

HISTORY OF THE

Warren-Sipe House

LOCATED AT 301 SOUTH MAIN STREET



The Virginia Quilt Museum opened in 1995 in the Warren-Sipe House, located at 301 S. Main Street, Harrisonburg. Before that, the house had many purposes; it started as a family home before becoming a youth center, a historical society, and even briefly serving as the circuit court.

Read on to learn more about this beautiful building, Harrisonburg history, and the history of the Virginia Quilt Museum.

1856

The house was built by Edward Warren and his uncle, William Rice, at an approximate cost of \$6,000. Warren and his new wife, Virginia "Jennie" Watson Magruder, lived in the home with their three children, Jennie's two sisters, and Edward's mother, sister, and grandmother. According to an 1860s record, four enslaved people were owned by Edward Warren and four were owned by his mother, Harriet Warren. Letters from Edward to Jennie name three: Billy, Martha Ann, and Fanny. It is possible another was named David.



Edward Warren

"Free Inhabitants" Record and "Slave Inhabitants" Record, June 5, 1860

| SCHEDULE 1.—Free Inhabitants in <i>The Town of Harrisonburg</i> in the County of <i>Rockingham</i> State of <i>Virginia</i> enumerated by me, on the <i>Sixth</i> day of <i>June</i> 1860. <i>McSmith</i> Ass't Marshal. Post Office <i>Harrisonburg</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--------------|------|---------------------------------|---|------------------------|---------------------------|--|--------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--|
| Dwelling houses numbered in the order of visitation. | Families numbered in the order of visitation. | The name of every person whose usual place of abode on the first day of June, 1860, was in this family. | Description. | | | Profession, Occupation, or Trade of each person, male and female, over 15 years of age. | Value of Estate Owned. | | Place of Birth, Naming the State, Territory, or Country. | Married within the year. | Attended school within the year. | Persons over 20 yrs of age who cannot read & write. | Whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane, idiotic, pauper, or convict. |
| | | | Age. | Sex. | Color, {White, Indian, mulatto} | | Value of Real Estate. | Value of Personal Estate. | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 197-197 | | E. T. H. Warren | 30 | M | | Surgeon ✓ | 14000 | 3000 | " | | | | |
| | | Jennie " " | 25 | F | | | | | " | | | | |
| | | Lizzie " " | 6 | F | | | | | " | | | | |
| | | James M. " " | 4 | M | | | | | " | | | | |
| | | Milly Rice | 15 | F | | | | 12000 | " | | | | |
| | | Harriet Warren | 49 | F | | | | 4000 | " | | | | |
| | | Ella Warren | 19 | F | | | | | " | | | | |
| | | Mary S. Magruder | 15 | F | | | | | " | | | | |
| | | Henrietta " " | 15 | F | | | | | " | | | | |

The following lived in the home:

E.T.H. Warren
Jennie Warren
Lizzie Warren
James M. Warren
Milly Rice
Harriet Warren
Ella Warren
Mary S. Magruder
Henrietta Magruder

| SCHEDULE 2.—Slave Inhabitants in <i>The Town of Harrisonburg</i> in the County of <i>Rockingham</i> State of <i>Virginia</i> , enumerated by me, on the <i>5th</i> day of <i>June</i> , 1860. <i>McSmith</i> Ass't Marshal. | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|----|---|----|------------------------------|---|---------------------------|---|
| NAMES OF SLAVE OWNERS. | Number of Slave | | | | Fugitives from Slave States. | Deaf & dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic. | No. of Slave Inhabitants. | |
| | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| E. T. H. Warren | 1 | 47 | M | 13 | | | | |
| | 1 | 37 | F | 13 | | | | |
| | 1 | 18 | F | 13 | | | | |
| | 1 | 12 | M | 13 | | | | 1 |
| Harriet Warren | 1 | 36 | M | 13 | | | | |
| | 1 | 30 | F | 13 | | | | |
| | 1 | 7 | F | 13 | | | | |
| | 1 | 6 | F | 13 | | | | |

This record shows that E.T.H. Warren owned four enslaved people, male age 47, female age 37, female age 18, male age 12 or 13 and Harriet Warren owned four enslaved people, male age 36, female age 30, female age 7, female age 6.

1862

Before serving in the Confederacy, Edward Warren deeded the home to his mother, Harriet Warren, and his grandmother, Milly Rice. Under their care, the house was used as a Confederate hospital. A very pregnant Jennie Warren and her children were living elsewhere out of precaution. There is only one known casualty that occurred in the house; 19-year-old Major Joseph Latimer, known as the "Boy Major," died in the home on August 1, 1863 after gangrene set in, following a field amputation of his arm. Edward Warren was killed at the Battle of the Wilderness in 1864.



THE BOY MAJOR.

A young officer of no ordinary merit and promise died at Mrs. Warren's in this place on Saturday last. We allude to Major Joseph W. LATIMER, of Prince William co., familiarly spoken of by his fellow-officers as, "the boy Major," for he was under 20 years of age when he died. When the war began, he was in the Lexington Military Institute. He entered the army as 2d Lieutenant, and rapidly advanced until, at Gettysburg, he commanded a battalion of artillery in Gen. Ewell's corps. In this battle he lost an arm. He reached this place, on his way to Richmond, when he was arrested by a disease produced by his wound, which in a few days terminated his short, but useful and honorable career.

He is represented as being a youth of a peculiarly amiable and genial spirit, and a great favourite with all his acquaintances. His military talents have been highly spoken of by his superior officers, and as an artilleryist he was excelled by few of any age. Such men the Confederacy can ill afford to spare.

Like many of our soldiers, we learn that he has for a considerable time been regarding his duties to his God as well as to his country, and that he died with the hopes of a christian.

On Sabbath the remains were interred in our cemetery with appropriate religious services.

Portrait of Joseph Latimer and obituary

1873

Harriet Warren sold the house to Benjamin and Sarah Long, who lived in the home with their two sons, Newton and Ashby. They paid \$1.00 to Harriet Warren the day the home was purchased and agreed to pay the remainder of the cost in four installments. They paid two installments but then sold the home without paying the final payments.



Here is a photo of the home pre - 1890s.

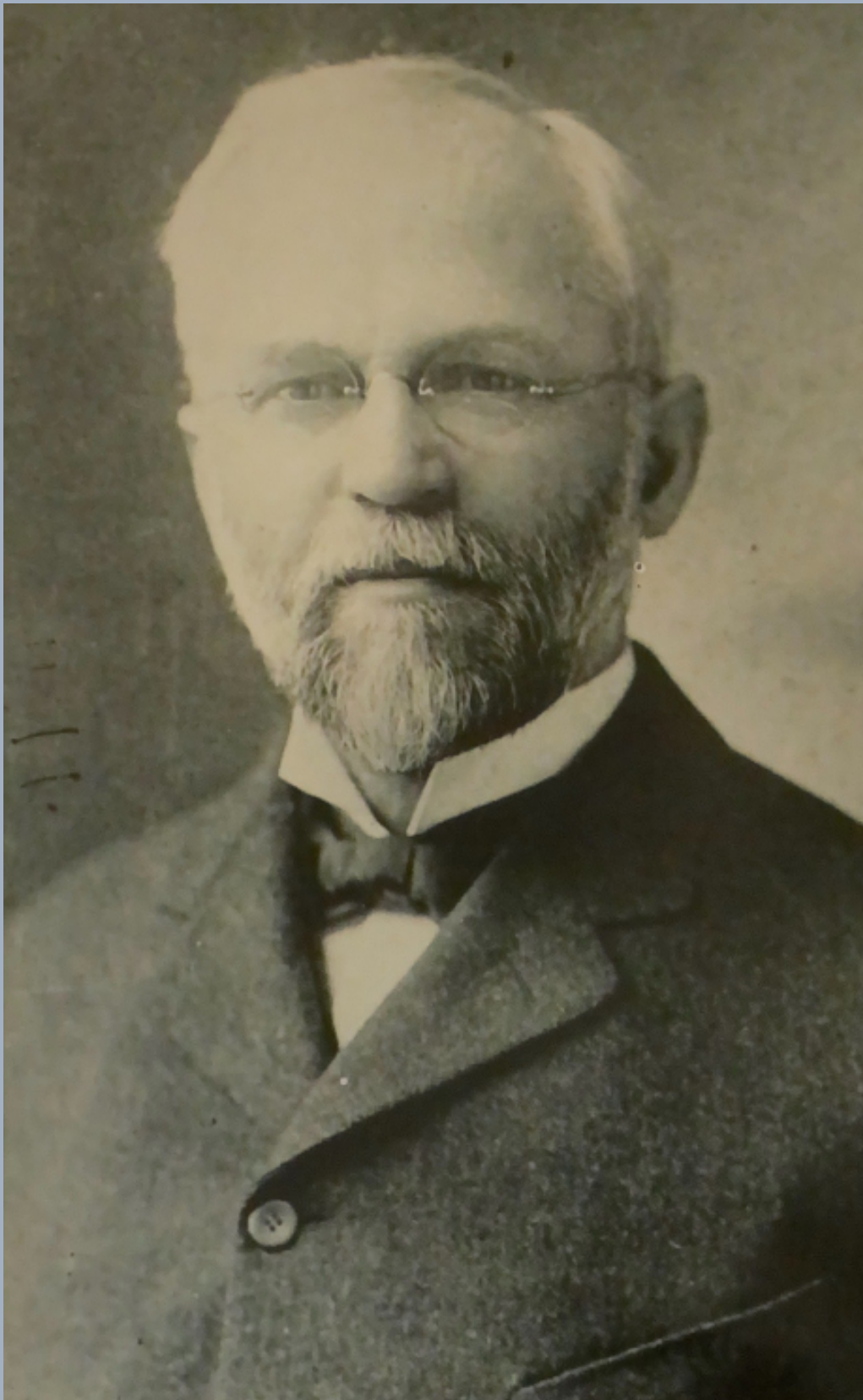
Note the presence of a balcony and lack of the mansard roof. The column in this room is one of the original columns as seen in this picture, and this floor panel is one installed by George Sipe after this photo was taken.

1875

After purchasing the home from Benjamin Long, John Samuel Harnsberger agreed to pay the final two payments owed to Harriet Warren. He was a lawyer and eventually served one term as mayor before running for Senate. When he lost his bid for Senator, he left his law practice and become a farmer. He and his wife, Caroline "Carrie" Virginia Harnsberger, rented out the home, first to a Mrs. Hoxsey and later to a Mr. John G. Yancey.

1894

John Harnsberger sold the home to George E. Sipe in 1894 for \$4,150. George Sipe and John Harnsberger worked together at a law firm before George started his own practice. George was married to Mary Rebecca Nancy on July 23, 1881, and the couple had two children together, Louise and Mary Sipe. Mary passed away in 1886, and George married Marien Mullikin in December of 1891. Marien and George had one daughter, Enid Sipe, who was later married in the home.



George Sipe



Enid Sipe on her wedding day

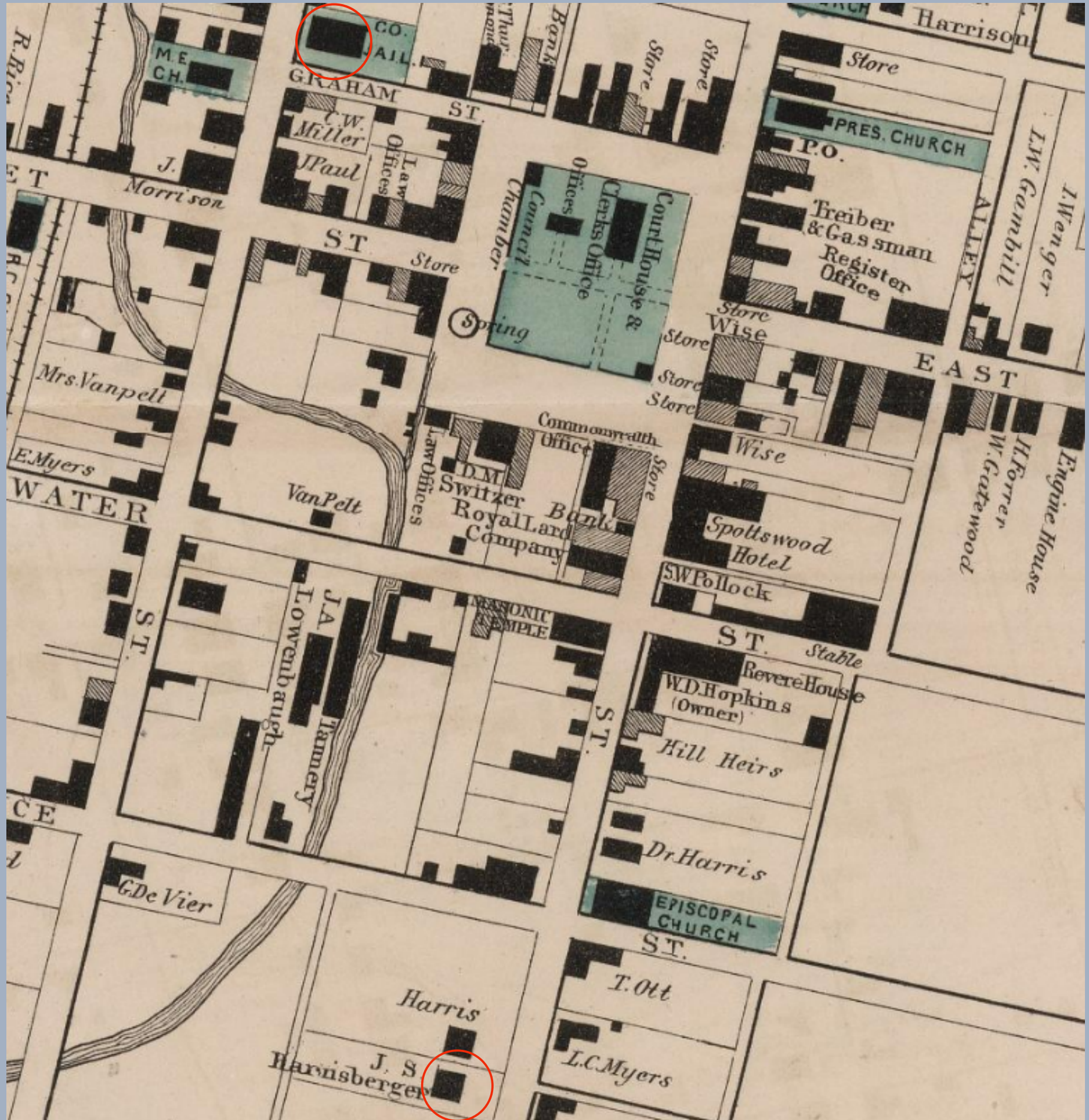
The Sipes lived in the house the longest of any of the private owners. George Sipe made several changes to the home, such as adding the attic, installing decorative floors, and installing the two mahogany mantels you can still see on the first floor. At least one mantel was built by Christopher Columbus Grandle.

While we believe in summary punishment in certain cases of lawlessness yet we cannot sanction the lynching of the colored woman who, it is alleged, instigated the burning of a barn in the eastern section of this county, reported in our local columns this morning.

In East Rockingham for several years past, murder, rapine and arson have been of frequent occurrence, and we can readily understand how the citizens of that section would like to rid themselves not only of the stigma which of late has attached to their neighborhoods, but of their desire to rid themselves of those who commit the crimes. In this case, however, we believe that those engaged in the lynching acted hastily and without proper consideration of the awful deed they were about to commit. Barn burning is not a hanging offence. The law is ample in such cases, and if proof was sufficient to those who hung her, it doubtless could have been produced in court and justice satisfied.

Had the woman persuaded the boy to burn Mr. Sipe's dwelling, thereby endangering life, there would have been some extenuating circumstances about the hanging, and no word of censure would have place in these columns.

A VIRGINIA ATROCITY.
DISGUISED MEN AT NIGHT SWING UP A
WOMAN TO A SAPLING, TAKING HER LIFE
ON A SUSPICION OF CRIME.
[BY TELEGRAPH TO THE HERALD.]





Marien Sipe

1939

At the age of 89, George visited Enid in Alabama where he had two battles with pneumonia and passed away, leaving the home to Marien. She lived at 301 South Main Street until she passed away at age 85 in February of 1950.



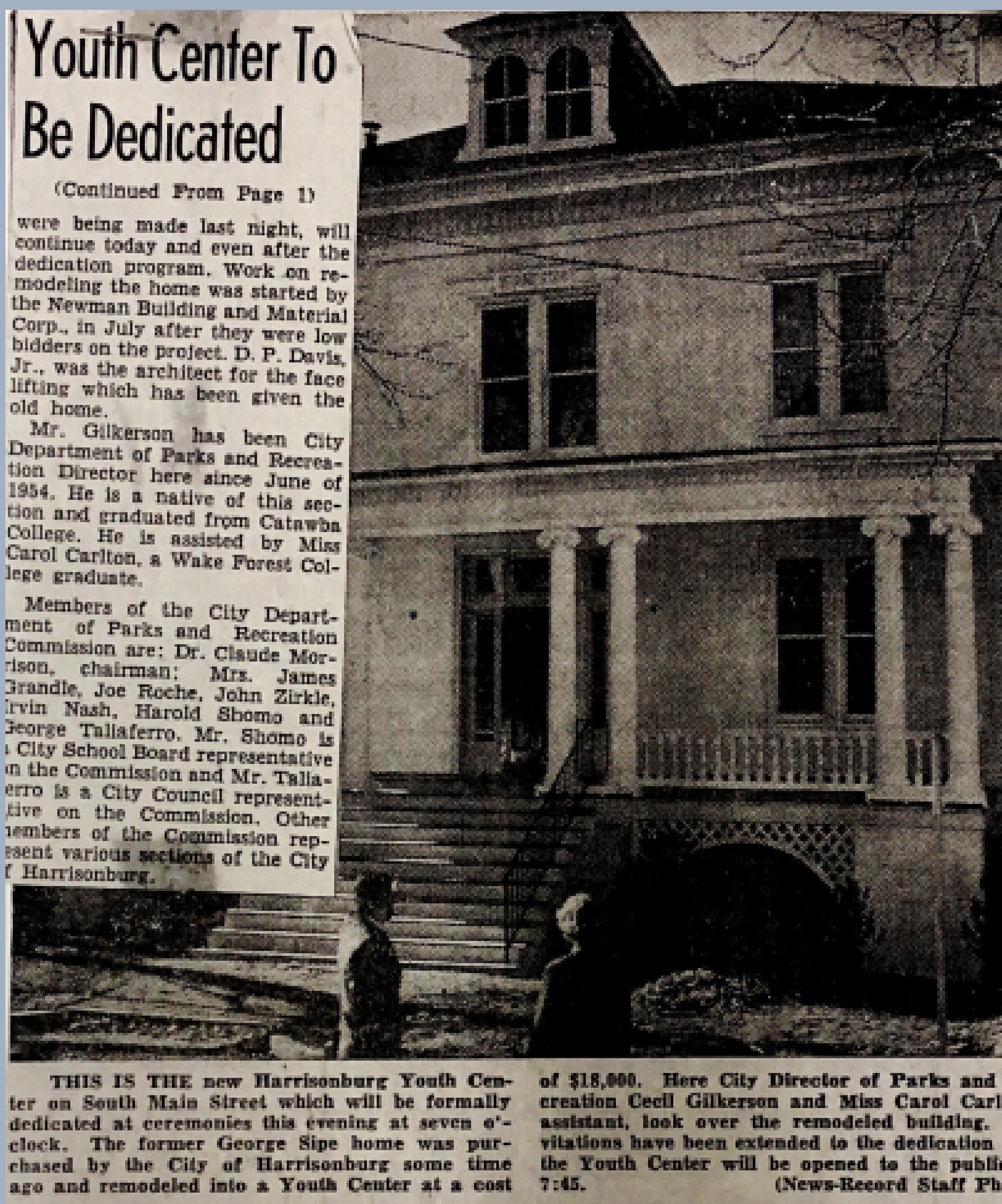
Mary, Enid, and Louise Sipe

1950

After their stepmother's death, Louis and Mary gained ownership of the home. It was stipulated in George Sipe's will that his daughters were to hold ownership in their own names "not affected by their husbands" and were to hold power to handle the "estate in like manner as if each were unmarried." The sisters rented the home to Daisy B. Monger who operated the home as a boarding house.

1956

The home was sold to the City of Harrisonburg for \$47,500. It was then remodeled to include 22 rooms, costing the city an additional \$18,000. It was dedicated as a Youth Center, but other agencies also operated out of the home, including the City Recreation Department, the City Parks & Recreation Department, and the Harrisonburg Golden Age Club.



Newspaper clipping announcing new Youth Center at 301 South Main Street

1984

From 1984 until 1986, the Harrisonburg Business Office, the Rescue and Communication Center, the Inspection Unit, and the Harrisonburg City Fire Department's Administration Office all operated out of the home. Following that, the Harrisonburg-Rockingham



The Warren Sipe House as it served as the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society

Historical Society occupied the home, now known as the Warren-Sipe House. They remained here until 1993, when they moved to their current location in Dayton, Virginia.

1993

While the county court house was being renovated, the Warren-Sipe House was used as Rockingham's circuit court. It was at this time that this jail cell was installed.

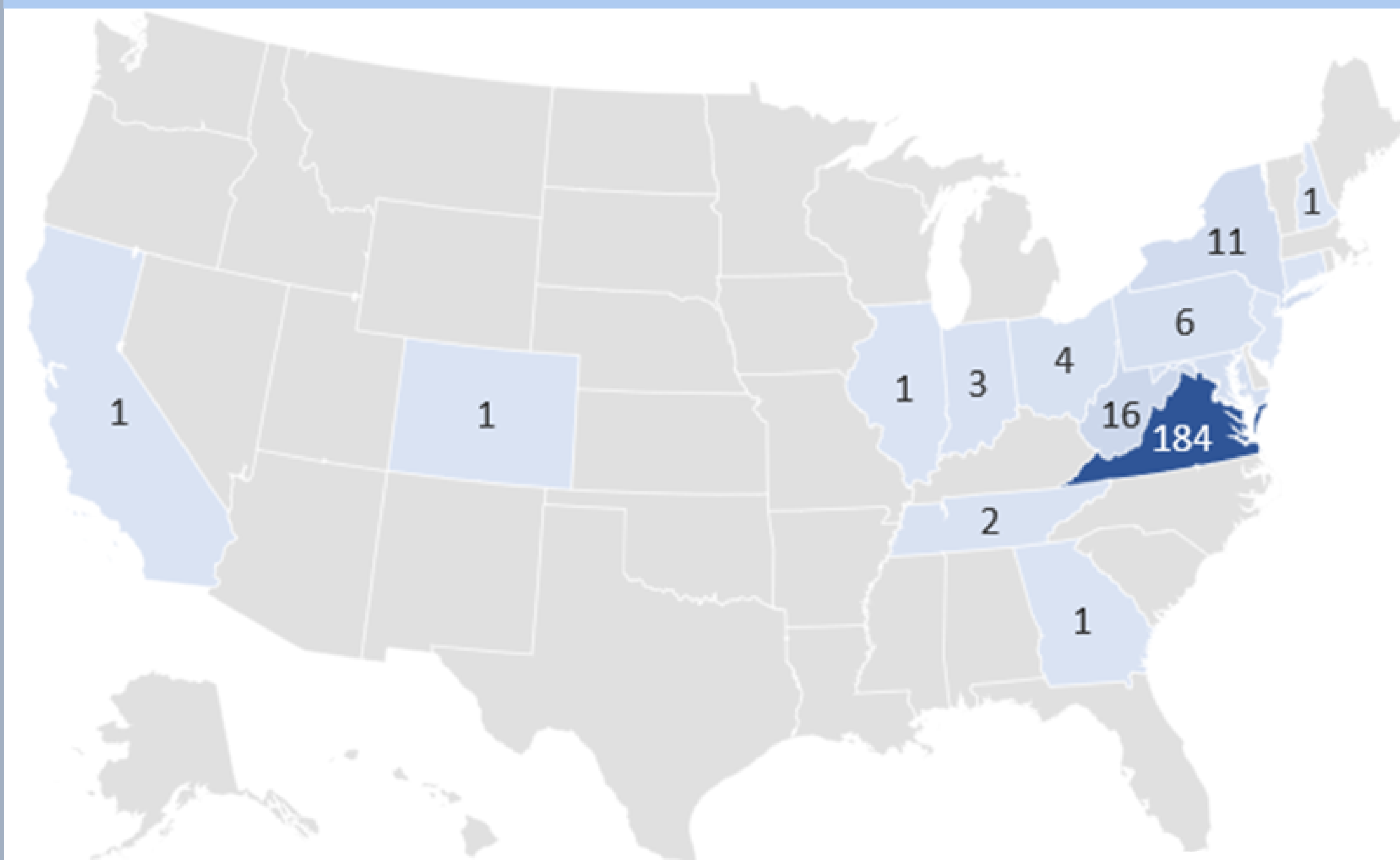
City Council Minutes, July 13, 1993

✓ Following discussion as to a location for the Court facilities during the renovation work on the Court House, Council Member Weaver moved that the Warren Sipe House be offered as a location for the courts during the renovation work. The motion was seconded by Council Member Dingledine, and approved with a unanimous vote of Council.

1995

The city of Harrisonburg offered the Warren-Sipe House to the Virginia Quilt Museum while the museum was looking for a building to call home. VQM opened its doors in August 1995 and in 2000, the General Assembly proclaimed the Virginia Quilt Museum the official quilt museum of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The collection at the Virginia Quilt Museum continues to grow: from a small collection of 12 quilts – which were originally stored in this very jail cell – we now have nearly 400 quilts divided between our Permanent and Education Collections with additional quilts being accepted every year. To preserve the quilting arts of Virginia, the museum also displays sewing machines, various forms of sewing ephemera, historical clothing, and our wide variety of quilts to showcase the history of quilting.

Number of Quilts Per State at VQM



**The above data was updated in 2022. It does not contain information regarding quilts in our collection that have unconfirmed location of origin.*