

1871 County Court House Addition

Shenandoah County's beautiful stone courthouse, built in 1795, has had two additions made to it over the years. The first was the current courtroom, added in 1871. The clerk's offices behind it were added in 1886. Several articles from the Shenandoah Herald follow the construction of the 1871 addition.

On January 12, 1871 the Herald reported that Mark Bird, Chairman of the Building Committee, announced that the time for receiving bids for the building of the new courtroom had been extended until January 20, when the contracts would be awarded.

We know from other newspaper articles that Edinburg was campaigning to have the county seat and courthouse moved to that town, and on February 9, the Herald published a copy of the Brubaker deed, wherein the property on which the courthouse and jail sits was sold to Shenandoah County with the stipulation that if the courts were moved elsewhere, the property and the building would revert to the Brubaker family. Several editorials followed the publication of the deed, opposing the removal of the courts out of Woodstock, which of course never happened.

By March 9 an article appeared stating that "the contractors are busy at work preparing to build the new Courtroom. Messrs. Hoshour and Sheetz are hauling brick and Mr. Cullers informs us that he has been at work making sash etc. for several weeks."

On April 20 a reporter wrote that "the contractors are busy tearing away a part of the old building and preparing to erect the new courtroom. In the meantime court will be held in the Academy building, which will be fitted up for the purpose".

The portion of the old building that was torn away, I believe, was a small rear addition that's visible in sketches from the Civil War and the Academy building that was used as a temporary courtroom was located near the Woodstock Presbyterian Church on E. Court St.

A May 11 article said that "the Academy building has been fitted up as a temporary courtroom. It answers the purpose admirably and is by far a more pleasant room than the old one. The workmen are at work on the new building which will be put up as rapidly as possible".

Amazingly, the new courtroom was ready for occupancy in a mere seven months, with an August 24 article stating that "the new Courtroom is now about completed and will be used this week, for the first time, by the Circuit Court. The building is substantial and convenient. The stone and brickwork was done by Messrs. Hoshour and Sheetz, the roofing by Messrs. John A. Saum and Bros., the carpenter work by Mr. A.J. Cullers, and the plastering by Mr. E.C. Haas. The building is creditable both to the county and the workmen engaged in clearing up the building and in improving the yard."

This moment from the past was presented by the Shenandoah County Historical Society.