

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

2229

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NOV 2 8 1989

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 Cherry County Courthouse
other names/site number CE14-89

2. Location

street & number	<u>SW cor 4th and Main Sts</u>	<u>N/A</u>	not for publication
city, town	<u>Valentine</u>	<u>N/A</u>	vicinity
state	<u>Nebraska</u>	<u>code NE</u>	<u>county Cherry</u>
		<u>code 031</u>	<u>zip code 69201</u>

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
[] private	[] building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
[x] public-local	[x] district	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
[] public-state	[] site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
[] public-Federal	[] structure	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u> objects
	[] object	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

County Courthouses of NebraskaNumber 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 [x] 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 [x] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. [] See continuation sheet.

James A. Johnson
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.

[] 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): _____

Patrick Andrus1/10/90

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 stonewalls brickroof asphaltother 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 [x] locally

Applicable National Register Criteria [x] A [] B [] C [] D

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

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)Politics/government

Period of Significance

1901-39

Significant Dates

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.

9. Major Bibliographical References

[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:

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

Specify repository:

10. Geographical DataAcreage of property less than 1 acre

UTM References

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

B			
Zone	Easting	Northing	
D			
Zone	Easting	Northing	

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

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

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 1901, the Cherry County Courthouse is an unpretentious example of the Property Type, County Capitol. Unlike most Nebraska courthouses, it has retained attractive wrought iron fencing on the site. 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, use of permanent materials, provision for fireproof storage vaults, and the impression of a government building of permanence and solidity. The courthouse originally had an entry tower between the hipped roof of the main body and gable-front wing, but this typical feature of the County Capitol was removed in 1940. Built in 1901 and 1904, respectively, the courthouses for Cherry and Sheridan Counties are alike in massing, materials, and overall design, and both were the work of Omaha architect W.T. Misner. Contributing resources are the original courthouse, fence, and World War I-era statue. Noncontributing resources are the courthouse annex, 1984 veterans' memorial, and 1983 statue.

The two-story brick-faced courthouse rests on a low rock-faced stone raised basement and also has limited attic space in the gabled front-facing wing. Red brick is laid in six rows of common bond, then one row of headers. A simple metal cornice with pairs of colonettes at the gable ends is painted white, as is the stone basement.

Hipped and gabled sections intersect to form a compact, roughly 50x60' rectangular shape. A hipped roof tower with corbels and round-arched windows once rose from the point of intersection. It was removed in August of 1940 when an insect infestation was discovered; the tower had begun to leak in the late 1930s.

Window treatment is generally simple, and most have brick lintels of radiating voussoirs. The 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 gable end, have more prominent round arches, a Romanesque Revival stylistic influence. These round arches, narrow windows, and nearby metal colonettes are the principal stylistic references.

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 west 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 features fine unpainted woodwork throughout, including

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spindle balusters for the staircase and landing. High baseboards, a paneled newel with carved detail and beading, wood floors, and double doors at the vestibule are other original features that contribute favorably to the building's appearance.

In addition to the tower removal, exterior alterations include: metal storm windows over the original wood frame double-hung windows, and the metal and glass entry door. A tall brick chimney has been rebuilt. The interior retains considerable original materials and a good sense of place. On the first floor, removable partitions have been added in part of the east hall, off the stairway, to form more office space. On the second floor, modern paneling and a new furnace are found in the hallway. The district courtroom retains its original layout and bar between spectators and the trial space, but has modern wood paneling and replacement furnishings, including a carpeted jury box.

The 1901 Cherry County Courthouse occupies the northeast corner of the courthouse site, which is the northeast quarter of a long and narrow block in the Original Town of Valentine. Nearby are a number of public or semi-public buildings, including the city hall and a church. Like other towns platted with the railroad in mind, Valentine's commercial street emanates from the railroad with the courthouse at the other end of the main commercial street. The courthouse site has been expanded over the years, but its commemorative statuary and other objects form a cohesive setting that conveys the importance of county government in the community and illustrates the evolution of courthouse activities.

A particularly fine wrought iron fence curves around the original courthouse. Such fencing is rare among Nebraska courthouse sites. Just southeast of the courthouse is a large metal statue of an eagle resting on a curved shape with a wagon wheel below. "1883-1983 Visionquest, 100 years, G.R. Breel" identifies the work. Because of its recent construction date, the object is a noncontributing element.

Directly south of the courthouse is the separate 1954 courthouse annex designed by the Omaha architectural firm of John Latenser and Sons. Both the 1901 and 1954 buildings on the site house county offices. The 1954 building is one-story, flat-roofed, faced with tan brick (in the same pattern as the 1901 building), and has limestone trim, especially around the simple recessed entrance. Its small scale makes the building relatively unobtrusive; its recent construction date renders it a noncontributing element for this nomination. The building includes the county jail, for the jail in the 1901 building was condemned by the fire marshall, a factor in the decision to build the 1954 building.

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Just south of the 1954 building is a small park with two memorials. The first and more prominent has a tall granite pedestal with a metal plaque of the "Roll of Honor" of those from the county who served in World War I, and it is a contributing element. Above the pedestal is a metal sculpture of an armed soldier in 1910s-era uniform. Behind this World War I memorial is a simple three-part stone memorial erected in 1984 (a noncontributing element due to its recent construction date). It is "dedicated to the memory of all who are veterans. Inscribed here are the names of those veterans from this area who made the supreme sacrifice in defense of the freedoms we cherish." A simple metal flagpole is behind this memorial, and a flower border of red cannas and yellow marigolds at the back of the small park effectively separates it from a small parking lot.

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The Cherry County Courthouse is 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, Valentine. Notable site, massing, and materials of the courthouse work together to mitigate the effect of alterations. Original exterior elements are present to a sufficient degree to identify the property as a courthouse.

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 Cherry County. In addition, it has the 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, 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 1901, when it was built, to 1939, when the "fifty year rule" takes effect. The Cherry 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.

Cherry County is the largest county in Nebraska, embracing 5,979 square miles. Centered along the Nebraska-South Dakota border, the area is part of the Sand Hills and is suited to cattle raising. Early settlers did not recognize the advantages of the area, and permanent settlement did not occur until the late 1870s.

Once the advantages of the area became known, settlement was rapid. In 1878 the federal government re-located the Brule Sioux in part of the Dakota Territory and established an Indian agency near present Valentine to administer the Indian settlement. In 1880 Fort Niobrara was created just outside present Valentine. That same year construction began on a railroad line into the county.

Evidence of permanent white settlement followed soon on the heels of rail construction. In 1882 boosters began building up Valentine, and Cherry County was organized the following year. In 1884 Valentine was incorporated. Population reportedly stood at 250 in 1884 and reached 750 just two years later.

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Businesses provided goods and services--saloons, general stores, saddlery shops, etc.--to the Indians and the military, and the town boomed in the later nineteenth century. However, the military post closed in 1906. 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.

Named for Congressman E.K. Valentine, Valentine is the only community of any size in the county and has always been county seat. The county initially rented space for county use. In October 1900, the county board received a petition calling for a \$15,000 bond issue to build a courthouse. Voters approved the rather modest bond issue the following month.¹ As was the case for adjacent Sheridan County in 1904, Cherry County officials built as costly and elaborate a courthouse as they could afford.

In February of 1901 Valentine residents donated \$150 for a courthouse site, which the board accepted. The board selected W.T. Misner, an Omaha architect, to design the courthouse. William Maier, also from Omaha, was awarded the contractor contract on March 23, 1901 with a low bid of \$13,979.

Construction proceeded rapidly, and on the afternoon of July 13, 1901, cornerstone ceremonies were held. On November 14, 1901, "after a thorough examination the board accepted the court house and made full settlement with the contractor William Maier," according to commissioners' records. And on November 25 and 26, the county officers moved into the Cherry County Courthouse.

¹In contrast, the more populated counties of Saunders and Seward built \$87,000 and \$100,000 courthouses in 1903 and 1904.

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

Nebraska State Historical Society. Photo Collection. #M281-941.

Cherry County. Commissioners' Records. Book B.

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

"Valentine Community and Methodist Church. 1884-1964." Clerk's Office.

Bell, Marianne, ed. A Sandhill Century. Book I. The Land. A History of Cherry County, Nebraska. n.p.: Cherry County Centennial Committee, 1986.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies Lots 1-11 in Block 10 of the Original Town of Valentine and is roughly 275x150' in size.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes that portion of the city block that encompasses the evolution of county services in the county. The boundary includes the 1901 courthouse, 1954 courthouse annex, and a World War I-era commemorative statue (among others) in a small park. These properties are adjacent to one another and surrounded on two sides by streets and an alley at the rear. County ownership ends at the south end of the parcel, and the park marks a clear differentiation in use, ownership, and appearance.

