

MCDOWELL HALL

1742

The history of this large square hip-roofed brick building began more than two hundred years ago.

In 1742, the Maryland Assembly authorized Governor Thomas Bladen to buy four acres of land and build "a Dwelling House and other Conveniences for the Residence of the Governor of Maryland for the time being." The cost was not to exceed £4000. A Scotch builder, Simon Duff, was employed and work begun. After two years a request to the Assembly for £2000 more to complete the project was refused.

Benjamin Mifflin, a Philadelphian, wrote after visiting Annapolis in 1762: "Viewed Bladen's Folly as the Inhabitants call it, the ruins of a Spacious Building begun by Governor Bladen but carried no further than the Brick Work and Joists two Stories High, but if finished would have been a Beautiful Edifice."

When St. John's College was chartered in 1784, it acquired Bladen's Folly and completed the project naming it McDowell Hall in honor of the college's first President. George Washington sent his two nephews Fairfax and Lawrence Washington there in 1794 and in 1798. Mrs. Washington's grandson, George Washington Parke Custis attended. Francis Scott Key was another early graduate. In 1909 a disastrous fire destroyed all but the walls of the old building. However, it has been ably restored.

Joseph Clark's involvement missing.