UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

NAME

HISTORIC
(Old) Linn County Jail (preferred name)

AND/OR COMMON
City Hall

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
312 Main

CITY, TOWN Mound City

STATE Kansas

20 VICINITY OF

20 CODE

COUNTY Linn

107 CODE

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY ___DISTRICT

X BUILDING(S) ___PRIVATE

___STRUCTURE ___PUBLIC ACQUISITION

___SITE ___IN PROCESS

___OBJECT ___BEING CONSIDERED

OWNERSHIP

X PUBLIC ___PRIVATE

___UNOCCUPIED ___WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE ___YES: RESTRICTED

___YES: UNRESTRICTED ___NO

STATUS

X OCCUPIED ___AGRICULTURE ___MUSEUM

___COMMERCIAL ___PARK

___EDUCATIONAL ___PRIVATE RESIDEN

___ENTERTAINMENT ___RELIGIOUS

___GOVERNMENT ___SCIENTIFIC

___INDUSTRIAL ___TRANSPORTATION

___MILITARY ___OTHER

PRESENT USE

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME City of Mound City, Kansas

STREET & NUMBER 312 Main

CITY, TOWN Mound City

VICINITY OF Kansas 66056

STATE

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER Linn County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN Mound City

STATE Kansas 66056

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE None

DATE

__FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN
The old Linn County Jail is a two-story rectangular brick structure with a front gable facade facing south on Main street in Mound City. The exterior features of the building have been plainly articulated. Simple stone sills and lintels distinguish the rectangular windows and doors. A simple wooden boxed cornice and plain frieze board serve as the only other significant source of ornamentation. The brick walls of the structure measure 21 inches thick and have been painted tan. Adjacent to the west wall is a brick-faced garage that houses the city fire truck.

The old jail measures 27 feet by 34 feet. Its rectangular plan is divided into three basic functional units, two on the ground floor consisting of one room each and one on the second floor consisting of four connected rooms. The south space on the ground floor is an office/meeting room where the sheriff's office was located. The north space on the ground floor served as the jail area. The second story rooms provided living quarters for the sheriff.

The building's three functional units are not internally connected. Access to each is achieved through a distinct exterior entrance(s). The facade entrance gives access to the ground floor office, a rear door on the ground story leads to the old jail area, and two second story entrances, one at the east and one at the rear, provide access to the second story rooms. The second story door on the east is reached by a wooden stairway built along the east wall; the second story entrance to the rear presently lacks a stairway.

Like the building's doors, the fenestration, though disposed regularly, also conforms in placement and size to the multiple uses of the structure. The second story is provided with two moderately large two-over-two windows on each wall, while the south room on the ground floor displays a similar type of window to the south and, originally, to the west. The window treatments in these areas are designed to provide ample light for interior activity. The rest of the ground story elevation, except for the rear door and for a small window to the north end of the east wall measuring six inches by twenty-two inches and located six feet above the ground, is devoid of openings, suggesting that this area was used for a different purpose than were the other areas of the building. This impression is reinforced by the appearance of the jail door on the north which is fitted with both an outer latticed iron door and a heavy interior wood door.

Two chimneys straddle the roof ridge, one to the north and one to the south.

The historical character of the building is primarily conveyed by its exterior appearance—a stone date stone inscribed "1868" confirms suspicions concerning the structure's age. The portion of the interior that most vividly conveys the building's history is the old jail area where the walls retain their original iron facing (attached to iron plates imbedded in the brick walls and visible from the exterior) and where one of the original two cells retains all its original features. An iron flooring remains in each of the cell areas. In addition a solid six-inch hand-hewn beam running north-south supports the ceiling of the ground-floor rooms.
7.

Alterations:

While the old county jail retains a high percentage of its original features, certain changes have been made over the years:

1. The garage that was added to the west in the early 1960's is the most obvious alteration to the property. When it was added, the west window of the old sheriff's office was converted into a door.

2. The building has been painted tan.

3. The roof was covered with wood shingles in 1975 in the belief that the original roof would have been wood.

4. The iron bars have been removed from the east jail cell to facilitate use of this area for storage.
Built in 1867-1868, the Old Linn County Jail in Mound City has provided continuous governmental service to the people of the county and the community, first as a jail and then after 1903 as the City Hall of Mound City.

Linn county was organized in 1855 with the first county seat at Paris. After an 1859 election the county seat was moved to Mound City. In 1865 Mound City lost the county seat but regained it in 1866. Another series of county seat elections between 1871 and 1875 continued to reflect the intense community rivalries in Linn county. The issue of the county seat location was not permanently resolved until 1885.

As a border county adjoining Missouri, Linn county experienced much of the violence and lawlessness during the so-called "Bleeding Kansas" period and the Civil War. Peace came to the area as the war ended. With peace there came a westward migration in the U.S. Linn county's population jumped from 6,336 in 1860 to 12,174 in 1870. With the greater population came additional problems for the county and local governments. Linn county had no courthouse or jail facilities in 1867. (In fact, the first county courthouse was not built until 1887, and it was donated to the county by the citizens of Mound City. That building stands across the street from the old jail and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.) The nearest available place that lawbreakers could be jailed was at Lawrence. Evidently the costs of transporting prisoners back and forth for trials and hearings and paying for their care while confined was a substantial portion of Linn county's budget. Agitation developed in 1867 for constructing a facility at Mound City which would provide jail cells, an office and living quarters for the sheriff, and space that could be used for court.

Land for the jail was purchased by the county on April 15, 1867, for $90. Also in April the commission paid local contractor Alfred Babb $5.00 for drawing plans for the jail. By the end of May contractor Ezekial Bunn had evidently begun construction. The county commissioners' journal indicates payments to Bunn at intervals for work performed, such as $175 for foundation work in the summer and $1000 in August when the foundation was completed and first floor walls were up. At a meeting in September, 1867, the commissioners estimated it would cost an additional $3885 to complete the building.

The county jail was the first major governmental facility outside of a schoolhouse to be built in Mound City, and its progress was given a great deal of attention by the editor of the local newspaper, the Border Sentinel. The Sentinel reported on September 12, 1867:
"The jail is growing slowly, but surely and strong. The floor is spiked and the cell walls taking form and comeliness. Mr. Dewey is doing a good and faithful job and we presume according to the specifications. We anxiously await its completion. The gloomy bare walls of these cells, will stand as great conservators of the peace, awing into apparent civility the vicious man, and the rowdy street brawlers, on the same principle that the hangman's whip formerly held the wretch in order."

In October a second installment of $1000 was paid to Ezekial Bunn and later in the month the Sentinel (October 25, 1867) noted:

"The walls of the jail are growing finely, the cells are made, and the work progressing. Bunn has been very successful in getting a fine lot of brick, the best it is said ever made at or near Mound City."

The same paper stated on November 8, 1867:

"The brick jail is assuming shape, and frowning barred windows lend a melancholy gloom to that part of town. The iron doors and massive walls, the dark cells, and huge iron rings fastened to the floor, speak of society as it is, not as it will be."

"Mound City will soon be prepared to dungeon a man for crime, and display to the public, for the benefit of whom it may concern, the hangman's whip."

By early December the building had progressed to the point where the first floor cells could be used. A third installment to the contractor of $1000 was authorized at the December county commissioners' meeting.

By January, 1898, the building was finally enclosed and the floor laid in the second story. A New Year's Eve cotillion was the inaugural use of the second floor. The commissioners inspected the building in early January and were reportedly well pleased with the work of contractor Bunn and carpenter Henry Dewey.

However, the new jail was not to the liking of one of the early occupants. On February 19, 1868, the two occupants of the jail departed after one named Barrett used a stove leg to batter a hole in the brick wall. The other prisoner went immediately to the sheriff's house and turned himself in, but Barrett left for parts unknown.
On March 6, 1868, the Border Sentinel announced:

"The jail is completed throughout. The hole made by Barrett is still there. But the jail was received from the hands of Mr. Bunn, by the Commissioners, last Monday."

"There is a great satisfaction among all parties; even Barrett the jail bird is fully satisfied."

The final payments to Mr. Bunn of $132.70 and $1295 were made at this time. The editor also informed his readers that Bunn had lost money on the contract.

The building continued in use as the county jail until the county erected a new jail and sold the old one to the city for $275 on January 16, 1903. Since that time the building has been the City Hall. It has been the meeting place for the city council and the local police court, the city offices, and the local polling place. For a time after the city's purchase, the second floor was rented to a barber who had his shop and living quarters there.

The (old) Linn County Jail has had a significant role in the history of Linn county and Mound City. For 110 years it has been in active governmental use, and there are no plans for that use to change.

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No. 9 Bibliography


Linn County Commissioners' Journal No. 1, Office of the County Clerk, Linn County Courthouse, Mound City, Kansas, pp. 146, 158, 163, 169, 175, 182, 193, and 195.

Linn County Republic, January 16, February 6, March 6, 1903.

Minute Book of Mound City Council, City Hall, Mound City, Kansas.

Mound City Border Sentinel, May 24, 1867--March 6, 1868.

Pittsburg (Kansas) Morning Sun, August 4, 1975.

Preliminary nomination form prepared by Linn County Historical Society.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

see attached sheet

GEORaphICAL DATA
ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than one

QUADRANGLE NAME: Mound City

ZONE
EASTING
NORTHING

A [1,5] [3] 4,1 [3,6,0] 4,2,1 [2,3] 0,1,0

ZONE
EASTING
NORTHING

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lot 12, Block 13

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

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

FORM PREPARED BY
NAME/TITLE: Julie A. Wortman, Architectural Historian
Richard Pankratz, Director of Historic Preservation Department

ORGANIZATION: Kansas State Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER: 120 west 10th

CITY OR TOWN: Topeka

DATE: 7-13-1978

TELEPHONE: 913 296-3251

STATE: Kansas

66612

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

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 National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE: Executive Director, Kansas State Historical Society

DATE: July 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

ATTEST:

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION