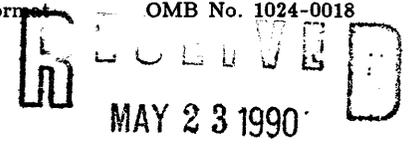


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Holt County Courthouse
other names/site number HT13-53

2. Location

street & number N. 4th St. bet E. Clay & Benton Sts. N/A not for publication
city, town O'Neill N/A vicinity
state Nebraska code NE county Holt code 089 zip code 68763

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>2</u>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
			Total

Name of related multiple property listing: County Courthouses of Nebraska
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

James A. Hanson _____ May 14, 1990
Signature of certifying official _____ Date
Nebraska State Historical Society

State or Federal agency and bureau _____
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See cont. sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
 determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain): _____

Beck Boland _____ 7/5/90

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions) Government/courthouse Current Functions (enter categories from instructions) Government/courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions) Art Deco Materials (enter categories from instructions) foundation brick
walls brick
roof asphalt
other stone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

[X] See continuation sheet, section 7, page 1.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions) Politics/government Architecture Period of Significance 1936-40 Significant Dates 1936-37

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Significant Person N/A Architect/Builder Latenser & Sons, Inc. John W.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

[X] See continuation sheet, section 8, page 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Built in 1936-7, the Holt County Courthouse is a good, relatively unaltered example of the Property Type, County Citadel. Identifying features include: rectangular shape, centered entrance, permanent materials, distinctive ornamentation, provision for fireproof storage, Art Deco stylistic influence, and the impression of a government building representing modernity, simplicity, and strength. In addition, the courthouse has other County Citadel characteristics: flat roof and designed by an architect. The courthouse and small county schools exhibit hall are considered one property since they constitute a "small group of functionally and historically related buildings."

The courthouse is rectangular and consists of two stories set upon a raised basement, plus attic jail space not visible from the exterior. A prominent entry pavilion on the west facade identifies the slightly projecting public entrance, and there is a nonpublic entrance to the basement on the rear or east facade. Attention is focused on the centered entrance by means of its raised and set-back facade, decorative stonework, and short flight of stairs.

The wall surface is golden brown brick with limestone trim. The smooth stone is used for coping, a distinctive geometric course, sills, moulded water table, and at the entrance. The entry pavilion features a large panel with "Holt County Court House" incised on it, pilaster forms having vertical designs, and a three-part window that lights the staircase. Above the door is a stone panel featuring papyrus bundles and a shield with stars and strips on it, patriotic symbolism.

Five attractively proportioned bays consisting of rectangular, double-hung windows flank the entry pavilion of the 60x90' building. The windows on all facades have white metal panels of a chevron design between them, a unifying feature. The numerous windows of the main facade are repeated on the other sides, as is the stone detail and raised parapet, creating a compact, unified design.

The ample first floor hallway is linear and runs east from the interior steps, terminating with the supervisors' room. Large vaults run north-south and are centered on the north and south sides. County offices occupy the first floor with district court uses on the second floor.

Courtroom furnishings are of greyish brown wood and original. The judge's bench and the jury box are simply rendered and paneled. Other original interior features include dull grey marble for wainscoting and surrounds for windows and two large hallway plaques, patterned terrazzo

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

flooring, and in the main hallway six simple light fixtures and a curving plaster cornice.

The courtroom is generally unaltered, except for a new ceiling and replacement lights. The interior of the courthouse is quite simple and relatively unaltered, including original ceilings (painted concrete). Exterior alterations include replacement windows and front door, a small shed-roofed covered entrance at the rear, a chain link fence on the roof to allow prisoners to exercise, and unintrusive metal exterior fire stairs plus two related doors on the north facade. Some original windows remain and have 6/6 panes on upper floors and 3/3 panes at the basement level. An historic photograph at the Nebraska State Historical Society reveals how little the building has changed.

The courthouse is a good example of the County Citadel courthouse exhibiting Art Deco stylistic elements. These include a linear, hard-edge composition with vertical emphases, stylized decoration including chevrons, stepped facade, low relief, and metal panels.

The Holt County Courthouse is centered on the half-block site at the north end of one of O'Neill's commercial streets. It shares the block with a house and two small commercial buildings. Commercial use essentially ends at the courthouse, but public uses--the post office and a school--are nearby.

Concrete walks lead to the courthouse from North 4th Street, directly to the entrance and also attractive curving walks at the sides of the building. No notable or prominent objects are placed on the site; mature evergreens at the entrance as well as a row of deciduous trees along the street make photography of the main facade difficult. An alley runs along the rear or west side of the site.

The courthouse shares the site with a small wood frame Exhibit Hall located at the southeast corner of the site along the alley. Built for the county schools to exhibit student art work, the 28x40' building is one-story and has a gabled roof. The foundation is poured concrete, wall cladding is shiplap siding, and the roof is covered with asphalt shingle. Craftsman stylistic details include decorative purlins, exposed rafter ends, large shed-roofed dormer, and multiple-paned windows. An unusual feature is the recessed entry with original wood double doors. The hall is shown on the 1935 plot plan of the courthouse site, and predates the courthouse. County officials, including the county clerk and employees in the district school superintendent's office, had no additional information on the hall, which is now used to assemble state fair exhibits.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

The Holt County Courthouse is architecturally significant (Criterion C) and historically significant (Criterion A) for its association with politics and local government. The property derives its historic significance as the focal point for the administration of local government and institutions in the county. It is a good example of public architecture in the county and contains good examples of design features and facilities distinctive to its design and use as a courthouse. In addition, Holt County is one of seven Nebraska counties to acquire a courthouse using federal work programs during the Great Depression of the 1930s and thus the courthouse is directly associated with the role of federal government assistance programs during this period.

As a good example of the County Citadel Property Type, the courthouse contains design features and facilities distinctive to its design and use (such as fireproof vaults), a rectangular shape, centered entrance, Art Deco stylistic influence, and permanent materials. Elements of the design combine to convey the impression of a government building representing modernity and simplicity, also features of the County Citadel.

The Period of Significance is 1936, when construction began, to 1940, when the "fifty year rule" takes effect. The Holt County Courthouse is being nominated as an example of the Property Type, County Courthouses of Nebraska (County Citadel) of the Context, County Government in Nebraska, 1854-1941, from the Multiple Property Submission, County Courthouses of Nebraska.

Holt County is located in north central Nebraska, and its northern boundary is also the state line with South Dakota. Settlement dated from 1870 but did not begin in earnest until 1873. The county was established in 1876 out of former Knox County territory, the same year residents voted that Paddock county seat.¹

John J. O'Neill founded an early colony of Irish immigrants in the county, who soon sought the county seat designation. In 1879 the Irish town of O'Neill won a county seat election, in part because of its

¹According to a reconnaissance level county survey, a log building briefly served as the courthouse. This statement cannot be verified, and the building, which is in ruins, has been moved from the Paddock site if it was indeed the early courthouse.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

central location in the county. The county initially used rented quarters O'Neill for courthouse purposes. Recognizing the importance of a permanent courthouse building for retaining the county seat designation, residents of Center precinct, the area where O'Neill was located, voted to issue \$8,000 in courthouse bonds in 1884--and again in 1885 after there were problems with registering them. Now increased to \$10,000, the bonds financed construction of the first permanent county courthouse in Holt County in 1885 at the present courthouse site.

Beginning in 1935, the county board took steps to improve county facilities. A bond election was scheduled for November 12th on whether to issue \$61,000 in bonds for a new courthouse and jail. The county qualified for and received Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works grants and loans to aid in the project. The federal government agreed to a grant of 45 percent of the completion cost (not more than \$49,909) as well as to buy the courthouse bonds. (Early in 1936 the county determined it could receive better terms elsewhere, and the federal government did not buy the bonds, at their request.)

The bond election passed, and construction proceeded. On January 4, 1936, the Omaha architectural firm of John Latenser & Sons submitted plans to the county for the building. After revisions, they were accepted on January 14th. The general contractor, Peter Kiewit and Sons of Omaha was selected on April 9, 1936. Construction proceeded throughout 1936, and on February 20, 1937, the county formally accepted the new courthouse and jail.

9. Major Bibliographical References

[X] See continuation sheet, section 9, page 1.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing
(36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings
Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

A	<u>11 41</u>	<u>51 21 91 01 41 01</u>	<u>41 71 01 01 61 31 01</u>	B	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	D	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

[] See continuation sheet, section 10, page 1.

Verbal Boundary Description

[X] See continuation sheet, section 10, page 1.

Boundary Justification

[X] See continuation sheet, section 10, page 1.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Barbara Beving Long, consultant		
organization	Four Mile Research Co.	date	January 15, 1990
street & number	3140 Easton Boulevard	telephone	(515) 266-4964
city or town	Des Moines	state	Iowa
		zip code	50317

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 1

Long, Barbara Beving. "County Courthouses of Nebraska." Multiple Property Submission. 1989.
Nebraska State Historical Society. Photo Collection. #M281-989.
Holt County. Supervisors Record. Book N.
Tracings. Holt County Courthouse. John W. Latenser & Sons, Inc.
Works Progress Administration. Survey of County Courthouse Records. 1936.
NeSHS Archives. Holt County.
McCulloh, Barns. A Piece of Emerald. O'Neill: Miles Publishing Co., 1974.
Tubbs, Verna Lee. "Settlement and Development of the Northeast Sandhills."
M.A. thesis. University of Nebraska, 1957.
Save America's Heritage. Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey. Reconnaissance Survey Final Report of Holt County. 1988.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property, the Holt County Courthouse, occupies lots 5-12 of block 10 of the Original Town Plat of O'Neill and is roughly 180x170' in size.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes that part of the city block that has historically been associated with the property.