

PH#364720

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED OCT 27 1976

DATE ENTERED APR 11 1977

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

* HISTORIC
Henry County Courthouse, Jail, and Warden's ^{House} Residence

AND/OR COMMON

Same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Courthouse Square

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

New Castle

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

06

STATE

Kentucky

CODE

021

COUNTY

Henry

CODE

103

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

 DISTRICT BUILDING(S) STRUCTURE SITE OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

 PUBLIC PRIVATE BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

 IN PROCESS BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

 OCCUPIED UNOCCUPIED WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

 YES: RESTRICTED YES: UNRESTRICTED NO

PRESENT USE

 AGRICULTURE COMMERCIAL EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL MILITARY MUSEUM PARK PRIVATE RESIDENCE RELIGIOUS SCIENTIFIC TRANSPORTATION OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Henry County Fiscal Court

STREET & NUMBER

Henry County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

New Castle

VICINITY OF

STATE

Kentucky

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Henry County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

New Castle

STATE

Kentucky

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky (Supplement)

DATE

1975

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Kentucky Heritage Commission

CITY, TOWN

Frankfort

STATE

Kentucky

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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

The small town of New Castle is located on a prominent rise, with the courthouse and jail being the focal point of the community. The tall mansard roof of the clock tower soars above the surrounding buildings and trees and is visible from all four major routes as one approaches the town.

The courthouse is a six-bay, two-story, brick structure on a rusticated stone foundation that rises about two feet above ground level. Two-story wings, that are set back, extend off the north and south sides of the large central block with the stone jail and brick jailer's residence extending off the rear of the main section forming a "T" shape. Narrow brick interior chimneys are placed along the side and end of the central portion. A bracketed cornice extends around the main block and the wings.

The front entrance of the structure is centered in the facade and is composed of double doors with a large round-arched transom above. The entrance is sheltered by a small one-story porch supported by two belted columns on round cut-stone blocks, with square pilasters against the wall. The round arch of the transom is reflected on the second-story facade in the large arches which frame the openings formed by three rows of headers, with the third row projecting forward the width of a header. In each arch there are two long narrow round-arched windows with four-over-four pane sash and a circular opening centered above them. Brick pilasters capped with stone are located at the corners and between each bay. A narrow strip of stone and a course of raised brick, just below the top of the windows and directly below them, run horizontally across the front. Stone blocks with concentric circles interrupt the pilasters between the first and second floors. The windows on the first floor are long and narrow rectangular openings with flat stone lintels and narrow stone sills. Above the first floor openings are three courses of corbelled brick which connect the pilasters. The fenestration on the sides of the main block is the same as the front. The windows in the wings are the same as those in the facade, although they are placed singly rather than paired. Sometime in the early 20th century, a one-bay, two-story addition was made to the end of the north wing.

Centered above the central bay of the facade and the east wing are shallow pediments. Rising behind the pediment in the facade is the full bell tower, with four identical sides. It rests on a cubic base with applied brackets and a row of five circular louvered vents above. A round clock face is centered in a panel and flanked by pilasters. Crowning the clock panel is a triangular pediment. There are squat urns in the corners at the base of the clock stage. The tower itself is capped by a tall, slightly rounded mansard roof and a decorative iron cresting. The indented corners of the tower reflect those of the main blocks below.

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 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 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. 1875

BUILDER/ARCHITECT McDonald Brothers

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Henry County Courthouse, erected about 1875 and dominating the small rural county seat of New Castle, is not only the focal point of the community's life, but is also an architectural monument in its own right. It is the first known major work in Kentucky by H. P. McDonald, head of the prominent and prolific Louisville, Kentucky, architectural firm of McDonald Brothers.

The Henry County Courthouse appears to represent an early working of the McDonald Brothers' standard formula for county courthouses which they provided for innumerable courts in Kentucky and the Southeast during the 1880s. Although not fully developed in terms of this standard type, the Henry County design perhaps has more visual appeal, with its vestigial Italianate and Second Empire features, than its more severe (and no doubt economical) successors. The jail, embedded between the back of the courthouse and the jailer's residence, also seems transitional: one of those experiments that is not followed up, but suggests a road that could have been taken. Both inside and out, the courthouse and jail remain relatively unaltered and still functional.

Henry County is situated in the north central portion of the State and is composed of rich undulating farmland. Its eastern boundary is formed by the Kentucky River and the northern boundary is about twelve miles south of the Ohio River. The county, named after the renowned Virginia statesman and orator, Patrick Henry, was established in 1798 out of Shelby County. In 1823 and 1836 Oldham and Trimble Counties were formed out of parts of Henry.

The first Henry County Courthouse was built in New Castle in 1799, near the present site of the courthouse. It was a frame structure consisting of four or five rooms in a row with a jail attached. The original structure was replaced in 1804. It was not until 1817, however, that the town of New Castle, the county seat, was incorporated. New Castle was ideally located in the center of the county at the intersection of all the major routes that traverse the county.

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The floor plan to the courthouse consists of cross-axial halls. The floor in the main hallways is composed of rust, gray, and ivory tiles with a few bright blue tiles in the center. Castiron stairways are located at the end of the central hall and the north and south halls. They are labeled "Snead and Bibb, Louisville, Kentucky" on the treads. Handsome castiron rosettes decorate the stringers. The original castiron mantels remain in almost all the offices. In several rooms the original high wainscoting survives. The courtroom, located on the second floor, has been modernized in recent years, but it retains the original iron railing that separates the bench and jury from the rest of the room.

Extending off the rear of the main block of the courthouse to the east is a two-story jail. The second story is brick and the first floor is made with rough-surfaced vertical stone slabs spaced apart, leaving long narrow openings. Centered high in the south wall of the jail is a stone with the names of the town trustees, the builder, and the architect, as well as the date of construction inscribed in it. The two-story brick jailer's residence which runs in a north-south direction is to the rear of the jail, forming a "T" shape. The jailer's house has two-over-two pane sash with stone lintels and sills. A large bracketed cornice extends around the jail and the house.

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Evidently the second courthouse burned in the early 1870s. The present structure was built in its place about 1875. The associated jail has on one of its rough stone walls a plaque that, as far as can be deciphered, reads:

Erected 187^[6]
Building Comm
W. R. Vance ^[?] Gray
C. H. Scott A. Jones
W. W. Rowlett W. Turk
W. S. Emmons
H. P. McDonald Peter Pfeiffer
Architect Builder

The only known earlier work by McDonald is the tiny Owen County jail in the county just east of Henry, erected in 1874 (listed on the National Register with the Greek Revival Courthouse on May 6, 1976). It is a modest Italianate structure with bracketed cornice and shallow-arched bracketed openings. In contrast, the Henry County Courthouse is an extraordinarily ambitious design that probably set an entirely new scale and stylistic pattern for Kentucky courthouses. Even the jail is far more effective an expression of the ideas of force and security than the Owen County design.

The Henry County Courthouse has a residual Italianate character in the rather inadequate bracketed cornice, the narrow pediments, and the shallow pilasters. The round-arched features of the second-story windows are particularly interesting: not only do they suggest a Tuscan or Lombard Romanesque inspiration, but they also present a challenge to the brick layer that the cost-conscious McDonald Brothers were soon to abandon. All the other known courthouses by the firm in Kentucky, most of which date from the 1880s, rely primarily on square-headed openings capped by an ingenious rectangular adaptation of the hoodmold. Naturally, this presents much less of a problem for the mason than the centered arches and the roundels in New Castle. As a result, however, the Henry County Courthouse facades have a rather pleasing rhythmic quality lacking in its successors, which include the Adair County Courthouse, Columbia (listed on the Register August 27, 1974); the Hickman County Courthouse, Clinton (listed September 11, 1975); and the Carroll County Courthouse, Carrollton, in the county

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just north of Henry on the Ohio River. The last of these has recently been enlarged by means of wings whose high-quality brickwork is a convincing tribute to the McDonald Brothers' ability to design easily replicable details.

Other courthouses in Kentucky, which may be attributed to the McDonald Brothers, of the same type, are or were those in Trimble County, northeast of Henry County (1884; rebuilt in different form in 1953); Simpson County (1882); the second Laurel County Courthouse (1885-86, destroyed 1958); and a smaller version in Boone County. Most of these have a somewhat more compact massing than the Henry County Courthouse. Whereas the latter is clearly cross-axial in plan, the others tend to have a prominent central mass containing the taller courtroom in the second story, with definitely subsidiary masses for the other wings housing less formal services. The later towers also lack the convex curve of Henry County's mansard, which lends a bulbous rather than spiky affect. When the later examples do have round-arched openings, they usually have stone lintels and are confined to the courtroom windows and occasionally to "Palladian" features over the main entrances (front and rear). Nevertheless, some details of the Henry County design do point to the future, such as the belt course with its vertical brick "dentils" and corner blocks that do double duty as capitals for the first-story pilasters and bases for those above. In general, the exterior treatment of the lower floor here is less romantic than the upper portions.

Thus, the Henry County Courthouse appears to represent an important transitional period between the typical post-Civil War Italianate or Second Empire courthouse (for the former see the National Register nomination form for the Warren County Courthouse, Bowling Green [1869], designed by D. J. Williams, being presented to the Review Board simultaneously with Henry County's; for the latter, see the lavish Scott County Courthouse, Georgetown, [1877], by Thomas Boyd; there is a similar structure in Nicholasville, Jessamine County [1878]) and the Richardsonian Romanesque vogue of the late 1880s and early '90s. Of the latter there are few examples in Kentucky, the imposing Fayette County Courthouse in Lexington (1898) being the only wholly Richardsonian design. McDonald Brothers did, however, give a Richardsonian flavor to the small but lavish Casey County Courthouse, Liberty (1888), and there are other examples elsewhere, such as the prominent Salem County Courthouse in Washington,

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Indiana (1886-88), that are fully Romanesque, although interestingly Goeldner refers to the latter as "among the least Richardsonian of Romanesque courthouses" in the twelve mid-American states he surveyed (p. 313). Thus, the Henry County Courthouse represents a way-station toward the development of the McDonald Brothers' most distinctive contribution to the design of the American Courthouse, for their typical 1880s solution is the least historically or stylistically classifiable of all these late 19th-century courthouse types, and therefore in some respects the most "modern."

On the other hand, the integration of the Henry County Jail and Warden's Residence with the courthouse building is most unusual, if not unique in Kentucky, although Goeldner points out (p. 13) that, among the numerous examples he studied, the jail was sometimes placed within the courthouse (usually in the basement but occasionally on an upper floor) in order to allow prisoners direct access to the courtroom, and to permit separation of the prisoners and the public at a trial. It is also not unusual to find the warden's residence associated with the jail (as is the case in the McDonald Brothers' contemporary Owen County facility). The "normal" late 19th-century rural Kentucky jail, however, was a small one or two-story box of rough-surfaced slabs of stone with narrow vertical slits between, set separate from the courthouse but on the courthouse square. Fortunately from the social-humanitarian point of view few of these survive in use, although a typical example remains in Carroll County, possibly to be adapted as a local museum. It would seem again, though, that the Henry County solution may have been not only innovative but precedent-setting in the treatment of the masonry construction for the jail proper, if not for its location.

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Garr, Elizabeth H. History of Kentucky Courthouses, State of Kentucky. The National Society of the Colonial Dames of America, 1972.

Goeldner, Paul Kenneth. "Temples of Justice: Nineteenth Century County Courthouses in the Midwest and Texas." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University Department of Fine Arts, 1970 (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, Inc., 1971).

On the McDonald Brothers, see the National Register of Historic Places nomination forms for the Western Colored Branch of the Louisville Public Library (listed December 6, 1975) and the Louisville City Hall Complex (listed September 1, 1976), as well as Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased) (Los Angeles, 1956).

J. Barbour

Res

CARROLLTON

Res D.R. Castleman

C. M. Mathews

CEDAR

ST.

Henry Female College

Tobacco Warehouse

ST.

ST.

132
133
123
124

Fresh Ch

Jail Court House

Jaura A. Oldham

R. W. Masterson

CROSS

ST.

BETHLEHEM

TURNPIKE

107
108
116
117

Gray House

J.M. Barnes

Res W. Carroll

SPRING

ORIGINAL

TOWN

MATHEWS

Fleming

A. H. Ditto

CHURCH

MAIN

ST.

Ch.

J. N. Caplinger

Christian Ch.

Cemetery

Res

Henry Male & Female College

R. Smith

GRAY

TURNPIKE

Creek

Geo. W. Gist

EMINENCE TURNPIKE

SURVEYORS.

ISAAC W. KELLY, Surveyor and Civil Engineer.
W. W. TURNER, Surveyor.
J. A. FITZGERALD, Surveyor.

DRUGGISTS AND PHYSICIANS.
CAPLINGER Dealer in Drugs and Chemi-

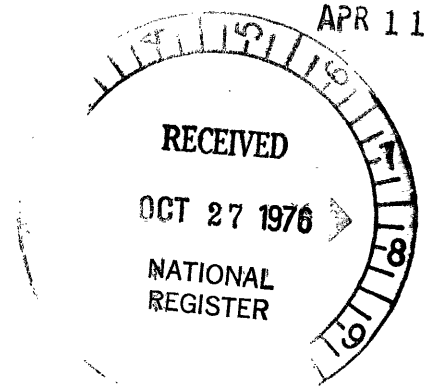
Henry County Courthouse, Jail,
and Warden's Residence
New Castle
Kentucky

An Atlas of Henry and Shelby
Counties, Kentucky. Philadelphia:
D. J. Lake & Co., 1882.

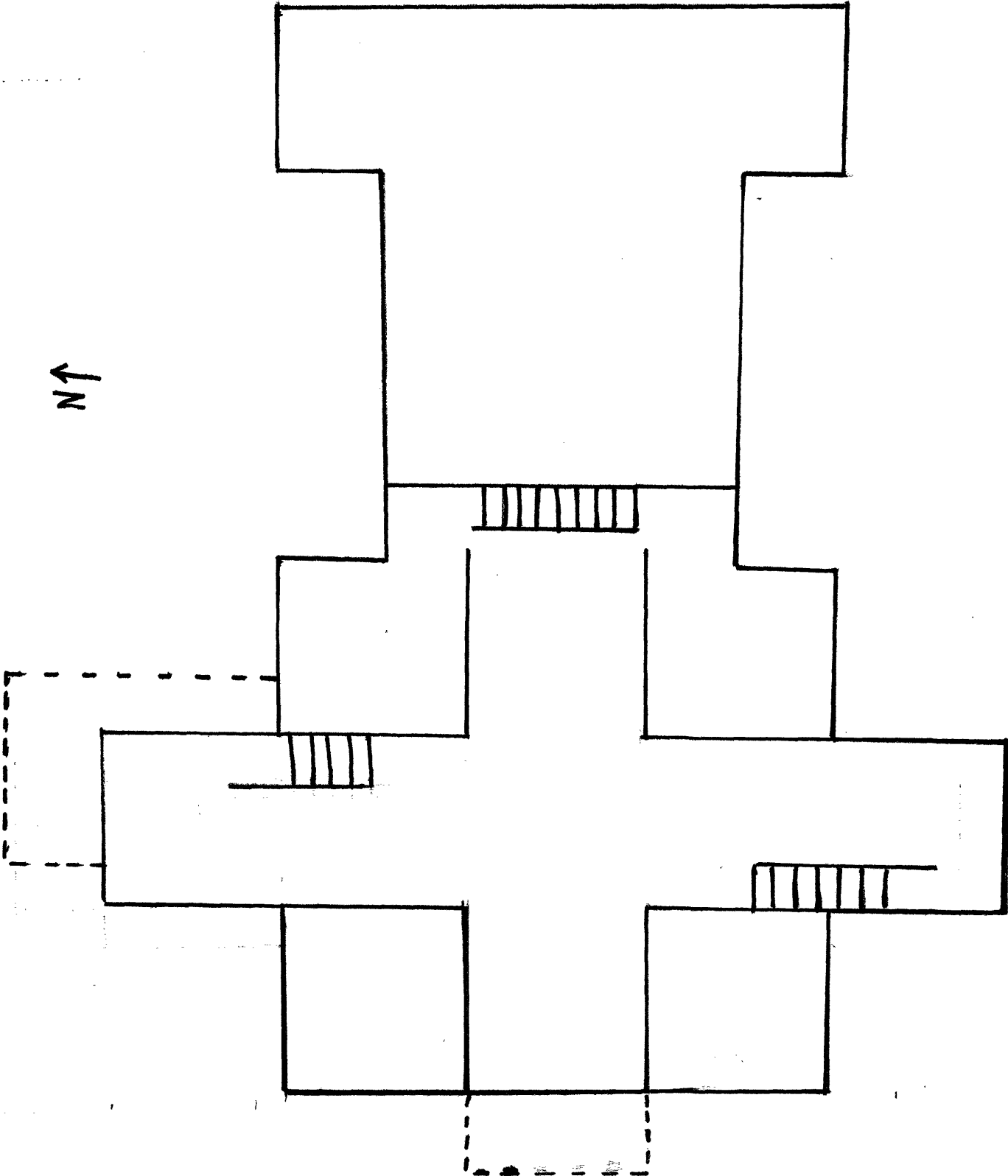
Map 2. The Henry County
Courthouse is outlined in red.

APR 11 1977

Henry County Courthouse
Sketch of floor plan
No scale



N ↑



Henry County Courthouse, Jail,
and Warden's Residence
New Castle
Kentucky

Mary Cronan
1976
No scale.

Map 3. Sketch of floor plan.