

PH0088977

# DATA SHEET

Form 10-300  
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	IOWA
COUNTY:	JOHNSON
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	MAR 27 1975

### 1. NAME

COMMON:  
**Johnson County Courthouse**

AND/OR HISTORIC:

### 2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**South Clinton Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Iowa City**

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
**First**

STATE: **Iowa** CODE: **14** COUNTY: **Johnson** CODE: **103**

### 3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

### 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
**Johnson County**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Iowa City**

STATE:  
**Iowa**

CODE:  
**14**

### 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Johnson County Courthouse**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**South Clinton Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Iowa City**

STATE:  
**Iowa**

CODE:  
**14**

### 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

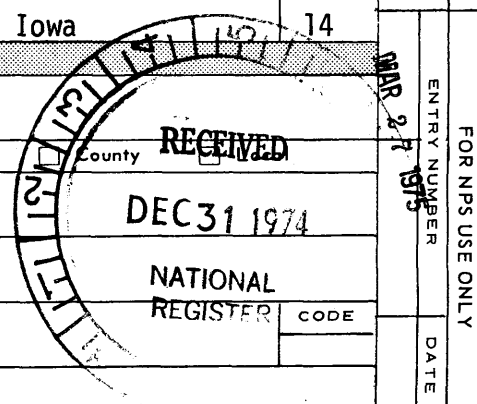
DATE OF SURVEY:  Federal  State

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Iowa City**

STATE:  
**Iowa**



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated
(Check One)		(Check One)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered		<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Use: The Johnson County Courthouse has served as the county government office and court building since its dedication in 1901 and despite the insufficient amount of space it provides, it will continue in that capacity in the future. Plans are underway to revise alterations which were made to the building in 1935 and 1973 and to restore the exterior and interior to their 1901 appearance.

Site: Facing east, the Johnson County Courthouse rests on a prominent hill in Iowa City, former state capital of Iowa. Its thirty foot tower is visible for miles and commands a good view of metropolitan Iowa City and surrounding Iowa River Valley. Placed slightly forward of center on a full city block, the courthouse shares its site with two other contemporary 1900 structures not included in this application.

Exterior: The Johnson County Courthouse is a basically rectangular stone structure with a peaked central tower. Stylistically, it shows characteristics of three contemporary trends: the arched openings and massiveness of the Richardsonian Romanesque; the vegetal ornamentation of Sullivan's work; and the voluminous geometric massing of the Shingle Style. Materials used were Berea sandstone and slate, the latter being covered at this time by a modern composite asphalt material. The screen walls of the Berea sandstone are pierced at regular intervals by rectangular and round arched openings. The elliptical arch of the doorway and round arched openings of the central flanking towers are topped by carved vegetal ornamentation. The basic rectangular shape of the structure is broken gently by attached towers and end pavilions. The roofline, however, is blatantly irregular being composed of conical roofs, turrets and step gables of the end pavilions. Other ornamentation includes the balustrades on the east and the dentillation at the roofline. It is assumed that the base of the tower, which is composed of smooth blocks of stone, was designed in the interests of economy. Elsewhere, the stone is laid in alternately narrow and wide bands of rock-faced stone.

Interior: The interior of the Johnson County Courthouse shows some alterations which were made in 1935 and 1973. Originally, interior finishing included mosaic tile floors, polished oak mill work and plaster pilasters with capitals (all of which remain), two colored glass elliptical skylights (only one of which is still visible), enameled vaults and wall frescoes. Renovations include the lowering of upper floor ceilings and the subdividing of some of the larger rooms. The original plan which had a twenty foot central hall, which is octagonal on the ground floor, and a grand staircase on the east remains basically unchanged, however. A hidden staircase for separate access can be found on the west.

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**5. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |                                       |  |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |  |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1901**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | <u>Governmental</u>                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |  | _____   |

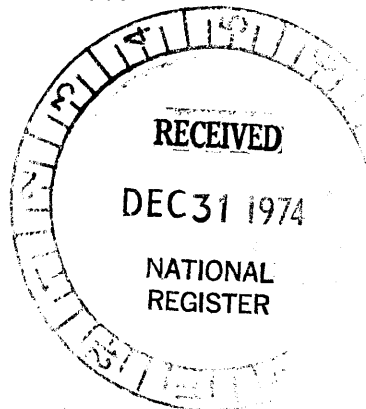
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Johnson County Courthouse stands as one of the best preserved examples of Richardsonian Romanesque courthouse architecture in the State of Iowa. Designed by architect, A. William Rush of Rush, Bowman and Rush of Grand Rapids, Michigan, the courthouse represents not only Henry Hobson Richardson's work but that of Louis Sullivan as well; evidence of the Shingle Style can also be seen. This is not surprising, for the Johnson County Courthouse appears as a rather late work for a firm which was active in courthouse design from 1894-1901. The Johnson County Courthouse itself was dedicated in 1901.

Although the Romanesque Revival is well represented in Iowa courthouse architecture, this structure is set apart by its monochromatic appearance, which contributes to the heavy, massive quality of the style, by its sparsely applied but interesting Sullivanaian ornamentation and by its medievaesque copper conical roof caps, now a bright green. Formerly buff color Berea sandstone, the courthouse is now a fortress grey-brown.

The Johnson County Courthouse is undeniably significant to the skyline of Iowa City. It stands a block south of the Central Business District in what is fast becoming an area devoted to the activities of the Federal and local governments. A new low profile Federal building occupies the block to the east. Atop one of Iowa City's highest points, the courthouse is the second such "Temple of Justice" to stand at this site.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Goeldner, Paul Kenneth; "Temples of Justice, Nineteenth Century County Courthouses in the Midwest and Texas"; Columbia University, 1970

Iowa City Citizen, June 7, 1901

Enright, Clifford A.; "Johnson County Courthouse: A Photographic Essay", University of Iowa, 1962

Pattschull, Richard (Restoration Architect) interview with Alan Rossmann,

June 25, 1974

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

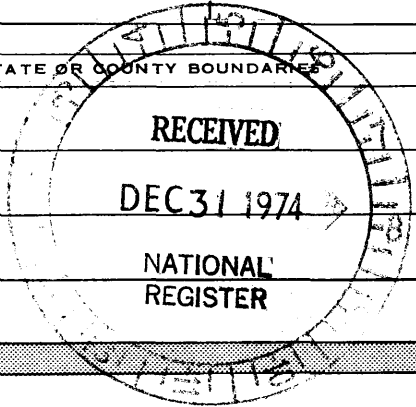
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		41° 39' 20"	91° 32' 6"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **One Acre**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

15/621970  
4612 420  
60



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Alan L. Rossmann**

ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: **July 1, 1974**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**209 Holiday Road #331**

CITY OR TOWN: **Iowa City** STATE: **Iowa** CODE: **14**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name Adrian D. Anderson

Title State Preservation Officer

Date 12/20/74

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

A. R. Montrose  
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 3/27/75

ATTEST:

[Signature]  
Keeper of The National Register

Date 3-26-75