



ESSEX VICINAGE

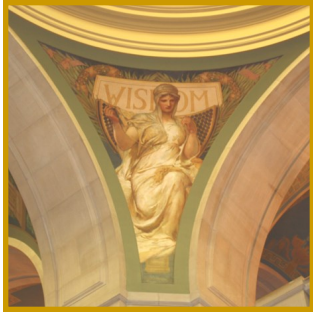


SELF-GUIDED TOUR PROGRAM



ESSEX COUNTY HISTORIC COURTHOUSE
470 DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. BLVD.
NEWARK, NEW JERSEY 07102

ROTUNDA AND MAIN STAIR HALL



Let's begin this self-guided tour by looking up. Visible from the rotunda are the muraled ceiling and the **Tiffany stained glass domes**. As you walk up the stairs to the second floor and enter the main stair hall, the **Decoration of the Pendentives** (the triangular segments on the ceiling) by **Edwin Howland Blashfield** (1848-1936) come into view. Blashfield was an American mural painter and mosaic designer. His works can be found in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., the Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa State Capitols, and the Church of St. Matthew in Washington, D.C. The Decoration of the Pendentives consists of four colossal seated female figures symbolizing: **Wisdom**, which informs the law, illustrated by the unraveling of a skein; **Knowledge**, which bases the law, illustrated by the searching of precedent in written records; **Power**, which supports the law, illustrated by the sword and rods; and **Mercy**, which tempers the law, illustrated by the casting of a white bean into an urn in favor of mercy as the ancient Greeks did when a tie vote occurred.

COURTROOM 200

In **Courtroom 200** is the mural **The Power and Beneficence of the Law** by American artist **Henry Oliver Walker** (1843-1929). Other works of his can be found in the Library of Congress, the New York Appellate Court and Bowdoin College in Maine. This mural represents the driving away of evil and uplifting of the fallen. In the two small paintings on either side of the mural, the lion symbolizes the strength of the law and the eagle the power of the law. Each side of the courtroom features Biblical text, above the jury box and where the defendants would have stood when the courtroom was used for criminal cases. The text facing the jurors suggests honesty in judging and the text facing the defendant suggests the consequences of evil doing.



COURTROOM 204



In **Courtroom 204** is **The Landing of Carteret** by **Howard Pyle** (1853 - 1911). Pyle was an American illustrator and author of children's books. The painting in this courtroom depicts the landing in August 1665. The rainbow is a symbol of promise, of the divine enlightenment of the future and of the new nation about to be established for the first time by Europeans.

COURTROOM 211

In **Courtroom 211**, which is the former Grand Jury room, is the **Foreman of the Grand Jury Rebuking the Chief Justice of New Jersey in 1774** by **Francis Davis Millet** (1846-1912). Millet was an American painter, sculptor and writer. In this painting, the history of the scene depicted is one of the most stirring incidents connected with the history of the city and county just prior to the Revolutionary War. Chief Justice Smith, with associate justices, listen in the courtroom as the foreman of the Grand Jury delivers an impassioned address regarding the tyranny of the British over the colonies. The foreman is the central figure, with his right arm extended in a gesture of protest as he faces the judges and speaks.



COURTROOM 400



In **Courtroom 400** is the mural **Diogenes** by American artist **Will H. Low** (1853-1932). Some of Low's decorative work can be found in New York's Waldorf Astoria Hotel. Diogenes, a Greek philosopher known for his cynicism, is shown searching the world for an honest man. The child, symbolizing innocence, approaches the cynical philosopher, who in turn smiles at the child. Light colors on the courtroom walls help to create the sense of a larger, deeper space.

CHAMBERS ROOM 410

Chambers Room 410 is the former chambers of **Chief Justice William Stryker Gummere**. The New Jersey Lawyers Diary does not show Chief Justice Gummere as having chambers in this courthouse until 1925, so it is likely that these chambers were built for him as part of the 1928 renovation. The longest sitting Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court, he was Chief Justice from 1901 to 1933. He presided at the swearing-in of 10 governors and was appointed first as Justice and then Chief Justice by six different governors of both political parties. As Chief Justice, he presided over the Court of Errors and Appeals, but he was also assigned to the Essex Circuit and presided over many jury and non-jury trials and appeals.



COURTROOM 401



In **Courtroom 401** is the mural **The Beneficence of the Law** by **Kenyon Cox** (1856-1919), an American painter, illustrator, muralist and writer. His murals can be found in the Library of Congress. This mural is a painting done on canvas. Inscribed below, it reads, "Under the Rule of Law, Inspired by Justice, Peace and Prosperity Abide." Cox used the face of Ethel Barrymore for the central figure. When this painting was completed, some thought that the face of an actress should not be used as the face of justice. Acting was not considered a noble profession at that time. Historic Courthouse architect Cass Gilbert instructed Cox to re-paint the face so as to not resemble that of the actress. However, in doing so the resemblance is still close to modern day actress Drew Barrymore, great-niece of Ethel Barrymore.

ABOUT THE ARCHITECT



Cass Gilbert (1859 - 1934) was born in Zanesville, Ohio. He attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston from 1878-1879. Gilbert designed the U.S. Supreme Court building in Washington, D.C. and the Woolworth Building in New York City. The Building Commission for the Historic Courthouse held a competition to determine who would be the building's architect, and Cass Gilbert was selected.

ESSEX COUNTY HISTORIC COURTHOUSE FACTS

- * The **Essex County Historic Courthouse** was built between 1902-1906 and dedicated in October, 1907.
- * The courthouse was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1975.
- * After years of disrepair, and at a cost of approximately \$49 million, the courthouse underwent extensive interior and exterior renovations. Restoration to its original splendor was completed in 2004 and the building was reopened in March, 2005.
- * Currently, the courthouse houses the Civil Part - Law Division. It originally housed both county offices and the courts.
- * The courthouse contains the original furniture, fixtures, artwork and decorative elements from 1906.
- * The **Seated Lincoln Statue**, located outside the front entrance to the courthouse, was sculpted by **Gutzon Borglum** (1867-1941). Dedicated in 1911, the statue depicts a weary president during the darkest hours of the Civil War and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1995.



SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY ESSEX VICINAGE

SHEILA VENABLE
ASSIGNMENT JUDGE

EDWARD D. WINGREN, III
TRIAL COURT ADMINISTRATOR

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