

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Lee County Courthouse
other names/site number Lee County Courthouse

2. Location

street & number Court St. between Spring & Broadway N/A not for publication
city, town Tupelo N/A vicinity
state Mississippi code MS county Lee code 081 zip code 38801

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- ☐ private
☒ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u>	<u>4</u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>4</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Historic Resources in Tupelo, MS

Number of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Kenneth H. P. Pool

Signature of certifying official

FEB. 11, 1992

Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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:)

National Register

Alonzo Byers

4/3/92

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government: Courthouse

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government: Courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Stone

roof Copper

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Lee County Courthouse is a two story, stone-faced building in the Classical Revival architectural style. It is situated on a square in Tupelo's commercial district. It is the most monumental historic building in the town center. Despite renovations in 1966 and 1977, the building retains a high degree of architectural integrity.

The courthouse is a coursed ashlar, two story block crowned by an octagonal cupola. The building is marked by corner piers and a high water table accented by beltcourses. The tripartite north and south facades each feature a centrally located, pedimented portico displaying two Ionic columns set in antis between piers. The five part east and west facades each feature a central bay consisting of square Ionic pilasters and columns in antis between massive piers. The recessed entrance has a frontispiece which includes an entablature with a denticulated frieze and a pediment decorated by a swag. The west facade also has a wheelchair access ramp. Most of the courthouse's windows are narrow 1/1 double hung sash of several forms. An entablature, which is accented by dentils and modillions, encircles the courthouse. There is also a balustrade-type parapet. The cupola features paired Doric columns interspaced with attic vents and windows which display pilasters supporting pediments. An entablature, swags and four circular clocks further adorn the cupola. At the top of its copper dome several small columns support a domical copper roof.

The floor plan of the courthouse is based on the intersection of the east-west and north-south halls which divide the building into equal-sized quadrants. Offices occupy the first floor. An original staircase in the eastern section of the east-west hall leads to the second story where the courtrooms are located. A description of the courthouse written in 1906 reported that the building was heated by steam, but also had grates in the offices. The courthouse was lighted by electricity and connected to the town's water system. Built of stone, the structure had a tile roof and a cupola (WPA File-Lee County History: 27).

The courthouse is located on a small rise. Its setting, aside from its prominent position on a square, seems to have evolved over time; there is no formal landscaping. Low shrubbery delineates the perimeter of the square. Concrete walks lead from the public sidewalks to the four entrances of the building, dividing the square into quadrants. Indigenous trees, such as magnolias, grow in a scattered fashion around the building.

☒ See continuation sheet

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 1Lee County Courthouse
Tupelo, Lee County, MS

The northern half of the square features a small, modern fountain. At the opposite end of the square just east of the sidewalk leading to the south entrance is a monument consisting of an angel atop a tall, square base. Originally part of a public fountain, this monument was erected by the Women's Christian Temperance Union in the early twentieth century to commemorate statewide prohibition which took effect on January 1, 1908. In the southeast corner of the square is a veterans' memorial in the form of a granite pillar approximately four or five feet tall in the Art Deco style. The southwest corner of the square features a stone and marble Confederate memorial. This monument consists of a tiered base, a middle section displaying swags and columns in the shape of upright cannon barrels, and a tall, castellated pillar surmounted by a statue of a Confederate soldier. The names of Confederates from the area are inscribed on the monument. Originally unveiled in 1906, this statue was erected at the intersection of Main and Broadway and served as the eastern terminus of a median. In the mid 1930s, the memorial was moved to its present location (Kincannon and Milam 1922: 9, 21; Louise Godwin Interview 6 April 1991).

The square created by the intersections of Court, Broadway, Jefferson and Spring Streets is actually a rectangle. In 1889, an earlier courthouse was located on the western half of the square, slightly closer to Jefferson than to Court Street. A well was sited just north of the building. The northeast corner of the square was occupied by a two story jail. Two small, one story buildings had been constructed in the northern section of the square by 1903 and the well had been removed. The following year, the current courthouse was constructed after a fire had destroyed the previous one. The 1909 Sanborn map shows the courthouse centered in the middle of the square with a jail still located in the northeast corner. Both are supposedly of fireproof construction. The jail was removed from the square in the late 1920s. The Sanborn maps do not record when the monuments were placed on the square. Historically, the square was surrounded by one and two story commercial buildings and residences. In its earliest days, the "parking lots" also bordered the block. This visual pattern is still intact on three sides of the square. On the north, however, across Jefferson Street, a monumental, post-modern justice center has recently been constructed. Though much larger than the courthouse, it acknowledges the historic building's preeminence in Tupelo's built environment through its classical vocabulary and stone wall treatment (Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1889, 1903, 1909, 1924, 1929).

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1904

Significant Dates

1904

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Weathers, Patrick Henry

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Lee County Courthouse, built in 1904, is a locally important work of early twentieth century Classical Revival architecture and is a well-executed and well-maintained example of the classical style county courthouses built in Mississippi between about 1900 and 1920. It is the only notable example of Classical Revival architecture remaining in the town of Tupelo and is the primary architectural landmark of Lee County. (The Tupelo City Hall, a Neoclassical Revival style building, has undergone alterations and is no longer a good example of its style.) The new Classical Revival style courthouse mirrored Tupelo's progressive spirit at a time when the town had embarked on a number of public improvement projects, such as the acquisitions of an electrical plant and sewerage and water works systems plus the upgrading of streets and sidewalks (Napoli 1980: 27, 53, 90; Daily Journal 31 July 1970:5-C).

The Classical Revival style, in several variations, was by far the dominant architectural fashion for public buildings in Mississippi during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Although some important buildings were constructed in the Victorian Romanesque style as late as 1902, by the time the New State Capitol was built in 1903, the preference for classical public buildings had swept the state. Of 35 county courthouses built between 1903 and 1920, 30 were of Classical Revival design, with the remainder displaying a loosely classical eclecticism. About 20 Classical Revival courthouses of this period still stand and retain a relatively high degree of integrity, including the Lee County Courthouse. Between 1920 and 1930, Mississippi county courthouse design became much more eclectic, but tended to retain a classical vocabulary. By the 1930s, however, the designers of the state's major civic buildings had largely turned away from the Classical Revival and embraced the Art Deco style.

The Lee County Courthouse is an excellent example of the Classical Revival civic architecture of Mississippi during the first decade of the twentieth century and retains a high degree of architectural integrity.

☒ See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 1

Lee County Courthouse
Tupelo, Lee County, MS

This building is one of four Mississippi courthouses designed by Partick Henry Weathers, a Jackson, Mississippi, architect. He apprenticed under Eugene T. Heiner, an architect from Houston, Texas, and later worked for his uncle, L. M. Weathers, in construction (Statewide Survey File). A characteristic feature of Weathers' courthouses was a pedimented portico with two monumental columns set in antis between massive piers. The other extant courthouses designed by Weathers include:

Carroll County Courthouse in Vaiden, Mississippi (1905)
Lamar County Courthouse in Purvis, Mississippi (1905)
Marion County Courthouse in Columbia, Mississippi (1905)

9. Major Bibliographical References

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET 9-1 FOR LEE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

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 # _____

☒ See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository:

MS Dept. of Archives & History

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 1.3 acres

UTM References

K ☒

1	6	3	4	3	0	3	0	3	7	9	1	9	5	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The Lee County Courthouse is located at the center of a city block, 212 feet by 276 feet in size and bounded by Court, N. Broadway, E. Jefferson and N. Spring Streets.

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries include the square that is historically associated with the courthouse.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan M. Enzweiler/Historic Preservation Consultant

organization _____ date September 30, 1991

street & number 1356 Seminole Ave. telephone (504) 834-9024

city or town Metairie state LA zip code 70005

Owner: Lee County
Tupelo, MS 38801

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 1

Lee County Courthouse
Tupelo, Lee County, MS

"Did You Know That" Daily Journal (Tupelo, Mississippi), 31 July 1970, p. 5-C.

Godwin, Louise. Local Resident, Tupelo, Mississippi. Interview, 6 April 1991.

Jackson, Mississippi. Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Historic Preservation Division. Files of Chief Architectural Historian.

Kincannon, Vann, Jr., and Milam, W. H. Tupelo: Premier City of North Mississippi, Lee County. Tupelo: The K & E Printing Company, 1922.

Napoli, Olivia. Grit, Greed and Guts. Tupelo, Ms.: Standard Graphics, 1980.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Tupelo, Mississippi 1889, 1903, 1909, 1924, 1929.

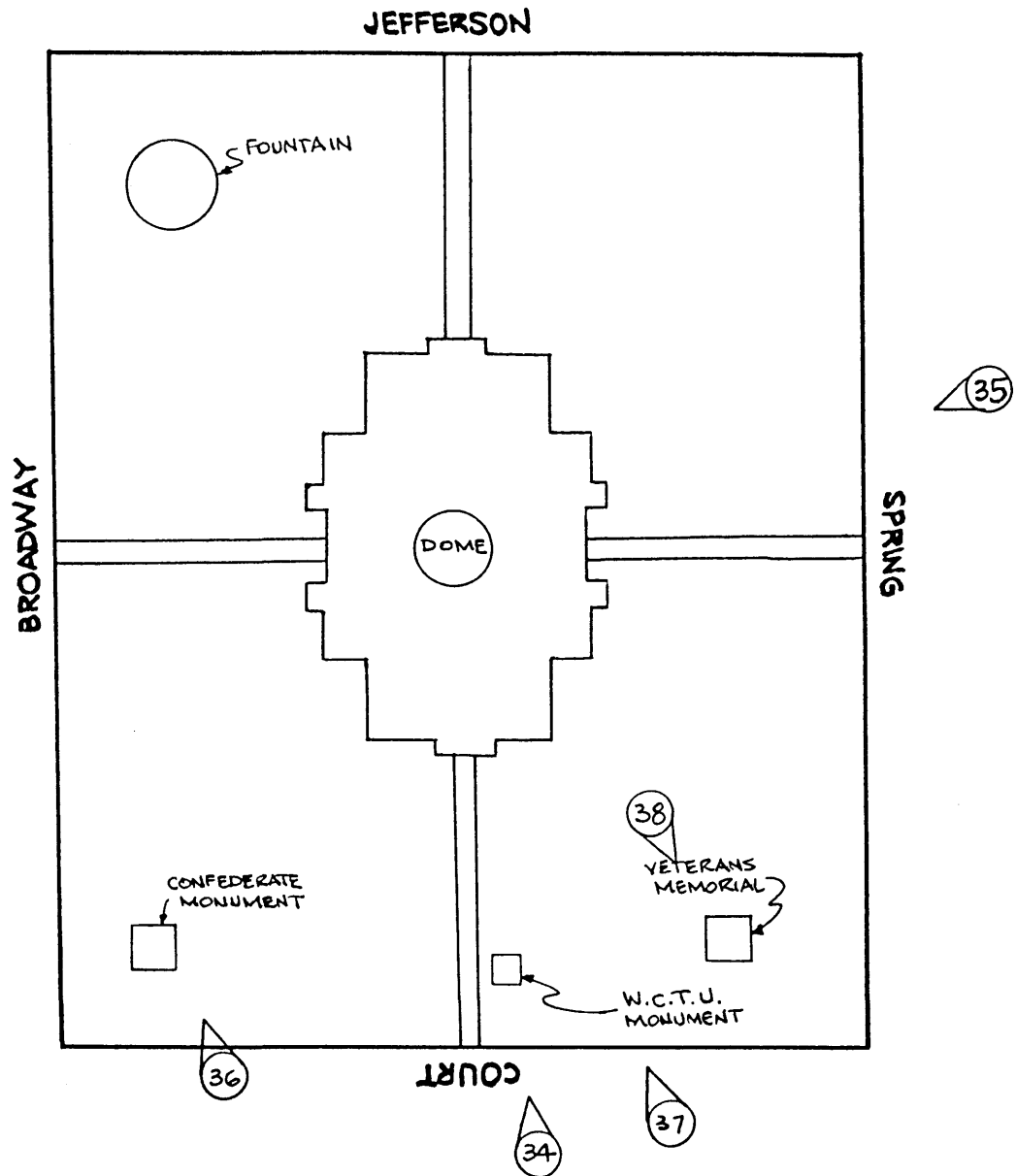
Tupelo, Mississippi. Lee County Public Library. Lee County History W. P. A. File. Assignment #2-Supplement, Volume 25.

Lee County Courthouse Square

MAP OF SQUARE

North: ↑ Scale: 1" = 50'

Photograph / Direction of View: 





Lee County Courthouse (South Elevation)
Courthouse Square
Tupelo, ^{MS} Mississippi
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MS Dept of Archives + History
View to North
34 of 43



Lee County Courthouse (East Elevation)
Courthouse Square

Tupelo, ^{MRA}Mississippi

Susan Enzweiler

April 15, 1991

MS Dept of Archives + History

View to West

35 of 43



Confederate Monument
Courthouse Square

Tupelo, ^{MS}Mississippi

Susan Enzweiler

April 15, 1991

MS Dept of Archives & Mississippi

View to North

#36 of 43



WCTU Monument
Courthouse Square
Tupelo, ^{MeA} Mississippi
Susan Enzweiler

April 15, 1991
MS Dept of Archives & History
View to North
#37 of 43



Veterans Memorial Monument
Courthouse Square

Tupelo, ^{MRA}Mississippi

Susan Enzweiler

April 15, 1991

MS Dept of Archives & History

View to Southeast

38 of 43