

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only  
received **JUL 29 1985**  
date entered **AUG 29 1985**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Carlton County Courthouse

and/or common Carlton County Courthouse

**2. Location**

street & number 3rd Street and Walnut Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Carlton N/A vicinity of

state Minnesota code 22 county Carlton code 017

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<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:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Carlton County

street & number 3rd Street and Walnut Avenue

city, town Carlton N/A vicinity of state Minnesota

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Carlton County Courthouse

street & number 3rd Street and Walnut Avenue

city, town Carlton state Minnesota

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Minnesota Statewide Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1984  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office, Fort Snelling History Center

city, town St. Paul state Minnesota 55111

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>    N/A    </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Carlton County Courthouse, located at the northeast corner of 3rd Street and Walnut Avenue in Carlton, Minnesota, is situated on the end of a city block in a residential and commercial neighborhood one block north of the Carlton business district. A landscaped lawn surrounds the building on four sides. A small parking lot is found at the rear of the building. The county jail is directly adjacent on the east side of the structure.

Designed by well-known Duluth architect Clyde Kelly and completed in 1924 at the cost of \$301,350.00, the Carlton County Courthouse is a rectangular building designed in the Renaissance Revival tradition. The three story structure, 126' long by 79' wide, rises 48' to the cornice or 57' to the top of a low pitched roof. Constructed of cream colored brick and stone the building has eleven bays lengthwise and five bays on each side. Each floor is organized into three distinct horizontal divisions. Smooth stone is found on the first floor and brick comprises the second and third floors. Each floor division differs in window ornamentation. All first floor windows display slightly curved stone arches with large voussoirs. Segmental window heads alternate with pedimented window heads on the second floor. The third floor windows display architrave window frames. The facade of the structure exhibits four recessed Ionic columns between bays on the second and third floor. Two Ionic pilasters, on each side of the building, are located between bays on the second and third floor levels. The rear is void of any type of columns. The front entrance is flanked by Ionic columns, reflecting the facade. Each side entrance is flanked by Ionic pilasters. All three entrances support a plain entablature and a broken elliptical pediment with the year 1922 engraved in a shield at the head. Carved leaves embellish the interior of the pediment. The rear entrance, reflecting first floor window ornamentation, has a slightly curved stone arch with large voussoirs above the entrance. On the stone entablature that surrounds the building CARLTON COUNTY COURT HOUSE is engraved in the frieze. The stone cornice is embellished with a repeating pattern of carved shells and nature motifs. The building is unaltered with the exception of window replacements.

The ground floor originally housed the offices of clerk of district court, judge of probate, county attorney, sheriff, county agricultural agent, an assembly room and a ladies room. The Carlton library was housed in the assembly room until 1936. The second floor contained the offices of county treasurer, register of deeds, county auditor, highway engineer and rooms for county commissioners. The third floor housed and needs of the district court including a large court room, two jury rooms, an office for court reporters, a law library, judges chambers and a witnesses waiting room. The basement held the heating and ventilating systems and storage vaults.<sup>1</sup> The interior has a large central staircase and wide hallways. Some improvements have taken place in the interior. In December 1977 remodeling plans were approved for basement excavation. Additional storage space was provided. Most office house original county functions.

The current county jail lies directly adjacent to the Carlton County Courthouse on the east side. The county jail was started in 1978 and completed in 1980 at the cost of \$1,450,000.00. It is the fifth jail built for the county.

<sup>1</sup>Cloquet Pine Knot, February 15, 1924.

# 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1922-1924      **Builder/Architect** Clyde Kelly - Architect  
Niebuhr Co. of Mpls. - Builder

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Carlton County Courthouse, located at the corner of 3rd Street and Walnut Avenue, is architecturally and historically significant as a prominent public building in Carlton County, as a building designed by prominent Duluth architect Clyde Kelly, and as a structure which has served as the county seat of government in Carlton County since its completion in 1924.

Carlton County, established May 23, 1857, was named for Reuben B. Carlton, a member of the first state senate in 1858. The first county seat was located at Twin Lakes, a stagecoach stop. A tavern served as the first courthouse. In 1870 the county seat was moved to Thomson where the first railway line between Duluth and St. Paul travelled through the county. A jail in Thomson was the first structure built by the county. A frame building in Thomson was converted into a courthouse. In 1889 the boom town of Cloquet was proposed as the new county seat but the official move required further action of the state legislature. In 1889 Thomson and Northern Pacific Junction (Carlton) continued to vie for possession of the county seat. Before Cloquet could be approved as the new seat the townspeople of Northern Pacific Junction crossed the St Louis River and removed the safe and county records. In late 1889 the state legislature legalized the seizure. In 1890 the Northern Pacific Junction townspeople built and paid for a courthouse. It was a two story brick building with a high pitched gable roof. A front gable arched entry was flanked on the right by a round roof high tower and on the left by a short turret protruding from the wall. At this time Northern Pacific Junction changed its name to Carlton in hope of presenting the community as a business center rather than a railroad crossing. This original courthouse was demolished in 1922 to make way for a bigger courthouse.

The present courthouse was begun in September, 1922 and completed in February, 1924. The location was directly west of the site of the first courthouse. The building was designed by a well known Duluth architect Clyde W. Kelly. He was educated in Chicago and received architectural training in the office of Clarence H. Johnston in St. Paul. Thereafter, he worked in the office of the supervising architect of the U.S. Treasury Department in Washington D.C. and later worked independently in Duluth. Kelly designed several schools in the state including the Morgan Park School in Duluth (1916), Washington School in Virginia (1921) and Riverside School in Duluth (1922). His Carlton County Courthouse remains the largest Renaissance Revival building in the county.

The courthouse was constructed at a cost of \$301,350.00. The Niebuhr Co. of Minneapolis was contracted to build the structure. Werner Olson was the superintendent in charge of the building, first employed by the Niebuhr Co. and then retained by the bonding company. The original contract estimated the cost at \$179,746.33. The plumbing and heating amounted to \$21,600.00; electrical wiring \$7,490.00; hardware \$3,177.00; fixtures \$3,100.00; acoustic installations \$1,415.00; and vault doors \$1,057.54. Architectural fees amounted to \$10,879, insurance while building cost \$1,392.00, and cost of grounds were

(see continuation sheet - page 1)

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Carlton County Vidette March 10, 1911, November 1922, February 14, 1924.  
 Cloquet Pine Knot February 15, 1924, May 5, 1966, January 6, 1977, June 1, 1977, July 14, 1977,  
 December 1, 1977.  
 Duluth News & Tribune August 5, 1973.  
 See Continuation Sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one  
 Quadrangle name Cloquet Quad. Quadrangle scale 7.5

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>5</u>	<u>5</u> <u>4</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>	<u>5</u> <u>1</u> <u>6</u> <u>7</u> <u>8</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification  
 Lots 7, 8, 9, & 10, Block 13, Original Plat, City of Carlton

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>	county	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>
state	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>	county	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Liz Holum - Field Assistant  
 organization State Historic Preservation Office  
Minnesota Historical Society date December 1984  
 street & number Fort Snelling History Center telephone (612) 726-1171  
 city or town St. Paul state Minnesota 55111

# 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 Russell W. Fridley  
 title Russell W. Fridley date 7/5/85  
State Historic Preservation Officer

For NPS use only  
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
Shelore Byers Entered in the National Register date 8/29/85  
 Keeper of the National Register  
 Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Carlton County Courthouse, Carlton, Carlton County, MN

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

\$1,500.00. Furniture and fixtures came to \$15,052.00. The final cost came to \$259,003.00 and including the interest the cost came to \$301,350.00.

The Carlton County Courthouse cornerstone was laid November 4, 1922. A box of mementos pertaining to the county was sealed under a large stone in the south-west corner. The first case heard in the new structure were 127 fire cases from the Northeastern Fire of 1918 that burned the majority of Carlton County and southern St. Louis County. The Carlton County Courthouse retains its original integrity and remains an important local example of early twentieth century architectural style and is significant for its part in the role of county government in rural Minnesota.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Carlton County Courthouse, Carlton, Carlton County, MN

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 2

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Bibliography - continued

The First 100 Years: The Minnesota State Bar Association. Minneapolis; State Bar Association, 1983.

Gebhard, David & Martinson, Tom. A Guide to the Architecture of Minnesota. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   2   Page   1  

---

REFERENCE NUMBER: 85001926

STATE: Minnesota

COUNTY: Carlton

RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC): Carlton County Courthouse


CITY/TOWNSHIP: Carlton

VICINITY OF:

ADDRESS: 301 Walnut Ave.

COMMENTS: Address Correction



  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ian R. Stewart  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

  4/24/98    
Date