

Early History of the Frederick County Jail

In March of 1732, the proprietor of the Province of Maryland desired to attract settlers to the northern and western areas of his territory, so he made a proclamation declaring special land prices and taxes for settlers.

- Any person having a family come to the land within three years of the proclamation and actually settle on the land could have two hundred acres without payment for 3 years. After 3 years the settler had to pay to the proprietor four shillings sterling for every hundred acres or,
- Any single person, male or female between the ages of 14 and 31 could have 100 acres under the same conditions, or,
- They were to be charged taxes and the security of their land would be insured as if they were British subjects.



The first petition to form a new county was entered into legislation in 1739. Benjamin Tasker, a former President of the Governors Council of Maryland, delivered the petition. This same Benjamin Tasker was given the land grant on which Fredericktown was laid out. Frederick County was created by an act of the Assembly on the 10th day of December in 1748, from parts of Baltimore and Prince George's counties (Chapter 15, Acts 1748). The County was probably named after Frederick Calvert (1731-1771), sixth and last Lord Baltimore, who was the Proprietor of Maryland from 1751 until his death in 1771 at Naples, Italy.

The new county (Frederick) was the largest in the State of Maryland. It included all of the lands of the present counties of Montgomery, Washington, Allegany and Garrett, as well as portions of Howard and Carroll counties until 1776 when Montgomery and Washington counties and the entire land west were removed.

The first courts for a year or so were held in the "Dutch Meeting House," and subsequently for a while in the upper story of Mrs. Charlton's tavern, on the southwest corner of Market and Patrick Streets. On December 13, 1749, John Murphy was sentenced to be hanged for "felony and burglary," becoming the first person executed in Frederick County. He was tried, convicted and hung all in the same day. An act of the General Assembly of 1748, provided for the purchase of three acres of land in or adjoining Fredericktown on which to build a Courthouse and Jail.

On the 10th of May, 1750, Daniel Dulany made a deed for lots 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, containing by estimation three acres, to Nathaniel Wickham, Jr., Thomas Beatty, Joseph Ogle, William Griffith, Edward Sprigg, Jr., and John Kimbal, the commissioners appointed by act of the Assembly to purchase three acres of ground for building a courthouse and jail. These lots

were each 62 feet wide and 393 feet deep, extending from Church Street to Second Street. The consideration was eighteen pounds.

In 1750, John Shellman and Joseph Hardman started building the Courthouse and completed the shell by November 24, 1750. The first jail was built in 1753. It (jail) stood opposite the Courthouse on the site of the home of Mrs. Chas. W. Ross, Jr. (101 - 105 Council Street). A whipping post was erected on the southeast corner of the lot. In 1776, the General Assembly authorized a levy of 30,000 pounds of tobacco to build a stone wall around the jail.

John Shellman reported to the June court in 1755, that he was unable to complete the county jail because so many wagons had been pressed into His Majesty's service that none were available for hauling lime, lumber, and stone. Benjamin Franklin had procured most of the wagons in the county for General Braddock's use in the Western Maryland campaign. The French and Indian War had effectively brought the building industry in Frederick County to a standstill for want of transportation.

In December 1775, the Tory Jail or Tory Gaol was built in Fredericktown, opening in June 1776. It was a two-story log building with each story divided into three rooms. A small house for the keeper and guards was built next door. These were located on East Second Street just past the corner of North Market Street. There is a plaque commemorating this historical jail at the old Farmers and Mechanics Bank Building located on East Second Street.

In December of 1777, one hundred prisoners from the Revolutionary War were sent to Fredericktown to be kept in the log jail until Fort Frederick could receive them. On Christmas Day they attempted a jailbreak by setting the building on fire, but the local militia quelled the outbreak.

On August 17, 1781, Caspar Fritchie, Peter Sueman, and Yost Plecker were hanged for treason at the rear of the Tory Jail on East Second Street. Four others who were convicted and sentenced with this trio were pardoned by Thoms Sim Lee, Maryland's Governor.

During the 19th century public hangings were a major source of entertainment. In such reported cases, the Sheriff resorted to issuing tickets for admission into the jail yard. Rooftops in the area were reportedly jammed with people who didn't have tickets. The sound of the jail bell "Hanging Bell" alerted the public that the hanging was ready to begin. The jail bell, which hung over the Frederick County Jail (South Street) for over 100 years, now resides at the Frederick County Adult Detention Center on Marcie's Choice Lane. The Josh Register Company in Baltimore, Maryland manufactured the "Hanging Bell".

Land maps found at the Frederick County Public Library indicate during the era of 1801 - 1808 the Frederick County Jail was located at the corner of West Second Street and Public Avenue (now Court Street). Land maps during the era of 1841 through 1862 indicate the Frederick County Jail was located on West South Street. However, there appears to be a separation between the Sheriff's House and the Jail during this period. History is vague on when the Frederick County Jail moved from the West Second Street and Public Street to the West South Street location.

The General Assembly in 1814 empowered the justice of the Levy Court to sell the ground on which the jail and scale house were located. They subdivided the land into twelve small lots. On March 12, 1815, the lots were sold at public auction. John McPherson was the highest bidder at \$8,250 and purchased the land where the old jail and scale house stood. On



September 13, 1862, the burning of the Frederick County Jail, set on fire by inmates, was another severe loss to Frederick, but with characteristic courage the people began the construction of a new edifice. It was built by James Hopwood on the site of the West South Street jail site, the latter having been built in 1875-76 at a cost of \$72,000. The architect was Frank E. Davis, of Baltimore, and the General Superintendent of Construction was the late David Frazier, who had as Chief Carpenter David H. Kolb. Haller & Hergesheimer did the masonry and brickwork; Routzahn & Bowers furnished the lumber and Flinn & Emmick the heating apparatus. Ebbert & Son did the plumbing, and the building throughout was a solid and substantial structure, well ventilated, three stories, with a dwelling for the sheriff and separate cells for prisoners.

Calvin Page & Company of Frederick, Maryland in 1875, cast the steel cell doors, locks and bars at the Frederick County Jail located on West South Street. Calvin Page & Company was located in the area of West South Street and Broadway. The remains of these castings are still there today. Phoebus junkyard was located across the way from the jail.

During the early years, the Sheriffalty (Sheriff) and his family were provided housing as part of the benefits of the position. The front "House" of the Frederick County Jail was the Sheriff's residence.

The last execution held at the Frederick County Jail was on November 10, 1922. William A. Stultz was hung for the murder of Frederick City Police Officer John Adams. Stultz was the last person to be executed in Frederick County, Maryland.

The reason that the state legislature centralized executions was the fact that executions were being made too much of a public affair, which was to a certain extent detrimental to the morals of the community. At a hanging that took place in Baltimore County, a delegate to the legislature was presented with a number of tickets granting him admission to the affair. It was this fact that prompted Senator McIntosh of Baltimore County to introduce a bill in the Senate to have a central point where all executions should take place.

The opponents of the bill brought out the fact that by transferring the execution from a county seat to the state penitentiary, the force of example would be materially weakened. However, the bill passed the Senate a few days before it went through the House, the body passed it during the last week it was in session.

All laws that are passed by the Legislature can not become effective before June 1, unless there is an emergency clause which provides that it must be necessary for the public health or public safety; in the case of an emergency clause; three-fifths of the vote of both houses must be had in order for it to pass, whereas for all other laws, only a majority vote is required.

It is understood that the bill pertaining to the concentration of all executions in a central point had no emergency clause. Therefore, it would go into effect before June 1, 1923.

Frederick County Government sold the West South Street Jail to the Frederick Rescue Mission and it was converted into the "Beacon House" in 1984. During the late 70's the Frederick County Jail became overcrowded and badly in need of repair. The Sheriff, County Commissioners and influential citizens began the search for funding and options to both refurbish and add to the existing facility or to build a separate new facility to handle the pending growth. A master study plan was completed for the potential growth of incarcerated in the correctional facility for the next ten years.



As it turned out, the new Frederick County Jail would end up on a nine-acre farm in the county. Accessible by Route 85, the Frederick County Adult Detention Center was then a reality. Funding from the county and state were approved and the ground breaking and building commenced. One of the most important decisions was to name the roadway that would handle all the traffic from Route 85 to the Detention Center's parking lot. The choice made was "Marcie's Choice", named after Commissioner Galen Claggett's daughter.

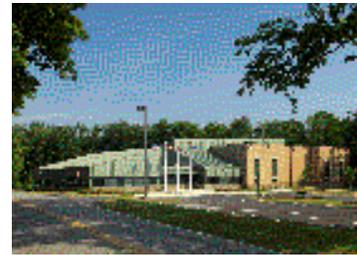
The Frederick County Adult Detention Center located on Marcie's Choice Lane, officially opened on October 4, 1984 at a cost of \$6.7 million dollars. Spacious housing was built for 96 Males, 10 Females and 22 Specialized Beds totaling 128 actual beds. At the time of occupancy for the year of 1984, the Inmate Population High was 111 and Low was 75. Total intakes for the year were 2,320 Males and 194 Females.



In October of 2003, a groundbreaking ceremony was held for the new Work Release/Substance Abuse Facility, located adjacent to the Detention Center on the Thomas Property. Construction of the facility was completed and occupancy was in June of 2005. This facility can house and feed approximately 128

Work Release inmates, both male and female.

The Frederick County Sheriff's Office - Corrections Bureau (Frederick County Adult Detention Center) has served the populous of Frederick County for over 250 years. With the first jail built 1753 - 1757 (2nd and Public Street), second jail built 1809 - 1814 (W. South Street), third jail built (1875-76) and the present facility (1984).



Since the inception of the JAIL, it has evolved into one of the finest Correctional Facilities in the State of Maryland. While the name has changed from Frederick County Jail to Frederick County Adult Detention Center to Frederick County Sheriff's Office - Corrections Bureau, the commitment of its staff to provide a safe and secure facility remains.