

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Tennessee	
COUNTY: Davidson	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
DEC 26 1972	

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Federal Office Building (Representative Richard Fulton)

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Customs House

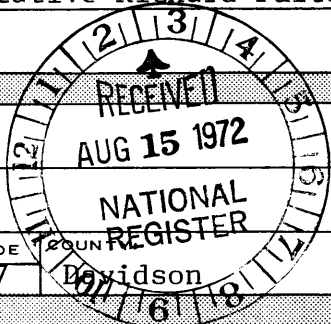
**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Broadway

CITY OR TOWN:  
Nashville

STATE:  
Tennessee

CODE 47      COUNTY Davidson      CODE 37



**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
U.S. Government

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
Washington

STATE:  
D. C.

CODE 11

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
Register's Office

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Davidson County Court House

CITY OR TOWN:  
Nashville

STATE:  
Tennessee

CODE 47

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:       Federal       State       County       Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Tennessee

COUNTY: Davidson

ENTRY NUMBER: DEC 26 1972

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DATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Federal Office Building on Broadway between Seventh and Eighth Avenues is in the Gothic Revival style. Construction was begun under Permit 552 sometime around 1875 at a cost of \$368,326.27. Limestone from Bowling Green, Kentucky, was the major material.

The Federal Building was built in four sections. The center portion including the clock tower was begun in September of 1875. A rear portion was added in 1903 and the wings 96 feet by 94 feet were added to the east and west ends of the structure in 1961.

Although the center section was not finished until 1882, the corner stone was laid in 1877 by President Rutherford B. Hayes.

William A. Potter of New York is known to have been the supervising architect. He had been the architect for several buildings at Princeton University. The design so pleased Washington officials that it was chosen to be displayed at the Centennial Exposition of 1876 in Philadelphia.

The intricate relief and pinnacles were hand carved, which was probably the only method that this could be attained in the 1870's. True to the Gothic style stained glass windows framed in stone and set in lead were used. These can be viewed from within the tower.

The interior of the building contains ornate plaster and wrought iron. There is a spiral staircase which winds its way up from the fourth floor to the balconies under the clock tower.

Much of the interior trim work is solid cherry and the hardware solid brass. There are fireplaces in many rooms and the walls are two feet thick.

The Howard Company guaranteed that each of the four clock faces would keep the correct time within fifteen seconds. Since then the mechanisms have been replaced with electrical works.

The Customs House or Federal Office Building is located within a two block area with other buildings, of similar period and architecture, which already are on the National Register.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The building now known as the Federal Office Building has had a somewhat varied history since its beginnings around 1875. When the idea was originally conceived for a federal building in the Nashville area, it was to be called the Customs House, Courthouse, Post Office Building. Later, the name was shortened to Customs House. By 1906 it was known as Customs House and Post Office. In 1948 the stone edifice was known as the Federal Office Building.

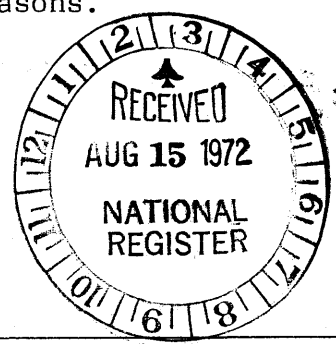
The building presently is the home of the Nashville District Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Geological Survey, all of which are to move to an annex of the U.S. Courthouse when it is built.

It has been said that the Customs House was a factor in the Rutherford B. Hayes-Samuel J. Tilden electoral dispute. In this election there were 21 contested votes in the Electoral College, most of which were in the South. Four states, Louisiana, South Carolina, Florida, and Oregon submitted two sets of electoral returns. As a result, both parties claimed victory.

In order that the stalemate might be settled in his favor, Hayes played for the southern votes by saying that he would nominate a Southerner to his cabinet and would immediately bring an end to Reconstruction. Hayes did fulfill his promises by nominating David M. Key of Tennessee as Postmaster General and by withdrawing all Federal troops from the southern states.

The building of the Customs House was part of a move to pump Federal money into the economy of the depressed South. To show good faith Hayes was present at the dedication of the corner stone. Thus, the structure is significant for political as well as architectural reasons.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

"100th Year Nears For Customs House", Nashville Tennessean,  
 February 1972  
 Interviews with Mr. Leland R. Johnson and Mr. John McLemore  
 Clayton's History of Davidson County  
 Woodward, Comer Vann, Reunion and Reaction  
 Boston, Little, Brown, 1966

H13 / 519670  
 16/4001370

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 . "	0 . "		36 09 . 31 .	86 0 46 . 53 .	
NE	0 . "	0 . "				
SE	0 . "	0 . "				
SW	0 . "	0 . "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 5

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
May T. Drummond

ORGANIZATION: Junior League of Nashville, Inc. DATE: 7/28/1972

STREET AND NUMBER:  
1409 Burton Valley Road

CITY OR TOWN: Nashville STATE: Tennessee CODE: 47

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name Michael J. Smith  
 Title Executive Director  
 Date 8-5-72

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Robert A. Utley  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 12/26/72

ATTEST:  
William J. Dunstons  
 Keeper of The National Register  
 Date 12-20-72