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INDEPENDENCE HALL PROJECT

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THE RESTORATION AND REFURNISHING
OF THE FIRST FLOOR OF INDEPENDENCE HALL
Made possible by

GENERAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS

Prepared by:
History and Interpretation Branch
Independence National Historical Park Project
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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FOREWORD

On October 15, 1952, representatives of the Independence National Historical Park Project and the General Federation of Women's Clubs met informally in Philadelphia to discuss the possibility of the Federation assisting in refurbishing and restoring a portion of Independence Hall as a project associated with the Federation's Americanism program. In December, Mrs. John L. Whitehurst, Chairman, Americanism Department, and former President of the Federation, submitted a detailed plan to Mrs. Oscar A. Ahlgren, President, and the National Board of Directors of the Federation for such a project. This plan, approved by both the Federation and the National Park Service, outlined a campaign by the Federation to solicit funds to restore and refurbish the first floor of Independence Hall to its appearance during that significant period in American history when the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were formulated there. On June 17, 1953, Mrs. Oscar A. Ahlgren, President of the Federation and Mr. Conrad L. Wirth, Director of the Park Service, at a conference in the Director's office in Washington, agreed on the respective responsibility each agency would assume in carrying out the project.

The General Federation of Women's Clubs agreed to undertake a nationwide program through its State and Territorial organizations to solicit contributions. The National Park Service, for its part, agreed to intensify its extensive and exhaustive program of historical and architectural research to determine and, with the funds provided, restore insofar as possible the exact appearance of the rooms on the first floor of Independence Hall during the period of their greatest significance. The accelerated research program, in fact, had been inaugurated the previous February when several members of the historical staff at Independence National Historical Park Project were detached from other responsibilities to begin at once the accumulation of historical information.

This report is the first of several which will outline the progress of the research program from inception to completion. As the initial study, it is necessarily more in the nature of a statement of the problem than a blueprint for restoration. The preparation of this report and the succeeding installments has been greatly hastened by the generous offer of cooperation of the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

In order to avoid confusing the reader, it was necessary to adopt specific designations for Independence Hall and its rooms. They have been identified by many names through the years, but, where possible, the writers use the earliest name. For example, the building itself, until the latter part of the 19th century, was always referred to as the "State House," and this is the term used in the report. Similarly, the "Assembly Room" designates the east room, in which the Declaration of Independence was adopted and the

Constitution formulated, while the "Supreme Court chamber" applies to the west room.

Conrad L. Wirth
Director

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M. O. Anderson
Superintendent

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Independence Hall is without question the foremost historic shrine of the United States. The United States was created in this building on July 4, 1776, when the Continental Congress voted the final form of the Declaration of Independence. In this same building, our Federal Government under the Constitution took form and came into being (in the same room in which independence had been voted) on September 17, 1787, when the Federal Convention completed its work and submitted the Constitution, through Congress, to the states for ratification. Thus, this building witnessed the splendid courage, patriotism, wisdom, and devotion to principle that gave birth to a free United States and from which came the free, democratic institutions we now enjoy. The building is truly an Independence Hall for all of the people of the United States, for all time.

A building of such supreme historical importance is one of the guardians of our historic past. Between it and us, there is a communion of ideas and ideals to be perpetuated from generation to generation as a great national tradition. It will serve this purpose best if preserved reverently and truthfully.

The history of Independence Hall shows that reverence for the building and its once priceless furnishings came late. Reverent and patriotic hands have since tried faithfully to repair and restore.

Structurally, inside, except for minor details, we believe the building appears much as it did during its great past. It is possible, however, that continued research may necessitate specific changes, but because of the great historical value of the building, no structural changes will be recommended unless the historical evidence is overwhelmingly in their favor.

However, a great deal remains to be done with regard to interior furnishings if Independence Hall is to be handed down to later generations as a truthful reflection of the historic scene of 1775-87. Past attempts at re-furnishing have been confined to the Assembly Room and these have been based on insufficient evidence, presenting a historically false impression.

If Independence Hall is to inspire its visitors toward increased devotion to the ideals once promulgated within its walls (and this need is greater now when evil forces abroad threaten our democratic institutions), it becomes imperative that we correct this condition. Fortunately, the General Federation of Women's Clubs has recognized the clamant need for an accurate restoration. Its generous support in undertaking to finance the restoration

and refurnishing of the first floor will help Independence Hall become a connecting link between the living principles and ideals of the historic past and Americans of generations to come.

The results of intensive National Park Service research completed up to the present time lead us to the following conclusions as to the restoration and refurnishing of the first floor interior of Independence Hall:

1. It seems reasonably certain, on the basis of careful research, that the furnishings of 1776, with the exception of the inkstand, no longer exist.

2. Pictures of the signing of the Declaration of Independence are apt to be fanciful. There is not enough information on the furnishings of 1776, nor the prospects of ever accumulating enough, for a technically accurate, complete reproduction of the 1776 scene. This important period, unless further information comes to light, will have to be represented by the original inkstand, by the restored Penn coat of arms, and reproduction of the captured British colors known to have been used there.

3. Furnishings now in the first floor rooms, for the most part, will have to come out and be replaced by authentic pieces of the period or by correct period reproductions. In other words, we have virtually a complete job of refurnishing to do. Genuinely historic pieces among the present furnishings which are of a historical date too late to make them proper for the first floor of Independence Hall will be utilized elsewhere in the park museum collections.

The Service makes the following recommendations:

1. Refurnish and restore as of the period 1775-87; that is, of the entire period of the second Continental Congress and the Constitutional Convention. As stated above, the period 1776 can be represented accurately only by a small number of historic objects or details. The bulk of the furnishings will represent the period 1778-87.

2. Begin partial refurnishing as soon as funds become available. We should rely heavily upon authentic period pieces, but in some instances it may be necessary to utilize modern duplicates or reproductions made on the basis of accurate specifications until authentic period pieces now in private collections or museums become available. The result should aim at creating a picture of the highest order of authenticity, in keeping with the priceless character of the building itself and the great national tradition it embodies. As efforts will be directed in the first instance to the acquisition of authentic period pieces, the total cost of this project cannot very well be determined in advance. However, the funds will be expended judiciously.

3. Follow a conservative policy in making architectural changes, such as those mentioned above. Alterations, will be made as required upon the completion of documentary research and architectural investigations.

In accordance with its understanding with the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the National Park Service will, as heretofore, utilize its architectural, engineering, historical, archeological and museum staffs to continue architectural and historical research needed to make the proposed restoration of the building and the first floor as accurate as possible. The architectural study will employ, in addition to the perseverance and skill of architects and architectural historians, the available techniques of modern science (chemical analysis of paint samples, for instance), in order to determine what is old, what is new, what may be original, and what may be an addition. The Museum Branch of the Service includes fine arts experts in numerous fields, such as furniture and decorations and the conservation of paintings.

The Service also intends to draw upon its many friends in professional fields and its long list of collaborators in highly specialized fields for assistance. We believe that the General Federation of Women's Clubs, upon the completion of the project, will be proud of its splendid contribution to the first floor of Independence Hall and to the American people.

II

RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH PROGRAM

A. General

While much source material remains to be studied, this report brings together for the first time more authentic data on the physical appearance of Independence Hall than has heretofore been assembled. New deposits are frequently discovered, and it is morally certain that continued research will reveal other untapped sources of information.

At the outset it is important to remind ourselves that Independence Hall emerged only gradually as a shrine. It was designed and used as a work building for many years before and after the great events which make it loom so large in our thoughts today. In its 200 years of existence Independence Hall has served as the capitol for a variety of governments, as a military hospital and prison, as a private museum, as an exhibition hall, as a court house as well as in the performance of other minor functions.

Hence it is not surprising that these many users are reflected in the frequency and extent of the architectural changes. Damage by military occupation, local vandalism, alternate periods of neglect and patriotic interest and consequent attempts at restoration have all influenced and changed the architecture and furnishings of the old State House.

Although the architectural history of Independence Hall is at once fascinating and important we shall reserve a more detailed discussion of it for a further report and concern ourselves here with the more pressing problem of the furnishings and fixtures of the building.

As for the original furniture of the State House, little if any of it has survived the onslaught of the years. Diligent search by antiquarians and historians over the past 8 decades have revealed very few remains of proven authenticity.

We must, therefore, approach the problem of re-creating the original scene from another direction. Instead of searching likely depositories for furnishings and fixtures reputed to be original, or accepting gifts which unsubstantiated family tradition claims to be authentic, we must determine by documentary research precisely what was actually in the room. The next step involves finding period pieces which are exact counterparts, or constructing accurate copies.

Further, research must determine the exact "working condition" of the rooms: how they were lighted and heated, the number of chairs and desks, wall decorations (flags, maps, etc.), and accessories--and the location and arrangement of them all. Even such details as where the delegates placed their hats, or whether they had quills and other items on their desks, are important.

This is a new approach for the restoration of the State House. Only thus can we hope to bring into existence once again the atmosphere and appearance of the first floor as it was during the period of its greatest historic importance.

While the historical problems confronting a faithful, authentic restoration of the first floor interior of the State House are serious and many, they are by no means insoluble; on the contrary, having recognized our problems and appraised them (thus eliminating the confusion which beset our predecessors), and possessing today the techniques of modern science and scholarship to an extent unheard of 50 years ago, we are now in far better position both to avoid their serious mistakes and to accomplish what they sought to do.

But the task of restoration will not be accomplished in a short period. It will have to be carried forward in successive stages as research data is developed. It will be possible to begin an initial and partial stage of refurnishing and architectural restoration in 1954, following receipt of funds. Additional refurnishing and architectural restoration will be undertaken in 1955. Completion of the final phases of this program will go forward as rapidly as the program of research will permit.

In this entire undertaking the interest and support of the General Federation of Women's Clubs is a vital and determining influence which will sustain us as we deal with the successive problems that must be faced.

B. Architecture

From the facts now in our possession it is possible to draw only a vague sketchy picture of the first floor of Independence Hall. Until further evidence comes to light which will round out our knowledge it seems pointless to do more than summarize our as yet inconclusive data.

Assembly Room

After the British occupancy of 1777 and the return of Congress of the Confederation to the Assembly room of the State House, an event occurred which afforded an occasion for an enlightening description of that room. That event was the reception by Congress of the French Minister Conrad Alexandre Gérard on August 6, 1778. Gérard's report to Foreign Minister Vergennes included not only a detailed description of the scene but also the seating plan.

This plan, in fact, is the earliest one yet found showing interior arrangements in the Assembly room (see fig. 3). The obvious care with which it was executed suggests accuracy of details, although there appear one or two discrepancies which at the moment defy explanation. From this plan we glean three very important architectural details and facts:

1. The exact location of the dais in the east end of the room; and the fact that it was made up of two tiers. (This latter fact is also confirmed in Gérard's verbal description, in which he uses the phrase "double marche pied." Elias Boudinot described the dais as "a platform raised about two feet.")
2. The existence and location of the "bar," near the west end of the room.
3. The absence of a structure in the "gallery," existence of which has sometimes been conjectured. Verifying the plan is the explanation given in the margin for "H," which marks the location of the gallery, as a "Public debout" or public standing room. Contemporary references to a "gallery," then, apparently signified not a raised structure, as some in recent years have supposed, but simply a standing space outside the bar. Further confirmation of this belief comes from: an act of the Assembly in 1786, appointing a committee "to make an estimate of the expense of erecting a gallery in the Assembly room, for the convenience of those citizens who may choose to attend debates"; and from Elbridge Gerry who in 1790 said in Congress, "The State House of Philadelphia has no gallery. . . ." The first item clearly indicates some kind of structure, and the fact that no such structure existed in 1786; the second item shows that the proposal was not carried out.

In 1785, or almost two years after Congress vacated the Assembly room and left Philadelphia altogether, the Assembly of Pennsylvania, which until then had been meeting on the second floor, decided to reoccupy its former quarters. At this time, it appears that additional work had to be done in the Assembly room, as shown by the following:

Sept. 29, 1785: pd James Pearson for alteration and repairs of the Assembly Room to do business Sept. 29 say Oct. 25--£71.5s10d.

This seems to have included laying a hearth and repairing or altering doors, for the order issued by the Supreme Executive Council on February 22 preceding covered:

"two windows, work & at repairing and altering the doors, laying the hearth in the Assembly room, making cases & to file the papers in the clerks room."

With this item the documentary evidence of architectural changes to 1787 ends. And while the evidence is most vital to our purpose, it is in most cases not as specific as we should like, and future research must fill in the details before we can utilize it for restoration purposes. The most serious gap, we may note, is the total absence of references to the walls and ceiling--the information most needed to establish the architectural relationship between the Assembly room of today and the Assembly room of the historic period.

Supreme Court Chamber

The original details of the chamber still elude us. But a good idea of its general appearance in 1774 may be had from the description by a visitor.

"To the West is a large room in which the Supreme Court is held, and another on the East, in which the Assembly meet. The first of these rooms is ornamented with a breastwork and a cornish supported by fluted pilasters of the Doric order. This is open to the entry ((Hallway)) only by the entering of three arches supported by fluted pilasters of the same order."

This description, it may be added, tends to confirm the authenticity of the chamber's principal features as we know it today.

Presumably, then, despite considerable alteration and at least one attempt at restoration, the chamber now appears substantially as it did originally. However, inasmuch as at this date we have not yet the complete story of changes and the restoration, we may accept this presumption only with reservations. It is quite certain, at any rate, even now that the centerpiece on the ceiling has no historic basis, and so will have to be removed.

Hallway

Although contemporary visitors recounted little of the Hallway's appearance, a study of builders' accounts makes it clear that the floor was not of wood, but of brick or tile. This together with Samuel Harding's itemized bill for the woodcarving done by him in the Hallway provide many details which we hope will enable us to authenticate much of the architectural treatment of this portion of the building.

C. Furnishings and Fixtures

No inventories nor contemporary descriptions of the furnishings and fixtures of 1775 and 1776 have yet been found. To determine what these may have comprised, consequently, we are left with the alternative of gathering and piecing together all the evidence of purchases made by the Province of Pennsylvania during the several decades preceding---from the time of the

construction of the State House. And this alternative is not wholly satisfactory; for even with all the desired data finally accumulated, there will still remain the two very important questions of, first, whether all articles purchased in the early years did in fact remain in use through 1776; and secondly, whether additional articles might not also have been acquired---through means other than purchase and hence unrecorded---by either the Province or the Continental Congress.

Notwithstanding these limitations, such a comprehensive record will nevertheless prove most valuable. It will provide a solid foundation of authentic information upon which to base at least the initial stage of our restoration. Subsequent research, then, may still supply the missing details, enabling us to bring the appointments of the rooms ever closer to their exact conditions at the time of the great events.

The Assembly Room

Prior to the construction of the State House, the Provincial Assembly had no permanent meeting place. It met at private dwellings, rented annually, or occasionally at the old City Hall at Second and High (now Market) Streets. Apparently it had no need of furnishings of its own, and the early records indicate none. Therefore, we may feel fairly certain that the original appointments of the Assembly room were acquired sometime after the construction of the State House. And these could not have consisted of many items; for we must remember that the 18th-century legislative hall was generally limited to essentials. By all indications, the furnishings and fixtures must have been severely plain. (Picture the frugal Quaker legislators countenancing anything else!) We shall consider them in terms of heating, lighting, seating, writing, and adornments.

Let us first consider heating. There is clear architectural evidence of fireplaces. It appears that long before 1776, these fireplaces had been lined with firebacks. From the Votes of the Assembly we learn that in 1744 William Branson (ironmaster) supplied the Assembly with "iron chimney backs" for which he received £6.3s.1d. These firebacks very probably remained in use through 1776. It is interesting to note that the documentary evidence in support of the early use of firebacks has since been confirmed by physical evidence revealed when the bricked-up fireplaces were opened again in the 1890's.

In addition to fireplaces, closed stoves were also utilized for a time. In 1772 the Assembly purchased two stoves and pipes from Lewis Brahl at a cost of £27.16s.11d. However, these were removed early in 1776 by order of the Continental Congress. Remarked one delegate, Richard Smith of New Jersey, in his diary: "The two stoves in our Room were ordered by general consent to be taken down as affecting the health and the eyesight of the members." These may have been cannon stoves, smoking monsters when the draft was poor. In

any case, the facts point to the conclusion that on July 4, 1776, the appointments of the Assembly room did not include closed stoves.

Next we come to lighting. Here we are on somewhat less certain ground. The available evidence does not indicate any purchase of lighting fixtures for the State House before 1777. In that year a pair of plated candlesticks and a pair of double sconces were ordered by the "president and council." However, these were manifestly for the Council chamber upstairs, not for the Assembly room. There is certainly no evidence, may we add, for the purchase of a chandelier.

A reasonable explanation for this seeming absence of lighting fixtures may be gained from the fact that the Assembly generally met in the daytime when ample natural light was afforded by the six large windows. And upon those occasions when the sessions extended into the night, candles were "brought in", probably on candlesticks, kept elsewhere. Thus we find in the Votes of the Assembly for 1743, 1749, and 1753 the identical entries: "Ordered, That Candles be brought in. And they were brought in accordingly." Again for 1755, there is an order which reads: "The House agreed to wait till they should hear from the Governor; and ordered Candles to be brought in, which was done accordingly." Most interesting in this connection is the recollection of Samuel Hazard, who in 1830 wrote in his Register of Pennsylvania, that:

It was the practice in the House of Assembly to have candles lighted at dark. The Speaker would then call "Candles," and the Door-keeper would immediately bring them in. . . .

All of this leads us to the conclusion that probably no permanent lighting fixtures ever formed a part of the Assembly room's appointments in the years with which we are presently concerned.

Perhaps our biggest problem at this juncture, in our efforts to determine the historic appearance of the Assembly room, concerns the seating arrangement. We must discover not only what the arrangement comprised in fact, but also the exact appearance of each article, and its location in the room. And the contemporary evidence which we have accumulated thus far scarcely supplies more than a rough outline of the facts alone.

The bulk of the furnishings for the State House was purchased in 1742. But unfortunately we know little else, for it is precisely at this very crucial point that the records fail us. Our sole reference, the Votes of the Assembly, records the purchase cryptically: "Paid Thomas Leech towards furnishing the State-house, £100.0.0." The purchase must have covered, among other things, benches, desks, and chairs; and many of these probably survived down to 1776.

The chairs in the Assembly room during the early decades undoubtedly were rush-bottomed, although the evidence so far collected is not clear-cut. Sturdy and inexpensive, this popular type lent itself well to use in public buildings. In 1733 the Assembly had purchased a dozen chairs of undetermined type from Caleb Emlen; but the probability of these having been rush-bottomed is suggested by the fact that Emlen (joiner and chairmaker) specialized in this type. In 1760, moreover, the Assembly purchased another dozen chairs, from Thomas Ackley at a cost of £3, and these we definitely know (having recently discovered the original voucher) to have been rush-bottomed. It may be that these later chairs replaced the ones purchased in 1733, which by 1760 would have been in use 27 years.

In further support of the belief that the chairs were rush-bottomed, William MacPherson Hornor, in his classic Blue Book of Philadelphia Furniture (p. 304), cites a bill "for making 6 chair Bottoms," presented to the Province for payment by John Fiss, on March 30, 1776. While Hornor does not give his source (and we have not yet found any reference to this item in the available records), there is no disposition here to question the accuracy of his citation, for it has the earmarks of authenticity apart from this authority's justly deserved reputation as an honest and careful observer. It would seem, then, that any chairs purchased in 1742, in all probability would also have been rush-bottomed. And, as we have seen from Hornor, some of them at least were still in use in 1776.

As to the speaker's chair, however, we hesitate to venture an opinion at this time. Purchased probably in 1742, it was provided with new "bottoms" by Plunket Fleeson in 1753; but these might have been of leather. Very probably, may we add here parenthetically, John Hancock as President of the Continental Congress used this chair in the Assembly room; the one there now, contrary to popular belief, is of later date.

After about 1760, the rush-bottomed chair gave way in popularity to the Windsor-type; and we find this reflected in subsequent purchases by the Province. Thus in 1775, a few months following the opening of the Second Continental Congress in the Assembly room, we find the Assembly ordering 18 Windsor chairs; and in the spring of 1776, 12 more--along with 2 desks.

There is considerable room for conjecture, however, as to whether the chairs in the Assembly room between May 10, 1775 (when the Second Continental Congress opened) and July 4, 1776, were: all rush-bottomed, all Windsors, or a combination of both. It would certainly seem that on the earlier date, and for some months thereafter, at least some if not all of them were rush-bottom chairs. And while possible, there is no clear indication that sometime prior to July 4, 1776, the Windsor chairs purchased by the Province were actually placed in the Assembly room, and the rush bottom chairs removed for use of the Assembly upstairs.

The basis for this belief that Windsor chairs replaced the rush-bottomed is three-fold: first, the Pine and Savage painting (c. 1784) which shows Windsor chairs; secondly, the fact that 30 Windsors had been purchased precisely in this period; and thirdly, that the Province as host would have as a matter of courtesy granted the use of the new and more comfortable Windsors to Congress, retaining for its own use the old chairs. These are plausible reasons and may yet prove correct. However, the facts as they stand do not actually bear them out, and so we shall require additional data before the matter can be settled beyond a shadow of doubt.

As to the number of chairs in the Assembly room, we can offer only an estimate based on the membership of the Assembly. From 1771 through the first 4 months of 1776, the membership varied between 38 and 41 (not counting the speaker and the clerk of the House). While 25 or 26 constituted a quorum, the actual attendance during these years ranged between 26 and 40. Consequently, there necessarily had to be about 40 chairs.

Turning now from chairs to other articles, we know that in addition to chairs there also had to be tables, at least for the accommodation of the speaker and the clerk of the House. And we have direct evidence of them. First, when in 1752 the Assembly ordered an inkstand, it specified that this was for the use of the "Speaker's Table." And secondly, a resolution read before the Assembly was ordered to be delivered "at the Clerk's Table." But thus far we have found no indication of other tables. Probably the members of the Assembly needed none.

The fourth category of functional objects, which must be considered in relation to interior appointments, is accessories--stationery, ink, quills, and the like. We have of course ample evidence of the use of these in the Assembly room. One interesting article for which there is no evidence but which might well have been used in place of a gavel, is the hand bell which Hazard tell us some speakers used to keep silence. But intrinsically the most valuable of the accessories was a silver inkstand made for the Assembly in 1752 by Philip Syng, Jr., the noted silversmith. This inkstand, probably used at the signing of the Declaration of Independence, is believed to be the one that is in the Independence Hall collection today (see fig. 9).

The fifth, and last, category of appointments comes under the heading of "adornments." These probably were few in number. Curtains were first ordered for the Assembly room in 1748; there is no indication, however, of actual purchase and payment. But in 1755 or 1756, Plunket Fleeson received £1.9s.6d for "putting up window curtains." Presumably this was in the Assembly room, and it may have been the first installation.

Just this past year, in the Penn manuscripts at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, we have come upon a most interesting discovery--that among

the adornments of the Assembly room was the coat of arms of the Penn Family. This item appears as an incidental reference in a letter written in 1764 by Governor John Penn to Thomas Penn, his brother in London concerning the opposition of the Quaker party in the Assembly to the Proprietary government, to the effect that ". . . some of the members the other day, were for pulling down the Arms over the Speakers Chair and putting up the Kings Arms in their place." Inasmuch as the Proprietary government continued in force until the second half of 1776, and in the absence of evidence to the contrary, it seems quite likely that the family device was still on the wall above the speaker's chair when the Declaration of Independence was adopted.

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Appropriate to the times, one other device known to have adorned the Assembly room was a battle trophy--the regimental colors of the Seventh British Fusiliers. It had been captured by the Americans under General Montgomery at Chambly in 1775, presented to the Continental Congress sometime in November, and "hung up" in the Assembly room as a token of victory.

And so ends our limited inventory of the Assembly room's appointments in 1775-76. The evidence for this inventory, as we have indicated, is entirely documentary; recollections have been considered only incidentally, tradition and hearsay not at all. And lest it be supposed that we have, perhaps, failed to consider the possibility that the Continental Congress might also have purchased some furnishings on its own, we hasten to rejoin that this possibility had indeed been explored. The Continental Congress did in fact make purchases of furniture, but entirely for the executive departments (Treasury and War Office), not for the Assembly room. As a guest of Pennsylvania, it had no need to make purchases for the Assembly room. Thus, when one member of Congress moved that a "handsome Time Piece" be purchased and set up in the Assembly room, as a present from Congress to Pennsylvania for use of the room, Pennsylvania's delegation was instructed to request that the proposal be withdrawn as the Assembly "expected no consideration"--and it was withdrawn.

Now that we have reviewed our knowledge of the appearance of the Assembly room from its first occupancy by the Provincial Assembly until 1776, we are faced by the exciting question of what happened to the State House furnishings of 1776. Despite intensive research which has included examination of thousands of pages of official records, the question remains unanswered. Here are some of the alternatives. Did Congress and the State government, faced with the imminent occupation of Philadelphia by the British, leave the furniture behind? Or did they transport it to Lancaster and then to York in September 1777, then back again in July 1778?

There have been many conjectures. But the most plausible one seems to be that with few exceptions the appointments were probably abandoned to the

occupying British, as a matter of practical necessity, and the latter before leaving Philadelphia either destroyed or removed them. This conjecture is supported by strong circumstantial evidence. For if the furniture had been transported to Lancaster and York, then back to Philadelphia again, there should be some evidence of payment for transportation in the official records still extant. But there is no such evidence, at least none that can be identified. On the other hand, if the furniture had been left behind, there would be no compelling reason for recording the fact, since no transaction involving public funds had taken place. If, however, the furniture had been destroyed or removed, new furniture would have been purchased, and the purchase would necessarily be on record.

Which is precisely the case! For the records show that in the course of less than 6 months following the return of Congress and the State government to the State House, more than £250 were spent for new furnishings. The significance of this becomes clear when considered in relation to similar purchases prior to British occupation. Thus, in the 18 months between May 1775 and December 1776, during which time the Second Continental Congress had to be accommodated, a little more than £30 were expended; while for the 33 years between 1742 and 1778, £141.

Therefore, notwithstanding the possibility that such factors as price variations and an increase in the membership of the Assembly after 1776, may explain some of the great disparity in the figures and the periods they represent, these comparative statistics, coupled with the knowledge that the State House was found after occupation in a sad state, lead to the plausible conclusion that relatively few items of furnishings could have been left for the use of Congress and the State government. It must be remembered, however, that this would not necessarily apply to small, intrinsically valuable items. When Congress returned to Philadelphia late in June 1778, cleaning and emergency repairs necessitated by the British occupancy of the building were speedily undertaken. Time was of the essence, for the first French Minister to the United States was on his way to Philadelphia and the Assembly room had to be placed in readiness for his reception.

The original furnishings of the Assembly room were gone; new ones had to be purchased. And since this was primarily the responsibility of the host, the Pennsylvania Assembly, it is not surprising that in the records of the Continental Congress we find evidence of only two specific purchases for the room. The one purchase consisted of two large armchairs, expressly for the reception of the French Minister; the other a glass ink pot "for the President."

But the records of the State, on the other hand, show the following items of furnishings bought in 1778 for the Assembly room and for the "use of the Assembly":

((28)) Windsor chairs made by Francis Trumble.....	L84. 15s. 0d
? Benches made by Michael Kuntz.....	L 3. 0s. 0d
20 Windsor chairs made by Francis Trumble.....	L60. 0s. 0d
? Candlesticks, snuffers, "etc.".....	L10. 0s. 0d
? Locks, fire shovel, tongs, "etc.".....	L11. 12s. 6d

It should be noted here, additionally, that the Supreme Executive Council of the State also purchased for use in the Council chamber on the second floor, 19 Windsor chairs made by Francis Trumble. This is important and should be kept in mind, for we see that all but the two special chairs which Congress purchased, about 67 were of the Windsor type (see figs. 5, 6, 7, and 8).

From this inventory it would appear that the appointments of the Assembly room on August 6, when Conrad Alexandre Gérard presented his credentials, were limited to bare necessities. And other evidence confirms this. For the "Plan" (see fig. 3) which Gérard submitted to his government in his report of August 7, shows but 2 large chairs, 34 other chairs, and a large desk. The large chairs undoubtedly represent the ones already alluded to, purchased by Congress for the occasion; while the others must be the Windsors purchased by the State. We have no evidence to account for the purchase of a desk at this time, however, nor of green cloth with which, Gérard states, the table was covered; these may have been borrowed for this special occasion.

There are extant, fortunately, several eye-witness accounts of this important ceremony, and these give us an excellent description not only of the event but also its physical setting. Most detailed is that of the French Minister himself, given in his official report, from which we cite (translated) the following:

At the door of the State House the guards presented arms.

The Minister Plenipotentiary advanced into the hall of Congress preceded by the members of the Committee who conducted him to a chair placed facing the President where the Minister Plenipotentiary seated himself.

The two deputies seated themselves two steps behind him.

The President was seated in an ((upholstered)) armchair upon a platform of two steps, in front of him a table covered with a green cloth.

The members of Congress, to the number of 32--the body being composed of 35 members present--were seated in a semi-circle, to the right and left, on chairs on the floor; these chairs were less impressive than the armchairs of the President and the Minister Plenipotentiary, which were identical ((of equal importance))....

The Minister Plenipotentiary then presented his credentials, through the Secretary of the Legation to the President, who opened them and gave them to the Secretary of Congress, who was upon the steps of the platform. Thereupon the Secretary read the papers and read also the translation in English:

Then Mr. ((Richard Henry)) Lee presented the Minister Plenipotentiary to the President and to Congress, who bowed mutually and the Minister Plenipotentiary gave his discourse standing. He then seated himself and sent a copy of his discourse to the President by the Secretary of the Legation.

The President rose to reply and the whole assembly stood, likewise the Minister Plenipotentiary, during the entire discourse.

When he was finished everybody sat down and the President sent a copy of his discourse to the Minister, by the Secretary of Congress.

Having received it, the Minister Plenipotentiary rose, bowed to the President, who returned the salutation. He then bowed to the members of Congress who responded to it in like manner.

The Committee then escorted the Minister Plenipotentiary back in the same order observed in bringing him to the audience....

Gérard's description is corroborated even to minor details by Elias Boudinot's letter to his wife, from which we cite a brief extract containing additional details on the appointments:

...Our President was seated in a Mahogany armed chair on a platform raised about two feet, with ((a)) large table covered with green cloth and the secretary along side of him. The Members were all seated round within the Bar and a large armed chair in the middle opposite the President for the Plenipo((tentiary))....

These excellent descriptions will be of very great value to us in the eventual restoration of the Assembly room. We may not, however, accept them without further question in every detail as representative of the day to day sittings of Congress. To cite two instances needing study: first, no tables are indicated for the principal delegates of the 13 states; and second, the chair of the delegates are neatly arranged along the north, east, and south walls. As to the first instance, there is some warrant for the belief that normally each principal delegate had before him a small table, like the 2 tables in the Pine and Savage painting (see fig. 4). If this proves correct, then it would appear that the Assembly room, at the time of this ceremony,

was only partially furnished. As to the second instance, the chairs of the delegates in the Pine and Savage painting are more casually arranged than on Gérard's plan, suggesting the possibility that except for ceremonial occasions such as this one, informality was rather the rule.

As to the tables, it is interesting to note that in 1782, at a public audience to the new French Minister on the occasion of the birth of a Dauphin, they are in evidence among the appointments--as described by Charles Thomson:

...The house was arranged in the following order--The President in a chair on a platform raised two steps from the floor with a large table before him. The members of Congress in chairs on the floor to his right and left with small tables before them. The tables were all covered with green cloth. On the left of the chair sat 1. delegates from Massachusetts, 2. Rhode Island, 3. Connecticut, 4. New York, 5. New Jersey. On his right sat 1. Georgia 2. S. Carolina, 3. Virginia, 4. Maryland, 5. Delaware, 6. Pennsylvania. The whole ((sat)) in a semi-circle. New Hampshire and North Carolina were not represented.

Another challenging question is this: Did green baize cover the tables during ordinary sessions or just on special occasions? No until 1780 do we find in State accounts an order for green baize--when a large quantity was purchased at a cost of £246. 1s. 10d. And even this seems to have been intended solely for the use of the State, for on May 9, 1782, just 4 days before the audience for the French Minister, Secretary Thomson had to write to the Superintendent of Finance, Robert Morris, that:

It is the desire of Congress that the table before the president and the tables before the Members be covered with green cloth on the day of the public Audience. Mr. Patton waits on you to receive your directions, respecting this matter.

But if this suggests that prior to the audience green cloth was not generally used, we also have evidence to show that thereafter the opposite was true. Prince de Broglie, who visited the State House in that year, certainly confirms the fact.

This French nobleman's description of the Assembly room during a session of Congress, moreover, is most illuminating in the new details it adds to our knowledge:

...The Chamber is large and without any other ornament than a bad engraving of Montgomery, one of Washington, and a copy of the Declaration of Independence. It is furnished with 13 tables, each covered with a green cloth. One of the principal repre-

sentatives of each of the thirteen states sits during the session at one of these tables. The President of The Congress has his place in the middle of the hall upon a sort of throne. The clerk is seated just below him.

The copy of the Declaration of Independence may have been a printed broadside; the Montgomery engraving was that of General Richard Montgomery, killed in the assault on Quebec; while the "engraving" of Washington (an error on De Broglie's or the translator's part) was actually the full-length painting by Charles Willson Peale which had been ordered in 1779 by the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania for the Council chamber. We are able to identify this famous painting, now at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, from the detailed description of another French visitor, the Marquis de Chastellux, who in that same year said that the handsomest ornament in the Assembly room was a "portrait of Washington larger than life; he is on foot, noble and easy attitude, canon, colours, and all attributes of war form the accessories of the picture."

To complete the inventory, as far as we know today, of furnishings and fixtures in the Assembly room during this period of the Continental Congress, we need mention some other items. First, late in 1778 Congress purchased for its use an atlas of America which, however, may have been in the Committee room, for there is no indication that it was actually placed in the Assembly room. Then, early the following year, the Pennsylvania Assembly had stove pipes put in and extensive ironwork done, at a cost of £107.14s., tending to suggest that during the previous winter fireplaces may have been used for heat. Finally, we must not forget the expendables: spermaceti candles, firewood, quills, "water" ink, "blank" sand, newspapers, stationery, etc.; these accessories were as much a part of the setting as the permanent objects, and without them restoration could not be complete.

In June 1783, Congress forsook Philadelphia; in 1785, the Pennsylvania Assembly, which in the interim had been meeting on the second floor, re-occupied its former quarters. And this change of tenants presents us with another problem: that of determining what disposition was made of the two sets of furnishing, the one left behind by Congress, the other used by the Pennsylvania Assembly till then. We must know this to determine the physical setting of the Assembly room at the time of the Constitutional Convention of 1787. Certain objects may have been removed by Congress, among them the two large armchairs which it purchased in 1778. The Pennsylvania Assembly, on the other hand, seems to have retained much of its old furnishings for use downstairs: its Windsor chairs, the high-back speaker's chair made by John Folwell (see fig. 10), the mace, and perhaps the benches. Thus, while the general appearance of the Assembly room may not have changed radically, we still have the all-important fact of change in details. And by 1787 we must note also among the furnishings of the room, Venetian blinds, perhaps installed for the first time, and three stoves.

We would wish that some traveler in Philadelphia during these years had taken the trouble of describing the room for posterity. But even Brissot, the usually verbose Frenchman, in describing the Assembly in session a year later, was content to say only that "50 members ((were)) present seated on chairs inclosed by a balustrade. Behind the balustrade, is the gallery for spectators. . . .

The reorganization of the Pennsylvania Legislature into a bicameral body in 1790 did not affect the Assembly room. The House of Representatives, substantially unchanged, continued meeting in its historic quarters. Nor do the available records show any indication of changes in physical arrangement before 1799. But in that year the State government moved to Lancaster, the new capital, and the Assembly room became, for the first time since 1742, an empty shell. Nothing was left behind but the bare walls, as far as we can establish. And the lot of the Assembly room for the next two decades was to become one of neglect and change, even more violent perhaps than that imposed on it in the heat of war by British occupation.

The 19 century represents a new phase in the story of the appointments of the Assembly room. From the standpoint of the underlying purpose of this report, that of determining historic conditions, there is actually very little more to tell here. But this "transitional" period, for such we might call it until the historic appearance of the rooms have been reestablished once again, is nevertheless both interesting and important.

Sometime after 1800, the Assembly room was turned into a court room; and the appointments for the next 20 years, though we lack details, were probably typical court-room furnishings and fixtures of the early 19th century. Then in 1824, on the occasion of Lafayette's visit to Philadelphia, the room underwent thorough renovation and refurnishing. The lavish appointments included a chandelier which cost \$200. Lafayette's memorable visit marked a turning point in the history of the room. From that time on the dominant theme was to be a growing public interest in its future and desire to see it restored as a shrine.

In 1831 the City Councils directed that the room be refurnished as it appeared at the time of the Declaration of Independence. But this proved impossible, and 2 years later the Committee on City Property reported that "the Committee finding it impossible to execute the direction, it ((Assembly room)) has since remained without furniture, and almost as a lumber room." Unsuccessful efforts to refurnish the room "as it appeared in 1776" were to be renewed from time to time.

Meanwhile in 1846, in response to public demand, the room was opened to the public as a historic museum and gallery. In 1852 the Liberty Bell was brought down from the steeple and placed on an octagonal pedestal in the

southeast corner of the room. Two years later, at the sale of Charles Willson Peale's famous gallery, the City purchased more than one hundred oil portraits of Colonial, Revolutionary, and Republican figures. These were placed on permanent exhibit in the room. And in further response to this widening appeal of the Assembly room as a museum, other paintings, Revolutionary relics, and curios were added from time to time (see fig. 14.)

Even a few objects purporting to have formed a part of the 1776 furnishings and fixtures were added. A chandelier (possibly the one bought in 1824) was installed in 1847. This chandelier, incidentally, has been and continues to be the subject of intensive study to establish its true origin. This much is known: there is no record of a chandelier acquired prior to 1824; in 1824 the Assembly room was fitted up with new furniture, including a chandelier; in the years following 1824 this new furniture was disposed of and by the 1830's none remained in the room; and in 1846, when the Assembly room was furnished once again, the present chandelier was discovered.

The other reputedly historic articles of 1776 returned in this period were the Speaker's chair and a table, brought back from Harrisburg in 1867. The Speaker's chair (see fig. 10) while not the "Hancock chair" as some have claimed, is believed to be the one purchased by the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1779. As for the table, this may be one of several purchased for the use of the State in the 1790's; however, there is no evidence to indicate either that it was ever used in the Assembly room, or even that it resembled any thus used.

In spite of past disappointments, the tantalizing thought of recovering the original furnishings of 1776, we see, persisted; and one man at least believed that he could succeed where others failed. Accordingly, in 1871, as the centennial of the Declaration of Independence approached, Frank M. Etting, a Philadelphian, conceived and carried out a plan. On the positive side, he succeeded in recovering from the Capitol in Harrisburg what is believed to be the original inkstand (see fig. 9) made for the Assembly by Philip Syng, Jr., in 1752, and used at the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

But his accumulation of a number of paintings and copies of signers of the Declaration of Independence, most of them of slight artistic merit and doubtful authenticity, was of little benefit to the Assembly room. Most incongruous, perhaps, were the 13 upholstered mahogany armchairs which he collected in various places in the erroneous belief that they had been in the Assembly room in 1776. Their very presence in the room has since gained for them a measure of acceptance. The documentary evidence of course refutes Etting's claim, and authorities on early American furniture agree in their attribution of these chairs to the decade of the 1790's.

* * * * *

Thus we have seen that the original furnishings and accessories of the Assembly room, with one exception, disappeared without trace. New appointments took their place in 1778 and the years immediately following. Included among these were 2 mahogany armchairs, a high-back speaker's chair, about 34 Windsor chairs, 13 small tables and green cloth to cover them, 2 stoves, an engraving of General Montgomery, the full-length portrait of Washington, and a copy of the Declaration of Independence. In time these replacements, too, disappeared, or were removed in 1799, when the State government abandoned the State House and set up the new capital in Lancaster.

Finally, with the exception of the silver inkstand of 1752 and the Speaker's (rising sun) chair of 1779, which have since been recovered, none of the objects in the Assembly room today are authentic survivals or counterparts of the furnishings of 1775-87.

The Supreme Court Chamber

Not a shred of evidence has yet come to light on furnishings and fixtures relating to the Supreme Court chamber. The secret still lies in the undiscovered account of original purchases made in 1742. It may be surmised that the interior appointments in all probability were both sparse and plain. Most conspicuous perhaps were the judges' bench and bar. Heating must have been provided by closed stoves, in the absence of fireplaces. For seating, there had to be three chairs, probably leather-covered armchairs, for the justices, and possibly a few chairs and tables for court principles, together with benches for spectators. Accessories, too, must have been in evidence--stationery, quills, inkstand, lawbooks, etc. For adornment, there may have been curtains or blinds. The King's arms over the judges' bench, which the patriots ripped off and burned in the Square on July 8, 1776, is certainly a fact.

With the exception of the King's arms, our first item of information is for 1779, when the State paid David Tew £15 for engraving a seal for the Supreme Court. This apparently was the seal of Pennsylvania, suspended over the "seat of Supreme Court" on the west end of the room. Another reference to it appears 6 years later, in the Pennsylvania Evening Herald for November 12, 1785:

The report of the committee appointed (some days since) to consider on the petition of Rutter and Jugiez, praying payment for painting, &c the state arms, now suspended in the supreme court, was read....

The "&c" in the account may stand for repairs or alterations of a delicate nature, for Martin Jugiez was a carver noted for his skill and artistry.

It is interesting to note that this State seal replaced the royal coat of arms, which had been ripped off the wall 3 years earlier, on July 8, 1776, by a band of patriots and burned in State House Yard.

One other item, also for 1779, exhausts our present knowledge of the furnishings and fixtures in the chamber during this period: John Pinkerton was paid £50 for 2 "settees." These were undoubtedly benches, and may have been replacements or additions to other benches already in the chamber. We may note, also, that from this limited data it is possible to visualize, approximately, the appearance of these benches (see fig. 32); for several examples of Pinkerton's craftsmanship and that of others have survived.

As for a contemporary description of the Supreme Court's furnishings and fixtures, to date we have found none. Even Manasseh Cutler, who in 1787 visited the State House, merely said:

The Supreme Court was now sitting. This bench consists of only three judges. Their robes are scarlet; the lawyers, black. The Chief Judge, Mr. ((Thomas)) McKean, was sitting with his hat on, which is the custom, but struck me as being very odd, and seemed to derogate from the dignity of a judge.

In 1790 the State bought one Venetian blind from David Evans, cabinet-maker, at the cost of £3.10. This fact bespeaks the presence of other blinds--and probably their use earlier than 1790--for patently the purchase of 1 blind for a room with 8 windows could hardly suggest other than a replacement. Then in the following year 2 stoves were bought, at the cost £29. In 1792, we again find an item covering 2 stoves together with 213 pounds of stove pipes for which Jacob Eckfelt was paid £20.7s.5d. The two items suggest two sets of stoves, but other data available in connection with them indicate that actually both refer to the same set.

Any attempt at interpreting this limited data for practical purposes would be unwarranted at this time; but we may suggest by way of conjectures that these stoves were probably of the "cannon" type, and that very likely they were located in the northeast and southeast corners of the chamber, respectively. For, in the first place, open or Franklin-type stoves would have required fireplaces--and there is no evidence of such ever having existed in the chamber; while the other types of closed stoves ("six-"and "tenplate") would have been awkward if not impractical in a public building. And secondly, the unusual quantity of stove pipes (213 pounds) purchased suggests a maximum distance from the chimneys, which were in the west wall and extended only to the second floor level. To reach them from the east end of the room, consequently, the two stoves would have required between 110 and 120 feet of stove pipes.

There is support for this conjecture, also, in the fact that as late as 1786 the General Assembly discussed a resolution for casing the open arches and putting in a stove; but the matter was tabled. Spectators sitting near the east end of the chamber were exposed, in winter, to the cold air of the unheated Hallway. It may be, therefore, that in response to repeated complaints, the two stoves were finally put in.

Sometime after 1800 the Supreme Court vacated the chamber, which then was taken over by the Mayor's Court. From 1854 to 1873 it was occupied by one of the Common Pleas courts; and from 1874 until recent years, by the "National Museum." No real attempt has ever been made to restore its original furnishings.

* * * * *

In summation, the original appointments of the Supreme Court chamber have disappeared. For the period following and up to the Federal Convention of 1787, moreover, we have at this time evidence only for two settees and the State seal (1779), and indications of stoves and Venetian blinds. None of the furnishings appear to have survived with the possible exception of the three upholstered armchairs in the chamber today, which a plausible tradition assigns to this period and which might well prove authentic.

The Hallway

The term "Hallway" or its variants does not appear in connection with furnishings in any of the many documents thus far examined. It is, therefore, quite possible--though the thought is advanced at this point simply as a conjecture--that the Hallway actually was never appointed, at least not to any appreciable extent. Considering the function of the Hallway, indeed, it is difficult to visualize the need for such furniture as chairs and tables. And the possibility of the use of stoves is precluded by the absence of chimneys in this part of the building.

Briefly, then, the physical history of the first floor interior is one of many changes--changes in the architecture and appointments which have been motivated in turn by practical needs, early patriotic interest, and a more subtle desire for the restoration of original conditions. The pattern of these changes, moreover, particularly in its architectural aspects, is an uneven interweaving of all these elements. The result is that we have today neither a reflection of conditions of the 19th century, nor certainly of historic conditions of the 18th, but rather a mixture of both periods.

THE PROGRAM OF CONTINUING RESEARCH

In this project of a complete restoration of a portion of the most important historic building in America, we have assumed a great responsibility. We owe it to present and future generations of Americans, indeed to the very principles we cherish and commemorate in the venerable State House, that this responsibility be discharged with faithful regard to truth and integrity. The spurious, the counterfeit, the blatant make-believe, have no place in our scheme. And so indeed the National Park Service and the General Federation of Women's Clubs have quite properly agreed that the goal must be nothing less than an accurate restoration of the historic appointments and architectural details of the first floor--a faithful "re-creation of the authentic atmosphere."

But this is not easy. It is a slow, painstaking process. At the outset one cannot even visualize the final result, let alone the extent of the task. Unlike other projects, this one cannot be done in terms of "target dates." For research is like detective work; it does not readily conform with schedules.

The experience of examining large masses of original material, to cull the pertinent from the irrelevant, is at once challenging, stimulating, disappointing, and exhausting. Thus, for instance, our historians have found three descriptions of the architectural order of the State House--each different. If we had found one and accepted it uncritically, perhaps an important phase of our work would now be completed. However, in this "embarrassment of riches," we find the Assembly room described as Doric in 1774, painted as Ionic by Robert Edge Pine about 1784, while in 1819, a writer recalled it as Corinthian in all its details.

Sometime the embarrassment is one of poverty, however. One historian, for instance, eagerly embarked upon the choice assignment of examining the historically valuable Penn manuscripts at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. This large collection of documents, containing the correspondence and public accounts of the Proprietary government of the Province of Pennsylvania in the 17th and 18th centuries, roused high hopes of rich finds. When our weary researcher returned after examining some 25,600 items, however, he had found exactly one pertinent fact--that the coat of arms of the Penn family adorned the east wall of the Assembly room in 1768. Amazingly enough, though, this was a completely new discovery in 1953.

Experiences of this kind are but the daily fare of the working historian, and are more than balanced by the stimulation of new fields as yet unexplored. There is, too, the deep satisfaction that each piece of evidence however pain-

fully unearthed, is a contribution to the knowledge of our foremost national shrine, and of the most vital segment of the American past with which it is so indelibly associated. In this highly specialized area of American history-- aptly phrased, "history written on the land"--so long clouded by legend and obscured by half-truths and even misrepresentations, we cannot but be happy and grateful at the opportunity to make a comprehensive and exhaustive study of the physical setting of our American beginnings.

When we look back on the status of our knowledge in January 1951, at the time the National Park Service assumed custody of Independence Hall, we are encouraged by our findings. For the 438 man-days devoted to research since that date and prior to February 1953, and the 221½ man-days of the past year (up to November 1), combine to show even in this early stage enough developments to hearten the most pessimistic of us. From the collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Library Company of Philadelphia, the Ridgway Library, Philadelphia's City Hall, and the Division of Public Records in Harrisburg, we have garnered 17,873 items pertinent to our larger problem here at Independence National Historical Park, and 1,275 of these are pertinent to the immediate problem of restoration and refurnishing.

But much research still remains to be accomplished. Even a partial listing would show at least 38 major depositories in the United States which will have to be visited in the course of our research. Scattered through 26 cities in 17 states, from coast to coast, these depositories house many vital collections pertaining to independence and the establishment of the United States; among them are at least 141 collections which concern us directly and will therefore have to be examined. And as the research progresses, it is expected that other collections will be discovered. Nor do we include in our reckoning the very considerable and very important foreign archives, particularly those of England, France, and Germany. These cannot be taken into account at the present time, not until we have had an opportunity to study the transcripts, photostats, and microfilm copies of such archival material as may be available at the Library of Congress. They may embrace a goodly portion of the very material we are interested in, notwithstanding the fact that cursory examination made recently would strongly suggest the opposite-- at least as far as the coverage of British and French archives is concerned. Altogether, the manuscript material which must be examined in the course of our research comprise, by estimate, some ten million items.

There is no avoiding this task, if we are to attain our declared goal. But once having attained that goal, as assuredly we shall, it will have been well worth while.

IV

PICTORIAL HISTORY OF THE FIRST
FLOOR OF INDEPENDENCE HALL

Fig. 1

For more than a century, search has been made for the construction details of the State House. Perhaps one day somewhere among unexplored manuscripts, we may find them. But until then we shall probably continue to feel our way in attempting to visualize the original architectural composition of the interior. This plan of the State House, 1732, attributed to Andrew Hamilton, shows the elevation of the main building substantially as it was erected. Note absence of fireplaces in Supreme Court chamber (right side of plan in upper right hand corner).

According to the late Horace Wells Sellers who served as chairman of a special committee of the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects investigating the physical history of the State House:

"In the original design the State House was intended to be a simple rectangle, without tower. The north front on Chestnut Street was to be ornamented with stone quoins at the angles, stone band courses and keystones, and between the upper and lower windows a row of plain stone panels, all presumably just as it stands now. On the opposite side, facing on the enclosed state House Yard, economy counseled the omission of this stone work, and brick was substituted throughout. The spacing of the windows on the facade clearly shows the original intention as to the interior arrangements: a wide central hall wide enough to include the door with a window on either side on the first floor and the three central windows above, was to run straight through the building. In this hall one early plan shows the proposed stairway with large rooms opening to the right and left on each floor similar to the arrangement in so many private mansions of this period."

Courtesy of Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

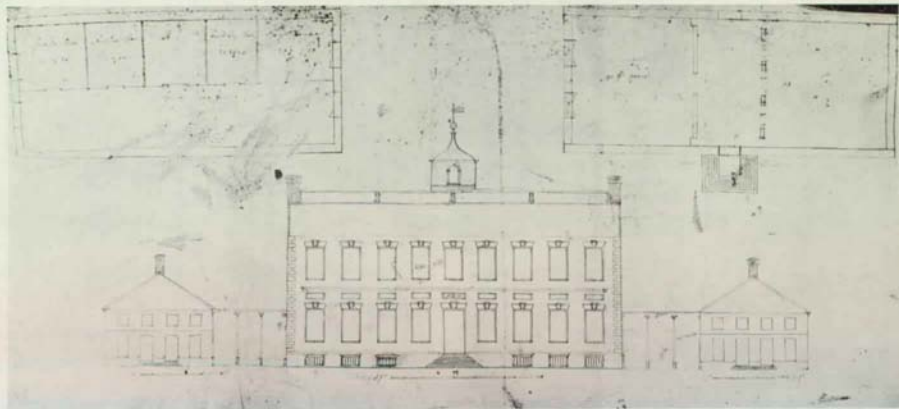


Fig. 2

This unidentified plan, drawn before 1749, is, perhaps, attributable to Edmund Woolley the builder-architect. Note location of staircase in Hallway; the tower, location of present staircase, was not erected until 1753. The plan is further discussed by the late Mr. Sellers as follows:

"But after the outside walls were somewhat, if not wholly built, the scheme was quite revised. It was decided to put the stairway in a separate tower extension at the back, an arrangement which permitted at once a more monumental treatment of the stairs and gave more room in the building itself. The central hallway no longer needed to be as wide as at first intended, so the east and west rooms could be enlarged at its expense. Without regard for the facade, the cross division walls were moved closer together until they came directly opposite the windows on either side of the door. In front these windows were set with glass like all the others, and fitted with inside shutters perpetually closed but thus preserving the external symmetry of the building. In the rear the tower when subsequently erected effectually covered in the openings. The interior woodwork has been so cleverly arranged that not one person in a hundred would even notice the discrepancy between the exterior and interior."

Courtesy of Historical Society of Pennsylvania

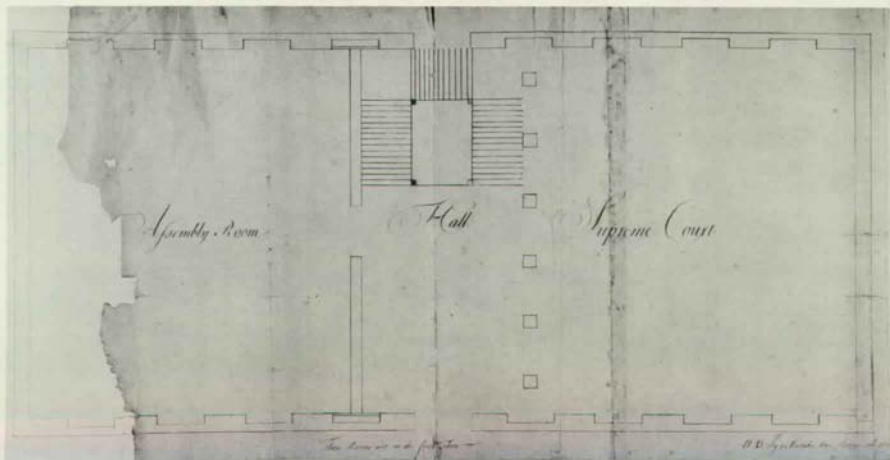
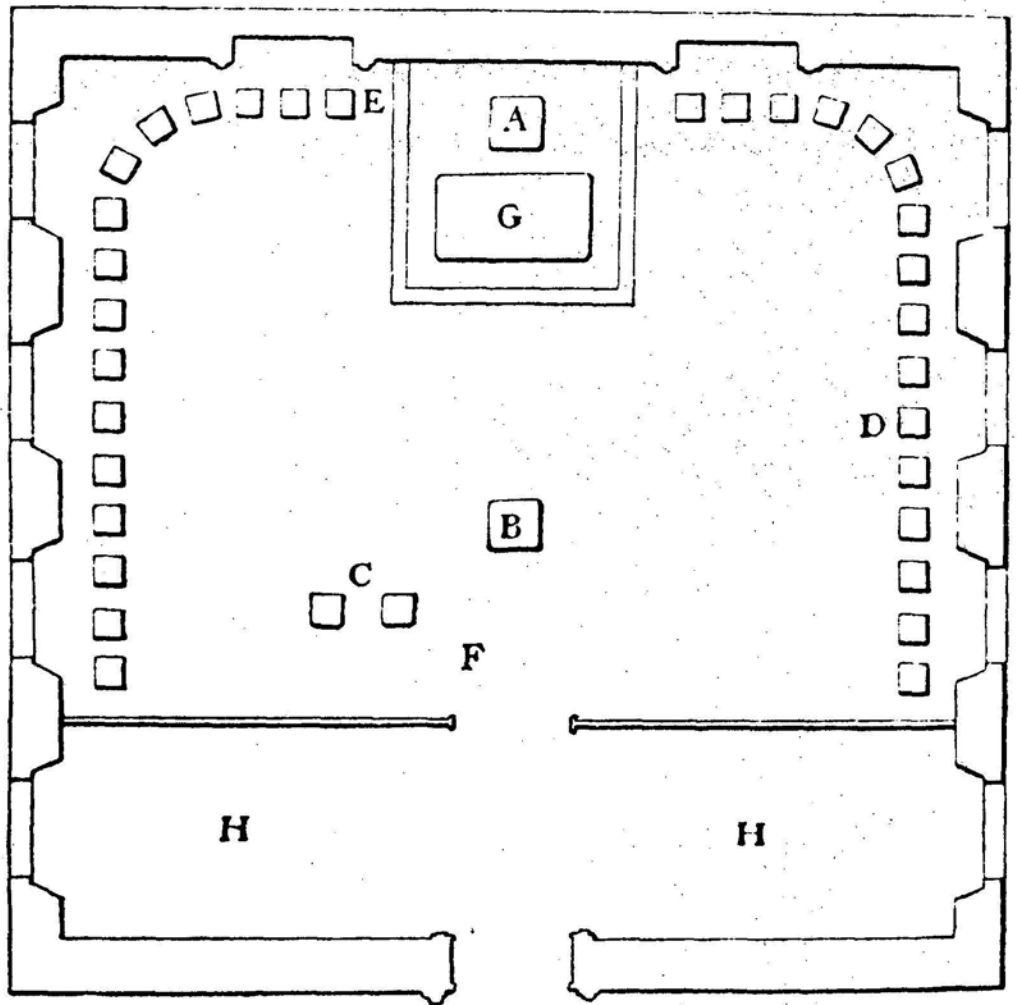


Fig. 3

Seating plan of the Assembly room, State House, on August 6, 1778, at the time the French minister, Conrad Alexandre Gérard, presented his credentials to Congress. From Henri Doniol, Histoire de la Participation de la France a l'établissement des États-Unis d'Amérique (Paris, Imprimerie National, c.1888) III, 212. Note raised platform at upper end; "A" - armchair of President; "B" - armchair of Minister; "C" - seating for the ((Congressional)) Committee; "D" - seats for the members of Congress; "E" - Secretary of Congress; "F" - Secretary and Committee of the ((French)) Legation, standing; "G" - Table covered with green cloth; "H" - Public standing ((behind the bar)).

PLAN

*de la Séance du Congrès des États-Unis de l'Amérique)
lors de la remise des lettres de créance
du Ministre Plénipotentiaire du Roi.*



RENVOI.

- A. Fauteuil du Président
- B. Fauteuil du Ministre Plénipotentiaire
- C. Sièges du Comité
- D. Membres du Congrès
- E. Secrétaire du Congrès
- F. Secrétaire de Légation.
ou cortège debout
- G. Table couverte d'un tapis vert
- H. Public debout.

Fig. 4

"Congress Voting Independence, July 4, 1776." Painting begun by Robert Edge Pine (c.1784) and completed after his death by Edward Savage. A view of the Assembly room in the State House looking northeast. Since Pine painted in the Assembly room--and had ample opportunity to become thoroughly familiar at first hand with every detail--we must give serious consideration to the architectural data that he reveals. This painting is certainly the earliest contemporary view we possess. Yet there are serious discrepancies in the details of the architectural treatment of the room if we compare this view with the room of today. It is apparent that the architectural order here employed is Ionic, whereas that of today is Roman Doric. This contradiction will have to be reconciled through further research. As regards the furnishings, however--Windsor chairs, tables covered with cloth, etc.--Pine's accuracy has been substantiated by original documentary data; and so in this respect the painting will be of immediate value in the restoration of the Assembly room. You will notice, too, that the painting shows a platform or dais of apparently two steps with the figure of John Hancock seated in a high-back chair in the background. Back of him may be seen an elaborate, pedimental-topped frame between two pilasters of the Ionic order. To the left is another pilaster, with indications of fluting, and further to the left a small pedimented door; in the corner, a half pilaster. Undoubtedly the walls between the pilasters are paneled, and it appears from the visible details that these panels are not identical with those of today. The entablature, too, appears at variance, although the egg-and-dart-course of the cornice appears in both cases. These contradictions will have to be reconciled through further research. Courtesy of Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

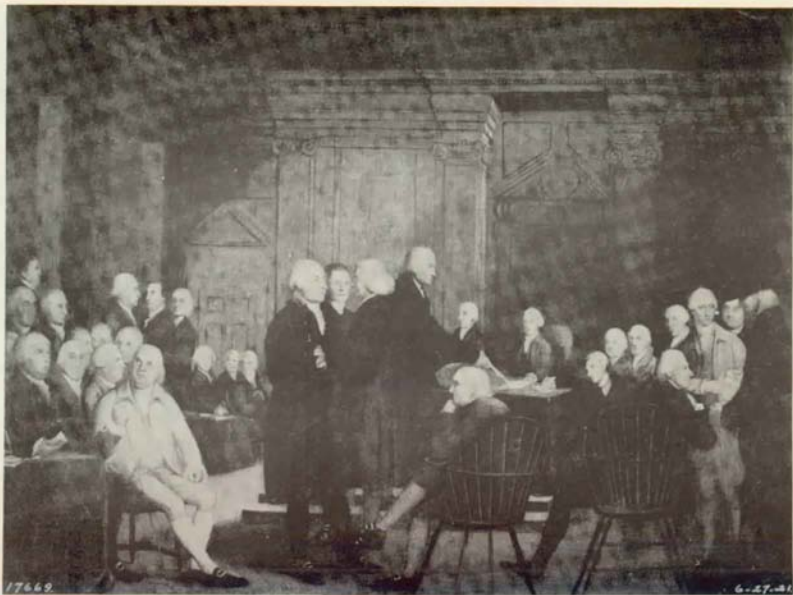


Fig. 5

Eighteenth-century hoop-back Windsor chairs. Some Windsor chairs, probably of this type, were purchased for the State House as early as 1775. From the David Stockwell collection, Philadelphia.



Fig. 6

Eighteenth-century Pennsylvania slat-back or ladder-back rush-bottom chairs. Sturdy and inexpensive, this type of chair formed a part of the furnishings of the State House prior to 1776, and some may have remained in use as late as 1777. From the David Stockwell collection, Philadelphia.



Fig. 7

Eighteenth-century comb-back and fan-back Windsor chairs. Said to be of Philadelphia origin, these were considered by some as the most dignified of the Windsors. The comb-back may have been the type, according to one authority (W. M. Hornor), supplied by Francis Trumble for the State House in 1778. From the David Stockwell collection, Philadelphia.



Fig. 8

Eighteenth-century hoop-back Windsor chairs and settee.
Windsor chairs and settees, probably of this type, replaced
the earlier furniture in the State House after 1778. From the
David Stockwell collection, Philadelphia.

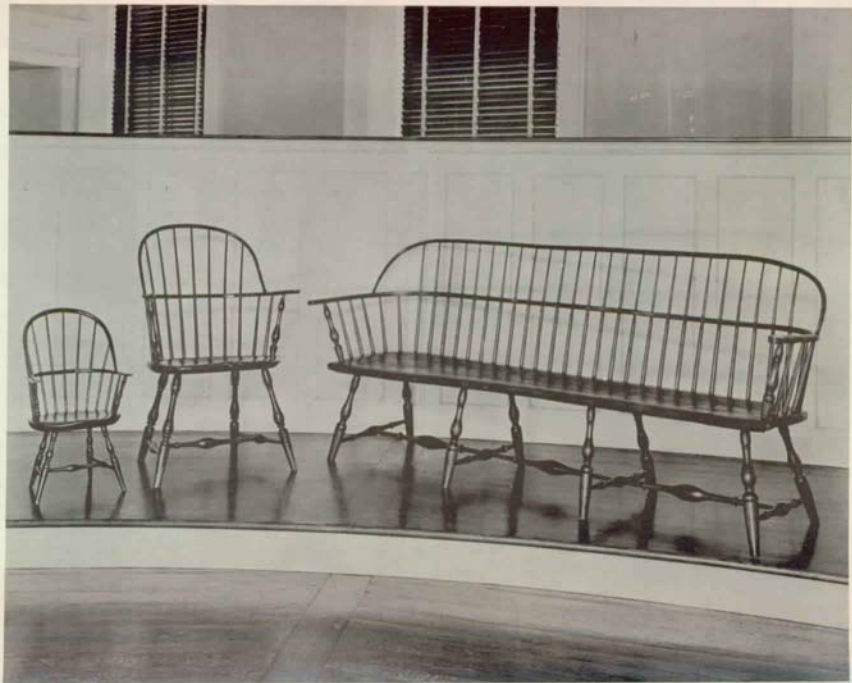


Fig. 9

Silver inkstand on display in the Assembly room of the State House. Made by Philip Syng, Jr. in 1752 for use of the Pennsylvania Assembly and believed to be the one used in signing of the Declaration of Independence. National Park Service photo.



Fig. 10

The Speaker's chair (the famous "Rising Sun" chair) in the Assembly room, State House. Purchased in 1779 for use of the Pennsylvania Assembly, it was also used by George Washington as president of the Federal Constitutional Convention which met in this room in 1787. The desk is probably of 1790 vintage (claimed by late tradition to go back to 1776). National Park Service photo.



Fig. 11

"The Declaration of Independence," begun by John Trumbull in 1785. Trumbull's famous painting as source material must be considered at least highly suspect, if not entirely ignored, in light of recent, carefully documented studies. Not only are some of the architectural details wholly at variance with now established facts, but it is also known that the artist had not even seen Philadelphia until 1790. The furnishings, too, as well as the arrangement of the chairs and tables, are inaccurate. Until recent years, the greater fame of this painting led many to accept its representation of the Assembly room and its furnishings in preference to the more authentic painting by Pine and Savage; and it served also as a basis for some of the details in earlier restorations. Courtesy of Yale University.



Fig. 12

Floor plan of the buildings on Independence Square fronting Chestnut St. in 1824 and their use by the City of Philadelphia. Note that while the general plan of the rooms on the first floor remained unchanged in the nineteenth century, the open archways leading into the Supreme Court chamber (here the Mayor's Court, right) had been cased and a single door in the center introduced. From Philadelphia in 1824. Courtesy of American Philosophical Society.

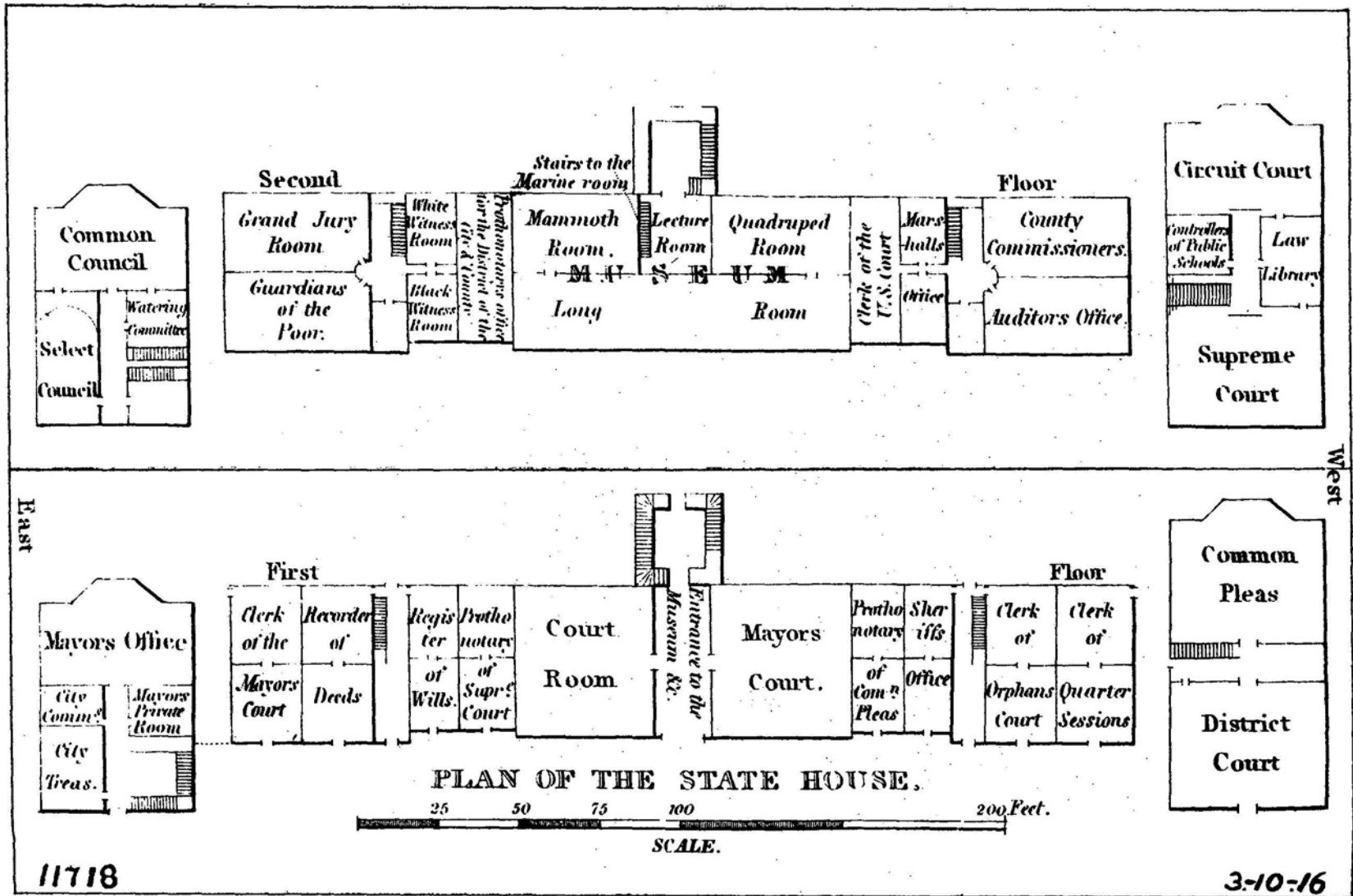


Fig. 13

Assembly room as a museum and gallery, looking east, 1853. The wooden statue of George Washington by William Rush was a prominent exhibit of the Assembly room for many years. Note the iron railing around the statue, the carpeted floor, the eagle above pedimental-topped frame, the two doors, the paintings on the wall, and the arc and stars on ceiling, all nineteenth-century innovations. The chandelier, probably the one purchased in 1824 on the occasion of Lafayette's visit to Philadelphia, was returned to the Assembly room in 1846. Drawn by Devereaux. From N. Y. Illustrated News, July 9, 1853. Courtesy of Historical Society of Pennsylvania

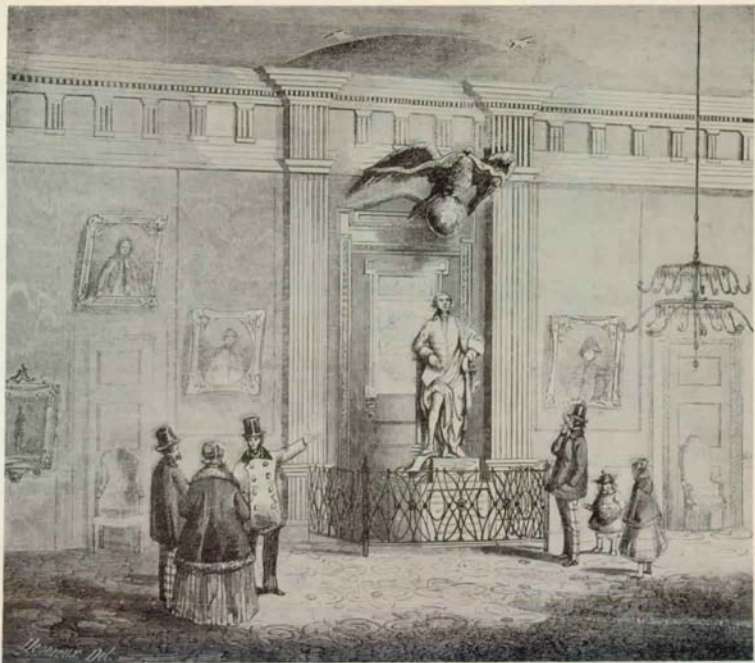


Fig. 14

Assembly room, State House, 1856, as a museum and gallery with tile floor, glass chandelier, and chairs, bench, and table around the sides of the room. The statue of Washington is not enclosed with an iron railing; the two doors, previously shown, are covered by panels and portraits. Earlier in the century columns supported the ceiling. Note Liberty Bell on 13-sided pedestal, brought down from the Tower and placed in the Assembly room in 1852. Drawn on stone by Max Rosenthal, published by Stayman & Brother, 1856. Courtesy of Historical Society of Pennsylvania.



Fig. 15

Earliest known photograph of Assembly room, State House, looking northeast, prior to restoration of 1876. Note cluttered condition of the room with, as Etting described it, "the doors, cornices, wainscoting, and the architectural characteristics of the room completely concealed beneath a mass of pictures of every kind." From small photo in Etting's "Memorial of 1776," Etting collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.



Fig. 16

Restored Assembly room, State House, 1876. Among the historical inaccuracies of the restoration are the pillars, tile floor, window drapes, and Affleck elbow chairs. The paintings on the wall are of signers of the Declaration of Independence. Note Speaker's chair in background, purchased by the Assembly of Pennsylvania in 1779, which was returned to the Assembly room in 1875.
Courtesy of Philadelphia Free Library.

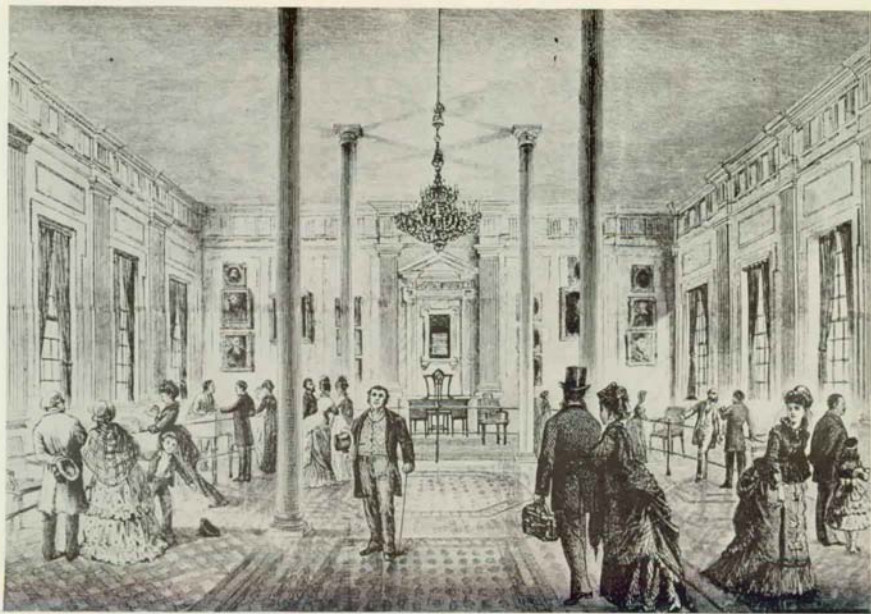


Fig. 17

Earliest known photograph of the Supreme Court chamber, northeast corner, State House, c.1874. The Court of Common Pleas vacated the chamber late in 1873 in order to provide quarters for the "National Museum," an adjunct of the restoration program for the Assembly room founded by Frank M. Etting and a group of ladies. The Museum was opened in 1874 on a tentative basis, with a miscellaneous collection of relics, antiques, state shields and curios. From small photo in Etting's "Memorial of 1776," Etting collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.



Fig. 18

View of the west wall of the Supreme Court chamber, State House, c. 1874, before restoration. Note incongruous cast-iron pillar; also absence of windows. For view after restoration see fig. 29. From small photo in Etting's "Memorial of 1776" Etting collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

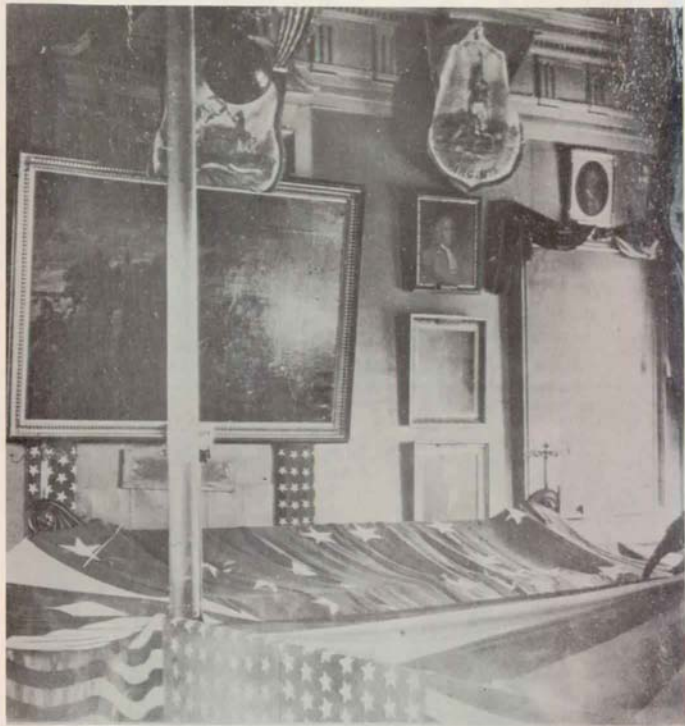


Fig. 19

Supreme Court chamber looking northeast, c.1876. The reorganized "National Museum" continued in this chamber until 1896-1897 when the chamber was restored to its earlier condition; at that time the pillars and gallery were removed and the cased arches opened. For restored view see fig. 30. From Frank M. Etting, An Historical Account of the Old State House of Pennsylvania... (2nd edition, Phila., 1891).



Fig. 20

Interior view of the first floor, State House, looking east from the Supreme Court chamber through the Hallway to the Assembly room, 1920. Note the 3 open arches (for view before restoration see fig. 17). Note, also, in Hallway, the modern bronze chandelier installed in 1920, and the centerpiece above, added in the restoration of 1897-1899; the latter have no historic basis. Courtesy of Bur. of City Prop., City of Phila.



16529.

9-16-1920.

Fig. 21

Assembly room, State House, looking northeast, 1917. This photograph affords a better view of the architectural details in the Assembly room after the restoration of 1897-1899 than the photograph preceding. Note the paneling above fireplaces, before concealed by paintings. The two pilasters, back of the Speaker's chair, are not the originals but part of the restoration of 1897-1899. The upholstered mahogany armchairs, collected in various places in the erroneous belief that they had been in the Assembly room in 1776, were placed here largely between 1871 and 1876. Their very presence in the room has since gained for them a measure of acceptance. However, documentary evidence refutes the claim for the chairs and authorities on early American furniture agree in their attribution of them to Thomas Affleck and the decade of the 1790's. Actually there is considerable evidence to show that all of these chairs might have been, and some of them had been in fact, used in Congress Hall by the Federal Congress between 1790 and 1800. Courtesy of Bur. of City prop., City of Phila.



17793

5-1-17

Fig. 22

Assembly room, State House, looking northwest, 1917. Observe rounded corner of paneling, believed to be part of the Haviland restoration of 1831, about the accuracy of which there is some doubt. The hardware on the door, substituted for the earlier hardware in 1875, is historically inaccurate. The flooring, restored this year (1917), is believed to be a good approximation of the original. Courtesy of Bureau of City Prop., City of Phila.



13774

5-1-17

Fig. 23

Assembly room, State House, looking east, 1921, with paintings on east wall and an information desk on the left. Note Peale's famous painting of George Washington near desk. Rearranging the room and its exhibits, from time to time, seems to have been the fashion in earlier years. Courtesy of Bur. of City Prop., City of Phila.



Fig. 24

Assembly room, State House, looking northwest, 1924. Rug on platform has no historical basis. The Venetian blinds (green) are of modern type and manufacture; those in use in the historic period were of different design. The chandelier was removed this year for restoration and repairs. Courtesy of Bur. of City Prop., City of Phila.



21048.

1-8-24

Fig. 25

Assembly room, State House, 1926. Close-up of fireplace and mantel, long bricked-up and concealed by the paneling (see, e.g., fig. 15); this and the other fireplace were opened again in 1897 and the details restored to what was thought to be their early appearance. They were finished with mantels, though the basis of the design for these are not known. Courtesy of Bur. of City Prop., City of Phila.



22779

1-11-1926

Fig. 26

Assembly room, looking northwest, 1931. Note drapes on windows, patterned after the drapes shown in Trumbull's famous painting and installed on the occasion of the Philadelphia Sesquicentennial Exposition. The actual appearance of the original drapes, however, is still not known. The electric floor lamps are of course modern installations and have no historical basis. The platform at the far end of the room (by the windows) is also without historical justification and will eventually be removed. Courtesy of Bur. of City Prop., City of Phila.



31263-B

6-24-1901

Fig. 27

Assembly room, State House, looking west, 1931. The centerpiece or medallion, added to the ceiling in the restoration of 1897-1899, appears to have no historic basis; certainly no evidence of its earlier use has been found. Courtesy of Bur. of City Prop., City of Phila.



Fig. 28

Assembly room, State House, looking east, 1952. This is how it appears today. The restoration and refurnishing of this room will proceed in successive stages as research data is developed and funds become available. National Park Service photo.



Fig. 29

Restored Supreme Court chamber, State House, looking northwest, 1920. Little is known concerning the judges' bench beyond the fact that the stairs and landing on either end were built as part of the restoration of 1897-1899. All of it may be of nineteenth-century origin. The windows and sham door, back of bench, are also parts of that restoration. (For "before" view, see fig. 18). So, too, the centerpiece or medallion, which, however, has no historical basis. The modern type bronze chandelier (similar to the one in the Hallway) was installed in 1920. Courtesy of Bur. of City Prop., City of Phila.



9.16.20

Fig. 30

Supreme Court chamber, State House, looking east into the Hallway, 1950. This recent photograph gives perhaps the best view of architectural details following the restoration of 1897-1899. While the fundamental features are very probably correct, there are questions today as to the authenticity of some of the details. As to the original furnishings we know very little. The grouped flags on the right and left are flags of the United Nations, temporarily displayed and since removed. Photo by Fawcett, National Park Service.

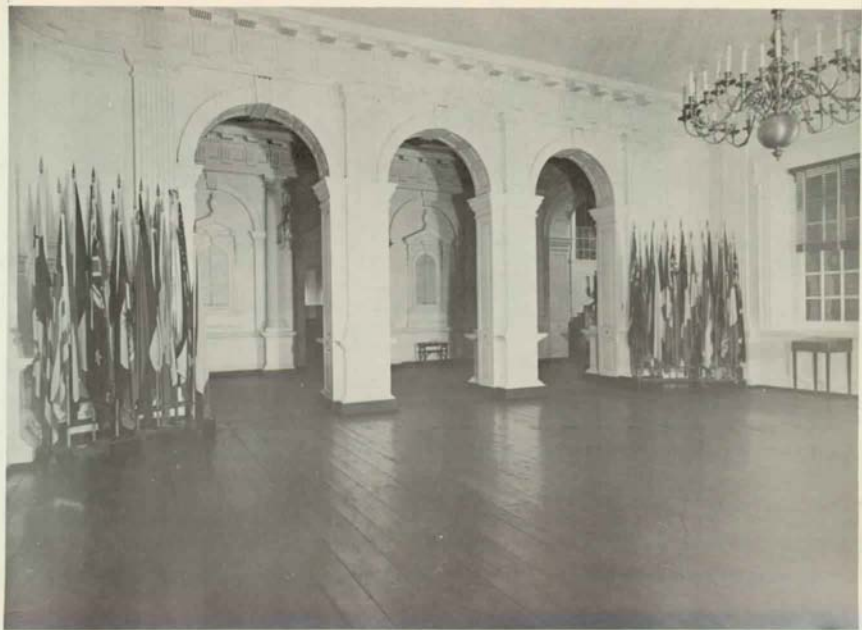


Fig. 31

Supreme Court chamber, State House, looking west, 1950. On the platform are state flags placed there in connection with the Philadelphia Sesquicentennial Exposition, since removed. In the glass cases are copies of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Note heat registers at either side of stairs. It will be one of our problems to reconcile such modern functional intrusions with an authentic restoration. Photo by Fawcett, National Park Service.



Fig. 32

Supreme Court chamber, State House, looking west, 1952. The three upholstered chairs on the bench are believed to be originals, once used by the justices of the State Supreme Court in this chamber. The eighteenth-century Windsor benches and chairs (on loan from the David Stockwell Collection, Philadelphia) are of the type once used in this and other rooms of the State House. While little is known as yet concerning the furnishings of the chamber in the historic period, we do know that benches or "settees," probably very similar to those shown here, were used. The portrait above the bench is that of William Allen, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania (1750-1774). National Park Service photo.



Fig. 33

A northeast view of Hallway, State House, looking toward the Chestnut St. entrance, 1950. The pavement, of pressed brick and part of the restoration of 1897-1899, is a reasonably accurate restoration. The gold-inscribed commemorative tablets on either side of the entrance to the Assembly room are innovations introduced in 1876; they have no historical basis. The hardware on the door replaced the earlier hardware in 1875; it is not considered authentic. While there is slight direct evidence as to the original appearance of the Hallway, this evidence tends to suggest that the Hallway of today except for the changes of the nineteenth-century, is substantially that of the historic period. Photo by Fawcett, National Park Service.



Fig. 34

Tower room, State House, looking south toward entrance to Independence Square, 1927. The Tower room dates from 1753 when the brick tower was completed to house the staircase and the State House Bell. Except for minor changes and additions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (note, for instance, commemorative tablet above staircase landing and the modern-type chandelier, installed in 1920), it is believed that the Tower room appears substantially as it did in the beginning. The fluted columns and archway are considered to be original. Courtesy of Bur. of City Prop., City of Phila.



23852

2-18-1927

Fig. 35

Tower room, State House, looking south toward Independence Square, 1950. The beautiful staircase is believed to be original, although the treads and many of the balusters are nineteenth and twentieth-century replacements. The Liberty Bell has been displayed as shown here since 1915. The Venetian blind is of modern type and manufacture; eighteenth-century blinds were of somewhat different design. There is no indication of other furnishings in the Tower room during the historic period. Photo by Fawcett, National Park Service.

