

MAY 29 1981

IOWA SITE INVENTORY

Division of Historic Preservation
Iowa State Historical Department
26 E. Market St., Iowa City, Iowa 52240

Site Number 95-004-001
District Name _____
Map Reference # 95-004-001
Topo Map Forest City 1:24,000

IDENTIFICATION

1. Site Name Winnebago County Courthouse
2. Village/Town/City Forest City Township _____ County Winnebago
3. Street Address J Street between 6th and Clark
4. Legal Location OT 50
Urban: subdivision block parcel subparcel
Rural: township range section 1/4 section-1/4 section
5. UTM Location: zone 15 easting 448160 northing 4790000; Acreage less than 1 ac
6. Owner(s) Name Winnebago County Board of Supervisors
7. Owner(s) Address _____
(Street address) (City) (State) (Zip)
Forest City Iowa 50436
8. Use: present _____ original _____

DESCRIPTION

9. Date of Construction 1896 Architect/Builder Kinney & Orth, Minneapolis, Arch
10. Building Type: single family dwelling multiple family dwelling commercial
 industrial educational other institutional public religious agricultural
11. Exterior Walls: clapboard stone brick board & batten shingles stucco
 other _____
12. Structural System: wood frame with interlocking joints
 wood frame with light members (balloon frame) masonry load-bearing walls
 iron frame steel frame with curtain walls reinforced concrete
 other _____
13. Condition: excellent good fair deteriorated
14. Integrity: original site moved-if so, when? _____
Notes on alterations, additions (with dates and architect, if known) and any other notable features of building and site: Interior remodeled. Aluminum sash and main entrance doors - tower roof lowered - glass brick added.
15. Related Outbuildings and Property: barn other farm structures
 carriage house garage privy other _____
16. Is the building endangered? no yes-if so, why? _____
17. Surroundings of the building: open land woodland scattered outbuildings
 densely built-up commercial industrial residential other _____
18. Map _____
19. Photo
Roll _____ Frame _____ View _____

SIGNIFICANCE (Indicate sources of information for all statements)

20. Architectural Significance

- a. Key structure/individually may qualify for the National Register
- b. Contributing structure c. Not eligible/intrusion

One of two courthouses (the other Hancock County, 1890) designed by F.W. Kinney in the 1890's in the Victorian Romanesque style. Common feature of both (and perhaps the most interesting) is treatment of main entrance, which is recessed within arcade of three round arches.

21. Historical Significance

Theme(s) Politics/Government

- a. Key structure/individually may qualify for the National Register
- b. Contributing structure c. Not eligible/intrusion

This courthouse is locally significant as the historical focus of county government, and of the political power and prestige derived from the community's status as the county seat. As center of county government, an Iowa town was reasonably assured of economic and population growth, and a prominent role in local social and political life. The county courthouse represents a significant public investment in a structure built not simply for utilitarian purposes, but also as a monument associated with the historical importance of county organization and development.

See Continuation Sheet

22. Sources (for primary and secondary sources, give complete facts of publication: author, title, place of publication, date, etc.):

Andreas, A.T. Illustrated Historical Atlas of Iowa. Chicago: Andreas Atlas Co., 1875.

Pratt, LeRoy G. The Counties and Courthouses of Iowa. Mason City, Iowa: Klipto Printing and Office Supply Co., 1977.

Stanek, Edward and Jacqueline. Iowa's Magnificent County Courthouses. Des Moines: Wallace-Homestead Book Co., 1976.

Prepared by _____ Date January 1980
 Address _____ Telephone _____
 Organization DHP

FOR DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION USE ONLY

1. OFFICE INFORMATION SOURCES ON THIS PROPERTY

- COUNTY RESOURCE FILE REVIEW AND COMPLIANCE PROJECT: _____
- WINDSHIELD SURVEY _____
- NATIONAL REGISTER OTHER _____
- GRANTS-IN-AID: _____ OTHER _____
- DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY OTHER _____

2. SUBJECT TRACES

3. PHOTO IMAGES

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Item Number(s)

WINNEBAGO COUNTY

The records of the earliest county proceedings in Winnebago County were destroyed by fire in the fall of 1861. There exists only sparse information on finding a suitable spot for the county seat and nothing that can be found on the structures in which the first courts were held.

At the time that county government was run by the county judge, the issue was raised of building a courthouse in Forest City. Robert Clark was the county judge immediately preceding the Civil War days. A petition was presented to him bearing the signatures of all but one of the voters of the county, asking that a \$20,000 courthouse be built. Bonds were issued and a contract was let, but no work on a courthouse was commenced for some time because the contractor was primarily engaged in the mercantile business.

Under pressure from the county citizenry, a foundation for the courthouse was laid at about the time that the system of government had changed to vesting the primary county authority in a board of supervisors. The first action of the board was to disapprove the courthouse contract for being too extravagant. An injunction was served on the contractor, restraining him from continuing his work.

The courts finally decided that the action of Judge Clark was binding on the county, and that the board of supervisors was still responsible for the bonds. In the meantime, the contractor built a smaller and cheaper courthouse. The board finally made a settlement for \$3,500 as compensation for the construction.

Funds raised through local subscriptions were used to build the present Winnebago County courthouse. The construction began in 1894 and was completed by 1896. The brick structure with its tall outstanding clock tower cost approximately \$25,000 to erect.

--from Stanek, Edward, and Jacqueline Stanek,
Iowa's Magnificent County Courthouses. Des
Moines: Wallace-Homestead Book Co., 1976.