

PH035079X

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

APR 19 1976

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEP 30 1976

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

~~AND/OR~~ COMMON
Lee County Courthouse

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

701 Avenue F

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Ft. Madison

VICINITY OF

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Iowa

Lee

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

Lee County

STREET & NUMBER

701 Avenue F

CITY, TOWN

Ft. Madison

VICINITY OF

STATE

Iowa

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Lee County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

701 Avenue F

CITY, TOWN

Ft. Madison

STATE

Iowa

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT

GOOD

FAIR

DETERIORATED

RUINS

UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED

ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE

MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Lee County Courthouse is a two-story temple form Greek Revival structure of red brick, on a stone foundation. A pedimented portico extends across the facade, and is supported by four Doric columns of stuccoed brick. A full entablature is found on all facades. The 2 over 2 double-hung sash windows are capped with stone lintels. The roof shingles were originally wood, but have been replaced with singles of green asphalt. There is white-painted wood and stucco decoration.

The building is 50' x 100', 3 bays wide and four deep. The first floor is bisected by a wide central hall, with two offices on either side. At the north end of the hall, divided stairs lead to the second floor. This upper floor also contains a central corridor, having offices along its length and a courtroom at the south end.

A large cupola on the south end of the roof was planned during the original construction, but not erected until after the Civil War. The cupola was destroyed by fire in 1911, and not replaced when the courthouse was repaired. An addition to the northwest corner was completed before World War I, possibly in conjunction with the repairs necessitated by fire.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

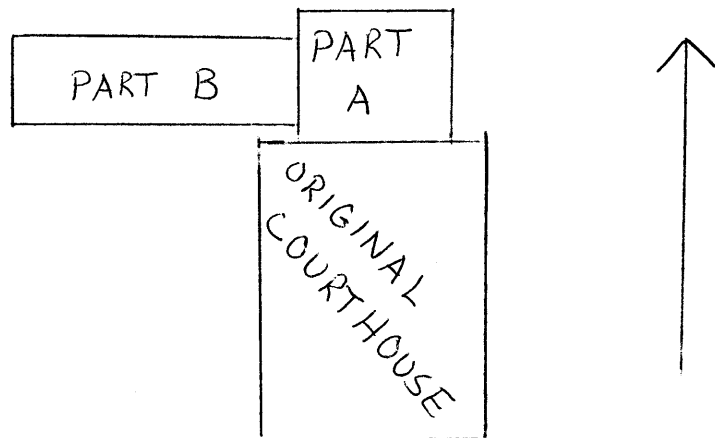
CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

The addition to the courthouse (pre W.W. I) consists of two parts (see diagram below). Part A, attached to the north wall, is two stories high, and two bays wide and two bays deep. It is of brick similar to that of the main block of the courthouse. The windows, with their stone lintels and 2/2 lights, are also in harmony with the main block. The peak of the gable roof, however, extends only to the cornice line of the courthouse.

Part B is a flat-roofed, red brick section, attached to the west side of Part A. For the first three bays of its length, it is one story high, then becomes a 1½ story block with irregularly placed segmental-arched windows and a garage door at the end.

Part A is generally in keeping with the style of the original courthouse. Part B is hidden from view in an alley, and thus does not detract from the integrity of the original structure.



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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input 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 1841-42

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This courthouse is a monument to the determination of a town to establish itself as the seat of county government. In 1836, when Iowa was yet part of Wisconsin Territory, Ft. Madison was designated the seat of Lee County, and reaffirmed in 1838 by the Iowa Territorial Legislature. In 1839, however, expansion of settlement into previously uninhabited portions of the county led to demands for a more centrally located county seat. In the next few years, the county seat was variously proposed for Franklin, Ft. Madison and West Point. Franklin never succeeded in becoming the county seat, but Ft. Madison erected its courthouse in 1841, only to have the seat of government moved to West Point. From 1843 to 1845, the Lee County Courthouse at Ft. Madison was rented out, the offices by private contract, the courtroom to religious groups on the basis of the highest bid. In 1845, a final proposal to relocate the county seat was submitted to the voters, and Ft. Madison emerged the victor.

As one of the oldest courthouses in Iowa enjoying continual use, this structure is a living expression of a portion of Iowa history. Unfortunately, the needs of government have outgrown the capacity of this old building, and tentative plans have been put forth to destroy it. As an historic site and an architectural treasure of southeast Iowa, the Lee County courthouse deserves to be preserved.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Minute Book #1 of the Lee County Commissioners
 The Ft. Madison Evening Democrat files, 1938
 Lee County History, 1885
 Lee County History, 1879
 Goeldner, Paul K. Temples of Justice. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Columbia University, 1970.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 5	5 4 2 9 2 0	4 4 9 9 0 7 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Northwest corner of Avenue F and 7th Street

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

Mrs. John Keenan, Pres.

March 1975

ORGANIZATION

DATE

North Lee County Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

Box 385

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Ft. Madison

Iowa

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

Adrian A. Anderson

TITLE

Director, Div. of Historic Preservation

DATE

April 14, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Attesting

James G. [Signature]

DATE

9/30/96

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

9/30/76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER