

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Missouri	
COUNTY: Caldwell	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Caldwell County Courthouse

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Main Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Kingston

STATE: Missouri CODE: 64650 COUNTY: Caldwell CODE: 025

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
County of Caldwell

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Caldwell County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN: Kingston STATE: Missouri CODE: 64650

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Office of Recorder of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Caldwell County Courthouse

CITY OR TOWN: Kingston STATE: Missouri CODE: 64650

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Missouri State Historical Survey and Planning Office

DATE OF SURVEY: 1971  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Missouri State Park Board

STREET AND NUMBER:  
P.O. Box 176, 1204 Jefferson Building

CITY OR TOWN: Jefferson City STATE: Missouri CODE: 29

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

		(Check One)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed	
(Check One)			(Check One)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site			

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Caldwell County Courthouse is a two-story red-brick structure set upon a regular ashlar foundation. The building measures 74 by 69 feet, and has major entrances on the south and east. A secondary entrance on the north provides access to the ground floor and to the basement. Architect Middaugh's plans provided for offices on the ground floor flanking a main north-south corridor, and included a stairway on each side on the main (south) entrance leading to the second story.

A large circuit court room with floor space of 55 by 60 feet occupies the northwest portion of the second story. The judge's rostrum is located on the west side of the room facing east. In the rear of the court room along the west side of the building is a judge's office and two jury rooms. In the southwest corner of the second story there is an office for the circuit clerk, and on the southeast corner is a grand jury room and a small waiting room.

The first story is 14 feet high, while the second is 22 feet in height. The truncated hip-roof is covered with slate, and a square-plan cupola with bell-dome roof occupies the center of the roof. A balustrade on the roof deck surrounds the cupola.

On the north part of the basement to the left of the entrance is located a boiler room, from which the building is heated by steam. The remainder of the basement was used as a county jail until a permanent facility was erected several years later.

The window arrangement of the Caldwell County Courthouse is quite decorative. All upper-story windows exhibit rounded-arches of stone. Ground floor windows have stone lintels. A one-over-one light pattern is used throughout. Many of the windows in the south towers use "curved" glass.

Curiously, the south and east facades exhibit decorative features such as towers and porches, while the north and west elevations are devoid of such elements. The east entranceway central pavillion is buttressed by two flanking towers topped by bell-shaped pinnacles and hip-roof. Five independent attic windows appear on this facade centered directly over the entranceway.

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7.

CALDWELL COUNTY COURTHOUSE

The south (primary) facade faces the major business district of Kingston. It is the most ornate in design. A pair of windows, identical to those used throughout the structure, flank the central two-story stone entrance porch. The porch itself is flanked by two tower elements running the height of the building from the foundation to the roof. The towers are semi-circular in plan with semi-conical roofs tied back into the main roof. The porch between the towers has stone access stairs arranged in concentric arcs of circles.

Although no extensive modification has been done to the Caldwell County Courthouse, the east entrance has been bricked up, and three windows installed in its place. The four clocks in the cupola have been removed. There is some evidence that the central portion of the east wall has been recently re-tuckpointed. Interior floors of mosaic tile, stairways and bannisters appear to be original. In general, the building is quite well-preserved and function adequately as a county court facility.

**3. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1896-1898

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal     | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric    | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science              | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture            | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art            | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater              | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation       | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation   |   |   |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Caldwell County Courthouse at Kingston, Missouri, is a physical manifestation of the prosperity of a nineteenth century Missouri agricultural county. The courthouse, built in 1898 after fire destroyed an earlier structure, illustrates a pervasive assumption among Caldwell countians that their wealth and security were assured. The building itself was a monument to the affluence of Caldwell County and a belief that the future of agriculture was bright. Local newspapers consistently argued that Caldwell County was worthy of a magnificent seat of justice and that a modest structure would not suffice. This particular argument transcended the rationale that a good courthouse was necessary only to protect records and provide suitable court facilities, and suggests a characteristic of the wealthy agrarian region in the optimistic years of the late gilded age.

Caldwell County enjoyed a healthy economy during the 1890's. It was strictly a rural county, but her farms were large and taxable wealth was great. The average Caldwell County farm in 1896 contained 133 acres of tillable ground, but only 11 Missouri counties had a higher figure. (United States Department of the Interior, Census Division: Report on Farms and Homes in the United States at the Eleventh Census: 1890, 1896, p. 158.) Furthermore, 1,359 of Caldwell's 1,931 farms were owner-operated, and only 26% of owners had a lien on their property. (Report on Farms and Homes: 1890, pp. 158, 305.) Caldwell's 1,931 farms produced a marketable surplus of \$1,382,310 during 1889, and the county's assessable valuation was in excess of five-million dollars ranking her 34th of Missouri's 114 counties. (United States Department of the Interior, Census Division: Report on Wealth, Debt, and Taxation at the Eleventh Census; 1890, 1895, p. 229. Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Inspection of the State of Missouri, 1892, p. 106.) In a county whose population numbered slightly over 15,000, the per-capita wealth was therefore nearly \$333.

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8. #1

CALDWELL COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Since Caldwell was a rural county whose largest town contained only 1,800 inhabitants, public expenditures were small. The county spent only 83¢ per-capita on public improvements during 1890 and therefore ranked lowest in the state in this particular index. (This figure suggests the primary county expenses were courthouse maintenance and schools. Report on Wealth, Debt, and Taxation; 1890, 1895, p. 532.) Furthermore Caldwell County was entirely free of debt from 1890 through 1898, and in 1890 boasted a \$20,000 treasury surplus. (Report on Wealth, Debt, and Taxation; 1890, 1895, p. 494. Kingston Times, Kingston, Mo., February 26, 1897).

During the campaign of 1896, Caldwell County newspapers supported Republican Candidate William McKinley particularly because of his interest in higher tariff legislation. McKinley's promise of higher agricultural duties prompted one editor to comment that with the Republican election, the "agricultural interests of the county have been well cared for," and that the tariff was "certain to stimulate other trades." (Kingston Times, Kingston, Mo., March 19, 1897; May 28, 1897; June 4, 1897; July 24, 1897; August 6, 1897, February 18, 1898.) Caldwell editors constantly reiterated the theme of business and agricultural prosperity and continually referred to the economy with such references as "the skies are bright before us..." (Kingston Times, Kingston, Mo., August 13, 1897). Kingston, the county seat, was especially enraptured with McKinley prosperity. The Times editor boastfully announced the opening of new stores, the continued stability of Caldwell's banks, and the fact that vacant houses were in great demand. "The prospects are bright for Kingston" proclaims the Times. "Hurrah for prosperity!" (Breckenridge Bulletin, Breckenridge, Mo., February 19, 1897, March 4, 1898, Kingston Times, Kingston, Mo., June 19, 1897; August 20, 1897; June 10, 1898).

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8. #2

CALDWELL COUNTY COURTHOUSE

6 The old courthouse at Kingston was destroyed by fire in November, 1898. (Caldwell County, Mo. Minutes of the County Court, Record Book "M", p. 11. The Hamiltonian, Hamilton, Mo., December 4, 1896.) The loss of the courthouse, occurring in a "boom" period, afforded Caldwell citizens an opportunity to erect a monument to their prosperity. Caldwell was free of debt, and construction of a magnificent edifice was to be "a measly concern" to such an affluent people. (Breckenridge Bulletin, Breckenridge, Mo., February 19, 1897, March 19, 1897. Kingston Times, Kingston, Mo., February 26, 1897.)

The County is certainly rich enough to build a structure that will be a county pride, a thing of beauty and joy forever...(The Hamiltonian, Hamilton, Mo., December 4, 1896.)

This is one of the best counties in the state. Its citizens are enterprising and industrious...And where is the farm in Caldwell County that would not be worth a hundred times more than the amount of taxes to be paid, with a good courthouse at the County seat. (Breckenridge Bulletin, Breckenridge, Mo., February 19, 1897.)

The Caldwell County Court called a special bond election for February 27, 1897, but the proposal was narrowly defeated because of a rumor that Hamilton businessmen would donate a new courthouse in their town if the bonds were rejected. (Breckenridge Bulletin, Breckenridge, Mo., February 12, 1897, March 5, 1897. Kingston Times, Kingston, Mo., March 5, 1897. Hamilton Farmers' Advocate, Hamilton, Mo., March 3, 1897.) Although this supposition was merely a rumor, it was not until March 5, 1898, that a second election was ordered. This proposal carried by a substantial margin and allowed the county to issue \$26,000 in revenue bonds. (Caldwell County, Mo., Minutes of the County Court, Record Book "M", p. 349. Kingston Times, Kingston, Mo., March 11, 1898. The Hamiltonian, Hamilton, Mo., March 11, 1898. Hamilton Farmers' Advocate, Hamilton, Mo., March 9, 1898.) The

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8. #3

CALDWELL COUNTY COURTHOUSE

County Board of Township Trustees selected Kansas City Architect L. Grant Middaugh to design the new courthouse to be constructed at the site of the old, and instructed him to plan a "very respectable courthouse..." (Caldwell County, Mo., Minutes of the County Court, Record Book "M," pp. 322, 323, 343. Kingston Times, Kingston, Mo., March 25, 1898, May 6, 1898). In the meantime, the county press had proclaimed that the new courthouse would provide "new activity" which "gives the promise of unprecedented growth". (Mirable Mercury, Mirable, Mo., June 10, 1898.)

Middaugh's design reflected the voters' concern that their courthouse be magnificent. The courthouse is one of the largest buildings in the county. It is of solid masonry construction and features a moderate display of architectural embellishment. When construction commenced during the summer of 1898, the Court authorized the contractor to purchase such materials for the building as "copper for the cornice" at \$400, and to include such features as "metal lath", "metal lentels (sic)" for the basement windows, and an "I-beam over the entrance". Caldwell County, Mo., Minutes of the County Court, Record Book "M," pp. 385, 404, 411, 444, 461). The use of towers, curved windows, an ornate cupola (which originally contained four clocks), and a two-story semicircular stone entrance porch with a limestone stairway demonstrates the theme of opulence expressed in the courthouse. The construction of such a building was costly and involved expensive, nonfunctional design, but nevertheless was a physical manifestation of the pride and prosperity of Caldwell County, Missouri in the last decade of the nineteenth century.

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

PRIMARY SOURCES

Caldwell County, Missouri, Minutes of the Caldwell County Court Record Book "M," pp. 11, 322-323, 343, 349, 385, 404, 411, 444, 461.

State of Missouri, Bureau of Labor Statistics and Inspection, Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Inspection.

Jefferson City, Missouri; Tribune Printing Company, 1892.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		39 ° 38 ' 28 "	94 ° 02 ' 13 "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE: Stephen J. Raiche, Research Historian

ORGANIZATION: State Historical Survey and Planning Office DATE: April 24, 1971  
Missouri State Park Board

STREET AND NUMBER: P.O. Box 176, 1204 Jefferson Building

CITY OR TOWN: Jefferson City STATE: Missouri 65101 CODE: 29

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name Joseph Jaeger, Jr.

Title Director, Missouri State Park Board, and Missouri State Liaison Officer

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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9.

CALDWELL COUNTY COURTHOUSE

United States Department of the Interior, Census Division,  
Report on Farms and Homes in the United States at the  
Eleventh Census: 1890, Washington, D. C.: Government  
Printing Office, 1896.

United States Department of the Interior, Census Division,  
Report on Wealth, Debt, and Taxation at the Eleventh  
Census: 1890, Washington, D. C.: Government Printing  
Office, 1895.

NEWSPAPERS

Breckenridge Bulletin (Breckenridge, Missouri) February 19,  
1897; March 5, 19, 1897; March 4, 1898.

The Hamiltonian (Hamilton, Missouri) December 4, 1896; March 11,  
1898.

Kingston Times (Kingston, Missouri) February 18, 26, 1897;  
March 19, 1897, May 28, 1897; June 4, 10, 19, 1897; July 24,  
1897; August 6, 13, 20, 1897; January 21, 1898; March 11,  
25, 1898; May 6, 1898.

Mirable Mercury (Mirable, Missouri) June 10, 1898.

CALDWELL COUNTY COURTHOUSE

COUNTY: Caldwell

LOCATION: Main St., Kingston, No. 64650

OWNER: County of Caldwell  
ADDRESS: Caldwell County Courthouse, Main St., Kingston,  
Missouri 64650

DATE APPROVED BY A.C.: 05-15-71

DATE SENT TO JEFF. CITY: 07-13-71

DATE SENT TO D.C.: 07-14-71

DATE OF REC. IN D.C.: 07-19-71

DATE PLACED ON NATIONAL REGISTER: 01-13-72

DATE AWARDED CERTIFICATE  
(AND PRESENTER): 02-26-79  
James M. Denny

DATE FILE REVIEWED:

The Caldwell County Courthouse at Kingston, Missouri, is a physical manifestation of the prosperity of a nineteenth century Missouri agricultural county. The courthouse, built in 1898 after fire destroyed an earlier structure, illustrates a pervasive assumption among Caldwell Countians that their wealth and security were assured. The building itself was a monument to the affluence of Caldwell County and a belief that the future of agriculture was bright. Local newspapers consistently argued that Caldwell County was worthy of a magnificent seat of justice and that a modest structure would not suffice. This particular argument transcended the rationale that a good courthouse was necessary only to protect records and provide suitable court facilities, and suggests a characteristic of the wealthy agrarian region in the optimistic years of the late gilded age.

Name of Site: Caldwell Co. Courthouse  
Site Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Photographer: P. A. Evans  
Date of Photo: Feb., 1971  
View of Photo: \_\_\_\_\_  
Neg. Size: \_\_\_\_\_













Name of Site: Caldwell Co. Courthouse  
Site Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Photographer: P. A. Eoax Kingston, Mo.  
Date of Photo: Feb., 1971  
View of Photo: town square  
Neg. Size: \_\_\_\_\_







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CALDWELL COUNTY COURTHOUSE

