

JUL - 2 1981

MAY 29 1981

IOWA SITE INVENTORY

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

Site Number 24-018-003
District Name _____
Map Reference # 24-018-003
Topo Map Denison 1:24,000

IDENTIFICATION

1. Site Name Crawford County Courthouse
2. Village/Town/City Denison Township _____ County Crawford
3. Street Address Broadway, between Avenue B and Avenue C
4. Legal Location OT 70
Urban: subdivision block parcel
Rural: township range section
subparcel 1/4 section-1/4 section
5. UTM Location: zone 15 easting 304880 northing 46541550; Acreage less than 1 acre
6. Owner(s) Name Crawford County Board of Supervisors
7. Owner(s) Address _____
Denison Iowa 51442
(Street address) (City) (State) (Zip)
8. Use: present Courthouse original Courthouse

DESCRIPTION

9. Date of Construction 1904-05 Architect/Builder George A. Berlinghof, Architect
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:

High dome with drum removed c. 1945.
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

Typical courthouse in Beaux Arts tradition. Exterior, with the exception of the loss of the dome, is quite intact, Prominently sited on grassy square.

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 _____
 Address _____ Telephone _____
 Organization DHP

FOR DIVISION OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION USE ONLY

1. OFFICE INFORMATION SOURCES ON THIS PROPERTY

<input 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

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

3. PHOTO IMAGES _____

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Item Number(s) _____

CRAWFORD COUNTY

A Baptist minister by the name of J. W. Denison purchased 200,000 acres in Harrison and Crawford counties for the Providence Western Land Company. The Reverend Denison offered the first permanent county judge a courthouse, a hotel, a store, and several houses if the judge would name the site, later to be called Denison, as the county seat. The offer was accepted and the first courthouse was begun in 1857 when the county had a total population of 256. Clay discovered in some hills north of Denison was formed into brick and used to build the courthouse which was finished in 1859. The structure was also used as a lecture room, church auditorium, banquet room, and Sunday school. One of the hottest issues of the time was whether or not the courthouse should also be used for dancing. After only one dancing occasion, a flurry of protests prevented any such further festive uses.

In October of 1860, cattle were tied to the fence around the courthouse square. Vegetables and grain were put on display and horse races were held on Denison's streets. These activities constituted the first Crawford County Fair.

Records indicate that sometime between 1871 and 1873 a frame addition was added to the courthouse to double its former size. The cost was under \$5,000. Apparently, however, the addition was unsightly and became popularly known as the "wart". Another "wart" was added in 1881.

In 1902, a \$75,000 bond issue was approved to build a "wartless" courthouse. Another \$40,000 bond issue had to be approved to finish the structure and erect its dome. The cornerstone was laid on July 30, 1904. The building's exterior is made from Ohio marble. Some of these blocks weigh as much as seven tons. The tower was too heavy for the rest of the courthouse and had to be removed in the 1940s.

The old courthouse was sold in 1903 for \$301 and moved across the street from the courthouse square. Over the years it has been used as a saloon, hotel, and a cafe. Although not in use at this writing, it still stands as a privately owned structure.

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