

**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

1. Name

historic Simpson County Courthouse

and/or common same as above

2. Location

street & number Courthouse Square

NA not for publication

city, town Mendenhall NA vicinity of

state Mississippi code 28 county Simpson County code 127

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	NA 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 Simpson County Board of Supervisors--Simpson County

street & number Simpson County Courthouse--Courthouse Square

city, town Mendenhall NA vicinity of state Mississippi 39114

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the Chancery Clerk/Simpson County Courthouse

street & number Courthouse Square

city, town Mendenhall state Mississippi 39114

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Statewide Survey of Historic Sites has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1985 federal state county local

depository for survey records Mississippi Department of Archives and History

city, town Jackson state Mississippi

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
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>NA</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Occupying a city block and fronting south on Court Street at the head of Main Street in downtown Mendenhall, the Simpson County Courthouse is a monumental, three-story, yellow brick building in the Neo-Classical Style. The massive, rectangular central block breaks forward in the center of each side to form a portico, and, within the angles formed by the east and west porticos, are quarter-round extrusions from the central block. The building is dominated by a central, domed octagonal tower that rests upon a square, balustraded base whose elevations are divided into panels by quoin-like pilasters supporting a full entablature. The high, pointed dome of the tower, which is surmounted by an acorn finial, features four, molded clock faces looking north, south, east, and west. At each corner of the octagonal tower is a pair of attached Ionic columns resting upon pedestals and set beneath a full entablature which breaks forward at the corners. On each face of the octagonal tower is a window opening framed by pilasters supporting a molded arch with keystone. The window openings are each filled with a circular louvered vent atop a fixed, twenty-four-light sash. Flanking the central dome to the east and west are a pair of shallow, saucer domes set upon clerestory drums with fixed, nine-light sash.

On the matching, nine-bay northerly and southerly elevations, giant-order porticos shelter the three, central, recessed bays with the three bays of the second-story level more deeply recessed to form a loggia with quarter-round inner corners that is railed by a balustrade composed of a central panel and turned balusters. The giant-order porticos of the east and west vary from the porticos of the northerly and southerly elevations by having Ionic columns set in antis with quoin-like corner pillars that echo the quoined outer corners of the building's central block and the quoin-like plinth that encircles the base of the building. The tympana of the four portico pediments are all adorned with bas relief ornament bearing the date 1907, and the portico entablatures continue unbroken around all elevations of the building.

The first-story window openings, whose sills are formed by the top band of the plinth, feature pedimented window caps. The second-story and attic story windows exist within a single frame and are divided at floor level by molded panels. The windows of the first two stories are filled with one-over-one, double-hung sash, but the small attic windows have single-light pivot sash. Access to the interior from northern and southern porticos is through a transomed doorway defined by the central panel of the loggia railing and by the projection of the railing entablature. The eastern and western porticos feature transomed doorways with pediments matching the window caps.

The interior of the courthouse, which is more plainly trimmed than the exterior, features on-axis hallways which intersect on the first story in a large, square room separated from the hallways by unmolded arched openings. The most significant interior space is the courtroom which occupies the western, upper two stories and has a curving balcony supported by iron posts carrying a full entablature topped by a railing of turned balusters. A second balustrade with turned balusters and paneled, square newels

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

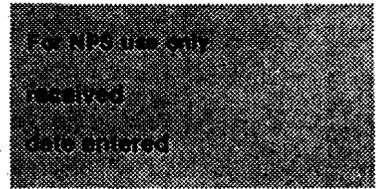
**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Simpson County Courthouse

Continuation sheet Mendenhall, Simpson Co., Miss. Item number

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separates the spectator area from the bench. The courtroom is further enlivened by a pressed metal ceiling and cornice and was apparently originally lighted by one of two saucer-domed cupolas, now obscured by a modern suspended ceiling. Surviving significant interior trim consists primarily of doorway surrounds with paneled jambs and stairway millwork which features square newels and turned balusters. Almost all original interior doors and transoms were removed and replaced by modern, metal-frame, glass doors.

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	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1906-07

Builder/Architect Architect--Andrew J. Bryan
Contractor--M. W. Land

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Simpson County Courthouse is one of Mississippi's most ambitious public essays in the Neo-Classical Style. Looming at the head of Main Street and occupying an entire city block, the courthouse dwarfs the small downtown of Mendenhall and is the most monumental and architecturally pretentious building in Simpson County. Deciding to relocate the county seat from Westville to Mendenhall, the Simpson County Board of Supervisors solicited plans for a new courthouse in August 1907. Echoing the design of the United States Capital, the adopted plans were submitted by New Orleans architect Andrew J. Bryan (Simpson County News, May 9, 1907), who had earlier served as the architect for the monumental, Romanesque Revival Jefferson County Courthouse erected in Fayette in 1903 (The Daily Democrat [Natchez], August 16, 1902). The cornerstone of the Simpson County Courthouse was laid in May 1907, and the contractor, who bid \$59,900 to construct the building, was M. W. Land of Jackson (Simpson County News, May 9, 1907). The well detailed exterior of the building exhibits a high degree of architectural integrity with the only obvious alteration being the removal of the original entrance doors. Likewise, the interior integrity has been compromised by the removal of original doors and transoms. The most significant interior space is the courtroom, which occupies the second and third stories of the western end of the building and features a graceful, curving balcony supported by iron posts carrying a full molded entablature topped by a railing of turned balusters. The courtroom was apparently originally lighted by one of two secondary domes, now obscured by a modern suspended ceiling. Heightened concern about the proper preservation/restoration of the courthouse building is evidenced by the initiation of National Register listing by the Simpson County Board of Supervisors.

9. Major Bibliographical References

The Daily Democrat [Natchez], August 16, 1902.

Simpson County News, May 9, 1907.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Mendenhall East

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	6	2	2	8	7	9	5	3	5	3	9	7	1	5
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property consists of a city block in downtown Mendenhall bounded by Pine Street to the north, Court Street to the south, Ashe Street to the east, and Elm Street to the west.

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

state NA code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mary Warren Miller/preservation consultant

organization Historic Natchez Foundation

date April 2, 1985

street & number P. O. Box 1761

telephone (601) 442-2500

city or town Natchez

state Mississippi 39120

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 Kenneth H. P. Pool

Deputy title State Historic Preservation Officer

date July 8, 1985





SIMPSON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Mendenhall, Simpson Co., Miss.

Looking northerly, the southerly
facade of the courthouse.

Mary W. Miller, Historic Natchez
Foundation, February 1985.

Photo 1 of 3



SIMPSON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Mendenhall, Simpson Co., Miss.

Looking northerly, the courtroom of the 2nd and 3rd stories of the western end of the courthouse.

Mary W. Miller, Historic Natchez Foundation, February 1985.

Photo 2 of 3



HOME
ECONOMIST

Tom's

SIMPSON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Mendenhall, Simpson Co., Miss.

Looking easterly down the easterly
corridor of the 1st-story interior
of the courthouse.

Mary W. Miller, Historic Natchez
Foundation, February 1985.

Photo 3 of 3