

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:
Virginia

COUNTY:
Botetourt

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
JUL 2 1977	

Arch
C#3

1. NAME

COMMON:
Botetourt County Court House

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Botetourt County Court House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
NW corner Main St. and Roanoke St.

CITY OR TOWN:
Fincastle

STATE	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Virginia	51	Botetourt	023

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"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Botetourt County

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Fincastle

STATE:	CODE
Virginia	51

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Botetourt County Court House, Clerk's Office

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Fincastle

STATE	CODE
Virginia	51

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory

DATE OF SURVEY: 1957

Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington

STATE:	CODE
D. C.	11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ruins
	(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 Botetourt County Court House is a three-part composition consisting of a tall two-story, temple-form center section flanked by low two-story wings. Designed in a provincial Greek Revival style, the center section is fronted by a tetrastyle Greek Doric portico of unfluted stucco columns supporting a plain entablature and pediment. The wings are covered by shallow hipped roofs, and the two bays of each wing are framed by pilasters supporting an entablature similar in form but smaller in scale to that on the center section. The first and second floor windows of the wings are treated as single units, having eight-over-eight lower sash and four-over-four upper sash with unornamented panels between. The lower sections of the inner windows in each of the wings, however, have been converted into doors. The first floor windows in the center section are treated in similar form as those of the wings. The upper sash of these windows apparently were originally intended to light jury rooms in the gallery.

Until the recent fire the apex of the roof was topped by a square belfry with coupled pilastres at the corners and a clock face on all four sides. Crowning the belfry was a shallow dome out of which projected a short hexagonal spire topped by a weather vane in the form of an arrow.

All of the court house's architectural details are either whitewashed wood or stucco, and thus stand out in strong contrast to the red brick walls. The walls are laid in very even Flemish bond which is accented by penciled joints. The original exterior form of the building is interrupted by three principal additions: a vault room behind the west wing, and two vault rooms behind the east wing or clerk's office.

The interior of the center section, as originally built, contained a high ceiling court room on the first floor level. The bench for this court room was on the north wall, directly opposite the front door. One apparently entered the court room beneath a gallery that contained jury rooms fronted by a balcony. This gallery seems to have been reached by two straight flights of stairs located against the side walls. It is uncertain how the floor level above the court room was divided or used.

The original interior scheme was completely reversed in 1918 during a remodeling of the building designed by a Roanoke architect, G. R. Ragan. The first floor became a low ceiling space divided into offices on either side of a central corridor. The new second floor level containing a high ceiling court room was reached by a wide stair opposite the entrance. The bench of this new court room was directly over the front door. The interior of the wings also were remodelled in 1918, thus leaving little if any original interior trim in the building. The 1918 interior of the center section, as well as the original roof framing was completely destroyed by the fire of December 1970. Plans are being made to rebuild the interior of the building and return it to a functioning court house.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

3. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (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 type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <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 type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The present Botetourt County Court House in Fincastle postdates two earlier courthouse buildings. The first court house, completed in 1773, was replaced around 1818 by a more substantial building erected according to drawings and instructions provided by Thomas Jefferson. A design for a new court house was requested of Mr. Jefferson by his friend James Breckenridge, a leading citizen of Botetourt County. Although Jefferson's drawings do not survive, their one time existence is confirmed by a letter from Jefferson to Breckinridge dated October 6, 1818, where Jefferson stated that he had found time to complete the drawings and that he was forwarding them by mail "with the explanations accompanying them." The second Botetourt court house and the Buckingham court house are thus the only court houses documented to have been designed by Jefferson.

Apparently the second court house was too small to accommodate all the necessary administrative functions for so large a county as Botetourt, for in 1845 a committee was appointed to contract for the building of a new court house on the site of the existing one. The second court house was thus demolished and the construction of the present one was begun that same year, with completion being achieved three years later. It has been a long-standing tradition in the county that because the general external appearance of the Jeffersonian court house was so much admired, the layout of the present building (central temple-form section flanked by low wings) was based on it.

However closely it may have resembled its predecessor the present court house is a most competent essay in provincial Greek Revival design, and is an important component in Virginia's notable collection of ante bellum court houses. It is also one of Virginia's largest court houses of its type and period. Further research may show that its chief builder, Schuyler W. Smith of Bedford, was responsible for the design of significant Greek Revival houses and churches in the Bedford and Botetourt area, since many of these buildings have strong architectural parallels to the court house.

Until it was gutted by fire in December 1970, the court house with its imposing portico, belfry and spire, was the architectural focal point for one of Virginia's most picturesque communities. Although the destruction of the interior is regrettable in the extreme, the fire destroyed little of architectural significance except for the roof and belfry, since nearly all interior fabric dated from the 1918 remodeling. The original walls

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(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries)

8. and columns survived with little irreparable damage, and it is intended to install a new interior within them and to restore the exterior to its original appearance.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Niederer, Frances J., The Town of Fincastle Virginia, Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1965.

Stoner, Robert Douthat, A Seed-Bed of the Republic, sponsored by Roanoke Historical Society, 1962.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			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 0	0 0 0	37	29 57	79 0 52 42
NE	0 0 0	0 0 0			
SE	0 0 0	0 0 0			
SW	0 0 0	0 0 0			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than 10 acres.

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Staff, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, James W. Moody, Jr., Director

ORGANIZATION: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission DATE: March 29, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER:
Room 1116, Ninth Street 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: Edw. P. Alexander by J. S. J.

Title: Dr. Edward P. Alexander, Chairman Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

Date: 4/6/71

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: JUL 2 1971

ATTEST:
Keeper of The National Register

Date: JUL 2 1971

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

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3. MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE:
U.S.G.S. 7 1/2', quadrangle Daleville, Va.

SCALE: 1:24000

DATE: 1963

4. REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

- Property boundaries where required.
- North arrow.
- Latitude and longitude reference.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

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3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE OF PHOTO: 1970

NEGATIVE FILED AT: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
Richmond, Virginia

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

View from the southeast.

U.S.G.S. 7½' quadrangle (Scale:1:24000)
Daleville, Va. 1963

DALEVILLE QUADRANGLE
VIRGINIA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

NW¼ ROANOKE 15' QUADRANGLE

CLIFTON FORGE 27 MI
EAGLE ROCK 12 MI

Botetourt County Court House
Latitude 37° 29' 57"
Longitude 79° 52' 42"

