

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUL 18 1978

DATE ENTERED

DEC 5 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Clinton County Court House

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Public Square

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN
Frankfort

VICINITY OF

STATE
Indiana

CODE
018

COUNTY
Clinton

CODE
23

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Clinton County

STREET & NUMBER
Public Square

CITY, TOWN
Frankfort

VICINITY OF

STATE
Indiana

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Clinton Co. Recorder Office Deed Record #1 page 3

STREET & NUMBER
Courthouse Frankfort

Indiana

CITY, TOWN

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Indiana Sites and Structures Survey

DATE
1972

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS Indiana Department of Natural Resources

CITY, TOWN
Indianapolis,

STATE
Indiana

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Clinton County Courthouse stands on an open square in Frankfort, Indiana.

The structure is a rectangular mass aligned north and south, with a central clocktower flanked by square corner pavilions. The roof is a low hip, truncated by a flat deck and interrupted across its center by a raised gabled bay which connects the central frontispieces of the east and west facades, and serves as the base for the clocktower.

The design of French Second Empire inspiration with Renaissance and Mannerist overtones is executed in Indiana Oolitic limestone. The first and second floors form a smooth rusticated plinth for the third and fourth floors which feature a giant order of Corinthian pilasters on the east and west elevations. Fenestration consists of deeply recessed flat openings on the first two levels and openings with flanking pilasters variously recessed on third and fourth floors. The windows of the top level are read as transom panels on the exterior. The window bays between the Corinthian pilasters are capped with flat lintels; otherwise openings are round-arched with those of the corner pavilions elaborated with compound arches. All sash are original two-over-two double-hung. The central frontispiece of each elevation features a round-arched opening deeply recessed behind flanking Corinthian columns distyle in antis on the second level and a simple square recessed opening beneath. The design is elaborated on the east and west elevations by the fact that the re-entrant corners of the central bay are convex curves and that the first and second levels project from the facade; monumental stairways which once graced all four entrances were removed in the late 1950's.

The roofline is particularly elaborate. The entablature consists of a plain frieze with oversized square modillions beneath a broad eave, the cornice is surmounted by prominent acroteria at its corners and midpoints; a solid parapet with panels and dadoes runs between the attics of the corner pavilions and central frontispieces. The attic stories are decorated with festoons and a bracketed cornice with a panelled frieze. The stepped roofs of the corner pavilions are topped by larger-than-life seated figures; centrally placed pedestals above the frontispieces feature standing figures. Flanking the central pavilions on the east and west elevations are vertically elongated chimneys which rise from round-arched bases and are capped with segmental hoods.

The central clocktower consists of a smooth ashlar base, an elaborate square pavilion, and an attic story surmounted by a dome; the dome's original lantern is now missing. Each elevation of the pavilion has a projecting central bay supported by consoles and flanked by a tall

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narrow window on either side; each of the three elements is surmounted by a low pediment. On the face of each projecting bay is a circular clockface inscribed in a square tablet.

The interior is divided into quadrants by two central hallways, whose crossing creates a rotunda beneath the dome. On either side of the crossing were two spiral stairways which extended from the first to fourth floors; about 1900, one of these was replaced with an elevator. The remaining staircase has a heavy walnut rail with stocky newels and balusters of Neo-Jacobean design. The interior is otherwise decorated in a classical vocabulary, with Roman Doric pilasters flanking openings whose enframements are recessed into the walls; egg and dart mouldings are used in both the woodwork and the panels of the plaster ceilings. The second and third floors have also retained their original Minton tile floors. The major space of the interior is the third floor courtroom, which still retains its Corinthian pilasters and golden oak furniture, although the ceiling has been lowered.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1882 BUILDER/ARCHITECT George W. Bunting

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Clinton County Courthouse is architecturally significant as an example of the work of George Bunting, the most prolific designer of Indiana courthouses. Bunting's earliest known work is the Johnson County Courthouse in Franklin (1879); that design was a hybrid of Neo-Jacobean and French Second Empire influences. One unusual aspect of the Clinton County design is that in the same year, 1881, the architect used the same design, though executed in brick, for the Madison County Courthouse in Anderson (demolished in 1969). The design of the two structures represents Bunting's most elaborate use of French devices; in his next known design, the Wells County Courthouse of 1889, he had dropped the classical vocabulary entirely for the newly-fashionable Richardsonian Romanesque, with its simple outline and rugged masonry.

The Clinton County Courthouse is also notable as the center of government for Frankfort and the surrounding area. The political and governmental associations with the site began in 1830; in that year county officials settled a dispute over whether Frankfort or Jefferson should be the county seat. John Pence offered sixty acres and one hundred dollars if the county seat would be located on his land. The gift was accepted, and Frankfort was selected.

The first courthouse was a clapboard sided structure of hewn logs and was located on the southside of the square. The structure was one and a half stories measuring 18 by 24 feet. This one-room building was replaced in 1838 by a more substantial two story structure housing two offices on the first floor and a courtroom on the second floor. By 1880 the county had long outgrown the second courthouse; however, previous county commissioners had delayed constructing a new building, fearing a political backlash over taxes associated with a new structure.

Riding the crest of a rising economy in the county, the commissioners in 1881 selected George Bunting as the project architect. In 1882 the old courthouse was auctioned off for \$300, and the cornerstone was laid on September 2, 1882, during a ceremony that drew people from a multi-county area.

The firm of Farman and Pearce served as the contractor, finishing the structure for about \$200,000. Politics entered in the construction when the opposition press claimed that defective materials were being used. Many questioned the use of mud cement in the foundation and the cry of "soft cement" was heard throughout the county.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Claybaugh, Joseph History of Clinton County, Indiana. Indianapolis: A. W. Bowan & Co., 1913.

Hermansen, David R. Indiana County Courthouses of the Nineteenth Century. Muncie: Ball State University, 1968.

History of Clinton County Indiana. Chicago: Inter-state Publishing Co., 1886.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY about 2 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Frankfort

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 54 1550 4458872
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Margaret Carter, Recorder
Clinton County Historical Society

ORGANIZATION Court House Recorders Office

DATE February 23, 1976

STREET & NUMBER Public Square

TELEPHONE 654-6614

CITY OR TOWN Frankfort

STATE Indiana

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Joseph Cloud 7/12-78

TITLE Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *William LeVander*
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE 12/5/78
 DATE Dec 9, 1978

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Since its completion, the Clinton County Courthouse has been the focal point for local political and governmental activities affecting all county residents.