

Philadelphia March 27. 1837

To

Wm. D. Waples Esq

and Sir

Agreeable to the Request contained in your Letter of the 16 Instant I have made all and had in designing & drawing the plans of a Court house and fire proof Office for the County of Salem. I think I have made a Government plan for the Hall Stairways and other interior Arrangements for the Court, Apom & Jury rooms. If I have not been too sparing in the front & your limits as to funds are the cause of the Brief appearance, and I could have wished to have introduced a few columns and some other decorations. On the exterior but was obliged on account of the smallness of the sum to be appropriated.

I have drawn an Iron Gallery in front on the Court Room lobby floor for the use of the Jury of the Court. Or for any purpose of assembling to a multitude beneath it is intended to project about 3 feet from the front of the Land Window and immediately above the door of entrance in the basement story. I thought you might want a Clock and have therefore introduced one in the base of the Cupola which is very conveniently placed in front over the Stairways which are double and convenient.

As you may at some future day want a Gallery in the Court Room you may determine the steps to a level with the ceiling of the Entry rooms which need not be more than 12 feet in height and you will perceive that you can have a large Gallery over these Rooms, as the Court Room is 28 feet in height.

My charge for these plans and estimate is \$60.

With Great Respect for
I am yours Very truly

Wm. Strickland

Philadelphia March 27. 1837

To
Wm. D. Waples Esq
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Agreeable to the Request contained in your Letter of the 16th Instant I have made all and had in designing & drawing the plans of a Court house and fire proof Office for the County of Suffolk. I think I have made a convenient plan for the Hall Stairways and other interior Arrangements for the Court Room & Jury Rooms. If I have not been so happy in the front & York limits as to finish on the basis of the Brick appearance, as I could have wished to have introduced a few columns and some other decorations, on the exterior but was afraid on account of the smallness of the sum to be appropriated.

I have drawn an Iron Gallery in front on the Court Room lobby floor for the use of the Jury of the Court. Or for any purpose of reclining to a multitude beneath it is intended to project about 3 feet from the front of the Land Window and immovably over the door of entrance in the basement story. I thought you might want a Clock and have therefore introduced one in the top of the cupola which is very conveniently placed in front over the Stairways which are double and convenient.

As you may at some future day want a Gallery in the Court Room you may determine the Story to a level with the ceiling of the Jury Rooms which need not be more than 12 feet in height and you will perceive that you can have a large Gallery over these Rooms, as the Court Room is 24 feet in height.

My charge for these plans and estimates is \$60.

With Great Respect for
I am yours Very truly &c Sincerely

William Strickland

Estimate of the Cost of Building a Court
house and fire proof office 60 feet Square
According to the Accompanying Plans &
Elevations, viz

Digging out foundation 120 cubic yds	\$24.00
Building Stone = 150 perches including freight - laying - lime and Sand	450.00
Bricks - 350,000 @ 10¢ including laying lime, and Sand	3500.00
Lumber for floors, Roof, and Scaffolding	1800.00
Carpenter Work	2300.00
Plastering Work and Materials	520.00
Painting and Glazing	450.00
Ironmongery. Nails. Shuts Spikes &c	380.00
Lime 3900 sup. feet at 14¢ including Salter and Putting on	546.00
Copper 750 feet of Copper for cupola	275.00
Stone Windows Sill 28	112.00
Stone Steps front & Back doors	60.00
Total Cost	10,417.00
Add 5 per cent for contingencies	

William Strickland
Architect

Philadelphia March 26 - 1837

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William Strickland
Architect

Philadelphia March 26th 1837

10¢
PER
COPY

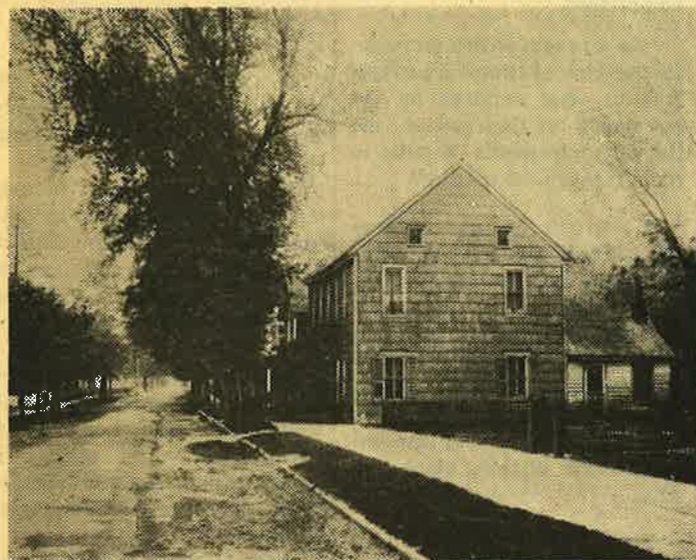
The Sussex Countian

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GEORGETOWN, DELAWARE, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1969

Vol. 79; No. 48

Remodeled Courthouse To Be Dedicated Saturday, Governor To Be Speaker



FIRST COURT HOUSE in Georgetown, built 1792 on the site of the present building, is an exact replica of the courthouse that was in Lewes.

In 1835 a lottery was authorized to finance the erection of a more modern, fireproof courthouse.

In 1837, the building was moved to its present site, on South Bedford Street,



"UGLY DUCKLING" — This 1840 courthouse, the second in Georgetown was even deplored by its architect, William Strickland, who was one of the greatest architects of his time. Apparently the shortage of money was the cause of its plainness. In 1837 he wrote, "Your limits as to funds are the Cause of the Brick Appearance and I would have Wished to have introduced a few columns and other decorations. . . ." In 1914 the columns were added.

The idea for the courthouse annex began peacefully enough. Back in February of 1963 the Sussex County Levy Court Commissioners received a study from departments in the courthouse on what additional space they would need. From that the architecture firm of William Heyl Thompson of Philadelphia would draw up plans for the courthouse annex.

One Levy Court Commissioner said at that time, "We should be able to make a decision in thirty or sixty days."

In July the Legislature passed a bill allowing \$275,000 to build a new highway department office outside of Georgetown. This put a whole new light on where the courthouse would be located. The highway building in town could be torn down and the courthouse could be expanded. The bi-partisan committee recommended that the courthouse stay on the Circle.

The negotiations with the property owners was long and drawn out, prompting one of the commissioners to remark after



NEW COURTHOUSE — The new courthouse will be dedicated this Saturday at 2 p.m. The ceremony will start with the introduction of the Building Commission. Next Chief Justice of the Delaware Supreme Court, Daniel F. Wolcott, will conduct the official laying of the cornerstone. Gov. Russell Peterson will give the dedication. This will be followed by a tour of the new courthouse. There will be twenty-five hostesses to conduct tours. Past Levy Court president Martin W. Johnson, Jr. will be master of ceremonies.

SPECIAL FEATURE!

Appearing in The Sussex Countian, beginning next week, will be a feature on the new courthouse.

The purpose is to acquaint the public as to the duties of the

yer's offices. The modern structure would have been five stories high.



OLD SUSSEX COUNTY JAIL — No story of Georgetown is complete without some mention of Patty Cannon. It was in the old jail (now the Court House Annex) shown above that she was imprisoned. The prison cells were in the rear of this building occupied by the sheriff. The extension at the left was the jail yard in the corner there was an upper cell, with an outside stairway that went up to the one room used by women prisoners. Patty Cannon, the Peninsula's most notorious criminal, who escaped arrest by dodging first the Maryland sheriff then the Delaware authorities because her house was at Reliance on the state line, was finally caught. Because the bones of the many persons she murdered were on the Delaware side, she was placed in the Sussex County jail and indicted on three charges of murder. She died May 11, 1829 before she was brought to trial and was buried in the jail yard in an unmarked grave.

PUBLIC INVITATION

The Public Is Cordially Invited

To The

Dedication And Open House

Of The

Remodeled Sussex County

Courthouse

Saturday, November 1, 1969

2:00 P.M.

Gov. Russell W. Peterson

Will Deliver

The Dedicatory Address

tion - 50%.

The model was shown. It was a five story, box-like structure, (see photo) and immediately the Sussex County Bar Association opposed the plans. It would dwarf the present two story courthouse they said. The attorneys recommended that the county commissioners consider another plan that would involve the extension of the courthouse wing along Cherry Lane.

The commissioners replied that the owners of the properties along the lane were asking too much money. However, they agreed to continue negotiations with them. Another problem facing the commissioners was that if they did not have plans ready by 1964 they might lose federal money, but in June of that year the commissioners were told that if they built a large enough building to include federal and state offices the federal money would be increased from 50% of costs to almost 75%. The commissioners decided this would necessitate moving the courthouse from the Circle to some place else in Georgetown. They purchased options on several properties about the town. Five properties were considered.

The first to object moving the courthouse from the Circle was the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce, represented by Francis Richardson, who handed them a petition opposing this plan. Also several property owners objected to the move. Later the Georgetown Town Council issued a statement to keep the Courthouse where it was. A member of the Sussex County Bar Association approached the commissioners and told them they were being, "silly, stupid and ridiculous" in their handling of the courthouse.

The commissioners formed a bi-partisan commission to suggest a location for the proposed new courthouse.

A new year came into being - 1964. By now expenses for the planning of the courthouse had cost the county over \$6,000 and the commissioners were looking for a new architect.

The next step for the commissioners was to check into the legality of the property owners along Cherry Lane. This caused a judge, who was to handle the case, to drop out because he owned property along the Lane, and also the spokesman for the Sussex County Bar Association could no longer meet with the commissioners because he owned property on the street too.

The Levy Court was still trying to negotiate with the property owners. It had the state fire marshal check the buildings along Cherry Lane to see if they were fire hazards and would have to be torn down. The fire marshal investigated the buildings and declared they were fire hazards, but he also declared that the courthouse and the Levy Court office was a fire hazard.

Negotiations with the property owners continued. About this time a building commission was formed to study the new courthouse. A land appraiser was hired to appraise the properties along Cherry Lane and eventually the properties along with those on South Race Street were purchased. The architecture firm of Whiteside, Moeckel and Carbonell was hired.

Although construction of the courthouse annex did not go smoothly because of strikes and other delays, the building was completed and there was no objection expressed to the style of architecture. And, Saturday it will be officially dedicated.

The first article will be on the office of the Levy Court.

History Of Town Tied To Courthouse History

Though the history of Georgetown begins a century and a half later than that of some of the other town in Delaware, the very reason for its existence is tied in with the earliest history of the settlement of this country. The story of the establishment of this county seat is linked with the controversies of the Lords Baltimore and William Penn and his heirs over the boundary lines between Maryland and Delaware; and only after this dispute was settled in 1775, did Sussex County, as it is today, come into existence; and then arose the need of a more central seat of government.

Before 1775, the area known as Sussex County was about half the size it is today. Maryland claimed all that territory lying South and West of a line drawn from Kent County in a Southeasterly direction to the mouth of Rehoboth Bay. As early as 1658, Lewes had been the seat of government with courts under the Dutch existing there. When the boundary settlement was completed and the county was more than doubled, there was an outcry from the western area for a more centrally located seat of government. For many years, the added area was called "New Sussex"; the Eastern portion, "Old Sussex". The result was that the Legislature, on January 29, 1791, passed an act, naming a board of ten commissioners to select a location for the new center of government, buy a quantity of land not exceeding 100 acres and lay out the plot of lots, reserving half an acre each for a court house and a prison.

This commission was quick to act and by May of that year had purchased 50 acres of land, known as James Pettyjohn's old field, in the center of the county — sixteen miles from the east, the west and north borders and eighteen from the southern border. Rhoads Shankland, surveyor and member of the commission, described the layout of the town in these words: "In the center of the town is a spacious square of 100 yards each way for public use; on the northeast side thereof stand the courthouse and public offices . . . The lots are laid off 60 feet front and 120 feet back, each lot having the convenience of a street or an alley for an outlet." An act was passed in October 1791 declaring the name of the place to be Georgetown. It is said to honor George Mitchell, a member of the commission.

To pay for the court house, which was begun immediately, \$3,500 was raised by lottery. The jail was built. By 1800 some fifty lots were sold and homes were being erected by lawyers, judges and county officials. Taverns and hotels were built and filled with county folk attending court or coming to town on county business. Business establishments were erected; a private school was incorporated in 1812; the Episcopal and the Methodist Churches were holding services; the Farmers Bank began business in 1807 and Georgetown became a thriving county seat. For fifty years, the town continued to grow, and life was like that of any other conservative county-seat. Then came the Civil War and Georgetown became a divided town with its sons fighting on both sides and families torn asunder by loyalties for the South and for the North. The bitterness faded with the years, but sympathy for the South has remained because the families here came from Maryland. Later wars brought no division and Georgetown gave her sons to the service of its country.

CENTRAL
SUSSEX

\$16,050

100%

-90%

-80%

-70%

-60%

-50%

-40%

-30%

-20%

-10%



HAPPY
HALLOWEEN



Georgetown Recreational News

OCT. 30TH — Thursday - Dancing Class - 8-9:30 p.m. Sussex Central Health Room

OCT. 30TH — Thursday - Halloween Street Dance on the Circle - 6:30 - 9 p.m. - 50c per person

NOV. 1ST — Saturday - Movie Matinee 1:30 p.m. School Auditorium - "Fearless Fagan" 25c per person

NOV. 3RD — Monday - Physical Fitness - 7:30 p.m. - 9:45 p.m. School Field House

NOV. 4TH — Tuesday - Ribbons & Bows Class - 7-9:30 p.m. Art Room at the School - \$1.00 per class

NOV. 5TH — Wednesday - Ceramics Class - 7-9 p.m. School Art Room

NOV. 8TH — Saturday - Teen Dance at the Armory Music by the "Solid Rock"

Nov. 29TH — Saturday - Bus Trip to Cherry Hill Shopping Center. \$2.00 per person. Contact Mrs. Cooper for tickets. 8 A.M. from the "Circle".

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THE COURT HOUSES OF SUSSEX COUNTY

Compiled by Public Archives Commission
Hall of Records, Dover, Delaware, 1965

The region now included within Sussex County, known before 1680 as The Whorekill and from 1680 to 1683 as Deale, was an organized governmental unit before the territory came into English control in 1664. As The Whorekill it extended northward to embrace most of modern Kent County also. Although the Duke of York, and later the Penns, claimed the whole of the modern County, control of its southern and western portions was contested by the Lords Baltimore until 1775.

Lewes, earlier The Whorekill, was the seat of county government from its inception until a more central location was chosen in 1791. No former court house is, however, standing there. Even the site of the building or buildings which served prior to about 1740 is now unknown. A court house erected about 1740, on a portion of the present cemetery adjoining St. Peter's Church, continued in use until the courts were transferred to Georgetown in 1791. It is said to have stood until about 1833, and to have been occupied as a tavern from 1797 to 1817.

Georgetown was founded for the specific purpose of providing a readily accessible county seat. A prominent spot on its Square was selected for the Court House. The first was a two story and attic frame building, sheathed with cypress shingles in a style characteristic of private dwellings in the region. It was completed by 1793, largely at the expense of a group of private citizens who were reimbursed from the proceeds of a lottery authorized in 1795. The structure is still standing on Bedford Street near Court House Square, where it was moved when work on the present building began. It was long used as a dwelling and later as a printing shop. Now it is owned by the Delaware State Museum and will later be restored.

On February 13, 1835 the General Assembly authorized a lottery to raise funds for a new Court House and records office for Sussex County. In February, 1837 a Commission was appointed to oversee its erection. Its frame predecessor was sold and moved. A two

story brick building was then erected on the same site, providing space for the County offices on the first floor and for the courts on the second. Court was first held there in the fall term of 1839; the building appears to have been fully finished early in 1840, within the budget imposed by receipts of \$15,000 from the lottery. It was designed by one of the more widely known architects of the period, William Strickland, and though severely functional, had several features of architectural interest. These were displayed to better advantage after a renovation in 1914 added certain details of exterior decoration and changed the proportions of the tower. No basic structural changes were made at that time.

By the decade of 1960 the Court House had become inadequate for the County's business. In January, 1965, the Levy Court was in the process of acquiring title to the site for a new building for which the plans were well advanced.

V.E.S.

Philadelphia March 27. 1837

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