

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 90000967 Date Listed: 7/5/90

Saline County Courthouse Saline NE
Property Name County State

County Courthouse of Nebraska MPS
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Beth Boland
Signature of the Keeper

7/5/90
Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

Item #3, Classification:

The correct count of resources: two contributing buildings and four contributing objects. The contributing objects are the light fixtures that flank the east and south walks.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government/courthouse
Government/correctional facility

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government/courthouse
Government/correctional facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone
walls stone

roof asphalt

other _____

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)

Architecture
Politics/government

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

1927-40

1927-29

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Evans, Marcus L.

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

Acreage of property 1.5 acres

UTM References

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|-----------------------|---------------------------|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | 1 4 | 6 7 2 4 4 0 | 4 4 8 3 0 2 0 | B | | | |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
| C | | | | D | | | |
| | 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 | January 2, 1990 | | |
| street & number | 3140 Easton Boulevard | telephone | (515) 266-4964 | | |
| city or town | Des Moines | state | Iowa | zip code | 50317 |

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Built in 1926-27, the Saline County Courthouse is a fine, essentially unaltered example of the Property Type, County Citadel. Identifying features include: rectangular shape, centered entrance, costly materials, distinctive ornamentation, Classical Revival stylistic influence, provision for fireproof storage, and the impression of a government building representing modernity, simplicity, strength, and prosperity. In addition, the courthouse has other County Citadel characteristics: flat roof and designed by an architect. It is one of six stone-faced County Citadels built between 1917 and 1930 across the state, an important subgroup of the property type.

Although they constitute a "small group of functionally and historically related buildings," the courthouse and matching jail (contributing) are considered a district, since the latter is across the street from the courthouse square.

The Saline County Courthouse is a three-story rectangular building that also has partial attic space tucked behind the parapet. The rusticated stone gives the appearance of a raised basement, but entrances are at grade.

The building is faced with Bedford limestone on all sides. Decorated pavilions on all but the north side call attention to the three entrances. The east facade is the primary facade and therefore has rounded fluted engaged columns and a more projecting pavilion. The secondary entrances found on the west and south sides have shallower decorated entry pavilions.

A series of imposing elements focus attention on the centered entry pavilions. These include tall fluted pilasters or engaged columns, a broad and prominent cornice decorated with paterae and triglyphs, and heavy lintels over the doors. Secondary facade pavilions have squared fluted pilasters rather than rounded engaged columns.

The west pavilion features a particularly fine two-story round-arched window which lights the staircase. Pairs of rectangular windows are slightly recessed and are located between the engaged columns or pilasters, as well as at the corners. There are decorated panels between the second and third stories for all the rectangular windows.

At the recessed entries of the east and west facades, acroteria are placed atop a heavy lintel which has consoles ending in triglyphs, a characteristic ornament of the Doric order also seen on the architect's

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Red Willow County Courthouse. Large original metal and glass wall lights flank the doorways. The south door is similar but has an outsized carved pineapple centered on the lintel and no acroteria.

Like the doorways, windows at the first floor level are recessed (and have voussoirs), conveying an impression of solidity and strength. The moulded cornice, lacking paterae and triglyphs, continues around the other facades, a unifying feature along with the water table, parapet, window treatment, and rustication.

Bays consisting of two sets of paired rectangular windows flank the entry pavilions, with three similar bays on the north facade of the 70x90' building. The floorplan is T-shaped, and vault placement is variable. According to the dedication program (which is extremely similar to the Red Willow County program), the vaults are unusually large and have outside light sources so that they may be a "serviceable work space." County offices occupy the first and second stories with judicial uses on the third story. Large storage vaults are tucked in the attic space above judicial offices. The high courtroom ceiling also extends into this attic space.

The courthouse is an excellent example of the County Citadel courthouse exhibiting Classical Revival stylistic elements. These include the symmetric arrangement, monumental proportions, smooth stone surface, prominent columns, unadorned parapet, rusticated and ashlar finish, and such classical elements as acroteria, fluted Doric columns, and triglyphs.

Exterior alterations are limited to replacement windows which have dark brown top panels, a small concrete ramp and metal railing at the west side to allow access by the handicapped, and some replacement doors. The double doors on the south side are original. An historic photograph at the Nebraska State Historical Society reveals how little the property has changed. Interior modifications are minor.

Costly materials adorn the interior: grey marble for staircases, railings, mopboards, and wainscoting, ornate plasterwork, and attractive dark woodwork. In the third floor district courtroom heavy moulded semi-circular broken pediments are placed above doors and windows, and there is attractive wood paneling on all walls, original hanging lights, and a particularly fine rounded judge's bench with original lights.

The Saline County Courthouse is centered on a full block in a residential area. The courthouse it replaced was located at one side of the high, uneven site overlooking downtown Wilber two blocks away, and this

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placement made it a simple matter to center the present courthouse.

A steep flight of steps leads directly to the east facade, and there are also straight concrete walks to the other entrances. Both the east and south walks have unique metal and glass lights to light the way. A petalled orb tops the openwork design, which features three small lion's heads and acroteria. According to the dedication program, the fixtures were specially designed by the Edwin F. Guth Company in collaboration with the architect.

The matching stone-faced jail was built under the same contract as the courthouse and designed by the same architect. It is located directly west of the courthouse square and faces High Street. The 56x36' two-story building is rectangular, flat-roofed, and faced with limestone. A pediments crowns the east entrance and is the principal decoration on the unaltered building.

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The Saline 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 a focal point for the administration of local government and institutions in the county. It is a fine example of public architecture and contains good examples of design features and facilities distinctive to its design and use as a courthouse.

As a good example of the County Citadel Property Type, the courthouse contains design features and facilities distinctive to its design and use (such as fireproof vaults), has a rectangular shape, centered entrance, costly materials, distinctive ornamentation, and Classical Revival stylistic influence. Elements of the design combine effectively to convey the impression of a government building representing modernity, simplicity, and prosperity, also features of the County Citadel.

The Period of Significance is 1927, when construction began, to 1940, when the "fifty year rule" takes effect. The Saline County Courthouse is being nominated as an example of the Property Type, County Courthouses of Nebraska (County Citadel) of the Context, County Government in Nebraska, 1854-1941, from the Multiple Property Submission, County Courthouses of Nebraska.

Saline County is located in southeastern Nebraska, just southwest of Lincoln. With its location near the Capital, it saw settlement relatively early, and the county was organized in 1867. Swan City was the first county seat, a position it held until 1871. Pleasant Hill was then voted county seat. In 1877 yet another county seat election was held, and Wilber won.

The following year a courthouse was built on this site. Despite its poor condition--the state fire commissioner condemned it in 1920--the replacement courthouse was not assured until 1927. The county saw one of the state's more bitter and prolonged county seat fights, dating from the 1870s and rekindled in 1920. Efforts to build the present courthouse began in 1920 and required seven years of conflict between Crete and Wilber residents.

By 1927 a courthouse fund contained \$110,000, and the bond issue election held July 26, 1927 provided another \$100,000 for courthouse and jail

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construction. Blueprints by Hastings architect Marcus L. Evans¹ are dated November 1, 1927. It appears he was selected to be architect shortly before the bond election, since county records mention his presentation of preliminary plans on August 20, 1927.

On December 7 of that same year, the general contractor for the project was selected, Fred Swanson of McCook. Swanson was also contractor for the similar Red Willow County Courthouse. Progress was such that the cornerstone was laid on June 5, 1928. Formal dedication ceremonies were held the following year, June 12, 1929.

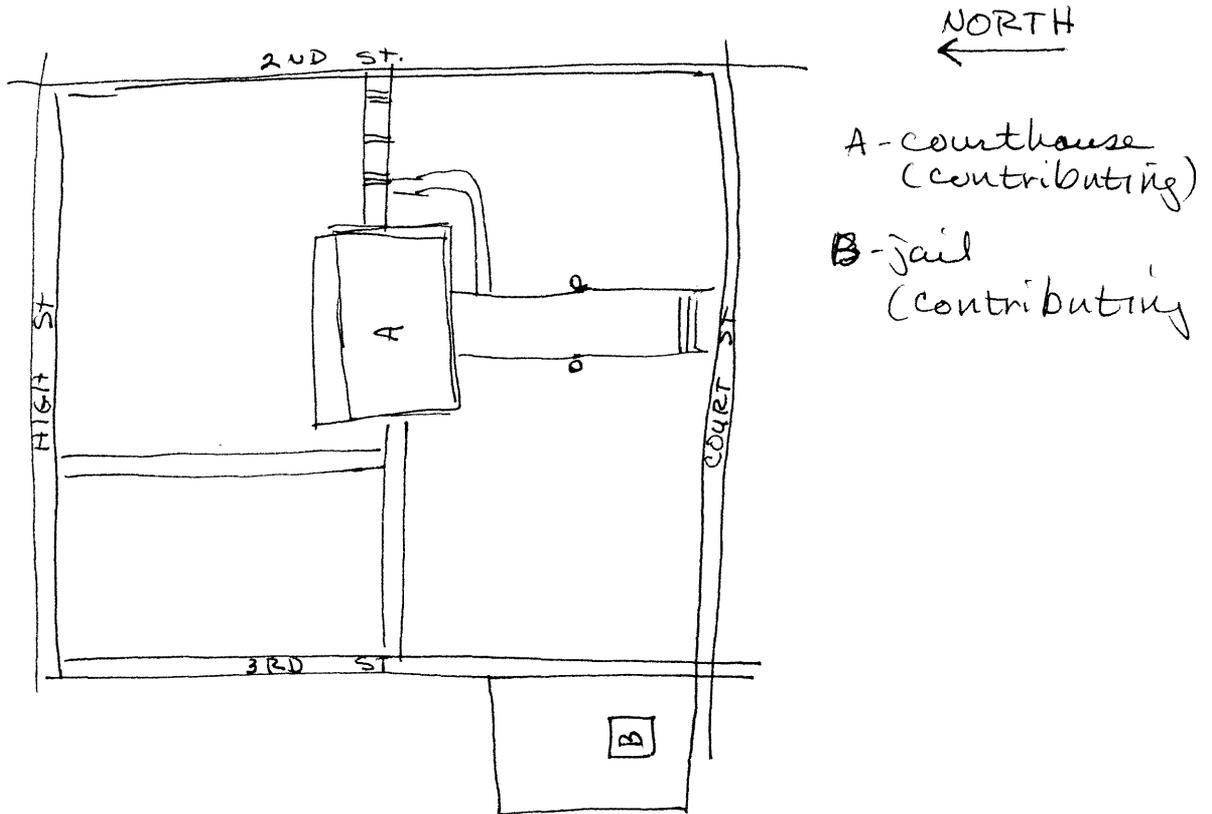
¹Evans also designed the Red Willow County Courthouse during this period.

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SALINE COUNTY COURTHOUSE



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- Long, Barbara Beving. "County Courthouses of Nebraska." Multiple Property Submission. 1989.
- Nebraska State Historical Society. Photo Collection. #M281-90 and -89. Tracings. Saline County Courthouse. Marcus L. Evans.
- Formal Dedication. Saline County Court House. June 12, 1929.
- Saline County. Commissioners Records. Book 8.
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Wilber. 1923.
- Kaura, J.W., comp. Saline County Nebraska History. N.d., n.p.
- Elliott, F.J. History of Saline County. N.d., n.p.
- "Saline County to dedicate court house." North Platte Telegraph. June 10, 1929.
- "Saline County's new court house to be dedicated June 12." Undated clipping from Crete News in Saline County Scrapbook, Nebraska State Historical Society.

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Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property, the Saline County Courthouse, occupies all of block 9 and the south half of lot 12 in block 10 of Wilber's 2nd Addition in Wilber and is roughly 250x250' in size.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all or that part of the city blocks described in the boundary description that have historically been associated with the property.