

# MISSOURI COURTHOUSES

## WRIGHT COUNTY

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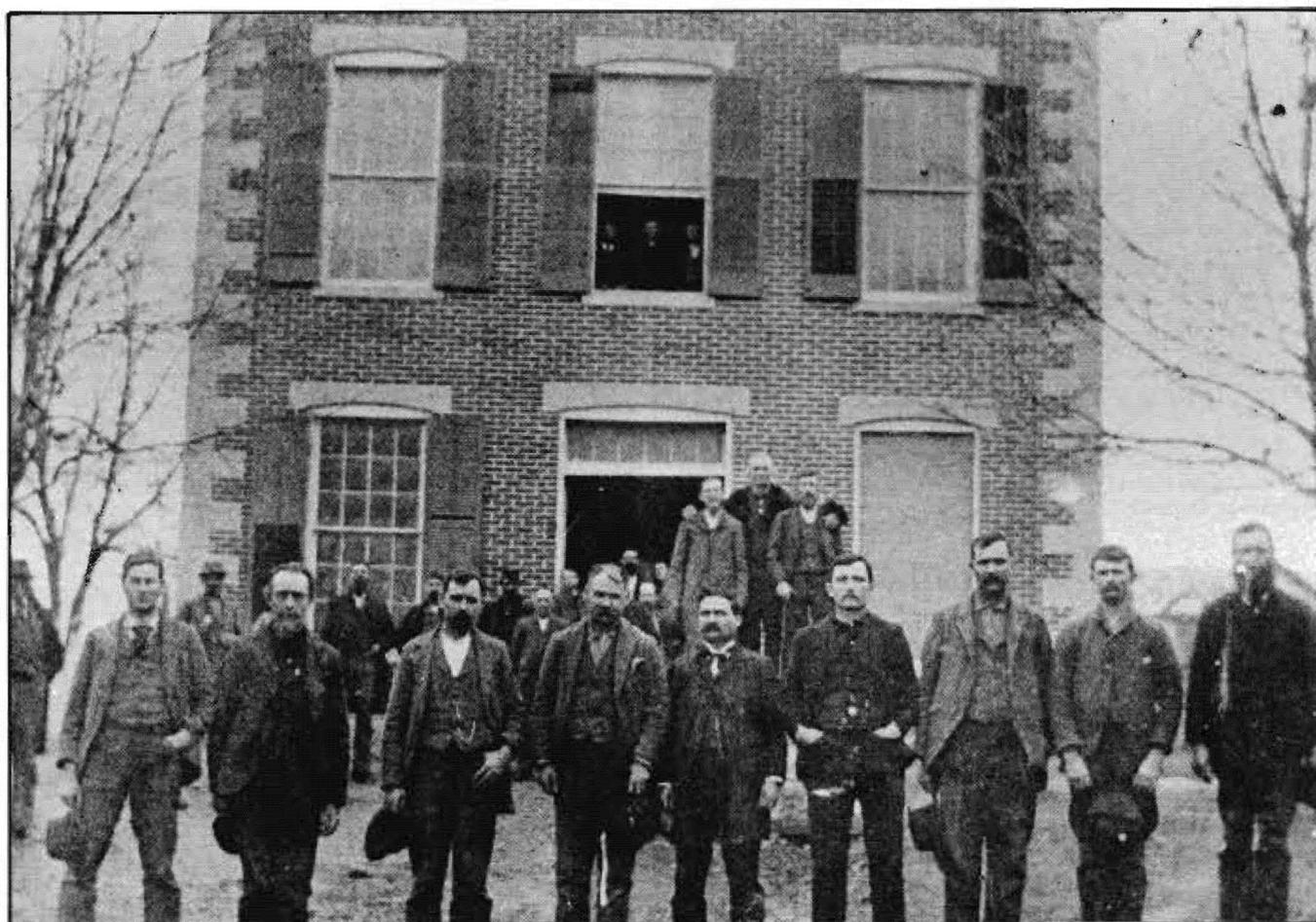


Fig. 1. Wright County Courthouse. 1849-1896, reconstructed after Civil War, damaged by tornado in 1888. (Courtesy: Darrell J. Hunter, Wright County Bank)

County . . . . . Wright  
Organized . . . . . Jan. 29, 1841  
Named After . . . . . Silas Wright, a  
U.S. senator  
County Seat . . . . . Hartville



County Court records for Wright County were destroyed in an 1896 fire, and there are few newspaper records. The earliest history is Goodspeed's, 1889, which mentioned construction of a small building used as a clerk's office. Work Projects Administration records call it a small courthouse. A photograph in the Pulaski County Historical Society is identified as



Fig. 2. Wright County Courthouse, 1898-1964, front view. (From: postcard, Trenton Boyd collection)

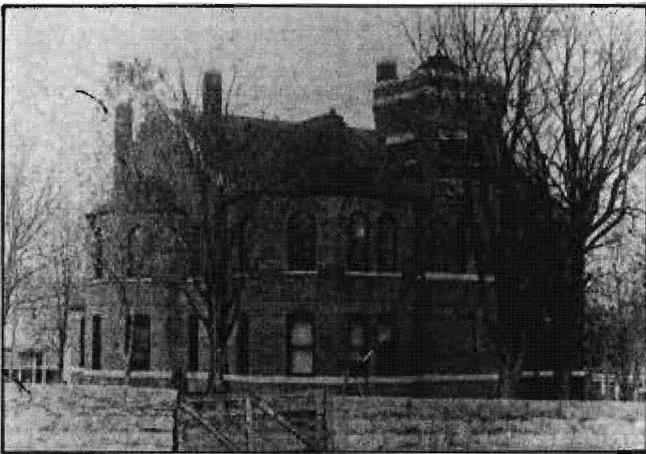


Fig. 3. Wright County Courthouse, 1898-1964, rear view. (Courtesy: Darrell J. Hunter, Wright County Bank)

Wright County's courthouse of 1841-1845, but this may be a home in which early courts met.

On March 10, 1849, John H. Hight presented the plan for a brick courthouse, which William C. Young contracted to build. The court received the building in December, although it was not completed. The yard was fenced and brick sidewalks laid in 1850. The clerk's office on the square was sold in February 1851.

Courthouse history during the Civil War period is unclear. Apparently, the 1849 courthouse was burned and partially destroyed in 1862. A subsequent frame

building used for a courthouse, which the court may have had built, was also burned, reportedly January 11, 1863. The partially destroyed courthouse was rebuilt at a cost of \$6,700 after the war (Fig. 1). A tornado damaged the building in 1888.

W. S. Candler and George W. Freeman acted as superintendents of the last courthouse built in the 19th century. Rader and Huffman were contractors for the two-story, brick building erected in 1898 (Figs. 2, 3). Built of soft brick, the courthouse plagued the county with constant need of repair until it was demolished in January 1964 as the new courthouse was being constructed.

In November 1962 architect Roger Frangkiser, Kansas City, met with Wright County officials to give them information about the federal government Community Facilities Administration funds for new public buildings under the Accelerated Public Works program. Wright County's need made it a potential recipient for a grant.

The court accepted Frangkiser's offer to draw new courthouse plans contingent upon approval of the grant application and the county's willingness to vote bonds. The Community Facilities Administration allowed \$10,000 engineering-architectural planning costs before approving a grant of \$187,000 for the new courthouse in July 1963. Bonds were approved for \$187,000 on August 23, 1963.

Bids were received in November 1963, and the court awarded the contract to E. R. Smith for \$279,950. In January 1965 county offices moved into their new courthouse (Fig. 4).

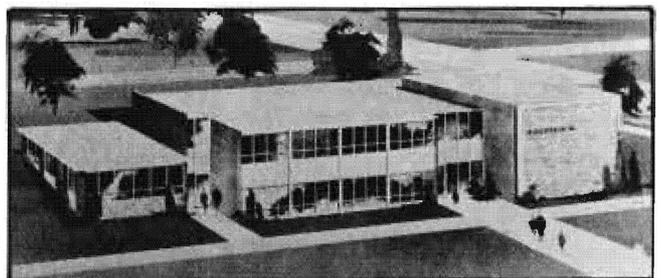


Fig. 4. Wright County Courthouse, 1964-, architect's rendering. (From: *Ozarks Mountaineer*, December 1964)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Books

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### Newspapers

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*St. Louis Globe Democrat*, Oct. 18, 1925.

### Manuscript Collections

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