

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED APR 01 1975
DATE ENTERED JUN 26 1975

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Essex County Court House
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
470 High Street
CITY, TOWN
Newark
STATE
New Jersey

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
10th

___ VICINITY OF

CODE
34

COUNTY
Essex

CODE
013

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders
STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN
Newark

___ VICINITY OF

STATE
New Jersey

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Registry of Deeds, Hall of Records

STREET & NUMBER
High Street

CITY, TOWN
Newark

STATE
New Jersey

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory (#2186.49)

DATE
1972

___ FEDERAL STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
Historic Sites Section, Dept. of Environmental Protection

CITY, TOWN
Trenton

STATE
New Jersey

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Original

"The Essex County Court House of Newark, New Jersey, completed in 1906, is located at the junction of Springfield Avenue and Market Street, occupying the entire block between Thirteenth Avenue and Market Street east of High Street. It stands on an elevation facing down Market Street, the front entrance being reached by a flight of wide, easy steps rising from the sidewalks level on the east. The dimensions of the building are 153 feet in extreme width and 189 feet in extreme length, the main steps and approaches extending down the hill from the building 113 feet to the sidewalk. The exterior of the building is 64 feet above grade on the High Street side.

"The exterior is in the Modern Renaissance style, of marble from quarries at South Dover, New York, the granite base and steps used being from Bethel, Vermont. The sculptured figures were carved by Piccirilli Brothers, in marble from quarries near Great Barrington, Massachusetts, from models by Andrew O'Connor, sculptor. The marble-cutting (with the exception of the sculpture) was done by Newark workmen. The statues were carved by Piccirilli Brothers, of New York.

"In the interior, the basement contains storage-rooms, the heating apparatus and mechanical plant, with space in engine-room for the installation of additional machinery if desired in the future; also detention cells of prisoners, who are brought to the building by the driveway under the steps.

"In the first story are located rooms for the County Clerk and the Sheriff, on the south side, and for the Register on the north, each with extensive fireproof vaults for storage of records. In front is the large entrance-hall, faced with Indiana limestone, and in the center the grand staircase hall with two staircases leading to the second and third floors; the piers, stairs and balustrads are of limestone and the floors of marble of various kinds.

"On the second floor is the Grand Jury room, also the Criminal Court, with rooms for witnesses and the offices of the Public Prosecutor adjoining; the Board of Freeholders' room, with committee rooms, and the offices of the County Attorney, the Collector and the Auditor adjoining; the Surrogate's office, in the northwest corner near the stairs from High Street, permitting practically private access by persons having business with this office.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	Judicial
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES	1904-1907	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Cass Gilbert
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE			

The Essex County Court House has been the seat of justice of Essex County for over 60 years. It is one of the few monumental buildings left in Newark and contains several priceless murals and paintings depicting Common Law Justice in the United States.

Architecture

This impressive structure was designed by Cass Gilbert, a famous early 20th century architect, who completed such other noteworthy buildings as the United States Customs House and the Woolworth building in New York, The Minnesota State Capitol, and the United States Supreme Court building.

This structure, according to the architect, is in the Modern Renaissance style and was constructed from marble quarried at South Dover, New York. The cost of the building in the early 1900's was in excess of \$1,750,000.00 further indicating the significance of the building.

Art

The paintings, murals, and sculptures in the Essex County Court House were all done by noted artists contemporary to the elegant building. Each of the artists are listed in Fieldings Dictionary of American Painters, Sculptors and Engravers:

Edwin H. Blashfield. Artist. Studied in Paris under Leon Bonnat, spent several years at the Royal Academy in London. Generally he concentrated on genre pictures, portraits and decorations. Blashfield was elected a member of the National Academy in 1888.

Gutzon Borglum. Sculptor. Studied art in Paris and San Francisco. Noted for his bronze statues, the one of Lincoln at the Court House is nationally recognized.

W. H. Low. Painter and Illustrator. Studied in Europe. Low, one of the founders of the Society of American Artists,

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Hudson County Court House

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New Jersey Sites Inventory #1597.10
Historic Sites Section
Department of Environmental Protection
Box 1420
Trenton, New Jersey

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7. Description (Continued)

"On the third floor, east front, is the Supreme Court; on the south side of the hall, Circuit Courtroom A; north side of the hall, Circuit Courtroom B; west of the hall, in center of building, the Motions Court. All the courtrooms are lighted from the ceiling only, excluding street noises which would enter by side windows. In the west half of the building are jury rooms and rooms for various officers of the county.

"Each courtroom is provided with private rooms for the judge and communicating jury rooms. Ample toilet facilities are in all parts of the building, for private use of officials and for the public.

"All vaults and many of the offices have steel cases for files, and the furniture and electric fixtures throughout have been specially planned and designed for use in their respective places and to meet the needs of the offices. Carpets, curtains and draperies have all been subject to careful study in their selection, with reference to harmonious effect in connection with wall decoration.

"The main staircase hall, vestibule and corridors have had special mural decoration-four panels in the pendentives under the central dome being allegorical paintings by Mr. Edwin H. Blashfield. The main room of the building have also receive special mural decoration of allegorical and historical paintings by eminent artists, as follows: Supreme Court, Kenyon Cox; Courtroom A, C. Y. Turner; Courtroom B, George W. Maynard; Motions Courtroom, Will H. Low; Criminal Courtroom, H. O. Walker; Grand Jury room, F. D. Millet; Board of Freeholders' room, Howard Pyle.

"Each room in the building is ventilated and heated by the fan system, controlled by thermostatic regulation, so that under ordinary conditions any desired temperature is automatically maintained. Air is passed through a spray to remove dust before delivery to the fans, and a vacuum system for sweeping the building is provided." (The Essex County Court House, 1907. Report by Cass Gilbert).

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7. Description (Continued)

Present

Standing on a slight eminence at the head of Market Street, facing east toward Newark's famous "Four Corners," Broad and Market Streets, the busiest intersection in the State, the Essex County Court House was, at its building, the most ambitious in New Jersey, and still is one of the most tasteful and beautiful in the United States.

Authorized by the Legislature in 1900, the design was chosen after a competition of leading American architects. The winner was Cass Gilbert, architect of the New York Custom House, the Woolworth Building, and more recently of the New United States Supreme Court Building in Washington, D.C. Excavation was begun in 1902, building continued from 1904-1907.

The design is modern Renaissance, with exterior and much of the interior of marble; occupying the entire block bounded by Springfield Avenue, Market and High Streets: 160 feet wide and 180 long, the facade rising 64 feet above the sidewalk on High Street; with a long sloping approach extending 113 feet from the entrance.

On either side of the great stone steps leading to the entrance are two statues symbolizing "Truth" and "Power". On the pediment is the inscription: "Truth is the Handmaid of Justice." High over the pediment stand nine marble allegorical statues by Andrew O'Connor, symbolizing (from left to right): "The Power of the Law," "The Reason of the Law," "Statutory Law," "The Victory of the Law," "The Shelter of the Law," and "The Authority of the Law." Over the three main entrances are inscribed, respectively, "Law," "Justice" and "Peace."

On the point of the small triangular park-space in front of the Court House, stands the nationally famous bronze statue of Lincoln, seated on a bench, musing, with his tall hat on the bench beside him, by Gutzon Borglum. Theodore Roosevelt was one of the guest at its unveiling, on Memorial Day, 1911. Chancellor Mahon

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7. Description (Continued)

Pitney, afterwards Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, in his address described the statue: "During a stroll along some secluded path, for rest of mind and exercise of the body, Mr. Lincoln paused here, and seated himself in unstudied negligent pose." Pictures have often been taken of this statue, with a child sitting in the crook of his arm.

Entering finds oneself in the impressive main staircase hall rising to a dome, with two grandstaircases on either side. On the four pendentives under the corners of the dome are painted four colossal seated female allegorical figures by the celebrated American mural painter Edwin H. Blashfield: "Wisdom," "Knowledge," "Power," and "Mercy."

The various chambers are decorated with striking murals by famous American artists, including Will Low and H. O. Walker. The most famous of these scenes from the history of Essex County and of the City of Newark. In the Circuit Court is the painting of C. Y. Turner, "The Landing of the New Englanders on the Banks of the Passaic River, May 16, 1666." In the Freeholder's room (now a District Court Room) is Howard Pyle's painting, "The Landing of Lord Carteret, August, 1665." In the Grand Jury room (now a District Court Room) is Frank D. Millet's painting of a historic revolutionary scene, "The Foreman of the Grand Jury Rebuking the Chief Justice of New Jersey, in 1774," when the royal judges (shown in full-bottomed wigs, and gowns) demanded indictments of certain prominent Colonists for treason. In the Supreme Court Room is the allegorical panel by Kenyon Cox, "The Beneficence of the Law."

First Floor

Room 104 - Common Pleas Court Room

The walls and ceiling are excellent examples of modern decorative woodwork. The paneling is in French walnut. The work has executed by Newark craftsmen. In the remodeling of the building this court room was made from the space formerly occupied

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7. Description (Continued)

by the County Register Department. Offices on this floor include the Prosecutor of the Pleas, County Detectives, Homicide Bureau and the Sheriff's Departmental Offices.

Second Floor

Room 201 - Common Pleas Court Room

Recently constructed. This room is finished in Mexican mahogany paneling, matched to bring out the unusual marking and coloring of the natural wood. Mexican mahogany is one of the newer decorative woods.

Room 203 - Circuit Court Room.

Formerly it was the public meeting room of the Board of Freeholders. This room has been redesigned but the original ornamental beamed coiling and marble walls have not been changed. Over the judge's desk is Howard Pyle's famous painting, "The Landing of Carteret." The artist chose for his subject the moment when Captain Philip Carteret, after having come ashore with about thirty settlers near the site of the City of Elizabeth, proclaimed his authority as Governor of the Province. Under his direction, the village, which then consisted of four log huts which had been erected the year previous, became the provincial capitol and was named Elizabethtown in honor of the wife of his relative and the proprietor, Sir George Carteret.

This painting is one of the best works of the artist. In the redecoration of this room it was thought that this painting which had become quite dim would require retouching and it was removed to a studio for that purpose, but after a thorough cleaning it was found to be in almost perfect condition. In the process it received a new coat of preservative varnish, practically nothing more.

Room 222 - Civil Court Room

The large painting is the work of H. C. Walker. It is entitled

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7. Description (Continued)

"The Power and Beneficence of the Law." The subject is allegorical. The Law is represented as driving away the evil and vicious and uplifting the fallen. The two small figures of the lion and the eagle typify the strength of the of the Law.

— Note the pleaders stand at the left - prisoners from this stand enter their pleas and later hear their sentences. Since this is the largest court room many trials for murder have been held here.

Third Floor

Room 303 - Domestic Relations court

This room occupies a space formerly devoted to the Law Library. It is finished in English brown oak. Furnishings are from the same wood.

The entire rear of this floor is given over to the detention of persons awaiting trial or sentence in the various courts. There is ample room for segregation for all types of prisoners.

Fourth Floor

Room 401 - Civil Court Room

Also used by the Chief Justice for hearing motions. The painting "Beneficence of the Law" is by Kenyon Cox. It bears this inscription "Under the Rule of Law, Inspired by Justice, Peace and Prosperity Abide." The central figure represents Law clothed in the crimson mantle of authority. Over her floats Justice, the Inspirer of the Law. The figure at the right represents Peace and the lower left, Prosperity. The intention has been to dwell upon Law as the protector of happiness.

Rooms 420 and 421
Chambers of the Chief Justice

These consist of a waiting room and a study finished in

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7. Description (Continued)

English brown oak.

Room 422 - (unassigned)

This room contains the decorative panel, by Will H. Low, "Diogenes." The incident depicted is imaginary. Diogenes is represented in the search for an honest man and typifies the research of Law. The child, typical of innocence advances to meet the cynical philosopher, who in turn smiles upon him.

Room 423 - Civil Court Room

The long decorative panel, "The Landing of the New Englanders" is by C. V. Turner. The artist has chosen for his subject the Landing of the Founders of Newark. Governor Carteret having established the government house at Elizabethtown sent agents into New England to proclaim the concessions given by the proprietors and to invite settlers to the colony. As the terms were considered liberal, a group came to inspect the land and to consider settlement. They chose the land "to the north of Elizabethtown and beyond the marshes." The landing occurred in May, 1666.

The Central Dome

Edwin Howland Bashfield painted the four colossal seated figures one in each of the pendentives of the central dome. They represent Wisdom - symbolized by the unraveling of a skein; Knowledge - represented in the search of written records for a precedent. Power is typified by the sword and rods. Mercy, by the voting Athene - in ancient Greece when a tie vote occurred, a white bean was cast into a urn - it was a vote for mercy and was known as "the vote of the Goddess."

Supreme Court Room designed by Kenyon Cox.

The robust dignified woman robed in crimson represents Law. She sits enthroned in a piece of ideal architecture in a smiling landscape. Above her floats Justice robed in the blue and white

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7. Description (Continued)

sky and bearing scales. Peace a flaxen blonde robed in colors of the rose and the dove sits at her feet of Law and looks up to her for protection while she holds up her emblem the olive branch.

Below her are billing doves. On the lower left sits Prosperity crowned with grain and poppies; she distributes the fruits of the earth to the children of men. A third poet or the artist occupies himself with gathering daisies and pays no attention to anything else. To the right behind peace is a round temple embowered in lofty trees, to the left beyond Prosperity is a flowering wild rose and a glimpse of winding river and distant mountain.

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8. Significance (Continued)

became a member of the National Academy in 1890. Generally he painted portraits, but later went into murals.

Francis Davis Millet. Painter. National Academy in 1885. Millet was primarily a muralist.

Andrew O'Connor, Jr. Sculptor. A member of the National Academy in 1919 O'Connor won a bronze medal at the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo (1901), and a second class medal at the Paris Salon in 1906.

Howard Pyle. Painter and Illustrator. Pyle was elected to the National Academy of Design in 1911.

Charles Yardely. Painter. Educated at the National Academy of Design and studied in Paris under Laurens, Munkacsy and Leon Bonnat. Selected Associate member of National Academy of Design in 1883, Academician in 1886. Turner generally painted murals which were often of an historical nature.

Henry Oliver Walker. Painter. Educated in Paris under M. Bonnat, and in New York and Boston. Member of the Society of American Artists and National Academy. Walker painted primarily murals.

That all these artists were contracted to prepare paintings and statues for the Courthouse indicates the cultural importance of Newark in the early 20th century.

Plans for constructing the Essex County Courty House were initiated by authority of an act of 1900. A Commission was engaged in the same year and a preliminary architectural advisor, A. C. Newman of Newark, was engaged. Later, Professor Warren P. Laird of the University of Pennsylvania was employed as a consulting architect and advisor to prepare specifications and requirements for the courthouse upon which architects might submit competing plans and designs.

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8. Significance (Continued)

Five architects entered the competition. They were George B. Post, Cass Gilbert, McKim, Mead and White, Carere and Hastings, and Babb, Cook and Willarm.

Originally the structure was to be built of Indiana limestone, but no expense was spared as another quarter of a million dollars was added to the cost in order to use South Dover marble.

Construction began in 1904 and was completed in 1907 while the building was occupied in 1906 in order to demolish the old courthouse.

Consequently, since 1906 the Essex County Courty House building has functioned as the judicial center for the county up to the present date. And, although the courtrooms were being slowly vacated a few years ago, more and more judiciary offices are returning.

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Essex County Courthouse
Newark, Essex County, New Jersey

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PAGE 3

Judicial

The courthouse was built in 1908 and has always served as the center of justice for Essex County.

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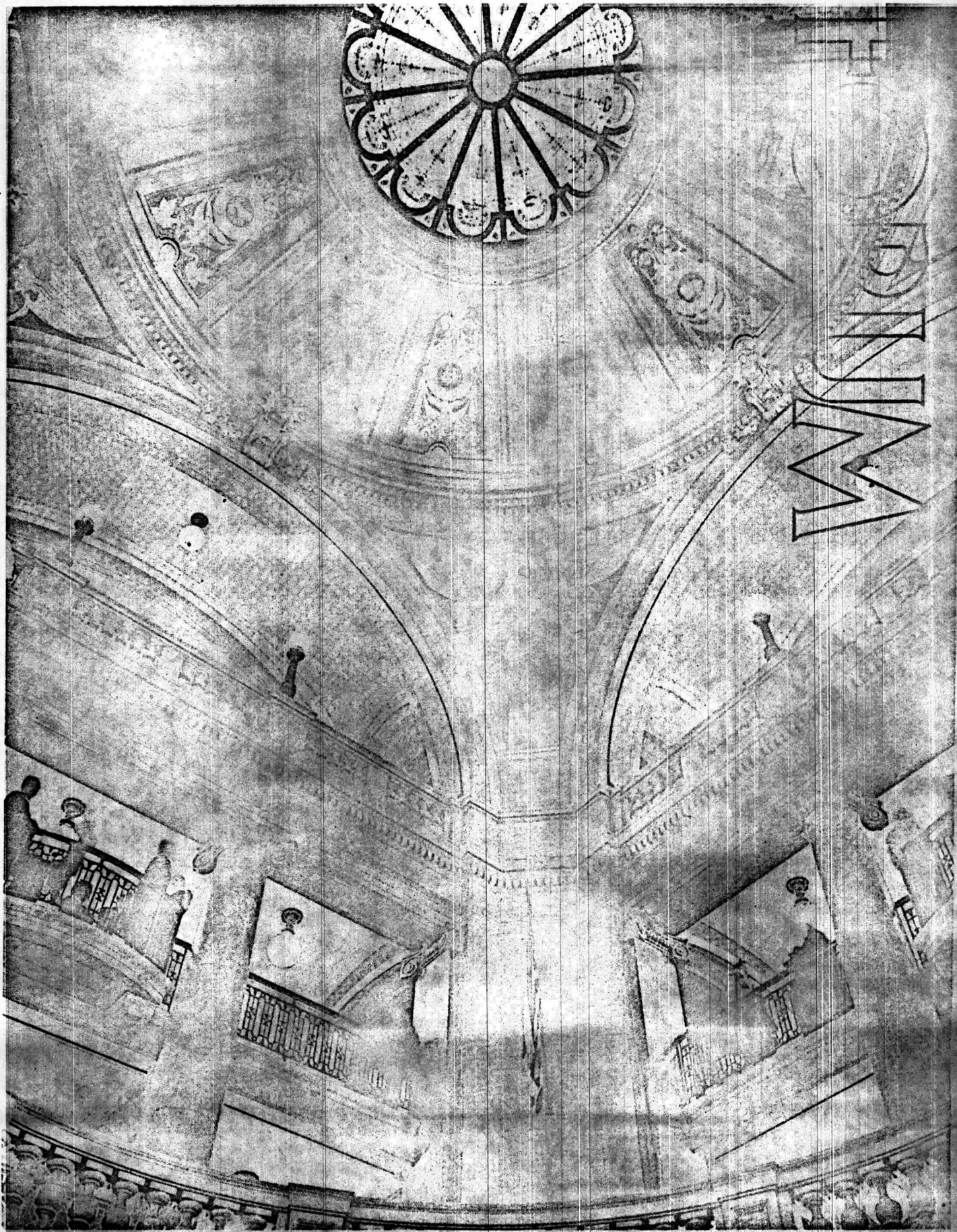
ITEM NUMBER 9. PAGE 1.

9. Bibliography (Continued)

Fielding's Dictionary of American Painters, Sculptors, and Engravers. James F. Carr. New York, 1965.

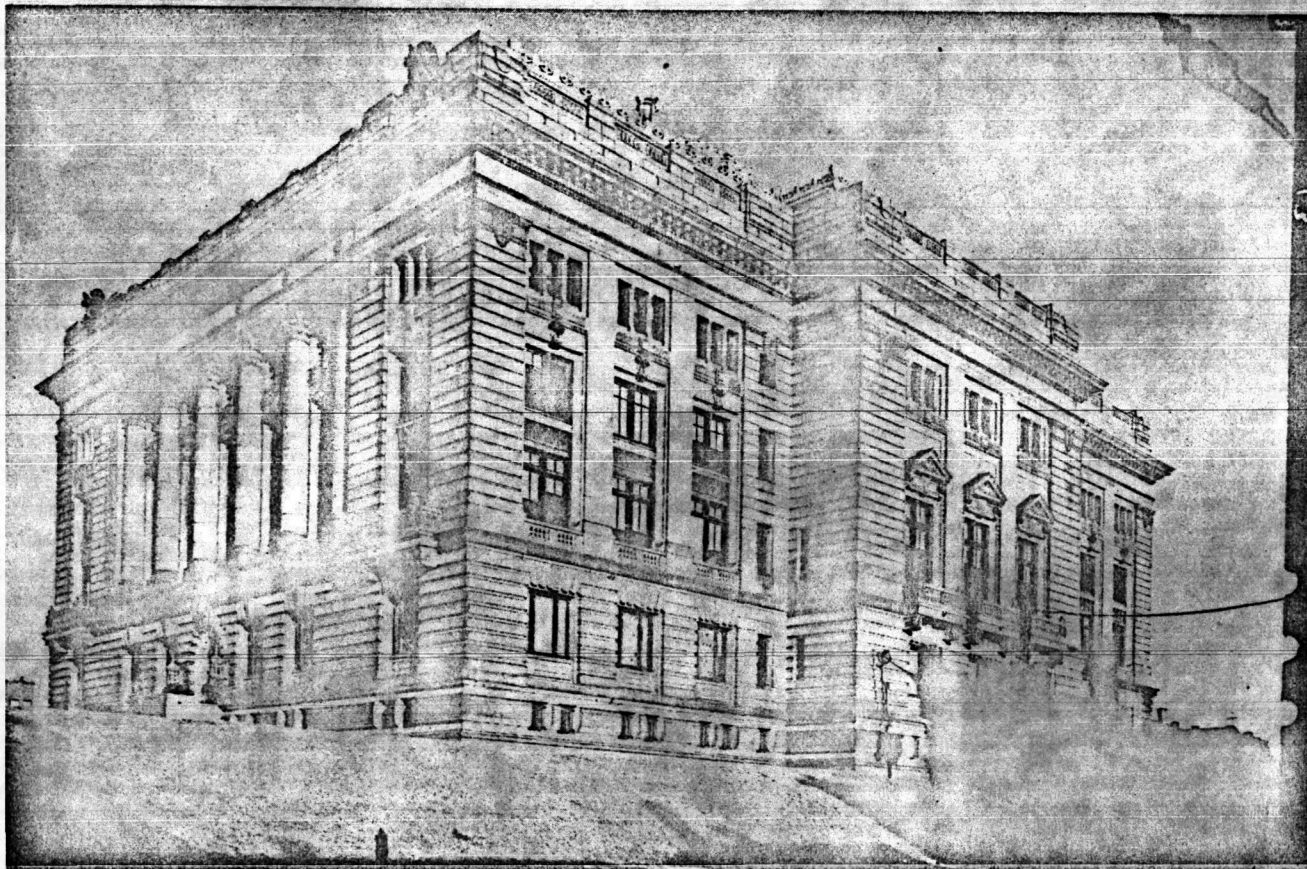
Information Supplied By:

Francis P. McQuade, County Counsel
Essex County Law Department
Newark, New Jersey



Hudson County Court House, Jersey City, New Jersey

Photo: American Heritage,
Paulus Leeser



Hudson County Court House, Jersey City, New Jersey
Facade Northwest

HABS Photo 1970