

VLR-3/17/87 NRHP-5/14/87

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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date entered

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination FormSee instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Roanoke County Courthouse (DHL File No. 129-8)

and/or common Old Roanoke County Courthouse (preferred)

2. Location

street & number 301 East Main Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Salem

N/A vicinity of

state Virginia

code 51

county Roanoke

code 161

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Board of Supervisors, Roanoke County
c/o Mr. Bob L. Johnson, Chairman and Mr. Elmer Hodge, County Administrator

street & number P.O. Box 3800

city, town Roanoke

N/A vicinity of

state Virginia zip code 24015

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Roanoke County Courthouse

street & number 301 East Main Street

city, town Salem

state Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

1. Survey (File No. 129-8)

title 2. HABS

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1. 1986

2. 1958

2. federal 1. state ☐ county ☐ localdepository for survey records 1. Division of Historic Landmarks
2. Library of Congresscity, town 1. Richmond
2. Washington1. Virginia
state 2. D.C.

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Old Roanoke County Courthouse is situated at 301 East Main Street in the city of Salem. The three-story, Neo-classical-style building was erected in 1909-10 after the plans of the local architect, H.H. Huggins. Constructed of stretcher-bond, yellow brick, the facade of the central-passage plan building is dominated by a tetra-style portico in the Ionic order.

The nomination consists of one contributing building, the courthouse, and one contributing object, the 1910 Civil War memorial.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

The facade of the Old Roanoke County Courthouse faces north. The dominating feature of the main elevation is the three-story, tetra-style Ionic portico. The portico is set on a stepped platform, with pedestals supporting unfluted columns with Roman Ionic capitals. An Ionic entablature further embellishes the facade. Resting on the portico is a full pediment, its typanum pierced by a segmental-arch opening with a fanlight. The pediment is covered by a gable roof which projects from the building's hipped roof. The portico shelters the main entrance. The entrance consists of double doors with sidelights and a transom framed by a stone architrave with a full pediment. The pediment is topped by a carved stone anthemion. The fenestration found under the portico is varied. The first story contains rectangular openings with 1/1 hung-sash windows. The architraves are raised and distinguished by keystones. The second story has rectangular openings with 1/1 hung sash windows. Round-arch openings are found on the third story and have multi-light windows with raised architraves topped by keystones. The facade is flanked by one bay of windows. The openings have 1/1 hung-sash windows on the first and second stories and multi-light windows on the first and third stories.

The east elevation fronts on College Avenue. It contains a first-story side entrance which consists of a one-story pedimented portico with Doric columns. The entrance opening has double doors topped by a transom and flanked by sidelights. The fenestration on the east elevation consists of three-part windows, as well as single 1/1 hung-sash windows. A large round-arch window is located above the doorway.

In 1948-49 an addition was made to the rear (south) elevation when the courthouse was expanded. The addition extended the building westward with the jail entrance placed on College Avenue. The two-story addition is executed in yellow brick and has asymmetrical rectangular openings with both hung-sash and casement windows. A one-story addition projects from the west elevation and is also executed in yellow brick with 1/1 hung-sash windows. The addition now serves to join the old courthouse with a new 1985 courthouse building. The courthouse has a hipped roof topped by a cupola. Mounted on the cupola is a figure of an eagle with spread wings. The cupola houses the courthouse clock, which is visible from all elevations.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

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In plan, the Old Roanoke County Courthouse contains a central passage that bisects the building. A lateral passage, containing the stair, is located near the main entrance. A second stair is found in the main passage. All stairs are iron and contain square newels with iron panels. The hall is embellished with wainscoting. County offices are located off the central passage. The second story contains the main courtroom, altered to its present appearance during the 1970s. Offices occupy the remaining floorspace. The basement was originally finished with the clerk's office. All court functions have been relocated to the new courthouse and the building is partially vacant.

In front of the courthouse on the corner of East Main and College is the 1910 Civil War Memorial. The memorial consists of a granite shaft topped by the figure of a Confederate soldier. The memorial serves to commemorate Roanoke County's Civil War dead.

The 1985 courthouse building abuts, but is not connected to the west wall of the 1909-1910 courthouse building. When the 1985 building was constructed, no attempt was made for any connection to the old building. The 1985 structure has no physical impact on the earlier courthouse. The impact is purely visual, the 1985 structure dominating the courthouse block.

RCC

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 checked="" 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 1909–10

Builder/Architect H. H. Huggins, Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

From the date of its construction in 1910, the Old Roanoke County Courthouse in the city of Salem served for three quarters of a century as the symbol and focal point of local government authority. The second courthouse to stand on the same site since Roanoke County's formation from Botetourt County in 1838, the Neo-classical-style edifice was designed by Roanoke architect H. H. Huggins, who also planned courthouses for Franklin and Montgomery counties. Of the three, the Roanoke building represents Huggins' most ambitious courthouse design. Although no longer serving its original function, it remains in a fine state of preservation.

BACKGROUND

On March 30, 1838, an act of the General Assembly created the county of Roanoke. Shortly thereafter, Salem was designated as the county seat due to its central location, chartered town status, and size. On May 24, 1838, the county court convened on the second floor of the James C. Huff Building and a committee was commissioned to bring in "models" for a new courthouse and estimate the cost. Two months later the plans were accepted and another commission was authorized to sign a construction contract, "on the most advantageous terms." The contract was awarded to William C. Williams, a local builder and hotelman. In March, 1841, a two-story brick building with one-story wings with a portico was formally received by the county as its first courthouse. The building, after serving for sixty-eight years, was razed in 1909 to make way for the present building, the old Roanoke County Courthouse.

A need to provide the county treasurer with more office space ultimately led to the construction of the new courthouse. At its February, 1908 meeting, the Board of Supervisors ordered the removal of three small buildings in the west yard in order to expand the treasurer's office. Charles D. Denit, Clerk of Court and editor of the Times-Register and Sentinel wrote an editorial calling for a new courthouse. On June 27, 1908, county officials held a joint meeting of the Board of Supervisors and Salem Council to weigh replacement against repairs of the old building. Salem officials had been involved from the outset because of the town's longstanding obligation to pay a third of the courthouse repair and maintenance costs. On July 3rd, the Supervisors formally voted to replace the old courthouse with a new one. Shortly thereafter, Salem also agreed.

The architect chosen for the plans of the building was Henry Hartwell Huggins of Roanoke; a \$43,870 building contract was awarded to King Lumber Company of Charlottesville. Demolition of the old courthouse began on February 1st, 1909, and the new building was received from the contractor on March 1st, 1910.

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Division of Historic Landmarks. "Franklin County Courthouse," "Montgomery County Courthouse." Archives Files Nos. 157-1 and 154-5.

Middleton, Norwood C. Salem: A Virginia Chronicle. Salem: Salem Historical Society, Inc., 1986

Roanoke Times, December 8, 1912

(See Continuation Sheet #4)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approx. 1/2 acre

Quadrangle name Salem, Va.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

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5	8	3	7	9	0
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4	1	2	7	6	6	0
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Zone

Easting

Northing

B

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Zone

Easting

Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

(See Continuation Sheet #5)

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

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
-------	-----	------	--------	-----	------

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
-------	-----	------	--------	-----	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard C. Cote and staff

organization Division of Historic Landmarks

date 1987

street & number 221 Governor Street

telephone 804-786-3143

city or town Richmond

state Virginia

zip code
23219

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

H. Bryan Mitchell, Director

title Division of Historic Landmarks

date April 10, 1987

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Henry Hartwell Huggins, the architect of the Old Roanoke County Courthouse, is described in his obituaries as "one of Roanoke's most prominent men...Mr. Huggins was regarded as one of the foremost architects in the South and planned many of the largest buildings in the city." Huggins came to Roanoke from South Carolina as a young man in 1890. He appears to have met with immediate success in his adopted city. His accomplishments of one year, for instance, are documented in the City Directories for 1902:

"14 residences, 1 church, 2 Lodge buildings, 3 Y.M.C.A. buildings,
10 business houses within 12 months.

There are some nice Colonial designs for residences to my credit this year. The style of our forefathers is not sufficiently appreciated, but will be." 3

During the same year in which Huggins was involved in the building of the Roanoke County Courthouse, he was also the architect for two other Virginia county courthouses in Montgomery and Franklin counties - both in partnership with the Roanoke architect, W. B. Bates. While Huggins is listed independently of Bates in the Roanoke City Directory for 1909, the Roanoke directory for 1910 lists the firm of Huggins and Bates as "architects and consulting engineers." 4 The partnership lasted until Huggins' death on December 5th, 1912. While the courthouses were no doubt individually designed for each county, the Montgomery County Courthouse had an eagle on it's pinnacle similar to that found on Roanoke's. Unfortunately, the Montgomery building was later demolished to make way for a new courthouse.

Following the installation of the Roanoke Courthouse clock, the local newspaper ran an editorial in June, 1910, that spoke of the town's newest building entitled, "Tick, Tock, Tick, It's the New Town Clock," the editorial noted:

"It is not only highly useful in its lofty setting, but is quite ornamental. In size it is commensurate with the new courthouse itself, which adds dignity to the whole square...it can be seen from four directions and at considerable distance, with the eagle on the pinnacle above it and the new Confederate statue below, the clock completes the beauty and usefulness of a clock that would do credit to any town." 5

Since the dedication of a new courthouse building on March 30, 1985, the old building has remained partially vacant and served for county offices. It is scheduled for remodeling to be used as a Court of Appeals with supporting offices.

RCC

(See Continuation Sheet #3)

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Notes:

1. Norwood C. Middleton, Salem: A Virginia Chronicle (Salem: Salem Historical Society, Inc., 1986), p. 55.
2. Roanoke Times, 8 December, 1912, p. 20.
3. W. H. Walsh, Walsh's Roanoke. Virginia City Directory for 1902 (Charleston: W. H. Walsh Directory Co., Inc., 1905-1912), pp. 113, 193, 273, 353, 417, & 497.
4. W. H. Walsh, Walsh's Roanoke. Virginia City Directory for 1910 (Charleston: W. H. Walsh Directory Co., Inc., 1905-1912), pp. 109, 191, 271, 351, 431, & 525.
5. Middleton, Salem: A Virginia Chronicle, p. 251.

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Walsh, W. H. Walsh's Roanoke, Virginia City Directory for 1900. Charleston:
W. H. Walsh Directory Co., Inc. 1905-1912.

Work Projects Administration. Roanoke: Story of County and City. Roanoke:
Stone Printing and Manufacturing Co., 1942.

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BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property consists of approximately 1/2 acre. The boundaries are drawn to include only the Old Roanoke County Courthouse building and the Civil War memorial. The adjacent 1985 courthouse is not included in the nomination. The nominated property has been the site of the Roanoke County Courthouse since 1841 when the first courthouse was received by the county.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point at the NE corner of the intersection of E. Main Street and College Avenue; thence extending approximately 100' ENE along N side of E. Main Street; thence approximately 300' NNW; thence approximately 100' WSW to a point on the E side of College Avenue; thence following said side of College Avenue approximately 300' SSE to point of origin.

Attachment: Continuation of Item #5:

and other leading citizens of the area since its early settlement; and (2) veterans of World War I from the area (all races).

Decorative cast-iron freestanding stairs remain, along with leaded glass entryways and small double-hung "Palladian" windows on the third story. The construction technique was a solid masonry building, with no wooden studs used.

USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)
Salem, VA 1963 (PR 1978)

OLD ROANOKE COUNTY COURTHOUSE
301 E. Main St., Salem, Virginia
(Roanoke County)

UTM References: 17/583790/4127660

