



THE AMERICAN COURT HOUSE AS A HOME

Douglas P. Woodlock

ANY STUDENT OF THE FUNCTION of the courts in America is obliged to begin with the observation of our nineteenth-century French visitor Alexis de Tocqueville that “[t]here is almost no political question in the United States that is not resolved sooner or later into a judicial question.”¹ Being from Boston prompts me to particularize that observation with a reference to an annual event in my hometown: the St. Patrick’s Day parade organized in the South Boston arrondissement of the City. It should come as no surprise that even the question who gets to march in that parade has occasioned full dress judicial opinions not only by the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts but also by the Supreme Court of the United States.²

Douglas P. Woodlock is a District Judge on the United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts. This is a redacted version of a presentation he made at a conference on “The Architecture of the Courthouse: A Franco-American Retrospective, 1991-2006,” jointly organized by the University of Paris-1 and the Harvard Graduate School of Design and held at the Institut National d’Histoire de l’Art in Paris, March 26-28, 2009. Judge Woodlock was charged with providing a French audience of art and architecture students and professionals with a brief overview of the function of the courts in the American system of justice and of the buildings where the courts conduct their business.

¹ ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE, *DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA* 257 (Harvey C. Mansfield & Delba Winthrop trans. & eds., Univ. of Chicago Press 2000) (1835).

² *Irish-Am. Gay, Lesbian, & Bisexual Grp. of Boston v. City of Boston*, 418 Mass. 238 (1994), *rev’d sub nom. Hurley v. Irish-Am. Gay, Lesbian, & Bisexual Grp. of Boston*, 515

To be sure, calling the South Boston St. Patrick's Day parade "organized" is a considerable overstatement. The parade is best understood as something of a Rabelaisian occasion not easily characterized as orderly under the best of circumstances. Indeed, the long-time state Senator from the area once noted, when explaining the character of the parade, that the organizer of the event has been an individual known by the name John "Wacko" Hurley. "Wacko," the Senator said, "the name tells it all." And so it frequently does.

I.

The space for judicial debate in America is called a "Court House," in France a "*Palais de Justice*." "House" and "*Palais*." The names, if not telling it all, tell us a good deal.

What the name tells us about America is that the housing of the judicial function is denominated as a place where the democratic impulse in judicial proceedings is domesticated. The point has been developed well by the American architect Allan Greenberg, who labored productively and with singular creativity in what was otherwise the vast wasteland of American courthouse design in the mid-twentieth century.

In his thoughtful book *Architecture of Democracy*, Greenberg offers a comparison of the

American courthouse with the European *Palais de Justice*. The designation *palace* reflects the divine majesty of the monarch [or, I might add, his equivalent, the nonmonarchical central authority] and a venue where the king's [or the central authority's] justice is administered. The architectural forms and masses of these buildings tend to dominate, even overwhelm, their surroundings. That approach to the design of public buildings stands in sharp contrast to the American house-based model, which strove to create a new civic architecture, one in which a citizen is at ease and feels a sense of ownership, one in which democratic ideals are manifest.³

U.S. 557 (1995); see also *S. Boston Allied War Veterans Council v. City of Boston*, 875 F. Supp. 891 (D. Mass. 1995).

³ ALLAN GREENBERG, *ARCHITECTURE OF DEMOCRACY* 82 (2006) (emphasis in

The American Court House as a Home

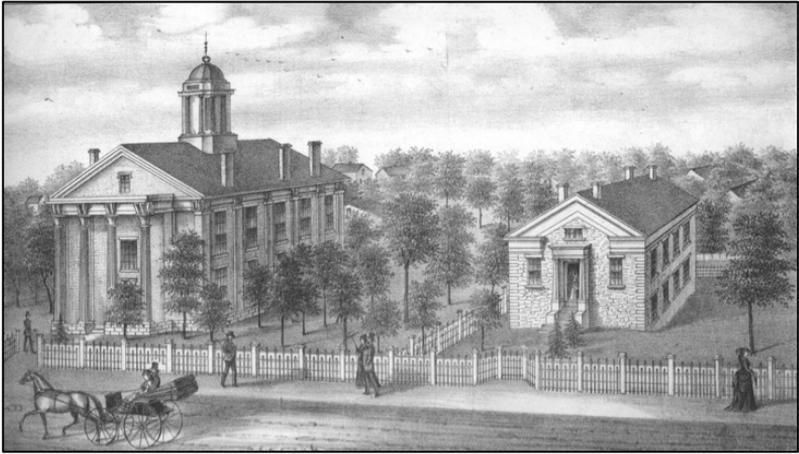


Fig. 1. Ashland County Courthouse (1853) and Jail (1848), Ashland Ohio.

That sense of democratic ownership, Greenberg argues, is generated by the proposition that “[t]he basic building block of American governance is the citizen, and the basic unit of American architecture is the citizen’s home.”⁴

II.

I must confess that the connection between the home and the courthouse has particular personal resonance for me because I believe I am the only United States judge who will admit that his great-grandmother reportedly died in her community’s county courthouse/jail complex. It was in a now demolished building ensemble in Ashland County, Ohio (Fig. 1). I should hasten to add that she was living there lawfully – and not in custody – because my great-grandfather was the Deputy Sheriff of Ashland County and one of the perquisites of office was an apartment in the buildings he administered.

That modest pair of essentially domestic buildings illustrates the role of the courthouse and its function, described by the American writer William Faulkner as “the focus, the hub” of communities

original).

⁴ *Id.* at 32.

throughout America, “musing, brooding, symbolic and ponderable . . . : protector of the weak, judicate and curb of the passions and lusts, repository and guardian of the aspirations and the hopes. . . .”⁵ Such buildings, Faulkner observed, were “built in a time when people took time to build even jails with grace and care” because “the very bricks and stones themselves held, not in solution but in suspension, intact and biding and potent and indestructible, the agonies and shames and griefs with which hearts long since unremarked and unremembered dust had strained and perhaps burst.”⁶

Within such buildings, as I have contended elsewhere, the heart is the courtroom.⁷ Faulkner specified the courtroom’s role in the courthouse when he described “that unmistakable odor of courtrooms; that musty odor of spent lusts and greeds and bickerings and bitterness, and withal a certain clumsy stability in lieu of anything better.”⁸ Professor Robert A. Ferguson has provided the less pungent, but equally pertinent, observation that “[c]ourtroom trials are central ceremonies in the American republic of laws, even though over 90 percent of all legal actions never reach that stage.”⁹ Consequently, he characterizes courtrooms as “the face of the law, the place where outside observation operates as a check on authority.”¹⁰

Even recognizing, as Ferguson does, that “[p]reliminary devices – settlements, nonsuits, dismissals, dispute resolutions, plea bargains, mediations, and prior admissions of guilt – [now] drive the legal process from behind the scenes,”¹¹ I believe the courtroom is singularly entitled to such vital descriptions as the “heart” of the building

⁵ WILLIAM FAULKNER, *REQUIEM FOR A NUN*, reprinted in WILLIAM FAULKNER: NOVELS 1942-1954, at 471, 499-500 (Library of Am. 1994) (1950).

⁶ WILLIAM FAULKNER, *INTRUDER IN THE DUST*, reprinted in WILLIAM FAULKNER: NOVELS 1942-1954, at 283, 320-21. (Library of Am. 1994) (1948).

⁷ Douglas P. Woodlock, *Drawing Meaning from the Heart of the Courthouse*, in *CELEBRATING THE COURTHOUSE* 155, 155 (Steven Flanders ed., 2006).

⁸ WILLIAM FAULKNER, *SANCTUARY*, reprinted in WILLIAM FAULKNER: NOVELS 1930-1935, at 179, 374 (Library of Am. 1985) (1931).

⁹ ROBERT A. FERGUSON, *THE TRIAL IN AMERICAN LIFE* 1 (2007).

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.*

The American Court House as a Home

and “the face of the law” because, as Ferguson observes, “only formal hearings and trials take place in public.”¹² And I would extend the anthropomorphic metaphors more broadly still by observing that it is the courtroom that brings life to the building. Affirming that life is the obligation of the courthouse designer.

III.

When speaking of the “heart” of the building or the “face of the law,” I am referring to the trial courtroom, where the factual dimensions to legal disputes are resolved. The description of courtroom proceedings as a community undertaking – in contrast to a pure professional transaction – becomes more attenuated when applied to appellate courtrooms. These courtrooms generally serve broader geographical areas than single-state counties or federal judicial districts. American appellate courtrooms are populated almost exclusively by legal professionals and their attachés, and, although spectator space is provided, appellate courtrooms are devoid of community members – whether the parties themselves or outside observers – in all but very high-profile proceedings. For the most part, American appellate courts use courtrooms during limited sessions for increasingly short argument opportunities (generally fifteen to twenty minutes per side) in cases the decisions for which will be resolved in written opinions or orders issued from the office of the clerk of court some time thereafter, rather than delivered contemporaneously in open court. Although the Supreme Court of the United States maintains the tradition of orally announcing a brief description in open court of the written opinions it is issuing on a given day, this practice is not followed consistently in other appellate courts.

Given the modest public participation and almost exclusively professional activity in appellate courtrooms, the relative grandeur of those spaces appears directed primarily to their ceremonial role and tendency to elevate the sense of professional status for the participants in appellate proceedings.

¹² *Id.*



Fig. 2. Chowan County Courthouse (1767), Edenton, North Carolina.

IV.

An iconic image of the eighteenth-century American courtroom – George Cooke’s famous painting, “Patrick Henry Arguing the Parson’s Cause” (1834) – shows the American patriot Patrick Henry arguing in the Hanover County courthouse a dispute over a question regarding whether and how all citizens of Virginia – Anglican Catholics or not – should be required to pay the salaries of Anglican priests by state taxation. The image is that of the entire community engaged in the resolution of the dispute. All the participants have a place: the lay judges (both citizen factfinders and precursors to a judiciary drawn from the practicing bar but not yet a distinct professional class of judges) sitting on the bench, the parties and the advocates in the well, the potential witnesses nearby and the spectators squeezing into, and spilling out of, the courthouse which opens

The American Court House as a Home

into the larger community – including the Tavern – beyond. All these members of the community then did and now can rightly claim to belong in the courtroom;¹³ and the courtroom itself is shown as part of the larger community outside the open door. Fundamentally, the administration of justice in America is an intensely local and community undertaking.

The formative American courthouses of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were domestic in character. The Hanover County courthouse, where Patrick Henry argued the *Parson's Cause*, was a modest building. Regional variations from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are found in communities throughout the original colonies, such as the Chowan County courthouse in Edenton, North Carolina, (Fig. 2) to the south and in northern towns like the later Lincoln County courthouse in Wiscasset, Maine (Fig. 3). In each of these domestic public buildings, the single courtroom was the destination, accounting for well over half of the occupiable space. And in each such building, the various local communities sought to express their sense of purpose and significance. These were buildings which, in the words of Edward F. Hennessey, the late Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, “evoke[d] the memory . . . of the aspirations, frustrations, and fears of the many people – the learned, the dedicated, the articulate, the oppressed and despised, the avaricious and the brutal – whom the law has summoned to exercise their skills or to account for their actions.”¹⁴ For the community at large, Chief Justice Hennessey observed, they were “theaters for high drama.”¹⁵

¹³ In the late twentieth century, the Hanover County courthouse was the site of the improperly closed murder trial that gave rise to a decision by the Supreme Court of the United States establishing the rights of the press and the public to be present at a criminal trial under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. *Richmond Newspapers, Inc. v. Virginia*, 448 U.S. 555 (1980). See generally Laurence H. Tribe, *Public Rights, Private Rites: Reliving Richmond Newspapers For My Father*, 6 GREEN BAG 2d 289 (2003).

¹⁴ Edward F. Hennessey, *Foreword to COURTHOUSES OF THE COMMONWEALTH* iv (Robert J. Brink ed., 1984).

¹⁵ *Id.*



Fig. 3. Lincoln County Courthouse (1824), Wiscasset, Maine.

Of course, those courthouses do not embody current realities but rather the creation stories of American justice and the American courthouse. The growth and urbanization of the country later in the nineteenth century led rapidly in a direction away from the house to the temple or the palazzo. The Old St. Louis courthouse (Fig. 4), begun in 1839 and completed in 1862, was designed with multiple courtrooms to accommodate the rapidly increasing population of the gateway city to the west. Another example is the late nineteenth-century Chicago federal courthouse I knew when I went to middle school in the suburbs of that city during the early 1960s (Fig. 5). Yet the core sensibility found in the creation courthouses,

The American Court House as a Home



Fig. 4 (above). Old St. Louis Courthouse (1839-62), St. Louis, Missouri.

Fig. 5 (below). Old Chicago Federal Courthouse (1905).



if not as clearly expressed in the later nineteenth century's expansive piles, remained the same. These buildings were understood to have local concerns in mind and they were intended to be occupied not simply by professional administrators of justice but also by the lay community which claimed a privileged place in the courtrooms during all proceedings conducted there.

V.

The historic resonances emanating from the classical forms those buildings adopted were not altogether affirming to the various groups summoned to account for their actions in courthouse precincts during the American Eden that provided the creation stories for American justice and the American courthouse. The painting of Patrick Henry arguing the *Parson's Cause* contains not one face either of a woman or a person from the community's large – but enslaved – African-American population. And it is not merely sins of omission that have left their stains on the American creation story courthouses.

The neo-Georgian confection of the Chowan County courthouse in Edenton, North Carolina, embodies a chilling chapter in the history of African Americans not by their absence but by their forced presence. A celebrated slave narrative by Harriet Jacobs recounts the impact on Chowan County of the 1831 slave revolt led by Nat Turner in nearby southeastern Virginia. “[T]he news threw our town into great commotion,” she recounted.¹⁶ “It was,” she observed, “a grand opportunity for the low whites, who had no negroes of their own to scourge[, and t]hey exulted in such a chance to exercise a little brief authority” under the pretext of suppressing an imagined slave revolt.¹⁷ “Every where men, women and children were whipped till the blood stood in puddles at their feet,” she reported.¹⁸ Jacobs recalled that she

 saw a mob dragging along a number of colored people, each white man, with his musket upraised, threatening instant death if they did not stop their shrieks. Among the prisoners was a respectable old colored minister. They had found a few parcels of shot in his house, which his wife for years used to balance her scales. For this they were going to shoot him on Court House Green.¹⁹

¹⁶ HARRIET ANN JACOBS, INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF A SLAVE GIRL, *reprinted in* SLAVE NARRATIVES 743, 809 (Library of Am. 2000) (1861).

¹⁷ *Id.* at 810.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.* at 812-13.

The American Court House as a Home

The Chowan County courthouse literally, and many of America's classic courthouses figuratively, bear such stains of the great American racial dilemma. Indeed, the old St. Louis courthouse was the venue for the initiation of litigation that culminated in a majority opinion by the Chief Justice of the United States pronouncing that the African-American slave "had no right which the white man was bound to respect" when the Constitution was adopted.²⁰ "Comfort with their familiar architectural language and iconography is not necessarily shared throughout our increasingly multicultural community."²¹

VI.

It is important to emphasize what was and remains the radically decentralized quality of the American judicial system. The United States has more than fifty independent state and territorial judicial systems with no obligation but good sense to maintain any particular consistency in their several approaches to legal problems (except federal issues) and procedures. Within each of those jurisdictions, trial proceedings are conducted in a vast multitude of county courthouses. There is also a parallel federal judicial system which is on major matters unitary – but not necessarily consistent in approach with any one or more of the state systems.

Within the federal system there are ninety-four separate districts (based upon state and territorial boundaries) in which justice is administered in individual federal courtrooms at numerous different places of holding court within the districts. The lower federal courts themselves remain stubbornly decentralized despite the unitary system under which they are directed in larger administrative matters. In the trial of cases throughout the country, matters of practice in, procedures for, and physical design of the courthouse remain profoundly local in character.

The decisionmakers as to the facts in the vast majority of the civil and criminal trials within the courtrooms of both the state and the federal courts in America are lay jurors drawn from a full cross-

²⁰ *Scott v. Sandford*, 60 U.S. (19 How.) 393, 407 (1857).

²¹ Woodlock, *supra* note 7, at 157.

section of the local community. The decisionmakers as to the law are, of course, judges. But American judges are drawn not from a professional cadre whose education and entire career have been spent in the professional work of judging. Rather American judges are generally former practicing lawyers (and a few academics) who are chosen mid-career from the relevant community – by election in most state systems (and in a few of the state systems by the state governors) or by appointment by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate in the federal system.

This decentralized organization continues to support the domestic creation myths of the American courthouse: the primacy of the individual courtroom and the welcome extended to – indeed the control exercised by – the larger community. The source and selection process for judges keeps them sensitive – perhaps too sensitive – to the sentiments of the community from which judges are drawn.

VII.

The durability of the creation story and its overarching approach to the administration of justice in America has been challenged during the last century and a half by two powerful countervailing trends. The first is the growth in the number of courtrooms and related bureaucratic space courthouses must accommodate. The second is the parochial assertiveness of the professions – legal and architectural – whose vocational perspectives the courthouses embody.

At about the time I went away to college, the late nineteenth-century Chicago federal courthouse was torn down to make way for a successor designed by the twentieth-century modernist master Mies van der Rohe (Fig. 6). This image can be read to illustrate how in mid-twentieth-century courthouse architecture – as in other aspects of our society during that period – we contrived “to demolish the past and denature the present”²² with buildings that at their best

²² Douglas P. Woodlock, *Judicial Responsibility in Federal Courthouse Design Review: Intentions and Aspirations for Boston*, in *FEDERAL BUILDINGS IN CONTEXT: THE ROLE OF DESIGN REVIEW* 53, 59 (J. Carter Brown ed., 1995).

The American Court House as a Home



Fig. 6. New Chicago Federal Courthouse risen, Old Courthouse razed.

merely conceal – and at their worst conspire to lobotomize – the character of the distinctive courthouse program.

The new Chicago federal courthouse now accommodates over fifty courtrooms but one would never suspect that was so in viewing the faceless structure. The proliferation of destinations – over fifty as opposed to one in the formative courthouses – certainly requires a different strategy for courthouse design and organizing the courtrooms; Chicago’s large and elegant filing cabinet is one way to do it. But the potential for thereby debasing the currency of the individual courtroom as the “heart” animating the “life” of the courthouse suggests that this is not an altogether successful strategy.

Yet it is perversely a strategy that can subserve the narrow guild and ideological sensibilities of the architectural and the legal professions. George Bernard Shaw's character Sir Patrick Campbell was deady accurate in observing that "[a]ll professions are conspiracies against the laity."²³ Once the design of the courthouse is cut off from its courtroom heart and the face of justice is obscured, courthouse design can become merely a more or – more frequently – less intriguing five-finger exercise for the architect in the manipulation of form and space voicing the architectural language dominant for its time in a composition devoid of larger meaning. The fundamental community role in the courtroom is often impeded, unheard and obstructed by such exercises.

This is by no means an outcome objectionable to guild tendencies of the legal profession. Every profession – the legal profession, and its subset the judiciary, are no exception – takes great pleasure and sense of self-worth from the administration of sacred mysteries. Mysteries are less mysterious when they are revealed to the laity. For the legal profession, maintaining the sense that the delivery of justice requires specialized and impenetrable learning – enhanced by structures whose function is not legible to the uninitiated general community – is a common if unstated craft goal. Meanwhile, the increasing collection of court attachés – the judicial bureaucracy – clamor for an increasing amount of non-courtroom space to occupy in the courthouse building while real and perceived security concerns result in a bunker mentality.

VIII.

Taking as a given that the very best of architecture is a successful marriage of memory and invention, I contend that the successes in the late-twentieth- and early-twenty-first-century generation of American courthouses have been achieved by rejecting or mitigating primacy for these countervailing trends and by recalling and extending, through the architectural language(s) of this time, the creation

²³ GEORGE BERNARD SHAW, *THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA*, reprinted in *THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA, GETTING MARRIED, AND THE SHOWING-UP OF BLANCO POSNET* 1, 32 (Brentano's ed., 1920) (1906).

The American Court House as a Home



Fig. 7. Hanover County Courthouse (1735). Fig. 8 (below). Boston Federal Courthouse (1998) from Boston Harbor. ©1998 Steve Rosenthal.



stories of American courthouses and the justice they seek to administer. Let me use my experience with the federal courthouse I occupy, opened in Boston in 1998 and designed by Henry N. Cobb of the Pei Cobb Freed firm – well-known to visitors of the Louvre – to illustrate one strategy that sought to affirm this goal.

Returning to beginnings, consider the Hanover County courthouse building (Fig. 7) with its single courtroom occupying over eighty per cent of the usable space. Then compare the new Boston federal courthouse (Fig. 8) with its twenty-seven courtrooms occu-



Fig. 9. Boston Federal Courthouse (1998) courtroom entrances at dusk.
©1998 Steve Rosenthal.

pying less than eight per cent of the usable space. You will note the point at which the Boston courthouse building engages with the water an arcade. This rather literally – with the risk of introducing an architecture of pastiche – restates the five-arch entry to the Hanover County courthouse. That feature also provides a scale for the modern building in comparison to its progenitors from which one can quickly absorb the implications of the fundamental fact that, while over eighty per cent of the usable space in the Hanover County courthouse was devoted to its single courtroom, less than eight per cent of the usable space in the Boston courthouse is devoted to its twenty-seven courtrooms.

Features aside, the fundamental move of the building is to reveal – indeed to display – the courtrooms themselves by creating three floors of courtrooms – three streets of nine individual courtrooms – equally privileged and equally visible through the huge picture window as this nighttime view (Fig. 9) illustrates. Transparency for the core function of the building in relation to the community and recognition of the dignity of the individual courtroom in a building

The American Court House as a Home



Fig. 10. Boston Federal Courthouse (1998) processional stairway.
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with multiple courtroom destinations provides an invitation to engage in the work of the building through its courtrooms.²⁴

The processional to the courtrooms draws upon past successes in providing a meaningful and eventful passage from the unordered world of the street to the ordered realm of the courtroom. This is a move H.H. Richardson mastered with his stairway for the Allegheny County courthouse in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. A similar move is made in the Boston courthouse (Fig. 10) which draws the public to the courtroom floors through a ninety-four-foot high drum populated by nine colored panels created for the building by Ellsworth Kelly, who, I might add, spent formative years as an artist in

²⁴ See generally Woodlock, *supra* note 22. In this book chapter, I sought to identify the larger principles of design development for the Boston courthouse project when then-Chief Judge Stephen G. Breyer of the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit and I were deeply and jointly involved with Cobb before Justice Breyer's appointment to the Supreme Court of the United States.



Fig. 11. Boston Federal Courthouse (1998) courtroom hallway.
©1998 Steve Rosenthal.

France.²⁵

The courtroom floors (Fig. 11), at the ends of which pairs of additional Kelly panels are juxtaposed (Fig. 12), in turn look out on the harbor and the city from which the controversies to be resolved in the several courtrooms arise. Those entering and emerging from the courtrooms remain in touch with the larger community. The movement along each of the courtroom floors to the individual courtrooms places the individual between the two fundamental and highly symbolic materialities of the building: the transparency of the expansive glass and the work-a-day durability of the brick. The brick does not merely reinforce the streetscape strategy for the disposition of the courtrooms, it conjures up the principles of Anglo-American common law and its emphasis on case law for development of doctrine. If the common law is an edifice created by specifi-

²⁵ See generally ELLSWORTH KELLY: THE YEARS IN FRANCE, 1948-1954 (Bois, *et al.*, eds., 1992).

The American Court House as a Home



*Fig. 12. Boston Federal Courthouse (1998) courtroom hallway.
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cally tailored judgments for individual cases and controversies laid up year by year to create an overall structure, so too is the Boston courthouse building created by the laying up of individually created water-struck brick, a material that France's great friend President Thomas Jefferson thought democratic and used in the construction



*Fig. 13. Boston Federal Courthouse (1998) entrance to Courtroom 1.
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of his beloved University of Virginia.²⁶

The importance of high craftsmanship in the brickwork is evident in the courtroom entrances (Fig. 13), each a carefully constructed elliptical half vault. The form is drawn from the Lincoln County

²⁶ As one architectural historian observed,

in this common building material a democratic quality emerges; it is capable of assuming noble proportions and intentions, it is honest, and it can be made into columns and other forms. This clearly is a space of the new world, a new American approach, and not a duplicate of the old world of the past.

Richard Guy Wilson, *Jefferson's Lawn: Perceptions, Interpretations, Meanings*, in THOMAS JEFFERSON'S ACADEMICAL VILLAGE: THE CREATION OF AN ARCHITECTURAL MASTERPIECE 47, 72 (Richard Guy Wilson ed., 1993).



Fig. 14. Lincoln County Courthouse (1824), Wiscasset, Maine, entrance.

courthouse entrance (Fig. 14) announcing a dignified and plainspoken access to that building's single courtroom.

The processional results in arrival at one of the multiple hearts of the Boston federal courthouse: a courtroom (Fig. 15). It is here that the separate roles and obligations of the several participants are both delineated and ennobled. The parties to the dispute and their advocates are seated under the circular, shallow dome that inscribes the well or working space of the courtroom. The jury of randomly selected members of the community, whose duty is to find the truth, is seated to the right, directly facing the witness box on the left, from which is given the testimony that the jury is to evaluate. The judge sits in the center of the far wall both between and to the side of the direct confrontation between witness and jury, symbolizing



*Fig. 15. Boston Federal Courthouse (1998) Courtroom 1.
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the judicial role not as factfinder but as instructor in the law to be applied by the jury as factfinder. The vantage point in this photograph of the courtroom is that of the public spectators sitting in benches designed to recall the seating for such community enterprises as the congregations of eighteenth-century churches or the citizen participants in the town meetings that act as the legislative assemblies in New England communities.

The geometry of arcuation embodied in the arcade at the front of the Hanover County courthouse and the entrance way of the Lincoln County courthouse, not to mention Richardson's later Allegheny County courthouse, finds expression in the stenciled arches along each of the walls. The arch under which the witnesses sit is the same size as the arch under which the jury sits. And so too is the arch under which the judge sits. Indeed, the arch through which spectators enter the room, although not visible in the photograph, is also the same size. Every person called to appear in the courtroom for the resolution of the dispute played out in the well by the advo-

The American Court House as a Home

cates on behalf of their parties is equally ennobled by a separate arch of equal proportions. Each arch is, of course, incomplete in itself to encompass the entire controversy. The witness called from the community to give testimony, the jurors called from the community to find the facts, the spectators who have come from the community to observe and evaluate the fairness of the proceedings, and the judge who must oversee the undertaking – each has a separate job description. But they have a common goal and responsibility: to exercise in this space a joint democratic effort which has been and remains the aspiration of American courthouses – together to see that justice is done.

