

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCERS use only

received AUG 4 1981

date entered SEP 3 1981

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic

and/or common Colfax County Courthouse (CX06-1)

**2. Location**

street & number CH ME 15 not for publication

city, town Schuyler vicinity of congressional district First

state Nebraska code 31 county Colfax code 37

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Board of County Commissioners

street & number Colfax County Courthouse

city, town Schuyler vicinity of state Nebraska

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Clerk

street & number Colfax County Courthouse

city, town Schuyler state Nebraska

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date On-going  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Nebraska State Historical Society

city, town Lincoln state Nebraska

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The 1921-22 Colfax County Courthouse is located on the northern half of Block 100 at the eastern end of A Street, the main street of Schuyler (1980 pop. 4,557). The properties to the north and west are used for commercial purposes, and dwellings are located to the east and on the southern half of the block.

Designed by George A. Berlinghof, the courthouse is a Second Renaissance Revival style edifice consisting of four stories over a basement. The 88 x 71 foot rectangular building has a symmetrical, five-bay facade constructed of gray brick with terra-cotta and stone trim. The brick of the first floor is laid in bands to resemble rustication. The central entrance is flanked by the original free-standing lamps and surmounted by a curved pediment. The central, three-bay pavilion projects lightly and dominates the facade. The paired pilasters and cornices are constructed in terra-cotta. The windows in the three central bays are tri-part; those of the second floor are crowned by frontons. Recessed panels on the corners simulate quoins. The east and west sides have projecting three-bay pavilions similar to the north facade. The simple terra-cotta cornice divides the third and fourth floors with the words "Colfax County Court House" in the frieze. The parapet houses the fourth floor and is decorated with a centered shield and garlands, and round flat medallions between the bays. Few changes have been made to the exterior; glass blocks have been placed in the front entrance transom and certain windows.

The major interior space is the third floor District Court Room (see photo #4). The ceiling is the most striking feature with recessed panels and elaborate plaster moldings and cornices. The original oak furniture, ceiling fixtures, and wall sconces remain intact. Acoustical tiles have been placed in some ceiling, wall, and window panels.

The courthouse is placed in the center of its half block, slightly recessed from the street. The grounds are elevated above the sidewalk by a low stone wall. The original sidewalk arrangement remains, but the plantings have been removed. A monument to the Colfax County men who served in the First World War is placed at the north entrance.

### Contractors:

General contractor	R. O. Stake, Lincoln
Superintendent	Edward H. Vrana, Schuyler
Plumbing and heating	L. J. Zimola, Schuyler
Electrical	E. A. Schmidt
Wood and metal vault furniture	Omaha Printing Co., Omaha
Linoleum	J. L. Brandeis & Sons, Omaha
Landscaping	Plumfield Nurseries, Fremont
Soldiers' monument	Lincoln Fine Arts Shop, Lincoln

# 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/		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)		

**Specific dates** 1921-22 **Builder/Architect** George A. Berlinghof, Lincoln

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Colfax County Courthouse is a significant landmark to the city of Schuyler and the county for its scale, visual, and stylistic prominence in the cityscape, as the center of county government activity, and as a testimony to the mature skill of architect George A. Berlinghof.

Colfax County has a significant location in the history of Nebraska. Its southern boundary is the Platte River, an important pathway to the West. The Mormon Trail passed through the southern portion of the county, and later the mainline of the Union Pacific Railroad. Colfax county was organized in 1869 from a division of Platte County. The county and the county seat were named for the then U.S. Vice-President Schuyler Colfax. The Union Pacific owned the townsite at the time of the county's establishment, and a town was quickly organized. The courthouse site was donated, and that building was erected in 1871-72 (Andreas, pp. 590-591).

By 1920 the County Commissioners were considering a new building. The old location, several blocks from the commercial area, was unpopular. As reported in the Schuyler Sun, July 29, 1920:

There are but few who hold to the old location. It is out of the way. . .An up-town location would be found to be much more convenient for those who have almost daily business among the county records in cases of abstracting and other legal matters.

A new location on the eastern end of the main street (A Street) was selected. On October 7, 1920, a Lincoln architect George A. Berlinghof, was selected to design a new building. R. O. Stake of Lincoln was later appointed general contractor. The cornerstone was laid on July 21, 1921, according to Masonic ritual. Because of contractor delays the building was not completed until December, 1922. The landscaping was done in 1923 to Berlinghof's designs.

The architect for the courthouse of this county of many Czech and German immigrants was a native of Germany. George A. Berlinghof (1862-1944) was born in Frankfort-am-Main and graduated from the Polytechnic School at Darmstadt in 1879. He moved to Omaha in 1881 and worked for the firm of Mendelssohn, Fisher, and Lawrie for nine years before opening his own office. In 1898 he moved to Beatrice, and seven years later to Lincoln where he remained for the rest of his life.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

APPLICABLE NOT VERIFIED  
 APPLICABLE NOT VERIFIED  
 APPLICABLE NOT VERIFIED  
 APPLICABLE NOT VERIFIED

Acreage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Schuyler, Ne

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 

1	4	6	6	2	4	7	0	4	5	9	0	0	0	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing						

C 

Zone			Easting				Northing						

D 

Zone			Easting				Northing						

E 

Zone			Easting				Northing						

F 

Zone			Easting				Northing						

G 

Zone			Easting				Northing						

H 

Zone			Easting				Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 1-13, Block 100, Original Town Plat, Schuyler, Ne

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Penelope Chatfield, Preservation Historian

organization Nebraska State Historical Society

date May, 1981

street & number 1500 R Street

telephone 402/471-3850 or 471-3270

city or town Lincoln

state Nebraska

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Margaret D. Kuntz*

7/24/81

title Director, Nebraska State Historical Society

date

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date

9/3/81

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Berlinghof was a prolific designer of public buildings in Nebraska: six extant courthouses and three city libraries are known to have been designed by him. In 1907 he was chosen State Architect, in that capacity he designed state institutions. After the turn of the century, his designs deal nearly exclusively in classical revivalist vocabularies. The Beatrice City Library is, to quote D. Murphy in the National Register nomination, "one of the only two outstanding examples of Beaux-Arts Classicism which have been identified in Nebraska to date" (see NRHP nomination 3-1-76). The A. O. Thomas House, Kearney, is a fine example of the Neo-Classical style in residential architecture (see NRHP nomination 2-28-80). The Second Renaissance Revival is the most common style used in his public buildings. His 20th-century courthouses (Seward County, Kearney County, Lincoln County, and Colfax County) were designed in that mode. Other examples are the proposed Nebraska State Historical Society (1909), the Presbyterian Church of Kearney (1922), and the Chadron Carnegie Library (1910). The Colfax County Courthouse is the last courthouse known to have been designed by Berlinghof: he was 59 at the time of the cornerstone laying. The use of the classical styles, particularly in courthouses, was in keeping with the slightly earlier attitudes of the City Beautiful movement and the appropriateness of classical styles in civic buildings.

The District Court Room is the major interior space in the courthouse. Its degree of ornateness and sophistication is somewhat unusual in courtrooms of an earlier date in Nebraska. The original fixtures and furnishings remain, and the room is relatively unchanged.

The Soldiers' Monument on the north side of the courthouse was designed to honor the men of the county who fought in the First World War. The shaft of gray Barre (Vermont) granite is inscribed with the names of the Colfax County soldiers. The bronze statue on top is entitled "Over the Top" and depicts an American soldier. The Lincoln Fine Arts Shop, a small art firm owned by Miss Katherine L. Woods in Lincoln from 1916-1931, undertook the contract to supply the monument. The Home Guards donated the money for the memorial. Funds were acquired shortly after the war, but the monument did not arrive until November, 1923. The location was chosen by Berlinghof in his plans for the grounds.

The Colfax County Courthouse is a landmark in the city and the county. The use of the Renaissance Revival style is one of the few examples of classicism in the city. Visually, it is an anchor on the eastern end of the main commercial street, striking in its scale (one of the tallest buildings in the community) and style.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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Andreas, A. T. History of the State of Nebraska. Chicago: Western Historical Co., 1882.

Colfax County Board of Commissioners Proceedings. Microfilm. State Archives, Nebraska State Historical Society.

Schuyler's Sixty-Fifth Anniversary. Schuyler, 1935, p. 30.

Schuyler (Ne.) Sun, 1920-1923.

W.P.A. Historical Records Survey, Colfax County, Nebraska. (Floorplan, ca. 1938). MS. (RG 515) State Archives, Nebraska State Historical Society.