

358

RECEIVED 418

FEB 27 1995

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties ~~NATIONAL PARK SERVICE~~. See instructions in *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 PICKETT COUNTY COURTHOUSE

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Town Square

N/A not for publication

city or town Byrdstown

N/A vicinity

state Tennessee

code TN

county Pickett

code 137

zip code 38549

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. Hayer
Signature of certifying official/Title

2/18/95
Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
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 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 3/30/95
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

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

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

Historic County Courthouses of TN

Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT; courthouse

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT; courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE; Crab Orchard/ CONCRETE

walls STONE; Crab orchard

roof ASPHALT SHINGLE

other METAL; CONCRETE

Narrative Description

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

A 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.)

- 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/ POLITICS

Period of Significance

1935-1945

Significant Dates

1935

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Marr, Thomas and Holman, Joseph, arch.

Yearwood, Nile E., contractor

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data: N/A

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

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

Byrdstown 333SW

UTM grid with values: Zone 16, Easting 667440, Northing 4048560

UTM grid with empty boxes for Zone, Easting, and 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 Lauren Batte

organization MTSU Center for Historic Preservation date August 30, 1994

street & number PO Box 80, MTSU telephone 615-898-2947

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.)

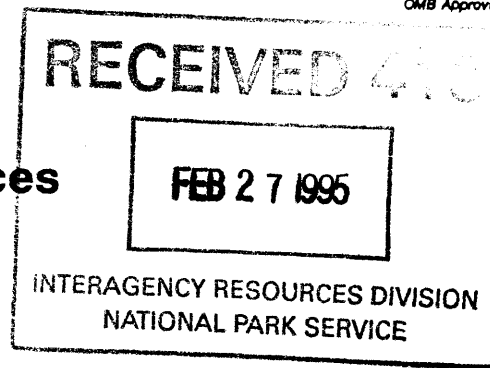
name Jack Whittenburg, county executive

street & number Pickett County Courthouse telephone 615-864-3798

city or town Byrdstown state TN zip code 38549

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.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1

Pickett County Courthouse, Byrdstown, Pickett Co., TN

VII. DESCRIPTION

The Pickett County Courthouse is a relatively unadorned, unpretentious yet dignified government building whose designers used a local building material, Crab Orchard stone, to give a distinctly regional touch to a nationally popular architectural style, Colonial Revival. The building was constructed in 1935 under the direction of a building committee consisting of S. S. Parris, chairman, Everett Hassler, secretary, Ernest Keigling, S. O. Huddleston, and H. T. Gloce. The architects were the Nashville firm of Marr and Holman with Nile E. Yearwood of Nashville serving as the contractor and S. R. Underwood supervising.

The rectangular plan, hipped roof, two story building with basement and cupola has simple details consisting of a dentiled cornice, soldier course at the water table and fluted pilasters supporting a dentilled front entrance. The courthouse forms the center of a geometrically irregular town plan on a slight rise with higher hills on at least two sides. The building is sited on a slight rise so that the rear basement is more exposed to the street. Windows on the first and second floors are replacement that reflect the original design for the building. At the northeast corner of the courthouse plot stands a marble monument to the Pickett County citizens who fought in the world wars (NC, due to date).

The northwest or front facade is five bays wide with the central bay serving as the main entrance. Two windows flank the central bay on the basement and first floor level. The basement windows are six over six double hung windows. A soldier course marks the watertable. The first floor windows are eight over eight double hung with vents located directly beneath. The front entrance doors are modern glass but the original six light transom remains. A modern aluminum awning has been added to the entrance whose fluted pilasters and entablature with dentils is distinctly Colonial Revival. The second floor windows are replacement metal windows that date to about 1980. According to local officials, the windows were "direct replacements," meaning that they are similar, if not exactly the same, in

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Pickett County Courthouse, Byrdstown, Pickett Co., TN

appearance to the original wooden windows that were replaced due to dry rot. The present windows are twelve over eight double hung sash with the same vents directly beneath and a soldier course above. These windows are slightly wider than the first floor windows. The dentiled cornice caps the front facade which is topped by the octagonal wooden cupola with bell cast roof. The octagonal portion of the cupola has four vented and four paneled faces and rests upon a square pedestal.

The four bay northeast elevation reveals more of the basement level than the front facade. On this basement level there are two six light casement windows, one in the first bay and one in the fourth bay. The first floor level has three eight over eight double hung sash windows, one in each of three bays. One of the middle bays has a side entrance with a small four over four double hung sash window beside it. The side entrance is wood panelled with nine lights on the upper half, a modern aluminum storm door and awning with stone steps leading to the street level. The second floor has one twelve over eight double hung sash window in the bay closest to the front facade. The next bay back is empty and the last two are jail windows of seventy-two small lights set into metal frames. The jail constructed in this courthouse still services the county. As with the front facade this elevation is capped with the dentilled cornice and topped by the cupola.

The rear or southeast elevation differs from the symmetrical front facade. There are three basement windows, a six light casement window on the east end and two eight light casement windows on the west end. On the west end of the facade is a two bay wide projection. Set in the central bay is an entrance at street level which is much lower than the front facade and thus is almost below the soldier course at the watertable. The remaining bay of the basement level is occupied by another entrance, this one set partially below street level and distinctly below the soldier course. The first floor has three bays with eight over eight double hung sash windows with vents below as is found on the front facade. The second bay from the east corner has two six

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Pickett County Courthouse, Byrdstown, Pickett Co., TN

over six double hung sash windows set side by side. The third floor has two more seventy-two light jail windows in the first two bays of the east end. The middle bay above the main rear entrance is a large window the top portion of which has been replaced with siding. The exposed portion of this window is twelve over eight double hung sash like the second story windows of the front facade. A small vent is present in the two bay projection on the west end. Again the building is topped by a dentilled cornice with cupola visible.

The southwest four bay elevation has a less visible basement level with sunken panelled entrance with three light transom on the south end. The south end bay is recessed from the rest of the elevation. Two eight over eight double hung sash windows flank a first floor entrance above the watertable soldier course. The modern double door entrance with original six light transom is simpler than the front facade like the other side and rear entrances. It also has a modern aluminum awning. The four second floor windows, one in each bay, are twelve over eight double hung sash with vents under the windows to the immediate side of the entrance. The dentilled cornice completes its trip around the building and again the cupola is visible.

The interior plan of the building is based around an T-shaped hallway with offices on either side of the hall and along the top of the T. A stairwell is located in the southwest corner of the building, rises to the second floor and descends to the basement. The walls and floor are cast concrete painted neutral tones with a stripe along the wall separating colors at approximately six feet high. Throughout the hallways and offices, original materials are evident in the original woodwork, doors, flooring, light fixtures, and wall treatment. Only in the courtroom has a drop ceiling been installed. The main entrance opens to a hallway with the county clerk's office on the right. The doorway to this office is original one wood panel with a window of equal size in the top of the door. A single light transom sits above the door. Proceeding along the hall is another original wood, two panel door to a janitor's closet. This hallway ends in the stairwell. Before the stairwell the hallway turns left towards the exit on the northeast

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Pickett County Courthouse, Byrdstown, Pickett Co., TN

elevation. Immediately upon entering this hallway are two doors across from one another, one on the left and one on the right leading into offices. These are original wood, one panel with above light and one light transom doors. Another door of this same configuration leads into another office on the left nearest the northeast exit. The first floor offices retain their original configuration and no partitions have been erected, although the offices do have more recent furniture and counters (largely from the 1980s) to serve the public.

The stairs in the southwest corner of the main floor ascend to the second floor on which is located the courtroom and jail. The stairs are painted cast concrete with original molded wooden hand rail. A landing midway up the stairs allows for a one hundred and eighty degree turn and the stairs proceed to the second floor. Upon reaching the second floor immediately on the right are a set of double original wooden two paneled doors leading to the main courtroom. These doors are enframed by wood surrounds with a cornice. The wood surrounds have shouldered molding with the cornice above. In front of the courtroom doors is a square lobby area. A small hallway extends to the left of the far wall. One door on the left of this small hallway leads to the jail while two doorways on the right open to sheriff offices. The interiors of these rooms are not open to the public.

The interior of the courtroom is relatively unadorned with the exception of the doors which mirror the exterior. The walls are concrete block and brick and retain the same color scheme as the main floor. The dividing painted stripe along the walls is placed at the level of traditional wainscoting. The rectangular room is unadorned with the exception of the wooden judge's bench which appears to be original, as do the benches for the audience. Tables for litigants and chairs for the jury are from about 1980, as is the balustrade which separates the audience from participants. A drop ceiling and new lighting were added in about 1980.

The stairwell leads to the basement as well as to the second floor. From the main floor the stairs reach a landing upon

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

Pickett County Courthouse, Byrdstown, Pickett Co., TN

which are the double doors visible from the outside. These stairs then turn one hundred and eighty degrees and descend to the basement. Here the floor and walls repeat the construction and painted pattern of the main floor. The plan is somewhat truncated. A small lobby sits at the base of the stairs. Two doors on the right lead to an office, a set of double doors opposite the stairwell open to a hallway which runs perpendicular to the lobby. Modern wooden panelling with service windows demarks the County Trustee's office. This office was converted from basement space in about 1980 and represents the most altered office in the courthouse.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Pickett County Courthouse, Byrdstown, Pickett Co., TN

VIII. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Pickett County Courthouse commands the center of the county seat of Byrdstown (pop. 998), but is not part of a traditional courthouse square. It is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its locally significant role in the government of Pickett County. The courthouse is also an important regional interpretation of Colonial Revival architecture as designed by the important Tennessee architectural firm of Marr and Holman. 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.

Pickett County was created by the Tennessee State Legislature from the northern part of Fentress County and the northern part of Overton County through a bill passed in 1879. This bill was later determined to be defective and a second legitimate bill passed in 1881. The name for the county is said to honor a young Lebanon attorney, H. L. Pickett, who helped to ensure passage of the bill through the legislature which created the county.

The first county court and county commissioners meetings for Pickett County occurred in a church in Smyrna. Land was purchased near Smyrna in Byrdstown to build a courthouse and jail. Before the building was completed court was moved to Byrdstown and met in another important building on the square, the Arch Miller building. The frame commercial building was constructed 1880-1882 and is still an impressive building with its simple decorative brackets and cupola giving it an Italianate architectural association. This two-story building sits immediately south of the current and earlier courthouse and has continuously served as commercial space on the first floor. The second floor as stated was used for county court while the courthouse was being constructed and was later used as the Byrdstown Masonic Lodge.

The first courthouse was completed sometime in 1890 as the Masonic assembly was moved to the second floor of the Miller

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Pickett County Courthouse, Pickett Co., TN

store which had housed the court activities while the building was under construction. The original courthouse foundation was limestone and the building itself brick. The jail was constructed of vertical wooden planks driven with nails. Steel cages replaced the wooden jail in 1898. Pharaoh Morgan laid the foundation, Tom Ray and his son laid the bricks while Tom Babb and Buchanan Matheny did the carpentry.

This courthouse burned in 1934 taking with it all of the county records. The replacement courthouse was constructed of local Crab Orchard stone, brick and cast concrete. Presumably the cast concrete was used as insurance against further loss to fire. Concrete was still a relatively modern building material whose popularity derived largely from its durability against fire.

After fire destroyed the first Pickett County Courthouse in 1934 the Quarterly Court sold \$40,000 worth of bonds to construct the second and present courthouse. This building was completed in 1935. The prominent and influential Nashville architectural firm of Marr and Holman was contracted and designed the new subdued but stately Pickett County Courthouse. Interestingly, the construction of this new courthouse came during the height of Public Works Administration and Works Project Administration building projects across the country and Tennessee. There were many public buildings erected in Tennessee designed in the PWA or WPA Modern styles using monies from these Federal agencies. Pickett County did not benefit from these funding sources; despite the fact that its citizens would be likely candidates for such aid. Equally interesting, these citizens were not influenced by the styles then popular but clung to a more traditional architectural style whose associations with government and the founding roots of this country are very strong. While this association may be contributed to the rural nature of Pickett County, with more limited access to the avenues which brought new building trends, any speculation along this line must be tempered by the fact that an important Tennessee architectural firm was engaged for the project. By retaining Marr and Holman Pickett Countians expressed their interest in good

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Pickett County Courthouse, Byrdstown, Pickett Co., TN

architectural design for their most prominent government building. Another possible source of New Deal involvement in this building would be the activities of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) in 1933-35 and the Civilian Works Administration (CWA) in 1934. Both agencies were committed to bringing relief to depression communities as quickly as possible. While neither developed the record of architectural contributions recorded by the PWA and WPA, both agencies often provided paid labor for local government projects, especially the repair of older public buildings and schools. Little research has been focused on the programs of FERA and CWA; until more is known, the level of association between the New Deal and the Pickett County Courthouse will be unknown.

The 1935 Pickett County Courthouse sits on a slight rise that slopes to the rear in the heart of Byrdstown. While there are buildings on all sides of the courthouse creating the feeling of a courthouse square the sides are irregular in length and do not meet at right angles. Thus the resulting pattern seems to be one not of formal planning, but evolutionary development. The two story with basement building is covered in Crab Orchard stone, an important local building material from the Eastern Highland Rim of Tennessee. The use of Crab Orchard stone gives this Colonial Revival building a distinctly regional design. Its simple decorative elements of cupola, entrance cornice and roofline cornice and front facade symmetry accent the building giving it its Colonial Revival association.

The Pickett County Courthouse was designed and built as the center of government activity for the County and remains so today. The new building represented, in physical terms, a significant development in the local government of Pickett County during the depression era: the acceptance of progressive ideas of good government by consolidating government services--from administration, to courts, to jail--in a central location. The courthouse thus documented the centrality of local government, and the expanded services associated with such progressive reforms as agricultural extension and state licensing program, to the lives of Pickett County residents during the 1930s. From

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

Pickett County Courthouse, Byrdstown, Pickett Co., TN

1935 to the present, the Pickett County Court met here and approved new local ordinances, consistent with state laws, that extended the role of government in welfare, public health, election law reform, and public education. The county court approved taxes and expenditures, as well, that allowed the county to take advantage of new road building projects throughout the period of significance. Also during the war years, the draft board for Pickett County met at the courthouse. Another significant pattern of events is that the courthouse became the primary, and in many elections, the sole meeting place for the Democratic party to pick its candidates for local offices and to select its delegates for state and national conventions. The courthouse was where major political rallies for state and local elections took place every two years during the Democratic primary and the general election. Throughout the New Deal era, the Southern Democratic party was often split into a conservative wing that had gained power earlier in the century and a progressive wing that grew out of support for President Franklin Roosevelt and his reform programs. The political fights between those two wings, on the local level, took place at the Pickett County Courthouse throughout the Roosevelt administration. Today, the courthouse continues to house both the jail and offices for the sheriff, offices for the circuit court clerk, county trustee, the county clerk and other county officials while also providing the county courtroom. The continued location of the sheriff's office and jail in the courthouse is a unique aspect of this small rural county whose local seat of government is little altered since construction in 1935.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 10

Pickett County Courthouse, Byrdstown, Pickett Co., TN

IX. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Glenn, L. C. The Northern Tennessee Coal Field: Included in Anderson, Campbell, Claiborne, Fentress, Morgan, Overton, Pickett, Roane and Scott Counties. Nashville, TN: State of Tennessee Department of Education Division of Geology, 1925.

Huddleston, Tim, ed. History of Pickett County, Tennessee. Collegedale, TN: The College Press, 1973.

Smith, Charles Galloway. "A Social and Economic Survey of Pickett County, Tennessee." Masters thesis., Vanderbilt University, 1928.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 11

Pickett County Courthouse, Byrdstown, Pickett Co., TN

X. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property lies at the center of Byrdstown, Pickett County, Tennessee. It occupies city lot 11 documented in the attached Pickett County Tax Map 24-0 and 24-P.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the city lot that has been historically associated with the Pickett County Courthouse.

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number PHOTOS Page 12

Pickett County Courthouse, Byrdstown, Pickett Co., TN

PHOTOGRAPHS

Pickett County Courthouse, Byrdstown, TN

Photos by: Carroll Van West
MTSU Center for Historic Preservation

Date: October 1993

Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission
Nashville, TN

Northwest facade, facing southeast

1 of 19

Entrance detail, northwest facade, facing southeast

2 of 19

Cupola detail, northwest facade, facing southeast

3 of 19

Northeast elevation, facing southwest

4 of 19

Southeast elevation, facing northwest

5 of 19

Southeast and southwest elevations, facing north

6 of 19

Southwest elevation, facing northeast

7 of 19

Southwest hallway, first floor, facing northeast

8 of 19

Intersection of southwest and northwest hallways, first floor

9 of 19

Northwest hallway, staircase, first floor, facing southeast

10 of 19

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number PHOTOS Page 13

Pickett County Courthouse, Byrdstown, Pickett Co., Tn

First floor staircase, facing southeast
11 of 19

Staircase to second floor, facing northwest
12 of 19

Entrance to second floor courtroom, facing southwest
13 of 19

Courtroom, second floor, facing southeast
14 of 19

Jury box, courtroom, facing northeast
15 of 19

Public seating, courtroom, facing northeast
16 of 19

Basement lobby, facing northeast
17 of 19

Trustee office, basement, facing northeast
18 of 19

American Legion War Memorial, facing southwest
19 of 19

Pickett County TN

1" = 100'

