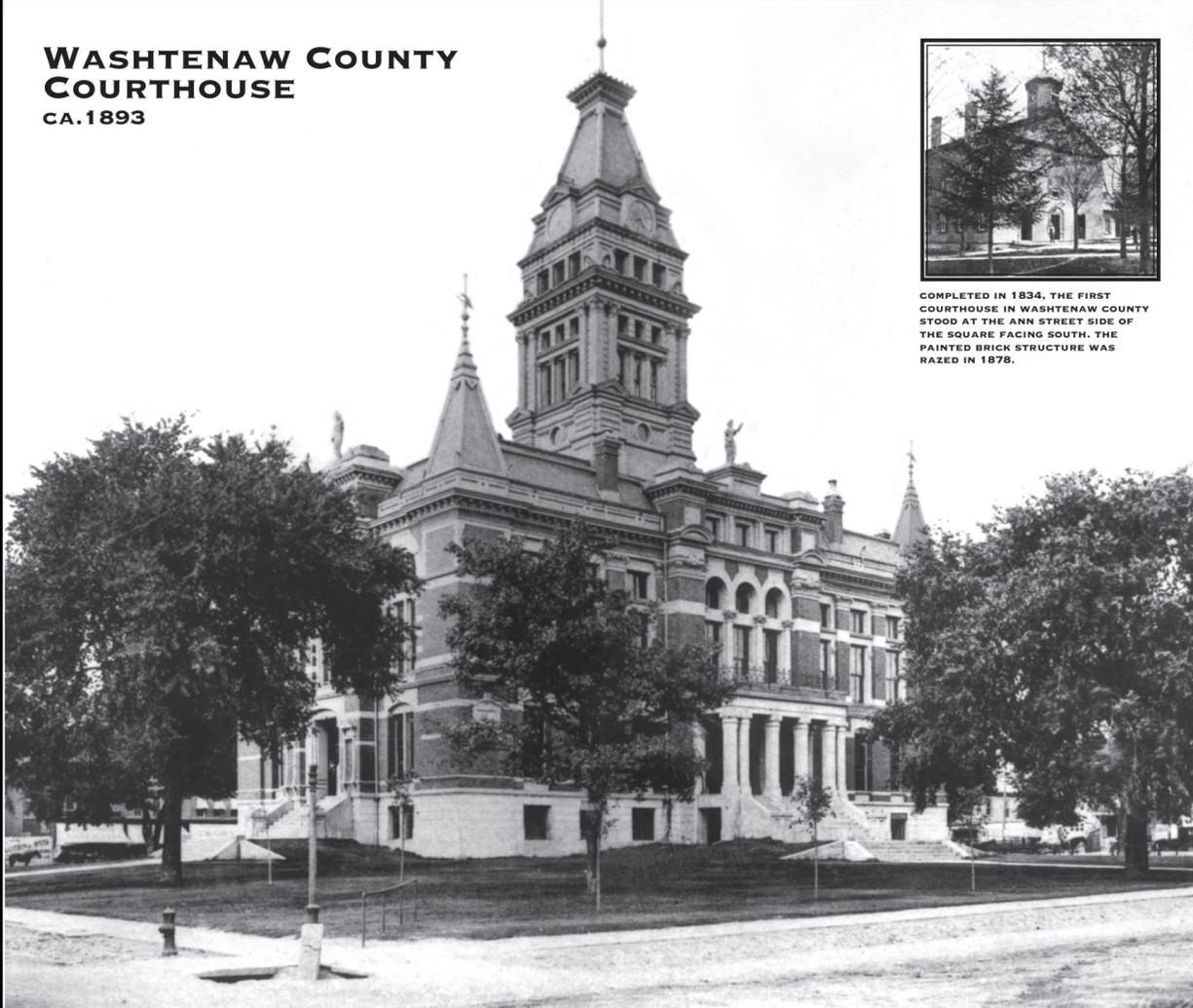




A LANDMARK OF CIVIC PRIDE ON COURTHOUSE SQUARE

WASHTENAW COUNTY COURTHOUSE CA. 1893



COMPLETED IN 1834, THE FIRST COURTHOUSE IN WASHTENAW COUNTY STOOD AT THE ANN STREET SIDE OF THE SQUARE FACING SOUTH. THE PAINTED BRICK STRUCTURE WAS RAZED IN 1878.

As laid out by village founders John Allen and Elisha Rumsey in 1824, the county courthouse block was to be a spacious town square surrounded by commercial blocks. Until the 1950s, Courthouse Square hummed with the activities that made Ann Arbor the focus of civic and business life in the county. The broad green open space was the choice site for parades, public speeches, political rallies, band concerts, and community events. Many of the area's most prominent hotels, live entertainment venues, banks,

eating places, saloons, and other small retail and service businesses ringed the Square. Postal, telegraph, and newspaper offices were centered here and provided communication with the outside world.

With its seven-story clock tower and park-like setting, the second courthouse was downtown's major architectural landmark from 1878 to the 1950s. The seat of Washtenaw County government and courts, it was a grand presence. It proclaimed

the vitality and importance of Ann Arbor in the commercial, civic, and cultural life of the region.

Building decay, combined with a vigorous campaign for more space and a modern image, led the County to replace it with the courthouse you now see on the site. Then-mayor William Brown stated the assumptions of the era perfectly: "The present courthouse was built before the turn of the century. Need I say more?"



PROMINENT ANN ARBOR RESIDENTS SHARED IN AMERICA'S FIRST BICYCLE CRAZE OVER A CENTURY AGO. JUNIUS BEAL (CIRCLED), PUBLISHER AND EDITOR OF THE ANN ARBOR COURIER AND LATER A UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN REGENT, POSES WITH THE MEN'S BICYCLE CLUB ON THE WEST COURTHOUSE STEPS, 1887.