

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

BLAINE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

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SIGNIFICANCE

The Blaine County courthouse is significant for being one of the oldest county courthouses in Idaho. In 1882 Hailey became the county seat of Alturas County after a bitterly fought election between it, Bellevue, and the existing county seat, Rocky Bar. A mining boom had shifted the population of Alturas County from Rocky Bar to the Wood River Valley. The Oregon Short Line's making Hailey, a land company creation, the Wood River Valley terminus gave this town the edge over Bellevue, the existing commercial center. In 1895 when Blaine County replaced Alturas County, Hailey remained the county's seat of government.

The building represents much of the region's political history.

Architecturally the building is significant for its interior details. The exterior alterations are not so radical as to preclude the possibility of restoration.

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Blaine County courthouse is a two-story brick building constructed in a simple Italianate style. Standing on a raised cutstone basement, the simple rectangular building's most striking features are its cast-iron window sills. Originally cast-iron pediments capped these windows as well.

A simple, rectangular portico serves as an entryway. Prior to 1950 the lattice worked balustrades adorned both the steps and balcony; these were replaced by the present iron railings. Originally the gables had returns, but these were removed when the building was reroofed. It was at this time that the window pediments also disappeared.

Although the exterior detail has been altered, the interior integrity has been retained. The original courtroom woodwork and the stairways remain, although the basement was remodeled in 1975.

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