

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Murray KY

Continuation sheet

Multiple Resource

Item number 7

Page 6

Name: Calloway County Courthouse

Location: Town square

Owner: Calloway County Judge Executive  
County Courthouse  
Murray, KY 42071

Classification: Building

Description: The Calloway County Courthouse is a three-story brick structure designed in the Classical Revival style and erected in 1913. The courthouse sits in the middle of the Murray town square and is surrounded on four sides by the downtown commercial district. The courthouse is constructed of buff-color brick with stone details, such as quoins, window lintels, and beltcourses. Each of the four sides of the courthouse has a three-story Classical portico with Ionic columns supporting a frieze and triangular pediment. A bracketed cornice runs around the building. On top of the building is a eight-sided cupola with a dome top and dormer clocks on four sides. The only original features on the interior are the iron staircase bannisters and marble wainscoating. A stone Confederate War memorial with a statue of Robert E. Lee stands at the northeast corner of the square.

Significance: The Calloway County Courthouse stands today because of one of the most unusual examples of election tampering in the history of the Jackson Purchase. The original Calloway County Courthouse was constructed when the county seat was moved to Murray from Wadesboro in 1843. The courthouse burned in 1906, leaving on the courthouse square the small brick County Clerk office and the Confederate monument. The monument was a gift to the county by the United Daughters of the Confederacy and Mr. Henry Dees. This monument is noteworthy because it is the only Confederate monument in the South that does not face square north. Local observers noted that Mr. Dees positioned the monument in a northeast direction to face his bank.

After the courthouse burned in 1906, court sessions were conducted in a building on the south side of the square. Bond issue votes to construct a new courthouse failed twice. A \$40,000 courthouse bond issue was proposed again in 1912. Proponents for the bond issue cried out that it was a shame on Calloway County to be without a courthouse. Opponents to the bond issue shuddered at the indebtedness imposed on future generations.

The election was held on the first Tuesday in November in 1912. The vote again failed to receive the two-thirds majority necessary for passage. The ballots and tally sheets were left in the county clerk's office on the square. During the night, a courthouse proponent slipped into an unlocked window and altered the tally sheets.

The next day, a recount was demanded by courthouse proponents and the county clerk discovered a gross error in his counting. He announced

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Continuation of Calloway County Courthouse

that the bond issue had passed by two-thirds majority plus 51 votes.

No one challenged the vote. The bonds were sold at public auction, netting \$40,679. The cornerstone laying ceremony in 1913 was a festive event with more than 5000 people attending and R. T. Wells speaking. The courthouse was constructed within 200 days and opened for business. The Calloway County Courthouse continues to serve the needs of the local people and stands as a beloved local landmark.

Acreage: Approximately 1 acre.

UTM references: (Murray quadrangle) 16/383540/4052220

Verbal Boundary Description: The Calloway County Courthouse is shown on accompanying Murray tax maps as Block 1. The courthouse is surrounded by Main Street on the north, South 4th street on the east, Maple Street on the south, and South 5th Street on the west.

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Calloway County Courthouse Calloway County KENTUCKY 86000287  
(Murray Kentucky MRA)

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION APPROVED

Entered in the  
National Register

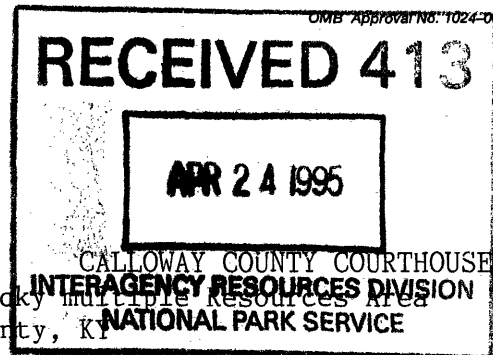
*Jay M. Rapsley 5/19/95*

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National Park Service

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Murray Kentucky Multiple Resources Area  
Calloway County, KY



### Murray Confederate Memorial Calloway County, KY

#### Description

The Murray Confederate Memorial is a granite and marble sculpture located at the northeast corner of the Calloway County Courthouse Square in Murray, Kentucky. It was erected in 1917 and has seen few physical changes since that time.

The Murray Confederate Memorial stands approx. 16.5 ft tall. The base of the memorial is a square, with approx. 8.5 ft sides. The memorial itself is divided into two sections. The bottom section of the memorial is a drinking fountain. The top portion of the memorial features a statue of Robert E. Lee (approx. 5.5 ft tall) supported on a platform above the water fountain by four pillars (each approx. 6 ft in length) and surrounded by four decorative cannonballs. Most of the memorial is constructed of granite, with the exception of the drinking fountain itself (which is constructed of steel and porcelain) and the statue and cannonballs (which are constructed of marble). Above the drinking fountain is a steel light fixture (approx. 2 ft diameter).

The base of the Lee statue features several inscriptions including its erection date: "MURRAY KY MAY, 1917", the name of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) chapter that sponsored it: "ERECTED BY J.N. WILLIAMS CHAPTER, U.D.C.", and the inscriptions "IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE" and "CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS" on the remaining two sides of the statue. A brass plate is attached to the bottom of the statue recognizing Effie Gatlin, the founder of the Murray UDC chapter: "TRIBUTE TO EFFIE OURY GATLIN, CHAIRMAN MONUMENT COMMITTEE, 1913-1917". The memorial stands on the northeast corner of the courthouse lawn facing the main branch of the Bank of Murray.

The water fountain itself was turned off sometime between 1945 and 1954 and a wrought iron railing was put up blocking it off. This was apparently done because of vandalism and a problem with freezing water lines. The statue has also seen periodic vandalism. All of the original lights above the water fountain have been broken out, the Lee statue's sword has been broken, and two decorative cannonballs beside the statue were broken off. Only the cannonballs have been replaced (sometime between 1988-89). But, aside from this, the memorial has remained essentially intact and unchanged since 1917.

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CALLOWAY COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
Murray, KY, MRA  
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**Murray Confederate Memorial  
Calloway County, KY**

**Statement of Significance**

The Murray Confederate Memorial is historically significant for its association with the "Lost Cause" movement which swept through the South beginning shortly after the Civil War and continuing well into the twentieth century. The memorial is a typical example of the Lost Cause memorial at the peak of the movement, when the forces of commercialization had begun to infiltrate the UDC and the UCV (United Confederate Veterans) organizations.

Historical background and significance

The "Lost Cause" movement began within a generation after the Civil War, as Reconstruction in the South came to an end. The movement began among Southern citizens attempting to deal with the reality of Confederate defeat in the War. During Reconstruction, a new myth had emerged in the South to reconcile the reality of defeat with the wartime belief that the Confederacy was divinely sanctioned. The basis of this myth was the belief that the Confederacy was a "lost cause" which was historically doomed to failure due to the overwhelming numerical superiority of its enemy (the Union). Accompanying this myth was the belief that the men who had fought for the Confederacy were especially valiant for fighting for a cause that they knew was doomed. By the end of Reconstruction this myth had evolved into the Lost Cause movement. With the Lost Cause, Southerners were able to accept the Confederacy's defeat (reconciling themselves with the Union) while still being able to honor their Confederate Veterans as heroes.

Soon veteran's and citizen's organizations began to spring up throughout the South with the intent of honoring the veterans of the Confederacy, both dead and alive. Some of the most popular were the United Confederate Veterans (UCV), The United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), and the United Sons of Confederate Veterans (USCV). The most enduring of these organizations was the UDC, with chapters spread across the South in virtually every Southern town (and even some Western and Northern towns).

The UDC engaged in a variety of activities. UDC chapters

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## Statement of Significance (continued)

attempted to introduce Lost Cause interpretation history texts into local schools. Chapters donated food and clothing to Confederate veterans and their families. They held Confederate most noticeable activities involved their work to have local Confederate memorials erected in local cemeteries and on local courthouse lawns. In the early stages of the Lost Cause movement, most of these memorials were erected in cemeteries and featured classical symbols of mourning. Of the 94 Confederate memorials erected between 1865 and 1885, 64 were erected in cemeteries. But soon after the end of Reconstruction, the UDC began erecting most of its memorials on courthouse lawns and they often featured depictions of Confederate heroes or common Confederate soldiers. Of the 306 memorials erected between 1900 and 1912, 241 were erected in town (only 38 were erected in cemeteries during the same time).

The J.N. Williams chapter of the UDC in Murray, Kentucky was very much a typical chapter of the UDC for its time. Murray, though located in a border state, had been heavily pro-Confederate during the Civil War. And so some time after the War, it developed strong chapters of both the UCV and the UDC. The J.N. Williams chapter of the UDC was founded in 1904 by members of the Paducah, Kentucky UDC chapter in alliance with Murray citizens and the Murray UCV chapter. J.N. Williams, for whom the chapter was named, was the president of the Murray UCV chapter at the time and helped to organize the UDC chapter. Almost immediately the chapter began organizing Confederate Memorial Day celebrations and raising money for a memorial to be placed on the courthouse lawn. Their fund raising activities culminated in 1917 with the purchase of a combination drinking fountain/statue memorial from the McNeel Marble Company of Marietta, Georgia.

The company that constructed the memorial was by far the most well known of all the companies around the turn of the century that specialized in Confederate memorials. The McNeel Marble Co. was notorious in its solicitation of UDC business. The persistent company advertised in the Confederate Veteran magazine (the official magazine of the UDC and UCV), its agents travelled the country speaking to UDC chapters, and it offered special

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**Murray Confederate Memorial  
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**Statement of Significance (continued)**

financing to the UDC. McNeel even supplied local UDC chapters with postcards of their proposed memorial to help raise money for it. The combination drinking fountain/statue was one of McNeel's most popular models (varieties of it were erected in Quitman, Georgia; Ellisville, Mississippi; Luray, Virginia; El Dorado, Arkansas; St. Matthews, South Carolina; and both Cadiz and Murray, Kentucky). And it is the model that many historians feel represented the peak of the commercialization of the Lost Cause.

The memorial cost the Murray UDC chapter \$2,500 (\$500 of which was financed). It was erected in the courthouse square in July, 1917. The erection and unveiling of the memorial was overshadowed by U.S. entry into World War I, and so the usual pomp and ceremony which accompanied the unveiling of a Confederate memorial was neglected. The memorial's location at the northeast corner of the courthouse lawn was apparently due to a request by the president of the Bank of Murray, a contributor to the UDC, that the statue of Lee face his bank (though a conveniently placed water line also played a role). Aside from the gloom which pervaded the ceremonies due to WWI, there was also some disappointment expressed by some local citizens who weren't satisfied with the memorial's depiction of Robert E. Lee.

Over the years the Murray Confederate Memorial has fallen victim to the decline of the Lost Cause movement. The movement began its decline after about 1920. In the 1960's the Lost Cause was dealt what many historians feel was its final blow with the advent of Revisionist historical interpretation of Southern history and the Civil Rights Movement. The J.N. Williams chapter of the UDC is still alive in Murray, but it has grown progressively weaker over the years and may now be in its last years. The memorial has suffered accordingly with physical deterioration. But the memorial has found its way into new traditions in Murray, including a long standing tradition among the two local high schools in which students race to the Lee statue at graduation to see who can be the first to dress Lee in a cap and gown. Such traditions are a long way from the grandeur of the Lost Cause, but they nonetheless allow the Murray Confederate Memorial to remain a vital part of the community's (and the South's) history.

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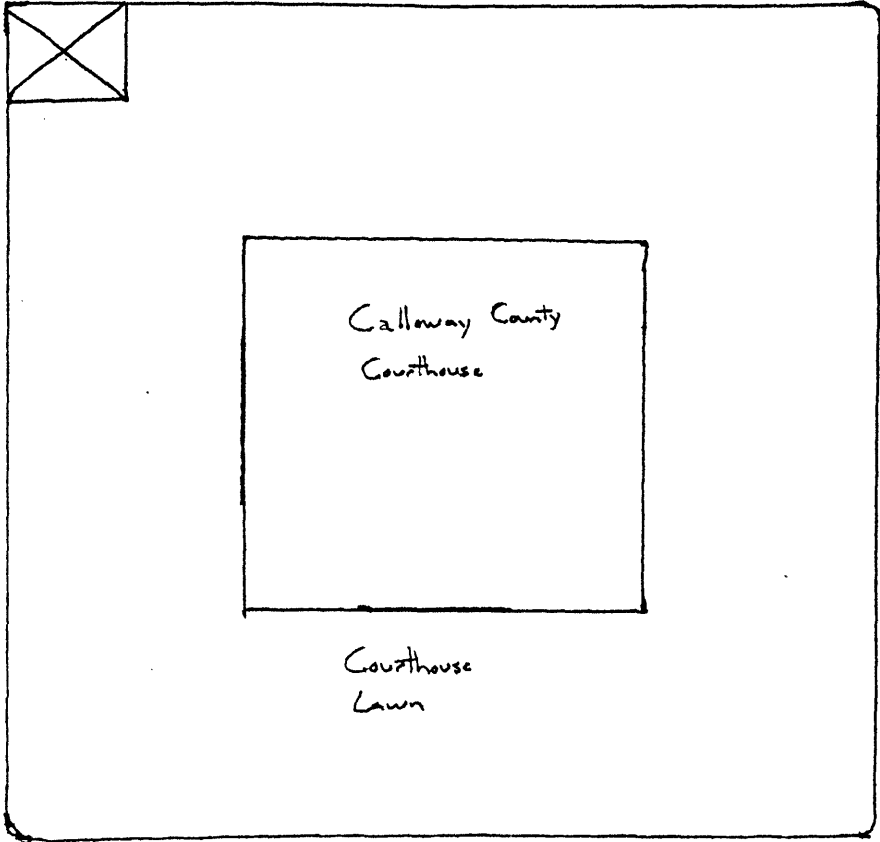


CALLOWAY COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
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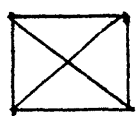
4<sup>th</sup> Street

Main Street



Maple Street

5<sup>th</sup> Street



= Murray Confederate Memorial.