

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED **JAN 23 1980**
DATE ENTERED **MAR 18 1980**

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Simpson County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

KY 73

CITY, TOWN

Franklin

___ VICINITY OF

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

2

STATE

Kentucky

CODE

021

COUNTY

Simpson

CODE

213

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Simpson County Fiscal Court

STREET & NUMBER

Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Franklin

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Kentucky

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Simpson County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Franklin

STATE

Kentucky

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky

DATE

1979

___ FEDERAL STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY 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 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

The Simpson County Courthouse is situated in the center of the town square in Franklin, Kentucky. With a population of approximately 6,553 Franklin is centrally located in this southern county within six miles of the Tennessee border. A turn-of-the-century church occupies the west side of the square, and commercial establishments comprise the other three sides.

Constructed in 1882, the courthouse is a two-story brick building embodying a cross-axial plan (see photo 1). The main facade is pierced by narrow windows with square brick hood molds. Brick pilasters divide the building vertically while a stone stringcourse encircles the structure at the second story level. On the east and west facades is a three-story projecting pavilion containing the entrances, each of which is sheltered by a shallow porch supported by Corinthian columns. Large, round-arched transoms surmount the double, glass-panelled doors (see photo 2). A Palladian window set within a segmental-arched corbelled recess pierces the upper portion of the pavilion and beneath it is a tripartite window arrangement. The dentilled cornice is accentuated by corbelled brick courses. Windows have stone lintels and sills. The north and south sides are four bays deep and contain tall, round-arched windows on the second level and straight-headed windows on the first floor. A clock tower rises from the tin, hipped roof.

One and one-half story brick wings which blend well with the 1882 design were added to the north and south sides in 1962. Although various minor alterations have been made, most of the interior remains intact (see photo 3).

The nominated property includes approximately three acres and comprises the entire courthouse lot.

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 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

1883

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

McDonald Brothers

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Simpson County Courthouse in Franklin, Kentucky, is the town's most handsome late nineteenth century structure and ranks as one of the county's finest examples of Victorian architecture. The two-story brick structure serves as both the visual and physical focal point of the town as well as being the governmental center of the county.

Simpson County, Kentucky was formed in 1819 by the Kentucky General Assembly. It was created out of parts of Logan, Warren, and Allen Counties. It was the sixty-third county developed in the state and retains its original boundaries. It is situated in the extreme southern part of the state and is bounded on the north by Warren County, on the east by Allen County, on the west by Logan County, and on the south by the Tennessee state line. The county seat of Simpson County is the city of Franklin which was incorporated on November 2, 1820.

The first courthouse in Franklin was built in the center of the square in 1819. In 1860 this log house was torn down and a brick structure was erected on the same site. In May 1882, the courthouse burned. Shortly thereafter plans submitted by the McDonald Brothers for the construction of a new courthouse were accepted. The exterior of the building remains virtually unchanged since its construction. It retains the original clock and bell made by the McShane Bell Foundry-Henry McShane and Company, Baltimore Maryland in 1883. The bell has been used through the years to announce the opening of court sessions.

By 1962 the courthouse completed in 1883 had become inadequate for the county's needs, and resulted in the addition of wings on the north & south sides. On the first floor extra space was provided for the county court clerk, the county tax commissioner, and the circuit court clerk. On the second floor the north wing provided a new room which was used as a library and as a room for the court to conduct private discussions. Private quarters were also provided for the county judge.

The courthouse is the first of four structures in Franklin that are known to have been designed by the prestigious Louisville architectural firm of the McDonald Brothers. Other works of the McDonald Brothers in Franklin include the First Franklin Presbyterian Church (1886), the Franklin Female College (1889), and the 1893 Goodnight House (listed on the National Register August 12, 1977). From the 1870s into the twentieth century, the firm designed numerous buildings in the Louisville area and a substantial number of public buildings across the state and throughout the southeast. Besides the Simpson County Courthouse, the McDonald Brothers are responsible for the Adair, Bell (destroyed),

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Beach, Mrs. James Sr., and James Henry Snider, comps. Franklin and Simpson County: A Picture of Progress. Tompkinsville, Kentucky: Monroe County Press, 1975.

Collins, Lewis and Richard H. History of Kentucky. 2 Vols. Covington, Kentucky: Richard H. Collins, 1874. (see continuation sheet)

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 3 acres.

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

QUADRANGLE NAME Franklin, Kentucky

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 537650 4063980

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Courthouse city lot.

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

Charlotte Schneider/Architectural Historian; Calvin P. Jones/ Historian

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Kentucky Heritage Commission

November 1979

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

104 Bridge Street

502/564-3741

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Frankfort,

Kentucky

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE ✓

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Edward W. Gullett

TITLE

DATE 12-19-79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

W. Ray Luce
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 3/18/80

ATTEST: *Kristin D. Conwell*
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE 3/6/80

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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Boone, Carroll, Casey, Henry, Hickman, Laurel (destroyed in 1958), Trimble (rebuilt in 1953 based on the 1884 design), and Whitley (destroyed in 1931) County Courthouses, as well as numerous jails. All of these, with the exception of the 1875 Henry County building, were constructed in the 1880s and reveal a generally uniform plan and massing. The Simpson County Courthouse is almost identical in materials, plan, and detail to the 1885 Adair (listed in the National Register on August 27, 1974) and the 1884-85 Hickman (listed in the National Register on October 11, 1975) county buildings and bears a strong resemblance to the other McDonald Brothers courthouses. These similarities indicate that the firm established a standard courthouse form, of which the Simpson County structure was the prototype, and proceeded to employ that design with only slight modifications throughout Kentucky and the southeast region during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

Hedgepeth, Marty P. "An Architectural Legacy from the Victorian to the Beaux-Arts, 1873-1913. An examination of the Louisville architectural firms of the McDonald Brothers, McDonald and Sheblessy, Dodd and Cobb, and McDonald and Dodd." Thesis (in preparation), University of Louisville, 1979.