

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0689548
FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED NOV 7 1978

DATE ENTERED DEC 22 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Monroe County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

Monroe County Courthouse

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Court House Square

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Aberdeen

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Second

STATE

Mississippi

CODE

28

COUNTY

Monroe

CODE

95

3 CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY

__DISTRICT

X BUILDING(S)

__STRUCTURE

__SITE

__OBJECT

OWNERSHIP
X PUBLIC

__PRIVATE

__BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

__IN PROCESS

__BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS
X OCCUPIED

__UNOCCUPIED

__WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

__YES: RESTRICTED

X YES: UNRESTRICTED

__NO

PRESENT USE

__AGRICULTURE

__COMMERCIAL

__EDUCATIONAL

__ENTERTAINMENT

X GOVERNMENT

__INDUSTRIAL

__MILITARY

__MUSEUM

__PARK

__PRIVATE RESIDENCE

__RELIGIOUS

__SCIENTIFIC

__TRANSPORTATION

__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Monroe County Board of Supervisors

STREET & NUMBER

Monroe County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Aberdeen

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Mississippi 39730

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

Office of the Chancery Clerk

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Monroe County

STREET & NUMBER

Monroe County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Aberdeen

STATE

Mississippi 39730

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Statewide Survey of Historic Sites

DATE

1975

__FEDERAL **X** STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN

Jackson

STATE

Mississippi 39205

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 Monroe County Courthouse, built in 1857, is a three-by-nine-bay two-story brick building with a hip roof topped by a polygonal clock tower. The walls are laid in common bond brick and divided by pilasters which support a corbeled and denticulated cornice. Originally set on brick piers, the foundation is now concrete. Windows on the first floor contain six-over-six sash; those on the second floor nine-over-nine sash. All windows are capped by peaked cast-iron lintels ornamented with acroteria and a raised floral motif. All four elevations originally had central entrances. Two of these, located on the north and south (side) elevations, have been enclosed. The two remaining entrances utilize recessed surrounds of side lights and transoms set beneath cast-iron lintels. Heavy four-panel doors are automatically closed by an original weighted pulley mechanism. On the second floor, four larger doorways with matching surrounds open onto cast-iron balconies sheltered by wooden brackets. The clock tower is adorned with fluted Ionic columns and paneled pilasters. In 1901 a one-story brick wing was added to the north side of the main block, and a two-story stucco wing was added to the south side in 1941.

As originally built the courthouse followed a four-room center-hall plan with three crossing halls. Various interior alterations have been made, however, to meet increased space requirements. Located in the front and rear crossing halls were four stairways, one at each corner of the building. Only one of these remains intact; the others now accommodate bathroom facilities, storage room, and elevator. Recent modernization has resulted in the loss of original courtroom furnishings, removal of mantelpieces, enclosure of the balcony, and lowering of ceilings, thereby hiding original eared architraves and cast-iron capitals.

6 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
☐ PREHISTORIC	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING	☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	☐ RELIGION		
☐ 1400-1499	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	☐ CONSERVATION	☐ LAW	☐ SCIENCE		
☐ 1500-1599	☐ AGRICULTURE	☐ ECONOMICS	☐ LITERATURE	☐ SCULPTURE		
☐ 1600-1699	☒ ARCHITECTURE	☐ EDUCATION	☐ MILITARY	☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
☐ 1700-1799	☐ ART	☐ ENGINEERING	☐ MUSIC	☐ THEATER		
☒ 1800-1899	☐ COMMERCE	☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	☐ PHILOSOPHY	☐ TRANSPORTATION		
☐ 1900-	☐ COMMUNICATIONS	☐ INDUSTRY	☒ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		☐ INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES	1857	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	J. A. Pate and J. B. Taylor, builders Thomas J. Davidson, contractor
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Monroe County Courthouse, located in Aberdeen, is an outstanding example of a Greek Revival public building. The courthouse has been in continuous service for the transaction of county business since 1857, and houses the oldest county records in north Mississippi, dating from 1821 (Mississippi Department of Archives and History, National Register form for Monroe County Courthouse prepared by Mrs. Sam W. Crawford).

When Monroe County was formed in 1830, the county seat was located in Athens, the geographic center of the county. A small courthouse was built there, but it was not standing in 1836, when the first land sales were conducted in Aberdeen. Within six months Aberdeen had become the largest town in Monroe County and its residents began agitating for the legislature to relocate the county seat there. Aberdeen was designated as the county seat in 1847, but attempts to return the county seat to Athens did not cease until 1850. The first courthouse in Aberdeen, a frame building costing only \$1,200, was much criticized by Athens residents, who had allocated \$20,000 for a courthouse in their town. Money was therefore not spared on Aberdeen's second courthouse. A "Court House Palace," symbol of Aberdeen's political dominance, was built at a cost of almost \$40,000. The courtroom on the second floor, measuring ninety-three feet by sixty-three feet, was for many years the largest room in the state (Rodabough).

Architecturally the Monroe County Courthouse is a catalog of elements and influences characteristic of the Greek Revival period in American architecture. Although there is no portico, reference to the Greek temple form is evident in the orientation of the building (main entrance located on the short end), the brick pilasters, and the denticulated frieze. Common Greek Revival features are displayed in the pilasters and Ionic columns in the clock tower. The influence of Minard Lafever is evident in the delicacy of the narrow door panels and floral motifs of the lintels, and it is particularly interesting to see Lafever's decorative ideas expressed in cast iron. The influence of elements of Egyptian architecture, unearthed during the Greek Revival period, is reflected in the courthouse interior, which utilizes Egyptian pylon architraves and Egyptian column capitals.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Cramer, Adele, architectural historian. Personal inspection, September 7, 1978.

Hamilton, Charles G. "Historic Monroe: An Introduction." Revision of paper read at meeting of Monroe County Historical Society, March 11, 1974. Mississippi Department of Archives and History, uncataloged.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2.07 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME Aberdeen

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,6 3,5,7 3,3,0 3,7 4,3 3,4,0

B 1,6 3,5,7 4,4,0 3,7 4,3 3,1,0

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C 1,6 3,5,7 4,0,0 3,7 4,3 2,1,0

D 1,6 3,5,7 3,0,0 3,7 4,3 2,2,0

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property occupies a square of land 200 feet by 200 feet and is designated as Court House Square on the original 1836 plan of the Town of Aberdeen. It is bordered on

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

Adele Cramer

Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Mississippi Department of Archives and History

DATE

September 19, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 571

TELEPHONE

601-354-6218

CITY OR TOWN

Jackson

STATE

Mississippi 39205

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

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

Edward B. Williams

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

November 1, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 12-22-78

ATTEST:

James H. Bulmore
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 12-22-78

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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9 - MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Hamlin, Talbot. Greek Revival Architecture in America. New York: Dover, 1964.

Lafever, Minard. The Modern Builder's Guide. New York: Dover, 1969.

Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Statewide Survey File. Monroe County and Monroe County Courthouse (containing National Register nomination form for Monroe County Courthouse prepared by Mrs. Sam W. Crawford, September 25, 1975).

_____. Subject File. Aberdeen.

Monroe County, Mississippi. Deed Book 14:472.

Peacock, Lucille, comp. Historical Sketches of Aberdeen, Mississippi. Aberdeen: Lucille Peacock, 1961.

Rodabough, John. "Port of Aberdeen." Aberdeen Examiner, August 17, 1972.

10 - GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

the north by Jefferson Street and block 24, on the west by Locust Street and block 26, on the south by Madison Street and block 41, and on the east by Chestnut Street and block 27.



MONROE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Aberdeen, Monroe County, Mississippi

Adele Cramer

DEC 22 1978

September 7, 1978

Mississippi Department of Archives and
History

West (facade) and north elevations, looking
southeast.

Photo 1 of 8

NOV 7 1978



MONROE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Aberdeen, Monroe County, Mississippi

Adele Cramer

DEC 22 1978

September 7, 1978

Mississippi Department of Archives and
History

South elevation, showing alteration of
original entrance; balcony; and clock
tower. Looking north.

Photo 2 of 8

NOV 7 1978



MONROE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Aberdeen, Monroe County, Mississippi

Adele Cramer

September 7, 1978 DEC 22 1978

Mississippi Department of Archives and
History

Detail of clock tower, looking north.

Photo 3 of 8

NOV 7 1978



MONROE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

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Mississippi Department of Archives and
History

Detail of cast-iron window lintel.

Photo 4 of 8

DEC 22 1978

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History

Detail of cast-iron balcony railing on west
elevation, looking southwest.

Photo 5 of 8

DEC 22 1978

NOV 7 1978



MONROE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

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DEC 22 1978

September 7, 1978

Mississippi Department of Archives and
History

Center hall, showing Greek Revival column
support; looking west from east entrance.

Photo 6 of 8

NOV 7 1978



MONROE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

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Mississippi Department of Archives and
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Interior courtroom door, showing eared
architrave; looking east.

Photo 7 of 8

NOV 7 1978



MONROE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Aberdeen, Monroe County, Mississippi

Adele Cramer

DEC 22 1978

September 7, 1978

Mississippi Department of Archives and
History

Iron door surround of vault room (now an
office) of 1901 addition; looking north.

Photo 8 of 8

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PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Monroe County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Aberdeen

— VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Monroe

STATE

Ms.

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

Lisa Reynolds

DATE OF PHOTO

8/74

NEGATIVE FILED AT

Ms. Dept. of Archives + History

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO.

Courthouse exterior looking Northwest
showing rear of Monroe County Health Center
building at right.