

Washington County Courthouse

From Ancient Greece to Utah's Dixie

Lesson Objectives

Students will:

- Compare the elements of Greek Revival and Queen Anne style buildings.
- Develop a description of Greek Revival style based on their comparisons.
- Explore the history and significance of Greek Revival architecture.
- Design a Greek Revival style building.

Teacher Background

This lesson contains two Student Activity options from which you can choose. If possible, complete both activities.

Setting the Stage

1. Ask students to think of popular clothing styles at your school and the different articles of clothing that make up these styles (e.g., different kinds of shirts, pants, skirts, shoes, socks, hats, jewelry, etc.).
2. **Explain:** *Just as there are different styles of clothing, there are different styles of buildings. Building styles are called architectural styles. Designers put pieces of clothes together in different ways to make a clothing style. Building designers (or architects) put parts of a building together in different ways to make an architectural style.*
3. **Tell students:** *We will be learning about an architectural style called Greek Revival that was popular when Utah was first settled. Some of the oldest buildings in the state were built in this style.*

Student Instruction

1. Show *Generic House* overhead. Ask students to brainstorm a list of the different parts of a building that you can see from the outside (e.g., roof, walls, windows, doors, porch, foundation, decorations, etc.). List ideas on the board.

Tour Info

Address: 97 East St. George Boulevard, St. George

Tours offered: By appointment.

To schedule a tour call: Karma Hyatt, St. George Area Chamber of Commerce at (435) 628-1658

Duration

One to two
45-minute periods

Instructional Materials

Generic House
(1 overhead)

Washington County Courthouse photo
(1 overhead and 1 copy per student)

Queen Anne House photo
(1 overhead and 1 copy per student)

What Style am I? handout
(1 overhead and 1 copy per student)

Greek Revival Features
(1 overhead)

From Ancient Greece to Utah's Dixie (1 copy per student)

Building Blocks
(1 copy per student)

Optional:
Washington County Courthouse History
(1 copy per student)

Supplies

drawing materials
scissors
glue

Core Curriculum Objectives

4th Grade

Social Studies
6100-0203
6100-0503

Language Arts
4070-0201
4070-0203
4070-0301

Visual Arts
1040-0201
1040-0202
1040-0401
1040-0402

7th Grade

Social Studies
6100-0203
6100-0503

Language Arts
4070-0201
4070-0203
4070-0301

Visual Arts
1100-0102
1100-2501



2. Handout one *Washington County Courthouse photo* and one *Queen Anne House photo* to each student and show overheads.
3. As a class, compare and contrast the parts of the Queen Anne house and the Washington County Courthouse. For example, the Queen Anne house has windows of many sizes and shapes while windows of the Washington County Courthouse are all the same shape.
4. Write the terms *symmetrical* and *asymmetrical* on the board. Ask students to draw a straight line through their *Washington County Courthouse photo* that divides the building into two mirror halves. Now ask the students to try to draw a straight line that divides the Queen Anne house into two mirror halves. Explain that the Washington County Courthouse is balanced, or *symmetrical*, because it can be divided into two mirror halves while the Queen Anne house is *asymmetrical* because it cannot.
5. Handout the *What Style Am I?* photos to each student and show overheads. Ask students to work in pairs to find features shared by these buildings and the Washington County Courthouse. Students should look at all the buildings as a group, not simply compare the courthouse to each of the *What Style Am I?* buildings individually.
6. Explain that the Washington County Courthouse and the other buildings are all examples of Greek Revival style architecture. Ask students to work with their partners to develop a list of the important features of Greek Revival style architecture based on their building comparisons. Explain that not all Greek Revival buildings display every feature of Greek Revival style. Students should look for trends and similarities, not exact duplicates of features. If students don't know the architectural term for a feature, they may describe it in their own words or draw a picture of it.
7. Ask students to share their ideas with the class. Record ideas on the board. Show the *Greek Revival Features* overhead. Explain that this list is not exhaustive, but provides a good starting point. Discuss how students' ideas compare to the ideas of architectural historians.

Student Activity Option 1

1. **Ask students:** *So how did the Greek Revival style come to be? What's Greek about it? What's the revival? Let's find out.* Hand out copies of *From Ancient Greece to Utah's Dixie*. Assign students to take turns reading the sheet out loud and write down new vocabulary.
2. **Ask students:** *Is Greek Revival a good style for the Washington County Courthouse? Why or why not? What values do you think the people who constructed the building wanted to convey?*

Student Activity Option 2

1. Assign students to design their own Greek Revival style building. Distribute drawing materials, scissors, glue, and copies of the *Building Blocks* sheets. Emphasize that students should not simply copy one of the buildings they have seen, but use the elements of the Greek Revival style to create a new building. Students can trace elements from the photos and use the cut-outs as needed.
2. Students should write a caption for their drawing which gives the name of the building, explains its use, points out notable Greek Revival features, and tells anything else they wish viewers to know.
3. Create a bulletin board display of students' drawings.



Extensions

Learn About the History of the Washington County Courthouse

Handout copies of the *History of the Washington County Courthouse*. Assign students to read the history either individually or out loud as a class.

Collect Greek Revival Buildings

There are numerous Greek Revival style buildings in Washington County. Encourage students to look for them as they travel about. When they find a Greek Revival style building, students should write down its location, name (if known), make a sketch or take a photo, and report on their findings to the class. See how many Greek Revival style buildings students can collect over the year.

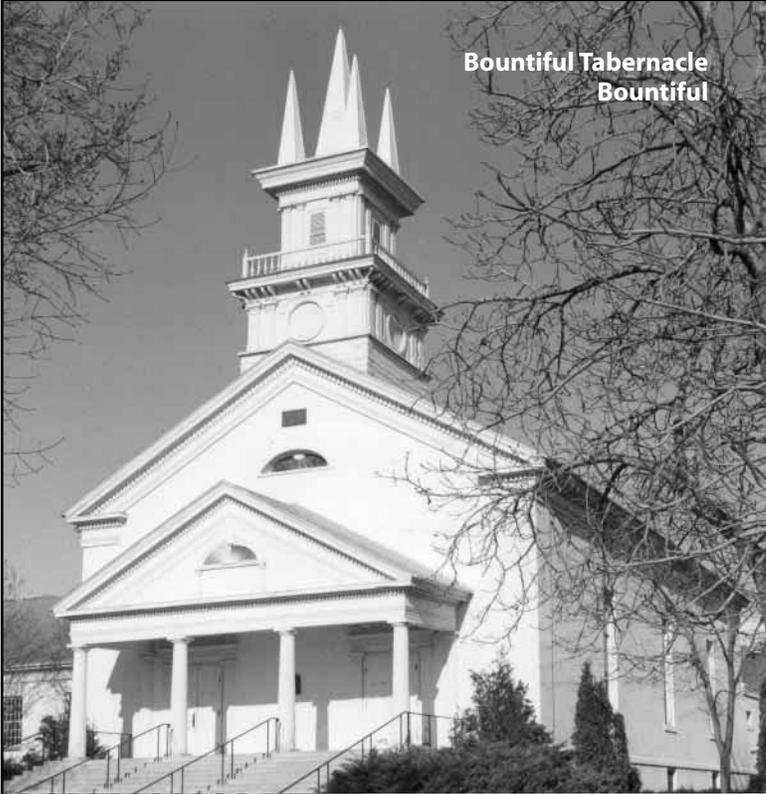
Design Your Own Revival Style

What would Log Cabin Revival, Igloo Revival, or McDonald's Revival look like? Explain that a revival style borrows features and ideas from an older style of architecture. Ask students to come up with their own revival style based on a kind of building they know, draw a building in this revival style, and explain its features. After they have finished their drawing ask students to write answers to the following questions: *What does your revival style borrow from the original-windows, doors, roof, materials, decorations? Why would people choose to build in this style? What kind of building would it be appropriate for?*

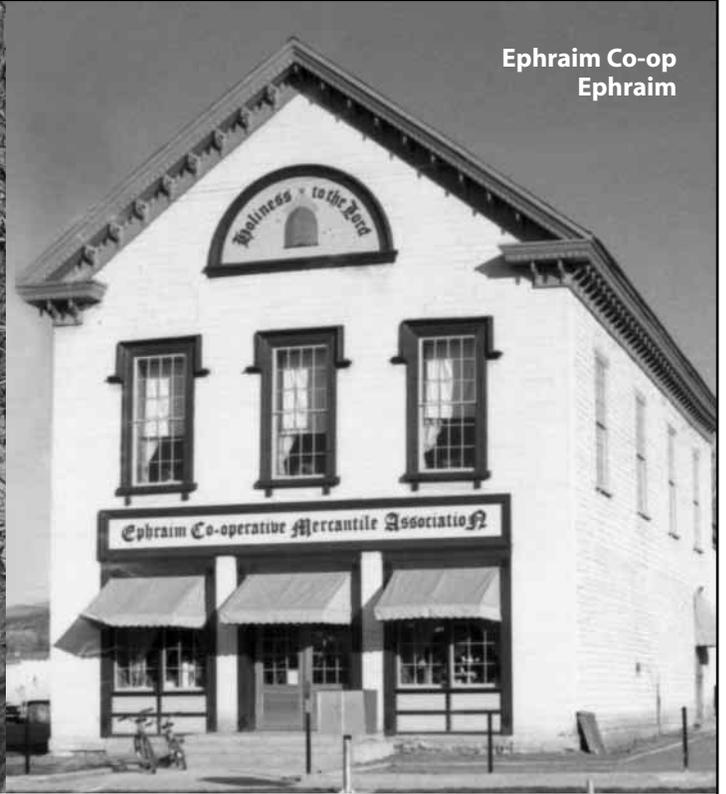








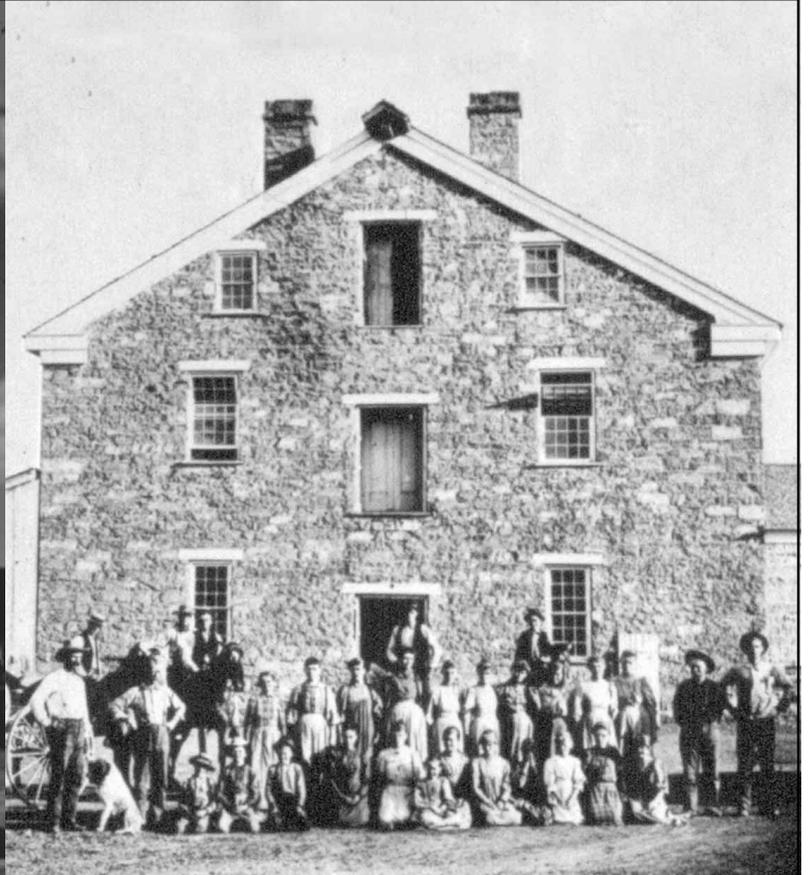
Bountiful Tabernacle
Bountiful



Ephraim Co-op
Ephraim



Beehive House
Salt Lake City



(clockwise)

Pine Valley Chapel
Pine Valley

**Washington
Cotton Factory**
Washington City

Chase House
Salt Lake City



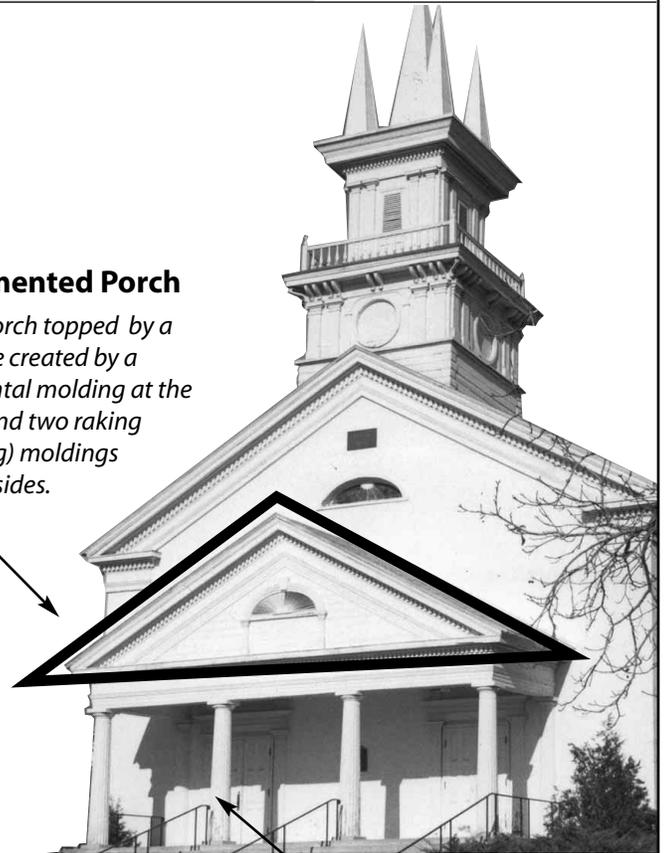


Symmetrical or balanced facade

■ The front (facade) of the building can be divided into two halves that are mirror images of each other.

Pedimented Porch

■ A porch topped by a triangle created by a horizontal molding at the base and two raking (sloping) moldings on the sides.



Column

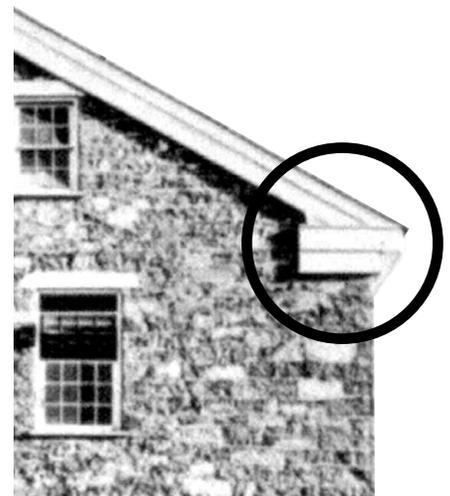
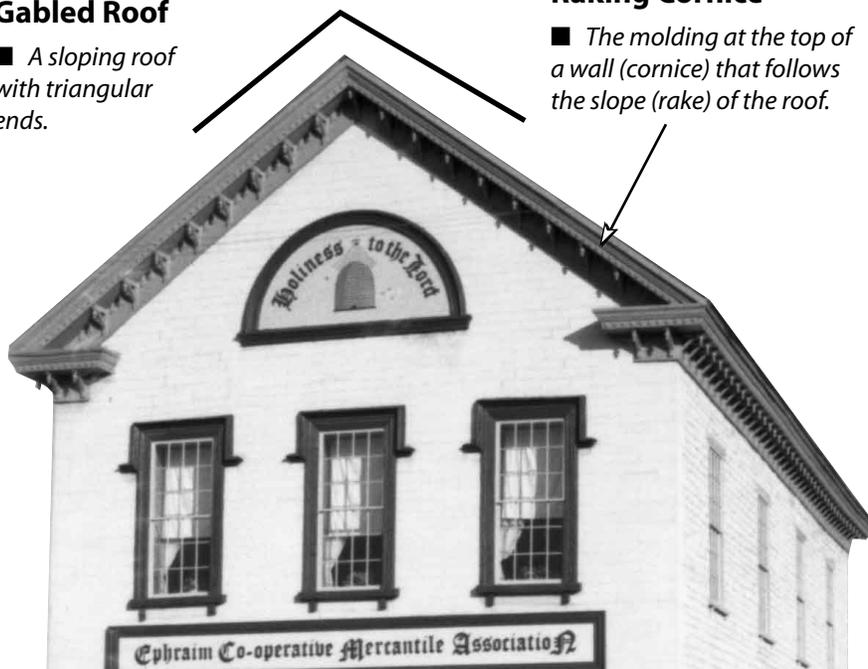
■ A thin, vertical support.

Gabled Roof

■ A sloping roof with triangular ends.

Raking Cornice

■ The molding at the top of a wall (cornice) that follows the slope (rake) of the roof.



Cornice Return

■ The continuation of the molding at the top of a wall (cornice) in a different direction.

Where did Greek Revival style architecture come from? Why did settlers in Washington County decide to construct buildings in a style named after a far away country? To answer these questions we need to look back in time almost 2,500 years to Ancient Greece. At this time, the Greeks were building beautiful temples to their gods. Today people still think these temples are some of the finest buildings ever built.

The Parthenon



Greek temples were long rectangular buildings with columns all the way around them. These columns may stand for sacred groves of trees where people held religious ceremonies in earlier times. The temples had sloped, or *gabled* roofs, that formed a triangle at the front and back. This triangular space is called a *pediment* and was filled with carvings showing the deeds of gods and heroes. The ancient Greeks used white marble or limestone to build their temples. They cut the stones very carefully so they fit together perfectly without any mortar.

The ancient Greeks designed their temples to express ideas important in their society. They believed people should strive for *balance* and *symmetry* in all things. They developed mathematical formulas to determine the *proportions* of each part of a temple. Each part is balanced in relation to all the other parts.

The Greeks also strove for excellence through testing and improving ideas. They discovered that perfectly straight lines in buildings don't look perfectly straight because of optical illusions. They learned to build with slight curves to trick the eye. One of



Pediment

the most famous Greek temples, the Parthenon, appears to be built on perfectly straight lines but there are no truly straight lines in the building.

One reason the ancient Greeks could spend so much time and money building temples was that they were not building palaces for kings. The Greeks developed a system of government called democracy. In a democracy people govern themselves rather than being ruled by a king.

In the early 1800s, Americans began to borrow ideas from the architecture of Ancient Greece for their own buildings. At this time, archaeologists were rediscovering the beauty of the old Greek temples. Americans were drawn to Greek architecture for political reasons too. Ancient Greece was considered the first democracy in the world. As citizens of a new democracy, Americans looked to the ideas and values of the ancient Greeks as models.

In addition, the United States had just fought the War of 1812 with Great Britain. Because of this, Americans were not fond of anything that came from Britain. This included styles of architecture popular in colonial times that had been developed in Britain.

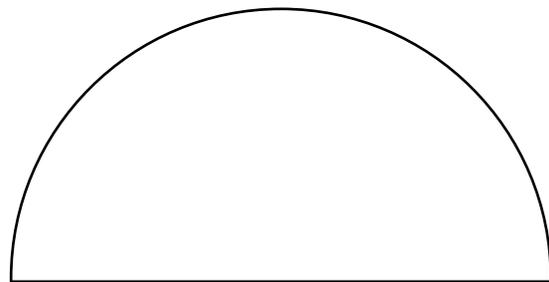
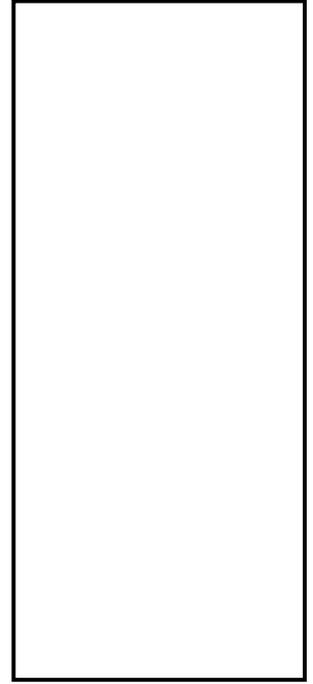
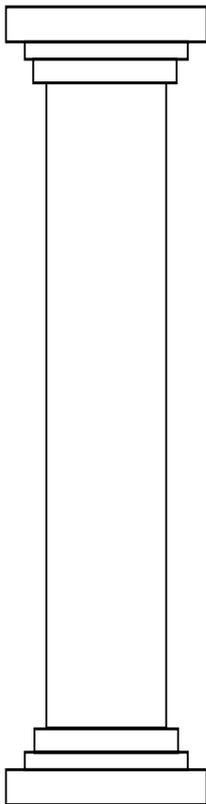
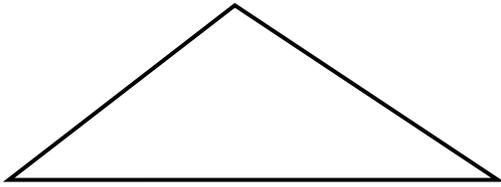
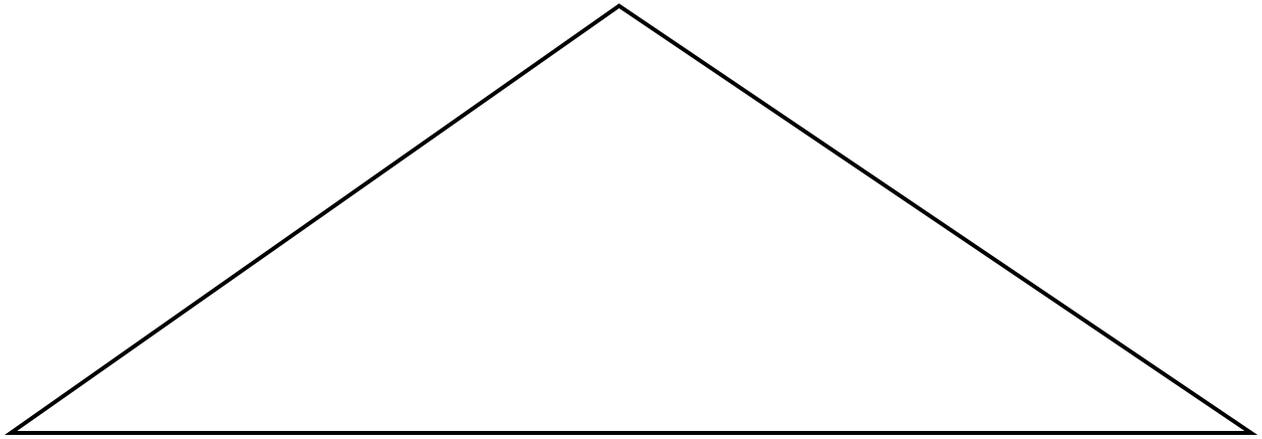
Between 1820 and 1860, Greek Revival was the most popular architectural style in the United States. Many houses, churches, banks, government buildings, and stores were built in this style. It was so popular it became known as the National Style. Americans did not build exact replicas of ancient Greek temples, but used features like columns and pediments on their buildings.

The Mormon settlers who came to Utah from other places in the United States were familiar with the Greek Revival style. Many of them had lived, worked, or worshiped in Greek Revival style buildings. When they arrived in Utah, they constructed buildings like the ones they remembered from their earlier homes. Greek Revival was the most popular architectural style in Utah from 1847 through the 1890s. Many of the oldest buildings in the state were built in this style.

When settlers arrived in Washington County, they brought their memories of Greek Revival buildings with them. And that's how architecture from Ancient Greece arrived in Utah's Dixie.



Hellenic Temple



by Dr. Douglas D. Alder

The Old Courthouse on St. George Boulevard and First East in St. George is one of the primary historic sites in Utah's Dixie. It was built in 1865 at the same time the St. George Tabernacle, the St. George Hall, and the Cotton Factory in Washington were under construction. It was a time of grand dreams when citizens promoted the common good over their own personal benefit.

Judge James D. McCulloch was concerned that the local government had no building for its operations. There was nowhere for the city police or the county sheriff to have a desk. There was no regular courtroom or city office, nor a regular place for city council meetings.

McCulloch proposed that a bond election be held to provide funds for the building. It was questionable whether the citizens would approve such a bond that would tax them at a time they were trying to build homes as well as great civic buildings. They proved Judge McCulloch right; they voted for the bond. The building was soon built.

The main floor was designed to house government offices, including a city chief of police and a county sheriff. Jail cells were provided in the basement. Upstairs was a judge's office and a spacious courtroom. Two murals by L. Covington, one of Zion National Park and one of the Grand Canyon, decorate the back wall.

The judge's podium and the jury box are still in place. Court sessions have been relocated to new buildings, but the courtroom hosts re-enactments by Historic St. George LIVE volunteers in the summer months. Civic meetings and arts shows also utilize the courtroom today.

In the courtroom there are four large pillars. They hold up the cupola on top of the building. A stair ladder in a closet provides access to the cupola interior. Legend says that the cupola was partly intended to house a gallows. No one was ever executed there so no gallows was really constructed.

