

PH0687383

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED NOV 7 1978  
DATE ENTERED DEC 22 1978

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 Muhlenberg County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON NAME  
Same

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN  
Greenville

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE  
Kentucky

CODE  
021

COUNTY  
Muhlenberg

CODE  
177

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

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME  
Muhlenberg County Fiscal Court, c/o Robert Draper, Judge Executive

STREET & NUMBER  
Muhlenberg County Courthouse, Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN  
Greenville

VICINITY OF

STATE  
Kentucky

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
Muhlenberg County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER  
Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN  
Greenville

STATE  
Kentucky

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky

DATE  
1971

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
Kentucky Heritage Commission

CITY, TOWN  
Frankfort

STATE  
Kentucky

# 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		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The 1907 Muhlenberg County Courthouse occupies the center of the courthouse square in Greenville (1970 pop., 3,875), a small, busy town in mid-southwestern Kentucky. Parking spaces ring the square, and the main commercial block faces the square from the west. Most buildings within this block date from the turn of the century, and several have undergone severe alterations. Buildings to the north and south of the square serve a variety of needs and are of differing dates, scales and types. To the east are several recent constructions and a paved parking lot.

The courthouse is basically a two-story mass with a raised basement and an attic story surmounted by an octagonal clock and bell tower. Construction is of softly colored red brick with trim and other components of limestone and wood. The facade's arrangement is strictly symmetrical. In the center is a recessed pavilion approached by a flight of ten steps, and sheltered by a pedimented, hexastyle Corinthian portico. The portico's tympanum is framed by dentils, modillions and narrow moldings, and in the center is a stone plaque depicting scales of justice. Openings of the pavilion's lower level are quite chaste in comparison with those of the upper level which are surrounded by framing stonework that continues upward to encircle roundels centered over each window. Visually, the pavilion's levels are further distinguished by a metal balcony.

Two-bay wings flank the pavilion but do not equal its height. As a result, the wings' entablatures are noncontinuous with that of the portico, although they are identical in execution. Also, stone balustrades are atop the flat roofs of both wings. The windows on the wings' facades have keystone surrounds. At the bottom edge of the windows' stone trim is a stringcourse that continues around the entire building. Also, a stone table is at the building's base.

A projecting pavilion is centered on both sides of the courthouse, and the entrances to these sides are protected by small porticos. Windows are treated simply and have stone lintels at their heads and sills.

The heavy entablature continues around the building to encompass the rear, which is a reversed arrangement of the front, lacking a portico however. Openings of this side are rather cleanly treated. The second-floor windows of the main block have roundels centered above, but the stone trim surrounding the same window arrangement on the recessed wall of the facade is absent.

(continued)

# 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      1907      BUILDER/ARCHITECT   Kenneth McDonald, Sr./William Dodd

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Muhlenberg County Courthouse is the most impressive and imposing building in Muhlenberg County, Kentucky, and its architectural features enable it to rank among the finest courthouses in the Commonwealth. Further significance is attained through its having been designed by Kenneth McDonald, Sr. and William J. Dodd of Louisville, Kentucky's leading architectural firm in the early twentieth century.

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Muhlenberg County (1970 pop., 27,537), established in 1798, was the 34th of Kentucky's 120 counties in line of creation. In 1874, noted Kentucky historian, Lewis Collins, described the area as such:

The surface of the county is generally rolling, part of it broken; the northern portion is good farming land, and all the county is fine grass land, and well timbered. The principal products are tobacco, corn, hay, and wool. Cattle and hogs are sold in large numbers to drovers. But the great wealth of the county is coal and iron (Collins, History of Kentucky, Vol. II, p. 639).

Presently, Muhlenberg is Kentucky's leading coal-producing county, a status held since 1960 (Courier-Journal, Louisville, Ky., April 10, 1975). The mining industry is the chief employer in the county, and average family incomes are above those of other counties in the state equal in size and population.

The first sessions of Muhlenberg's quarterly courts were held in a log house two miles southeast of present-day Greenville. When Greenville was founded in 1799, two sessions were conducted in a tavern there. By 1800, however, a permanent courthouse of log construction had been erected on a lot that continues to serve as the square. The second permanent courthouse of Muhlenberg County, this one of brick, was completed in 1836 (Elizabeth H. Garr, History of Kentucky Courthouses, pp. 122-23). An early-20th-century photograph shows that the latter was a two-story building with Greek Revival openings and a steeply pitched hipped roof.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Collins, Lewis. History of Kentucky, Vol. II. Berea: Kentucke Imprints, 1974.

The Courier Journal , Louisville, April 10, 1975.

Garr, Elizabeth. History of Kentucky Courthouses. Privately printed by the National Society of Colonial Dames, 1975. (continued)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than  $\frac{1}{2}$

QUADRANGLE NAME Greenville

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 

1	6	4	8	4	2	0	0	4	1	1	6	9	4	0
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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

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## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The foundations of the Muhlenberg County Courthouse serve as the boundaries of the property nominated.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Daniel Kidd, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Kentucky Heritage Commission

DATE

October, 1978

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

*Edward W. Greeter*

TITLE

DATE

*10/30/78*

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*Charles Adams*  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

*12-22-78*

ATTEST: *Jane H. Gilmore*  
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

*12/22/78*

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Muhlenberg County Courthouse

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The attic story is pilastered on all four sides, and at the corners are pediments with stone consoles below. The tower is a Baroque element that is visible from a distance of several blocks in all directions. Each side of the octagonal tower is pierced by a semi-circular arched opening, while alternating sides are treated with broken pediments resting on coupled columns. In 1975 the metal sheathing of the tower's dome was replaced with a fiberglass cover. At this time a stone balustrade atop the attic story was removed.

The floor plan of the Muhlenberg County Courthouse is functional and allows for an easy flow. The four principal entrances open onto one of two halls that meet in the building's center. Plain marble wainscoting lines the corridor walls. At the north and south ends are fine cast-iron staircases with marble treads. The staircases ascend to the attic story. Piers along the corridors are embellished with large fluted consoles draped with wreaths--plaster being the medium. Flooring in the halls is terrazzo, and openings off the halls are treated in a simple manner.

The first floor accomodates the county courtroom and offices of the sheriff, circuit clerk, county clerk, property valuator, and county attorney. The second floor contains the circuit courtroom, a law library, the county judge's office, and additional offices that were created when the circuit courtroom was modernized and diminished in size as part of a renovation in 1975. Chambers other than the circuit courtroom have been altered through the years, but the corridors throughout the building retain much of their original fabric.

The foundation of the courthouse building serves as the total extent of nominated property.

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The third and present courthouse, completed in 1907 and standing on the site of its predecessors, symbolizes the increasing growth, prosperity and ambitions the county has felt since its creation. The decision to commission McDonald and Dodd for the 1907 building's design was no fatuous matter, for their's was one of the most eminent regional firms in the United States at that time. Kenneth McDonald, Sr. (1852-1940) practiced with his brother in Louisville before becoming associated with Dodd around 1904. He was a charter member of the Kentucky Chapter of the A.I.A., and the latter part of his career was spent in San Francisco (Biography of American Architects /Deceased/, p. 405). William J. Dodd (1862-1930) was educated in Chicago and served an apprenticeship in architecture under Major William LeBaron Jenney. With S.S. Beman, he is said to have participated in the design of the planned industrial city, Pullman, Illinois. Dodd arrived in Louisville in the 1880s, and the latter phase of his career was spent in Los Angeles (Ibid., pp. 176-77). Together, this team produced several notable edifices in Louisville; Temple Adath Israel (entered on the National Register December 31, 1974), the Western Colored Branch of the Louisville Free Public Library (entered on the Register December 6, 1975), the Weissinger-Gaulbert Apartments (entered on the Register December 12, 1977), the Louisville Y.M.C.A. Building (entered on the Register December 16, 1977), and the Citizens National Life Insurance Building (entered on the Register November 11, 1977).

The Muhlenberg County Courthouse represents a departure from the typical urban work associated with McDonald and Dodd. For the building, this team combined a symmetrical mass having cubic parts with a Neo-Classical portico and a Baroque tower. The interior's chambers have been modified, but the corridors remain the same as when the building was completed. The exterior is virtually unchanged.

The courthouse is the most substantial and outstanding edifice in Muhlenberg County. In addition, its location is the most prominent site in Greenville.

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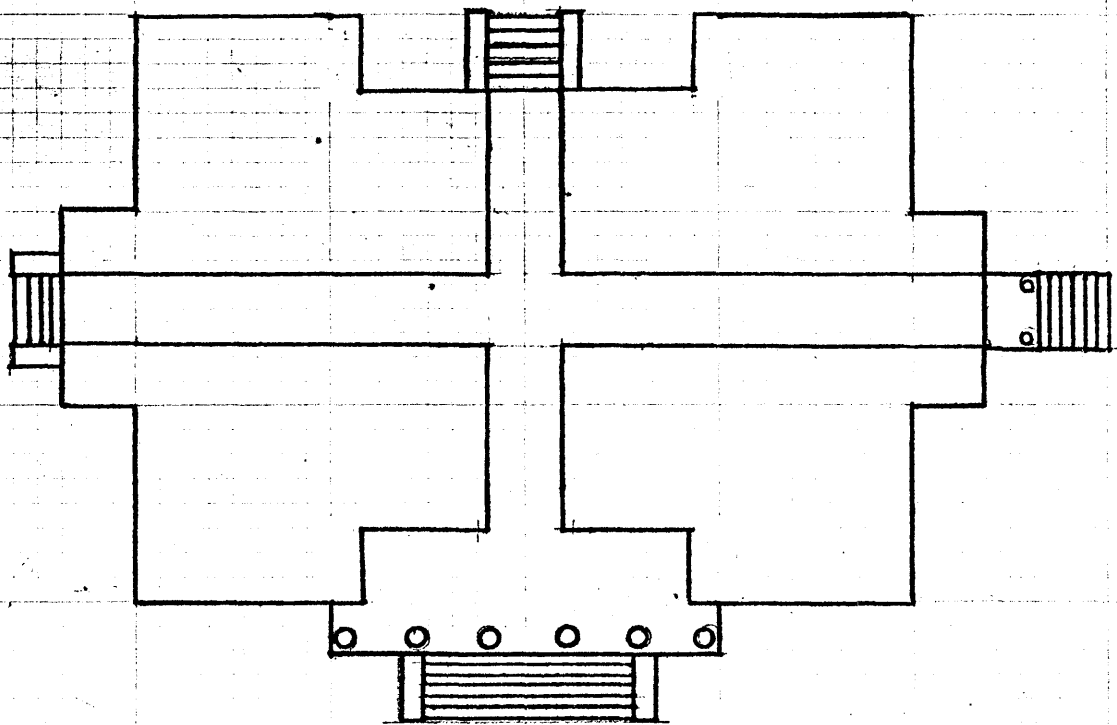
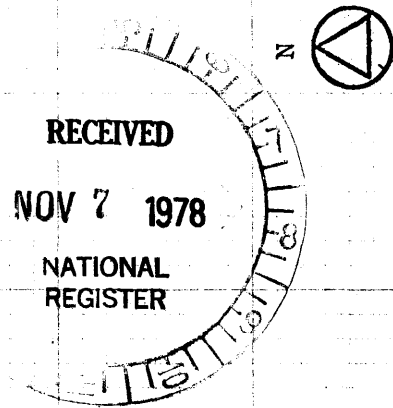
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Withey, Henry, and Withey, Elsie. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects  
(Deceased). Los Angeles:Hennessey and Ingalls, Inc. , 1970.

MUHLENBERG COUNTY COURTHOUSE, 1907  
GREENVILLE, MUHLENBERG COUNTY, KENTUCKY

BASIC FLOOR PLAN  
NO SCALE





Muhlenberg County Courthouse  
Greenville, Kentucky  
Map 2.

1907, Basic floor plan  
No scale.

DEC 22 1978