

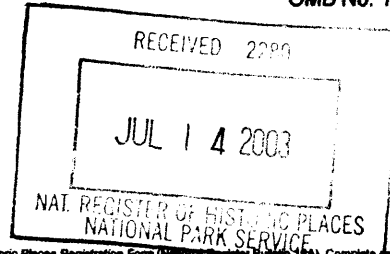
JUL 10 2003

OMB No. 10024-0018

NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



823

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.

Name of Property

historic name Humboldt County Court House

other names/site number P.W.A. Docket IA 1351-DS

2. Location

street & number 203 Main Street N/A not for publication

city or town Dakota City N/A vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Humboldt code 091 zip code 50529

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (see continuation sheet for additional comments).

Howell F. Soike July 10, 2003

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

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.

**Entered in the
National Register**

Signature of the Keeper _____

AUG 28 2003

Date of Action _____

determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
1		sites
		structures
1		objects
3		Total

Name of related multiple property listing

Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

PWA-Era County Courthouses of Iowa MPD

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/courthouse

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER/ PWA Moderne

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK
STONE/limestone

roof ASPHALT

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 is 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 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 the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

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 Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1939 - 1953

Significant Dates

1939

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Dougher, Rich and Woodburn

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Humboldt County Auditor's Office

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Less than 5 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	[1][5]	[4][0][0][4][2][0]	[4][7][3][0][4][9][0]	2	[][]	[][][][][]	[][][][][][]
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
3	[][]	[][][][][][]	[][][][][][]	4	[][]	[][][][][][]	[][][][][][][]
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

See continuation sheet

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 Mariys A. Svendsen, Svendsen Tyler, Inc.

organization for State Historical Society of Iowa date January 2003

street & number N3834 Deep Lake Road telephone 715/469-3300

city or town Sarona state WI zip code 54870

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the complete 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 the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Humboldt County, c/o Peggy Rice, Auditor

street & number PO Box 100, 203 Main Street telephone 515/332-1571

city or town Dakota City state IA zip code 50529

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, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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7. Description

Site: The Humboldt County Court House (contributing), the county's second courthouse, was completed in 1939 in Dakota City. It is located on a one-block site bounded by Main Street on the south, 2nd Street on the west, 1st Avenue North on the north, and 3rd Street on the east. The corporate limit of Dakota City is located one block to the west adjoining the city of Humboldt. The courthouse square is located west of Dakota City's small central business district and about a half mile east of Humboldt's retail area. The courthouse square (contributing) is a slightly elevated site with the principal slope along the south side. A spacious lawn extends from the front of the building down to Main Street. Wide sidewalks extend at right angles from the original flagpole (contributing) that is placed approximately 50 feet from the building. The walks connect the front entrance to Main and 3rd streets. The previous county courthouse and at least six other buildings or structures stood on this site prior to construction of the present courthouse. No historic archeological investigation was made to determine the presence of foundations or other building remains on the site. A mix of mature deciduous and coniferous trees are now scattered throughout the site. Parking spaces line the curbs along 2nd and 3rd streets and a large asphalt paved parking lot extends along the rear of the building.

Exterior: The Humboldt County Court House is one of ten courthouses built in Iowa as part of the federal Public Works Administration (PWA) program. It was erected in 1938-1939 and has a height of three stories with a rectangular footprint measuring 105 feet by 66 feet. The courthouse has a reinforced poured concrete structure with a brick and stone facing. The foundation and walls are faced in gray-colored brick set in a light gray-colored mortar. Bedford limestone with a rubbed finish is used for most of the decorative cut stonework with Mankato Stone reserved for the entrance surround.

Front elevation: The front or south elevation has a height of three stories or approximately 44 feet. Window openings separated by brick and cut-stone panels fill the nine bays that extend across the front. The five center bays are distinguished by the two-story height of the window openings on the upper floors that comprise the courtroom. Original architectural sketches show 1½-story wings flanking the main block but these were eliminated from the final plans. The raised basement that extends beneath the entire building provides good window height and sufficient light for offices on the ground level. A wide stone watertable separates the ground level from the first floor.

All of the windows on the front façade are framed in Bedford stone. First and second floor windows have decorative stone panels above flat stone lintels. The first floor panels have diagonal cuts and the second floor panels have fluted vertical cuts. Continuous sills and lintels for the first and third floor windows create horizontal stone bands, respectively. The third floor lintel band features a series of half-diamonds cut above the windows in the seven center bays. Cast-bronze block lettering over the five center bays reads "Humboldt County Court House." Decorative metal squares are at each end of the lettering. The building's stone cornice consists of three curved horizontal bands with floral patterned stone squares widely spaced along the bands. The cornice design is

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identical to that of the Cass County Court House and the Jones County Court House designed by the same architectural firm several years earlier. When the new roof was installed in 1995, the cornice was modified slightly with the addition of a narrow, straight metal coping.

The courthouse's main entrance is centered on the front façade within a tan-colored limestone surround that retains all of its original detailing. The stone was described in local newspaper accounts as "Mankato Stone" and is also referred to in the building trades as "Kasota stone" named for the town along the Minnesota River where it is quarried." The original double doors, transom, and grillwork were fabricated of bronze but were subsequently removed and replaced with a plate glass door, sidelight, and transom. Stonework to either side and above the entrance is a series of receding stepped sections. A large keystone is centered above the entrance with the center section featuring a carved eagle design. Together, the stonework provides an Art Deco design for the entrance opening. The entrance steps are constructed of granite and are set between wide cut-stone balustrades. Light standards were omitted from the entrance design according to the original architectural drawings.

All of the courthouse's windows are replacement sash. The new sash were installed in phases between 1983 and 1987 and are fabricated of an aluminum alloy with a dark brown finish. Each unit is configured with a transom or insulated infill panel in the top and a 1/1 double-hung window in the lower two-thirds to three-fourths of the opening. Because portions of the building do not have central air conditioning, window AC units are installed in several of the transom panels. All of the windows have stone sills and lintels of varying dimensions.

Side elevations: The east and west elevations are nearly identical. Each has six window bays with stone panels, sills and lintels matching those of the front. The east façade differs slightly because of the placement of a basement level entrance centered on the façade. Pipe rails line the ramp that extends along the north half of the wall connecting this entrance to the rear parking lot. The ramp was installed in 1981.

Rear elevation: The rear or north elevation contains an arrangement of entrance and window openings that fits the internal plan of the building. The façade has the main entrance in the center with five window bays to either side. The main entrance surround has recessed stepped brick walls with a three-sided metal canopy overhead. The original doors and transom have been replaced with plate glass transom, single door, and sidelight that match the balance of the building. The first floor windows have a continuous stone sill and the third floor openings have a similar configuration for the lintel. Secondary entrances in the rear façade are located midway along the walls to either side of the main entrance. The east entrance accesses the building's secondary stairs. An overhead garage door (not original) leading to the basement is located to the right of the main entrance. Horizontal pipe handrails are used for all of the entrances and basement retaining walls.

Interior Floor Plan: The Humboldt County Court House has a central corridor plan like those of the other nine PWA-Era Courthouses in Iowa. The front entrance located midway along the south

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façade opens into a vestibule set between the ground or basement level and the first floor. On the interior, this vestibule is set perpendicular to the central corridor, which runs the full length of the building. Individual county offices outfitted to meet the needs of specific county functions open onto the public corridor. Circulation between floors in the courthouse is via the central staircase located opposite the front entrance vestibule and the secondary staircase located in the northeast corner of the building. An elevator shaft was designated in the original plan. The current elevator was installed in 1981 replacing the original equipment. The elevator is located adjacent to the central staircase in the east corridor. The district courtroom is located on the second floor and the county jail, now in a separate Law Enforcement Center, was originally located on the third floor. Design elements and finishes for the most important spaces in the courthouse are discussed in greater detail below.

Entrance vestibules: The front entrance vestibule is divided into two levels with a set of double doors opening onto the public corridor as depicted in the original plan. The floor has a terrazzo finish (dark green borders) with polished Winona stone used for the steps and field. A floor feature found in all PWA-Era courthouses designed by Dougher, Rich and Woodburn is a recessed area inside of the entrance doors designed to hold a rubber floor mat. The walls are finished with polished tan stone wainscoting described by the architect as "Mankato marble" and plaster walls at the entrance and rift sawn oak panels along the steps and upper landing. Permanent commemorative plaques made of a dramatic black marble identical to that found in the Cass and Jones county courthouses, are inset on the sidewalls. The west wall plaque gives the name of the building and federal funding source while the east plaque lists the members of the board of supervisors and the contractors involved in the project. Fluted wood molding strips separate the wood panel sections. A decorative plaster cornice with an Art Deco design consisting of half-diamonds decorated with fan designs extends around the ceiling. The original ceiling light, a short cylindrical pendent style light fixture with an opaque globe, remains present. The inner doors are wood (probably birch) with bronze hardware and have a plain glass transom. The radiators are set in recessed openings with aluminum grates featuring Art Deco styled lily patterns. The grates have an unpainted gray metal finish.

The east vestibule opens into the building midway between the basement and first floor levels. The floors are dark green borders with tan stone fields. Separate single doors lead to the rear side of the central staircase, one flight leading up to the first floor and the other door leading down to the ground or basement level.

Public corridors: The first floor corridor has a terrazzo floor (dark green for the border and base board and alternating tan and darker pinkish-tan squares in the field). The walls have polished tan stone wainscoting with curved corners where the front entrance opens onto the corridor. It is described in local newspaper accounts as "Mankato marble." Textured plaster covers the walls above the wainscoting and originally had a glazed finish (nonextant) with gold leaf highlights (extant). A decorative plaster cornice consists of half diamonds with scrolled patterns set between two narrow borders. The central sections of the ceiling in the public corridor are finished in original

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"Celotex" acoustic tile used elsewhere in the building as well as other PWA-Era courthouse projects. Original school light fixtures are widely spaced along the ceiling in the corridor in both directions. All office doors opening onto the corridor are wood with full-length glass panels and bronze or brass hardware. Some have transoms and others have a combination of transoms and half sidelights. The trim is painted metal.

The second floor corridor is finished in a similar manner as the first floor with a few exceptions. The corridor itself is shorter with the offices at each end accessed through an internal corridor behind a pair of doors. Offices at the west end of the corridor include the judge's chambers, jury room, and other offices. The law library is located at the east end.

The ground floor or basement corridor has a lower ceiling height with a mix of original and new openings and doors. The walls have marble wainscoting and the floors have a terrazzo finish. The third floor was remodeled in the 1980s following the removal of the jail. A narrow corridor was established, the floors carpeted, ceiling lowered, and new metal doors installed for the offices and meeting rooms located here.

County offices: Each of the county offices on the first floor contains a service counter at which public business is transacted, a public lobby in front of the counter, a staff work area to the rear of the counter, and one or more private offices. In most of the offices the original metal counters have been replaced with new counters. Four work vaults for storage of public records are located on this floor. Walls in these offices are plastered with wood chair rails. Flooring is a combination of asphalt floor tile and carpeting (non-original). The ceilings have been lowered with suspended acoustic tile. Lighting is provided by recessed fluorescent fixtures. Ceiling fans have been installed in some locations.

Main staircase: The central staircase is located midway along the south wall of the central corridor opposite the front entrance. A stepped arch fashioned of plaster sets off the stair opening. The staircase features a single left hand run along the west wall leading up to a wide landing between flights with a return run along the east wall leading from the main landing to the second floor. Sidewalls enclose the lower run but the upper run is open. From the first floor, the run along the east wall leads down to a landing and the rear vestibule. From here the return run extends down to the basement level. The stair treads are made of Winona stone with the same polished Mankato marble used for wainscoting on the corridors used along the staircase walls. Wrought iron handrails are mounted along the wainscoting. The stairwell walls above the wainscoting continue the textured plaster and cornice design of the first and second floor corridors. Three oversize windows at the landing provide abundant light for the second floor corridor.

Courtroom: The most important space aesthetically and functionally in a courthouse is usually the courtroom. As was noted previously, the Humboldt County Court House's district courtroom is located on the second floor along the front half of the building. It has a two-story ceiling height that extends into the third floor with original floor dimensions of 50 feet by 30 feet. The judge's bench,

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witness stand, clerk's desk, reporter's desk, and counsel tables are located in the west end of the room with the jury box on the left or south side. The original window openings have been altered with the addition of new sash and transom panels. Spectator seating in the east half of the room consists of six rows of benches or pews placed theater style with a center aisle and a single double width pew against the rear wall. It appears that the original bar separating the spectator area and counsel tables that was described in a contemporary newspaper account has been removed. Now the original aluminum passage gate is mounted on the ends of the first row of pews giving the counsel table area more floor space. Wood panels at the end of the front row of pews separates the spectator seating also. The aluminum gate has a geometric Art Deco design and the wood end panels have a cut out eight-pointed star design

A 5-foot tall wainscoting fashioned of rift sawn oak panels extends around the perimeter of the room with its height increased to 9 feet behind the judge's bench at the front of the room. The wainscoting has three horizontal bands separated by a concave molding strip and a more elaborate finish molding along the top edge that features convex vertical pieces. The finish of the walls above the wainscoting is a combination of smooth plaster, textured plaster, and acoustic panels. Fluted plaster pilasters separate the acoustic panels. The "Celotex" acoustic tile has the original Art Deco design stenciled in a rust-red color. The tile was cleaned in 1997 as part of courtroom remodeling. The ceiling has an ornamental plaster finish. A decorative plaster ceiling cornice repeats the half-diamond and fan designs used elsewhere in the building. The center section of the ceiling is clad in acoustic tile.

An unusual series of custom light panels extends along a stepped recessed edge from the front to the back of the room. The architect described the lighting as follows: "The lighting is indirect and the fixture is made of white opal flashed glass panels and aluminum dividing strips and hangers. This creates an unusually effective and decorative method of lighting a room of this type."¹ In addition to the strips of lights, the ceiling has two rectangular fixtures of similar design that are placed at each end of the ceiling. The only modification to the ceiling treatment is the addition of ceiling fans.

As noted above, the wall at the front of the courtroom features the same wainscoting design as the side walls but with a higher height. Six rift sawn oak bands are separated by a concave molding strip of "white holly inlay," according to the architect's specifications. A more elaborate finish molding along the top edge features a wide band of convex vertical pieces. Identical doors are positioned at each side with recessed stepped frames. The doors have a flush finish with an Art Deco style design inset near the top of a fluted vertical molding that extends through the center of the door. A similar design is featured in the front of the judge's bench. The judge's bench is centered on the west wall with the witness stand and recorder's desk to either side. Each of these desk elements as well as the jury box has a smooth oak veneer finish with inlay strips and curved moldings along the upper edge. The jury box contains its original seating with padded backs and seats, each of the chairs set on a cast iron pedestal base. The courtroom originally had an asphalt

¹"Architect's Description of Building," *The Humboldt Republican*, March 10, 1939.

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tile floor but now has carpeting.

The judge's chambers, jury room, and other related offices are located along the west end of the second floor. They are accessed through doors located to either side of the judge's bench or through a separate access at the end of the central corridor. The balance of the rooms in the east end including the law library have a combination of original asphalt tile floors and carpet.

Floor plan: As originally conceived, the principal county offices for the Humboldt County Court House were to be located on the first floor. They included offices for the board of supervisors, the auditor, assessor, treasurer, clerk, and recorder. The second floor contained the main courtroom, judge's chambers, a small law library, jury rooms, witness rooms, attorney's office, and county superintendent's office. The third floor contained the sheriff's residence in the east end, dormitory rooms for women and men jurors, and the various components of the county jail. The ground floor or basement contained an additional storage vault, a large assembly room, social worker's office, space for the county engineer, several unassigned offices, the sheriff's garage, and various machinery rooms.

During the past several decades in a series of small to medium sized, phased remodelings the original allocation of space in the courthouse has been altered somewhat. Changes were based on the obsolescence of certain offices (county school superintendent) and functions (sheriff's residence and dormitory space for jurors). In other instances, the expanded needs of specific offices were accommodated by the allocation of vacant areas. Changes made to meet access requirements were done within the original space allocations (ADA rest rooms) or through sensitive alterations (addition of a ramp at the east entrance). The construction of a new law enforcement center in 1994 eliminated the need for a jail on the third floor.

Selected floor plans prepared in 1938 by the architectural firm of Dougher, Rich & Woodburn of Des Moines prior to the courthouse's construction appear on the following pages.²

²Floor Plans prepared by Dougher, Rich & Woodburn, Auditor's Office, Humboldt County Court House, Dakota City, Iowa, 1938. The original sources for plans and drawings reproduced in this and other PWA-Era Courthouse nominations came in various sized formats from original documents, old newspaper clippings, microfilmed newspaper articles, old photo copies, and reverse print images, all of varying quality. The purpose of including images here is to provide a sense of the overall form and delineation of space in the building's principal unaltered floors.

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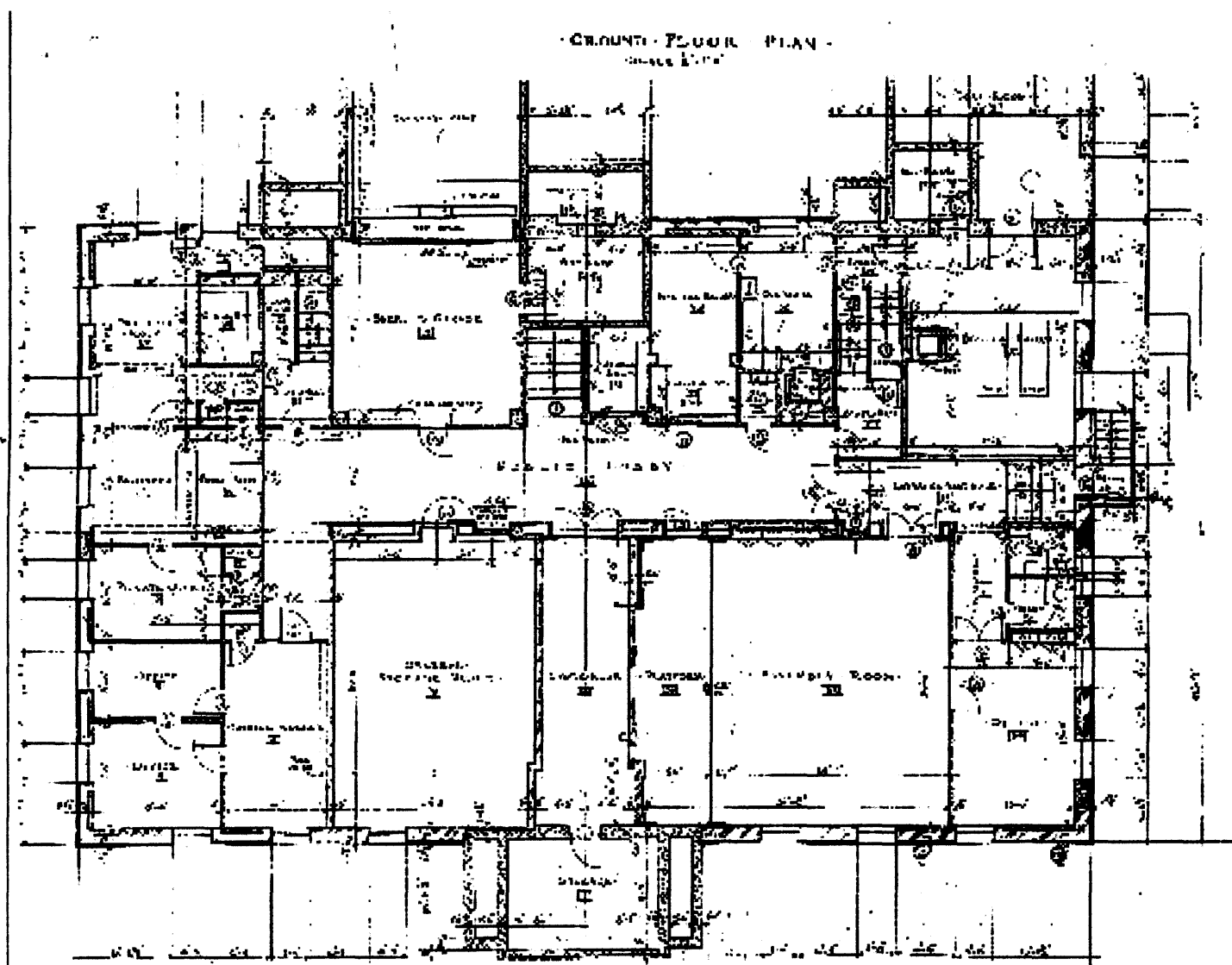
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Humboldt County Court House, Ground (Basement) Floor Plan, 1938



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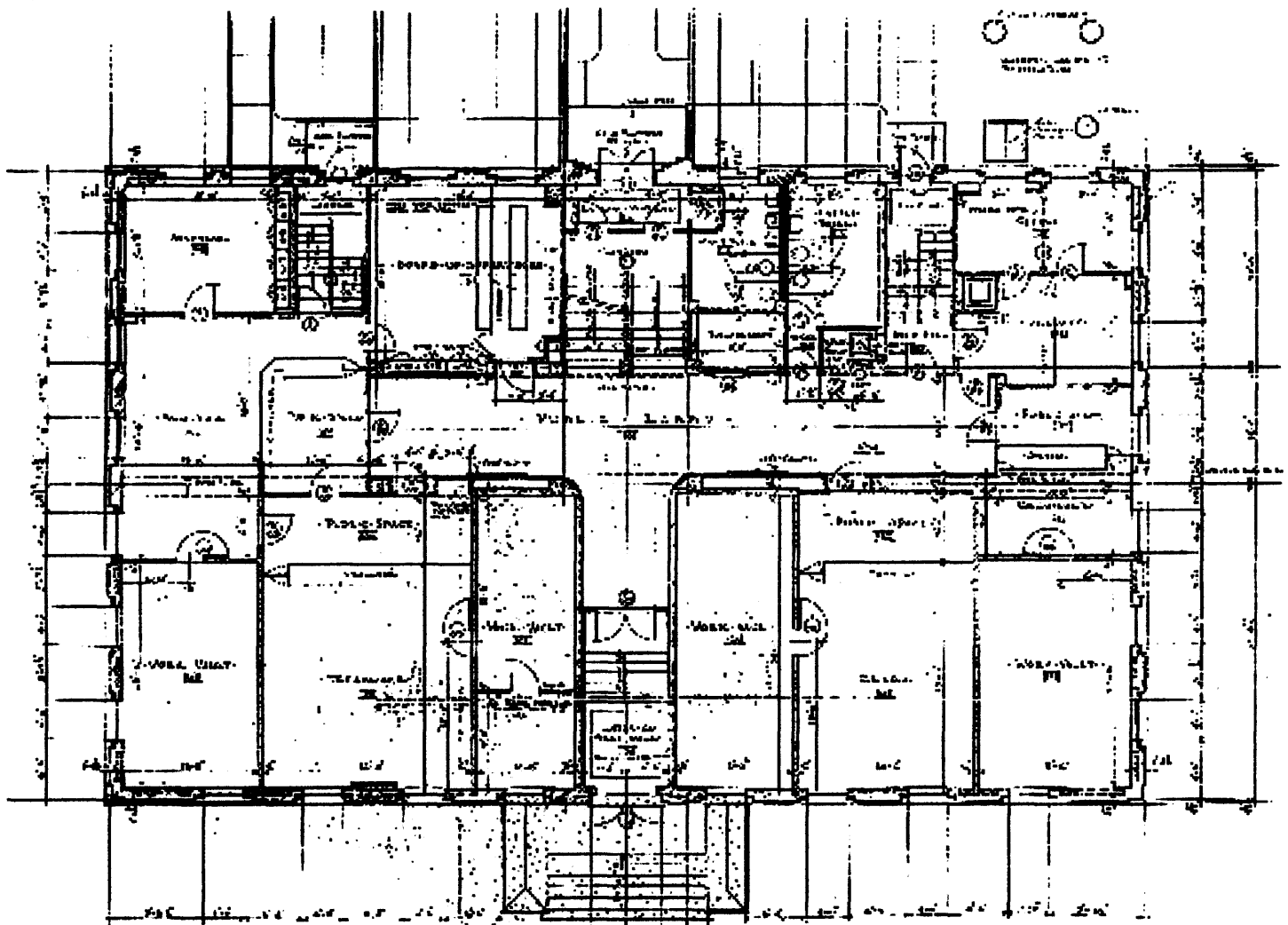
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Humboldt County Court House, First Floor Plan, 1938

FIRST FLOOR PLAN
- 1938 -



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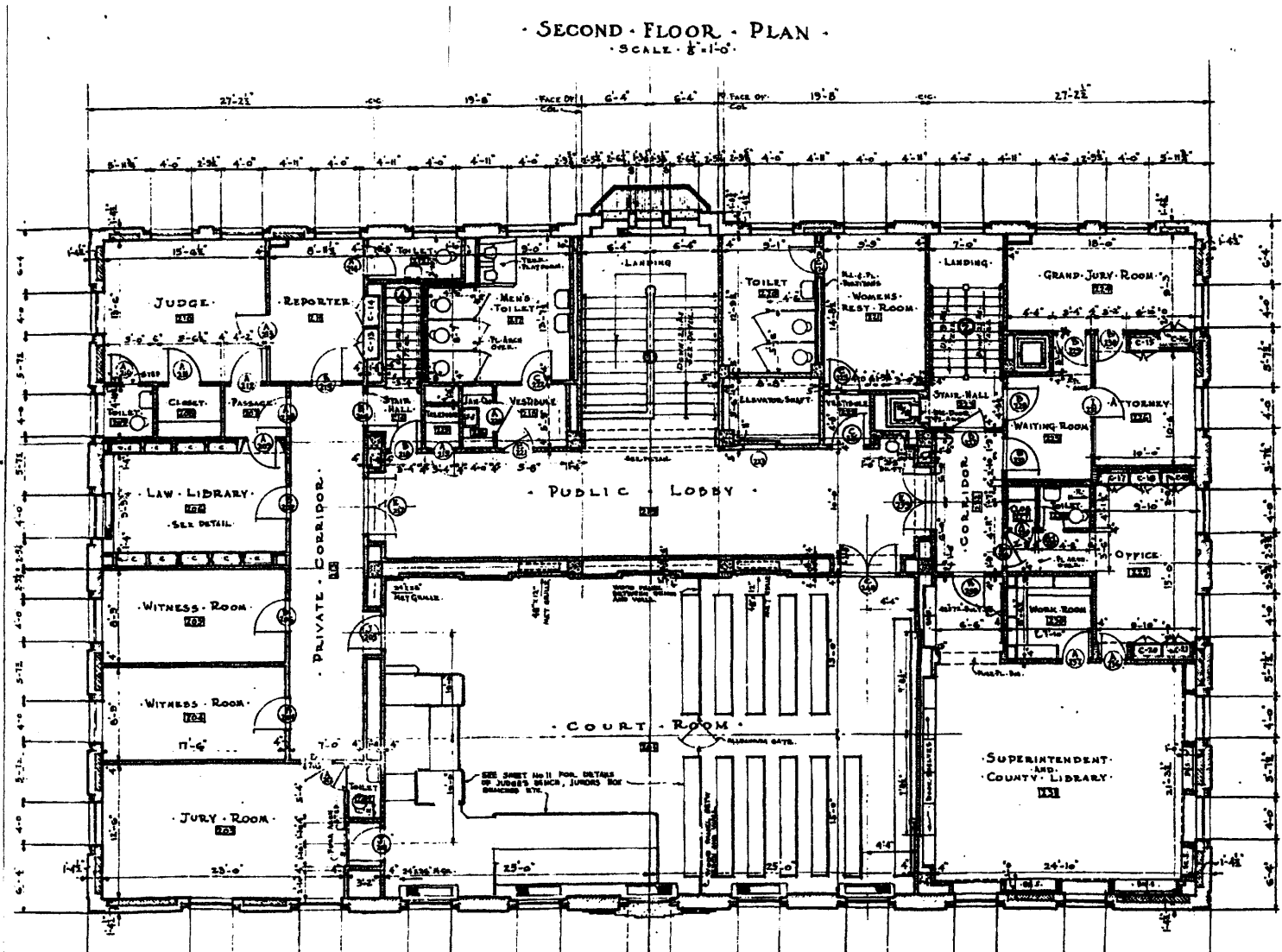
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Humboldt County Court House, Second Floor Plan, 1938



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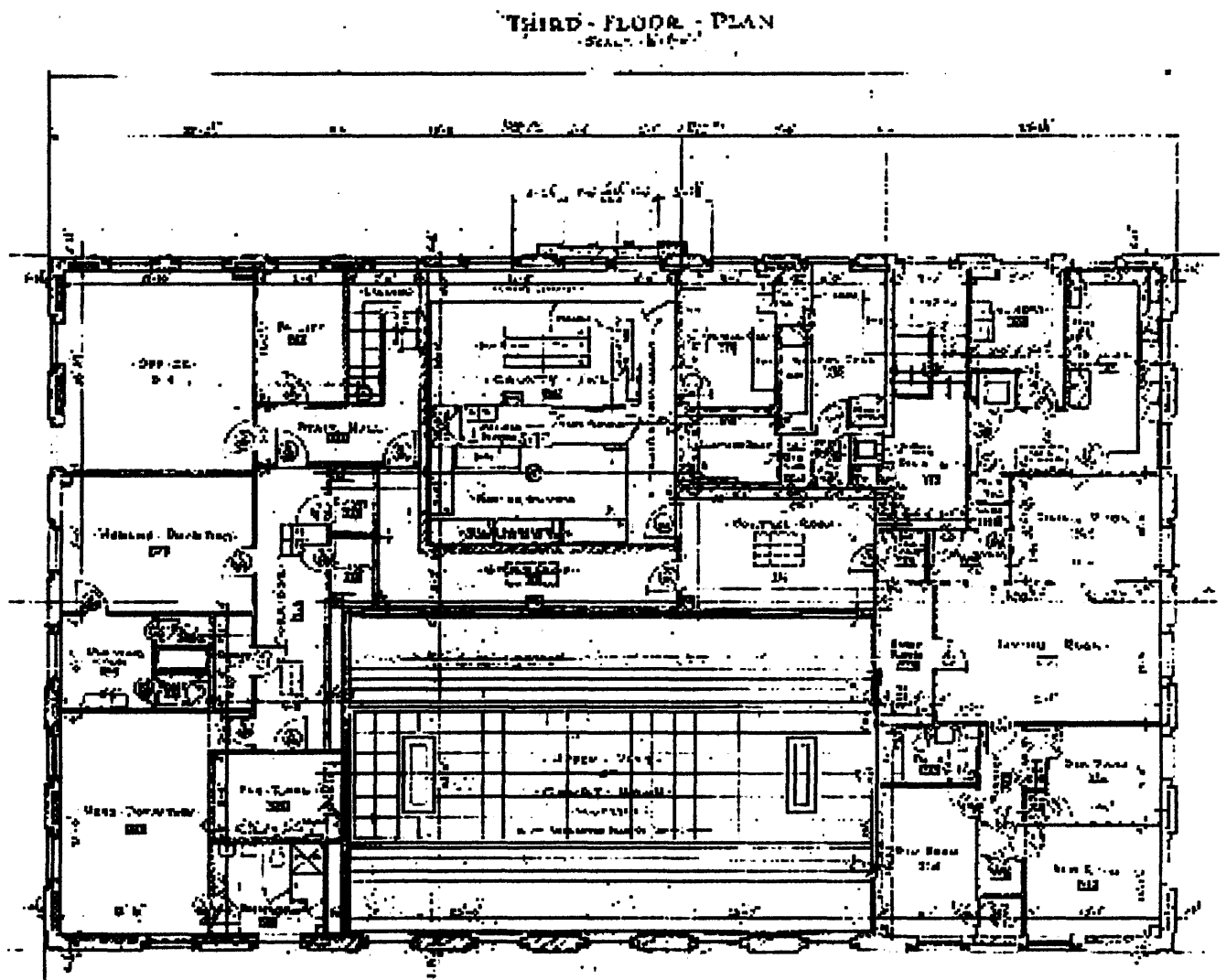
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Humboldt County Court House, Third Floor Plan, 1938



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Summary of contributing and non-contributing resources:

All historic resources associated with the courthouse were evaluated according to rules set forth in *National Register Bulletin 16A, How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* (1991). The evaluation was made according to procedures further specified in Section F.v. "Individually Eligible Properties," p. 47 of the PWA-Era County Courthouses of Iowa MPD. A summary follows.

- 1 Contributing Building: courthouse
- 1 Contributing Site: courthouse square
- 1 Contributing Object: flagpole

Summary of alterations:

- Masonry cleaning, 1954
- Replacement elevator and handicapped ramp at east end of building, 1981
- New metal windows, 1983-1987
- Remodel clerk of court office, 1988-89
- Re-roofing, 1994, 1995
- Masonry waterproofing, 1995
- Remodel recorder's Office, 1998
- Courtroom remodeling (refinish benches, paint walls & ceiling, clean acoustic tile), 1997
- New fire alarm and security systems, 2001
- Remodel third floor for offices, 1983, 1994

The changes made to the Humboldt County Court House are consistent with the registration requirements set forth under Section F.iv.c of the "PWA-Era County Courthouses of Iowa" MPD, pp. F45-F48. The courtroom remodeling rehabilitated finishes consistent with their original appearance. Introduction of new windows is also consistent with the registration requirements. All of the openings have retained their original size with replacement sash incorporating metal transoms where reduced size sash have been installed. Re-roofing and office changes have had minimal impact on the building and are expected with its continued use as a modern office building. The third floor's jail area has been modified following the removal of the county jail to a new building. A new corridor and relocated office walls have replaced the cellblock, day rooms, and various offices on the third floor. Rehabilitation of this space is also consistent with the building's continued use as a modern office building.

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8. Statement of Significance

The Humboldt County Court House is significant under Criteria A and C as one of ten county courthouses built in Iowa during the New Deal Era as part of the federal Public Works Administration and its predecessor agencies. Its construction represented a significant public investment of federal and local dollars by voters during a time when the economy was pressed by the effects of the Great Depression. Designed by Dougher, Rich & Woodburn of Des Moines, an important Iowa architectural firm responsible for the design of numerous PWA funded public buildings, it is a well-preserved example of the PWA Moderne style of public building architecture developed during the 1930s and early 1940s. Its design blends Art Deco and Moderne style elements with the utilitarian advantages of modern office building construction. Nomination of the Humboldt County Court House is consistent with the registration requirements set forth in Section F of the "PWA-Era County Courthouses of Iowa" MPD.

Historical Background:

i. New Deal Era and the Public Works Administration:

In June 1933 near the end of Franklin Roosevelt's first one hundred days in office, Congress passed the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) creating two important federal initiatives designed to combat the Depression. The National Recovery Administration or NRA was established to set up code agreements with private industries that would encourage greater employment and at the same time, regulate wages and affirm union organizing. The other new agency was intended to serve an emergency role hence the name, Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works. A short time later, President Franklin Roosevelt appointed General Hugh Johnson to head the NRA. During the next two years it would have a fractious history until the Supreme Court struck it down in May 1935.

Roosevelt's second initiative on behalf of industrial workers was intended to serve as an emergency program that would soon outlive its useful life.³ He appointed his good friend Harry Hopkins to head the newly established Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) and Civil Works Administration (CWA). Responsibilities for the new Public Works Administration (PWA) were assigned to Harold Ickes, Roosevelt's fiscally conservative Secretary of the Interior. The following year the CWA efforts were also transferred to Ickes. Under their direction a series of federal undertakings were given form and substance. Management structures were created, distribution systems organized, administrative practices reorganized, and funding set in motion. By June 1934, Ickes had overseen expenditure of \$3.3 billion to 13,266 federal projects and 2,407 non-federal projects. The popular federal program would see a series of successive appropriations continue for nearly a decade until the PWA was dismantled in 1943. It is this aspect of the NIRA that comprises

³Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Roosevelt: The Coming of the New Deal* (Boston, 1959), p. 104 as quoted in Lisa B. Reitzes, "Moderately Modern: Interpreting the Architecture of the Public Works Administration, Volume II," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Delaware, May 1989, p. 370.

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the balance of this discussion.

It is not surprising that the first public works projects to be funded through the FERA were for federal agencies. The Federal Employment Stabilization Board created in 1931 was responsible for establishing a six-year program of federal construction projects. However, under President Hoover's administration that was as far as the planning had gone. Now, with federal funding in place, many of these construction initiatives were ready to move forward. As a result, Washington, D.C. was among the first cities to benefit from the demand for both skilled and unskilled workers created by these federal programs.

The other part of the NIRA was intended to stimulate non-federal projects where the national government would serve as a partner with states, local communities, schools, and other non-governmental groups. For these projects to get off the ground, considerable planning would have to take place first. Soon after FERA was established, each state was asked to establish an advisory board with three members. Their purpose would be to stimulate applications for the non-federal funds, forward reports to Washington, and handle requests for funds once they were received. These boards were criticized and by February 1934 were discontinued.⁴

State level offices staffed by federal employees soon replaced the state boards. These offices were headed by "state engineers" and despite their titles, their responsibility was to the federal government. In a major effort at decentralization, legal, engineering, and financing experts were transferred from Washington to the State Engineer offices. Over time, there were problems with these offices as well. Their titles lead to confusion as local officials sought to learn how to apply for federal assistance and were unclear as to whether the "State Engineer" was a promoter or administrator.

Despite these problems, Congressional appropriations continued annually, each year accompanied by mandated changes in the operation of the PWA program. Among the most important were provisions in the Relief Appropriation Act of 1935 that allowed the federal share of PWA projects to be increased from 30 percent to 45 percent. Another provision allowed the grants to cover the cost of architects and engineers, acquisition of necessary land, legal fees, and administrative costs. By including these costs, more localities were able to participate and the quality of projects was enhanced. An executive order issued by President Roosevelt added the requirement that prevailing wage rates be observed on PWA projects.

When the 1936 appropriation bill came up the following year, Congress expressed its continuing concern for the large numbers of unemployed Americans by enacting new measures in the PWA designed to accelerate the expenditure of PWA funds. Historian Lisa Reitzes summarized the conflict:

⁴Jack F. Isakoff, "The Public Works Administration," *University of Illinois Bulletin*, Volume XXXVI, (November 18, 1938), p. 36.

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...it was widely agreed that, for the PWA to have a visible effect on unemployment and poverty, it needed to move quickly on labor-intensive projects; but Ickes insisted that to produce permanent useful public works whose execution would be economical and free from scandal, the PWA had to move slowly and apply strict standards for inclusion in the program...many in the government believed that the PWA needed to dictate what and where projects were undertaken; however, to enlist local support and ensure the "usefulness" of public works projects, many felt that distribution of PWA funds and designation of construction priorities needed to be guided by local decisions.⁵

In the end, Congress prevailed seeking to increase the ranks of the employed by speeding up spending on PWA projects. Setting an aggressive timetable for completion of projects did this.

The following year, Congressional sentiment shifted again. Funding under the PWA Extension Act of 1937 was drastically cut and July 1, 1939 set as the date for completion of all projects. The PWA's administrative staff was cut as it moved towards "liquidation" with state offices among the first to be shut down. Although seven regional offices, each with three or more states, had been in place since early in the life of the PWA, they had not had major responsibilities for project oversight.

This changed in the fall of 1937 as the state PWA offices closed. Thereafter, all grant applications, approvals, bidding and contracting, monitoring of wage scales, correspondence, payments, and auditing would flow through the regional offices. Though final authority remained in Washington, the day-to-day management of the PWA shifted to the regional offices. Iowa was one of eight states included in Region No. 4 headquartered in Omaha. Other states in Region No. 4 included Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, and Missouri. The other regional offices were headquartered in New York, Atlanta, Chicago, Fort Worth, San Francisco, and Portland.

By June 1938 with liquidation measures well underway, Congress reversed itself again. Measures to shut down the PWA were temporarily halted and a new appropriation of nearly \$1 billion was authorized. To keep the money flowing as quickly as possible, the appropriation law specified that new projects must be completed by July 1940.

In early 1939 a series of government publications appeared describing the story of the PWA. Some were designed to respond to criticism of the PWA and others were published to document for posterity the success of this experiment in public works construction. *The Story of PWA* came out in the spring of 1939, the lengthy *Public Buildings: A Survey of Architecture of Projects Constructed by Federal and other Governmental Bodies between the Years 1933 and 1939 with the Assistance of the Public Works Administration* came out later that year, and *America Builds the Record of PWA* came out before year's end.

⁵Lisa B. Reitzes, "Moderately Modern: Interpreting the Architecture of the Public Works Administration, Volume II," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Delaware, May 1989, p.372-373.

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The PWA officially ended in July 1939 as the focus of the Administration began to shift toward readying for war. President Roosevelt's reorganization plan consolidated the efforts of a number of the "alphabet agencies" under the umbrella of the Federal Works Agency (FWA). It absorbed not only the PWA but also the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Supervising Architect's Office in the Treasury Department (responsible for post office construction), and the U.S. Housing Authority. John M. Carmody was selected to head the new agency. The regional offices continued to operate until 1943 with Iowa projects still in the pipeline managed through the Omaha office through 1941.

ii. *The PWA at Work in Iowa: County Courthouse Building (1934-1941):*

Establishment of the Public Works Administration in June 1933 prompted formation of a network of 48 state PWA offices. There was no precedent to guide the federal-state-local partnership resulting in considerable time spent during the first months in simply setting up the state offices. Communities were not prepared to respond quickly to a call for PWA projects and as a result, the federal government turned to two other programs to speed federal money into the pipeline – the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the short-lived Civil Works Administration (CWA).

Meanwhile it became clear that antiquated municipal and county laws governing public building and the poor credit ratings of many cities and counties in the wake of bond failures would further prohibit a prompt set of applications. The PWA responded by sending financing and legal experts to states to assist in drafting new state enabling legislation and arranging for federal loan guarantees. Although no history of Iowa's State PWA Office has been written, it is likely that similar problems and responses were experienced there. The acting state director of Iowa's PWA Office by the time the first county courthouse was being planned in Cass County was P.F. Hopkins.⁶ Based on the correspondence record from that office, it appears that he continued in that capacity throughout the office's life.

The process of selecting PWA projects would be the same in Iowa as in other states. Initially applicants would be able to apply for grants amounting to up to 30 percent of the project's costs. Funding could be used for labor and materials but not for project management, architectural and engineering fees, and land acquisition. There would be five "yardsticks" by which local projects would be measured:

1. The social desirability of the project and its relation to coordinated planning.
2. The economic desirability; that is its relation to unemployment and the revival of industry.
3. The soundness of the project from engineering and technical standpoints.
4. The financial ability of the applicant to complete the work and "reasonably secure" any loans by the United States.

⁶P.F. Hopkins' familial relationship, if any, to PWA Administrator Harry Hopkins is unknown.

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5. The legal collectibility of the securities to be purchased or the enforceability of any lease entered into.⁷

In the case of county courthouses, the application would need to be submitted by the county board of supervisors with the actual applications usually prepared by the county auditor. In some Iowa counties, courthouses had been under discussion for years. In the case of Jones County, space for county offices and a courtroom was maintained in rented quarters for more than six decades prior to the completion of the new Jones County Court House in 1937. In Bremer County, the county offices and courtroom were housed in seven buildings including the 1857 courthouse, three banks, and above a hardware store. In the case of three counties, multiple referenda were held to consider building a new courthouse. One unique example involved the Cass County Court House in Atlantic. After a fire destroyed the old courthouse in 1932, a referendum vote was scheduled two months later. Faced with grim economic conditions voters turned down the referendum by a substantial margin. By the time the second vote was held, a citizens group had prompted the board of supervisors to apply for a PWA grant to underwrite a portion of the costs. After the second referendum was held year later, local officials were certain that the availability of a PWA grant had contributed to its passage. In several cases in Iowa when courthouse referenda votes were held in conjunction with a general election they failed. Passage appears to have been more likely when scheduled as part of a special election.

It was necessary for a PWA applicant to provide considerable information about their intended project. The only surviving application for a county courthouse in Iowa is believed to be the application prepared for the Jones County Court House in Anamosa in 1935. It is likely that it was typical of other applications filed. It contained the following:

- a general description of the project
- a statement regarding the status of drawings and specifications
- a breakdown of labor expenses by category of worker, amount, and percentage of grant allotment
- a breakdown of expenses for superintendence, architects, and engineers
- a breakdown of expense for land, materials, equipment, and contingent expenses
- a list of skilled laborers by specific trade and number to be employed
- estimated average worker yearly wage
- estimated total number of man-hours
- estimated daily average number of employees each month for term of the project
- a statement regarding source of other funds and statutory authority to undertake project
- a copy of the application resolution by the board of supervisors
- supplemental information regarding outstanding bonds, borrowing capacity, county

⁷*America Builds. The Record of PWA. Public Works Administration.* Prepared in the Division of Information by the United States, Public Works Administration. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1939.

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population, and assessed valuation⁸

To answer these questions, an applicant-county would need to have preliminary cost estimates in hand. It would be impossible to determine the overall cost figure or any of the breakdowns required in the application without first having a general building plan in hand. To do this it appears that several architectural firms in Iowa were prepared to work for little or no fee during this first phase. In courthouses where Keffer & Jones of Des Moines were involved, the firm signed a contract stipulating that no fee would be charged until the PWA grant was approved and the bonds sold. Their services were limited to preliminary sketches until that time.⁹

The willingness of an architectural firm to work with a county in such a manner allowed two things. First, it enabled the county to prepare an application and respond in an educated manner to the questions posed by federal reviewers. Second, it gave the board of supervisors a building concept and design to promote during the referendum process. If the grants were awarded and the county's voters approved, the architect who had supported the local efforts was likely to secure the design services contract.

Once a PWA application was approved at the state, regional, and national levels, the board of supervisors moved to the next step – the referendum campaign. In virtually every county in the Iowa, these campaigns looked the same. A citizens committee, either formal or informal, undertook a public information campaign to persuade voters of the merits of building a courthouse with the help of a PWA grant. Presentations were given by members of the committee or the board of supervisors to civic organizations. Using the front pages of the local newspapers, articles appeared regularly touting the merit of grants that would underwrite 45 percent of the cost. Voters were encouraged to think themselves fortunate to be able to get more courthouse than their tax dollars would normally buy.

An example of such a campaign was seen on the front pages of the *Indianola Record* in 1936 and 1937. During the summer of 1936 the Warren County Federated Women's Clubs had the courthouse as part of their quarterly meeting. Following the meeting the *Indianola Record* carried an extensive article with the opinions of various members, both pro and con, cited. The newspaper carried similar articles when the Indianola Chamber of Commerce considered it on its several months later. The opinions of those who favored the new courthouse were best summarized in the comments of one Warren County woman when she said that "she had always been taught to take a piece of pie when it was passed to her. She was heartily in favor of constructing a new courthouse now when the county can get a \$145,000 building for \$80,000."¹⁰ The referendum vote was held in conjunction with the general election in 1936 and failed. Two years later at a special election

⁸"Application for Grant, Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, PWA Form No. 175 for Court House for Humboldt County," dated July 5, 1935, on file in Auditor's Office, Jones County Court House, Anamosa, Iowa.

⁹"Agreement between Architects and Owners, for Court House for Audubon County," dated July 29, 1938, on file in Auditor's Office, Audubon County Court House, Audubon, Iowa.

¹⁰"Women's Clubs Talk Building a Courthouse," *Indianola Record*, July, 1936.

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following a continuing campaign by promoters, the measure passed.

Other pro-courthouse campaign messages stressed the need for a new courthouse to keep records safe. In Cass County, a referendum information pamphlet made the case for approval by pointing out that in Douglas County, Nebraska the county had spent nearly \$300,000 to recreate records lost or damaged in a fire. When Jones County began to make a case for its courthouse in 1935 it contacted Cass County's auditor who happily shared a copy of the information pamphlet.¹¹

A third reason frequently given for erecting a courthouse in the midst of a national economic depression related to the cost of bonds. Architect Karl Keffer combined all of these arguments when he spoke to the Audubon Board of Supervisors in August 1938. He said that the "primary reason Audubon County should have a new courthouse is because county records are not safe in case of fire in the present building. The secondary reason is that it would be to the county's financial advantage not only to secure the government grant but to take advantage of present low interest rates county bonds carry."¹² Keffer's assessment of bond rates proved prophetic when the county was able to secure a favorable rate of just 1¾- percent later that year. This rate was less than half that paid four years earlier in Cass County.

Soon, the success of one PWA-funded courthouse building encouraged other counties to undertake the application process. By the time Warren County voters were asked to consider approving a referendum the second time, the *Indianola Tribune* was able to feature photographs of three completed buildings. Two were finished using PWA grants in Jones and Cass counties while a third, much smaller building, was erected in Ringgold County before the PWA was available.¹³

The first county to successfully complete the application, referendum, and courthouse construction process was Cass County in southwest Iowa in 1934. Both Governor Clyde Herring and Lieutenant Governor N. C. Kraschel were on hand for the cornerstone ceremony in March 1934 when 1,200 Atlantic school children turned out to greet them. Groundbreaking ceremonies, cornerstone laying events, courtroom dedications, and courthouse openings were celebrated with parades, keynote speakers, and historical pageants. In most communities completion of the courthouses was viewed as an opportunity to pass the torch from one generation to another and the county's old settlers were given special honors. In all but the last several courthouse completions community boosters used these events to look to better times ahead.

A chronological list of PWA-Era courthouses completed between 1934 and 1941 appears below. All received federal assistance except the Floyd County Court House, which was denied funding when the federal appropriation available for the state ran out.

¹¹"Suggest for the New Court House for Cass County," prepared by the Board of Supervisors of Cass County, Iowa for November 8, 1932 referendum, on file in Auditor's Office, Jones County Court House, Anamosa, Iowa.

¹²"PWA Grant for Court House is Asked by Board," *The Advocate-Republican*, August 4, 1938.

¹³"County Board Reserves Right to Reject Any and All Architectural Plans for Courthouse," *Indianola Tribune*, August 3, 1938.

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Figure 2: Chronological List of PWA-Era Courthouses, 1934-1941

County/City Federal Project #	Year Completed	Architect	General Contractor	Original Cost ¹⁴
Cass Co., Atlantic Federal Public Works Project No. 1410	1934	Dougher, Rich & Woodburn, Des Moines, Iowa	C.C. Larsen Co., Council Bluffs, Iowa	\$130,000
Bremer Co., Waverly P.W.A. Docket IA 1338-R	1937	Mortimer Cleveland, Waterloo, Iowa	Drape Construction Co., Tripoli, Iowa	\$135,000
Jones Co., Anamosa P.W.A. Docket IA 1068-R	1937	Dougher, Rich & Woodburn, Des Moines, Iowa	C.C. Larsen & Sons Co., Council Bluffs, Iowa	\$200,000
Humboldt Co., Dakota City P.W.A. Docket IA 1351-DS	1939	Dougher, Rich & Woodburn, Des Moines, Iowa	Holtze Construction Co., Sioux City, Iowa	\$185,000
Warren Co., Indianola P.W.A. Docket IA 1290-F	1939	Keffer & Jones, Des Moines, Iowa	F.B. Dickinson & Co., Des Moines, Iowa	\$145,000
Audubon Co., Audubon P.W.A. Docket IA 1586-F	1939	Keffer & Jones, Des Moines, Iowa	J.C. Mayer, Clarion, Iowa	\$133,000
Buchanan Co., Independence P.W.A. Docket IA 1447-F	1940	Dougher, Rich & Woodburn, Des Moines, Iowa	C.C. Larsen & Sons Co., Council Bluffs, Iowa	\$254,000
Des Moines Co., Burlington P.W.A. Docket IA 1529-F	1940	Keffer & Jones, Des Moines, Iowa	Paul Steenberg Construction Co., St. Paul, Minnesota	\$280,000
Allamakee Co., Waukon Federal project # unknown	1940	Charles Altfillisch, Decorah, Iowa	Rye & Henkel, Mason City, Iowa	\$202,000
Floyd Co., Charles City Not funded with PWA assistance	1941	Hansen & Waggoner, Mason City, Iowa	James Thompson & Sons, Ames, Iowa	\$265,000

iii. Building the Humboldt County Court House:

Dakota City was established as the county seat of Humboldt County in 1857. A two-story brick courthouse was erected in 1872 and enlarged in 1885. According to Iowa historian Leroy Pratt, the brick used for the original building was manufactured from clay extracted from Court House Hill and fired in improvised kilns on the grounds.¹⁵

Humboldt County's population grew steadily from 5,341 in 1880 to a peak of 13,459 in 1940. With the county's economy based heavily on agriculture, mechanization led to a reduced employment base in subsequent years.

¹⁴Original cost figures include all expenses for completion of the courthouse including site acquisition if applicable, architectural fees, excavation, general contract, subcontracts, furnishings and equipment, and landscaping. Cost figures are rounded to the nearest thousand.

¹⁵LeRoy G Pratt, *The Counties and Courthouses of Iowa*, (Mason City, Iowa: Klipto Printing & Office Supply Company), 1976, p. 159.

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A move to erect a new courthouse was first brought before Humboldt County voters in 1923. This move to build a new courthouse was soundly defeated when voters suspected plans by the supervisors to erect a new building would also entail moving the county seat to nearby Humboldt. At the time Dakota City was Iowa's smallest county seat community with less than a population of 500. The agricultural recession facing rural Iowa during the 1920s likely added to the rejection by voters. In 1925 with no plans for a new building in sight, the county board of supervisors authorized construction of a brick vault adjacent to the old courthouse in order to protect valuable records.

In 1936 the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors and residents of the county began work on a campaign to build a new courthouse with the assistance of federal funds. During the spring and summer citizens circulated petitions asking the board to call an election to issue bonds for a new courthouse. The petition with the required number of signatures was filed on October 1, 1936 and the board set an election for the following November to allow the county to issue bonds. The debate over the new courthouse focused on the safety of records and the deplorable working conditions in the old courthouse – one of the oldest courthouses in the state. The referendum, which assured that the new building would be constructed in Dakota City, was approved at the general election on November 3, 1936 by a vote of 3,573 to 1,508.

Shortly thereafter, architects Dougher, Rich & Woodburn of Des Moines were retained to finalize designs for the building. The board of supervisors prepared an application to the PWA for a grant to cover 45 percent of the cost of construction a \$175,000 courthouse. Approval did not come until the following year, however, when a new federal appropriation was in hand. On October 4, 1937 the board of supervisors officially accepted the PWA grant. With architectural planning completed, contracts for construction were ready to be let that fall. The general contract was awarded to Holtze Construction Company of Sioux City, Iowa. The plumbing and heating contract went to Carstens Brothers of Ackley, Iowa and Best Electric Co., Ames, Iowa received the electrical contract. Of special note was the award of the decorating contract to C.C. Randrup Company also of Sioux City. Among Randrup's other credits was the Woodbury County Court House in Sioux City, a noteworthy Prairie School Style building.

Although excavation was undertaken before winter, most work awaited until the spring of 1938. By then the board of supervisors projected that the new building would likely total \$185,000 with \$95,000 coming from the sale of bonds, 83,250 from the PWA grant, and the balance from transferred county funds. On April 30, 1938 the cornerstone was laid in a short program.

Once underway the building proceeded steadily over the next twelve months. Although the courthouse was no longer weekly front-page news, photographs depicting progress on the building were regular features. By February 1939 the county offices were completed and the employees had moved into the new building. On February 25, 1939 the new building was formally dedicated during an open house and ceremony held in the new courtroom. Iowa Supreme Court Justice Richard Mitchell presented the dedication address and an overflow crowd attended the open house. The dedication ceremony ended with another ceremony when Humboldt County Board of

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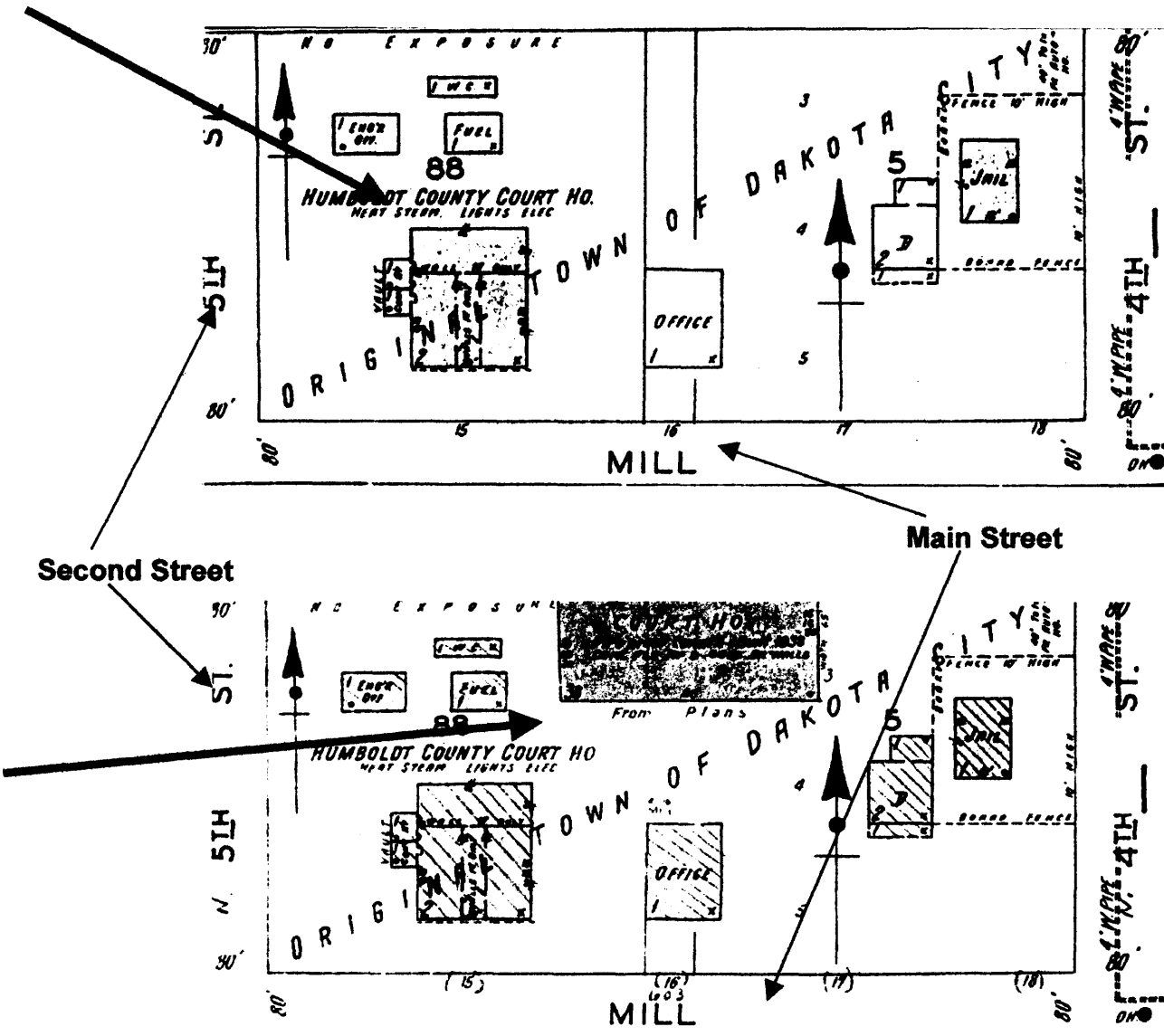
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Supervisor Arno Schumann was married to Mabel Briggs in the new courtroom.¹⁶

Sanborn maps depicting the courthouse square before and after construction appears below.

Humboldt County Court House, 1930 (top); 1930 updated to 1948 (below)¹⁷

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¹⁶ "Wedding in Courthouse," *Des Moines Register & Tribune*, February 26, 1939.

¹⁷ *Insurance Maps of Humboldt/Dakota City, Iowa*. (New York: The Sanborn and Perris Map Company) 1930 and 1930 updated to 1948, p. 1. Note: the hatch-marked buildings were removed after the courthouse was completed.

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iv. Architectural significance:

The Humboldt County Court House was designed by the architectural firm of Dougher, Rich and Woodburn with offices in Des Moines, approximately 100 miles southeast of Dakota City. James A. Dougher (1894-1976), Herbert E. Rich (? – ca. 1949), and Chester C. Woodburn (1893-1960) formed their partnership in 1923. Both Dougher and Rich had worked for the Des Moines firm of Proudfoot, Bird and Rawson. Woodburn worked as a structural engineer for Keffer and Jones, also in Des Moines. Dougher's strength apparently lay in administration while Rich's aptitude was for design and Woodburn's interest was in engineering and the business rather than professional side of architecture according to historian Wesley Shank.¹⁸

During the 26 years that the firm practiced, the firm developed a substantial reputation in the state eventually receiving commissions for many schools, churches, and hospitals. The firm designed the Temple B'nai Jeshurun, St. Lukes Parish House, and Plymouth Congregational Church, all in Des Moines during the 1920s as well as the Presbyterian Church in Fairfield, the Methodist Church in Indianola, and the Methodist Church in Macedonia. Among their Iowa school projects were buildings in Boone, Hampton, Marshalltown, Muscatine, Marengo, Washington, Macedonia, Mt. Ayr, Dawson, Avoca, Creston, Hamburg, Keosauqua, Woodbine, Coon Rapids, Stratford, Sac City, Pomeroy, Shipley, and Altoona.¹⁹

The firm developed a solid reputation for their work on county courthouses in the state as well. Commissions included the Cass County Court House (1933-1934) in Atlantic, the Jones County Court House (1936-1937) in Anamosa, the Humboldt County Court House (1938-1939) in Dakota City, and the Buchanan County Court House (1939) in Independence. These four New Deal Era courthouses designed by the firm share a number of design attributes including basic form, floor plan, and materials. Each building has a symmetrical façade with a central section (two to four levels). The Humboldt County Court House is the only building that does not feature lower height wings at each end. In each case a central corridor extends the length of the building and county offices opening onto the corridor. The Jones County Court House differs from the others with its main staircase at the end of the corridor rather than midway opposite the main entrance. Common materials include buff colored brick, Bedford limestone, multi-colored terrazzo floors, polished stone wainscoting, and acoustic tile. Though the courtroom designs are distinctly different, each originally used dark wood tones and Art Deco ornamentation. The Humboldt County Court House is the only building to use Mankato or Kasota limestone and Mankato marble.

The Humboldt County Court House is the third courthouse designed by Dougher, Rich and Woodburn. It reflects their successful experience in the other buildings as well as new innovations

¹⁸Shank, Wesley I., *Iowa's Historic Architects: A Biographical Dictionary* (Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1999, pp. 52, 141, & 178.

¹⁹"Architect's Description of Building," *Humboldt County Republican*, Humboldt, Iowa, March 10, 1939; and Barbara Beving Long, "Architects in Iowa Study," various working files prepared for the State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines, Iowa, September 1984.

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for such features as an underground sheriff's garage, a central incineration system with connections to each floor and the jail, and the use of additional stones for building finishes. The architectural details in each of the three primary entrances, the decorative plaster cornices in the corridors, terrazzo floors, polished stone wainscoting, and the main staircase elements remain unaltered. The courtroom has been changed minimally leaving stencil patternwork, tubular light fixtures, and all wood elements as originally built. The American flag depicted on the original architect's drawings for the courtroom is even still hung as specified.

Summary:

In summary, the Humboldt County Court House derives its significance as one of ten county courthouses built in Iowa during the New Deal Era with planning or funding assistance from the federal Public Works Administration. Its construction represented a significant public investment of federal and local tax dollars made at a time when this rural county was hard pressed by the Great Depression. Designed by Des Moines architects Dougher, Rich & Woodburn, it is a well-preserved example of the PWA Moderne Style of public building architecture that dominated the 1930s and early 1940s in Iowa.

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Proposed Drawing for Humboldt County Court House, 1938 (as published in the *Des Moines Register and Tribune*)²⁰



²⁰Humboldt County Court House," Photograph Collection, State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines, Iowa.

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Humboldt County Court House
Name of Property

Humboldt County, IA
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Verbal Boundary Description:

The courthouse square includes Block 5, Original Town of Dakota City, Humboldt County, Iowa.

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries comprise the original site for the Humboldt County Court House when it was erected in 1938-1939.

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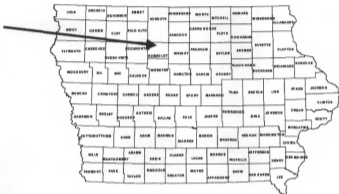
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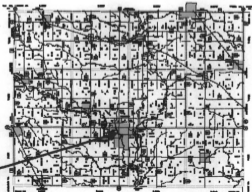
Humboldt County, IA
County and State

Map: Humboldt County, Iowa



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UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTION OF
HUMBOLDT COUNTY
IOWA



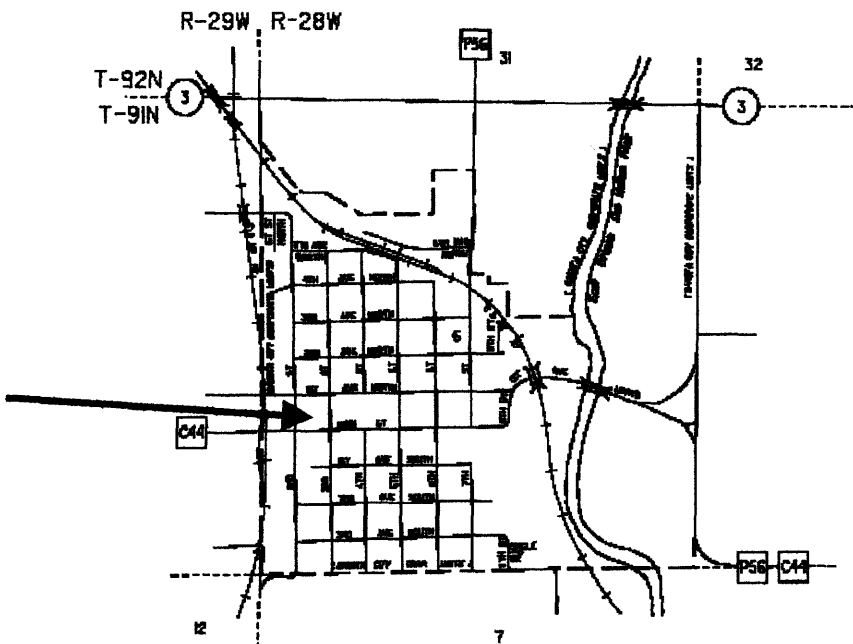
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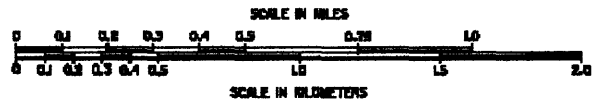
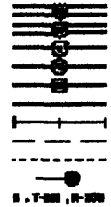
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LEGEND

- INTERSTATE ROUTE
- PRIORITY OR EMPLOYMENT ROUTE
- U.S. PLANNED ROUTE
- STATE PLANNED ROUTE
- COUNTY NUMBERED ROUTE
- LOCAL ROAD OR CITY STREET
- RAILROAD
- CORPORATION LINE
- SECTION LINE
- U.S. MC RAC
- SECTION, TOWNSHIP & RANGE NUMBER



**HIGHWAY AND STREET MAP
OF
DAKOTA CITY
IOWA**

PREPARED BY
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DIVISION OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING
OFFICE OF TRANSPORTATION DATA

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Humboldt County Court House
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Photographs

Bruce Meyer, photographer

Date taken: October 22, 2002

1. Front & west façades, looking northeast
2. Front & east façades, looking northwest
3. Front façade, looking north
4. Rear & east façades, looking southwest
5. Rear & west façades, looking southeast
6. Front entrance vestibule, looking north
7. Radiator grill cover detail, entrance vestibule, looking west
8. Main staircase, between first and second floors, looking northwest
9. Central corridor, first floor, looking west
10. Cornice detail, first floor, looking west
11. Courtroom, towards front of room, looking west
12. Courtroom, judge's bench, looking west
13. Courtroom, door detail, looking west
14. Courtroom, towards rear of room, looking east
15. Front, flagpole, looking north