

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0143162 DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED APR 30 1975  
DATE ENTERED JUN 20 1975

**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

Clay County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Brabantio Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Green Cove Springs

STATE

Florida

VICINITY OF

CODE

12

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Second

COUNTY

Clay

CODE

019

**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 checked="" 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	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input 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 Board of County Commissioners

STREET & NUMBER Clay County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN Green Cove Springs VICINITY OF

STATE Florida

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Clay County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Green Cove Springs

STATE Florida

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE N/A

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Clay County Courthouse is a two-story brick structure to which stucco was applied in the 1950's. The building is bi-laterally symmetrical in plan with the main facade facing north. As originally constructed, the building had four nearly identical facades, each characterized by a central pavilion with tri-arched entrance, the columns of which are cast iron. The central archway visually frames the double doors through which the building is entered. New plate glass doors have replaced the original wooden ones, although the framing pilasters, transom, wainscoting and wooden paneling which surrounded them is still intact. Unique to the structure is the decorative metal cornice, which is wide and heavily bracketed, and the decorative metal gable above. The roof is a low hip with cross gables each terminating in the metal pedimented gable. Rising from the roof are six brick chimneys with corbeled caps and in addition, there is decorative brick corbeling beneath the cornice and beneath the stone balustrade which crowns each entrance. Within the central pavilion on each facade and above the arched entrances are four pilasters which rise to the cornice thus dividing the window space vertically. All first floor windows are double hung sash with plain surrounds and brick labels. On the second floor, windows are vertically elongated to accommodate a third fixed pane--a treatment which also tends to visually heighten the building.

There have been two major additions to the structure to create additional office space. In 1928, an entire wing was added to the east side of the building which resembles the original structure. This was done to create space for the offices of the Clerk of the Circuit Court and the Tax Assessor. In 1959, a one-story addition was made to the west side for the office of the county Judge. The entire building and the east wing were stuccoed in 1957. Alterations to the interior include extensive relocation of partitions. The building, however, is in good condition and has been in continuous use since its construction.

# 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 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 1889-1890

BUILDER/ARCHITECT A.E. McClure

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

On October 14, 1889, a tract of land was deeded from John and Ellen Borden to the Clay County Commissioners for the purpose of erecting a new county courthouse.<sup>1</sup> The previous September bids were let for construction of the building and the contract awarded to W.A. McDuff for the sum of \$13,215.30.<sup>2</sup> Architect A.E. McClure of Jacksonville was selected to design the new building and he was paid the sum of \$269.70 for preparing plans and specifications.<sup>3</sup> McClure was soon to distinguish himself as a designer of Florida courthouses for in 1891 he received the commission for the magnificent Nassau County Courthouse at Fernandina Beach. The courthouse at Green Cove Springs was completed in 1890 and the minutes of the Nassau County Commissioners indicate that several trips were made to see the building before a final design was decided upon for the Fernandina building. Although the later structure is somewhat more impressive in its general scale and attention to ornamental detail, the two buildings are similar in their stylistic interpretation of a basically Renaissance mode. Wide bracketed eaves, entrances recessed behind arcades, pedimented gables and decorative brickwork earmark both buildings as being among the finest of A.E. McClure's Victorian designs.<sup>4</sup>

The Clay County Courthouse served as the seat of county government continuously from 1890 until 1973 when the new courthouse was completed. The building currently houses various public offices as well as the Clay County Historical Museum and plans are underway to fully restore the building to its original appearance.

Florida has no ante-bellum courthouses and only a handful that were constructed prior to 1900. Of those few which were built in the late nineteenth century only the ones in Leon, Nassau, Osceola and Clay counties are still standing. The structure is significant, not only as the original seat of county government, but as a fine example of the work of a local architect, A.E. McClure.

<sup>1</sup> Clay County Records, Clay County Courthouse, Green Cove Springs, Florida. Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court. (Subgroup: Deed Book 12, pages 475-485).



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED APR 30 1975

JUN 20 1975

DATE ENTERED

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

Clay County Courthouse

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

FOOTNOTES CONTINUED:

<sup>2</sup>Clay County Records, Clay County Courthouse, Green Cove Springs, Florida. Office of the County Commission. (Subgroup: Book #2 County Commissioners Minute Books, page 233.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. page 234.

<sup>4</sup>After the devastating fire of 1901 which destroyed most of the commercial downtown (North side of St. John's River) of Jacksonville, Florida, A.E. McClure was one of the architects responsible for the appearance of its new skyline.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	APR 30 1975
	JUN 20 1975
DATE ENTERED	

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

Clay County Courthouse

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 1

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES: (con't)

Early post card of the building showing the north and west sides as they originally appeared.

Nassau County Records, Nassau County Courthouse, Fernandina Beach, Florida. Office of the County Commission. (Subgroup: Minute Books, Volume I, July 22, 1891, page 239).