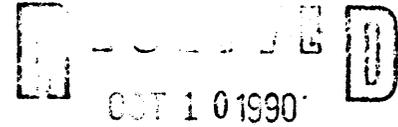


1747

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Old Hendry County Courthouse
other names/site number 8 Hn 35

2. Location

street & number Corner of Bridge St. & Hickpochee Ave. n/a not for publication
city, town LaBelle n/a vicinity
state Florida code FL county Hendry code 051 zip code 33935

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

| Contributing | Noncontributing |
|--------------|---------------------|
| <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> |
| | <u>0</u> buildings |
| | <u>0</u> sites |
| | <u>0</u> structures |
| | <u>0</u> objects |
| <u>1</u> | <u>0</u> Total |

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. See continuation sheet.
Suzanne P. Walker 10/3/90
Signature of certifying official Date
Florida State Historic Preservation Officer (deputy)
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of commenting or other official Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

- I, hereby, certify that this property is:
- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 - determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
 - determined not eligible for the National Register.
 - removed from the National Register.
 - other, (explain:)

Entered in the National Register
Selous Byer 11/8/90
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government/Courthouse

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Government/Courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals:
Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival/
Mediterranean Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick
walls Brick
roof Asbestos
other Concrete
Metal: Iron

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

PLEASE SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Politics/Government
Architecture

Period of Significance

1927-1940

Significant Dates

1927

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Significant Person

n/a

Architect/Builder

Hosford, E.C./Marshall-Jackson Co.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

PLEASE SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

PLEASE SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

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 # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property Approximately 1 acre

UTM References

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 Zone Easting Northing

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The courthouse is located at the northern end of parcel R-2-09-43-29-A00-0001, 0A00, and is bounded by State Road 29 (Main St.) on the W, State Road 80 (Hickpochee Ave.) on the N, Bridge St. on the E, and the parking lot and 1968 courthouse site to the SW, as indicated by the heavy dotted line on the accompanying map entitled, "Old Hendry County Courthouse, LaBelle, Florida".

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the building and immediately adjacent grounds historically associated with the Old Hendry County Courthouse, excluding that part of the original site now occupied by new construction.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Roy Jackson/Barbara E. Mattick, Historic Sites Specialist
 organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date October 1990
 street & number R.A. Gray Bldg., 500 S. Bronough St. telephone (904) 487-2333
 city or town Tallahassee state Florida zip code 32399-0250

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1 Old Hendry County Courthouse, LaBelle, FL

SUMMARY

The Old Hendry County Courthouse is a 1927, I-shaped, two to three story, brick, Mediterranean Revival Style building, located in the commercial area of LaBelle, Florida. The central part of the building has a modified hip roof, while the side pavilions have gabled roofs with Mission Style, curvilinear end parapets. A large clock tower and three subsidiary towers with pyramidal roofs are located at the corners of the building. The roofs are covered with asbestos shingles. Flat roofed loggias supported by spiralled columns are located at the entries on each elevation.

SETTING

The courthouse occupies the northern end of a city block located between the Main Street (State Road 29) and Bridge Street intersections with Hickpochee Avenue (State Road 80), in downtown LaBelle. When the courthouse was built there was a street immediately to the south of the building. It was closed off when the courthouse annex, jail, and parking lots were built c1968. The immediately surrounding landscape is dominated by two short hedgerows lining both sides of the front walk and along the front of the building. A flag pole and veterans memorial monument flank the walkway leading to the main (south) entrance. Live oaks and sable palms are scattered around the building, but are particularly clustered off the south and west sides. There is no formal landscaping. (Photo 1)

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The original I-shaped design with attached loggias on all four sides remains unaltered. The two side sections have three stories and the center section has two. The front and rear loggias are each supported by eight spiralled, concrete columns with Corinthian capitals. Each column has a corresponding pilaster on the face of the building (Photos 2, 3, & 4). The smaller, side loggias are each supported by four similar columns (Photo 5). All four loggias are topped with balconies with iron railings between brick piers.

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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2 Old Hendry County Courthouse, LaBelle, FL

Balconettes are located on the front and rear elevations of the side pavilions. Both side pavilions have Mission Style parapets with cast stone coping, and a central oculus and side finials (Photo 6). A seventy-foot clock tower rises from the northeast corner of the building (Photo 7). Three smaller towers are located at each of the remaining three corners. All four towers are square with pyramidal roofs. The three minor towers have an arched opening on each of their four sides, and the clock tower has three such openings on each side. Below the clock, the larger tower also has one rectangular opening on each side. The rectangular openings are now vented and the arched openings are completely filled (Photo 1).

The original walls of red brick with yellow brick facing remain intact, as does most of the building's exterior. All four sides are embellished with rosettes, four each on the north and south elevations and three each on the east and west elevations (Photo 2).

Fenestration is symmetrical. The main entrance, centrally located on the north elevation, has double panelled doors, with glazing in the top half and a twelve-light transom (Photo 4). Windows are single hung, aluminum sash with various light configurations and cast stone sills. Arches above the windows in the central bays and on the first floor of the side pavilions complement the arches of the loggias.

INTERIOR

The first floor has eleven foot ceilings. Ten foot wide hallways lead from the four entrances and intersect in the center of the building. The first floor hallways have ceramic tile floors and wainscoting, and seven foot doors with stationary transoms (Photos 8 & 9). The main stairs, located at the west end are covered with marble and have wrought iron banisters with wood handrails (Photo 10).

The stairs lead to the second floor which has one continuous hallway with the original courtroom and office off to the sides (Photo 11). The court room extends North-

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South across the width of the building and through the third floor space to the roof. The domed ceiling of the courtroom has an ornamental design and four brass chandeliers (Photos 12 & 13). Offices and jury rooms are located in the four corners of the second floor; an east stairway from this floors leads down to the first floor and up to offices on the third floor (Photo 14). A small wooden floor balcony at the west end of the courtroom is reached from the third floor.

ALTERATIONS

All major alterations to the building took place when a new courthouse was constructed c1968. Exterior alterations are fairly minor. The original Mission Style clay roof tiles were replaced with black asbestos shingles, and the original steel casement windows were replaced with single hung aluminum sash. When air conditioning was installed, some window openings on the rear and side elevations were filled in. Wrought iron on the northwest balcony is gone. In 1929, lightening damaged the tower's cornice and knocked the clock mechanism through the roof and into the judge's chamber. The clock was dismantled and put in the basement. This left only the face of the clock in place. The clock mechanism was replaced in 1975 and the clock is now working.

The interior of the old courthouse was altered to provide more office space. The east end of the first floor hallway was closed and partitions of two small offices were removed to create one large office. On the second floor, a hallway was created through the center of the courtroom with offices on each side. The second floor ceilings were dropped, but the original ceilings remain intact (Photo 12). Some interior walls have been removed to create larger work areas and more efficient space. Original jail cells and jailers' quarters on the third floor were converted into offices. Much of the interior, however, remains intact, including the original marble stairway with wrought iron-wooden banisters, and most of the interior walls. The basic floor plan is also unaltered.

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1 Old Hendry County Courthouse, LaBelle, FL

SUMMARY

The Old Hendry County Courthouse is significant under Criterion A as the oldest and most important county facility in Hendry County, and under Criterion C as the region's most outstanding example of Mediterranean Revival Style architecture and the work of the architect, E.C. Hosford.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

More than half of Hendry County lies in the Florida Everglades, and until drainage projects began in the 1880s, those areas were virtually uninhabitable. The first settlements were forts established near the Caloosahatchee River during the Second Seminole War (1835-1842). It was not until after the Third Seminole War (1855-1858) that the first group of non-military, white settlers began to enter the region.

Captain Francis Asbury Hendry was one of the first landholders in the area, purchasing one of the old Seminole forts. Hendry and others began to raise cattle. This industry remained the area's principle land use for some time because periodic flooding of the Caloosahatchee River made other uses unpractical. As a result, the region became an important source of beef for the Confederacy during the Civil War. The existence of an important commodity such as beef during war years heightened the importance of the Caloosahatchee as a transportation artery. Although no military action took place in what became Hendry County, a civilian defense force was organized to protect the region and its cattle which was vital to the Confederate effort.

After the Civil War, settlers still only trickled into the region because of the flooding. Captain Hendry, however, continued his cattle trade and became the largest cattle raiser in the area, exporting cattle to Key West and Cuba. More settlers came in the 1880s, after the Atlantic and Gulf Coast and Okeechobee Land Company began draining the area around Lake Okeechobee. Land reclamation projects included the dredging of the Caloosahatchee to control flooding and to make it navigable to Lake Okeechobee. As flooding decreased, settlement increased, for the exposed,

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Section number 8 Page 2 Old Hendry County Courthouse, LaBelle, FL

rich muck land was excellent for growing vegetables, citrus, and sugarcane. Citrus became a major industry.

By the 1920s, the residents of this sparsely populated and remote part of Lee County were agitating for the creation of their own county. Hendry County, named for its most prominent settler, was created from the eastern part of Lee on May 1, 1923. LaBelle, located on the Caloosahatchee River, in the northwest part of the new county, was made the county seat. It was the oldest settlement in Hendry County, having been a steamboat stop along the river from the 1880s until the early 1900s. LaBelle was incorporated in 1911, and remained the only city in the county until Clewiston was developed on the shores of Lake Okeechobee in the 1920s.

Transportation was improved when the Seaboard Railroad extended its services to Ft. Myers, LaBelle, Punta Rassa and Naples in 1926, and State Road 80 was completed from Ft. Myers through LaBelle to Palm Beach. The United States Sugar Corporation, the largest sugar producer in the state, began its operations in Clewiston in 1929. Flooding was finally checked in the 1930s when the Army Corps of Engineers built locks and levees which effectually straightened the Caloosahatchee River.

In spite of these improvements, Hendry County remains a sparsely populated, rural county with a population of approximately 22,700; LaBelle has a population of 2,287 and Clewiston has one of 5,219. Sixty percent of the area is unincorporated and much remains wetlands. A large part of the Big Cypress Seminole Indian Reservation is located in the southeast corner of the county.

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Shortly after the creation of Hendry County in May 1923, the county commissioners undertook efforts to construct a courthouse at the intersection of Palm Beach Boulevard (present State Road 80 or Hickpochee Avenue) and State Road 29. These are the two main roads in the county, and the intersection is the most prominent site in LaBelle. After touring several other county courthouses and entertaining bids from various architects, the commission

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Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 3 Old Hendry County Courthouse, LaBelle, FL

selected E.C. Hosford of Lakeland to design the building. The Marshall-Jackson Company of Lakeland had the lowest bid at \$129,000, and was selected as the contractor.

On November 22, 1924, a \$100,000 bond issue was approved by 130 voters, 61 voting against it. The county commission, however, soon learned \$100,000 would not pay for the imposing structure they sought. Requests to the governor and legislature resulted in two local bills in the special session of 1925 which authorized an additional \$50,000 in bonds/time warrants without requiring court validation.

The site at the intersection of the main highways adjacent to the LaBelle business district was ideal, but landowners would not donate enough land there. The county commission refused to consider another site, however, and the City of LaBelle agreed to give the county a quit claim deed to fifty feet which was part of the strip of land donated to the city by an early developer for street widening and park purposes. Lot owners across the East-West highway donated a fifty foot strip off their lots for street purposes to give more space around the courthouse.

Work on the building began in late 1925, but there were many difficulties in construction: the contractor went bankrupt when the Florida land boom ended, and the bonding company and county had to complete the building. When it was occupied in May 1927, it contained all offices for county officials, the courtroom, judges chambers, jail, and small apartment for the jailer.

The courthouse was the center of civic and political gatherings for many years. Weather and market reports, so vital to the county's agricultural economy, were announced there on a blackboard which is still in place on the front veranda (Photo 15). The building is Hendry County's first and only county courthouse; although it no longer contains all the county offices, it remains the principle county government building.

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Section number 8 Page 4 Old Hendry County Courthouse, LaBelle, FL

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Mediterranean Revival Style:

The Mediterranean Revival Style was derived from a combination of architectural elements borrowed from countries and cultures surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, primarily Spain and Italy. This practice became popular in the late 1910s as part of the increased national interest in historical styles and architecture. Interest in such styles was especially fostered by the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego in 1915. The style, so suitable for Florida's Mediterranean-like climate and Spanish history, became extremely popular in Florida and is closely associated with the Florida land boom of the 1920s.

General design characteristics include features taken from the Mission, Spanish Colonial Revival, and the Italian Renaissance styles. Mission Style buildings are simple in form with little sculptural ornamentation. Curvilinear parapets, their most distinctive feature, are pronounced. The Spanish Colonial Revival Style is more elaborate than the Mission Style. Distinguishing features include clay tile roofs, a stucco finish, arched windows and doors, arched walkways or loggias, and round or square towers. Casements and fanlight windows are common, along with the more common double hung sash. Ornamental iron work is often used for window grilles and balconettes. Exterior colors are most often white, yellow-brown, and rose. The Italian Renaissance Style is characterized by recessed entry porches and full-length first story windows with arches above. The roof, except when flat, commonly has broadly overhanging, boxed eaves. Decorative brackets at the eaves help distinguish Italian Renaissance buildings from the other Mediterranean styles. Other common details include: quoins, roof-line balustrades, pedimented windows, classical door surrounds, molded cornices, and belt courses. Walls are stucco over frame, stucco, or masonry; wood is never used.

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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 5 Old Hendry County Courthouse, LaBelle, FL

E.C. Hosford:

E.C. Hosford was born in Cochran, Georgia, on April 24, 1883. After he was graduated from the Georgia School of Technology, he established an architectural office in Eastman, Georgia. Hosford did much of his work in Florida, however, and became a resident of Lakeland in July 1920. His work includes courthouses in the Georgia towns of Eastman and Hamilton; and Florida courthouses in Polk County (1908, NR 1989) and Jefferson County (1909, NR 1977). His works in Lakeland include the Hartzell Building, Oats-Corley Building, Smith-Hardin Building, the Success Furniture Building Company, and numerous houses.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Old Hendry County Courthouse is an exceptionally fine example of Mediterranean Revival architecture, incorporating every defining element of the style. Its most notable features are the Italian Renaissance clock tower and wide bracketed eaves (Photo 16). Spanish influences are strikingly evident in the curvilinear parapets (Photo 17) and the arched windows, ironwork, and spiral Corinthian columns on the four loggias (Photo 18).

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1 Old Hendry County Courthouse, LaBelle, FL

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Photographs 1 Old Hendry County Courthouse, LaBelle, FL
Section number _____ Page _____

- 1 1) Old Hendry County Courthouse
 2) LaBelle, Hendry County, FL
 3) Sargent's Photography, LaBelle, FL
 4) 1975?
 5) Sargent's Photography, 285 Davis St., LaBelle, FL
 6) Aerial view, camera facing SW
 7) 1 of 20

- 2 1) Old Hendry County Courthouse
 2) LaBelle, Hendry County, FL
 3) Rick Schuster
 4) August 1990
 5) Rick Schuster
 6) N portico on main facade, camera facing SW
 7) 2 of 20

Unless otherwise noted, the information for items 1-5 for the remaining photographs is the same as that for photograph 2.

- 3 6) S elevation of S portico, camera facing N
 7) 3 of 20

- 4 6) N entrance showing pilasters, camera facing SW
 7) 4 of 20

- 5 6) E portico, camera facing SW
 7) 5 of 20

- 6 6) W end of S elevation, showing balconette, oculus and
 curvilinear parapet, camera facing N
 7) 6 of 20

- 7 6) NE corner of clock tower, camera facing SW
 7) 7 of 20

- 8 6) Main hallway on first floor, camera facing E
 7) 8 of 20

- 9 6) Detail of mosaic floor tile on main interior
 stairway
 7) 9 of 20

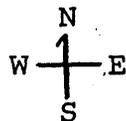
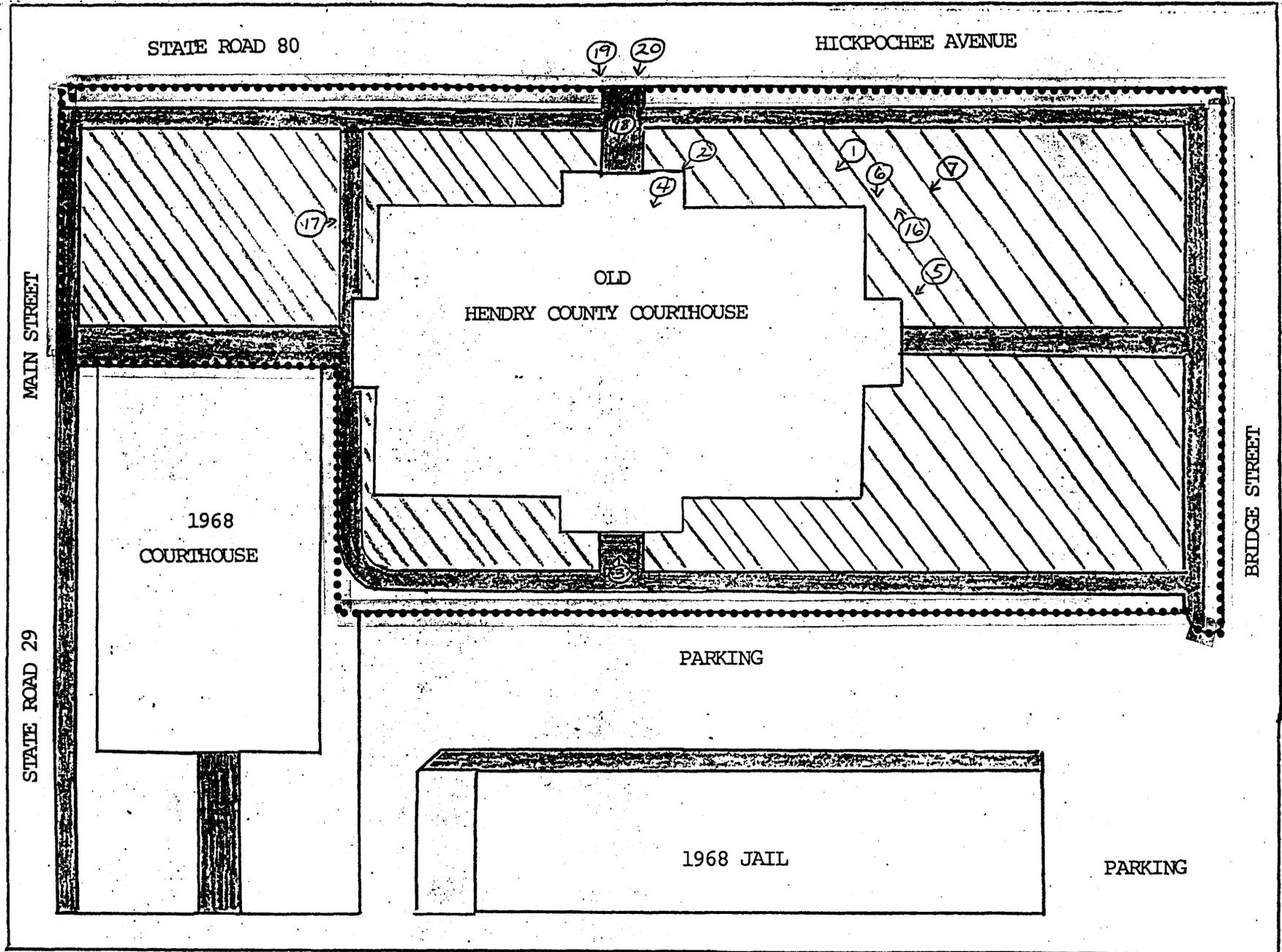
- 10 6) Interior view of W entry, camera facing W
 7) 10 of 20

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Continuation Sheet

Photographs 2 Old Hendry County Courthouse, LaBelle, FL

Section number _____ Page _____

-
- 11 6) Main hallway on second floor, camera facing E
7) 11 of 20
- 12 6) Ceiling of old courtroom, camera facing NE
7) 12 of 20
- 13 6) Original chandelier in old courtroom
7) 13 of 20
- 14 6) W stairway to third floor, camera facing NW
7) 14 of 20
- 15 6) Farmers Bulletin on N elevation, camera facing S
7) 15 of 20
- 16 6) E & S elevations of clock tower, camera facing NW
7) 16 of 20
- 17 6) Exterior of third floor and W tower, camera facing
NE
7) 17 of 20
- 18 6) Detail of N entrance, showing rosettes on N
elevation, camera facing S
7) 18 of 20
- 19 1) Old Hendry County Courthouse
2) LaBelle, Hendry County, FL
3) Kerry R. Faunce, Pahokee, FL
4) 1975?
5) Kerry R. Faunce, Pahokee, FL
6) Main (N) elevation, camera facing S
7) 19 of 20
- 20 1) Old Hendry County Courthouse
2) LaBelle, Hendry County, FL
3) Unknown
4) c1925
5) Calusa Valley Historical Society, LaBelle, FL
6) Main (N) elevation, camera facing S
7) 20 of 20



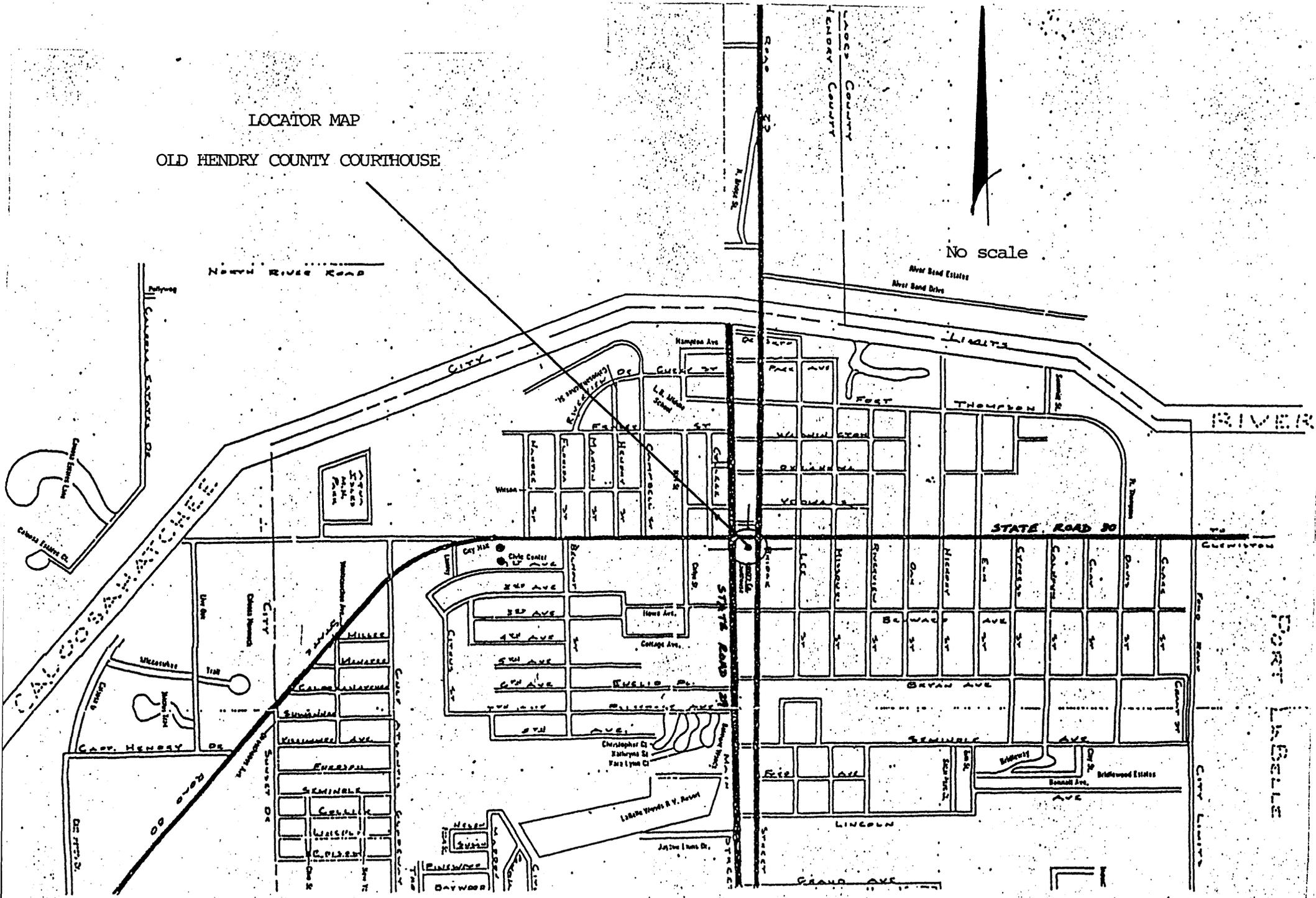
BOUNDARY

OLD
HENDRY COUNTY COURTHOUSE
LaBelle, Florida

1" = approx. 30'

LOCATOR MAP

OLD HENDRY COUNTY COURTHOUSE



No scale

RIVER

STATE ROAD 30

PORT LABELS