

ADDED July 24, 1973

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	ILLINOIS	
COUNTY:	ALEXANDER	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE	

24th Congressional District - Congressman: Kenneth Gray

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON:

OLD CUSTOM HOUSE

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

WASHINGTON AND FIFTEENTH STREET

CITY OR TOWN:

CAIRO

STATE

ILLINOIS

CODE

17

COUNTY:

ALEXANDER

CODE

003

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	_____	_____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:

CITY OF CAIRO

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

Illinois

CODE

17

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

RECORDERS OFFICE, ALEXANDER COUNTY COURTHOUSE

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

Illinois

CODE

17

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

DATE OF SURVEY:

Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

Washington

STATE:

D. C.

CODE

11

STATE: Illinois

COUNTY: Alexander

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE
DESCRIPTION

THE OLD CUSTOM HOUSE AT CAIRO ORIGINALLY HOUSED POSTAL FACILITIES, GOVERNMENT OFFICES, AND COURT. THESE FUNCTIONS SEEM TO HAVE BEEN SEGREGATED ON EACH OF ITS THREE FLOORS FROM BOTTOM TO TOP IN THE ORDER GIVEN. THE ORIGINAL USE OF THE BASEMENT IS NOT KNOWN.

ON THE FIRST TWO FLOORS A CENTRAL HALL FOLLOWS THE LONGITUDINAL AXIS. PRESUMABLY THE ORIGINAL MAIN ENTRANCE WAS ON THE SOUTHEAST SIDE. THE THREE DOORS ON THAT FRONT, APPROACHED BY A WIDE FLIGHT OF STONE STEPS, ARE NOW SEALED BUT MUST ORIGINALLY HAVE OPENED INTO A LARGE VESTIBULE THAT INTERSECTED THE LONGITUDINAL HALL.

IN THE NORTH CORNER OF THE BUILDING THERE IS A STAIRCASE THAT RISES THROUGH ALL THREE FLOORS IN A LARGE OPEN WELL. ALSO IN THE WELL IS AN ELEVATOR THAT IS ENCLOSED ONLY BY A WIRE CAGE ON THREE SIDES. ITS DECORATIVE DETAILS AND POSITION INDICATE THAT IT WAS INSTALLED AT THE TIME OF CONSTRUCTION, I.E. 1869-72.

THE HALL ON THE SECOND FLOOR IS DOUBLE LOADED WITH SPACIOUS OFFICES HAVING HIGH CEILINGS. AT ITS SOUTH END IS ANOTHER STAIRCASE LEADING TO THE COURTROOM FLOOR.

THE MONUMENTAL COURTROOM OCCUPIES THE CENTER OF THE TOP FLOOR. ITS SPACIOUS DIMENSIONS ARE EXPRESSED ON THE EXTERIOR BY THE HEIGHT GIVEN THE CENTRAL PART OF THE PRIMARY ELEVATION. IT IS SUMPTUOUSLY FITTED UP WITH A MARBLE FIREPLACE, BRASS CHANDELIERS, AND WALNUT RAILINGS AND BENCH. THE WALLS ARE SUBDIVIDED BY HANDSOME CORINTHIAN PILASTERS THAT SUPPORT THE VAULTS OF THE CEILING. ALSO ON THE THIRD FLOOR ARE A NUMBER OF ROOMS OF VARIOUS SIZES ORIGINALLY USED FOR JUDICIAL PURPOSES.

THE BUILDING IS BUILT OF STONE (PROBABLY ON A BRICK CORE) AND IS CAST IN A MONUMENTAL PALAZZO OR COMMERCIAL ITALIANATE STYLE AS ITS ROUND-HEADED WINDOWS AND BRACKETED CORNICE TESTIFY. THE HIGHLY UNUSUAL HALF-STORY PROJECTING ABOVE THE MAIN CORNICE ON THE NORTHWEST AND SOUTHEAST SIDES IS THE RESULT, AS NOTED, OF HAVING PLACED THE COURTROOM THERE.

HISTORY

BY 1869 THE CITY OF CAIRO, AT THE CONFLUENCE ON THE OHIO AND MISSISSIPPI RIVERS, HAD ASSUMED SO IMPORTANT A ROLE IN THE COMMERCE OF THE MID-MISSISSIPPI VALLEY THAT IT WAS SELECTED AS THE SITE OF THIS LARGE FEDERAL BUILDING TO HOUSE A POST OFFICE, CUSTOMS HOUSE AND COURT. ITS DESIGNER WAS ALFRED U. MULLET (1834-90), U.S. SUPERVISING ARCHITECT BETWEEN 1865 AND 1880. HE HAD COME TO AMERICA WITH HIS PARENTS IN 1845 AND LATER TRAINED AS AN ARCHITECT IN OHIO AND EUROPE. HE WAS ASSOCIATED WITH THE WELL-KNOWN HOTEL ARCHITECT, ISAIAH ROGERS AT CINCINNATI, UNTIL 1865 WHEN GRANT APPOINTED HIM TO THE ARCHITECTURAL POST.

THE BUILDING WAS CONSTRUCTED BETWEEN 1869 AND 1872 AT A COST OF \$184,000. ACCORDING TO LANSDEN'S HISTORY OF CAIRO, WHEN MULLET VISITED THE CITY TO INSPECT THE CONSTRUCTION HE WAS SHOCKED TO FIND THAT THE BUILDING WAS BEING BUILT ACCORDING TO LOCAL TRADITION FOR BUILDINGS OF A PERMANENT CHARACTER WITH ITS FIRST FLOOR AT THE HEIGHT OF THE LEVEES SURROUNDING THE CITY. HIS RESPONSE WAS TO ORDER AS MANY COURSES OF STONE REMOVED AS WAS NECESSARY TO BRING THE FIRST FLOOR DOWN TO PRESENT GRADE.

WHEN A NEW POST OFFICE WAS BUILT IN 1942 THE BUILDING WAS GIVEN TO THE CITY AND NOW SERVES AS POLICE HEADQUARTERS.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

6. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1869-72

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

AS ONE OF THE VERY FEW REMAINING FEDERAL CUSTOM HOUSES, THE OLD CAIRO CUSTOM HOUSE IS A PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT BUILDING. ITS ARCHITECT, ALFRED B. MULLET, WAS ONE OF THE BEST-KNOWN GOVERNMENT ARCHITECTS IN THE 19TH CENTURY.

ITS ITALIANATE STYLE IS ALSO RARE AMONG GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, THE SECOND EMPIRE BEING THE STYLE MOST OFTEN ENCOUNTERED. THE BUILDING IS AN EXCELLENT DESIGN BOTH AS REGARDS ITS ARTISTIC EFFECTS AND ITS FUNCTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS. THE COMPOSITION AND PROPORTIONS ARE WELL HANDLED, AND THE INCORPORATION OF THE LOFTY COURTROOM ON THE TOP FLOOR IS ESPECIALLY WELL-DONE. THE PLAN HAS CLARITY AND LOGIC IN ITS ARRANGEMENT. THAT A PASSENGER ELEVATOR WAS APPARENTLY PART OF THE ORIGINAL DESIGN MAKES THE CUSTOM HOUSE A VERY EARLY EXAMPLE OF THE ELEVATOR BUILDING.

THE BUILDING IS ONE OF THE LARGEST MONUMENTAL GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS DATING FROM THE NINETEENTH CENTURY IN THE ENTIRE MID-MISSISSIPPI VALLEY. AS SUCH, IT IS AN IMPORTANT LINK WITH THE HISTORY AND FORMER PROSPERITY AND GRANDEUR OF THAT ERA OF RIVER COMMERCE.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

LANSDEN, A HISTORY OF THE CITY OF CAIRO, 1910, p. 234.

WODEHOUSE, "ALFRED MULLET", S.A.H. JOURNAL XXXI (MAR. 1972), 22-37.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES			
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE			
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	0	'	"	0	'	"
NE	0	'	"	0	'	"
SE	0	'	"	0	'	"
SW	0	'	"	0	'	"

**O
R**

LATITUDE			LONGITUDE		
Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
37°	00'	11"	89°	10'	15"

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **1 acre**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

PAUL E. SPRAGUE, DIRECTOR

ORGANIZATION

ILLINOIS HISTORIC STRUCTURES SURVEY

DATE

MAY 29, 1973

STREET AND NUMBER:

1800 SOUTH PRAIRIE AVENUE

CITY OR TOWN:

CHICAGO

STATE

ILLINOIS

CODE

17

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

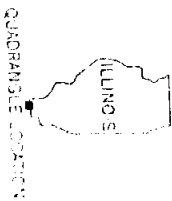
ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

MAP OF QUADRANGLE
 COLOMADO 80225, OR 145 - WYTON, D. C. 20242.
 URBANA, ILLINOIS 61511.
 LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY 40502.
 FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY 40601.
 ROLLA, MISSOURI 65401.
 AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

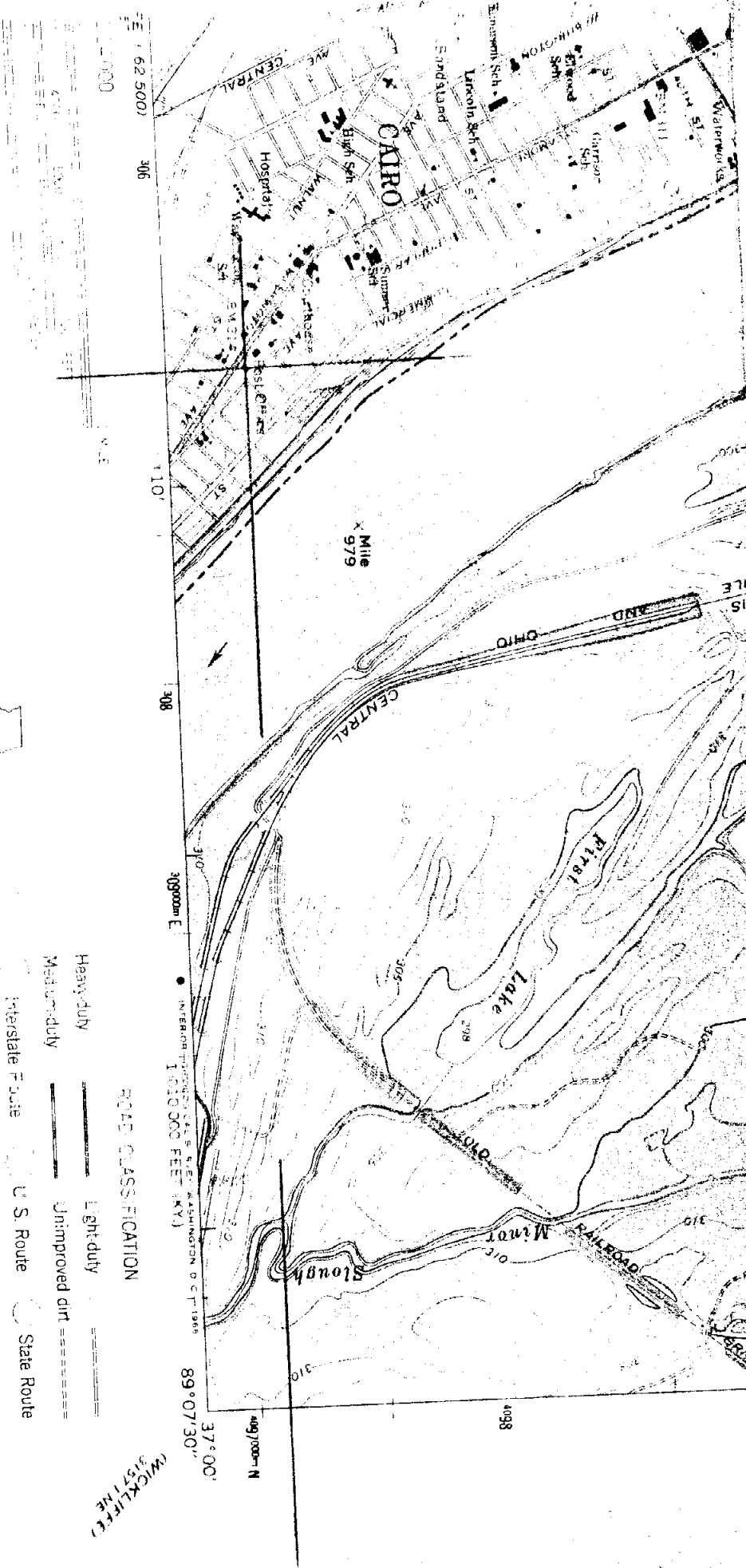


CAIRO, ILL. - KY. - MO.

SW 1/4 CAIRO 15' QUADRANGLE
 T. 3700 - W. 8907.5, 7.5

1967

AMS 3:58 II SW - SERIES V863



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
 Heavy duty —————
 Medium duty —————
 Light duty - - - - -
 Unimproved dirt =====
 Interstate Route ————
 U. S. Route ————
 State Route ————

(WICKLIFFE)
3/15/1967

AL-H-12

100533

- Archaeology
- Architecture
- History

1. Name of Site: Customs House; Police Headquarters

Common:

NATIONAL REGISTER

NR DISTRICT

Historic: Built when Cairo had a surveyor of the port and produce came directly to Cairo where customs was paid on it. Also served as Post office and for Federal Court.

2. Location of site:

Street and Number

Township

Section

1400 Washington Ave.

17S

26

City or Town

Zip Code

Range

* Section

Cairo

62914

1 West

County:

Alexander

Illinois

3. Classification

Category: (check one)

Integrity: (check one)

- District
- Building
- Site
- Structure

- Altered
- Unaltered

Position: (check one)

- Moved
- Original Site

4. Ownership

Status:

- Public
- Private

- Occupied
- Unoccupied
- Preservation work in progress

Access to the public:

- Yes
- Restricted
- Unrestricted
- No

Present Use: (check one or more)

- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Educational
- Entertainment
- Government
- Industrial
- Military
- Museum
- Park
- Private Residence
- Religious
- Scientific
- Transportation
- Other (specify)

5. Owner of property:

Owner's name

Phone Number

City of Cairo
Street and Number

618 734 4127

City or Town

Cairo

State

Illinois

County

Alexander

Zip Code

62914

MAJOR THEMES - ARCHITECTURE, GOVERNMENT
SUB THEMES - FEDERAL

6. Descriptions

Conditions:

- Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated Ruins Eroded

Is there a program of preservation under way? Yes No

If yes, give a brief description on separate attached sheet.

Has been sandblasted and cleaned and painted throughout.

7. Historical themes: (check one or more of the following)

- Archaeological site (pre-Columbian)
 Archaeological site (post-Columbian to 1673)
 French influence (1673-1780)
 Illinois frontier (1780-1818)
 Illinois early (1818-1850)
 Illinois Middle (1850-1900)
 Illinois late (1900-present)
 Famous people (give names and dates)

8. Specific date of site:

Areas of significance: (check one or more)

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal (pre-historic) | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal (historic) | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) |

Brief statement of significance: (Include all names and dates)

Attach sheet.

8. Form prepared by:

Name and Title: Guyla Wallis Moreland pr director Date: June 25, '71

Organization: Cairo Chamber of Commerce

Street and Number: 228-8th

City or Town: Cairo County: Alexander Zip Code: 62914

Phone Number: 618 734 2737

During the course of the Survey we often find it necessary to search for references for a particular site.

When filling out the survey form, please list according to the following example any published references to the site for which the form is being completed.

If a bibliography can be compiled, it will greatly reduce the survey's task.

Bibliography Form.

Robertson, Robert B., Of Whales and Men, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1954.

List Bibliography on sheet and attach hereto.

Significance

Begun in 1869 completed in 1872. Designed by A.B. Mullett, (1834-'90) supervising architect of the U.S. Treasury. An example of the Romanesque and Renaissance combined features. Built of hewn stone. First floor was Post Office; second floor held government offices; third floor U.S. district Courtroom. Top, U.S. Weather Bureau Cairo office. The Cairo Bulletin said : "The courtroom is said to be the neatest in the United States, such being the expressed opinion of Architect Mullett on his last visit of inspection to the custom house, when he surveyed with much satisfaction the entire building." The courtroom, worthy of restoration of a perfectly designed room, has arched ceiling, columned walls, and once a triple tier chandelier. Exterior has been recently sandblasted clean and presents an atmosphere of timeless grandeur.

Bibliography

Koeper, Frederick, Illinois Architecture From Territorial Times to the Present, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London. In connection with Illinois Sesquicentennial, 1968.

Many copies of the Cairo Daily Bulletin, 1869-1872. On microfilm at Cairo Public Library and Springfield State Library.

Note: Feb. 18, 1859, legislature ceded to U.S. jurisdiction, Block 39 in Cairo for construction of a U.S. Court, post office and Custom House.

Apr 28, 1866, Cairo Property Trustees conveyed Block 39 to U.S. Govt. which appropriated in 1868 and 1871, total \$184,000 to erect.

Vacated by U.S. Govt in 1940 when new P.O. was built and was ceded to City in exchange for property on which new building stands.



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

