

# IOWA SITE INVENTORY

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

MAY 29 1981

Site Number \_\_\_\_\_  
District Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Map Reference # \_\_\_\_\_  
Topo Map Bellevue 1:24,000

## IDENTIFICATION

1. Site Name Former Jackson County Courthouse
2. Village/Town/City Bellevue Township \_\_\_\_\_ County Jackson
3. Street Address square bounded by Third, State, Fourth and Court Streets
4. Legal Location square bounded by Third, State, Fourth and Court Streets
5. UTM Location: zone 15 easting 712320 northing 4681360; Acreage less than 1 ac
6. Owner(s) Name Bellevue Community School District
7. Owner(s) Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Bellevue Iowa 52031  
(Street address) (City) (State) (Zip)
8. Use: present school original courthouse

## DESCRIPTION

9. Date of Construction 1845 Architect/Builder Dohaney and Jones
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: north wing added 1872; south wing added 1870. Window sash replaced. Main entrance, reworked (?). Converted wholly to school use 1861.
15. Related Outbuildings and Property:  barn  other farm structures  
 carriage house  garage  privy  other 20th century school buildings; playground
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

This is one of Iowa's oldest extant courthouses, along with Lee County (1841) and Van Buren County (1840-43), and one of seven in the Greek Revival Style. This courthouse served Jackson County government until 1861, when the county seat was relocated at Andrew.

**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 was a victim of county seat rivalry. The Jackson County seat was located at Bellevue 1838-48, at Andrew 1848-51, at Bellevue 1851-61, at Andrew 1861-73, and at Maquoketa 1873-present.

The county courthouse is locally significant as the historical focus of county seat 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.)

History of Jackson County, Iowa. Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1879.  
 Ellis, James W. History of Jackson County, Iowa. Chicago: S.J. Clarke, 1910 (Vol. I)  
 Pratt, LeRoy G. The Counties and Courthouses of Iowa. Mason City: Klipto Printing and Office Supply Co., 1977.

Prepared by Division of Historic Preservation Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address 26 E. Market St., Iowa City, IA Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
 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

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_

e. \_\_\_\_\_

3. PHOTO IMAGES \_\_\_\_\_

## CONTINUATION SHEET

Item Number(s)

## JACKSON COUNTY

December 21, 1837, was the date on which the act establishing Jackson, Jones, and Linn counties, was approved. Bellevue was temporarily named as the seat of justice for all three counties. Governor Dodge of the Wisconsin Territory was to appoint an organizing sheriff for Jackson County. He received a petition from many respectable citizens asking that he appoint W. W. Brown, stock thief and a member of a counterfeiting gang, to the position. An investigation disclosed that the signatures were genuine but had originally been affixed to another petition dealing with the boundaries of Jackson County. Mr. Brown had cut off the original heading and substituted one requesting his appointment. Captain W. A. Warren, the enrolling clerk of the House, was given the job.

There appears to be some confusion in old records in trying to keep track of the location of the county seat. It appears, however, that it was moved to Andrew in 1848, back to Bellevue in 1851, and then back to Andrew in 1861. The courthouse was built at Andrew and, when not in use by the county, was rented to private concerns. The citizens of Andrew built the stone courthouse for \$6,000 and furnished it to the county gratuitously, for a period of five years. In 1866, the board of supervisors purchased the structure for \$2,000. In recent times the old courthouse at Andrew has been the home of the Andrew Co-op Creamery Company.

A new city hall was constructed by the city of Maquoketa in 1873, and in an attempt to secure the honor of being the county seat, the city council offered a substantial fraction of that building to the board of supervisors for county purposes. The building was 45 by 81 feet, was made of dressed stone, and offered ample room for both levels of government. Jackson County signed a 99-year lease, which committed it to Maquoketa and the new building for the sum of one dollar.

A new courthouse was built in Maquoketa in 1886 for an estimated \$7,000. This structure stood on the same ground as the present modern sprawling courthouse, which was built in 1958 under a \$400,000 bond issue.

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