

The picturesque DC Courthouse

The Davis County Courthouse attracts a lot of attention from tourists who pass through Bloomfield. Travelers often drive around the square and stop to take pictures of it from all angles.

Some tourists have written letters to the editor of "The Bloomfield Democrat," remembering their stop in Bloomfield because of the unusual architecture and beauty of the courthouse.



Some of the ornate stonework on the Davis County Courthouse is shown by this closeup of one of the clock faces and the Statue of Justice.

The courthouse and all the buildings on the Bloomfield Square are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Built of Bedford stone in 1877 for \$45,201, the courthouse is now 130-years-old. The architect, T.J. Tolan, styled it in French Renaissance, sometimes called Second Empire, with a mansard

roof in which third-story dormer windows project. The building's foundation is four-feet thick, and its walls are 16 inches thick. It has 42 rooms, counting the vault, and 115 windows. There are stone steps up to the east and west entries, and a few years ago an elevator was added on the south side.

The bell tower at the top of the building is nine feet off center to the east. The bell, made by Kimberly Bell Works of New York, is four inches thick and weighs approximately 2,000 pounds. The hammer that strikes the bell is 25 pounds. In early days, the bell was rung by hand as a fire alarm.

Above the bell tower is the original Seth Thomas clock with eight-foot faces turned in all four directions. Sometimes the clock hands on one side are ahead of those on another, but that is because some gears that turn the hands are more worn than others. The long hands are four feet long and the short hands, three. The clock was originally wound by hand. Custodian Russell Lundstrum tries to keep the old clock running. For spring and fall daylight savings time changes, he merely shuts off the power until the new time rolls around.

The statue on the top of the belfry is the blind Goddess of Justice.

Most Davis County offices are located on the

first floor of the courthouse. The Davis County Board of Supervisors' office is on the second floor, as well as jury rooms and the 45' x 65' courtroom that can seat 300 people. The courtroom's seats and benches are all walnut originals. The jail was in the basement until the fall of 1973 when a new law-enforcement center was built. Now, the assessor's office is behind bars in the former jail's area.

At one time, the courthouse was surrounded by a wrought iron fence at the edge of the courtyard with a sidewalk outside the fence and hitching posts along the sidewalk. Currently, there are flowerbeds and memorial trees in the courtyard.

The courthouse was preceded by a log courthouse, built in the summer of 1844. The Iowa Territorial Legislature declared Davis a county on March 1, 1844. In 1846, land was deeded to Davis County by the territorial legislature. Davis County was named for Garrett Davis, a congressman and chairman of the Claims Committee of Congress.

The Davis County Courthouse renovation

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Davis County Fine Arts Council

Presents *Fall Harvest Courtyard* *Arts Festival*

Art Displays - Cash Prizes Awarded, Entertainment, Car Show, Antique Tractor & Motorcycle Displays, and Many Children's Activities

Saturday, October 3; 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

2009 Fall Musical

A musical play performed by the Davis County Players.

Thurs., Fri., & Sat., November 12, 13 & 14

7:30 p.m.

Sunday, November 15; 2:00 p.m.

Iowa Theatre

Weekend Movies

During the school year.

Iowa Theatre

Kay Burchette Cultural Center

Spring Play

TBA

Spectrum Artists

Look for local artists' displays in Bloomfield businesses.



An unusual angle provides a look at the architectural details that are a part of the picturesque

Courthouse

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continues, spurred by the efforts of the Davis County Courthouse Preservation Fund, formed in 2005 to raise money to help the Davis County Board of Supervisors preserve the

unique courthouse.

The preservation fund was the brain child for Linda Boatman, a Davis County native, who is president of the fund.

Most recently, new entrance doors have been installed financed in part by a \$15,000 grant from the Davis County Community Foundation. The efforts of the Preservation Fund have also been boosted by the awarding of a Main Street Iowa Challenge Grant to help the county finance repair work on the clock tower.