

IOWA SITE INVENTORY

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

MAY 29 1981

JUL - 2 1981

Site Number 1-014-001
District Name _____
Reference # 1-014-001
Topo Map Omaha NK 1:250,000

IDENTIFICATION

1. Site Name Adair County Courthouse
2. Village/Town/City Greenfield Township _____ County Adair
3. Street Address Iowa Ave. and First Street
4. Legal Location OT Courthouse Square
- Urban: subdivision block parcel subparcel
Rural: township range section 1/4 section-1/4 section
5. UTM Location: zone 15 easting 377800 northing 4573400; Acreage less than 1 a
6. Owner(s) Name Board of Supervisors, Adair County
7. Owner(s) Address Greenfield, Iowa 50849
(Street address) (City) (State) (Zip)
8. Use: present courthouse original courthouse

DESCRIPTION

9. Date of Construction 1891 Architect/Builder S.E. Maxon, Arch. (Omaha)
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:
tower removed, no date.
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

A representative example of Iowa's Victorian Romanesque courthouse architecture.

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.

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 Division of Historic Preservation Date January 1980
 Address 26 East Market Street Telephone _____
 Organization Iowa City, Iowa 52240

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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CONTINUATION SHEET

Item Number(s)

ADAIR COUNTY

The original courthouse in Adair County was not at Greenfield but at Fontanelle. It was a small building, two stories high and 26 feet wide by 36 feet long, constructed of locally harvested woods and hardware brought by wagon from Keokuk. It was used from 1856 until 1874 when the county seat was moved to the village of Greenfield. After 1874 and until it burned down in 1910, it served a multitude of purposes including as a school, a church, for fraternal meetings, for social gatherings, and as a town hall.

The second courthouse, but the first in Greenfield, built in 1874, was doomed to the same fate as the first one in Fontanelle. It cost almost \$8,000 for the two-story frame building which was situated on the East side of the town square. Luckily, in spite of the destructive fire of 1889, the county records were preserved in the vaults. Until the third courthouse was finished in 1892, the opera house became the courthouse.

The cornerstone of the present courthouse was laid on July 4, 1891. Inside the cornerstone were placed several items, including a bible, a bottle of corn, a bottle of wine, a bottle of oil, a history of Greenfield from 1856, a church history, names of Adair County officers, and lists of officers and members of some community organizations. Also included were three coins, a letter to be opened by the oldest man present when removed, a record of the 1889 fire to be opened by the oldest businessman present, and a number of other items.

This brick courthouse was completed on March 25, 1892 at a cost of \$26,768 including furniture and is architecturally almost identical to the Monona County courthouse located at Onawa.

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