

The Clock Tower

The belfry framework of wrought iron is still in place today. The bell in the clock weighs 1500 pounds and there are faces on all four sides of the tower. The original clock had an 8 foot pendulum. The present clock is operated by electricity. There is an iron spiral staircase to the clock tower.

The Architect



The Architect, **Elijah Myers**, designed state capitol buildings in Michigan, Texas and Colorado, as well as the McDonough County Courthouse, Macomb, IL and the Macoupin County Courthouse at Carlinville, IL, which cost one million dollars when completed in 1867.

**History as told by Marge Harris*

The McDonough County Courthouse was renovated in the 1970s to remove the exterior yellow and grey paint and to remodel the interior. An ultra modern court room was dedicated in 1973, which with an elevator are the major changes inside. Architects were Coney & Dahl for the renovation 1969-1976.

National Register of Historic Places

Macomb City Historic District



Macomb Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

120 E. Calhoun Street

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THE MCDONOUGH COUNTY COURTHOUSE





Courthouse History*

The McDonough County seat was organized in 1830 in a tavern built and occupied by James Baker, a Baptist minister, which housed the clerks office and courthouse in a town called "Washington" which was renamed Macomb. This log cabin stood east of the now Spoon River College between South McArthur and South Johnson Streets.



"The first court house was erected in Macomb in 1831 and was constructed of logs, hewed on both sides. The dimensions were 18x20 feet. According to the specifications the building was to have a plank floor of white oak and the walls should be 'chinked and daubed on the outside' and the building was to be provided with a good 'batter door hung on good iron hinges.' The building should have two windows, one with twelve panes of glass and the other with six panes. The contract was awarded to William Southward (the sheriff) for \$69.50." *Macomb Daily Journal, March 3, 1915.*

This first log building was inadequate and by March of 1834, Joseph P. Updegraff was contacted to build a new building of brick, two stories in height, 46 feet square, with a frame cupola on top. The total cost being \$4,832 dollars. In December of 1838, Robert A. Brazelton was "humbly requested to saw off the pole on the cupola." Payment of \$5 was authorized in March of 1839 for sawing off the spire on the Courthouse. Various roof repairs had to be made in a short time. In March of 1850, Commissioners ordered the old weather boarding and outside work of the cupola taken off and that the cupola should be remodeled and rebuilt in a style similar to one on the Christian Church which then stood on the south side of what is now Chandler Park. This however was never done.

Pigeons were a problem and in August of 1860 while several boys were capturing pigeons in the cupola, eleven year old Douglas Head fell onto seats below and died of a crushed skull.

Current Courthouse

A resolution passed to construct a new building in September of 1868 since the current brick structure was falling apart. Meanwhile citizens of Bushnell were arranging to have the Courthouse built there, but with some maneuvering, money was secured in Macomb and the new building was erected while offices were rented close by for the county government to operate.



Third Courthouse

Bids were rejected many times for the new building of the 3rd Courthouse. The bid of Walbaum & Co. of Chicago was accepted for \$129,000. It was finished in the summer of 1872 with the final cost of building and furnishings of \$155,370.

The original mansard roof was always leaking and being of tin, created a glare, so after a storm in 1890 blew a church steeple into it, the mansard roof was removed. The walls are wainscoted with black walnut and ash. Doors are of ash with black walnut trim; the outside doors have a carved braided trim. Inside window shutters and casing are the same woods. Mention was made in the newspaper that Mr. Morgan was doing the fine work of making 216 window sash of ash with not nail or pin—all dovetail and glue. The original building contained 34 rooms heated by steam, the principle rooms also having fireplaces and mantles. Some of the ceilings were corrugated iron painted white and are still in place. The iron stair from the basement to the third floor under the mansard roof cost \$27,000. There is also a narrow stair in the southwest corner of the building which is just as decorative. The corners of the building are supported on 450 pound slabs of stone. Floors are still supported by wrought iron beams which also support brick inner walls.