

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

DRAFT

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building

other names/site number _____

name of related multiple property listing _____

2. Location

street & number 302 Court Street [] not for publication

city or town Little Valley [] vicinity

state New York code NY county Cattaraugus code 009 zip code 14755

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [X] locally. ([] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- [] entered in the National Register
[] see continuation sheet
- [] determined eligible for the National Register
[] see continuation sheet
- [] determined not eligible for the National Register
- [] removed from the National Register
- [] other (explain) _____

Signature of the Keeper

date of action

Name of Property

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location
- C** a birthplace or grave
- D** a cemetery
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by historic American Building Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other repository: _____

Areas of Significance:

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance:

1914-1962

Significant Dates:

N/A

Significant Person:

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect/Builder:

Freeburg & Fidler

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.41 acres

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 42.251472 | Longitude: -78.801142 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gregory Pinto, w/ contributions by Tom Stetz, Mark Dunkelman, and Julian Adams

organization Clinton Brown Company Architecture, pc date 1/17/2025

street & number 403 Main Street, Suite 506 telephone 716-852-2020

city or town Buffalo state NY zip code 14203

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20503

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**Cattaraugus County Memorial and
Historical Building**

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Name of Property
Cattaraugus County, New York
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Narrative Description of Property

The Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building is a Neoclassical style building located in the heart of the Village Little Valley, Cattaraugus County, New York. The original building was constructed in 1914 and stands out as an intact example of Neoclassical architecture that was typical of war memorials of the early twentieth century. The building consists of the original octagonal block with two wings and a red brick addition constructed in 1952. The addition connected the memorial to the former County Clerk's Office (demolished 1968) which previously stood adjacent to the original 1914 building. The interior, consisting of a full basement and first story, maintains significant historic elements including finishes, materials, and the original floorplan.

Location and Setting

The Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building is sited on a 0.41-acre parcel in a corner of Cattaraugus County Bicentennial Park located in the heart of the Village of Little Valley, the County Seat. The lot consists of the building located on the southwest corner of the parcel and is graciously set back from the street and public sidewalk by a sizeable lawn that has a historical marker in its honor from the Pomeroy Foundation. West of the building is an asphalt parking lot that is owned by the County. The adjacent parcel is a 1.4-acre parcel occupied by Cattaraugus County Bicentennial Park, featuring a small memorial plaque and mature deciduous trees amid sloping grassy lawns.

Exterior

The original 1914 portion of the Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building is a single story, red brick masonry building designed in the Neoclassical style and constructed with a stone foundation that has a continuous belt course at the basement level. The entire building has a multi-layered foam roof behind its parapet. Oriented diagonally to the southwest intersection of Court Street and 7th Street to face traffic traveling from downtown Little Valley, the building consists of a central octagonal block flanked by two identical, rectangular wings to the south and west.

The primary façade of the Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building is the most ornate in design and features the main entrance to the building. The entrance is reached via a stone staircase flanked by stone consoles and accented with a metal handrailing, flanked by short stone pillars with flat capitals. This entrance is through paired three-panel style-and-rail wood doors with eight-lite diamond patterned, square sashes and a transom that has three windows of the same design. These doors are set behind contemporary storm doors added to protect the original entrance from damage. All of this is set within a historic stone entryway that is defined by classical-style scrolls and an entablature with a carved inscription on its frieze which says: TO THE MEMORY OF ITS SOLDIERS AND SAILORS IN THE WAR OF THE REBELLION, THIS BUILDING IS ERECTED BY CATTARAUGUS COUNTY. The entablature is supported by two engaged Doric columns.

The principal elevations of the two flanking wings repeat the design of the center bay, consisting of fenestration on the basement and first-story level. The basement windows on each bay are two sets of paired wood windows

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set behind mesh security panels. On the first story, there are partially blind windows framed by a stone sill, keystone, and cornice. Their fenestration consists of paired transom windows with eight-light diamond patterned, square sashes separated from the brick façade by a stone transom bar. The blind portion of the window north of the entrance has a stone plaque set within it that has raised lettering spelling the building's name "Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building."

All other elevations of the 1914 portion of the Memorial Building have regular fenestration of ribbon windows organized in sets of three or four with stone sills and eight-lite diamond patterned, square sashes in the upper portions. A flat-roof, single-story projection at the rear, southeast corner of the building houses a staircase to the basement, via a five-panel wood door on its east elevation. Most of the original Classical Style elements designed by the architectural firm Freeburg & Fidler more than one hundred years ago remain and are in good condition.

Attached to the west end of the memorial building is a single-story addition of red brick that is slightly darker than that of the original building. It was designed and constructed as a hyphen to connect the Memorial and Historical Building and the County Clerk's Office building. Constructed over several years beginning in 1952, the addition is a rectangular block with a poured concrete foundation and flat roof with a combination of metal and stone coping. The south façade is three bays in width and features the secondary entrance to the addition's interior, a multi-pane wood door set within a full-height precast concrete entryway. A more recent wooden ramp oriented to the west leads from the sidewalk to the elevated entrance. The entranceway is surmounted by a sign with the County's logo in raised block lettering that is overlaid with a sign that spells 'CAMP' (Citizens Advocating Memorial Preservation). The west elevation, completed in 1970 to fill the opening left open by the demolition of the County Clerk's Office building, can be distinguished from earlier portions of the addition due to its slightly darker shade of brick and metal coping at the roofline. This elevation is also accented by the typical fenestration pattern of three-over-four aluminum windows with stone sills. Additional entrances to the basement and the first story are present on the south elevation.

Interior Overview

The interior of the Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building is approximately 6,300 square feet in size and, as its exterior, retains a high degree of its original design components. The original portion of the building maintains its original configuration of rooms, consisting of a central room with two wings to the south and west, all of which are fully open spaces. Attached to the east is the 1952 addition, which most recently functioned as the offices for the County Board of Elections. A partially finished basement has the same configuration as the rooms above it. Overall, the interior retains a high degree of integrity in its materials, design, and finishes throughout.

Basement

The basement is a partially finished space that reflects the layout of the floor above it. Main features of this space are concrete floors and a combination of brick and concrete block walls throughout. The finished portion

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of the basement, beneath the 1954 addition, has concrete flooring and a dropped ceiling with fluorescent lighting. To the south, an L-shaped hallway allows access to a small utility room, two washrooms, and a metal door that connects the addition with the 1914 Memorial Building.

First Floor

The primary entrance to the building leads into the center hall, an octagonal-shaped room that is finished with a multi-colored decorative mosaic tile flooring design with a pattern of a center star medallion with a field star motif. The baseboard is dark slate. The walls and ceiling of this room are finished with plaster, most of which is intact. Where some portions have deteriorated, the structural terracotta wall tile is visible. Historic design elements, including slate baseboards, wood trim, doors, and display casework are fully intact and in good condition.

Branching from the hall to the south and west are two wings that are identical in plan. They are both square rooms that carry over the finishes of the center hall, with original openings for windows on each exterior-facing wall.

Accessible from two entry vestibules on the north and south, the 1952 addition consists of an open plan, rectangular room with carpet flooring, painted plaster walls, and an acoustic tile ceiling that has suspended fluorescent lighting. A staircase in the center of the room with wrought iron surrounds gives access to the basement, which reflects the layout of the first story.

Integrity Summary

Despite sitting vacant for a decade, the overall historic integrity of the Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building is good. Most of the important original historic elements of the exterior, including fenestration, masonry, and trim are intact and have undergone minimal alteration since the period of significance. It is also worth noting that the character-defining glass dome that once adorned the building has been absent for 67 years, almost twice the length of time that it was extant. It was removed for the purpose of protecting artifacts and records in the building that were damaged by water infiltration and excessive sunlight.

In every respect, the interior of the Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building is also fully intact. Both the 1914 building and its 1952 addition retain significant historic elements and their full floorplans. Interior finishes and materials are intact, except for a portion of plasterwork that has been damaged from water infiltration and a lack of maintenance.

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Statement of Significance

The Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building located at 302 Court Street in Little Valley is significant under National Register criterion A in the area of Social History. Constructed in 1914, the building's initial purpose was to function as a Civil War Memorial for veterans throughout Cattaraugus County as well as a repository for historical artifacts related to the war. For almost fifty years the building played an important central role for the local community, hosting public events and tours and housing the Little Valley's first public library. The building had a significant role in the early development of Little Valley and stands out for its prolonged care and dedication over time by its government and citizens as the building passed through different phases of use and occupancy. The building is the last remaining civic building that composed the original network of county buildings known as Courthouse Square, established ca. 1869.

The building fulfills Criteria Consideration F/Commemorative Property as a rare example of a building constructed to commemorate veterans of the Civil War. Built by and for the residents of Cattaraugus County, the building's original purpose was as a Civil War Memorial and a repository for the county's historical records. Its construction was facilitated by the Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Society, a volunteer organization composed of residents of Cattaraugus County that formed amidst previously established local posts of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). These GAR groups were responsible for creating numerous memorial structures throughout Cattaraugus County but failed to create a commemorative building to the scale of the building at 302 Court Street. As public sentiment towards memorialization evolved in the wake of World War I and World War II, the building served as a reminder of the sacrifices of local veterans, of the Civil War, and eventually of those who served in World War I.

The period of significance begins with the construction of the building in 1914 and ends in 1962, when the Little Valley Library relocates elsewhere in the Village and the memorial building takes on a new role as a location for local government offices.

Historic Context

Prior to the arrival of European settlers, the Village of Little Valley was occupied by the Seneca Nation of the Iroquois Confederacy, who referred to the area as "Little Forest." White colonists first arrived in the area in 1807 with plans to establish a community along the local creek, but these were interrupted by the onset of the War of 1812. Settlement began again in earnest in 1815 once a road was laid out that connected the Little Valley with the nearby Village of Franklinville. Once established, a small population formed and entrepreneurs built mills and created farms, forming an economy centered around logging and dairy activities. Within three years the Town of Little Valley was formed, covering a large swath of the county that included the present towns of Leon, Conewango, Randolph, Coldspring, Napoli, New Albion, Mansfield, Salamanca and Red House.¹

¹ "History," *Village of Little Valley, NY* (blog), accessed June 28, 2023, <https://www.villageoflittlevalley.org/history.html#:~:text=After%20much%20lobbying%2C%20the%20Erie,Valley%2C%20made%20official%20in%201868.>

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As settlement in the region continued these municipalities established themselves independently and broke away from the town, producing a period of stagnation in Little Valley that lasted throughout the remainder of the early nineteenth century. Between 1830 and 1850 only one general store was built on the outskirts of the village. It served a population of fewer than 1,000 residents, and settlement in the village was confined to approximately 1/40th of the entirety of the town.² The development of Little Valley took off once it was established as a stop along the newly formed Erie Railroad in 1851. Rail access attracted a new wave of settlers who formed local businesses and established houses for themselves on residential lots created by developers.³

Amidst this growth, the local government sought to further establish the legitimacy of the village by becoming the destination for the county's new governmental buildings. In 1856 the Town Council voted to spend \$10,000 to secure the right to build county offices in Little Valley, with an additional \$35,000 guaranteed to the Supervisors should they "decide to locate at that point."⁴ The county courthouse and jail were built at 303 Court Street in 1867 with funds given from both Little Valley and the nearby town of Napoli. The lot was donated by early resident, John Manley, a member of the Cattaraugus County Agricultural Society. Once opened in the subsequent year, the plan to transfer the title of County Seat from the Village of Ellicottville to Little Valley was made official. With this new authority, the square parcel across the street was given the apt title of Courthouse Square, first apparent on the 1869 County Atlas (see Figure 3). Shortly after the establishment of county offices, Little Valley became an incorporated village in 1876. The combination of a strong municipal government and a high number of commercial businesses and hotels built in relation to the railroad allowed the Village to become "materially improved and beautified" in the years following its incorporation.⁵

The site of the Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building, then known as Courthouse Square, remained an undeveloped parcel until the start of the twentieth century. The history of the site began ca. 1905 after the Village Board approved the construction of a County Clerk's office in an effort to provide a proper, central location for additional county services. Conveniently located across the street from the County courthouse and jail, it was a two-story brick building designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, complete with a full-height projecting square tower and a prominent round-arched entrance on its façade. Once completed, it reinforced Little Valley's role as a hub of municipal government.

History of the Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building

In August of 1908, at the County's Centennial celebration held in Salamanca, a group of citizens formed with an interest in establishing a county historical society and repository for local heritage. Initially established as the Cattaraugus County Historical Society, the group's primary mission was to create a building "to be used for

² John Barber and Henry Howe, *Historical Collections of the State of New York*, 1842, 85.

³ Rick Miller, "A Look at Little Valley: Spawned by the Railroad, Village Would Aspire to Become County Seat," *Olean Times Herald*, July 21, 2009.

⁴ Miller.

⁵ Franklin Ellis and Eugene Arns Nash, *History of Cattaraugus County, New York, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Some of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers* (Philadelphia: L.H. Everts, 1879), 270.

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historical relics and as a memorial to our soldiers and sailors who enlisted in the Civil War for this country.”⁶ Members of the group consisted of various citizens who had been involved in the war. Among its members were Colonel Eugene A. Nash, Marc D. Johnson, Alfred Spring, I. R. Leonard, Frederick W. Kruse, C. D. Davies, and James S. Whipple. A year later, the group rebranded to the Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Society and began plans to gather funds to support the proposed building.⁷

To obtain support for their plans, the group turned to fellow veterans of the 154th New York regiment that were scattered throughout the county in the few remaining GAR stations. A group of sixty members endorsed the plans for building at the group’s 1909 reunion.⁸ Additional funding for the building came from the county and private donations, reaching a sum of \$13,000 towards this endeavor. To design the building, the society commissioned Freeburg & Fidler, a prominent architecture firm from the nearby City of Jamestown. The original drawings from the firm identify the building as the *GAR Memorial Building*, but it was renamed as the Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Center before construction was finished. The committee had also planned to include their names on engraved plates on the building’s exterior but reversed their decision after receiving backlash from veterans throughout the county.⁹ The cornerstone was laid on September 12, 1911 before a crowd of veterans and citizens.

The building opened in 1914 with a dedication ceremony hosted by the Cattaraugus County historical society. Celebrated as a socially significant event for the veterans, the ceremony was attended by 217 veterans from local GAR posts, fifty-seven members of the fraternal organization Sons of Veterans, and their families. The importance of this building was further demonstrated by the speech made by First Sergeant Henry F. Whipple of the 154th, who said “One of the prime objects in erecting this edifice is to prove our appreciation of the importance of the victories won by our forefathers, and to publicly show our love and veneration for that generation of men who sacrificed all, even their lives, to preserve that which was won by their fathers at Bunker Hill, Valley Forge, and Yorktown.”¹⁰ In its early years the historical society maintained the building as a combination of memorial and museum that housed various artifacts donated by local veterans. Despite the success the historical society put into funding and building the memorial, the group “drifted into a condition of inertia” as WWI began.¹¹ As a result, the memorial building was forgotten for a long time and no public events associated with the memorial building appear to have been publicized. By the early 1920s the group fully disbanded and ownership of the building was transferred to Cattaraugus County. In an effort to maintain the building for use by citizens and veterans the local government facilitated a number of to ensure the building’s longevity.

⁶ Mark Dunkelman, “A Brief History of the Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building,” *Citizens Advocating Memorial Preservation* (blog), accessed June 15, 2023, <https://cattcomemorial.org/memorial-history/>.

⁷ Dunkelman.

⁸ Mark Dunkelman, *Brothers One and All: Esprit de Corps in a Civil War Regiment* (LSU Press, 2006), 258.

⁹ “Names Chiseled Off,” *Olean Times Herald*, November 16, 1912.

¹⁰ Dunkelman, “A Brief History of the Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building.”

¹¹ “Newly Appointed City Historian Values Position,” *Olean Times Herald*, August 19, 1919.

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Shortly after obtaining control, the county established a memorial building committee which oversaw its daily operations and maintenance. One of the most impactful changes they facilitated came in 1923 with the creation of Little Valley's first public library. Following a visit by a representative from the State Department of Education, plans for establishing a public library in the memorial building's basement were approved. The library was initially run by a group of volunteers with the purpose was to provide residents of Little Valley access to a small collection of books and periodicals that residents would otherwise have to travel to obtain access to.¹² This was later expanded by passage of a bill from the New York State Legislature in 1931, which gave the county the ability to contract with larger public libraries in the area. Once enacted, this gave the Little Valley branch access to a larger collection of books and the services of trained librarians to better handle day-to-day operations.¹³

During this period the building also underwent a needed revival and underwent necessary renovations to keep it operational. The years 1926 and 1928 marked two separate instances where public funds were allocated to repairing the building's roof, which showed early signs of leakage.¹⁴ This marked the earliest instance of water resistance issues that the building would endure throughout the remainder of its use. Moisture from the building's glass dome penetrated the basement and posed an issue for artifacts and records that were stored. The glass dome also allowed excessive sunlight that threatened the museum's more sensitive exhibits.¹⁵ With its minor repairs, the memorial continued to attract residents from across Western New York to view artifacts their own personal memorabilia to the museum's collection. For instance, Mrs. Anna Markham Bailey of Gowanda donated a cabinet with the uniforms, swords, medals, and other naval equipment of her late husband who served in the Civil War.¹⁶

Displays in the museum remained relatively unchanged until 1957, when County Historian Julia Pierce incorporated a large collection of Native American artifacts that were donated by Eber Russell, an avid collector of Native American artifacts who single-handedly collected thousands of items that were gathered both locally and as far as California and the Pacific Northwest.¹⁷ With the addition of this collection, described as "the single largest collection in New York State"¹⁸, the museum became one of the most important places for cultural heritage in the county. Pierce also spearheaded the argument to prevent the razing of the building that the County contemplated in the 1960s. In Pierce's words put into a Letter to the Editor:

Cattaraugus County sent over four thousand men to Civil War, several hundred of which were killed trying to save the Union. Are the members of the Board of Supervisors trying to forget what they did? The Memorial Building contains many articles relating to the Civil War... The Cattaraugus County Museum is outstanding in many ways, and it should be kept intact.¹⁹

¹² "May Incorporate Library Association at Little Valley," *Olean Times Herald*, May 8, 1923.

¹³ "See Benefit In Proposed Library Law," *Olean Times Herald*, March 17, 1931.

¹⁴ "Proceedings of County Legislature" (Cattaraugus County Board of Supervisors, 1926, 1928).

¹⁵ Sharon Fellows, "Can County Afford to Preserve the Memorial Building?," *Olean Times Herald*, December 24, 2015.

¹⁶ "Proceedings of County Legislature" (Cattaraugus County Board of Supervisors, 1923).

¹⁷ "Cattaraugus County Museum Displays Eber Russell Collection," *Springville Journal*, November 19, 2020.

¹⁸ "Indian Relic Collection Is Acquired by County," *Salamanca Republican-Press*, September 18, 1957.

¹⁹ Julia Pierce, "Historian Raps Razing of Civil War Building," *Salamanca Republican-Press*, October 10, 1961.

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Throughout the remainder of its operation, community groups and organizations continued to use the building's library and museum space as a location for events and meetings related to local history. A 1946 appraisal of the library by the State Education Department lists a number of social and cultural agencies in Little Valley that used the building, including church group activities, lodges, firemen, a home bureau, a farmer's grange association, and book clubs.²⁰ The museum also hosted occasional tours and speaking events to raise awareness and education about the Civil War to citizens. The local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution repeatedly toured and visited the museum, attending speaking events and observing the displays of the museum.²¹ The museum also was open to students of Cattaraugus County for field trips. As described by Tom Stetz remembering his visit, "I never forgot that trip. I always thought the memorial would be open to view the Civil War-related items and never thought it had a chance of being demolished."²²

Despite its continued use, the building's early structural issues remained an ongoing issue for the museum and the library. The ongoing problems caused by light damage and water infiltration caused the museum to temporarily close to the public so the building's prominent centered domed roof and pediment could be removed in 1956. Additional hardship for the building came in the form of larger socioeconomic changes that Little Valley experienced in the post WWII era. Development in Cattaraugus County after the war favored larger cities such as Salamanca over the rural communities such as Little valley. In addition to becoming the location for new businesses and residential neighborhoods, Salamanca also was the center for more public services to accommodate growing populations. In the 1960s the city had established its own library branch that provided an alternative for residents.²³ It was likely the combination of these factors which resulted in the library vacating its space in 1962 for its current location in Little Valley of 110 Rock Street. The museum and memorial aspects of the building, however, remained intact.

The Evolution of American War Memorials

Over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the cultural attitude of memorialization in America went through several changes centered around the ways that war and veterans were remembered. During and after the Civil War, both the northern states and the former confederacy prioritized erecting monuments to honor the soldiers who sacrificed their lives for their respective causes. In addition to major cities, smaller municipalities across the country got swept up in the war and put effort in honoring the local soldiers who fought and died for the cause. In Cattaraugus County, former officers joined a number of short-lived organizations aimed at commemorating the war and supporting the veterans who contributed to the cause. This consisted of the Cattaraugus Soldier's Union, a county branch of the United Service Society, and the GAR which, at its peak, had more than twenty posts throughout Cattaraugus County that oversaw veteran affairs and

²⁰ "Appraisal of Service for the Memorial Library at Little Valley" (The State Education Department, Bureau of Library Division, Public and Association Libraries Section, September 19, 1946).

²¹ "Indian Relic Collection Is Acquired by County."

²² Mark Dunkelman, "CAMP Guards the Memorial," *Western New York Heritage*, Fall 2023.

²³ "Inspection Report for the Memorial Library at Little Valley" (The State Education Department, Bureau of Library Division, Public and Association Libraries Section, July 19, 1966).

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erected small-scale monuments in parks and cemeteries.²⁴ No such organization appears to have existed for Little Valley.

The early monuments commissioned by these GAR posts fit into the larger national method of commemoration. Plaques and inscriptions were placed in local cemeteries often identified fallen soldiers by name. Similarly, individual statues of soldiers were built that portrayed them in heroic poses, marching in formation, carrying flags, or engaging in battle. All of these helped to reinforce the patriotic symbolism of the soldier as the personification of American ideals.²⁵ Over time this phenomenon continued to take hold and the idea of the Civil War soldier grew to become synonymous with core patriotic ideals of hard work and discipline, an image which was previously personified by the American farmer.²⁶ It was relatively uncommon for these community groups to commission large buildings for commemorative purposes. The Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building stands out as a later exception to this pattern within the context of small-scale, citizen initiated war memorials built across New York and the country built between the 1880s and the 1910s. Municipalities and volunteer commemorative organizations sought to find ways to honor their local veterans in a way that connected them with broader ideals of militarization and sacrifice, at a time when veterans were fewer and fewer and their descendants wished to recognize their service.

Research into other monuments and memorials for the Civil War built across New York State at this time support this statement. The New York State Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War lists only seven monuments across the state that were established by the Grand Army of the Republic in the years after the war. Of this list, which includes statues in the Albany Rural Cemetery, Courthouse Square in Binghamton, and a monument of General Sherman in Manhattan, only the General Grant National Memorial is listed as another example of a building that commemorates the Civil War.²⁷ Other examples of structural monuments in Upstate New York specifically include a monument to the 77th Infantry in Saratoga Springs and a commemorative obelisk in the center of Glens Falls.²⁸

This method of memorialization continued uninterrupted until the United States became engaged in World War I. Seeing the devastating impacts of war at a large scale across Europe changed the public's mindset on how memorials should be built and what they should depict. The few Civil War memorials built in the early decades of the twentieth century were typically more stoic and focused on honoring important political and military figures in order to reinforce ideals of patriotism and shape the vision of the American military going forward. The most famous example to come out of this era was the Lincoln Memorial, which embodied a variety of political and military narratives that strived to bring the nation together without drawing focus on death and the sacrifices made by friends and family.²⁹

²⁴ Dunkelman, *Brothers One and All: Esprit de Corps in a Civil War Regiment*, 252.

²⁵ Thomas Brown, *Civil War Monuments and the Militarization of America*, 2019, 66.

²⁶ Brown, 66.

²⁷ "GAR Monuments Around New York State," *Department of New York Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War* (blog), n.d., <https://nysuvcw.org/projects/monuments>.

²⁸ Evan Portman, "Traveling Through Civil War New York," *Emerging Civil War* (blog), August 14, 2024, <https://emergingcivilwar.com/2024/08/14/traveling-through-civil-war-new-york/>.

²⁹ Brown, *Civil War Monuments and the Militarization of America*, 235.

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Similarly, memorials built to honor World War I veterans were designed to remember the war and its soldiers in a way that was more sensitive to the trauma the war produced for civilians. This era also saw many preexisting memorials repurposed to also include mention of the soldiers who enlisted in the Great War. In smaller communities such as Little Valley, this interpretation took the form of simple plaques with a list of names of those who served. In 1922 County Historian Richmond C. Hill presented a plan to the County Legislature to establish a monument to World War I soldiers in Allegany State Park and to add a “memorial tablet” to the building at the county seat at the cost of \$500.³⁰

By the time World War II began, skepticism towards traditional American war memorials gradually increased, with critics pointing towards the failures of older soldier monuments in their ability to evoke meaning and still being able to retain their significance over time. As a result, the majority of those memorials that were built in the mid-to-late twentieth century were designed to be utilitarian in nature, commonly referred to as “useful memorials.” In addition to reinforcing American militarism and honoring veterans, these memorials served a beneficial public service that gave them longevity. Typically, these took the form of municipal infrastructure, such as bridges and roads, as well as public spaces including community centers, parks, hospitals, forests, stadiums, and other recreational facilities.³¹ This expanded approach to memorization directly contributed to the country’s increasing militarization which took hold throughout the remainder of the twentieth century.

Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building After the Period of Significance

After the library vacated its space in the memorial building the previously strong social impact declined and records of activities hosted in the building appear infrequently. As a result, the building appears to have taken on a more civic function that continued for the remainder of its use. The year 1967 was marked with the opening of the Cattaraugus County Center at 303 Court Street at the site of the former county jail and courthouse. Once it opened, the remaining county offices were phased out of use and subsequently demolished, including the County Clerk’s office. In April of 1968, the County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution to accept bids for the “razing of the former jail, Harris House and the former County Clerk’s Office with the exception of the Motor Vehicle Building”.³² The Motor Vehicle Building was the hyphen connecting the memorial building and the County Clerk’s office. Once the razing was implemented, memorial building addition’s west elevation, the wall which abutted the County Clerk’s Office, was temporarily exposed to the elements. It was filled with a brick-faced wall two years later. The work was completed the next year by the Haley Construction Company, which left the west wall of the 1952 addition temporarily exposed to the elements.³³ It was later replaced by a brick wall in 1970, along with a new flat roof, which gave the building its current exterior appearance.

³⁰ “Proceedings of County Legislature” (Cattaraugus County Board of Supervisors, 1922), 49.

³¹ Brown, *Civil War Monuments and the Militarization of America*, 259.

³² “Authorization to Accept Bid for Razing Former Jail, Harris House, and the Former County Clerk’s Office Building with the Exception of the Motor Vehicle Building,” April 10, 1968.

³³ “Haley Bid Low On County Job,” *Salamanca Republican-Press*, August 30, 1969.

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Within a few months, Court House Square was updated once again to better serve this new role. The county sought to develop the land around the memorial into a public park, involving three phases of development. Included in the proposed design was the demolition of the County Clerk building and blacktopping the surrounding area with a new parking lot, complete with curbs, drains, a sidewalk, and stairway at the east side of the property.³⁴ During the 1970s, the museum maintained its original grandeur and role as a location for Civil War memorabilia. A firsthand account of the time recalls the following details about the building.

The memorial was a stately place, with a mosaic tile floor and high ceilings. Display cases filled with artifacts occupied the octagonal main room, with racks of muskets on the walls. To the right was a room devoted to Native American life, with a large collection of relics, charming folk-art paintings and immense wooden statues of two mount builders. The archives library was to the left, through glass-paned door, where people gathered to work. In the basement was stored a vast array of stuff for which there was no room upstairs.

The building abounded with Civil War history. Display cases were filled with uniforms, muskets, flags, drums, canteens and bayonets. In the archives were soldiers' records, and photographs. When I first stepped into it a half-century ago, the Cattaraugus County Historical Museum embodied the sentiment declared in the dedicatory plaque above its front doors: "To the memory of its soldiers and sailors in the War of the Rebellion, this building is erected by Cattaraugus County."³⁵

After the Clerk's Office Building was demolished in 1968, the use of the 1952 addition transitioned to functioning as the Cattaraugus County Board of Elections offices from 1978 until 2014. Then the building became vacant and suffered from a lack of maintenance. This marked the end of the building serving a vital municipal role for Cattaraugus County for three generations.

Upon learning that the vacant building did not seem to have any more importance, the county initiated obtaining bids to demolish the Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building. In reaction, a group of concerned citizens formed with the intention of preserving the building and bringing awareness to its important historical legacy. Citizens Advocating Memorial Preservation (CAMP) formed a 501c3 charitable organization and acquired the building in 2017. They have since been maintaining the building with the intention of restoring it to its original design and civic use, both as a memorial as it was intended, and as an important community resource.

Summary

The Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building is significant as a rare remaining example of a Civil War Memorial that took on an important social role for residents of Cattaraugus County and New York's Southern Tier region. The building was built to honor the legacy of the roughly 3,500 soldiers throughout the Cattaraugus County region who served in over 180 units for the Union armed forces from New York, which

³⁴ "Planning Board Proposed County Museum Expansion," *Salamanca Republican-Press*, July 20, 1968.

³⁵ Dunkelmann, "CAMP Guards the Memorial."

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contributed more personnel than any other state.³⁶ While several other monuments to the Civil War exist throughout the region, none appear to have been built to the size and scale of the building in Little Valley. For almost fifty years the Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building served residents of Cattaraugus County as a repository for local historical artifacts, a public library, and as a memorial to honor the lives of citizens who enlisted and served in the Civil War. Despite the condition issues the building has experienced over the decades, the Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building has remained an important local landmark in Little Valley that has warranted several phases of governmental support and grassroots activism to preserve the building and carry forward the civic service for which it was built.

³⁶ familysearch.org "New York in the Civil War", July 14, 2023.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed maps with scale.

Boundary Justification

The boundary reflects the current legal parcel associated with the property, which is the same as the historic boundary during the period of significance.

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Additional Information



Figure 1: Undated photograph showing the original County Clerk's Office, which stood adjacent and apart from the freestanding Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building.

Source: Cattaraugus County Historical Museum

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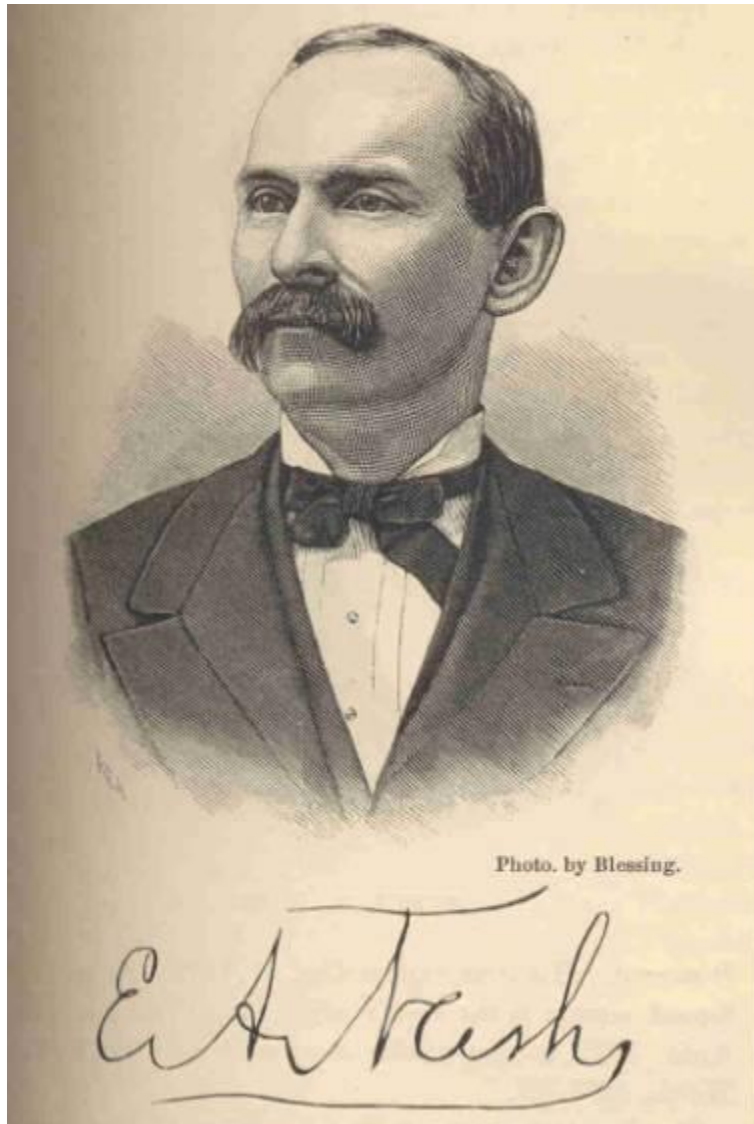


Figure 2: Sketch of Lieutenant-Col. Eugene Arus Nash, Commander of the 23rd Regiment and Co-Founder of the Cattaraugus County Historical Society

Source: *History of Cattaraugus History of Cattaraugus County, New York, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Some of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers*

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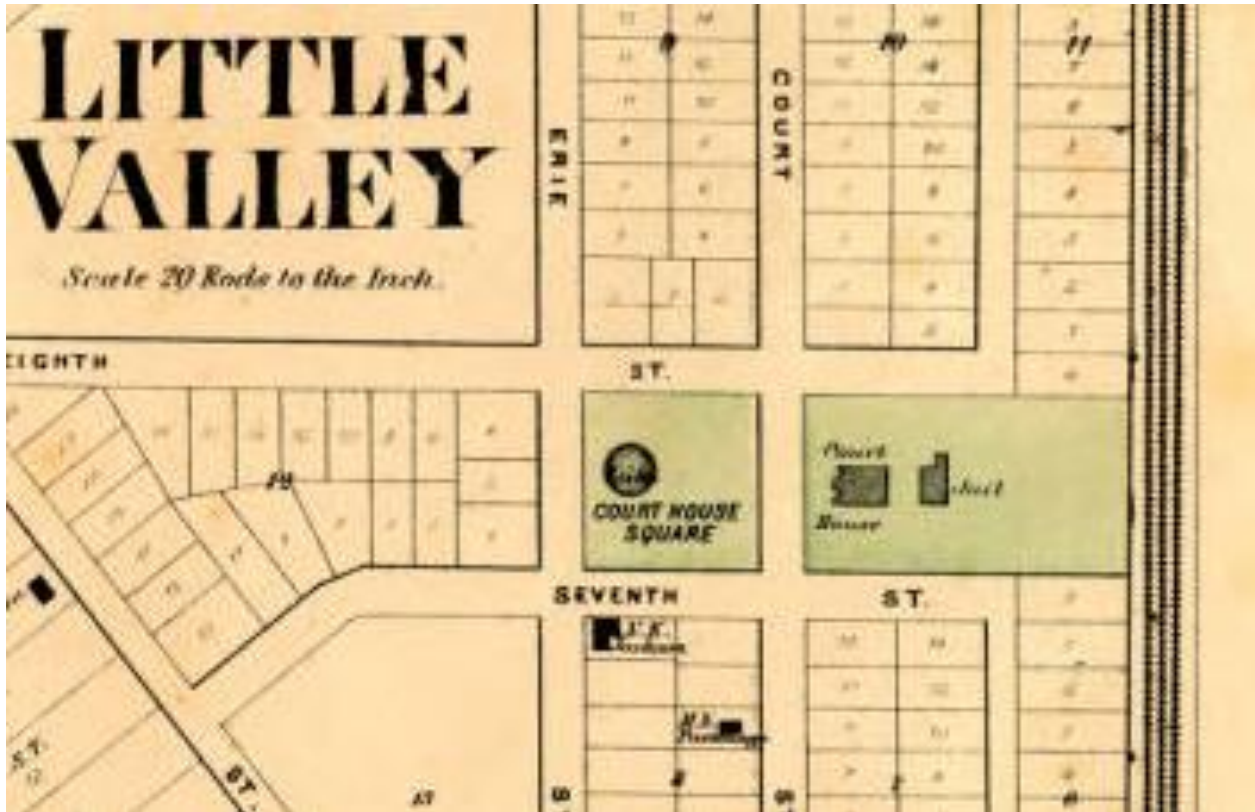


Figure 3: Section of the 1869 D.G Beers & Co County Atlas showing initial development of the site. Note the presence of the Court House and jail across the street from Court House Square.
Source: New York Heritage Digital Collections

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Figure 4: Front Façade of the “GAR Memorial Building” as designed by architects Freeburg & Fidler (1914). Most of the elements defining Classical Style remain today.

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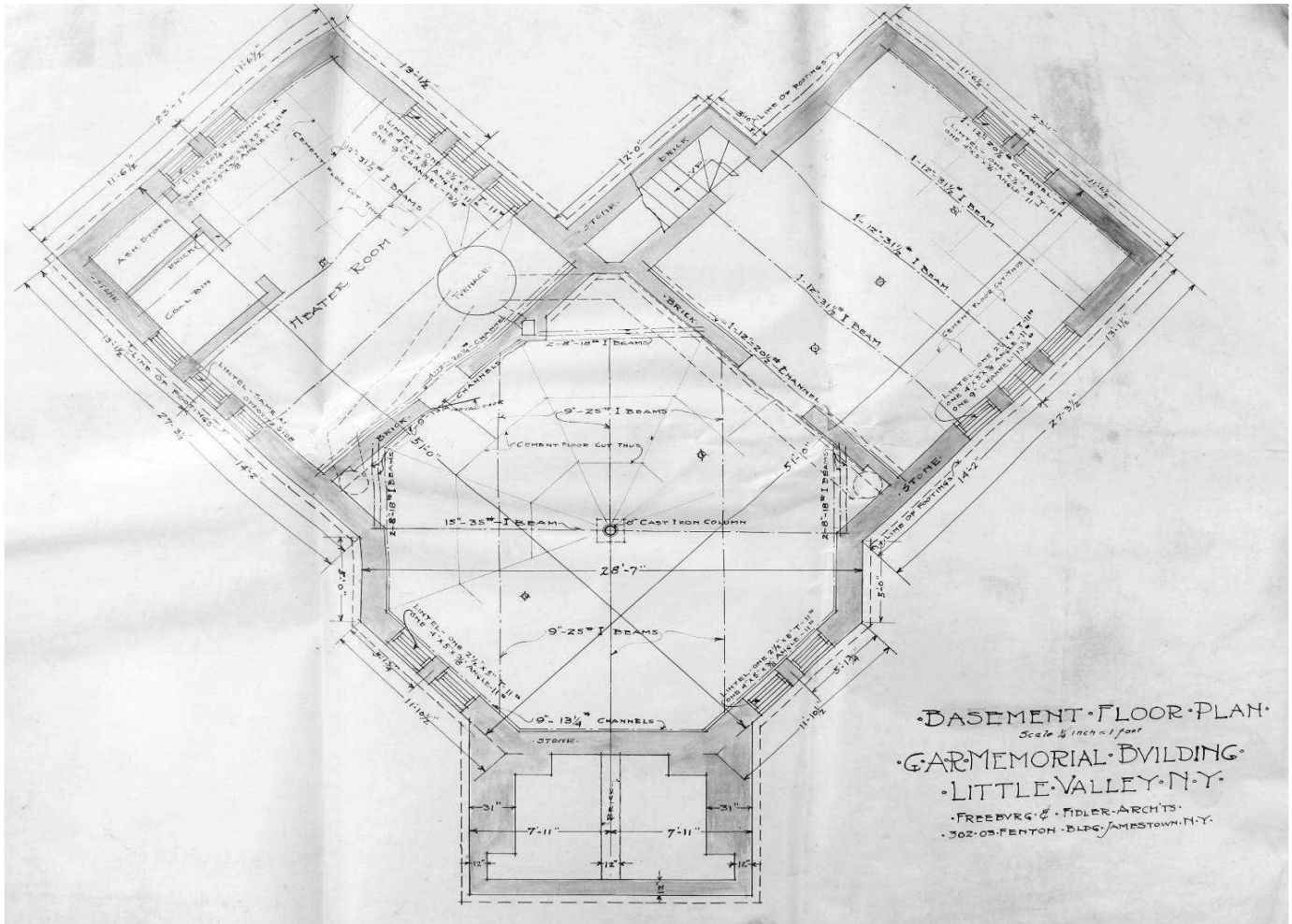


Figure 5: Basement Floor Plan of the “GAR Memorial Building” as designed by architects original building by Freeburg & Fidler (1914). The symmetrical plan defining the Classical Style remains today.

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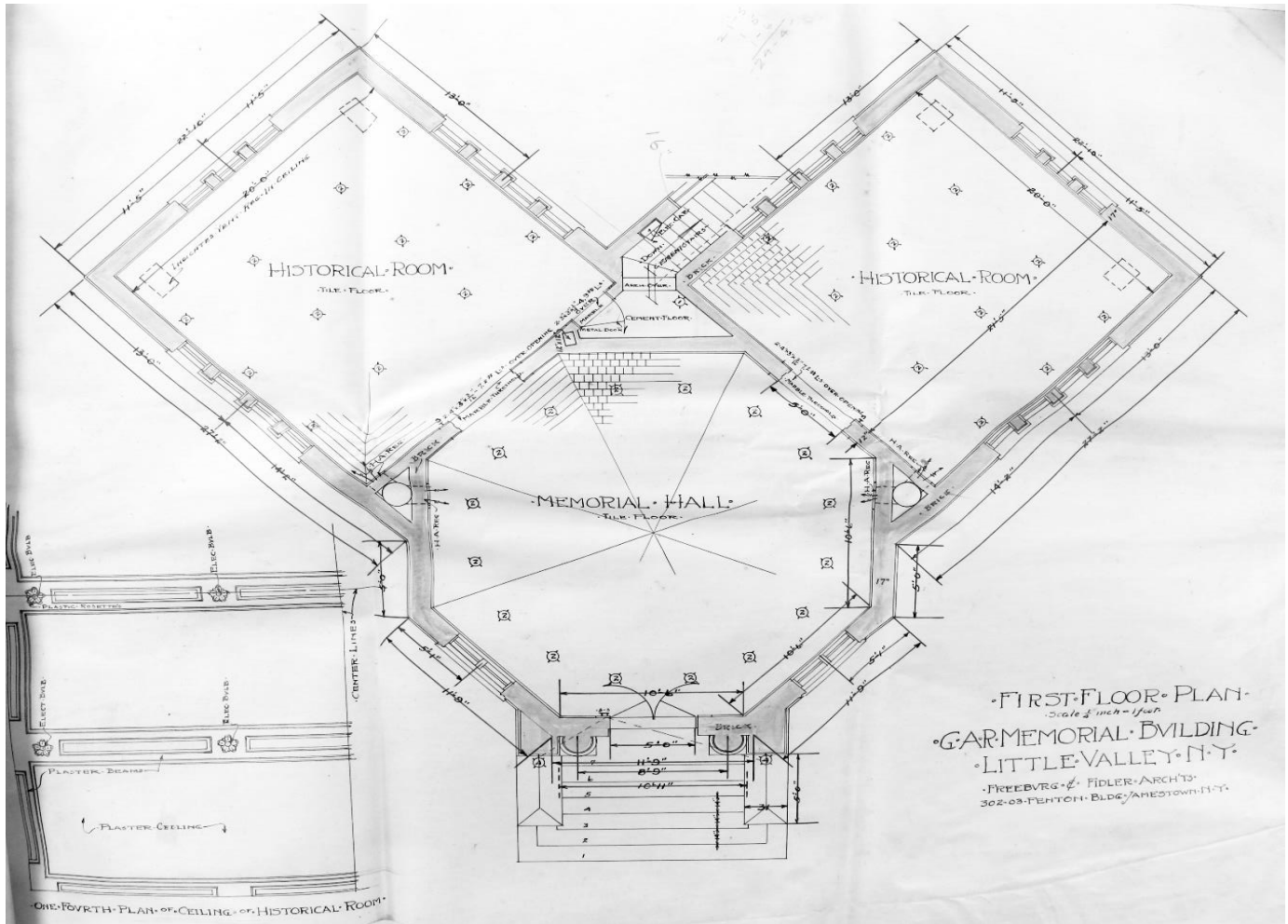


Figure 6: First Floor Plan by Freeburg & Fidler (1914)

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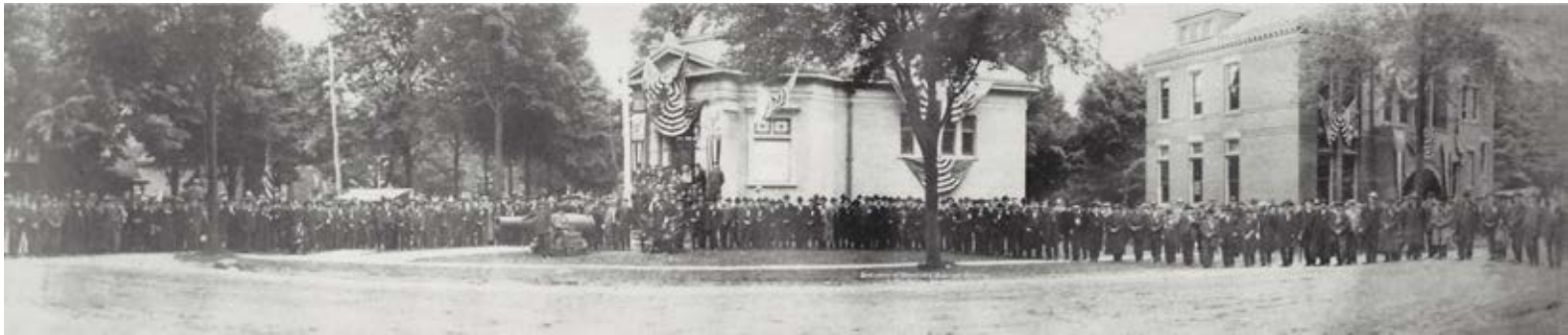


Figure 7: 1914 panoramic photograph showing the dedication ceremony of the Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building.
Source: Mark Dunkelman

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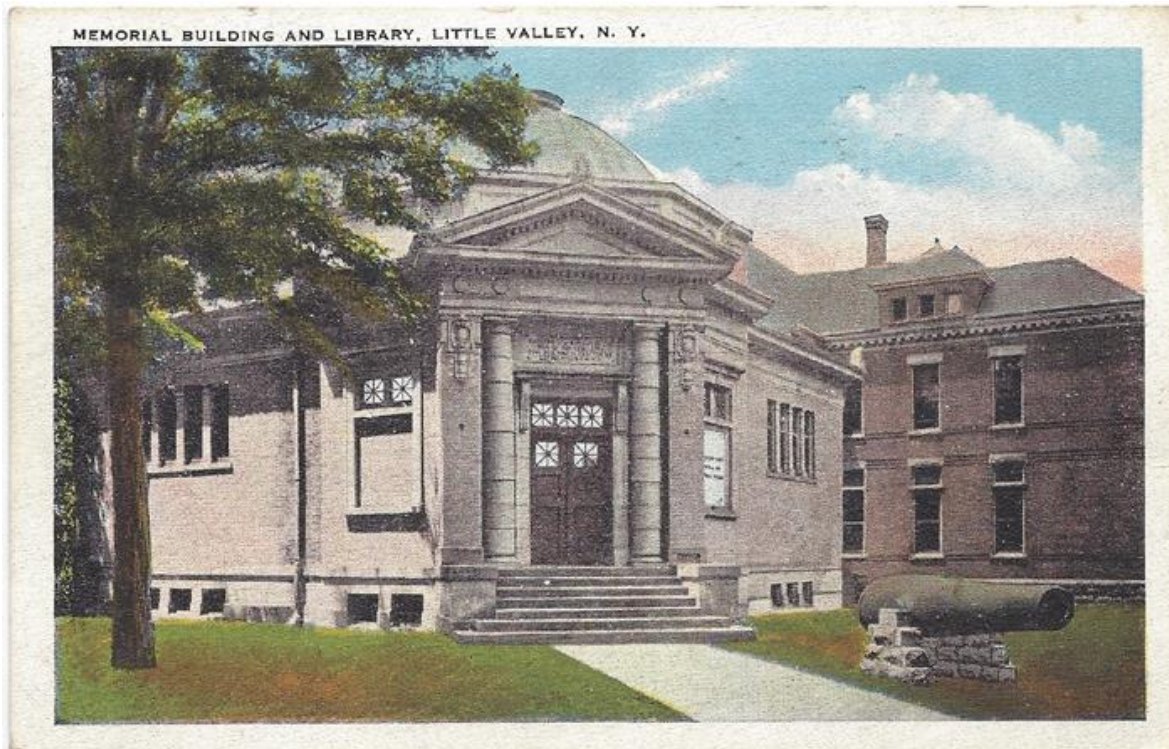


Figure 8: Historic postcard of the 1914 Memorial Building, with the adjacent and the County Clerk's Office behind it.

Source: CBCA

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Figure 9: Undated photograph of the Memorial Building. The County Clerk's Office is seen in the background, but not yet adjoined by the single story addition.
Source: Cattaraugus County Historical Museum

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Figure 10: Ca. 1914 photograph of the Memorial Building around the time of its dedication ceremony.
Source: Cattaraugus County Historical Museum

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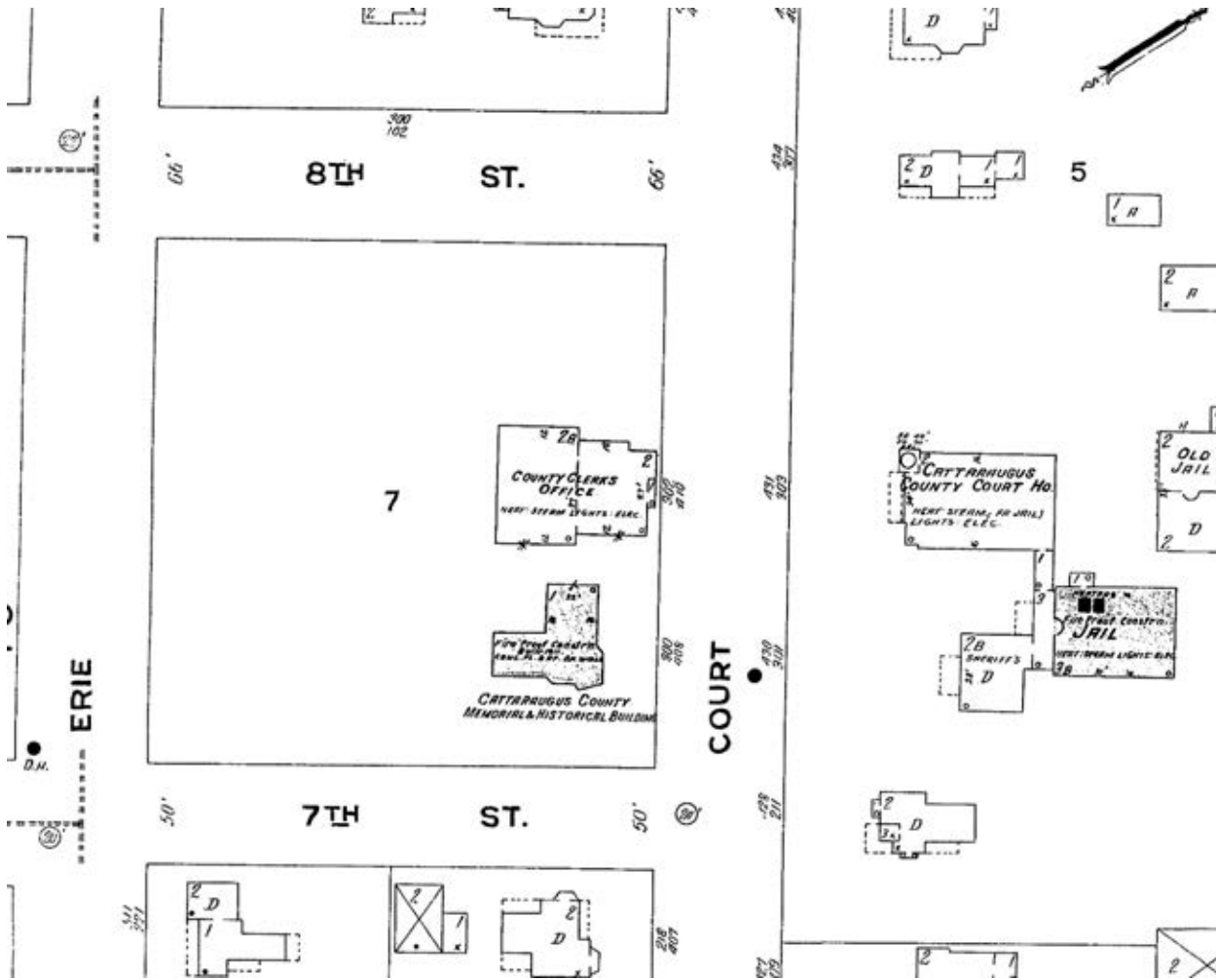


Figure 11: 1924 Sanborn Map of Little Valley. The freestanding Memorial Building and adjacent County Clerk's Office building are located across Court Street from the County Court House and Jail, making the area a hub of civic and government importance for Cattaraugus County.

Source: ProQuest Digital Sanborns

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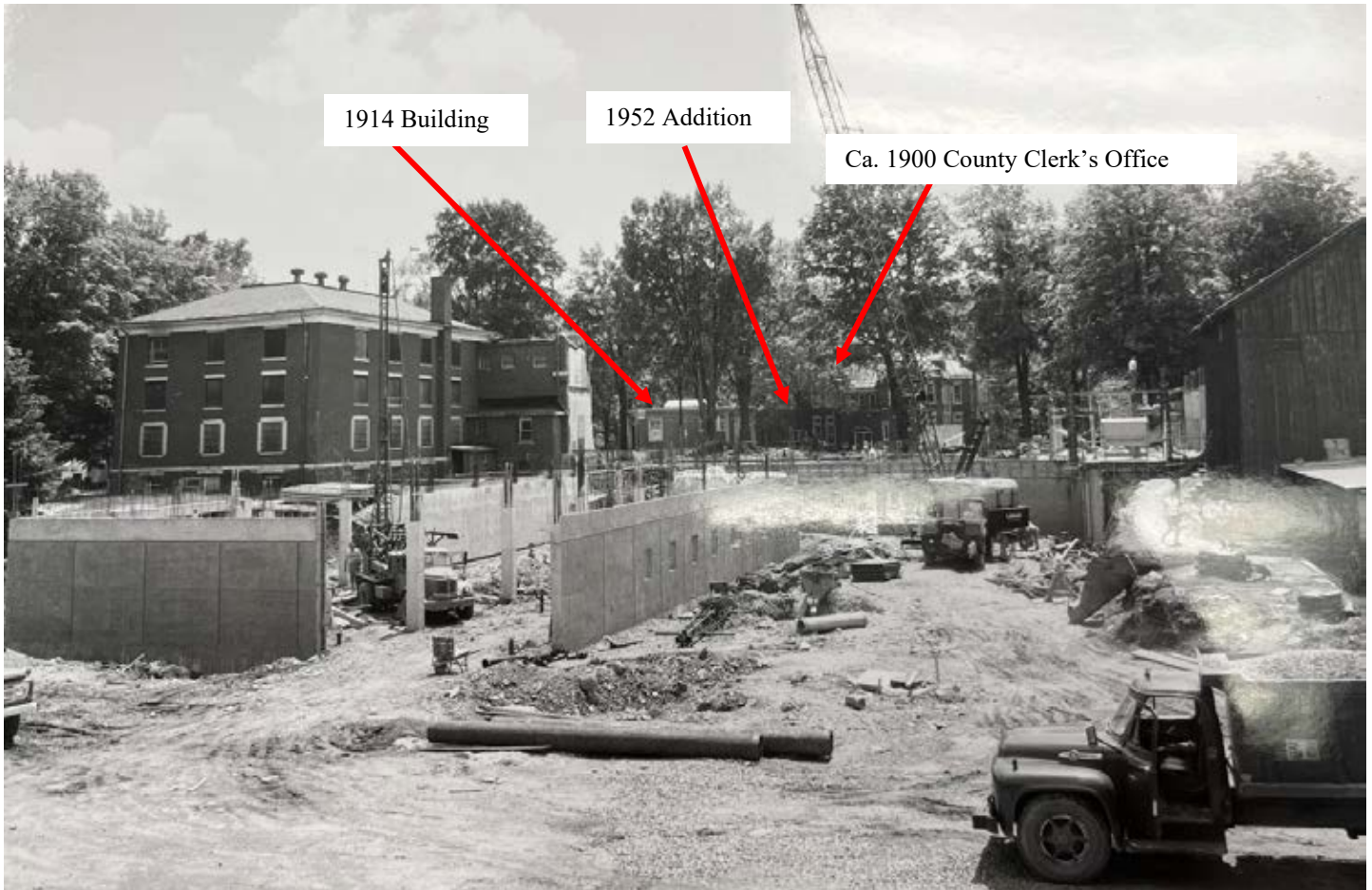


Figure 12: 1966 photograph showing the initial construction of the Cattaraugus County Center building, located at 303 Court Street. In the foreground, the 1914 Memorial Building, 1952 addition, and the County Clerk's Office can be seen connected.

Source: Cattaraugus County Museum and Research Center

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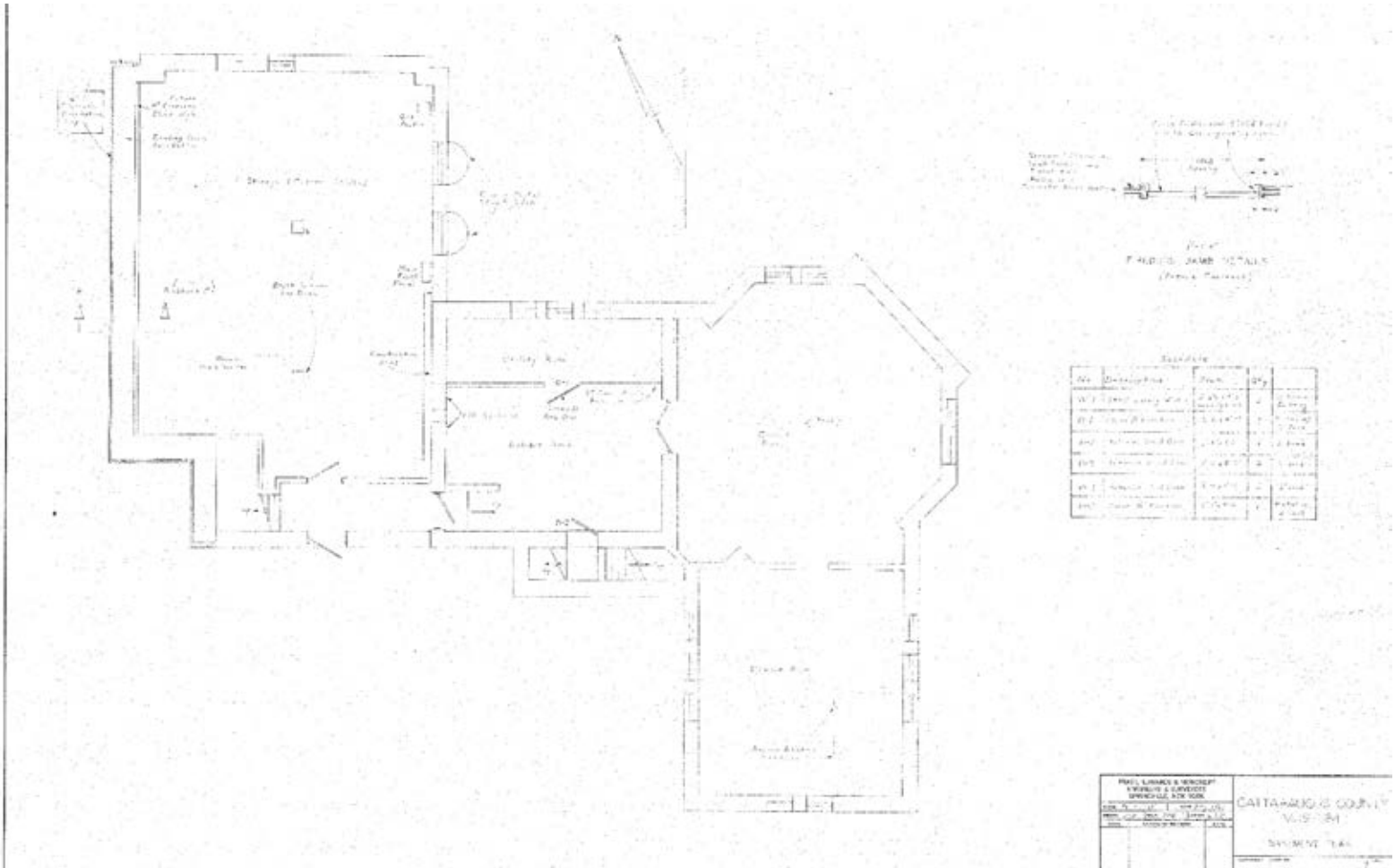


Figure 13: Basement plans for the expanded Memorial Building and 1952 addition by the firm of Pratt, Edwards & Moncreiff (1969). The basement of the 1952 addition was used as storage.

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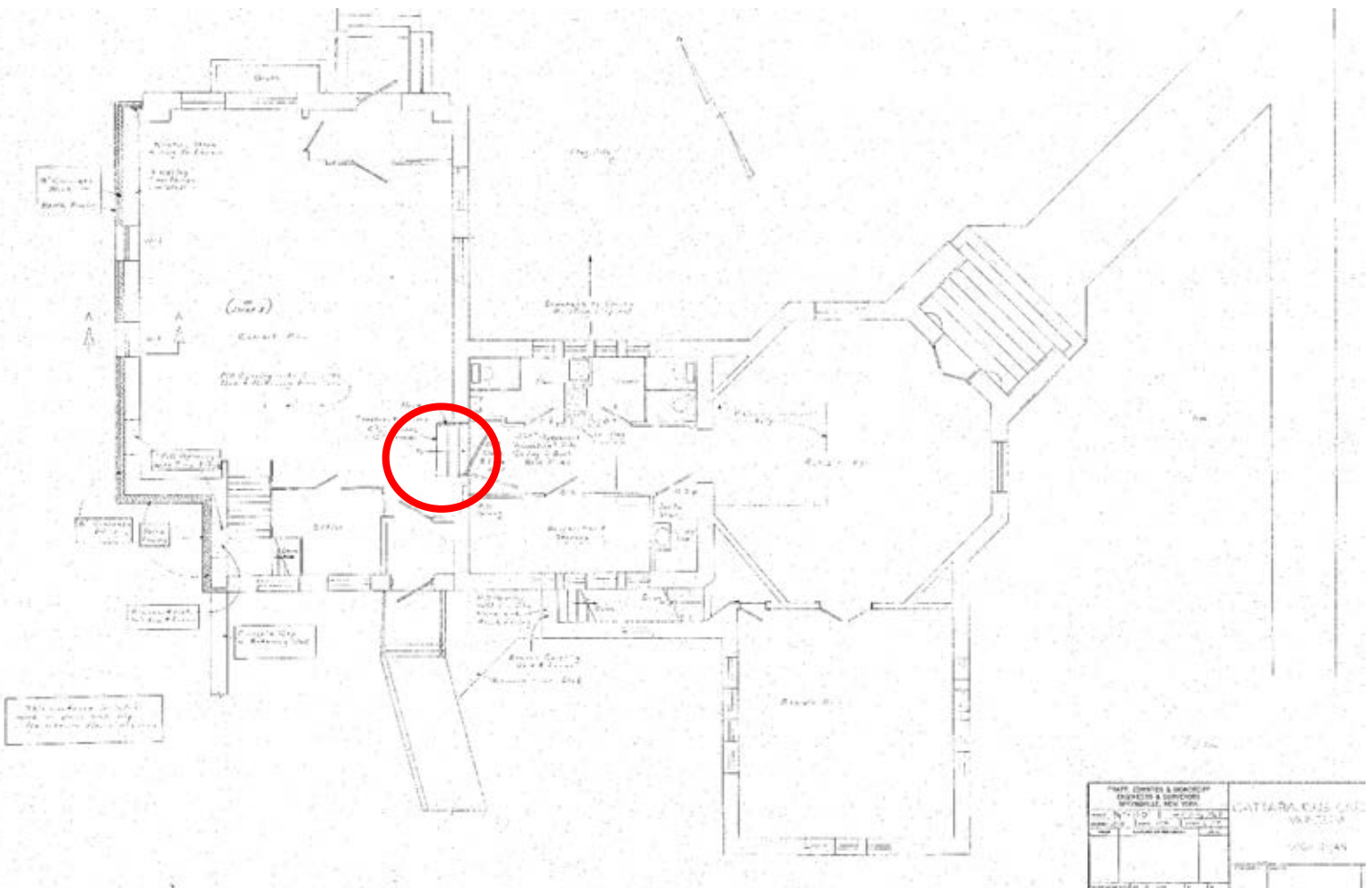


Figure 14: First Floor plans for the expanded Memorial Building and 1952 addition by the firm of Pratt, Edwards & Moncreiff (1969). Note the internal connection between the original section of the building and its addition, circled in red.

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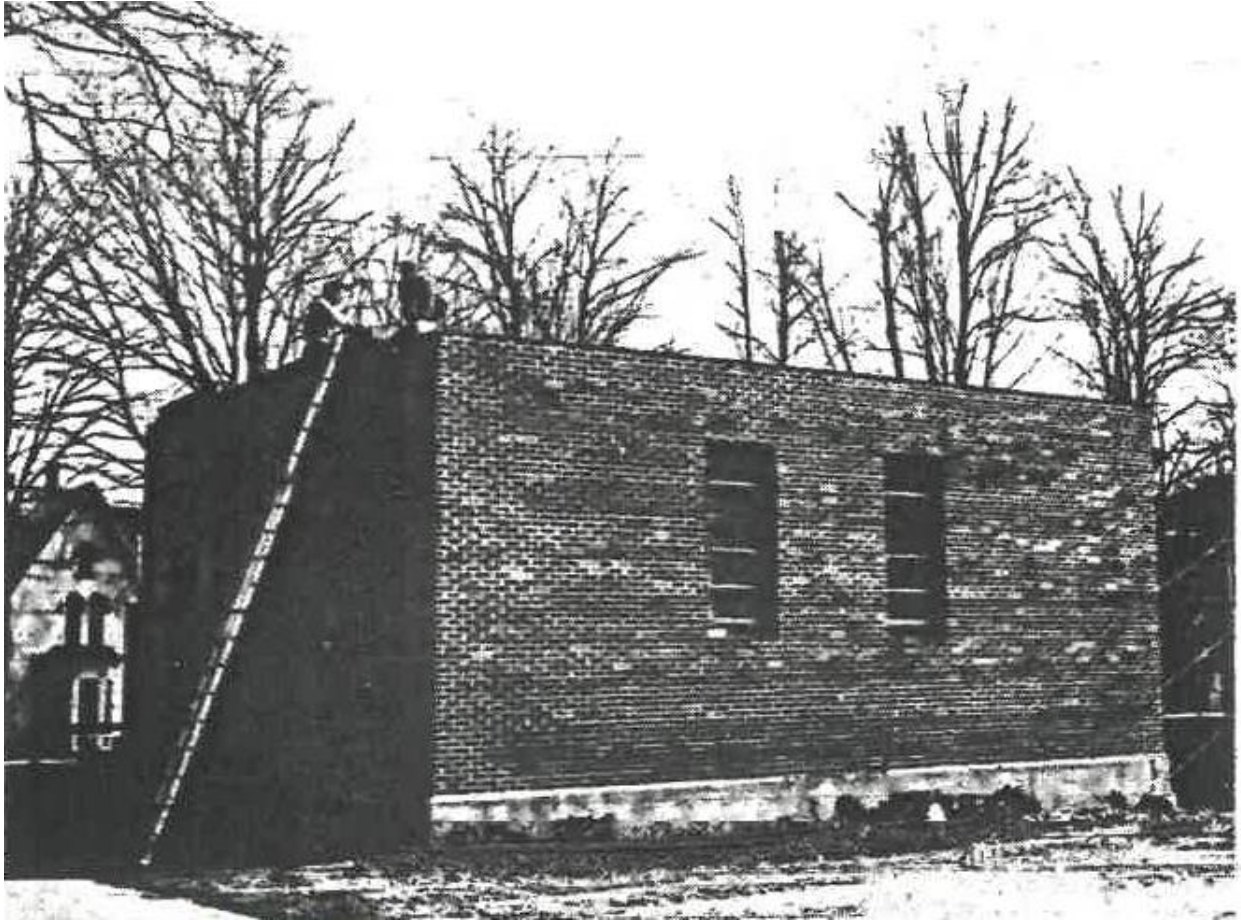


Figure 15: 1970 Photograph showing the final steps of construction for the west elevation of the 1952 addition that had previously abutted the County Clerk's Office. The construction of this wall enclosed the 1952 addition and gave it its current appearance.

Source: Cattaraugus County Historical Museum

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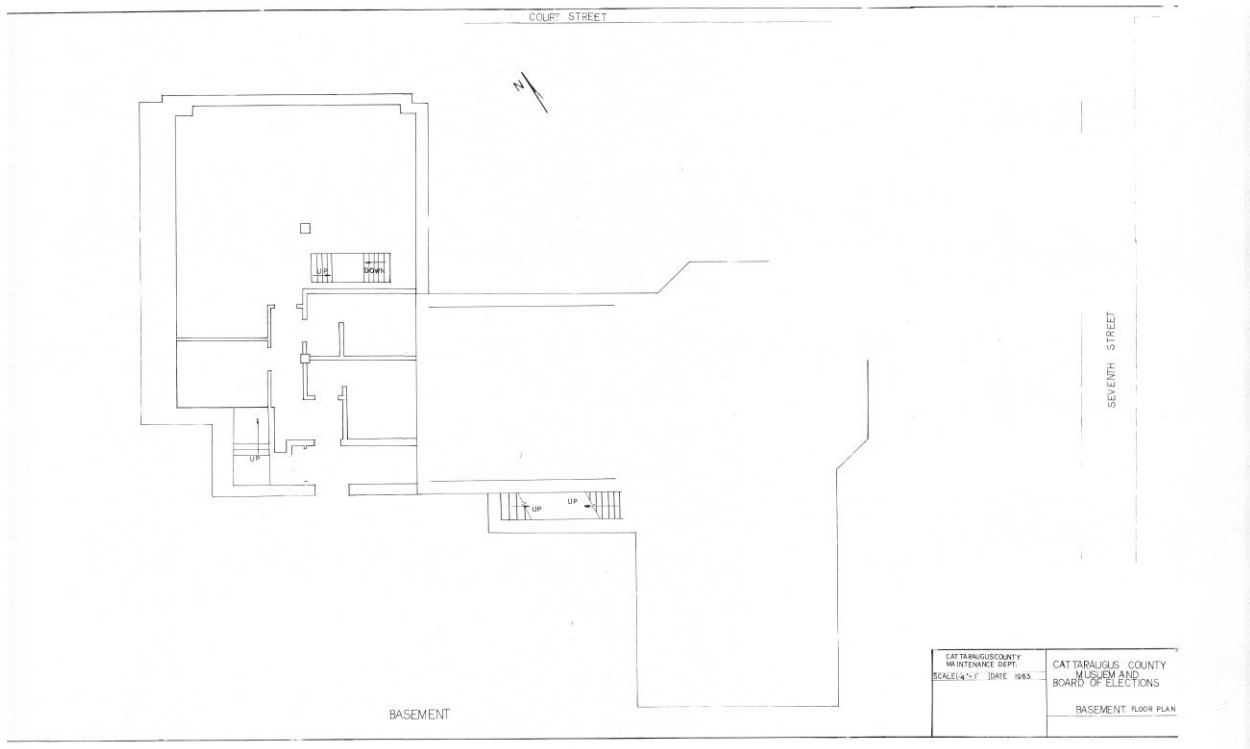


Figure 16: Basement Level plan of the 1952 addition. (1983) No evidence of an internal connection between the sections of the building is apparent.

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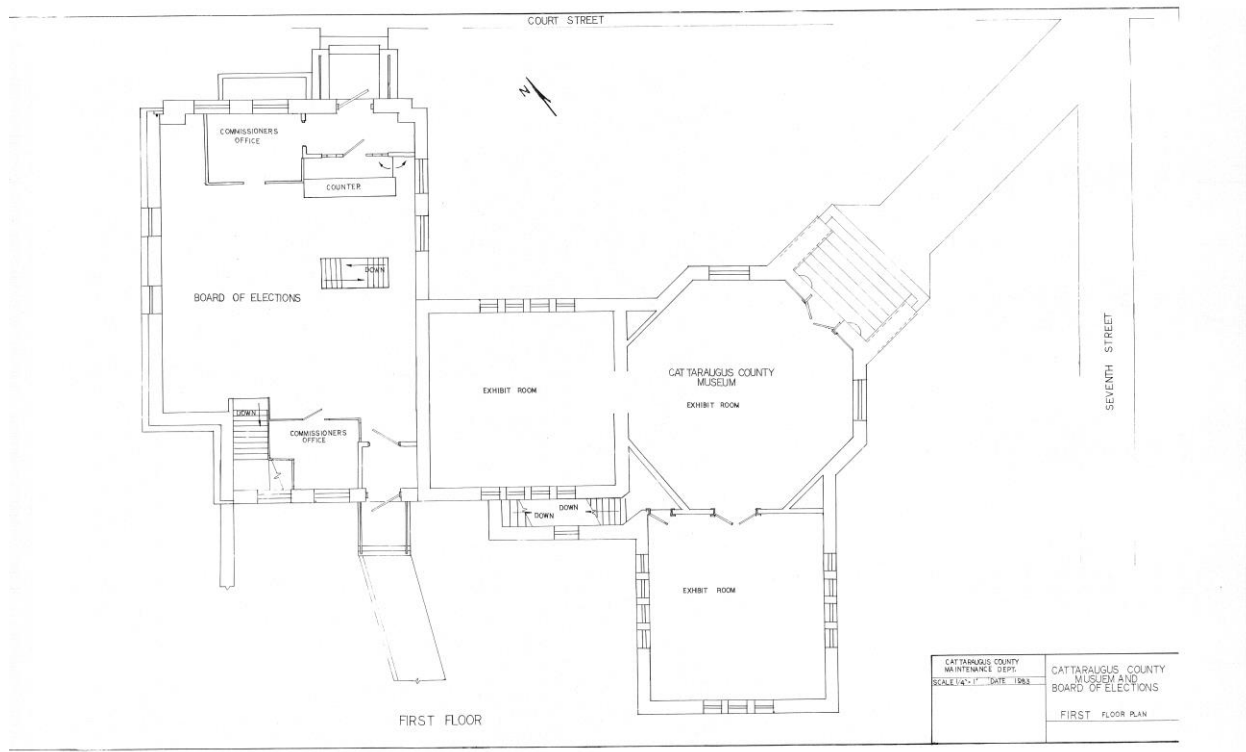


Figure 17: First Floor Plan (1983) No evidence of an internal connection between the sections of the building appears by this point.

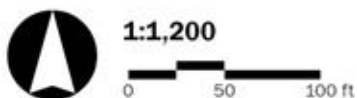
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Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 17N

 Nomination Boundary (0.30 ac)

New York State Orthoimagery Year: 2020



New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation

Mapped 01/29/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

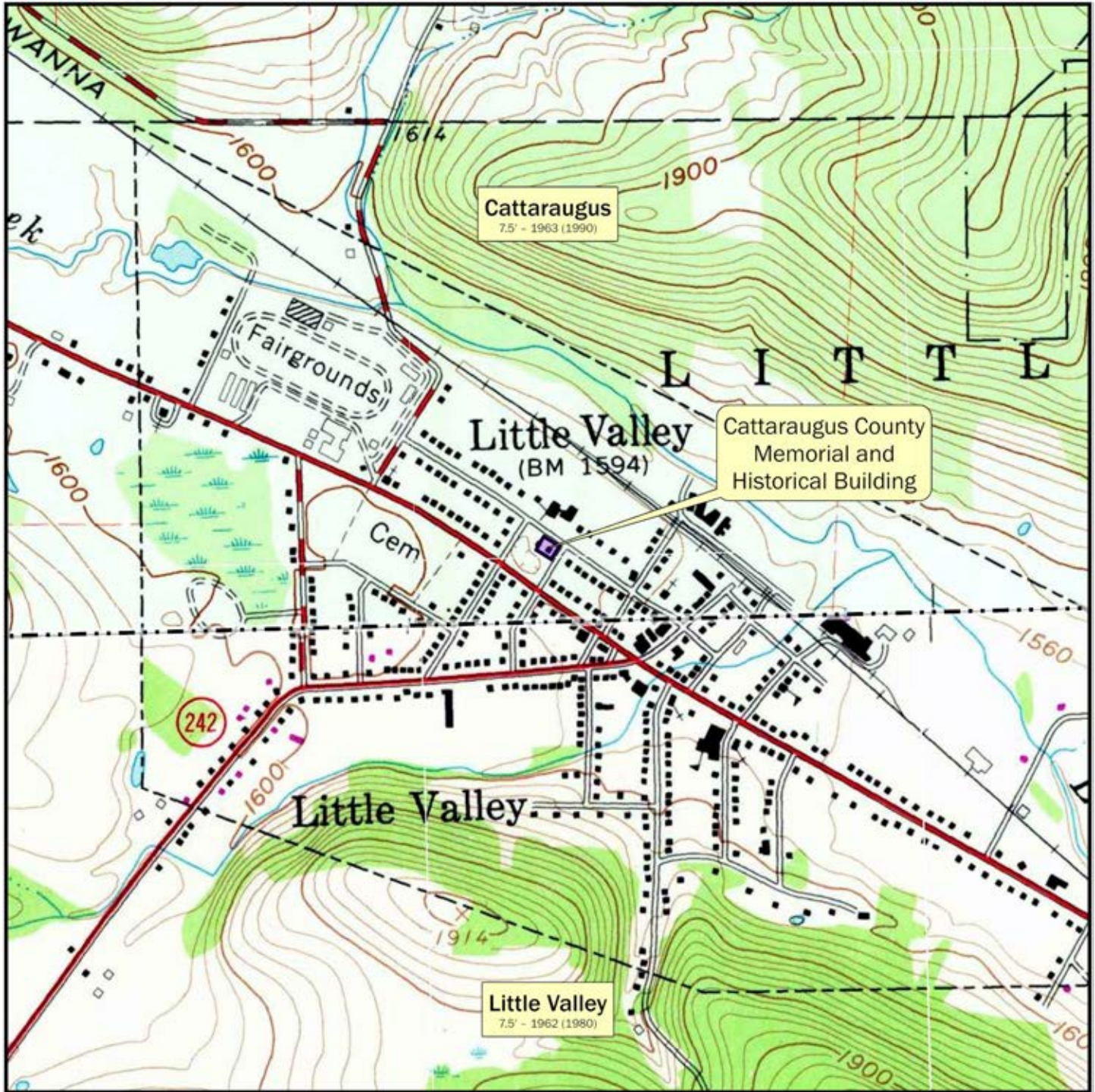
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Cattaraugus County Memorial and
Historical Building

Name of Property
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 Cattaraugus County Memorial and
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Parks, Recreation and
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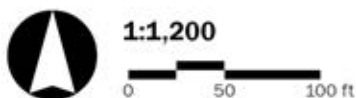
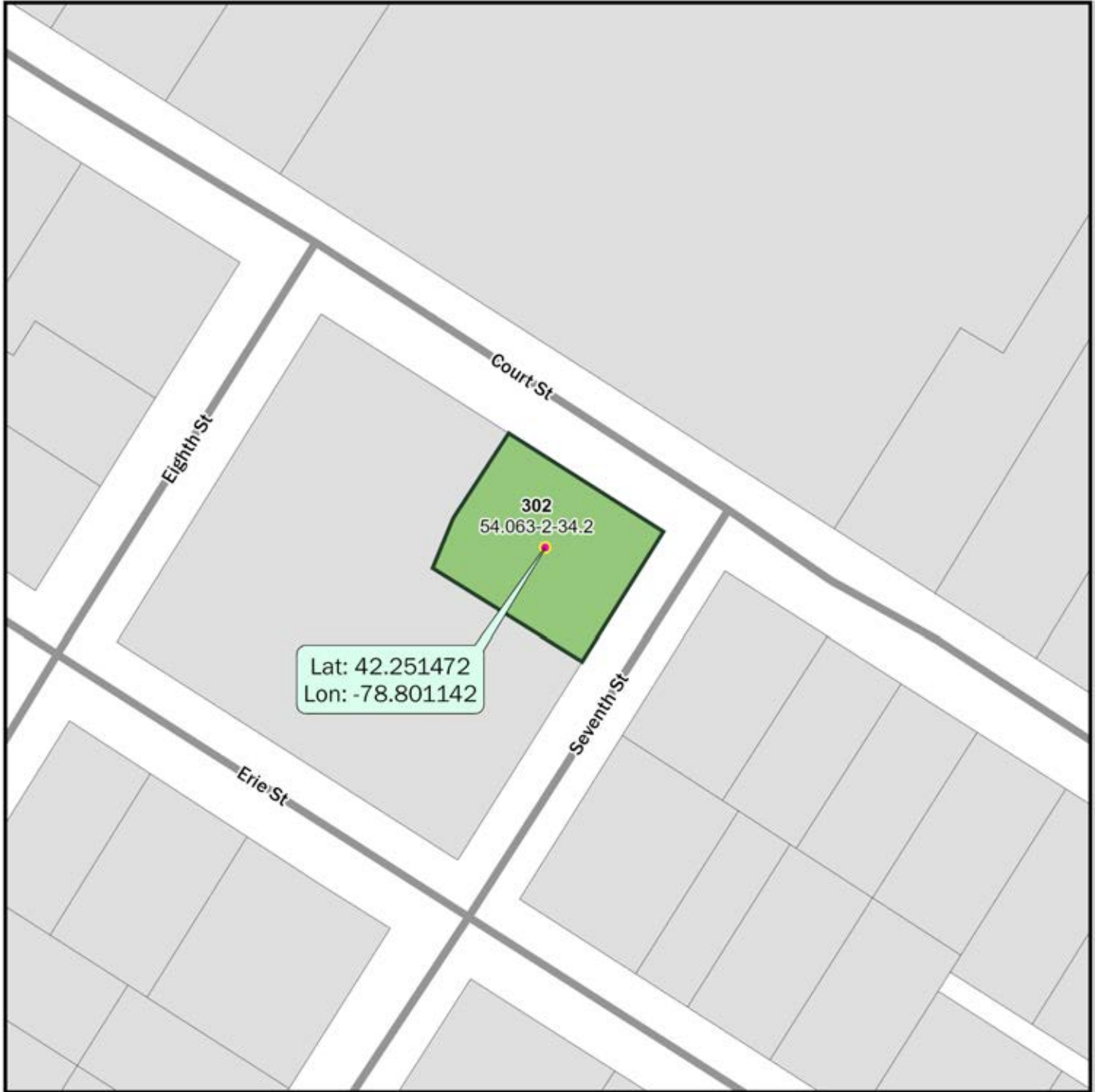
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PHOTO LOG:

Name of Property: Cattaraugus County Memorial and Historical Building
City of Vicinity: Little Valley
County: Cattaraugus
State: New York
Name of Photographer: Clinton Brown, Clinton Brown Company Architecture
Date of Photograph: 2022
Location of Original Digital Files: CBCA, 403 Main Street, Suite 506, Buffalo, NY 14203
Number of Photographs: 16

- 0001: 1914 Building, Front (east) elevation looking west.
- 0002: 1914 Building, Front (east) elevation, detail of primary entrance.
- 0003: 1914 Building, Front (east) elevation and side (northeast) elevation looking southwest.
- 0004: 1914 Building, Front (east) and side (southeast) elevation looking northwest.
- 0005: 1914 Building, Rear (west) elevation looking east.
- 0006: 1952 Addition, Front (northwest) elevation looking south.
- 0007: 1952 Addition, Side (southeast) elevation looking west.
- 0008: 1952 Addition, Side (southwest) elevation looking east.
- 0009: 1914 Building, Basement looking east.
- 0010: 1914 Building, Basement looking east.
- 0011: 1952 Addition, Basement looking northeast.
- 0012: 1914 Building, Main Hall looking east.
- 0013: 1914 Building, Main Hall, detail of mosaic tile flooring.
- 0014: 1914 Building, North Hall looking west.
- 0015: 1914 Building, South Hall looking south.
- 0016: 1952 Addition, First floor looking southeast.

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