For NPS use only

### **National Register of Historic Places** Inventory—Nomination Form

received date entered

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms

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### 7. Description

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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Grundy County Jewett Norris Library, 1331 Main Street, Trenton, Mo., is a massive, square, 2 1/2 story building of stone and brick. It is situated on a high corner lot, with paved streets on two sides in a residential and commercial area.

The high stone base and broad stone steps leading to a porch with heavy, round stone arches, provide the building with the Romanesque architecture typical of the late 19th century. Situated on the southwest corner of the intersection, the library building faces east with entry located on the northeast corner of the building.

#### EXTERIOR

#### Over-all dimensions

The library building is 67 ft. wide and 86 ft. deep with a heighth of 48 ft. from ground level to the gable peak on the front (east) facade.

The front of the building measures 50 ft., including a 21 ft. porch, which is recessed one foot on the east and three feet on the north. The west half of the building is wider by seven feet on the north and on the south.

The south side of the building measures 37 feet from the front to the gable extension, which is 35 feet from the west corner of the building. The north side of the building measures 71 feet, due to the porch being recessed one foot. There is a five foot extension on the west (rear) side to include a chimney and there are 4 1/2 ft. bays front and rear, making the depth of the building 86 feet.

#### Wall construction

The walls are constructed of red brick and cut limestone. The bricks are laid in a stretcher (running bond) pattern. It is likely the brick was obtained from Quincy, IL.

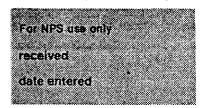
Large limestone blocks are used to enhance the heavy Victorian Gothic appearance of the building. The irregular length rock-faced stones are laid in a broken course (random) pattern. The stones are 12 inches high and 9 inches thick. There are limestone quarries in the area, so it is likely the stones are native. The stone walls form a ten-foot base for the building, surrounding basement windows. The porch is constructed of limestone and the top of the east gable and dormer are finished in stone.

The 2 ft. thick basement (foundation) walls, as well as the west lower wall treatment, is of rubble stone laid at random. The west wall of the building above the stone is finished entirely in brick.
Windows

Windows are a prominent feature of the library. The windows on the first and second floors are tall, double hung windows, wood frame, measuring  $9'6" \times 3'$ . The lintels and lug-sills are cut stone and extend horizontally around three sides of the building.

(1) Trenton Daily Evening Republican, May 1, 1980.

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Continuation sheet Jewett Norris Library

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The upper six steps are flanked by the 3' 6" stone piers of the arch. The arch has a span of 14 ft. with an 8' 6" rise. A matching arch on the north side of the porch has an 8 ft. span. The stone of the arches are 2 ft. 6 in. deep. The porch is 15 ft.  $\times$  21 ft. The south and east walls, each containing one window, are the brick walls of the building. The floor is concrete. The porch has a flat roof.

#### Roof

A medium gable extends north-south over the west half of the building and a 3 ft. lower gable urns east-west over the south half of the building. A hip extends to the east above the north portion.

The roof is slate covered, with verges close.

#### Dormers

There is a dormer, no overhang, in each end of the north-south gable and a dormer in the east side of the hip, to the rear of the porch.

#### Chimneys

A large 4 ft. square chimney extends from the center of the west wall rising above the gable peak. Another exterior chimney at the east end of the south facade protrudes 9 in. and is 9 ft. wide, extending half way up the roof. The chimneys are brick.

#### Decorative details

9 ft. stone Corinthian columns (carved leaves and flowers) accent each side of the (3) bay windows on each floor of the east facade. The second story bay is topped with cut stone supporting a curved stone railing (stone balusters) in front of the 3rd story gable windows.

The piers of the porch arches are formed by a cluster of 3 ft. Corinthian columns. The dated stone (1890) tops the round arch. The corners of the arch are decorated with carved figures—man and woman of the arts. Surmounting the front facade arch is the smooth—faced stone sections bearing the carved name of the building—Jewett Norris Library.

The gable peak and the peak of the east dormer are carved stone, each with a carved stone rosette inset.

Round brick columns protrude from 2nd story center windows, extending to each side of the dormers. There are three carved stone finials on each dormer and one on the east gable.

The 2nd floor section of the chimney on the south wall has a brick patterned inset.

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#### **INTERIOR**

#### Lower Level

There is a full basement with a concrete floor in the building. Three steps descend two feet from the outside door into this area.

The south half is divided into two rooms. The east half of this portion measures  $22' \times 39'$  and is used for a children's library. Both rooms have wood-paneled walls and a suspended ceiling (8'). These rooms are separated by a wall having French doors in the center.

The west half is in the wide part of the building. The added seven feet on the south are partitioned for an office room.

The north half of the lower level is divided into three rooms. The 5 ft. oak stairway from the first floor is in the center of this part. It descends from a  $6' \times 6'$  landing on the north wall into a  $21' \times 19'$  room used for an office (wood paneled). There are 15 steps (6'' riser, 9'' tread) to the landing.

The west half of this side is divided into two rooms -- a furnace and a work room.

From the landing at the top of the stairs, three steps lead west and east into the library proper and into the lobby.

#### Main Floor

#### Lobby

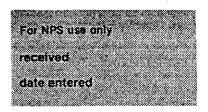
Entrance is made into a 21'  $\times$  23' lobby with an inlaid quarry tile floor—tan and brown with accents of royal blue and rust. The walls are brick which have been painted cream color.

The room is dominated by a magnificent, large, free standing stairway, which rises along the west, north and east wall to the second floor. Two steps from the lobby reach a 7 ft. square landing in the southwest corner of the room. The stairway is six feet wide and made of natural finished oak. Large carved newel posts accent the railing and balusters (turned). Also visible from the first floor is the curved baluster of the second level.

Ten steps (6" riser, 13" tread) lead to a 6 ft. square landing on the northeast corner. Ten more steps complete the rise to the second floor. The stair well is open thirty feet to the ceiling of the second floor.

The underneath of the stairs are oak covered with panels inset. The ornamental window in the north second floor accents the north wall.

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Entrance to the library proper is through double 5 ft. swinging doors—oak (paneled) with beveled glass insets. Matching windows on either side with carved oak column trim between, widen the doorway to nine feet. There is a round arch, 3 panel, 4 ft. high transom with oak column trim. The voussoir is brick.

Under the stairway in the northwest corner of the lobby, three steps lead down to an oak door on the landing to the lower level.

#### Library

The library is an L shaped room, which covers the entire building, with the lobby in the northeast corner of the L. The entire south half of the main floor is a reading room 24 x 73, with the extra seven feet in the west half.

All the woodwork in the building, including flooring, is oak. A 4 ft. wainscote of paneled oak lines all the walls of the library rooms.  $6" \times 8"$  recessed panels are the accent for the oak woodwork and this detail is carried throughout the building. The walls are plaster.

The windows reach from the top of the wainscote to the ceiling, which is 15 feet high. Two oak covered beams run north-south in the room. A beam runs east-west at the L of the room. The building has  $10 \ 1/2$ " baseboards.

There are two fireplaces in the reading room—one on the south wall at the east end of the room. The other angles across the northeast corner. Both have oak mantels with oak Corinthian columns supporting the mantels. A portrait of Jewett Norris hangs over the south mantel. The corner mantel is surmounted by a 4 ft. square beveled mirror in a large oak frame with columns and carved (book) detail. The fireplaces and hearths are ceramic tile.

The north room (30' x 31') of the L is for the stacks. Five rows of shelving is also of oak, as is a librarian's desk (5'6" x 12'6"), four library tables and the card catalog. The long north-south beam is supported by iron columns, painted oak color, with carved oak capitals.

On the north wall of the reading room is mounted a beautiful 8-day wall clock with a large brass pendelum. It is mounted in an ornate 2' x 7' oak and glass case.

#### Second Floor

The stairway lands on a large 21' x 21' open room. The top of the stairs is fourteen feet from the north wall, with an oak balustrade curving along the north end of the room, which overlooks the stair well and stained glass north window.

The woodwork on this floor, including 10 1/2" baseboards, is also oak. Horizontally paneled doors, with decorated door trim, are surmounted by 4 ft. glass transoms.

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A prominent feature of the front (east) facade is a large three-window bay, extending from ground level through the second story. The bay extends 4'6" from the building and is 15 ft. wide. There is a window on each side of the bay. A matching bay on the west facade extends only through the first floor and has no side windows.

The first floor has six windows on both the north and south sides with four windows on the west. There is a window on the east side in each of the extensions, where the building widens, and two above the porch on the second floor.

The second floor has four windows each on the south and north with two on the west.

In addition, a round—arch double window on the east end accents the north wall. This window is divided in four vertical panes with one half—round pane on the top. The two outer window panels are of stained glass in a flower and leaf pattern. The window measures 9 ft. by 6 ft.

On the upper (3rd) half-story, there are three arcading windows ( $2^x 6^t$ ) in the east gable. These windows have brick voussoir with stone extrados. There are two windows in each dormer on the east, south and north facades (measuring  $2^t \times 4^t$ ).

On the east end of the south, slanted roof, there is a 10 ft. x 12 ft. skylight extending down from the peak.

The basement windows are double hung, wood frame and measure  $3' \times 4'$ . They have stone lintels and lug sills. There are three on the east, five on the south, one on the west, and seven on the north. Two window openings on the north end of the west wall are wood covered for access to a furnace room.

The frames on all windows in the building are painted white.

#### Doors

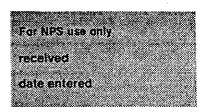
The main entrance is a double, 2 panel, wood frame door with glass in the upper panel of each door. The door is surmounted by a two-pane glass transom, which reaches to a stone lintel at the ceiling of the porch. The door measures  $6'3" \times 8'$ .

At the east end of the south wall is a wooden door, which provides an outside entrance to the lower level.

#### Porch

A broad stone stairway leads through a massive semi-circular stone arch to the open porch. Seven steps, 9 ft. 6 in. wide, flanked at the base by pointed stone posts (8"  $\times$  16"  $\times$  33') and with stone edging, lead to a five foot landing, which widens to 14 ft. 6 in. for 12 more steps leading into the center of the porch. The lower half of these steps are flanked by 66 in. square rock slabs on 3 ft. 6 in. stone bases.

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Double doors (6'  $\times$  8') to the west enter into a large auditorium, which covers the west half of the building. A 6 ft. vaulted ceiling rises above the 15 ft. walls. There is an exit door and the southern third of the room extends five feet on the west. The walls are plaster.

A 17' x 19' stage with a 3 ft. thrust occupies the south part of the room. The stage, 2 1/2 ft. above the floor, has a 2 ft. ceiling vault. The proscenium is inset sixteen inches at the rear of the thrust. Two (2'6" x 6') doors lead to each side of the stage and a door in the southwest corner leads to the attic. Ample natural light is provided by the windows on three sides.

There are two rooms on the south and east of the second floor. The east room measures  $11' \times 24'$  with a 3 ft. bay. Single doors to these rooms measure  $3' \times 8'$  with  $3' \times 4'$  transoms.

The south room measures  $18' \times 25'$  with a  $10' \times 12'$  skylight. Entrance is also made to the stage from this room.

#### <u>Attic</u>

Stairs lead over the stage to an unfinished attic. Less than half the floor is board covered.

Huge oak beams formed by four 2"  $\times$  12" boards support the main north-south gable.

The brick walls are not covered.

#### Alterations

Few changes have been made in the original building. A sagging, tile porch floor was replaced with concrete. Iron railings were installed on the front steps in 1962. Restoration of the brick and a new porch roof was done in 1969.

The lower level was paneled in 1975. In 1982, stryo-foam blocks were installed on the first floor to cover deteriorating plaster. They were placed flush with the ceiling to preserve all the original wood trim.

Except for arrangement of furniture and the addition of book stacks, there has always been an effort to maintain the library in its original condition. The beauty of the exterior and interior is appreciated by all.

### 8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 1800–1899 1900–	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric archeology-historic agriculture architecture art commerce communications	community plan conservation economics education engineering	ning landscape architectur law literature military music lement philosophy politics/government	science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater
Specific dates	1891	Builder/Architect	A. F. Gauger, architect	
Statement of S	ignificance (in one paragr	Builder, Chauncey Hall,		

The Jewett Norris Library meets criteria A, B, and C in areas of significance. The culture of the area was greatly enhanced by the building and equipping of the library. This was the first library of note, outside of St. Louis and Kansas City, to be built in the state of Missouri. Though not a man of fame, Jewett Norris was an early settler and developer of Trenton and Grundy County His benefaction continues to promote the area. The building is a good example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style of turn-of-the-century architecture. The stone arches and massive appearance of the building are typical. The broad free-standing oak stairway, tile lobby floor, use of windows, fireplaces and oak paneled wainscotting carry out in exceptional detail this style. The original characteristics of the building have been preserved. The library is the oldest public building still in use in Trenton. It was opened to the public in 1891.

Jewett Norris was born on a farm in New Hampshire on June 11, 1809 and spent the first fourteen years of his life there. He did not have a good education from the country school he attended, but he became an avid reader, and a self-educated, cultured man.

At 15, Jewett Norris moved to Boston where he found work. After three years, he moved on to New York and after seven years there, he decided to become a pioneer.

In 1835, at the age of 26, he came here and located on what was then unsurveyed land near the settlement of Trenton. Dec. 26, 1837, he married Sarah A. Peery, daughter of an early settler, under jurisdiction of Livingston Co., probably at Chillicothe—if not, theirs was the first marriage in Trenton. At that time Grundy formed two townships of Livingston County. They lived on the farm in a log cabin, characteristic of the time, and farmed for twenty years. During this time he took an active part in public affairs, helping form the county, and was a member of the first county court in 1841.

In 1855, he moved to Trenton and engaged in the mercantile business. Jewett Norris was elected to the state senate in 1858, and re-elected in 1862. He was a resourceful and useful legislator, taking high rank among his colleagues. At the outbreak of the war, he did much to crystallize Union sentiment in this part of the state, with both voice and purse. In 1863 and 1864, he was Lt. Colonel of the Thirteenth Enrolled Militia.

In 1870, his health began to fail. Mr. Norris moved to St. Paul, MN, where during the next 20 years, he was able to make investments yielding him good returns. He estimated that he had taken about \$50,000.00 with him to St. Paul from Grundy County, so in 1890, he offered that amount to the county for the library which now stands as a shrine to his memory.

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Norris wrote the Trenton School Board and made his proposition. They were to find a site, purchase the land, oversee the construction and the building would be owned by the school board for the use of the people of Grundy County.

The plans for the library building were drawn up by a St. Paul architect, A. F. Gauger, under the personal supervision of Mr. Norris.

Six construction bids were made on the building—two from St. Paul, others from Quincy, IL, Atchison, KS, Chillicothe and Trenton. All were very close. The bid from Chauncey Hall, Trenton, was \$40 less than the Quincy firm. Mr. Hall, according to specifications, bid \$25,295.00. If Quincy brick is used, \$250 less. If cast iron lintels, \$110 less.

Mr. Hall was a member of the School Board! So, when bids were read, he tendered his resignation. It was accepted and a final awarding of the contract postponed until a meeting of the new Board.

A newspaper account reports: "There were several reasons why Mr. Hall should be preferred, although the Board did not and could not give him any preference over the other bidders. He will make his bond right here in Trenton where the Board will be at no trouble to know that it is good; and his experience in putting up public buildings here is satisfactory evidence that he will do the work according to the contract. Besides, Mr. Hall will use all home material allowable, and will employ his labor at home. There is universal satisfaction that he received the contract."

The library cost \$30,000.00 to construct, \$5,000.00 for furnishings and books, leaving \$15,000.00 for the endowment fund which is now invested. The interest is used for the maintenance and repair of the building.

The building was completed by October, 1891, but Mr. Norris died in May of that year. Quoting from the newspaper of Oct. 4, 1891, regarding the dedication:

"The Norris Library, conceded to be one of the finest in the west, is now open to the people. It is a free institution, and is the property of the people of Trenton and Grundy county, and every citizen thereof ought to look upon with pride and satisfaction. Outside of St. Louis, there is not a library building in the State of Missouri to compare with it, and its shelves are stocked with books of Reference, Science, Art, History, etc., of the best authors known to this day and age.....At present there are 3,300 volumes registered on the book of accessions, and about 1,000 more to come in yet.....

The exercises held at the Opera House Tuesday afternoon, in commemoration of the completion and opening of the Norris Library, were attended by over 1,000 people, and hundreds were turned away."

There was music by the brass band.

"Judge Stepp, President of the School Board, then called the house to order, after which a chorus of 100 children sang Viva L'America in an inspiring manner. Mr. W. C. Benson then invoked the blessing of God upon the magnificent benefaction of Judge Norris.

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Mr. Jewett N. Carnes, Jr. of Royalton, MN, was then introduced and stepping to the front of the stage, he read in a clear voice, the address that had been written by his honored Grandfather, Judge Norris."

Then a song was followed by an Orator.

"One of the most impressive ceremonies of the programme was the presentation of the portrait of Judge Norris to the Trenton School Board. Mr. Henry Carnes of this city made the presentation speech in behalf of Mrs. Elizabeth Carnes, daughter of Judge Norris. The speech was brief but is spoken of as being one of the neatest of the day, it was `multum in Parvo'." Judge Stepp accepted the portrait in a neat speech of acknowledgment. The Benediction followed.

"The building is one of the most ornate in the state. Passing up the broad stone steps you pass through a stately Gothic porch, and into a wide hall. To the left is the entrance to the reading room, which extends from the east to the west limits of the building. It is beautifully finished in oak, lighted by electricity and gas, and at either end there is a beautiful fireplace and mantel, surmounted by handsome mantel mirrors. At right angles with the rearend of reading room, the library proper extends to the north side of the building. Here are located the shelves of books, to which the librarian and assistant only have access, the same being separated from the reading department by a broad oak counter. In the basement is a large unpacking room, fuel room, etc. and a large area which is unused.

"From the main entrance hall a broad stair case of beautiful design winds up to the second floor. On this floor is a gem of a lecture room seated with 267 opera chairs, and fitted with a stage  $18 \times 34$  feet in dimensions. In front of the lecture is a commodious art room, and adjoining it on the east is a handsome room for the Board of School Directors. The entire building is handsomely furnished and needs to be seen to be appreciated."

#### Footnotes

- (1) The History of Grundy County, Missouri, Birdsall & Dean, Kansas City, MO, 1881
- (2) <u>Centennial History of Grundy County Missouri 1839–1939</u>, William Ray Denslow, Trenton, MO, 1939
- (3) The Daily Evening Republican, May 1, 1890
- (4) Ibid., Oct. 4, 1891

9. Major Bi	bliographica	Refer	ences	
	nslow, Centennial His		ndy Coun <b>t</b> y Missou	ıri 1839-1939.
· .	1939) pp. 165, 167-1 Ford, A History of Gru		1908 (News Put	olishina Co
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Page 1

- The Jewett Norris Library, pamphlet prepared by Mrs. Marguerite Ward, Librarian. Feb., 1965
- 4. The Daily Evening Republican, May 1, 1890, Oct. 4, 1891
- 5. The Trenton Republican-Times, April 6, 1946, June 6, 1978, Sept. 22, 1982
- 6. The Kansas City Times, July 20, 1977, p. 1C photograph
- 7. St. Joseph News-Press/Gazette, March 13, 1983

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Page 1

Verbal boundary description and justification

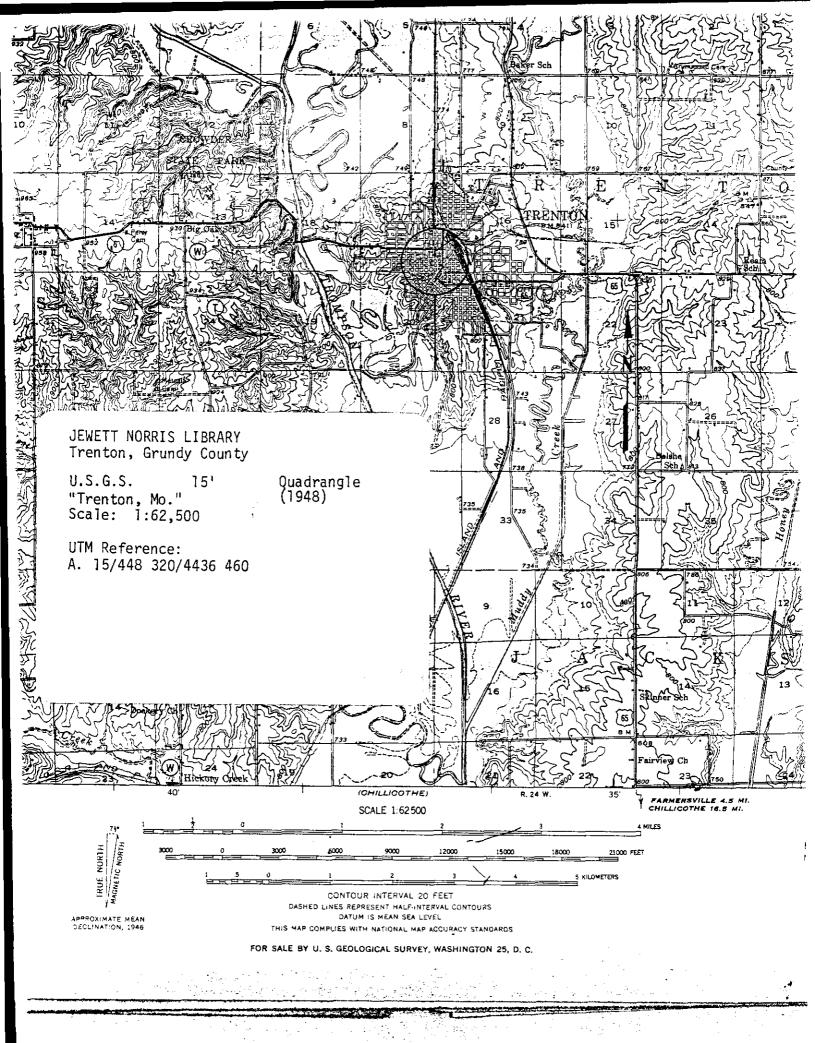
known as West Crowder Street on the North side thereof."

Continuation sheet Jewett Norris Library Item number 11

Page 1

2.. Jim Denny, Chief, Survey and Registration and State Contact Person Department of Natural Resources P.O. Box 176 Jefferson City

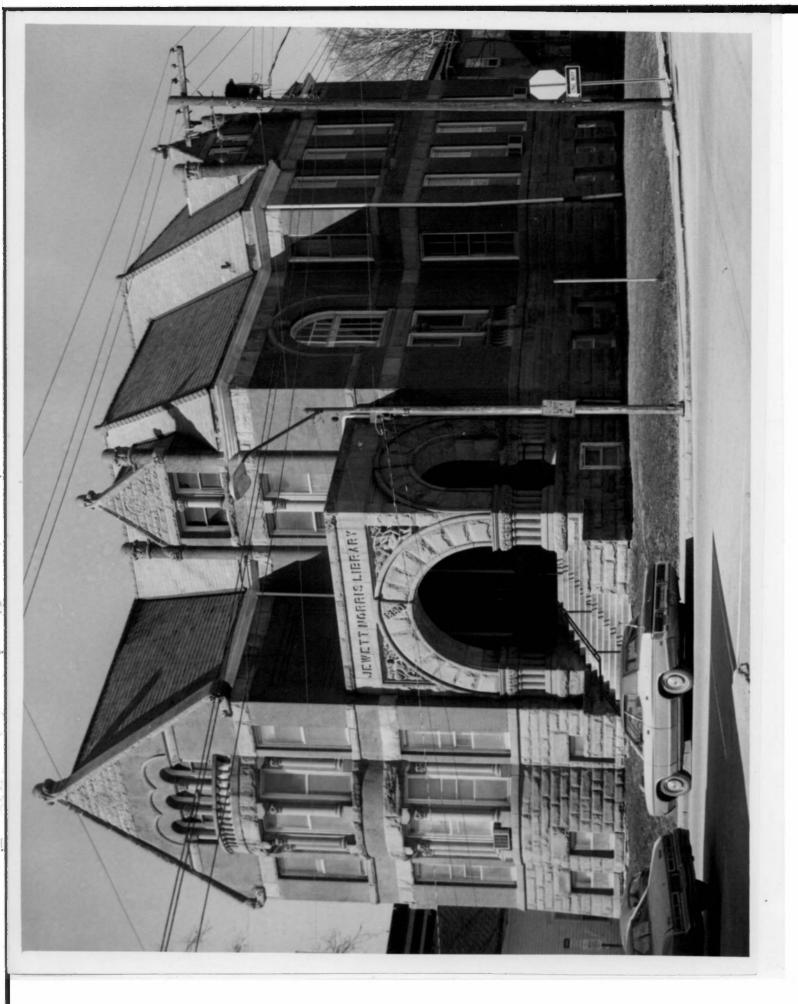
May 1, 1984 (314) 751-4096 Missouri 65102



GRUNDY COUNTY JEWETT NORRIS LIBRARY 1 of 4 Trenton, Mo.

Wendell J. Lenhart April, 1984 Grundy Co. Jewett Morris Library 313 Ridgeway Ave. Trenton, Mo. 64683 Pnotographer: Date Neg. Loc. :

Exterior of building, which faces east.



2 of 4

GRUNDY COUNTY JEWETT NORRIS LIBRARY Trenton, Mo.

Wendell J. Lenhart
April, 1984
Grundy Co. Jewett Norris
Library
313 Ridgeway Ave.
Trenton, Mo. 64683 Pnotographer:

Date Neg. Loc.

North wall of lobby.



3 of 4 Trenton, Mo.

Wendell J. Lenhart April, 1934 Grundy Co. Jewett Norris Library 313 Ridgeway Ave. Trenton, Mo. 64683 Photographer: Date : Neg. Loc. :

Lobby staircase, facing south to library doorway.



GRUNDY COUNTY JEWETT NORRIS LIBRAY Trenton, Mo.

Photographer: Date : Neg. Loc. :

Wendell J. Lennart
April, 1934
Grundy Co., Jewett Worris
Library
313 Ridgeway Ave.
Trenton, Mo. 64683

West wall of library reading room

