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LINCOLN COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Historical Sketch

Tryon Courthouse was the first county seat of Lincoln County which was formed from Tryon County in 1779. The first court was held in 1783 about nine miles from Lincolnton at the home of Christian Mauney. An upstairs room served as the jail. In 1784 court was held at another private home where the top floor of the spring house was used as a jail. One year later Lincolnton was designated as county seat and the first courthouse and jail was built of logs. In 1788 it was replaced by a frame building which in 1810 was removed and converted into a dwelling, and a third courthouse was built. Still another courthouse appeared in 1853, built of brick and stone, and featuring a cupola covered with lead.¹

In April, 1921, the county commissioners decreed "that the present Court House is inadequate and not suited for the business of the county and that the court and the business of the county requires a larger and more commodious court building." They further ordered that, "excepting and reserving the present fire vault doors and clock," the old courthouse was to be torn down and removed and a new one erected on the same site. James A. Salter was appointed architect. The county offices were moved into the Childs Building on Main Street while the new courthouse was being built. The commissioners authorized the issuance of \$225,000 worth of bonds to finance the new building, and in September, 1921, the cornerstone of the structure "was laid by the Grand Lodge of Masons of North Carolina . . . in accordance with the ancient forms and ceremonies of the order." In June, 1923, the county officials moved into the newly-constructed courthouse.²

Architectural Description

Commanding all the major roads into Lincolnton, the Lincoln County Courthouse is a monumental Neo-Classical Revival "Temple of Justice" that dwarfs the surrounding commercial buildings. Set on a beautifully landscaped square, the courthouse is an excellent example of the academic and more austere Neo-Classicism of the 1920s. It was designed by James A. Salter, a Raleigh architect known for his elegant Georgian Revival houses, including the Andrews-London House (now the Capital City Visitors Center).

Begun in 1921, and completed in 1923, the large ashlar courthouse is a rectangular structure with three-story flat roof wings flanking a taller gabled roof central block. Matching pedimented hexastyle Doric porticoes on the front and rear of the center section, a Doric frieze along its sides, and antefixes decorating the corners and ridge of its roof, give the building its distinctive Greek character. In addition, the side

¹ Olds, Story of the Counties, pp. 40-41.

² Lincoln County, Minutes of Board of County Commissioners, April 4, 5, May 3, 10, June 6, October 3, 1921; June 4, 1923.

entrances to the wings are sheltered by smaller two columned versions of the monumental main porticoes. Doors and windows are set in plain linteled surrounds.

The interior has the conventional cross hall plan with an octagonal circulation area at the intersection on the first floor. The courtroom is on the second floor. Although recently remodeled, most of the finishing details on the first floor remain intact, including marble floors and baseboards, handsome ten-panel doors, and classical light fixtures. A dentil crown mold, bundled bay leaf bands and paneled pilasters with acanthus and palmette capitals have been retained in the halls and circulation area. The courtroom, which was also renovated, has only its early auditorium seating with monogrammed end standards and heavy, beautifully detailed acanthus and palmette consoles supporting the now enclosed gallery to suggest its original finish.

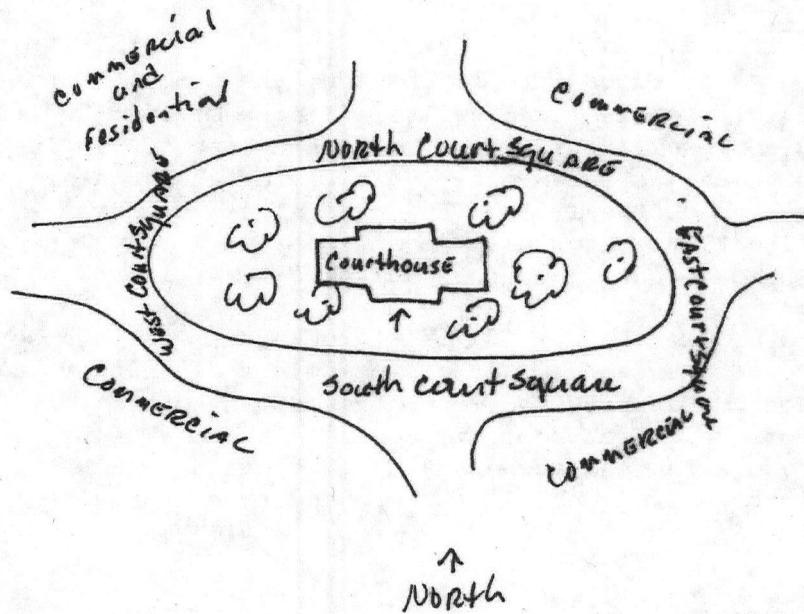
The 1858 Lincoln County Courthouse was demolished in 1921 to make room for the present building. A small Greek Revival brick structure resting on a high basement, the courthouse was similar to the Old Burke County Courthouse which is in the National Register of Historic Places.

Address: James W. Warren, Chairman, Lincoln County Commissioners, Lincoln County Courthouse, Lincolnton, N.C. 28092

Acreage: 1.9 acres

UTM reference: Latitude: $35^{\circ}28'41''$ Longitude: $81^{\circ}15'26''$

Verbal boundary description: The Lincoln County Courthouse lawn forms a traffic circle bounded to the east by East Court Square, to the west by West Court Square, to the north by North Court Square, and to the south by South Court Square.





NEGATIVE NUMBER

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PHOTOGRAPHER

Mary Lee

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SUBJECT

Lincoln Co. Courthouse

North Carolina

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LINCOLNTON QUADRANGLE



R.B. Marshall, Chief Geographer.
Frank Sutton, Geographer in charge.
Topography by J.D. Forster, R.L. Harrison, and J.B. Metcalfe, Jr.
Control by Coast and Geodetic Survey, Geo. T. Hawkins,
C.H. Semper, and F.P. Hoover.
Surveyed in 1909.

Surveyed in 1909.

SURVEYED IN COOPERATION WITH THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA.

1 2 0 3000 0 3000 1 2 3 4 5 KILOMETERS
3000 6000 9000 12000 15000 18000 21000 FEET
1 5 0 1 2 3 4 5
Contour interval 20 feet
Datum is mean sea level.

FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

Approximate Mean
Declination 1909.
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