

PH0024279

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Kentucky	
COUNTY: Green	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER APR 1 0 1972	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON: **The Old Courthouse**

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: **Public Square**

CITY OR TOWN: **Greensburg**

STATE Kentucky	CODE 21	COUNTY: Green	CODE 087
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: **Green County Fiscal Court**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Greensburg	STATE: Kentucky	CODE 21
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: **Green County Courthouse, Greensburg Kentucky**

STREET AND NUMBER: **Public Square**

CITY OR TOWN: Greensburg	STATE: Kentucky	CODE 21
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: **Historic American Buildings Survey (see attached photostat)**

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: **Library of Congress**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Washington	STATE: D.C.	CODE
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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ENTRY NUMBER: **APR 1 0 1972**

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Also: Survey Of Historic Sites In Kentucky; 1971; published by Kentucky Heritage Commission, 401 Wapping St., Frankfort, Ky.

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

2 -
gk
The building's exterior is essentially as it was originally. However, some changes have been made. A door on the left side of the building has been changed into a window; a bell was added in 1879 and in the 1930's rock pillars and a huge chain were erected all the way around the lot on which it stands.

2 -
gk
The ^{IN} exterior is entirely changed. Following is a list of the most prominent known changes:

1. The balcony eliminated and a second story added.
2. The Judges platform and jury box removed.
3. A wooden floor laid over the flagstone.
4. Stairway relocated.
5. Several fireplaces plastered over.
6. All furnishings gone.

Included herewith is the court order describing the original specifications of the building. (See attached Green County Records, Deed Book 4 - Page 78).

Following are excerpts from a newspaper article describing the original building:

"The result of the building contract was a cut stone edifice of gray limestone quarried in the town limits. It is 34' x 40' and two stories high, surmounted with a peaked shingle roof with a small bellfry on the top. When first built, the upper floor was railed off for visitors and did not cover the space occupied by court and bar. The rest of the upstairs was occupied by grand and pettit jury rooms, entered from the gallery."

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | | <u>Law</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Courthouse was built by a man who was destined to become the Tenth Governor of Kentucky, Thomas Metcalf. He was known as "Old Stone Hammer" not because he was a stone mason but because of his habit of pounding the podium with his fist to emphasize a remark. The County of Metcalfe carries his name.

It is interesting to note that this building has served its people in many capacities. Not long after its completion, a Rev. John Howe petitioned the court for permission to establish New Athens Academy in the East jury room. This permission was granted, provided Mr. Howe could execute bond in the sum of \$50. for damages that his students might do to the building. Rev. Howe, a Presbyterian minister and a graduate of Princeton University, soon boasted 30 students. His reputation as a teacher spread far and wide attracting students from as far away as Lexington, Louisville, Danville, Lebanon, and Elizabethtown. One of his students, a Mr. McElroy, later taught Mentor Graham, the man credited with teaching Abraham Lincoln whatever higher education he had.

In this building men were recruited to fight in the War of 1812 and its court yard served as muster ground for those volunteers. A legend that has some substance of fact is that one of these volunteers was a "free man of color" who was under the command of General King and was the man who fired the shot that killed General Pockingham in the Battle of New Orleans.

In this building Ninian Edwards practiced law. He later became a friend of Lincoln, Governor of Illinois and U.S. Ambassador to Mexico.

Nathaniel Owens, Sheriff of Green County and father of Mary Owens, served the court in this building. Mary Owens was the sweetheart of Lincoln and the subject of the book, Lincoln's Other Mary.

(see continuation sheet)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Green County Court Records
Greensburg, Ky.

Collins, Richard H. & Lewis
History of Kentucky, Vol I

Coleman, John Winston
Kentucky, A Pictorial History
University of Kentucky Press

Newspaper article dated July
1, 1904. Author unknown.

Coleman, J. Winston
Historic Kentucky; Henry Clay Press

Mr. Samuel W. Moore
Green County Historian
Interviews

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		37°	16'	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		35°	30'	2"
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

UTM
16/632910
4124630
CD

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **45' x 65'**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
George M. Huddleston, Jr., President

ORGANIZATION: **Green County Historical Society** DATE: **2/21/72**

STREET AND NUMBER:
125 Circle Drive

CITY OR TOWN: **Greensburg** STATE: **Kentucky** CODE: **21**

12 STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name *S.W. Moore*

Title State Liaison Officer

Date _____

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Robert M. Utley
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 4/10/72

ATTEST: _____

William H. Miller
Keeper of The National Register

Date APR 10 1972

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(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries) - #8 Statement of Significance:

In this building, Thomas and Hannah Lincoln fixed their claim to 300 acres of second rate land that became known as Lincoln Green River Farm.

William H. Herndon, Lincoln's law partner, was born within site of the building in 1818. *sight*

In 1832, Andrew Jackson spent several days in Greensburg and filed a brief in the courthouse. The document was preserved until about 1935 when WPA labor was used to re-index and refile documents in the clerk's office and in the process, the Jackson document was either stolen or misplaced. To this day, it has not been found.

The building has escaped ^e destruction on two occasions. First during the Civil War, when General Lyons was burning most of the County Courthouses in the area. He found that a Col. Moore was stationed in Greensburg with a considerable number of Union soldiers to guard the Internal Revenue Office. This office was housed in the Courthouse. Gen. Lyons passed through Summersville, five miles away one afternoon and burned the courthouse in Campbellville the next morning.

The second time was in 1928. In the 1928 election, a County Judge was elected who proposed that Green County needed a new courthouse. He was a progressive man and one of the leading citizens and merchants of the county. He suggested that the old courthouse be torn down and a new one erected "in the middle of the square" (the old building is in the southeast quarter of the square). Judge Durham's sole intent was to build something better for the County.

There were citizens in Green County and other sections of Kentucky that viewed the move as an effort to tear down something worthy of saving. Editorials and letters began to appear in the local paper in opposition to tearing it down. Citizens became divided on the issue and a committee to "Save the Old Courthouse" was organized. Prizes were offered to school children for the best essay on "Saving the Old Courthouse."

The Committee brought suit in 1930 against the County Court. The trial judge was Circuit Court Judge Henry McElroy and his ruling was based on the original city plate and "Beal's Letter." Mr. Beal had donated the land on which the City of Greensburg is built and in these letters and deeds he specified that space be given to

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(Number all entries) #8 Statement of Significance:

the County in the public square on which to build a County Court-
house. McElroy's ruling simply stated that the only land the County
owned was the land on which the actual building stood, a 45'x65'
piece of ground. This was not enough ground on which to put a new
building. Mr. Beal's letter written in 1790 had saved the Old
Courthouse.

During World War II, it served as the ration board office for the
County.

Soon after the War, the building was used by the Jane Todd Crawford
Library. With the construction of a new public library building,
the building was vacated and remained empty until the Fiscal Court
gave custody to the Green County Historical Society. Since then,
the Society has operated The Old Courthouse Museum which attracts
several hundred visitors each year.

The Oldest Courthouse west of the Alleghenies has stood for 170
years and served historic Green County for 135 years as a court-
house. This was a splendid building for its time and should cer-
tainly be recognized as being worthy of preservation.