

*The Historic
Genesee County Courthouse
1926-2003*



*Re-Dedication Events
September 12-14, 2003
Commemorative Publication*



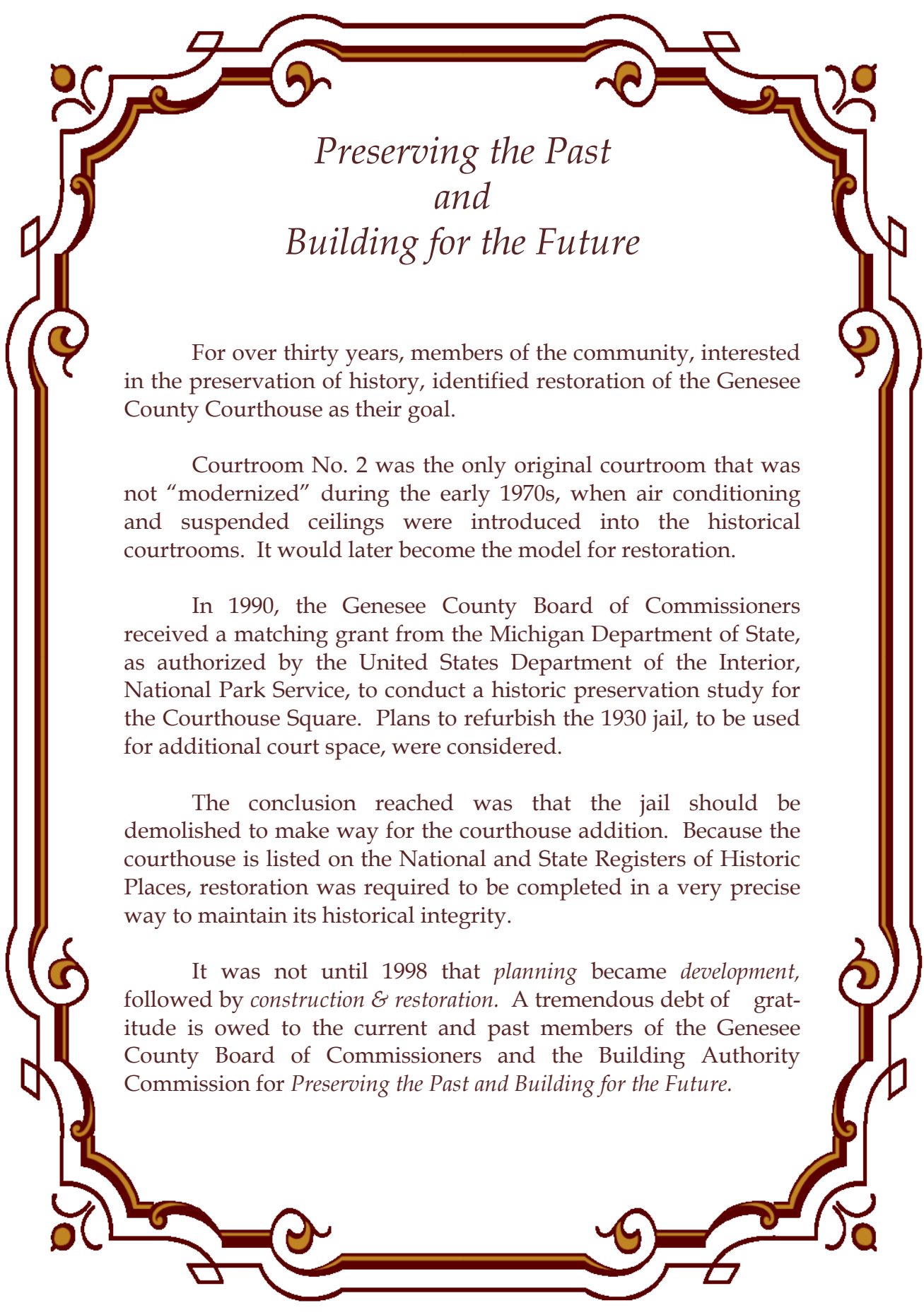
Genesee County Courthouse *1926-2003*

Commemorative Publication 2003
Content and Design:

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Janet E. Patsy

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*Preserving the Past
and
Building for the Future*

For over thirty years, members of the community, interested in the preservation of history, identified restoration of the Genesee County Courthouse as their goal.

Courtroom No. 2 was the only original courtroom that was not “modernized” during the early 1970s, when air conditioning and suspended ceilings were introduced into the historical courtrooms. It would later become the model for restoration.

In 1990, the Genesee County Board of Commissioners received a matching grant from the Michigan Department of State, as authorized by the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, to conduct a historic preservation study for the Courthouse Square. Plans to refurbish the 1930 jail, to be used for additional court space, were considered.

The conclusion reached was that the jail should be demolished to make way for the courthouse addition. Because the courthouse is listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places, restoration was required to be completed in a very precise way to maintain its historical integrity.

It was not until 1998 that *planning* became *development*, followed by *construction & restoration*. A tremendous debt of gratitude is owed to the current and past members of the Genesee County Board of Commissioners and the Building Authority Commission for *Preserving the Past and Building for the Future*.

Courthouse Re-Dedication Events
Presenting Sponsors

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*Sorensen Gross Construction Co.,
 construction manager for the
 Courthouse Square Project,
 wishes to extend its congratulations
 on completion of the largest
 court-related building project in the
 history of Genesee County.*

Serving the Flint area since 1925 as ...



**GENERAL CONTRACTOR
 CONSTRUCTION MANAGER**



Calendar of Events

September 10 - 14, 2003

Wednesday, September 10, 2003

PERKS Annual Picnic for Genesee
County Employees
Courthouse tours available

Friday, September 12, 2003
Noon

Ribbon Cutting

Saturday, September 13, 2003
6:30 - 11:00 P.M.

Gala Event – period attire, vintage au-
tomobiles, theatrical presentations,
musical selections, *Epicurean Line Up*
and restoration viewing

5:30 – 6:30 P.M.

Prohibition Tea Party – Bailiwick

Sunday, September 14, 2003
Noon - 4:00 P.M.

Family Day – vintage automobiles,
restoration viewing, entertainment and
re-dedication of Civil War monument

***Elected Officials
2003***

Genesee County Board of Commissioners

Richard E. Hammel, District 8, *Chairperson*
Fred Shaltz, District 6, *Vice-Chairperson*
Raynetta P. Speed, District 1
Floyd Clack, District 2
Ted Hammon, District 3
John Northrup, District 4
Miles T. Gadola, District 5
Archie H. Bailey, District 7
Rose Bogardus, District 9

7th Judicial Circuit Court

Honorable Robert M. Ransom, *Chief Judge*
Honorable Richard B. Yuille, *Chief Judge Pro-Tem*
Honorable Duncan M. Beagle
Honorable Joseph J. Farah
Honorable Judith A. Fullerton
Honorable John A. Gadola
Honorable Archie L. Hayman
Honorable Geoffrey L. Neithercut

Genesee County Probate Court

Honorable Allen J. Nelson, *Chief Judge*
Honorable Thomas L. Gadola
Honorable Robert E. Weiss

67th District Court

Honorable Christopher R. Odette, *Chief Judge*
Honorable Larry J. Stecco, *Chief Judge Pro-Tem*
Honorable John L. Conover
Honorable David J. Goggins
Honorable Richard L. Hughes
Honorable Mark C. McCabe

68th District Court (City of Flint)

Honorable Nathaniel C. Perry III, *Chief Judge*
Honorable Michael D. McAra, *Chief Judge Pro-Tem*
Honorable Peter Anastor
Honorable William H. Crawford II
Honorable Herman Marable, Jr.
Honorable Ramona M. Roberts



County Clerk

Michael J. Carr

Drain Commissioner

Jeffrey Wright

Prosecutor

Arthur A. Busch

Register of Deeds

Melvin P. McCree

Sheriff

Robert J. Pickell

Surveyor

Carl H. Carlson

Treasurer

Daniel T. Kildee

Those Who Build and Restore

Genesee County Building Authority Commission

Chris C. Poulos, *Chair*

Bruce Trevithick

Robert Centilli

Gary Isham

Suellen J. Parker



CHMP, Inc., *Architect*

Sorensen Gross Construction Company, Inc., *Construction Manager*

The Vitetta Group, *Structural Engineer*

Di Clemente Siegel, *Electrical Engineer*



Contractors

Acton Rental & Sales Co., *Wheelchair Lifts*

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McAvinchey Bldg. Demolition

Black & White Asphalt, Inc., *Asphalt Paving*

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Historical Chandeliers

Certified Abatement, Inc., *Asbestos Abatement*

City Renovation & Trim, Inc., *Drywall & Acoustical*

Commercial Control Sys., Inc., *Temperature Controls*

Conex, Inc., *Demolition & Excavation*

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Dee Cramer, *Heating/Cooling/Sheet Metal*

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Overhead Coiling Doors

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Future Fence Company, *Fencing*

Genesee Electric, Inc., *Electrical Services*

Genesee Technologies, *Audio/Visual Systems & Security*

Goyette Mechanical Co., *Misc. Mechanical Demolition*

Great Lakes Fire Protection, Inc., *Fire Protection*

Huntoon Equipment Co., *Loading Dock Equipment*

Imperial Woodworks, Inc., *Architectural Millwork (pews)*

Interior Dynamics, *Courtroom Furniture*

J. Perez Construction Co., *Misc. & Selective Demolition*

Johnson & Wood, L.L.C., *Concrete*

Johnson Steel Fabrication, Inc., *Steel*

Kone, Inc., *Elevators*

Metro Fabricators, Inc., *Fabrication*

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Historical Cornice & Valances

Midwest Mechanical, Inc., *Mechanical*

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Myers Landscape & Irrigation Svcs., Inc.,

Landscape & Irrigation

Northside Floor Covering, Inc., *Flooring Systems*

Pleasantview Glassworks, *Exterior Lighting Restoration*

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SCF Furniture, *Library Furniture*

Spray-On Fireproofing, Inc., *Spray-On Fireproofing*

Steve Davidek Painting & Decorating, Inc.,

Murals & Restoration

T & C Insulation, *Insulation*

The G-S Company, *Detention Equipment*

The Trane Co., *Roof Top Units*

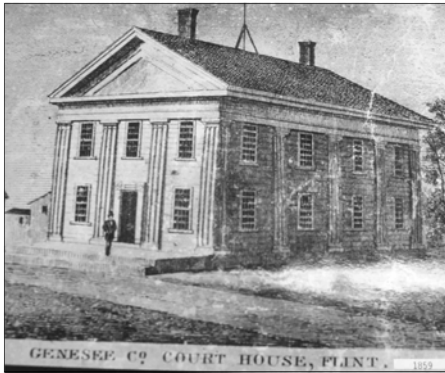
Unity Construction, *Site Concrete*

William E. Walter, Inc., *Mechanical*

William Reichenbach Co., *Drywall & Acoustical*

Genesee County Courthouses

The land currently occupied by the Genesee County Courthouse has been the site of the center of justice for the county since 1838. The Legislative Council of the Michigan Territory recognized Genesee County as a governmental body in 1835. A two-acre parcel of land, originally owned by early settler John Todd, was deeded to the county by Wait Beach. The land was given for use as a courthouse and public square.



2nd Courthouse

The first courthouse was built in 1838. It was a solid oak log structure and served as the jail and courtroom. A second courthouse was built in 1839 and destroyed by fire in 1866. A third courthouse was constructed in 1867, at a cost of \$50,000 and remained in use until 1903.



3rd Courthouse



4th Courthouse

In 1904 an impressive domed courthouse was constructed and also destroyed by fire in 1920. After a few years of debate, the 1926 courthouse was constructed.



5th Courthouse

The 1926 courthouse is one of only a small number of neo-classical revival county courthouse buildings in Michigan. A jail was constructed a few years later, on the courthouse square, and closely matched it in design. The architect of both was Frederick D. Madison of Royal Oak, Michigan. The courthouse project was completed in sixteen months at a cost of \$710,000.

The building is a reinforced concrete-frame structure with an exterior faced in Indiana limestone. Other important building materials include marble wainscoting, wrought iron handrails, American Walnut interior appointments, millwork ornamentation of European origin and courtroom murals. The murals depict local history and legal origins.

The Seventh Judicial Circuit Court

By an act of the territorial legislature, Genesee was established as a separate county on March 28, 1835. For judicial purposes, it remained attached to Oakland County. On March 8, 1836, Genesee became organized as a county. The first officers were elected on August 22, 1836. The first associate judges were Jeremiah R. Smith and Asa Bishop.

During 1837-1838, the upper story of Stage & Wright's store and a hall over the store owned by Benjamin Pearson were used for the holding of court. The first term of court was held in February 1837, by the Honorable George Morell, one of the Justices of the Michigan Supreme Court. The first case was an appeal from the justice court involving a judgment for the Plaintiff in the amount of \$5.63. The case was reversed and a judgment entered for the Defendant in the amount of \$16.00.

Today, the Circuit Court is the court of general jurisdiction for Genesee County. Judges assigned to the civil/criminal division hear all civil cases, with damages in excess of \$25,000 and criminal cases whose maximum penalties exceed one year. The family division judges preside over matters related to domestic and juvenile issues. The Circuit Court also exercises appellate review over courts of limited jurisdiction. There are eight elected circuit judges.

Circuit Judges 1926-2003

Edward D. Black	Anthony J. Mansour
Fred Brennan	Thomas C. Yeotis
James Parker	Ollie B. Bivins, Jr.
Paul V. Gadola	Harry B. McAra
Philip Elliott	Earl E. Borradaile
Clifford A. Bishop	Robert M. Ransom *
Steven J. Roth	Judith A. Fullerton *
John W. Baker	Valdemar Washington
Louis D. McGregor	Duncan M. Beagle *
Stewart A. Newblatt	Geoffrey L. Neithercut *
Donn D. Parker	Archie L. Hayman *
Elza H. Papp	Richard B. Yuille *
Donald R. Freeman	Joseph J. Farah *
Philip C. Elliott	John A. Gadola *



* *Currently Serving*

The Genesee County Probate Court

The Probate Court was the first court organized in the county. It was a court of importance to early settlers, since the succession of land and property ownership was of great concern.

The Judges of Probate began with Samuel Rice in 1836. The first case heard in the Genesee County Probate Court involved the will of Schuyler V. Brown. On October 29, 1836 the court convened in Flint and received the petition of Gould Davison, who was the executor of the estate. A hearing was set for November 26, 1836 to prove the will. That hearing was adjourned to December 5th due to the absence of two of the three witnesses to the will. On December 5th, the witnesses appeared and testified to its validity. There were no objections, and the first will was admitted to the Probate Court of Genesee County.

The Probate Court exercises jurisdiction over matters relating to the estates of decedents, trusts, appointment of guardians and conservators for adults and minors, and commitment of individuals determined to be mentally ill. There are three elected probate judges. Two of the judges are currently serving in the family division of the Circuit Court.

Probate Judges 1926-2003

Fred A. Wertman	Thomas C. Yeotis
Vernon W. Dodge	Richard C. Evans
Frank L. McAvinchey	Luke Quinn
John F. Baker	Earl E. Borradaile
William E. Doran	Thomas L. Gadola *
George D. Stevens	Allen J. Nelson *
Philip C. Elliott	Bruce A. Newman
Harold E. Resteiner	Robert E. Weiss *

* Currently Serving



Office of the County Clerk

Settlement of the territory comprising Genesee County began in the year 1819. In 1836, the first Genesee County Clerk took office. His name was Robert F. Stage and he was co-owner of the first general store in Flint.

Jesse C. Good was the Clerk when the current Courthouse was built in 1926. His office was one of several offices located on the 2nd floor. Today the Clerk's Office occupies the entire 2nd floor of the Courthouse.

Over the years there have been many interesting County Clerks. George C. Dunn was the longest serving Clerk - serving from 1937 until 1977 with a brief period in between (February 1943 until July 1946) when his wife, Frances F. Dunn, served in his stead while he was away at war.

Edward A. Murphy was the County Clerk in 1891 and 1892. He held the office for one term being the first democrat to have the office in 50 years. He was also a great uncle to the current County Clerk.

Michael J. Carr was first elected as County Clerk in 1977 and served until 1983 when he was appointed Commissioner of the Michigan Lottery. In 1992, he was once again elected to the post of County Clerk and currently occupies that position.

Genesee County Clerks 1926-2003

Jesse C. Good
George T. Gundry
George G. Dunn
Frances F. Dunn
George G. Dunn
Michael J. Carr
John H. Trecha
Michael J. Carr *



* Currently Serving

Office of the County Prosecutor

The Prosecutor is the chief law enforcement officer for Genesee County. The office represents the public interest, by prosecuting violations of state law.

The first county prosecutor was *Joseph Bugg* (1850-1852). Since that time, the county has had many prosecutors that became judges or went on to further public service.

One such prosecutor was *Charles Dean Long*, who was elected in 1874. He became the first president of the Detroit College of Law (1891) and an Associate Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court (1888-1902). Justice Long fought in the Civil War, losing his arm and carrying a bullet in his leg for the rest of his life.

A restored oil painting of Justice Long hangs in the judicial conference room of the Genesee County Courthouse. The painting is a companion piece to the official Michigan Supreme Court portrait.

Genesee County Prosecutors 1926-2003

William R. Roberts

Charles Beagle

Ralph Freeman

Andrew Transue

Joseph R. Joseph

John L. Roach

Stephen J. Roth

John L. Roach

Leon A. Seidel

Chester Schweisinger

Jerome F. O'Rourke

Walter P. Kuta

Robert F. Leonard

Robert E. Weiss

Arthur A. Busch *

* *Currently Serving*



The Genesee County Jail

The former jail was closed in November, 1988 and inmates transferred to the new facility.



The Jail House Rocked...

The 1930 jail was imploded on November 14, 1998 to make way for the courthouse addition.



Jail, continued...

A photograph was discovered that depicted a formal laying of the cornerstone, or so it appeared. No records could be found to determine if a time capsule had been included. On November 4, 1998 the cornerstone was opened and a copper box with many artifacts from the past discovered. County Clerk, Michael J. Carr, took possession of the contents. With media present, this was another great day for the Courthouse Square Project.



Contents of 1930 Cornerstone

1. *The Flint Weekly Review* Newspaper – Vol. #19, No. 16, August 8, 1930
2. *The Grand Blanc News* Newspaper – Vol. IV, No. 17, August 8, 1930
3. *The Flint Daily Journal* Newspaper – Last Edition, August 13, 1930
4. *The Flint Daily Journal* Newspaper, Section Two, August 13, 1930
5. *The Detroit Free Press* Newspaper, Flint Edition, No. 101, August 13, 1930
6. *The Detroit Free Press Sports Newspaper*, No. 101, Part 2, August 13, 1930
7. *Flint-Genesee County Legal News* Newspaper, Vol. 3, No. 2, August 13, 1930
8. *Flint Saturday Night Magazine*, Vol. 4, No. 14, August 9, 1930
9. “Buick for 1931 Four Straight Eights” - Pamphlet/Sales Brochure
10. “Buick Deluxe Straight Eight 1931” - Pamphlet/Sales Brochure
11. Genesee County Jail Parchment Sheet – Lists Contractor, Subcontractor, Building Committee, Sheriff Department Employees
12. Bottle with note signed by A. L. Dedrick, Engineer
13. The Standard Form of Agreement Between Owner and Architect – Genesee County Board of Supervisors and Frederick D. Madison, dated April 17, 1929
14. Coins: 1880 Silver Dollar, 1907 Nickel, 1928 Penny, 1918 Half-Dollar, Pontiac Coin of General Motors, 1919 Canadian Penny, 1908 Quarter, 1917 Canadian dime
15. A \$1.00 check from J. H. Galliver dated August 13, 1930
16. 25 Cent Fractional Currency (paper) donated by Elias F. Good
17. Kiwanis Club Membership Card dated June 30, 1930 for J. C. Good
18. Frank Harris Membership Card to the National Exchange Club, 4th Quarter, 1929
19. Mark H. Piper Membership Card, National Exchange Club, 2nd Quarter, 1930
20. Wm. W. Ainge Business Card, Ainge Electric Co., Inc.
21. Notary Public Manual for Re-election of Hazen W. Waller, for Register of Deeds Primaries, Sept. 9, 1930
22. Schedule of Prices Booklet for Recording Instruments – Register of Deeds, 1930
23. Revised Book Booklet 1930-1931 of State, County, City, Township, Village Officers
24. Card with Photograph of Ralph M. Freeman, Candidate for Prosecuting Attorney
25. Card with Photograph of Herbert F. Haas, Candidate for County Treasurer
26. Card with Photograph of Jesse C. Good, Candidate for County Clerk
27. A General Diamond Natural Leaf Tobacco Plug with note from Joe Galliver, County Auditor
28. Photograph made March 20, 1930 of Sheriff’s Home and Office
29. Two photographs of Laying of 1930 Cornerstone of Genesee County Jail

Groundbreaking

Groundbreaking for the addition took place on September 28, 1999. The event was exactly seventy-four years after the groundbreaking for the 1926 Courthouse. The date was intentionally selected to forever link the common dreams of a people, separated only by time.



Chief Judge Robert M. Ransom, 7th Judicial Circuit Court (left) and Chief Judge Allen J. Nelson, Genesee County Probate Court turned ceremonial shovels of earth.



As Commissioner Richard E. Hammel, Chairperson of the Genesee County Board of Commissioners opened the ceremonies, (from left), Chief Judge Robert M. Ransom, Chief Judge Allen J. Nelson, Commissioner Fred Shaltz, Commissioner John J. Gleason, Commissioner Robert Myers, Richard Sly, Sorenson Gross and David Hanute, CHMP stood ready to add their comments.

A tent on the courthouse lawn provided shade for refreshments and conversation about what the future would hold.



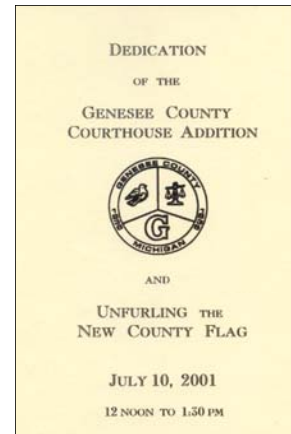
Dedication Ceremony

On July 10, 2001, the addition was formally dedicated. After many years of planning, designing and building, the consolidated court facility was opened for public review.



Dedication Ceremony

The dedication ceremonies were held on the steps of the Beach Street entrance. Remarks were made that piqued the expectations of the assembled crowd. After the official red and blue ribbon cutting, many spectators rushed into the courthouse. As they toured the facility, there were the expected comparisons to the “old side”. Most of the comments were very generous and appreciative of the familiar presence of wood and expanded space.



The Genesee County Board of Commissioners authorized the designing of a county flag and placement of a bronze plaque on the first floor of the courthouse.



Commissioner Robert Meyers served a leadership role in making the Courthouse Square Project become a reality. He succumbed to illness before its completion. His wife, Mary Meyers, is shown here assisting Commissioner John J. Gleason in raising the new Genesee County flag.



The dedication ceremony also included the burying of a time capsule. The capsule is located under a granite slab adjacent to the Beach Street portico. It is marked by a bronze plaque. Many public agencies included materials about their organizations that would be of interest to future generations.

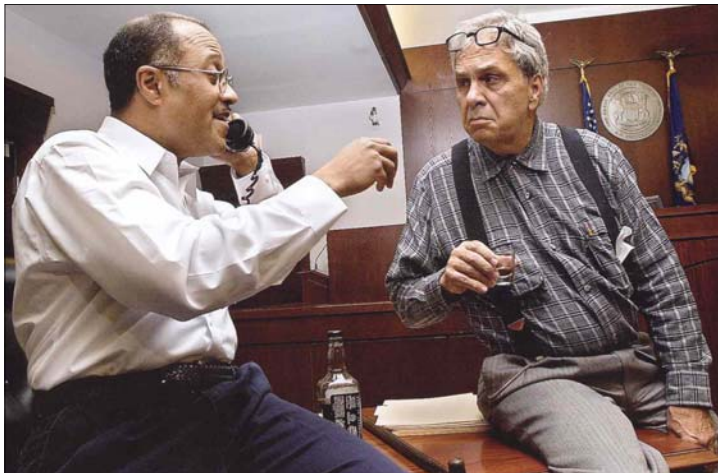
Anatomy of a Murder



On October 3 & 4, 2001, Vertigo Productions presented *Anatomy of a Murder*, in a courtroom on the fifth floor of the addition. The novel was written by former Michigan Supreme Court Justice, John D. Voelker. It was the first time that it was performed in a courtroom. Voelker served on the high court from 1957 to 1959.

He left the bench to return to his beloved Upper Peninsula, where he continued to write in a preferred, rustic location. When he resigned from the court, he stated that “other people can write my opinions, but none can write my novels”.

There were plans to present the play at the Shiawassee County Courthouse, at the completion of its restoration. This did not occur and Genesee County became the first to stage the production.



*Actors:
Tony Ennis, left, played defense attorney,
Paul Biegler (Jimmy Stewart role)
George Bennis, right, played Parnell
McCarthy*

*Photograph courtesy of The Flint Journal
Jane Hale, photographer*

*Actors:
Tony Ennis, left
Tim Ruwart, center, played Judge Weaver
John Nickola, right, played prosecutor
Claude Dancer (George C. Scott role)*

*Photograph courtesy of The Flint Journal,
(Heritage Newspapers)*



Historical Gallery Debut

An early phase of the Courthouse Square Project was the courthouse photographic gallery. The first series of photographs were displayed on the 4th floor, former home to the law library, court administration, jury management and the detention center for the sheriff. The unveiling took place December 14, 1998. The groupings have been moved to the 2nd floor for greater public viewing.



An artistic treasure was found hanging in the old law library. For many years, an oil painting of Michigan Supreme Court Justice Charles Dean Long (1888-1902) hung near the copy machine. It was torn and tattered, but held a great deal of interest.

After contacting the Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society, it was determined that the painting was by *Percy Ives*. Ives was the premier portrait artist in Michigan around the turn of the century. He painted many official portraits for justices, governors and other dignitaries. Two of the more notable portraits were of President Grover Cleveland and Walt Whitman.

The piece was fully restored by *Conservation and Museum Services, Inc.*, Detroit, Michigan and is a companion painting to the official portrait of Justice Long, commissioned by the Michigan Supreme Court.



Long was born in Grand Blanc, Michigan. He lost his arm during the Civil War and then returned to Grand Blanc to pursue a law career. He served as County Clerk in 1864, Prosecutor in 1874 and became a member of the Michigan Supreme Court. He was also the first president of the Detroit College of Law.

The Genesee County Bar Association

The *Genesee County Bar Association* was founded on November 19, 1897. There were approximately 40 attorneys in Genesee County. The local attorneys concluded that forming an association would be beneficial to its members and promote the administration of justice in the community. Both objects were deemed to be highly desirable.



Photograph Courtesy of the Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society

The first president of the Genesee County Bar Association was *George H. Durand*. Durand served the community and the state in a variety of positions, including Alderman, Director of the Flint Public Schools, Mayor of the City of Flint (1873), Congressman and Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court (1892). In 1893, he was elected president of the State Bar of Michigan and was the first president of the State Board of Law Examiners.

The original law office of Durand is located at Genesee County Historic Crossroads Village and memorializes his contribution to the legal community. Genesee County Bar Association members participated in its dedication.

Specialty Bar Associations of Genesee County

The *Flint Trial Lawyers Association* (FTLA) dates back to the mid 1960s. The founders were a small group of trial attorneys who came together to discuss political and legal issues affecting the practice of law. The attorneys mainly practiced in the area of civil litigation, on behalf of plaintiffs, or criminal defense.

The organization has maintained as its focus, the fight for individual liberties and equal access to the court system.

As of 2003, there are 60 members of the Flint Trial Lawyers Association. For a period of time, the organization was also known as the *Genesee Trial Lawyers Association*.



The *Mallory, Scott, Van Dyne Bar Association* was formed in 1989 and takes its name from three of the earliest black attorneys in Genesee County. *Claude W. Haywood* may have been the first black to practice in Genesee County. He came to the Flint area from Raleigh, North Carolina and began to practice in 1919. Little else is known about him.

Dudley Mallory came from Virginia and became a member of the bar in 1926. *R. M. Van Dyne* came to Flint from Oklahoma in 1927 and became a popular trial attorney. Van Dyne's nephew, *Elisha Scott*, came to Flint from Kansas in 1946 and practiced with his uncle. Scott was Flint's first administrative law judge, serving in the Michigan Department of Labor.



The *Women Lawyers Association of Michigan*, Genesee, Shiawassee, Lapeer Region, was started in the 1970s by a group of female attorneys.

The organization provides support to the *YWCA Safehouse Legal Defense Fund* that benefits battered women and children. There is also an annual award given to the *Woman Attorney of the Year*. The recipients are recognized for their overall contribution to the goals of the organization and the legal community.

Edgar Spier Cameron
Muralist



An intriguing mystery was to be solved, as the Courthouse Square Project moved into the restoration phase. The Courthouse is graced with original murals that dignify and adorn two historical courtrooms. However, the identity of the muralist was unknown.

No obvious signatory marks or records identifying the artist could be found. A keen interest developed in discovering his identity. The historic renovation of the courtrooms, and their return to grandeur, made the quest more urgent. Many art institutes, archival sources, libraries and newspaper articles were consulted.

The murals were prominently featured in a 1926 newspaper account of the grand opening of the Courthouse. It was written that they were an “instant crowd pleaser with the touring public.” The composition of the murals was extensively reviewed.

Notably absent from the article was any reference to the artistic contributor. A trip to the State Archives at the Michigan Historical Center in Lansing was made. Minutes from the 1925 and 1926 Genesee County Board of Supervisors were on file and made reference to the courthouse construction. The name of the muralist was not included in the materials.

The Michigan State Capitol Historian, Kerry Chartkoff, was contacted, to draw upon her experience in discovering the identity of the muralist whose works adorn the Capitol Building in Lansing. For many years, the identity was unknown.

Ms. Chartkoff suggested sending out letters of inquiry to museums, historical societies and art institutes. Letters were sent to the Chicago Art Institute, Cranbrook Art Academy, Detroit Institute of Arts and others. Photographs of the courthouse murals were included. Hope began to fade, when responses were not forthcoming.

Shortly thereafter, and quite unexpectedly, an art conservationist from Chicago contacted the court. The caller inquired as to whether there were *Edgar Cameron* murals in the courthouse. She was involved with the restoration of another Cameron mural in the Chicago area.

The Genesee County Courthouse was said to be mentioned in the biographical information of *Edgar Spier Cameron* in *Who's Who in American Art*. An immediate trip to the Flint Public Library and a rapid Internet search for similar works, confirmed that Cameron painted the murals.

Muralist



Edgar Spier Cameron (1862–1944) was born in Ottawa, Illinois and studied in Chicago, New York and Paris. He returned to Chicago with his French-born artist wife, Marie Gelon. As an art critic for the *Chicago Tribune* (1890–1900), he participated in the World’s Columbian Exposition and interpreted new art for the public. He won the Paris Exposition Silver Medal in 1900. His works were prominently displayed at a number of shows at the Chicago Art Institute.

Cameron had a wide range of interest in subject matter, including portraits, landscapes, genre and historical paintings. Some of his paintings resulted from travels to Belgium, Brittany and Paris. It is clear from the inventory of his work, that American history and landscapes were of special interest.

A portion of his artistic career was spent on mural commissions. He was one of the artists who worked on *The Chicago Fire* cyclorama prior to the 1893 World’s Fair. A number of his murals remain intact in prominent buildings in Chicago.

One of his mural commissions (*right and below right*) merit further notice. The murals, now located at the Mead Public Library in Sheboygan, Wisconsin are particularly reminiscent of the murals in the courthouse.



Scenes (above and below) from Courtroom No. 3 depicting the trade importance of the Flint River and Native American presence in Genesee County.



“William Paine and Colonel Oliver Crocker with Native Americans in the Building of the First Dam on the Sheboygan River” (above) and “Sheboygan Industry and Education” (below)



Murals Compared



Jurisprudence

A grouping of four murals in the Illinois Supreme Court Library in Springfield, offer striking similarity to the classical murals in Courtroom No. 2.



Justice



Knowledge

The four are painted to represent the ideals of: *justice, precedent, jurisprudence and knowledge.*

*Photo credit:
Chicago Conservation Center*



Precedent



The murals of Courtroom No. 2 feature depictions of *Mosaic Law (left), Natural Law (above) and The Codification of Roman Law by Justinian (right).*



Restoration of Courtroom No. 1



The murals in the third floor courtrooms were the showpieces of the Courthouse when it opened in 1926. The mural panels in Courtroom No. 1 represent the industries that provided economic growth in the region; lumbering, agriculture and manufacturing. Though painted in 1926, the mural was reminiscent of the monumental artistic works commissioned in the depression, under President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration (WPA).



Air conditioning and suspended ceilings were introduced to the Genesee County Courthouse in the early 1970s. It was during this period that sections of the mural below the ceiling line were removed. The whereabouts of the removed mural pieces remain unknown. (Left), is a picture of the courtroom as it appeared in the 1970s and until the mural was recreated.



A 1926 black and white photograph and the remaining mural pieces above the ceiling line (*above*) provided the basis for mural recreation.



Restoration of Courtroom No. 2

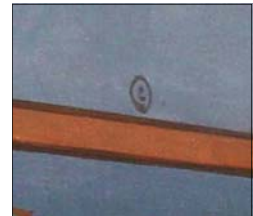


Courtroom No. 2 was the only historical courtroom that remained true to its original appearance, except for over-painting the gold leaf ornamentation. As such, it remained more historically accurate in appearance.



The original chandeliers in this courtroom were cleaned and restored. Additionally, the sources of light within these fixtures were augmented to provide sufficient lighting for the courtroom occupants. Remarkably, this electrical upgrade did not alter their appearance. The restored fixtures also became a model for replication of eleven similar fixtures in the historic courtroom spaces. They are solid brass and copper.

The restoration process became the catalyst to discover the identity of the mural artist. Cryptic signatory and copyright marks were found on the mural during the cleaning process.



The mural composition in Courtroom No. 2 reveals classical and allegorical themes. The muses at the upper corners represent symbolic figures of justice. The *fasces*, bundles of rods bound together around an ax, were emblems of authority in the Roman era. Common, Natural, Roman and Mosaic Laws are also noted.

Restoration of Courtroom No. 3



This was the largest courtroom. The original back wall was the Saginaw Street facade. The current back wall of the courtroom was added sometime thereafter. The added walls created an office for a court stenographer and two small private offices. The modernization of the mechanical systems changed beautifully proportioned spaces by adding suspended ceilings.

The courtroom features a mural depicting the crossing of the Flint River at Saginaw Street. *The Flint Daily Journal* described the mural in an article of November 7, 1926, as being the “most interesting from an historical point of view.” The crossing would later become the focal point of downtown Flint. The artistic expression also captured the culture and heritage of the Native Americans that were in the area. *Jacob Smith*, the founder of Flint, built his trading post near the crossing.



Significant effort was undertaken to return all third floor courtrooms to their original interior colors. No historic photographs were found to illustrate the original decorative scheme. By carefully removing layers of non-historic paint, original brush strokes were discovered. Each courtroom is a combination of several colors and glazing techniques. The *Dutch metal* cornice near the ceiling line was returned to its original luster. Gold leaf was reapplied to the raised panels.

A decorative stenciling pattern, unique to Courtroom No. 3, was revealed during the paint restoration process. A trompe l’oeil technique was added to the back wall to add dimension and perpetuate the overall decorative theme.

Original Probate Courtroom Restored

The original Probate Courtroom on the 5th floor did not have a jury box or a mural. The American eagle, over the bench, was deemed a sufficient decoration. The jury box was added soon after construction.

As part of the Courthouse Square Project, the eagle was gold leafed, the chandeliers returned and intricate ceiling medallions restored. The ceiling medallions disguise cold air returns. They were similarly used in the early years of the courtroom. The beautiful interior of the courtroom was compromised when suspended ceilings were introduced.



The photograph, below left, shows the courtroom before the restoration. The Four Original Michigan Supreme Court Justices, U. S. President Thomas Jefferson (1801-1809) and Chief Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court, John Marshall (1801-1835) were not original to the courtroom. They were added sometime thereafter.

Due to their poor quality, it was decided that they would not be returned. Two artistic expressions of Lady Justice, by artist Stefan Davidek, and an improved depiction of the Four Original Justices were added.



Treasures Revealed



The space on the north end of the 5th floor was originally home to the Genesee County Board of Supervisors. This photograph shows the original appearance. Note the beautiful gold leaf raised plaster panels, high ceilings and chandeliers.

Circuit Judge Philip C. Elliott swears in members of the Genesee County Board of Commissioners in January 1969. Charlotte L. Williams, left front, was able to identify the following commissioners: *first row (from left): Williams, Harlan W. Dyball, Willard P. Harris, T. Ray Johnson; second row: William D. Falk, Robert M. Hartley, Nathaniel Turner, Theodore P. Mansour; third row: Harold R. Hayden, Thomas R. Welch, George R. Poulos, Emil A. Snow. Not pictured: William P. Polk, Edward A. McLogan, Duane P. Fitzgerald, Donald C. Ruschman and Raymond M. Newman.*



Photo: Courtesy, Judge Philip C. Elliott



When the county administration building was built and more courtroom space was needed, the chamber was converted to a courtroom and judicial offices.

The windows on the north end were covered to create a backdrop for the bench. A suspended ceiling and other “modern” aspects were also introduced.

Treasures Restored



The restoration project had sufficient funding to upgrade the courtroom, but it was to remain a “suspended ceiling” atmosphere. As the project worked its way to the 5th floor, it became clear that the original appearance must be restored. There would be only one window of opportunity.



The *Ruth Mott Foundation* was approached to fund the project. It was proposed as an opportunity to restore an historic space, expose public art and perpetuate revitalization in downtown Flint. The grant application was approved and the historic space was targeted for restoration. Without the *Ruth Mott Foundation*, the completed level of restoration would not have been possible.



The courtroom is nearly identical in appearance to the historic courtrooms. It features black walnut millwork and ornamentation, chandeliers that were cast from the original and restored raised plaster panels. As with many other aspects of the Courthouse Square Project, artistic credit is given to Stefan Davidek, Stephen Heddy and their capable assistants.

The hallway leading into the courtroom features historical sites of Genesee County. The Genesee County Historical Society served as consultants in subject matter selection. *Artist: Joseph Katrinic.*

Non-Historic Courtroom Renovation



The middle courtroom on the 5th floor was originally office space for the law library. When converted for court use, Anthony J. Mansour was the first judge to use the newly created courtroom.

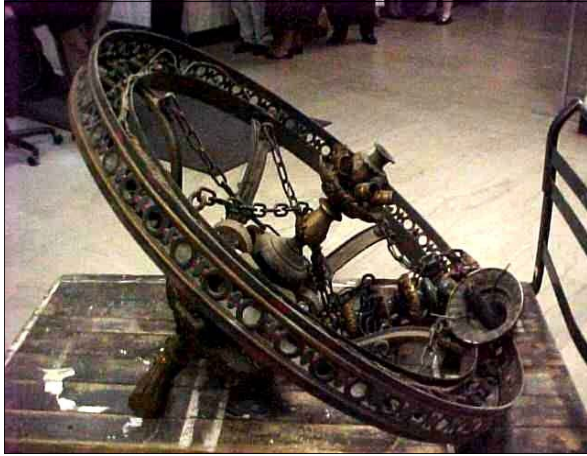


The courtroom was updated during the Courthouse Square Project and minor modifications were made to the appearance. It continues to feature a spectacular view, from the bench, of the Saginaw Street activity.

Lighting Restoration

Interior

Restoration of the historical lighting fixtures was one of the premiere features of the Courthouse Square Restoration Project. When the Courthouse was built in 1926, there were three lighting fixtures in each of the four original courtrooms. As the 1930s gave way to the 1940s and beyond, the historical integrity of the courtrooms fell victim to the need for increased lighting and other mechanical improvements.



In three of the four original courtrooms, the fixtures were removed and fluorescent lighting and suspended ceilings installed.



The chandelier, as noted in the photographs above and to the right, is one of three fixtures that remained intact in Courtroom No. 2. As the photographs demonstrate, the original finishes of the chandeliers tarnished after seventy-five years.



A search commenced for a lighting expert who could restore existing chandeliers and use them as a model for replication. Increased illumination, that did not diminish the historical integrity of the fixtures, was of primary concern. *Capitol Lighting and Restoration*, an historical lighting vendor located in Grand Haven, Michigan, was able to accommodate the needs of the project.





Lighting Restoration

Exterior

The Saginaw Street entrance featured two large *torchieres* or *standards*. Amethyst stained glass globes were prominently affixed. Over the years, the glass had been broken, although the fixtures still worked. The base metal had been over-painted and cast details muted.

Through a generous donation from *The Whiting Foundation*, the exterior lights were restored. The base material was determined to be bronze. Each solid bronze standard weighs over 700 pounds and features detailed ornamentation. The glass was repaired and the natural patina of the bronze accelerated. They were returned to their original location.



Restored south end fixture



Restored jail fixture

Other exterior lighting, at the north and south facades were also restored. Fixtures from the 1930 Genesee County Jail were removed before its implosion, restored and are located at the Beach Street entrance to the courthouse.

Artistic Contributors

Stefan Davidek, of *Steve Davidek Painting and Decorating, Inc., (Flint)* was the master artist responsible for the design, creation and painting of the mural in Courtroom No. 1. Other Davidek works include mural restoration at Saint Matthew's Church (Flint) and original murals featured in Zehnders Restaurant (Frankenmuth). He is also a founding member of DAS Printing, a group that creates serigraphs of former Flint landmarks.

The tri-panel representation of the industries that provided regional economic growth; lumbering, agriculture and auto manufacturing, remain true in theme but are recreated in composition and arrangement. The original mural, by *Edgar Spier Cameron*, had been removed over thirty years ago.

Mr. Davidek also cleaned and restored circular judicial portraits from the historical courtrooms. The portraits featured laurel wreaths and companion torches on either side. A new stencil was created which allowed for all wreaths and torches to be compatible in appearance.



Several other talented painting associates were on hand to assist Mr. Davidek. They applied the gold leaf on the raised panels and restored the original stenciling treatments on the first floor ceiling (*left*) and below the cornice line in Courtroom No. 3.

In addition, they assisted with a trompe l'oeil painting technique. This was applied to a non-original back wall of Courtroom No. 3 to provide a cohesive architectural treatment to that space. They include: *Stefan Davidek, Robert*

Davidek, Jimmy Martin, Paul Davidek, Mark Davidek, Dennis Davidek, Matthew Benedict, Edward Davidek Jr., and Brice Liljeblad.

Stephen Heddy, of *Artistic Decorating. (Burton)* was primarily responsible for the faux-painting treatments and techniques in the historic courtrooms. In the original courtrooms, non-historic layers of paint were carefully removed, revealing the original brush strokes and color schemes. Mr. Heddy and his crew returned those spaces to their original colors. Each restored courtroom is a combination of colors and glazing techniques.

Additionally, his company was responsible for refinishing the walnut wainscoting, benches and other woodwork in the courtrooms. He also served as the creative force behind the cornice replication and created the replicated valances on the fifth floor (*below*). Heddy received national interior design recognition for his work at Saint Lorenz Church (Frankenmuth) and Saint Paul's Episcopal Church (Flint).

He brought a talented and dedicated crew with him to embellish the historic spaces: *Joseph Katrinic, Foreman, Brandon Baxter, Jamie Baxter, John Baxter, William Lincoln, Wayne Lincoln, Mark O'Connor, Jennifer Rowe, Washington Jackson and Travis Gumbs.*



Artistic Contributors

John Fuchs, of *Capitol Lighting and Restoration*, (Grand Haven) designed the augmented lighting scheme for the 1926 early electric fixtures in Courtroom No. 2. Those original fixtures remained intact during a period of mechanical upgrades to the building. Mr. Fuchs inserted a series of halogen up-lights that were concealed in the upper ring or wheel of the fixture. This enhancement provided sufficient light for the space. In spite of the upgrade, they remain true to their original appearance.



When the existing fixture components were disassembled, they were also employed as patterns for replication. Each replicated component piece was metal sculpted and cast. A total of eleven replicated fixtures now grace the historical courtrooms on the third and fifth floors.

This restored copper & brass finial was used as a pattern.

Other notable projects in Mr. Fuch's portfolio include the Detroit Orchestra Hall, Palace Theatre, Chicago, Illinois and the Ohio State Capital, Columbus, Ohio.

Pleasant View Glassworks, (Fenton) restored the globe torchiere fixtures at the Saginaw Street entrance. The company also restored complementary sconces on the north and south facades, with the assistance of **Historical Lighting Repair & Restoration**, (Fenton). The torchieres were sandblasted (*right*) to remove black paint and then returned to their original bronze patina. During the restoration process, the electrical components were upgraded. Missing glass was also replaced.



Furniture Restoration began in early 1998. **Jack Dzuro** (*Clio*), refurbished furniture in the four historical courtrooms. This included counsel tables and chairs, juror chairs, podiums and a distinctive divan (*left*). **Jack Martin** (*Clio*), assisted with re-upholstery.



Several large historical conference tables were also slated for restoration. **McNally Office Service, Inc.** and **Hensler Furniture Restoration**, (both of Saginaw) performed this work. **Kenneth J. Galvas**, (Genesee County Building and Grounds) refinished the original Board of Supervisors desk now located in the law library. **Roger Woodside**, (Fenton) completed the restoration of a number of chairs.

Artistic Contributors

Michigan Lumber Company, (Flint) is the local vendor that fabricated cornices for the historical courtrooms on the 3rd floor. Original cornices had been removed, during a period of mechanical upgrades, and were not available to be used as a model for replication.



With design assistance from Michigan Lumber Company and a black and white photograph, new cornices were made. They were patterned after the original pieces and featured raised panels and a decorative center motif. The final work product (*left*) resulted in another ornamental element that was true to the 1926 design.



On November 7, 1926, *The Flint Daily Journal* dedicated several pages to the opening of the courthouse.

Included was an advertisement (*left*) from Michigan Lumber Company citing their contribution.

William Reichenbach Company, (Lansing) is the contractor responsible for the historic restoration of the plaster and ornamental friezes. Their other notable projects include the impressive and extensive plaster restoration at the State Capitol Building in Lansing.

The installation of air conditioning and suspended ceilings severely damaged the original plaster. Large holes punctured the ceilings and distinctive cornices (*right*). William Reichenbach Company returned these areas to their original condition by reapplying gypsum plaster. Damaged and missing plaster pieces required custom fabrication and installation. The detailed restoration of the cornices and friezes (*bottom right*), in the 5th Floor Chambers of the Board of Supervisors helped to restore that space to its original beauty.



The Courthouse Square Project
Private Contributors



Ruth Mott Foundation	<i>Creation of Historical Courtroom, 5th Floor</i>
The Whiting Foundation	<i>Restoration of Exterior Historical Lighting</i>
Genesee County Bar Foundation	<i>Grant and Matching Grant Challenge for Mural Recreation, 3rd Floor; Grant for Mural Project, 5th Floor</i>
Central Paint Supply and Benjamin Moore Paint	<i>Paint for Restoration</i>
Genesee County Bar Association ♦	<i>Recreation of Mural, 3rd Floor Courtroom</i>
Flint Trial Lawyers Association ♦	<i>Restoration of the "Four Original Justices", 5th Floor Courtroom</i>
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♦ *Contributors, page 38*

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