7. 1854 to 1863: American Philosophical Society Hall, West Side of Fifth Street

Until 1854, the County of Philadelphia consisted of more than two dozen townships, boroughs, and districts in addition to the City of Philadelphia, whose boundaries at that time encompassed only the area between Vine and South Streets from the Delaware River on the east to the Schuylkill River on the west. In 1854, the Pennsylvania General Assembly consolidated the City and County, making the two jurisdictions co-terminus.

With this consolidation, the Court moved out of Independence Hall where it had sat since 1830. In June 1854, the Government leased for the Court the ground and second floors of the Hall of the American Philosophical Society situated immediately south of Philadelphia's City Hall on the west side of Fifth Street. The space had previously housed the offices of the City's Mayor, among others. In 1856, the government offered to purchase the Hall and its lot for the Court for $78,000, but because of a deed restriction, the United States Attorney General refused to approve the acquisition.

Until July 1, 1863, the American Philosophical Society Hall continued to be leased for the use of the Court, although the Court had vacated the premises before that time. The minutes of the Society reflect that in June of 1863 the Court sought permission to remove its papers from the Hall's "N.E. attic."