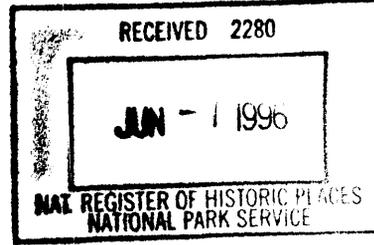


743

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: POTTER COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

Street & number: 201 SOUTH EXENE STREET not for publication

City or town: GETTYSBURG vicinity

State: SOUTH DAKOTA Code: SD County: POTTER Code: 107 Zip code: 57442

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility  meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Jay D. Voigt  
Signature and title of certifying official

05-24-96  
Date

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

POTTER COUNTY COURTHOUSE

POTTER COUNTY, SD

Name of Property

County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
- See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
- See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

*loc*  
 Signature of the Keeper: *Edson H. Beall* Date of Action: *7.5.96*  
 Entered in the National Register

POTTER COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
Name of Property

POTTER COUNTY, SD  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property Category of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply) (Check only one box)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private	XX	building(s)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - local		district
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State		site
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal		structure
<input type="checkbox"/>			object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

COUNTY COURTHOUSES OF S.D.

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**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 CONCRETE

walls BRICK

SANDSTONE

roof asphalt

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- \_\_\_\_\_ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ ARCHITECTURE \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1910-45 \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1910 \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1911 \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

- \_\_\_\_\_ N/A \_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

- \_\_\_\_\_ N/A \_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

- \_\_\_\_\_ Architect: J.P. Eisentraut \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Builder: Stolte & Mencier \_\_\_\_\_

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

POTTER COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
Name of Property

POTTER COUNTY, SD  
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1   4	4   2   4   7   8   0	4   9   8   4   2   7   0	2						
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing			
3				4						
										See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared by

Name/Title: Mark Hufstetler / Historian

Organization: Renewable Technologies, Incorporated

Date: March 1, 1996

Street & Number: 511 Metals Bank Building

Telephone: (406) 782-0494

City or Town: Butte

State: Montana

Zip code: 59701

POTTER COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Name of Property

POTTER COUNTY, SD

County and State

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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**Property Owner**

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(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

Name: Potter County

Street & Number: Courthouse  
9408

Telephone: (605) 765-

City or Town: Gettysburg

State: South Dakota

Zip code: 57442

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

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**Narrative Description:**

The Potter County Courthouse stands in the center of a platted city block in Gettysburg, South Dakota. The courthouse block is located in a built-up residential neighborhood, just south of the community's main commercial district. The courthouse faces west; a tree-lined sidewalk leading from the west entrance to the street defines the property's landscaping. Additional tree and shrub plantings, a sidewalk, and a flagpole are also present on the lot. The northeast quadrant of the lot includes an unpaved parking lot for courthouse patrons.

The courthouse building, while relatively utilitarian in appearance, includes architectural detailing reflective of the Second Renaissance Revival style, with Classical Revival influences. Such styling was popular for public buildings throughout the United States between about 1880 and 1920, and is seen in many South Dakota courthouses constructed during the period. The projecting entry bays, the full entablature with projecting cornice, and the roof balustrade are all characteristic features of the style.

The courthouse is three stories in height. All facades are symmetrical. The building's north and south elevations are largely identical, as are the east and west elevations. The exterior walls are not load-bearing, but hide a concrete structural skeleton.

The first story of the courthouse serves visually as a podium upon which the upper two stories rest; it is faced with cut sandstone panels typically measuring 10 by 32 inches. There are eight courses of these panels, above a beveled stone "water table" course and beneath a beveled stone cap course. The upper stories of the building are clad with a reddish-brown commercial brick, laid in a common-bond pattern. Every sixth course of brick is recessed, resulting in a rusticated appearance. The brickwork is divided horizontally by continuous stone courses (cut in a cavetto molding) above both the second and third level window bands. There is an unadorned concrete cap above the topmost course of stonework.

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All four elevations of the building feature slightly projecting central bays, which help break the building's otherwise austere rectangular plan. On the east and west elevations, these bays are further defined by four full-height pilasters, each with a sandstone base and Classically-decorated stone cap. Stone panels centered near the top of these bays display the incised lettering --1910--POTTER COUNTY--1910--. The building's entry doors are centered on the first level of the east and west bays. The doors are accessed by short runs of sandstone steps, between low sandstone balustrades. Light standards (now removed) once rested atop these balustrades on the west elevation only.

A cornice constructed of formed metal surrounds the building on all four elevations, and expands to suggest a triangular pediment at each of the four projecting bays. Molded ornamental medallions decorate the corners of the east and west pediments.

The building retains its historic fenestration pattern, but nearly all of the exterior door and window units are modern. Entry doors are paired aluminum units, with full-light glazing. While a few of the building's historic wood-framed double-hung windows survive, nearly all of the windows are anodized metal, two-part sliding units. Most replacement windows occupy only the lower portion of their historic openings; the upper portions are infilled, although all of the original wood window casing appears to survive. Some of the windows on the north and south elevations are barred, indicating the presence of either an interior vault or a jail cell.

The interior of the building retains a relatively high level of historic fabric. The building's interior is more utilitarian than that of many South Dakota courthouses, but still conveys the perceived civic importance of the interior spaces. There is no rotunda or other monumental central space. The vestibuled main entrance opens to a landing on the building's central stairwell, between the first and second floors. The stairway is a double-return design, and is constructed of metal with ornate iron railings and posts. Stairway landings and hallways on each level provide the only large public spaces in the building.

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Similar interior finishes and materials are evident on both the second and third levels of the courthouse. Walls and ceilings are plastered. Floors in hallways and other public areas are surfaced with 3/4" white tile; black tiles placed in a repeating diamond pattern accentuate the floors, and the floor edges include black tiles in a simple labyrinth pattern. Interior doors are paneled wood with half-light glazing, and are beneath transoms. Offices and other non-public spaces display similar detailing, although most office floors are carpeted and most of these rooms have modern suspended ceilings.

The top floor of the building includes a large courtroom and related office space. The courtroom retains some, but not all, of its original furniture and woodwork. A suspended ceiling and modern paint obscure one or more historic wall murals which originally decorated the courtroom space. Several county offices and a meeting room for county commissioners occupy the second floor. Office areas retain most of their original metal counters and work areas (countertops are Tennessee marble). Each of the four major office groups includes a separate, fireproof vault room for records storage. These vaults, grouped at the center of the building's north and south elevations, extend downward to the building's lower level. Metal circular stairways within each vault provide access to lower-level vault space.

The bottom floor of the courthouse houses two jail cells, the sheriff's office, and the building's heating plant. (The jail, while historic, is apparently not original to the building; public meeting rooms once occupied part of this space.) The first level displays a relatively utilitarian appearance, with poured concrete floors and minimal interior detailing. The landing for the central stairway at this level is flanked by support columns displaying simple Corinthian capitals.

The only other building on the courthouse grounds is a small modern shed used to store gardening equipment. The shed is just south of the courthouse building; it is wood-framed, approximately 12' square, and is clad with T-111 wood siding. It has a gambrel roof surfaced with wood shingles and rests on a concrete pad. This building is a non-contributing resource, but its small size and unobtrusive placement minimize its impact on the site.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance:**

The Potter County Courthouse is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places with local significance under Criteria "A" and "C." The building is historically significant for its role as the symbolic and functional seat of government for Potter County. Since the building's construction, it has housed virtually all of the county's administrative, operational, and judicial functions, while simultaneously serving as the official repository for county records. The courthouse is the most important single physical element in the historic and contemporary governance of Potter County, and is a significant local visual reminder of the importance of county government.

The Potter County Courthouse is architecturally significant as a representative example of early twentieth-century public and institutional architecture in South Dakota. The building's utilization of Classical Revival design elements is typical of state courthouses constructed during the period. The building is visually representative of an early twentieth-century courthouse, and the facility is among the largest and most visually striking examples of architecture in Gettysburg and Potter County.

*Historical Narrative:*

Potter County is located in north-central South Dakota, in a rural region of farms and small towns. In common with most of central South Dakota, the county saw only limited Euro-American habitation until the late nineteenth century, when the construction of railroad lines into the area spurred a great period of settlement into the region. Most of the county's new settlers claimed 160-acre tracts of the region's fertile prairie and established small grain farms. They enjoyed general success, and by the end of the century nearly all of the arable land in the county was devoted to agriculture. Several small communities developed during the period, serving as business and community centers for the farmers. Gettysburg quickly became the largest, due both its central location and its position on the county's primary railroad route.

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Potter County was established by the Dakota territorial legislature in 1875; it was known as Ashmore County until 1877. In common with most of Dakota's newly-created counties during the period, Potter County was established well before the arrival of a significant number of Euro-American settlers, and the county remained an unorganized entity until 1883, when the first large influx of homesteaders to Potter County took place. The county's first meeting of its new Board of Commissioners was held on December 27, 1883 in Forest City, a small town on the Missouri River west of Gettysburg. (The Forest City townsite is now beneath the waters of Lake Oahe.)

Following a pattern played out in several South Dakota counties, Potter County's first year was marked by a bitter dispute over the permanent location of the county seat. The county's first Commissioners temporarily gave the honor to Forest City, but a special election in 1884 saw Gettysburg chosen as the permanent county seat. When the Forest City partisans suggested vote fraud and refused to relinquish the official county records, a contingent of Gettysburg residents crept into Forest City for a dawn raid on the county offices. Their removal of the county papers to Gettysburg essentially settled the county seat dispute, and county officials soon began planning for the construction of a courthouse in Gettysburg.

Potter County's first courthouse was constructed in 1888 on a donated lot on what is now the north edge of town. Robert B. Fisk, a prominent local resident, arraigned for the construction of the building and apparently assisted financially in its completion. The finished courthouse was a two-story, wood-sided edifice; it was distinguished by a bell tower with a convex mansard roof centered on the front elevation. A combination of political and natural forces doomed the building to a relatively brief career, however. A windstorm in 1892 destroyed the building's tower, and the building was plagued with other structural problems. The building also proved too small for the rapidly-growing county. Of greater significance, though, was the fact that local political squabbles resulted in Gettysburg's original platted townsite (including the courthouse block) being largely forsaken by builders in favor of other platted lots further south. This left the courthouse in an unfavorable location away from most

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development. Consequently, by the early 1900s County Commissioners began making plans for a modern, replacement courthouse facility.

The county's first major step towards building a new courthouse came in 1908, when voters approved the issuance of \$50,000.00 in 5 percent bonds to buy a new courthouse site and construct a building. The following year, the county purchased a block of land in Gettysburg's residential neighborhood, just south of the commercial district, and planning for the new courthouse began in earnest. While deciding on the style and configuration of Potter County's new courthouse, county commissioners evaluated recently-completed county buildings elsewhere in South Dakota. The men were apparently pleased by the appearance of the new Sanborn County courthouse in Woonsocket (1908), since in 1910 commissioners decided to construct a near-replica of the Sanborn County building for Potter County's use. That May, J.P. Eisentraut, designer of the Sanborn County courthouse, was hired by Potter County as the architect for its new building.

John Philip Eisentraut was an Iowa native who practiced architecture in South Dakota between 1909 and 1928. One of the state's most noted architects of the period, he prepared designs for a variety of major projects in South Dakota and surrounding states. Among his other South Dakota commissions were the Walworth County Courthouse, several commercial buildings in Hot Springs and Rapid City, and the Blue Bell Lodge in Custer State Park. Eisentraut worked under several partnerships and business entities throughout his career, living in Deadwood, Hot Springs, Rapid City, and Custer. He began the Potter County project while a principal in the firm "Black Hills Company" of Deadwood; by the time the project was finished, however, Eisentraut was affiliated with "The Fall River Company," an architectural firm in Hot Springs.

County Commissioners began soliciting bids for construction of the courthouse in June 1910, and opened the bids on August 4. The lowest of the three bids came from the firm Stolte & Menciaer of Redfield, South Dakota, and they were awarded a \$52,420.00 construction contract. Work on the building apparently began late in 1910, and continued throughout most of the following year. County records reveal few difficulties during the construction process, although midway through the undertaking Commissioners decided that the building's ceilings were too low, and authorized an

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additional expense to raise those on the top floor. Smaller contracts for electrical fixtures, furniture, and other items were awarded by the county during the summer and fall of 1911, and the courthouse was declared ready for occupancy that November. The first commission meeting in the new building was held on December 12, 1911.

The building continues in service as Potter County's courthouse in 1995, over 80 years after its completion. Changes to the building during its existence have been relatively minor. The county's jail was moved into the courthouse basement at a relatively early date, after the small jail building just east of the courthouse was vacated. The county library was moved into the courthouse in 1924, and remained there until 1970. Finally, a modernization project during the early 1980s included the installation of new windows and lowered ceilings, and the sandblasting of the building's exterior.

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Continuation Sheet**

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**Bibliography:**

"Architects" vertical file, South Dakota State Historical Preservation Center, Vermillion.

Architectural drawings for the Potter County Courthouse, files of the Potter County Auditor's Office, Gettysburg, South Dakota.

Deed and mortgage records maintained at the Potter County Register of Deeds office, Gettysburg, South Dakota.

Gettysburg Diamond Jubilee Committee. *Through 75 Years -- 1883-1958.* Gettysburg, South Dakota: the Committee, 1958.

"Potter County Commissioners Record," manuscript minute books maintained at the Potter County Auditor's Office, Gettysburg, South Dakota.

Potter County Historical Association. *Potter County: People, Pictures and Progress, 1883-1983.* Pierre: State Publishing Co., 1983.

*Potter County News-Courier* [newspaper], Gettysburg, South Dakota, August 11, 1910; September 22, 1910.

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Continuation Sheet**

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**Verbal Boundary Description:**

All of Block thirty-two (32), Bryson's Addition to Gettysburg,  
South Dakota.

**Boundary Justification:**

The nominated property includes the courthouse building and the landscaped grounds immediately surrounding it. It coincides with the legal description of the tract of land historically set aside as the courthouse grounds. It does not include adjacent city streets, or the unrelated urban development surrounding the block.