

No. 10-

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LOCAL HISTORY

OF

CARLISLE, PA.,

BY THE LATE

Rev. JOSEPH A. MURRAY, D. D.

(Reprinted under the Auspices of the Hamilton Library Association,—Historical Department.)



I.—Old Court Houses of Carlisle, Pa.

II.—Molly Pitcher (Molly McCauley).

III.—Old Market Houses of Carlisle, Pa.

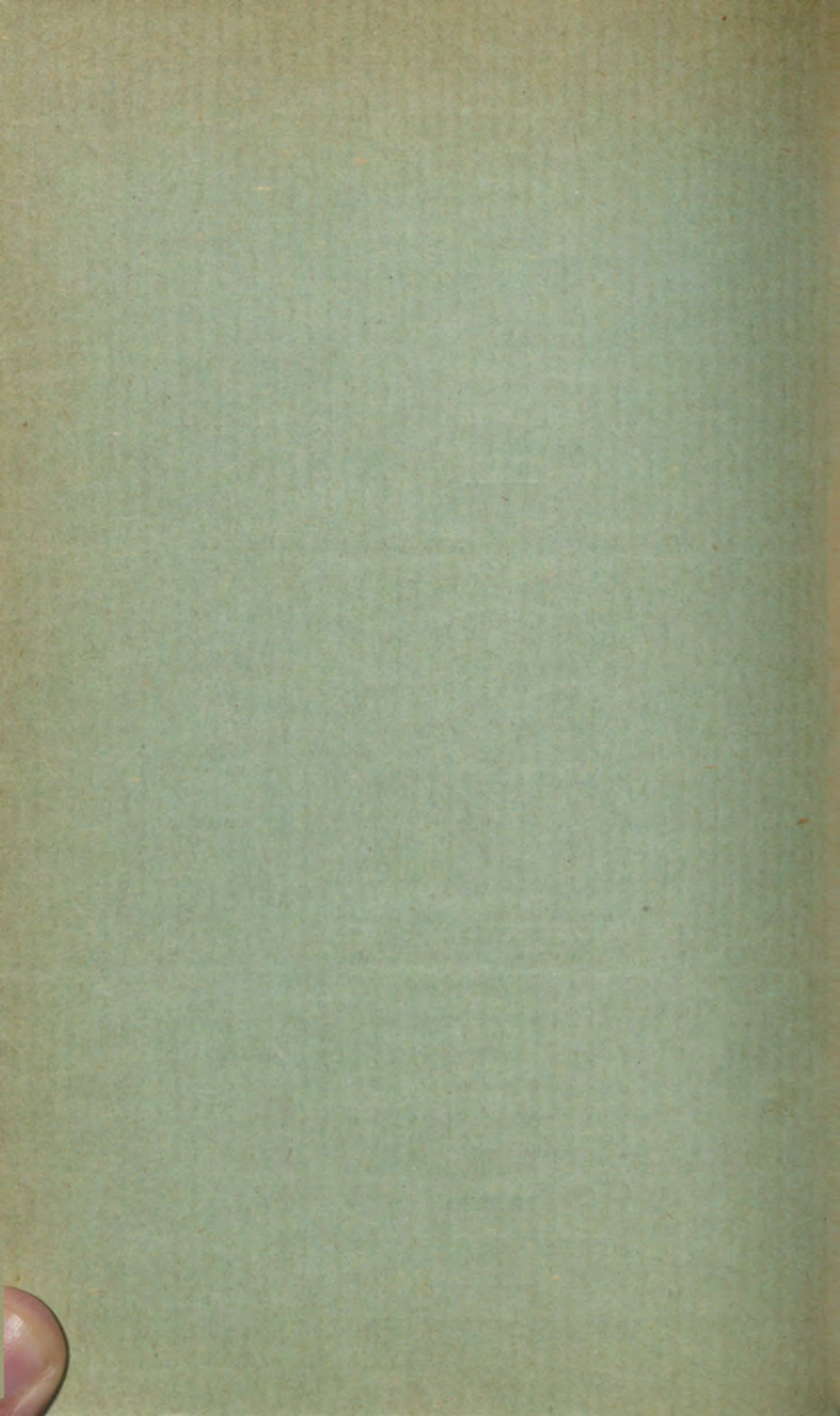
IV.—Andre and Despard in Carlisle, Pa., with note by
Prof. Charles F. Himes.

V.—Old Jails of Carlisle, Pa.

VI.—Old Wells of Carlisle, Pa., with notes by Prof.
Charles F. Himes.

CARLISLE, PA.

1902.



LOCAL HISTORY.

FIRST PUBLIC BUILDINGS IN CARLISLE.

COURT HOUSES.

BY THE LATE REV. J. A. MURRAY, D. D.

REPRINTED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF
THE HAMILTON LIBRARY ASSOCIA-
TION.—HISTORICAL DEPARTMENT.

In preparing the following sketches and reminiscences of our former public buildings, in addition to old papers, we have carefully consulted several of our aged and best informed citizens in regard to the matter, both to have our own recollections confirmed or rectified, so far as they go back, and to secure assistance in reaching the truth where our own recollections were faint and unsatisfactory. In regard to a few things there seemed at first to be some doubt or discrepancy in the memory consulted; but, upon due reflection, we will be believed in having stated "the truth"—if not "the whole truth"—and "nothing but the truth;" and if, in any instance, we have failed to do so, it has been an unintentional failure. Hence, if our statements have not the attractions of romance, they certainly will have the higher and better claim of reliableness, even if prosaically given.

It is not our purpose to describe the early proceedings of our courts, or to give a sketch of the Cumberland

2

County Bar of former years, but chiefly to gather up and bring together the historical and traditional fragments in regard to our earliest court edifices. In doing this, however, it may not be irrelevant to premise, that, at the first settlement of our county and for many years afterwards the knowledge of the Law was quite limited in its extent and rather imperfect in its character. The courts of our county were presided over by the Justices of the Peace, any three of whom were competent to transact business; and yet it is admitted that the business was for the most part wisely transacted, as these 'Squires were generally persons of acknowledged integrity and good common sense, and who, by careful observation and experience, became qualified to consider and settle the matters committed to them.

There was an interesting paper on the Courts of Pennsylvania in the 17th Century, by Mr Lewis, read before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, March 14th 1881, and published in the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* Volume, V. p. 141

(The Court Houses of the olden times were generally very humble and unpretending buildings, but in harmony with the new country and its primitive people. Nevertheless they were great centers of interest and attraction and importance to those who had business at them or were drawn thither by curiosity. Who ever read H. M. Brackenridge's description of the first court that was held in Butler, in 1800, without having his risible faculties excited? It was an unfinished log cabin, with a carpenter's bench and

three chairs on it, and this constituted the hall of justice and the judgment seat! The detailed narrative is most graphically and amusingly given in his interesting "Recollections of the West," and it also appears in *Day's Historical collection of Pennsylvania*, pp. 78, 174.

Repeatedly has the writer seen the earliest seat of Justice of Perry County. It was a very ordinary-looking log building in Landisburg, whose rough exterior and dilapidated appearance now loom up in our vision, and in very manifest contrast with the present large and beautiful and convenient court house of that county. The several courts, however, were held in it from 1820 to 1826, when the public buildings were finished at Bloomfield, which had been selected as the county seat in 1823 by the commissioners appointed by the previous legislature. In Hazard's *Register of Pennsylvania*, volume 3 p. 304. May 9, 1829, there appears the following account of Bloomfield, taken from the *Perry Forrester*:

"There are now 29 dwelling houses, 21 shops and offices, a Court House and jail, besides other out-houses, in this town. There are 4 stores, 5 taverns, 1 printing office, 2 shoemaker shops, 2 taylor shops, 1 saddler, 4 cabinet-makers, 1 hatter, 1 tinner, 2 blacksmith shops, 2 tanneries, 2 or 3 carpenters, more than half a dozen lawyers, and half as many doctors. The population of the town is about 220 Little more than four years ago, the site upon which the town stands was an inclosed clover field without a solitary building upon it."

24

Such, too, was the character of the first Court House in Carlisle—subsequently recognized as the *Court-town* of the State, socially and militarily and educationally, whose public square is now occupied with such buildings of which any borough might be justly proud and whose bar fully maintains its honorable reputation as eminently learned in the law.

In consequence of the inconveniences and annoyances experienced by the early settlers living in the western portion of Lancaster county,—west of the Susquehanna river, in what was originally called the North Valley but afterwards Cumberland Valley—and so remote were these settlers from the town of Lancaster, where the courts were held and the public offices kept, that James Silvers and Wm. Magaw, of the western settlers, presented a petition to the Assembly, asking for the erection of a new county. For this purpose an act was passed, erecting Cumberland County, January 27, 1751: and Robert McCoy, Benjamin Chambers, David Magaw, James McIntire and John McCormick were appointed by the Assembly, trustees, or any three of them, and were authorized to purchase and take assurance to them and their heirs of a piece of land, situated in some convenient place in said county and thereon to erect and build a court house and prison, sufficient to accommodate the public service of said county and for the ease and convenience of the inhabitants. The Commissioners and Assessors were authorized to raise a sum of money, not to exceed three hundred pounds, to purchase the land and furnish the

court house and prison. As Shippensburg was in existence before Carlisle, the courts were first held there, but we have now no information as to the building used there for this purpose; but it is probable that it stood on or near the corner of King and Queen streets, as tradition says that the whipping post stood there; and it is very probable that it was an extemporized building, or one rented, as only about two months intervened between the passage of the act establishing the county and holding the first court there. Four courts had been held in that town "before Samuel Smith, Esquire and his Brethren Keepers of the Peace," or "his Associate Justices" (see Quarter Sessions Docket, 1750 to 1765) 24th of July, 1750, 23rd of October, 1750, 22nd of January, 1750, 23rd of April, 1750. In regard to these dates which we have carefully examined and copied, the third and fourth terms precede the first and second, and for this we cannot give a satisfactory explanation. It was not until 1751, that an act was passed by Parliament (24 Geo. II., 1751) for equalizing the style in Great Britain and Ireland with that used in other countries of Europe. It was then enacted that eleven days should be omitted after the 2nd of September, 1752, so that the ensuing day would be the 14th. The O. S., or Julian, was to terminate with the last day of December, 1751, and the N. S., or Gregorian, commence with the day following. But this change in the computation of time does not explain the above mentioned discrepancy. At present we must accept it as an error, and suppose that the 22nd of January

and the 23rd of April, refer to 1751, especially as the next court is held in Carlisle July 23rd, 1751.

In 1751 Carlisle was laid out and became the seat of Justice, where had previously been the council fire of the Indians, and the first court was held here July 23rd, 1751.

During the first five years after the erection of the county, the Orphans' Court seemed to have followed the persons of the Judges, and exercised its jurisdiction in different places. It was held at Shippensburg and Carlisle; also in Peters township, now Franklin County, June 12th, 1751; in Antrin township, now same county, January 4th, 1752; at Wm. Anderson's, March 5th, 1755; and afterwards regularly at Carlisle. (*Rupp's History* p. 386.)

As is well known the removal of the county seat and the several courts to Carlisle was attended with no little excitement and dissatisfaction in the western portion of the county. But, of this, enough. In a letter written by John O'Neal to Gov. Hamilton from "Carlisle, May 27th, 1753," it is said: "The Court is at present held in a temporary log building on the north east corner of the centre square. (*Hazard's Register of Pennsylvania*, vol. 4 p. 389) It was on that section or quarter of the square upon which now stands St. John's church. We have never seen or heard any statement that denied or controverted this account, and hence we accept it as true, otherwise we cannot account for the locality of the court house that must have existed from 1751 to the erection of the brick building in 1765. How intensely interesting now to have a faith-

ful picture and description of that building!—of its form, dimensions and arrangements, with the trials and incidents that occurred there; but we have not, neither will we let fancy picture what history has not given and verified. That "log building"—constructed, doubtlessly, according to the most simple rules of architecture, and with unwritten history—may have been sufficient to accommodate the business of the times for about fifteen years, when the first brick court house was erected on the public square, at the south-western intersection of Main and Hanover streets.

We are inclined to believe that at first there were those who were rather unwilling to use the center square for public buildings; and yet it was done, because we suppose, it was central, and probably no purchase of ground need be made; and it would seem that there was also complaint made because of the tardiness or improper way in which it was done. Hence we have these official acts of the assembly relative to the affair, namely. "Pursuant to leave for that purpose, Mr. Allen presented to the chair a bill for purchasing a lot, and erecting a court house thereon, which being read the first time, was ordered to be laid on the table" (Feb 9, 1762.)

And on March the 16th following, it is stated that "Sundry inhabitants of Cumberland county presented a petition setting forth that the Trustees appointed to erect a court house and jail, have not fully answered the end of their appointment, praying for the removal of those Trustees and the appointment of others." (March 16,

1762. Votes of Assembly, vol. 5. p. 183
to 209. Rupp)

A copy of the contract of the erection of the old brick court house, at the southwest corner of Main and Hanover streets, we here furnish but corrected in its orthography and capital letters:

"Articles of agreement made and concluded by and between Col. Benjamin Chambers, David Magaw, and John McCormick, Trustees, appointed by act of Assembly for Cumberland county; of the one part and Wm. Denny of Carlisle, carpenter, of the other part, Witnesseth: That the said William Denny for the consideration hereinafter mentioned, doth covenant and promise to procure and provide scantling, timber, and shingles requisite and necessary for the door cases, window cases, sashes, doors, window shutters, joists, girders, rafters and cupola, for the Court house to be built in the town of Carlisle—the principal rafters and cupola to be framed of oak and the best of pine; and that the said William Denny shall make the door cases, window cases, joists, girders, rafters, doors, windows, window shutters, sashes, cupola, and put on the roof, in a workman like manner, on or before the last day of October next, the shingles to be of white pine if it can be got, if not, of yellow pine, and they are to be clear of sap-wood, the roof is to be done with a cove eave cornice, and a barge eave cornice. The lights of sash to be for glass 10 by 12, more or less, as may best suit the story, and the whole to be done in a proportional manner; he is also to glaze the windows, the said trustees finding glass.

and all iron work and nails necessary for said building. And the said Benjamin Chambers, David Magaw and John McCormick by virtue and in pursuance of the trust in them reposed by the act of Assembly, do covenant and promise to pay the said William Denny for the said work when finished according to the rates and prices of such work in said town, the roof to be paid for by the square, and the cupola according to the rate and prices of such work in York or Lancaster; and further, that when the said scantling and timber or part thereof is procured and brought into said town that the said Trustees will furnish him with money from time to time as shall be necessary to pay for said timber or scantling according to the prices paid for such scantling in said town, the said William Denny producing bills from the saw mills of the said scantling delivered and receipts for the money paid for it to the said Trustees. The said William Denny is to be allowed for his time transacting any business about the premises which does not concern the carpenter work. The said William Denny is to have such reasonable sums of money from the said Trustees from time to time as may be necessary to pay his workmen. And for the true performance of all and every the covenants and agreements aforesaid, the said parties bind themselves, their heirs, executors, administrators, in the penal sum of five hundred pounds lawful money of Pennsylvania to each and other firmly by these presents.

In witness where-of the said parties have here-unto interchangeably set their hands and seal this 12th day of March, Anno Dom. 1765.

10

Seal and Delivered, &c."

(See bundle of contracts in Commissioners' office, Carlisle.)

The original agreement and security, for the faithful performance of the foregoing contract, we have in our possession. It bears the same date as the previous document, is made to the same Trustees by William Denny and Hermanus Alricks, and witnessed by Robert Magaw and William Magaw.

We have also in our possession the original agreement, relating to the bricks, which is here given in extenso:

Articles of Agreement Made & Concluded upon By and Between George Jacob Housman of Carlisle in Cumberland County and Province of Pennsylvania Brickmaker of the One part & Stephen Foulk of the same place Bricklayer of the Other part. Witnesseth that the said George Jacob Housman Shall & Will Make & Deliver or cause to be made and Delivered In the Middle of the Centre Square in the said Town such Quantity of good & Merchantable 9 Inch Brick as may be necessary for Building the Court of the Dimention Mentioned in a Contract between the said Stephen Foulk & the Trustees Part of which Bricks the said George Jacob Housman Doth Covenant & promise to deliver at the Place af'd on or before the 20th day of May next & the Rest from Time to Time as fast as the said Stephen Foulk shall or may have Occasion for them, the whole to be Delivered on or before the 10th day of August next. And the said Stephen Foulk Doth Covenant & Promise to pay to the said George Jacob Housman for the said Bricks so as af'd Made and Delivered

the Sum of 28 Shillings & 1000 to be Estimated or Counted in the Work £20 whereof is to be paid on the 25th day of April next, provided that the said George Jacob Housman should not furnish sufficient Brick or not a Sufficient quantity at the time the said Stephen Foulk may have need for them to carry on the Building. That in such Cases the said Stephen Foulk may get Bricks from any Other Person to enable him to carry on said Building & fulfill his Article with the Trustees For the True Performance of all & Every the Covenants & Agreements afd the said Parties bind themselves to Each Other in the sum of Five Hundred Pounds firmly by These Presents In Witness Whereof They have hereto Interchangeably Set their Hands & Seals.

This 23rd Day of March, 1765.

Sealed & Delivered in }
the presence of us }

CONRAD BUCHER.

ROBT. MAGAW.

STEPHEN FOULK, (L. S.)

GEORGE JACOB HOUSMAN (L. S.)

The original document—venerable with age, but perfectly intact—has not a punctuation mark in it, and it is given with all its capital letters and abbreviated words; it is written on a large sheet of paper, unruled and bearing the usual water mark or stamp. These agreements appear to be written in the easily recognized hand of Col. Magaw, who was one of the leading lawyers of the place and many of his Court papers, as well as military papers, are in the possession of the writer.

The Court House was duly completed, and in the most substantial manner. Though reference is made in the foregoing paper to the "Dimension" of the building "in a Contract between the said Stephen Foulk & the Trustees," yet we have never seen said "contract" or the dimensions specified; and although we have a very distinct recollection of the form and arrangements and general appearance of the building, yet we do not know its precise length or width or height. It had an entrance on Main street near the east corner, and a window west of it, with two windows above. The north entrance was boxed inside, and to this was attached a storm-door, which when opened, closed by means of a rope and pulley and weight. The chief entrance was a large double door on Hanover street, with a window on each side, and three windows above. At the east side of the interior, and extending partly around the north and south ends, there was a gallery, rounded in front and supported by Doric columns, and reached by a stairway in the southeast corner. The main floor was paved with square tiles or bricks, and on it—somewhat in the rear of the dock—stood a large stove, not a ten-plate, but a six-plate stove, long enough to receive a cord-wood stick, and sufficient to warm the whole room. The large space embraced by the brick pavement, had no chairs or seats, only two or three backless benches, and persons had generally to stand, but there were seats on the gallery. At the west side there was a semi-circular semi-octagonal alcove or attachment, communicating with an

13

opening into the main building, something like the rear or chancel of St. John's church, having a large window with a Venetian blind. This alcove was wide and deep enough to hold the Judge's Bench. Immediately in front of it stood the clerk's desks, and in front of these was the Bar. To the right, or south of the Bench, running east, were the Grand jury boxes—two rows, and on the left or north of the Bench, were the other two jury boxes, all entered from the west end. The Bar floor—commencing at the east end of the jury boxes, and somewhat curved or rounded in front, and parallel to the front of the gallery—was elevated about two feet above the aforesaid brick pavement, and was reached midway from the pavement by two or three steps. The space between these steps on either side and the jury boxes was closed with panel work below and open work above of a suitable height, separating the raised portion from the paved floor. This barrier between the lower brick pavement and the Bar floor above was so high that those standing near it below, if of small stature, could scarcely reach to the top of it with their elevated hand, nor see over it conveniently, unless they stood some distance from it—they could hear better than they could see; but spectators were favored with a good view inside the Bar by looking through the entrance way into it. The best view however, was from the front of the gallery. The arrangement precluded all tampering with the jury by outsiders, as the one could not be easily approached by the other or hold any communication with them. This matter has been

14

greatly and acceptably changed with the advance and demands of the times. The judiciary is not quite so sacred or dignified or elevated as formerly, but has become popularized since it has become elective, without, we trust, any loss to its exalted worth and sterling integrity. The platform upon which the clerk's table stood was a foot or step higher than the floor of the Bar, as was also the first jury box on either side; and the floor of the Bench was elevated two feet or steps above the Bar floor, as was also that of the rear jury boxes. The dock was at the right of the entrance going into the Bar, with a door midway in the west side; and the Orier's seat was elevated at the left of the entrance into the bar. There was also in the rear of the big stove, and against the north wall of the court room, immediately under the belfry, a closet containing the ropes and weights of the town clock, and where it was wound up, without the necessity of going to the attic. The large alcove or bay annex containing the Judge's bench was somewhat between the main building and the town hall or engine house, as it served both purposes, and was known by either name. This was a two-storied brick building, erected about 1820, and bore on its front the name of *Town Hall*, a short distance west of the Court House, on a range with it, and facing Main street. The fire engines and five buckets of leather* were kept in the first story.

*Frequently the citizens kept these leather buckets in a very convenient place at home. They were long and narrow, made entirely of leather, with a round handle of leather. When a fire occurred there was generally a

15

with wide entrances on Main street; the second story was the Hall where the Borough council met, and was approached by a door and stairway at the northeast corner. Along the entire rear of the building, about five feet from the ground, projected a roof with a slope of about three feet, and under this covering and shelter the fire ladders were kept. The building was surmounted with a cupola and bell, distinguished from the "Court House bell" and the "College bell" by the usual appellation of the "Town Hall bell" or "Fire bell."

(There is an engraving of these buildings in *Day's Pennsylvania Historical Collections*, p. 264.) and we have an old plan of Carlisle on which they appear. The Borough elections were held at the old Court House, at the window on the right hand of the Hanover street entrance, and, as the window was pretty high above the pavement, persons of short stature reached their ballot up on the end of a split stick; at the other windows of the same building the voters from the different townships exercised that right and beneath the rear window, the ground being low, a box was placed from which the citizen reached up his ballot. (Formerly the ground of the sev-

double row of persons, formed as soon as possible, extending from the pump or the spring to the place of the fire, from four to six feet apart, and the empty buckets would pass along one row and be returned with water by the other. Sometimes men and women, boys and girls, would be in line, especially if it was formed to the spring, and occasionally when a bucket reached the engine there would not be much water in it, unless it had been swung from one person to another with care and skill.

eral quarters of the Square was lower than it is now, especially the Market House section, where, in the olden time, was "the deep quarry," but it has all since been filled up and graded with the surrounding pavement.) John O'Neal, in his letter to Gov. Hamilton, under date of "Carlisle, May 27th, 1753," writes as follows:

"A lime kiln stands on the Centre Square, near what is called the deep quarry, from which is obtained good building stone." Hazard's *Register of Pennsylvania*, vol. 4, p. 389.

The *Second Tuesday of October*—election day under the old Constitution—was always a day of great interest to the politician, as well as the office seeker, and to the lover of old rye; memorable, also, for some ugly fights between the contending and excited partisans; and the bags of chestnuts, at a "flip" a quart, were attractive both to men and boys. Such are our distinct recollections of the old Court House, which was erected by our grandfathers in the year 1765, and was doubtless used for its appropriate purpose in the year following, if not sooner. During the Revolutionary war, however, the courts were not always held in it, but were compelled by the exigencies of the times to be held in "other places," as appears from the following report or presentment made by the grand jury of the county to the Court in January, 1778, viz:

"The Grand Inquest for the Common Wealth of Pennsylvania and the Body of the County of Cumberland do present that the public Court House of the County of Cumberland being now occupied (by Capt. Coran and his men,

who are employed in the service of the United States) as a laboratory and store house, and has been occupied by the people in the service of the United States a considerable time past so the county of Cumberland cannot have the use of the said Court House, but are obliged to hire other places for the county use, they are therefore of opinion that the United States ought to pay unto the Treasurer of the county of Cumberland, after the rate of ten pounds. Month, monthly and every month Capt. Isaac Coran hath been possessed of the said Court House, and for every month he or they may continue to occupy it not exceeding the twentieth day of April next, and of this they desire that Capt. Coran or the Commanding Officer of the Laboratory company may have Notice.

"Wm. Moore, foreman"

(See—"Quarter Sessions Docket"—1777 to 1789—p. 22.)

It would seem that during the existence of the first Court House, as well as during many years afterwards, there was no particular place in which the public records were kept, no building designed or used for that special purpose; and it is probable that they were kept at the office of the presiding 'Squire, or committed to the care of the Clerk, or some other responsible person, who kept them at his own residence or place of business. But as the business of the county increased and as these records accumulated, it became desirable and necessary to have a suitable edifice for their safe keeping, and in some central place where they could be easily consulted. Hence, about

18
thirty-five years after the erection of the first brick Court House, we have the following court record, viz:

MARCH SESSIONS 1801.

Upon the representation of the Commissioners of the county of Cumberland, to the court and Grand jury setting forth, That it was highly necessary to appropriate a sum of money of the county, not exceeding six thousand dollars, to defray the expenses of erecting a suitable building, in the public square of the borough of Carlisle, for the safe keeping of the public records of said county, agreeably to the Act of Assembly in that case made and provided: and requesting the court and Grand jury to concur in said appropriation for the said purposes. Whereupon the grand jury signify their concurrence, as follows, viz: The grand jury concur with the Commissioners to appropriate six thousand dollars for the purpose of building a house for the public offices, not exceeding sixty-two feet in length and thirty-one feet deep, to contain three offices and three arched rooms for the security of public papers on the first story, to be built of stone and brick, on the public ground, near the south end of the Court House.

JAMES BROWN, foreman.

And which appropriation, now, to wit the 5th day of March, 1801, was confirmed by the court, as follows, viz: The court approve of the above appropriation.

By the court,

JOHN JOSEPH HENRY."

(Quarter Sessions Docket, B—1800 to 1803—p 74.)

19

Though this action of the court occurred in 1801, yet the agreement for only the stone-work of the proposed structure was not made until "August 2nd 1802," and it is not very probable that the building was erected and finished sooner than 1803—and subsequently, with some change in the original plan and design. It was an oblong brick edifice, added to the south end of the old Court House, being the same height and constituting its extension in that direction, so much so, that it appeared to form an integral portion of it, though erected many years afterwards.

Next to the Court House on Hanover street, there was a door, approached by two or three sandstone steps, opening into a short hall, and thence a stairway led to the second story. This hall, near the foot of the stairway, was connected with the court room by a door having two or three descending steps under the south gallery. A door, on the opposite side of the hall, entered a room used for the Sheriff's office, that also had a door window in front, and it was so used until about the time of Sheriff Mitchell or Sheriff Ritner, 1816—1819, after which the office was removed to the jail and there it has ever since continued. At the rear of this office was a large room, used for lumber and fuel, connected with the court room by a door, and also opening on the west side by a door and window. From the first landing on the aforesaid stairway, and turning to the right hand side going up, there was a passage that led into the gallery of the Court House. The balance of the building on the first

floor, southward, was divided south of midway by a hall or entry running through it from Hanover street to the west side, with a door at each end, but without any stairway in it. The door at the east end was a large door, having a semi-circular top, with sash and glass, and a narrow sash and glass on each side. As you entered this hall from Hanover street the Prothonotary office was the first one to the right hand, with two windows; and at the rear of it was a corresponding room, with two western windows, used for the Commissioner's office. As you entered the hall from Hanover street on the left hand side, or at the corner, was the office of Register and Recorder; and at the rear of it was the office of the Clerk of the Court—each having two windows on the east and west sides. The before-mentioned stairway, leading to the second story, landed nearly midway, and then turned southward into an entry. On the east side of this entry, and connecting with it by a door, was a room with a window on Hanover street; this room was used for various purposes; it was also known as the Judge's Room; and at one time Judge Hepburn had his office in it, where also he had his law library partially burned by an ill disposed person, who had thus sought to be revenged for the disagreeable operation of law. West of the entry, and connecting with it by a door, was another and a larger room, having two windows looking westward, and a small stairway in the northeast corner leading to the attic and cupola. This was a jury room. These two rooms were above

W

the old sheriff's office and the room for lumber and fuel in its rear. The entry extended to a large room occupying the entire south end of the second story, and leading into it by a door with a semi-circular window at the top to give light in the entry that would have been otherwise measurably dark. This large room was above the entry and the four offices below it—it had five windows on the east side and five on the west side and two at the south end. The middle window on the east side, over the entrance into the offices, was called the "big window," because it was larger than any of the others—having an additional or narrow sash on each side, one pane wide. It was called the "*County Hall*" and also the "*Grand Jury Room*." The entire building was frequently termed the "*State House*," but for what reason we know not, unless authorized or directed to be built by act of Assembly. There was cellarage under the county offices, used doubtless to store the winter supply of wood for the several office fires.

Capt. John Turner has informed us, that when he worked with Mr. Spangler, they made two new frames of locust timber for the cellar doors on Hanover street, and they were careful to give them such a pitch or inclination as would easily cast the rain. It was not dug very deep, and this fact will account for the first floor being considerably higher than the paved floor of the Court House, to which you descended by two or three steps from the interior of south door—leading from the short hall, between the county offices and the court room.

22

It is very probable that there may have been some changes in the use and arrangement of the offices between the time of the erection near the beginning of the century and their destruction forty years afterwards, especially after the Sheriff's office was removed to the Jail, when a change was made in the Commissioner's office and the office of the Clerk of the Courts.

In the Spring of 1823 a contract was made between John Higgins and the County Commissioners, according to which he agreed for \$235 "to build a brick wall, and Coffee house" at the rear of the county offices—"83 feet long, 14 inches thick, 8 feet high." It extended the entire length of the building containing the public offices and reached the court-house wall, near to which was a gate opening into this enclosure, and opposite to a door opening into the fuel room, which was also connected with the court-room. The enclosure was also easily reached by the hall and entry between the offices which led directly into it by the west door. The contract was "made upon the 1st day of March, 1823." (see copy in my possession of the original in the Commissioner's office, Carlisle.)

As may be supposed the Court House and public offices were repaired from time to time as occasion required. In May 1825, William Main was employed to paint them. On the 14th of May 1834, Jefferson Worthington agreed with the Commissioners—John Black and S. Wunderlich, attested by John Irwin, Clerk—to "paint the Court House Cupola with good and substantial coats of white lead and oil and Gild and Smelt the Clock faces. Gild

23

the Ball, Fether and Pine Apple, in a good workmanlike manner"—for \$55. The "Fether," mentioned in this agreement was doubtless the vane, which was really an *arrow* but barbed with a feather. The ball, arrow, pine apple were the ornaments of the rod or spire that surmounted the Cupola. Also, in April, 1841, Mr. Worthington agreed with the Commissioners, John Coraman, Alex. Kerr, and Michael Mislter—to paint and stain the court house for \$275. In November 1843, Wm. Martin agreed for \$49.50 to repair what is termed in the agreement the "Judge's Room," &c., that had been injured by fire—the work of a colored man, whose ill will Judge Hepburn had incurred.

We have stated incidentally that the Court house and offices had been heated in winter—not with coal, as now, but with wood. In 1823 Christian Crotzer agreed—as attested by D. Fisher, Clerk, to furnish 30 cords of hickory wood at \$2.70, and 30 cords of oak at \$1.70 a cord. In the following year, 1824, George Myers agreed to, "deliver twenty-five cords of hickory wood at \$2.50 per cord and twenty-five cords of oak wood at \$1.75 per cord, and to deliver it when required either at the jail or court house of Cumberland County, the Commissioners to pay (him) the amount when delivered. Also, in December, 1827, Jacob Vantz agreed "to deliver the Commissioners of Cumberland County twenty cord sound oak wood, they to pay (him) one dollar and fifty cents per cord after the delivery."

We do not know what Mr. Claudy receives for his services, as keeper of the

29

court house, but we believe that he deserves to be well paid, as does every faithful employe. We will be excused, however, in giving here in extenso a short agreement made with Mr. Peters, in 1833, and attested by J. W. Eby. It is as follows, viz:

"Agreement of John Peters, appointed Superintendent of Public buildings, commencing as of the first day of December, 1833, as follows:

The said Peters to attend to everything necessary to keep the public buildings in proper order, to cut all the wood, and put it in its proper place and make all the necessary fires, &c., when required. To wash and scrub out all the Public buildings at least four times a year, and at all other times to have them clean swept, to find everything necessary for scrubbing and cleaning at his own expense, and generally to do everything appertaining to his duty as Superintendent, etc., the commissioners reserving the right to removal at pleasure. To be paid the sum of sixty-five dollars annually, viz: in quarterly payments.

Agreed to 21st November, 1833.

Test.

J. W. EBY. JOHN PETERS. (L. S.)

As is well known, the old Court House, including the County offices and Town Hall, was destroyed by fire in 1845. It was the work of an incendiary, and, that his fell purpose might be all the more successfully accomplished, the fire apparatus had been so roped and secured as to baffle and defeat the operations of the firemen—whose engine house was first fired.

This disaster occurred early on the morning of Monday, March 24th, 1845.

We have in our possession the voluminous diary of an aged and valued friend, long since deceased, which he very carefully kept for many years, and his entry for that day is as follows: "Cold morning, with a little sunshine. Cold, raw, cloudy, windy and dusty through the day. The *Engine House, Engines, Town Hall, Court House and County offices*, utterly destroyed by fire, between 1 and 3 o'clock, A. M.—the work of an incendiary. The most valuable records saved." Diary of Mr. Wm. Blair who died in Carlisle, in 1861, and in the 75th year of his age.

As there was in the construction of the buildings, much yellow pine timber used, very combustible, the fire is remembered as being "a big and hot fire." The very last hour that the old clock struck was *one*, and before it had reach the next figure on the dial it fell to the pavement, and was broken into pieces. The fragments were collected by persons, and kept as relics: it was very fine metal, and parts of it were afterwards converted into valued souvenirs, as finger rings—some of which were fire gilt and very pretty. The larger pieces were removed to the jail yard under the direction of the Commissioners, so Capt. Geo. W. Crop informed me, but what became of them I know not. Mr. Alexander S Lyne, tinner and coppersmith, told us that he secured some of the pieces, which he melted into a pipe, and out of this pipe or hollow tube he made scores of finger rings, some of which were "fine gilt" and beautiful. He also told us that Elbert and Martin Gardner, machinists, now of Altoona, and brothers

25

of Franklin Gardner, also secured pieces of the broken bell and made finger rings of it. The writer has a piece of the old bell, given to him by his good friend Capt. George W. Crop, who obtained it at the time and place of the fire.

The venerable Dr. Duffield, deceased, lately of Detroit, but who had spent his early ministry in Carlisle, in a Centennial discourse delivered in Carlisle in 1857, made the following interesting statement about our old Court House bell:

"The Court House had afforded accommodations for worship prior to the erection of church buildings, and its bell, which announced the hours of worship, continued ever thereafter to render the same important services. That loud, clear sounding bell, which for close upon a century, had convoked the early Presbyterians who settled in this place, to their meetings on the Sabbath, as I learned from the old inhabitants, some forty years since, was cast in the town of Carlisle, Cumberland County, England, and was said to have been a gift from the people of that town and county, to its young name-sake in Kittochtinny Valley. As the legend ran, it owed its brilliant tone to the fact, that the subscription of the Penn family—the proprietaries—toward it, was made on condition that the £30 they contributed, to be paid in pure silver, should be added to the other metals composing it, at the time of its being fluxed in the furnace for casting. For three generations did that sweet silver-toned old bell faithfully perform its sacred duties on the Sabbath, proclaiming the hour of

worship, until it yielded to the fiery element that brought it into being. It was the charm of the old settlers, and to none more than to the early Presbyterians. It was music to our ears, and we sighed as though a friend had departed when—though at a distance—we heard its tragic story—that it had melted in burning grief, and buried itself in the ashes of its own funeral pile.”

A venerable friend of excellent memory has furnished the writer the following information relative to the first bell of the Court House: It was a present to the Episcopal Church in Carlisle by the English queen. It was shipped to Philadelphia, where it lay a very considerable time and the expense of bringing it to Carlisle—a long distance over bad roads, in a Conestoga wagon—was more than the church would pay, and some may have thought it too large and heavy to put on their little stone church, which then stood some distance south of the present building. Whereupon the Commissioners of the County bought it from the Episcopalians, and employed Mr. David Rowan, a well remembered teamster of Carlisle, who lived at the south-west corner of Louthier and Pitt streets, to bring it to Carlisle which was done in 1826 when the present St. John's church was finished, an attempt was made to secure the bell and have it transferred from the Court House to the church. At the time it occasioned no little interest and excitement. A committee of persons was appointed both by the church and Commissioners to ascertain and determine who really had the right to it.

28

On the part of the church Isaac B Parker was one that was appointed, and by the Commissioners Squire Wm Irwin was another.

Mrs. Pattison, widow of Charles Pattison and sister of Andrew Mateer, who had four sons — lived in the plastered house at the southwestern corner of High and East streets and had many records and papers in her possession, as her husband had been a county officer, and upon looking over these documents there was found a receipt for the payment of money to Mr. Rowan from the county commissioners for hauling the bell from Philadelphia to Carlisle.

After the destruction of the county buildings the courts were held in Education Hall, Church alley, south side, and east of Pitt street, previously the old Methodist church.

Immediately after the fire the county officers secured temporary quarters in Beetem's Row, in the rear of the First Presbyterian church. The next day after the fire a small printed poster appeared through the town, as follows, viz:

"SEALED PROPOSALS"

Will be received at the Commissioners' office, in Beetem's Row, until tomorrow morning (Wednesday) at 9 o'clock, for taking down, whole bricks in the Court House walls and chimnies and also for cleaning and piling away the bats in a heap—the job to be commenced and finished without delay by employing a sufficient number of hands.

ROBERT LAIRD,

O. FITZELL,

J. WORTHINGTON,

Commissioners.

Carlisle, March 25, 1845.

Two days afterwards, on the 27th, John Holsapple and Charles Cart agreed to do it for one hundred dollars, within four weeks from this date (if the weather will permit)."

As soon as practicable the present Court House was erected on the south side of the southwest section of the Public Square, at a cost of about \$55,000. The contractors and builders were Messrs. Wilt & Byers, of Harrisburg. The court room has been since repeatedly remodeled, including a very recent alteration, and it is now one of the most beautiful court rooms in the State. In the olden time, prior to the erection of churches, in Carlisle, the Presbyterians and probably others, had services in the old brick Court House as well as in its more humble predecessor.

The County Hall or Grand Jury room was used for many and various purposes. There were no fixed or stationary seats in it; only backless benches that could be shifted or removed at pleasure. Religious, political, military, and other assemblages were held there. It was there that a Polander had a class in the sword and lance exercises. He had a roughly constructed horse made of wood, something like a carpenter's tressel or saw horse, and when astraddle of it, he would wield his lance in front and rear and on either side with surprising ease and dexterity. Balls and dances occurred there, as well as feats of legerdemain. Sometimes Sunday Schools were held there—and we remember the time when there was not a church in Carlisle that had a lecture room or Sabbath School room con-

nected with it. At one time old Mr. Tommy Jones had a singing school in it—his class of young persons meeting on Saturday afternoon and his adult class in the evenings of the same day. And sometimes the military drilled in it—it was so used when destroyed in '45

Among our boyhood memories of the old court house—and when we were a Sabbath School scholar in the old Presbyterian church—there was an exhibition in it in December of 1828 of Dunlap's *Christ Bearing the Cross*, represented on a canvass of 240 square feet and containing 113 figures, a very large painting and which was placed in front of the judge's bench, to which the Sunday School children were admitted.

We remember, also the trial of Maglaughlin there, for killing George Swords, not far from town, on the Baltimore turnpike — a monstrous crime and the result of the monstrous evil of drunkenness.

Among our early recollections of the County Hall was a Festival of; the ladies of the old stone church, chiefly under the management of Miss Eliza Seely, who became the wife of Professor Henry Vethake. Also a microscopical display of a drop of water, a piece of cheese, &c, greatly magnified on a screen, which first revealed to our astonished eyes the tiny and disagreeable but otherwise invisible forms of organized life.

It was in this Hall that the people of St. John's Church worshipped after their old church edifice had been taken down and before they entered the pres-

ent one—between 1824 and 1827. Here too the Second Presbyterian church was organized, January 12th, 1832, and here for some time they held their church services and Sunday school. During the erection of their present church, which stands on the site of the previous one, the congregation worshipped in the Court Room, but the Sabbath School and Wednesday evening lectures were in the Hall of the Good Will Fire Company, on South Hanover street west side, about midway between the square and Pomfret street.

Also, on the 8th of January 1828, near the time when Gen. Andrew Jackson was first elected President, the Democracy had the entire building brilliantly illuminated with candles; a full sized painting of old Hickory executed by our townsman, Mr. Wm. Main, painter, with cannon and ball at the hero's side, the whole festooned with flags, and placed in front of the "big window" on Hanover street; a bonfire was burning and blazing at the centre square; and the drum and fife were rendering important services,—all to commemorate the battle of New Orleans, and to honor the chieftain who had defeated Pakenham in 1815. "In consequence of the victory obtained by General Harrison over combined British and Indian armies, the Public Buildings of the borough will be handsomely illuminated this evening. The Burgess has expressly forbidden the firing of guns in the streets, lighting up bonfires, &c. &c. (*Carlisle Herald*, Friday, October 22, 1813)

We the children, measurably ignorant of the bitterness of party feel-

ing somewhat engendered by the then recent charge of *Bargain and Sale*, thought it was a grand display, such as our eyes had never before seen.

The boys of both Democrats and Federalists enjoyed it, as we all thought it a big affair. But—the world advances, and our country has vastly grown and greatly prospered and wonderfully improved, and increasingly solemn and important are the duties and responsibilities and opportunities and possibilities of the men and boys of the present day, and God grant that they may prove themselves equal to the demands of the times—who know what ought to be done, and do it, promptly and earnestly.

J. A. MURRAY,
Carlisle, 1881.

