

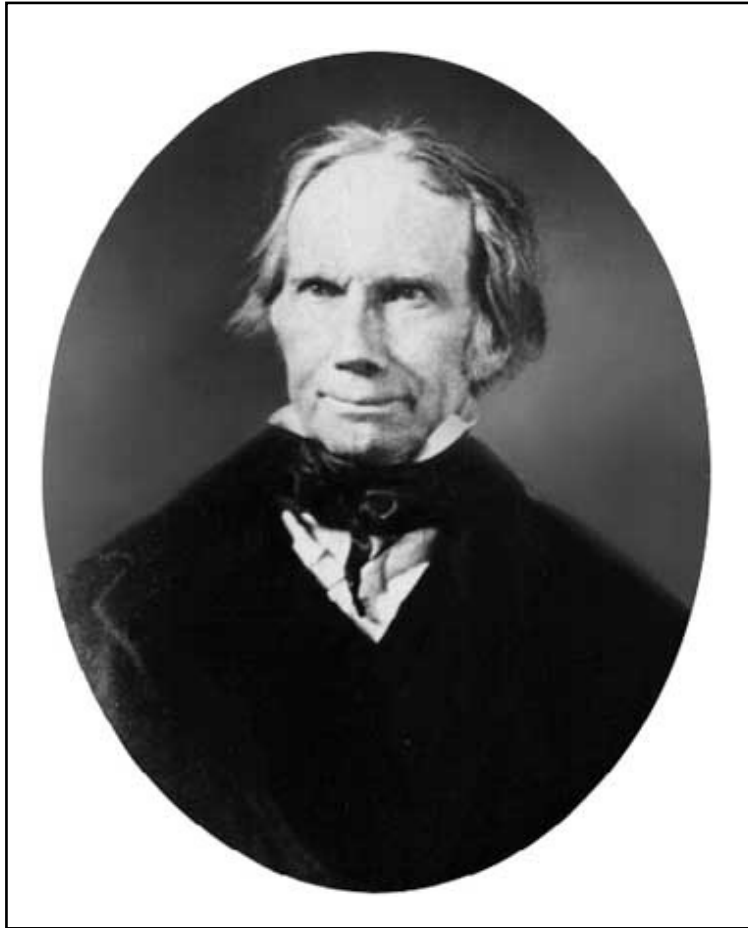
THE CLAY COUNTY COURTHOUSE



CLAY COUNTY COURTHOUSE – 1913

Written in 2012
by Judge Arthur Rusch
for the
Clay County Courthouse Centennial

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Henry Clay
"The Great Compromiser"
Congressman, Senator, Secretary of State,
three times candidate for President,
Clay County was named after him

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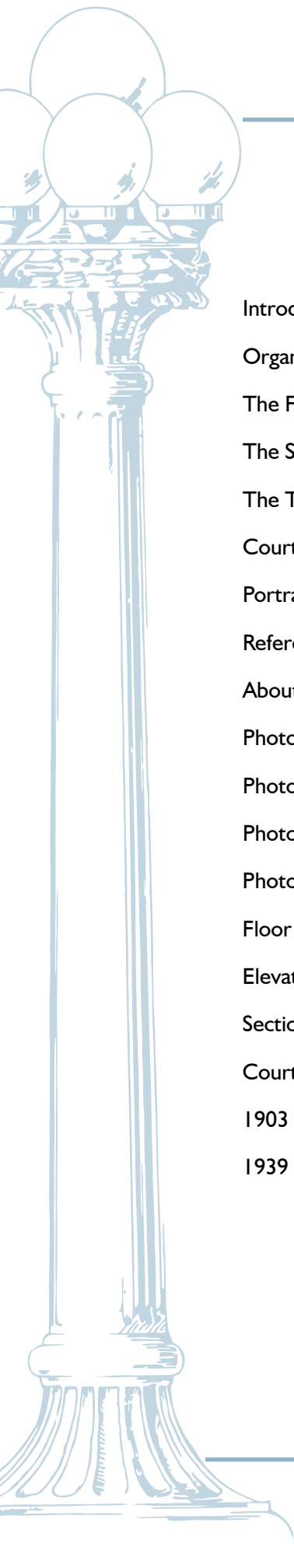
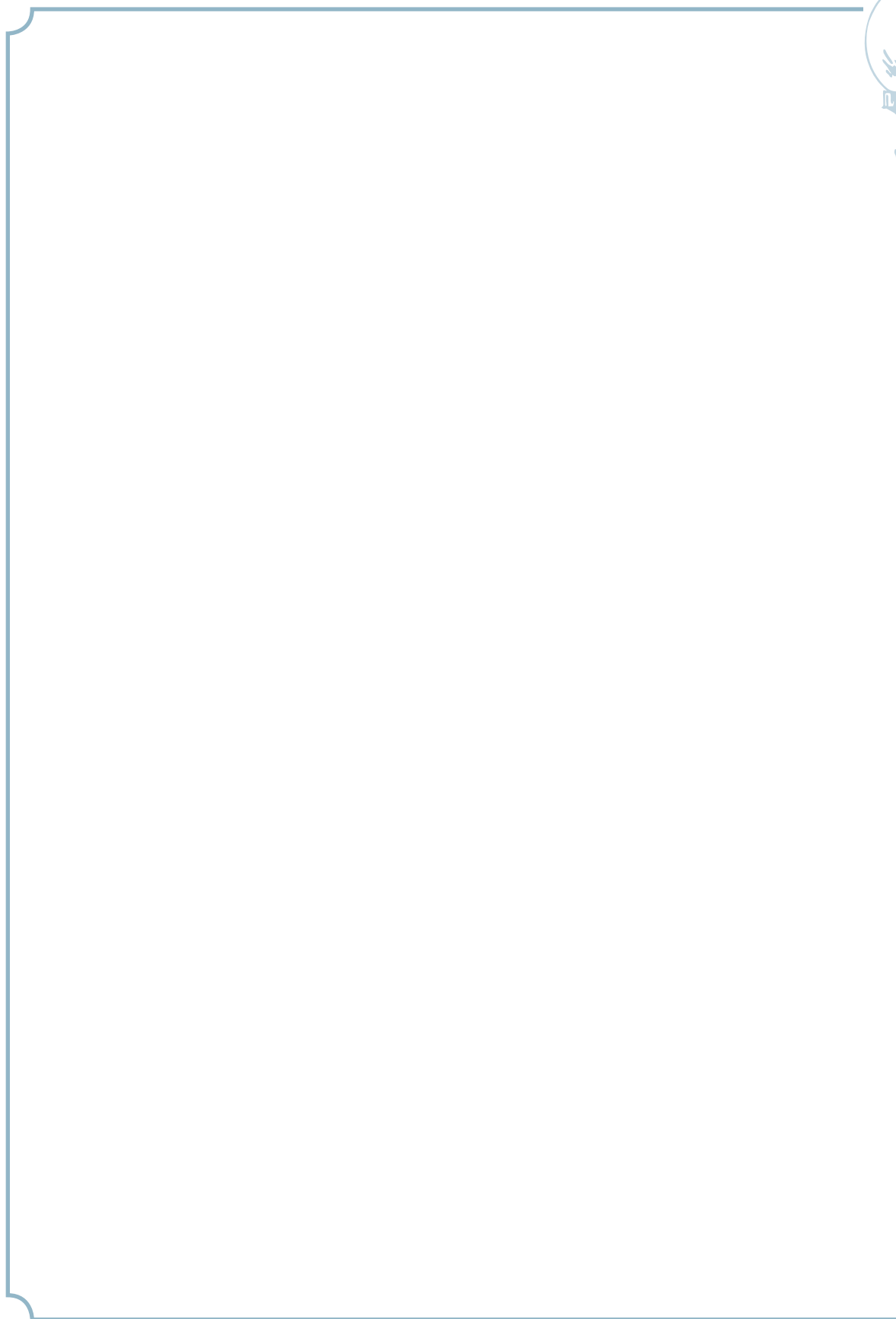


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INTRODUCTION

The 100 year old Clay County Courthouse is a wonderful Neo-Classical building with marble, tile, decorative light fixtures, and ornate railing. It is one of the nicest small courthouses in the state and has been well maintained. In contrast, some other courthouses built in the same era were not as well built and maintained and, as a result, have had to be razed as they were not structurally sound.

Designed by Lloyd D. Willis, an architect from Omaha, the Clay County Courthouse is the only one he designed in South Dakota. It was built by Hintz & Malloy, contractors from Aberdeen. Construction on the courthouse was begun in early 1912 and was completed in April of 1913. The cornerstone was laid with great fanfare on June 8, 1912. The building was constructed at a cost of approximately \$95,000. There have been several major improvements and additions made to the building and grounds since its construction to improve space and accessibility as well as for the relocation of the Clay County Veteran's Memorial. The Clay County Courthouse was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983 (#83003005).¹

THE ORGANIZATION OF CLAY COUNTY

In 1859, the residents of what is today Clay County joined with other residents of the area west of the new state of Minnesota, to petition for the formation of a territorial government for the area. Although the 1859 petition asking Congress to organize Dakota Territory was unsuccessful, a petition to Congress in 1860 succeeded and on March 2, 1861, President James Buchanan signed the legislation creating Dakota Territory.² Two days later, Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated as President of the United States and he appointed all of the territorial officers. As the first territorial governor, Lincoln appointed Dr. William Jayne, the Lincoln family physician from Springfield, Illinois.

Although Vermillion hoped to be selected as the temporary capital city, since it was the largest town in Dakota Territory, when Governor Jayne arrived in Vermillion, on May 28, 1861, he stopped only briefly for a reception at Mulholland's hotel and then went on to Yankton, twenty-seven miles west of Vermillion. Allegedly this was due to his connection to Mary Todd Lincoln and the financial benefit that Mary's cousin, J.B.S. Todd received from having the capitol located where he owned a portion of the town site.³

When the first territorial legislature met in Yankton on March 17, 1862, the primary issue to be decided was the location of the permanent capitol. After much wrangling and threats of violence, an agreement was reached that the capitol would go to Yankton, the territorial university would go to Vermillion, and the territorial penitentiary would go to the village of Bon Homme, which was located along the Missouri River about thirty miles west of Yankton. In dividing up the "pork barrel" projects, the river towns of Vermillion, Yankton, and Bon Homme, banded together to obtain the desirable projects and shut out

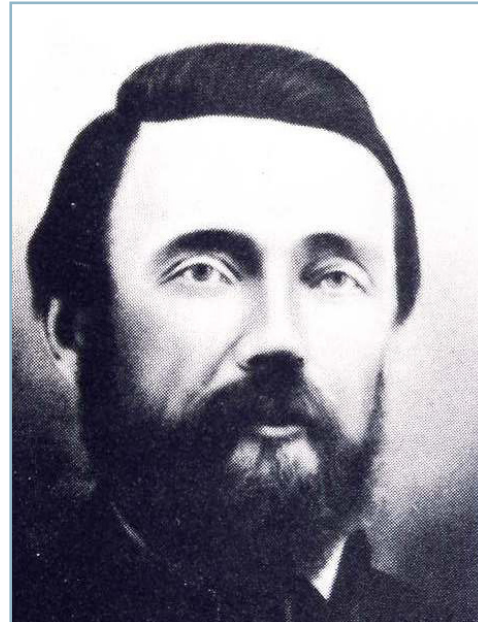
Sioux Falls and the Pembina area (now North Dakota) area along the Red River which were the other centers of population at the time.⁴

As a result of hard feelings arising from this dispute, efforts were made to prevent Vermillion from becoming the county seat of Clay County. Each of the legislative bills necessary to designate Vermillion as the county seat “mysteriously” disappeared and the legislative session ended with no county seat being approved for Clay County. Although the 1862 legislative session designated county seats for all of the other organized counties, Clay County did not get a county seat until the next session of the legislature.⁵

Among his first actions as governor, Governor Jayne divided Dakota Territory into three judicial districts. The First Judicial District, headquartered at Vermillion, included everything from the Iowa border to the Clay-Yankton County line and north to the Canadian border.⁶ President Lincoln appointed Lorenzo P. Williston of Pennsylvania as one of the three U.S. District Judges for the new territory assigned to the First District at Vermillion. Judge Williston held the first session of court in Dakota Territory at Vermillion on August 6, 1862. At that court session, J.B.S. Todd and William Gleason, of Yankton, and Henry Betts, John Boyle, A.J. Harlan and Nelson Miner, of Vermillion, were all admitted to the bar.⁷ It is uncertain just where that first court session was held but probably in the second floor hall above McHenry’s general store where many of the early public meetings were held. Other early court sessions were held in the little log schoolhouse on the ravine road.⁸



Judge Lorenzo P. Williston



Nelson Miner

THE FIRST COURTHOUSE

Within a short time after its organization as a county, Clay County rented space for a courthouse above Jensen's Drug store on the North side of Broadway St., across the street from the St. Nicholas Hotel. Although that space provided room for trials and public meetings, the other county offices were spread in rented space throughout the downtown area. One of those was the office of the County Probate Judge (who also had the same duties and responsibilities as the County Treasurer). Other county offices were located in other buildings, generally on the second floor.



The Log Schoolhouse on the Ravine Road



Vermillion in 1871⁹

The buildings in Vermillion in 1871 included: 1) the law office of Judge Kidder and John J. Jolley; 2) Dakota House or Adelphi Hotel; 3) Hawthorne's General Store; 4) Saloon; 5) the General Store run by J.W. Stone; 6) Dr. Lyon's residence; 7) livery barn for Adelphi Hotel; 8) St. Nicholas Hotel owned by Capt Miner; 9) warehouse of M.D. Thompson (C.I.K. means Cash Is King); 10) the general store of James McHenry built in 1859; 11) the United States Land Office; 12) the livery barn for the St. Nicholas Hotel; 13) Confectionary and Fruit Store; 14) Hardware Store owned by Finley and Morrison; 15) the general store of Lee & Prentiss; 16) hardware and implement store of Sam Jones; 17) general store and Post Office by Austin & Palmer; 18) harness shop by Thos. Robinson; 19) millinery store by Mrs. S.A. Oakley; 20) drug store by Dr. Lyons; 21) meat market by Gilbert & Taylor; **22) drug store by D. Jensen (second story was courthouse)**; 23) road (now railway track); 24) road up ravine (now Audubon Park Road); 25) road up draw leading to Lewis St. and Forest Av.; 26) residence of Hotel Mr. Williams (formerly owned by Clem Russell); 27) residence of Thos. Robinson; 28) Episcopal Church; 29) residence of C.J. Johnson; 30) Howard's Shoe Store; and 31) residence of C.F. Prentiss. (Numbers 13-16 are out of sight behind the C.I.K. warehouse and Butler's studio is 50 feet north of no. 26.



The St. Nicholas Hotel¹⁰

On January 13, 1875, Clay County suffered a severe blow as a result of a fire. The great fire of 1875 started in the County Probate Judge's offices above Dr. Lyons drug store. The courthouse on the north side of Broadway Street didn't burn in that fire but many of the buildings on both the north and south sides of Broadway burned to the ground.¹¹ As described in the January 14, 1875, issue of *The Dakota Republican*:

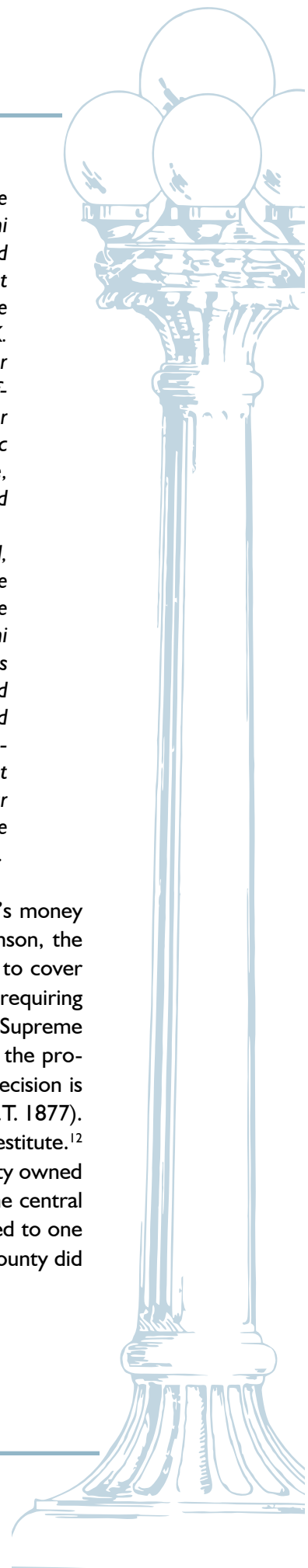
At noon on Wednesday, the 13th inst., the dread cry of fire was heard on our streets. The wind was howling a gale from the north west and the thermometer sixteen degrees below zero. On going into the street smoke was seen to be issuing from the south east corner of the second story of Lyon's Block - the room occupied by R. J. Simenson, Judge of Probate. A rush was made for the room by Jack Becker and others. Arriving at the top of the stairs on the north east corner of the block, the outside door was found locked. It was broken in, passing across the empty room to the south, the door entering Simenson's office was also found locked, this also was broken in when the whole room was found to be in a sheet of flame. At the moment of breaking in the door, the south window of the office gave way and a sheet of flame leaped out ten feet long. A rush was made to clean out the store of Grange Brothers immediately below, but before many goods were removed the fire began to fall through

from above and the suffocating smoke drove every body out. In the meantime Hayward's boot store, next door, Hodgin's meat market next and the Adelphi Hotel were being cleaned out as fast as possible. But the flames made rapid work and in a few minutes the Bank, across the road, Russell's meat market and dwelling immediately west occupied by G. W. Pratt were in flames; on the east of the Bank, Tyler's fruit store, Thompson & Lewis' office and the C.I.K. building occupied by Pratt & DeVay, the second story occupied by the Register Printing Office, Jolly's law office and W.K. Hollenbeck's Internal Revenue office was soon a sheet of flame. Then came Ashard's Bakery, Wheeler's barber shop, Steven's watch shop, Carr's store, Hansen's furniture store, Masonic and Odd Fellow's hall, Macomber's drug store, Republican Printing Office, Tubb's fruit store, the Post Office and the medical office of Drs. Dawson and Burdick.

By almost superhuman effort the main part of the Adelphi Hotel was saved, only burning the low wing between it and Lyon's block. The same was true of Mrs. Dr. Lyons house and the building known as Cheap Jim's. The store between Lyons block and Mrs. Lyon's residence was burned. Had the Adelphi burned nothing could have saved every building on both sides of the street as far west as the street leading to the depot. – Had Cheap Jim's building burned everything would have burned east on that side including the Court House and the St. Nicholas on the south. The conflagration was terrible: the wind sweeping down from the north west carried the flames from Lyon's block almost across the street. So rapid was the destruction that it was impossible to clear the room sunder Union Hall entirely of their contents though the streets were full of men, women and children working with the greatest possible dispatch.

Unfortunately, when the Probate Judge's office burned, all of Clay County's money and tax records burned up with it. This led to heated accusations that Simonson, the Probate Judge, had pocketed the county's money and burned down the town to cover his theft. Ultimately, litigation led to a Dakota Territory Supreme Court decision requiring Simonson's bondsmen to make good the lost money. Among other issues, the Supreme Court held that failure of Clay County to furnish a fireproof safe for the use of the probate judge did not excuse the loss of the county funds. The Supreme Court decision is reported at *Clay County v. Simonsen, et. al* , 1 Dakota Reports (1 Bennett) 387 (D.T. 1877). In the intervening years, until the bond was paid, Clay County was completely destitute.¹²

The loss of the county money (about \$2,700) led to an effort to build a county owned courthouse building. However, the 1876 effort failed due to opposition from the central and northern parts of the county which still hoped to see the county seat moved to one of the other centers of population such as Lodi or Bloomingdale. Instead, the county did erect a 12 foot by 24 foot building as an office for the County Treasurer.¹³





The Intersection of Broadway and Market Looking South¹⁴

Lyon's Block, the second floor of which were the offices occupied by the Probate Judge or County Treasurer, and where the fire started can be seen on the extreme right in this picture, on the northwest corner of the intersection.

THE SECOND COURTHOUSE

Five years later when Vermillion was destroyed by the great flood in March and April of 1881, the courthouse again avoided destruction, but like all of the other buildings in town, was extensively damaged.

As a result of the flood, 132 buildings were completely destroyed in Vermillion and many of the surviving building were badly damaged. Damages in Vermillion were estimated at \$140,000 with a total of \$450,000 in damages throughout Clay County. After the flood the decision was made to rebuild the town on top of the bluff. Market Street between Main and Union (renamed Kidder Street after Judge Jefferson Kidder) and two blocks of Main from Market to the corner of Church Street were the primary business districts in the new town.¹⁵

Vermillion, above the bluff, was a veritable beehive of activity from April through August of 1881, as the new buildings were constructed between Main Street and Kidder Street from Market on the west to Court Street and Church Street on the east. There was also some construction done in the block extending from Church Street east to Dakota Street. Many of the old buildings from below the hill, including the brick structures, supplied the building material for the new construction. Wooden structures which were not too badly damaged were moved in their entirety. Carpenters, masons, and professional house movers, including some who came from Des Moines and Sioux City, worked around the clock. By July and August the new town on the bluff was flourishing. County offices and court sessions utilized rooms on the second floor of the new Inman bank building.¹⁸



The North Side of Broadway After the Flood¹⁶

In this picture looking northeast, taken after the 1881 flood, the first courthouse can be seen still standing at the extreme right.



The South Side of Broadway After the Flood¹⁷

In this picture looking southeast taken after the 1881 flood, the total devastation of the buildings along Broadway can be seen

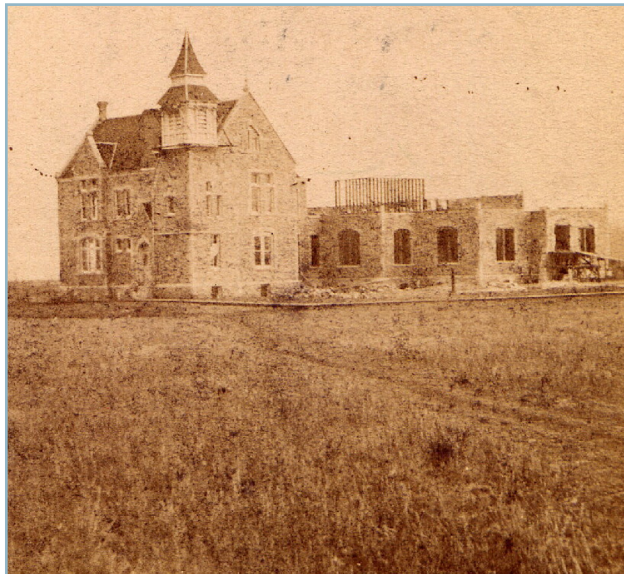
Among the many community improvements made in Vermillion after the flood were the construction of a new city hall at the intersection of Main Street and Church Street and finally a county owned courthouse. In August of 1881, Federal District Judge Jefferson Kidder had ordered a grand jury to investigate the condition of Clay County's public buildings and they reported that the twelve foot by twenty-four foot building which contained the records of the county treasurer and county clerk was "...about as cheap as could have been built,...".¹⁹ On September 6, 1881, citizens of Vermillion offered to provide land and money toward the construction of a county courthouse. Four different proposals were presented for different locations and differing amounts of money which would be provided by the city residents. On September 8th the Clay County Commissioners decided that if the city would provide lots 8, 9 and 10 and part of lot 11 of Block 27 of the Original Town site of Vermillion and \$800 toward the construction of a county office building, that the county would contribute \$2,000 towards the construction costs.²⁰ These lots were located at the northeast corner of the intersection of Court Street and Kidder Street (where the post office is now located). On October 6, 1881, the county commissioners awarded a contract to George A. Porter for the construction of the courthouse at a cost of \$2,800.²¹ Eventually they allowed Porter an additional \$350 for work not specified in the contract.²² The new county courthouse, on Court Street (hence the name), was erected during the winter of 1881-1882. On May 20, 1882, the county commissioners inspected the new building and

accepted it as they were satisfied that it was completed in accordance with the contract.²³ The new wood frame courthouse structure was constructed at a cost of \$4,000, including \$2,000 which was appropriated by the county commissioners, and the balance was raised by public subscription. The first classes of the new University of Dakota Territory were held in that courthouse building while “Old Main” was under construction.²⁴

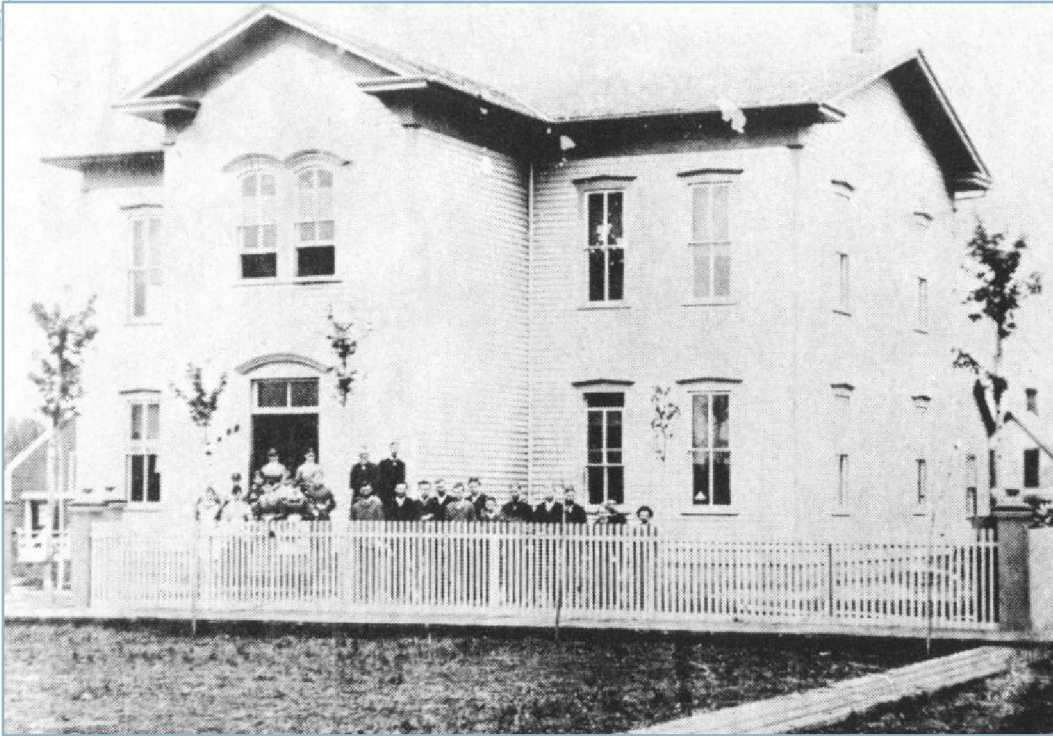
The economic devastation suffered by the community also led to community action to finally start the University of Dakota which had lain dormant since it was authorized by the legislature in 1862. Spearheading the drive to establish the University in Vermillion were Judge Jefferson Kidder, attorney John Jolley, D.M. Inman, a local banker, and Dr. F.N. Burdick, the editor of *The Dakota Republican* newspaper. Judge Kidder donated 10 acres of land to make up half of the original campus.²⁶ The land donated by Judge Kidder for the home of the new university had been homesteaded by his son, Lyman, who was killed in the summer of 1867 while on active military duty.²⁷ The taxpayers of Clay County also approved \$10,000 in bonds to construct the first building on the campus.²⁸ Since construction of Old Main (then designated as University Hall) was not complete when classes were scheduled to begin in the fall of 1882, the first classes were held in the newly constructed Clay County Courthouse on Court Street.²⁹



Jefferson P. Kidder



University Hall (Old Main) Under Construction.²⁵



*The New Courthouse on the Corner of Court Street and Kidder Street³⁰
The first university students are shown standing in front of the courthouse,
where their classes were being held.*



The Courthouse on Court Street Around 1900.³¹

THE THIRD COURTHOUSE

Certainly due in part to the rapidity of its construction, within thirty years, the 1882 courthouse was showing its age. By the turn of the century, the 1882 courthouse was in terrible condition. . . As indicated in the June 9, 1910 edition of the *Dakota Republican*, Clay County had "...scrimped along for a decade of years with an old rattle trap, wooden shell building for a courthouse. . .".³²

In September of 1906 a group of citizens presented the county commissioners with a petition asking that a new courthouse be built because the county records were unsafe in the existing building. The petitioners represented that a new courthouse could be built for \$60,000 and that it could be paid for without bonding by using \$20,000 from the county general funds and the balance could be raised by a special 3 mil tax levy collected in 1906 and 1907 and 2 mils collected in 1908. An election on the proposal was held on November 6, 1906 and it was defeated by a vote of 796 in favor of the courthouse to 975 against.³³ Some of the opponents objected to the proposal to pay for the new courthouse through a special tax levy while others in the northern part of the county opposed the construction of another courthouse in Vermillion because they wanted the county seat moved to a more central location in the county.³⁴

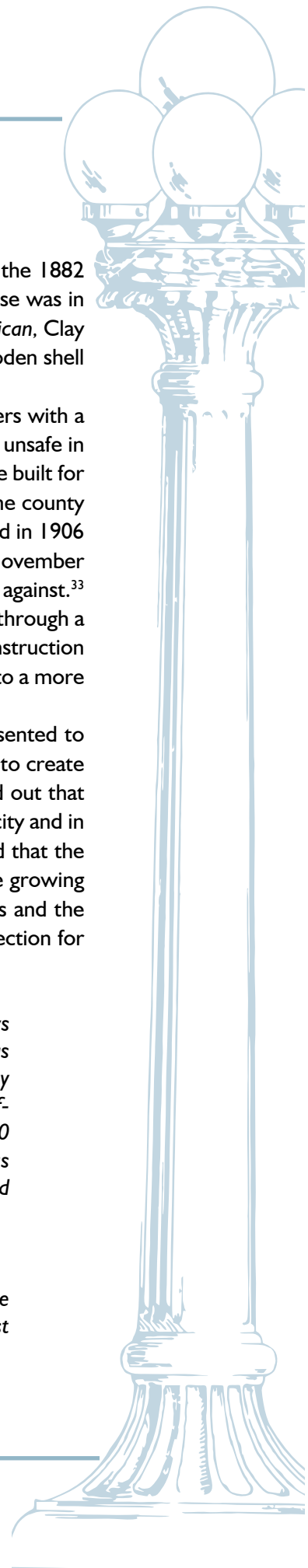
On April 6, 1910, another petition, this one signed by 330 voters, was presented to the county commissioners asking that a 3 mil tax levy be imposed for four years to create a sinking fund for the construction of a new courthouse.³⁵ The petition pointed out that the existing courthouse was inadequate for the needs of the county both in capacity and in security for the county records in case of fire. The petitioners also represented that the existing courthouse would soon require costly repairs and additions to meet the growing demands and that "we have no convenience so necessary to sanitary conditions and the welfare of the public health".³⁶ In response, the county commissioners set an election for June 7, 1910, on the issue of whether to construct a new courthouse.


Prior to the election, the *Dakota Republican* editorialized:

*Only one county in South Dakota, this side of the great river – Clay always excepted – is now without a modern courthouse. The county of Sully has been keeping company with Clay County in this respect. But next Tuesday the people of Sully are going to make a change of condition and will vote affirmatively on the proposition contemplating the erection of a new \$75,000 county capitol. Sully County has no line of railroad and is not near as populous or prosperous as Clay, but they are progressive up there – same as it is believed we are going to be down here on the same date.*³⁷

In a separate article the paper opined:

Every vote cast for a new building says "I believe in improvement; I believe in Clay County; she is entitled to the best and to be ranked with the foremost counties of the state.





A rousing majority for a new Courthouse would do more to advertise the county than could be done by all of the immigration bureaus between here and Borneo".³⁸

At the election on June 7, 1910, the proposal for a new courthouse passed by a vote of 851 in favor of building a new courthouse to 657 votes against.³⁹ Following the election, the *Dakota Republican* expressed its approval.

NEW COURTHOUSE WINS OUT.

Clay County will Have a Modern County Building as a Result of Tuesday's Vote.

After having scrimped along for a decade of years with an old rattle trap, wooden shell building for a courthouse, Clay County has decided that it will join the ranks of the other counties in this part of the state, and, indeed, all over the state, and have a new, modern, up to date, structure, on that will not only be a credit to the county in every respect, but one that will render their records perfectly safe from danger of loss by fire. That point was emphatically decided on at the special election on Tuesday, when the people of the county voted by nearly 200 majority that the old building had outlived its usefulness, and that they wanted a building of which they would not be ashamed. Now that the matter has been decisively settled, Clay County can in a short time hold up its head among the other counties of the state and call attention to as fine a building for county purposes as there is anywhere. The vote on the proposition was as follows:

Yes	848
No	<u>656</u>
Majority for yes	192

When the results first commenced to come in on the proposition, it was seen that the matter would carry, for the change over the vote four years ago was so apparent that it would not be figured out any other way. There was but one precinct that did not give an increased vote in favor of the courthouse, and in some precincts the percent of gain was more than was expected.

The amount to be expended for a new building is limited to \$65,000. The manner provided by the commissioners for raising the money was one factor that helped in favor of the proposition. Under that plan the money will be available as soon as the building is completed and the courthouse will be paid for and there will not be a cent of indebtedness to look after.⁴⁰

On September 6, 1910, the county commissioners made the decision to assess \$15,300 in taxes for the year 1910 for the courthouse building fund.⁴¹ In October, the county commissioners began considering possible sites for the new courthouse and initially considered two possible sites: the Chandler House Hotel site which was available for \$6,000 and the Catholic Convent grounds which was available for \$9,500, but no decision was made at that time.⁴² On January 26, 1911 the commissioners again considered possible locations for the new courthouse and decided to advertise for sites with anyone who was interested in selling their property to submit proposals by February 6, 1911.⁴³

By their next meeting, on February 6, 1911, the commissioners had received 16 different proposals for locating the courthouse, including sites in Blocks 33, 34, 37 and 42 of Snyder's Addition, and Blocks 14, 22 and 27 of the Original Town site. Some of the proposals included the buildings located on the lots and others were without the buildings. Former Mayor and Congressman John L. Jolley proposed to sell his property in Block 37 to the county for whatever three "fair men" valued it at. Congressman Jolley also submitted a proposal whereby the county would acquire the lots but the Congressman and his wife would retain possession of their home, in Block 37 during their lifetimes.⁴⁶



The Chandler House Hotel

Located on the bluff on the south end of Market Street, where the old National Guard Armory is now located, was one of the sites considered for the new courthouse. The Chandler House was one of the buildings salvaged and brought up the bluff after the 1881 flood.⁴⁴



The Catholic Convent Grounds

located at the southeast corner of the intersection of High and National Streets, was another site under consideration. ⁴⁵

On March 8, 1911, the county commissioners decided to build on Block 37 of Snyder's addition to the City of Vermillion.⁴⁷ Block 37 was owned by John L. Jolley (Northeast quarter) A.H. Whittemore (Northwest quarter), Mrs. O'Connor (Southwest quarter) and Mrs. Schafer (Southeast quarter) and that the total purchase price would be approximately \$12,500 including buildings which were estimated to be worth \$3,000.⁴⁸ At their meeting on May 12, 1911, it was reported to the commissioners that the county had purchased lots 18, 19 and 20 of Block 37 at an auction for \$3,500. This property was owned by Sadie Schaefer and was sold by court order because she was a patient at the State Hospital in Yankton. The commissioners also interviewed an architect, W.W. Beach of Sioux City, at that meeting.⁴⁹

On May 27, 1911, a report was made to the commissioners that the county had bought lots 11-12-13 and 14 of Block 37, from A. H. Whittemore for \$1000, had bought lot 4 and the south ½ of lot 5 from John Jolley for \$750, and had bought lots 15-16 and 17 from Catherine Merrigan, Lucy Lynch, Margaret Milam and Ellen Donahoe for \$3,250. The commissioners then ordered all of the houses on the courthouse block offered for sale.⁵⁰

On June 9, 1911, Architect Lloyd D. Willis of Omaha appeared at the commissioner's meeting and showed them sketches and plans for the courthouse and, according to the minutes of the meeting, the commissioners spent the "forenoon" considering his plans.⁵¹ The next day, June 10, 1911, various other architects appeared and offered to furnish plans for the courthouse. Presenting proposals for architectural work were O.H. Tegen of Manitowoc, Wisconsin. who would charge a fee of 5% for the plans and superintending

the construction but only 3% if he just furnished the plans; William Tyrie of Bell, Tyrie and Chapman of Minneapolis, Minn. who wanted 5% for plans without any superintendence; Wilfred Beach of Sioux City, IA, who wanted 3 1/2% for plans without superintendence and Lloyd D. Willis of Omaha who wanted 2% for plans without superintendence. Willis, the low bidder, was selected.⁵²

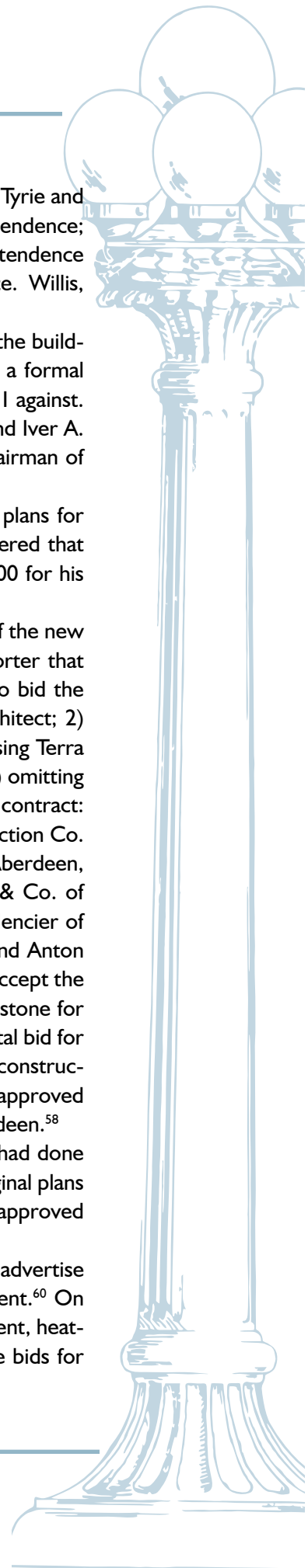
On June 21, 1911, it was reported at the commissioners meeting that all of the buildings on the courthouse site had been sold for a total of \$1,618. On that date a formal resolution was passed to build a new courthouse. The votes were 2 in favor and 1 against. Voting in favor of building a new courthouse were commissioners T.O. Ellison and Iver A. Iverson and voting against building a courthouse was G. W. Richardson, the chairman of the commissioners.⁵³

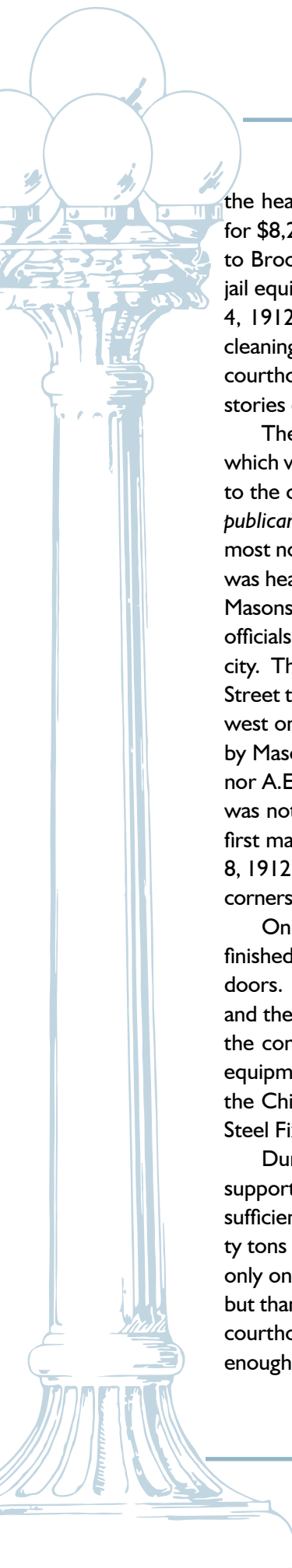
On September 5, 1911, architect Lloyd Willis appeared and presented his plans for the new courthouse building. The commissioners approved the plans and ordered that construction bids be submitted. They also approved a payment to Willis of \$500 for his services.⁵⁴

On October 3, 1911, the commissioners opened the bids for construction of the new courthouse. According to *The Dakota Republican*, the architect told their reporter that the bids came in below his expectations.⁵⁵ Interested bidders were allowed to bid the construction contract in any of four different ways: 1) as proposed by the architect; 2) using Kettle River stone rather than Bedford Stone for the basement level; 3) using Terra Cotta rather than stone for the architrave, frieze, parapet wall and coping and 4) omitting all of the marble and tile. Fourteen bidders submitted bids on the construction contract: Lepper Construction Co. of Aberdeen, Erick Nysten of Vermillion, Gray Construction Co. of Watertown, Wold & Johnson Construction of Brookings, Hintz & Malloy of Aberdeen, G.J.S. Collins of Omaha, Bowles & Bailey of Ottawa, Iowa, Rasmussen, Kyhl & Co. of Omaha, F.P. Gould & Son of Omaha, P.J. Creeden & Son of Omaha, Stolte & Menciaer of Redfield, SD, George A. Shaul of Seneca, Kansas, Anton Rostad of Vermillion and Anton Zwack of Dubuque, Ia.⁵⁶ On October 4, the county commissioners decided to accept the low bid of Hintz and Malloy and to use Kettle River Stone rather than Bedford stone for the basement level and Terra Cotta for the cornice. With those additions, the total bid for the new building was \$61,200. The county also agreed to hire P.E. Henzie as the construction superintendent for \$5 per day.⁵⁷ On October 18, 1911, the commissioners approved the construction contract with the general contractor, Hintz and Malloy of Aberdeen.⁵⁸

On November 9, 1911, the construction superintendent reported that he had done soil testing at the courthouse site and found that the footings called for in the original plans were not wide enough and needed to be increased in size. The commissioners approved that change for the additional footings at an additional cost of \$2,357.37.⁵⁹

On December 5, 1911, the commissioners directed the county auditor to advertise for bids for the plumbing, heating, ventilating, electrical wiring and jail equipment.⁶⁰ On January 5, 1912, the commissioners met with the architect about the jail equipment, heating and plumbing and electrical wiring and opened the bids. There were three bids for





the heating and plumbing and the contract was awarded to P.F. Cavanaugh of Vermillion for \$8,297. There were four bids for the electrical wiring and the contract was awarded to Brookman and Barrett also of Vermillion for \$1,526. There was only one bid for the jail equipment and the commissioners decided to rebid that.⁶¹ On April 3, 1912 and April 4, 1912, the commissioners approved various change orders including a central vacuum cleaning system at an additional cost of \$90.⁶² For a period of time in April any news of the courthouse virtually disappeared from the local Vermillion papers which were filled with stories of the sinking of the Titanic.

There was a festive laying of the cornerstone for the new courthouse on June 8, 1912, which was conducted by the Vermillion Masonic Lodge. The celebration included a parade to the courthouse site, and speeches by various dignitaries. According to *The Dakota Republican*, over 2000 people attended the cornerstone laying and that it was "...one of the most notable events of Masonic history in Vermillion." According to the paper, the parade was headed up by Reed's band, followed in order by the Knights Templar, local and visiting Masons, the Masonic Grand Master and the officers of the Grand Lodge, city and county officials, Odd Fellows encampment and subordinate lodges and the school children of the city. The parade began at the intersection of Main and Elm Streets and went north on Elm Street to National and then east on National to Dakota, south on Dakota to Main, and then west on Main to the site of the new courthouse. At the courthouse speeches were given by Masonic Grand Master Charles Brockway, the Honorable D.M. Inman, former Governor A.E. Lee, State Senator Andrew Anderson (who said in his speech that if Clay County was not the Garden of Eden, it was mighty close to it) and John Jolley who had been the first mayor of Vermillion and a United States Congressman from 1891 to 1893.⁶³ On July 8, 1912 the county commissioners approved the payment of \$141.30 for the expenses of the cornerstone laying.⁶⁴

On August 27, 1912, the commissioners opened bids for the courthouse furniture, finished hardware, electric light fixtures jail equipment, metal vault equipment and vault doors. The bids accepted were from Brown & Sanger for courthouse furniture (\$7,188); and the Diebold Safe & Lock Co for vault doors (\$345).⁶⁵ The next day, August 28, 1912, the commissioners accepted the bids of Stewart Iron Works of Cincinnati, Ohio for jail equipment (\$4,902); James Morton and Sons of Omaha, for finished hardware (\$1,127.18); the Chicago Gas & Electric Manufacturing Co. for electrical fixtures (\$1,952.50) and the Steel Fixture Manufacturing Co. of Topeka, Kansas for metal vault equipment (\$2,750).⁶⁶

During the construction, on November 4, 1912, an accident occurred in which some support props slipped and concrete which had been poured but which had not yet dried sufficiently, dropped to the third floor. The *Vermillion Plain Talk* estimated that some twenty tons of concrete and tile fell, carrying three workmen with it. The paper reported that only one of the workmen was bruised but that the workmen were all pretty badly scared but thankful to escape with their lives. The paper also commented that the strength of the courthouse was shown by the fact that the fall of twenty tons of concrete and brick wasn't enough to even jar the rest of the building.⁶⁷

On January 9, 1913 the commissioners accepted a proposal for a flag pole on the roof of the courthouse at an additional cost of \$58.65, and on January 13, 1913, they authorized the auditor to advertise for bids for a retaining wall, cement walks, grading, interior decorating, walls and murals, window shades and floor coverings.⁶⁸ The county commissioners considered the various landscaping and decorating proposals on February 18, 1913, and awarded contracts to Christopher Grosse of Vermillion for the walks (\$1,024) and the retaining wall (\$2,200). The next day, February 19, 1913, the commissioners awarded contracts to the W.G. Colling Co. of Omaha for painting and decorating (\$2,675), to the Orchard, Wilhelm Carpet Co. of Omaha for Battleship linoleum (\$1.16 per square yard) and to Lee & Prentis of Vermillion for window shades (\$90).⁶⁹

On February 24, 1913, Civil War veterans who were members of the GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) Miner Post #8 presented the commissioners with a sixteen foot silk flag for use at the new courthouse and on the same date the commissioners interviewed 17 applicants for janitor and selected John Bergman who had offered to work for \$40 per month.⁷⁰



Laying of the Cornerstone at the Clay County Courthouse⁷¹



Hauling the cornerstone for the Clay County Courthouse up Chandler Hill from the Vermillion depot below the bluff.⁷²



A parade from the downtown area to the courthouse site before the cornerstone laying on June 8, 1912. The large building in the background is the Waldorf Hotel which stood on the corner where CorTrust Bank now stands.⁷³

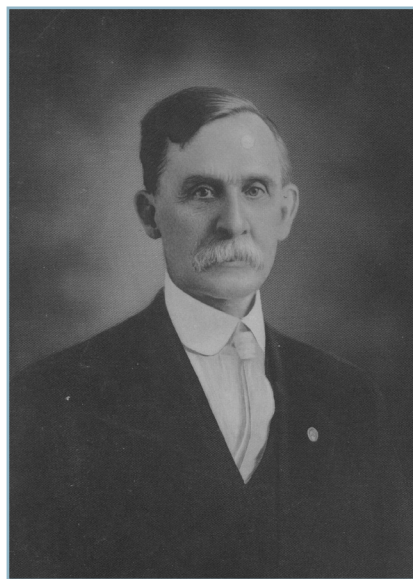


Both the Masons and the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) participated in the festivities surrounding the laying of the cornerstone for the Clay County Courthouse on June 8, 1912.⁷⁴





*Congressman Jolley giving the speech
at the laying of the Courthouse cornerstone on June 8, 1912.⁷⁵*



Congressman John L. Jolley

With the new courthouse nearing completion, on April 1, 1913 the commissioners accepted a petition to sell the old courthouse and jail on Court Street and on April 17, 1913, they inspected the new courthouse with the architect and found it complete.⁷⁶ On April 22, 1913, the county commissioners determined that after that date, the new courthouse building would officially be the courthouse.⁷⁷ That week the *Plain Talk* reported:

Officers Moving In

By The Close Of The Week County Officials Will Be Quartered In New Home

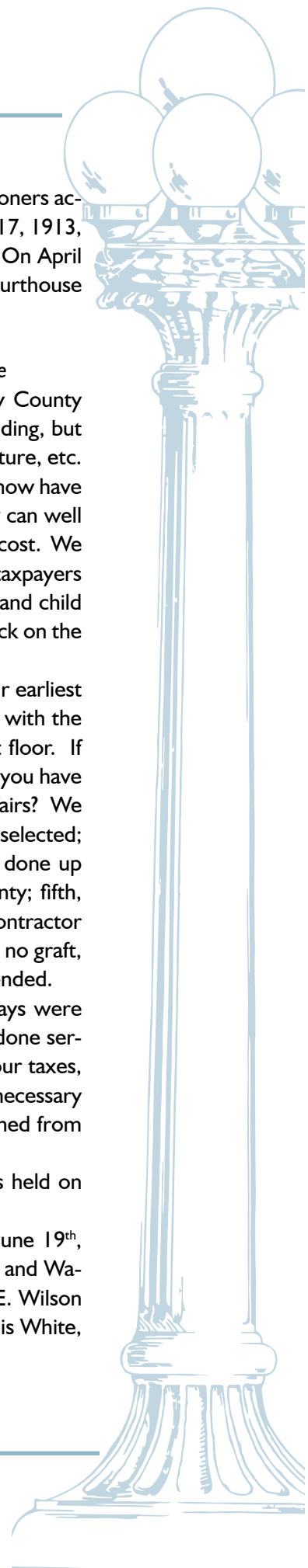
All past records were shattered a few years ago when the voters of Clay County decided to erect a new courthouse. They agreed to spend \$65,000 for the building, but expected that it would cost more when completed and equipped with new furniture, etc. And the cost has been considerably more than that amount. But who cares? We now have one of the very finest courthouses in the state, and one which we of this county can well afford to boast of. The editor of the *Plain Talk* has no desire to figure up the total cost. We know that the job has been well done; that it is only once in a lifetime that the taxpayers will be called to pay for the same; and we are satisfied that every man, woman and child will say, "well done." It is beyond our imagination that anyone would register a kick on the new structure. It looks good to us, from any viewpoint.

And by the way, if you haven't as yet visited the new courthouse do it at your earliest convenience. The doors are wide open. Inspect it from top to bottom. Begin with the engineering plant in the basement and continue the journey clear up to the last floor. If you do not say that it is one of the neatest, most elaborate and cleanest buildings you have ever seen then we miss our guess. And what has brought about this state of affairs? We can tell you. First the voters appropriated the money; secondly, a good site was selected; third, the commissioners took an active interest in seeing that everything was done up right; fourth, a competent superintendent was employed on behalf of the county; fifth, the contractors exerted themselves to give us a good job; and sixth, every sub-contractor made good with the work that he had to do. That's the record. There has been no graft, and no charges of graft. The county has got value received for every dollar expended.

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday were moving days. Nearly all of the drays were pressed into service.. And by Saturday night the old frame structure which has done service for so many years will have been entirely abandoned. If you want to pay your taxes, have a deed recorded, secure a marriage license, or even go to jail it will now be necessary to journey west to High Street, where an entrance to the new court can be gained from the east, north, west or south.⁷⁸

The first meeting of the county commissioners in the new courthouse was held on May 6, 1913.⁷⁹

A dedication ceremony for the new courthouse was held on Thursday June 19th, 1913. The dedication was conducted by the Odd Fellows Lodges of Vermillion and Wankonda. The main speaker at the dedication was Odd Fellows Grand Master S.E. Wilson and speeches were also given by pioneer settlers of Clay County, John Norin, Ellis White, John Bruyer, John Jolley and M.D. Thompson.⁸⁰



On July 12, 1913 the old courthouse was sold to Erick Nylen of Vermillion for \$5,650.⁸¹

On July 1, 1913, the commissioners formally expressed their appreciation to the Masonic Lodge of Vermillion for their assistance in the laying of the cornerstone on June 8, 1912 and to the Odd Fellows Lodges of Vermillion and Wakonda for their help in the Courthouse Dedication on June 19, 1913.⁸²

Of importance in the, as of yet unanswered question as to whether any murals were painted in the courthouse, which have since been covered with paint, is the fact that on October 7, 1913, the commissioners passed a resolution to pay \$1,000 to the painter, W. G. Colling Co. of Omaha, but indicated that the payment was not to be considered approval of the "paintings done under said contract."⁸³ However, at the time of the dedication, *The Dakota Republican* described the courthouse in detail, including that the wainscoting was of Vermont "Light Clouded" marble; the base of Tennessee "Ellis Pink" marble; the stools and aprons of the windows were Tennessee "Gray" marble; the stairs were also of Tennessee "Gray" marble; and the walls were painted a light gray color.⁸⁴ However, *The Dakota Republican* makes no mention of any murals.



*The Old Courthouse on Court Street
after the county offices were moved out and into the new building.⁸⁵*



Clay County Officials, 1913

Shown in front of the entrance from left to right are:

J.A. Copeland (Judge)

J.T. Olson (Auditor)

J.C. Dawson (County Commissioner)

Nels Weeks (Clerk of Courts)

H.J. Tilton (States Attorney)

Alice Cope (Supt. of Schools)

Iver Iverson (County Commissioner)

T.G. Ellison (County Commissioner)

August Peterson (Treasurer)

Charles Sundling (Register of Deeds)

John Bergman (Janitor)⁸⁶



COURTHOUSE DESCRIPTION

The Clay County Courthouse is a rectangular, three-story, “Bedford” yellow-stone building, with a central skylight, which has now been covered to save energy. The building is constructed in a Neo-Classical style. The front and sides are symmetrical with three bays on each facade, of which the center bay projects slightly forward. There is a highly decorated pediment on the central bay of the front and on each side. The front has a recessed entrance and two flanking columns. Inside, there is a circular light well. There was a usable skylight until about twenty years ago when it was covered and insulated. The building consists of two stories above a raised basement. The basement area creates the appearance of a podium upon which the upper stories rest. The basement level is of rusticated “Kettle River” stone which flares outward while the upper two floors are of vertically ribbed dressed stone. Between the first and second floors is a projecting belt course of stone. The center bay on the front façade, which projects forward creating the appearance of a portico, has a recessed front entrance on the ground level. On the second and third floor is a large window flanked on each side by Ionic columns running the length of the second and third floors. The windows on the side bays are plain with no adornment. The stairs to the front entrance rise between projecting low, stone walls with lamp standards on either side. The building is topped with a heavy overhanging cornice with dentil moldings and a parapet. The building is raised above street level by a sandstone wall on the front and sides of the sidewalks.⁸⁷

The courtroom is a beautiful example of those found in older courthouses. It has exquisite woodwork and light fixtures which have all been rewired. It has a lovely coffered ceiling with ornamental plaster work including extensive decorative dentils (comes from the same word as dentist as they look like teeth). Actually, there is a suspended ceiling in the courtroom, but the suspended ceiling was installed so that it would not obscure the beauty of the coffered ceiling.

Major improvements which have been made to the Clay County Courthouse since its construction include the installation of the elevator in 1966, the rear vestibule in 1982, and the attached Public Safety Center in 1989. The 1982 rear vestibule was built by Nels Urup Construction Co. of Vermillion, and the 1989 Public Safety addition was designed by Glenn H. Mannes of Yankton and constructed by Hoogendoorn Construction of Canton, SD.⁸⁸ The Clay County Veterans’ Memorial was relocated from Prentis Park to the southeast corner of the courthouse grounds in 2000.



Courthouse Under Construction ⁸⁹



Finishing the Retaining Wall in Front of the Courthouse ⁹⁰



PORTRAITS IN THE COURTHOUSE

In the courtroom are portraits of all of the judges who served Clay County, who lived in Vermillion. Although the first court session in Dakota Territory was held in Vermillion, there have been very few judges who lived here – primarily because Vermillion was almost always serviced by a judge who traveled out of Yankton.

The early territorial judges were appointed by the President of the United States for four year terms. The judges who were actually assigned to the First District located in Vermillion were:

- **Judge Lorenzo P. Williston**, 1861 – 1864, held first court session in Vermillion but within a few years, moved to Montana when he was appointed chief justice of the Montana Territorial Supreme Court.
- He was replaced by **Judge Ara Bartlett** – mayor of Kankakee Illinois, who was an Illinois friend of President Lincoln. He served briefly in the First District in Vermillion (1864-1865) and was then appointed by the President as chief justice of the Dakota Territory Supreme Court so he moved to the Second District in Yankton where he served for a four year term from 1865-1869.
- Judge Bartlett was replaced by **Judge Jefferson P. Kidder** – who had served as Lt. Governor of Vermont and in the Minnesota state legislature before coming to Vermillion. He had also been selected as the Dakota Territorial delegate to Congress by the Dakota Land Company at their Sioux Falls meetings in 1858 but had not been seated by Congress. Appointed as judge in the First District at Vermillion by President Lincoln, he served from 1865-1869 and was reappointed twice by President Grant and served from 1869-1873 and from 1873-1875. Kidder resigned his judgeship in 1875 because he had been elected as the Dakota Territorial delegate to Congress. He served in Congress for two terms from 1875-1879. When he was defeated at the election of 1878, Congress created a Fourth Judicial District in Dakota Territory to be located at Vermillion as the First District headquarters had been moved to Deadwood in the interim. Judge Kidder was then appointed to that position by President Rutherford Hayes and served 1879-1883. Kidder was then appointed to a fifth term by President Arthur in 1883 and served until his death in the fall of 1883. No other Territorial judges served more than two terms.
- When Judge Kidder was elected to congress, he was replaced by **Judge Granville Bennett** who served from 1875 to 1877 when that judgeship was moved from Vermillion to Deadwood. Judge Bennett then moved to Deadwood and served the rest of his term there from 1877 to 1879. In 1878 Judge Bennett ran against and defeated Judge Kidder at the Republican convention but only served one term in Congress before he was defeated.

Since statehood, the judges who have been assigned to serve in Clay County were:

Ellison G. Smith of Yankton– 1889 to 1908
Robert B. Tripp of Yankton– 1908 to 1934
C.C. Puckett of Yankton– 1935 to 1973
James Adams of Vermillion/Yankton– 1973 to 1974
Donald Erickson of Yankton – 1975 to 1981
Robert Ulrich of Vermillion – 1977 to 1981
Jay Tapken of Yankton – 1981 to 1993
Wayne Christensen of Worthing – 1981 to 1982
Riley Connelly of Parker – 1982 to 1988
Richard Bogue of Canton – 1988 to 2000.
Arthur Rusch of Vermillion – 1994 to 2011
Glen Eng of Yankton – 2000 to present
Steven Jensen of Dakota Dunes – 2003 to present
Cheryle Gering of Freeman – 2011 to present

In the courtroom, there is also a portrait of Charles Hall Dillon who served as a United States Congressman from 1913 to 1919 and South Dakota Supreme Court Justice from 1922 to 1926. Dillon moved to Vermillion, which was his wife's home, in 1922 and lived there until his death in 1929. There is also a large decorative clock in the courtroom which was donated by the family of Phillips Crew, a long time Vermillion attorney.

In the third floor hallways are portraits of Congressman John Jolley who served in the United States House of Representatives from 1891 to 1893, and Senator Thomas Sterling, who served in the United States Senate from 1913 to 1925 and later served as Dean of the USD Law School in Vermillion. Also pictured are Senator Tim Johnson, a native of Vermillion, who served as a United States Congressman from 1987 to 1996 and a United States Senator from 1996 to the present; Governor (and Senator) Peter Norbeck who never served in office from Clay County, but who was born in Clay County in 1870; Governor Andrew Lee who served as Governor from Clay County from 1899 to 1901 and Governor Carl Gunderson, who did not serve from Clay County but who was born here in 1864.

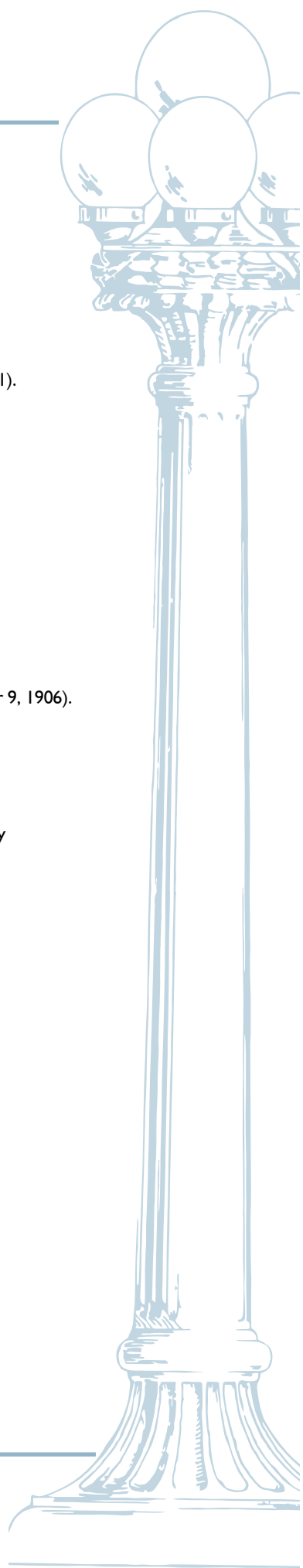
Finally, in the hallway is a picture of Henry Clay who served as United States Senator and United States Congressman from Kentucky and Secretary of State. Clay was an unsuccessful candidate for President three times. Clay County is named after him.



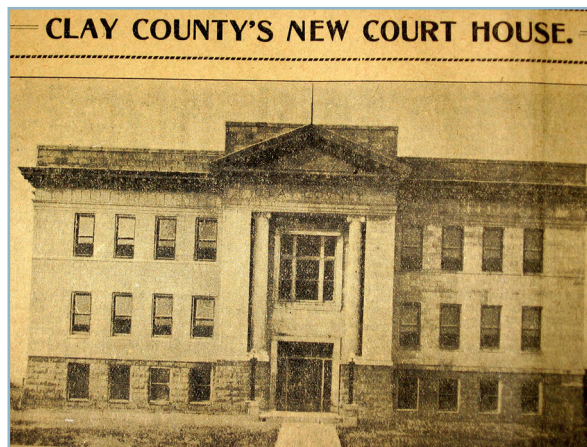
Newly Completed Clay County Courthouse and Retaining Wall ⁹¹

REFERENCES

- ¹ Doolittle and Torma, "National Register: Clay County Courthouse," section 8; and National Register of Historic Places at <http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/sd>.
- ² Herbert S. Schell, *History of Clay County, South Dakota*, (Clay County Historical Society, Vermillion, SD, 1976) page 17.
- ³ Schell, *History of Clay County* at page 17-18
- ⁴ Schell, *History of Clay County* at page 19. Bon Homme was located in present day Bon Homme County, along the Missouri River east of Springfield.
- ⁵ Schell, *supra* at page 19.
- ⁶ Dakota Territory Organic Act of 1861, §9; and Bruce Gering, *The South Dakota Judicial System: Past and Present*, 28 S.D. Law Review (1982) 91-92.
- ⁷ Act of 2 March, 1861, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 12 (1863): 154-155; George W. Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory* (S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., Chicago, Ill., 1915) 1:129, 175, 180; Herbert S. Schell, *History of South Dakota*, 4th ed. (S.D. Historical Society, Pierre, SD, 1970) 100; and Schell, *History of Clay County*, page 21.
- ⁸ In the spring of 1862, a company of cavalry, consisting of 98 men, was raised in Dakota Territory. Company A, 1st Regiment, Dakota Cavalry, was enlisted for a three year period and it was anticipated that the regiment would be sent east to join in the Civil War fighting. Instead, Company A was sent to garrison Ft. Randall and then was assigned to protect the Dakota Territory settlements after the Minnesota Indian uprising in 1862. Many of the cavalry troopers were Vermillion men and Captain Nelson Miner of Vermillion was elected as the company commander. One of the benefits that Vermillion derived from its connection to Company A and in particular, Captain Nelson Miner's leadership, was that in the winter of 1864-65, the soldiers under Captain Miner's command cut the logs and constructed the log schoolhouse at Vermillion where some of the early court sessions were held.
- ⁹ Photo and building identification information from the W.H. Over Museum, Vermillion, SD.
- ¹⁰ Photo from the W.H. Over Museum, Vermillion, SD
- ¹¹ Arthur L. Rusch, "Portrait of a River Town: Vermillion before the Flood of 1881", *South Dakota History* 40 (2010) 348 - 352, and *The Dakota Republican*, (Vermillion, Dakota Territory, January 14, 1875).
- ¹² Schell, *History of Clay County* at pages 49-50 and 64.

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- ¹³ Schell, *History of Clay County* at page 65.
- ¹⁴ Photo from the W.H. Over Museum, Vermillion, SD
- ¹⁵ Schell, *History of Clay County* at page 59-63; and A. H. Lathrop, *Life In Vermillion Before the 1881 Flood and Shortly After*, pages 39-42.
- ¹⁶ Photo from the W.H. Over Museum, Vermillion, SD.
- ¹⁷ Photo from the W.H. Over Museum, Vermillion, SD.
- ¹⁸ Schell, *History of Clay County* at page 62-63;
- ¹⁹ Schell, *History of Clay County*, 64 - 65.
- ²⁰ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, Book 2 page 13 (September 6, 1881 and September 8, 1881).
- ²¹ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, Book 2 page 22 (October 6, 1881).
- ²² Clay County Commissioner's minutes, Book 2 page 46 (May 20, 1882).
- ²³ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, Book 2 page 45 (May 20, 1882).
- ²⁴ Schell, *History of Clay County*, pages 65 to 67 and 165.
- ²⁵ Photo from the W.H. Over Museum, Vermillion, SD
- ²⁶ Lathrop, *supra* page 24, and Schell, *History of Clay County*, page 65 to 67
- ²⁷ Schell, *History of Clay County*, page 67 and Randy Johnson and Nancy Allen, *supra* and Kingsbury, *supra* at page 22.
- ²⁸ Lathrop, *supra* page 24.
- ²⁹ Schell, *History of Clay County*, page 67.
- ³⁰ Photo from the W.H. Over Museum, Vermillion, SD.
- ³¹ Photo from the Clay County Historical Society, Vermillion, SD.
- ³² *The Dakota Republican*, Vol. L, No. 23 (Vermillion, S.D., June 9, 1910).
- ³³ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, pages 43 (September 5, 1906) and 54 (November 9, 1906).
- ³⁴ Schell, *History of Clay County*, page 186.
- ³⁵ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 219
- ³⁶ It appears that this is an indication that there was no indoor plumbing in the courthouse.
- ³⁷ *The Dakota Republican*, Vol. L, No. 22 (Vermillion, S.D., June 2, 1910).
- ³⁸ *The Dakota Republican*, Vol. L, No. 22 (Vermillion, S.D., June 2, 1910).
- ³⁹ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 225 (June 10, 1910). This was the finally tally as reflected in the canvass although *The Dakota Republican* reported a slightly different result.
- ⁴⁰ *The Dakota Republican*, Vol. L, No. 23 (Vermillion, S.D., June 9, 1910).
- ⁴¹ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 241.
- ⁴² Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 245.
- ⁴³ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 268.
- ⁴⁴ Photo from the Clay County Historical Society, Vermillion, SD
- ⁴⁵ Photo from the Clay County Historical Society, Vermillion, SD
- ⁴⁶ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 269 (February 6, 1911).
- ⁴⁷ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 272 (March 8, 1911).
- ⁴⁸ *The Dakota Republican*, Vol. LI, No. 10 (Vermillion, S.D., March 9, 1911).
- ⁴⁹ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 279 (May 12, 1911)
- ⁵⁰ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 284 (May 27, 1911).
- ⁵¹ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 285.
- ⁵² Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 285 (June 10, 1911).
- ⁵³ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 287 (June 21, 1911).
- ⁵⁴ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 300-301.
- ⁵⁵ *The Dakota Republican*, Vol. LI, No. 40 (Vermillion, S.D., October 5, 1911).
- ⁵⁶ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 305-307 (October 4, 1911).
- ⁵⁷ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 307-308 (October 4, 1911).
- ⁵⁸ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 310 (October 18, 1911).
- ⁵⁹ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 313 (November 9, 1911).
- ⁶⁰ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 315 (December 5, 1911).
- ⁶¹ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 320 (January 5, 1912).

- ⁶² Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 330-331 (April 3 and 4, 1912).
- ⁶³ Congressman Jolley was also one of the people who had sold his home to Clay County for the courthouse site. *The Dakota Republican*, Vol. LII, No. ____ (Vermillion, S.D., June 13, 1912).
- ⁶⁴ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 351.
- ⁶⁵ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 355 (August 27, 1912).
- ⁶⁶ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 356 (August 28, 1912).
- ⁶⁷ *Vermillion Plain Talk*, 29th year, No.47 (Vermillion, S.D., November 7, 1912).
- ⁶⁸ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 378 and 382 (January 9, 1913 and January 13, 1913).
- ⁶⁹ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 382 (January 13, 1913) and 387-389 (February 18-19, 1913).
- ⁷⁰ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 390 (February 24, 1913) and *Vermillion Plain Talk*, 30th Year, No. 10, (Vermillion, S.D., February 27, 1913).
- ⁷¹ Photo from the Clay County Historical Society, Vermillion, SD
- ⁷² Photo from the Clay County Historical Society, Vermillion, SD
- ⁷³ Photo from the Clay County Historical Society, Vermillion, SD
- ⁷⁴ Photo from the Clay County Historical Society, Vermillion, SD
- ⁷⁵ Photo from the Clay County Historical Society, Vermillion, SD
- ⁷⁶ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 398 and 402.
- ⁷⁷ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 404.
- ⁷⁸ *Vermillion Plain Talk*, 30th Year, No. 18, (Vermillion, S.D., April 24, 1913).
- ⁷⁹ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 405 (May 6, 1913).
- ⁸⁰ *Vermillion Plain Talk*, 30th Year, No. 27, (, Vermillion, S.D., June 26, 1913).
- ⁸¹ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 412. Jerry and Donna Schafer report that their home on Canby Street in Vermillion was built out of the salvage from that courthouse building.
- ⁸² Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 414 (July 1, 1913).
- ⁸³ Clay County Commissioner's minutes, volume 5, page 427 (October 7, 1913).
- ⁸⁴ *The Dakota Republican*, Vol. LIII, No.15(Vermillion, South Dakota, April 10, 1913).
- ⁸⁵ Photo from the W.H. Over Museum, Vermillion, SD
- ⁸⁶ Photo from the Clay County Historical Society, Vermillion, SD
- ⁸⁷ Doolittle and Torma, "National Register: Clay County Courthouse," section 7
- ⁸⁸ Doolittle and Torma, "National Register: Clay County Courthouse," section 8 and Dedication Plaque in hallway of Public Safety addition.
- ⁸⁹ Photo from the Clay County Historical Society, Vermillion, SD
- ⁹⁰ Photo from the Clay County Historical Society, Vermillion, SD
- ⁹¹ Photo from the Clay County Historical Society, Vermillion, SD



Newspaper Clipping April 10, 1913 - from the Dakota Republican

ABOUT THE ARCHITECT

Lloyde D. Willis

The Clay County Courthouse was designed by Lloyd D. Willis of Omaha, Nebraska. Little is known about Willis and there are no known pictures. He was active as an architect in Omaha from 1909 until 1915. In 1909 he was a partner in the architecture firm of Willis and Frankfurt with Henry D. Frankfurt. The firm listed offices in Omaha and Columbus, Nebraska.

Based on listings in City Directories, it is evident that Willis embarked on a solo practice starting in 1909 when he is listed Lloyd D. Willis, Architect and Investments with an office in the New York Life Building. In 1912 he was listed solely as an architect and he maintained an office in the City National Bank Building. The last mention of Willis is in the 1918 City Directory where it is noted that he is an architect and he enlisted.

There are 25 buildings attributed to Willis all dated from 1909 to 1915. There are 3 single family residences, 5 duplexes, 10 multifamily residences, 1 unknown building and 5 non-residential buildings. The five non-residential buildings are a school in Dunbar, Nebraska, the Jewell Schoolhouse in Bellevue, Nebraska, the North Side Christian Church (now the Paradise Baptist Church in Omaha, the Carnegie Library in Greenfield, Iowa, and the Clay County Courthouse in Vermillion. The Greenfield Carnegie Library, the Paradise Baptist Church and the Clay County Courthouse are still standing. It is interesting to note that at he was the owner of one of the apartment houses built in 1909 when he defined himself in the City Directory as both architect and investor.

Two of his buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

Clay County Courthouse, Vermillion, SD

3303 Poppleton, Omaha, NE In the Field Club Residential Historic District.

Following is a list of the known buildings designed by Willis.

3322 Woolworth Av. C. D. Armstrong Residence (1909)

1707-11 N. 31st St. Duplex (1909)

414 N. 41st Av. Duplex (1909)

144 S. 38th St. Colonial Hotel Apartments (1909)

3302-08 Poppleton Av. Quadruple House (1909)

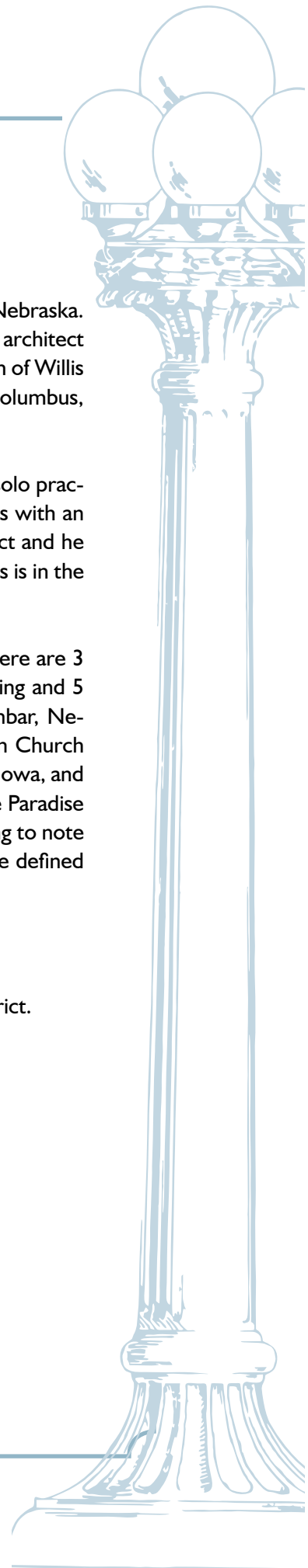
1323 N. 29th St. (1909)

1302 S. 33rd St. Quadruple House (1910)

1136 Park Av. Willis original owner, Maryland Apartment (1910)

3303 Poppleton Av. Multifamily (1910)

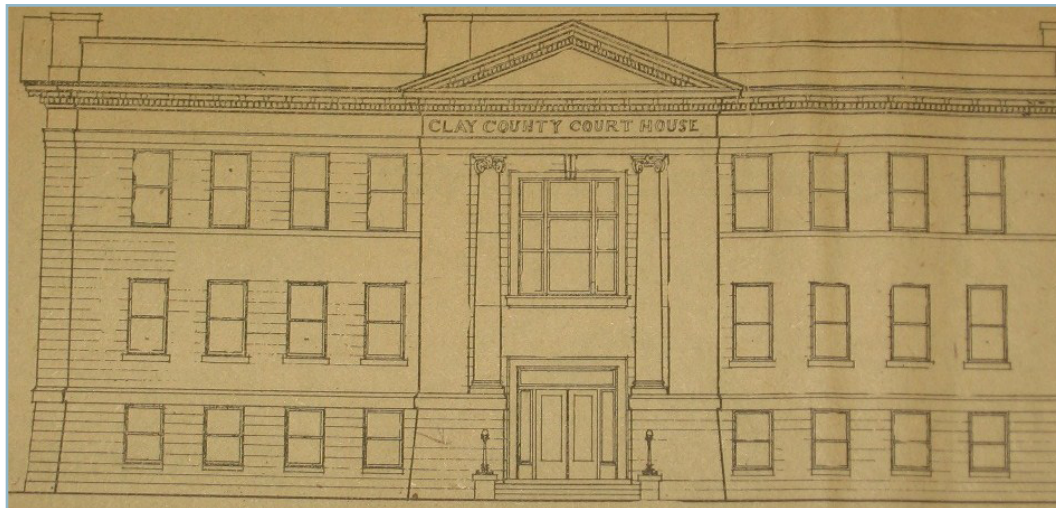
2124 Lothrop St. North Side Christian/Paradise Baptist Church (1911)



3105 Dewey Av. Lorraine Apartments (1911)
2913-15 Dodge St. Rowhouse (1911)
703 Bellevue Blvd. Bellevue, Jewell Schoolhouse (1911)
Clay County Courthouse, Vermillion SD (1912)
1148 Park Av. J. Lichtenwahnler, Virginia Apt. (1912)
3541 Woolworth Av. Russell I Harris Residence (1913)
420 Park Av. Pasadena Apartments (1913)
506 S. 31st St. Woodland Apartments (1913)
702 S. 38th St. Knickerbocker Apartments (1913)
Dunbar School, Dunbar Ne. (1914)
3310-12 Davenport St. Duplex (1914)
137-39 N. 38th St. Duplex (1914)
133-35 N. 38th St. Duplex (1915)
106 S. 52 St. (Marion Ward Residence) (1915)
Greenfield Carnegie Library, Greenfield IA (1916)

All buildings listed without a city are in located in Omaha.

Blueprints may be viewed in the Clay County Auditors' Office in the Courthouse.



Clay County Court House Drawing - July 13, 1911

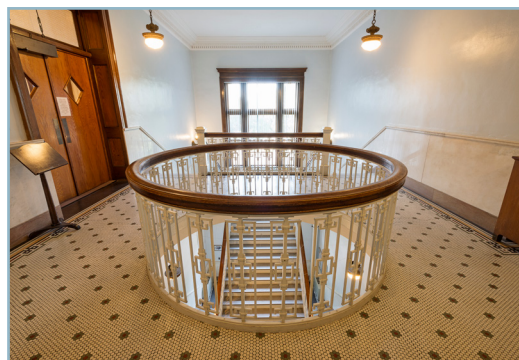
CURRENT PHOTO COLLECTION - 2012

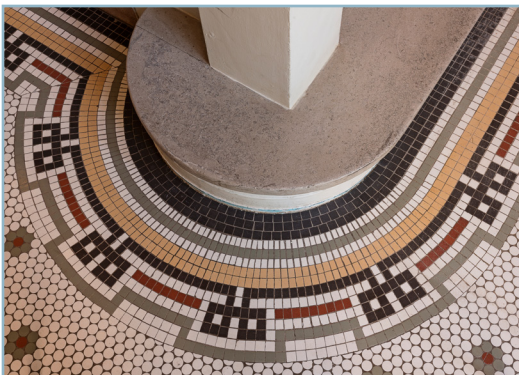


EXTERIOR VIEWS



INTERIOR VIEWS

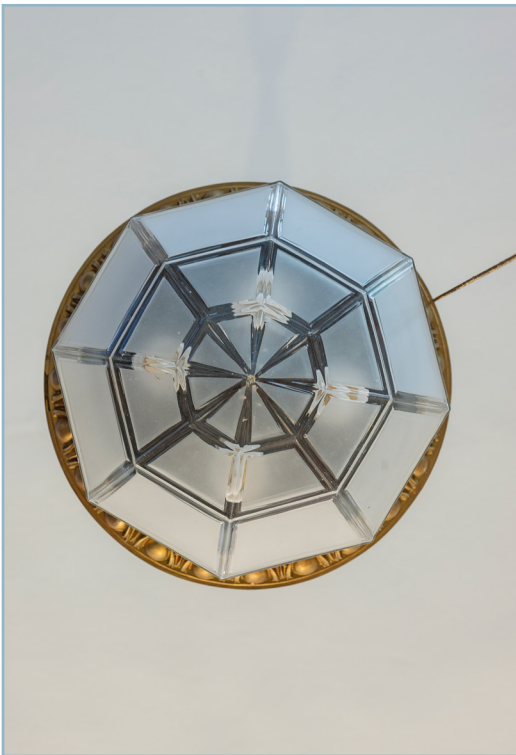






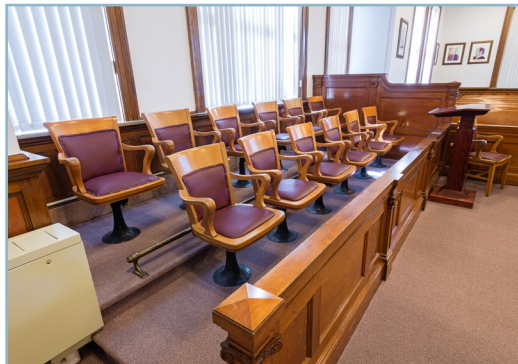
INTERIOR DETAILS

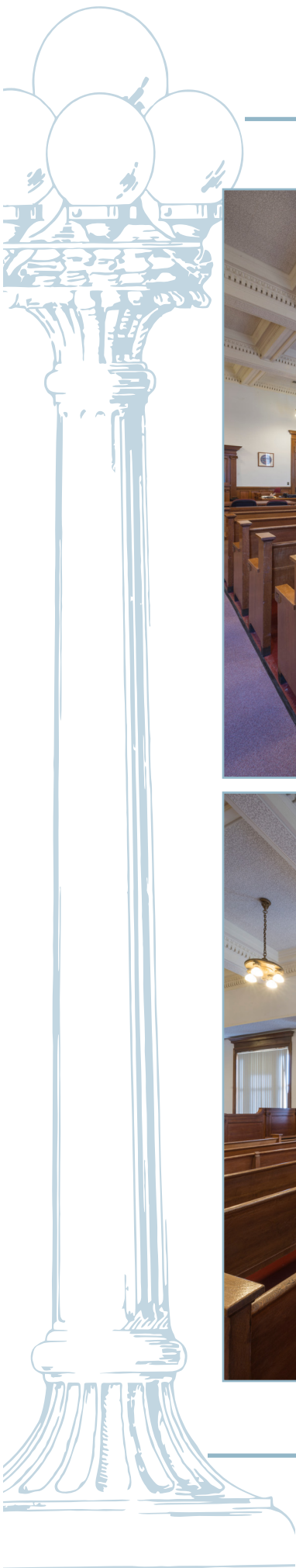




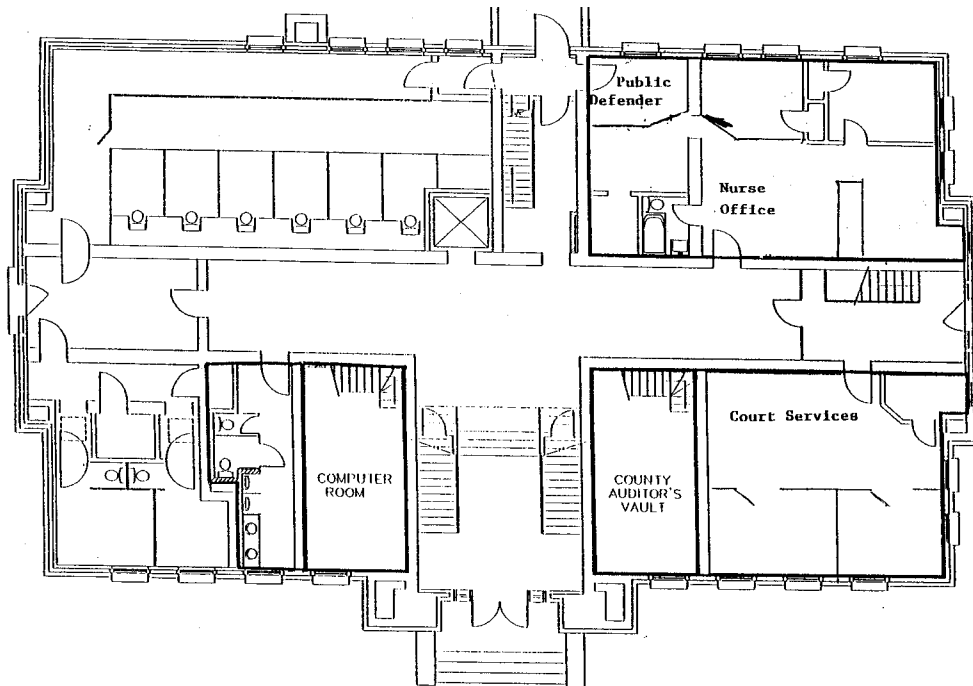
COURTROOM VIEWS



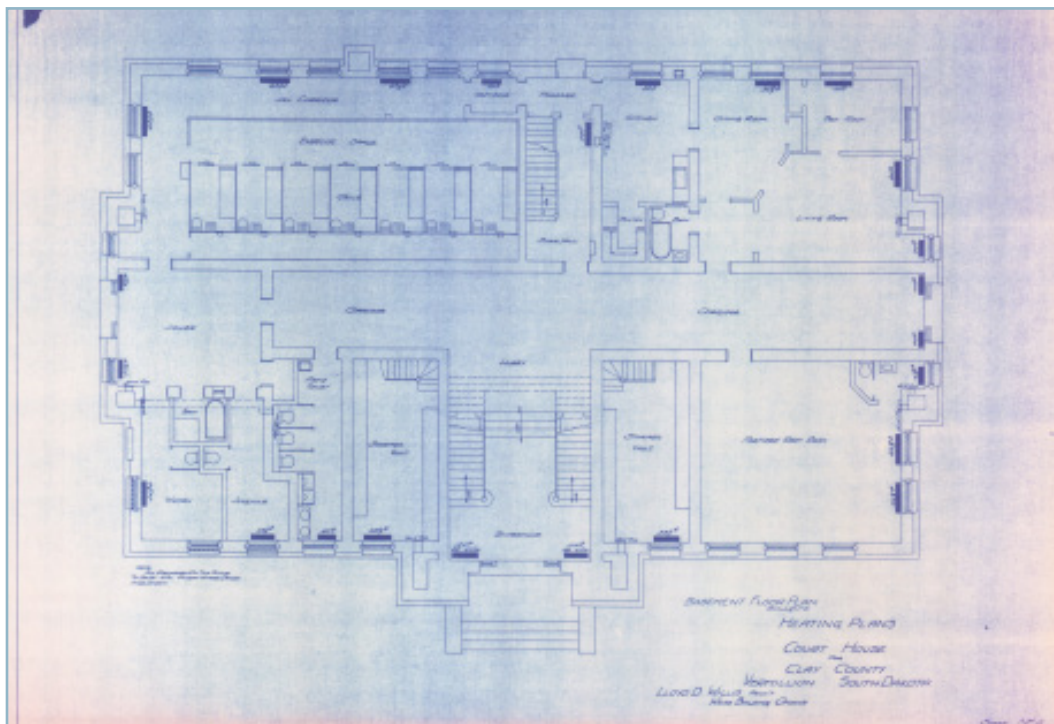


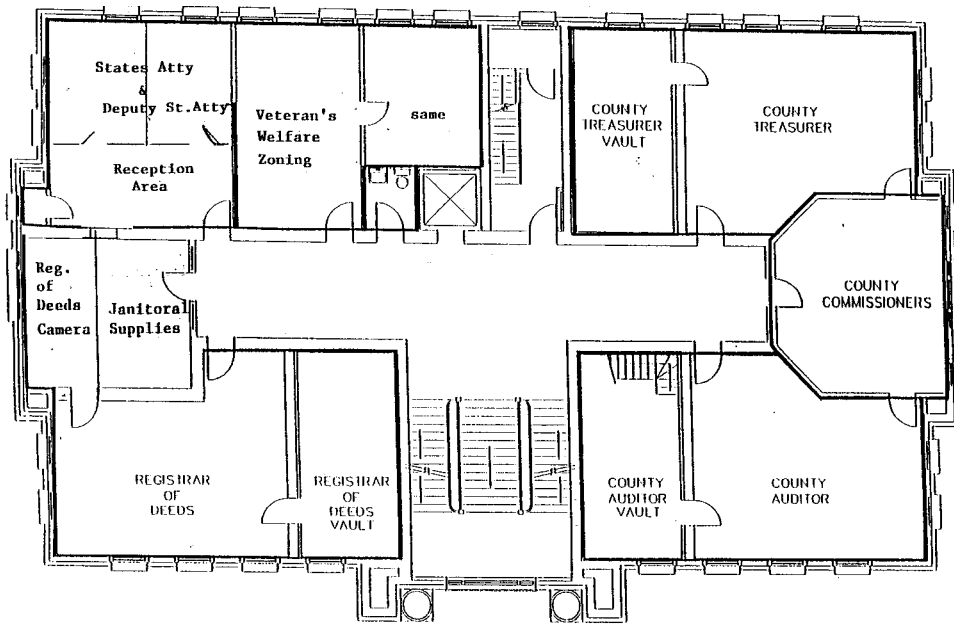


FLOOR PLANS

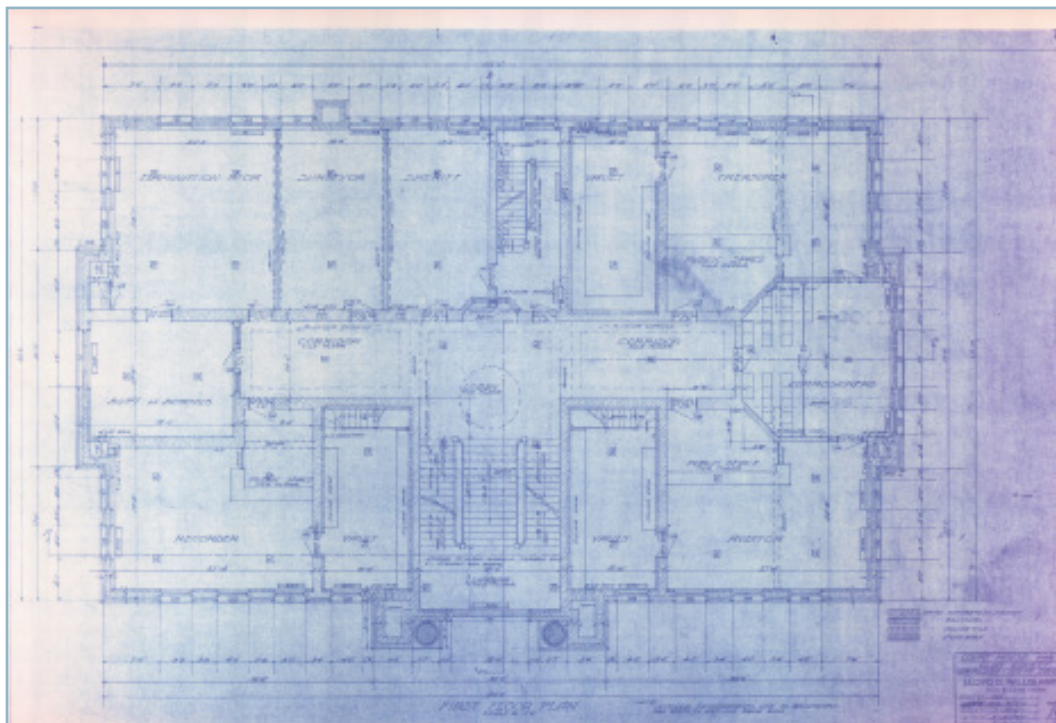


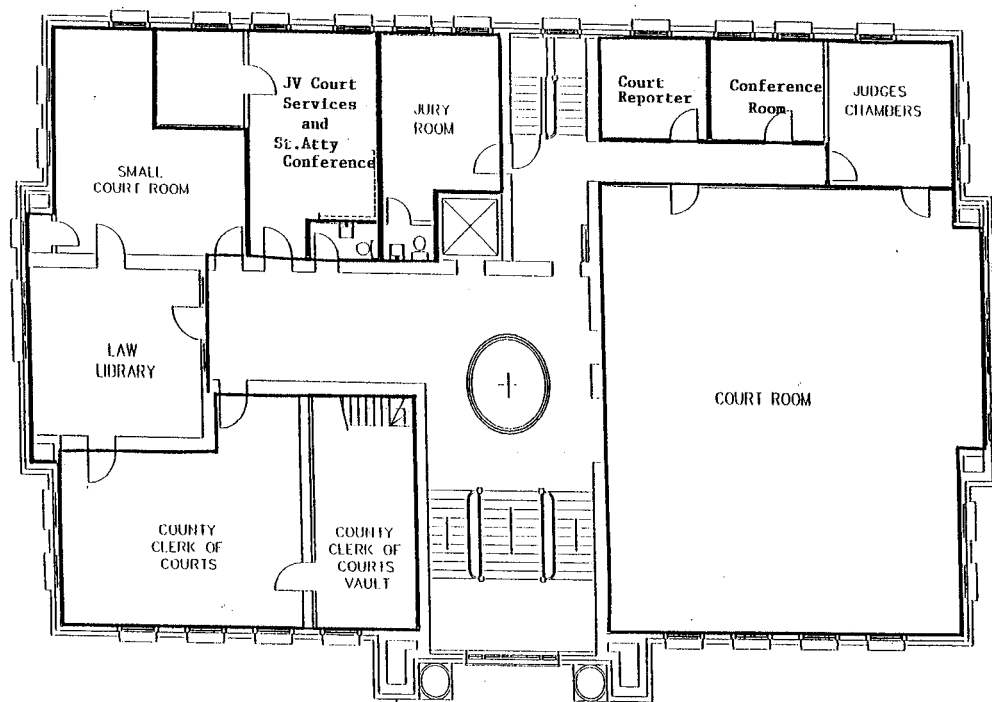
FIRST FLOOR PLAN - 2012
NOT TO SCALE



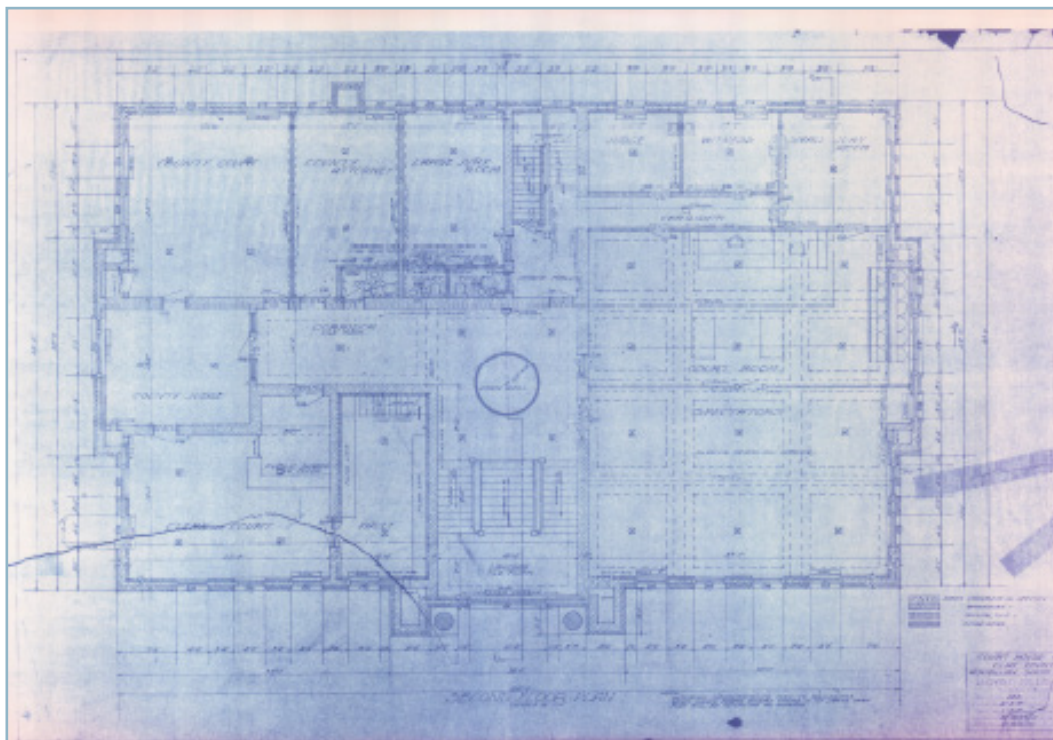


SECOND FLOOR PLAN - 2012
NOT TO SCALE



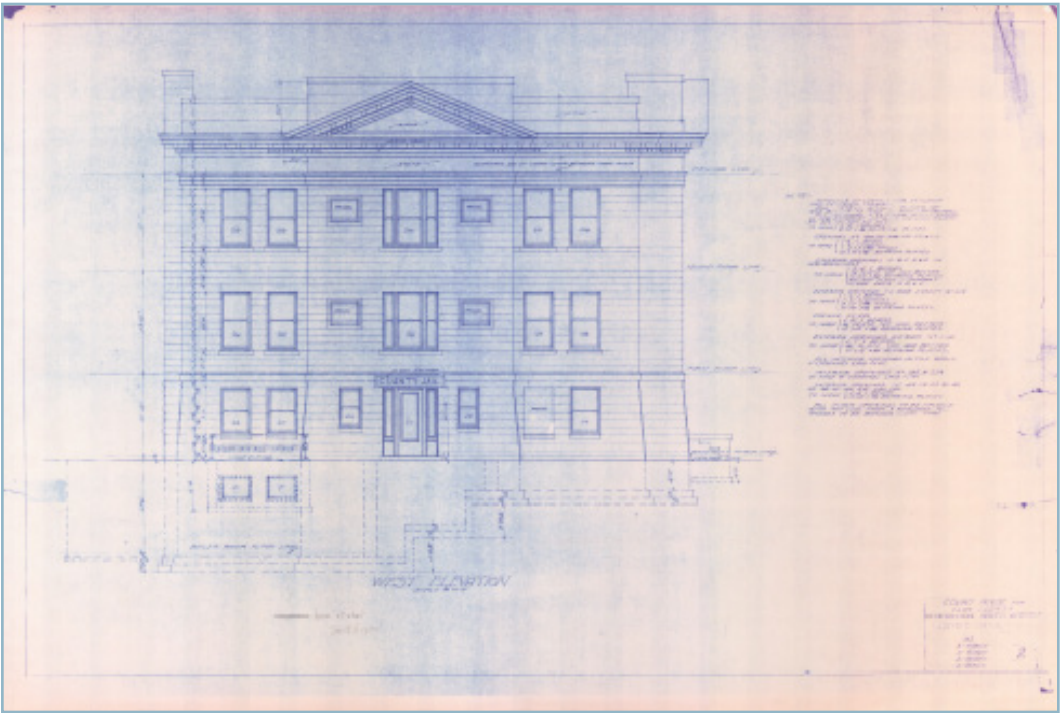
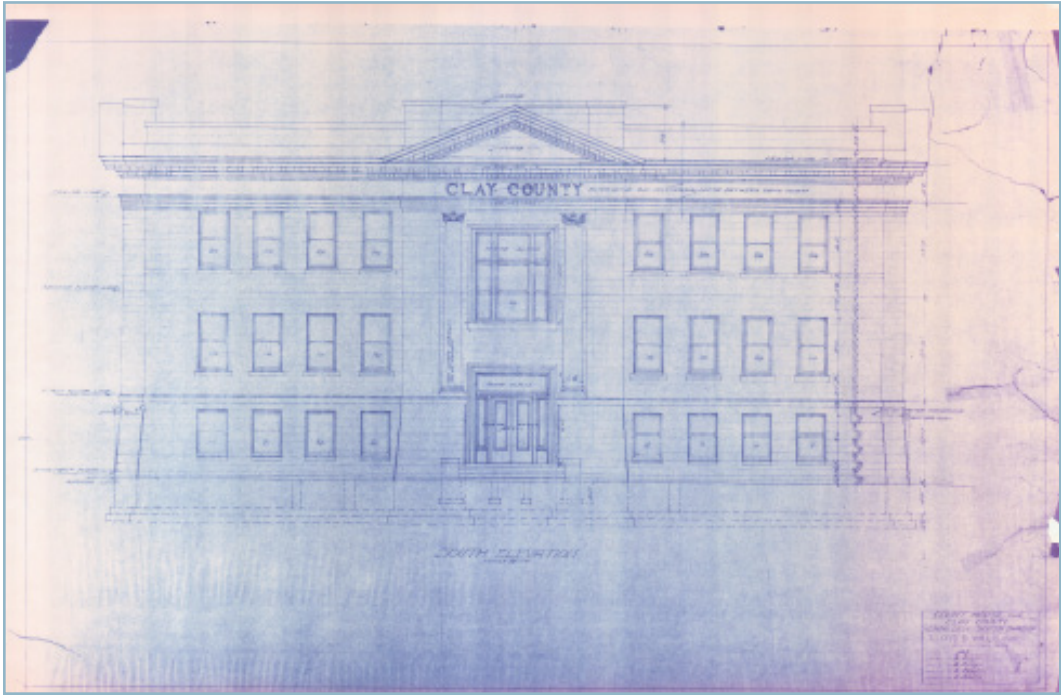


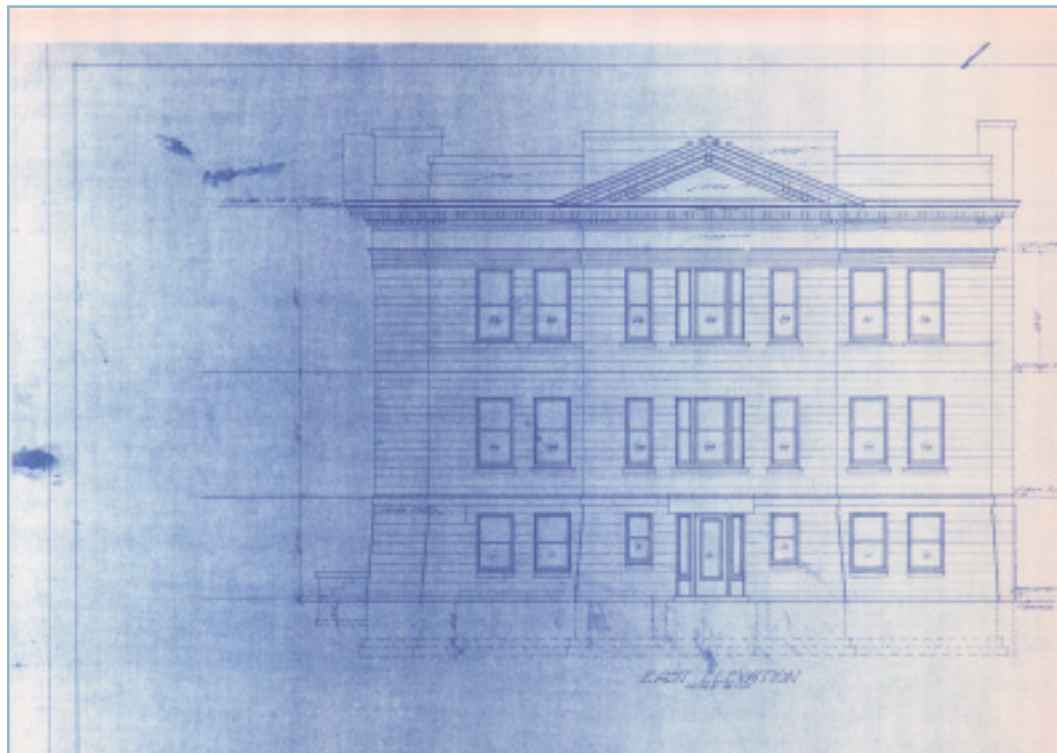
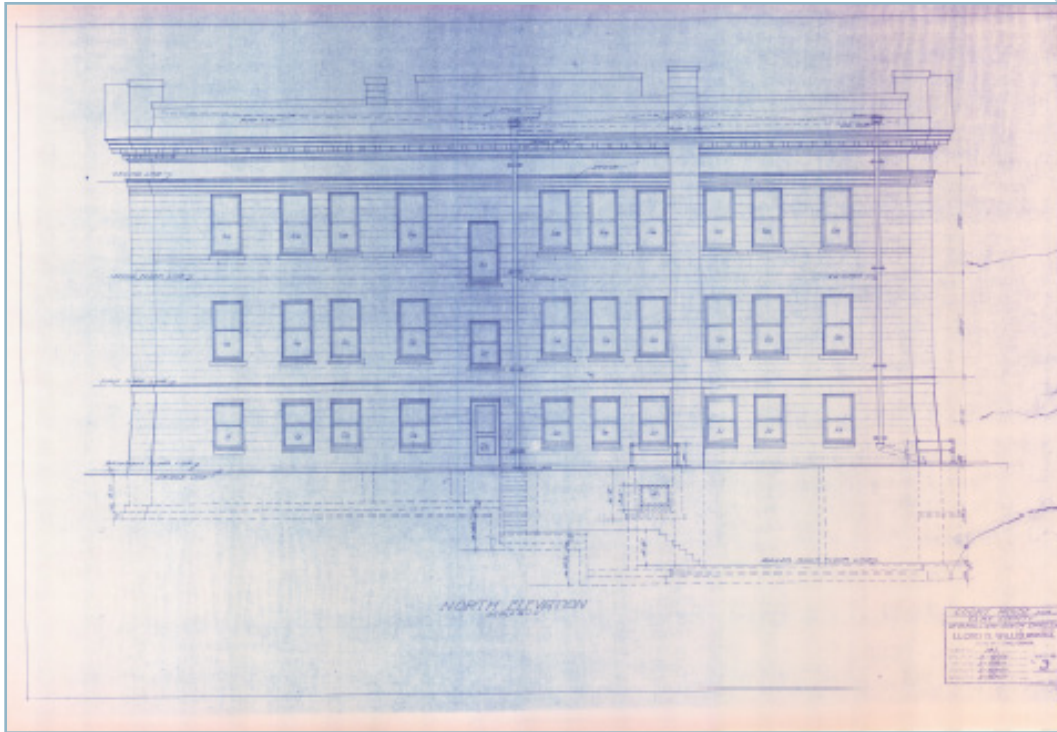
THIRD FLOOR PLAN - 2012
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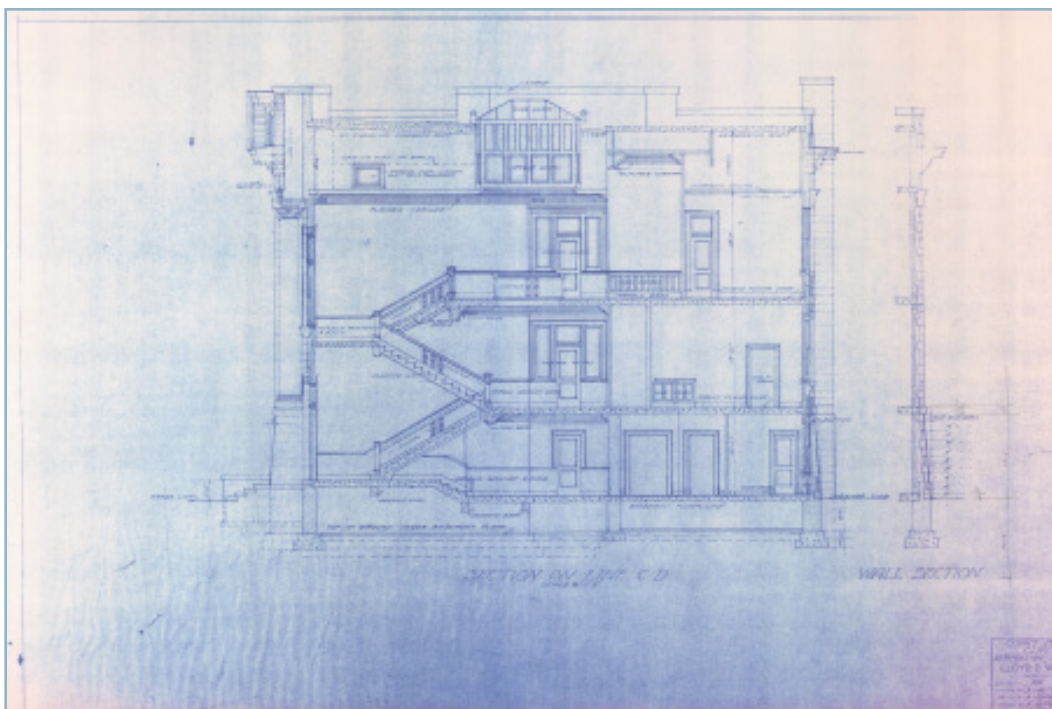
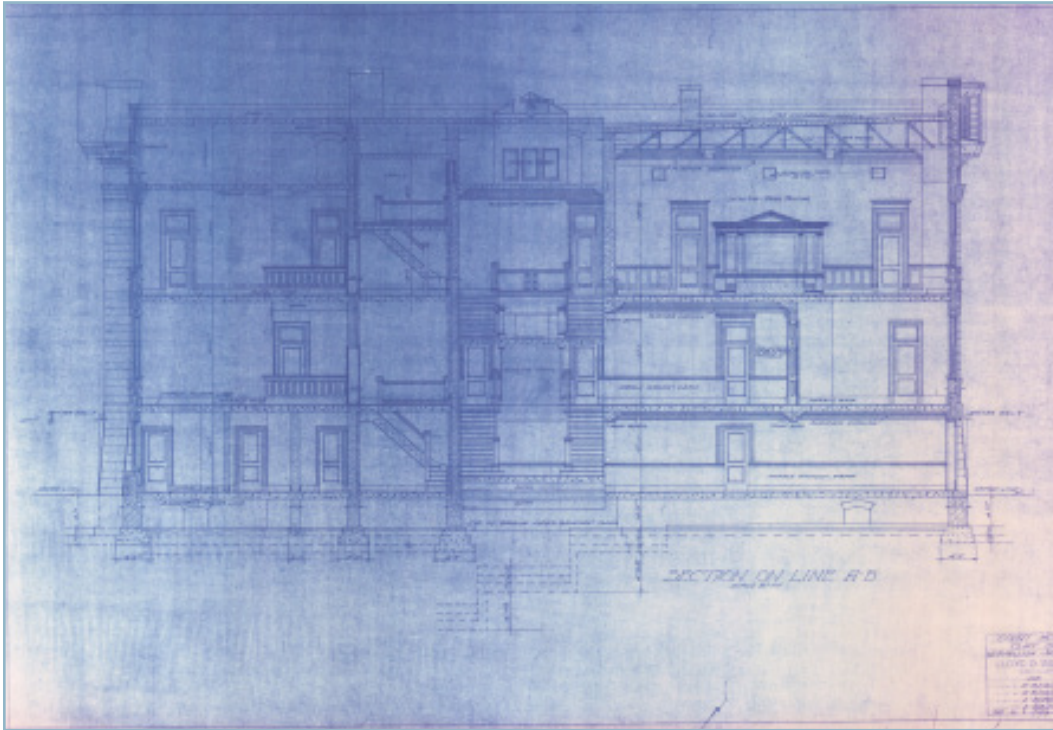


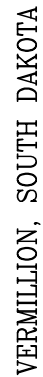
ELEVATIONS



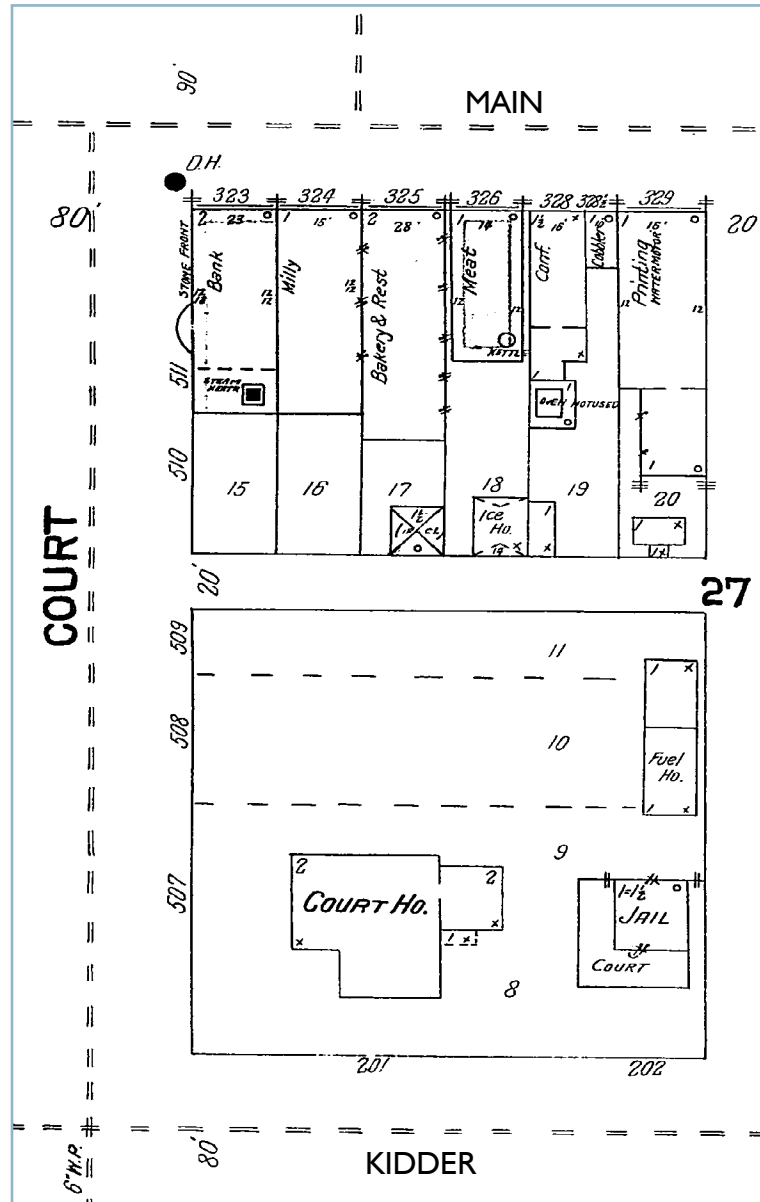


SECTIONS





1903 SANBORN MAP COURTHOUSE NO. 2



1939 SANBORN MAPS COURTHOUSE NO. 3

