

HANSON COUNTY COURTHOUSE



Location: 720 5TH St., Alexandria, SD 57311

Date: Constructed in 1904.

Architect: W. R. Parsons and Son of Des Moines, Iowa.

Description: The Hanson County Courthouse consists of a rectangular, two-story, brick building with a raised basement, constructed in the Neo-Classical style. The front and sides are symmetrical with three bays, with the center bay projected forward. The raised basement of roughly cut Sioux Falls granite creates the appearance of a podium upon which the upper two stories rest. The upper two floors are of smooth brickwork. Above the raised basement is a belt course of contrasting stone. The center bay on the facade has an entrance midway between the basement and first floor consisting of a large arched doorway. On either side of the center bay is an area running to the roof line, which is slightly recessed and adorned with a long, vertical cleft of recessed bricks. Above the entry way on the second floor are two windows flanked by wide pilasters and separated by a narrower pilaster. Below each of the windows is a recessed panel and above them is a larger panel with a decorative medallion. The bays on either side of the center bay have four windows on each floor, of which the windows on the first floor are slightly arched with brickwork voussoirs, and the windows on the second floor are recessed to create the appearance of pilasters rising between them. The windows all have contrasting stone sills. Above the pilasters is an architrave and projecting cornice of a contrasting stone supported by

modillion blocks. Above the cornice is a parapet with slightly raised corners on the center bay and a contrasting stone pediment above each of the side bays. The parapet is topped by a row of contrasting stone. The courthouse was originally topped a large square cupola. The building was designed by W.R. Parsons and Son of Des Moines, who also designed the courthouses in Yankton, Turner and Faulk Counties and was built by -----at a cost of \$25,000.ⁱ

History: Hanson County was established by the territorial legislature in 1871 and was first organized in _____.ⁱⁱ The county seat was temporarily located at Old Fort James and named Rockport and the first election was held in 1873 with 16 votes being cast. The original courthouse was constructed in 1880 and served until 1901 when it burned to the ground. That resulted in the construction of the present building.

ⁱ 1983 response by Hanson County Auditor to S.D. Historic Preservation Office questionnaire.

ⁱⁱ SL 1870-1871, ch. 10.