NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name Adams County, Indiana, Courthouse

other name/site number

2. Location

street & town 112 South Second Street NA not for publication

city or town Decatur NA vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Adams code 001 zip code 46733

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date: 8/6/2008

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is: — Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other, (explain:) _____

NPS Form 10-900
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FINAL

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name Adams County, Indiana, Courthouse

other name/site number

2. Location

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city or town Decatur NA vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Adams code 001 zip code 46733

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☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other, (explain:) _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
- ☒ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
- ☐ district
- ☐ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
3	3	objects
4	3	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is **not** part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
(Enter **only** categories from instructions)

Government: courthouse

Current Function
(Enter **only** categories from instructions)

Government: courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter **only** categories from instructions)

Late Victorian: Second Empire

Materials
(Enter **only** categories from instructions)

foundation stone
walls brick
roof slate
other sandstone

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(enter categories from instructions)

Government/Politics
Architecture

Period of Significance
1873-1957

Significant Dates
1873, 1900 (courthouse building)
1913, 1926, 1936 (monuments/memorials)

Significant Person (only if Criterion B selected)

NA

Cultural Affiliation
NA

Architect/Builder (use last names first for individuals)
Johnson, J. C. (architect)
Boseker, Christian (builder)
Mulligan, Charles (sculptor)
Wing and Mahurin (architects)

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

☒See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☒ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other Name of repository:

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References
(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 675019 4521703
Zone Easting Northing

2 / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

3 / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

4 / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

USGS Topographic Quad name __Decatur, IN__

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Boundary Justification (Explain **why** the boundaries were selected.)

☒See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth Gallow and Beth Sullebarger

organization BHE Environmental date 3/12/08

street & number 11733 Chesterdale Road telephone (513) 326-1500

city or town Cincinnati state OH zip code 45246

email address bsullebarger@bheenvironmental.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps
A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs
Representative **black and white** photographs of the property.

Additional items
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

name/title Adams County, Indiana

street & number 113 W. Jefferson Street telephone (260) 724-5303

city or town Decatur state IN zip code 46733

email address (if available)

Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana

Setting

The Adams County Courthouse is located at 112 South Second Street in Decatur, Indiana. This 1873 Second Empire style building sits in the center of the public square which is delineated in Plat Book 1 page 2, recorded September 22, 1836.[1] The square occupies one half of a city block and is defined by Second Street on the east, Madison Street on the north, Third Street on the west, and Court Street on the south. The configuration of the courthouse square reflects the Shelbyville plan.[2] It is surrounded by two- and three-story commercial buildings lining Second, Madison, and the east half of Court Street. The U.S. Post Office occupies the west end of Court Street, and the Superior Court (occupying the old library), a new public library, and the county government annex building (occupying an old school) sit behind and to the south of the courthouse on Third Street.

Given its prominent location and impressive silhouette, the courthouse serves as a focal point in Decatur's business district, anchoring the civic complex at the center of town.[3] In addition to the courthouse building, the square also contains six objects placed on the lawn: a limestone peace monument (1913) is located at the southwest corner; the "Elephant Rock" memorial to Gene Stratton Porter (1926) is located at the southeast corner; a bronze tablet dedicated to the county's pioneers (1936) and a granite memorial honoring the men and women who fought in World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam (date unknown, not historic) are located at the northeast corner; and two small metal historical markers (date unknown, not historic) flank the walkway leading to the main entrance.

Overview

The courthouse was built in 1873 in accordance with the design of Ohio architect J. C. Johnson. Overall, the massing and detailing of the courthouse reflect all of the key elements of the Second Empire style and reveal Johnson's playful and creative application of the classical orders. The building is five bays wide and seven bays long, measuring approximately 70 feet by 120 feet. It is two stories tall plus a Mansard roof with dormers and a full basement. The Second Street (east) elevation is the principal façade, marked by a large clock tower rising in the center, approximately 160 feet above the basement floor. The courthouse is essentially rectangular in plan with projecting center and corner bays, with one exception—the center bay on the rear (west) elevation does not project.

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[1] Adams County, Indiana Plat Book 1, County Recorder's Office, Decatur, IN.
[2] Courthouse square types described by Edward T. Price, "The Central Courthouse Square in the American County Seat," *Geographical Review*, Vol. 58, No. 1 (Jan. 1968), pp. 29-60.
[3] David R. Hermansen refers to the building's silhouette in *Indiana County Courthouses of the Nineteenth Century*, Muncie, IN: Ball State University Faculty Lecture Series, Feb. 1968.

Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana

The building was intended to be viewed from all sides and thus all elevations are highly detailed and once contained entrances (photos 1-4). However, the side entrances were bricked in to create additional office space on the first floor in the 1970s. Otherwise the overall fenestration pattern remains unchanged (photo 3). The courthouse is constructed of Philadelphia pressed brick. It sits on a raised rusticated stone foundation and is topped with a patterned multi-colored, slate-covered mansard roof. Decorative Berea sandstone trim accentuates the building's corners, entryways, and window openings, and pressed-tin moldings painted cream, slate green, and pale brick red adorn the cornice and dormers.

Exterior

The east façade of the courthouse contains the building's principal entrance and presents its most highly ornamented face to the main street of town. The central bay is strongly emphasized, and the courthouse lawn is designed to direct one's gaze to this point. One can approach the main entrance of the front façade from a straight central walkway or from diagonal pathways coming from the front corners of the courthouse square. Viewing the courthouse from these sidewalks, one is struck by the carved Berea sandstone details that accentuate the building's design. Alternating vermiculated (irregular honeycomb) and deeply fluted sandstone quoins adorn the corners of the projecting central bay. All other corners of the building are covered with simple smooth-surfaced quoins, and a sandstone belt course divides the first and second stories. The building's elongated windows are also accented with sandstone detailing. The rectangular first-story windows have chamfered upper corners and are crowned by bracketed pediments. The arched second-story windows are topped with arched window hoods adorned with three pentagonal keystone medallions. All of the windows rest upon bracketed sandstone sills. This treatment is consistent on all elevations, though variations exist in the treatment of the central second-story windows.

The main entrance is dramatized by a nine-step stoop and a detailed, sandstone, arch-order surround with quoined columns and molded cornice. Treatment of the quoins alternates between vermiculation and deep fluting. The archivolt of the inner arch is adorned with chevron-like and egg-and-dart moldings punctuated by five large keystones with chamfered upper corners. The keystones and spandrels are vermiculated. The arch rests on slender, fluted, cast-iron Corinthian columns paired with engaged sandstone Doric-style pilasters with chamfered edges. Behind the arched surround is a recent metal and glass door assembly.

Above the front entrance, the central window is a more elaborate variation of the other second-story windows. It has a full surround, including three keystones similar to those that adorn the entrance. The window rests on a small decorative balcony rather than a bracketed sill. The balcony has a low railing featuring trefoils in circles and square corner posts with spherical finials. The railing is painted like the cornice in slate green, cream and pale brick red.

Overall, the building's detailing is consistent on all elevations. The only major differences occur in the treatment of the central bay. The fenestration on the rear elevation is similar to the front, but the central bay does not project and the central doorway and second-story window are much simpler in their ornamentation (photo 4). The arched door surround, articulated by a single four-sided honeycombed keystone and plain, sandstone quoins like those found on the corners of the building, encloses aluminum-and-glass double doors and a semicircular transom. The central second-story window is typical of those throughout the building. An eight-step stoop and a concrete wheelchair ramp provide access to this entrance. The color of the ramp matches the sandstone found on the building, and it is equipped with a simple black metal handrail.

The north and south elevations of the building are essentially the same (photo 3). The detailing matches that of the front and rear elevations except for the treatment of the projecting central bays. As mentioned earlier, the doorways that once occupied the central bays were filled in with brick with a single small square window in the center. Arched surrounds with five vermiculated keystones and quoined columns frame the openings. At the second floor, a pair of narrow arched windows, each with three vermiculated keystones, sit on a dado joined with the belt course below.

There are only minor utilitarian differences between the north and south elevations. On the south side of the building, the ground rises under the three left (western) windows, reflecting the location of the coal room. To the right of the central bay, a small brick addition, probably built in the early twentieth century, provides access to the basement. This addition has two parts—a small front-gabled section with a metal door, and, on the right, a slightly lower, flat-roofed section containing a small three-light window. Both the door and the window are topped with flat arches of vertical bricks. A simple metal light fixture with a glass globe is mounted above the door.

There are two entrances to the basement on the north side of the building. One is located under the second window from the left (east), and the other is located just to the right (west) of the projecting central bay. Each is enclosed by small, flat-roofed brick addition with a metal door on the front and single six-paned windows on the sides. As on the south side, the doors and windows are topped with flat arches, and there are simple light fixtures above the doors.

Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana

The building is topped by a prominent metal entablature and slate mansard roof. The frieze is articulated with long horizontal oval panels circumscribed by cable moldings and punctuated by a cavetto in the center. The cornice is supported by closely spaced modillions with acanthus leaves, alternating with egg-and-dart molding. A row of large dentils lines the top of the frieze. Highly decorated dormer windows in three different designs align with the windows below. The dormers in the central projecting bays on the front and sides are most ornate. They reflect a three-part Palladian motif, accented by urn-shaped finials on the top of the arch and the two ends. The corner bays contain square dormers with arched windows, topped with segmental arched pediments. The remaining dormers are arched, topped with four-sided keystones and globe-shaped finials (photo 7). The entablature and dormers are all painted the same cream, slate green, and pale brick red found on details throughout the building.

A square tower, identical on all sides, crowns the front of the building, rising above the central bay (photo 8). The tower has three stages, including a solid base, a taller middle section and a segmental domed roof topped with a small cupola. Each side of the middle stage features three arched openings divided by brick pilasters with sandstone Corinthian capitals. Above each arch is round window, or oculus, trimmed in sandstone. White wooden shutters fill the lower portions of the arched openings. A modillioned metal cornice defines the top of the middle stage. At the top stage, a handsome clock graces each side of the tower's domed roof. The hours are marked by black metal Roman numerals and hands. The clocks are surmounted by segmental arches and flanked by a paneled dado. The segmental dome is topped with an open cupola with an arched opening on each side and topped with a square dome and a flag pole.

Interior

The courthouse interior contains four levels: a basement; the first floor, occupied by the prosecuting attorney's and clerk's offices; the second floor, which contains the courtroom and the judge's offices; and the attic, which is unused but reveals important clues about the building's history. The basement and first-floor plans are defined by central east-west hallways; the second-story plan is dominated by the large courtroom, with offices and secondary spaces wrapping around it on the north and west sides of the building. The stairways are not prominent features but rather are recessed in the corners to allow maximum usable floor space. In the southeast corner of the building, just to the left of the front entrance, a recently added elevator and spiral staircase fill the space once occupied by the original main stairway. They both begin in the basement and rise to the lobby area outside of the courtroom on the second floor. Just off the central corridor near the northwest corner of the building, an original stairway begins on the first floor and rises to the judge's office on the second floor and then up to the attic.

Basement

Following the stairs down to the basement, one finds a long central hallway that runs east-west through the length of the building (photo 9). The interior finishes of this space date to the 1970s. The floors are covered in brick-shaped tiles arranged in a chevron pattern, the walls are covered in artificial wood paneling, the doors are metal, and the insulated dropped ceiling contains inset fluorescent lighting. From front (east) to back, the south side of the hallway contains the elevator, a room for storage of election equipment, the men's restroom, and the boiler room; the north side contains the elevator maintenance room, the women's restroom, and the "juvenile alternatives" office.

First floor

The first floor is bisected by a wide central hall that runs from front to back. The prosecuting attorney's offices occupy the south side of the hall, and the offices of the clerk of court occupy the north. As the former side entrances would suggest, the hall was originally cruciform in plan, but the north and south arms of the hall were partitioned to create additional office space in the 1970s. At these locations the walls are framed with wide pedimented surrounds within which a water fountain and fire extinguisher have been installed (photo 12). Pedimented door surrounds with fluted pilasters frame the four-panel wooden doors that line the hallway. Two of the doors on each side of the hallway are original; they are quite tall, befitting the high ceilings in this space, and their elongated proportions suggest an Italianate stylistic influence. The newer doors are the contemporary standard of 7 feet by 3 feet in size, but are four-paneled like the original doors.

Though made to appear traditional, most of the interior finishes in the hallway are relatively new. The floor is covered in brick-shaped tiles laid in a chevron pattern. Two rows of square tiles create baseboards on the walls. Simple wooden moldings applied to the walls create patterns of rectangles resembling wall paneling. The plaster walls are painted a cream color, and the trim is painted dark slate gray. Most of the "panels" are filled with textured cream-colored wallpaper, while large horizontal panels located approximately five feet above the floor are filled with decorative burgundy and gold wallpaper. The hallway ceiling is covered in insulated panels made to look like a pressed tin with a rosette design. Five large brass chandeliers light the space—four are located in the main hallway, and one hangs in the front entry vestibule.

The prosecuting attorney's suite consists of a secondary hallway, a large room occupied by support staff, and the prosecuting attorney's office. A conference room occupies the former hallway. East of the conference room there are four small rooms. The floor plan has been significantly altered by the

insertion of drywall partitions. Dating from a 2005 renovation, the finishes are typical of a contemporary office: the floors are carpeted, the ceilings are dropped, and the walls are covered in drywall and painted white.

The clerk's offices on the north side were also renovated in 2005 and reflect significant changes to the original plan. The original bearing walls of the northern hallway have been removed to create a large space spanning the three central bays. Off of this main room, there are two offices in the northeast corner and one office in the northwest corner of the building. There is another office at the west end of the building accessible only from the main hallway. As in the prosecuting attorney's office, the finishes are those typical of a contemporary office, but the ceilings in the clerk's office rise to their full height. The office contains one detail of artistic note—a contemporary stained-glass fan window installed over the opening to the former north entrance.

Behind a locked door on the north side of the hallway, an original half-turn stairway with winders leads to the judge's office on the second floor and continues on to the attic. The lower portion of the stairway is cast Cleveland Steel (photo 13); the string that runs from the second story to the attic is wood (photo 14). Both are painted a bluish gray color. The treads of the steel stairs are textured in a diamond pattern to provide traction, and the risers are ornamented with a shield in the center. A black stylized curling vine design frames either side of the central circle. Steel balusters support a heavy wooden hand rail mounted along the inner wall. This handrail continues up to the wooden portion of the staircase, where it is supported by turned wood balusters. The risers of the wooden staircase are not ornamented; the treads are painted bull-nosed wood. Most visitors to the courthouse never see this staircase, but instead access the second floor by the elevator or staircase at the front of the building. They both deliver people to a small lobby area on the second floor at the center of the front of the building.

Second floor

The second-floor is primarily occupied by the courtroom in the center on the south side. Smaller rooms are arranged around the perimeter, including the circuit court judge's offices on the north. There is a small lobby at the south end in front of the elevator and spiral stair. The lobby floor is covered with black and white square marble tiles laid in a checkerboard pattern. These tiles originally covered the main hall of the first floor of the building (photo 15). The formal entrance to the courtroom is through double doors on the east side. The judge's offices, which occupy the three western bays on the north, include two small conference rooms; a large office space for the judge's staff; the court

administrator's office; and, in the northwest corner, the judge's private office. This area was remodeled in the late 1990s and finished with carpeted floors, white walls, and an acoustical dropped ceiling. The jury deliberation rooms and rest rooms on the west side of the building have also been renovated.

The courtroom is the most significant interior space (photos 16 and 17), although it was altered from the original design in 1900 when the tower was relocated and the ceiling was dropped. Upon entering the courtroom through the double doors on the east, one encounters an archway that spans the width of the vestibule. Proceeding into the courtroom, one encounters six rows of attached wooden theater-seating divided by a center aisle. In front of the seating area is the bar, a wooden railing with a gate in the center and heavy turned newel posts at each end. In front of the bar are movable wooden tables for the prosecution and the defense. To the right, the paneled wood jury box sits along the side wall. The judge's bench and witness box, in the front of the courtroom, are of similar paneled wood design. The bench is a desk with more decorative detailing; paired pilasters topped with rosettes embellish the corners. The recorder's desk stands perpendicular to the front left corner of the judge's bench. The wall behind the judge's bench is detailed with three large panels are attached to the wall, accentuating the importance of that position. The center panel is taller, wider, and more ornate than the two side panels. Paired rosette-topped pilasters like those on the judge's bench flank either side of the central panel. The cornice that crowns the central panel is heavier and more ornate; the side panels are topped with simple cyma recta cornices.

Overall, the finishes found in the courtroom are formal but simple. All of the trim and wood moldings are natural wood finished to match the courtroom furniture. All of the doors are also matching wood with a textured frosted glass window above two vertical rectangular panels. The room is trimmed with simple ten-inch baseboards, and the walls are divided by a chair rail. Above the chair rail, the upper portion of the courtroom walls feature rectangular panels created by applied moldings. In the tympanum of the arched courtroom entrance, a bronze seal of the State of Indiana has been mounted in the center. Two boxed beams divide the courtroom ceiling; between the beams the ceiling is finished with acoustical panels with inset lighting. The beams are painted beige and two rows of wooden trim similar to that used to create the panels on the walls run along their length. This is continued onto the courtroom walls, creating a sort of crown molding around the perimeter of the room.

Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana

Attic

The attic is unfinished, but it reveals much about the original design of the building. The center portion of the attic floor is raised several feet higher, indicating the original height of the courtroom ceiling. Remnants of this ceiling still survive, encapsulated between the attic floor and the current ceiling. Though this area cannot be easily accessed, photographs of this space provided by the judge show small fragments of murals, indicating that the courtroom ceiling was once decorated with scenes portraying the county's history. One of the murals depicts a house on a hill overlooking a lake surrounded by dense forest; the other depicts a figure, either a soldier or an explorer, on the sandy shores of a river or lake. According to local historians, many of these murals were destroyed and the rest were hidden from view, when the courtroom ceiling was lowered. The other features still visible in the attic are brick bearing walls and steel bridgework (photo 20) that supported the tower, which originally stood in the center and was relocated to the front of the courthouse in 1900. Constructed of Carnegie steel, the bridgework creates a truss system four bays wide and three bays long that sits on the outer bearing walls in the center part of the building. Though it no longer serves any purpose, it would be impractical to remove it.

Contributing Objects in the public square

Peace Monument - Contributing

On the southeast corner of the courthouse square stands a large Peace Monument (photos 21 and 22). The monument is carved of blue Bedford oolitic limestone quarried in Lawrence County, Indiana.[4] It is built in the Pylon form and measures 42 feet-6 inches long, 18 feet-6 inches wide, and 18 feet high. The large central female figure of Peace with shield measures 12 feet 3 inches tall.[5] She stands at the front of the monument facing the corner of 3rd and Court Streets, posed in the middle of two flanking walls bearing bronze plaques engraved with the names of all of the soldiers from Adams County who served in the Civil, Spanish-American, and Mexican-American wars and the War of 1812. The corners of these walls are ornamented with American eagles carved in an Egyptian style. The entire monument sits on a plinth; at ground level in front of the Peace figure, two pedestals support carved vases used as planters.

[4] "'Peace' memorial 60 years old," *Decatur Daily Democrat*, Nov. 3, 1973. "Courthouse" file at the Decatur Public Library.
[5] Ibid.

The back side of the monument is dedicated "to the women of our nation/ as a tribute to their/ Courage Devotion and Sacrifice." This inscription is located at the top center of the back wall, above a relief carving of a female nurse tending to a wounded soldier. The wall to the left of the figures is also incised and reads, "To the glory of our country/ and in loving memory of/ our soldier heroes." The wall to the right is blank.

The *Decatur Daily Democrat* from October 30, 1913 provides an excellent description and explanation of the details and symbols of the Peace figure:

> "Facing the southland, the scene of the late conflict to which the greater numbers of our soldiers were given stands our memorial for our brave soldiers... 'Peace' is represented by the female figure of the nation, in heroic size, facing the right. Her left hand rests on the American shield, which in turn rests at her feet, as the conflict is over and she no longer has need of it on her arm for vital protection. On the shield are the thirteen stars and thirteen stripes. Back of the shield, at the side of the figure of Peace hangs the scabbard and the sword, sheathed and at rest. Her right arm is extended and rests along the top of the monument, on the implements of war now at rest—the gun, the cartridge box, the canteen, and the flags which are draped or looped around a now unused bier. In her hand she holds a laurel twig, symbolical of perseverance, ambition, and glory. Her noble figure is clad in the flowing gown, falling from her steels or breastplate, which is formed of the spreading wings of the American eagle, the head of which pulsates with life, courage, and inspiration on her breast."[6]

Today, the monument appears exactly as described in 1913. It was recently cleaned, and remains in excellent condition with unspoiled historical integrity.

Elephant Rock - Contributing

The "Elephant Rock" is a huge gneiss glacial boulder taken from the bed of the St. Mary's River and installed on the southeast corner of the courthouse lawn as a memorial to the author Gene Stratton-Porter (photo 23). It measures approximately 10 feet x 11feet x 8 ½ feet. A bronze plaque in the shape of an open book has been affixed to the rock. It reads:

[6] "Tribute to Adams County Heroes," *Decatur Daily Democrat*, October 30, 1913, Decatur Public Library.

Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana

> "In memory of/ Gene Stratton-Porter/Author/ of/ The Girl of the Limberlost,/ The Song of the Cardinal, Freckles/ and other Nature Stories/ Who came to Decatur as a bride and in/ this county, at Geneva, on the Banks of the/ Limberlost, her first ten books were written/ She taught the love of nature/ Dedicated by the school children of Adams County/ 1926."

Pioneer Memorial - Contributing

On the northeast corner of the courthouse lawn is a rectangular bronze plaque mounted between two square bronze poles (photo 24). A relief image of a pair of oxen pulling a Conestoga wagon adorns the top center of the plaque and is framed by the years 1836 and 1936. Below the relief is the following text:

> "To our pioneers and those/ who came after them/ this tablet is gratefully/ dedicated/ Decatur Centennial Association/ August 4th/ 1936."

War Memorial – Non-Contributing

Nearby, a modern polished granite monument in the shape of a gravestone honors Decatur's military veterans (photo 25). A stylized carving of an eagle sits upon an incised block of text reading: "Honoring/ the men and women/ of Adams County/ who served in/ the armed forces of/ the United States." Below this block are four rectangles, arranged two-by-to, reading "World War I," "World War II," "Korean," "Vietnam." A long rectangle below them reads "And all other conflicts."

Historical Markers (2) – Non-Contributing

A pair of historical markers flanks the central walkway leading to the main entrance of the courthouse. They are simple painted metal signs hanging from white aluminum posts. One commemorates "The First Election 1833" and the other describes "Decatur: The County Seat." They are part of the "Adams County Historic Sites" series and donated by the Decatur Optimist Club.

Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana

Historic Integrity

The Adams County Courthouse property includes one contributing building, the Courthouse (1873), and three contributing objects—the Peace Monument (1913), Elephant Rock (1926), and the Pioneer Memorial (1936). The property also includes three non-contributing objects—the War Memorial and two historical markers.

All of the contributing features retain historic integrity. Integrity of setting is reinforced by the intact commercial blocks that surround the historic public square. The historic objects on the courthouse lawn remain in their original locations and appear to be unaltered and in good repair. The courthouse building itself has undergone changes throughout its history, but the most significant components of J. C. Johnson's design remain. Most importantly, the building retains its Mansard roof, a feature lost from two of Johnson's other Second Empire courthouses. The tower, though a replacement, respects Johnson's original design and has become historic in its own right. Also, the building's fine sandstone details and careful brickwork contribute greatly to the integrity of the courthouse's materials, craftsmanship, and feeling. Changes to the interior reflect the struggle to continue to utilize the courthouse as the county grew and needs changes. In most cases, when changes were made, architectural evidence remained that reveals the original design.

Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana

The Adams County, Indiana Courthouse, built in 1873, is a well-preserved example of a Second Empire-style county courthouse constructed during the courthouse building boom that swept across the state of Indiana in the mid-to-late-nineteenth century. Its size, style, and quality of construction speak to the growth, permanence, and increasing sophistication of Adams County during this period, and it therefore meets National Register Criterion A in the area of Government and Politics for its significance to local Adams County history. Additionally, the Adams County Courthouse is exemplary of the work of J. C. Johnson, an important architect of public buildings (including local government buildings and jails, schools, churches, and commercial blocks) in northwestern Ohio and northeastern Indiana in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. The Adams County Courthouse meets National Register Criterion C and is significant in the area of Architecture as the best preserved example of J. C. Johnson's Second Empire-style courthouse designs. The related monuments, particularly the 1913 Peace Monument on the southwest corner of the grounds, further contribute to the importance of the courthouse as a center for civic life in Adams County.

History of Decatur and Adams County, Indiana

Adams County was created from Allen County's Root Township by an act of the Indiana General Assembly on January 23, 1836.[7] The county's first elections were held that spring, and one of the first acts of the county commissioners was to determine the location of the county seat. After considering many options, they selected the site proposed by Thomas Johnson, located in "the northeast quarter of section 3, township 27 north, range 14 east."[8] Johnson sold the land that would become Decatur's business district to the county government for the price of $3,100 and agreed

> "that he plat the town site in lots and give a half acre for the public square, one acre for a county seminary...; that he donate one desirable town lot to each of the Presbyterian, the Catholic, the Baptist and the Methodist church denominations for church purposes; that he would pay all expenses of the locating commissioners and furnish a building in which to hold court and transact the other county business until a courthouse could be erected."[9]

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[7] J. F. Snow, *Snow's History of Adams County, Indiana*, Indianapolis: B. F. Bowen and Co., 1907, p42.
[8] Quoted in several articles and histories, including Gary Rutledge, "History of county courthouse told," *Decatur Daily Democrat*, July 7, 1972.
[9] Snow, p. 83.

Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana

In May of 1839, the commissioners contracted with John Reynolds, the county treasurer, and Samuel L. Rugg, the county clerk, to build a frame courthouse on Lot No. 94 located at the southwest corner of Madison and 3rd Streets.[10] The contract stipulated that the building

> "...shall be a framed house built of good material, thirty by forty feet in size and two stories high; the lower story or room to be left without any partitions, and the upper story or room divided into rooms to accommodate the grand and petit juries...The weather boarding on the two sides next to the streets shall be planed."[11]

Surviving photographs of the building show a two-story, five-bay building with a central front entryway. The windows are 12-over-12 double hung sashes, the door has a simple 5-pane transom above, and the entire building is clad in weatherboard as specified. Overall it is a very neat and simple building. It served as the county courthouse for 34 years. The county sold the building when the present courthouse was completed in 1873, and it was later moved to another site in the city.[12]

Immigration to Adams County increased significantly in the 1840s, especially following the opening of the Wabash and Erie Canal in 1843 and the Ohio and Pennsylvania Railroad (now Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne, and Chicago RR), in 1855.[13] These improvements linked northeastern Indiana to national markets, greatly improving the economic viability of the area. According the 1849 *Indiana Gazetteer*, "the surplus products consist of wheat, corn and hay, and horses, cattle and hogs, in considerable numbers, are raised for exportation."[14] Most settlers to the region expected to make a living from such agricultural pursuits. They came from Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, traveling west across the National Road and then northwest across the Piqua, Fort Recovery, and Huntington Roads to Adams County.[15] As their numbers increased, so too did the amount of business conducted by the county's courts and officers. By the 1870s, the original county courthouse could no longer serve the needs of the county's growing population.

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[10] John W. Tyndall, *Standard History of Adams and Wells Counties, Indiana, Vol. 1*, Chicago and New York: Lewis Publishing Co., 1918, p. 61.
[11] Quoted in ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Snow, p. 45.
[14] E. Chamberlain, *The Indiana Gazetter, or Topographical Dictionary of The State of Indiana*, 1849. Excerpt available at http://www.countyhistory.com/adams/start.html.
[15] Snow, p. 45.

Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana

History of the Adams County Courthouse

The Commissioners' Records serve as the primary source detailing the decision to build a new courthouse and the construction process. A series of articles from the *Decatur Daily Democrat* written by Gary Rutledge for the centennial of the building nicely summarizes these records and the building's early history. Discussion of the need for a new courthouse first appears in the records in December 1871. During this session, the commissioners heard a petition from Emanuel Wood requesting that they "take immediate steps to build public buildings viz. courthouse and jail" because the existing buildings "are in a very dilapidated and worthless condition and whereas the public records are suffering decay that cannot be avoided in the present buildings used for their keeping."[16] The commissioners did indeed take immediate action, sending a committee of four men to "examine the public buildings in other counties for the purpose of getting information with plans and specifications of court houses and jails."[17]

After visiting five locations, the committee reported back to the commissioners on February 8, 1972: "We...do recommend the adoption of the plans of the Defiance Court House, and agree with J. C. Johnson, architect of Fremont, O., to do the architect work and superintending the building of a courthouse in Decatur, Adams County, Indiana..."[18] The commissioners accepted this recommendation, and the next day they "order[ed] the auditor to give notice to contractors and builders that sealed proposals will be received by the board of commissioners of Adams County, Indiana for the building of a first class fire proof courthouse in Decatur, Adams County, Indiana according to the plans and specifications prepared by J. C. Johnson, architect, and which can be seen at this auditor's office up to the 12th day of March, 1872..."[19]

The process appeared to be moving along quite quickly and smoothly, but the commissioners were not without critics. In March of 1872, two individuals filed a remonstrance, asking the commissioners to reconsider their decision to build a new courthouse; these motions, however, were overturned, and the commissioners proceeded to review bids on March 12. Though not the lowest bid, the commissioners ultimately awarded the contract to Christian Boseker for $78,979 after discovering a "material omission" in the bond of the lowest bidder, William Paul. An extensive three-page contract delineates the relationship between Boseker and the commissioners, though it provides little detail

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[16] from Adams County Commissioner's Records, Book E, as reported by Gary Rutledge, "Winning courthouse bid...$78,979," *Decatur Daily Democrat*, July 8, 1972.
[17] Ibid.
[18] ibid, Book F.
[19] ibid.

about the building itself. The contract stipulated that the courthouse "shall be completed on or before the first day of December 1873 under penalty of three hundred dollars for every week exceeding that time," and that "said building to progress and be under roof on or before December 1st, 1872."[20] The records reveal that Boseker met neither deadline and that in the end the building cost $12,000 more than expected. Yet, on January 29, 1874, the commissioners adopted a resolution declaring that both J. C. Johnson and Christian Boseker.

> "have by their ability, energy, and perseverance constructed the finest and most convenient courthouse in the state of Indiana. Therefore resolve by the board of the county commissioners of Adams County, Indiana that we tender our thanks to J. C. Johnson as Architect and Christian Boseker as Contractor and builder for the gentlemanly manner that they have treated us as a board of commissioners and for the neatness and skill of workmanship they have manifested in the construction of the building..."[21]

David R. Hermansen's lecture, "Indiana County Courthouses of the Nineteenth Century," provides a context for understanding the Adams County Courthouse. As he reports, a sort of courthouse building hysteria existed in Indiana in the nineteenth century: "Of the ninety-two counties in Indiana, all built at least two, and as many as five, courthouses in a span of less than ninety years."[22] Most of the courthouses that survive today were built in the second half of the nineteenth century, many in the 1880s and 90s. They reflect the increased settlement and growing sophistication of these Midwestern towns. While most early courthouses were simple log or frame buildings, the later courthouses utilize nationally popular architectural styles to create powerful political, social, and architectural symbols to define the county.[23] Three styles predominate Hermansen's discussion: the Greek Revival and other classically inspired motifs were popular in the 1840s and 1850s; Eclectic design, drawing upon the Renaissance, Mannerist, Baroque, and Second Empire styles, was popular in the 1880s (as exemplified by the work of George W. Bunting); and Richardsonian Romanesque became quite popular in the 1880s and 1890s. Hermansen's work spends more time describing individual buildings than commenting on the significance of these styles, but surely shifting stylistic preferences also imply shifting emphasis on different ideals.

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[20] from Adams County Commissioner's Records, Book F, as reported by Gary Rutledge, "Final cost exceeds bid by $12,000," *Decatur Daily Democrat*, July 9, 1972.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Hermansen p. 1.
[23] ibid.

Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana

According to Virginia and Lee McAlester, the Second Empire style (exemplified in the Adams County Courthouse) "was considered very modern, for it imitated the latest French building fashions."[24] In contrast, the Italianate and Gothic Revival styles "looked to the romantic past for inspiration."[25] Second Empire was the style of choice for public buildings constructed under the Grant administration (1869-77), and became a popular choice for domestic architecture in the northeast and Midwest in the 1860s and 70s.[26] The Adams County Courthouse displays nearly all of the defining characteristics of this style, including the distinctive Mansard roof, ornate dormers in a variety of styles, and tower. As in other Second Empire style buildings, the elements below the roof line are similar to those found in Italianate architecture, including the bracketed cornice, decorative quoins, and hooded windows.[27]

The building's Second Empire design is the work of architect John Carlton Johnson (1828-1901). J. C. Johnson graduated from New Hampshire's Wentworth Academy before moving to the Midwest in the mid-nineteenth century. In the 1870s he established a reputable architectural firm in Fremont, Ohio and received several commissions across northwestern Ohio and northeastern Indiana. The following is an incomplete timeline of Mr. Johnson's major works:

1871 Defiance County Courthouse, Defiance County, OH (OHI# DEF0001111)

1873 Adams County Courthouse, Adams County, IN

1873 Dillon House, Sandusky County, OH (OHI# SAN0001907)

1875 Whitley County Sheriff's House and Jail, Whitley County, IN (on Historic Landmark Foundation of Indiana's 10 Most Endangered List)

1877 Randolph County Courthouse, Randolph County, IN

1879 Fremont City Hall, Sandusky County, OH (OHI# SAN0000207, listed in National Register, demolished)

1897 Hancock County Jail and Sheriff's House, Hancock County, OH (OHI# HAN0035408)

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[24] Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002, p. 242.
[25] Ibid.
[26] idid.
[27] ibid, p. 214-215, 242-243.

Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana

1881 Crawford County Sheriff's Office and Jail, Crawford County, OH (OHI# CRA0008312)

1883 First Brethren Church, Sandusky County, OH (OHI# SAN0015307)

1885 Campbell School, Erie County, OH (OHI# ERI0017403, listed in National Register)

1886 Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, Huron County, OH (OHI# HUR0015407)

1887 Bluffton Town Hall, Allen County, OH (OHI# ALL0001904)

1889 Gibsonburg Village Hall, Sandusky County, OH (OHI# SAN0013406)

1890 Sandusky County Jail and Sheriff's Residence, Sandusky County, OH (OHI# SAN0003707, listed in National Register)

1892 Good Hope Evangelical Lutheran Church, Crawford County, OH (OHI# CRA0028912)

1892 Lutheran Zion's Church, Sandusky County, OH (OHI# SAN0013506)

Based on this list, one can see that Johnson specialized in local government buildings (town/village halls, county courthouses, and county jails/sheriff's houses), churches, schools, and residences. In an 1887 article in the *Fremont Daily News*, he was also noted for designing infirmaries and business blocks.[28] In short, his work left a strong mark on many of the cities and towns of northwestern Ohio and northeastern Indiana in the last three decades of the 19th century. As noted in the Sandusky County Jail and Sheriff's Residence National Register nomination, "Johnson's work reflects the historicism of the period by choosing stylistic references considered appropriate for the function" of each building type. His other courthouses, like the Adams County Courthouse, were built in the Second Empire style; his jails were typically built in the imposing Romanesque Revival style; schools and churches reflected the Gothic Revival; and his houses were an eclectic mix of Italianate, Second Empire, and Queen Anne.

[28] Patricia R. Bristley, "Sandusky County (OH) Jail and Sheriff's Residence," National Register nomination, 1996.

Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana

Of Johnson's three surviving Second Empire-style courthouses constructed in the 1870s (Defiance County, OH; Adams County, IN; and Randolph County, IN), the Adams County courthouse retains the greatest historical integrity. Both of the other courthouses have had their towers and Mansard roofs completely removed, probably because of the roof structure was inadequate to support the central tower. Today the Randolph County courthouse has a flat roof above the cornice-line, and the Defiance County Courthouse has an insensitive, modern, third-story addition. The Adams County courthouse experienced similar structural problems as the other two buildings, but the problem was recognized and addressed much earlier (in 1900), and the tower was relocated to the front of the building in keeping with the stylistic sensibilities and fine workmanship seen in the original.

Alterations

The history of the Adams County Courthouse is one of change as well as continuity. The first significant change made to the building was the relocation of the tower from the center of the courthouse to the front. Historian John Snow provides the authoritative word on this matter. According to Snow,

> "Originally the tower was not properly supported. It was massive and was in the center of the building, right over the large court-room, with no support directly under the center that reached the foundation ground. It was upon a bridge work that rested on the side walls of the building and by the swaying back and forth by the wind storms became dangerous and was taken down in 1900 and removed. A new tower with suitable anchorage and supports was built at the front of the structure; is made of solid brick work sixty or seventy feet above the main building, which not only adds much to its appearance, but makes it a tasty and durable structure."[29]

Fort Wayne architects Wing and Mahurin designed the new tower and dismantled the original one.[30] At the time they were considered "the premier architectural firm in Fort Wayne," specializing in the Richardsonian Romanesque, Queen Anne, and Neoclassical styles.[31] The new tower used some of the same motifs as, and possibly materials salvaged from, the original. This helped to preserve the architectural integrity of the courthouse's exterior, but the interior of the building was significantly altered at this time. The stress caused by the original tower had badly damaged the original

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[29] Snow, 84.
[30] Courthouse history compiled by the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, available online at www.in.gov/judiciary/ipix/adams (accessed 12/3/07).
[31] Information on Fort Wayne architects from the Fort Wayne Community Development Division, available online at www.cityoffortwayne.org (accessed 12/3/07).

courtroom ceiling. Nearly all of the original plaster was removed and a flat ceiling was installed below the original one. Today the framing of the old double-arched ceiling and a few small fragments of the original murals survive, trapped between the current courtroom ceiling and the attic floor. They provide valuable evidence for understanding the historic character of this important space.

While these changes were made in response to a building flaw, all of the other more recent changes to the building have been in response to the demand for additional space. In 1966, recognizing that the old courthouse no longer met all of Adams County's needs, the county commissioners heard proposals for the building of a new courthouse and county government offices on the public square.[32] Ultimately, they decided against this approach, and in the 1970s the county renovated the 1873 courthouse in an attempt to accommodate better the county's officials and records. Most significantly, the two side doors were closed off to provide more space for offices on the first floor. At this time they "also added a second-story loft to the clerk's and recorder's offices, lowered ceilings, and replaced the original front doors with double aluminum-and-glass doors."[33] This loft or mezzanine addition has since been removed and the ceilings in the clerk's office restored to full height. Today, only the clerk, prosecuting attorney, and circuit court judge occupy the county courthouse; the other county offices have been moved into the former Bellmont Junior High School on Third Street. Though the interior plan and finishes of the courthouse remain altered, this move has eased the stress on the building and helped to protect it from further insensitive alterations.

The Peace Monument

The Peace Monument, located on the southwest corner of the courthouse square, is significant in its own right. The monument was designed by Charles Mulligan (1866-1916), the head of the sculpture department at the Art Institute of Chicago. In this capacity, Mulligan "trained artists to produce classicizing works for a city which had remained sculpture-mad after the Columbian Exposition."[34] His works survive in Chicago and in towns across Illinois and the Midwest. Mulligan's design for the Adams County monument was executed by noted Indiana carver Charles M. Dodd for a total cost of $10,000.[35] The front of the monument depicts an allegorical female figure of Peace standing in front of a wall listing all of the soldiers from Adams County who served their country during its major wars. The back is dedicated to women's service to their country, and includes a relief carving of a nurse

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[32] *Decatur Daily Democrat*, Nov. 14, 1966.
[33] Courthouse history.
[34] Sue Ann Prince, *The Old Guard and the Avant-Garde: Modernism in Chicago, 1910-1940*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990, p. 197.
[35] "Tribute to Adams County Heroes," *Decatur Daily Democrat*, October 30, 1913.

tending to a wounded soldier. The monument was "the first in Indiana to be officially supported by a county," and, according to an article written for its 60th anniversary, is the "first monument dedicated to peace in the United States."[36] Though this later claim is unsubstantiated, it certainly reveals the great importance of the monument to the community identity of the people of Adams County. Indeed, the festivities surrounding its dedication on October 29, 1913 suggest that the unveiling of the monument was one of the proudest days in Adams County history. The *Decatur Daily Democrat* from the following day reports on the event with much excitement:

> "GUNS BOOMED!
> THE BELLS RANG!
> THE WHISTLES BLEW!
> All sounded in unison today at daybreak.
> THIS WAS ADAMS COUNTY'S GREAT REVEILLE proclaiming to the populace that the Vague Night is past; that her heroes shall stand unveiled in her everlasting glorious recognition."[37]

The entire town, including businesses and schools, shut down so that everyone could attend the parade and ceremonies, and Governor Ralston and his staff, State Commander Comstock, other government officials, and noted artists participated in the festivities. According to the *Democrat*, "It [the monument's dedication] is said to be the first demonstration in the state, not of a political nature, that has ever been attended by so many prominent officials. Their visit here, therefore, was purely for love of the cause and country, and not for selfish reasons."[38] Thus the monument honored the best of Adams County and in so doing brought out the best in all of those involved in creating and celebrating it.

When the monument was dedicated, it was referred to in the newspaper as the "soldiers' monument." The name "peace monument" was applied later, perhaps reflecting the political atmosphere of another era. Yet, the fact that the monument centers on a figure of Peace rather than a military hero, obelisk, or other more typical form certainly is significant. The choice of Peace reflects the ideals of the Progressive Era. Indeed, a speech made at the dedication of the monument declared that "the spirit manifested today proves again that our community is one of the best on earth, patriotic, appreciative, and *progressive*."[39] Progressives believed that purposeful human and governmental

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[36] "'Peace' memorial 60 years old," *Decatur Daily Democrat*, Nov. 3, 1973.
[37] "Thousands of Voices Sing 'America,'" *Decatur Daily Democrat*, October 30, 1913.
[38] "Was literal 'glory blaze,'" *Decatur Daily Democrat*, October 31, 1913.
[39] "Tribute..." *Decatur Daily Democrat*, October 30, 1913, emphasis not original.

interventions could improve quality of life and social and economic conditions for all Americans. This core belief in progress suggested to many that world peace was possible if nations would join together to support international arbitration and a world court.[40] Though peace would soon be shattered with the outbreak of World War I, the League of Nations, created after the War, was a legacy of this pre-war peace movement. At their core, most people involved in the peace movement of the early 20th century were not pacifists, but reformers who believed that people would only reap the full benefits of reforms, ranging from improved working conditions to women's rights, if peace and stability could be maintained.[41]

While at the national level discussion of peace often included criticism of American imperial policies and fear of entanglement in European affairs, in Adams County peace was invoked in response to memories of the horrors of the Civil War. Though the monument was erected nearly 50 years after the war's end, the incredible sacrifice and terrible tragedy of the war between the North and the South plays heavily in the newspaper articles celebrating the monument's dedication. Thus, as is often the case with memorial objects, the Peace Monument conveyed both feelings about the past and hopes for the future. Along with the Elephant Rock and Pioneer Memorial, the Peace Monument marks the courthouse lawn as a key site of public memory in Adams County.

Summary of significance

The Adams County Courthouse, with its related monuments, represents the progress of Adams County from its settlement period into the modern period. It also reflects the development of civic life in Decatur and Adams County. As an important and well-preserved work of architect J. C. Johnson, the Adams County Courthouse serves as excellent regional example of eclectic design popular in the U.S. after the Civil War. The building's finely executed Second Empire-styling reflects both Midwestern and national trends in civic architecture. The monuments in the complex, particularly the Peace Monument, demonstrate the local community's involvement in the affairs of the nation by commemorating local citizens' service to their country and their connection to important national issues and ideals of the early-twentieth century. The courthouse complex, with its contributing monuments, is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C and is significant at the local level.

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[40] C. Roland Marchand, *The American Peace Movement and Social Reform, 1898-1918*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton U. Press, 1972, p. xii.
[41] ibid, p. x.

Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana

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State of Indiana Judiciary website: www.in.gov/judiciary/ipix/adams.

City of Fort Wayne website: www.cityoffortwayne.org.

Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana

Verbal Boundary Description

The property is a city block defined by Second Street on the east, Madison Street on the north, Third Street on the west, and Court Street on the south. It occupies the original Public Square, as delineated in the Adams County Plat Book 1, page 2, recorded September 22, 1836.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries are the historical boundaries of the property. The Public Square retains historical integrity as the center of the county government and as a focal point of the Decatur business district.

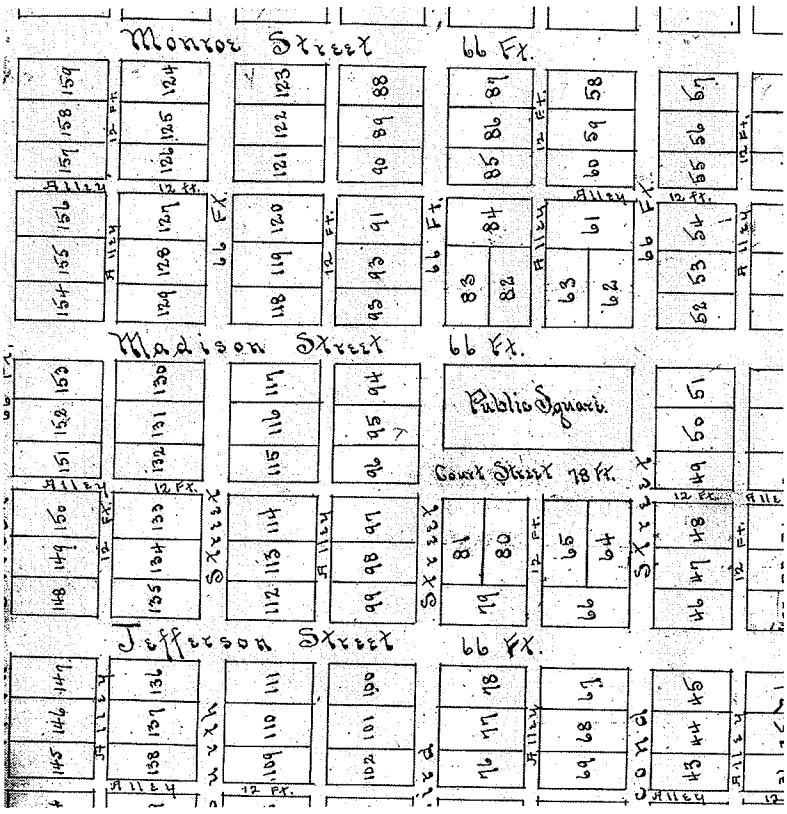
Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana

List of Photographs

Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana
Elizabeth Gallow
December 5 and 6, 2007
Digital photographs

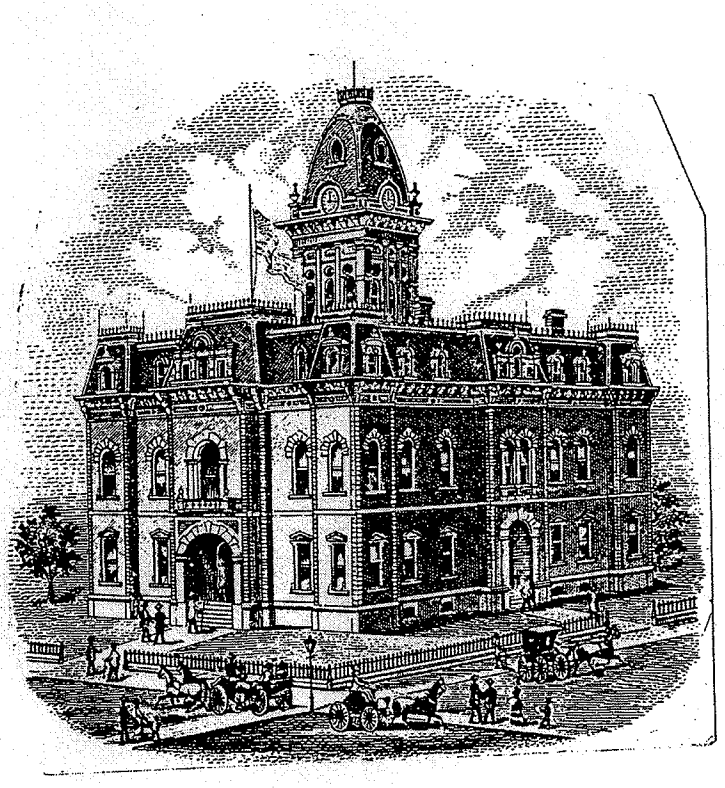
1. Front and north elevations, looking southwest
2. Front and south elevations, looking northwest
3. South elevation, looking north
4. Rear and north elevations, looking southeast
5. East entrance, looking southwest
6. Cornerstone on north side of east elevation, looking west
7. Roof detail of northeast corner, looking southwest
8. Tower, looking west
9. Basement hallway, looking west
10. Elevator, looking southeast
11. Door to prosecuting attorney's office (south side of first-floor hallway), looking southeast
12. Wall detail (south side of first floor hallway, looking southwest
13. Stair to judge's office, view from base on the first floor looking north
14. Stair to attic, view from landing on the second floor looking west
15. Main stair and marble tile, view from second floor lobby looking southeast
16. Courtroom, looking southwest
17. Courtroom, looking east
18. Judge's office, second floor, looking west
19. Jury room, second floor, looking south
20. Steel bridgework in attic, looking southwest
21. Peace Monument on the southwest corner of the public square, looking northeast
22. Peace Monument, back side looking south
23. "Elephant Rock" on the southeast corner of the public square, looking northwest
24. Pioneer Memorial on the northeast corner of the public square, looking southwest
25. War Memorial on the northeast corner of the public square, looking southwest

Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana



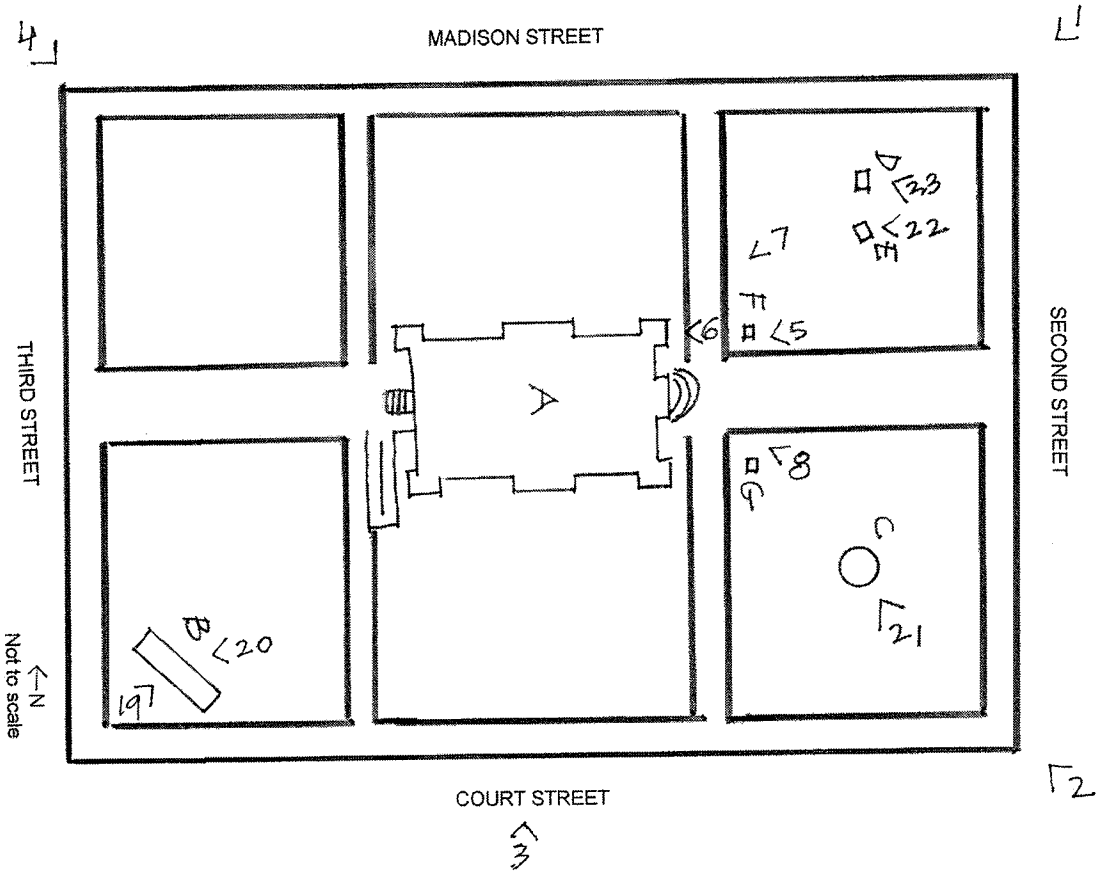
Excerpt from original plat of Decatur, Indiana.
Source: Adams County Plat Book 1, p. 2.

Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana



Engraving of Adams County Courthouse showing original tower in center.
Source: Adams County Public Library "Courthouse" file.

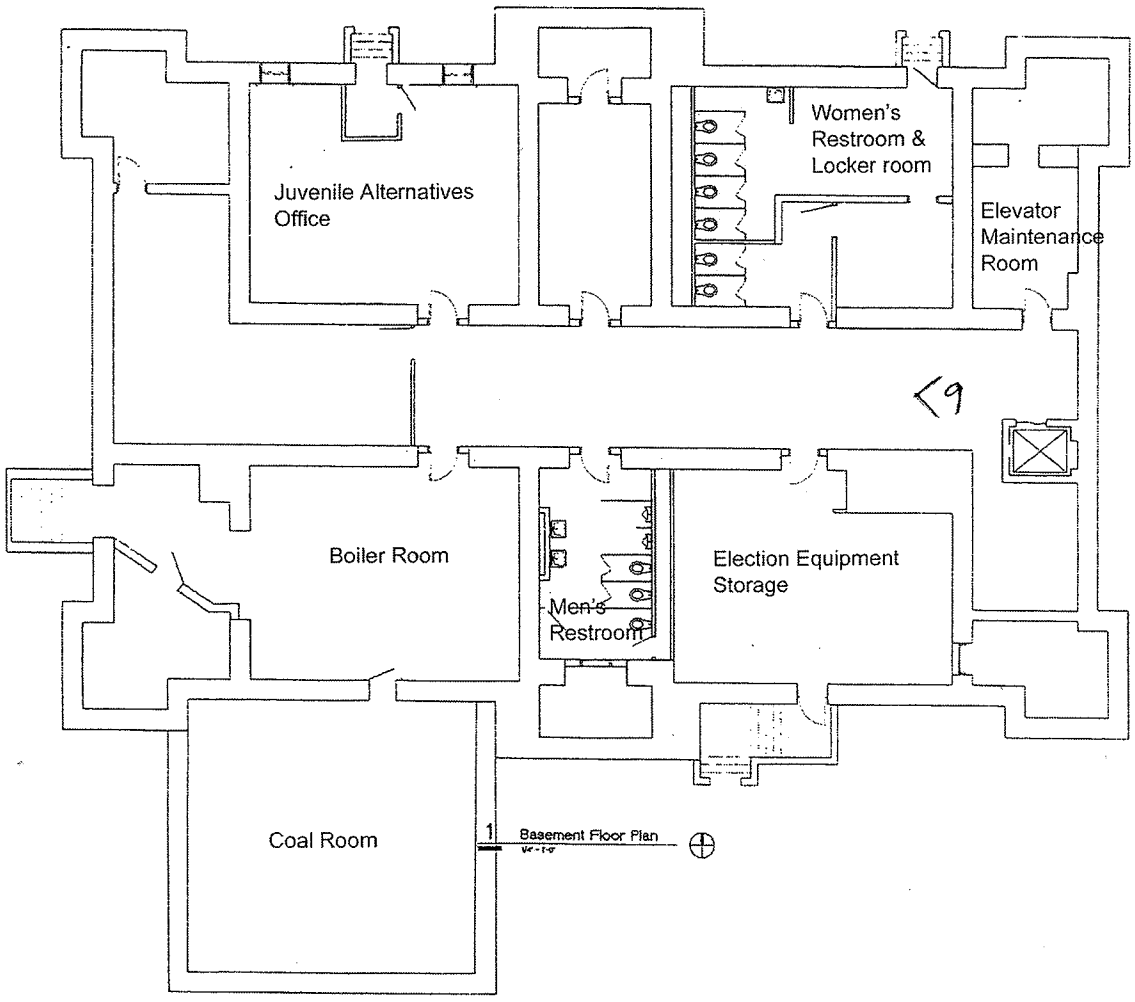
Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana



Site plan

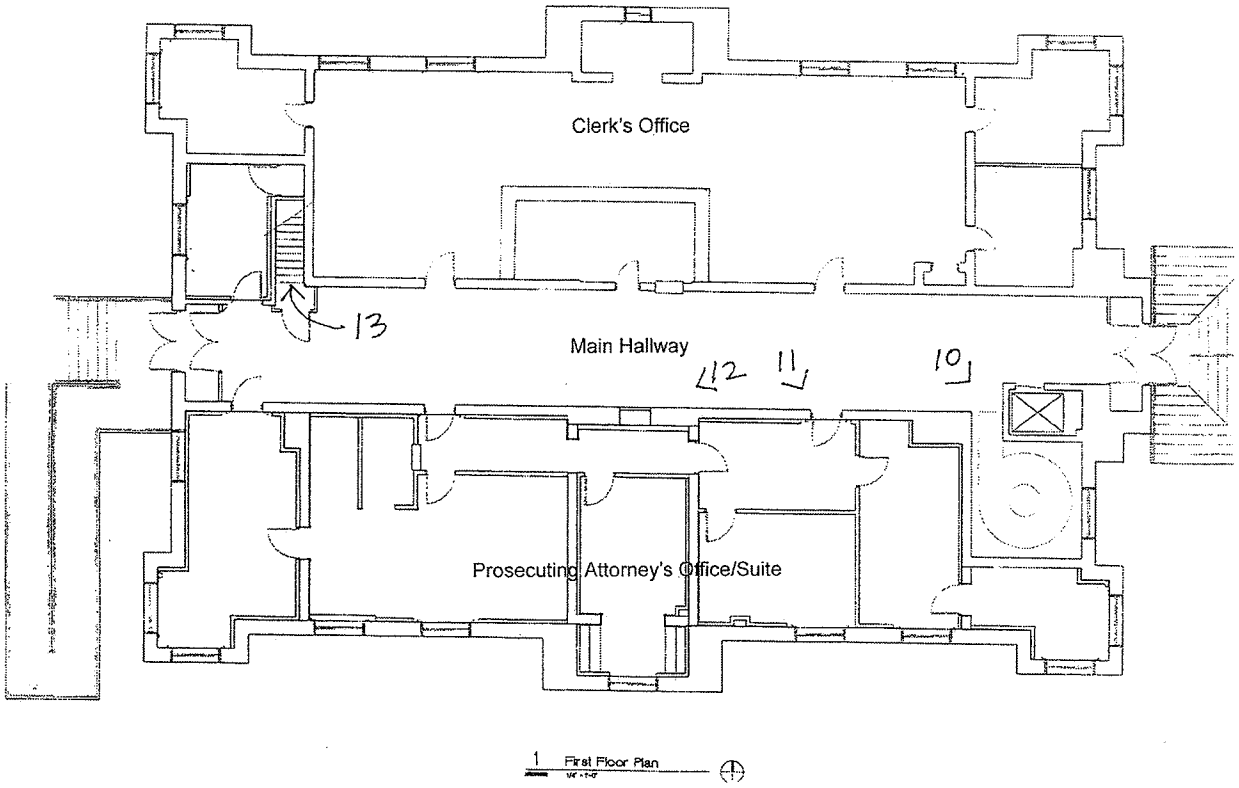
A Courthouse
B Peace Monument
C Elephant Rock
D Pioneer Memorial
E War Memorial
F Historical Markers
G Historical Markers

Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana



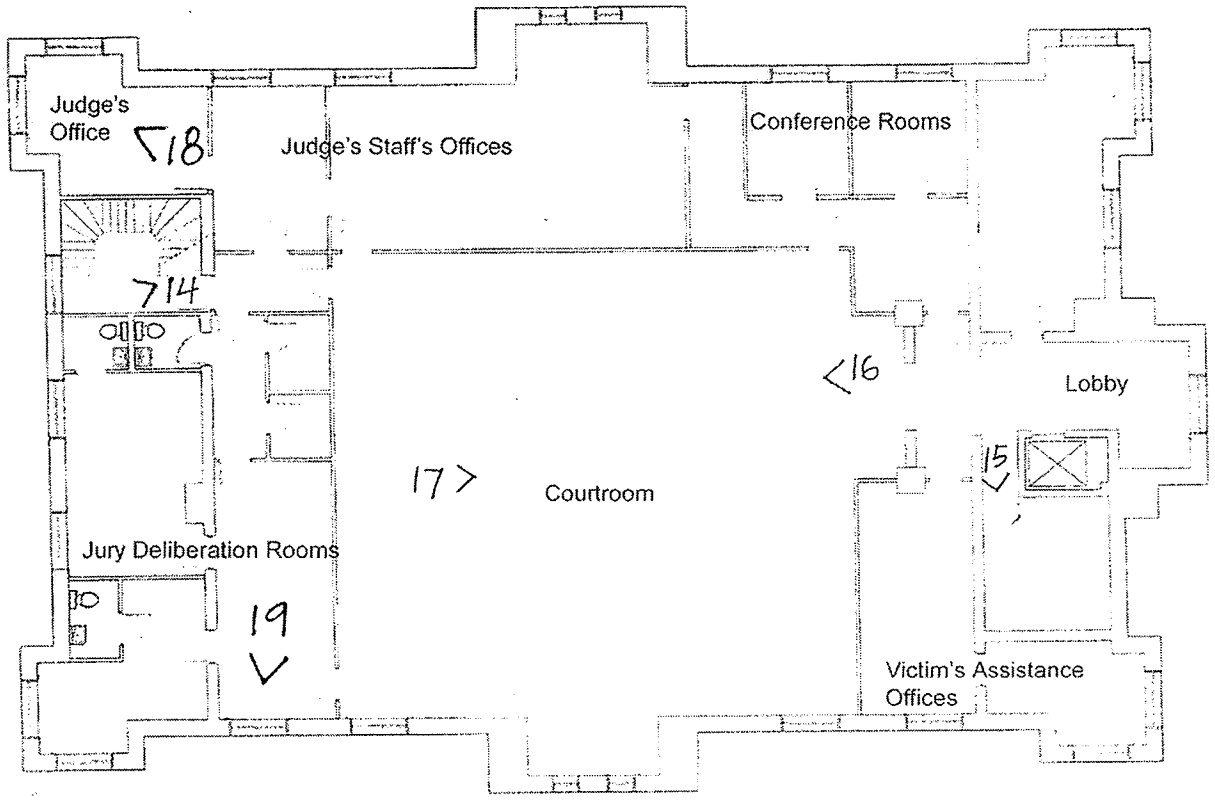
Basement Plan
Source: Judge Frederick Schurger (posted in Courthouse for security purposes)

Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana



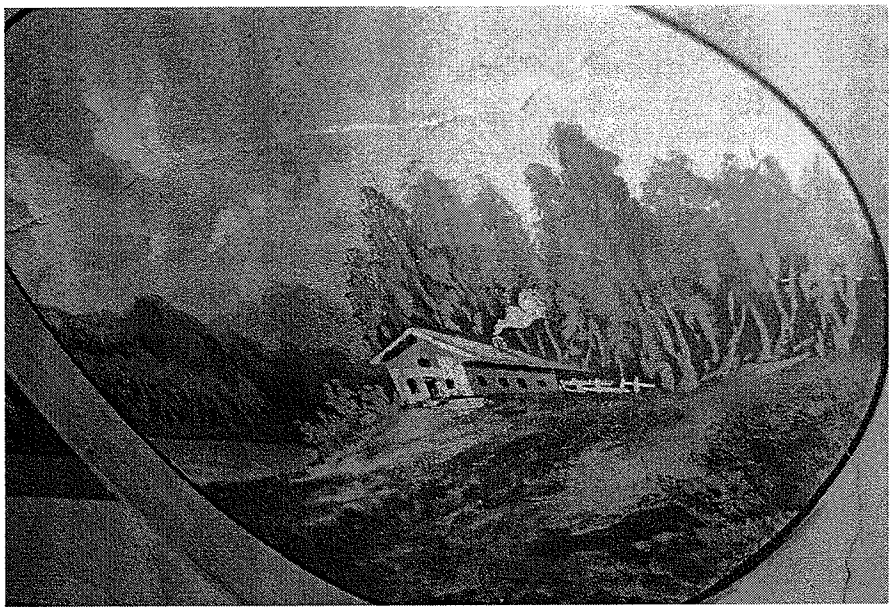
First-Floor Plan
Source: Judge Frederick Schurger (posted in Courthouse for security purposes)

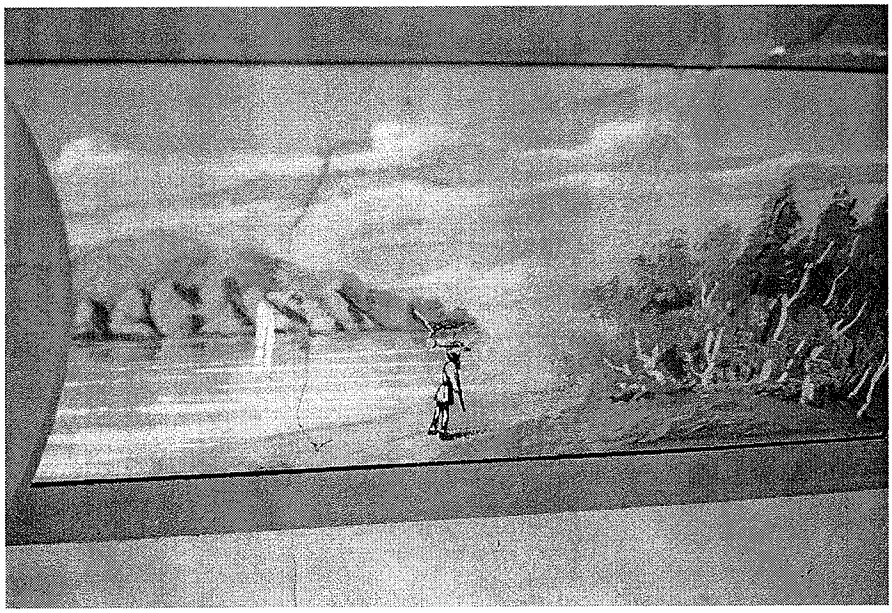
Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana



Second-Floor Plan
Source: Judge Frederick Schurger (posted in Courthouse for security purposes)

Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana



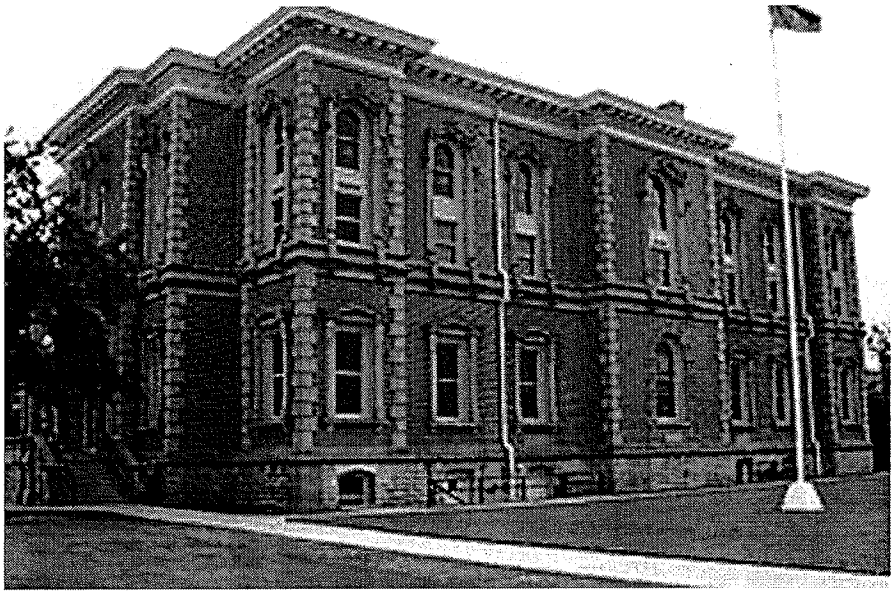


Murals from original courtroom ceiling
Source: Judge Frederick Schurger

Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana

Defiance County, Ohio, Courthouse.
Source: http://www.city-data.com/picfilesc/picc7584.php

Adams County Courthouse
Adams County, Indiana



Randolph County, Indiana, Courthouse.
Source: Margaret Foster, "Can a Calendar Save a Courthouse?"
National Trust Preservation Online, Aug. 1, 2005
http://www.nationaltrust.org/Magazine/archives/arc_news_2005/080105.htm