

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SENT TO D.C.

9-23-94

### 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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

#### 1. Name of Property

historic name Montgomery County Courthouse

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. Location

street & number Courthouse Square  not for publication

city or town Hillsboro  vicinity

state Illinois code IL county Montgomery code 135 zip code 62049

#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William L. Wheeler, SHo 9-20-94  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

Montgomery County Courthouse  
Name of Property

Montgomery County, Illinois  
County and State

**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**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

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

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

None

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/Courthouse

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Government/Government Office

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Second Empire

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick

walls Brick

roof Fiberglass

other Limestone

Wood

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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.)

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Politics/Government

**Period of Significance**

1870-1944

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Randall, G. P., Architect

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Montgomery County Courthouse

Montgomery County Courthouse  
Name of Property

Montgomery County, Illinois  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	6
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2	8	4	5	7	0
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4	3	3	7	4	3	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3 

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Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Idabel Evans

organization Historical Society of Montgomery County date July 25, 1994

street & number 904 South Main Street telephone 217-532-3329

city or town Hillsboro state Illinois zip code 62049

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional Items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Montgomery County c/o Montgomery County Board, Paul Hamrock, Chairman

street & number Courthouse Square telephone 217-532-9530

city or town Hillsboro state Illinois zip code 62049

**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. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Montgomery County Courthouse

## NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Montgomery County Courthouse stands in the center of the public square in downtown Hillsboro on a small, slightly raised plot of ground, facing South Main Street. The site retains much of its original character from the time of the initial construction. The building is the result of the "changes and improvements" made to the second courthouse during the period from 1868 to 1872. The remodeling was carried out in the Second Empire style so popular for public buildings following the Civil War. It stands 50 feet high, 84 feet wide and 98 feet long. The structure is of red brick construction using a common bond, with limestone arches and sills. Two interesting architectural features distinguish the building and directly affect the interior layouts. One is the square tower to the southwest which encloses a winding stairway that leads from the main floor to the circuit court room on the second floor. The other is the southeast projecting pavilion which is capped with a mansard roof that is similar to the southwest tower's original roof. The remainder of the courthouse is covered with a gently sloping hip roof coming to a point in the center. At the cornice line of the tower, southeast pavilion and front facade are decorative wood brackets. In general, the historic and structural integrity of these elements and the building remain intact.

The south facade represents a terminus to Main Street when traveling north through downtown. The elevation is divided by a central entrance with flanking pavilions. Each is capped by a separate roof and framed with corner pilasters. The main entrance is sheltered by an ornate wooden portico with carved wooden details and piers with engaged colonnettes. The piers support segmented arches with wooden brackets. The arched front door is double-leafed and flanked by two arched windows. Strong horizontal limestone bands of classical ornament contrast with the verticality of the separate masses and mansard roofs. This effect has been somewhat diminished with the removal of the roof and ornament of the southwest tower in 1952. The original mansard roof, with its heavily ornamented windows and roof pinnacles added considerable height, both physically and artistically. As the facade develops vertically, the window treatment changes from a single story arched opening to a paired two story opening mirroring the two story spaces on the interior. This typical window consists of a double-hung window on the second floor, a small spandrel panel between floors, and an arched double-hung window on the second floor. This window pattern is repeated throughout the structure. However, the limestone arches on this elevation are more detailed, with a profiled molding and a keystone. At the attic level, small bands of arched openings puncture the tower facade and central facade. This vertical progression again is contrasted with the horizontal bands of limestone ornament wrapping the building. A thin limestone water table is located at the first

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Montgomery County Courthouse

## Narrative Description (Continued)

floor level. At the second floor, a heavier wooden (now covered with metal) string course divides the shorter one story openings from the two story openings above. Next follows the richly detailed cornice with its heavily profiled wooden brackets, another trademark of the Second Empire style. The mansard roof covering the southeastern pavilion remains intact. The material is a green-blue metal siding, edged with metal ridges and crowned by a cornice. This appearance resembles the original appearance, with the exception of the cornice details at the top which have been removed or recovered and the removal of the cameo window in the center of the roof. Modifications on this facade include the replacement of the original two-over-two light wooden windows with one-over-one aluminum windows, the metal cladding of the wooden brackets, and the addition of a basement entrance at the ground level. These changes were made in 1983. In the mid-1930's, at the request of a local religious group, a neon sign reading, "The World Needs God," was placed below the small band of attic windows.

The east elevation is dominated by the projecting pavilion on the southeast corner which continues around from the south facade. The basic elements of this separate architectural mass match those of the south facade; vertical elements such as corner pilasters and elongated windows are contrasted with horizontal string courses, and the whole composition is capped by a mansard roof. There are three arched window openings on each level. Between the northern two sets of arched openings are smaller arched windows that light an interior stairway. Again, the facade remains generally intact, with the exception of the covered wooden brackets and the removal of the cameo window between the two chimneys. Another detail which has been lost is the patterned slate roof. Also, the south chimney has been rebuilt. Farther north on this elevation, the wall is set back from the projecting pavilion and is more utilitarian in style, perhaps because the jail was originally located in this area. The single story arched window openings are capped with brick arches instead of limestone. A ground level entrance leads to the men's rest room. In this area, a one story brick vault was added, date unknown. The elevation terminates on the northeast corner with a projecting square tower which rises 12 feet above the roof. This is paired with another decorative tower to complete the north facade. Each tower is capped with a tall, square cupola with a convex mansard roof. A flaring skirt-roof wraps each tower at the roof line of the main building. Multiple limestone string courses ring the towers along with false arched windows and circular windows framed with limestone. Between these towers an arched doorway bisects the facade. This door is the rear entrance to the main north-south corridor of the first floor. There are three arched window openings on the second and third floors, although the central window on the third floor has been blocked up. The central doorway and windows are capped with limestone arches and the others with brick. The peaked cornice between the towers matches that on the front elevation.

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Montgomery County Courthouse

## Narrative Description (Continued)

The west corner of the north elevation was significantly altered with an addition built in 1912. In general, the composition and details are repeated on this addition. The original portion of this elevation contains four, one story windows on the first floor and four, two story windows, with spandrel panels above, marking the location of the courtroom. The addition contains single story windows on all three floors. The cornice brackets have been removed on this elevation. Two small brick entrances to the basement were constructed at unknown dates. A third, for handicap accessibility was added in 1986.

The interior of the courthouse is arranged around two features, the main north-south hallway on the first floor and the large two story courtroom on the second floor. The front entrance stairway leads to the hallway on the first floor, which divides the floor into two groups of offices. The west half of the floor is occupied by the County Clerk and the Treasurer. The east half was previously occupied by the Circuit Clerk and vault. This arrangement and the subsequent room divisions appear not to have changed substantially. The hallway and offices on either side are framed with wood molding, including wainscot paneling with base and chair rail, and crown molding framing the doorways. Nearly all of this molding remains intact, but has been covered with paint. Also, many of the walls have been covered with wooden paneling and suspended ceilings have been added, covering the original tin ceilings. The original black and white marble floors have been covered with carpeting and with quarry tile in the hallway. One small exposed area in the County Clerk's office reveals a checkerboard pattern in the black and white marble. An elevator was installed in 1972 near the north entrance, replacing a stairway leading from the basement to the third floor.

Two stairways presently lead to the second floor--the main stair tower and a smaller stairway in the former Circuit Clerk's office towards the east. The main stair tower is constructed of wood with heavy wooden balustrades and newel posts in the same style as the exterior wooden details. The stair leads to the large courtroom with flanking offices. Again, the original features have been covered with carpeting, paneling and suspended ceilings. The original ceiling has been lowered to accommodate a mechanical loft; however, the ceiling medallions and plaster moldings are intact. The ornate judge's bench along the east wall is another original feature which is visible. The north area of this floor has been divided into offices. A new stairway has been added which leads to the third floor.

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Montgomery County Courthouse

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Narrative Description (Continued)

The architectural arrangement on the first and second floors creates a curious anomaly on the third floor. Due to the two story height of the circuit courtroom, the north part of the third floor and the abutting part on the east are completely isolated from each other, while the main stair tower becomes merely a decorative feature of the front exterior with no access to the interior. The north part of this floor contains an office and the former boardroom. The east part is used for storage. Without the original plans, it is impossible to determine how the space on the second and third floors was arranged when it accommodated the jail and the sheriff's living quarters. When a separate jail was constructed in 1909, this space was remodeled, probably very much as shown in the 1939 floor plans attached. Subsequent changes were minor.

The basement contains a number of mechanical and storage rooms and, also, men's and women's rest rooms. Most interesting is the exposed structure of flat brick vaulting supporting the structure above.

With the completion of the new courthouse in June 1994, all court related functions were moved to that building just north of the Historic Courthouse. The offices of the County Clerk and Treasurer remain in the historic Courthouse, and it is anticipated they will be joined by the Assessor and Assistant Regional Superintendent of Schools, plus other school-related offices. Some remodeling will be necessary, but it is not expected to affect the arrangement of rooms.

The limited grounds around the courthouse afford room for sidewalks, benches, a Civil War cannon, a millstone dedicated to the pioneers, and two basins planted with flowers, but formerly used to water horses.

The public square for which the courthouse provides the centerpiece includes three other buildings: St. Paul's Lutheran Church (1895) and the new courthouse to the north, and the Red Rooster Inn (1912) to the east. The rest of the square is composed of commercial buildings dating from the 1850's to the 1950's. The square is bisected by Main Street (North-South) and Seward Street (East-West) and the courthouse dominates the view from all four directions.



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Montgomery County Courthouse

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### NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Montgomery County Courthouse is locally significant under Criterion A for Politics/Government for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The period of significance extends from 1870, the year the building was occupied, to 1944, the 50 year cutoff date for the Register. For over 120 years, the Montgomery County Courthouse has stood as a symbol of local government and the American judicial system. Within these walls are stored the records of life in the county since 1821: births, deaths, marriages, divorces, wills, deeds, tax notices, vote tallies, court proceedings, etc. On these steps have stood politicians addressing their constituents, young men departing to fight America's wars, protesters exercising their rights of free speech, and sheriffs selling property to satisfy delinquent taxes. Actions and decisions taken here affect the lives of all citizens of Montgomery County. They may be of local significance only, but often are the result of the policies of state and federal governments or of national trends and patterns.

#### Historical Background

The first European inhabitants in the area which became Montgomery County settled along the streams in the southeast corner and exerted a powerful influence on the location of the county seat. After the county was formed in 1821, the Legislature appointed three commissioners to locate the seat of justice. They chose a site three miles southwest of the present location of Hillsboro. A town was laid out, named Hamilton, and a start was made on erecting buildings. However, the aforementioned settlers considered the site too difficult for them to reach and, since they were the most numerous, their opposition was effective. In the 1823, the Legislature appointed three new commissioners to establish the county seat. The new site was located on public land and named Hillsboro.<sup>1</sup>

The first courthouse was a hewn log structure located on the east side of the public square. Court was first held there on March 1, 1824.<sup>2</sup> At that time, there were fewer than 500 people residing in the county.

By 1830, the population had risen to 2,953 and, in 1833, a new courthouse was ordered to be built in the center of the public square. This was to be a two story frame structure which would not be completed until 1835.<sup>3</sup> Abraham Lincoln would have been familiar with this courthouse since it is recorded that he spoke at Whig rallies held there in the 1840's.<sup>4</sup> The Inventory of the County Archives of Illinois, compiled in 1939, states, "This court house is the one in use today, though it is doubtful if any of the men who walked through its corridors in 1835 would recognize its outlines, so extensive have been the remodelings and additions made upon it."<sup>5</sup>

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Montgomery County Courthouse

## Narrative Statement of Significance (Continued)

Between 1850 and 1870, the population of Montgomery County increased 400%, from 6,277 to 25,314. It is probable that completion of the Terre Haute & Alton Railroad through the county in 1855 was responsible for much of this increase. Settlers from the Eastern states and foreign countries poured into Illinois at this time, seeking cheap Western land.

The courthouse had been significantly remodeled in 1852-53 when a wing was added for the jail,<sup>6</sup> however, in 1868 the County Court held that "the court house in this county is too small and entirely unsuited to the condition and wants of the people of the county."<sup>7</sup> The prospect of building a new courthouse prompted some agitation for removal of the county seat from Hillsboro to Litchfield, by then the largest town in the county.<sup>8</sup> Whether to prevent this or simply in the interests of the economy, the Court ordered only the "change and improvement" of the courthouse and jail. The cost of these improvements was to be paid from funds accruing from the sale of swamplands owned by the county.<sup>9</sup>

G. P. Randall of Chicago was employed to draw the plans for the improvements. According to the Inland Architect and Builder of October 1884, Randall was "perhaps more widely known throughout the West than any other architect. His work was especially in the line of school houses and churches and also courthouses of which he built a large number, some in distant states . . ."<sup>10</sup> The Morgan County Courthouse in Jacksonville is another of Randall's designs in the Second Empire style, with some similarities to the Montgomery County Courthouse.

The employment of a professional architect was a sign of the growth and development of the county since 1833 when Aaron Knapp was paid two dollars for a "draft" of the second courthouse.<sup>11</sup> The surprising choice of a newfangled style such as the Second Empire perhaps indicates a desire to have the county appear progressive and up-to-date. However, the county officials were old-fashioned enough to stick to their intention of utilizing as much of the old courthouse as possible. In May 1869, it was reported to the Court that the courthouse and jail were "covered in" and that "the old walls have been used as far as practicable, as well as the brick and stone where the same walls could not be used in their standing form."<sup>12</sup>

Construction seems to have proceeded very slowly; perhaps the sale of swamplands was lagging. It appears that it was necessary to pay some workmen and suppliers with promissory notes instead of cash.<sup>13</sup>

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Montgomery County Courthouse

## Narrative Statement of Significance (Continued)

In June 1870, the Circuit Clerk moved back into the courthouse from his rented quarters on Main Street and, in September, the Hillsboro News Letter provided a tour of the "scarcely completed" courthouse for its readers. The editors stated that, when completed, the courthouse would be "one of the most convenient and ornamental structures of its kind in the state." They estimated the cost at approximately \$100,000, "a very small amount for so fine a structure."<sup>14</sup> Actually, the cost was over \$130,000, including the iron fence, sidewalk, etc.

The courthouse was probably completed in 1871, although payments for furnishings, fencing, etc. continued to be made in 1872 and final accounting was not made until the March term of court in 1873.<sup>15</sup>

An unusual feature of the completed building was the location of the jail on the third floor, with the sheriff's living quarters on the second. When a separate jail was built in 1909, this space was remodeled for offices and jury rooms.<sup>16</sup>

The design of the courthouse may have influenced the style of mansard roofed homes built in Hillsboro and Litchfield during the 1870's. One of them, since demolished, was almost a smaller replica.

As modern conveniences became available, they were installed at the courthouse. In 1893, the Hillsboro Electric Light & Power Company began operations, and electricity was installed at the courthouse in March of 1894.<sup>17</sup> The ceiling medallions from which the fixtures were hung in the courtroom can still be seen above the suspended ceiling. Sanitary facilities were installed in 1902 and 1918.<sup>18</sup>

Shortly after the courthouse was completed, the voters of Montgomery County chose to adopt the township form of government. The county was divided into 16 townships and three more were added later. The duly elected supervisors held their first meeting at the courthouse on May 8, 1873 and assumed the duties formerly carried out by the 3-man county court. These consisted of the imposition and collection of taxes, management of county property, fiscal oversight of county offices, provision for construction of roads and bridges, care of the indigent, supervision of education, selection of juries and supervision of elections.<sup>19</sup> When the functions of the county, circuit and probate courts, sheriff, etc. are added, it is obvious that decisions made at the courthouse affect the lives of all Montgomery County citizens.

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Montgomery County Courthouse

Narrative Statement of Significance (Continued)

Throughout the period of significance from 1870 to 1944, the day to day business of the county government was conducted in the courthouse. Many tasks changed little during this time; for instance, the recording of vital statistics, deeds, mortgages, wills, etc., while others were affected by new laws or changing attitudes nationwide. An example of the latter can be found in the area of social services.

In the earliest days of the county, two responsibilities continually occupied the attention of county officers: the development of roads and the care of paupers. By 1870, the development of roads had progressed much more rapidly than the care of the indigent. The latter was still handled by the practice of "farming out" the care of the individual to the lowest bidder. By mid-century, it was considered more humane, and less expensive, to congregate the indigent in a common county "home". Several attempts to establish such an institution in Montgomery County came to nothing until 1874, when the county purchased a 268-acre farm near Hillsboro for this purpose. It was expected that the able bodied individuals would work on the farm and contribute to their own upkeep. The county farm was still in existence in 1944, serving the aged and infirm, but was rapidly being replaced by services provided by the County Department of Public Welfare established in 1937. The widespread unemployment and consequent suffering caused by the Great Depression had resulted in a need for services which could not be provided by a county farm. In 1934, at the height of the Depression, over 2000 families in Montgomery County were in need of relief.<sup>20</sup>

Another duty of the county, supervision of schools, also underwent changes during the period of significance. As the population increased, so did the students. This problem was handled by building new schools. After the decrease in population caused by the Depression, and the resultant decrease in tax money for schools, it was necessary to close many rural schools and consolidate others.

While a large proportion of the county's budget has always been allocated to highways, for many years the county lacked a unified, county-wide network of good roads. The tendency was for each supervisor to expend funds where they would do the most good for his own township. In the 20th century, the growing use of the automobile produced a demand for a better system, and the introduction of State Aid funds provided means of achieving it. In 1913, the county board passed a resolution designating 240 miles of State Aid Roads, making a continuous system and connecting with the roads of adjacent counties. However, they refused to make the necessary levy to secure the state funds, referring the matter to the

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Montgomery County Courthouse

## Statement of Significance (Continued)

voters. The vote was strongly in favor and upgrading of the roads began.<sup>21</sup> However, all was not progress. In 1919, the board considered building a concrete road with State Aid funds, but could not agree on the location, and the money was spent on dirt roads.<sup>22</sup> Eventually, by the end of the period of significance, the county could boast of a network of well kept, all weather roads and paved highways.

From its very beginning, the economy of Montgomery County had been almost entirely agriculture-related. In the late 19th century, however, the mining of coal began in several locations and became a mainstay of the economy for the next half century. When the first wagon load of coal was produced at the Hillsboro mine in 1887, it was drawn to Courthouse Square, accompanied by a band and local dignitaries, and auctioned off to the highest bidder.<sup>23</sup>

By 1908, ten mines would be operating in the county. The availability of coal, plus excellent railroad service, attracted industries dependent on the fuel. Hillsboro acquired two smelters and a fruit jar factory, and the entire area was enjoying a boom which would last for two decades.<sup>24</sup> The population of Montgomery County rose from 30,836 in 1900 to 35,311 in 1910 and 41,403 in 1920.

The employment opportunities resulted in an influx of workers from foreign countries, which led to mass naturalization ceremonies at the courthouse. With industry also came the conflicts which marred relations between labor and management across the nation. In February 1898, Hillsboro miners held a public meeting at the courthouse to explain why they had formed a union.<sup>25</sup> In more militant times, the sheriff and his deputies would be called upon to quell violence which flared up along picket lines. Noted union organizers John L. Lewis and Edward Carbine were active in the county. (Lewis was a Montgomery County resident before he began his rise to fame.) The worst violence erupted in 1925 when Carbine arrived to organize the workers at the American Zinc Company plant in Taylor Springs. Sheriff Hill swore in 160 special deputies to guard the plant and asked Governor Small for assistance. Ten companies of state militia arrived the next day and encamped near Taylor Springs for a week. The sheriff's office in the courthouse served as a command post for coordinating control of the situation.<sup>26</sup>

The courthouse was again the scene of action during Prohibition when many a warrant was sworn out for the arrest of bootleggers.

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Montgomery County Courthouse

Statement of Significance (Continued)

Although trials held at the courthouse are usually of local significance only, decisions are necessarily affected by laws passed in Washington or Springfield and decisions made by higher courts.

One new law mandated the inclusion of women on formerly all male juries. In April 1931, the first women to serve on a grand jury in Montgomery County posed on the courthouse steps with their male colleagues.

During the period of significance, the courthouse was witness to the tragedy of three wars--the Spanish-American, World War I, and World War II. After being inducted in the circuit courtroom, the draftees would pose for pictures on the courthouse steps prior to departure.

In addition to being the home of county government, the courthouse plays another role in the lives of Montgomery County residents. Its location in the center of the public square makes it a natural focal point for community events: parades, protests, contests, band concerts, and spontaneous gatherings such as occur at times such as Armistice Day and VJ Day. For Hillsboro's Old Settlers Day, held every year since 1883, the courthouse is surrounded by a carnival, platforms for speakers and entertainers, and throngs of people.

Politicians have been speaking on this site since the earliest days of the county. Abraham Lincoln has already been mentioned; other famous Illinoisans included Adlai Stevenson I in 1908<sup>27</sup> and the colorful Senator J. Hamilton Lewis in 1920.<sup>28</sup>

From the beginning, the courthouse has been a source of pride to the people of Montgomery County. Writing in 1882, William Henry Perrin, in his History of Bond and Montgomery Counties, stated, "It is a handsome and imposing structure and a credit to the county and the people." He pointed out that "it is situated on the highest ground in the county and serves as a waymark to the passing traveler."<sup>29</sup> The courthouse still can be seen when approaching Hillsboro from the west and it presents a powerful image when viewed from any direction.

Landmark, seat of county government, symbol of the past, the Montgomery County Courthouse deserves consideration for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

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Montgomery County Courthouse

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NOTES

1William Henry Perrin, ed., History of Bond and Montgomery Counties (Chicago: O. L. Baskin & Co., 1882), pp. 181,187.

2County Court Record, vol. A, pp. 21,24,44.

3Ibid., pp. 166,199.

4Earl Schenck Miers, ed. in chief, Lincoln Day By Day, A Chronology, 1809-1865, vol. 1: 1809-1848, William E. Barringer (Dayton: Morningside, 1991), pp. 43J115, 44J115,20.

5Work Projects Administration, The Illinois Historical Records Survey, Inventory of the County Archives of Illinois. No. 68: Montgomery County (Hillsboro) (Chicago: 1939), p. 16.

6County Court Record, vol. 1, pp. 94,119,127,130.

7Ibid., vol. D, p. 88.

8Perrin, p. 230.

9County Court Record, vol. D, pp. 45,88.

10Inland Architect and Builder, October 1884.

11County Court Record, vol. A, p. 167.

12Ibid., vol. D, p. 131.

13Ibid., pp. 387-389.

14"Our Courthouse," Hillsboro News Letter, 28 September 1870.

15County Court Record, vol. D, p. 433.

16Inventory, p. 64.

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Montgomery County Courthouse

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NOTES (Continued)

17Montgomery News, 15 March 1894, p. 1.

18Inventory, p. 64.

19Ibid., p. 15,30

20Ibid., p. 25,27

21Newton Bateman and Paul Selby, eds., Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois, vol. 2: History of Montgomery County, Alexander T. Strange, ed. (Chicago: Munsell Publishing Co., 1918), pp. 742-743.

22Montgomery News, 16 May 1919, p. 1.

23"Coal to Spark Second Area Industrial Revival," Montgomery News, 14 June 1952, p. 1.

24Workers of the Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of Illinois, comps., Hillsboro Guide (Hillsboro, IL: Montgomery County News, 1940), pp. 31-35.

25"The Miners' Side of the Strike Question," Montgomery News, 11 February 1898, p. 4.

26"Smelter Employees Return to Work as Troops Arrive to Prevent Violence," Montgomery News, 14 August 1923, p. 1.

27"Old Settlers Day," Montgomery News, 11 September 1908, p. 1.

28"Tuesday Was Democratic Day; Courthouse Packed by Crowd," Montgomery News, 22 October 1920, p. 1.

29Perrin, p. 230.



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Bateman, Newton and Selby, Paul, eds. Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois. Chicago: Munsell Publishing Co., 1918. vol. 2: History of Montgomery County, ed. Alexander T. Strange.

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Traylor, Jacob L. Past and Present of Montgomery County. Chicago: The S. J. Clark Publishing Co., 1904.

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"Coal to Spark Second Area Industrial Revival." Montgomery News, 14 June 1962, p. 1.

"Old Settlers Day." Montgomery News, 11 September 1908, p. 6.

"Our Courthouse." Hillsboro News Letter, 28 September 1870, p. 3.

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Continuation Sheet

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Montgomery County Courthouse

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BIBLIOGRAPHY (Continued)

Newspapers (Continued)

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Montgomery News, 14 August 1923, p. 1.

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Local Economy of the Hillsboro, Illinois Area, 1887-1941." Southern  
Illinois University, Edwardsville, 1984.

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Bliss, Robert R. Editor, Montgomery County News, Hillsboro, Illinois. April 1994.

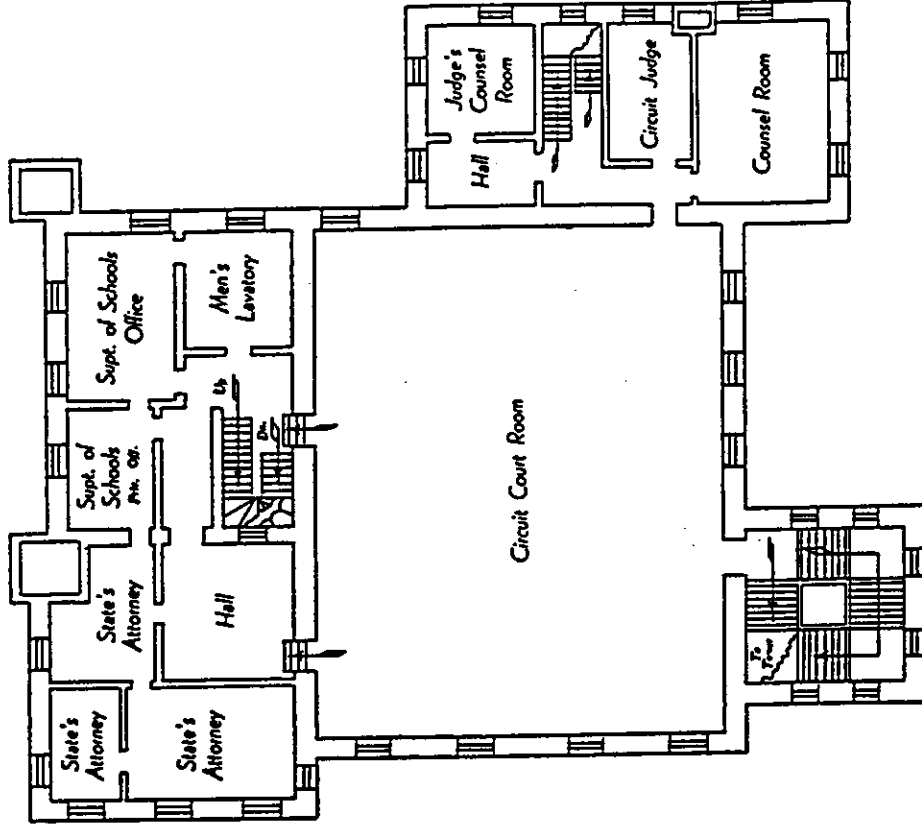
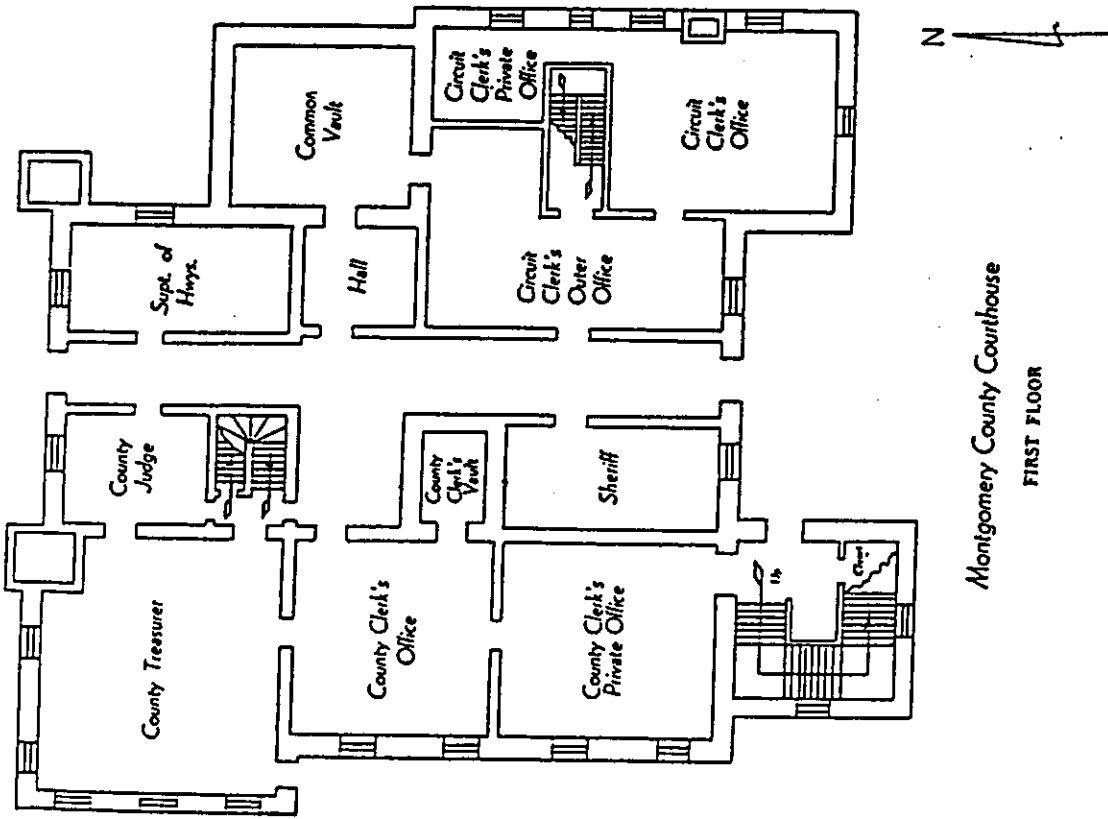
Hertel, Roy L. Montgomery County Circuit Clerk, Hillsboro, Illinois. April 1994.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

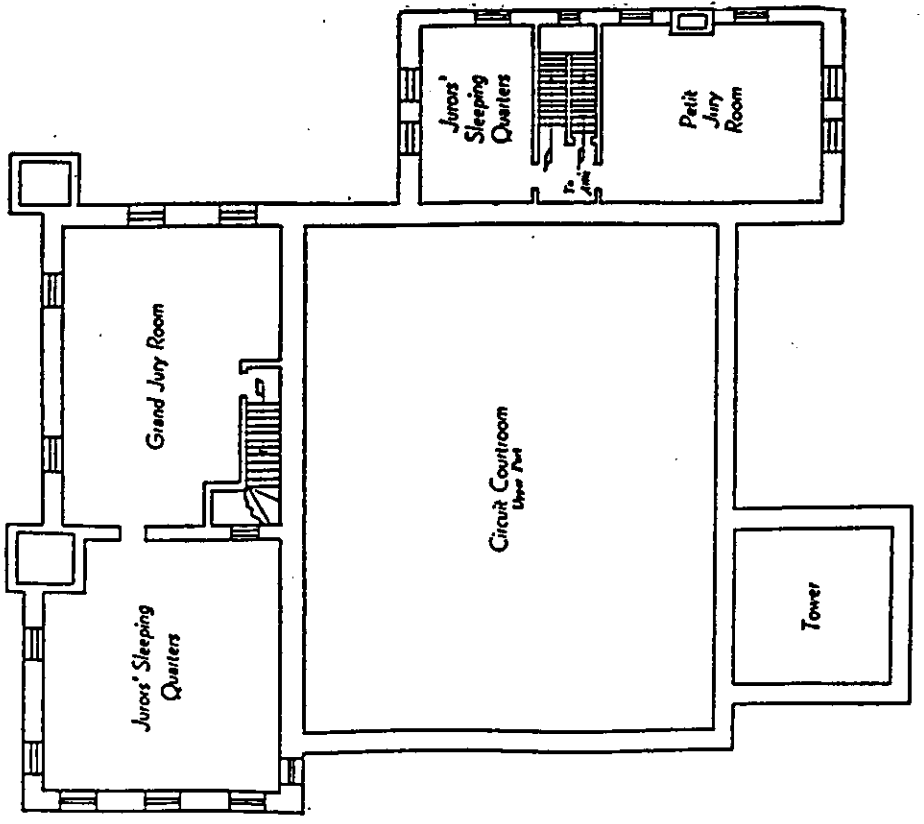
The boundary of the Montgomery County Courthouse is a plot of ground  
130 feet by 130 feet, located in the original town of Hillsboro, as platted  
and dedicated by the County Commissioners of Montgomery County in a plat filed  
in Deed Record Book A, Page 9, November 24, 1823.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

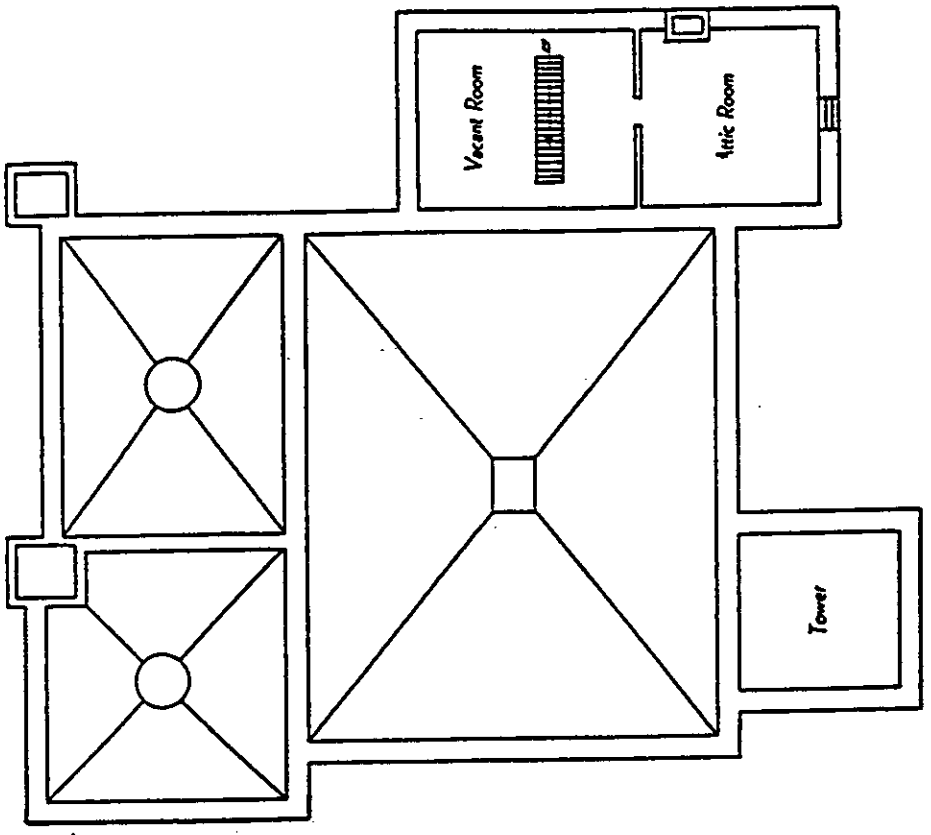
The boundary includes the Montgomery County Courthouse and surrounding  
area that has historically been associated with the Montgomery County Court-  
house and that maintains historic integrity.



Inventory of the County Archives of Illinois  
 No. 68 - Montgomery County - 1939

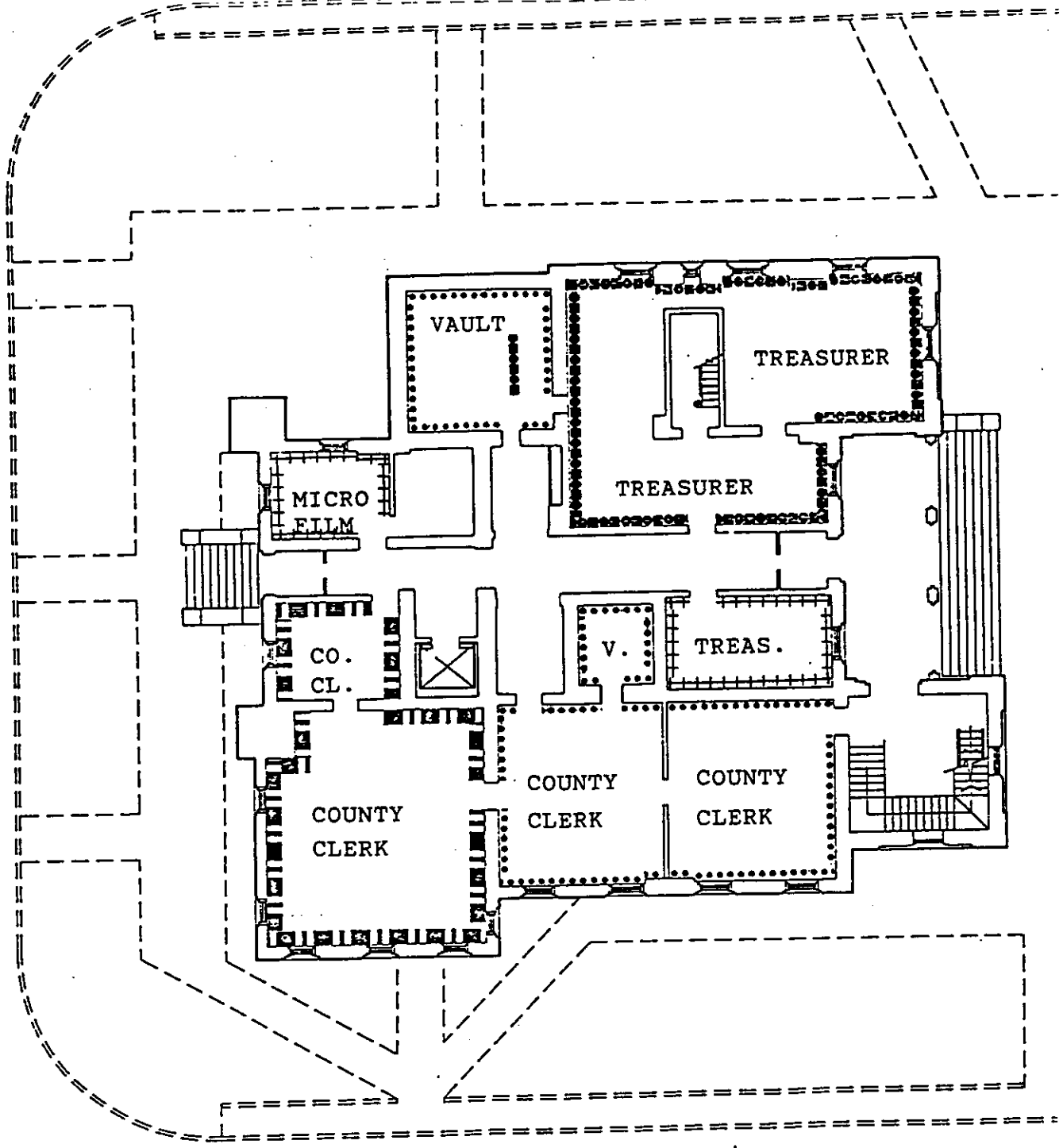


Montgomery County Courthouse  
THIRD FLOOR



Montgomery County Courthouse  
ROOF and ATTIC

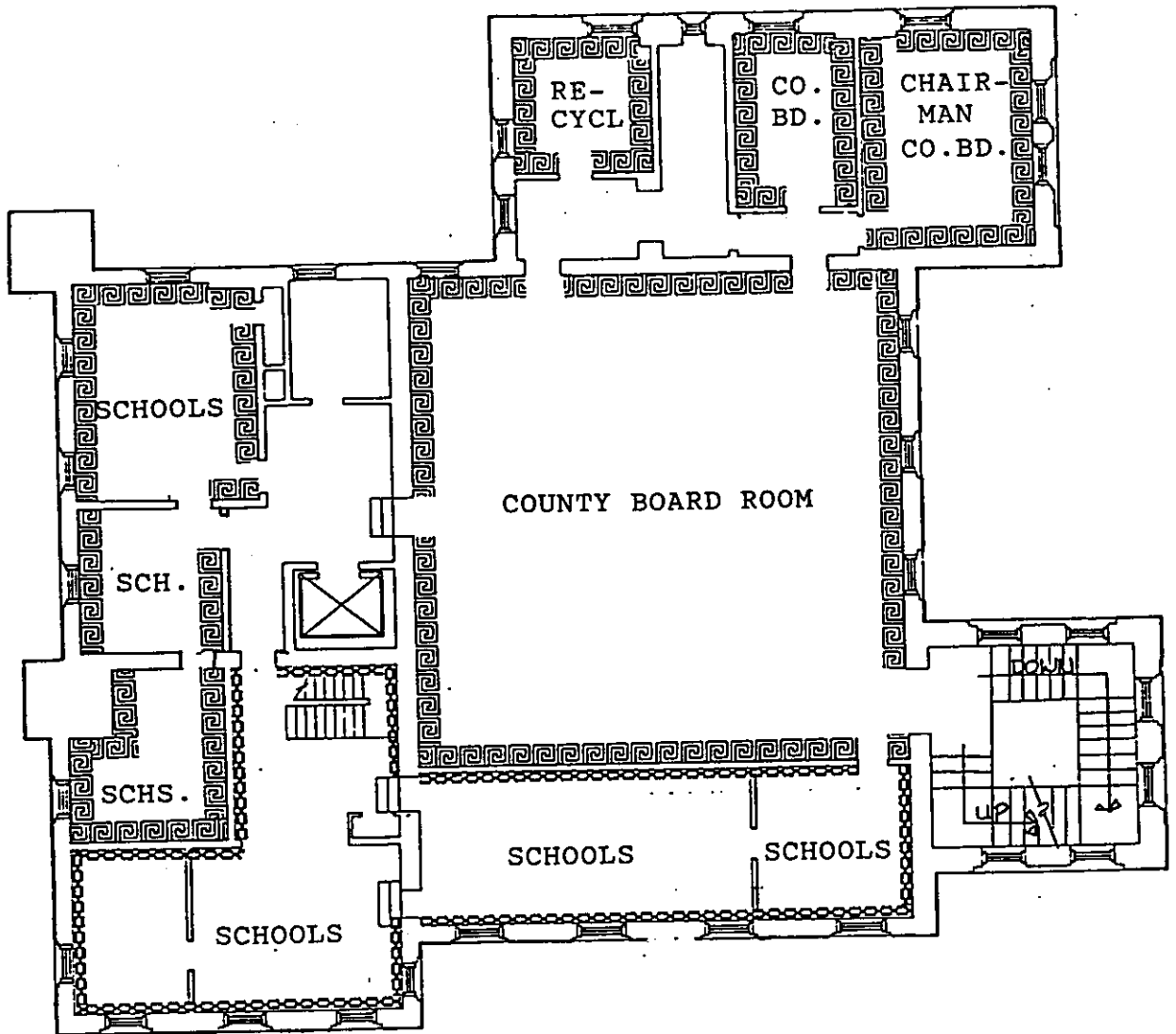
Inventory of the County Archives of Illinois  
No. 68 -- Montgomery County -- 1939



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



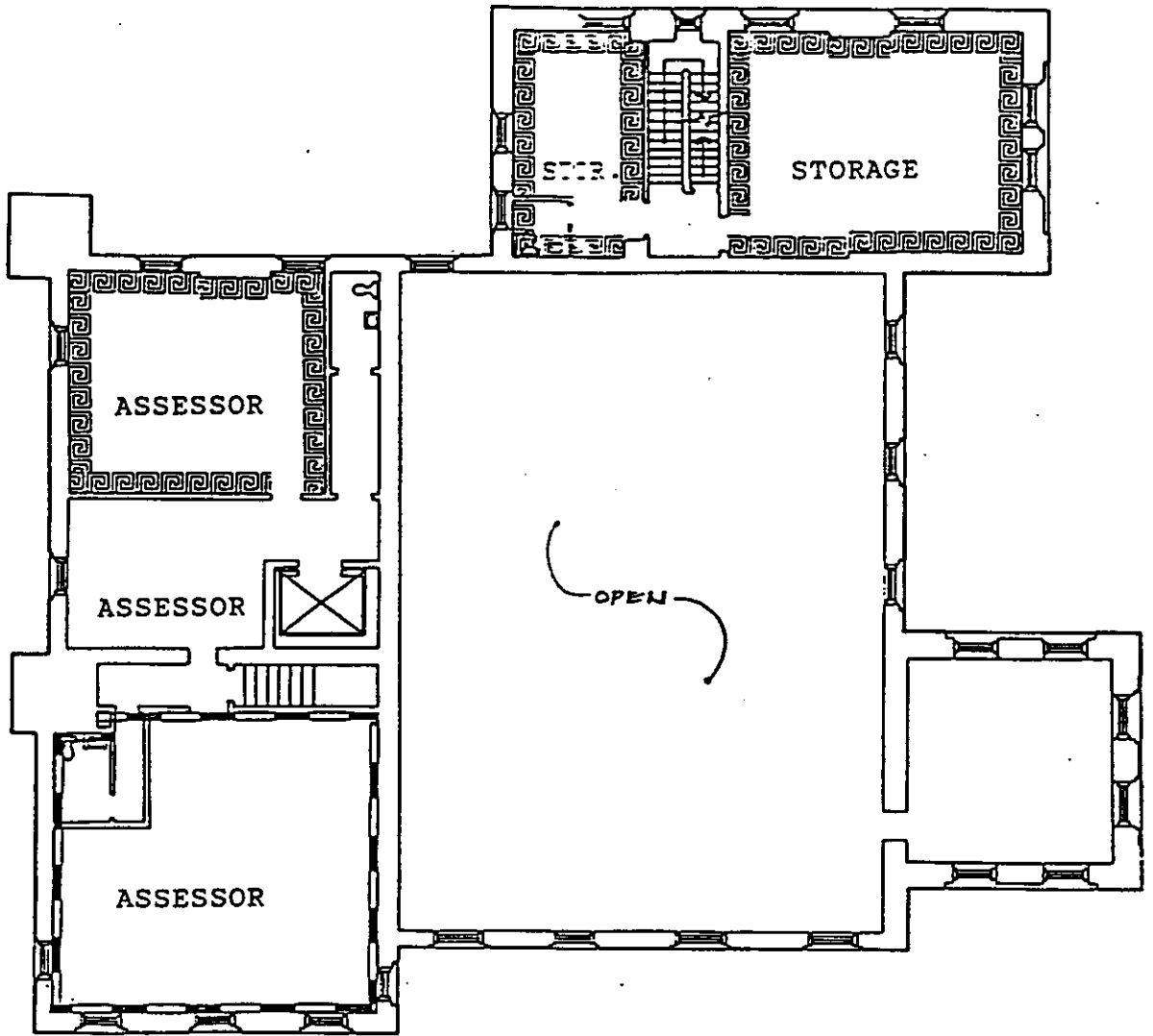
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
 Hillsboro, Illinois



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
Hillsboro, Illinois



THIRD FLOOR PLAN



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
Hillsboro, Illinois



IN REPLY REFER TO:

# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
P.O. Box 37127  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

RECEIVED

NOV 09 1994



Preservation Services

The Director of the National Park Service is pleased to inform you that the following properties have been entered in the National Register of Historic Places. For further information call 202/343-9542.

NOV 4 1994

WEEKLY LIST OF ACTIONS TAKEN ON PROPERTIES: 10/24/94 THROUGH 10/28/94

KEY: State, County, Property Name, Address/Boundary, City, Vicinity, Reference Number NHL Status, Action, Date, Multiple Name

- COLORADO, ADAMS COUNTY, Riverside Cemetery, 5201 Brighton Blvd., Denver, 94001253, NOMINATION, 10/28/94
- COLORADO, LARIMER COUNTY, Hewes--Kirkwood Inn, 465 Long Peak Rd., Estes Park vicinity, 94001254, NOMINATION, 10/28/94
- FLORIDA, GADSDEN COUNTY, Nicholson, Dr. Malcolm, Farmhouse, FL 12, N side, W of Havanna, Havana vicinity, 94001272, NOMINATION, 10/28/94
- FLORIDA, INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, Maheer Building, 1423 20th St., Vero Beach, 94001274, NOMINATION, 10/28/94
- FLORIDA, INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, Smith, Archie, Wholesale Fish Company, 1740 Indian River Dr., Sebastian, 94001275, NOMINATION, 10/28/94
- FLORIDA, SARASOTA COUNTY, Out of Door School, 444 Reid St., Sarasota, 94001276, NOMINATION, 10/28/94
- ILLINOIS, CHAMPAIGN COUNTY, Gamma Phi Beta Sorority House, 1110 W. Nevada, Urbana, 94001270, NOMINATION, 10/28/94 (Fraternity and Sorority Houses at the Urbana-Champaign Campus of the University of Illinois MPS)
- ILLINOIS, DU PAGE COUNTY, Bloomington School--Village Hall, 108 E. Lake St., Bloomington, 94001263, NOMINATION, 10/28/94
- ILLINOIS, DU PAGE COUNTY, Randecker's Hardware Store, 112 S. Bloomington Rd., Bloomington, 94001265, NOMINATION, 10/28/94
- ILLINOIS, FULTON COUNTY, South Fulton Churchhouse, 2.2 mi. S of jct. of Astoria-Bader Rd. and US 24, Astoria vicinity, 94001264, NOMINATION, 10/28/94
- ILLINOIS, JERSEY COUNTY, Grafton Bank, 225 E. Main St., Grafton, 94000016, ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION, 6/03/94 (Grafton MPS)
- ILLINOIS, JERSEY COUNTY, Grafton Historic District, 105--225 and 24--214 W. Main St., and stone wharf at Maple St., Grafton, 94000020, ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION, 6/03/94 (Grafton MPS)
- ILLINOIS, JERSEY COUNTY, Mason, Paris, Building, 100 N. Springfield St., Grafton, 94000017, ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION, 6/03/94 (Grafton MPS)
- ILLINOIS, JERSEY COUNTY, McClintock, John and Amelia, House, 321 E. Main St., Grafton, 94000019, ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION, 6/03/94 (Grafton MPS)
- ILLINOIS, JERSEY COUNTY, Ruebel Hotel, 207--215 E. Main St., Grafton, 94000015, ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION, 6/03/94 (Grafton MPS)
- ILLINOIS, JERSEY COUNTY, Slaten--LaMarsh House, 25 E. Main St., Grafton, 94000018, ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION, 6/03/94 (Grafton MPS)
- ILLINOIS, LAKE COUNTY, Hotel Waukegan, 102 Washington St., Waukegan, 94001269, NOMINATION, 10/28/94
- ILLINOIS, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, Montgomery County Courthouse, Courthouse Sq., Hillsboro, 94001266, NOMINATION, 10/28/94
- ILLINOIS, ST. CLAIR COUNTY, Marissa Academy, 610 S. Main St., Marissa, 94001267, NOMINATION, 10/28/94
- IOWA, JASPER COUNTY, Byal Orchard Historic District, W. 108th St. about 1.5 mi. S of jct. with IA 223, Mingo vicinity, 94001255, NOMINATION, 10/28/94
- LOUISIANA, NATCHITOCHE PARISH, Church of St. Anne, Jct. of LA 485 and Bloss Moore Rd., SW corner, Allen vicinity, 94001271, NOMINATION, 10/28/94
- LOUISIANA, ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH, Graugnard House, 2292 LA 44, Reserve vicinity, 94001249, NOMINATION, 10/28/94
- MAINE, AROOSTOOK COUNTY, Corriveau Mill, US 1, S side, 0.3 mi. SW of jct. with Paridis Rd., Upper Frenchville vicinity, 94001246, NOMINATION, 10/28/94
- MAINE, SAGadahoc COUNTY, Heal Family House, ME 127, W side, 1.2 mi. S of jct. with Robinhood Rd., Georgetown vicinity, 94001243, NOMINATION, 10/28/94
- MAINE, WASHINGTON COUNTY, Calais Residential Historic District, Roughly, area along Main St. and Calais Ave., from Calais Ave. to Swan St., Calais, 94001248, NOMINATION, 10/28/94
- MAINE, WASHINGTON COUNTY, Hinckley Hill Historic District, Roughly, 305--326 Main St., Calais, 94001244, NOMINATION, 10/28/94
- MASSACHUSETTS, HAMPDEN COUNTY, Longmeadow Street--North Historic District, Bounded by Longmeadow St., Springfield Town Line, Westmoreland Ave. and Colley Dr., Longmeadow, 94001262, NOMINATION, 10/28/94
- MISSISSIPPI, JEFFERSON DAVIS COUNTY, Holloway, John Fielding, House, US 84, about 450 ft. E of jct. with MS 541, Mount Carmel community, Prentiss vicinity, 94001252, NOMINATION, 10/28/94
- NEBRASKA, CHEYENNE COUNTY, Sioux Ordnance Depot Fire & Guard Headquarters, Jct. of 1st Ave. and Military Rd., Western Nebraska Community College, Sidney vicinity, 94001234, NOMINATION, 10/24/94
- NEW JERSEY, ESSEX COUNTY, Indian and the Puritan, Opposite 5 Washington St., Newark, 94001256, NOMINATION, 10/28/94 (Public Sculpture in Newark MPS)
- NEW JERSEY, ESSEX COUNTY, Wars of America, Military Park, 614--706 Broad St., Newark, 94001257, NOMINATION, 10/28/94 (Public Sculpture in Newark MPS)
- TENNESSEE, GILES COUNTY, Reveille, 408 W. Madison, Pulaski, 94001273, NOMINATION, 10/28/94



ILLINOIS HISTORIC SITES SURVEY INVENTORY

1. Name of Site:

Common

Historic

Montgomery County Courthouse

2. Location:

Street and Number

Courthouse Square

City or Town

Hillsboro  
County

Montgomery

Township

8N

Range

4W

Section

1/4 Section

3. Classification:

Category (check one)

( ) District

( ) Site

( ) Building

(X) Structure

Integrity (check one)

(X) Altered ( ) Unaltered

( ) Moved (X) Original Site

4. Ownership:

( ) Private

(X) Public

Status (check one)

(X) Occupied

( ) Unoccupied

(X) Preservation work in progress

Access to Public

(X) Yes ( ) Restricted (X) Unrestricted ( ) No

Present Use (check one or more)

( ) Agricultural

( ) Commercial

( ) Educational

( ) Entertainment

(X) Government

( ) Industrial

( ) Military

( ) Museum

( ) Park

( ) Private Residence

( ) Religious

( ) Scientific

( ) Transportation

( ) Other (specify)

5. Ownership of Property:

Owner's Name

Montgomery County

Phone Number

Street and Number

City or Town

State

County

Zip Code

6. Description:

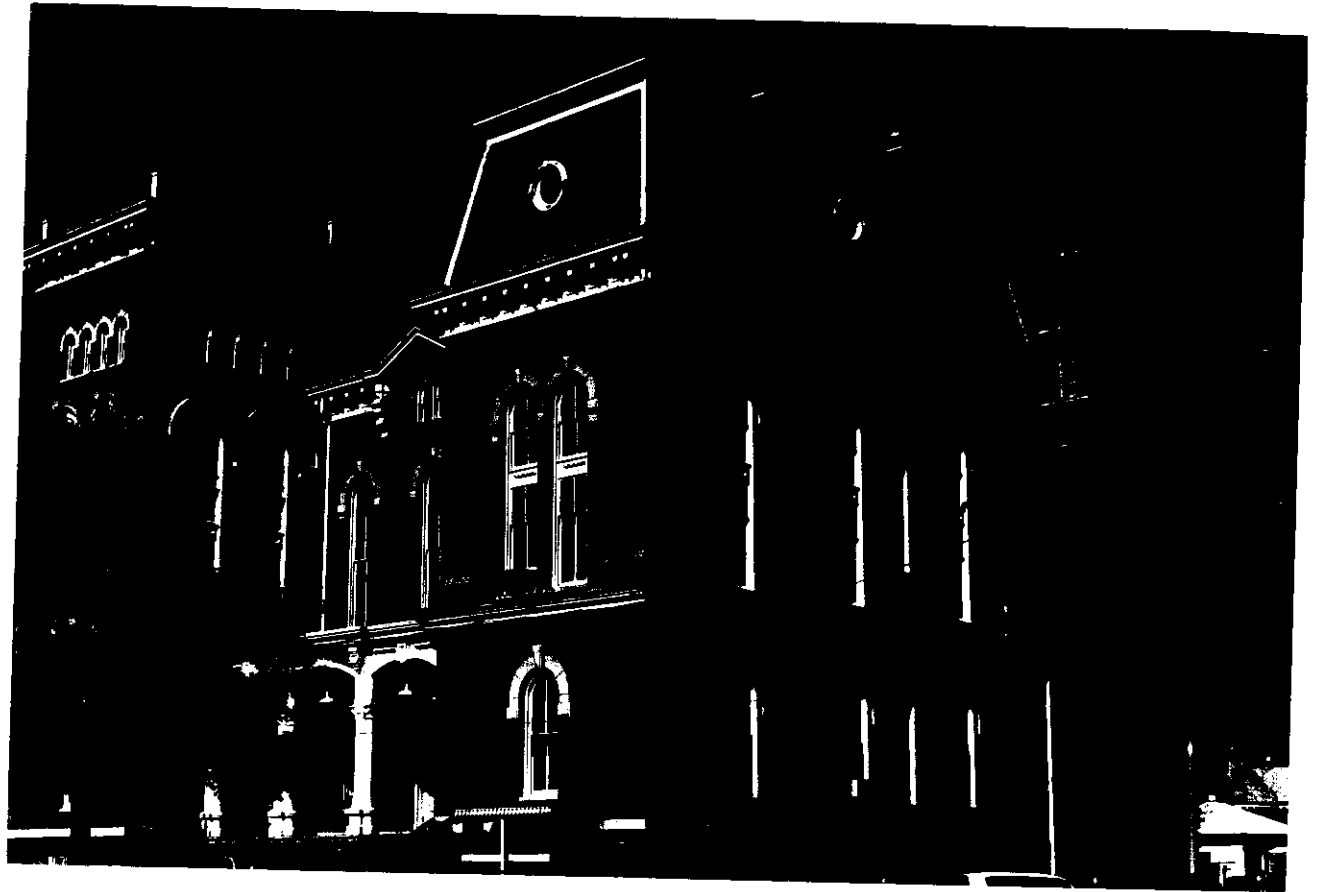
Condition:

(X) Excellent ( ) Good ( ) Fair ( ) Deteriorated ( ) Ruins

( ) Unexposed

Is there a program of preservation underway? ( ) Yes ( ) No

GOVERNMENT







[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

