

# DAUPHIN COUNTY COURTHOUSE



## TOUR BOOKLET

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# History of Dauphin County Courthouses

The booklet published by the Dauphin County Bar Association in December 1943 at the dedication of the current Dauphin County Courthouse states

*“FROM LOG HOUSE to an epic in marble! Such is the interesting story of a community’s growth and development as reflected in its several courthouses and sites.”*

The first Dauphin County Court of Common Pleas and of Quarter Sessions of the Peace and Goal Delivery convened on May 17th, 1785. The first Court session was held in a log building, which reportedly stood until about 1840 and from other sources until 1843. Yet another history of Dauphin County published in 1846 reports that “the building in which the first Court was held still stands - the dilapidated log house in the rear of what was Hise’s brewery”. The Dauphin Co. Bar Association’s Booklet for the current Courthouse’s 1943 dedication ceremonies states:

*The “first court-house was a log building on South Front Street owned by John Harris, located a short distance below the stone mansion erected by him in 1766 and just above the Reading Company’s present bridge, a stone’s throw from the then ferry landing”*

The Court subsequently occupied a log jail on Strawberry Alley in Harrisburg and then in a log house which stood on Market Street near Dewberry Alley. After several other moves, the Court finally acquired a permanent home when a Courthouse was built between 1792 and 1799 at the intersection of Raspberry and Market Streets in Harrisburg. (Raspberry Street was later appropriately renamed Court Street.)

The tract on which the Courthouse was built had been originally set aside for that purpose by John Harris Jr. in his original plan for Harrisburg. When Harrisburg was designated as the capital of Pennsylvania in 1812, the Dauphin County Courthouse was made available to house the Pennsylvania Legislature



The Courthouse completed in 1799 is described in Kelker’s History of Dauphin County as “an antique affair of brick, two stories high, with wings and a semi-rotunda in front, which was added to the building by the state of Pennsylvania” during the period in which the Legislature met in the building. Various histories of Dauphin County provide a detailed accounting of the expenditures in pounds for construction of that Courthouse. Converted to current dollars that Courthouse is reported to have cost about \$6,000.

Left is a sketch of the 1799 Courthouse at Raspberry (now Court) and Market Streets:

The Courthouse completed in 1799 was demolished in 1860 to make way for a new Courthouse on the same site. The new Courthouse was completed in 1861 cost of \$57,012 and had two courtrooms.

From 1812 to 1822, the Court moved into a partially finished brick building that would later be known as the White Hall

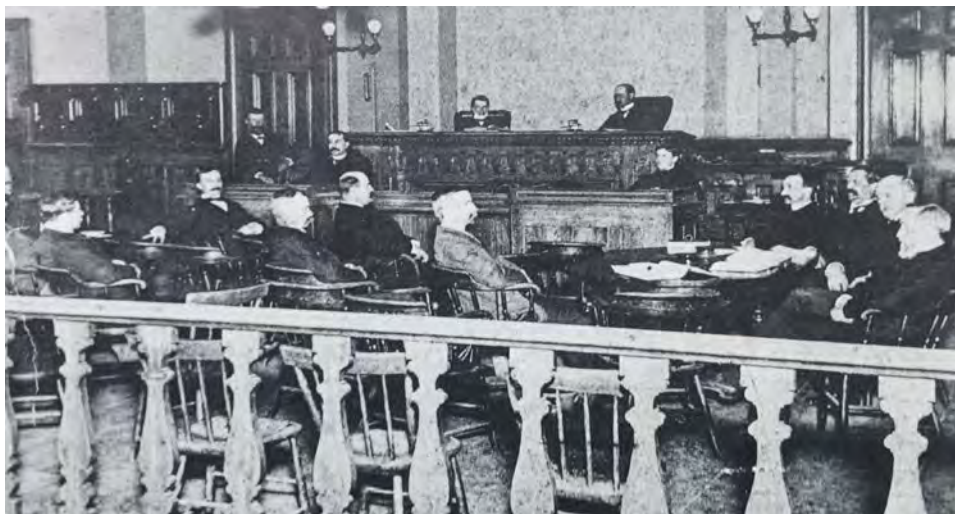
Tavern, and subsequently into brick buildings erected by the Dauphin County Commissioners at the corner of Walnut Street and Raspberry Alleys where the Court remained until construction of the State Capitol was completed in 1822.

A photograph of the 1861 Courthouse appears below:



In 1894, an annex was added to provide space for two additional courtrooms, the law library and chambers for the judges at a cost of about \$11,000.

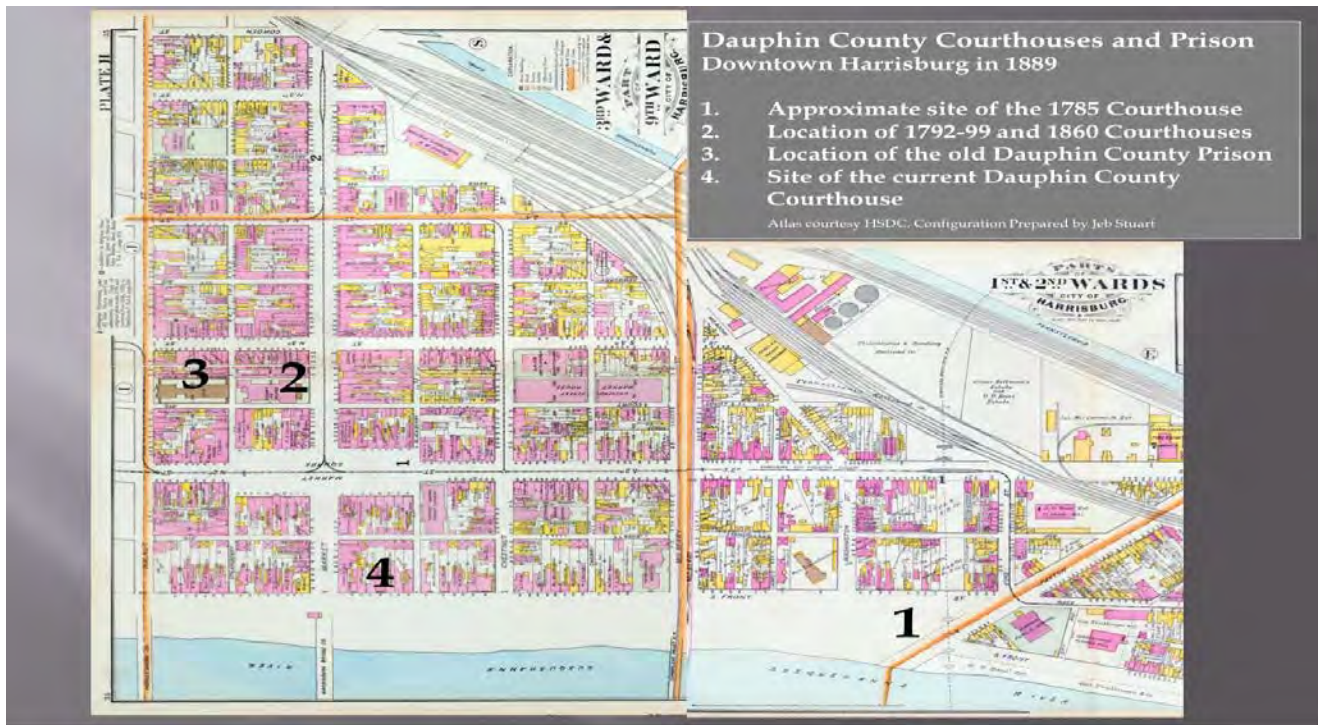
The photo below depicts a courtroom in the old Courthouse on Market Street in 1890 during a Dauphin County Bar Association meeting:



*On the bench are Judges Simonton and McPherson. Others present include Murray Graydon, John Weiss, Samuel McCarroll (later a judge), M.W. Jacobs, L. M. Neiffer, Clayton Backenstow, Solomon Rupp, John E. Fox (later a judge) and Isaac Swartz.*



A configuration from an 1889 Harrisburg map indicating the sites of the four Dauphin County Courthouses (1785, 1792, 1860 and 1943) and the 1790 and 1841 Prisons:



*The Dauphin County Courthouse in 1932 on  
Market Street. (From the Patriot-News archives)*

By the 1930s, voices were raised calling for construction of a new and modern Courthouse for Dauphin County to replace what had become a run-down and outdated building. In 1938, the County made plans to build a new Courthouse at Fourth and Walnut Streets but that project failed to win approval when the federal government

turned down a belated request for a Depression era Public Works Administration subsidy. With strong support from the Dauphin County Bar Association, in 1939 county residents approved a \$1.7 million bond issue. Plans to build a new Courthouse at Front and Market Streets were finally approved, and bids for construction were opened in May 1941 and prior to wartime restrictions to obtain steel and other building materials.



*Photo was taken Nov. 20, 1938, for a story about the relocation of the American flag the courthouse. Court Crier Fred Marsh is sitting at left. (From the Patriot-News archives)*

In his *History of the Law and Lawyers in Dauphin County* published by the Dauphin County Bar Association in 2008, Don Sarvey notes as follows:

*Symbolically, the site could not have been more appropriate. The one acre upon which the courthouse was to be built was part of the 300 acres originally given to John Harris, Sr., by the proprietors of Pennsylvania. The old courthouse was also on land that had been given to Harris and deeded by him. That fact, however, created a legal thicket that had to be cleared away before the construction project could become reality. There was a question of whether the old courthouse could be sold and the money applied to the construction of the new one. At the time, Walter R. Sohn, later to become a Dauphin County judge, was serving as county solicitor. According to the recollection of Judge Homer L. Kreider, Sohn, 'was confronted by a deed recorded in 1785 by John Harris, the founder of this city.' Harris had given four lots specifically for a courthouse and jail. 'The question was whether there was a reversionary interest in the heirs of John Harris,' Kreider said. Two of Harris's heirs, William B. Pearson and John B. Pearson, the latter a Dauphin County lawyer, were invited, and they agreed to bring a 'friendly suit' against the county commissioners 'to test the title and determine whether this land on which the old courthouse stood could be sold.' According to Kreider's account, 'The case was argued, and believe it or not the Dauphin County Court was persuaded that the old courthouse could be sold, free and clear of encumbrances, and so held in an opinion written by the late Judge Frank B. Wickersham.' But the case did not end at that point. To be on the safe side, the parties involved agreed to take an appeal all the way up to the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. The Supreme Court unanimously affirmed the decision of the Dauphin County Court, though one of the justices, William J. Schaffer, a Chester County native, disqualified himself because he was a direct descendent of John Harris.*

The southeast corner of Market and Front Streets was selected and everyone was comparatively happy - except for the owners, residents and early preservationists who mourned the loss of the stunning historic homes on South Front Street. Included in the rubble was the William A Kelker house, 9 S. Front Street, which had been the home of the Historical Society of Dauphin County since 1908.



*(From the Patriot-News archives)*

The Courthouse dedication ceremonies formally opened the current Courthouse in December 1943.

## Dauphin County Courthouse





The current Dauphin County Courthouse, for which bids were extended in May, 1941 before we were at war. Construction completed in 1943. It is positioned at the central entrance to the Capital City of Harrisburg at the intersection of Front and Market Streets. Its costs were approximately two and a quarter million dollars. The land cost \$365,200, the structure \$1.62 million and the furnishings \$243,487. Because of wartime material shortages, the cost exceeded the \$1.7 million approved by voters, so County ommissioners dug into the county coffers to make up the shortfall. The noted Harrisburg architectural firm of Lawrie and Green in consultation with the state Art Commission and an internationally known architect Paul P. Cret, designed the building in the neo-classical revival interpretation of the Art Deco style.

The building, of imposing classic proportions with contemporary details for the time, was constructed of white Georgia marble, with dark-veined Georgia marble surrounding the windows on the first floor. It contains six floors and a penthouse on the top floor for mechanical equipment.

In his 2002 guidebook, "Count Courthouses of Pennsylvania," retired political science professor Oliver P. Williams effusively praises Dauphin County's building, calling it "one of the last of the monumental decorated courthouses, a must-see for any courthouse fan." He writes that the courthouse "is a showcase for marble, wood and terrazzo" and likely has more words carved in the stone than any other courthouse in the nation."

The Courthouse was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1993.

## Exterior

The Front Street elevation is surmounted by a portico, with six large pillars 55 feet high, between which night illumination may be had from light nests and opaque lenses concealed beneath the frieze above. In the center of the frieze, surmounting the pillars is a carved marble seal of Dauphin County with the figure of an early Susquehanna Native American on one side and a Pioneer Settler on the other, designed and executed by Mr. Paul Jennewein, a noted New York sculptor. Carved in the frieze beneath the design appears the following profound quotation:

***"EQUALITY AND LIBERTY UNDER THE LAW IS THE FOUNDATION OF A GOVERNMENT OF FREE PEOPLE"***

The steps to the portico on the Front Street side are also granite. Carved in the granite in the platform on the left side is a replica of the old Dauphin County Courthouse and on the right side, the Seal of Dauphin County. Above the doors at the Front Street entrance doors are three scenes etched in glass: in the central figure a man and woman, pioneer settlers; the left, an early settler clearing the land; the right, a pioneer settler reaping the harvest.

Around the perimeter, carved in the marble between the windows of the lower story, are the names of every borough and township in Dauphin County, except the town of Pillow.

At the Front Street side of the Courthouse is a beautiful fountain from which six large streams play into an elevated basin, in the center of which a smaller fountain sends forth vertical streams of water. From the elevated basin, the water flows into a lower pool. The basin floor originally was colored Faience tile.

Carved in the marble wall at the back of the pool is the following quotation from Proverbs 13:14:

***"THE LAW OF THE WISE IS A FOUNTAIN OF LIFE"***

Another outward-curved edge of the basin reads:

***"GOD GAVE THE FOUNTAIN OF JUSTICE: MEN MUST PRESERVE ITS PURITY"***





Relating, quite appropriately to that quote, overlooking the pool, and in front of the portico, installed some years after the Courthouse was built, is a grand marble statue of a stalwart man of towering height, with his right arm upraised. Called “The Triumphant American” created by New York Sculptor, James K. Watt, it weighs 3 tons, approximately twelve feet high

Over his left leg the mantle of authority is drawn. In his left hand, he holds a sheaf of thirteen arrows, indicative of the origin and protection of the basic laws under which we enjoy freedom. Beneath his left foot, slightly raised, he crushes a monster, indicative of the forces of evil. The symbolism is that of ultimate victory over the powers of evil and injustice, and protection from tyranny by laws of righteousness and equity.

*Today the lawn of the Dauphin County Historical Society on Front Street, Harrisburg proudly displays this Courthouse Bell, pictured right, from the Cupula of old Dauphin County Court Houses 1861-1929. On its engraved sign it states that "this Bell Rang out its Message to the People of Harrisburg." It was cast by Meneely's of West Troy, NY and weighs 2041 pounds.*



## Entrances and Lobbies

At the Market Street Entrance, surrounding the three doors, are three carved marble figures representing Wisdom, Justice and Mercy. Below each figure, mounted in the panels of each transom, are three cast bronze figures, developing in appropriate symbolism the theme represented by the marble figure above. Justice, the central figure, is holding the Book of Laws in her right hand, clutching a sword with her left, and a coronal of stars in the background, a child whispering in her left ear. Over the right door, Wisdom, an aged man with flowing beard, is holding an owl, with sycamore leaves in the background. Over the left door, Mercy, an aged man, is holding a lamb in his arms, with azaleas in the background. Justice symbolizes the authority, interpretation and enforcement of the laws, with an ever-progressive outlook. Wisdom, experience increasing with age. Mercy; the compassionate restoration of the wayward to society with opportunity to begin life anew.

The walls of the Market Street lobby are Red Numidian marble. Over the transoms of the vestibule doors the Ten Commandments are artistically etched in heavy glass and on the doors immediately beneath are etchings illustrative of the admonitions contained in the Ten Commandments. From the ceiling hangs an electric fixture- a large opaque glass ball three and one-half feet in diameter, with an encircling ring on which is engraved the Golden Rule and appropriate symbolic representations. This arrangement is said to be “eloquent of Christ’s interpretation of the law given by Moses- that all the Law and the Prophets hang upon one great principle of love to God and one’s neighbor. By this effective treatment, the Lobby becomes the prologue to a social philosophy whose spirit pervades the entire building.

The inscription on the Front Street frieze-proclaims the Court's theme:

***"EQUALITY AND LIBERTY UNDER THE LAW IS THE FOUNDATION OF A GOVERNMENT OF FREE PEOPLE".***

The corridors on the first floor are Fiorito Rosso marble. All corridor floors elsewhere are composed of terrazzo. Inserts in the terrazzo on the first floor contain colored designs representing Mining, Agriculture, Finance, Government, Transportation, Construction and industry. In the transoms over the entrance and office doors, etched glass panels portray highlights of Dauphin County history.

On the wall facing the entrance is a statue-graphically depicting the wind-blown figure of John Harris, the first settler, poling his boat across the Susquehanna-surmounts a brief history of Dauphin County, carved in the marble and overlaid with gold leaf.



The wall inscription reads as follows:

*DAUPHIN COUNTY WAS ERECTED IN 1785, AND NAMED IN HONOR OF THE DAUPHIN OF FRANCE. HARRISBURG, THE COUNTY SEAT, BECAME THE STATECAPITAL IN 1812. MOVEMENTS LAUNCHED AND LAWS ENACTED HERE HAVE DEVELOPED PENN'S COMMONWELATH INTO A LEADING STATE. HARRIS FERRY, FAMOUS EASTERN GATEWAY TO THE WEST, INDIAN TRIALS, CONESTOGA WAGON AND STAGE-COACH ROUTES, AND CANALS HAVE BEEN REPLACED BY HEAVILY-TRAVELED ARTERIES OF TRANSPORTATION. IN 1740 GEORGE WHITEFIELD PREACHED FOR SOME TIME AT HARRIS' FERRY. IN 1744 DAVID BRAINERD BECAME THE FIRST KNOWN MISSIONARY TO THE SUSQUEHANNA INDIANS. THE CELEBRATED HANOVER RESOLUTIONS, ADOPTED JUNE 4, 1774, BY LEADERS OF WHAT IS NOW DAUPHIN COUNTY, ANTEDATED THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. A MUSICAL RENDITION OF THE POEM OF FRANCIS SCOTT KEY, BY TWO HARRISBURG VOLUNTEERS IN THE WAR OF 1812, IMMORTALIZED THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER. THE COUNTY HAS FURNISHED LEADERS IN RELIGIUMN, PATIROTISM, EDUATION, THE ARTS, SCIENCES, PROFESSIONS, INDUSTRY, AND AGRICULTURE. ITS COURT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT LOWER COURT IN THE STATE.*

### **Back Stairwells -Moving Inmates and Jurors through the Courthouse**

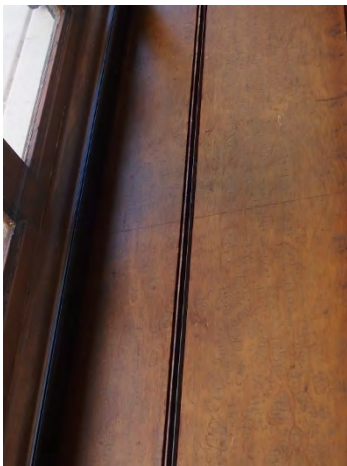
The Dauphin County Courthouse has a remarkable system to move prisoners throughout the building. For security purposes, only on rare occasions will an inmate be exposed to the public, both for their safety and that of the inmate. Dauphin Co. Deputy Sheriffs currently transport between 8,000-10,000 prisoners a year. The defendant prisoners are transported to the Courthouse in secured vans, compartmentalized to separate general population prisoners from restricted class prisoners, juveniles and females. The inmates are moved from the van in the secured sally port-type driveway on the south side of the Courthouse. Once inside, they are placed in large secure holding

cells in the basement, again separated by classification and gender. When it is time for their court appearance, they are taken, handcuffed and sometimes with leg chains, to a secure interior private elevator and taken to the fourth floor. At this point, they are walked either to the third or fifth floor and enter the designated courtroom through a secured interior stairwell and doorway into the courtroom. When the proceeding is completed, they are returned to the basement cellblock by same route in reverse.

These back stairwells are also used to move jurors from their assigned Jury Deliberation room up into their designated courtroom. Great care is taken so jurors never see or are in an area with any prisoners.

### Windows

Many of the windows throughout the Courthouse contain the original glass upon which can be seen from the exterior and interior, beautiful etchings of both artistically drawn scenes as well as famous quotes relating to the law. Many are described below as they appear in various locations. One example is printed to the right:



Also, quite interesting and not always observed, most, if not all of the original windows contain the original built in slides for “Blackout Blinds”, for the mandated blackouts ordered during WWII, the time during which the Courthouse was built. While the blinds have been removed, the tracks remain, as seen to the left.

### Basement

Double marble stairways leading to the Basement from the Market street entrance lead to the Courthouse Cafe, Court Reporters, Costs and Fines and the Jury Assembly Room. Private non-public areas include cell blocks for prison inmates, and the Deputy Sheriffs’ offices.

### First floor

From the Market Street entrance, two wide stairways lead up to the first floor.

Located on the first floor of the Courthouse are the offices of County Treasurer, Controller, Sheriff, Register of Wills, Recorder of Deeds and Prothonotary.

The hallway walls on the first floor are Fouto Rosso marble. The floors are terrazzo with designs representing mining, agriculture, finance, government, transportation, construction and industry. If you look closely, you can see that several panels are cut from the same stone.



Twenty-one (21) historical panels deeply engraved in heavy glass in the transoms over the County Treasurer's and Prothonotaries offices and Front Street entrances, creating a beautiful cameo effect. They begin over the Treasurer's office, with Etienne Brule, a French explorer who came down the Susquehanna River in 1615 and met with the Susquehanna Native American Indians near the site of the Courthouse and end over the Prothonotary office, with panels depicting war and peacetime activities. Thus, by happy coincidence, the panels end with scenes of martial activity over an office whose first incumbent was an officer in the Revolutionary Army.

### **The Dauphin County Room**

Off the Front Street entrance (now only used as an exit during emergencies) is a large atrium/lobby called "The Dauphin County Room." The beautiful terrazzo floor contains map of Dauphin County of various colors, bronze strips outlining the boundaries identifying the adjoining counties, the City of Harrisburg, and the various boroughs, townships, creeks, rivers, forests, Indiantown Gap Military Reservation, and all primary highways. The map contains both errors and changes. Note that "Hershey" is not labeled on the map although a brass plaque appears within Derry Township. That is because Hershey was not a borough but rather merely a village. It is in fact not an official "town" even today. If you place your foot on half of the plaque, you will see it becomes a Hershey kiss! Likewise, the village of Linglestown, a "census designated place", is depicted as a square. Notably, Schuylkill County is spelled incorrectly. (The "l" before 'kill' is missing.) The name for the Borough of Pillow in upper Dauphin County, originally known as Uniontown, had to be changed because there were too many "Uniontowns" in Pennsylvania. The residents changed the name to Pillow because that was the name of the hotel in town.



### **Second floor**

On the second floor, the walls are a light tan Montebello marble. The floors are terrazzo, without any design. The second floor contains the offices for the District Attorney, Clerk of Courts, Victim - Witness Assistance Program, and Courtroom 9, judicial chambers and offices for the judge's judicial assistant, law clerks.



### **Courtroom 9**

The walls in Courtroom 9 are of beautiful figured Brazilian rosewood which curve to form a semicircle behind the bench. The walls over the door is a carved wood replica of the Coat of Arms of Pennsylvania.



### **Third floor**

The marble on the walls of the third floor are tan Montebello marble and red Rouge Ionazo marble. The marble shows the various fractures caused by the intense pressure upon the softer sedimentary rock, which hardens it to become marble.

Courtrooms Nos. 2, 3, 4 and 5 are on the third floor. Adjoining them are chambers for four judges, their judicial assistants and law clerks. Offices of Court Administration personnel are also on the third floor. In addition, the two waiting areas on the north and south areas of the Courthouse, outside the judicial assistants' offices and judges' chambers, are lined with massive bookshelves made of oak surrounding a large conference table and chairs. The judicial assistants' and judges' chambers are also lined with beautiful wooden bookshelving.

### **Courtroom 2**

Paneled in Burl and Clara walnut, the acoustical ceiling is studded with circular lighting lenses of unique design. Furniture and seating benches are constructed of the same wood as the paneling. The chairs upholstered in black



leather give it a deep-toned richness. It has been referred to as the “Anthropological Room”, its general theme being that of human progress, exemplified by the woodcarvings on the front and side walls, which represent the efforts of man to discover the natural laws and to control the elements by which he is surrounded.

The carvings, of lighter wood than the paneling, stand out in bold relief. The vermilion descriptive lettering surrounding each carving creates a marked contrast with the dark paneling. These carvings depict: Domestication of Animals - Use of Fire - Tilling the Soil - Use of Machinery - Use of Writing - Use of Metals - Foundation of the Family.

### Courtroom 3

Courtroom 3, designated as the William Penn Room, is paneled with quartered white oak. The simple dignity interprets fittingly the life and character of the founder of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The front wall is Relante marble, upon which is superimposed a bronze replica of the Coat of Arms of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. A woodcarving mounted on the south wall portrays the youthful appearance of William Penn at the time of his arrival in America to establish his Holy Experiment. The furniture is constructed of oak and walnut.



The following quotations from the writings of William Penn adorn the room:

*“Freedom exists only where the laws rule and the people are parties to the laws.*

*You shall be governed by laws of your own making and live a free and,  
if you will, a sober and industrious people.*

*Liberty without obedience is confusion.*

*Obedience without liberty is slavery.*

*Impartiality is the life of justice.*

*Justice is an insurance to all men. If violated, there is no security.”*

#### Courtroom 4

Known as the Dauphin County Courtroom, the side and rear walls of Courtroom 4 are paneled with native white pine and the front with redwood burl. This treatment effectively represents the development of the County from a primeval forest to a community of grace and beauty. The furniture is constructed of redwood of contrasting grain. On the south wall is a clock, with hour points of woodcarvings from Greek and Roman mythology, indicative of the classical culture enjoyed by many of the early settlers.



The front wall is adorned with a quotation from Richard Hooker, in gold leafed letters:

*“Of Law There Can Be No Less Acknowledged Than That Her Seat is The Bosom Of God,  
Her Voice The Harmony Of The World.*

*All Things In Heaven And Earth Do Her Homage; The Very Least As Feeling Her Care,  
And The Greatest As Not Exempt From Her Power.”*

#### Courtroom 5





Courtroom 5 is paneled in Brazilian rosewood, the front wall of Tamo, upon which is mounted a carved wood replica, partially overlaid with gold leaf, of the Seal of Dauphin County.

The wood carvings and gilt descriptive lettering which adorn the walls effectively portray the pursuits of the people of the County; The Capitol dome represents government; Agriculture by a tractor plow; Business and Industry by a manufacturing plant and railroad; Labor by the figure of a man at work; Professions by a man in academic robes; and Homemaking by a woman and child.

## Fourth floor

The fourth floor has plaster walls and a terrazzo floor. Located on this floor are located the Lawyers' Lounge, Law Library, eight (8) Jury Deliberation Rooms, and an adjoining alcove used by tipstiffs during jury deliberations. This alcove was originally was designed to provide space for one tipstaff to guard three jury rooms Today, each jury is supervised and managed by their own tipstaff. The floor originally included offices of the Jury Commissioners; however, those positions have since been eliminated by our Legislature.

### Lawyers' Lounge

A striking feature on the fourth floor is the Lawyers Lounge, a place where attorneys can meet with each other, or talk to their clients. In addition, Custody Conciliations and other meetings and court events take place here. It is a



grand room, finished in paneled mahogany, with a large fireplace constructed of red Numidian marble.

Numerous legendary quotes appear throughout this beautiful room. For many years during the Holidays the judges would invite lawyers to join them in this room to share a holiday beverage and tales of trials they had enjoyed together. Unfortunately, as part of the Courthouse renovations, in the spirit of energy conservation all the flus in the Courthouse fireplaces were closed years ago so they can no longer be used as working fireplaces.

Above the fireplace is a famous oft- cited quotation from Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* -

**“Do as Adversaries Do in Law, Strive Mightily, But Eat and Drink as Friends.”**

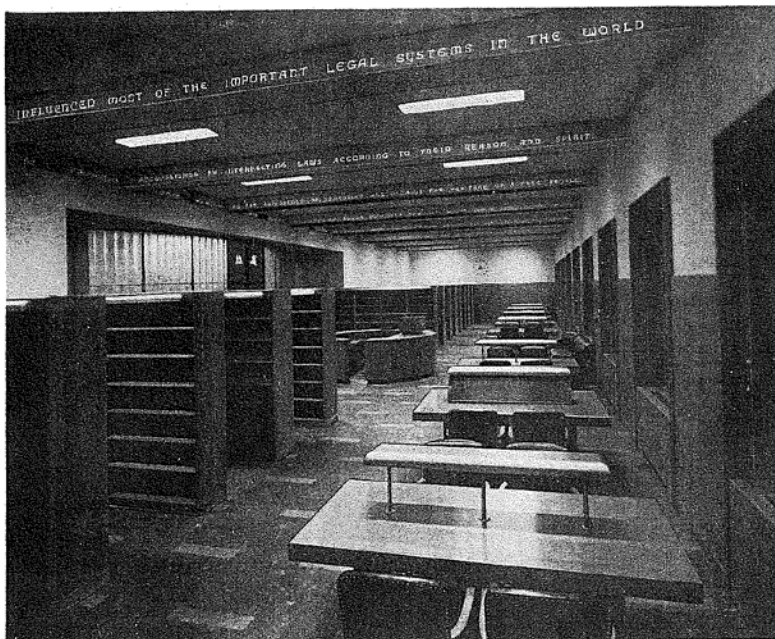


Inscribed on the back of Fireplace appears: *"He Harms the Good that Doth the Evil Spare."*  
The various inscriptions on the ceiling beams include the following:

*A man who is his own lawyer has a fool for a client. Yet is he wise after the event.*  
*Good counsellors lack no clients.*  
*Law is a jealous mistress.*  
*Laws can discover sin, but not remove it. - Milton*  
*The first step to knowledge is to know that we are ignorant. - Cecil*  
*Ignorance is the mother of fear.*  
*Justice without wisdom is impossible. - Froude*  
*Moderation is the foundation of justice.*  
*Good order is the foundation of all good things. - Burke*  
*Where law ends, there tyranny begins. William Pitt*  
*Reason is the life of the law. - Coke*  
*Justice is truth in action. - Disraeli*  
*Where there is no vision, the people perish - Proverbs 29:18*  
*Law is the effort of man to create orderly society. - Beecher*  
*Nothing is good law that is not reason. - J. Powell*  
*Do Justice for truth's sake. - Shakespeare*  
*The people's safety is the law of god. - Otis*  
*Good laws make it easier to do right and harder to do wrong - Gladstone*  
*Righteousness exalteth a nation. - Proverbs 14:34*  
*Laws are not masters but servants. - Beecher*  
*The law has honored us; may we honor it. - Daniel Webster*  
*Law intends the greatest good for the greatest number.*  
*Destroy law and liberty is lost.*

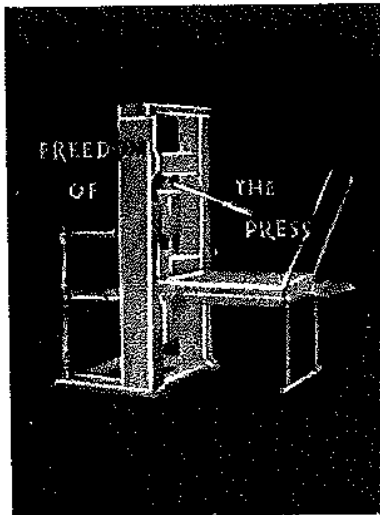
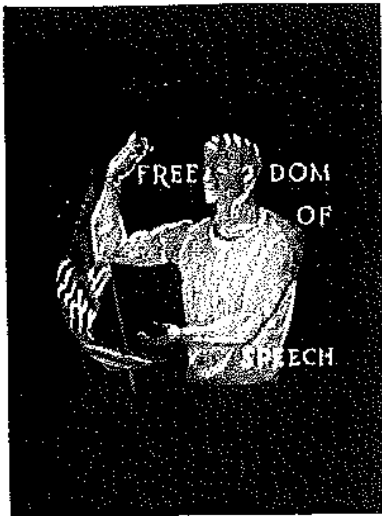
### Law Library

The Law Library in the current Courthouse originally was housed on the south end of the fifth floor. It contained beautiful solid comb grain oak tables and bookcases, which accommodated approximately 20,000 volumes.



With the addition of an eighth judicial position to the Dauphin County Court in 2001, an expansion was needed in the Courthouse. In 2004, the Law Library relocated from the fifth floor of the Courthouse to the fourth floor in order to accommodate the new courtroom 8 and chambers for two judges. The new Law Library is smaller than the original Law Library, but from a technological standpoint, it expanded in that seven computer terminals were added for legal research.

Beautiful etchings in the windows depicted eleven periods of legal development intimately connected with American jurisprudence - Hebrew Law, Maritime Law, Roman Law, Trial by Jury, Magna Charta, Bill of Rights, Common Law, Equity, Civil Law, The Declaration of Independence, and The Constitution. On the sides of the beams and end panels, of which each window formed a part, was an explanatory inscription of the engraving on the window. The Law Library doors also contained etchings depicting the four Freedoms -



Speech, Worship, Press, and Assembly. Two of these panels remain above the doors to Courtroom 8. Two panels, moved to the new 4<sup>th</sup> floor Law Library doors, are the sandblasted designs illustrating Freedom of Speech and Freedom of Press:

The Law Library also is home to our Court's "Self Help Center" for self-represented litigants and the public.

## Fifth floor

Courtrooms Nos. 1, 6, 7 and 8 are situated on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor together with the chambers of the President Judge and three other judges, their judicial assistants, law clerks and a video-conference room.



It originally contained the Law library, which was moved to the fourth floor, as described above. It was renovated into an additional courtroom, now Courtroom 8, chambers, and offices for the judge's Judicial Assistant and Law Clerk, when an 8<sup>th</sup> judicial seat was added to the Court.

The hallway and lobby on the fifth floor have Golden Morocco marble cut and joined to form intricate patterns on the walls. The floor is terrazzo with Griffins design in front of Courtroom 8.

Massive double doors of comb grain oak connect an adjoining hallway to Courtrooms 6 and 7, judge's chambers and the judges' staff's offices as well as the Video Conference Room. These impressive doors contain symbolic carvings illustrative of the world's great legal systems

and beneath each symbol, the name of the outstanding legal scholar associated therewith.

### Video Conference Room

A video conference room, providing not only an additional conference room for legal counsel and their clients, judicial meetings and parties' conferences, but also for video conferencing with inmates from the Dauphin County prison and State Correctional institutions across the state, eliminating the need to transport prisoners unnecessarily for both criminal and civil actions. Once a part of the former law library, it now enjoys the original glass etched windows seen to the right.



**ROMAN LAW**  
*The Law of the Conqueror*  
The Romans evolved a superb legal system. Through its grandeur faded, the Code of the Emperor Justinian, the first comprehensive legal code, codified and recast its vital principles.



**TRIAL BY JURY**  
*A Modern Jury Panel*  
The origin of trial by jury is lost in the mists of antiquity. Within its field no better system has yet been devised by man for the administration of justice and the safeguarding of government liberties.



Massive carved solid comb grain oak doors also lead into Courtroom 1 and into Courtroom 8's Judicial chambers and offices, as seen to the left.

The waiting area behind two oak double doors on the north side of the building, off the main hallway leading to the chambers and offices of the President Judge and the Judge next in seniority, is lined with massive oak bookshelves. Two round inlaid oak tables and leather chairs are in the anteroom to seat lawyers and litigants waiting to meet with a judge. The floor has a beautiful inlaid pattern of asphalt tile.

### Courtroom 1

This is the Courtroom where the President Judge primarily presides. It is the largest courtroom being seventy six feet in length and forty feet in width. It combines awe-inspiring dignity with mellowness of simple beauty. The side and rear walls, unbroken by windows, are paneled in crotch mahogany, the front wall of Escalette marble, with adjoining paneling of blistered maple. The bench and rail are of Darosa Vein marble. The railings are solid brass.



Mounted on the front wall is a bronze replica of the Coat of Arms of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the following quotation in bronze letters from the Constitution of Pennsylvania:

***“No Man Can Be Deprived of His Life, Liberty or Property,  
Unless By The Judgment Of His Peers Or The Law Of The Land.”***

The furniture is constructed of crotch mahogany, as is the long desk enclosure for the Court Clerk. The front of the enclosure, green bronze, bears superimposed cast bronze figures symbolizing Justice, Wisdom and Mercy.

The names of all of the Judges of the Dauphin County Court of Common Pleas, from its erection to the present, (57 as of 2015) are carved in the paneling of the walls and burnished with gold leaf.

The absence of natural light, except through the skylights, the exclusion of exterior noises and the soft light from the graceful wall sconces, all accentuate the solemnity and quietness desirable in a hall of justice.

### **Courtroom 6**

The side and rear walls are constructed of blistered maple and gum, the front wall of redwood Burl, adorned in brass lettering “Liberty under Law”. The furniture is constructed of the same wood as the paneling.



Mounted on the wall behind the judicial bench appears the carved wood figure of the Greek Goddess Justitia, regulated by wisdom, sympathy, and discipline. This was the first Courtroom in which the first woman judge of the court, Jeannine Turgeon, presided. She would tell her juries that the architects of the building must have known this would be where the first woman judge would hold court!

### **Courtroom 7**

Named the Orphans' Courtroom, the paneling is of exquisite Redwood Burl and Tamo. Etchings in the glass windows and gold carvings painted in gold leaf paint all depict various Orphan's Court matters. The front wall is of Fioroto rosso marble, upon which is mounted a bronze replica of the Coat of Arms of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with the following quotation in bronze letters:

***“Laws Are The Very Bulwarks Of Society  
They Define Every Man's Rights, And Stand Between And Defend The Individual Liberties Of All Men.”***



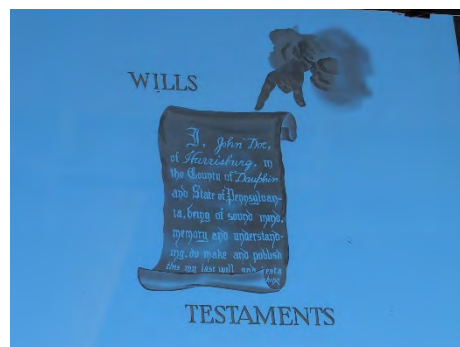


Three windows on the east side, containing engraved panels, complement the raised, cameo like panels, framed in bronze, on the west wall, three of which contain woodcarvings. These panels set forth in symbol and text the development and scope of the jurisdiction of the Orphan's Court. In the panels, in carving with Gold embossed lettering appears:

- Audits and hearings on exceptions*
- Fiduciary accounts*
- Accounts and distribution*
- The administration of decedent's estate*
- Real estate personal property -devolution of property*
- Adjudication of Will contests and Trusts*

In addition, artistic drawn scenes and writing relating to Orphan's Court matters, inscribed and etched into the glass windows, include the following:

- Interpretation of wills,*
- Protection of minors*
- Adoptions guardianship*



## Courtroom 8

Originally, as explained above, this space held the original law library, but was converted into an additional courtroom in 2004.



The glass doors to the old Law library contained sandblasted designs illustrative of the four Freedoms- SPEECH, WORSHIP, PRESS and ASSEMBLY. Two of these panels were moved down to the new law library doors on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. Two remain on the doors leading into Courtroom 8. Upon entering these doors, one is faced squarely with window designs symbolizing the English and American Bill of Rights, which guarantee these Four Freedoms.

On the sides of the beams and end panels, of which each window forms a part, is an explanatory inscription of the engraving on the window.

The original law library also had various legal quotes and references hand painted into the beams, which remain today:



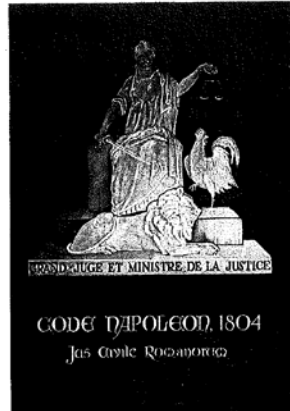
Windows on the south side contain a symbol or illustration engraved in the glass, depicting periods of legal development intimately connected with American jurisprudence. The following glass engravings remain in the windows in Courtroom 8.

**CIVIL LAW**

*The Civil Law of the Romans*

Illustration from the title page of the first edition of Code Napoleon

The Code Napoleon adapted the Roman Civil Law to the legal thought of a new era, and crystallized it into an harmonious system which influenced most of the important legal systems in the world.



**THE CONSTITUTION**

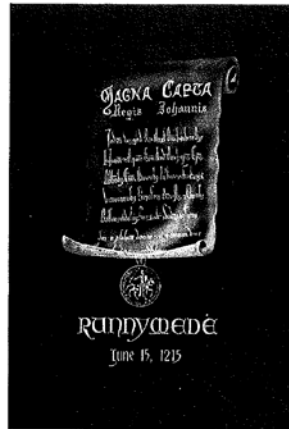
*The Safeguard of Freedom*

The Constitution, which limits the powers of government and safeguards the liberties of the individual, is the great contribution of the United States to the legal science of the world.

**MAGNA CHARTA**

*The Great Charter of English Liberties*

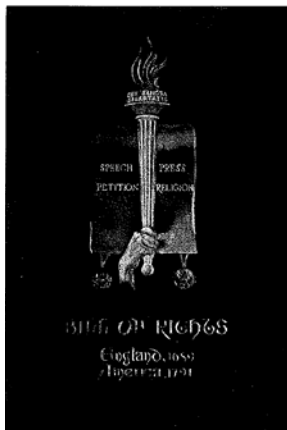
United in a definite claim for liberty and law, the Barons at Runnymede wrung from King John the Magna Charta, the restatement of English liberties, and the basis of our American freedom.



**COMMON LAW**

*The Unwritten Law*

The genius of the English people for liberty under law developed the Common Law. It enshrines customs tested by the experience of centuries, and remains the heritage of a free people.



**BILL OF RIGHTS**

*Freedom's Holy Light*

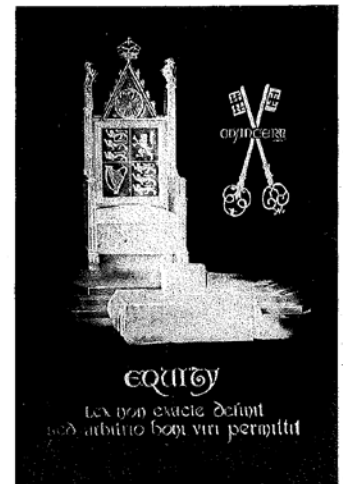
The Bill of Rights boldly reasserted ancient rights and liberties violated by royal tyranny. It firmly laid the foundations of modern democracy both in England and in the United States.

**EQUITY**

*What the law does not define exactly, it leaves to the judgment of a good man.*

The Lord Chancellor's Chair and Woolsack

Equity aimed at the correction of that wherein the law, by reason of its universality, was deficient. This was accomplished by interpreting laws according to their reason and spirit.



Courtroom 8 is the only Courtroom, as of 2015, to include smart screens for the Jurors:



### Judicial Chambers

The judicial chambers for the judge presiding in Courtroom 6, and offices for that judge’s judicial assistant and law clerk were expanded following the Courthouse renovations for the additional judge. They now enjoy the following glass-etched windows from the former Law Library.

**MARITIME LAW**  
*Custom is the Law of the Sea*  
 Mariners of all nations and all seas had a common life and experience. Unaffected by the ebb and flow of political and legal chaos, custom established and remains the universal law of the sea.



**HEBREW LAW**  
*The Mosaic Law Given at Sinai*  
 The Ten Commandments, the Divine Lex Scripta, was the fundamental law of the Hebrew Commonwealth. Its principles of social righteousness are embodied in all important legal systems.

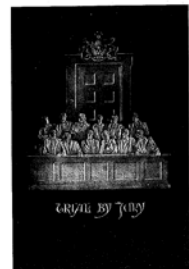


**ROMAN LAW**  
*The Law of the Conqueror*  
 The Romans evolved a superb legal system. Though its grandeur faded, the Code of the Emperor Justinian, the first comprehensive legal code, codified and restated its virile principles.



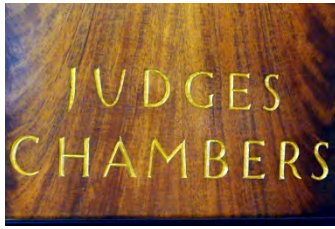
**THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE**  
*The Voice of Freedom*  
 Declaration of Independence—answer of outraged liberty to royal tyranny—at once proclaimed equality under law, recognized democratic government, severed political ties, gave birth to a nation.

**TRIAL BY JURY**  
*A Modern Jury Panel*  
 The origin of trial by jury is lost in the mists of antiquity. Within its field no better system has yet been devised by man for the administration of justice and the safeguarding of guaranteed liberties.





## Judicial chambers for President Judge and Courtroom 7 Judge



The chambers for the President Judge and the Judge presiding in Courtroom 7, typically the judge highest in seniority other than the president judge, each have beautiful wood paneling and bookcases made from crotch mahogany, marble fireplaces of Roman Breche marble and arched ceilings with indirect lighting. Mahogany and leather furniture adorn each chamber.



The doors leading into the Courtrooms contain carved, painted in gold leaf lettering.



*The door, for example, leading into Courtroom 7, once used only for Orphan's Court matters.*

## Juvenile Justice Center Courtrooms 11 and 12

Upon the Legislature's creation of two new Judicial positions in Dauphin County, extending the compliment to 10 judges, the Dauphin County Commissioners and Court agreed to create a Juvenile Justice Center with two judges' chambers and rooms for their judicial Assistants and Law Clerks along with 2 new courtrooms on the seventh floor of the Dauphin County Human Services Building, located right across Blackberry Alley south of the Courthouse.

Courtrooms 11 and 12 are utilized not only for Juvenile Court, but also for other judicial functions that do not require juries, including Grand Jury proceedings, Domestic Relations hearings, Arbitrations, and Divorce Master Hearings.



## 2015 - Dauphin County Court of Common Pleas Judges



*Back Row: Judge Wm. Tully, Judge John Cherry, Judge Bernie Coates, Judge Andrew Dowling, Judge Bruce Bratton and Judge Deb Curcillo. Seated: Judge Scott Evans, Judge Jeannine Turgeon, Judge Todd Hoover, Pres. Judge Rich Lewis and Senior Judge Lawrence Clark.*

This Booklet was created and printed in conjunction with the 230<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Dauphin County Court. Most of the information in this Tour Booklet was gathered from the Dauphin County Courthouse Booklet published by the Dauphin County Bar Association in December 1943 for the dedication and opening of the Courthouse as well as from Patriot News articles and our the 230th Anniversary Booklet. Funding for its original printing was provided by those who contributed to the Court's 230<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Program and Celebration, listed below:

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*Watercolor painting by Judge Jeannine Turgeon*