

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

2216  
NOV 28 1989

### National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

#### 1. Name of Property

historic name Sheridan County Courthouse  
other names/site number SH08-1

#### 2. Location

street & number 2d St at Sprague St N/A not for publication  
city, town Rushville N/A vicinity  
state Nebraska code NE county Sheridan code 161 zip code 69306

#### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>        </u>	<u>        </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>        </u>	<u>        </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>        </u>	<u>1</u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: County Courthouses of Nebraska  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

#### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

James A. Hanson Signature of certifying official  
November 17, 1989 Date

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See cont. sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

#### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register. Patrick Andrus 1/10/90  
 See continuation sheet  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.  
 determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register. \_\_\_\_\_

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

for Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
Government/courthouse

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
Government/courthouse

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Romanesque

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls brick

roof wood

other stone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

[X] See continuation sheet, section 7, page 1.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Politics/government

Architecture

Period of Significance

1904-39

Significant Dates

N/A

1904

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Misner, W.T.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

[X] See continuation sheet, section 8, page 1.

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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[X] See continuation sheet, section 9, page 1.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing  
(36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings  
Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering  
Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreeage of property less than 1 acre

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>3</u>	<u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>7</u> <u>9</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u>	<u>4</u> <u>7</u> <u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	B	<u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u>	<u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u>	
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>  </u> <u>  </u>	<u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u>	<u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u>	D	<u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u>	<u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u> <u>  </u>	
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

[ ] See continuation sheet, section 10, page 1.

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Verbal Boundary Description

[X] See continuation sheet, section 10, page 1.

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Boundary Justification

[X] See continuation sheet, section 10, page 1.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title	Barbara Beving Long, consultant				
organization	Four Mile Research Co.	date	November 12, 1989		
street & number	3140 Easton Boulevard	telephone	(515) 266-4964		
city or town	Des Moines	state	Iowa	zip code	50317

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Built in 1904, the Sheridan County Courthouse is a relatively unaltered, unpretentious example of the Property Type, County Capitol. Identifying features of the Property Type include its standing as a good example of public architecture in the community, presence of features distinctive to courthouse use, a tower, use of permanent materials, provision for fireproof storage vaults, and the impression of a government building of permanence and solidity. Built in 1901 and 1904, respectively, the courthouses for adjacent Cherry and Sheridan Counties are alike in massing, materials, and overall design, and both were the work of Omaha architect W.T. Misner.

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The two-story brick-faced courthouse rests on a low rock-faced Hot Springs sandstone raised basement and has limited attic space in the gabled front-facing wing. Heavy simple stone pedestals occur at the entry steps. Additional gables, also with simple brick detail at the ends, adorn the east and west facades. Red brick (Alliance Red) is laid in six rows of common bond, then one row of headers. Hipped and gabled sections intersect to form a compact, roughly 50x60' rectangular shape. An attractive but simple hipped roof tower with corbels rises from the point of intersection, and the main entrance is below it.

Window treatment is generally simple; most have brick lintels of radiating voussoirs. Smooth stone sills are also of uncomplicated design. Second story windows in the gable end are longer and narrower than others. Two small attic windows, also in the front gable end, have prominent round arches, a Romanesque Revival stylistic influence. These round arches and the narrow windows are the principal stylistic references. Other ornamental detail includes simple moulded brick courses at gables and between the first and second stories where, like the lintels, the bricks have a textured finish.

The centered entry vestibule opens onto the bend of an L-shaped hallway and also faces stairs leading to the second floor. A secondary or back entrance on the south facade is tucked beyond the staircase. County offices are placed off the hallway, and some have angled entrances to them. Vault placement is variable within the county offices.

The interior has rather simple woodwork in halls that has been painted and in most offices that remains unpainted. High baseboards, turned balusters, a squared newel, and swinging vestibule double doors with glass lights and small panels are among the original features.

Exterior alterations are few. The west face of the tower has been

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rebuilt without corbels but using matching brick. Metal storm windows and a new entry door cover or replace the originals. Inside, the district courtroom retains its original layout and bar but has been remodeled using acoustic tile and modern light tan paneling and a new ceiling, light fixtures, and ceiling fans.

The Sheridan County Courthouse site is the northwest corner of a long and narrow block in Rushville. A highway, also one of two intersecting main commercial streets, runs past the principal, or north, facade of the courthouse. The commercial district is just west of the courthouse. Nearby are houses, and a c. 1972 jail and gravel parking lot occupy the lot directly east of the courthouse.

The jail is one-story, flat-roofed, faced with red brick, and has a light tan smooth cornice. Materials and massing blend well with the older courthouse. A jail is shown on the present jail location as early as 1928, according to Sanborn fire insurance maps, and the jail location has historically been associated with the courthouse since 1911 when the first jail was built, according to county records.

A three-part small stone veterans' memorial with three flagpoles is located at the northwest corner of the courthouse site. While attractive and suited to a courthouse site, it is of recent (1970s?) construction and therefore a noncontributing object for this nomination. The jail is also a noncontributing element because of its recent construction date.

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The Sheridan County Courthouse is architecturally significant (Criterion C) and also historically significant (Criterion A) for its association with politics and local government. The courthouse forms a significant part of the identity of the county seat, Rushville. The courthouse displays associative qualities of the Property Type, County Courthouses of Nebraska, since it serves as the focal point for the administration of local government in Sheridan County. As the first courthouse the county constructed, the property represents the "county seat wars" that characterized an important chapter in the county's political history. In addition, it displays physical qualities of the Sub-property Type, the County Capitol. Identifying features of the County Capitol include its standing as a good example of public architecture in the community, presence of features distinctive to courthouse use, a tower, use of permanent materials, provision for fireproof storage vaults, and the impression of a government building of permanence and solidity.

The Period of Significance is 1904, when it was built, to 1939, when the "fifty year rule" takes effect. The Sheridan County Courthouse is being nominated as an example of the Property Type, County Courthouses of Nebraska (County Capitol) of the Context, County Government in Nebraska, 1854-1941, from the Multiple Property Submission, County Courthouses of Nebraska.

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Located along the Nebraska-South Dakota border in western Nebraska, Sheridan County is part of the Sand Hills. Potential settlers did not initially recognize the area's suitability for cattle raising, and ranchers first came to the area in 1878. Once the advantages of the area became known, settlement was rapid. Railroad construction further spurred settlement. Passage of the Kinkaid Act that increased the size of legal homesteads further encouraged county settlement after 1904, and cattle raising remains an important economic pursuit.

Pioneer residents took steps to organize Sheridan County in 1885, secure in the knowledge that the railroad was coming from Cherry County to the east. Four settlements vied for the county seat designation, and four elections as well as court cases were necessary before Rushville triumphed. It was not until 1888 that the state supreme court settled the matter, in favor of Rushville.

The county initially rented space for county use. In February of 1904, the county board received a petition calling for a special tax to build a courthouse. As was the case three years earlier for adjacent Cherry County, Sheridan County officials built as costly and elaborate a

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courthouse as they could afford. Also like Cherry County, the board selected W.T. Misner, an Omaha architect, to design the courthouse. Sang C. Reck from Alliance was awarded the contractor contract on June 3, 1904, with a low bid of \$17,325, according to county records. Reck agreed to complete the project by December 1, 1904.

In September of 1904 the cornerstone was officially laid before an estimated 300 witnesses. A procession consisting "of the different fraternal societies, the Rushville Hose Co., floats and individuals, and...led by the Rushville Cornet Band" formed on Main Street, according to newspaper accounts. After speeches there was a dinner, ball game, various races, and a band concert to celebrate the Sheridan County Courthouse in Rushville.

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Long, Barbara Beving. "County Courthouses of Nebraska." Multiple Property Submission. 1989.

Nebraska State Historical Society. Photo Collection. #M281-1060.

"Sheridan County." Who's Who in Nebraska. Lincoln: Nebraska Press Association, 1940.

Contract. Sang C. Reck and Sheridan County. June 3, 1904. County Clerk's files.

Contract. W.T. Misner and Sheridan County. June 3, 1904. County Clerk's files.

"The Corner-Stone Laid." Gordon Journal. September 16, 1904.

"Big Day for Rushville." Rushville Standard. September 16, 1904.

Rushville, Nebraska. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. 1928.

Phillips, Anna and Ball, Vilma. History of Box Butte County...and...Neighboring Counties of...Sheridan.... Hemingford, NE: by the authors, 1939.



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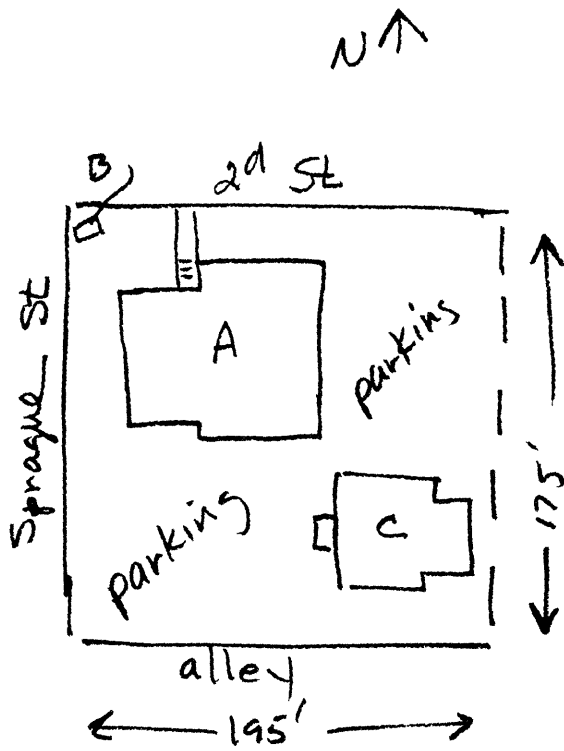
Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies all of Outlot 4 and all of Lot 3 of Block 9 of the Original Town of Rushville and is roughly 175x195' in size.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes that portion of the city block that has historically been associated with the property. Since 1911 a county jail has occupied Lot 3 and the courthouse was built on Outlot 4 in 1904.

SHERIDAN COUNTY  
COURTHOUSE (SHOP-1)  
Rushville, NE



contributing

A - Courthouse - bldg

Noncontributing

B - memorial - object

C - jail - bldg

Not to scale