

Jefferson County Courthouse – 1854

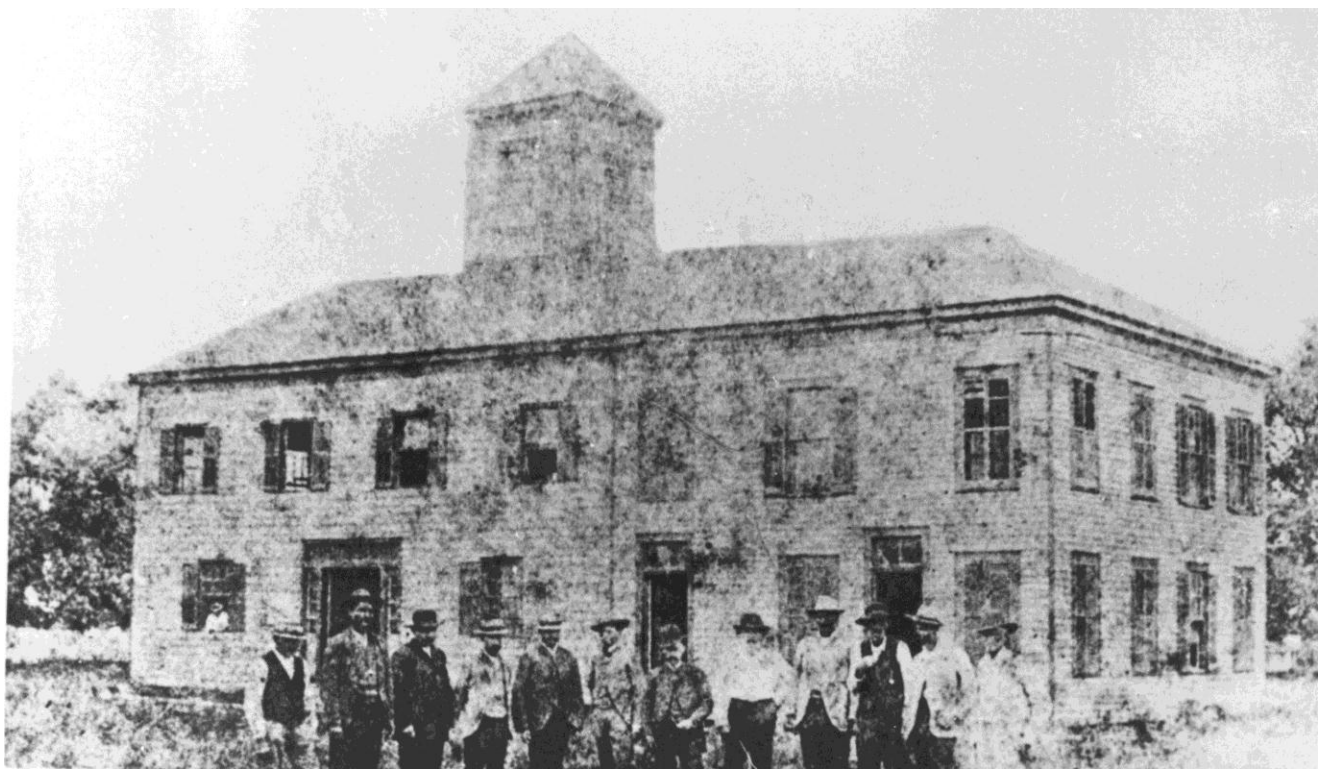
The Jefferson County Commissioner's Court minutes, Volume B, Page 116 - 119, from February 21, 1854, set out in detail the precise dimensions and specifications of a courthouse to be built.

The following is a transcript of those minutes:

“It is ordered by the Court that there shall be a Court House built for the county of Jefferson of the following dimensions to wit – Forty feet square - two full stories in height, each story to be nine feet six inches in the clear, that there shall be four rooms in the lower story, divided by partitions, that there shall be a hall eight feet wide in the clear, running through the lower story from South East to North West, that the four rooms below shall be of equal size – that the Clerk's offices and Sheriff's office and Jury Room shall be below – and the Court Room above, that there shall be a door to each lower room to open into the hall, and a folding door at each end of the hall with side lights and upper lights – that there shall be three windows in each lower room with twelve lights 10 by 12 – that there shall be sixteen windows in the upper room with twelve lights 10 by 12 – that the Judge's seat shall be on the South East side of the building in the centre of the wall and shall be elevated 2 ½ feet above the floor – with steps and bannisters and railings – that there shall be three Jury Boxes on each side of the Judge's Seat – 12 feet in length, there shall be bench seat with a rail at the back, that there shall be a bannister and railing running across the building to enclose the Jury Boxes and the Judge's Stand – the bannisters to be four feet high and 1 ½ inches square – that there shall be a flight of stairs at the lower floor at the North west end of the hall, and running to the upper floor, to be four feet wide and to have bannisters 3 feet high with a rail on the top – with a platform at the top of the hall door – and winding to reach the upper floor – that there shall be 20 cypress blocks to set said house upon 2 feet high and three feet in diameter and shall be laid down sidewise – that the blocks shall be of solid red cypress – the sills shall be 12 inches square at the bottom of the building and of red cypress – that the [illegible] shall be 8 inches by three – and of cypress and the studding 3 by 4 inches and of cypress, and the corner posts 8 inches by 4 – the joists 8 inches by 3 of good pine – plates 4 inches by 8 - and of good pine – the lower floor to be of cypress, 6 inches wide & 1 ¼ inches thick laid down square joints & not dressed – the second floor of good pine 6 inches by 1 ¼ inches dressed and matched on the underside and the joists on which it is laid to be dressed &

beaded below – the weatherboarding to be of cypress 8 inches wide 1 ¼ inches lap – ¾ inches thick and dressed – the Court Room shall be sealed with pine [brushes] ¾ of an inch thick dressed and matches and sealed overhead in like manner – that the roof shall be square and shall be made of shingles ¾ of an inch thick of good cypress & 20 inches long to the weather – that there shall be a Belfry on the top of the roof ten feet square with a Dome to be covered with zink [sic] – the bell doors shall have panel shutters made of cypress 11 ¼ inches thick, the inside door shutters to be batton – and there shall be good locks and bolts to fasten the doors, there shall be windows shutters in the lower story with good fastenings – that there shall be steps at both doors of the hall, as wide as the hall door to reach the first floor, and of good materials – the whole building to be finished in a workman like manner, and have three coats of paint.

It is further ordered that the clerk shall advertise that sealed proposals will be received by the Chief Justice of said county until the 15th day of March, 1854 for the building of said house according to the above specifications. Bond and security to be approved by the Court will be required of the undertaker.



Jefferson County Courthouse built in 1854

Photo Credit: Jefferson County Historical Commission archives

The Jefferson County Commissioner's Court minutes, Volume B, Page 126 – 127, from March 15, 1854, record further details. The following is a transcript of those minutes:

Be it remembered that on the fifteenth day of March, A.D., 1854, by Special Appointment, there was begun and held in and for the county of Jefferson at the house of Joseph P. Pulsifer in the town of Beaumont, there being no courthouse provided by the county court, a called session of said court for special county business composed of the Chief Justice and county commissioners present, and presiding, Isaiah Junker, Chief Justice, county commissioners, Rich and West and Eastridge Daniel, when the following orders were made and proceedings had...

It is ordered by the Court that the house of Joseph P. Pulsifer in the Town of Beaumont be occupied as a courthouse and clerk's office for said county until the court shall make other arrangements in relation to the same.

On this day John A. Beaumont filed his proposal to build a courthouse for the county of Jefferson – It is ordered by the Court that said bid be received and that the said John A. Beaumont proceed forthwith to build said house on the square known as Jefferson Square or Courthouse Square – being Block number nine on the plat of the Town of Beaumont, lying between Main and Pearl streets and Franklin and Milam streets, said bid being to build said house for the sum of one thousand nine hundred dollars – and to (sic) inclose the square for the further sum of one hundred dollars – It is further ordered that the said (sic) inclosure shall be good and substantial cypress hearts six feet high and the railing to be 3 inches square – the pickets to be six feet high – and the panels 8 feet in length – all of good heart cypress - It is further ordered that the said John A. Beaumont shall enter in to bond in the sum of four thousand five hundred dollars [illegible] for the faithful performance of the same ...

The Jefferson County Commissioner's Court minutes Vol. B, Page 158, from February 21, 1855, record the approximate date the courthouse was completed. The following is a transcript of those minutes:

It is ordered by the Court that the Chief Justice of Jefferson County be authorized to appoint a committee of three suitable persons to examine the new courthouse now being built for the said county by John A. Beaumont, whenever the said Beaumont shall report the same is finished, who

shall report to the said Chief Justice whether the said courthouse is completed according to the contract, and if the same be reported by said committee as completed according to the contract, then the said Chief Justice is hereby fully authorized to receive said house, and give a draft upon the County Treasurer of said county for the residue due the said Beaumont for building said Courthouse...