

# MISSOURI COURTHOUSES

## HOLT COUNTY

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Fig. 1. Holt County Courthouse, 1850-1965.  
(From: *An Illustrated Historical Atlas Map of Holt County, Missouri*, 1877)

Jesse Carroll built Holt County's first courthouse in 1841-42 for \$659. The two-story, frame building measured 20 by 26 feet, rested on rock foundation, and had walnut weatherboarding and shingles. The courthouse site fronted 20 feet on Nodaway Street and 26 feet on Washington. R. M. Barkhurst acted as county superintendent. In October 1842 the court accepted the completed building.

County . . . . . Holt  
Organized . . . . . Jan. 29, 1841  
Named After . . . David R. Holt,  
member of state  
legislature  
County Seat . . . Oregon



Henry Watson contracted for \$4,995 to build the second courthouse, a 46-foot-square, brick, two-story building with hip roof. The court received the completed courthouse in May 1852; final costs came to about \$6,000 (Fig. 1).

Remodeling with mansard roof and tower, designed by Levi Zook and built by Moses Bennett, transformed the building in 1881 at a cost of \$9,600 (Fig. 2). The work began in June and was completed in December. The entry, from the north, featured a 15-foot vestibule paved with stone slabs. A double staircase of black walnut led to the second floor. Patterned colored roofing decorated the mansard roof.

Some people questioned the legitimacy of the court's action, which took the county so far into debt. They were convinced that the court actually rebuilt under the guise of repair to avoid taking the issue before the county, since voter approval was not required for repair. Their protest resulted in a lawsuit that went to



Fig. 2. Holt County Courthouse, after 1881 remodeling.  
(From: postcard, Trenton Boyd collection)

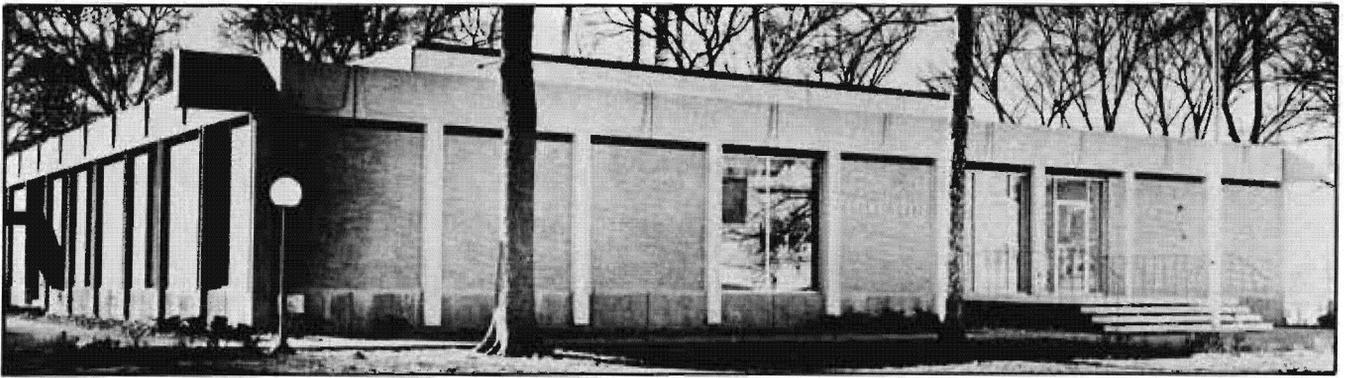


Fig. 3. Holt County Courthouse, 1965-. Architect: B.R. Hunter (Courtesy: Richard Buntz, Holt County Clerk)

the state Supreme Court in 1886. There, the court affirmed the county's power to act as long as it did not violate the constitution by incurring a debt in excess of the revenue provided for that year.

**T**wentieth century remodeling included a citizen-funded project in 1911, designed by St. Joseph architects Eckel and Aldrich, which added four rooms on the south. Another addition came in 1938. The building was painted gray in 1927, white in 1950, and restored to natural brick about 1960. Fire in February 1965 destroyed the several-times-remodeled courthouse.

Voters authorized a bond issue for \$162,500 in August, 1965. Architect B. R. Hunter, of the Kansas City firm Geis, Hunter and Ramos, was architect of the new building (Fig. 3). Brick for the new building was similar in color and texture to the previous courthouse. The design called for a flat roof poured in place or of precast concrete. Tinted glass in the exterior windows diffused glare and heat. Contractors for the 90-foot-square building were Herbert and Broomer, St. Joseph, for \$194,863.45. Completed in the summer of 1966, Holt Countians celebrated with an open house September 4, 1966.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Books

- History of Holt and Atchison Counties.* St. Joseph: National Historical Company, 1882.  
*History of Holt County, Missouri.* St. Joseph: History Publishing Company, 1917.

### Newspapers

- Holt County Sentinel* Feb. 4, 11, July 15, 22, 29, Aug. 5, 19, 26, Sept. 1, 2, Nov. 11, 25, Dec. 9, 1965; Sept. 1, 1966.  
*Oregon County Paper.* Aug. 12, 26, Oct. 15, 1881; Jan. 27, 1882.

### Maps, Atlases, Gazetteers

- An Illustrated Historical Atlas Map.* Philadelphia: Brink, McDonough and Co., 1877.  
*Standard Atlas of Holt County, Missouri.* Chicago: Geo. A. Ogle and Co., 1898.  
*Standard Atlas of Holt County, Missouri.* Chicago: Geo. A. Ogle and Co., 1918.  
 Holt County Historical Society combined the above three atlases and reprinted them in 1975.

### Manuscript Collections

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