8. <u>1863 to 1884: United States Post Office and Courthouse Building, Southside of Chestnut Street East of Fifth Street</u>

In February 1863, in the midst of the Civil War, a new United States Post Office, with a small wing at the rear of the building for use by the Court, costing $60,000 was dedicated. It was located on the south side of Chestnut Street east of Fifth Street, less than a block from the American Philosophical Society Hall and next to what had been the Second Bank of the United States. A wing extended south to Library Street. The new structure contained marble floors and steam heat and was the first building constructed in Philadelphia specifically to house a federal court. Many dignitaries including Postmaster General Montgomery Blair, Secretary of the Interior John Usher, and Governor Andrew Curtin, were present for the grand opening festivities which featured a band, a dinner and the unfurling with great fanfare of an American flag from a rooftop staff. The second floor of the wing that bordered on Library Street provided accommodations for the Court, which moved into that space in May 1863. A contemporary newspaper article commented, “The whole arrangement tends to the comfort and will meet the wants of the Post Office as well as the United States Courts, in an admirable manner, there being convenience within the structure for both departments.”