

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	
COUNTY:	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
OCT 31 1972	



**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**Tippecanoe County Court House**

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Public Square**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Lafayette**

STATE: **Indiana**    CODE: **18**    COUNTY: **Tippecanoe**    CODE: **157**

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
**Tippecanoe County**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Public Square**

CITY OR TOWN: **Lafayette**    STATE: **Indiana**    CODE: **18**

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
**Recorder's Office, Tippecanoe County Court House**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Public Square**

CITY OR TOWN: **Lafayette**    STATE: **Indiana**    CODE: **18**

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**William Digby's survey of original town-site**

DATE OF SURVEY: **May 25, 1825**     Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**Recorder's Office, Tippecanoe County Court House**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Public Square**

CITY OR TOWN: **Lafayette**    STATE: **Indiana**    CODE: **18**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER: **OCT 31 1972**

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DATE:

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent  Good  Fair  Deteriorated  Ruins  Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered  Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved  Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Tippecanoe County Court House on the Public Square in Lafayette, Indiana, the third on the same site, was begun in 1881. The contract for its erection had been awarded to Farman & Pearce, a non-local firm, for \$207,999 but Farman died in 1882 before completion of the first floor necessitating a second call for bids to finish the structure. Charles Pearce of the previous partnership was the successful bidder at \$241,000, with Elias Max to be his builder and James F. Alexander superintendent of construction. Both Max and Alexander were local men.

The architectural style of the building reflects the Neo-Classic influence of the times in its departure from the traditional classic style which had dominated American public buildings for a century or more. Its design and plans have been attributed to Elias Max, a local contractor, but recent research indicates this may have been an error. A study of factual events and the political overtones which plagued the planning and construction phase of the building show that in the initial call issued by the Board of Commissioners for both local and non-local architects to submit plans and specifications, those of James F. Alexander, a local architect, were among those submitted. He was, however, unsuccessful in acceptance of his plans.

Alexander, a native of Lafayette, began training in architecture in St. Louis, later graduating from the University of Toronto, and following this formal preparation by some practical experience in Chicago before returning to Lafayette to practice his profession. He specialized in the use of stone in both public and domestic architecture and many of Lafayette's finest houses erected in this period were his work.

With the onset of the second phase of construction when the much heralded "Max Plan" was adopted, it was observed to be identical with those earlier but unsuccessfully submitted by Alexander, except for a few minor details. One tends to conclude that recognition is long overdue the man who probably first conceived the design of this court house, the Lafayette man whose identity as a well qualified architect has been too long shrouded by the indiscriminate title, "Superintendent of Construction".

The laying of the cornerstone, conducted by the Masonic fraternity, took place on October 26, 1882. It was a gala occasion. Completed in 1884, the total cost approximated \$500,000. The shape is that of a large cross, 150 feet square, with corridors from a center rotunda to each of the four sides. A slender dome surmounted by a 14 foot statue of LIBERTY, rises from its top, the whole being supported by the hexagonal clock tower. The overall height from ground level is 92 feet. Beneath each of the four clock faces is a niche containing a 9 ft. female figure in classic form representing one of the four seasons. Other statuary is in the central group of figures (JUSTICE flanked by INDUSTRY and AGRICULTURE) of the east and west pediments which rise at the roof level. Those in the identical north and south pediments portray GEORGE ROGERS CLARK, hero of the old Northwest, GEORGE WASHINGTON, and TCOMSEH, great Shawnee Indian chief of Tippecanoe fame.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**SIGNIFICANCE**

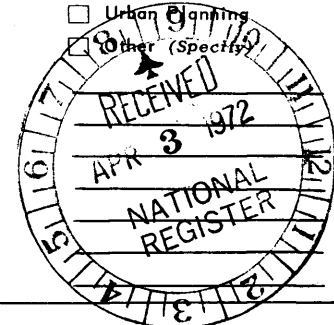
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science              |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture            |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater              |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation       |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |   |  |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The principal building material is stone, supplemented with brick. The interior trim is wood ornately carved. The basement and first floor were finished in red oak, the second and third in ash, all of heart-wood quality. That in the basement has been painted. Wainscoting in the court rooms and hallways was in red oak. Outside doors at each exposure on the main floor are massive carved walnut. Nearly all fire-places have been covered but still remain. The marble tile floors have largely been covered with terrazzo or other present-day materials. The original elevator with its ornately wrought iron cage is still in use, the only one in the building. Two stair-wells mount from the north and south arms of the cross which form the shape of the building. Their heavy iron but gracefully shaped balustrades are matched by a similar railing around the central rotunda at the second and third floor levels. The fourth level is devoted to storage space.

Beginning in 1959 an alteration was begun involving the removal of the center section of the entrance steps at each of the four elevations so as to provide easier access to the basement at street levels. This was completed in 1970. From <sup>time</sup> to time other constructions have usurped hall space but a major alteration took place in 1969 with the re-structuring of the two court chambers to provide additional room for the courts and their dependent offices.

The excellent style of this court house was pointed out to our Tippecanoe County Historical Museum executive, Miss Alameda McCollough, in April, 1960, when Mr. Irvin O. Christiansen of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C., discovered it while touring Indiana in assessment of historical art resources within the state. Trained in architecture, Mr. Christiansen praised its perfection as an example of the Beaux Arts influence which had swept the country by the 1880's, its excellence consisting of the harmonious, skilful and well proportioned blending of the many classical forms which had heretofore dominated architectural style in America. "It is one of the finest I have ever seen. Don't ever let it be torn down!" was his parting admonition.

Dr. David R. Hermansen of the College of Architecture and Planning, Ball State University, in similar praise of its eclectic sources has called attention also to the considerable imagination with which they have been combined in such harmonious proportion, and to the use of the finely carved limestone ornament.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

PAST & PRESENT IN TIPPECANOE COUNTY, Vol. I, p. 156  
by R. P. DeHart

-INVENTORY OF THE COUNTY ARCHIVES OF INDIANA, Historical Records  
Survey, 1941, No. 79, Tippecanoe County, p. 116,117,118

ORIGINAL SPECIFICATIONS, 1883

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

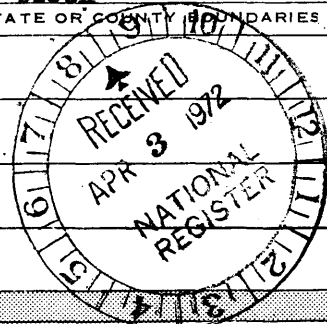
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW.	°	'	"	°	'	"	86°	53'	20"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	40°	25'	05"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

NO UTM  
EX

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **One city block**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE: **Alameda McCollough, former curator**

ORGANIZATION: **Tippecanoe County Historical Association** DATE: **Nov. 4, 1971**

STREET AND NUMBER: **909 South Street**

CITY OR TOWN: **Lafayette** STATE: **Indiana 47901** CODE: **18**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name: John R. Lloyd

Title: State Liaison Officer

Date: October 16, 1972

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Robert M. Utley  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 10/31/72

ATTES: William H. Huntz  
Keeper of The National Register

Date: 10-30-72