



LEFT, ILLUSTRATION COMMEMORATING THE APRIL 15, 1868 DEDICATION OF THE FIRST LINCOLN STATUE, PUBLISHED IN THE 19TH-CENTURY WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER. RIGHT, THE LINCOLN STATUE AS IT STANDS TODAY.

HISTORIC COURTHOUSE/ OLD CITY HALL

1832 SAM HOUSTON CASE

In 1832, Sam Houston, the former Tennessee Governor and future Governor and Senator of Texas, was in Washington, D.C. to lobby for the rights of the Cherokee Indians. While giving a speech on the floor of the House of Representatives, William Stanberry of Ohio accused Houston of fraud in his dealings with Native Americans. The statement was later published in the newspaper. Infuriated, Houston found Stanberry and beat him with his cane. Houston was convicted of contempt by Congress, but was also indicted for assault and battery in the District of Columbia Courts. Houston admitted the assault, but contended that he could not be punished twice for the same crime. The Circuit Court for the District of Columbia held that the "conviction and judgment of the [H]ouse of [R]epresentatives, upon the charge of a violation of its privileges, is not a bar to the present prosecution for the assault and battery." In meting out Houston's sentence, the court considered "the situation of the parties, their high standing in society, the original provocation, the deliberate revenge, the great outrage upon the public peace, the severity of the battery, and the mitigating circumstances before mentioned," and fined Houston \$500.

References:
- United States v. Houston, 4 D.C. (4 Cranch) 261 (1832)



1835 RICHARD LAWRENCE AND THE NEAR-ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT ANDREW JACKSON

On a wet, rainy day in January 1835, President Andrew Jackson was leaving the United States Capitol after attending the funeral of a Congressman from South Carolina. As Jackson left the building, surrounded by his cabinet and the public, Richard Lawrence, an unemployed housepainter and English immigrant, stepped out of the crowd and, from several paces away, raised a pistol at Jackson. It was to be the first recorded assassination attempt on a sitting President. Lawrence was carrying two loaded derringer pistols in his pockets. As he pulled the trigger on the pistol, which was aimed directly at Jackson's chest, it misfired. Dropping the first pistol and leveling the second at Jackson, it misfired as well. Legend has it that President Jackson, though frail at the age of 67 and no stranger to hand-to-hand combat, charged at Lawrence and helped to subdue him with his cane. Lawrence was charged with assault with intent to kill by Francis Scott Key, the United States Attorney for the District of Columbia, and was brought before William Cranch, Chief Judge of the Circuit Court of the District of Columbia. He was tried by jury and, after five minutes of deliberation, he was acquitted by reason of insanity. Lawrence was committed to a mental institution where he spent the remainder of his life.



FRANCIS SCOTT KEY



JUDGE WILLIAM CRANCH

References:
- United States v. Lawrence, 4 Cranch C.C. 514, 26 F. Cas. 886 (1835)
- United States v. Lawrence, 4 Cranch C.C. 518, 26 F. Cas. 887 (1835)

SLAVERY IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



was applicable and two holding that the law was inapplicable in the District. Congress finally repealed the Fugitive Slave Law in 1864.

References:
- JEFFREY BRANDON MORRIS, CALMLY TO POSE THE SCALES OF JUSTICE (2001)
- United States ex rel. Copeland, 2 Hay. & Haz. 402 (1862)
- In re Hall, 6 D.C. (1 Mackey) 10 (1863)

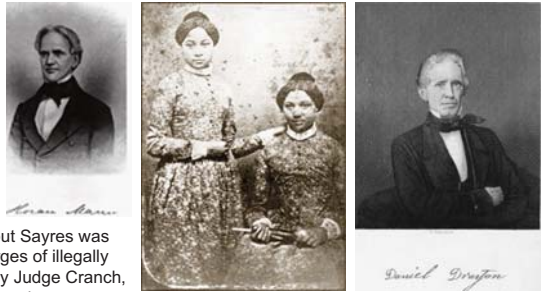
Slavery had been present in the District of Columbia since the capital's inception. Although by 1850 Congress had abolished the slave trade in the District and by 1862 it had taken the further step of abolishing slavery in Washington, D.C., throughout that period fugitive slave laws remained on the books. Actions were brought before the Circuit Court to enforce the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. For example, a slave brought a challenge in 1862 to the application of the fugitive slave law in the District of Columbia, which prompted the court to conclude that the law was to be enforced against slaves in the District as in any state. Similarly, in 1863, a slave named Andrew Hall again challenged the law. Although the Circuit Court had in that year been reorganized by President Lincoln into the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia, the court divided 2-2, with two justices concluding that the law





1849 DANIEL DRAYTON AND THE PEARL

Daniel Drayton, abolitionist and an orchestrator of the largest recorded escape attempt by slaves in the United States, was tried in this building. Together with Edward Sayres, pilot of the schooner *Pearl*, they set sail up the Chesapeake Bay from Washington, D.C. on April 15, 1848, with over 70 fugitive slaves on board. Difficult sailing conditions allowed the slave owners to catch the *Pearl*, and Drayton and Sayres were apprehended and brought to trial. Phillip Barton Key, the prosecutor and Francis Scott Key's son, charged the two men with 36 counts of larceny and 74 counts of illegal transportation of slaves. Abolitionists from New England helped organize the defense, including procuring Horace Mann to represent Drayton. The jury returned guilty verdicts in each of Drayton's first two trials, but Sayres was acquitted of the larceny charges. Sayres was later convicted on charges of illegally transporting slaves. On February 19, 1849, the court, in an opinion by Judge Cranch, overturned Drayton's convictions. Drayton was then tried twice more on larceny charges, but was acquitted in both instances. Seeing no point in any more trials on the larceny charge, the prosecutor agreed to drop the remaining charges in return for Drayton pleading guilty to the lesser crime of illegal transportation of slaves. Both Drayton and Sayres were fined and remained in jail due to their inability to pay. After four years in jail, President Millard Fillmore pardoned Drayton and Sayres in 1852. These trials were among the events at the Historic Courthouse that led to its inclusion by the National Park Service in the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.



- Reference:
- MARY KAY RICKS, *ESCAPE ON THE PEARL* (2007)
 - *Drayton v. United States*, 1 Hay. & Haz. 369, 7 F. Cas. 1063 (1849)



THE TRIAL OF THE HON. DANIEL E. SICKLES FOR THE MURDER OF P. BARTON KEY, ESQ., AT WASHINGTON, D.C.

1859 THE MURDER OF PHILLIP BARTON KEY

One of the most infamous and highly publicized cases to come before the early court was the murder of Phillip Barton Key by New York Congressman Daniel E. Sickles. The thirty-nine-year-old Key, who had prosecuted Drayton and Sayres in connection with the *Pearl* incident, was known as something of a playboy. Key had become involved with Sickles' wife after meeting her at the inauguration of President Buchanan. Sickles found out about the affair, and on Sunday February 27, 1859, followed Key to the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Madison Place (near Lafayette Park) and shot him down. Key's murder created a media frenzy. Indicted on March 24, Sickles' trial began several days later in front of a packed gallery. After a twenty-one day trial in which the evidence showed that Sickles' committed the crime, the jury acquitted him nonetheless.

- References:
- MATTHEW MCGUIRE, *AN ANECDOTAL HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA 1801-1976*
 - JEFFREY BRANDON MORRIS, *CALMLY TO POSE THE SCALES OF JUSTICE* (2001)



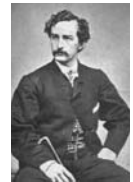
DANIEL SICKLES

MURDER OF P. BARTON KEY BY ASPH. DANIEL E. SICKLES AT WASHINGTON, ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1859



WASHINGTON, D. C.—THE NEW ADMINISTRATION—COLORED CITIZENS PAYING THEIR RESPECTS TO MARSHAL FREDERICK DOUGLASS, IN HIS OFFICE AT THE CITY HALL.—SKETCHED BY OUR SPECIAL ARTIST.

1867 SURRATT TRIAL



JOHN WILKES BOOTH



JOHN SURRATT, JR.



MARY SURRATT

John Surratt, Jr. was a confederate courier who was implicated but not convicted of participation in the conspiracy to assassinate President Abraham Lincoln. Surratt and John Wilkes Booth met in March 1865 to discuss a plan to kidnap the President, a plan that never came to fruition. Surratt claimed to have had no involvement in Lincoln's murder, though his mother Mary was convicted by a military tribunal and was executed for her alleged participation in the assassination conspiracy. Surratt fled the country, and was apprehended in Egypt and brought back to the United States for trial. Surratt received a civil trial, rather than a military one. The several months long trial was held in this building in the summer of 1867. After hearing from 170 witness, the jury could not agree on a verdict, and he was not re-tried.



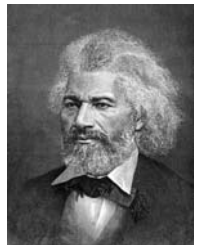
Justice Wylie Chief Justice Carter Justice Cain Justice Fisher



- References:
- MATTHEW MCGUIRE, AN ANECDOTAL HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA 1801-1976
 - TRIAL OF JOHN H. SURRATT IN THE CRIMINAL COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA (1867)

1877 FREDERICK DOUGLASS, U.S. MARSHAL

In 1877, President Rutherford B. Hayes appointed Frederick Douglass United States Marshal for the District of Columbia. His office was in this building. In 1881, President Garfield appointed Douglass Recorder of Deeds for the District. Douglass, the former slave turned abolitionist and renowned orator, later served as United States Minister and Consul in Haiti prior to his death in 1895.



FREDERICK DOUGLASS

1882 GUITEAU'S CASE



President James A. Garfield was assassinated by Charles Guiteau on July 2, 1881, at the B&O Railway Terminal at Sixth and B Streets. His trial took place in this building before the District of Columbia Supreme Court, a court created during President's Lincoln's tenure to replace the Circuit Court for the District of Columbia, a court Lincoln dissolved because he deemed its judges insufficiently loyal to the administration. Guiteau claimed that the assassination was divinely inspired and raised an insanity defense. The trial hinged on whether defense experts could convince the jury of Guiteau's insanity. After less than an hour of deliberation, the jury convicted. The D.C. Supreme Court affirmed the conviction in a lengthy opinion. Guiteau was hanged on June 30, 1882.

- References:
- JEFFREY BRANDON MORRIS, CALMLY TO POSE THE SCALES OF JUSTICE (2001)
 - United States v. Guiteau, 10 F. 161 (1882)

1889 THEODORE ROOSEVELT AS CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONER

Before serving as the twenty-sixth President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt served in a lesser-known capacity: U.S. Civil Service Commissioner. Roosevelt's career in the civil service began in 1881 when he served as a member of the New York Civil Service Reform Association. As an Assemblyman in the New York legislature, Roosevelt helped to pass the nation's first civil service act. Roosevelt's work in New York brought him to the attention of President Benjamin Harrison, who appointed him as the United States Civil Service Commissioner, a position he held from 1889 to 1895. Roosevelt's efforts as Commissioner saw him undertake reforms to create a modern government bureaucracy staffed with competent officials and to move away from the traditional patronage system, or "spoils system," as it was then known. This building housed the Civil Service Commission for several years during the time Roosevelt led it, and it is believed that his office was located in the far southwestern corner of the building.



THEODORE ROOSEVELT

- References:
- RICHARD D. WHITE, JR., ROOSEVELT THE REFORMER: THEODORE ROOSEVELT AS CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONER, 1889-1895 (2003)
 - http://www.opm.gov/About_opm/tr/

1925 THE TEAPOT DOME SCANDAL

This building was the site of numerous trials of participants in the "Teapot Dome" scandal before the District of Columbia Supreme Court between 1925 and 1930. Teapot Dome was an oil field on public land in Wyoming, and was at the heart of the one of the biggest bribery scandals in U.S. history. The scandal broke when Congress began an investigation into kickbacks received by the Secretary of the Interior, Albert Fall, and two oil executives Edward Doheny and Harry Sinclair. Sinclair and Doheny were acquitted of bribery, but Fall was the first cabinet officer convicted of a felony and imprisoned.



PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN ON THE COURTHOUSE STEPS AFTER DOHENY'S ACQUITTAL (LEFT TO RIGHT, FRANK HOGAN, DOHENY, MRS. DOHENY, AND JOE COTTER.)

- References:
- JEFFREY BRANDON MORRIS, CALMLY TO POSE THE SCALES OF JUSTICE (2001)
 - Fall v. United States, 49 F.2d 506 (1931)
 - United States v. Doheny, 10 F.2d 651 (1925)