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 assembling 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,
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.
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
13. 1977.348 Pike County, Zebulon, Ga. 1896; Goluck & Stewart, Architects
14. 1977.349 Chester County, Chester, S.C. c. 1850; Architect unknown
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

FRANK GOHLKE
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

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

2. 1977.310 Macoupin County, Carlinville, Ill.  
   1867-70; E. E. Myers and Son, Architects.

3. 1977.358 Jay County, Portland, Ind.  
   1916-18; McLaughlin & Hulsker, Architects

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

   1749; Judge Peter Oliver, Architect

   1953-55; Harley, Ellington & Day, Architects


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

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

   1731; Architect unknown

2. 1977.287 St. Louis County, St. Louis, Mo.  
   1839-61; Henry Singleton, Robert S. Mitchell, Thomas D.  
   P. Lanham & William Rumbold, Architects

13. 1977.290 Charles City County, Charles City, Va.  
   1730; Architect unknown
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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
47. 1977.303 Geauga County, Chardon, Ohio 1869; Joseph Ireland, Architect

STEPHEN SHORE

8. 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
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