

STOKES COUNTY COURTHOUSE

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Historical Sketch

Stokes County was formed from Surry in 1790 and its first courthouse was built at Germantown in that same year. Citizens erected a new structure in 1833, and three years later a traveler to Germantown, Albert Waugh of Raleigh, observed that the

very ugly courthouse, built of brick, at a cost of \$6,000, stands in the center of town, and like its brother in Greensborough, boasts of a clock with four dials---but the inhabitants never take the trouble to wind it except during the sittings of court.

The county seat was moved to Crawford in 1849, and a courthouse was completed there two years later. In 1853 the name of the county seat was changed to Danbury, and the same courthouse continued to serve the county until another building replaced it in 1904. Designed by Wheeler of Charlotte, the new courthouse was of brick, and, counting annexes and wings, it cost approximately \$74,000. A survey conducted by the Federal Works Progress Administration in 1939 noted that a serious fire hazard existed in the building because it was heated by stoves. The 1904 courthouse is still in use today.¹

Architectural Description

Danbury, an archetypal county seat town, takes its character from its function and is dominated by the Stokes County Courthouse. Set on a well landscaped hillside site, the courthouse and its grounds form the core of the town. The surrounding one and two-story shops and offices serve or have served court-related functions, including law offices and hotels.

The Stokes County Courthouse is one of six remaining courthouses designed in the Beaux Arts Neo-Classical Revival style at the turn of the century by Charlotte architect Wheeler and his various associates. Crowned by a distinctive Second Empire cupola, these buildings were especially popular in western North Carolina with three identical Wheeler and Runge designs being built in 1904 in Ashe, Stokes, and Watauga (demolished) counties.

The main facade of the brick courthouse is a five-part composition with a three-story hipped roof core topped with a small polygonal cupola and fronted by a tetrastyle Ionic portico. The unusual oblong mansard cupola is set directly behind the portico. Two-story flat roof wings project from the sides. All corners are defined by brick pilasters and windows are set in segmental arch surrounds. One-story wings and a two-story rear addition were appended in 1940 by a Works Progress Administration grant, but the scale, detail, and materials were handled so as to be nearly indistinguishable

¹Crittenden and Lacy, eds., Historical Records, III, 433; Stokes County, an unpublished research paper, in An Historical Survey of the Courthouses of North Carolina compiled by the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of North Carolina, October, 1966.

from the original. All of Wheeler's 1904 buildings have common decorative features: foliate scrolls with a shield bearing the construction date in the tympanum of the portico, bullseye windows in the base of the mansard cupola, and masonry egg and dart caps on the corner pilasters.

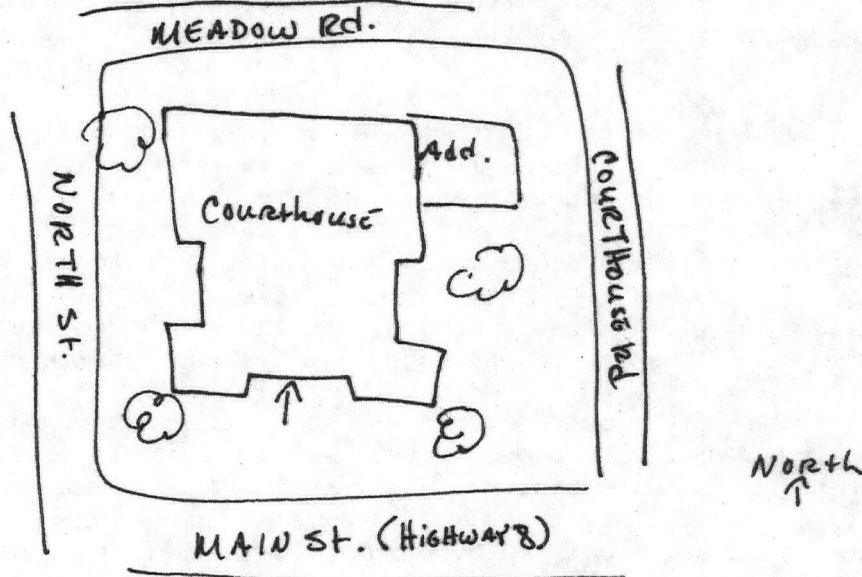
The interior--a long hall flanked by offices on the first floor and a second floor courtroom reached by a pair of stairs from the entrance vestibule--remains virtually untouched since it was completed in 1904. A heavily molded chair rail tops a high vertical wainscot and door and stair reveals and soffits are paneled. The finish on the 1940 WPA addition attempts to match the earlier section, especially the paneled newel and turned balustrade. In the courtroom the gallery has not been enclosed and the ornate pressed tin ceiling remains. The same wainscot is used in the courtroom and window and door surrounds are symmetrically molded with roundel corner blocks. The furnishings which are also original further emphasize the quality of materials and craftsmanship of the past and the importance of the community's pride in the maintenance of its courthouse.

Address: C.T. Lasley, Chairman, Stokes County Commissioners, Stokes County Courthouse, Danbury, N.C.

Acreage: less than one acre

UTM reference: 17/571180/4029460

Verbal Boundary Description: The courthouse is bounded to the north by Meadow Rd., to the east by Courthouse Rd., to the south by Main St., and to the west by North St.



Property North Carolina Courthouses Thematic Group

State N.C.

Working Number 12.12.78.4763

TECHNICAL

Photos #62
Maps 57

CONTROL

OK 12.14.78

57 county courthouses ranging from early 19th century to 1930s. Significant in long time associations with ~~the~~ commercial, political, and legal activities in the Unmunicipal and regions they serve. Some questions on integrity of subject, justification in 1930s examples. Needs call for minimal information. CALL / ACCEPT DOUBLE 5/6/79

HISTORIAN

~~The inventory forms covered adequate~~ DESCRIPTIONS AND STATEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE NOT CLEAR REASON THINK 3/6/79
CONVEYANCE OF THE COURTHOUSES ARE VERY IMPORTANT AND
FOR MANY BUILDINGS ARE BEING NOMINATED.
I THINK WE SHOULD RETURN FOR PROPER COMPLETION.

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

1930's structures justified in continuation sheets; additional photos received. Brunswick Co. Courthouse has suffered some loss of integrity but retains missing fenestration, belfry symbolizing public building - would accept but defer to architectural historian opinion. ACCEPT 5/8/79 PUBLIC

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____
Review _____

Articulate presentation of significance of these **REVIEW UNIT CHIEF**
Courthouses.

one apparently eligible property held back because of county opposition, but I cannot see rejecting entire thematic of exclusion of one property. Accept Belovich 5/10/79
BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

National Register Write-up _____ Send-back _____ Entered MAY 10 1979
Federal Register Entry 6-5-79 Re-submit _____ 5/10/79



NEGATIVE NUMBER N-77-2-572

DEC 12 1978

PHOTOGRAPHER Mary Lee

PHOTO DATE MARCH 1977

MAY 10 1979

SUBJECT Stokes Co. Courthouse

North Carolina Courthouses

Thematic ~~Group~~ ^{Files}

~~County~~ Alamance County

#52 of 62

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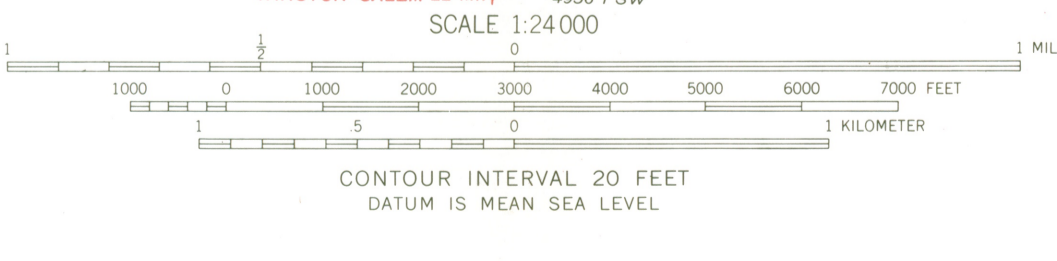
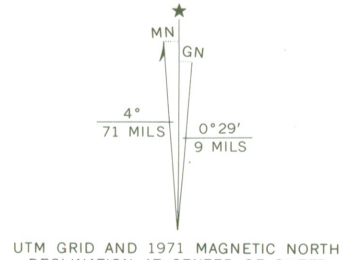
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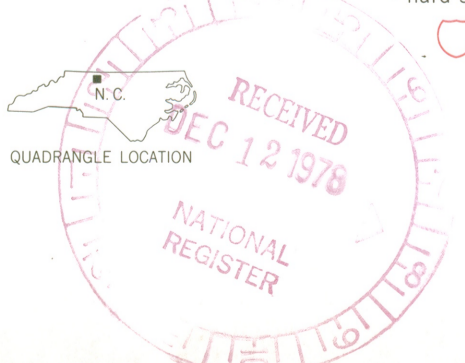
Stokes County Courthouse
Danbury, North Carolina
UTM Reference
17/571180/4029460

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and USC&GS
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1966. Field checked 1971
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on North Carolina coordinate system
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 17, shown in blue



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, hard surface	Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
Secondary highway, hard surface	Unimproved road
Interstate Route	U.S. Route
	State Route



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

DANBURY, N. C.
N3622.5-W8007.5/7.5
1971
AMS 4956 1 NW-SERIES V842

MAY 10 1979

