

PH 0507814

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED NOV 22 1977  
DATE ENTERED MAY 22 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC  \*Robertson County Courthouse  
AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: Public Square  
CITY, TOWN: Springfield  
STATE: Tennessee  
VICINITY OF: Fifth  
COUNTY: Robertson  
CODE: 47  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Fifth  
CODE: 147

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

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME: Robertson County

STREET & NUMBER  
CITY, TOWN  
STATE  
VICINITY OF

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Register's Office-Robertson County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER: Public Square  
CITY, TOWN: Springfield  
STATE: Tennessee

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE: Tennessee Historical and Architectural Survey

DATE: 1977  
FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Tennessee Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN: Nashville  
STATE: Tennessee

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR  
 DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Robertson County Courthouse is an impressive public building located on the original one acre, courthouse square. Being the center of the commercial district for Springfield, the square is surrounded on each side by a narrow avenue of two and three-story buildings, primarily of the late nineteenth century period. This court building replaced the former brick courthouse, constructed in 1819. After much debate the distinctive clock tower was added and the building was enlarged with matching wings extending out at each side in 1929-30. The last major improvements were made following the storm damage of 1972. At that time the brick was sandblasted, the roof was recovered and the second story courtroom was enlarged.

The two-story brick bearing wall system was constructed in two phases. The center section with the projecting frontpiece on two fronts is the original main section; the wings were constructed across the sides where the original doors were located. The wing additions and the brick tower match the original, late Victorian style, with classic revival detail.

On the interior, the formal cross-hall plan serves to divide the first floor into four main areas which have been partitioned into smaller rooms for the various county offices. At the end of each long hall are open well staircases leading to the court area above. The large courtroom occupies the center of the building, fronted at one end by a wide foyer with press rooms. Beyond the dais for the bench are doors leading to the judge's chambers and jury rooms. The second set of stairs leading from the main hall serve this area.

The design for the courthouse features an interesting monochromatic scheme enriched by contrasting textures of brick and stone of the same light buff color. To further enhance the design the main floor is elevated several feet above ground level by a handsome base wall finished with rusticated, coursed limestone and capped with a water-table of smooth stone. The entrances at each elevation are fronted by wide stone masonry steps. The tall, second-story level is delineated by two, wide set, bands of smooth coursed stone forming a wide belt course. Above each main entrance are five oversized windows. To stress the importance of the second story, the roundheaded window apertures maintain the effect of an arcade with heavily molded surrounds connected by a molded archvolt and impost coping, extending the width of the frontpiece. The original main entrances are composed of a double, panel door entrance enframed by carved stone masonry, fluted Doric pilasters, supporting a full entablature of carved stone enriched by low-relief carvings appearing in the typanum, frieze and festooned spandrel area. The side entrances are enframed with carved stone masonry, moldings and pilasters supporting triangular shape pediments. Adding to the classic symmetry of the design are pairs of tall, roundheaded windows, spaced identically on each elevation. These windows have 4/4 light sashes, with apertures joined by heavily molded hoods enriched by molded corbel stops and keystone motif.

Features appearing on the roof are a highlight of the building. The stone balustrade and parapet railing above the main cornice are repeated in the smaller stone capping used above the cornice for the side wings. The square clock tower is built from the flat roof deck in two stages. The open belfry is enriched by a carved stone balustrade for each arched opening. The belfry story has pilasters and carvings in low relief; the lower stage is finished with quoins at the corners. Clock faces are mounted in the molded, curvilinear gable detail, flanked by finials at each corner.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input 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		

W. C. Smith-Architect

SPECIFIC DATES 1879

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Patton and McInturff-Contractors

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Robertson County was established April 9, 1796 during the first session of the General Assembly of Tennessee. The act provided that the area referred to as the Tennessee County be divided into two counties. The eastern half was named in honor of James Robertson, one of the founders of Nashville; the western section was named Montgomery in memory of Col. John Montgomery. The act also provided commissioners to establish the county government system and raise money to build a courthouse and jail.

The first courthouse was a log structure located on the public square. It was completed on July 15, 1799 and the court adjourned for a quarter of an hour to move to the new building. The log structure was replaced in 1819 by a two-story brick. The original log building was sold for \$116.55 and the new building was constructed on the same site for a cost of \$6,598. The brick structure was considered a very modern building for that period, but by 1879 it was announced that the building was unsafe and construction of the present courthouse was begun. The structure was completed in 1881 for \$20,959.40. The architect was William C. Smith and the contractors were Patton and McInturff. In 1930 the tower clock and two side wings were added to bring the courthouse to its present size and appearance.

The Robertson County Courthouse is a significant building to this area. It is located on the original site of the county's first courthouse and has been the seat of government for Robertson County for 178 years. It is one of twenty-five courthouses built before 1900 in the state and is the sixteenth oldest courthouse still in use. It is also one of ten courthouses in Tennessee constructed during the fifteen year period following the Civil War. Its original 1879 Victorian style has been preserved with little or no changes. The 1930 wings were designed to complement and blend completely with the original architectural plan. The building is the most outstanding architectural accomplishment within the city and its third story tower draws attention to the magnificent structure from miles away. It is located on the public square, surrounded by a group of 1890 to 1925 buildings that provide an environment of a unique and undamaged, turn-of-the-century commercial district.

The courthouse is an important piece of the county's heritage and with inclusion on the National Register can be protected for future generations. The courthouse is in danger of being razed in order to provide space for a modern courthouse and additional office space.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Crane, Sophie and Paul. Tennessee Taproots. Earle-Shields Publishers, 1976.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1

UTM REFERENCES No UTM grid tics; see continuation sheet

A	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C			

B	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D			

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property being nominated is bounded to the North by Fifth Avenue; to the East by Main Street; to the South by Sixth Avenue; and to the West by the Public Square.

## 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 Debbie K. Henderson, Research Aide  
Gail E. Hammerquist, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION Tennessee Historical Commission

DATE September 1977

STREET & NUMBER 170 Second Avenue North

TELEPHONE (615) 741-2371

CITY OR TOWN Nashville

STATE Tennessee

# 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 Herbert L. Hayden

TITLE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE 10/14/77

**FOR NPS USE ONLY**

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION Washburn DATE 5-22-78

ATTEST: Cole Washburn Cole KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER DATE 4-25-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

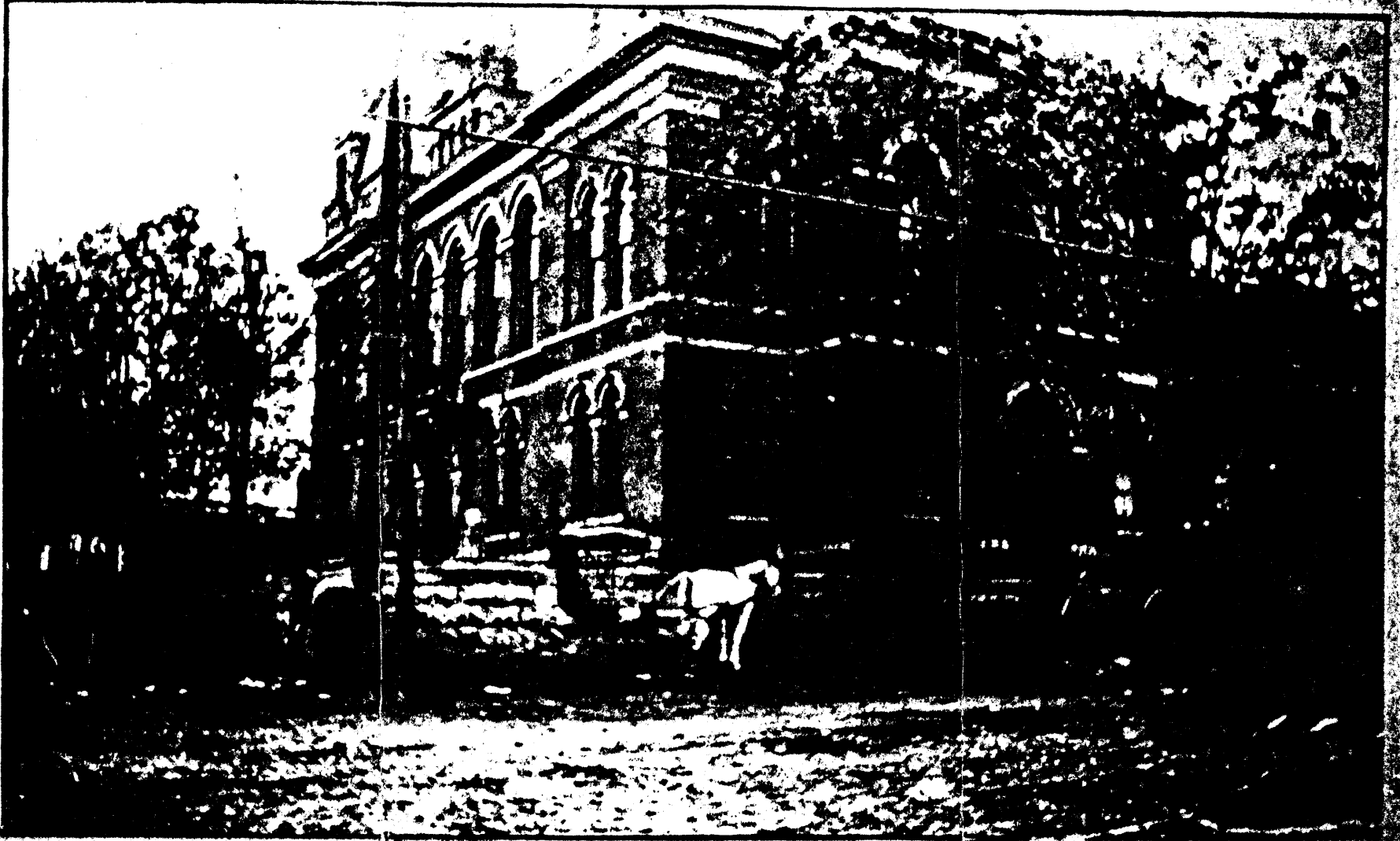
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

ROBERTSON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Latitude *Long* Longitude *Lat.*  
86° 53' 08" 36° <sup>31</sup>/<sub>30</sub>' 08"



1909

COURT HOUSE, SPRINGFIELD, TENN.