

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED FEB 4 1977  
DATE ENTERED JUL 26 1977

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  
Old Iron County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER  
303 Iron Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN  
Hurley

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
7th

STATE  
Wisconsin 54534

CODE  
55

COUNTY  
Iron CODE  
051

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" 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	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Not currently in use.

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME  
Iron County Historical Society, c/o Mrs. Edward Kopacz, President

STREET & NUMBER  
Box 88

CITY, TOWN  
Gile

VICINITY OF

STATE  
Wisconsin 54525

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Iron County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER  
300 Taconite Street

CITY, TOWN  
Hurley

STATE  
Wisconsin 54534

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE  
Wisconsin's Historic Preservation Plan, Volume II: The Inventory

DATE  
1975  FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS State Historical Society of Wisconsin

CITY, TOWN  
Madison

STATE  
Wisconsin 53706

## 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 type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built in 1892-1893,<sup>1</sup> this massive two-story structure is eclectic in style with a castellated High Victorian clock tower and Romanesque features elsewhere. The building is 83' long and 69' wide and is of red pressed brick with Lake Superior brownstone ornamentation-- keystones, lintels, quoins, and water table. Contractors for the excavation and foundation were Rinke and Means and for the building proper, Rinke and Carroll.<sup>2</sup> A newspaper description of 1892 stated that the structure, "situated on a slight eminence directly facing the town, will present a sightly and handsome appearance."<sup>3</sup>

The main facade consists of three pavilions separated by two narrow bays. Towers at either corner--the one at the northeast (left) a tall clock tower originally specified to rise 40 feet above the roof,<sup>4</sup> and that at the northwest (right) a three story tower with a dome-like roof--comprise the outer pavilions. The center pavilion has a large round-arched window at first floor level, segmentally-arched windows at second story level, and a large semicircular window in a gabled wall dormer at the top. There are also round-arched windows in the bays between pavilions at first story level and in the northeast tower. Most windows in the main block are segmentally arched with radiating voussoirs of brick and keystones of brownstone. On the east and west sides of the building are central pavilions which duplicate that of the main facade. The roof proper is a truncated hip.

Originally the village fire station was located in the front of the building, and a ramp leading to a large doorway in the central pavilion served as the driveway for the fire equipment. The ramp has been eliminated and the opening closed so that it conforms structurally with the rest of the building. The original front entry into the northeast tower has also been closed and walled in. The only remaining entry at the front of the building is now in the northwest tower and has a wooden enclosure built in front. One corner parapet of the northeast tower is missing and the four clocks are currently inoperative. A covered fire escape has been added to the rear of the building. Some back windows have been reduced in size and at least one completely closed by bricking-in. The building as a whole is in fair to good condition, however, and the owning organization wishes to renovate the building as much as possible and convert it, at least in part, to adaptive use as a museum and meeting place. The extent and rate of restoration will depend upon availability of funds.

1. Montreal River Miner, Oct. 22, 1892
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

# 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 checked="" 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		

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SPECIFIC DATES 1892-1893, 1894 (1) BUILDER/ARCHITECT (2) (1) Julius Rinke & E. J. Carroll (2) L. H. Ruggles

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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Although this building would be considered less distinctive architecturally in the southern half of Wisconsin, it is an important composition and landmark building in its locale in Iron County in the far northern reaches of Wisconsin. There it represents the attempt of an architect and supervisor in the early 1890's to create an impressive public building, using a combination of styles and features he had probably seen in public or institutional buildings elsewhere. The result reflects favorably on the abilities of L. H. Ruggles and is considered to be architecturally significant at the local level in an area where little that is comparable can be found.

The building is also important in the local history of the city of Hurley and the Town of Vaughn, which was a township in the county of Ashland at the time the building's construction began. The structure was built as the new town hall of the Town of Vaughn, and it was unusual indeed for a Wisconsin civil town to erect a town hall of such dimensions, design, and materials as this when most town halls in the state were likely to be simple one or two story frame buildings. At the time, however, work was apparently already under way in the Wisconsin legislature to create a new county out of parts of Ashland and, possibly, Oneida counties. A newspaper story about the new building gave clear indications of the reasons for erecting such a structure, stating that it would contain "apartments for the fire department, a city jail, rooms for the town offices, library room, a large room that might be used for a court room or for any public gathering--in fact the building would serve for county purposes, and many counties in the state have nowhere near as fine a building as this will be."<sup>1</sup> Its total cost was \$27,303.63.<sup>2</sup>

Although the building was to be the town hall of the Town of Vaughn, the new County of Iron, created in March 1893, had made arrangements to use most of it for county purposes before the building was completed. On August 12, 1893, the local paper published the agreement between the county and the town whereby the Town of Vaughn leased to Iron County "All that portion of the new town hall which is contained in the entire upper story or on the second floor of said building and also all that portion of said building which is constructed for jail purposes, and also the two rooms at the south end of said building nearest the east side thereof, on the first or ground floor."<sup>3</sup> The town agreed to furnish for all portions of the leased premises, "ample light, water, and heat at all times when needed for comfortable use and occupation of... lessee."<sup>4</sup> The town retained the right to use the portion known as the court room for public meetings of the electors of the town, but the county had first priority on its use.

In reality, the building served as the Iron County Courthouse almost from the date of its completion in late 1893, and reports of proceedings of meetings of the Town Board of Vaughn printed in the Montreal River Miner usually indicated that the meetings were held at the town clerk's office on Copper Street. In an editorial, "The Situation," which

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Iron County Historical Society. Information in preliminary nomination form.  
Iron County Miner, Hurley, Wis., June 19, 1975  
Montreal River Miner, Hurley, Wis., various issues, July 16, 1892-Dec. 16, 1893, incl.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.5

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	5	7	1	6	3	5	0	5	1	4	7	4	5	0
ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING						

B 

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING					

C 

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING					

D 

ZONE				EASTING				NORTHING					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

Donald N. Anderson, Historian & Registrar, Historic Preservation Division

ORGANIZATION

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE

2 December 1976

STREET & NUMBER

816 State Street

TELEPHONE

608/262-0746

CITY OR TOWN

Madison

STATE

Wisconsin 53706

# 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

*Rebecca Heaney*

TITLE

Acting Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE

1/25/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

ATTEST:

*Charles [Signature]*

DATE

2/26/77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

6-20-77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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CONTINUATION SHEET

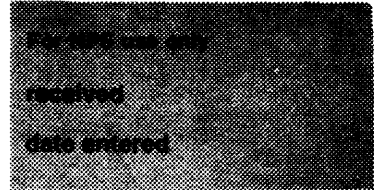
ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

appeared in the Miner on November 11, 1893, it was mentioned that, "Ever since the organization of Iron County, the plan of the Town of Vaughn selling its magnificent building to the county has been talked about and urged by many." The editorial called for adoption of this plan. As a matter of fact, the Miner, on several occasions before and after the date of the editorial, referred to the building as the courthouse. It was finally sold to Iron County in 1894.<sup>5</sup> The town of Vaughn lost its name when Hurley, the county seat since Iron County was created in March, 1893, became a city on November 10, 1910.<sup>6</sup> The old landmark courthouse, vacated by the county in 1975, played a significant role in the governmental history of the Town of Vaughn, the County of Iron, and Wisconsin's once important iron mining area as a whole, and it merits preservation.

1. "The New Town Hall," Montreal River Miner, October 22, 1892
2. The Montreal River Miner of September 2, 1893 published the official list of expenses of the Town Hall, audited and allowed by the town board of Vaughn, and certified by J. A. Emunson, Town Clerk of Vaughn Township, August 14, 1893.
3. "The New Town Hall," Montreal River Miner, October 22, 1892
4. Ibid.
5. "Courthouse was originally built as Vaughn town hall," Iron County Miner, June 19, 1975.
6. "Iron county organized in 1893, 82 years ago," Iron County Miner, June 19, 1975.

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

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



Continuation sheet

Item number

Page

PROPERTY NAME Iron County Courthouse

7	7	0	0	0	0	3	1
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REFERENCE NUMBER

W	I
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STATE

0	5	1
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COUNTY CODE

Correct name is Old Iron County Courthouse

SIGNED, SHPO OR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE

2/13/86

DATE