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# DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

|                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY |             |
| RECEIVED         | FEB 4 1977  |
| DATE ENTERED     | JUL 26 1977 |

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

### NAME

HISTORIC  
Audubon County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON  
K.P. Hall (Knights of Pythias Lodge)

### LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER  
Washington and Kilworth Streets

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN  
Exira

VICINITY OF  
Fifth

STATE  
Iowa

CODE  
COUNTY  
Audubon

CODE  
007

### CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY  | OWNERSHIP                                   | STATUS  | PRESENT USE                                       |
|---|---|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT    | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED        | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED                 | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE              | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH               | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS           | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SITE                   | <b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE      | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT                 | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT            |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED   | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED          | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT               |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> NO                         | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL               |
|   |   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY                 |
|   |   |   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: social |

### OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME  
Knights of Pythias Lodge

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN  
Exira

VICINITY OF  
Iowa STATE

### LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Audubon County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN  
Audubon

STATE  
Iowa

### REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT                       DETERIORATED  
 GOOD                                 RUINS  
 FAIR                                  UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The former Audubon County Courthouse is a rectangular building, approximately 30' x 65'. It is of frame construction on a stone foundation, with a gable roof covered with asphalt shingles.

Windows are either plate glass (first floor) or 2/2 lights in double hung sash (second floor). The front entrance is slightly off-center, with a plate glass window immediately to the left.

A flat-roofed addition was made to the east side of the building, probably after the Knights of Pythias took over the structure in 1887. It is 9' x 24', with its own entrance and plate glass window beside it.

The first floor is devoted to an auditorium and stage area, with three small rooms at the far rear. The second floor, reached by stairs on the right rear, is divided into three rooms, a long lodge hall and two kitchen areas at the back. This conversion from office space to meeting and entertainment facilities probably dates from the earliest years of Knights of Pythias occupancy of the building.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD  | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW |   |   |  |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC          | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC  | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING     | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE         | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499            | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC     | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION           | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW                            | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599            | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE             | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS              | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE                     | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699            | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE            | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION              | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY                       | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799            | <input type="checkbox"/> ART                     | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING            | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC                          | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE                | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY                     | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900-                | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS          | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)     |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION              |   |  |

SPECIFIC DATES      1874

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This structure served as the Audubon County Courthouse from 1874 to 1879, and is thought to be the first building erected in the county specifically for use as a county government facility. Audubon County was organized in 1855. That year, the county seat was located in the "paper town" of Dayton, which had been platted expressly for that purpose. However, few people were willing to purchase lots in Dayton, and in 1861 the seat of government was relocated at Viola (now Exira). Disagreement over the proper location of the county seat being a favorite local political pastime, Exira was challenged a number of times in the following years, and not until 1874 did Exira's position seem secure enough to warrant the construction of a real county government facility.

In that year, the Exira Hall company was formed to erect a building for the county court and offices, and "tendered to the board of supervisors" the use of rooms in the new structure. This offer was accepted, "in case the county seat should remain in Exira".

The tentative nature of the county's agreement was well-founded. In 1879, the town of Audubon campaigned successfully for the relocation of the county seat. It has remained in Audubon since.

There is no information on the structure's use after 1879, until 1887, when the newly-formed Knights of Pythias Lodge took over the rent, and then title, to the former courthouse. The Knights rented the lower floor to travelling musical and theater troupes, and later to entrepreneurs who showed silent movies. Community plays and dances were also held here. The upper floor has seen continuous use as a meeting hall for the Lodge.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

H.F. Andrews, History of Audubon County, Iowa (1915)  
 Andreas, A., Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa (1875)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

|   |      |         |          |         |   |      |         |          |
|---|------|---------|----------|---------|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | 1,5  | 3,4,0,0 | 4,6,0,0  | 5,8,0,0 | B |      |         |          |
|   | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |         |   | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C |      |         |          |         | D |      |         |          |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
|       |      |        |      |
|       |      |        |      |

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Leon Milliman, Secretary/Treasurer

ORGANIZATION

Audubon County Historical Society

DATE

December 1975

STREET & NUMBER

Box 275

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Exira

STATE

Iowa 50076

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*Adrian D. Anderson*

TITLE

Director, Division of Historic Preservation

DATE

1/27/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Wm. M. ...*

DATE

7/26/77

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

*Charles ...*

DATE

8-15-77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER