

MAY 29 1981 **JL - 2** 1981

# IOWA SITE INVENTORY

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

Site Number 19-024-001  
District Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Map Reference # 19-024-001  
Topo Map New Hampton 1:24,000

## IDENTIFICATION

1. Site Name Chickasaw County Courthouse
2. Village/Town/City New Hampton Township \_\_\_\_\_ County Chickasaw
3. Street Address Prospect Street, at Locust Avenue
4. Legal Location OT 17  
Urban: subdivision block parcel  
Rural: township range section  
1/4 section-1/4 section
5. UTM Location: zone 15 easting 555810 northing 4778600; Acreage less than 1 ac
6. Owner(s) Name Chickasaw County Board of Supervisors
7. Owner(s) Address \_\_\_\_\_  
(Street address) (City) (State) (Zip)  
New Hampton Iowa 50659
8. Use: present Courthouse original Courthouse

## DESCRIPTION

9. Date of Construction 1929 Architect/Builder Ralston & Ralston, Waterloo, Arch.
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:  
Exterior and principal interior spaces very well preserved.
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  
An extremely fine courthouse. The style is a "stripped classicism" leaning toward Moderne and Art Deco. Beautiful detail, including original light fixtures.

**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 26 E. Market St., Iowa City, IA. 52240 Telephone 353-6949  
Organization \_\_\_\_\_

**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**

**3. PHOTO IMAGES**

- |          |       |
|----------|-------|
| a. _____ | _____ |
| b. _____ | _____ |
| c. _____ | _____ |
| d. _____ | _____ |
| e. _____ | _____ |

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Site Number \_\_\_\_\_

## CONTINUATION SHEET

Item Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

### CHICKASAW COUNTY

The center of population and influence in Chickasaw County during its early years was the City of Bradford. Appropriately, on August 14, 1854, the county commissioners established it as the seat of county government. A simple log courthouse without plaster or even a ceiling was constructed to house county records. However, Bradford was not located near the geographic center of the county and one of the first functions carried out at the log building was to relocate the county seat to New Hampton. The decision for this move was finalized in 1857, but in 1858 people in the southern part of the county felt that another location, such as Forest City, would be more appropriate. An election was held resulting in the decision to again relocate the county seat. A subsequent investigation revealed that the poll book had been tampered with and a number of court battles ensued, resulting in the re-establishment of New Hampton as the county seat.

The first publicly built structure to house county offices in New Hampton was built in 1865. It was a small frame building which was enlarged in 1876 by a four-room one-story fireproof brick addition. On March 26, 1880, the building was destroyed by fire. Luckily for Chickasaw County citizens, their records were not seriously damaged since they were kept in the fireproof section of the courthouse.

Once again the question of relocation of the county seat arose. The petition was thwarted by a \$5,000 contribution from New Hampton private citizens to be applied toward the construction of a new courthouse. In 1881 a brick and stone building was erected for \$10,500. In 1905 and 1906 wings were added to the south and north sides for a cost of about \$4,200 each.

The present courthouse was designed by an architect from Waterloo. It was constructed of Bedford stone during 1929 and 1930 for a cost of approximately \$134,000.

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