

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC Old Court House, Warren County

AND/OR COMMON
Old Court House, Warren County

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Court Square

CITY, TOWN _____ VICINITY OF _____
Vicksburg 4th
STATE Mississippi CODE 28 COUNTY Warren CODE 149

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> 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 Warren County, operated by Vicksburg and Warren County
Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER Court Square

CITY, TOWN _____ VICINITY OF _____ STATE Mississippi
Vicksburg

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, Warren County Courthouse
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER Grove and Cherry Streets

CITY, TOWN _____ STATE Mississippi
Vicksburg

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Historic American Buildings Survey (9 drawings)

DATE 1966 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Library of Congress/Annex

CITY, TOWN _____ STATE D.C.
Washington

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Old Warren County Courthouse is a large two story rectangular brick building, originally faced with smooth stucco, now with cement, scored to give the appearance of ashlar masonry. The shorter ends of the building have four columned temple porticos with fluted Ionic columns supporting a full entablature which runs around the entire building. The long sides have six columned porticos of identical design. The well proportioned thirty-foot columns with a decorative Athenian band below the capitol give an imposing dignity to the structure, an effect which is heightened by the hilltop location.

A large well scaled tower adds further visual impact. A great octagonal drum rests upon a low broad square base which rises from the roof. Slender engaged Corinthian columns mark the angles and support a full heavy entablature which adds needed weight to the central octagon section. Between the columns are doors which open onto the low terrace base. These have semicircular fanlights and are framed by smaller Corinthian columns in turn supporting entablatures for the entrances which correspond to that of the octagon itself. Above this a lighter circular cupola supported by slender colonettes shelters the tower bell.

Four small octagonal buildings at the corners were originally cistern houses for catching water to fight fires. In later years these were converted into outside offices.

In 1876 balconies were added to the second story windows behind the porticos and in 1907 a new coat of cement was put on the face of the building. A tornado damaged the Courthouse slightly in 1953; minor repairs included the replacement of the cupola roof.

Minor alterations in the interior of the building since the 1860's include the replacement of some wainscoting, the removal of a few small partitions, the construction of a cement floor in the downstairs hall on top of the original hard wood surface, and the closing of the dome cavity on the second floor by a ceiling. Generally, however, the building retains remarkable integrity.

Exhibits occupy eight rooms and two halls on the first and second floors. Generally they deal with Civil War and Southern history. The large courtroom on the second floor is used for meetings of the Vicksburg and Warren County Historical Society and for various public functions.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1859-1861, 1863

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

William Weldon

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Old Warren County Courthouse, constructed between 1859-1861, became the symbol of Confederate resistance during the siege of Vicksburg because of its large size and prominent hilltop position. Following the surrender of the city on July 4, 1863, Union forces under Major General U. S. Grant replaced the Confederate flag with the Union flag on the Courthouse cupola, signifying the Union victory in a campaign which most historians agree was the most decisive in the Civil War. Substantially unchanged after more than a century, the Old Warren County Courthouse, now maintained as a museum, remains today not only a symbol of the siege of Vicksburg, but a nice example of late Greek Revival style.

HISTORY

In 1859 builders George and Thomas Weldon of Antrim, Ireland, began construction of a new courthouse for Warren County, Mississippi. William Weldon, a brother of the contractors furnished the design. The builders utilized trained slave labor and burned brick for the courthouse at the site. A direct tax levy provided the necessary capital for other materials. The building was completed in 1861 and later played a significant role in the siege of Vicksburg.

The Vicksburg Campaign (May 1862-July 1863) is recognized by many of the leading military historians in the United States and abroad as the decisive campaign of the Civil War. In this campaign the Warren County Courthouse became a symbol to the Union soldiers and sailors who struggled to gain a victory over Confederate forces.

When the Union ocean-going fleet arrived below Vicksburg on May 18, 1862, Commander S. Phillips Lee ordered Brigadier General H. L. Smith to surrender the city. After Smith refused, Union warships bombarded Vicksburg and its defenders for two months but failed to break the spirit of the Confederates. Sketches and drawings prepared by artists and illustrators who accompanied the fleet show the Courthouse as Vicksburg's most prominent landmark.

(Continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See Continuance Sheet)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	15	699630	3581250	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The Courthouse is located in Courthouse Square. The boundary is drawn to enclose this square including the main building and its four cistern houses (the only structure on the Square) within the landmark designation. Using the near curb line, Courthouse Square is bounded on the north by Jackson Street, on the east by Cherry Street, on the south by Grove Street and on the west by Monroe Street.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Patricia Heintzelman, Architectural Historian, Landmark Review Project

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE

5/15/75

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE

202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C. 20240

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

Landmark

Designated: MAY 23, 1968

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.

Boundary Certified the

George J. Emery
 June 1, 1977

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

12/7/77

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Because the navy failed to take the city, Major General U. S. Grant moved down from the north in the autumn of 1862. His army spent the winter camped on the Louisiana flood plain opposite Vicksburg where they looked across the Mississippi and saw the Vicksburg bluffs and the Warren County Courthouse. Their goal became simplified in the complexities of war: unfurl the colors from the cupola of the Courthouse and the battle would be won. In April, satisfied that the Confederate were using the Courthouse as an observation post, Grant had a battery of 30-pound guns placed with orders to destroy the structure. Union guns, however, failed to inflict serious damage.

On April 30, 1863, Grant crossed the Mississippi 30 miles below Vicksburg. In a lightening 18-day campaign, Grant defeated the Confederates in five battles and approached Vicksburg from the east. An epic 47-day siege ensued. From their rifle-pits and batteries, Union soldiers looked across Confederate defenses at the Courthouse.

Finally on July 4, the Confederates surrendered. The battle-hardened veterans of Grant's army moved into Vicksburg and raised the flag over the Courthouse as a symbol of their victory, while troops paraded around the building.

Coming the day after the Union victory at Gettysburg, the fall of Vicksburg was a crucial blow to the Confederate cause. Not only was the South cut in half, but Grant's large forces were free for further action, and the Mississippi River was again open for northern trade.

Warren County continued to use the old building until 1939, when a new courthouse was erected directly opposite the old one on Cherry Street. Except for a few offices, the structure remained vacant until 1942. At that time Mrs. Eve W. Davis of Vicksburg spearheaded a drive to preserve the building for use as a museum and obtained occupancy rights from the Warren County Board of Supervisors. While the Vicksburg and Warren County Historical Society assumed responsibility for the custody of the structure, the county continues to bear the cost of maintenance.

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