

When a fire in 1892 destroyed the Appomattox courthouse of 1846 standing near the site of General Lee's surrender, county officials chose to build a new courthouse three miles away near the railroad station, thereby effectively moving the center of town. Although it underwent some Colonial Revival polishing by Stanhope S. Johnson of Lynchburg in the early twentieth century, the old section of the courthouse (now used as Appomattox Courthouse Theatre) is one in Virginia's long line of nineteenth-century classical courthouses. The one-story brick building has a slightly projecting central pavilion with a four-columned Tuscan portico set on a raised terrace extending on either side to the secondary front entrances. The portico features a large circular window in its pediment, an element echoed in the side pediments and dating from the 1930s Colonial Revival remodeling. The courthouse's remodeling veered down an odd architectural path with the addition of a Georgian Revival monumental door case featuring wooden quoins crowned with an entablature pierced by an oversized keystone. Combined with the Georgian Revival octagonal cupola with arched windows, the result is an odd amalgam.

To the left rear of the old section is the Flood Family Mausoleum (c. 1900). This may be the only mausoleum standing in a Virginia courthouse square. The austere granite tomb, a miniature temple set on a three-stepped plinth, has four finely executed Doric columns supporting a full entablature below its pediment. Unusual in its placement, the mausoleum is a testament to the political influence of its builder, congressman Henry Flood, uncle of senator Harry Flood Byrd Sr. The mausoleum now stands somewhat awkwardly in front of the new two-story brick courthouse that is attached to the rear of the old courthouse. On the right side of the new section, a one-story semicircular classical portico leads to the interior where the portraits of past and present judges look down on the proceedings.

Writing Credits

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Anne Carter Lee, "[Appomattox County Courthouse](#)", [[Appomattox, Virginia](#)], SAH Archipedia, eds. Gabrielle Esperdy and Karen Kingsley, Charlottesville: UVaP, 2012—, <http://sah-archipedia.org/buildings/VA-02-AP1>.

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Facts

Location:

Appomattox Virginia

Regional Essays:

[Virginia: Valley, Piedmont, Southside & SouthwestSouthsideAppomattox CountyAppomattox](#)

Architect:

[Johnson and BrannanCraddock Cunningham](#)

Types:

[courthousesmausoleumstombsrailroad stationterraces \(landscaped-site elements\)county courthouses](#)

Styles:

[Georgian RevivalColonial Revival](#)

Materials:

[building brick \(clay products\)granite \(rock\)brick \(clay material\)](#)

The name Appomattox is synonymous with the words “defeat” and “victory” in the minds of Americans. Here ended the four-year-long struggle between two ideologies, the remnants of which continue to be rallying points today for differing opinions over the Civil War's meaning and its legacy. Robert E. Lee's surrender to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox was a turning point in the nation's history, effectively if not officially ending the war.

In 1845 Appomattox County was formed from the surrounding Buckingham, Prince Edward, Charlotte, and Campbell counties. The county, site of the headwaters of the Appomattox River, took its name from the river that, in turn, had been named for a tribe

of Native Americans living at the falls of the river. Clover Hill, a tavern stop on the stage line between Richmond and Lynchburg, was named its county seat. The village that grew up became known as Appomattox Court House. A few years later, in 1854, the Southside Railroad came through the area and established a stop three miles southwest of Appomattox Court House, marking the beginning of the small community's decline. The rural character of the county did not change, however, with the coming of the railroad. With the exception of the Pamplin Pipe Factory ([AP9](#)), a manufactory of clay pipes for smoking tobacco, the county knew little of industrial development or industrial building types. Only in the late nineteenth century, with the relocation of the courthouse, did the new town of Appomattox become prosperous enough to support the architectural expression of an emerging entrepreneurial class. Today, the town is the retail hub for the area and its major employers are Walmart and the public school system.

WRITING CREDITS

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