

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received **JUL 21 1983**

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Clay County Courthouse

and/or common Clay County Courthouse

2. Location

street & number 211 West Main St. NA not for publication

city, town Vermillion NA vicinity of

state South Dakota code 046 county Clay code 027

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<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:

4. Owner of Property

name Clay County

street & number 211 West Main

city, town Vermillion NA vicinity of state SD 57069

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Clay County Register of Deeds

street & number 211 W. Main

city, town Vermillion state SD 57069

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Clay County Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records Historical Preservation Center

city, town Vermillion state SD

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
<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	<input type="checkbox"/> only slightly	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Clay County Courthouse is a 2 1/2 story stone - veneered structure sited in the center of a courthouse square at the west end of the commercial district of downtown Vermillion. Raised above street level, the courthouse occupies the north side block. As with many South Dakota county seat towns, the courthouse is removed from the center of town and plays only a secondary role as a visual landmark.

The building is a standard Neo-Classical design. In plan, a central stairhall occupies the center bay and extends to the middle of the building. A circular light well opens from the third to second floor and a skylight provides natural lighting in the core of the structure. A hall which is parallel to the front and rear walls, bisects the building and terminates in the side entrances on the basement floor. The jail occupies the west bay of the basement floor, and the courtroom is located in the east third of the third floor.

On the exterior the building is composed of two stories raised above a full basement. This base is marked with a slight flaring outward at the base of the wall. In addition, a watertable demarcates the stories and the basement is trimmed in rusticated stone. The two upper stories are finished with vertically ribbed dressed stone. The building is capped with a cornice and parapet. On the rear facade, the windows are arranged in an irregular composition with half story windows lighting the fire stair well. The three, formal facades are composed in three bays with a projecting central portico. On the front, the portico has a recessed story-and-a-half entrance and flanking columns.

Original Contracts:

Architect: Lloyd D. Willis, Omaha, Nebraska
General Contractor: Hintz and Malloy, Aberdeen, SD
Plumbing and Heating: P.F. Cavanaugh, Vermillion, SD
Electric Wiring: Brookman and Barrett, Vermillion, SD
Wood Furniture: Brown and Saenger, Sioux Falls, SD
Jail Equipment: Stewart Iron Works, Cincinnati, Ohio
Electric Light Fixtures: Chicago Gas and Electric Fixture Mfg. Co., Chicago, Ill.
Metal Vault Equipment: Steel Fixture Mfg. Co., Topeka, Kansas

Alterations include the installation of an elevator in 1966 by Carter Elevator of Sioux Falls, and a rear vestibule in 1982, constructed by Nels Urup Construction, Vermillion.

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 1913 **Builder/Architect** Lloyd D. Willis, Architect, Omaha, NE

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Hintz & Mallory, general contractors
Aberdeen, SD

Significant in the areas of architecture and local government, the Clay County Courthouse is a fine example of Neo-Classical architecture of the early 20th century and is the center of government for historic Clay County.

Clay County was the site of the earliest settlement in the Dakota Territory, and Vermillion, the county seat vied with neighboring Yankton for territorial capitol status. The county was formed with the territorial government in 1861 and had its first appointed officials in 1862. Initial attempts were made to erect a courthouse in 1876. However, it was not until 1881–1882 when the city moved to the present location on the bluff after the disastrous flood of 1881, that plans were made for a permanent courthouse. This wood frame structure was erected in 1882 and stood on the site of the present post office.

The present courthouse, erected in 1912–1913 was the result of a movement started in 1906. A \$60,000 bond issue was defeated that year, however, four years later a sinking fund was successfully created and construction begun in June of 1912. Completed in April of 1913, the building cost \$95,000 to erect.

Lloyd D. Willis of Omaha, Nebraska designed a formal Neo-Classical structure built of yellowish stone. The interior employs bold classical and Greek Revival moldings. The structure has been maintained in excellent condition with few and unobtrusive alterations. Sited above street level on landscaped courthouse ground, the building is a very competent design, executed with fine craftsmanship and molded, three dimensional detail. By no means an innovative design, the structure is a good example of the small-town Neo-Classical style employed for public buildings.

At the turn of the century, many 19th century courthouses were being replaced. The years 1910 to 1917 were especially active ones for architectural courthouse commissions. Willis is not known to have designed any other South Dakota buildings, yet his work is well within the tradition of formal classicism favored by 1910–1920s South Dakota architects.

*a

9. Major Bibliographical References

Herbert Schell, History of Clay County, South Dakota, The Broadcaster Press: Vermillion, SD, 1976: 19-20, 50, 64-65, 185-186.
Journal of Proceedings, Clay County Board of Commissioners, 1910-1982.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property four

Quadrangle name Vermillion

Quadrangle scale 1:24 000

UTM References

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4	17	3	18	2	10	10
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Verbal boundary description and justification

The lot lines form the boundaries of the site which is located in all of Block 37, Snyder's addition to the City of Vermillion.

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

state NA code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Walter Doolittle technical editing: Carolyn Torma (605-677-5314)

organization SE Council of Government date 27 Apr 83

street & number 25 Center telephone 605-624-8066

city or town Vermillion state SD 57069

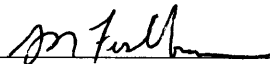
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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



title Director, Office of Cultural Preservation

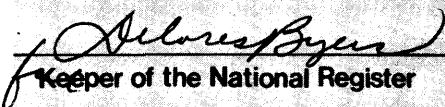
date 7/12/83

For NPS use only

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

entered in the National Register

date 8/18/83


Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration