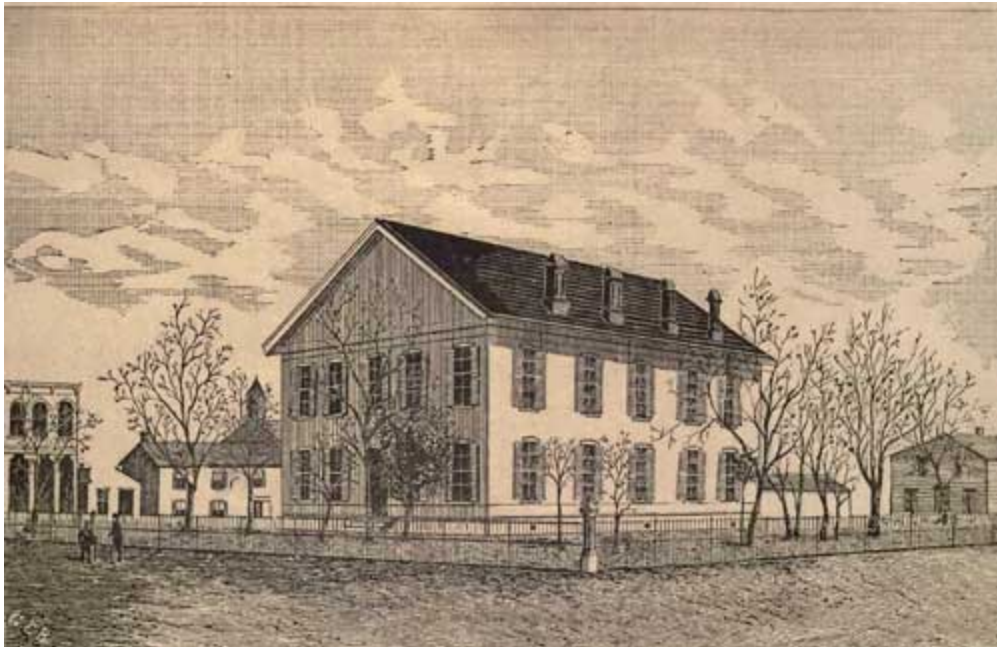


Piatt County Courthouse-Monticello

The first two courthouses

Piatt County built their first court house in 1843. It was a frame building, and was completed in 1845. It was constructed by John Rickets, who would later become a county judge. It was moved to the west side of the square in 1856 when the county decided to build a new courthouse, and was used for a variety of purposes until it burnt down in 1885.

Piatt County built their second court house in 1856-57. The contract for construction was given to George Dempsey and John Lawry for \$10,936. Judge John Rickets also participated in the construction. It was made of brick. It originally had a cupola, but this was destroyed in a storm in July, 1871.



The first Piatt County Courthouse, 1843-1857

Abraham Lincoln argued the case *Ford v. Thorpe* at the first courthouse in 1852, and *Hays and Boyer v. Morain* at the second courthouse in 1858. Lincoln also gave a political speech at the first courthouse during the presidential campaign of 1856.

The first term of the county court was held at the Devore Hotel on May 14, 1841. Justice Samuel H. Treat was the presiding judge. The first school in Monticello was at the original courthouse. In 1843 and 1844 Rev. Peter Cartwright held revival meetings at the original courthouse.

Sources

History of Piatt County, by Emma Piatt, 1883, available at <http://www.archive.org/details/historyofpiattco00piat>

Past and Present of Piatt County, by Charles McIntosh, 1903, available at <http://www.archive.org/details/pastpresentofpia00mcin>

Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois, with a History of Piatt County, Newton Bateman, 1917, available at <http://www.archive.org/details/historicalencyclopc02bate>

See, "From Log Cabins to Temples of Justice: Courthouses in Lincoln's Illinois", pg. 64-67. Covers the first courthouse (1845-56), the second courthouse (1856-1904), and includes two Lincoln stories, one from 1852 and the other from 1858.

See, *Illinois Courthouses: An Illustrated History*, by Dennis Weiser, 2009

The current courthouse

In 1902, the county agreed to build a new courthouse. Construction began in 1903, and was to be completed by the summer of 1904. County officers first occupied the building in January of 1905. The courthouse was designed by architect Joseph W. Royer of Urbana. The contract for the construction of the court house was given to H.B. Walters of Danville for \$75,000.



PLATT COUNTY COURT HOUSE, MONTICELLO