

# MISSOURI COURTHOUSES

## STODDARD COUNTY

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**F**ifty acres donated in Bloomfield provided the site for Stoddard's county seat. First courts of Stoddard County met at the home of H. B. Bailey in February 1835. Within a short time a small, two-story, brick building, 40 by 30 feet, was constructed on the square and continued in use until 1856. Cost of the building was \$2,500.

In 1856 the court appropriated \$10,000 for a courthouse reported to be a two-story, brick building, almost square. Solomon G. Kitchen supervised the construction, which was done by William Ringer. Final costs amounted to about \$12,000. Less than 10 years later this building was burned in Price's raid during the Civil War.

Construction on the next courthouse began in 1867 and was completed in 1870; W. B. Phelan supervised construction (Fig. 1). George Miller and Sam Henson contracted the almost-square building for \$14,800; final costs ran to approximately \$18,000.

On the first floor a hall ran through the center of the building from north to south, with three rooms on each side. A double stairway led to the courtroom and jury room on the second floor. Various repairs were made through the years before part of this structure was included in an extensive remodeling during 1909.

**L**ong rivalry between Bloomfield and Dexter for the county seat culminated in Dexter securing enactment of a law permitting four terms of Circuit Court to be held in Dexter. A two-story, brick courthouse was built in Dexter, but the arrangement was unsatisfactory and terminated within a few years.

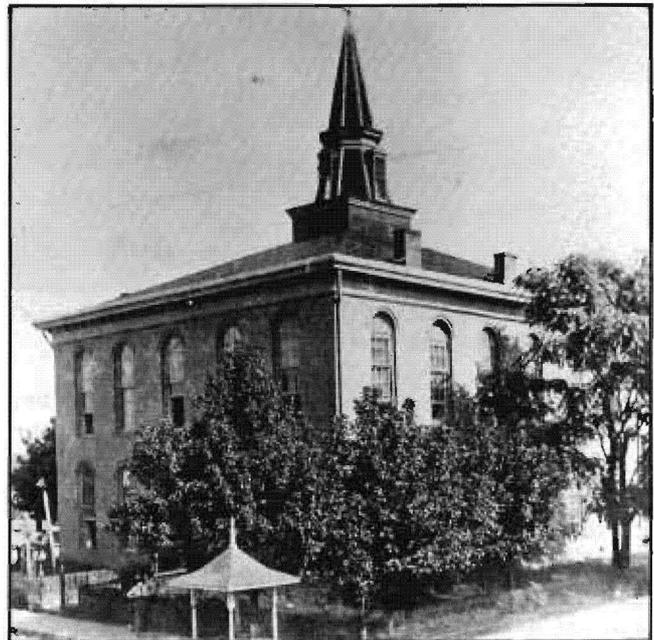


Fig. 1. Stoddard County Courthouse, 1867-  
(Courtesy: Grant Thorn)



Fig. 2. Stoddard County Courthouse, after remodeling 1909.  
Architect: P. H. Weathers  
(From: postcard, Trenton Boyd collection)

County . . . . .	Stoddard
Organized . . . . .	Jan. 2, 1835
Named After . . .	Maj. Amos Stoddard, first American civil commandant of Upper Louisiana
County Seat . . .	Bloomfield

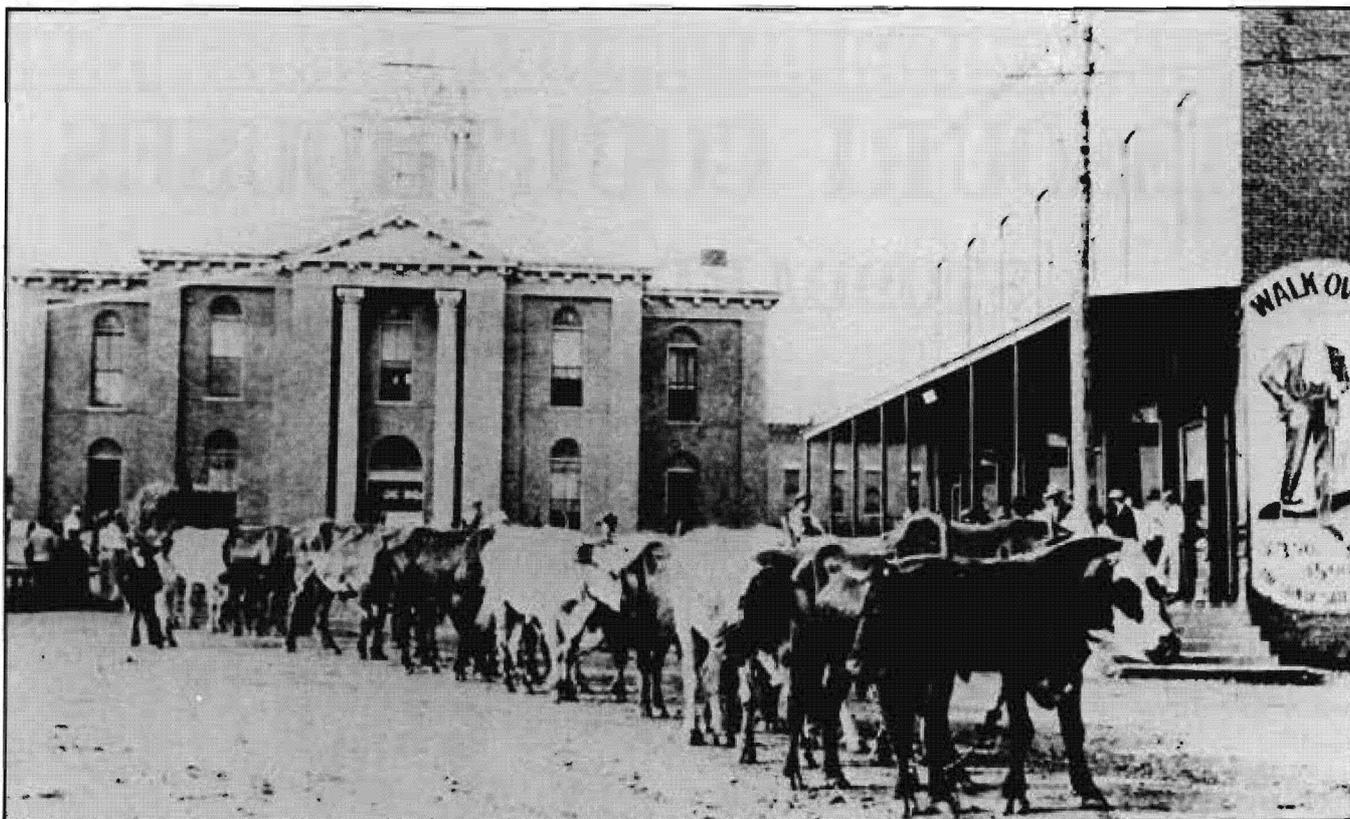


Fig. 3. In 1910, streets were still unpaved, and cattle drives came by the courthouse through the center of town. (Courtesy: G. R. Loughead, from Ott Heacock collection)

✧ P. H. Weathers prepared a design to enlarge and repair the 1867 Bloomfield courthouse, and the court adopted it May 22, 1909 (Figs. 2, 3). T. P. Milner, Atlanta, Georgia, supervised the work, which was contracted for \$28,325 by the Manhattan Construction Co., Guthrie, Oklahoma. The foundations were reinforced, new brick wings were added, and old walls were covered with brick veneer. Weathers used a similar design in stone for Daviess and Cape Girardeau counties about this time.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

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##### Articles

- "Court House Facts" *Bloomfield Vindicator*, July 2, 1909.

##### Manuscript Collections

- Work Projects Administration, Historical Records Survey, Missouri, 1935-1942, Stoddard County. Located in Joint Collection: University of Missouri, Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Columbia and State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscripts.