

P40356271

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JAN 30 1976
DATE ENTERED JUN 18 1976

**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

AND/OR COMMON

** Otoe County Courthouse

HABS

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

10th St + Central Ave.

CITY, TOWN

Nebraska City

___ VICINITY OF

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1st

STATE

Nebraska

CODE

31

COUNTY

Otoe County

CODE

131

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

People of Otoe County

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Register of Deeds - Otoe County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Nebraska City

STATE

Nebraska

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic American Building Survey

DATE

1934

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington, D.C.

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" 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 Otoe County courthouse, designed by architect A. G. Bassett, is a two-story brick structure built in 1864-1865. The structure has a rubble stone foundation finished with a rough ashlar face. W. R. Craig and F. W. Wood were the builders, with County Commissioner Oliver Sherman supervising the work.

The original 1865 structure makes up the center section of the present building. This structure is a simple two-story rectangle with slight projection at the corners. Entry to the building was originally gained through a central three-story tower on the east which was topped with a cupola of Moorish design. The main body of the building featured round arched windows at the corners and ends of the building on the first floor with segmentally arched windows along the sides (north and south facades). The second floor design, above a stone string course displays tall, round arched windows. These windows feature a stone string course which forms the arch and connects the springing lines of all the window arches around the perimeter of the building. A paneled frieze of brick occupies the space between this string course and the wood cornice which exhibits brackets combined with dentils.

When originally constructed, the building housed the jail in the basement, county offices on the first floor and the District Courtroom on the entire second floor. Two wings were added to the courthouse, one ca. 1882, and the other in 1936. These additions are on the east and west ends of the 1865 structure, resulting in an H-shaped plan for the building.

The first addition was made at the west end, with minor alterations being made in the original structure to accommodate the change. Construction details were continued identical to the original. The main entrance at this time remained on the east.

Later, as the need for more space became apparent, an identical two-story addition was made to the east end of the building resulting in the present form. This addition was made in 1936 at a cost of \$60,000, and resulted in major changes to the original building. The courtroom was moved to the second floor of the new addition, while the remainder of the original building was converted into office space. The original entrance tower was removed and considerable alteration was made to the center of the north side of the original building to accommodate the new main entrance. A secondary entrance on the south and a new stairwell were added through the center of the original building. A new cupola, remotely resembling the original, was built on the axes of the altered building.

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The resultant form of the building, as altered, has a classical, rather Beaux-Arts character in the symmetry and disposition of the design elements. The original modified Italianate character of the building is still revealed in the 1865 details which continued to be used through all of the alterations. The only variance from this is seen in the stone "frontspiece" entrance on the north.

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 type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1865 BUILDER/ARCHITECT A. G. Bassett

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Otoe County was formed by an act of the Nebraska Territorial Legislature in 1855 and Nebraska City was named the county seat. For several years the county offices had no permanent location with the first few terms of the District Court being held in a log cabin while other offices conducted their business in rented rooms above the downtown stores.

A contract for a substantial county building was made August 13, 1864. A. G. Bassett, the architect, was paid \$150 for his plans and specifications, and builders W. R. Craig and F. W. Wood were hired to start construction immediately. Total cost of erection of the original portion was \$22,500. The Otoe County courthouse is the oldest public building in Nebraska which has been in continuous use since its completion.

The original structure of the courthouse exhibited typical features of early public architecture in Nebraska. The basic form, a two or three-story block with an entrance tower, was used in many communities in Nebraska for public buildings. Among the most notable examples are the old Furnas, Harlan and Greeley county courthouses, and McCormick and Ringland Halls on the Hastings College Campus in Hastings, Nebraska (See National Register nominations, Adams County, Nebraska).

The significance of the building in its present form lies chiefly in the use of the early details on the entire structure. A sense of the character of the original building is readily at hand through inspection of these details. In addition, the conservatism apparent in the duplication of architect Bassett's details in the enlarging of the building is noteworthy. Many old Nebraska courthouses were either demolished when more space was needed or their integrity was seriously impaired by the indiscriminate addition of a modern building to the original structure.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet: Bibliography, page 1

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

UTM REFERENCES

456

A	1, 5	2, 5, 8	4, 2, 0	4, 5	0, 6	5, 2, 5	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

Janet Jeffries, Curator of Historic Sites

ORGANIZATION

Nebraska State Historical Society

DATE

October, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

1500 R Street

TELEPHONE

(402) 432-2793

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Marilyn D. Knott

TITLE

Director, Nebraska State Historical Society

DATE

10/31/75

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Marilyn D. Knott

DATE

6/18/76

Acting DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

Charles A. ...

DATE

5-17-76

Acting KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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measured drawings, photographs and information sheet.