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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JUL 24 1978
DATE ENTERED DEC 12 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

AND/OR COMMON

Fillmore County Courthouse

(FM05-1)

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

9th & G Streets

__ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Geneva

__ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Nebraska

CODE

031

COUNTY

Fillmore

CODE

059 ✓

3 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
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Fillmore County

STREET & NUMBER

9th & G Streets

CITY, TOWN

Geneva

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Nebraska

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Fillmore County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

9th & G Streets

CITY, TOWN

Geneva

STATE

Nebraska

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic Preservation in Nebraska

DATE

1971

__ FEDERAL STATE __ COUNTY __ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Nebraska State Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

Lincoln

STATE

Nebraska

7 DESCRIPTION

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

The Fillmore County Courthouse is located on a two square block parcel of land along the southern edge of Geneva's main business district. The park-like setting is broken only by the courthouse parking lot just south of the building and by public parking at both the far western and eastern edges of the site. Neither of the public parking lots infringe on the setting of the courthouse.

The building is a two story brick structure above a raised basement. The foundation is rusticated limestone in a slightly battered wall, while the roof is an asphalt shingled hipped roof. The overall design of the building represents a rather vernacular version of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Each major facade exhibits a five-part composition with three-sided bay pavilions at each end and a slightly projecting pavilion in the center. The end pavilions have hipped roofs with gabled wall dormers. The central pavilions of the east, west and south walls are all topped with gabled dormers--those of the east and west being of an unusual stepped gable design.

Attention is focused on the north wall where a three story tower surmounts the central entrance pavilion. The tower roof, which still has its original slate roofing, is a flat-topped octagonal pyramid surrounded by a simple balustrade. The original gabled dormers have been removed. The large round-arched entrance is detailed in stone in typical Richardsonian Romanesque fashion. A community clock is located on each side of the tower, installed by Geneva jeweler W. P. McCall in 1909.

Designed by the then Geneva architect, George E. McDonald in 1892, the building was modeled after the fine Gage County Courthouse in Beatrice by Gunn and Curtis. The building lacks the sophistication in design and execution of the Beatrice example which is more thoroughly Richardsonian in form and detail. McDonald's design, while exhibiting many characteristic features of Richardsonian Romanesque, is more eclectic in its excessive variety of form, detail and material.

The axial symmetry of the exterior (along a north-south axis) is evident in the interior arrangement of space. A large hallway runs through the center of the building in an east-west direction and widens at the main entrance vestibule in the center. Large stair-halls on both the first and second floors are at either end, opening to the south of the main hallway. Offices open off the hallway north and south on both levels except on the second floor where the large district courtroom occupies the central section of the building south of the hallway. Notable interior features include the borrow lights between the court offices and the second floor stair hall, large frame Romanesque arches in the main floor hallway and a profusion of pressed metal wall and ceiling coverings (added in 1916). The pressed metal work is nowhere more evident than in the district courtroom where three different designs are used for the ceiling, walls and wainscot.

1. Goeldner. (1970), page 330.

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The building is in good shape and retains much of its original fabric, both inside and out. The most unfortunate alteration has been the window replacement project which took place in the late 1960's. Fully one-half of the 155 windows have been bricked closed or replaced with glass block. All four entrances have been modernized. Original wall openings, however, remain in tact.

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 1892-1894

BUILDER/ARCHITECT L. F. Pardue/George E. McDonald

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The first settlements on the land which became Fillmore County occurred in 1866-67. Four years later, organic elections were held and the county was organized in 1871. The townsite of Geneva was surveyed in that year and the first county buildings were under construction by December of 1872. The county jail was completed early in 1873 and the first court house was completed shortly thereafter in the same year.

Less than two decades later, the need for an expanded, fireproof facility became evident. After one unsuccessful attempt, the voters of the county approved a bond issue for construction of a new building on the basis of plans submitted by local architect, George E. McDonald. Ground was broken in December of 1892 and the contract was awarded to Geneva contractor, L. F. Pardue for \$46,176.55 on January 11, 1893. The building was dedicated on February 22, 1894.

The building has been a focal point of county legal activities and has been the major landmark in the region since its completion in 1894. Its significance as landmark perhaps outweighs its architectural significance, however, it is the major building of any architectural pretense identified in the county to date.

The architectural importance of the building is evident as a local interpretation of the Richardsonian Romanesque style of architecture. The style gained widespread popularity following the completion of H. H. Richardson's Allegheny County Courthouse in Pittsburgh in 1888. Of particular interest is the attempt to copy, on a smaller scale and with less expensive materials, Gunn & Curtis' design for the Gage County Courthouse, fifty miles to the east. Goeldner notes (1970, page 330) that a perspective drawing of the Gage County building was used to illustrate the proposed Fillmore County building prior to the bond issue vote.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 5 ¹

WHRB
12-4-78

QUADRANGLE NAME Geneva, Nebr.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 14 6727810 4481060

B

C 14 618380 44816770

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

D. Murphy, Architect

ORGANIZATION

Nebraska State Historical Society

DATE

July, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

1500 R Street

TELEPHONE

(402) 432-2793

CITY OR TOWN

Lincoln

STATE

Nebraska

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

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

Marion E. Knott 7/10/78

TITLE

Director, Nebraska State Historical Society

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

[Signature]
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 12-12-78

ATTEST:

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

William H. Brasham 12-4-78

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Fillmore County Board. Minutes. Compiled by Douglas E. Rung, 820 J Street, Geneva, Nebraska 68361 (for National Register nomination).

Gaffney, Wilbur G. (Ed.). The Fillmore County Story. Geneva: Geneva Community Grange No. 403, 1968.

Goeldner, Paul Kenneth. Temples of Justice: Nineteenth Century County Courthouses in the Midwest and Texas. unpublished dissertation, Columbia University, 1970.

History of the State of Nebraska. Chicago: The Western Historical Company:1882.