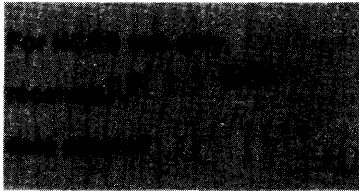


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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



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

1. Name

historic LaGrange County Court House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Detroit Street ___ not for publication

city, town LaGrange ___ vicinity of congressional district 4th

state Indiana code 018 county LaGrange code 087

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input 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:

4. Owner of Property

name County of LaGrange, Indiana

street & number Detroit Street

city, town LaGrange ___ vicinity of state Indiana 46761

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder's Office, LaGrange County Court House

street & number Detroit Street

city, town LaGrange ___ vicinity of state Indiana 46761

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Indiana Historic Sites & Structures Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1972 ___ federal state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Indiana Department of Natural Resources

city, town Indianapolis ___ vicinity of 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 LAGRANGE COUNTY COURTHOUSE stands on a tree covered square in LaGrange, Indiana. The 1878 structure is a rectangular mass, aligned east and west, with a central clocktower flanked by square corner pavilions. A low hipped-roof covers the main portion of the building. There are mansard roofs with straight sides over the square corner pavilions. The central pavilion on all four facades are capped with pediments. The clocktower has a gold painted domical roof, with roof cresting and a smaller bell tower. The peak of the bell tower is 125' above the ground. The bell tower contains the original 1879 Seth Thomas clock and bell still in working condition.

The design of the two-story courthouse is of Georgian and French Second Empire inspiration. The 65' wide x 101' long building is made up of common bond red brick separated from the rusticated limestone foundation by a sandstone sill. The east entrance features paired Roman Doric Order columns.

Brick pilasters outline the five bays on all four facades. A belt course runs around the entire building. The belt course elevation coincides with the second floor window sill level.

The entablature consists of a square modillion frieze and small brackets beneath a broad eave.

The east and west entrances have semi-circular fan lights. The east entrance has double glass paneled doors.

The windows are tall double-hung, with exterior storm windows. The semi-circular masonry window openings have eyebrow-like window heads with pronounced keystones. There are pedimented dormers on the mansard and domical roofs. The clocktower has five porthole windows and a pair of arched louvered openings on each of the four sides.

Alterations to the exterior of the Courthouse have been slight. Entrances to public restrooms have been added on the north and south sides, and a small storage area has been located over the outside basement stairs at the rear. These additions are all below the first floor level.

The interior is largely original. The Court Room ceiling has been lowered; restrooms have been added; and a glass partition has been placed across the west end of the second floor hall.

The first floor is divided into equal halves by a central hallway that runs east to west. Offices occupy the first floor. The stairs connecting the main floors are cast iron, and many of them are curved. The stairs from the Clerk's office to the Court Room is a complete spiral.

The Circuit Court Room occupies the entire east end of the second floor. Other rooms on the second floor serve the various court officers and jurors when court is in session.

Woodwork throughout the building is of walnut alternating with ash; windows have interior folding shutters. All window and door hardware is of cast brass in an attractive designs. The main and upper halls are floored with blocks of black and white marble in a diamond pattern.

Also of significance are the original wlanut and ash counters which remain in the building, although two have been moved to different offices. Also original are several walnut tables, oak chairs, and the benches in the main hall and courtroom. The speaking tube system is no longer used but is still partially intact.

Although the courtyard no longer contains the traditional bandstand, or the iron fence which once surrounded it, there are stately maple trees and a hitching rail along the entire west side which is used regularly by the Amish of the county. A war memorial and cannon are also located in the courtyard.

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 1878–1879 **Builder/Architect** Thomas J. Tolan

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Located in the center of LaGrange County, the Courthouse has been a hub of local politics and government for nearly 100 years.

The architecture of the LaGrange County Courthouse has local significance. The architect was T. J. Tolan and Sons, of Fort Wayne, a firm that was prolific in the design of Indiana courthouses of which only about half of a dozen still exist. The design is of Georgian and French Second Empire inspiration. Basic plans for the courthouse were drawn by Samuel Shepardson, County Auditor.

Charles Rosseker and John Begue, of Fort Wayne, received the contract for the construction work with a low bid of \$46,700. The cornerstone was laid August 15, 1878. Work was interrupted in March 1879 due to financial difficulties of the contractors. Andrew Ellison, a local lawyer who had gained a grudging public esteem during the Regulator period for defending some accused counterfeitters and horsethieves, was appointed an agent by the County to manage the contractors' finances until the work was finished in November, 1879. Total cost of the building was \$71,675 including a Seth Thomas clock, which still operates.

There are many details which give the courthouse architectural significance. The stairs connecting the main floors of the building are of iron cast made in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Many of them are curved, the one from the Clerk's Office to the Court Room being a complete spiral. Also of significance are the original walnut and ash counters which remain in the building. Also original are several walnut tables, oak chairs, and the benches in the main hall and courtroom. All original doors, windows, and the woodwork are in good condition. The woodwork is also of walnut and ash and quite striking in appearance. No longer used, but still partially intact is the speaking tube system throughout the building. While a number of nineteenth century Indiana courthouses remain, few are as well preserved on the interior as is the LaGrange County Courthouse.

Careful planning 100 years ago created a building which is still functioning efficiently with a minimum of changes. The Courthouse is aesthetically pleasing in appearance and has been well cared for by county officials.

9. Major Bibliographical References

"History of LaGrange County Indiana Court House"
 by Gene Plasterer, LaGrange, Indiana, written 1974 (Copy enclosed)
 "Counties of LaGrange and Noble - Indiana - Historical and Biographical"
 by Weston A. Goodspeed et al., F. A. Battey and Company, Chicago, 1882

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property 1.8
 Quadrangle name LaGrange, Indiana **ACREEAGE NOT VERIFIED** quadrangle scale 1:24000
 UMT References

A	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>6</u> <u>31</u> <u>70</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>1</u> <u>1</u> <u>30</u> <u>0</u>	B					
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing		
C				D					
E				F					
G				H					

Verbal boundary description and justification

The entire block twenty (20) in the original plat of the town of LaGrange being 280½' square, bounded on the north by Michigan Street, on the east by Detroit Street, SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

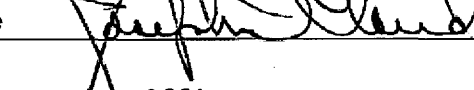
11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard C. Tjarks, Director J. Scott McKibben, President
 organization LaGrange County Historical Society, Inc. date June 26, 1978
 street & number R. R. 1 telephone (219) 463-2632
 city or town LaGrange state Indiana 46761

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 
 title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer date 5-12-80

For HCRS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
 Keeper of the National Register Sally G. Oldham date 7/17/80
 Attest: W. Ray Luce date 7/14/80
 Chief of Registrations

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

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



Continuation sheet 1

Item number 10

Page 1

on the south by Spring Street, and on the west by High Street consisting of 1.8 acres more or less. Copy of original plat and copy of transfer of west half of said property to County in 1877 included.