

PH001 3234

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Georgia	
COUNTY: Thomas	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER: 70-6-10-0044	DATE: 6/22/70

1. NAME

COMMON:
Thomas County Courthouse

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
North Broad Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Thomasville

STATE: Georgia	CODE: 10	COUNTY: Thomas	CODE: 275
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input type="checkbox"/>	Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both <input type="checkbox"/>	Public Acquisition: In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/>	Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/>
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			Yes: Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/>	Government <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum <input type="checkbox"/>	Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific <input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/>

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNERS NAME:
Thomas County

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Thomasville

STATE: Georgia	CODE: 10
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Thomas County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Thomasville

STATE: Georgia	CODE: 10
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APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **1.4 Acres**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Thomasville Landmarks Architectural Inventory

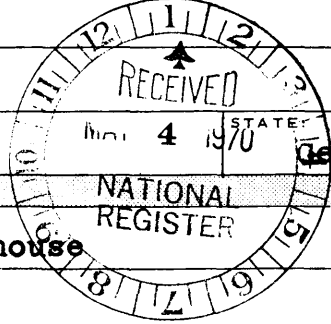
DATE OF SURVEY: **10/1/69** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Thomasville Landmarks, Inc.

STREET AND NUMBER:
Box 44

CITY OR TOWN:
Thomasville

STATE: Georgia	CODE: 10
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Georgia
COUNTY: Thomas
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Fair <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/>	Ruins <input type="checkbox"/>	Unexposed <input type="checkbox"/>
INTEGRITY	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	Altered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unaltered <input type="checkbox"/>		Moved <input type="checkbox"/>	Original Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (*if known*) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

See attached report for description of original building and subsequent changes.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Pre-Columbian 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

1858, 1888

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	Political	<input type="checkbox"/>	Urban Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/>	Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion/Phi-	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Historic	<input type="checkbox"/>	Industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	losophy	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/>	Invention	<input type="checkbox"/>	Science	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sculpture	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/>	Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social/Human-	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Communications	<input type="checkbox"/>	Literature	<input type="checkbox"/>	itarian	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Military	<input type="checkbox"/>	Theater	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
		Music	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

See attached report for statement of architectural significance. Original Courthouse designed by John Wind, the most important architect to practice in Thomasville.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Rogers, W.W., Ante-Bellum Thomas County, Tallahassee, Florida State Univ., 1963, pp12, 16-17

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	30 ° 50 ' 21 "	83 ° 58 ' 57 "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	30 ° 50 ' 22 "	83 ° 58 ' 55 "				
SE	30 ° 50 ' 20 "	83 ° 58 ' 53 "				
SW	30 ° 50 ' 19 "	83 ° 58 ' 55 "				

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Russell Wright, Consultant**

ORGANIZATION: **Thomasville Landmarks, Inc.**

STREET AND NUMBER: **Box 44**

CITY OR TOWN: **Thomasville**

STATE: **Georgia** CODE: **10**

DATE: **12/5/69**

(Circular stamp: RECEIVED JUN 4 1970 NATIONAL REGISTER)

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Mary Gregory Jurst

Title State Liaison Officer, Ga

Date Apr. 28, 1970

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Ernest Allen Connally
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date **JUN 22 1970**

ATTEST:

William J. Mustang
Keeper of The National Register

Date **MAY 27 1970**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

A History of the Thomas County
Courthouse

Prepared for the Thomas County
Commissioners of Roads and Revenues



by

Russell Wright, consultant and
Thomasville Landmarks, Inc

Thomasville, Georgia

December, 1969

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

The history of the Thomas County Courthouse parallels the history of Thomas County, in that the existing structure is the third courthouse to be built on the site. Thomas County was established by legislative action on December 23, 1825. Five commissioners were charged with the responsibility of selecting a county seat, and in December 1826, formally selected Thomasville.

The first courthouse to be built was a small structure of split pine logs covered with pine siding, and was finished sometime prior to November of 1827. This was replaced by a brick courthouse, built by Samuel Austin in 1849. Badly damaged by a storm in 1853, the building remained in poor condition for more than two years.

In June 1855, a committee composed of R.H. Hardaway, E.R. Young, E. Seixas and W.J. Parnell "reviewed and carefully examined the Court House, have found the walls so much cracked as, in their opinion, to render it unsafe and dangerous. They do not believe it can be repaired but requires to be entirely rebuilt. They, therefore, recommend that it be entirely rebuilt with the best materials and in the most substantial manner".

On June 22, 1855, the Inferior Court of Thomas County offered the sum of fifty dollars for "the best plan with specifications that may be presented by any Architect for the building of a Court House in Thomasville". The notice specified that the building should be "60 feet square and three stories high, Court Room on the second floor, lower floor laid down with cement, Jury Room in the third floor, four offices below....", but the court would consider plans of a different layout. A committee originally made up of E. Seixas, M.B. Jones, Noah Parramore, James Seward and

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W.Ponder,with D.M.McLean and R.H.Hardaway added shortly thereafter,was appointed to judge and pass upon the plans and specifications.

John Wind,the architect of Greenwood,Susina and Fair Oaks Plantations,was selected as the"Architect to draw a plan with specifications and working plan for a new Court House,said plan to be in the Clerk's Office by the first Monday in September next"(1855).On January 7,1856 a contract was signed with H.C. and Wm.Bowen for the building of the new structure,at a cost of \$ 14,999.00.The contract called for the Bowen's to "make,erect build and finish in a good substainial and workmanlike manner a three story brick Court House on the lot of land in Thomasville known as Court House Square and in the center of said lot".

Construction was to be finished by the fourth Monday in May, 1857.Detailed specifications for the building are available in the Records of the Thomas County Inferior Court of January 7,1857. The Court House was designed to be 80 feet long by 48 feet wide, with an overall height of 48 feet from grade to the top of the eaxes.The basement floor was to be 10 feet high,Court Room floor 18 feet and the third floor 16 feet.The floor of the basement was to be two feet above ground and finished in concrete,and the other two floors were to be heart pine.The thickness of the exterior walls varied from two feet eight inches at the basement level to one foot eight inches at the third floor,and were to be made of brick.The exterior finish of the walls was to be plaster, scribed into one by three foot rectangles to simulate stone blocks. Porticos were designed for the Broad Street and Jefferson Street facades,with brick columns and an entablature that continued

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around the entire building.

The basement floor was divided into two pairs of two rooms, separated by a central hall. All interior walls were to be plastered and each pair of rooms was to have connecting iron doors for fire purposes. Each of the four rooms was provided with a fireplace with simple mantels, and had panelled wooden doors to the hall. The second floor was to be composed of the Court Room and two smaller rooms, each 14 by 15 feet. Each of the smaller rooms was to have a fireplace, with the Court Room being provided with two. A wood railing with turned ballusters separated the Court and Jury areas from the spectator area, which was to have stepped seats to provide a view of the proceedings. Two side stairways led to the Grand and Petit Jury Rooms on the third floor. Windows and doors were to be framed with floor length pilasters and angle blocks, and the ceiling, which contained a six foot diameter plaster center piece of "beads and reeds" was to be surrounded with a plaster cornice. A pulley was provided in the center of the ceiling for a chandelier. Six square interior columns with caps and entablatures were to support the third floor.

The third floor was to contain five rooms, including the two jury rooms and a "Town Hall Room" directly off the center stairs. Each of the four smaller rooms received a single fireplace, with two going to the "Town Hall", and all rooms were finished with the same trim as below.

Basement windows were to be twelve 12x18 inch glass panels, set $\frac{3}{4}$, the second floor windows eighteen 14x18 panels set $\frac{6}{3}$ and the third floor windows fifteen 14x18 panels set $\frac{5}{3}$, all double-hung. Window openings on the exterior were simple rectangles, unadorned. A cupola was planned for the roof, setting on a square base and being octagonal with a round roof. A winding stairway

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led to a platform in the middle of the cupola which was used as a viewing platform by citizens. The cupola was to be topped with an 18 inch brass ball, two and one-half feet above the roof.

The Court House walls, interior and exterior were to be painted white, with bronze green doors outside and varnished oak on the interior. Interior trim was to be buff, stairs and railings chocolate with white ballusters. The exterior stairs were to be granite.

Despite these well outlined specifications the construction of the Court House was not without its problems, and a variety of changes were authorized during its erection. The portico on the Jefferson Street side collapsed during construction, killing one worker and injuring another. This was never rebuilt, nor was the privy originally called for in the contract, and the contractors refunded part of their fee for not completing this work. The Bowen's were paid for additional work, however, including a new vault, using brick instead of stone for the base of the floor and finish plastering the interior. On October 15, 1858 the Inferior Court ordered Lewis Key to pay the County \$675 for "deficiency in Copper Work on the Court House".

The Court House as designed by [redacted] and built by the Bowen brothers was accepted as complete following repairs to the roof and a favorable report to the Inferior Court on September 28, 1858. A conjectural drawing prepared by Prince J. Wright and reproduced in William W. Rogers' Ante-Bellum Thomas County, Georgia shows

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the Court House as a rectangular cube with a front portico supported by four large two story columns. A straight double stairway to the second floor is enclosed within the portico. The hip roof has an octagonal cupola with an open viewing area in the middle and there are four large corner chimneys.

The new building was occupied almost immediately, and quickly became the center of Thomasville's social as well as political life. The Inferior Court granted a petition to a group of leading citizens to "hold a Ball in the Concert-Hall of the Court House Nov. 23, 1858, free of charge it being the first Ball held in said hall. Hereafter all parties of a similar character or otherwise will be charged ten dollars for each and every night."

In October 1858 the Inferior Court ordered that a "good and substantial fence of iron" be put up around the square, and appointed a committee to have the Court House Square cleaned up and put in good order. With the exception of repairs to damage caused by a winter storm in 1860, little change to the Court House occurred until after the Civil War.

On April 26, 1887, the Clerk of the Superior Court condemned the County Commissioners for allowing the building to "go to pieces for lack of repairs", and asked that a tax be levied to raise \$ 4000 for its repair, saying that it "brings the blush of shame to the face of our own people and is a subject of ludicrous comment". In addition, an article appeared in the States-Enterprise of September 20, 1867, calling attention to the condition of the square... "the fence has been partially destroyed, and of late persons have adopted the habit of hitching horses to the shade

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trees within the inclosure, and some of them, we are told, are already destroyed or much injured."

William Miller, builder of many of the fine Thomasville homes of this era, was put in charge of designing and planting the square in 1887. Work was completed, including the large fountain, by January 1889. Plant materials were donated by members of the community, and all work was completed through the voluntary contribution of materials, money and labor. This labor also included the use of the Chain Gang, provided by the City Council.

The Court House was restored in 1888, Eaves and Wase, Contractors. The front portico was filled in, and the columns removed. A rear addition was provided, and new windows and doors, including the existing elaborate Italianate window heads were added. In 1909 the clock was added. One story wings were added to the front and rear, filling in the corners, in 1918-19 and 1922, and the Classic Revival Annex to the rear was built in 1937, Prince Jinright, Architect, Brenton and Sons, Contractors. At this time the Court House underwent its final renovation and with the exception of the blocking of a number of windows on the basement level, appeared as it does today.

Recommendations for visual improvements to the exterior of the Thomas County Courthouse.

Because of the scope and overall design quality of most of the changes to the John Wind design of 1858, it is proposed that no attempt be made to restore the Thomas County Courthouse past the date of the redesign completed in 1888. No structural changes will be required to the exterior in order to visually improve the appearance of the building, and it is recommended that none of the low flanking wings be changed. While added in 1919 and 1922, they are in character with the building as it now stands and can be accommodated into plans for the future appearance of the Courthouse.

With the exception of filling cracks in the walls of the building, no major structural improvements appear to be necessary at this time. The wood cornice is in need of repair, the sheet metal window heads need minor repairs and painting and a number of window frames will have to be either replaced or repaired, but the Courthouse is in relatively good structural condition. Visually, however, a number of changes should be made to the property.

The major visual deficiencies of the Courthouse can be corrected by completing six work items, as follows:

1. Remove the second level metal porch roof, and point the front facade where it has been attached.
2. Replace the second floor, main, entrance door with wood doors of the period, or contemporary doors of good design. The doorswings should be reversed to open outward, and panic bars should be provided.
3. Restore the ground level front facade, opening the original arched window wells and replacing the poorly designed glasspanelled door. Reverse doorswing and provide panic bar.

4. Replace the poorly designed rear and side doors with wood panel doors of the 1880 period or contemporary doors of good design. Reverse doorswings and provide panic bars.
5. Since it appears impractical to unblock the windows in the ground floor of the north facade, it is suggested that evergreen planting be introduced along the wall to visually screen the blocked windows.
6. Following the general specifications previously developed for refinishing the exterior of the Courthouse, including patching and waterproofing walls, repairing the cupola and cornice and other trim, and painting the entire exterior, work of this nature should be let out for bids and contracted for as soon as possible. It is important that close supervision, by an architect if possible, be maintained during this work. It is critical to the visual appearance of the Courthouse that none of the original detailing be lost, and the finished coat of paint or other material should be rescribed to simulate the original texture of one by three foot stone blocks.

The Courthouse Square is also in need of restoration and planting, with the ultimate removal of the parking area and service drive which cuts through the north lawn. A qualified landscape architect should be hired to prepare a planting plan and other improvements, including the repair and possible relocation of sidewalks, and the repair of the fountain, benches and other street furniture. A plan prepared by W. Miller for the 1887 redevelopment of the Square is available at the Thomasville Public Library, and should be consulted during this phase.

The Thomas County Courthouse is clearly one of the finest buildings in Thomasville, and it is recommended that the modest changes to the visual appearance of the building and square as outlined in this report be carried out.

NORTH BLVD



30°50'40"

COURTHOUSE

80°54'0"

