

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0668028

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
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**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
Grant County Courthouse
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER *Main*
126 West ~~Maple~~ Street

CITY, TOWN
Lancaster

___ VICINITY OF

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Third

STATE
Wisconsin

CODE
55

COUNTY CODE
Grant 043 ✓

3 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 type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Grant County

STREET & NUMBER
Grant County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN
Lancaster

___ VICINITY OF

STATE
Wisconsin 53813

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Register of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER
Grant County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN
Lancaster

STATE
Wisconsin 53813

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places

DATE
1976
___ FEDERAL STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
State Historical Society of Wisconsin

CITY, TOWN
Madison
STATE
Wisconsin 53706

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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 Grant County Courthouse is the only building occupying Lancaster's courthouse square. A commercial district, the city's central business district, surrounds the square with unusually handsome and well-maintained, primarily-nineteenth-century, storefront buildings.

The three-story courthouse is cross-shaped in plan with brick walls and Lake Superior brownstone trim, belt courses and window pediments. Three types of brick are found in the exterior walls: red clay bricks at the basement, glazed brown bricks at the first story, and light-brown bricks on the upper stories. The straight-forward design uses fluted brownstone pilasters on all four facades to provide a neo-classical feeling that is reinforced by triangular pediments over windows, and other details.

An octagonal glass-and-copper dome dominates the building. Roof ornamentation is also of copper, and all copper in the building has weathered to a characteristic green color. Contemporary accounts reveal the construction of the dome and the copper trim and ornament resulted in a see-saw battle regarding their employment in the building or replacement with galvanized iron and elimination of the dome. Construction began in 1902 with the intent to use iron and build no dome. After the cornerstone was laid, however, the county judge, in a stirring speech defending the dome and copper, inspired a return to the original plans of the architect, Armand Koch. The extra funds required were generated by raising taxes and issuing \$12,000 in bonds.

On the interior, a three-story light well reaches from the ground level to the dome. Light comes through the dome to illuminate the interior, though no stained glass is employed as in the Lafayette County Courthouse nearby. Four Doric columns support the second floor at the corners of the well, and four Ionic columns rise above them to support the third floor. Ornamental iron railings surround the well at the second and third floors, and an open stairway descends from the second floor to the first on center in the middle of the well. On the third floor, murals decorate the four spandrels under the dome.

First floor offices include the county tax assessor, the county nurse, and the headquarters of the Grand Army of the Republic. Second floor offices include the county clerk, the county treasurer, and the county register of deeds. The county court is at the south end of the second floor and the circuit court is on the third floor. All offices have been modernized at various times with tile ceilings and fluorescent lights. The circuit court has a dropped ceiling with 1930s incandescent lighting. The county court has also been modernized, but retains fluted pilasters flanking the judge's bench.

Behind the courthouse a surface parking lot covers the entire width of the south end of courthouse square.

Civil War monuments at the northeast corner of the square include eight small free-standing monuments surrounding one large vertical monument. These monuments, dedicated on 4 July 1867, together comprise Wisconsin Registered Landmark No. 47, "First Civil War Monument," and are identified by a large plaque. At the northwest corner of the square is a raised fountain holding a statue of a Civil War soldier with a rifle.

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" 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 1902 (Cornerstone) BUILDER/ARCHITECT Armand D. Koch (Cornerstone)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Grant County Courthouse is eligible for entry on the National Register in that it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a period of architecture, represents the work of a significant historic architect, and has served as the seat of county government, and therefore civic identity, for three-quarters of a century.

The architect for the building was Armand D. Koch (1870-1931), son of German-born architect Henry C. Koch, an important pioneer Milwaukee architect. The young Koch was educated at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Ecole des Beaux Arts, the latter from 1894 to 1898. In 1902, the year the courthouse was begun, he became a partner in his father's firm which, in 1905, was renamed H. C. Koch and Son. In 1910 he became the firm's sole owner.

Architecturally, the building is an example of the type and quality of relatively abstract neo-classicism found in midwestern county courthouse designs of the first decade of the twentieth century. In contemporary accounts, Koch placed the inspiration for his dome on that of Rome's St. Peter's Cathedral. A cursory comparison between them, however, reveals that this claim was made for the benefit of his local clients. The octagonal glass dome is unusual among Wisconsin courthouses, though not unique. The Grant County example is virtually identical to that of the Oneida County Courthouse (1908) in Rhinelander, designed by Manitowoc architect Christopher Tegen, suggesting the dome was a stock item.

The public square was defined to hold the county courthouse in the Lancaster plat of 1837, the year of the community's selection as county seat. Two previous courthouses, built in 1838 and 1853, occupied the site prior to the current building. Thus the courthouse square has been the civic and commercial center of the community for 140 years.

The nine-element Civil War monument in the northeast corner of the square, identified as Wisconsin Registered Landmark No. 47, is an extremely early such monument. A subscription for its construction began in 1862 and construction was completed in 1867.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAR 19 1980
DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

GRANT COUNTY COURTHOUSE, Lancaster, Grant County, Wisconsin
NRHP April 26, 1978

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 2 PAGE

Correct street address to read 126 West Main Street, Lancaster, WI 53813,
not Maple Street



D. N. Anderson
Historian & Registrar
March 15, 1980