

**IDENTIFICATION**

1. Site Name Muscatine County Courthouse
2. Village/Town/City Muscatine Township \_\_\_\_\_ County Muscatine
3. Street Address 3rd Street between Walnut and Mulberry
4. Legal Location OT 59  
Urban: subdivision block parcel  
 Rural: township range section  
 subparcel 1/4 section-1/4 section
5. UTM Location: zone 15 easting 663540 northing 4587520; Acreage less than 1 acre
6. Owner(s) Name Muscatine County Board of Supervisors
7. Owner(s) Address \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street address) (City) (State) (Zip)  
Muscatine Iowa 52761
8. Use: present Courthouse original Courthouse

**DESCRIPTION**

9. Date of Construction 1909 Architect/Builder J.E. Mills, Detroit, Architect  
J.W. McAlpine, Dixon, Ill., Bldr.
10. Building Type:  single family dwelling  multiple family dwelling  commercial  
 industrial  educational  other institutional  public  religious  agricultural
11. Exterior Walls:  clapboard  stone  brick  board & batten  shingles  stucco  
 other \_\_\_\_\_
12. Structural System:  wood frame with interlocking joints  
 wood frame with light members (balloon frame)  masonry load-bearing walls  
 iron frame  steel frame with curtain walls  reinforced concrete  
 other \_\_\_\_\_
13. Condition:  excellent  good  fair  deteriorated
14. Integrity:  original site  moved-if so, when? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Notes on alterations, additions (with dates and architect, if known) and any other notable features of building and site:  
Rotunda area somewhat modernized - aluminum sash and doors.
15. Related Outbuildings and Property:  barn  other farm structures  
 carriage house  garage  privy  other \_\_\_\_\_
16. Is the building endangered?  no  yes-if so, why? \_\_\_\_\_
17. Surroundings of the building:  open land  woodland  scattered outbuildings  
 densely built-up  commercial  industrial  residential  other \_\_\_\_\_

18. Map

19. Photo  
 Roll \_\_\_\_\_ Frame \_\_\_\_\_ View \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNIFICANCE** (Indicate sources of information for all statements)

**20. Architectural Significance**

- a. Key structure/individually may qualify for the National Register
- b. Contributing structure  c. Not eligible/intrusion

A courthouse somewhat of the Beaux Arts style - note pairs of giant columns and pediment above the main entrance. Two-stage bell and clock tower features domed roof. Note oculi above third floor windows, sited on large square near CBD.

**21. Historical Significance**

Theme(s) Politics/Government

- a. Key structure/individually may qualify for the National Register
- b. Contributing structure  c. Not eligible/intrusion

This courthouse is locally significant as the historical focus of county government, and of the political power and prestige derived from the community's status as the county seat. As center of county government, an Iowa town was reasonably assured of economic and population growth, and a prominent role in local social and political life. The county courthouse represents a significant public investment in a structure built not simply for utilitarian purposes, but also as a monument associated with the historical importance of county organization and development.

See Continuation Sheet

**22. Sources** (for primary and secondary sources, give complete facts of publication: author, title, place of publication, date, etc.):

- Andreas, A.T. Illustrated Historical Atlas of Iowa. Chicago: Andreas Atlas Co., 1875.
- Pratt, LeRoy G. The Counties and Courthouses of Iowa. Mason City, Iowa: Klipto Printing and Office Supply Co., 1977.
- Stanek, Edward and Jacqueline. Iowa's Magnificent County Courthouses. Des Moines: Wallace-Homestead Book Co., 1976.

Prepared by \_\_\_\_\_ Date January, 1980  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Organization DHP

FOR DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION USE ONLY	
<b>1. OFFICE INFORMATION SOURCES ON THIS PROPERTY</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> COUNTY RESOURCE FILE	<input type="checkbox"/> REVIEW AND COMPLIANCE PROJECT:
<input type="checkbox"/> WINDSHIELD SURVEY	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> NATIONAL REGISTER	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____
<input type="checkbox"/> GRANTS-IN-AID: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____
<input type="checkbox"/> DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____
<b>2. SUBJECT TRACES</b>	<b>3. PHOTO IMAGES</b> _____
a. _____	_____
b. _____	_____
c. _____	_____
d. _____	_____
e. _____	_____

CONTINUATION SHEET

Item Number(s)

MUSCATINE COUNTY

Bloomington was established as the seat of Muscatine County shortly after the county was organized in 1837. The original courthouse was built in 1840 from bricks that were nine inches long, five inches wide, and two and one-half inches thick. Using plans and specifications which cost \$200, the edifice was set upon a stone foundation. Upon its completion, the cost of the building totaled \$15,000. It was placed upon land that had been reserved for it in 1838. The county paid \$1.25 per acre for the site. Upon the adoption of a special charter by its citizens, Bloomington was incorporated as the city of Muscatine on February 21, 1851.

The old courthouse was destroyed by fire on December 17, 1864. A new courthouse was built in the summer and fall of 1867 for \$29,000 after the ashes and rubble from the fire had been cleared away. The handsome two-story brick building was surmounted with a well-proportioned and neatly designed dome, the crest of which was ornamented with a large and elegant statue of the goddess of justice. The goddess held the scales of justice in her left hand until one day when a high wind amputated her left arm. She stood in this manner for several years until her condition deteriorated further and she was removed from her pedestal.

The front of the 1867 structure had six grand pillars which had to be removed in 1907 to make room to dig the foundation of the present courthouse. This grand edifice sits high atop the square, which has been reserved for Muscatine County courthouses for nearly 150 years. Although no goddess adorns this structure, a beautiful dome with a public timepiece surmounts it.

--from Stanek, Edward, and Jacqueline Stanek,  
Iowa's Magnificent County Courthouses. Des  
Moines: Wallace-Homestead Book Co., 1976.