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OLD COURT HOUSE NOW AN APARTMENT BUILDING

By HAMPTON DUNN

MAYO --- In 1908 when the Lafayette County Commissioners decided to spend $46,950 to erect its present Court House (which has recently been remodeled), they had a "white elephant" on their hands. It was a spacious frame building which had been put up in 1894-98 and used as the first Court House.

The first Court House was built for $5,800. It sold for $615 a few years later when the County wanted to build a new and more substantial building on the same site. Raleigh Lancaster bought it. Later it was acquired by the Ware family and moved across the street where it now stands. It's known today as the McClain Apartments.

Lafayette County was carved from Madison County in 1856, and the county seat was placed at Old Troy on the Suwannee River. A log cabin court house there was burned by some Confederate deserters in 1865.

The county seat remained in New Troy until 1893 when it was moved to Mayo. The change resulted from a heated election in which Mayo was declared the winner in the balloting by only 29 votes. Intra-county disputes continued. The upper and lower parts of the county argued so much over roads, that the southern section split off and became the present Dixie County in 1921.

Lafayette County was named for General Lafayette, the great French soldier who was given a grant of land in North Florida by the U.S. Congress in recognition of his services during the Revolutionary War.