

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received FEB 5 1988

date entered MAR - 8 1988

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Campbell County Courthouse at Newport

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number Fourth and York Streets

n/a not for publication

city, town Newport

n/a vicinity of

state Kentucky

code 021

county Campbell

code 037

**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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a being considered	<input 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 Campbell County Courthouse Commission

street & number Campbell County Courthouse; Fourth and York Streets

city, town Newport

n/a vicinity of

state Kentucky

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Campbell County Courthouse at Newport

street & number Fourth and York Streets

city, town Newport

state Kentucky

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1978-1979

federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Kentucky Heritage Council

city, town Frankfort

state Kentucky

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<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 <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

### Section 7a. Summary.

The Campbell County Courthouse at Newport, located at Fourth and York Streets, dates from 1883-84. The Courthouse is sited on a natural rise, at the junction of two major streets, and faces a tree-shaded green. It is one of urban Northern Kentucky's primary landmarks, and forms the nucleus of a diverse group of late nineteenth and early twentieth century religious and commercial buildings. The Courthouse is an outstanding example of high Victorian architecture, lively and eclectic; its interior also retains many notable features. With the exception of a modest 1912 addition, its exterior has changed little. Included in the nomination are the courthouse building and adjacent greenspace; there are no outbuildings.

### Section 7b. Location and Context.

The Campbell County Courthouse at Newport is located conspicuously on a natural rise at the intersection of two main streets, York St. (which carries U. S. 27 south), and Fourth Street, one of the city's major east-west thoroughfares. It is roughly equidistant (about three or four blocks) from the Ohio River to the north and the Licking River to the west. The Ohio River divides Kentucky from Ohio, with Cincinnati opposite, and the Licking separates Campbell from Kenton County, with Covington opposite (see Maps I, II; Photo 1; Illus. 1). Newport extends south and east from the junction of the rivers within the basin and now extends up the hills to the south beyond Twelfth St., with Bellevue and Dayton (also in Campbell County) along the curve of the Ohio to the east. The Courthouse Square is bounded by York on the east, Fourth St. on the south, Columbia St. on the west, and Court Place on the north.

The "basin" or core area of Newport, from the Ohio River south to the foothills of South Newport, was surveyed by the Kentucky Heritage Council during 1978-1979. In the process approximately 250 historic structures--dating for the most part from c. 1870 to 1910--were documented. In the vicinity of the Courthouse, several landmarks have been honored with National Register designation. St. Paul's Episcopal Church, located opposite the Courthouse Square at York and Court Place, was built in 1874 and listed on the Register in 1980. The c. 1860 Southgate-Maddux House at 25 East Third St., approximately two blocks from the Courthouse, received National Register designation in 1976. The c. 1890 Posey Flats buildings at Third and Monmouth Sts., one block east of the Southgate-Maddux House, were listed in 1987. The Salem Methodist Episcopal Church and Parsonage (1882), located four blocks south of the Courthouse Square, achieved National Register status in 1986. A historic district was proposed in 1983 for Monmouth St., downtown Newport's primary commercial artery, but local opposition prevented designation. The east end of Newport includes two adjacent districts that are primarily residential in character; Mansion Hill (listed 1980--expanded, 1985); and East Newport (1983). Together these two preservation areas include approximately 950 buildings.

## 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1883-1884; 1912

**Builder/Architect** A. C. Nash; L. H. Wilson

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Section 8a. Statement of Significance.

The Campbell County Courthouse at Newport, built 1883-1884, with a 1912 addition, is significant under Criterion C and the theme of architecture as a primary landmark of the city of Newport. It is also one of the largest and most architecturally distinctive late nineteenth-century courthouses in Kentucky. Significant details include a tall bell tower, eclectic and stylized masonry details, marble interior staircase, and Cathedral glass window. The Courthouse is a major work of the prominent Cincinnati architect A. C. Nash, and is also associated with Newport architect L. H. Wilson. Among Cincinnati-area public buildings of the late 1800's, its design and execution are unusual. Because of its fortuitous location, the Courthouse enjoys great visual prominence. It was designated a Kentucky Landmark in 1979.

### Section 8b. History.

The Campbell County Courthouse at Newport is somewhat of a historical anomaly. Since Campbell is one of two Kentucky counties to maintain dual county seats, the Newport courthouse occupies an almost-unique position; one of two courthouses in active use in the same county. Although Newport was the county's original seat of government, at a later date a second courthouse was established in the central Campbell town of Alexandria, for reasons that have been lost to history. County offices and departments are divided between the Newport building and its older (c. 1840's) counterpart. Newport is home to the county's main offices, as well as the district and circuit courts. For many years, Newport's courthouse has also served as a city hall, with one wing of the first floor devoted to municipal offices.

Newport's Courthouse Square has been a "seat of justice" for nearly two centuries. This approximately two-acre parcel was sold to the county by General James Taylor, revered as the founder of Newport, for one shilling in 1795. In the beginning, county business was transacted in the homes of Newport residents Andrew Lewis and Jacob Fowler. In July of 1797, the first Campbell County Courthouse was completed. It was replaced in 1815 by a more permanent structure, built of brick and crowned with a cupola and bell. (See illustration.) This building, said to have cost \$1007.00, was labeled the "Palace of Peace."

By the late 1870's, this venerable building had fallen into disrepair. Public attitudes toward the old courthouse were summarized by the NEWPORT LOCAL: "Oh, hasten the day when the old pile will be taken away, for it is a disgrace to the city." (NEWPORT LOCAL, March 24, 1883.) On June 5, 1879, the LOCAL reported that the county court had imposed fines on the City Council for its "failure to provide a suitable [Courthouse] building." In March of 1882, a bill authorizing construction of a new courthouse was introduced into the state

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property 1 acre

Quadrangle name Newport

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A	<u>16</u>	<u>716390</u>	<u>4329840</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<u>16</u>	<u>716430</u>	<u>4329780</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<u>16</u>	<u>716370</u>	<u>4329740</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

D	<u>16</u>	<u>716360</u>	<u>4329800</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

E			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

F			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

G			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

H			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

### Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	n/a	code	county	n/a	code
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state	code	county	code
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# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Walter E. Langsam and Margaret Warminski, Architectural Historians

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date December 1987

street & number 340 East Second Street telephone (606) 581-2883

city or town Newport state 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 David L. Mozan

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date 2-1-88

### For NPS use only

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

[Signature]  
Keeper of the National Register

date 3-8-88

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
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During the course of this survey, the Campbell County Courthouse at Newport was designated a state landmark. The Courthouse is unique among Northern Kentucky's public buildings in its large scale, its horizontal plan, and its fine state of preservation, and may be considered the most architecturally distinctive "temple of Justice" in the area. Historic courthouses also survive in Burlington (seat of Boone County), Independence (Kenton County), Alexandria (Campbell County), and Falmouth (Pendleton County). But all four are small in scale, and both the Burlington and Alexandria examples have undergone considerable exterior alteration. The city of Covington in Kenton County once boasted a splendid turn-of-the-century City Hall and a late Victorian Courthouse. However, both have been demolished and the latter replaced in the 1960's by a high-rise structure.

The courthouse building faces a wide lawn shaded by mature trees. Around the Courthouse grounds is a stone coping wall that curves into many pathways, with a number of original stone posts; these are gabled-over rosettes with molded corners that are chamfered in the Neo Grec manner. In front of the main entrance at the intersection of several paths is a World War II monument in the form of a tall polished granite obelisk on a darker pedestal; at the top is a sphere with the world land-masses embossed on its surface.

A concrete parking lot adjoins the rear of the courthouse building. Just west of this parking area, and facing Columbia St., is the Newport Jail and Jailer's residence (Crapsey and Brown, c. 1887), which is scheduled for demolition in the near future. A diverse group of landmark structures dating from c. 1850 to 1927, some of which are National Register-eligible, surround the Courthouse Square on the north, east, and south. One of the most significant of these--the Journal Building (1885)--was designed to harmonize with and complement the architecture of the Courthouse. From the portico of the Courthouse, or from a vantage point on its green, almost two centuries of the city's history can be surveyed, and the sense of connection with the past is strong indeed. The Courthouse is the primary landmark of downtown Newport, its striking towers and roof-scape highly visible throughout the basin area as well as from Cincinnati. To those who live or work in Newport, the hourly chiming of its bell is a sound familiar and beloved.

Section 7c. Description; exterior.

The Campbell County Courthouse at Newport (as distinguished from the smaller but older courthouse in Alexandria) is a long, rectangular building, extending north-south and facing east toward York Street. It has basically two and a half stories, with a high usable basement. A one and a half story addition adjoins the south end, rising directly from the sidewalk. (See photos 1, 2.) The original building is accented by slightly-projecting square towers, not quite identical. Rising an additional two stories above the main building is a huge tower with open loggia and squared mansard dome set into the east entrance pavilion, slightly overlapping and almost jostling the under-scaled pediment over the main entrance with its one-story porch. (Photo 3.)

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The roofs of the main block are hipped to a wide flat deck, with slightly raised hips extending to the corners of the projecting central east and west pavilions, and smaller roofs leading to their gables. The low, wide dormers between some of the towers also have hipped roofs. Three of the corner towers have truncated, steep-sided pyramids. The fourth, southeast tower rises to its natural point, although a break comparable to that of the others is marked by shell-like motives. The northwest and southwest rear corners are slightly lower sections with reduced-height third stories flanking the rear central section of the main block, which, unlike the front, has three full stories. The northwest and southwest towers have shed roofed dormers at their bases rather than the bulls-eyes with Baroque corner volutes displayed on the front corner towers. The central tower displays clock-faces on four sides. Because of this complex massing and the slight disparity between the towers, the overall effect of the exterior is irregular and asymmetrical, although the plan is actually completely symmetrical. (Photos 1, 6, 8.)

The towers, gabled east and west pavilions and projecting blocks, all of which rise slightly above the main eave-line, have very long single or double brackets at the corners. Similar but even more elaborate pilasters mark the corners of the main tower above the roof-line, with swags in relief lending a Neo-Classical touch, and serving as capitals for the balconied fourth story. (Photo 3.)

The front porch and tower form an integrated ensemble, with the northeast pilasters of the tower actually overlapping those of the south end of the gabled entrance pavilion. The one story main porch extends over only the double bay under the pediment. It has paired rusticated brick pillars and pilasters, each pair linked by stone blocks incised with stylized rosettes; these have above them the stone blocks that extend inward to form impost blocks for the segmental brick-and-stone front arch, which appears to rest on slender, partially fluted stone columns with exaggerated (perhaps Romanesque) capitals, on stone pedestals. Over the piers are acanthine brackets that may date from c. 1912 when the south wing addition--displaying similar features--was added. (Photo 3.)

The window openings of the two main stories of the Courthouse are individually very tall and narrow in proportion. Many are grouped in pairs or triplets, reinforcing the vertical impression. (Photo 5.) But the segmental arched basement openings, the small windows grouped in dormers and in towers above the roof line, have a horizontal effect. Horizontal emphasis is also provided by multiple thin stone bands at sill, lintel, and even floor and cornice level. In many places, however, these are interrupted to rise around the transoms of the second story windows, or the segmental arches of the triple windows in the main block. When they serve as lintels, these stone bands are transformed into brick jack arches with stone used only for keystones and impost blocks. (This effect is echoed in the south wing on the round-arched window openings, even though there are only continuous sill-courses.) The arched lower windows of the facade have the effect of striped voussoirs because of the multiplication of keystones, and this is repeated on the segmental front and side arches of the front porch, and the round-arched third-stage

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openings of the main tower. This treatments serves to reinforce the overall effect of nervous, rhythmic vitality.

Decorative elements are drawn from a variety of sources, including the Neo-Classic and the Neo-Grec. The pilasters of the gable pavilion and tower have stylized Neo Grec capitals, with various raised circles and the equivalent of dentils and modillions. (Photo 7.) Stylized acroteria adorn the front gable. The Neo-Grec influence can also be seen in the paired pilasters that flank the facade windows. These pilasters also feature central incised verticals and impost blocks. The windows of the second-story have curious applied flattened pilasters that are really schematic renderings in incised stone of columns like those on the front porch. The flatness of these stylized elements contrasts to the rather robust floral relief under the segmental arches below. Tri-partite Palladian windows can be seen under and above the front gable.

Iron cresting remains on the southeast tower only, although an undated (c. 1909) postcard view proves it was also used on the main tower. Metal is, of course, employed on the tower and dormer trim, and pressed metal reliefs flank the clock faces of the main tower. Perhaps the most striking exterior use of cast iron or steel, however, is the series of iron staircases open from the corner towers and rear entrance, which contrast to the later fire escapes on the rear elevation. (Photo 7.) It has been suggested that the rear staircases were probably manufactured nearby at the Buecker Iron Works factory.

The simpler, more obviously Neo-Classical south wing of 1912 is clearly intended to relate to the original building, and its design almost suggests a base for a second story. Its foundations are the same, except for the tabbed stone surrounds accenting the segmental arched openings. The long brick quoins on the main story echo the rustication of the original porch piers. In addition, the paired brackets under the plain, flat cornice might be considered reduced, acanthine versions of those on the main tower. (Photo 2.)

Section 7d. Description; interior.

The layout of the interior of the Courthouse is essentially simple, and intact, although frequent remodellings have changed nearly all the surfaces and some spaces. A short hall runs from the front entrance to the rear with a long cross hall extending from north to south on both main floors and the basement. The ends of the second floor cross-hall have been filled in with chambers, as has the front section of the main hall over the porch. (This may, however, have been an original room).

As originally built, the Courthouse had a pair of staircases leading from the first to second stories, in the same area of the hall as the present stair. These twin staircases ran along the outer walls of the short hall, and their outlines are still visible on the plaster. Moreover, they are depicted on the 1886 and 1894 Sanborn maps. The present staircase rises in single centered flight from the first floor, splitting into two

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reverse flights at a land about two-thirds of the way up. The base is flanked by outward curving solid marble newels with applied carved garlanded volutes supporting impressive bronze lamp standards with hanging arms beneath a central globe. These light fixtures were restored during 1984, the Courthouse's centennial year.

Another primary feature of the interior is the long, rectangular light-well that rises from the front hall to a skylight above the second story. This feature, however, does not appear to be original and may date from the renovation of the hall. Previous to its installation, it appears the well was lit through the loggias of the third story interior. Only one of these loggias has not been closed up, although all four remain within the walls. They retain highly stylized short columns, banded in the center and base, with rather handsome Romanesque-Corinthian capitals, and sunburst-like flares flanking the impost blocks.

The well in the second-story front hall was also recast in the early 20th-century remodellings; indeed, it may not have been there originally. The edge of the cutout floor is cased in marble, with a handsome Roman thermal-patterned bronze railing around the opening. The contemporary skylight that almost fills the ceiling above the third floor over the front hall is divided into nine panels by beams, with small corner squares. The glass is patterned by tiny squares, triangles, and assorted tetrahedra. It almost suggests some of Frank Lloyd Wright's more abstract window designs, while evoking the Roman thermal pattern of the railing. The colors are mostly frosted white and pale gold or amber, with somewhat brighter colors in the wreathed seal of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Aside from many incised door frames with concentric corner blocks, the first and second stories retain almost no evidence of their original treatments. The woodwork's grained finish, executed in the 1910 renovation, has been obscured by layers of paint, and no evidence remains of the wall and ceiling frescoes referred to in 1907 newspaper accounts.

The attic stories, however, do seem to retain many original structural and some decorative features. The attic surrounds the raised third floor in the center of the rear elevation, as well as the truncated cross hall that opens through the loggia into the top of the light well. An interesting surviving feature is the upper gallery of what must have been a court room in the southeast corner of the central crossing. There are probably other remaining elements above lowered ceilings, behind panels, in virtually inaccessible towers, and possibly elsewhere.

The main hall is the major surviving feature of the 1907 remodelling, when the staircase was rebuilt. The courtrooms and most of the interior rooms of the Courthouse--occupied as city or county offices--were remodelled in 1910 and have been modernized yet again in recent years with the addition of paneled walls, lowered ceilings, and the like, which probably covered (if not obliterated) original and earlier features. The corridors have handsome white mosaic tile floors with Greek key or meander borders and small geometric

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patterns in alternating rows. There is much use of gray marble wainscot.

On the landing is a magnificent allegorical art or "Cathedral" glass window, facing west. Toward the left stands a female figure (symbolizing the Arts), crowned by a laurel wreath and holding a palette. To her right stands a male figure (Transportation) in garb that suggests overalls, bearing a locomotive in one hand and a torch (that may be a symbol of Progress) in the other. Commerce, whose hand rests on a money chest, is seated at their feet. In the background, gears symbolize Industry; twining vines, Nature; and scales encircled by a wreath, Justice. An arcade frames the grouping, and palms frame a blank panel at the base of the window. This handsome, warmly-colored window, with well-painted faces, drapery, and other elements, effectively lights the staircase. According to the July 28, 1907 edition of the KENTUCKY POST, the window was produced by "a Cincinnati art glass studio" whose name the paper declined to mention. The male figure of the group is said to resemble William Goebel, Kentucky's "martyred" governor, who was assassinated on the steps of the state Capitol in 1900.

Section 7e. Alterations.

The building has been well maintained by the Courthouse Commission. It is basically in excellent structural condition, although inevitably in need of constant repair. The exterior has been cleaned and pointed, with some care taken not to damage the original fabric. As mentioned previously, the 1912 south addition remains the most significant exterior change. Anodized aluminum windows recently replaced many of the building's original double-hung sash. The building's original exterior doors were recently replaced with contemporary doors of glass and bronze-colored aluminum, which remain fairly unobtrusive. An inappropriate concrete-stucco sign is visible above the southeast tower's main doorway, and the north doorway is similarly treated. Protective glass has also been added to the art glass window to conserve energy and deter vandalism. The most significant interior change was the addition of an elevator in the southwest intersection of the main hall and cross-hall. This much-needed feature was inserted into space formerly used as restrooms, with minimal damage to historic fabric.

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legislature. Five months later, Campbell County voters approved a new tax to fund a Courthouse Commission. The Commissioners, appointed to four-year terms, thus became the building's legal owners, responsible for its maintenance. This would prove to be a novel arrangement, since Kentucky's other courthouses are owned and maintained by local Fiscal Courts, composed of the county's chief executive and a board of commissioners.

On June 16, 1883, the names of sub-contractors were published in the LOCAL. J. T. Thomas was named "main contractor" and carpenter. Excavation and limestone work were the responsibility of Charles Limerick; brickwork, John Kenley of Covington; freestone, Behan McDonald of Covington; galvanized iron, tin, and slate roofing, Lawrence Rust of Newport; iron work, Meyer Manufacturing of Covington; plumbing, James McLean. Architect in charge was A. C. Nash, a prominent Cincinnati designer whom the LOCAL claimed was "called to all parts of the country in his calling." Pleased with this progress, the newspaper proclaimed "it now seems like work in earnest, and in a little over a year from this time it is hoped the city will have one of the finest public buildings in the state."

During the summer of 1883, a minor controversy erupted over the siting of the new courthouse building. This was resolved by Nash, who favored a generous setback for the new structure, and who labeled the Courthouse Square "the finest for public building" he had ever seen. Soon afterward, the old courthouse was demolished. By September, the foundations for the new building were in place, and the brick work begun. A month later, the "second tier" of joists had been completed. On October 13, the LOCAL reported that the new courthouse was "going to add very largely to the appearance of the city." By 1884, the new courthouse was complete.

Once occupied, the resplendent Courthouse became the center of the city's political and economic life. During the late 1880's, a new county jail (complete with rock-breaking shed) was completed on the rear of the Courthouse Square. A city market, open for business three days a week, occupied Fourth Street between York and Columbia, and continued to flourish until the 1900's. In the mid-1880's, the adjacent 400 block of York Street was redeveloped and transformed into the city's prime commercial/mercantile district, home to both the city's banks and an array of smaller enterprises. It retained this status until the turn of century, when the focus of commercial activity shifted to Monmouth St. (See Sanborn maps.) But the viability (and desirability) of the Courthouse Square was again demonstrated in 1927, when the still-extant Newport Finance Building--Northern Kentucky's first high-rise office building--was completed at the southwest corner of Fourth and York Sts.

In its role as a "temple of justice," Newport's Courthouse witnessed many dramas great and small. One of its most notorious moments occurred in 1897, when the Pearl Bryan murder trial--which followed one of the most gruesome crimes in Northern Kentucky's history--culminated in the last public execution in the state. Despite expert legal counsel, the accused murderers of "Poor Pearl, Poor Girl" were convicted and hung on the

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Courthouse lawn. For many years the Courthouse was a mecca for eloping couples taking advantage of the state's liberal marriage laws.

After the turn of the century, an ambitious improvement program was begun. In 1907, the courthouse's public spaces were improved by the addition of tile flooring, a marble wainscot and staircase, electric lights, and an immense art glass window. Walls and ceilings were "frescoed in buff and bronze," and woodwork grained "in imitation of oak." These improvements, costing \$13,500, aroused great admiration. The KENTUCKY POST labeled the marble and tile work "the finest in Newport," and praised the newly renovated entry hall as "among the handsomest and most artistic of any public building in the State."

Despite these efforts, the interior rooms of the Courthouse remained untouched, and their defects led the POST to call them "about the worst and most inconvenient in the state." In the summer of 1910, Newport architect L. H. Wilson was hired to supervise a major renovation of the building, to include remodeling of several offices and courtrooms. Exterior improvements would include painting, roofing, and reconstruction of sidewalks in concrete and cement. The porch balustrade would also be removed, and replaced with one made of cement. It was the POST's opinion, (stated on June 27) that the building "had been neglected for years," and that "an expenditure of at least \$5000" would be needed to "place it in repair." Renovation work began in August, and was completed by the end of the year. In 1912, a one-story annex was constructed, adjacent to the south side of the building.

As the twentieth century progressed, the Campbell County Courthouse at Newport continued to play its designated role, home to county courts and city offices. But in the post-World War II era this Victorian landmark, like so many others across the country, faced an uncertain future. The city's first Comprehensive Plan, prepared in 1972 by the Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission, favored demolition of the Courthouse to make way for a new civic center complex.

However, this "urban renewal" plan was never carried out. As its centennial year approached, the Courthouse gained new status as a landmark of architectural and historic significance. As a symbol of the city, and an icon of its skyline, it became a tourist attraction. National Register status should further ensure the preservation of this unique and important building for the future.

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Section 8c. Architectural context.

1. A. C. Nash

Albert C. (also known as "A. C.") Nash (1826-1890), the architect of the 1883-84 Campbell County Courthouse at Newport, was one of the leading architects of the Cincinnati area from about 1867 until his death. He began practice as an architect in Bridgeport, Connecticut, in 1848, and also did work in nearby New Haven. He later moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and eventually came to Cincinnati to superintend construction of his design for a new municipal hospital. According to an 1891 account, published after his son M. R. Nash had succeeded to the firm, A. C. Nash (as he was known professionally) "early became justly celebrated for the artistic beauty of his designs, utility and excellence of his plans, and thoroughly reliable and substantial character of all work supervised by him. "

An 1886 sketch claims that his reputation was "almost national as an expert in his profession, and many of the finest buildings in this city (Cincinnati) and New York and other places attest to his genius to design and skill to execute the plans for the most imposing private and public buildings...He makes a specialty of church architecture." Nash was a charter member of the Cincinnati Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and served as its president from 1873-76 and from 1882-89, according to Withey.

Nevertheless, few buildings by Nash have so far been identified. The 1891 account lists several, including the Bodman Building (now the Fort Washington Hotel, 619-23 Main Street, Cincinnati, c. 1889; see Miami Purchase Association Inventory Form), and the Lincoln Inn Court Building, in which many prominent Cincinnati architects once had their offices. Nash was also responsible for the landmark Hoffner Block (1885) on Hamilton Ave., which is listed on the National Register as part of the Hoffner Historic District. Among the most important of the residences designed by Nash was the A. H. Hinkle mansion in Mount Auburn, Cincinnati (see Maxwell, pp. 11-13).

In Northern Kentucky, perhaps the best-known of Nash's works was "the Holmes residence on the Madison Pike near Covington." Known as the "Holmes Castle," this superb post-Civil War Gothic Revival mansion was demolished in the 1930's to make way for an addition to the Holmes High School complex, named for its original owner, Daniel H. Holmes.

Nash was also responsible for the two Dueber Watch Case Factories (1882-83, 1886) located at 501 and 601 Washington Ave. in Newport. It is curious to note that these industrial landmarks, as originally designed, bore a striking resemblance to the Newport Courthouse! (See illustrations.) Although the elaborate schemes depicted in Marquis' idealized view were never carried out, the Dueber buildings as executed have many elements in common with the Courthouse, including window treatments and eclectic and stylized masonry details. 601 Washington, the larger and more striking of the Dueber buildings, even had a mansarded

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clock-tower, a feature that was removed long ago. The handsome Samuel Reed Masonic Lodge (1884) in nearby Ludlow has also been attributed to Nash. (See Inventory Form, Kentucky Heritage Council.) It is interesting to note that both the Samuel Reed and Hoffner buildings were built shortly after the completion of the Newport Courthouse. But it is not yet clear whether the earlier Dueber building provided the inspiration for the Newport Courthouse, or vice versa; in the absence of definitive information, it is interesting to speculate about which came first.

A number of churches in and around Cincinnati were also designed by Nash. These include the First Presbyterian Church in suburban Glendale, Ohio (before 1870; see Maxwell, pg. 81); the Church of the Presentation, Walnut Hills (see INLAND ARCHITECT, II, February 1884, 13.); and a "new Jewish synagogue at the northeast corner of Mound and Richmond Streets" (IA, III, 86). Nash also was responsible for the Roman Catholic Church of the Assumption, also in Walnut Hills (IA, VI, 1, August 1885, 9); and a Presbyterian Church in Price Hill (IA, XI, 1, Feb. 1888, 13).

The Nash design most relevant to the Campbell County Courthouse, however, is the former Bourbon County Courthouse in Paris, Kentucky. (See illustration.) This landmark is known through old photographs and a lithographic frontispiece in Perrin's 1887 history of Bourbon and neighboring counties of the Blue Grass Region. Nash's 1873-74 Second Empire-style courthouse in Paris, which cost the considerable sum of \$125,000, was described as "French Renaissance" in style. It had many features in common with the Campbell County Courthouse, as well as with many others from the 1870's and 1880's. (See Perrin, pp. 45-46, for an interesting description of the building and the contractors, who came from Cincinnati, Lexington, Paris, and elsewhere.)

On the other hand, there are specific similarities and differences. The main tower, with its panelled pilaster strips, two stories above the roof, domed Mansard, and balconies on brackets, closely resembles its Newport counterpart, and also contrasts with the square Mansard corner towers. The Paris building, however, is far more vertical in form. It is symmetrical at the short end, with the tower directly over the two-story entrance portico. Thus the Paris building effectively provides a model for the "standard" courthouse building of the period, against which the unusual features of the Newport building stand out.

It is curious that, despite at least two known courthouse commissions in Kentucky, Nash is not listed as having designed any of the 500 or so 19th-century courthouses in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, or the eight other Midwestern states catalogued in Goeldner's TEMPLES OF JUSTICE.

2. L. H. Wilson

Louis Henry (L. H.) Wilson (1857-1935), who was responsible for the 1910 alterations to

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CAMPBELL CO. COURTHOUSE AT NEWPORT, KY

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the Courthouse (and possibly for others), was born in Newport. He was the son of Patrick Henry (P. H.) Wilson, a prolific builder-contractor, with whom he began practice. (See Withey, p. 66+.) Among L. H. Wilson's listed works were "the seven-story Finance Building (1927), several schools, and a number of private homes" in Newport and vicinity. Other Newport buildings known to have been designed by Wilson include two eclectic and handsome late Victorian structures in what is now the Mansion Hill Historic District; his residence at 429 East Fourth Street, and his office at Park and Lexington Aves. Some of Wilson's works have been identified through the "Building Notes" weekly column in the KENTUCKY POST from about 1910 to 1918. But this small and disparate group of structures makes it difficult to characterize Wilson's work, other than to suggest that he was comfortable using both Georgian Revival and Tudor or Gothic Collegiate styles.

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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet**

CAMPBELL COUNTY COURTHOUSE AT NEWPORT, KY

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Section 9. Bibliography.

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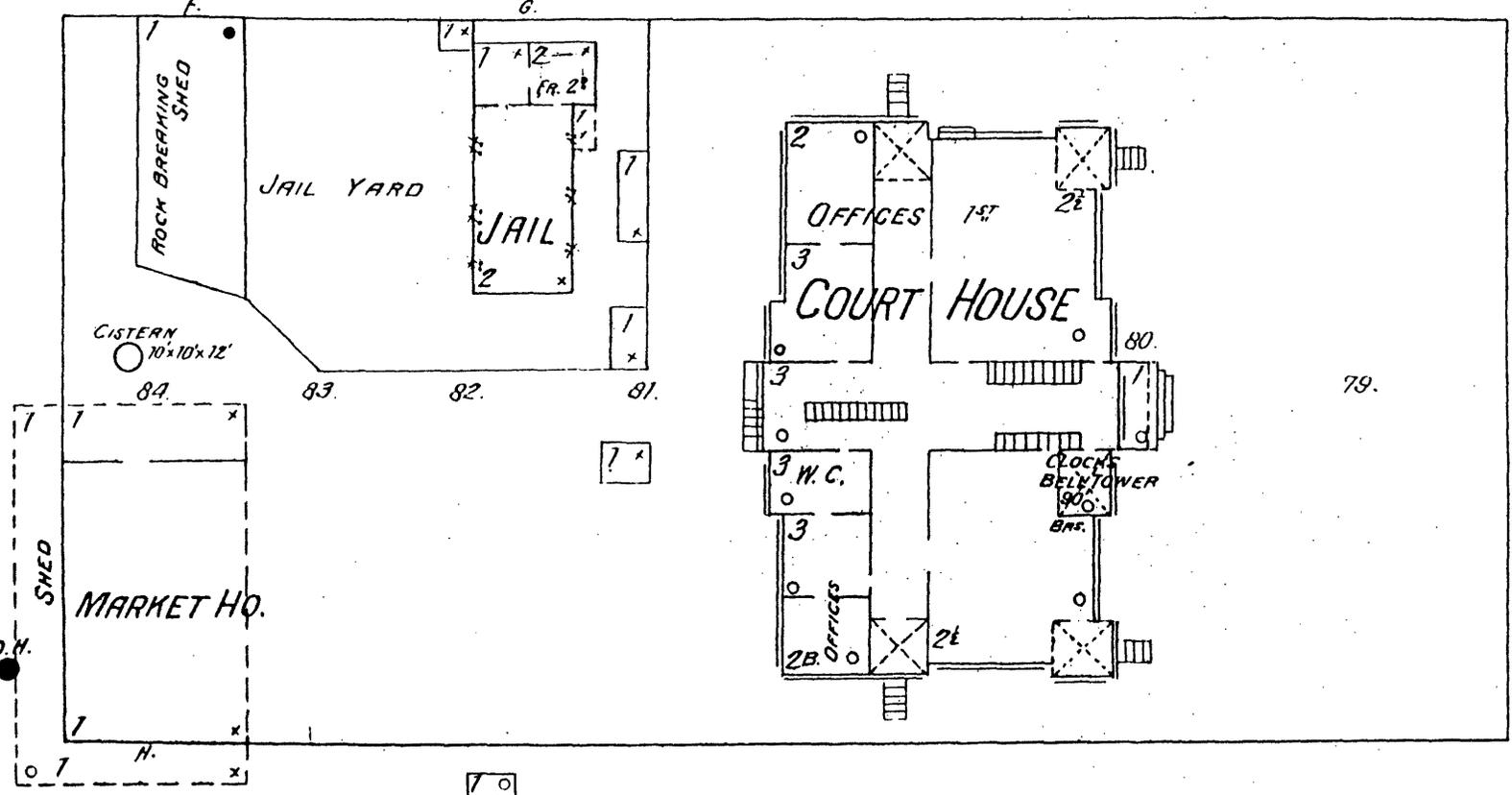
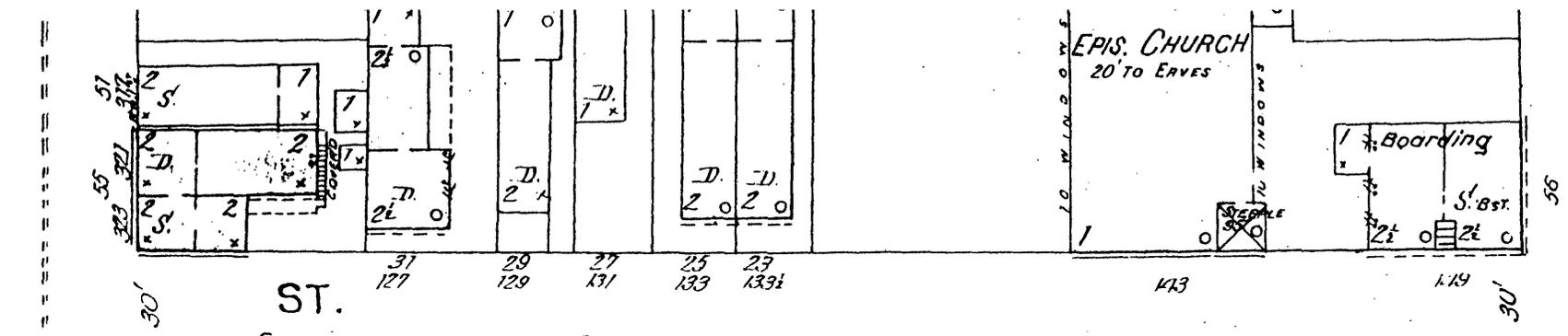
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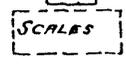
Section 10. Geographic Data.

Beginning at the southwest corner of York St. and Court Place; then proceeding south along the west line of York St. to its intersection with the north line of West Fourth St., a distance of 205 feet more or less; then west along the north line of West Fourth St. a distance of 215 feet more or less, to its intersection with a concrete driveway; then proceeding north along the east line of said driveway to its intersection with the south line of Court Place, a distance of 205 feet more or less; then proceeding east along said south line, for a distance of 215 feet more or less to the point of intersection of said line with the west line of York St.: the place of beginning. Contents 1 acre.

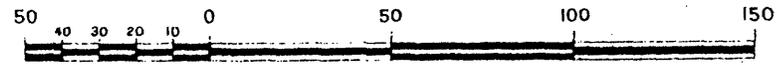
Included within this boundary are the courthouse and the lawn adjoining the east face of the building; there are no outbuildings. This boundary includes



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Scale of Feet.



1886 Sanborn Map of Newport, showing new Courthouse & environs  
 CAMPBELL CO. COURTHOUSE AT NEWPORT, KY

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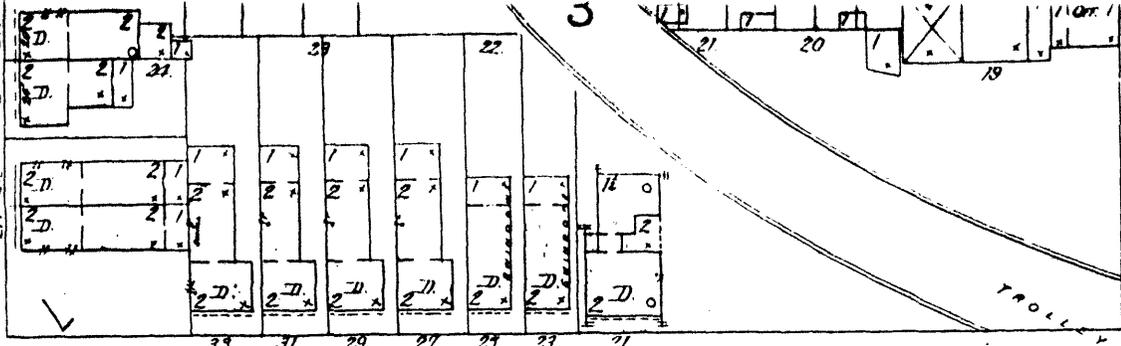
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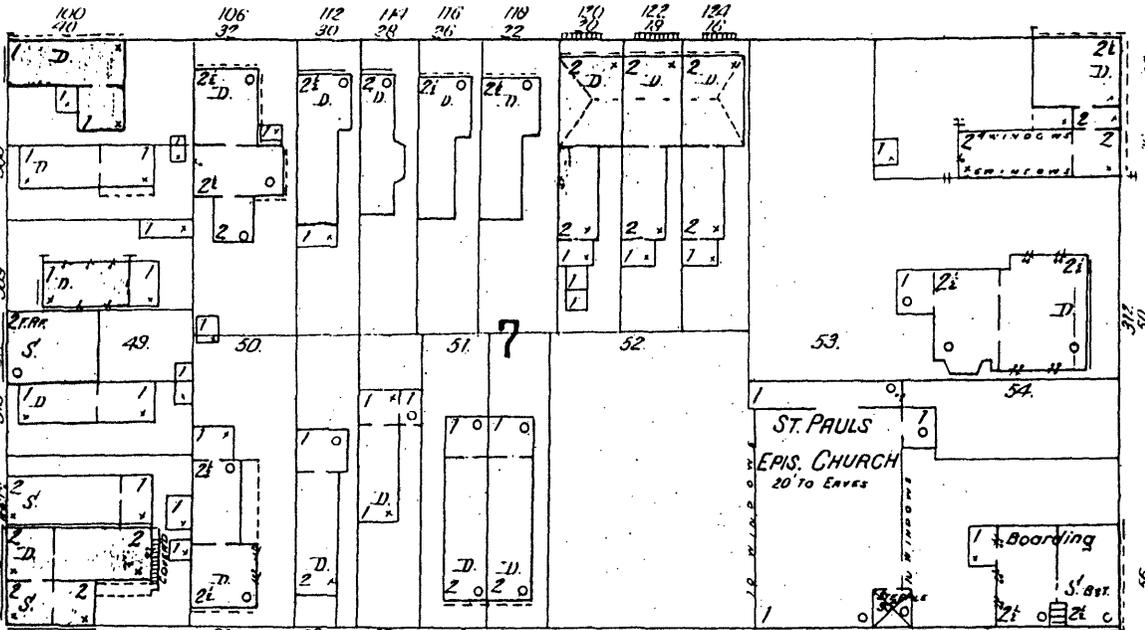
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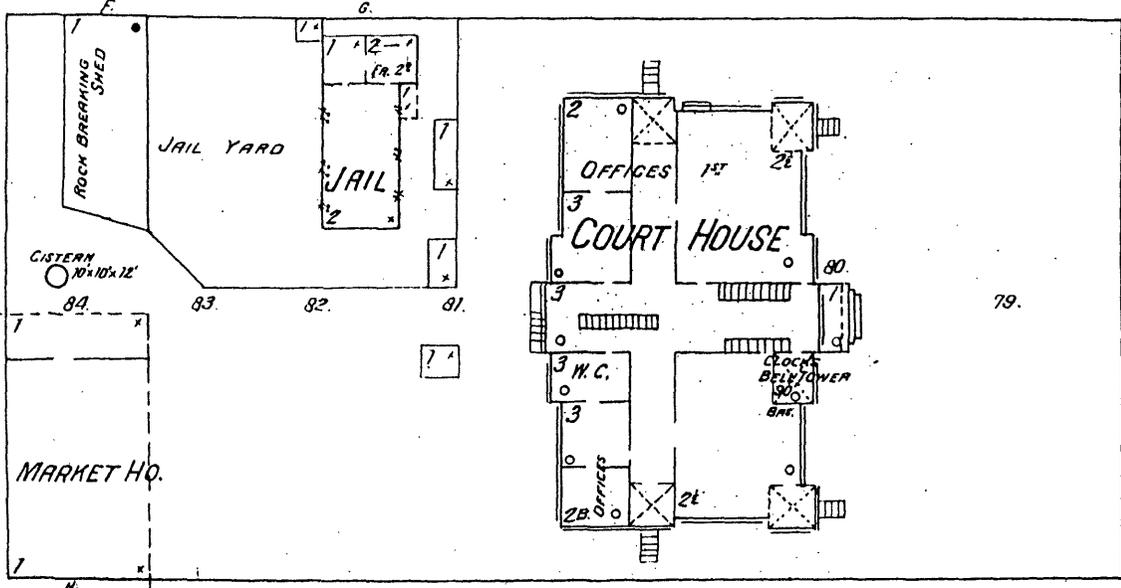
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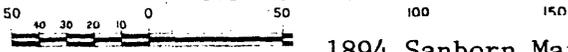
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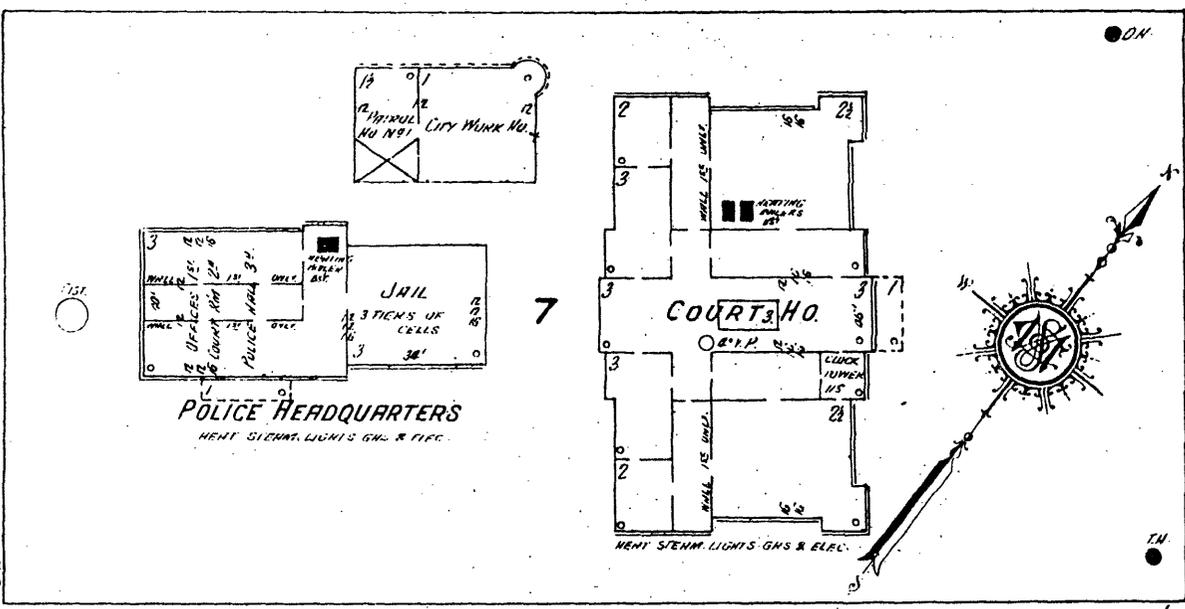
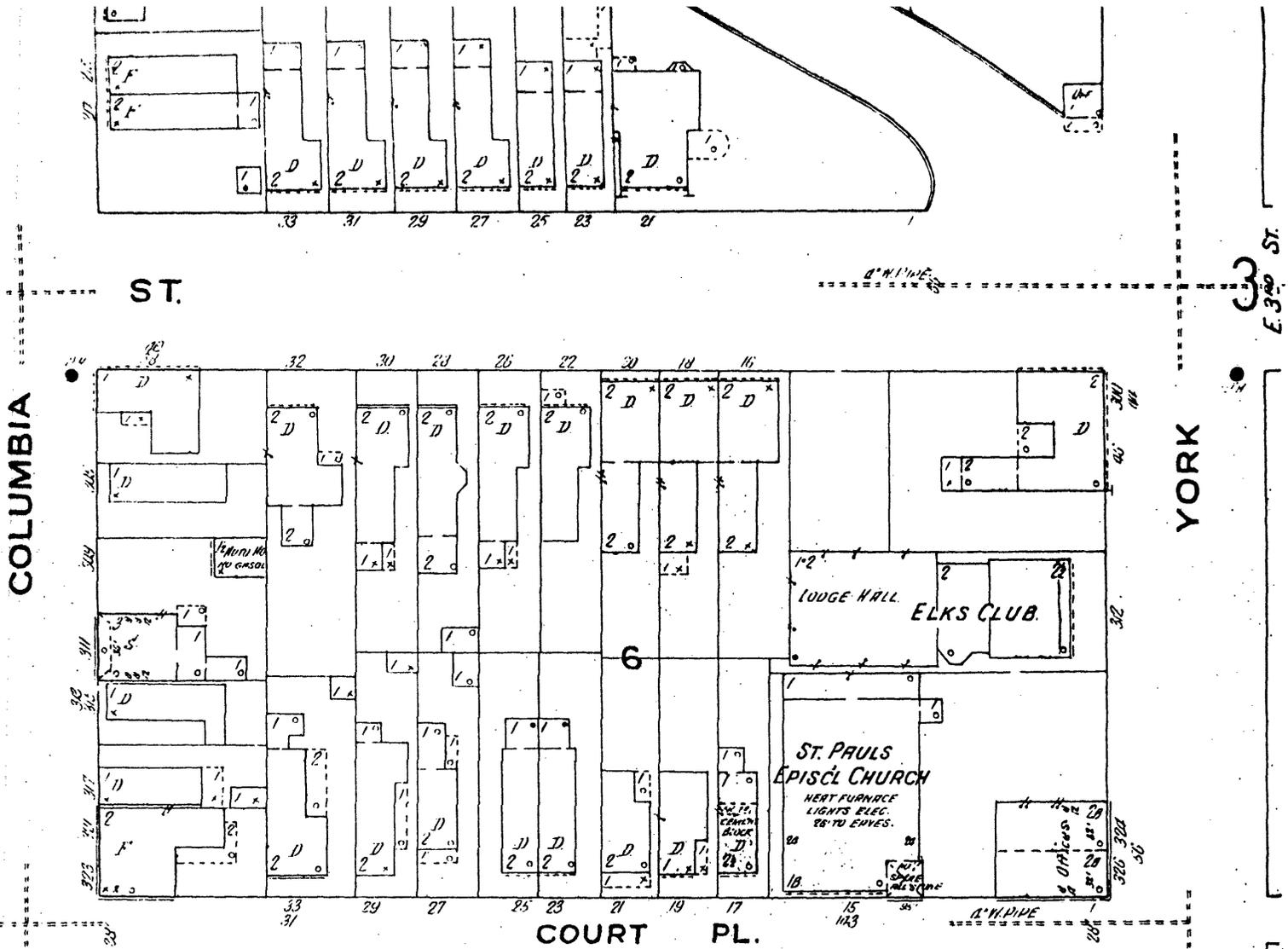
1894 Sanborn Map of Newport, showing Courthouse, old jail (now demo.), and market house  
 CAMPBELL CO. COURTHOUSE AT NEWPORT, KY.

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CAMPBELL COUNTY COURTHOUSE AT NEWPORT, KENTUCKY

1894 Newport Sanborn map index, showing Courthouse in context; streets, rivers, bridges





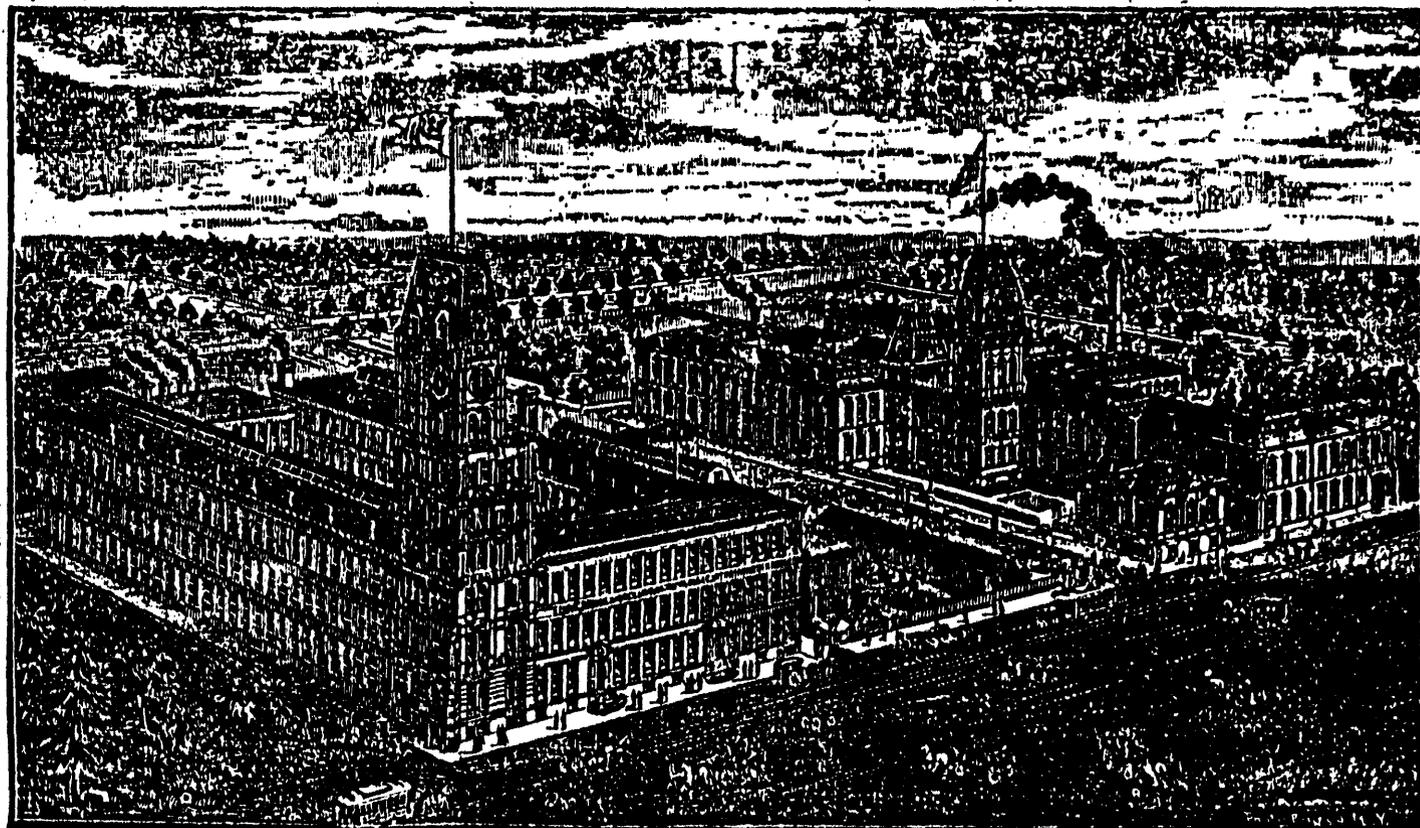
1910 Sanborn Map of Newport; new jail at rear of Courthouse, and interior plan with new (c. 1907) staircase  
 CAMPBELL COUNTY COURTHOUSE, NEWPORT, KY



Former Bourbon Co. Courthouse (A. C. Nash  
1873-74). INCLUDED FOR COMPARATIVE  
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CAMPBELL COUNTY COURTHOUSE, NEWPORT, KY

BOURBON COUNTY COURT HOUSE.

A. N. Marquis, ed. The Industries of Cincinnati  
 Cent. A. N. Marquis & Co., 1883.



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**THE DUEBER WATCH CASE MANUFACTURING CO.**  
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 A. C. Nash, 1882-83, 1886. An idealized  
 view taken from A. N. Marquis, ed., THE  
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A. N. Marquis & Co., 1883.  
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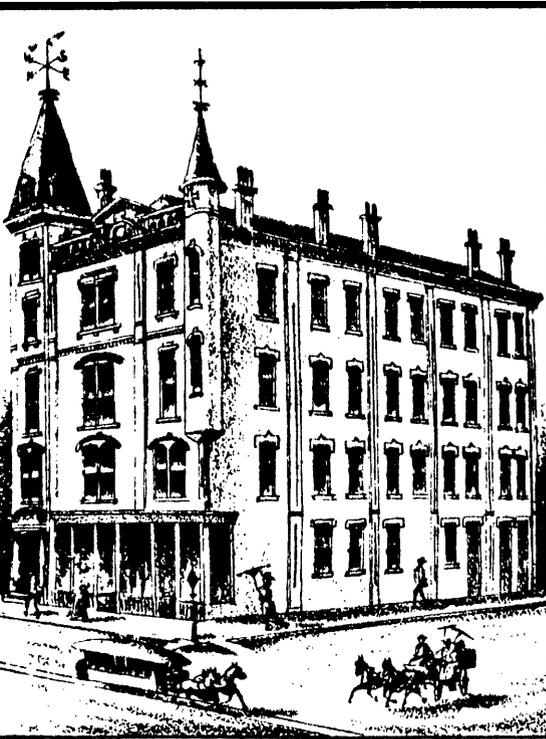
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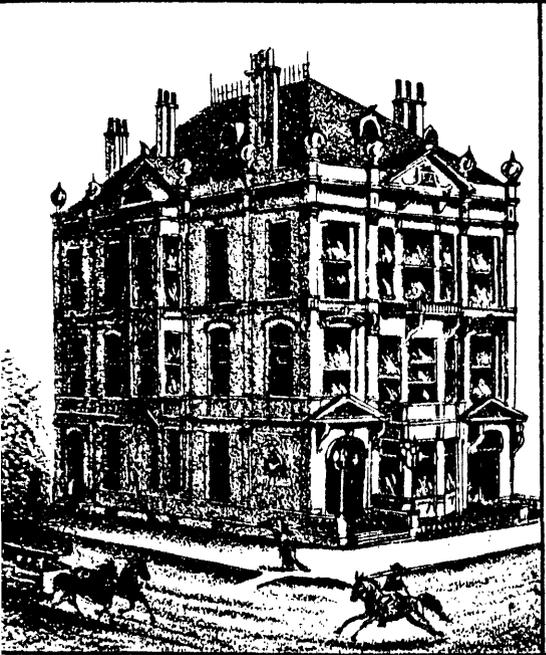
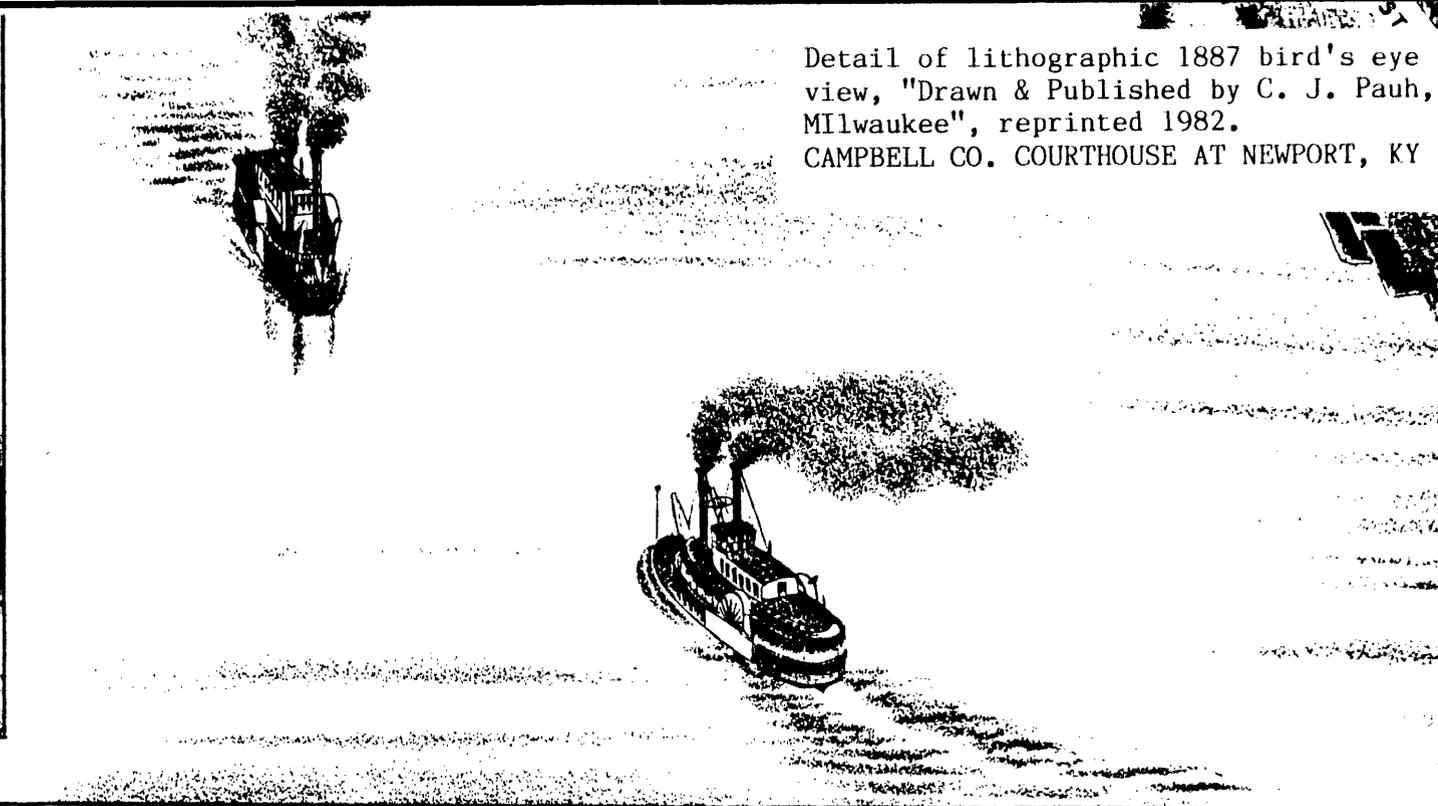
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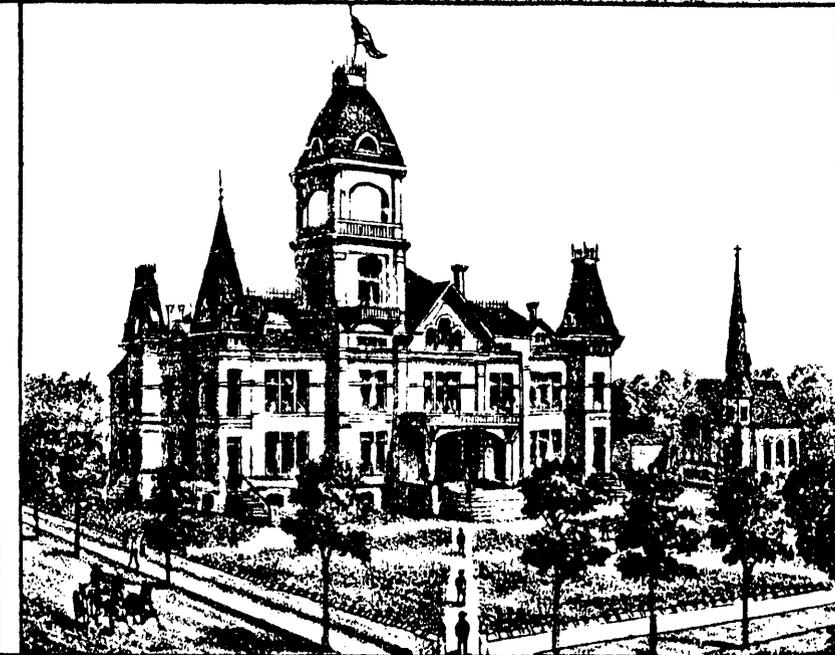


MASONIC BUILDING.

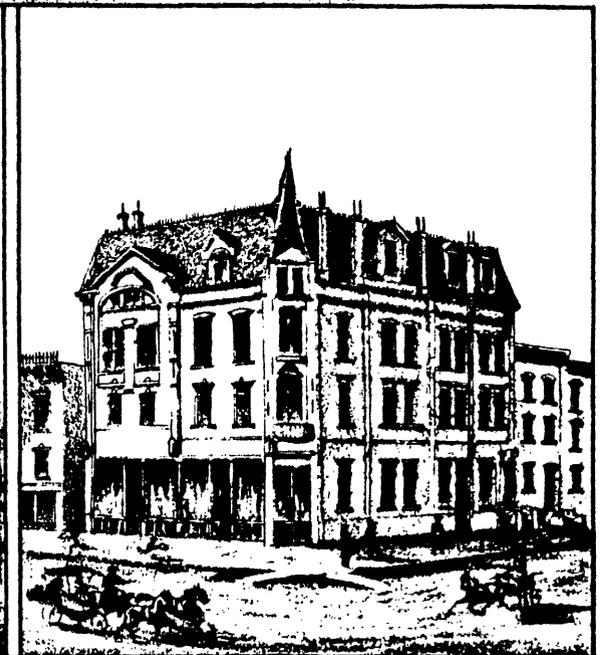
Detail of lithographic 1887 bird's eye view, "Drawn & Published by C. J. Pauh, Milwaukee", reprinted 1982. CAMPBELL CO. COURTHOUSE AT NEWPORT, KY



FIRST NATIONAL BANK.



COURT HOUSE.



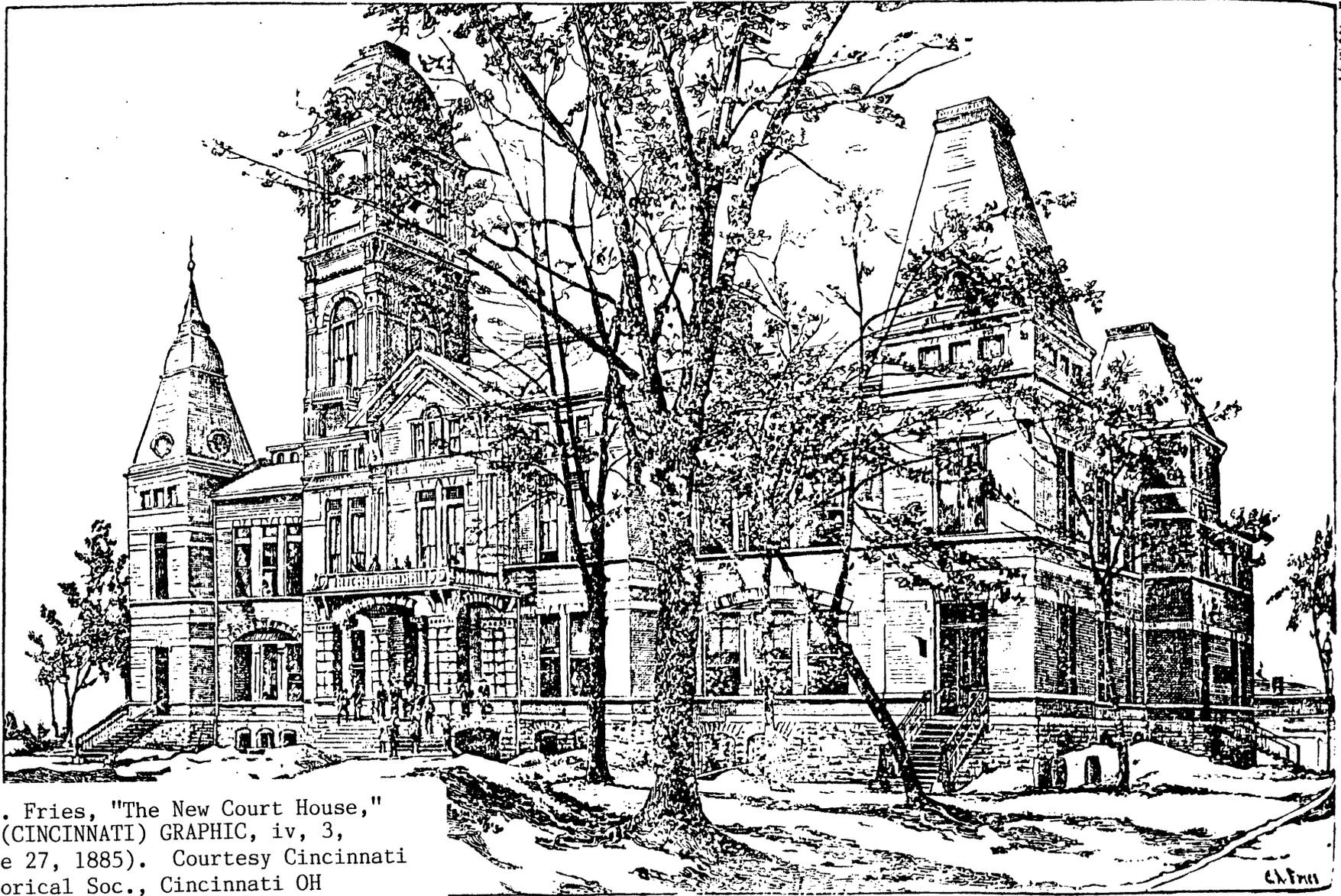
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