

WASHINGTON

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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date entered

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Edgar County Courthouse

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Town Square, Main Street not for publication

city, town Paris vicinity of Edgar congressional district 22nd

state Illinois code 012 county Edgar code 045

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Board of Supervisors

street & number Edgar County Courthouse

city, town Paris vicinity of Edgar state Illinois

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Clerk's and Recorder's Office, County Courthouse

street & number Main Street

city, town Paris state Illinois

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Illinois Historic Structures Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date October, 1974 federal state county local

depository for survey records Illinois Dept. of Conservation, Historic Sites Division

city, town Springfield state Illinois

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Edgar County Courthouse is a two story, Romanesque Revival structure, constructed of brick, and reinforced concrete. The "wedding cake" tower, painted gray, is of galvanized iron. The tower clock was added shortly after construction ended for a cost of \$1000. A statue of Justice, facing west, tops the tower.

The building is, in essence, octagonal in shape, consisting of four sides (facing north, south, east and west) and four main entryways (facing northeast, southeast, north, west and southwest). Each of the four sides consists of three parts - two terminal towers and a central flat facade topped by a steeply pitched gable. The dormers located in the hipped roof of each terminal tower are medieval in character. Relief carving and stone brackets are in the gable points and below the cornice. The two stories are marked by tall windows, topped with relieving arches on the second floor and by squares on the first floor. The tower is three tiered, the two lower tiers are square while the upper one is octagonal. Each side of the upper tier is topped with a steeply pitched gable. The hipped roof of red slate and tinwork is original.

The cornerstone was laid on November 5, 1891. Construction was completed in 1893 for a total cost of \$122,890.90. According to the architect's specifications the main building was of blue-amherst stone while the porch floors and steps were of Kasota limestone. The arches were of brick and interior floors marble. Carvings ordered for the exterior of the building include lion heads, medallions, entablatures, and datestones. The dome was of galvanized iron on a frame. Obtuse spouts and cement catch basins were ordered for the dome. The "sloping roofs" were covered with red slate and all gutters were painted red. The statue of Justice held scales gilded with gold leaf.

The exterior has not changed to any great degree since constructed. Aluminum windows were added in 1969. In 1970 an entryway of aluminum and glass doors was added at the lower level of the north facade to provide access for the handicapped. Sometime before 1940, Justice lost her scales in a windstorm and they were never retrieved.

Inside the building vaults and offices are located on the lower level. A courtroom and offices are on the main floor and additional courtrooms and jury rooms occupy the second floor. Interior ceilings were originally vaulted and covered with tin. These are still visible on the lower level and the original tin ceiling remains in the Treasurer's office. Four large, original murals on the second floor were recently restored through the efforts of the Edgar County Historical Society. Most of the offices and courtrooms have been remodeled and suspended ceilings added. An elevator was installed in the center of the building in 1970.

The courthouse is located in the public square on land donated by Samuel Vance in 1823. At a June, 1823, meeting of the Board of County Commissioners, the boundaries of the public square were laid out with each side being 310 feet 9 inches and the total area being two acres. Four streets surrounding the square were also laid out. The present courthouse is the third such building to be located on this site.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1891-1893

Builder/Architect Henry Elliot, architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Edgar County Courthouse is a fine example of the Romanesque Revival style of architecture popular in public building design during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The overall massiveness of the building, the heavy rough hewn stone, the terminal towers, medieval elements, & subdued carving are indicative of the style. The unusual wedding cake tower distinguishes the building from other Romanesque Revival structures of the period. Since a courthouse is deemed representative of a county by the people of that county, it was necessary that the structure conform to the "right" style or form. Courthouses had to have a tower and the architect for the Edgar County Courthouse complied, albeit by combining two different architectural styles in one building. The Edgar County Courthouse may be seen, then, as indicative of the ways in which the people of Edgar County viewed both themselves and their public buildings. The present structure occupies the only site ever used as a seat of justice in this county. Thus it has always been the scene of political activity, the focal point of the community, and the center of the downtown business area.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Edgar County Historical Society, Prairie Progress: A History of Edgar County, 1880-1975 (Dallas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1976).

Elliot, Henry, Specifications of the Fire Proof Courthouse (Jacksonville, 1891).

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property two acres

Quadrangle name PARIS SOUTH

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	6	4	4	0	2	8	0	4	3	8	A	6	8	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Located in the Town Square, center of Paris township, bounded by Main, Central, Court, and Wood streets. The area is 310 feet 9 inches square.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth A. Carvey

organization Department of History
Historical Administration Major

date January 12, 1981

street & number Eastern Illinois University

telephone 217-581-3310

city or town Charleston

state Illinois 61920

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Director, Department of Conservation date 4/9/81

For HCRS use only I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	date
Keeper of the National Register	date
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	

ILLINOIS HISTORIC SITES SURVEY INVENTORY

E-H-17

200339

1. Name of site:

Common Edgar County Court House
Historic

2. Location:

Street and number Bounded by 100th, Main, Court, and Central Streets
City or Town Paris Zip Code 61944 Township Range Section 1/4 Section
County Edgar

3. Classification:

Category (check one) Integrity (check one)
() District (x) Building () Altered (x) Unaltered
() Site () Structure () Moved (x) Original Site

4. Ownership

() Private (x) Occupied
(x) Public () Unoccupied
() Preservation work in Progress

Access to Public

(x) Yes (x) Restricted () Unrestricted () No

Present Use (check one or more)

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

5. Ownership of Property

Owner's name Edgar County Phone Number
Street and number
City or Town Paris
State Illinois County Edgar Zip Code 61944

6. Description

Condition
(x) Excellent () Good () Fair () Deteriorated () Ruins () Unexposed
Is there a program of preservation underway? () Yes (x) No

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)
(x) Illinois Middle (1850-1900)
(x) Illinois Late (1900-present)
() Famous People (give names & dates)

GOVERNMENT



8. **Specific Date:** Construction begun 1891 and completed 1893.

Areas of significance (check one or more of the following)

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

Brief statement of significance: (include all names and dates.) Use additional sheets if necessary. The location of county-wide political activity in Edgar County since 1893.

9. Form prepared by:

Name and title: _____ Date: May 1973
Organization: Keith A. Sculle
Illinois Historic Sites Survey
Street and number: 1505 W. Kirby, Apt. 3
Champaign, Illinois 61820
City or town: _____ County _____ Zip Code _____
Phone Number: _____

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, published references to the site for which forms are being completed. If a bibliography can be compiled, it will greatly deduct from the Survey's task.

Bibliography

- Robertson, Robert, Of Whales and Men. New York, Alfred K. Knopf, Inc., 1954.
Souvenir History of Edgar County, 1823-1893. Paris, Illinois: U. O. Colson, 1892, pp. 20-32.