

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAR 28 1978
DATE ENTERED MAY 10 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 Hamilton County Courthouse Square
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER *Corner of Loggan, 8th, 7th & Courthouse Sq*
Public Square
CITY, TOWN Noblesville VICINITY OF 5th
STATE Indiana CODE 018 COUNTY Hamilton CODE 057 ✓

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"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Hamilton County
STREET & NUMBER Courthouse
CITY, TOWN Noblesville VICINITY OF STATE Indiana

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Hamilton County Recorders Office, Auditors Office
STREET & NUMBER Courthouse
CITY, TOWN Noblesville STATE Indiana

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Indiana Sites and Structures Inventory
DATE 1972
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Department of Natural Resources
CITY, TOWN Indianapolis STATE Indiana

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The courthouse square in Noblesville is a green presently occupied by two structures - the Hamilton County Courthouse on the east and the Hamilton County Jail on the southwest corner. Both are Second Empire Style structures built of red pressed brick, trimmed with Indiana limestone, and crowned by mansard roofs.

The present jail is the third such structure to occupy the square; its form consists of two distinct parts, an ell-shaped brick residence with a square tower at its vertex and a square cellblock constructed of limestone to the rear (north) of the residence. The wings of the two story residence are two bays wide and three and four bays long, respectively, with the long leg parallel to the south side of the square; the three story tower is two bays square. The elevations consist of a foundation and quoins of rusticated limestone, windows of two-over-two double-hung sash capped by low stone pediments, and a cornice with modillions over rectangular panels set between brackets. The concave curve of the slate mansard roof above still remains one dormer on the south elevation. The windows of the tower differ only on the third floor where they are paired by a central mullion and capped with round-arched stone lintels; the cornice and mansard roof of the tower have been removed. The original porch, in the angle between the wings, has survived; the entrance, in its base of the tower, has a modern door.

The cellblock to the rear has simple walls of smooth rusticated limestone punctuated by simple punched openings; the roofline has a bracketed eave and a straight mansard roof covered in slate.

The jail has been altered a number of times. In 1940 a two-car garage was added to the east side, and new cells replaced the old cell blocks. The old sheriff's residence has been made over into the sheriff's office. The final major change other than routine maintenance was the removal of most of the dormer windows and tower roof, in the 1950's.

The courthouse is a three story rectangular mass aligned north and south, with a straight-pitched mansard roof and a clocktower at the crossing of the central axes. On the east and west elevations, three central bays project to form a frontispiece; these are roofed with a convex mansard roof, as are the central bays on the south elevation. The facades are punctuated by limestone Corinthian pilasters used to define pavilions at the corners and central bays; limestone is also used for the classical enframements of the windows which are capped by segmental arches on the first floor, flat or pedimented lintels on the second, and the architrave of the main entablature above the third floor. The entablature consists of a plain architrave with horizontal mouldings and a crown mould on the cornice; the roof is now an expanse of shingles devoid of the dormers, cresting and metal curbs which it originally displayed.

The tower consists of two stories on a square base, with a square domical roof. The walls are covered with metal stamped to simulate ashlar masonry with rusticated horizontal joints. The upper tower story has clock faces set in each of the four sides while the lower story has bents. Engaged columns flank the vents, and simple pilasters flank the clock faces.

The major exterior change to the courthouse was the removal of the dormer windows, statuary, and chimneys in 1937. Other changes include outside basement entrances (1911), marble wainscoating added to the first and second floors (1903), and coal storage bin and restroom entrances to the basement (1939).

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 Jail 1875-1876
 Courthouse 1877-1879

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Jail - W.R. Parsons
 Courthouse - Edwin May

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Hamilton County Courthouse Square is a good example of the public squares that were common in the rural Indiana county seats. In addition to its architectural merit, the complex derives significance from a trial that had important political ramifications. When many public squares are giving way to modern city-county buildings and parking lots, the Hamilton County Complex is a reminder of an era when counties strove to surpass their neighbors in the elegance of public buildings.

The Hamilton County Courthouse Square is significant for its representation of the Second Empire Style of architecture in public structures. The courthouse has been called, "One of the most lucid expressions of the Classical French Renaissance made to have been constructed in the Midwest during the nineteenth century." (D.R. Hermansen, Indiana County Courthouse of the Nineteenth Century (Muncie, 1968), p. 18).

The public square dates back to the platting of Noblesville in 1823. The county first made use of the site in 1826 when it located a log dungeon measuring 21 by 14 feet on the north-west corner. The next structure was a post and beam courthouse built in 1831; it was one and a half stories measuring 32 by 18 feet. This building replaced the first county courthouse which was a double log cabin located off the square. The third courthouse, a 45 foot square brick structure with two stories, was constructed in 1837; and a new brick jail and sheriff's residence was added in 1853.

In a major building campaign in the 1870's the county commissioners replaced both the jail and courthouse. The existing jail and sheriff's residence was constructed between 1875 and 1876. The architect was W. R. Parsons, and the contracting firm was Williams, Giger, and Durfee. Although little is known about Parsons, Edwin May who designed the existing county courthouse, is more notable. May was a Bostonian who was one of the first professional architects to practice in Indiana. He arrived in the state during the 1850's and was important at a time when self-taught master builders were beginning to give way to younger men with formal architectural training. May is particularly known for his work with courthouses; he designed structures at Brookville, Fort Wayne, Greensburg, Shelbyville, Sullivan, and Vincennes. In the case of the Hamilton County Courthouse, the fidelity of the finished product to the original design may be questionable. May became entangled in a bitter dispute with the county commissioners over the time required to complete the building. May resigned from the project, sued the commissioners, and finally settled out of court for \$2,200 for his services.

The jail and courthouse are associated with a number of local historical events and at least one trial that drew national attention. In the 1920's a wave of intolerance swept the country much like the McCarthyism of the 1950's. One result was the rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan, and Indiana was one of the strongholds of the new Klan. In the early twenties Indiana

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Campbell, Frank S. The Story of Hamilton County, N.P., 1962.
 Haines, John F. History of Hamilton County, Indiana. Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen & Co., 1915.
 Helm, T.B. History of Hamilton County, Indiana. Chicago; Kingman Brothers, 1880.
 Hermansen, David R. Indiana County Courthouses of the Nineteenth Century. Muncie: Ball State University, 1968.
 Shirts, Augusta Finch. Primitive History of Hamilton County, Indiana. n.p. 1901

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.8 acres

UTM REFERENCES

see continuation sheet
LABORERS 4/5/78

D 1,6	5,8,4,0,5,0	4,4,3,3,1,6,0	A 1,6	5,8,4,1,6,0	4,4,3,3,1,6,0
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
B 1,6	5,8,4,1,6,0	4,4,3,3,0,7,0	C 1,6	5,8,4,0,5,0	4,4,3,3,0,7,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary for the historic property begins on the north at the intersection of the centerline of Logan Street with the centerline of 8th Street. It follows the centerline of Logan Street east to the intersection of the center line of 9th Street. The boundary then runs south along the 9th Street centerline to the intersection of the centerline of Conner Street; west along the Conner Street centerline to the intersection of the 8th Street centerline; and finally north along the centerline of 8th Street to the point of origin.

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

Kenton Craig Ward

ORGANIZATION

DATE

January 1976

STREET & NUMBER

106 Waterman Drive

TELEPHONE

(317) 773-1704

CITY OR TOWN

Noblesville

STATE

Indiana

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Joseph P. Clark

TITLE Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

3-10-78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Charles A. Herring

DATE

5-10-78

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

Charles W. Cole

DATE

4-18-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

Grand Dragon David C. Stephenson controlled state politics through his dictatorship of the Klan. With a strangle hold on the state Republican machine, Stephenson forced the two senators to adopt a friendly attitude to him, was able to elect his candidate for governor (Ed Jackson), and harbored aspirations to become a U.S. Senator. His dictatorship over the state seemed impossible to challenge until April, 1925, when he was charged with the murder of a clerk, Madge Oberholtzer, whom he had savagely assaulted.

Stephenson's trial at Noblesville drew national attention. His conviction and sentence to life imprisonment marked the start of the Klan's decline in Indiana and the nation. Two years later Governor Jackson was indicted for bribery, and although he was acquitted on a technicality, his political career was over. Publication of the corrupt practices and debauchery of Klan leaders caused the public to turn away from the Klan.

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Booth, Edgar A. The Mad Mullah of America. Columbus, Ohio: Boyd Ellyson, 1927.
Busch, Francis X. Guilty or Not Guilty. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1952.
Butler, Robert. So They Framed Stephensen. Huntington, Indiana: Robert A. Butler, 1940.
Leibowitz, Irving. My Indiana. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964.