

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of PropertyHistoric name: Washington County Courthouse

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

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

2. LocationStreet & number: 900 Washington AvenueCity or town: Greenville State: MS County: WashingtonNot For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A ___ B X C ___ D



Signature of certifying official/Title:

7/22/14

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☐
Public – Local ☒
Public – State ☐
Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☒
District ☐
Site ☐
Structure ☐
Object ☐

Number of Resources within Property

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(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

buildings

1

sites

structures

1

objects

3.

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0.

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT/county courthouse

RECREATION AND CULTURE/monument/marker

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/horticultural facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT/county courthouse

RECREATION AND CULTURE/monument/marker

AGRICULTURE/SUSBSISTENCE/horticultural facility

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN/Romanesque/Richardsonian Romanesque

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: stone, cast concrete, asphalt shingles, rubber

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Washington County Courthouse is a two-and-one-half-story public building in the Richardsonian Romanesque style originally constructed in 1891 and put into service in 1892. It is located on its own block in an urban setting at 900 Washington Avenue in Greenville, Washington County, Mississippi. It has asymmetrical massing and is constructed of rusticated Illinois brown stone. The primary façade faces south and the building consists of hipped, flat-roof, and gabled sections. Four additions have been constructed: a one-story addition to the north (rear) façade in 1930, which also remodeled much of the original interior; a two-story addition to the north in 1950, including a second floor to the 1930 addition; a two-story addition in 1965; and, a two-story addition to the northeast corner in 1976. The Confederate Monument on the front courthouse lawn and an arboretum originally laid out soon after the original courthouse construction are contributing resources.

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Narrative Description

Exterior

The Washington County Courthouse is situated on a public square in Greenville, Washington County, Mississippi. The courthouse square is located at the eastern edge of the historic central business district. The square is bordered by Washington Avenue to the south, Courthouse Alley (formerly Court Street) to the north, Harvey St. to the west, and Edison St. to the east. Historically, the square has been bordered by sparsely-placed buildings, primarily industrial in nature, and a handful of residential buildings. Two buildings to the north/northeast of the courthouse, the county jail and an educational extension building, are not included in the courthouse square and, therefore, have not been listed as resources here. A county jail has been located north of the courthouse since the construction of the courthouse. Today the courthouse square is surrounded by a number of moderately large free-standing commercial/office buildings.

The original courthouse structure is located in the geographical center of the square, with large lawn areas to the south and west. Four sizeable additions have been made to the original courthouse, dating to 1930, 1950, 1965 and 1976. While the additions approximately tripled the total square footage of the building, the positioning of the additions is such that the original building maintains its independence, especially from the south, southeast, and southwest vantage points. The viewshed from the south presents a large lawn with the Confederate monument (1909) offset from center and the statewide recognized arboretum, which is contemporary with the original courthouse. Parking areas line the north edge and the northwest corner of the building's north façade. These parking areas are accessed by Courthouse Alley, which was historically known as Court Street, and served as the north boundary of the courthouse square.

The original courthouse and its additions are all two-story structures. The roof of the original courthouse is a combination of gabled and hipped sections, covered with clay tiles. The additions have flat roofs and rubber membrane roofing. The walls of the original courthouse are constructed of rusticated brown stone. Its primary façade faces south and a projecting entrance porch consisting of Romanesque arches is located at the southeast corner of the building. A large stone tower, which originally featured a tall belfry, is located near the southwest corner of the building. Two lower, secondary towers with crenellated parapets are located at the southwest and southeast corners. The tower was reduced from its original height in the 1930s, presumably during a renovation project led by architect James M. Spain. The building was constructed at the request of the Washington County Supervisors and, as engraved on the cornerstone, the McDonald Bros. were the architects, John F. Barnes was the builder, and A.L. Thomas was the mason. The window openings are topped by radiating voussoirs and belt courses of dentiled stone separate the stories. (Photos 1 and 2)

The existing tower is square with an octagonal closed cupola. The cupola contains tall narrow round-arched fenestration that is now infilled with masonry and painted over. At each corner of the cupola is a raised cast-stone pillar topped by a cast-stone urn. The cornice line below the cupola has brick corbelling. Two minor corner towers, at the southwest and southeast corners,

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are surmounted by crenellations. The projecting porch is surrounded by an arcade of wide round arches supported by short squat columns. All exterior windows on the original courthouse are one-over-one double-hung wood sash. Many of the south façade windows have round arches, while the east and west windows are flat at the lintel. Three gables intersect the hipped roof of the original courthouse and form an attic. These gables contain a mixture of windows, louvered vents and semicircular stone panels. According to pre-1930 photographs, there was a one-story porch on the north façade that has since been removed to accommodate the later additions.

The 1930 renovation saw major interior alterations in addition to the expansion of the building footprint. On the exterior, the most notable change was the removal of the belfry and the crenellated parapets at the gable ends that face south, east and west. This renovation project was undertaken by architect James M. Spain..

The 1950 addition extended the footprint of the building to the north. The new construction was two-stories and added a second floor to the 1930 addition. The north façade of this addition consists of seven bays with a center entrance, which now serves as the primary entrance to the courthouse. The entrance porch, with a flat roof awning and brick columns, is now enclosed to create a vestibule. Brick ramps provide A.D.A. access to this entrance. The window bays contain modern aluminum-frame fixed windows. The first-floor windows have four divided lights and the second-floor windows have two divided lights with vertical muntins. (Photo 3)

The 1965 addition, located at the southwest corner of the 1950 addition, is two-story with a flat roof and is constructed of a light-hued beige brick. The addition exhibits some Art Deco influence, most notably at the north façade, such as recessed window spandrels with geometric brick patterns and applied concrete tiles with geometric designs, a recessed center window with stepped or corbelled brick on the side edges, and brick columns with corbelled brick caps. (Photo 3)

The two-story office annex, constructed in 1976, is attached at the east side of the 1950 addition. The facades of this addition are brick veneer and are dominated by a series of tall narrow arched window bays that are recessed and separated by narrow brick pilasters, creating an arcade effect. The pilasters have brick corbelling at the top and brick buttresses at the base. The window bays contain modern aluminum fixed windows with metal paneled spandrels at the base and between the two floors. There are no entrance bays on this addition. (Photo 4)

Interior

Historically, the door at the south porch served as the primary entrance but, due to security concerns, the north doors are the primary entrance today. The south door is a single-leaf glazed door with sidelights. The door opens to a vestibule, separated from the lobby by a glazed wall with a single-leaf door. The grand lobby has terrazzo floors featuring geometric patterns, marble block walls, elaborate pilasters with gold leaf caps, half-round plaster friezes along the upper walls and ceiling, and a grand staircase along the west wall. The finishes in this area date to the 1930 remodel. (Photos 12 and 13) The main lobby area also features a tray ceiling with a

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recessed circle and chandelier at the center. At the south end of the lobby is an open stairwell with heavy square newel posts with spherical caps, marble treads, a landing at the halfway point, and a decorative iron balustrade with flared iron balusters. The lobby opens to a corridor at the north end, which is further accented by marble wainscote and door casings and terrazzo floors. A near-seamless transition leads one from the lobby and 1930s-era corridor into the 1950s-era corridor.

Offices with 1990s finishes open off the lobby to the east. Double-leaf wood doors with frosted panels in the west wall open to the Chancery Courtroom. The Chancery Courtroom has terrazzo floors and a plaster crown molding. Plaster column capitals with floral motif remain visible above wood paneling boxing the columns. The historic details most likely date to the 1930 remodel, while the paneled walls are a later addition. (Photo 15)

At the top of the lobby stairs is the second-floor entrance into the main courtroom and a short corridor that leads to offices at each end. (Photo 16) The courtroom occupies most of the second floor of the original 1891 building. The ceiling and walls are plaster with a plaster crown molding, believed to date the original 1890s construction. The raised dais and bench are located on the north wall set off with wood paneling. Single-leaf doors that flank the bench open to the judge's chambers and jury room. The jury box is set in the northwest corner of the room. Wood paneling details the jury box and extends as a wainscote on the north and south walls. Spectators sit in benches separated by a center aisle. The courtroom's balcony remains but has been enclosed for storage. The wood panel rails of the balcony remain visible. (Photos 17 and 18)

A large unfinished attic space is set over the entry vestibule, stairway and second floor hall. The windows on the upper south-facing gable of the south elevation open into the attic space. The tower is accessed through the attic. The space houses some mechanical units and also provides space for some record storage.

The primary entrance to the courthouse, now located on the north façade of the 1950 addition, opens into the corridor with county offices opening to the east and west. The corridor has terrazzo floors, plaster walls and marble wainscoting, approximately four feet high, which matches the marble used in the 1930s-era lobby. (Photo 8 and 9)

An open stairwell is located at the north end of the corridor of the corridor and has terrazzo treads and polished metal handrails and balusters. (Photo 22) The second floor corridor, constructed in the 1950s addition, similar in scale and appearance to the first floor corridor, runs north and south, with the entrance to the main courtroom on the southern end. (Photo 20) Several original single-light-over-one-panel wood doors with original hardware and transoms remain along the corridor. (Photo 21) A smaller auxiliary courtroom is accessed from the east side of the second-floor corridor and was recently renovated with new carpet, furniture and fixtures.

The 1976 addition is accessed through a first floor hallway on the east wall of the 1950 corridor. The interior of this addition has a very modern appearance with vinyl composition tile floors,

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gypsum board walls, and acoustical tile ceilings. This addition is comprised of a U-shaped hallway that is lined at the east end by a large open office with smaller auxiliary offices at the corners. Smaller offices, most with wood doors and plate-glass windows, line the remainder of the corridors in this addition. (Photo 23)

Although the interior of the original courthouse underwent renovations in the 1930s, the alterations from that period have gained significance due to their superior craftsmanship and their high level of integrity. The 1950 and 1965 additions have also retained many original finishes such as marble wainscoting, wood doors, and terrazzo flooring. The interior of the 1976 addition has a modern appearance; however, this addition is removed from the primary hallway in a way that does not detract from the integrity of the central corridor.

Confederate Monument

A Confederate monument (1909) is located on the south lawn of the courthouse. (Photos 2 and 5) The monument consists of a single standing figure, approximately five and one-half feet tall, perched atop a twenty-foot tall square pedestal that tapers toward the top. The figure is of a male soldier wearing a brimmed hat, holding a rifle and leaning on a stump. The pedestal is divided into three segments. The top segment is inscribed with the image of the Confederate battleflag; the middle segment is unadorned; and the bottom segment features inscriptions on each side, consisting of quotes by historical figures and memorial sentiments to the Confederacy. The pedestal base consists of three square steps.

Arboretum

An arboretum was established in the same year that the original courthouse was completed and is located on the lawn of the courthouse square. The arboretum contains a collection of trees that are indigenous to Mississippi and the Southeast, such as varieties of oak, magnolia, poplar, maple, and pine. A brick and glass display case on-site contains the history of the arboretum and a map that identifies the type and location of the trees. (Photos 6 and 7)

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1891-1964

Significant Dates

1930

1950

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

McDonald Bros., Architect

John F. Barnes, Builder

A.L. Thomas, Mason

James M. Spain, Architect (1930 renovation)

Lockard & Vaughn, Builders (1930 renovation)

Harold Kaplan, AIA (1950 & 1965 additions)

G. E. Bass and Contractors (1950 addition)

Hall-Burle Associates, Architects/Engineers (1976 addition & renovations)

C.E. Frazier Construction, Builders (1976 addition)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Washington County Courthouse in Greenville, Washington County, Mississippi, is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places for local significance under Criterion A for its association with Government and for local significance under Criterion A for its association with Social History related to a nationally recognized speech by Sen. LeRoy Percy objecting to the establishment of the Ku Klux Klan in Washington County. The Courthouse also is significant on a statewide basis under Criterion C associated with Architecture as a rare extant example of a stone Richardsonian Romanesque courthouse in the state of Mississippi. It was built in 1891, enlarged and renovated in 1930, and enlarged in 1950, 1965 and 1976. The twentieth century additions, though sizeable, obscure only the north façade of the original courthouse structure. The three remaining facades retain a high level of integrity and remain viewable from the public right-of-ways. The Confederate Monument and the Arboretum are additional resources on-site that contribute to the significance of the courthouse.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

History of Courthouse

Washington County is located on the east bank of the Mississippi River in the Mississippi Delta. The Mississippi legislature created Washington County on January 29, 1827,¹ and named it for George Washington, the first U.S. President. The county was organized from land ceded by the Choctaw in the Treaty of Doak's Stand in 1820. Washington County originally covered a very large area of northwest Mississippi. The legislature designated New Mexico, a community on the Mississippi River, about five miles south of the thirty-third parallel, as the county seat. County organizers met at the home John DeHart in New Mexico, appointing a committee to select a site for a courthouse and jail. It was later determined that New Mexico was located outside the boundary of Washington County as determined by the legislature. However, by 1829, a courthouse had been constructed in New Mexico.² To correct the geographical error, the county seat was moved to the town of Princeton.

¹ William D. McCain and Charlotte Capers, ed. "County Seats and Early Railroads" in *Memoirs of Henry Tillinghast Ireys*. Papers of the Washington County Historical Society, 1910-1915. P. 290

² McCain and Capers, 297.

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Princeton's service as the seat of Washington County government was short, approximately five years. It reached its peak in 1836, when the town was the home of the courthouse, a bank, a railroad depot and numerous businesses and a population of 600.³ In 1844, the state legislature severed the southern district of the county, creating Issaquena County. With the redrawn boundaries, Princeton no longer occupied a central location in the county. The Board of Police recommended the county seat be moved to a location on the Mississippi River located on Bachelor's Bend, to be named Greenville. A courthouse and jail were completed in the spring of 1847. The town's location on the river was subject to flooding and the river was continuously cutting away the bank, further threatening the community. During the Civil War, the town suffered considerable damage from Union forces. Based on all these events, the legislature decided to move the town about one and one-half miles north, to its current location.⁴

A new courthouse was built on property donated to the county by Mrs. H. B. Theobald near the corner of Poplar Street and Nelson Street. The building was described as a two-story square building, with the sheriff and clerk's office on the ground floor and the courtroom on the second floor. Built by N. B. Johnson and John Wanifold, the ground floor was brick and the second floor was wood, with an exterior stairway.⁵ The building served the county's judicial needs until 1892, when the oldest portion of the current courthouse was built. The old building was apparently in poor condition, since the WPA records report that the old courthouse was condemned as unsafe.

Possibly due to the condition of the old courthouse, the Mississippi Legislature in 1890 authorized the Washington County Board of Supervisors to issue bonds, not to exceed \$100,000.00. The Legislature directed that "From the proceeds of the sale of said bonds, the Board of Supervisors shall cause to build a courthouse and jail at the county site of Washington county."⁶ The county apparently wasted no time issuing a "Notice to Architects" calling for plans and specifications to be submitted by April 7, 1890.⁷ The Board of Supervisors selected plans submitted by the McDonald Brothers of Louisville, Kentucky. An article in the July 19, 1890 *Greenville Times* described the plan:

It measures about 80 X 100 and is two stories...The entire exterior...is faced with stone in rough ashlar...As the plan now stands you enter the house through a handsome stone portico having a colonnade with carved capitals.⁸

The first floor had offices for the county officers while the second floor was devoted to the courtroom and supporting spaces. According to the story, "the building is to be finished in first class style and will be thoroughly fire proof throughout."

³ McCain and Capers, p. 302.

⁴ Greenville Commercial Historic District. National Register of Historic Places, 1997.

⁵ Historic Resources Materials, Series 447, Box 10839. Washington County. Folder: "The Bar." Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

⁶ *The Greenville Times*, February 22, 1890.

⁷ *The Greenville Times*, March 8, 1890.

⁸ *The Greenville Times*, July 19, 1890.

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The new courthouse was built on a block east of the downtown commercial district bordered by Washington Avenue, N. Harvey Street, Alexander Street and N. Edison Street. The cornerstone was laid in a grand ceremony on October 20, 1891. The *Greenville Times* reported on the ceremony. A procession consisting of 400 school children, a band, representatives of local fraternal organizations and elected officials paraded from the Masonic Temple to the courthouse site. The cornerstone, dedicated to justice, bore the names of the County Board of Supervisors and other county officials. The stone recognized the McDonald Brothers as the architects, John F. Barnes as the builder, and A. L. Thomas as the mason. The *Greenville Times* reported that "School children sang beautiful songs. Rev. Dr. J. Bogan closed ceremonies with a brief classic address and a beautiful benediction."⁹ The rusticated brownstone building opened in 1892.

The courthouse served the governmental and judicial needs of the community without any significant changes until 1930. In that year the county retained the services of Jackson architect James M. Spain to remodel the building. The work included a one-story annex to the north to house the offices of Chancery Clerk, the Circuit Clerk and the Superintendent of Education. Once the annex was completed, plans called for remodeling the first and second floors. Work began February 1930 with completion anticipated in September. County offices were expected to remain open during the remodeling work.¹⁰ Although no architectural drawings remain, the bronze building plaque in the first floor lobby announces that the courthouse was "rebuilt" in 1930, which supports the conclusion that Spain oversaw a major overhaul of the interior. The 1931 Sanborn Fire Insurance map shows the one-story annex, noting its fire proof construction, with dimensions of approximately 16 x 22 feet.¹¹

The building continued to house the county offices and courts for another twenty years before any additional changes were made. In the November 4, 1949 edition of *The Delta Democrat Times*, a major courthouse expansion was announced. Architects James M. Spain and Harold Kaplan submitted plans for enlarging the courthouse at a cost of \$300,000.¹² The plans also called for construction of a new jail on an adjacent parcel. The project must have been completed expeditiously because the Sanborn Fire Insurance map for November 1931-June 1950 shows a two-story addition to the north of the 1930 annex as well as a second floor on the annex itself.¹³ A bronze building plaque dates the addition to 1950. The work must have included some updating to the courtroom as well. *The Delta Democrat-Times* columnist Brodie Crump reported on his experience on jury duty in 1951, noting

The courtroom has had quite a face-lifting since we saw it last, and the paneling, which apparently is red-gum, is most attractive. The dilapidated swivel chair in which jurors were wont to turn and teeter, have been given the heave-ho, and the box is located in the southwest corner of the room.¹⁴

⁹ *The Greenville Times*, October 20, 1891.

¹⁰ "Remodeling of Courthouse to Begin Feb. 15." *The Daily Democrat Times*. February 6, 1930.

¹¹ Sanborn map p.6

¹² "New Courthouse Plans Need Last OK."

¹³ Sanborn map p. 6

¹⁴ *The Delta Democrat Times*, 1951. MDAH Historic Resources Files, Washington County Courthouse.

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Another major addition to the Washington County Courthouse came in 1965. An article in *The Delta Democrat Times* noted that "the Washington County Courthouse grounds are covered with construction materials and machinery."¹⁵ The \$318,000 project included additions to the circuit clerk and county clerk's offices. When the current footprint of the building is compared with the footprint showing the 1950 addition on the Sanborn maps, this project must have been the two-story wing at the southwest corner of the 1950 addition.

The last major addition to the Washington County Courthouse came after the close of the Period of Significance. A building plaque establishes that Hall-Buhrle, Architects and Engineers, designed "Additions and Alterations" to the Washington County Courthouse. The project included a large two-story addition to the east side of the 1950 addition and includes offices for the Circuit Clerk, other county offices, and additional courtroom space.

Originally constructed in 1891, with additions in 1930, 1950, 1965 and 1976, the Washington County Courthouse has been the seat of Washington County government for 122 years. The County Board of Supervisors meets in the Board Room. The county records are maintained by the Circuit Clerk and Chancery Clerk. The County Tax Assessor and County Tax Collector are responsible for county revenues. Civil and criminal cases are adjudicated in the buildings courtrooms. The Washington County Courthouse is locally significant for its association with Politics/Government in Washington County.

Confederate Monument

The Confederate monument stands at the southwest edge of the original courthouse building and was constructed by the Columbus (Mississippi) Marble Works. It was dedicated in June, 1909 by the United Daughters of the Confederacy with the Hon. LeRoy Percy delivering the dedication address. The monument remains intact as a tribute and memorial to the fallen soldiers of the Confederacy.

Monuments to the veterans of the Civil War are ubiquitous in Mississippi. Almost every county has a memorial, many located on courthouse lawns. This reflects a regional trend in the New South at the turn of the century. As was the case in Washington County, the leading forces behind these commemorations were women organized into memorial associations. More than merely eulogizing the dead, the memorialization efforts were often an attempt to celebrate the "Lost Cause" Art historian Cynthia Mills wrote

Built first in grief and later in celebration during a great wave of commemorative efforts that peaked in the early 1900s, public monuments became a central means of rewriting history from the Confederate perspective—"righting history," their patrons said. Unveiled

¹⁵ "Predictions Coming True: Building Business Booming." *The Delta Democrat Times*, July 5, 1965.

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with elaborate ritual and rhetoric, they bear inscriptions of honor, courage, duty, state's rights, and northern aggression.¹⁶

This is certainly the case with the Washington County monument. The United Daughters of the Confederacy planned the program, which included a parade, a band, and patriotic speeches. The inscription announces the intent of the monument: "To commemorate the valor and patriotism of the Confederate Soldiers of Washington County, 1861-1865."

Arboretum

The arboretum was planned by Dr. Orville Blanton, a Greenville native son and former surgeon in the Civil War, soon after the courthouse was completed. Dr. Blanton began the initial plantings by placing two trees of each native species on the east and west sides of the courthouse, in identical patterns. In later decades, with the lack of a formal garden club, interested citizens of Washington County took over the plantings, following Dr. Blanton's original plan. Disease and the flood of 1927 destroyed many of the original tree specimens. Soon after the flood, the Greenville Garden Club organized and petitioned the County Board of Supervisors to grant them official curatorship over the courthouse lawn. Under the Garden Club, trees were catalogued, marked with bronze markers, and general restoration of the arboretum began. With the help of trained foresters from Chicago Mill and Lumber Company, the arboretum was re-marked and a plat was presented to the Garden Club for use in future planning and preservation. Over the years, the trees and shrubs have required replacing many times. However, efforts have been made to research and represent the historical layout and appearance. Today, the lawn area is officially recognized as a Statewide Arboretum by the Garden Clubs of Mississippi, Inc.

Social History

The main courtroom in the Washington County Courthouse served as a community center for speeches and public meetings. A meeting on March 1, 1922, drew national attention to Greenville. An organizer for the resurgent Ku Klux Klan convinced sympathetic county officers to allow him to use the courtroom for a meeting to recruit members. Former Senator LeRoy Percy organized opposition to the Klan and spoke at length against the organization. Percy rejected the Klan's anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic rhetoric, but his strongest point was a potential effect the Klan would have on the region's blacks, who provided the labor the Percy and the planter class relied on. Noting that out-migration of blacks was already causing labor shortages, Percy stated:

You can make three parades in the county of Washington of your Ku Klux Klan and never say an unkind word and you can start the grass growing in the streets of Greenville.¹⁷

¹⁶ Cynthia Mills, "Introduction," in *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art, and the Landscapes of Southern Memory*, eds. Cynthia Mills and Pamela H. Simpson (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003), xv.

¹⁷ James C. Cobb. *The Most Southern Place on Earth: The Mississippi Delta and the Roots of Regional Identity*. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 149.

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At the close of Percy's fiery speech, the meeting adopted a resolution condemning the Klan.

Newspapers across the country ran accounts of the speech. Percy printed and distributed copies. He received letters of praise from across the country. Black leaders, Catholics and Jews thanked Percy for his opposition to the Klan.

There is no doubt that LeRoy Percy personally rejected the tenets of the Ku Klux Klan. His business partner was Jewish and his wife was Catholic. However, his opposition was also political. The Percy family had long been active in Greenville politics. A Klan-backed voting bloc would have threatened the position held by the Percy family. In his account of the great 1927 flood, historian John Barry wrote:

Percy had run the county for as long as anyone could remember. Deep into the night the lights in his office in the Weinberg Building, where he sat down with a few men to decide who would serve as county supervisor, or city councilmen, or mayor, city councilman... Usually present were Joe Weinberg, a wealthy Jewish banker, planter Alfred Stone and Billy Wynn... a comer with his own law firm.¹⁸

However, Percy's deepest opposition to the Klan was based on the threat it presented to the Delta's black labor force. He recognized that "overt repression and abuse of blacks could lead to economic disaster for his region,"¹⁹ calling the Klan "a menace to the prosperity and welfare of my people."²⁰

Recognizing these varied motivations today though should not lessen the significance of Percy's speech as a rare instance in 1920s America of a major political leader openly facing down the Klan, a dominant political force.

Architecture: Richardsonian Romanesque Architecture in Mississippi

Richardsonian Romanesque architecture, a style credited to Henry Hobson Richardson and most popular in the 1890s arose from the Romanesque Revival which became popular in the U.S. as early as 1840. Richardsonian Romanesque is unique for its broad, low round arched openings, heavy lintels and keystones, short, thick columns, steep-gabled wall dormers, and rusticated stone. Richardson's earliest example of this style is Trinity Church in Boston, Massachusetts, constructed from 1873-1877. Buildings of this style are most commonly constructed of stone masonry and many are public buildings. The style never gained prominence in Mississippi, most likely due to the fact Mississippi has no significant reserves of building stone. The Washington

¹⁸ John Barry. *Rising Tide: The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How It Changed America*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 143.

¹⁹ Cobb, 148.

²⁰ Cobb, 149.

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County Courthouse is the only Richardsonian Romanesque courthouse of stone construction in Mississippi. The Tallahatchie County Second District Courthouse in Sumner, Mississippi, (NR, 2007), built in 1910, is also a fine example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture. That building, by contrast, is constructed of brick masonry. The earliest Richardson Romanesque buildings in Mississippi are the Aberdeen Post Office (NR, 1976) built in 1885-1887 and the Oxford post office (NR, 1890) built in 1887. The Aberdeen building now houses the chancery court and clerk, while the Oxford building hosts the city hall.

The Washington County Courthouse exhibits most, if not all, of the traditional earmarks of this style. The Richardsonian elements remain in place on the original courthouse building, although the original belfry has been reduced to its prominent base and shaft. The original courthouse still clearly exhibits asymmetrical massing with rusticated masonry walls and heavy arches at the south porch. The parapeted gables and the prominent base and shaft of the original belfry further create a dramatic effect that is enhanced by the integrity of the three mostly unaltered elevations. The belfry featured a taller shaft and a steeply-pitched polygonal spire roof, as evidenced by a postcard in the Forrest Lamar Cooper collection at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Along the base of the belfry, tripartite windows are separated by thick pilasters with bases and caps. The base cornice is adorned with arcaded corbels. Just above the base, the polygonal shaft exhibits four round-arches supported by stone columns with intricate caps. Although the fenestration is now infilled with painted masonry blocks, the heavy arches continue to give an imposing appearance to the belfry. The lower corner tower, west of the belfry, exhibits crenellations at the parapet, which matched crenellations at each parapeted gable, previously removed. The more prominent Romanesque features are accented by additional small details such as semicircular inset panels above each window opening, rusticated keystones, dentiled belt courses, and inset cartouches defined by radiating stone units around the circumference.

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Mississippi
County and State

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Barry, John M. *Rising Tide: The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How It Changed America*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997.

Cobb, James C., *The Most Southern Place on Earth: The Mississippi Delta and the Roots of Regional Identity*. Oxford University Press (New York; Oxford) (1992)

Cooper, Forrest Lamar. Postcard Collection: Washington County Courthouse postcard, c.1900

Cornerstones at southwest corner of original Washington County Courthouse building.

Delta Democrat Times "Courthouse Arboretum is officially historical", by Sandy McIntire (Greenville, MS) (date unknown)

Gurney, Bill. *Mississippi Courthouses: Then and Now*. Old Timer Press (Ripley, MS) (1987)

Knights of Columbus pamphlet (Form 255) "Address by Sen. Leroy Percy, Greenville, Miss., March 18, 1922.

McLemore, Richard Aubrey, *A History of Mississippi: Volume II*. University & College Press of Mississippi (Hattiesburg, MS) (1973)

National Register Registration Form, Tallahatchie County Second District Courthouse. Prepared by William M. Gatlin (2006)

Percy, William Alexander. *Lanterns on the Levee: Recollections of a Planter's Son*. Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1941. (pp. 232-233)

"Washington County Courthouse Arboretum" essay. By Cole Delong (undated)

Washington County Historical Society, Programs of 1982: Public Records of Washington County. By Margaret Tucker. September 26, 1982.

Wyatt-Brown, Bertram. *The House of Percy: Honor, Melancholy and Imagination in a Southern Family*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

www.pbs.org "American Experience: Biography: LeRoy Percy" Accessed Nov. 13, 2012.

Washington County Courthouse

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www.pbs.org "American Experience: General Article: Greenville, Mississippi Rejects the
Ku Klux Klan.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 151-GRV-034-ML _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approx 4

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 33.421389 Longitude: -91.072500
2. Latitude: Longitude:

Washington County Courthouse

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Mississippi
County and State

Name of Property

3. Latitude:

Longitude:

4. Latitude:

Longitude:

See Continuation Sheet

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone:

Easting:

Northing:

2. Zone:

Easting:

Northing:

3. Zone:

Easting:

Northing:

4. Zone:

Easting :

Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Washington County Courthouse is located at 900 Washington Avenue in Greenville, Washington County Mississippi. The courthouse site is bounded by Washington Avenue on the south, N. Harvey Street on the west, Courthouse Alley on the north, and N. Edison Street on the east.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries selected represent the original boundaries of the courthouse square, which are marked by the bordering streets on the south, east, and west, and by the parking lot driveway, known as Courthouse Alley and formerly known as Court Street, on the north. These boundaries encompass all of the resources included in this nomination, including the building, additions, monument, and arboretum.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: William M. Gatlin
organization: MDAH, Architectural Historian
street & number: P.O. Box 571
city or town: Jackson state: MS zip code: 39205-0571
e-mail bgatlin@mdah.state.ms.us
telephone: 601-576-6951
date: June 30, 2014

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Washington County Courthouse

City or Vicinity: Greenville

County: Washington

State: Mississippi

Photographer: William M. Gatlin, MDAH, Photos 1-11

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Mississippi
County and State

Name of Property

Jennifer Baughn, MDAH, Photos 12-23

Date Photographed: Photos 1-11 May 30, 2014
Photos 12-22 January 13, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 23 Exterior. South elevation. Camera facing north
- 2 of 23 Exterior. South elevation. Confederate Monument. Camera facing northeast.
- 3 of 23 Exterior. North and west elevation . Camera facing southeast.
- 4 of 23 Exterior. East elevation. Camera facing west.
- 5 of 23. Confederate Monument. Camera facing north.
- 6 of 23. Arboretum. Camera facing northwest.
- 7 of 23 Arboretum sign. Camera facing north.
- 8 of 23 Interior. First floor hallway. Camera facing south.
- 9 of 23 Interior. First floor hallway. Camera facing north.
- 10 of 23 Interior. First floor. Board Room. Camera facing northwest.
- 11 of 23 Interior. First floor. Chancery Clerk. Camera facing southwest.
- 12 of 23 Interior. First floor. Lobby. Camera facing south.
- 13 of 23 Interior. First floor Lobby detail. Camera facing east.
- 14 of 23 Interior. First floor. Lobby stair. Camera facing south.
- 15 of 23 Interior. First floor. Chancery Courtroom. Camera facing west.
- 16 of 23 Interior. Second floor. Landing. Camera facing north.
- 17 of 23 Interior. Second floor. Main Courtroom. Camera facing west.
- 18 of 23 Interior. Second floor. Main Courtroom. Camera facing east.

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19 of 23 Interior. Second floor. Jury Room. Camera facing north. .

20 of 23 Interior. Second floor. Hallway. Camera facing south

21 of 23 Interior. Second floor. Representative door and transom. Camera facing east.

22 of 23 Interior. Second floor. North stair. Camera facing southwest

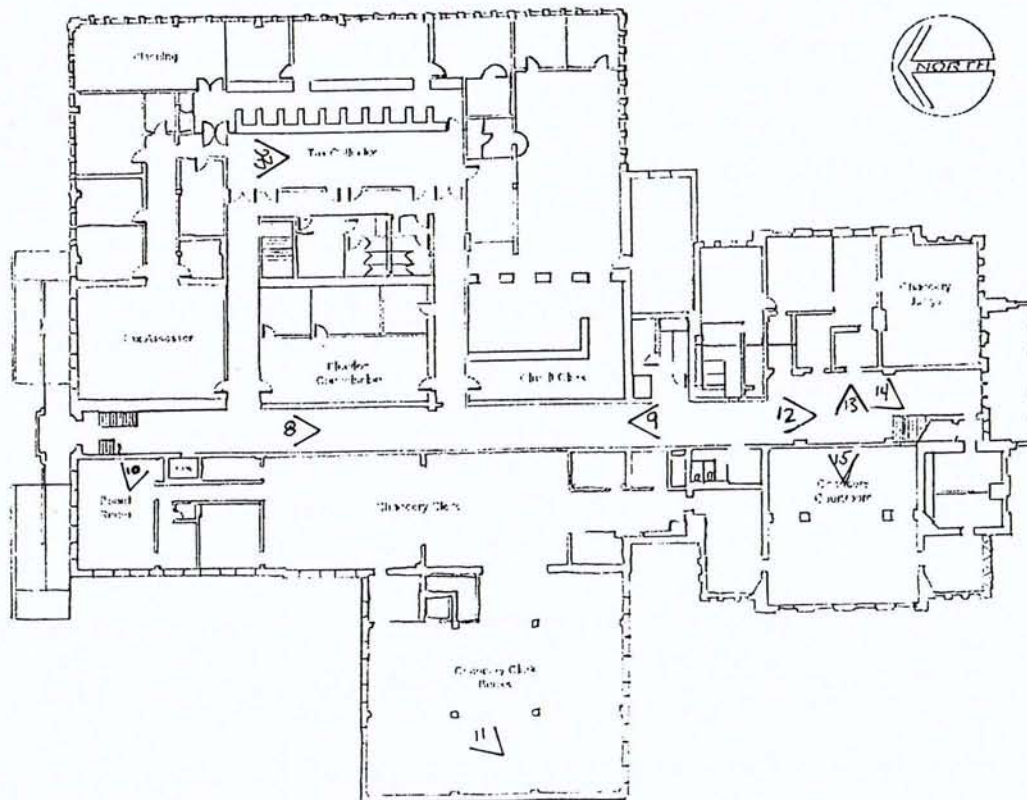
23 of 23 Interior. First Floor. Tax Collector. Camera facing south.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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COURTHOUSE LANE

WASHINGTON AVENUE

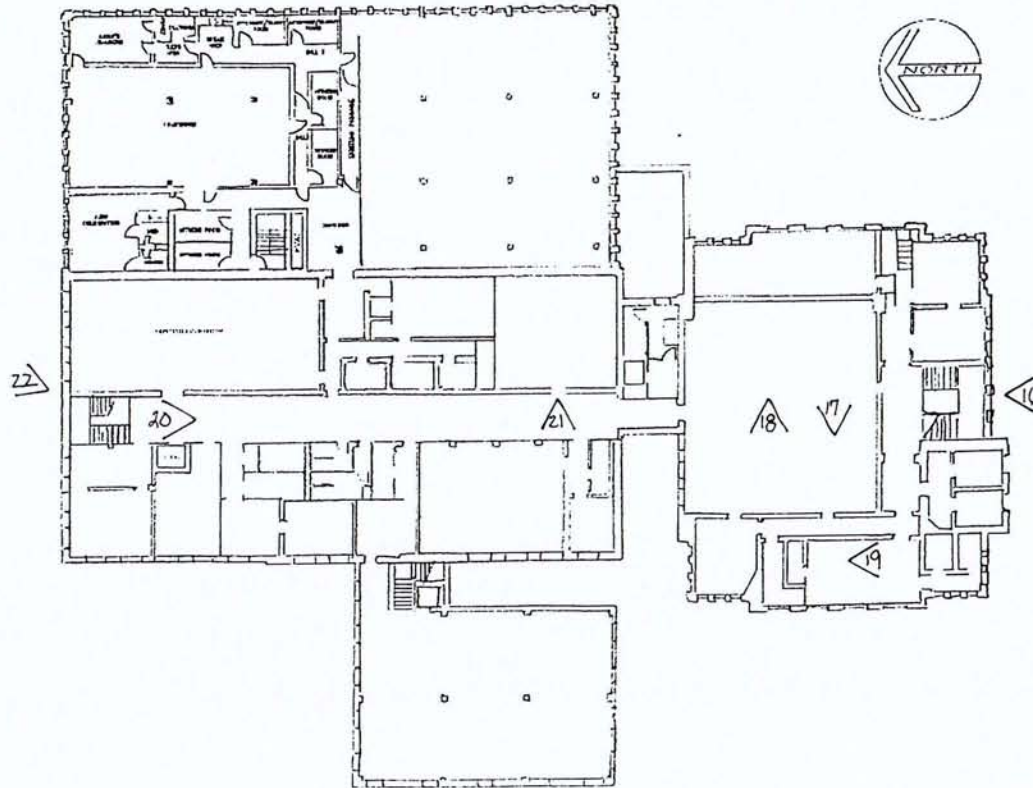
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WASHINGTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

SECOND FLOOR

COURTHOUSE LANE



WASHINGTON AVENUE



MS_ Washington County - Washington County Courthouse - 0001



MS - Washington County - Washington County Courthouse - 0002



MS - Washington County - Washington County Courthouse - 0003



MS - Washington County - Washington County Courthouse - 0004



MS - Washington County - Washington County Courthouse - 0005



MS - Washington County - Washington County Courthouse - 0006



MS - Washington County - Washington^{County} Courthouse - 0007



MS - Washington County - Washington County Courthouse - 0008



MS - Washington County - Washington County Courthouse - 0009



MS - Washington County - Washington County Courthouse - 0010



MS - Washington County - Washington County Courthouse - 0011



MS - Washington County - Washington County Courthouse - 2012



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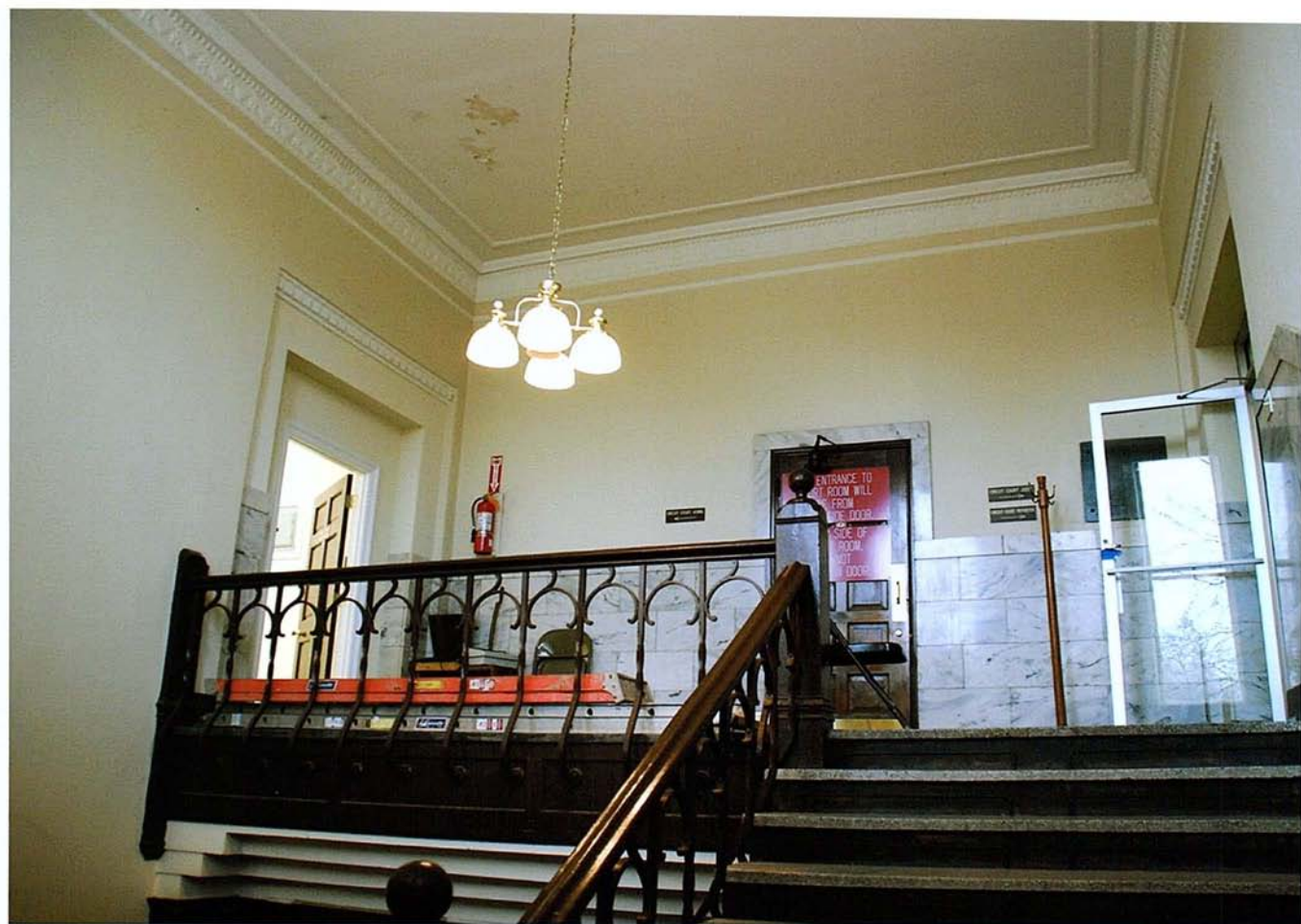
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MS - Washington County Washington County Courthouse - 00/4



MS-Washington County-Washington County Courthouse-2015



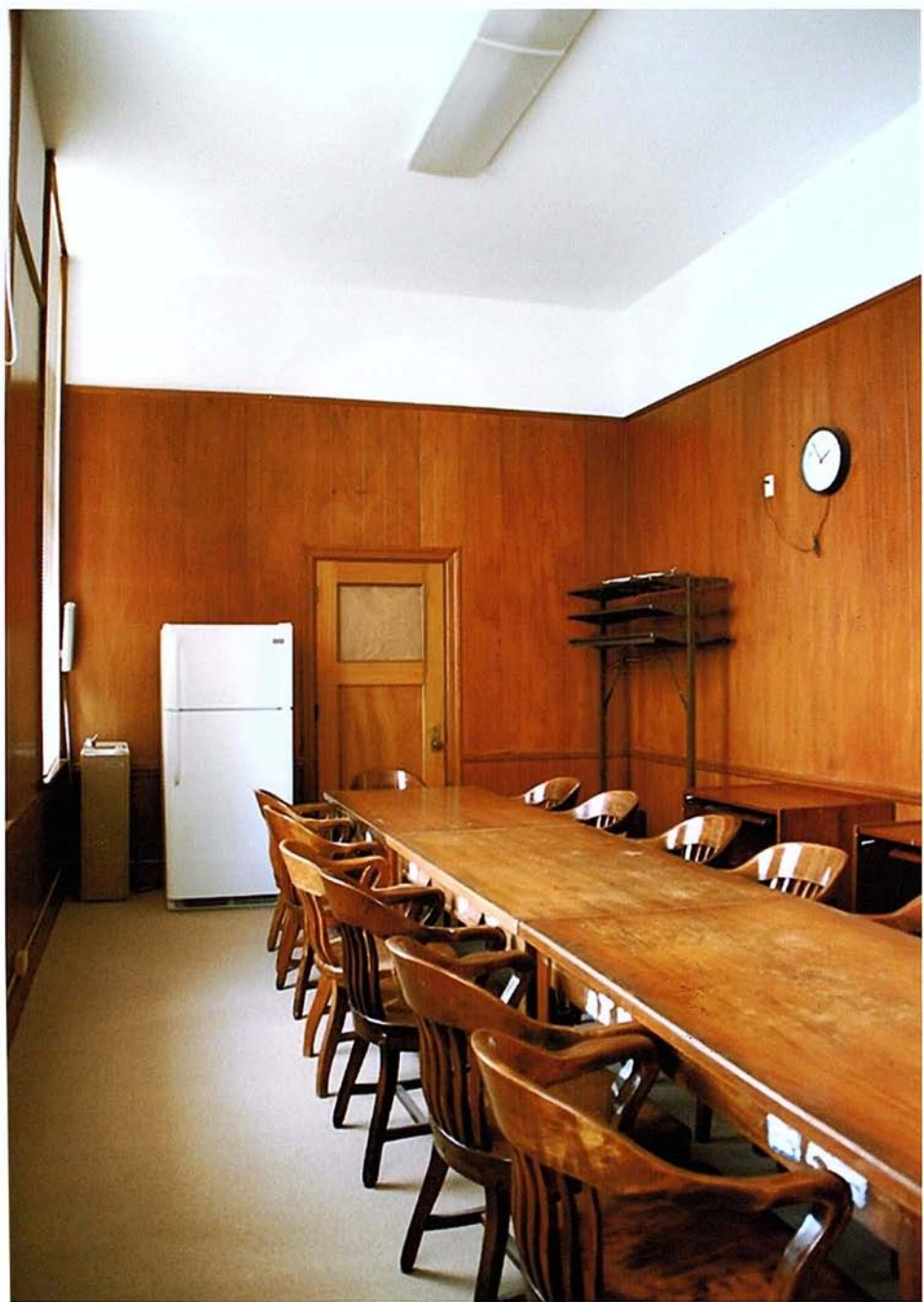
MS - Washington County - Washington County Courthouse - 0016



MS - Washington County - Washington County Courthouse - 2017



MS - Washington County - Washington County Courthouse - 0018



MS - Washington County - Washington County Burroughs - 0019



MS - Washington County - Washington County Courthouse - 0020



MS - Washington County - Washington County Courthouse - OZ



MS - Washington County - Washington County Courthouse - 10022



MS - Washington County - Washington County Courthouse - 0023