

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Marion County Courthouse and Sheriff's Residence

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Adams and Jefferson Streets

CITY, TOWN

Fairmont

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

West Virginia

CODE
54COUNTY
MarionCODE
049**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	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<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 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

Marion County Commission

STREET & NUMBER

Marion County Courthouse, Adams and Jefferson Streets

CITY, TOWN

Fairmont

VICINITY OF

STATE

West Virginia

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Marion County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Adams and Jefferson Streets

CITY, TOWN

Fairmont

STATE

West Virginia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input 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 Marion County Courthouse and Sheriff's Residence occupy a parcel at the northwest corner of Adams Street and Jefferson Street in the central business district at Fairmont, West Virginia. Though the courthouse with its grand architecture dwarfs the house on its western side, the two buildings complement each other with matching smooth ashlar facing and fine classical detailing. The monumental size of the domed courthouse combined with expansive approaches at the building's south (major) and east (secondary) entrances prevents the domination of the structure by nearby commercial highrise buildings. The courthouse was erected in the years 1897-1900, and designed by the noted Columbus, Ohio architectural firm of Yost (Joseph Warren) and Packard (Frank L.). The residence of the Marion County Sheriff was built in the first years of the twentieth century.

A handsome perspective of the proposed Marion County Courthouse appeared in a supplement of the Fairmont Free Press on March 25, 1897. This sophisticated piece of art reveals that the building as it was proposed, and the building as it appears today (1979) in comparison, has changed only in the most minute detail. The excellent state of the structure's exterior integrity evident in this picture is noteworthy. It might also be noted that the personality of the senior partner, Mr. Yost, was of sufficient stature to resist the usual local pressures for slight deviations in the plan.

The Marion County Courthouse is a rectangular, two-story building with raised basement whose monumental porticoes and dome are distinguishing features of its Beaux Arts style classicism. The front elevation entrance is surmounted by a hexastyle portico and is approached by a grand, two-flight stair that is appointed with four metal lamps and stone balustrades. The Corinthian order of the portico, represented throughout the building, is skillfully treated by the stonemason. The fluted columns are comprised of six drums and carry an entablature whose frieze is detailed with shallow rondels. The outer columns of the portico are paired and coupled at the base with a single shallow stone plinth. The pediment is detailed with a dentiled cornice and modillions and frames a tympanum filled with a sculptural grouping. The carving and design of this ensemble was the work of a Mr. W. D. Priest. Justice, power, agriculture and mining are the central themes represented. Near the apex of the pediment an eagle with outstretched wings signifies power. Just below this is the Scales of Justice. In the right corner of the pediment a mining car, a shovel, and the figure of a man represent the coal mining interests

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of Marion County and West Virginia. The eave-blocks and apex of the portico's raking cornice are decorated with antefixae.

The pediment of the over-sized portal is duplicated over the first story windows of the bays flanking the portico. The windows throughout the first level are tall in proportion to their second floor counterparts, and are otherwise headed with flat entablatures. Other exterior ornamentation includes horizontal rustication at the raised basement level, a roof balustrade, cartouche panels flanking the main portal and a watertable in the form of a Minoan fret.

The porticoes at the east and west ends of the courthouse are tetrastyle in plan; the eastern or Jefferson Street portico (now closed) is approached by a monumental flight of steps.

A small dome carried above a high drum dominates the character of the Marion County Courthouse. Its four principal sides are pedimented and centered with clock faces. The belvedere of the dome is surmounted by a large figure holding the scales of justice. The roof of the dome is richly figured with swags and oval reliefs.

The courthouse dome houses an inner dome of lower height that forms a rotunda, two stories in height, from which major interior corridors open. The corridor roofs are barrel-vaulted and contain twenty-five coffers, nine of which are filled with stained glass. The corridors run in an east-west axis and north-south axis, corresponding in direction to the three exterior porticoes. The rotunda dome is an elaborate, sixteen-panel stainedglass skylight.

Enriched plaster mouldings (in the Corinthian order) embellish the arched openings and entablature of the rotunda. The second floor (third level from basement) Division 1 Circuit Courtroom is entered through a pedimented doorway rich in classical detail. The courtroom, containing a judge's dais, seating and a balcony is flanked on each side with four Ionic columns. A huge stained-glass dome is centered above the seating of the courtroom. A rectangular stainedglass skylight is centered above the judge's dais.

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Ground floor renovations were undertaken in 1960 by L.D. Schmidt and Son. Additionally, first floor renovations in the county commissioners' office and Division 11 Circuit Courtroom were completed in 1977. With these exceptions, the Marion County Courthouse retains excellent integrity. The major architectural features of the interior survive. There are no exterior additions and no significant exterior alterations.

The Marion County Sheriff's Residence at the west end of the courthouse facing Adams Street is a square, hipped roof house that has undergone little change since the date of construction. Its smooth ashlar facing is its principal feature. The building has wide-projecting eaves with ornamental modillion brackets. Hipped dormers are centered in each of the major roof elevations. The dormer at the front is especially ornate with its Palladian window arrangement.

The windows of the Sheriff's Residence are headed with carved label mouldings of particular interest at the front elevation. The one-story front porch runs the full width of the front and is carried by three, square, stone columns with long vertical panels. The porch roof cornice is dentiled like the cornice of the house.

The residence in spirit of style (note paneled chimneys) has a vaguely Renaissance reference, though its styling is that pervasive early twentieth century American theme that might best be described as "1910 cube". The Sheriff's Residence was designed by Yost and Packard.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1897-1900

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Yost and Packard, Architects

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Construction of the Marion County Courthouse in 1897-1900 was viewed by many in the northcentral West Virginia city of Fairmont as the grand testimony of that community's coming of age. By the turn-of-the-century Fairmont was no longer that "middletown" between Clarksburg and Morgantown. It had in fact become the thriving and self-sufficient center of a vast coal and gas producing industry and the home of an upcoming institution of higher learning, Fairmont Normal (Fairmont State College). Marion County's rapid growth and new wealth prompted the county fathers to consider plans for a new and larger courthouse by 1893. Fairmont residents were not, however, unanimous in their support for a new facility.

The old Marion County Courthouse was revered as the direct link with the formation of the county. Proposals for its construction in November 1842, followed by only several months the creation of Marion County by an act of the General Assembly of Virginia, adopted January 14, 1842. Delegate William S. Morgan, Delegate John J. Jackson of Wood County and Senator William J. Willey were principal figures in the movement to create a new county from the larger counties of Harrison and Monongalia. It was named by Thomas Conaway For General Francis Marion.

The first Marion County Courthouse was a Greek Revival style building with a portico, sturdy red brick walls and a louvered belfry. Its rather short-lived existence of only fifty-three years was the result of an incident reported (in part) on the front page of the Fairmont Republican of January 14, 1897. A mob of about eighty men, armed with crowbars, axes and mattocks, and apparently incited by local officials (with the aid of whiskey) who desired a finer courthouse, set upon the building and wrecked it. The newspaper, in an apologist approach, reported that the building was dangerous, had once caught fire and that the chimneys were ready to collapse. The paper officially reported that "a short time after the court adjourned in the evening a large force of men was put to work, and by midnight they had torn away the rear portion of the first story." The editor further stated that "there is considerable

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opposition throughout the county to this action of the court, but as everybody in the county knows we need a new building, it is thought the objections will soon be withdrawn." Accusations and recriminations followed and the incident was not soon forgotten.

The courthouse was completely razed in March 1897 by a contractor named Page, and by Messrs. Moran and Swisher. Mr. Page also demolished at this time the historic "Mountain City House", Fairmont's landmark hotel that stood at the northeast corner of Jefferson and Adams Streets. This demolition was also authorized by the county "to make room for a new courthouse." During the interim when a courthouse was unavailable, all county offices and courts were assembled in the Cunningham and Manley Building, a property purchased by the court from Mr. T. B. Carpenter, and located only a short distance from the site of the old courthouse.

The County Commissioners lost little time in securing the services of an architectural firm to plan a suitable seat of government for Marion County. They chose the firm of Yost (Joseph Warren) and Packard (Frank L.) of Columbus, Ohio, that had become so successful that its senior partner, Mr. Yost, held a reputation of national stature. Joseph Warren Yost (1847-1923) was partnered with Packard from 1891 until 1901, and thereafter with Albert D'Oench of New York. Yost's early Columbus commissions included enlargement of the Ohio Capitol.

Frank L. Packard was active in West Virginia during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Among several of his works are the Clay County Courthouse (1902) and the Parkersburg High School (1917). Mr. Packard also designed the American Embassy at Rio De Janerio, Brazil.

A stunning perspective of the proposed Marion County Courthouse appeared in a special supplement of the Fairmont Free Press on March 25, 1897. The county officially opened bids for construction in June 1897, and accepted the \$130, 643 bid of Westwater and Co. of Columbus, Ohio, over Hamilton Brothers of Wheeling and G.W.L. Mayers of Fairmont.

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The Marion County Courthouse was largely finished during the summer of 1900; the paving and grounds were finished in June. The county commissioners were Aaron Furbee, Festus Downs and Marcus Morgan. T.L. Burchinal was the superintendent of construction.

The Marion County Courthouse is a significant example of Beaux Arts Classicism in West Virginia, and is the finest representation of the style found among all courthouses in the state. Major elements of the school seen in the building include coupled columns (on the periphery of the dome); monumental flights of steps (at the south and east elevations); arched, pedimented and linteled openings (particularly at the south front); an overall elaborate symmetry (as seen in the placement of the front, hexastyle portico, and end, tetrastyle porticoes); and the use of relief sculpture (in the south and east pediments).

Significant as a representation of local historical, social and industrial conditions of Marion County and West Virginia is the sculptural groupings in the pediments at the south and east fronts. This work was designed and sculpted by a Mr. W.D. Priest, and reflects central themes of power, justice, agriculture and mining.

The artistic significance of interior Corinthian style plasterwork in the central courthouse rotunda is reflected also in the use of stainedglass in the coffered barrel vaults of the principal corridors, and in the high domes of the rotunda and Division 11 Circuit Courtroom. Typanums at the vaulted corridor ends are painted murals in classical genre.

The Marion County Courthouse is significant as a focal point of county history and government. The only two courthouses of the county have been located on this site since the formation of the county in 1842. Additionally, the size and richness of the structure's plan reflects upon the emergence of Fairmont and Marion County as major centers of commerce and industry (particularly as a center of the north-central West Virginia coal fields).

The Marion County Courthouse defines at a local level the nineteenth century architectural ideal of a public building as representational of the majesty and power of the state. It seems not unusual

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then to view the placement of a historical plaque honoring Marion County's favorite son, Francis H. Pierpont (often called the "Father of West Virginia" and whose statue stands in Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol), on the grounds of the building as a fitting testimonial of this concept.

Though the adjacent Sheriff's Residence , also designed by Yost and Packard, may be viewed as a mere shadow of the larger building, its significance rests in its neat design that is harmonious with the parent building, but of a differing style. The Sheriff's Residence, as a dependency of the county courthouse, retains its architectural integrity from the date of construction (with the exception of a front metal awning). The original county courthouse also featured an adjacent sheriff's residence.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Fairmont Free Press, Mar. 18, 25, 1897; April 8, 1897; June 10, 24, 1897; Jan 11, 1900; June 27, 1900.

Marion County Centennial Yearbook. Fairmont, W.Va.: Fairmont Printing Co., 1963, pp.43,50.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/2 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Fairmont

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 17 573610 4370740

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated properties are located at the northwest corner of Adams Street and Jefferson Street. The parcel is bound by an alley on the north.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Rodney S. Collins, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

West Virginia Department of Culture and History

DATE

January 15, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex

TELEPHONE

304-348-0240

CITY OR TOWN

Charleston

STATE

West Virginia 25305

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

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

Clarence Morrow

3/26/79

TITLE

DATE

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

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Laugh, Glenn D. Now and Long Ago: A History of the Marion County
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pp. 446-55.

Wodehouse, Lawrence. American Architects from the Civil War to
the First World War. Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1976, pp. 260-61.

FAIRMONT WEST QUADRANGLE
WEST VIRGINIA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

NW/4 FAIRMONT 15' QUADRANGLE

MORGANTOWN 16 MI.

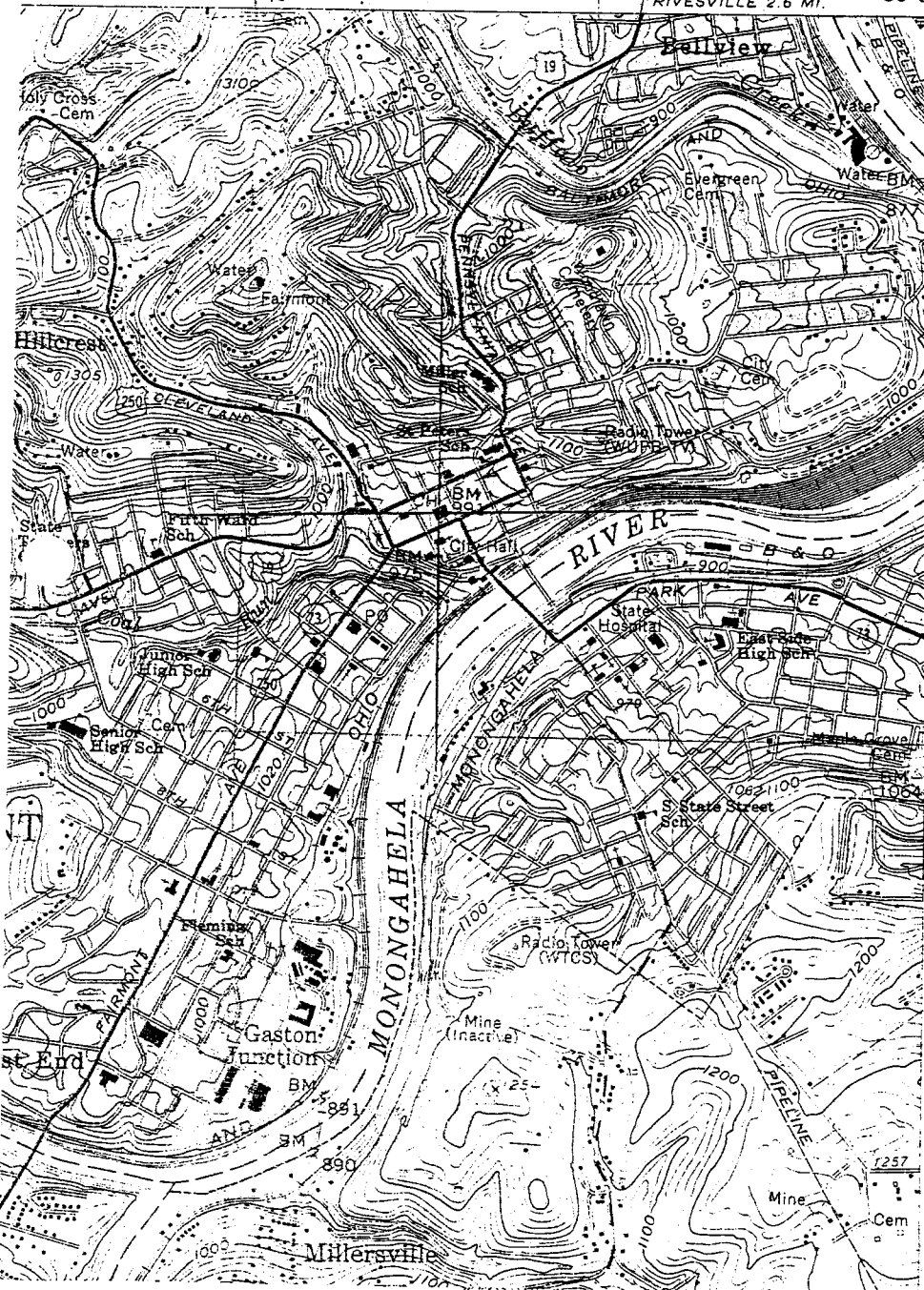
RIVESVILLE 2.6 MI.

80°07'30"

39°30'

1963 11 9E
(RIVESVILLE)

573



MARION COUNTY COURTHOUSE
AND SHERIFF'S RESIDENCE,
ADAMS AND JEFFERSON
STREETS,
FAIRMONT, MARION CO.,
WEST VIRGINIA

17/573660/4370740

MEADOWDALE 3.2 MI.
MORGANTOWN 19 MI.

4369

