

VLR-12/1/99 NRHP-1/28/00

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 102440318

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 1614). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Warren County Courthouse

other names/site number VDR File No. 112-005

2. Location

street & number 1 East Main Street not for publication
city or town Front Royal vicinity N/A
state Virginia code VA county Warren County code 187 Zip 22630

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility ~~meets~~ the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 12/15/99
Signature of certifying official Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is: other (explain): _____
 entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet. _____
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 moved from the National Register
Signature of Keeper
Date of Action _____

U. S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Warren County Courthouse
Warren County, Virginia

name of property
location

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u> 2 </u>	<u> 1 </u>	buildings
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	sites
<u> 0 </u>	<u> 0 </u>	structures
<u> 2 </u>	<u> 1 </u>	objects
<u> 4 </u>	<u> 2 </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

 N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Government Sub: County Courthouse

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Government Sub: County Courthouse
 Government Correctional Facility

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

U. S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Warren County Courthouse
Warren County, Virginia

name of property
location

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival _____

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone _____
roof Metal _____
walls Stone _____

other Wood _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture _____
 Politics/Government _____

U. S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Warren County Courthouse
Warren County, Virginia

name of property
location

Period of Significance 1836-1949

Significant Dates 1836
1936

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Saville, Alan J. -Architect and Engineer

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources
2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, VA 23221

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.68 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting	Northing	Zone Easting	Northing
1	<u>17 743340</u>	2	<u>4311160</u>
3	_____	4	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

U. S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Warren County Courthouse
Warren County, Virginia

name of property
location

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Thomas E. Crosley /David A. Edwards-DHR

Organization: _____ date Spring 1999

street & number: 73 McWhirt Loop telephone 540-368-0743

city or town Fredericksburg state VA zip code 22406

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Warren County Administrator's Office

street & number P. O. Box 908 telephone 540-636-4600

city or town Front Royal state VA zip code 22630

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Warren County Courthouse (Name of Property)
Warren County, Virginia (location)

Section 7 Page 1

7. Summary Description:

Built in 1935-36, the Warren County Courthouse is a two-story, concrete block and stone-faced Colonial Revival building consisting of a central rectangular block with a pedimented gable roof and smaller flanking recessed wings. Its recessed first-story entrance arcade, foundation, and walls are faced with local uncoursed fieldstone, while the gable roof of the central block is finished with standing-seam metal and is surmounted by a three-stage cupola with an open and domed belfry. Above the recessed stone arcade, wood pilasters and stone walls support a full entablature and pediment. Most interior ornamentation is reserved for the second-floor courtroom. The courthouse is situated on a grassy lot at the corner of East Main Street and South Royal Avenue in downtown Front Royal, Virginia. The building is in excellent condition on the exterior, with renovations planned for the interior. Two supporting buildings are also located on the courthouse lot: a circa 1836 brick clerk's office and a 1950 brick jail. The courthouse lawn contains two contributing war memorials – a Confederate Monument, dedicated in 1911, and an obelisk honoring veterans of World Wars I and II.

Architectural Analysis

The courthouse employs a three-part composition including a central block flanked by two recessed wings. The first floor contains offices and the second floor is arranged around a central courtroom. The nine-bay facade of the courthouse is constructed of concrete block faced with fieldstone, including the foundation, entrance arcade, and walls. The central block has a pedimented gable roof, while the flanking wings have flat roofs hidden by wooden parapets.

The central block extends out 10'8" from the wings. The three-bay stone arcade provides access to a central entrance that leads into a vestibule. The entrance has two eight-panel wooden doors with a single-pane window in the center of each door. A six-light transom tops the entrance. A concrete sill, wood trim, and brick jack arch frame the doors. Two iron lamps fixed to the stone arcade, illuminate the entrance. The south entrance, which is similar to the front entrance, is flanked by decorative pilasters and is topped by a transom that has been filled in with concrete.

The facade of the courthouse is symmetrically fenestrated. First-floor windows have eight-over-twelve double-hung sashes with wood sills and brick jack arches. Second-floor windows employ six-over-six double-hung sashes with header brick lintels. Three large inter-columnar triple sash windows illuminate the courtroom on the second floor of the central block.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Warren County Courthouse (Name of Property)
Warren County, Virginia (location)

Section 7 Page 2

One interior axial chimney is visible above the west wing of the building. The brick chimney incorporates an 8:1 stretcher to header American bond pattern and serves as an exhaust to the heating furnace located in the basement. A cornerstone dated 1935 is visible on the northeast corner. Decorative elements include six wooden pilasters that adorn the second-story facade of the central block. A bull's-eye window is positioned in the pedimented gable. The three-stage cupola has pilasters, engaged columns, an open belfry with a large bell, clock faces on all four sides, and a large copper dome topped with a decorative finial. Wooden parapets top the molded cornice and plain frieze of the east and west wings.

The vestibule leads to the interior corridor and links the west and east wings of the first floor. Painted wood wainscoting, plaster ceilings, and glazed doors characterize the first-floor offices. The east stairwell and men's lavatory has been moved to outside the walls of the original building and into a 1979 addition. The old west wing stairwell leads to offices and the paneled double doors of the courtroom. The courtroom extends out over the first-floor arcade, with judge's bench and jury box positioned at the north end. Stained oak wainscoting, sand finished plaster walls, high ceilings, and oak pews characterize this room. Two symmetrical exits lead to the judge's and jury rooms toward the north end. Paneled double doors lead to a corridor linking the courtroom to the offices and addition of the second-floor east wing.

Two buildings stand on the courthouse lot, a contributing one-story, brick clerk's office (built ca. 1836) at the northeast corner of the property and a non-contributing two-story red brick jail (built in 1950) behind the courthouse. Three war memorials can be found on the north lawn of the courthouse. A brick walkway extending from the main walkway leads to a brick Vietnam Veterans Monument northeast of the courthouse (noncontributing object). Under a nearby pine tree, a stone obelisk memorializes veterans of the First and Second World Wars (contributing object). Most prominently situated of the four monuments is the Confederate Monument (contributing object). The statue of a Confederate soldier atop a tall pedestal is located on the northwest corner of the grounds. The courthouse grounds are landscaped with a mixture of holly and boxwoods. A sidewalk stretches around the lawn of the courthouse and three pebble-surfaced sidewalks connect the north entrance with two parking lots that flank the east and west sides of the courthouse.

A 1979 two-story fieldstone addition connects the east wing of the courthouse with the jail, to the south. In 1998, a two-story brick office, originally the jailkeeper's home, was sold and moved two blocks north.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Warren County Courthouse (Name of Property)
Warren County, Virginia (location)

Section 8 Page 3

8. Statement of Significance

A courthouse for Warren County has stood on the lot at the southeast corner of East Main Street and South Royal Avenue in the Town of Front Royal from 1836, the year the county was formed, until the present day. A brick courthouse, built in 1836, survived until the current concrete block and stone courthouse replaced it in 1936. Also located on the lot is a brick clerk's office associated with the original courthouse and a brick jail built in 1950. The present-day courthouse, dedicated in 1936, is a direct product of Virginia's participation in the Works Progress Administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal programs. Designed by Richmond architect Alan J. Saville in the Colonial Revival style, the handsome three-part composition with a central block and flanking eaves is a familiar design for Virginia courthouses throughout the Commonwealth. A combination of classical features and local fieldstone, the Warren County Courthouse is a significant architectural expression of stability that was produced during the Great Depression era.

Historical Background

On March 9, 1836, the Virginia General Assembly carved Warren County out of neighboring Shenandoah and Frederick Counties. The 226 square-mile county had 5,625 residents and named Front Royal as its county seat. Only fourteen days later, the county's first court session convened at a tavern in Front Royal.¹ On July 4, 1836, a committee appointed to select a suitable site for a new courthouse reported that a lot offered for sale by William R. Ashley was a desirable site.² Forty-one days later, the county purchased the property from Ashley.³ By August 25, 1836, the county commissioner had made arrangements for the construction of a courthouse, clerk's office, and jail.⁴

Warren County's original courthouse was to be a simple two-story, brick building similar to many surviving nineteenth-century courthouses throughout Virginia. The first floor contained only one large courtroom, while the second floor housed two offices and two jury rooms. A twenty-four-foot-high octagonal-shaped cupola contained a bell on top of the building.⁵

While the courthouse's planning and construction took place, court was held at the town's Baptist church.⁶ After construction of the building, the court's first order of business on July 26, 1838 was to pay for the use of the church.⁷ Soon thereafter, the court allowed the new building to be used for public worship by "any Christian Minister of the gospel who may desire it."⁸

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Warren County Courthouse (Name of Property)
Warren County, Virginia (location)

Section 8 Page 4

The original courthouse also played a military role during the Civil War. An entry dated April 16, 1860 in the Warren County Court Minutes Book offered the jury room for use as storage for militia arms.⁹ According to an October 21, 1861 entry, the courthouse was pressed into duty as a Confederate hospital for soldiers stationed at Manassas Junction.¹⁰ From November of 1861 to November of 1862, the county court convened at the Front Royal Presbyterian Church.¹¹ The county clerk, in an entry dated January 20, 1862, was pressed into asking the confederate Army for use of the building as a courthouse again.¹²

After the Civil War, as the county's population grew, so did the needs of its courthouse complex. On August 11, 1876, David D. Hashour was contracted to build a one-story brick treasurer's office to be completed in 1877. This building survives at 105 East Main Street, but is now privately owned and, therefore, was not included in this nomination. In 1914, the old jail was replaced by the current two-story brick jail. Soon, it became apparent that the courthouse would also need to be replaced. A need for more space precipitated the building of the present-day courthouse, marking a turning point for the region coming out of the Great Depression.

Raymond Moley, a speechwriter and original member of Roosevelt's "Brain Trust" said in an interview well after the Great Depression had ended, "My interest, as was [Roosevelt's], was restoring confidence in the American people, confidence in their banks, in their industrial system and in their government. Confidence was the buoyant spirit that brought back prosperity."¹³ High national unemployment rates and a belief that every man should have the opportunity to make a living led to the creation of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Along with social security legislation, the WPA offered a more permanent solution to the economic and social problems facing communities across the nation. In Virginia, WPA Director, William Smith defined his objectives as "providing work for the many persons on relief and for improvements and accomplishments that will be of lasting benefit to the state and communities." Virginia's involvement in WPA programs peaked in December of 1935 at 40,000 employees.¹⁴ The WPA-sponsored construction of the Warren County Courthouse therefore marks the apex of Virginia's participation in WPA programs.

On November 14, 1933, the Warren County Board of Supervisors called for a special election to vote on a bond referendum that would provide a \$50,00 loan from the Public Works Administration, forerunner of the WPA, to build a new courthouse.¹⁵ After some legal wrangling, a second vote on

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Warren County Courthouse (Name of Property)
Warren County, Virginia (location)

Section 8 Page 5

the bond was approved by the voters and planning for the new courthouse continued.¹⁶ To be considered eligible for WPA money, projects were required to be publicly useful, locally sponsored, and performed on public property by a work force that was at least 90 percent jobless. Virginians often met New Deal change with skepticism. Persuasion was left to the so-called "county courthouse ring" to rally support for participation in such programs.¹⁷ When the second bond referendum was presented to Warren County voters, Judge Philip Williams's plea for a new courthouse, placed on the front page of the July 1935 edition of the *Warren Sentinel*, convinced voters three-to-one to approve the referendum.¹⁸ The courthouse and the similarly constructed Front Royal Town Hall were both dedicated on August 7, 1936 to celebrate the county's centennial.¹⁹

For many years, the Warren County Courthouse served as a hub around which life in Front Royal revolved. The courthouse is located in the geographic center of town and continues to serve as a social and political center for the county. Over the years political rallies and debates have been held on the lawn. A monument, erected in 1911 to commemorate those Confederate soldiers lost during the Civil War, has a prominent location on the grounds, along with two other war memorials. According to a 1959 newspaper article, strawberry festivals were held there as well. To celebrate the Fourth of July, Front Royal residents held the Sunday School Festival, highlighted by a parade through town and a picnic on the courthouse grounds.²⁰ These are just a few events held at the courthouse that contributed to the social history of the area.

Richmond architect Alan J. Saville with consulting architect William Dewey Foster of Washington D.C. chose the Colonial Revival style to design the building. The architects were "following a national trend that was particularly appealing to Virginians who were seeking both to honor the past and to achieve stability, then viewed as the primary political and social virtue."²¹ Through this tangible reminder, confidence and stability had been returned to the area. The courthouse construction provided work for the unemployed and helped maintain a measure of dignity and self-esteem among the citizens of the county. The Warren County Courthouse was one of over 850 WPA projects in Virginia that, in the words of author Ronald L. Heineman, "mitigated depression conditions and educated, entertained, and trained thousands of citizens."²² It continues to serve as Warren County's center of political and social life to the present day.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Warren County Courthouse (Name of Property)
Warren County, Virginia (location)

Section 8 Page 6

Notes

1. Warren County Court, *Minutes Book A* (Front Royal, VA: 1836), 1.
2. Warren County Court, *Minutes Book A* (Front Royal, VA: 1836), 23.
3. Warren County, *Deed Book A* (Front Royal, VA: 1836), 51.
4. Warren County Court, *Minutes Book A* (Front Royal, VA: 1836), 29.
5. Sara Fritts, "Courthouse was Once Center of Social Life in Front Royal," *Winchester Evening Star* (June 6, 1959), 10.
6. Warren County Court, *Minutes Book A* (Front Royal, VA: 1836), 112.
7. Warren County Court, *Minutes Book A* (Front Royal, VA: 1836), 120.
8. Warren County Court, *Minutes Book A* (Front Royal, VA: 1836), 142.
9. Warren County Court, *Minutes Book C* (Front Royal, VA: 1860), 336.
10. Warren County Court, *Minutes Book C* (Front Royal, VA: 1860), 403.
11. Warren County Court, *Minutes Book D* (Front Royal, VA: 1862), 1-19.
12. Warren County Court, *Minutes Book D* (Front Royal, VA: 1862), 9.
13. Studs Terkel, *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1970), 250.
14. Ronald L. Heinemann, *Depression and New Deal in Virginia: The Enduring Dominion* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1983), 34.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Warren County Courthouse (Name of Property)
Warren County, Virginia (location)

Section 8 Page 7

Notes (continued)

15. Warren County Board of Supervisors, *Minutes Book of the Warren County Board of Supervisors* (Front Royal, VA, 1933), 54-55.

16. John O. and Margaret T. Peters, *Virginia's Historic Courthouses* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 196.

17. Heinemann, 88-89.

18. Peters, 206.

19. [Author unknown], "Courthouse is Model of Architectural Beauty," *Warren Sentinel* (4 August 1936), 1.

20. Fritts, 10.

21. Peters, 206.

22. Heinemann, 103-104.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Warren County Courthouse (Name of Property)
Warren County, Virginia (location)

Section 9 Page 8

BIBLIOGRAPHY

[Author unknown]. "Courthouse Is Model of Architectural Beauty," *Warren Sentinel*, Front Royal, VA, 4 August, 1936.

Fritts, Sara. "Courthouse Was Once Center of Social Life in Front Royal," *Winchester Evening Star*, Winchester, VA, 6 June, 1959.

Heinemann, Ronald T. *Depression and New Deal in Virginia: The Enduring Dominion*. Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1983.

Peters, John O. and Margaret T. *Virginia's Historic Courthouses*. Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1995.

Terkel, Studs. *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1970.

Warren County Court. *Minutes Book A of the Warren County Court*. Front Royal, VA: Warren County Clerk's Office, 1838.

Warren County Court. *Minutes Book C of the Warren County Court*. Front Royal, VA: Warren County Clerk's Office, 1860.

Warren County Court. *Minutes Book D of the Warren County Court*. Front Royal, VA: Warren County Clerk's Office, 1862.

Warren County Court. *Deed Book A*. Front Royal, VA: Warren County Clerk's Office, 1836.

Warren County Board of Supervisors. *Minutes Book 4 of the Warren County Board of Supervisors*. Front Royal, VA: Warren County Clerk's Office, 1933.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Warren County Courthouse (Name of Property)
Warren County, Virginia (location)**

Section 10 Page 9

Boundary Description

The 1.68-acre Warren County Courthouse lot is defined by the survey map found in Warren County Deed Book 80, p. 289. The lot does not include the one-story brick building owned by Arnold C. Noel at 105 East Main Street.

Boundary Justification

The lot on which the Warren County Courthouse and associated buildings stand has been the site of two courthouses for Warren County since the county was formed in 1836.

WARREN COUNTY
COURTHOUSE
WARREN COUNTY,
VIRGINIA

UTM REFERENCE:
17/743340/4311160

