

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

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

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NAME: Emmons County Courthouse

LOCATION: Fifth Street, Linton, North Dakota 38, Emmons County 029

OWNER: Emmons County, Linton, North Dakota

ACREAGE: 1.790 Acres

VBD (LEGAL): Block 1, Courthouse Addition, Townsite Plat of Linton, ND

UTM: Zone 14, Easting = 404715, Northing = 5124235; Linton, N. Dak. Quad.

DESCRIPTION: Emmons County Memorial courthouse is a two-story structure facing east with a one-story 1983 addition on the north side. Structural steel supports the original building, and concrete block the addition. Locally produced brick covers the exterior walls on the main structure; brick also clothes the addition's outer walls. Both the original building and the addition have flat roofs. Fenestration on the historic building consists in a colored enamel transom over two panes of glass separated by a mullion which replaced the original 24-paned windows in 1983; the addition has a similar window system without the colored transom, and has no windows on the east or west sides. Buff ledge Mankato stone forms the trim of the original courthouse. The main portion of the historic courthouse is 134'x 51' and essentially forms a rectangle. A 72'x51' bay projects from the rear (west side) and serves as a gymnasium-auditorium. The north side addition measures 38.5'x 40.5', is connected by a 9.5' vestibule, and provides handicapped access and supplemental office space to the courthouse. Thirteen carved stone spandrels bear figures which portray an evolution of county history. The courtroom retains some elements of its original decor, particularly the horizontal metal bands which encircle the room. A dropped ceiling and contemporary lighting replaced the original ceiling fixtures after 1982. Window changes, the north addition, and the courtroom's dropped ceiling stand as the major alterations to the building.

SIGNIFICANCE: Date: 1934

Architect: J. Howard Ness
Contractor: Olson and Orheim

The historic significance of the Emmons County courthouse stems from several factors. As other county courthouses, it has served the county as a depository for official documents and records. It also serves as the site for court cases. Beyond these factors common to buildings of this type, it also has distinction as the first WPA project granted in the state. The WPA helped to finance more than 100 building projects in North Dakota--many of which would have been impossible without aid. Seven North Dakota courthouse were completed through the Depression Works programs. Their funding often required county to accept bonded indebtedness to cover costs above what federal grant and county savings could pay. The Emmons County courthouse was chosen as the state's first project for a Works program grant possibly because the added complication of a bond issue election was eliminated by adequate on-hand money in the county building fund. As a test case, the project was able to assume a sufficient magnitude to have a measurable impact on the local economy and unemployment without the need to persuade voters of the program's value before beginning.

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The courthouse is also architecturally significant as one of nine North Dakota county buildings with an Art Deco-Art Moderne styling. The number of decorative spandrels with a non-repetitive design on the building (thirteen) is higher than that of any other courthouse. This gives the building a spirit of decoration consistent with the style's name.

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