

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC *Historic*
Tecumseh ~~Architectural~~ District
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER *roughly bounded by Atchison & NE RR. tracks, 9th & Washington Sts., and U.S. 136 #10.*
in irregular pattern - see map #5 and item #10.
CITY, TOWN Tecumseh VICINITY OF 1st
STATE Nebraska CODE 31 COUNTY Johnson CODE 097

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Multiple Ownership
STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN VICINITY OF STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Register of Deeds
STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Johnson County Courthouse STATE Nebraska
Tecumseh Nebraska

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Historic Preservation in Nebraska (buildings)

DATE 1971 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Nebraska State Historical Society

CITY, TOWN Lincoln STATE Nebraska

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Situated overlooking the North Fork of the Big Nemaha River in southeast Nebraska's Drift Hills region, Tecumseh is the oldest community in Johnson County. Surveyed in 1856 just west of the junction of two important trails (the Nebraska City-Marysville Trail and the Brownville-Beatrice Trail), Tecumseh has been the county seat of Johnson County since its organization in 1856-57.

The courthouse square and the town center surrounding it are located on a slight knoll in the otherwise southwest sloping terrain (see map #1). This position of prominence within the environs has enhanced the symbolic and physical significance of the county's governmental and commercial center (see photo #1).

Surrounding the town center, primarily to the east and north, are the residential environs of the town including public park lands, schools, churches, etc. (see map #2). The original (1856) plat of Tecumseh included 74 blocks running east-west and bisected by Town Branch Creek with the town square located in the western half of this rectangle. While development did occur east of the Town Branch, topographic circumstances favored development to the north of the town square and in 1870 Kershaw's Additions (the paper town of Lexington laid out in 1857) were made to Tecumseh. It is the area between the Big Nemaha and its Town Branch that we are concerned with here.

Tecumseh experienced slow growth until the mid-1860's, however, the town profited during this period from the considerable freighting business channeled through Tecumseh from Nebraska City and Brownville. Growth accelerated following the 1872 arrival of the Atchison and Nebraska Railroad and was further stimulated by the extension of the Republican Valley Railroad in 1882-83. The period between 1872 and the turn of the century represents Tecumseh's greatest growth, the bulk of the building being completed during this period. The present architectural character of the Tecumseh district still reflects this nineteenth century development, comprising, as it does, the majority of structures in the district. Some development occurred in the early part of the twentieth century but its scale and style was much like that of the nineteenth century structures and, to a great extent, is indistinguishable from it. The little development that has occurred from the 1920's to the present took place in the spaces between earlier developments creating a more dense residential area (see map #3).

Structurally the town center is primarily brick and iron. Moving immediately out of the courthouse square area, however, materials are wood frame with the exception of major public buildings (i.e. some churches, schools, post office, etc.). All of the residential structures

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in the district, with one exception, are wood-frame structures. In addition, the stylistic character of the residential environs is decidedly Greek Revival (see map #4). Architecturally the town center is distinguished by several fine examples of nineteenth century architecture while the residential environs display a variety of vernacular interpretations of the Greek Revival style of architecture (See map #5).

Inventory of Architecture Sites within the Tecumseh District

1. Johnson County Courthouse (Courthouse Square): This fine two-story brick structure trimmed with stone and supported on a limestone base has been the focal point of Tecumseh since its completion in 1889 (See photo #2). Designed by Lincoln architect William Gray, the building is rectangular in plan and measures approximately 70 feet by 100 feet. Each of the facades has an entrance featuring a columned portico supported on masonry piers which are alternating stripes of red brick and white limestone. Access to the main floor is by a stairway rising above the basement level. Exterior access to the basement is by steps running beneath the main stairway. Projecting corner pavilions provide an accent and repeat the form of the central domed tower which is the most prominent element of the design. All detailing above the cornice, including the columned portico is based on Classical precedent and executed in cast and stamped metal.

The building has seen only minor alterations since its completion with the majority of changes occurring on the roof. Originally the corner pavilions had truncated pyramidal roofs, Mansard in form, with circular portal windows and iron cresting around the top. The tower featured circular windows on each of its eight sides as well as a lantern at the peak. Several years ago the windows were removed and the flat areas at the top of the corner pavilions were eliminated in an attempt to make the roof watertight. Other deterioration on the building is primarily due to wind and water, the extent of which is in the ornamental stone and metal work.

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2. Old City Hall (east side, courthouse square): This two-story brick structure was built shortly after the courthouse in 1889, and features an entrance tower (See photo #3). Situated on the east edge of the courthouse square, this red-brick structure complements its larger county counterpart both formally and symbolically. The overall character of the proportions are "High Victorian" in association while the detailing of the bell tower is decidedly classical. All details are executed in pressed metal. The original asymmetrical facade was exaggerated by the removal (because of wind damage) of the triangular pediment which formerly occupied a position above the cornice on the south half of the building.

Originally housing the offices of city government as well as the fire department's engine house, today these spaces are occupied by the Tecumseh Utilities for office and storage space. The large room on second floor which formerly housed the city library before the erection of the Carnegie Library in 1907, is presently used for city meeting functions.

3. Old Johnson County Jail (183 N. 4th Street): The third of as many important civic structures included in the district, this one predates the first two. Built of native stone ca. 1872, it is a unique structure of its kind in the midwest (See photo #4). The original space housed prisoners on the ground floor and living quarters for the sheriff on the second floor; the design of this building symbolically represents the difference in the two functions. Walls are built of heavily rusticated limestone (with slabs up to 18" thick and several feet long) at the ground floor with emphasis placed on the strength of the walls at this level (See photo #5). Above, the rusticated stone is used at the corners as quoins to visually tie the ground floor to the stone cornice at the top of the wall. Rough dressed stone is used on the front facade of the second story wall while the rear and side walls are built of rubble - a more conservative and economical method of construction. Of particular interest is the iron exercise "bullpen" across the east facade. Added to the building probably around the turn of the century, the pen provided an open-air exercise and lounging area for prisoners. The "bullpen" features a decorative strap iron cornice.
4. Ellsworth Building (northwest corner of 4th and Broadway): Of the several substantial business blocks surrounding the courthouse square, this two-story brick structure deserves mention (See photo #6). Built in 1885,

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the Ellsworth Building has long been one of Tecumseh's most prominent architectural structures. Situated at the northeast corner of the courthouse square, the building is distinguished by its stamped metal ornamentation which includes an elaborate cornice and window hoods throughout. Occupied at an early date by Anderson and Goodwin's Cash Grocery, the building today is occupied by the Wilcox Plumbing and Heating Company and is in a remarkably well preserved condition.

5. Chittenden's Store (177 S. 3rd): A two-story brick and iron structure built in the late 1880's and remodeled ca. 1920, this building is notable for its well-preserved state which has retained the scale and texture of a late 19th century business building (See photo #7).
6. Peoples Natural Gas (255 Clay): Built in the early 1880's and another exceptionally well preserved building in the town center, this two-story brick structure features a simple cast iron front which supports a finely detailed brick facade trimmed with stamped metal cornice and window hoods (See photo #7).
7. Hopkins Block (north side, Courthouse Square): Built in 1901, this two-story structure is wholly compatible with its 1880's neighbors. Its fireproof covering of pressed metal remains as a subtle reminder of the fire which destroyed the buildings along this block in 1875 (See photo #8).
8. "The Tecumseh Mall" (south from the courthouse to the railroad station): The Mall is the site of a semi-formal garden walk which connected the railroad station to the south entrance of the courthouse prior to the 1930's when the Community Building was constructed. At one time profusely planted with flowers, all that remains today is the fountain (See photo #9), part of the walkway, and the monumental stairway at the south end of the mall.
9. Presson-Simpson House (263 S. 3rd Street): Built between 1871 and 1876 for Joseph H. Presson, the structure was purchased in 1882 by Andrew Simpson and considerably enlarged during the years of his ownership. Originally the house was a two-story rectangular frame structure with

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gable roof and frontal (east) porch. The house originally portrayed the simplified Greek Revival style of architecture. With Simpson's purchase a complicated succession of additions and alterations were made to the house which resulted in its present form - a remarkably integrated structure and still a fine example of the Greek Revival mode of architecture (See photo #10). Prominent on its east (front) facade are the finely molded corner pilasters, broken pediment, trabeated entrance with sidelights and the Doric columned front porch. The house is presently owned by Glen Van Winkle.

10. Crow-Hedrick House (449 N. 3rd Street): This one-story frame house on a limestone foundation was probably built for John H. Crow ca. 1873 and is a fine example of the simplified Greek Revival style in Tecumseh. Originally of a cruciform plan with cross-gabled roof, today the plan is still apparent at the front and side facades. The rear of the house has seen many additions, however, without loss of scale or integrity. Prominent Greek Revival features include the broken pediments at each gable, molded corner pilasters similar to those on the Presson-Simpson house, trabeated entrance and Doric columned porch (a late nineteenth century addition) (See photo #11). Occupied from 1881-1965 by the Hedrick family, the dwelling is now owned by the David J. Bailey family.

11. Seavers House (587 N. 5th Street): This fine one-story frame dwelling was begun late in 1882 by H. Muhlenbrock for C.E. Masters and probably completed by Muhlenbrock in 1883 for the Seavers family. This well-detailed house is distinguished by the strong horizontal emphasis of the proportions which are, in turn, enhanced by the low-pitched hipped roof and the narrow clapboarding. The ca. 1890 addition to the south contributes to the overall horizontality of the composition without detracting from the whole. Detailed throughout in a very simplified Greek Revival style, the house betrays its late date in the immaculately detailed Eastlake porch and iron cresting at the peak of the roof (See photo #12). In much the same condition as when built, this well-preserved house is presently owned by the Vernon Waltemath family.

12. Hardenburg-Bartles Residence (800 block of north 4th Street): This small, one-story frame dwelling was probably built for S.E. Hardenburg ca. 1892 in a vernacular interpretation of the Greek Revival style of architecture.

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Basically a 24 foot square pavilion with pyramidal roof, the house has a frontal (west) porch and a rectangular bay window on the south. The rear addition to the house was made after 1900 with the utility shed being added sometime after 1915. The Eastlake-inspired porch and screen door as well as the stained and leaded glass transom light over the "picture window give emphasis to the front facade (see photo #13). The house was purchased in 1906 by Henry Bartles and is still in the Bartles family.

13. Charles Campbell House (404 Sherman): A small one-story frame dwelling probably built by William H. Hassett for Charles Campbell ca. 1892, it is similar in form and detail to the Handenburg-Bartles house.
14. Ferguson House (393 N. 4th Street): A small one-story frame house built in the 1890's with an ell-shaped plan, the prominent east gable is highly articulated with a pattern of clapboarding and shingle work and is highlighted with Eastlake-inspired details.
15. Charles E. Buerstetta House (236 N. 6th Street): It is a one and one-half story frame house of unusual form built ca. 1905. This house is yet another example of the simplified Greek Revival style in Tecumseh (see photo #15).
16. Hassett House (155 N. 3rd Street): This one and one-half story frame house was built ca. 1903 for George W. Hassett in a vernacular interpretation of the Queen Anne mode of architecture (see photo #14). A local lumber dealer and carpenter, Hassett probably built this house for himself and was involved in at least one (probably both) of two other houses in Tecumseh that are nearby, identical to this one (see 17 and 18, below). Only minor details exist to distinguish this house from its two "sisters". Formally of Queen Anne derivation, the house is basically eclectic in nature. Queen Anne shingle work acts as a cornice around the ground floor and the tower and is used as wall covering for the projecting dormers. Doric styled corner pilasters terminate the clapboarding (the primary wall material) at each corner. Minutely scaled Ionic columns support the porch. Early twentieth century detailing is evident in the tower windows and the

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molded brackets which visually support the eaves at the southeast corner of the house. This well-preserved structure is presently occupied by the Lanie Roberts family.

17. Albert Fitzsimmons House (452 N. 5th Street): A one and one-half story frame residence built in 1901 as a vernacular interpretation of the Queen Anne style, this house is the precursor to the Hassett house (16) and the Bartling house (18).
18. Fredrick L. Bartling House (652 N. 3rd Street): a one and one-half story frame residence built ca. 1907 and a near copy of the Hassett house mentioned above.
19. C. W. Graff House (495 N. 4th Street): A two-story frame residence built ca. 1900, this is perhaps the most pretentious residence in Tecumseh. Eclectic in nature, the house exhibits features from several 19th century styles including: Shingle style, Georgian Revival, Chateausque, as well as the Classical Greek Revival.

This district includes approximately 450 structures in the 250 acres of land. Of these 450 structures 54% were built in the nineteenth century, 18% in the early twentieth century, 9% from the 1920's through the 1940's and 19% were built after the Second World War (see map #3). The highly compatible nineteenth and early twentieth century structures comprise 72% of the entire district. Nearly 60% of the structures within the residential environs of the district (see map #2) are examples of the simplified Greek Revival style of architecture (see map #4).

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Tecumseh Architectural District represents an especially fine example of the nineteenth century, rural, county seat town in Nebraska. From the distinct plan of its town center, organized around the courthouse square to the design of its individual buildings which relate to a larger hierarchy of purpose, the Tecumseh environs exist as a contiguous and coherent whole.

Fine examples of a wide range of nineteenth century building types and building materials exist in the approximately fifty square blocks of the district. The range of scale from monumental to intimate, the range of purpose from symbolic through functional to private, the range of materials from brick, stone and iron to the simplest wood frame structure, the range of ownership from public to private; all exist within the district environs and correspond roughly to a walk in any direction from the courthouse to the residential neighborhoods.

Central to Tecumseh's continuing importance to Johnson County is its position as county seat. This fact above all else has probably done more to maintain Tecumseh as the trading center for the strictly agricultural area surrounding it than any other factor. Thus both symbolically and architecturally, the pivotal structure to the district is the Johnson County Courthouse.

Tecumseh has been the Johnson County Seat since its organization in 1857. A small courthouse was erected that year and served until 1868 when a new two-story building was constructed. Twenty years later, concern with the fire safety of the structure was sufficient to warrant a bond issue in the amount of \$40,000 for the erection of a new courthouse with work to be commenced immediately after the adoption of the proposition. A special election was held March 14, 1888, and the following day the County Board ordered that advertisements for plans and specifications be issued. All plans were submitted April 3rd and the board met the next several days to determine whose plans to select. After visiting York, Nebraska, and conferring with the County Commissioners there, they decided to adopt the plans of architect William Gray of Lincoln. By May 18, 1888, sealed bids were opened and a contract was let to Falls City contractor W. B. Schmucker in the amount of \$40,000.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet #9, page 1.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 250 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 4	7 3, 8 8, 0, 0	4, 4 7, 3 2 4 0	B	1, 4	7 3, 8 8, 6, 0	4, 4 7, 1 8, 6, 0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1, 4	7 3, 7 9, 4, 0	4, 4 7, 1 8, 4, 0	D	1, 4	7 3, 7 9, 0, 0	4, 4 7, 3 2, 2, 0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

UTM
OK
HA
Approx

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

south edge defined by the present Burlington Northern Railroad tracks, east to the present channel of the Town Branch following this channel north to a line 80 feet north of the north edge of Greeley Street, west to the center line of 5th Street, then north to the center line of Washington Street, west to a line running north-south down the center of the alley in blocks 16, 15, 5, and 6 of Kershaws Addition, continuing south along this line to the Burlington Northern tracks at the south edge of the district.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

D. Murphy, Curator of Historic Sites

ORGANIZATION

Nebraska State Historical Society

DATE

June 4, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

1500 R Street

TELEPHONE

(402) 432-2793

CITY OR TOWN

Lincoln

STATE

Nebraska

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Marvin E. Kiehl

6/10/75

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

A. A. Mortenson
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 ATTEST: *D. Murphy*
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

6/20/75

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After acceptance of William Gray's design the Tecumseh Chieftain proudly announced the new courthouse ". . . will favor utility rather than beauty and outside show. When all is done a handsome, stable, convenient courthouse will [be built] in the handsomest square in the state, a monument to the enterprise of the citizens of the county". That such an imposing courthouse, especially of this particular style, could be built on such a limited budget is significant in itself.

Built in what Paul Goeldner calls the County Capitol style of courthouse design, the Tecumseh courthouse is one of only two such examples in the state of Nebraska. A popular style for courthouses in the late nineteenth century, examples exist in every state in the midwest. While sounding quite pretentious, the term County Capitol accurately describes the county courthouse and has philosophical as well as structural precedents. Counties relate to states in a fashion similar to the way states relate to the Union. Structurally the precedents began when the domed statehouses of Ohio and Indiana became county courthouses after the state governments there moved to a new location. St. Louis County, Missouri, was the first midwestern county to rival state government in its architecture, when it adopted the domed design of Henry Singleton in 1839. The dome, a design element traditionally associated with American centers of government since the completion of the same for the national capitol in 1863, and Classical detailing are both typical features of county capitols that were based on historical precedent. The major problem in adopting these features was one of reducing these grand concepts to local economic capabilities.

Tecumseh's "county capitol" exhibits both the domed tower and classical detailing as well as other characteristics of the style. The centrally placed tower topped with a slim ornate dome is the most prominent feature. The strict symmetry which created a front of every side is another characteristic featured in the Tecumseh example. Here, however, the location of the courthouse in the town center provides a functional justification for the four entrances.

Of the fourteen nineteenth century courthouses extant in Nebraska, only two were built as "county capitols" and both are fine examples of the style. The York county courthouse, the other example, was built 1886-88 and is very similar to the later Johnson County building. York's courthouse was designed by Gray and Placey of Lincoln with O. H. Placey performing supervisory duties. Which of the two was responsible for the design has not been determined. We do know, however, that the partnership was dis-

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solved by 1887 and that the plans for the Tecumseh building were prepared by Mr. Gray who was acting on his own behalf at the time. Mr. Gray went on to design two other nineteenth century courthouses in Nebraska - of especial note, the Cass County Courthouse in Plattsmouth.

The location of the courthouse as the focal point of the town center is perhaps the best-known form of courthouse square, however, few examples of this plan are to be found in Nebraska. Many courthouses are located on an entire city block, surrounded by green space, but very few perform the dual function of courthouse square and town center surrounded by business blocks, as in the case of Tecumseh. This district arrangement has created the underlying order for this physically coherent community.

The square is well-planted. While providing for pleasant areas of shade, good views of the courthouse are offered from every angle. A distinctive feature of the landscape plan is the line of evergreen trees which flank each side of the south approach to the courthouse. Originally connected to and terminating the Tecumseh Mall from the railroad station, the walk between these columns of trees was once a highlight of this grand entrance to the town.

The buildings surrounding the square, the walls that enclose it, are nearly all typical examples of nineteenth century commercial architecture. A major non-commercial structure, the nineteenth century City Hall, establishes the scale of the courthouse environs while serving to connect, symbolically, the monumentality of the courthouse to the civic scale of the commercial buildings. Through the subtle design of its not-quite-symmetrical facade, it makes a connection between the formal symmetry of the courthouse and the textured wall of the businesses surrounding it. These walls themselves are largely composed of nearly symmetrical or otherwise asymmetrical parts. Many buildings, as in the Hopkins Block (7) and People's Natural Gas (6), while portraying a symmetrical facade at the second level, contradict that symmetry on the street level facade by providing off-center entrances that respond to functional circumstances. Architecturally, as parts of the whole texture, most of the business buildings make a positive contribution to the whole and largely retain their nineteenth century character. Examples like Chittenden's Store (5), People's Natural Gas (6), and the Ellsworth Building (4), exceptionally well-preserved buildings, maintain the earlier street level scale and allow the observer to "read" it into those that have re-modeled store fronts. Few buildings have been so altered that their

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that their original character has been irreparably lost. In all, the integrity of the town center has been remarkably well preserved.

Material relatedness as well as scale and workmanship are characteristic of the residential environs immediately adjacent to the town center. Complementing the monumental and civic scale of the town center, the residential environs comprise the intimate and private counterpart to the public realm of the town center. Composed primarily of small one and two-story white painted frame residences, the majority are not only related through materials, scale, color, texture, and building placement, but are also related by style through design details.

Although structures from all periods of the twentieth century are represented in the district, the overwhelming majority were built in the late nineteenth or very early twentieth centuries (see map #3). Of those that were built after this time, most still maintain a similar scale and color to the earlier buildings and do not detract significantly from the integrity of the district (see photos #15 and #17).

Unique to the residential environs is its style-relatedness. Nearly all of the nineteenth and early twentieth century houses in this district represent some vernacular interpretation of the Greek Revival style (see map #4). Popular along the east coast from about 1820 to 1860, the style penetrated nearly every section of the country and exhibited many regional variations. This style was the first of the academic styles to be introduced to Nebraska after the opening of the territory in 1854. Primarily characterized by details borrowed from Classical Greek sources, few, if any, buildings were built in Nebraska that approach the more sophisticated examples of the style built in the older areas of the country. However, it proved to be a most popular style of the vernacular builders of Nebraska who continued to use it through the first decades of the twentieth century. The style probably received further impetus with the emergence of the Georgian and Neo-Classical revivals of the early twentieth century.

The style was used on a wide variety of vernacular house forms in the Tecumseh district. Examples range from the more elaborate Presson-Simpson House (9) and the Crow-Hedrick House (10) to the most simple versions represented by houses like the Campbell House (13) and the Hardenburg-Bartles residence (12). These houses also represent the range from the more complete Greek Revival to the more rudimentary examples.

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The Crow-Hedrick house (10) and the Presson-Simpson house (9) are not only the most sophisticated examples of the style in Tecumseh, they are also the earliest. Probably the generators of the style in Tecumseh, they provide the fundamental details that reappear in varying forms on the later examples. Both houses exhibit the broken pediment, finely molded corner pilasters (see photo #16), Doric styled porch columns, trabeated entrances and window frames in trabeated form (narrow jambs which support a wider entablature with a narrow molded cornice).

Corner pilasters are probably the most characteristic detail of the Tecumseh examples. Variations range from the elaborate examples of the Presson-Simpson House (9), through a simplified version with a plain pilaster and molded trim for the capital such as those on the Campbell house (13) and at the south addition to the Seavers House (11), to the simplest examples where the pilaster is nothing more than a piece of molding at the corner as in the Hardenburg-Bartles residence (12) and the main portion of the Seavers House (11). Characteristically, the entablatures supported by the corner pilasters range from the slightly detailed example of Presson-Simpson (9) to the plain wide board shown on the Hardenburg-Bartles House (12).

Doric porch columns, where they occur, tend to be round in section, although a few examples of square-sectioned columns do appear. Greek Revival porches most likely appear on the older examples and are replaced in the 1880's and 1890's examples by the more elaborate Eastlake styled porches (see Seavers house, #11). Doric porch columns reappeared, however, in the early twentieth century as shown by the porch on the Buerstetta House (15) (see photo #15).

Of the trabeated entrance detail, the Presson-Simpson and the Crow-Hedrick homes constitute the major examples. A variant form may be seen in the simplified entrance of the Seavers house. Here the jamb pilasters support a low, sloped pediment for the door head detail. This motif is also used for the window frames on the Seavers house and constitutes the major variation of the trabeated window motif in the Tecumseh Greek Revival examples. Most other houses exhibit the simple post-and-beam motif as used on the Crow-Hedrick house (see photo #11).

In addition to the variety of house forms that utilized the simplified Greek Revival style, of considerable interest is the ability of the style to assimilate elements from other styles. Particularly noteworthy

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is the Eastlake porch which enhances the entrance to the Seavers house (#11, photo #12). Eastlake-inspired details constitute the decorative elements of the porches on the Hardenburg-Bartles (#12) residence and the Campbell house (#13) as well as enhancing the front gable of the Ferguson house (#14).

Nowhere is the adaptability of the style more evident than in the Hassett house (#16) and its two sisters, the Fitzsimmons (#17) and Bartling (#18) houses. Here, in addition to the Doric styled corner pilasters, each house exhibits columns derived from one of the Greek orders: Ionic on the Hassett and Fitzsimmons houses and Doric on the Bartling house. Even the highly eclectic Graff House (#19) displays a number of Greek Revival details including an entablature detailed with dentils under the eaves, and a similarly detailed entablature supported by the Doric columns of the porch.

The cohesiveness of scale, texture and detail which characterizes the residential environs is similar to the cohesiveness displayed by the scale and texture of the commercial buildings surrounding the courthouse square. The subtle symbolic connections made through the use of the Greek Revival detailing in the residential environs and the Classical detailing of the Johnson County Courthouse and Old City Hall complement the cohesiveness and physical coherency of the entire community.

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