

Until the end of the 18th century, Norfolk Borough and County courts and offices shared space in a common building and the Borough was given many powers over county matters. County residents complained that it was an "Officious interferrence (for the Borough) to intermeddle with the concerns of the county" and in 1789 the Virginia Assembly passed legislation requiring county courts to relocate outside borough limits. Norfolk County built a courthouse of its own at Washington Point (now Berkley) and Norfolk Borough erected a 2-story brick building with a bell tower at the southeastern corner of East Main Street and Town Hall Lane (later Nebraska Street). The building housed court and civic offices, a jail and, nearby, the headquarters of the Union Fire Company. The bell was rung to announce the opening of court and also served as a fire alarm.

After Norfolk was incorporated as a city in 1845, a new courthouse and city hall was built on Bank Street (now occupied by the MacArthur Memorial). Council met there for the first time in 1850. In 1895, many city offices moved from the courts building to the Norfolk Armory and City Market on City Hall Avenue (site of MacArthur Center), followed by the city council in 1918. In 1937, when a new federal courthouse and post office was dedicated on Granby Street, the federal government sold the old post office building on Plume Street to the city for \$32,880. City Hall moved into this building in 1938 and remained there until the fifth, and present, City Hall was dedicated in 1965, a stone's throw away from its 1791 location.

Pages from Norfolk's Past are researched and written by Peggy Haile McPhillips, City Historian

