

## A HISTORY OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PRESENT COURT HOUSE AND ITS MODIFICATIONS, 1902 ~ PRESENT

On November 11, 1902, a resolution to build a new court house was introduced by supervisors C. Otto Schmidt of the 7th Ward, City of Manitowoc, and John J. Schroeder, 4th Ward, City of Two Rivers. Several reasons for a new court house were cited. The existing brick court house was "old, inconvenient and unsanitary," and the vaults of the various county offices were "crowded and inconvenient on account of lack of space."

The resolution called for the county to "immediately proceed to the erection of a more commodious and convenient court house, at a cost not exceeding \$100,000." The resolution further directed the county board chairman "to appoint a committee of five members from said board to procure plans and specifications of a suitable court house for Manitowoc County, and to investigate and report as to what would be the best manner of raising funds . . ." The resolution also directed the committee to file its report with the county clerk on or before the first day of April 1903. On November 18, the resolution was adopted on a vote of 18 ayes and 13 nays.

The committee appointed to select plans and specifications for a new court house included Schmidt, Schroeder, William Spencer (Kossuth), J. P. Watt (Maple Grove), and Thomas Gretz (Newton). On March 12, 1903, the Court House Committee decided to select the plan offered by Kinney & Detweiler of Minneapolis. The plan for the proposed new structure was "without a doubt a most magnificent looking structure."

The plan called for a Beaux Arts, Neoclassical building, 95 x 128 feet, of either pressed brick or stone, three stories, which included a basement, all above ground. The main entrance faced South Eighth Street with large pillars. Other entrances were on Washington and Hancock Streets. A mammoth dome was to top the building, rising 127 feet from the ground. Interior plans showed a basement for vaults and storage rooms for public records. The main and second floors housed county offices. The court rooms were on the third floor.

Local newspapers printed plans of the new court house and praised the advantages such a building brought to the community. *The Manitowoc Citizen* reported, "All the county offices and all county business will be grouped in one building." It further stated, "A study of the plans will show that Manitowoc County is to have a court house of which the citizens and taxpayers can well feel proud."

The Court House Committee filed their report with County Clerk Edward Schaffland on April 2, 1903.

On April 9, an alternate plan with drawings for a proposed court house suddenly appeared. It was prepared and submitted to the committee by Manitowoc architect William J. Raeuber. The local architect's plan called for a Richardsonian Romanesque style building with three large entrances, the main one being on Eighth Street, and all county offices, doing the largest volume of business, which included the treasurer, clerk and register of deeds, on the first floor.

The municipal court room, 40 x 40 feet, with offices attached, was also on the main floor. The second floor was designed exclusively for the circuit and probate court rooms, with private offices and jury rooms attached, and the office of the clerk of court. The third floor contained offices for the tax commissioner, superintendent of schools and county surveyor, extra jury rooms, committee rooms and two extra office rooms. It was reported that, "Those who have seen the plans speak

highly of them and they will be placed on exhibition for inspection of members of the county board and the public."

The County House Committee soon became entangled with the County Board over its selection of an architect and plans for the new court house. Board members and county officials held that the committee had usurped its authority in making a signed contract with an architect on March 7, 1903, that guaranteed a payment of \$3,500 for the plans. They argued that the intent of the November 1902 resolution was to procure plans and submit them to the board, and that it should make a final selection.

District Attorney Albert L. Hougen even wrote a letter to the Minneapolis architect instructing him to stop all further work on the plans because he did not believe their firm could collect from the county.

Supervisor Watt explained apologetically that if the Court House Committee *had* indeed exceeded its authority in making a selection, it was not done *intentionally*, and he was confident that the board would endorse its selection.

The controversy of the court house plans continued. The issue was brought up at the County Board meeting on May 22. This time architect Kinney, who was present, was asked to explain his plans to the board. No sooner than he had finished, a resolution was read that referred the entire matter of procuring suitable plans and sketches for a court house to the Standing Committee of Public Buildings and Improvements, directing it to advertise for the submission of plans for a new court house, not to exceed \$100,000, complete, and to recommend what plan to adopt. It also instructed the committee to invite Lyman J. Nash, Fred Schuette and Edward Hamilton to counsel and cooperate with the committee upon all matters regarding the construction of a new court house building.

The board resolution instructed the county clerk to inform architects Kinney & Deweiler that their plans and specification were on file at his office, "subject to their order and disposal." A motion to table the resolution was defeated by a vote of 23 to 9. The motion to adopt the resolution then passed by a vote of 22 to 10.

On June 19, 1903, the board refused to purchase four lots on the west side of the court house block due to unreasonably high prices being asked by the owners of the property. Edward Kadow, who owned a butcher shop at 823 Washington Street on the corner of South Ninth and Washington Streets, demanded \$20,000 for Lot 6. Mrs. Schindler (probably Margaretha Schindler, widow of Edward Schindler) owned a hotel and saloon at 819 Washington Street, next to Kadow Meats, and wanted \$35,000 for Lots 5 and 8. A resolution to acquire the Kadow and Schindler lots by condemnation proceedings was defeated by a vote of 20 to 11.

Conditions regarding the acquisition of Lot 7 on the southwest corner of Block 273, owned by the German Evangelical Reformed Church, further complicated the matter. The church requested the purchase of a lot and a half for its church in Block 271, the removal of the church from the

corner of Hancock and South Ninth Streets to the new site, the placing of cement sidewalks, and the payment of \$5,000, all of which amounted to about \$13,000. No action on the church property was taken.

A crushing blow to plans for constructing a new court house took place during a special meeting of the County Board on June 19. A resolution, directing the Committee of Public Buildings to cease further duties with regard to procuring plans and sketches for a new court house, and calling for the building of a court house to be indefinitely postponed, was narrowly adopted by a vote of 16 ayes and 15 nays.

These and other board decisions sidetracked the new court house project. However, in the fall of 1903, when the question of building a court house seemed all but over, Dr. John R. Currens of Two Rivers offered to donate a whole city block to the county for building a new court house. At a meeting of the County Board on Friday, November 20, a motion was adopted to investigate the matter and report back during its annual session. When the board reconvened on Monday, November 23, a communication from H. P. Hamilton and Frank Kaufman, addressed to Supervisor Charles Krause of Two Rivers, "offering a bonus of \$5,000 and other valuable considerations," was presented to the board and read. A motion to table the communication failed, and the matter was referred to Supervisor Krause.

After visiting Two Rivers, a resolution to thank the people of the city of Two Rivers for the courtesy shown to members of the County Board when they visited to select a site for a new county court house was adopted on November 24. The resolution, signed by Herman Stehn (Mishicot) and David W. Sheldon (Manitowoc Rapids), stated that the board considered "the site offered by Dr. Currens a very good one, and . . . with the bonus offered by the citizens a very good offer and worthy of consideration." However, no further action on the proposed court house site in Two Rivers was taken.

The need for a new court house did not diminish. In January 1904, Peter Johnston, who had been elected Manitowoc's first mayor in 1870, wrote a brief history of the old court house that appeared in many local newspapers. In his opinion, the present court house, first occupied in 1857, "was much too small" for its different uses. He added, "It has much lumber and timber in its construction and is by no means a fireproof building; it can burn down and perhaps destroy all the records of Manitowoc county."

In asking the proverbial question, "Can the people afford to take that?" Johnston replied, "I think no." He continued, "The demand for a new building will not [sic] down until they get it; and the sooner it comes the better. The county will never be better able to do it than now. We need a commodious, up-to-date building with all modern improvements and accommodations and fireproof beyond any doubt so that the records of the county will be secure." Johnston further stated that the county was "nearly out of debt," and stressed that the issue of bonds at a low rate of interest for twenty-five or thirty years "so the cost of the court house could be spread through many years, even to [sic] the second and third generations and no tax payer will feel the burden heavily."



Two months later, on March 17, 1904, a disastrous fire in the Manitowoc business district damaged the Wernecke & Schmitz Block (the present Studio 8 building) on the northeast corner of South Eighth and Washington Streets, across from the court house. The second floor of the building housed the municipal court and the offices of Judge A. P. Schenian and Clerk Silas Giles. Fortunately, court records and the valuable law library of the judge were saved.

The local press reported, "It is thought that the recent narrow escape from destruction of the valued court records will result in the county board taking steps for securing a new \$100,000 fireproof courthouse."

By the late summer of 1904, after many months of agitation and disagreements, plans for a new \$150,000 court house on the site of the old court house seemed a certainty. The Special Court House Committee of the County Board of Supervisors had issued a prospectus to architects requesting plans for "a convenient and modern" fireproof three story court house, complete with plumbing, heating and lighting, to be located on the court house square. Architects were encouraged "to submit plans, sketches or designs of a court house in competition" to the county clerk by September 30, 1904.

By early November, the Court House Committee had reviewed and examined proposals and drawings from 21 architects, and had selected plans for "an imposing structure." The committee, however, remembering the mistakes made by the former Court House Committee, decided not to provide any details of the proposed new court house until the County Board met at the upcoming annual fall session.

On November 21, 1904, the County Board unanimously approved the committee's report, and a resolution for court house plans presented by C. H. Tegen, a local architect from Manitowoc.

The board also adopted a resolution to issue a series of court house bonds for \$150,000 to pay for the building project. One hundred fifty bonds, numbered consecutively from 1 to 150, in the denomination of \$1,000 each, were to be issued, with a 4% annual interest rate. The first bonds (numbers 1 to 3) were payable on February 1, 1908, the last (numbers 141 to 150) came due on February 1, 1924.

On November 30, 1904, Edward Mohr of Manitowoc was elected Superintendent of Construction to supervise the erection of the new court house. The board also elected a five-man court house committee to oversee the building project. The committee included Charles Krause (City of Two Rivers), P. J. Murphy (Cato), C. R. Zorn (Schleswig), Christ Muth (Manitowoc), and J. P. Watt (Maple Grove).

Like architects Kinney & Detweiler, Tegen chose a Beaux Arts, Neoclassical design for the "Temple of Justice." His plans called for a basically square, stone building with three entrances, facing Washington, South Eighth and Hancock Streets, and broad stone steps leading up to each. The three story building had a full basement, and was surmounted by a prominent glass dome. Other exterior architectural elements included rusticated porticos beneath projecting balconies,

regularly-spaced rectangular windows, and smaller decorative details such as cartouches, finials and sculpted consoles.

The plan on the interior featured a large spacious open lobby surrounded by balcony-corridors at second and third floor levels, and a decorative cast iron stairway with an ornamental balustrade. The central lobby at the first floor was to be a raised court, four steps above the surrounding corridor and offices. The central glassed sub-dome in the rotunda was lit with natural light from a larger glass dome above. Other monumental Neoclassical design features included ornamental plaster columns, decorated with pilaster capitals in Doric, Ionic and Corinthian styles.

On December 7, the Court House Committee met for the first time, and after choosing a chairman and secretary, negotiated contracts with architect C. H. Tegen and Superintendent Mohr, which were completed on December 15, 1904.

The committee decided to advertise bids for the construction of the new court house in the *American Builder*, published in Chicago, and the *Manitowoc Daily News*, with all bids to be filed no later than May 25, 1905, at the county clerk's office. The bid deadline was later extended one day to May 26, 1905.

The committee was unsuccessful in advertising bids for the sale of the old court house building (no offers were received), and failed to purchase a vacant lot adjoining the court house grounds. As a result, it was decided to remove the building to a vacant lot owned by the county, just south of the county jail and sheriff's residence.

Initially, the Owen Goss House Moving Company of Milwaukee was awarded the contract for moving the old court house building at a cost of \$3,650. After declining it, the contract was awarded to the next lowest bidder, Henry Buestin & Sons, Milwaukee, for \$3,960. Rudolph Groll & Co. of Manitowoc was awarded the contract for a new basement and foundation upon which to place the old court house at a cost of \$1,985. The committee, deciding it necessary to have a night watchman in charge of the old court house during its removal, hired D. H. Cooney at a salary of \$2.50 per day.

On May 25, the court house bids were opened, but an addenda to the building specifications for stone work by architect Tegen gave those who presented bids the opportunity to amend or withdraw them, thereby delaying the matter by the board one day.

On the next day, May 26, 1905, the board accepted the bid of George Rickman & Sons Company, Kalamazoo, Michigan, for \$159,200 to construct the new court house building, despite the fact that no specifications or costs for plumbing, heating, ventilation or lighting were included. The contract called for the structure to be completed within 20 months.

The board resolution also directed the county treasurer to deposit monies from the sale of court house bonds, which was to occur on September 1, 1905, in three banks in the city of Manitowoc in equal amounts. The banks selected were the Manitowoc Savings Bank, German American Bank and National Bank.

By June 1, 1905, workers had begun putting heavy timbers under the old court house, estimated to weigh about 800 tons. The work of moving it began on the morning of July 6, 1905. By the end of the day, the building had been slid only about 15 feet. Crews from the Electric Light Co. and Wisconsin Telephone Co. removed wires along South Eighth Street so as not to obstruct the building when it was moved into the street.

By July 20, the old court house building had been moved completely off the court house square and onto South Eighth Street. The laying out of the lines for the foundation of the new court house was completed, and temporary shelter sheds for the contractors and architects were being erected along the Washington Street side of the court house square.

One week later, the old court house was still being moved south on Eighth Street at the rate of three feet an hour. The sliding process had been abandoned and large rollers were now being used to move it.

Moving the old court house did not occur without some problems. On July 27, a large chain broke twice, and three large iron rods or guides running through the building, to which the heavy chains used in moving the building were attached, snapped, delaying the moving operations. The girders were taken out and sent to a local blacksmith shop to be welded together again. A large timber also broke, but luckily no members of the moving crew were injured. Several cement blocks in the sidewalk along South Eighth Street cracked when the heavy structure was moved over them.

By August 3, 1905, the old court house was being turned in toward the vacant lot, south of the county jail. As the building was moved off the street and onto the lot, it jerked, causing wall and ceiling plaster to fall in several places inside the building. Many onlookers believed an accident would surely occur. The heavy brick structure remained on the moving dollies, however, with only minor damage to the building.

Two weeks later, the work of moving the old court house was practically completed, with only a few more inches needed before it was secured on its new foundation. On August 17, John Laughlin, a member of the moving crew, got his left hand caught in a chain, and had two fingers badly jammed before he released his hand.

Several county residents believed that tearing down the old court house and renting offices would be cheaper than incurring the expense and trouble of moving it. These claims, however, were quickly refuted by Court House Committee members, who explained that moving the old building would save the county \$10,000 over and above the expense of moving it. They cited costs needed to rent space for a term of two years for six county officers, and vault rooms for their use, plus the need to rent Turner Hall twice a year for three weeks or a month at from \$10 to \$20 a day in which to hold circuit court. Besides, they argued, the old court house could be rented or leased at a profit after the new court house was completed.

As the old court house was being moved ever so slowly, work on the new building progressed

rapidly. Excavators had begun digging the foundation and a dozen stone cutters were busy cutting stone for basement walls.

One week later, fifteen laborers mixing concrete for the foundation walls of the new court house unexpectedly went on strike, demanding 22 to 25 cents an hour, about 40% more than the 17½ cents an hour, or \$1.75 a day, that they were receiving from the contractor. The striking workers claimed men at the Manitowoc coal docks were receiving as high as 45 cents an hour for work that was not any harder than mixing cement. The strike at the court house on August 3 did not last long, as contractor Rickman hired a number of men who came the next morning, replacing the striking workers.

Other problems soon developed. Rain delayed work on August 3, as did the non-arrival of concrete. The biggest concern, however, was the sinking of the ground at the extreme southeast corner of the new foundation. On August 17, the Court House Committee called a meeting to consult with architect Tegen, contractor Rickman, superintendent of construction Mohr and several businessmen and engineers, including Thomas Torrison, Fred Schuette, city surveyor Urger, ex-city engineer Louis Pitz and Max Rahr.

Tests with a long iron rod indicated that the soft earth extended 20 feet below where the excavations had been made. It was finally decided by the committee to have Mr. Rickman dig down and put in a secure foundation of concrete. By the end of the day, firmer ground had been reached and the work of filling the hole with concrete had begun.

On September 20, a carload of white Bedford stone, consigned to George Rickman & Sons Co. for the new court house in Manitowoc, was demolished in a train wreck on the C. I. and L. line in Illinois. The wreck and other delays, however, did not seriously hold up work, nor did it delay plans for the laying of the cornerstone of the new court house on Saturday, September 30, 1905.

Arrangements for the cornerstone laying ceremony were made by a special committee of citizens, named by the Court House Committee, that included Max Rahr, Edwin Schuette, C. A. Groffman, A. Torrison, Ed. Nash, Michael Dempsey, Emil Baensch, Fred Schuette, Dr. Currens and Edward Hamilton. A platform, 100 feet square, was erected just inside the foundation at the northeast end of the building, and draped in red, white and blue bunting. The Marine Band played several selections, and Rev. Huebner of Two Rivers delivered an opening prayer. This was followed by a song by members of the Concordia and Freier Saengerbund singing societies under the leadership of Prof. Urban.

Speeches were delivered by Attorney Lyman J. Nash, Judge Michael Kirwan and Judge Emil Baensch, who presided as master of ceremonies. Baensch spoke on the "Farewell to the Old Court House," and chronicled the early history of Manitowoc County. Newspapers called his address "a touching farewell to the old building."

Following these activities, a children's chorus of 150 voices sang and Attorney Nash delivered a brief address, "Welcome to the New Court House." After the Marine Band played another musical



selection, Judge Kirwan delivered the principal address of the afternoon, "The Foundation Stone." At the conclusion of Judge Kirwan's speech, the cornerstone of the new court house was laid. A copper box placed in the cornerstone contained copies of all the papers of the county, coins, commemorative aluminum plates engraved with the names of officers of the county, pictures of buildings, and copies of the court house bonds, resolutions and proceedings of the County Board. The afternoon ceremony closed with the singing of "America." Approximately 3,000 people attended the elaborate cornerstone laying ceremony.

In 1905, when the cornerstone of the new court house was laid, the population of Manitowoc County had risen to 44,796, with 12,733 people living in the city of Manitowoc.

Meanwhile, the work of building the new court house continued, but not without some further delays. In mid-October of 1905, just a few weeks after the cornerstone laying ceremony, the failure of iron and heavy steel girders to arrive resulted in all work on Manitowoc's new building being stopped. The white Bedford stone for the first story above the basement was reportedly "placed around the building ready for installing as soon as the iron work is partially put in."

On the evening of November 25, a wagon containing two large building stones, being transported from a rail car to the construction site, broke down at Franklin and South Twelfth Streets.

On November 29, 1905, the Court House Committee filed a report with the County Board, indicating "the work of constructing the new building is progressing in a manner that is highly satisfactory" and "the work is being done and material being furnished according to contract."

By this time, however, it was evident that Manitowoc County's new court house would be a "\$200,000 structure." The extra concrete work by George Rickman & Sons Co. in the foundation walls required 9,356 cubic feet of concrete at 33 cents per cubic foot, plus labor, at a cost of nearly \$4,000. At its meeting on November 29, the County Board approved "piping of the new court house for gas light" for \$420, since no provisions for it were made in the original plans. Additional changes in specifications, approved by the board, would eventually surpass the estimated \$200,000 cost of the building.

Two other resolutions regarding controversial issues were adopted by the board on the last day of its annual session in November 1905. The first resolution, adopted by a vote of 23 to 7, directed the Court House Committee to cease meeting "under the pretense of their official duty as a building committee once a week . . . unless called by their chairman or the superintendent."

The second resolution adopted on Wednesday, November 29, ordered the Court House Committee to "immediately" and "absolutely" remove the names of the building committee, architects, contractors and superintendent from the sides of the newly laid cornerstone and "in lieu and in place thereof on the east side of said cornerstone to have inscribed thereon in large letters, chiseled into said stone, the following: Manitowoc County Court House. Erected, Sept. 30, A.D. 1905." The names "Chas. Krause, J. P. Watt, Christ. Muth, C. R. Zorn, P. J. Murphy, Building Committee"

had been inscribed on the east side, and "C. H. Tegen & Son, Architects; George Rickman Sons & Co., Contractors; Ed. Mohr, Supt." appeared on the north side.

Motions to table the resolution, then amend it by leaving architect Tegen's name on the cornerstone, were defeated. After agreeing to omit "Manitowoc County Court House" from the east side, the resolution was adopted by a vote of 28 to 2.

As the year 1905 came to a close, a crew of five men, who had put in the first story iron frame work and other iron and steel work, arrived from Milwaukee on the evening of December 27 to begin work on the second floor. Because the work was expected to take "at least ten days," it was hoped "moderate and sufficiently agreeable" weather would continue so "stone cutters, layers and masons can work through the winter." A large derrick erected at the northeast corner was used to haul iron girders, posts and bracers over the first story of stone.

Construction of the new court house continued during the winter of 1905-06. By spring and the return of pleasant weather, the work was reportedly "being rushed" by contractor Rickman. During one week in April, twenty-one carloads of materials were received for the new building. Iron work on the interior of the second story was underway and stone was being laid on the third story. The local newspaper reported confidently that, "The building will be under roof in August and completed by April 1, 1907."

On May 10, work was temporarily halted when two workmen fell a distance of more than fifty feet down a chimney flue, and a third worker fell a distance of eleven feet outside the chimney to the next floor below. The three men were setting a stone on the third floor of the building near the flue when the scaffolding over the opening gave way under their weight. Nick Kowalski, a laborer, fell first, followed by Peter Fredericks, foreman of the stone cutters, who reportedly "could have held himself but feared he would pull the heavy stone in on top of he and his companion." They landed in a heap in the basement.

Kowalski, unconscious, suffered bruises and a sprained back, and was taken into the contractor's office. Dr. Thurtell, a local physician, was summoned. Fredericks cut his head and had badly lacerated and bruised hands from trying to stop his fall by grasping the rough interior of the chimney flue. Both men were "laid up for several days." The third workman was unhurt.

On May 16, new bids were received for gas piping at the new court house. G. H. Kallies of Manitowoc submitted the lowest bid and was awarded a contract, approved by the County Board, for \$670. The committee had rejected two bids previously received on December 27, 1906, and decided to re-advertise them.

Problems with the concrete and iron structural work were reported by the Court House Committee to the County Board at its meeting on May 23. Mr. Tegen made a test of the concrete, which was changed from the kind specified, and found it "O.K." Mistakes in four "I" beams used in the building were also detected, which the contractor agreed to remedy "to the satisfaction of all parties concerned."



Several decisions regarding the new court house were made at the special session of the County Board in May of 1906. On May 25, a resolution to install a Johnson system of heat regulation at an additional cost of \$3,450 was approved, with all members present voting aye.

By a vote of 24 to 7, the County Board also voted to change the specifications for the new court house by replacing the copper cornice with stone, and putting in stone balustrades and terra cotta ornaments in place of copper, at a total additional cost of \$12,600. It was decided not to act upon the question of putting in ornamental plastering, as provided for in the original plans and specifications, at an additional cost of \$4,500. Board members wanted to wait until work was further completed to see how the interior of the building looked before making this decision.

By the end of the summer in 1906, work at the court house was not progressing as rapidly as the building committee wanted. As a result, they ordered architect C. H. Tegen and superintendent of construction Edward Mohr to direct George Rickman & Sons Co. to put more men at work on the building as soon as possible to hurry its completion within the time limit of 20 months.

*The Manitowoc Citizen* reported that the date of putting a roof on the building, originally planned for the end of July, would probably now be pushed to the end of September, at least. Changes in the plans, including a stone instead of copper cornice, were partly to blame for the further delay.

On November 29, the County Board met to consider the question of providing for ornamental plastering in the inside of the new court house. After Mr. Rickman explained the need to decide this issue in order to furnish steel and iron work, the board adjourned to allow the members to inspect the new building and to receive information as to the difference between ornamental and plain plastering. When the County Board reconvened, the members unanimously approved a resolution for "ornamented" plastering in the new building at a cost of \$4,500. The board also extended the time for the contractor to finish and complete the building to May 1, 1907.

The question of changing the dome from copper to terra cotta was also discussed. A bid prepared by Mr. Rickman for a terra cotta dome amounted to an addition cost of cost of \$13,535. When the Court House Committee stated that Mr. Tegen had informed them that the extra cost of the terra cotta would be but \$6,000, Tegen replied that he had made a mistake and that a terra cotta dome would cost between \$12,000 and \$13,000.

Some local papers, including *The Manitowoc Citizen*, supported the change, stating, "Terra cotta would make a much more desirable material and would top off the lower structure to better advantage than would copper."

After much debate on the merits of terra cotta versus copper, a vote was taken and the resolution to substitute terra cotta for copper on the dome was defeated by the close vote of 15 ayes to 13 nays.

During the fall of 1906, work on the court house continued. At the annual session of the County Board in November, more extras for the building were approved. On November 23, the board approved new steel and wood furniture, including wood desks, tables, chairs, filing cases, and

necessary steel fireproof filing cases for all the vaults (not to exceed \$25,000), and suitable lighting fixtures designed for the use of both electricity and gas, both inside and outside the building (not to exceed \$6,000).

A resolution to "contract with some decorative artist to decorate the interior of the new court house building," including the main corridor and the circuit court and county court rooms, at a sum not to exceed \$5,000, was not approved.

Three days later, by unanimous vote, the board decided to change the wainscoting from slate and plaster to marble in the new court house at an additional cost of \$14,500.

On November 27, 1906, the board approved the building committee's report and recommendation for more extras. They included a speaking tube from the circuit judge's desk to the clerk of the court office for \$45, first quality "Prism Glass" instead of double thick glass in windows on the dome at an extra cost of \$2,107.50, and conduits and wiring for a telephone system with a telephone in each county office in the new building at a cost of \$685. The board took no action on installing two drinking fountains, estimated at a total additional cost of \$1,500.

A complication now arose between the County Board and Mr. Rickman regarding the bonding company, which did not agree to allow the bond as made out originally to stand, due to the large number of changes made in the building. Although Rickman assured the board that the county would be amply well protected, and that the county need not accept the building unless it was completed in a workmanlike manner, tempers flared.

District Attorney Hougen, who was present at the County Board meeting, "severely arraigned" Rickman and the bonding company, in particular, for never acknowledging a letter received from the county clerk, regarding the large number of additions to the contract, and how it would affect the Rickman Company's bond. Rickman responded by explaining that the contract alone provided for both additions and deductions from the original plans, and this protected the county from any liability. Hougen stated the bonding company must file an acceptance of the changes.

A resolution regarding the surety bond was adopted by all members present. It stated emphatically that the contract with George Rickman & Sons Co. for additional marble construction would not become effective until the contracts complied with the condition of the resolution or the contractor filed a new bond to be approved by the Court House Committee.

In mid-December of 1906, it was reported that the plate glass for the windows and dome in the new court house was "on way." It was also reported that putting in the windows, starting up the furnace, and interior carpentry and finishing work were anxiously being awaited. With several men able to work on the interior of the building all winter, Rickman expressed no doubt that the new court house would be ready by the contract time of May 1, 1907.

By April of 1907, with a work force of between 25 and 35 men, including a number of ornamental plasterers, Rickman was "now pushing the interior work on Manitowoc's new \$200,000 court



house, in order to get the structure ready for occupancy this summer." Nearly all the plastering in the various offices, court rooms, vaults and corridors of the building was completed, and mosaic tiling for the floors in all the hallways and corridors had arrived. The iron stairway inside the rotunda had been installed, and ornamental plastering in the rotunda was "being put on by a crew of experts." The interior of the building was rapidly taking shape. Final stone work on the building was underway, and steps on the Hancock Street side of the building were being set with stone that had been cut the previous fall.

After an inspection of the work site, *The Manitowoc Citizen* commented, "One noticeable feature about the new building is the spaciousness of the many vaults in the offices of the county clerk, register of deeds, probate court, clerk of court, municipal court and county treasurer. These are all built large enough to accommodate any growing needs of Manitowoc County for 100 years to come."

Despite the progress being made on the building, it appeared, owing to delays, that it would be impossible to complete the new court house by May 1, and that a date in late summer seemed more likely.

By the end of May 1907, Superintendent of Construction Edward Mohr complained that interior work on the new court house was progressing too slowly. Several plasterers had quit, and copper and iron were slow in arriving. Practically all the carving and stone work, however, was finished. Nevertheless, Mohr feared it would be late in the fall before the building would be ready for occupancy. It was further reported that Rickman "has left in search of men."

On May 22, the Court House Committee filed a report with the County Board during a meeting of its special session. It reported that a contract for steel furniture had been awarded to The Art Metal Construction Co. for \$6,800, and that the wood furniture contract went to Wollaeger Manufacturing Co. for \$15,559. The contract for lighting fixtures was awarded to Charles Polacheck Bros. Co. of Milwaukee, whose designs were thought to be the "most handsome and complete."

On May 23, 1907, the board was informed by County Treasurer Frank Zeman, in a detailed report, that only \$4,876.94 remained in the new court house fund, out of an original bonded amount of \$150,000. The report was referred to the Finance Committee, which the next day recommended transferring \$60,000 from the general fund to the court house fund in order to "meet all the bills of the new court house," and, if necessary, to borrow money for a short time in the fall. The motion to adopt the resolution was carried, with all members present voting aye.

On May 24, the matter of an elevator for the new court house was discussed. A motion to adopt a resolution for an electric passenger elevator, at a cost not to exceed \$3,000, was narrowly defeated by a vote of 17 to 14. Mr. Rickman also addressed the board, asking for an extension of time to complete the new court house building, and for full payment for all extra work done.

On Saturday, May 25, the last day of its special session, the County Board of Supervisors adopted several resolutions regarding the new court house. The board approved the purchase of coal to

heat and protect the building, on account of unusually damp weather, and also "mating, rugs, carpets and window shades."

The board also decided to replace plaster wainscoting with marble on four sides of the balustrade of the rotunda on the third floor, to purchase regular wire screens for the elevator shaft at a cost of \$705 (so that it could be made serviceable if a lift was installed at a future date), to build cement walks leading from the street walks to the three entrances of the new court house, and to place stone curbing on Washington and Hancock Streets adjoining the court house premises.

On May 30, 1907, Henry Schumberg, a Centerville farmer about 55 years of age, visited the new court house with his son. While admiring the ornamental plastering on third floor, he fell 15 feet to the floor below, breaking two bones in his heel and cutting his face. In its news coverage of the accident, *The Manitowoc Citizen* stated bluntly, "The county was in no wise to blame, as Schumberg had no right in the building."

On June 12, about two weeks later, Julius Buerstatte, an electrician, fell 30 feet from the top of a ladder leaning against the dome of the new court house. He was at work putting up a large "welcome" sign in electric lights on the court house dome for the Kreuger Verein. Although another man was holding the bottom of the ladder, it slipped, and Buerstatte, seeing that the man could not hold on, jumped off. The fall resulted in internal injuries, and his lower limbs were paralyzed.

Despite these unfortunate accidents, the construction of the new court house was continued through the summer of 1907. By fall, construction was nearing completion. On September 9, the Building Committee met and received reports from Superintendent Mohr and Architect Tegen that the building was completed, and ready for acceptance.

Before the County Board met in a special session on September 17 to hear the report of the Building Committee, a heavy rainstorm demonstrated that the roof of the building leaked, rendering the building "unsatisfactory in that regard." In its report, the committee reported that this was the "only discoverable defect in the building."

Desiring to occupy the building as soon as possible, the board passed a resolution on September 17 to accept and occupy the new court house until a formal and final acceptance of the building was made by the county.

The board also ordered that asbestos covering be placed around all the heating pipes in the basement, except those in the vaults, and that wire screening be placed above the sub-dome as protection for the glass.

Gossip about a leak in the dome of the court house traveled swiftly throughout the county and city. While some complained about the defect and the contractor, others were confident that "the building will be the pride of Manitowoc county and the state so far as court houses are concerned. Do not knock it just because a small defect has been discovered."



*The Manitowoc Citizen* defended Mr. Rickman, stating, "All parties having business relations with the contractor have found him to be an upright honest man and his reputation as a builder would not permit him to turn over the job if it was in any way inferior."

While the matter of a leaking dome was being debated, discussed and investigated for a satisfactory remedy, another chapter in the court house construction that had caused quite a sensation, ended. On September 19, a stone cutter chiseled off the north and east faces of the cornerstone, the names of the Building Committee, the contractor, architect and superintendent, pursuant to a resolution adopted by the County Board, nearly two years before, on November 28, 1905.

Interestingly, the stone cutter's chisel marks from the removal of the names in 1905 are still clearly visible on the north and east sides of the cornerstone today.

In early October of 1907, the county had not yet occupied the new court house, as the wood furniture man was still installing desks and fixtures in the county clerk's office. It was thought that the county judge would be the first to move in so that these rooms in the old court house could be leased to the Wisconsin Business College, which had been started in Manitowoc eight years earlier and now needed more space.

While the Court House Committee met to decide what steps were to be taken to hurry the work of installing the rest of the furniture and to solve the problem of the leaking dome, plans were being made by a special committee of citizens to formally dedicate the new court house building "with appropriate ceremonies [in the] afternoon and evening" and "to present it to people of Manitowoc County" on Tuesday, November 12, 1907.

On the day of the dedication festivities, addresses in the afternoon were delivered by Circuit Judge Michael Kirwan and Wisconsin Governor James O. Davidson. An evening program featured City Attorney John T. Kelley of Milwaukee, who made two addresses. Kelley spoke to an audience of 600 in the circuit court rooms first, then addressed more than 1,000 people assembled in the rotunda of the building. Mayor J. R. Currens of Two Rivers acted as master of ceremonies.

While Attorney Kelley was speaking inside the court room, Emil Baensch of Manitowoc addressed the throng of people gathered in the rotunda. Local attorneys Lyman J. Nash and James S. Anderson each spoke for a few minutes in the circuit court rooms, giving reminiscences of the old days in the old court house. The dedication program and speeches attracted an audience of several thousand people. Moser's Orchestra played "stirring music and dreamy waltzes" during the early evening from the balcony on the second floor.

Following the dedication ceremony, *The Manitowoc Citizen* boasted, "There is no more modern or handsome county court house in Wisconsin, if indeed one can be found in the whole northwest."

When the County Board convened in annual session on November 20, the Court House Committee filed its final report, stating that "through every hour of the afternoon and evening the building was visited and inspected by large crowds of people from the whole county, and from the expressions of approval from all visitors, the new building has fully realized the fondest hopes of the people

of this county. Everybody seemed satisfied that the money invested in the [new building] by your honorable body was wisely, safely, and permanently invested where it will be a pride, comfort, and convenience to the orderly discharge of the business of the county for many years to come."

On November 20, 1907, the County Board formally accepted the new court house at a cost of \$238,348.71 from the contractor George Rickman & Sons Co. The board agreed to pay the contractor a final bill of \$568.11 for extras, and accepted a \$5,000 bond guaranteeing that all of the roofs and the sub-dome of the new court house would be watertight for a period of five years.

Before accepting the bond, Supervisor A. H. Pohl of Manitowoc raised the question of broken lights that remained in the sub-dome. Mr. Rickman responded that the lights were "on the way here" and indicated that he had made arrangements to have them installed.

Toward the end of the meeting, Mr. Rickman addressed the County Board members and thanked them for the pleasant relations and many courtesies extended between his firm and the board during the building of the new court house.

In other business that day, a Mr. C. Schmidt [sic] (probably Conrad Schmitt) of Milwaukee addressed the board on the proposed decorating of the new court house, which he estimated would cost \$10,000. On a motion by Supervisor Joseph Connell (Town of Meeme), the matter was referred to the Committee on Public Buildings and Improvements. *The Manitowoc Citizen* correctly reported that the matter of decorating the new court house "probably would not be acted on favorably by the county board."

During the morning session of the County Board on November 20, the matter of hiring a janitor for the new court house building was reported on by the Committee on Salaries which, "after careful inquiry and investigation," recommended the hiring of "one competent man" at a wage of \$100 per month. The following day, it was reported that nine persons had filed applications for the job. After eleven ballots, John J. Hoyer was elected janitor, having received a majority of votes cast.

By the end of the County Board's annual session on November 26, 1907, the business of constructing a new Manitowoc County Court House appeared to be nearly over, or at least it seemed.

Matters regarding the new court house lingered for some time, however. In May of 1908, the County Board decided to move chairs and benches left over from the old court house into the assembly room of the new court house.

Defective and broken lights in the dome of the rotunda still had not been replaced as dutifully promised one year before by the contractor. The Committee on Public Improvements, as a result, was instructed by the County Board to take the necessary measures to repair them.

Furniture belonging to the county from the old court house was still being inventoried and sold in 1908 and 1909. By that time, the sale of old furniture had raised a total amount of only \$87.61, which was turned over to the county treasurer.



A resolution to purchase a vacuum cleaner for the court house, recommended by the Committee on Public Buildings and Improvements on May 22, 1909, was not taken up again until more than a year later. On August 22, 1910, the request was denied for the reason that the \$75 machine was "very slow, the running of the machine taking up too much time."

The matter of an "imperfect condition" of the roof on the new court house remained a perplexing problem for three years. On November 17, 1909, the matter of repairing the roof was referred to the district attorney. On November 24, District Attorney John J. Healy reported that he had communicated with George Rickman & Sons Co. and that they "showed a willingness to repair the roof and had intended to send their roofer here while the board was in session, but it was impossible for him to reach here in time." During the meeting Supervisor Pohl of Manitowoc moved that the Committee on Public Buildings and Improvements be authorized to repair the court house roof. The motion carried.

The condition and lack of progress in fixing the court house roof were reported in the local newspapers. On June 10, 1909, *The Manitowoc Citizen* tersely stated, "The roof of the court house leaks. It has been a sieve ever since it was constructed."

One year later, George Rickman & Sons Co. had yet to appear, and the court house roof still leaked. On August 22, 1910, the Committee on Public Buildings and Improvements reported that "it would be only a waste of time to cause any repairs to be made" on the roof, and recommended that the County Board should "place a new roof on, in place of the old one, and do the work at our county's expense," and begin legal action against the contractor at once.

Supervisor Watt of Maple Grove introduced a resolution to appoint a special committee consisting of County Board Chairman Olof Lundberg, County Clerk Frank Vraney, and District Attorney John J. Healy to estimate the cost of damages caused by the court house roof and make arrangements to compel Rickman to pay damages for its repair. It was adopted by a vote of 25 to 7.

On November 29, 1910, the Court House Roof and Dome Repair Committee reported "that it was useless and futile to spend any further time" trying to have repairs made by the George Rickman Sons & Co., as assets of the contractor, who erected the building, had recently gone into receivership.

Bids for the roof and dome to be repaired with copper were advertised and received, and Joseph Romberger of Milwaukee was selected to do the work, having submitted a low bid of \$7,931.63. The architectural firm of Hirschberg, Williams, Washburn Co. of Milwaukee was hired to oversee the project at a rate not to exceed 10% of the actual cost of repairs, or \$793.16, making the total roof repair cost \$8,724.79. A motion by Supervisor Henry Hansen to adopt the report and resolution passed unanimously. The active work of repairing the roof began immediately, and was completed by the following July.

In a report to the County Board on November 17, 1911, the Court House Roof Committee indicated that the copper from the old roof had been removed and sold to a local junk dealer for \$30.00 and that the old slate was stored in the court house basement.

During the repairs, a flag staff, costing \$310.50, had been erected upon the dome and a balustrade, or railing, had been built in the cupola at an additional cost of \$129.85, "for the protection of the person who raises the flag upon the pole." Broken glass on the dome was also replaced at a cost of \$70.03.

The matter of decorating the interior of the court house was not acted upon until nearly 3½ years after the completion of the building. On May 20, 1911, a resolution, signed by twenty board members, to appoint a decorating committee of five to procure designs and costs for decorating the court house, was adopted.

After meeting on June 28, the Decorating Committee decided to visit the newly erected Brown County Court House "where work of a like nature" had recently been done and "also to obtain knowledge of the nature of this work so as to better qualify themselves in passing upon the merits of the different designs which would be presented" during the bidding process. At Green Bay, the committee learned that "a very satisfactory job had been done for the sum of \$8,000.00." As a result, "it was decided that the same amount ought to be spent for the work here."

Nine bids and designs for decorating the court house were received and examined on October 17, 1911. Eight firms came to Manitowoc to present proposals for doing the work: Associated Artists, Milwaukee; Conrad Schmidt [sic], Milwaukee; Liebrig & Co., Milwaukee; Mathiesen, Milwaukee; Odin J. Oyen, La Crosse; Wm. G. Andrews & Co., Clinton; Lee Decorating Co., Chicago; and A. Thiel & Co., Chicago. Not having enough time to thoroughly examine the submitted proposals and different designs, the committee met again on October 23.

"After a careful study and examination of all the designs," Associated Artists of Milwaukee, the firm that had decorated the Brown County Court House, was selected to decorate the new Manitowoc County Court House.

When the local press reported that the Decoration Committee was about to choose Associated Artists, local labor unions sprung into collective action, sending identical resolutions, signed by their respective officers, to the County Board. The resolutions protested the "illegal and high-handed action" of the committee and its assuming of "powers not granted to it by the resolution by which it was appointed," and "because the Associated Artist [sic], of Milwaukee, is known by us to be an unfair firm to labor, employing non-union labor."

On November 22, communications from seven union organizations, including Local No. 328 Tailors, Local No. 477 Cigar Makers, Local No. 301 (not specified), Local No. 304 Painters and Decorators, Local No. 445 Plumbers and Steamfitters, Local No. 849 Carpenters and Joiners, and the Manitowoc Central Labor Council, were filed during the annual session of the County Board.

Despite this outburst of pro-union sentiment, about two weeks later, on December 9, a contract for \$8,000 was awarded to the Milwaukee firm of Associated Artists, which completed the work in 1912. Upon the suggestion of Judge Kirwan and the Manitowoc County Bar, the designs in

the circuit court room "were modified to comply with their wishes; their object in view was to have the circuit court room just as plain as possible, which was done."

Surprisingly, no mention of the present rotunda murals, the two paintings on the west landing staircase, or other works and designs that might have been done in other rooms, corridors and hallways at the court house is recorded in any of the County Board proceedings for this period.

Since its completion in 1907, the Manitowoc County Court House has undergone several remodeling and repair projects. In 1936, the interior of the rotunda was painted. In 1939, exterior steps were replaced during a federally-funded WPA project, with the county contributing about \$8,000.

In 1950, the County Board approved a recommendation from the Public Property Committee to rebuild and repair the dome in the court house, at an estimated cost of \$40,000. The base of the dome and several glass plates were broken and shattered in a devastating wind storm on May 5, 1950, that swept the county and the upper Midwest. Plans for the repair and rebuilding job were drawn by architect Frederick Rauber of Manitowoc.

During the repairs, a stainless steel dome replaced the glass plates in the upper portion of the dome, a new inside floor was installed at the base of the dome (the original dome had no floor) and steel supports extending from the copper base of the dome to the flagpole were strengthened.

The interior of the rotunda was repainted in 1952.

In 1954, preliminary plans and specifications were drawn by Frederick Rauber for a five-story \$750,000 court house annex, 50 x 140 feet, to be attached to the west side of the building with connecting stairways, elevators and hallways, and a separate entrance on Washington Street. Plans provided for a new jail on the upper two floors of the annex and a county traffic department on first floor. The proposed addition was never built, however.

In March of 1959, remodeling work was completed in the court room on the north side of the building on second floor. During the remodeling, old fashioned light clusters were removed from two marble pillars in the room. Other remodeling in the court room was done in 1970.

In January of 1969, a fire of an undetermined origin destroyed an automatic passenger elevator, that had finally been installed in 1931, and its operating equipment, in the northwest section of the court house. Some minor damage to office areas adjacent to the elevator also resulted.

In 1971, the court house steps were again replaced at a cost of about \$11,200.

In 1972, the court house roof was replaced at a cost of about \$75,000. The new roof, raised about 5 inches, was built over an old 4-inch thick concrete roof covered with copper sheeting that had deteriorated and developed leaks over time, reminiscent of earlier years.

On January 22, 1974, the old First Reformed Church, which had been purchased in the late 1950s by the county for use as an annex, was torn down by Fred Radandt Sons, Inc., to provide

additional parking space. The building housed offices for various county and federal agencies as well as the site for County Board meetings. The offices were moved to the former Manitowoc County Teachers College at 1701 Michigan Avenue when it was remodeled by the county.

In the fall of 1975, workmen from Consumers Steel Co. completed the erection of a fire escape on the northeast corner of the court house at a cost of \$16,000. New exit lights were also installed throughout the building at this time.

New exterior windows were installed throughout the court house in 1978. In 1980, the court house rotunda was remodeled. Glass panels in the sub-dome were replaced, and murals and scroll work restored. The six-week project cost about \$36,000.

A major interior remodeling project took place in 1981 at a cost of \$800,000. During the project, the 15,000 volume law library on second floor was moved to the basement area, which was reconfigured to its present layout, and a new court room on the east wall of the second floor was built in the area formerly containing the law library, lounge facilities and office of the court administrator. Several offices were moved to their present locations in the building at this time, including the office of clerk of court and county treasurer. The heating system was converted from steam heat to hot water baseboard heating, and a heat recovery system was installed above the rotunda during the project.

The Manitowoc County Court House was listed on the National Register of Historic Places by the U.S. Department of the Interior on April 16, 1981.

Since its National Register designation, a small addition for an accessible entrance with a chair lift was built in 1984 on the south side of the building, adjoining the east side of the steps. Other maintenance, repair, and remodeling projects have been conducted during the last 20 years for the continued use of the landmark building as an administrative and judicial center.