

PH0662089

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED FEB 6 1978

DATE ENTERED AUG 3 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 Meigs County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Court Square

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Decatur

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Third

STATE

Tennessee

VICINITY OF

CODE
47

COUNTY
Meigs

CODE
121 ✓

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Meigs County

STREET & NUMBER

Meigs County Courthouse, Court Square

CITY, TOWN

Decatur

VICINITY OF

STATE

Tennessee

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Meigs County Register's Office

STREET & NUMBER

Meigs County Courthouse, Court Square

CITY, TOWN

Decatur

STATE

Tennessee

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historical and Architectural Survey

DATE

May 1977

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS

Tennessee Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Nashville

STATE

Tennessee

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	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Decatur, the county seat of Meigs County, lies in the Goodfield Valley, at the intersection of state routes 58 and 30, in southeastern Tennessee. The Meigs County Courthouse stands on a tree-shaded court square in the center of the small town.

Built on a brick foundation, the two-story vernacular courthouse has a basically rectangular floor plan. The foundation and water table have been stuccoed and scribed to simulate cut and coursed stone. All of the red brick walls were laid in the common bond pattern. Black composition shingles cover the low hip roof; two gables and a plain boxed cornice, with an equally unadorned frieze, ornament the roof structure. The facade (east elevation) is divided into three sections; the left and right sections each have two bays and project slightly forward and to the side. The first floor windows surrounds have segmented arch heads with brick radiating voussoirs and plain wooden slip sills. These one-over-one windows are topped with rectangular transoms. Windows in the upper story have round arches, wooden slip sills, and half-round transoms over the one-over-one sashes. Brick belt courses girdle the buildings and connect all lintels at the base of their transoms. The center section of the facade is a three-and-one-half, story, square clock tower; after a fire in ca. 1960 the clock was permanently removed. The pyramidal roof of the clock tower has on each face gables with embossed metal and wheel motif ornamentation; a weathervane surmounts the composition shingle-clad roof. The partly glazed, double-leaf doors are recessed and a projecting, one-story, round-arched portico--a recent addition--further shelters the main entrance. Unlike the rest of the building, this addition has brick laid in stretcher bond and an iron fence bristles on its roof. At the third level of the tower are triple one-over-one, round-headed windows; above these paired louvered vents with basket arched openings; and over the vents a round clock face aperture. The last two elements appear on all four tower walls. Belt courses join the windows and vents.

The north and south elevations are similar. Each contains eight bays and has remained largely original in appearance. The third bay from the west end of the south wall has a round-arched, deep recess. This was an entrance, but in recent years the door was removed and a window installed; the stone steps still remain in place. An ornamental gable with a round, louvered vent is also located in this bay. A tall, square brick chimney stands in approximately the same position on the north wall. The west elevation also has three sections. A gabled, two-story, projecting frontispiece occupies the center section; the gable decoration duplicates the one in the south elevation. The upper window of this feature was recently sealed; on the lower level is a round arched, recessed entrance which protects the transomed, double-leaf, partly galzed doors. The flanking sections resemble the north and south walls. In the foundation of the left section is the door to the partial basement.

The first floor interior of the courthouse contains an east-west hall with offices arranged on either side; the hall walls are solid brick. The east end of the hall opens and contains two half-turn staircases with landings which merge to form a straight stair as it approaches the second floor. The courtroom and additional office space are found on this level. The staircase has turned balusters and ornate newels and drops, and the stairwell has wide board ceilings and vertical, beaded-board wainscotting.

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 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 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 ca. 1903

BUILDER/ARCHITECT W. R. Harper

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Meigs County was organized on May 2, 1837 and named for Return Jonathan Meigs, a Continental Army major who fought in the Battle of Lexington. The following year the site for the county seat was selected, named, settled, and incorporated. Decatur became the chief town because of its location near the geographical center of the county. With an economy based on agriculture and animal husbandry, the populations of Decatur and Meigs County have never been large. In 1970 the county, with a population of about 5,200, ranked 90th of the 95 counties in Tennessee; it is now 91st in the state. Decatur had a population of 957 and has not grown appreciably since the last census.

Three brick courthouses have stood on this site. The first, completed in 1837, was replaced in 1882. On April 2, 1902 fire gutted this building; only three walls were left standing. W. R. Harper, a contractor, prepared plans for a building and received \$50 for his services. Broadway Manufacturing Company of Knoxville, Tennessee, submitted the low bid and completed the project in late 1903 or early the following year. The ruins of the earlier building were removed and the new courthouse, which almost duplicated its predecessor, was built on the same foundation. The cost of the courthouse, exclusive of furniture and fixtures, came to \$7,645; the quarterly court had appropriated \$8,000 for the project.

The Meigs County Courthouse is the county's landmark. It rises above all of the other buildings in Decatur, and the tower can be seen for miles. The building's lines are clean and the massing correct for the setting. Unlike many Tennessee courthouses, the facade and main entrance of the building are clearly defined. Belt courses delineate each window and emphasize the horizontality of the edifice, while the height of the massive tower helps to balance the appearance of the building.

The courthouse has served the judicial and administrative needs of Meigs County for nearly seventy-five years and still houses some county offices. A large city-county building was erected recently in the outskirts of Decatur, and many county offices are located there. The building appears to be structurally sound and almost completely original in appearance. There are no known plans to demolish or change the building.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Crane, Sophie and Paul. Tennessee Taproots. Old Hickory, Tenn.: Earle-Shields Publishers, 1976.

Information provided by Edward H. Green, Jr. of Knoxville, Tennessee.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.5

QUADRANGLE NAME Decatur, Tenn.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1: 24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,6 7,0,0 4,1,0 3,9 3,2 1,9,0

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The property nominated includes the entire block known as the Court 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

Robert E. Dalton, Director of Field Services

ORGANIZATION

Tennessee Historical Commission

DATE

January 1978

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 X

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. Hays

TITLE Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

DATE 1/30/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE 8/3/78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *Chas. Adams*
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE 8.1.78

IDENTIFICATION	Historic name: <u>Meigs County Courthouse</u>	STATUS	Open to public: Yes ___ No ___ Restricted <u>X</u>
	Common name: <u>Meigs County Courthouse</u>		Visible from road: Yes <u>X</u> No ___
	Address: <u>Court Square</u> <u>Decatur, Tennessee</u>		Occupied: Yes <u>X</u> No ___
	Owner's name: <u>Meigs County</u>		Present use: <u>Government</u>
	Owner's address: <u>Meigs County Courthouse,</u> <u>Court Square, Decatur, Tennessee 37322</u>		Current condition: <u>Good</u>
	Classification: <u>Building-public</u>		Alterations: <u>Clock removed from clock tower</u> <u>ca. 1960; door removed and replaced by</u> <u>window on south elevation, projecting 1 story</u>
	Tax map reference: <u>Dist. 3, Map 42-K,</u> <u>Parcel D-9</u>		Site features: <u>N/A</u>
	Acreage: <u>1.5 acres</u>		
UTM reference: <u>Zone 16 N 3932190</u> <u>E 700410</u>			
HISTORY	Date of construction: <u>ca. 1903</u>	SOURCES	Bibliographical data: <u>Crane, Sophie and Paul.</u> <u>Tennessee Taproots, Old Hickory, TN: Earle-</u> <u>Shields Publishers, 1976.</u>
	Architect/builder: <u>W. R. Harper, contractor</u>		<u>Information provided by Edward H. Green, Jr.</u> <u>Knoxville, TN.</u>
	Original or previous owners: <u>Meigs County</u>		<u>National Register Nomination, 1978.</u>
	Original use: <u>Government</u>		Form prepared by: <u>Ann Toplovich</u>
	Theme/s: Primary <u>Politics/Government</u> Secondary <u>Architecture</u> Other <u>N/A</u>		Title: <u>Cultural Resource Surveyor</u> Organization: <u>Tennessee Historical Commission</u> Date: <u>9/16/81</u>
DESCRIPTION	Built on a brick foundation, the two-story vernacular Meigs County Courthouse has a basically rectangular floor plan. The foundation and water table have been stuccoed and scribed to simulate cut and coursed stone. All of the red brick walls were laid in common bond. Composition shingles cover the low hip roof; two gables and a plain boxed cornice, with an unadorned frieze, ornament the roof. The facade (east elevation) is divided into three sections; the left and right sections each have two bays and project slightly forward and to the side. The first floor window surrounds have segmented arch heads with brick radiating voussoirs and plain wooden slip sills. These 1/1 light windows are topped with rectangular transoms. Windows in the upper story have round arches, wooden slip sills, and half-round transoms over 1/1 lights. Brick belt courses girdle the building and connect all lintels at the base of their transoms. The center section of the facade is a three-and-one-half story, square clock tower.		
SIGNIFICANCE	Meigs County was organized on May 2, 1837 and in 1838 Decatur was selected and settled as county seat. This is the third courthouse to stand on this site; the first was replaced in 1882, and the second was gutted by fire in 1902. W. R. Harper, a contractor, prepared plans for a new building and received \$50 payment. The Broadway Manufacturing Company of Knoxville, Tennessee completed the building in late 1903 or early 1904. The new courthouse was built on the foundations of the old and almost duplicated its predecessor. The cost of the new building was \$7645. The building has clean lines and massing correct for its setting. The facade and main entrance are clearly defined, and belt courses delineate each window and emphasize the		

PHOTOGRAPHIC DATA

Photographer: Stephen T. Rogers

Date: 1/23/79

Negatives on file: Tennessee Historical
Commission

Photographer facing: S & E elevation - facing NW
N & E elevations facing SW
Photograph number 33 & 34 of 55

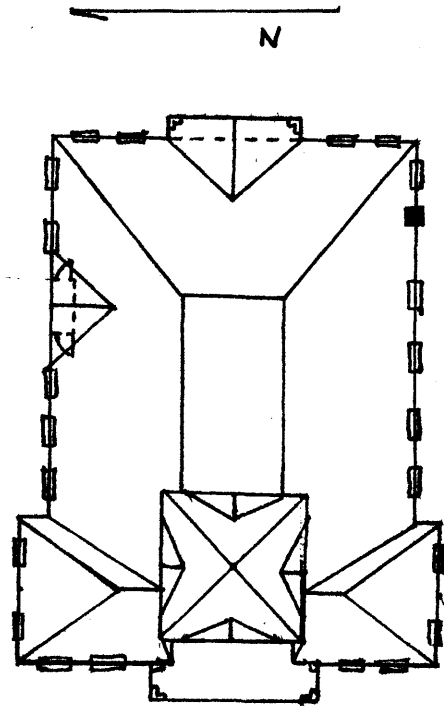
CONTINUATION

Alterations: flat roofed portico added to facade.

Description:

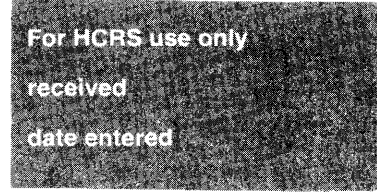
The pyramidal roof of the clock tower has gables with embossed metal and wheel motif on each face; a weathervane surmounts the composition shingled roof. The partly glazed, double leaf doors are recessed and a projecting, one-story, round-arched portico further shelters the main entrance. Unlike the rest of the building, this addition has brick laid in stretcher bond and an iron fence on its roof. At the third level of the tower are triple 1/1 light, round-headed windows; above these paired louvered vents with basket arched openings; and over the vents a round clock face aperture. The last

SITE PLAN - Include North Arrow



**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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



Continuation sheet Historic Resources of
Meigs County, Tennessee **Item number** **Description** **Page** **2**

MEIGS COUNTY MULTIPLE RESOURCE NOMINATION - MEIGS COUNTY COURTHOUSE (#26)

Description:

two elements appear on all four tower walls. Belt courses join the windows and vents. The north and south elevations are similar. Each contains eight bays and has remained largely original in appearance.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet Historic Resources of Meigs County, Tennessee Item number Significance Page 2

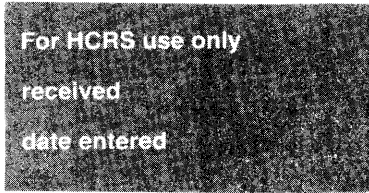
MEIGS COUNTY MULTIPLE RESOURCE NOMINATION - MEIGS COUNTY COURTHOUSE (#26)

Significance:

horizontalities of the edifice, while the height of the massive tower helps to balance the appearance of the building. This courthouse has served the judicial and administrative needs of Meigs County for nearly eighty years. The Meigs County Courthouse was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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



Continuation sheet Historic Resources of
Meigs County, Tennessee **Item number** Identification **Page** 2

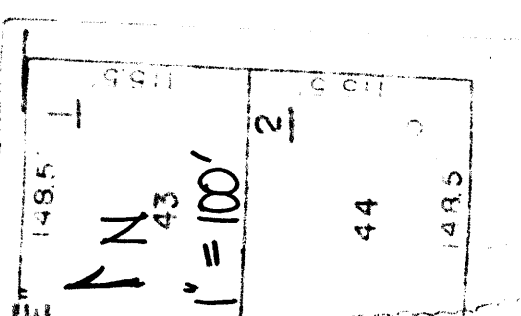
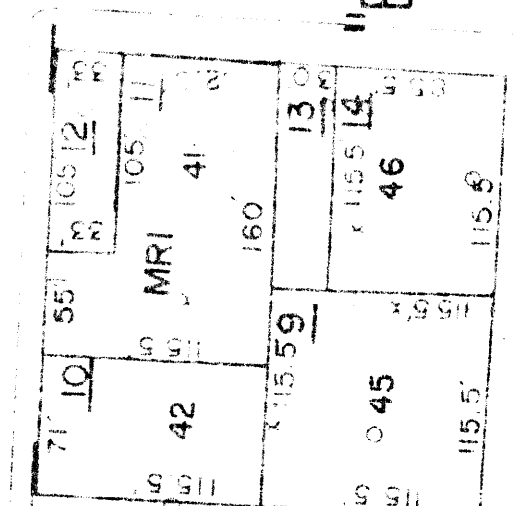
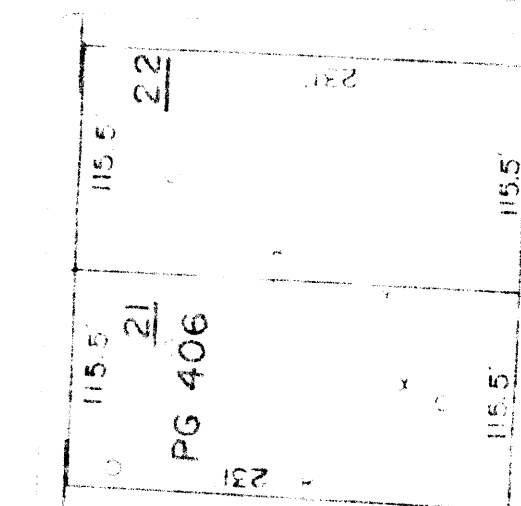
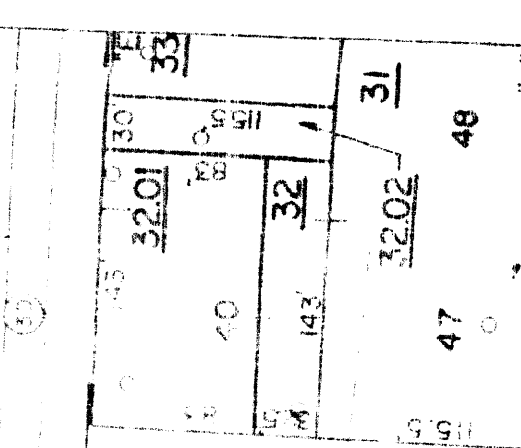
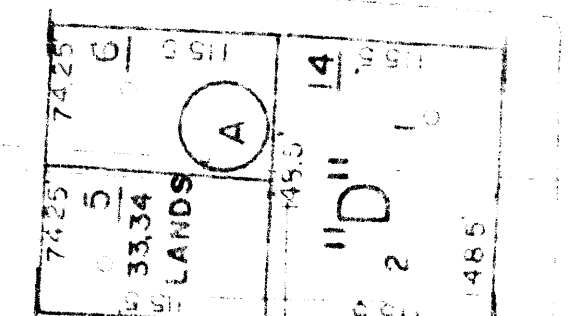
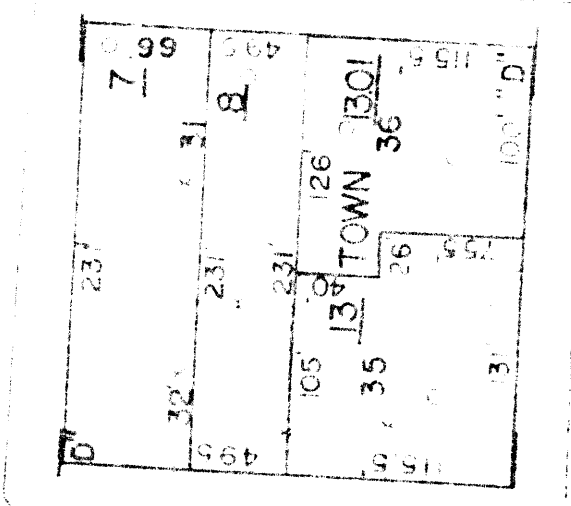
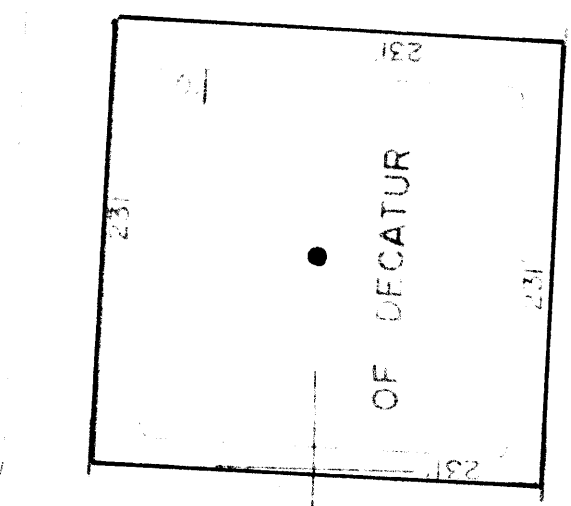
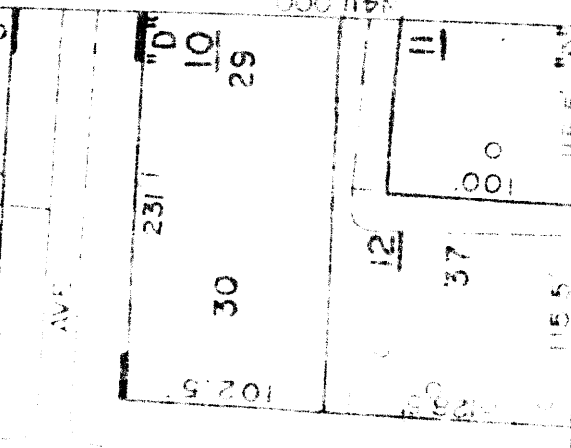
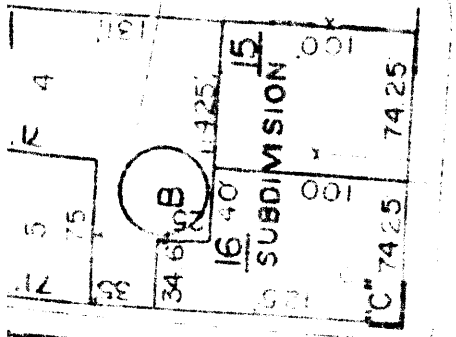
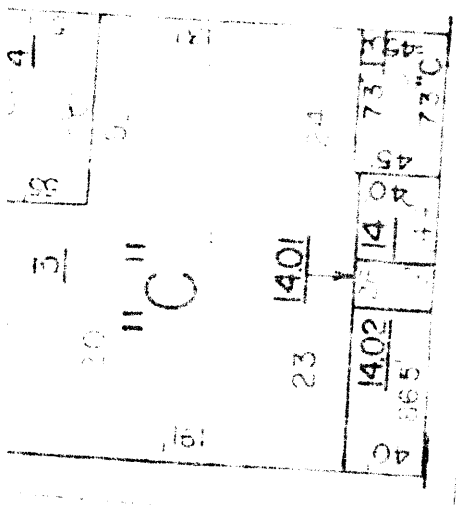
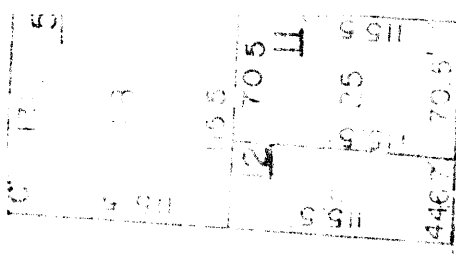
MEIGS COUNTY MULTIPLE RESOURCE NOMINATION - Meigs County Courthouse (#26)

Verbal Boundary Description and Justification:

26. The boundaries conform to the dimensions of the lot, occupied by the courthouse, which consists of approximately 1.5 acres.

Historic Resources of Meigs County,
Tennessee
(Partial Inventory: Historic and
Architectural Resources)

MEIGS COUNTY COURTHOUSE (#26)



1411.000



Historic Resources of Meigs County, TN. (Partial Inventory: Historic and Architectural Properties)

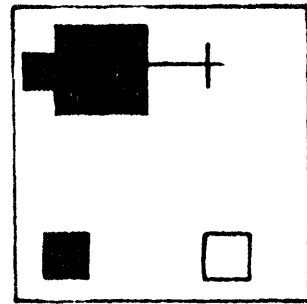
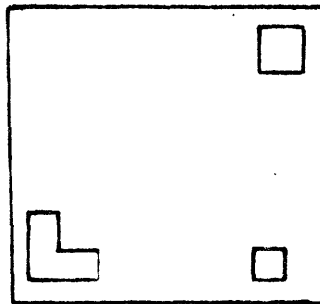
MAP #3

TOWN OF DECATUR

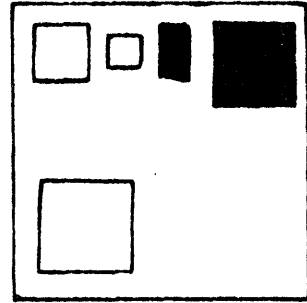
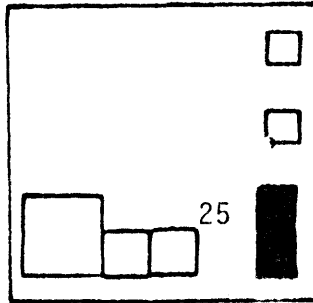
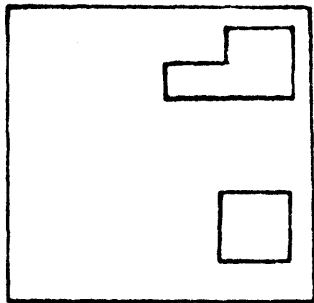
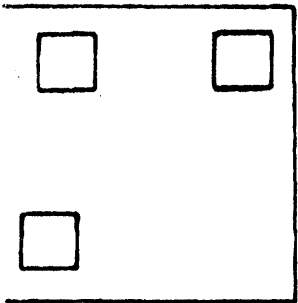
■ Structures Recorded During Survey

5
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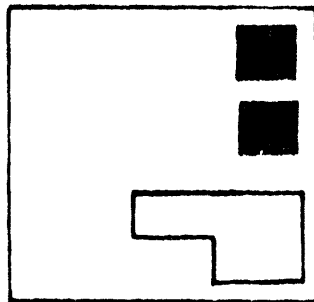
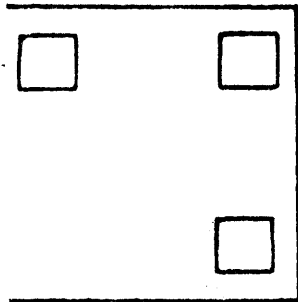
22 23



24



25



MEIGS CO.
26
COURT HOUSE

