2. 1791 to 1824: Old City Hall, Southwest Corner of Fifth and Chestnut Streets

In August 1791, what is now known as Philadelphia's Old City Hall was completed and ready for occupancy. The handsome Georgian edifice, which still stands immediately east of Independence Hall at the southwest corner of Fifth and Chestnut Streets, became the home of the District Court. At that time, the City shared the building with the federal courts. The United States Supreme Court sat on the first floor from 1790 until 1800 while Philadelphia was the nation's capital. The District Court courtroom was on the second floor.

In 1818, Congress divided the District of Pennsylvania into the Eastern District of Pennsylvania with court to be held in Philadelphia, and the Western District with a new federal judge to be appointed to sit in Pittsburgh.