

PH 001-1001

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Kansas	
COUNTY: Rush	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER APR 13 1972	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Rush County Courthouse

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
715 Elm Street

CITY OR TOWN:
La Crosse

STATE: Kansas CODE: 67548 COUNTY: Rush CODE: 165

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Rush County

STREET AND NUMBER:
Rush County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN:
La Crosse

STATE: Kansas CODE: 67548

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

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

STREET AND NUMBER:
Rush County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN:
La Crosse

STATE: Kansas CODE: 67548

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
NONE

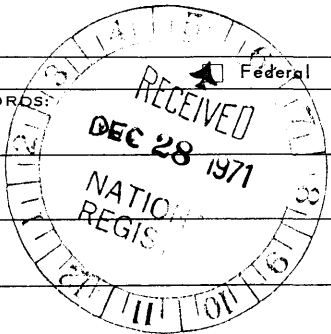
DATE OF SURVEY:
Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
La Crosse

STATE: Kansas CODE: 67548



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Kansas

COUNTY: Rush

ENTRY NUMBER: APR 13 1972

FOR NPS USE ONLY

DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

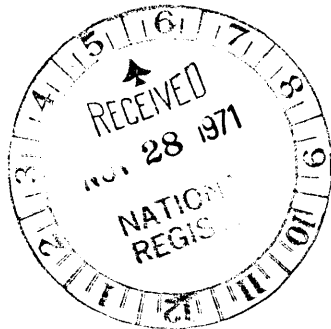
CONDITION

(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 Rush County Courthouse at La Crosse is constructed of reddish-brown face brick laid in common bond. A four foot high water table of rough hewn native limestone provides a base for the brick structure and defines the basement. The building is two stories in height with a full basement and is generally rectangular in plan. Towers at the northeast and southeast corners protrude from the rectangular plan. The southeast tower is semicircular and extends to the south of the main wall. This tower terminates at the building roof line. The northeast tower is square and extends north and east of the wall lines. This tower protrudes above the roof line and while now flat on top, originally was taller with a steep hip roof. Arched openings and recessed circular decorations are located in the top of the tower. The main entrance was emphasized by projecting it several feet from the building front and extending it above the roof line. The entrance terminates in a gable roof. The courthouse has a hip roof with two ridge heights. The southeast tower has a steep cone-shaped roof terminating with an ornamental spire. All the roof forms are shingle covered. Stone stairs rise to the main entrance which is framed by a semicircular ornamental stone arch. Windows on the entrance wall and on the second floor of the northeast tower are wide and multi-paneled with semicircular stone arched heads. Windows on the first and second floors are rectangular with stone sills and lintels. The lintels are integrated with a stone belt line running around the building.

A number of exterior alterations have been made in addition to the partial removal of the northeast tower. Originally the roof was covered with tin shingles while the present shingles are of asbestos. Aluminum frame doors have been installed at the main entry ways.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1888-1889

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"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

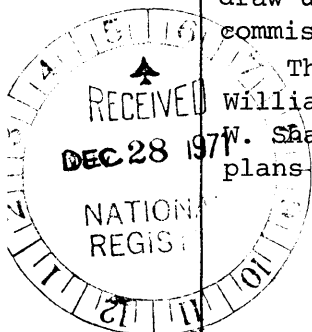
✓ The construction of the Rush County Courthouse at La Crosse in 1888-1889 in effect ended what had been Kansas' longest county seat war. Several western Kansas counties experienced conflicts over the selection of a county seat, but few lasted as long as ten years. Outside of occasional fistcuffs, the war in Rush county was fought in the courts and in the press of the two rival towns, La Crosse and Walnut City (now Rush Center).

Walnut City had been designated temporary county seat by the governor when the county was organized in 1874. An election in 1877 resulted in the county seat being moved to La Crosse, but another vote in 1878 returned it to Walnut City. The next election on the county seat issue, which was won by La Crosse, was held August 23, 1887. In the intervening years the county seat was at Walnut City until the Kansas Supreme Court ordered it back to La Crosse in 1882. There it remained until February 29, 1888, when county officials moved to Walnut City in compliance with a court order issued on the basis of the 1878 election. However, on March 10, 1888, a band of armed men from La Crosse seized the county records and removed them to La Crosse. A court order was finally issued on the basis of the 1887 election requiring county officials and county records to be located in La Crosse. Walnut City partisans didn't give up the legal maneuvering, but their efforts were futile as the Kansas legislature in February, 1889, enacted a law legitimizing the 1887 election locating the county seat at La Crosse.

A special bond election was held July 10, 1888, and by a margin of 801 to 453 Rush countians approved a bond issue of \$20,000 to build a courthouse. One of the successful arguments used in the election campaign by La Crosse supporters was that the construction of a courthouse would effectively stop the "courthouse on wheels" incidents which had been an expense and irritation to other Rush countians. After the election the county commissioners made a contract with George W. Shaffer of Abilene to draw up plans for the new courthouse. However, shortly thereafter the commissioners reconsidered and hired L. L. Levering to prepare the plans.

The contract for construction was let on September 3, 1888, to William T. Heaps for \$17,950, and work began two days later. George W. Shaffer was made superintendent of construction. Reportedly the plans were poorly drawn and caused almost as many problems as the

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Blackmar, Frank W., compiler, Kansas, A Cyclopedia of State History (Chicago, Standard Publishing Co., 1912), v. 2, pp. 611-613.
 La Crosse Chieftain, July 12, 1888--May 30, 1889.
 Rush County News (La Crosse), Kansas Centennial Edition, 1961.
 Rush County News (La Crosse), May 19, 1949.
 Schwartzkopf, Calvin F., "The Rush County Seat War," Kansas Historical Quarterly, v. 36, no. 1 (Spring, 1970), pp. 40-61.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	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	°	'	"	°	'	"	38	31	48
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	99	18	40
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Two

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Charles Hall, Architectural Consultant
Richard Pankratz, Planner

ORGANIZATION: Kansas State Historical Society DATE: April 30, 1971

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 Secretary, Kansas State Historical Society

Date Nov. 30, 1971

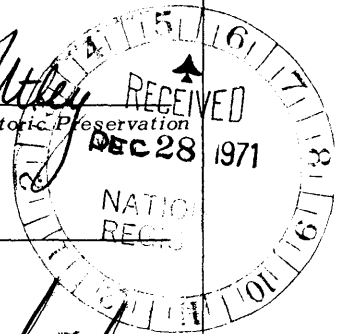
NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Robert M. Utley
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 4/12/72

ATTEST:
[Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register
 Date April 7, 1972



UTM
 14/47290
 426448
 HL

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Kansas	
COUNTY	
Rush	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	APR 18 1972

(Number all entries)

8. acrimonious relations among the commissioners, Shaffer, and Heaps. In spite of the delays the building was practically finished by the spring of 1889 although landscaping and sidewalks weren't completed until autumn.

The open setting of the Rush County Courthouse and its Romanesque characteristics make it one of the most interesting and attractive small town courthouses in the state. Additionally it is historically important because its construction was the culmination of Kansas' longest county seat war.

