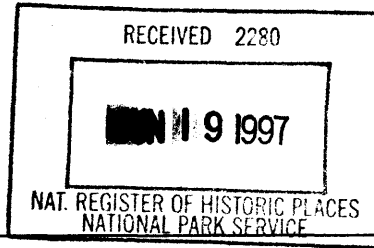


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



796

1. Name of Property

historic name: Rankin County Courthouse

other name/site number:

2. Location

street & number: 301 Town Square

N/A not for publication

city or town: Brandon

N/A vicinity

state Mississippi code MS county Rankin code 121 zip code 39042

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

*Kenneth H. P. Paul*

JUNE 12, 1997

Signature of certifying official

Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

State or 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 commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this 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):

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

*Michael M. ...*

8/1/97

Rankin County Courthouse  
Name of Property

Rankin, MS  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property:** public-local

**Number of Resources within Property:**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

**Category of Property:** building(s)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing:** Architectural & Historic Resources in Brandon, MS

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:** 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions:** GOVERNMENT Sub: courthouse

**Current Functions:** GOVERNMENT Sub: courthouse

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification:**

Classical Revival

Other Description:

**Materials**

foundation BRICK  
roof TERRA COTTA  
walls BRICK  
other

**Narrative Description**

See continuation sheets.

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

**Areas of Significance**

- 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.

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1924-25

**Significant Dates**

1924-25

**Criteria Considerations**

Property is:

- 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.

**Significant Persons**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Overstreet, Noah Webster, Sr.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

See continuation sheets.

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

**Bibliography**

See continuation sheet.

**Previous Documentation on File (NPS):** N/A

**Primary Location of Additional Data:**

- 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  
# \_\_\_\_\_

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

Name of repository:

MS. Dept. of Archives & History

Rankin County Courthouse  
Name of Property

Rankin, MS  
County and State

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**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property: 1.00

USGS Quad Map Name:

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>16</u>	<u>218700</u>	<u>3574480</u>	3	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
2	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	4	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

     See continuation sheet.

**Verbal Boundary Description:** See continuation sheet.

**Boundary Justification:** See continuation sheet.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title:	John Linn Hopkins & Marsha R. Oates		
organization:	Hopkins & Associates	date:	March 1997
street & number:	974 Philadelphia Street	telephone:	(901) 278-5186
city or town:	Memphis	state:	TN
		zip code:	38104

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**Property Owner**

name:	Rankin County		
street & number:	301 Town Square	telephone:	(601) 825-1475
city or town:	Brandon	state:	MS
		zip code:	39042

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Rankin County Courthouse  
Brandon, Rankin County, MS

Section number 7 Page 1

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### 7. Narrative Description

The Rankin County Courthouse, designed by Noah Webster Overstreet, Sr. and built in 1924-5, is a three story brick building in the Classical Revival style. The courthouse is situated at the front of an elongated block on a small rise, facing the Town Square. A lawn, intersected by concrete sidewalks parallel and at right angles to the building, is defined by a low wall with a run of stairs leading to a parking area below. A cast iron fence with spearhead-tipped palings and gateposts with ball finials sits atop the wall. A planting area between the parking lot and the wall has several large oak trees, and the courthouse has large foundation plantings. A stone cenotaph commemorating the veterans of the First and Second World Wars is located on the lawn, in the center of the south façade.

The courthouse is the only monumental building in the town center. Although the building was expanded to the rear in 1974, the main block of the courthouse retains a high degree of architectural integrity.

The main façade of the courthouse faces south and is symmetrical, consisting of a three story, five bay yellow brick central block flanked on the east and west by two story, three bay brick blocks, all rising from a light masonry podium. The building has a hipped roof covered with terra cotta tiles. The roof extends to form deep eaves on all sides.

The major entrances are in projecting flat bays on the east and west ends of the central block. Each of the two entrances is surrounded by a two story, light masonry architrave with a keystone. The double leaf, single light doors have a lintel terminating in large modillions supporting a cornice with a metal balustrade which appears to form a small balcony, although there are no doors at the second floor. Between the projecting end bays is a two story, three bay fenestrated arcade with brick spandrel panels laid in header coursing. Each of the three arches is delineated by a course of light masonry with a keystone. The central arch has cartouches on either side at the second story. An architrave, banded top and bottom with light masonry and filled with a red brick soldier course interspersed with rosettes on square bases, spans the arcade. A light masonry belt course extends across the five bays of the central block, separating the two lower floors from the attic, which has a seven bay central block with projecting flat bays at the east and west ends. Each of the attic end bays has a terra cotta panel depicting the scales of justice in low relief.

The two story east and west end blocks have three bays whose fenestration is defined by a panel consisting stack bond brick on the east and west sides and a soldier course lintel. Running bond brick piers flank the center windows. Each of the windows has a brick spandrel panel laid in header coursing beneath its sill.

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Rankin County Courthouse  
Brandon, Rankin County, MS

Section number   7   Page   2  

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### 7. Narrative Description, continued

Most of the windows on the first two floors are double hung sash in several configurations. The attic has side-hinged, six light, double leaf casement windows under four light transoms on the main facade.

The major interior spaces on the ground floor are defined by three hallways: one parallel to the south façade, extending from the east to the west side entrances, and two corridors which intersect the south hall at right angles, extending from the south front entrances to rear entrances on the north. Both the north and south sections of the western hall have been enclosed to provide office space. The interior was remodeled in 1974 and little remains of the original finish materials.

Stairs on the east and west ends of the south hall lead to the second floor courtroom and its auxiliary spaces. The courtroom has been greatly modified; but it retains its original railing between the judge, jury, and counselors' area and the seating area for the audience. Large modillions support a plain architrave above the judge's area. The original balcony has been enclosed by a solid wall and is no longer visible from the lower area of the courtroom.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Rankin County Courthouse  
Brandon, Rankin County, MS

Section number 8 Page 3

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### 8. Narrative Statement of Significance

The Rankin County Courthouse, built in 1924-5 and designed by Noah Webster Overstreet, Sr., is nominated under Criterion C for architecture as a locally important work of early twentieth century Classical Revival architecture. It is a well executed and well maintained example of the classical style civic structures built throughout Mississippi during the first quarter of the present century. It is the most monumental and the only high style civic building in the county and is the major architectural landmark in the town of Brandon.

Rankin County has had five courthouses since the county was formed in 1828. The present courthouse is the second to be located on this site. A Neoclassical, temple form, two story, distyle-in-antis courthouse with a cupola was built in 1853. It burned in 1924 and the existing building was constructed that same year.

Because of the pervasive influence of the *École des Beaux Arts* on architecture during the early years of the twentieth century, many civic buildings in the United States, including Mississippi, were designed in the Classical Revival idiom. The New State Capitol, built in 1903, and approximately 30 county courthouses built during the first quarter of this century were of some variation of Classical Revival design. The Rankin County Courthouse is Classically inspired although not literally derived from a specific Classical example. Its symmetrical form and incorporation of elements such as an arcade, monumental entries with consoles and balconies, cartouches, and sculptural panels, show strong Classical influence. Although the interior was renovated and additions made to the rear in 1974, the building, particularly the exterior of the original structure, retains a high degree of architectural integrity.

Noah Webster Overstreet, Sr. (1888-1973), one of Mississippi's most notable and prolific architects, designed the Rankin County Courthouse. Overstreet, a Mississippi native, received a B. S. degree in Mechanical Engineering from the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Mississippi in 1908. He also received a B. S. degree in Architectural Engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana in 1910. He worked in Urbana for two years as an architectural engineer. In 1912, he moved to Jackson where, in association with R. B. Spencer, he established the architectural office of Overstreet and Spencer. His firm was known as Overstreet and Associates from 1918 until 1930, when he and A. Hays Town formed a partnership which lasted until 1938; Overstreet and Associates from 1938 until 1954; Overstreet, Ware and Ware from 1954 to 1965; and Overstreet, Ware, Ware, and Lewis from 1965 to 1968, when Overstreet retired.

Overstreet's practice consisted primarily of institutional projects (schools, churches, hospitals, courthouses). Overstreet designed the courthouses for several Mississippi counties, including

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Rankin County Courthouse  
Brandon, Rankin County, MS

Section number 8 Page 4

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### Narrative Statement of Significance, continued

Alcorn (Corinth, 1918), Bolivar (Rosedale, 1923 and Cleveland, 1924), Harrison (Biloxi, 1908 and Gulfport, 1917), Pontotoc (Pontotoc, 1918) and Webster (Walthall, 1915). He also designed corporate office buildings and had a large residential clientele. His firm was responsible for more than 650 projects in the course of his career.

Overstreet's early works were of Classical Revival derivation, but by the mid-1920s he was noted for his Moderne/Art Deco designs. He was a sponsor of legislation to license architects practicing in the state, served several terms as president of the Mississippi Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and was elected a Fellow of the AIA.



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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Rankin County Courthouse  
Brandon, Rankin County, MS

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### 9. Major Bibliographical References for the Rankin County Courthouse

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**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Rankin County Courthouse  
Brandon, Rankin County, MS

Section number   10   Page   6  

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## **10. Geographical Data**

### **Verbal Boundary Description**

See accompanying scale map.

### **Boundary Justification**

The boundaries include the block that is historically associated with the courthouse.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Rankin County Courthouse  
Brandon, Rankin County, MS

Section number photo Page 7

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### Photograph List

Rankin County Courthouse  
301 Town Square  
Brandon, Rankin County, MS

Photos by: John Linn Hopkins  
Date: March, 1997  
Negatives: Mississippi Department of Archives and History

#### Photo 1 of 10

View of the front (south) and side (west) facades of the Rankin County Courthouse looking northeast.

#### Photo 2 of 10

View of the front gate and fence surrounding the Rankin County Courthouse.

#### Photo 3 of 10

View of the center block of the front (south) facade of the courthouse looking generally north.

#### Photo 4 of 10

View of the side (west) facade of the courthouse, looking generally northeast.

#### Photo 5 of 10

View of the side (east) facade of the courthouse, looking generally west.

#### Photo 6 of 10

View of the interior corridors from the front (south) doors at the crossing of the main corridors, revealing some of the original interior trim and tile floors.

#### Photo 7 of 10

View of the east-west corridor of the first floor.

#### Photo 8 of 10

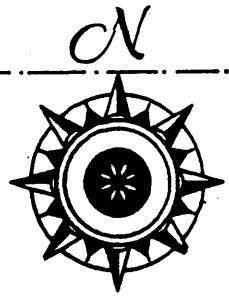
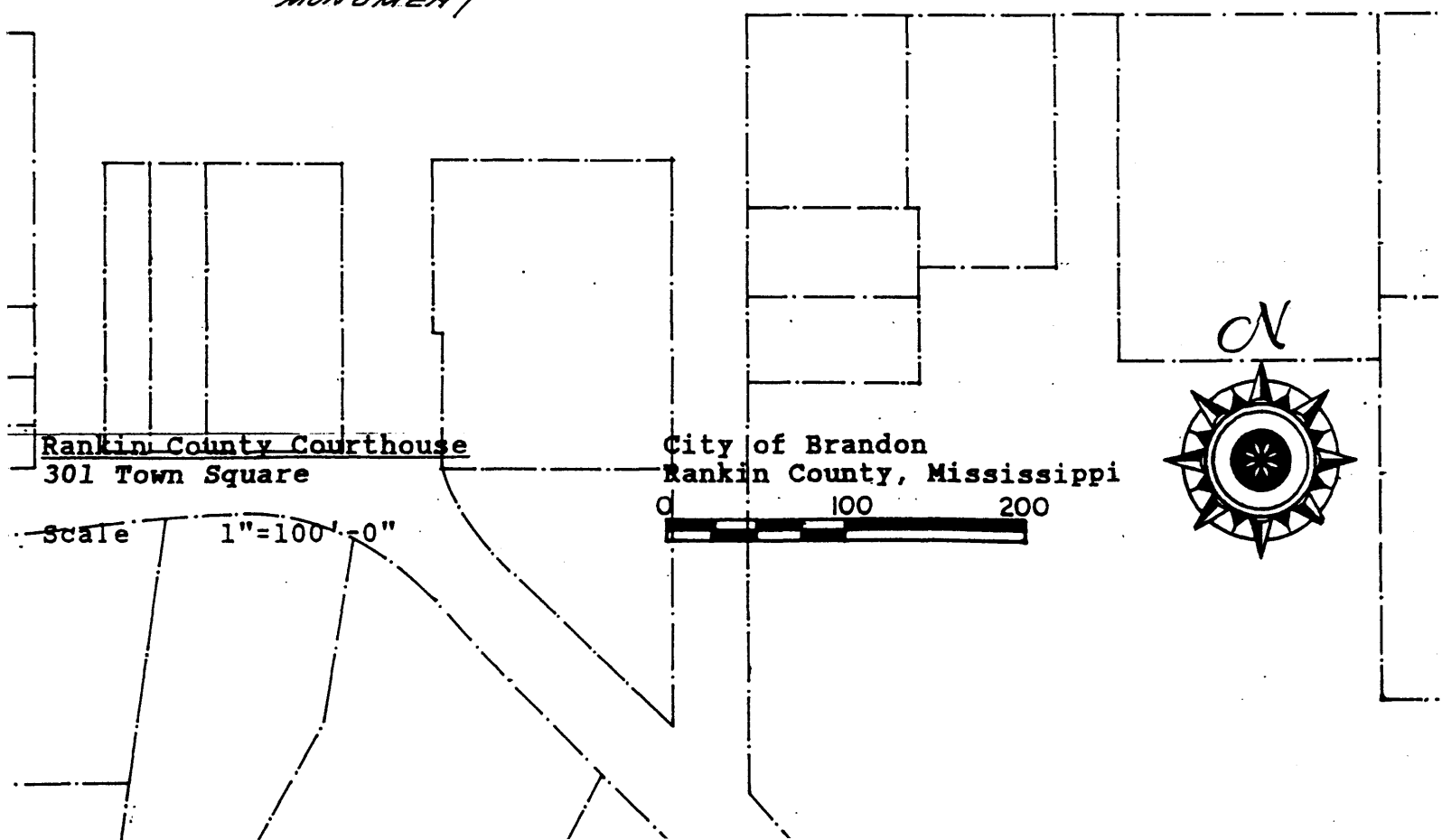
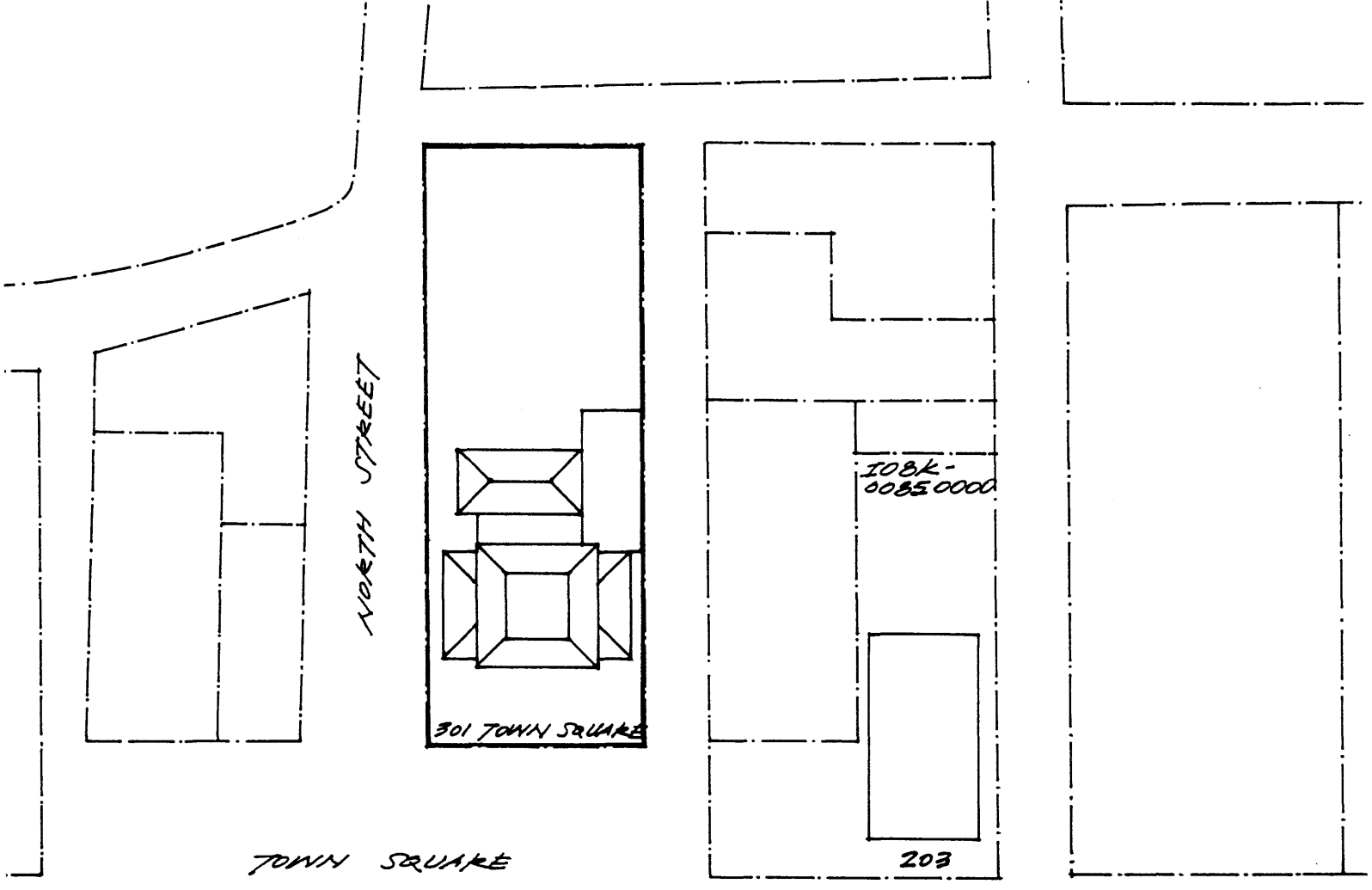
Detail of the stair rails and window trim.

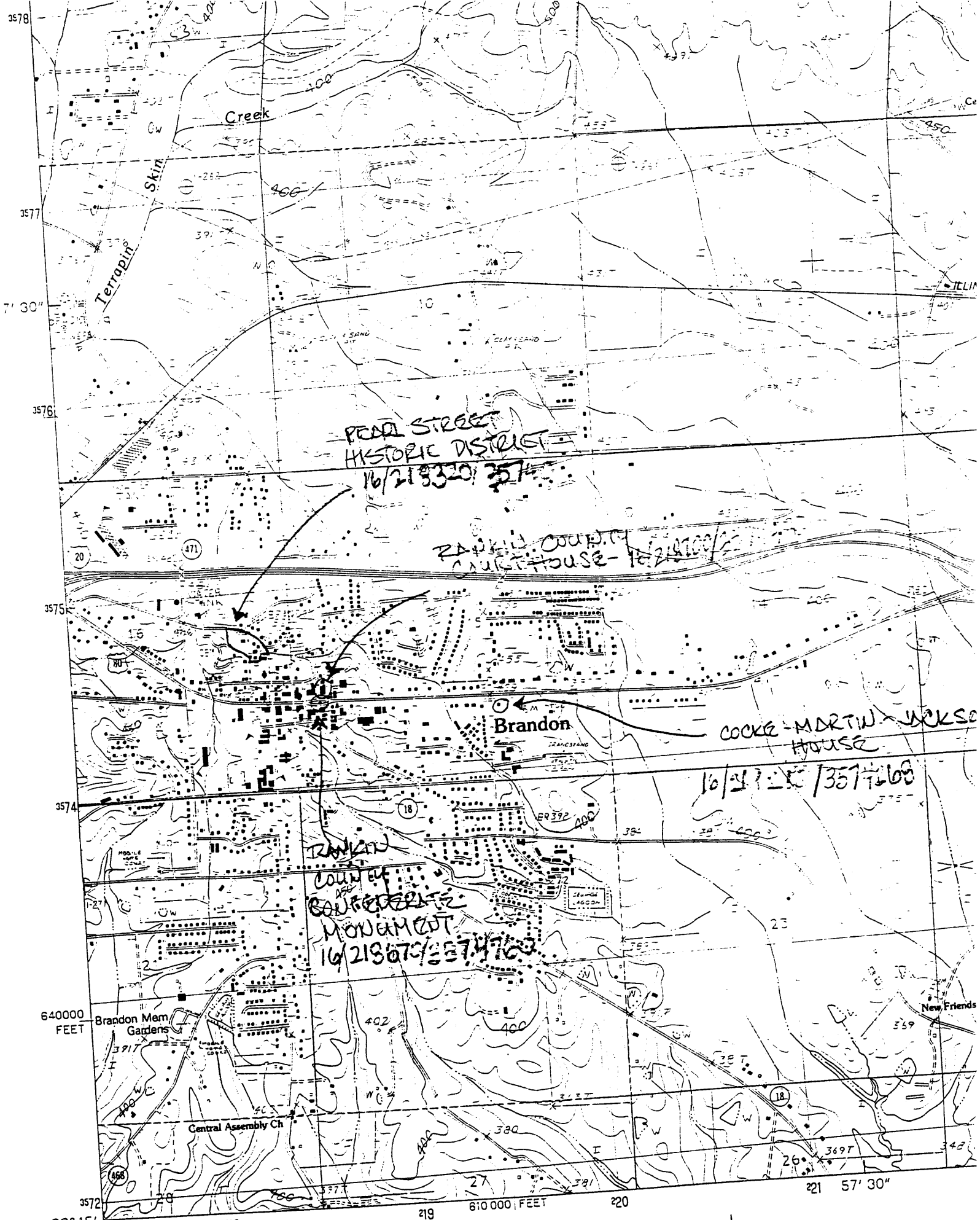
#### Photo 9 of 10

General view of the second floor courtroom.

#### Photo 10 of 10

Detailed view of the bar railing, jury box and other details of the second floor courtroom.





POND STREET  
HISTORIC DISTRICT  
16/218320/357450

RANDOLPH COUNTY  
COURTHOUSE - 16/218320/357450

COCKE-MARTIN HOUSE  
16/218320/357450

RANDOLPH  
COUNTY  
COURTHOUSE  
MONUMENT  
16/218320/357450

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Rankin County Courthouse  
Brandon, Rankin County, MS

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## 7. Narrative Description

The Rankin County Courthouse, designed by Noah Webster Overstreet, Sr. and built in 1924-5, is a three story brick building in the Classical Revival style. The courthouse is situated at the front of an elongated block on a small rise, facing the Town Square. A lawn, intersected by concrete sidewalks parallel and at right angles to the building, is defined by a low wall with a run of stairs leading to a parking area below. A cast iron fence with spearhead-tipped palings and gateposts with ball finials sits atop the wall. A planting area between the parking lot and the wall has several large oak trees, and the courthouse has large foundation plantings. A stone cenotaph commemorating the veterans of the First and Second World Wars is located on the lawn, in the center of the south façade.

The courthouse is the only monumental building in the town center. Although the building was expanded to the rear in ca. 1955 and 1974, the main block of the courthouse retains a high degree of architectural integrity.

The main façade of the courthouse faces south and is symmetrical, consisting of a three story, five bay yellow brick central block flanked on the east and west by two story, three bay brick blocks, all rising from a light masonry podium. The building has a hipped roof covered with terra cotta tiles. The roof extends to form deep eaves on all sides.

The major entrances are in projecting flat bays on the east and west ends of the central block. Each of the two entrances is surrounded by a two story, light masonry architrave with a keystone. The double leaf, single light doors have a lintel terminating in large modillions supporting a cornice with a metal balustrade which appears to form a small balcony, although there are no doors at the second floor. Between the projecting end bays is a two story, three bay fenestrated arcade with brick spandrel panels laid in header coursing. Each of the three arches is delineated by a course of light masonry with a keystone. The central arch has cartouches on either side at the second story. An architrave, banded top and bottom with light masonry and filled with a red brick soldier course interspersed with rosettes on square bases, spans the arcade. A light masonry belt course extends across the five bays of the central block, separating the two lower floors from the attic, which has a seven bay central block with projecting flat bays at the east and west ends. Each of the attic end bays has a terra cotta panel depicting the scales of justice in low relief.

The two story east and west end blocks have three bays whose fenestration is defined by a panel consisting stack bond brick on the east and west sides and a soldier course lintel. Running bond brick piers flank the center windows. Each of the windows has a brick spandrel panel laid in header coursing beneath its sill.

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National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Rankin County Courthouse  
Brandon, Rankin County, MS

Section number 7 Page 2

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**7. Narrative Description, continued**

Most of the windows on the first two floors are double hung sash in several configurations. The attic has side-hinged, six light, double leaf casement windows under four light transoms on the main facade.

The major interior spaces on the ground floor are defined by three hallways: one parallel to the south façade, extending from the east to the west side entrances, and two corridors which intersect the south hall at right angles, extending from the south front entrances to rear entrances on the north. Both the north and south sections of the western hall have been enclosed to provide office space. The interior was remodeled in 1974 and little remains of the original finish materials.

Stairs on the east and west ends of the south hall lead to the second floor courtroom and its auxiliary spaces. The courtroom has been greatly modified; but it retains its original railing between the judge, jury, and counselors' area and the seating area for the audience. Large modillions support a plain architrave above the judge's area. The original balcony has been enclosed by a solid wall and is no longer visible from the lower area of the courtroom.

Major additions were made to the courthouse in ca. 1955 and 1974 with the addition of successive office and jail wings running north from the northeast corner of the courthouse building. The ca. 1955 addition is a two-story, flat roofed, reinforced concrete frame structure with brick veneer, of nine bays in depth. Windows are four and five light jalousie sashes, arranged in singles and pairs. The 1974 jail addition steps down the hill from the courthouse and stands three stories tall and runs ten bays deep. The building is a reinforced concrete frame structure covered with brick and cast stone veneers. Window bays project slightly to accommodate metal screen panels, which add security to the two-slight fixed sash windows set back behind the screens. Each window bay features an arch in relief to the cast stone panels at the parapet.

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A note regarding the architectural style of the Rankin County courthouse

Richard J. Cawthon, Chief Architectural Historian, Mississippi Department of Archives and History

When this nomination was brought up for consideration by the Mississippi Historic Preservation Professional Review Board, there was some discussion about the proper identification of the architectural style, and some further remarks about the stylistic character of the building were requested.

While the basic architectural vocabulary of the building is Classical Revival, it exhibits a very free and eclectic approach to classicism that was often seen in Mississippi County Courthouses built in the 1920s. The tan brick walls, the terra cotta tile hipped roof with its broad eaves, and the prominent arches across the facade are all features often associated with the Italian Renaissance Revival architecture of the 1910s and 20s, although this building does not display an academic or historical approach to that style. To call it Classical Revival is not incorrect, but it would be more accurate to say that it exhibits an informal interpretation of the Italian Renaissance Revival style.