

VINTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE



Vinton County is the least populated county in Ohio, and one of the last to be established. It is located southeast of Columbus, in an area that was difficult to reach before modern roads. The county still remains heavily forested, with Zaleski State Forest and Lake Hope State Park taking up much land in the county.

The Vinton County Courthouse, located in McArthur, dates to 1937. It was built with federal money, as a WPA project, and stands in the same location as the first courthouse. It is a square building with a facade of locally manufactured brick, and with a decidedly art deco style. Some of that style can be seen in the design of the doors with their separating pillars.

More of that style can be seen in the lobby (right), in features such as the light fixture and the decorative tile around the state seal in the floor.





The lobby is a little like a museum, with medallions picturing traditional Vinton County activities such as mining and forestry. A cabinet holds several items of memorabilia, including a shotgun which was used to kill a Vinton County sheriff.



Several doors in the courthouse are decorated.

Below is the bench in the common pleas courtroom. It is made in beautiful dark wood, with the scales of justice inlaid in lighter wood behind the bench. And it too displays the art deco style of the courthouse.





The Juvenile Court courtroom is furnished entirely by furniture made by Judge Philip H. Rose. “When I came to this court in 1985,” says Judge Rose, “there were tables made from \$3.00 plywood doors, and the room had one electric circuit. After some years I decided to give something back to the community by making proper furniture for the courtroom.” Judge Rose spent about 930 hours over 4 months, and a probation officer spent another 600 or so. The room was finished in February of 1997.

The furniture is made from local wood—mostly red and white oak and ash—and covered with a polymer coating. The courtroom is also properly wired, not just for electricity but for items like computers and security cameras.





Like many others, the Vinton County Courthouse is surrounded by symbolism. Above is the state seal, laid into the floor of the lobby.



At left is a statue of a Union soldier. It dates from 1914, and is made from Vermont granite. It used to stand in McArthur's main intersection, but was displaced by a stoplight and moved to its current location around 1941.

Below is a memorial to Vinton County veterans, standing by the northwest corner of the courthouse.



Acknowledgements: Thanks to Judge Rose for a tour of the courthouse and of the Juvenile Court courtroom. The picture of the lobby and the picture of the cabinet with memorabilia are from *County Courthouses of Ohio*, by Susan W. Thrane, with pictures by Tom and Bill Patterson (Indiana University Press, 2000; www.indiana.edu/~iupress).