

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

1-10-90

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

89002228

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 Greeley County Courthouse
other names/site number GY02-2

2. Location

street & number Kildare St, Block 28 N/A not for publication
city, town Greeley N/A vicinity
state Nebraska code NE county Greeley code 077 zip code 68842

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>2</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>1</u> objects
		<u>2</u>	<u>1</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. Harrison 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) Classical Revival Materials (enter categories from instructions) foundation stone
walls brick
roof other
other stone

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 1913-39 Significant Dates N/A
1913-14

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Significant Person N/A Architect/Builder Berlinghof, George A. (Berlinghof and Davis)

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 1913-14, the Greeley County Courthouse is an excellent, largely unaltered example of the Property Type, County Citadel. Identifying features include: rectangular shape, centered entrance, costly materials, distinctive ornamentation, Classical Revival 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, raised basement, and designed by an architect. The courthouse is a good example of the work of Nebraska architect George A. Berlinghof (here as Berlinghof & Davis), representing the evolution of his designs. The courthouse is a less elaborate version of the Howard County Courthouse built in 1912-15 in the next county south of Greeley.

The Greeley County Courthouse is rectangular and consists of three stories set upon a raised basement. Four broad stone steps provide access to the principal entrance, which is recessed and has original wood double doors with large panes. At the principal or west entrance is a vestibule with steps down to the ground level and 18 steep steps up to the first floor. On the other three sides entrances open directly into the ground floor. The third or top floor was designed to house the jail, while the two-story district courtroom on the second floor extends into third floor space.

Limestone of a golden hue is used effectively for the foundation and also trim, especially at the west entrance and along the parapet. The stonework contrasts effectively with greyish tan face brick and is used for the heavy moulded water table, continuous sill for first story windows, distinctive door surround, moulded bases and capitals of pilasters, the heavy cornice, and the parapet.

All four facades have slightly recessed sections of windows that are located between brick corner bays. Since the west facade is the primary entrance, it has somewhat more elaborate detail: an oversized stone shield with large swags, papyrus bundles, and scrolls centered on the stepped parapet; the name of the building across the entablature (with discs between each word); and at the entrance an attractive flat decorated lintel with consoles. This lintel has a shield with "G" on it and a row of upright ears of corn on either side and is joined effectively with the water table.

Both the east and west facades have simple paired brick pilasters while four pilasters are arranged singly on the north and south. Between the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

pilasters are slightly recessed windows grouped in three's on the east and west sides and paired on the other sides. Decoration is limited at the corners of the building and generally continues cornice and parapet treatment as well as that of the foundation and water table.

The 70x82' courthouse exhibits features of the Classical Revival style, including symmetrical arrangement, monumental proportions, a parapet, large pilasters, smooth surfaces, and attic story.

The ground floor includes a ladies restroom and along the east side a large assembly room. On the first floor county offices are arranged off a short corridor. Vaults are located next to the slightly projecting corner bays of the building. Although the vaults have windows, heavy inner steel shutters can be closed to provide a fireproof and secure space. The district courtroom is centered on the east side of the second story.

The interior, which is of rather simple but largely unaltered design, retains original features, such as terrazzo flooring in hallways and marble counters. Perhaps the most prominent feature is the white marble that is used for wainscoting, stairs, and finely curving banisters. The largely unaltered district courtroom is also simply decorated and features original high ceilings, broad plaster beams, pairs of unadorned pilasters between long narrow windows, white marble mopboard, grey painted concrete floor, and simple wood furnishings. The original light fixtures consist of three long globes with three shorter ones around them and all are suspended by a long metal chain.

Interior changes include some dropped ceilings with flush fluorescent fixtures and modern wood paneling applied to counters in offices. Exterior alterations are also few: transoms on original windows have been painted white, two windows on the north facade have been enclosed, and a small wood gabled entry has been added to the south facade (easily removable).

The Greeley County Courthouse enjoys a full courthouse square off the commercial area of Greeley. Railroad tracks are at the other end of the main commercial street, an example of Hudson's "T-town" arrangement and evidence of the community's beginnings as a railroad stop. On the courthouse block a gravel parking lot has entrances from the northeast and southeast corners and is located at the back or east side of the building. A broad concrete walk leads directly to the west entrance, and walkways also lead from the northwest and southwest corners of the site, as well as around the building on three sides.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

One outbuilding (small, hipped roofed, concrete block and clapboard, and one-story) was once the city pumphouse but is now used for storage. It is located in the southeast corner of the site, near where the city water tower once stood. A distinctive memorial to Viet Nam veterans is located at the northeast corner of the courthouse. One of the better local interpretations of the Washington, D.C. Viet Nam monument, the Howard County memorial is quite moving. An earthen mound shelters a small V-shaped monument (brick with concrete coping) and there are two stone plaques on it. A small bench with metal slats is part of the design, placed there for contemplation. Because of its recent construction date, the memorial is a noncontributing object for this nomination. The old, unaltered pumphouse is a contributing building for it dates from around the time of courthouse construction, is located within the obvious historic boundaries of the nominated property, and it adds to the historic architectural qualities of the site.

The Greeley County Courthouse shares some similarities with the architect's County Capitol designs, reflecting his apparent nostalgia for this form. The courthouse has four entrances, despite the wasted space. The slightly projecting corner bays are reminiscent of those with towers on a County Capitol, and opposite facades are nearly the same. As such, the courthouse in Greeley is a smaller and more modest interpretation of the Howard County Courthouse, also a Berlinghof & Davis design.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

The Greeley County Courthouse is architecturally significant (Criterion C) and also historically significant (Criterion A) for its association with politics and local government. The property derives its historic significance as the focal point for the administration of local government and institutions in Greeley County. It is a good example of public architecture in the community and contains good examples of design features and facilities distinctive to its design and use as a courthouse. In addition, the courthouse is a good example of the work of an important Nebraska architect, George A. Berlinghof (here as Berlinghof & Davis), representing the evolution of his designs.

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 Classical Revival 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 1913, when construction began, to 1939, when the "fifty year rule" takes effect. The Greeley 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.

Greeley County is located in central Nebraska. The area is well watered by a series of streams and enjoys reasonably fertile growing conditions. Early settlement dated from 1871 and was initially concentrated in the southwest corner of the present county, along the North Loup River. Among the early arrivals was a colony of Seventh-Day Baptists from Wisconsin, and an Irish settlement also arrived in the 1870s, platted towns, and bought a reported 25,000 acres of land.

In the fall of 1872 area residents took steps to organize a county, and the governor proclaimed Greeley County as duly established the same year. Two locations vied for the county seat designation in an election held February 11, 1873. Lamartine was the winner. In November 1874 Scotia residents succeeded in calling another county seat election, which they won.

The matter was not ended, however. In 1878 and again in 1881 O'Connor, a community of the Irish settlement located near the center of the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

county, petitioned for yet another vote on the county seat location. However, O'Connor did not receive enough votes to wrest the county seat from Scotia, despite its more accessible location in the county. To counter O'Connor's efforts to become county seat, Scotia residents sponsored construction of a \$4,000 courthouse there in 1885. In addition, the only railroad in the county passed near Scotia, which had a spur line to it. Prospects seemed good for Scotia retaining the county seat designation.

The present county seat, Greeley, was not established until 1886, when the Burlington Railroad was built through the county. It enjoyed a spot in the center of the county and also railroad connections, both important factors in becoming a county seat. The railroad had bypassed O'Connor in favor of its own rail stop, Greeley.

A special election held January 17, 1888 was nullified when both sides engaged in fraudulent vote-counting. Finally, in 1890, Greeley was successful in its quest for the county seat. The real estate arm of the railroad, Lincoln Land Company, donated a courthouse block. Greeley boosters raised \$5,000 for building a brick courthouse. On January 13, 1891, the county board held its first meeting in Greeley (also known as Greeley Center).

As early as 1907, the two-story brick courthouse in Greeley was inadequate for county needs, forcing them to rent space. In August 1910 a grand jury investigated the condition of the courthouse and condemned it, likely a tactic of county government to force the issue. The grand jury said the courthouse and jail lacked vault room, that county records were not properly cared for, and furthermore the jail was unsanitary. The county board had a duty to provide suitable quarters for county government and could point to the grand jury findings as justification for building a new courthouse.

The board planned to hold an election in November 1910 to vote on issuing \$65,000 in bonds to underwrite courthouse construction. It is unclear, and county records are silent, on whether that election was held, and it was not until July 2, 1912, that a \$65,000 bond issue passed, by just one vote.

Several months later, in December 1912, the board met with the architect, Berlinghof & Davis. County records make no mention of how the firm was selected, but it seems clear that county officials were familiar with the Howard County Courthouse which is so markedly similar to the Greeley County Courthouse.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

George A. Berlinghof was a German immigrant who initially settled in Beatrice, Nebraska. In 1905 he moved to Lincoln where his expertise and connections resulted in his selection as architect for the State of Nebraska in 1907. Berlinghof is known to have designed courthouses in four other states as well as for seven other Nebraska counties.¹

On February 4, 1913, Ohlsen & Son was named general contractor and William Kelly & Company the plumbing and heating contractor. Pre-construction activity continued in the early spring of 1913. By April 28, 1913 the old courthouse had been moved from its centered site to one on the north end of the courthouse square. (Nearby Howard County had used the same technique for carrying on county government during its courthouse construction in 1912.)

Unlike the Howard County experience, construction seems to have proceeded rapidly. The cornerstone was laid July 10, 1913. By October 1913, the board was selecting bids for wood furniture (from Wollaeger Manufacturing) and for steel vault furniture (from Art Metal Construction Company), an indication the building was all but complete. However, in December of that year a misunderstanding arose over the amount of marble that would be used, and this delayed completion. The architect and the contractor disagreed, but the matter was eventually resolved.²

By May 1914 the courthouse was complete, and the board advertised for bids on the janitorship of the courthouse. On May 26 and June 2, the county moved in, and by the end of the month began planning formal dedication ceremonies.

¹In chronological order the counties are Nemaha, Thayer, Seward, Kearney, Howard, Greeley, Lincoln, and Franklin. The Richardsonian Romanesque Thayer County Courthouse has been altered and does not appear to be eligible for the National Register, unlike the others.

²Berlinghof also had problems with contractors for the Seward and Howard County Courthouses; both resulted in lawsuits and costly delays.

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:

- [x] State historic preservation office
- [] Other state agency
- [] Federal agency
- [] Local government
- [] University
- [] Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 2 acres

UTM References

A	<u>1 4</u>	<u>15 13 19 12 12 10</u>	<u>14 15 19 19 15 10 10</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.
- Nebraska State Historical Society. Photo Collection. #M281-987.
- Greeley County. Commissioners' Records. Books 1 and 2.
- Works Progress Administration. Survey of County Courthouse Records. 1936. NeSHS Archives. Greeley County.
- Tracings. Greeley County Courthouse. Berlinghof & Davis. Clerk's office. Cornerstone. Greeley County Courthouse.
- McDermott, Edith Swain. The Pioneer History of Greeley County, Nebraska. [by 1939]; reprint ed., Greeley: Greeley Printing Co., 1977.
- A.T. Andreas. History of the State of Nebraska. Chicago: Western Historical Co., 1882. "Greeley County."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 1

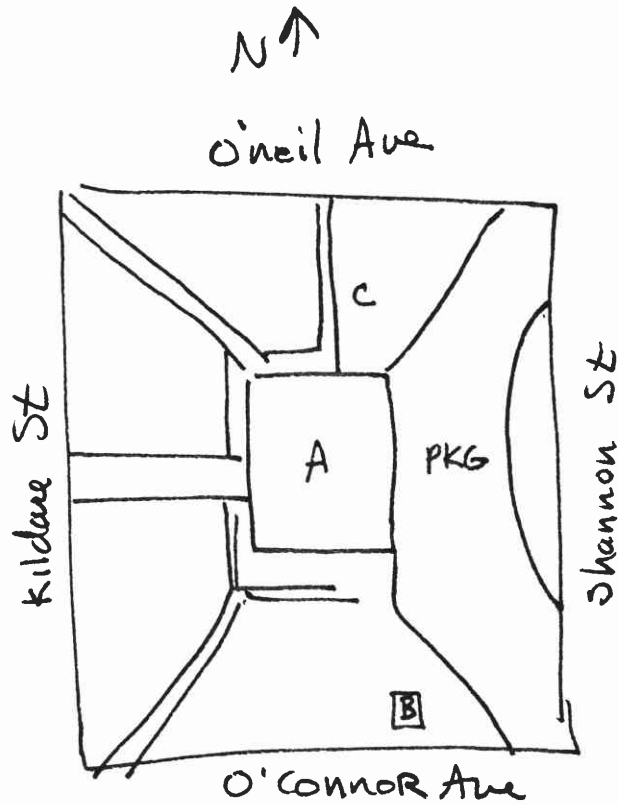
Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property, Greeley County Courthouse, occupies Block 28 of the Original Town of Greeley and is roughly 300x300' in size.

Boundary Justification

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

GREELEY COUNTY
COURTHOUSE (6Y02-2)
Greeley, NE



Contributing Bldgs

- A - Courthouse
(Photos 1 + 2)
- B - Pump House
(Photo 4)

Noncontributing Object

- C - Veterans Memorial



View looking NE -- Photo by John Kay, 1991 (NSHS 9112/13:37)

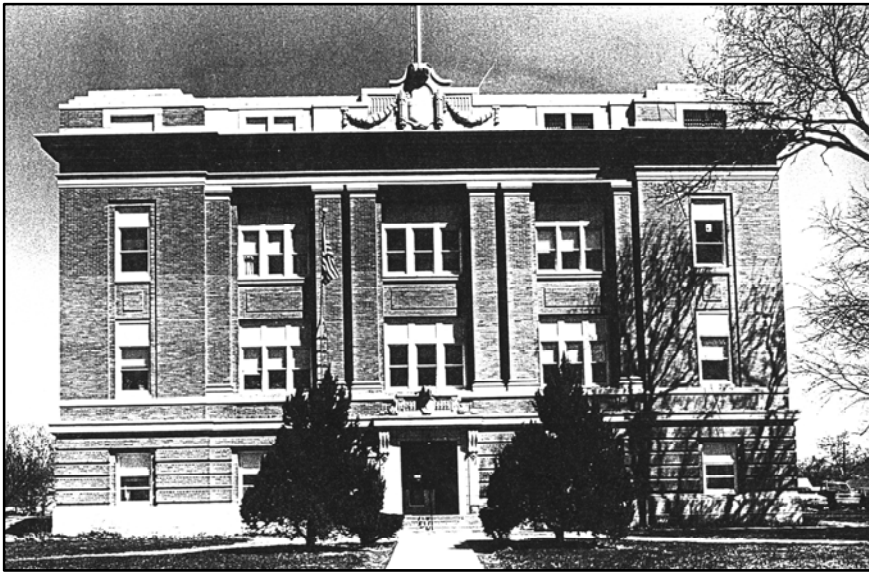


Photo 1 of 4 – looking E showing W façade
Photo by BJB Long, Four Mile Research (NSHS 8904/11:24)

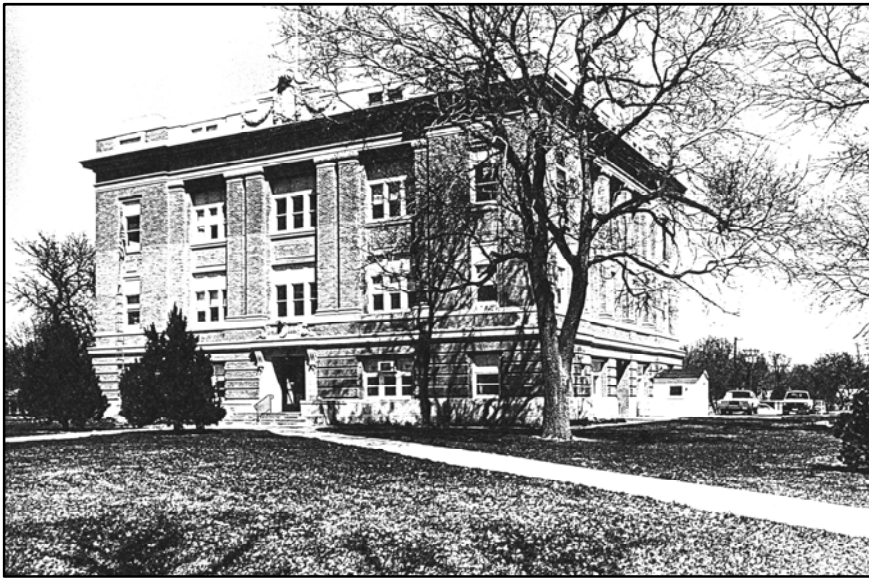


Photo 2 of 4 – looking NE showing S & W facades
Photo by BJB Long, Four Mile Research (NSHS 8904/11:22)

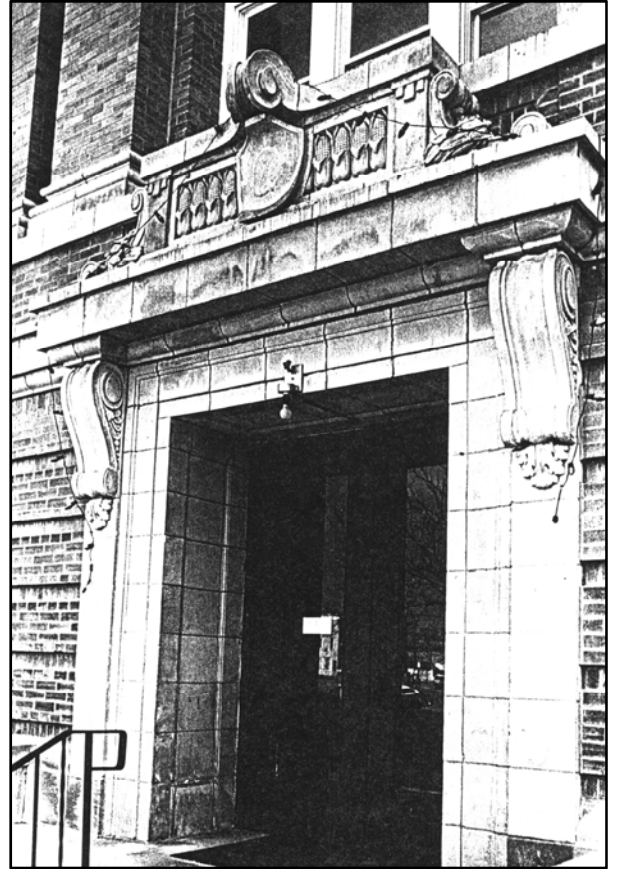


Photo 3 of 4 – looking E at W façade entrance
Photo by BJB Long, Four Mile Research (NSHS 8904/11:14)

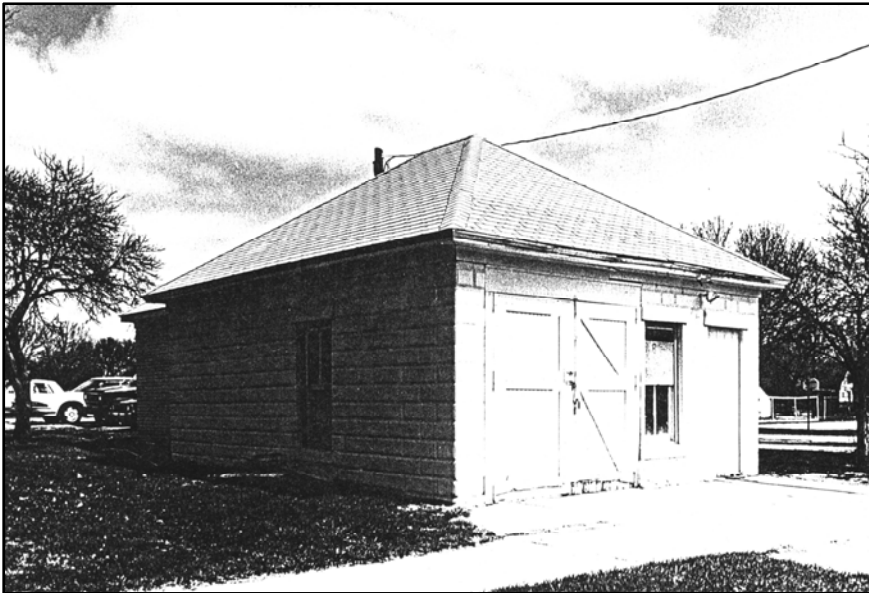


Photo 4 of 4 – looking NE showing S & W sides of former pumphouse
Photo by BJB Long, Four Mile Research (NSHS 8904/11:9)