

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

FINAL

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Ripley County Courthouse

other names/site number 137-647-36023

2. Location

street & number 115 N. Main Street n/a ☐ not for publication

city or town Versailles n/a ☐ vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Ripley code 137 zip code 47042

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination
☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of
Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property
☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant
☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official/Title

8/4/2009
Date

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet

- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet

- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.

- ☐ removed from the National Register.

- ☐ other, (explain): _____

Ripley County Courthouse
Name of Property

Ripley County, IN
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-state
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	1	objects
1	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/ courthouse

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MID-19TH CENTURY:Greek Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	STONE:Limestone
walls	Brick
	STONE: Limestone
roof	Asphalt
other	STONE: Granite

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more sheets.)

See continuation pages.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significant within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination if individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Areas of significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Politics/Government

Architecture

Period of Significance

1861-1959

Significant Dates

1861

1863

1912

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Pattison, Thomas

Yater, James L.

Ripley County Courthouse
Name of Property

Ripley County, IN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References Bloomfield Quad, USGS 7.5 Minute Series.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

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

3

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Zone Easting Northing

2

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4

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☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Camille B. Fife

organization The Westerly Group, Inc. date January 2009

street & number 225 East Main Street telephone (812) 273-8826

city or town Madison state IN zip code 47250

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Ripley County Commissioners

street & number 115 No. Main St. P. O. Box 235 telephone 812.689.6115

city or town Versailles state IN zip code 47042

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance to the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding the burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Ripley County Courthouse, Ripley County, IN

Section 7. Description

Summary

A three-story brick building, built between 1860 and 1863 in a cross plan, the Ripley County Courthouse is situated in the center of Versailles town square, in the original plat of the county seat, on a plateau overlooking a river valley. The building was designed in a transitional mode using elements of the prevalent Greek Revival style which was intensely popular between 1820 and 1850. In addition, it demonstrates elements of Italianate styling, soon to become popular in the Midwest. Significant features include a prominent pediment, intact and symmetrical fenestration and materials. While adaptations and additions have occurred over the years since its construction, it has retained adequate integrity, on the exterior, to demonstrate its style and purpose. It is a significant building in Ripley County, both for its association with county history and for its architectural design.

Description

The Ripley County Courthouse is located in the center of the town of Versailles. Situated on a promontory which overlooks the Laughery Creek valley, the town looks down on three sides toward the creek and to the east and north, the Versailles State Park. The bluffs drop off several hundred feet in some places. The dramatic site descends steeply from the edge of town on the northwest, north and southeast sides. To the east, Cliff Hill cemetery lies at the edge of the populated area. Access to downtown, via the south, and south west is achieved through U.S. 421, and State Road 129, as well as smaller county roads. From the west, U.S. 421 and U.S. 50 join along the headland. U. S. 50 continues east from Versailles to the state park and ultimately to Aurora, Indiana on the Ohio River.

The town grid is oriented slightly off the cardinal points. Thus the main entrance to the courthouse is approximately east, with the opposite entrance approximately west. For the purpose of this nomination we have assumed a due east-west orientation. The courthouse square is bounded on the east by Main Street, on the north by West First North Street, on the west by Washington Street and on the south by Tyson Street. The latter was originally called Main Cross Street. It was renamed during the twentieth century in honor of a local benefactor.

The courthouse square is indeed square in plan, with sidewalks leading to the east and west entrances of the building. There are public sidewalks on all four sides of the square. Walks lead from the outer rim of the square to the center from a mid-point on all four sides. However, the walks on the north and south sides angle toward the east and west entrances, since it is not possible to enter the building on those sides. The plan of the square is very regular and symmetrical (see Figure 1 - Site Plan.) Trees are planted at graceful intervals throughout the lawn. The southwest corner of the square is decorated with an artillery piece, a plaque honoring Ripley County veterans of all wars, and two historical markers. The artillery and the markers were installed after the former Clerks office was razed in the 1960s. The western marker commemorates the local Masonic Lodge which was located at the site for many years (on the second floor of the clerks office) and the

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Ripley County Courthouse, Ripley County, IN

easternmost recalls Stephen S. Harding, a local abolitionist and orator. These objects are of insufficient scale and permanence to be counted as resources.

On the southeast corner of the square is a large, tripartite war memorial. Constructed of grey and black granite, the left and right panels feature the words to "America, the Beautiful", while the center panel is the dedication to Ripley County veterans. The plaza around the memorial is paved in brick. Benches and landscaping decorate the perimeter (see Photo 05.) Because it is less than 50 years old, the memorial is a non-contributing object.

On the east side, near the main entrance to the courthouse, is a boulder, with a bronze plaque dedicated to General John Morgan. It was placed c. 1924. Located in the same vicinity and of somewhat later date is the historical marker describing Morgan's raid through Versailles (see Photo 07.) These markers are not counted as resources.

The square has been the center of town life since the early nineteenth century. At least as early as 1859, a fence had been placed around the square to keep animals away and was in need of repair. Persons were forbidden to engage in games and amusements, although public meetings were allowed and the courthouse bell could be tolled for funerals and church services.¹ By 1878 an iron fence decorated the square. It remained until the 1930s.

By 1883, the square contained three buildings: The present courthouse, constructed between 1860-1863, a rectangular, two story building located on the south west edge, which contained a Masonic hall and county offices and a "T" plan structure on the north west corner which contained the Sheriff's office and other functions.² Today, the courthouse alone occupies the square.

Courthouse Exterior

The courthouse today is a cross-plan, cross-gabled building. Prior to 1971-72, when a new addition was constructed on the west side, the building was in the form of a "T" with the main entrance (as it is now) on the east side. This is the building which was constructed between 1860 and 1863. The building is a solidly-massed three stories but appears taller because of the bell tower and high pitched gabled roof. The foundation consists of two courses of dressed limestone.

At the basement level, there are two exterior entrances, one on the north east and the other on the southeast. Both lead to the excavated basement area which exists only on the east part of the building. The exterior stairs are located in the crotches between the center part of the building and the east wing. There is also a stair to the basement on the interior.

The exterior walls of the courthouse are of brick, laid in common bond. The present wall surface is a variegated reddish brick which was stained to represent an early color sometime after 1999. Random bricks are of a lighter shade. Over the course of its life, the building was often painted, usually white. It appears unpainted in a photograph (Figure 5) which is undated, but may be within twenty years of its construction. Then, in another photograph, also undated, but probably

¹ Ripley County Commissioners Record, March Term, 1859.

² D. J. Lake & Co., *An Atlas of Ripley County, Indiana, Philadelphia, PA: D. J. Lake & Co., 1883.*

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Ripley County Courthouse, Ripley County, IN

between 1880 and 1915 (Figure 6) it has been painted white. During the course of a 1971-72 renovation, the bricks were sandblasted to remove the white paint. However, the condition of the brick was deemed too fragile to remain and it was repainted.³

The fenestration on the first floor of the building consists of six over six light windows, with flat, dressed limestone sills. There are four such windows on the south side of the building and five on the north side. The east wing (part of the original configuration) contains two windows flanking the main door. Another similar window is located in the east face of both the north and south wings and another in the north and south faces of the east wing. These windows provide extensive light to the stair hall in this wing (see Photos 11 and 12.) The main entrance is a single opening with double leaf wooden doors, each containing six upper lights. Above, the transom contains the legend: "Ripley County Court House, Built 1860." The entry surround consists of a limestone lintel, in two courses, the upper part of which projects slightly and is gently curved downward on the outer edges. Below, brick pilasters, corbelled at the top provide classically inspired support for the lintel. As evidenced by the early photographs, the entire entry, along with the windows, their lintels and sills, was painted white. Today, all limestone elements have been cleaned of paint.

All of the fenestration on the modern addition replicates the original, including the main door and windows on the first and second floors. The brick walls on the modern addition match the original in color but are a modern brick, laid in stretcher bond.

The second floor of the original building is considerably taller than the first and contains nine over nine light flat head windows with limestone lintels and sills. They are framed within a larger, round arched brick relieving arch, which is slightly recessed. This brick feature recalls round-arched windows of such well-known Greek Revival buildings as Faneuil Hall in Boston, built 1825-26. The fenestration on the first and second floor of the east and west elevations is symmetrical: each contains three bays. All of the second floor windows are identical, except that on the north elevation, second floor, the central of the five bays is completely infilled with brick. As with the first floor, the second floor contains four bays on the south side and five on the north side.

The Ripley County Courthouse differs from the "traditional" Greek Revival building in several ways. It is a transitional building, constructed during and after the Civil War. (See further discussion in Section 8.) Its original plan was a "T" form, rather than the more typical rectangular temple form associated with Greek Revival buildings. In addition, it does not contain a columnar portico, a typical element of the style. However, the pediments at the gable ends recall the Greek Revival style. The tympanum within the pediment is of brick, with an oculus window, encircled by a dressed stone frame containing voussoirs top, bottom and sides. Within, the lights are in a wheel pattern, in six segments. This feature, on the new addition, is a louvered attic vent rather than a window within the frame.

The raked and horizontal cornices which frame the four pediments are encased in plain white siding. Elements of the Italianate style can be seen below. A narrow fascia supports the raked

³ Ripley County Commissioners Record, Book 22, p. 14.

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Ripley County Courthouse, Ripley County, IN

cornice. Below this pediment, a row of dentils and corbelled brick in the modified form of brackets decorates the upper frieze. This interesting element is actually formed in the brick, with the sixth tooth of the molding extending to the bottom of the frieze, thus forming the leg of the "bracket." The present cornice siding undoubtedly covers the original modillions, since a 1999 drawing indicates that the original cornice was to be covered with aluminum.

The present tower is three-part. The first and lowest stage is a square base set atop the gable of the west wing. The base is faced with decorative shingles and there is a wide, projecting cornice. The second stage is also square and is comprised of single, round-arched louvered vents within each shingled face, framed by an elliptical-arch lintel. A trio of fluted Doric columns marks the corners of this and the upper stage. A projecting cornice separates this element from the upper stage of the tower, the face of which contains a clock and is framed by a matching element, slightly smaller than the lower element. Atop the clock is a copper spire, splay-foot, and gently sloping, rising to a slender pointed spike. (Photos 03, 04, 06, and 08.) The two upper stages of the tower were constructed above the original cupola base in 1932, part of a gift by a local donor to the community. Prior to that time, the courthouse cupola was comprised of an octagonal lantern with narrow, round-arched vents. Above this sat a dome atop a decorative, molded cornice. (See Figures 5 and 6)

Courthouse Interior

Considerable changes have occurred on the interior of the building, especially on the second and third floors. Steel reinforcing was installed (See Figure 7c) during the 1970s renovation to accommodate the changed floors and loads. Other structural reinforcements may have occurred since the original construction, but specific information regarding them has not been found.

The basement of the building is presently accessed by a stair in the east wing stair hall. (See Photo 13.) The stair lands adjacent to the entrance to a women's bathroom which was remodeled in the late 1950s, adding the orange tile. A men's bathroom is down the hall, also remodeled at the same time. Also in the basement are storage areas and an electrical-furnace room which contains the heating system for the building. (See Figure 3 and Photos 26, 27, and 28.) There are two outside stairs to the basement, on the north and south side of the east wing (Photos 04 and 08.)

The first floor contains a large stair hall in the east wing, and a smaller hall, with an elevator in the west wing (newer annex). There is a spacious central hall, with offices for the County Recorder, Auditor, Treasurer and Assessor, as well as the Commissioners. All of the ceilings are dropped, with modern hung hardware and panels. The doorways and vaults are original. (See Figure 2 and Photos 11-18.) The terrazzo floors and gray marble wainscot are additions to the structure which date to 1912. The second floor is accessed by the main, east stair hall, a stair in the west wing, or by the elevator. The Neo-Classical Revival styled steel stairs were added in 1912. Newel posts have a triglyph motif at the top of each face. The stairs are close string, and the railings feature a "circle and vertical bars" design.

This floor contains the Circuit Court Room, offices for the judge and for the County Clerk. All of the partitions for these facilities appear to be modern dry wall construction. (See Figure 2 and

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Ripley County Courthouse, Ripley County, IN

Photos 19-22.) The third floor contains the Superior Court Room and offices for the judge and prosecutor, as well as jury and bathroom facilities. It is accessed by a stair in the east wing as well as stairs and elevator in the west wing. (See Figure 3 and Photos 23-25.)

There is an attic above the third floor, which contains access to the clock tower as well as much of the HVAC systems for the buildings. The interior construction of the building, as described in an 1863 specification, can be seen within this attic. There is also a remnant of decorative painting which remains and was probably in the original court room. (See photos 29-32.)

Integrity

While changes have occurred over time, the Ripley County Courthouse displays a high degree of integrity. The building is in its original location, and the basic massing, roof lines, fenestration, pediments, gables and the base of the cupola are present. The present clock tower, installed in 1932, falls within the period of significance and adds to the character of the building. These elements comprise the critical parts of the design. The 1971-72 addition is extremely sensitive to the balance of the building, replicating window sash, doors, materials, massing, roof lines and other details, such as the brick work in the cornice and frieze. While the interior has seen considerable change, necessary to accommodate requirements for environmental controls and additional court rooms, as well as additional offices, the 1912 east stair hall, and the original central hall remain to convey the history of the courthouse. The cupola, present until 1932, was replaced with a clock tower on the same base. This represents change over time, which is often the case for buildings of the age of the courthouse. Since the adaptation has, in itself, achieved more than fifty years of age, and since it represents an addition, but not a dramatic change in the general character of the building, it may be said to be contributing. While businesses in the square have come and gone since the building was erected, the setting, is reasonably intact. The square itself has hosted other buildings, but not within the last fifty years. The courthouse displays historic materials and workmanship. The feeling of the building and its surrounds are probably close to the original, even though such small amenities as the iron fence have vanished. Finally, association with the historical events of the county is strong.

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Ripley County Courthouse, Ripley County, IN

Section 8. Statement of Significance

Summary

The Ripley County Courthouse is significant under Criterion A for its association with the governmental history of the county. It has stood as a symbol of the county's political and social life since its construction between 1860 and 1863. The courthouse was in active use by late 1861, though workers did not complete it until 1863. It is also significant for the quality of its architecture, under Criterion C. The building was designed in a modified version of the Greek Revival style, and has retained all of the key elements which make it a distinctive example of this style as seen in a public building in a small, rural community.

Statement

Ripley County is located in south east Indiana, somewhat north of the Ohio River, and east of the state line with Ohio. Since the Ohio River was the earliest viable transportation route into lands of the Northwest Territory, settlement first emerged in those counties along the river. Located somewhat inland of that waterway, Ripley County was formed a bit later. Settlers appeared in the area that would become the county about 1814. The county was organized by an act of the state legislature in 1817 and named after Brigadier General Eleazer W. Ripley, a hero of the War of 1812. General Ripley was born in Hanover, New Hampshire in 1782. He entered the War as a lieutenant and rapidly rose to Brigadier General by 1814. Retiring from service in 1820, he died in Louisiana in 1839.⁴

The county was underway in 1818 when, as prescribed by state law, several men were named to select a site for the county seat. John DePauw of Washington County, William Eads of Franklin County and Charles Beggs of Clark County were given this honor. They selected a site, on a high bluff over the Laughery Creek valley, 100 acres in the north half of Section 12, Township 7, Range 11 East. The property on which the courthouse would be located was owned by the wealthy Madison speculator, John Paul, who donated the 100 acre parcel for the purpose of establishing a county seat.⁵ The town was named Versailles, after the French city, which was also the home city of John DePauw, one of the incorporators of the county.⁶

John Paul had begun the town of Xenia in Ohio, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, then moved to Indiana, purchasing considerable amounts of land in the southern part of the state after the area had been opened to settlement following the negotiation of a treaty with the Indians in

⁴ Violet Toph, "A People's History of Ripley County", Vol. 1, P. 22.

⁵ Ibid., p. 28, and Ed. Jerman, *History of Ripley County*, P. 70.

⁶ www.ripleycounty.com/Versailles/history.htm, accessed 12/22/2008.

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1805.⁷ He had considerable land holdings in the area that would become Ripley County, and it is likely that friends of his were also involved. A copy of the earliest Commissioners Record Book notes that several of the town lots recorded in June of 1820 were sold to residents of Jefferson County, these included, in addition to John Paul himself, John Vawter and Israel T. Canby.⁸ It was not unusual for wealthy individuals to donate land for a town, especially a county seat, in the vicinity of other holdings. Once the town and county were established, their holdings, acquired cheaply, could be sold at a large profit. At the time of the 1850 Census, none of the original town lots listed in the Commissioners Record were in the same name, most had changed hands several times.

Many counties wrangled for the location of the county seat, but in Ripley County, this decision was made rather quickly. John DePauw was paid for sixteen days of his time, Mr. Eads for only seven and Mr. Beggs for thirteen days to select the location.⁹ According to some sources, brief consideration of a site on the lower ground, near Laughery Creek had been considered. It appears to have been rejected rather quickly, though, probably because of the danger of flooding.

John Ritchey, appointed agent for the county, placed ads in an edition of the Lexington, Indiana newspaper, in August of 1818, announcing the first sale of lots in the town to be held on September 21, 1818. The town and surrounding country was said to be "generally rich, and well adapted to farming, abounding with never failing springs of the best water, ..." One-eighth of the purchase price was due at the sale and the balance in three equal annual payments. Interest was charged if the payments were late.¹⁰ Appetites for the sale were whetted by serving the participants liquid refreshment. A barrel of good whiskey had been purchased by the agent for \$13.50 for the purpose. 166 lots were sold during the sale period and \$315.50 received.¹¹

Development in the new county would not be swift. According to a writer in the 1876, *Historical Atlas for Indiana*, "This county has had a very slow agricultural development. When the counties to the east and south were among the best in the Ohio Valley from the farming standpoint, Ripley was scarcely touched by the plow. This was in part due to its exceedingly heavy forests; in part to the swampy nature of the soil over two-thirds of the county... and in part to remoteness from the river, at that time the sole outlet for surplus farm produce."¹²

But life continued for the hardy residents of the new county. During the November, 1818 County Commissioners term, Joseph Bentley and Carmy Goodrich were granted a license to "keep and Ordinary in the town of Versailles and retail spirituous liquors." The first marriage license was

⁷ Land Records, transcribed, Jefferson Land Office, for 1808.

⁸ Copy from Commissioners Record Book A, pp. 98-99 in the collection of the Ripley County Historical Society. (Note, original of this record book has since been lost.)

⁹ Commissioners disbursements, quoted in Toph, p. 38.

¹⁰ Advertisement, dated August 1, 1818, reprinted in Alan F. Smith, *Tales of Versailles*, P. 4.

¹¹ Business and Profession Women, *History of Ripley County, Indiana*. Batavia, OH: Clermont Publishing Company, 1968, P.6.

¹² Quoted in Toph, Vol. 1 page 10.

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also granted that year. Prices for horse feed, an important commodity, were set by the county: twelve and a half cents for a gallon of oats or corn; and twenty-five cents for haying a horse over night. Prices for human accommodations were also set: twenty-five cents per person for a meal of victuals; twelve and a half cents for comfortable bedding. Spirits ranged from twenty-five cents for a half pint of rum to the same price for a quart of cider.¹³

The first county officials were established through commissions issued by Jonathan Jennings, Governor of the State of Indiana. Each had to agree to the provisions of the state constitution, the oath of office and an oath against dueling. On July 23, 1818, the candidates presented their credentials and swore their oaths before the Honorable John Test of the Third Judicial District, of which the new county of Ripley was assigned. Conrad Overturf thus became the first Clerk of the Ripley Circuit Court, and Benjamin Kirby became Sheriff. A Grand Jury was named, Nathaniel French and William Hendricks were admitted to practice in Ripley Circuit Court, while John Richey presided. Since no official court house had been built, this first court was held at the house of Benjamin Brown, a settler in Shelby Township. With no litigation in hand, the grand jurors were paid seventy-five cents each for their day of service, Judge Richey received two dollars for two days and the first Ripley County Circuit Court was adjourned. An auspicious beginning.¹⁴

Ripley County Courthouses

The county commissioners moved quickly to remedy the matter of a courthouse. By September of the following year, advertisements appeared in newspapers around the region, for a sale of lots in Versailles. This additional sale would fund the construction of a courthouse. The notice also called for the crying off, to the lowest bidder, "the building of a brick court house in said town, forty feet square." Plans for this building could be viewed at Branham's Tavern in Madison, the Hotel in Vevay as well as clerk's offices in Brookville and Versailles.¹⁵ The county commissioners directed their agent, John Richey, to build the courthouse in the center of the public square in the town of Versailles. Although the commissioners moved quickly to provide an official courthouse, it wasn't their first building project. They had solicited contracts for a jail even earlier, in February of that first year, and at the same time paid for the construction of a stray-pen.¹⁶ In these rough and tumble times, managing errant people and animals was local government's first priority.

The commissioners, recognizing the difficulties of obtaining materials and labor in the pioneer setting, allowed the builder of the new courthouse three years to complete his task. Payments would be spread out over that time. In the meantime, the commissioners paid rent to Joseph Bentley for the use of his home during the three years. Bentley was the first postmaster, appointed in April of 1819 and had been the first purchaser of Lot 18, on Washington Street, just

¹³ County Commissioners Record Book A, quoted in Toph, p. 40.

¹⁴ Jerman, *History of Ripley County*, PP. 71-72.

¹⁵ *Madison Indiana Republican*, September 4, 11, 18, 1819.

¹⁶ County Commissioners Record Book A, quoted in Toph, p. 40-41 and Smith, Pp. 6, 7.

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south of the public square.¹⁷ By 1821, work was underway on the courthouse. George Craig's contract as the builder was being amended to accommodate changes in the design of John A. Prior, the architect or designer who had drawn up the plan. Nothing remains of this early building, since the contractor for the 1860-63 replacement was given the right to the materials. However, we can assume from the records that it was a two-story building, square in plan and constructed of stone and brick. The windows in the lower floor contained 28 lights and those in the upper story, 24. The originally planned hipped roof was changed to a "square roof with a plain, full cornish".¹⁸ We can assume that the building, typical of early nineteenth century courthouses, was, in the words of architectural historian Paul Goeldner, a "coffee mill" structure. A high-style stone example of this design can be seen today in the first territorial court house located in Corydon, Indiana. The Ripley County Commissioners, in February of 1822, engaged their agent to order a cupola for the courthouse under construction "provided he can have it done for \$150." The cupola was to be patterned after one already built at Charleston, Indiana.¹⁹ Other details included stone door sills, double brick arches, and chimneys in the corner of the house. The cupola was underway in August of 1823, but the courthouse was not finished within the time allotted. In addition, costs had soared well over the \$2,000 budget. The commissioners order their agent to sue George Craig for damages that the county sustained because the courthouse was not finished according to the contract.²⁰ Courthouse building in Ripley County would never be an easy task.

Other troubles plagued the county's early years. The first jail burned while under the possession of William Skeen, the county sheriff, in 1822. A new one was ordered to be replaced in 1854 with the building shown on the north west corner of the square in an 1880s map (Figure 4.)²¹ In May of 1826, a contract was let to build a separate office for the Clerk. This was to be a one story building, located in the south west corner of the square. Later this building would be enlarged with a second floor to accommodate the Masonic Lodge, commemorated by a historical marker at this site.²²

The town of Versailles enlarged with additions to the north, east and south. At the same time, the county population was growing. This required that the original townships be continually subdivided, as each filled with the required population. Between May of 1818 and January of 1819, there were only three townships, Laughery in the east, Greyham in the west and Perry in the south. By May of 1825, this had been increased to eight townships: Jackson, Shelby and Henry in the west, Delaware and Johnson in the center and Franklin, Washington and Brown in the east. By 1858, the county was divided into eleven townships – dictated by continuing growth. The townships which

¹⁷ Ibid, P. 47, and Smith, Appendices 1 and 2, pp. 173-175.

¹⁸ Commissioners Record Book A, quoted in Toph, pp. 49-50.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 50.

²⁰ Commissioners Record Book B, Beginning Nov. 1821, through 1824.

²¹ Business and Professional Women of Osgood, Versailles, Milan and Holton, *History of Ripley County, Indiana*, Batavia, OH: Clermont Publishing Co., 1968, P. 8.

²² Smith, pp. 8-9.

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existed during this time, on the eve of the Civil War, were to remain nearly the same to the present day. They included: Center Township, in the middle of the county, just north west of Johnson, where the county seat, Versailles still retained its central spot. In addition, Adams, Franklin, Washington and Brown defined the eastern and part of the southern border, with Laughner and Delaware, north of Johnson Township in the center and Jackson, Otter Creek and Shelby Townships on the western side.²³ As the population of the county grew, the commissioners recognized a need for more space and facilities for record keeping, courts and meetings.

By March of 1859, it was obvious that the public square, and the courthouse had become the focus of more than just record keeping and court business. The commissioners, in describing a new superintendent's duties, felt compelled to state that "the court further forbids all persons from engaging in any kind of games or amusements in the Public Square. No person shall be allowed to enter the Court House by raising windows or otherwise except by permission..." Obviously, games and other amusements, as well as unauthorized entry had become a problem. Nonetheless, the commissioners also wanted to reassure the public that the square and the courthouse were still theirs: "Nothing in the foregoing shall be construed to prevent all public meetings from assembling in the Court House, nor to hinder anyone from tolling the Bell on funeral occasions, or ringing it for church services."²⁴

The significance of the Ripley County Courthouse, like others in the Midwest, was not just in its role as the legal seat of government, nor in its role as a symbol of county economic prowess, but also through its place in the life of the community. The courthouse was intimately associated with the life of Versailles, including the daily and personal activities of its people and organizations. For many years, the building was the only facility for public assembly. In the days prior to radio and television, large court rooms were necessary, to accommodate the crowds who participated as audience in the live drama.²⁵ This situation no longer exists, and one can see in the changes which have occurred over time in the Ripley County Courthouses, how the new legal requirements have created physical adaptations in the structure.

By 1860, it was obvious to several of the commissioners, that new facilities were needed for the growing legal and administrative business of the county. In March of 1860, the commissioners, finding the current building "insufficient" for the safe keeping of county records and that the current buildings did not provide space for a treasurers office, determined to build a new building. They thought it should be of brick on a stone foundation, 52 by 38 feet, two stories tall with a central hall twelve feet wide. They would locate it on the north east corner of the square. They appointed an agent to draft plans and specifications and hoped for a bid by the second Monday in April. They also granted the I. O. O. F. the right to erect a third story on this planned courthouse.

²³ Business and Professional Women, 1968, pp. 10-11.

²⁴ Ripley County Commissioners Records, March Term, 1859

²⁵ Paul Goeldner, *Temples of Justice, Nineteenth Century County Courthouses in the Midwest and Texas*. Doctoral Dissertation, Columbia University, Fine Arts 1970. University Microfilms, Inc. Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1971., p.23.

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They adjourned, determined to arrange for the planned building and, if necessary, make repairs to the existing courthouse.²⁶

By the first Monday in April, 1860, the commissioners had rescinded their plan for a new courthouse, and began considering merely an addition to the existing building. In special session on April 10th, they compared costs and received plans for the new and revised buildings. A contract was prepared with James L. Yater for \$6,000 to do the work and Henry Lipperd was appointed agent in charge. A protest to this action erupted in the person of one of the three commissioners, Mr. John Glass. The other two commissioners, Mr. James Shields and Mr. George Lotshaw listened and agreed that Mr. Glass's objections be recorded in the minutes. Then, having the majority, they authorized Mr. Yater to proceed with the work of improving the existing courthouse.²⁷

Mr. Glass's objections were based on the fact that the county was currently in debt (although evidently not greatly), because he did not believe in levying a tax without first consulting the people of the county (a referendum), and that he did not believe that the action was legal. He was also concerned about taking an action which might influence the changing of the county seat, although that does not seem to have been in contention.²⁸ His objection probably stemmed from the fact that compared to other Midwestern states, Indiana's law's regarding county building expenditures were the most liberal. County commissioners in Indiana could borrow up to 1% of all appraised real and personal property without an election. They could also levy and collect taxes whenever they deemed it necessary. In Missouri, bond elections were routinely held for courthouse projects. In Minnesota, the state legislature stepped in with authorizations. In Illinois, graft was rife. County commissioners often called for "improvements" or "enlargements" to avoid the legal restrictions on borrowing for new buildings.²⁹

Still unsure about their actions, the commissioners called a meeting in May to discuss remodeling or building a new structure. A new courthouse would raise the price from about \$6,000 to more than \$16,000. With continuing controversy regarding the legality of their actions, they voted to "ratify" their acts. They also retained an attorney, Mr. A. C. Downey, to handle the litigation which was growing out of the issue, Mr. Glass having officially initiated a suit against the county. Still, plans for a new courthouse were moving forward. Mr. Thomas Pattison had been hired to draw plans and create specifications for the new building, \$100 being authorized for his services. They were accepted at this special session in May and James L. Yater was contracted for \$16,250 to erect the new courthouse according to the plans and specifications. In a somewhat unusual action, Mr. Pattison was named the principal superintendent of the work. To these

²⁶ Ripley County Commissioners Records, Book 3, p. 72-73.

²⁷ Ripley County Commissioners Records, Book 3, P. 76.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Goeldner, pp.. 40-41.

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proceedings, Mr. John Glass, Esq. entered his protest.³⁰ The minutes are silent with regard to the outcome of his efforts.

The onset of the Civil War made construction difficult and much more expensive. Mr. Yater's contract had called for completion by August of 1861. The contractor, faced with escalating costs of his subcontractors, found it difficult to continue.³¹ In December of 1861, the building must have been substantially complete, because the commissioners ordered that county offices could move in and courts held in the new courthouse. Mr. Yater agreed that he would not take advantage of this move. The sheriff was ordered to take possession of the stoves that were in the old courthouse and move them to the new one. The old auditor's and recorder's offices (a separate building) were ordered rented to the highest bidder and the treasurer was allowed to move into the recorder's office in the new building until his own was completed. Furniture was ordered and work continued.³²

In December of 1862, Mr. D. E. Carrington was employed to paint the wood work in the court room – to be grained in oak. By June of 1863, the specifications which had been developed by Thomas Pattison several years before were finally recorded in the minutes, along with the details of the original contract. This latter was probably done as part of an audit conducted in 1863. (See selected text of this specification following Figure 8c.) In addition, they ordered completion of the unfinished painting in the courthouse. Work to match that previously completed in the court room except that the counters in the various offices were to be painted imitations of marble.³³ At last, the new courthouse was complete.

The building which stood at the center of Versailles public square looked much like the present one on the exterior, the exception being the new addition on the west side. The interior would be remodeled two times in the future and the exterior would be painted, then the paint would be removed (See Figures 5 & 6). Sometime around the latter part of the nineteenth century, the building was painted white, shutters were added, and the trim was polychromed for emphasis. The building continued to be painted white well into the twentieth century.

By 1912 the courthouse had been in service for fifty years. But new advances in heating, lighting and other services had made the old systems obsolete. Terrazzo tile floors were added, along with marble wainscoting in the corridors. A basement was finished, including the installation of a furnace room with steam heat and public rest rooms. The present steel stair and rail replaced the previous wooden one. The cost of the remodeling was \$10,461, with additional monies allowed for sidewalks and sewer work for a total of over \$12,000. Eight bids were received in the final

³⁰ Ripley County Commissioners Records, Book 3, PP. 76-81.

³¹ Wayne Guthrie, "Spic and Span, That's Ripley's Courthouse", undated newspaper clipping in vertical files, Ripley County Historical Society, probably c. 1959.

³² Ripley County Commissioners Records, Book 3, December term, 1861, pp. 212—215.

³³ Ibid., pp. 370-376.

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bidding round from as near as Versailles and as far as Cincinnati, Ohio. The contract was awarded to the firm of Barringer and Timulty, located in Greensburg, Indiana³⁴.

In 1932, a bequest from the late Mrs. Florence Winegate Grether, widow of Charles was left to the trustees of the town of Versailles. Her intention was to purchase a clock for the courthouse as a memorial to her husband. A clock and chimes was purchased for \$8,400 from the I. T. Verdin Machine Company of Cincinnati, Ohio. In order to install the clock, a new tower was designed and constructed. Mr. Walter Rump, a contractor from nearby Dillsboro, Indiana was hired to build the tower and install the clock.³⁵ The heavy machinery required to operate the clock was hoisted into the tower. This included three electric motors: one for the clock, one for the chimes and another for the striking mechanism. With installation and new construction, the total cost was approximately \$20,000.³⁶ Because of the stipulations of the bequest, the clock is owned by the town of Versailles, while the building and tower are the property of the county. (See Photos 29, 30.) This is still the case today.

While the addition of the clock changed the original cupola, it strengthened the significance of the courthouse for local residents. The function of the courthouse as a community facility and as a beacon for the hopes and pride of the county was enhanced as the bells tolled the quarter hours. Each day, citizens were drawn to the building, observing the time and marveling at the wonder of its mechanism. Unfortunately, the mechanism is presently in need of repair and no longer rings the bells. Perhaps it will do so again in the future.

In the 1970s, a major remodeling was planned by the commissioners. It was no longer desirable or necessary to have a large court room which could also serve as a community gathering place. Other local spaces could serve in that capacity, not the least a large high school gymnasium/auditorium. In addition, the more complex 20th century legal system required the possibility of an additional court room. Many counties were serving both circuit and superior court needs. Finally, privacy and services for the accused had become more extensive and more sophisticated since the nineteenth century. Ripley County needed spaces to serve these new needs. With an active third floor, and with new sensitivities for people with disabilities, an elevator was required.

The county commissioners began the process of addressing the needs for more space in June of 1970. They hired the architectural firm of David B. Hill and Associates from Seymour, Indiana to complete the drawings (See Figures 7a-g). The architects prepared an extremely sensitive addition to house the elevator and a second stair. The high ceiling of the original court room made it possible to insert a new third floor in the space, allowing for a second court room. (Although this second room, now the Supreme Court, was not completed until several years later.) The original

³⁴ Ripley County Commissioners Records, Book 15,

³⁵ Versailles Town Board Commissioner's Report, Dated June 16, 1932, p. 344. Copy in the vertical files of the Ripley County Historical Society.

³⁶ Alan F. Smith, *Tales of Versailles*, Milwaukee, WI: Foursep Publications, 1999, P. 97.

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windows were retained, but the upper portions blocked on the interior to accommodate the lowered ceilings installed on all floors. These were used to hide the increased ducts for climate control and heat. In addition, they were seen as helpful to energy economy. Although the renovation made dramatic changes, the first floor plan was nearly the same, including the hall widths and the existing vaults and doorways. In May of 1971, appropriate bonding was achieved and W. A. Gutzwiller, contractors from Batesville, Indiana, were hired to complete the renovation at a cost of \$371,070. With the addition of landscaping and other items, this cost was increased to \$391,736.41 by June of 1972.³⁷

Unfortunately, the exterior was sandblasted in an attempt to remove the paint. Although not at an intense level, this undoubtedly removed the oldest skin of the brick. It was decided to repaint, following this operation.

In 1999, Howard J. Barth & Associates of Greensburg, Indiana were hired to complete additional renovations, which included reglazing windows in original frames and rebuilding, but replicating the original sash and creating fixed rather than movable windows. New guttering and downspouts were added, along with an aluminum railed handicapped ramp and railings at the east and west entrances. Repair to the clock and the additions of minimal siding in the cornices and tower completed the 1999 activities. Sometime after, c. 2004, the present brick stain treatment was added and the white paint removed.

Ripley County Courthouse in the Civil War

The Ripley County Courthouse was the scene of a dramatic episode when a Confederate force of 2,000, under the command of General John Hunt Morgan, stormed through southern Indiana in an attempt to engage Union forces. Entering Indiana far to the west, near Corydon in Harrison County, they ultimately arrived at Jennings County, then moved eastward into Ripley County on Sunday, July 13, 1863. They entered at Shelby Township, looting a general store and marching on to Versailles. Morgan's troops were met at the still unfinished courthouse by a band of militia and citizens. The raiders seized their guns and broke them against the corner of the courthouse. Although county funds had been hidden for safety, the raiders were still able to take several thousand dollars from the treasurer's office. In addition to food, livestock and other possessions, Morgan's Raiders took the "jewels" from the Masonic Lodge. When Morgan (also a Mason) discovered this travesty, he ordered them swiftly returned. In all, Morgan's raid covered about 1,000 miles in Indiana and Ohio. After leaving Ripley County, they pushed eastward through Ohio, eventually being captured on the eastern side of the state.³⁸

The Economy of the County

³⁷ Ripley County Commissioners Record Book 22, PP. 14, 23, 33, 34, 38, 39.

³⁸ Lawrence McHenry, WPA L. C. Project writer, 1938-39, www.countyhistory.com/ripley/morgan.html, accessed December, 2008, and www.ohiohistorycentral.org, accessed February 2009.

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During the nineteenth century, all of Indiana, and Ripley County was associated with the business of agriculture. From the earliest years, Ripley County enjoyed a larger acreage than the adjoining counties. Ripley consists of 466 square miles of territory, Franklin County, located on the state line with Ohio to the north contains 391 square miles. In 1820, Ripley County had a meager population of 509, while Franklin, founded in 1811, enjoyed 2,403 residents. By 1840, Ripley had grown to 10,392, and Franklin to 13,349, but both were usurped by Jefferson (16,614) and Dearborn (19,327) Counties. With their strategic river front locations, they prospered. However, by 1860, when the commissioners were contemplating their new building, Ripley County at 19,054, had outstripped nearby Jennings, Ohio, Decatur and Switzerland Counties, and was neck-in-neck with Franklin (19,549). Jefferson and Dearborn, at approximately 25,000 each still topped the regional population figures.³⁹ The Ripley County commissioners had every reason to believe that their investment in a courthouse would be justified, in spite of the protests.

By 1900, Ripley's population, at 19,881 was third among these surrounding counties. Jefferson and Dearborn still held the top honors, but Franklin, Decatur, Switzerland, Jennings and Ohio Counties had dropped back. Today, Ripley County is fourth among this group, after Dearborn, Jefferson and Jennings.⁴⁰

Unlike most counties in Indiana, Ripley's county seat, Versailles, is not the most populous. Founded in the 1850s and the present home of a flourishing casket and furniture business, Batesville, in the northern part of the county, with a population over 6,000 is clearly the largest. Milan, in the east central part is second with a population of 1,816. Versailles is third with a population of 1,784, followed by Osgood, in the center of the county with a population of 1,669.⁴¹ During the early nineteenth century, it appeared that Versailles, at the heart of the county would prosper. Batesville's railroad, arrived in 1853, one year after its founding, beginning its growth. Today, a major interstate and highway also contribute to its transportation advantages.

The courthouse at Versailles has maintained over a much longer period of time than many in Indiana. Perhaps because less pressure for development has been felt in the little town on the edge of Laughery Creek. In addition, one of the locale's great advantages, the beauty of its site, has helped it maintain a quieter, more rural atmosphere. Beginning in the 1930s, the National Park Service acquired thousands of acres of land in the Laughery Creek valley to the north and east of Versailles and hired the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) to create a Recreational Demonstration area. In 1943 the land was given to the Indiana Department of Conservation. The 230-acre Versailles Lake was created in the 1950s and today, nearly 6,000 acres of land comprise the Versailles State Park,

³⁹ US Census figures for these areas and dates,

<http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/php/county.php>. Accessed February, 2009.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ 2000 Census Figures.

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under the jurisdiction of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. This facility and the hilly topography have established Ripley County as a recreational site for many Indiana citizens.⁴²

The county also lost considerable amount of agricultural acreage during the 1940s, when the Jefferson Proving Ground was established, converting thousands of acres in the extreme south west corner of the county to military testing use. Between 1941 and 1994, the area, more than 55,000 acres in Jefferson, Ripley and parts of Jennings Counties was home to extensive ammunition testing. Located just south of Holton, the plant brought jobs to many in the area. Closure began in 1989 and is still continuing, although much of the land is contaminated and will not be reclaimed.⁴³

The County has spawned a number of notable citizens. One who affected the town of Versailles in a dramatic way was James H. Tyson. Co-founder of the Walgreen Drug Company, he was born in Versailles in 1856. Later he learned the printing trade at the local newspaper and traveled all around the country, eventually arriving in Chicago where he met Charles Walgreen. After amassing a fortune, he returned to Versailles toward the end of his life and set up the Tyson fund. This fund was responsible for the construction of the Tyson Temple, an Art Deco building designed by the Indianapolis architectural firm of McGuire & Shook and constructed between 1936 and 1938. In addition, Mr. Tyson contributed funds for the construction of a library, school and gymnasium, all of which are architecturally outstanding. Tyson died in 1941 and is buried in Cliff Hill Cemetery, east of downtown.⁴⁴

The Ripley County Courthouse today stands as a reminder of the ambitions and aspirations of the citizens of the county. Joined by several other architecturally distinguished buildings in the small town of Versailles, its quality of design and construction have allowed it to remain distinctive for nearly 150 years. Today, it is a reminder of the simple, but dignified heritage brought forward for new generations.

Architecture

Of Indiana's 92 remaining county courthouses, only eight were built before 1860, when Ripley's edifice was planned and construction began. Of those, St. Joseph's second courthouse (1853-55) and Harrison's, (actually the Corydon Territorial Capital 1814-1816) are no longer actively used for county business. Another, the former Perry County courthouse in Rome, Indiana, has also been retired. The building at Corydon dates from the earliest period of public construction in the Northwest Territory and follows a "coffee mill" style, as described by Paul Goeldner. The building in Rome, dated to 1818, was also built in this style.⁴⁵

Although built between 1862 and 1864, because of its style we may add Switzerland's courthouse to this group of seven early buildings still in county use (Switzerland, Jefferson, Ohio, Orange,

⁴² Smith, Pp. 100,110, 118, and Indiana DNR, www.in.gov/dnr/history/

⁴³ Ruth Wright, "The Dean of Deal-Making", *The Roundabout*, Madison, Indiana, November 2002.

⁴⁴ Smith, PP. 101-103.

⁴⁵ Goeldner, p. 120-127.

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Morgan, Jennings and Decatur.) The two oldest, Ohio County's building in Rising Sun (1844) and Orange County's courthouse in Paoli (1847-50) are both excellent examples of the Greek Revival style, complete with columned porticos and the traditional temple form.

The courthouse in Versailles shows the influences of the Greek Revival style, which was in vogue, especially for public buildings between 1820 and 1860. The symmetry of its massing, prominently pedimented gables and multi-light, flat head windows are just a few of the details which can be seen in the building today. However, the Orange and Ohio County buildings stand alone in their strict adherence to the style and feeling of this early period.

During the next decade, courthouses in Jefferson County and St. Joseph County were constructed which also reflected the Greek Revival style. We can also add the courthouse in Switzerland County, built in 1862-64, to this sub-group, since it is a duplicate of the one in Jefferson County. The second courthouse in St. Joseph County was designed by a noted Chicago architect, John M. Van Osdel. It modified elements of the Greek Revival style to produce a highly original design. It features a low pitched pediment, segmental arched windows on the second floor and a baroque tower. Because of this, like the first state capital in Corydon, Harrison County, it stands alone. The two courthouses in Switzerland and Jefferson Counties, designed by the local architect-builder, David Dubach, expand upon the design vocabulary, with a great dome and tetrastyle portico on the second floor over a triple arched base. In scale and composition, both move away from the simple temple form of the older Greek Revival. They recall the great domes of state around the country and in the nation's capitol.⁴⁶

The courthouses in Martinsville, Morgan County and Vernon, Jennings County, both built between 1857 and 1859 are effectively the same design. Isaac Hodgson was the architect who provided the plans. Today, Morgan County's building has been altered, but once the two were nearly identical. They represent a version of Italianate design which is similar to that seen in residential buildings. As such, they were in the vanguard of the popularity of this style which became nearly ubiquitous in Midwestern residential architecture after 1870. They are asymmetrical, with a prominent projecting tower and other features of the style. These two buildings are as different, stylistically, from the Ripley County Courthouse as is possible.

Thus, of the courthouses built before or during the Civil War in Indiana, only Decatur County remains. This building, constructed from designs drawn by Edwin May (the architect of courthouses in Knox County and later, the state capitol in Indianapolis), relies heavily on Gothic Revival styling with touches of the Norman in its round-arched windows.⁴⁷ Built between 1854 and 1860, it has an eclectic design which puts it into a category of its own.

The Ripley County Courthouse is a blending of elements of the traditional Greek Revival design concepts (symmetry, pedimented gables, round relieving arches, flat head windows with

⁴⁶ Ibid., Pp. 237-246.

⁴⁷ Will Counts & Jon Dilts, *The Magnificent 92, Indiana Courthouses*. Bloomington, IN: The Rose Bud Press, 1991, p. 38.

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multi-lights in regular rhythms) and the soon to be popular Italianate features. The latter included the corbelled and wooden "brackets" on the frieze, in the original cornice and the use of round arch wall panels. The lack of columnar porticos and the use of the "I" plan heralded a breaking away from the traditional temple form of the Greek Revival. Yet, the restrained use of the Italianate also gives the courthouse a more chaste appearance than would be seen in examples which fully employed the repertoire of the style.

Ripley County's courthouse presaged a simplified use of this combination, which would be seen in courthouses such as the Scott (1873-4), Brown (1874-5), Martin (1876-77) and Steuben (1867-68) courthouses. But all of these were at least a decade or more later. Thus Ripley County was in advance of the changing styles and reflects both of these trends.

There are probably two reasons why this is so. First, it must be recalled that the first proposal put forward by the commissioners was for a remodeling of the existing building, which would have cost about \$6,000. It was only after some debate and analysis that the commissioners decided to build a new building, for the cost of \$16,250. It may be recalled that both of these alternatives were heatedly protested by the third commissioner and a law suit undertaken. Thus, it can be assumed that the county officials were under some pressure to produce a building at extremely reasonable cost. In this regard they certainly succeeded.

Excepting the courthouse in Corydon, Harrison County which was constructed in the first decades of the nineteenth century (probably for about \$3,000) and the one in Ohio County for which we do not have cost figures, Ripley County's courthouse is one of the least expensive. In fact, only the Orange County Courthouse (1847-50) which cost \$14,000 is cheaper and that was constructed during an era when costs had not yet begun to escalate because of the war.

The two Italianate buildings in Jennings and Morgan counties cost, respectively, \$26,375 and \$32,000. The magnificent Gothic edifice in Greensburg, Decatur County ultimately expended a whopping \$120,000 of county funds. Jefferson and Switzerland Counties buildings were built, respectively, for \$36,168 and \$29,745. Van Osdel's creation in South Bend cost the county \$31,482. Courthouses constructed after the Civil War would vary dramatically in cost.⁴⁸ The sturdy building at Versailles continues to serve the county's purposes, and will do so for many years. Even when one takes into account the various rehabilitation costs, it is probably one of the most cost-efficient expenditures the county could have made.

The second reason behind the combination of stylistic influences and construction costs is the fact that the building was designed by a local architect-surveyor. Thomas Pattison had been known for his surveying and map making work in Ripley and nearby Dearborn Counties. He was from Aurora, in Dearborn County and published a Map of Dearborn County in 1860. Otherwise we know little more about him, although it is possible that he was a collaborator on the design of at least one nineteenth century building in Aurora. As a practical man, used to the rigors of surveying, he may have seen the need for a simple, but graceful building to serve Ripley County.

⁴⁸ Ibid., various pages throughout.

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The building has withstood considerable wind and weather over the years, and still stands true and plumb. The original materials for the building gave it preeminence in the community. The specification at the end of this document calls out standards for lumber, brick and other materials. Of interest is the clear instruction that Buena Vista stone was to be used for the foundation and water table. This stone, part of the Mississippian Cuyahoga Formation was one of the earliest quarried in Ohio, dating at least back to 1814. Quarries were located in the hills above the Ohio River and along the route of the Ohio & Erie Canal in the 1830s and 1840s. It was particularly known for sites in Ross, Pike and Scioto counties in southern Ohio. Interestingly enough, in addition to mentions of its use for an 1858 Masonic building (probably in Cincinnati) it was also used for the piers of the first bridge over the Ohio River at Cincinnati, constructed between 1856 and 1867. Mr. Pattison may have known of its qualities from this engineering work. It is still quarried today.⁴⁹

The Ripley County courthouse is locally significant for its association with the government of the county and the community life of Versailles, Indiana. It is also significant as an example of one of the few courthouses built during the Civil War in a mixed style involving elements of the Greek Revival and the Italianate. In this way it presaged the changes in building style which would come. Finally, it is constructed of fine materials and workmanship which have stood the test of time and which still today demonstrate the quality of nineteenth century architecture.

⁴⁹ W. B. Ruggles, C. E., "Building Stone for Engineering Structures", *The American Engineer*, April 1894, P.186-187, and Saja, David B. & Hannigal, Joseph T., "Quarries Along the Ohio: The Quarrying History, Use, and petrology of the Buena Vista Member of the Cuyahoga Formation." Paper presented at the North-Central Section, 42nd Annual meeting, April 24-25, 2008, Geological Society of America.
http://gsa.confex.com/gsa/2008NC/finalprogram/abstract_137636.html

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Section 10.

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the south east corner of Tyson Street and North Washington Street, proceed on the south side of North Washington Street northward to the junction of North Washington and West First North Streets, thence turn east, remaining on the south side of the street, to North Main Street and turn south, following the west side of the street to Tyson Street, turning west along the north side of the street to the place of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The Courthouse Square, as described above has been traditionally associated with the building since its construction. The limits of the square is thus an appropriate and significant boundary for the courthouse.

Section 11.

Additional Documentation

Specification (Excerpted From the County Commissioners Record, June 5, 1863, copied June 6, 1863.)

"Specifications of Works Required in the Erection of Court House and County Offices at Versailles in Ripley County, Indiana in Conformity with the Accompanying drawings, by Thomas Pattison, Aurora, Ind.

The building to consist of two stories. The first or lower story to consist of a Clerk's Office, Recorder's Office, Auditor's Office, Treasurer's office and a Sherriff's office. With a Hall 15 fee wide extending across the center of the main building and wing. The main building to be 60 by 75 feet and wing 20 by 45 feet. The first story to be 16 feet high in the clear and 2nd story to be 25 feet in the clear. The 2nd story to consist of a Court Room 48 feet by 50 feet 8" in the clear and four Jury Rooms with lawyers Room and Lobby as shown on the Plan. The Ceiling over Jury Rooms may be lowered to 19 feet in the Clear. A vault will be constructed in the first story between the Clerk's and Recorder's office. Also between the Treasurer and Auditor's offices as shown on Plan, to be arched over with a 12 inch Brick Arch filled in on back with sand or earth as may be directed. To be properly shelved for the reception of Books and papers. Doors to Vaults to be of 1/4 Inch Boiler Plate. Iron frames and facings tow doors for each vault for Clerks and Recorders.

Excavations....

Masonry Foundations

The footing for the Exterior Walls and partition wall between wing and main building to be 30 inches thick and so raised to the ground level where an offset of 4 1/2 inches on each side will be made and the wall carried up to the water

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table level with a uniform thickness of 21 inches. The other Interior Walls to [be] 24 Inches thick below the ground line. And there offset 3 inches on each side thence carried up 18 inches thick to a proper leve to receive the first floor joists.

Care is to be taken in giving each stone a perfect bearing and to be thoroughly bedded in good lime & sand mortar Making through bonds as often as the Material used will admit of. And the Outside Walls above the Ground line in to be laid in as perfect Courses as possible. Each stone to be laid on the Natural and perfectly prepared bed. The Joints and beds to be fully flushed with Mortar and no stone to be tilted up with spaces[?] to plumb.

The Face. The Quoins [Note: based on the earliest photographs, there were never any quoins on this building, as we presently use the term. However, the term can and does refer to any external angle or corner, which is how it is here used.] and outside face stone. Must be selected from the best stone and hammer dressed and hammer quoins to be well dressed and tail bonded. The whole to be a good job of Rubble Masonry done up in a workmanlike manner. The foundation of Outer Walls to be 6 feet 4" high from Bottom to Top of Water Table.

Mortar...

Brick Work.

The walls from the foundations are to be constructed of Brick work of sound fair and well burnt bricks fully bedded and jointed in Mortar of Quality as above described. At least every seventh course is to be a Bonding one of Header and Stretcher Outside and continuous headers inside on Piers, Jambs & flues each alternate coarse to be bonded on the return with window jambs flared as on Plan. All flues are to be smoothly parquettted Througout and left at least 8 inches by 12 in the clear. Arches are to be turned over all Lintels and openings of suitable size, equal Curve and Summering from out to out of Lintels. Also over the vaults - No wood work will be allowed nearer than six Inches of any smoke flue, and always at least one inch to be open space.

The Chimney shafts above the Roof are to be selected of the best hard Brick. The Exterior surface to be carefully preserved from Mortar and other stains. All Exterior joints to be neatly drawn and not to Exceed on an average 3/8 Inches on Breadth. Arched recesses around Windows and the Architrave and frieze of Cornice to be formed of brick as shown on Plan. The Exterior Walls and wall between wind and Main building to be 16 Inches or the length of 2 bricks Thick. All other walls 12 inched thick including Vault arches.

Cut Stone Work

The Cut sone work will consist of Base and String courses. Exterior Steps, Caps and sills for Windows and wills, Lintel and caps for outer doors. All to be set in swimming beds of Mortar and all Joints to be flushed with mortar. No loose and pointed joints to be allowed.

In the recesses the string course must be of sufficient width to form water tables and in one length to extend at least 4 Inches longer than width of recess.

The coping for chimney tops to be in one piece for each chimney with the flue perforated in it.

All cut stone to be from the Buena Vista, Ohio quarries unless otherwise ordered by the superintendant or Board of County Commissioners.

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Carpenter Work & Material

The joists of 1st and 2nd floors to be 21/4 by 16 inches and all placed 16 Inches between Centers all to be backed and well blocked upon the walls, to be laid to long way of the Main building, to be supported by a tressed beam or girder across the Center of the Clerks and Recorders Offices. Which is to be composed of two pieces 4 b6 18 inches each girder to be properly trussed and braced by an Iron Hog Chain Rod of 1 1/4 Inch. Round charcoal Iron over the Clerks and Recorders Vaults and likewise across the sheriffs & Treasurers and large apartment of the auditors office. They will be supported by girders laid on the walls to be 6 x 14 inches all to be of the best poplar Timber. The floors will be of the best yellow poplar free of sap and shakes 1 1/4 Inch thick and not 6 inches in width planed perfectly jointed, tongued and grooved and well nailed to the joists.

The Roof will be constructed with 6 principal rafters on trusses over main building and two over each wing which last will support the Cupola. There will be two strings of purlins on each side of the Wing and three strings on each side of Main Building. The beams of all the trusses will be 6 x 16 inches principal rafter 6 x 10 inches and braces 6 x 8 inches with wing bolt and suspension rods of 1 1/4" round charcoal Iron of best quality. Common Rarfters to be 21/2 x 6 Inches placed two feet apart. The roof of wing to extend back to intersect main roof forming two vallies to be sheathed with white or yellow poplar on Inch thick and covered with good 18 Inch Yellow Poplar Shingles showing not more than 5 inches to the weather.

The Trusses....

The Cupola ...

The doors and Window frames will be of good pine lumber, also sash and doors all to [be] made and finished in conformity with the plans the lining and casing may be of good Yellow Poplar.

Stairs...

Plastering. All the walls and Ceiling will have tow coats of good brown Mortar and one of hard white finish. The Mortar to be composed of clean Sharp sand and wood burnt lime, of best quality well mixed with Slaughtered hair the lath to be sound and free from Bark.

Painting...Hand rails and doors to be grained plain Oak. And well Varnished if required. The sash will be glazed with the best American Glass, the upper windows to contain 18 lights and the lower 12 lights all 16 by 26" to be well bedded...

The work is to be constructed under the supervision and direction of a superintendant to be appointed by the Board of County Commissioners and all Materials or work not approved by him will be rejected and he will have the power to dismiss any Mechanic or laborer, from the work who refuses or neglects to do the work as ordered.

The county Com..also reserves the right to make any changes in the Plans during the Progress of the work which they and the Superintendant may deem best and the Contractor or Contractors shall be paid in proportion as the work may be increased or diminished to be estimated by the Superintendant.

The balance of the document contains the requirements for contractor's bond, the articles of agreement between the Commissioners and the contractor, James L. Yater, the levy of a special tax to pay for the work and payments for the work. The latter began in April of 1861. The document

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also guaranteed that their proceedings were legal and binding and gave all the materials in the old court house building to contractor Yater.

Photo Log:

(Digital Photographs on a CD accompany this document)

RIPLEY COUNTY COURTHOUSE

The following information is the same for all photographs unless otherwise indicated:

1. Name of Property: Ripley County Court House, 115 N. Main Street, Versailles, IN , 47042
2. County and State: Ripley County, Indiana
3. Photographer: Camille B. Fife, The Westerly Group, Inc.
4. Date of Photographs: December, 2008 and January 2009.
5. Location of original negatives (digital images): Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology, DNR, 402 W. Washington Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204; The Westerly Group, Inc, 225 East Main Street, Madison, IN 47250.

Photograph numbers and descriptions follow:

Exteriors

1. Looking NE toward the SW corner of the courthouse square, showing the courthouse and several objects on the lawn.
2. A close up of the artillery and plaque located on the SW corner of the courthouse square. Historical markers flank the piece
3. Looking approximately due north toward the south façade of the courthouse.
4. An image looking NW toward the south east corner of the building. Also in the image is a contemporary war memorial, disabled ramp and protective fencing.
5. A close up of the modern memorial, showing the three granite panels and text.
6. Looking west toward the main (east) entrance located in the 1860 part of the building.
7. A close up of the stone and embedded bronze plaque on the east side of the courthouse. The text reads: General John Morgan Marched North along this road on Sunday, July 12, 1863 in his raid across Southern Indiana --Ripley County Historical Society 1924
8. Looking SW toward the north east corner of the courthouse.
9. Looking due south toward the north side of the courthouse.
10. Looking east toward the west entrance located in the 1971 addition.

Interiors First Floor

11. Looking SW toward the main staircase in the east entrance to the building.
12. Looking SW and up toward the staircase as it ascends to the second floor.
13. Looking W and down the stairs from the first floor to the basement level.
14. Looking due West down the central hall toward the west door and the 1970s addition

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15. Looking due East down the central hall toward the main door and stair hall.
 16. Looking SE within the treasurer's office toward the vault door, showing its ornately decorated trim.
 17. Looking NE within the main hall toward the door to the Records office.
 18. Looking SE down the main hall toward the treasurer and assessor's offices.

Interiors Second Floor

19. Looking NW from within the stair hall on the second floor showing the stair and entrance.
20. Looking West, SW down the central hall toward the west stair and exit.
21. Looking NW within the Second Floor Circuit Court Room showing the judge's bench.
22. Looking due West from the central hall toward the west exit.

Interiors Third Floor

23. Looking NE to the Third Floor stair.
24. Looking West down the central hall. A door to one of the small conference rooms is visible on the right.
25. Looking NW within the Superior Court Room on the Third Floor.
26. Looking south in the basement hall toward rear exit doors via an outside stair.

Interiors Basement

27. Looking SE within the women's rest room.
28. Looking SW within the electrical-boiler room toward the mechanical systems of the courthouse.

Interiors Tower (not shown on figure)

29. Looking south east from within first stage of the tower toward the machine which operated the tower clock.
30. Looking up toward the bell located on the north side of the tower. There are five bells in all, one at each side of the massive timber frame shown in the photo and one above. The photo is taken within the east side of the second stage of the tower. A vent at right is covered with screening to keep birds out.

Interiors Attic (not shown on figure)

31. Looking east from within the attic area toward the gable end of the east wing showing the massive timber trusses which support the tower and building. This timber, although cracked is approximately 16 inches.
32. Looking east and north along the east wall of the upper part of the former third floor, probably the area above the stair to the attic space, just below where the floor was

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removed and replaced during the 1971-72 remodeling. The painting is primitive, but was probably echoed in other parts of the building.

Figures which follow this document:

Figure 1. Site Plan

Figure 2. 1st & 2nd Floor Plans

Figure 3. 3rd & Basement Floor Plans

Figure 4: 1883 Map of Versailles

Figure 5: Early Photograph of the Courthouse, probably c. 1880

Figure 6: Photograph of the Courthouse, probably c. 1890

**Figures 7a, 7b, 7c, 7d, 7e, 7f: Photographs of selected drawings from 1971-72 renovation,
David B. Hill & Assoc.**

**Figures 8a, 8b, 8c: Photographs of selected drawings from 1999 renovation, Howard J. Barth
& Assoc.**

Figure 9: Comparative composite of 14 courthouses.