

# DAVISON COUNTY COURTHOUSE



***Location:*** 200 East 4th Avenue, Mitchell, SD 57301

***Date:*** Constructed in 1936-1937 (dedicated September 6, 1937).

***Architects:*** Kings & Dixon of Mitchell, SD

***Description:*** The Davison County Courthouse is a flat-roofed, rectangular, four-story, reinforced concrete building with a Minnesota Sandstone veneer constructed in the Art Deco style. The front and sides are symmetrical. A stone foundation rises to just below the level of the first floor windows. On each corner there is a one story projecting bay. The projecting areas and the lack of decorative elements on the first floor create the appearance of a podium upon which the upper three stories rest. The facade contains seven vertical rows of windows separated by piers which rise from the first floor and are topped with decorative capitals. The sides have a slightly projecting center bay with four rows of windows. These projecting center bays rise three floors, and on the fourth floor the bay is recessed and the windows are separated by piers which go to the roof line, where they are topped with decorative capitals. On the front and sides, on either side of the window bay, are flanking bays which project forward and do not reach the roof line. These flanking bays contain a single vertical row of windows. The ground floor has a slightly projecting entrance on the center of the front facade. Within that entrance, the glass and aluminum front doors are covered with a cast iron transom. The windows on the second, third and fourth floors are separated vertically by piers and horizontally by cast aluminum spandrels. Above the top floor windows and between the separating piers are incised panels. The building and the projecting bays are topped with a parapet, with a row of decorative carving similar to that of the decorative capitals on the window piers. The interior is marble and the

foyer walls are decorated with murals by Bill Lackey.<sup>i</sup> Architects for the building were Kings & Dixon of Mitchell, who also designed the courthouses in Aurora, McCook and Miner counties.<sup>ii</sup> The building was constructed by Peter Kuipers Co. also of Mitchell at a total cost of about \$240,000.<sup>iii</sup>

**History:** Davison County was established by the 1873 territorial legislature, although with different boundaries than as presently established.<sup>iv</sup> The present area of Davison and Hanson Counties were divided by a line running east and west, with Davison County north of the line and Hanson County south of the line. However, in 1874 the legislature reorganized the counties and divided this area by means of a north south line. In that year, Davison County was organized and the county seat was established at Firesteel. In 1880, the county seat was moved to Mitchell which was located on the railroad. The 1881 legislature added several townships to the west side of the county. In February of 1882, the voters approved a \$20,000 bond issue for the construction of a courthouse, but due to construction difficulties, it was not completed until late in 1883. Fifty years later, in October of 1933, a bond issue of \$150,000 was approved for the construction of the present courthouse. This was augmented by a federal WPA grant of \$70,000.

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<sup>i</sup> United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form - Mitchell Historic Commercial District (March, 1974) and Souvenir Davison County Courthouse dedication program (September 6, 1937).

<sup>ii</sup> United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form -Aurora County Courthouse (September 1, 1992).

<sup>iii</sup> Souvenir Davison County Courthouse dedication program (September 6, 1937) and 1983 response by a deputy Davison County Auditor to S.D. Historic Preservation Office questionnaire.

<sup>iv</sup> SL 1872-1873, ch 16.