



Old City Hall

## Lancaster City Hall

The original Lancaster City Hall was an unpretentious three story brick building constructed in 1859.

City Hall proper was on the second floor. Besides serving as city council chambers, it was often used as a church and an assembly room. The offices of the mayor, the fire department, the city prison and the post office were on the first floor. Early lodges and secret orders used the third floor.

In February of 1896, Frank Oger proposed a \$75,000 bond issue for a new city building at the same site: the southeast corner of Broad and Main Streets. City Council and the voters approved the proposal.

The Building Committee selected Henry Ives Cobb of Chicago as the architect. On October 12, 1896 the building contract was awarded to Henry Karg of Fostoria, Ohio. With the old building demolished, work began the next month.

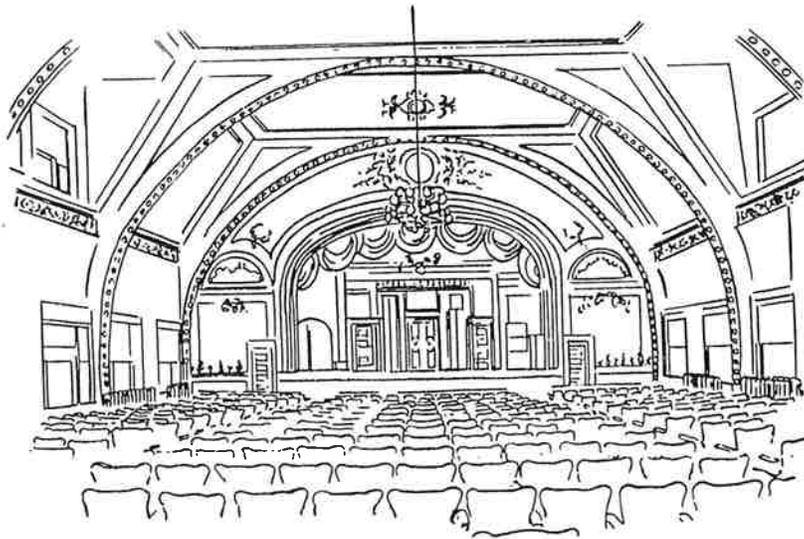
The cornerstone was laid on February 22, 1897. Many people trekked to the mayor's office to place various items in a special copper box that was sealed in the cornerstone. The box is to be opened after 100 years.

In the new building, the police court was in the basement next to the city prison. The first floor housed the mayor, city council, the city clerk, the gas office, the water works and the post office. The library and the city engineer were on the second floor. The largest and most unusual interior feature was the spacious auditorium which seated several hundred people. It, too, was on the second floor.

Another notable City Hall feature is the exterior stone. The bulk of the stone came from the Allegheny Quarry, which was located east of Lancaster. The buff-colored sandstone is from the geological formation known as Berne sandstone, named for the quarry location in Berne Township. The stone was hauled from the quarry to the site by horse and wagon. It was then prepared for construction at the City Hall site just before it was placed. The contrasting stone used in the building trim is Berea Grit, obtained from Lorain, Ohio's North Amherst Quarry.



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City Hall Auditorium

Without question, though, the crown jewel of the new structure was the Town Clock. Located in the tower room, the four clock dials were originally illuminated by gaslight. The clock was proudly wound once a week by Charles Riebe, the official clock winder. The City Hall timepiece resolved a long standing issue. Citizens had debated for years whether or not to place a town clock in the steeple of the Presbyterian Church.

Thousands attended the dedication ceremony on April 1, 1898. Even though the cost had risen to \$85,000, the citizens of Lancaster were immensely happy with their new municipal building.

Lancaster City Hall has changed many times since its construction. In the 1950s, the auditorium was removed and an interior third floor was added. Because the auditorium had such a high ceiling, the third floor was installed without any roofline changes. The post office, police, gas and water departments, as well as the library, eventually moved into their own buildings. Electricity replaced gas lighting. Even so, City Hall is a standing tribute to the early ideals of our forefathers who believed the county seat should have a grand government building.

Per John Dye of  
San. Historic Commission

The current City Hall  
Building (built in 1898)  
is of the Romanesque  
Architecture.

5/2005

- JP

OF REVEREND AND WIFE  
COPIOUS TEARS OF  
APPROVAL.

Washington's Birthday—Laying of Corner-Stone—Bushnell Appoints Hanna U. S. Senator—Ex-President Harrison Becomes a New Pa—Etc.

unable to open due to instability of how to get put.

Ann Penner  
Mayor's Office  
1997-1998

In the face of a driving rain and mud and slush, the laying of the corner-stone of the new city hall took place yesterday. It was an event of such interest to Lancaster and the surrounding community, that, notwithstanding the disturbed condition of the elements, the streets were thronged with citizens bent on seeing the sights and participating in the ceremonies of the memorable event.

Long before the hour for the parade to form, people began to throng the public square, and many persons desirous of having some article or name in the box to be deposited in the corner-stone, called at the Mayor's office, where the box was in charge of a committee, and made their deposit in the box.

It was simply impossible to get a complete list of the deposits or the names of the depositors, but through the courtesies of Nathan Prentiss, the committee on box, and City Clerk H. T. Mechling, we were enabled to secure a list of the principal articles, which were as follows:

BOX DEPOSITS.

- Copies of all the city papers.
- "Picturesque Lancaster."
- Names of Co. A, First Ohio Reg't.
- Picture of old city hall.
- Picture of court house.
- Copper plate containing the names of all the city officials.
- Copper plate containing names of committee on arrangements for laying corner stone.
- Premium list of agricultural society, by Pat Gordon.
- Copy of young people's society, Lutheran Church.
- Copy of menu at Martha Washington Tea.
- Copy of rules of Union Veteran Legion No. 112, with list of resident members.

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 History of natural gas plant.  
 Financial statement of City Clerk.  
 Copy of city hall bond ordinance.  
 List of City Council committees.  
 Names of Board of Education.  
 Copper plate with names of Gas Trustees.

Silver dollar of 1897 with names of Water Works Trustees, Clerk and engineer engraved thereon.  
 Copy of Cincinnati Enquirer.  
 Box of old coins by Gen. J. G. Reeves and son Harold.  
 Old medal by John Gotser.  
 List of members of Board of Health.  
 List of singers at laying of corner stone.  
 Number of private clubs in the city.  
 List of library trustees and librarian.  
 List of members of Lancaster bar.  
 Copper plate, City Librarian Miss Lovina Busby.  
 Copy of bar docket, 1897.  
 Printed programs of the day's event.  
 List of bids and bidders on contract for City Hall.  
 City Directory by D. B. Tidd.  
 Bible by Rev. Dr. W. L. Stutz and Gen. John G. Reeves.  
 Silver plate with names, A. Schleckman and family.  
 Silver plate with names of jeweler Chas. Klebe and family.  
 There were many other articles and depositors, whose names we were unable to learn.  
 The box in which these articles were placed, is eight inches wide, eight inches deep and sixteen inches in length, made of copper and sealed airtight before placed in the hollow cut in the corner stone.

**PARADE.**

Not deterred by the downpour, the parade formed at 1 o'clock as was announced in the following order:

- Police.
- Ministers and Speakers in Carriages.
- Military Band.
- Mount Pleasant Guards.
- Knights of St. George.
- Knights of St. John.
- Mechanics Band.
- Grand Army of the Republic.
- City Officials.
- Citizens in Vehicles.

**LINE OF MARCH.**

From City Hall west on Main to Columbus; thence south on Columbus to Broad; thence north on Broad to City Hall, where the exercises took place.

After the line of march had been completed, Grand Marshal B. F. Dun arranged the different orders surrounding the corner stone, and directed the singers to a platform arranged, and the city officers and City Council took places near.

Music by the Military band opened the ceremonies, after which Rev. G. W. Mochling in well chosen words de-

## PRESENT CITY HALL (EARLY 1900's)



On the day the cornerstone of our present City Hall was laid, February 22, 1897, many residents went to the Mayor's office with items to be placed inside a special copper box, which was to be sealed within the cornerstone. Those items included a Bible; a list of members of Company A, First Ohio Regiment; and a picture of the old City Hall.

On April 1, 1898, the new building was dedicated. Crowds thronged the streets in a downpour of rain for the parade, which was just one part of a program that filled several hours.

One gentleman who can "remember when" pointed out a small saloon in the far left of this photograph where a five-cent beer was once accompanied by a lunch providing "all you could eat."