

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received **MAR 9 1984**
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Clatsop County Courthouse

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number 749 Commercial Street N/A not for publication

city, town Astoria N/A vicinity of First Congressional District

state Oregon code 41 county Clatsop code 007

3. 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input 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	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" 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 County of Clatsop

street & number 749 Commercial Street

city, town Astoria N/A vicinity of state Oregon 97103

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Clerk's Office &/or County Assessor's Office
Clatsop County Courthouse

street & number 749 Commercial Street

city, town Astoria state Oregon 97103

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Statewide Inventory of
Historic Properties has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1974 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Salem state Oregon 97310

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Clatsop County Courthouse has been used continuously since January 10, 1908, by the government of Clatsop County, Oregon. The handsome Tenino stone and pressed brick building trimmed with terra cotta looks just about the way it did when it was first built, except for three exterior changes which have been made during the past 75 years.

Located on the northern portion of Block 28, McClure's Addition to Astoria, (Township 9N, Range 9W and Section 8, County of Clatsop, State of Oregon), the Clatsop County Courthouse is directly across Commercial Street, Astoria's main thoroughfare, from the United States Post Office and Federal Building and/or Customs House, built in 1933. Directly in back of the Courthouse on Lots 7 and 8 of Block 28 is the Old Clatsop County Jail, nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. Across Duane Street to the south, is the historic Flavel House (also on the National Register of Historic Places), built in 1886 by Captain George Flavel. Today, it is operated and maintained by the Clatsop County Historical Society as a historical museum.

The Clatsop County Courthouse is a three-story structure, although the ground floor is actually a daylight basement. The first, or main floor, is approximately 12 feet average above grade with access to it provided from both the north and south sides of the building by wide concrete stairways. The main entrance with clusters of ornamental lights on either side is from Commercial Street on the north. The building is approximately 120 feet wide from east to west, and approximately 94 feet deep from north to south. From ground level to the roof line is approximately 60 feet. A shallow ornamental dome which originally was a part of the roof was removed after a 1949 earthquake weakened it. In 1929, a doorway was cut through the Tenino stone foundation wall to provide another outside entrance to the Justice Court, located on the ground floor on the north side of the building. A steel outside stairway was built in 1977, on the west side of the building, at the request of the Astoria fire marshall to provide a needed additional exit from the top floor.

The lawn which separates the Courthouse from the streets on the north and east sides is broken up by two historical displays. On the northeast corner is a concrete, paved platform which was placed there by Clatsop Post No. 12, American Legion in 1929, to display a captured Austrian field gun from WW I. It was broken up for scrap during WW II, but subsequently was replaced later by a Japanese field gun. In front of this is a concrete bench, placed there in 1934 by the Oregon Department of the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War. On the northwest corner of the block is a rustic log shelter, roofed, but with open sides, which protects a 115-inch thick fir log, which was cut in the David Douglas Park in 1931.

The remaining areas of Block 28, aside from the area taken up by the Old County Jail, are devoted to parking with a paved lot fronting on Duane Street to the south, and another paved lot fronting on 7th Street to the west.

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Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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Continuation sheet CLATSOP COUNTY COURTHOUSE Item number 7 Page 2

The main double-doored entrance to the first floor leads into a large hall floored with square marble blocks, and with walls with marble and oak wainscoting highlighting the painted walls. In the original floor plan the county clerk and recorder's office were located in the northeast corner off the main hallway with the county sheriff's office located directly in back of it. Between these two office areas is a vault which extends down into the basement. The lower portion of this, reached by an interesting antique elevator, or by a steel stairway, is used for storing records.

On the other side of the first floor hallway is the Assessor's offices in the southwest corner and the county court offices in the northwest corner. Some of these areas have been changed through the years, but the basic office space is still as it was when the Courthouse was first built. Basically, the first floor is virtually unchanged from its original state.

At the south end of the first floor hallway is a wide oak staircase with carved, curved banisters on each side leading up to the second floor. Halfway up, it is split into two separate staircases, one on each side of the hallway, which doubles back to give access to the second floor. Here is another large hallway also paved with marble and with the same kind of trim as is on the first floor. Originally, the Circuit Courtrooms were on the west side with adjoining witness rooms and two jury rooms. On the opposite, or each side of the hall, was the office of the District Attorney and the County School Superintendent. Much of the layout of this top floor has been changed through the years to accommodate changing needs, but virtually all of the original walls and oak trim are still in place. On the ceiling, in the center of this hallway, can be seen the circular outline of the original dome removed in 1951. The opening to this has been sealed with plaster to match the rest of the ceiling area.

The basement, or ground floor, can be reached by an elevator installed in 1981, or by a staircase which goes down from the south end of the first floor, or by the door which was cut through the foundation on the Commercial Street side. There is also a freight ramp, concrete surfaced, which leads to the ground floor from the parking area on the west side of the building. Most of the rooms in the basement have been changed many times since the building was built and few of them match the elegance of the rooms on the two upper floors. The concrete floors and wooden walls are practical, but certainly not ornamental. In short, the basement is a working area with few frills. There is however, a nicely furnished Justice Courtroom on this floor on the north side near the front entrance.

Throughout most of the Clatsop County Courthouse, the original oak built-in desks, counters, storage drawers and cupboards are still in place, looking just as they did when they were first installed. almost all of the doors and windows are original with old-fashioned fittings and decorations still intact. Most of the original lighting fixtures have been replaced with modern ones. Many of the bathroom fixtures however, are originals. In short, the Clatsop County Courthouse was so well-planned, well-built, and has been so well-maintained, that even today it is still as functional and as ornamental as it was when it was first opened in 1908.

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 type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" 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 1908

Builder/Architect

Edgar Lazarus - Architect

Hastie & Dougan - Contractors

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Clatsop County Courthouse is significant to the local community and to the area because it is the oldest continuously used public building in the county and one of the oldest in the state of Oregon. Virtually unchanged in appearance since it was completed in 1908, the Courthouse has dominated the political and official life of Clatsop County for 75 years, providing a stable, dignified, and yet familiar place for the people of the county to conduct their official business with their elected county officials. We feel that it is eligible under criteria "a" and "c."

Located in one of the oldest settled areas of Astoria and undamaged by the great Astoria fire of 1922, which swept to within a block of it, the Clatsop County Courthouse is a part of a cluster of historical buildings which includes the Old County Jail built in 1914, and the historic Flavel House, one of the finest examples of Victorian architecture in the state, built in 1886. Within the two block area to the west are other such historic structures as the John Hobson residence, which dates from the 1860s and which is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The tan exterior of Tenino sandstone of the Clatsop County Courthouse surplanted by two stories of pressed brick with terra cotta detailing presents an aesthetically pleasing appearance from all sides. Even though it is 75 years old, it is a serene, peaceful, old building, showing its age a bit, but still capable of being the center of official Clatsop County for many years to come.

In 1854, the original Clatsop County Courthouse was built on Block 28, McClure's Addition to the city of Astoria. Col. John McClure, one of the founders of the city donated this block and 15 other building sites to the county on the condition that it would build the Courthouse in his addition. Clatsop County accepted his offer and hired a local man, Conrad Boelling, to build the new Courthouse, receiving for his efforts, ten building sites. The other donated lots were sold to pay for the Courthouse furniture.

Fifty years later, in 1904, the Clatsop County Commissioners decided to build a new Courthouse, citing a lack of space and the run-down condition of the original Courthouse as reasons for the move. They planned to build the new building on the same block and drew up a set of specifications which they sent to a number of architects. Edgar Lazarus, a Portland architect, was chosen to do the work after his preliminary plans were approved by the County Commissioners.

After testing the ground and the soil, W.A. Grondahl, who had drawn up the foundation plans for Edgar Lazarus, decided against using a pile foundation. Instead, he specified a steel and concrete blanket foundation consisting of 24 inches of crushed rock on another 24 inches of tamped sand. A 18-inch concrete pad, reinforced with steel rods, was to be poured over this. Grondahl sent out his specifications to various contractors for bids.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Attached Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Astoria, Oregon-Washington

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 1 0 4 3 5 8 6 0 5 1 1 5 0 7 5
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification The property nominated is a full city block minus the 50 x 100 foot lot on the southwest corner occupied by the Old County Jail. It is bounded on the west by 7th Street, on the North by Commercial Street, on the east by 8th Street and on the South by Duane Street. The County Jail has been listed independently.

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

state None code county code

state None code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rogert T. Tetlow, Historian and Writer

organization Clatsop County Historical Society date May 23, 1983

street & number 1576 Irving Avenue #11 telephone (503) 325-4083

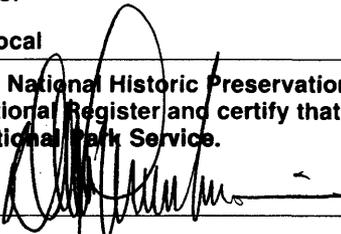
city or town Astoria state Oregon

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

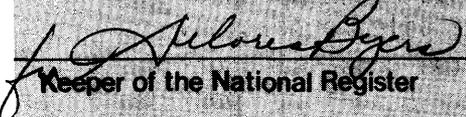
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date Mar 2 '84

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


Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 4/5/84

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

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All of the bids submitted were for more than twice the amount that Grondahl had figured the job should cost. He told the County Court that he would build the foundation using day labor for the amount he had specified, so they gave the contract to him. Grondahl finished the foundation right on schedule and the cost of it was exactly what he had predicted it would be.

In July, 1904, the contract for construction of the new Clatsop County Courthouse was awarded to Hastie & Dougan, a Spokane, Washington construction firm, which had made the low bid of \$97,351. This bid did not include foundations, plumbing, electrical wiring, or the dome.

On August 23, 1904, the cornerstone was laid in an elaborate ceremony, which included a parade and various official and unofficial activities. A metal box containing many articles deemed to be of future historical importance was placed into a hole in the cornerstone and sealed over. Official photographs were taken and then everyone went home, confident that the people of Clatsop County would soon have a new Courthouse.

Unfortunately, it did not work out that way. In November of 1904, all work on the structure was stopped because purchasers of the county warrants had been told that they were illegal. The warrants had been drawn against the county General Fund and a state law specified that no county would have indebtedness of more than \$5,000. Unable to proceed with construction, the county tried to have a new law passed by its legislative representative. This was done, but the Oregon State Supreme Court declared the new law unconstitutional.

Meanwhile, carloads of stone, brick, terra cotta, and other building materials were arriving at the site daily. Much of this was stored in the unfinished basement and temporarily covered.

Unable to raise additional funds, the County Court ordered the basement boarded up, but all of the bids for doing this job were too high, so the Court finally allowed the unfinished structure and the piles of building materials to sit unprotected from the elements.

The exposed County Clerk's office and vault were still being used and some anxiety was felt for the county documents stored there, but the matter was dropped and the County Clerk presumably kept working in his open office, exposed to the elements.

In January, 1906, another attempt was made to complete the Courthouse when the county planned a levy to raise the necessary funds. There was not enough interest expressed at the polling places to pass the levy however, so the matter of the unfinished Courthouse was dropped for still another year.

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Finally, a special tax was levied in 1907, which passed, and Hastie and Dougan went back to work. Because of the many delays however, the cost of the completed Courthouse would be in excess of \$175,000. Even so, the contractors went ahead and promptly ran into a long spell of bad weather which further delayed construction. The Clatsop County Courthouse was finally and officially completed on January 30, 1908.

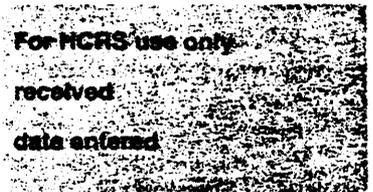
The architect, Edgar M. Lazarus, was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1868. He arrived in Portland c. 1892, and began an extensive practice which produced many fine public, commercial and domestic buildings throughout the state. Lazarus was a supporter of the Portland Architectural Club and eventually became a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects. He was a member of the firm of Lazarus, Whitehouse and Fouilhoux. He was most active professionally until the First World War. Edgar Lazarus died in 1939.

Like many of his contemporaries, Lazarus could provide designs in a variety of stylistic categories. These ranged from the Arts and Crafts elements of his domestic work between 1892 and 1904, to the Jugendstil-influenced Vista House (1916-1918) at Crown Point on the Columbia River. Classically-derived examples other than the American Renaissance-styled Clatsop County Courthouse include the Ahavai Shalom Synagogue (1904) and Agricultural Building (1905) at the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition, both in Portland and both demolished.

Equally significant works include: Apperson Hall, Oregon State University (1898-1899), in Corvallis, and the 1910-1912 Receiving Ward at the State Insane Asylum (Oregon State Hospital) in Salem. Between 1898 and 1904, Lazarus was also supervising architect on two projects designed by John Knox Taylor of the United States Treasury. These were the United States Custom House (1898-1900) and additions to the United States Post Office and Court House (1903-1909), both in Portland.

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Page 1

Daily Astorian . August 9, 1974.

Astorian Daily Budget. October 28, 1905; November 8 & 9, 1905;
December 15, 1906; January 6, 1907;
April 6, 10, & 12, 1907; August 29 & 30, 1907;
January 16, 21, & 30, 1908.