

# MISSOURI COURTHOUSES

## NODAWAY COUNTY

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Fig. 1. Nodaway County Courthouse, 1853-1881 (left); jail (right). (Courtesy: State Historical Society of Missouri, gift of Nodaway County Historical Society).

**F**irst courts of Nodaway County met in either private homes or a schoolhouse. In February 1846 the court appropriated \$250 for a two-room, log courthouse. James Vaughn superintended the construction done by Benjamin Sims, whose bond the court approved on April 6, 1846.

According to the County Court Record, the court assigned a lot at the southwest corner of Second and Main for the courthouse. A complete description of the 32-by-20-foot building with central chimney is in the court record.

The court encountered difficulty with the slow progress of Sims' construction; several times the court threatened to forfeit his work unless completed by specified dates. By February 1847 court was held in the courthouse, but work continued through the summer. Finally, the court accepted the building in October 1847.

In July 1853 the court appointed James Ray superintendent of the anticipated new courthouse and appropriated \$3,500; a month later, Ray, who operated a drinking establishment in Maryville, presented a plan. James C. Nelson contracted for building the courthouse. The square, brick building with cupola was received by the court in June 1855 (Fig. 1). Total costs amounted to \$4,461.

During the winter of 1856 the cupola leaked, and by May, roof and cupola were reported in poor condition. The inspector recommended covering with zinc or tin. Apparently, the courtroom on the first floor proved inconvenient. In 1869 the building was remodeled at a

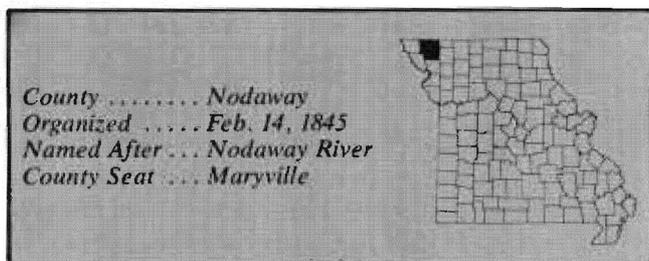




Fig. 2. Nodaway County Courthouse, 1881-.  
Architects: Edmond J. Eckel and George R. Mann  
(Courtesy: State Historical Society of Missouri)

cost of \$391.45 to place the courtroom on the second floor with offices on the first. The building was razed in September 1881 as construction began on the next county courthouse.

An election on June 7, 1881, authorized \$80,000 for building a courthouse and jail; \$60,000 of this sum went to the third and present courthouse of Nodaway County. Edmond J. Eckel and George R. Mann, architects from St. Joseph, designed the building (Fig. 2). The contract was given to R. K. Allen for construction of courthouse and jail for \$74,000. The 111-by-76-foot, red-brick building is trimmed with white sandstone. County offices occupy the first floor; smaller offices and the courtroom are on the second.

Few alterations have been made. In 1932 a new floor was put in the Circuit Court room, and the direction was changed so the room faces north rather than south. Exterior renovation in 1950 cost about \$15,000.

Nodaway County's courthouse is a fine example of a tall-towered, late 19th century courthouse. Architect Eckel and his partner, Mann, were members of an outstanding firm in northwest Missouri, and this courthouse is one of their earliest surviving works. It is now on the National Register of Historic Places.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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### Maps, Atlases, Gazetteers

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