

# Courts as Well as Congress.

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Every well-informed reader knows that when General Howe and the British army drew near to Philadelphia in the fall of 1777, the Congress of the thirteen Colonies resolved to remove from that city into the interior of the State and did so remove, having come to Lancaster and begun its sittings here on September 27, of that year. Its stay here was of the briefest. Fear of molestation by the enemy induced another move, this time to York, where it began its sittings on October 2, 1777.

About the same time the General Assembly of the State seems to have deemed a similar movement on the part of the Courts of Common Pleas and Quarter Sessions of Philadelphia and Chester counties necessary, and an act was passed to authorize the change. The original manuscript of that statute is still in existence. It consists of two folios and is attested by a seal. The dealer who owns it asks \$150 for it. The full text is as follows:

## **Removal of the Courts From Philadelphia to Lancaster.**

“Act to empower the Justices of Philadelphia and Chester Counties to hold Courts at other places than usual. Whereas the Invasion of the Commonwealth by the Enemy hath rendered it impracticable to hold the County Courts of Common Pleas and general Quarter Sessions of the Peace and Gaol delivery, in and for the Counties of Philadelphia and Chester at the Places directed by Law; Be it therefore enacted, and it is hereby enacted by the Representatives of the Freemen of

the Common Wealth of Pennsylvania, in General Assembly, and by the authority of the same, That the Justices and Judges of the Courts of Common Pleas and General Quarter Sessions of the Peace and Gaol delivery in and for the Counties of Philadelphia and Chester respectively, shall be, and they are hereby Authorized and impowered to hold the same Courts respectively at the Times appointed by Law, and in such Places, as to the same Justices and Judges respectively, or any three of them, may appear to be Right and necessary," etc.

"(Signed.)

JOS. McLENE,

"Speaker."

At the bottom follows:

"Enacted into a Law at Lancaster on Saturday, the Twentieth day of December, In the year of our Lord one thousand and seven hundred & Seventy-seven.

"JOHN MORRIS,

"Clerk of the General Assembly."

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