

Ellie Rose, Kelly Martin , Lizzie Frazier, Ashton Wilt

Ms. Fisher

Hometown History

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The Courthouse

Winchester has boasted a beautiful, proud courthouse throughout its many years as a town, one that the community has long been glad to call theirs. Throughout the years there have been renovations to this glorious structure to uphold safety concerns or just to help this momentous structure remain a permanent piece of the community. Although it has been through its ups and downs, it has and continues to be a worthwhile investment held within the community's heart as its political center for many more years to come. Frequently the residents of Winchester have had to have tough conversations considering budgeting and bargaining to keep this masterpiece healthy and active in their square.

Ranging from modernization to safety concerns there has always been work to be done on the town centerpiece, but never has there been a lack of citizens wanting to help. Safety issues aside, the goal of the remodel was to update and modernize the facility. The building and updated changes were kept in line with the style of the Courthouse from its birth in 1875 to have the modern conveniences but retain the grandeur of its timely build.. If you look at the window panes and detailing of the exterior of the Courthouse you can tell which sides are from the most recent renovations and which are from the original build by overall wear, yet both ages hold their own beauty. The woodwork and marble halls were kept as original as possible but received a good cleaning and shine to bring the resemblance alike. Throughout the courthouse you will find murals, painted by Roy Barnes in 1977, depicting our county history, proud legacies and honorable mentions from the past to show what the building represents.

The community of Winchester had many discussions about the renovations of the Courthouse as well as many disagreements. Many of the disagreements were what renovations the money should be spent on. Since the building was quite small, there were many citizens wanting to expand the size of the building and the space available, while many other people believed that the funds should be spent on the courtroom, or the exterior and cleaning, At the same time many believed in creating a judicial annex and voiced their opinions around the square. “We have come to the conclusion that with the dollars we have available the best way to spend the money is to create a judicial annex.”¹ To begin with, the courthouse wasn’t laid out well as Hanchar said “The building is poorly laid out.”²

The Courthouse also holds the second tallest monument in Indiana³. The Monument was first placed there in 1905. The Monument is a part of the Courthouse and what makes it so special. The monument was first placed there by James Moorman in 1890, who donated \$2,000 to be used towards the statue. He spent about 2 years researching and planning this statue so it would be an “absolutely perfectly- equipped and historically- correct example of what the United States infantry soldier was, and stood for.” The soldier at the top of the monument was taken off in 2015 for cleaning and restoration and continued to be off the monument for several months. It was off the top of the statue for a total of one year after being up there for 112 years. The courthouse takes pride in the monument as it stands at the front of the Courthouse, and the second tallest in the state of Indiana.

The community fought for what they believed was right for the Courthouse, a group of older ladies in the community called the “Calendar Girls”. The group made an impact on what

¹ Bill Richmond, “Courthouse Meeting Draws Divided Crowd.”

² Bill Richmond, “Courthouse Meeting Draws Divided Crowd.”

³ The Historical and Genealogical Society of Randolph County, Indiana. Randolph County, Indiana. Paducah Kentucky

changes were made. They protested what changes should have been made since they have been there since the beginning of it. They helped to raise awareness of what was going on and also had fundraisers as well. ⁴ With each calendar that they posed for and each calendar that was sold, \$5.00 was donated to saving the Courthouse. They were very invested in the subject and worked hard to save every aspect of the courthouse.

The courthouse has been in our community for a long time. Many citizens have helped to shape what the courthouse is today, based on where it began and what renovations were to be made. Our community utilizes the courthouse for many things each and every day, from judicial, to offices, to safety and security issues. The upgrades that we see now, have shaped what the courthouse has been used for while allowing citizens to still be proud of where it began.

⁴ *“Courthouse Girls’ calender to be unveiled”*