

THE ALLEN COUNTY COURTHOUSE PRESERVATION TRUST PRESENTS  
A WALKING TOUR OF

# THE ALLEN COUNTY COURTHOUSE



THE ALLEN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND THE COURTHOUSE PRESERVATION TRUST WELCOME YOU TO THE ALLEN COUNTY COURTHOUSE.

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## RESTORATION

- On September 23, 2002, one hundred years after the original dedication, the restored Allen County Courthouse was rededicated. Like the original dedication, there were speeches, music and a gala celebration.
- The courthouse has been designated as a national landmark by the federal government and is regarded as one of the five finest courthouses in the United States.
- The original building and art work cost \$817,000 in 1902. The restoration cost \$8.6 million. The courthouse green cost an additional \$2.2 million which included purchase of the land, demolition of the existing buildings and building the park.
- The restoration project included:
  - ★ Restoration of famed muralist Charles Holloway's murals in the rotunda dome to their original state.
  - ★ Cleaning of the stained glass and the repair of its steel framing in the rotunda dome.
  - ★ Restoration of each of the four courtrooms on the third floor, including their glass domes, art work and gilded ceilings.
  - ★ Restoration of the ceiling light fixtures in each of the four main courtrooms.
  - ★ Repair and replacement of the damaged faux marble, called scagliola, in hallways and courtrooms. The application of a special cleaning process to the white marble in the halls and stairways.
  - ★ Repainting of the magnificent ornate ceilings throughout the building.
  - ★ Restoration of the clocks in the courtrooms, in the hallways and the installation of new mechanisms for the four large outside clocks located above the rotunda.
  - ★ Refurbishing of Lady Liberty and restoring her to the top of the courthouse.

## THE COURTHOUSE

The courthouse **cornerstone** was laid in 1897. The building was partially occupied in 1900 and officially dedicated in 1902.

The exterior construction is of **Blue Bedford Indiana limestone** with **Vermont granite** columns at each entrance.

The interior is of **Italian carrera marble**, plaster and an imitation marble called "scagliola." **Scagliola** is made from a hard gypsum compound which includes marble dust and involves using a unique coloring process. The material is then sanded and polished to a high gloss. There are 28 colors of scagliola and 24 patterns in the courthouse.

One art expert has declared that the quality and color variety of the scagliola in the Allen County Courthouse is rivaled only by the Reform Club in London, England.

Today only a few artisans worldwide know how to make and repair scagliola. The Preservation Trust called in David Hayles from England to do the replacement and repair work on the courthouse scagliola.

The **encaustic floor tiles** were made by the then new process for creating inlaid designs invented by Herman C. Mueller (1854-1941) and Karl Langenbeck.

Throughout the building, the gray and white materials are real Italian marble and the colored materials, including the columns, are scagliola.

In a 1971-75 project the courthouse was air conditioned, new windows and doors installed and the building's heating, plumbing and electric updated.

## TO BEGIN THE TOUR

Enter the building from the park side. As you move through the halls and courtrooms note the design work on the **encaustic floor tiles**, the intricate plaster work on the **walls** and ornate painted designs and gold and silver gild work on the **ceilings**.

On the backside of the southeast rotunda column is a **portrait of Perry A. Randall** (1847-1916). He was a founding vice-president of the Jenney Electric Company, predecessor to the local division of the General Electric Company. He was prominent in local affairs and was active in

promoting the building of the present courthouse. He was likely responsible for courthouse being built with electric lighting and elevators.

A short distance away in front of the north elevator the **cornerstone to the prior 1861 courthouse** is embedded in the wall.

Moving to the center of the building, you get a great view of the **rotunda**. The view of the stained glass dome is one of the most impressive parts of the building. The round opening through the second floor is set-off by the square opening of the third floor. This sight is equally as impressive looking down from the upper floors to the patterned tiles on the main floor.

The south end of the first floor is mostly **new auxiliary courtrooms**. On the north end are the **Sheriff's offices**. In addition to being the county's police department, the Sheriff is a court officer responsible for serving court papers, enforcing court orders and bringing prisoners from the jail to court.

In a niche in the northwest corner of the rotunda is the **old master clock**. It once used air impulses to regulate thirty-two clocks throughout the building and the four outside clocks in the tower. The system deteriorated and the clocks were electrified some time ago. The restoration project restored the clock faces and installed new mechanisms. The new mechanisms are synchronized with a space satellite to keep accurate time.

Moving to the West or Calhoun Street entryway you should note the impressive ceiling restoration with its vivid rose and green colors. On the north stairway landing is a **portrait of Samuel Hanna**. He was Allen County's first judge and the first postmaster. On the opposite landing is the **portrait of Colonel John Allen**. Allen County was named for Colonel Allen of Kentucky who aided in the defense of Fort Wayne during the war of 1812. He was killed January 22, 1813 in the battle of Raisin River in Michigan.

## SECOND FLOOR

Proceed up the Grand stairway to the second floor and to the well of the rotunda. Directly across the rotunda is the **Family Relations Court**. This courtroom, like all of the others, may be entered any time, but

do so quietly. Occasionally it may be locked because a closed juvenile matter is being heard. This room is interesting because it was originally the County Commissioners' hearing room. The judge's bench is the old Commissioners' bench. You will note that it is wide enough to seat the three county commissioners. In the paneling behind the judge's bench is a carved seal of the State of Indiana.

At the south end of the second floor are the **judicial offices** of the Family Division of the Superior Court.

At the north end of the second floor are the **Court Clerk's offices**. The Clerk is in charge of the court records and all papers filed with the court. The Clerk also issues marriage licenses and collects child support payments.

### THIRD FLOOR

Returning to the stairway, you can see why it is called the **grand stairway**. It is of white Italian marble. At the middle landing is the building's **dedication plaque**. Above the plaque is a large art glass window. The figure above the window on the left represents the agriculture of Allen county and the figure on the right represents the industry of Fort Wayne. Looking straight up to the ceiling directly above this landing you will see the very ornate plaster work and the stained glass coverings for the stairway lights.

Proceeding to the third floor, you will again go to the **well of the rotunda**. Looking down, you get a great view of the tile work on second floor and the main floor. Looking up, you see the **murals** over the great arches representing on the north side "**Law and Order**," on the west "**War**," on the south "**Despotism**," and on the east "**Joy and Peace**."

The dark colors of "War" on the West Wall are contrasted with the light colors of "Joy and Peace" on the East wall. The mural of "Despotism" has the same background as "Law and Order" on the opposite North wall except that "despotism" is darker and is in the fall of the year and "Law and Order" is lighter and is in the spring.

The murals were painted by Charles Holloway (1859-1941) of Chicago, Illinois. Holloway won a gold medal for art at the 1900 Paris Exposition. Mr. Holloway is one of the leading artists in the newly rediscovered "Chicago School" of muralists. Our murals are regarded as outstanding examples of his work.

These murals had been seriously compromised by prior "preservation" attempts and the glue holding them in place was loosening due to water problems. They were about to fall to the main floor. These

murals were restored, not repainted. What you see is the original work of the artist. The restoration was done under the supervision of Perry Huston who had worked on the restoration of the murals in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. The cost of the restoration of the murals was \$1.4 million and the repair work was done a square inch at a time. It took more than two years to complete the restoration of the murals.

Looking to the rotunda ceiling, you get a closer look at the restored **stained glass** in the dome. Just below the stained glass you can see a balcony with a black railing running around the dome. It is no longer open to the public.

Take note of the **restored ceilings** in the hallways on the third floor. Over the years, most of the courthouse ceilings and decorations had been painted over with flat wall paint. The ceiling designs and the gold and silver gilding are recreations of the original designs and gilding.

The third floor is the main court floor. There are four courtrooms on this floor and each is decorated differently. These courtrooms are open to the public. Enter quietly through the rear doors.

### SUPERIOR COURT ONE

The four courtrooms are located in the center of the building with two on each side of the rotunda. Start in **Superior Courtroom One** at the south end of the hall that runs next to the main stairway. This room is decorated in dark green scagliola with a **stained glass** dome. The **bas-reliefs** represent the government, industry, the arts and the sciences. The easiest to identify are the bas-reliefs depicting astronomy (a man seated next to a globe and children looking through a telescope) near the back on the north side and music (a lady seated at an organ) near the front on the south side. The bas-reliefs were created by Wm. Barth (1866-1915) and Robert J. Staak (1863-1942). They were experts in sculpturing and wood carving. They came to Fort Wayne in 1898 after doing work on the buildings at the Chicago World's Exposition 1893. All of the **woodwork** in this courtroom is the original mahogany, except for the counsel tables.

The courthouse originally had **skylights** in the roof that allowed natural light to flow into each of the four courtrooms through the glass domes and ceilings. The skylights in the roof have long since been covered over. The restoration has cleaned and back lighted the domes or ceilings in each of the four main courtrooms so that you can now see the full beauty of the stained glass colors.

The original **light fixtures** in Superior One and in the Circuit Courtroom had been removed sometime ago and lost. In a lucky break, the architectural firm, MSTD & Associates, was able to locate the company that made the original fixtures, the Stewart Iron Works Co. of Covington, Kentucky. It was further discovered that they still had the original molds to recreate the fixtures.

### SUPERIOR COURT TWO

This court is located on the south side of the rotunda. Enter through the rear center door. This room has a **stained glass ceiling**. The scagliola in the courtroom is much brighter. It is decorated in gold and black scagliola. On the wall just above the judge's chair is a painting of the official **seal of the State of Indiana**. It shows a setting sun (symbolizing the westward movement of the country), a buffalo (American Bison) and a woodsman clearing the land. At the opposite end of the room, above the door you just entered, is a painting of the seal of Allen County showing a sheaf of wheat symbolizing unity and plenty.

The distinctive features of this room are the murals. These murals have been recreated from the originals. The south mural depicts the 1794 **Battle of Fallen Timbers** in which General Anthony Wayne decisively defeated the Indians and forced the British to withdraw the last of their forts from American territory. The original was painted by Florian Piexotto (1870-1910) of New York. Mr. Piexotto was a member of the Academie Julian of Paris, France. The north mural depicts the Indians and General Wayne **signing the Treaty of Greenville** in 1795. The treaty made peace with the Indians after their defeat in the Battle of Fallen Timbers. The treaty opened the territory to settlement. The smaller east mural depicts the **perilous ride of William Oliver** during the War of 1812 to bring word to the American Army garrison at Fort Wayne that help was on the way. The murals on the north and east walls have been attributed to Charles Holloway who painted the murals in the rotunda. However there is doubt because the style differs from his other work.

The murals in Courtroom Two are reproductions. The originals could not be restored because numerous over paintings had destroyed the original work. Because of the over-paintings, the restorers could not be certain about the content of the original work. From the last over painting, the restorers changed the full headdress of the plains Indians to those of the worn by the Indians of the Midwest. The plains Indian tepees were replaced with the wigwams of the Northwest Territory.

The bas-relief panels on the walls under the murals depict important events in the history of Allen County. These bas-reliefs were created by Wm. Barth and Robert Staak.

### 17 SUPERIOR COURT THREE

This courtroom is located on the north side of the rotunda. Enter through the center door at the rear. It is decorated in various shades of pink and cream scagliola. Like courtroom two, this room also has a stained glass ceiling. On the wall just behind the judge's chair is a carving of an American eagle representing the federal government. The bas-reliefs represent the Indians of the Northwest Territory. The center bas-relief on the south side depicts the burial of Chief Little Turtle with full military honors. The bas-reliefs in this courtroom were done by M.J. Doner of Chicago, Illinois.

### 18 THE CIRCUIT COURT

This courtroom is the most impressive of the four main courtrooms. This courtroom is located at the north end of the hallway. The outstanding feature of this room is the stained glass dome. Its backlighting brings out its colors and shows its full beauty.

The murals in the Circuit Courtroom were originally painted by Carl Guthertz (1844-1907) of Washington, D.C. He was born in Switzerland. Mr. Guthertz was a renowned muralist and portrait painter and is noted for the murals and frescos he created in the Library of Congress, including the ceiling of the House Reading Room. Unfortunately, the original murals could not be saved because of damage caused by bad prior restoration work. However, they have been meticulously reproduced from photographs and the artist's sketches of the original work.

As one sits in this courtroom facing the judge, the artist intends you to see in the murals the legal aspects of the law. You see the Roman Emperor and law giver Justinian and the Old Testament lawgiver Moses handing down the strict rules of the law. The cathedral of St. Sofia is behind Justinian and the temple of Solomon is behind Moses. The judge looking in the other direction sees the murals depicting the divine inspiration of the law with angels imploring justice, wisdom and mercy.

Guthertz's mural on the north wall depicts "Justice Prominent." Lady Justice has an angel on one side protecting her from disorder, crime, anarchy and injustice and an angel on her other side extending an open hand to the law abiding.

His mural on the south wall depicts the "Court as Arbitrator" with the court

acting between those seeking protection on the one side and the forces of destruction and passion on the other side.

These murals and the murals in Courtroom Two were recreated by Evergreene Painting Studios of New York City.

Among the outstanding features of this courtroom are the columned pediments at each end. The figures on the pediments represent the four seasons. At the west end above the judge's bench are the seasons of autumn and winter and on the pediment at the back are the seasons of spring and summer. The four bas-reliefs on the west wall on either side of the judge's bench depict restraint, wisdom and justice, truth and strength, and the power to relieve and set free. The bas-reliefs on the south wall represent war, those on the north wall represent peace and those in the rear represent hunting, horticulture, fishing, agriculture and pioneer life. The bas-reliefs in this courtroom were done by Wm. Barth & Robert Staak.

### COURTHOUSE ARCHITECT

The architect for the courthouse was Brentwood S. Tolan (1855-1923) of Fort Wayne. He was also the architect for the Indiana courthouses in the towns of LaPorte (1882) and Columbia City (1888). He and his father Thomas J. Tolan (1831-1883) were the architects for the Indiana courthouses in the towns of Lagrange (1878), Rockville (1879) and Warsaw (1882). The Lagrange and LaPorte courthouses are of brick construction. The others are of the renaissance limestone construction similar to the Allen County Courthouse. Thomas and Brentwood Tolan were also the architects for the red brick French Second Empire and Italian Renaissance Revival style courthouse in Van Wert, Ohio (1874).

### OUTSIDE OF COURTHOUSE

Do not miss the opportunity to examine the outside of the courthouse. The inscriptions such as "The law hateth wrong," "Justice the Hope of all who suffer, the dread of all who wrong," etc. were selected to inspire. Above the North and South entrances to the building are busts of important persons in the history of Allen County and the nation: Indian Chiefs Tecumseh and Little Turtle, Washington, Lafayette, General Wayne and the County's namesake Colonel John Allen. Also, near the top of the north and south entrances are life-sized dummy owls placed there in a futile attempt to scare away the pigeons.

Near the top of the building on the north, east and west sides are bas-reliefs of important persons in the history of the nation and state. On the west side of the building are bas-reliefs inscribed with the names of each of the townships of Allen County.

The terra cotta brick dome was repaired and covered with copper in 1994. The statue on the top of the dome is Lady Liberty. She is thirteen feet eight inches tall and made of copper. The statue rotates to face the wind. As part of the restoration project, Miss Liberty was taken down, refurbished by the WPC Roofing & Sheet Metal Co. of Fort Wayne and restored to the top of the courthouse in 1998.

### COURTHOUSE GREEN

This was a project of the City of Fort Wayne and the Preservation Trust. The city purchased the land and the Trust raised the money for the demolition of the buildings, its design and its construction.

Note the water fountains and the city's dedication plaque in front of the center fountain. The bas-reliefs in the park were duplicated from the artist's prototypes found in the courthouse basement during the renovation. The park is intended to be a quiet place from which to view the courthouse with no monuments or statutes.

### RESTORATION PROJECT

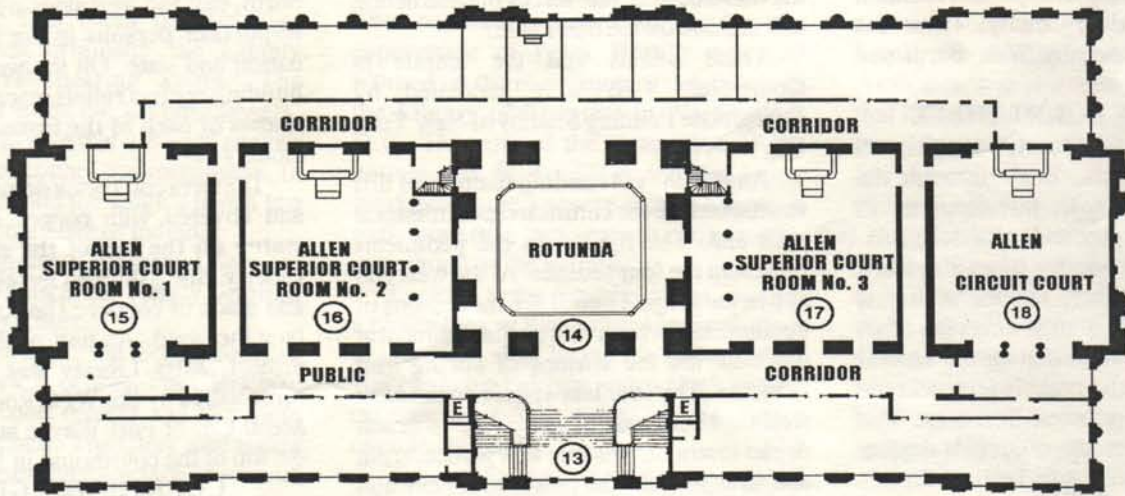
The restoration of the Allen County Courthouse was a joint project of the Allen County Courthouse Preservation Trust, Inc. and the Allen County Commissioners with donations from the State's Build Indiana Fund, the Allen County attorneys, numerous businesses, various charitable trusts and the citizens of Allen County. The trust is a not for profit corporation set up to assist the County Commissioners in the restoration.

### HISTORICAL CONTEXT

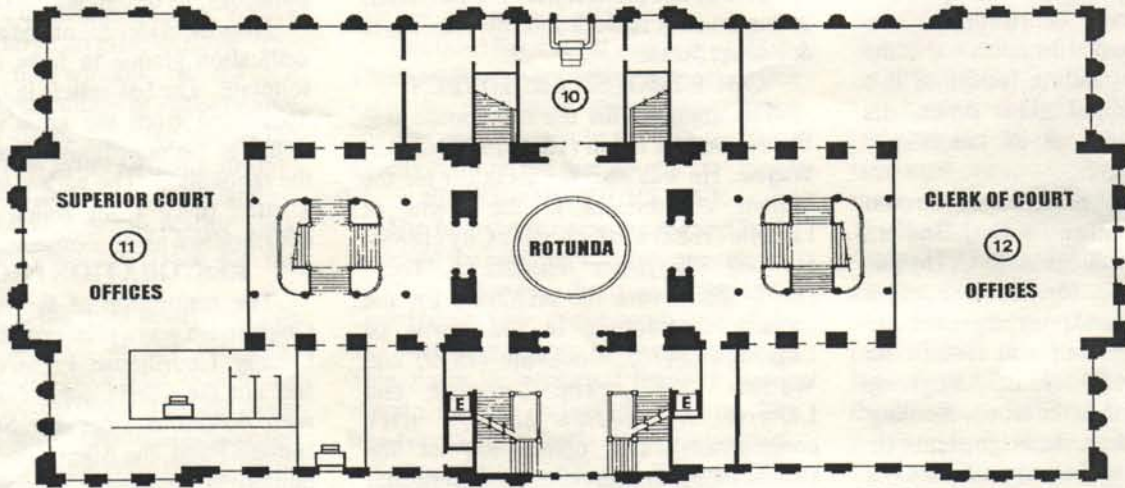
It is interesting to note that in 1897 when the cornerstone was laid:

- Teddy Roosevelt was president.
- the civil war ended only 32 years earlier.
- there were only 45 states.
- the last Indian battle occurred at Wounded Knee, North Dakota only 7 years before.
- the first powered airplane flight was 6 years away.
- There was no radio or television.
- The first movie house in Fort Wayne was not opened until sometime after 1904.

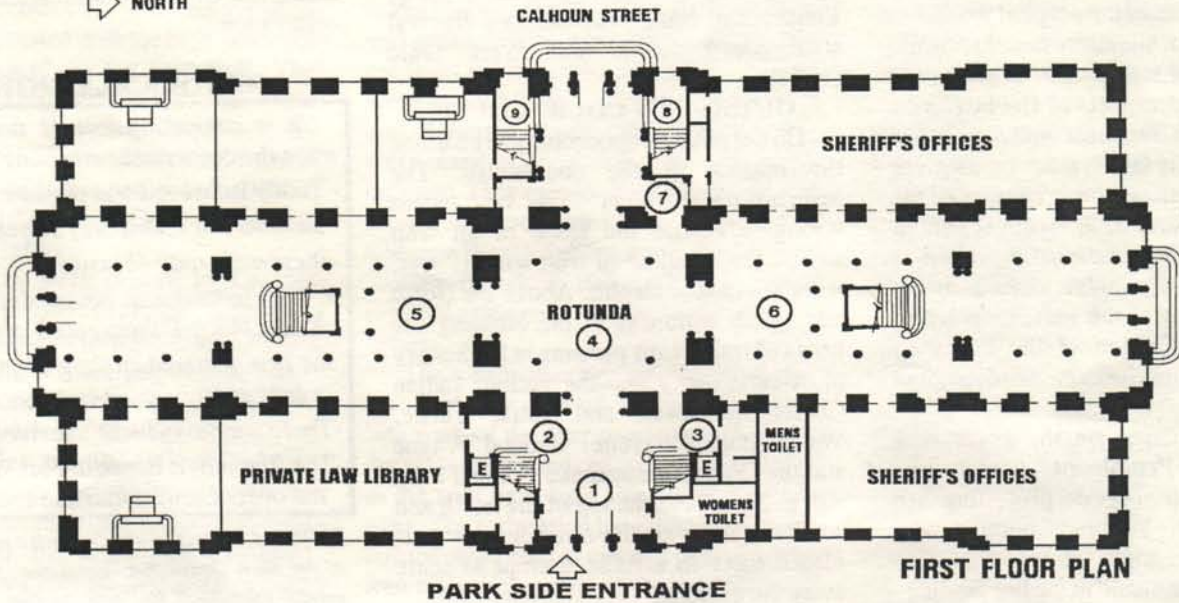
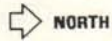
*By Donald D. Doxsee. Mr. Doxsee is a past president of the Allen County Bar Association. He is in the private practice of law with the firm of Williams Williams & Doxsee.*



THIRD FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN