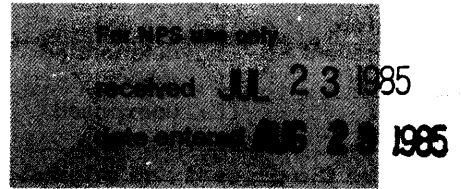


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Douglas County Courthouse

and/or common Douglas County Courthouse

2. Location

street & number 320 7th Avenue W.

N/A not for publication

city, town Alexandria

N/A vicinity of

~~congressional district~~

state Minnesota

code 22

county Douglas

code 041

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Douglas County

street & number 320 7th Avenue W.

city, town Alexandria

N/A vicinity of

state Minnesota 56308

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Douglas County Courthouse

street & number 320 7th Avenue W.

city, town Alexandria

state Minnesota 56308

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Minnesota Statewide Historic Sites Survey

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1983 - 1984

federal state county local

depository for survey records

State Historic Preservation Office
Fort Snelling History Center

city, town St. Paul

state Minnesota 55111

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one		
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	N/A	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved		date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed				

300 3 S 31A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Douglas County Courthouse, located at 320 7th Avenue W. in Alexandria, is situated on a full city block in a residential neighborhood west of the city's business district. The courthouse has a shaded park-like lawn on the north side and small parking lots located east and south of the building.

Designed by prominent St. Paul architects Buechner and Jacobson and completed in 1895 at an estimated cost of \$35,000, the Douglas County Courthouse is a good example of monumental Victorian Romanesque architecture. The nine bay, 2½ story building was constructed of common brick from Alexandria, Evansville, and Ida brickyards and faced with stretcher bonded red pressed brick from St. Paul. It sits on a rockfaced red Kasota limestone foundation and is trimmed with a Kasota stone watertable, sills, and lintels.

The courthouse has a symmetrical design dominated by a four story square entrance tower. The tower has a hipped roof rising above a parapet with corner pinnacles and four small gabled wall dormers with finials. The fourth story of the tower is lighted by narrow rounded arched window openings topped by raised brick arches. The third story has two rectangular window openings on the main facade. The base of the tower features a large rockfaced stone rounded arch with foliated springing blocks. This arch opens into a recessed entrance porch lined with green glazed brick. The stone arch and recessed entrance porch were obscured in 1940 when a one story W.P.A.-built red brick entrance was added to the main facade. This addition has an open rounded arched entrance flanked by two outer bays each housing an office with rectangular window openings.

The main body of the courthouse has a hipped roof and outer bays which project slightly and rise to gabled parapet walls with stone finials. There are gabled wall dormers with bullseye windows above the third and seventh bays. The first story of the building has rectangular and rounded arched window openings, arranged singly and in pairs. Most of the second story window openings are rounded arched and some are separated by smooth stone engaged columns with capitals decorated with acanthus leaves. Almost all of the second story windows are topped by raised brick arches with foliated springing blocks. The courthouse has brick corbelling at the eaves and three bay sidewalls with regularly spaced rectangular and rounded arched window openings.

The main entrance of the courthouse consists of two sets of rectangular double leaf oak doors with transoms and sidelights, separated by an interior foyer. The building was designed to house eight offices on the first level and five offices and a courtroom on the second level. The interior is decorated with light oak panelled wainscoting, tiled floors, oak woodwork with architrave molding, ornate carved oak counters, and some interior fireplaces. An oak stairway with turned balusters leads to the second story. The county courtroom is furnished with carved oak benches and desks and has oak woodwork with architraves, dentils, and keystones.

The original character of the Douglas County Courthouse remains largely intact, although the building has undergone some alteration. In 1973 a two story red brick addition housing a jail, sheriff's department, and offices was built onto the rear and east facades. It was designed by Foss-Engelstad-Foss of Moorhead and constructed by Edlund Construction Company of Valley City, North Dakota. Other exterior alterations include the 1940 entrance addition, new aluminum framed 1/1 sash, and a new asphalt single roof. Alterations to the interior have included installing new ceilings and light fixtures, remodelling the basement storage space into offices, and repartitioning a second story office. The courthouse is in good condition and is well maintained.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1895 **Builder/Architect** Buechner and Jacobson, architect
Hinkley and Powers, builder

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Douglas County Courthouse, located at 320 7th Avenue W. in Alexandria, is architecturally and historically significant as the largest Victorian building still standing in Douglas County, as a successful design by prominent turn of the century architects Buechner and Jacobson, and as the building which has served as the seat of Douglas County government since its completion in 1895.

Civil and judicial transactions in the area now comprising Douglas County were administered by government officials in Stearns County until 1859 when the Governor appointed the first Douglas County Board of Commissioners. According to local historians, the newly formed county government was disbanded and all records were lost when the small settlement at Alexandria was threatened during the Dakota War of 1862. It was not until 1866 that the Minnesota Legislature permanently reorganized the county government and officially established the present boundaries of Douglas County.

County business was originally conducted in a simple and expedient manner typical of small frontier communities. Appointed officials kept legal records at their homes until 1867 when the County decided to lease a two story woodframe building on Broadway Avenue. The building was constructed for this purpose by pioneer businessmen William E. Hicks and Thomas F. Cowing who leased the structure to the County for \$250 per year. The building housed four offices on the first floor and a large courtroom/public meeting hall on the second floor. Despite their initial enthusiasm for a county office building, however, local officials soon felt it impractical to leave their places of business during the day and go to the county office building to conduct legal business. By 1868 most of the county records were again being stored at the homes and businesses of individual officials and most of the office space in the Hicks and Cowing building was being rented to private parties. The county sheriff's department originally operated in an equally practical manner. Because of the lack of an official jailhouse, prisoners were kept in various locations at the discretion of the sheriff until the County erected a 12' by 14' oak timber jail in 1868.

As more settlers moved to Douglas County and the volume of official business increased, plans were made to construct an official courthouse. In 1875 after some negotiation, the widow of town proprietor William E. Hicks agreed to donate Block 34 of the original Townsite of Alexandria to the County if a new courthouse costing at least \$3,000 would be built by January 1, 1878. A new two story woodframe courthouse, designed by J. N. Herder and built by Raymond and Owen of St. Cloud, was completed in August of 1876. In the fall of 1880 a brick jail containing eight cells and constructed mostly underground was built next to the courthouse.

During the next decade foresighted county officials began raising money and making plans for the present courthouse. In October of 1893 architectural plans submitted by the St. Paul firm Buechner and Jacobson were chosen. Buechner and Jacobson had been in partnership since 1889. Together they designed the Lac Qui Parle County Courthouse in Madison (1899), the Swift County Courthouse in Benson (1889), and a number of schools, houses, and other buildings in St. Paul and elsewhere. After Jacobson's death (see continuation sheet)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Information provided by the Douglas County Historical Society, Alexandria.
Larson, Constant. The History of Douglas and Grant Counties, Minnesota.
B. F. Bowen, 1916.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property Less than one

Quadrangle name Alexandria West Quad.

Quadrangle scale 7.5

UMT References

A

1	5	3	1	5	2	4	0	5	0	8	3	7	0	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

Block 34, Original Town Site of Alexandria

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan Granger/Field Assistant

organization State Historic Preservation Office
Minnesota Historical Society date February, 1984

street & number Fort Snelling History Center telephone (612) 726-1171

city or town St. Paul state Minnesota 55111

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 Russell W. Fridley

title Russell W. Fridley date 7/1/85
State Historic Preservation Officer

For NPS use only

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

Entered in the National Register

date 8/23/85

Keeper of the National Register

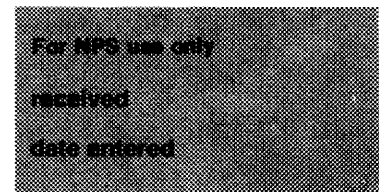
Attach

Chief of Registration

date

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Douglas County Courthouse, Alexandria, Douglas County, MN
Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

8. in 1902 Charles Buechner formed a partnership with Henry Orth which lasted until 1924. Buechner and Orth also designed many public buildings including the Goodhue, Jackson, Ottertail, and Wilkin county courthouses.

In January of 1894 the contract for construction of the courthouse was awarded to builders Hickley and Powers. The building was completed in the fall of 1895 at an estimated cost of \$35,000. In 1900 a brick jail and sheriff's residence was built southeast of the courthouse. The jail was compatible in style with the courthouse, and was probably also designed by Buechner and Jacobson. This new jail replaced the damp and dark 1880 jail which had been condemned by the State Board of Corrections and Charities in 1899.

By the 1970's the population of Douglas County had increased tremendously from its early twentieth century level and county government was outgrowing its facilities. In 1973 the courthouse was expanded when a two story jail, sheriff's department and office addition was built onto the east and rear facades of the building. The addition was designed by Moorhead architects Foss-Engelstad-Foss and constructed by Edlund Construction Company of Valley City, North Dakota. Despite this alteration, the Douglas County Courthouse retains its original character and remains a significant local example of nineteenth century architectural style and a monument to the importance of county government in rural Minnesota.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 2 Page 1

REFERENCE NUMBER: 85001816

STATE: Minnesota

COUNTY: Douglas

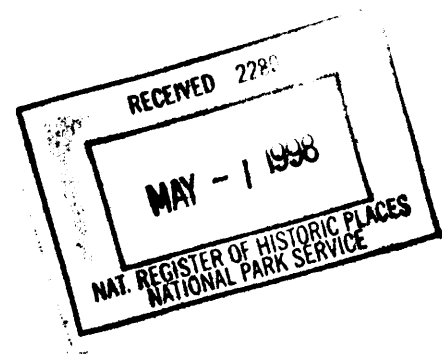
RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC): Douglas County Courthouse

CITY/TOWNSHIP: Alexandria

VICINITY OF:

ADDRESS: 305 8th Ave. W.

COMMENTS: Address Correction





Ian R. Stewart
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

4/24/98
Date