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The court square as a city form is repeated throughout the Ohio Valley, yet, the circumstances surrounding its initial construction are less important than its continued existence. This thesis serves to illustrate that existence through identification and description of four Indiana court squares from 1800 to 2000. Evolutions in transportation have changed the ways in which the court square is approached and experienced; thus, the transportation history of the state is used a context for change. However, physical evidence is dependant on personal experience and collective memory for meaning. Changes to the structure, landscape, streetscape, and monuments of each square were documented through photo analysis and evaluated for their symbolic value. This thesis provides justification for a method for describing urban environments, one that considers symbolic value in the interpretation of physical space.

COURT SQUARE: MOVEMENT, MEMORY, METHOD, MEANING

by

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To my parents,
for their continued support
and for instilling in me the belief and determination
to accomplish my goals and live my dreams.

APPROVAL PAGE

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this work is to address the court square as a distinct urban form that carries with it information regarding the symbolism of government and the value of community in small town America. The research traces the physical evolution of four Indiana court squares, using contemporary and historic photographs to evaluate material changes as they relate to specific periods of transportation. Paying special attention to elements of the square that remain unchanged, the work considers these continuities as they speak to the endurance of specific cultural values in American small towns. The research focuses on the relationship between physical and cultural changes in American county seats, specifically the relationship between transportation and the physical form and aesthetic appearance of the courthouse square.

Clay (1980) outlines three fixes, or biases, for perceiving the contemporary city, citing each as limiting in their own way. The research seeks to overcome the individual limitations of Clay's methodology, evaluating the court square through physical and conceptual evidence in order to obtain a more complete understanding of the court square in its Indiana context. Photographic analysis allows for the comparison of corporeal elements while placing the images in historic context provides for the inference of value.

The sample towns (Madison, Mount Vernon, Peru, and Bluffton), selected for their relationship to water, rail, and road transportation, their possession of a court square, and their current population, provide ample evidence regarding specific elements of the

court square and, through analysis, patterns of physical and symbolic change in these Indiana civic spaces. Photographs and written histories chronicle the physical evolution of four squares from their initial construction through the turn of the 21st century in four categories: structure, landscape, streetscape, and monument.

Comparative analysis of the four court squares demonstrates the evolution of each space and distinguishes major trends in their development, analyzed for their ability to interpret changing small town cultural values. An analysis of physical changes tied to periods of transportation advancements fosters an understanding of the growth and development of the court square and its evolving symbolism.



Figure 1. View from the Courthouse, Mount Vernon, Indiana. The square remains central in town, but monuments mark its presence as a memorial space (Photo by author, 2004).

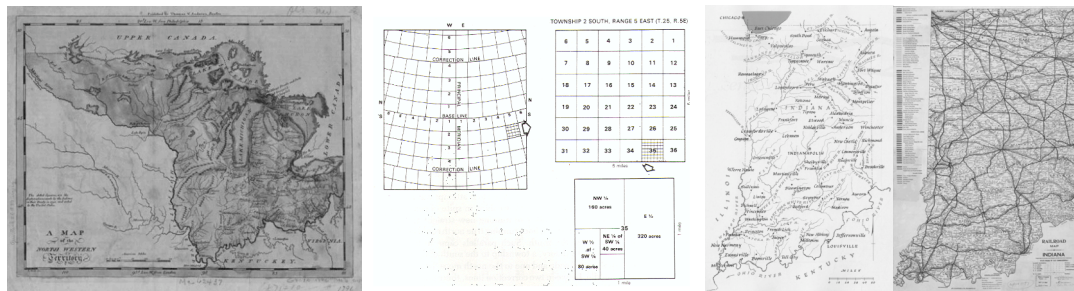
The relationship between physical change and perceived value is not reciprocal. The research found that the court square physically transformed during the 19th century, but relatively unchanged through the 20th century. While change provides clues to shifting values, continuities prove equally informative. The retention of the court square and the improvement of its individual elements despite the emergence of new transportation systems indicates a value shift.

The court square thus illustrates an evolution of both physical space and symbolic values. This research provides a historic context for evolving transportation systems, a description of physical changes to the square, and a discussion of the values that underlie these changes. Value cannot be determined by a simple classification of elements and documentation of alterations. Rather, our understanding of the court square depends on the influence of collective memory and cultural constructions. This discussion of the Indiana court square as an urban form provides a foundation on which to build a case for the inclusion of meaning in the classification and interpretation of urban environments.

CHAPTER I

MOVEMENT: TRANSPORTATION AND THE COURT SQUARE

Provide the town a Main Street and one cross street of stores, place one or two red brick school houses as varying points in them, add one white sandstone court house in a public square, and a railroad station, and four or five red brick churches, and there you have them all. Give one town a lake, another a stream, another a mill – it makes little difference. (Dreiser, 1916, p. 152)



Dreiser made a journey through Indiana in 1920 and described it in his book, *A Hoosier Holiday*, in which he characterized the landscape as provincial, a repetitive experience so simple that, to a big city visitor, it seemed monotonous. The repetition and simplicity of its small towns is, in fact, what defines the region.

As one approaches any Indiana small town, farmland slowly evaporates, replaced by residences. Closer to town, residential development increases in density, relieved only by the occasional church or school. Residences give way to businesses as individual

buildings are replaced with larger commercial blocks. At the core of this dense concentration of business blocks, there is a break in the density. Here, in the very heart of the city, set back from the street, stands the courthouse, like a monument set on a pedestal of grass. Then, just as quickly, in regular rhythm, the commercial blocks, residences and farmland return, where the pattern recurs with little exception as one moves out of town and to the next community.

The court square, in built form, epitomizes the ease of navigability of Indiana small towns, so that the open spaces serve as both monument and placeholder in the landscape. Roads that criss-cross the Ohio Valley, lifelines of commerce and community, not only connect one town to another, they guide the traveler from the heart of one town directly to the heart of the next. The connection between towns through the court square, so pronounced that directions are rarely needed to navigate from one square to the next, describes a particular American landscape in both time and space.

The construction of court squares in the Ohio Valley occurred as a response to a very specific political, economic, and social environment, giving physical presence to actual and perceived centers of the town and county. As transportation systems evolved, architectural preferences changed, and county seats rebuilt and reorganized, the court square remained an anchor for the small town landscape. Initially valued for its location and representation of the newly formed county governments, the court square retains symbolic importance as a hallmark of small town life.

Gridding The Wilderness

When acquired in 1781, the Northwest Territory, including the present-day states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin, though home to many native peoples, was perceived as little more than a vast wilderness. However, the fertile soil of the Ohio River valley, the level topography, and the ability to easily clear land allowed for relatively quick and easy settlement and contributed to a regional economy that relied on agriculture to survive. In 1819, Edmund Dana noted eight characteristics for profitable settlement in the early West: climate, availability of ground water, availability of timber, drainage, topography, quality of soil, the legal security of one's claims, and access to market (Mahoney, 1990, p. 18).



Figure 2. 1796 Map of the Northwest Territory. The future state of Indiana lies between Lake Michigan and the Ohio River. (Map Courtesy of Indiana University Library.)

The Northwest Ordinance

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 contributed to the geometric division of the newly acquired land through its survey guidelines and requirements for statehood. The survey employed an ordered system of lines and grids to divide the land into townships thirty-six miles square and then further into thirty-six sections, each one mile square, with most county lines following the survey lines. Surveys of the Northwest Territory provided a system in which the regular, geometric division of land took precedence over methods respondent to natural features. The ordered divisions extended to city planning, resulting in an easily adaptable city grid and influencing the practice of designating a full city block as the court square.

The government land surveys and its subsequent sale to countless individuals supported a grid system that extended to city planning and, ultimately, to architectural

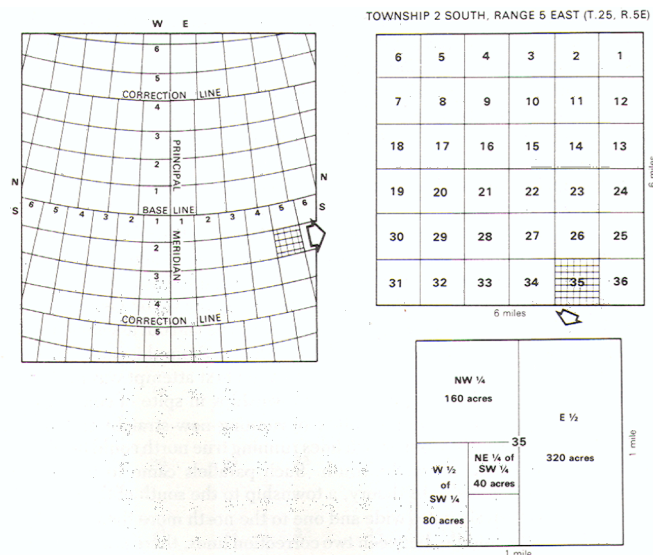


Figure 3. The Public Lands Survey System. The system divided the Northwest Territory into an even grid of townships and square plots of land (Johnson, 1976, p. 58).

development. The rectilinear grid that covered the land and the ease of its implementation and adaptation spawned repeated use in the layout of Northwest Territory cities. The government surveyors only surveyed to the section; individual towns and lots were laid out by town planners and county leaders. The rectilinear grid provided tracts readily built on and easily combined to form different sized plots, necessities for early cities that did not have formal zoning or land use regulations. Additionally, “the need to build cities quickly and to provide for almost continual growth led to a reliance on grid planning” (Rybczynski, 1995, p. 79). Because of the success of the grid, innovations in town design were infrequent; the grid was used even in the far West where the terrain sometimes made traversing the grid difficult, as in the case of hilly San Francisco.

Land grants awarded after the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 encouraged land occupation by rewarding soldiers real estate in the unsettled West. Lands, ceded by both the federal and state governments, in Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, and Arkansas, followed the Public Lands Survey System, with soldiers generally receiving multiples of a hundred acres of land based on their rank and the duration of their service (Treat, 1910, p. 240). Lands offered for sale, as provided in the Northwest Ordinance, were so large and costly (the smallest available tracts measuring 640 acres), that sales were small. In some instances the government offered tax incentives in order to encourage immediate occupation of the frontier lands and, by 1800, a five-year credit period had been adopted to make the purchase of land more feasible (Treat, 1910, p. 379).

1800-1850 – Waterways and Early Settlement

The characteristics for profitable settlement caused community and government to locate settlements according to rivers and canals, not survey lines, as evidenced in *Figure 4*. Early roads made river towns the destination of surrounding farmers and countrymen and for inland and river county seats alike, the designation and development of the court square symbolized the birth of the county and stimulated town construction.

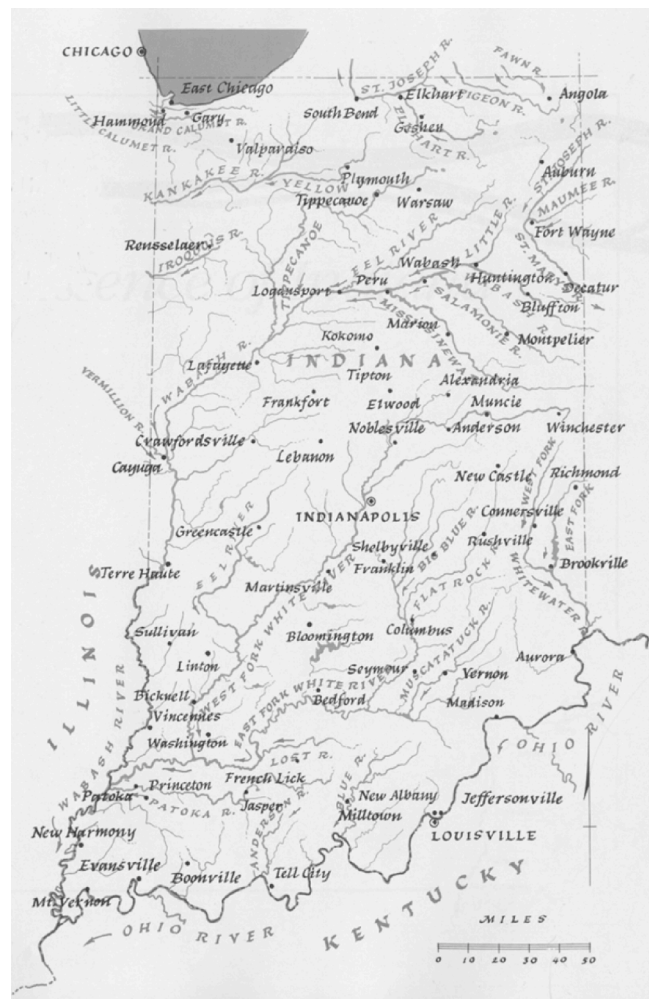


Figure 4. Map of the Rivers of Indiana. Rivers define the southern borders of Indiana and provide access to the interior of the state (Simons, 1985, p. xi).

River and canal access

Early settlement followed the network of rivers that ran through Indiana and the surrounding Ohio Valley landscape. More than 30 waterways weave through the state, though most early settlement focused along the banks of the Ohio and the Wabash. Water, essential for trade and communication, linked the Indiana Territory to the rest of the region and the country and dominated all aspects of settlement: “In a vast land with few roads the rivers provided the chief means of transportation and appeared to push their way through cities in the insistent manner of interstate highways today” (Rybczynski, 1995, p. 95).

The river proved more influential than the grid in the location and development of early settlements in the Ohio Valley. Not only fertile banks for settlement and access points for transportation, the rivers impacted the location of early counties, cities, and seats of government. When the Indiana Territory was formed in 1800, it was divided into only four counties, all oriented to the rivers: Harrison, Clark, and Dearborn on the Ohio River and Knox on the Wabash. By the time Indiana was admitted to the Union in 1817, it had grown to 13 established counties, ten located on either the Ohio or Wabash River (Leffel, 1978, p. 64). Counties located along the river were more likely to have county seats on the river, unlike interior counties, where the county seat was generally centrally located. Currently, ten of the 13 counties that border the Ohio River and nine of the 17 that border the Wabash have county seats on the river, rather than in some more central county location (Simons, 1985, p. 81).

Not all parts of the Wabash and Ohio were navigable and many of the state's small rivers were not large enough to accommodate the type of trade needed to sustain the region. Thus, the residents of Indiana quickly discovered the importance of building canals to create a stronger water connection. Canals, equally influential in the placement and advancement of early Indiana towns, caused cities to compete for canal access. Towns located along the canal typically enjoyed many benefits of river town status: connecting to market as well as an influx of money and settlers.

While the canal-era was short-lived, it did much to shape the early development of the state. Indiana, like Ohio, sought to build a series of connections between Lake Erie and the Ohio River in order to solidify its presence in a market based on water transportation. The first canal in Indiana, the Wabash and Erie, begun in 1832, only seven years after the completion of the famed Erie Canal in New York. Indiana's canal system experienced its peak in 1852, but was quickly superceded by the railroad and abandoned by 1874 (Gray, 1994, p. 124). Yet, by the middle of the 19th century, each of Indiana's 92 counties had been established and the canal, like the river, influenced the placement of their county seats. Even the state's nickname is said to have derived from the building of the canal. Simons (1985) contends that, after failed attempts to create a canal on the Indiana side of the Ohio River, an attempt was made on the Kentucky side, near Louisville. The successful project was led by a man named Hoosier and a crew of predominantly Indiana men, who came to be known as "Hoosier's men." (p. 82)

As a supplement to water travel, Jefferson proposed a national road in 1808, to "accomplish a continued and advantageous line of communication from the seat of

General Government to St. Louis” (Jefferson, 1808, p. 714). Envisioned as a channel for national defense and begun in Baltimore, Maryland, the road reached the Ohio/Indiana border in 1827 and was “passable but unfinished to Terre Haute” in 1835 (Raitz, 1996, p. 169). Completion through Indiana and construction beyond slowed further during the Panic of 1837, taken over by the states. Road building, slow and piecemeal, with slow travel as a result, ultimately lost out to river and rail travel until the 20th century invention of the automobile. “There was nothing wrong with the road except its timing; it was a century ahead of its time” (Raitz, 1996, p. 18).

County organization

Access to waterways proved an important requirement for early county seat selection (Appendix A). All 92 of Indiana’s counties were established in the first half of the 19th century, at a time when river and canal transportation reigned supreme. Thus, while the practice of locating the seat in the center of the county spoke to the equality of county residents, waterways provided a means to sustain trade and stimulate town growth. A court or committee of prominent land and business owners, often responsible for locating the county seat, considered any number of criteria for selection: water for trade and communication, the quality of soil, the location of the site within the county, and the cost of land or the prospect of donated land.

Practices of town planning were well established by the early 19th century. The public lands surveys, “reinforced the natural inclination for the gridiron street system” throughout the Ohio Valley (Reps, 1965, p. 217). The grid proved stronger than ethnic planning practices, in part, perhaps because of the “melting-pot” nature of the region. A

true mixture of American and European cultures and religions, settlers included Presbyterians, Dutch Reformed, Quakers, and Congregationalists as well as Scotch-Irish, Swedes, Norwegians, Germans, Dutch, Quaker English, Welsh, and Penn German (Price, 1986, p. 141)

Yet, neither religion nor national origin was emphasized as a characteristic of Ohio Valley residents. Having migrated to the region from Pennsylvania in the north, Virginia and North Carolina in the south, these settlers were more likely to consider themselves Pennsylvanians or Virginians, making an analysis of the ethnic composition of the region nearly impossible (Price, 1986, p. 141). With widely varied ethnic and religious backgrounds, the people of the Midwest constructed their towns around those principles that they did hold in common, principles of economic profit and democratic government.

The same landowners and businessmen who selected the county seat often designated a specific site for the construction of both public square and courthouse. The physical form of the county seat depended on the relationship between the platting of the town and its designation as a county seat. Located in an existing town, where the surrounding land had already been developed and land values were higher, the courthouse received less space, often placed on part of an existing business block. In newly developed towns designated as county seats at the time of their construction, the courthouse more likely received its own full block of land in the center of town (Francaviglia, 1996, p. 92).

The Northwest Ordinance called for the reservation of one section of each township for the creation of public schools, but did not provide lands for public or government functions. However, the Ordinance supported the formation of and pattern for local governments. Further legislation by the federal government definitively supported county government. In 1820, Ohio petitioned the federal government and received a quarter section of land in each of 12 counties for use as a seat of justice. In the public land states, an 1824 act allowed county governments to preempt one-quarter section of land for the county seats (Treat, 1910, p. 317). However, many counties still relied on the generosity of private landowners to supply the land for their county seats.

The perception of the court square as an urban oasis may have been a result of the parks movement of the 1830s and 1840s. The cemetery movement in the Northeast saw an interest in cemeteries as park-like spaces for the living to enjoy rather than simply places for burying the dead (Bender, 1974, p. 196). Additionally, parks and trees were linked to physical and psychological health benefits; in addition to their air purification qualities, parks were thought to encourage moral values. While the creation of parks often required tax dollars, their overall cost was lower in the Midwest and West where the land itself was plentiful and less expensive.

The city grid and the court square brought visual order and equality to the small town county seat. Initially employed for the ease with which it could be adapted to different uses, the grid provided a physical regularity that “turned out to be an ideal accommodating device for a more tolerant society” (Rybczynski, 1995, p. 80). The same gridded city that provided a sense of regularity and equality for its residents contributed

to a regional understanding of city form. As one traveled from one city to the next, the similarities made the cities easily understood and navigated, thus putting visitors on equal footing with the residents.

The benefits of county seat designation extended from the community to individual property owners. For the community, a courthouse signaled new building construction and the benefit of being the political and economic center of the county. For the landowner who may have donated his farmland for the construction of a courthouse, the land values surrounding the courthouse increased, more than making up for the initial donation of land.

Early architecture

The political and economic benefits of county seat designation can be further understood through an evaluation of the architecture that characterized the early squares. Residents saw the importance of constructing a courthouse as soon as possible because these buildings symbolized permanence for the community and provided meeting places for government and private activity. Built before 1850, generally of log or wood frame construction, the first courthouses contained only one or two rooms. Ancillary structures, built as needed on the square, housed offices of the county auditor, recorder, treasurer, and, in many cases, a county jail. Fire destroyed many of the early courthouses and offices and those that survived were eventually replaced by newer, more durable courthouses, constructed of brick or limestone, in definable architectural styles, by the middle or end of the 19th century.

1850-1900 – Railways Solidify Settlement

The railroad connected relatively isolated river settlements and their hinterlands into an expansive network of towns. People and ideas were more rapidly disseminated through the county by the railway than by water or road travel. Better access to markets and towns outside of the region made the railroad a key factor in the development of the Ohio Valley and its presence signaled permanence for river and inland towns.

Railroad access

The railroad brought national lines of trade from river cities into the heart of Indiana, making its inland towns as accessible and economically important as its early river towns. Initially developed as a supplementary transportation system, Indiana railroads, little more than ‘feeder’ lines for water transportation, connected to either the Ohio River or the Wabash and Erie Canal (Simons, 1997, p. 1). However, Indiana soon proved an important link in the trade between the great cities of the East, the growing cities of Chicago and St. Louis, and ultimately the far West. The centrally located capital at Indianapolis developed as the first major inland city and served as a magnet that attracted and focused rail lines, creating a competitive trading center.

Essential to the development of the Ohio Valley as a network of cities and towns, rather than merely a vast wilderness, railroads influenced the very growth and development of individual towns (Appendix A). Nineteenth century rail travel meant that frequent towns served as terminals, division points, and shop towns. As the rail system expanded, its lines traversed nearly every county, assuring the success or decline of each town that it either passed through or bypassed, respectively. The town of Murray,

Indiana, suffered a fate typical of those towns without rail access. A local historian notes, “although pleasantly situated on the north bank of the Wabash, it was too near the successful county seat [Bluffton]; and no railroad ever touched it. So that now, virtually all that can be said of Murray is to be classified as long-past history, and nothing in the making” (Tyndall, 1918, p. 446-447).

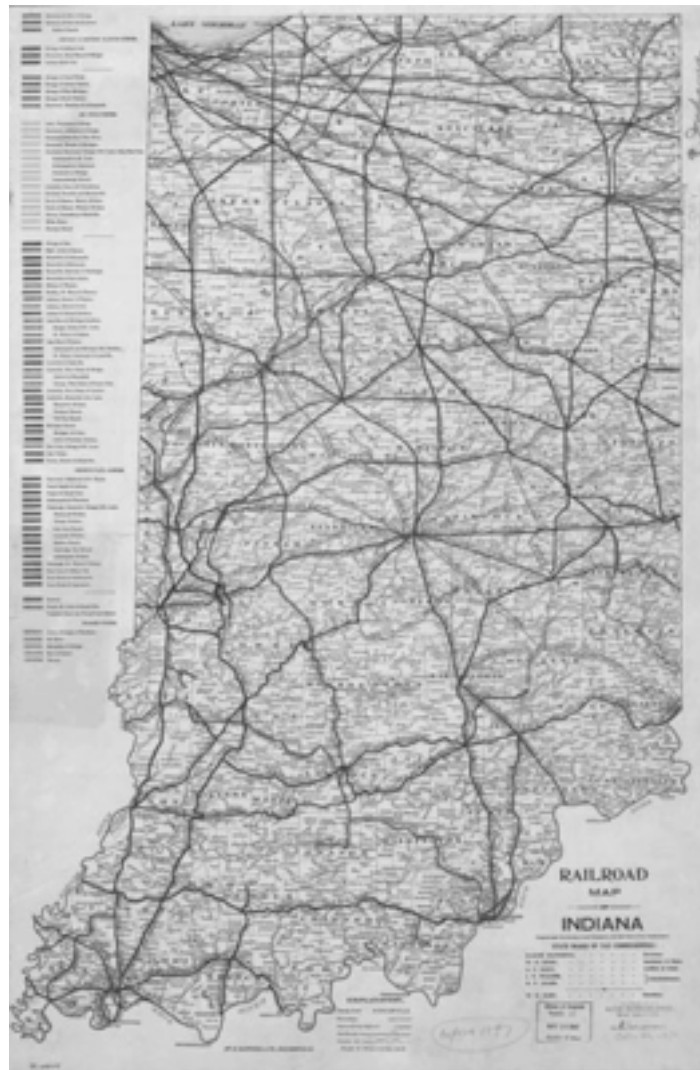


Figure 5. Indiana Railroad Map, dated “before 1897.” The map details the web of rail lines that criss-crossed the state (Library of Congress).

As with canal construction, towns competed for rail access and provided financial support for its construction and maintenance. In order to avoid a fate similar to the town of Murray, towns would do nearly anything to secure a railroad connection, confident of the physical and economic growth that the railroad promised. Town representatives lobbied railroad men for a connection through their town, sometimes dishonestly. A local historian describes Peru's loss in their fight for a rail connection from Marion, Indiana, to Chicago, Illinois:

Confident that they had secured the connection for Peru, J.B. Fulwiler and Jesse Higgins returned to Peru from Marion, Grant County, where the representatives of the various roads had convened, flushed with victory, only to find, to their mortification, that the directory of the Union, Peru & Chicago Railroad Company had, during their absence, been beguiled by two adventurers, representing themselves as railroad men and capitalists, into a consolidation with another road from Peru to Chicago, and changing the eastern direction from Peru to a southern route by way of Cambridge City, the home of one of the adventurers. (*History of Miami County*, 1887, p.289)

The railroad also brought physical organization to the Indiana county seat. Early towns, not zoned for specific uses, featured governmental, commercial, industrial, and residential buildings in close proximity. However, by the 1850s, the railroad had pulled wholesale commercial and industrial functions away from the city center into a new zone centered on the railroad. Within each town, the railroad spurred the development of a depot, warehouses, engine shops, and related businesses in a new industrial and trade district.

As industrial and trade functions shifted elsewhere, the city center and riverfront areas were transformed into genteel retail and recreational centers respectively. The court square became a refined space, “devoted to nonmanual professions or the retail trade” (Tolbert, 1999, p. 97). River towns saw the redesign of the waterfront from a commercial/warehouse district to a place of enjoyment, with walkways, parks, and playgrounds.

Permanent architecture

Newly formed counties were quick to establish a courthouse as a meeting place and physical embodiment of their county status, contracting for the construction of a courthouse as soon as the town could be platted. The wooded interior of Indiana, the rapidity with which early towns were constructed, and the paucity of money available for public construction or civic improvements all contributed to the use of log or wood frame construction for courthouses and commercial buildings until the 1840s and 50s.

Nineteenth century log courthouses, constructed as simple meeting places, also held tremendous symbolic value for their location on the square and the founding of a county that they represented. Residents recognized them as transient structures, not permanent fixtures in the townscape. They had little architectural distinction, built of the same construction as the first jails, and “very similar in appearance” (Tyndall, 1918, p. 310).

As the county seats grew both physically and financially, citizens replaced early courthouses with carefully-designed permanent structures. Log and wood-frame structures were replaced by brick and limestone buildings as early as the 1840s, partially as a response to the need for ‘fireproof’ buildings, because so many log courthouses

caught fire, destroying both the building and county records. As counties rebuilt, they employed brick and limestone, native to Indiana, for their structural and fire-resistant qualities.

The desire to build the courthouses in contemporary high-styles illustrated the quest for modernity and fashionability of the still-young county seats. Madison, Mount Vernon, Peru, and Bluffton, all established as counties between 1810 and 1835, replaced their first courthouses with permanent structures in the latter half of the 19th century. These structures reflect the railroad era in that their styles align with national trends in architecture: Greek Revival, Italianate, Italian Renaissance, and Richardsonian Romanesque. The railroad disseminated styles and ideas throughout the developing West, as well as brought finish materials, hardware, and furnishings, all of which led to more thoughtful and permanent construction for civic, commercial, and residential functions. More importantly, the railroad opened the small town to a network of communication trade, bringing people and money to the developing town.

1900-1950 – Roadways and Improved Access

By 1900, the American rail system bound the nation together, “dominating not just the American transportation system, but permeating American life” (Raitz, 1996, p. 23). Railroads monopolized the transportation industry, a national road system neither in existence nor perceived necessary. Roadways were “not immediately strung straight along section lines as they were later to be throughout much of the nation” (Gray, 1994, p. 222).

Road access

Like early rail lines, Indiana's first state roads supplemented water transportation; roads connected local farmers to town and crossed the state connecting the Ohio River with the Wabash and Lake Michigan, yet, they were relatively ineffective in solidifying regional connections. The Michigan Road connected the community of Madison, on the Ohio River, to Indianapolis and South Bend and then on into various cities in Michigan. A turnpike connected Vincennes on the Wabash River with New Albany and Louisville on the Ohio; another linked Jeffersonville and Louisville on the Ohio with Lafayette on the Wabash (Esarey, 1935, p. 403). Yet, because the cost of maintaining and improving the roads rested on local sources, early roads were little more than dirt paths with deep ruts, roads that rain and snow rendered useless.

In 1913, the Lincoln Highway Association formed a private initiative to construct the country's first "east-west, coast-to-coast highway" (Kaszynski, 2000, p. 38). The group sought to connect the country from Jersey City to San Francisco, via Philadelphia, Fort Wayne, and Chicago. The project relied on donations from the public and the automobile industry, thus progressing slowly at periods. However, as word of the road spread and drivers experienced the smooth surface of the paved highway, excitement and funding were forthcoming. Completed in 1935, the Lincoln Highway (now U.S. 30) became "the nation's first hard-surface transcontinental highway," encouraging the creation of other similar organizations (Kaszynski, 2000, p. 40). Other privately funded highways that crossed Indiana include the Dixie Beeline (U.S. 41) from Chicago to

Nashville, the National Old Trails Road (U.S. 50) from Baltimore to Los Angeles, and the Detroit-Lincoln-Denver Highway (U.S. 6).

Roadways were more than just the dominant mode of transportation in the early 20th century; by the 1920s, roads provided access to Indiana and the entire country under a national system. In 1925, legislators adopted a numbering system for both publicly and privately funded roads, (odd numbers for north-south roads and even numbers for east-west roads) and made cross-country travel easier to navigate (Kaszynski, 2000, p. 60). With a tendency toward access in the construction of roads, engineers and government leaders attempted to balance the creation of the most direct route with the inclusion of as many cities as possible along the route.

Ultimately, in the period from 1900 to 1950, the automobile dominated and surpassed railroad travel just as rail had done to river and canal transportation a half-century earlier. The first Model-T rolled off the assembly line in 1908 and Americans grew disaffected by outmoded rail travel. By 1916, Drieser wrote, “at best the railways have become huge, clumsy, unwieldy affairs little suited to the temperamental needs and moods of the average human being” (p.92). Like water and rail travel, the road provided a new means of accessing and experiencing the city and the physical form of the city was adapted accordingly.

Architecture of independence and mobility

The evolution of the highway system and the widespread use of roads led to yet another phase of re-orientation for the county seat. These towns, once oriented toward rail as the main point of entry, now turned their attention to the city as approached by

automobile. Cities created new buildings and developments at the edge of town and made few changes to the court square in this time frame (Appendix A).

The physical form of the city center did not undergo marked change during this period, but the way it was experienced changed. Residents and visitors began to realize that the same country roads that led *to* the center of town also led *away* from the center and toward the next town. While the railroad served as a means to transport goods to market, the road allowed for the easy transportation of people; railroads linked markets, but roads linked communities.

Post-1950 – Interstates Limit Access

The interstate highway system provided a means for traversing the country quickly and safely. At the same time, it limited access to small towns; court squares were preserved, not as bustling economic centers, but as memorial spaces, commemorating local and national history.

The interstate highway system

While automobile travel gained popularity, the first mention of a federal highway system in 1944, met resistance. Individual states wanted control over roadways and by mid-century, several states (including Indiana) constructed their own tollways with limited access, making them easier to drive, and individual towns more difficult to reach. However, “with the nation’s highways clogged with vacationers and commercial traffic competing for road space,” a national system promised to resolve congestion caused by

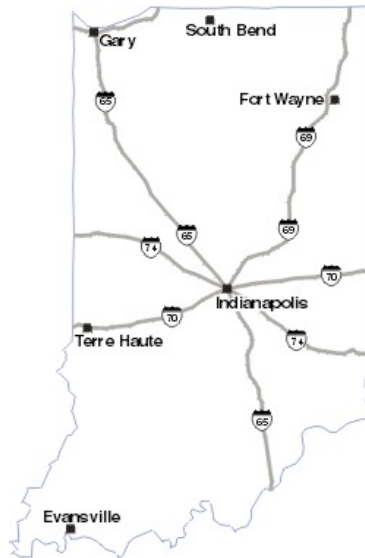


Figure 6. Indiana Interstate Map. Four Interstate highways, converging on Indianapolis, connect the Indiana to the rest of the country (www.usdoj.gov, 2005).

an increased number of vehicles and unlimited access to the state highways (Kaszynski, 2000, p.161).

Eisenhower, annoyed at the slow speed at which troops were able to traverse the country during WWII, reiterated the need for a more efficient means of mobilizing troops. Within a year of taking office, he signed the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1954 and appropriated money for the formulation of an interstate highway system “of limited access, multi-lane freeways of standard construction” (Kaszynski, 2000, p.164). In order to reduce congestion on the new interstates, the roadways crossed fewer towns. “While the old U.S. highway system’s primary objective was to serve all population centers over 50,000, the new system sought to reduce total mileage and serve fewer cities” (Kaszynski, 2000, p.167). The interstate provided a path from one point to the next, with

as few interruptions as possible; scenery became a more distant objective behind speed and safety.

As the new interstate system bypassed towns connected by the former U.S. system, the towns again re-organized to reflect the change. No longer a node along the path to a destination, many communities experienced a sharp decline in traffic and tourism. “Merchants in bypassed areas saw their business drop to a trickle the day following the opening of a new section of interstate” (Kaszynski, 2000, p.175).

Generally forced to relocate nearer the freeway or close their doors, service businesses (restaurants, filling stations, and motels) rushed to purchase property near the freeway interchanges where fierce competition saw small-town businesses losing their place to well-known chain restaurants and motels.

Architecture as harbinger of memory

One-hundred years of the railroad and highway connections to towns unraveled in the second half of the 20th century as the interstate bypassed all but the largest county seats, leaving the buildings, businesses, and residents struggling to survive. In response, towns began to redefine themselves as nostalgic hamlets.

With little to no new construction in the center of the small town county seat, the court square became a memorial to the once-thriving city and county center. In the latter 20th century, with the advent of a formal preservation movement, the courthouse, carefully maintained or restored, served as a tourist destination in addition to its governmental function. Downtown business blocks that faced the courthouse, occupied by antique stores and specialty shops, plied the tourist trade, leaving residents to shop on

the outskirts of town. These residents gathered on the square only for special occasions; outside of civic ceremonies and county festivals, the lawn was occupied only by monuments and the occasional maintenance worker.

Like the grid that stretched across the Ohio Valley, the court square was a flexible space, adapted to meet the changing needs of evolving transportation systems and growing county seats. Early city planners created towns with easily navigated central cores, an arrangement easily understood by residents and visitors alike. Created as the governmental, commercial, and social heart of the town and surrounding county, the court square continues as a centering space and place for the community, if only symbolically (Appendix A). Physical changes redefined the appearance of the square over time, yet, the courthouse and the square on which it rests remained the symbolic center of its town and county through these changes.

The square exists as a physical place, but an understanding of the square comes from the symbolism of its elements. Thus, an understanding of “place” is tied not only to the physical assemblage and personal experience of square, but to collective memories and cultural constructions of the space. Interpretation and definition of these memories and constructions contribute to an acknowledgement of the court square as an important regional form.

CHAPTER II

MEMORY: CONTEXTS FOR THE COURT SQUARE

We are surrounded by messages from the past and we use these whisperings and shouts of those gone before to understand our present. Our world is full of mnemonic devices, and they can extend memories back in time. (Archibald, 2004, p. 47)



The court square holds a variety of meanings for different people, meanings that vary across time and space. The physical elements of the square have evolved to reflect the value placed on the square. They act as reminders of meaning, influencing the way current residents and visitors view the square. The physical elements, together with collective memories and cultural constructions, shape an understanding of the square as an urban space.

Geographers have routinely categorized space by its physical features and uses. Social scientists have attempted to interpret physical landscapes based on the collective

memories of its inhabitants. However, an understanding of physical space also depends on personal experience within the space and the cultural constructions that affect collective memory. Additionally, neither the physical environment, nor memories remain static. Thus, a new method is necessary to interpret the changing, or static, values of a group of inhabitants from their evolving physical environment.

Physical Environment and Personal Experience

Geographers and planners have often sought to define the physical elements of the city as a means of interpreting their impact on people's perception of space. Lynch (1960) proposed three components for analyzing the urban environment: identity, structure, and meaning. These components are roughly contiguous with Bacon's (1976) interpretation of a space based on realization, representation, and apprehension. Both authors implement an analysis that moves from identifying individual elements to evaluating relationships between these elements and the viewer and finally to attributing meaning to these elements.

The systematic categorization of physical elements, while appropriate for scientific research, produces an image of the city that disregards the importance of personal interpretation of the space. Lynch (1960) concentrates on the visual legibility of the cityscape, which he defines as, "the ease with which its parts can be recognized and can be organized into a coherent pattern" (p. 2). He contends that one must first have a space that is visually organized before one can inform it with one's own meaning. However, meaning is not something that is applied to a landscape as an afterthought, but

rather is integral to the interpretation and categorization of that space. One cannot categorize things that have no meaning to them.

Ultimately, the physical construction of a space guides an understanding of the space, behaviors within the space, and the perception of one's self in relation to that space. While Lynch's ultimate goal is to categorize the elements of a space, Bacon and Lynch both recognize the impracticality of looking at any element of the city independent of its physical surroundings or the impact of these physical elements on the observer: "nothing is experienced by itself, but always in relation to its surroundings, the sequence of events leading up to it, the memory of past experiences" (Lynch 1960, p. 1). Jakle (1982) describes settings that either cue place-appropriate behaviors or contain symbolic value as 'behavioral environments.' These environments, Bacon would argue, contribute to the perception of one's self. Introverted or extroverted, involvement with a given space depends directly on the perception, be it favorable or hostile, of the physical space.

The connection of an element to its physical surroundings and their collective impact on the observer is the basis of Lynch's second analytical component, structure. This notion of structure as the spatial relationship between observer and object is echoed in Bacon's definition of architecture as, "the articulation of space so as to produce in the participator a definite space experience, in relation to previous and anticipated space experiences" (Lynch, 1960, p. 21). This definition supports Lynch's research and process of 'cognitive mapping,' in which residents were asked to actually map the city in two dimensions, to describe several trips through the city, and finally to list and describe specific elements that they felt contributed to the overall imageability of the city.

While Lynch's method for cognitive mapping certainly addresses the various ways that citizens interact with the physical fabric of the city, its purpose was to create a composite image of the city and thus, Lynch does little to uncover reasons for the variations in interpretation. Hayden (1995) recognizes this disconnect, noting that differences exist because everyone creates their own cognitive map of a city based on their personal memories and experiences. Thus, it is difficult to generalize about the imageability of a city, regardless of the number of cognitive maps that are overlaid or compared, because image is so deeply rooted in personal experience.

Physical space cannot be separated from the meanings that it contains. Hayden (1995) describes place as a "container for experiences" (p. 46) and Lowenthal (1985) discusses the relationship between physical elements (relics), memory, and history noting that relics are little more than a framework for understanding meaning and memories. Physical objects without memory or meaning are not relics because they refer to no past experience. Lynch (1960) attempts to address the meaning of space when he describes its imageability as, "the quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in a given observer" (p. 9). However, he seems content to substitute recognition in an observer for the meaning he claims to seek, so much that low imageability in a city results in resident "dissatisfaction, poor orientation, and an inability to describe or differentiate its parts" (Lynch, 1960, p. 32). However, if place is little more than a container for experience, as proposed by Hayden and Lowenthal, that would indicate that the city was difficult to navigate *because* its parts had little meaning for its residents and not the reverse as Lynch proposes.

The imageability of a space, or sense of place, depends on more than simple recognition of the physical elements of a space and the meanings attributed to them by individual users. In addition to personal experience, meaning is created and revised according to collective memory and cultural constructions of space. The notion of a shared image is addressed by Hayden (1995) who has coined the term ‘power of place’ to mean, “the power of ordinary landscape to nurture citizens’ public memory, to encompass shared time in the form of shared territory” (p. 9).

Cultural Constructions of Space and Collective Memory

Knowledge of the past is essential to an understanding of the present landscape. Based on personal experiences within the physical environment, collective memories and constructed images of that environment, an acknowledgment of the past places one within a continuum of time. Lowenthal (1985) discusses the interpretation of the past in three stages, a longing for the past, a knowledge of the past, and a practice of changing the past.

Nostalgia is defined as a longing for things, persons, or situations of the past. This longing often occurs because, as one grows more removed in time from a particular landscape or situation, the details become blurred and the landscape simplified. Often the memory of a place is far more pleasant than the actual place. Jakle (1982) notes, “home was never the same to adults who returned, especially after long absences. The images that had been ingrained on the mind were too vivid, too exaggerated” (p. 79). A longing for a simplified past has led to an interest in antiquing and the collection and retention of

historic photographs, the adaptation of existing landscapes, and the creation of a series of entirely new landscapes meant to depict a former time.

Francaviglia (1996) notes that nostalgia requires a specific time as well as a place. In his creation of Main Street, U.S.A., Disney chose to depict a railroad community from the early twentieth century. His constructed community was removed from and protected from the massive growth and decentralization that was 'ruining' many American small towns during the middle of the century. Thus, in addition to being a nostalgic representation of his hometown, Main Street U.S.A. was also a, "tacit protest against modern America," an intact historic commercial corridor that was protected from the evils of suburbanization (Marling, 1994, p. 106).

More than through reconstructions of historic landscapes, knowledge of the past is most often obtained through photographs. While the very nature of a photograph requires that some semblance of the image actually exist at one point in time, this is not to say that photographs cannot lie, or at the very least misrepresent the past. Trachtenberg (1989) warns of the dangers of using images as history, addressing the balance between reproduction and construction that Lowenthal and Francaviglia introduced and providing the following three considerations for viewing photographs: the static nature of the image, the selective view of the viewfinder as manipulated by the photographer, and the context in which the images were taken and meant to be viewed.

Photographs produced static, seemingly staged impressions of small towns, partly due to the early technology of photography. Long exposure times were not suited to capturing movement and the bulk of early equipment limited the view and types of

photographs that could be taken. “A photograph or sketch may freeze Main Street in a particular moment, but time always changes the streetscape from one moment to the next.” (Francaviglia, 1996, p. 59) The limits of photography may have contributed to the image of the small town as a static environment. However, specific scenes captured by photographers contributed to this notion of stasis than did the technology.

Where the historian uses words, the photographer uses the viewfinder to tell his story. In fact, lexically, photography means, “a kind of pictographic writing, communication through images” (Trachtenberg, 1989, p. 4). The photographer’s tools for the creation of an image include where to place the edge of the picture, what to exclude, and from what point of view to show the relations among the included details. Ultimately, “all images are selective, filtered statements about the design and content of the streetscape” (Francaviglia, 1996, p. 182).

The content of an image is often dictated by the purpose of the photographer, his client, and the setting in which the image is to be viewed. Traveling photographers took many images of small towns for use on postcards, to promote the town. Understandably, these images contained the most impressive views of the town, often making it, “appear even grander, neater, or more prosperous than it actually was” (Francaviglia, 1996, p. 136). Anderson (1992) discusses the photographs that survey expeditions prepared for the U. S. government. These images were taken to document the western lands, but also promote their settlement. These images, originally intended for government use, have been widely reproduced and are exhibited as art in museums throughout the country. While the images certainly have artistic merit, that was not their original purpose (p. 16).

To take a photograph outside of the context in which it was created is to misconstrue the intentions of the photographer and in some cases to discredit the image.

Photography, like every other artistic media, including drawing and painting, is open to interpretation. Their reproduction and wide distribution sometimes inadvertently adds to their credibility. Trachtenberg notes, “repeated again and again by historians and critics, these memories are like tinted lenses, coloring the images in the light of the author’s retrospective account of his intentions and feelings” (Trachtenberg, 1989, p. 180). When viewing photographs we bring with us our own knowledge and biases, which influence our interpretation of the images.

Jakle contends that place images served to organize the world conceptually, in the same way that Lynch’s vocabulary served to organize the world physically. Less tangible than photographs, though no less prevalent are the place images that Jakle describes. In his work he seeks to explore place images as the beliefs and attitudes, “extrapolated from suggestive icons in the landscape” (Jakle, 1982, p. 5). These place images, rooted in both direct experience and “on indirect knowledge – on understandings communicated and shared as part of the popular culture,” become, in themselves, a kind of vocabulary (Jakle, 1982, p. 6). The vocabulary of place images contributes to what Francaviglia calls the image of Main Street. He proposes that Main Streets are, above all, “creations that symbolize both individual and collective human energy, aspiration, and dreams” (Francaviglia, 1996, p. xxiv).

While the history of a place and the physical forms it produces are indisputable, the preservation or destruction of these forms serves to adapt the understanding of this

history. Bacon's (1976) notion of the second man states that, "it is the second man who determines whether the creation of the first man will be carried forward or destroyed" (p. 109). Similarly, Francaviglia's axioms for interpreting Main Street serve as clues to the editing of Main Street. This selective editing coincides with Lowenthal's discussion of a changing past and Lynch's (1972) statement that, "choosing a past helps us to construct a future" (p. 64).

Altering the physical environment reflects an editing of the past and a vision for the future. The National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street program is as guilty of perpetuating stereotypical images of American small towns as Disney's Main Street U.S.A. One of the main goals of the organization is to, "develop a positive image for the town, that would help reverse deterioration of the declining downtown," which they achieve through design, promotion, cooperation, and economics (Francaviglia, 1996, p. 177). Decisions made regarding Main Street are often made with the end goal being a coherent, balanced streetscape aesthetic. However, a focus architectural character and integrity may negate the passage of time, backdating Main Street in appearance.

The preservation of Main Street also speaks to a desire to retain the best of the past. The most prominent street in town, Main Street contained the most significant buildings, at least in terms of the dominant culture of the area. Francaviglia argues that,

Preserving Main Street seems natural – in retrospect, inevitable – because they are significant social and economic investments. Their preservation, then, would seem to ensure that we preserve the best of our past, and the best of our historic character as a people (Francaviglia, 1996, p. 180).

However, preserving only the ‘best’ structures in a city provides a sanitized sense of history, in which only elements of the dominant culture are retained.

The elements of the physical environment that are retained, whether consciously or subconsciously, speak to a desire to shape the physical and mental construction of space. “The places we cherish and work to save are symbols, but they are not abstractions. They are real and tangible. They surround, support, and illuminate almost every aspect of our daily lives. And they embody our most fundamental values” (Moe, 2002, p. 10).

The past cannot be viewed except through the lens of the present and the present cannot be understood except through knowledge of the past. Together the past and present influence sense of place and guide decisions for the future. Place images become collective memories. The danger occurs when changed or reconstructed environments become part of the collective memory. Places like Disney’s Main Street U.S.A. contribute to a false sense of history, confusing the general public and contributing to a collective memory of a time that never existed. It is this confusion of an abstracted image with reality that infuriates historians and scholars (Francaviglia, 1996, p. 157).

A New Method for Interpreting Urban Environments

Space cannot be organized without attributing meaning to it, nor can it be interpreted independent of memories and bias. For this reason, both the geographer’s and the social scientist’s approaches fall short of a true analysis of urban form. A new method for describing and discussing our environment is essential, a method that

employs memory and cultural perception to both define physical elements and interpret their value.

Because of the complexity of the urban environment, many cultural historians shun the simplification and reduction of urban forms to a verbal or written vocabulary. Hayden (1995) argues that, “the urban landscape is not a text to be read, but a repository of environmental memory far richer than any verbal codes” (p. 227). However, the need to organize and classify surroundings inevitably continues to drive an understanding of the urban environment.

A method that allows for both the description and interpretation of surroundings and the creation of a new vocabulary is more than just important, it is a necessity. Lowenthal reinforces the importance of vocabulary when he states that, “only language provides the wealth of detail and nuance that enables us to identify and assess perceived differences among place” (Clay, 1980, p. 19). While an established vocabulary is important for understanding the history of the built environment and a continually evolving vocabulary is essential for describing our existing cities, a common vocabulary is even more important for the discussion of the future city. “Any individual citizen, by virtue of his particular choices of alternatives for action and experience, will need a vocabulary to express what he imagines the entire city to be” (Strauss, 1961, p. 13).

The physical environment is continually evolving; yet, the vocabulary for describing the environment has not kept pace with the changes. As perceptions of space and place images change through time, vocabulary must change accordingly. Grady Clay (1980) notes, “neither language nor landscape stands still for us” (p. 19). Thus,

vocabulary must be constantly evolving in order to keep up with the changing urban landscape. Clay suggests that the current vocabulary and means for viewing the contemporary city are rooted in age-old words and perceptions. Speaking of cities in simplified terms trivializes the interaction between buildings and sites. The purpose of his book is to break down the current vocabulary, to reevaluate the American city without the biases and connotations of the existing vocabulary, and to produce a new vocabulary to aid the ordinary person in organizing the “propaganda, rumors, and clichés being mass-produced about his environment” (Clay, 1980, p. 13).

The vocabulary used to describe the urban environment consists of more than a simple list of words. It includes collective memories, actual or constructed place images, and two-dimensional representations of the city. Individual authors have addressed one or more of these elements, but no author has discussed their collective impact on the understanding and interpretation of the urban environment. While Lynch has addressed the importance of personal experience and recognition of physical space, he has reduced his findings to a series of physical maps and a list of terms, in effect negating the importance of the interpretations that formed his research. Bacon (1976) has addressed the effects of physical space on the construction of self. However, he too has reduced space to a series of physical elements, small components that can be easily identified and analyzed.

Physical elements, two-dimensional representations, personal experience, and collective memories can all be interpreted as a kind of vocabulary for discussing and understanding the city. Francaviglia (1996) used the physical environment to read the

history and values of a small town Main Street. Through his sixteen axioms he proposes clues to successfully ‘reading’ and understanding the development of the city.

Tractenberg (1989) uses photographs in the same way. Even the title of his book, *How to Read American Photographs*, infers the possibility of using two-dimensional images as vocabulary. Lowenthal (1985) and Jakle (1982) discuss the importance of memory and place images in understanding the urban environment. Whether we realize it or not, having a series of common place images allows us the comparison of urban environments against accepted standards for what they should look like.

In addition to creating a new vocabulary for the American city, or perhaps *in order* to produce this new vocabulary, biases in perception must be confronted. Clay (1980) states that, “only when we manage to break free from old fixes and look with new vision will the city fully come alive to our presence in it” (p.29). He defines these perceptual biases as centrality, cross-section, and perspective, contending that to view cities through one of these means unintentionally limits the understanding of the city. However, when used in tandem, these three perceptions can provide a thorough understanding of the court square as an urban form.

Clay’s (1980) discussion of centrality is based on an analysis of the overall form and spatial organization of the city, a perception that relates directly to the work of Lynch and Bacon. To view the city based solely on physical form provides a misleading notion of immobile geometry instead of a more accurate view of the irregular growth of the city. Centrality provides a, “type of reductionism which makes it possible to encompass a city’s wide expanse...it achieves the simplifications and imposes the limitations which

come from looking at a façade” (Strauss, 1961, p.11). Finally, like Lynch’s cognitive mapping, a centralized perception analyzes the city only through the dominant culture and values, negating the variety of influences and experiences that form the image of the city.

Clay’s (1980) cross-sectional perception of the city is derived from the idea of looking at a city scientifically. This view freezes the city in time and space and analyzes it as a scientific specimen. The approach provides a fairly accurate view of the city at a specific point in time, including the context of the surrounding environment that both Lynch and Bacon note as essential to understanding. However, Clay warns that one view alone in effect negates the passage of time. Additionally, “since age and trend are relative matters, any placement of a city in symbolic time necessitates that a comparison be made with other cities” (Strauss, 1961, p.27). Landscapes and their meanings are constantly evolving and emerging; a full understanding of a city requires viewing the city in full and in the context of other urban forms.

Clay’s (1980) final perception, perspective, addresses the notion that the correct way to view a city is derived from Renaissance ideas of beauty and perspective. Bacon (1976) notes that, “for hundreds of years we have been imprisoned within the confines of the picture plane, and are only now beginning to free ourselves from the restrictions imposed” (p.59). This faulty perception is compounded by the stereotypical place images of small towns perpetuated in both two- and three-dimensional form, which ultimately become part of the collective memory. Skewed by memory or the limits of the media in which it is created, perspective creates beautiful images in the mind and on paper but, in

effect, reduces the urban landscape to a stage setting. Clay (1980) concludes that the limited relationship of buildings and spaces in a three-dimensional perspective, “produce visual answers that require no questions” (p. 29).

Unfortunately, after addressing our perceptual biases, Clay, like Lynch, contents himself with creating a new list of terms through which to describe the urban environment. However, the reduction of a three-dimensional environment loaded with visual cues and meanings to a simple list of terms intended to be universal tools for the description of cities negates the dynamism of the city and its influences. In addition to the fact that Clay’s vocabulary has already become outdated, the terms he chooses to employ have distinct connotations that guide our interpretation of specific landscapes.

In order for cultural geographers and preservationists to accurately analyze and interpret the changing landscape, a new method is necessary, one that aims to identify not only the physical elements of the landscape, but the symbolic value these elements possess. An analysis of value is important for cultural geographers as they describe and classify the urban environment, but is essential for preservationists as they begin to make decisions about the repair or replacement of specific elements.

No urban landscape, the court square included, can survive without changes to its physical fabric or the collective memories it evokes. In addition to the physical environment signaling information about symbolic value, collective values direct the maintenance or adaptation of the physical environment. The reciprocal relationship between the corporeal environment and symbolic value justifies a new method for interpreting physical landscapes as a means of inferring value.

CHAPTER III

METHOD: PERSPECTIVES ON THE COURT SQUARE

Town planning, land use, social activity, and architectural symbolism are interwoven at the square in ways matched by few other elements of American urban form. (Veselka, 2000, p.1).



The goal of the research was to document the physical evolution of the Indiana court square and to consider physical consistencies across time as they spoke to continuing values in small town America. An evaluation of the physical form alone could not provide an understanding of the built environment. Thus, the physical evidence was reviewed in both historical context (to see how people changed the physical space over time) and in social context (to see how people responded to the physical environment).

The research was completed in three stages: identification, description, and analysis. These stages correlate roughly with the researcher's interpretation of Clay's (1980) three fixes, or biases, for perceiving the contemporary city: centrality, cross-

section, and perspective (p.23-37). Clay correctly identified these perceptual biases as incomplete views of the evolving city, however, he did not consider the effect of employing the views simultaneously. The researcher sought to utilize all three perceptual biases, letting each view account for the limits of the others.

The work first indexed Indiana's county seats using maps, aerial photos, surveys, and published histories to document the relationship of existing court squares to major transportation routes. Next, the researcher outlined the physical features of the court square using maps, historic photographs, published histories, and written and oral descriptions to chronicle their evolution from construction through the turn of the 21st century. Finally, the researcher drew conclusions about the symbolic value of the square as reflected in the physical treatment of the square over time.

Identification – Clay's Centrality

Centrality is one of the defining features of the court square as a city form. While social and economic centrality may be hard to visualize, the physical centrality of the court square is easily seen in maps and aerial photographs, their relationship to one another illustrating Christaller's central place theory (Beavon, 1977, p. 12). When viewed from above, the county seat resembles a web of transportation routes converging on a single area of the county. While maps and aerial photographs illustrate this hierarchy of activity and are very useful for classifying the city in terms of its physical form and proximity to transportation routes, they provide a static image of the city, frozen in time.

The first objective of the research was to create a comprehensive inventory of Indiana's county seats in order to determine which seats possess a central court square, the type of square they possess, and their relation to major rivers, canals, rail, and road transportation. Aerial photos produced by Microsoft and topographic maps produced by the United States Geological Survey, both available on-line at terraserver.com, provided the needed images of the cities. While these maps were created in the late 20th century, there is no reason to believe that the layout of the streets and form of the square have changed since the erection of each courthouse in the second half of the 19th century. Typologies presented by Price (1986) and Veselka (2000) were used to categorize the court squares (Appendices B and C).

The relationship of the county seats to major transportation routes was determined using a combination of maps and written texts. Water routes were identified using Simons's (1985) *The Rivers of Indiana* and Fatout's (1972) *Indiana Canals*. This information was verified using the 1982 Map of Indiana Lakes and Streams, produced and distributed by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. Simons's (1997) *The Railroads of Indiana* and Martin's (1976) *Rail Atlas of Indiana* was used to locate rail transportation routes in the county seats. The presence of highways was established using appropriate chapters from Carmony and Peckham's (1946) *A Brief History of Indiana* and Esarey's (1935) *A History of Indiana: From 1850–1920* and were confirmed using individual county and city histories and the 1970 Indiana Base Map with Highways, produced and distributed by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

County Seat	County	Date	Type of	Water	Rail	Road	2000
		of Est.	Square				Population
Albion	Noble	1835	Shelbyville			■	46,275
Anderson	Madison	1823	Unknown	■	■	■	133,358
Angola	Steuben	1835	1/4 Block			■	33,214
Auburn	DeKalb	1835	2 Block			■	40,285
Bedford	Lawrence	1818	1/2 Block		■	■	45,922
Bloomfield	Greene	1821	Shelbyville			■	33,157
Bloomington	Monroe	1818	Shelbyville		■	■	120,563
Bluffton	Wells	1835	1/2 Block	■	■	■	27,600
Boonville	Warrick	1813	Shelbyville			■	52,383
Brazil	Clay	1825	Irregular Block		■	■	26,556
Brookville	Franklin	1810	1/4 Block	■		■	22,151
Brownstown	Jackson	1815	Shelbyville			■	41,335
Columbia City	Whitley	1835	Shelbyville	■		■	30,707
Columbus	Bartholomew	1821	1/4 Block	■	■	■	71,435
Connersville	Fayette	1818	1/4 Block	■	■	■	25,588
Corydon	Harrison	1808	Unknown			■	34,325
Covington	Fountain	1825	Shelbyville	■	■	■	17,954
Crawfordsville	Montgomery	1822	1/4 Block		■	■	37,629
Crown Point	Lake	1836	Harrisonburg			■	484,564
Danville	Hendricks	1823	Shelbyville	■		■	104,093
Decatur	Adams	1835	1/2 Block	■	■	■	33,625
Delphi	Carroll	1826	Shelbyville	■		■	20,165
English	Crawford	1818	Unknown			■	10,743
Evansville	Vanderburg	1818	1/4 Block	■	■	■	171,922
Fort Wayne	Allen	1823	1/2 Block	■	■	■	331,849
Fowler	Benton	1840	Irregular Block			■	9,421
Frankfort	Clinton	1830	Shelbyville		■	■	33,866
Franklin	Johnson	1822	Harrisonburg	■		■	115,209
Goshen	Elkhart	1830	Shelbyville	■	■	■	182,791
Greencastle	Putnam	1821	Shelbyville	■	■	■	36,019
Greenfield	Hancock	1827	Shelbyville			■	55,391
Greensburg	Decatur	1821	Shelbyville		■	■	24,555
Hartford City	Blackford	1838	Shelbyville			■	14,048
Huntington	Huntington	1832	Irregular Block	■	■	■	38,075
Indianapolis	Marion		Unknown	■	■	■	860,454
Jasper	Dubois	1817	Philadelphia	■		■	39,674
Jeffersonville	Clark	1801	Shelbyville	■	■	■	96,472
Kentland	Newton	1835	Shelbyville		■	■	14,566
Knox	Starke	1835	Shelbyville			■	23,556
Kokomo	Howard	1844	Shelbyville		■	■	84,964
Lafayette	Tippecanoe	1826	Shelbyville	■	■	■	148,955
LaGrange	LaGrange	1832	Shelbyville		■	■	34,909
LaPorte	LaPorte	1832	Shelbyville			■	110,106
Lawrenceburg	Dearborn	1803	1/2 Block	■	■	■	46,109
Lebanon	Boone	1830	Shelbyville			■	46,107
Liberty	Union	1821	Shelbyville			■	7,349

Figure 7. Inventory of Indiana County Seats.

County Seat	County	Date of Est.	Type of Square	Water	Rail	Road	2000 Population
Logansport	Cass	1828	1/2 Block	■	■	■	40,930
Madison	Jefferson	1810	1/4 Block	■	■	■	31,705
Marion	Grant	1831	Shelbyville	■	■	■	73,403
Martinsville	Morgan	1821	Shelbyville		■	■	66,689
Monticello	White	1834	1/4 Block	■		■	25,267
Mount Vernon	Posey	1814	Shelbyville	■	■	■	27,061
Muncie	Delaware	1827	Unknown	■	■	■	118,769
Nashville	Brown	1836	1/2 Block	■		■	14,957
New Albany	Floyd	1819	Unknown	■	■	■	70,823
New Castle	Henry	1821	Shelbyville	■	■	■	48,508
Newport	Vermillion	1824	2 Block	■		■	16,788
Noblesville	Hamilton	1823	Shelbyville	■		■	182,740
Paoli	Orange	1815	Philadelphia			■	19,306
Peru	Miami	1832	1/2 Block	■	■	■	36,082
Petersburg	Pike	1816	2 Block			■	12,837
Plymouth	Marshall	1835	Shelbyville	■	■	■	45,128
Portland	Jay	1835	Shelbyville	■		■	21,806
Princeton	Gibson	1813	Shelbyville		■	■	32,500
Rensselaer	Jasper	1835	Shelbyville	■		■	30,043
Richmond	Wayne	1810	Unknown	■	■	■	71,097
Rising Sun	Ohio	1844	Unknown	■		■	5,623
Rochester	Fulton	1835	Shelbyville		■	■	20,511
Rockport	Spencer	1818	Shelbyville	■	■	■	20,391
Rockville	Parke	1821	Shelbyville		■	■	17,241
Rushville	Rush	1821	Shelbyville	■	■	■	18,261
Salem	Washington	1813	Philadelphia	■		■	27,223
Scottsburg	Scott	1820	Shelbyville			■	22,960
Shelbyville	Shelby	1821	1/2 Block	■		■	43,445
Shoals	Martin	1820	Unknown	■		■	10,369
South Bend	St. Joseph	1830	1/4 Block	■	■	■	265,559
Spencer	Owen	1818	Shelbyville	■		■	21,786
Sullivan	Sullivan	1816	Shelbyville		■	■	21,751
Tell City	Perry	1994	Unknown	■	■	■	18,899
Terre Haute	Vigo	1818	Shelbyville	■	■	■	105,848
Tipton	Tipton	1844	1/2 Block		■	■	16,577
Valparaiso	Porter	1835	Shelbyville			■	146,798
Vernon	Jennings	1816	Shelbyville	■		■	27,554
Versailles	Ripley	1816	Shelbyville			■	26,523
Vevay	Switzerland	1814	Shelbyville	■		■	9,065
Vincennes	Knox	1790	Shelbyville	■	■	■	39,256
Wabash	Wabash	1832	1/2 Block	■	■	■	34,960
Warsaw	Kosciusko	1835	Shelbyville			■	74,057
Washington	Daviess	1816	Shelbyville		■	■	29,820
Williamsport	Warren	1827	1/4 Block	■		■	8,419
Winamac	Pulaski	1835	1/2 Block	■		■	13,755
Winchester	Randolph	1818	1/4 Block	■		■	27,401

Figure 7 (continued). Inventory of Indiana County Seats.

The inventory also provided information regarding dates of establishment and evolving populations from 1850 to 2000. This information was taken from Kane's (1972) *The American Counties: Origins of Names, Dates of Creation and Organization, Area, Population, Historical Data, and Published Sources* and the United States census respectively.

The information was placed in a matrix following that presented by Veselka (2000) as an appendix to, *The Courthouse Square in Texas*. For each Indiana county seat, the matrix included the presence and type of square, the names of waterways, railways, and roadways that run through the county seat, dates of establishment and county populations as of 2000.

From the matrix the researcher identified those county seats that contain each of the three dominant modes of transportation: waterways, railways, and roadways were highlighted. The researcher then considered the current populations of the remaining cities. Towns with populations under 40,000 people were selected because they represent towns that experienced moderate growth, but not the large-scale reconstruction that comes with excessive growth. Additionally, selecting towns with similar populations provides a more comparable sample. The resulting sample included fourteen county seats, as illustrated in *Figure 7*.

The researcher chose to further limit the sample to those counties on either the Ohio or Wabash Rivers, as they were the only navigable rivers in the early history of the state and were thus the first settled. Nine county seats remained: Madison, Tell City, Rockport, and Mount Vernon on the Ohio River and Bluffton, Covington, Peru,

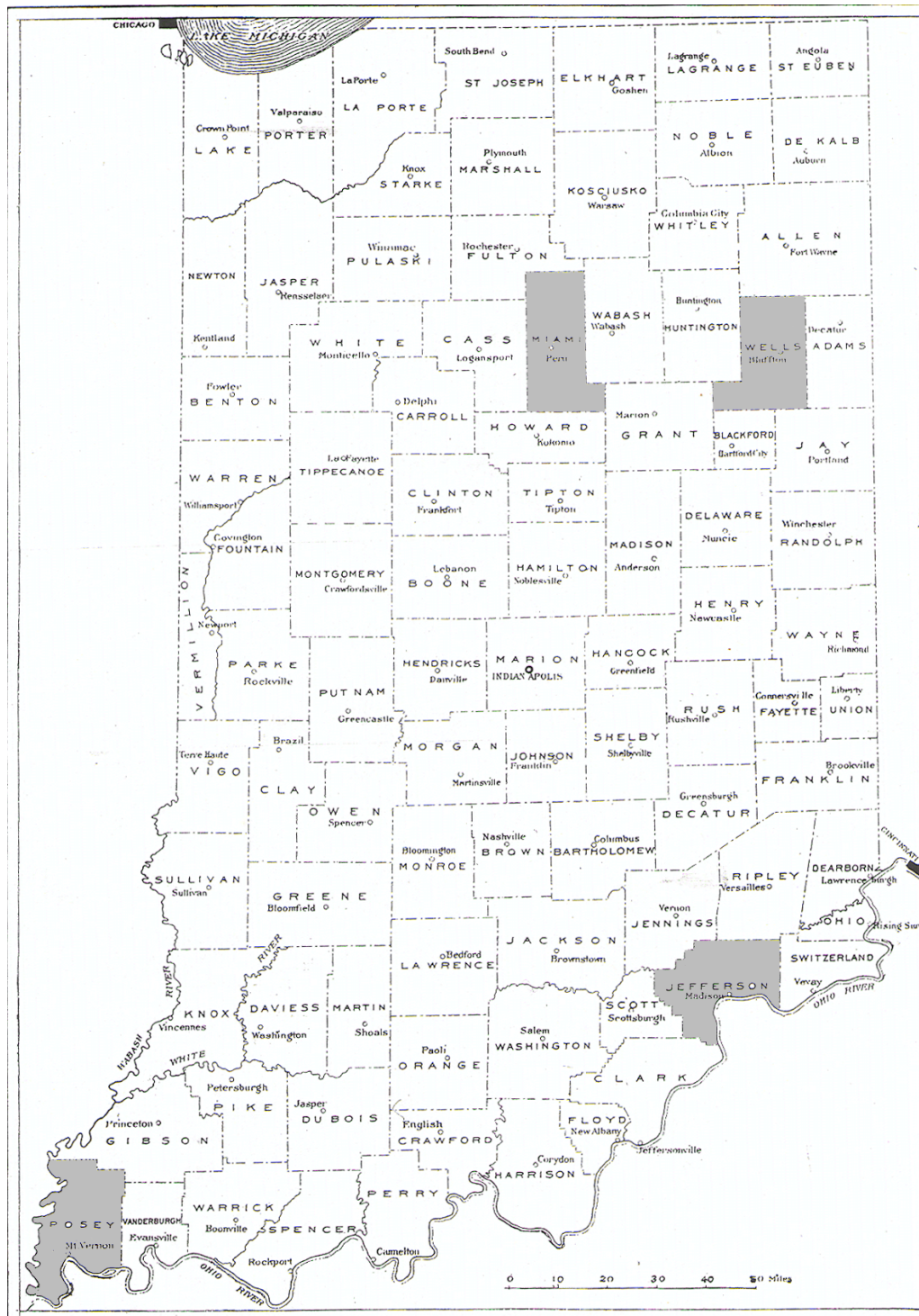


Figure 8. Indiana Map with Case Study Counties Highlighted. Peru (Miami County) and Bluffton (Wells County) in the north of the state and Mount Vernon (Posey County) and Madison (Jefferson County) along the southern border.

Vincennes, and Wabash on the Wabash. Tell City was removed from the sample because it was established as the county seat in 1994.

It was important that two towns were selected on each of the Ohio and Wabash Rivers in order to accommodate for regional differences that may have occurred. For this reason, Vincennes and Covington were eliminated from the sample because they lie on the southern end of the Wabash River, too near the Ohio River to provide for regional differences. Upon visiting the remaining six squares, the sample was narrowed to four county seats (Bluffton, Madison, Mount Vernon, and Peru) based on the availability of information and the overall impression of the towns, including activity on and around the square and the perception of the square as a vital element of the townscape (*Figure 8*).

An inventory of Indiana's county seats, while important for the classification of city forms and their relationship to transportation, cannot illustrate how an individual city responded physically to evolutions in transportation. Thus, it was necessary to evaluate the physical features of several cities across time, or to take a cross-sectional view.

Description – Clay's Cross-Section

To view the city cross-sectionally is to reduce the built environment to a series of 'snapshots' through time. While these snapshots provide a view of the city that is static and frozen in time, analyzing cross-sections allowed the researcher to make comparisons between the physical elements of the city across time. Images and landscapes, be they historic photographs or contemporary field reconnaissance, provided certain challenges to the researcher. While both sources provided a wealth of visual information, their story

can be difficult to interpret because they provide us with a seemingly complete picture of an evolving landscape. For these reasons, it was the responsibility of the researcher to discern landscape evolution and to regard the images and the contemporary landscape as an accumulation of developments rather than as a static form.

The current conditions of the court square were evaluated and documented by the researcher. Photographs, diagrams, and notes were created during the field research (APPENDIX D). Information about the physical condition of the courthouse, landscape and streetscape features, and the dates and placement of monuments were the focus of the field research.

Historic photographs and written descriptions of the square were used to trace changes from its initial construction to its current condition. Fifteen to 30 images were collected for each case study, predominantly from local libraries and historical societies. The images included published photographs, sketches and artistic renderings, postcards, and newspaper clippings. The variety of sources necessitated a careful photo analysis that took into account the source and purpose of the image. One drawback to this form of research is its dependence on the availability of images. For periods before photography and when images were scarce, published histories provided supplementary information. While they often contain biases of the author, these histories provide information about the court square as viewed by residents at the time of publication.

The physical features of the case study squares were evaluated based on four categories for analysis: structures, monuments, landscape, and streetscape elements. The courthouse, the structure that defines the court square, is often the most prominent

building in town, and as such was more thoroughly documented than surrounding structures. In addition to the courthouse, other structures found on the square historically included jails, sheriffs' houses, pumphouses, and gazebos. However, neither ancillary structures on the square, nor the buildings of the surrounding townscape were evaluated in this study. Their exclusion may weaken the conclusions, however, their analysis was too complex to be included within the scope of this work. The researcher's documentation of the current condition of the courthouse was compared against historic photographs in order to approximate dates of change.

Streetscape and landscape elements were evaluated in similar fashion, field documentation compared against historic photographs. The streetscape of each square, including paving material, signage, lighting, curbing, and parking was documented. An evaluation and description of landscape features, including sidewalks/walkways, trees and shrubs, seasonal plantings, retaining walls, benches, drinking fountains, and waste receptacles was performed in the field. From there the researcher compared the existing streetscape and landscape to historic photographs in order to approximate dates of change and to form a complete understanding of the physical evolution of the space.

Monuments to local and national heroes often adorn the courthouse lawn and can tell volumes about the values of a particular town. These monuments often take the form of statues, plaques, obelisks, fountains, or memorial plantings. The physical placement of these monuments and information regarding their dates of construction and the groups that they honor is as important as the form of the monument itself. The researcher documented existing monuments, noting their location and including descriptions of their

design and construction. The history and evolution of these monuments was inferred from the monuments themselves, which generally contained engravings or identification plaques containing the dates of the monuments and the circumstances regarding their erection. Newspaper clippings and county histories provided additional information about the monuments.

The four physical elements of the court square were compared across time, concentrating on four periods, 1800-1850, 1850-1900, 1900-1950, and post-1950. These time periods correlate with advancements in transportation described in Chapter I. All of Indiana's county seats were settled between 1790 and 1844. Additionally, the canal system in Indiana was completed in 1847 and the National Road by 1850, making 1850 an appropriate year to close the first period. The rail system in Indiana reached its peak in the early 1850s and remained the dominant form of transportation until the early twentieth century, as seen in the 1850-1900 evaluation. The expansion of the highway system can be seen in the analysis of the square from 1900-1950. Finally, an examination of the court square as it appears today, in the early years of the third millennium, will complete the analysis, taking into account the effects of the interstate highway system and the national preservation movement in the latter half of the 20th century.

As noted, fieldwork consisted of the researcher's written and photographic documentation of the existing square. From there, changes to the square were discerned from a comparison of historic and contemporary photographs. The evolution of the court square was presented in the form of a second matrix describing physical change as they

relate to the four time periods studied. The matrix took the form below, with a separate matrix completed for each of the four case studies. In this way the researcher evaluated the square as a dynamic landscape in order to fully understand the physical elements of the current landscape (*Figure 9*).

	Structure	Landscape	Streetscape	Monuments
1800 – 1850				
1850 – 1900				
1900 – 1950				
Post – 1950				

Figure 9. Sample Matrix for the Evaluation of Case Study Court Squares.

Analysis of Value – Clay’s Perspective

To view the city through visual evidence alone is to disregard the cultural forces that drove the physical development, to view the effects without considering the causes. This practice aligns closely with Clay’s (1980) description of the perspectivist tradition of viewing the city that he calls, “the death of a townscape – when it produces pat visual answers that require no questions” (p. 29). Thus, the final stage of research was an analysis of value. Physical changes or continuities were placed in historic context and considered in terms of the dominant cultural values in small Indiana county seats.

The completed matrices for the individual county seats provided a set of data against which to compare the physical features of the square, not only across time, but also across space by comparing the simultaneous development of the four case study squares. However, the physical evidence alone was not enough to illustrate the use and value of the square. The researcher considered contemporary festivals that take place on or around the square, consulting the local chambers of commerce to obtain information about the location and initial dates of festivals for each town. These festivals and their dates of inception were listed in chart form.

In order to graphically represent general trends in the physical and cultural development of the square, the researcher created a chart that compared the four periods of study against significant eras of development for each of the four physical categories and the dates of festival activity. Using the matrixes created for the individual towns, the researcher used graphic elements to show periods of relatively intense development within the designated time periods (*Figure 10*).

The researcher then compared overall physical changes for each time period to the changes in transportation during the same periods, attempting to uncover the role of the court square in the evolution of the town, both physically and culturally. In essence, the researcher sought to study the city through physical evidence of the square, focusing on the alteration and use of the spaces and the cultural connotations that these spaces contain.

CHAPTER IV

MEANING: REFLECTIONS FROM THE COURT SQUARE

In the west – everywhere west of Pennsylvania and sometimes east of it – a public square is not complete without a courthouse or at least a soldiers' or sailors' monument – or both – planted in the centre of it, and these almost an exact reproduction of every other courthouse or monument for one thousand miles about. The idea of doing anything original is severely frowned upon. Whatever else you may be in America or elsewhere, apparently you must not be different. Hold fast to what your ancestors did! Build all courthouses and monuments as courthouses and monuments should be built – that is, true to tradition. (Drieser, 1916, p.136)



Drieser (1916) recognized the court square as a form repeated across time and space. Found throughout the Ohio Valley, its physical existence has been mapped and analyzed. As early as 1969, Price mapped the distribution of court squares throughout the United States, defined four main typologies of squares, and attempted to trace their presence from one region to another (Appendix B). While the typologies he defined have become the standard for identifying court square, his attempt to illustrate the migration of

the square, linking it loosely to the ethnicity of early settlers, falls short of a true cultural analysis.

Veselka (2000) expanded on Price's classification in his analysis of the court square in Texas. He introduced five additional typologies and went on to classify the court squares as predominant, codominant, or subordinate based on the surrounding business types (Appendix C). Veselka attempted to address the symbolic features and social activities of the square, however, his analysis was dependant on the quantification of physical evidence, including the era of courthouse construction and the number of monuments present on the square.

The significance of Price's and Veselka's research is that its very presence illustrates the importance of the court square as a city form. However, their work is largely quantitative, based on the physical city form, and represents Clay's (1980) ideas about centrality. Neither author attempts to interpret the square across time or to infer cultural values based on the results of their survey work. Employing all three of Clay's perceptual biases for understanding urban environments (centrality, cross-section, and perspective) results in a more thorough comprehension of physical space, and from that, an indication of cultural values.

The Indiana court square illustrates evolving value placed on the physical elements of the square, a response to changing cultural connotations and ideals. (The current physical configuration of each square is illustrated in Appendix D and their evolution in Appendix E.) Periods of transportation advancement and community growth

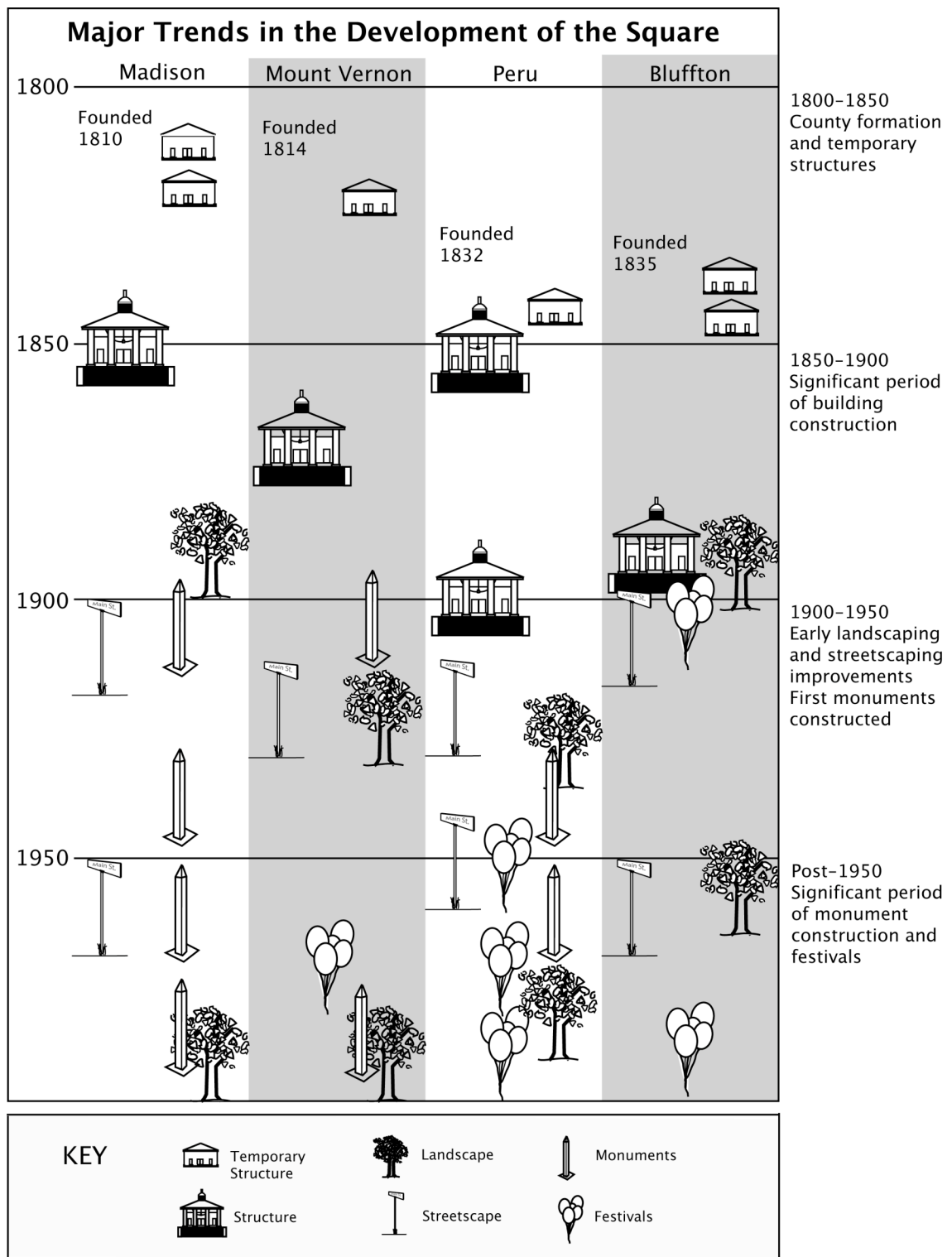


Figure 10. Major Trends in the Development of the Square.

first altered the purpose and subsequently the perception and symbolism of the square. An analysis of the physical space and cultural context provides a complete image of the court square as an evolving urban form.

Madison, Mount Vernon, Peru, and Bluffton, Indiana, share many characteristics in their physical and cultural development (Appendix E). All of the case study squares have experienced physical change to their structures, landscapes, streetscapes, and monuments and while this physical evidence can be quantified (Appendix D) and analyzed (*Figure 10*), the cultural connotations of these small town landscapes prove more difficult to discern. This analysis seeks to evaluate and interpret the evolution of physical elements in their historic context in order to discern the cultural significance of the square over time, employing a more thorough cultural analysis that adds to previous research, focused on form and morphology.

1800-1850 – The Square as Destination

The early 19th century court square served as a destination for farmers and surrounding townspeople. The period witnessed the organization of counties, the designation of county seats, the platting of towns, and the construction of temporary courthouse structures. The sample towns, chosen for their location along major waterways, illustrated the importance of water in town location. The dominant mode of transportation during this period, water provided access to market and fertile land, necessities for a predominantly agrarian society. The court square confirmed the importance of river towns and county seats as economic and social centers.

The location and orientation of the court square implied a sense of equality for county residents; the square was a communal space where residents could meet on equal terms, “a gathering place for farmers and town dwellers, slaves and masters, men and women” (Tolbert, 1999, p. 112). Nineteenth century *court days* provided an opportunity to attend to governmental, commercial, and social activities in the same day. Shepard (1995) notes that in agricultural areas with widely dispersed populations, court days afforded the residents the opportunity to “attend elections, to buy, sell, or trade crops, horses, dry goods, and other items, or to be entertained by speeches, races, games of chance, or similar pastimes” (p. 461).

Constructed and destroyed before the widespread use of photography, an understanding of the early 19th century court square is largely dependant on written

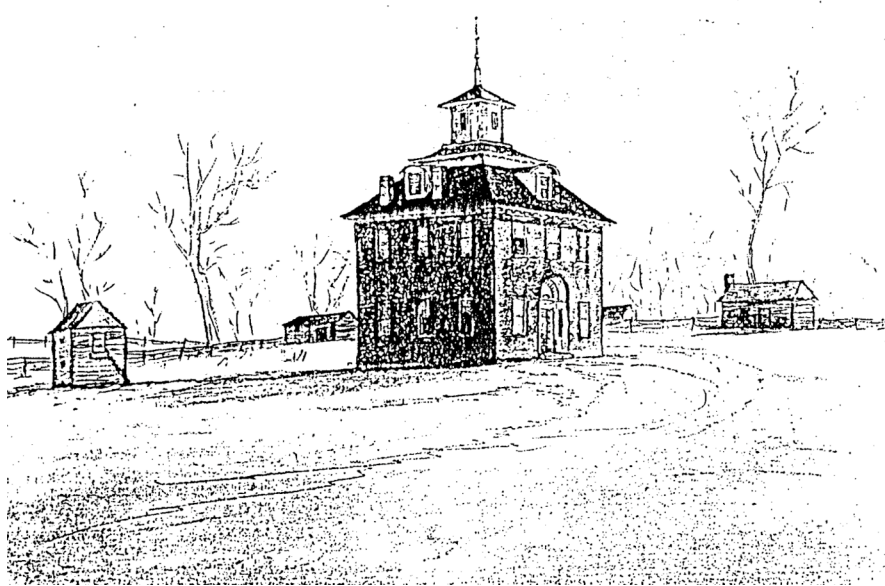


Figure 11. Posey County Courthouse, 1825 by Karl Bodmer. Mount Vernon’s first courthouse is an early example of a brick courthouse on the Indiana frontier. (Image courtesy of Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Nebraska.)

histories and descriptions. The only visual evidence collected for this period is an 1825 watercolor painting of the first courthouse at Mount Vernon. The image shows a two-story brick structure surrounded by small wood structures, likely a jail and ancillary offices, however, Leffel (1978) does not place a jail on the square until 1837 (p. 70).

The relative impermanence of the earliest courthouses was a benefit to counties still dealing with the logistics of where to locate their county seats. Posey County relocated their county seat three times in less than ten years and constructed wooden structures in each location before erecting a brick building in Mount Vernon (*Figure 11* and Appendix A). Nevertheless, the courthouse was a symbol of the physical center and the newly formed county government and was essential to the psychological development of town and county.

As towns were established, citizens constructed brick courthouse buildings. Valued not only for their perceived permanence, but for their fire-resistant qualities, each of the four case study towns constructed their first brick courthouses during this period: Madison in 1823, Mount Vernon in 1825, Peru in 1835, and Bluffton in 1843. Madison, the earliest founded and most progressive town of the period, passed a fire-related ordinance as early as 1830 that restricted the erection of frame or log buildings as “dwelling houses, stores, groceries, stables, or workshops” within the city limits (Windle, 1986, p. 19). However, their well-intentioned efforts were ineffective against fires that both consumed their 1823 brick courthouse and destroyed the interior of their 1855 brick and limestone building; Peru’s 1835 brick courthouse suffered a similar fate.

The earliest squares, surrounding temporary courthouses, received no formal landscaping (*Figure 11*); however, the very reservation of a square in the newly gridded town illustrates the significance of county seat designation to community founders. The case study squares represent a range of square types from the full block, Shelbyville square at Mount Vernon, a half-block at Peru, and quarter-block plans at both Madison and Bluffton (Appendix D). While land may have been plentiful in the undeveloped Ohio Valley, the retention of even a partial block for the courthouse is a significant contribution for a region dependent on agriculture, while the courthouse itself was important as the repository for deeds to county lands. The open square surrounding the courthouse was valued as a gathering space for townspeople for social, political, and economic functions, marking the square as a community center and local destination.

1850-1900 – The Square as Stop-over Point

The railroad brought an influx of people, products, and ideas to the Indiana county seat in the second half of the 19th century. An 1868 bird's eye illustration of Peru, Indiana includes a rail engine, barely visible in the top right corner, identifiable by the stream of smoke it emits (*Figure 12*). The nature of rail travel necessitated more frequent towns for fueling and maintenance of rail engines and cars. For those traveling by rail, the county seat was little more than a stopover point, but it remained the destination of farmers and townsmen.

Characterized by intense reconstruction, the second half of the 19th century saw each county's commitment to a permanent courthouse, a symbol of stability and point of



Figure 12. Bird's Eye View of Peru, Indiana, 1868. The railroad paralleled the river with the towns growing up between them. (Photo courtesy of Library of Congress).

pride for the county seat. Bringing new architectural styles and materials to the developing frontier, the railroad facilitated and encouraged the replacement of early courthouses. County officials employed prominent architects; the courthouses, constructed of local building materials in definable architectural styles, include the 1855 brick and limestone Classical Revival (Madison), 1856 brick Norman (Peru), 1876 brick Italianate (Mount Vernon), and 1891 sandstone Richardsonian Romanesque (Bluffton). The railroad ensured that courthouse styles kept abreast with contemporary architecture in the East during the same period.

The railroad also brought hardware and furnishings from other parts of the country, items that contributed to the modernity of the courthouse and square, but could



Figure 13. Norman Style Courthouse at Peru, ca. 1870-1890. The high-style courthouse is evidence of rail connections to the East, but the horse appears in the photos as the dominant local means of transportation. (Image courtesy of the Miami County Library.)

not be manufactured in a town still in its infancy. A late 19th century photograph of the courthouse at Peru shows metal castellation on the towers, a bell tower (presumably housing an iron bell), and wrought-iron fence (*Figure 13*). Though written histories make no mention of the origin of these elements, they were most likely constructed outside of the town and brought by rail.

A ca. 1880 photo of Madison, Indiana provides an interesting juxtaposition to the image of Peru from the same period (*Figures 13 and 14*). Both images provide evidence of rail connections to the county seat. In Madison, the connections are obvious; trolley lines linked the court square to the depot both physically and visually, perpetuating a

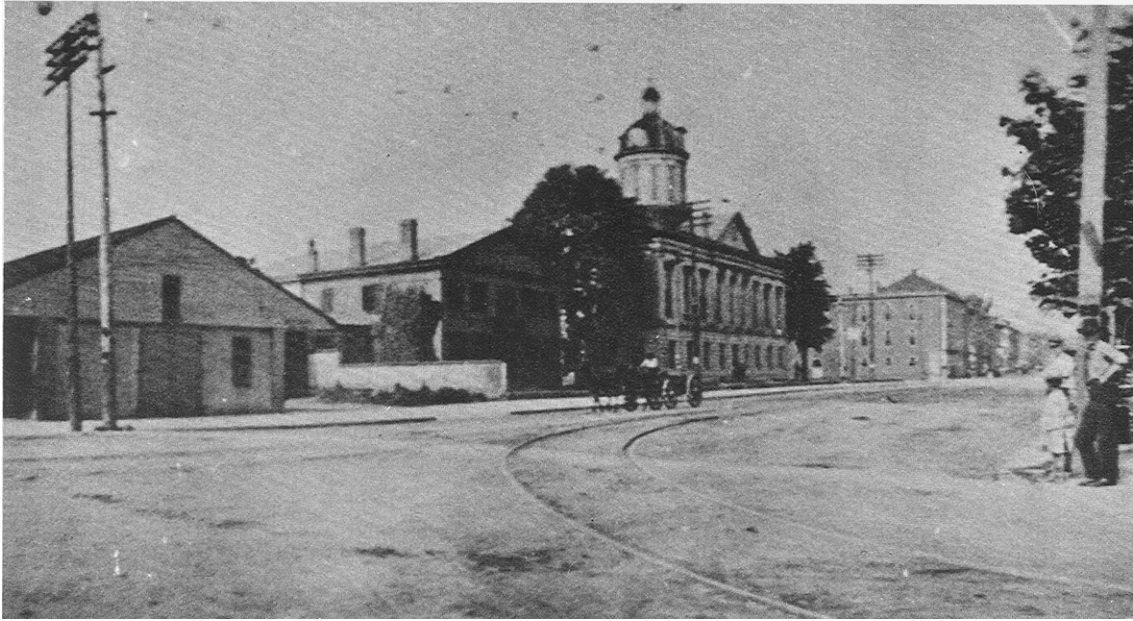


Figure 14. Madison, Indiana ca. 1880s. Electric and trolley lines, symbols of a progressive townscape, connect the court square to the train depot. Note the public market building to the left of the courthouse (Eisen, 1975).

progressive image of the square and town to rail passengers. In Peru, rail lines are not visible from the square, but county histories indicate the completion of the Indianapolis, Peru, & Chicago Railroad in 1854 (*History of Miami County, Indiana*, 1887, p. 288). Yet, in each image, the presence of horses and hitching posts along the square in Peru provide evidence of the dominant mode of transportation for residents within the county.

The Indiana small town, still struggling to establish and identify itself, embraced modern amenities in the decades surrounding the turn of the 20th century. The 1880s image of Madison shows a developing townscape; a market house, sheriff's residence and jail appear to the left of the courthouse with commercial buildings to the right (*Figure 14*). Evidence of electricity and early street lighting appeared in photos of the

court square as early as the 1880s in Madison and Peru and by 1900, wires lined the main streets of Bluffton and arc streetlights provided illumination for the court square and downtown commercial district (*Images 13, 14, and 17*). Evidence of fire service appears in the late 19th century photo of Peru's square, an indication that fire continued to be a concern for early residents (*Figure 13*).

Landscaping in the late 19th century served to define the space as a distinct entity within the townscape. Brought by rail, wrought iron fences surrounded the square in Madison, Mount Vernon, and Peru in the 1870s and 1880s (*Figures 15, 31, and 13*). The fences may have served a functional purpose in protecting the courthouse from wild

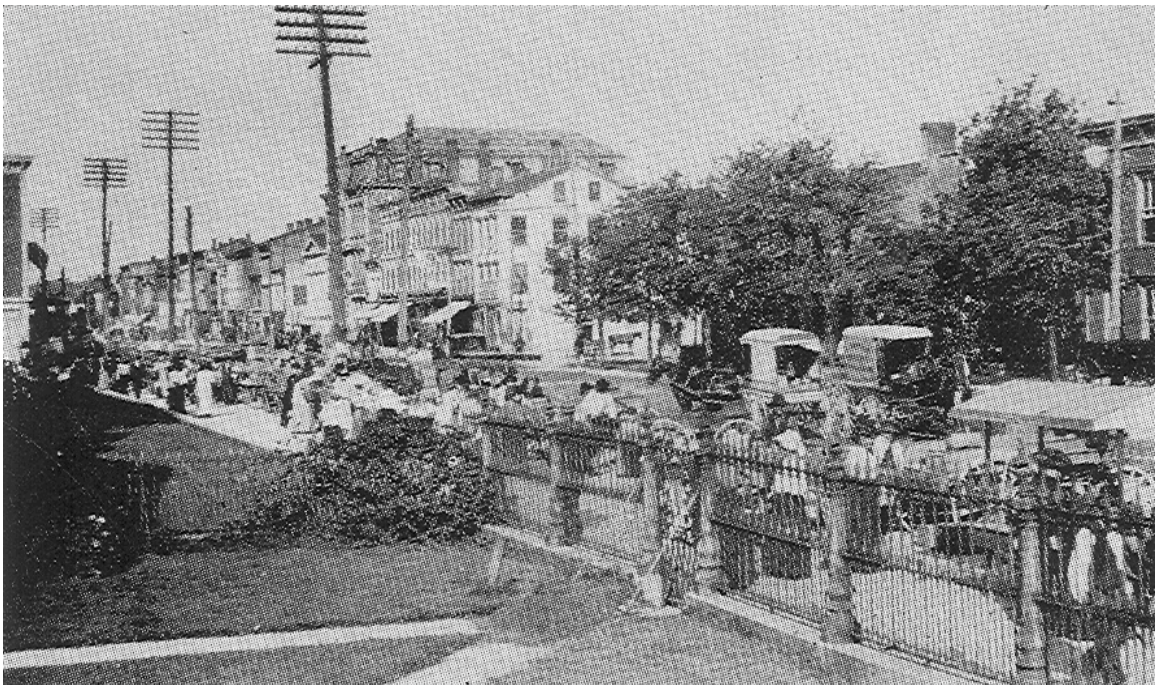


Figure 15. The court square at Madison, Indiana, ca. 1880. A wrought-iron fence and grass lawn define the square as a distinct entity within the townscape. (Image courtesy of The Madison-Jefferson County Public Library).

animals and vagrants, but, it is more likely that their construction was a means of defining the court square as a distinct space, contributing a sense of urbanism to the small town.

Early landscaping also reinforced the centrality and importance of the courthouse through the construction of a series of paths leading from the street and encircling the courthouse in Madison, Mount Vernon, and Peru (*Figure 15*). Lynch (1960) asserts, “paths with clear and well-known origins and destinations had stronger identities, helped tie the city together, and gave the observer a sense of his bearings when he crossed them” (p. 54). The paths on each square approached the courthouse from all angles, representing a design solution to vernacular walkways, reinforcing the notion of the building as the exact center of town and county, and symbolizing access for all citizens.

In addition to fences and furnishings, the railroad brought both commerce and visitors to the growing county seat. This attention likely prompted the planting of trees and construction of paths on the court square in order to complete the image of the square as a gathering place and community focus (*Figures 13 and 15*). The square, a fenced area of grass or dirt, served as a setting for the gathering of townspeople for civic and social functions alike. The presence of what appears to be a banner on the side of the courthouse in Peru reinforces the idea of the court square as both a community meeting place and bulletin board (*Figure 13*).

Bluffton represents an urban response to the court square, and an exception to the landscaping conventions of the time. At no point since the construction of its 1891 courthouse has the square (or more appropriately, perhaps, the plaza) contained a lawn,



Figure 16. The courthouse and streetscape at Bluffton, ca. 1895. The quarter-block square has no lawn, only a plaza. The streets have not yet been paved and horses remain the dominant mode of local transportation. (Image courtesy of the Wells County Historical Museum.)

only four small patches of grass with an egg-shaped fountain in the middle. Its courthouse rested on a paved, partial block, an arrangement that provided both visual importance and integration when viewed in context of surrounding commercial buildings. While it may not have aligned with the other squares in terms of landscaping, Bluffton did keep pace in terms of technological advancements, installing arc lighting in 1896 and paving their streets as early as 1897 (*Figure 16*).

Although evolving transportation systems allowed for the easy transport of products to larger markets, farmers continued to trade perishable goods at the local level. Farmers' markets, common in the agricultural Ohio Valley, reinforced local and regional economic dependency between town and countryside. Madison constructed a series of market houses, the fourth of which was constructed on the court square in 1851, illustrating the perceived equality of government and commerce (Windle, 1986, p. 16)

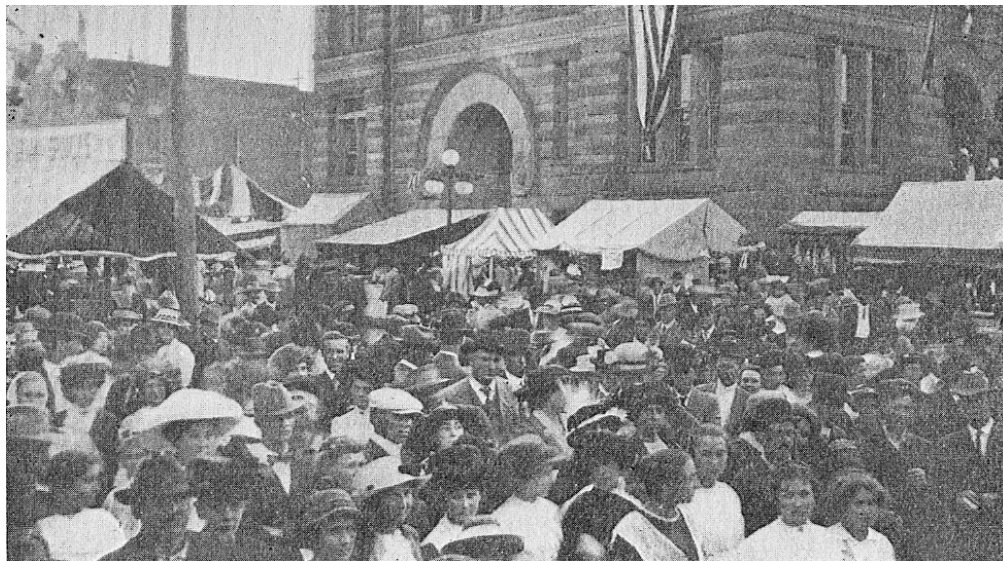


Figure 17. The Bluffton Street Fair with the courthouse in the background, 1914. (Image courtesy of the Well County Historical Society.)

(*Figure 14*). This relationship was also evident in the market house at Mount Vernon; erected on the court square in the late 1850s, the building was used as an armory in 1861, for newly enlisted volunteers in the Union Army (Leffel, 1913, p. 97).

The social interaction that occurred on the square was as important, if not more, than economic transaction or government action. Mount Vernon and Madison demolished their market houses in 1876 and 1905 respectively, but Madison continues to accommodate a farmers market on the periphery of the court square. Bluffton, despite its lack of a formal square used its space regularly; the Bluffton Street Fair began in 1898 on the streets surrounding the square and continues into the 21st century (*Figure 17*).

1900-1950 – The Square as Pass Through

The development of the automobile and the prevalence of road travel in the first half of the 20th century affected the way that the court square was approached, viewed, passed-by, and experienced. The square remained in regular use by residents, while cohesive streetscapes, paved pathways, and temporary and permanent monuments indicated the value of the court square to visitors and passersby.

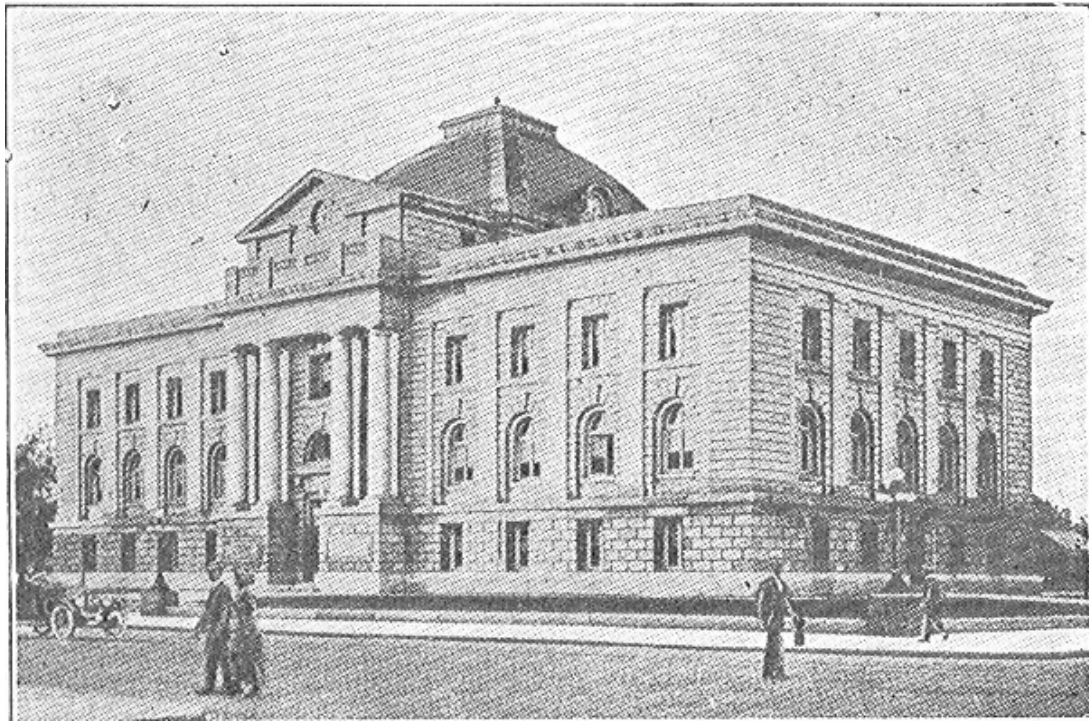
Style continued to symbolize progress as courthouses in the early 20th century reflected the modernization of the townscape. The clearest example, Peru, replaced its 1856 courthouse with a limestone Italian Renaissance structure (*Figure 19*). Significantly larger than the 19th century courthouses, Peru's 1910 building epitomized a modern structure that met the functional requirements of a growing county. Seventeen other



Figure 18. Courthouse at Madison, ca. 1900. The early 20th century court square remained the destination of local farmers and townsmen, while improvements to the square contributed to the image of a progressive and cohesive streetscape. (Image courtesy of Madison-Jefferson County Public Library).

counties in Indiana (not in the sample) replaced their courthouses in the first two decades of the 20th century.

With the widespread use of photography by the early 20th century, the county seat, and specifically the court square was the subject of both professional and amateur images. The reason for the photograph certainly influenced the image. Two photos of the new courthouse at Peru, one a published image of the front of the courthouse that appears in a contemporary guest guide, the other an impromptu image of the bustling street at the rear of the courthouse, provide an interesting comparison, an example of the bias that effects photography (*Figure 19*).



Peru: Courthouse (over)



Figure 19. Front and Rear façades of courthouse at Peru, 1913. The first image appears in a guest guide from the time, propaganda for the new courthouse. The second is an unpublished photo. (Images courtesy of Miami County Museum.)

The published image provides a clean, carefully-framed view of the newly constructed building (*Figure 19*). The focus is on the building, with little entourage arranged so as not to obstruct any part of the building. The people included in the image are well dressed, the streets clean and in good repair. The image provides an overall impression of the space as a well-respected and carefully attended townscape that may or may not experience actual use.

The second image is taken from the opposite corner of the building; the rear façade of the building has pilasters in place of round columns supporting the portico (*Figure 19*). The building is photographed at an extreme angle and the amount of context included indicates that the courthouse alone was not the subject of the image. The street and square are teeming with carriages and people, illustrating the square's regular use. Electric lines and other wires criss-cross the top of the image, a sign of the progressive streetscape rising above the courthouse walls.

As the automobile gained popularity in the early 20th century, downtown streets were paved and street and traffic signs installed to direct visitors safely through the square and on to the next town (*Figure 22*). By the 1920s, increased automobile traffic and encouraged the creation of a cohesive streetscape. Electric lines, once considered symbols of progress, were buried in an effort to 'clean-up' the view of downtown. A 1924 newspaper clipping from *The Peru Republican* noted the city's electric department working to run electrical service to the courthouse under pavement, "in order to eliminate the use of poles along the street front of the court house." The same process may have taken place in Bluffton, however, it is more likely that the 1929 postcard image of



Figure 20. Postcard image of the Courthouse at Bluffton, 1929. Streetlights illuminate and beautify the square, while electric lines and poles have been removed. (Image courtesy of the Wells County Historical Society.)

Bluffton was altered to removed the electric lines and poles that appear in photos from 1914 and 1941 (*Figures 20 and 36*).

Bluffton, Peru, and Mount Vernon installed new streetlights in the 1910s and 1920s, updating their streetscapes. Bluffton's three-bulb fixtures can be seen as early as 1914, but were replaced by a two-bulb, more modern fixture by 1941 (*Figure 36*). The two pronged fixture installed in Peru appears to have a central pole rising above the lighting elements, perhaps used for displaying banners or flags (*Figure 36*). Mount Vernon installed a simple single-bulb fixture that appears on both the square and business side of the street by 1929 (*Figure 22*).



Figure 21. Corner opposite the Courthouse at Peru, 1929. Note the light fixture near the center of the image. (Image courtesy of the Miami County Museum.)

Each court square displayed Lynch's (1960) notion of an edge, or boundary, between two distinct areas that may or may not be impenetrable (p.62). Initially accomplished by fencing (removed by the late 19th century), stone or concrete curbing was installed in the early 20th century to define the square both physically and visually in Madison, Mount Vernon, and Peru (*Figures 22 and 20*). The lawn rose a foot above the surrounding sidewalk, placing the entire square on a plinth and providing seating for visitors.



Figure 22. Landscape and streetscape of Mount Vernon, 1929. (Image courtesy of the Alexandrian Public Library.)



Figure 23. Front façade of courthouse at Mount Vernon, published 1913. The Soldiers and Sailors Monument stands at the left. Paths converge on the courthouse from all angles. (Leffel, 1978).

The earliest monuments, to soldiers and sailors, appeared on the squares in Madison and Mount Vernon in the first decade of the 20th century. Both monuments contain cast bronze figures on a stone pedestal, Mount Vernon's with an obelisk supporting the Goddess of Liberty (*Figure 23*). Erected approximately 130 and 40 years, respectively, after both the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, whose heroes they commemorate, they may have signified an effort by residents to connect themselves to national sentiments, displaying their support proudly to visitors. The fact that images of these monuments were included in county histories and reproduced on postcards supports this notion (*Figures 23 and 24*).



Figure 24. Postcard image of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument at Madison, 1909. (Image Courtesy of the Madison-Jefferson County Public Library.)

Until mid-century, the monuments adorning the square, predominantly temporary, supported military ventures. Peru placed a chest on the courthouse lawn in 1918, into which residents were expected to place donations for the war effort. Madison erected a County Honor Roll for War Bonds on their square in 1943; the board listed those who had purchased war bonds, a practice that no doubt encouraged the town residents to publicly support the war (*Figure 26*). Tanks, planes, and cannons were also displayed on squares during this period, to remind residents of their responsibility to support the war, to serve as points of community pride, and to display the county's involvement to passers-by (*Figure 25*).

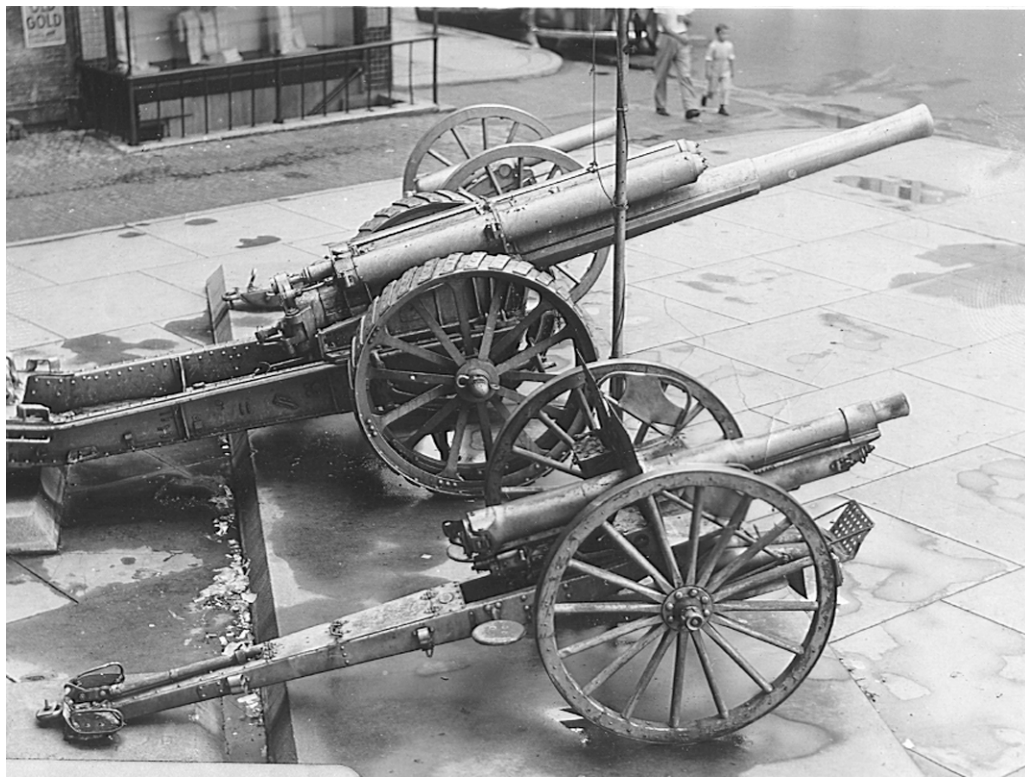


Figure 25. Cannons on the Square in Bluffton, ca.1940. The cannons were displayed prior to World War II. (Photo courtesy of Wells County Historical Museum).

During this period, the county seat represented the typical American town, according to an article from an unknown source found in the archives of the Madison-Jefferson County Public Library (*Figure 26*). The article's focus is the County Honor Roll, but more impressive than the Honor Roll in the photo is the courthouse towering over the residents. The angle from which the photo was taken exaggerates the scale of the building, depicting the courthouse as an anchor of strength and democracy.

While United States involvement in the World Wars may have spurred interest in monument construction and community support, the depression and economic difficulties of the subsequent World War made building construction difficult. Only four new courthouses were constructed in Indiana in the 1930s and none were built between 1937 and 1959. In lieu of new construction, counties updated the square by making less drastic, but equally significant, changes to courthouses and landscapes in the early 1900s; Mount Vernon's courthouse was updated by painting the entire structure cream. However, the streetscape experienced the most significant changes during the first half of the 20th century, with lighting, parking, and signage redefining the appearance of the square.

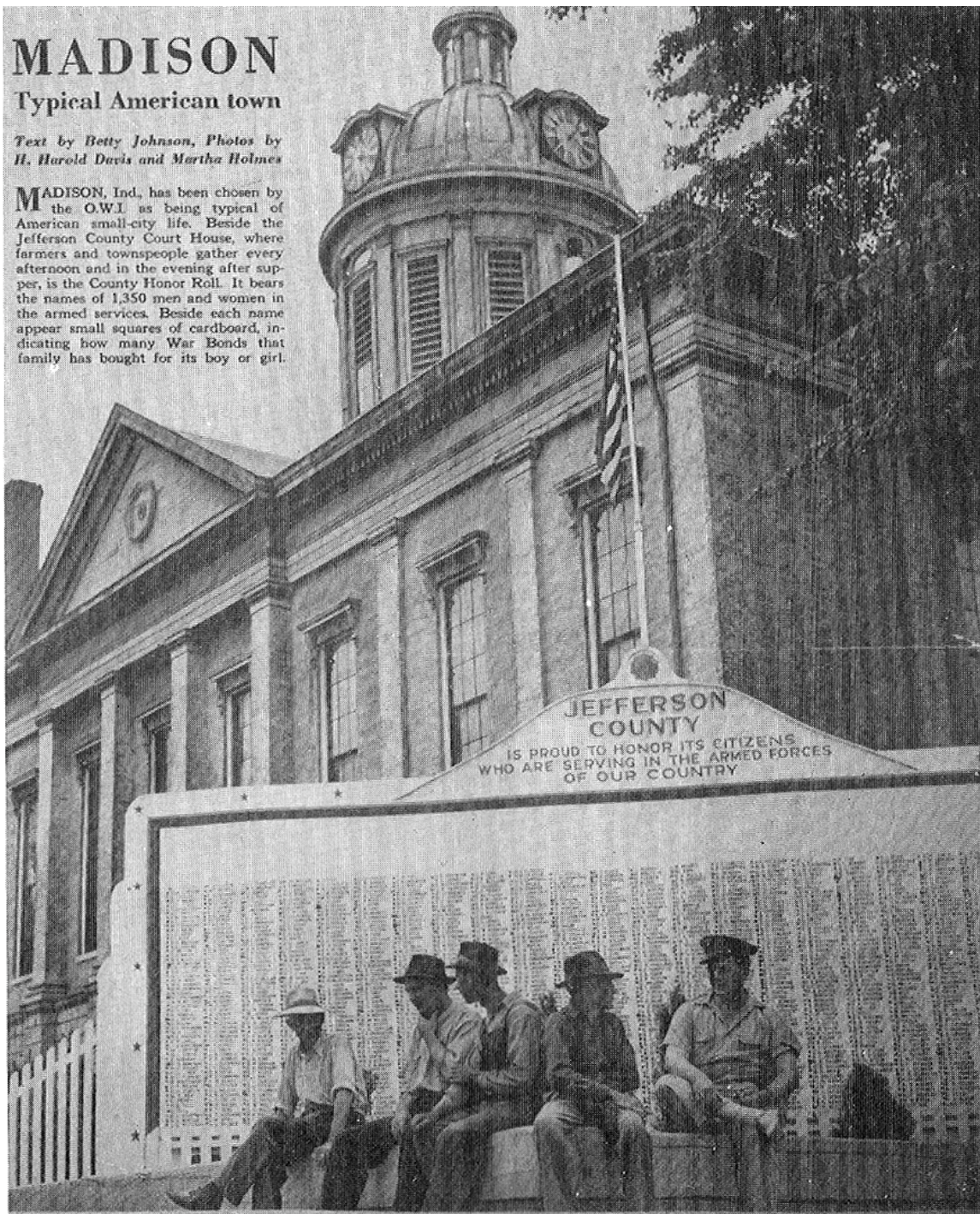


Figure 26. "Madison: Typical American Town." (Image Courtesy of the Madison-Jefferson County Public Library, 1943.)

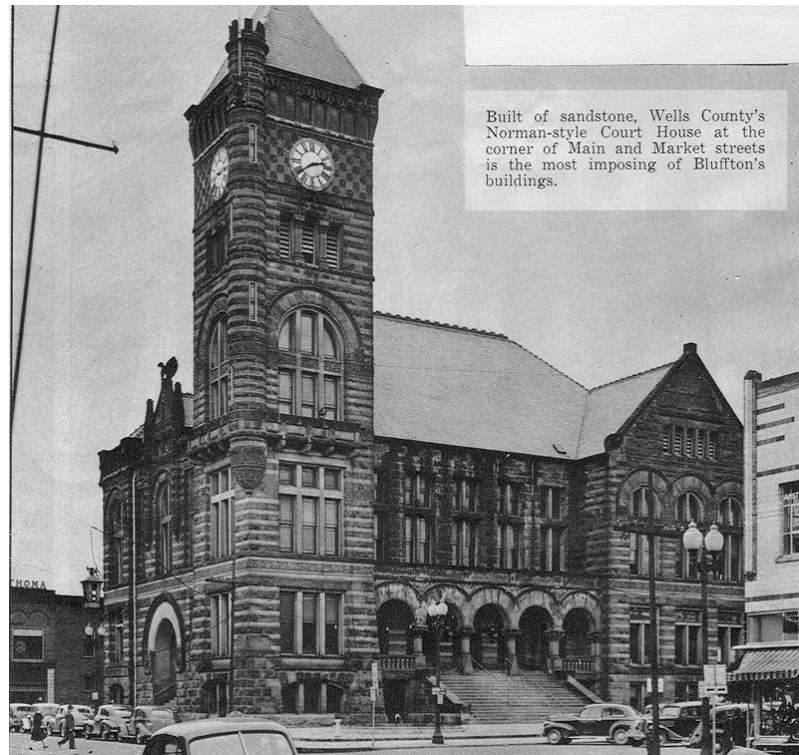


Figure 27. Courthouse at Bluffton, 1941. The image shows an updated streetscape with improved lighting and parking. (Image courtesy of the Wells County Historical Society.)

Post-1950 – The Square as Memorial Space

The second half of the 20th century saw the small town as hindrance to rapid automobile travel; the interstate highway system provided a means to travel the country faster by bypassing small towns, linking region and nation at the expense of local connections. No longer an economic or social destination, even for county residents, the court square had become little more than a symbolic center or potential tourist destination. The rehabilitation of aging courthouses, the inclusion of monuments on the square, and the use of the square and surrounding streets for annual festivals all point to the court square as a memorial space; they also illustrate Lowenthal's (1985) main

themes of wanting the past, knowing the past, and changing the past, as well as a fourth theme of celebrating the past.

Wanting the past – Courthouse preservation

By the late 20th century, the Indiana county seat reached a pivotal point; aging courthouses, technologically outdated and unable to meet functional requirements, needed either repair or replacement. Whether for economic or cultural reasons, each of the case study towns elected to retain and update their historic courthouses. Windows, doors, and mechanical and electrical systems were replaced in Bluffton and Peru in the

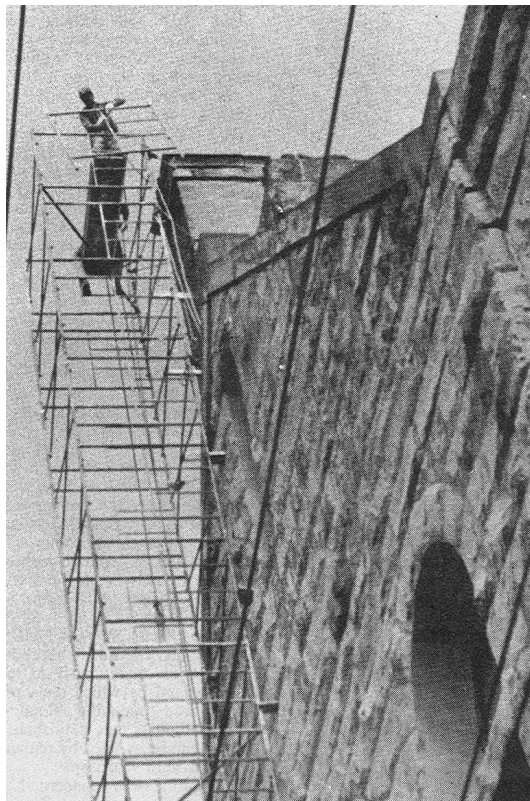


Figure 28. The courthouse at Bluffton received repairs, 1992. Structural and mechanical repairs were common during the second half of the 20th century. (Image courtesy of the Wells County Historical Museum.)

1990s and early 2000s (*Figure 28*); Mount Vernon added an architecturally sensitive elevator shaft to the north end of its courthouse in the 1990s in response to government regulations for accessibility; Peru and Madison erected or adapted buildings adjacent to the square to serve as annexes. These measures, together with the continued use of the structures for government functions, denoted a symbolic value that outweighed functional inadequacies.

Beyond simple retention and necessary upgrades, courthouse preservation can be credited to a longing for the past and the preservation of an image, a collective memory.

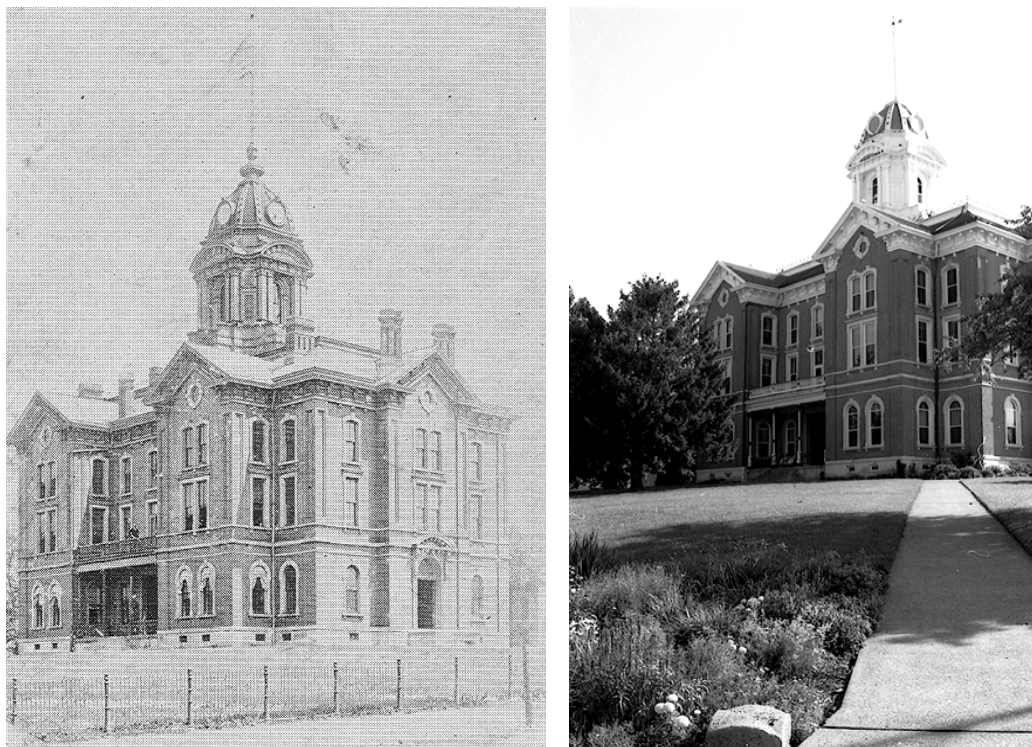


Figure 29. The Court Square in Mount Vernon, Indiana, ca. 1870 and 2004. The building's appearance has changed very little since its construction in 1876, however the landscape has evolved from a gathering space to a memorial space. (1870 image courtesy of the Alexandrian Free Library, Mount Vernon, Indiana. 2004 photo by author).

debated the construction of a new courthouse. Instead, the county chose to completely In 1960, even before designation as a Main Street community, a growing Madison demolish the interior of its 1855 courthouse, constructing a new interior within the shell of the historic building. No less costly than a full reconstruction, Madison's retention of the historic shell established the value of the visual image of the court square. Image was equally important in Mount Vernon where, like Madison, exterior paint was removed, exposing original brick and limestone (*Figure 30*). Peru cleaned and sandblasted the courthouse exterior in 1967 and chemical cleaned the building again in 1996.



Figure 30. Jefferson County Courthouse, Madison, Indiana, 1962 and 1990. Exterior paint was removed in the 1970s after the interior was reconstructed in the 1960s. (Images courtesy of HABS/HAER and Snodgrass, 1990.)

Knowing the past – Monuments

In the second half of the 20th century, counties erected monuments to veterans and local heroes, as well as national and local centennials, on the courthouse lawn. Unlike monuments, temporary or permanent, in the first half of the century, which denoted civic pride and regular use of the square, those erected in the second half mark the square as a purely memorial space, kept for the perpetuation of history and preservation of collective memory.

The heyday of monument construction occurred during the second half of the century, however, Peru posed an exception, erecting monuments to the veterans of World War I and another from the Miami County Navy Mothers Club in 1930. In Madison,



Figure 31. Statue of Liberty Replicas in Peru and Madison. The sculptures, both dedicated by the Boy Scouts of America, are identical. (Photos by author, 2004)

monument construction commenced in 1950 with a replication of the Statue of Liberty dedicated by the local Boy Scout troop for the 50th anniversary of their organization (*Figure 31*). Peru erected an identical monument in 1951, after which, a Peru historian, proud of their “Lady Liberty,” but obviously ignorant of Madison approximately 145 miles away, noted the statue to be “the only large-sized replica publicly-owned in the United States.” (Anderson,1986). In Peru, Boy Scouts maintained the flowerbeds within the base of the monument, drawing local attention to their version of a national symbol.

The most common type of monument on the square commemorated soldiers: Madison and Peru each erected monuments to local veterans involved in World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam between 1945 and 1986 (*Figure 32*). The Bicentennial sparked Mount Vernon’s construction of a monument to the soldiers of the American Revolution in 1977, followed by the erection of tablets containing histories of the town and county in 1979. Memorializing became so popular that Mount Vernon’s square even contains a tree planted in 2001 “In Honor of the Staff & Customers of the Mount Vernon License Branch for Organ & Tissue Donation Awareness Efforts.”

Bluffton, with no permanent monuments on its court square, presents atypical data in this sample. Not indicative of a county without pride or memory, Bluffton’s lack of monument development is perhaps a factor of the size and treatment of the urban square; resting on a quarter-block of land, there is no court “lawn,” only a paved plaza. While the other squares resigned themselves as memorial spaces in the latter part of the 20th century, spaces to be viewed rather than used, Bluffton’s square was less a tribute to history than an integral part of the busy townscape.



Figure 32. Monument to local veterans, Madison, Indiana, 2004. Madison included names of all 20th century war veterans into a single monument. (Photo by author.)

Celebrating the Past - Festivals

Festivals, an important part of small town life in the late 20th century, replaced court days and barn raisings as social events that brought the community together. Bluffton's street fair, having taken place in front of the courthouse for 100 years or more, proves an exception to this generalization. However, the majority of festivals are relatively new, illustrating a desire to bring residents and visitors to the center of town and reinforcing the perception of the court square as a memorial space, used predominantly for special occasions.

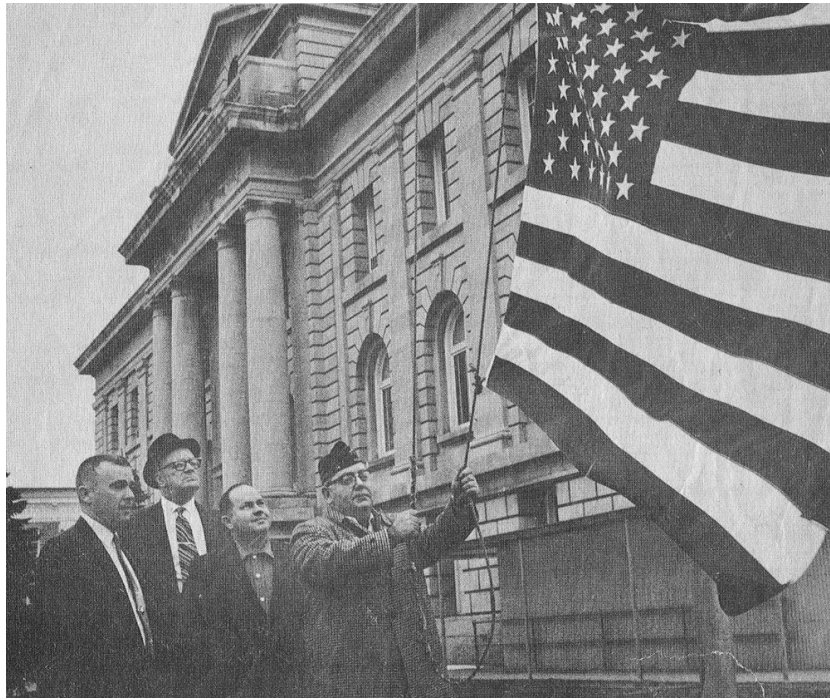


Figure 33. A flag is raised in front of the Miami County Courthouse in Peru, 1970. Civic ceremonies are common on the late-20th century square. (Image courtesy of the Miami County Museum.)

In addition to their very existence, the names of current festivals draw attention to the historic and memorial function of the court square. “Nostalgia Fest,” “Old Court Days,” and “Heritage Days” all reveal promoters attempts to take advantage of the square’s history and place in collective memory. The square had been a place for community gathering in the 19th and early 20th centuries, however, history was not emphasized until the late 20th century. Monuments and festivals exemplified one way in which county seats advertised their merits, past and present, giving travelers a reason to venture into the heart of small towns and residents a chance to celebrate their own history and share it with others.

Bluffton	Bluffton Street Fair – 1898 Nostalgia Fest – late 1990s
Madison	Old Court Days – N/A
Mount Vernon	Street Carnival – 1970s
Peru	Circus City Festival – 1960 Heritage Days – mid-1970s through late 1990s Summerfest – late 1990s

Figure 34. Festivals on the Court Square. Table includes their names and dates of inception.

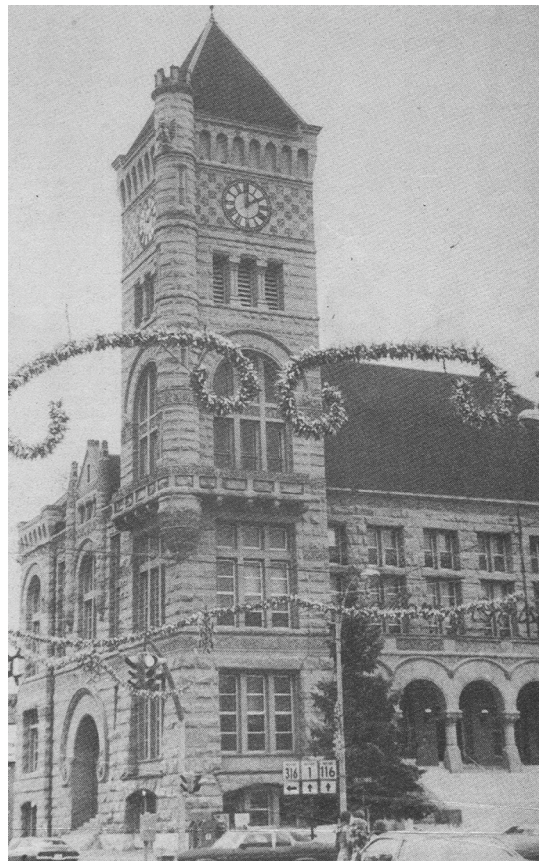


Figure 35. Downtown Bluffton decorated for Christmas, 1979. The square anchors the downtown business district both physically and visually. (Image courtesy of the Wells County Historical Society.)

Changing the past – Streetscape and landscape improvements

The inclusion of monuments marked the courthouse lawn as a commemorative space, while landscape and streetscape changes visually re-wrote the very history monuments and festivals celebrated. In addition to parking meters and stoplights, installed as a response to an influx of automobile traffic on the square in Madison and Bluffton, the end of the century saw the streetscape of the court square improved, this time to suggest a sense of history, most often unrelated to the actual history of the town. Inlaid with brick, Madison's sidewalks provided a nostalgic memory of a time that never existed (*Figure 37*); photos from the 1880s to the late 1990s show no indication of brick sidewalks, only concrete or dirt paths. Streetlights added to Bluffton's square in the late 1990s, echo lighting standards removed from the same square 30 years earlier (*Figure 36*).

Plantings were common on squares after 1950, illustrating community pride in appearance, reinforcing the notion of the square as an urban oasis, and at the same time indicating a decline in its use. Landscaping involved community support, with Boy Scouts and local gardening groups responsible for planting and maintaining flowerbeds. Trees and shrubs were employed to break up the surrounding urban landscape. All four case studies employed foundation plantings for a period between 1950 and 2000. Bluffton planted a tree on its urban square in 1951 and Peru took to replacing its aging trees in the 1990s, reinforcing the ideal of the court square as an urban oasis.

Landscaping did more than simply beautify the space, it redefined use. In the 1990s, Madison and Mount Vernon introduced extensive perimeter plantings to the

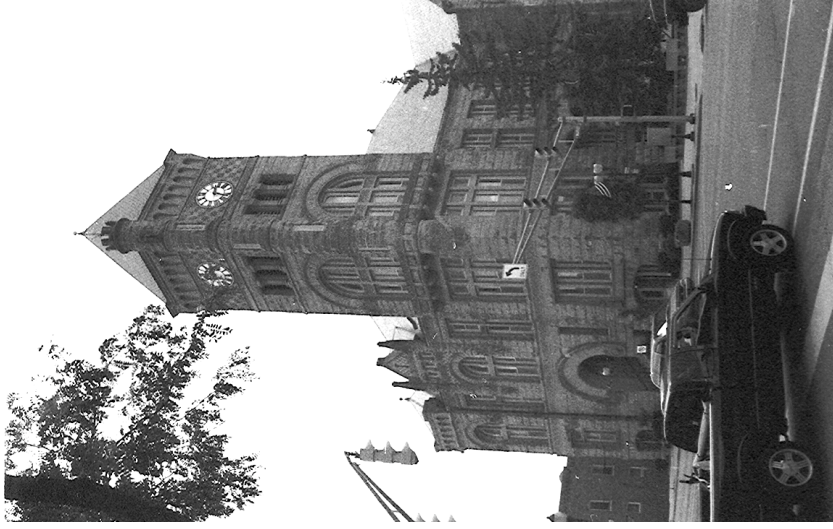
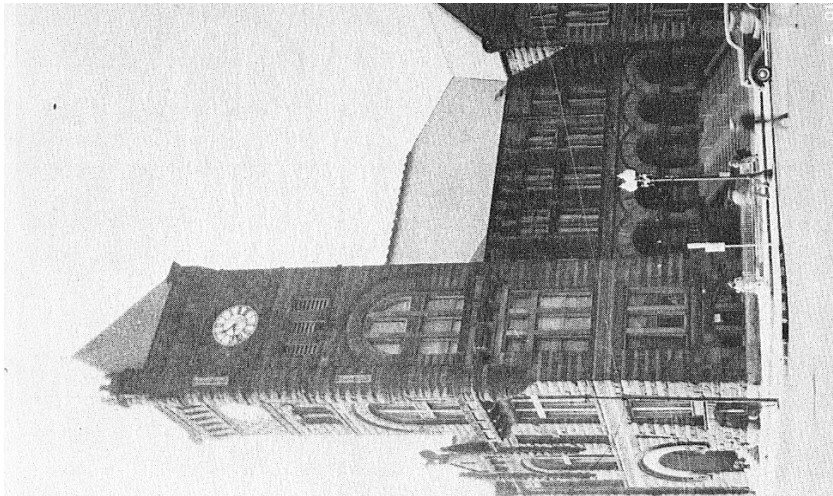


Figure 36. The Courthouse at Bluffton, ca. 1957, ca. 1980, and 2004. Two-bulb streetlights are removed from the square in the 1970s or early 80s. Similar fixtures were reinstalled on the square by the early 21st century. (Historic photos courtesy of the Wells County Historical Society. 2004 photo by author.)



Figure 37. Brick inlayed sidewalk, Madison, Indiana, 2004. Brick sidewalk were not historically used in Madison. Their current use implies a false sense of history. (Photo by author.)

square, thus decreasing the usable area of the courthouse lawn. The plantings framed the court square as an oasis to be enjoyed from the sidewalk rather than a setting for community gathering.

The square underwent significant periods of building, landscape, streetscape, and monument construction. These periods may be loosely linked to evolutions in transportation, but are more representative of evolutions in the value of the square. Historically an anchor of community, the square has evolved from much used space to a predominantly memorial setting. This conclusion cannot be drawn from the physical evidence alone, but requires an interpretation based on historic context and careful visual analysis.

CONCLUSION:

NEW CONSIDERATIONS FOR INTERPRETING URBAN ENVIRONMENTS

The court square represents more than just an urban form; its lasting presence illustrates a continuity of value within a changing landscape. While it is a defining feature of the Indiana small town county seat, authors and geographers have also noted the existence of the court square throughout the Ohio Valley, as well as in parts of Texas, North Carolina, Virginia, and Georgia. The prevalence of the form suggests that the research is applicable beyond the Ohio Valley. However, reasons for the initial development of the court square as a city form and its concentration in this area of the United States are too complex to be included within the scope of this work.

An understanding of the continued value of the Indiana court square involves political, economic, and cultural dimensions, more important than the analysis of the initial construction of the square. These values, evident in each square, affect periods of significant building, landscape, and streetscape improvements. The square evolved symbolically from an economic, social, and political center for the county to a place for memory, punctuated by monuments and celebrated by festivals.

One goal of the research was to align physical changes to the square with trends in transportation. Case study towns were selected for their relationship to all four modes of transportation, modes researched and documented in Chapter One. The Ohio Valley

region was settled within a relatively short period of time, its towns similarly platted and developed, although some towns experienced periods of intense growth. The sample was restricted to county seats with populations of 40,000 or less in order to focus on towns with similar growth patterns throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The resulting towns experienced the effects of transportation similarly, making it possible to generalize physical changes and cultural connotations of the court square throughout Indiana and the Ohio Valley.

Towns in the Ohio Valley sprang up, grew, and prospered or withered with innovations in transportation. The river dictated early settlement by providing a reliable path to larger markets; the small town was the destination of farmers and county residents. Railroads provided inland towns with access to market and created stop-over points for people and products traveling across the region. Advancements in road transportation made people more independent and mobile and towns became places to drive enroute to larger destinations. The interstate highway system streamlined the way that people traveled by automobile, bypassing the small town altogether.

Lynch (1960) and Clay (1980) proposed systems for the classification of physical elements in the urban landscape. At first glance, their methods seem valid to evaluate the Indiana court square (and other city forms) because the physical elements have not changed dramatically since the vocabulary was introduced. The physical components of the court square seem to indicate an evolution of form during the 19th century and a stasis in the 20th century. This constancy in the physical environment does not indicate

stagnant value, but the systems proposed by Lynch and Clay do not allow for an interpretation of value from physical change.

Indeed, the physical elements of the court square, whether changing or constant, reflect the economic growth, collective memory, and cultural constructions of the small town. Improvements to the square do not align cleanly with innovations in transportation. Thus, while transportation certainly affected the evolution of the square, to accredit change solely to transportation is to misjudge the cultural dynamic of the small town. Additionally, while the physical elements of the square did not change radically in the 20th century, the value of the square did. Initially significant as a central plot of land, a social and economic center of the county, the square evolved into a predominantly memorial space. Therefore, vocabulary introduced by Lynch (1960) and Clay (1980) cannot illustrate the symbolic value of the space, because these authors do not consider collective memory or cultural constructions in their approaches to organization.

A second goal of the research was to uncover the evolving source of value for the square through the evaluation and documentation of physical change. The court square in each of the case study towns experienced periods of centralization, adaptation, preservation, and memorialization. These periods do not have definable beginnings or ends, nor do they necessarily align from one town to the next. However, their existence speaks to evolving political, economic, and cultural ideals of the Indiana county seat.

County seats, located along major transportation routes, initially valued as trading rather than geographic centers, evolved from their economic purposes as anchor of community, both visually and functionally. The imposing size and placement of the

courthouse mark it as the visual center of the community. Over the years, political functions, religious and educational activities, and economic and social gatherings centered on the court square (Appendix A). Regular use of the building and square for non-political functions mark it as a symbol of support for the community.

The court square adapted to transportation innovations and government regulations as county seats relocated to take advantage of major transportation routes (Appendix A). Additionally, streetscape and landscape improvements illustrate clear responses to the prevalence of automobile traffic. The courthouse and square adapted to meet new standards for accessibility in the late 20th century. Replacement doors and elevators brought the buildings up to code, while new parking systems and ramps made the site accessible.

Each square experienced preservation in some capacity; the adaptation of the courthouse to meet present needs and standards instead of replacing the structure is the most obvious example. Physical preservation indicates the perpetuation of an ideal, a community image. Nostalgia for the past, manifested in brick sidewalks and period lighting around the square, reinforce this ideal. Preservation of the court square and downtown, and an increasing number of festivals on the square, may signify the exploitation of cultural and historic resources for economic gain, establishing the small town county seat as tourist destination.

Physical elements suggest the transformation of the square from a much-used center to a memorial space. The presence of monuments and extensive plantings designate the court square as a carefully maintained but rarely used space and the

preservation of the courthouse structure marks it as a monument in its own right.

Festivals on the square indicate its importance to the community as a historic space.

Part of the appeal of the small town, county seat, and court square lies in the sense of history and memory they evoke, a feeling attributed to the cultural construction of the space and the collective memories they induce. Memories are subjective, triggered by physical elements in the landscape; at the same time, memories are perpetuated by physical adaptations made to the townscape. However, landscapes infused with symbolic elements have immediate meaning and value to the visitor, regardless of whether the setting holds personal memories. The physical landscape is understood through the lens of personal experience and collective memory, not as a mere construction of material elements. Personal and collective memory aid in the categorization of space by attributing meaning to individual elements of a townscape.

The creation and retention of the Indiana court square responded to a variety of economic, social, and political factors. Linking the physical evolution of the court square to changes in transportation begins to uncover the meaning behind the changes and continuities of the square. However, to perform a cultural analysis based solely on the corporeal response to transportation oversimplifies the complex cultural processes.

The cultural analysis of the Indiana court square and similar townscapes is ongoing. This work provides justification for a new method for evaluating urban environments, a framework that employs photographic analysis to assess physical change and continuity and encourages an understanding of the physical evolution of space in order to deduce symbolic its value.

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APPENDIX A.
COUNTY HISTORIES



Aerial photograph of Mount Vernon, Indiana. Courtesy of www.microsoft.terraserver.com.

MOUNT VERNON, INDIANA

LOCATING CENTER

Posey County, Indiana illustrates the influence of both the river and the regional economy on town growth. Bounded by the Ohio River on the south and the Wabash on the west, Posey County has "rich soil, which yields abundant crops of all varieties of grain, vegetables and fruits common to the temperate regions" (Leffel, 1978, p.45). In the early years of settlement, nearly every family raised their own produce, resulting in little to no local market for grown goods; therefore, the river was essential for the transportation of goods to a larger market. 'Flatboating' was the occupation of many early settlers and river towns flourished.

Posey County also illustrates the struggle that some counties experienced in selecting their seats of government. Established in January 1816, the county appointed commissioners who then met to "fix the seat of justice." They laid out the town of Blackford on 320 acres of land and began the sale of lots shortly after. In May of the same year, a log courthouse was constructed on the public square "in the style of the times" (Leffel, 1978, p.66). The location of the county seat soon proved unsatisfactory to the county residents, who desired a more central site.

In 1817, a committee was appointed to enact the necessary legislation for removing the county seat to another location. The following portion of their statement illustrates their considerations in designating a county seat:

We...after being first sworn have proceeded to examine and explore the said county in different directions; have received proposals of donation in land from different persons; have maturely considered their several advantages and situations, together with the extent of the county, the advantages of the soil, the weight of the present as well as the prospect of the future population and future divisions: have selected 100 acres of land, a donation given by Frederick Rapp, on which to fix the permanent seat of justice for said county...it being the near the center (of the county) and an eligible situation for a town. (Leffel, 1978, p.68)

Thus, the town of Springfield was laid out, lots were sold, and a log courthouse (in the same plan as Blackford's building) was constructed on the public square. By 1818, the county had made enough money from the sale of lots that they invested in a more permanent courthouse; a brick, two-story structure on the square.

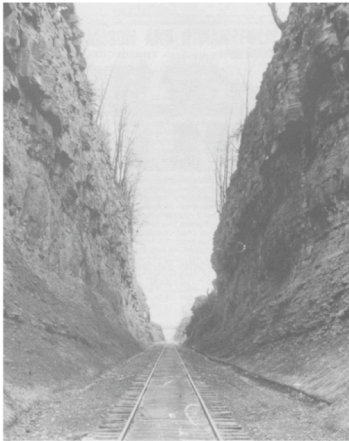
The permanence of the building was not enough to retain the county seat. Less than ten years after its designation as the county seat, Springfield was found unsatisfactory and was abandoned. Although central in the county, Springfield did not have the access to markets, namely river access, necessary for a town to prosper in the early nineteenth century. Leffel (1978) goes so far as to assert that, "it was plainly evident that Springfield had nothing in its favor that would ever give in any importance except the fact that it was the county seat." (p.69)

Mount Vernon, on the other hand, because of its location on the Ohio River, experienced prominence as a trading point. By 1825, when it was named the county seat, the town had grown to be the largest in the county. The municipal growth continued throughout the century as a result of trade with larger river towns including Cincinnati and Pittsburgh (Leffel, 1978, p.187).

Without the governmental and commercial support afforded a county seat, Blackford and Springfield struggled to exist. Blackford was abandoned so thoroughly that it no longer exists as a town and is not shown on present maps. Springfield fared little better as its courthouse and jail were sold at public auction as soon as the seat was moved. By 1827, the town was in such poor economic condition that a relief act was passed for the property owners in Springfield; over thirteen hundred dollars were paid for damages that resulted by the removal of the county seat (Leffel, 1978, p.121).



Posey County Courthouse, Mount Vernon, Indiana. Photo by author, 2004.



The Madison Railroad.
Photo courtesy of Simons (1997).

MADISON, INDIANA

TRANSPORTATION CENTER

Early Madison experienced the benefits of any river settlement in the Ohio Valley: fertile land, available water and timber, and access to trade. The town served as a distribution point for both people and supplies to the Indiana hinterland. Located at the apex of a northward bend in the Ohio River, Madison extended further into the Indiana Territory than most river towns. The demands of the developing backwoods supported Madison as a significant trading point, but “most important for the town’s future was a series of developments in transportation” (Windle, 1986, p.8).

Madison realized early on that it could not compete with the dominant shipping centers of Cincinnati and Louisville. Its survival was dependant on the development of overland trade routes, roads and railroads that could compete with the increasing speed of water travel. The Michigan Road was one of the first in the state, the first fifteen miles being “cut and grubbed” by 1831 (Windle, 1986, p.8). The road was to stretch from Madison on the Ohio River, north through the state capital at Indianapolis and on to the Michigan line.

Though construction of the first rail lines in Indiana began in the 1830s the railroad did not gain widespread use until the 1850s. Indiana’s Internal Improvement program, passed in 1836, called for the completion of the canal system, the construction of a highway paralleling the Ohio River, and the laying of Indiana’s first railroad. Realizing the near impossibility of securing the necessary capital from private sources alone, the act also provided state funding for the projects (Simons, 1997, p.9). The Madison Railroad was to run from Madison on the Ohio River through Indianapolis to Lafayette on the Wabash.

The railroad was so important to the residents of Madison and the entire state, that construction workers cut through solid rock, sometimes to depths of 100 feet in order to complete the railroad through north Madison. The resulting embankments on the Madison end of the line were, “too steep for regular locomotives, and ascending freight cars were pulled up the incline by eight tandem-hitched horses” (Simons, 1997, p.10). The construction of the Madison end of the rail line cost the state so much money that by the time the incline was completed in 1841, the railroad had been sold to private enterprise (Zimmer, 1974, p.132). The railroad would take six more years to complete to Indianapolis, but the debt that occurred as a result of the unfinished Internal Improvements Act would take much longer to recover.

Unfortunately, the railroad did not bring the wealth and prosperity that the residents of Madison expected. With few production ventures of its own, the city remained merely a trading point. “Its value lay in the commerce it carried from the river to its tributary area, and the agricultural produce, particularly from the central portion of the state, that it brought to Madison industries” (Zimmer, 1974, p.141).

Its transportation systems connected Madison to other cities and regions of the state and country, strengthening them by the connection, but contributing little to Madison’s economy, save the stimulation of transportation related industries like steamboat-building and railroad car construction and maintenance. Madison survived as a transportation and trading center, but never established itself as a significant manufacturing center.



Jefferson County Courthouse, Madison, Indiana
Photo courtesy of Snodgrass, R. (1990).



Peru's 1857 courthouse.
Photo courtesy of Miami County Museum.

PERU, INDIANA

BUILDING CENTER

The residents of Miami County, Indiana illustrate the forward thinking of city planners and county officials in the early twentieth century. In a period of only seventy years, the county went through three courthouses (and a handful of smaller public buildings) of varying sizes, constructions, and styles. While they employed permanent building materials and built for future growth, they also valued the importance of keeping their structures current, both architecturally and mechanically.

Miami County, located on the upper Wabash, was organized later than its counterparts on the Ohio River; commissioners met in 1834 to fix the seat of justice, but it would be another nine years before the county would receive its first courthouse. Completed in 1843 the courthouse was a two-story brick building, forty-feet square with a stone foundation. The building was centered on the public square with the county jail

contained in a small log building occupying the northeast corner of the square. The courthouse "was substantially built, conveniently arranged, and, at that time was considered a very credible structure" (*History of Miami County*, 1887, p.275). However, in less than a year the first courthouse and all of the records it contained were destroyed by fire.

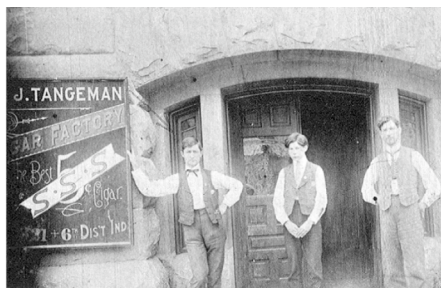
Recognizing the need for a structure to mark their county both physically and symbolically, the county officials immediately ordered the construction of a building to house the county offices until another permanent courthouse could be completed. The 'fireproof' structure, completed in 1843, was constructed of brick with a stone foundation. Larger than the original courthouse, the sixteen by forty-five foot structure was divided into three rooms to house the county offices. This building soon proved too small, resulting in the construction of a small clerks office on the square with a recorder's office to follow in 1848. By 1852, when the original log jail was consumed by fire, the square held no fewer than four county buildings (including the jail).

In 1857, the county's second courthouse was completed, a grand, three-story structure in the "Norman Castle" style of architecture. The new brick structure was large enough to house the jail cells in the basement, clerk, treasurer, recorder, and auditor's offices on the first floor, and the courtroom on the second floor. The third floor, which local newspapers speculate may have been added in the 1870s, may have housed jury rooms, but was also unoccupied at times. Its construction illustrates an effort to provide for the future growth of the county, however, city planners and county officials could not predict their building would last little longer than fifty years.

By the turn of the century, the courthouse had grown too small to house the county's business and in 1905, residents petitioned the county commissioners for the construction of a new courthouse. The existing courthouse was demolished in 1906 when money was appropriated for the construction of a large, three-story Italian-Renaissance structure. The building, constructed of Bedford limestone, accented with marble and art glass, occupies nearly the entire square and includes offices for the county officials as well as the courtroom and additional assembly rooms; the jail is housed in a separate structure.



Miami County Courthouse, Peru, Indiana.
Photo by author, 2004.



Business within Wells County Courthouse, Bluffton, Indiana.
Photo courtesy of Rose (1975).

BLUFFTON, INDIANA

ECONOMIC CENTER

Economics was important in the development of Bluffton, as in any early settlement. Platted in 1838, Bluffton was chosen as the county seat in part because of gifts of money and land from two prominent businessmen. "Land was donated by Abram Studabaker with a reserve of two choice lots... Robert C. Bennett donates the southeast fraction of the northeast corner. Studabaker and Bennet also donated \$270 in cash" (Tyndall, 1918, p.306).

The courthouse stands on the corner of Main and Market, streets that supported a variety of businesses throughout the years including an assortment of "saddlery shops, shoe shops, wagon sales rooms, blacksmithies, metal works, clothing stores, and general merchandise stores" (Rose, 1975, p.15). John Studabaker, the town's first merchant, erected a log structure on Market Street where he bartered his stock, "with coonskins and furs being the common means of exchange" (Tyndall, 1918, p.380). These wooden structures gave way to more permanent buildings; by 1865 there were no roads or railroads through the county, but three business blocks defined downtown Bluffton.

The local merchants and the county government had a sort of reciprocal relationship. In the mid-1800s, a local drugstore provided supplies to a doctor operating on the second floor of the courthouse. The 1891 courthouse also rented rooms on its lower level to small businesses. Tangeman's Cigar store was one of these businesses (Rose, 1975, p.60). Fighting the depression and mail-order catalogues in the 1930s, a group of local merchants invited a couple to marry and then showed the couple with gifts, a promotion that took place on the courthouse porch (Rose, 1975, p. 124). During this same period, the Chamber of Commerce worked to encourage support for local merchants and to secure entertainment for the court square that would bring potential customers to the business district (Rose, 1975, p. 136).

Early church meetings were held in homes or in the log courthouse. These meetings continued to be held in the log courthouse after the county's second courthouse was built in 1844. Tyndall (1918) notes the use of the courthouse for church services for the Presbyterians until 1853 and the Methodists until 1872 (p.403). The log courthouse was also used as a school in 1844 while a brick school building was under construction (Rose, 1975, p.14). The courthouse stood as a point of pride in the county and was symbolic of a promising future. Panoramic photographs of the county's graduating eighth graders were taken on the courthouse steps beginning in 1907.

Wells county made the creation of a public library a priority from its earliest days. Tyndall (1918) notes "ten percent of the funds derived from the sale of lots was reserved for a county library" (p.380). Bluffton's first library was housed in the recorder's office in the courthouse as early as 1853, when its first president was named (Rose, 1975, p.45). A library board was established in 1902 to tend to the books held by the board of education. At this time, the county's holdings were located in the basement of the courthouse, where they remained until 1905 when Bluffton's Carnegie Library was completed.

County clubs and organizations also used the courthouse as a meeting place and point of display for their collections. In the 1880s, the Federation of clubs opened a reading room in the courthouse (Rose, 1975, p.112). In the early 1900s, Homemakers Clubs were developing throughout the region. By the 1930s, an interested group of women "met in the courthouse, using boxes for seats during these early meetings" (Rose, 1975, p.114). As late as 1976, the Wells County Chorus was meeting regularly for practice in the "Choral Rooms' of the courthouse (Rose, 1975, p.177).

In addition to housing political functions, like elections and visiting politicians, the courthouse and its surrounding block were center of economic, social, and even religious life in Wells County. The wide variety of functions that took place within the courthouse walls and the various groups that met there reinforce the notion of the courthouse as a true center of the community.



Wells County Courthouse, Bluffton, Indiana.
Photo by author, 2004.

APPENDIX B.

PRICE'S TYPOLOGIES FOR COURT SQUARES

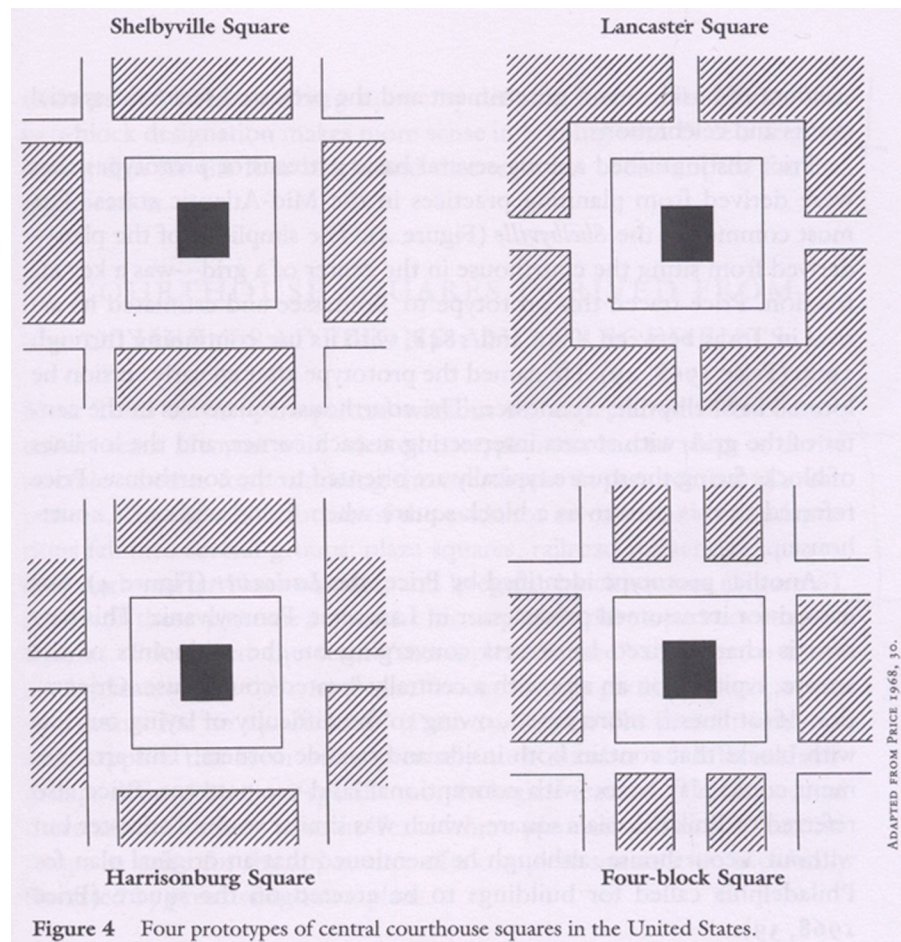


Image taken from Price, E. (1986). The central courthouse square in the American county seat. In D. Upton & J. Vlach (Eds.) *Common places: Readings in American vernacular architecture* (pp. 124-145). Athens: University of Georgia Press.

APPENDIX C.

VESELKA'S ADDITIONAL TYPOLOGIES FOR COURT SQUARES

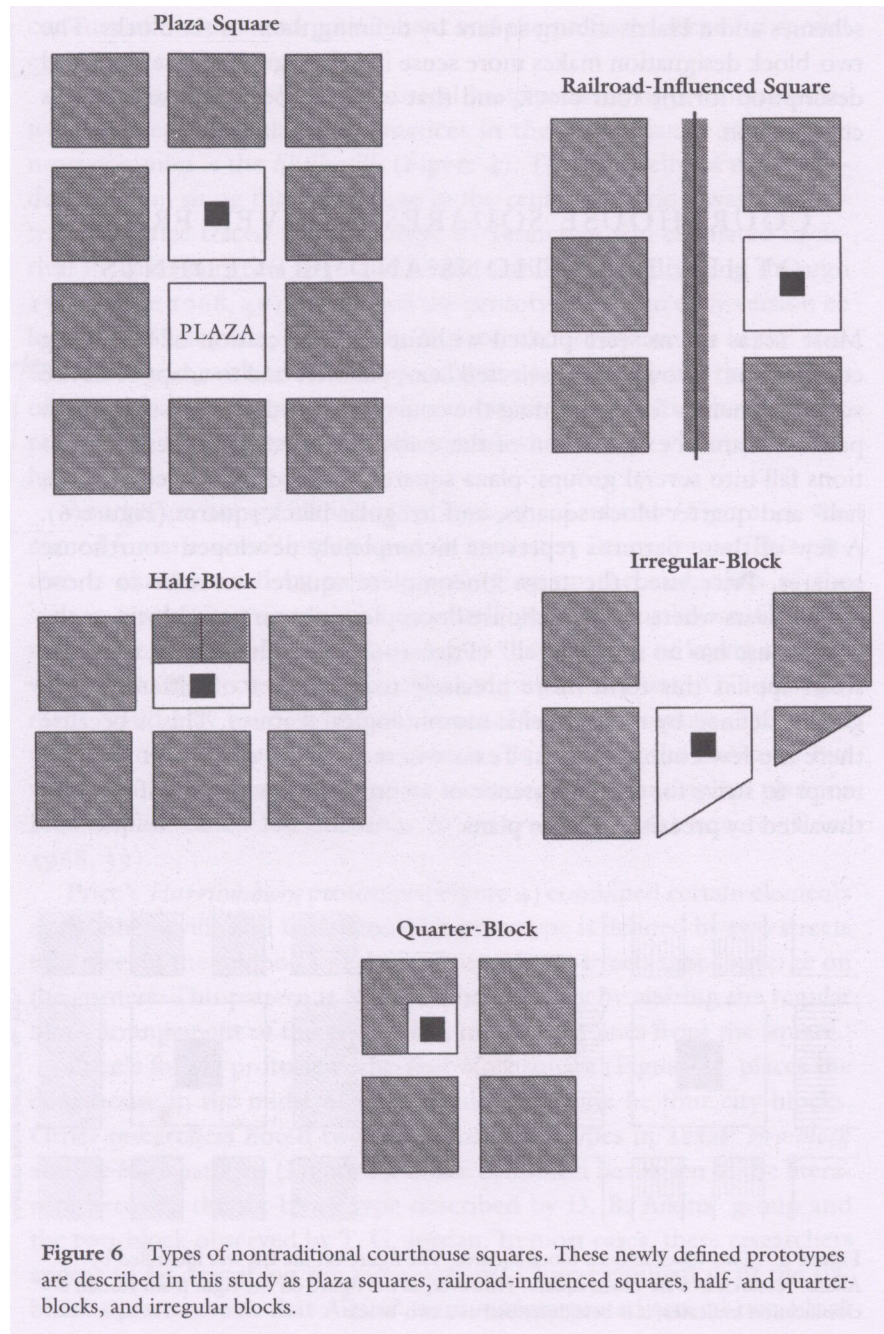
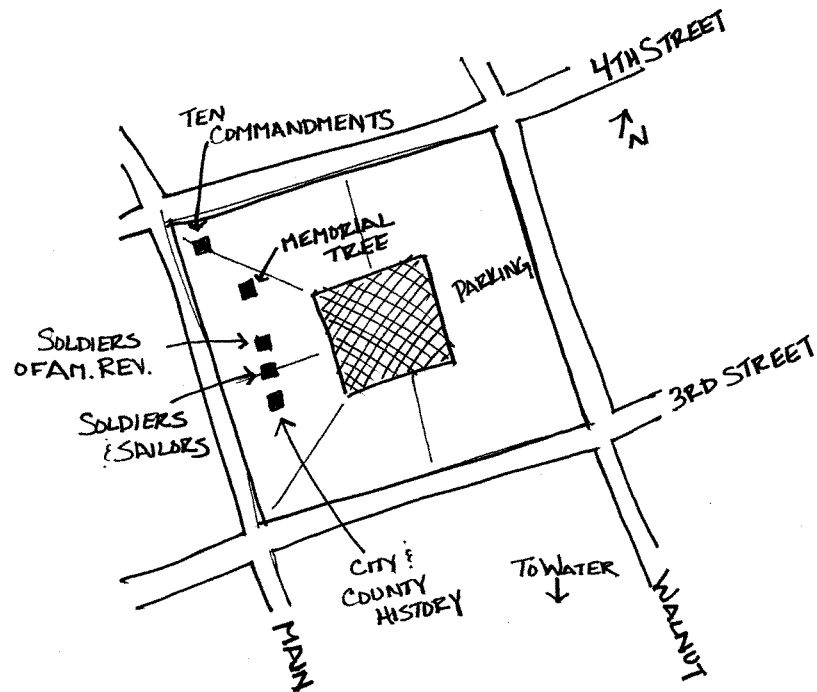
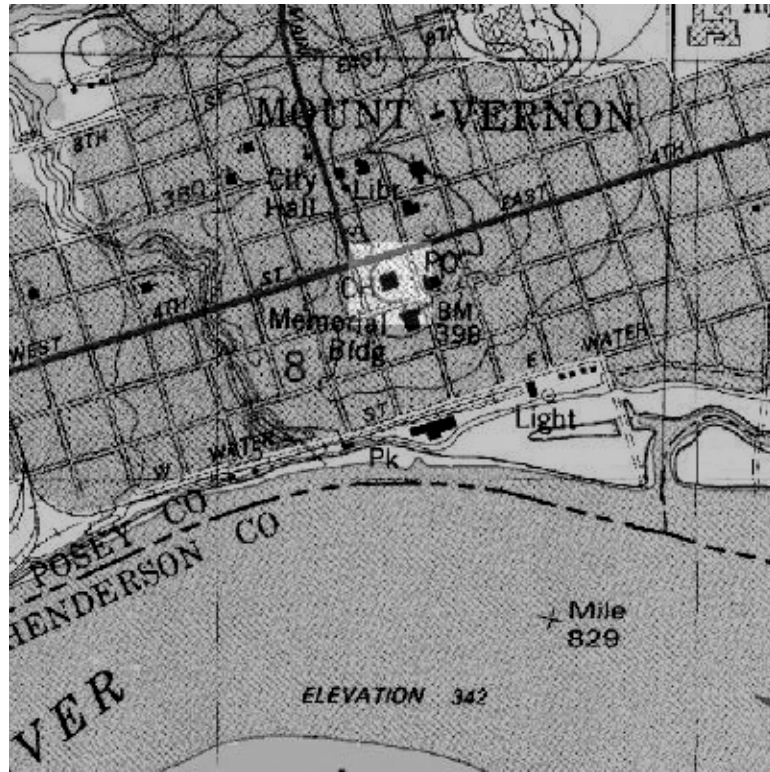


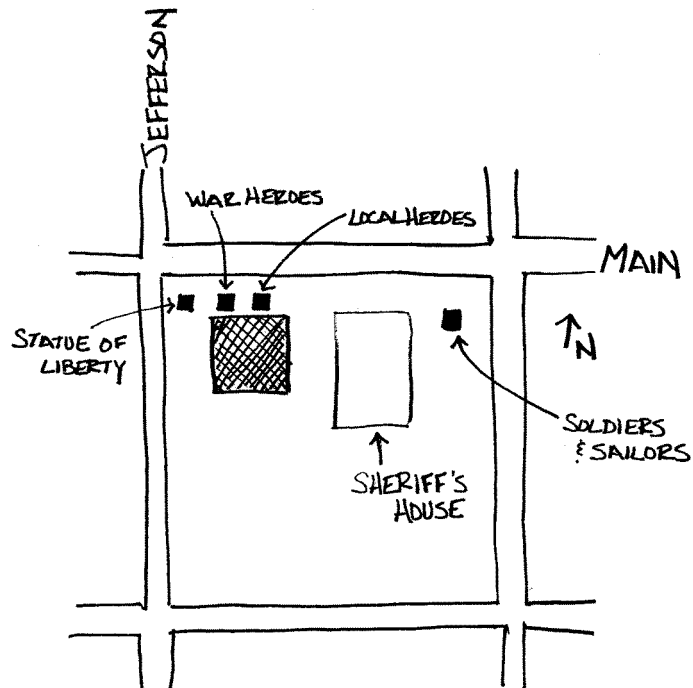
Image taken from Veselka, R. (2000). *The courthouse square in Texas*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

APPENDIX D.
TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SITE DIAGRAMS



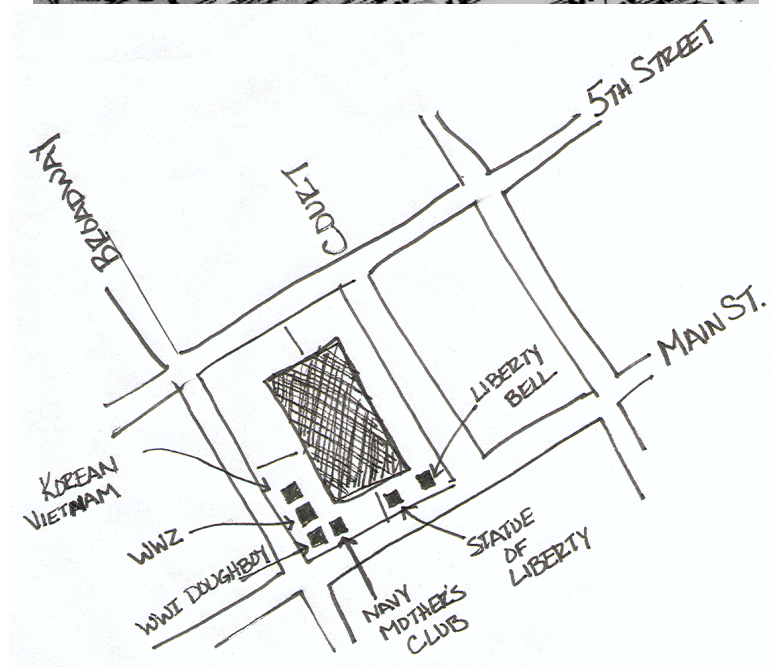
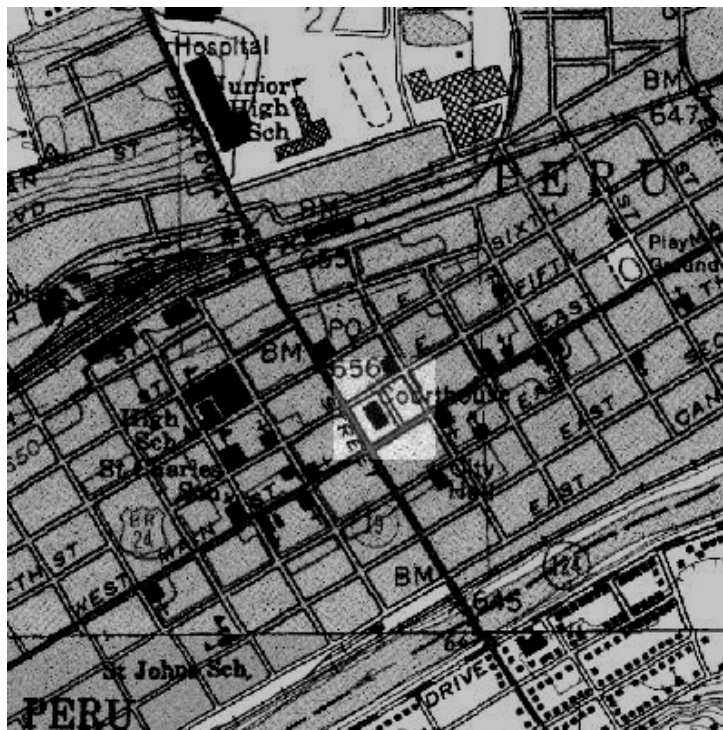
Mount Vernon, Indiana

Shelbyville Plan



Madison, Indiana

Quarter-Block Plan

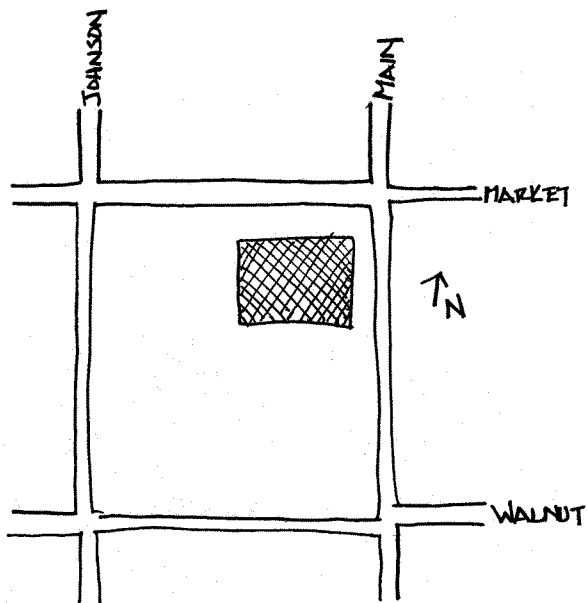


Peru, Indiana

Half-Block Plan



(No topographic map available.)







Bluffton, Indiana

Quarter-Block Plan

APPENDIX E.

PHYSICAL CHANGES TO THE COURT SQUARE




Posey County – Mount Vernon, Indiana				
	Structure	Landscape	Streetscape	Monuments
1800	1825 – Log courthouse built			
1850	1876 – Brick courthouse is built			
1900	1910 – Chimneys removed, brick painted		c. 1900 – Electric lines 1909 – Dirt streets	1908 – Soldiers and Sailors Monument
			1929 – Paved streets and street lights c. 1929 – Granite curbing and paved corners of square	
1950	1961 – Cornerstone added to north end of building in conjunction with elevator addition c. 1965 – Paint removed 1976 – Plaque added for 100 year anniversary of building 1978 and 1988 – Interior renovations c. 1993 – New Windows and doors	c. 1959 – Foundation plantings c. 1970 – Trees planted on square c. 1993 – Access ramp and stairs c. 1997 – Plantings at corners of square	1950 – More street signs 1966 – Overhead street lights 1993 – Parking meters c. 1993 – Parking lot at rear of building	1968 – Ten Commandments 1977 – Soldiers of the American Revolution 1979 – Posey County and Mount Vernon Histories 2001 – Memorial Tree

¹ Photo by author, 2004.

² Leffel, J. (ed.). (1978). History of Posey County, Indiana. Evansville, Indiana: Unigraphic.

³ Photo by author, 2004.

Jefferson County – Madison, Indiana




	Structure	Landscape	Streetscape	Monuments
1800	<p>1811 – First courthouse built</p> <p>1819 – Second courthouse built</p>			
1850	<p>1853 – Courthouse destroyed by fire</p> <p>1855 – Third courthouse built</p> <p>1858 – Roof, cupola, and interior rebuilt after fire</p>			
		<p>c. 1880 – Wrought iron fence</p>	<p>c. 1880 – Electric lines and trolley rails</p>	
1900		<p>c. 1900 – Pathways up to and around the courthouse</p>	<p>1910 – Paved streets</p> <p>c. 1920 – Street signage</p>	<p>1907 – Soldiers and Sailors Monument</p> <p>c. 1930 – Cannonball</p> <p>1943 – county Honor Roll for War Bonds</p>
	<p>1948 – Roof and HVAC repairs</p>	<p>c. 1940 – Marble curbing around courthouse</p>	<p>c. 1940 – Street lighting</p>	
1950	<p>1960 – Rebuilt courthouse interior</p> <p>1969 – Painted marble</p> <p>1980 – Removed whitewash</p>	<p>1971 – Railing on West end of courthouse</p> <p>c. 1997 – Plantings around perimeter of the site</p> <p>c. 2000 – New street trees</p>	<p>c. 1960 – Parking meters and overhead street lighting</p> <p>c. 1980 – Stoplights and phone booths</p> <p>c. 2000 – Brick inlays in the sidewalk</p>	<p>1950 – Lady Liberty</p> <p>1951 – Major Samuel Woodfill Memorial</p> <p>c. 1980 – Monument to WWI, WWII, Korean, and Vietnam Veterans</p>

¹ Photo by author, 2004.

² Sesquicentennial Madison, IN: 1809–1959. Historical Souvenir Program.

³ Rolling Along the Ohio...a pictorial history of Jefferson County, Indiana. Heritage House Publishing: Marcelline, MO, 1995.

Miami County – Peru, Indiana




	Structure	Landscape	Streetscape	Monuments
1800				
	<p>1843 – First courthouse built 1843 – Courthouse destroyed by fire 1843 – Court held in temporary structure</p>	<p>1834 – Land donated for court square</p>		
1850	<p>1856 – Second courthouse built</p> 			
1900	<p>1906 – Courthouse demolished 1910 – Third courthouse built</p> <p>1926 – Dome added to courthouse</p>	<p>1918 – Temporary war chest</p> <p>1925 – Flagpole raised c. 1925 – Foundation plantings c. 1935-45 – Plane on the square</p>	<p>1913 – Brick streets & overhead power lines</p> <p>1924 – Buried power lines c. 1930 – Paved streets</p>	<p>1930 – Doughboy 1930 – Miami County Navy Mothers Club 1940s – Miami County War Dead – WWII</p>
1950	 <p>1995 – Covered skylight 1996 – New windows 2001 – Dome repairs</p>	<p>1971 – New sidewalks c. 1970s – Foundation plantings removed</p> <p>1987 – Monuments lighted c. 1995-2000 – Trees removed and replanted</p>	<p>c. 1950 – Parking meters and street signs</p> <p>2000 – New Streetlights</p>	<p>1951 – Lady Liberty Liberty Bell</p> <p>1986 – Miami County Korean – Vietnam War Memorial</p>

¹ Photo by author, 2004.

² Photo courtesy of Miami County Museum.

³ Photo courtesy of Miami County Museum.

Wells County – Bluffton, Indiana

	Structure	Landscape	Streetscape	Monuments
1800				
	<p>1838 – Log courthouse built 1845 – Log structure burns 1845 – Brick courthouse built</p>			
1850	 <p>1891 – Sandstone courthouse built</p>		 <p>c. 1880 – Trolley lines 1896 – Electric lines and arc street lighting 1897 – First paved streets</p>	
1900	<p>1913 – Replaced hands of clock</p>	<p>c. 1891 – Paved lot with four patches of grass surrounding a fountain</p> <p>1907 – Electric fountain on the square</p> 	<p>c. 1914 – Bulb street lights</p> <p>c. 1940 – Street and traffic signs</p>	
1950		<p>1951 – Pine tree on square surrounded by iron fence 1961 – Tank on the square c. 1970 – Concrete bench around the tree</p>	<p>c. 1950 – Parking meters c. 1960 – Stop lights</p>	
	<p>1992 – Chimney repairs 2001 – New windows and HVAC</p>	<p>c. 1990 – foundation plantings</p>		

¹ Photo by author, 2004.

² Postcard image courtesy of Wells County Historical Museum.

³ Postcard image courtesy of Wells County Historical Museum.