

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JUN 13 1975
DATE ENTERED SEP 5 1975

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Douglas County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Waterville

STATE

Washington

___ VICINITY OF

CODE
53

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

#4 - Hon. Mike McCormack

COUNTY

Douglas

CODE

017

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

___ DISTRICT
 BUILDING(S)
___ STRUCTURE
___ SITE
___ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC
___ PRIVATE
___ BOTH
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
___ IN PROCESS
___ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

OCCUPIED
___ UNOCCUPIED
___ WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
___ YES: RESTRICTED
 YES: UNRESTRICTED
___ NO

PRESENT USE

___ AGRICULTURE
___ COMMERCIAL
___ EDUCATIONAL
___ ENTERTAINMENT
___ GOVERNMENT
___ INDUSTRIAL
___ MILITARY
___ MUSEUM
___ PARK
___ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
___ RELIGIOUS
___ SCIENTIFIC
___ TRANSPORTATION
___ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Douglas County

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Waterville

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Washington

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Douglas County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Waterville

STATE

Washington

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Washington State inventory of historic places

DATE

___ FEDERAL STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission

CITY, TOWN

Olympia

STATE

Washington

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR
 DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Douglas County Courthouse at Waterville is a two story brick building on a stone foundation with a daylight basement mostly above grade. It is square in plan, approximately 60 feet on each side.

The town of Waterville is 2,600 feet above sea level on table lands east of Washington's Cascade Mountains. This high plateau slopes gradually down toward the Badger Mountains to the south. The courthouse is located in town at the center of a site one long block square. It is surrounded by a ring of tall pine and fir trees at the perimeter of the grounds and lining the axial walk to the main entrance.

The foundation is squared rubble in broken coursework. It extends up almost a full story to the level of the first floor where it is capped by a water table moulding. Farther up the brick walls above is a somewhat similar belt course running between the second story windows a bit below their heads. This becomes a hood moulding over the windows themselves. Openings in the stone foundation work below the interior bearing wall partitions are arched with bricks fitted into the rubble coursing.

The medium bellcast hip roof is interrupted by stepped parapet gable wings centered on opposite sides and a square entrance tower in front. The parapets rise in Mission style curves and steps with a slightly projecting moulding that follows along the top edge.

The entrance tower and the parapet gable wings all project only slightly from the square plan of the central structure. The foundation stonework of these elements flares out a few degrees from plumb, emphasizing their solid footing. At the base of the tower is a Romanesque entrance arch. The stonework at this entrance is continued several feet beyond the level of the first floor above which there is a transition to brick elsewhere on the building. It terminates in mouldings that follow ogee shaped "shoulders" flanking a horizontal sill for the windows above. These windows are on a landing in the main stairwell directly inside the entrance tower and they maintain the same height and level as the brick spandrels between the first and second floor windows on the remaining building. Over this window grouping is a recessed spandrel and, at the next landing, a set of windows and transomes within a stilted arch. The spandrel frames the words "DOUGLAS COUNTY COURT-HOUSE" in raised letters. Together with window openings of equivalent width above and below, the spandrel recess is a part of a single tall arch form resting on the entrance arch below.

Interrupting the four foot overhang and its scroll sawn rafter tails, the tower continues upward over the roof as a square shaft crowned by an open woodwork balcony with an octagonal bellcast spire and flag pole finial. The brick shaft includes two rows of decorative corbeling and a set of four elliptical windows in between the rows on each side.

Nearly all windows are double hung, regularly spaced and aligned in vertical and horizontal rows. The diamond shaped windows in the two sets of double doors at the main entrance are bevelled glass.

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The interior of the courthouse has been considerably redecorated, although little structural alteration has taken place. Some ceilings have been lowered and linoleum has been installed in many rooms. The entrance and stairs are unchanged, including the original varnished hardwood. The brass escutcheons with borders of art nouveau tracery are still in place on the four front doors.

A flat roofed annex has been built at the rear of the building, with connecting hallways. Both structures are painted a stark white. The annex was added in the late 1950's, and although it is simply a stuccoed box without ornament or relief of any kind, it has approximately the same dimensions as the original structure. The windows also maintain roughly similar proportions and spacing so that the impact of this strictly anonymous intrusion is somewhat reduced.

The Douglas County Courthouse is an interesting example of courthouse architecture in that it seems at the same time pleasant and imposing. The tower spire and roof detailing are an almost whimsical contradiction to the solid and simple structure below, lending considerable interest to what is otherwise an ordinary building in most respects.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES

1905

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Newton C. Gauntt

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Washington Territorial Legislature of 1883 created Douglas and Lincoln Countys from a vast land area originally encompassed by Spokane County. The proposal at first was to establish only a single new county, to be known as Lincoln County, but this plan was revised through the lobbying efforts of Mr. J. W. Adams. Adams was a "professional townsite boomer" from Kansas who saw an opportunity to essentially form a county of his own. The population of this new county was approximately 100 inhabitants, including men, women and children, scattered across an area equal in size to the state of Connecticut.

Together with two partners under the name Adams, Mann & Company, Adams platted the townsite of Okanogan City, designated by the Legislature as temporary county seat. The present town of Okanogan is 60 miles to the northeast in Okanogan County. One of the partners, Mr. Meyers, was a resident of Illinois. Although appointed one of the commissioners, he attended only their first meeting and never had a residence in Washington Territory.

Walter Mann, the other partner, "held down" the townsite in a tent through the winter. On February 28, 1884, the commissioners held their first meeting in Okanogan's only structure-Mann's tent. Later in the spring, a Mr. B.L. Martin completed a 24 foot by 36 foot store building there at the county seat, which then became the courthouse and the only building in town. Martin was appointed auditor. That fall the second building was constructed, a first class hotel "all things considered".

Promotional literature was circulated, some claiming ready availability of water from a profusion of natural springs. Soon the surrounding land was entirely staked out. However, when the intended settlers discovered that there was in fact no water, they abandoned their claims near Okanogan and sought more favorable locations elsewhere. Adams himself drilled wells to a depth of 80 feet without success. When a hired drilling rig sank a dry hole 285 feet deep, he finally gave up.

Soon afterward a few towns developed in adjacent territory where water was available. One of the new commissioners attempted to have the county seat removed to an excellent site near a lake. This proposition was defeated because the law required a vote of the people to accomplish such a move.

The territorial legislature approved an act on January 16, 1886 authorizing an election to determine a new seat for the Douglas County government.

Six miles west of Okanogan, A. T. Greene and J. M. Snow planned to build a new town to be known as Waterville. At the Democratic convention in Okanogan, these promoters announced

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

History of the Big Bend Country. Western Historical Publishers, 1904.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM OK WM 9-29-75

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,0 | 17,2,0 | 9,4,0 | 5,2,8,0 | 3,0,0
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B [] | [] | [] | [] | []
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Jacob E. Thomas

ORGANIZATION

Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission

DATE

May 12, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 1128

TELEPHONE

(206) 753-4116

CITY OR TOWN

Olympia

STATE

Washington

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Charles H. Odegaard

TITLE

Executive Director - Charles H. Odegaard

DATE

June 9, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

9/5/75

ATTEST:

W. Monteen

DATE

SEP 5 1975

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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their intention to have the county seat removed to the new townsite. A number of supporters for this proposition attended the convention. Their point was dramatized by a barrel of water hauled there from Waterville to prove the truth of claims of an abundant water supply. The Waterville Board of Trustees offered the county free use of a building for two years if the government was relocated there. The residents of Okanogan objected to this offer, with the contention that it constituted bribing the voters in violation of territorial law.

When the election was held in November, there were four towns interested in the outcome. A majority of all votes cast was required to move the county seat, otherwise it remained in Okanogan. When the ballots were counted, there was no clear majority. However, a sizeable number of votes were for a place known as Grand Coulee Crossing, which had never been formally platted and for which there was no legally established location. The commissioners ruled at their next meeting the following Spring that all ballots for Grand Coulee had to be thrown out because the law required definite boundaries for the location of a county seat. Reduced in total number by this technicality, the votes were recounted and Waterville was declared the winner - nearly seven months after the election.

The county auditor questioned the legality of this decision, although he was personally in favor of the change. He refused to move his offices because it was his belief that the votes were improperly recorded. By authority of the board of commissioners, the sheriff seized his records and removed them to Waterville. To resolve any questions of legality, the Territorial Legislature passed in 1888 "An act legalizing the acts of the county officers of Douglas County . . . so far as said acts affect, or are affected by, the location of the county seat of said Douglas County"

The new county courthouse was the second building in Waterville. It was constructed before the election for this purpose, although that fact was kept secret with the ruse that it was a real estate office. The courthouse was a small board-without-batten shack. Daylight was visible between its plank walls. The auditors desk was a packing crate, and the commissioners sat on sawhorses with planks supported between them for a table.

In 1889 a permanent courthouse was built. It was of frame construction with two stories and a classic pedimented portico. This building was later destroyed by fire, following which plans were begun for the present structure.

The existing brick and stone courthouse was built in 1905 as authorized by Commissioners J. A. Wilburn, E. O. Whitney and John McKay. It was designed by Newton C. Gauntt, Architect and constructed by William Oliver, Contractor. This courthouse is a very pleasing eclectic design and it is a genuine architectural asset to the community and the county. It is considered locally to be the grandest building in Douglas County, a belief that has persisted since the day it was finished.

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The Douglas County Courthouse was built in a period following the construction of a series of elaborate courthouses in several counties throughout Washington, four of which have been entered in the National Register. These buildings have all helped to insure the permanence of county governments in the towns where they are located by providing attractive, desirable and hard to duplicate facilities deterring any potential challenge from a rival community. The Douglas County Courthouse at Waterville has served continuously housing the offices of local government since its construction in 1905.