

140 17119

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	IOWA
COUNTY:	DAVIS
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	MAY 3 1974

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Davis County Courthouse

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Davis County Courthouse

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
On the Square Bloomfield Town Square

CITY OR TOWN:  
Bloomfield

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
Fourth

STATE: Iowa CODE: 14 COUNTY: Davis CODE: 051

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Davis County

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Davis County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN:  
Bloomfield

STATE: Iowa CODE: 14

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
Recorder's Office, Davis County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:  
On the Square

CITY OR TOWN:  
Bloomfield

STATE: Iowa CODE: 14

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:

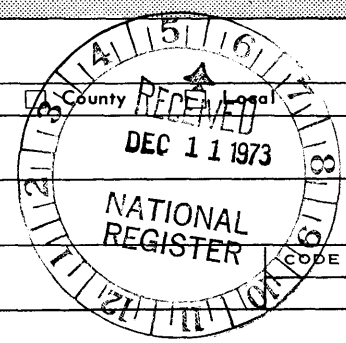
DATE OF SURVEY:  Federal  State  County

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:



STATE: IOWA

COUNTY: DAVIS

ENTRY NUMBER: MAY 3 1974

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DATE:

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7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Davis County Courthouse is a two story stone-faced building with mansard. It is the central focus of the town square area in Bloomfield. Its dimensions are approximately 97 feet by 87 feet with 16 inch brick walls (faced in Bedford stone), a four-foot thick foundation, and 42 rooms with 20-foot ceilings.

Prominent features on the exterior are the graduated rectangular plan, the tall bell tower with four-faced clock and life-size statue, roof cresting and roof brackets and the Bedford stone strimmed windows. The bell in the tower is original and was made in Troy, by the Kimberly Bell Works in 1876. The Seth Thomas Clock, too, shows the date 1876 and still works. The blind goddess figure carries a scale in one hand and sword in the other. Steel tie-rods were inserted into the bell tower in the 1940's to stabilize the wood and copper-coated tin structure.

All windows have original wood sashes and frames. The original tin roof has been covered by a mixture of tar and pea gravel. Shingles of the mansard are metal soldered at the seams.

The courthouse is entered on the east and west by a flight of stone steps. The central vestibule inside is ten feet wide and is the main access to side offices. At the east end of the vestibule is the open stairway leading to the second floor where the courtroom (45'x60'), with original walnut seats and benches, if found.

Interior walls are plastered and have little decoration. The walls on the exterior were recently sandblasted.

No additions or renovations on exterior or interior have been made.

"Instead of projecting corner pavilions this plan is a Greek cross with a projecting pavilion centered at each side. The material is cut limestone. Although a mansard roof may be simply defined as a roof with a steep lower slope and a more level upper slope, this definition fails to mention the secondary cornice which usually caps the wall-like lower slope and conceals the upper. It was customary in the 1870's to place a railing of cast iron lace atop this cornice, a detail which is completely intact at Bloomfield. A central tower has a mansard roof which would be pyramidal were not a railed platform for the statue of "Justice" created by the secondary cornice overhang. The clock faces are in round arched, strongly projecting dormers."

↑  
"Paul Goelder"  
↓

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

## SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1877

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                      |   |  |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi-        | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry    | losophy                                       | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention   | <input type="checkbox"/> Science              | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture            | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | Architecture                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human-        | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature  | itarian                                       | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Military    | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater              | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            | <input type="checkbox"/> Music       | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation       | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In 1877 the Davis County Courthouse replaced a log structure in the Bloomfield Town Square. The people of Bloomfield had, on the 13th day of May 1872, at an election then held, authorized the use of the square for the site of a county courthouse. In 1875 at the general election authorization was given to build a courthouse at a cost not to exceed \$50,000. Several previous elections had defeated the issue.

In November 1876 the ground in the center of the square was cleared off. The plans of T. J. Tolan and Sons, architects, were adopted; the contract to Larkworthy and Menke of Quincy, Illinois for stone was let. John Lane was appointed local superintendent of the work. The amount was \$45,201.00. The cornerstone was laid in 1877.

The heating contract in 1878 for steam heat was awarded to the Haxton Steam Heater Co., Kewanee, Illinois for \$2,675.00.

To quote an old "History of Davis County". "This building is one the people can look upon with pride, as a fitting emblem of their prosperity." It is still an object of pride. Countless tourists passing through Bloomfield stop to take pictures of its unique architecture. It has been the subject of several artists, one the Late George Shane of the Des Moines "Register" staff. It has appeared in newspaper articles as far away as Oklahoma City as a subject of unique rural architecture. Only one other like it is said to exist in New England. It is an excellent example of Victorian architecture with French influence, similar to the Hubbell Mansion of Des Moines, which has been purchased by the State of Iowa.

It long has been the hub of county activities from band concerts, scrap metal drives for World War II, barbecues, civic rallies, etc.

"It is unlikely that any firm was more successful in the design of courthouses in the Second Empire style than T. J. Tolan and Sons of Fort Wayne...The Tolans next appear at the Davis County Courthouse in Bloomfield, Iowa, (1877-1878). " Paul Goelder"

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**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

"History of Davis County, Iowa", Press of Mills & Co., Des Moines, 1882, pages 432, 433, 434, 435

Kincart, Jim, HABSI form, Ames, Iowa State University, October, 1968

Excerpt from Paul Goeldner's Temples of Justice, unpublished dissertation, Columbia University, 1970.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

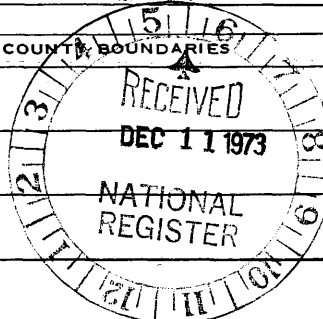
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		40° 45' 15"	92° 25' 0"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

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4511260  
CD

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **THREE**

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



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**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
Mrs. W. David Haufe, Davis County Liaison Officer

ORGANIZATION: Davis County Historical Society      DATE: March 1973

STREET AND NUMBER:  
413 North Columbia Street

CITY OR TOWN: Bloomfield      STATE: Iowa      CODE: 14

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION      NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National     State     Local

Name: Adrian A. Anderson

Title: Historic Preservation Officer

Date: 10/5/73

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Adrian A. Anderson  
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 5/2/74

ATTEST:

Wm. M. ...  
Keeper of The National Register

Date: 5.2.74