

PHO 355551

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	OCT 20 1976
DATE ENTERED	SEP 22 1977

**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

\*\*

Martin County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

Martin County Courthouse

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Lake Avenue at Second Street

\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Fairmont

\_\_ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Second

STATE

Minnesota

CODE

27

COUNTY

Martin

CODE

091

**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
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Martin County

STREET & NUMBER

Lake Avenue at Second Street

CITY, TOWN

Fairmont

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Minnesota

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Registry of Deeds -- Martin County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Lake Avenue at Second Street

CITY, TOWN

Fairmont

STATE

Minnesota

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Statewide Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1972

\_\_FEDERAL  STATE \_\_COUNTY \_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Minnesota Historical Society - Building 25, Fort Snelling

CITY, TOWN

Saint Paul

STATE

Minnesota

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED . DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Martin County Courthouse is built of stone. The first story is built of Marquette rain-drop sandstone from Michigan, and the second and third stories are built of Buff-Bedford limestone from Indiana. The foundation of the building is made of solid concrete about five feet deep. The building is classical in architecture. The bottom floor is rusticated; all the corners are quoined. A dentiled cornice and balustrade conceal a low pitched roof. The windows and doors are flanked by pilasters, and the main doors and two windows are topped by complete entablatures. The detailing is carried through to the central metal domed tower. The interior offices are arranged around a circular lighted court between the second and third floors located under the muralled dome. The third floor has a garland-band ceiling trim and stained glass windows in the stairwells. It is made fire proof throughout. Its construction was commenced on April 9th, 1906, and was completed November 1st, 1907. It is 79 feet by 116 feet in size, and height to the top of the roof is 50 feet. The dome extends 58 feet above the roof, making it 108 feet from the ground to the ball on the dome. The total cost of the building, including heating, lighting, steel and wood furniture, paintings and decorating, and the plumbing is a little less than \$125,000. It is built in the western part of the City of Fairmont on an eminence of ground overlooking beautiful Lake Sisseton.

The ground floor is divided into offices for the Judge of Probate, Superintendent of Schools, Surveyor and rest rooms. The second floor is divided into offices for the County Commissioners. Auditor, Treasurer, Register of Deeds and Clerk of Court. The third floor is divided into District Court Chambers, Court room, Jury rooms and an office for the County Attorney. The Rotunda and corridors on the different floors are large and spacious and are fitted up with settees for the accommodation of the public.

### Description of Paintings in Court House

PEACE -- (in the dome, on the north wall) The center figure sitting represents Minnesota, with the horn of plenty. Standing behind is Columbia. Minnesota under the protection of Columbia is growing in peace. Minnesota, with raised hand is blessing the county. All agricultural industry, etc., prosper under this blessing. The symbol of agriculture is represented in the figure presenting the olive branch to Columbia and Minnesota. The industry of cattle raising is shown in the background. Home industries are represented by the girl with the spinning wheel. The group on the left hand in this painting represents mechanics and education. The classical figure with the scroll is teaching knowledge and wisdom to the eagerly listening young woman. In this group we also see the worker in iron, with a stern look. The Indian in his typical paraphernalia, is eagerly watching the rapidly changing conditions of the county, holding in his hand the plans of the new Courthouse, thinking of the times when only dense forests and prairie covered the land.

(see continuation sheet)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Martin County

CONTINUATION SHEET Courthouse

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

WAR -- (on South wall) This painting represents destruction. The fury of war, the avenger of evil, comes from the sky with a sword of flame. Underneath are beautiful women, old men, young warriors, women in great pain, showing the last moment of life. A miser attempts to save all his goods and the money, but is unable to save them for the avenger comes. The city goes down, the temple burns, the sun sets showing the end. This painting represents all evil and the destruction of prosperity.

INSPIRATION -- (on the East wall) Allegoric figures. The center figure represents light and the intellect of the mind. The right hand figure represents power of thought holding the symbol of the court, the fasces in the hand. The left figure represents glory. The spiritual representation of the figures is expressed through the clouds.

GENIUS -- (on the West wall) The North Star and Seal of Minnesota. The Seal is decorated with the state flower, the Moccasin flower.

Between the great paintings on the walls of the dome are four emblems representing agriculture, commerce, art and science.

SENTENCE -- (in the Court room. On the right hand) Justice is represented standing with the scale in hand. Law is reading in the book and Mercy begs a moderation of the law.

THE EXECUTION -- (in the Court room. On the left hand) The power of the law is sitting with the fasces in hand, reading the sentence from the tablet. The executioner is standing in the middle, near the Bible on the table, with a sword in his hand, to carry out the sentence of the Court. The prisoner in chains represents the power of the Court.

In 1972 plans were developed for the construction of a Security Building immediately to the west of the Courthouse. This building provides police and detention facilities. It is of modern design, cubiform in mass, and employs a combination of brick and concrete in construction and facing materials. It is completely detached from the Courthouse with the exception of a concourse at the second storey level and a similar link via tunnel below grade at the basement level. This linkage does not detract from the original design features and massing of the Courthouse itself.

Both the Courthouse and Security Building as well as surrounding grounds are in an excellent state of maintenance.

# 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1906-07

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Charles E. Bell

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Martin County Courthouse, constructed during 1906 to 1907 according to designs by Minneapolis architect Charles E. Bell, is a fine example of the turn of the century Renaissance/Baroque influence on the design of public buildings. Moreover, the murals which grace the central dome and courtroom interiors, designed and executed by local artist F. Rorbeck, attest to the regional interpretation of classical and allegorical subjects. The building, together with the interior artwork, portray a fine degree of combining the skill of the artist with that of the architect.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Cross, Marion E., Minnesota Courthouses. Colonial Dames of America in Minnesota, 1966.  
 "Dedication of Martin County Courthouse", Martin County Sentinel, 20 December 1907.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 1  
 UTM REFERENCES

A	1,5	3,8,1,8,7,0	4,8,3,4,1,8,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Charles W. Nelson, Architectural Historian and Susan Zeik, Research Historian

ORGANIZATION

Minnesota Historical Society

DATE

26 August 1976

STREET & NUMBER

Building 25, Fort Snelling

TELEPHONE

612-726-1171

CITY OR TOWN

St. Paul

STATE

Minnesota

# 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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Russell W. Fridley*

TITLE Russell W. Fridley  
 State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 10/11/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*Charles Obermeyer*  
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 9-22-77  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *Valerius Cole*  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 9-22-77

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   2   Page   1  

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REFERENCE NUMBER: 77000755

STATE: Minnesota

COUNTY: Martin

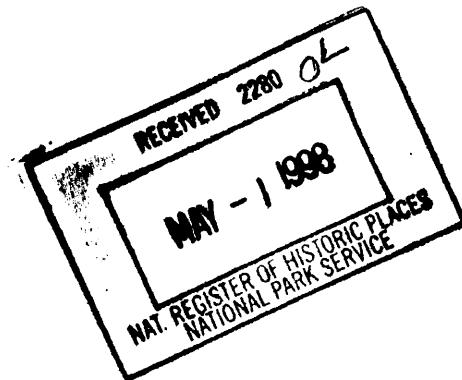
RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC): Martin County Courthouse

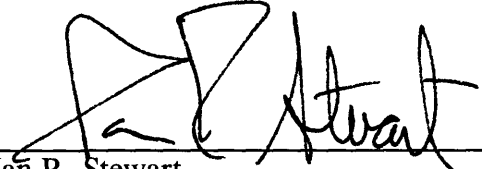
CITY/TOWNSHIP: Fairmont

VICINITY OF:

ADDRESS: 201 Lake Ave.

COMMENTS: Address Correction



  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ian R. Stewart  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

4/29/98  
Date