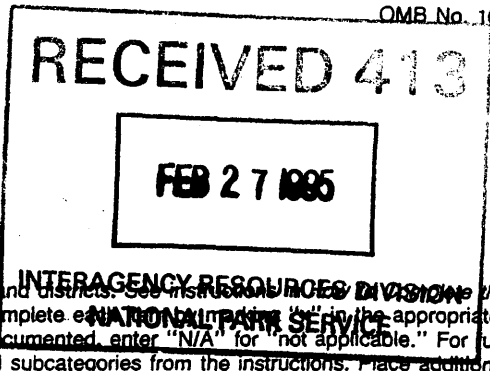


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name BLED SOE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Town Square  not for publication

city or town Pikeville  vicinity

state Tennessee code TN county Bledsoe code 007 zip code 37367

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Herbert L. Hager 2/18/95  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Comm  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

for  
Edson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

Entered in the National Register Date of Action 3/30/95

Bledsoe County Courthouse  
Name of Property

Pikeville, TN  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
0	1	objects
1	2	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Historic County Courthouses of TN

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: courthouse

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: courthouse

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT SHINGLE

other METAL; CONCRETE

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheets.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is: N/A

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

POLITICS/ GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1909-1945

Significant Dates

1909-10

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Brown, W. K., and Brothers

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data: N/A

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Bledsoe County Courthouse  
Name of Property

Pikeville, TN  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

Pikeville 110SW

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	6	6	6	4	0	8	0	3	9	4	1	5	2	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

3 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Carroll Van West  
organization MTSU Center for Historic Preservation date August 30, 1994  
street & number PO Box 80, MTSU telephone 615-898-2947  
city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37132

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Bill Wheeler, county executive  
street & number PO Box 149 telephone 615-447-6855  
city or town Pikeville state TN zip code 37367

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

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INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Bledsoe County Courthouse, Pikeville, TN

VII. DESCRIPTION

The Bledsoe County Courthouse lies at the center of the courthouse square of Pikeville (pop. 1,771), the seat of Bledsoe County. The two-story red brick building of Classical Revival style rests on a limestone foundation. Its hipped roof is covered with asphalt shingles.

The west facade contains seven symmetrical bays separated by plain brick pilasters and is dominated by a two-story, four columned classical portico. The paired brick columns, with Tuscan order capitals, on either side of the primary entrance support a plain entablature of brick. Two horizontal bands of brick wrap around the top of the building while a lower brick band highlights the lintels of the second story windows as it wraps around the courthouse. A round brick arch defines the primary entrance. The original plain lunette remains but the doors were replaced by modern metal doors in about 1980. Above the door is a symmetrically located three-part fixed cottage window with fanlight. On either side of the entrance are three symmetrically located double hung four-over-four windows on both the first floor and second floor levels. A brick segmental arch lintel highlights each window.

The north elevation continues the ornamental patterns found on the west facade. Its symmetrical five bays are separated by two plain brick pilasters. A round brick arch defines the north entrance. The original plain lunette remains but the doors were replaced by modern metal doors in about 1980. The other bays contain double hung four-over-four windows, topped by a brick segmental arch lintel.

The west elevation repeats the pattern of bays divided by plain brick pilasters. The seven bays contain double hung four-over-four windows, each topped by a brick segmental arch lintel. This facade shows how later brick additions in the 1950s were made to the courthouse. The first addition, with a small double hung one-over-one window on both the north and south side of the addition, contained two modern restrooms. The second addition was a low one-story wing, that extends north from the bathroom addition along the west elevation of the courthouse (but not replacing the courthouse wall), which housed the local public

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

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### Bledsoe County Courthouse, Pikeville, TN

library. The entrance to the Veterans Administration office faces the north side of the square and is not oriented as to appear to be part of the courthouse. Also visible on the west elevation is a small frame storage shed, added to the rear of the bathroom addition in about 1980. The original outside opening to the basement of the courthouse is located near the southwest corner of the building.

The south elevation is an exact match of the north elevation. Its symmetrical five bays are separated by two plain brick pilasters. A round brick arch defines the south entrance. The original plain lunette remains but the doors were replaced by modern metal doors in about 1980. The other bays contain double hung four-over-four windows, topped by a brick segmental arch lintel.

The interior of the Bledsoe County Courthouse contains many intact historical details. The courthouse has a T-plan, with the stem of the "T" creating a small public lobby and a long north-south corridor providing public access to the offices of county officials. On the south wing are offices for the county executive and the general sessions court. On the north side are offices for the trustee, property assessor, and the clerk and master. The original decorative pressed tin ceiling has been replaced on the first floor and new fanlight fixtures added in about 1980. Carpet has been added in the hallways and drop ceilings installed in the first floor offices. However, other important decorative features remain intact on the first floor. The original wooden strip wainscoting remains as do the original dark-stained wood door frames and office doors. Original steam radiators remain at both the north, south, and west entrances to the building. The original configuration of the offices is largely intact. The original walls remain unchanged and the original tile flooring is present in all offices, except that of the county executive. In the county executive office, faux pine paneling has been added to the walls, carpet has been installed, and a faux pine partition has been constructed. These changes date to about 1980.

At the north end of the corridor, a dog-leg metal staircase leads to the second floor. The staircase features original ornamental iron newel posts, iron handrail, and iron balusters. Much of the original decorative pressed tin ceiling remains in the second

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### Bledsoe County Courthouse, Pikeville, TN

floor courtroom lobby and hallway. The original linoleum flooring also remains in addition to original steam radiators. The door frames and doors for the court offices on the second floor are original. But the courtroom itself was modernized in about 1980. A drop ceiling with florescent lights, new judicial bench, new defendant stand, new jury box, and new counsel tables were installed at this time. Faux pine floor to ceiling paneling was added to the wall as well. The courtroom, however, contains its original public seating benches as well as original iron radiators and its original pine flooring. The second floor hallway also provides access to offices for the general sessions/ juvenile court, the circuit court clerk, and the jury room. The jury room has received no alterations while carpet and a drop ceiling have been installed in the other offices.

A non-contributing building and a non-contributing object stand on the courthouse grounds. On the east side of the courthouse grounds is a long rectangular brick one-story office building, with hipped asphalt shingle roof, that was constructed to house a small county hospital in about 1965. The building now contains offices for the county agricultural extension agent and the county board of education. This building is non-contributing (NC), due to its date of construction. At the southwest corner of the courthouse grounds is a war memorial monument, erected by the citizens of Bledsoe County in about 1950. This monument is non-contributing (NC), due to its date of construction.

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Bledsoe County Courthouse, Pikeville, TN

### VIII. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bledsoe County Courthouse in Pikeville, Tennessee, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its significant association with local government in twentieth century Bledsoe County. It is nominated under the registration requirements for County Courthouses set forth in the Multiple Property Documentation form for Historic County Courthouses in Tennessee, 1865-1945.

Bledsoe County was created on November 30, 1807, and in 1818, county officials moved the seat of government from Madison to Pikeville where the first court meeting took place in the upper story of Phillip Thurman's log house. In 1908, an earlier nineteenth century courthouse (the second Bledsoe County Courthouse) burned and county officials decided to build a brick replacement.

The county hired W. K. Brown and Brothers of Chattanooga to be the architects of the new courthouse. In 1909-10, the firm designed and constructed an understated interpretation of the then-popular Classical Revival style for this rural community. The statement of classical architecture was best expressed by the two-story portico of the west facade, but clearly the architectural statement was muted when compared to other more formal interpretations of Classical Revival style recently constructed in Tennessee. The columns are not fluted and the rather plain Tuscan capital was used rather than the more decorative Cornithian or Ionic capitals found on more academically correct interpretations of Classical Revival style. This more vernacular interpretation of an academic style reflected both the abilities of W. K. Brown and Brothers and the economic realities of Bledsoe County. The design of Brown and Brothers also proved to be a model when the citizens of neighboring Sequatchie County chose the firm to build a new courthouse two years later. The Sequatchie County Courthouse (NR 1/20/80) follows the exterior style and the interior floorplan of the Bledsoe County Courthouse very closely. Compared to Sequatchie County Courthouse, however, the Bledsoe County Courthouse is a more unaltered example of the Classical Revival courthouse design developed by W. K. Brown and Brothers in the



**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 5

Bledsoe County Courthouse, Pikeville, TN

early twentieth century.

The construction of the Bledsoe County Courthouse also had a lasting impact on the architecture of Pikeville during the early twentieth century. From 1910 to 1925, the economy of Bledsoe County expanded and Pikeville experienced its first sustained period of urban growth as two local banks and several small industries were established. The new courthouse pleased local residents and over the next fifteen years, they turned to W. K. Brown and Brothers for the designs of other significant new buildings. By 1925, the Chattanooga firm had completed the Bledsoe County High School, the First National Bank, the local Methodist and Church of Christ churches, at the Patten High School in the rural community of Melvine.

The new Bledsoe County Courthouse immediately became a place where significant changes in local government took place from 1910 to 1945. In 1910, for example, the county court made decisions to put the county into compliance with the recently approved General Education Law of 1909. The General Education Law was the first of several state laws that transformed public education at the local level. In the mid-1910s the Bledsoe County Court passed appropriations that allowed the county to participate and receive funding in the state's growing road construction program; the county court strongly supported the various highway acts of 1923, 1925, and 1927, introduced by Governor Austin Peay, to improve the state highway system. The county commissioners understood that local support would translate into an improved transportation infrastructure and U.S. 127, constructed in the late 1920s and early 1930s, brought a modern road through the middle of the county for the first time in its history. Local governmental decisions at the courthouse were strongly influenced by the leadership and political power of Lewis Pope, a Democrat from Pikeville. Pope, who served as commissioner of institutions under Governor Peay, ran for the Democratic nomination for governor in 1928. He launched his campaign from the courthouse in Pikeville. Although his effort was unsuccessful, Pope again used the Pikeville courthouse to launch later gubernatorial campaigns in the early 1930s.

During the New Deal era, the Bledsoe County Court, meeting at the courthouse, agreed to participate in the federal reclamation effort that eventually created Fall Creek Falls State Park. The

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### Bledsoe County Courthouse, Pikeville, TN

courthouse also served as offices for local Works Progress Administration and National Youth Administration projects. During World War II, the courthouse became a center for homefront activity, ranging from the meetings of the local draft board to being the community center for various scrap and war bond drives.

The actions of the county commissioners and officials at the Bledsoe County Courthouse from 1909 to 1945 were part of a general shift in local government during the first half of the twentieth century. While considerable power resided in the county court throughout the era, the impact of state and federal laws and regulations on the everyday lives of Bledsoe Countians increased markedly, especially as the county commissioners and officials traded a large part of their local government autonomy in exchange for funds and expertise offered by the state and federal governments. In Bledsoe County, the progressive revolution in American government was centered at the county courthouse.

In the late 1930s, a historian of the Federal Writers' Project visited Pikeville and observed that the courthouse was a center of activity:

On Saturday afternoons, between visits to the stores, the hill people wander over to the courthouse lawn where there are almost continuous arguments on social, political, and religious questions, usually settled by old-timers whose opinions are highly respected. There is much gossiping, too, about cooking, ailments, crops, courtships, marriages, births, and deaths. Children of all ages run in and out of the crowd, and family dogs scamper and fight. (1)

Over sixty years later, the Bledsoe County Courthouse still conveys that sense of place and remains a valuable artifact of government and community identity in Pikeville.

#### ENDNOTE:

1. Federal Writers' Project, The WPA Guide to Tennessee (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1986 [1939]), 503.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Bledsoe County Courthouse, Pikeville, TN

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 8

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Bledsoe County Courthouse, Pikeville, TN

## X. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

### Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property lies at the center of the courthouse square in Pikeville, Bledsoe County, Tennessee. It occupies the city lot 8 documented in the attached Bledsoe County Tax Map 65-I block C.

### Boundary description

The boundary includes the city lot that has been historically associated with the Bledsoe County Courthouse.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

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Bledsoe County Courthouse, Pikeville, TN

PHOTOGRAPHS

Bledsoe County Courthouse, Pikeville, TN

Photos by: Carroll Van West  
MTSU Center for Historic Preservation

Date: October 1992

Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission  
Nashville, TN

West facade, facing southeast  
1 of 19

West facade, facing east  
2 of 19

North elevation, facing south  
3 of 19

North and east elevation, facing southwest  
4 of 19

East elevation, facing west  
5 of 19

East elevation, facing northwest  
6 of 19

South elevation, facing north  
7 of 19

First floor corridor, facing north  
8 of 19

First floor corridor, facing south  
9 of 19

Staircase, first floor bathrooms, facing east  
10 of 19

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
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Section number PHOTOS Page 10

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Bledsoe County Courthouse, Pikeville, TN

Second floor hallway, facing north  
11 of 19

Second floor stairs landing and tin ceiling, facing west  
12 of 19

Steam radiator, courtroom, facing west  
13 of 19

Courtroom, second floor, facing west  
14 of 19

County office building, courthouse grounds, facing southwest  
15 of 19

War memorial monument, courthouse grounds, facing east  
16 of 19

County court clerk office entrance, first floor, facing east  
17 of 19

Second floor hallway, with original tin ceiling, facing north  
18 of 19

Jury room, second floor, facing west  
19 of 19

