PAULDING COUNTY

URTHOUSE CENTENNIAL

June 20-21, 1986



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Credits page 2

Courthouse Centennial Program 3

Messages of Congratulations 4

A History of Paulding County's County Seats Courthouses 7

The Original County Seats and Courthouses 8

Construction of the New Courthouse: 1886 10

Construction of the New Courthouse: 1887 18

Construction of the New Courthouse: 1888 21

Later Developments 25

Footnotes 27

Bibliography 28

Persons Names As Paid For Work on the New Courthouse, 1886-1888 30

A HISTORY OF PAULDING COUNTY'S COUNTY SEATS AND COURTHOUSES

A Centennial Anniversary Publication
Researched, Written, and Produced by Melinda Huseby Krick
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THE CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

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Harry Wiebe

COURTHOUSE CENTENNIAL PROGRAM

June 20 and 21, 1986

Friday, June 20, 1986

6:00 p.m. — DEDICATION OF BANDSTAND
Recognition of FFA Students and REA Employees

6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. — BAVARIAN BRASS
Music for dancing - singing - listening

CENTENNIAL DISPLAY OF MEMORIES OF THE PAST
Around the Courthouse Square

Saturday, June 21, 1986

9:00 a.m. — WALK AROUND THE SQUARE
View the display of old vehicles, machinery, hitching post and horses
Watch the craftsmen at work

OLD STYLE BAND ORGAN
Ken Smith of Black Lick, Ohio - owner

GAMES, RIDES AND ENTERTAINMENT OF YESTERYEAR
Courthouse lawn

1:00 p.m. — PARADE
Master of Ceremonies - Nolan "Tucker" Shisler

GRAND MARSHALLS
Olive Armstrong and Sylvia Simpkins

2:00 p.m. — PROGRAM AT BANDSTAND
Introduction of special guests

OPEN CORNERSTONE
Northeast corner of courthouse

FLAG BURNING CEREMONY
Courthouse Lawn

BEST DECORATED BICYCLE CONTEST
Courthouse Lawn

During this two day celebration, everyone is asked to dress in old fashioned clothes, including merchants and courthouse employees.

Friday and Saturday, the Post Office will have a booth to hand stamp any letters to be mailed with a special "Centennial Postmark". Special centennial envelopes will also be available.



RICHARD F CELESTE
GOVERNOR

STATE OF OHIO
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COLUMBUS 43266-0601

June 21, 1986

Dear Paulding County Board of Commissioners:

I want to extend my congratulations to you and the citizens of Paulding County on the 100th anniversary of the Paulding County courthouse.

This great occasion which has called you together in celebration is made meaningful by those citizens of Paulding County who have gone before you. As Willa Cather said in O Pioneers!, "the history of every country begins in the heart of a man or a woman." One hundred years ago the men and women of Paulding County built this courthouse as evidence of their belief in the ability of the people in this northwest Ohio community to govern themselves.

They may not have realized they were creating history, but those citizens of Paulding County who were present one hundred years ago to witness the laying of the courthouse cornerstone created your history just as you who are present today are creating the history of your children. As you remove the cornerstone and examine its contents, you are joined with the citizens of 1886. Likewise in one hundred years - 2086 - at this building's 200th anniversary, your actions will blend with those of the celebrants on that June day.

You, the citizens of Paulding County, can look with pride on your courthouse. It symbolizes 100 years of commitment to freedom and justice for all Paulding Countians. What's more, the contents of the cornerstone represent your collective past - your history which began in the hearts of your ancestors.

Ohio is a great state because of its people...people such as you who are gathered here today before your courthouse...people who remember and honor the memories of their past....people who build on their history to make a better tomorrow. Best wishes in your future endeavors.

Best Regards,

Richard F. Celeste

Richard F. Celeste
Governor

WILLIAM V. ROTH, JR., DELAWARE, CHAIRMAN

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MARGARET P. CRENSHAW, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 20, 1986

Paulding County Commissioners
Court House Square
Paulding, OH 45879

Dear Friends:

I sincerely regret that I am unable to join the festivities today celebrating the 100th birthday of the Paulding County Courthouse. I do, however, want to take this opportunity to offer my best wishes for a successful and joyous celebration.

Like you, I am proud of our nation's heritage of community social events, and of the graceful architecture of buildings like your Courthouse. As you celebrate the one hundredth birthday of your courthouse remember that you are also celebrating our time-honored belief in equal justice under the law.

My wife Annie joins me in extending our best wishes for this event.

Best regards.

Sincerely,

John Glenn

John Glenn
United States Senator

JG/eaw



A HISTORY OF PAULDING COUNTY'S COUNTY SEATS AND COURTHOUSES

In the year 1886, Paulding County was in the midst of a great twenty-year boom in population and economy never before or since equalled in the county's history. In less than ten years the population had doubled, and would double again to a peak of 27,528 residents by the 1900 census. The people settling here during those years were lured to the Great Black Swamp by the promise of prosperity by clearing and processing the vast forests covering the county. Timber was the main industry and the basis of the boom until most of the trees had been removed, about 1900.

To residents in the mid-1880s, though, there was no end in sight. Towns had been springing up all over the county and virtually all had a sawmill or stave factory or some type of business engaged in manufacturing wood products. As timber to supply these industries was removed, cleared land was left for agricultural development; the amount of arable land was doubling every decade along with the population. Ditching efforts to drain the land had begun and "improved roads" were petitioned for throughout the county. Three railroads traversed the county, and the Cincinnati, Jackson & Mackinaw Railroad had reached the county seat, Paulding Center, about 1884 and pushed north into Michigan, all linking the county with the distant marketplaces for its products.

Towns were thriving; many had several hardwares, groceries, dry goods stores, general stores, saloons, and other businesses. In the mid-1800s in the larger towns, frame buildings began to be replaced by more substantial brick "blocks," which were less susceptible to fire damage from the catastrophic fires which often devastated the towns. During the next several years, the local newspapers noted nearly every week new brick buildings under construction in business districts. Dwellings were in short supply for the multitude of new settlers and more had to be built. The March 25, 1886 issue of the Paulding Democrat proclaimed that "the building boom is on and soon there will be employment for all who want it."1

At this point, Paulding, as the county seat, did not have a courthouse for transacting county business. A frame building containing a court room and jury rooms stood on the northeast corner of the square facing Main Street, and county officers were housed in

Postcard courtesy Roger Sierer

a crumbling brick building south of the court building. In late 1885 or early 1886, it was decided that a new courthouse was needed with offices for county officers and for safely keeping county records. Undoubtedly, the building would also symbolize the modern, prosperous, and fastest-growing county in Ohio as it emerged from the woods and looked to the future.

The Original County Seats and Courthouses

The first settlements within Paulding County were by Shadrach Hudson and Isaac Carey along the Auglaize River in 1819, a year before the county was formed from Indian Territory on April 1, 1820. The base line from which the surveys of public lands were made was established in May, 1819, by Sylvanus Bourne. Township lines were established in 1820 by Alexander Holmes, Samuel Holmes and others, although townships were not organized for several years. Townships were subdivided into sections in 1821-1822 by James W. Riley and his assistants.

The county did not actually organize until 1839. Previously, it had been under the jurisdiction of Wood County from 1820 to 1824, then of Williams County from 1824 to 1839. In the fall of that year, Paulding County's first county seat was established in New Rochester, at that time the largest and most flourishing village, located on the south bank of the Maumee River just north of Cecil. It had been laid out in 1835 by Dr. John Evans, Robert Clemmer, and the Revs. N.L. Thomas and Joseph Miller. According to the 1892 atlas, "at the time of the location of the county seat there, the village contained thirty or forty families, three hotels, three general stores, two blacksmith shops, two tailor shops, and was on a daily stage line, leading from Toledo to Fort Wayne."2

No courthouse was built in New Rochester, but court was held on the second floor of a business owned by Gen. Horatio N. Curtis. County officers located wherever they could find offices. Following the county's organization in 1839, the first associate judges Nathan Eaton, Gilman C. Mudgett, and John Hudson, met that year and appointed Horatio N. Curtis as clerk pro tem and Andrew J. Smith as sheriff. Edwin Phelps, of Defiance, was appointed prosecuting attorney as no lawyers resided in Paulding County. The first and only term of court was presided over by Hon. Emery D. Potter in spring, 1840. At that time lawyers traveled with judges on the court circuit. No traces of the once-thriving village of New Rochester remains today.

The village of Charloe, on the west bank of the Big Auglaize River, was platted in 1840 by Benjamin F. Hollister to become the new county seat. Hollister had agreed to construct a courthouse, at his expense, with the understanding that it would remain county property unless the county seat was removed from Charloe. Hollister built a thirty-foot by forty foot, two-story brick courthouse on a stone foundation for $10,000. Woodwork and furnishings were of black walnut. On the first floor were located six county offices, three on each side of a central hall. The courtroom was on the second floor.

The county seat was transferred to Charloe in 1841. John H. Palmer, S. Briggs, and Patrick G. Good were common pleas judges. Located in Charloe at this time were the courthouse, a hotel, several businesses, and a population of about five hundred, including county officers and their families and four attorneys and their families. After the county seat was moved to Paulding Center in 1851, the courthouse reverted to the Hollister heirs, who were not interested in the building. For several years it was used for public gatherings, and eventually the structure rotted away and crumbled.

As the story goes, Paudling was founded because:

> In the year 1849 a party of gentlemen in Van Wert were discussing the probable future of the northwestern counties of Ohio, one of them remarked that "the county seat of Paulding County was not where it should be and would probably be changed sometime." A shrewd speculator hearing the above remark quickly concluded that the change might be hastened by immediate and energetic action, and that he might profit by it.3

Charloe, located in the eastern section of the county, was on both the Auglaize River and the Miami and Erie Canal, the major means of transportation in the county when Charloe was the county seat. The eastern sections of the county were more heavily populated, but the western and southern sections were gaining in population and a more centrally-located county seat would be necessary. Lands near the center of the county were purchased and on August 10, 1850, Paulding Center was platted by a man appropriately named George Marsh. It was surveyed by Ezra J. Smith, county surveyor, on the left bank of Crooked Creek (Flat Rock Creek) one and one-half miles north of the geographical center of the county.

The new town was in the middle of the woods with no settlements for miles and only a few wagon roads connecting it to civilization. An act of the state legislature moved the county seat to Paulding Center in spring, 1851, and Charloe desperately tried to regain the designation but failed. Several log cabin residences were built in this wilderness hamlet and the first two terms of court were held in Elias Shafer's cabin until a courthouse could be constructed.

On the northeast corner of the square, Paulding County's second courthouse was built in 1852, a frame, thirty-foot by forty-foot, two-story structore similar to the one in Charloe, but "it was an ungainly, ill-proportioned affair, and from the day of its completion had a sort of rickety, tumble-down appearance."4 The building was destroyed by fire on January 2, 1868, and many county records were lost.

The third courthouse was constructed soon afterwards upon the same site by Francis Reiniche under terms of a contract with the commissioners for $2,000. The building again was frame, thirty feet by forty feet, but only one story and contained only a courtroom and jury rooms. County offices and records were located in a long, brick building, called "brick row," south of the court building facing Main Street. Brick for the offices was brought via the canal to Tate's Landing, then south to Paulding in wagons over the muddy roads, a very slow and costly method of transportation.

After several years of use the buildings were in disrepair. The court building was the only room in town available for meetings, social gatherings, and even for church services. A local church history cites a description of the courtroom at that time:

> The room was large and nearly square; the floor partially covered with hemp carpet. In the center of the room was a large stove, which on many occasions was decorated with moss and ferns, which grew so profusely in the woods close by. The ceiling was adorned with cob-webs and one might almost as well have tried to sweep the cob-webs out of the sky as to try to sweep them from the ceiling of the old court room. Almost every kind of gathering was held in the court house. Besides the different courts were the political meetings, lectures, concerts, shows, suppers, spelling, schools, bazaar, in fact everything of this nature, for it was the only available room in town.5

The condition of "brick row" had also deteriorated to the point where walls were collapsing; some had to be supported with timbers and some walls had holes in them. Paulding Democrat reported in spring, 1886, that since the ground frost was melting a section of ground along "brick row" was heaving up, causing a large bulge in the outside wall. All agreed this place was unfit to transact county business and store official county records.

Construction of the New Courthouse: 1886

The question, then, was whether to repair the old structures or construct a new courthouse containing both courtrooms and county offices. In January, 1886, a petition was circulated requesting the state legislature to grant the county commissioners permission to sell $40,000 in bonds for constructing a new courthouse. The petition read:

> To the General Assembly of the State of Ohio: We, the undersigned resident Tax Payers and Voters of Paulding County, State of Ohio, respectfully represent that Public Necessity requires the building of a Court House, in and for said county, with suitable county offices. We ask; therefore, that your honorable body may cause such legislation as may be necessary, authorizing and to require the Commissioners, of said county, to issue Bonds in the sum of $40,000, and build for said county, forthwith, a Court house, to cost $40,000.6

On February 25, 1886, the Paulding Democrat happily reported that about 1,500 "voters and freeholders: in the county had signed the petition. On the same date, the Antwerp Argus devoted an editorial opposing the proposed construction because it would place another tax burded on the county, which was already in financial straits. The Argus merely asked that the question of whether to construct a courthouse at that time be put to a vote, and "if such decision be in its favor, then all strife between sections will cease, and no further complaint can be made."7 Hon. John L. Geyer, the county representative, introduced the petition as a bill to the state legislature in March.



The Lenawee County Courthouse was built in Adrian, Michigan, in 1885 and designed by architect E. O. Fallis. Fallis designed Paulding County Courthouse in 1886, using the earlier Adrian Courthouse as a model. —Photo by M. Krick.

Apparently, county residents were so concerned over the proposal that a delegation of Hon. L.S. Gordon, Hon. Henry George, and L.B. Peaslee were selected at a meeting to go to the legislature on the matter. The Antwerp Argus reported that throughout the county, talk was heard of obtaining an injunction to stop proceedings for at least three years. However, news was received in mid-April that the bill was passed by state senate and had become law, giving the commissioners the green light to proceed.

County Commissioners F.M. Wade, J.V. Sharp, and Thomas Chester met April 24, 1886, and "discussed the best plan to proceed with in building the court house."8 A seven-man building committee was organized, composed of the commissioners, Clerk T.J. Champion, probate judge W.G. Lee, Sheriff D.W. Parr, and J.B. Zuber (appointed by common pleas judge). The committee traveled on April 27-29 to Celina, Ottawa, Lima, Findlay, and other points to view their courthouses to get ideas for a design for the Paulding County courthouse.

Paulding Democrat, on May 6, said the following architects met May 5 with the building committee to present plans and specifications: Prof. John Eisenman, Cleveland; J.C. Crain, Logansport, Ind.; Wing & Mahurin, Fort Wayne; D.C. Shureman of Rumbaugh & Shureman, Cincinnati; J.C. Johnson, Fremont; and Jay V. Olds, Paulding. No plans or architects were accepted that day.

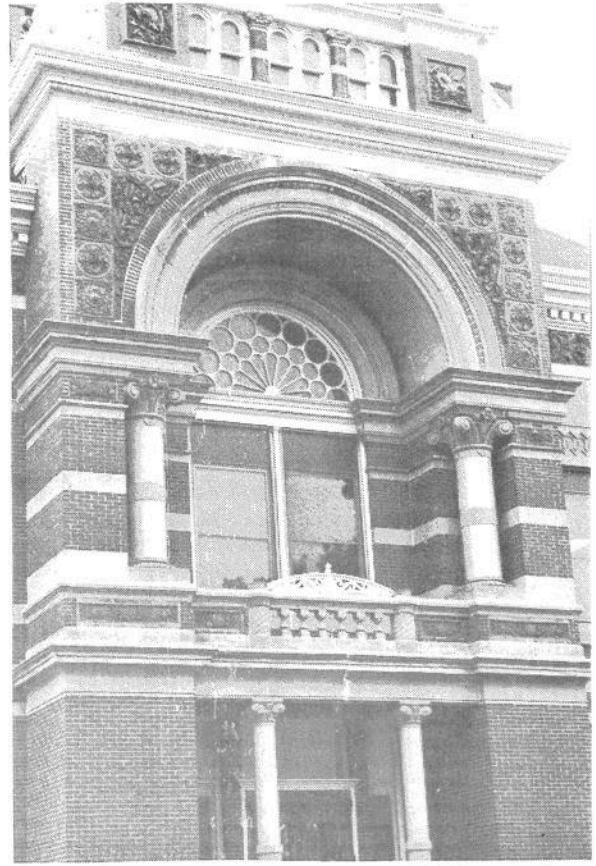
On May 18, the committee met again to look at plans presented by architects for the building. Commissioners selected the plans of Toledo architect Edward Oscar Fallis, and he entered into a contract to furnish plans and specifications for the building and superintend its construction. Other architects in attendance that day were J.C. Holland, Topeka, Kan.; J.C. Johnson, Fremont; D.C. Shureman, Cincinnati; J.P. Boyd, Pittsburgh; J.F. Wing, Fort Wayne; F.O. Wearey, Akron; J.C. Crain, Logansport, Ind.; and J.V. Olds, Paulding. The Paulding Democrat stated each was given a separate interview, and the process took over a day to complete.

Fallis (1851-1927) was a prominent and prolific architect with 107 known buildings commissioned. He designed every type of building, including residences, commercial, industrial, religious, academic, governmental, and agricultural. Fallis was architect for Toledo's first brick skyscraper, Toledo State Hospital, a residence called "The Castle" in Defiance, and the Williams County courthouse (built 1888-1889) in Bryan and Lenawee County courthouse (1885) in Adrian, Michigan. Eight courthouses in five states are attributed to Fallis, but he may have designed as many as twelve courthouses, all on the single-face or four-faced plans.

The commissioners chose Fallis' four-faced, or four front, plan as the new courthouse would stand in the center of town on the square. The design is virtually identical to the Adrian courthouse, except that Paulding County's courthouse does not have such

lavish exterior and interior trim. Both structures are constructed with brick, and the Adrian courthouse has bands of stone trim. An architectural description of Fallis' six four-faced courthouses states:

> Four of the six...were executed in a heavily classical Roman idiom and abound with classical motifs. Yet while they shared numerous characteristics, each had its own "mark of distinction"....The Paulding County courthouse offered the only round tower of the group. This tower was capped by two unusual Roman temple-like domes, one large and the uppermost dome much smaller. This latter dome was nearly identical to the small dome atop the Adrian courthouse. The Paulding courthouse featured the most extensive brick corbelling and two pairs of massive, highly corbelled bridged chimneys over opposing entrances. 9



Detail of the lavish exterior decorative trim on the Adrian courthouse, featuring terra-cotta floral and classical designs.—Photo by M. Krick.

The Antwerp Argus noted on June 3, 1886, that the building committee had traveled to Adrian earlier in the week "to view a new court house--their expenses being paid by a stone mason, which is all kerect."10

Fallis presented his plans and specifications for the courthouse to the building committee June 25. Immediately, the wisdom of continuing with the original concept of building with four entrances was challenged. Committee member D.W. Parr moved that the committee approve the plans substantially as presented by Fallis. The motion was seconded by J.B. Zuber. Commissioner Thomas Chester then moved to amend Parr's motion and adopt a plan for a two-front building. Chester's motion was seconded by W.G. Lee. In a vote taken on the amendment, Chester and Lee voted yes and all others voted no, and the amendment was declared lost. A vote was taken on the original motion favoring a four-faced building, and all voted to approve the motion except for Chester. That day, commissioners also passed a motion granting Fallis "the privilege of making his working and detailed plans and specifications on a estimate of $37,000."11



Detail of the exterior decorative brick trim and classical arch motifs of Paulding County Courthouse.—Photo by M. Krick.

Commissioner Chester was not satisfied yet with the idea of a four-faced courthouse. When commissioners met the following day, Chester submitted this written motion:

> Moved by Thomas Chester that E.O. Fallis, Architect of court house, be instructed to place the offices of the Auditor, Treasurer, and Commissioners, with vaults of Auditor and Treasurer, on the north side plans of court house, and that north entrance to first floor plan be dispensed with and said vaults be placed a sufficient distance to the north to give room for stairs to second floor, and a partition wall between said vaults be placed in center of hall as shown on plan presented on June 25, 1886, so as to add much necessary and valuable room to both Auditor and Treasurer's offices, and save the cost of a fourth and worse than useless entrance.12

When the motion received no second, Chester then moved to place his written motion on record. All three commissioners agreed, and it was entered on commissioners' journal.

Commissioners passed a resolution June 26, 1886, to issue $40,000 in bonds to construct the courthouse. The bonds were to bear four percent interest annually, interest payable on the first days of February and August each year. Four bonds of $1,000 each would become due on the first day of February of the years 1895, 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903 and 1904. Commissioners then advertised for bids for the bonds.

The architect had been selected, the plans had been drawn up, a contractor would be chosen, and it was anticipated that construction would begin soon. However, the commissioners had not obtained Paulding Village's permission tc build the courthouse on the town square. On August 2, 1886, the clerk of Paulding Village presented the following resolution as passed by the council June 28:

> RESOLUTION giving certain permission and privileges to the board of County Commissioners of Paulding County, Ohio:
>
> Sec. 1. Be it Resolved by the Council of the Incorporated Village of Paulding...that the Board of County commissioners...have the privilege and are hereby permitted to build, erect and maintain a court house upon the public grounds in said Village, known as public square upon the original recorded plat of said Village; and that said Board of County Commissioners have the further privilege to make such improvements upon said grounds and keep the same in such repair as may be conducive to and consistent with the use of the public therein, and the occupation thereof by said Board.
>
> Sec. 2. That no privilege or permission herein granted shall extend to any time beyond the time of occupation of said grounds by said Board for Court house purposes. 13

Commissioners had advertised for contractors to bid on furnishing materials and constructing the courthouse for four weeks in the Paulding Democrat and Paulding County Gazette. Bids were opened on August 12, 1886, four received for the complete project, one for stone work, and one for vault doors. The bids were submitted as follows:

J.T. Kerrish and N.J. Brandeberry, Milan, Ohio; materials and labor, $34,475.00.
W.H. Myers & Son, Contractors, Hillsdale, Michigan; materials and labor, $35,700.00.
J.P. Davis; Excavation, stone & concrete work, $2,050.00.
Rud. Ehrhart, Defiance, Ohio; materials and labor, $33,380.00.
Dawson and Anderson, Toledo, Ohio; materials and labor, $39,300.00.
B.F. Smith per S.L. French, Agt.; vault doors, $400.00.

Commissioners awarded the contract to Rudolph Ehrhart, his bid considered the lowest and

best bid. Paulding Democrat reported that "by the terms of Mr. Ehrhart's contract the basement story is to be finished by the 15th of October, 1886; and the building fully completed by the 1st of December, 1887."14

The $40,000 worth of bonds for the project were to have been sold August 26, 1886, but commissioners met that day and declared all bids received for the bonds were rejected, and passed a resolution to re-advertise for bids. Interest on the bonds was raised to five percent per year instead of four percent and would be sold September 30, 1886.

Advertisements for bids appeared in the Toledo Blade and Paulding Democrat. On September 30, the bonds were sold to the highest bidder, W.H. Pennell of Van Wert, for $41,000. Pennell was from the Van Wert National Bank.

No date can be found of when actual groundbreaking began, but work was underway probably in September. Paulding Democrat noted in October that much of the stone being used in the basement came from Lewisburg, Preble County, Ohio. The cut brown sandstone for the basement was the best quality from the quarry at Stony Point, Michigan. It is believed that much of the brick used in constructing the courthouse was manufactured in Paulding by a firm owned by George Edward Coon. He may have had two brickyards in town, one located behind Live Oak Cemetery. No known records indicate that the brick was shipped here from other brickyards, except when there was a shortage of brick in June, 1887, and some was shipped from Defiance.

November 4, 1886, Paulding Democrat stated the courthouse cornerstone would be laid during a ceremony by the Masonic Fraternity in mid-November and promised to print a program the following week. On November 11, they made no mention of the cornerstone ceremony but reported that work on the basement was progressing nicely and credited Ehrhart, who was superintending construction.

A notice appeared in the following week's paper that the cornerstone-laying ceremony was set for December 21 and "reduced rates on railroads have been obtained. [Masonic] Grand Master S.Straker Williams and others will be present and deliver addresses. The general public is cordially invited and it is hoped that there will be a large attendance. Good music will be on the grounds."15 A number of Masonic organizations from surrounding towns and cities were scheduled to attend, including the Masonic lodge and Prof. Hiestand's Band from Van Wert, according to the Van Wert Bulletin.

A few days before the ceremony, the Antwerp Argus published a notice of the planned events and stated about the building that:

> The past season has been very favorable for the contractor, Mr. Rudy Ehrhart, and with a few more days of favorable weather, the basement and foundation will be fully completed, which, we understand is as far as the building will progress until Spring opens, when it will be pushed to a rapid completion. The building when finished will be a very handsome one, having as it will, four fronts, and if constructed in accordance with plans and specifications, it will be an honor to our county. 16

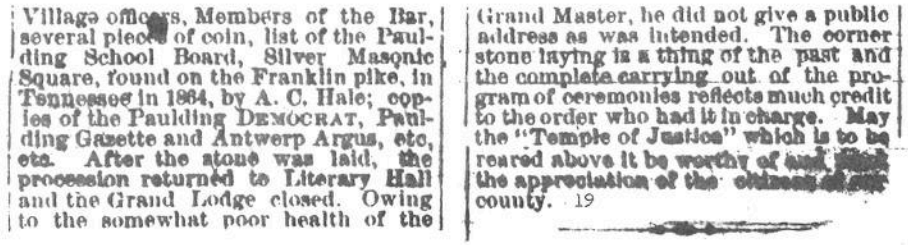
The Antwerp Argus article also mentioned that it had originally opposed the project because of the additional tax burden, but since the issue was settled and construction was proceeding, it was the duty of every taxpayer and every county official to look after every phase of construction, beginning with the laying of the cornerstone.

The cold of winter was settling in and a cold snap plagued the area in mid-December, undoubtedly effecting the number of persons attending the ceremony. Still, according to local newspaper reports, a large crowd of men and women from the area braved the cold and gathered at 1 p.m. December 21, 1886, to witness laying the Vermont granite cornerstone in a "beautiful and impressive ceremony" well-attended by Masons from "Antwerp, Van Wert and other points in Paulding, Van Wert and Defiance Counties,"17 as stated in the Paulding County Gazette. The article also said that the several items placed in the cornerstone were "to remain until the new Court House shall be deemed too small for the business of the county and give way to one of larger dimensions."18

An accounting of the proceedings also appreard in the Paulding Democrat and is included here in its entirety:

Laying of the Corner Stone.

Last Tuesday the laying of the corner stone of the new court house was performed by the Masonic Fraternity, and was witnessed by a large crowd of people from this and surrounding counties. At 1 o'clock, p. m., the F. & A. M. Lodge of this place met the visiting members from the south at the depot, formed in procession and headed by the Paulding Harmony Band marched to Literary Hall where the Grand Lodge of Ohio was opened. After this and at about 3 o'clock the procession, headed by S. S. Williams, M. W. G. Master, of Newark, Ohio, moved to the court house square, where the ceremonies were performed in a very imposing manner, in the presence of a large number of ladies and gentlemen from town and country. The stone is a ~~parallelopiped of gray granite, three~~ feet in length and two feet in height and thickness. It occupies a position on the northeast corner of the building and is inscribed as follows: On the east end, at the top is engraved the triangular symbol of the square and compass, and the words "S. S. Williams, M. W. G. Master;" below these follow, "Dedicated by the Paulding Lodge, No. 502, F. & A. M., Dec. 21. A. D. 1886, A. L. 5886." The north side bears the inscription, "E. O. Fallis & Co., Architects, Toledo, O. R. Ehrhart, Con., Defiance, O. F. M. Wade, J. V. Sharp, Thos. Chester, Commissioners. Within the stone was deposited a copper box containing a copy of the Holy Laws, List of the County and



Village officers, Members of the Bar, several pieces of coin, list of the Paulding School Board, Silver Masonic Square, found on the Franklin pike, in Tennessee in 1864, by A. C. Hale; copies of the Paulding DEMOCRAT, Paulding Gazette and Antwerp Argus, etc, etc. After the stone was laid, the procession returned to Literary Hall and the Grand Lodge closed. Owing to the somewhat poor health of the Grand Master, he did not give a public address as was intended. The corner stone laying is a thing of the past and the complete carrying out of the program of ceremonies reflects much credit to the order who had it in charge. May the "Temple of Justice" which is to be reared above it be worthy of and elicit the appreciation of the citizens of the county. 19

Construction of the New Courthouse: 1887

The onset of winter made further construction impossible and work was discontinued until late February or early March. Commissioners met January 1, 1887, and voted to approve Fallis' proposal to employ a superintendent to supervise daily courthouse construction. Fallis and the commissioners were to equally divide the cost of the superintendent's wages. In later commissioners' journal entries the name of David Shaw is listed as being paid for services as superintendent.

Only two changes to the original plans were approved by the commissioners at the request of Ehrhart. The first, in October, 1886, called for raising the rubble stone work in the basement an additional one foot higher at a cost of $399.57. The second change, in March, 1887, was to reduct the flagging (stone paving) in four vaults from six inches to four inches in thickness at a reduced cost of $46.80.

Beginning in March, the more visible construction of the courthouse began, and nearly every week following, the newspapers chronicled the latest developments until the exterior was completed about nine months later, in November. Reading the newspaper excerpts, it is easy to visualize how the building grew to loom over the tiny, muddy village in the middle of the Great Black Swamp:

From the Paulding Democrat:

March 10, 1887 -"Stone cutters have commenced dressing up stone for use in the new court house."

March 24, 1887 -"Four or five men are engaged in preparing stone to be laid in the new courthouse building."

April 14, 1887 -"The inside brick walls of the new court house are commencing to loom up. Contractor Earhart [sic] has a force of about twenty men engaged."

From the Antwerp Argus:

April 28, 1887 -"About thirty workmen are employed on the new court house. The contractor is pushing the work very rapidly."

May 12, 1887 -"The brick work on the new court house is now about 15 feet high above the level of the ground."

From the Paulding Democrat:

May 26, 1887 -"The new court house walls are now finished up to the second story and parts of the joists for that floor have been laid."

From the Antwerp Argus:

June 9, 1887 -"The first story of the new court house is now up, and the second story commenced."

From the Paulding Democrat:

June 23, 1887 -"Contractor Ehrhart is having trouble to secure brick for the construction of the court house. We are told that he will have some shipped here from Defiance."

June 30, 1887 -"The walls of the second story of the court house are now going up."

July 14, 1887 -"The walls of the new court house are now up to the top of the second story."

From the Antwerp Argus:

July 28, 1887 -"Work on the new court house is progressing finely. The brick work of the second story is about completed and work on the roof and dome will be commenced ere long."

From the Paulding Democrat:

August 4, 1887 -"Work on the Court House has progressed rather slowly since last Friday as most of the brick layers have been sick since that time. The terrible hot dry weather is the cause of their trouble."

August 25, 1887 -"G.W. Gardner, photographer of Napoleon, came here last Thursday and took a view of the new court house for the architect."

September 8, 1887-"The work of putting in timbers for the roof of the new court house is progressing nicely."

From the Antwerp Argus:

September 15, 1887-"Work on the new court house progresses rather slowly. However, the workmen are now putting on the rafters and sheeting preparatory for slate roofing. It will be a fine structure when completed, and will compare favorably with any other court house in Northwestern Ohio."

From the Paulding Democrat:

October 6, 1887 -"The work of putting the slate on roof of the new Court house will be commenced as soon as the sub-contractor for that part of the job arrives from Toledo. The plastering will also commence as soon as enough of the roof is on to keep it dry. The whole structure has been greatly delayed by furnishing of material."

October 13, 1887 -"The brick work on the court house is now complete except finishing two chimneys."

From the Antwerp Argus:

October 13, 1887 -"Slate for the new court house roof has arrived, and is now piled up

on the court house yard."

From the Paulding Democrat:

October 20, 1887 -"The slate is being put on the court house roof and the dome is gradually ascending skyward."

October 27, 1887 -"Plastering is going forward at a rapid rate on the inside walls of the new court house."

November 3, 1887 -"Workmen are engaged in leveling off the earth which was exhumed from the court house basement."

November 17, 1887-"The new heating apparatuses for the new court house are this week being placed in position--four for the benefit of the whole building and one especially for the court room and are what is known as the Phelps Improved furnace."

-"The outside brick work on the new court house was completed the fore part of the week."

-"Painters are improving the outward appearance of the new court house. Some of the windows have also been put in."

November 24, 1887-"Ed. Shessler is in Paulding overseeing the painting of the court house."

At the end of November, a somewhat humorous episode in the construction occurred when men working on the furnaces in the basement went on strike for a day against construction superintendent David Shaw. An account of the incident appeared on the front page of the Paulding Democrat December 1, 1887:

Court House Workmen Strike.

Trouble arose between the workmen on the court house and Supervising Architect Shaw last Saturday which culminated in a general strike Tuesday of all the hands employed on the building. There seems to have been an ill-feeling existing between Shaw and the men for some time and the volcano which had been smouldering broke forth in a general eruption on account of the refusal of the men last Saturday to work at brick-laying for setting the new furnaces in the basement of the building because of poor light, it being a very cloudy day and the Supervisor refused to furnish any artifical light. On Tuesday morning the workmen hoisted a black flag at half mast on the flag pole at the top of the building and then securing for each one a piece of tin or some other instrument with which a noise could be made by pounding, they formed in procession, double file, with one of their number acting as drum major flourishing a short stick, and they marched around the court house several times bearing in the procession an effigy which we suppose was intended to represent the gentleman with whom their differences had occurred. It was a novel parade and attracted the attention of a number of our townspeople. Beyond getting pretty full of red liquor they committed no offense and it was looked upon as innocent fun. One of their number informed us later in the day that there would be no resumption of work under Shaw's management and a new man would have to be substitued in his place.

LATER—Tuesday afternoon contractor Earhart returned to the seat of war and matters were adjusted by the Commissioners giving Shaw a leave of absence from duty. Wednesday morning the black flag was hauled down from the masthead, the stars and stripes run up in its place and work resumed with nothing left to bring to memory the mutiny of a few hours previous.

The contract calls for the completion of the building we believe about this time, but from present appearances the finishing touches will not be put on before the bluebirds carol their melodies again. 20

An interesting sidelight to the strike is that the architect, S.S. Saille, mentioned in his personal journal that he had ordered a man named "Rob. Shaw" discharged from the Adrian courthouse job on June 14, 1885. The possibility exists that David Shaw and Rob. Shaw were related. Apparently David Shaw was replaced by J.C. Hale as superintendent as commissioners' journals twice mention paying him for the work.

If the Paulding Democrat was accurate in reporting the terms of the contract with Ehrhart, then all construction was to be completed by December 1, 1887. Workmen were finishing the courthouse dome in late December, and in late January, 1888, Ehrhart said work would be completed in about six weeks if the weather was good.

Construction of the New Courthouse: 1888

In the beginning of 1888, finishing work was all that remained to complete construction. In November, commissioners had given Ehrhart permission to start the furnaces, which allowed interior work to proceed through the winter. Plastering and inside carpentry work were progressing in January. Newspapers noted in February that tin was being put on the dome, floors were being finished, and painters were working on the offices.

The commissioners advertised in February for bids to supply furnishings for the new building. The county officers had accompanied the commissioners on a tour of the new offices to suggest what furnishings would be necessary. Manufacturers from several cities were expected to attend the commissioners' meeting March 29, 1888, when bids were to be opened. Commissioners awarded the contract to Conant Brothers of Toledo for $2,752 with delivery on or before June 1, 1888.

Paulding Democrat proclaimed on April 19, 1888, that the courthouse interior was completed. Only building stair steps and slating the roof of the dome remained to complete the outside. Slating was expected to be difficult because of the curved surface. An article in the same issue of the newspaper said a representative of Edison Electric Light Co., Toledo, had visited Paulding to promote installing an electric light plant in the courthouse. The commissioners had not decided on the project, but there was local discussion of purchasing a plant to light the streets and homes in town.

It might also be noted that John S. Snook and Wilson H. Snook, both judges and political

leaders in the late 1800s and early 1900s, brought another "first" to the courthouse. The Snooks had purchased some sheep from a Nova Scotia geneticist and inventor. Some of his inventions were later displayed at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition which the Snooks attended. The two directed the attention of Emperor Don Padro of Brazil to the inventions, which consequently received press attention. The young inventor was Alexander Graham Bell and his invention was the telephone. In trying to patent the telephone, Bell ran into a challenge from a man claiming to be its first inventor. During the lengthy litigation following, the Snooks testified for Bell that they had seen the telephone several years before in Nova Scotia. In gratitude for their assistance, Bell said he would grant them a favor. The result was a telephone communications system for the courthouse after its completion. Though not the first system in the county, it was one of the earliest.

According to several sources, the commissioners accepted the building on May 24, 1888, except for minor finishing work to be completed by Ehrhart before he would be given his final payment. That date cannot be verified because there is no entry in the commissioners' journal stating they had accepted the job at any time in 1888. John McCartney was hired as janitor of the new courthouse and he proceeded to prepare the building for occupation. County officers were moved to their new quarters probably the last week of June, 1888. The Paulding Democrat said on July 5 that the county officers had transferred their records and papers to the new offices and the furniture had arrived and would be set up that week. The article added that the officers were now "very pleasantly and conveniently located. We have one of the finest court houses in Ohio considering the price paid for its construction."21 Indeed, other sources hailed the courthouse as a "marvel of cheapness" and was completed for about half the average cost of a courthouse built in that era.

The commissioners decided to insure the new courthouse and its contents for $32,000 in policies distributed among four local insurance agents as follows:

J.I. Wilkins agent--Northern Assurance Co., $4,000; California Insurance Co., $4,000.

Floyd Atwill agent--Home, of New York, $5,000; Miama Valley, of Dayton, $3,000.

Cullen & Richards agents--American, $4,000; Royal, of Liverpool, $4,000.

Byron Snook, agent--Phenix, of Brooklyn, $4,000; Phoenix, of Hartford, $4,000.

The commissioners paid John Leasure five dollars to action off the old frame court building, the "brick row" offices, and the furnishings. The frame building was purchased by M.D. Mann for $500, and the building was moved to Jackson Street where it was used as an opera house. The "brick row" was torn down by it purchasers and the debris removed from the site. The grounds surrounding the courthouse were graded and sidewalks were installed. Shade trees were planted around the building three years later in 1891.

The finished building is 105 feet north and south, measured from the brick entrance columns, and 98 feet east and west. A complete description appears in the 1892 atlas:

> Its height from the ground to the highest point of the dome is 163 feet. The basement story is used to store away fuel, and is also the location of the hot air furnaces from which the building is heated throughout by means of pipes; an engine is also located in the basement, which is used to pump water into a 100-barrel cistern, near the roof, from which the building is furnished with water. Water is also conveyed from this cistern to the county jail, by means of an underground pipe.
>
> On the first floor are two halls extending entirely across the building. At



Paulding County Court House, Paulding, Ohio.

Paulding County Courthouse as it appeared soon after the turn of the century. The old bandstand stood in the southwest corner of the Courthouse square. Postcard courtesy John Wilson.

the outer extremeties of these halls are the four entrances to the building, all of which are similar. In the northwest corner of the first floor is the recorder's office comprising two rooms, a fire-proof vault. and two closets; in the northeast corner is the clerk's office, having the same amount of room as the recorder's office, and the addition of a private stairway leading to the judge's stand in the courtroom. In the southeast corner are the commissioners; office, and the auditor's public office. The commissioners have only one room. The auditor's public office is supplied with a fire-proof vault and two closets. In the southwest corner is the treasurer's office and vault; also a private office to be used conjointly by the auditor and treasurer.

On the second floor is one hall extending north and south. One the east side of this hall is the court room, about 40x70 feet in length and breadth. Back of the court room in the northeast corner of the building is the judge's private room. South of the court room is the surveyor's office. On the west side of the building is the sheriff's office. Immediately north of the sheriff's office is the probate judge's office, and farther down the hall are two rooms for the grand and petit jurors. At the north and south ends of the hall are rooms for witnesses. The garret is used as a store room for unused public documents and records of no special value, yet necessary to be preserved. 22

Only days after the county officers took up residence in the building, the first trial was held and a synopsis of the proceedings was printed in the Paulding Democrat:

The first trial in the new court house was held by Probate Judge Lee last Monday, wherein the State prosecuted _____ for stealing timber. He was found guilty and the Judge fined the defendant $40 and costs of prosecution. Being unable to pay, the victim will work out the price in about ninety days in the Toledo stone yard. Thus was the mill of justice first set in motion in the new temple. 23

As construction on the courthouse began in 1886, the first of Paulding's brick blocks around the square was started also, signalling a construction boom in the town. The Antwerp Argus reprinted an article from the Milan Advertiser, Milan, Ohio, in 1887:

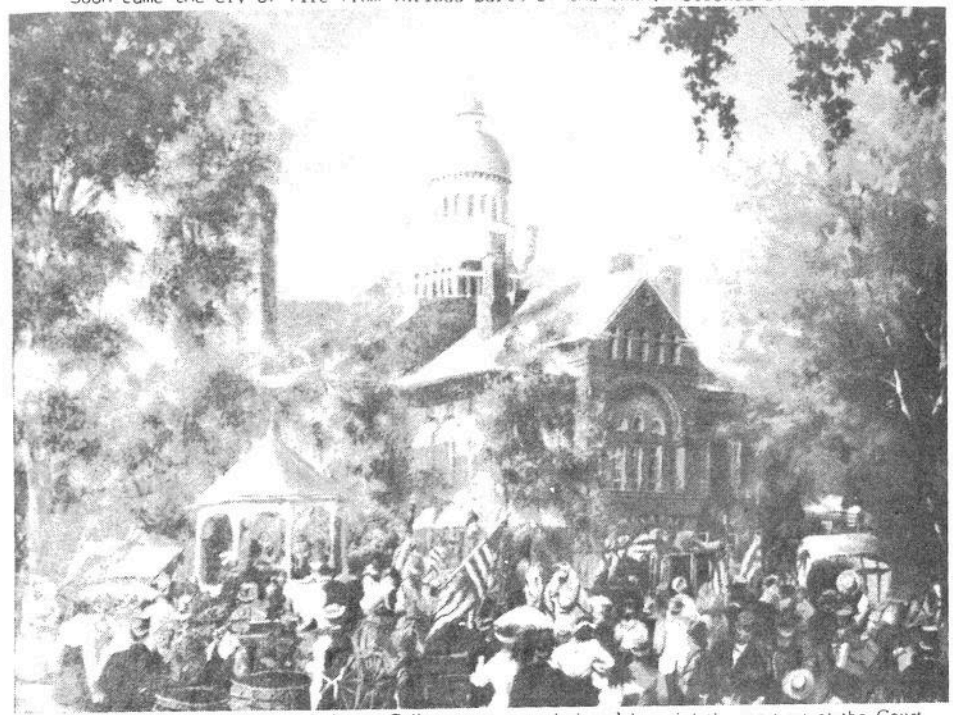
Paulding is building a fine court house, and is full of activity. It has three hotels, the best of which, the Thompson House, is building an addition to accomodate the ever increasing patronage. Work is plenty, and money is plenty, and the air of business pervading the town, is very refreshing after the quiet of our own locality. Its boom is a solid one,

depending on the timber, the land, and the products of labor....24

Later Developments

The courthouse has remained a source of pride and a symbol of our county since its completion, and is one of the oldest remaining structures within our county borders. It stands relatively unchanged from its original condition except for repairs and interior renovations in the interim. The only known damage of the courthouse occurred in the early hours of June 21, 1890, when lightning from a fierce thunderstorm struck the dome, starting a fire. The Paulding Democrat printed the exciting details of efforts to put out the fire:

Soon came the cry of fire from various parts of the town, followed by the



Hermann Wiebe, a professor at Defiance College, was commissioned to paint this portrait of the Courthouse by Northwest Technical College, Archbold. A similar painting was painted by Wiebe as part of a series of Ohio's 88 courthouses. Wiebe donated a duplicate painting to the county commissioners to commemorate the Courthouse Centennial.—Photo by M. Krick.

ringing of the bell on the engine house. People were not long in discovering that lightning had struck the dome of the new court house and that the fire had already gained considerable headway. Fortunately three members of the Defiance fire department who had attended the ball game in the afternoon, were yet in town and had not retired. They were Chief Louis Spring, and firemen Will Helpman and Charley Kettenring. They rushed from the Paulding House, broke open the doors of the Court House and were soon doing heroic service in extinguishing the devouring element. Our fire department boys came out with their hose cart and engine and tried to be of some service, but for some reason by the time they were steamed up the Defiance boys, with the assistance that had gone to them, had succeeded in getting the fire under control. It was an exciting time and everybody drew a long breath of relief when the danger to our temple of justice had passed. 25

The article said Kettenring had helped fight the blaze by swinging out onto the dome from a hole knocked through the side. The extent of damages from the fire was about $500.

Plans were drawn up April 10, 1914, by Howard & Merriam architects, Columbus, for changing the stairs leading to the north and south entrances of the courthouse. The stairs to the main halls were placed outside of the doors, beyond the brick columns, allowing for an entrance to the basement beneath the stairs. The building has been reroofed several times, including 1956 when sandblasting work on the exterior also was done by Masonry Maintenance Contractors of Marion. Total cost for reroofing, new gutters, sandblasting, brick repair, and other work was $22,400.

In 1978, the courtroom was renovated and divided into two courtrooms. The second-floor balcony, overlooking the intersection of the two main-floor halls, was closed off and turned into a lawyers' conference room. The last major repair work was in 1983 when the large chimneys over the east and west entrances were dismantled and closed off. The building was reroofed and the dome was cleaned and repaired.

The commissioners called a preliminary meeting February 26, 1986, to prepare a courthouse centennial celebration. A committee was formed and planned two days of events June 20-21, including a parade, craftsmen's demonstrations, exhibits of antique vehicles and machinery, and a display of the contents of the cornerstone. With great and imposing ceremonies did the people of Paulding County celebrate the hundredth anniversary of their courthouse, as their ancestors celebrated the laying of its cornerstone on a cold, blustery day in 1886.

Footnotes

[1]"Local Gossip," Paulding Democrat (March 25, 1886), p. 5.

[2]O. Morrow and F.W. Bashore, eds., Historical Atlas of Paulding County, Ohio (1885; rpt. Dallas: The John Paulding Historical Society, 1978), p. 20.

[3]Atlas, 1892, p. 33.

[4]Atlas, 1892, p. 20.

[5]G.M. Eaton, ed., The Paulding County Times, 18, July 8, 1910, p. 10.

[6]"Courthouse and Canal," Antwerp Argus (Feb. 25, 1886), p. 2.

[7]Antwerp Argus (April 1, 1886), p. 2.

[8]Paulding County, Ohio, Commissioners' Journal (April 24, 1886), p. 440.

[9]Theodore J. Ligibel, E.O. Fallis, Master Architect in Perspective, submitted to the Graduate College of Bowling Green State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, December, 1981, p. 113-116.

[10]Antwerp Argus (June 3, 1886), p. 3.

[11]Commissioners' Journal (June 25, 1886), p. 448.

[12]Commissioners' Journal (June 26, 1886), p. 448.

[13]Commissioners' Journal (August 2, 1886), p. 452.

[14]"New Court House," Paulding Democrat (August 19, 1886), p. 5.

[15]"Laying the Corner Stone," Paulding Democrat (Nov. 18, 1886), p. 5.

[16]"Corner Stone," Antwerp Argus (Dec. 16, 1886), p. 3.

[17]"Dedicated," Paulding County Gazette (Dec. 23, 1886), p.3.

[18]Gazette, p. 3.

[19]"Laying of Corner Stone," Paulding Democrat (Dec. 23, 1886), p. 5.

[20]"Court House Workmen Strike," Paulding Democrat (Dec. 1, 1887), p. 1.

[21]"Moved In," Paulding Democrat (July 5, 1888), p. 5.

[22]Atlas, 1892, p.21.

[23]"Local Gossip," Paulding Democrat (July 12, 1888), p. 5.

[24]Milan Advertiser [Milan, Ohio], quoted in Antwerp Argus (June 9, 1887), p. 3.

[25]"Lightning," Paulding Democrat (June 26, 1890), p. 1.

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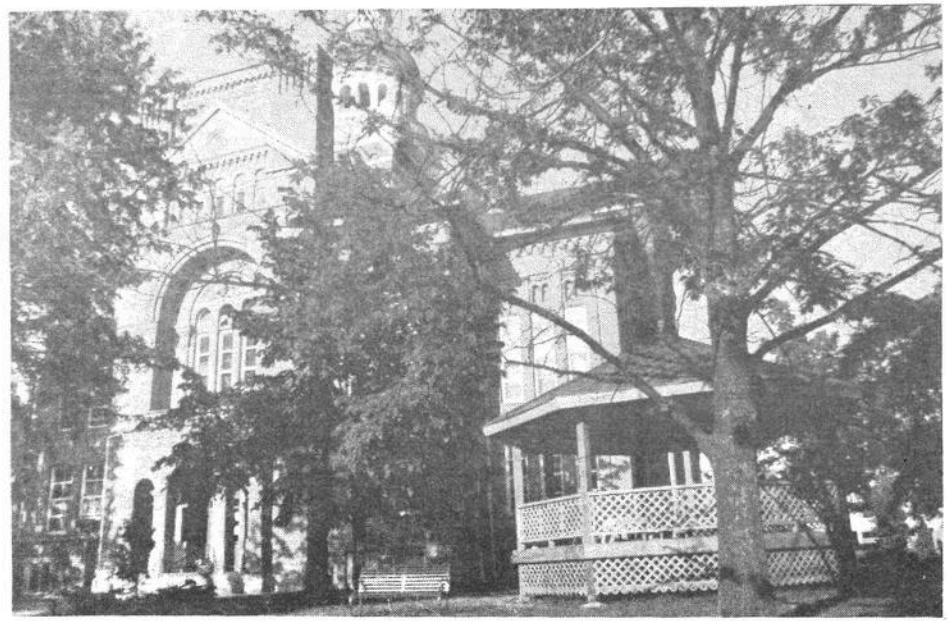
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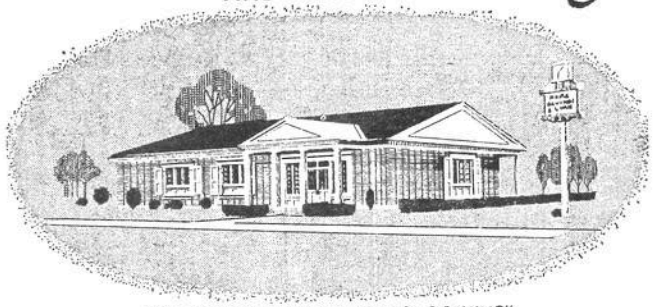
Paulding County Courthouse and new bandstand in 1986.– Photo by M. Krick.

PERSONS NAMED AS PAID FOR WORK ON THE NEW COURTHOUSE, 1886-1888

NAME	WORK PERFORMED	AMOUNT PAID	DATE APPROVED
N.R. Webster,	publishing various notices		
C.J.&M.R.R. Co.,	freight on sewer pipe for court house	40.75	Sept. 22, 1886
M.B. Gorman,	sewer pipe for court house	138.35	"
E.O.Fallis,	Architect for court house	834.50	Oct. 4, 1886
J.L. Geyer,	engineer for Sept. on court house sewer	8.00	"
J.J. Clark,	constructing sewer to court house	73.50	Dec. 6, 1886
"	, extra work on sewer for court house	62.00	"
Rud. Ehrhart,	part estimate on new Court house building	1,101.90	Jan. 5, 1887
J.B. Zuber,	services as Committeeman on Court House	56.15	March 7, 1887
David Shaw,	Supt. of Court House	(65.00 ea.)	
E.O.Fallis,	Supt. of Court House	262.97	July 11, 1887
C.J.&M.R.R. Co.,	for freight on material for new court house	65.00	Sept. 7, 1887
Samuel Walls	for labor on court house sewer	1.50	Oct. 6, 1887
William Banks	" " " " "	5.00	"
Joseph Beason	" " " " "	5.00	"
A.R. Geyer,	services as Engineer on grade on court house yd.	2.00	Nov. 5, 1887
Thos. Self,	work on court house drain	6.75	"
James Bigelow,	" " " "	6.00	"
M.Craven	" " " " "	16.50	"
Mr. Green	for hauling two loads of tile for court house drain	1.00	"
Higley and Webster,	10 barrels of white lime (?) for court house furnaces	9.00	Nov. 19, 1887
James Bigelow,	work as tender for masons on building foundations for furnaces	8.25	"
Isaac Male	for attending masons in building furnaces in court house	1.20	Dec. 7, 1887
Ed. Hall	for work as mason	15.92	"
James Bigelow	for attending masons	8.25	"
Henry Rickets	" " "	8.32	"
O. Mann	work as mason	12.25	"
John Barnhizer	for work as mason on furnaces in new C.H.	6.65	Dec. 8, 1887
Frank Neff	" " " " " " " " "	13.12	"
A. Abatt,	attending masons	.75	"
Frank Neff and others	for labor and material for furnaces in court house	174.67	"
Thos. J. Champion	as member of court house committee	45.85	Jan. 3, 1888
J.C. Hale, E.O. Fallis & Co.	superintending court house construction	84.00	Jan. 28, 1888

NAME	WORK PERFORMED	AMOUNT PAID	DATE APPROVED
Korst & Linzer,	panels to cover tin pipes in C.H.	53.00	Jan. 30, 1888
E.O.Fallis,	Architect of new court house	200.00	Feb. 7, 1888
J.C. Hale,	superintending work on new court house	78.00	"
W.S. McClary & son,	extra work on new court house	52.42	May 23, 1888
J.I.Wilkins,	premium on Insurance on new court house	48.00	June 4, 1888
Floyd Atwell,	" " " " " " "	96.00	June 7, 1888
Liney Dixson,	putting wood in court house basement	.75	"
A.Freeman,	" " " " " "	6.48	"
A. Richardson, A. Freeman and W.H. Goode,	moving Clerk into new office	10.00	July 2, 1888
Cullen & Richards,	premium on insurance on court house	96.00	"
John Ryan,	helping Treasurer move books	.40	"
W.M. Dillon,	moving old safe	5.00	"
A. Richardson,	moving furniture for Clerk	2.00	"
T.J. Patterson,	helping move Treasurer	.75	"
John Leasure,	auctioneer, for selling old court house and furniture	5.00	"
Gilbert Barnes	for 2M feet of cottonwood flooring for attic	40.00	"
Wm. Dillon,	moving new safe from depot	6.00	"
"	, moving old safe from Auditor's office	6.00	"
A. Freeman	for helping move county offices	3.00	"
W.H. Goode	" " " " "	3.00	"
Byron Snook,	premium on insurance on new court house	96.00	"
John McCartney,	Janitor of court house	45.33	"
W.H. Goode,	helping to lay linoleum at court house	4.00	"
J. Bowers,	setting glass in windows and doors	.50	"
R.J.H. Smith & Co.	for cuts of new court house	8.00	"
J.H. Kehause,	linoleum for court room	128.07	"
Henry Clark,	fixing court house doors	1.25	Aug. 1, 1888
Lynn & Ohl,	making door keys for court house	1.00	"
Heller, by T.J. Champion,	carpet for court house	38.05	Sept. 1, 1888
S.W. Cramer,	refitting doors to court house	1.25	"
Hazzenzhal,	lamps for court house	5.25	"
James Linn,	hanging lamps in court house	14.75	"
Tate & Cromley,	sundries for court house	8.18	"
M.H. Allen,	blinds for court house	184.62	"
Neff & Barnhiser,	brick for walks at court house (part pay)	150.00	Oct. 1, 1888
J.E. Wierman,	drilling well at courthouse	74.82	"
C.P. Clark,	refitting doors at court house	1.50	Nov. 5, 1888
Gasser Bros.,	lumber furnished court house & jail walks	4.39	Dec. 3, 1888
John Matthis,	laying stone for floor in basement of C.H.	11.40	"
Weingerding & Anderson,	cement for floor in basement of C.H.	1.50	"
J.A. Thompson,	drayage for court house	1.00	"
Charles Sweed,	labor and material for plumbing court house	38.37	"

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