

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Illinois
COUNTY: Iroquois
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Iroquois County Museum

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Old Iroquois County Courthouse

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Cherry St. at Second St.

CITY OR TOWN:  
Watseka

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
17th.

STATE:  
Illinois

CODE:  
17

COUNTY:  
Iroquois

CODE:  
038

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
County of Iroquois

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN:  
Watseka

STATE:  
Illinois

CODE:  
17

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Iroquois County Clerk and Recorder

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN:  
Watseka

STATE:  
Illinois

CODE:  
17

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Town of South Middletown

DATE OF SURVEY:  
May 29, 1860

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Iroquois County Clerk and Recorder

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN:  
Watseka

STATE:  
Illinois

CODE:  
17

CHANGE TO  
ILL. HIST  
LAND SURV.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:  
COUNTY:  
ENTRY NUMBER:  
DATE:  
FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The original part of the old Iroquois County Courthouse was built in 1866. C.B. Leach was the architect and A.C. Mantor the contractor. The site consists of Lots 4 through 13 of Block 29 of the original Town of South Middleport. The architectural style of the building is ~~American~~ <sup>French</sup> ~~Romanesque~~ <sup>Romanesque</sup>. The building is two stories high with a basement set about three feet below ground level. The basement level walls are of limestone blocks and the remainder of the building of solid red brick construction. The door and window sills and lintels are limestone slabs. The floors and the roof are of wood. The building was heated by stoves and assisted by two fireplaces in the courtroom.

The jail, consisting of a block of 4 cells, was in the basement, as were the office and the living quarters of the sheriff. On the first floor a vault was built above the cell-block, with doors opening into the offices of the county clerk county treasurer. Also, on the first floor, were the supervisor's meeting room and the office of the circuit clerk. The second floor contained the office of the county judge, the jury room, and the courtroom.

In 1881, an addition was constructed to the back of the original building. On the basement and first floor levels, vaults were constructed and on the second floor a new jury room, a law library, and an office for the circuit judge were added. Again, in 1927, another addition was made to the first addition. The basement contained more office space for the county clerk and offices for the county nurse. There were additional vaults on the first floor and a new office for the circuit judge and a meeting room for the supervisors, on the second floor. Architecturally the original building and the first addition are in harmony, but the second addition might be classified as "American factory". However, time has aided in blending it into the whole building design.

The octagonal tower of the original building began to deteriorate, so in the 1881 addition construction it was rebuilt in its present square form. By 1927, the copper dome was considered too heavy for its supporting structures, so it was removed and the present mansard type top was placed on the tower.

The two additions and the changing of the tower are all the major changes that have been made to the building structure, except for the installation of a steam-heating system, running water, and electricity. When the present heating system was added all the chimneys, except the one serving the boiler, were cut down below roof level.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	Illinois	
COUNTY	Iroquois	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER		DATE

(Number all entries)

Continuation of page 3, Item 8, Significance:

ond floor contain an Indian artifact exhibit and a display of rocks and minerals. The former jury room has a display of Kennedy memorabilia and of uniforms, from the Civil War to World War II, as well as material of general historical interest. A display of the development of corn and corn products and of old tools used in corn production are in the former law library. The Iroquois County Retired Teachers Association has converted the former office of the circuit judge into a replica of a one-room school. The Laybourn Victorian Parlor, formerly displayed at the Lightner Museum, St. Augustine, Florida, and a number of mannikins, dressed in Victorian clothing, are displayed in the former supervisor's meeting room. This past year the beautiful design in the canvas paneling of the courtroom, has been restored by local artists. The courtroom windows have been covered with velvet drapes and the modern fluorescent lighting fixtures have been replaced by ones of antique design, designed and made by a local craftsman. The courtroom is used for meetings and for presentation of various types of community programs.

The museum is open every day of the year, except Christmas Day and New Year's Day, from 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M., and for special occasions and meetings. It is supported by dues and donations, and staffed by volunteers.

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science              | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture            | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater              | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation       | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |   |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

During the 142 years of the existence of Iroquois County, the old courthouse served, for 98 years, as the seat of the county government. A bequest of land to the county, enabled the county to construct a new courthouse in 1964. The supervisors decided to raze the old building, but the loud protests of a number of citizens of the county halted the proposed destruction. The building sat empty for two years, during which time some vandalism occurred and deterioration set in. At that time the Iroquois County Historical Society was organized and plans were made to acquire and restore the building. A 99 year lease was negotiated with the supervisors and the work began.

Some years before, Judge Hooper had begun to collect materials for a historical display in the jury room. With collection as a nucleus, the Society began to acquire, by loan and by gift, a large amount of historical material for the museum they proposed to set up. Restoration of vandalized areas was begun and the building cleaned and much of it re-decorated. Additional trees and shrubs were planted on the grounds and a rail fence constructed in front of the building.

In the basement the former sheriff's quarters are used as meeting rooms for the Iroquois County Gem and Mineral Society and as a workshop for the art department of the historical society. There are meeting rooms for the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and a part of the area is leased to the state of Illinois as a Driver's License station. A large storage vault is also located in the basement.

On the first floor are the offices of the historical society and three large vaults. In one vault the Iroquois County Genealogical Society is housed. Their vault contains many old county records which they are indexing and micro-filming. There are two rooms of general historical exhibits and two rooms, used by the art department, for exhibiting the works of county artists and artists of the surrounding area. The former county treasurer's office has been converted into a Victorian parlor and an adjoining room into a Victorian kitchen.

The county ministerial association has converted a room, on the second floor, into a small chapel, furnished with pews, a pulpit and chairs, and an antique reed organ. Religious services and weddings are held there. Two other rooms on the sec-

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

HISTORY OF IROQUOIS COUNTY  
 Beckwith, H.W.  
 1880 H.H. Hill & Co., Chicago, Ill.  
 Part I pp. 403 - 405

MUSEUMS OF ILLINOIS  
 Whittaker, Mary Jo  
 1974 Weekend, Inc., Salem, Ill.  
 pp. 63 and 64

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE				
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	0	'	"	0	'	"	40	46	28
NE	0	'	"	0	'	"	87	44	49
SE	0	'	"	0	'	"			
SW	0	'	"	0	'	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **1.25 acres**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY R.P. Roberts, President and**

NAME AND TITLE: **Glen Hamilton and Ralph D. Moore, Members of Board of Directors**

ORGANIZATION: **Iroquois County Historical Society**      DATE: **1-25-1975**

STREET AND NUMBER: **Cherry Street at Second Street**

CITY OR TOWN: **Watseka**      STATE: **Illinois**      CODE: **17**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION      NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National       State       Local

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE      ILLINOIS

Date Entered      JUN 18 1975

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Old Iroquois County Courthouse	Watseka Iroquois County
Ellwood Mansion	De Kalb De Kalb County

**COPY OF CONFIDENTIAL NOTIFICATION**

Also Notified

Hon. Charles H. Percy  
Hon. Adlai E. Stevenson  
Hon. George M. O'Brien  
Hon. Tim L. Hall