

48-07-0185-33

NR 10-14-76

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Monroe County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Courthouse Square

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Clarendon

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Arkansas

VICINITY OF

CODE

05

COUNTY

Monroe

CODE

095

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Monroe County (Tom Catlett, County Judge)

STREET & NUMBER

Monroe County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Clarendon

VICINITY OF

STATE

Arkansas

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Circuit Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

Monroe County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Clarendon

STATE

Arkansas

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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

Located in the historic town of Clarendon, Arkansas, the Monroe County Courthouse was constructed in 1911. It was designed by architect Charles L. Thompson of Little Rock, who designed many of the finest structures in Arkansas. Exhibiting a classical influence the brick structure follows symmetrical lines. The Monroe County Courthouse was constructed under the supervision of W. A. Prather and Company of Memphis, Tennessee, for \$118,000.

The rectangular-shaped structure is marked by four octagonal towers, one on each corner of the building. These corner towers are topped with cornical-shaped tile roofs. The truncated hip roof of the structure is also composed of tile and is marked by regularly spaced chimneys and dormers on all four elevations. All windows are double-hung multi-lite and feature cast-stone lugsills and keystones. Entries on the east and west elevations feature heavy oak-paneled double doors surrounded by sidelites and transom with triangular-shaped lites.

The facade (north elevation) is majestically marked by a large center tower which features clocks on all four elevations. Three, tall, slender windows, one above the other are located on each elevation along with a band of cast stone beneath the clocks. The base of the classic-styled belfry is supported by paired decorative brackets. The belfry features four arched openings each flanked by small Doric-capital columns. The hip roof of the belfry is supported by brackets.

A classic portico of cast-stone blocks marks the facade entry. Doric-capital columns flank either side of the entrance to the portico. Above the portico entrance is an elliptical-shaped arch with returns. In the center of the arch is an elaborate crest.

Interiors of the Monroe County Courthouse are exceptionally elaborate in the usage of marble and tile. The lobby features marble wainscoting and colorfully patterned ceramic tile floors. Marble pilasters and columns are a frequent feature of the rich interior. Original light fixtures remain in most parts of the building.

Of special interest is the courtroom in the Monroe County Courthouse, located on the second floor. The original oak furniture remains in perfect condition in the courtroom. In the center of the courtroom ceiling is a large dome skylite which contains panels of richly colored stained glass.

The interiors have been minimally altered to accommodate the need for office space. No alterations have occurred to the exterior.

This architecturally interesting structure, designed by one of Arkansas' leading architects, remains in excellent condition. Resting on the courthouse square, the Monroe County Courthouse is a prominent landmark in the county.

6 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__ HISTORIC	__ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__ COMMUNITY PLANNING	__ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__ RELIGION
__ 1499	__ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__ CONSERVATION	__ LAW	__ SCIENCE
__ 1500-1599	__ AGRICULTURE	__ ECONOMICS	__ LITERATURE	__ SCULPTURE
__ 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	__ EDUCATION	__ MILITARY	__ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__ 1700-1799	__ ART	__ ENGINEERING	__ MUSIC	__ THEATER
__ 1800-1899	__ COMMERCE	__ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__ PHILOSOPHY	__ TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	__ COMMUNICATIONS	__ INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__ OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__ INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The largest number of architecturally significant public buildings in Arkansas are the courthouses scattered over the state's seventy-five counties. A structural symbol of American Government, the county courthouse serves as the center of local political activity. Often the largest and most costly building in the county, the courthouse is almost always a source of pride to the citizens who financed and make use of its facilities.

Monroe, the twenty-second county, was created on November 2, 1829. It was formed out of Phillips and Arkansas Counties and named for President James Monroe. The temporary seat of justice was directed to be at the house of Thomas Maddox, and in January, 1830, an election was held to select commissioners who would choose a site for a courthouse. The commissioners selected a site on the farm of Joseph Jacobs and named it Lawrenceville. The county seat remained there until the spring of 1856 when, by vote of the people, the center of government was changed to Clarendon on the White River. The removal order on the county records was in October, 1857.

The present Monroe County Courthouse stands on the site of four previous courthouses. The first building on the site was a two-storey brick structure started late in 1859. Although near completion, work on the building was stopped during the Civil War. The Federal forces tore it down, loaded the bricks on transports and shipped them up the White River to De Valls Bluff to use in Federal fortifications there. The second courthouse on the square was a two-room frame building completed in the spring of 1866 to be used only until a more suitable structure could be erected. In 1872 a two-storey brick courthouse was constructed but burned to the ground on January 1, 1895. The citizens of Monroe County, in a mass meeting, decided to build a courthouse for the county and on January 9, 1895, received permission from the county court to do so. This structure was completed by June 3, 1895, at no cost to the county, but was torn down to make room for the present courthouse.

The present Monroe County Courthouse was erected in 1911. Architect Charles L. Thompson of Little Rock designed the plans for the building in 1910. The contract was let on January 25, 1911, to W. A. Prather and Company of Memphis, Tennessee for \$118,000.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

During the 1927 flood which destroyed much of the town, water was up to eighteen feet deep in some areas of Clarendon. Boats were rowed through; the halls of the courthouse and hundred of persons sought refuge on the upper floors, awaiting rescue. Church services and other community activities were held in the courthouse while flood damage to the remainder of the town was being repaired.

Architecturally as well as historically significant, the Monroe County Courthouse is a large two-storey brick structure. Designed by prominent architect, Charles L. Thompson, the structure is rectangular in plan with a symmetrical appearance. Four octagonal-shaped towers mark the corners of the building. The center of the facade is distinguished by a large tower topped by a belfry.

The interior of the Monroe County Courthouse is exceptionally noteworthy. The richness of marble and ceramic tile abounds. The second floor courtroom features a brilliantly colored dome skylite.

The Monroe County Courthouse is a significant historical structure both architecturally and as the center of politics and government in the county. Resting on its original site on the courthouse square, the Monroe County Courthouse is a historic landmark in Arkansas.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

A Survey of Arkansas Courthouse. Compiled by the National Society of Colonial Dames of America in the State of Arkansas. Mrs. W. G. McDonald, Chairperson, Historical Activities Committee. Arkansas Room, Little Rock Public Library.
English, Jo Claire (Research Historian, Monroe County Courthouse). Personal interview, April 21, 1976, Clarendon, Arkansas

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 5	6 5 4 4 2 0	3 8 4 0 0 4 5	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	NORTHING	
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

<u>Sandra Taylor, Historian</u>	DATE
ORGANIZATION	<u>June 8, 1976</u>
<u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u>	TELEPHONE
STREET & NUMBER	<u>(501) 371-1639</u>
<u>300 West Markham</u>	STATE
CITY OR TOWN	<u>Arkansas</u>
<u>Little Rock</u>	

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 Anne Bartley

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer DATE 6-8-76

FOR NPS USE ONLY
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER
DATE
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DATE
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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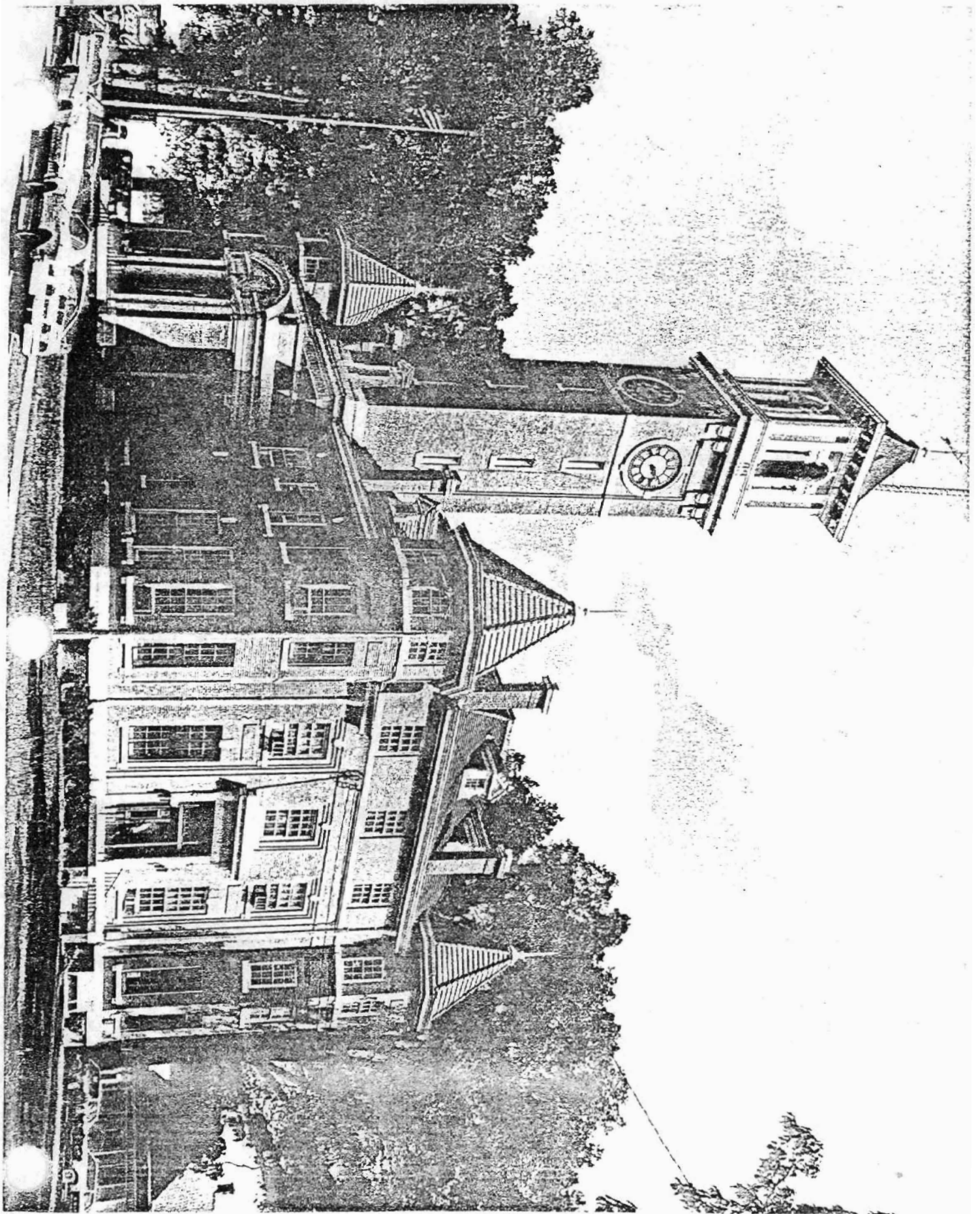
CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

Lyle, Mrs. Bateman (President, Monroe County Historical Society). Personal interview, April 21, 1976, Clarendon, Arkansas.

Monroe County Sun, February 17, 1911.

Roberts, Mrs. John (Monroe County Circuit Clerk). Personal interview, April 21, 1976, Clarendon, Arkansas.



ARKANSAS HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM



"THE OLD STATE HOUSE" 300 WEST MARKHAM

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 722
TELEPHONE - 501 371-1

APR 20 1976

PROPERTY OWNER'S APPROVAL

I, Tom Catlett, Monroe County Judge, am the legal
guardian
~~owner~~ of the Monroe County Courthouse
located at Clarendon, Arkansas

I hereby acknowledge that I have been fully informed and understand the significance of having the aforementioned property placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

I hereby approve the inclusion of the aforementioned property on the National Register of Historic Places.

Tom Catlett
Owner

April 19, 1976
Date