

# BRULE COUNTY COURTHOUSE



**Location:** 300 South Courtland St., Chamberlain, SD 57325

**Date:** Constructed in 1958

**Architect:** McWayne & McLaughlin (successor firm to Perkins & McWayne)

**Description:** The Brule County Courthouse consists of a flat-roofed, rectangular, two-story, brick and stone building with a slightly taller area at the north end. The building is constructed in Modern style. The front is non-symmetrical with the entrance at the right side of the building and seven bays of windows to the left of the entrance. Each of the window bays is separated vertically with brick piers which run from the ground to the cornice. Between the piers, above and below each of the windows, are smooth stone panels. The plate glass entrance is protected with a flat-roofed portico flanked with projecting stone panels. To the right of the entrance is a slightly taller, windowless area of the same brick as the piers which separate the windows. The courthouse was designed by the architectural firm of McWayne and McLaughlin which was the successor firm to Perkins & McWayne who designed the courthouses in Codington, Douglas, Haakon and Jerauld counties. It was built by the Kuipers Construction Co. at a cost of \$261,000.<sup>i</sup>

**History:** Brule County was established by the territorial legislature in 1875.<sup>ii</sup> The county was organized immediately with the county seat at Brule City, but it did not grow in population due to President Grant's actions in withdrawing the area from settlement until 1879. At that time the county was reorganized, and following an election in November of 1881, the county seat was moved to Chamberlain, which had become the major city in the county due to the railroad. In April of 1885, all of the county offices were moved into the Hendershot building in Chamberlain. In 1894, a block of land was obtained for construction of a courthouse, but a bond issues to construct a courthouse was voted down in

1901. In 1902 a courthouse was constructed at a cost of \$7,800.<sup>iii</sup> That building served as the courthouse until the construction of the present building in 1958.

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<sup>i</sup> 1983 response by Brule County Auditor to S.D. Historic Preservation Office questionnaire.

<sup>ii</sup> SL 1874-1875, ch 31.

<sup>iii</sup> Brule County Historical Society, Brule County History, (1977) pages x and 564-565.