

VLR-2/20/13

NRHP-3/21/73

Form 10-300
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Virginia
COUNTY:	Dinwiddie
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	

1. NAME

COMMON:
Dinwiddie County Court House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
West side of Route 619 at intersection with Route 1

CITY OR TOWN:
Dinwiddie (Fourth District, Robert W. Daniel, Jr.)

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
51

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51 COUNTY: Dinwiddie CODE: 053

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Dinwiddie County

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Dinwiddie

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Dinwiddie County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Dinwiddie

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory

DATE OF SURVEY: 1959 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington

STATE: D. C. CODE: 11

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CONDITION	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The original portion of the Dinwiddie County court house is a two-story, brick temple-form structure approximately 37' wide and 78' long including the front portico. Designed in a simple Greek Revival style, the front and side bays are framed with Greek Doric pilasters supporting a Greek Doric entablature without triglyphs. The center bay of the three-bay facade is widened, making the pilasters appear paired rather than evenly spaced. The portico columns echo this spacing.

As originally completed in 1851 the court house apparently was the more typical one-level building instead of being the present two-level one. A court order of November 1858, however, resolved that the building was to be so remodeled as to have ". . . three rooms on the first floor for Clerk's office and sheriffs office & peoples room -- a court room and two Jury on the 2nd floor - - and that the materials of the old clerks office be used in the said work. . ." This remodeling was interrupted by the War between the States, and the incompleteness of the project was noted by General Philip Sheridan in his 1865 description of the court house village. Sheridan observed that the roof was tottering under "the unusual burden on new repairs and improvements thereupon. . ." He further mentioned the large timbers placed to brace the building's eaves while the remodeling was being carried out. He confirmed the fact that the building was divided into two stories by that time with his description of the interior spaces. A contemporary engraving showing Sheridan at Dinwiddie Court House illustrates the building with a two-run divided stair leading up to a second-floor door in the center of the facade. The top landing is shown serving as both a small balcony and a shelter for the first-floor entrance. This exterior stair apparently lasted for little more than a couple of decades as it was replaced before the turn of the century by an interior stair. A small iron balcony now occupies the former position of the stair's top landing. If indeed the court house originally had only one level, it is assumed that the side bays were altered during the 1858 renovation to have their present two-tiers of windows to reflect the new two-level scheme.

During the early part of the present century the building's interior was further altered so that most of the present interior trim such as window and door architraves, doors, flooring, and fixed furniture dates from that time. The court room's handsome stamped-metal ceiling also belongs to the early-twentieth century period. It was during this period that the building was first painted gray rather than its former red.

The building received two additions during the early 1930's. A two-story wing was placed on the rear, and a one-story wing with gable roof was attached toward the rear of the east side in 1933. The new east wing was built to correspond with the one-

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story west wing which originally was a free-standing building believed to pre-date the court house. The original function of this early structure is uncertain, although most probably it was a law office. Its facade is laid in Flemish bond, and its openings originally were topped by flat splayed-brick arches. The wing's openings, trim and roof pitch were altered to make it conform architecturally to the east wing.

The court house did not receive its portico until 1933 when it was erected as part of a Civil Works Administration project. The Doric order of the original portion was carried into the portico making it a harmonious addition.

The setting of the court house is enhanced by a broad lawn in front which slopes down to the highway (U.S. Route 1). The lawn is planted with shade trees, and on its eastern edge is the 1904 Clerk's Office. Behind the court house is the early twentieth century Sheriff's Office and jail. To the east of the complex is the small frame Episcopal Church noted by Sheridan.

CCL

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATES (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>county history</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Greek Revival-style Dinwiddie County Court House stands as the architectural and historical focal point of its venerable Southside county. Set at the head of its broad lawn the dignified building has housed the county's government and courts since it was completed in 1851.

The destruction of many of Dinwiddie's early records during the War between the States has left the history of the county's earlier court houses obscure, but it is thought that the very first courts were convened near Petersburg. However, the earliest known court house was located about a half-mile northwest of the present building. This court house burned in 1821, and it is assumed that the court house location was moved in that year to the present site. An unpretentious frame building is thought to have been the immediate predecessor of the present structure.

The frame building proved inadequate, and on February 7, 1849 the County Court advertized for bids on the building of "a new brick Court House." Completed in two years the new building was described in a letter by Dr. James Boisseau of Dinwiddie to Judge James Boisseau of the University of Virginia: "The Court House has been finished and was received by the Court on Monday----It is a very neat and tasty building; externally it does great credit to the builder, but some of the internal arrangement is very bad and does not speak so well for them as the former." Some of the inconveniences of the internal arrangement noted by Dr. Boisseau provided sufficient reason for a major remodeling of the interior just seven years after its completion. In November of 1858 the County Court resolved that the building was to be so remodeled as to have "three rooms on the first floor for Clerk's office and sheriffs office & people room --a court room, and two jury rooms on the 2nd floor -- and that the materials of the old clerks office be used in the said work. . ."

This alteration was interrupted by the War between the States, and it was during this period that the court house witnessed its most significant historic events. In March of 1865 Union General Philip Sheridan, bringing his troops from

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the east as part of the drive on Petersburg, passed through the court house village but was driven back by a fierce attack led by General Pickett. This action has been designated the Battle of Dinwiddie Court House. Sheridan withdrew to Dinwiddie and the next day advanced to attack Pickett, and defeated him in the decisive Battle of Five Forks. In his personal memoirs Sheridan gives both a detailed account of the action at Dinwiddie Court House, as well as a careful description of the village complex. Recalling the court house building Sheridan noted:

The court-house betokened a more modern appearance than the specimens of rural architecture surrounding it, and was built of red brick, freshly painted. The roof, as though tottering under the unusual burden of new repairs and improvements thereupon, was bolstered up by immense timbers supporting its eaves. The court-room, in the upper story, formed a most excellent public dormitory, and the various legal and county offices, on the first floor, gave employment to many a wandering soldier. The floors were irreverently strewn with abstracts of title, venerable mortgages, copies of deeds, and other such interesting matter as appertains to a county clerk's office. This being one of the oldest counties in Virginia, many of the documents were yellow with age, some bearing date as far back as the time of Governor Dinwiddie, and, for aught I know, furnishing golden opportunities to the American antiquarian.

Although the court house has been altered and added to over the years, it preserves its simple ante-bellum dignity. Its setting has changed little in character from the time that Sheridan's troops camped on the square.

OCL

"Dinwiddie County: The Country of the Apamaticca", Federal Works Works Agency, 1942.
 Glick, J. Paul, "Dinwiddie County Geography Supplement", Dinwiddie County School Board, University of Virginia, 1926.
 Sheridan, M. B., Personal Memoirs of Phillip Henry Sheridan, New York, 1902.
 Sheridan, P. H., Personal Memoirs of P. H. Sheridan, Vol. 1, New York: Charles L. Webster & Co., 1888.

0. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 : "	0 : "		37° 04' 37"	77° 35' 14"	
NE	0 : "	0 : "				
SE	0 : "	0 : "				
SW	0 : "	0 : "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than ten acres.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff
 ORGANIZATION: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission DATE: February, 1973
 STREET AND NUMBER:
Room 1116 Ninth Street State Office Building
 CITY OR TOWN: Richmond STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name J. R. Fishburne, Jr.
J. R. Fishburne, Jr., Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
 Title _____

Date FEB 20 1973

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

 Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

6



U.S.G.S. 7½' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)
 Dinwiddie, Va. 1963

DINWIDDIE COUNTY COURT HOUSE
 latitude 37°04'37"
 longitude 77°35'14"