

Jackson County Courthouse (Jacksonville Museum)  
North Fifth Street between C Street and D Street  
Jacksonville  
Jackson County  
Oregon

HABS No. ORE-69

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20243

APPENDUM  
FOLLOWS

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. ORE-69

JACKSON COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
(NOW JACKSONVILLE MUSEUM)

Location: North Fifth Street between C and D Streets, Jacksonville, Jackson County, Oregon

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The Jackson County Courthouse--which now houses the Jacksonville Museum--was constructed in 1883-84 to replace a frame structure which stood on the same site. During the early years of Jackson County's development, the courthouse was any building that was temporarily used for holding court; during the 1856 court term this was the Methodist Church.<sup>1</sup> The County Commissioners saw the need for a building, but their only recourse was to authorize various officers to rent suitable rooms.<sup>2</sup> In July 1856, they rented a building from the Reverend T. F. Royal, at the same time appointing Thomas Pyle, William G. T'Vault, and William Hoffman to recommend a location for the courthouse.<sup>3</sup>

Although the first plat of the town indicated that the "Court House Square" would be the north side of California Street between Third and Fourth Streets,<sup>4</sup> the courthouse was never actually built on that lot. Instead the county and Warren Lodge No. 10, Accepted Free and Ancient Masons, shared a building that stood on the lot occupied by the present building.<sup>5</sup> A simply designed structure, it had a gabled facade and was sheathed with clapboards. The County Commissioners paid Berry and Kerr, contractors, \$500.00 for building the courthouse and \$83.50 for materials to underpin the building; presumably this was the partial cost of the building assumed by the county.<sup>6</sup>

In 1865, James Cluggage deeded the land that the Courthouse stood on to the Commissioners of Jackson County.<sup>7</sup> In 1867, the Masons gave up their rights in the building to the Commissioners--along with the carpet on the floors.<sup>8</sup> The county had been making numerous improvements to the building and grounds--which included the addition of a stone vault,<sup>9</sup> carpeting<sup>10</sup> and general refinishing,<sup>11</sup> new steps and fences,<sup>12</sup> and the planting of young maple trees.<sup>13</sup> But not until 1871 did the Commissioners order that "all sessions of this Board be held in the Court House of the County."<sup>14</sup> In addition to housing the Commissioners, the courts, and the county offices, space in the building was also rented to private lawyers.<sup>15</sup> The building must have been very crowded and overused, judging from a Democratic Times article of 1871: "This dilapidated old structure is a disgrace to the county."<sup>16</sup> Not until 1882, however, did the Commissioners discuss the need for a new building:

Now on this day August 10, 1882 the Court having taken into consideration the propriety of erecting a Court House and whereas there exists a public necessity that said building should be erected without unnecessary delay, the Court having duly considered the matter,

It is ordered by the Court that said Court House be erected in the town of Jacksonville and that the plans and specifications for the erecting of said Court House be considered at an adjourned meeting of the Court to be held at the usual place of holding said County Court on Thursday the 17th day of August 1882 at 10 o'clock A.M. of said day.<sup>17</sup>

Although G. E. Payne of Ashland was appointed as architect, his role seems to have been secondary to the opinions of the Board of Commissioners in the overall design of the building. They wanted a brick structure, ninety-two feet long, sixty feet wide, and two stories high, with fourteen-foot ceilings on the ground floor; the second floor was to have a courtroom sixty-eight feet long, forty feet wide, and twenty feet high, with jury rooms adjoining.<sup>18</sup> A diagram was accepted, and Payne was appointed to draft detailed plans and to estimate costs.<sup>19</sup> In September the ground occupied by the existing courthouse was judged the best location for a new building,<sup>20</sup> and bids for excavation and the foundation were let.<sup>21</sup> George Holt was awarded the contract, with the cost set at \$6,500; he was to use stone from Kanaka Flats on the outskirts of the town.<sup>22</sup> L. P. S. Marsh was given the construction contract for \$32,000, with the date of completion set as February 10, 1884.<sup>23</sup> Marsh used a number of local merchants to supply materials and labor; Gustav Karewski supplied the lumber;<sup>24</sup> S. J. Day, the vault front;<sup>25</sup> and Vaughn and Carr, the brick.<sup>26</sup> Byers and Gearin were employed as plasterers.<sup>27</sup>

Local newspapers detailed the construction of the building. The cornerstone was laid on June 23, 1883. Adam Schmitt's bank provided music for the occasion, and Judge Day delivered an address on the building's size and cost. The cornerstone, contained a number of items, including "an upper set of artificial teeth, by Will Jackson, dentist."<sup>28</sup> In August, the walls were finished and the frame of the tower was in place.<sup>29</sup> By the end of 1883, the basic structure was completed,<sup>30</sup> and in March 1884 the building was finished and turned over to the Commissioners.<sup>31</sup> The cost, including the architect's fees, the furniture, and the out-buildings, was \$29,803.34--\$2,196.66 less than the contract price.<sup>32</sup> A fence had to be constructed, new desks ordered, lamps installed, windows hung, and matting provided for the floors.

The rooms in the new building were arranged with offices on the ground floor and courtroom, jury rooms, and judge's office on the second floor. The first room on the south side of the hall was the office of the Circuit Judge of the District Court; the next room was assigned to the Surveyor and School Superintendent; the room next to that, to the District Attorney; the last two rooms were reserved for the Sheriff. Across the hall, opposite the Circuit Judge, was the County Treasurer; next to the Treasurer, the County Clerk; and finally, the County Judge and Commissioners. On the second floor, the room south of the staircase was the grand jury room; the room opposite, the trial jury room and witness room.<sup>33</sup> In October 1884 the Treasurer was ordered to vacate his office, and it was rented to Paine Paige Prim for his law office.<sup>34</sup>

The building was used as a courthouse until 1927, when the county government was removed to Medford. It is now the main museum building and administrative office of the Jacksonville Museum and Southern Oregon Historical Society.

FOOTNOTES

1

Jackson County Commissioners' Journals, December 2, 1856.

2

Ibid., July 11, 1854, and July 9, 1856, for example.

3

Ibid., July 9, 1856, and August 17, 1856. The building owned by Rev. Mr. Royal has not been identified; it is certainly not the Methodist Church, since he did not own that building personally.

4

G. Sherman, "Plat of Jacksonville," 1852.

5

Jackson County Commissioners' Journals, March 7, 1859.

6

Ibid., March 7, 1859.

7

Jackson County Deeds, November 29, 1865. Cluggage was paid a nominal \$1.00 for the lot.

8

Ibid., October 10, 1867.

9

Jackson County Commissioners' Journals, November 5, 1866; the vault was built by G. H. Young, and the iron door was imported from San Francisco by Sachs Brothers.

10

Ibid., February 5, 1868.

11

Ibid., February 7, 1866; Linn and Hall were paid for furnishing new chairs; August 4, 1868, Louis Spetzold paid \$19.00 for papering offices; April 7, 1880, J. T. Roloson paid \$4.50 for repairing the gate to the courthouse yard.

12

Ibid., October 1, 1866, and December 5, 1877.

13

Ibid., June 9, 1869, and March 8, 1871.

14

Ibid., July 11, 1871.

15

Ibid., February 7, 1872, James D. Fey was billed for two years' rent for an office.

16

The Democratic Times, December 30, 1871.

17

Jackson County Commissioners' Journals, August 10, 1882.

18

Ibid., August 18, 1882.

19

Ibid., August 18, 1882. Although referred to as the "architect" of the Court House, Payne was probably a draftsman, as the Journals explicitly state.

20

Ibid., September 7, 1882.

21

Ibid., September 7, 1882.

22

Ibid., September 16, 1882. Other bids were received from N. F. Steadman for \$7,700 and from G. H. Young and Jacob Smidling for \$11,500, which included dressed stone for the door and window sills.

23

Ibid., December 7, 1882. Bids had been advertised twice. The first time, the bids for the construction of the walls only were thought too high. The second time, bids were requested for the complete building, and two were received: David Linn bid \$34,500, and L. P. S. Marsh bid \$2,500 less and received the contract.

24

Ibid., April 4, 1883.

25

Ibid., June 8, 1883.

26

Ibid., July 7, 1883.

27

Ibid., November 8, 1883.

28

The Democratic Times, June 29, 1883.

29

Ibid., August 24, 1883; August 31, 1883.

30

Ibid., December 14, 1883; December 21, 1883; December 28, 1883.

31

Jackson County Commissioners' Journals, March 7, 1884.

32

Ibid., September 3, 1884.

33

Ibid., July 2, 1884.

34

Ibid., August 7, 1884.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. Description of Exterior:

1. Number of stories: The building has two stories, a high attic, and a basement.
2. Number of bays: The front facade is three bays wide, with a central projecting bay. Each bay contains a grouping of two or three windows, rather than a single opening.
3. Layout, shape: The building is I-shape and set perpendicularly to the street. The original symmetrical form has been slightly obscured by additions at the northeast corner of the building.
4. Wall construction, finish, color: Above the stone foundation, the walls are laid up in brick with a natural finish. The foundation blocks are dressed and capped by a stone water table.
5. Porches: The central bay of the main facade has a one-story wooden porch with a gabled roof. There are three supports at each corner--a square, panelled pier with an unfluted column at each inner face. At the wall, a pilaster re-

places the square pier and is paired with a column. All the supporting elements of the porch are wooden and are in the Corinthian order. On the rear facade, there is a porch of similar but simpler design.

6. Openings:

- a. Doorway: The doorway contains double wooden doors of Italianate character with a rectangular transom light above. The entire doorway is framed with pilasters and has a bracketed cornice.
- b. Windows: The walls are articulated with vertical strips and horizontal bands that divide the surface into panels. In the center of each panel a large double window is framed under a segmental brick arch. The arch is emphasized by a hood molding with a keystone and corbelled brackets. Within each opening two round headed windows are separated by a "Florentine" central mullion. The central mullion and wooden window frames are molded into round shafts with small capitals. Eastlakeian incised ornament fills the spandrels. The upper sash has a semicircular head; both upper and lower are divided into four large panes. The central window arrangement is similar, but the arch is wider; a triple window has a round-arched sash flanked by segmentally arched sash. The sill is lower and the arch rises higher than the flanking windows; therefore, the sash are triple hung, each with four large panes of glass. All of the windows have stone sills.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape: The roof is a low hip, except for the pediment on the main facade.
- b. Cornice: A heavy wooden entablature is carried around the building. The base is marked by a heavy molding; above this, in the center of each section of the frieze, a projecting panel is incised with Eastlakeian ornament. Each section of cornice is marked by deep, scrolled brackets molded on the face and incised on the sides; there are small corbels or modillions between the brackets. The deep boxed cornice is faced with a wide crown molding. Over the central bay of the facade, the roof is pedimented. The full cornice is carried along the sloping sides of the pediment; the base of the pediment is marked by a fascia supported by brackets and corbels which continue across the facade; and the tympanum contains a round medallion with star-shaped boss, flanked by raised panels of incised Eastlakeian ornament.

c. Tower: On the central axis a square lantern rises slightly behind the plane of the facade. Its brick pedestal supports a bracketed cornice. Between the brackets are rectangular raised panels; the bed molding of the cornice is denticulated. The brackets themselves have a console shape, with molded faces. Above the cornice, a low base is capped by a projecting molding. This molding carries the pilasters that support the pediment over the window on each face of the lantern; it also carries the corner pilasters that support the roof cornice. The corner pilasters have scrolled bases and panelled faces; the capitals are bracketed and carry a deep cornice with a wide crown molding; the bases and the capitals are both decorated with Eastlakeian incised ornament. The sides of the lantern are sheathed with boards painted white. In the center of each side is a round-headed double-hung window with four panes in each sash. The pilasters flanking the window have bracket capitals carrying a projecting cornice, the center section of which is pedimented. The pediments rise high above the heads of the windows, which are treated as an arch with voussoirs and keystone. The spandrels contain Eastlakeian incised ornament.

B. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans and staircase:

- a. First floor: The front doorway gives access to a vestibule, from which a central hall runs directly through the building with offices on either side. The double staircase starts in the vestibule, with curving runs along either side wall leading to a landing over the doorway. From the landing, a single straight run leads to the second-floor courtroom. The large polygonal newel posts taper slightly inward before terminating in a large, flat, round cap. There are either one or two turned balusters to each radial tread supporting a molded handrail.
- b. Second floor: There is a landing at the top of the stairs, with two small rooms to either side, and the courtroom facing. The courtroom is an irregular octagonal shape.

2. Flooring: The present flooring is tile, most of it probably of asbestos composition. The original floors were of wood covered with mats.

3. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls are wainscoted with vertical boarding capped by a round molding. The walls above are plastered and painted. The courtroom ceiling is coved, with a band of molding at the base and at the top of the coved section.
4. Openings: The openings have heavy Italianate surrounds that have been painted a dark shade.
5. Fixtures: In the southwest room, an original fireplace and mantel survive. The mantel is carved in a generally Eastlakeian style.

C. Site and Surroundings:

The building sits in the middle of the courthouse square on the site of an earlier building. The square is landscaped with large trees and shrubs and is surrounded by a low stone wall. The building faces North Fifth Street. On the east side of the lot, two one-story, frame buildings have been erected for use as offices and additional display space for the Jacksonville Museum. There have always been other buildings on the property--most notably, a jail and a small frame office building that has since been moved across Sixth Street to a new site.

D. Original Appearance:

Originally the porch had a flat roof with a balustrade; the ghost of the end baluster is still visible on the facade. The wooden trim on the exterior was probably painted a light hue but not white, and perhaps some of the detailing was given a slightly darker tone. The major partition walls on the interior remain, although accounts of the offices on the first floor when the building was first occupied indicate a division into more rooms than at present. The two rooms on either side of the second-floor landing were originally jury rooms. During the nineteenth century, a wooden fence with gates surrounded the square.

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ADDENDUM TO  
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