

MISSOURI COURTHOUSES

OSAGE COUNTY

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First courts met in homes in Osage County, but in August 1843 the County Court called for bids on a courthouse. George Cretzinger, the superintendent, provided plans, and the contract was awarded to builders from Jefferson City, William Young and John Burch, in February 1844. Cost of the 30-by-38-foot, two-story brick building with a plain-gable roof was \$3,420.79.

There were two entrances to the building and fireplaces in each of the four rooms on the first floor. A stone wall was built around the courthouse yard in 1854, and a fence was added in 1860. The building was repaired in 1867.

In 1874, as construction on the new courthouse progressed, the old courthouse was ordered sold. J. K. Kidd bought it for \$100. An illustration of this first courthouse was placed in the cornerstone of the 1872 building. When the 1872 building burned, the contents were apparently placed in the cornerstone of the present courthouse, built 1923-25. Osage County's first courthouse was reported to be a replica of the Maries County courthouse at Vienna, except the latter faced north and south, while the courthouse at Linn faced east and west.

The court requested that the second courthouse be built on the south side of the square. Louis Trentmann, an immigrant from Hanover, Germany, presented plans August 9, 1872 (Fig. 1). The court requested he provide specifications by August 26. The court called for bids on the 61-by-81-foot building in September 1872 and appropriated \$25,000. Trentmann, Narup and Co., of Washington, Missouri, contracted the building. W.

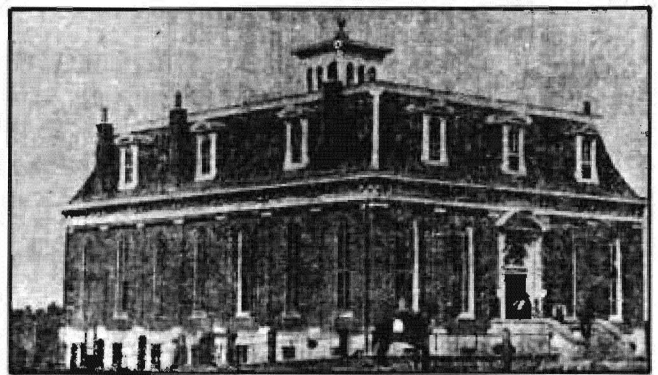
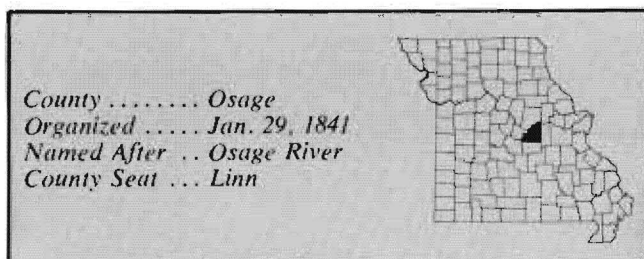


Fig. 1. Osage County Courthouse, 1872-1922, damaged by fire 1880.
Architect: Louis Trentmann
(From: *Osage County Observer*, Jan. 27, 1966)



Fig. 2. Osage County Courthouse, after 1881 remodeling.
Architects: Goesse & Rimmers
(From: *Osage County Centennial*, 1941)



A. Weeks served as superintendent. Cornerstone ceremonies took place in June 1873; the court inspected and received the completed building in July 1874. A fire on November 14, 1880, damaged the courthouse.

After the fire, plans for rebuilding were provided by architects Goesse and Rimmers of St. Louis. Appar-



Fig. 3. Osage County Courthouse, 1923-. Architect: Henry H. Hohenschild (From: W.P.A., Historical Records Survey)

ently, these men were Joseph B. Goesse and Frederick J. Rimmers, identified in Gould's *St. Louis Directory*, 1880. H. H. Beinke, of Washington, contracted the rebuilding for about \$13,000. The principal changes occurred in the upper level of the building, where a dome replaced the smaller square belfry on the previous building (Fig. 2). The courthouse was completed and presented to the court in September 1881. The courtroom was considered one of the finest-furnished and best-planned courtrooms in Missouri. Fire destroyed the building October 30, 1922.

At a meeting held in January 1923, some citizens thought it best to reconstruct, using the existing foun-

datations and walls, because of precarious county finances. Offices were temporarily placed in different locations throughout Linn. In November 1923 the court decided to build a new courthouse. They accepted a plan from architect Henry H. Hohenschild and contracted with McCarthy Construction Co. for about \$45,000 for the first stage of the building. It is not reported whether or not part of the foundation and walls were incorporated in the new building. Two years later, in October 1925, the court received the new building (Fig. 3). Total costs came to about \$85,000.

The red brick building with white trim has three stories. The courtroom is on the third floor; the jail was placed in the basement.

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