

STONE COUNTY



Fig. 1. Stone County Courthouse, 1870-1919, left. County jail, right. (From: *Centennial Edition, Stone County*, May 1951)

The home of John B. Williams, in Cape Fair, served as meeting place for Stone County's first County Court. In January 1852 court was ordered to meet at Jamestown, the county seat. Jamestown's name was changed to Galena in January 1853.

Money for construction of the first courthouse came from the sale of lots. The court appropriated \$376 and

appointed Samuel D. Nelson, superintendent. John H. Moore submitted the low bid and won the contract for building the two-story, hand-hewn structure, which the court accepted in February 1853.

The upper story was neither finished nor partitioned. Court officials kept their records and equipment in special corners.

Workers painted the building in 1854 and repaired the underpinning and the chimney in 1858. By 1867 the courthouse was in such poor condition that the county clerk's office moved to the home of P. C. Berry, a few yards from the courthouse.

On December 12, 1870, the court appropriated \$4,000 for construction of a new courthouse (Fig. 1). Harry Baker served as first superintendent. He was succeeded by W. P. Davenport. Contractors were

County Stone
Organized Feb. 10, 1851
Named After . . . William Stone,
pioneer judge
County Seat . . . Galena





Fig. 2. Stone County Courthouse, 1920-. Architect: Charles Sudhoelter and Co. (From: postcard, Trenton Boyd collection)

Goodall and Bradshaw. Apparently, an additional appropriation of \$986 was required to complete construction on the hip-roofed, two-story frame. It may have had a cupola. Exterior stairs led from each side to the center door upstairs. The court accepted the courthouse May 4, 1874.

By 1919 the building was in such a deplorable state of repair that only three offices remained; the other offices were scattered throughout Galena. After more than 50 years of use, the courthouse was razed when Stone County authorized construction of a 20th century courthouse.

Petitions presented to the Stone County Court called for an election on a \$50,000 bond issue, which passed in July 1919. Illustrations of recently built neighboring courthouses were printed next to the old courthouse of Stone County to point out the contrast.

Commissioners chose Charles Sudhoelter and Co., Joplin, as architects. Contractor was the Pauley Construction Co., Springfield, which bid \$47,600 on the three-story, 65-by-70-foot, 40-foot-tall, brick building with concrete trim (Fig. 2). A central hall divides

the interior; courtrooms, located on the south, have a curved projection with seven windows. The graceful, oval shape of the third floor Circuit Court room distinguishes this modest courthouse. Cornerstone ceremonies for Stone County's present courthouse took place on March 27, 1920.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

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Newspapers

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Manuscript Collections

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W.P.A. workers in Stone County cited County Court records to provide documentary evidence for the history of Stone County's courthouses and supplemented the material interviewing Galena citizens.