NPS Form 10-900 (Rev. 10-90)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

State or Federal agency and bureau

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM	MAT ALL STATES AND STA
1. Name of Property	SERVICE LACES
historic name: <u>Pleasants County Courthouse</u> other names/site number: <u>N/A</u>	
2. Location	
street & number: 301 Court Lane city or town: St. Marys state: West Virginia code: WV_county: Pleasants_code	_vicinity: N/A
3. State/Federal Agency Certification	
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preserved Property Certify that thisX nomination request for documentation standards for registering properties in the National the propertyX meets does not meet the National this property be considered significant nationally continuation sheet for additional comments.) Susan M. Pierce, Deputy SHPO	or determination of eligibility meets the National Register of Historic Places and orth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, al Register Criteria. I recommend that
State or Federal agency and bureau	_
In my opinion, the property meets does not me (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)	et the National Register criteria.
Signature of commenting or other official	Date

4. National Park Service	e Certification	1
I, hereby certify that this	.0	nature of Keeper Date of Action
entered in the Nat See continua determined eligible	ation sheet.	1/264 1/1/12 12 W - 9 < 3104
National Register See continua		
determined not eli National Register	igible for the	
_	National Register	
5. Classification		
Ownership of Property		
private		
X public-local		
public-State	a1	
public-Feder	aı	
Category of Property		
X_building(s)		
district		
site		
structure		
object		
Number of Resources w	ithin Property	
Contributing	Non-contributing	
1	2	_ buildings
		_ sites
	······································	_ structures
	1	_ objects Total
1	3	

Name of related multiple property listing County Courthouses of West Virginia

X A	broad patterns of our history.
В	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
<u>X</u> 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

A	owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B	removed from its original location.
C	a birthplace or a 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 Si	gnificance
Architecture Politics and	Government
Period of S	ignificance
<u>1924-1953</u>	
Significant	Dates
<u>1924</u>	
Significant	Person
<u>N/A</u>	
Cultural A	ffiliation
<u>N/A</u>	
Architect/E	Builder
	Pogue, architects oreman, builders
Narrative S	Statement of Significance
See Continu	nation sheets

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By	
name/title: Barbara E. Rasmussen, Ph.D., Alan Ro	owe and Erin Riebe (WV SHPO)
organization: Historic Preservation and Research	date: June 2003
street & number: 224 Wilson Avenue	telephone: (304) 292-7652
city or town: Morgantown state: WV	zip code: 26501
	•
Property Owner	
<u> </u>	
name: Pleasants County Commission	
street & number: 310 Court Lane	telephone: (304) 684-7542
city or town: St. Marys state: WV	• •

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Pleasants County Courthouse	<u>Pleasants County, WV</u>
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Location and Setting

The Pleasants County Courthouse is located at 301 Court Lane in St. Marys, West Virginia. The community is located on the Ohio River at the Mouth of Middle Island Creek and is reached by West Virginia State Route 2. The courthouse sits on a high knoll along SR 2, near the edge of the town. The approach is via a long drive, Court Lane, with a center terrace divider with four lamp posts spaced equally up the drive.

The courthouse property includes the courthouse building, a jail annex, and a small storage shed. A bulletin board and Vietnam War memorial are situated near the end of Court Lane along SR 2.

Description

Courthouse 1924 contributing building

The Pleasants County Courthouse is a simple rectangular building exhibiting elements of the Neo-Classical Revival style. It is two stories tall, has a flat roof, is constructed of brick, and is supported by a sandstone foundation.

The front portico rises the full two stories. It is reached by a wide set of sandstone steps. The pedimented portico and its entablature are covered in aluminum siding and are supported by four tapering fluted Doric columns. The entablature on the pediment bears the inscription "Pleasants County Courthouse." To each side of the portico a set of steps leads down to a basement-level entrance. This entrance has original double-doors, multi-light side lights and transom.

The main (or northwest) elevation is symmetrically oriented. Three windows openings are situated at the basement level, below the watertable, to each side of the sandstone steps. A cornerstone is located on the south corner of the building. One side of the cornerstone reads "Laid by Masonic Fraternity AD 1924, AL 5924, Fred C. Steinbicker, Grand Master." The other side reads "1851 Pleasants County Courthouse, 1924."

Five one-over-one, double-hung sash windows are situated to each side of the centered entrance and eleven windows are situated directly above on the second floor. All of the window openings have brick lintels and sills. The entrance has replacement doors and a transom window. Above the doors is a flat cornice supported by decorative scrolled brackets. Two stringer courses of brick near the parapet of the building frame a decorative course of toothed-in vertical brick, comprising the only detailing on the building's exterior. There is a plain metal cap along the parapet.

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The side and rear elevations are similar with symmetrical fenestration and one-over-one, doublehung sash windows. The rear (or southeast) elevation has a small elevator shaft addition and stairwell.

Interior

The main floor of the courthouse is reached through a small vestibule with modern double doors and a wide transom. Several offices line the L-shaped hall of the first floor. This hall features simple detailing such as a chair rail, paneling, transoms above doors, and unpainted, original woodwork. There are four one-over-one, double-hung sash window openings into the hall once used by clerks to serve the public. The stairwells contain original metal and wood rails.

On the second floor the arched courtroom is detailed with oak wood trim and furnishings. The bench is centered and recessed in an alcove between two pairs of square oak pilasters. Gallery seating is also of oak, in the form of theater style seating placed at a slight angle facing the center of the courtroom. The jury box, framed with oak railings, is next to the bench. The gallery is separated from the proceedings by a similar railing. The original spacious size of the courtroom has been reduced in the rear to provide additional office space.

Jail and Jailer's residence

c.1900, c.1965 noncontributing building The jail is located immediately behind the courthouse. It is a square, one-story building with hip roof, and is constructed of rock-faced block. It has exposed rafter ends, a standing seam metal

roof and barred windows with stone lintels and sills. The interior of the jail maintains original details just as cell doors and inmate beds. A jailer's residence was constructed on the north elevation of the jail c.1965. It is a one-story brick ranch building with side gable roof. This building is now used as office space. The jail does not retain historic integrity due to the large addition.

Storage shed

c.1960

noncontributing building

A rectangular storage shed is situated between the courthouse building and the jail. It has a side gable roof, aluminum siding, casement windows, and original paneled doors. The shed does not retain historic integrity.

Monument

c.1995

noncontributing object

A noncontributing Vietnam monument is located at the end of Court Lane along State Route 2. It is a pointed arch stone monument.

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Statement of Significance

The Pleasants County Courthouse is eligible under *Criteria A: Politics and Government* for its significance in Pleasants County's political history. Although the courthouse is not the county's first, the building stands today as a symbol of the political tendency to form new counties in former western Virginia as populations increased. This demonstrated a desire on the part of rural and remote citizens to bring the institutions of local government to their communities. The current courthouse is a representative of that trend. Citizens desired close access to civil government and were hopeful of economic and political benefits that a county seat would bring to the area. The Pleasants County Courthouse is the material evidence of the county's population growth and a symbol of the residents' values.

The building is also eligible under *Criterion C: Architecture* as a locally significant example of the Neo-Classical Revival style of architecture. The period of significance is 1924, the year the courthouse was constructed, to 1954, the National Register's fifty-year cut-off date.

History

The formation of Pleasants County brought new norms of gentrification to the region, allowing expanded opportunities for political activities for the area's residents. The formation of the county was triggered by increasing population in this section of the Ohio River shoreline that was too far away from a courthouse to allow access to court within the proverbial one day's ride – a traditional standard in southern locales. With the formation of the county there were potentially several new wage-paying positions with county government that also brought social prestige. This in turn led to the development of new political groups and a stronger political voice for places far in Virginia's west.

Efforts to form a new county from remote portions of Tyler, Wood, and Ritchie counties began in 1847. The citizens' meetings that were held to organize the county were held in Alexander Creel's home, with Rodney Hickman keeping meticulous and neat account of the proceedings. Several citizens pledged their financial support for the new county. The citizens voted for the project on April 27, 1848. Final success came in the 1850-51 session of the General Assembly, which approved the new political unit. It took a long time to fully organize the county and to establish public buildings. Because the population of the county was so small (1,500) at the time of founding, the county fathers encountered much difficulty in raising the funds needed to build a courthouse and jail. Further, finding revenues to pay the modest salaries of the new county employees proved almost insurmountable.

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A committee of citizens designed the first courthouse. They were Alexander Creel, John Widderfield, Edmund Riggs, Browne, John K. Prince, and Abner Martin. Creel, Browse, Widderfield, John Stewart, and Joseph Taylor were tasked to find a suitable site for the construction. They accepted a parcel of land deeded to the county court in 1851 by Creel, the founding settler of the town. Creel owned all of the land that became St. Marys. His deed stipulated that if the courthouse site ever changed, then his estate should be reimbursed only for the cost of the "naked" lot, and no subsequent improvements to the site. The building the committee designed was a Classical Revival building constructed of brick, at a cost of \$5,300. The builders were George Sharp [Tharp?] and John Stewart. They were contracted to build a combined courthouse and jail, with the jail in the basement of the building. Given one year to construct the building, they took until June 11, 1854 to complete the project. While the construction was under way, the court met at the home of Isaac Reynolds on the southeast corner of Second and Lafayette streets. Commissioners arranged to use the Wood County jail until theirs was completed.

The first courthouse featured a gable front entry, pedimented portico over a central entry, and a very tall belfry. It was constructed of brick that was fired at the Gallagher farm near the site of construction. This courthouse served the county until 1919 when the automobiles became more popular and post-war prosperity triggered a desire for a newer, larger courthouse. That year, responding to a petition by 132 citizens, the justices presented a bond issue for a new courthouse that would be used to honor the county's returning war veterans: each of their names would be inscribed on the building. The \$150,000 proposal failed at the hands of the voters. Though the issue received a majority of the votes (589 to 521) the necessary three-fifths majority was not attained.

County commissioners took no further action to replace the aging structure. Their hands were forced, however, after a electrical storm on July 6, 1923. The courthouse cupola was struck by lightning causing a fire that so badly damaged the building it could not be safely used. Once again they returned a bond issue to the voters of the county, this time for only \$100,000, which was approved by the necessary three-fifths majority (1,083 to 212).

During the demolition and ensuing construction, county offices were housed in downtown office buildings, a feature that was immediately popular with the citizenry because it was so convenient for them. The circuit clerk, county clerk, assessor, and all of their records were located in the Haddox Building, where the court also met. The sheriff's office was relocated to the second floor of the Phillips Building. Although there was interest in moving the courthouse to the business district of town, the court did not do so; the Creel site could not be sold to purchase

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new land. The reversionary clause in his deed would force the land, or proceeds from its sale, to revert to Creel's estate. Hence, the court decided to rebuild on the original site.

The site was on top of a steep hill, and was difficult to get to, but it had become a local institution that the courthouse square was the traditional gathering place for public assemblies and for political matters. In order to make access to the courthouse somewhat easier, the court purchased some additional land to the east, and on either side of the road up the hill, extending the court square to Barkwell Street. This acquisition allowed for the construction of a courthouse, a jail, and a jailer's residence, closely located behind the courthouse proper. Parking for automobiles was also included in the design. The provenance of the small blockhouse remains a mystery.

Clarksburg architects Holmboe & Pogue designed the courthouse and Marietta, Ohio contractors Putnam & Foreman built the complex for \$99,983. The architects drew three different drawings of the courthouse with the commission selecting the most simple design. Demolition of the old building and construction of the new commenced almost at the same time. The contract was let on May 20, 1924, and on September 3, the cornerstone was laid in an elaborate Masonic ceremony led by Grand Master Fred C. Steinbecker of Wheeling.

Construction continued through the winter of 1924, and in the spring of 1925 county officials moved into the new building, all complete except for the basement. The court stipulated that the cornice and facade of the building be left plain as a cost cutting measure. Local historian Robert L. Pemberton marveled that the work could be accomplished so quickly at such a low price, given the costs of construction materials then.

Architecture

The dignified courthouse architecture reflects the county's respect for the law and reverence for the institutions of self-government on a local level. The architecture of the present courthouse is a tribute to the county's first courthouse that was destroyed in a storm. It was a Classical Revival building that featured a column-supported pedimented portico. The 1924 building echoes that theme.

The enclosed portico does not effect the building's ability to convey significance under *Criteria* A or C. An effort is underway to maintain the building and restore the original portico.

Summary

The Pleasants County Courthouse is eligible under *Criteria A: Politics and Government* for its significance in Pleasants County's political history. Since 1924, this building as provided a place for lawmakers and county officials to gather and conduct business. The building is also eligible

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under *Criterion C: Architecture* as a locally significant example of the Neo-Classical Revival style of architecture. The period of significance dates from 1911, the year the courthouse was constructed, to 1954, the National Register's fifty-year cut-off date.

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- Holmboe & Pogue, architects. Courthouse for the Pleasants County Court, St. Marys, West Virginia, drawings. 29 January 1924.
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Pleasants County Courthouse	Pleasants County, WV
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Verbal Boundary Description

The courthouse occupies the half-acre lot of land at the top of Court Lane that was dedicated for the purpose in 1851 when the county was formed, and which is further described in Pleasants County Deed Book 1, Page 68.

Boundary Justification

The site comprises the property associated with the Pleasants County Courthouse and jail annex.

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Pleasants County Courthouse

Pleasants County, WV

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Section

Photos

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Name of Property:

Pleasants County Courthouse

Address:

301 Court Lane

Town:

St. Marys

County:

Pleasants

Photographer: Date:

Erin Riebe April 2004

Negatives:

WVSHPO, Charleston, WV

Photo 1 of 10

Northwest and southwest elevations of courthouse building

View facing east

Photo 2 of 10

Main (northwest) elevation of courthouse

View facing south

Photo 3 of 10

Northeast and southeast elevations of courthouse

View facing west

Photo 4 of 10

Main hall in courthouse

View facing south

Photo 5 of 10

Courtroom

View facing southeast

Photo 6 of 10

Courtroom

View facing east

Photo 7 of 10

Jail cell

View facing north

Photo 8 of 10

Noncontributing jail and jailer's residence with storage shed and

courthouse in background

View facing west

Photo 9 of 10

Noncontributing jail building

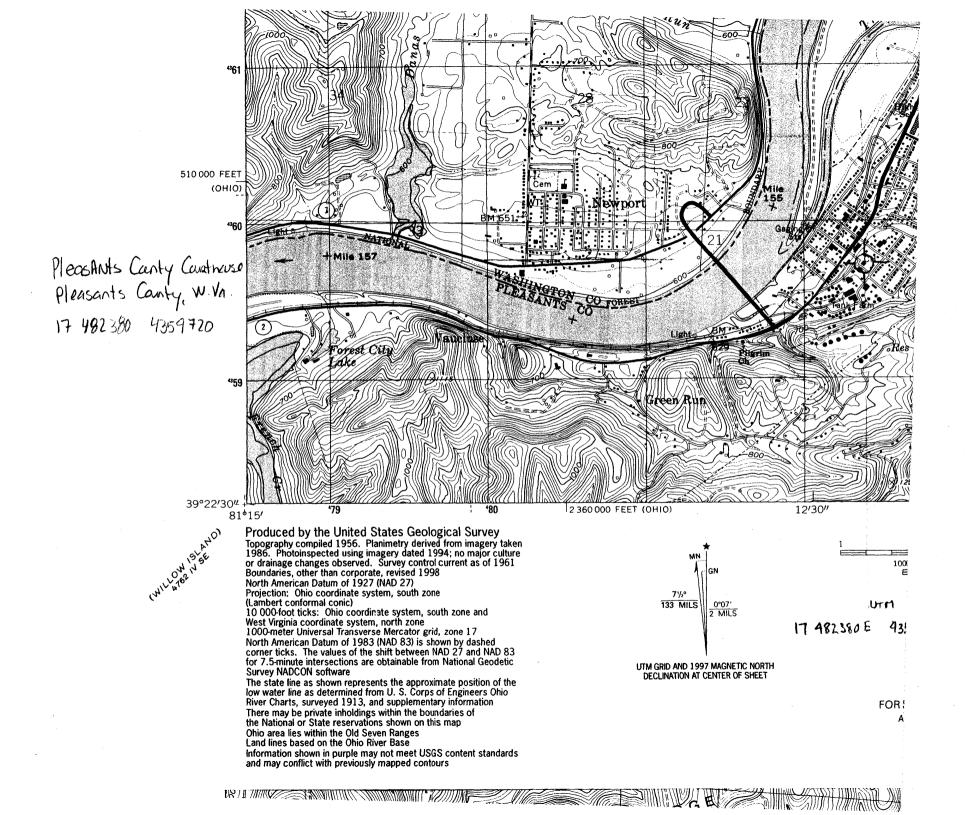
View facing southeast

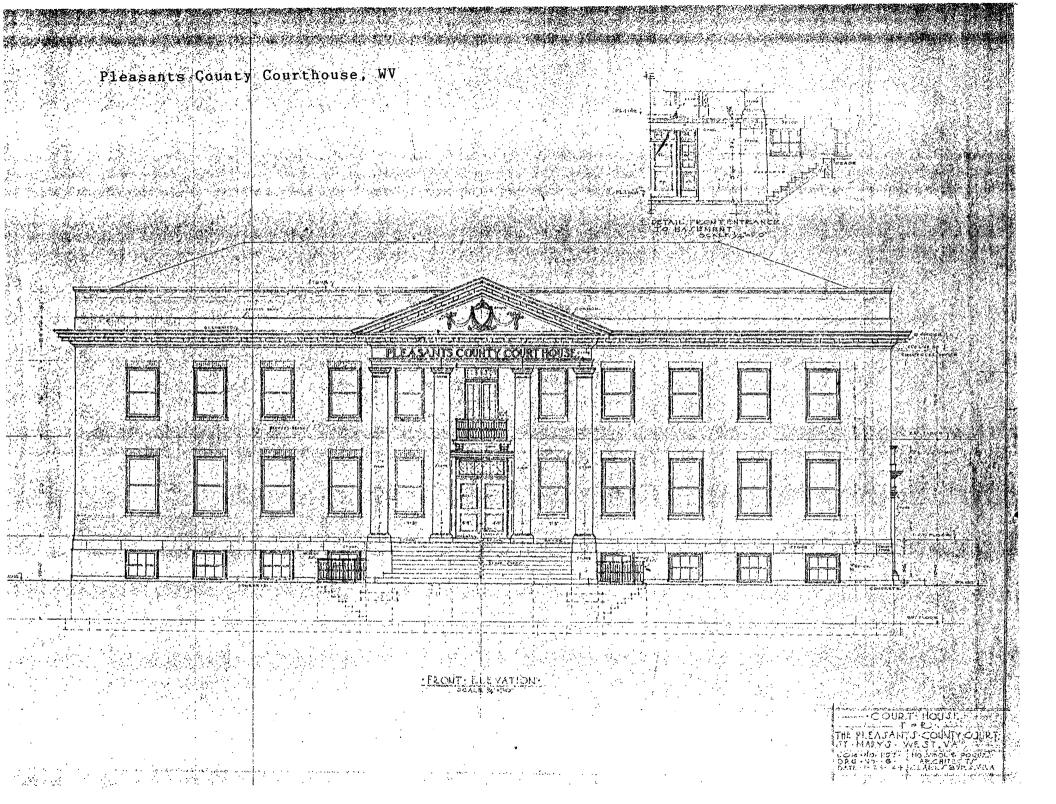
Photo 10 of 10

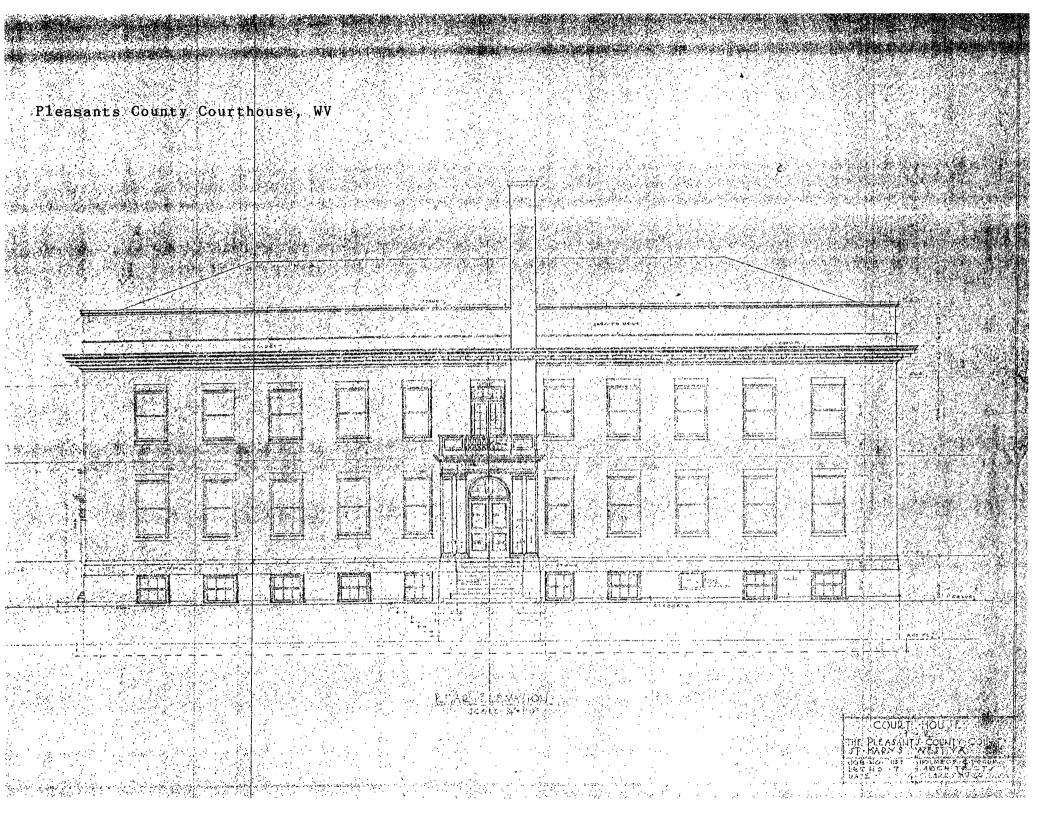
Noncontributing storage shed

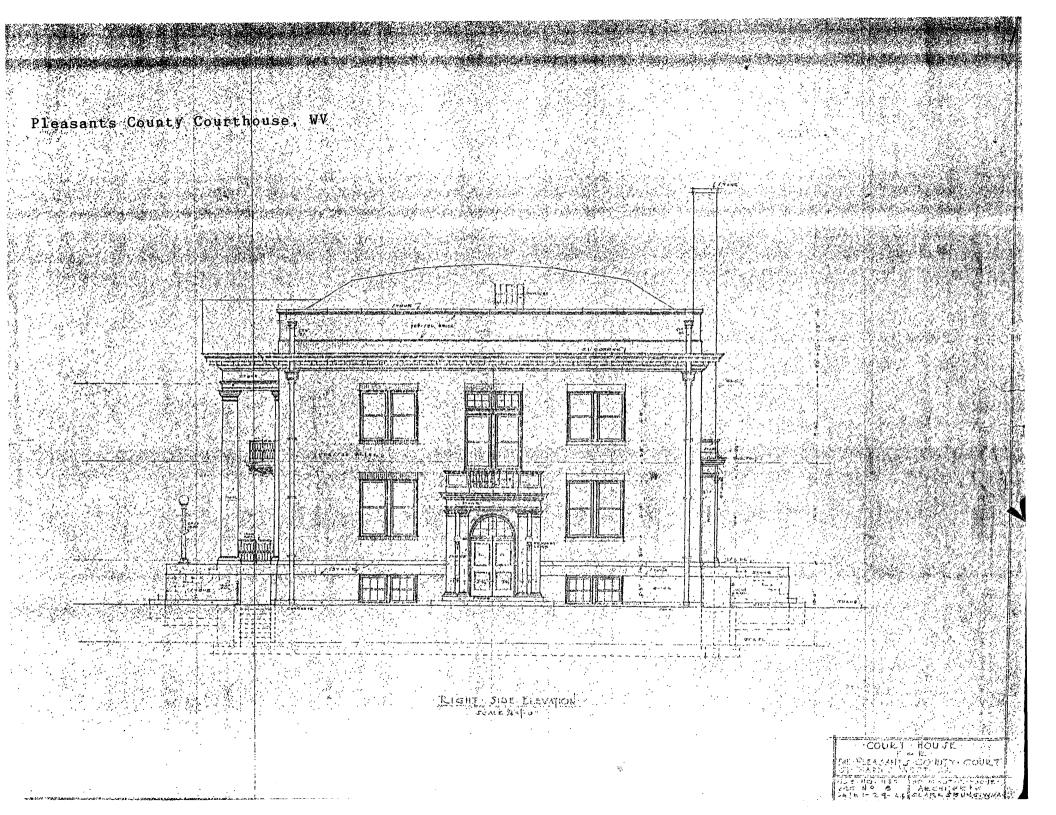
View facing east

SR 2

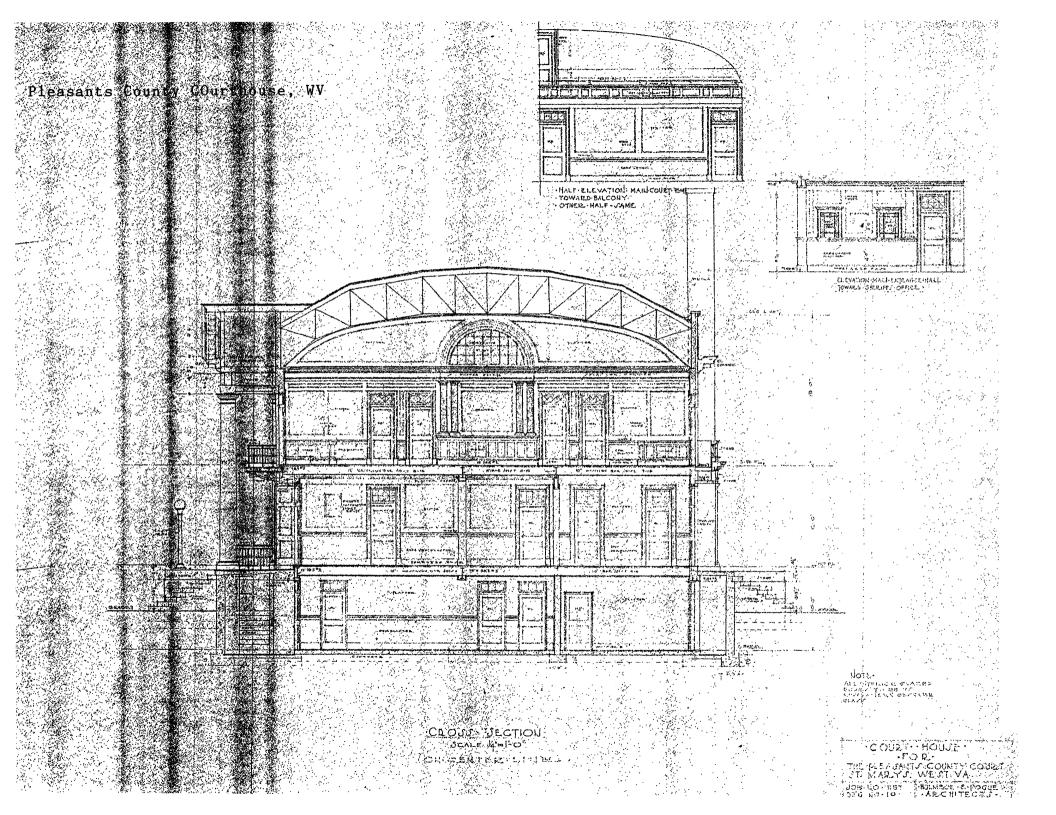


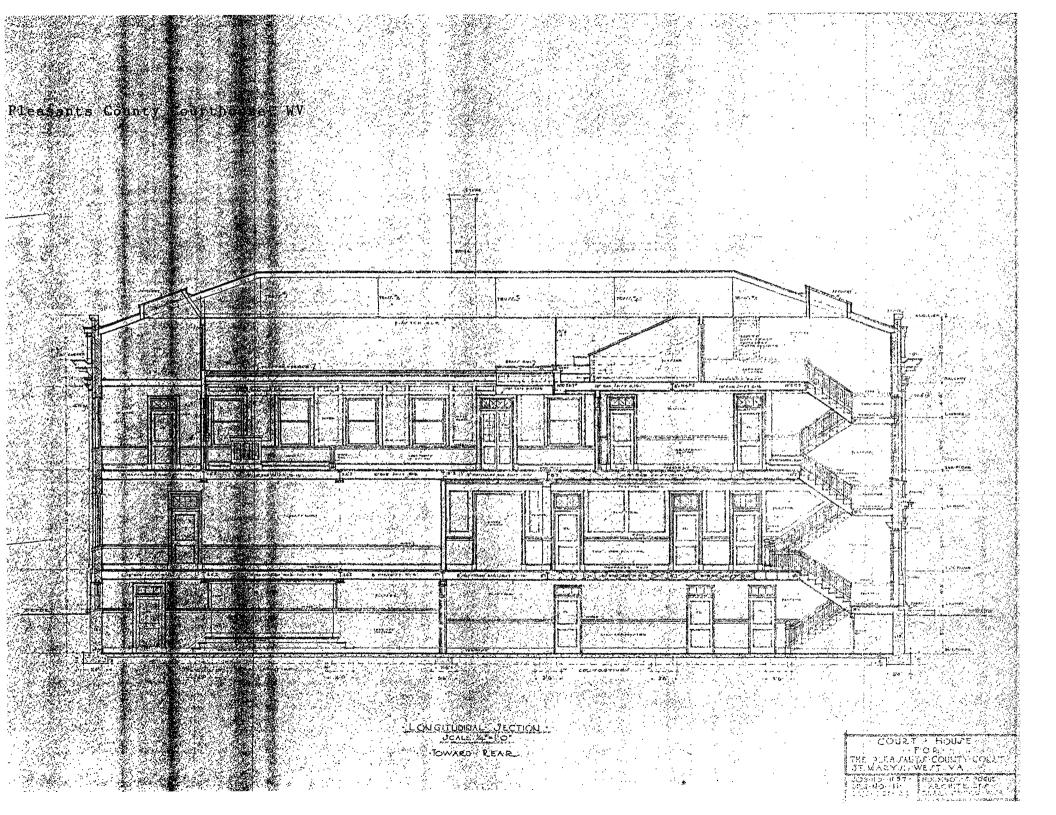


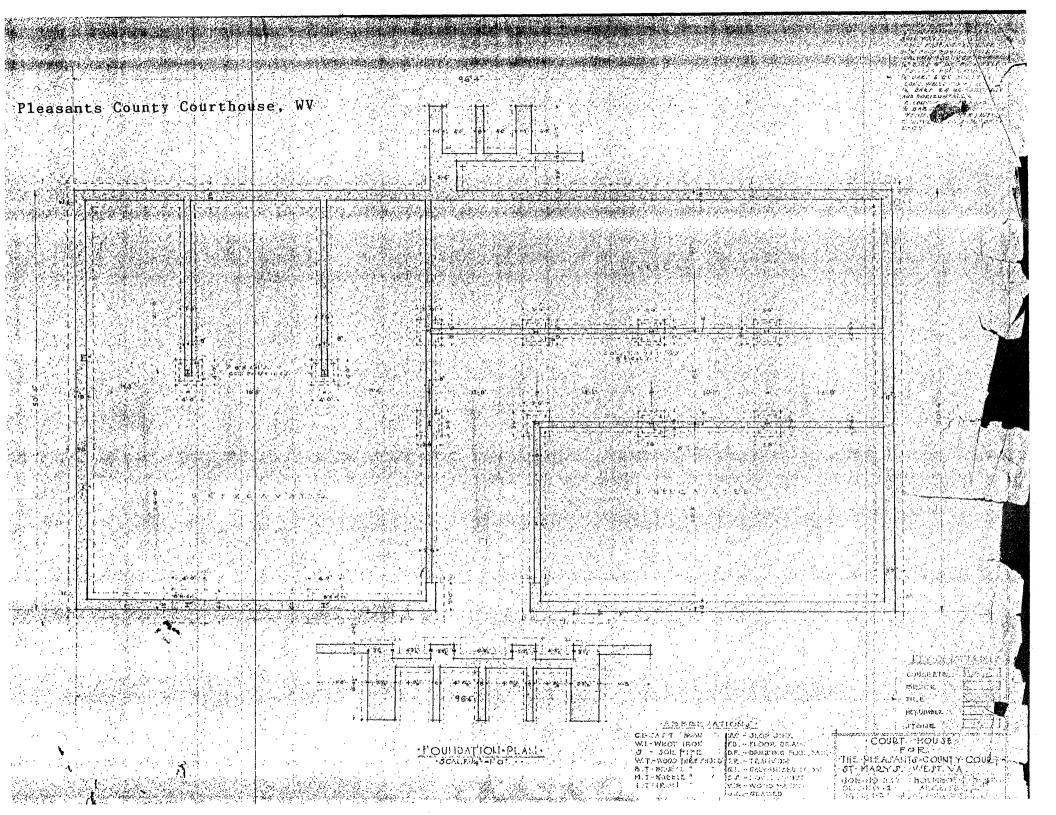


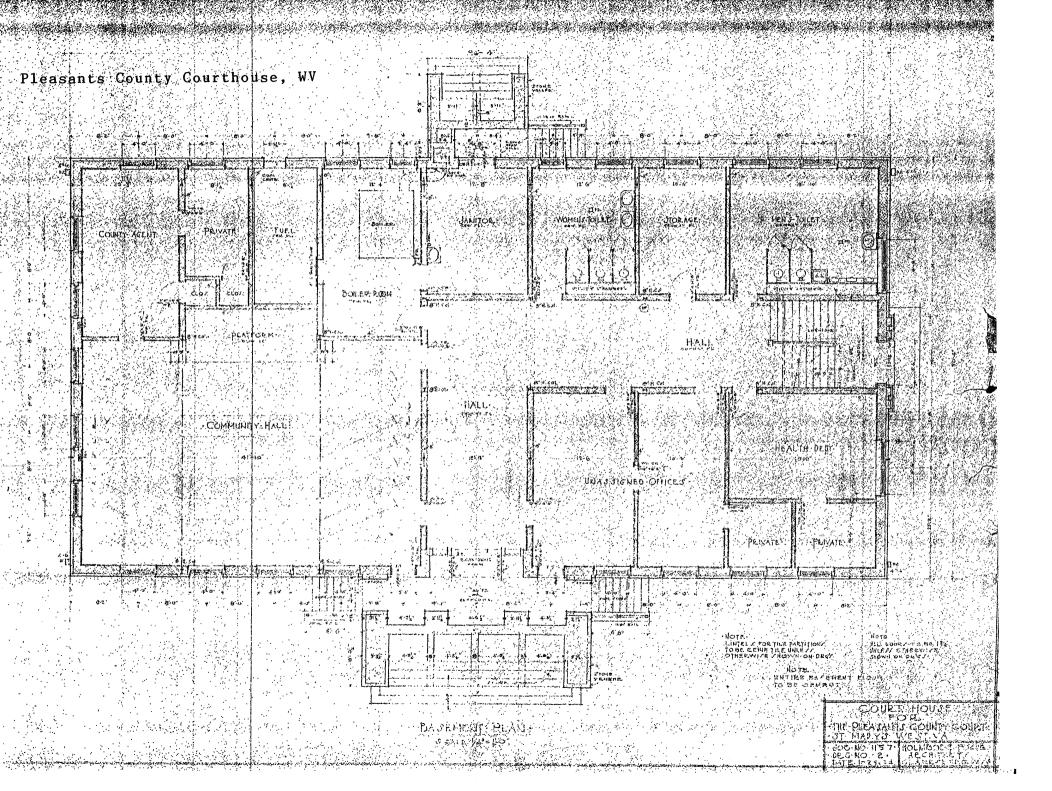


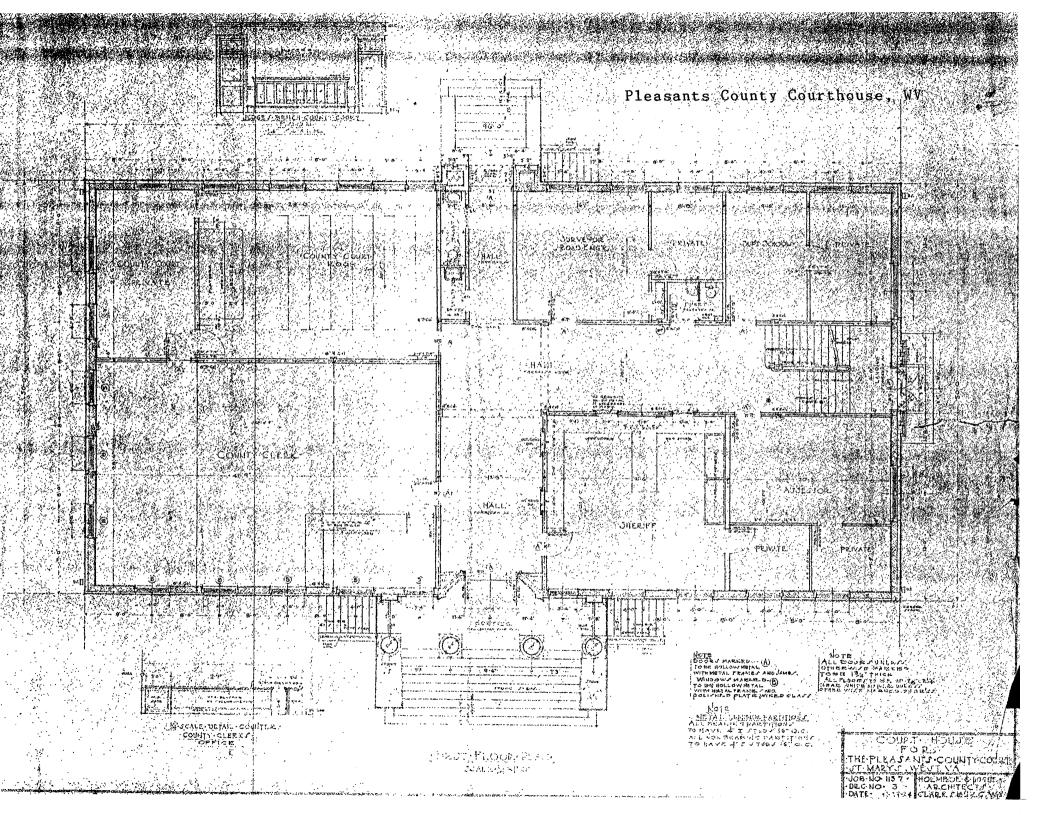
Pleasants County Courthouse, WV LIST JUNE - ELEVATION Server yolo COURT HOUSE
THE PLEASANT COURTY COURT
JT MARYS WEST VA
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EATEL 21. 21. 21. CLARK JENES WA



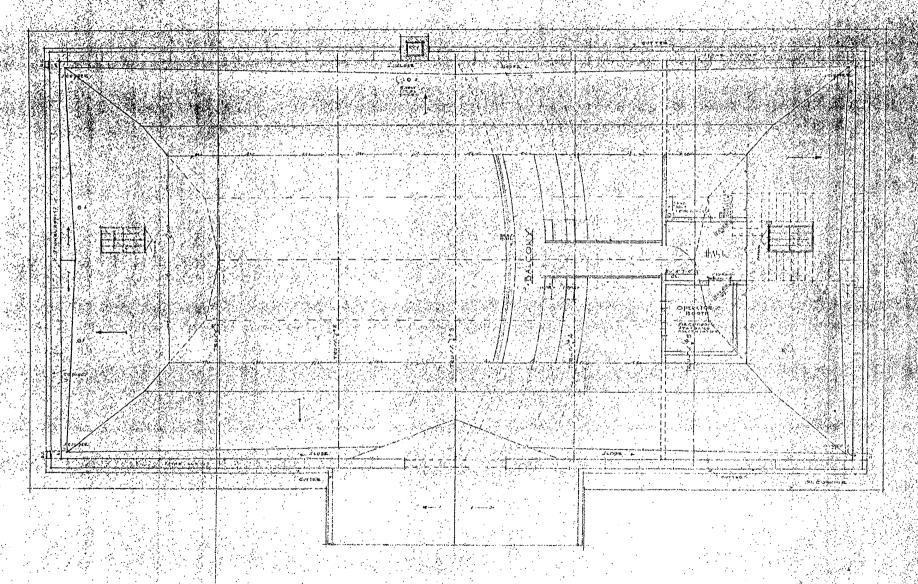








Pleasants County Courthouse, WV



BALCONY & ROOT PLAN-

COURT HOUSE.
THE FLEA CAUTH COUNTY COURT
STHARY COUNTY COURT

OJOB HIST HOLMBORD POGUE DAG 5 - ALCHITE CTOO