

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

2214
NOV 28 1989

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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 Cedar County Courthouse
other names/site number CD07-2

2. Location

street & number Broadway Ave bet Centre & Franklin Sts N/A not for publication
city, town Hartington N/A vicinity
state Nebraska code NE county Cedar code 027 zip code 68739

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<u>1</u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>2</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 November 17, 1989
Signature of certifying official Date

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:)

Patrick Andrews 1/10/90
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) Romanesque Materials (enter categories from instructions) foundation stone 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 1891-1939 Significant Dates N/A 1891-92

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Significant Person N/A Architect/Builder Stitt, J.C.

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.

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

Acreeage of property 1 acre

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>14</u> <u>16</u> <u>14</u> <u>12</u> <u>13</u> <u>19</u> <u>10</u> <u>14</u> <u>17</u> <u>11</u> <u>19</u> <u>18</u> <u>18</u> <u>10</u>	B	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
	Zone Easting Northing		Zone Easting Northing
C	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	D	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <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 November 8, 1989
street & number	3140 Easton Boulevard telephone (515) 266-4964
city or town	Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50317

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The Cedar County Courthouse is a good, relatively unaltered example of the Property Type, County Capitol. Identifying features include: prominent corner tower, permanent costly materials, elaborate ornamentation, Romanesque Revival stylistic influence, and impression of a government building of permanence and solidity. To meet changing law enforcement requirements, a one-story jail has been added to the courthouse site. Eighteen extant County Capitols were built between 1888 and 1907 across Nebraska. The Cedar County example is an unusual variant, for the prominent tower is not centered, but is located at a corner. The facility remains the center for county government in Cedar County.

Built in 1891-92, the Cedar County Courthouse consists of 2-1/2 stories on a low raised basement. The basement is rusticated rock-faced golden-colored stone as is the trim. Upper walls are faced with red brick, making an attractive color and textural contrast with the stone. An unusual textured brick is used in the spandrels over the two entries and also beneath the corner tower windows. Stone is used effectively to form continuous lintels and sills, quoins on the massive corner tower, and fine large round arches on the tower and also two deeply recessed entries.

A notable characteristic is the heavy corner tower with its metal colonettes, round arches, massive hipped roof, and rough stone trim. Other corner towers around the main hipped roof have much lower gabled or hipped roofs with metal cornices and barely keep the composition from "tipping" too strongly toward the principal corner tower.

The plan is narrow and rectangular (approximately 50x75') with notable recessed entrances having stone steps on the north and west facades (on either side of the prominent tower). A minor entrance is located on the south facade. The main hallway runs north and south, with a small stub hallway from the west entrance, similar to the Washington County Courthouse. Five offices on the first floor are located off the main hall. Vault space is located in a narrow rectangular addition (c.1930) at the rear of the building, a highly uncommon occurrence.

Romanesque Revival elements include the rock-faced stone, broad hipped roof planes, transomed windows, and a feeling of solidity. Also, the groupings of round-arched windows, colonettes, compound round-arched entries, and columns with enriched capitals.

Changes to the exterior are minimal and expected and include covered

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transoms and replacement windows (including three of glass block), new entry doors, and the 1930s vault addition. Two corbelled brick chimneys shown in an historic photograph on the entry pavilion of the west facade have been removed. Inside, the first floor has been modernized, including new ceilings, wall surfaces, and lighting. The second floor district court room may have been reduced in size somewhat but retains considerable original woodwork as well as four notable colored glass windows located behind the judge's bench, an unusual feature.

The courthouse shares a long half-block site with a memorial at the northwest corner and the 1972 jail to the northeast. The jail covers parts of lots east of and beyond the original courthouse site, and this slight expansion is part of the nomination in order to include the entire jail building. The one-story jail is faced with tan brick with light tan concrete panels in a "corrugated" pattern forming its cornice. The memorial consists of a granite shaft with a metal sculpture of three guns above. Four panels on the shaft contain patriotic inscriptions, such as "May the land they loved be free forever." Short concrete walks radiate from the memorial, and an eternal flame, three flagpoles, and a concrete bench further call attention to the space. The memorial is well designed and appropriate to the site but is of too recent (c. 1970) construction to be other than a noncontributing element in this nomination, as is the recent jail. Five 19th century houses run along the east or back side of the courthouse site. Directly north of the courthouse is Hartington's commercial district.

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The Cedar County Courthouse is architecturally significant (Criterion C) and also 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 Cedar County. The first courthouse on this site, it is a notable example of public architecture in the community.

Eighteen extant County Capitols were built between 1888 and 1907 across Nebraska. With its 1891-92 construction date, the Cedar County Courthouse is among the earlier examples. As an important example of the County Capitol, the courthouse contains design features and facilities distinctive to its design and use, has corner towers, costly materials, and distinctive ornamentation. Elements of the design combine to convey an impression of a government building of permanence and solidity, another feature of the County Capitol. It is an unusual example of the property type, for its prominent tower is not centered, but anchors a corner of the building. The Period of Significance is 1891, when construction began, to 1939, when the "fifty year rule" takes effect. The Cedar County Courthouse is being nominated as an example of the Property Type, County Courthouses of Nebraska (County Capitol) of the Context, County Government in Nebraska, 1854-1941, from the Multiple Property Submission, County Courthouses of Nebraska.

Registration Requirements under this Multiple Property Submission state that a County Capitol must have "provision for fireproof storage vaults." The Cedar County Courthouse, funded by only a \$20,000 bond issue, used smaller, mobile safes until the county could afford to add the present vault addition to the rear of the courthouse. The property contains sufficient physical and associative qualities of the County Capitol to merit nomination, and did provide for fireproof storage of county records.

Cedar County is located in the northeast corner of Nebraska along the Missouri River. Yankton, South Dakota, is just across the river. With its riverside location, Cedar County was among the earliest counties in the state and was organized in 1857. That same year St. James was named county seat. As settlement increased from the initial nine families present in 1857, residents voted to remove the county seat to St. Helena, and the original site was eventually abandoned. Most early settlement, until the 1880s, was concentrated in the north part of the county along the river, although the interior was known to be quite fertile and well-watered.

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Located in the center of the county, the present county seat, Hartington, was established in 1883 as a stop on the railroad. An 1883 description noted the following:

The location for the townsite of Hartington was chosen wisely. A somewhat elevated plateau, bounded on the right by the Bow Valley, and on the left by a tributary....one sees for miles up and down both these wide valleys....to make the scene a complete duplicate of Eden, one only needed to see Adam and Eve and the Devil skirmishing around among the trees.

Settlers apparently agreed that the site held high promise, and on September 18, 1883, a "large and enthusiastic" crowd participated in an auction of real estate in Hartington. An estimated 150 businessmen from Nebraska, Iowa, and Illinois were on hand to buy property, and a contemporary account averred that "parties familiar with the location of the town and country surrounding, knew that Hartington would be the metropolis of northeastern Nebraska and a great commercial center." The soon-to-be Hartingtonians bought 82 lots within three hours, most in the commercial sector. Within just two weeks 44 buildings were under construction, including a hotel, two banks, and law and land offices, and 66 more buildings were reportedly planned.

With its central location and rail connections (beginning in 1884), Hartington soon gained the county seat designation as well. After a spirited campaign, voters approved the change on January 2, 1885. On April 28, 1891, county commissioners received a petition calling for a vote on whether to issue \$20,000 in bonds to underwrite courthouse construction. The election was held on June 6th and passed.

On the 26th of June, 1891, "the several plans and specifications of the competing architects were duly submitted to the board, and after due consideration said board selected the perspective and preliminary studies of J.C. Stitt," according to the commissioners' records. Stitt had settled in Norfolk (about 50 miles south of Hartington) in 1889; he practiced architecture there until his death in 1947. Among his commissions in Norfolk were the senior high school, Masonic temple, city auditorium (with E.B. Watson), and a number of buildings at the state hospital. In addition, Stitt obtained commissions from a^e Chadron college, state institutions in Kearney and Hastings, and many commercial and residential buildings in Norfolk. Stitt had no formal architectural training but began at age 16 working for his father, a contractor.

On August 12, 1891, the board selected Patterson and McClean as the

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general contractor. One year later the board insured the new courthouse, reflecting its completion and their acceptance of the building from the contractor.

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Long, Barbara Beving. "County Courthouses of Nebraska." Multiple Property Submission. 1989.
Nebraska State Historical Society. Photo Collection. #M281-937.
Cedar County. Commissioners' Records. Book 2.
Hartington, Nebraska. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. 1899.
"Cedar County." Who's Who in Nebraska. Lincoln: Nebraska Press Association, 1940.
File on architects. NeSHPO Office. [1947] James C. Stitt obituary.
McCoy, J. Mike. History of Cedar County, Nebraska. n.p. [1937].

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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies all of Lots 7-18 and the west half of Lots 5 and 6 of Block 48 of the Original Town of Hartington.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes that part of the city block that has historically been associated with the courthouse. The west half of the jail is located on that part of the city block that has historically been associated with the nominated property. In addition, the east half of the jail (built in 1972) is located on the west half of Lots 5 and 6 of the block, and the boundary extends to include that portion of the building.

