

# MISSOURI COURTHOUSES

## LEWIS COUNTY

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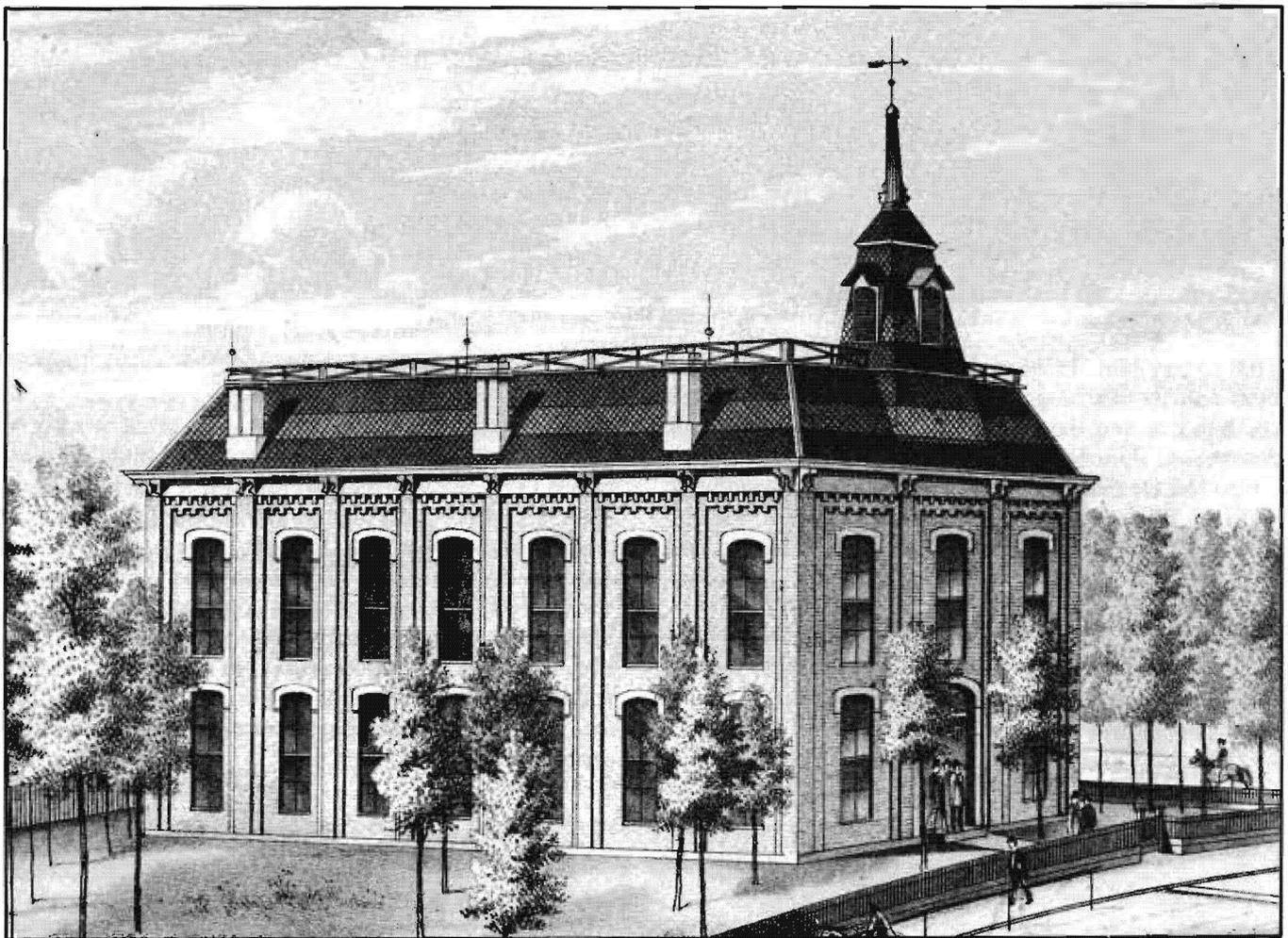
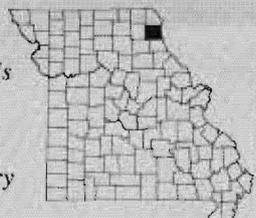


Fig. 1. Lewis County Courthouse, 1875-. Architect: J. T. McAllister (Courtesy: State Historical Society of Missouri)

County . . . . . Lewis  
Organized . . . . . Jan. 2, 1833  
Named After . . Meriwether Lewis  
of Lewis and  
Clark Expedition  
and governor of  
Missouri Territory  
County Seat . . . Monticello



**L**ewis County built three courthouses in the 19th century. The first, built in 1834, was a one-room log building about 100 yards northwest of the present courthouse site. The 1887 *History of Lewis, Clark, Knox and Scotland Counties* described it as neither spacious nor comfortable, but the court intended it to be only a temporary courthouse. J. W. Buckley contracted the building for \$210, but the court needed to borrow

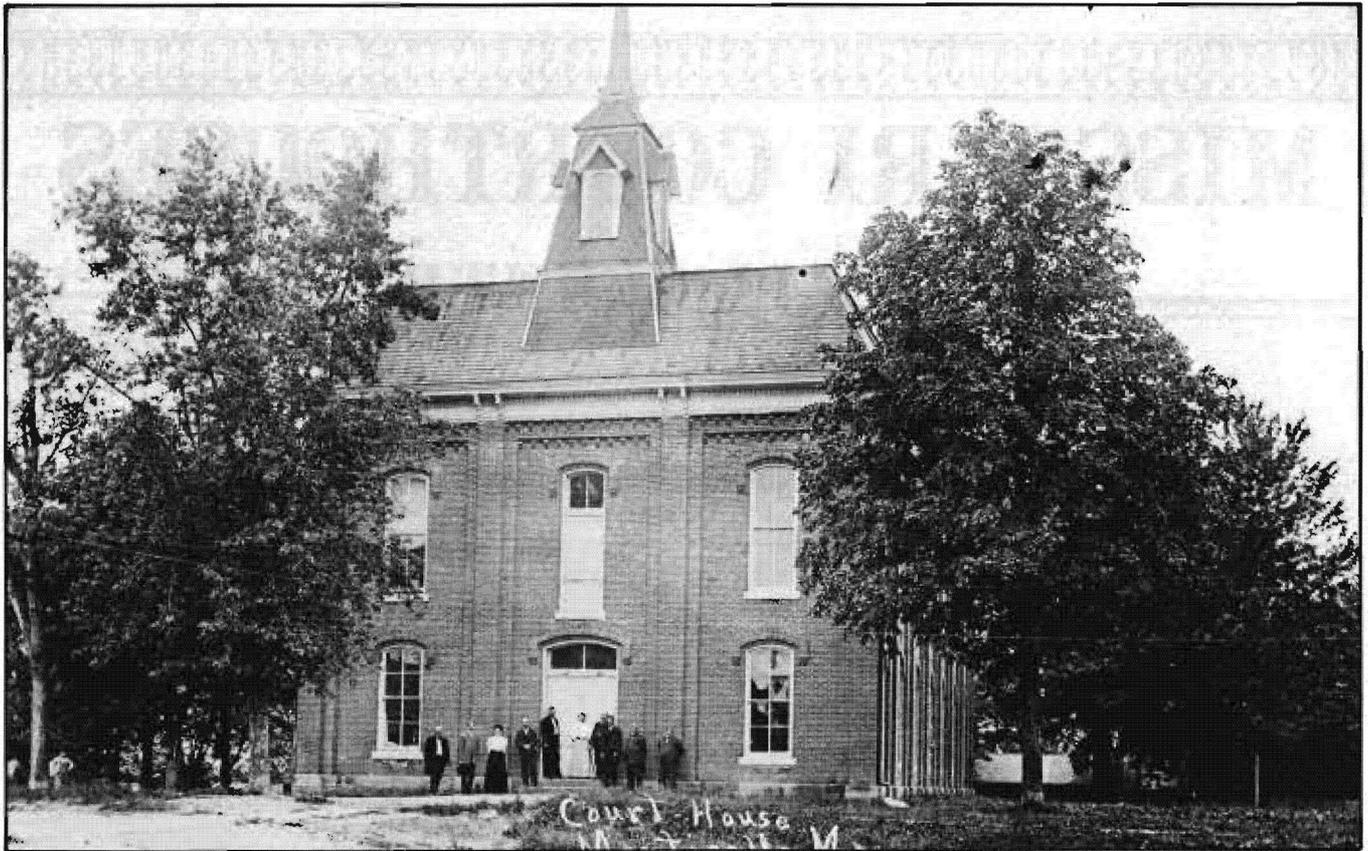


Fig. 2. Lewis County Courthouse, 1875-. (From: postcard, Trenton Boyd collection)

\$100 to pay him. In September 1839, as plans for the next courthouse progressed, county officials ordered the building and the lot on which it stood sold at the courthouse door to the highest bidder.

At the December term in 1838, the court appointed William Ellis commissioner. His assignment was to draft a plan then let the bid by public auction after giving one month's notice in area newspapers. The court appropriated \$3,200 in February 1839 for this two-story, brick building. Williams S. Pemberton and James A. Richardson apparently shared responsibility for the construction. The courthouse was on the square, facing west. No known illustrations exist.

The third and present courthouse dates from 1875 (Figs. 1 and 2). J. T. McAllister, architect, prepared

plans for the two-story, brick building with patterned mansard roof. A small, unusual overtop rises above the roof, marking the entry. Decorative brick work and paired brackets enrich the cornice. The building measured 75 by 50 by 30 feet. At the time it was built, there were six offices and a large hall on the first floor; the courtroom, three offices, library, judge and jury rooms were on the second. S. J. Vandiver was superintendent for the county. George Barnes contracted the building. Costs ran slightly over \$10,000.

Additions have been made, but they did not significantly alter the original design. Lewis County's is one of the few remaining courthouses in Missouri dating from the 1870s.

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