

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Woodson County Courthouse

and or common Woodson County Courthouse

NHRI - 207-6010-0002

2. Location

street & number On the courthouse square between Main, Rutledge,  
State, and Butler Streets

N/A not for publication

city, town Yates Center

N/A vicinity of

state Kansas

code 20

county Woodson

code 207

code 207

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Woodson County Board of Commissioners

street & number Woodson County Courthouse

city, town Yates Center

N/A vicinity of

state KS 66783

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Register of Deeds

street & number Woodson County Courthouse

city, town Yates Center

state KS 66783

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Kansas Historic Sites Survey

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1970

federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Kansas State Historical Society, 120 W. 10th

city, town Topeka

state Kansas 66612

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## 7. Description

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**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved      date

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Woodson County Courthouse is a two-story rectangular brick building with a partly-raised limestone basement and an unfinished attic. It measures 74 feet east to west and 84 feet north to south. The principal roofline is hipped, with a square cupola at the peak. At each corner of the building is a slightly-projecting square corner block with a pyramidal roof. A gable center pavilion projects slightly from each of the four walls.

The Woodson Courthouse is very similar in many respects to the Kingman County Courthouse by the same architect, but whereas the Kingman Courthouse has only one principal entrance, the Woodson Courthouse has four principal entrances, one on each side. The entrances on the east, south, and west all have simple round-arched doorways protected by a flat-roofed porch with brick piers. On the north side the entrance consists of a doorway at almost ground level set into an arch made of large, rusticated limestone blocks, the outer edges of which form a rectangle. There is no porch on this facade.

The courthouse, built in 1899, exhibits an architectural character that can perhaps be best described as "mixed late Victorian," blending Romanesque, Queen Anne, and "Free Classical" elements in a manner that was distinctive to the architect, George P. Washburn.

Above the basement walls of limestone block the walls are red brick. The tall, slender first story windows have flat tops, capped by stone lintels and tied together by a stone stringcourse just below the level of the lintels. The windows of the second story are of the same size and shape as those of the first. Their lintels form parts of a continuous string course that surrounds the building. The stone-framed, round-arched windows of the attic sit low over the second story windows and continue their lines, giving them together the appearance of taller, arched windows. In the courtroom itself, the ceiling is above the level of the attic windows, so that they are in fact part of the second story windows. Above the attic windows is a classical modillion cornice. The four centered gables are treated as classical pediments, with modillion cornices across the base and on the slopes. Each pediment is faced with brick and has a very narrow, vertical window in its center.

The first floor plan consists of two long, perpendicular corridors intersecting at the center, with offices in the corners. On the second floor, the south half of the building is occupied by the courtroom, the north half by offices on either side of a shorter corridor.

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The building has a high degree of integrity. On the exterior the only major changes have been:

1. Alterations to the cupola in 1960, giving it a simpler, more boxy appearance. There are plans now to restore it in the near future.
2. The building was reroofed in 1960. Some of the decorative details on the roofline were lost at this time.
3. The addition of a fire escape on the east facade.
4. The addition of basement entrances on the south side.
5. Installation of metal and glass doors.

The interior, too, has good integrity, for the most part. Almost all of the original custom-built furniture and cabinetwork remains, in addition to the structural woodwork and the original vaults. The courtroom has retained its high ceiling, which is decorated with wood framing in interlocking rectilinear patterns. There has been some alteration of the main staircase due to the installation of an elevator alongside it, taking the place of one of the two upper half-flights of steps.

The courthouse stands in the center of a grassy, tree-shaded public square, which is included as part of the nominated property. The area of the square immediately north of the courthouse, just east of the north entrance, has been taken up by a new law enforcement building, which is not included in this nomination.

# 8. Significance

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

**Specific dates** 1899      **Builder/Architect** Architect: George P. Washburn of Ottawa, KS  
 Contractor: J.W. Brewster

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Woodson County Courthouse is locally significant both for its architecture and for its role for many years as the seat of justice and government for Woodson County.

Built in 1899-1900, it was designed by George P. Washburn of Ottawa, KS, one of the leading architects in the state at the turn of the century. Washburn and his contemporary, James C. Holland of Topeka, were the most prolific designers of Kansas county courthouses, each having designed thirteen between 1890 and 1918. The Woodson County Courthouse is one of ten Washburn courthouses that still stand in their original form. Six of these are already listed on the National Register; one other, Kingman, has recently been nominated. This building is a relatively intact representative example of Washburn's public architecture. Although Washburn designed some major buildings in a "purer" style, many of his most prominent public buildings display his own distinctive stylistic character, combining elements derived from Romanesque, Queen Anne, and "Free Classical" architecture, as can be clearly seen in the design of the Woodson courthouse.

Woodson County was created by the territorial legislature in 1857. In 1858 the town of Neosho Falls was selected as county seat. Between 1865 and 1875 the county seat was moved several times, from Neosho Falls to Kalida, back to Neosho Falls, back to Kalida, then to Defiance, and finally to Yates Center, where it has remained ever since. Yates Center was newly laid out in 1875 in the center of the county on land donated by Abner Yates.

A wooden building moved from Defiance served as the first courthouse at Yates Center. In 1898 the voters of the county approved a measure authorizing construction of the present building, which has served as the seat of justice for Woodson County continuously since its construction in 1899.

THIS STATEMENT IS BASED ON CURRENT KNOWLEDGE AND IS SUBJECT TO AMENDMENT.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 2.5 acres

Quadrangle name Yates Center

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

1	5
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 Zone 

2	5	9	6	4	5
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 Easting 

4	1	9	6	0	2	0
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 Northing

B 

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 Zone 

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 Easting 

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 Northing

C 

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 Zone 

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 Easting 

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 Northing

D 

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 Zone 

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 Easting 

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 Northing

E 

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 Zone 

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 Easting 

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 Northing

F 

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 Zone 

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 Easting 

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 Northing

G 

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 Zone 

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 Easting 

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 Northing

H 

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 Zone 

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 Easting 

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 Northing

## Verbal boundary description and justification

All of Block 31 of the original survey of Yates Center (except that the nomination does not apply to the Law Enforcement Center building located immediately north of the courthouse).

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard J. Cawthon, Architectural Historian

organization Kansas State Historical society date July 24, 1985

street & number 120 West 10th telephone (913) 296-3251

city or town Topeka state Kansas 66612

# 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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

Executive Director

title Kansas State Historical Society date August 12, 1985

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Major Bibliographical References

Architect's drawings in the George P. Washburn Collection, Manuscripts Department,  
Kansas State Historical Society.

History of the State of Kansas. Chicago: A.T. Andreas, 1883.

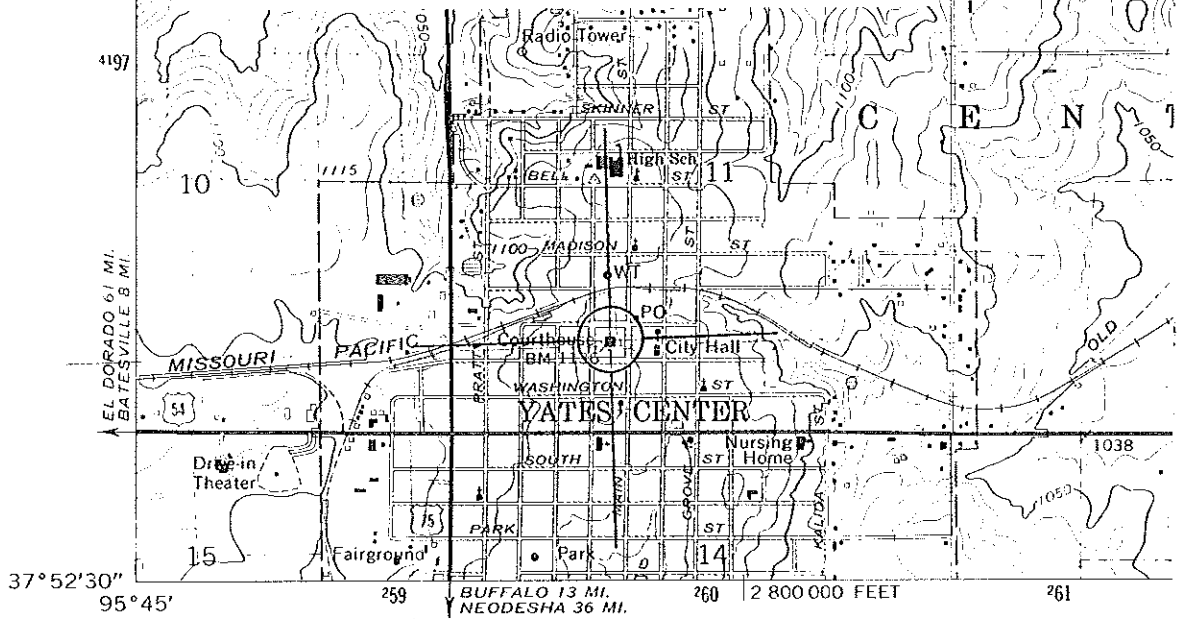
Woodson County Commissioners' Journal.

The Yates Center News, issues in April, June, and August 1899.

This nomination was prepared from a draft submitted by Brenda Manske of the Woodson  
County Historical Society, P.O. Box 100, Yates Center, KS 66783.

Woodson County Courthouse  
 Yates Center (Woodson County) Kansas  
 UTM Reference 15/259645/4196020

4198  
 460 000  
 FEET



37°52'30"  
 95°45'

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
 in cooperation with State of Kansas agencies

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial  
 photographs taken 1967. Field checked 1969

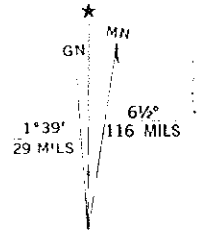
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
 10,000-foot grid based on Kansas coordinate system, south zone  
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
 zone 15, shown in blue

Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983,  
 move the projection lines 23 meters east as shown by  
 dashed corner ticks

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1981 and  
 other sources. This information not field checked. Map edited 1984

(TORONTO SE)  
 6889 IV SE



UTM GRID AND 1984 MAGNETIC N  
 DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SH

15 --- 14 --- 57'30"