# MISSOURI COURTHOUSES

## GASCONADE COUNTY

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Fig. 1. Gasconade County Courthouse, Hermann, 1842-1896, top of hill on right. Drawn by Robyn ca. 1859-60. (Courtesy: State Historical Society of Missouri)

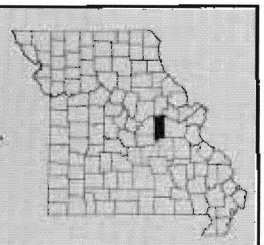
Gasconade City, Bartonville and Mount Sterling were early locations of Gasconade's county seat. Courts began meeting in Gasconade City, located on the Gasconade River, in 1821 and continued meeting there until 1825, when flooding caused relocation. The second site, Bartonville, was also located on the Gasconade River, in what later became Osage County. It, too, flooded, and the county seat next moved to Mount Sterling in 1832.

Volume A of the County Court Record indicates that the court planned a one-story, 22-foot-square, hewn-log building; however Goodspeed's *History of Franklin, Jefferson, Washington, Crawford and Gasconade Counties* of 1886 describes a 20-by-24-foot, log, two-story building on stone foundation, with a stone chimney and two fireplaces. The courtroom was on the first floor. Joshua Cox contracted the building for about $300.

After an election on March 14, 1842, the county seat moved to Hermann. The town paid for the courthouse, which was built in the center of a block on East Front Street (Fig. 1). This site, high on a bluff above the Missouri River, is one of few courthouse sites that takes advantage of a natural vista. The square, two-story, brick building with hip roof cost about $3,000 (Fig. 2). The County Court used this courthouse until 1896 when they ordered it razed.

The present courthouse, a gift to the county from Charles D. Eitzen, was built in 1896-98. Architects were J. B. Legg, St. Louis, and A. W. Elsner, Jefferson City, who originally presented plans calling for a 143-by-88-foot building. The two-story courthouse had

*County . . . . . Gasconade*
*Organized . . . . . Nov. 25, 1820*
*Named After . . Gasconade River*
*County Seat . . . Hermann*



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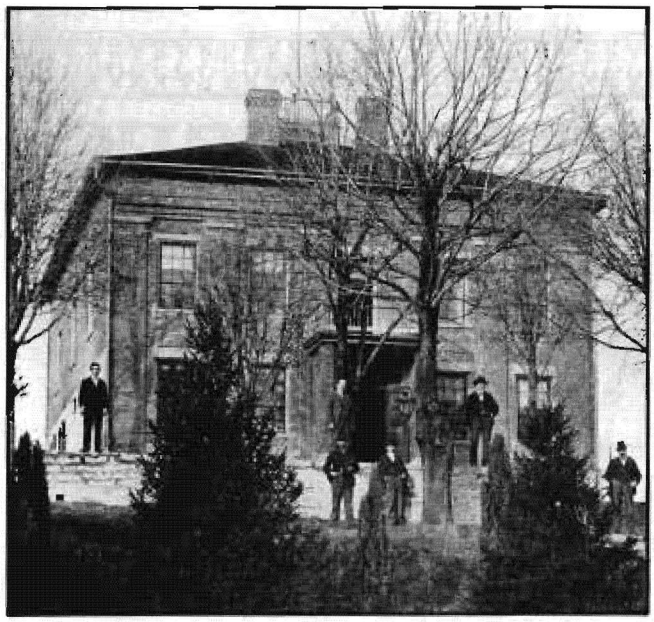

Fig. 2. Gasconade County Courthouse, Hermann, 1842-1896.
(Courtesy: State Historical Society of Missouri, gift of W. J. Eitzen)

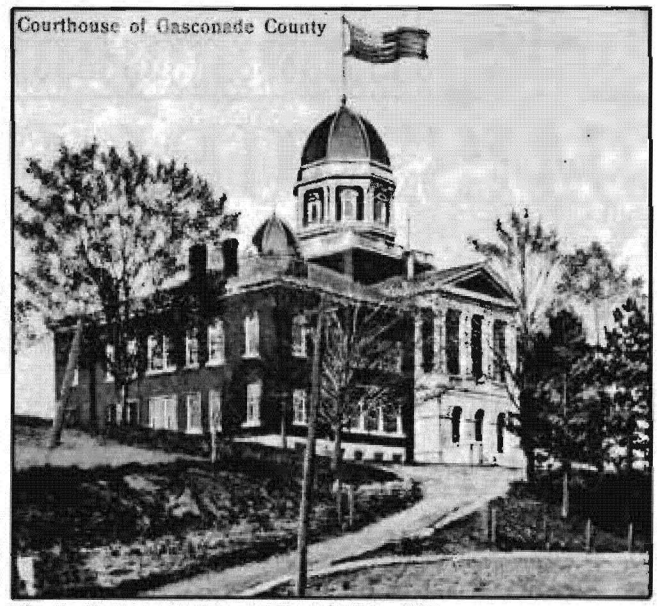


Fig. 3. Gasconade County Courthouse, 1898.
Architects: J. B. Legg and A. W. Elsner
(From: postcard, Trenton Boyd collection)

a finished basement and a dome that rose 120 feet. Originally, the building was to be constructed of light-gray or medium-buff brick with matching terra cotta trim. The main roof was to be dark Pennsylvania slate, the dome roofs of tin, painted a copper color. The rotunda and corridors were to be tiled in Italian marble and mosaic.

In February 1897 the court called for bids. Thirty contractors responded, but all bids for the Legg-Elsner design were too high. The architects then modified the plans, eliminating some of the more costly specifications. Red brick with white stone trim was substituted for the gray or buff brick. Again the court called for bids; H. J. Wallau received the building contract for $41,500 and completed his work in 1898 (Fig. 3). On the first floor, offices open off a long east-west hall; the 41-by-44-foot Circuit Court room is located on the west end of the second story. Dedication took place May 25, 1898. Fire damaged the building February 3, 1905.

This courthouse may be compared with two similar courthouses Legg designed a few years later: Mississippi County, also of red brick, and St. Charles County, done in gray stone.

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