

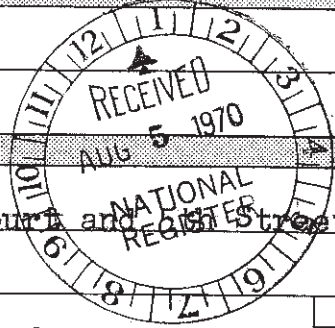
PH0097092

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

STATE: Indiana
COUNTY: Vanderburgh
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER: 70.9.13.0002
DATE: 9/4

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

1. NAME
COMMON: Old Vanderburgh County Courthouse
AND/OR HISTORIC: Same as above



2. LOCATION
STREET AND NUMBER: Whole City Block bounded by Vine, 4th, Court and 6th Streets
CITY OR TOWN: Evansville
STATE: Indiana CODE: 13 COUNTY: Vanderburgh CODE: 163

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public* <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both * Leased to Foundation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) Cultural Center <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY
OWNER'S NAME: Vanderburgh County Commissioners
STREET AND NUMBER: City-County Building, 8th and Main Streets
CITY OR TOWN: Evansville STATE: Indiana CODE: 13

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Same as above
STREET AND NUMBER:
CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE: 13

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE OF SURVEY: No known existing survey
DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
STREET AND NUMBER:
CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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COUNTY: VANDERBURGH
ENTRY NUMBER: 70.9.13.0002
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Old Vanderburgh County Courthouse is a baroque style building of Indiana Limestone. Since it was sand-blasted and pointed about eight years ago, it is in excellent condition, particularly the exterior. The interior has been well but not beautifully maintained and would require some repairs to plaster ceilings and refinishing of woodwork and walls. It was, however, used until May, 1969 as the seat of County Government and is in quite habitable condition.

Designed by Henry Wolters of Louisville, Kentucky, the Courthouse is symmetrically balanced in the classic sense. The main building is a long, rectangular structure with a broad pavillion projecting perpendicularly from each of the long sides, with a soaring dome erected on the roof at the crossing point of the pavillions and the axis of the main building. The decoration is in symmetrically organized patterns of high complexity, rusticated stones alternating with smooth ones. At the third story level are cartouche type windows surrounded by elaborate scroll designs. Along the cornice-line a marble balustrade railing encircles the entire building, interrupted only by segmental pediments placed one at each end of the main building and capped by over-life sized statuary by Franz Engelsmann, a pupil of Augustus St. Gaudens. Four bulging bays located near the corners of the structure are topped by hemispherical domes which emphasize the symmetrical balance and call attention to the doorways, which are approached by long, imposing stairs.

The interior of the building is paved with marble in the principal hallways and the walls of the main and second floors are lined with Tennessee marble panels. Elaborate ironwork guard rails are a feature of the Rotunda on each floor and the stair rails are of wrought iron as well. The central dome of the Rotunda rises to a coffered, rounded ceiling visible from below from all three floors. The Rotunda has on each floor niches and lunettes which it has been proposed that local artists treat with sculptures and murals. There are several large court rooms going through two floors, with handsome baroque plaster ceilings and wall decorations. The original judge's benches, jury boxes and railings of carved walnut are still in place. The interior construction of the upper portion of the dome rising above the clock mechanism is a masterpiece of the bricklayer's art, with bricks baked to order, rounded to fit into the curved surfaces of the dome. The brickwork is supported by a spider-web-like framework of bent iron bars. The sub-basement and foundations are extremely massive, with limestone chunks 5 x 5 feet square, still showing drill marks where they were blasted out of the quarry. A tunnel leads under 4th Street to the County Jail across the street and also conducts the heating pipes from the power plant behind the Jail building.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) Cornerstone 11/27/88; completed 1891

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 checked="" 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 Old Vanderburgh County Courthouse served for 78 years as the seat of County Government for Evansville and Vanderburgh County. It cannot boast of any great historical decision like the Dred Scott case or of any specific memorable event. Many candidates for State and National office appeared on its steps to address the public, including many Presidential candidates, both successful and unsuccessful.

Of some historic interest is the fact that the Courthouse occupies the site of the former turnaround basin of the Wabash and Erie Canal, completed in 1853 but having a brief life until only 1865 because of the overwhelming competition of the railroads, which took all of the canal business. The disastrous failure of the canal project bankrupted the State of Indiana and caused it to adopt the very conservative fiscal policies which persist to this day.

The main significance of this Courthouse for the State and Nation would be its grandeur as a masterpiece of architecture of its period - a remarkably pure and "uncluttered" example of the ostentatious "Neo-Baroque" style which our towns adopted in the post-Civil War Victorian period to express their civic pride and image of success and prosperity.

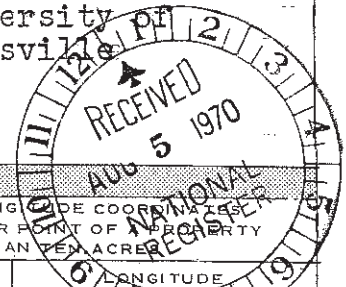
SEE INSTRUCTIONS



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

"Architectural Heritage of Evansville" by Howard E. Wooden
Published by the Evansville Museum of Arts and Sciences

"The Evansville Story" by Dr. James E. Morlock 1956
Professor at the University
Evansville



10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	LATITUDE		
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	0 . "	0 . "	0	0	0
NE	0 . "	0 . "	37	58	25
SE	0 . "	0 . "	87	33	59
SW	0 . "	0 . "			

NOUTH
CX

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 2.15 Acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Indiana	13	Vanderburgh	163
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
None overlapping			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Alexander L. Leich, President

ORGANIZATION: Conrad Baker Foundation

DATE: February 18, 1970

STREET AND NUMBER:
Old Vanderburgh County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN: Evansville

STATE: Indiana 47708

CODE: 32

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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 ^{MS 215183}

Name: John R. Ryle

Title: Dir of Nat. Resources

Date: 8-3-70

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Arnet Allen Connally
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: SEP 4 1970

ATTEST:
William J. Muntz
Keeper of The National Register

Date: AUG 20 1970