

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Scott County Courthouse

other name/site number N/A

2. Location

street & town 131 S. Winchester St. N/A not for publication

city or town Benton N/A vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Scott code 201 zip code 63736

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mark A. Miles 12/15/03
Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is: Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
	1	structures
2	1	objects
3	2	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/Courthouse

GOVERNMENT/Courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Beaux Arts

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls brick

roof asphalt

other terra cotta

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

8. Description

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Politics/Government

Architecture

Period of Significance

1912-1953

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Hohenschild, H.H./architect

McCarthy, J.W./builder

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other Name of repository:

Scott County Courthouse

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.1 acres

UTM References

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 1/6 2/7/2/1/5/0 4/1/0/8/4/6/0
Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

3 / / / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

4 / / / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Property Tax No.

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

11. Form Prepared By

name/title See continuation Sheet

organization _____ date _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs: Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items: (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

name/title Scott County Commission

street & number 131 S. Winchester St. telephone _____

city or town Benton state MO zip code 63736

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Scott County Courthouse
Scott County, Missouri

Summary: Constructed in 1912 from plans by H. H. Hohenschild, the Scott County Courthouse located at 131 S. Winchester St. in Benton, Missouri is an impressive edifice with Beaux Art characteristics. The "T" shaped, flat roofed building has a three story central block with two story wings on the north, south and west. The central block and wings sit on a full basement. Constructed of reinforced concrete with brick veneer, the building is notable for the ornate terra cotta detailing on the façade. Oversized terra cotta blocks accentuate the three formal entrances on the façade but attention is focused on the second and third stories. The middle three bays of the central block are recessed behind colossal Ionic columns that support a dentiled entablature. Over the entablature is a cast stone balustrade on either side of a statue replicating the Great Seal of the State of Missouri. The wings have symmetrically placed arched bays with terra cotta capitals, keystones and banding. The courthouse sits on just over one acre of land, and shares the site with a small non-contributing shed, two contributing and one non-contributing historical and memorial markers. Installation of ramps for improved accessibility and modern storm windows over the original wood windows have moderately affected the exterior appearance, however the overall integrity of the historic building is intact.

Setting: The courthouse rests on a square of land (320 foot on each side) donated by Col. William and Nancy Meyers on August 9, 1837. Centered in the small town of Benton (pop. 575), the building is in the middle of a small commercial district and fronts a historic thoroughfare originally known as *El Camino Real* or Kings Highway. A level grassy lawn with mature trees and shrubs surrounds the courthouse. In 1903 an artesian well, that still supplies the community's water, was drilled on the northeast corner of the lot. The building also shares the lot with small, non-obtrusive memorial objects common to courthouse squares. In 1915, the Daughters of the American Revolution placed a red granite marker on the northeastern corner to commemorate *El Camino Real*. An undated marker commemorating Scott County's WWI veterans is located at the southeast corner, and a non-contributing cast metal historical marker (c. 1961) is located at the front, central, portion of the lot.

Elaboration: The courthouse building contains 30,974 square feet of floor space. From north to south, the building stretches 192 feet and is 51 feet deep. The central section and two wings house county offices and storage space for public records. The west wing, which extends from the back of the three story central block, projects 66 feet and houses the courtroom and other court offices.

Notes accompanying the original blueprints indicate that the foundation and structural system is reinforced concrete with brick veneer. The foundation extends 3-4' above ground level and is denoted by darker red brick and a concrete water table. The upper stories are faced in a lighter red brick in a common bond pattern with thin concrete quoins at the corners. Other concrete, stone and terra cotta detailing includes decorative bands, pilaster capitals and keystones.

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Scott County Courthouse
Scott County, Missouri

This central block has more floors and projects past the wall plane created by the two-story wings to the north and south. The highly detailed façade of the block is divided horizontally into three sections: a rusticated first floor entrance, second and third floors dominated by colossal columns, and an elaborate entablature with decorative balustrades and statuary. Vertically, the façade is divided into three sections. Projecting bays on either end are simply detailed with thin concrete quoins, and balconies at the second story windows. The balconies are supported by two massive brackets and have heavy, terra cotta balustrades. The first floor of the central bays has three formal entrances accentuated by "rusticated" cast terra cotta surrounds that have prominent quoins and keystones. The second and third floors are recessed behind colossal Ionic columns that support the dentiled entablature. The entablature has the words "Scott County Courthouse" written in metal letters. Topping the central section is a cast stone, highly detailed, replica of the Great Seal of the State of Missouri on a wide base. The seal includes two large bears holding a circular shield. On either side of the statue base are turned balustrades that match those on the second story balcony.

Windows throughout the building are symmetrically placed. Unless otherwise noted, they are 6/6 double hung wood windows fronted by modern metal storm windows divided into four horizontal panes.

The wings to the north, south and west are nearly identical. The exterior of the wings has a raised base with a wide terra cotta water table defining the bottom of the first floor. Each wall of the wings has five round arched openings defined by brick pilasters with decorative terra cotta capitals. The top of each brick arch has oversized terra cotta keystones. Within each arch is a slightly recessed wall containing the first and second story wood windows. Between the two windows is a brick panel outlined by projecting stretcher bricks. The second story windows have rounded tops. Above the arches is a simply designed stone cornice and parapet wall. The parapet, with terra cotta coping, has projecting sections that extend above the pilasters on the main wall and recessed brick panels over the arches. The end of each wing has a formal entrance in the center bay. The doors have terra cotta surrounds with pronounced quoins and keystone. Over each entrance is a plain entablature supported by large decorative brackets. Over the entablature is a large stone shield flanked by decorative scrollwork.

Interior: The simply designed interior spaces appear to be intact. A large lobby allows access to hallways to each wing and a broad staircase leading to the court anteroom and upper floors. The primary public spaces, entrance lobby and hallways, have marble floors, plaster walls and high ceilings. Simple, wide wood moldings surround the doors and transoms. The most ornate space is the courtroom that has classical detailing on the woodwork and judge's bench. The large courtroom has two story ceilings and a balcony for a visitor's gallery. Woodwork over the doors and windows resembles classical entablatures with projecting cornice, plain freeze, and simple architrave. The focal point of the courtroom is a recessed alcove containing the judge's

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Scott County Courthouse
Scott County, Missouri

bench. Surrounding the alcove are faux marble painted pilasters between which is a wide arch supported by decorative brackets.

Integrity: Overall, the integrity of the building is highly intact. Few changes have affected the exterior of the building. A concrete ramp, not attached to the building itself, has been poured to provide handicap accessibility to the entrances and lobby. Metal storm windows have been installed that impact the appearance of the window divisions. Original windows are intact behind the new storm windows. The interior has seen few changes, although an elevator is currently being installed on the interior to provide access to the courtroom, basement, and upper floors. The elevator will impact the interior configuration of the central stair and part of the lobby, but the building will still maintain much of its historic appearance and will be able to convey significance as Scott County's seat of government and a good example of Beaux Arts architecture in the region.

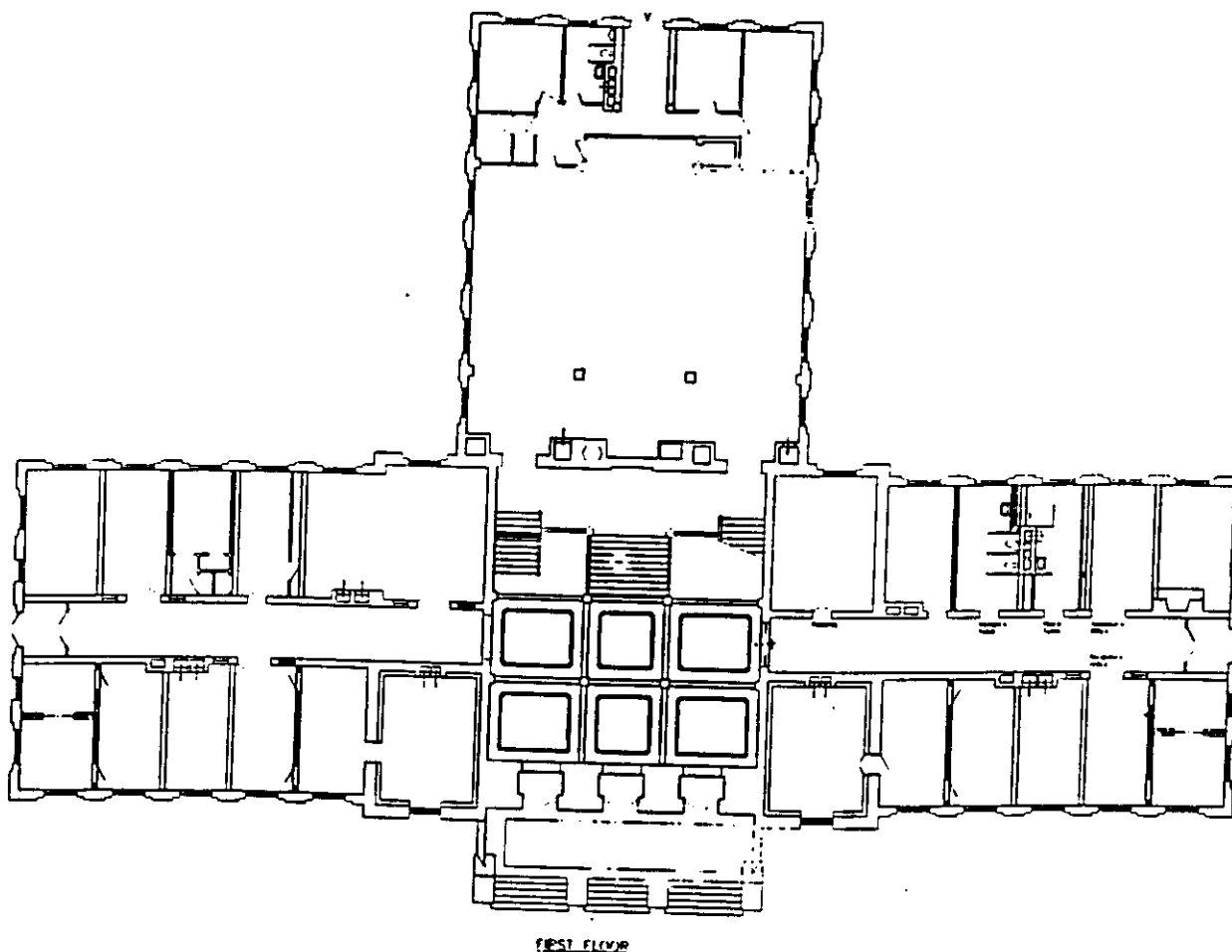
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Scott County Courthouse
Scott County, Missouri

Figure 1: Current First Floor Plans¹



¹ Galemore, Ronald G., A.I.A. "Proposal for Elevator Addition to Scott County Courthouse, Benton, Missouri." Submitted to the Scott County Commission, October 2000.

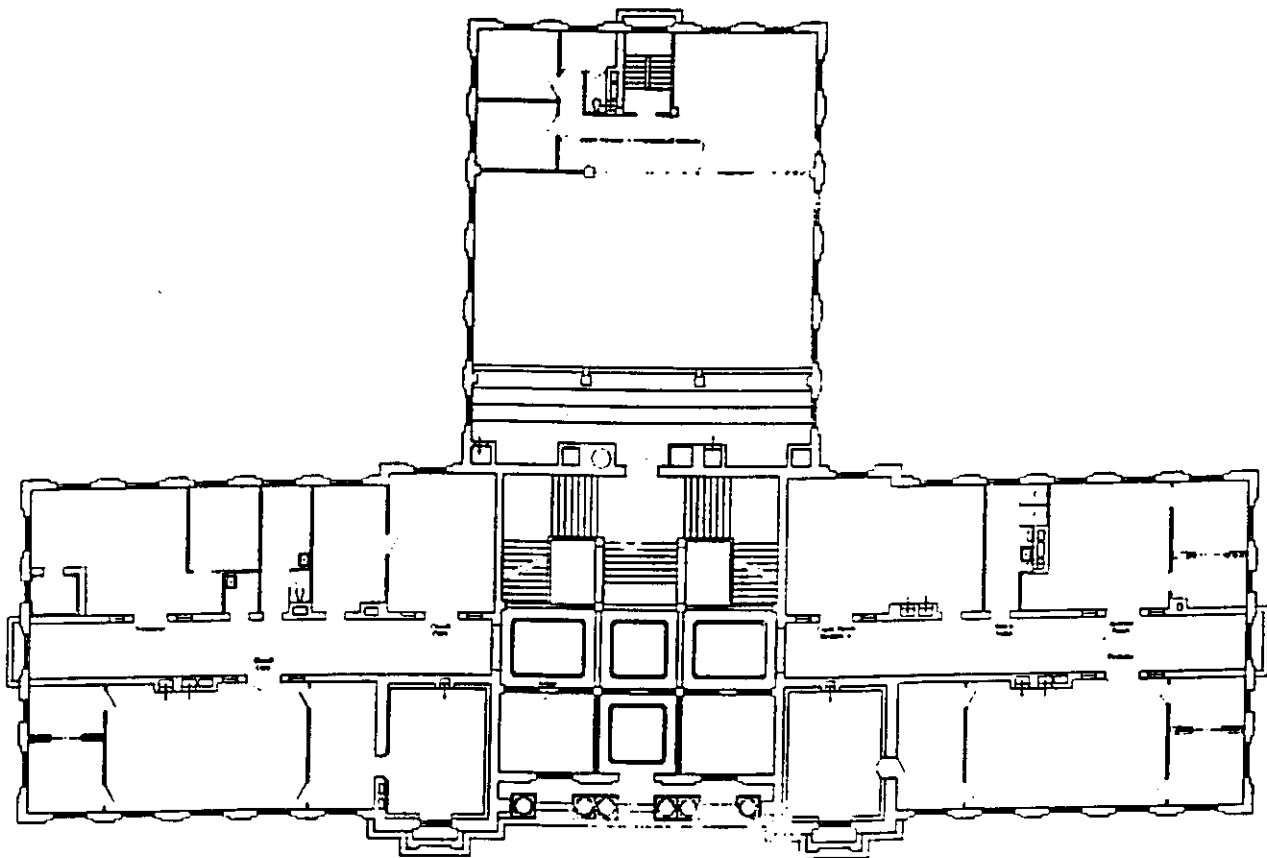
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Scott County Courthouse
Scott County, Missouri

Figure 2: Current Second Floor Plans²



SECOND FLOOR



² Ibid.

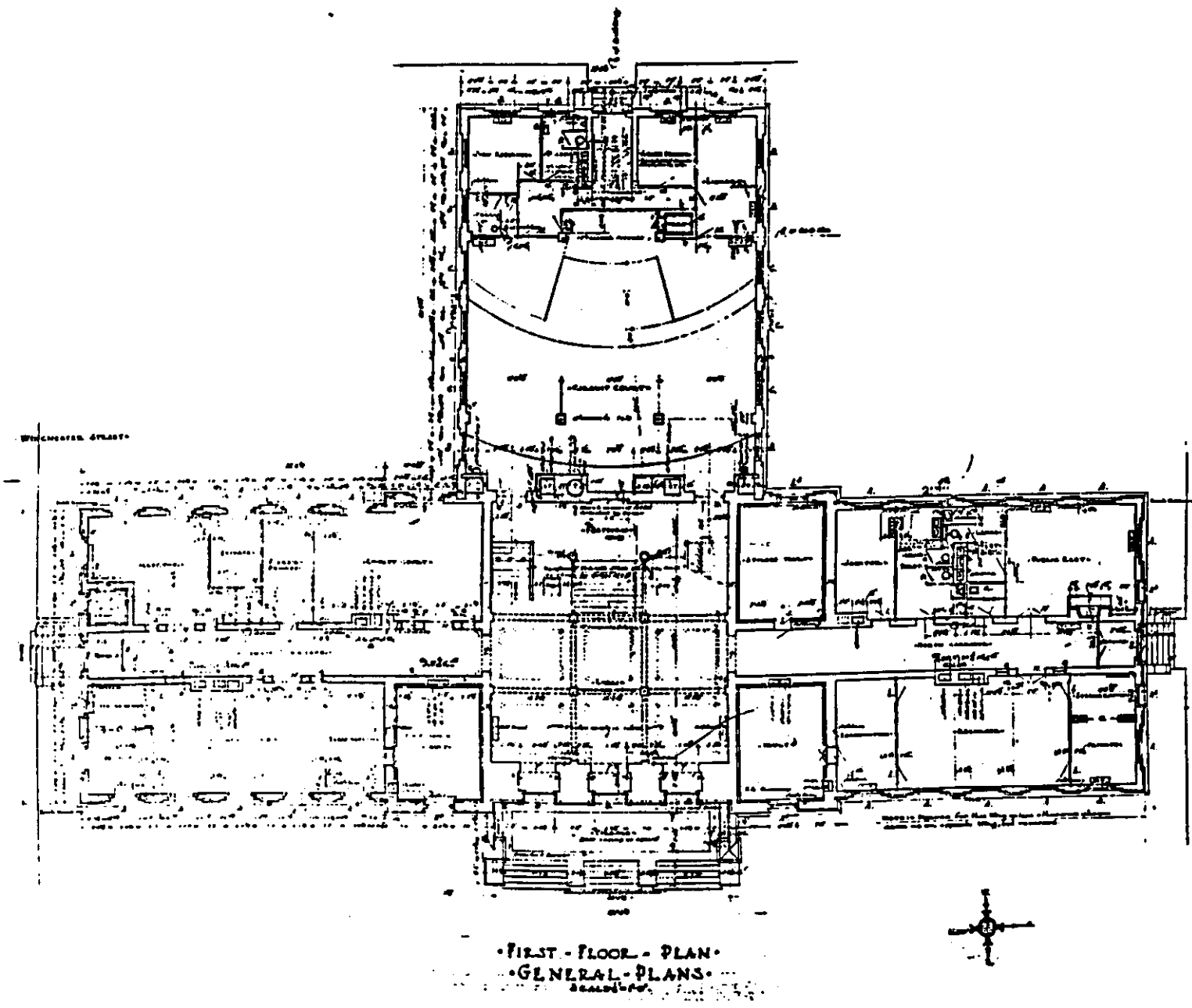
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Scott County Courthouse
Scott County, Missouri

Figure 3: Historic First Floor Plan, as designed by H.H. Hohenschild.³



³ All floorplans and elevations for the courthouse designed by H.H. Hohenschild are kept on file at the Office of the Recorder of Deeds, Scott County Courthouse, Benton, Missouri.

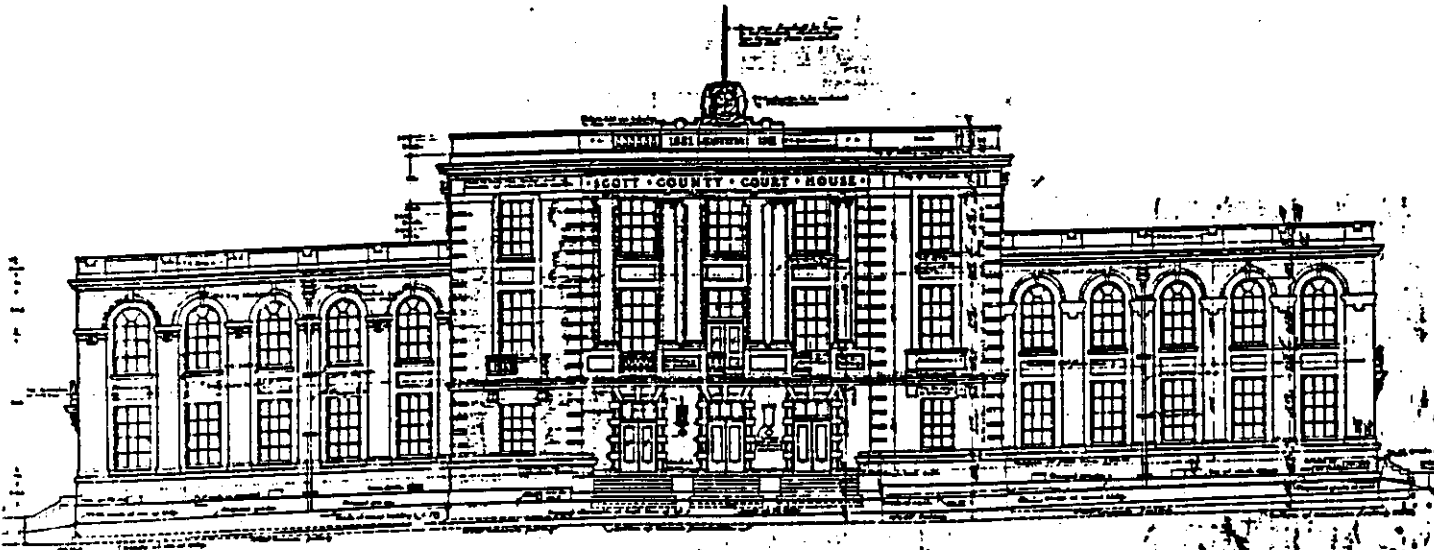
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Scott County Courthouse
Scott County, Missouri

Figure 4: Example Elevation Drawing from Scott County Courthouse by H.H. Hohenschild.

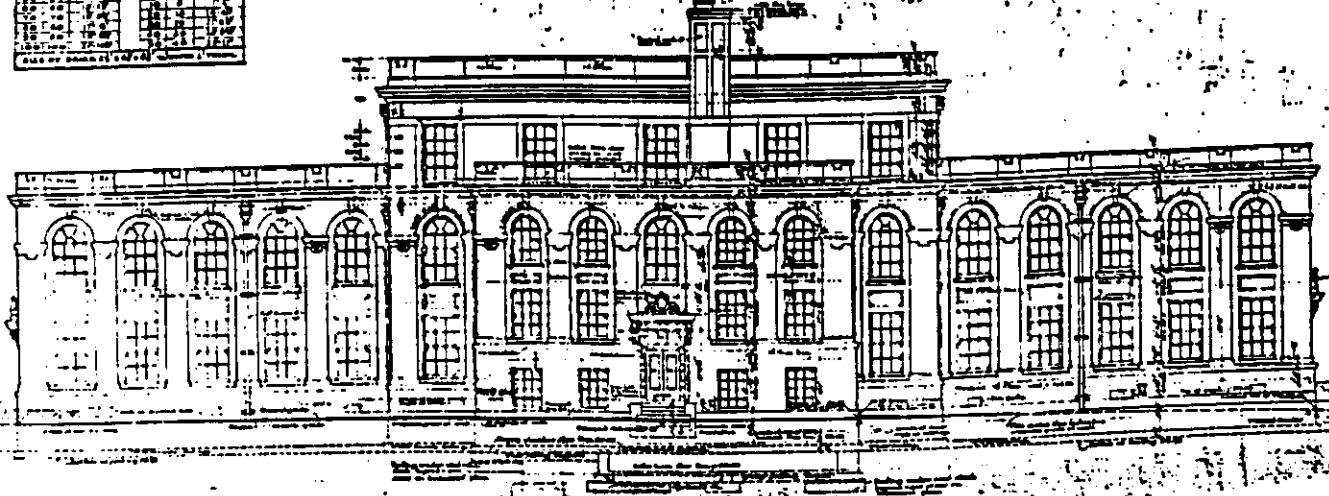


• FRONT (EAST) ELEVATION •
Scale 1/8" = 1'-0"
• GENERAL •
PLANS & SCALE DRAWINGS
• OF •
• COURT HOUSE •
• FOR •
• SCOTT COUNTY •
• BENTON, MISSOURI •

H. H. HOHENSCHILD • ARCHITECT
SUITE 30-36 HANOVER BUILDING
80 • LOUIS, MISSOURI.
AND SOLO, INC.

• GENERAL NOTES •
See notes on sheet 10-900-2 for all other sheets
and for complete specifications and conditions
of contract.
These drawings are intended for
reference only and do not constitute
a contract.

• SHEET TABLE •	
NO.	DESCRIPTION
1	GENERAL NOTES
2	GENERAL NOTES
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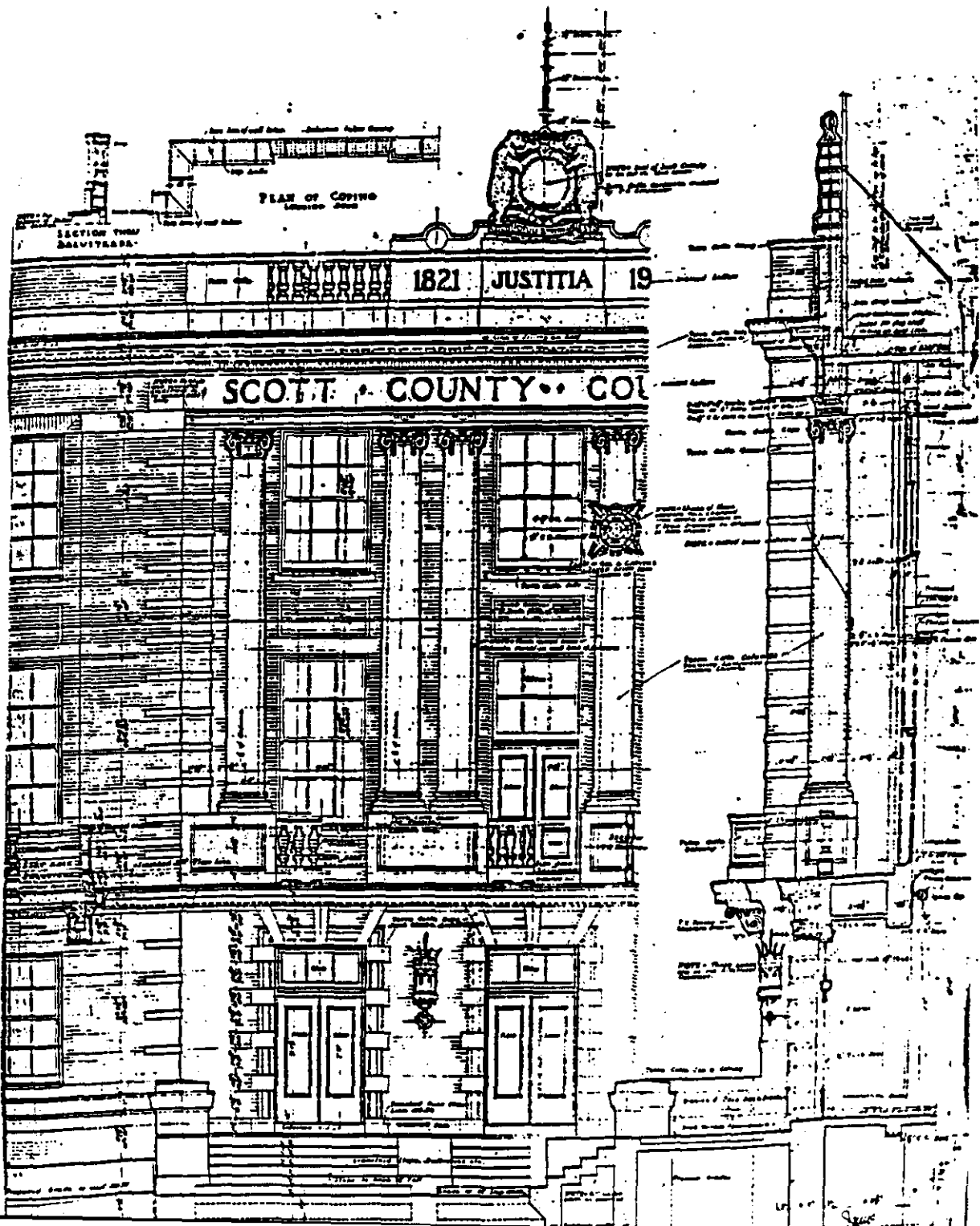
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Scott County Courthouse
Scott County, Missouri

Figure 5: Example elevation drawing from Scott County Courthouse by H.H. Hohenschield.



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Section number 8 Page 9

Scott County Courthouse
Scott County, Missouri

Summary: The Scott County Courthouse, 131 S. Winchester St., Benton, Missouri is significant under Criteria A and C in the areas of Politics/Government and Architecture. Constructed in 1912-13 as the fifth courthouse in Benton's public square, this building has continuously held the circuit court and county offices serving Scott County since its completion. The building reflects its significance as the seat of county government through its impressive size and massing. Designed by H.H. Hohenschild, a prolific designer of courthouses and public buildings in the state, the courthouse is a landmark in Benton and the county. Centered in a large square, the courthouse shares its lot with two contributing and one non-contributing historical markers and a small non-contributing shed built over the artesian well. The period of significance for the courthouse is 1912-1953. The dates include the beginning of construction to the arbitrary 50 year cut off date.

Historical Background

Scott County was one of the first counties formed after Missouri gained statehood in August of 1821. Named for John Scott, the first U.S. representative from Missouri, the county was organized by an act of the Missouri legislature on December 28, 1821. The county was originally part of New Madrid County that encompassed most of southeast Missouri including all of the Bootheel. When formed in 1821, Scott County included all of present day Mississippi County. The present boundaries of the county were established in the 1840s. The same act that formed the county also established a commission of men to locate a county seat of government.⁴

In early 1822 the commission designated the new county's seat on forty acres of land donated by William Myers. Named Benton after Thomas Hart Benton, Missouri's first U.S. Senator, the town was platted and lots were being sold by October 22, 1822.⁵ The configuration of Benton's plat is classified as a Shelbyville Square plan. This plan was very popular and fully one half of Missouri's historic courthouse squares are laid out this way. The plan is very simple, and designates a central block of a town grid to the courthouse and rearranges the lots (usually commercial) on surrounding blocks to face the public square.⁶ The eastern border of the square is formed by the original *El Camino Real* (Kings Highway), an early trace from New Madrid to Ste. Genevieve. King's Highway is noted in histories as being in use as early as 1789; today's U.S. Highway 61 roughly follows the alignment of the original trace.

⁴ Shrum, Edison. The History of Scott County, Missouri Up to the Year 1880, 3rd Edition. Sikeston, MO: Standard Printing Company, 1995, p. 166. The history lists the following members of the commission: Thomas Roberts, Enoch Evans, Newman Beckwith, Joseph Smith, and Abraham and Joseph Hunter.

⁵ Ibid. In August of 1822, Missouri's governor appointed George C. Harbison as the first county surveyor for Scott County. It is very possible that the original plat and survey for the community was produced by Harbison.

⁶ Ohman, Marian M. A History of Missouri's Counties, County Seats and Courthouse Squares. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Columbia, 1983, p. 33.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

Scott County Courthouse
Scott County, Missouri

The first of five Scott County courthouses was constructed on the new public square in 1822. This log building, according to local history, had a loft and doubled as a church, school and gambling room. Apparently, it also provided occasional shelter for pigs and sheep. By 1844, the original courthouse no longer served the needs of the county and the court ordered a new two-story brick building to be constructed. Completed in 1844 for approximately \$4,000⁷, the new courthouse was noted as being poorly constructed and was showing signs of deterioration soon after completion. The building served until 1855 when, "because the courthouse was so poorly constructed, it [was] unsafe and dangerous," it was demolished to make way for a two-story frame building.⁸

Like the first two courthouses, the third building (completed c. 1858) had a short life in public service. The use was cut short not by deterioration, but by ransacking by Union troops. County records indicate that the courthouse and records were damaged by a raid on June 23, 1862. An oral account by a descendant of Union army men stationed in the area, notes that in 1862:

Union cavalry took over the Courthouse, ransacked it, stealing everything of value, threw books, papers and records helter-skelter over the floors, walked, tramped over them, even rode their horse through the offices and halls of the lower floor, set fire and tried to burn everything.⁹

This and following raids are likely the cause of an act of the Missouri legislature that moved the seat of government in Scott County from Benton to Commerce in January of 1864.¹⁰

During the Civil War, Commerce was held by Union Troops and was considered a relatively secure location. As the county's largest community, located on the Mississippi River, it was also a logical location for a new county seat. By 1878, however, the "off-center" location of the courthouse was becoming a problem for Scott County residents. During that year the county held an election to vote on moving the county seat to a more central location. In 1879 the County Court published the results of the election and Benton, once again, became the seat of justice for Scott County.¹¹ In 1883 the court moved into a new building, the fourth to be constructed in Benton's public square.¹²

⁷ Oglive, Leon P. The Development of the Southeast Missouri Lowlands. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO, 1967, np.

⁸ "Brief History of the Court House in Scott County, Missouri, Excerpts taken from Centennial book of 1960." Scott County Historical Society, n.d., n.p.

⁹ Shrum, 164.

¹⁰ Brief History, n.p.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid. The building is said to have cost \$11,000.

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**Scott County Courthouse
Scott County, Missouri**

The 1883 courthouse was the most elaborately designed to date. The two story building had brick walls divided by pilasters, an arched front entry, and a domed cupola in the center of the hipped roof. This building served longer than any of the previous courthouses, but by the early 1900s county officials were feeling the need for more room than the small courthouse could provide. In addition to lack of space, an unsanitary environment and increasingly unsafe conditions prompted the county to push for a new courthouse.

In April of 1911, the county court hired Henry H. Hohenschild to prepare a design for the new courthouse. His plans were accepted in June of that year, and a contract was given to J.W. McCarthy to construct the shell of the building in October.¹³ The construction of the present court was authorized on February 14, 1912.¹⁴

Construction of the new courthouse was done in stages because the initial allocation of \$70,000 provided for construction costs but not for heating or lighting the building. A bond issue was needed to raise funds to complete the building for its new inhabitants. While there seemed to be a good deal of support for the completion of the courthouse, supporters used events to keep the new courthouse, and the proposed bond issue in the minds of county residents. As part of the publicity, supporters sponsored an essay context for youth with the topic "Why a \$40,000 bond issue should be voted to complete the new courthouse in Scott County, Missouri." The essays were to be 500 words or less, with the top prize being \$10.¹⁵ Apparently the promotion proved successful, because in March of 1913, voters passed the bond issue with a vote of 1465 to 643.¹⁶ The courthouse was completed in December 1913 with a final cost estimated between \$100,000 and \$140,000.¹⁷

The building was dedicated on April 20, 1914 with great fanfare. An article in the paper invited the community to the opening ceremony saying that "The court house is your building. Come and see it." The dedication program included "State and Southeast Missouri Speakers, Vocalists of National Reputation, Music by Morley Band and Big Basket Dinner."¹⁸ The Scott County Democrat pronounced the new building to be the "Most Magnificent and best County Building in Missouri." The same paper illustrated the construction of the building this way:

¹³ Ohman, Marian M. "Scott County," Encyclopedia of Missouri Courthouses. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri-Columbia Extension Division, 1981, n.p.

¹⁴ Ford, Royal E. History of Scot County, Missouri. Oak Ridge, MO: Privately published, 1939, p.9.

¹⁵ Encyclopedia, "Scott County."

¹⁶ Scott County Democrat, Benton, MO, June 12, 1913.

¹⁷ Several different sources state the cost of the building in this range. The Scott County Democrat on April 16, 1914 encourages county residents to see the "New \$112,000 Court House," while Royal's county history gives the \$140,000 cost estimate.

¹⁸ Scott County Democrat. Copy of an article, n.d.

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**Scott County Courthouse
Scott County, Missouri**

There were in the construction of this building eighty-five [railroad] car loads of crushed rock, 100 loads of gravel, 84 car loads of sand, 70 car loads of cement, 11 car loads of terra cotta and 40 car loads of brick.¹⁹

A brass plaque in the lobby dedicates the building to its central focus, justice, and notes some important events in the history of the county and current courthouse. The plaque reads:

UPHOLD WHAT IS RIGHT – CONDEMN WHAT IS WRONG – JUSTICE TO ALL

TO ALL PERSONS WHO INVOKE CIVIL GOVERNMENT HONESTLY AND
PRUDENTLY ADMINISTERED, THIS EDIFICE IS FOREVER DEDICATED.

HISTORICAL

Scott County Missouri, Organized DEC. 28, A.D. 1821. First White Settler of Soil 1789. First Public Road 1811. COURTH HOUSE SQUARE Donated by WILLIAM AND NANCY MEYERS. Aug. 9, 1837. R.R. Bridge Across Mississippi River to Thebes, ILL. May 25, 1900. Artesian Well In N.W. Cor. Court Square 1500 Feet Deep, Drilled 1903. Area of County 444 Sq Miles. Population 1912, 24,000. Taxable Wealth \$7,750,000.00 This is the Fifth Court House on This Spot. It was Ordered Erected by the County Court Composed of THEODORE F. FRAZER, Pres., Joseph W. Meyers, James V. Bandy, W.C. Bowman, Matt Thomas, Associated Judges and James McPheeters, Clerk. Feb. 14, 1912 – April 17, 1913.

H.H. Hohenschild
Architect

McCarthy Construction Co.
Contractor

Jno E. Warner, Inspector

Tim McCarthy, Foreman

Albert De Reign – William Hunter – Ferd. W. Loy
MEMORIAL COMMITTEE

While the period of significance of the building ends at the arbitrary 50 year cut off date, the building still functions as the seat of county government in Scott County. Since its construction the building has housed circuit court proceedings, as well as county offices that oversee responsibilities given to county governments such as land transactions, road maintenance and construction, and registration of marriages, births and deaths. For several years, the courthouse also held the office of the County Superintendent of Schools. Historically, this

¹⁹ Scott County Democrat, Benton, MO, March 5, 1914.

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Scott County Courthouse
Scott County, Missouri

building has also housed state offices such as county extension agent stationed in the county to assist farmers to improve agricultural methods and yields, and federal programs such as selective service. The courthouse also served and serves as a social center. For example, in March of 1922 a group of women met at the courthouse to form the Wednesday Club of Benton. This club, affiliated with the Missouri Federation of Women's Clubs, was a social and service organization dedicated to improving Benton and assisting in local, state and national charities.²⁰

H.H. Hohenschild and the Architecture of the 1912 Courthouse

The very design of the courthouse reflects its significance as the county seat of government. Centrally located in the small community of Benton (pop. 575), the large building dominates the public square. Its size, location, and architectural detail mark it as a well designed example of Beaux Arts style courthouses in Missouri. Additionally, as the work of Henry H. Hohenschild, a prolific designer of government and institutional buildings, it might also be considered a work of a master architect.

Influenced by the *Ecole des Beaux Arts* in Paris, Beaux Arts Classicism in the United States was introduced by American architects attending the school in France. The style rose in popularity at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries, notably after the design of the 1893 Chicago Worlds Fair grounds used ideals of classical design in the buildings as well as the layout of the grounds. With highly detailed facades using classical motifs, the style was especially popular among this country's industrial barons and could be seen in their huge mansions and summer homes. However, the style is most common in public and institutional buildings. Common features of the style include paired colossal columns, facades divided into projecting and receding planes, and use of exterior statuary and elaborate architectural decorations.

In Missouri Beaux Arts and other classically derived architectural styles influenced the construction of numerous courthouses throughout the state. Beaux Art style courthouses were constructed in Missouri between 1910 and 1935, although most date from 1910 to 1920.²¹ While Missouri's Beaux Arts courthouses are good examples of the style, most are plainer than high style examples and architects modified them to meet the needs and tastes of the county. Of the 21 courthouses in this style, however, most seem to have the basic elements that define the style such as: blocky massing, symmetrically and regularly spaced windows aligned on

²⁰ Benton Centennial 1860-1960, reprinted by the Scott County Historical & Genealogy Society, 1999, p. 85.

²¹ Hartley, Glen Dale. "Twentieth Century Courthouses in Missouri," unpublished paper for American Art, University of Missouri Columbia, 1972, 1.

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Scott County, Missouri

each floor, elaborately detailed entrance/front, and a division of the face into at least three major sections.²²

In addition to these basic characteristics, the Scott County courthouse also has other Beaux Arts details. Hartley, in his analysis of 20th century courthouses, speculates that as one of the early courthouses built in the style, Scott County's courthouse appears to a purer example of the style than those of later construction.²³ The courthouse has similar detail on all of its elevations including decorative pilasters, arched window openings and terra cotta cornices. The central portion of the façade shows the most influence of the classical style with its paired colossal columns supporting a classical entablature topped by a statue depicting the Great Seal of Missouri.

While significant as a representative example of Beaux Arts architecture in rural Missouri, the courthouse is also significant for its association with H.H. Hohenschild. Hohenschild, a prolific designer of government and institutional buildings in Missouri, is credited with the design of ten courthouses in the state, three of which were designed in the Beaux Arts style.²⁴ Scott County Courthouse, however, has the distinction of representing Hohenschild's designs in Missouri's Contribution to American Architecture published in 1928.²⁵

Born in 1882 in St. Louis, H.H. Hohenschild was educated in the city's public schools. There is conflicting information about his architectural training,²⁶ however he started his architectural practice at an early age. After moving to Rolla in 1881, he began to design public and residential buildings. His first public building design, for the Howell County Courthouse in 1881, was completed when he was only 19 years old.²⁷

Hohenschild's early success as an architect opened doors to other areas of interest. After making a speech at the opening of a building he had designed, he was recognized as a fine orator. He would use this skill in his role as Deputy Grand Master and Lecturer and as Grand High Priest of Indian Territory, honors given to him by the Masons.²⁸ His popularity and skills also led to his election to the Missouri Senate in 1896.

²² Ibid., 2-3.

²³ Ibid., 3.

²⁴ Ibid., 7.

²⁵ Bryan, John Albury. Missouri's Contribution to American Architecture. St. Louis: St. Louis Architectural Club, 1928. Courthouse is pictured on page 142.

²⁶ Earl Strebeck in his unpublished paper on Hohenschild said that he "attended several architectural schools" although none were specified. Ohman in her treatise on Missouri county seats notes that Hohenschild was "self trained."

²⁷ Encyclopedia, "Howell County."

²⁸ Strebeck, Earl. "Henry H. Hohenschild, Missouri Architect," unpublished paper, 1994, np.

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**Scott County Courthouse
Scott County, Missouri**

While known for his speaking skills, Hohenschild did not neglect his career in architecture. Beyond design, he edited his own periodical, the St Louis Architect and Builder, and wrote a book entitled Practical Hints on Building. Hohenschild was also a charter member of the Western Association of Architects, an elected member of the *Societe Centrale d'Architecture de Belgique* in Belgium, and was honored as a fellow of the American Institute of Architecture (FAIA) at the age of 27.²⁹

Through political connections, talent and hard work, Hohenschild obtained a large number of public commissions. In Rolla he designed several buildings for the School of Mines (now the University of Missouri—Rolla) and at least two public school buildings. Governor Lon Stephens appointed Hohenschild State Architect around 1896 which involved the architect in designing several state buildings including some at the state penitentiary. Commissions from state, county and local governments continued after his term as state senator and state architect ended. His largest state commission was the State Mental Institution in Farmington, but he was also called on to design the “temporary” home for the state legislature after a devastating fire destroyed the state capitol on February 5, 1911.³⁰

During his career, 10 Missouri courthouses were constructed and one was remodeled from designs by H.H. Hohenschild. In addition to these, he submitted plans for at least five other courthouses. Although not all are extant, it is thought that he designed more Missouri courthouses than any other single architect. The last of his courthouse designs to be built was for the Pemiscott County Courthouse in 1924.³¹ Hohenschild continued to work on plans until his death from a heart condition on February 3, 1928.

Missouri Courthouses by H.H. Hohenschild³²:

Barry County (1913)
Christian County (1913)
Howell County (1881?, 1883)—Demolished in 1933.
Osage County (1923)
Pemiscot County (1924)
Pike County (1917)
Pulaski County (1903)—Listed on the National Register 7/17/1979.
Scott County (1911)
Shannon County (1899)—Demolished 1938.
Washington County (1907)

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Strebeck, np.

³¹ Ohman, 123.

³² List derived from: Ohman, 123 and Encyclopedia.

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**Scott County Courthouse
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Individually listed National Register properties designed by Hohenschild:

Pulaski County Courthouse, Pulaski County, listed 7/17/1979
Ralph E. Burley House, Laclede County, listed 7/7/1994
Administration Building, Missouri State Fruit Experiment Station, Wright County, listed
12/01/1979

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**Scott County Courthouse
Scott County, Missouri**

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Scott County Democrat, Benton, MO, April 20, 1914.

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Note: Copies of original plans for the Scott County Courthouse by H.H. Hohenschild are located in the office of the Scott County Records Office, Scott County Courthouse, 131 S. Winchester, Benton, MO.

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Scott County Courthouse
Scott County, Missouri

Geographical Information

Boundary Description

The courthouse boundary includes the entire public square on which the courthouse sits. The square is bounded by on the north by W. North St., Winchester St. to the east, W. Missouri to the south, and New Madrid St. to the west.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries encompass the entire public square on which the courthouse sits and has historically been associated.

Photographic Information

The following information is true for all photographs:

Scott County Courthouse

131 S. Winchester St.

Benton, Scott County, Missouri

Photographer: Roger Maserang

Date: November 2003

Location of Negative: Missouri State Historic Preservation Office, P.O. Box 176, Jefferson City, MO

Photograph Log

1. East façade, facing southwest.
2. East façade and El Camino Real marker, facing southwest.
3. Detail, east façade, facing west.
4. Detail, east façade, facing west.
5. West facades, facing northeast.
6. West facades, facing southeast.
7. South facades, facing north.
8. West façade (rear wing), facing east.
9. WWI Soldiers and Sailors monument, facing northwest.
10. Detail of entry light, facing southwest.
11. Entry foyer/lobby, facing west.

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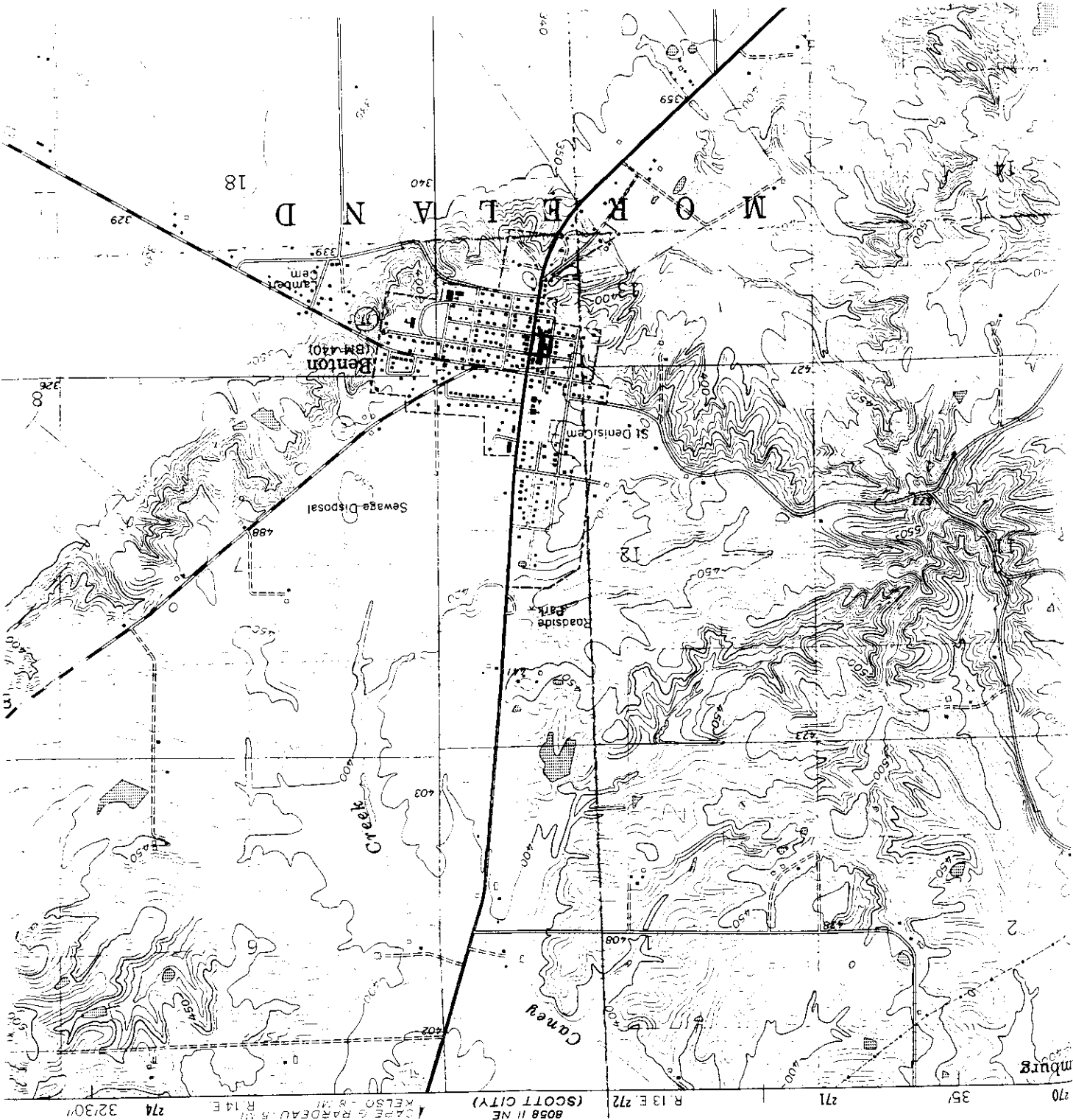
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Scott County Courthouse
Scott County, Missouri

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573-751-7800



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 UTM
 South County Centers
 Benton, South County, Missouri













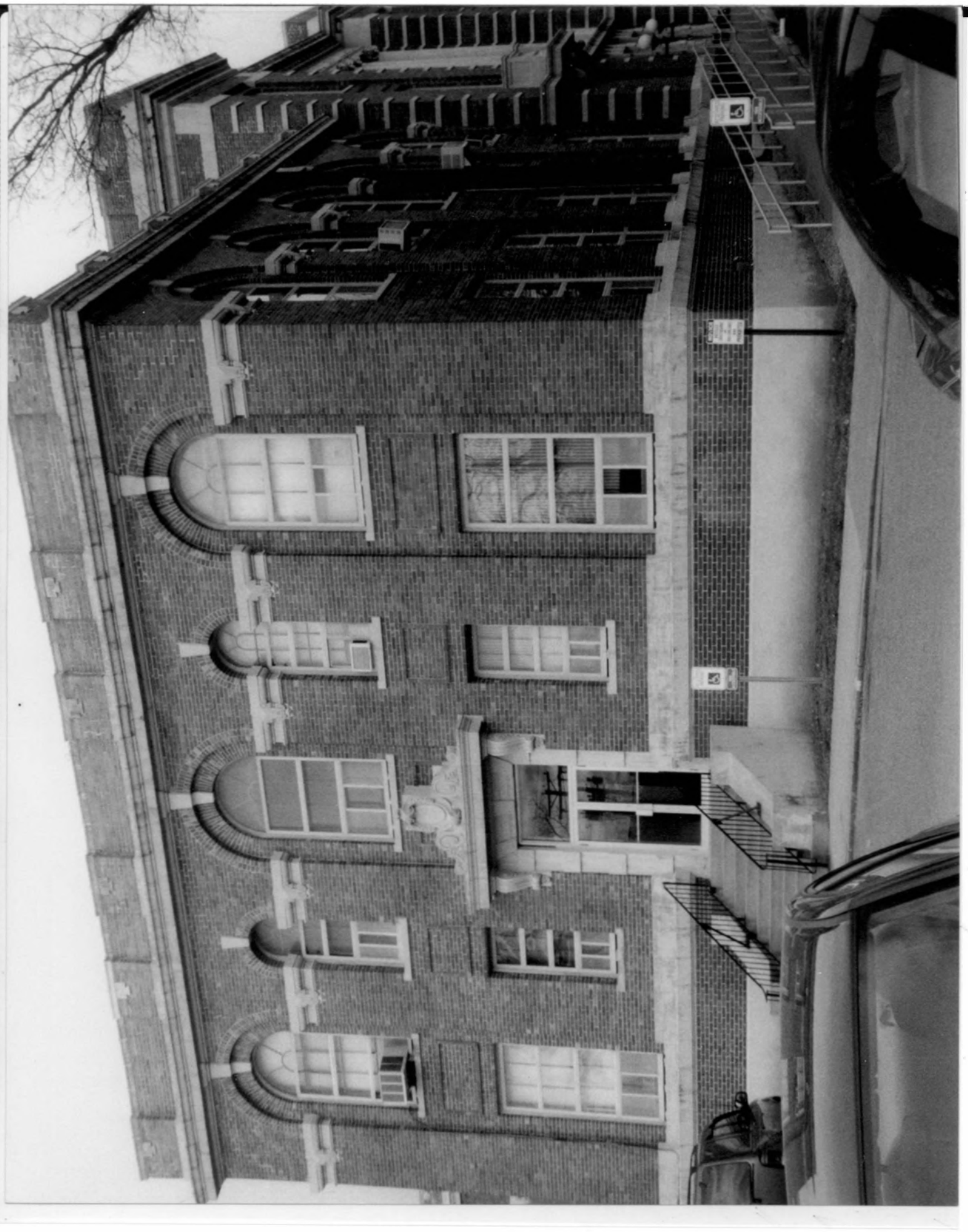


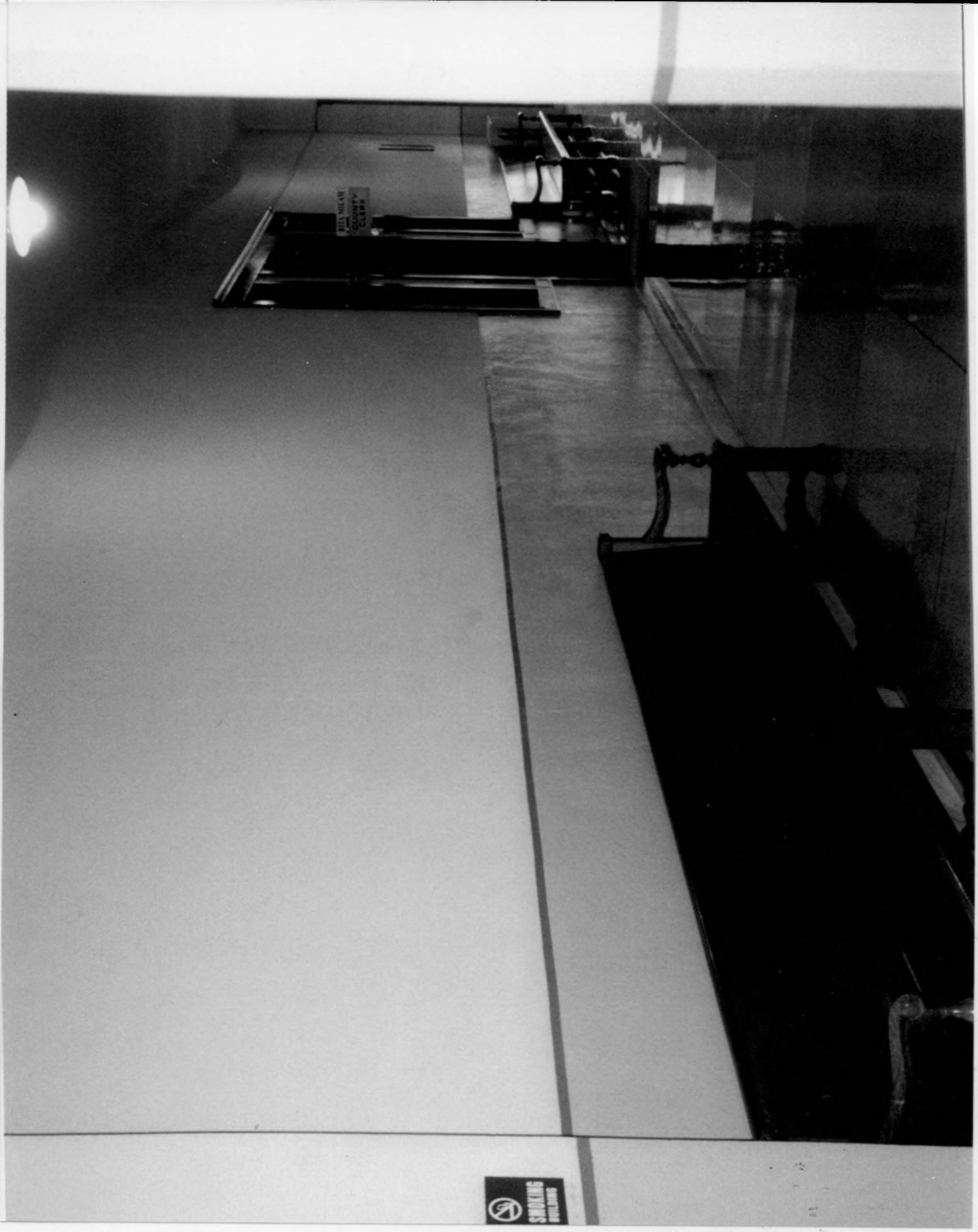


EXTRA PHOTOS

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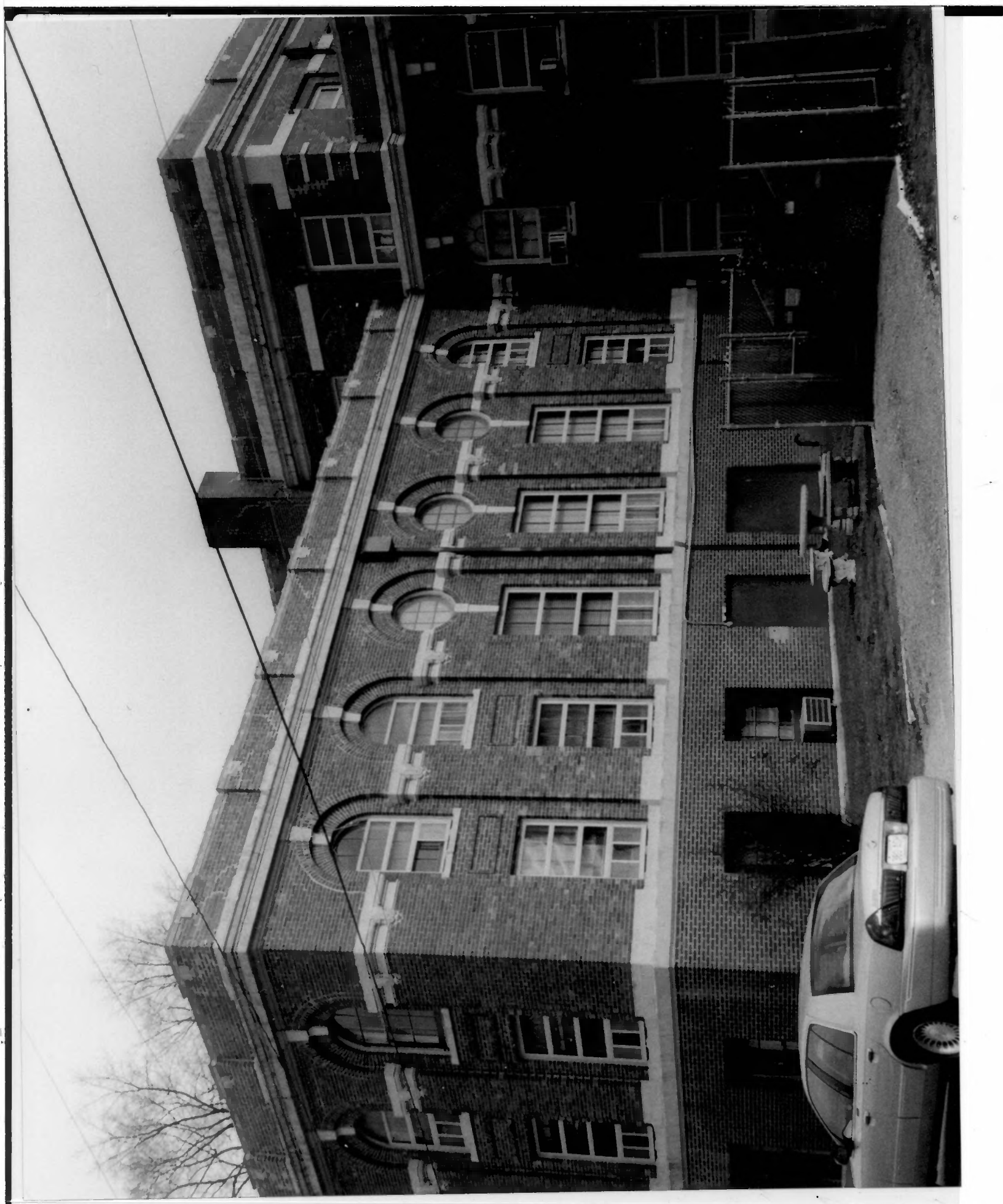




BILL MURAN
COUNTY CLERK

NO SMOKING
SMOKING PROHIBITED

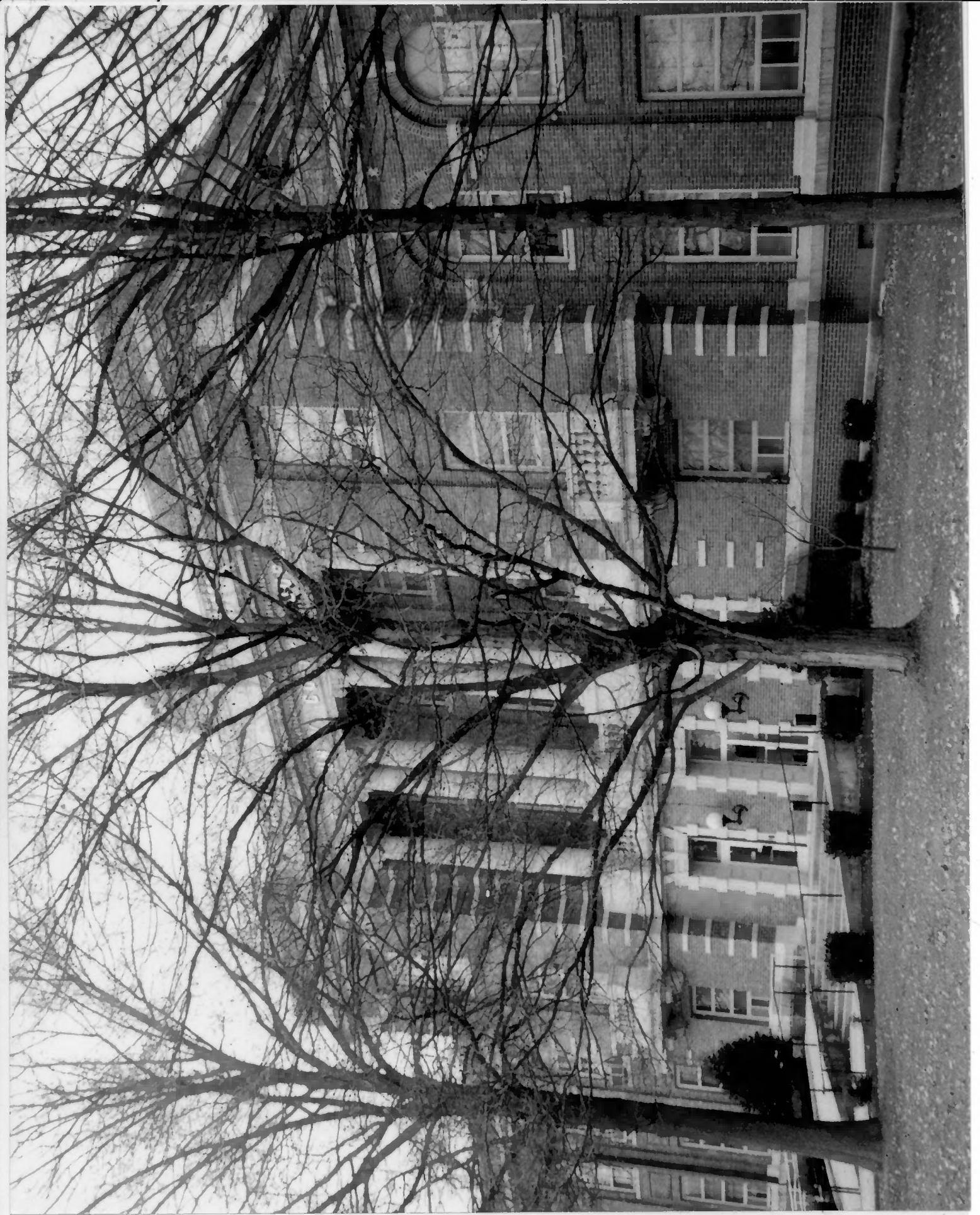














COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

1911





