

VLR-9/18/96 WRHP-2/21/97

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 684). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

## 1. Name of Property

historic name THE OLD GRAYSON CO. COURTHOUSE and CLERK'S OFFICE

other names/site number N/A

## 2. Location

street & number GREENVILLE RD. (640) and JUSTICE RD. (SR 634)  not for publication

city or town GALAX  vicinity

state VIRGINIA code VA county GRAYSON code 077 zip code 24333

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]  
Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Virginia Department of Historic Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

- 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): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Old Grayson County Courthouse  
and Clerk's Office  
Name of Property

Grayson County, Virginia  
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

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

Number of Resources within Property  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: Courthouse  
GOVERNMENT: Government Office

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling  
Work in Progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Early Republic/Federal  
Early Republic/Federal

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/Sandstone  
walls Brick  
roof Slate  
other Wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)



Name of Property

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	17	503520	4056359
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Paul Hardin Kapp

organization Paul Hardin Kapp, Designer date 7-15-96

street & number 406 North Main Street telephone (540) 236-451

city or town Galax state Virginia zip code 24333

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Dr. and Mrs. John P. Kapp

street & number 406 North Main Street telephone (540) 236-4151

city or town Galax state Virginia zip code 24333

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Old Grayson County Courthouse  
and Clerk's Office  
Grayson County, VA.

### ARCHITECTURAL SUMMARY

The Old Grayson County Courthouse is located in the community of Old Town, Grayson County, Virginia. Built in 1834, the Courthouse sits on approximately 0.66 of an acre near the intersection of Greenville Road (SR 640) and Justice Road (SR 634). The brick courthouse is a two-story central block with flanking two-story wings and a one-story addition on the rear north side which was built in the 1870s and expanded in 1988.

The Old Clerk's Office, built in 1810, is a simple one-room brick structure that sits diagonally across the road from the courthouse on .0115 of an acre on the southwest corner of Greenville Road (SR 640) and Justice Road (SR 634). It has two means of egress, one on the east elevation and the other on the south elevation.

### ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The Old Grayson County Courthouse is an unusual antebellum courthouse design because it resembles a residence more than a public building. Constructed by master builder, James Toncray, it is both simple and functional. The principal, south facing facade is symmetrical, with a tripartite massing scheme. The central block and the two flanking wings have gabled roofs; the pitch of the central block is more shallow than the wings. The building is one room wide and the second floor matches the first floor. The central block facade is three bays wide. The entry has double doors, a simple transom and sidelights. A small iron balcony replaces a one-story wooden porch, which once sheltered the primary entry.<sup>1</sup> A double-hung sash window is positioned over the entry where there once was a door leading onto the former porch. Flanking the central entry, there are double-hung sash windows on the first and second floors.

The two-story wings are very typical of Toncray's courthouses. The inner-bay of the two-bay wings have a single door on the first floor and a double-hung sash window on the second floor. The outer bay has double-hung sash windows on both floors. The window

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Old Grayson County Courthouse  
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Grayson County, VA.

### Architectural Analysis (continued)

openings in the wings have jack arches that are 2 stretchers tall while the jack arches in the central block are only one stretcher tall.

The east and west gable ends are blank walls. The central block's walls are laid in American running bond while the two wings were laid in Flemish bond. The building rests on a cut sandstone foundation.

The roof structure on the central block and the flanking wings date to the 1870's. The entire roof is covered with slate, and is supported by revealed rafters spaced approximately two feet on center. The slate was installed in 1988.

The central bay with symmetrical flanking wings is a design characteristic found in Toncray's Old Wythe County Courthouse (1818, demolished), Scott County Courthouse (1829), the Montgomery County Courthouse (circa 1833, demolished),<sup>2</sup> and the First Grayson County Courthouse of Independence, Virginia (circa 1863, demolished, 1904).<sup>3</sup>

Behind the central-main entry, is the stair hall. On each side of the hall there are two rooms, one contained in the main building and one in the wing. In the western wing there is a small stair that leads to the second floor. Each room except the central hall has a fireplace. These fireplaces are serviced by four symmetrically placed corbeled-cap chimneys.

All of the rooms have a beaded baseboard and a chair rail made of a beaded board with a small wood cove and beaded cap. The most distinctive architectural trimwork is the eight fireplace mantels. Each mantel is approximately five and a half feet tall, constructed of beaded boards with unique ovolo moldings below the mantel shelf. The walls are loadbearing brick walls covered with plaster except for the two central hall walls which are painted board partitions. All of the floors in the courthouse feature original heart pine.

Four bathrooms were added during the 1988 remodeling. One is

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Old Grayson County Courthouse  
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### Architectural Analysis (continued)

under the hall stair, one is against the north wall of the first floor of the west wing, and two are on the second floor of the central block.

The rear (northside) of the courthouse has a one-story ell addition with a basement built in 1870 and expanded in 1988. Most of the addition was built in the 1870s when the structure was used as a hotel. The short leg of the ell was expanded in 1988 for a family room. The addition has a slate roof. A carport with a deck above it is to the north of this ell addition.

Across the street from the courthouse is the brick one-room Clerk's Office. The masonry is laid in a Flemish bond and the gabled-roof is covered with slate. A single door located in the center of the east elevation features a fanlight transom. A small half-exterior, central chimney is on the west elevation. The north elevation has two double-hung sash windows, while the south elevation has one double-hung sash window and a door. A brick arch with a fanlight transom surmounts this entry. The foundation was rebuilt in the 1960s and it is made out of poured concrete. The molded brick water table on the north, east and west sides is one of the more elaborate construction features of the building.

The interior is very simple and was altered in the 1960s when the building was used as a voting precinct for the county. The walls are covered with gypsum wall board and a simple flat stock baseboard. The pine floor was installed during the 1960s. The west side of the room includes a wood-burning stove flanked with bookshelves, each having paneled doors.

The surrounding grounds are simple and unadorned. There is a stone walkway leading to the central entrance of the courthouse and a stone retaining wall on the west side of the property. The current owners have installed an asphalt driveway beyond the retaining wall and a paver brick walkway along the front elevation which works as a ground gutter. There are no built features or landscaping around the Old Clerk's Office except for the dry set stone retaining wall on the east side along Justice Road (State Road 640).

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### ENDNOTES

1. Kapp Private Collection of historic photographs.
2. John O. Peters and Margaret T. Peters, Virginia's Historic Courthouses (Charlottesville, VA.: University of Virginia Press, 1955): 106, 107.
3. Laura Bryant, "Courthouses of Grayson County", Virginia Cavalcade 25 (Spring, 1976): 162.

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Old Grayson County Courthouse  
and Clerk's Office  
Grayson County, VA.

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Old Grayson County Courthouse and Clerk's Office, Old Town, Virginia is located in eastern Grayson County. It is eligible under Criterion A because of its association with the evolution and growth of Grayson County and the formation of Carroll County, Virginia. Moreover, it is an excellent surviving example of the work of Master Builder, James Toncray, the premier builder of courthouses of this period in Southwest Virginia, thus eligible under Criterion C. These two buildings are the primary components of the first civic complex of Grayson County. Both buildings have retained most of their structural and contextual integrity. The Old Clerk's Office, built in 1810, was the first clerk's office in Grayson County while the Courthouse, built in 1834, was the county's third structure for this use.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1792, the Virginia General Assembly voted to form Grayson County from Wythe County. The first meeting of the Grayson County Court was held in a double corncrib barn which belonged to Wm. Bourne, one of the founders of Grayson County.<sup>1</sup>

In 1799, Charles Nuckolls and Flower Swift conveyed 90 acres they owned in the center of the county to Minitree Jones and Matthew Dickey, commissioners, for the "Publick" of Grayson County. The commissioners under the order of the county divided this land into half-acre lots which would become the county seat. The town was called Greenville, and is also known as Grayson Court House.<sup>2</sup> On the north side of the Main Street (Greenville Road) in the center of the town a log structure was built. It became the second courthouse of Grayson County. It has long since disappeared.<sup>3</sup>

In 1810, Martin Dickenson, the second Clerk of the County, built the Clerk's Office on a secondary road (Justice Road) across from the Courthouse, which ran perpendicular to Main Street (Greenville Road).<sup>4</sup> The two lots across from the log courthouse and Clerk's

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Old Grayson County Courthouse  
and Clerk's Office  
Grayson County, VA.

### Historical Background (continued)

Office had several owners between the years of 1799-1824. In 1824 Dickenson bought the lots and by 1826 sold the Clerk's Office to the county only to own it again when he exchanged his two lots fronting the log courthouse for the Clerk's Office in 1833.<sup>5</sup>

In that year, the county commissioners selected James Toncray to build the brick courthouse on the two lots. Toncray was the most prominent courthouse builder in Southwest Virginia, constructing the courthouses in Wythe County, (1818 demolished), Scott County (1829) Montgomery County and Floyd County at the same time he was building the Grayson County Courthouse.<sup>6</sup>

These courthouses are similar in both form and appearance. Besides being built of brick and designed in the Federal style, the courthouses he designed had a tripartite composition with a two-story central block and flanking two-story wings. The symmetrical flanking wings were two bays long with a door in the inner bay. The Old Grayson Courthouse is a typical example of his design. It is the most intact and least altered Toncray courthouse in Virginia.

In 1834 the County began using the Courthouse in Greenville. In 1842 the Virginia General Assembly divided Grayson County and formed Carroll County from the eastern half. By 1848 after a six-year dispute on whether the county seat should stay in Greenville or be moved to a new centrally located site, the county government agreed to abandon the courthouse and relocate. In 1850 the county seat moved to its present location in Independence,<sup>7</sup> and in 1854 the county sold the empty courthouse to William B. Dickenson. The Clerk's Office would later be sold to Creed Nuckolls. In 1855, Nuckolls also bought the courthouse structure.<sup>8</sup>

From 1855 to 1871 the courthouse was used as a private residence. In 1871, then owner Mastin Hale sold the courthouse building to William P. Waugh who added the one-story ell addition and converted it into a hotel. It would serve in this capacity for nearly 40 years. The property was then sold to Harvey Williams who converted

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Old Grayson County Courthouse  
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### Historical Background (continued)

the building from a hotel to an apartment building.<sup>9</sup>

During most of the 20th century, the courthouse changed ownership and uses, from an apartment building to a hay barn. In 1983 the current owners, Dr. and Mrs. John P. Kapp, bought the courthouse from William D. Ring, and in 1988 began restoring and remodeling. In 1989 it was occupied as the residence of Dr. and Mrs. John P. Kapp.

After the county offices were moved to Independence the Clerk's Office served many uses as well, from a post office for Old Town to a dental office.<sup>10</sup> During most of the 20th century it was used as a voting precinct for the eastern portion of Grayson County. In 1989 the county sold the Clerk's Office to Kapp. The Old Grayson Courthouse and Clerk's Office are excellent examples of civic architecture in Southwest Virginia representing the late Federal Style and are significant monuments to the early governments of both Grayson and Carroll Counties of Virginia.

### Endnotes

1. Laura Bryant, "Courthouses of Grayson County", Virginia Cavalcade 25 (Spring, 1984): 162.
2. John W. Parsons, "Chain of Title for Old Grayson Courthouse", January 13, 1984.
3. Betty Lou Fields and Jane Hughes, Grayson County, A History of Words and Pictures (Winston-Salem, NC: Hunter Publishing Company, 1976): 16.
4. Bryant, 160.
5. Parsons, 2.
6. John O. Peters and Margaret T. Peters, Virginia's Historic Courthouses (Charlottesville, VA.: University of Virginia Press, 1955): 106, 107.
7. Bryant, 162.
8. Parsons, 2.

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Endnotes (Continued)

10. Shirley Gordon, Interview with Author, Independence, VA.  
September 20, 1995.

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Old Grayson County Courthouse  
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Grayson County, VA.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bryant, Laura. "Courthouses of Grayson County" Virginia Cavalcade 25, Spring, 1976.

Bucklen and Bucklen. County Courthouses of Virginia. Charleston, WV: Pictorial Histories Publishing Co., 1988.

Farrar, Emmie Ferguson and Emilee Hines. Old Virginia Houses: The Mountain Empire. Charlotte, NC: Deumar Publishing Co., 1978.

Fields, Betty-Lou, ed. Grayson County: A History in Words and Pictures. Winston-Salem, NC: Hunter Publishing Co., 1976.

Gordon, Shirley. Interview with Author, Independence, VA, September 20, 1995.

Historic American Building Survey. Virginia Catalog (HABS), 1976 Federal. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., p. 364. Also: HABS.I.

Kapp Private Collection of historic photographs.

Parsons, John W. (Attorney-at-Law) to Dr. John P. Kapp. "Chain of Title for Old Grayson County Courthouse", Old Town, VA, Independence, VA, January 13, 1984.

Peters, John O. and Margaret T. Peters. Virginia's Historic Courthouses. Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1995.

Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Survey. VDHR File No.: 38-04.

### GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

#### Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the Old Grayson County Courthouse and the Old

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Old Grayson County Courthouse  
and Clerk's Office  
Grayson County, VA.

### Geographical Data - Verbal Boundary Description (continued)

Clerk's Office are shown as dashed and dotted lines on the accompanying map entitled "Site Map of the Old Grayson County Courthouse and Clerk's Office, Old Town, Grayson County, VA, 1996." Tax Map No. 57-A-107A, D.B. 196-P. 734

### Verbal Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Old Grayson County Courthouse and Clerk's Office, Old Town, Va.

SITE MAP OF THE OLD GRAYSON COUNTY COURTHOUSE & CLERK'S OFFICE

OLDTOWN, GRAYSON CO., VA.

SCALE: APPROX. 1" = 50'-0"

DRAWN BY PAUL H. KAPP, 1990  
 (BASED ON SURVEYS BY T.S. SWANER & D.B. DUDLEY, 1983)



COW PASTURE

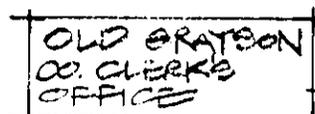
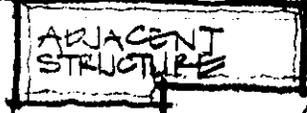


GREENVILLE ROAD

VA. RTE. 640

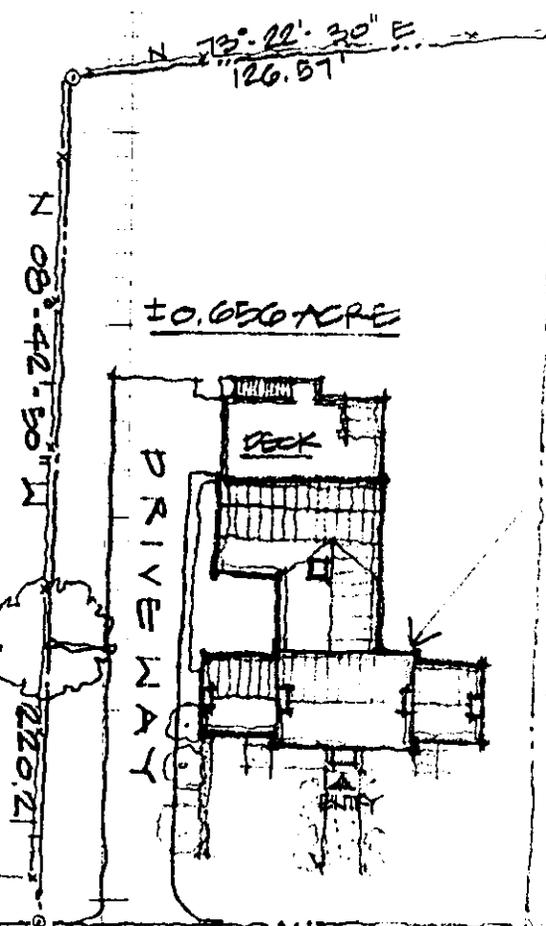
← TO NEW RIVER

TO BRAX, VA. →



$S 08^{\circ} 16' 37'' E$   
31.91'

$N 81^{\circ} 43' 23'' E$   
18.00'



OLD GRAYSON  
DUNTY COURT  
HOUSE & CLEARING  
OFFICE, OLD  
TOWN, GRAYSON  
DUNTY, VA.  
ITM REFERENCE:  
ZONE 17  
ASTING: 503520  
DRTING: 4056302

Comments

