

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received
date entered

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

WASHINGTON

1. Name

historic Mercer County Courthouse

and/or common Mercer County Courthouse

2. Location

street & number SE Third Street (Illinois Highway 17) N/A not for publication

city, town Aledo N/A vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~

state Illinois code 012 county Mercer code 131

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<u>N/A</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mercer County

street & number SE Third Street

city, town Aledo N/A vicinity of state Illinois

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Mercer County Courthouse - Recorder's Office

street & number SE Third Street

city, town Aledo state Illinois

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Inventory of Historic Structures
title in Mercer County

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date October, 1972 federal state county local

depository for survey records Illinois Department of Conservation

city, town Springfield state Illinois

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Mercer County Courthouse is of Romanesque architecture and has undergone few alterations since its construction in 1894. Located in Aledo on Southeast Third Street between South College Avenue and South Second Avenue, the courthouse is the predominate structure in this midwest farm community.

The approximately one acre site of the courthouse is surrounded on three sides by low commercial and residential buildings and the town square to the north. The main streets leading to the courthouse create scenic vistas opening onto the expansive lawns surrounding the structure. Sidewalks lead to each doorway and in front of the main entrance a monument to Mercer County veterans has been erected with the names of those killed in action etched into the stone pillar.

The three story courthouse is constructed out of Beria sandstone and is basically rectangular in shape with five vertical sections. A decorative cornice runs around the entire building and is also evident over entrance ways.

The windows of the courthouse are of three basic designs; double-hung, double-hung with an arch above, and double-hung with a rectangle above. Exceptions to these three styles are found in the windows of the spires that form the main entryway at the front of the building. Generally speaking, the lower two floors of the building have plain double-hung windows while the third floor has windows with ornamentation. On the east side of the front and the east end of the building the windows of the third floor are arched; while on the west side of the front and the west end of the building rectangles are found above the windows. The windows on the back of the building have rectangles above them:

All four entrances into the building are arched doorways supported by ornamental columns. The doors on the north, south and east are used daily, but the one on the west is not functional.

The ends of the building are somewhat symmetrical to the center vertical section which is comprised of the main entryway and is flanked by two spires. Above the spires rests the clock tower. The tower, which rests in the middle of the roof, has four spires, one at each corner. There are five arched openings for the belfry which is located directly above the clock. Below the clock on each side of the tower there is a large opening which leads to an observation deck guarded by wrought iron railings.

During the spring of 1977, the original windows were replaced with double glazed, anodized aluminum frame windows. The original fixtures had deteriorated to the extent that they did not readily lend themselves to restoration.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
	<input type="checkbox"/> invention			

Cornerstone laid on

Specific dates April 18, 1894 **Builder/Architect** L. L. Leach & Sons/M. E. Bell

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Mercer County Courthouse is located in Aledo, Illinois. Since its construction in 1894 the courthouse has greatly influenced the life and development of this rural farm community. County courthouses by their very nature are of paramount local significance. Mercer County's is no exception. Even though the windows have been altered it still retains its essential character and is worthy of inclusion in the National Register.

The Mercer County seat of government has not always been in Aledo, Illinois. An election was held in August of 1857 to determine whether the county seat would be located in Keithsburg or Aledo. Aledo was the victor. In April of 1893 the large volume of county business necessitated that the County Board of Supervisors pass a resolution authorizing the construction of a new courthouse which would cost no more than \$60,000.00. The board also stipulated that the citizens of Aledo contribute \$10,000.00. The citizens pledged over \$12,000.00. The cornerstone of the courthouse was laid in April 1894 funded through this public-private partnership brought about by the willing cooperation of the Mercer County residents.

The Mercer County Courthouse and the DuPage County Courthouse were designed by the same architect, M. E. Bell. The DuPage County structure, already listed on the National Register, is a more elaborate example of Bell's design for the Mercer County building. It is assumed that Bell probably expanded the Mercer County design (1894) to accommodate the more wealthy DuPage County clients (1896-97). The Mercer County structure was composed of sandstone rather than brick, and sported fewer ornamental elements than did the DuPage County edifice.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Allen, Bernice Study of Mercer County; Teacher's Manual (unpublished) found in Aledo Public Library, Aledo, Illinois.
 Birkhead, Cynthia The Prize and Pride of Aledo (unpublished) found in Mercer County Clerk's Office, Aledo, Illinois.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Aledo East

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

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

B

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 Zone Easting Northing

C

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Block 94 Original Town, now City of Aledo

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dean Baumgardner, Director of Community and Economic Development

organization Bi-State Metropolitan Planning Commission date 12-30-81

street & number 1504 Third Avenue telephone (309)793-6322

city or town Rock Island state Illinois

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Director date 4/16/82

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

For HCRS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet Mercer County Courthouse Item number 9

Page 2

Thomas, Clarence C. Official Directory of Mercer County, Illinois 1935. Aledo, Illinois: the Times Record Company, 1935.

GA, Tattall County, Reidsville, Alexander Hotel, 204 W. Brazell St. (06/17/82)
GA, Taylor County, Reynolds, Ricks, Ferdinand A., House, S. Collins and E. Calhoun Sts. (06/17/82)
GA, Terrell County, Dawson, Dawson Woman's Clubhouse, 311 6th Ave. (06/17/82)
GA, Toombs County, Vidalia, Brazell, Crawford W., House, 607 Jackson St. (06/17/82)
GA, Twiggs County, Jeffersonville vicinity, Wimberly Plantation, Jeffersonville Rd., GA 96 (06/17/82)
GA, Walton County, Walnut Grove, Brodnax, Samuel H., House, GA 81 (06/17/82)
GA, Wilkinson County, Gordon, Elam-Camp House, 216 Jackson St. (06/17/82)

IDAHO, Blaine County, Bellevue, Bellevue Historic District, Roughly bounded by U.S. 93, Cedar, 4th, and Oak Sts. (06/16/82)

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Brookfield, Grossdale Station, 8820 1/2 Brookfield Ave. (06/15/82)
ILLINOIS, Jersev County, Chautauqua, New Piasa Chautauqua Historic District, Off McAdams Pkwy. (06/15/82)
ILLINOIS, Lake County, Libertyville, Lewis, Lloyd, House, 153 Little St. Mary's Rd. (06/15/82)
ILLINOIS, Mercer County, Aledo, Mercer County Courthouse, SE 3rd St. (IL 17) (06/17/82)
ILLINOIS, Mercer County, Aledo, Mercer County Courthouse, SE 3rd St. (IL 17) (06/17/82)

INDIANA, Grant County, Marion, Grant County Jail and Sheriff's Residence, 215 E. 3rd St. (06/17/82)
INDIANA, Tippecanoe County, West Lafayette, Pierce, James, Jr., House, 4623 N., 140 W. (06/17/82)
INDIANA, Vanderburgh County, Evansville, Hose House #12, 1409 First Ave. (06/17/82)
INDIANA, White County, Monticello, Reynolds, James Culbertson, House, 417 N. Main St. (06/17/82)

IOWA, Winneshiek County, Decorah vicinity, Jacobson Farm, SE of Decorah on Rt. 1 (06/14/82)

KANSAS, Douglas County, Lawrence, Taylor, Lucy Hobbs, Building, 809 Vermont (06/14/82)
KANSAS, Franklin County, Ottawa, Tauv Jones Hall, Ottawa University Campus 10th and Cedar Sts. (06/14/82)
KANSAS, Montgomery County, Coffeville, Terminal Building, 717 Walnut (06/14/82)
KANSAS, Sedgwick County, Wichita, Clapp, L. W., House, 1847 Wellington Pl. (06/14/82)
KANSAS, Sedgwick County, Wichita, Munger, Darius Sales, House, Sim Park (06/14/82)
KANSAS, Sedgwick County, Wichita, Occidental Hotel, 300 N. Main St. (06/14/82)

KENTUCKY, Fayette County, Lexington, Cloud House, 3740 Versailles Rd. (06/17/82)
KENTUCKY, Oldham County, Goshen vicinity, Yager House (Pine Grove Stock Farm), SE of Goshen on Covered Bridge Rd. (06/17/82)

LOUISIANA, Orleans Parish, New Orleans, Pessou House, 6018 Benjamin St. (06/15/82)

MAINE, Hancock County, Dedham vicinity, Lucerne Inn, Bar Harbor Rd., Rte 1A (06/16/82)

MISSISSIPPI, Marion County, Columbia, Keys Hill Historic District, Broad St. (06/14/82)
MISSISSIPPI, Oktibbeha County, Starkville, Greensboro Street Historic District, Greensboro St. (06/14/82)

MISSOURI, St. Louis (ind. city), Union Trust Company Building, 705 Oliver St. (06/17/82)
MISSOURI, St. Louis County, Webster Groves, Marshall Place Historic District, Marshall Pl. (06/17/82)

MONTANA, Cascade County, Vaughn vicinity, Vaughn, Rogert, Homestead (Captain Couch Ranch), Vaughn Cemetery Rd. (Cadcade County Rd.) (06/14/82)
MONTANA, Glacier County, Browning vicinity, Holy Family Mission, (06/14/82)
MONTANA, Lewis and Clark Counties, Helena, Silverman, Morris, House, 412 N. Rodney St. (06/14/82)

ILLINOIS HISTORIC SITES SURVEY INVENTORY

201335

1. Name of Site:

Common Mercer Co. Courthouse
Historic

2.. Location:

Street and Number College & Third
City or Town Alledo Zip Code
County Mercer Township T14N
Range R3W Section 20
1/4 Section NE

3. Classification:

Category (check one) Integrity (check one)
() District (X) Building () Altered (X) Unaltered
() Site () Structure () Moved (X) Original Site

4. Ownership:

() Private (X) Occupied
(X) Public () Unoccupied
() Preservation work in progress

Access to Public

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

Present Use (check one or more)

() Agricultural () Industrial () Religious
() Commercial () Military () Scientific
() Educational () Museum () Transportation
() Entertainment () Park () Other (specify)
(X) Government () Private Residence

5. Ownership of Property:

Owner's Name Phone Number
Street and Number
City or Town
State County Zip Code

6. Description:

Sandstone (?) Romanesque
() Excellent (X) Good () Fair () Deteriorated () Ruins () Unexposed

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

GOVERNMENT

7. Historical Themes : (check one or more of the following)

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archeological Site | (Pre-Columbian) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archeological Site | (Post-Columbian to 1673) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> French Influence | (1673-1780) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Frontier | (1780-1818) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Early | (1818-1850) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illinois Middle | (1850-1900) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Late | (1900-present) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Famous People | (give names & dates) |

8. Specific Date: 1894

Areas of significance (check one or more of the following)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal (historic) | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal (pre-historic) | <input type="checkbox"/> Military |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Music |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | |

Brief statement of significance: (include all names and dates) Use additional sheets if necessary.

9. Form prepared by:

Name and Title: T.H. Date: _____
Organization: _____ Phone: _____
Street and number: _____
City or Town: _____ County: _____ Zip Code _____

During the course of the Survey we often find it necessary to search for references for a particular site. When filling out the Survey form, please list according to the following example, published references to the site for which forms are being completed. If a bibliography can be compiled, it will greatly deduct from the Survey's task.

Bibliography

Robertson, Robert, Of Whales and Men. New York, Alfred K. Knopf, Inc., 1954.

