Cumberland County Government

(Based on the publication *Cumberland County Government* compiled and edited by Daniel J. Heisey in 2000 for Cumberland County's 250th Anniversary, additional information and updates have been added to this overview of Cumberland County Government. Section 1, "Prologue", covers the founding of the county and Section 2 covers Offices and Departments. A link is provided to the individual office or department following their description. More extensive histories of Cumberland County can be found at the Cumberland County Historical Society. For a more in-depth history of each office and department consult County Government and Archives in Pennsylvania edited by Sylvester K. Stevenson and Donald H. Kent (Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Harrisburg, 1947).

Prologue….

In 1750, the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania met in Philadelphia and passed an act creating the County of Cumberland. The legislature carved Cumberland from Lancaster County, and the new county covered most of Pennsylvania west of the Susquehanna River.

The next year the Proprietor, Thomas Penn, settled the county seat twenty miles west of the Susquehanna and mid-way between North and South Mountains. Other sites had vied for the honor of being the courthouse town, but his site, a low hill bounded on the east by a small stream, the LeTort, won the favor of Penn and his brother, John. The town was called Carlisle, after Carlisle, England, and it bore the same chess board plan enjoyed by Philadelphia. Streets intersected at right angles, the two chief streets, High and Hanover, crossing to form a large public square. Although William Penn was a Quaker, his sons were members of the Church of England. So, they planned for an Anglican church to stand on the north-east corner of the Square, and the whole Square they thus called Episcopal Square. (See James D. Flower, *The Planning of Carlisle and its Center Square*. Carlisle: Cumberland County Historical Society, 1983.)

On the south-east corner of the Square the plan called for a market house, and on the north-west corner, a Presbyterian meetinghouse. The south-west corner the Penns reserved for a courthouse. Until the 1950s these four institutions – two churches, a market, and the courthouse – remained the local landmarks. In 1954 the old market house was razed, popular protest notwithstanding, and in 1960 a new courthouse filled the vast lot vacated by the market. The implications of a courthouse replacing a market house require our attention. First, though, a word about the courthouses of Cumberland County.

According to the statute creating the County, four men were to act as trustees and buy land for a courthouse and jail. Robert McCoy, Benjamin Chambers, David Magaw, James McEntire, and John McCormack, "or any three of them," were authorized "to purchase a Piece of Land, situate in a convenient Place in the said County 'and thereon to erect and build a Court-House and Prison." (*Acts of Assembly of the Province of Pennsylvania*. Philadelphia: Hall and Sellers, 1775. 221.) This structure was to be "sufficient to accommodate the public Service of the said County for the Ease and Convenience of the Inhabitants." Chambers, Magaw, and McCormick, acting for the others, chose the corner of the Square for which the Penns had planned a courthouse; trustees often have their decisions made for them. Time seeming to be unimportant, in 1762 Cumberland County's representative in the Assembly, William Allen, introduced a bill to make that corner of Carlisle a courthouse, and the project got under way. (J. Flower, *Planning of Carlisle*, 35.)

All records and published histories indicate that the first courthouse "in and for the county of Cumberland" was built in 1765. The general contractor, William Denny, later became the county's coroner and these facts are inscribed on his tombstone in the Old Graveyard in Carlisle. Denny's courthouse lasted eighty years, but its very creation should give one pause. Herein lies one of the great mysteries of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and of Cumberland County itself. Where did the courts meet, where were the records kept, from 1750-1765? The solution, as with any mystery, forces an indirect approach.

In 1764, when the first courthouse for Cumberland County was being drafted, Edward Gibbon was in Rome conceiving the idea for his History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. An English country gentleman had the leisure to travel and reflect upon the past; his worries ranged from whether the Tories would remain in government to whether the butler served the Madeira on time. He did not have to worry whether the acre he had just cleared with his son and his axe would grow enough food to keep them alive through the next winter, nor did e have to worry about marauding aborigines scalping him or his wife for a few pounds sterling. Gibbon's world was small and enclosed as his mind was broad and open; he dined with knights and scholars in London, while drifting mentally from Hadrian's Wall to Constantinople. The man with the axe in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, faced a limitless frontier and focused his mind on his almanac and his Bible. The life of the pioneer in the middle decades of the eighteenth century was hard and callused, and recording human events was not worth the time of the every-busy day.

So, although it is recorded that the first permanent courthouse in Cumberland County was built in 1765, only venerable tradition tells the whereabouts for the first session of court held in the County. Historians in the nineteenth century accepted as genuine a letter dated 27 May, 1753, saying that "Court is at present held in a temporary log building on the north east corner of the centre square." (See Milton E. Flower's note on Joseph A. Murray, The XVIIIth and XIXth Century Cumberland County Court Houses. Carlisle: Cumberland County Historical Society, 1978. Page 4.) This letter has since been proven to be a hoax, so one must return to oral tradition. That tradition maintains that at Widow Piper's Tavern, a two-story stone house on King Street in Shippensburg – now on the western fringe of the County – was held Cumberland's first Court of Common Pleas. (Merri Lou Schaumann, *Taverns of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, 1750-1840*. Carlisle: Cumberland County Historical Society, 1994. Page 73.)

Widow Piper's Tavern c. 1910

Of course, holding court in a tavern does not make that tavern a courthouse. A courthouse is at heart what the Scots call a Registry, a place where repose the records of public business – "hatches, matches, and dispatches." The first deed recorded in Cumberland County bears the date of 20 September 1750, nine months after the County was erected. Other records begin two months prior, and the tale they tell concerns us next.

The page has crumbled around the edges, but once it was crisp and new. In a flourishing hand, aware he was part of a grand day; the clerk began noting the business transacted "At a Court of General Quarter Sessions of the Peace held at Shippensburg [sic] for the County of Cumberland." (Cumberland County Quarter Sessions Docket 1, page 2.) It was "the Twenty fourth day of July in the Twenty Fourth Year of the Reign of his Majesty King George the Second Anno Domini 1750." This court was held "before Samuel Smith Esquire and his Brethren Keepers of the Peace of our said Lord the King and his Justices assigned to hear & determine divers Felonies Trespasses & ca."

A Grand Jury was appointed, composed of such prominent men as James Silver, for whom a township is now named, and Felix Doyle, whose family settled around where now is Doylesburg, Franklin County. Justice Smith and his court handed down several indictments, including one against Samuel Moorehead "for carrying spirituous Liquor to the Indians." Lastly, an officer was named to keep the public records. "Hermanus Alricks Esq: produced to this Court a Commission appointing him Clerk of the Peace of the County of Cumberland. Alricks (his first name is property spelled Harmanus) cam from Philadelphia, his forebears having settled along the Schuylkill from the Netherlands. He served Cumberland County as Recorder of Deeds and Justice of the Peace until his death in 1770.

Since 1715 Pennsylvania's laws had said only that "an Office of Record" of a county "shall be kept in some convenient Place" in that county. (*Acts of Assembly*, page 78.) Moreover, "the Recorder shall duly attend the Service of the same," providing parchment and other supplies from his own funds. It seems reasonable to conclude that the "good large Books well bound and covered" containing the public copies of deeds and lawsuits and indictments were kept in the homes of the men chosen for those offices. It would seem an early Prothonotary or Recorder kept office hours at home much as tax collectors do today. One must imagine a fairly informal environment; its domestic aspect marred by such hectic days as

those immediately before the Stamp Act of 1765 took effect. (Henry J. Young, "Agrarian Reactions to the Stamp Act in Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania History XXXIV.1*. January, 1967. Pages 26-27.)

County government includes more than judges and bookkeepers. The jail was once next to the courthouse, with stocks out front. In 1854 a massive new jail, resembling a mediaeval castle, was built a block to the east. To meet growing demands and standards, a new jail was built in the 1980s just east of Carlisle. In the 1810s the County began providing care for the elderly and infirm and erected a "Poorhouse and House of Employment" in what is now Perry County, once part of Cumberland. (*Laws Incorporating and Regulating The Poor House of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania*. Newville, PA; 1877.) With the establishment of Perry County in 1820, Cumberland County erected its second "Poorhouse" just east of Carlisle. Clarmont (sill "the poor house" to some older residents), originally a farm, is in Middlesex Township, and its three hundred acres contain a thriving center for geriatric care. In 1984 the County acquired the three-story building to the east of the New Courthouse. This building had held J. P. Bixler & Sons Hardware Store, established in the 1840s. To connect the "Bixler Building" with the New Courthouse, the County claimed the airspace above Market House Alley (now Avenue), and built above the alley. (Cumberland County Deed Book 33F, page 969; cf. Deed Book 30T, page 357. For Bixler's Hardware, see D. W. Thompson ed, *Two Hundred Years in Cumberland County*. Carlisle: Hamilton Library and Historical Association, 1951. Page 330.

Various Federal laws since the New Deal and the Great Society have mandated counties provide or administer certain social services and welfare programs. By 1994 these departments had grown and their clientele expanded; the County then bought a building in the first block of West High Street in Carlisle, recently used as a branch of Meridian Bank. Need for additional space to accommodate growing departments and provide convenient access to citizens resulted in the 2003? Purchase of a building just west of Carlisle on Allen Road. From sessions of court held in a tavern and records kept in private homes, the public services of Cumberland County now comprise no fewer than nine buildings in and outside Carlisle.

Gone are the days when the local newspaper could note: "Judge Biddle and wife have returned from Bedford Springs – by auto." ("Personal," *The Evening Sentinel*. 1 July 1911. Page 6.) In 1900 the County had a population of 50,344; by 1990 the population was 195,257. By the close of the twentieth century, nearly everyone over the age of sixteen has an automobile. This means of transportation has eliminated the trolley and train service once connecting towns and villages. As a resident of Cumberland County as observed, "For the first time in history, the enormous gap between town and country has almost been closed." (*B. Bruce Briggs, The War Against the Automobile*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1977. Page 27.)

Rather than bringing farmers into town, as first believed (such was the claim of Governor Gifford Pinchot, famous for paving rural roads in Pennsylvania), the automobile and the macadam road have lured people outside of towns. After the Second World War, large market houses and small shops in the towns gave way to palatial shopping malls and grocery stores on the edge of town. It is no exaggeration to say that half a century of automobiles made the old market house in Carlisle obsolete. Whereas it may be true on the whole that "Americans omitted to build the ceremonial spaces and public structures that these…functions might have called for," such is not true for the seat of government in Cumberland County. (James Howard Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man-Made Landscape*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993. Page 33.) The foresight of the Penns placed the "ceremonial spaces and public structures" at the heart of the new county they called Cumberland, where they remain to this day.

Offices and Departments

Aging and Community Services

As its name implies, the Office of Aging and Community Services provides a wide range of services to the aged and the community. This office is part of the safety net the citizens – through their various levels of government – have laced throughout their society; this office helps when private means cannot.

The Office of Aging assists elderly residents (often living alone) who need some guidance navigating between the twin dangers of Bureaucracy and Chronology. The Office of Aging helps with legal matters – wills, powers of attorney, tax forms – and government programs for medical prescriptions and rent rebates. It also helps with basic household chores, and it assesses when an older adult needs some level of institutional care.

The Community Services aspect of this office has programs to serve individuals, families, and communities at risk of ruin and decay. These people and communities include homeless, the disabled, and the blighted. This Office helps the needy find counseling, transportation, and health care. It also co-ordinates the efforts of the nine local food pantries and the County's one soup kitchen.

Human Services Bldg

Agricultural Extension

This Office is a service of the College of Agriculture of Penn State University. With the co-operation of the County Commissioners, the University provides a County Agent to keep farmers informed of developments in their profession. The County Agent has a weekly newspaper column and, with a staff of home economists, conducts workshops and speaks to various groups within the community. Topics addressed include soil conservation, food preservation, and relevant legislation.

The Extension Office also oversees the 4-H Clubs in the County. (The four H's stand for Head, Heart, Hands, and Health.) This program, initiated by the United States Department of Agriculture, provides training for teenagers and young adults interested in farm life.

Allen Road Bldg.

Board of Assessment

The Board of Assessment and Revision of Taxes is composed of the three Commissioners, who then appoint the Board's solicitor and the Chief Assessor. The County provides the necessary Certified Property Evaluators (called simply Assessors), as well as other employees needed to prepare tax assessment rolls for the various taxing districts.

This Board adopts rules and regulations, consistent with State assessment law, to govern the Chief Assessor, the hired Assessors, and the locally elected Assessors. Citizens may challenge the assessment of their real property, and the Board hears these appeals. The Board also maintains records, extensive and permanent, or all properties; such records include aerial maps delineating property lines, index cards noting changes to buildings and deeds, and in many cases photographs of properties.

Real property is assessed at values determined by neighborhood models set in each municipality and kept in the County's computer. The assessments are based upon an established ratio approved by the Board.

Old Courthouse

Buildings and Grounds

The buildings and grounds of the various County offices are kept clean and pleasing to the eye by the staff of the former Maintenance Department. Each building – the courthouses, the prisons, the nursing home, and other county owned and rented facilities- has assigned to it a team of maintenance employees and a supervisor. Their mission, large and growing, is to keep the landscape pruned, mowed, and weeded and the buildings in sound repair and fine appearance. All matters of plumbing and electricity, heating and air conditioning come under their care.

(photo "The New Courthouse, built in 1960")

Children and Youth Services

The County Commissioners established the office of Children and Youth Services under the County Institutional District Act of 1937, as amended through 1961. The agency's mission is to protect children, and where possible, preserve families referred to it. Various State laws mandate the agency provides child welfare services all day, y ear round.

Monthly, the agency serves an average of ninety children or youths placed by the Court outside their homes. The annual cost is about $3.1 million; the agency also serves monthly another four hundred or so children at an annual cost of $1.4 million.

Clerk of Courts

The Clerk of the Court of Quarter Sessions and Oyer and Terminer (define) has existed in Pennsylvania since the first organization of English government in colonial America. A change in the Pennsylvania Constitution (what year?) consolidated all the various courts into the Court of Common Pleas with the clerk now being known as the Clerk of Courts.

Most duties now performed by other row officers (those elected) belonged to the early Clerks. Duties such as recording judgments, executions and attachments, and maintaining naturalization records are now performed by the Prothonotary; recording of deeds and surveys of town plots, also commissions granted, now belong to the Recorder of Deeds; and the entering of wills or administrations fall within the realm of the Register of Wills.

The one enduring responsibility of the Clerk has been custodian of the records of criminal court, from the early hand-written dockets to the evolution of the present-day technological records. (Sylvester K. Stevens and Donald H. Ken, eds., County Government and Archives in Pennsylvania. Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1947. Pages 166, 231.) Those records contain all activity of the criminal court from the creation of the original docket after receipt of the case from the District Justice or an Appeal from Summary from a defendant through arraignment, pretrial conference, pleas and sentencing. The Clerk also has the responsibility of receiving the costs, fins, and restitution imposed by the court and disbursing said funds to the appropriate victims and county and state agencies.

In addition, the Clerk of Court maintains non-criminal court records pertaining to the following: Private Investigators, Constables, Professional Bondsmen, Tax Collector Bonds, Road Resolutions, and various other miscellaneous records.

Commissioners

The Board is comprised of three Commissioners elected by County voters to serve concurrent four year terms. The Board of Commissioners, as the executive governing body of the County, exercises a broad responsibility for the operation of County government which includes establishing the annual County operating budget. Under Pennsylvania law, known as the County Code, authority is granted to the Board of Commissioners to manage the administration of County programs, personnel, property and facilities in order to provide the highest level of service to the citizens of Cumberland County. In 2006 the County's bond rating was raised to AA+ by Standard & Poor's, one of the nation's premier financial rating services. The AA+ rating indicates the County has a very strong capacity to meet its financial commitments.

Cumberland County's overall 2008 Budget adopted by the Board of Commissioners is $207 million, of which $61 million is the General Fund. These funds are vital for the County to meet mandated operating expenses while continuing to maintain essential services to its citizens. Claremont Nursing and Rehabilitation Center is a $23 million County Enterprise fund separate from the General Fund. Human Services departments are funded 94% by state and federal funds.

Under State law, the Commissioners also serve as members of various specialized boards such as the Board of Elections, Salary Board, Prison Board and Retirement Board. The Commissioners appoint the Chief Clerk and other administrative staff to manage the daily operations of County government and to serve the public through an array of County services.

The Commissioners work with other elected county officials, the Row Officers, and these officials exercise responsibility under the State Constitution for an array of traditional government services related to the courts, deeds, wills, and licenses. The Commissioners also serve as liaisons with other various County boards and authorities as well as other levels of government regarding issues affecting county residents, such as regional planning, economic development, and public safety.

(photo: "The front of the New Courthouse")

Each year, the Commissioners gather information and recommendation from citizens, staff, technical experts, as well as representatives from the business community and other levels of government. The Commissioners use a variety of forums to generate public participation in County planning efforts. These forums include regular open meetings of the Commissioners, county departments, special hearings, surveys, and public input through the County website. The County maintains an array of citizen advisory boards, authorities, commissions, and task forces to involve citizens in the planning and decision making of county government. Over 200 volunteers are appointed by the Commissioners to serve the County as regular members of these groups.

The Board of Commissioners has actively pursued new initiatives in order to operate more efficiently and effectively.

- Established strategic planning and performance management as a priorities to help manage Cumberland County through continuous financial and operational improvements;
- Formed the Municipal Advisory Board to improve regional partnerships;
- Created the Emergency Services Action Panel to identify problems and develop solutions pertaining to public safety as well as open communications between emergency services and local government;
- Executed a comprehensive energy savings program which will save the County approximately $675,000 over the next fifteen years;
- Adopted Land Partnerships Open Space Preservation and Smart Growth Plan and approved distribution of over $1 million for local partnerships and $1.36 million for Growing Greener II funding; secured an additional $6.5 million in farmland preservation funds;
- Initiated Phase I of a Prison expansion project and committed to the replacement of the Public Safety Building;
- Implemented the new 800 MHz radio system through the County's Department of Public Safety.

The Commissioners continue to work on building relationships with neighboring counties to collaborate on efforts such as economic development and planning in order to enhance not just Cumberland County, but the entire South Central Pennsylvania region.

Conservation District

The Cumberland County Conservation District began operations on 1 July, 1953, after a group of local farmers interested in the conservation of their soil and water resources made their interest known to the County Commissioners.

The District is responsible for administering soil and water conservation programs in Cumberland County. Most of the programs conducted at the county level are delegated to the District by the Commonwealth's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the State Conservation Commission. The Conservation District administers the following programs in Cumberland County: Chapter 102 Erosion and Sedimentation Control, National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) for sites over five acres, the Chesapeake Bay Program, the Nutrient Management Program and the Dirt & Gravel Roads Program.

The District also carries out many environmental education activities including a poster contest, the Envirothon, sponsorship of local students to attend summer conservation camps and college scholarships for students majoring in the environmental field. All environmental programs are funded by proceeds from the District's annual tree seedling sale and golf tournament.

The Conservation District also performs water testing for County residents. Once a month, citizens may bring their drinking water to be tested by a local laboratory.

A seven-member board of directors, appointed by the County Commissioners, governs the Cumberland County Conservation District. Four members of the board represent the farming community, two represent the general public, and one representative is a County Commissioner.

Controller

The Controller, elected every four years, supervises the fiscal affairs of the County. This task includes monitoring all the accounts and official acts related to all elected officers and other County employees and organizations tat collect, receive, hold, or disburse County money. Specifically, functions of the Controller's Office include internal audit, general accounting, disbursements, payroll, and retirement services. The Controller also serves as a member of the County Salary Board, Retirement Board, and Prison Board.

The regulatory responsibilities of the Controller make this office the "fiscal watchdog" for the County's citizens. The Controller's Office has received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for nineteen consecutive years. This certificate, presented by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada, is a prestigious national award recognizing conformity to the highest standards for preparation of a state and local government financial report.

Coroner

The Coroner's office is required to investigate all sudden, violent, or suspicious deaths in the county. These deaths may include homicides, suicides, and traffic deaths, as well as accidental deaths. "Sudden death" also includes the apparent natural death of persons not under the care of a physician who is able to certify the cause of death based on recent medical history.

The Coroner's investigations are to determine the medical cause of death, the manner of death, and whether the death was the result of criminal acts --- or criminal neglect --- on the part of any person other than the deceased. Among the Coroner's investigative tools is the Coroner's Inquest, at which he presides with a specially called jury. The Coroner's

office has computerized the records of all deaths it has investigated, from 1792 to the present. Searches can be made both by name and by date of death.

The Coroner works with local police and County detectives, exchanging information, evidence, and opinions regarding a given case. The Coroner or a deputy personally notifies next of kin. The Coroner's office is responsible for the personal effects of property found on or about the deceased until claimed by the legal representatives of the deceased. The Coroner is responsible also for the disposition of all unclaimed bodies in Cumberland County.

Court Administrator

The Office of Court Administrator manages the caseload and budget of the Cumberland County Court of Common Pleas. The Court is composed of five judges, each elected by the County's voters to serve terms of ten years. The Court of Common Pleas is a trial court, having jurisdiction over all matters within the Ninth Judicial District not exclusively relegated to another court and appellate jurisdiction over decisions made by District Justices.

Until the Pennsylvania Constitution of 1968, the functions now given to the Court Administrator belonged to the county's President Judge. The judges of Cumberland County have been able administrators as well as learned jurists --- the County Bench has produced two justices of the State Supreme Court, a Superior Court Judge, and one Federal judge --- but the size and complexity of the caseload has required a full-time administrator. The office as it now exists dates to 1983.

The Court Administrator serves as the voice of the Court. It makes and publishes the annual Court Calendar and keeps open discussions with the various County departments regarding issues of mutual concern, such as security. It also provides public education, encouraging school students to attend sessions of Court; it also lectures at local high schools and colleges. The Court Administrator keeps informed of the methods and technology used in other judicial districts, always with an eye to what will work best here, and it alerts local news media of significant issues and cases before the Court.

District Attorney

By statue, the District Attorney is the chief law enforcement officer of the county. The District Attorney's Office prosecutes all criminal and juvenile cases filed within the county and litigates all criminal appeals resulting from those cases. In addition, this office investigates all criminal activity occurring within the county not falling within the primary jurisdiction of another police agency.

The District Attorney empanels and administers the Grand Jury, active sine 1996. The District Attorney also maintains a section dedicated to helping victims and witnesses of crimes during all phases of the criminal justice system, including recovery of restitution and preparation of victim impact statements. Although its trial division is perhaps best known, this office also investigates automobile theft and insurance fraud and oversees the County's Drug Task Force.

In May 2003, the Forensic Laboratory at the Office of the District Attorney began to test illegal substances for courtroom presentation.

In December 2005, the Office hired a Forensic Investigator and has established a Bureau of Justice Services encompassing the Forensic Lab, Forensic Investigative Services, Accident Reconstruction, and Computer Forensics.

Domestic Relations

Prior to 1975, Domestic Relations (DRS) was considered a Probation Office function. In 1975 Title IV-D legislation was passed which allowed for Federal funding of the DRS. Circa 1983 Domestic Relations formally split from the Probation hierarchy and now officially reports to the Court.

The Cumberland County Domestic Relations Office helps ensure financial security for children of broken families. The Office's many activities include locating absent parents, scheduling and performing DNA tests in civil paternity cases, establishing equitable support orders, scheduling delinquent defendants for Court and providing for prosecution and enforcement of support orders in compliance with the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure, existing Pennsylvania statute and Code of Federal Regulations.

Applications for assistance come form the general public and it remains the goal of the Office to continue accepting applications on a walk-in basis. The Office strives to establish local orders within as short a time frame as possible to maximize the well being of children covered under a support order. The average case load per officer is approximately eight hundred and fifty (850) cases. The Office collects and disburses approximately $27 million per year.

Domestic Relations Bldg

Drug and Alcohol Commission

The Cumberland-Perry Drug and Alcohol Commission operates from within the Cumberland County Human Services Building. The Board of Commissioners of both counties select fifteen volunteers representing various community and geographic interests to serve on the Commission. This group of volunteers is responsible for planning and overseeing the delivery of publicly funded drug and alcohol treatment services in the two counties.

Under joint direction of the Boards of Commissioners of Cumberland and Perry counties, the Commission serves as the Single County Authority in fulfillment of State contracts and regulations. The Commission's staff must manage a combination of State, Federal, and local funds fro drug and alcohol services. Over the years, the Commission has grown adept at addressing the varied needs of residents in the 1,100 square mile area it serves.

With one exception, the Commission contracts with local organizations to provide prevention, intervention, and treatment services. The exception is a Resource Center in Cumberland County for the county's residents. All providers of these services, including the Commission's Resource Center, are approved or licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Health in accordance with the numerous State regulations and the State Plan for Drug and Alcohol Services.

Election & Voter Services (Bureau of Elections)

Election & Voter Services provides mandated services and is responsible for registering voters and conducting federal, state, county and local elections. In addition, Voter Services compiles and maintains the registration of all voters according to voting precincts for use at all elections.

Election &Voter Services prepares and publishes notices of elections and lists of offices for which candidates are to be nominated, accepts and verifies nomination petitions, prepares and prints official and specimen ballots, and administers the Campaign Expenditure Act. In addition, Election &Voter Services is responsible for establishing voting precincts, locating polling places for each voting precinct, training election officers to staff the polls on Election Day, and preparing all election supplies to be used at the polls on Election Day.

Farmland Preservation

The County Commissioners in July, 1989, created the Cumberland County Agricultural Land Preservation Board. The first task of the five-member board was to draft a program that would meet requirements of Act 149 of 1988. In September, 1990, the State Agricultural Land Preservation Board approved the program. The County Board's activity centers on the purchase of "development rights," more formally known as Agricultural Conservation Easements. These easements preserve in perpetuity the use of farmland as farmland.

The County Board, through the Program Co-coordinator, ,welcomes applications from owners of farmland. Applications are ranked according to soil quality and several other factors, and farms with the highest-ranking scores are selected first for purchase of easements. The Board retains an independent appraiser to determine an easement value of the selected farms, upon which appraisals offers are made to the applicants. After an applicant accepts the offer, an agreement of sale is entered into between the applicant and the County Board. After the County has processed an application and has submitted it to the State Bureau of Farmland Protection for staff review, it is then presented to the State Board for review and approval.

The County Board in its first eighteen years purchased easements over 13,000 acres of farmland. Funding for the program comes primarily from County and State government, but also occasionally from the Federal government. (Farmland Preservation is now under the Planning Commission.)

Finance Office

The Finance Office was created prior to the 1980's when the budget and finance duties were branched out from the Commissioners Office. The Office manages the fiscal affairs of the County, provides accountability and oversight for the County budget, and supports financial decision making of the Board of Commissioners, Chief Operations Officer, and other County officials and departments. The Finance Office also monitors the financial condition of all County operations and programs. It prepares, publishes, and administers the annual budget, as required by Fourth Class County Code. The fiscal budget process begins in February and concludes in June while the calendar budget process begins in June and concludes in December. Both budgets require public review and comment, and this process precedes adoption by the Commissioners.

Other responsibilities of the Office include financial forecasting, financial management, debt management, performance management and benchmarking for County finances, and cash management. Investing County money with local financial institutions ensures availability of adequate funds to meet all County disbursements and also maximize interest revenue.

The Finance Office also oversees the centralized purchasing for all County departments and provides for equitable public purchasing by the County, to maximize the purchasing value of public funds in procurement, and to ensure a procurement system of quality and integrity in compliance with all Pennsylvania public procurement codes.

Human Resources

The office of Human Resources provides County employees with a full range of services while representing the interests of their employers, the citizens as embodied in the three County Commissioners and the Row Officers. Like Joseph in the Bible, this office must see to the dreams and needs of the overseer and the overseen. It negotiates with insurance companies and labor unions, reviews grievances and claims for worker's compensation. It ensures adherence to County policies and procedures --- as well as all relevant State and Federal laws --- regarding the safety, training, transfer, hiring, and firing of employees. It maintains personnel files on the rights and responsibilities enjoyed both by employees and by employers.

Information Management

"Knowledge itself is power," Francis Bacon said, and in no other era has information abounded in such variety. In 1999 the County Commissioners created the Information Management and Technology Office, and it helps all other county agencies with their use of telephones and computers. When necessary, it consults with experts in the private sector. Assistance ranges from the installation and repair of those machines to advice on keeping the information they convey safely stored and swiftly found.

the Bixler Bldg (left) and the addition connecting it to the New Courthouse (right)

Jury Commissioners

Both Jury Commissioners --- one Republican and one Democrat --- are elected to a four-year term, and they serve concurrently. With the President Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, they compose the Jury Selection Commission. The Jury Commissioners mail a summons and a questionnaire to prospective jurors
before each term of civil and criminal court. The Jury Commissioners review each questionnaire to determine whether a person is fit for jury duty. Once selected, jurors receive an instructional booklet, parking authorization, and a map designating appropriate parking facilities near the courthouse.

Library System

Founded in 1960, The Cumberland County Library System (CCLS) includes an administrative office, seven local libraries, and one branch: Amelia S. Given (Mt. Holly Springs); Bosler Memorial Library (Carlisle), East Pennsboro Branch (Enola), Cleve J. Fredricksen Library (Camp Hill), John Graham Public Library (Newville), new Cumberland Public Library, Shippensburg Public Library, and Joseph T. Simpson Public Library (Mechanicsburg).

As a federated library system, each member library has its own governing board, with a county system board charged with overall library service development and provision. Each member library board nominates one full-time and one alternate representative for appointment to the Library System Board by the Cumberland County Commissioners. A County Commissioner serves as the System Board's liaison with the County.

The Library System administrative office is a department within Cumberland County government and reports to the Library System board as well as to the Cumberland County Commissioners Office.

The mission of the Library System administrative office is to plan, develop, coordinate and provide comprehensive public library services for residents through a cooperative network of public libraries. Its core activities are:

1. **Library Services** – Provides a free public library card to residents and taxpayers for library services, library material delivery, reference databases and online services.
2. **Information Technology** – Includes computer hardware, software and telecommunications costs for a 250-PC countywide network that uses library management software for circulation, cataloging, public access and Internet services.
3. **Technical Services** – Includes acquisitions, cataloging and processing of library materials for member libraries as well as bibliographic database maintenance.
4. **Training Services for Staff & Board Members** – Includes countywide training for staff as well as higher-level skill development for staff and board members.
5. **STAR Outreach Services** – STAR provides free, personalized selection and delivery of library materials to homebound older adults who cannot visit the library due to age, illness or physical disability. STAR also provides large print and audio book collections as well as large print deposit collections at senior care facilities.
6. **Advocacy, Public Relations and Marketing** – Includes outreach to elected officials and fostering partnerships with community agencies such as Success by Six and Hospice of Central PA. Also includes strategic marketing initiatives such as *One Book, One Community*, yellow pages, and promotional brochure design and printing.
7. **Administrative & Financial Services** – Includes group health insurance plans and reimbursements for over thirty (30) member library staff and system wide grant applications.

Cumberland and Perry Counties' Mental Health and Mental Retardation Program

This Program, serving Cumberland and Perry Counties', was established in 1967 under the Mental Health and Mental Retardation Act of 1966. The purpose of the Act was to develop a continuum of supports and services for individuals with mental illness and/or mental retardation. Services are provided to all residents of our joinder, who meet the criteria, as established by the Act, regardless of their ability to pay for services. Depending on the service requested a liability determination may be completed.

The Program provides an Administrative component that is responsible for ensuring services under contract and for supporting the development of new/enhanced services and supports, for monitoring and evaluating the services, for providing technical assistance to providers and for funding services. Services and supports include those mandated by the Act as well as those that have developed since the inception of the Act of 1966. The Mental Health Program is also responsible for developing and implementing the Involuntary Mental Health Commitment procedures and for developing and maintaining a Disaster Crisis Outreach Team that works with our counties' Emergency Management.

The Mental Retardation Base Service Unit is operated through the County Program and provides for the hiring of Supports Coordinators who work with adults and children diagnosed with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Services are provided either under contract or by the Program office and include: Intake, Early Intervention, residential and supported living services, behavioral intervention, family support, supported employment services, transportation, and the

development of Individual Service Plans. Supports Coordinators coordinate and evaluate the quality of services and supports provided to their respective clients.

The Mental Health Base Service Unit and case management functions are provided through contracts with Holy Spirit Hospital Behavioral Health Center and NHS Stevens Center. Mental Health services are also provided under contract with additional providers and include: Crisis Intervention and Emergency Services, outpatient evaluation and treatment services, psychiatric Inpatient hospitalization, psychiatric rehabilitation, social rehabilitation, supported employment, residential services, supported living, partial hospitalization, family support, and transportation.

Additional services provided by both Programs include information and referral services, consultation and education, individual and family supports and technical assistance. Both programs encourage consumer directed services and supports and strive to support individuals in their home communities.

Nursing Home (Claremont Nursing and Rehabilitation Center)

Claremont Nursing and Rehabilitation Center (CNRC), located in Middlesex Township, is a licensed nursing home owned and operated by the County and is certified by Medicare and Medicaid. CNRC traces its history to the Cumberland County Poorhouse and House of Employment. In 1810 this institution was located in what is now Perry County. After Perry County was established in 1820, the Pennsylvania Legislature in February of 1829 passed Law 32 for Cumberland County to again establish a Poorhouse and House of Employment to be located within Cumberland County's new boundaries. Directors of the Poor purchased in 1829 the Edward Stiles farm just east of Carlisle known as Claremont Farms for the erection of the Poorhouse, also later known as the Almshouse. It remained a self-sufficient farm for more than a century. Residents helped with chores and kept themselves supplied with vegetables, milk, and meat. In 1873, a Hospital was erected. In 1878 a Hospital for the Insane was established and continued in service until patients were transferred to the State Hospital in Harrisburg in 1922. After more modern facilities replaced the Hospital building, it was used to store county records. In 1995, it was renovated and made into apartments for disabled persons of lower income.

Originally a corporation unto itself, the Poorhouse and House of Employment was reorganized in 1937 under a Pennsylvania Law effecting the poorhouses of all counties. The County Commissioners became the Board of Directors and the Poorhouse and House of Employment became known as the Institutional District from 1937 to 1968. From 1968 to 1977 it was officially called the Cumberland County Nursing Home. Designated the Claremont Nursing Home and Rehabilitation Center since 1977, the nursing home remains on the property purchased in 1829 with additional land purchases.

Currently, CNRC has 290 licensed beds, all Medicare certified, and provides a full range of nursing home services with a fifty-three (53) bed Alzheimer's Unit and services for physical, occupational, and speech therapy.

Claremont provides round the clock nursing care designed to meet the needs of each resident. The dietary program has the full time services of a registered dietician. Five physicians --- in addition to a podiatrist, dentist, psychiatrist, and psychologist --- provide medical care, aided by a complete pharmacy, laboratory, and x-ray equipment. There is also a full time Social Service staff, an Activities staff, and a chaplain.

the Hospital of 1873, now Valley Ridge Apartments

Planning Commission

The Cumberland County planning Commission is composed of nine members appointed by the County Commissioners. Each member is appointed to a four year term, and all Planning Commission members must meet County residency requirements.

The County Planning Commission administers the County's Comprehensive Plan, doing so through co-coordinating planning activities among the thirty-three municipalities and providing recommendations to local officials. The Commission reviews and makes recommendations to the local elected officials concerning all subdivision and land

development plans submitted in the County. It also reviews all proposed zoning amendments and amendments to subdivision and land development ordinances. All new zoning ordinances and subdivision and land development ordinances are also required to be reviewed by the County Planning Commission. The Commission is also charged with the task of holding public meetings and hearings when deemed necessary.

The Planning office also maintains extensive files for use by the public. These include all the municipal zoning and subdivision ordinances, zoning maps, comprehensive plans, sewerage plans and flood plain maps. All subdivision and land development plans and sewerage modules submitted for review are also kept on file.

The Cumberland County Planning Commission is supported by a staff of six planners and receives regional planning support from the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission. The Commission also offers a Local Planning Assistance program to municipalities in which the staff attends municipal planning commission meetings, thereby providing direct planning consultant services.

Prison

Cumberland County has had a prison system --- as we now know the phrase --- since 1854, when the then all-modern prison was built on East High Street in Carlisle (to replace the first prison or goal built in the 1760s?). Since 1985 inmates have been housed in the new facility on Claremont Road in Middlesex Township. This new prison provides the latest in correctional technology and rehabilitation for inmates. This “new generation” prison can keep 336 inmates in its secure environment.

Inmates receive many treatments services aimed at rehabilitation and reducing recidivism. Some programs allow inmates to earn an equivalent high school diploma, receive psychiatric services (enabling them to be placed in work release jobs), or participate in an Intervention Drug and Alcohol program that, since its inception, has helped hundreds of inmates, resulting in an enviable record: Ninety-three percent of all program participants have not been returned to prison for driving under the influence. These various psychiatric and intervention programs have greatly contributed to the safe operation of the prison. The work release program has allowed inmates to earn in the aggregate hundreds of thousands of dollars, almost one-third going to the prison to pay for room and board, as well as for restitution, fines, court costs, and other expenses.

The prison is governed by a Prison Board composed of the County Commissioners, the Controller, the Sheriff, the District Attorney, and a Common Pleas Judge. The Board appoints the Warden, who has an administrative staff of three deputies --- one for security, one for treatment, and for operations.

New Prison

Probation

In August, 1996, the Cumberland County Probation Office was split into two separate units, Adult Probation and Juvenile Probation. The department itself, once including duties now given to Domestic Relations, began in 1949.

The Adult Probation Department is charged with two main responsibilities: Protect society from the defendant; rehabilitate the offender. Probation officers keep convicted criminals under a watchful eye, making sure the Court’s orders for treatment or community service are obeyed. The Office also monitors
and enforces the collection of all costs, fines, and restitution ordered by the Court.

The Juvenile Probation Department handles children ages ten through seventeen charged with committing criminal offenses. Both the number of youths referred to this office and the crimes they commit have increased, seventy percent between 1992 and 1997. The State’s Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission oversees county juvenile probation departments. During the 1990s theses departments adopted the Balanced Approach, whereby three parties are considered: The youth, the victim, and the community.

Old Prison

Prothonotary "Keeper of the Civil Records"

The word Prothonotary is Latin in origin (*protonotarius*) and means "First Notary." This word dates back to Ecclesiastical Law as being the highest administrator of the Court of Rome and the First Notary, known as the Prelate of a body of twelve Notaries. Whenever a case was read for trial, the Prothonotary would notify the Judges when to appear in Court to try a case.

When the English Court system was established, the Prothonotary acted as the chief administrator in the English Courts of the Kings Bench and Common Pleas. When our American Court system was established, we also adopted the same procedure as those being used by the English Courts. Every state in our United States has it's own Clerk of the Common Pleas Court but very few are titled as Prothonotaries. The older New England States and Pennsylvania still have their Prothonotaries.

In Pennsylvania prior to 1790, the Prothonotary was the appointment of the General Assembly. From 1790 to 1838 it was the appointment of the Governor. Since 1839 it is an elective choice of its citizens. The Prothonotary's Office is a fee operating office and is self-supporting. All fees are turned over to the County Treasurer for use of the County government.

The Prothonotary has administrative control and responsibility for keeping and maintaining all official records of the civil court such as lawsuits, divorces, and liens (other than liens of mortgage); writs of execution for sheriff's sales and other actions are also here. Appeals of judgments by District Justices may be filed with the Prothonotary, and then proceedings begin before the Court of Common Pleas. The Prothonotary also helps select juries for civil trials.

The oaths of naturalized citizens were once kept here, a practice long since defunct. (1) Another Federal function, that of issuing passports, is still conducted through the office of the Prothonotary. Since 1 January 1994, all new cases have been entered in a computerized system.

(1) Henry J. Young. *Abstracts of the Naturalization Papers of Cumberland County, 1798-1906* (Carlisle: Self-published, 1983).

Cumberland County Public Defender Office

As a direct result of the 1963 U.S. Supreme Court decision in Gideon v. Wainwright, the Pennsylvania Constitution of 1968 (Article 9, Section 3) established the position of Public Defender as an appointed officer in each county. The County Commissioners appoint the Public Defender, and the Public Defender hires assistants and staff with approval of the Commissioners.

According to the Pennsylvania Public Defender Act, the Public Defender is responsible to furnish free legal counsel to persons who lack sufficient funds to obtain their own attorney in proceedings where there is a constitutional right to be represented by a free attorney.

Though operating under state mandate, the Public Defender Office [9 attorneys] is funded by Cumberland County from the county's general revenue. In Cumberland County the judiciary makes the determination as to whether an accused is eligible for a public defender.

Public Safety

MISSION – To coordinate essential public safety activity among federal, state, regional, county, municipal agencies and volunteer organizations to provide quick, reasoned responses to the needs of our citizens during daily public safety operations and emergencies for both natural and man-made disasters, including those resulting from acts of terrorism.

Originally, the Department of Public Safety (DPS) was established in the 1950s and called Civil Defense. In 1978 the name was changed by a County Resolution to the Office of Emergency Preparedness. The current name and structure was finalized in October 2006 with two operational divisions: Public Safety Communications and Emergency Management.

The focus of Public Safety Communications is the 9-1-1 Center which receives incoming calls from the general public reporting emergencies throughout the county and then dispatching the appropriate police, fire, and/or emergency medical services. In 1997, the 9-1-1 Mobile Communications Unit was purchased as back-up in the event that the primary 9-1-1 Center becomes inoperable.

The focus of the Emergency Management is to assist individuals, groups, and/or communities in preparing for, supporting, and recovering from the impact of a natural or man-made disaster. The Hazardous Materials Program ("HazMat") is a major component of this division. Its objective is to reduce injury, or loss of property and life, due to the uncontrolled releases of hazardous materials by providing a coordinated response and restoration of facilities and highways. The Emergency Management division also includes trained volunteers to support specialized emergency response teams such as SHOT (Special Hazards Operations Team), MCIRT (Mass Casualty Incident Response Team), and SAR (Search and Rescue). An Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is available for activation on a 24/7 basis to assist with command, control, and coordination along with operational, logistical, and administrative support during large scale events or disasters.

Through its Emergency Services Training Institute, the office provides training for various fire and emergency services throughout the county. In addition to educational programs provided yearly for third grade students by the 9-1-1 staff, the DPS staff provides free of charge experienced-based training or presentations to the public.

Recorder of Deeds

Since 20 September, 1750, until the present day, the Recorder of Deeds has maintained a permanent public record of deeds and documents related to the development, transfer, and encumbrance of real estate in Cumberland County. In the early days of the office other forms of property --- cattle, horses, slaves --- had their sale recorded here as well. Happily, though, Deed Book 1 L (1794-1796) contains several manumissions of slaves. (1)

Unscathed by the courthouse fire of 1845 and securely hidden during the Confederate invasion of 1863, the records provide a unique vista on the people who have made Cumberland County what it is. From agreements between neighbors to the official commissions of judges, all are here and on view to the public. Until the early 1970s non-profit corporations --- churches, college fraternities, lodges --- received their charters from the county's Court of Common Pleas, and those charters have been recorded here.

Prior to 1929 all records were copied by hand into canvas-bound books; today all documents are copied by machine. All records are divided into three categories: Deeds, Mortgages, Miscellaneous. Separate index books for each category were made until December, 1993, when indexing became computerized. As the office enters its fourth century, the Recorder of Deeds continues to seek ways to make its ancient service adapt to the times.

(1) John C. Fralish, Jr. *The Pennsylvania County Archives Collection, Part 21, vol. II.*

Register of Wills and Clerk of Orphans' Court

True to its name, the office of the Register of Wills keeps copies of Wills, from 1750 to the present. The person elected Register of Wills also serves as Clerk of Orphans' Court, as such keeping birth and death records from 1894 to 1906 and marriage licenses from 1885 to the present.

The Register of Wills grants Letters Testamentary and Short Certificates to executors of estates. The Letters bear witness to the executor's duties, while the Certificate in short form sums up the authority granted by the Letters. The estate's inventory, inheritance tax return, and payment of inheritance tax must be filed with the Register within nine months of the death.

The duties of the Clerk of Orphans' Court include petitioning the Court to declare a person incapacitated or to appoint for a person a guardian. Through these petitions a minor may become a ward of the Court.

Sheriff's Office

The Cumberland County Sheriff's Office was founded in 1750.

The mission of the Sheriff's Office is to enforce court orders issued by the Court of Common Pleas and to maintain peace throughout the county by enforcement of the Commonwealth's crimes code, vehicle laws, and Pennsylvania Rules of Court. All of the Office's tasks are put into five categories.

Civil Process

This operation serves court orders such as summonses, complaints, money judgments, writs of seizure, and injunctions. Also, subpoenas are served ordering the appearance of individuals in court. Money judgments include judgments for personal property and judgments for real estate.

Criminal

The criminal division processes warrants issued by the courts for the transportation or extradition of fugitives. Crimes against employees and property of the County are investigated by the Sheriff's Office. Prisoners are transported from federal, state and county prisons for criminal court appearances. The Sheriff's Office works with the County's Drug Task Force on a full-time basis and assists local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies as needed. During October, 1997, the Sheriff's Office put into service its first full-time K-9 unit. Since then another K-9 has been added, giving the Sheriff's Office two full-time K-9 units. One is certified in explosives detection and the other is certified in drug detection and tracking. And as a result of recent events, the Couth Central Terrorism Strike Team was organized, consisting of local law enforcement within south central Pennsylvania. Currently the Cumberland County Sheriff's Office has ten deputies assigned to the Strike Team. As a member of the Strike Team deputies are continuously involved in training which focuses on weapons of mass destruction incidents. The Sheriff's Office also has two deputies assigned to the Special Response Team.

Security

Members of the Sheriff's Office provide security to the courts as well as to the main courthouse facilities.

Licenses

The Sheriff's Office issues several licenses: a License to Carry Firearms (issued to residents of Cumberland County); a License to Sell Firearms (issued to a dealer of firearms in Cumberland County); a license to see Precious Metals (issued to all dealers in precious metals).

Community Services

The Office provides several community service programs, including: The Outmate Work Program, which involves inmates from the county prison being escorted by Deputy Sheriffs to do community project throughout the county; ID a Child Program, photographing and fingerprinting children; and DARE (Drug Awareness Resistance Education), taught in elementary schools.

Solicitor's Office

The County Solicitor is appointed by the County Commissioners and must be an attorney-at-law admitted to practice in the courts of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The County Commissioners may also appoint not more than three assistant solicitors, and with the approval of the Court of Common Pleas, may appoint special counsel. The primary function of the Solicitor's Office is to advise the Commissioners and all departments under their jurisdiction on all legal matters and litigation involving the County.

The Solicitor's office commences and prosecutes all suits brought by the County concerning any rights, privileges, properties, claims, or demands involving the County. The Solicitor's office also defends all actions or suits brought against the County.

All Ordinances and Resolutions to be adopted by the County and all contracts for purchase of services, personal property, and any other legally binding contract to be entered into by the County are drafted or reviewed by the Solicitor's office. This Office also performs these duties for each elected officer who is not authorized to appoint a solicitor or who has not appointed a solicitor.

Solid Waste Management

Since 1975, the County has enjoyed the guidance of a Solid Waste Authority, but not until 1991 did it have a Department of Solid Waste Management. The Authority is appointed by the Commissioners, and it develops and administers the County's plan for managing solid waste. The Department implements this plan and addresses the daily details associated with it.

The Department of Solid Waste Management (to give its full title) is tasked to carry out such varied duties as fixing appropriate fees, adopting and enforcing ordinances and regulations, and co-coordinating and encouraging recycling programs throughout the county.

Tax Assessment

The Tax Assessment Office, per Pennsylvania Statute, is responsible for identifying and assigning fair and equitable valuation to all parcels of real estate and persons, over eighteen, in Cumberland County. The valuations are used to create Real Estate and Occupational/Per Capita tax rolls for all taxing bodies. Permanent records are maintained and updated on real estate properties as ownership and physical characteristics changes are made. The Tax Mapping department maintains and updates tax maps showing property information and boundary lines on all parcels.

The County Commissioners, acting as the Board of Assessment Appeals, adopts local Rules and Regulations governing Real Estate Assessment and Appeals. All persons or property owners aggrieved by their Assessments have the right to appeal. The County Commissioners can appoint, as provided by law, a Board to hear the appeals brought before them.

Tax Claim Bureau

The Tax Claim Bureau, acting under the Pennsylvania Real Estate Tax Sale Law, is responsible for collecting real estate taxes that are not paid to the municipal tax collector by the end of the year that taxes were levied. The Bureau also collects Clean and Green Rollback Taxes assessed on properties that violate the Clean and Green regulations. Taxes returned to the Tax Claim Bureau become a lien against the real property. The lien is satisfied when full payment is made of the delinquent tax, Bureau costs, and all accumulated interest.

All uncollected real estate taxes for the year are turned over to the Bureau by the following January 15th. A notice is mailed to the taxpayer via certified mail the month after the tax as been returned. Reminder notices are sent in May and October of the year that the taxes have been returns and also May of the second y ear. Any property with taxes in arrears eighteen months after being turned over to the Bureau will be listed for tax sale. The tax sales are held annually in September as a public auction usually in the second floor of the Old Courthouse.

Taxes and interests collected by the Bureau are distributed quarterly to the municipalities and school districts less a five percent commission.

Old Courthouse

Transportation

The Cumberland County Transportation Department (CCTD) was established in 1980. CCTD provides paratransit (or shared-ride) service to eligible Cumberland County residents free or for a nominal fee.
The resident must be determined eligible through various agencies and registered with CCTD. Transportation is provided to such destinations as elderly day care, sheltered workshops, and mental health and medical treatment facilities. Transportation is also provided to grocery stores, banks, post offices, social service agencies, drug stores, and work sites.

Currently CCTD has a fleet of thirty-one vehicles. All vehicles are wheelchair accessible. To arrange for transportation services , residents simply need to contact the CCTD by noon of the working day before the day of the requested ride once eligibility is determined. Reservations can be made three (3) weeks in advance. Rides can be requested to destinations throughout Cumberland County. Services, although (for medical appointments only) to places just over the Franklin and Dauphin and county lines to include the Capitol Complex and to Hershey Medical Center are provided on a limited basis.

Allen Road Bldg

Treasurer

The Treasurer's office receives, records, and deposits funds collected by every department and elected office holder within the County. The office maintains, updates, and reconciles all cash accounts. Moreover, the Treasurer is responsible for the payroll account, transfer of funds, and the purchase and redemption of all County investments.

The Treasurer is an agent for the State Game Commission and the State Fish and Boat Commission for the issuance of their approximately thirty (30) different licenses. Also, the office serves as an agent to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture for the issuance of county specific dog licenses. Under the two different state statues the office issues a Small Games of Chance License and a Bingo License to certain eligible non profit organizations established under law. The revenue received from this issuance of these licenses is placed within the county general fund.

Beginning in April 2001 the Treasurer began to collect a County Hotel Tax. This tax is collected upon patrons who reside in hotels and bed & breakfasts within the county. The funds received are paid over to the Cumberland County Economic Development Office for their use in the promotion of tourism and other economic pursuits to benefit Cumberland County.

The Treasurer serves along with the Controller and the three County Commissioners on the County Retirement Board. This body oversees the county retirement funds as prescribed by state statute.

Vector Control/Weights and Measures

Ever since the flooding caused in 1972 by Hurricane Agnes, the Vector Control Office has provided relief to County residents with certain vector problems – including rodents, mosquitoes, and gypsy moths- by administering community-wide pest management programs. "Vector" comes from the Latin for carrying, and so refers to disease-carrying pests.

The office also provides information to residents for control and treatment of household insects and other vermin. A listing is available to refer the homeowner to other appropriate government agencies or private companies. For municipalities, the office has educational information on the various vectors and methods of controlling them.

The Weights and Measures aspect of this department assures that there is equity in the marketplace and that standards are met and honored. Commerce has become more sophisticated than the days of the butcher putting his thumb on the scales, but the instinct to cheat remains the same. The role of Weights and Measures is to inspect such devises as motor fuel dispensers and supermarket scales and scanners. It also checks the accuracy of labels and the safety of packaging, all the better to protect the customer.

Veterans Affairs

The Department of Veterans Affairs provides assistance to the 24,000 military veterans and their families residing in Cumberland County. This assistance includes obtaining appropriate Federal, State, and County benefits. Veterans also receive advice and assistance in filing for disability compensation and pensions. Burial Benefits for veterans are coordinated by this office.

The Director of Veterans Affairs helps to plan and execute various patriotic events held each year throughout Cumberland County. The Director also passes on information on veterans benefits to the twenty-nine veterans organizations located within the county.

Early Cumberland County Townships

Sources:

1. Bell, Raymond M. Mother Cumberland. Midlothian, Va.: Hearthside Press. 1989.
2. Cumberland County Tax Rates Books

Township	Formed	Present County	Spelling variations
Allen	1753	Cumberland	
Armagh	1770s	Mifflin	
Antrim	1741	Franklin	
Ayr	1754	Fulton	Air, Aire
Barree	1767	Huntingdon	
Bedford	1767	Bedford	
Buffaloe	1799	Perry	Buffalo
Carlisle	1753	Cumberland	
Colerain	1767	Bedford	
Cooke	1872	Cumberland	
Cumberland	1767	Bedford	
Derry	1767	Mifflin	
Dickinson	1785	Cumberland	Dickison, Dickenson
Dublin	1767	Huntingdon	
East Pennsboro	1745	Cumberland	East Pennsborough, East Pennsburgh
Fannett	1754	Franklin	
Fermanagh	1754	Juniata	
Frankford	1795	Cumberland	
Greenwood	1767	Perry	
Guilford	1751	Franklin	
Hamilton	1751	Franklin	
Hampden	1845	Cumberland	
Hopewell	1735	Cumberland	
Juniata	1793	Perry	
Lack	1754	Juniata	
Letterkenny	1761	Franklin	
Lower Allen	1850	Cumberland	
Lower Frankford	1920	Cumberland	
Lurgan	1751	Franklin	
Middleton	1750	Cumberland	
Middlesex	1859	Cumberland	
Mifflin	1797	Cumberland	
Milford	1768	Juniata	
Monroe	1825	Cumberland	
Newton	1767	Cumberland	
North Middleton	1810	Cumberland	
Penn	1767	Cumberland	
Peters	1751	Juniata	
Rye	1766	Perry	Rie
Saville	1817	Perry	
Shippensburg	1793	Cumberland	
Silver Spring	1787	Cumberland	
Southampton	1783	Cumberland	
South Middleton	1810	Cumberland	
Toboyne	1763	Perry	Teboine
Tyrone	1754	Perry	
Upper Allen	1850	Cumberland	
Upper Frankford	1920	Cumberland	
Washington	1770s	Franklin	
Wayne	1780s	Mifflin	
West Pennsboro	1745	Cumberland	West Pennsborough, West Pennsburgh