

4-3-74

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	West Virginia	
COUNTY:	Jefferson	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE	
JUL 10 1973		

1. NAME

COMMON: Jefferson County Courthouse

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Corner of North George Street and East Washington Street

CITY OR TOWN: Charles Town (2nd. Congressional District)

STATE	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
West Virginia	54	Jefferson	037

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<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 (Specify)

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Jefferson County

STREET AND NUMBER: Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN: Charles Town

STATE:	CODE
West Virginia	54

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Jefferson County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Charles Town

STATE	CODE
West Virginia	54

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey

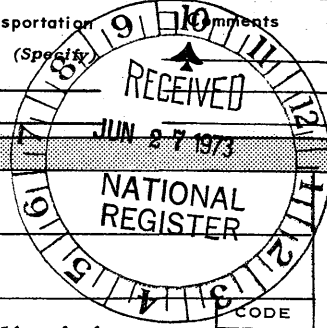
DATE OF SURVEY: 1924 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Division of Prints and Photographs

STREET AND NUMBER: Library of Congress

CITY OR TOWN: Washington

STATE:	CODE
District of Columbia	11



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: West Virginia

COUNTY: Jefferson

ENTRY NUMBER: JUL 10 1973

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The first county courthouse in Charles Town, a small brick building erected in 1808 on a lot donated by Charles Washington for public use, was replaced about 1836 by a larger structure, nucleus of the present courthouse. During the Civil War it was seriously damaged and the county seat moved to Shepherdstown. After the war it was returned to Charles Town; it was restored and enlarged, and in 1916 a wing was added to the rear of the building.

Today, the Jefferson County Courthouse is a red brick Georgian Colonial building set on a high stone foundation and separated from the street by a tiny yard. Extending across the front is a tall portico with four Doric columns, their fluted metal base supporting an angular pediment, the design of which is repeated in pediments over the windows of the first floor and above the four faces of the clock in the square-domed tower. A small iron balcony juts above the front door, and ornamental brackets follow the lines of the eaves. A metal tablet on one corner of the building honors the memory of Colonel Charles Washington.

The roof trusses, as well as the floor and ceiling frames, are wooden. In the interior of the courtroom, the railing which divides the room into several parts, including the railing for the judge's bench, has both a bottom and top rail with turned balusters. The balusters of the two interior stairways are turned throughout the entire length. The newel posts are also turned. The interior has undergone many changes, including the chamber in which John Brown was tried. That room today is partitioned; the original was not.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1859 (Brown's Trial) 1922 (Miners' Trial)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Jefferson County Courthouse is historically significant both because it played an important role in the development of the county's government during and after the Civil War and because it was the site of two treason trials.

The first treason trial was that of John Brown. After Brown's capture and confinement, Governor Henry Wise of Virginia succeeded in getting him tried in a Virginia court and succeeded in appointing Andrew Hunter as the special prosecutor to aid Charles Harding, the county's attorney. Brown was charged for advising and conspiring with slaves to rebel, for murder, and for treason against Virginia. Although Brown's trial drew sympathy from the North, it was a fair one. When he was first asked to choose his defense attorneys, he made a heart-rending speech saying that he was too ill to be tried and knew no one to represent him. The court then offered to appoint his attorneys, but Brown ignored them saying he had sent for his own counsel. When it did not arrive, he agreed to have Lawrence Botts and Thomas Green defend him; then Brown again claimed illness, was examined by Dr. Gerald F. Mason, and pronounced perfectly able to stand trial. For theatrics, Brown asked to lie on a cot during the trial; his request was granted. He refused to comply with his lawyers' desire to plead insanity and claimed a lack of confidence in them; the court then allowed him to choose George Hoyt as a replacement for Botts and Green. Finally Brown was found guilty of murder and treason and later hanged.

During the forthcoming war, the building in which Brown was tried was seriously damaged, and in 1865 the county seat was moved to Shepherdstown, so that Federal troops stationed along the B & O could protect it. Since an act of the West Virginia Legislature proclaimed Shepherdstown as the permanent county seat, the County Board of Supervisors decided to sell the valuable courthouse lot in Charles Town. Luckily, the plan was prevented. After the war a violent controversy arose between the people of Shepherdstown and Charles Town. Both wanted the distinction of having the county seat, and when the courts decided in favor of Charles Town, Shepherdstown and its neighbor, Scrabble, nearly left the county.

The next action to earn historic distinction for the Jefferson County Courthouse was the trial of some West Virginia coal miners charged with murder and treason. In general, the reason for the charges was an attempt at unionization. The mine owners, being against the union and the men trying to join it, had hired armed guards to protect their interests.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bushong, Millard K. Historic Jefferson County. Boyce: Carr Publishing Company, Inc., 1972

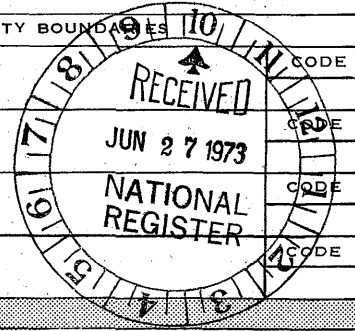
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		39° 17' 22"	77° 51' 35"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: $\frac{1}{2}$ acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Ted McGee, Field Agent for the

ORGANIZATION: West Virginia Antiquities Commission DATE: March 7, 1973

STREET AND NUMBER: Old Mountainlair, West Virginia University

CITY OR TOWN: Morgantown STATE: West Virginia CODE: 54

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: Maurice G. Brooks
Maurice G. Brooks
Title: State Historic Preservation Officer
Date: May 30, 1973

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Robert M. Utley
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 7/10/73

ATTEST:

A. Bradford
Acting Director of The National Register
Date: July 6, 1973

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

HB
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4352580
253300

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE		West Virginia
COUNTY		Jefferson
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE	
JUL 10 1973		

(Number all entries)

8. SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

Hostilities invariably resulted. By the time things reached their peak Mingo County, West Virginia, was under martial law and Logan County was engulfed in local warfare. In all, twenty-four men were charged with murder and/or treason. Because of the prejudices in southern West Virginia, they were tried in the state's most eastern county. The irony of this was that the citizens of Jefferson County could remain no more impartial than their southern peers; consequently, during the trial of mine union president, C. F. Keeney, the defense attorney was forced to ask for a change of venue. The cases were moved to Morgan County, but legal skirmishes there required a second move to Greenbrier County. Many of the sentences pronounced were harsh and were later commuted or pardoned.

