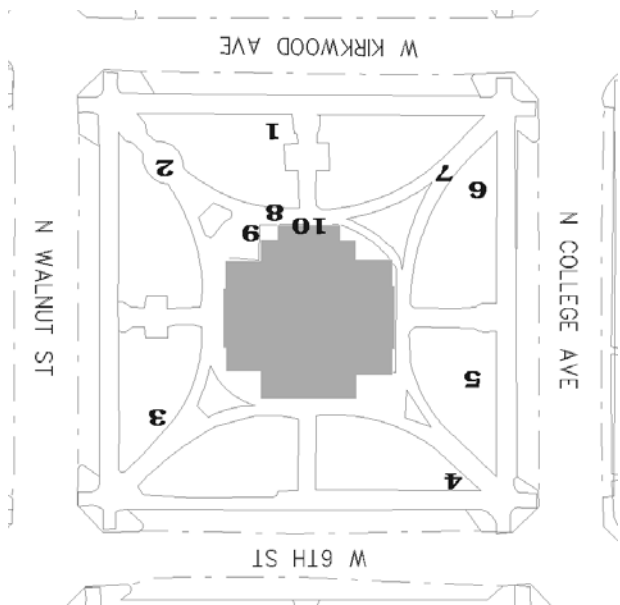


No. 9 Courthouse



for restoration. The building now houses the administrative offices of county government and a new Justice Building was constructed in 1986 at 7th Street and College Avenue for court procedures.

Today the courthouse serves as a tribute to the history and heritage of Monroe County's citizens past and present. Its art, architecture and monuments demonstrate the pride Hoosiers have for their state. Its restoration exemplified that pride locally and was the beginning of a historic preservation ethic that began downtown and has now spread throughout the city and county. Welcome to the Monroe County Courthouse!

The Building's Interior Continued

Chandelier
Throughout the building there are many original lighting fixtures. This brass Chandelier hangs in the stairway and matches the style of fixtures in the Nathaniel Hill Meeting Room.



Rotunda
The stained glass, again created by Gustav Brand, shows the Arts and Crafts style with images of justice including wreaths, olive branches, bay leaf bands, a torch, the shield and an axe. The glass utilized is Kokomo Opalescent, a glass manufactured in Kokomo, Indiana. Restoring the glass was a painstaking process involving removal of the 160 panels and old grout. Each was cleaned of dirt, corrosion and pigeon droppings and reinstalled. The entire project consisted of about 2,000 hours of labor over a ten week period.



Courtroom
The former Circuit Courtroom, now the Judge Nathaniel Usher Hill, III Meeting Room is housed on the north side of the building. Dedicated to the memory of a judge who presided longer than any other judge in the county's history, the room is now used for county commission meetings. Once hidden by acoustic tiles and largely forgotten, the courtroom dome was uncovered in 1984. Impressive features in the room include the original mahogany wood paneling, clock, judge's bench, two original tables, an original spectator bench and numerous brass light fixtures. Enjoy the architectural details and view of downtown from this commanding perspective.

In 1962 the interior was altered to provide additional work space, but by the mid-1970s the county found itself again in need. Many options were explored, including demolition, because the building was "not considered to be of any major historical significance." A small group of local citizens began efforts to counteract this opinion. Their first step was to list the courthouse on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976. A plaque located to the left of the south entrance commemorates this event. The "Save Our Courthouse Committee" of Bloomington Restorations, Inc. continued to push for restoration of the building. Despite this, the integrity of the historic courthouse was threatened by new proposals, including construction of east and west wings and underground additions as well as the desire to replace it with a new building. At long last, the County Commission approved emergency restoration of the dome, which seemed to be a first step. Still, talk returned to demolition. Not until 1983 was the long argument over and the courthouse finally approved



Ground was broken in 1906 for the third and present courthouse. It was designed in the style of Beaux-Arts Classicism, by the Fort Wayne architectural firm of Wing and Mahurin, who also designed at least three other Indiana courthouses. The contractors were George W. Caldwell and Lester Drake of Columbus, Indiana, noted for their completion of both West Baden Hotel, West Baden, Indiana, and the Palace of Agriculture at the St. Louis World's Fair. The building was dedicated in 1908.

In Appreciation

This project is a cooperative effort of the City of Bloomington and The Monroe County Convention and Visitors Bureau. It was researched and written in part by Danielle Bachant-Bell. Other assistance was provided by Bradley Cook, Tom Kavanagh, Jane Marie Lind, Valerie Pena, Laura Newton, Nancy Hiestand, and Kari Price.

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- The Herald Times, Bloomington, Indiana
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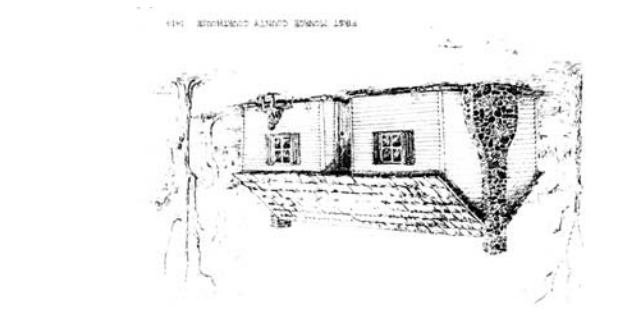
Additional information gathered from the archives of:

- William Hammond Mathers Museum, Indiana
- University Indiana Room, Monroe County Public Library,
- Monroe County Historical Museum

April 2002



In 1819 the county began construction of a brick courthouse. Completed in 1826, the simple, two-story square building topped with a tower was sited in the center of the square per the original plan. Thirty years later, two wings and a four-column porch were added. A clock tower was added in 1875 and the building was remodeled in the Mansard style.

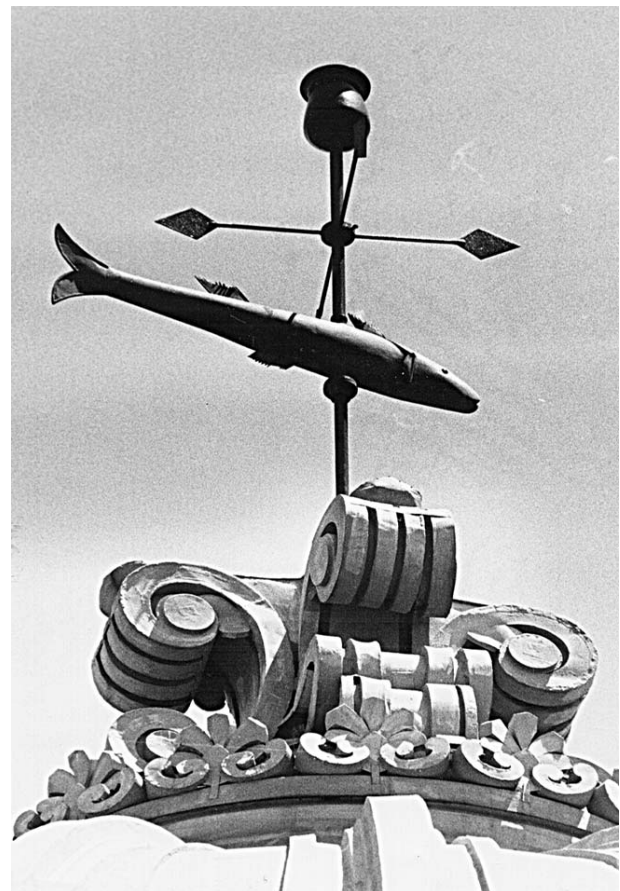


Montroe County was founded in January of 1818. That same year David Rogers conveyed his wheat field to the county for the purposes of laying out the public square of Bloomington. The original plat anticipated a courthouse placed in an open central square with major streets intersecting at each of the four-corners. Later known as the Shelbyville plan, it allowed the orientation of business buildings to face the governmental center of town. By August of 1818, a temporary log building was constructed at what is now 106 S. Walnut Street. It was later the location of jails built in 1870 and 1936. Known as a dog-trot, the building consisted of two rooms separated by an open passageway.

The Monroe County Courthouse

A Walk Through the Monroe County Courthouse

Historic Tour Guide No. 9



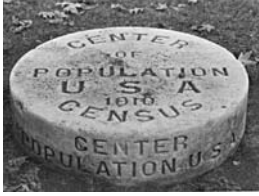
Bloomington Indiana

The Grounds

At the time of the courthouse's construction there were no large trees, plants or shrubbery on the square. A plaque commemorates the early landscaping, which was done in memory of those Monroe County citizens who perished during World War II. At the time of the building's restoration in 1984, additional landscaping plans were made which included sites for future monuments, all of which are primarily sculpted of limestone.

1. Center of Population Stone

The Center of Population stone is located on the south side of the square to the east of the sidewalk. In 1910 the center of population for the United States was located in Bloomington. Originally sited at the Showers Brothers Furniture Factory at 8th and Morton Streets, now City Hall, it was moved to the courthouse lawn when the center of population shifted further west.



2. Civil War Memorial

The Captain William Alexander Grand Army of the Republic memorial, "To the Soldiers of All Wars," was erected in 1928. Designed by George W. Bunting and carved by Henry McIlveen and Josef Graf, its friezes depict battle scenes from the Mexican War, Civil War, Spanish-American War, and World War I. It is topped with the figure of a Civil War soldier. Elsewhere on the site is an 816-pound canon removed from the USS Phoenix in 1864.



3. World War II Memorial

The World War II monument titled, "Spirit of the Fighting Yank," was designed by Ernest M. Viquesney and carved by Harry Donato. The original cornerstone can be viewed on the northeast side of the building nearby.



4. Korean War Memorial

On the northwest side of the building is the "Freedom Flame," erected in 1952 in honor of Monroe County's Korean War veterans. The 12-foot tall monument highlights the four freedoms—from fear, from want, of religion, and of speech—noted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in his address to the 77th Congress on January 6, 1941.



5. Vietnam Memorial

The largest monument is the Monroe County Vietnam Veterans Memorial erected in 1991. The monument honors the 4,000 area residents who served in Southeast Asia and lists the 24 Monroe County citizens who lost their lives. A large wind chime honors the prisoners of war and those missing in action.



6. Women's Christian Temperance Fountain

A water fountain erected by the Women's Christian Temperance Union in memory of Elizabeth Loudon was originally on the sidewalk in the southwest corner of the lawn but was moved in the early 1960s.



7. Peace Memorial

The "Peace Memorial," carved by Bill Dahman, was erected in 1978. The artist's intention was for the monument to serve as a compliment to the "Four Freedoms Memorial" and to serve as a balance between the war memorials.



The Building's Exterior

The Beaux Arts Classical style was popular during the period 1890 to 1920 and is typically seen in corporate or civic buildings. The Monroe County Courthouse is an excellent example with its display of grand classical forms and details. Extensive use of symmetry can be found throughout the building beginning with its cross axial floor plan. In keeping with local stone tradition, the courthouse, with the exception of the dome, is entirely crafted of limestone.

8. First Floor Carvings

On the first floor, the design of the rusticated stone is characterized by horizontal banding and keystones above the windows. This heavily beveled stone gives the building a monumental gravity. Each of the four projecting facades has an elaborately detailed doorway with carved *acanthus consoles* at the corners and foliated pilasters. False doorways on the east and west provide symmetry to the building design.



9. Second Floor Decoration

The second and third floors are constructed of smooth, or *dressed* stone and columns and pilasters unify the height of the combined floors. The Ionic and Doric *pilasters*, columns semi-attached to the wall, are decorated with the shield, a symbol of justice repeated throughout the exterior and interior of the building. The large *dentil molding*, the repeating blocks beneath the roof line and the *balustrade*, the decorative railing projecting above the roof are additional characteristics of the Beaux Arts style.



Standing on the cornice are two figures called caryatids. They flank the date of construction carved into a panel surmounted by the shield-like *cartouche*.



10. Entrance Sculpture

Above the main entrance on the south side is a sculptural group called "The Light of the World," carved in limestone by Hungarian native Albert Molnar, Sr who was locally known through his work at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. The central figure holds the torch of enlightenment and is framed by figures personifying the law and power.



The name of the courthouse is carved into the frieze and flanked by *festoons*.



Dome

Each of the four facing walls supporting the octagonal dome display Ionic pilasters topped with a pediment. Between each face is a wreath, another symbol of justice representing peace. The dome itself is made of copper with *oculus* or round vents symmetrically incorporated into the design.



Clock

Four clocks visible on each side of the building are connected to one master clock located within the top of the dome. Each week the gravity-powered clock is wound by hand with 25 turns of the crank. However, the chime weight requires 250 turns to wind. Because of the noise, it was stopped when offices were in the rotunda. Thanks to Bob Dixon's efforts, after the 1986 restoration, the bells were heard again.



Weathervane

The copper fish crowning the dome was reportedly first placed atop the cupola of the 1826 courthouse and has been reused on every courthouse since then. The three-foot-nine-inch fish was first gilded in 1884. It is believed to have been made by Austin Seward, who established the Seward foundry in Bloomington in 1822. However, it is unclear whether or not it was actually made locally or brought with him from the Ohio River Valley. Thus speculation abounds as to why a fish was placed atop the courthouse of a landlocked county. One popularly held belief is that it symbolized Christianity.



The Building's Interior

There are several commemorative plaques visible near the south entrance, those devoted to the 1906 dedication and the 1984 restoration and veterans of the Revolutionary War. The floors are made of terrazzo with marble and limestone walls and details. The original information desk is also present. Prior to restoration—the six story rotunda was not visible. Floors for office space cut off all light from the domes' stained glass skylights and obscured the view of the murals. Banisters and wrought-iron balustrades were covered by sheet rock.

Balustrade and Capitals

From the second floor, the restored banister and wrought iron balustrade can be seen. Also the Egyptian Revival details of the large Ionic capitals and smaller Doric columns come into better view. Many of these capitals had to be recreated using the original blue prints. Notice the repeated use of the shield.



Murals

Well known German artist Gustav A. Brand painted the classically-styled murals adorning the dome's interior. His work was also featured at the St. Louis World's Fair and the influential Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893. The murals are painted in oil on canvas, and measure approximately eight by sixteen feet each. The murals were restored in 1992 when funding was available. Many years of water damage, surface mold and soil accumulation were removed. Damaged canvas was repaired and missing paint was replicated.



Education (north side)

The importance of Indiana University's presence in the community is illustrated by various objects including books, a globe, a surveyor's transit, and subjects such as ancient history and teaching.

Justice (west side)

In the center the goddess of justice holds the sword of righteousness and the wreath of peace and glory. The figure on the far left holds a lyre representing the balance of peace and harmony. To the right the figure holds the mirror of truth. The military figure to the right of the center goddess symbolizes defense against malice and treachery, which is suggested in the figure lurking on the far right. The eagle and patriotic shield again point to the county's national pride.

Agriculture (south side)

At the time of the courthouse's construction, farming was a primary industry in the county. The figure on the far left is placing harvested grain in a storage pot, the next figure holds a cornucopia. The right figure displays a hand plow, and a scythe.



Stone Industry (east side)

The limestone industry, the county's chief industry during the early 1900s, is depicted. A quarry is in the background while the figures portray the progress of working the stone from rough block to a finished column. The figure in the center symbolizes the Stone Age.

Stained Glass Window

At the landing between floors is an elaborate stained glass window, one of many restored in 1984. The window design displays the clean geometric lines of the Arts and Crafts style with symbols of justice as the dominate theme.

