

MISSOURI COURTHOUSES

CHARITON COUNTY

Marian M. Ohman
Coordinator, Art History Programs

First courts met in Old Chariton for about 10 years and built no courthouse. After the move of the county seat to Keytesville in 1833, the court built a brick, two-story, square courthouse with four rooms below and a courtroom above. The courthouse and other public buildings were constructed on land donated to the court by James Keyte.

A fire in the clerk's office, apart from the courthouse, destroyed all County Court records November 11, 1861, and fires set by Confederates on September 20, 1864, destroyed the courthouse.

By 1865 the Chariton County Court ordered the treasurer, Hale T. Chellis, to act as commissioner and examine courthouses at Macon, Columbia and Fayette, obtaining dimensions, costs, etc. before reporting back to the court. Apparently, the court favored the style of the recently built Macon courthouse.

The court called for bids on the plan marked "A" and awarded the contract on February 8, 1866, to Levi Aldrich (Fig. 1). The court wanted the masonry, brickwork and carpentry done in a plain, durable style, leaving off all ornamental work. The firm of Mitchel [sic] and Wagner received the contract for interior work on October 23, 1867.

The shuttered, two-story, brick building had a cupola rising from the crossing of gabled roofs. Measurements were 110 by 62 feet, and the cost was \$40,000. The brick courthouse, painted white in 1969, was destroyed by fire August 27, 1973, during a renovation project (Fig. 2).

As County Court judges considered building a new courthouse in the fall of 1973, they visited several

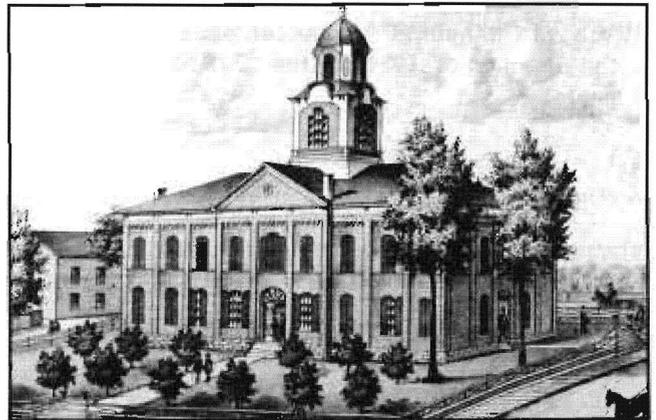
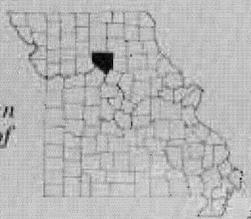


Fig. 1. Chariton County Courthouse, 1867-1973.
Architect: Levi Aldrich
(From: *An Illustrated Historical Atlas of 1876*)



Fig. 2. Chariton County Courthouse, destroyed by fire, August 27, 1973.
(Courtesy: Mary Alice Alsbaugh)

County Chariton
Organized Nov. 16, 1820
Named After ... Chariton River,
possibly after John
Chariton leader of
a fur expedition
County Seat ... Keytesville



recently constructed courthouses in Kansas, Nebraska, Illinois and Missouri. They were particularly impressed with a Seneca, Kansas, example and requested architect Carroll Hutchens to submit a similar design for consideration, which the court accepted in January 1974 (Fig. 3).

A protesting group in Keytesville, who considered a modern design unsuitable, offered an alternative (Fig.

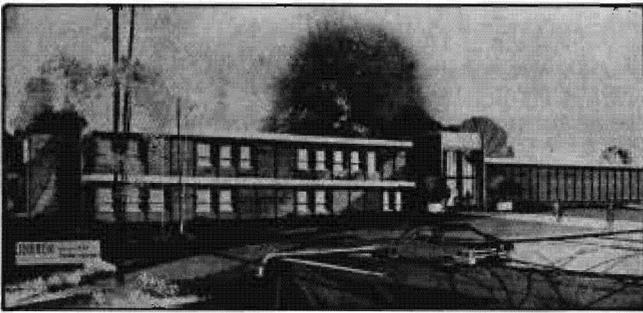


Fig. 3. Proposed Chariton County Courthouse, 1974.
Architects: Frangkiser and Hutchens
(From: *Chariton Courier*, April 18, 1974)

4). Committed to Hutchens, the court asked him to revise his proposal. Hutchens then presented several options for the exterior, but retained the basic plan. The court accepted one of Hutchens' revisions, and Irvingbilt Co. of Chillicothe, low bidder, began construction in the summer of 1974 on the \$725,000 courthouse (Fig. 5).

Formal ceremonies at the courthouse were held July



Fig. 4. Proposed Chariton County Courthouse, 1974.
(From: *Chariton Courier*, April 18, 1974)

27, 1975, and the court occupied the completed building the following month. Principal sources of funding came from fire insurance compensation, revenue sharing and a grant from Missouri Law Enforcement Assistance Council.



Fig. 5. Chariton County Courthouse, 1974-. (From: *Salisbury Press Spectator*)

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June 6, July 4, Aug. 1, 8, Sept. 5, 19, Oct. 10, 1974; Feb. 13, April 3, 10, July 17, 24, 31, 1975.

Manuscript Collections

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