

USE AS COPY

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination FormSee instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

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received

date entered

1. Name

historic Summers County Courthouse

and/or common Summers County Courthouse

2. Location

street & number Ballangee Street and First Avenue (Public Square) not for publication

city, town Hinton vicinity of congressional district Second

state West Virginia code 54 county Summers code 089

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 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 Summers County Commission

street & number Summers County Courthouse

city, town Hinton vicinity of state West Virginia

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Summers County Courthouse

street & number Ballangee Street and First Avenue (Public Square)

city, town Hinton state West Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveystitle has this property been determined eligible? yes ☒ no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Summers County Courthouse at Hinton, West Virginia, is a large, red brick Late-Victorian structure whose rectangular mass features six symmetrically placed octagonal, nearly identical towers. Despite the presence of impressive classical detail in the form of a dentiled and modillioned cornice and heavy, white-painted full entablature window heads, the exterior ornamentation is not essentially classical, but is typically a Victorian assemblage of late 19th century eclectic features. Most prominent of these elements, perhaps, is the ornamental brickwork of the tower eaves which is corbeled in the fashion of medieval machicolation and the open-brick fretwork of brick seams binding the octagonal tower planes. Stylistically, the Summers County Courthouse embodies a Victorian interpretation of a medieval theme represented uppermost in the dominant towers with their bastion-like massing. To the credit of county fathers of later years were decisions which required that additions to the building must fully integrate with the existing architectural scheme.

The Summers County Courthouse when constructed in 1875-76 was a 48-foot square, two-story with attic, brick building. It had a shingled, hipped roof with a small dormer in each slope and one-story addition at the northeast side. On the interior, a wide hall extended through the first floor with two large offices to either side, and the courtroom occupied the entire second floor.

Sometime between 1893 and 1898, rehabilitation and redesign of the original square unit was accomplished under the direction of architect Frank P. Milburn. Large octagonal towers were added to each corner of the building and the whole was given a slate roof. Each tower had 8-foot faces and contained about 400 square feet of space on both floors. Interior doors were placed to connect the towers with the offices of the first floor and with the courtroom on the second, while a stairway was placed in the northwest tower and the top of the northeast tower was capped with a belfry.

About 1923 the office space in the courthouse was tripled by the addition, at the rear, of another square with two towers. This section contained a hall and five rooms on each floor, and these tied in to the earlier building. During the 1930's, the structure was again extended to the rear by a 32-foot, flat-roofed addition with no towers. This section was to provide fire-safe rooms for county records and office space for state-county bureaus. It has plain trim, except for the entrance doorway on First Avenue which has a heavy, broad encasement with deep-set doors.

The towered parts of the courthouse were built of brick burned on the site and lumber from the nearby Hinton Island Mill. Local brickmasons and carpenters did all the construction with the exception of the metal cornices and window pediments. It is quite probable that Colonel John C. McDonald, the contractor, had the zinc trim of the doors, windows and cornice pre-formed and shipped in from the East.

The bricks were laid in courses of common bond, but the towers were embellished with treatment in the corbels at the eaves and belt courses at window lintels and sills. The under-eave cornice is a large ogee molding with large dentils, and below this is a smaller strip of ogee with dentils. The front, double-door entranceway is surmounted by a large, scrolled and segmental, broken pediment extended above the over-door and sidelights.

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The principal windows carry full entablature pediments with consoles, and on the upper floor are surmounted with transoms. Windows with rounded arches have no extra trim and those of half-moon design are covered with peacock-style grilles.

The belfry tower is set apart by extra height and by the inclusion of steeply-pitched gabled dormers. Five louvered belfry windows with a belt course of stone at their lintels represent other distinguished tower features.

The rooms and halls of the entire building are large and boxlike (some have been partitioned), and floors have been replaced, most now being covered with composition tile. The outside and load-bearing inside walls are 18 and 20 inches thick and the doors large, thick, and transomed. All walls and ceilings have plaster over oak lath. Attractive four-foot high wainscoting, topped by fine molding, is on all the interior walls.

A special feature of the building is the lovely spiral, cast-iron stairway which is in the northwest tower and ascends to the courtroom. The risers of the pie-shaped steps have a frieze with fleur-de-lis. A wooden rail tops the balustrade which has a lower border of loop and ball, and the narrow banisters are joined together with artistically formed iron scroll-work. Newel posts are paneled and have reeded caps.

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1875; c.1897; 1930 **Builder/Architect** John C. McDonald, builder 1875

Frank P. Milburn, architect, c.1897

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Summers County Courthouse at Hinton, West Virginia, is significant because its architectural style combines - in the best example of the locale - many features of late 19th century eclecticism that in other neighboring communities have been masked or altered with additions or renovations. The building, which assumed its present appearance c.1896-97, is also significant as an early example of the work of architect Frank P. Milburn, who distinguished himself with noteworthy buildings throughout the southeastern United States in the early 20th century. The very existence of the large brick edifice is significantly tied into area transportation history which provided the raison detre for the formation of the community of Hinton.

Summers County, West Virginia, was formed in 1871 from parts of Fayette, Greenbrier and Monroe counties. The land was mostly so poor and sparsely settled that it was willingly given to the new county. The first County Commission met in an old log Baptist Church "two miles up New River from Foss". In 1872 the Commission moved into the upper floor of C.L. Thompson's Printing Office in Avis. Then, in 1873, they moved to the storehouse of John C. F near Hinton Island.

It was in the latter year that Collis P. Huntington oversaw the completion of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway which linked the James and Ohio rivers. Soon after this momentous event, the directors of the C & O gave the county a site for a courthouse in the newly plat- ted town of Hinton. This "public square" faced Ballangee Street and extended from First to Second Avenue. Early in 1874, a \$10,000. contract to build a courthouse was given by the Commissioners to Colonel John C. McDonald.

The 48-foot square, two-story building was placed in the northwest corner of the "public square". It was constructed of locally burned brick and sawn lumber and first occupied in 1877. It is said that this simple building was all the county could then afford and that the contract was revived with Colonel McDonald for a total of \$14,000 to build a large octagonal tower into each corner of the original building and to decorate the entire structure in a manner lavish for the time and place. Classical Revival and Victorian style trim in hand-formed zinc was generously used on both the building and the towers, after the fashion of many buildings of the 1890's. A bell was bought and installed in the belfry tower on the northeast, and a post-and-plank fence of rough-sawn walnut was built around the square.

An addition to the courthouse in 1923 doubled its size with a 48-foot square and two towers. The brick and lumber were of local origin, and a metal-worker (to copy the elaborate trim of the older building) was found in Cincinnati after a long search. Again, in the 1930's, the courthouse was enlarged by a square, flat-roofed addition to house the growing number of state-county bureaus and to provide a fire-safe room for county records. This addition has no towers and its only special trim is at the entrance facing First Avenue.

Frank P. Milburn (1868-1926) designed several courthouses and business buildings in southwestern West Virginia in the late 19th century. His early practice in this area was a

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result of his family and business connections at Kenova, Wayne County. Milburn is known for important courthouses in Kentucky, Virginia, and the Carolinas. The old Florida Statehouse is one of the better known buildings by Milburn in the period when his practice was centered in Washington, D.C., and in the Carolinas.

The growth over the years of the courthouse and the increasing use of the square is indicative of the prosperous growth of Summers County since her beginning as "a poor relation" of Fayette, Greenbrier, and Monroe counties. As the center of government for the area, it has the attraction of the formal and informal realm of small-town politics, but it is rare that this is combined in an attractive building which was the outgrowth of such a sparsely settled and economically substandard region that saw a blessing in the coming of a railroad.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Interview, Tommy Jayne Lowe with C.E. Turley, Research Assistant, West Virginia Antiquities Commission, August 15 and August 21, 1975. Information on file with the West Virginia Department of Culture and History, Capitol Complex, Charleston, West Virginia.
Interview, Thomas L. Reed with C.E. Turley, Research Assistant, West Virginia Antiquities

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 2 acres

Quadrangle name Hinton, West Virginia

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

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5	0	9	5	1	8	1	5
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Is located at the center of a 200' square bounded by Ballangee Street on the west and by 1st Avenue on the north.

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title C.E. Turley, Research Assistant; Rodney S. Collins, Architectural Historian

organization Historic Preservation Unit, Department of date January 5, 1980
Culture & History

street & number Capitol Complex telephone 304/ 348-0244

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

Charles E. Moran

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date November 5, 1980

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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

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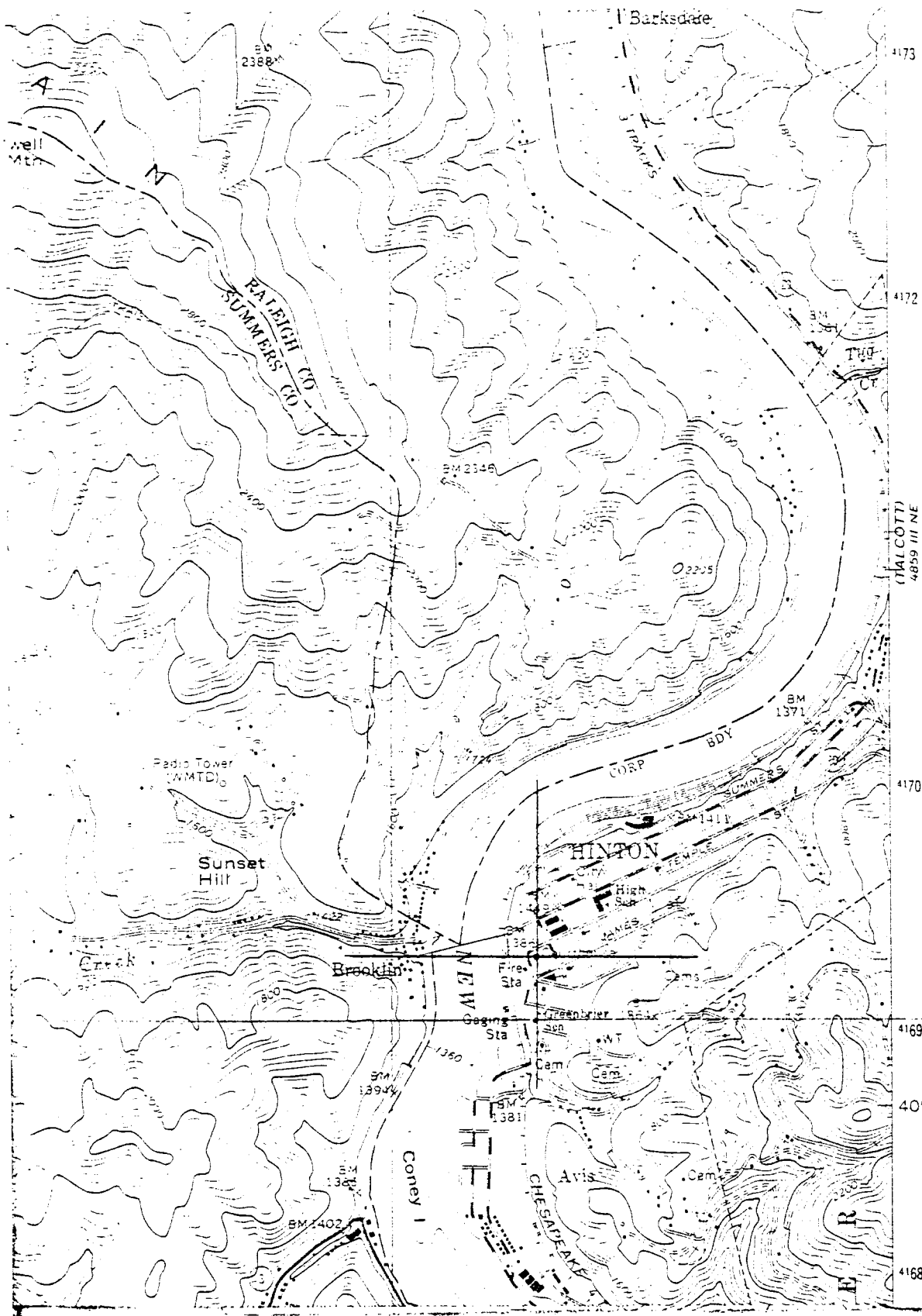
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Commission, August 15, August 21 and September 6, 1975. Information of file with the West Virginia Department of Culture and History, Capitol Complex, Charleston, West Virginia.

Miller, James H. History of Summers County, West Virginia. Hinton, West Virginia: by the author, 1908. (pp. 106-197)

Morgantown, West Virginia. West Virginia Collection, West Virginia University Library. Sanborn Map Collection (Hinton, Summers County, October 1893, December 1898, October 1905, September 1910, April 1922 and January 1930).



SUMMERS COUNTY
COUNTY HOUSE
HINTON, SUMMERS COUNTY,
WEST VIRGINIA
UTM REFERENCES:
17/501050/4169000

