

Historic Carthage, Illinois



Courthouse Timeline

1833	Carthage is chosen as the county seat of Hancock County; a 1-room log cabin is built and used for courthouse, school, and church
1839	A 2-story brick courthouse replaces the log cabin; Abraham Lincoln files what is an unsuccessful motion for retrial on behalf of William Fraim, who was convicted of murder and sentenced to death by hanging
1849	General Assembly authorizes vote to move county seat; 1 st attempt made to move county seat to Warsaw
1858	Lincoln gives Senate Campaign Speech on lawn of courthouse
1902	Citing a need for a bigger courthouse, a 2 nd attempt to move the county seat to Warsaw is made, but fails to win a 3/5 majority vote
1902-06	Carthage vows to keep the county seat and begins securing funds for a bigger courthouse that will silence calls for moving the county seat
1907	Construction begins on the new courthouse. Joseph E. Mills, Architect. The cornerstone laying ceremony draws thousands of people
1908	Courthouse construction is complete
1987	Kiwanis Club of Carthage purchases and installs the clock faces
2008	The courthouse centennial is celebrated. www.hancockcountycourthouse.org

Self Guided Historic Walking Tour

Other Resources

Hancock County Historical Society
 306 Walnut Street
 217-357-0043
www.library.il.us/community/clubs/historical

Carthage Chamber of Commerce
 8 South Madison Street
 217-357-3024
www.carthage-il.com/business

Walking Tour Podcast
www.carthage-il.com

The Kibbe Museum/Hancock County Historical Society 1

Housing many archeological and agrarian artifacts, the Kibbee Musuem is the perfect place to see pictures and relics of Carthage over the years. The Hancock County Historical Society, in the same building, is home to over 150,000 genealogical records, pictures and historical documents.

www.kibbe.wordpress.com
www.carthage.library.il.us



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Built in 1915, the Presbyterian church that now stands was built to replace the one that burned in 1914.

The Historical Carthage Jail and Visitor Center. 2



Restored to its original design, the Jail is the site of the slayings of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Tours are given daily.

www.historicnavoo.net



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The Fitz Randolph House. Built in 1873 by Dr. James

Randolph, this Italianate mansion is now the Fitz Randolph House Inn, a Bed and Breakfast owned and operated by Steve and Karol Carr.

www.fitzrandolphhouseinn.com

The Carthage Methodist Episcopal Church 4



was organized in 1836 and used the first one-room cabin that was also the courthouse.

This building, completed in 1909, was built using the same Bedford, Indiana Limestone as the Courthouse. Notice the many stained glass windows throughout the building.

www.firstumc-carthage.com



Historic Carthage Square

Designated a National Landmark, the Carthage Square features buildings with unique historical significance that still cater to citizens and visitors alike.

Originally, all the streets on the square were called Main Street, differentiated by N, S, E, and W. When they were changed, it was common to name streets after US Presidents or trees. Many streets in Carthage have this distinction. Wabash Street was named after Wabash Railroad, which had a presence in Carthage for many years.

Hancock County Courthouse 6



Completed in 1908, this building is considered to be one of the grandest courthouses in Illinois. Featuring interior corridors with 4-foot wainscoting of TN marble, floors of mosaic marble, staircases with mahogany woodwork and two fish-scale art glass rotundas, the courthouse is open from 8am-4pm M-F. Feel free to take a walk and explore this beautiful building. *Calling ahead

is recommended due to the changing nature of the courtroom schedule.

7 WCAZ is one of the oldest operating radio stations in America. First hitting the airwaves in 1923, this station has operated in various Carthage buildings.

www.wcazam990.com

The Old Hancock County Jail.

This building served as the jail from



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1876-1987. The sheriff would live here while holding office. Today, the building houses The Crooked Creek Gallery.

The former building of the Masonic Lodge

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was later purchased by the Mississippi Telephone Company, whose sign is still on the building.

10 The First Baptist Church of Carthage is housed in a building



constructed in 1910. The bell that was in the first building is now displayed in front of the Carthage Fire Department.



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Site of the old Hamilton Hotel. Artois Hamilton, a respected pioneer from the

early days of Carthage, built the original Hamilton Hotel in 1835. During the summer of 1844, Hamilton constructed coffins for the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, returning them to Nauvoo.

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Trinity Lutheran Church, in a building built in 1875, has seen very few changes over the years. The first graduation

ceremonies of Carthage College took place in this church.

Looking for Lincoln Wayside exhibits are located throughout Carthage. These exhibits provide detailed information about Abe Lincoln's visits to Carthage.



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The building that is today used by the VFW club was originally home to Zion Lutheran Church of Carthage. Church members built the Building with bricks they baked themselves and with bricks from the ruins of the Mormon Temple in Nauvoo.

