

PH0502146

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED AUG 9 1977

DATE ENTERED MAR 28 1978

**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 Bristol County Courthouse Complex

AND/OR COMMON same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 15, 11, 9 Court Street

CITY, TOWN Taunton VICINITY OF 10th
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE Massachusetts CODE 025 COUNTY Bristol CODE 005

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input 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:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Bristol County

STREET & NUMBER 9 Court Street

CITY, TOWN Taunton VICINITY OF STATE Massachusetts, 02780

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Bristol County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER 11 Court Street

CITY, TOWN Taunton STATE Massachusetts, 02780

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Inventory of the Historic Assets of the Commonwealth

DATE 1976
 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Massachusetts Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN Boston STATE Massachusetts, 02108

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE 1894 (#1)
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Bristol County Courthouse complex consists of a group of three buildings situated in the downtown section of Taunton at the corner of Court Street and Taunton Green. The buildings occupy approximately two acres of property directly opposite the town Common.

The First District Courthouse (#1) was constructed in 1826 and was moved west to its present site in 1894 to provide space for the erection of the Superior Courthouse (#2). The elegant two story brick masonry Greek Revival structure at 15 Court Street faces south. The partially exposed basement is defined by a wide granite water table at the first story floor level. The three bay wide facade is dominated by an Ionic portico. Four two story columns support a heavy molded entablature beneath a triangular pediment. Ten full length stone steps with iron railings lead to the center entrance. The double three panel doors are flanked by delicate pilasters, headed by an entablature containing the name of the building and crowned by a triangular pediment. On either side of these doors are 6/6 windows with panels below. Three symmetrically placed 12/12 windows occupy the second story. The corners of the building are articulated by wide brick pilasters. The pediment of the portico is surmounted by an octagonal cupola with arched louvered openings and a weathervane. There is a later addition on the north (rear) elevation.

NO PHOTO

The Bristol County Superior Courthouse (#2) is set well back on a spacious lawn. The building faces south toward Taunton Green and stands on the site of two previous courthouses (1772 and 1826). The distinguished building dominates the center of the city. The imposing Richardsonian Romanesque structure, designed by Frank Irving Cooper, was built in 1894. It is of rough faced granite with a copper roof and dome. It has a high water table. The courthouse is dominated by a 170' central tower which rises in three stages. The first stage contains a series of four small windows divided by stout engaged columns. The second stage is a duodecagonal cylinder which rises from the granite roof on the stage below. Its facade is composed of a central triple arched window divided by compound piers with Romanesque capitals. The center arch contains an oculus. A low balustrade runs along the sill. To either side of this triple window is an engaged cylinder headed by a small Byzantine style dome with a round arcade on short columns. A console table in stone with a circular design relief separates the tower from the duodecagonal copper dome. This dome is crowned by a large flame motif finial. The main body of the facade is 2½ stories, with a dentiled granite stringcourse at the second story floor level. A gable entrance projects from the center of the facade. A large round molded arch on short columns marks the double arched doors. These are flanked by a single window on either side, and are headed by a wide three round arched window on compound piers on the second story. Each of the three arches contains a double arched window separated by colonettes and headed by an oculus. The gable above has a round relief ornament crowned by a rounded finial. To either side of the center section is a decorative gable dormer with a rounded finial at the peak. The eastern and western ends of the facade are marked by a three story turret. Fenestration on the first story of the facade is single casement separated from a transom window by a wide granite band. The second story is arched windows, and the third is small 1/1 separated by double engaged columns.

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Bristol County
CONTINUATION SHEET Courthouse Complex ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

The Registry of Deeds (#3) is located between the other two buildings at 11 Court Street. The Georgian Revival structure, designed by Albion Marble of Fall River, was built in 1918. It is a two story brick building with granite ornamentation. The hip roof has two tall chimneys. The partially exposed granite basement is marked by a rounded granite watertable at the first floor level. A molded granite stringcourse connects the sills of the first story windows, and a granite stringcourse defines the first and second stories. All corners of the building are quoined. A wide molded entablature with projecting cornice encircles the building. Fenestration on the facade is 18 light double casements and on the elevations single 2/2 casements with eight light tracery above. All windows are headed by a granite entablature with keystone. The five bay wide south facade has a two story single bay center entrance engaged Doric portico. The arched entrance itself is flanked by paired pilasters and headed by a dentiled cornice above the building title in the frieze. Directly above this is a second story window which has a wide bottom panel with "1918" inscribed within and a molded architrave. A single window on the first and on the second story flank the portico. The eastern and western end bays project slightly from the center section. The east and west elevations are nine bays deep. Both elevations have a central three bay wide section which projects slightly.

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 checked="" 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	1826 (#1), 1894 (#2), 1918 (#3)	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Frank Irving Cooper (#2) Albion Marble (#3)
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bristol County Courthouses are significant for their architectural prominence and for their part in the governmental history of Taunton.

All three buildings are fine examples of their various styles and stand together as an impressive unit in the center of the city. First District Courthouse (#1) is the best example of Greek Revival architecture in Taunton, just as the Superior Courthouse (#2) remains the most outstanding Richardsonian Romanesque structure in the city. Between these two, the Registry of Deeds (#3) is representative of Taunton's finest Georgian Revival architecture.

Taunton was designated the Shire Town of Bristol County following the settlement of a boundary dispute with Rhode Island which assigned the town of Bristol to that state. The first courthouse was built in Taunton in 1746, followed by two others constructed in 1772 and 1826. These were both located on the site of the present Superior Courthouse (#2). The 1826 building once housed the Municipal Court of Taunton, 1854. It was established as the First District Courthouse (#1) in 1874 and was moved west to its present location in 1894.

Frank Irving Cooper, the well-known Massachusetts architect who designed the Superior Courthouse, was born in May of 1867. He founded the Frank Irving Cooper Corp. in 1914. The organization is well remembered for fine school architecture. Mr. Cooper designed high schools in Malden, Attleboro, Plymouth, Somerville and Quincy. He is also responsible for the design of the Medford Public Library, the Ashburnham Memorial Town Hall, and the Clark Laboratory at Amherst College. Cooper died in November of 1933.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Old Colony Historical Society.
 City of Taunton, Tercentenary Official Program, 1639-1939.
 Cross, Wilton, Historic Taunton, The Story of 300 Years in Pictures, Taunton, 1939.
 City Engineer Maps, 1828-29, 1869.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Approx 1 1/2 acres

UTM REFERENCES

DA	119	326160	4640900	A	19	326280	4640900
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
B	19	326280	4640820	C	19	326160	4640820
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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 Blaine Mallory and Joseph Orfant, National Register Editor
 (Christine White, Taunton Historical Commission)

ORGANIZATION Massachusetts Historical Commission DATE July 5, 1977

STREET & NUMBER 294 Washington Street TELEPHONE 617-727-8470

CITY OR TOWN Boston, STATE Mass. 02108

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL X

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 *Peter L. Weslawski*

TITLE Acting Executive Director, Mass. Historical Commission

DATE 7/19/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION ATTEST: <i>Katherine S. Cole</i>	KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER DATE 3-28-78
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	DATE 3-26-78

Bristol County Courthouse Complex
Taunton, Massachusetts
Sketch Map
Scale: 1"=50'
City Engineers' Map, c. 1940

COURT STREET

VACANT LOT

COMMERCIAL

BRICK WALL

FIRST DISTRICT COURT #1

REGISTRY OF DEEDS #3

#3

CONCRETE TUNNEL

SUPERIOR COURT #2

COMMERCIAL

BRICK WALL

COMMERCIAL

BRICK WALL

MODERN COMMERCIAL MALL



TAUNTON GREEN (CITY SQUARE)

THE COMMON

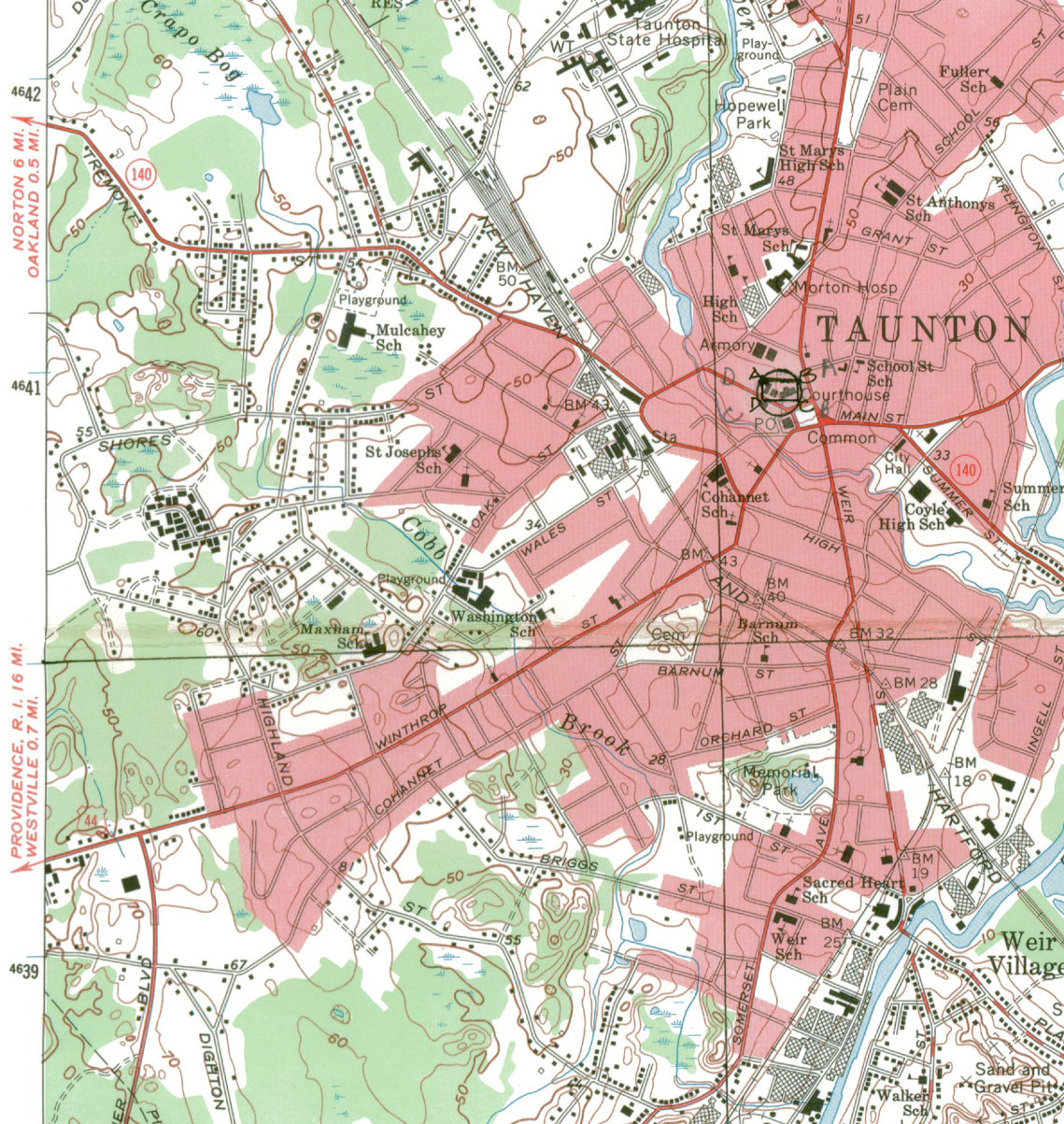
TAUNTON GREEN

Bristol County Court-
house Complex

Taunton, Massachusetts

UTM Coordinates:

DA	19/326	160/4640	900
AB	19/326	280/4640	900
BC	19/326	280/4640	820
CD	19/326	160/4640	820

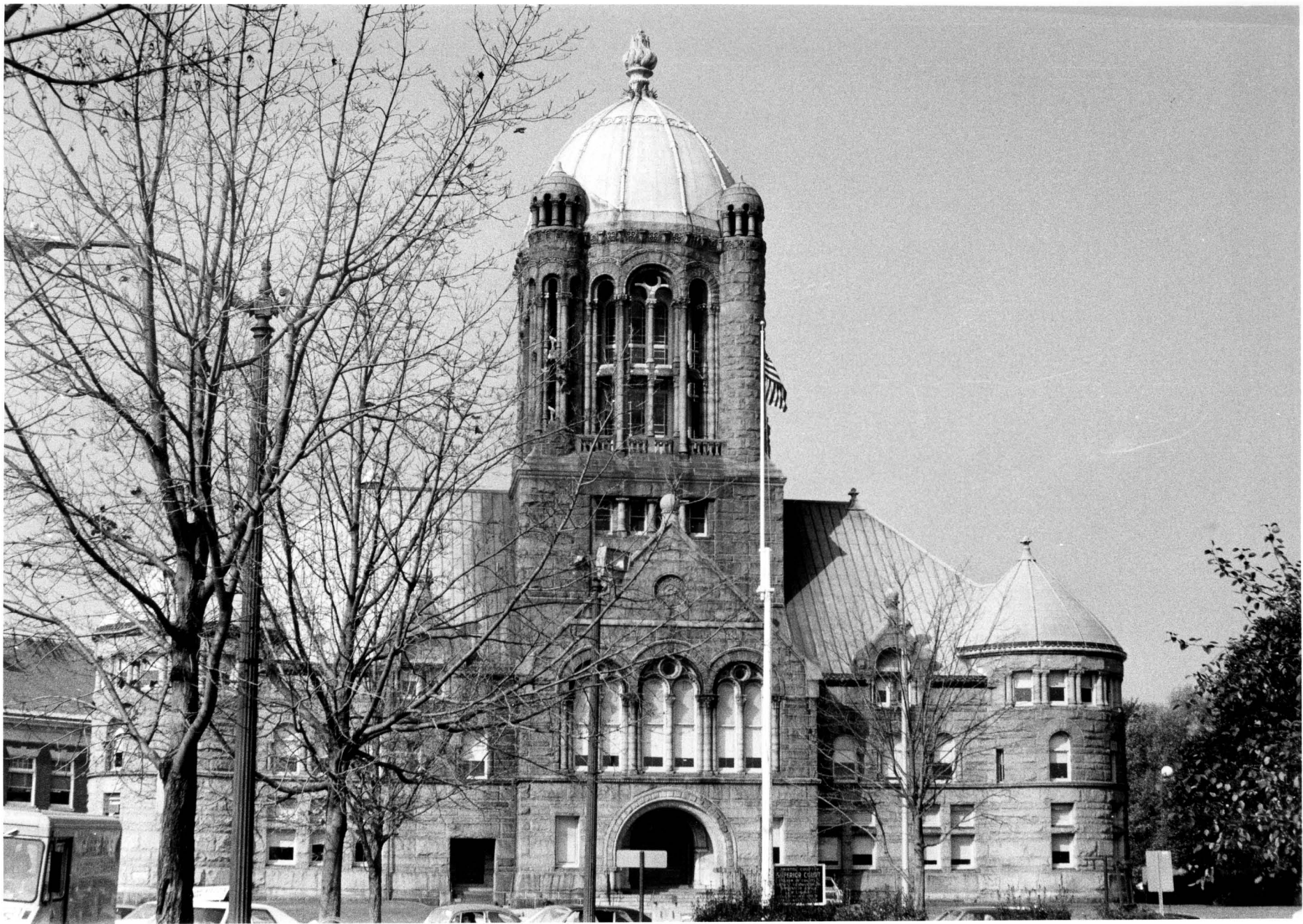


NORTON 6 MI.
OAKLAND 0.5 MI.

PROVIDENCE, R. I. 16 MI.
WESTVILLE 0.7 MI.



1. South facade of First District Courthouse (#1). (Photograph: Richard Mros, Old Colony Historical Society, 1976)



2. South facade of Bristol County Superior Courthouse (#2). (Photograph: Richard Mros, Old Colony Historical Society, 1976)



3. South facade of Registry of Deeds (#3). (Photograph: Richard Mros, Old Colony Historical Society, 1976)