

2-28-73

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: South Dakota	
COUNTY: Custer	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER: NOV 27 1972	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Custer County Courthouse

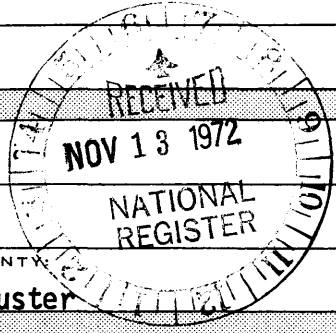
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
411 Mt. Rushmore Road

CITY OR TOWN:
Custer

STATE: **South Dakota** CODE: **40** COUNTY: **Custer** CODE: **033**



3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <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 (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Custer County

STREET AND NUMBER:
411 Mt. Rushmore Road

CITY OR TOWN: **Custer** STATE: **South Dakota** CODE: **40**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Register of Deeds Office, Custer County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:
411 Mt. Rushmore Road

CITY OR TOWN: **Custer** STATE: **South Dakota** CODE: **40**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
South Dakota Historic Sites Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: **1971** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
South Dakota Historic Preservation

STREET AND NUMBER:
W. H. Over Dakota Museum, University of South Dakota

CITY OR TOWN: **Vermillion** STATE: **South Dakota** CODE: **40**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Courthouse is a three-story building made of native red brick reflecting a plains adaptation of the Italian style. The most telling feature of the building's character is a simple and symmetrical window group above the main entrance. This group of three contains two windows and a central door opening on a balcony on the portico. Round headed apertures display little decoration except for radiating voussoirs with keystones. All other windows on the front of the building are double and topped with semi-elliptical surrounds of the same type.

The main doorway is approached by a flight of cement steps and surrounded by a portico with wooden columns of a simple order. The doorway is set away from the building by a short extension supporting a pediment with boxed cornices and decorated frieze above the eaves which are also decorated with small arches and brackets. A gabled roof covers the original building.

Two wings added in 1915 do follow the theme of the main structure but with less decoration.

A winding staircase connects the second and third floors. The grounds are surrounded by a hedge and contain flower beds and spruce trees.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **built in 1881**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

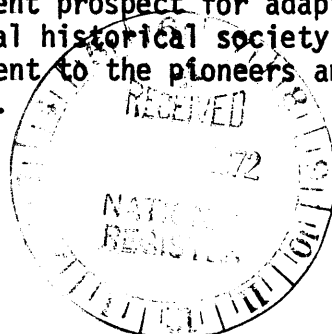
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built in Dakota Territory in 1881, the Custer County Courthouse represented a transitional period between lawless, uncertain gold rush days and more civilized and traditional commercial ways of life, an important theme in Black Hills history. Its construction marked the arrival of political and social stability to an area that only four years earlier had been considered the wildest in the country.

Custer City found a reliable economic base in its designation as county seat. On the court days, sidewalks and stores were packed with miners, stockmen, and farmers either on legal business or in town to watch the spectacular trials. Horse races and other events were sponsored by the city to entertain those crowds. A kind of social tradition developed with the Courthouse as its focal point.

Trials reflected the unsettled nature of a rapidly expanding frontier. Land disputes, robberies, horse and cattle thefts, and stolen mine properties made up a large share of court cases. Custer County also had its share of violent crimes. Most spectacular of these was the killing of the county sheriff by John Blehman in 1891. Brought to trial and convicted of murder, Blehman became the first victim of capital punishment in the state. It was not the first hanging in the area or even in the city, but it did have the sanction of a recognized legal system and was at least more just than the vigilante executions of previous years.

The Custer County Courthouse has served as a local political center for 91 years. Its career will end in the spring of 1973 when a new courthouse is completed. Its downtown location and proximity to an historical park make the Courthouse an excellent prospect for adaptive uses either commercial or historical. The local historical society is interested in preserving the building as a monument to the pioneers and the history of the development of the Black Hills.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Newspaper articles from Custer County Chronicle (Custer, SD).

Parker, Watson, Gold in the Black Hills, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966, pages 70-78.

Whitley, Fred W., A History of Custer City, South Dakota 1874-1900, M.A. thesis, University of South Dakota, 1971, passim.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	43 °	45 '	59 "
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	103 °	36 '	04 "
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: approximately 1/3 acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Historical Sites Committee

ORGANIZATION: **Custer Historical Society** DATE: **June 27, 1972**

STREET AND NUMBER:
Box 27

CITY OR TOWN: **Custer** STATE: **South Dakota** CODE: **40**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: James E. Gillinan
Title: State Liaison Officer

Date: June 27, 1972

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

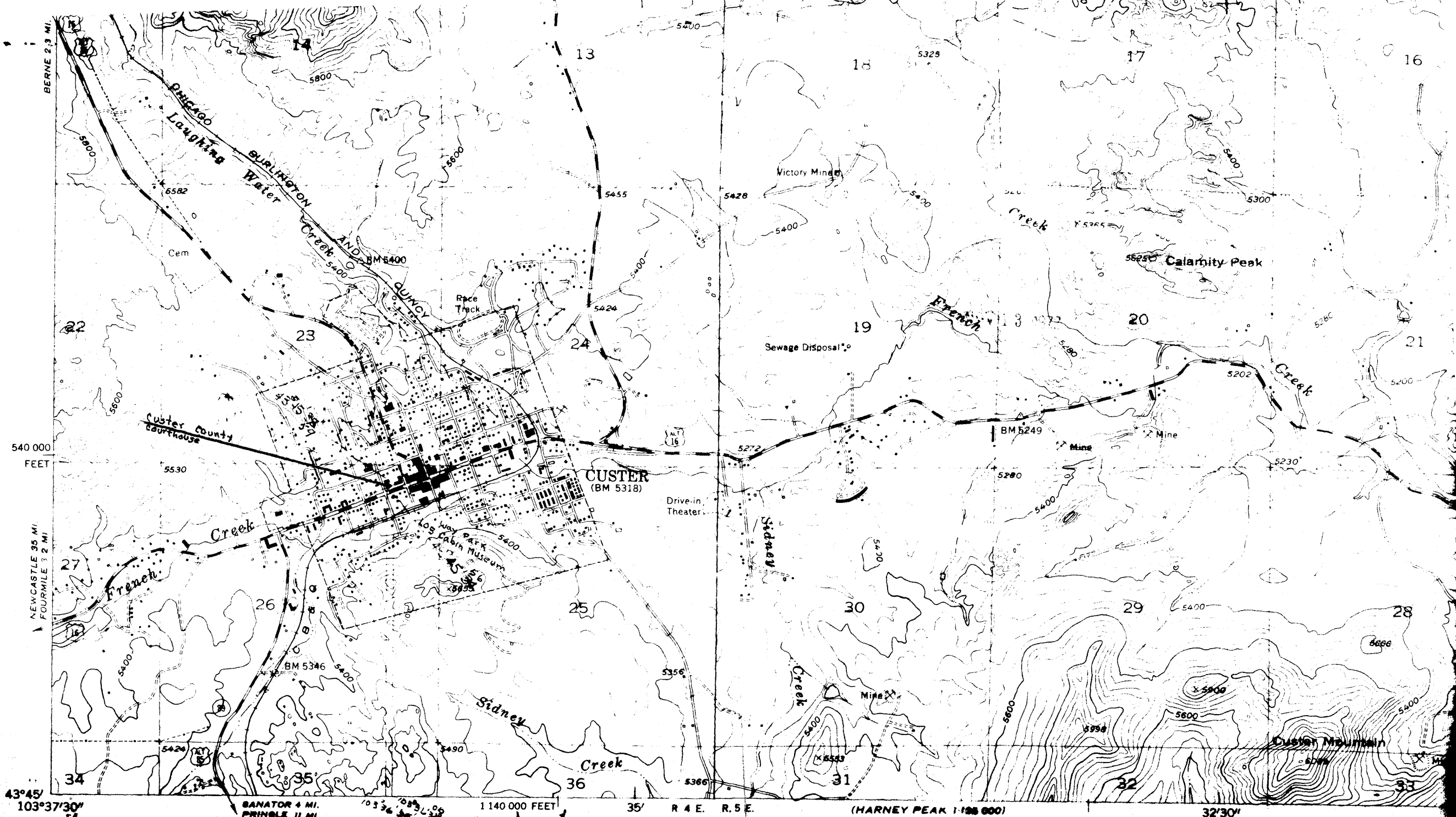
Robert M. Utley
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 11/27/72

ATTEST:
William J. County
Keeper of The National Register

Date: 11.21.72

NO COPY SEE INSTRUCTIONS



43°45' 103°37'30"

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography from aerial photographs by multiplex methods

1:140,000 FEET

(HARNEY PEAK 1:125,000)

SCALE 1:24,000

