

MISSOURI COURTHOUSES

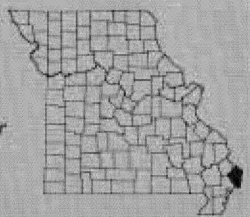
MISSISSIPPI COUNTY

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Fig. 1. Mississippi County Courthouse. 1899-. Architect: Jerome B. Legg (Courtesy: State Historical Society of Missouri, gift of Henry Stark, Jr.)

County Mississippi
Organized Feb. 14, 1845
Named After Mississippi River
County Seat Charleston



Although Mississippi became a county in 1845 and a clerk's office was built in 1846, it was not until 1852 that County Court officials authorized construction of a frame courthouse in Charleston. James T. Russell contracted the two-story building, which remained standing in 1888, the date of Goodspeed's *History of*

Southeast Missouri; the structure appears on an 1886 Sanborn map as a square shape. The 1852 courthouse reportedly burned in 1891.

After the fire the court used two, small, brick offices on the square and the opera house to conduct county business until 1900. A neighboring community, Hibbard, began vying for the county seat as early as 1893, but Charleston remained the county seat.

Architect Jerome B. Legg planned the second courthouse after the court appropriated \$25,000 in a special election September 30, 1899 (Fig. 1). St. Charles County used Legg's same design for their present courthouse, but selected gray stone building material.

Legg's design for the Gasconade County courthouse, 1896, is similar, but constructed of brick.

V. O'Bryan and the Central Bridge Co., of St. Louis, contracted Mississippi County's 114-by-70-foot, brick building. Construction began in February 1900 on the same block as the previous courthouse. The court accepted the finished courthouse in May 1901. The courthouse continues in use today, although repairs altered its appearance considerably after workmen on a Work Projects Administration repair crew, in September 1938, apparently set the tower on fire while using a blowtorch to remove paint.

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