

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Jersey County Courthouse

and or common

2. Location

street & number Public Square

N/A not for publication

city, town Jerseyville

N/A vicinity of

state Illinois

code 012

county Jersey

code 083

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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	N/A 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 Jersey County Board

street & number Jersey County Courthouse, Public Square

city, town Jerseyville

N/A vicinity of

state Illinois

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Jersey County Courthouse

street & number Public Square

city, town Jerseyville

state Illinois

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Survey see continuation sheet  
title Illinois Historic Structures has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date October 1973

federal  state  county  local

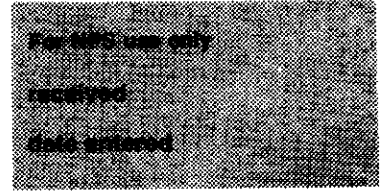
depository for survey records Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

city, town Old State Capitol, Springfield

state Illinois

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Continuation sheet Jersey County Courthouse Item number 6

Page 1

Illinois Historic Landmarks Survey

April 1975

X  State

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency  
Old State Capitol  
Springfield, IL 62701

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" 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

The Jersey County Courthouse is located on the Public Square, one block west of the main thoroughfare, in Jerseyville, Illinois. The courthouse stands in the center of the Square, with its main entrance facing south. The Square has a park-like appearance in its eastern and southern sections. A parking lot occupies the western portion, and the northeast corner, to the rear of the courthouse, is occupied by a modern one-story jail structure. This building is not included in the nomination. The new jail building replaced an earlier jail (built in 1885) which stood on the northwest corner of the square until October of 1985, when it was demolished.

The present Jersey County Courthouse is the third courthouse to occupy the Public Square, which was donated by the original owner specifically for county administrative buildings. The first courthouse, built one year after the organization of Jersey County in 1840, burned in 1884, and an interim building constructed after the fire was moved from the site in 1892 to make way for the present courthouse.

The first courthouse was a simple, a two-story brick structure, square in plan, with a hip roof and center cupola. The building design was a popular one for early Illinois courthouses. The jail facilities were on the ground floor with the courtroom above. Within a short time after its construction, a two-story front porch was added to the south facade providing direct access to the second floor courtroom. A north facade addition of this same period was used as a jail on the first floor and the second floor as a jury room. In 1862-63, fireproof offices were constructed separate from the courthouse to house the circuit and county clerks. This building served this purpose until the present courthouse was completed.

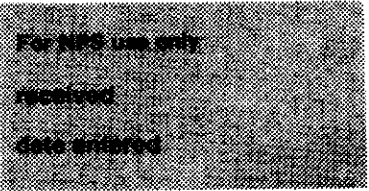
The second courthouse, hurriedly constructed after the 1884 fire, was a one-story frame building built at the cost of \$900. There being no jail for the county, prisoners were housed in the jail at Carrollton until a new jail was built in 1885. This sheriff's residence and jail was erected for \$15,000 and was an impressive two-story brick and stone Gothic-inspired design.

In 1892, the Jersey County board of supervisors submitted a proposition to vote \$40,000 in bonds for the erection of a permanent courthouse. The vote approving the building's construction was 1,366 for, and 977 against. On February 3, 1898, the plans of the architect, Henry Elliot, were approved, and the contractor, F.W. Menke of Quincy, Illinois, was accepted on April 11, 1893. The laying of the cornerstone of the new courthouse was celebrated by Jersey County citizens, the county board, and the county officers of Greene County on July 4, 1893. Construction was completed and the building occupied in the summer of 1894, in time for the September term of the circuit court. The total cost of the building was \$40,411.85.

see continuation sheet

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The courthouse is a two-story Romanesque Revival building, augmented by a raised basement, a third story, lit by small windows just below the roofline, a dormered attic space, and a four-story tiered tower. The building is 124½ feet high, 90 feet long and 71 feet wide. The cross-plan building is rough faced with buff-colored Grafton limestone and beige Bedford stone serves as contrasting trim. The front facade consists of two-story terminal towers and a central gabled section fronted by a one-story porch with access to the raised first floor. The near-identically fenestrated side facades articulate the crossplan with projecting central, gabled pavillions. The rear facade is a simple three-bay block with a central gable in the roofline. The tower rises directly behind the front facade block, to the south of the building's center. It is supported by a square two-story base with projecting rectangular bays at the steeply-pitched roofline. The tower itself is octagonal and the faceted dome with pinnacled gables rests on a round arch arcaded base. The square base and tower are presently sheathed in a silver-gray metal covering.

The exterior of the main building is finished with rock face limestone quarried in nearby Grafton along the bluffs of the Mississippi River. The stone is extremely strong and was extensively used for Mississippi River bridges and dykes. The polychromatic effect of the contrasting stones is very subtle, and the horizontal belt and string coursing gives a sense of weight and solidity to the building. Tall exterior window openings counteract the horizontality of the stone coursing, as does the windows and roof peaks of the towers and gabled dormers. Cornice line crenellations and corner cushions top off the wall surfaces.

The front facade of the courthouse is the most highly ornamented as it makes use of a variety of stone finishes, both carved and worked. Second story tower windows are topped by relieving arches with edged aslar surrounds. A foliated stone course separates the two rows of windows. A smooth-faced, Richardsonian-inspired band of four windows in the central section and checkerboard patterning above contrast sharply with the rock face wall finish. Floral carving in the gable and dormer pediments have darkened with age, and they effectively accentuate the verticality of the design. The massive rectangular porch at the base of the facade is a worthy entrance to this important public building.

The interior plan of the basement and first floor is organized around a central north-south hallway with rooms to the side for service areas, offices and records storage. A three-story octagonal rotunda space is directly beneath the tower, and stairs to all floors are adjacent to this space. The northern half of the second floor is occupied by the main courtroom and the southern half by the rotunda area and offices. The third floor was originally the balcony area for the two-story courtroom, however, it has been reduced in size by closing off the balcony space and inserting an acoustical tile drop ceiling. A library presently occupies

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the eastern half of the balcony space, and the western half is used for storage.

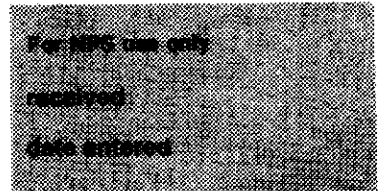
The courthouse contains two functioning vaults for records storage, one at the rear of the county clerk's office and one in the circuit clerk's office across the hall. The vaulted basement support spaces are being used as a mechanical equipment room and a storage area for older county records.

The interior of the courthouse is finished with wooden wainscoting, stair and rotunda balusters and railings, plastered walls and plaster ornamentation; pressed metal ceilings, and marble floors on the first floor only. Nearly all the smaller exterior windows are filled with patterned colored stained glass, as are the interior hallway windows and door transoms on the first floor and the faceted rotunda ceiling. The woodwork is rather plain with simple baseboards, vertically panelled wainscoting dados, and egg-and-dart and bead moldings in the cornice board of the wainscoting and door frames. Rectangular stair posts have a simple carved relief foliage design at the top, chamfered corners, and an incised leaf motif at the base. Balusters are simple turned spool designs. Much of the plaster ornamentation is in the rotunda space and main courtroom. Access to rooms off the first floor octagonal space are through arched openings. Floral plaster designs appear on the supporting pier capitals and arch spandrels over the openings. Elaborate cornice and ceiling designs feature lion heads, garlands, fleur-de-lis, and cluster floral patterns. Some of the plaster work is gilded. The courtroom frieze plasterwork is inspired by gothic tracery designs. The first floor vestibule, rotunda, and central hall flooring is finished in red and beige marble tile. The stained glass windows have a variety of patterns and colors, with geometric and tracery patterns being predominant, and soft amber, lavender, and yellow colors create warm interiors. Nearly all the pressed metal ceilings have been covered over with drop ceilings, however, the courtroom ceiling is still visible in the third floor storage area. The ceiling has a large cove cornice with wreath and laurel designs, and the flat ceiling is a coffered pattern.

The building's integrity is very good on the exterior and good on the interior. A new basement entrance constructed of Grafton stone has been added to the rear of the building and corner gargoyles on the tower base and the statue of Justice above the dome have been removed. The gargoyles appear to have been animal figures with up-curving serpent-like tails. Perhaps they were an interpretation of the Indian cave drawing of the Piasa bird, sighted by Marquette and Joliet on the Mississippi River in what would become Jersey County.

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Alterations on the interior include the enclosure of the courtroom balcony space, dropped ceilings in most of the offices, and synthetic wall panelling in two rooms off the first floor vestibule. The interior finishwork is intact and in good condition.

## 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 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 type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1893-1936 **Builder/Architect** Henry Elliott

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Jersey County Courthouse meets criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places Criteria for Significance. The courthouse is important because it is the seat of the governmental functions for this western Illinois county. It is also a very good example of the Romanesque Revival style of architecture popular in public building design during the last two decades of the 19th century and the first years of the 20th century.

Jersey County was organized in 1839, approximately 20 years after the first white permanent settlement in the county. The 367 square mile county had been part of Greene County since 1821, and previously part of Madison County before it was divided in 1812. The primary attractions of the region during this early period were its arable prairie lands, wooden areas for pasture, and the natural resources of the major rivers on its western and southern borders. Land was acquired in 1820 at the cost of \$40 per forty acre tract and the well-watered land insured success for stock raising and grain crops. By the 1830s towns were being laid out, and the new towns of Jerseyville and Grafton would continue to prosper and maintain their prominence in the county's economic development.

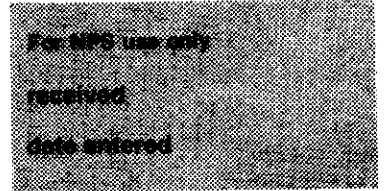
In 1879 the county changed from a Commissioner to a Township form of government. By 1884 seven communities had been incorporated including Jerseyville (1837), Grafton (1853), Fieldon (1857), Brighton (1859), Otterville (1867), Elsay (1873), and Fidelity (1884). Jerseyville had been selected as the county seat in 1839, and its development was closely tied to the governmental business of the county seat and its role as a service center for the county. Grafton, the county's river town, served as the link to the lands south of the Mississippi River. As early as 1833 a ferry was established in the community and by 1844 the county's first highway was built between Jerseyville and Grafton. During the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century Grafton supported many businesses and industries, the most notable being the Grafton Quarries, a boatworks, and fisheries. The stone quarries were the largest, single industry in the county before 1900, and during its most prosperous years, 1866-67, over 2,000 men were employed. Jersey County also had its share of coal mining as Piasa Township was actively mined during the early 20th century. Piasa was also the location of a Chautauqua community organized in 1884 and which still functions today as a private resort. However, Jersey County's largest "employer" has always been and still is agriculture, both livestock raising and grain crops.

The 20th century saw the continued focus on agricultural development. In 1912 only 14% of the county land was used for non-agriculture purposes such as urban development, highways and railroads. However, recreational development of the Illinois River was advanced by the establishment of

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the Pere Marquette State Park in the 1930s. A total of 10,000 acres was set aside by the state and federal governments for conservation and recreation purposes. The State Park and other rivertowns continue to draw outside visitors to the region.

The county courthouse serves as the physical repository for the important governmental records of Jersey County, and it is the headquarters for the political, judicial and administrative business of the county. The various county offices and officers which function from the building are the county clerk, circuit clerk, Sheriff, Judge of the Probate Court, Treasurer, Assessor, Regional Superintendent of Schools, State's Attorney, County Surveyor, and County Coroner. This substantial building is indicative of the image the people of Jersey County chose to project of themselves in 1893. It occupies the site which has always been reserved for the seat of government and justice in the county.

The Jersey County Courthouse is a very good Illinois example of Romanesque Revival public building design, and the building is an important design of the architect, Henry Elliott of Jacksonville, Illinois. In terms of its massing, interior plan and polychromatic stone finishwork, the building exhibits a certain design sophistication. Henry Elliott was familiar with courthouse design as he was responsible for designing the nearby Greene County Courthouse in Carrollton in 1891. Elliott published in 1891 a book entitled, Specifications for the Fire Proof Courthouse. It was not unusual for architects to "advertise" their expertise in this manner. Elliott's proficiency at designing this building type is evidenced by four known county courthouse designs in Illinois which include the Jersey and Greene County courthouses, the Edgar County Courthouse in Paris (1891-93) and the Pike County Courthouse in Pittsfield (1894-95). The latter three buildings are presently listed on the National Register as single buildings or as part of an historic district.

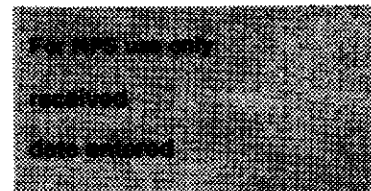
A comparative evaluation of the four buildings reveals that the Jerseyville building was an elaboration of the earlier Carrollton building through the incorporation of design motifs and massing of the intervening Paris design. The overall octagonal massing of the Paris building with its corner entrances was translated to an interior octagonal rotunda below the tower in Jerseyville. Although the stocky cross configuration of the Carrollton building was used in Jerseyville, the earlier building did not have an interior expression of the square tower. Also, the terminal towers and gable dormers of the Jerseyville building are very much like those of Paris. The most obvious borrowing is the use of an octagonal tower and square base very similar to the earlier Paris building.

Cost comparisons of the Paris and Jerseyville buildings raise an interesting question. The Edgar County Courthouse cost approximately \$122,000 and the Jersey County Courthouse, \$40,000. Why such a difference?



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The Jersey County building was constructed for the most part of local stone which may account for part of the reduced cost. However, it would appear that Elliott was consciously designing a building which addressed the financial status of the client, the functional requirements, and aesthetic considerations.

The Jerseyville building exhibits those characteristics associated with good Romanesque Revival design: massiveness of building configuration; attention to the texture and color of building materials; consciously designed unfinished, rough quality to the exterior; and the incorporation of motifs associated with early medieval buildings. Elliott made limited use of distinct Richardsonian motifs, including the front row of windows expressed in ashlar stone, the checkerboard wall pattern above, and the checkerboard balustrades of the front porch and tower bays. The pyramidal tower rooflines and round arch windows are directly linked to medieval designs. The stonework is especially interesting as Elliott not only contrasted stone colors but also the stone coursing was expressed in a variety of finishes. The worked surfaces range from rock face for all the large wall surfaces, rock face with a drafted top and bottom margin on some of the trim belt courses, and porch pillars ashlar for the arches and front window row, and carved ornament on the capitals of the tower windows and dormer and front gable pediments. The skill of the stonemason is also expressed in the fine stone finishwork.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Cooper, Marshall M. History of Jerseyville, Illinois; 1822 to 1901  
Jerseyville: Jerseyville Republican Print, 1901.

see continuation sheet

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Jerseyville South, Illinois

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	5	7	3	0	9	1	0	4	4	3	3	1	7	1	0
Zone		Easting				Northing									

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing									

C 

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D 

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H 

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** The building is located on the lot surrounded to Pearl, Lafayette, Exchange, and Washington Streets in Jerseyville, Illinois and the boundary follows a line fifteen (15) feet from the courthouse building walls.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ann V. Swallow, Assistant National Register Coordinator

organization Illinois Historic Preservation Agency date February 27, 1986

street & number Old State Capitol telephone 217-785-4512

city or town Springfield state Illinois

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Director, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency date 3/18/86

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

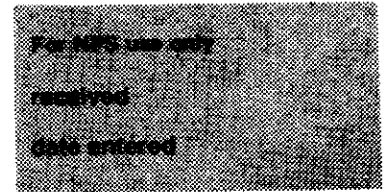
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet Jersey County Courthouse Item number 9

Page 1

Hamilton, B.B. Historical Sketch of Jersey county, Illincis Jacksonville:  
Courier Steam Printing House, 1876.

Hamilton, Oscar Brown (ed), History of Jersey County, Illinois Chicago:  
Munsell Publishing Company, 1919.

History of greene and Jersey Counties, Illinois. Springfield; Continental  
Historical Company, 1885.

Jerseyville Illinois, U.S.A. in Nineteen Hundred Twelve Jerseyville: James  
Allan Reid, Publisher, 1912.

Quasquicentennial Committee Jersey county Quasquicentennial; 1839-1964  
Kane: Umphress Printing, 1964.

Seidenburg, Frederic "Dedication of Marquette Monument at Grafton, Illinois."  
Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society. Vol. 22, No. 3  
(Oct. 1929) 451-59.

Shelton, Clara Belle Rugged hills and Stalwart People Jerseyville, 1969.  
(Mimeographed)



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

P.O. BOX 37127

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20013-7127

IN REPLY REFER TO:

**MAY 16 1986**

The Director of the National Park Service is pleased to inform you that the following properties have been entered in the National Register of Historic Places beginning May 4, 1986 and ending May 10, 1986. For further information call (202) 343-9552.

STATE, County, Vicinity, Property, Address, (Date Listed)

ALABAMA, Choctaw County, Mount Sterling, Mount Sterling Methodist Church, Near jct. of CR 43 and CR 27 (05/08/86)

ALABAMA, Colbert County, Leighton, Preuit Oaks, Cotton Town Rd. (05/08/86)

ALABAMA, DeKalb County, Fort Payne, Alabama Builders' Hardware Manufacturing Company, 204 Eighth St. NE (05/08/86)

ALABAMA, Etowah County, Gadsden, Hood, Colonel O. R., House, 862 Chestnut St. (05/08/86)

ALABAMA, Marshall County, Arab, Hotel Thompson, 104 First Ave. NE (05/08/86)

CALIFORNIA, San Francisco County, San Francisco, Ship KING PHILIP—Schooner REPORTER (Shipwreck Site), Foot of Ortega St. (05/08/86)

DELAWARE, New Castle County, Townsend, Townsend Historic District, Roughly bounded by Taylor, Main, Commerce, Lattiamus, South, Ginn, and Walnut Sts., Railroad Ave., and Cannery Ln. (05/08/86)

GEORGIA, Stewart County, Richland, Richland Historic District, Roughly bounded by Ponder and Harmony Sts., GA 27 and Broad St. (05/05/86)

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, Blackstone Hotel, 80 E. Balbo Dr. (05/08/86)

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Chicago, Jeffery—Cyril Historic District, 7146—7148, 7128—7138 Cyril Ave., 7144—7148, 7147, & 7130 S. Jeffery Blvd., and 1966—1974 E. Seventy-first Pl. (05/05/86)

ILLINOIS, Cook County, Lemont, Lemont Methodist Episcopal Church, 306 Lemont St. (05/05/86)

ILLINOIS, Effingham County, Altamont, Wright, Dr. Charles M., House, 3 W. Jackson St. (05/08/86)

ILLINOIS, Jersey County, Jerseyville, Jersey County Courthouse, Public Square (05/08/86)

ILLINOIS, Kane County, Aurora, Aurora Watch Factory, 603—621 LaSalle St. (05/08/86)

ILLINOIS, Mercer County, Keithsburg, Keithsburg Historic District, Roughly bounded by Third, Jackson, Fifth, and Washington Sts. (05/08/86)

KENTUCKY, Elliott County, Conley—Greene Rockshelter (15EL4) (05/08/86)

LOUISIANA, Terrebonne Parish, Gibson, Gibson Methodist Episcopal Church, S. Bayou Black Dr. (05/03/86)

MAINE, Aroostock County, Presque Isle, U.S. Post Office—Presque Isle Main, 23 Second St. (05/09/86)

MAINE, Cumberland County, Portland, U.S. Post Office—Portland Main, 125 Forest Ave. (05/09/86)

MARYLAND, Howard County, Ellicott City vicinity, Enniscorthy, 3412 Folly Quarter Rd. (05/08/86)

MASSACHUSETTS, Hampshire County, Ware, Ware Center Historic District, MA 9 and Greenwich Plains Rd. (05/08/86)