

Historical Marker - L404 - Mason County / Mason County Courthouse (Marker ID#:L404)



Front - Title/Description

Mason County

The first permanent Euro-American settlement in Mason County began in 1847 when New York native Burr Caswell and his family arrived at the mouth of the Pere Marquette River. The Caswells lived in a driftwood cabin near the Ottawa village of Nindebekatumning. Abundant pine forests attracted lumbermen including Charles Mears, James Ludington, and Eber Brock Ward. In 1855 the state legislature organized Mason County, named for Michigan's first governor, Stevens T. Mason. The Caswell farmhouse in Pere Marquette Township served as the county seat. In 1860 Charles Mears persuaded the board to remove the county seat to Little Sauble (later Lincoln). But remote Little Sauble could not compete with booming Ludington. In 1873 Ludington became the permanent county seat.

Significant Date:

Statehood Era (1815-1860)

Registry Year: 1975 **Erected Date:** 2000

Marker Location

Address: 300 East Ludington Avenue

City: Ludington

State: MI **ZipCode:**

County: Mason

Township:

Lat: 43.95545600 / **Long:** -86.44472500

Web URL:

Back - Title/Description

Mason County Courthouse

Ludington became the Mason County seat in 1873, when county offices were moved from the now-vanished village of Little Sauble. At that time, Ludington was the county's most prosperous settlement. Formerly called Pere Marquette, Ludington was platted in 1867 by Milwaukee lumberman James Ludington. The town served as a shipping center for West Michigan lumber. Erected in 1893-94, this is the fourth structure to serve as Mason County's courthouse since the county was established in 1855. Grand Rapids architect Sidney J. Osgood designed the Richardsonian Romanesque structure, which was built of Jacobsville sandstone from the Upper Peninsula. The courthouse is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.