

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Hampshire County Courthouse

other name/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number: 66 North High Street not for publication: N/A

city/town: Romney vicinity: N/A

state: West Virginia code: WV county: Hampshire County code: 027 zip: 26757

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_\_\_ statewide X locally. (\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.)

Troy Body  
Susan M. Pierce, Deputy SHPO

7-21-05  
Date

West Virginia Division of Culture and History

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.  
(\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of Certifying Official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

*Edson H. Beall* 9.7.05

entered in the National Register  
See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the  
National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the  
National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain):

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

private

public-local

public-State

public-Federal

**Category of Property**

building(s)

district

site

structure

object

**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Non-contributing	
3		buildings
		sites
		structures
1		objects
4	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: County Courthouses of West Virginia

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**6. Function or Use**

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**Historic Functions**

**Current Functions**

GOVERNMENT=County Courthouse

GOVERNMENT=County Courthouse

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**7. Description**

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**Architectural Classification**

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> and EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY REVIVALS = Neo-Classical Revival

**Materials**

**foundation:** stone, concrete

**roof:** asphalt, slate, metal

**walls:** brick, stone

**other:** stone, copper, wood

**Narrative Description**

See Continuation sheet

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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**Applicable National Register Criteria**

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- 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**

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

**A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

**B** removed from its original location.

**C** a birthplace or 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 Significance**

Politics and Government

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

c.1800; c.1850; 1921-1955

**Significant Dates**

c.1800; c.1850, 1921, 1928, 1934

**Significant Person**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Holmboe and Pogue, architects

Vandegrift, John, builder

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(See continuation sheets.)

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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**Bibliography**

(See continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

\_\_\_\_\_ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

\_\_\_\_\_ previously listed in the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_ previously determined eligible by the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_ designated a National Historic Landmark

\_\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office

\_\_\_\_\_ Other State agency

\_\_\_\_\_ Federal agency

\_\_\_\_\_ Local government

\_\_\_\_\_ University

\_\_\_\_\_ Other

Name of Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

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**Acreege of Property:** Less than one acre

**UTM References**

**Quad Map Name:** Romney Quadrangle

17      693370      4357905  
**zone**   **easting**      **northing**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(See continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(See continuation sheet.)

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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**name/title:** Alan Rowe and Erin Riebe (WV SHPO) with Barbara E. Rasmussen  
**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

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**Property Owner**

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**name:** Hampshire County Commission  
**street & number:** 66 N. High Street      **telephone:** (304) 822-5112  
**city or town:** Hampshire      **state:** WV      **Zip code:** 26757

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Hampshire County Courthouse

Hampshire County, WV

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**Location and Setting**

Romney, the county seat of Hampshire County, is located at the intersection of U.S. Route 50 and State Route 28, in the Potomac Highlands of West Virginia. The community is situated along the eastern shore of the South Branch of the Potomac River, approximately seventeen miles upstream from its entry into the Potomac River. The courthouse sits on a corner lot at the intersection of Main and High Streets in Romney's commercial area. The jail and courthouse annex are located to the rear or north side of the courthouse. This nomination includes four contributing resources including the three buildings and a veterans' memorial.

**Courthouse**

**1921**

**Contributing**

The Hampshire County Courthouse is a two-story, rectangular, brick and sandstone, Neo-Classical Revival building. It is dominated by a large vented copula with cardinal directions and a large, pedimented portico on the main elevation which faces south. The portico is supported by four tapering Ionic columns. Egg-and-dart trim, dentils, and ogee molding accent the parapet and entablature. The main entrance features a fanlight window over double doors flanked by sidelights with decorative metal mullions and Ionic pilasters that support a small balcony. The balcony has a wrought iron railing and a set of double-doors with fanlight. A single window to each side of the door on both stories is one-over-one, double-hung sash.

The entablature along the main facade continues around the side and rear elevations. Each side elevation displays a row of one-over-one, double-hung sash windows on the first story and fixed, arched window openings on the second story. The rear of the building is generally unadorned with windows on the first and second stories and a set of double-doors centered on the facade with diamond-pane sidelights and transom.

The courthouse interior features a long, wide hallway reaching from front to back, with public offices located on either side. The ceiling is deeply paneled with wood and plaster. To the right of the entry, stairs lead to a second floor which houses the courtroom, judge's chambers, and jury room. This large room features a large domed ceiling encircled by squared rose medallions each of which holds an electric light. The finish of the ceiling and the dome is in acoustical tiles, which is not likely to be the original material. A large walnut panel with a pedimented arch broken by an eagle and shield provides the backdrop for the curved judge's bench is centered on the rear, or north, wall. On either side, smaller pedimented arches accent doors to the judge's chambers and the jury room. The gallery is separated from the proceedings by a spindled railing, also in walnut. The gallery seats 180 persons in nine rows of twenty folding theater-style wooden seats. Three aisles break the ranks into units of five seats.

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**Courthouse Annex**

**1934**

**Contributing**

The annex, situated to the rear of the courthouse, is a two-story, cut-stone, rectangular building. It rests on a raised basement and has a flat roof. The building has a symmetrical facade with a flat-roof vestibule containing modern double-doors and windows. Double and single windows to each side of the vestibule on each story are one-over-one, double-hung sash. Constructed circa 1934, the annex houses the assessor, sheriff, planner, economic development authority, health department and extension service.

**Sheriff's Residence and Jail**

**c.1800, c.1850**

**Contributing**

The jail is a side-gable, two-and-one-half story, brick building with end chimneys. The symmetrical facade is three bays wide and has six-over-six, double-hung sash windows and a centered hipped-roof porch with tapered columns and a modern door. A rear, flat-roof addition is constructed of brick and stone and has metal casement windows. It is speculated that this portion of the building was constructed c.1800. A modern flat roof, synthetic sided addition was constructed to the rear of this building. The building's configuration indicates that at one time the jailer resided in the front portion of the building and prisoners were detained in the rear stone section.

**World War I Veterans Memorial**

**1928**

**Contributing**

A soldiers' memorial honoring the World War I soldiers of Hampshire County stands in front of the courthouse. It was erected in 1928 by *The Hampshire Review* as a gift to the people of Hampshire County to honor the twenty-seven local soldiers who died in that war. Governor J. J. Cornwell, a former editor of that newspaper, dedicated the monument on May 13, 1928. The statue was executed by Romney Marble and Granite Works.

The figure stands approximately seventy inches by twenty inches by twenty inches, upon a stone base that measures fifty-two inches by thirty-nine inches by thirty-nine inches. The soldier faces east, is standing erect, and steps forward on his left leg. His hand rests on that leg, and he holds a rifle in his right hand, with the butt resting on the base beside his right foot. The uniform includes a helmet with a chin strap, trousers with gaiters, and laced shoes. His belt contains attached pouches, a canteen, and a bayonet. The stone base has irregular horizontal grooves to simulate stacked stones.

A bronze plaque on the base carries this inscription: IN HONOR OF /HAMPSHIRE'S SONS WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES/AND THEIR SERVICE IN THE WORLD WAR /"WE ARE THE DEAD/SHORT DAYS AGO WE LIVED/FELT DAWN, SAW SUNSET GLOW/LOVED AND WERE LOVED" followed by a list of twenty-seven fallen soldiers. ERECTED BY THE HAMPSHIRE REVIEW/1928.

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**Statement of Significance**

The Hampshire County Courthouse is eligible for the National Register under *Criterion A: Politics and Government* for its local significance with Hampshire County's political history. The building is associated with the political tendency to form new counties in 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 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 Hampshire County Courthouse is the material evidence of the county's population growth and a symbol of the residents' values.

The courthouse is also eligible under *Criterion C: Architecture* for its Neo-Classical Revival style of architecture. The period of significance is c.1800 and c.1850, the construction dates of the sheriff's residence and jail building; and 1921, when the current courthouse was constructed, to 1955, corresponding to the National Register's fifty-year cut-off date.

**Brief History**

(see *County Courthouses of West Virginia MPS*, 2004 for full context)

The first settlers were in the vicinity of Romney by the early eighteenth century. In 1738 John Pearsall arrived at the site of Romney, built several homes, and named the area Pearsall's Flats. Most of the early settlers in this era were displaced German immigrants or Scotch-Irish Presbyterians who were leaving Ulster for America.

Hampshire County was formed in 1754 on the eve of the French and Indian War from parts of Frederick and Augusta counties and named for the English shire of the same name. Pearsall's settlement was dedicated as the county seat in 1762 and renamed Romney by Fairfax to commemorate an English seaport of the same name. That same year, Fairfax sent a survey party to the area and ordered the formal layout of the town. When Fairfax designated Romney as county seat, the town was destined to become the hub of local government, commerce, and civic affairs. At that time, a wooden courthouse was constructed on the court square. It stood until 1833 when a new courthouse was constructed on the corner of Main and High Streets.

During the Civil War, although no battles were fought in Romney, it changed hands fifty-six times before the war ended and occupying armies committed many depredations upon public buildings and records. Fearful of a courthouse fire or other outrage, Governor Boreman in 1865 ordered that the circuit court of Hampshire County and all of the county records, property books,

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and papers to be removed to the town of Piedmont, and retained there until the governor ordered their return to Romney. Many of the records were never returned to the courthouse.

In 1920 the county recognized the need for an updated courthouse that could provide more storage and office space. They considered remodeling the early nineteenth century building, but instead decided to construct a new building on the same site. The County Court designated Literary Hall to hold court sessions until a new facility was open. After commencing the process, however, the county did not have the funding to complete the building and resorted to a bond issue during a special election in February 1921.

With materials held up and work suspended, the county requested an additional \$40,000 to complete the building, the maximum they were permitted to bond under law. Three weeks before the special election an article printed in the local news paper pressed the issue of the bond and the absolute necessity that it is passed by the voters stating that "there can be no room for differences of opinion" as to the necessity to authorize funding to finish the new courthouse. Then governor, John J. Cornwell (Hampshire County native) even wrote a letter to the editor endorsing the bond issue.

Despite having support of the Governor, the first attempt at retaining funding through a bond issue failed. To help gain support for the new courthouse, the county published a drawing of the building under the caption "How the Front of the Hampshire County Courthouse will look when completed." A second special election was held and on June 1, 1921 the *Hampshire Review* announced that the bond issue was passed by the voters. One week later the county solicited work to be completed "under the supervision of Holmboe & Pogue, Architects, and according to the plans and specifications furnished by said Architects and on file in their office at Clarksburg, West Virginia, and the Clerk's Office of this Court." A contract was awarded on July 6 and work was completed over the coming months. Court was resumed in the new courthouse in March 1922.

### Architecture

The substantial courthouse building is the most dignified in the community and is the only example of Neo-Classical Revival architecture in the town whose other historical buildings are linked to an earlier period. The relatively large gallery in the courtroom links Hampshire County to southern government and social ways: court days were important sources of entertainment in rural southern locales, and southern courtrooms were expected to seat all those who traveled to witness the trials there. In more recent times, the large courtroom also provides communities with a place for public assembly for other purposes. This building replaces two earlier courthouses.

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The addition of a ramp on the southeast corner of the building does not affect the resource's ability to convey significance under the selected criteria. The buildings retain excellent integrity.

**Summary**

The Hampshire County Courthouse is eligible under *Criteria A: Politics and Government* for its local significance in Hampshire County's political history. Since the early twentieth century, this building as provided a place for lawmakers and county officials to gather and conduct business. 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 c.1850; 1921-1955; and 1934.

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**Major Bibliographic References**

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\_\_\_\_\_ *Sectionalism in Virginia 1776-1861*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.  
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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The site is Lot 66 of the original Romney Plat, which was dedicated for the purpose of a court square in 1762 as registered in Hampshire County Deed Book 10, Page 510. The lot is located on the block bounded by Main Street (U.S. 50), Rosemary Lane, High Street and Grafton Street.

**Boundary Justification**

The site contains the historic Hampshire County Courthouse, annex building, historic jail, and a historic monument to World War I Veterans' from Hampshire County. The lot is the original location of Hampshire County government.

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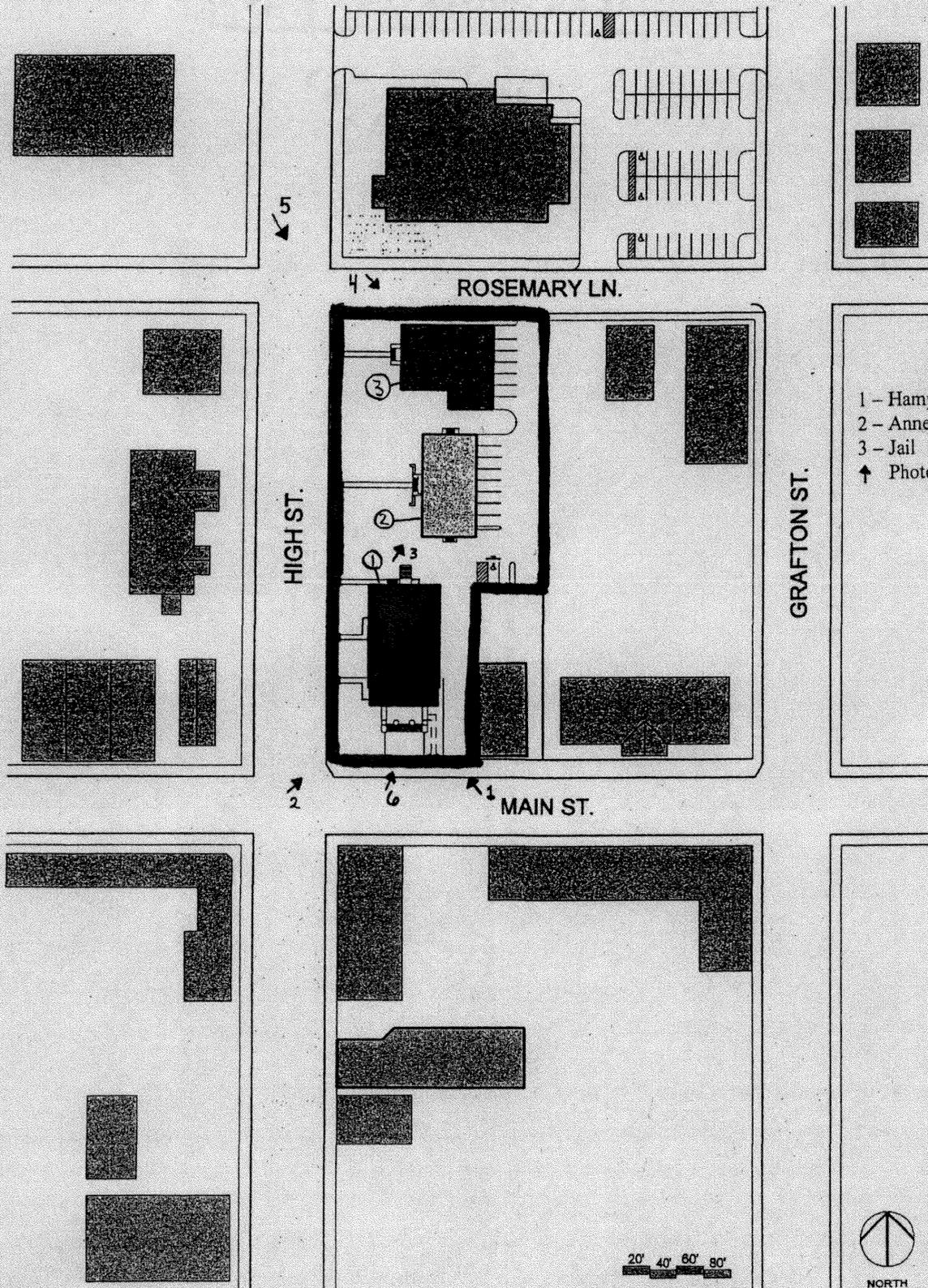
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**Photo Log**

Name of Property:      Hampshire County Courthouse  
Address:                66 N. High Street  
Town:                    Romney  
County:                  Hampshire  
Photographer:         Erin Riebe and Alan Rowe  
Date:                     March 2004  
Negatives:              WVSHPO, Charleston, WV

Photo 1 of 10            Hampshire County Courthouse. View facing northwest.  
Photo 2 of 10            Hampshire County Courthouse. View facing northeast.  
Photo 3 of 10            Hampshire County annex building. View facing northeast.  
Photo 4 of 10            Hampshire County jail building. View facing southeast.  
Photo 5 of 10            Hampshire County Courthouse setting. View facing southeast.  
Photo 6 of 10            Veterans Memorial. View facing northeast.  
Photo 7 of 10            First floor interior hall.  
Photo 8 of 10            Staircase detail.  
Photo 9 of 10            Courtroom showing judge's bench.  
Photo 10 of 10          Courtroom gallery.

Hampshire County Courthouse  
Hampshire County, West Virginia

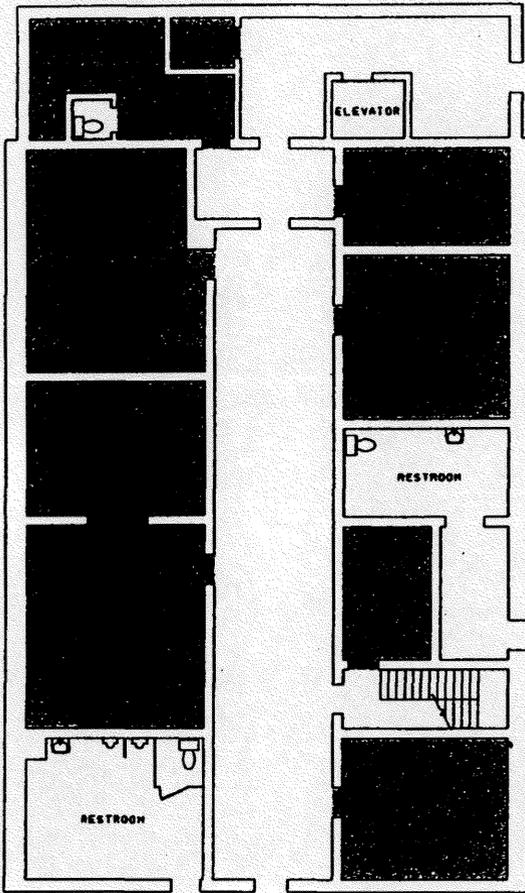


- 1 - Hampshire County Courthouse
- 2 - Annex
- 3 - Jail
- ↑ Photo Views

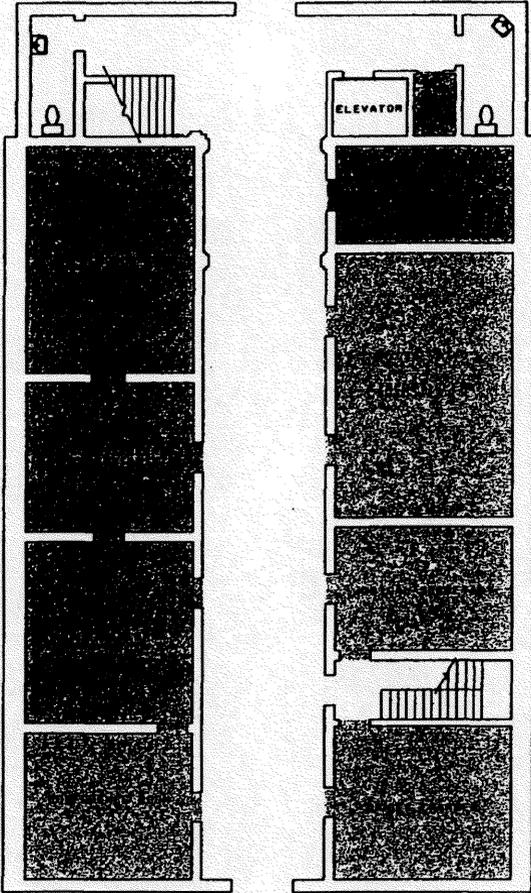
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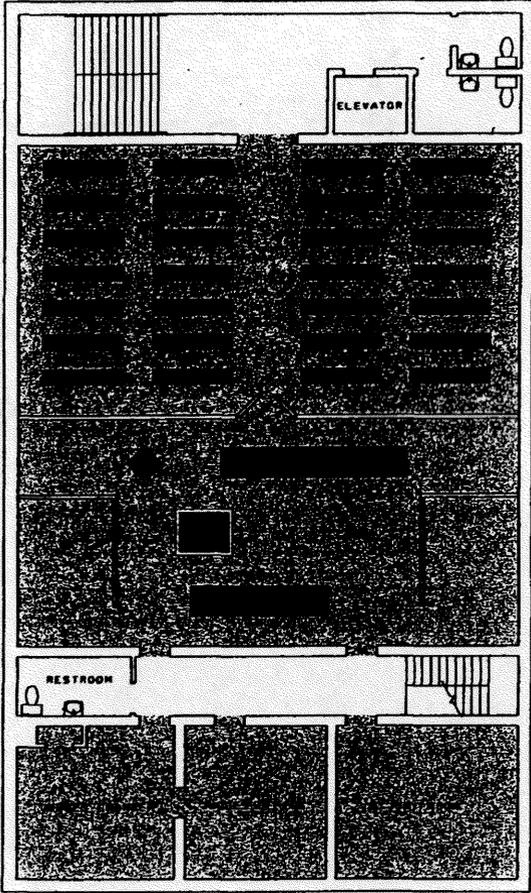
Hampshire County Courthouse  
Hampshire County, West Virginia



**BASEMENT**



**FIRST FLOOR**

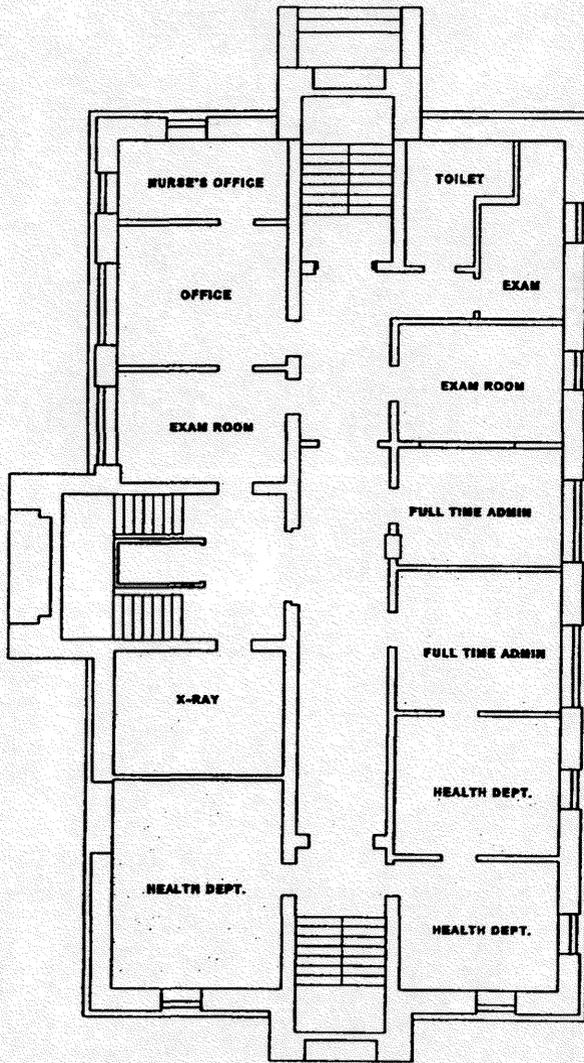


**SECOND FLOOR**

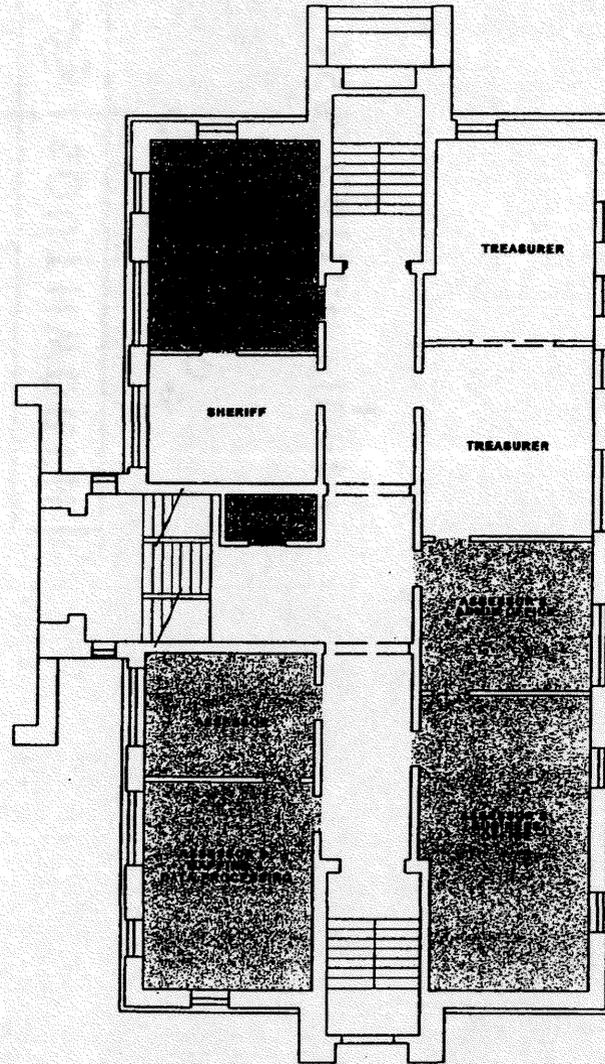
Hampshire County Courthouse  
Hampshire County, West Virginia



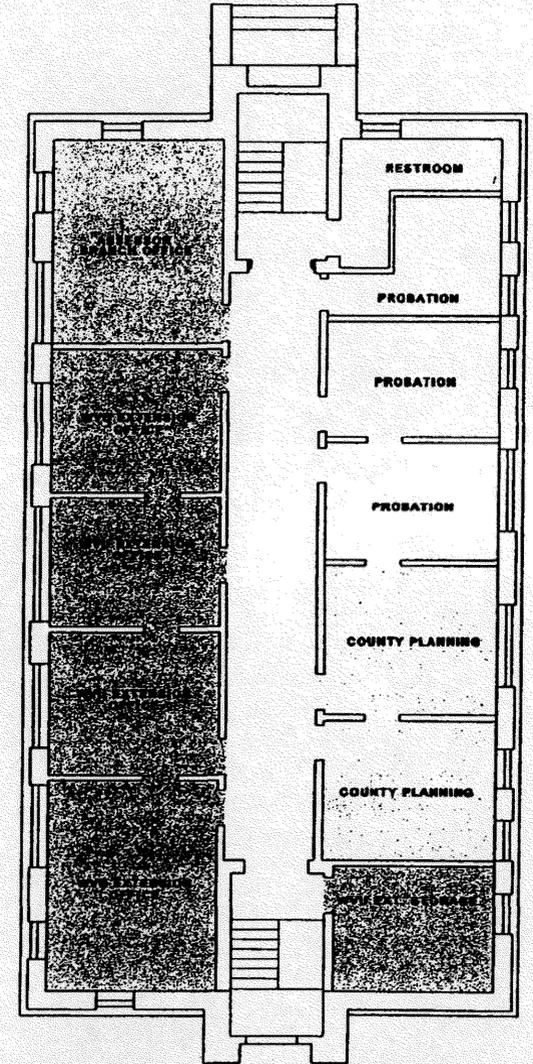
Courthouse Annex Building



BASEMENT



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

Hampshire County Courthouse  
Hampshire County, West Virginia



Sheriff's Building

