

MISSOURI COURTHOUSES

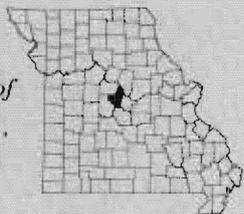
MONITEAU COUNTY

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Fig. 1. Moniteau County Courthouse, 1867-, after 1905 remodeling. (Courtesy: State Historical Society of Missouri, gift of W. W. Wisdom)

County Moniteau
Organized Feb. 14, 1845
Named After . . . French spelling of
Indian word
meaning "spirit"
or "God"
County Seat . . . California



The first session of Moniteau County Court took place on February 27, 1845, a few miles north of the present-day county seat. In May of the same year, Mr. and Mrs. A. T. Byler donated 50 acres in Boonesborough, an early name for California, which was designated as the county seat. The square was to contain one acre. In May 1846 the court ordered the

sheriff to sell the old building on the public square.

In September 1846 the court appropriated \$2,500 for a two-story, brick courthouse with stone foundation to be built on the same site. The building contained two small offices on the south side, a large room on the north (apparently the courtroom), and one large room on the second floor, which was leased to a lodge in 1852. Albert Byler contracted the building of the 50-by-70-foot courthouse for \$2,176.85. In April 1867, as the court prepared to build a second courthouse, they ordered the building sold to the highest bidder. H. C. Finke bought it for \$550 and removed it.

The court made an order in January 1867 for a new courthouse. William Vogdt was appointed to superintend construction, which the court estimated to cost about \$45,000-\$50,000. A new site was briefly considered, but in February 1867 the court chose the site of the previous courthouse. The commissioners received bids for construction of a 54-by-89-foot building in March 1867.

The Illinois firm of Underwood and Conn submitted a bid of \$40,433.75, which the court accepted in April 1867. Contractors completed construction in February 1868. Seven rooms were on the first floor; double stairways leading to the 54-by-54-foot courtroom on the second floor were later reduced to one stairway by enclosing the well on the east.

In 1905 O. E. Spruce directed an extensive remodeling that included alteration of the roof, which had caused so much leaking. He increased the height of the dome 20 feet, replastered the walls and added a metal ceiling to the Circuit Court room (Fig. 1). Minor repairs

and alterations were made in 1934 under a federal Civil Works Administration project.

The curved portico design is similar to the 1826 St. Louis County courthouse designed by Morton and Laveille. It is also reminiscent of the Missouri State Capitol, designed by A. Stephen Hills in 1837, remodeled in 1888. Moniteau County's courthouse is now on the National Register of Historic Places.

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