The Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

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PHOTOGRAPHS OF COUNTY COURTHOUSES AT MODERN MUSEUM

COURTHOUSE, an exhibition of 64 photographs drawn from "one of the most original, intelligent and useful architectural documentations of recent years," sponsored by Joseph E. Seagram & Sons, Inc. as a contribution to the Bicentennial, will be on view in the Steichen Galleries of The Museum of Modern Art from April 12 through July 10. These photographs of county courthouses from all regions of the nation have been selected by John Szarkowski, Director of the Department of Photography, from the more than 8,000 photographs commissioned by Seagrams from 24 photographers. The exhibition is being presented as a "selective fragment" of the total archive. In all, nearly 1,000 courthouses, specially chosen for their architectural and/or historical interest and representing a little less than one third of the counties in the continental United States, have been documented in the project, directed by Phyllis Lambert with Richard Pare as general editor.

Initiated in 1974, the courthouse project was conceived as a pictorial record of buildings that are unique expressions of American society and architecture. As John Szarkowski notes, "The subject of the document--the county courthouse in the United States--is both ambitious and coherent, and exemplary of the social and artistic history of this country." From the spare elegance of the Chester County, South Carolina, to the great courthouse fortress of Hennepin County (Minneapolis), Minnesota, the photographs in the show reveal the county courthouse to have served in America much as churches and palaces have in Europe: the physical embodiment of community values and their authority. In asseibling the archive of material from which the exhibition is drawn, the intention was to represent the entire spectrum of existing courthouses of all periods and styles.

Among the 13 photographers represented in this exhibition are Pirkle Jones,

(more)

Nicholas Nixon, Tod Papageorge, Stephen Shore, and Geoff Winningham, among others. The only restriction on the photographers was that all work be done with a view camera to ensure high-quality, finely detailed images. For some of the photographers this assignment provided the first occasion to use the view camera. The photographers travelled the nation between September 1974 and April 1975 along designated routes, photographing certain assigned courthouses as well as any others that caught their interest. Speaking of the artistic issues that faced them, and, indeed, the problem that arises in architectural photography in general Mr. Szarkowski notes: "A photograph of a building is neither a replica nor a model, but the translation of an idea from an architectural to a pictorial form. It is, inevitably, a critical act, recording not only the building itself, but the photographer's understanding of it, and of his own medium's capacity to describe it. Like other varieties of photographs, it is made, not born."

"The highly selective fragment of the total Seagram's project that is shown here can only suggest the scope of the total archive as a resource for the study of American building and social values. It can perhaps indicate something of the intelligence, skill, sensibility, and independence with which a group of superior photographers, mostly young, used their own art to describe in translation the radically different arts of architecture, building, and government."

Later this year an expanded version of the exhibition will tour nationally, under the auspices of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

THE PHOTOGRAPHERS IN THE MUSEUM EXHIBITION ARE:

Doug Baz
Caldecotte Chubb
William Clift
Jim Dow
Frank Gohlke
Pirkle Jones
Lewis Kostiner
Nicholas Nixon
Richard Pare
Tod Papageorge
Stephen Shore
Bob Thall
Geoff Winningham

Additional information available from Michael Boodro, Assistant, or Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, New York 10019. Tel. 956-7296; 7501.

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COURTHOUSE

April 12 - July 10, 1977

CHECKLIST

HAROLD ALLEN

1. 1977.359 — Stark County, Toulon, Ill.
1856; Architect unknown

DOUGLAS BAZ

2. 1977.284 — Grand Isle County, North Hero, Vt.
1824-25; Joseph M. Mott (?), Architect

3. 1977.319 — Grafton County, North Haverhill, N.H.
1971; Kenneth Di Nesco of E. Verner Johnson - Robert N. Hotvedt & Associates, Inc., Architects

CALDECOT CHUBB

4. 1977.313 — Edgefield County, Edgefield, S.C.
1838-39; Robert Mills (?), Architect

WILLIAM CLIFT

5. 1977.275 — St. Louis County, St. Louis, Mo.
1839-62; Henry Singleton, Robert S. Mitchell, Thomas D.P. Lanham, William Rumbold, Architects

6. 1977.289 — Tuscarawas County, New Philadelphia, Ohio
1882-85; Thomas Boyd, Architect

7. 1977.294 — Allegheny County, Pittsburgh, Pa.
1884-88; H. H. Richardson, Architect

8. 1977.311 — Warren County, Warrenton, Mo.
1869-71; Thomas W. Brady, Architect

9. 1977.316 — Miami County, Troy, Ohio
1885-88; J.W. Yost, Architect

JIM DOW

10. 1977.295 — Newberry County, Newberry, S.C.
1849-53; Jacob Graves, Architect

11. 1977.318 — Macon County, Tuskegee, Ala.
1905; J. W. Golucke & Co., Architects

12. 1977.345 — Grady County, Cairo, Ga.
1908-09; Alexander Blair, Architect

JIM DOW cont'd.

13. 1977.348 — Pike County, Zebulon, Ga.
1896; Goluck & Stewart, Architects

14. 1977.349 — Chester County, Chester, S.C.
c. 1850; Architect unknown

15. 1977.350 — Charleston County, Charleston, S. C.
1789-92; William Drayton, Architect

16. 1977.351 — Pickens County, Carrollton, Ala.
1877-78; Architect unknown

17. 1977.353 — Georgetown County, Georgetown, S.C.
1824; Robert Mills (?), Architect

18. 1977.354 — Tate County, Senatobia, Miss.
1875; Built under direction of J. H. Cocke

19. 1977.356 — Hancock County, Sparta, Ga.
1881; Parker & Bruce, Architects

20. 1977.357 — Anderson County, Anderson, S.C.
1897; Architect unknown

FRANK GOHLKE

21. 1977.281 — Ramsey County, St. Paul, Minn.
1932; Thomas Ellerbe & Associates, Architects

22. 1977.298 — Hennepin County, Minneapolis, Minn.
1888-1906; Long & Kees, Architects

23. 1977.305 — Tarrant County, Fort Worth, Texas
1893-95; Frederick C. Gunn & Louis Curtis, Architects

24. 1977.309 — Parker County, Weatherford, Texas
1884-86; W.C. Dodson & W. W. Dudley, Architects

25. 1977.312 — Denton County, Denton, Texas
1895-96; W. C. Dodson, Architect

26. 1977.360 — Hennepin County, Minneapolis, Minn.
1888-1906; Long & Kees, Architects

PIKKLE JONES

27. 1977.324 — San Joaquin County, Stockton, Cal.
1962-64; Courthouse Associated Architects,
(Mayo, Johnson, DeWolf, Clowsley, Whipple)

LEWIS KOSTINER

28. 1977.288 Grays Harbor County, Montesano, Wash.
1911; Watson Vernon, Architect

29. 1977.300 Los Angeles County, Los Angeles, Cal.
1954-59; Stanton, Williams, Wilson of Austin, Field & Fry, Architects

30. 1977.301 Morgan County, Jacksonville, Ill.
1868-69; G.P. Randall, Architect

31. 1977.306 Hancock County, Greenfield, Ind.
1896-98; Wing & Mahurin, Architects

32. 1977.310 Macoupin County, Carlinville, Ill.
1867-70; E. E. Myers and Son, Architects.

33. 1977.358 Jay County, Portland, Ind.
1916-18; McLaughlin & Hulsker, Architects

NICHOLAS NIXON

34. 1977.276 Essex County, Salem, Mass.
1841; Richard Bond, Architect

35. 1977.282 Plymouth County, Plymouth, Mass.
1749; Judge Peter Oliver, Architect

36. 1977.322 Wayne County, Detroit, Mich.
1953-55; Harley, Ellington & Day, Architects

TOD PAPAGEORGE

37. 1977.285 Appomattox County, Appomattox Court House, Va.
1964; Henry Judd, Architect. Reconstruction of 1845 courthouse.

38. 1977.286 Carroll County, Huntington, Tenn.
1931; Hart, Freeland & Roberts, Architects

39. 1977.297 Salt Lake County, Salt Lake City, Utah
1891-94; Proudfoot, Bird & Monheim, Architects

RICHARD PARE

40. 1977.271 St. Louis County, St. Louis, Mo.
1839-61; Henry Singleton, Robert S. Mitchell, Thomas D. P. Lanham & William Rumbold, Architects

41. 1977.283 Northampton County, Eastville, Va.
1731; Architect unknown

42. 1977.287 St. Louis County, St. Louis, Mo.
1839-61; Henry Singleton, Robert S. Mitchell, Thomas D. P. Lanham & William Rumbold, Architects

43. 1977.290 Charles City County, Charles City, Va.
1730; Architect unknown

RICHARD PARE cont'd.

44. 1977.292 Allegheny County, Pittsburgh, Pa
1884-88; H. H. Richardson, Architect

45. 1977.293 Delaware County, Delaware, Ohio
1876; R. N. Jones, Architect

46. 1977.299 Philadelphia County, Philadelphia, Pa.
1871-1901; John McArthur, Jr., & Thomas U. Walter, Architects

47. 1977.303 Geauga County, Chardon, Ohio
1869; Joseph Ireland, Architect

STEPHEN SHORE

48. 1977.308 Greene County, Greensboro, Ga.
1849; David Demorest and A. Atkinson, Architects

49. 1977.328 Greene County, Eutaw, Ala.
1868-70; George M. Figh, Builder

50. 1977.329 Georgetown County, Georgetown, S.C.
1824; Robert Mills (?), Architect

51. 1977.331 Frederick County, Winchester, Va.
1840; Robert Cary, Architect

52. 1977.332 Hampshire County, Romney, W. Va.
1922; Architect unknown

53. 1977.333 Loudoun County, Leesburg, Va.
1894-1898; Architect unknown

54. 1977.347 Essex County, Newark, N.J.
1902-07; Cass Gilbert, Architect

BOB THALL

55. 1977.273 Wapello County, Ottumwa, Iowa
1892-93; Foster & Liebbe, Architects

56. 1977.307 Davis County, Bloomfield, Iowa
1877-78; T.J. Tolan & Sons, Architects

57. 1977.314 Tippecanoe County, Lafayette, Ind.
1881-85; Elias Max, Architect

58. 1977.317 Floyd County, New Albany, Ind.
1961; Walker, Applegate, Oakes & Ritz, Architects
Columns from previous courthouse by
Stancliff & Vogdes of Louisville, 1865-67

59. 1977.320 Fountain County, Covington, Ind.
1936-37; Walter Scholar, Architect
Works Project Administration project

BOB THALL cont'd.

60. 1977.321 Vigo County, Terre Haute, Ind.
1884-88; Samuel Hannaford, Architect

61. 1977.327 Jefferson County, Louisville, Ky.
1836-42; Gideon Shryock, Architect
Completed by Albert Fink, 1858-59

GEOFF WINNINGHAM

62. 1977.325 Franklin Parish County, Winnsboro, La.
1950-51; John W. Baker and Neild-Somdal Assoc., Architects

63. 1977.277 Tarrant County, Fort Worth, Texas
1893-95; Gunn and Curtis, Architects