

# MISSOURI COURTHOUSES

## DEKALB COUNTY

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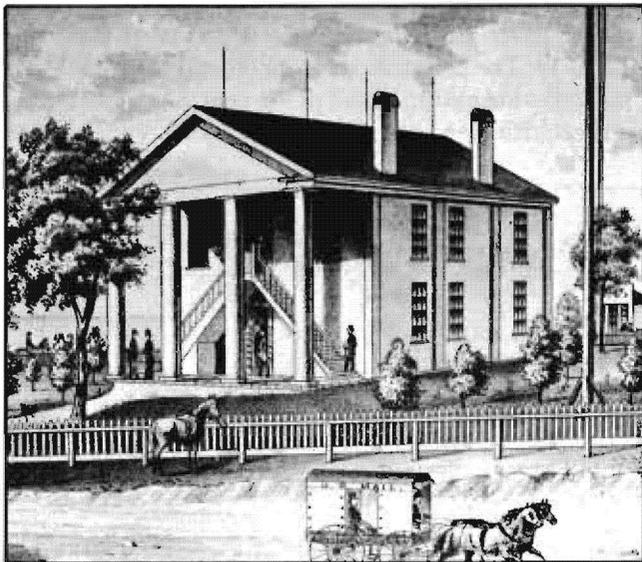
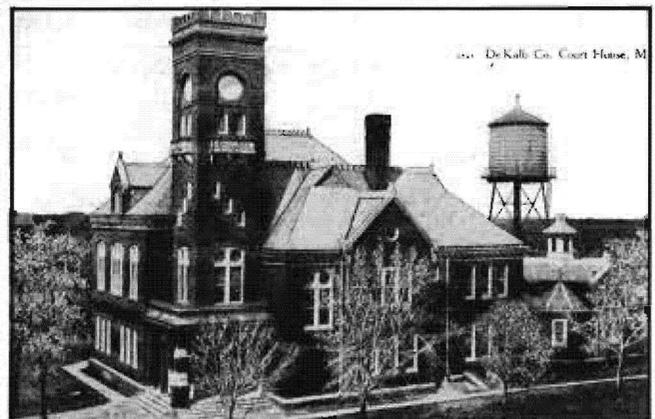


Fig. 1. DeKalb County Courthouse, 1851-1878.  
 (From: *An Illustrated Historical Atlas of DeKalb County, Missouri*, 1877)

After county organization in 1845, first courts met in homes. In 1848 DeKalb County residents presented a petition to the County Court to build a courthouse, but the court rejected it, preferring to purchase a log cabin on the east side of the public square in Maysville. Three years later a new court looked favorably on building a courthouse and respected the wishes of the petitioners.

In 1851 the court ordered Abram Barger, superintendent, to submit a plan for the courthouse. His original design called for a cupola, but the court

County . . . . .	DeKalb	
Organized . . . . .	Feb. 25, 1845	
Named After . . .	Baron John DeKalb of Revolutionary War fame	
County Seat . . .	Maysville	



Figs. 2 and 3. DeKalb County Courthouse, 1885-1938 (above): after tower removal (below).  
 Architects: Eckel and Mann  
 (From: postcards, Trenton Boyd collection)

considered this an extravagance and eliminated it from the design. The 55-by-30-foot brick courthouse was built by George W. C. McPherson at a cost of approximately \$3,750 and completed in 1852 (Fig. 1). The porticoed entry faced south; the courtroom and two offices were on the first floor, with additional offices on the second floor. The building was destroyed by fire on Christmas night in 1878.

Several communities then contended for the county seat, but Maysville remained the choice of the people. The cornerstone of the next building was laid on August 27, 1885 (Fig. 2). It was designed by the St. Joseph architectural firm of Edmond J. Eckel and George R. Mann. Other northwest Missouri courthouses by this important firm include: Nodaway, 1881, Atchison, 1882, and Gentry, 1884. This brick building contained two wide halls on the first floor and a pair of stairs leading to the second floor. The cost of the building was \$32,000. The jail in the rear of the building contained eight revolving cells and two rooms for hospital care. The spire of the corner tower was taken off after

lightning severely damaged the tower in the early 1900s (Fig. 3). The building was razed in 1938 when a new courthouse was built.

Twice propositions for a new courthouse were defeated, but in August 1938 voters approved a \$55,000 bond issue, which was matched by a \$45,000 government grant. Eckel and Aldrich, St. Joseph, were selected as architects. George R. Eckel was the son of Edmond J. Eckel, architect of the previous courthouse. A contract for about \$59,000 was awarded the J. E. Hathman Construction Co. in December 1938 for a 110-by-55-foot, brick building trimmed with stone. Limited funds prohibited an all-stone structure. Offices and County Court room were on the first floor, Circuit Court room on the second, the jail and sheriff's quarters on the third. Cornerstone ceremonies were held April 10, 1939. The cornerstone from the old courthouse was placed in the entrance hall of the new. Dedication of the new courthouse took place October 20, 1939 (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4. DeKalb County Courthouse, 1938-. Architects: Eckel and Aldrich (From: *Architecture and Design*, Vol. IV, No. 13, July 1940)

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