

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

NOV 30 1976

DATE ENTERED

SEP 15 1977

**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

Hall County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

First and Locust

__ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Grand Island

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Nebraska

CODE
31COUNTY
HallCODE
79**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Citizens of Hall County

STREET & NUMBER

First and Locust

CITY, TOWN

Grand Island

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Nebraska

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Deeds--Hall County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

First and Locust

CITY, TOWN

Grand Island

STATE

Nebraska

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic Preservation in Nebraska

DATE

1971

__ FEDERAL STATE __ COUNTY __ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Nebraska State Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

Lincoln

STATE

Nebraska

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 _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Hall County Courthouse is a two-story brick structure on a high limestone basement, located at the intersection of First and Locust Streets in Grand Island. It is here that the juxtaposition of the early plats (those paralleling the Union Pacific Railroad Lines) and the later southeastern addition to the town occurs, creating an interesting urban space in contrast to the standard 90° grid. The placement of the courthouse on this site is at an acute angle to both grids, thus "claiming" all of the space at this intersection as its setting (see photo #1).

The courthouse building itself is an exquisitely designed structure and an outstanding example of Beaux-Arts Classicism (see photo #2). Designed by Thomas R. Kimball, prominent Omaha architect, in 1901, the building exhibits several features common to this mode of design. A large rectangular mass, the building displays a Beaux-Arts tri-partite composition with a dominant central entrance element climaxed with a mounted tower of symbolic association. Executed in limestone with brick accents on the second level, the entrance pavilion is detailed with arched openings on the main level, coupled columns framing a second level balcony and an enlivened cornice accented on the corners with anthemion and in the center with civic clock surrounded by a broken pediment. The whole of this composition builds delightfully to the climactic mounted tower complete with picturesque symbolic dome surmounted with lantern and weather-vane (see photo #3). Entrance is gained through this element by a monumental flight of steps up to the main level. The monumentality has been diminished somewhat in the recent past by the addition of the on-grade entrance to the basement level in the center of the stairway.

The end pavilions of the tri-partite composition are a part of a basic rectangular mass, finely detailed, which constitutes the plan-form of the building. The building is presently roofed with a simple truncated hipped roof which features circular dormers on the front (northwest) elevation only (photo #4). The roof had been plagued by leakage problems from about 1905 and since that time has been redesigned to its present form. Originally (photo #5) the top of the roof was embellished with light iron railings set between brick posts. This motif considerably enlivened the skyline and enhanced its overall Beaux-Arts character. The walls of the building are a deep red-brown brick, clearly articulated into strong horizontal bands with accents of limestone--the high, rusticated limestone basement, limestone belt course and cornice. Strong limestone quoins terminate the building, focusing on the central pavilion. The windows are accented within the brick walls by elaborately detailed surrounds, varying for each level.

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The central organizing feature of the interior is the rotunda (photos #6 and 7) of the main and upper levels. Entrance to the main level is by way of the central pavilion, through a vestibule to the rotunda. Opposite the entrance is the iron stairway (photo #8) and the elevators. Off of the rotunda and along the long axis of the building are hallways, which provide access to the various county offices on all sides (photo #6). Upstairs, circulation is around the open well to offices on the east and courtroom on the west (photo #9). One of the finest public spaces in Nebraska, the rotunda has a plaster cast domed ceiling detailed with classical motifs (photo #10), and is lighted by a central skylight. Of the interior spaces, the rotunda has seen little alteration (that being confined to the dark painted wainscot) while most of the office spaces themselves have been completely remodeled.

Building construction began in 1901 and was completed in 1904 at a cost of \$131,703.45. This cost reflects the construction of a new jail facility at the rear of the courthouse which is still extant but virtually unrecognizable due to numerous modern additions. Thomas R. Kimball, architect for the building, received \$5,620.67 for his services. He secured the work in 1901 from among a list of distinguished Nebraska architects, including James Tyler (see Grand Island Carnegie Library--NRHP) and James Craddock of Lincoln, George A. Berlinghof (see Beatrice Public Library--NRHP) of Beatrice, James McDonnell of South Omaha and Mr. Prescott of Marshalltown, Iowa.

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 1901-1904 ~~BUILDER~~/ARCHITECT Thomas R. Kimball

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Hall County Courthouse has served the needs of county government in Grand Island for over 70 years. Prior to that time, the county had erected its first courthouse building in 1872-73 on another site. Curiously, certain features of the original courthouse were repeated in the design of the Kimball building. The original building was a two-story brick structure on a raised limestone basement. The structure featured a mounted tower over the entrance gable. This tower was designed with a slender, vertically proportioned symbolic dome with clocks on four sides, surmounted by a small lantern. Above the cornice on the side walls were a series of chimneys. It would seem more than accidental that significant images from the old building would be mirrored in the new building, i.e. the mounted tower, symbolic dome, lantern and clock as well as the brick posts of the balustrade, which resemble chimney pots (see photo #5).

The new building, however, is of another era and a completely different pedigree. Conceived at a time when the influence of the French Ecole des Beaux-Arts was near its peak in the United States, this building is one of the very few fine examples of the style in Nebraska (see also Beatrice City Library--NRHP). Although the style did not enjoy widespread popularity in Nebraska, the basic tenets of the Ecole had a profound influence on architecture here as it did elsewhere. From the late nineteenth century on, the leaders of the architectural profession in America were trained at the Ecole, and with the establishment of the first schools of architecture in America (M.I.T. and Columbia--both basing their methods on those of the Ecole) the influence of the Beaux-Arts was assured for many years. Kimball himself graduated from a three-year architectural program at M.I.T. (1885-88).

The earliest influence of the Beaux-Arts on Nebraska architecture was seen in buildings of divergent stylistic characteristics. Buildings such as Old Main on the Nebraska Wesleyan University Campus in Lincoln (see NRHP) and the York County Courthouse (see NRHP) both exhibit fundamental compositional characteristics of

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

see Continuation Sheet, Item #9

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,4	55,56,6,0	4,53,02,6,5	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

D. Murphy, Architect

ORGANIZATION

Nebraska State Historical Society

DATE

November 24, 1976

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 XX

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

Marvin B. Kerrett

11/23/76

TITLE Director, Nebraska State Historical Society

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

Charles H. ...

DATE

9/15/77

DATE

9-13-77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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the Beaux-Arts, yet cannot be described as of that style. It wasn't until just prior to and after the turn of the century that the fully developed style emerged. Although more modest in scale, the temporal context of the Hall County Courthouse compares favorably with some of the best known public buildings of the style (New York Public Library, 1895-1902; Grand Central Station, 1903-13) in the United States.

The impetus the style received from the architecture of the great exhibitions cannot be overlooked. From the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago (1893) to the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco (1915), America saw perhaps the finest examples of the style executed in plaster. Nebraska, too, had its days with expositions when Omaha sponsored the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition in 1898. Thomas R. Kimball, then in partnership with C. Howard Walker of Boston, was architect-in-chief for the 1898 exposition.

Architect Kimball was perhaps Nebraska's premier architectural talent. Born in 1862, near Cincinnati, Ohio, he received advanced education at the University of Nebraska, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Cowles Art School in Boston. He then studied in Paris under various tutors, including the great painter, Harpignies. Back in Boston, he became a partner in the architectural firm of Walker, Kimball, and Best. Kimball was in charge of the Omaha office of the firm which continued until 1899 as Walker and Kimball. He practiced alone in Omaha until 1928, when the firm of Kimball, Steele and Sandham was formed. He died in Omaha in 1934. In addition to his association with the Trans-Mississippi Exposition, Kimball acted as professional advisor to the Nebraska State Capitol Commission and is credited with writing that competition, was elected a Fellow in the American Institute of Architects in 1901 and served as A.I.A. National President from 1918-1920. The Hall County Courthouse stands today as a landmark, not only to Hall County, Nebraska, but to one of Nebraska's most important architectural talents. Perhaps only his Omaha Public Library Building and St. Cecelia's Cathedral in Omaha can stand alongside this courthouse as his greatest achievements.

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"Thomas R. Kimball" in Architecture, Vol. 70, November 1934.

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