

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>New York</b>	
COUNTY: <b>Tompkins</b>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER <b>71.3.36.0026</b>	DATE <b>3/18/71</b>

1. NAME

COMMON:  
**"Old Courthouse"**

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
**\* Second Tompkins County Courthouse**

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**121 East Court Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Ithaca**

STATE <b>New York</b>	CODE <b>36</b>	COUNTY: <b>Tompkins</b>	CODE <b>109</b>
--------------------------	-------------------	----------------------------	--------------------

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comments <b>Located in DeWitt Park historic core area.</b>
---	--	--	---	---

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
**Tompkins County**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**320 North Tioga Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Ithaca**

STATE: <b>New York</b>	CODE <b>36</b>
---------------------------	-------------------

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Tompkins County Courthouse**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**320 North Tioga Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Ithaca**

STATE: <b>New York</b>	CODE <b>36</b>
---------------------------	-------------------

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**Map of the City of Ithaca, N.Y. by F. W. Beers**

DATE OF SURVEY: **1889**     Federal     State     County     Local

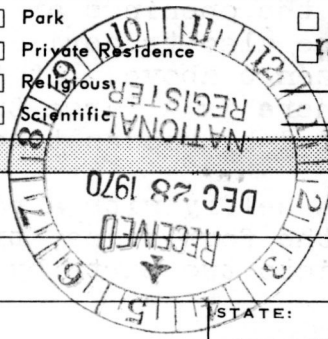
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**Tompkins County Courthouse**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**320 North Tioga Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Ithaca**

STATE: <b>New York</b>	CODE <b>36</b>
---------------------------	-------------------

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE: **New York**  
COUNTY: **Tompkins**  
ENTRY NUMBER: **71.3.36.0026**  
DATE: **3/18/71**  
FOR NPS USE ONLY

## 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

A rectangular building of two stories, with a three-story tower. It is approximately 57 feet by 75 feet; there are three bays at each end and six on each side. The foundation, about three feet above grade, of a somewhat shaly stone is laid in random ashlar, terminated by a beveled water table. The walls are of red brick divided into bays by buttresses, and into stories by a simple moulded belt course just below the second-story window sills. Small octagonal corner turrets extend above the roof level. The walls were covered in later times, possibly the 1920's, with gray stucco, which has effaced some of the detail.

An entrance is centered on each end of the building (N. and S.); they are similar. The masonry opening is spanned by a two-centered pointed arch, moulded above the spring line, and has three wooden colonnettes in each jamb; there is a hood mould. Three steps and a stone threshold lead to each doorway. A door to the basement, on the east side of the building, is an addition to the original structure. The windows have stone sills, some of them covered with stucco, and label moulds above the head. On the first story the openings are rectangular, divided into two parts by wooden tracery, each having a trefoil head. On the second story the openings are pseudo-arched (or triangular-headed), they are also traceried, having a trefoil above each part, and a lozenge above. At the center of each end, at the second story, there is a large two-centered pointed-arch window, triply divided by wooden tracery.

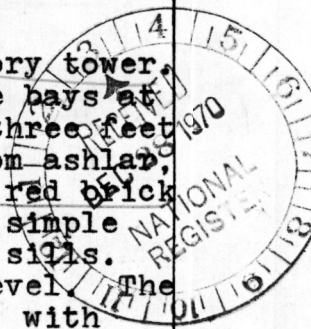
The tower contains a belfry with a pointed-arched (two-centered) opening on each of the four sides, trimmed by a hood mould. Each opening is divided into two parts by tracery and filled with louvers.

The first story interior has a central longitudinal corridor which affords access to rooms on each side. There is a stair in the southwest corner of the building, and another in the northeast corner.

The courtroom is on the second story, which it appears to have filled, originally. Partitions now restrict it to the central four bays, plus a gallery in the bay at the south end. There is now, at the north end, an apse roughly semi-elliptical in plan, behind the judge's bench. A semi-circular railing in front of the bench divides this functional area from that reserved for spectators. Offices occupy the NW. and SE. corners. This second story originally was open to the trussed roof but the space is now subdivided by an attic floor located at or near the beginning of the roof. This notable open timber roof is intact but now visible only in pieces. There are seven arch-braced hammer-beam trusses, carrying seven purlins on each side,

Continued on attached sheet

S E E I N S T R U C T I O N S



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

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
New York	
COUNTY	
Tompkins	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
71.3.36.0026	3/18/71

(Number all entries)

7. Description, continued.

which in turn carry matched and beaded boards. Each has a central pendant. There is a ridge pole. All of this roof woodwork is painted in imitation wood graining.

The gallery has a solid wooden railing, ornamented with trefoil-headed arcading. The attic floor is an addition, for which additional trussing was introduced. Its lower side forms the present courtroom ceiling, which is divided into panels, of narrow matched and beaded boarding by wooden mouldings.

The area at the north end of the courtroom is an architectural curiosity in this Gothic building; it is a Neo-colonial wall to partition off three small offices, and, at the same time, provide an impressive background for the judge's bench. The bench, with its witness box and clerk's desk, rests on a dais four steps above the main floor level of the room. Directly behind is a shallow apse with a semi-elliptical plaster head. It is framed by wooden pilasters of the Roman Doric order, on high pedestals. Above this is a small second-story order, having a pair of pilasters on each side. A central doorway is crowned by a triangular pediment, having an egg-and-dart course in the architrave, and a denticulated cornice. At each side, there is another doorway, similar in detail except that the pediment is segmental. In front of the bench is a large space for lawyers; it is enclosed by a semi-circular railing with turned balusters and square pedestals. This setting was designed in 1894 by William Henry Miller, Ithaca's noted architect who designed many of the finest buildings. His style is marked by eclectism.

Heating of this building was originally by means of stoves. Later a steam system was installed. Old ornamental steam radiators are still in place.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup>This description was taken in part from report by Harley J. McKee ( see bibliography).

**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) 1854

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input checked="" 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 checked="" 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

"A mid nineteenth-century public building with a well-developed plan, notable open-timber roof, and other interesting details derived from medieval types. Its original state can be clearly observed despite some interior subdividing. This building is an uncommon survivor of its period in central New York."(McKee)

"The Old Court House, the second on this site, was designed by John F. Maurice, Architect, and built in 1854. The land was given to the County in 1817 by Simeon DeWitt . . . for the first Court House. The existing building is the oldest surviving court house of the Gothic Revival Period in the State of New York, and the oldest public building in Tompkins County. It served as the County Court House for 78 years until supplanted by the present Court House which was built in 1932.

"The architectural character of the Old Court House reveals the skill and restraint of the architect in adapting features of English Medieval castles to a public building in the United States. It is an early manifestation of the use of Gothic forms in American architecture and exhibits much more restraint than was to become popular in the years following. It presents a skillful use of brick and wood to reproduce the stone detailing found in its historical prototypes.

"Evidence of early attempts at summer and winter ventilation, and heating systems, still exist in the building which, when restored, will contribute to the history and development of climate control in public buildings.

"The Old Court House is, indeed, significant and worthy of preservation because of its architectural character which is unique in Ithaca, unusual elsewhere in New York or in the Country . . . it is a distinguished and out-standing building. Examples of work done in this period have been rapidly disappearing and have but recently been awarded their important place in the development of the Architecture of the United States. The building is a sensitive adaptation of historic precedence, exhibiting a fine appreciation of mass, proportion, and space admirably adapted to its original use."(Bullock)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bullock, Orin M., Jr: Evaluation and Restoration Feasibility Study of the Old Court House . . . Ithaca, New York, 1970

Levatch, Peter S., and Miller, John: Tompkins County Government Center, an Office Space Study, 1969

McKee, Harley J.: Historic American Buildings Survey, Part 11, Second Tompkins County Court House (HABS No. NY-5442) 1966

18/372800/4699780  
4-27-76  
DTM

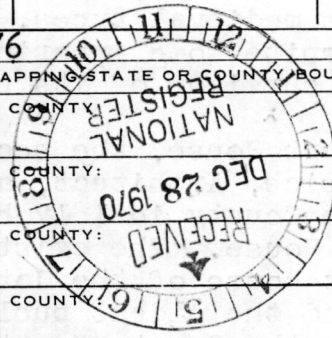
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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 . "		42 0 26 . 30 .	76 0 29 . 50 "	
NE	0 . "	0 . "				
SE	0 . "	0 . "				
SW	0 . "	0 . "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1/6

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:  
**Stephen W. Jacobs, President**

ORGANIZATION: **Historic Ithaca** DATE: **24 July 1970**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Box 151**

CITY OR TOWN: **Ithaca** STATE: **New York** CODE: **31**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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 W. Jacobs

Title Chairman, New York State Historic Trust

Date December 15, 1970

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Ernest A. Connolly  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

**MAR 18 1971**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

William Huntington  
Keeper of The National Register

**FEB 3 1971**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

4/5/71

# Second Tompkins County Courthouse Thompkins Co.

71 000362  
NY

RECEIPT

PROPERTY

STATE

REGISTER NUMBER

DATE OF RECEIPT 12/28/70

YES

NO

NUMBER

71.3.36.0026 3/18/71

- DATA PAGE
- PHOTO (S)
- PHOTO DESCRIP (S)
- MAP (S)
- MAP DESCRIPTION (S)
- LOGGED
- ACKNOWLEDGE 1/5/71

RESUBMIT

REVIEW

*Orman*  
2/23/71

HISTORIAN

OK 5 Manning  
2/23/71

HISTORIAN

OK Levy  
2/24/71

ARCHITECT

OK Chambers  
2-24-71

ASST. KEEPER

KEEPER

OK Wm  
2/3/71

ENTRY

CHIEF, CAMP

OK  
3-18-71

EDITORIAL PROCESSING, EDITOR

OK ED  
3/1/71

Federal Register Entry 5/4/71

Date

Annual Edition Entry

Logged 3/18/71  
Card 3/18/71

WORKING NUMBER 12.28.70.2





*C. Hedley Smith*  
ITHACA, N. Y.

NPS Number 71.3.36.0026  
Title: Old Court House  
Second Tompkins Courthouse (1)  
Tompkins City, NY  
Loc. S. side to W.  
4th to East 9th  
Baptist Church

G. HADLEY SMITH  
COMMERCIAL & ILLUSTRATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY

Carey Bldg.

Ithaca, N. Y.

FILE #

70-5-14-8

Courthouse, Tompkins Co.

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



C. Hadley Smith  
ITHACA, N. Y.

NPS Number

71.3.36.0026

Title:

Old Court House  
2nd Tompkins City Court House

Loc.

View of Court st N.  
Facade

(1)

G. HADLEY SMITH  
GENERAL & ILLUSTRATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY

Carey Bldg. Ithaca, N. Y.

FILE # 70-5-14-1

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

#3

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

*(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)*

STATE New York	
COUNTY Tompkins	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 013,36,0026	DATE 3/18/71

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**1. NAME**

COMMON: "Old Courthouse"

AND/OR HISTORIC: Second Tompkins County Courthouse

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:

121 East Court Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Ithaca

STATE:

New York

CODE

36

COUNTY:

Tompkins

CODE

109

**3. MAP REFERENCE**

SOURCE:

U.S.G.S. Quadrangle, 7.5 minute series

SCALE: 1:2400

DATE: 1959

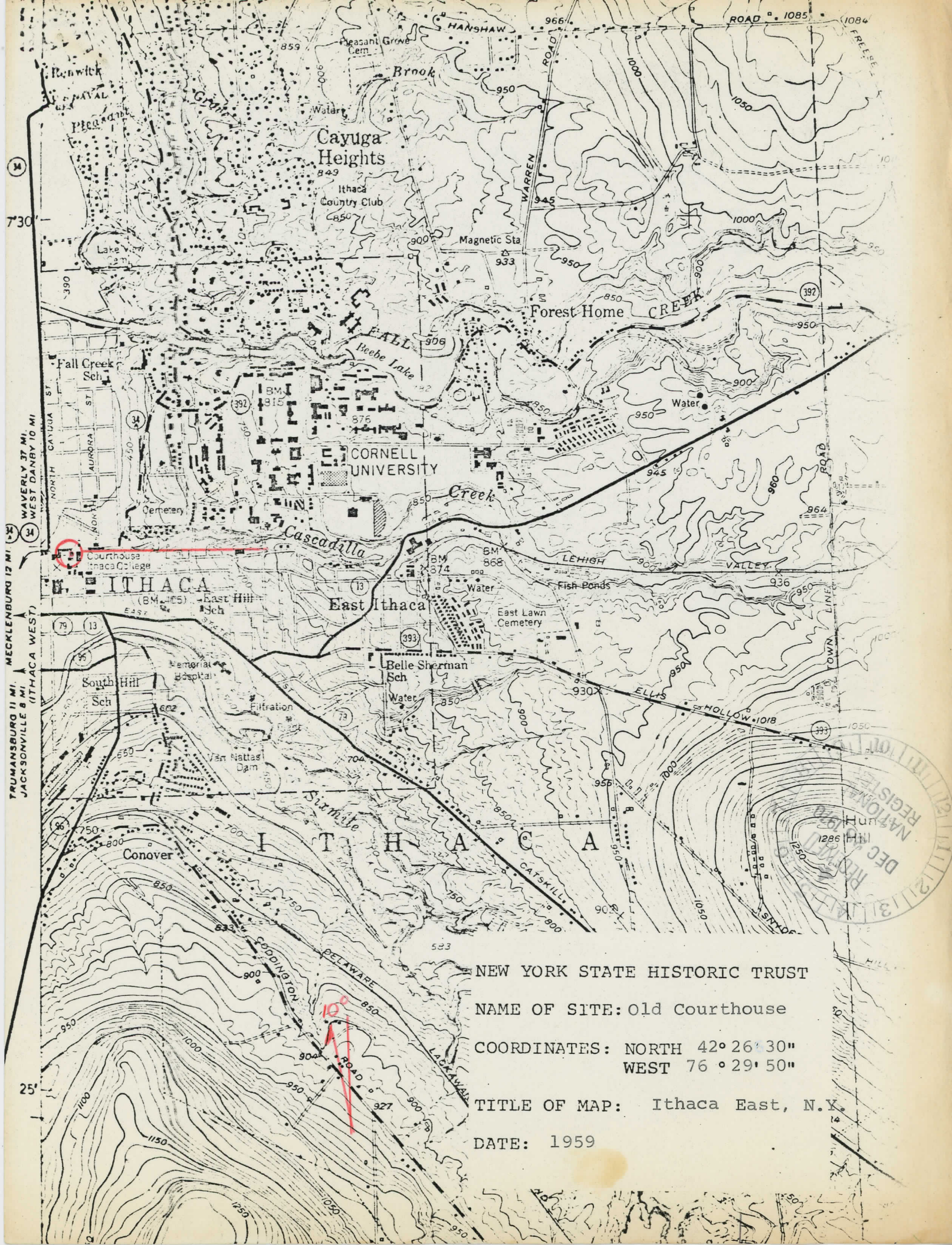
**4. REQUIREMENTS**

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.



PH0031976



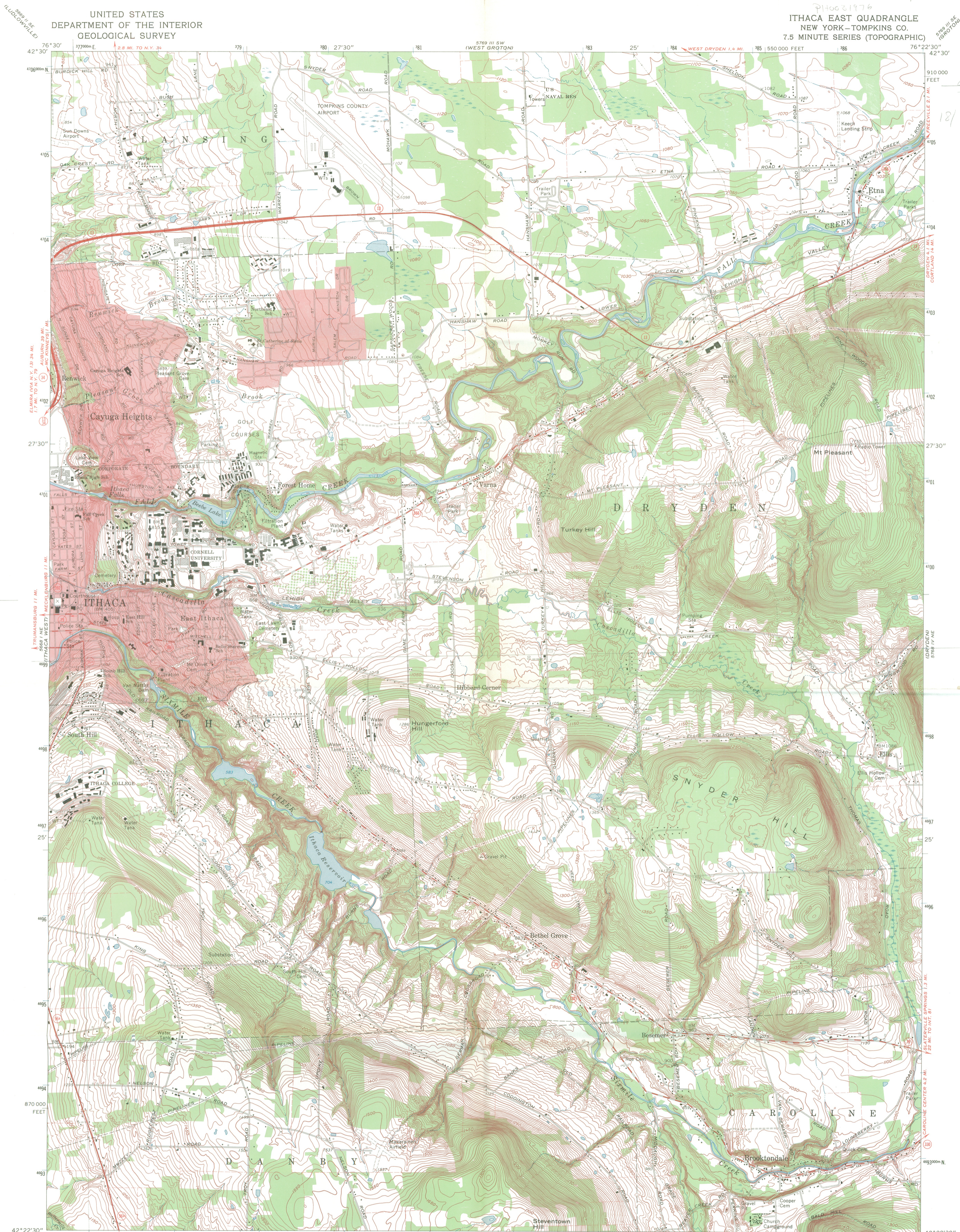
NEW YORK STATE HISTORIC TRUST

NAME OF SITE: Old Courthouse

COORDINATES: NORTH 42° 26' 30"  
WEST 76° 29' 50"

TITLE OF MAP: Ithaca East, N.Y.

DATE: 1959

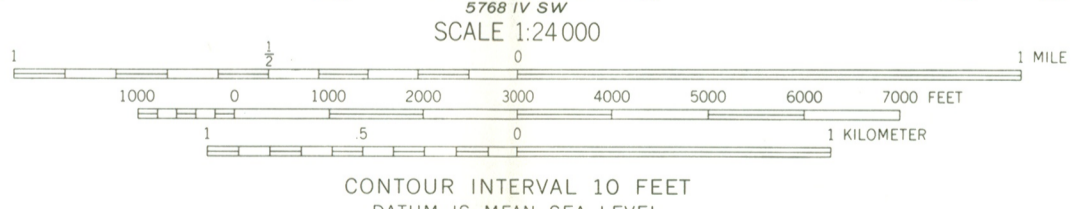
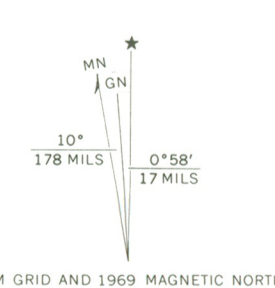


Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Revised in cooperation with New York Department of Transportation  
Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs  
taken 1944. Field checked 1949. Revised from aerial  
photographs taken 1968. Field checked 1969

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on New York coordinate system, central zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18,  
shown in blue

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where  
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked  
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, all weather, hard surface	Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface
Secondary highway, all weather, hard surface	Unimproved road, fair or dry weather
	State Route

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ITHACA EAST, N. Y.  
N4222.5—W7622.5/7.5  
1969  
AMS 5768 IV NW—SERIES W821

SECOND TOMPKINS COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
P14008176  
12/ 372800  
4699780



CONRAD L. WIRTH, Chairman  
 LOUIS C. JONES, Vice Chairman  
 JAMES E. ALLEN, JR.  
 SEYMOUR H. KNOX

JOHN H. G. PELL  
 LAURANCE S. ROCKEFELLER  
 MILDRED F. TAYLOR  
 WILBUR E. WRIGHT,  
 Executive Secretary

## NEW YORK STATE HISTORIC TRUST

DIVISION OF PARKS  
 CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT, ALBANY, N. Y. 12226

December 17, 1970

Dr. William Murtagh  
 Keeper of the National Register of  
 Historic Places  
 National Park Service  
 801 Nineteenth Street, N. W.  
 Washington, D. C. 2-036

Dear Dr. Murtagh:

As Chairman of the New York State Historic Trust, the officially designated State Preservation Agency, and as the State Liaison Officer, I am forwarding the enclosed nomination to the National Register of Historic Places:

Albright-Knox Art Gallery  
 Buffalo, New York

Second Tompkins County Courthouse,  
 Ithaca, New York

Old Saratoga County Courthouse Complex,  
 Ballston Spa, New York

The above nominations have been reviewed and approved by the Governor's Advisory Committee in accordance with the criteria outlined in Section 2.2 of the Grants Guide.

The staff of the Trust would welcome the opportunity to discuss these nominations with your office.

Sincerely,

Dr. Louis C. Jones,  
 Chairman

LCJ:ve

Enclosed

DEC 23 1970

Second Tompkins Co Courthouse  
Tompkins NY  
57 Mar 18 1971  
3/16/71

MAR 18 1971

H30-HR

Dr. Louis C. Jones  
Chairman  
New York State Historic Trust  
Parks and Recreation  
Building 2 - State Campus  
Albany, New York 12226

Dear Dr. Jones:

We are pleased to inform you that the historic properties listed on the enclosure have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Senators Jacob K. Javits and James L. Buckley and the appropriate Representatives are being informed. A leaflet explaining the National Register is enclosed for each of the property owners. Please withhold any publicity on this until you have received a carbon copy of the Congressional correspondence.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed)

Director

Enclosures

Entered in the National Register

MAR 18 1971

cc:

HR

3/12/71

SMarusin:naf

BASIC FILE RETAINED IN HR

Properties added to the National Register of Historic Places

NEW YORK

Old Saratoga County Courthouse Complex	Saratoga County, New York
Second Tompkins County Courthouse	Tompkins County, New York
Van Schaick House	Albany County, New York
New York State Department of Education Building	Albany County, New York
Binghamton City Hall	Broome County, New York
Whipple Cast and Wrought - Iron . . . . . String Truss Bridge	Albany County, New York

377/annons  
3/15/71

MAR 18 1971

M30-HR

Hon. Jacob K. Javits  
United States Senate  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Javits:

We are pleased to inform you that the historic properties listed on the enclosure have been nominated by the State Liaison Officer appointed by the Governor for the implementation of the National Historic Preservation Program in New York and have been entered into the National Register of Historic Places. Senator James L. Buckley and the appropriate Representatives have also been provided with this information. By copy of this letter, the State Liaison Officer, Dr. Louis C. Jones, Chairman, New York State Historic Trust, Parks and Recreation, Building 2 - State Campus, Albany, New York 12226, has likewise been notified. A leaflet explaining the National Register is enclosed.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed)

Director

Enclosures

MAR 18 1971

Entered in the National Register

cc: Dr. Louis C. Jones, Chairman, New York State Historic Trust, Parks and Recreation, Building 2 - State Campus, Albany, New York 12226

Also notified:	United States Senate	House of Representatives
	Hon. James L. Buckley	Hon. Carleton J. King
		Hon. Howard W. Robison
		Hon. Samuel S. Stratton

BASIC FILE RETAINED IN HR

SMarusin:naf

3/12/71

HR

Properties added to the National Register of Historic Places

NEW YORK

Old Saratoga County Courthouse Complex	Saratoga County, New York
Second Tompkins County Courthouse	Tompkins County, New York
Van Schaick House	Albany County, New York
New York State Department of Education Building	Albany County, New York
Binghamton City Hall	Broome County, New York
Whipple Cast and Wrought - Iron Bowstring Truss Bridge	Albany County, New York