

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Buchanan County Courthouse

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Courthouse Square

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

St. Joseph

__ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

#6 - Hon. E. Thomas Coleman

STATE

Missouri

CODE

29

COUNTY

Buchanan

CODE

021

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Buchanan County

STREET & NUMBER

Courthouse, Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN

St. Joseph

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

Missouri 64501

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Recorder of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

Courthouse, Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN

St. Joseph

STATE

Missouri 64501

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

1. Missouri State Historical Survey

DATE

1972

__FEDERAL STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Missouri State Park Board

CITY, TOWN

Jefferson City

STATE

Missouri 65102

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. County Records. St. Joseph, Missouri: N. Pub., N.D. (xerox copy).
2. Daily Herald [St. Joseph, Missouri], March 29, 1885.
3. History of Buchanan County, Missouri. St. Joseph, Missouri: Union Historical Company, 1881, pp. 334-343.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 2 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME St. Joseph North, Mo-Kans

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 341160 4403510

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

City Block 48 (Courthouse Square).

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

1. M. Patricia Holmes, Chief Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Mo. State Park Board, State Historical Survey & Planning Office

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 176, 1204 Jefferson Building

TELEPHONE

June 20, 1972

CITY OR TOWN

Jefferson City

STATE

Missouri 65101

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Director, Dept. of Natural Resources and
State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

April 18, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

BUCHANAN COUNTY COURTHOUSE

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 11 PAGE 1

2. James M. Denny, Section Chief
Nominations-Survey
Office of Historic Preservation
Department of Natural Resources
314/751-4096
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

state

SITE FILE COPY

Form 10-300
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Missouri	
COUNTY: Buchanan	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	21 Aug 72

1. NAME *Approved by A.C. W. June 72 Fred WDC 27 Jul 72*

COMMON:
Buchanan County Courthouse and Jail

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Courthouse Square *

CITY OR TOWN:
St. Joseph

STATE: Missouri 64501 CODE: 29 COUNTY: Buchanan CODE: 021

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes: Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Buchanan County

STREET AND NUMBER:
Courthouse, Courthouse Square

CITY OR TOWN:
St. Joseph

STATE:
Missouri 64501

CODE:
29

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Recorder of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:
Courthouse, Courthouse Square

CITY OR TOWN:
St. Joseph

STATE:
Missouri 64501

CODE:
29

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
1. Missouri State Historical Survey

DATE OF SURVEY:
1972 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Missouri State Park Board

STREET AND NUMBER:
P.O. Box 176, 1204 Jefferson Building

CITY OR TOWN:
Jefferson City

STATE:
Missouri 65101

CODE:
29

*6th Congressional District - Hon. W. R. Hull, Jr.
House of Representatives

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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6. #1

BUCHANAN COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL

2. Important Events of the Century: Great Centennial Exhibition at Philadelphia (federal)

1877

published: New York: United States Central Publishing Co.

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Buchanan County Courthouse is a cruciform, Renaissance Revival-style building, with embellishments in the Romano-Tuscan mode, as seen primarily in the window treatment. Pedimented porticoes in the Corinthian order lend dignity and prominence to the building, while lessening the severity normally associated with Romano-Tuscan detailing. The window proportions show the influence of Victorian taste for verticality. A dome surmounts the courthouse at the intersection of the wings.

EXTERIOR

Over-all dimensions

The courthouse has north and south frontages of 218 3/4 feet, and east and west frontages of 200 feet.

South wing. The south wing is rectangular in plan. There are five bays (56 1/2 feet) on the south, east, and west facades of this wing.

East wing. The east wing is T-shaped in plan. The east facade is eleven bays (121' 10 1/2") wide, the south facades are four bays (40' 2 1/2") each, and the southernmost section of the west facade (which is the wall between the south facades) is three bays (28' 1 1/2") wide.

West wing. The west wing is also T-shaped and follows the same proportions as the east wing (except for the addition of a fireproof chamber at the basement, first, and second story levels on the northern portion of the east facade): eleven bays (118 2/3 feet) on the west facade, four bays (40' 2 1/2") on the south facades, three bays (53' 1 1/2") on the westernmost section of the north facade, three bays (28' 1 1/2") on the northernmost section of the east facade, and three bays (26 feet) on the southern section of the east facade.

North wing. The north wing is L-shaped with a three-sided projecting bay on the southern section of the west facade. The northwest and southwest facades of this projection measure 12 1/2 feet each (one bay), and the central wall measures 15' 1 1/2" (also a single bay). The north facade is eight bays (90' 7 1/2"), the northern section of the west facade is four bays (40' 2 1/2"), the south facade is four bays (38 1/2 feet), and the east facade is an undetermined number of bays (78 1/2 feet).

Construction materials

The courthouse is constructed of red brick walls, painted white; stone columns, window trim, and decorative details; and a glass and tin dome. The foundations are built of stone ashlar with a rough texture.

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BUCHANAN COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL

Wood has been used on the doors and the moldings between the window lights.

Porticoes

There are three identical porticoes, one dominating each of the main east, west, and south facades. Each portico has four, tall, well-proportioned, fluted, Corinthian columns. (The column capitals were carved by a local stone cutting company, J. Pfeiffer & Son). Each column rests on a massive, block base. The pediment and entablature, which are supported by the columns, are simple with their only detailing being modillions and dentils. The triangular space of the pediment is filled with brick to match the wall surface of the courthouse.

Openings

Windows. The fenestration pattern is identical on all the floors of the courthouse, one-window-per-bay.

Due to the sloping terrain on which the courthouse is located, the basement windows are not continuous around the entire building, having been omitted on the north facade and the north end of the east wing. All but seven of these windows are rectangular and have two-over-two light, double-hung sashes and a smooth stone lintel over them. The seven remaining windows, which are on the south ends of the east and west wings, are round-arched and ornamented with a stone molding and centered keystone. Four, small, three-over-three light, double-hung sash windows are located on the west facade of the north wing. Three similar windows are on the south side of the same wing and are inserted into shallow window wells.

The first story windows are tall, slender, and rectangular in shape. Each window, except for those on the north, south, and northernmost west facades of the north wing, has a two-over-two light, double-hung sash. The remaining window openings are filled with small, square, glass blocks. The only ornamentation is the alternating segmental and pedimented arches over the windows. These arches are found on the south, west, and east wings only, the north wing being an exception, having only a raised brick molding with a centered keystone over each window.

All the second story windows, except for the eight on the north facade and the two northernmost windows on the west facade of the north wing, are round-arched and have two-over-two light, double-hung sashes. Each

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7. #2

BUCHANAN COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL

has a centered keystone and imposts at the spring of the arch. The ten remaining north wing windows are similar in shape and ornament to the other second story windows, but are filled with the same small, square, glass blocks that are found on the first story windows.

Doorways and doors. The three main entrances into the courthouse are centered on the west, south, and east facades under the porticoes. Each entrance spans the width of three bays and is made up of three separate openings (one-per-bay), each filled with a set of double, half glass, half wood doors. Over the doorway is a horizontal, two-light transom and a fanlight with circular moldings. Framing each doorway are pilasters supporting an arched molding with centered keystone.

All secondary entrances are on the basement level except for the north (or rear) entrance which is on the first story level. These entrances are one door wide and give access to the offices located in the basement. The north entrance is similar to the main entrances in design, but not in size, having been reduced to one bay in width. The central, south basement doorway is identical to the rear doorway, but has no transom and fanlight sections over it.

Dome

A three-stage dome is centered over the intersection of the four wings. The wooden base is octagonal in plan with bull's eye windows on alternating sides. The tin second stage is cylindrical, forming a transition between the base and the domical third stage. Eight, decorative, tin, inverted bracket-like features are attached to this section at the points corresponding with the junctures of each side of the base. The dome has eight ribs corresponding in placement with the location of the bracket-like features. The spaces between the ribs are filled with small, rectangular panes of translucent glass with a molding framing each pane. A lantern tops the dome.

Roof

Low-pitched, gable roofs cover the T-shaped east and west wings. Hip roofs cover the south wing and the north-south axis portion of the north wing. The east-west section of the north wing also has a gable roof.

Chimneys

A single chimney services the building. It is separate from the building

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BUCHANAN COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL

at the north side. It is square in plan, tapering upward to a height approximating that of the dome. The chimney is constructed of brick, painted white to match the main building.

Decorative features

All decorative features are of stone or brick. They occur on all sides, except the rear north facade of the north wing. They include: 1) the brick pilasters between the windows; 2) the stone arches over the first and second story windows (already described); 3) the brick stringcourse; 4) the entablature; 5) the gable ends of the east and west wings; and 6) the double recessed panels under the first story windows.

The pilasters extend from the basement to the entablature, intersecting the stringcourse between the first and second stories. The decorative capitals are in the Corinthian order on the south facades of the west, south, and east wings and are innovative non-classic elsewhere.

The wide stringcourse spans the east, south, and west facades, as well as the north and south ends of the east and west wings. It consists of two parallel stone moldings enclosing a brick section which is ornamented with alternating single, horizontal, recessed panels, under the second story windows, and sets of three vertical, recessed panels on the pilaster sections which intersect the stringcourse.

The stone entablature is continued across all the facades of the building.

The gable ends of the east and west wings match the pediments of the west, east and south porticoes.

Horizontal, rectangular, recessed panels with a second, smaller, interior, recessed center are under the first story windows, corresponding to the panels of the stringcourse.

Entrance stairs

A monumental, straight, stone stairway is located on the west facade. A second set of stairs, on the south facade, has a double "L" plan. The east entrance matches that on the west, but has only a few steps up into the building because of the high grade on this facade.

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BUCHANAN COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL

INTERIOR

Basement

Located in the basement are various offices (the Magistrate 1st District, the health unit, the Superintendent of Schools, the County Highway Engineer, the State Veterans Office, and the State Highway Engineer), storage vaults, storerooms, and the boiler room. The walls, which are of stone ashlar, match the exterior basement walls. The floors are only partially finished; the offices have cement floors and the hallways have a centered, cement walkway with gravel along the sides. The doorways are arched with a double row of brickwork trim.

First floor

Two hallways, one running east-west and the other north-south, intersect each other in the central rotunda area. Opening off the east-west hallway are various offices and courts: the Assessor, the Recorder, the Sheriff, the State Probation Officer, the County Court, the County Court Clerk, the Public Administrator, and the Probate Court. Other offices are on the north-south hallway: the Auditor, the Collector, the Treasurer, the Prosecuting Attorney, and the Magistrate 2nd District.

The walls of the corridors are painted beige on the lower third and green on the upper two-thirds. There is a red marble baseboard (12 inches high) on the rotunda area walls.

The floors are surfaced with tile. An over-all pattern of small green crosses covers the central portions of the hall floors, and there is a border design of Grecian key patterns in green and grey. The State Seal, in ornamental tiles, is centered on the rotunda floor.

Two, U-plan, symmetrical stairways of wrought iron and wood connect the first and second floors and are in the northwest and northeast corners of the rotunda.

The first story is 18 feet high.

Second floor

The second floor hallways repeat the organization of the first floor. Opening off the east-west hallway are the following offices and courts: The Circuit Court Clerk, the Circuit Court #3, the Circuit Court #2,

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BUCHANAN COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL

the Court Recorder #2, and the Judges' Chambers #1, 2, and 3. The Jury Rooms, the Juvenile Officer, the Circuit Court Recorder #1 and 3, the rest rooms, and the Circuit Court #1 open off the north-south hallway.

The first floor color scheme is repeated.

The floor covering is linoleum in the east-west hallway, the north hall, and the rotunda area. The south hall has wood flooring.

The main Circuit Courtroom, Circuit Court #1, is in the south end of the south wing. The entrance into the courtroom is on the north and has half glass, half wood, double doors. Large, rectangular windows line the three exterior walls. The walls are painted green and have cream-colored woodwork. Accoustical tiles, in green and grey, have been placed on the lowered ceiling. Most of the trim and furnishings are of dark wood. This room has been reduced in area to provide additional office space along its former north side.

Attic

The attic is a large, high, unfinished area which provides space for the interior wood and metal supports of the dome. Access to this area is by a narrow stairway on the north side of the east wing, immediately to the east of the rotunda area.

ALTERATIONS

No major alterations have been executed since the rebuilding of the courthouse after the 1885 fire. At that time, several changes were made in the arrangement of the rooms and a new, diminished, drumless dome added.

Since 1885, it appears that only minor room-by-room renovations have been carried out and several new vaults added. The most drastic alteration was the covering over of the dome opening in the rotunda at the second floor ceiling level with a translucent material and the installation of lighting fixtures behind it.

BUCHANAN COUNTY JAIL

The jail, which is to the northeast of the courthouse and on the same block, is a red brick building with white stone trim and is constructed in a modified cruciform plan. The building is divided into three

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BUCHANAN COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL

sections: a two-story eastern section (the jailer's quarters) with a hip roof, a three to four-story western section containing the cells and covered by a combination hip and gable roof, and a one-story middle section which divides the jailer's quarters from the jail proper. Entrances into the building are centered on the east facade and on the south and north ends of the connecting one-story passage. The windows in the jailer's quarters and passage are rectangular with double-hung sashes. Bars are over the windows in the jail proper (or west wing).

SITE

The courthouse is located on the west three-quarters of the courthouse square (City Block 48), facing south. The jail is also located on this block, but in the northeast corner, ten feet from the north curb and 12 feet from the east curb. Nine to twelve feet wide sidewalks surround the square along the curb. Other sidewalks lead from the curb walk to the east portico entrance; the rear, north door; and the basement entrance on the south end of the east wing. A fifth, L-shaped walk connects the east portico entrance with the basement entrances on the south end of the east wing and on the east side of the south wing. Commercial buildings are located on the adjacent blocks to the south and west of the courthouse square, while a parking lot is to the north and a partially cleared block is to the east.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1873-1876, rebuilt in 1885 after fire

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | | <u>Jurisprudence</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Buchanan County Courthouse is significant as the only cruciform, Renaissance Revival courthouse in Missouri. Only two other courthouses have a similar floor plan, St. Louis City Courthouse and Platte County Courthouse; but neither of these courthouses are in the Renaissance Revival style. Buchanan County Courthouse is second only to St. Louis City Courthouse in size and monumentality. When the courthouse was built in 1873, the building was labeled as the largest courthouse in the state outside St. Louis.

The courthouse is also significant by the fact that the building survived the devastating fire of 1885 which gutted the interior, leaving only the exterior walls and portico columns standing. It is through the stubbornness of the insurance companies that the County did not succeed in its plans to demolish the rest of the building and build a new courthouse with the insurance money. In a manner of speaking, these insurance companies were early preservationists in that they advocated the renovation of the courthouse to its condition before the fire, instead of its demolition.

A third area of significance is jurisprudence. This courthouse served as the scene of the trial of the Ford brothers for the murder of Jesse James.

Buchanan County, established in 1839, has had three courthouses. The present courthouse is the third such structure. Previous to the construction of the first courthouse, the county and circuit courts met in the homes of Richard Hill and Joseph Robidoux. In January, 1841, the county court ordered that a log house containing two rooms be erected in the town of Sparta, which was located near the center of the county. The contract for the courthouse was let to Guilford Moultray. This structure was 18 feet x 20 feet and lighted by day through two 12-light windows in each room on the first floor and by a 6-light window in each gable. When the courthouse was used at night, tallow candles were used. This building served more than one purpose; aside from being the "palace of justice, it was also the academy of learning, the temple of worship, the forum of the people, and the opera house."¹

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8. #1

BUCHANAN COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL

On November 9, 1842, the county court appropriated \$6,000 to erect a new courthouse and jail. This courthouse was to be built in Sparta. Before the courthouse could be constructed, however, a conflict between Sparta and Blacksnake Hills developed over the location of the county seat. As a result of this agitation, Sparta lost and the \$6,000 was invested in St. Joseph. City Block 48 was donated by Joseph Robidoux for the location of the new courthouse. A brick structure, with Louis S. Stigers and N. J. Taylor as the architects and builders, was built. It was a two-story, 50 feet x 74 feet, 9-room building with a dome and a front (or south) facade portico. "Insignificant as such a structure would appear today in the city, it was then a prominent architectural and visual landmark in the landscape, due to its elevated position."²

In 1871, after twenty-five years of service to the county, the building was condemned as unsafe and was vacated in October of the same year. The next courthouse, of which the present one forms a part, was begun in 1873. Its architect was P. F. Meagher and its builder was John DeClue. The courthouse, costing \$173,000, was of brick with cut-stone foundations and trimmings and was constructed in a cruciform plan with the arms running east and west and north and south. In the center of the building, "like a giant-headed spike joining the arms of the cross,"³ was a domed rotunda rising 145' from the ground level. Stoves heated the building. Aside from the county offices, the building was occupied for various other purposes including space for lawyers' offices, rooms for sleeping purposes, worship rooms for the Latter Day Saints Church, lecture space for the Northwestern Medical College, and rooms for the Mendelsohn Society, a musical organization.

On the morning of March 28, 1885, the courthouse was severely damaged by a fire that gutted the interior and destroyed the dome, but left the exterior walls and columns intact. It is a generally accepted theory that from some neglect or accident the fire was transferred from either a stove or an ash receptacle to the floor.

Even though the building was amply covered by insurance, the county court had considerable difficulty in obtaining settlement from the insurance companies. The court demanded a full cash settlement in the amount of the policies with the intention of erecting a new building, while the insurance companies wanted to pay only a part of the coverage. An agreement was reached by which the insurance companies obligated themselves to place the building in the same condition as it had been before the fire. This agreement was carried out with R. K. Allen as the builder and Judge Bernard Barton as the supervisor. The building, as

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8. #2

BUCHANAN COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL

then completed (with minor interior changes and improvements), is still standing and in use today. It is to these insurance companies that preservationists can be thankful. Without them, it would have been quite possible that this magnificent courthouse, hailed as "Buchanan's capitol,"⁴ would have been lost.

The Buchanan County Courthouse is also noteworthy as the scene of the trial of the murderers of Jesse James, the Ford brothers. Jesse James, upon whose head the State had put a price and to whose captors or slayers immunity had been promised, was killed in St. Joseph on April 3, 1882. James had been living in St. Joseph since 1881 with his wife, two children, and Charley Ford, a fellow bandit. Tempted by a \$10,000 reward and the promised immunity, Charley and Bob Ford entered into a trap and killed James, Charley's friend and protector. After the fatal shooting, the Fords wired Governor Crittenden, Sheriff Timberlake of Clay County, and the marshall of Kansas City that they had killed Jesse James. The Fords had themselves placed in custody after admitting to the police that they had shot James. Subsequently, Mrs. James swore out warrants charging them with the murder of her husband. Judge O. M. Spencer, who was the State's attorney for Buchanan County at the time, insisted on prosecuting the Fords. They were indicted for murder in the first degree, and upon arraignment before Judge Sherman, pleaded guilty to the charge. Spencer sentenced them to be hanged on May 19th. On April 19th a pardon, signed by Governor Crittenden, arrived and the Fords were released. The reward of \$10,000, which had been offered by the express and railroad companies that had been troubled by the depre-dations of the James gang, was paid to the Fords.

PRESENT STATUS

The present status of the Buchanan County Courthouse is precarious due to a lack of maintenance and its location in the urban renewal area of St. Joseph. The Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority has offered the county \$245,000 for the courthouse and jail property. This offer, in turn, has launched a move by the county court to push for a new court-house and jail. The court approves of this move on the basis that the courthouse and jail are too expensive to keep in good repair. Other groups in Buchanan County are against such a plan. They advocate re-stitution of the structures, especially the courthouse. Architectural authorities who have been called upon for their opinions have also ad-vocated this restoration position. One such authority is Earl W. Henderson, Jr. of Springfield, Illinois who suggests "preservation of the exterior of the present building and renovation of the interior. The

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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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STATE Missouri	
COUNTY Buchanan	
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8. #3

BUCHANAN COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL

construction of the courthouse here is sound and there is enough space to take care of growth in the future. Renovation could be carried out on a wing-to-wing basis thus eliminating the necessity of moving the offices out of the building during the restoration."⁵ A bond issue is scheduled in the hopes that some solution can be found to this controversy.

COMPARISON WITH OTHER MISSOURI COUNTY COURTHOUSES

Buchanan County Courthouse is one of two courthouses built in the cruciform plan, the other being the St. Louis City Courthouse (the St. Louis Old Courthouse) dated 1839-51 and 1859. A third courthouse (1866), in Platte City, the seat of Platte County, is a variation of this cross-type plan. This building has had lower, square-plan additions inserted into the exterior voids between the arms of the cross. Of the three courthouses, Buchanan County's (1873) was the last to be built.

The Buchanan County Courthouse is the only example of the three in the Renaissance Revival style. The St. Louis Courthouse is more purely a Greek Revival-style building, and the courthouse in Platte City has a comparatively generalized neo-classic derivation.

In size and monumentality, Buchanan County Courthouse ranks second in the state after the St. Louis Courthouse. When built, the Buchanan County Courthouse was labeled as the largest in the state outside St. Louis.

The survey of Missouri's sites of historical and architectural significance is based on the selection of sites as they relate to theme studies in Missouri history as outlined in Missouri's "Comprehensive Statewide Preliminary Historic Preservation Plan." The Buchanan County Courthouse is therefore being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places because the courthouse 1) is the only cruciform, Renaissance Revival-style courthouse in Missouri; 2) survived a county's desire to demolish it after a devastating fire in 1885 which gutted the interior, leaving only the exterior walls and columns standing; and 3) was the scene of the trial of the murderers of Jesse James.

FOOTNOTES

1. Chris Rutt, ed., History of Buchanan County and City of St. Joseph and Representative Citizens (Chicago: Biographical Publishing Co., 1904), p. 144.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Missouri	
COUNTY	
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FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

8. #4

BUCHANAN COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL

2. History of Buchanan County, Missouri (St. Joseph, Mo.: Union Historical Company, 1881), p. 334.
3. County Records (xerox copy).
4. Daily Herald [St. Joseph, Missouri], March 29, 1885.
5. St. Joseph [Missouri] News-Press, February 22, 1972.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. County Records. St. Joseph, Missouri: N. Pub., N. D. (xerox copy).
2. Daily Herald [St. Joseph, Missouri], March 29, 1885.
3. History of Buchanan County, Missouri. St. Joseph, Missouri: Union Historical Company, 1881, pp. 334-343.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE			LATITUDE		LONGITUDE
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
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NE	°	'	"	°	'	"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"
				39°	46'	05"N
				94°	51'	20"W

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than ten

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: M. Patricia Holmes, Chief Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION: Missouri State Park Board, State Historical Survey and Planning Office DATE: June 20, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER: P.O. Box 176, 1204 Jefferson Building

CITY OR TOWN: Jefferson City STATE: Missouri 65101 CODE: 29

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name Joseph Jaeger, Jr.

Title Director, Missouri State Park Board, and Missouri State Liaison Officer

Date _____

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Missouri	
COUNTY	
Buchanan	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

9. #1

BUCHANAN COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL

4. Rutt, Chris L. (ed.). History of Buchanan County and City of St. Joseph and Representative Citizens. Chicago: Biographical Publishing Co., 1904, pp. 144-146, 204-206.
5. St. Joseph [Missouri] News-Press, February 22, 1972.

OTHER PERTINENT SOURCES

1. Caldwell, Dorothy J. (ed.). Missouri Historic Sites Catalogue. Columbia, Missouri: State Historical Society of Missouri, 1963, p. 131, 173.
2. Campbell, R. A. Campbell's Gazetteer of Missouri. St. Louis: R. A. Campbell, Publisher, 1874, pp. 80-81.
3. Daily Herald [St. Joseph, Missouri], March 28, 1885.
4. Hamlin, Talbot. Greek Revival Architecture in America. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1964 (original edition 1944), p. 253.
5. McCue, George. The Building Art in St. Louis: Two Centuries. St. Louis: St. Louis Chapter, American Institute of Architects, 1967, p. 28.
6. Paxton, W. M. Annals of Platte County, Missouri. Kansas City, Missouri: Hudson-Kimberly Publishing Co., 1897.
7. Rutt, Chris L. (ed.). The Daily News' History of Buchanan County and St. Joseph, Missouri. St. Joseph, Missouri: The St. Joseph Publishing Co., 1898, pp. 149-155.
8. St. Joseph [Missouri] Daily Gazette, March 29, 1885, p. 6.
9. St. Joseph [Missouri] Historical Society. Architectural and historical information on the Buchanan County Courthouse and Jail.
10. St. Joseph [Missouri] News-Press, August 14, 1938.
11. _____, December 18, 1938.
12. _____, August 25, 1943.

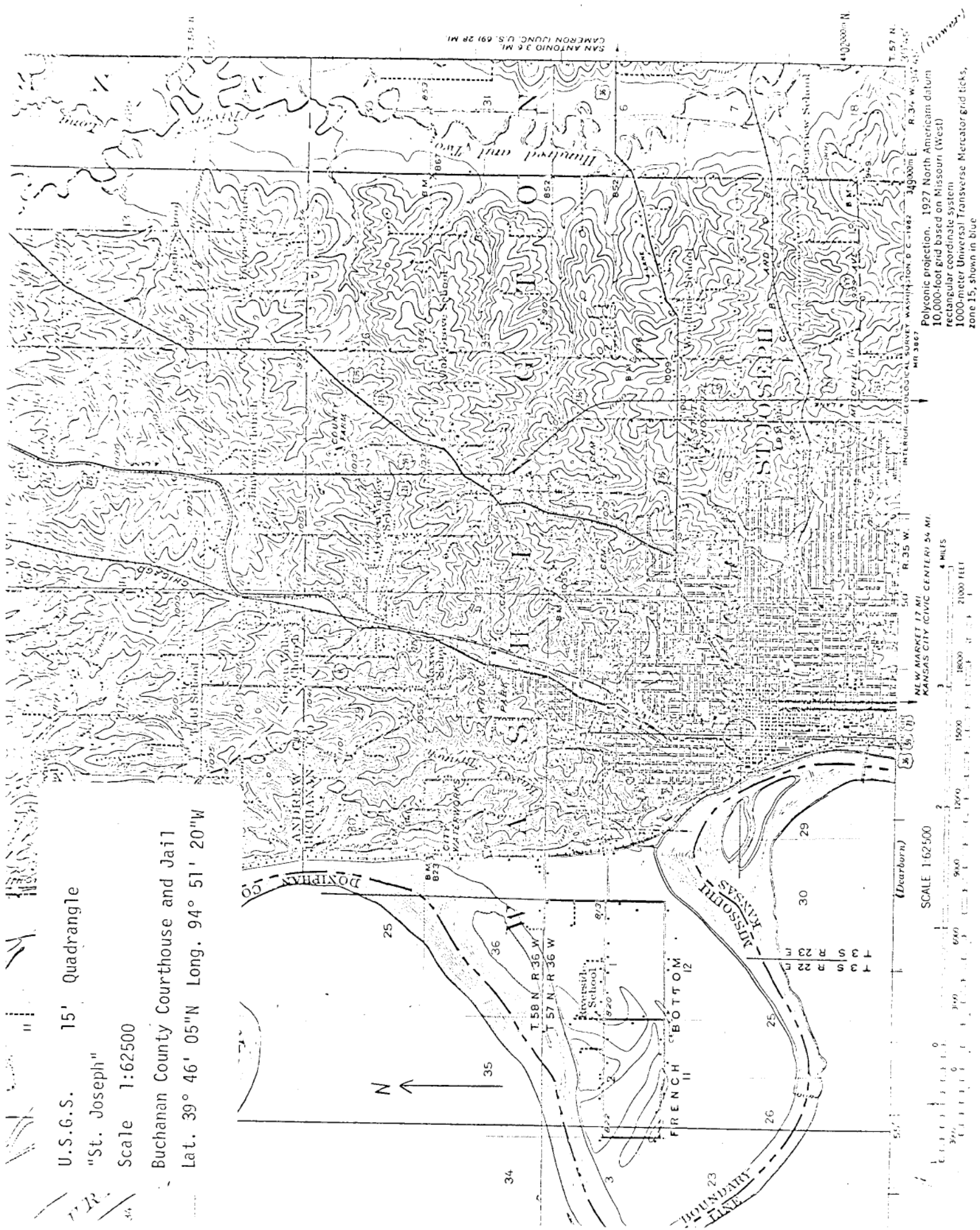
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Missouri	
COUNTY	
Buchanan	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

9. #2 BUCHANAN COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL
13. _____, March 19, 1944.
14. _____, August 27, 1944.
15. _____, September 24, 1944.
16. _____, March 28, 1945.
17. Utz, Nellie. "History of the Growth and Development of St. Joseph, 1857-1858." Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Kansas, Lawrence, 1935, p. 100.



U.S.G.S. 15' Quadrangle

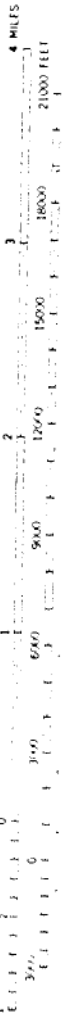
"St. Joseph"

Scale 1:62500

Buchanan County Courthouse and Jail

Lat. 39° 46' 05" N Long. 94° 51' 20" W

SCALE 1:62500



NEW MARKET 17 MI
KANSAS CITY (CIVIC CENTER) 34 MI

INTERIOR GEOLOGICAL SURVEY WASHINGTON D.C. 20542

10,000-foot grid based on Missouri (West) rectangular coordinate system

1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue

Polyconic projection: 1927 North American datum

MR 3067

4020000 N

T. 57 N.

R. 34 W. 31 E.

31745'

SAN ANTONIO 3.6 MI 691.28 MI
CAMERON LUNG U.S. 691.28 MI

MISSOURI KANSAS

FRENCH BOTTOM

BOUNDARY LINE

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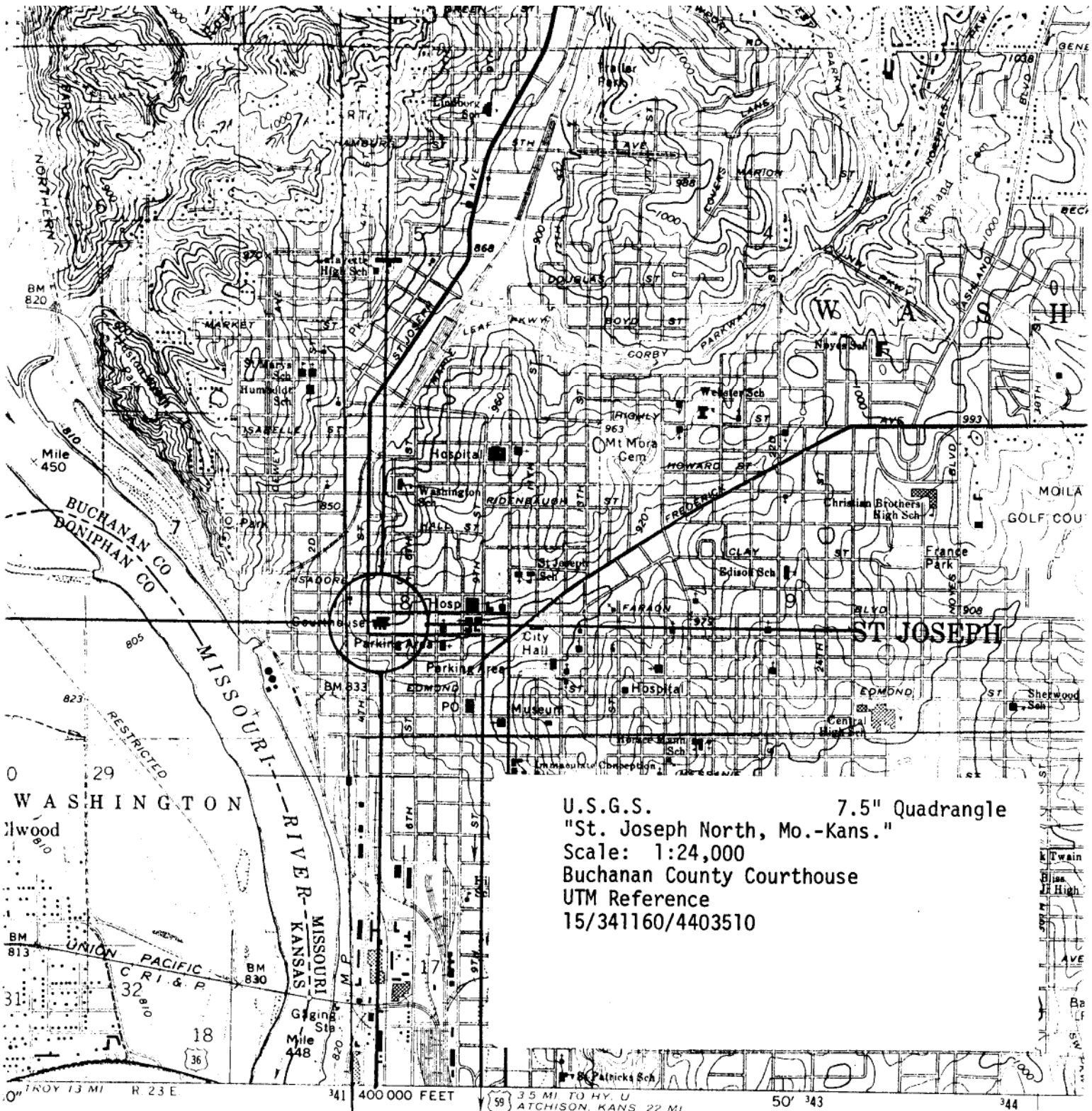
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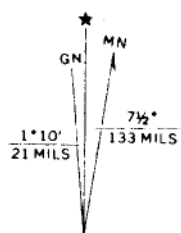
Map compiled, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
 under control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial
 photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1971

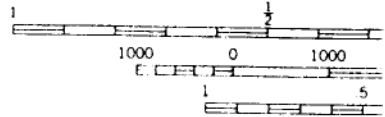
Cylindrical conic projection. 1927 North American datum
 1000-foot grid based on Missouri coordinate system, west zone
 30-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
 zone 15, shown in blue

Light tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
 Red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
 generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

U.S.G.S. 7.5" Quadrangle
 "St. Joseph North, Mo.-Kans."
 Scale: 1:24,000
 Buchanan County Courthouse
 UTM Reference
 15/341160/4403510



UTM GRID AND 1971 MAGNETIC NORTH
 DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



THIS MAP COMPLIES
 FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
 MISSOURI GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
 AND STATE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
 WITH A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHY

Photo Log:

Name of Property: **Buchanan County Courthouse and Jail**

City or Vicinity: **St. Joseph**

County: **Buchanan County** State: **MO**

Photographer: **M. Patricia Holmes**

Date
Photographed: **May 1972**

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 10. View looking SW from the NE. View includes the E and N facades of the E wing (left) the one-story middle section (center), and the jail proper (right). Dome of the courthouse is behind the jail proper.

2 of 10. N façade of the jail showing the E wing (left), and the jail proper (right). The N façade of the courthouse is on the far left. The dome of the courthouse is in the background.

3 of 10. SE corner, view looking NW from the SE with the S wing (left), the E wing (center), and the brick jail (right).

4 of 10. E façade, view from the E looking W. Outstanding feature is the monumental portico. View shows the sloping terrain on which the courthouse is located.

5 of 10. N façade, view looking S from the N with N façade of the courthouse (right) and the brick jail (left). The separate chimney is in full view.

6 of 10. SW corner, view from SW looking NE with W wing (left) and S wing (right).

7 of 10. Interior view of Circuit Courtroom #3. View from the NE looking SW. Interesting details include the theatre-type seats and the wall decoration.

8 of 10. Interior view of second floor rotunda area. View from the S looking N.

9 of 10. Interior view of attic showing the interior wood and metal supports for the dome.

10 of 10. Interior view of basement, E-W hallway. View from the W looking E showing the ashlar walls and unfinished floors.



