

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED FEB 6 1979
DATE ENTERED MAR 26 1979

**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 **Chester County Courthouse**

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Court Square

--- NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Henderson

--- VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Sixth

STATE

Tennessee

CODE

047

COUNTY

Chester

CODE

023

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"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<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:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Chester County

STREET & NUMBER
Chester County Courthouse, Court Square

CITY, TOWN

Henderson

--- VICINITY OF

STATE

Tennessee 38340

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. **Chester County Courthouse**

STREET & NUMBER
Court Square

CITY, TOWN

Henderson

STATE

Tennessee 38340

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Historical and Architectural Survey

DATE
November 1978

--- FEDERAL STATE --- COUNTY --- LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS **Tennessee Historical Commission**

CITY, TOWN

170 Second Avenue, North, Nashville,

STATE

Tennessee 37201

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 Chester County Courthouse is located on State Route 100 in Henderson, the county seat. It stands in a court square facing southeast. A water tower and a minor service building are the only other structures on the square.

Constructed in 1913 this two-story brick building on a brick foundation is covered with a hip roof. A cupola on the low square platform crowns the center of the roof. A pedimented portico dominates the facade, and pedimented gables accent the flanking elevations. Lunette windows adorn the otherwise plain tympana of the pedimented gables.

A full entablature, consisting of dentiled cornice, plain frieze, and architrave, girds the building. The portico is supported by columns of the Roman Doric order which is reflected in conforming pilasters at its junction with the facade.

At the lower level, the simple one-over-one windows are surmounted by brick flat arches, each with a pronounced, concrete-faced keystone. On the southwest and northeast elevations the windows are divided vertically by brick projections simulating pilasters. A belt course forming a continuous sill girds the building at the level of the lower window sills. The brick is laid in six course American common bond. The mortar is brick colored and was originally pencilled white; in protected places this penciling survives.

In plan a center hallway extends from the entrance door to a stairway section on the northwest side of the building. This passage is flanked by offices for the various county officials including the clerk of the court. Although modernized at various periods in the past, the interior retains some of its original woodwork, including door and window architraves and the principal staircase. The courtroom is located on the second floor.

A two-story brick veneer addition was constructed ca. 1955 on the northwest side of the building. It repeats some decorative elements of the original section of the courthouse, such as the one-over-one windows, the continuous lower sill, and the full entablature. It provides additional office space for the county government.

The property nominated includes only the court square, a parcel of land owned by Chester County, which is bounded on all four sides by public thoroughfares. The acreage of this tract is 1.6.

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 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 1913

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Tennessee General Assembly created Wisdom County on March 19, 1875, from portions of neighboring Hardeman, Henderson, McNairy, and Madison Counties. Wisdom County was never organized and the legislature created another county, using the same boundaries, on March 4, 1879. Chester County, named for Colonel Robert I. Chester, veteran of the War of 1812, early Jackson, Tennessee, postmaster, and federal marshall for the Western District, was not formally organized until June 3, 1882; litigation was brought by opponents of the new county and the establishment of the government was delayed until the Tennessee Supreme Court ruled for the proponents of the new county. Chester and Pickett were the last two counties created by the General Assembly, and Chester has the distinction of having the youngest county government in the state.

Henderson, a town known as Dayton before the Civil War, was selected as the county seat; Henderson was named for another War of 1812 veteran, Colonel James Henderson. The Dr. J. A. Crook House served as a temporary courthouse from 1883 until fire destroyed it in March 1891. A second building, the county's first permanent courthouse, was erected in 1891, and fire destroyed this, too, in 1910. The present courthouse was built in 1913 and has served as the seat of justice for more than sixty-five years.

The architectural style of the Chester County Courthouse illustrates the revival of Roman Classicism in Tennessee for public buildings during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Tennesseans have favored and continue to prefer the use of traditional Greek and Roman styles in their courthouses; this preference accounts for the large number of surviving courthouses in this style in the state. Of this group the Chester County Courthouse ranks among the best because of the unusual attention to Roman Classical detailing it exhibits: the four-columned portico is in the Roman Doric order, all of the pediments enclose lunettes, and the side walls feature simulated pilasters. A later Italian influence appears in the use of exaggerated keystones in the lintels. This courthouse, then epitomizes this important architectural trend which flourished primarily in the nonmetropolitan areas of Tennessee.

The Chester County Courthouse was selected by Hollywood film makers to appear in Walking Tall; the film about the adventures of Sheriff Buford Pusser of McNairy County. The courthouse was also seen in the sequels to this film.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Henderson Area Centennial. Henderson Centennial Celebration Commemorating 100 Years of Progress. "From Indians to Industry." Jackson : Laycock, 1960.

History of Tennessee From the Earliest Time to the Present; Together With an Historical and a Biographical Sketch of the Counties of Henderson, Chester, Decatur, McNairy, and Hardin. Nashville : The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1887.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.6

QUADRANGLE NAME Henderson, Tennessee

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 | 35,10,7,0 | 3,9,2,2,8,8,0

B | |

C | |

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property is the court square, a quadrilateral tract of land which measures approximately 280 feet by 300 feet by 225 feet by 280 feet, and is bounded as follows:

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 Barbara Hume Church, Architectural Historian
Robert E. Dalton, Director of Field Services

ORGANIZATION

Tennessee Historical Commission

DATE

January 1979

STREET & NUMBER

170 Second Avenue North

TELEPHONE

(615) 741-2371

CITY OR TOWN

Nashville

STATE

Tennessee 37201

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

Herbert L. Hager

TITLE

Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

DATE

1/31/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
ATTEST: *[Signature]*

DATE

3-26-79

DATE

3/26/79

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 2

Reid, Mrs. S. E. A Brief History of Chester County, Tennessee, Ten and Now. An His-
torical Comparison, Facts of the Past and Present Which the Future Will Want to Remember.
Jackson : McCowat-Mercer Press, 1924.

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beginning at the north corner of SR 100 (Main Street) and Crook Avenue; thence northwest approximately 280 feet along the northeast side of Crook Avenue to east corner of Crook Avenue and an alley; thence northeast approximately 300 feet along the southeast side of the alley to south corner of the alley and another alley; thence southeast approximately 225 feet along the southwest side of the alley to the west corner of the alley and SR 100 (Main Street); thence southwest approximately 280 feet along the northwest side of SR 100 (Main Street) to the beginning.