FHR 8-300 (11-78)

D-143

(See also D-185)

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

For HCRS use only

received

date entered 15

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic

and or common Dorchester County Courthouse and Jail

2. Location

street & number 206 High Street N/A not for publication

city, town Cambridge N/A vicinity of congressional district 1

state Maryland code 24 county Dorchester code 019

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	X public	X occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
X building(s)	___ private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	X yes: restricted	X government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	N/A	___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Commissioners of Dorchester County

street & number P.O. Box 307

city, town Cambridge N/A vicinity of state Maryland 21613

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Dorchester County Courthouse

street & number 206 High Street

city, town Cambridge state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined elegible? ___ yes X no

date 1981 ___ federal X state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

7: Description

D-143

dition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	X original site
X good	___ ruins	X altered	___ moved date _____
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Dorchester County Courthouse District is situated on Lot 15 on the original plat of the town of Cambridge and is bounded by High Street, Spring Lane, Gay Street, and Court Lane. Sharing the land with the Courthouse to the southwest is a small park, and to the southeast the County Jail. The Dorchester County Courthouse is an 1850's Italiante influenced, painted brick structure which was enlarged and extensively remodeled with Georgian Revival decorative detailing in the 1930's. The County Jail is a Queen Anne style granite structure with brick and terra cotta appointments constructed in the 1880s. Over the years it has been altered by an enclosed porch and a block kitchen wing. Spring Valley Park is a low lying open space to the southwest of the Courthouse and Jail. It is a product of vernacular growth with a cast iron fountain as its focal point.

Dorchester County Courthouse faces northwest and is separated from High Street by a grassy plot with concrete walk connecting the two, flanked by low sheared yew hedges. To the west of the Courthouse is a large sycamore tree and to the north is a linden.

The facade of the Courthouse is divided into three nearly equal parts, each being entirely different. The central division contains the entrance to the building and is flanked by two towers, the north tower being three stories and the west tower being two stories. Supporting the large brick structure is a granite foundation of enormous slabs with a chamfered water-table course above. On the north corner of the building are three dates on the corner stone, MDCCLXX, MDCCLII, and MCMXXXI. Only the center date is original to the building, the other two having been added in 1931. Common bond brickwork was used throughout with a header course every seventh row.

Three Romanesque arches in the central section of the building contain double doors with semi-circular wood panels above bearing a large recessed circle with flanking triangular recesses. Bases and capitals of the pilasters are made of granite, and the sill and three steps as well. The semi-circular arches consist of three courses of corbeled brick, the outer brick being molded. Centered above the two flanking doors are circular plaques bearing the Seals of the State of Maryland and Dorchester County. Above the central door is a standard for a flag pole. In the arch of the central door is an iron hexagonal light fixture supported on ogee brackets of wrought iron.

Above the entrance on the second story are two large windows with sills resting on a five row belt course. At impost level of the Romanesque arches there is another belt course which also rises above the windows. The sash have 16/12 panes. Under the box cornice are modillion-like brackets.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET # 1

FOR DESCRIPTION SUMMARY SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #7

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

A slate covering of the hip roof terminates in a copper gutter at the bottom and a copper ridge where the hip meets the "built-up" deck above.

Both towers are identical up to just below the cornice. The size difference between the first story windows (6/6) and those of the second story (16/12) suggests a difference in function of the original two stories. The first story windows have protruding sills of granite supported on two molded brick brackets. Their heads each have a projecting arch. The second story windows are identical to the central windows, there being one in each tower, connected visually by the belt course at impost level. At the corners of the towers are brick quoins. The roof of the west tower bears the same cornice as the remainder of the building; however, the north tower is one tall story higher and terminates with the same type pyramidal roof. Both northeast and northwest faces of the tower have a pair of windows (8/6) separated by a pilaster. There is a belt course at impost level.

The northeast facade of the Courthouse is accented with the tower which protrudes about four feet from the face of the remainder of the building. In the first floor of the tower are two small windows, like the northwest facade, with one above. All other windows on the first story have 8/8 sash and segmental protruding arches with descenders. Like the front windows, all of the remaining windows on the first story have overhanging granite sills supported by brick brackets. Those above are identical to the second floor windows of the facade. The final bay of this facade terminates in a flat roof with parapet being a continuation of the impost belt course. This final bay is also recessed a few inches back from the plane of the building. The final bay of the principal plane is an entrance on ground level with stone segmentally pedimented architrave set in a field of quoins. Between the third and fourth bays of this plane, a very fine difference in the amount of mortar between bricks indicates the original from the 1931 addition.

All of the southeast elevation dates from 1931. Most of what is visible is the flat-roof single bay extension stretching along the entire depth of the building. It has seven windows on the second story (3/3) and six windows on the first (6/6). The latter have the same treatment as the side windows, except they lack the brick brackets beneath the granite sills. A chimney rises from the south corner of this facade and carries the same belt cources as the body of the building.

There is nothing on the southwest facade to suggest the presence of a tower, there being seven uniform bays plus the lower "extension". One difference, however, is in the placement of a concrete bulkhead leading to the Civil Defense Shelter.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #2

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

Inside the three arches of the High Street facade (N.W.) is a stair hall with hexagonal tile floor set in cement. The walls are plastered, and the ceiling has acoustic tile. A very broad stair ascends against the back wall in three flights to the front of the hall above. The balustrade has hugh newels and intermediates with drop finials. A bold mahogany handrail ascends over the newels and around the stairwell above. Two turned balusters per step and wave fretwork applied to the step ends grace the majestic stair. Along the two sides of the ceiling are the only remaining plaster box cornice of the 1853 period. Beneath the first landing is a tiny closet with original hexagonal tiles set in sand.

To the north side of the stair hall is the office of the Clerk of the Court, his office being in a corner of the tower. The remainder of the tower room has a counter and waiting room. Beyond, to the south, is one long office for the secretaires of the Clerk.

On the opposite side of the building, in the south tower, is another office of the Clerk of the Court and access to the large vault for land records. Only the vault is floored with hexagonal tiles. The vault was extended to its present dimensions in 1931.

Separating the secretaries of the Clerk and the vault is a wide corridor running in a southwesterly direction on line with the northernmost arch of the entrance. At the end of this plain corridor is a door to the office of the Court Reporter. To the north is a back stair hall and lavatories. To the south is the office of the Register of Wills and Orphans Court. Opening off of this space is the vault for the records and an office. All of this space is within the 1931 addition.

On the second story the stair hall and corridor occupy the same space as below. Two huge windows with original paneled jambs light the waiting area of the second story hall. A bold plaster cornice with dentils graces the ceiling. The entrance to the principal Court Room has a dentiled architrave and double paneled doors. Above the architrave is a semi-circular transom. Flanking this entrance are arches in the plaster with keystone at top, one leading to the corridor, the other being a recess for balance. At right angles to the latter is another arch leading to a back corridor extending in a southwesterly direction. On the right side of the corridor is a reporters' room and ladies' lavatory and on the left is another entrance to the Court Room, identical to the previous one. (In 1970 a bomb was planted in the building. This area was restored immediately thereafter.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #3

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

In the north tower is a small courtroom for the Circuit Court. Opening on to this room is an ante-chamber and library above the corresponding space of the secretaries of the Clerk of the Court. The library had a new balcony installed in 1970 which doubled the shelf space of the original. At the end of the southeast corridor is a mens' lavatory, back stair and Judges' Chamber. Two other doors open on the opposite side of the hall into the principal Court Room.

The Court Room has five large windows on its southwest side, the Judge's Bench on the southeast side. Flanking the Judge's Bench, with its paneled desk and backdrop, are two doors with architrave and semicircular windows above. These windows are reflected in the balancing entrance doors on the northwest side of the Court Room. The northeast wall has two small doors with circular decorative grills above. Wainscoting, about six feet tall, surrounds the room. Squarish benches painted off-white with wood trim remind one of a church more than a court room. Immediately behind the Judge's Bench are the Judge's Chambers and the Jury Room.

A basement exists only beneath the 1931 addition. In the basement are three vaults, all having early iron doors with decorative cast iron floral ornamenst. These doors are undoubtedly re-used from the 1853 vaults. Two rooms are used for furnace and electrical functions and two for civil defense. There are also two lavatories and a storage room.

According to the plans for 1931, most of the interior of the original section was removed, i.e. new plaster walls, tile floors and ceilings. Spaces were changed to meet the demands of the county at that time. Consequently, little interior fabric remains of the 1853 period besides the tile floors and stairway. Stove flues or fireplaces were located on the back walls of the two tower rooms on both floors. They served both sides of those walls. These were removed in 1931 when the central heating system was installed.

Between 1931 and 1970 minor changes took place which were not recorded with architects' drawings. These changes were due to the natural growth of the county and the expansion of county services. In 1970 a new office building was constructed across Court Street to alleviate the pressure on the old Courthouse. After that time the interior was changed to meet the needs of the few offices which remain. In 1970, after a bomb exploded in a janitorial closet in the second floor west corner, several exterior and interior repairs were necessary. They were undertaken with such care that it is not evident unless one is looking at the 1931 plans of the building.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #4

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

Behind the Courthouse, located very close to Court Street, is the Dorchester County Jail. No documentation has been found in the records, but it appears to have been built around 1890. In style it is a Queen Anne building, in form it is a "T" shape, two-story hip roof structure. It was originally built as a combination jail and jailer's residence. In recent years, however, the jailer's family was moved out and the rooms were converted to cells on the second floor and offices on the first.

The entire building is constructed of rough-cut granite blocks with decorative bands of brick and terra cotta and limestone sills and lintels. Its principal facade looks toward the northwest and is three bays wide, two stories tall, with a central pedimented pavillion. The building has a slate covered hip roof with cupola in the center between decorative trim finials. Three chimneys (one rebuilt) pierce the roof and have a curious eight and ten corner plan and as many vertical lines. Across the first story is an eclosed porch. The roof and foundation existed as an open porch prior to its enclosure for office space. Judging from an early photograph of the jail in Elias Jones' History of Dorchester County, the porch and kitchen were preceded by very small porches. The kitchen is now a one story concrete block structure painted green on the southwest side of the building.

There is a plain stepped watertable, but decorative bands continue around the building at sill and impost levels. The former is composed of three courses of reeded brick or terra cotta separated on the bottom by one course of brick and at the top by a double thickness of black brick (residence course now painted white). At lintel level the top course of reeded bricks arches over the windows. Above the second story windows is a single course of reeded brick beneath a bracket and dentil cornice painted white in contrast to the plain red brick between. The cornice continues around the pediment and frames the lunette window within the pediment.

The northeast side of the building consists of two bays belonging to the residence and four large bays to the jail propert. The rear windows of the residence are wider than the front windows and have a pair of 1/1 sash in both stories. Each of the jail windows has a semi-circular arch at the top of the barred two story openings. The same coursing of reeded terra cotta and brick carry around this section of the building at sill and impost level, although the latter is a few courses higher than the second story sill course. The bay closest to the residence appears to have been a door with transom above, but the door has been blocked up and stuccoed. At the apex of the hip roof on this section is a larger cupola with ogee roof having a ball finial. Smaller windows at ground level (the building is on a hill) are very plain, with black-painted limestone lintels and bars in front of the sash.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #5

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

From the end of the southeast side of the building are two protrusions, one square on the ground floor and round above, the other a semi-circular protrusion which is a chimney for the heating system. The top of the former has a small metal dome with ball finial. Flanking the chimney are two narrow windows on each of the three levels.

The southwest side of the building is similar to the northeast with more regularity to the fenestration.

The original plan of the building consisted of four rooms on both floors divided by a central stair hall in the residence and two rows of four cells on each floor with corridor around each row in the jail proper. In recent years changes have been made in both sections. The interior was not made available to the surveyor for the preparation of this report.

The land drops off appreciably from the Courthouse and Jail into a small park which has been called Spring Valley since at least the turn of the century. It is called after a spring which is located beneath the bandstand.

The brick platform with iron balustrade between brick piers was constructed in the mid-1960's and is dedicated to the memory of President John F. Kennedy. Prior to the present structure, there stood a wooden Victorian bandstand in the same place (see Xerox).

Between the bandstand and High Street is a cast iron fountain in a large round basin of formstone. This was moved to its present location at the same time that the present bandstand was erected. It formerly stood closer to the bandstand. There is no maker's name on the fountain, but it probably dates from the 1890's and was made in Philadelphia.

The jail is an 1880s stone Queen Anne influenced structure with decorated brick banding and a back corner tower. The interior contains cell blocks with offices and former jailor-residence in the front section.

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400–1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500–1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600–1699	X architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/ humanitarian
___ 1700–1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ theater
X 1800–1899	___ commerce	___ exploration settlement	___ philosophy	___ transportation
X 1900–	___ communications	___ industry	X politics government	___ other (specify)
		___ invention		

Specific dates See below Builder Architect See below

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Specific Dates and Builder/Architect:

Courthouse: Erected 1853-1854; Richard Upjohn, Architect
Remodeled 1931-1932; William F. Stone, Jr., Architect
Charles E. Brohawn & Bros., Cambridge, Builders

Jail: Erected 1883; Charles L. Carson, Baltimore, Architect
J. E. Chilcutt & R. H. Stevens, Builders
Remodeled 1934; Henry Powell Hopkins, Architect

Applicable Criteria: A, C

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The significance of the Dorchester County Courthouse and Jail is drawn from two sources. First, in the area of politics and government, these buildings have been a symbol of government and law in Dorchester County since construction in the 19th century. The structures also have architectural significance. The courthouse, though altered extensively on the inside, still retains the basic exterior design and shape as prepared by Richard Upjohn in 1851. Upjohn designed a number of buildings in Maryland, mainly churches, but the Dorchester County Courthouse is the only courthouse. The jail, which is one of the few governmental buildings on the Eastern Shore designed in the Queen Anne style, is the work of the Baltimore architect, Charles L. Carson, who practiced in the late 19th century.

HISTORY AND SUPPORT

The Dorchester County Courthouse District is important as a symbol of authority, law, equality and justice on a county level. This site has been the seat of government in the county since 1770. Architecturally, the Courthouse is noteworthy because the Romanesque style building was designed by Richard Upjohn, a very important architect of the mid-19th century. Although undocumented to date, the Jail is a fine example of Queen Anne style structure which was designed for a bygone era. Adjacent to these structures is an open park which has served the "lighted" needs of the public for the past two centuries.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #6

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

Dorchester County was founded in 1668-69 to include only slightly more area than it now encompasses. (A portion in the northeast was given to Caroline County in 1771.) Between its founding and 1674, court was held in private homes. In 1674 William Morgan gave 25 acres of "Harwood's Choice" with a dwelling to be used by the Justices of the County. This was used until around 1688, when a new courthouse was contracted to be built with Anthony Dawson. There is some debate whether Dawson actually did build the courthouse, but we know that court was being held in Cambridge at least as early as 1695. There is also some question as to the number and locations of courthouses in the town preceding the one built in 1770. The one built in 1770 was constructed in the same location as the present building and was the immediate predecessor thereof.

The brick courthouse was destroyed by fire in 1852 on May 9, and is believed to have been the product of arson. By July of that year the Commissioners of Dorchester County were in touch with Richard Upjohn, architect from Boston. Upjohn produced plans for the new building in the Romanesque style. By summer of 1854 the new courthouse was finished.

Between 1854 and 1930 the Upjohn Courthouse served the needs of the county, but by the late 20's it became apparent that more space would be needed. The architect for the addition and remodeling was William F. Stone, Jr., of Baltimore. Charles E. Brohawn and Bros. of Cambridge were the general contractors.

The architectural significance of the Courthouse is primarily that it was designed by Richard Upjohn. Upjohn is most noted for his church architecture which was primarily in the Gothic style. To differentiate between religious and secular buildings he used the "Italian style". This is evident in his design for the Utica City Hall which is a grander version of the Dorchester County Courthouse. As at the Utica City Hall, the uses of the building were apparent from the exterior in the placement of the entrance, towers, and difference in window detail. In the appendix to Everard Upjohn's monograph on Richard Upjohn, the Dorchester County Courthouse is classified a minor work in relation to the Utica City Hall or St. Paul's Church in Baltimore. As a matter of note, all of his six Eastern Shore commissions were classified secondary in nature.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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SEE CONTINUATION SHEET #7

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Less than one acre.

Quadrangle name Cambridge, Maryland.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	18	406340	4269510
B	18	406270	4269520
C	18	406160	4269620
D	18	406240	4269660
E			
F			
G			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

The property, bounded on all four sides by public roads, measures 200' along High Street, 375' along Spring Street, 195' along Gay Street, and 390' along Court Lane. The boundaries are defined by these streets.

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Allen B. Tolley and Michael Bourne

organization Dorchester County date May 1982

street & number P.O. Box 307 telephone

city or town Cambridge state Maryland 21613

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state X 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature J. Little 11-9-82

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date

For HCRS 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

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Jones, Elias. History of Dorchester County, Maryland. Williams and Wilkins Press. Baltimore, Md., 1902.

Mowbray, Calvin W. Early Dorchester. Cambridge, Maryland, 1979.

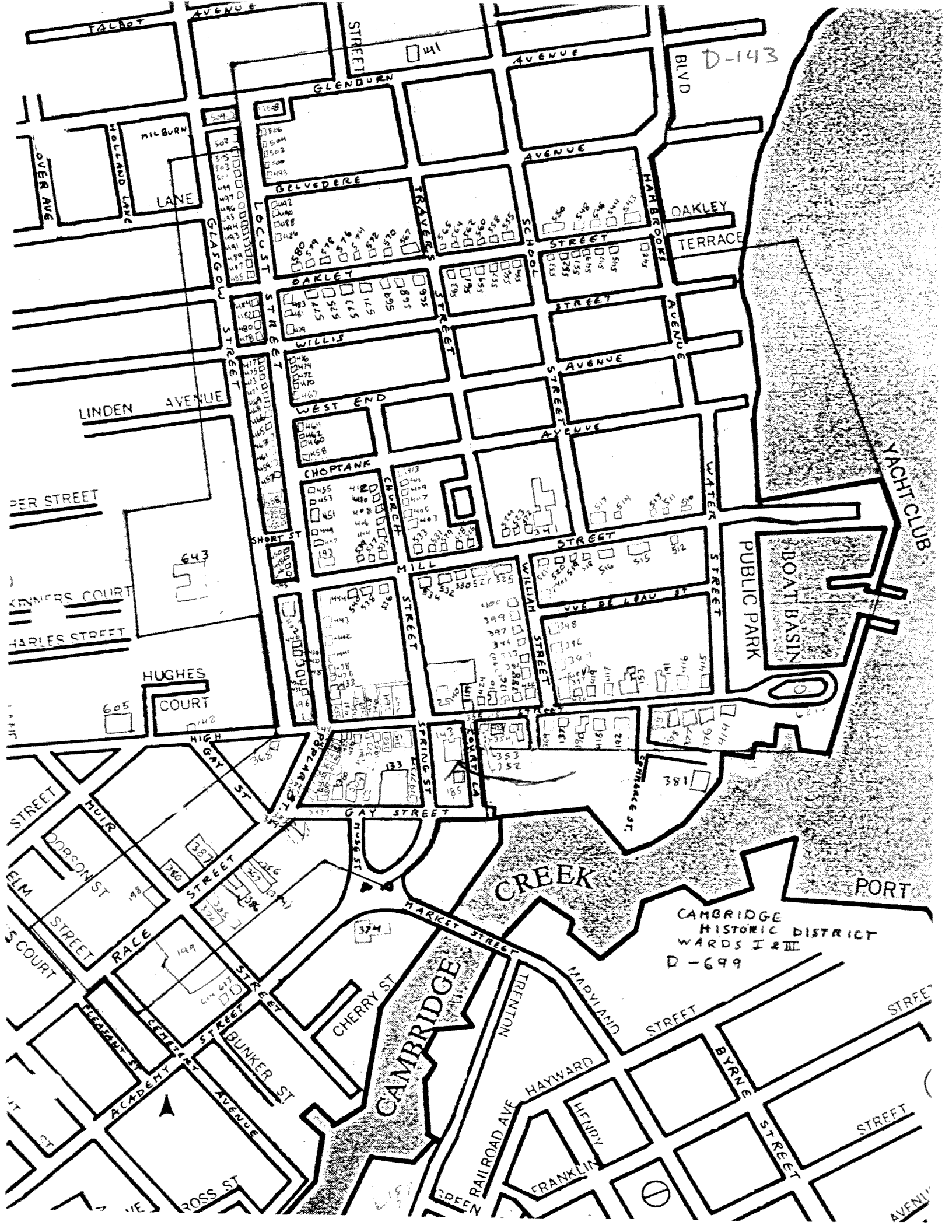
Radoff, Morris L. The County Courthouses and Records of Maryland, Part 1. Publication #12, The Hall of Records Commission, State of Maryland, Annapolis, 1960, pp. 103-105.

Upjohn, Everard M. Richard Upjohn, Architect and Churchman. DeCapo Press, New York, 1968. (Appendix: Class B).

Commissioners of Dorchester County. Dorchester County: A Pictorial History. Western Publishing Co., Inc., 1977, p. 86.

DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

The Dorchester County Courthouse is situated on Lot 15 on the original plat of the town of Cambridge and is bounded by High Street, Spring Lane, Gay Street, and Court Lane. Sharing the land with the courthouse to the southwest is a small park, and to the southeast, the County Jail. The Dorchester County Courthouse is and 1850s Italianate influenced, painted brick structure which was enlarged and extensively remodeled with Georgian Revival decorative detailing in the 1930s. The County Jail is a Queen Anne style granite structure with brick and terra cotta appointments constructed in the 1880s. Spring Valley Park is a low lying open space to the southwest of the courthouse and jail. It is a product of vernacular growth with a cast iron fountain as its focal point. The facade of the courthouse is divided into three nearly equal parts, each being entirely different. The central division contains the entrance to the building and is flanked by two towers, the north tower being three stories and the west tower being two stories. Supporting the large brick structure is a granite foundation of enormous slabs with a chamfered watertable course above. Three Romanesque arches in the central section of the building contain double doors with semi-circular wood panels above bearing a large recessed circle with flanking triangular recesses.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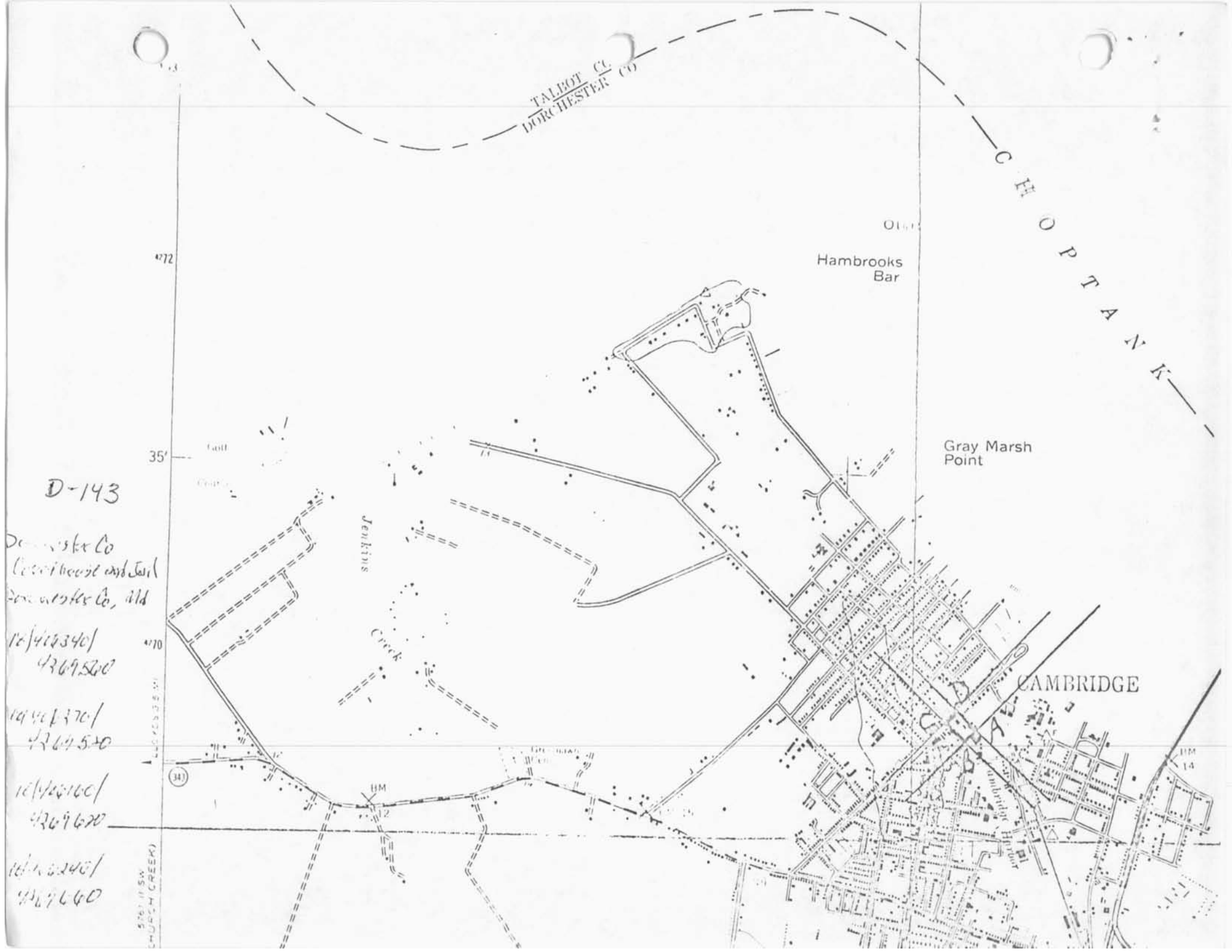
FALBOT AVENUE
GLENBURN AVENUE
BLVD
MILBURN
HOLLAND LANE
OVER AVE
LANE
BELVEDERE AVENUE
GLASGOW STREET
LOCUST STREET
TRAVERS STREET
SCHOOL STREET
HAMBROOKS AVENUE
OAKLEY TERRACE
OAKLEY STREET
WILLIS AVENUE
WEST END AVENUE
LINDEN AVENUE
CHOPTANK AVENUE
CHURCH STREET
WATER STREET
YACHT CLUB
PER STREET
SHORT ST
MILL STREET
WILLIAM STREET
VUE DE L'EAU ST
PUBLIC PARK
BOAT BASIN
KINNERS COURT
HARLES STREET
HUGHES COURT
HIGH
GAY ST
POPLAR ST
SPRING ST
COURT LA
COMMERCE ST.
GAY STREET
MUSE ST
MUIR
DORSON ST
ELM STREET
RACE STREET
CREEK
PORT
MARKET STREET
CAMBRIDGE
CAMBRIDGE HISTORIC DISTRICT WARDS I & III
D-699
CHERRY ST
TRENTON
MARYLAND STREET
BYRNE STREET
HAYWARD
HENRY
RAILROAD AVE
FRANKLIN
GREEN
BUNKER ST
CEMETERY AVENUE
ACADEMY
PLEASANT ST
ROSS ST
STREET



D-143

Dorchester Co
Courthouse and Jail
Dorchester Co, Md

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4269560

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D 143

D Co Courthouse

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