

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JUN 13 1975
DATE ENTERED SEP 5 1975

**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

Grant County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

"C" Street N.W.

CITY, TOWN

Ephrata

STATE

Washington

___ VICINITY OF

CODE

53

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

#4 - Hon. Mike McCormack

COUNTY

Grant

CODE

025

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- ___ DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- ___ STRUCTURE
- ___ SITE
- ___ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- ___ PRIVATE
- ___ BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- ___ IN PROCESS
- ___ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- ___ UNOCCUPIED
- ___ WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- ___ YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- ___ NO

PRESENT USE

- ___ AGRICULTURE
- ___ MUSEUM
- ___ COMMERCIAL
- ___ PARK
- ___ EDUCATIONAL
- ___ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ___ ENTERTAINMENT
- ___ RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- ___ SCIENTIFIC
- ___ INDUSTRIAL
- ___ TRANSPORTATION
- ___ MILITARY
- ___ OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Grant County

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

___ VICINITY OF

Washington

STATE

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Grant County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

"C" Street N.W.

CITY, TOWN

Ephrata

STATE

Washington

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Washington State Inventory of Historic Places

DATE

1974

___ FEDERAL STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

CITY, TOWN

Olympia

STATE

Washington

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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

Built in 1917, the Grant County Courthouse is a two story flat roofed brick and terra cotta structure with a daylight basement. It occupies a site one block square fronting on a street parallel to and immediately north of Ephrata's linear business district. The town of Ephrata is in the Columbia Basin near the geographic center of Washington State surrounded by irrigated farm lands and range country.

The courthouse is neo-classical revival in style, strictly symmetrical with a two story pedimented portico in front and pilasters dividing the facades into regular bays. It is rectangular in plan, and what appears to be the foundation is continued up to the level of the first floor faced in glazed white terra cotta blocks that resemble polished stone coursework. Above this the wall surface changes to brick after a substantial water table marking the transition between floors. The windows and decorative brickwork spandrels nearly fill recessed panels in between the slightly projecting brick pilasters. These pilasters rest directly on the water table as do the first floor window sills. Terra cotta capitals of no identifiable classical order crown the pilasters establishing a line at the top that is continued by the heads of the second story windows. A full entablature and parapet above this level completes the facades in alternating bands and panels of brick and terra cotta.

Within individual bays on the long facades in front and back there are two large double hung windows to each floor separated by slender mullions. On the end walls the narrower bays contain one window to a floor. The two central bays are eliminated by a slight planar projection of the wall surface that retains most of the lines of terra cotta detailing but without pilasters and with windows only on the first floor.

The pedimented portico at the main entrance is at the head of a full width flight of stairs. The stairs are flanked by low solid masonry railings faced in terra cotta. There are lamps on cast iron standards mounted on each railing toward the bottom steps. Four fluted Corinthian columns support the entablature and pediment, all of which are white terra cotta. The two outside columns rest on the low railing, and the inside columns stand on pedestals. Across the frieze is written in incised letters GRANT COVNTY COVRTHOVSE. In the typanum are a low relief Roman urn and garland decorations.

Behind the portico, the main entrance enframement consists of flanking terra cotta ionic pilasters and a frieze with stylized winged lions and two muscular figures that seem to support an urn sitting above them on the cornice. This enframement detail is repeated around the windows on either side of the doorway (without the figures or the urn). The windows themselves, and the taller windows of the second floor are screened with ironwork.

The courthouse interior was extensively remodeled after an annex was added to the rear of the building in 1956. Wood paneling was installed, partitions were moved and ceilings were lowered in places. Although the annex is approximately the same dimensions in plan, it is otherwise unrelated architecturally. However, it is well hidden by the original structure when viewed from the front, and the annex is separated by

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a distance of 20 feet connected by a single hallway. With the exceptions of this connecting hallway and replacement of the front doors, the courthouse itself is unaltered on the exterior.

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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" 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

1917

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

George H. Keith

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

During Washington's first twenty years of statehood, Grant County was included in the southern portion of Douglas County. In January, 1909, there was a measure before the state legislature that would have established a district court in the town of Wilson Creek -- then an old and thriving community where the Great Northern Railroad had located its roundhouse and maintenance shops. A district court at Wilson Creek would have divided the fertile wheat lands of the county into two separate jurisdictions. This was politically undesirable from the point of view of Mr. Al Rogers, who was at that time a powerful force in the county government at Waterville. There had been for some time discussion of creating a separate, autonomous county by dividing along a diagonal line running northeast and southwest, effectively cutting off desert lands in the southern part below Grand Coulee -- territory that included Wilson Creek. Rogers found this proposal far more acceptable in terms of his political fortunes, so he advocated the creation of a separate county to counter the pending district court legislation. His position helped to reduce the influence of the forces opposing separation of the county and consolidated those seeking it.

Although Wilson Creek would have been the logical county seat should such a division take place, the residents were committed to their proposal for a district court and they continued to support that concept. Delegations were sent to Olympia from Quincy, Coulee City, Ephrata, Wilson Creek and Waterville. Major opposition to the creation of a new county came from Waterville and Quincy, with the remaining representatives solidly behind the idea but divided over a location for the new county seat. The contingent representing Waterville and the interests of Al Rogers allied themselves with the delegates from Ephrata. Their political maneuvering included a carefully timed telegram that caused a Quincy delegate to leave Olympia on urgent business. One of the representatives from Wilson Creek was unable to attend a critical legislative session as a consequence of excessive partying. With a reduced number of supporters, the Wilson Creek bill never made it to the floor. Grant County was created and the smaller town of Ephrata became the county seat.

It was argued after the fact that this act of the legislature was unconstitutional on the grounds that the state constitution requires that a petition to divide a county be endorsed by a majority vote of the people within it, when in fact only a small number of residents had ever expressed their preference. In 1910 a disgruntled alliance from Wilson Creek, Quincy and Coulee City tried unsuccessfully to remove the county seat to Adrian, the only location satisfactory to this mixed group. Adrian was a town with only a hotel and a store.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Ruby, Dr. Robert H. "Grant County -- Fifty Years Old". Spokesman-Review, Spokane, February 22, 1959.

Grant County Commission's proceedings. April 12, 1917, May 10, 1917.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.5 acres

UTM ok W N 9-29-75

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	1	3	0	7	1	3	0	5	2	4	3	8	8	0
ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING							

B

ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING							

C

ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING							

D

ZONE			EASTING				NORTHING							

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Jacob E. Thomas, Historic Preservation Specialist

ORGANIZATION

Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission

DATE

May 12, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 1128

TELEPHONE

(206) 753-4116

CITY OR TOWN

Olympia

STATE

Washington

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Charles H. Odegaard

TITLE

Executive Director - Charles H. Odegaard

DATE

June 9, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

9/5/75

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

SEP 5 1975

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The first meeting of the county commissioners at Ephrata took place in a small room over the general store. The following meeting was held in a building designated as a temporary courthouse. Four days later the board of commissioners requested bids on specifications for a more suitable courthouse -- a 40 x 60 foot frame building with a small brick addition for the vaults and jail. This was intended to serve for only an interim period prior to completion of a grand facility at an unspecified future date. The frame courthouse narrowly survived the petition to move the county seat to Adrian by a vote of 945 to 802 -- the building being only a marginal inducement to retaining county offices in Ephrata.

On April 12, 1917 the board of commissioner, D. C. Thiemens, J. C. White and Tom Twining, passed a resolution to construct a new courthouse. The architect was George H. Keith and the contract was awarded to J. J. Lohrenz for the low bid of \$63,263. The cornerstone was laid at a ceremony in July by the Grand Master Mason of Washington State, George Lawler.

The day officially designated for moving into the new building was a Monday in January the following year. New office equipment had already been installed, and all other preparations were completed except for transfer of the county records. Groups from rival communities that vigorously opposed the construction of both the old and new courthouses in Ephrata were reportedly seeking an injunction to prevent the transfer of records from taking place. Since court was not in session until Monday, the county employees completed the move on Sunday before an injunction could be filed to prohibit it.

The county's first grand jury inquiry and a recall election both resulted from this courthouse construction project. It was alleged that one of the commissioners had an interest in the property purchased for the courthouse site. Although the commissioners were absolved by the courts of all misconduct charges two of them were recalled from office in 1918.

The frame courthouse still stands across the street from the present brick and terra cotta building, however it has been converted to a church and little remains of the original work other than its roof line and general proportions.

The present structure is significant as the first permanent courthouse built in Grant County. It has served continuously for 57 of the county's 66 years and it represents an important political achievement in a city that owes much of its present size and economic well-being to development attracted by the county government. Wilson Creek, by contrast, is now partly abandoned. The neo-classical revival courthouse is considered to be the most beautiful building in the county. It is certainly one of the largest and most architecturally attractive non-industrial structures.

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Grant County Historical Society. "Committee Job Sheet -- Courthouse Committee".
Ephrata, October 12, 1971, (unpublished).