

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED	JUL 30 1976
DATE ENTERED	SEP 1 1976

## 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  
~~Louisville City Hall Complex (City Hall, Annex, and former Fire Station No. 2)~~  
 AND/OR COMMON  
 City Hall; Annex; Sinking Fund Building

### 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER  
 601, 603, 617 West Jefferson Streets -- NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
 CITY, TOWN CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
 Louisville VICINITY OF 3 and 4  
 STATE CODE COUNTY CODE  
 Kentucky 021 Jefferson 111

### 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  
 City of Louisville  
 STREET & NUMBER  
 601 West Jefferson Street  
 CITY, TOWN STATE  
 Louisville VICINITY OF Kentucky

### 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
 Jefferson County Courthouse  
 STREET & NUMBER  
 531 West Jefferson Street  
 CITY, TOWN STATE  
 Louisville 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 STATE  
 Frankfort Kentucky (continued)

# 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 (slightly)	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The City Hall Complex is situated in downtown Louisville, at the northwest corner of the intersection of 6th and Jefferson Streets, three blocks south of the Ohio River and approximately two blocks from the site of original settlement, Fort Nelson. A marker for the latter is at the midpoint of the 19th-century West Main Street commercial area (see #8 for National Register listings). West Market Street, which runs east-west parallel to and between Main and Jefferson Streets, is less intact than West Main: amid a number of commercial survivors from the 19th and early 20th centuries are extensive parking lots, including the entire north half of the block of which the City Hall Complex (including the modern Police Headquarters at the western end) forms the southern half, with Congress Alley as the divider. The southern half of the block east of City Hall contains the Jefferson County Courthouse (see 8) in landscaped grounds; several large annexes and commercial buildings, as well as a small parking lot at 6th and Market are located in the northern half of that block. Beyond to the east are contemporary high-rise office buildings and early 20th-century structures housing the financial and legal core of the city.

A block south of the courthouse on 6th Street is the old Jefferson County Jail (see 8). Directly south of the City Hall Complex is the nearly-completed Hall of Justice, a huge New Brutalist structure of form-cast concrete with varied setbacks, linked near its west end to the Police Headquarters by means of a second-story bridge across 6th Street just west of the Sinking Fund Building. South and west of the governmental complex is a vast area cleared by Urban Renewal in the 1960s and gradually being filled by large-scale government structures, multi-story parking garages, and expressway access ramps. Although suburban development has provided competition to the entire downtown area of Louisville, and the modern downtown commercial axis is 4th Street, two blocks east, the City Hall Complex remains near the core of both the historic and modern development of the city.

The City Hall Complex is a group of three separate but adjacent structures, visually related by scale, and to some extent by material, not only with each other but also with the Jefferson County Courthouse to the east (see photo 1; map 2). The latter, begun in 1835 to the design of Gideon Shryock, was not completed until 1858, under the aegis of the prominent Louisville engineer Albert Fink. A severe and colossal Doric structure, it faces south with its tetrastyle portico set back from the street (similar porticos were originally intended for the east and west facades but are now represented only vestigially by projecting pilasters). A grandiose flight of steps leads up to the main story, which is set over a high and functional basement. The scale of the structure is enormous (at least six actual stories are concealed within its apparent two) and emphasized by the smooth and unornamented surface of local limestone.

# 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 City Hall 1870-73; Annex BUILDER/ARCHITECT City Hall: John Andrewartha, with  
Fire Station 1891; 1907-1909 C. S. Mergell and C. Stancliff; Annex: Cornelius Curtin;  
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE Fire Station: McDonald Brothers

The Louisville City Hall Complex consists of three adjacent buildings dating from the decades of the 1870s, 1890s, and 1900s. The first and last were designed specifically as the City Hall and its first Annex; the 1891 building, designed and used as the Fire Station No. 2, later the Sinking Fund Building, now also houses city offices, including those of the Louisville Historic Landmarks and Preservation Districts Commission. Each of the structures is an outstanding local example of its architectural style, and originally was considered both functional and structurally innovative. The City Hall, designed by Englishman John Andrewartha, is an adaptation of the French Second Empire Mansard style popular after the Civil War, with many Italianate features and unique symbolic sculptural ornamentation. The Fire Station (which has unfortunately lost the belfry that announced its original purpose) is a similarly localized version of the Richardsonian Romanesque style, also with interesting and characteristic sculptural adornment. It was designed by the prominent and prolific local firm of McDonald Brothers. The Annex, designed by Cornelius Curtin, is a restrained but handsome example of turn-of-the-century Beaux-Arts Classicism, apparently intended to harmonize with the neighboring City Hall.

With the magnificent Greek Revival Jefferson County Courthouse on the landscaped block east of City Hall (1835-58; designed by Gideon Shryock; placed on the National Register on April 10, 1972); the Sullivanian Jefferson County Jail a short block south (1902-1905; designed by the firm of D. X. Murphy; listed on the Register on July 16, 1973); and the striking Brutalist concrete Hall of Justice, now under construction, that fills the block south of the City Hall Complex and is intended to replace the old Jefferson County Jail, downtown Louisville can boast a government complex of extraordinary architectural interest: a fitting monument to a city that has notably combined growth with a respect for its past.

Furthermore, this complex is surrounded on two sides by commercial buildings that reflect the source of the city's continuing prosperity. These include the West Main Street Historic District (listed on the Register March 22, 1974), with its unequalled array of 19th-century castiron and masonry facades ranging from before the Civil War until shortly

(continued)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Board of Public Works, City of Louisville. Annual Report. Louisville: F. C. Nunemacher Press, 1909, pp. 561-62.
- Brown, Theodore M. Introduction to Louisville Architecture. Louisville: Louisville Free Public Library, 1960.

(continued)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 6	6, 0, 8	4, 3, 0	4, 2	3, 4	5, 8, 0	B						
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING							
C							D						

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The three structures occupy the northwest corner of the intersection of Jefferson and West 6th Streets, extending north to Congress Alley and west up to, but not including, the Police Headquarters Building.

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

Douglas L. Stern, Research Assistant

WEL

ORGANIZATION

Louisville Landmarks Commission Staff

DATE

September 1975

STREET & NUMBER

617 West Jefferson

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Louisville

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

*Eldred W. Milton*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

*July 27, 1976*

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*W. Milton*

DATE

*8/1/76*

Acting DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

*Charles Abney*

DATE

*8.27.76*

Acting KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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As individual buildings in the following:

Brown-Doherty

1960 Local

Bridwell Art Library

Belknap Campus

Louisville, Kentucky

Urban Design

1968 County (SMSA)

Metropolitan Council of Governments (now Kentuckiana Regional Planning  
Development Agency)

505 West Ormsby

Louisville, Kentucky

Historic American Buildings Survey

1974 Federal

Washington, D. C.

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In contrast, City Hall extends almost to the lot lines on the south and east, although the tower is slightly recessed at the southeast corner. City Hall, with its three stories and raised basement, actually seems lower than the courthouse. The two structures are fascinatingly counterpaired in style, proportion, detail, and effect. Whereas the Courthouse relies on a single huge horizontal mass, smooth sharp-edged surfaces, minimal detail, and largeness of parts, the City Hall presents a series of masses at angles to each other vertically and horizontally, dominated only partially by the corner tower which provides an accent of urban scale, and encrusted with varied ornament.

Originally City Hall was to have been almost three times as large as its size as built, with a three-story portico entrance to a convex-mansarded central pavilion facing south on Jefferson Street, and a wing matching the present building (but without the tower) farther west (see photo 2). Because a large portion of the original design was not executed, the secondary east facade has become primary, with additional access at the base of the corner tower. Since the east facade seems not to have been so carefully composed as the south front, a certain weakness and inconsistency of treatment mars the present main facade: the portico lacks the carefully graduated sequence of orders and setbacks characteristic of American Second Empire public architecture. The third story, in particular, with its almost dainty arcade--at a half or third the scale of the second-story fenestration--seems anticlimactic and rhythmically inappropriate. Originally, however, it was probably intended to de-emphasize the east facade in favor of the south front, rather than to crown the main entrance. These accidental flaws, however, are more than made up for by the height and handsome profile of the mansarded tower, the articulation of the surfaces, and the sculptural ornamentation.

The City Hall Annex, on the other hand, seems to have been intended by the architect to return to the vaster scale of the courthouse, although virtually at ground level. Its colossal, archaeologically detailed Corinthian order, with coupled columns in antis on a short facade, and enormous, highly articulated entablature and attic, seems intended to provide a lesson in correctness to the eclectic structures flanking it, while sharing their plasticity and the material of City Hall. It is only at the level of the second-story cornice that there is any horizontal alignment between the City Hall and its Annex.

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The Sinking Fund Building (originally Fire Station No. 2) is now unfortunately painted white, destroying the original subtle harmony of its red-brick, sandstone, and terra cotta surfaces--a combination of materials characteristic of turn-of-the-century construction in Louisville (numerous unpainted examples still survive in the Old Louisville Residential District, listed on the National Register February 7, 1975). Restoration of this facade would be difficult because of deterioration of the materials under the paint, because of the alteration in function of the ground floor with its two large round-arched openings for fire engine garages, and because of the resultant contrast in color and texture between this building and its neighbors. Such a restoration, moreover, would have to include reconstruction of the balloonlike belfry, which originally crowned the composition and formed an integral part of the fire-alert system of the city, synchronized by the Fire Alarm Telegraph Corps.

The fire station originally loomed over the shop-front houses to the west and the Old City Jail to the east, although its three stories approximately correspond to the lower two of City Hall (see photo 13). Although its prominent gables and stylistic details strike different notes from those of the City Hall and present Annex, the round arches and rhythmic diminution of the openings upward do bear at least some resemblance to those of City Hall. Moreover, the bulbous curves of the tower roof once echoed those of City Hall's taller and more angular tower.

The overall massing of City Hall presents an interplay of numerous horizontal and vertical elements punctuated by a prominent Second Empire corner tower and the narrow centralized, pedimented entrance pavilion on the east side (photos 1,3, 4). The Sixth Street facade has a central entrance pavilion flanked by curtain walls. The recessed stairs enter under a Roman Doric portico, above which (without the customary Ionic order as transition) is a similar Corinthian portico; the third story of the central pavilion lacks a portico, but has an added partial story within a framework of composite pilasters. Beyond the four-bay curtain walls are, on the south the 196-foot tower, which originally housed the fire lookout and alarm, and on the north a flat-roofed end pavilion. The cast-iron cornice, the work of F. W. Merz and Company, a local foundry, is continuous throughout except for the Sixth Street curtain walls, which are a half-story lower. (A balustrade above the cornice is almost the only loss on the exterior of the building; compare photos 3 and 4.)

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The tower itself, rebuilt by Louisville's Henry Whitestone in a slightly enlarged version after a fire in November 1875, carries the cornice to the Jefferson Street side (photo 6). The tower's clocks, somewhat enlarged after the fire, offered "a great accomodation [sic] to the belated pedestrian" and even today remain a frequent point of reference. The elevation on Jefferson Street--shorter in length although more successful in vertical composition--continues the cornice and shares the corner tower, thus achieving an equilibrium of height and massing (photo 8). The attitudes of the separate blocks with their accompanying cornices and courses, however, impart a visibly dynamic angularity. The fenestration presents a wide variety of forms and detail: segmental arches on the principal story, round-arched windows on the second (with Palladian compositions under the portico), and on the third, both arched openings set in rectangular frames with square vents above & recessed round-arched windows linked by an arcade of attenuated Romanesque columns on the Sixth Street side. (For a more detailed description of the exterior see the Historic American Buildings Survey nomination form prepared by David Arbogast, of which a copy is enclosed [Appendix 17].)

It is the carved stonework in the portico and window areas that establishes the local artisans involved as truly exceptional and the building as a result of the city's singular aesthetic impulse. Above the second-story windows one can see the grotesque yet accurately depicted heads of horses, mules, pigs, and cattle--all symbolic of the role that these beasts played in the development of the region and doubtless regarded by many contemporaries as a fit and highly artful embellishment. No carving surpassed, however, the craftsmanship, meaningful symbolism, and beauty of that found above the east entrance (photo 5). Here is located, as the architect saw it, "a boldly-cut bas relief of the city coat-of-arms, representing an engine in full action, bearing the motto 'Progress, 1871,' pushing its way through a rough tunnel of chaotic rock and Southern flora, indicating the progress of Louisville and its influence on the surrounding country, and the direction of its principal trade!"

Very little remains of the original interior as described by Andrewartha (see the contemporary description reprinted in 1882, of which a copy is enclosed [Appendix 27]; sections are also quoted in 8.). Unlike the exterior, the interior has undergone frequent renovation and remodelling in accord with changing needs and concepts of civic propriety, most notably in 1956-60. Only the Mayor's office in the southeast corner of the main floor near the tower entrance, and a few offices adjacent, still retain the

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high ceilings, plaster chandelier medallions, bold millwork, and marble or castiron mantels dating from the 1870s. The striking and symbolic hardware, however, is still scattered throughout the building, and some of the original furnishings are enshrined in the otherwise drastically altered Aldermen's Chamber on the third floor. It has been suggested that some of the original plasterwork and frescoes may survive above lowered ceilings and it is believed that the architect's original drawings have recently been rediscovered, so that a partial restoration of the interior may be possible, although the famous staircase in the east entrance pavilion has been replaced by elevators.

Conceived of amid a wave of stricter neoclassicism in this century's first decade, the City Hall Annex, although sandwiched in mid-block, manages a colossal civic statement while continuing its original function uninterrupted since 1908 as the city's fiscal depository (photo 9). Known for his far more restrained ecclesiastical work, architect Cornelius A. Curtin created a three-story, brick complex to house various tax and finance offices along with the police courts, all behind an ebullient flat-topped portico (see the architect's drawing, photo 10, the 1912 photo 11, and photo 12). Eight giant Corinthian columns--the ends paired, set closely, and projecting in antis--surmount a crepidoma of exquisite polished granite and support an overwhelming, if incorrect, entablature. Concealing the entire third floor, it presents an unusual admixture: a "correct" fascia topped by a frieze containing the edifice's inscribed title; a row of dentils capped by an inordinately large cornice; and all this surmounted by a massive panelled attic with projections on axis with the columns below, and a bleak dentilled cornice. Behind this screen, doubly recessed it seems because of the projecting ends, is a nearly blank ashlar wall containing rectangular windows, some with flat, heavily bracketed lintels (see photo 11). The main wall is flanked by almost hidden clusters of fluted pilasters. This inner wall rises only two stories until buried beneath the entablature.

The interior, unlike those of the other buildings in the complex, is largely unaltered. Its marble-floored hypostyle hall, on the ground floor off the street, is both the most public and the grandest space found in any of the three. Visited continuously by prudent taxpayers, it fairly inspires pecuniary fidelity. An august marble bust of a past civic luminary, superb carved-wood desks and counters, and an immense two-story volume combine successfully to invoke dignity and rectitude.

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Fire Station No. 2 has been known as the Sinking Fund Building since its remodeling and the commission's relocation there in 1957. (The Sinking Fund was founded in 1851 as the city's fiscal reserve.) The building was completed in 1891 according to the design of the pre-eminent firm of McDonald Brothers (see the 1894 view, photo 13, and photo 14). The Courier-Journal had this description for its readers in late August of that year: "Built of red sandstone, brick and terra cotta, three stories high, with tower and belfry, seventy-five feet front and 120 feet deep, it is complete in every detail. The floors are all of hard wood and the ceilings of the ground floor are of wood. The three exits into the street are through spacious arches of red sandstone." The domical belfry, covered with the polychromic slate so in vogue at the time, has since been removed. Further alteration occurred to the exterior in 1957 when two of the spacious arches were filled with brick and sash windows, the other with glass doors and aluminum mullions.

The remainder of the facade is virtually intact. It is composed basically of three deeply cut units split vertically by decorated octagonal tourelles. The two easternmost, gabled and symmetrical, are counterpoised by the narrower but taller, slightly projecting tower unit to the west. Fenestration remains consistent from section to section, however, and from floor to floor. The round-arched system begun on the principal story is repeated on the second, although reduced in scale. Further diminution is seen on the third story as windows, here flatheaded, increase in number but decrease in size. The highly carved decorative features demand the closest inspection. Terra cotta reliefs (medallions set into the gables represent fire department officers at that time: Major Ed Hughes and Assistant Chief Bache), rough-hewn sandstone lintels and courses, copious terra cotta foliage, lush-capped pinnacles, and the castellated tower combine to create an affect both lavish and robust.

Virtually nothing remains of the original interior of the building, which has repeatedly been remodelled. Originally, however, the ground floor was ingeniously arranged to permit an efficient execution of the complex tasks required of men, horses, and equipment; it was actually divided into three separate "houses," each behind its own arched bay. The upper stories contained offices, storage, dormitories, baths, a lookout, and the repair shops--all lit with "an abundance of light" and reached by "a neat stairway, finely finished in hard wood" (only a newel post remains). The

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Courier-Journal summarized it this way in their dedicatory headline: "All Roomy and Convenient and Built According to Modern Plans, The Central Fire Station the Most Complete in the South or West."

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after the turn of the century, and the former Louisville Trust Building (1889-91; designed by Maury and Dodd, another important local architectural firm, & now housing county offices; nominated to the National Register at State level on December 4, 1973); and several recent office towers by nationally known architectural firms. Among this close-knit group of historic and contemporary structures, the city-county governmental complex remains pivotal, both functionally and architecturally.

As Walter Creese writes, "Louisville itself was largely made rich, elaborate, and interesting by Victorian growth." The prosperity which Louisville enjoyed during the decade following Appomatox fashioned an era of expansion unrivaled in the city's history. Mercantile and industrial interests advanced, and the city truly began, in the words of Theodore M. Brown, the transformation from the "placid world of Jefferson and Emerson into our own nervous era." The erection of buildings to match this burgeoning spirit played an essential role in the development of the post-bellum community. Elegant and substantial edifices housing government functions were long considered an accurate measure of civic stature. "There is no doubt," declared the Louisville Daily Ledger forthrightly in 1873, "but the best means of judging the character of a community is to examine their public buildings."

The completion of the new Louisville City Hall in July 1873 distinguished its citizens, which presumably would have included the author of these words found in the Daily Ledger, "as among the most intelligent, cultivated, generous, and enterprising of any city in the country." Admittedly self-congratulatory, this statement was, nonetheless, an accurate assessment of both the spirit of the times and the profound pride felt as a result of the community's accomplishment. "Louisville may well be proud of her City Hall," boasted the Ledger, "erected in the most solid manner, with stone from the White River quarries, brick arched floors, iron floor joists and beams and nothing. . .left undone to make it complete as to utility and durable as to structure and fireproof qualifications." The edifice, three full stories with basement and tower, was actually only a wing of a much larger planned complex which would have housed a fire station, a grand public auditorium, and additional office space. However, it also would have required the demolition of a number of buildings then in use, and would have been a considerable financial drain on the city government even in that booming Reconstruction era.

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The Louisville City Hall, very much a product of this late-nineteenth century expansionist urge, has been in continuous use for over one hundred years. Its history began somewhat tentatively on May 31, 1866, when Third Ward Councilman Phil B. Bate resolved that the "Mayor employ an architect to prepare a plan and drawings for City Buildings, on the corner of Sixth and Jefferson Streets." Even though the buildings then occupied by the city were considered to be "not only old, but much out of repair, and entirely too small," Councilman Bate's proposition met an "active opposition" and was tabled by the board. A few days later, however, on August 9, another resolution calling for the appointment of a committee to study and report on the matter was introduced to the Board of Aldermen by R. F. Baird and passed. The joint committee investigated the issue and testified in favor of the project shortly afterward. Nevertheless, it was nearly six months before further action was taken. This took the form of a final resolution offered by Alderman Maxwell on March 14, 1867. It carried, calling for the advertisement of a design competition and the awarding of \$500 for the design judged best by the joint committee. After careful review of a number of plans, the committee selected the proposed design of the local architectural firm of C. S. Mergell and John Andrewartha on April 4, 1867.

On April 25, after another aldermanic motion, it was decided to allow the firm to begin preparation of working drawings. During the period between commencement and completion of the plans--nearly a year and four months--the firm contracted for the City Hall changed to Stancliff and Andrewartha, marking the departure of Mergell. The final plans were submitted on September 2, 1868, and formally accepted on October 8. The fee for the work to this point already amounted to almost \$5,300. It was discovered, however, that there were no means under the "restrictive clauses" of the city charter to obtain the large sum necessary to begin construction. It was not until the Charter Convention of 1869, largely thanks to the "energetic work of friends of the improvement," that the issuance of \$250,000 in bonds and their payment by taxation were approved. The item was passed by the General Assembly and made law on March 3, 1870.

In the spring and early summer of 1870 the local government began to implement its plans for the new city hall in earnest. John G. Baxter, a figure noted for his involvement in capital improvement projects which included the construction of many miles of up-to-date roads and the establishment of the city's first free internal park, was elected mayor in March 1870 and "at once took the necessary steps to insure the speedy commencement and completion of the building." General I. M. St. John, the city engineer, was appointed to supervise the construction while Andrewartha was named superintending architect. The

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city officials, no doubt animated by their success in securing the bonds for the project, began clearance of the site on July 4, 1870, thus marking the start of construction. By August 14 of the same year work had begun on the excavation of the ample foundation, and on September 13 the placement of the masonry began. Work progressed rapidly until it was discovered in 1872 that the amount generated initially by the bonds was not sufficient. An appeal was made once again to the General Assembly for permission to issue more bonds. The unfinished state of the edifice, and the support of Mayor Charles D. Jacob, whose "zeal in pushing forward the work" was considered great after his election in March 1872, combined to convince the lawmakers of the need for additional money. The reissuance of bonds was approved on March 3, 1873, and eventually provided another \$200,000. Four months later, again on the Fourth of July, the building was declared finished.

The style of the City Hall is a strange merger of the Italianate manner of the mid-century and the French Second Empire style which dominated much public building after the Civil War. The irregular skyline with its high end-pavilions (originally capped by balustrades), the almost Romanesque round-arched arcade on the top story of the 6th Street front, and the relative restraint of some of the detail, all evoke the Italian villa or palace. But the heavy superimposed porticoes, the narrow pediment, the insistent play of vertical and horizontal layers, and above all the soaring, overscaled Mansard tower reflect the incipient influence of the New Louvre in Paris, enlarged in the 1850s, and its American imitators, such as Federal architect Alfred B. Mullett's Executive Office Building in Washington. The resulting combination of elements is awkward both as a whole and in detail (there are a number of architectural "improprieties" like the placement of squat composite pilasters at the corners over another story of "correctly" proportioned pilasters--which themselves should have been Ionic to fit the usual classical sequence over the Doric first story). Nevertheless, the overall effect of the building has such verve, such a delight in variety and surface effects, that it deserves the affection many citizens feel for it. And it remains the outstanding example of the style in the city, if not the State.

The image of the Early Republic evoked by the Courthouse is replaced in the City Hall by an equally truthful reflection of post-Civil War life. Louisville's debt to agriculture and industry is recognized in the sculpture which adorns the exterior of the building. As T. M. Brown put it, "Pigs, cows, and horses are proudly displayed on the sides

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of the building to symbolize Louisville's busy stockyards. And the pediment over the main entrance has a relief sculpture of a train plowing through the wilderness, a fitting symbol of the part played by the railroad in conquering the West and its vital role in the life of nineteenth century Louisville. The building thus sings the praises to the commercial forces that helped create the city and expresses well the confident, satisfied, materialistic tone of the Gilded Age."

A contemporary description by the architect emphasizes not only the size and splendor of the building, the lavishness and symbolism of the ornamentation, but also the provisions both for comfort and safety. He mentions, for instance, the "massive self-closing sash doors [of the east entrance], which inclose the corridors for purposes of warmth and protection." He goes on: "Immediately opposite this entrance is developed the staircase, a prominent piece of workmanship in iron, the steps being covered with rubber to prevent sound. The rubber can be renewed at pleasure." Unfortunately, neither of these features survives.

The major concern, however, seems to have been fireproofing. In a biography published at the time of the dedication of Andrewartha's other known masterpiece, the old Courier-Journal Building on Fourth Street, in 1876 (see the National Register nomination form approved at the State level on June 15, 1976), the author--probably the architect himself--claims that he had been responsible for introducing castiron commercial construction to Louisville shortly after his arrival in the city on July 4, 1865. The description of the interior of City Hall not surprisingly mentions the use of castiron construction repeatedly. Although almost nothing of the gorgeous decorations--woodwork, stuccowork, frescoes--has survived, it may be assumed that the underlying construction still exists: "The arched brick floors, constructed upon and sustained by wrought-iron rolled beams, have spaces varying from three feet six inches to five feet six inches, with a maximum rise of two feet to every foot width between beams, and are calculated to sustain two hundred and forty pounds per square foot . . . . The galleries [formerly arranged in horseshoe form around the Aldermen's Chamber] are sustained by iron cantilevers or brackets, built into the walls and concealed in the construction of the <sup>of</sup>grained ceilings beneath." Andrewartha also specifies the pressures upon the walls and foundations, including cut stone from the newly opened quarries of oolitic (Bedford) limestone in Salem, Indiana; the low cost per square foot ("The entire building has been found to cost the low rate of thirty-six and one-half cents per cubic foot of available space--a low average when we consider the amount of detail and small parts in its

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its interior plan and finish."); and the utilities: "The system of heating adopted in the building is the application of G. W. Blake's New York Patent Direct Radiator, with high pressure steam supply and independent return pipes." (It is not known whether any of this original system remains.) Thus, the City Hall was originally conceived of, not only as a highly ornamental structure, symbolic of both the prosperity and culture (past, present, and future) of the city, but also as an up-to-date functional organism, convenient and secure.

Architect John Andrewartha, described in a brief biography following the structure's completion as "a man of stern and thoughtful appearance," was born in England in 1839. He received his professional education there, beginning seven years of indenture and study at the age of fifteen. He arrived in Louisville in 1865 when only twenty-five years old. It was not long, according to his biographer (perhaps himself), before he "revolutionized, in a great measure, the style and character of private building enterprises in this city." Prior to the City Hall commission Andrewartha's public and private works suggest an esteemed reputation and, perhaps, investors' increased willingness to accept his often more flamboyant designs over the more restrained Italianate manner preferred by other local architects such as Henry Whitestone, and their clients. Andrewartha's residences, built for figures synonymous with the management of civic and commercial affairs a century ago such as Samuel Hamilton, W. A. Robinson, James Bridgeford, James Trabue, and W. A. Davis, were again in the biographer's estimation, "indebted to the excellent judgment and fine taste of this gentleman." Andrewartha's commercial projects were regarded as no less magnificent. Elegant and massive business houses for Main Street firms such as Kitts and Werne, Bamberger-Bloom, Von Borries and Beckurts, and J. M. Robinson (see the nomination form for the West Main Street Historic District referred to above), in addition to work for The Courier-Journal (see the National Register nomination form for the Old Courier-Journal Building, approved at the State level on June 15, 1976) and Louisville Jockey Club (see the National Register nomination form for Churchill Downs, approved at the State level December 4, 1973), not only reversed the trend whereby owners spent "but a tithe of their lives in a lascivious rich-appointed mansion, and the balance in unhealthy, dingy, uninviting stores and offices," but also introduced the use of many innovative building materials and styles. Finally, a partial list of his public and ecclesiastical projects constitutes an impressive record: the building erected to house what is believed to be the first public high school for black students in the United States (see the National Register nomination form for the Central Colored School in

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Louisville, approved at the State level on October 21, 1975; forwarded to Washington June 23, 1976); the enlargement of St. Paul's Episcopal Church on Walnut Street in Louisville; a building for Danville's Centre College; schoolhouses for the United States Government in Louisville, Lexington, and Richmond; an extension of the State Penitentiary and Fourth Kentucky Lunatic Asylum; a warehouse for the Commonwealth in Frankfort; plans for a new Statehouse ("not adopted on account of their magnificent proportions, being considered too much in advance at that time"; see the National Register nomination form for the Old Capitol Historic District, Frankfort, Franklin County, approved at the State level on October 21, 1975); a City Almshouse for Louisville; and an Eruptive Hospital, **Louisville**. Although little or nothing is now known of the remainder of his life and career, it seems likely that the Louisville City Hall, a sketch of which was reproduced in The (New York) Daily Graphic shortly after its dedication, was Andrewartha's executed magnum opus.

Begun in 1907 on the site of the old jail, the City Hall Annex marks the involvement of a distinguished local architect in the city's major pre-war project. Designer Cornelius A. Curtin (1853-1926) charted a remarkable career which, although he was mostly known for churches, included the erection of the city's first skyscraper, the superb and fondly remembered Columbia Building, once the pride of Louisville's downtown area. The many churches built under his guidance clearly show the work of a thoughtful and talented practitioner. Among them is St. Charles Borromeo Church, one of the most impressive buildings of the basilical type in the area, and regarded as a significant West Louisville landmark. Another, the Highland area's Church of St. Brigid, was featured in the catalogue of an exhibit of the works of Louisville architects and others held in Louisville in 1912. His priory for St. Louis Bertrand Church (see the National Register nomination form, approved at the State level on October 21, 1975), done in association with John Bacon Hutchings in 1890, was only recently torn down.

The Annex, although certainly not as grand as his skyscraper nor as impressive as his churches, still warrants appreciation as a fine remnant of an often abused idiom. Reporting in 1909 the head of the Board of Public Works had this to say:

The City Hall Annex has been pushed to completion as fast as possible under the enforced delays which surround all city work. At the date of this report everything is completed except the wainscoting in the halls of the building, the railings

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and benches for the Police Courtroom, and the furniture and stairways of the main office, which is the large front room on the ground floor to be occupied by the City Tax Receiver and the Commissioner of the Sinking Fund.

It was explained further that the original plan called for the second floor to be occupied by the police department, but that was changed early in 1908. Deplotted along with Curtin's other work in the 1912 American Institute of Architects catalogue, the Annex's excellent stone work was contracted by the local John Diebold & Sons Stone Company, whose specialty, shown in the catalogue alongside a photograph of the Annex, was not surprisingly columns, bases, caps, and balusters. And, as citizens were able to see in The Courier-Journal of July 11, 1909, an important and handsome addition to their government center had been completely occupied.

When dedicated in early September 1891, Fire Station No. 2, also often referred to (perhaps unofficially) as the Headquarters or Central Station, soon became the object of effusive praise as the Pantheon of the fire department's Golden Age. In thirty-five years of city-owned service (fire was battled, with disastrous results and despite frequent admonitions, for the city's first seventy-five years on a volunteer or lightly subsidized basis until a formal appropriation and enabling legislation in 1856), the department had grown to become one of the most powerful, efficient, and respected organizations in Louisville as well as the Commonwealth. The reason, in no small measure, was Major Ed Hughes. Department chief for nearly thirty years at a time when political obloquy cut other careers far shorter, Hughes built the service and gained a reputation expressed in the following, written for an 1894 souvenir of the fire department:

There is perhaps no man better known in all the State. He is a born leader of men; of a frank, open-hearted disposition, generous to his opponents, he never betrays the confidence of a friend and never deserts one in time of need; nor does he forgive him an injury. These strong traits of character have made Major Hughes a power in political circles of Louisville.

This complicity with City Hall, potentially damaging to an agency charged with the public's safety, worked to the department's distinct advantage. Hughes' knack for getting along with politicians regardless of party meant that better working conditions, improved equipment, and the most up-to-date engine houses could be had without the

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customary delays. Friendships with Mayors Paul Booker Reed (Republican, 1884-90) and Henry S. Tyler (Democrat, 1890-96) proved most helpful in securing new stations.

Tyler, also featured in the 1894 souvenir, was credited with adding "six new houses to the fire department, all fine modern structures," although Reed must have certainly done the groundwork. Unlike City Hall, however, where both the names of Charles D. Jacob, mayor under whom the work was finished, and John G. Baxter, whose drive began construction, share the cornerstone, Reed's participation is never acknowledged.

Among the six new houses, of course, was Fire Station No. 2, "one of the handsomest, best equipped fire buildings in the country." One of three stations put into use on September 1, 1891, it merited these remarks in the souvenir:

The completion of the handsome new Engine House No. 2 marks a period in the improvement of the fire service. The department is now just about as complete as can be, and it is not likely any further expense will be incurred soon by city in further improvements. The new building is an ideal engine house, and nothing could be added either to enhance the beauty of its appearance or to increase its conveniences. Every modern improvement to the fire station has been added--not the smallest detail being overlooked.

The massive Richardsonian Romanesque style seems (perhaps unexpectedly) particularly appropriate to the original function of the building: the low, wide arches for the engines on the ground floor, the diminution of window openings on the upper stories reflecting the scale of the firemen's individual quarters, the sturdy tower suggesting both monumentality and alertness. The numerous gables, pinnacles, and capitals are highly carved with both foliage and representational subjects, like some of the carvings on City Hall: Hughes and his assistant in medallions in the main gables are familiar landmarks, although the firemen's hats sculpted amid stylized Byzantine foliage in the first-floor arch spandrels are often overlooked.

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Credit for such an edifice, however, plainly must go to others than just Reed, Tyler, or Hughes. The architects, McDonald Brothers, were the chief local rivals of the renowned Clarke and Loomis (1893 Louisville Medical College, listed on the National Register July 30, 1975) in the 'eighties and 'nineties; moreover, their designs for court-houses and other public buildings were distributed throughout the southeast. Brothers Harry P. (1848-1904) and Kenneth (1852-1940) were no strangers to the design of large public or institutional buildings. An advertisement for the firm within the souvenir lists a number of significant works executed under their charge, many done in the robust Romanesque characteristic of their fire station. Although they began their careers in High Victorian Gothic style and ended in Beaux-Arts (see K. McDonald and William J. Dodd's Western Colored Branch Library, listed on the Register on December 6, 1975), the bulk of their work in the 1890s was done in the Neo-Romanesque manner rekindled by H. H. Richardson. Immensely popular in the Midwest during the 'eighties and 'nineties, the style coincided perfectly with the theretofore unknown requirements of the new industrial metropolis: large factories and warehouses; skyscraper office buildings; new and expanded government buildings (to cope with the rapidly expanding bureaucracy); more sophisticated prisons and asylas, which the period's much overlooked reforms demanded (as much as its urban misfortunes created); and glorious train stations, the "Cathedrals of the Industrial Age," as William Morgan put it--all were erected throughout Louisville's Brown Decades, and a round-arched and lithic example of each was turned out by the McDonalds, in addition to the more traditional churches, schools, and residences. Sadly, a great portion of the firm's Romanesque phase has been destroyed over the years. Thus, although authentic restoration would pose considerable problems, Fire Station No. 2 deserves careful preservation and remains an integral part of Louisville's civic center.

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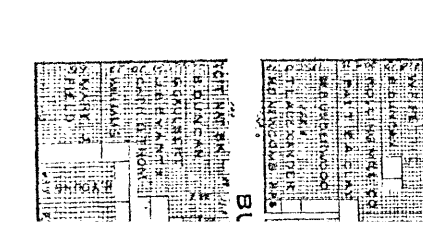
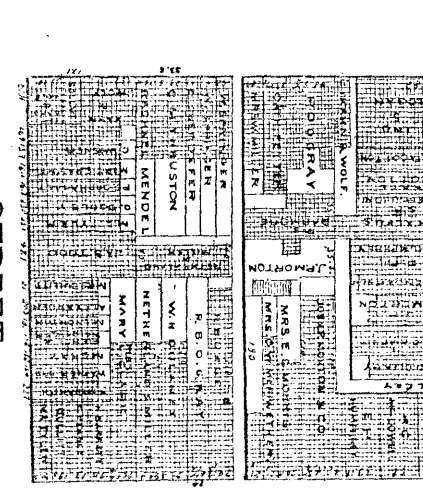
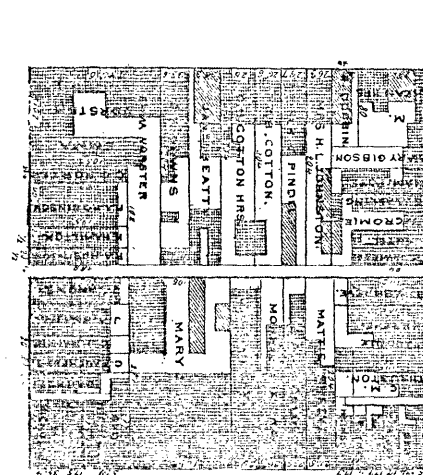
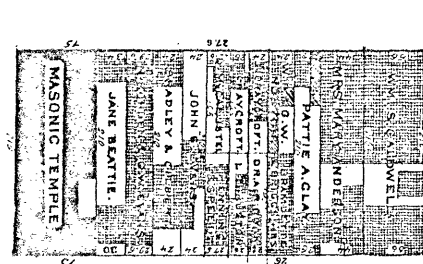
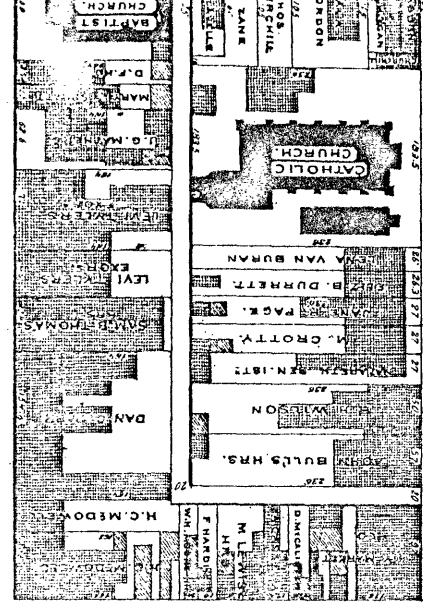
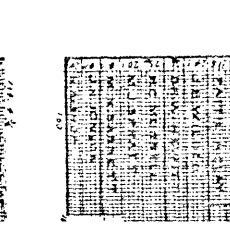
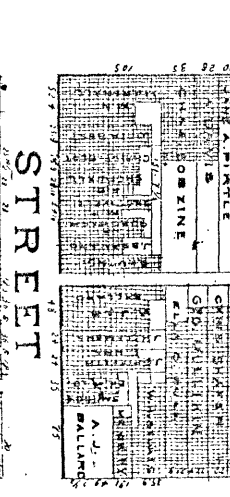
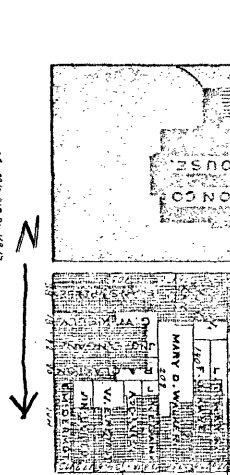
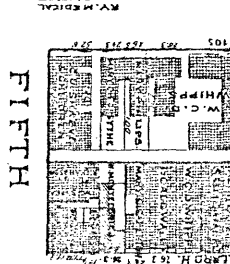
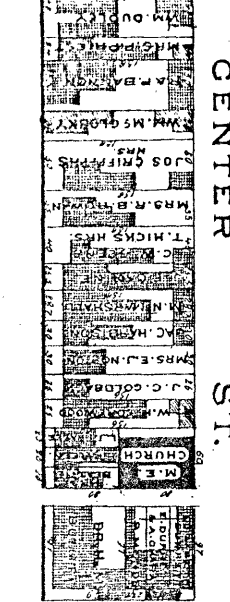
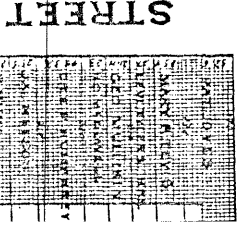
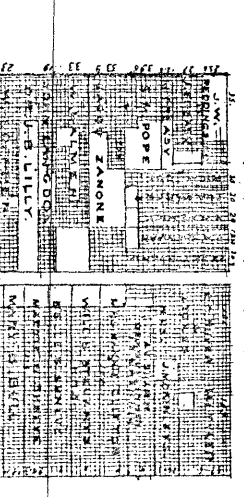
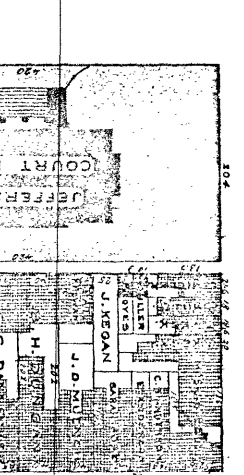
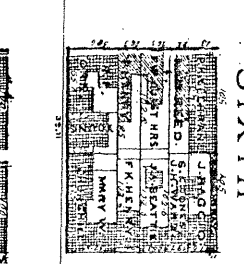
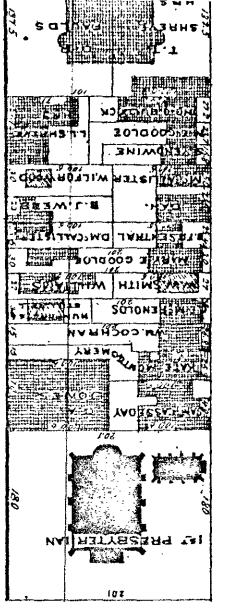
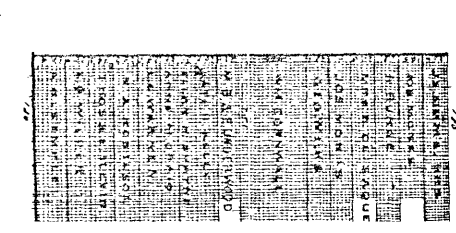
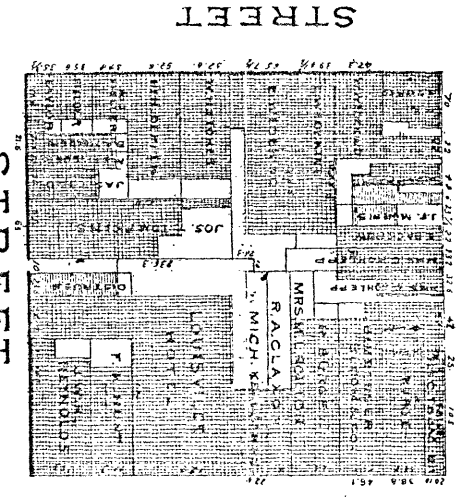
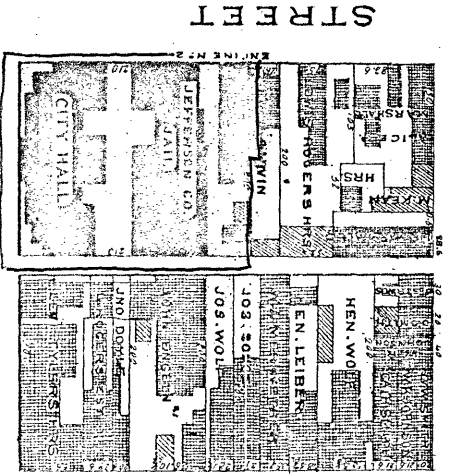
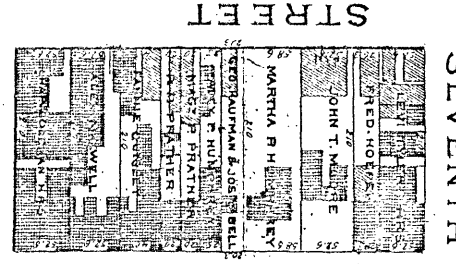
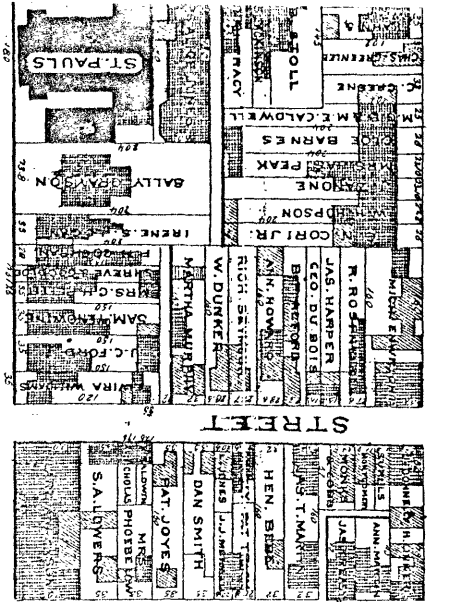
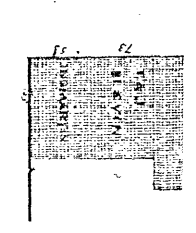
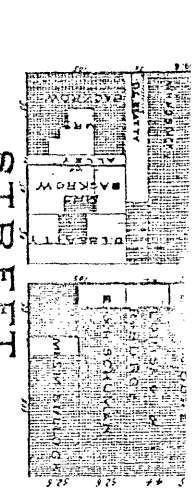
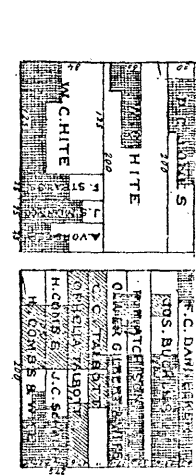
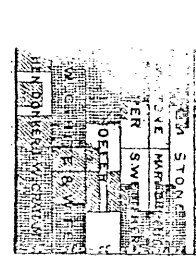
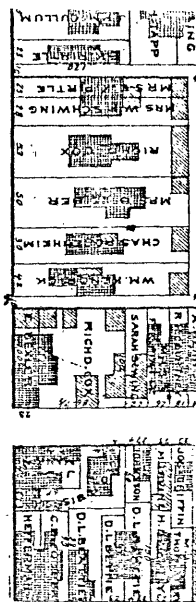
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SEVENTH STREET

SIXTH STREET

FIFTH STREET

FOURTH STREET

THIRD STREET

SECOND STREET

CENTER ST.

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Louisville City Hall Complex  
Louisville  
Jefferson County  
Kentucky



Atlas of the City of Louisville  
(Louisville: Louisville Abstract &  
Loan Association, 1876), Map no. 1.

Map 2. The then-new City Hall  
is shown just west of the Jefferson  
County Courthouse. The Jefferson  
County Jail shown to the west of

it was replaced by the present  
City Hall Annex; Engine House No.2  
by the present Sinking Fund Building.