

ALLEGHANY COUNTY COURTHOUSE



Historical Sketch

Alleghany County was formed from Ashe in 1859. In April of that year fifty acres of land in Sparta were set aside as a town site and a location for a courthouse. The Civil War, however, soon came, and a courthouse was not constructed until 1867. From 1859 to 1867 county officials held court in Shiloh Methodist Church, four miles west of Sparta. In 1878 the first courthouse was replaced by a second one of brick. The latter building served until 1910 when a third was erected.¹

In 1932 a fire broke out in Sparta destroying a block of businesses and homes and the Alleghany County Courthouse. By January, 1933, the county commissioners had begun efforts to rebuild the seat of county government, and they employed architect Harry Barton of Greensboro to "furnish plans and specifications for the new Court House to be rebuilt." Barton was a native of Philadelphia who was noted for planning public buildings, including many of the courthouses of North Carolina, and for his use of Neo-Classical design in construction. The commissioners awarded the contract to build the new courthouse to Fowler-Jones Lumber Company, who agreed to construct the building for a cost of \$17,000.²

Architectural Description

The present Alleghany County Courthouse was built after "The Big Fire" of 1932 destroyed the courthouse and a block of businesses and homes. Located along Sparta's main street, the courthouse is surrounded by one and two-story commercial buildings which reflect its simple straightforward design.

Although built in the 1930s, the courthouse is reminiscent of the earlier more severe Neo-Classical buildings of the nineteen teens (Columbus and Washington counties) and lacks the lavish use of academic details displayed in the later Neo-Classical Revival phases (Guilford and Cumberland counties). Fronted by an awkward tetrastyle Tuscan portico, the two-story, H-shaped brick building has wide white masonry bands running below the window sills on each floor and serving as the architrave and cornice of the entablature. Brick pilasters with masonry caps define the building's corners and a third story is treated as a setback attic.

The interior which was recently renovated has the conventional hall flanked by offices running the length of the building and a vestibule with a pair of stairs to the second floor courtroom. The fine iron stair and

¹Olds, Story of the Counties, pp. 11-12.

²Alleghany County, Minutes of Board of County Commissioners, January 30, March 14, 1933.

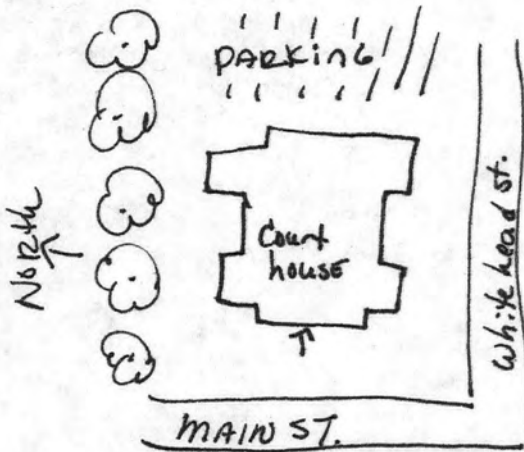
courtroom furnishings are all that remain of the original interior; unlike the exterior these elements are typical of the later phase of the Neo-Classical Revival in the sophisticated use of refined details.

Address: Leo Tompkins, Chairman, Alleghany County Commissioners, Alleghany County Courthouse, Sparta, N.C. 28675

Acreage: less than one acre

UTM reference: 17/489180/4039860

Verbal Boundary Description: The courthouse is bounded to the north by a row of fir trees, to the south by Whitehead Street, to the east by parking lots, and to the west by Main Street.



ALLEGHANY COUNTY COURTHOUSE - addendum

Built in 1933, the Alleghany County Courthouse reflects the lean times and tight county budgets of the Depression era, especially in western North Carolina. Designed by Harry Barton of Greensboro who is best known for his more lavish Neo-Classical Revival style courthouses of the 1920s (Guilford, Johnston, Alamance, and Cumberland counties), the Alleghany County Courthouse in its severity and lack of ornamentation is reminiscent of the earlier phase of the Neo-Classical Revival style courthouse (Columbus and Washington counties). Thus, the Alleghany County Courthouse is a unique and rather anachronistic element in the career of architect Harry Barton and in the evolution of the Neo-Classical Revival style courthouse in North Carolina.

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

HISTORIAN

57 county courthouses ranging from early 19th century to 1930s. Significant in long time associations with ~~the~~ commercial, political, and legal activities in the community and regions they serve. Some questions in integrity of collection, justification in 1930s samples. Needs call for minimal information.

ACCEPT / DOUBLE 3/6/79

The inventory forms contain adequate descriptions and statements of significance yet lack convenience of the earlier sets. The same impact made on many buildings are being nominated. I think we should return for proper completion.

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

RECALL 3/6/79

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

ARCHEOLOGIST

ACCEPT 5/8/79

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____

Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

Articulate presentation of significance of these courthouses.

one apparently eligible property held back because of county opposition, but I cannot see rejecting entire thematic of exclusion of one property.

Accept Lebowich 5/10/79

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

National Register Write-up

6-5-79

Send-back

Federal Register Entry

Re-submit

Entered

MAY 10 1979 5/10/79



N. 78-10-1091

DEC 12 1978

Diane Davis

MAY 10 1979

Nov. 1978

Alleghany Co. Courthouse
Sparta

North Carolina Courthouse Thematic
Group Alamance County
Currituck

#12 of 62

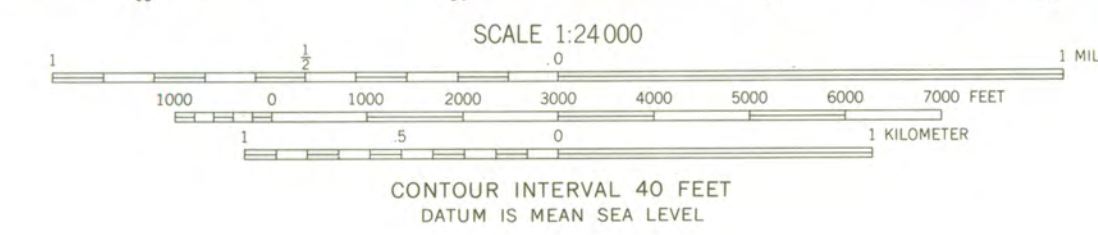
MAY 22 1980



Alleghany County Courthouse
Sparta, North Carolina
UTM Reference
17489180/4039860

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS and USC&GS
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial
photographs taken 1963-64. Field checked 1966
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grids based on North Carolina coordinate system,
and Virginia coordinate system, south zone
1000meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 17, shown in blue
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

UTM GRID AND 1966 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty	Light-duty
Medium-duty	Unimproved dirt
U.S. Route	State Route

RECEIVED
DEC 12 1978
NATIONAL REGISTER

SPARTA EAST, N.C.-VA.
SE/4 INDEPENDENCE 15' QUADRANGLE
N3630-W8100/7.5
1966

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20242
AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES, CHARLOTTEVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

MAY 10 1979
AMS 4757 II SE-SERIES V842

