

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

APR 6 1995

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions on how to complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name COCKE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 111 Court Avenue N/A not for publication

city or town Newport N/A vicinity

state Tennessee code TN county Cocke code 029 zip code 37821

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Herbert L. Hays 3/29/95  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission  
State of Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

Entered in the National Register 5/4/95  
Date of Action

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property (Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

- building(s), district, site, structure, object

Table with columns: Contributing, Noncontributing, buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total. Values: 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Historic County Courthouses of TN

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: courthouse

GOVERNMENT: courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

foundation CONCRETE, walls BRICK; CONCRETE

roof ASPHALT

other METAL

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheets.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- XX A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is: N/A

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

POLITICS/ GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1930-1945

Significant Dates

1930

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Manley and Young, architects; H. C. Fonde and Sons, contractors

Primary location of additional data: N/A

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

Cocke County Courthouse  
Name of Property

Newport, Cocke Co., TN  
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

NEWPORT, TN 173NW

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	7	3	0	3	0	0	0	3	9	8	2	2	5	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

  
2 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

3 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

  
4 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

  
 See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carroll Van West  
organization MTSU Center for Historic Preservation date August 30, 1994  
street & number PO Box 80, MTSU telephone 625-898-2947  
city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37132

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

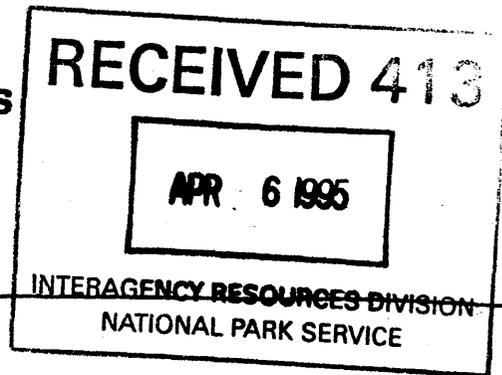
name Harold Cates, county executive  
street & number Cocke County Courthouse telephone 615-623-8791  
city or town Newport state TN zip code 37821

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1



Cocke County Courthouse, Newport, Cocke Co., TN

VII. DESCRIPTION

The Cocke County Courthouse faces the Norfolk Southern railroad tracks and East Main Street in Newport (pop. 7,123), the seat of Cocke County, Tennessee. This courthouse is the only one in Tennessee in such close proximity to a major railroad line. The three-story brick building, with a flat asphalt roof and concrete foundation, reflects the Colonial Revival style of architecture as is evident in its use of red brick, quoins, pediments, and symmetrical arrangement of elevations. Around the building wraps a concrete dentiled cornice, upon which rests an unadorned concrete parapet.

Designed and constructed in 1930, the building retains its original exterior architectural integrity, save for a small concrete recreation area for county prisoners that was added in about 1978 at the southwest corner of the building. Also in 1977-78, county officials approved the modernization of the interior. While most rooms retained their original size and original woodwork throughout the building was preserved, drop ceilings, modern air-conditioning and heating units, and the addition of carpet in the courtroom took place.

The north facade is composed of nine symmetrically arranged bays. Five bays are in the recessed center section of the building while each end of the facade, defined by parallel pairs of concrete quoins, is composed of two bays. The windows of these bays are highlighted by concrete lintels, with concrete keystones. The windows are 36 light casement windows, although some were altered between 1930 and 1977 as openings for individual air-conditioning units were cut into the windows. Due to the 1978 central air conditioning system, these windows once again have glass panes where the air-conditioning units were once located. A similar pattern of change can be seen in the windows and panes of the other elevations of the building.

The recessed center section of the north facade retains symmetry, despite a multiplicity of doors and windows. A series of five casement windows, with plain concrete lintels, define the third story of the building. The second and first story levels are defined by a frankly odd, but symmetrical, arrangement of doors and windows. The entrance has a modern metal security door and

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Cocke County Courthouse, Newport, Cocke Co., TN

transom, which date to about 1978. Surrounding the door is a plain concrete cornice, which rests on a concrete frieze with the words "COCKE COUNTY." This is supported by recessed concrete pilasters. On either side of the doorway are original metal colonial-style electrical lanterns. Flanking the doorway and exterior lights are two small eight light casement windows, highlighted with plain concrete lintels. The function of these small windows was to introduce more natural light into the first floor hallways leading to the central lobby of the building. Resting above the frieze and cornice is a fixed cottage-type of single pane window with a Colonial Revival style-inspired fanlight. Framing the window is a concrete arch window with keystone, which, in turn, is supported by flanking concrete consoles with volutes. Flanking the central bay doorway are Colonial Revival style-influenced windows, which somehow seem incomplete. The windows are framed by a brick round arch, with concrete keystone. But the original casement windows do not fill the entire space and the 48 light windows are topped by a wide, plain band of concrete which appears to serve the purpose of a lintel. The windows also rest on a wide band of concrete on which was inscribed a listing of county officials instrumental in the construction of the courthouse in 1930. Finally, on the first floor level, between the large Colonial Revival windows and the farthest most bay of the recessed center section, are matched original wooden panel doors, with original four light windows. The north facade also contains the handicapped entrance into the building. This is a concrete ramp, with metal handrails that connects with the original concrete stoop leading into the entrance door.

The east elevation is largely unchanged, except for the installation of a modern metal security door and a metal flat awning, with metal supports, over the entrance in about 1978. The east elevation contains seven symmetrically arranged bays, with concrete quoins defining each end of the elevation. The 24 light casement windows are highlighted by plain concrete lintels. A concrete stoop of seven steps leads to the entrance door, which is framed by concrete panels and topped by a plain cornice and frieze that contains the numbers "1930."

The south elevation contains nine symmetrically arranged bays. The two projecting end sections are defined by paired quoins and contain two bays in each section. The windows of these bays are 36 light casement windows, topped on the first and second story levels by concrete lintels with concrete keystones. The recessed

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Cocke County Courthouse, Newport, Cocke Co., TN

center section of the south elevation contains five bays. Here the arrangement is more direct than on the north facade. The first floor entrance contains a modern metal door and transom, added in about 1978. The doorway evokes Colonial Revival architecture with its concrete fluted pilasters supporting a broken Chippendale-influenced pediment that has a decorative pineapple, a motif found most often in the colonial period on domestic, not public, architecture. Flanking the doorway are original metal colonial-style lanterns. On each side of the first floor entrance are two pairs of 24-light casement windows, with each pair defined by a concrete lintel with keystone. The second and third story levels are defined by five large Colonial Revival style-influenced windows, each highlighted by a concrete round arch with keystone. Like in the Perry County Courthouse, these windows provide exterior light for the courtroom.

The west elevation is largely similar to the east elevation in its quoins and symmetrical arrangement of three stories of casement windows. However, this elevation, on the third floor, contains a modern security door that leads from the jail, down a metal mesh covered staircase to a small concrete walled exercise area for prisoners. This addition was part of the 1978 renovations of the courthouse. A large tree partially obscures the view of the concrete addition from the south elevation, but the addition is clearly visible from the west elevation.

The interior plan of the Cocke County County is based on the cruciform, with the interior hallways on the first floor intersecting at the center of the building and creating a central lobby from which access to the staircase for the second floor is obtained. During a 1977-78 renovation of the courthouse, designed by Community Tectonics, Inc., as the architects and executed by Roy D. Brown, contractor, drop ceilings were added and new ceilings contained new florescent light fixtures as well as the central heat and air system for the building. In the lobby, the renovation also resurfaced the walls to give them a more decorative rough stucco appearance. Otherwise, the renovations on the first floor retained many of the buildings original features, including door frames, doors, the linoleum over concrete flooring, and original room configuration. From the central lobby looking south are original dual staircases, with metal balusters, leading to the second floor. A central hallway passes through the first floor on a east-west axis. On

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

---

Cocke County Courthouse, Newport, Cocke Co., TN

the east end of the hallway are the offices of the property assessor, county court clerk, a women's restroom, and a storage closet. On the west end are offices for the county trustee, sheriff, chancery court, probate court, a men's restroom, and another closet.

The interiors of these offices contain the original tile flooring and original wall treatments; the drop ceilings were added in each office, even the men's restroom. New service windows were added for the trustee's office. A faux pine partition was added only in the county clerk office.

The second floor contains the courtroom, basically in the center of this level. Outside of the courtroom is a small lobby where benches have been placed for public seating. In the courtroom, the drop ceilings cover part of the exterior light once provided by the large Colonial Revival style-influenced windows. Carpet has been added and a modern judicial bench and new furniture for the attorneys were installed during the 1977-78 renovations. However, the room still contains several original features, especially the wood paneled walls behind the judicial bench and extending around the interior wall to the jury box. Centered on the east interior wall of the courtroom, directly over the judicial bench, is an original broken pediment, again with the pineapple motif. On the opposite end of the courtroom, on the west interior wall, are four symmetrically located wooden panels. The original public benches in this courtroom also remain in place.

A U-shaped hallway surrounds the courtroom. On the west end of the second floor are offices for the circuit court clerk and staff, the general sessions court, the county election commission, and a women's restroom. These rooms contain original tile floors and wall treatments, except for the circuit court clerk where a decorative wallpaper border defines the cornice of the room. On the east end are offices for the county extension agent, the general sessions court, the juvenile court, the jury room, and an access to the jail. These rooms contain the original tile flooring and wall treatment. No partitions have been added in the second floor offices. Another access to the jail is at the central staircase where a locked jail door provides access to the third floor where the jail quarters, other law enforcement offices, and storage are located.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

---

Cocke County Courthouse, Newport, Cocke Co., TN

One non-contributing object is located on the courthouse grounds. A war memorial monument, erected in 1967 by the Business Women's Club of Newport, stands near the southwest corner of the courthouse (NC, due to date).

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

---

Cocke County Courthouse, Newport, Cocke Co., TN.

### VIII. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Cocke County Courthouse, located at the intersection of Court and East Main streets in Newport, Tennessee, is a locally significant property eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with politics and government in Cocke County. It is nominated under the registration requirements for County Courthouses set forth in the Multiple Property Documentation form for Historic County Courthouses in Tennessee, 1865-1945.

The Tennessee General Assembly established Cocke County in 1797, but Newport did not emerge as the permanent county seat until after the Civil War when the town was platted and developed as a symmetrically planned railroad town by the Cincinnati, Cumberland Gap, and Charleston Railroad. The railroad reached the townsite in 1868, and due to pressure from railroad officials and interested capitalists, the county seat was moved from near the French Broad River (Old New Port) to the bluffs overlooking the river (the new town of Clifton, later Newport). After a fire destroyed the courthouse in 1876, the county seat returned to an earlier 1828 brick courthouse at Old New Port on the river.

Here county government remained until 1884 when a new \$10,000 brick courthouse was constructed. The emergence of Newport as permanent county seat was closely involved with the financial and industrial schemes of a group of British, American, and Canadian investors, headed by A. A. Arthur, who formed the Scottish Carolina Timber and Land Company, Limited. The Western North Carolina Railroad, by 1882, had finally finished the Appalachian section of the railroad through Cocke County and now the region contained a modern transportation corridor linking it to both Knoxville and Asheville. These businessmen engineered the permanent return of the county seat to Newport as part of their developmental schemes for the city and region. The new courthouse was located at the intersection of Court and East Main Streets, along the railroad tracks. Interestingly, it was not located at the center of the downtown commercial district; that place was reserved for the railroad depot, an unmistakable sign of the power of the new capitalists compared to that of the local government.

To meet the needs of progressive government, county officials in

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

---

Cocke County Courthouse, Newport, Cocke Co., TN

1930 decided to build a new and much larger courthouse at that same intersection of Court and East Main streets. They engaged the Knoxville architectural firm of Manley and Young to design the new building in the then-popular style of Colonial Revival. This is the only Manley and Young courthouse in Tennessee. The exterior of the courthouse remains one of the most impressive Colonial Revival statements among Tennessee courthouses. The contractors were H.C. Fonde and Sons.

Like other Tennessee courthouses constructed in the 1920s and 1930s, the new building represented the trends toward centralization and progressive reform found in general in Tennessee politics and government in the early twentieth century. Rather than separating the sheriff and jail in other buildings, as was typical in the nineteenth century, the new building provided space for the county jail on the third floor of the building. On the second floor was an office suite for the county extension agent, another important agent of governmental reform and progressivism during the early twentieth century.

Constructed as the Great Depression began to make its heavy hand felt on the people of Cocke County, the new building became a source of community pride and renewal as county officials worked with state, then federal, officials to provide relief and reform. The county court, during the 1930s, made decisions to provide local support (however grudgingly) and land for the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Cherokee National Forest. The commissioners supported the construction of the ambitious Foothills Parkway project and approved county expenditures for the upgrading and improvement of U.S. Highway 70, the county's primary connection then to the rest of the state. The courthouse also became the headquarters for New Deal officials working in Cocke County, especially the Works Progress Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps. During World War II, the county was a center for homefront activity. War bond drives were announced here and the grounds became a collecting point for the different scrap drives. The local draft board also met at the county courthouse. From 1933 to 1945, the county court also had to periodically deal with issues related to the impact of the Tennessee Valley Authority in the region, especially during the early 1940s and the construction of Douglas Dam. The dam impounded the French Broad River and part of its reservoir spilled into Cocke County, dislocating families, county

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

---

Cocke County Courthouse, Newport, Cocke Co., TN

roads, and county services. Like other courthouses in Tennessee constructing during the Great Depression era, the Cocke County Courthouse was where a general shift in government--greater federal and state impact over local affairs displaced local governmental authority--took place.

Historian Wilma Dykeman gave a persuasive, and graphic, description of the meaning of their courthouses to people of this region in her 1955 book The French Broad:

The courthouse sits near the center of town. It is the nerve center of every county seat along the French Broad. Its floors are worn by the shuffling feet, its walls are stained with the lounging backs, its corridors are dingy with the smoke of all the swarming human life centered in its books of record and departments of health and road and welfare--and its courts of law. Belonging to no one, it belongs to everyone. Impersonal as a tool or weapon, it is also as personal as hate and murder. Above all, it is a smell. The smell of many people through many years of heat and cold, the smoke-soaked clothes speaking of airless grease-spattered rooms. Sweat and tobacco and wholesale disinfectant, stale air saturated into every crevice, a human composite as impossible to communicate to an outsider as to escape if you are an insider.

In this building, at the beginning of every quarter year, the dramas that have dragged to weary denouement or blazed to tragic climax in country coves and town's back streets repeat themselves, to be weighed in the scales of impartial justice. And the French Broad country, being still a region of individuals where a person is more interested in two neighbors' argument over a dog than some journalized account of distant conflicts, still boasts a generous turnout for court days. (228-229)

The Cocke County Courthouse remains a center for community pride and civic respect in Newport; it is a distinguished central element of the downtown urban landscape of this East Tennessee town.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 9

---

Cocke County Courthouse, Newport, Cocke Co., TN

## IX. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cocke County County Court Records, 1930, 1977-78.

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

Dykeman, Wilma. The French Broad. New York: Holt Rhinehart,  
1955.

Godshalk, Rolfe F., ed. Newport. Newport, TN: private, 1970.

Goodspeed, Weston A., ed. History of Tennessee. Nashville:  
Goodspeed Publishers, 1887.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 10

---

Cocke County Courthouse, Newport, Cocke Co., TN

### X. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

#### Verbal Boundary Description

The Cocke County Courthouse is at the intersection of Court Street and East Main Street in Newport, located on city lot 4 documented in the attached Cocke County Tax Map 47-N.

#### Boundary Description

The nominated boundaries contain all of the historic property associated with the Cocke County Courthouse.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number PHOTOS Page 11

---

Cocke County Courthouse, Newport, Cocke Co., TN

## PHOTOGRAPHS

Cocke County Courthouse, Newport, TN

Photos by: Carroll Van West

MTSU Center for Historic Preservation

Date: December 1993

Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission  
Nashville, TN

North facade, facing southeast  
1 of 18

North facade, facing southeast  
2 of 18

East elevation, facing west  
3 of 18

East elevation and south elevation, facing northwest  
4 of 18

South elevation, facing north  
5 of 18

South elevation, detail, facing north  
6 of 18

West elevation, facing east  
7 of 18

Central lobby, first floor, facing south  
8 of 18

First floor hallway, facing west  
9 of 18

West staircase, from second floor to first floor, facing south  
10 of 18

Courtroom lobby, staircase, second floor, facing west  
11 of 18

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number PHOTOS Page 12

---

Cocke County Courthouse, Newport, Cocke Co., TN :

Second floor hallway, facing south  
12 of 18

Courtroom, second floor, facing east  
13 of 18

Courtroom, second floor, facing west  
14 of 18

Staircase to jail, third floor, facing west  
15 of 18

County clerk office entrance, first floor, facing west  
16 of 18

Jail entrance, facing west  
17 of 18

War memorial monument, facing north  
18 of 18

