

# Centre County Court House Dedicated Last Friday.

**A Large Audience Present to Witness the Formal Exercises. Appropriate Addresses Made by Judge Orvis, Dr. Sparks and Gen. Beaver.**

Centre county's remodeled temple of justice was very appropriately dedicated for the use it is intended last Friday. Though the crowd in Bellefonte was not as large as expected there were enough people here to fill the court house, a number being compelled to stand during all the exercises.

The new City band had been engaged for the occasion and from nine o'clock until after ten gave concerts in various parts of the town. Naturally, the court house was the place of attraction for all visitors and the morning was spent in a general inspection of the building from

the poetic myths and legends of the ancient Greeks. So in the sands of Africa and Asia the mosque and graceful minaret which we know as Saracenic architecture portrays the Moslem's faith; while through central and northern Europe the spire and pointed arch best illustrates the spirit of medieval christianity; for, as has been said, each Gothic church is a prayer, petrified in stone, of the great Gothic races. Each perfect building should be not only a history but in itself a prophesy; a history of the past and projecting itself into the ages to come. In America, where we have no common national religion, the aspirations of our people best show themselves in the capitols, the homes of legislation, and in the temples of justice that adorn and embellish each county town.

This is that this beautiful building in which we now assemble meets these requirements. In 1795 James Dunlop and James Harris founded

special service and use, we see thy guiding hand in the wisdom displayed by those who have had in charge the work of restoration. And blessed be the Lord God who hath given us abundant material resources from which tribute may be claimed to discharge the obligations incurred thereby. And now, O Lord God, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants who walk before thee with all their heart, have respect unto our prayer, that thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place.

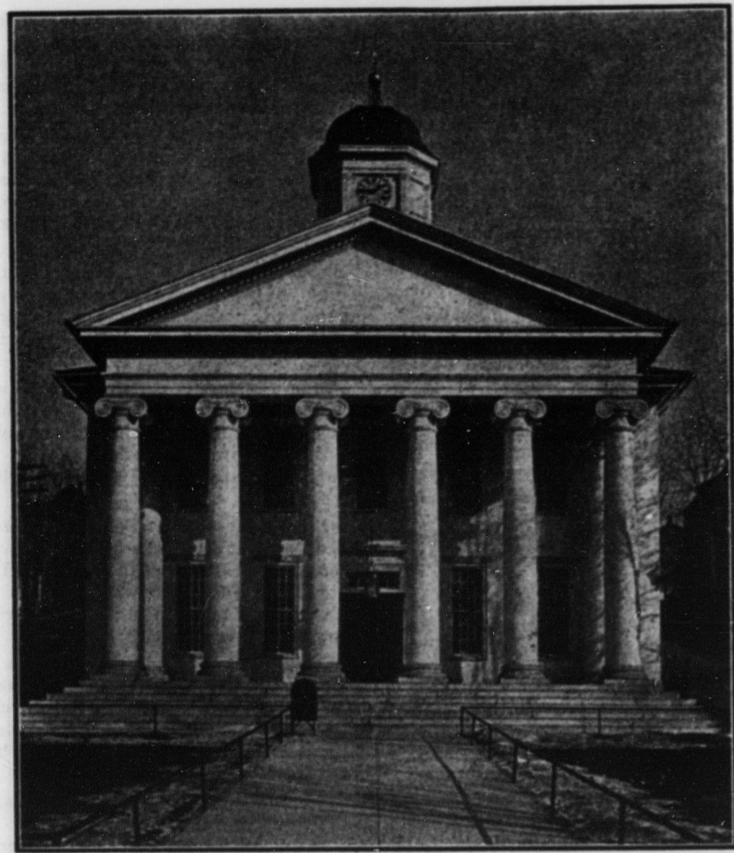
If any man trespass against his neighbor, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thee in this house; then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness.

history of this locality but of the state and nation. It is thus apparent, when urgent circumstances demanded the enlargement of this building, that these additions and alterations should be in harmony with its dignified Greek portico and be as dignified as its history and as noble as its uses and purposes. We cannot, therefore, too much commend the wisdom displayed by the present Board of County Commissioners in doing their work so economically and so well, avoiding patchwork and cheap economies, and thereby bringing this building to such a position that it will serve all the purposes of Centre county for generations to come. In saying this I am aware that there has been adverse criticism and there are rumors that there is considerable objection to their work in some of the remoter sections of the county. All these criticisms and objections are solely due to ignorance and misconception, and must yield to a personal

inspection of the Court House and to an understanding of the urgent needs of the people for its present facilities. If there be at present any divided opinion upon this work of the Board of Commissioners I unhesitatingly predict that the future will have no divided judgment and that these Commissioners have erected for themselves to their credit and to the pride of their descendants for all future time this building as their peculiar monument. It is not a misplaced compliment to allude in words of praise to the exceeding satisfactory work of the contractors, Gehret and Lambert, nor must we omit a reference to the architects Newman and Harris, and especially to Mr. James Harris who gave so much of his personal time and thought to this work, and who honors us and this occasion with his presence. It is a source of gratification that he is no stranger to us, but is one of us

that it was the sacred duty of receiving at the hands of the learned judge of Centre county the beautifully reconstructed court house for the people of Centre county and he wanted to impress on the minds of all present that it was their building. Not that of one man or a small coterie of men, but a building in which every man, woman and child in Centre county had a rightful claim and heritage. He stated that he was glad to see such a mark of progressiveness among the people of Centre county. Away back hundreds and thousands of years ago, in the stone age, man lived for himself alone. His food he drew from the forests and streams; his raiment was obtained in the most primitive manner; he had no colleges, no schools, no churches, no public institutions or buildings, no highways or any of the advantages of civilization, consequently there was no need of levying tribute for anything. The civilization of today is nothing more than organized society for the advancement and betterment of all and he was glad to see that the people of Centre county, through their court and their bar association, and their present

county that was constantly growing in size and importance until the time came when it was imperative that something must be done. Various grand juries, he stated, had favorably reported remodeling the building but the commissioners always lacked the necessary nerve and backbone, until it came to the present board and, to their credit be it said, when they were shown the imperative necessity of doing something, they decided to take the bull by the horns and go ahead. The General then told of the meeting held at the home of Judge Orvis, at which he was present, when the plans of architects Newman and Harris for the remodeling of the building were submitted by the county commissioners and approved by all present, and stated that he was glad that he was at that meeting to endorse the action of the court and bar association. That he was glad that he had had that much to do with helping along the work and he was not only ready and willing to share his part of the burden but wanted to say that instead of receiving criticism for what they had done the county commis-



FRONT VIEW REMODELED CENTRE COUNTY COURT HOUSE DEDICATED MAY 19TH, 1911

basement to court room. The general expression was one of appreciation over the fact that at last Centre county had a court house in keeping with the dignity and progressiveness of its citizens and one in which the records of the county can be kept in absolute safety, without any fear of their destruction by fire or flood.

When the audience finally assembled in the court house at 10:30 o'clock among those present were Judge H. M. McClure, of Union county, members of the bar from Lock Haven, Altoona and Clearfield and a number of county commissioners, two of the latter being from Chester county. Judge Ellis L. Orvis presided over the meeting and the exercises were opened with an invocation by Rev. John Hewitt. It was an appeal to the Almighty for such wise and universal Divine guidance that we publish the same, as follows:

Grant that whosoever shall preside in this place as a judge before thee, and between man and man, in the pleading of any cause whatsoever, shall be so endowed with a knowledge of the law, and with a competency of thy divine wisdom that justice impartial and mercy unrestrained shall be so clearly discernible in every decision and act that righteous judgment shall be honored by the people and also bring honor to the judge.

Grant that whosoever, as advocate, counsellor or solicitor, shall plead any cause before the tribunal of justice in this place shall so set forth the truth that the innocent shall not receive harm nor the Commonwealth suffer damage.

Grant that whosoever shall serve as juror in this house, or fill any office under the supervision of the court in this county, shall so discharge the duties of the same that the majesty of the law shall be maintained, the interests of the people duly guarded against the open assaults of the lawless, and the secret designs of seekers after gain frustrated.

When the cry of the condemned prisoner comes before thee in this place then do thou in heaven hear, have mercy, and give grace to bear the punishment according to the deserts.

The Lord our God be with us. Let him not leave us nor forsake us; that he may incline our hearts to walk in all his ways, and his statutes,

this town of Bellefonte, and in the same year dedicated the ground upon which we now stand to the uses of the future Court House. It was the same year that the most distinguished historian of the county, the Prince de Talleyrand visited the home of Mrs. Harris, now known as "Willow Bank," and gave to the infant village its present name of Bellefonte. Five years later this county of Centre was created, and five years still later, or in 1805, this Court House was begun and has, though with additions and repairs, preserved an uninterrupted continuity of existence to its present almost perfect beauty and symmetry. Thus has this single building been projected in the eighteenth century, been the centre of our municipal life through all the nineteenth century, and reaches its greatest utility and beauty in the second decade of the twentieth century. There are none in this audience, pos-

sibly none in this county, that can recall the exterior front of our Court House to be other than as it is today. None of us without reflection can realize what this building means to the people of this county. For a portion of two centuries it has safe-guarded the archives of county and family history. Here are maintained the title to our lands, the records of our properties, of our loans, and of our business papers. Here, through all the generations have been preserved, the record of each dead man's estate and the litigations between our peoples. Here, too, have been preserved the names and dates of our children's births and the dates and burials of our loved ones. It is to this place the blushing bridegroom must come for his marriage license. In this forum have been waged the great legal battles. Here has been heard generation after generation the wit, the eloquence, the learning of the great judges and lawyers of the past. So

by the closest and most sacred ties. His father, an honored citizen, died in our midst. He bears the name and is a member of one of our oldest families. By ties of kinship, he is connected with one of our most brilliant and versatile jurists (I refer to Mr. Petriken). It is to Mr. Harris' artistic skill in preserving all that was beautiful in the old structure, to his delicate sense of shade and symmetry, that we owe this beautiful building. Therefore, President Sparks, on behalf of Jacob Woodring, H. E. Zimmerman and John A. Dunlap, Commissioners of Centre county, I hereby present to the people of Centre county, through yourself, one of our most distinguished citizens and as the representative of our people, this beautiful Temple of Justice, to be used by our people for all its varied purposes and uses throughout all the years to come; and may God add His blessing thereto, and grant that true justice and mercy may be ever administered

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board of county commissioners had developed a spirit of progressiveness in advance of many other communities. He then spoke of the completeness of the remodeled court house, its harmony in colors and architecture and stated that it would be a standing monument to the board of county commissioners long after they had passed away, the one thing that they have done that will be longest remembered.

In commenting upon the progressiveness of the people of Centre county he stated that a year or so ago he was present at the dedication of the magnificent High school building; that it was a pleasant duty to be present at the dedication of the court house and that he hoped to live to be present at the dedication of the new state highway. In conclusion he stated that in behalf of the people of Centre county he received the building as tendered by the court on behalf of the county commissioners, feeling assured that the citizenship of Centre county would hold it sacred for the uses for which it is intended.

At the conclusion of Dr. Sparks' speech of acceptance Gen. James A. Beaver was introduced and made the principal ad-

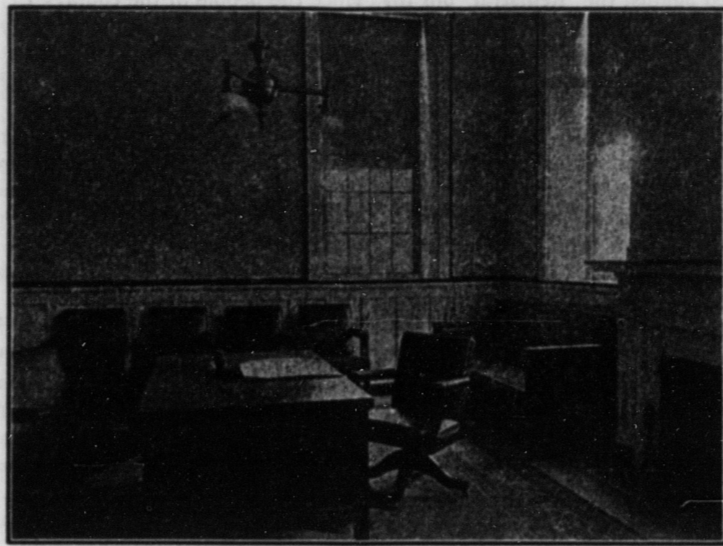
dress of the day. His talk was mostly historical with just enough of personal reminiscences of judges and members of the Centre county bar to make it extremely interesting to all present, and it is only lack of space which prevents us from publishing it in full. He started out by giving a brief account of the organization of Centre county and the wise provision of the founders of Bellefonte, James Dunlop and James Harris, in setting aside grounds for the erection thereon of county buildings and conveying for this purpose the undivided one-third interest in all the lots of the town. He told when the first court house was completed in 1806 and the first court held therein in the fall of the same year. Following along the trail of the court house he told of the erection of the stately columned front in 1835, and the building of the court house as it was known up until two years ago in 1855. For fifty-five years the same building was made to do duty for a people and a

more than an hour, and at its close Rev. E. H. Yocum pronounced the benediction and the meeting adjourned.

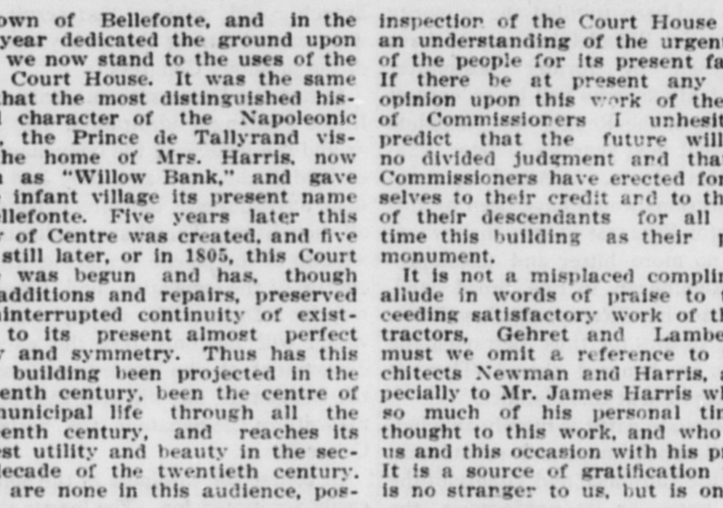
How Bells Are Tuned.

When certain bells in a chime produce discord they can be tuned. The tone of a bell may be raised or lowered by cutting off a little metal in the proper places. To lower the tone the bell-tuner puts the bell in his lathe and reams it out from the point where the swell begins, nearly down to the rim. As the work proceeds he frequently tests the note with a tuning-fork, and the moment the right tone is reached he stops the reaming. To raise the tone, on the contrary, he shaves off the lower edge of the bell, gradually lessening or flattening the bevel, in order to shorten the bell, for of two bells of equal diameter and thickness the shorter will give the higher note. A notable instance of bell-tuning was at Lausanna, where twelve bells, in three neighboring steeples, produced only seven distinct notes, and produced a most curious discord.

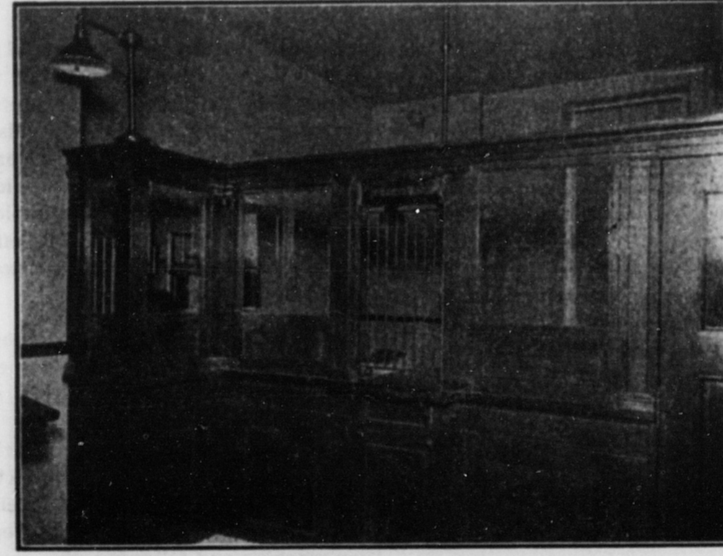
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COUNTY TREASURER'S OFFICE



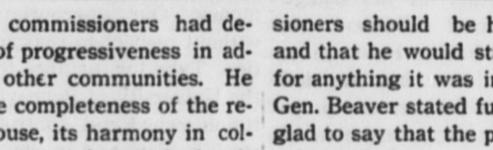
MEMORIAL HALL

are preserved within these walls the biography of all our citizens and the history of our community. Thus cluster around this building the most precious memories, associations and traditions. What farmer of mature years is not delighted to tell to his auditors the story of famous law suits and great legal battles! All this is peculiarly true of this building, for the history of our early bar is unusually rich in distinguished advocates and learned judges who have affected most potent not only the law and

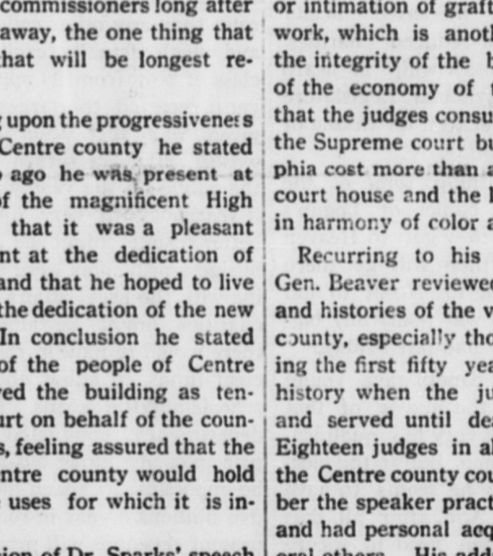
therein. In accepting the court house in behalf of the people of Centre county Dr. Edwin Eric Sparks, of State College, said that ordinarily when a receiver was appointed it meant that an estate or a business had gone into bankruptcy and that a receiver had been appointed to wind up its affairs. In this case, he stated, he had been appointed receiver, but he was glad to say



MARBLE STAIRWAYS LEADING TO COURT ROOM



COURT ROOM



REAR PORCH



COURT ROOM

All Father Omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Creator—to whom all things in heaven and in earth do bow and obey; who dost gather thy people in nations, kingdoms, republics and States and guiding them by thy spirit, dost set them in divers ranks and companies under Governors, judges and subordinate officers for the orderly discharge of their social, religious and political duties, that thy purpose in their creation may be righteously accomplished.—thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the majesty, and thou art exalted as head over all!

Assembled here in thy name and presence, we humbly pray thee, as for the people of these United States in general, so especially for the people of this county, that thou wouldst be pleased to direct and prosper all their undertakings of whatever sort to the advancement of thy glory, the safety, honor and welfare of thy people, that all things may be so ordered and settled by their endeavors, upon the best and surest foundations, that peace and happiness, trust and justice, religion and piety, may be established among us for all generations.

To this end, we, as workers together with God, here dedicate this house, and ourselves with it, to thee and thy service, under the laws of this State, for the administration of justice, and Equity, and Mercy,—chiefest attributes by which we know thee as our God. Accept it for this service and use, and regard it, we pray thee, in its renewed state, as a pledge on our part of renewed purpose to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly and obediently before our God. Suitably planned and perfected for the said spe-

cial service and use, we see thy guiding hand in the wisdom displayed by those who have had in charge the work of restoration. And blessed be the Lord God who hath given us abundant material resources from which tribute may be claimed to discharge the obligations incurred thereby. And now, O Lord God, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants who walk before thee with all their heart, have respect unto our prayer, that thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place.

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and his judgments, and that he maintain the cause of his people at all times as the matter shall require, and to him we will ascribe all might! majesty, dominion and praise forever and ever! AMEN.

Following the invocation Judge Orvis arose and as president judge of Centre county and the natural head of the bar association made the opening address presenting to the people of Centre county, as their right and title, in fee simple, the court house as it has been repaired and remodeled. He spoke as follows:

Ladies and Gentlemen, citizens of Centre County, and honored and welcome visitors from sister counties: It has been assigned to me the distinguished and grateful duty of presiding over this meeting and making the presentation address which, from the length of the program, must necessarily be as brief as possible. Architecture in all ages and among all people is the most enduring, costly and noble medium of embodying that people's highest aspirations. On the banks of the Nile the mysterious religion of Isis and of Osiris is better typified in its pyramids and monoliths than in its hieroglyphics. Along the eastern shores and upon the Isles of Mediterranean we find the marble remains of the temples of ancient Hellas where best is embalmed the spirit of