

LINCOLN COUNTY COURTHOUSE

RECORDED
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NATIONAL
REGISTER

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

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

²Lincoln 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.

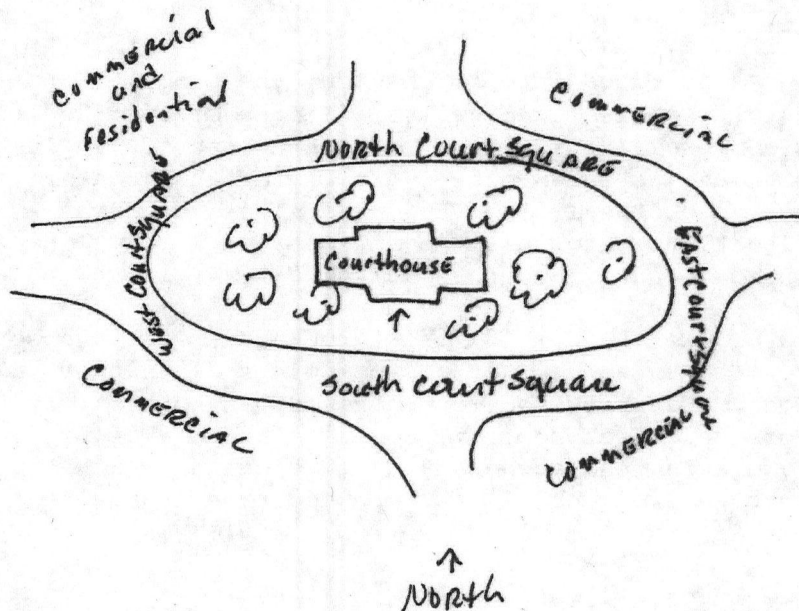
The 1858 Lincoln County Courthouse was demolished in 1921 to make room for the present building. A small Greek Revival brick structure resting on a high basement, the courthouse was similar to the Old Burke County Courthouse which is in the National Register of Historic Places.

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

Acceage: 1.9 acres

UTM reference: Latitude: 35°28'41" Longitude: 81°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.



Property

North Carolina Courthouses Thematic Group

State

N.C.

Working Number

12.12.78.4763

TECHNICAL

Photos

Maps

#62

57

CONTROL

OK 12.14.78

3/6/79

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 Unionist and regions they serve. Some questions in integrity of earliest, justification in 1930s samples. Needs call for minimal information. CAN / ACCEPT

3/6/79

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

The inventory forms contain adequate descriptions and statements of significance yet lack conveyance of the courthouse's importance or in many buildings are being nominated. I think we should return for proper completion. READ 3/6/79

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

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

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

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 5/10/79

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

National Register Write-up

Federal Register Entry

6-5-79

Send-back

Re-submit

Entered

MAY 10 1979

5/10/79



NEGATIVE NUMBER

N-77-2-865

DEC 12 1978

PHOTOGRAPHER

Mary Lee

PHOTO DATE

MARCH 1977

MAY 10 1979

SUBJECT

Lincoln Co. Courthouse

North Carolina

FROM DIVISION OF
ARCHIVES & HISTORY
DALEIGH, N. C.

Courthouses Thematic

Group - ~~Alamance~~ ~~County~~

PRINT BY
HISTORIC PRESERVATION SECTION

30 of 62 865

MAY 22 1980

(Caser 1:24,000)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
REPRESENTED BY THE
STATE GEOLOGIST

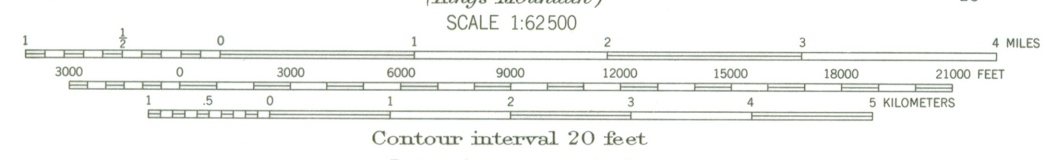
NORTH CAROLINA
LINCOLNTON QUADRANGLE

Lincoln County Courthouse
Lincolnton, North Carolina
Latitude 35°28'41" Longitude 81°15'26"



R.B. Marshall, Chief Geographer.
Frank Sutton, Geographer in charge.
Topography by J.D. Foster, 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 COOPERATION WITH THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA.



Contour interval 20 feet
Datum is mean sea level.

APPROXIMATE MEAN
DECLINATION 1909.

RECEIVED
DEC 12 1910
NATIONAL
REGISTER

LINCOLNTON, N. C.
N3515-W8115/15

1909

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

MAY 10 1979

