

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

For NPS use only

received **AUG 5 1985**
date entered **SEP 5 1985**

**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 Grant County Courthouse

and/or common Grant County Courthouse

2. Location

street & number Second Street and Central Avenue N/A not for publication

city, town Elbow Lake N/A vicinity of

state Minnesota code 22 county Grant code 051

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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input checked="" 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 Grant County

street & number Second Street and Central Avenue

city, town Elbow Lake N/A vicinity of state Minnesota 56531

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Grant County Courthouse

street & number Second Street and Central Avenue

city, town Elbow Lake state Minnesota 56531

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

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

Check one

unaltered

altered

Check one

original site

moved

date

N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Grant County Courthouse, built in 1905, is located on the north side of Second Street at Central Avenue in Elbow Lake, Minnesota. The imposing Beaux Arts and Renaissance-inspired building is a focal point for the town and is situated on a slight hill at the northern end of the city's main commercial street. Its rear facade overlooks a parking lot, a small park area, and Flekkefjord Lake. The Minneapolis firm of Bell and Detweiler, specialists in courthouse architecture, designed the building, and it was built by Prince Construction Company of Minneapolis with the assistance of local labor. The 97' wide by 75' deep by 102' high building was constructed of smoothly dressed and rockfaced coursed ashlar Port Wing brownstone quarried near Superior. The stone was laid on a granite boulder foundation supported by concrete footings. The courthouse is 2½ stories tall, five bays wide, and has a hipped roof (covered with slate tiles) rising to a two story central tower and cupola. A new glass and metal entrance is recessed beneath a large rounded arch, with a keystone, supported by paired, engaged polish granite Tuscan columns incorporated in a projecting central bay. On the third story of this bay is a recessed porch with urn-shaped balusters and smooth Tuscan columns supporting a heavy cornice on which rests a low parapet wall capped by four stone globes. Above the central bay is a large pedimented dormer with a semi-circular window with a keystone. Rising above the dormer is the two story tower and cupola. Its open square base has clustered corner pilasters topped by small decorative segmental arched pediments, Tuscan columns, and urn-shaped balusters. Above the open "lookout" level is an enclosed second story with small Composite order engaged columns supporting segmental arched pediments, and projecting corner pilasters topped by acroteria. This level of the cupola was designed to house four clock faces which were never installed, and instead contains four bullseye windows. The cupola has a hipped, ribbed dome-like roof sheathed in "Spanish Copper tile" supporting a small square copper lantern comprised of columns supporting a cornice and a finial.

The exterior of the building is relatively plain, although the ground floor level is textured with rockfaced coursed ashlar brownstone. The first and fifth bays of the main facade and the central bay of each of the side and rear walls project and have pilasters at the outer edges of the third story. These projecting bays rise to flat parapet walls on the main facade and pediments on the side and rear walls. The building has a large metal cornice with modillions. With the exception of the elliptically arched window openings on the first and fifth bays of the main facade, the windows are rectangular and positioned alone and in pairs. Most of the windows on the second and third level have transoms. The original 1/1 sash has been replaced by newer multi-paned sash.

The interior of the courthouse features wainscoting of pink Tennessee marble in the main halls, floors of marble slabs and chips, classically-inspired plaster entablatures, brackets, and keystones decorated with white and gold paint, ornate brass chandeliers and fixtures, oak woodwork, and heavy oak furniture. Interior walls of the building were decorated by muralist and interior designer Odin J. Oyen of LaCrosse, Wisconsin. The walls of the foyer are decorated with hand-painted Grant County emblems and the name of the county is incorporated into the marble floor. An open stairway with marble steps, cast iron balustrades and ornate cast iron lamp standards leads to the second story (main level). A similar rear stairway leads from the second to the third story level. A round opening edged with tiny electric lights in the center of the second story ceiling provides a view up into a domical vault rising above the third story level. This circular opening is defined in the third story floor by an iron and oak railing. The vault is comprised of four large panels decorated with signed murals by Oyen. The murals depict women engaged in farming activities and are entitled "Sowing", "Agriculture", "Milling", and "Dairying". Smaller panels are decorated with official

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

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 1905

Builder/Architect

Bell and Detweiler, Architect

Prince Construction Co., Builder

Odin J. Oyen, Interior Designer

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Grant County Courthouse in Elbow Lake, built in 1905, is architecturally and historically significant as the largest and most lavish turn of the century building standing in Grant County, as the work of successful Minneapolis architects Bell and Detweiler and noted interior designer Odin J. Oyen of LaCrosse, Wisconsin, as one of Minnesota's diminishing number of monumental Victorian courthouses which are still standing, and as the physical seat of Grant County government since 1906.

Grant County was created by the Minnesota Legislature in 1868 and the first county commissioners were appointed in 1868, although the Board of Commissioners did not officially meet until 1873. Until the first courthouse was built in Elbow Lake in 1878, elected and appointed county officials conducted business in a sometimes informal manner from their homes and farms. The first courthouse was a two story woodframe building located across the street to the west of the present courthouse. It was split and remodelled into two residences when the present courthouse was completed. (The two houses are still standing at 212 and 214 Central Avenue N.) During the first few years of the courthouse's history, Elbow Lake nearly lost its claim as the seat of Grant County during a year-long battle between residents of Herman and Elbow Lake over the distinction in 1880-81. Private citizens in Herman even built their own courthouse and raided the county offices in Elbow Lake for legal records before the dispute was settled and the documents were restored to the original courthouse.

Plans to construct a new county courthouse began in 1899 when Elbow Lake had a population of about 600. In 1904 Minneapolis architects Bell and Detweiler were chosen to design the courthouse and early in 1905 the five acre site was acquired and construction began under the supervision of E. A. Durkee of Prince Construction Company, a Minneapolis firm. The cornerstone was laid on June 24, 1905. In February, 1906, interior designer Odin J. Oyen was awarded a \$3,000 contract for decorating the interior of the building. The courthouse was dedicated July 23, 1906 after \$80,500 had been spent on the project. The courthouse was built with no bonded indebtedness; instead money was raised through increasing tax levies and squeezing money from the county's regular revenue funds.

Charles E. Bell (1858-1932) and Menno S. Detweiler (1869-1907) both received their architectural training in the Midwest and worked alone and with various firms before forming a partnership in 1904 that ended at Detweiler's death in 1907. Both architects were involved in the design of a large number of public buildings in Minnesota and other states throughout their career, and together they designed the Grant County Courthouse, the Martin County Courthouse in Fairmont (now on the National Register), and county courthouses in Wisconsin, Iowa, and South Dakota. In 1905 the firm designed the South Dakota State Capitol at Pierre. After Detweiler's death Bell worked alone and with William Tyrie and Cecil B. Chapman (1909-1914), Percy Dwight Bentley (1916-1917), and C. L. Kinport (1920).

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

9. Major Bibliographical References

Biographical information on Bell and Detweiler from Northwest Architectural Archives, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota.
Rausch, Joan M. A Catalog of the Gyen Collection. LaCrosse: University of Wisconsin, 1979.
"Special Courthouse Edition." Grant County Herald, Sept. 13, 1906.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre
Quadrangle name Elbow Lake Quad. Quadrangle scale 7.5

UTM References

A	<u>15</u>	<u>26951010</u>	<u>51091751810</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet - page 2

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

state	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>	county	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>
state	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>	county	<u>N/A</u>	code	<u>N/A</u>

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan Granger, Field Assistant
State Historic Preservation Office
organization Minnesota Historical Society date October 1983
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 7/12/85
State Historic Preservation Officer

For NPS use only

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

for Melissa Byers Entered in the National Register date 9/5/85
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____
Chief of Registration

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

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



Continuation sheet Grant County Courthouse Item number 7, 8

Page 1

Item #7: Description, Continued

seals of Minnesota and the United States. The top of the vault features a stained glass oculus which is backlit by electrical lights.

The Grant County Courthouse originally housed offices, two jail cells, and a fire proof storage vault on the ground level, offices and a commissioners' room decorated with four murals by Oyen on the second level, and offices, a courtroom, and jury rooms on the third floor. This arrangement of rooms has changed very little. Both the exterior and interior of the building are basically intact and the courthouse has been well maintained although the paint on the metal cornices is flaking. The only apparent exterior alterations have been the replacement of the original windows and front entrance doors. The interior retains original furniture and fixtures. The Oyen murals in the domical vault were retouched sometime after 1970 and the third story courtroom was sensitively redecorated with new carpets, curtains, and paint colors in 1983.

Item #8: Significance, Continued

Interior designer Oden J. Oyen (1865-1926) was raised in Wisconsin and apprenticed to a Madison, Wisconsin, decorating firm before attending the Institute of Chicago in the 1880's. In 1888 he and a partner established an interior design firm in LaCrosse specializing in frescoes, painting, and paper hanging. In 1890 the partnership was dissolved and Oyen worked alone to build a design and retail decorating firm that eventually employed over forty workers and gained a national reputation. The Oyen firm created interior designs for hundreds of churches, homes, and public buildings throughout the Northwest, including St. Joseph's Cathedral in Minneapolis (ca. 1904), eight theaters in St. Paul, and at least ten county courthouses in Minnesota. After Oyen's death in 1926 the business continued under his son and brother until it folded in 1931.

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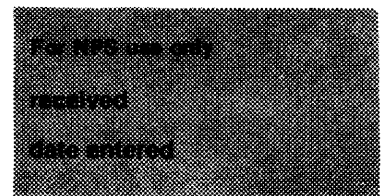
**National Register of Historic Places
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Grant County Courthouse, Elbow Lake, Grant County, MN

Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 2



Commencing at a point 769 feet north of the section corner of Sections 8, 9, 16, and 17 in Township 129 North of Range numbered 42 West, running thence east at right angles 167 feet; thence north at right angles to the meandered shore of Worm Lake; thence in a westerly and northwesterly direction following the meandered shore of said Worm Lake to the section line between sections 8 and 9 in the said town and range; thence south along the said section line between said section 8 and 9 to the place of beginning. And that certain other tract of land described as follows: commencing at a point 769 feet north of the section corner of Sections 8, 9, 16, and 17 in Township numbered 129 North of Range numbered 42 West, running thence west at right angles with said section line 216 feet; thence north at right angles to the meandered shore of Worm Lake; thence in a southeasterly direction following the meandered shore of said Worm Lake to the section line between said Sections 8 and 9 in said town and range; thence south along the said section line between said sections 8 and 9 to the place of beginning.

**United States Department of the Interior
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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 2 Page 1

REFERENCE NUMBER: 85001945

STATE: Minnesota

COUNTY: Grant

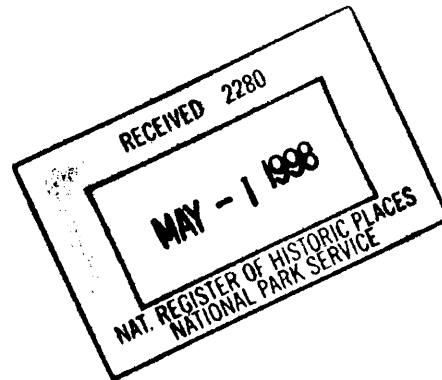
RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC): Grant County Courthouse


CITY/TOWNSHIP: Elbow Lake

VICINITY OF:

ADDRESS: 10 2nd St. N.E.

COMMENTS: Address Correction





Ian R. Stewart
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

4/24/98
Date