

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED SEP 20 1977
DATE ENTERED SEP 21 1978

**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
KINGS COUNTY COURTHOUSE
AND/OR COMMON

MAY 31 1977

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
114 W. 8TH STREET

CITY, TOWN
HANFORD

STATE
CALIFORNIA

___ VICINITY OF

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

17

CODE
06

COUNTY
KINGS

CODE
031

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 type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
PEOPLE OF THE COUNTY OF KINGS - PRESENTLY ON 52 YEAR LEASE TO CITY OF
STREET & NUMBER
114 W. 8TH STREET HANFORD
CITY, TOWN
HANFORD VICINITY OF
CALIFORNIA STATE

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
KINGS COUNTY RECORDERS OFFICE
STREET & NUMBER
114 W. 8TH STREET
CITY, TOWN
HANFORD STATE
CALIFORNIA

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
NONE
DATE
___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
CITY, TOWN
STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located at the center of a gracious, tree-shaded public square, the Kings County Courthouse is a fine example of a neo-classical revival style public building. It is one of the oldest public buildings in continual use in Central California, having been erected in 1896. A later addition was built in 1913 or 1914, which was well integrated and faithful to the original style and detail.

The structure is bi-axial, the major axis running north-south. It is a rectangle, approximately 90 by 150 feet, the original portion being about 90 by 105 feet. There are two principal levels, plus a full basement level, which is partly below grade.

Construction materials employed are brick for the exterior and interior bearing walls; concrete for the footings and floor slab at grade; wood trusses at the roof; granite at exterior walls and for the two center columns at the south portico, and granite at the exterior steps. Exterior brick for the walls is buff-colored, slightly variegated. Lintels and arches, as well as the lintels along the cornice appear to be cast cement plaster or a type of concrete. The pediments at the north and south porticoes likewise appear to be cast cement. The corners of the structure are capped with pyramidal roof elements, sheathed with metal roofing of a silvery hue.

The major features of the north and south facades are the two-tiered porticoes. Columns extend for two stories and are broken by flat lintels at the second floor level and arches above. Column capitals are derived from the Ionic and are integrated well into the whole. Circular openings in the balcony railing recall the arches above. The pediments at the north and south also have circular openings, the decorative motif there is also curvilinear. The lintel and false arch detail at the upper story corner windows, further develop this theme. The brick facing is typically common running bond, with stringcourses defining floor levels and tops and bottoms of windows.

Window and door openings are vertical in emphasis and are dominated by the solid wall areas. This is particularly true at the east and west facades, where narrow windows occur in the two tiered false porticoes. The interior of the building contains a central north-south hall with grand staircase, and smaller halls following the sub-axis. Interior detailing is less assured than that of the exterior, but still effective.

The structure shares its site with a smaller two story building of red brick and granite, once used as the County Jail and now referred to as "The Bastille", an art gallery. Together, these buildings create a strong focal point and "Anchor" for the public, open space and the commercial or public buildings facing onto it. Public sidewalks surround the two structures and a small parking area extends along the east side of the Courthouse.

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 1896

BUILDER/ARCHITECT John Haggerty/W. H. Wilcox

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Kings County was officially incorporated on March 22, 1893.

The Kings County Courthouse is one of the oldest public buildings in Kings County, and is a fine example of a neo-classical county courthouse; one of the few remaining in California.

Architecturally, the courthouse is the most prominent building located on the square, and in the central business district. It is critical to the entire county. Location and design establish the courthouse as the visual focal point and anchor for smaller public and private buildings surrounding it.

Kings County started from scratch. It had no funds or property of its own, not even a courthouse or jail. County offices were scattered within the City of Hanford (County Seat) between the new Opera House, the Farmers and Merchants Bank Building and a one-story brick building on Seventh Street.

The sheriff at first conducted business from his home. Soon a jail was established on Sixth Street and the sheriff, the Superior Court and county clerk occupied the second floor.

On May 13, 1896, the Board of Supervisors entered into its minutes the following abstract: "John Haggerty to erect and construct said courthouse according to said plans and specifications in granite stone of terra cotta trimmings for the sum of \$26,364.00, is the lowest responsible bid."

The courthouse was financed by the sale of bonds. The architect was W.H. Wilcox. It is a two-story building with a basement. The frame is brick and stone; the floors are concrete and wood. The exterior walls are brick covered with face brick and granite; and the roof is gabled. The width of the building is 92 feet and the length is approximately 105 feet. An addition was made to the original courthouse building in 1914. There have been no changes since that date.

The county was born with a population of 5,900 and presently has a population of 70,000 which, of course, has resulted in an expansion of county offices into buildings other than the original courthouse.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

THE HANFORD JOURNAL 1895-96-97
 SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE ROBERT R. ROSSON- KINGS COUNTY
 SACRAMENTO PRESS JOURNAL 4-8-1977

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3 acres

UTM REFERENCES Latitude: 36° 19' 40.4"

A	_____	_____	_____
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	_____	_____	_____

Note: As UTM References are not available for the Hanford Quadrangle, the geographic coordinates are given in latitude & longitude.

Longitude: 119° 38' 44.7"

B	_____	_____	_____
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
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

SAVE THE COURTHOUSE COMMITTEE

5-25-1977

ORGANIZATION

KINGS COUNTY CITIZENS

DATE

(209) 584-3236

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

265 E. BIRCH STREET

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

HANFORD

CALIFORNIA

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

[Handwritten Signature]
 SHPO

TITLE

DATE

JUL 25 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

R. B. Rettig

DATE

9/21/78

ATTEST: *William Lebovich*
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

[Handwritten Signature]
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 DATE Sept 21, 1978

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

Statement of Significance

The Superior Court still holds forth in the original courtroom, with the original decor and with very few modern appliances added, with the exception of air conditioning, heating and lighting. The judges bench and the jury box are the originals. Many famous trials have been held in this courtroom throughout the years; such as the Lee Camp windmill murder trial, the Talent will contest, the Kinder murder trial, the Stephens murder case, the Alves murder trial, and in more recent times the Hillery murder trial. Many years ago the courthouse was the scene of the murder of Justice of the Peace Meadows by William Denny, who was killed a few minutes later, outside of the courthouse by the then City Marshal, William Hime, who later became sheriff.

The courthouse is also famous for being the site of extensive water litigation.

History also tells us that attorney, Earl Rogers, of Los Angeles, and his assistant, Gerald Geisler, later to become more famous than his employer, were trying a will contest, the Talent case, in the courtroom; and that Clarence Darrow sat there for several days listening to Rogers, trying to determine if he (Darrow) should hire Rogers to represent him in a personal matter. In recent years Melvin Belli of San Francisco tried a case in this county courtroom.

Two years after the courthouse was constructed, the Kings County Jail was built (1898), with an addition to the jail made in 1913.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 1

VERBAL DESCRIPTION OF COURTHOUSE SITE:

All that property shown on a map recorded in Volume 1 at page 17 of Licensed Surveyors Plats, Kings County Records. Said property being bounded on the North by Court Street, on the East by Douty Street, on the South by 8th Street, and on the West by Irwin Street, as said streets appear on the afore-mentioned map.

Legal Description of Site:

That property consisting of the following recorded documents:

1. Block 155 of the City of Hanford as per that map recorded in Mapbook Page 11, Kings County Records.
2. That property conveyed by Book 2, Page 620 of Deeds, Kings County Records.
3. That property conveyed by Book 3 Page 199 of Deeds, Kings County Records.
4. That property conveyed by Book 6 Page 502 of Kings County Records.
5. That property conveyed by Book 17 Page 488 of Kings County Records.
6. That property conveyed by Book 44 Page 250 of Kings County Records.
7. That property conveyed by Book 75 Page 475 of Kings County Records.

Kings County.

MOST of us have read how Cabrillo discovered California in 1542, and of subsequent exploring expeditions in 1602, when Monterey and San Francisco Bays were discovered; how the San Franciscan Monks, under Father Junipero

Serra, visited the Coast in 1769, laying the foundation of religion and education, and, under sore trials and hardships, establishing missions and civilizing the land; how California became a victim of Spanish rule; how Mexico shook off the yoke of Spain and laid claim to California; how a handful of Americans wrenched it from her grasp, and how in 1849 the golden era was ushered in, electrifying the world and starting in motion the wheel of prosperity which for over fifty years has ground on unceasingly. As this work is not intended for a chronicle of early historical events, and since so much has been written concerning the aboriginal, Spanish, and missionary periods of California, we take it for granted that with all of this the average person is familiar, and will forbear rehearsing here

fierce engagements with savage tribes; from reopening chapters crimsoned with blood, and from relating in detail prosy history, which will but consume time and space required for the description of the subject of this work—Kings County. This, the youngest County in the State,

was for many years a portion of Tulare County, one of the oldest settled sections in the Valley, and an organized County since 1852. The early settlers of Tulare County were men possessed of great thrift, energy, and determination, with nerves of iron, and hearts for any fate. This was

especially true of those who settled in the western portion—which is now Kings County—for at that time men who settled land in this section with the expectation of cultivating it were considered fit subjects for a madhouse; at least this is the light in which they were held by those settling in other parts of the County, and patronage and credit was not extended to them. Although coupled with these circumstances was the apparent fact that the land was nothing more than a sandy, barren plain, suitable only for growth of prairie-dogs, rabbits, and wild oats, and while its natural state repelled rather than attracted, still these sturdy yeomen were not daunted and their courage forsook them not, for their faith was the offspring of endurance. They looked beyond the surface at her

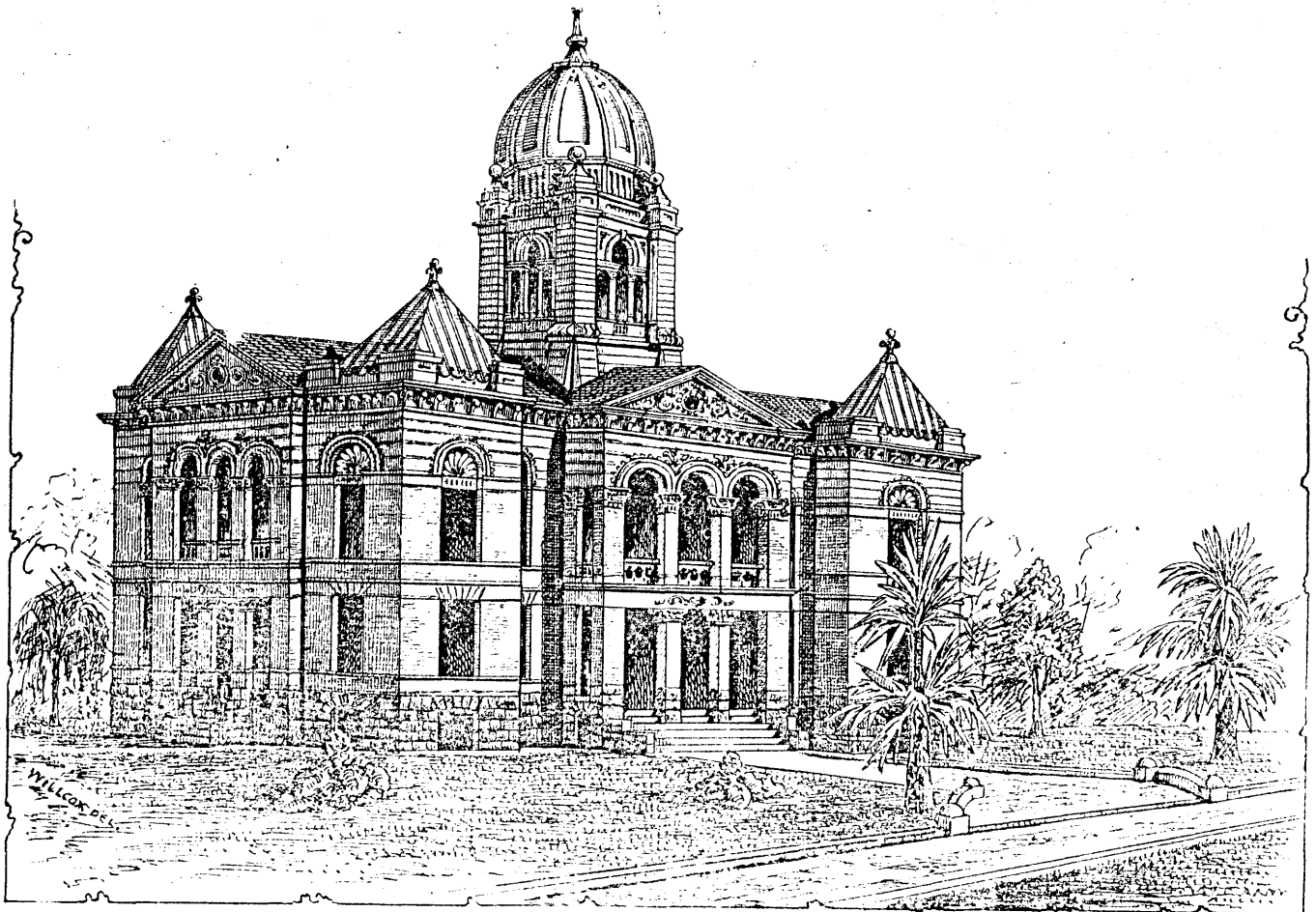
natural conditions and surroundings, and called it a land of great possibilities. How amply has it been proven that theirs was not a misplaced confidence; how abundantly has the land filled labor's hands with her rich products; how splendidly has Nature, with the combined force of



OUR NEW TEMPLE OF JUSTICE.

SKETCH OF KINGS COUNTY.

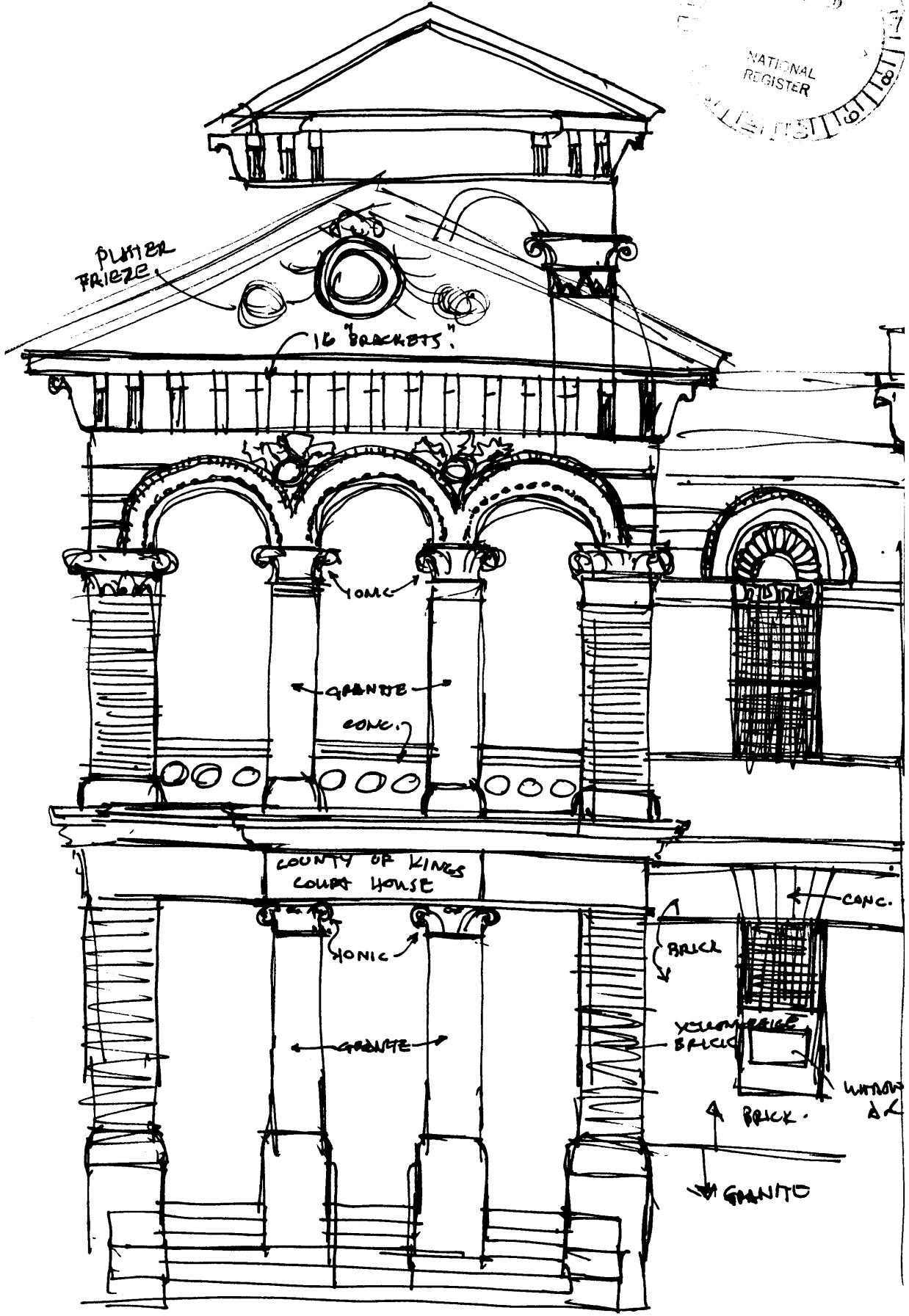
In the election of 1892, the people of western Tulare county made it an issue to divide Tulare county and set off said western portion of it as a separate and independent county government. On this issue Mr. F. A. Blakeley was chosen member of the Assembly, and during the session of the State Legislature of 1893, the people of Hanford, especially, and of western Tulare county generally, rallied with united strength to the standard of their leader in a heroic fight to obtain the goal. With the required population, sufficient taxable property and every other requisite for the establishment of a new county, the cause was presented to the Legislature and a bill was passed submitting the question to a vote of the people of the territory comprising the proposed new county. The election took place on May 23rd, 1893, and the result stood 1412 for division to 412 against division. This overwhelming voice of the people was proof positive of the righteousness of the cause. The county of Kings thus created, contains 1267 square miles, an assessed acreage of 427,281 acres and an assessed valuation of about \$7,000,000. It is a county of the 43rd class. The bill creating it named Hanford as the county seat. Tulare lake, which is the largest lake in the United States west of the Missouri river, is located wholly in Kings county. It acts as a great drainage basin for the higher irrigated lands. This is the best irrigated county in the State, and never fails to produce yearly, immense crops of alfalfa, grain and all kinds of deciduous fruits. In the production of horses, cattle, sheep, hogs and poultry, Kings county is a veritable wonder. The people are progressive, intelligent and hospitable. The government is economical and judicious. The building of the San Francisco and San Joaquin Valley Railroad through Kings county this year, 1897, is a march of improvement that guarantees an era of great prosperity, and makes Kings county, beyond all question, one of the most prosperous localities in the State.



KINGS COUNTY COURT HOUSE, HANFORD, CAL.

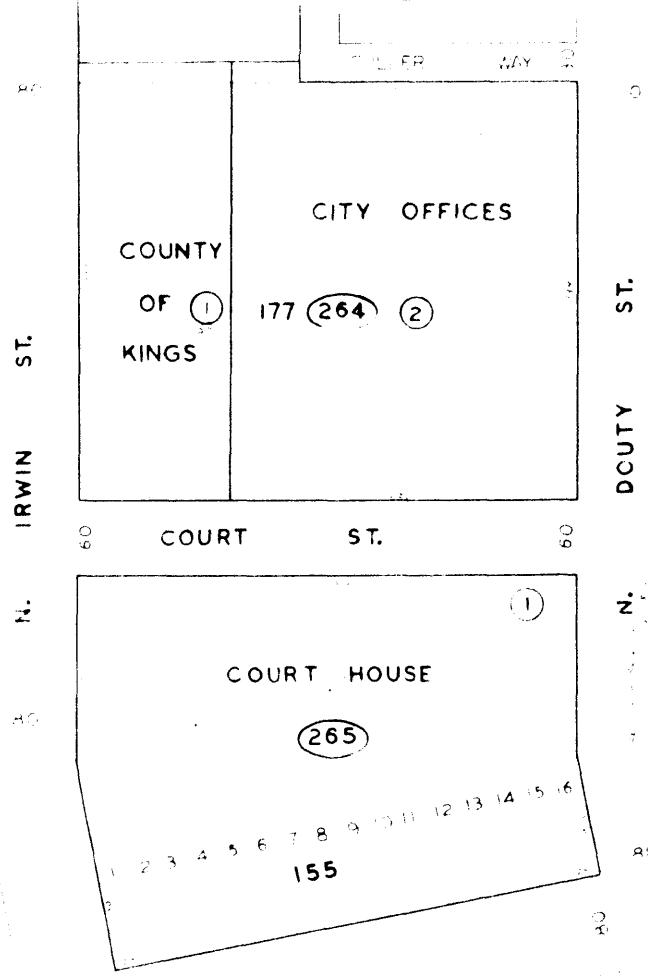
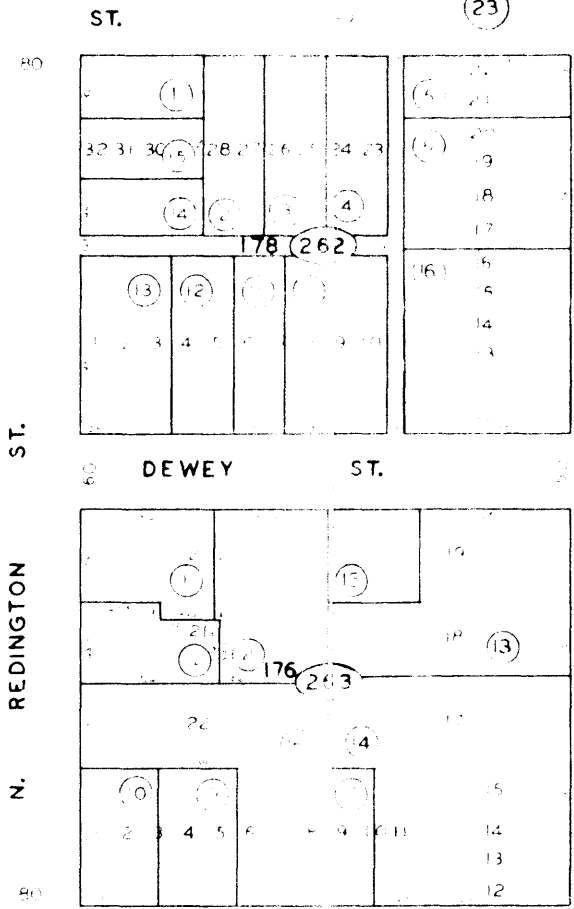
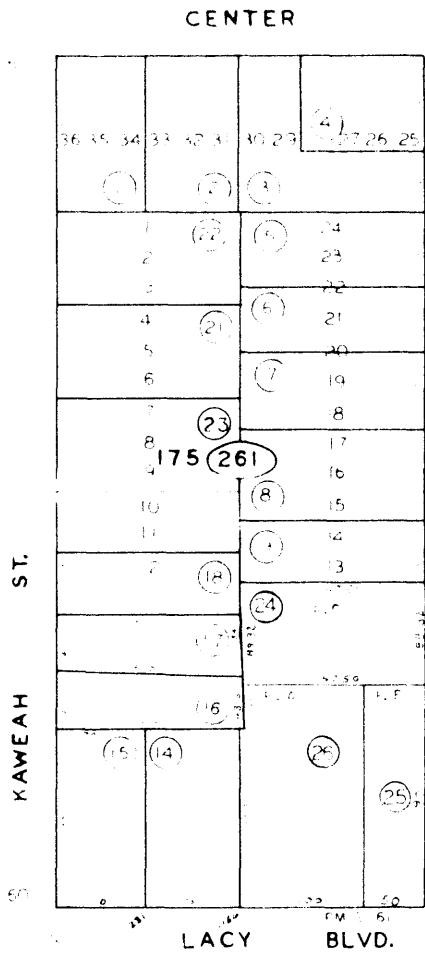
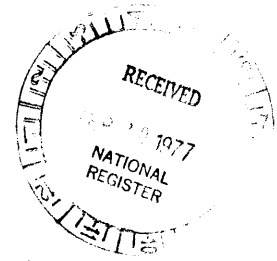
SENTINEL JOB PRINT. HANFORD.

RECEIVED
NATIONAL REGISTER
1916



KINGS COUNTY ASSESSOR'S MAP

10-26



(25)

(27)

PK 12