

MAY 29 1981

JUL - 2 1981

# IOWA SITE INVENTORY

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

Site Number 79-018-001  
District Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Map Reference # 79-018-001  
Topo Map Des Moines NK 1:250,00

## IDENTIFICATION

1. Site Name Poweshiek County Courthouse
2. Village/Town/City Montezuma Township \_\_\_\_\_ County Poweshiek
3. Street Address Town Square Main between 3rd and 4th Streets
4. Legal Location OT Courthouse Square  
Urban: \_\_\_\_\_ subdivision \_\_\_\_\_ block \_\_\_\_\_ parcel \_\_\_\_\_  
Rural: \_\_\_\_\_ township \_\_\_\_\_ range \_\_\_\_\_ section \_\_\_\_\_  
subparcel 1/4 section-1/4 section
5. UTM Location: zone 15 easting 539700 northing \_\_\_\_\_; Acreage less than 1 ac
6. Owner(s) Name Poweshiek County Board of Supervisors
7. Owner(s) Address Courthouse Montezuma Iowa 50171  
(Street address) (City) (State) (Zip)
8. Use: present Courthouse original Courthouse

## DESCRIPTION

9. Date of Construction 1859 Architect/Builder Drake & Dryden, Architects  
Drake & Dryden, Builders
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:  

1930's building raised and basement added - south addition in 1890's -  
new sash and aluminum doors, interior remodelled.
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

Among Iowa's oldest courthouses, and one of the few in the Greek Revival style. Note pedimented gable end, very wide triglyph frieze, wide pilasters, the caps of which crowd the tops of the second-story windows. Tower with entrance at base and open bell platform possibly later.

**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

**FOR DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION USE ONLY**

**1. OFFICE INFORMATION SOURCES ON THIS PROPERTY**

- COUNTY RESOURCE FILE
- WINDSHIELD SURVEY
- NATIONAL REGISTER
- GRANTS-IN-AID: \_\_\_\_\_
- DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY
- REVIEW AND COMPLIANCE PROJECT: \_\_\_\_\_
- OTHER \_\_\_\_\_
- OTHER \_\_\_\_\_
- OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

**2. SUBJECT TRACES**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_

**3. PHOTO IMAGES** 78/1-2, 241/7-10, 302/33A-42A, 314/20-23

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

CONTINUATION SHEET

Item Number(s)

POWESHIEK COUNTY

The first courthouse of Poweshiek County was completed in 1850. Built on the northeast corner of the square, it was a two-story frame building with the courtroom on the first floor and three offices on the second floor. The offices were for the clerk, the treasurer-recorder, and the county judge. It was a very-elaborate structure for its time. The building was not only a courthouse, but it also served as a school, a church, and a gathering place for the entire community. Finally, in 1859, it was moved and made into a house.

In 1856, plans for the present courthouse were begun. A property tax of one mill on the dollar was levied on the county for that year, to pay for the proposed building. It was completed in 1859 at a total cost of \$1928.15. Although well over 100 years old, this Poweshiek County landmark continues to serve as the county courthouse. The cupola atop a tower at the front of the building bestows upon it the character of a large Victorian place of learning. It remains in nearly the same order that it had over a century ago; however, during the W.P.A. days of the 1930s, the structure was raised and a basement added. At that time a new section was also constructed to provide additional space.

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