

PH# 365033

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED **DEC 13 1976**

DATE ENTERED **JUL 25 1977**

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 Washington County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON
Same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Public Square, Main at Lincoln Park Road

CITY, TOWN
Springfield

STATE
Kentucky

VICINITY OF
02

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
02

COUNTY
Washington

CODE
229

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Washington County Fiscal Court

STREET & NUMBER
Main Street

CITY, TOWN
Springfield

STATE
Kentucky

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Washington County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
Main Street

CITY, TOWN
Springfield

STATE
Kentucky

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky

DATE
1971

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
Kentucky Heritage Commission

CITY, TOWN
Frankfort

STATE
Kentucky

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

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

The Washington County Courthouse, built in 1815, is located in the small community of Springfield. The structure faces south, fronting on U. S. Highway 150, connecting Danville and Bardstown. The courthouse is a five-bay, two-story brick block built on a smooth stone foundation, which rises about three feet above ground level. The structure is capped by a hipped roof. In 1840 a tower with an octagonal cupola and weathervane was added.

The brick is laid in Flemish bond. A stone water-table, placed a foot above ground level extends around the building, as does a wooden cornice decorated with modillions. Originally the windows had twelve-over-twelve pane sash, but were replaced with two-over-two, during remodeling in 1918. The openings, however, do retain the jack arches above and the narrow stone lintels below. The front entrance, composed of double doors, the top panels of which have been replaced with glass, has a bracketed entablature above. One-story tetrastyle Doric porticos, based on stone posts, were added on the south and west sides of the courthouse in 1918.

The original plans for the structure are missing, although the list of twenty-four specifications for the building remains. The specifications include the following: "The floors and staircase, steps and risers are to be of black ash plank... There shall be a white oak girder ten by twelve inches to run across the house, supported by two circular posts of twelve inches diameter each... The doors are to be good strong batten... walnut finished with fancy sash above the circle... with all windows twenty-four lights... The whole house is to be well plastered and whitewashed all the woodwork inside and outside to be well painted colors to suit the Commissioners... Verdegis Green excepted " (Springfield Sun, April 2, 1936, p. 6).

In the interior, the original woodwork and wainscotting remains intact.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input 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 1814-1816; cupola 1840;
1918

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Thomas H. Letcher, Frank Brewer

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The simple brick structure, built in 1816, is the oldest courthouse in continual use in Kentucky. A fine example of Georgian architecture, the courthouse was the third building constructed as a seat of justice for Washington County, the first county formed after Kentucky became a state in 1792. A few minor alterations to the structure have occurred over the years, but it essentially retains its original plain massing and simplicity of style.

Washington County was created from Nelson County in 1792. The bill proposing the formation of the county, introduced by General Matthew Walton the largest landholder in the state prior to 1800 (see the Walton Manor Cottage (John Pope Law Office) forwarded to Washington November 24, 1796), was the first act adopted by the general assembly of the new Commonwealth.

The County's first justices of the peace met at a private residence until 1793, when Springfield, the county seat, was established, and a log courthouse was erected. The first log building burned eleven months after it was completed. In 1797 a second brick courthouse was constructed which burned in 1814. After the fire, the county commissioners met and let a contract to the lowest bidder for construction of a third structure. Thomas H. Letcher was hired, with the bid of \$2,500.00. The new structure was completed in 1816, fulfilling the specifications set forth by the commissioners.

With the exception of the addition of the bell tower in 1840, the only major alterations to the courthouse occurred in 1918. At this time the court decided that "improvements" should be made including the erection of suitable porches and the replacement of the old window panes with new ones. Architect, Frank Brewer, was hired to make the changes. At this time the iron fence which extended around the courthouse was removed.

(continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Coleman, J. Winston. Historic Kentucky. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1967, p. 59.

Collins, Richard. History of Kentucky. Covington: Collins and Co., 1878, Vol. II, p. 748.

(continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	16	6516840	47172180	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

Mary Cronan, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Kentucky Heritage Commission

DATE

November 1976

STREET & NUMBER

104 Bridge Street

TELEPHONE

(502) 564-3741

CITY OR TOWN

Frankfort

STATE

Kentucky

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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Eduard W. Mellon

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

12/7/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

Charles O. ...

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

7/25/77

DATE

6.5.55

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED DEC 13 1976
DATE ENTERED JUL 25 1977

Washington County Courthouse

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

In discussing Georgian public buildings in his Architecture in Old Kentucky (1958) Newcomb describes the Washington County Courthouse:

Like most county courthouses of its era, it is crowned by a hip roof at the apex of which stands a square classic dio supporting a dome-covered octagonal cupola with a weather vane. This cupola seems rather large for the building. Porches carried on Doric columns, probably later additions, shelter doors on two sides, and modillions adorn the cornice. The building is among the oldest existing seats of justice in the state (p. 77).

Despite the destruction of the first two Washington County Courthouses by fire, the county's earliest records have survived. Included in the documents is the marriage bond of Abraham Lincoln's parents, Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED DEC 13 1976
DATE ENTERED JUL 25 1977

Washington County Courthouse

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 2

Garr, Elizabeth Headley. History of Kentucky Courthouses. Colonial Dames of America, 1972, p. 150.

Newcomb, Rexford. Architecture in Old Kentucky. Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1953, p. 77.

County Court Order Books. A through M, 1792-1840, 1918, Washington County Courthouse, Springfield, Kentucky.

Additional information from Mrs. E. O. Kelly, Jr., County Representative for the Kentucky Heritage Commission.