

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

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

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

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

**1. Name**

historic Doddridge County Courthouse

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number Court Square \_\_\_ not for publication

city, town West Union N/A vicinity of First congressional district

state West Virginia code 54 county Doddridge code 017

**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 type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Doddridge County Commission

street & number Doddridge County Courthouse

city, town West Union N/A vicinity of West Virginia state

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Doddridge County Courthouse

street & number Court Square

city, town West Union West Virginia state

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Courthouse Square Survey has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_ yes  no

date April 1977 \_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_ county \_\_\_ local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Unit, Department of Culture and History

city, town Charleston West Virginia state

## 7. Description

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

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Doddridge County Courthouse is a late Victorian Romanesque-style red brick structure commanding the crest of a hill overlooking the town of West Union, seat of Doddridge County, West Virginia. Visual dominance of the two and one-half story building in the community is due to the siting and to strongly vertical elements of massing. The steeply pitched gables and prominent towers lend a subtle Gothic touch to the composition. Other Gothic features are well expressed in the limestone pinnacles and demi-buttresses of the dominant gable facing Church Street.

Important to the exterior architectural character of the building is the presence of rich brick and stone detailing. The well preserved pressed red brick facades are punctuated with horizontal recessed and relief brick coursing and with vertical and horizontal limestone banding. Dressed stone appointments and quoin work accentuate the fenestration while high relief foliate-style carving embellishes the spandrels of the massive arched entrance portal comprised of radiating limestone voussoirs. Dominating the center of the front-facing gable (above a tripartite, balconied window) is a corbeled stone pedestal carrying a classical-style bronze figure representing "Justice".

Flanking the principal entrance to the left is a massive, soaring clock tower, battered at the base and buttressed at the corners with molded brick ribs. Openings of the tower belfry are rectangular and feature smooth stone mullions, corresponding stone banding, and shallow stone embellished balconies. The parapet above the clock faces at each of the tower elevations is stepped, indicating a slightly awkward structural solution to the removal of the tower's dormered spire in 1969. The truncation of the tower cap necessitated by serious structural deterioration, evidences the only major alteration in the entire building. The original 1903 E. Howard Clock Company clock of Boston, was replaced in 1973 with a time piece from the I.T. Verdon Company of Cincinnati.

The two and one-half story rounded bay (above a rusticated stone raised basement) at the north corner of the building is surmounted with a conical cap. The coupled and transomed windows of this bay are filled with stained glass from basement to attic. The cornice of the bay echoes the main cornice which superimposes dentils and modillions of the red, tile-covered, multi-gabled roof.

Interior features of the Doddridge County Courthouse remain much as they were at the time of their installation. Spaces are intact in the major corridors and rooms (with the exception of the lowered second floor courtroom ceiling), original woodwork and finish such as the fine oak door casing and cornice heads survive, and original cast iron and stained glass features are in excellent condition. The major display of stained glass in the central portion of the building is seen in the arched heads of the tripartite window openings above the landing of the major stairway leading to the large second floor courtroom. The rose hues of these windows (with touches of lavender and red) match the coloration of the veined, rose marble wainscoting.

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The octagonal courtroom of the second floor is a large space whose principal ornamental features are classical in style. The front and sides of the room are centered with high Palladian-style recessed openings, the spandrels of which are adorned with roundels containing murals (on fabric) depicting patriotic themes. A large mural centered with a figure of "Justice" holding the scales dominates the wall behind the dais and the bench.

While the ceiling of the major courtroom has been altered (lowered), the cornice and classical-style wall recesses have not been impaired and the general ambience of the entire space, including the cast iron and wood seating, is turn-of-the-century. Only very minor changes elsewhere in the building have been noted. It is evident that interior quartered oak "Victorian Venetian blinds" (louvered wooden shutters), mentioned in the contracts during the finishing stages of the building, have long ago disappeared.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Local History
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

<b>Specific dates</b>	1899-1903	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	J. Charles Fulton, architect John P. Conn, builder/contractor James Grant, stonemason
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**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Doddridge County Courthouse (1899-1903) at West Union, West Virginia, is significant because it is one of northeastern West Virginia's finest and best preserved examples of turn-of-the-century civic architecture. The building is also distinctive in the region as a late example of brick Victorian Romanesque architecture and as an important work of J. Charles Fulton, an architect noted for the design of large buildings in southern Pennsylvania and northern West Virginia. The imposing character of the site has contributed to the community's sense of history. It is a landmark which dominates the vistas of West Union. Significantly, it has achieved a greater longevity than the previous courthouses that have continuously occupied this spot from the period of the formation of Doddridge County in the mid-1840's.

The Doddridge County Courthouse is much older than the courthouses in neighboring Tyler, Ritchie, Gilmer and Harrison counties. In one respect it preserves the region's finest traditions of the late Victorian mason's art. The large expanses of red, pressed brick, molded brick surfaces, and limestone dressing are appropriate to the architect's choice of style, which was thoroughly eclectic. The picturesque profile of the structure with its asymmetrical massing, irregular roofline and prominences reflects the national taste in late stages preceding the colonial and classical revivals seen in the architecture of the courthouses of Doddridge County's neighbors.

Stylistically, the courthouse is a well detailed Romanesque building, two and one-half stories high above a raised stone basement. Quarry-face stone masonry details the openings in various ways best represented, perhaps, in the entrance portal comprised of large radiating voussoirs. Stone carving in the spandrels of the arched entrance and piers is typical of the foliate themes popular in detailing of buildings of the period. Fanciful visages also peer down in medieval fashion upon the observer. Local history records that a certain James Grant, a stonemason and a native of Scotland, was responsible for the building's stone appointments.

Architect J. Charles Fulton (1856-1924) of Uniontown, Fayette County, Pennsylvania, was chosen by the county court in 1899 as architect for a new courthouse. Fulton was known in northern West Virginia for important civic and commercial projects. His works appeared in Morgantown, Fairmont and his plans were chosen by the commissions of Barbour and Randolph for courthouses in those counties. John P. Conn, a contractor of some considerable reputation, was awarded the contract for construction of the courthouse at West Union. Both Fulton and Conn collaborated on several major projects in the region. Construction of the Doddridge County Courthouse began during the term of County Court president Maxfield Chapman in 1899 and ended during the presidency of T. H. Thomas in 1903 (finishing work continued in 1904).

Construction of the present Doddridge County Courthouse was necessitated when fire destroyed a previous building at the same site on November 27, 1898. The county court of Doddridge first assembled at this site in the brick home of prominent West Union land-

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owner Nathan Davis in 1845, the year of the county's founding. Davis gave his house and the land to the county and it was at this location, subsequently called Court Square, that courthouses of later times were erected. The site is thus associated directly with the entire history of Doddridge County, its prominent citizens, and the town of West Union, the first and only county seat of Doddridge and the largest community in this traditionally agrarian county.

Doddridge County was founded in 1845 from parts of Harrison, Tyler, Ritchie and Lewis counties, Virginia. It was named for Philip Doddridge (1772-1832), a great lawyer, orator, public servant, and spokesman of western Virginia. Although Philip Doddridge did not reside in the county named for him, its people were closely tied to the nineteenth century political and social conditions associated with the West Virginia statehood movement centered in the Wheeling, Ohio-Brooke County area, the home of Philip Doddridge.

Item 9, page 2.

and commissioner's records concerning the Doddridge County Courthouse, filed in the Historic Preservation Unit), November 24, 1981, 5 pp.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

A. Doddridgean (pseud.). "Mostly About Ourselves", The West Union Record, Feb. 26, 1976, p.2.  
 Hoylman, Loana. "Doddridge County Court House", History of Doddridge County. (Unpublished manuscript on file at the Doddridge County Commission), N.D., pp.135-47.  
 Swisher, Vivian. "Doddridge County Court House History". (Annotated account of deeds

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1/2 acre  
 West Union

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Quadrangle scale 1: 24,000

### UMT References

A	1 8	5 1 9 4 4 0	4 3 4 9 2 4 0	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Sited at the rear of a square (city lot) bounded on the N.W. by Church Street, on the N.E. by High Street, on the S.E. by Chancery Street and on the S.W. by Court Street.

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rodney S. Collins, Architectural Historian  
 organization Historic Preservation Unit  
W.Va. Department of Culture & History date January 14, 1982  
 street & number The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex telephone (304) 348-0240  
 city or town Charleston state West Virginia

## 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature \_\_\_\_\_

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date February 3, 1982

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

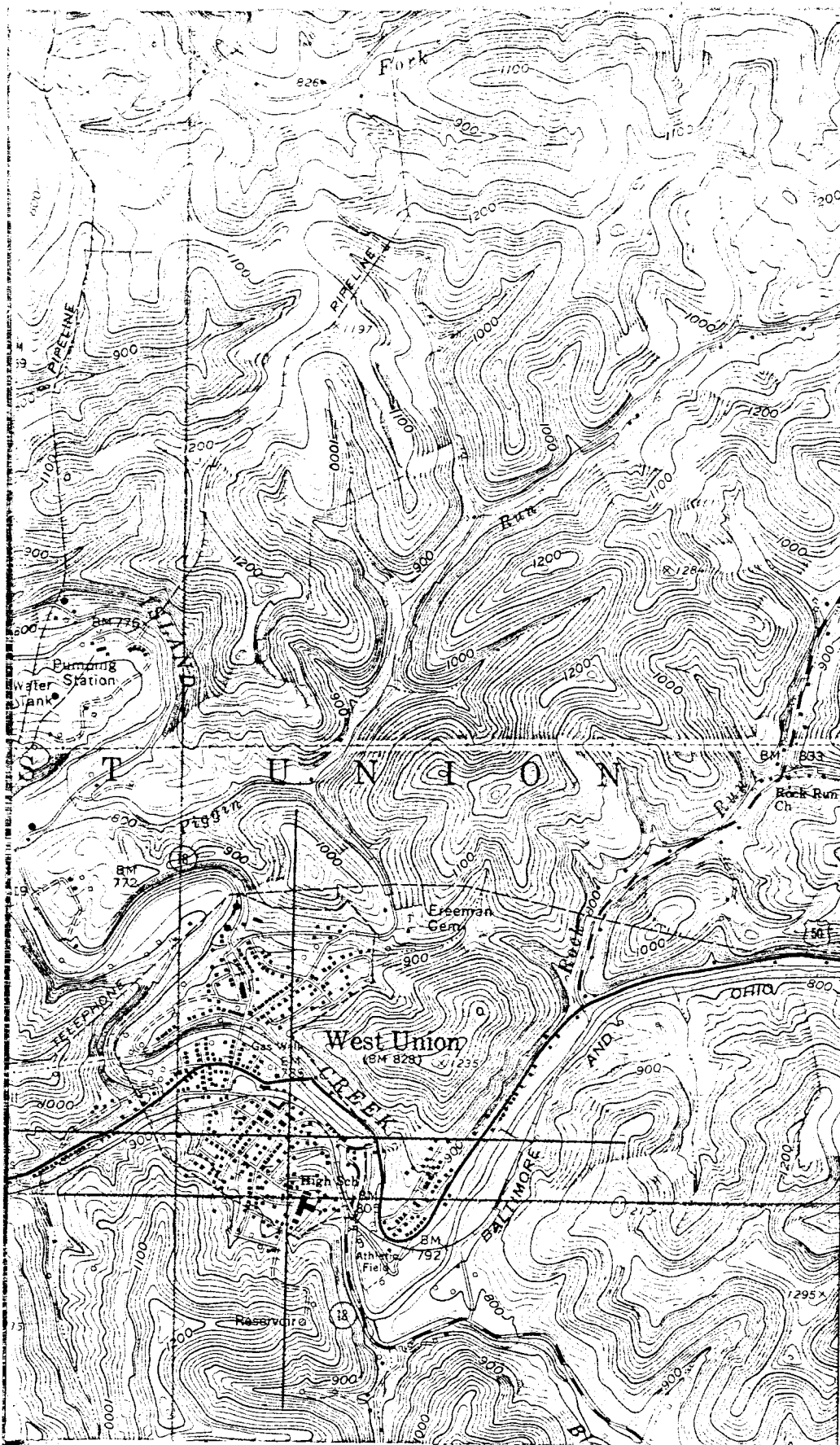
date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



WEST UNION, W.VA.  
QUAD.  
7.5 Min.  
1:24,000

DODDRIDGE COUNTY  
COURTHOUSE  
COURT SQUARE  
WEST UNION, W.VA.

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17'30"

LITTLE PITTSBURG 8 MI.  
(SMITHBURG)  
SMITHBURG 1.2 MI.  
CLARKSBURG 2.4 MI.

