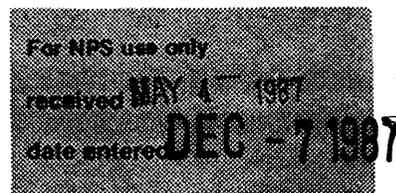


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**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Union County Courthouse | Item number 1-3,6,7 | Page 1

Union County, Clayton  
County Courthouses of New Mexico

1. Name: Union County Courthouse  
(County Courthouses of New Mexico)
2. Location: Court Street  
Clayton, New Mexico
3. Owner: Union County Commission  
Box 430  
Clayton, New Mexico 88415
6. Listed on New Mexico State Register of Cultural Properties, File #408.
7. Description: The 1909 World's Fair Classic Style Union County Courthouse is a two story domed building with classical detailing, situated in a Shelbyville style court square. This courthouse has three public facades, one each to the east, north and west, and a minor facade to the south. It was designed by D.P. Kaufman and Son Architects.

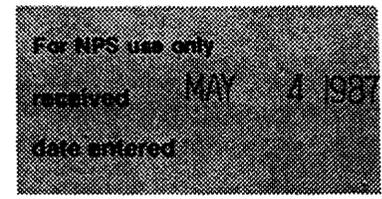
This two story rectangular building has an octagonal dome on a Mansard roof covered with standing seam metal. The top of the dome is capped with an iron railing, and four of the eight sides have circular louvered vents. The base of the dome is supported by eight triplets of slender columns, between which are small lozenge lights. Inside the dome is a 10'x10' room, from which much of the town can be viewed. The mansard roof is detailed with cresting. The cornice includes a capped and dentilated parapet wall on all sides except the rear where the cornice is boxed.

The building is constructed of blond and red brick on a sandstone foundation (this sandstone reportedly comes from the first Union County Courthouse). The corners of the building are defined by blond brick "quoins". The fenestration is double hung wood sash with aluminum storm windows. There are two major entrances to this building, both of which are two stories tall with a classical pediment and 4 evenly spaced columns. The main entrance, located on the southeast side, also has arched windows, with cast stone bas relief wreath decorations above the spandrel. A protruding keystone and arched brick course further decorate the arched windows. The secondary major entrance is on the southwest side.

The interior of the courthouse has oak floors with wooden baseboards, plaster walls and pressed tin ceilings with corner molding. The stairway is wooden with a wooden balustrade, turned balusters, and paneled newel

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Union County Courthouse | Item number 7 Page 2

posts.

Administrative functions are on the first floor.

The second floor courtroom has a carpet and oak floor, and a pressed tin ceiling with hanging light fixtures. The furniture is oak, with paneled judge's desk, and bookcases lining the gallery.

The attic was originally used as jury quarters but is now used for storage. The associated and contributing original jail and sheriff's offices are housed in two detached structures located on the court square northwest of the courthouse. A new community center is being built to the east of the jail and sheriff's quarters, and will extend no further east than the east facade of the courthouse. This new structure will be one story, and will be stuccoed in a color to match the brick of the old courthouse.

Handicap ramp access exists on the south east corner to the courthouse, but there is not an elevator. The building is in fair condition with minor remodeling.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Continuation sheet Union County Courthouse Item number 8

Page 3

8. Significance: The Union County Courthouse in Clayton, New Mexico meets National Register Criterion C as one of the best historic, public buildings in Clayton and as an excellent example of the provincial interpretation of turn-of-the-century Classicism frequently seen in Territorial New Mexico.

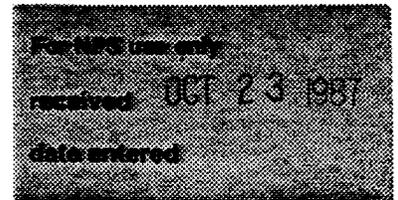
The Union County Courthouse was built in 1909 for \$30,000 to replace an 1894 courthouse which had been severely damaged by a tornado. The contractors were J.W. Wooten and N.V. Bundy, and the architects D.P. Kaufman and Son Architects of Amarillo, Texas. The son, W.R. Kaufman, would design the Freestone County Courthouse in Fairfield, Texas in 1919 and the Gray County Courthouse in Pampas, Texas in 1928. Both are Classical designs, the latter larger and more richly detailed than the Clayton Courthouse.

The gap separating aspirations and execution which typified much (though not all) New Mexican architecture of this period is apparent in the Union County Courthouse. Like other courthouses, this building takes on the form of a state capitol, although in the most limited way: the short, stone podium, the three, projecting pedimented porticos, the slightly projecting end bays and the dome (admittedly without rotunda). The unfluted cast-stone columns of the porticos appear to be Tuscan but without well defined capitals. Perhaps, the beveled tops of these capitals are seats which never received the standard, separate, cast-stone capitals. The silver, painted dome is realized with the simplest materials: pipe columns, a canted, sheet metal entablature and pressed metal shingles on the dome itself. The red brickwork with light accents--moldings, quoins and dentil entablature--provides an echo of the Georgian Revival. (A good deal of subsequent local brick construction adopts the polychromy of the courthouse.)

From the main entrance on the long, north side of the courthouse, stairs inside double back on either side to a landing above the entrance. A single broad stairway lead on to a small vestibule outside the courtroom. Double doors open to the gallery of the rectangular courtroom; a railing separates the public from the "sanctuary" beyond with its raised platforms and seats for the witness, jury and judge. The second floor has a T-shaped plan; that is, it lacks rooms above the southeast and southwest corners of the rectangular first floor. This arrangement allows windows on three sides

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet Union County Courthouse Item number 8,9

Page 4

of the "sanctuary," thereby bathing the place of justice in light. The interior plan, then, reinforces the traditional courthouse metaphor of the ascension to light and justice.

The silver dome of the Courthouse stands out above other buildings and trees, visible for miles in the distance as one approaches town. Besides being a good, if provincial, Classical building, the courthouse has the most distinctive siting of any building in Clayton, situated as it is on its own courthouse square with the main north/south highway on its east side. A nicely detailed, one-story, Mission style school built in 1917 and 1922 occupies the block west of the courthouse; modest, stuccoed, one-story houses line the three other sides of the square. Four blocks to the east, on the other side of the railroad tracks, is the commercial district comprised mainly of utilitarian, one and two-story business blocks. In this commercial district are located the only other historic buildings which rival the prominence of the courthouse: the Ekland Hotel, a three-story rusticated sandstone structure built about 1900, and the Farmers and Stockmans Bank, a two-story, Neo-Classical, red/brown brick building with cast stone details and buff brick accents built sometime between 1913 and 1921.

9. Major Bibliographic References:

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Pare, Richard, ed. Courthouse: A Photographic Document. New York: Horizon Press, 1978.

Pratt, Boyd. Gone But Not Forgotten. Santa Fe: Historic Preservation Division, 1986.

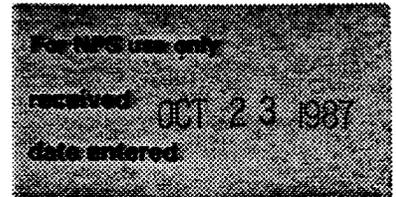
Robinson, Willard. The People's Architecture: Texas Courthouses, Jails and Municipal Halls. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1983.

Sanborn Map Company. "Clayton, N.M." Maps dated 1902, 1908, 1913, 1921, 1929.

Whisenhunt, Donald. New Mexico Courthouses. El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1979.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Union County Courthouse Item number 9,10

Page 5

Wilson, Chris. "Clayton, N.M., September 16, 1987." Field notes on file NMHPD.

10. Geographical Data: The nominated property consists of Block 850 in the Town of Clayton, N.M.

Quad Name: Clayton, N.M. Quad Scale: 1:24,000

UTM Reference: 13 662485 4035120

Acreage: approximately three acres.