

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCERS use only
received MAY 8 1980
date entered JUN 16 1980

1. Name

historic Washington County Courthouse

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Public Square _____ not for publication

city, town Salem _____ vicinity of congressional district Ninth

state Indiana code 018 county Washington code 175

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Washington County

street & number Washington County Courthouse

city, town Salem _____ vicinity of state Indiana

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Washington County Courthouse

street & number Public Square

city, town Salem _____ state Indiana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date _____ federal _____ state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records

city, town _____ state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" 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

Situated in the center of the Salem Public Square, the Washington County Courthouse is an expression of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. The limestone for the building was quarried one mile southwest of Salem, cut on the site, and laid in a coursed ashlar facing over brick bearing walls. The building stands two stories above a raised basement level, with wall dormers lighting the third floor attic area below the decked, hipped roof.

All four sides of the rectangular building are essentially the same, with three main sections: a slightly projecting central pavilion with a gabled wall dormer, flanked by squarish corner sections with crenelated parapets.

The surface of the building is rock-faced from the ground level to the top. This is interrupted between the basement and first floor by a dressed stone water table. Above the first floor windows are shallow dentils below a dressed stone band course. The dentil motif is seen again above the second story windows at the cornice level, this time sandwiched between two narrower band courses. Above the cornice level, a crenelated parapet finishes the corner sections, whereas the central pavilions feature parapeted, gable wall dormers, flanked by paired piers with spherical finials.

All windows in the building are round-arched, with movable doublehung sash, with the exception of three round, fixed windows that appear above the second story windows in the corner sections.

The main entrance on the south elevation is expressed by a projecting arcaded porch, five bays wide. The round arches rest on short columns, with massive Corinthian capitals. The one-story porch terminates in a balustrade with spherical finials topping the piers. A smaller, three-bay version of this porch appears on the north elevation. There are no entrances on the east and west elevations.

The symmetry of the main (south) facade is broken by a five-story clock tower which stands just left of the main entrance. The elements of the tower conform to those of the rest of the building, from the ground up to the cornice line. Here, the dentil trim and dressed stone band courses of the cornice are surmounted by a square third story, which features a band of five narrow round-arched windows. A string course forms the archivolt, and continues around the tower. This first level of the tower culminates in a crenelated parapet, with corner piers topped by spherical finials.

The next level of the tower is octagonal, and features clock faces on four of its sides. Alternating sides feature oval windows. This level terminates in an engaged balustrade with short, round piers that have conical caps. The uppermost level of the clock tower is round, with an open arcade. Inside is the bell, which was recast after it was damaged by lightning in 1934. The entire clock tower ensemble is crowned by a steep conical roof.

The interior features broad corridors and high ceilings. Floors in the basement corridor and first floor lobby are of stone, and iron balusters grace the stairs. Each room contains a fireplace and many of the original furnishings are still in use.

Clock faces are six feet in diameter. The clock mechanism, which survived the lightning damage in 1934, was built by E. Howard and Company, of Boston, and uses 350 pounds of crushed stone for its weights.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1886-88

Builder/Architect McDonald Bros., Louisville, Kentucky

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Washington County Courthouse is architecturally significant as a well-preserved, fine example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style.

This style was used in several of the Indiana courthouses constructed about this time, among them the Blackford, Hancock, Starke, and Fulton County Courthouses. But the Washington County Courthouse appears to be the earliest among these, having been started during the lifetime of Richardson. The present courthouse was the third to be constructed on this site in the Public Square.

Since its construction nearly one hundred years ago, the Washington County Courthouse has served, continuously, as the center of political and governmental activity for Washington County.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Stevens, W.W., Centennial History of Washington County, Indiana; Bowling Co. Press, 1916; Unigraphic, Inc., 1967
 Original blueprints of Courthouse, Stevens Museum, Salem, Ind.
 The Republican Leader, Salem newspaper article; Salem the Center of a Prosperous Community, Unpublished MS's, Stevens Museum, Salem, Ind. June 7, 1929

10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreege of nominated property 200 x 200 feet - approximately 0.92 acre.

Quadrangle name Salem

Quadrangle scale 1 : 24,000

UMT References

UTM NOT VERIFIED

A

1	6	5	7	8	3	0	0	4	2	7	3	1	8	5
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated Courthouse is centered on the 200' x 200' Public Square. An 80' wide street circles the Square, (as shown in original platt of Salem). It is intersected N. & S. by Hwy. 135, and E. and W. by Market Street. This nomination includes the Public Square, as indicated in the original plat of Salem.

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 Judith C. Hedrick

Chamber of Commerce

organization Community Betterment Committee date June 22, 1979

street & number R. 3, Brookside telephone 812/883-5166

city or town Salem state Indiana 47167

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Joseph D. ...*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date April 22, 1980

For HCRS use only

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

W. Ray ... date 6-16-80
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: *W. Ray ...* date 6/12/80
 Chief of Registration