

## Second Courthouse at Easton with Additions

This courthouse of 1794 is still in use in Talbot County. There have been some changes, of course. In 1874, the General Assembly authorized the expenditure of \$3,000 for constructing two fireproof vaults, one for the Clerk of the Court and the other for the Register of Wills, these vaults to adjoin their offices.<sup>18</sup> Again, in 1898, the sale of \$10,000 in courthouse bonds was authorized for the purpose of remodeling, repairing and reconstructing the courthouse.<sup>19</sup> The architect who directed this extensive work was Henry Brauns.

Every historian of the area has noted the fine lines, the solid form, the octagonal bay and other features which have set this courthouse off from the others of the same period. It was, therefore, to be expected that efforts to enlarge or otherwise change the outward appearance of the building would arouse public interest. After long controversy, the Board of County Commissioners, through its Courthouse Improvement Committee, entered into a contract with the architectural firm of Perry, Shaw, Hepburn and Dean of Boston to enlarge the courthouse and to remodel the old portion. Of the large expenditure required, \$275,000 was authorized by Chapter 239 of the Acts of 1955 and by Chapter 311 of the Acts of 1957. Additional funds were provided otherwise.

The end result was the addition of two wings joined by hyphens to the old rehabilitated courthouse, forming an enormous Georgian whole. Its size, while providing adequate space for the County's business, has necessarily detracted from the beauty of the square. It is adequate, but no more, for recordkeeping.

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<sup>18</sup> Ch. 199.

<sup>19</sup> Ch. 39.