

JUL - 2 1981

IOWA SITE INVENTORY

Division of Historic Preservation
Iowa State Historical Department
26 E. Market St., Iowa City, Iowa 52240

MAY 29 1981 Site Number 44-006-003
District Name _____
Map Reference # 44-006-003
Topo Map Davenport NK 1:25,000

IDENTIFICATION

1. Site Name Henry County Courthouse
2. Village/Town/City Mount Pleasant Township County Henry
3. Street Address Washington between Main and Adams
4. Legal Location OT 17
Urban: subdivision block parcel subparcel
Rural: township range range section 1/4 section-1/4 section
5. UTM Location: zone 15 easting 58700 northing 4540200 Acreage less than 1 ac
6. Owner(s) Name Henry County Board of Supervisors
7. Owner(s) Address Courthouse Mount Pleasant Iowa 52641
(Street address) (City) (State) (Zip)
8. Use: present Courthouse original Courthouse

DESCRIPTION

9. Date of Construction 1914 Architect/Builder English Brothers, Champaign, Illinois, Builder
10. Building Type: single family dwelling multiple family dwelling commercial
 industrial educational other institutional public religious agricultural
11. Exterior Walls: clapboard stone brick board & batten shingles stucco
 other _____
12. Structural System: wood frame with interlocking joints
 wood frame with light members (balloon frame) masonry load-bearing walls
 iron frame steel frame with curtain walls reinforced concrete
 other _____
13. Condition: excellent good fair deteriorated
14. Integrity: original site moved-if so, when? _____
Notes on alterations, additions (with dates and architect, if known) and any other notable features of building and site: _____
15. Related Outbuildings and Property: barn other farm structures
 carriage house garage privy other _____
16. Is the building endangered? no yes-if so, why? _____
17. Surroundings of the building: open land woodland scattered outbuildings
 densely built-up commercial industrial residential other _____
18. Map _____
19. Photo Roll _____ Frame _____ View _____

SIGNIFICANCE (Indicate sources of information for all statements)

20. Architectural Significance

- a. Key structure/individually may qualify for the National Register
- b. Contributing structure c. Not eligible/intrusion

A good example of a very simplified neoclassicism, in which detail is cut to a minimum. Windows have simple, shortened surrounds, and the parapet rises unbroken by a cornice of any kind, as an extension of the outer wall plane. The engaged giant columns are a simplified Roman Doric, and entrance detail is limited to a small triangular pediment on plain brackets.

21. Historical Significance

Theme(s) Politics/Government

- a. Key structure/individually may qualify for the National Register
- b. Contributing structure c. Not eligible/intrusion

This courthouse is locally significant as the historical focus of county government, and of the political power and prestige derived from the community's status as the county seat. As center of county government, an Iowa town was reasonably assured of economic and population growth, and a prominent role in local social and political life. The county courthouse represents a significant public investment in a structure built not simply for utilitarian purposes, but also as a monument associated with the historical importance of county organization and development.

See Continuation Sheet

22. Sources (for primary and secondary sources, give complete facts of publication: author, title, place of publication, date, etc.):

- Andreas, A.T. Illustrated Historical Atlas of Iowa. Chicago: Andreas Atlas Co., 1875.
- Pratt, LeRoy G. The Counties and Courthouses of Iowa. Mason City, Iowa: Klipto Printing and Office Supply Co., 1977.
- Stanek, Edward and Jacqueline. Iowa's Magnificent County Courthouses. Des Moines: Wallace-Homestead Book Co., 1976.

Prepared by _____ Date January 1980
 Address _____ Telephone _____
 Organization DHP

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| FOR DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION USE ONLY | |
| 1. OFFICE INFORMATION SOURCES ON THIS PROPERTY | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COUNTY RESOURCE FILE | <input type="checkbox"/> REVIEW AND COMPLIANCE PROJECT: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> WINDSHIELD SURVEY | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NATIONAL REGISTER | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GRANTS-IN-AID: _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____ |
| 2. SUBJECT TRACES | 3. PHOTO IMAGES <u>109/3-4</u> |
| a. _____ | _____ |
| b. _____ | _____ |
| c. _____ | _____ |
| d. _____ | _____ |
| e. _____ | _____ |

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Item Number(s) _____

HENRY COUNTY

Henry County business was originally transacted in various log cabin homes in Mount Pleasant. This type of meeting was common for most of Iowa's counties shortly after their organization. But the old perspective of time was considerably different than it is today, mainly because of the lack of modern modes of transportation. Today one can travel by highway across Iowa in one afternoon, without a second thought as to the convenience. One hundred fifty years ago, horseback was the mode and muddy roads were the mechanism if one was lucky enough to find one. Moving a long distance was a major affair not lightly thought of. For these reasons, the first significant events in the history of Iowa's eastern counties often occurred 20 or 30 years before similar events in Iowa's western counties.

The governmental machinery of Henry County began turning on January 16, 1837, at the first session of the county commissioners. Roads were located, boards of officers were approved, and buildings planned. The contract for the first courthouse to be located at Mount Pleasant was ordered on February 13, 1837. In May the order was rescinded and replaced the following month with a specific order for a 30 by 18 foot courthouse, ten feet high between the joists. Actual construction was delayed for a period so that the building was not completed until 1839.

Difficulties with transportation made the county quite concerned about moving people and freight, and thoughts of additional county building space were preempted. A toll road was constructed between Mt. Pleasant and Burlington in 1853 and called, appropriately enough, the "Burlington and Mount Pleasant Plank Road". It was built of sturdy oak planks eight feet long and three inches thick. Toll gates were placed at regular intervals to collect the two-cents-per-mile toll for a horse and wagon. The road's lifetime was short, though, because the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad came to Henry County before the end of the decade. Attention was then diverted to the need for a new county building.

Henry County's second courthouse was a remodeled version of a place called "Hill Hall" which was located on the extreme north-western corner of what is now called "Courthouse Block". The structure bore the date 1870 and was used until the present courthouse was built in 1914.

--from Stanek, Edward, and Jacqueline Stanek,
Iowa's Magnificent County Courthouses. Des
Moines: Wallace-Homestead Book Co., 1976.