

**Collection  
M 092  
OMB 022**

**Loudoun County Courthouse Records  
1920-2011**

**Table of Contents**

User Information  
Historical Sketch  
Scope and Content Note  
Container List

Processed by  
Elizabeth E. Preston  
26 June 2014

**Thomas Balch Library  
208 W. Market Street  
Leesburg, VA 20176**

## USER INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 8 cu. ft.

COLLECTION DATES: 1920-2011

PROVENANCE: Loudoun County Circuit Court, Leesburg, VA

ACCESS RESTRICTIONS: Collection open for research

USE RESTRICTIONS: No physical characteristics affect use of this material.

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CITE AS: Loudoun County Courthouse Records (M 092) Thomas Balch Library, Leesburg, VA.

ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

OTHER FINDING AIDS: None

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS: VCR and DVD player for some material.

RELATED HOLDINGS: Bienenfeld, Paula. *An Archaeological Survey of the Loudoun County Courthouse Square, Town of Leesburg, Virginia Final Report*. Falls Church, VA: Tetra Tech, Inc., 1997. [V REF 975.528 BIE] Loudoun County Courts Complex Collection (SC 0093), Thomas Balch Library, Leesburg, VA. Robinson, Debbie. *Loudoun County Courthouse Old Clerk's Office Building Replacement and Renovation Project*. Reston, VA: SWSG, 2002. [V REF 975.528 ROB] Sanders, Suzanne. *Archeological Investigations Related to the Loudoun County Courthouse Expansion...: Final Report*. Frederick, MD: Christopher Goodwin and Associates, Inc., 1999 [V REF 975.528 SAN]

ACCESSION NUMBERS: 2013.0165

NOTES:

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Virginia General Assembly divided Fairfax County in 1757 and created Loudoun County out of the western portion. The county began construction on its first courthouse in 1758, situated in Leesburg. The courthouse housed the executive, legislative, and judicial functions of the county. An office for the clerk of court and a small jail were also constructed on the courthouse grounds. The jail was very poorly built, however, and the county ceased using it almost immediately, in 1759.

Leesburg and Loudoun County outgrew the small courthouse, and in 1811 a new building was constructed on the site of the demolished first courthouse. In 1848, the Leesburg Academy for Boys constructed a large school just east of the courthouse. The Academy sold the building to Loudoun County in 1873, which used the building as office space for court officials. The courthouse was rebuilt again in 1895. A building matching and adjoining the Academy building was constructed in 1959, and in 1972 the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors purchased the Valley Bank building. This structure, east of the courthouse, serves as the office of the Commonwealth's Attorney.

By 1990, the circuit court judges felt strongly that the 1895 courthouse and its facilities were inadequate to meet the needs of Loudoun County. They cited lack of witness areas and appropriate office space for visiting judges, failure of the old buildings to accommodate new technologies, and poor security as real problems that had to be addressed. The Board of Supervisors hired a consulting firm to draft a needs assessment for the next ten years, and to suggest a renovation plan. Their plan, in two phases, came with a projected cost of \$18,500,000. It would have renovated existing structures and added 37,000 square feet, as well as a parking desk. The plan failed to gain funding through a voter referendum.

The judges continued to advocate renovations. They wrote a public letter in January 1996 laying out their grievances that prompted the Board of Supervisors to create the Judicial Center Taskforce. The taskforce was made up of community members, government officials, and judges, and was charged with beginning the planning process for renovation of the courthouse complex. At the first meeting of the taskforce Judge Thomas D. Horne presented an "Analysis of the Courtroom" which listed the problems of the facilities.

The voters rejected all funding options in a referendum. Two of the judges insisted that the Board of Supervisors commit to renovation plans or face legal action for failure to support the necessary functions of the county. Planning for the renovation of the courthouse moved forward in the summer of 1996. Eventually, the Board chose to fund Phases I and II of renovations through property tax revenues.

The final plans and construction documents were completed in January 1999 and the Board of Supervisors invited bids from construction companies. The \$20,900,000 contract was awarded to the Charles E. Tompkins Company in March 1999. Judge Horne invited citizens to a public information session on 27 June 2000. As a result of this meeting, the Board of Supervisors formed the Courthouse Grounds and Facilities Taskforce (later Courthouse Grounds and Facilities Committee), composed of citizens and the judiciary, to advise the Board on decisions about use of the courthouse and its grounds. The taskforce operated as an important liaison between the public and the Board of Supervisors on all areas of courthouse use, including concerns about renovation plans, holiday displays on the courthouse lawn, and care of memorials.

Construction and renovation suffered delays and setbacks, but the new courthouse was ready for occupancy in August 2004. In January 2013, the Board of Supervisors authorized the Courts Complex Phase III Expansion, which will renovate portions of the courthouse and Valley Bank building, improve parking lots and pedestrian access, and allow for a new parking garage.

## SOURCES

Bienenfeld, Paula. *An Archaeological survey of the Loudoun County Courthouse Square, Town of Leesburg, Virginia Final Report*. Falls Church, VA: Tetra Tech, Inc., 1997.

Loudoun County Court Complex Collection (SC 0093), Thomas Balch Library, Leesburg, VA.

Loudoun County Courthouse Records (M 092), Thomas Balch Library, Leesburg, VA.

Loudoun County. *History of Loudoun County*.  
<http://www.loudoun.gov/index.aspx?nid=174> (accessed 26 June 2014).

Town of Leesburg. *A Brief History of Leesburg*.  
<http://www.leesburgva.gov/index.aspx?page=527> (accessed 26 June 2014).

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection comes from the office of Judge Thomas D. Horne, who led efforts to renovate the Loudoun County Courthouse beginning in 1990. Judge Horne was a Circuit Court Judge in Loudoun County from 1982 until his retirement in 2013. He served on several committees and taskforces that advocated for new courthouse facilities and made decisions on how they should be renovated. The

collection contains notebooks that Judge Horne maintained in his office. The notebooks are comprised of studies, reports, correspondence, and meeting minutes that deal with courthouse renovation. For preservation purposes materials have been removed from the notebooks and placed in folders. In addition to notebooks, there are studies created to assist in the planning process, reports and requests from public groups, and minutes from the Courthouse Grounds and Facilities Committee. The collection also contains architectural drawings and site plans from as early as 1920, though most of the site plans were produced as part of the 2004 renovation.

## CONTAINER LIST

### M 092

#### Box 1

- Folder 1 Notebook 1: Court Complex Reports and Studies: Judicial Center Staff Study, 29 March 1996
- Folder 2 Notebook 1: Court Complex Reports and Studies: 1995 Annual Growth Summary, May 1996
- Folder 3 Notebook 1: Court Complex Reports and Studies: Application for 1996-1997 State Survey and Planning Funds, 2 May 1996
- Folder 4 Notebook 1: Court Complex Reports and Studies: Joint Finance-Public Safety/Transportation Committee Meeting Reports, 13 June 1996
- Folder 5 Notebook 1: Court Complex Reports and Studies: Caseload and Population Projections for Loudoun County Courts, 1 November 1996
- Folder 6 Notebook 1: Court Complex Reports and Studies: Request for Proposal for Pre-Design Services for the Loudoun County Court System, 1996
- Folder 7 Notebook 1: Court Complex Reports and Studies: Courts Pre-Design Services Public Presentation by Dan L. Wiley and Associates, Inc., 19 February 1997
- Folder 8 Notebook 1: Court Complex Reports and Studies: Application for Zoning Map Amendment, April 1998
- Folder 9 Notebook 1: Court Complex Reports and Studies: Loudoun County Caseload Reports, 4 November 1998
- Folder 10 Notebook 2: Judicial Center Task Force: Ad Hoc Bench-Bar Courthouse Facilities Planning Committee, 1996
- Folder 11 Notebook 2: Judicial Center Task Force: Agendas and Minutes, January-April 1996
- Folder 12 Notebook 2: Judicial Center Task Force: Background Materials, 1996
- Folder 13 Notebook 2: Judicial Center Task Force: Correspondence, 1996-1998
- Folder 14 Notebook 2: Judicial Center Task Force: Financial Reports, 1996

- Folder 15 Notebook 2: Judicial Center Task Force: Loudoun County Courts Master Plan, 1996
- Folder 16 Notebook 2: Judicial Center Task Force: Report to the Board of Supervisors, April 1996
- Folder 17 Notebook 2: Judicial Center Task Force: Summary Reports, 1996
- Folder 18 Notebook 3: Courts Complex Plans, Correspondence, and Reports, n.d., 1994-1996
- Folder 19 Notebook 3: Courts Complex Plans, Correspondence, and Reports, 1997-1999

**Box 2**

- Folder 1 Notebook 4: Analysis of the Courtroom, 1996
- Folder 2 Notebook 4: Analysis of the Courtroom, 1996
- Folder 3 Notebook 4: Analysis of the Courtroom, 1996
- Folder 4 Notebook 5: Loudoun County Courts Administration Building Renovation Project (Davis and Carter), 1991, 2002
- Folder 5 Notebook 5: Loudoun County Courts Administration Building Renovation Project (Davis and Carter), 1991, 2002
- Folder 6 Notebook 5: Loudoun County Courts Administration Building Renovation Project (Davis and Carter), 1991, 2002
- Folder 7 Notebook 6: Trailer Courtroom Information, 1996-1997
- Folder 8 Notebook 7: Court Statistics and Estimates, 1995-1998
- Folder 9 Notebook 8: Courts Complex Advisory Committee: Agendas, Minutes, Correspondence, April 1996- March 1998
- Folder 10 Notebook 8: Courts Complex Advisory Committee: Agendas, Minutes, Correspondence, April 1998-May 2000
- Folder 11 Notebook 8: Courts Complex Advisory Committee: Agendas, Minutes, Correspondence, June 2000-February 2001
- Folder 12 Notebook 8: Courts Complex Advisory Committee: Notes

**Box 3**

- Folder 1 Notebook 9: Cultural and Archeological Subcommittee: Agendas, Minutes, and Correspondence, 1996-April 1998
- Folder 2 Notebook 9: Cultural and Archeological Subcommittee: Agendas, Minutes, and Correspondence, May 1998-September 2000
- Folder 3 Notebook 9: Cultural and Archeological Subcommittee: Historical Information
- Folder 4 Notebook 10: News Medial Information and Transparencies: Transparencies
- Folder 5 Notebook 10: News Medial Information and Transparencies: News Clippings, 1994-1999
- Folder 6 Notebook 10: News Medial Information and Transparencies: Legal Information
- Folder 7 Notes on Contents of Project Notebooks (author unknown)
- Folder 8 Acceptable Courts, Today and Tomorrow (part 1), 1 April 1996
- Folder 9 Acceptable Courts, Today and Tomorrow (part 2), 1 April 1996

- Folder 10 Acceptable Courts, Today and Tomorrow: A Five-Step Plan of Action, 10 May 1996
- Folder 11 Air Quality Testing, 2002-2003
- Folder 12 Analysis of Courthouse Facilities in Loudoun County, January 1996

**Box 4**

- Folder 1 Archeological Survey, 1996-1998
- Folder 2 Proposal to Conduct an Archeological Survey of the Loudoun County Courthouse Square (TetraTech, Inc.), 30 August 1996
- Folder 3 Architectural Materials, 1989-1994
- Folder 4 Arts Advisory Panel, May 2004
- Folder 5 Notes on Artwork, Memorials, and Monuments at the Courthouse
- Folder 6 Asbestos Abatement, 1995
- Folder 7 Circuit Court Judges' Position Statements, 1989-1990
- Folder 8 Clocktower Restoration Project, 1993-1994
- Folder 9 Courthouse Grounds and Facilities Task Force, Policies and Guidelines for Proposed Projects, 2004
- Folder 10 Courthouse Grounds and Facilities Task Force, Agendas and Minutes, 1999-2001
- Folder 11 Courthouse Grounds and Facilities Task Force, Agendas and Minutes, 2002
- Folder 12 Courthouse Grounds and Facilities Task Force, Agendas and Minutes, 2004-2005
- Folder 13 Courthouse Grounds and Facilities Task Force, Agendas and Minutes, 2006
- Folder 14 Courthouse Grounds and Facilities Task Force, Agendas and Minutes, 2006-2008

**Box 5**

- Folder 1 Courthouse Grounds and Facilities Task Force, Agendas and Minutes, 2009
- Folder 2 Courthouse Grounds and Facilities Committee, Agendas and Minutes, 2009-2011
- Folder 3 Courtroom Renovations, 2003-2007
- Folder 4 Courts Advisory Committee, 1998, 2000-2001
- Folder 5 Courts Advisory Committee, 2002-2008
- Folder 6 Courts Expansion Study, 2008
- Folder 7 Courts Pedestrian Flow Study, 10 July 2007
- Folder 8 Courts Phase III Expansion, 2011
- Folder 9 Courts Project Update, 1998-2002
- Folder 10 Courts Complex Pre-Design Discussion Materials, 12 December 1996
- Folder 11 Courts Complex Pre-Design Services Final Report, Executive Summary and Strategic Plan, February 1997
- Folder 12 Courts Complex Pre-Design Services Final Report, Court Facilities Program, February 1997

- Folder 13 Courts Technology Committee, 2001
- Folder 14 Cultural and Historic Architectural Details for the Loudoun County Courthouse Expansion Project, 2000
- Folder 15 Design of the Renovation of the County Administration Building, Request for Proposals, 1990
- Folder 16 Downtown Traffic Study, Leesburg, Virginia, 18 February 1997

**Box 6**

- Folder 1 Electrical Assessment of the Old Courthouse Building, 12 May 2011
- Folder 2 Exterior Lighting Plan, 1992
- Folder 3 Facility Assessment and Expansion Plan, 2007
- Folder 4 Historical Marker, 1995-2000
- Folder 5 Historic Loudoun County Courthouse: Exterior/Structural Repairs Specifications, 20 March 2009
- Folder 6 Historic Structures Report (part 1), 15 January 2008
- Folder 7 Historic Structures Report (part 2), 15 January 2008
- Folder 8 "The Histories and Biographies of the Eight Portraits Hanging in the 1894 Loudoun County Courthouse, Leesburg, Virginia," by Eugene Scheel, 13 May 1986
- Folder 9 A History of the Loudoun County Courts, 2004
- Folder 10 History of Loudoun County Courts (presentations by Judge Thomas Horne), n.d. and 2013
- Folder 11 Histories of the Loudoun County Courthouses
- Folder 12 "The Story of Loudoun County Court and its Buildings"
- Folder 13 Index of Books Donated by Mobil Oil (part 1), 1999
- Folder 14 Index of Books Donated by Mobil Oil (part 2), 1999
- Folder 15 Inventory of books, Furniture, and Equipment in the Courthouse, ca. 2000
- Folder 16 "Inside Loudoun County: Courts Renovation and Expansion Project" (VHS tape), June 2001

**Box 7**

- Folder 1 Judicial System Master Plan Update, 2006
- Folder 2 Judicial System Projections Update and Expanded Space Needs Assessment, Draft, May 2006
- Folder 3 Judicial System Projections Update and Expanded Space Needs Assessment, Final Report, September 2006
- Folder 4 Landscape Master Plan, 2002-2003
- Folder 5 Landscape Master Plan, Final Report, 1 April 2005
- Folder 6 Law Library, 2001, 2003-2007
- Folder 7 Law Library Revisions, 35 Percent Design Submittal, 20 October 2003
- Folder 8 Law Library Revisions, 95 Percent Submittal (part 1), 30 January 2004
- Folder 9 Law Library Revisions, 95 Percent Submittal (part 2), 30 January 2004



- Folder 10 Lobby Renovations, 2008, 2010
- Folder 11 Loudoun County Courts Expansion Update Facility Plan and Assessment, August 2011
- Folder 12 Loudoun County Courthouse Facilities (VHS tape), February 1996
- Folder 13 Marshall, George C. Memorial, 1981, 1983, 2007
- Folder 14 Patriot Project, 2004
- Folder 15 Phase I Signage Standards, July 2004
- Folder 16 Security, 1990, 2001, 2004, 2009
- Folder 17 Security Assessment, 2007

**Box 8**

- Folder 1 Signage Study, Loudoun County Courthouse, 2005
- Folder 2 Site Plans, Elevations, and Reports from Quinn Evans Architects (DVD with PDF documents), 2008
- Folder 3 "The Story of the Beginnings of the Confederate Memorial on the Courthouse Lawn, Leesburg, Loudoun County, Virginia, March 1988
- Folder 4 Streetlight Plan, 2008
- Folder 5 Tompkins Builders, Meetings and Project Management Documents, 2000
- Folder 6 Trees on the Courthouse Lawn, 1995
- Folder 7 Understanding the Complex: A Taxpayer's Reality (part 1), 20 March 1998
- Folder 8 Understanding the Complex: A Taxpayer's Reality (part 2), 20 March 1998
- Folder 9 Understanding the Complex: A Taxpayer's Reality (part 3), 20 March 1998
- Folder 10 Update Facility Plan and Assessment: Final Submission, August 2011
- Folder 11 Vietnam Veteran's Memorial Dedication, 11 November 1988
- Folder 12 Virginia Courthouse Facility Guidelines, 1987
- Folder 13 Widening the Courthouse Doors, July 1998
- Folder 14 Photographs, Exterior of Courthouse and Parking Areas, 1987, 1996
- Folder 15 Oversized Photographs

**Rolled Storage**

**Box 9**

- Law Library Renovations Plans, 2003

**Box 10**

- Renovation and Expansion of the Loudoun County Courts Complex Plans (part 1), 14 September 1998

**Box 11**

Renovation and Expansion of the Loudoun County Courts Complex Plans (part 2), 14 September 1998

**Box 12**

Renovation and Expansion of the Loudoun County Courts Complex Plans (part 3), 14 September 1998

**OMB 022**

**Box 1**

- Folder 1 Architectural Drawings and Site Plans, n.d., 1920, 1947
- Folder 2 Architectural Drawings and Site Plans, 1959
- Folder 3 Architectural Drawings and Site Plans, 1966, 1978, 1987
- Folder 4 Architectural Drawings and Site Plans, 1999-2000
- Folder 5 Architectural Drawings and Site Plans, 2001-2004
- Folder 6 Architectural Drawings and Site Plans, 2006
- Folder 7 Architectural Drawings and Site Plans, 2008-2009