

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Greene County Courthouse

other name/site number Historic Greene County Courthouse

2. Location

street & town 940 Boonville Avenue N/A not for publication

city or town Springfield N/A vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Greene code 077 zip code 65802

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mark A. Miles September 25, 2007
Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as apply)

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

Category of Property (check only one box)

- building(s), district, site, structure, object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Table with columns: Contributing, Noncontributing, and counts for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Function (Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/courthouse, GOVERNMENT/city hall

Current Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/courthouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS, Other: Neoclassical Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE, walls STONE, roof Rubber, other CONCRETE

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- PI
x [] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
[] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
[] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
[] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- [] A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
[] B removed from its original location.
[] C a birthplace or grave.
[] D a cemetery.
[] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
[] F a commemorative property.
[] G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- [] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
[] previously listed in the National Register
[] previously determined eligible by the National Register
[] designated a National Historic Landmark
[] recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
[] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Politics/ government

Period of Significance

1912 - 1957

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Miller, Opel and Torbitt- Architect,

Hiram Lloyd Co. - Contractor

[x] See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

Primary location of additional data:

- x [] State Historic Preservation Office
[] Other State agency
[] Federal agency
x [] Local government
[] University
[] Other Name of repository:

Greene County Archives and Records, Springfield, MO

[x] See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

Greene County Courthouse
Name of Property

Greene County, MO
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.5 acres

UTM References

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 1/5 474110 4119100
Zone Easting Northing

2 / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

3 / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

4 / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Beg. N. W. corner Central & Robberson North 415' m/l, West 163', South 415', East to beginning, and Joseph Gotts 2nd Addition south 625' of Lot 1 and all Lots 6,7,12,13 and Courthouse Addition Lots 1 thru 6.

Property Tax No. N/A

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Boundaries are the historic legal boundaries of the property upon which the Greene County Courthouse was built.

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Gail Emrie

organization Greene County Historic Sites Board date August 2007

street & number 8052 N. Devonwood telephone 417 833 4381

city or town Fair Grove state MO zip code 65648

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs: Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items: (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

name/title Greene County Commissioners

street & number 933 N. Robberson telephone 417 868 4112

city or town Springfield state MO zip code 65802

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

**Greene Co. Courthouse
Greene County, Missouri**

Summary

Constructed 1910-1912, the Greene County Courthouse in Springfield, Missouri, is a Neoclassical Revival, four level rusticated stone building with a flat roof and low dome over a rotunda. The Courthouse is located at 940 Boonville Avenue in what has come to be known as the Government Plaza. It features a rectangular plan with a frontispiece projecting from the wall on the south, east and west elevations. The main façade faces south to Central Street and its secondary façade faces west to Boonville. The building was designed by A. N. Torbitt of the architectural firm Miller, Opel and Torbitt, of Jefferson City, Kansas City, and Springfield. The Greene County Courthouse substantially retains its historic appearance with the exception of replacement windows and removal of the parapet in the 1970s. The primary south entrance is approached by a broad walkway and steps with stone sidewalks and steel hand-railings to a platform porch where three deeply recessed, round-arched entrances to the main floor are located. These entrances are surmounted by a free colonnade of four Ionic columns that extend the height of the upper two floors. Between the columns, stone balustrades and cartouches enliven the spaces below double-hung windows, and the balustrades continue across the elevation. East and west ends of the building have similar facades featuring colonnades of engaged columns and balustrades but minus cartouches. Third floor window openings are elaborately ornamented with stone pediments supported by ancons. There are street level entrances to the raised basement on all four sides of the building. The brick and concrete structure has a veneer of smooth dressed, rusticated gray Phenix marble from quarries in northwest Greene County. Within the boundary are three contributing objects: a bronze replica of the Statue of Liberty, the stone bases of two columns from the former courthouse, and a World War I cannon.

The Greene County Courthouse is known today as the Historic Greene County Courthouse to distinguish it from a new Judicial Courts Building and Justice Center constructed just north of the nominated property in the 1990s. The courthouse is centrally located in the Government Plaza area, containing the city hall, the former post office, city utilities offices, the new courthouse, the county jail, a library, Central High School and several buildings housing city offices. These buildings are of various architectural styles reflecting the growth and history of the city. The courthouse is located at the corner of Boonville Avenue and Central Street. Boonville is a major north-south artery connecting Commercial Street and the Public Square. Central Street also carries significant traffic from Boonville Avenue east to National Avenue. The courthouse is bounded by Central on the south, Boonville on the west, Robberson on the east and a service drive on the north. The exterior of the Greene County Courthouse is surrounded by lawns with mature trees on the east, west, and south sides. The building is set back approximately 100 feet from Central Street and approximately 80 feet from both Boonville and Robberson. The lawn is separated from the sidewalk by a low retaining wall. The front lawn facing Central Street contains the three contributing objects; the columns are in the southwest corner of the lawn with a sign indicating their source, the cannon is in the southeast corner, and the replica of the Statue of Liberty is centered on the broad sidewalk approaching the building. The statue, placed on the sidewalk leading up to the main entrance on the south side, was given to the county in 1950. The plaque on its base reads:

With the faith and courage of their forefathers who made possible the freedom of these United States, The Boy Scouts of America dedicate this replica of the Statue of Liberty as a pledge of everlasting fidelity and loyalty.

The west side of the courthouse has a broad sidewalk and steps entering the ground floor, an access drive, and the handicapped entrance to the basement. The east side of the building has a small parking lot accessed from Robberson Street with an entrance to the basement, and an added handicapped access.

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**Greene Co. Courthouse
Greene County, Missouri**

The Greene County Courthouse is a 200 foot by 125 foot, symmetrical, rectangular building with slight projections on the front and rear. The projecting central pavilion of the front, main façade contains three arched doors with stepped, radiating voussoirs and keystones. Four ionic columns, extending the height of the second and third floors, surmount the entrance. A stone balustrade extends between the columns. Three bays of windows are inset above the balustrade. They are ornamented with carved ancons between the second and third floor windows. The ten bays of windows extending across the front of the building are of the same pattern, one over one, with balustraded and pedimented windows on the second level and simpler surrounds on the first and third levels. The east and west ends of the building have similar facades with colonnades of engaged columns matching the front façade. The fenestration design is the same as the front façade. The west facade is the secondary entrance with a broad walk way and steps, similar to the front, leading to a ground floor platform porch and entry. The east façade has only a ground level entrance and no porch. The courthouse has a rear projection of office space mirroring the entrance projection on the front. Ornamentation of stone work on the projection and windows has been omitted on the rear of the building. There is a low dome over the rotunda. The otherwise flat roof has been covered with rubberized roofing.

The smooth dressed rusticated stone veneer of the building was brought from Phenix Quarry in northern Greene County. The stone was called Napoleon grey marble but is actually a fine grade of limestone. Phenix Quarry shipped stone throughout the country for interior and exterior use. It has been used for many public buildings in the Springfield, Missouri area. The foundation and basement exterior is covered with smooth stone with no ornamentation around the windows. The ground floor stone work is banded with alternating thick and thin courses with no decorative window surrounds. A belt course runs between the first and second floors. The second floor windows are elaborately ornamented with carved stone balustrades matching the balustrade above the entrance doors, and pediments supported by ancons. The windows on both the second and third floors have distinct window casings. The stone veneer on the top two levels is of smooth ashlar, with evenly banded courses of rusticated stone on the sides of the colonnades and wrapping the corners. The entablature encircling the uppermost edge of the courthouse includes an architrave, smooth frieze (except for "GREENE COUNTY COURTHOUSE" carved above the main entrance), and a cornice with dentils. Originally this was topped with a balustrade and large cartouches. Having become unstable they were removed in 1973, along with the parapet. The rear of the building, which has little visual exposure due to surrounding county structures, has the same stone veneer treatment but the windows are not ornamented.

The interior of the building has retained its integrity in the public spaces, although some offices have been modified. The main entry doors on the south facade are surmounted by leaded glass arched windows with ancons centered over the interior of each arch. This entrance leads into the first floor vestibule with marble floors and walls. The walls have dentils above the structural columns between the doors. Oak and glass doors lead into the rotunda. The rotunda floors are marble with a contrasting hexagon in the center. Stairs on the east and west sides of the rotunda lead up to the second and third floors. The stairs and balconies have decorative brass railings. The dome of the rotunda is lit with a radial pattern of lights leading to the leaded glass dome which is back lighted. Halls extend east and west from the corners of the rotunda. The first floor doorways have oak trim with crown moldings supported by ancons above the transoms. The upper floors have oak door surrounds but are less elaborate. The third floor has back lighted stained glass panels in the ceilings at cardinal points around the rotunda. Original paneling and fixtures can be found

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**Greene Co. Courthouse
Greene County, Missouri**

throughout the building. Only one original courtroom is still in use. The other two courtrooms have been converted to offices and meeting rooms. The original safes are intact with the safe doors functioning as doorways between offices.

Although the Greene County Courthouse was occupied in 1912, the interior decoration was not completed until 1915 due to budget constraints. The original plans for the building have been lost but plans associated with the WPA work in the 1930's are in the county's possession. The Works Progress Administration performed maintenance and grounds work on the property in 1936. The interior work included plastering, painting, millwork for new door openings, adding electrical work and caulking. The exterior work included excavation for drives and a parking lot, pouring new sidewalks, adding pipe handrails, and repairing retaining walls. In addition a walkway was added from the county jail, which was to the north or rear of the building, to the second story courtrooms. This has since been removed. Repairs and facelifts were done in 1960 which included replacing the roof, and cleaning the exterior. The sandblasting done at this time may have accelerated weathering of the stone but is not readily apparent today. Removal of the original parapet along the top of the building due to safety concerns occurred in 1973. A new Judicial Courts Building and Justice Center were built in the 1990's directly to the north of the courthouse. Recent maintenance has been done on the roof, painting the interior, cleaning the exterior stone, and implementing ADA required improvements.

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**Greene Co. Courthouse
Greene County, Missouri**

SITE MAP

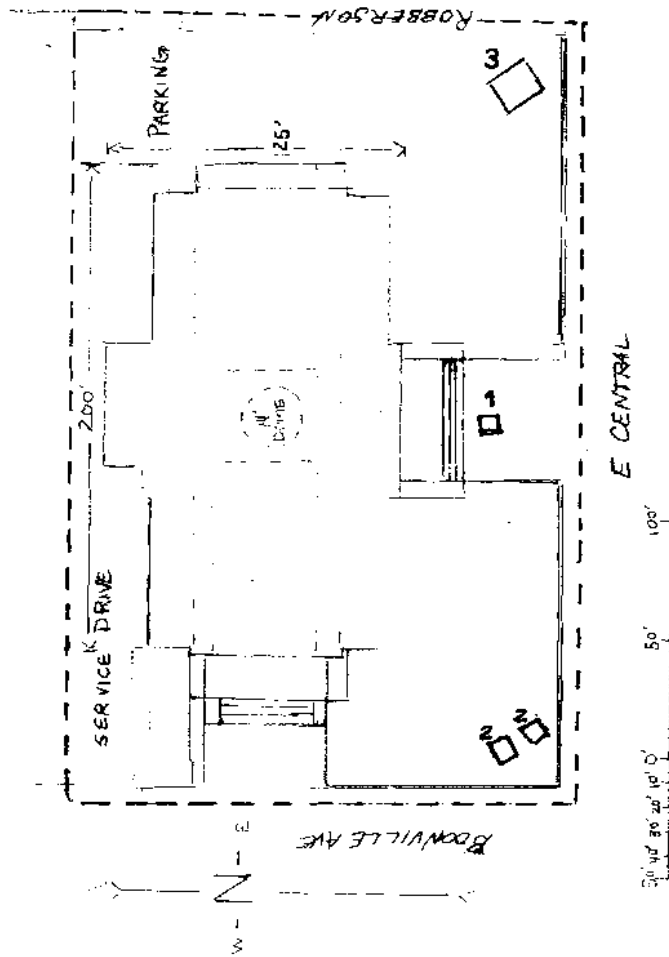
SOURCE: 1933 SANBORN MAP CITY OF SPRINGFIELD

Key:

Property Boundary - - - - -

Contributing Resources

- 1. Replica of Statue of Liberty
- 2. Columns from previous courthouse
- 3. World War I Cannon



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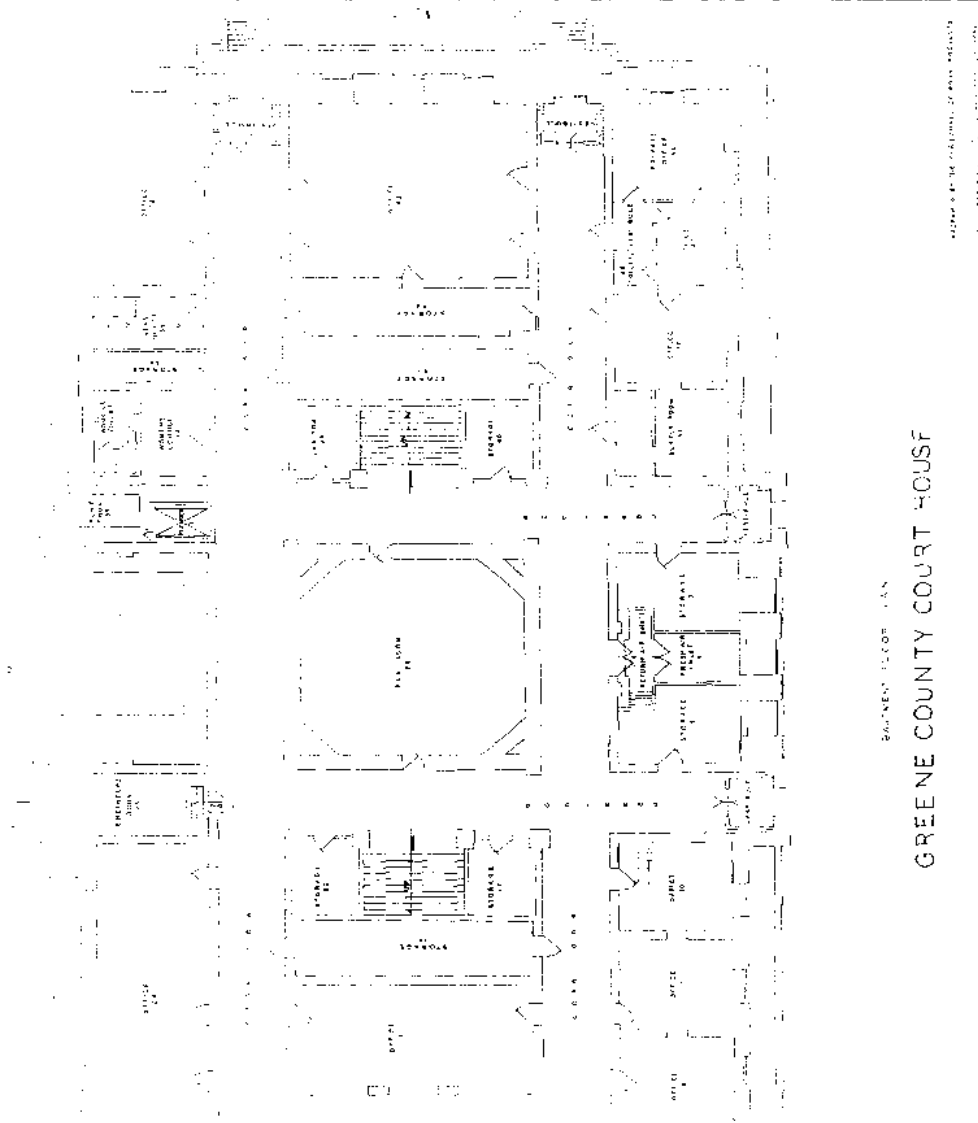
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**Greene Co. Courthouse
Greene Co., Missouri**

1939 Basement Floor Plan

Source: Atlas and Directory of Greene Co. Missouri Equipment 1939, Work Projects
Administration, District 5 Springfield, Missouri, Work Projects NO. 6576



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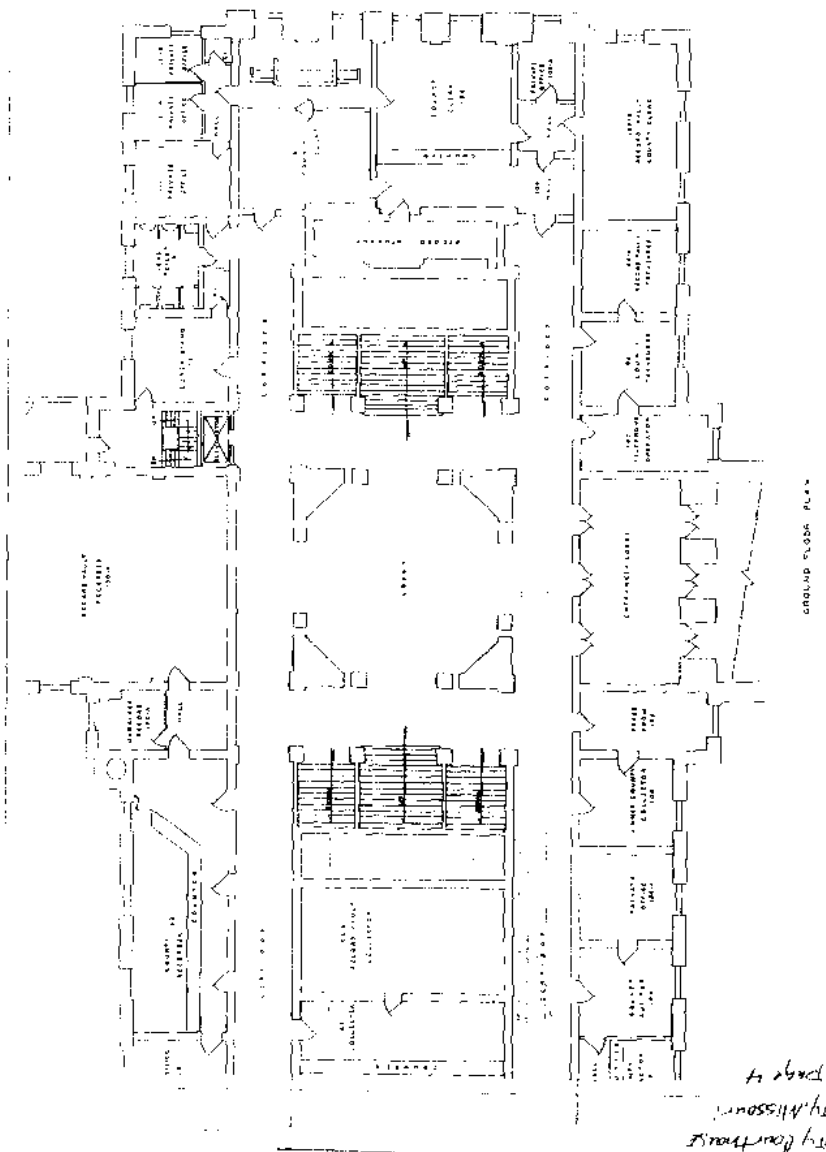
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**Greene Co. Courthouse
Greene Co., Missouri**

1939 Ground Floor Plan

Source: Atlas and Directory of Greene Co. Missouri Equipment 1939, Work Projects
Administration, District 5 Springfield, Missouri, Work Projects NO. 6576



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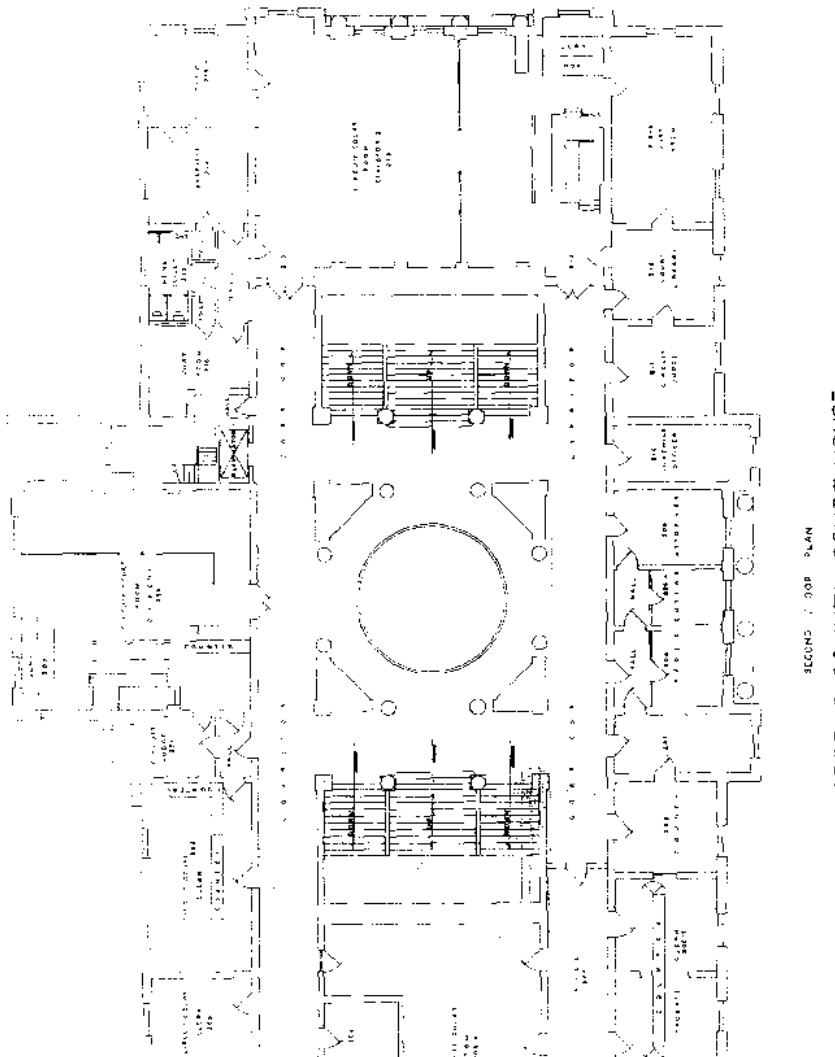
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**Greene Co. Courthouse
Greene Co., Missouri**

1939 Second Floor Plan

Source: Atlas and Directory of Greene Co. Missouri Equipment 1939, Work Projects
Administration, District 5 Springfield, Missouri, Work Projects NO. 6576



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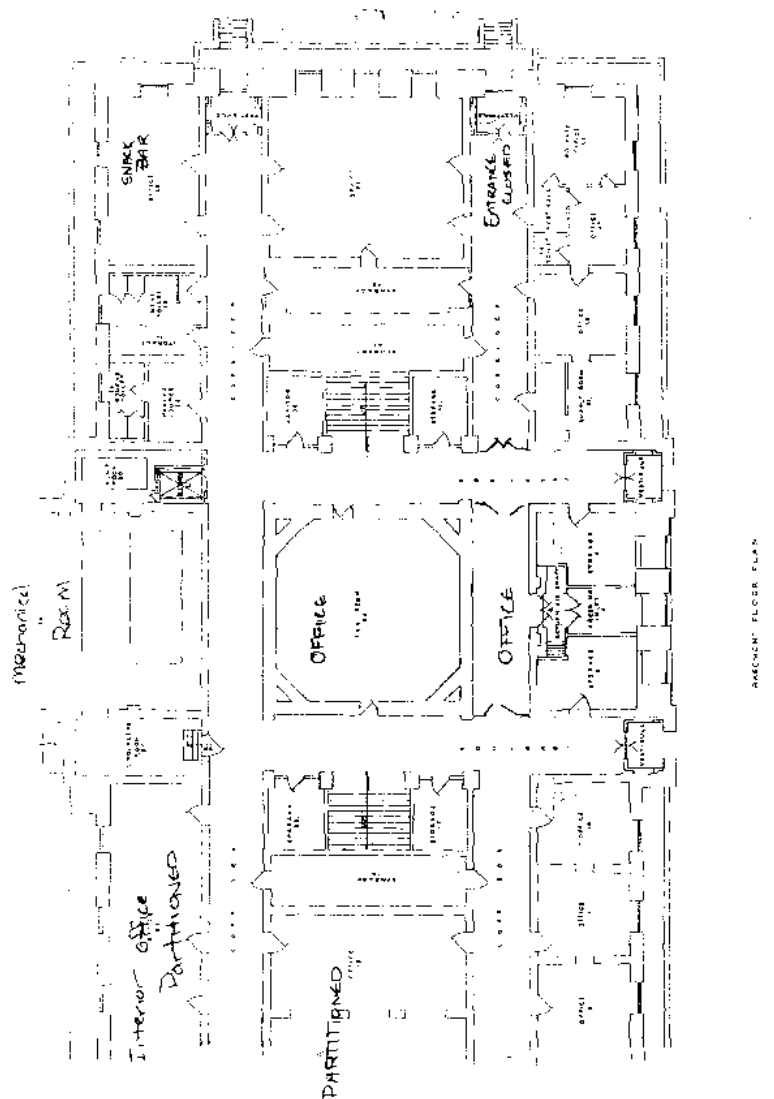
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**Greene Co. Courthouse
Greene Co., Missouri**

Basement Floor Plan with Changes Indicated

Source: Atlas and Directory of Greene Co. Missouri Equipment 1939, Work Projects Administration, District 5 Springfield, Missouri, Work Projects NO. 6576



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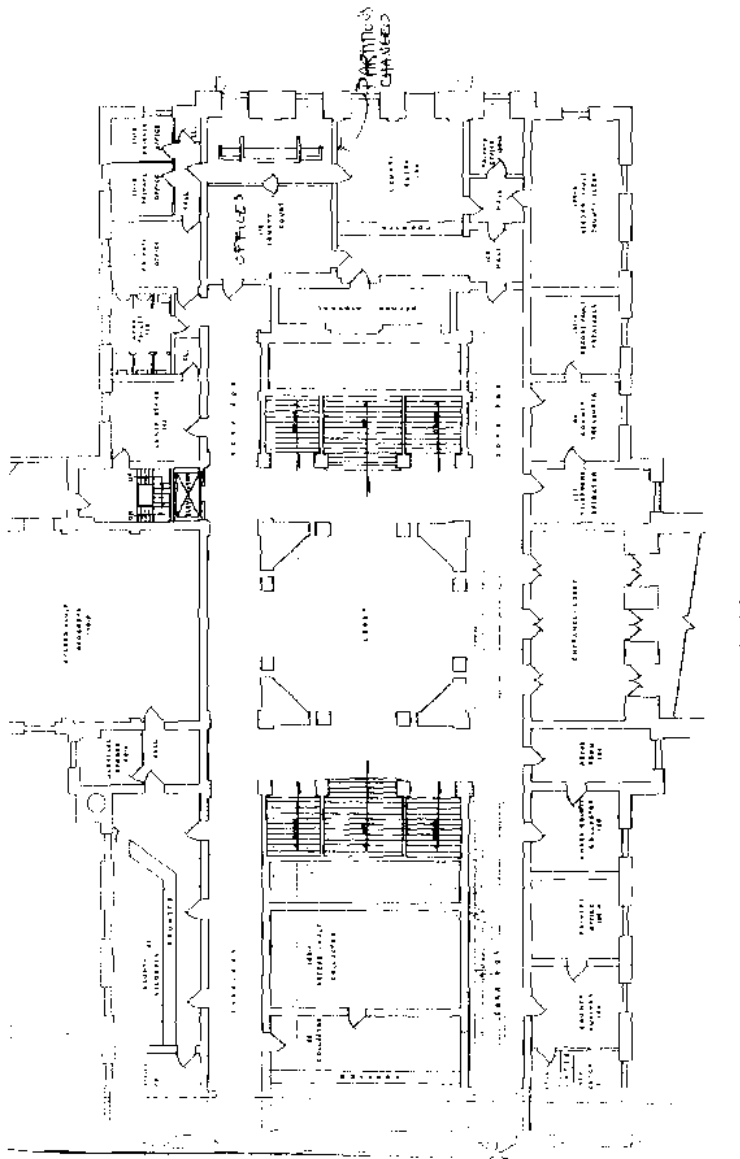
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**Greene Co. Courthouse
Greene Co., Missouri**

Ground Floor Plan with Changes Indicated

Source: Atlas and Directory of Greene Co. Missouri Equipment 1939, Work Projects
Administration, District 5 Springfield, Missouri, Work Projects NO. 6576



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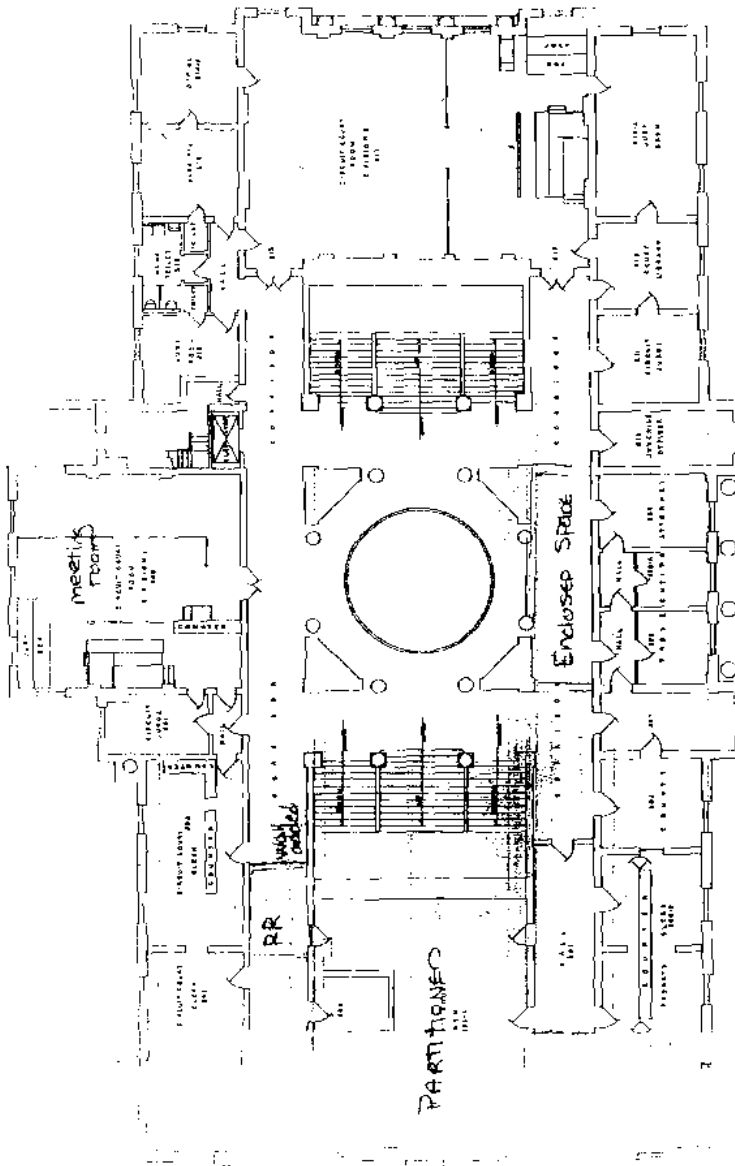
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**Greene Co. Courthouse
Greene Co., Missouri**

Second Floor Plan with Changes Indicated

Source: Atlas and Directory of Greene Co. Missouri Equipment 1939, Work Projects Administration, District 5 Springfield, Missouri, Work Projects NO. 6576



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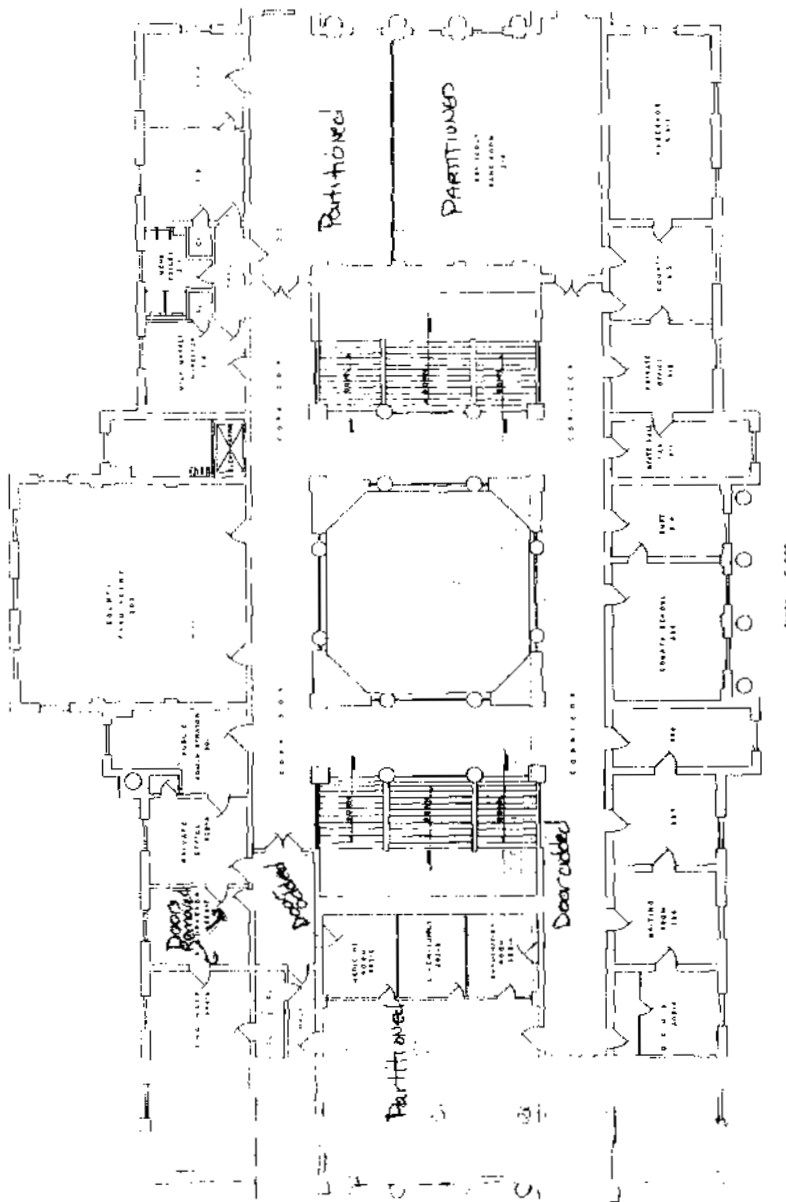
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**Greene Co. Courthouse
Greene Co., Missouri**

Third Floor Plan with Changes Indicated

Source: Atlas and Directory of Greene Co. Missouri Equipment 1939, Work Projects Administration, District 5 Springfield, Missouri, Work Projects NO. 6576



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**Greene Co. Courthouse
Greene County, Missouri**

Summary:

The Greene County Courthouse, constructed between 1910 and 1912, stands as a monument to civic pride in Springfield, Missouri. Said to be the first of Missouri's classically-inspired courthouses to incorporate features of the Second Renaissance Revival, the rusticated marble building has been the center of Greene County government for nearly a century.¹ The worn marble steps bear witness to the countless citizens who have passed through its doors to pay taxes, serve on juries, record deeds, acquire marriage licenses, attend court or complete other business of public record. As such, the Greene County Courthouse qualifies for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and is locally significant in the area of politics and government.² Erected after a bitter political struggle over location and the expenditure of funds, the Greene County Courthouse became a foundation for the growth of the government district in midtown Springfield. Judge Ben Diemer, who was the driving force behind the creation of the courthouse, faced law suits, possible prison terms and loss of his position as a judge in elections following its construction.³ Today the building, designed by A. N. Torbitt of Miller, Opel and Torbitt, stands as a beautiful and impressive home for county government in Greene County, Missouri. The design, with its low-slung, businesslike look brought a sense of order and uniformity to Springfield's government center. The period of significance for the courthouse begins in 1912 when the first county offices moved into the building through 1957, the arbitrary 50-year cutoff date.

Elaboration:

Greene County, Missouri was organized in 1833. It had been a part of the larger Crawford County which extended west across the state of Missouri. The first county courthouse was John P. Campbell's log cabin near what is now the Public Square in Springfield, Missouri. The square was laid out by John Campbell in 1835 in the Lancaster Square pattern, the same pattern he knew from his former home in Maury County, Tennessee.⁴ A four square brick courthouse was built at the center of the Public Square in 1837, serving a population of approximately 5,000, with the courthouse occupying the center of the square. As the population of the county grew, the space became inadequate. A new (third) courthouse, also on the Public Square, was authorized to be built in 1858.⁵ Before the new courthouse was completed the old brick courthouse burned. The new courthouse, located on a corner on the west side of the square, was built in the classic style with columns on the front of the building. The county's population increased over threefold in the next four decades to 52,713 in 1900. At that time it was the fourth largest county population in the state and three to five times larger than the surrounding counties. The 1858 courthouse, built to serve a population of 13,000 in 1860, was then serving over three times that number. The population of Springfield was also growing rapidly, from 6524 in 1880 to 23,267 in 1900. It was the fourth largest city in Missouri in 1900.⁶ The growth of the city and county was followed by the most prosperous decade in Springfield and Greene County, as in most of the United States, in history up to that time. Once

¹ Marian Ohman, *A History of Missouri's Counties, County Seats, and Courthouse Squares*, Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1983, p.83.

² The courthouse does not qualify under Criteria C because the original parapet was removed in 1973.

³ James Erdman, "The Courthouse of Greene County, Missouri", *Greene County Archives*, 13:1.

⁴ Ohman, p.31.

⁵ Ohman, *Encyclopedia of Missouri Courthouses*, Columbia: University Press, 1981, unpag.

⁶ Richard Fogtall, "MISSOURI, Population by Decennial Census: 1900 to 1990" 1995.

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Greene Co. Courthouse Greene County, Missouri

again the space had become inadequate. The July 5, 1904 court records state, "Whereas, the building now occupied as a Court House in this County is in a dilapidated condition and is wholly inadequate in size and internal arrangements for the uses and purposes for which it was designed and for which it is now used. ... A more commodious and a safer Court House has long been an urgent and pressing need of this Community."⁷ The courthouse, occupied in 1861, had been used for 51 years until the current courthouse was built in 1912. There was considerable controversy over the location and building of the fourth courthouse. First was the reluctance of the citizens of Greene County to incur indebtedness to build the courthouse and second was where to locate the building.

Although the county judges saw the need for a new courthouse attempts to levy taxes for the purpose failed in 1906 and 1907.⁸ The other issue was where to locate the new courthouse should it be built. Former courthouses had been on the public square, but the property owned by the county was not large enough to accommodate the county's growing needs.⁹ The City of Springfield had developed in two parts, the original city, around the public square, and North Springfield along the train lines a mile and a half north of the square. There was strong competition between the two parts of Springfield which had joined as one city in 1887. This included competition for the location of the new courthouse. A compromise was reached when the Federal Building (now Old City Hall) was built on Boonville between the two parts of the city. The county judges saw this as the appropriate area to build the new courthouse, centered between the two populations. The Springfield Republican story about the laying of the courthouse cornerstone on July 17, 1910 states,

Imbued with the spirit which was displayed at a meeting held on the same spot at the time of the ratification of the agreement of the citizens of the North and South sides of Springfield in 1888, twenty-two years ago, the cornerstone for Greene County's magnificent new official home was laid yesterday afternoon by Mayor Robert E. Lee in the presence of between five and six thousand residents of the county.¹⁰

In 1903 land in the Boonville - Center Street area was quietly purchased by the Ollis Brothers for the future courthouse.¹¹ The property selected was between Robberson and Boonville facing on Center Street (now Central Street). The site was bought by the county in 1909 for \$12,825. Financing the building project was arranged by using county surplus funds and proceeds from the sale of the old courthouse. The architect selected was A. N. Torbitt, of Miller, Opel and Torbitt.¹² Plans were also submitted by Reed and Heckenlively, a Springfield firm, George E. McDonald, P. H. Weathers, and architects from out of state.¹³ Miller, Opel and Torbitt had offices in Springfield, Jefferson City and Kansas City during the period of the courthouse construction. The Springfield city directories show Arch N. Torbitt worked in Springfield

⁷ Greene County Archives and Records, "Archives and Bulletin Number 2, Guide to Greene county Courthouses." 1988, 5.

⁸ John Hulston, "Hulston on History" Greene County Records and Archives, Greene County Courthouse Folder.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Springfield Republican, Springfield, MO., July 17, 1910.

¹¹ James Erdman, "The Courthouse of Greene County, Missouri." 1911, 3.

¹² Jonathan Fairbanks and Clyde Edwin Tuck, *Past and Present of Greene County, Missouri*, 1913, 173.

¹³ Ohman, Marian M., *Encyclopedia of Missouri Courthouses*, 1981, unpagged.

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Greene Co. Courthouse Greene County, Missouri

from before 1909 through 1911 but had left in 1915.¹⁴ An advertisement in the Springfield Daily Leader, Sunday, August 20, 1911 states the firm had been in Springfield three years at that time. The ad lists their architectural record which includes: four Drury College buildings, Landers Theater, two office buildings, St. Agnes Church, and two of the original buildings at what is now Missouri State University. Some time after leaving Springfield Torbitt moved to Washington State where he is noted for several buildings. He is listed as architect on the National Register of Historic Places listing of the Raymond Public Library Building, Raymond, Washington¹⁵ and also as the architect of the Longview Library, Longview, Washington.¹⁶ He joined Daniel Huntington's Seattle firm in 1927 becoming Huntington and Torbitt.¹⁷

The old courthouse was sold in 1910 with a two year lease for use until the new courthouse was completed.¹⁸ The new courthouse was promoted as being a "fireproof Work began in 1910 shortly after final approval of the plans when inmates in the county jail dug the foundation. The cornerstone ceremony was held July 16, 1910.¹⁹ The community approved \$150,000 in bonds to complete construction in 1911.²⁰ The building was occupied in 1912.²¹ Work continued on the interior until 1915. The old courthouse on the public square was razed for new construction in 1914. At that time two columns from the old building were placed on the new courthouse lawn. The offices of the city of Springfield occupied the third floor until they moved into the Federal Building in 1938.

Presiding Judge Ben Diemer, whose portrait hangs in the rotunda of the Greene County Courthouse, persevered through controversy, difficulty in raising funds, and law suits filed by men in the county to prevent the building of a new courthouse, to complete the task. Their suit, filed in May of 1909, went all the way to the Missouri Supreme Court where it was decided in favor of the county officials. In spite of the court decision he was defeated in the elections of 1910. Fairbanks and Tuck honor him with this passage, "Without his determination and courage, his consistent and persistent work in the face of all obstacles, the age-old deadlock over the location of a new court house would without doubt still be in full force."²²

The Courthouse has retained many of its original administrative functions, such as the County Assessor's office and Records office, while its court functions have been moved to the new courthouse to meet current needs for security. Many of the large rooms in the building have now been converted into smaller offices. In the basement the fan room is now office space and the southeast corridor has been enclosed as a reception area to adjacent offices. The ground floor is essentially the same layout and in many cases

¹⁴ *Hoye's City Directory of Springfield, Kansas City, MO. 1909, 1911, 1915.*

¹⁵ <http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/WA/Pacific/state.html>

¹⁶ Longview Public Library <http://www.longviewlibrary.org/history.html>, Longview Washington, 2003.

¹⁷ Seattle Fire Station No.37 Landmark Nomination, accessed June 15, 2007. Report, <http://www.seattle.gov/fleetsfacilities/firelevy/facilities>.

¹⁸ James Erdman, "The Courthouse of Greene County, Missouri." 1971, 5.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 8.

²⁰ *Springfield Republican*, Springfield, MO., June 14, 1911.

²¹ John Hulston, "Hulston on History" Greene County Records and Archives, Greene County Courthouse Folder

²² Jonathan Fairbanks and Clyde Edwin Tuck, *Past and Present of Greene County, Missouri*. 1913, 175.

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**Greene Co. Courthouse
Greene County, Missouri**

rooms have the same use. The second floor retains the east court room with the original jury box and judges' podium. The probate court room on the west end of the second floor is partitioned for offices. Parts of the corridors on this floor have been enclosed for storage or restrooms. The third floor, which was originally the Springfield city offices, became county offices in the 1930's. It housed offices for the county health department, farm agent, school superintendent, milk inspector, engineer, and assessor. It also had a large room dedicated to the Boy Scout Band. The entire west end of the building now houses the Planning and Zoning Department and the east end is primarily used by the Computer Information Department. The large room on the west end has been partitioned into smaller offices. Although partitions have been added to some of the large rooms in the building and some hallways have been enclosed no significant changes have been made to the original structure.

At the cornerstone laying ceremony Dr. William Rienhoff, president of the Springfield Club, told how the "county has slowly but steadily grown to be the foremost one of the southwest territory of our state."²³ The building of the Greene County Courthouse was part of the fervor of growth and prosperity at the beginning of the twentieth century. Springfield, no longer a country town, was seen as a growing metropolis. The Second Renaissance Revival style of architecture selected for the building was an expression of the mood of the time. Classicism had become the fashionable style of architecture due to Daniel Burnham's City Beautiful Movement of the late 1800's. Its association with classical cultures and our nation's early history made it a popular style for public buildings. It caught the nation's mood for civic grandeur and lofty ideals.²⁴ The repetition of form and symmetry brought a sense of order and uniformity to the urban landscape. Not only was the Greene County Courthouse one of the earliest Missouri examples of classicism, but Ohman in fact described it as "one of the finest Missouri examples" of turn-of-the-century classicism of those built in Missouri. Between 1900 and 1928, 25 of the 37 courthouses built by counties in Missouri were classically inspired.²⁵

An outstanding example of early 20th century government architecture in Greene County, the nominated property represents the transition of Springfield from a rural community to a prosperous urban center. The courthouse was also a key piece in the uniting of the two parts of the city. Renovations and alterations in the building are representative of important periods in the community's history: the WPA work during the Depression, the modernization of the 1970s, changing functions of the building as the county continued to grow and build a new Judicial Center, and the appreciation and preservation of our past as the courthouse nears its centennial. The Greene County leaders had vision to create a lasting structure and a government district reflecting the sentiments of the City Beautiful Movement in what has become known as Midtown Springfield.

²³ Springfield Republican, Springfield, Mo. July 17, 1910.

²⁴ Spiro Kostof, *A History of Architecture*, 1995, 669.

²⁵ Marion Ohman, "A History of Missouri's Counties, County Seats, and Courthouse Squares", University of Missouri Columbia, 1983, p.83.

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Greene Co. Courthouse
Greene Co., Missouri

Historic Photo

Source: "Springfield Greets You", Springfield Chamber of Commerce, c. 1920



No. 1.—Greene County Court House, Built of Missouri Marble at a cost of \$400,000.

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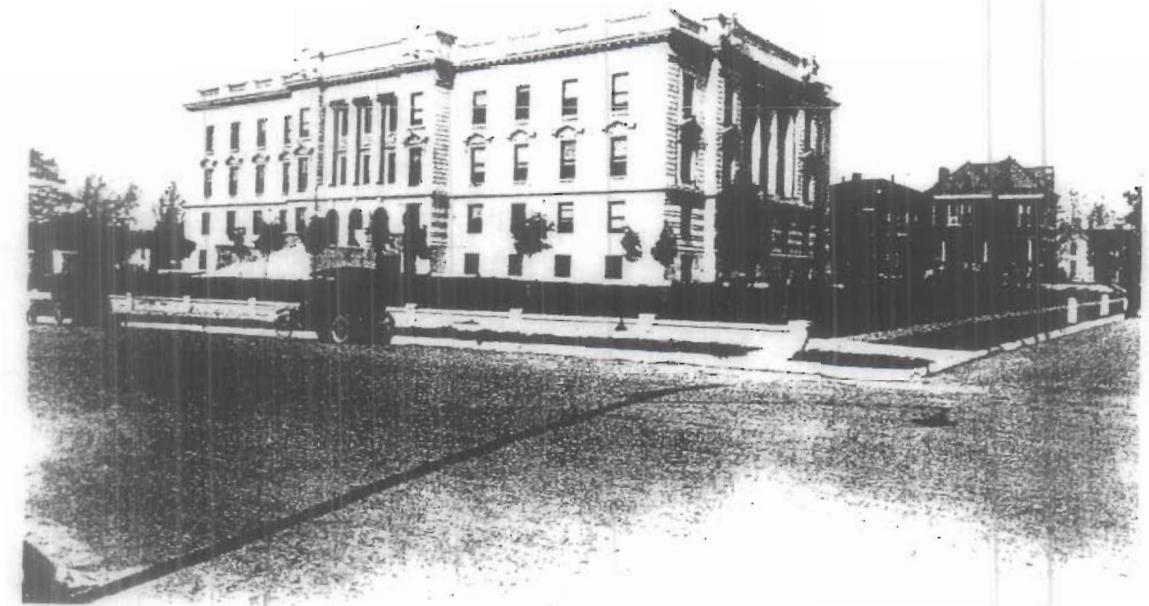
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**Greene Co. Courthouse
Greene Co., Missouri**

Historic Photo

Photo copied from photo in office of Greene County Courthouse , circa 1927.



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**Greene Co. Courthouse
Greene County, Missouri**

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Greene County, Missouri**

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**Greene Co. Courthouse
Greene County, Missouri**

The following information is the same for all photos:

Name of Property: Greene County Courthouse

Location: Greene County, Missouri

Photographer: Gail Emrie

Date of Photographs: Jan. 10, 2007

Location of Negatives: Gail Emrie LLC, 8052 N. Devonwood, Fair Grove, Mo. 65648

Photos:

1. Main Façade, South Elevation. Photo looking North from across Central Street
2. Detail of Main Façade with contributing feature replica Statue of Liberty. Photo looking north from Central Street.
3. Secondary Façade, West Elevation. Photo looking east from Boonville Street.
4. East Elevation. Photo looking west from Robberson Street.
5. North Elevation, Rear of Building. Photo looking south-southwest from County Commissioner's Office Building.
6. Interior, Vestibule. Photo looking southwest from interior corner.
7. Interior, Rotunda. Photo looking up toward north from entrance.
8. Interior, Rotunda and Stairwell. Photo looking west from east first floor staircase.
9. Interior, Second Floor Courtroom. Photo looking south toward jury box.
10. Interior Detail, Millwork and Trim. First Floor Office.
11. Contributing Feature, Columns from previous 1861 Greene County Courthouse. Photo looking northeast from Central Street.

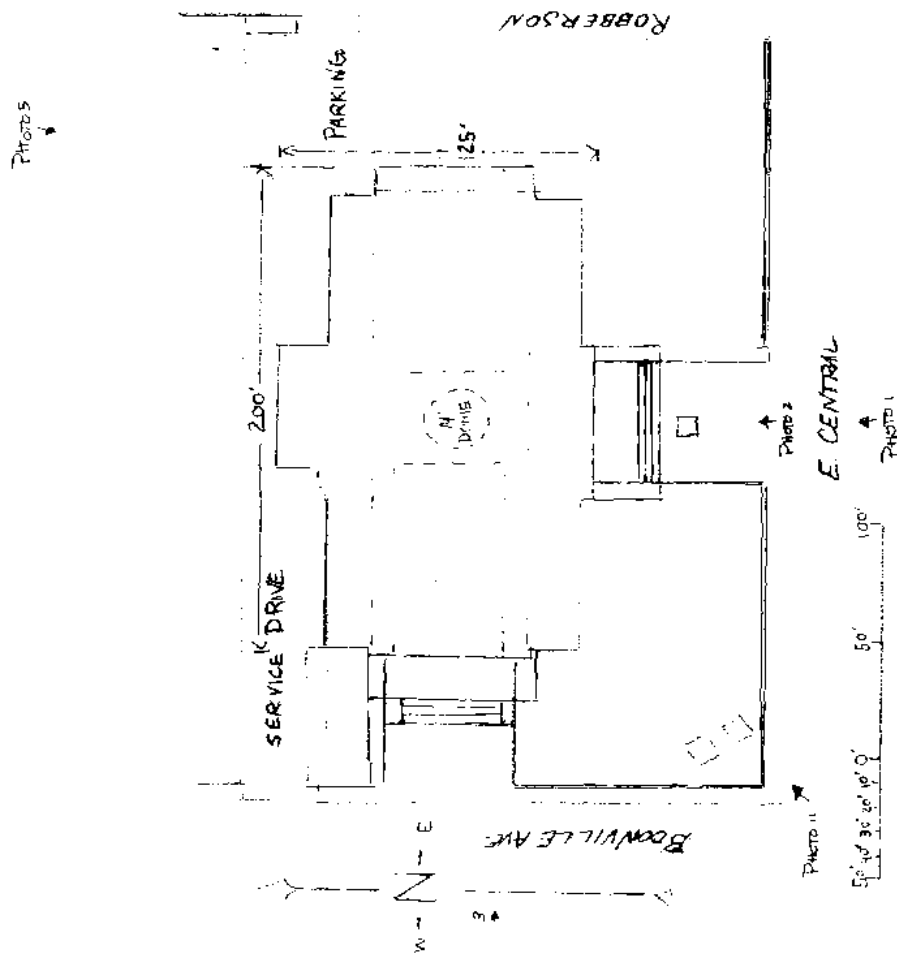
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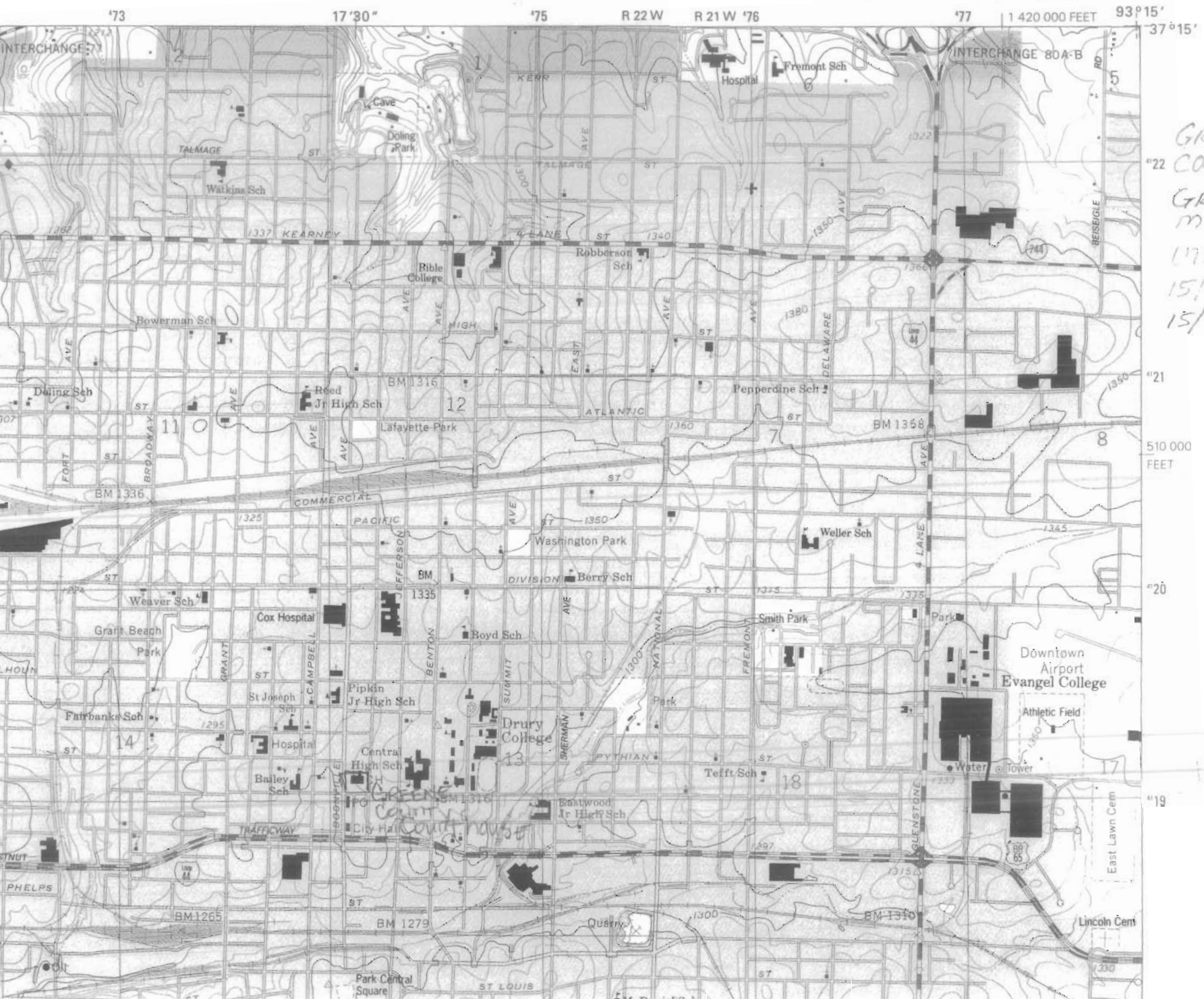
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Greene Co. Courthouse
Greene Co. Missouri

PHOTO KEY MAP



SPRINGFIELD QUADRANGLE
 MISSOURI-GRENE CO.
 7.5-MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



GREENE COUNTY
 CO. 1
 GREENE CO,
 MISSOURI
 UTM REFS
 15/474110 E
 15/4119100 N

GREENE COUNTY, MISSOURI