

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91000119

Date Listed: 2/28/91

Adams County Jail
Property Name

Adams
County

IOWA
State

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

(su) Patricia Andrews
Signature of the Keeper

3/4/91
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section Number 8

This nomination was amended to delete Criteria Consideration A.
The amendment was confirmed by phone with the Iowa SHPO (3/4/91).

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

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JUN 24 1991

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

**NATIONAL
REGISTER**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Adams County Jail
other names/site number House of History; Adams County Historical Society

2. Location

street & number 1000 Benton Avenue not for publication
city, towns/site number Corning vicinity
state Iowa code IA county Adams code 003 zip code 50841

3. Classification

Ownership of Property		Category of Property		Number of Resources within Property	
				Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/>	private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public-local	<input type="checkbox"/>	district	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	public-State	<input type="checkbox"/>	site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/>	public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/>	structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<input type="checkbox"/>	object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.
David C. [Signature] 12/18/90
Signature of certifying official 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.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register. Patrick Andrus 2/28/91
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed for the National Register.
 other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

GOVERNMENT: Correctional Facility

Current Functions

RECREATION & CULTURE: Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification

MID 19TH CENTURY: Greek Revival

Materials

foundation stone

walls limestone

roof asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See continuation sheet

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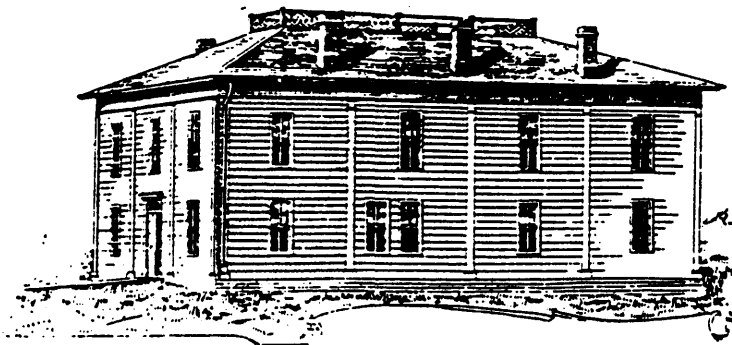
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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The former Adams County Jail (1877) was designed to mirror the design lines of the first Adams County Courthouse (1872-1889) which stood immediately south on the present courthouse square. Best described as a vernacular design with Greek Revival stylistic influences, the jail was juxtaposed as a limestone version of the frame courthouse. This Greek Revival influence is hinted by the remnant of a pedimented entryway (flanking pilasters and blocked transom), the window hood molds on the facade, and the roof treatment. A lost stylistic element is the parapet wall which carried the facade above the eaves line with corner pilasters and a stepped progression of stones from each end meeting in a central capstone.

The building is prominently cited to the rear of the adjoining courthouse at the head of Corning's two broad commercial streets. A string of elongated half-wide blocks separate these two parallel 100 foot wide streets. These blocks, beginning at the north end of the downtown and proceeding north, are used for a park, the courthouse block, and the jail site. This limestone relic of a hundred and thirteen years predates all of the commercial buildings which front the southward descending main streets and it predates most of the residential buildings which adjoin it on the north, west and east. The jail is centered on the southernmost of a triple-lot parcel. The original jail and courthouse both faced onto Benton Street to the west. Future courthouses were cited to the south, overlooking a narrow rectangular park.

At the time of its construction, the jail was rather isolated, being surrounded by only a scattering of houses and empty parcels. By 1899, three churches were built within a block's distance and these were joined by 1907 by the construction of the Corning High School to the immediate southwest. By 1969 the northernmost lot and the northernmost 26 feet of the middle lot had been sold off.



The immediate building site descends to the east, and the basement windows accordingly are increasingly exposed as they progress in that direction.

Adams County Courthouse built at Corning in 1872 and destroyed by fire in 1889.

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The building is two stories tall with a full basement, and is rectangular on plan (35'x25'). An elongated hipped roof with flat crest runs east and west. The design facade faces west. A left-hand entrance and window pierce the first floor facade, matched above by two windows. The side walls are pierced by four windows on the three levels, these being vertically aligned.

The limestone walls are formed of cut and coursed blocks. The stone of uneven thickness was locally quarried and is slightly yellowish in color. Four "S" tie rod bolts secure the side walls on either side between the two main floor levels. Plain limestone sills and lintels frame each window opening, those on the facade evidencing a Greek Revival influence in the hoods. A date stone ("1877") is positioned on the south side wall at the southwest corner.

The original building had no porch, rather it had a gabled portico above its entryway and even this fails to appear on the first several Sanborn Fire NPS

Insurance Maps. The same source indicates two second floor windows on the east or rear wall. The present porch dates from c. 1919 and is as it appears on the 1929 Sanborn Map. It's base is of coursed "ashlar" concrete block. The original building boasted a raised front parapet wall, with corner pilasters and a stepped gable effect between them, culminating in a centered capstone. The hipped roof was original to the building, and the resulting design failure, i.e. the lack of a cripple roof behind the wall to eliminate moisture, likely led to the present roof line. The earliest Sanborn maps show a cornice line only along the south wall. It is possible that the eaves lines were simply extended although the current eaves match those of the first courthouse. Two in wall chimney flues are located on each side wall. Two brick external flues were added c. 1955 for the current heating needs of the building. The rear addition, a concrete block basement level garage that dates to the construction of the front porch, and a later frame addition (enclosed by Sheriff Roland c. 1942-47) came later.

A small shed centered on the middle lot, and a two story barn, centered on the northern lot were historically associated with the jail but are non-extant. These structures appear on the 1893, 1899 and 1907 Sanborn Maps. By 1929 a modern 1-1/2 story garage was on the rear of the northern lot. A small enclosed entry porch was centered on the east end of the building. Today the building has no outbuildings associated with it.

Internally, stone load bearing walls running across the short dimension of the plan split the original building roughly in half. The basement includes from west (front) to east, a coal room, furnace room (narrow elongated areas), and living quarters, kitchen on the north, dining room and stairs to the south. On the main floor, the entryway leads immediately to stairs to the right,

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which lead to the second floor, and successively the living room, a large formal dining room (southern two thirds of plan) and two small bedrooms to the north. Only one penetration of the rear wall connects this level to the rear addition.

On the second floor, the stairs in the southwest corner come up from a landing, are separated by an iron mesh grating (original), and lead to a central hall which runs the length of the building. Two small rooms are north off the hall, one larger room to the south. The large open cell room (25.5' x 23.5') once held a free standing cage or cell.

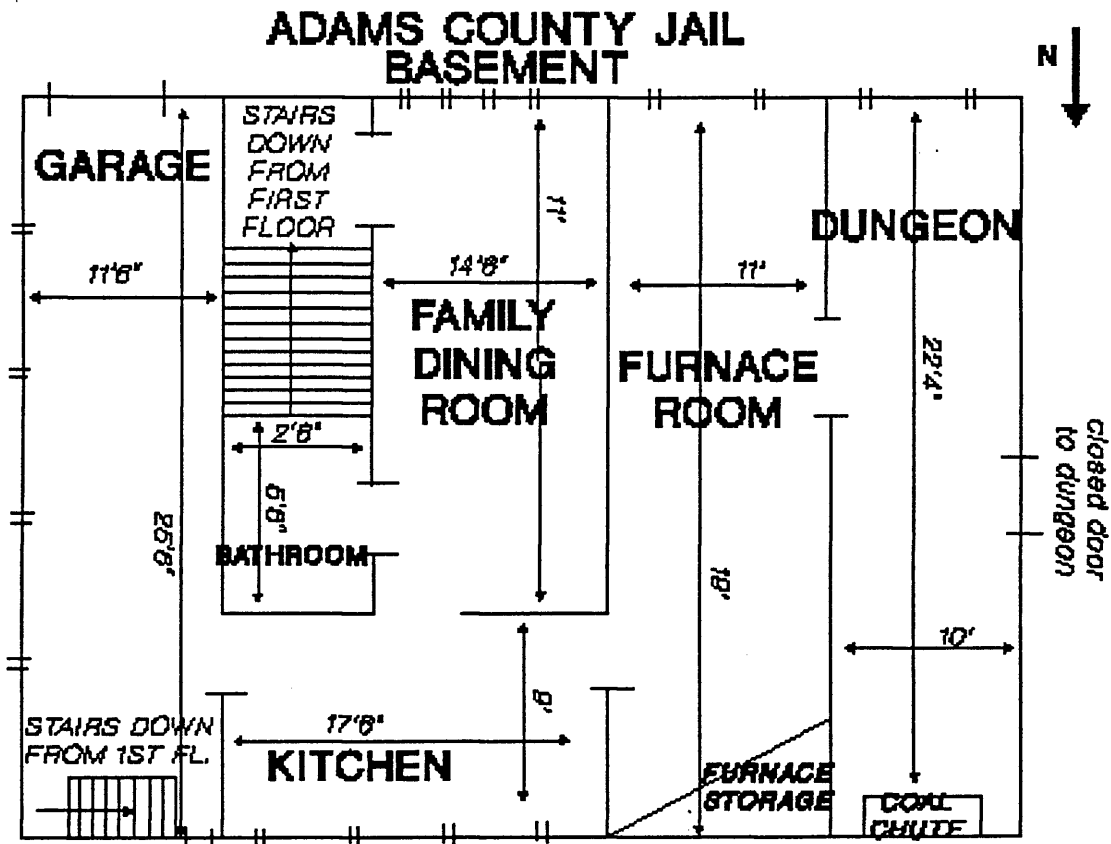
The cells were stolen in 1955 when they were removed during the conversion of the building for apartments. Left in the yard, they disappeared. The bars on the windows similarly were removed at this time. The building was converted for use as a museum and the bars were replaced, accurately recreating those which were lost. Of special interest are the carvings of the prisoners on the window casings and stone sills on the second floor.

The building and the present day museum (1969) owe their existence to the care and local leadership of two local historians, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Sickler. Lois Sickler survived her husband and sought the nomination of this building as early as 1976. Her son Doug and wife Bev (the project researcher) are to be credited for their persistence in pushing for this listing.

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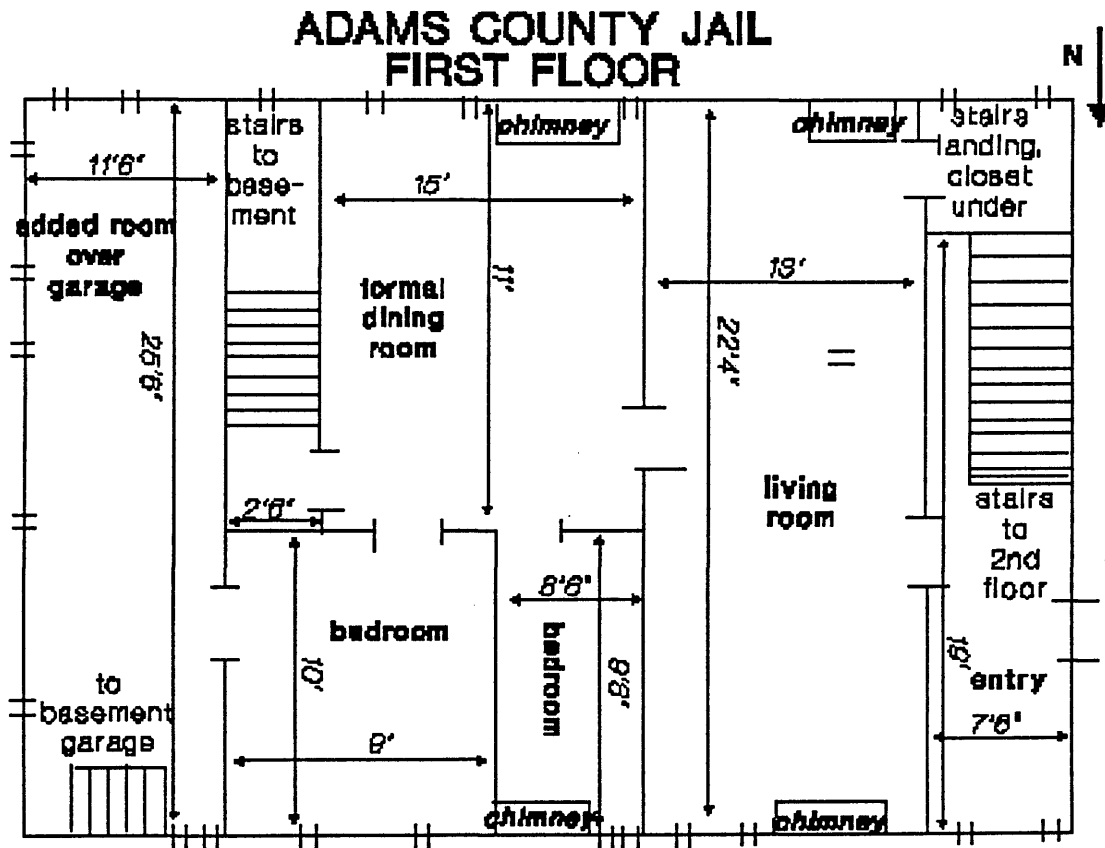


note: the "dungeon" is not historic, it is part of the museum.

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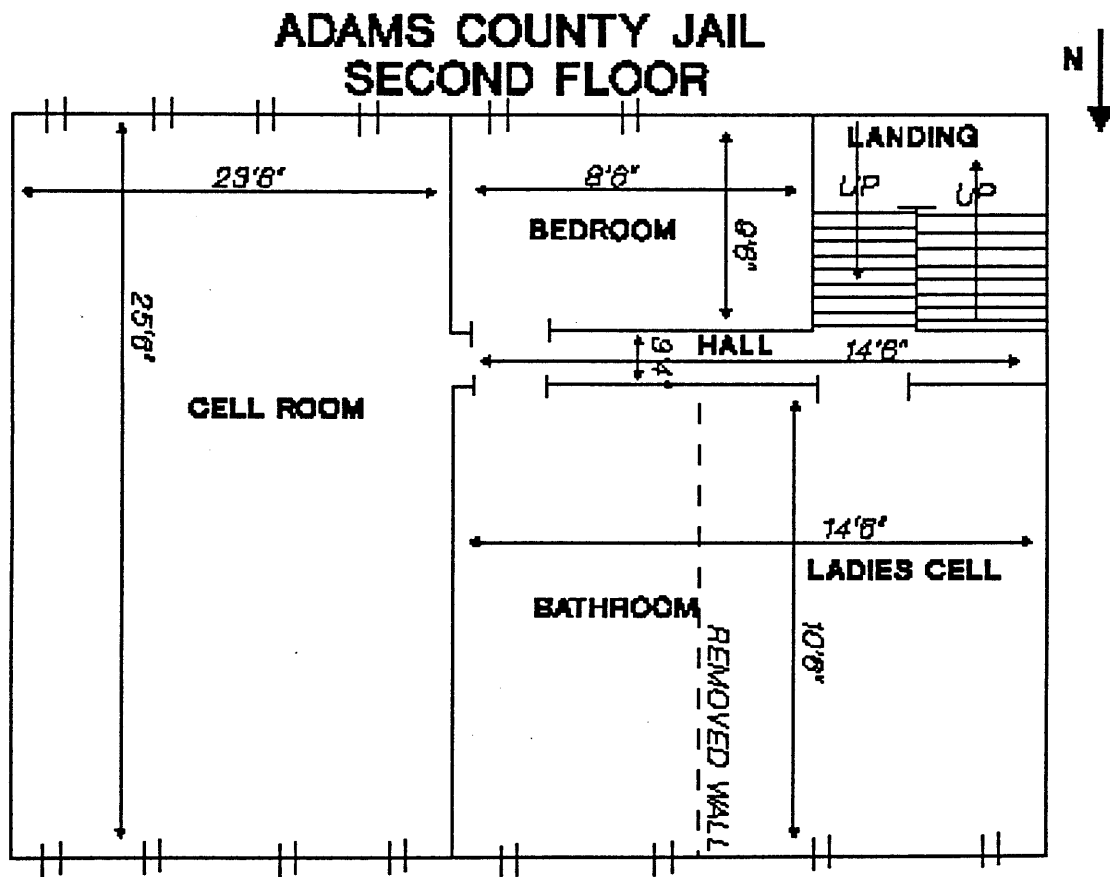
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The former Adams County Jail carries twofold significance under Criterion A as representing both the historic struggle in Adams County for the courthouse location and the local struggle for law and order, having served as a county jail for 78 years--a service that spanned 20 county sheriffs. It is also significant under Criterion C as a good example of Greek Revival derived architecture and the oldest public building in the county. The period of significance spans the years 1877-1940 while a county jail, although it continued in use as such until 1955. Built in 1877, this building evokes the lines of the first Corning Adams County Courthouse.

Corning won the courthouse struggle in 1872, beating out the town Quincy, a community doomed by its having been bypassed by the railroad. Corning contributed the land for the courthouse (see Figure 1). The jail was somewhat delayed in following. A tax levy for the jail was passed by a vote of 401 to 148 on October 1, 1874. The land was already in hand, purchased April 20, 1870 by the county. Three Superintendents, George C. Calkins, J. W. Larimer, and W. C. McDuffee were appointed to draw up plans and specifications, and to take bids and let the contract on January 11, 1877. The finished building was accepted from the unidentified contractor a year and a day later. Thomas George supplied iron (October 16, 1877) for the building and George Price filled the beds with stuffing, earning 80 cents for his trouble (January 8, 1878). There was much business awaiting the new structure, local photographer J. Proctor being paid to photograph a murder victim on January 9, 1878. Hollister Brothers provided jail and courthouse furniture (April 1, 1878). L. M. Mann provided oil and a lamp oil can (same date). The jail barn was underway at the same time, built by a number of local craftsmen, being finished by September. Irving Hazen provided the rock for the barn foundation (all June 6, 1878) and Miles Parker and J. H. Maltoren graded the jail lots. Jones and McDaniel were paid \$12.00 in mid-September for "painting rods on jail." A well was dug by B. F. Lamb (paid October 16, 1878). E. Piper dressed the stone window sills of the jail.

For whatever reason, the building soon required both repair and rearrangement and a second Board of Supervisors committee presented a report to this end on September 4, 1879. A jail fund of \$750 was authorized. The majority of the money went to the King Iron Bridge Company of Cincinnati, OH for cells on the second floor in 1879.

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Surviving records (Figure II) trace the occupancy of the cells in the jail over its lengthy history. The second floor/basement served as the living quarters of the jailer (when the sheriff had his own residence) or the sheriff. Figure III lists the sheriffs who served during these years. The numbers of prisoners varied over the history of the jail. Not surprisingly, the numbers soared during poor economic times (1182-83, 1892-93, 1901-02, 1904-06, 1908) and were high for most years after 1923. H. F. Hull, sheriff for sixteen years was in that office the longest by far, followed closely by the last sheriff to occupy this building, Bryan Goodvin, who served a dozen years.

The most notable single historical event that is associated with this jail was the lynching of John W. McKenzie, a 39 year old farmer, in 1887. McKenzie shot a neighboring farmer, whose land he rented, turning himself in at the jail on March 9, 1887. McKenzie was a reputable citizen, having served as acting deputy sheriff under Sheriff Amos Thomas three years earlier. Held for four weeks, McKenzie was lynched on April 2 by a masked and well organized mob of 50 men. Armed men surrounded the jail as well as sheriff Burgan's residence several blocks distant. The sheriff was away in Mount Pleasant. Using a ten foot oak battering ram, the door to the jail was broken down and jailer D. C. Pomroy was found in a front room on the upper floor provided with an iron door. The victim was then lynched under a maple tree on the courthouse lawn. The party stood by for a full hour, then calling off the men by numbers, they slowly dispersed. Mr. Harper, the night watchman was also seized near the courthouse and held. Another guard was placed over the engine house to prevent any sounding to the alarm.

A description of the building's interior layout was recorded as part of the recounting of this incident:

"the lower part of the building is used as a residence by the jailer. The front of this is covered by a wide hall opening up to the stairs, in the right side of the front door, used for reaching the upper floor where the jail proper and cells are located in the rear portion. At the head of the stairs an iron grate or lattice door is constructed, and opposite this is a room provided with an iron door on the outside in addition to the regular wooden one. In this room was sleeping Deputy Sheriff Pomroy and his wife, , the better to guard the jail and prevent persons from coming up the stairs except at great risk."

The identity of the mob was never discovered and despite some twenty years of investigation on the part of the county, state and the family of the lynched man, the mystery went unsolved.

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The rest of the jail's history is much more tame. The first inmate was jailed in 1878 for "allowing minors to remain in and around a beer saloon." Two prisoners briefly escaped in 1879, sawing locks and bars in a window. An 80 year old man was jailed for "keeping a nuisance." Thirteen tramps were included in the bumper crop of 1882, spending only one night at the jail. Two prostitutes were held the next year. Eight minors were held in 1884 for such offenses as jumping on trains, being profane and obscene.

A man was jailed in 1888 for voting twice, this being his 8th visit to the jail, and this stay lasted four months. A murderer was forwarded to Fort Madison for hanging in 1892. A bigamist graced the jail in 1894. The next year saw "the biggest liar on earth" behind bars, charged with refereeing a prize fight. 1898 saw two rioters and two female keepers of a house of ill fame behind bars. The high numbers for 1901 were mostly liquor related. Tramps fell prey to Sheriff Larson in 1902 to the number of 16. Six men were jailed in 1915 for "Gaming." A murderer of three victims was held in 1919 prior to going to state prison on a life sentence. In 1921 two fourteen year old girls spent a night in jail for being "out too late with the boys." They were remanded to the custody of their fathers. The first intoxicated driver was jailed.

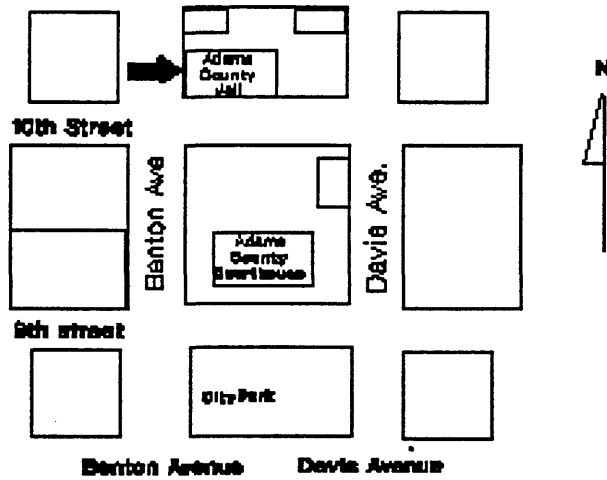
A new jail was constructed behind the courthouse in 1955 and the building served for fourteen years as a residence. It was purchased for use as a museum in 1969 and continues to serve that purpose.

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ADAMS COUNTY JAIL
Corning, IA



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Prisoners Adams County Jail

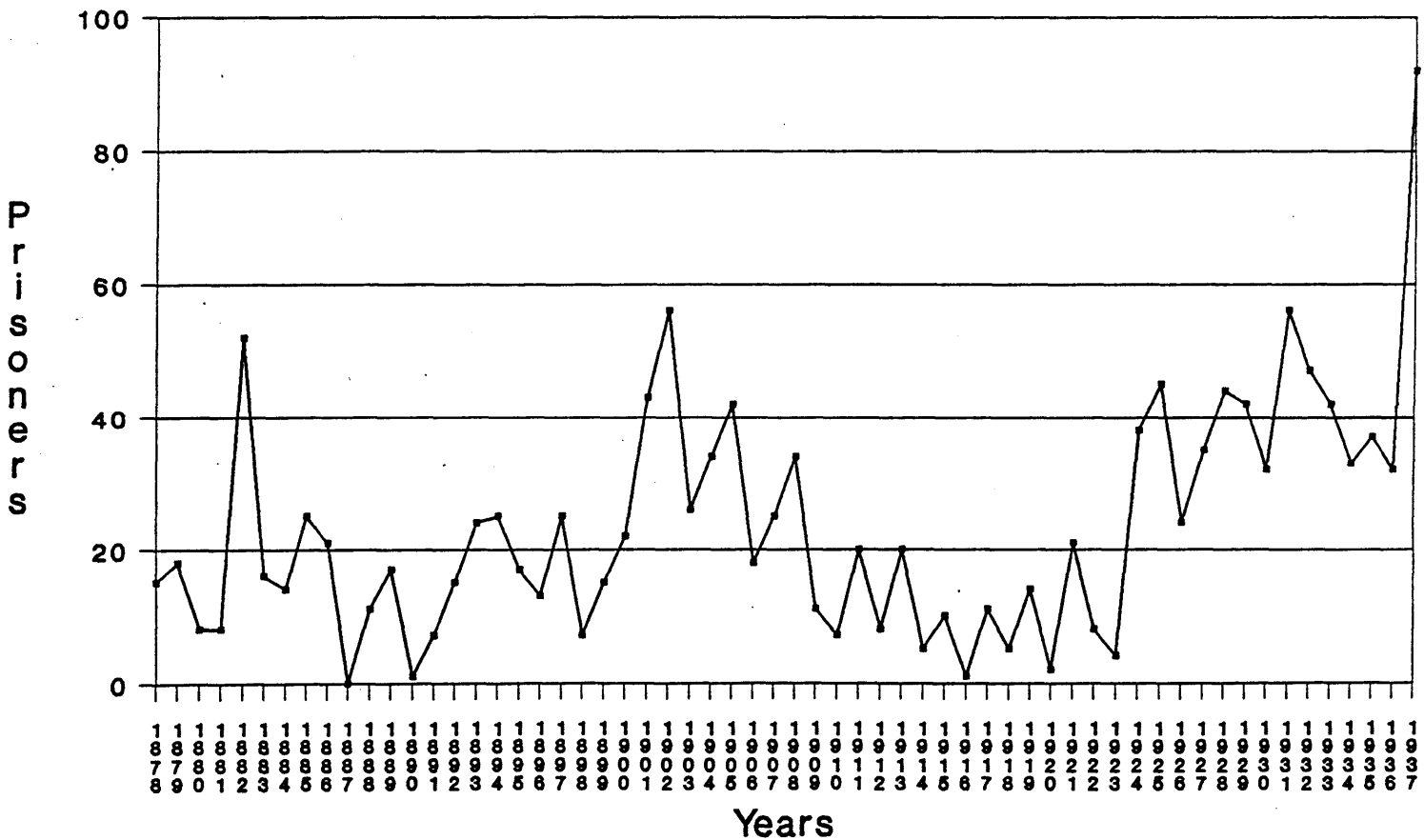


Figure II

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ADAMS COUNTY SHERIFFS

1867 - 1869 William Bixler
1869 - 1871 "
1871 - 1873 John W. Larimer
1873 - 1875 "
1875 - 1877 "
1877 - 1879 James D. Morton
1879 - 1881 "
1881 - 1883 A. D. Thomas
1884 E. Y. Burgan
1884 - 1888 "
1888 - 1891 Douglas C. Pumroy
1892 - 1895 H. W. Eldridge
1896 - 1899 William Gibson
1900 - 1902 W. V. Norris
1902 - 1904 W. Larson
1904 - 1919 H. F. Hull
1919 - 1921 George T. Simpson
1921 - 1927 J. S. Coakley
1927 - 1931 C. E. Rubin
1931 - 1937 John W. Angus
1937 - 1942 W. Earl Gibson
1942 - 1947 Russell Roland
1947 - 1955 Bryan Goodvin
1955 - 1968 Lloyd L. Leonard
1968 - 1978 Merlyn Dixon
1978 - 1986 Thomas Nolan
1986 Brad Albee
1986 - Larry Drew