

# DATA SHEET

PH 0100115

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:	Kansas
COUNTY:	Douglas
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	APR 14 1975

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Douglas County Courthouse

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Southeast corner, Massachusetts and Eleventh streets

CITY OR TOWN:  
Lawrence

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
no. 3, Larry Winn

STATE: Kansas CODE: 66044

COUNTY: Douglas CODE: 045

**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"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input 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**

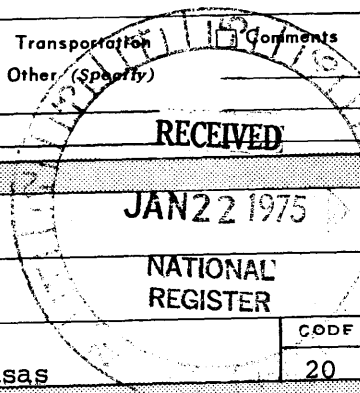
OWNER'S NAME:  
Douglas County

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
Lawrence

STATE:  
Kansas

CODE:  
20



STATE: Kansas

COUNTY: Douglas

ENTRY NUMBER: APR 14 1975

DATE:

FOR NPS USE ONLY

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Register of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Douglas County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN:  
Lawrence

STATE:  
Kansas

CODE:  
20

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Historic Sites Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1969

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Kansas State Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:  
120 West Tenth Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Topaka

STATE:  
Kansas

CODE:  
20

**7. DESCRIPTION**

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(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

The three and one-half story native stone Douglas county courthouse is basically rectangular in plan with slight irregularities caused by the clock tower, the stair tower, the gable ends and the entrance features. The exterior walls of the Romanesque structure are constructed of rough-hewn Cottonwood limestone laid in regular courses. A narrow band of smooth cut limestone runs entirely around the building at the first floor sill. A wide band of smooth cut limestone wraps entirely around the building at the first floor lintels.

The building has a combination of roof forms. The south portion has a gable roof running east-west with an intersecting gable roof for the large dormer on the south. The north portion has a truncated hip roof with a large gable dormer on the north and small gable dormers on the east and west. The walls on all the gable ends extend past the roof line. The roof is covered with wood shingles and all ridge lines have metal caps.

The dominant feature of the courthouse is the square clock tower. Located on the west side just north of the main entrance, it rises six stories high and is terminated by a pyramidal roof, which in turn is capped by a metal finial. Four large minarets begin on the sixth floor and rise past the roof line, adding to the impressive character of the tower. At the fifth floor small corbelled out balconies with iron railings are placed on all but the east side. The clock in the tower is still in working order.

Located at the southwest corner is a smaller octagonal stair tower. It has a steep eight-sided roof which is topped by a metal finial. The windows in the stair tower are placed in alternating fashion on the five visible sides of the tower. Where the main roof line of the building meets the tower, a band of cut stone with dentils is located. The same treatment is repeated in the cornice of the tower.

The main entrance is at ground level on the west side and located in a massive recessed arched opening adjacent to the clock tower. The doors are of frame construction, painted white and shaped on top to fit the semi-circular arched doorway. Four small columns and much ornamental stone carving are found in the recessed archway.

Another major entrance is on the first floor on the north side. Reached by a flight of steps, it is placed in an archway recessed in a flat rectangular opening. The doors are similar to those on the west entrance.

Windows on the courthouse are found in a wide variety of shapes: squares, rectangles and windows of various widths with semicircular arched heads. Most of the windows, except for those on the basement floor, have lintels of smooth cut stone; some are flat single stone lintels while the arched openings are of seven or eight cut stones.

A checkerboard-like effect caused by alternating squares of smooth cut and rough cut stone is found at many places on the exterior: at the cornice except on the gable ends, on the clock tower between the third and fourth floor windows and on the south and west sides between some of the second and third floor windows.

Stone drain spouts with carved decorations are placed at a number of locations and there is even one small gargoyle on the clock tower above the first floor. The name "Douglas County Court House" is visible in raised letters on the west side to the south of the main entrance. The carved stone ornamentation found on the building attests to the quality of

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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

STATE Kansas	
COUNTY Douglas	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	APR 14 1975

Page 1

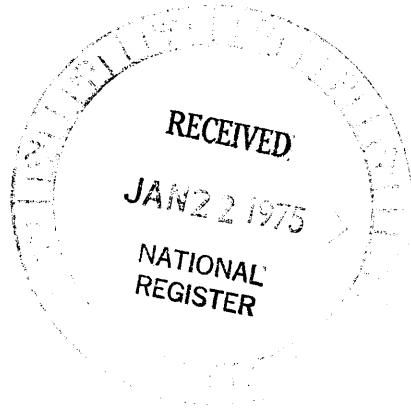
(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

7.

the craftsmanship of the early 20th century stonemasons.

The exterior of the building is virtually the same as it was originally except for the weathering of some carved stone and the installation of window air conditioning units. Changes have been made to the interior to accomodate expansion of county government.



**3. 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) 1903-1904

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science              | _____                                    |
| <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 Douglas county courthouse, built in 1903, filled a long-standing need for permanent county office facilities. Since its organization in territorial days in 1855, the Douglas county government had rented office space, first in Lecompton until 1858 and after that time in Lawrence. Rooms were rented wherever available in various business buildings until 1869. In that year the Lawrence city hall was completed, and the county subsequently rented quarters from the city that provided space for many of the county offices but not all.

The time came when the people of Douglas county tired of the decentralized county government and the large sums paid out for office rental; in 1899 they voted to levy a tax which would raise an \$80,000 fund for the construction of a courthouse. An act of the legislature in 1903 permitted \$20,000 to be added to the fund for furnishing the building.

In February, 1902, J. B. Watkins of the Watkins National Bank offered to donate as the site for a courthouse four lots at the southeast corner of Massachusetts and Eleventh streets, which was at the south end of Lawrence's commercial district and diagonally across the street from Watkins' bank. The county commissioners--J. C. Watts, B. F. Hoskinson, and A. J. Parnell--decided that his was the best offer and accepted the deed to the site March 19, 1902.

During the summer months of 1902 the county commissioners were searching for an architect. Apparently there was a difference of opinion among the commissioners on the two leading candidates: John G. Haskell of Lawrence and Frederick C. Gunn of Kansas City.

(Haskell was a Lawrence resident who had designed many of that city's homes and other buildings. He had also served as State Architect, preparing the plans for many of the state's public institutions, including part of the State Capitol. He was one of the state's earliest professional architects. Frederick Gunn was a considerably younger man who was then making a reputation for himself. His firm of Gunn and Curtiss had earlier designed the Church at the Soldiers Home in Leavenworth, the Missouri State Building at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, and a number of homes in the Kansas City area.)

Haskell and Gunn resolved the matter by entering into an agreement and in August the commissioners selected them as associated architects to prepare the plans for a fee not to exceed five per cent of the total cost of the building's construction. Plans and specifications were completed by the end of the year and the notice to bidders was sent out

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

"County Officials in Many Offices," Lawrence Journal-World, October 7, 1937.  
 "Douglas County Is to Have a Courthouse," Jeffersonian Gazette (Lawrence), July 8, 1903.  
Lawrence Daily World, August 9, 1902; February 18, 19, July 4, 1903.  
 "The New Courthouse," Jeffersonian Gazette (Lawrence), Sept. 27, 1904.  
 Von Achen, J. Kurt, Lives and Works of Early Kansas Architects (Unpublished Master's thesis submitted to the University of Kansas School of Architecture, June, 1966).

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

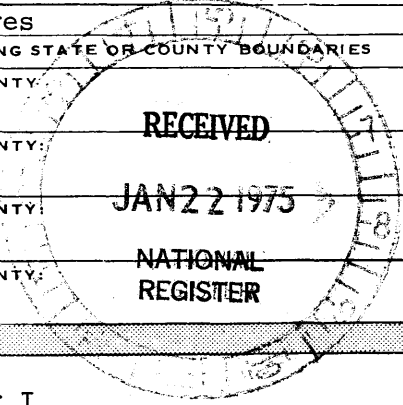
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		°	'	"
NE	° ' "	° ' "		38	57	48
SE	° ' "	° ' "		95	14	06
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

15/306330  
4314880  
C2

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 2 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE: Richard D. Pankratz, Adm. Officer I

ORGANIZATION: Kansas State Historical Society DATE: Jan. 3, 1975

STREET AND NUMBER: 120 West Tenth Street

CITY OR TOWN: Topeka STATE: Kansas 66612 CODE: 20

**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: Nyle H. Miller  
Nyle H. Miller

Title: Executive Director, Kansas State Historical Society

Date: January 9, 1975

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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

AR Mortensen  
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 4/14/75

ATTEST:

W. Hunter  
Keeper of the National Register

Date: APR 8 1975

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

page 2

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Kansas	
COUNTY Douglas	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	APR 14 1975

(Number all entries)

8.

on January 12, 1903. Bids were opened on February 18, 1903. Eight bids were received for the construction and four for the plumbing and heating. In a meeting the next day the commissioners determined that the firm of Cuthbert and Sargent of Topeka was the low bidder for the general construction and George W. Savage of Lawrence was the successful bidder on the plumbing and heating.

Work on the building soon began. The cornerstone was laid with impressive Masonic ceremonies on July 4, 1903. A large procession marched down Massachusetts avenue to the site, and after the ritual ceremonies a rousing Fourth of July oration climaxed the event.

Construction proceeded rapidly and by September a local newspaper reported that the courthouse would be ready for occupancy in a month or two. Early in 1904 it was finished. Completion costs were around \$85,000; the building was paid for at the time with no bonded indebtedness.

The Douglas county courthouse is significant to the political history of the county since it is the first and so far the only courthouse the county has had. The building is also of architectural interest; it is a fine example of an early 20th century Kansas courthouse designed by one of the state's most famous 19th century architects, John G. Haskell, in association with another architect, Frederick C. Gunn, who attained a great deal of prominence in the Kansas City area around the turn of the century.

