

Courthouses in the Indiana Lincoln Highway Counties

The Lincoln Highway in Indiana passes through 8 counties on its original 1913 alignment and 8 on its shorter realignment completed in the 1920's and marked by the Boy Scouts in 1928. 5 of the counties are on both alignments...Allen, Whitley, La Porte, Porter and Lake...and the other 6 are on one alignment or the other....11 counties in all. A tour of the 11 courthouses will provide a superior glimpse to the architecture of the late 19th century in Indiana. 7 of the 11 courthouses here are directly on one of the two routes of the Lincoln highway, another is mere blocks away and the other three are only a few miles away. Let our route be your guide to these magnificent structures and the history they hold. We hope you will study the varying architectural styles, revel at the ornateness and craftsmanship, take in the many historical murals and sculptures, all the while enjoying a leisurely ride on America's first coast-to-coast highway...THE LINCOLN HIGHWAY

Counties on the Lincoln Highway in 1913	Counties on the Lincoln Highway in 1928
Allen	Allen
Whitley	Whitley
Noble	Kosciusko
Elkhart	Marshall
St. Joseph	Starke
La Porte	La Porte
Porter	Porter
Lake	Lake

All photographs are courtesy of John Deacon. Check out his American Courthouses website here:

<http://www.courthouses.co/>



On the 1913 route of the Lincoln County:

FORT WAYNE...Allen County

One of the finest examples in the nation for the Beaux Arts style of architecture is this 1902 courthouse. It is located at 715 S. Calhoun Street just 2-3 blocks north of the Lincoln Highway and is included in the National Register of Historic Places. It is actually the 4th courthouse for Allen County, all on this same plot of land

The structure was designed by Brentwood S. Tolan who also designed Lincoln Highway courthouses in La Porte, Columbia City, Warsaw and Van Wert, Ohio. Tolan also designed the Fort Wayne Opera House and the Fort Wayne Masonic Temple.

The courthouse is principally built with Bedford, Indiana limestone and granite from Vermont. There are incredible murals in the rotunda from artists Charles Holloway, Carl Guthertz, and Florian Pixetto as well as multiple portraits and sculptures telling the story of growth in Allen County and Fort Wayne through the 19th century.



COLUMBIA CITY...Whitley County

The courthouse in Columbia City is directly on the 1928 alignment of the Lincoln Highway at 101 W. Van Buren Street (the corner of Van Buren and Main Streets). It is a three story structure in the French Renaissance style of architecture.

The courthouse was constructed in 1888 using Indiana limestone, having been designed by Brentwood S. Tolan. It is now entered in the National Register of Historic Places. An earlier Federal Style wood courthouse (1841) stands at 168 N. Whitley Street several blocks NE of the current courthouse setting.



ALBION...Noble County

The Noble County Courthouse is approximately 8 miles east of the Lincoln Highway at Kimmell in the city of Albion. It is the 6th courthouse or county seat for Noble County. The original site was in Kimmell (known as Sparta at the time), but deemed too far from the center of the county. It was moved to Augusta, an area still west of Albion, then to Port Mitchell, a bit southwest of Albion, and ultimately to Albion in 1847. That first courthouse in Albion burned down in 1859 and a replacement was built in 1861 but ultimately demolished in order to build the larger one we have today.

The Noble County Courthouse was designed by E.O Falls and Company and completed in 1887. It is an example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style of architecture and comprised of a red brick exterior with a limestone trim. The building is on the National Register of Historic Places and located at 101 N. Orange Street in Albion.



GOSHEN...Elkhart County

The original county seat for Elkhart County was in Dunlap (1831-1833), an area in between the cities of Elkhart and Goshen. The second courthouse was in Goshen and designed by Jacob Studebaker, serving the county until it was razed in 1868. It was replaced with the one we have today at the intersection of US 33 / Main Street (the original Lincoln Highway route through Indiana) and Lincoln Street near the center of town.

The courthouse was designed by the Chicago architect firm of Barrows and Guernsey and is an excellent example of the Renaissance Revival style of architecture. It is 3 stories high with a domed tower and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

At one time an underground tunnel connected the courthouse to the old jailhouse but that has been filled in today. An early Abraham Lincoln portrait (1860) hangs in the judge's chambers and an interesting fountain of Neptune stands in the courthouse yard, a gift to the city from a grateful Greek confectioner in 1912.



SOUTH BEND...St. Joseph County

An old wooden courthouse was constructed in South Bend and lasted from 1832 to 1855 when it was razed in favor of what is today called either the Old Courthouse or the Second St. Joseph County Courthouse. The Old Courthouse was famously designed by John M. Van Osdel and Olmstead (Chicago) and is a two story Greek Revival style structure. The original doorway still exists and is surrounded by Lemont limestone. It has a very tall clock tower as well. In 1896 a new courthouse was built so the Old Courthouse was physically moved and still stands on the original 1913 Lincoln Highway route at the corner of Lafayette Boulevard and W. Washington Street.

The new (1896) St. Joseph County Courthouse also stands along the Lincoln Highway at 200 W. Washington Street (or 101 S. Main Street) on the spot vacated by the 2nd St. Joseph County courthouse. It was designed by Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge. The structure has an incredibly beautiful rotunda and dome, and excellent craftsmanship throughout. Spectacular murals along the interior tell the story of exploration and settlement of St. Joseph County. Both the new and the old courthouses are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

On the corner of Main and Washington Street, in the yard of the courthouse, stands a Civil War Memorial dedicated to the men and companies of St. Joseph County that waged battles in that war.



LA PORTE...La Porte County

The La Porte County Courthouse is located in the center of downtown right on the original 1913 Lincoln Highway route across Indiana at 813 Lincolnway. It was designed by Brentwood S. Tolan as were several more here in northern Indiana, and was completed in 1892.

The first courthouse in La Porte County was in 1833 at this very same site and was replaced in 1847 by a Greek Revival style courthouse designed by John Van Osdel of Chicago. The clock tower of that building is now atop the La Porte County Historical Society Museum south of town.

The current courthouse was built in 1892 and is in the Richardsonian Renaissance architectural style utilizing Lake Superior Red Sandstone for the exterior. It has a distinctive tower / skylight, is surrounded by gargoyles, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



VALPARAISO...Porter County

The Porter County Courthouse is directly on the Lincoln Highway. .. both the 1913 and 1928 alignments... at 16 E. Lincolnway in Valparaiso. The original courthouse was wood and was in Valparaiso from 1837 to 1853. A second courthouse was constructed in the Greek Revival style made of brick and it was there from 1853 to 1883. In 1883 the city built today's courthouse of Ellettsville, Indiana limestone.

The current structure was designed by J.C. Cochrane of Chicago and is in the Second Empire and Neoclassical style of architecture. On December 27, 1934 the structure suffered a severe fire that gutted much of the building including a 168' tower. The cause of the fire is still unknown but suspicions at the time were that it was started by local racketeer Christopher Mahlmann who was pushing to turn the courthouse into a local brothel!



CROWN POINT...Lake County

The first Lake County Courthouse was in Lake Court House (now Crown Point) from 1840 to 1849. A second one lasted from 1849 until the current courthouse...known fondly as "The Grand Old Lady" ...was built in 1878.

John C. Cochrane of Chicago designed the Grand Old Lady in a Romanesque and Georgian architectural style with a brick façade using bricks from the Henry Wise brickyard. In 1907 two towers were added to the structure. The Grand Old Lady is listed on the National Register of Historic Places



On the 1928 route of the Lincoln Highway:

WARSAW...Kosciusko County

The current courthouse in Warsaw is actually the 4th to serve Kosciusko County. The first site was actually in the little town of Leesburg north of Warsaw from 1835 to 1837. It was followed by a 2 story wood structure in Warsaw (1837-1847), then a 2 story brick building (1847-1882).

The current courthouse is on the 1928 alignment of the Lincoln Highway at the corner of W. Center Street and Lake Street. It is recognized as part of the Warsaw Historic District and listed on the National Register of Historic Places along with the local 1870 Old Jail and the 1874 Opera House as well as other buildings.

It was constructed in a Victorian Eclectic style with an ornate limestone façade and 162' domed tower. The designer was Brentwood S. Tolan. A Civil War cannon, World War II cannon and World War II tank all stand in the yard as monuments honoring those who fought the battles.



PLYMOUTH...Marshall County

Located at 211 W. Madison Street in Plymouth, the Marshall County Courthouse was constructed in 1872 and is on the 1928 alignment of the Lincoln Highway. It is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is a two story brick and limestone structure in the Italianate and Renaissance Revival style of architecture and was designed by Chicago architect Gunder P. Randall.



KNOX...Starke County

The Starke County Courthouse is in Knox, about 8 miles south of the 1928 alignment of the Lincoln Highway across Indiana. The address in Knox is 53 E. Washington Street and is the 3rd county courthouse for Starke County. The first was from 1851 to 1863 and the second from 1863 to 1897.

The current courthouse was designed by Wing and Mahurin from Fort Wayne and completed in 1897. It is a three story Richardsonian Romanesque style structure using Oolitic, Indiana limestone and terra cotta. It has a 138' clock tower atop the building as well. The courthouse is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

