NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

FINAL

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Benton County Courthouse

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number 706 East Fifth Street N/A ☐ not for publication

city or town Fowler N/A ☐ vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Benton code 007 zip code 47944

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 consider significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☑ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date 6/12/2008

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
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:)

Benton County Court Houe
Name of Property

Benton County, IN
County and State

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	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
1	0	objects
3	0	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

n/a

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/courthouse

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/Second Empire

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone
walls Brick
roof Slate
other Asphalt

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

See continuation sheets

Benton County Court House
Name of Property

Benton County, IN
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the 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, 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 significant within the past 50 years.

Areas of significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1874 - 1957

Significant Dates

1874

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

G. P. Randall, Chicago

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

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 if 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:

Benton County Court House
Name of Property

Benton County, IN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	16	473340	4496100
2			
3			
4			

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Camille B. Fife

organization The Westerly Group, Inc. date June 8, 2007

street & number 225 East Main Street telephone (812) 273-8826

city or town Madison state IN zip code 47250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 0r 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

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Benton County Commissioners

street & number 706 East Fifth Street telephone (Clerk) 765.884.0930

city or town Fowler state IN zip code 47944

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance to the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding the burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Section 7. Narrative Description

The Benton County Courthouse is a three-and a half story brick and stone building constructed in 1874 in the Second Empire Style. It is roughly rectangular in form with two protruding wings on the north and south sides of the building. There is a new annex attached on the south, which was constructed c. 1995. It interconnects with the historic building through a glass fronted link. Most of the original façade of the building is visible within this link. The building is sited within a square, originally surrounded by grass and a board fence. Today, one corner of the square is rounded, to permit traffic to turn south on S. Grant Avenue. Also located on the courthouse square is a new, one-story Jail. This building is connected to new annex, via a small passageway. The property considered in this nomination includes the Court House with its annex, the connected jail and the courthouse square which contains a contributing object, the former courthouse bell, dating to the c. 1874 period.

Setting: The Benton County Courthouse is located in Fowler, Indiana – roughly the center of the county. It is situated in the broad expanse of what was once called the "Grand Prairie". This great swath of nearly flat land spreads westward toward Illinois and beyond. The flowing grasses which once populated this part of Indiana have long since vanished, but the statuesque courthouse still seems to tower over the surrounding landscape. Today, the square is surrounded by one and two story residential buildings on the north and south sides. On the west, at the corner of Sixth and Lincoln Avenue, stands the sandstone jail which was a contemporary of the historic courthouse. Today it is maintained as a museum. Located on the east and north east sides of the square are commercial and business endeavors.

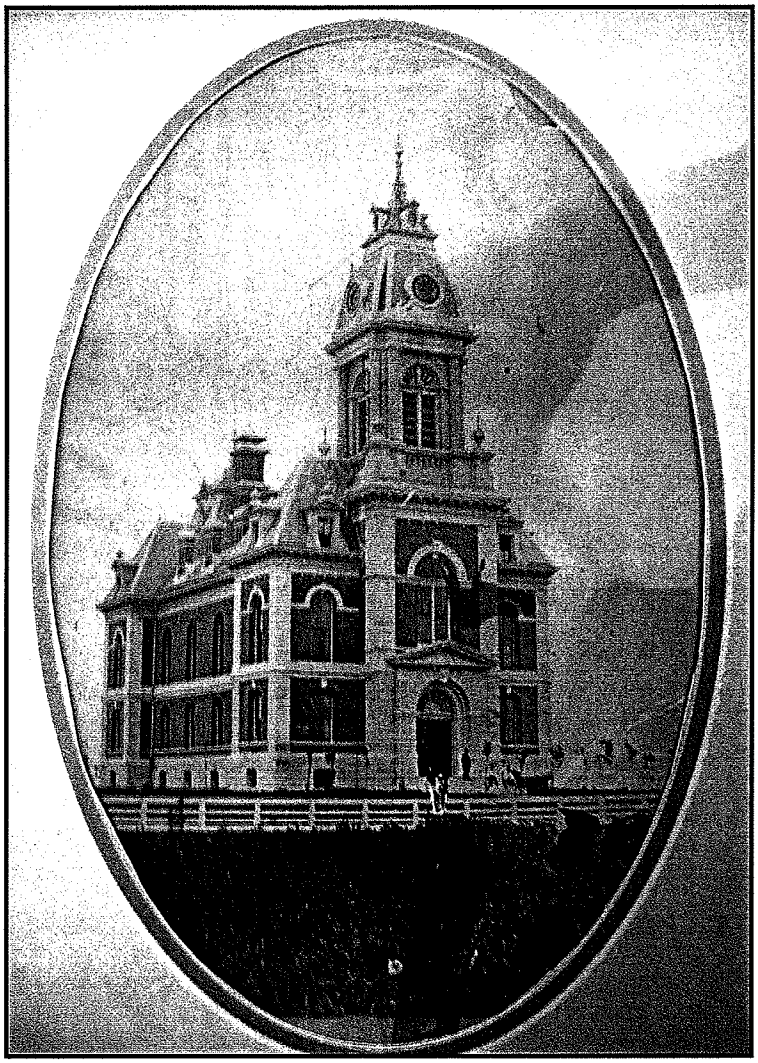
The square itself (a contributing site) is a gently rising, grass covered oasis in this prairie landscape. It is dotted with mature and young trees as well as the courthouse bell which was formerly located in the tower. This artifact is mounted on a concrete plinth at the north east section of the square, a reminder of days past. The circulation consists of narrow concrete sidewalks from E. Sixth Street and E. Fifth Street to the north and south entrances. In addition there is a walk which bisects the square at an angle, from the north west to the south east corners, interrupted on the east side of the courthouse by a parking lot. There are two automobile access drives, one on E. Sixth which leads to the parking lot previously mentioned and another which is a drive through under the Jail port cochere. Amenities in the square also include generous parking spaces near the front entrance, a flag pole in the north east quadrant and several historically sensitive lamp posts. The site is well-landscaped with a variety of evergreen and deciduous trees, a row of recently planted trees atop a berm (to soften the brick wall of the Jail) in the south west quadrant and sensitive shrubs as foundation planting near the historic courthouse.

The western edge of downtown Fowler is bisected at an angle by US 52. State Route 18 leads westward to US Highway 41, a major north-south artery between Chicago and Terre Haute as well as points south. In addition, State Road 55 connects northward from Fowler to Newton County. Thus, Fowler is reasonably well connected to transportation arteries in the

north western sector of Indiana. The presence of a large grain mill and silos, at the western edge of town is evidence of the town's continuing ties to rural agriculture.

During the 1870s, when the courthouse was constructed, the square was evidently surrounded by pasture. According to local lore, a board fence which is visible in a late nineteenth century image was necessary to keep the cattle away from the entrance.

Below: A nineteenth century view (c. 1875) of the courthouse, showing the board fence which was erected around the perimeter. (Collection of the Benton County Historical Society). The tower, which was lost sometime during this century, once contained a bell and a clock.



The Building: The foundation is constructed of coursed sandstone, rock-faced or dressed, with a dressed draft. The color of the sandstone varies from a light tan to a slight orange cast. The ashlar is rusticated in the four courses rising from grade level. A course of dressed stone with a rubbed finish caps the foundation at approximate shoulder height above grade.

The walls of the building are constructed of brick, which is of a natural reddish color and set in a stretcher bond. There is modern tuck pointing. The corners of the building are highlighted by quoins, large dressed stones with a prominent tooled draft, but laid evenly, rather than alternating "headers" and "stretchers" as is usually the case. These create strong vertical elements at the four corners of the projecting wings and define the pavilions of the north and south entrances. Narrow horizontal dressed stone courses unify the sills of the second floor windows on all four elevations of the building. The windows at this level all have segmental arches; those on the north and south wings also contain keystones.

The brick window surrounds are laid as voussoirs, rowlock. All windows are recessed and have modern glass replacements for the original two/over/two or four/over/four light glazing. (See photo No. 4 and historic photographs on pages 4 and 5.)

At the third floor level, the exterior of the building is graced with a string course, the central segment of which projects slightly. This strong horizontal element prepares the eye for the enlarged third floor level, where all of the windows are semi-circular and the expanse of brick between the windows and the upper cornice is enlarged. Because this floor contains the court room and other important offices, it was necessarily bigger. To balance the composition, the architect has employed several decorative elements. The third floor window surrounds on the north and south wings are composed of stone with a scrolled keystone. A narrow course of sandstone extends horizontally from the springing line to the corners of the wings. In the main north and south entrance pavilions, these elements are even more pronounced.

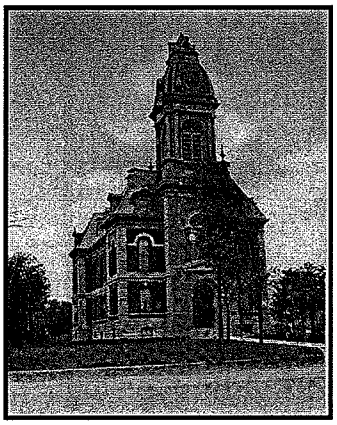
The fourth floor of the building only consists of the partial stories above the projecting wings. On the exterior of the building, the cornice is an ornate composition consisting of a decorative molded fascia, resting atop a row of small projecting brackets, which are concave and similar to mutules. Above this, the frieze contains decorative molding and the cornice itself is supported by scrolled modillions sitting atop a course of finely detailed dentils. A compound molding forms the cornice, concealing the drain system, whose downspouts are only slightly visible on the inner corners between the north wing and the main building (See photos No. 6 and 8).

The roof of the courthouse is extremely steep, straight, and hipped on the two projecting wings. On the main part of the building and in the two pavilions a more typical straight mansard is employed. The latter will be more closely described below. Dormers decorate the roofs of the wings and the pavilions. According to a c. 1874 photograph, the main roof once contained three chimneys on the west side, and possibly on the east. These are now gone, possibly removed during a re-roofing. The dormers on the wings have ornate pedimented window heads, gable roofs and four/over/four light double hung windows. They are scrolled at the bases. There is a wall dormer on the north pavilion. The roof, originally of slate, has been replaced by modern asphalt shingle in some places. Each of the dormers and the roofs of the wings were once decorated by ornate urn finials (See historic photo, P. 2). These are now gone.

The north and south elevations of the building, which create the main entrances, both have ornate pavilions, projecting bays with highly decorative elements. The north pavilion is clearly seen from photo No. 7. Access to the building is achieved through a wide stair, the full width of the pavilion. The entrance way and the first floor of the bay are clad in the same sandstone which decorates the rest of the building. Here, the deeply recessed entry is framed with a semi-circular arch, whose entrados is highlighted by rusticated stones with a scrolled keystone at the top. Within this recess, the double leaf door (now a modern replacement) is topped by a three-light transom, over which is placed a two light fanlight. The recess is framed with stone moldings. Above the entry, the third floor line is denoted by the same wide string course which decorates the rest of the building. In the third floor, a semi-circular arched

window, with a stone surround and keystone echoes the theme of the second floor entry, with greater height. The present window is a six-light replacement, but retains the four-segment fanlight of the original construction. The cornice detailing, above this window is the same as can be found on the wing. Above the cornice entablature, the pavilion is graced with a short stone wall which forms the base for a wall dormer or lucarne, typically a feature of the French Second Empire style. The lucarne on the Benton County Courthouse contains a semi-circular arched, six light window with a keystone in the stone surround. It is topped by a closed pediment, similar to the other dormers and contains scroll work at the base. The pavilion is presently capped with a pyramid roof, decorated with semi-circular pediments at the four faces. These are decoratively molded for emphasis.

The south pavilion is marked by the massive entry door, similar to the north entry, but in much larger scale. This element can be viewed within the glass fronted link to the new annex (See photo No. 18.) The massive stones which form the semi-circular arch are rusticated and rock faced with dressed drafts. The stone cornice which marks the springing line of the arch contains carved moldings including flat and convex varieties. Within the entrados, two dressed stone courses step back to frame the door surround. A massive scrolled keystone supports the outer course and the first inner course. The door surround is also recessed with beaded molding. The present, double leaf door is modern, but the fanlight above is original and consists of a lunette, surrounded by seven segments, each delineated by turned moldings and with trefoils at their heads. The original south entry was topped by a decorated pediment. This was probably removed during the construction of the annex, although the balance of the pavilion detailing remains.



Chronology: The tower which once stood as a beacon on the south entry of the courthouse was taken down because of deterioration in 1936.[1] This element, shown in the c. 1875 photograph had a balustrade, above which was the bell tower, with semi-circular arched louvers, topped by a cornice and a convex mansard roof which contained roundels for the clock faces on all four sides. This was topped by a square base which supported a pyramid roof with four dormers surmounted by a decorative spire. This element had already been slightly modified at the time that a c. 1900 postcard was created.

Photo at left: C. 1900 Postcard (Collection of the Benton County Historical Society.) The spire has been lost, but the clock remains.

It is evident that the tower continued to deteriorate over the years. This is not surprising, since it rose above all of the other buildings around it and thus would have been vulnerable to

[1] Information from Mr. Harold Furr, County Historian, July, 2007.

high winds, and lightning, at the very least. A postcard photograph, c.1900 shows the courthouse with similar walks as at present. The tower is mostly intact, except without the spire. Another postcard, undated, shows the clock has been removed, along with all of the dormers above the convex mansard roof, as well as the spire. This seems to have been replaced by what appears to be either an antenna or lightning rod. It is probably the latter, since an obvious rod appears on the north wing of the building. Note in the photograph (shown below) that the prominent chimney was clearly visible and probably functioning. It is now slightly truncated and capped. The dormers in the main roof section are not visible in this photograph, partially obscured by a tree.

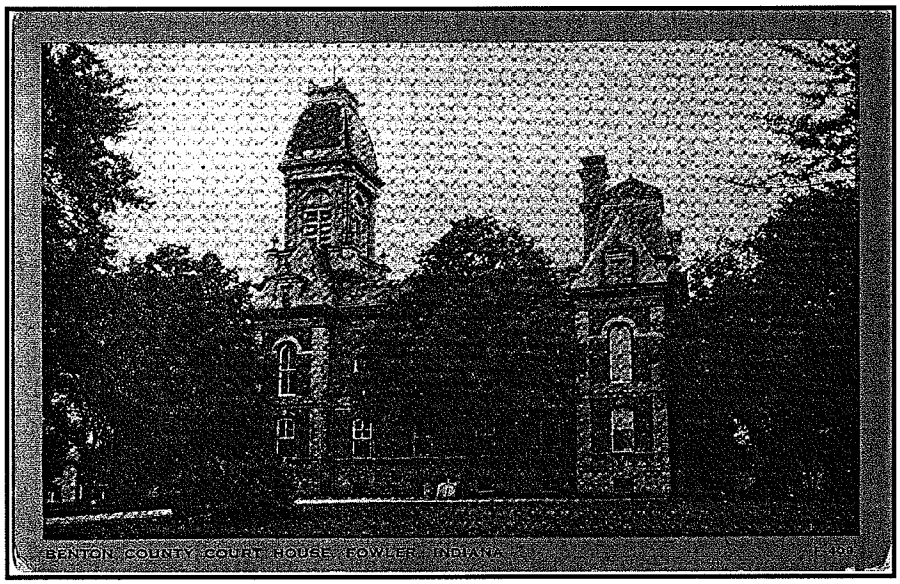
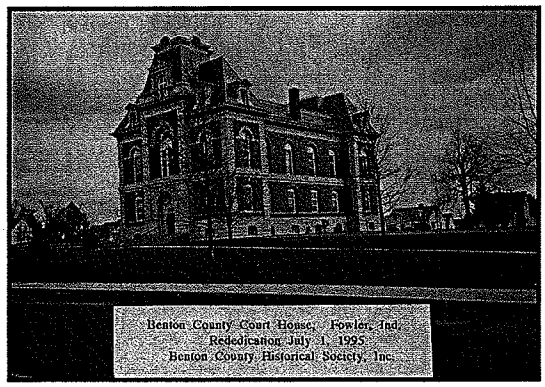


Photo at left: No Date. (Black and White Postcard in the Collection of the Benton County Historical Society) Because this is a black and white photograph, it probably dates between the 1920s to the 1930s. Note the four/over/four windows on the second floor and two/over/two on the third.



In1992 the bell which was once located in the tower was given a new life. A local Eagle Scout, along with other boys and local contractors made the base and installed it on the courthouse lawn. [2] In 1994, a master planning study was completed for the courthouse. Drawings prepared for this study have been used (Courtesy of the Benton County Historical Society) for the sketch maps in this document. Prior to the construction of the annex

and Jail in July of 1995, a rededication of the courthouse was held. The photograph at left is from

[2] "Benton County's Tower Bell in New Home", *The Benton Review,* 1992. In the Benton County Historical Society.

the files of the Benton County Historical Society. Then, as now, the courthouse dominates the landscape which surrounds it. The view is looking south, southeast from East Fifth Street.

As mentioned before, the construction of the Annex was carefully planned to preserve nearly all of the remaining south elevation within the glass link. Construction photographs indicate that the pediment above the entry was lost but all else prevailed. (See photo No. 28).

Interior: The plan of the interior of the courthouse has changed little over the years. As shown on the sketch maps, the offices of the various county officials are well laid out. The plan includes on all three floors, a central hall, with dark, fumed oak framed doors, arcades and windows (See photos No. 14, 15, & 16). One of the most significant rooms in the courthouse is the courtroom. Many of the details of this room are intact, particularly the woodwork and configuration of the space (See photos No. 21, 22, 23 & 24). The niche at the north end of the room, which forms a back drop to the judges seat may have had ornamental paint or stenciling, but has been over painted. Some of the furniture, including two tables is also original. Halls and the court room have had modern light fixtures installed, and in some cases the ceiling has been lowered to allow for the required utilities. However, these changes do not dramatically alter the volume and feeling of the original spaces. The vaults are still in place, at least one of them in the recorders office is original. The basement, or first floor, has been somewhat modified, but the original segmental arched openings are still visible (See photo No.12.)

The north side of the fourth floor is used for storage, and retains all of its original integrity and detailing. While the graining on the stair leading to this area may not be original, the fabric appears intact (See photos No.26 & 27)

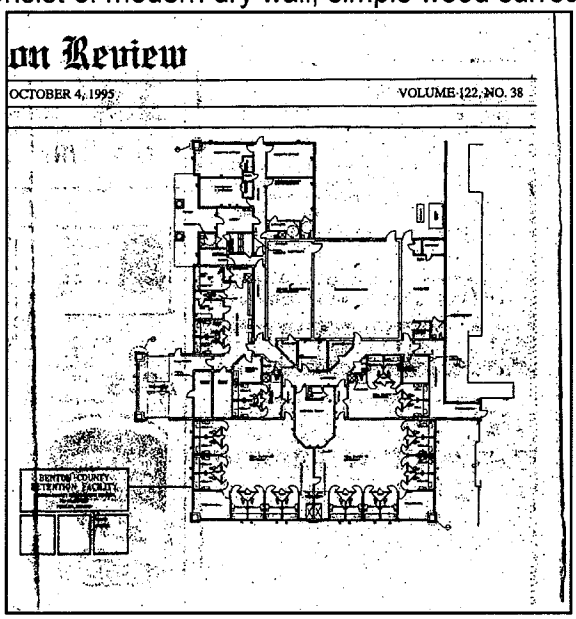
The north entrance still contains wood wainscoting probably with its near original finish. However, the present door, with its open work, and the surround with glass inserts may be a modern adaptation, to increase the amount of light available in the interior halls (photo No. 17). Certainly, the entrance to the second floor hall, which is primarily of glass, is a newer innovation (See photo No. 13.) The major change on the interior is the removal of the grand stair case which once led from the second to the third floor. This was undoubtedly required to provide modern security into the courtroom (See photo No.24.)

The Annex

Entrances to the annex from the historic courthouse are simple and create little confusion for the visitor. They are designed in utile fashion, to provide clean, modern spaces for the functions as required (See photos No. 20 & 25.) There is a modern elevator in the annex which provides access to all three levels and thus meets the A. D. A. requirements. The annex is a wood frame building clad with brick and stone. It has a glass faced link opening to the east and a simple modern door on the south entrance which leads to the second floor (See photo No. 20). The plan of the annex is straightforward: Each floor contains a central hall running from the south to the north, with offices off the east and west sides. There is a connecting door in the annex to the new jail. Like the jail, interior finishes in the annex include modern dropped ceilings with inset fluorescent fixtures, typical dry wall and both finished wood flooring (second and third floor) and black and white vinyl tile (first floor). See photos No. 12, 20 and 25.

The Jail

On the western side of the courthouse square and within its boundaries, is a new, one-story jail building, constructed c. 1996. A narrow covered hall connects this building to the new annex. Although it takes up much of the square footage, this building is rather low-key. Because of its construction, it appears to hug the ground and thus, allows views of the courthouse from the west. A port cochere on the west side allows emergency and police vehicles to transport passengers directly to the entry in a discreet fashion. The interior of the jail consists of a main entry, with offices for the Sheriff and staff. This area is accessed via the northwest entrance (see photo No. 8). A floor plan of the jail, published in 1995 shows the layout and connecting hallway. The interior finishes of the building, like those of the annex consist of modern dry wall, simple wood surrounds and composition tile floors.


on Review
OCTOBER 4, 1995
VOLUME 122, NO. 38

At Left: Jail floor plan from The Benton Review, October 4, 1995. Courtesy of the Benton County Historical Society.

The interior spaces of the jail consist of the previously mentioned main entry, cells, surrounding an open area on the south of the building, and links at the center of the building, with security facilities at the core. The narrow hall connects the link between the new annex and the old courthouse. Several recreation areas are included within the jail. Other spaces in the building include Sheriff and secretarial offices, maintenance, cooking, restrooms and utility services. The jail cells are standardized units which met the requirements of all existing regulations in 1995.

Integrity: It is obvious that issues of integrity have arisen since the Benton County Courthouse was constructed in 1874. In addition to the vagaries of natural events, the increasing demand for additional space to accommodate modern government requirements has necessitated additions. However, the building has retained adequate integrity to allow it to qualify for the National Register.

The building is sited on its original location. The location of the town of Fowler, and the "new" courthouse is also significant, as is discussed in the next section. While there have been additions and a new jail, these have not seriously compromised the location of the courthouse. Although the old jail is still present on S. Lincoln Avenue, the new jail is not inappropriate. A jail was always associated with this court house. Indeed, one of the factors which influenced the

building of a new courthouse was the inadequacy of the former jail. The design of the courthouse has been somewhat modified over the years, however, the design intent of the architect is clearly visible in the three elevations which are presently visible. This is especially true of the north façade, which demonstrates many of the high design elements of the French Second Empire style. The setting of the courthouse, while somewhat altered over the years, is still impressive. The ideal of a great, impressive structure towering over the "Grand Prairie" is maintained. The materials of the building, especially the varying stonework elements are outstanding. The brick and stone all recall the highest level of nineteenth century concern for quality. The workmanship is also very apparent, especially in the way the stone is worked, and the brick masonry. In addition, the woodwork in various parts of the building recalls the craftsmanship of its builders and remains as a testament to their quality. The feeling associated with this building, is still vividly present, especially as one enters the grand entry, behind the glass link. The court room also reminds one of the grandeur of the law and the respect it engendered, especially during this time period. Finally, the Benton County Courthouse is also significant under Criterion A for its association with the relocation of the Benton County seat to Fowler. The association of the building with local government in Benton County is one of the strong areas of significance which makes the courthouse eligible for the National Register.

Section 8. Statement of Significance

Summary

The Benton County Courthouse is significant under National Register Criterion A, for its association with local government. The courthouse was pivotal in the relocation of the county seat and the further development of Benton County. The construction of the courthouse coincided with this relocation. The Court House is still the site of important county events, activities and trials. It is also significant under Criterion C as the work of a master designer, architect G. P. Randall, who thrived in Chicago during the last half of the nineteenth until his death in 1884. In addition to the Benton County Courthouse, Randall designed a courthouse in Plymouth for Marshall County and several buildings on the campus of Northwestern University in Chicago.

Statement

Benton County was created in 1840, divided out of Jasper County to the north east and Warren County to the south. The legislative act which confirmed its creation was passed on February 18, 1840. It is a brief document, following the pattern of many new counties formed after an act of 1838, which regulated county business during the burgeoning mid-nineteenth century growth of Indiana's northern lands. The act forming Benton County specified that the house of Basil Justus would be used for meetings and county business. Mr. Justus was a resident of Oak Grove Township, in the southern part of the county. He had been one of the early settlers in the County, erecting a log cabin in 1835 in White Oak Grove, very near the future location of the town of Oxford. Soon Oxford would be the new county's seat, to no one's surprise. Settlers had been moving into the area as early as 1831, building small cabins and farming the land.[3] This part of Indiana had been surveyed in 1831-32, thus opening up possibilities for settlement. [4]

Benton County was named in honor of Thomas Hart Benton. During the first decade of the nineteenth century, he was a leading statesman of the west, serving as United States Senator from the State of Missouri. Benton had moved to St. Louis after the war of 1812, and had been instrumental in the admission of the State of Missouri to the Union in 1821. He was an ardent exponent of Jacksonian Democracy and a vociferous proponent of western development, saying: "The magnificent valley of the Mississippi is ours, with all its fountains, springs and floods; and woe to the statesman who shall undertake to surrender one drop of its water, one inch of soil to any foreign power." [5]

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[3] F. A. Battey & Co., *Counties of Warren, Benton, Jasper and Newton, Indiana, Historical and Biographical ...*, Chicago, IL: F. A. Battey & Co., 1883, Reproduced by Unigraphic, Inc., Evansville, IN, 1973.
[4] Benton County History Project, *History of Benton County, Indiana,* Indiana Historical Society, Dallas, TX: Taylor Publishing Co., 1987, p. 6.
[5] Jesse Setlington Birch, *History of Benton County and Historic Oxford,* Crawford and Crawford, Inc.: Oxford, IN, 1928, Pp 3 - 5.

County organizers were inspired by the flamboyant oratory of Thomas Hart Benton and encouraged by resident David McConnell who would become one of the first trustees and who was also a friend of the statesman. In this prairie-centered county, they, like the great Senator "firmly declared that the future wealth and glory of the Republic must come from the grassy plains watered by the Father of Waters and its many tributaries." [6]

Benton County, first divided into only three townships, now contains eleven. The land contains broad expanses of gently undulating prairie, broken only by a few groves. A few of these gave picturesque names to some of the townships: Oak Grove, Hickory Grove and Parish Grove. The latter assuming a local name from an Indian Chief, who was felled by a tree in the grove and buried there.[7] The county is located in the eastern part of what was termed the "Grand Prairie" in the nineteenth century. Once, it contained a plethora of sloughs and other wetlands, but massive drainage activity brought most of it under cultivation. Pine Creek runs through the county in the south east and other creeks enter, flowing from the Iroquois River to the northwest. The county's fine grazing lands produced excellent cattle. Once drained, the land proved to be fertile for most crops, but especially corn, although stock farming remained a major agricultural endeavor. Two spots in the county provided a vantage point for prairie vistas. Called Mt. Nebo and Mr. Gilboa, the latter hill, at an elevation of eighty feet was said to provide a "splendid view...for a distance of fifteen miles ..."[8] Illustrations in an 1876 Atlas show the two knobs joined, near Gilboa township in the north east, by Gilboa Ridge. Groves dot the map and a few wetlands are also still present. [9]

In addition to the glorious agricultural riches for which the county was reknown in the nineteenth century, it is celebrated as the home of the famous race horse Dan Patch. The equine star was born in April of 1896 in Oxford, Indiana. After a brilliant year or two on the racing circuit, Dan Patch was bought by a Mr. E. B. Sturges of New York for $20,000. Within a year the horse was re-sold to Marion W. Savage for the incredible price of $60,000 (in 1902). Mr. Savage toured the beautiful animal to race against the stop-watch and promote his International Stock Food Company. The horse died in 1916 at 20 years of age, little over one day apart from his beloved owner. They were buried on the same day. [10]

The pre-European settlement history of the county includes paths worn by the tribes of the Miami whose trails crossed in the northern section of the present county. By 1818, the Potowatomi tribe was pre-eminent in the region and treaty discussions were begun between Jonathan Jennings, Lewis Cass and Benjamin Parke, Commissioners for the United States and 35 Sachem Chiefs and Warriors of the tribe. This resulted, on October 2 in a treaty in which the native tribes ceded lands in Indiana and parts of Illinois. The boundary line, shown on an 1876

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[6] Ibid. P. 3.
[7] Benton County History Project, *History of Benton County, Indiana,* Indiana Historical Society, Dallas, Texas: Taylor Publishing Co., 1987, P. 6.
[8] Battey, Pp. 214-215.
[9] Baskin Forster & Co., *Illustrated Atlas of Indiana, Map of Benton County,* 1876.
[10] Recollections of Harold Dimmich, D. D. S. and other documents in the vertical files of the Benton County Historical Society.

Atlas, runs due north west through Benton County. More than half of the county land, south and east of this line became available for settlement through this treaty. Fourteen years later, in 1832, the treaty of Tippecanoe resulted in the cessation of lands north and west of the boundary line.[11] All of Benton County (as well as land in other counties) was released for American pioneer development.

Although many men and women are responsible for settling and governing the county during its early years, one, Henry Robertson, is credited as the "father" of the County. Henry came with his brother in 1834, to find a suitable farm for the family. He was only 21, but a young man of great strength and height for the time. He was born in Kentucky, but his parents, John and Anna were Virginians of English descent. Robertson was a natural leader, an intelligent force in the new country and he quickly prospered. He settled in what would become Parish Grove township. By 1838 he was appointed Sheriff to organize the county, and later became a school master, surveyor, and county commissioner. Throughout his life he was highly respected and a leader in the community. He died in 1889.

Robertson's contribution to the founding of the county probably began early in 1838, when he conceived the founding a new county. According to reliable sources, he became fixed upon the idea of separating the prairie land of the future Benton County from its parent. He presented a petition to organize a new county out of the three southern tiers at a meeting of the board of Commissioners of Jasper County and asked for their signature. He must have been enormously persuasive, for they freely agreed. According to a local account, a short time later he traveled to see the legislature in Indianapolis where his petition was enacted in February of 1840. He came home with a certified copy of the law authorizing the organization of Benton County, with himself as the first sheriff. [12]

After formation of the County, court sessions and other county business continued to be held at the house of Basil Justus, who served as clerk of the court. In 1843 the sessions were moved to the house of James T. Parker, and stayed at that location until 1845 when a new court house in Oxford was ready.[13] It is probably no surprise that Oxford (Milroy and Harford, its earlier names were found to be duplicated elsewhere in the State[14]) was chosen as the center of county government. David McConnell, Basil Justus and Thomas Atkinson, settled near Oak Grove, providing the genesis for the town of Oxford. [15]It was surveyed in 1843 and originally named Milroy after one of the committee chosen to select the county seat. In addition, land for the courthouse was donated by Messrs. Ellsworth and Watkinson, two progressively minded

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[11] Kappler, *Indiana Affairs, Laws, and Treaties, Vol. 2*, P. 168, 273; J. S. Birch, *Benton County and Historic Oxford, P. 9;* Barce and Swan, *History of Benton Co., Vol 1.* P. 77-79; George Mitten, *Memoirs of Union Township,* 1931, P. 6. Quoted in text of Benton County Historical Marker #2, "Indian Boundary Line", vertical files of the Benton County Historical Society.
[12] Text of Benton County Historical Marker #28, "Henry Robertson". Sources: Birch, Pp. 19-21; Battey & Co., P.385-86; Also: Barce, Pp. 21-23.
[13] Battey, P. 233.
[14] Benton County History Project, P. 6.
[15] Maggie Vanatta, *History of Benton County, Indiana, c. 1888, www.rootsweb.com, June, 2007.*

citizens. Located in the south east portion of the county, the town which became known as Oxford was in a part of the county which was settled at an early date. Near Pine and Mud Creeks, this part of the county contained a little more wooded lands than the north—an enticement to pioneers who required quick timber for shelter.

The location of a county seat has always been a crucial economic matter for those whose land holdings would benefit from the increased commerce and activity. In fact, the town of Oxford, although platted, did not contain a single house until the first county court house was built. This edifice was ordered in the fall of 1843 by the Commissioners. Their instructions were precise: "the house is to be a frame, twenty feet in width, and thirty feet in length, two stories high; the lower story to be eight and one-half feet high and the upper story to be seven and one-half feet high." It was to be begun in 1843 and finished by June of 1844. In fact, it appears to have taken a bit longer, since the first term of the court to be held in the new building occurred in August of 1845. The architect and builder was a local gentleman by the name of Francis Boynton. [16] The second building to rise in the town was a hotel, built by the ever enterprising Henry L. Ellsworth. [17] By 1855, the stalwart Oxfordite Basil Justus had made two additions, developments of thirty-two and forty-six lots, respectively. Others followed and by 1870, Mr. Justus had added his Third Addition with forty-six lots. The town was incorporated in 1869.[18]

Oxford prospered in its role as county seat. A new courthouse had been built, the contract having been let to a Mr. George Brown of Lafayette in 1854. The brick structure, fifty by eighty feet, was begun in 1855 and completed the following year. The cupola atop this edifice rose seventy feet from the foundation. [19] This building also served as the public hall for the town of Oxford.[20] Basking in its economic glory, the little town could not imagine that a whirlwind of change was brewing, not far away. At its eye was a fascinating man, a personality to be reckoned with. He would soon shake the complacency of Oxford's eminent city fathers.

Moses Fowler was a force. His parents, both Virginians of Revolutionary stock, emigrated to the western frontier of Ohio before he was born in April of 1815. Like so many youth of the time, he worked on his father's farm until he was sixteen, then apprenticed to learn a trade. After working for Mr. Bell's large tannery in Circleville, Ohio for two years, he was asked to become a partner in the business. Audaciously, eyeing a greater prize, eighteen year old Moses graciously declined the offer. He became a clerk in a dry goods store, learning the mercantile trade from an excellent businessman in Adelphi, Ohio. After three years he had mastered it and saved a small monetary cache. As luck would have it, he encountered another bright young man in the little Ohio town. John Purdue (later the founder of Purdue University)

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[16] Battey, Pp. 233 – 234.
[17] Wikipedia: Oxford, Indiana. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oxford_Indiana. June, 2007.
[18] Battey, P. 307.
[19] Ibid. Pp 236-237.
[20] Jesse Setlington Birch, *History of Benton County and Historic Oxford,* Crawford and Crawford, Inc.: Oxford, IN, 1928, P. 34.

was an excellent teacher. Moses Fowler was one of his students. The teacher encouraged him and he prospered. [21]

By 1839, at the age of twenty four, the two men ventured to the tiny metropolis of Lafayette where they became partners in a mercantile venture. Fowler contributed $700 to the enterprise, part of it borrowed. He had already demonstrated a talent for success, so it was not long before the foundation of his future fortune was laid. Ultimately he moved from retail to wholesale groceries. From the vantage point of Lafayette, along the Wabash & Erie Canal, his enterprise traded over a radius of one hundred miles along the canal and the nearby Wabash River. Only a few years after arriving in Lafayette, Moses Fowler also became involved in banking. As a director, organizer or president, he was responsible for influencing the financial matters of at least four banks. Over a period of thirty years, he continued to profit from these banking investments. [22]

Moses Fowler's interests were many faceted. His wealth and social status were legendary in Lafayette by 1851-52 when he built his home, one of the finest examples of Gothic Revival architecture in the State of Indiana, now the home of the Tippecanoe County Historical Museum. In the 1860s, during the Civil War, he organized a meat packing business which became one of the largest in the West. Fowler had both a personal and business relationship with Adams Earl. Both men married sisters, daughters of James Hawkins, a prosperous Quaker from Ohio who became a land owner at Shadeland, Indiana. Slowly, over a period of time, the two men acquired thousands of acres of prime grazing land in Benton County. They placed large herds of cattle on this land. Typically, Fowler's prodigious energies were directed toward a maximum of independent profit. He ultimately bought out his partner and owned, in his own right, at least 20,000 acres in the center part of Benton County.[23] Some estimates of his holdings are as high as 56,000 acres.[24]

Of course, with investments in Lafayette, as well as north and west, Fowler and his partners were in need of reliable railroad transportation to swiftly move goods from Lafayette to Chicago. Early in the 1860s they began planning for a railroad line to connect Lafayette to the New York Central in Kankakee, Illinois. This line would run through lands already owned by Fowler – a swath across the center of Benton County. As plans for the railroad progressed, Fowler continued to amass land and funds. By 1872, the town of Fowler was platted. Simultaneously the county commissioners had been negotiating to support a railroad that would connect Lafayette to towns in Illinois across the southern tier of the county, through the town of Oxford. The Lafayette, Muncie & Bloomington Railroad (L.M. & B.) achieved this goal in the 1870s. At about the same time, Fowler, the entrepreneurial genius was ready to bring all of the elements of his planning together. Since the L. M. & B. did not pass through the town of Fowler,

[21] B. F. Bowen & Co, *Past and Present of Tippecanoe County, Indiana, Illustrated, Volume II.* B. F. Bowen & Company: Indianapolis, IN, 1909. As reproduced in www.rootsweb.com, P.1; *Benton Review* , May 29, 1969, "Historians Discuss Moses Fowler Life".
[22] Bowen, P. 2.
[23] Ibid., P.3.
[24] Birch., P. 36.

he organized, with several other partners, a short line, the Cincinnati, Lafayette and Chicago Railroad, (C.L.& C.) which would join with the L.M. & B. about midway along the route across the county, at Templeton. From there it would travel north west, adjacent to the town of Fowler and into Kankakee, Illinois. Ultimately the C.L.& C. connected Cincinnati to Chicago, through Lafayette. This massive transportation link became famous as the Big Four Railroad. In a tidy fashion, Fowler's short line and the county-supported L. M. & B. were both completed in 1872. [25] With considerable land holdings and a new railroad line completed, all that was needed to maximize the investments of Moses Fowler, Adam Earl and their partners was the relocation of the county seat.

Meanwhile, all was not peaceful amidst the shady streets of Oxford, Indiana. In the spring of 1873, the county was shocked by the escape of the murdering rascal, James McCollough. While awaiting trial he managed to pry a hole in the deteriorating foundation wall of the county jail, and flee to temporary freedom.[26] Although he was later recaptured, the embarrassing event moved the commissioners to action. They instructed the auditor to employ a competent architect to examine the courthouse and jail with the notion of having them repaired. Although the buildings were only seventeen and thirteen years old, respectively, it appears that they had already achieved a state of dilapidation. [27]

The architect who evaluated the condition of the buildings was highly respected in Chicago and throughout the Midwest. G. P. Randall had designed a host of buildings in the Windy City, including the University Hall at Northwestern University, completed in 1869. He had just finished construction of a statuesque courthouse for Marshall County, Indiana at Plymouth, in 1872. There is no evidence that Moses Fowler had any influence in the selection of this architect, but Mr. Randall's reputation was formidable. His evaluation was brutal. He found the courthouse foundation walls, "hardly in a condition to carry the walls resting upon them." Responding to their desire for repair as a remedy, he commented: "I frankly confess my inability to do this ...the building is a complete wreck from foundation to cupola; ..." Turning his attention to the jail, he remarked: "I shall have to make a report similar to that of the courthouse. The walls of the building... afford hardly any obstructions to the egress of a prisoner ...Every piece and part of the building is insufficient, ... The present [jail] is surely of no account as a place for the safe-keeping of rogues, as you have seen practically demonstrated quite recently."[28] The report was so devastating, that after hearing it, the Board of Commissioners immediately fled to the Town Hall, where the remainder of the session was held. By June, the commissioners decided to order plans for a new courthouse. One month later, plans drawn by G. P. Randall & Co. of Chicago were accepted, with a budget not to exceed $55,000. All of this, as the commissioners thought, to take place in the town of Oxford.

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[25] *Benton Review,* 5/29/1969.
[26] Birch., P. 35.
[27] Battey, P. 242.
[28] Report to the County Commissioners of Benton County, Ind., G. P. Randall, Chicao, March 20, 1873. County Commissioners' Minutes, Volume D., P. 142.

But their plans were not to bear fruit. By September, Moses Fowler, Adams Earl (and their wives), delivered a deed for two lots of land to erect a courthouse and jail at Fowler. This gift was accompanied by a petition for the relocation of the county seat to Fowler, along with $250 in cash -- $100 for the architect's fees and the balance for expenses connected with the assessment of the value of the Oxford property, with an eye to its sale. Chaos resulted. Only two of the three commissioners were present, Henry Robertson (the "father" of the county), and Robert M. Atkinson. The latter immediately resigned, while Robertson and the Auditor, William Snyder proceeded to appoint William Marvin to fill the vacancy. The petitioners protested, declaring that Marvin, "was not appointed a Commissioner according to law, and had no authority to sit as a Commissioner of said county." [29] Nonetheless, in a surprising move, the petitioners withdrew their petition, thus negating an injunction which they had previously obtained. The injunction had restrained the board from letting a contract until the matter of relocation had been settled. But with the petition withdrawn, the truncated board rushed to open bids and award a contract for $55,000, "for the erection of a new courthouse in the town of Oxford." [30]

Why the team of Fowler and Earl chose to withdraw their petition at this time is something of a mystery. What is sure is that their determination to re-locate did not wane. Perhaps they were concerned about the influential Atkinson's reaction. Perhaps they chose to marshal additional forces and wait until after the November elections. Whatever their motives, in December, with new Commissioners favorable to the relocation, a new petition was filed. This time they had achieved an impressive 1,221 signatures. The $250 cash was also offered, as before, along with the deed for the two lots. The new Commissioners were Joseph Perkins, John F. Boswell and Robert M. Atkinson. On a day when Mr. Atkinson was not present, the question of the removal of the county seat was passed and the Auditor was ordered to engage G. P. Randall to prepare plans, specifications and estimates for the new buildings in the new location. Mysteriously, Commissioner Atkinson re-appeared at the next day's meeting.

By the March, 1874 session, the county property at Oxford had been appraised for $6,750. In addition, a generous additional donation of $40,000 toward the cost of the courthouse had been contributed by Moses Fowler and Adams Earl, to be held in trust until needed for the construction.[31] The deed was accomplished. The extra funds provided the means to build a grander edifice at Fowler. (Some figures place the aggregate cost of the new buildings at $85,000.)[32] The magnificent building which was conceived by architect Randall (we assume with the support and encouragement of Moses Fowler) still recalls the ambitions and the vision of these powerful men. The Benton County Courthouse is significant as a memorial to the nineteenth century wealth and industry of entrepreneurs like Moses Fowler. During his rise from farm boy to wealthy land owner and banker, he also earned a place in the history of

[29] Battey, P. 244.
[30] Ibid. P. 245.
[31] Ibid., P. 246
[32] Ibid., P. 247.

Benton and Tippecanoe Counties. With its designation as the new county seat and two magnificent new buildings, Fowler prospered for many years thereafter.

In the judgment of later historians, the county benefited from the new, more central location. It was convenient to more citizens. The environment for conducting county business was greatly improved. The courthouse still stands as the embodiment of high hopes and aspirations for all who live in Benton County. Yet, bitter memories persevere. A local history retells the complaint of a frustrated Oxfordite: "Dear old courthouse, had we let thee stand ...Moses would not have drawn from his huge bosom $40,000, and crushed our budding prospects and taken our capitol from our midst."[33]

Architecture

The Benton County Courthouse is also significant under Criterion C for the quality of its design and craftsmanship and as the work of master architect, Gurdon P. Randall. Mr. Randall was known as an "architect of the old school", capable of designing with a "broad and positive expression"[34]. At the time that the Commissioners in Benton County contacted him, he was well known in both Chicago and the region. His work on the First Baptist Congregational Church, located on North Ashland Avenue in the Near West Side neighborhood of Chicago was (and still is) considered significant. It was designated as a Chicago Landmark in 1982. Originally built as the Union Park Congregational Church, its innovative, amphitheatre-style auditorium was widely influential in church architecture. [35] The project was worthy of note when it was under construction in 1869. The Chicago Tribune issued a small article regarding the building, noting that the auditorium would seat 2,000 people and that the spire would be over 226 feet in height. [36]

Gurden P. Randall was born c. 1820, probably in or near Northfield, Vermont. The latter was his "early home" according to his obituary in *The Inland Architect and Builder.* He studied with the eminent architect Asher Benjamin (1773-1845) in Boston and moved to Chicago at the age of 30, (c. 1850). [37] By 1862, G. P. Randall was considered one of the "leading architects of the city". His work was described in a Chicago Tribune article: "The March of Improvements – The New Buildings of 1861". Among these were his own office (90 Portland Block) and house on W. Washington Street. But he was also completing three additional homes, several stores and two school houses in Chicago. Out of the city, he was designing school houses in LaPorte, Indiana, several locations in Illinois, including completing a huge project at the State Normal University, Bloomington, as well as a church in Waukegan, a residence at Hyde Park and two houses at Lake, Illinois. The aggregate amount of this construction was $279,900, an enormous sum in 1861.

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[33] Birch. P. 38.
[34] *Inland Architect,* October, 1884 (Obituary).
[35] Chicago Landmarks Commission Web Site, First Baptist, June 2007
[36] *Chicago Tribune,* Jul. 20, 1869.
[37] *The Inland Architect and Builder,* Vol. IV, No. 3, October, 1884.

Throughout his career, Mr. Randall was known for the work he performed for schools and colleges. In addition, he compiled a book or catalogue of his designs for such institutional buildings. It included courthouses, universities, academies, school houses, churches as well as dwellings. This appears to first have been published in the early 1860s, but a version was certainly available by 1868. It is probably this latter publication which enabled the Benton County Commissioners to feel confident in his ability to review their buildings and make recommendations. Indeed, he became known for his educational buildings during the decade of the 1860s. In 1862 he was commissioned to design four school houses for the Chicago Board of Education. The same year he completed the Haven School for the Board of Public Works in Chicago at a cost of over $22,000 plus over $11,000 for the land. The four story building was lauded as "probably one of the finest in the country." It contained a Mansard roof, like many of Randall's buildings (including the Benton County Courthouse) influenced by the renaissance of the French Second Empire. [38]

The following year, Mr. Randall designed a much applauded University Building at St. Mary's of the Lake. It was an imposing edifice, 224 by 112 feet in plan, with two 120 foot towers, designed in the "Renascent" style. The Chicago Tribune deemed it a "credit to its designer" and went on to say, "whose reputation as an architect, and especially in designing buildings for educational purposes, has become world-wide." [39] Even discounting the nineteenth century predisposition for exaggeration, it was an impressive recommendation. Mr. Randall went on to design many private and public buildings. Two of his most ambitious works still reside on the campus of Northwestern University: University Hall (1869) and the Music Administration Building (1874). The impressive courthouse in Plymouth, Marshall County, Indiana was completed by 1872. Designed in a combination of classical revival and Second Empire styles, it is an imposing and very pleasing combination of these elements.

In addition to the publication promoting his own work, G. P. Randall became more active in publishing and in civic works during the 1870s. In 1871, he was the author of a small booklet entitled: "The Great Fire of Chicago and its causes. What and What are not fireproof buildings, and how to build them, and suggestions on heating and ventilation."[40] Later, in 1879, he published a series of articles propounding a new system of ventilation, called "Sub-Earth Ventilation" which could be adapted from milk-producing plants. It involved an underground system to bring in fresh air at the ground temperature (50 or 52 degrees F.) and circulate it within hollow walls throughout the building. His enthusiasm for this system overflowed: ..."valuable influences from S.E.V. clearly foreshadow that it is to be a priceless boon to man".[41]

By this time, Randall was highly respected in the community of Chicago architects. As a private citizen, he was a member of a prestigious fraternal organization, church, and neighborhood. He was often called upon, as a "leading architect" to review the work of others.

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[38] *Chicago Tribune*, Sept. 22, 1862.
[39] *Chicago Tribune,* Jan. 30, 1863.
[40] In the collection of Illinois State University Library (Microfilm), Bloomington, Illinois.
[41] *Chicago Tribune,* "Sparks of Science", G. P. Randall essay, July 19, 1879.

In 1869, he was one of three who had been asked to examine the new wings of the court house in Chicago with regard to their stability. (He found nothing to indicate any danger.) [42] Thus, he was certainly considered able to perform such structural examinations a decade later, when he gave similar service to Benton County.

In 1878, he was on another prestigious Chicago committee, this time to report on the work completed for City Hall. Toward the end of his life, in 1883, as a member of the Standing Committee of the Citizens Association of Tenement Houses and the Moral Condition of Their Inmates, he toured "Cheyenne", an Italian immigrant quarter on the south side of Chicago. This was vividly reported in the Tribune. Evidently Randall was impressive, not only for his reputation, but for his girth. To demonstrate the instability of an outside stair, the reporter remarked that Randall, "who is a man weighing 200 lbs, ascended the outer stair with trepidation." Randall's comments were equally impressive: "Human imagination can picture nothing worse" [than the conditions in the tenements]. In 1884, the last year of his life, he authored a publication, the *Book of Designs for School Houses.* This work was mentioned in a report generated for the Michigan Historical Center, Department of History, Arts and Libraries, in September of 2003, entitled: "An Honor and an Ornament: Public School Buildings in Michigan". G. P. Randall is the first of "Key Architects of Michigan's Public School Buildings" to be listed.

Over the course of his professional life, G. P. Randall possibly designed a hundred or more buildings, many of them serving public functions. His reputation as an early, classically oriented Chicago architect was well founded. At his death, the obituaries remembered him as a "maker of God's houses,"[43] with a "reputation for honesty and integrity that was also beyond reproach."[44] Of the many buildings he designed during his career, we have been able to identify five which survive. Perhaps a dozen could be found with more research. Nonetheless, the extant examples are still rather rare. The Benton County Courthouse is one of the better examples of his work. Although it has suffered some changes over the course of its 132 years of existence, it still retains adequate integrity of materials, design and craftsmanship, along with other qualities, which make it eligible for the National Register.

Several key elements of the courthouse proclaim its significance. The form and massing of the building are typical of the exuberant Second Empire style. This is especially seen in the height and size of the various roofs. The use of massive stone at both entrances was intended to imbue a sense of awe in the people who walked up to this symbol of law, order and public government. In this, the architect was certainly successful. The use of a variety of window openings, also helps lead the eye upward, toward the tower-like pavilion on the north side of the building (photos No. 7 and 9). Intimate detailing was carefully planned for the ornate,

[42] *Chicago Tribune,* "The Supervisors", September 25, 1869.
[43] *Chicago Daily Tribune,* September 25, 1884.
[44] *Inland Architect,* October 1884.

combination cornice which highlights both the pavilion and the main roof. This certainly reflects Randall's classical orientation. Finally, the use of the pediment, in the interior woodwork of the court room, as well as on the dormers and entries is a continuing motif which stresses the role of this building as protector of the democratic principals of the county. These motifs recall both Greek and Roman originals, the traditional homelands of democratic principals and western law.

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10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary includes all of the historic Court House square, bounded by E. Fifth Street, S. Grant Avenue, E. Sixth Street, and S. Lincoln Avenue. Within this site, the building includes the historic courthouse and the addition referred to in this document as the Annex as well as the connected Jail. In addition, the property includes the bell from the courthouse tower. The footprint of the building is shown on the attached sketch site map, which includes a scale. Beginning at the south east corner of E. Fifth Street and S. Lincoln Avenue, continue east along the south side of the street, following the curved drive which leads to S. Grant Avenue. Follow the west side of S. Grant Avenue to its juncture with E. Sixth Street and turn west along the north side of the street, continuing to the corner of S. Lincoln Avenue and turn north, continuing along the east side of S. Lincoln Avenue to the place of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The boundary for the nomination encompasses the historic courthouse square. This setting still conveys the sense of the building's relationship to the surrounding land. This square has been reasonably intact since the construction of the courthouse, although its original condition was considerably different (See photo on page 2). Nonetheless, the character of the square has been maintained for at least fifty years and certainly within the period of significance. The square places the courthouse in a distinct physical context and helps establish its distinctive importance as the center of county government, an historic theme.

11. Additional Documentation: Photographs

The following information is the same for all photographs unless otherwise indicated:
1. Benton County Courthouse, 706 E. Fifth Street, Fowler, IN 47944
2. Benton County, Indiana
3. Photographer Camille B. Fife, The Westerly Group, Inc.
4. May, 2007
5. Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology, DNR, 402 W. Washington Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204 (photographic prints); The Westerly Group, Inc, 225 East Main Street, Madison, IN 47250 (original digital images).

PHOTO CAPTIONS

Site Plan

6. Looking northeast from the corner of Lincoln Avenue and Sixth Street toward Courthouse Square.
7. Photo 1 of 30

6.Looking north from E. Sixth Street.
7. Photo 2 of 30

6. Looking north, northwest from E. Sixth Street.
7. Photo 3 of 30

6. Looking west from S. Grant Avenue, showing historic courthouse and annex.
7. Photo 4 of 30

6. Medium Close Up, looking west, showing glass area serving as a link between historic courthouse and new annex.
7. Photo 5 of 30

6. Looking west, southwest from the corner of S. Grant Avenue and E. Fifth Street
7. Photo 6 of 30

6. Looking south, southeast from Fifth Street
7. Photo 7 of 30

6. Looking east, southeast from Lincoln Avenue, showing new, one-story jail, with historic courthouse in background.
7. Photo 8 of 30

6. Looking south from sidewalk in from of Fifth Street entrance to courthouse.
7. Photo 9 of 30

6. Looking north, northeast from courthouse parking toward bell and commercial section of Fifth Street.
7. Photo 10 of 30

6. Looking north from E. Sixth Street toward the passageway which connects the annex link to the new jail.
7. Photo 29 of 30

6. Looking south from E. Fifth Street toward the area where the new jail is connected to the annex via a passageway.
7. Photo 30 of 30

1st & 2nd Floor Plans
6. Down stair entrance to basement from the north side of the courthouse
7. Photo 11 of 30

6. Looking south along the central hall in the first floor of the old courthouse. The door with a segmental arched opening leads to the new annex.
7. Photo 12 of 30

6. View from the annex toward the original courthouse, looking north toward north exit.
7. Photo 13 of 30

6. View looking north in the main hall, toward the north exit.
7. Photo 14 of 30

6. View looking north in the recorder's office toward a large vault and a vault room.
7. Photo 15 of 30

6. Looking north, northwest toward the door to the first floor.
7. Photo 16 of 30

6.Looking due south in the vestibule at the North entrance, toward the stair and door to the hall.
7. Photo 17 of 30

6. Looking north, northwest from inside the "link" toward the original stone entry.
7. Photo 18 of 30

6. Looking north toward the entry from inside the "link"
7. Photo 19 of 30

6. Looking south along the central hall of the annex toward the south entrance.
7. Photo 20 of 30

3rd & 4th Floor Plans
6. Looking south along the west wall of the court room toward the entrance to the conference room, showing original wood work.
7. Photo 21 of 30

6. Looking north toward the judge's bench and the north wall of the court room, showing the niche behind the bench and other details.
7. Photo 22 of 30

6. Looking north along the same wall, toward the north part of the court room.
7. Photo 23 of 30

6. Looking south toward the entry door to the court room, showing the original door surround and other wood work.
7. Photo 24 of 30

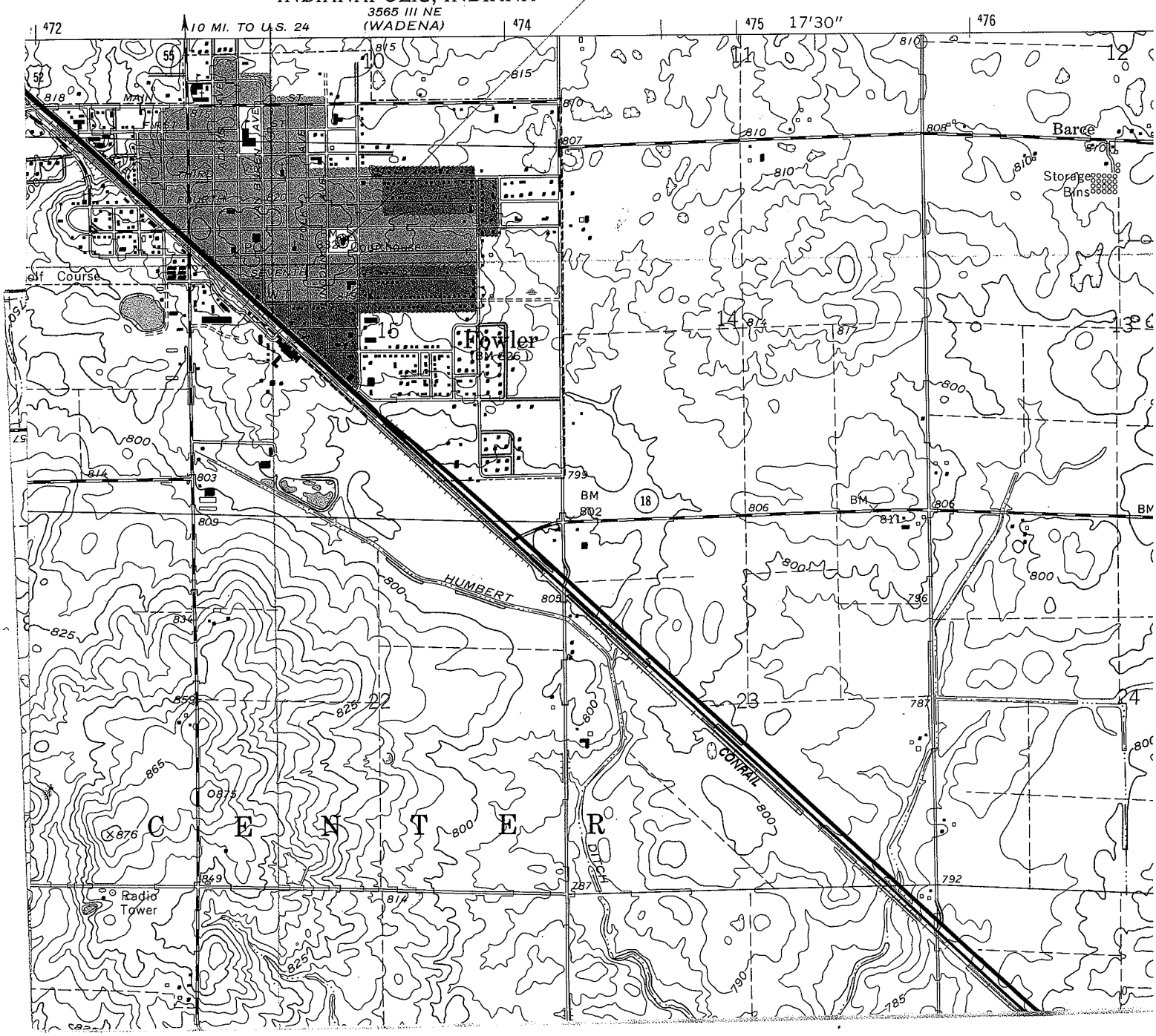
6. Looking south along the central hall of the annex .
7. Photo 25 of 30

6. Fourth Floor (North) looking north, northwest in storage area
7. Photo 26 of 30

6. Looking north toward up stair case to fourth floor and window in north façade
7. Photo 27 of 30

Construction Photograph
6. Looking west from parking area toward the new annex and "link" under construction, c. 1995. (Collection of the Benton County Historical Society).
7. Photo 28 of 30

BENTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE
FOWLER, BENTON COUNTY, IN

STATE OF INDIANA
INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

UTM REFERENCE
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