

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Sherman County Courthouse
other names/site number SM04-135

2. Location

street & number 630 O Street N/A not for publication
city, town Loup City N/A vicinity
state Nebraska code NE county Sherman code 163 zip code 68853

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: County Courthouses of Nebraska
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. 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. See continuation sheet.

James A. Hansen November 17, 1989
Signature of certifying official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See cont. sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Government/courthouse

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Government/courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Beaux Arts

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation terra cotta

walls brick

roof other

other terra cotta

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)

Politics/government

Architecture

Period of Significance

1920-39

Significant Dates

1934

1920-21

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Henningson Engineering Co.

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.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Built in 1920-21, the Sherman County Courthouse is a good, largely unaltered example of the Property Type, County Citadel. Identifying features include: rectangular shape, centered entrance, costly materials, distinctive ornamentation, Beaux Arts stylistic influence, provision for fireproof storage, and impression of a government building representing modernity, simplicity, strength, and prosperity. In addition, the courthouse has other County Citadel characteristics: flat roof and raised basement. The use of terra cotta is distinctive and unusual.

The Sherman County Courthouse is rectangular and consists of two stories set upon a raised basement. The rather low raised basement serves as an effective base for the design above. Pilasters separate two bays on either side of the main entrance, and east and west facades are five bays long.

White terra cotta trim contrasts well with red and tan brick of the wall surface. Terra cotta is used for simple decorative courses, a decorated water table, pilasters between bays and at the corners, second story continuous sills, and the prominent centered entry pavilion. The material is also used for coping and for panels spaced regularly along the parapet. And finely decorated round-arched window surrounds on all sides of the first floor are decorated with foliated designs, urns, and delicate Adamesque swags, all also in terra cotta. Narrow rectangular windows are recessed and paired above these round-arched windows.

Fluted paired columns and a cornice having mutules and parapet above further call attention to the pavilion on the principal or south facade. A large round-arched window is set above the doorway and has multiple panes, an ornate foliated terra cotta surround, and small consoles below the sill. The door surround is squared and features a flat pediment, foliated course, and fluted pilasters. Unusually small original metal light fixtures with single globes rest on terra cotta pedestals on either side of the entry steps. Over the main entrance are portions of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address: "that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

The 60x74' building exhibits features of the Beaux Arts style interpreted in a somewhat simplified manner. These elements include colossal columns, considerable classical detail, pronounced cornice, enriched surfaces, projecting pavilion, and a certain grandiose quality.

The south facade is the primary entrance, and there are secondary entries

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

on the west and north sides as well. The rear or north facade continues the materials and treatment of the other sides.

From a small landing at the main entrance there are steps down to the ground floor and up to a small corridor on the first floor. The secondary entrances open onto the ground floor. County offices are arranged off the first floor corridor space. Vault placement and size is variable. The district courtroom runs along the north facade on the second floor.

A variety of materials adorn the interior: white veined marble for wainscoting and banisters, light grey marble steps, hexagonal floor tile in black and white, and simple moulded plaster pilasters in the halls. The courtroom has attractive dark woodwork (fluted pilasters, wainscoting, heavy beams, a cornice), windows with amber-colored glass squares, and bell-shaped wall lights at the judge's bench.

There have been few interior alterations: three fluorescent lights and four ceiling fans in the courtroom, new lights in halls. Exterior changes include new double entry doors, panels covering some basement level windows, and replacement windows (1975). A ramp was added in 1986 to the west entrance to provide access for the handicapped. An historic photograph shows similar single globes for the main entry lights, but the present globes are modern replacements.

The courthouse square is just off the main commercial area of Loup City, and commercial or public uses (library, hospital) surround the site. The courthouse is centered on a full city square, and there are no objects on it other than a simple flagpole (not counted in this nomination). Concrete walkways lead to the building from all four corners of the lot, circle the building, and also lead directly to the north and south entrances. A number of deciduous and evergreen trees dot the site, which is very well maintained.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

The Sherman County Courthouse is architecturally significant (Criterion C) and also historically significant (Criterion A) for its association with politics and local government. The property has historic significance as the focal point for the administration of local government and institutions in Sherman County. In addition, it was the scene of a riot and related trial in 1934 that marked the end of the Farm Holiday Movement in Nebraska.

The property is a good example of public architecture in the community and contains examples of design features and facilities distinctive to its design and use as a courthouse. As a good example of the County Citadel, 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 Beaux Arts stylistic influence. Elements of the design combine effectively to convey the impression of a government building representing modernity, simplicity, strength, and prosperity, also features of the County Citadel.

The Period of Significance is 1920, when construction began, to 1939, when the "fifty year rule" takes effect. Significant Dates are 1934, when the riot and trial occurred, and 1920-21, when the building was constructed. The Sherman 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. (See Sheriff subsection in Structure of County Government section for information on the 1934 Flag Day riot and trial.)

Sherman County is located in central Nebraska, and the Loup River runs through the county. It was organized in 1873 during a period of pronounced settlement in the state. Loup City was selected as county seat and a courthouse was built the following year. However, it burned down the day it was completed.

As early as 1914 there was interest in replacing the aging brick courthouse rebuilt in 1878, and voters presented petitions on two occasions calling for a bond issue election. However, for some reason the supervisors did not call such an election. Residents then petitioned for an election on whether to levy a special tax to fund construction, and that measure passed late in 1919.

In February 1920 the county board met with a number of architects; the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

following month they selected Henningson Engineering Company of Omaha to be the courthouse architect. This is apparently the only example of an engineering firm in Nebraska designing a courthouse. The firm billed itself as architects and engineers, and likely had architects on staff. No other information is known about the company.

John Ohlsen & Sons of Loup City won the general contractor award. John A. Anderson Company was named plumbing and heating contractor, and Clifford Hale did the electrical work. Construction began the summer of 1920, also the year the Masons laid the cornerstone. During the construction phase, the old courthouse was removed from the center of the courthouse square, and county offices were scattered in commercial buildings in the county seat. The new courthouse was completed the end of September 1921, and formal dedication ceremonies were held October 8, 1921.

The courthouse square was the scene of the Flag Day Riot on June 14, 1934. "Mother" Ella Reeve Bloor (a nationally known figure) and other American Communists or activists were arrested during a rally promoting the Farm Holiday Movement, a response to the crippled agricultural conditions of the 1930s in America. The riot marked the end of the Farm Holiday Movement in Nebraska and reveals the general atmosphere, organizing activities, and specific events of an important period in the nation. The arrests, trial, and subsequent appeals were reported nationally. Bloor discussed the matter in her autobiography, We Are Many, and she is included in books about the American labor and Communist movements.

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

Acreeage of property 2 acres

UTM References

A	<u>14</u>	<u>5102840</u>	<u>415161911010</u>	B	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	D	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	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	November 8, 1989
street & number	3140 Easton Boulevard	telephone	(515) 266-4964
city or town	Des Moines	state	Iowa zip code 50317

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Long, Barbara Beving. "County Courthouses of Nebraska." Multiple Property Submission. 1989.
Loup City, Nebraska. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. 1900, 1922.
Nebraska State Historical Society. Photo Collection. #M281-1061.
Sherman County. Supervisors' Records. Book 6.
Tracings. Sherman County Courthouse. Henningson Engineering Co.
Historic photographs. Sherman County Historical Society.
"Sherman County." History of the State of Nebraska. A.T. Andreas, 1882.
Owens, Meroe J. History of Sherman County. 1952.
Rowley, William D. "The Loup City Riot of 1934: Main Street vs. the 'Far-out' Left." Nebraska History 47 (September 1966): 295-328.
"The Reddest County in Nebraska." Grand Island Daily Independent. April 8, 1978.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property, Sherman County Courthouse, occupies Block 4 of the Original Town of Loup City and is roughly 300x300' in size.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire city block that has historically been associated with the property.



View looking northwest showing south & east facades. Photo by BJB Long, Four Mile Research, 1989 (NSHS 8904/7:22)