**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

**Type all entries -- complete applicable sections**

**1. NAME**

- **COMMON:** Rush County Courthouse
- **AND/OR HISTORIC:**

**2. LOCATION**

- **STREET AND NUMBER:** 715 Elm Street
- **CITY OR TOWN:** La Crosse
- **STATE:** Kansas
- **COUNTY:** Rush
- **CODE:** 67548
- **ENTRY NUMBER:** 20
- **DATE:** 165

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

- **CATEGORY:** Public
- **OWNERSHIP:** Private
- **PUBLIC ACQUISITION:** In Process
- **STATUS:** Being Considered
- **ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC:** Yes

**4. OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY**

- **OWNER'S NAME:** Rush County

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

- **COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:** Register of Deeds
- **STREET AND NUMBER:** Rush County Courthouse
- **CITY OR TOWN:** La Crosse
- **STATE:** Kansas
- **CODE:** 67548
- **ENTRY NUMBER:** 20

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

- **TITLE OF SURVEY:**
- **DATE OF SURVEY:**
- **REPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:**
- **STREET AND NUMBER:**
- **CITY OR TOWN:**
- **STATE:**
- **CODE:**

**7. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

- La Crosse Chieftain, July 12, 1889-May 30, 1889.
- Rush County News (La Crosse), May 19, 1949.
Major Bibliographical References:
La Crosse Chieftain, July 12, 1889-May 30, 1889.
Rush County News (La Crosse), May 19, 1949.

Geographical Data:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NW</th>
<th>NE</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>SW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 38° 31' 48" | 99° 18' 40"

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE:</th>
<th>CODE:</th>
<th>COUNTY:</th>
<th>K.</th>
<th>C.</th>
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<tr>
<td>STATE:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Form Prepared By:
Charles Hall, Architectural Consultant
Richard Penkrate, Planner

Kansas State Historical Society
April 30, 1971

Owner's Name:
Rush County

State Liaison Officer Certification:

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National: [ ] State: [ ] Local: [ ]

Name: [ ]
M. Miller
Title: Executive Secretary, Kansas State Historical Society
Date: Nov. 30, 1971

 Keeper of the National Register

Location:

715 Elm Street
La Crosse

Classification:

Category (Select One):
- [ ] District
- [ ] Site
- [ ] Structure
- [ ] Object

Ownership:

- [ ] Public
- [ ] Private
- [ ] Both

Public Acquisition:
- [ ] In Process
- [ ] Being Considered

Status:

- [ ] Occupied
- [ ] Unoccupied
- [ ] Preservation work in progress

Accesible to the Public:

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] Restricted
- [ ] Unrestricted
- [ ] No

Credit Use:

- [ ] Agricultural
- [ ] Commercial
- [ ] Educational
- [ ] Industrial
- [ ] Military
- [ ] Municipal
- [ ] Religious
- [ ] Residential
- [ ] Scientific
- [ ] Transportation
- [ ] Utilities
- [ ] Other

Ownership:

- [ ] Government
- [ ] Park
- [ ] Other

Department of the Interior
United States National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory - Nomination Form

Type all entries - complete applicable sections.
The Rush County Courthouse at La Crosse is constructed of reddish-brown face brick laid in common bond. A four foot high water table of rough hewn native limestone provides a base for the brick structure and defines the basement. The building is two stories in height with a full basement and is generally rectangular in plan. Towers at the northeast and southeast corners protrude from the rectangular plan. The southeast tower is semicircular and extends to the south of the main wall. This tower terminates at the building roof line. The northeast tower is square and extends north and east from the wall lines. This tower protrudes above the roof line and while now flat on top, originally was taller with a steep hip roof. Arched openings and recessed circular decorations are located in the top of the tower. The main entrance was emphasized by projecting it several feet from the building front and extending it above the roof line. The entrance terminates in a gable roof. The courthouse has a hip roof with two ridge heights. The southeast tower has a steep cone-shaped roof terminating with an ornamental spire. All the roof forms are shingle covered. Stone stairs rise to the main entrance which is framed by a semicircular ornamental stone arch. Windows on the entrance wall and on the second floor of the north-east tower are wide and multi-paneled with semicircular stone arched heads. Windows on the first and second floors are rectangular with stone sills and lintels. The lintels are integrated with a stone belt-line running around the building.

A number of exterior alterations have been made in addition to the partial removal of the northeast tower. Originally the roof was covered with tin shingles while the present shingles are of asbestos. Aluminum frame doors have been installed at the main entry ways.

The construction of the Rush County Courthouse at La Crosse in 1888-1889 in effect ended what had been Kansas' longest county seat war. Several eastern Kansas counties experienced conflicts over the election of a county seat, but few lasted as long as ten years. Outside of occasional fistfights, the war in Rush county was fought in the courts and in the person of the two rival towns, La Crosse and Walnut City (now Rush Center).

Walnut City had been designated temporary county seat by the governor when the county was organized in 1874. An election in 1877 resulted in the county seat being moved to La Crosse, but another vote in 1878 returned it to Walnut City. The next election on the county seat issue, which was won by La Crosse, was held August 23, 1887. In the intervening years the county seat was at Walnut City until the Kansas Supreme Court ordered it back to La Crosse in 1882. There it remained until February 29, 1888, when county officials moved to Walnut City in compliance with a court order issued on the basis of the 1878 election. However, on March 10, 1888, a band of armed men from La Crosse swiped the county records and removed them to La Crosse. A court order was finally issued on the basis of the 1887 election requiring county officials and county records to be located in La Crosse. Walnut City partisans didn't give up the legal maneuvering, but their efforts were futile as the Kansas legislature in February, 1889, enacted a law legitimizing the 1887 election locating the county seat at La Crosse.

A special bond election was held July 10, 1888, and by a margin of 801 to 453 Rush counties approved a bond issue of $40,000 to build a courthouse. One of the successful arguments used in the election campaign by La Crosse supporters was that the construction of a courthouse would effectively stop the "courthouse on wheels" incidents which had been an expense and irritation to other Rush counties. After the election the county commissioners made a contract with George W. Shaffer of Abilene to draw up plans for the new courthouse. However, shortly thereafter the commissioners reconsidered and hired L. L. Levering to prepare the plans.

The contract for construction was let on September 3, 1888, to William T. Hoops for $17,950, and work began two days later. George W. Shaffer was made superintendent of construction. Reportedly the plans were poorly drawn and caused almost as many problems as the
Longest county seat war.

Important because this construction was the culmination of Kansas' small town courthouses in the state. Additionally, it is historically characteristic to the most interesting and attractive characteristics that make it one of the most interesting and attractive open setting of the Rush County Courthouse and the Romanesque completed until autumn.

The setting of 1899, although landscaped and strewed with
in spite of the delays, the building was practically finished by
accomplishments repay among the contributors, shelter, and benches.

8.

(INVENTORY SHEET)

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

FOR NPS USE ONLY

Kansas

DATE

ENTRY NUMBER

Rush