

preservation **issues**

NEWS FOR THE PRESERVATION COMMUNITY

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

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How the Citizens of Madison County Worked Together to Save Their Historic Courthouse

The year was 1900; Madison County was in its prime. Fredericktown, the county seat, had been a hub of the lead mining industry in southeast Missouri for more than a century. The economy was booming, and the county had just replaced its original 1821 county courthouse with a new Romanesque building of red brick and Missouri red granite, designed by Theodore Link, the famous St. Louis architect. By the 1980s, the mines were closed, the railroad had abandoned the area and industry was almost nonexistent. The county courthouse reflected the county's stagnant economy; it was in disrepair and showing its age.

Madison County, like other rural coun-

ties across Missouri, had become accustomed to the use of revenues derived from federal grants. With the termination of \$70,000 in annual revenue-sharing funds from Washington, D.C., the county was thrown into a financial tailspin and began borrowing at an alarming rate. The county's loss of federal funding created hardships for the community. County offices were looking at reduced hours, and the sheriff's department was left with just the sheriff and one deputy. The extension bureau was in danger of losing its office. Staff members were leaving for more secure jobs. Many road and bridge projects had to be cut for lack of funds.

With their backs against the wall and nowhere to go but up, a steering committee of historic preservation commission members*, concerned residents, and supporters began to organize a sales tax campaign. It was non-

partisan and grass roots from the beginning.

A one and one-half cent county sales tax was proposed for the general revenue fund. An additional one and one-half cent tax for capital improvements, that was to last only for four years, was earmarked for the rehabilitation of the courthouse. The campaign to pass the sales tax began in earnest in February of 1988. Private citizens met to discuss the steps necessary to mount a successful sales tax campaign. Madison County revenues, expenses and county office budgets were reviewed. Priorities were set in cooperation with the county commissioners — all of whom had remained neutral until the later part of the campaign. In addition to the huge

(See MADISON, Page 4)

Inside

Madison County	1
Warren County Courthouse	2
Courthouse Grants	3
Romanesque Architecture	6
Archifacts: Courthouses . . .	6
Landmark Listings	7

September/October 1996

The citizens of Madison County gathered in front of the courthouse in Fredericktown for this 1906 photograph. Photo courtesy of Luer & Associates, Madison County Collection.



The Demolition of the Warren County Courthouse — HOW COULD THIS HAVE HAPPENED?

At 8:25 on the morning of June 30, 1995, the ultimate step in the annihilation of the historic Warren County Courthouse began. A demolition company machine rolled up to the 1870s building and smashed a gaping hole in the bricks. After tearing that first break in the wall, just beneath a second-story window, the workmen left. Later that afternoon they returned to rip the puncture even larger for the benefit of St. Louis photographers who had missed the beginning of the courthouse's end.

How could this have happened?

The answer is that citizens who cared about preserving their heritage were not vigilant enough. Some believed that the building's listing in the National Register of Historic Places would protect it. But the destruction of the 125-year-old courthouse illustrates the inadequacy of that designation to preserve our historic buildings.

It is hoped that by examining what happened to the courthouse in the last years of its life, all who are interested in the preservation of their local landmarks will learn how to begin planning now to ensure a future for their past.

Completed in November of 1870, the Warren County Courthouse was an excellent example of classical architecture with its tall columns, arched windows and doors, winding staircase and beautiful cupola. It had served as the county's main public building with only one renovation, which consisted of an interior modification. Next to the courthouse was the smaller and companion structure, the Clerk's Building. Completed prior to the courthouse to safely house its most valuable commodity — its records — that building was one of a few remaining examples of such an early completely fireproof structure.

Both buildings had been altered only by the need for installing modern utilities, e.g., electricity. But, while the buildings retained their architectural and historic integrity, they were long overdue for upgrading. Offices were cramped and deteriorated; mechanical and plumbing systems were antiquated.

There was, however, a "watchdog" provision for the old buildings — that is, Missouri law requires all empaneled grand juries, while they are convened, to inspect the county's buildings. This provides an unbiased public jury with an ongoing opportunity to play watchdog, or guardian, over "public" buildings.

One such inspection of the Warren County Courthouse, did, indeed, occur in 1965. The findings were critical. Subsequently, three times between 1964 and 1974 the county proposed bond issues to replace or restore the 1870 courthouse. The public voted down all three issues.

The result was slow demolition of the courthouse by public neglect. Some members of the public did demonstrate an interest, however. The building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974 through the efforts of private citizens.

In 1993 the courthouse's physical inadequacy was brought into sharp focus by a law suit filed against Warren County. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, a suit charged the county with failure to comply with ADA provisions applicable to its courthouse, i.e., adequate ramps and elevators.

Feasibility studies prepared to deal with the situation reflected two options for the courthouse, preservation or replacement. The cost of renovation to meet ADA standards was approximately \$180,000; replacement on 5–10 acres needed for growth was estimated at \$6.3 million.

In addition to cost, another major concern of the community was a desire to have its public offices remain in the same locality. Some county officials at that time indicated a desire to see the historic courthouse preserved. Other county commissioners, however, desired to replace the courthouse with a new "Justice Center."

The following events increased the momentum for the new Justice Center. First, the county conceded the ADA-plaintiff's charge against it. Second, the county announced that a \$6.2 million bond issue to erect a new building would appear on the November ballot. That left preservationists with only 32 days before the November election to mount a campaign to save the courthouse. Opposition was especially difficult because the November 8 ballot provision to fund a new justice center did not state that, if

(See *DEMOLITION*, Page 8)



The Warren County Courthouse prior to its demolition in 1995.

Courthouse Development and Predevelopment Grants

Fiscal Year 1996 HPF Grants

APPLICANT: City of Farmington
PROJECT: Old St. Francois County Jail Feasibility Study
GRANT AWARD: \$4,459
PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The project will pay for an architect to prepare plans and specifications and to advise the city during the demolition and restoration phase of this project. The jail has been in continuous operation at this site since 1870. The county is building a new jail that will be ready for occupancy in early 1996. The existing jail will then be available for restoration as a museum of transportation, funded by an Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act enhancement grant.

APPLICANT: Carroll County Commission

PROJECT: Carroll County Courthouse and Jail Buildings
GRANT AWARD: \$6,000
PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The project will consist of a comprehensive architectural and engineering study of the Carroll County Courthouse and jail buildings. The study will address the following: 1.) physical deterioration of the infrastructure of the buildings, and 2.) modifications for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance and its impact on the historical significance of the buildings.

APPLICANT: Gentry County Commission

PROJECT: Gentry County Courthouse—ADA Rest room Project
GRANT AWARD: \$7,200
PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The project will involve the construction of a rest room, which is in compliance with ADA standards, within the Gentry County Courthouse. The

courthouse must comply with ADA guidelines in order for county offices to remain open.

APPLICANT: County of Ralls
PROJECT: Ralls County Courthouse ADA Compliance Plan
GRANT AWARD: \$8,000
PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this project is to prepare architectural plans and specifications aimed at assisting the county in preserving the historic Ralls County Courthouse — the oldest operating courthouse west of the Mississippi River (1858) — and meeting the provisions of the ADA.

APPLICANT: Old Courthouse Preservation Committee, Inc.

PROJECT: Old Courthouse of Phelps County — Rehabilitation Project
GRANT AWARD: \$13,513
PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The project will consist of the masonry repair of two existing openings and for installation of 10 new energy-effi-

cient, historically correct windows in the Old Phelps County Courthouse. This project represents accomplishment of one step in a locally supported multi-phase plan to restore the building to its appearance in 1881, the date of its first major historic addition.

APPLICANT: Iron County Commission

PROJECT: Replacement of Roofs on Iron County Courthouse and Gazebo
GRANT AWARD: \$12,560

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

This project will involve the removal of the existing deteriorated asbestos shingled roof from the Iron County Courthouse, installation of new roof sheeting over entire roof, and the application of roofing felt and a new composition shingled roof to the building. As part of the same project, the deteriorated shake roof of the gazebo on the east courtyard will also be removed and replaced with a new cedar shake roof.

Heritage Tourism Course Offered at Central Missouri State University

Tourism is a vital industry in Missouri and many other states. It is a diverse industry and is currently enjoying significant growth in multicultural and heritage travel activities. Central Missouri State University (CMSU) recently announced a four-year undergraduate program dedicated to preparing future professional tourism leaders. The CMSU program is one of only five in the United States.

The first course offerings for the fall semester included a three hour undergraduate course, REC4000 Heritage Tourism. This course presents a study of the rise of heritage sites and tourism in the United States. It examines the evolution of historic, cultural and natural resources as major destinations for national and international visitors. The class also explores how public, private and civic sectors can initiate benefits from heritage tourism.

For more information, contact: Recreation & Tourism, Terry Simmons, Lovinger 201, Warrensburg, MO 64093. Or call him at (816) 543-8928.

(MADISON, from Page 1)

amounts of time invested in "getting the word out," and in educating the voters on the needs of the county, research began in earnest on the history of the 88-year-old courthouse. Community meetings were held all over the county,

and brochures were designed and distributed to keep the courthouse restoration in front of the voters.

Several citizens "stepped back in time" by role-playing as early Madison County residents when discussing the two sales tax issues. They spoke of the county's his-

tory as well as the deplorable condition of the once stately courthouse. They reminisced about its construction in 1900, and the pride they had always felt because of its famous architect, Theodore Link. Comparisons were drawn between several features of their courthouse and the St. Louis Union Station — also designed by Link.

On April 5, 1988, Madison County voters showed their pride in their county — and their courthouse — by passing both sales taxes by a two-to-one margin. Madison County, at least three times in the past, had tried and failed to pass a sales tax for general revenue. To have both of these taxes pass at one time had been thought impossible by many.

The same enthusiasm and commitment that went into passing the sales tax soon became evident in the advisory committee appointed to oversee the courthouse rehabilitation. It served in an advisory capacity to the county commissioners; however, much of the leg work in selecting an architectural firm was turned over to them.

A joint venture between the St. Louis architectural firms of Gerhardt Kramer and J. R. Luer and Associates was selected. Because the sales tax to fund the courthouse was a four-year tax, only limited funds were available at any one time. It was decided to divide the project into three phases so the voters would be able to see progress almost immediately without having to wait for four years.

The first phase was to be stabilization of the building, installation of a new roof, and tuckpointing and repair of the masonry. The second phase would be the replacement of the window units with new wood units that matched the originals, but which would be energy efficient. The third phase was to be the interior work and furnishing.

By using energy-efficient windows; insulation in the walls and ceilings (which had been non-existent); a heating system composed of four, energy-efficient, 90



The Madison County Courthouse was showing its age and years of neglect in the top photo. Note the variety of non-historic window infill and the modern metal balustrade on the tower balcony. With rehabilitation complete (bottom photo), the courthouse is once again the pride of Madison County.



The north elevation before rehabilitation (left), and after (right), demonstrates the importance of windows and doors as character-defining features. Note also, the beautifully reconstructed balcony.

percent-plus boilers connected in series (and staged to operate only on demand); a new 35-ton, energy-efficient chiller; and a new, four-pipe, heating and cooling system to allow for heating and cooling only where needed, the project became eligible to receive a low-interest loan from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Division of Energy. The department's Historic Preservation Program (HPP) provided technical assistance throughout the project.

The installation of energy-efficient windows, insulating the entire building, and changing the heating system, along with the installation of a total-building cooling system, resulted in over 50 percent savings of energy in the first year after the systems were in place.

The county commissioners soon realized that they could make the balance of the tax money go farther — and help alleviate a chronic unemployment problem among unskilled county residents — if the county became its own contractor for phase three of the project.

Melvin Starkey, a lifetime resident of the county and superintendent for the contractor who completed phases one and two of the work, was now employed directly by the county commissioners. Unemployed Madison County residents were added to the county payroll, then supervised and trained by Starkey in the skills necessary to complete phase three. This phase included the new heating and cooling system, a new electrical system, a new 800-amp underground electric service (beneath the highway), a new alarm system and new plumbing. These crews of county employees, under Starkey's guidance, undertook all of the carpentry work necessary to furr the interior walls and re-work the wood floors, install the ceramic tile and do the final painting and finishing. The building was adapted to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and even some of the original furniture in the courthouse was restored and refinished.

Phase one of the construction was started in 1989, and phase three completed in 1993. The one-and-one-half cent portion of the sales tax earmarked for capital improvements had raised \$1,200,000 which allowed the historic courthouse to have its useful life extended for another millennium — to remain the heart of the county.

— Jack Luer

Jack Richard Luer is a St. Louis architect, who played a major role in the rehabilitation of the Madison County courthouse.

*Fredericktown passed a historic preservation ordinance and became a Certified Local Government (CLG) in 1987. The CLG program, administered by the HPP, assists communities in preservation planning.

MISSOURI

Historic Architecture

Romanesque ca 1880 - 1910

- Romanesque style buildings are characterized by a sense of weight, massiveness and solidity; a profound departure from the delicate, decorative detailing of the Queen Anne, Eastlake and Stick styles.
- The style is primarily seen in large public buildings and very fashionable large homes of the period.
- Most Romanesque buildings have hipped roofs and may have one or more

lower cross gables emerging from the main form. The style is also seen on gabled townhouses.

- Bold, massive towers with conical or steeply pitched pyramidal roofs are quite common.
- Exterior wall treatment is always masonry, usually with rough-faced, ashlar stonework. Occasionally, two or more colors or textures of stone or brick are combined to create decorative elements.
- Wide, rounded Romanesque arches predominate in fenestration and doorways.

The Jasper County Courthouse, Carthage (1895), is a fine example of Romanesque architecture, a predominant style used in the construction of Missouri's courthouses between 1891 and 1906. Of the 15 courthouses in the state that are considered Romanesque, Jasper County's is the most typical and best preserved of the style. Alterations have been minimal and are sympathetic to the original design.
— Allen Tatman

In doorway treatments, the arches may sit upon short, squat columns or massive piers. Syrian arches, commonly used in doorways and windows, lack column or pier supports and begin at or near floor level.

- Windows are usually deeply recessed; and groupings of three or more arched windows are very common. Stone enframed transom windows arranged in ribbon-like fashion are often found.
- Facades are almost always asymmetrical.
- Dormers are found more often than not, and they may be parapet-gabled, hipped or eyebrow.
- Other common elaborations include: belt courses, heavy post and lintel porches, very large arched breezeways and entryways, decorative flashings on roof ridges, carved decorative stonework and cushioned capitals on piers and columns.



Archifacts: Missouri's Historic Courthouses

The architectural styles of Missouri's historic county courthouses are broad and varied, covering a large portion of America's architectural movements from the mid-19th through early 20th centuries. While most of the courthouses cannot be described as examples of high style architecture, the majority exhibit specific stylistic elements, and a few are considered typical examples of very particular styles. Using a broad criteria of consideration, it can be said that 12 styles of architecture are represented by Missouri's county courthouses: four are Greek Revival (1847-1871); nine are Italianate (1858-1887); five are Second Empire

(1870-1898); six are Renaissance Revival (1873-1924); five are Victorian Gothic Revival (1881-1904); 28 are Classic Revival/Neoclassical (1887-1927); 15 are Romanesque (1891-1906); three are Italian Renaissance (1897-1907); three are Beaux Arts (1910-1926); and 20 are Art Deco (1931-40). In some cases, the architectural style, or stylistic elements, of Missouri's courthouses clearly reflect the predominant styles being used in public buildings at the time of construction, while in other examples, the style of the courthouse does not follow the academic periods of popularity in its particular treatment. These variations are probably

explained by availability of funds at the time the county needed the building constructed; when the money was there, it was spent on development of architectural plans and stylistic embellishments were considered. When funding was limited, the county satisfied itself with what could be obtained within budget.

Thirty-six of Missouri's 115 county courthouses are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, either individually or within historic districts; probably 66 more are eligible for the National Register, but remain unlisted.

—Allen Tatman

Landmark Listings



OLD STONE HOUSE IN HISTORIC HERMANN

A rare opportunity to own property on the National Register of Historic Places. Completely restored, all modern conveniences and more. A/C, gas heat, random width flooring. Prime condition, 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, living room, dining room, keeping room-kitchen with huge fireplace, utility room-office, porch, attached garage and 3 room useable basement. On 4 landscaped lots, with spectacular views of town, Missouri River, bottom lands and mini-mountains beyond — all on top of East Hill.

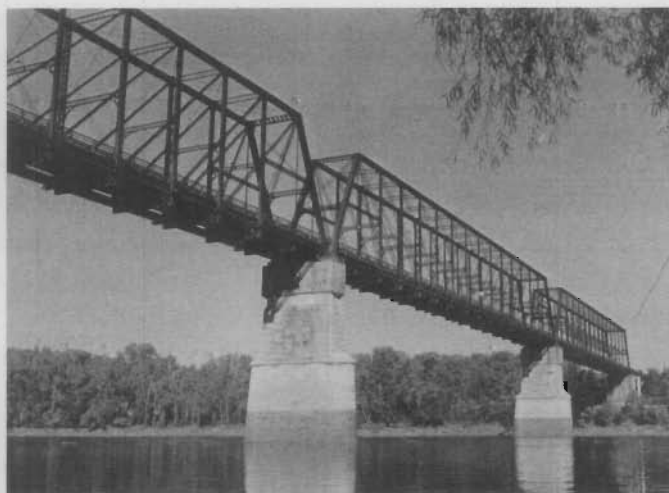
Priced to sell!!!

Contact (573) 486-2000 or write 200 Franklin St., Hermann, MO 65041



For Sale, National Register-listed, carefully restored, 2 story 11 room, 2,832 sq. ft. house in historic Bonnots Mill on the Osage River. Tastefully decorated and updated in-keeping with the Arts and Crafts period. New furnace, wiring + district water. Private lot with mature trees, shrubs + garden.

House features original light fixtures, woodwork, hardwood floors, 9' ceilings, large closets, 3-4 bdrms., 2 baths, formal dining, living room w/fireplace and built-in bookshelves, large kitchen with butlers pantry, new cabinets, appliances; 10' x 30' screened-in back porch. Master "suite" includes bedroom, sitting room study, bath, walk-in closet and screened porch. Asking \$89,500. Call Don Knollmeyer, Wilbers Realty, (573) 897-3214.



KANSAS CITY

Francois Chouteau Missouri River Bridge available for reuse on or off site. National Register of Historic Places eligible. Built 1887 by Keystone Bridge Works. Railroad converted to highway. Contains three 403 foot Whipple-Murphy truss spans, 1,629 feet steel trestle. Interested parties capable of assuming ownership write Harrington & Cortelyou, 127 West 10th Street, Kansas City, MO 64105 for information packet by Oct. 31, 1996.



COOPER COUNTY

"Klenklen Bridge" available for adaptive reuse. NRHP eligible. Built in 1930 by Missouri bridge builder J.A. Dice. This suspension bridge is a good example of vernacular bridge construction, designed and built without the benefit of structural analysis or computations. The bridge has steel towers and side

rails, original cables and wood decking. From anchors to towers, 60 ft, with 200 ft span. Currently not used due to flooding. This bridge will be match-marked, dismantled and stored for further handling by party accepting ownership if interested party contacts Shannon Howe with Shafer, Kline & Warren, P.A., P.O. Box 366, Macon MO 63552, (816) 385-6441 by Sept. 30, 1996.



CONCORDIA,

the 1872 Gothic Revival Lohoefer House, 710 Orange St. is for sale. Only 2 owners — the Lohoefer family of 12 & the German Heritage Museum. Brick, 6 rooms and attic and hall.

Frame additions contain 4 more rooms, bath, hall + back porch. Partial bsm't., gas furnace, well, sandstone walks. New roof 1992. Public & Lutheran high schools.

Contact: Lloyd or Nyla Shepard, 614 Briarwood, Marshall, MO 65340, (816) 886-2629.

(DEMOLITION, from Page 8)

funded, the center actually would replace the old courthouse. Local preservationists were unsuccessful in their last-minute attempts to convince the county's voters otherwise, and the bond issue passed.

On March 27, 1995, the county filed a plan with the U.S. Federal Court, i.e., to situate the new justice center upon the site of the historic courthouse. This action sounded the death knell for the historic Warren County Courthouse. And so the demolition crew went to work on June 30, 1995.

So how could the destruction of the Warren County Courthouse have happened? Many county residents would cite a lack of public awareness and education that resulted in a complacent citizenry. Consequently, it would seem essential to educate communities about the following issues:

(a) the history, and the value of that history, of our public buildings and any other historic buildings in the community.

Included in this education should be information about the buildings' intrinsic value, identification of threats to the sites and preservation laws regarding them. Creating awareness about what could happen and a sense of responsibility for the resulting actions

are first vital steps.

(b) the economic value of having buildings properly maintained so that the financial issue of preservation is not outweighed by the sometimes attractive issue of modern replacement.

Costs of preservation need to be balanced against specific returns that the investment will bring to the community (tourism, sense of pride) rather than being considered primarily emotionally.

(c) the connection between preservation desire and involvement.

Being in favor of preservation is not enough. Preservationists and their supporters must learn about the issues, the candidates, and what outcomes will result from the electoral process.

(d) clarification of accountability for site protection.

Since it is generally and erroneously believed that a listing on the National Register guarantees site protection, education about what that listing really entails is crucial. Communities obviously can be significantly "involved" only if they accept local responsibility for their historic buildings and give up the idea that the national listing is an opportunity to expect site-protection from an outside agency.

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Thus, education and awareness about what could happen and accountability for the results are vital steps. Missourians who care about the preservation of their history should begin planning today for a local program that protects the buildings, structures and sites that are most important to them. It is never too early to plan. But, as the citizens of Warren County learned, it is sometimes too late.

— *Dorris Keeven*

Dorris Keeven, a long-term resident of Warrenton, chaired the Committee to Save the Warren County Courthouse.

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