

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED	AUG 21 1979
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Lyon County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

3rd and Story Streets

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Rock Rapids

__ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Sixth

STATE

Iowa

CODE

COUNTY

Lyon

CODE

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

__DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

__AGRICULTURE

__MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

__PRIVATE

__UNOCCUPIED

__COMMERCIAL

__PARK

__STRUCTURE

__BOTH

__WORK IN PROGRESS

__EDUCATIONAL

__PRIVATE RESIDENCE

__SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

__ENTERTAINMENT

__RELIGIOUS

__OBJECT

__IN PROCESS

__YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

__SCIENTIFIC

__BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

__INDUSTRIAL

__TRANSPORTATION

__NO

__MILITARY

__OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Lyon County (Board of Supervisors)

STREET & NUMBER

3rd and Story Streets

CITY, TOWN

Rock Rapids

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Iowa 51246

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

County Recorder's Office

STREET & NUMBER

206 S. Second Ave.

CITY, TOWN

Rock Rapids

STATE

Iowa

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Lyon County Courthouse, built 1916-17, is situated on the public square near the central business district of Rock Rapids.

The building is of the loggia type, with elongated plan, three-stage elevations, one-bay end pavilions and centered, basement-level entrances. Dimensions are approximately 110' x 71'. The outer walls are Bedford limestone (rusticated on the basement level) lined with brick. Windows are for the most part 2/2 sash, many with multi-light transom panels, and on the two-story second stage are separated by flat pilasters. The modillion cornice has a wide frieze, decorated with blind medallions and triglyphs, below a panelled parapet.

The main elevation features a nine-bay giant loggia with freestanding, fluted columns. The bronze doors of the entrance in this facade are recessed within a slightly protruding vestibule, above which is a reclining stone lion. The side and rear elevations have slightly protruding centered frontispieces, set off at the second stage by paired pilasters. The aedicular frame of the rear entrance is similar to that of the front, but the doors are recessed within the frontispiece.

The interior features a central rotunda area, extending from basement level to the art-glass skylight of the dome. Corridors and offices are arranged around this feature. The main staircases and corridor wainscoting are of Italian marble, while the floor of the rotunda displays the county seal in a mosaic of ceramic tile. The third floor, which houses the legal and judicial functions, displays in the rotunda area four semicircular murals, set within the tympana of the arches which open off the rotunda to the corridors. These murals, entitled "Pioneer", "Immigrant", "Rock Rapids 1873", and "Modern Farm 1917" were possibly the work of artist William Peaco (Peaco's "Pioneer" and "Immigrant" murals in the Greene County Courthouse, Jefferson, are remarkably like those at Rock Rapids). The courtroom on the third floor is also of note, featuring an early jury box (with swivel chairs bolted to the floor), judge's bench and chair, and fine aedicular doorframes. With the exception of new lighting in some areas and the partitioning of one ground-floor room, the interior spaces of the courthouse are essentially untouched.

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1917 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Joseph Schwartz, Sioux Falls SD

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Lyon County Courthouse is an extremely well-preserved expression of Beaux Arts architecture in Iowa, and a good example of this state's courthouse design during the early decades of the 20th century. The Beaux Arts style was quite popular in Iowa in these years, as shown by the more than 15 such buildings still to be found in the state. The giant loggia is a principal feature of the Lyon County Courthouse, with the lion couchant above the main entrance presenting a visual pun. The handsome rotunda area, with its classical detail, mosaic, marble, and vernacular iconography of the murals, is of particular note, as is the well-preserved courtroom.

The architect, Joseph Schwartz, also designed the Methodist Church in Rock Rapids (N.R. June 1978)

Lyon County was organized in 1872, and the first courthouse erected in 1874. This courthouse, a 3-story frame structure with hipped roof and bracketted eaves, was later moved a few blocks, stuccoed and painted green, and is used as an apartment house. The present courthouse was begun in 1916 and was dedicated the following year.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Pratt, LeRoy G., The Counties and Courthouses of Iowa. Mason City: Klipto Printing and Office Supply Co., 1977, pp. 210-211.
 Fiftieth Anniversary of the Dedication of the Lyon County Courthouse 1917-1967 (includes reprint of building description from the official dedication program of June 7, 1917).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 1

QUADRANGLE NAME Rock Rapids

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 14 7292810 48122510

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Area included is one city block, bounded on north by S. Second Ave., on east by Marshall St., on south by S. Third Ave., on west by Story Street, in Rock Rapids, Iowa.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Nadine Pettengill

ORGANIZATION

Lyon County Historical Society

DATE

August 1978

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Rock Rapids

STATE

Iowa 51246

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

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 A. Anderson

TITLE

Director, Division of Historic Preservation

DATE

8/10/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Carl Skell

DATE

10-1-79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

William A. Brown

DATE

7.27.79

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION