

# MISSOURI COURTHOUSES

## REYNOLDS COUNTY

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In 1845 when Reynolds County was organized, Lesterville was designated as the first county seat. Courts met in the home of Joseph McNails until a small, log courthouse was built in 1846-47. Fire destroyed this structure and all county records in 1862.

For the next three years courts met in private homes until the county seat moved to Centerville. The court authorized construction of another small building of logs or rough lumber for court purposes in 1865, but it too burned on November 24th or 25th, 1871. The following day the court met in the courtyard by the ruins and appropriated \$10,000 for a new building.

The third and present courthouse, a two-story brick building, originally measuring 50 by 40 feet, reportedly cost \$8,000, less than the \$10,000 the court had appropriated in 1871 (Fig. 1.) The original specifications, which are on file at the courthouse, called for a dome and lantern, but these apparently were never built.

In the 1930s when Work Projects Administration projects helped counties in building new courthouses, it was out of the question for Reynolds since there were insufficient funds to sponsor the county share. Instead, the court bought for \$600 a two-story, 24-by-40-foot frame building and moved it to the southwest corner of the square.

The 1871 courthouse continues in use, a typical example of a courthouse design found in Missouri during the 19th century. The Reynolds County courthouse is one of the few in Missouri over 100 years old.

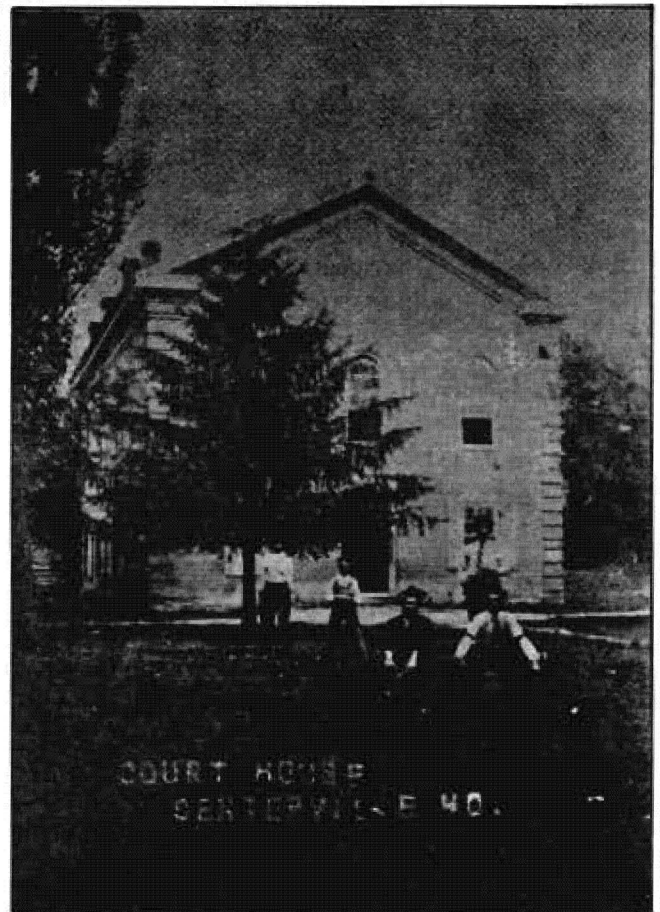
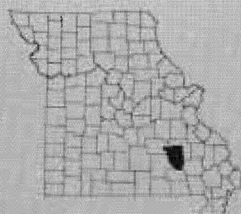


Fig. 1. Reynolds County Courthouse, 1871-.  
(From: *A Reynolds County Commemorative* [sic], 1973)

County . . . . . Reynolds  
Organized . . . . . Feb. 25, 1845  
Named After . . . Gov. Thomas  
Reynolds  
County Seat . . . Centerville



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