

HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT

HISTORICAL DATA SECTION - PART 1, AND
HISTORIC GROUNDS STUDY

OLD COURTHOUSE

JEFFERSON NATIONAL EXPANSION MEMORIAL
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

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DENVER SERVICE CENTER
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
DENVER, COLORADO

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FOREWORD

This account of the history of the interior and the grounds of the Old Courthouse was facilitated by the generous assistance and co-operation of National Park Service personnel at the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, the Denver Service Center and the Midwest Regional Office who provided access to historical records, made helpful suggestions concerning subjects that should be explored, and recommended improvements in the text. Members of the staff at many institutions and agencies in St. Louis must be given credit for their patience and aid as the author scoured their collections. Those include, in alphabetical order, the Circuit Court of the City of St. Louis, the Law Library, the Mercantile Library, the Missouri Botanical Garden, the Missouri Historical Society, the Municipal Reference Library, Olin Library of Washington University of St. Louis, the St. Louis Art Museum, the St. Louis County Public Library, and the St. Louis Public Library. A particularly deep debt is owed to Gerhardt Kramer, F.A.I.A., for his help in analyzing architectural records, and to Lincoln B. Spiess, the true authority on Carl Wimar as well as on the work of other artists of nineteenth-century St. Louis.

All of that assistance is reflected in whatever merit the study may possess. The faults that remain are solely the responsibility of the author. In many instances the documentary record of an episode which affected the interior of the Courthouse contained only the sketchiest of detail. That is indeed as one would expect, since court or municipal officials of the nineteenth century were as little inclined to draw up a meticulous record of every alteration or remodeling as their counterparts today are to expend their time creating a complete documentary account of existing buildings which may attract the attention of an historian a century hence. Because that is true, the author has been forced to pepper the text with observations about what probably happened when the surviving record makes an expression of certainty unjustified or untenable.

Many, if not all, of those uncertainties could vanish if the entire body of local newspapers for the period covered by the study were thoroughly examined. The sheer volume of material made it impossible to scrutinize every issue of the publications issued over the span of twelve decades. Ideally, readers of the account presented here will find their own curiosity has been piqued about a particular incident and will thereupon turn to the files of newspapers of its time to search for more complete answers. When that happens, knowledge of a fascinating but often enigmatic building will grow.

The focus of this study was restricted to the physical features of the interior and the Courthouse grounds. No attempt was made to trace or analyze the myriad events which occurred there. The significance of the structure as a place at which the course of the history of the nation was affected has been outlined by both John A. Bryan and Donald Dosch, but neither of those historians had available the time they would have needed or wanted to explore the matter in full detail. That task too is open for someone in the future who wishes to enhance our understanding of the historic implications of the events associated with the Old Courthouse.

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

A. Project Identification: Building Name, Number, Specific Location in Park, and Date or Period of Historical or Cultural Significance.

Name: Old Courthouse. This structure, now occupied by area headquarters, was built in sections beginning in 1839 and was completed in 1862.

Building Number: 1

Specific Location: The Courthouse is located in downtown St. Louis facing the Mississippi River, with Broadway on the west, Market Street on the south, Chestnut Street on the north, and Fourth Street on the east. The Courthouse is on the west boundary of the park; its address is 11 North Fourth Street, St. Louis, Missouri, zone 15, easting 744,700, northing 4,278,950.

B. Order of Significance and Proposed Level of Treatment

The park is on the National Register. This structure is of high significance as far as historical structures in St. Louis are concerned. The Courthouse is of the First Order of Significance, and the recommended level of treatment is preservation.

C. Proposed Development Work

It is proposed that a thorough architectural survey and analysis of the building be made, and that preservation and adaptive restoration be carried out as soon as money is available.

D. Proposed Use of Structure

The building will house the administrative offices of JNEMNHS and will contain living history exhibits, an exhibit on St. Louis, and other displays that are supplemental to, and supportive of, the Museum of Westward Expansion.

E. Cooperative Agreements

There are no cooperative agreements in effect.

PRELUDE: PROCURING A PLAN

As the fourth decade of the nineteenth century neared its end, rising civic pride coalesced with a concurrent growth in population to stimulate a feeling that the building which housed the courts of St. Louis would need to be made larger and grander. The community's image of itself was not nearly as grandiose as it would become in the 1870s, but there was a great deal of pride in past achievements and optimism about future prospects. As one of the city's leaders had put it a full decade earlier, St. Louis had "risen from the condition of a frontier village" to that of "a flourishing commercial town, the emporium of two States, and the entrepot of all the trade of the upper Missouri and Mississippi."¹ Such a self-image helped to produce the sentiment which favored the construction of the first building to house the government of the City of St. Louis.² It would also be a factor in the erection of a major addition to the County Courthouse.

The growth of the local population might by itself have been enough of an inducement for an enlargement at the Courthouse. While legal matters in the past had been adequately handled by a small number of judges, the pressure on the Circuit Court's calendar was becoming increasingly intense. Not many years would pass before questions of probate would also become so numerous as to require an expansion of the local judiciary.

In the immediate sense, the problems faced by the Circuit Court were of greater concern and a reduction in its case load was accomplished through the creation of a Criminal Court by act of the state legislature in January, 1839.³ The new court would require space that was not available at the moment, a fact that worked in unison with local boosterism to spell the end of the acceptability of the only court building which existed in 1839.

The County Courthouse of that time had been built by Laveille and Morton, the leading architects in St. Louis, in 1826-1828. It was not, therefore, an old building as such things go. On the other

1. Minutes of the Common Council of the City of St. Louis (St. Louis, 1934), 525.

2. This subject is discussed by John Lindenbusch in "Getting it Right: The Building of the City Hall," St. Louis, XI, no. 8 (August, 1979).

3. William Hyde and Howard L. Conard, Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis (St. Louis, 1899), 1953.

hand, it contained only a limited number of rooms and it offered no real opportunity for expansion. Its inadequacies and the problems it presented were outlined as early as March 1836 in a grand jury report on "the situation of the Clerk's offices of the different Courts of this County." The Circuit Court was described as needing more space "for convenient arrangement and safekeeping" of its records and for the office of the clerk. The County Court, forced to use a private dwelling for its meetings, was equally deserving of more spacious quarters in a public building. The present structure was not even fireproof, and was inadequate for existing, much less future, needs.⁴

The physical features which that grand jury had examined consisted of a two-story, brick structure standing on a full city block which had been donated to the county in 1823. The land had been given for use as the site for a courthouse by Auguste Chouteau and John B. C. Lucas. Over the course of the next sixteen years, a fair amount of development had occurred in addition to the construction of the main building. At least as early as 1830, perhaps even by 1828, a privy had been erected which, if it fit the description written in the earlier year, was eight feet long, twelve feet wide and had a stone foundation. It was joined, or replaced, in 1832 by a new "necessary." The records of the time are not completely clear on whether the earlier privy was then demolished, but they do indicate that in 1838 there were "small buildings" located on the grounds.⁵

One of those may have housed the well which was discussed at sessions of the County Court in both 1831 and 1835.⁶ More certainty attaches to the other contemporary features of the grounds. The old pillory, said to have stood on the north side of the lot, had been taken down in 1832 at the time a new enclosure was being erected around the grounds.⁷ The men responsible for the wall wanted it to be in keeping with the dignity and the importance of the site and referred to the need for a thing of "beauty, permanency and usefulness." Toward that end, they erected by 1833 a wall made up of a stone base, a brick wall with a stone cap and "a large gate on

4. "Report of Committee on the Clerk's Office...filed 18 March 1836" Typescript in the archives of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, St. Louis (hereinafter cited as JNEM).

5. Records of the St. Louis County Court, I, 107, 162 and 300; II, 203 (hereinafter cited as Court Records).

6. Ibid., I, 245 and 416.

7. Ibid., I, 305; St. Louis Daily Missouri Democrat, July 4, 1862.

the east side." It was far more grand than the simple fence of cedar posts and four-inch planking which had been envisioned in 1830. At the front of the Courthouse, the new wall was curved back toward the building, opening an area in which cedar posts and railing were used to make a hitching post set into the brick sidewalk. The final touch was added during 1837 with the planting of locust trees.⁸

Those trees were the only physical feature of the Courthouse Square which was yet to be added when the grand jury delivered its doleful appraisal of the adequacy of the work of the past decade. The jurors completely accepted the premise that additional construction was needed and they offered their thoughts on the shape that it should take. Preference, they maintained, should be given to "two buildings of elegant style and superior workmanship, one on the south and one on the north of and fronting in line with the front of the Court House" in order to provide both county offices and a new City Hall. As an alternative, should the county be unable to bear the expense of that much construction, they suggested that only one structure be erected "in the west of the Court House."⁹

That smacks almost of prescience but the County Court was faced with its usual financial problems, in this instance made more profound by the effects of the nationwide Panic of 1837. The judges did not follow the recommendations of the grand jury until almost half of 1838 had passed. They then discussed a one-story structure which was to measure 30 by 132 feet and to contain six offices. That number was lowered to four in the announcement of an architectural contest which resulted in the award of prizes to Peter Brooks, the Superintendent of the city's water works, and Henry Spence, a carpenter. The designs they submitted were for a building which would have been erected on the southwest corner of the Courthouse Square, and with the two sets of plans in hand the County Court changed its mind. The efforts of Brooks and Spence were forgotten and Henry Singleton became the actual architect for the construction which began in 1839.¹⁰

8. Court Records, I, 181, 245, 303 and 306-307; II, 141 and 165; "Report of Commissioners for Enclosing Public Square...18 March, 1831," in Misc. Legal Documents, 1800s, JNEM.
9. "Report of Committee on the Clerk's Office...filed 18 March 1836" JNEM.
10. Mathews and Lyle to County Court, June 19, 1838, JNEM; Court Records, II, 221; St. Louis Daily Dispatch, July 4, 1862.

Singleton was not a total stranger to the County Court. He had in 1837 offered plans for "a latticed bridge over the River des Peres on the road from the City of St. Louis to Jefferson Barracks." The judges had then decided against acceptance of his proposal because it "would require a greater expenditure than the Court deem proper."¹¹

The proposal for the Courthouse, made only in the form of a "sketch", fit the concept which the County Court held in March, 1839. That sketch, almost certainly similar to the famous view of the building which was published in 1840 by J. C. Wild, was the product of an evolution in the attitude of the members of the County Court on the matter of retaining the older building. They had originally viewed that structure as something that would continue to provide for most of the county's needs. Supplementary offices or courtrooms would be housed in another building on the Courthouse Square and it was envisioned as being rather plain in appearance and form. The local sense of community promise, a sense they may well have fully shared, played its part and real monumentality was embraced when they accepted a design for a cruciform structure which could only be brought to completion if the existing Courthouse were demolished.

That rather radical turn in direction was taken on March 28, 1839, the date on which Peter Ferguson, the clerk of the County Court, was asked to "procure a plan or plans" in conformity with Singleton's earlier sketch and to make "an estimate of the probable cost."¹² The report which he submitted to the judges was not entered into the record but it must have given cause for optimism. Singleton was engaged as the architect for a project that at times would seem endless but which ultimately produced the present Old Courthouse.

¹¹ Court Records, II, 122 and 203.

¹² Ibid. 242.

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY MEASURED DRAWINGS

- Figure 1. Basement Plan, February 1937, revised July 16, 1940 and July 10, 1941.
- Figure 2. First Floor Plan, January 1937, revised July 16, 1940.
- Figure 3. Second Floor Plan, April 18, 1934.
- Figure 4. Third Floor Plan, March 1937, revised June 28, 1940.
- Figure 5. Roof Plan, March 1937, revised June 15, 1940.

These plans are included for the assistance they provide in determining the location of spaces described in the text. They reflect, however, the numerous alterations made throughout the history of the building, and must be used with that in mind.

The Old Courthouse was one of the first buildings recorded by the Historic American Buildings Survey which since 1933 has gathered drawings, photographs and written documentation concerning more than 13,000 American buildings of historic and architectural significance. The material forms a national architectural archive at the Library of Congress. A reproductive service there makes the archive available to scholars and the general public.

For additional Survey drawings of the Old Courthouse, see figures 18-20 and 63-66.



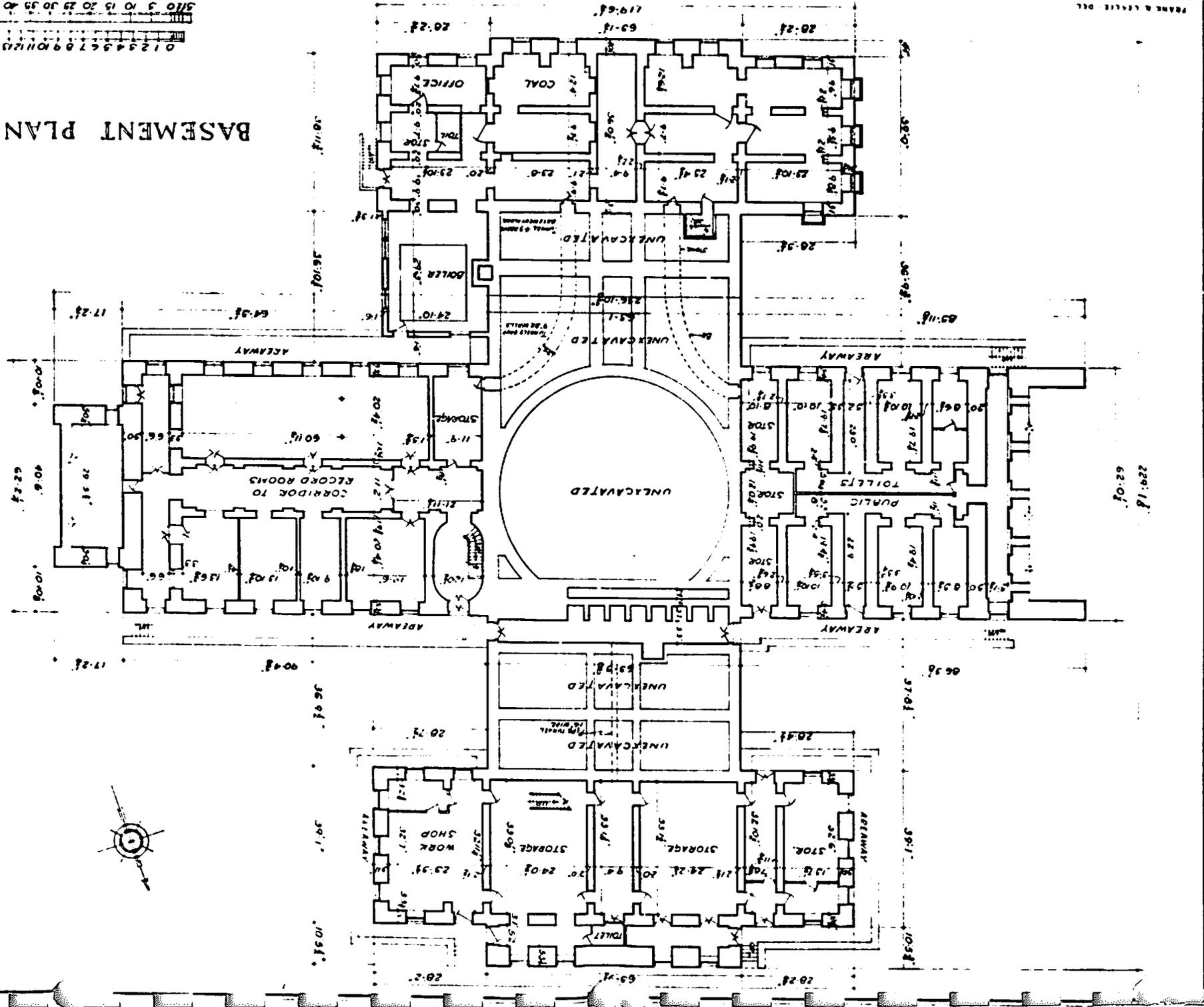
Figure 1

FRANK & LITTLE, DES.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
METERS

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50
FEET

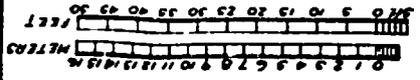
BASEMENT PLAN



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P1-122

Figure 2

FRANK R. LECHE - DEL.



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

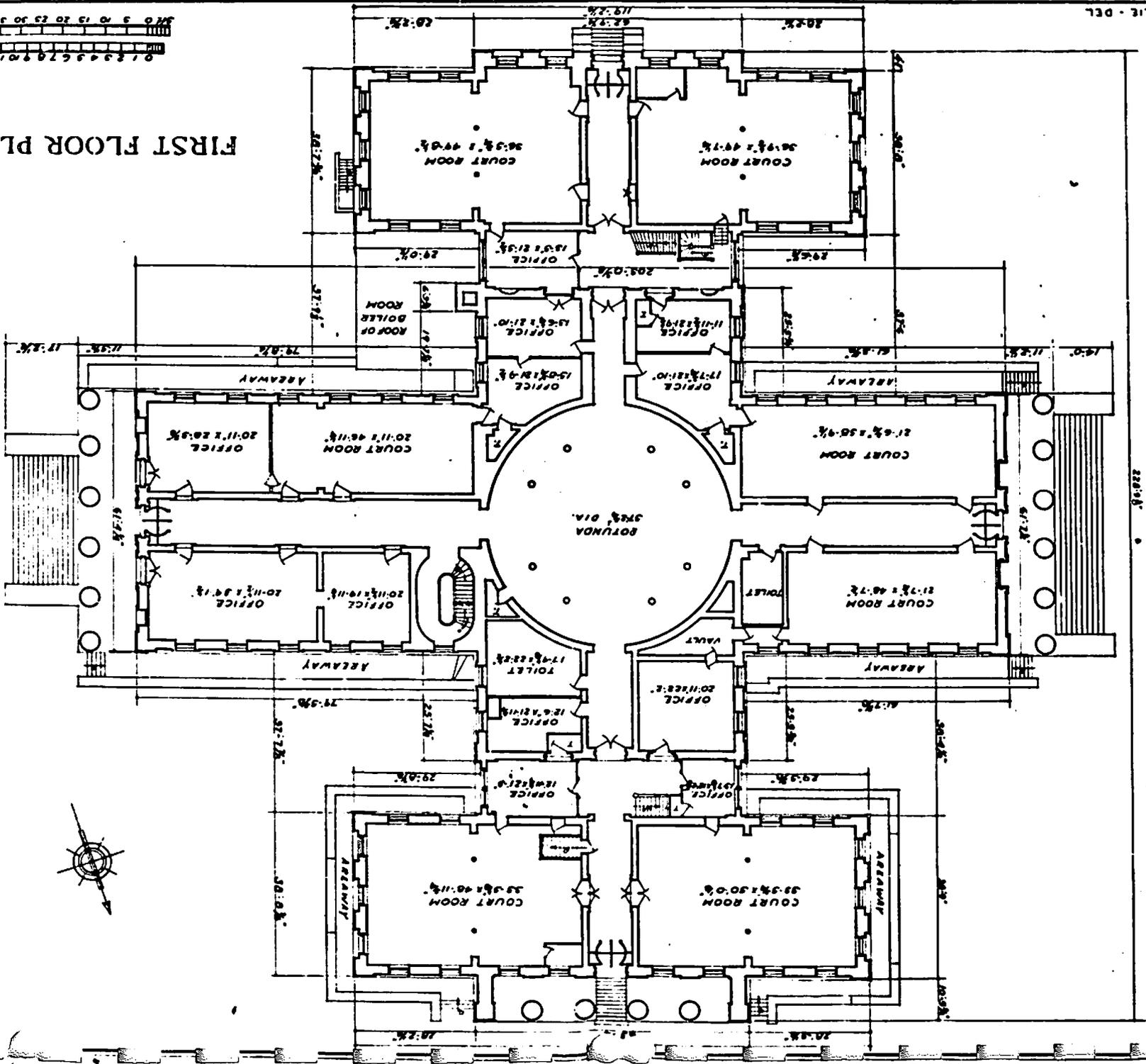
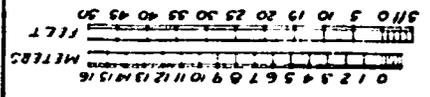


Figure 3

Figure 4



THIRD FLOOR PLAN

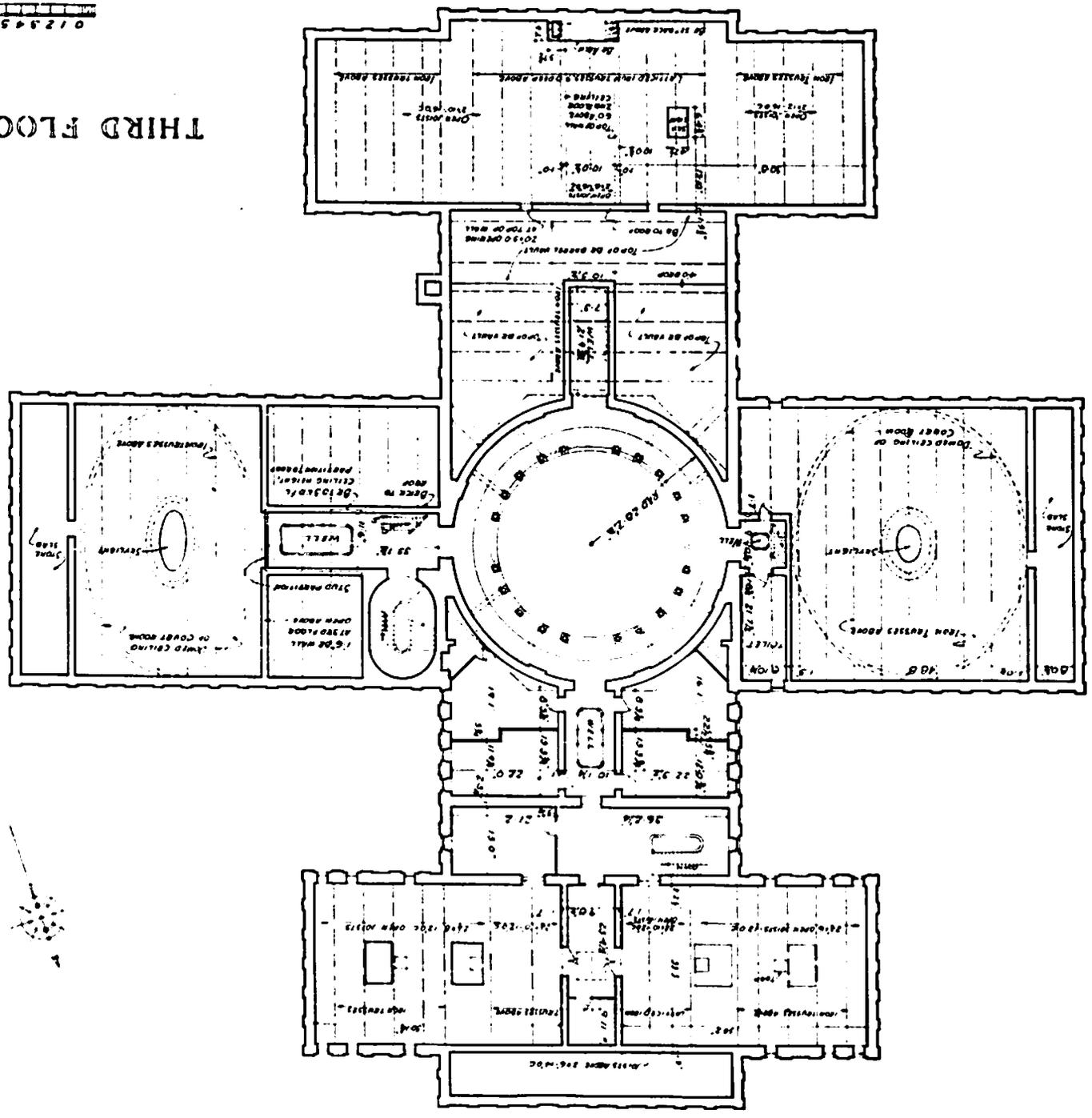


Figure 5

Figure 6

Chronology of construction: Above, courthouse erected in 1826-1828; Below, Form of the exterior after 1845 and until 1851. The dotted lines indicate porticoes which were planned but not built. From Donald F. Dosch, The Old Courthouse: Americans Build a Forum on the Frontier, reproduced through the courtesy of the Jefferson National Expansion Historical Association, Inc.

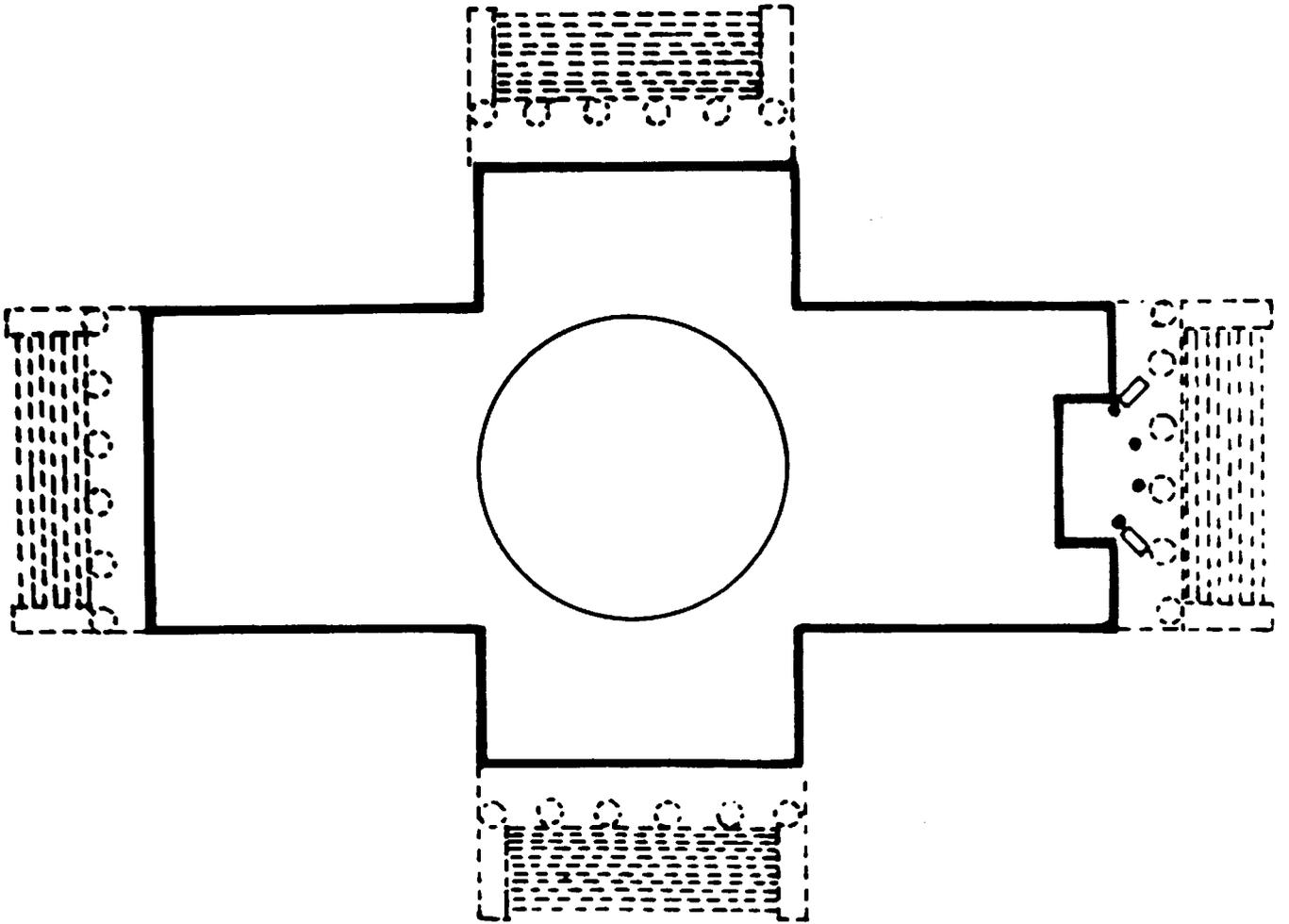
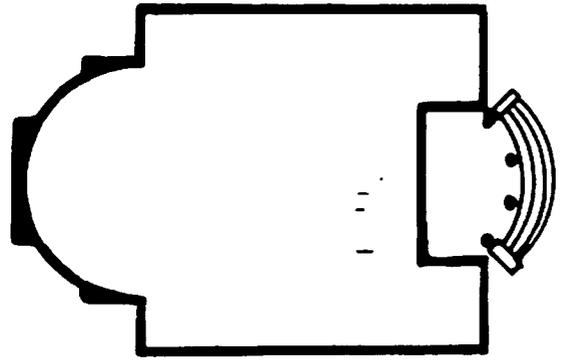
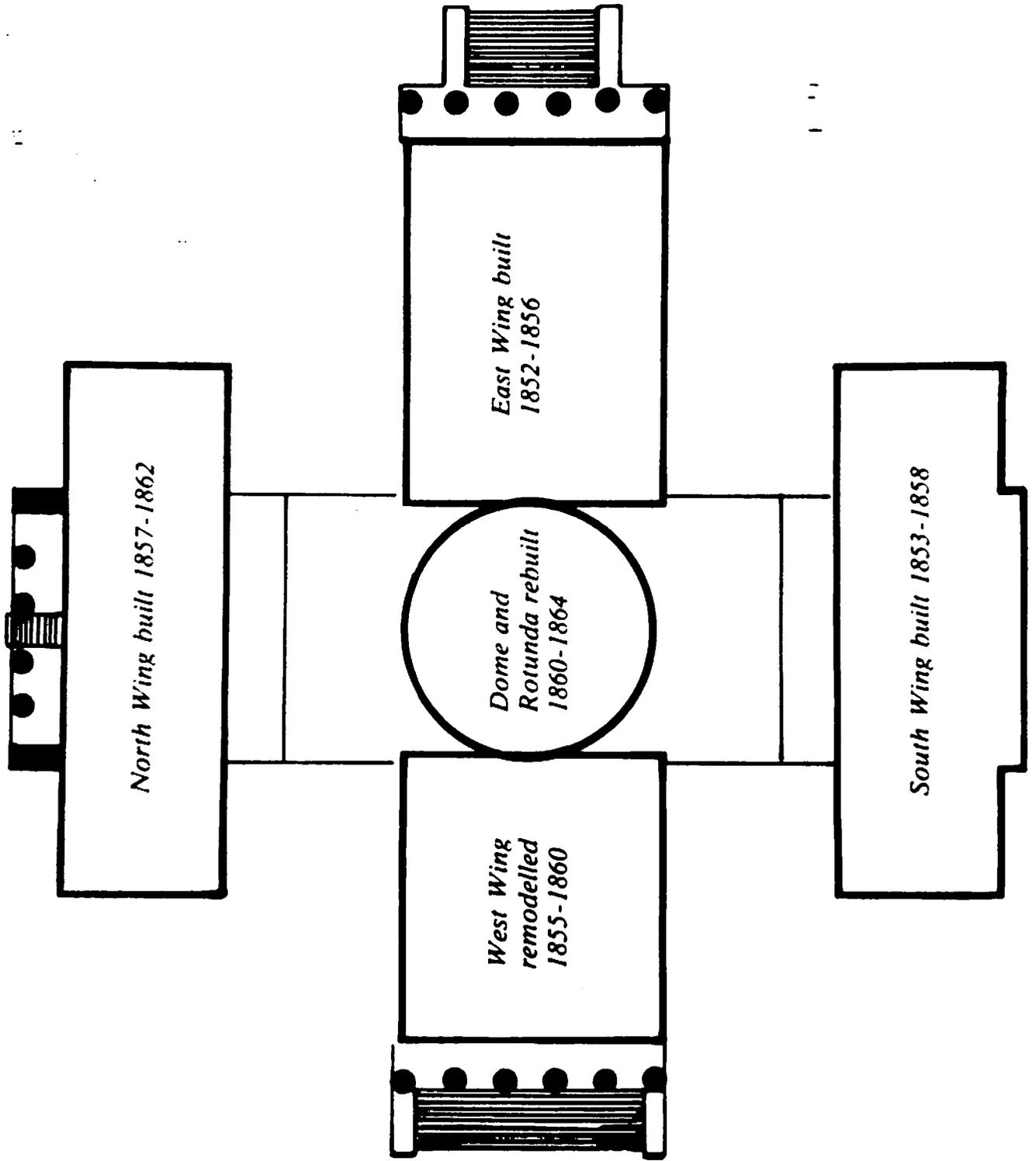


Figure 7

Chronology of Construction, 1852-1864. From Donald F. Dosch, The Old Courthouse; Americans Build a Forum on the Frontier, reproduced through the courtesy of the Jefferson National Expansion Historical Association, Inc.



THE FIRST STEPS, 1839-1851

The construction which was undertaken in 1839 included only the western wing, the rotunda and the two extensions from the rotunda which were to later serve as links to the north and south wings. Even that limited part of the overall plan provided a great deal more interior space than had been deemed necessary when the County Court had first considered the question of present and future needs. Within the west wing, there would be two virtually square rooms, each providing more than 3,100 square feet of floor area. Eight smaller rooms were placed in the northern and southern extensions from the rotunda, their dimensions being irregular because of the need to fit them against the curve of the rotunda's wall. All eight were larger than the office rooms which had been envisioned in September 1838. The County Court's willingness to pay the cost of building for the future had indeed increased.

The letting of contracts and the hiring of workmen were authorized on July 8, 1839,¹ and progress was at first fairly rapid. The ceremonial laying of the cornerstone was conducted on October 21. It was placed in the northwest corner of the north extension and remained there until it was discovered during the process of construction of the north wing. It was opened at that time and was found to have "a cavity about twenty inches long, eight deep, and eight wide, containing the decayed remnants of newspapers and other documents, and a few pieces of silver, and covered by a coating of wax. Water had entered the stone box and spoiled the otherwise interesting records."²

Early in 1840, arrangements were made for the procurement of "upwards of twenty thousand superficial feet of hewing." The wood was cut in the vicinity of Grand Rapids, Wisconsin Territory, and was sawn at a lumber mill in that area which was owned by David B. Hill. The timber was then rafted down the Wisconsin and Mississippi rivers to St. Louis.³

The greatest part of that wood must have been intended for the roof of the west wing, and would have been discarded when it was replaced in 1856. The truss remnant which is now to be seen in the

1. Court Records, II, 264.

2. Daily Missouri Democrat, December 17, 1857.

3. Contract of Rufus Eaton, January 18, 1840; Typescript copy of diary of Rufus Eaton, St. Louis Buildings--Courthouse Collection, Missouri Historical Society.

northern extension, on the other hand, is a part of the material which was brought from the Wisconsin Territory in 1840.

The arrival of the timber at St. Louis made it possible to complete the exterior construction and, by the early part of 1842, to begin work on the interior. The progress made during 1841 was slowed by the chronic financial problems of the county but the correctness of the original decision to take on the burdens of so large a structure became obvious. In February, the state legislature created the Court of Common Pleas to hear civil cases and removed the County Court's jurisdiction over matters of probate. There was now to be a Probate Court for St. Louis County, the judge of which was required to have an office no more than two hundred feet from the Courthouse.⁴

That taxed the capacity of the building which had been in use since 1828, and other quarters had to be rented for use as a jury room, a meeting room for the grand jury, and for the clerk of the County Court at various times between September 1841 and March 1842.⁵ It must, therefore, have pleased everyone involved that work on the new building had progressed to a point by the beginning of 1842 that made it possible to let contracts for work on the interior. That had not been accomplished without substantial cost --reported to have reached \$86,500 by January 14--but a milestone in the effort had been attained.

That was somewhat unfortunate for Singleton because the County Court now felt that it no longer really needed his services. He had supervised all the details of the project, including the hiring of the work force. In place of that arrangement, the judges elected to enter into separate contracts for each of the specific features of the interior finish. There is no evidence that Singleton was discharged, as has been frequently suggested, as a result of a dispute or out of dissatisfaction. To the contrary, he remained in sufficient favor with the County Court to enable him to obtain an appointment as one of three port wardens in March 1843.⁶

The contract for plastering the two courtrooms in the west wing was given to John Shannon in March 1842. It called for "all side walls to be finished plaine, there will be stucco cornices of appropriate size with architraves soffits centres circular mouldings and pannels. Mouldings to be all run plain. Such forms either

4. Hyde and Conard, Encyclopedia of St. Louis, 1820 and 1952.

5. Court Records, III, 37, 41, 56, 66 and 91.

6. Ibid., 77, 79 and 310.

finished or ready to receive the stucco ornaments as may hereafter be directed by the Superintendent."7 The latter was William Twombly, a man who was willing to work for a monthly salary which cost the County Court a great deal less than the percentage of the construction costs which had been used to compute Singleton's compensation.

Plans for the interior seem to have undergone some alteration at this time for Twombly was paid an extra \$125 "for drafting plans for the court house and jail" on April 13, 1842.8 No substantial change could have been made on the exterior at that late date, and the evidence suggests that Twombly played an important role in determining the appearance of the two original courtrooms.

Additional evidence that both Singleton and Twombly changed the plans as they went along is found in the record of a dispute over doors and shutters which erupted in August 1842. The supplier, Kingsland and Lightner, appealed to the County Court against the demands made by the two architects. The firm claimed that under a contract given to them on January 15, 1840, they had agreed to supply four "iron trunk" doors measuring 8'-6" by 4'-6", two doors of the same material which would be 12'-6" by 4'-11", and sixteen "iron trunk window shutters", 4'-4 1/2" by 8'-10 1/2". Cast-iron frames of the same dimensions were also to be provided.

Subsequently, they claimed, Singleton had insisted that "cast iron moldings to represent pannels" be added to the doors and that the shutters be made two feet longer. He had given assurances that the payment to the firm would be adjusted. Twombly, however, had now demanded further changes but would accept no increase in the price.9

That is a most interesting controversy because it indicates that the doors leading into the basement of the west wing were originally iron and further suggests very strongly that the larger doors and the shutters were intended for use on the first floor. The shutters as originally ordered approximate closely the size of the existing windows and the change in their length which Singleton ordered would have caused them to extend down to the floor. It is

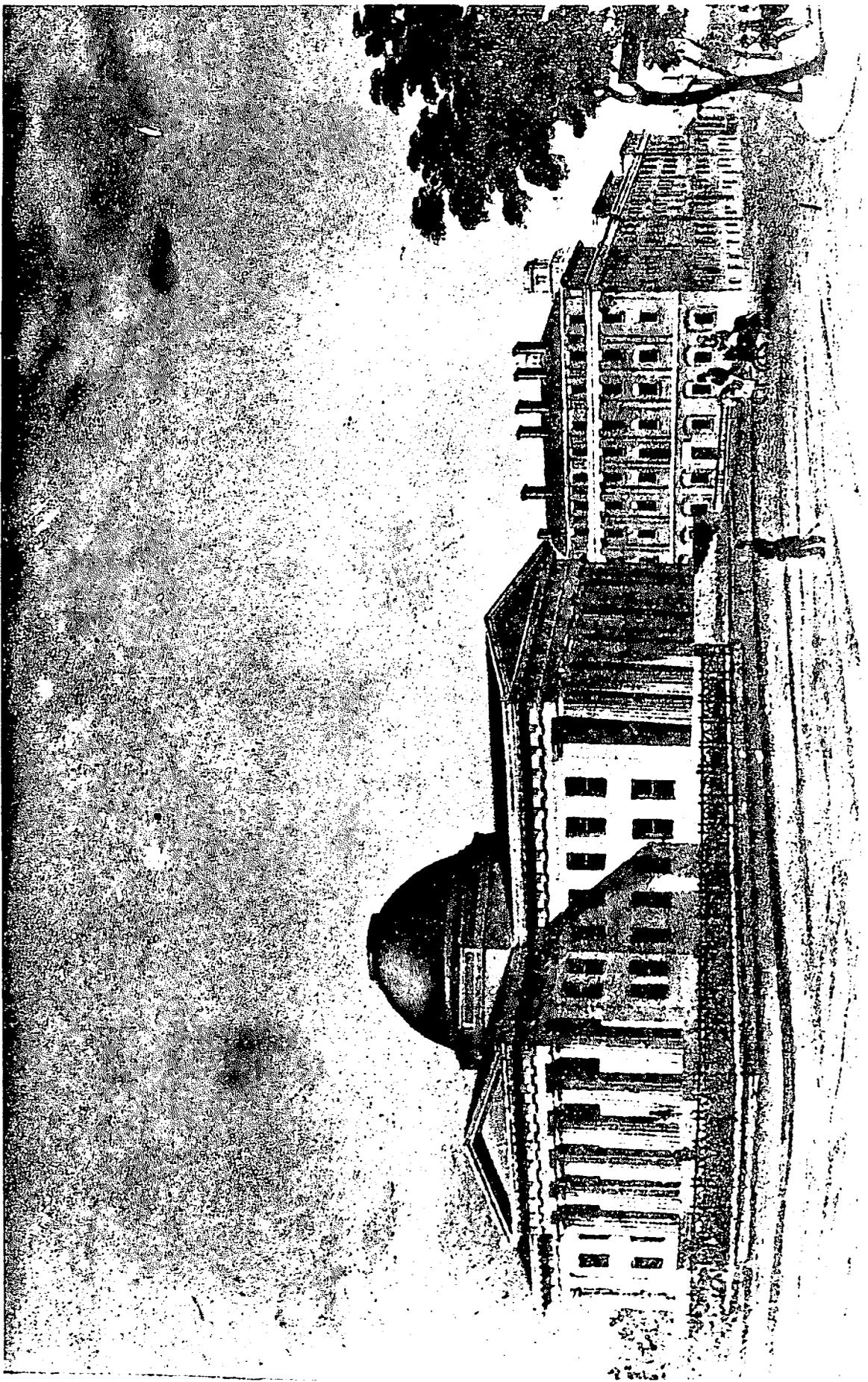
7. "Contract for Plastering Two Court Rooms," Misc. Legal Documents, JNEM. The County Court approved the contract on April 11. See Court Records, III, 128.

8. Court Records, III, 124.

9. Kingsland and Lightner to County Court, August 20, 1842. Misc. Legal Documents, JNEM.

Figure 8

The Courthouse from J. C. Wild's Valley of the Mississippi Illustrated, 1840, based on Henry Singleton's sketch and showing the original intent to create porticoes at the northern and southern extensions. From the Collection of the Missouri Historical Society.



clear from the record of changes made in the twentieth century that the jambs of all the windows in the west wing did run down to the floor up to that time. The 12'-6" doors could have been meant for use at the interior entrances to the two courtrooms or for the exterior openings of the extensions to the north and the south of the rotunda.

A great deal of speculation necessarily attaches to that, and no correlation can be made between the number of shutters which are mentioned and the number of windows in existence at the time. The shutters may, furthermore, have been removed as early as 1855. Be that as it may, the documentary evidence of the use of iron doors and shutters in the early construction is conclusive.

Installation of such iron elements fit a major concern which was frequently expressed as, for example, in the application of the term "fireproof" to a room on the east side of the first floor of the southern extension when it was assigned to the judge of the Probate Court on April 2, 1842.¹⁰ The fact that the space there was then ready for use gives another indication of the amount of work which had been completed as does the subsequent assignment of the room on the east side of the first floor of the northern extension in the following September.¹¹

Those extensions had been brought to a much more advanced stage of completion than had either of the major courtrooms in the west wing. On April 2, 1842, an order was issued suspending work at the county's quarry; restricting the start of any new work in the interior; and instructing Twombly to push forward the carpentry and plastering in the courtrooms. In spite of that, Twombly reported on October 10 that another six weeks would be required before the lower room was finished. He then indicated that the work in that space had progressed only to the point of the bricks having been ordered for the paving of the floor.¹²

The brick was set on edge in the same fashion as that used in each of the four rooms on the ground floor of the north and south extensions. The brick floor of the west wing courtroom was removed during the renovation of the space which was carried out in 1855, but it was a sufficiently striking feature to cause it to be remembered nearly a quarter of a century later by an attorney who took

10. Court Records, III, 118.

11. Ibid., 184.

12. Ibid., 119-120; Twombly to County Court, 20 October, 1842, Old Research Notes, JNEM.

part in a case heard there in 1850. That trial was, he recalled, "held in the west wing of the court-house, then in one apartment, covered with a brick floor."¹³

Any hope that the upper courtroom in the west wing would soon be ready was dashed in January 1843. Its floor was discovered to have settled, necessitating the connection of its beams to the rafters above by ironwork, creating both a delay in the construction and, obviously, a change in the floor plan. The contractor for that work was paid in early April, indicating that something like two months was lost as a result of faulty design or construction. Consequently, the plastering that had been ordered hastened in April 1842 was still undone in June 1843. Thoroughly exasperated, the County Court then threatened to void the contract for the work.¹⁴

When the problem of the weakness of the floor on the second story, and therefore also the ceiling of the first, was discovered the lower courtroom was already completed and fit for use. It was described on January 25, 1843, as being a "spacious and gorgeously furnished and finished room, with its fluted columns and massive railings around the bar" and as having "costly masonry and lofty ceilings with cornice and center circle...." Desks within the rail were covered with satinette, purchased by the county on January 12, which was said to be "infinitely better than nineteen-twentieths of the tax-payers can afford to wear for pantaloons." The need to return to the area to do major work on the ceiling must have been dismaying.¹⁵

The unexpected cost of that reconstruction of work which had been done just a short time earlier had its effect on the plans for the furnishing of the second floor. It was determined on January 20, 1843, that it would have columns of the "plainest kind", some of which must have enclosed the iron hangers which now supported the floor. Furniture was to include "pine benches with backs" in both the galleries and the lobby, but the judge's bench was "to be finished in the same manner as the bar in the room below...." On the basis of those specifications, an estimate was obtained for the cost of completing the courtroom and it demonstrates that interior shutters were original features. They are also known to have been

13. W. V. N. Bay, Reminiscences of the Bench and Bar of Missouri (St. Louis, 1878), 132-135; J. Thomas Scharf, History of St. Louis City and County (Philadelphia, 1883), 1467.

14. Court Records, III, 315 and 370.

15. St. Louis Daily People's Organ, January 25, 1843; Court Records, III, 268.

hung in the north extension because a pair was removed less than twenty years later.¹⁶

The contrast between the lower and upper courtrooms was marked. That on the second floor was described in very unfavorable terms when it was completely remodeled in 1856: "As it was formerly arranged, it was the worst room for speaking that could have been devised, and it was disfigured by numerous unsightly columns and three useless galleries, all of which will be removed."¹⁷

The vexatious delays which had forced the County Court to assign the eastern room on the second floor of the south extension for the use of the Circuit Court in September 1842 were finally overcome and the lower room in the west wing was ready for occupancy by that court on March 28, 1843. The Court of Common Pleas, for which the room on the second floor was intended, was assigned to the old building, as was the Criminal Court, on the same day.¹⁸

The final plan for the upper courtroom was still under consideration in June 1843 and the record of the payment for the painting done there does not appear until September 12, 1844. At about the same time, payment was made to Jesse Little, a cabinetmaker, for "work and materials furnished in varnishing tables in the Court room of the St. Louis Common Pleas."¹⁹ That apparently marks the end of five years of effort in the initial construction of the west wing, and the approximate date at which the Court of Common Pleas moved to the second floor of that wing.

A number of references to furniture in this period help to fill a mental image of the appearance of the two courtrooms in the mid-1840s. While pine benches were considered to be adequate for the use of spectators in the Court of Common Pleas, the Circuit Court in the room below was provided with chairs. Staining or varnishing are the forms of finish most often mentioned but in one instance a bill was received for "painting furniture for the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court." "Tablecloths", probably intended to mean something like the satinette used on the desks in the Circuit Court, were provided in the Court of Common Pleas as was a clock. The clock, rather surprisingly in view of the pervasive evidence of

16. Court Records, III, 281; Joseph Foster to County Court, January 30, 1843, Misc. Legal Documents, JNEM; "Bill of Corrected Measurements...August 12, 1863", item 365.

17. Daily St. Louis Intelligencer, July 3, 1856.

18. Court Records, III, 184.

19. Ibid., III, 366; IV, 67 and 73.

the generally plain nature of the furnishings, cost twenty dollars. Such a high price suggests that a rather magnificent timepiece was installed on the second floor.²⁰

Stoves were purchased on three different occasions. The first acquisition and, at \$390, the largest, came in June 1842. It may have included stoves for the north and south extensions, for the use of the workmen in the unfinished west wing, and even for the old building. No more certainty about the place at which the heating devices were actually installed is present in the case of the expenditures of \$169.95 in March 1844 or of \$8.25 in April of that year. The minor cost of the latter does, however, give the impression that the earlier purchases involved the most elegant models of stoves which were then offered by the suppliers, Andrews and Beackey of St. Louis.²¹

References to lighting devices are the rarest thing of all in this period. On two occasions, candles were purchased for the Court of Common Pleas; one while it was still located in the old building, the other after it had moved to its new quarters in the west wing.²²

The north and south extensions continued to be the subject of attention in 1843. Although offices within them were occupied at an earlier date, work on their stone entries was not undertaken until July 1. That was the date at which Francis McDermott agreed to construct the "buttresses", platforms and steps at the ends of each extension. The buttresses were like the cheekwalls at the present west, east and north entries and there were seven more steps specified for the north side than there were for the south in order to compensate for the differing elevations caused by the gradation of the site.²³

The cheekwalls and the steps have long since disappeared but McDermott's work is very much a part of the history of the present interior. The stone platforms which he then created as entries to both extensions form the present floors of the transverse halls on both the south and the north sides of the rotunda. Their original function as parts of the exterior porticoes explains why they are not at the same level as the floor of the rotunda.

20. Ibid., III, 225, 307, 395, 482 and 520; IV, 139; Daily People's Organ, January 25, 1843.

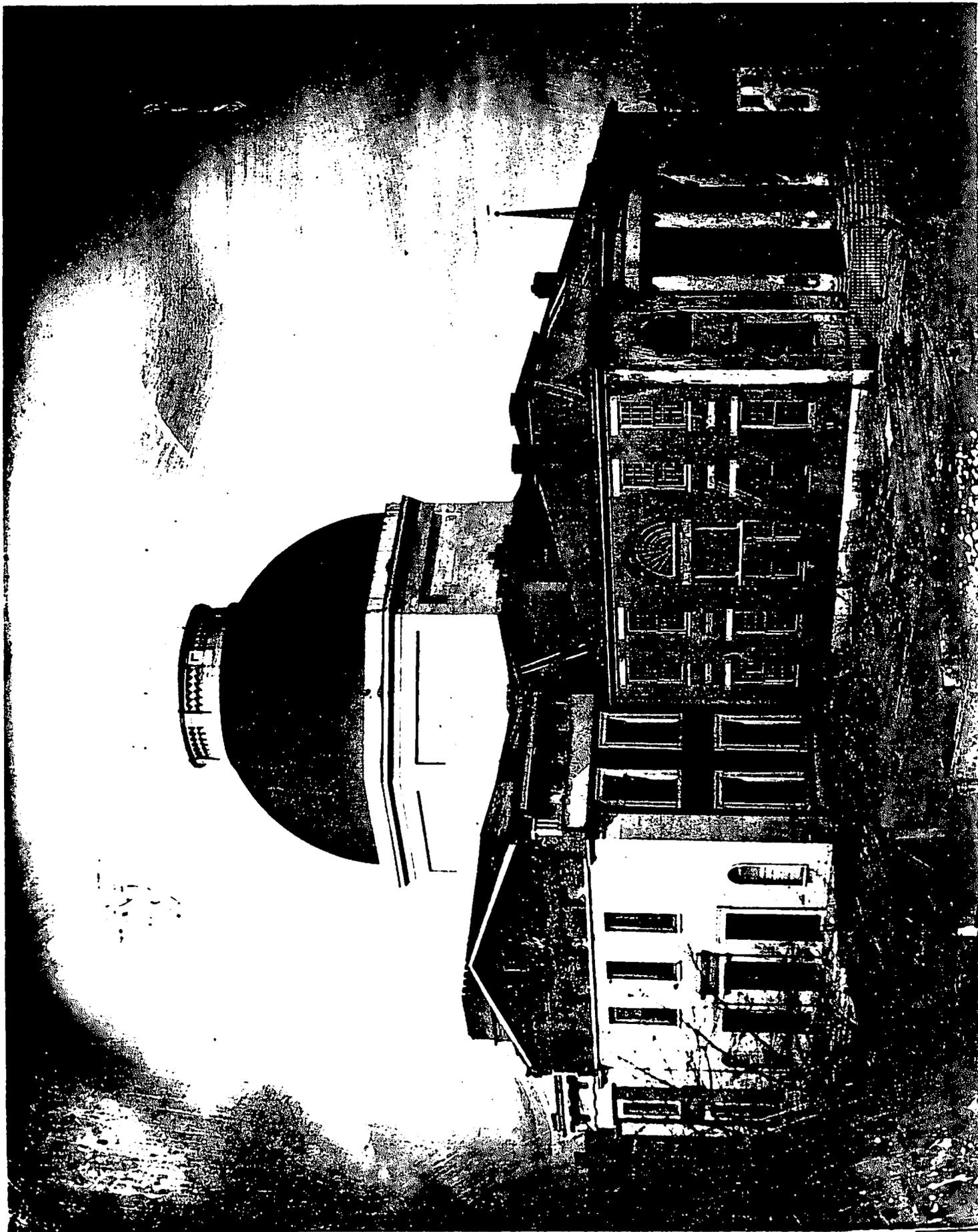
21. Court Records, III, 150 and 540; IV, 3.

22. Ibid., III, 306; IV, 81.

23. "Specifications for Stone Steps at Court House...July 1, 1843," JNEM; Court Records, IV, 81.

Figure 9

Exterior of the Courthouse, 1845-1846, from an original daguerreotype. The dating is based on the presence of the brick wall built in 1833 on the south side, paralleling Market Street, and of a section of the wrought-iron fence on the east side of the Courthouse Square. From the Collection of the Missouri Historical Society.



Yet another feature of the interior--the two niches in the wall of the southern transverse hall--is a product of the work completed before 1845. Like the floor in that space, the niches were originally meant to be a part of the exterior of the Courthouse but their exact purpose was not mentioned in the accounts of the period. The judges of the County Court may have intended to place some type of statuary within them, and it might also be noted that the circular form of the heads of the niches echoed that of the windows which flanked the entrance to the Laveille and Morton building. In a sense, the recesses thereby created a sort of architectural continuity between the older and newer construction. (Figure 9) No such niches, however, were set into the wall at the entry to the northern extension.

The conclusion of the work necessary for the extensions was taking place while McDermott brought the entries into being. The rooms and halls of the third floor were plastered in July 1843, and the brick gables under the roof at the north, west and south sides were completed before September 19, the date at which payment was made for barge boards. Five windows with walnut sills were ordered for those gables but they were never installed.²⁴ That part of the contemporary record suggests that another in the succession of changes in plan while construction was underway had been made. At any rate, the west wing and the two extensions to the north and south of the rotunda were now complete, leaving the County Court an opportunity to concentrate its attention on the rotunda itself.

A plan for that great space was ordered made on June 1, 1843, at the same time that such work was directed for the second floor of the west wing. The latter may have been assigned to Twombly but the former was entrusted to more skilled hands, those of George Ingham Barnett, one of the most noted local architects at the time. Little more than a month later, the County Court accepted his proposed design, ordering that he "furnish the specifications and detailed plans...as soon as practicable." The matter was again discussed on July 20, and Orin Bullock was told to make an "estimate and calculations for the carpenter's work." He did so, only to be informed on August 14 that the judges had "thought proper to alter the plan of the finish." Barnett was paid one hundred dollars for his efforts and a new plan was obtained from William Meredith, a man who appears to be otherwise unknown in local architectural history. His involvement in the design of the rotunda came after Joseph Foster, the contractor for the carpentry, had also been told

24. "Bond and Specifications," August 14, 1843; "William Houston's Bond for Brick Work...August 11, 1843," Misc. Legal Documents, JNEM: Court Records, III, 373-374.

to prepare a plan, making it completely impossible to determine who deserved credit for the original features of the space.²⁵

Foster presented his own views in a report which sheds a great deal of light. He described

the plan of one gallery--the Dome finished in a plain style--stairs attached to the wall same as Barnett's, ceiling vaulted as the plan I exhibited. Stairs leading to top of dome between the plastering and the outside and a heavy ballustrade on top of dome as per plans....If the two flights of stairs are placed in the center of the rotunda as per plan exhibited by me, leaving an open space in the centre of 21 or 22 feet level with the Court rooms depressing in off sets to the centre there will be an additional cost of from 5 to 600\$ making the total cost of the carpenter's work and materials say \$5,280 Should the Court add a Gallery above the cost should be added--and if you should entertain the proposition of stealing [sic] the Dome from its present exalted position to the more low but true position in the symmetry of the building I presume from rough data that it will add a cost of from \$850 to \$1000....²⁶

While no fuller statement than Foster's has been located, the general nature of the plan adopted for the rotunda in 1845 can be deduced from other bits of information and from the physical dimensions of the space which it encompassed. Those point almost unequivocally to a conclusion that the rotunda was divided into five levels by the creation of four galleries between the ground floor and the inner dome even though there is not a single reference in any of the written material to a fifth level gallery. The Missouri Republican, in its account of the formal opening of the rotunda on February 22, 1845, was typical in that it took note of only three galleries:

The second and third galleries were appropriated to the ladies, by whom they were almost exclusively filled. The principal floor was filled by the military, and by citizens, and the steps and lower floor [i.e., the second level gallery] and every avenue, were occupied by spectators.²⁷

25. Court Records, III, 388, 408, 419, 421, 423-424 and 434.

26. Joseph Foster to County Court, August 14, 1843, Misc. Legal Documents, JNEM.

27. Missouri Republican, February 24, 1845.

Balanced against that, another local newspaper stated that the rotunda was on that occasion "absolutely packed, gallery after gallery, even to the dome," implying that there was a gallery immediately beneath the inner dome.²⁸ If so, it had to form the fifth level of the original rotunda.

The hypothesis that there was a total of four galleries is necessitated by the simple fact that the dome erected in 1845 rested on the top of the octagonal drum, placing its base roughly 67' above the stone first floor of the rotunda. The first 55' of that interior elevation can be readily accounted for: the floors of the second, third and fourth level galleries were then, as they are now, 18', 31' and 43' respectively above the first floor. Assuming a continuation of the use of the 12' height of the third level gallery for any other galleries above it, the floor of the fifth level gallery would have been at an elevation of 55' and the top of the cornice above it at 67'. It seems far from coincidental that such a cornice would have exactly matched the known height of the base of the dome. Although no documentary proof can be advanced for the existence of the fifth level gallery of 1845, the established dimensions of the interior space strongly suggest that it was then constructed.

A great deal of conjecture must also be advanced with regard to other features of the interior because the written records of the 1840s and 1850s provide only fragmentary clues. It is nevertheless possible to piece the scraps of data together in a fashion which creates a coherent picture.

The observations about the plan which were offered by Joseph Foster in 1843 are an appropriate point of departure for such an effort. His assumption that the stone flagging of the first floor would be set in a stepped fashion, with the center forming the lowest point, fits well with the intention of the County Court to make the rotunda available for public meetings. It may, for that reason, have been indicative of a commonly-held concept of the space in 1843. If such a plan was then seriously entertained, it was abandoned by the time the actual work on the floor was begun under a contract awarded to John Purvis and Francis Morgan on August 7, 1843.

Purvis and Morgan agreed to provide flagging that was not "less in thickness than three and a half inches and Centre stone eight feet in diameter & not less than six inches thick," "four stone plinths for columns about two feet four inches square, fifteen inches deep set on rubble stone foundation, two feet six inches

^{28.} St. Louis Weekly Reveille, February 24, 1845.

Figure 10

Hypothetical Sectional View Through the Rotunda, 1845-1862. This drawing will be provided by Denver Service Center.

square eighteen inches deep well laid in lime and sand mortar," and "stair stones" for which no specifications were provided.²⁹

Aside from the stair stones--they were removed in the course of remodeling completed in 1862--the contract describes the stones presently found in the floor with the exception of eight very important blocks. The stone bases beneath the eight cast-iron columns which are now located there were not mentioned in 1843 because neither the stones nor the iron columns were installed at that time. They are instead products of the work done in the years preceding 1862.

All of the support which was deemed essential for the second level gallery in 1843 was provided by four stone columns for which the County Court caused an advertisement to be published in August of that year. A proposal from Solomon Woods was accepted, and he received the last of four payments on June 4, 1844, that date marking the point at which the final work of placing the columns on their base stones could be undertaken. They were described in the contract as being 15' tall but that was reduced to 14'-5" when the carving was completed. The reduction made the columns equal in height to the present ceiling above the stone floor and caused the cornice at the second level gallery to have a depth which approximately equaled that of the cornices at the third and fourth level galleries.³⁰ The present, deeper cornice at the lowest gallery was not created until 1869 when the second level gallery was cut back. Up to that time, all of the cornices in the rotunda had similar vertical dimensions.

The stone columns were of the Tuscan order and were squared at the plinth and at the top of the capital. Indeed, they were so unornamented as to cause one to wonder if Woods himself did all of the carving. There is in that regard record of the payment of a total of \$477 between April 27 and November 1, 1844, to John F. Thornton, an architectural carver according to contemporary city directories, for work variously described as "carving for Court-house," "carving caps" and "on account of caps for the columns in rotunda."³¹ Thornton may have been responsible for the final shape of the stone columns, and the period during which he was engaged in whatever he was doing fits neatly into the span of time during

29. "Specifications for the Rotunda," August 7, 1843, Misc. Legal Documents, JNEM. The flagging of the north and south passages was accomplished at the same time. See Court Records, III, 415.

30. Court Records, III, 408, 416, 458 and 505; IV, 5 and 11.

31. Ibid., IV, 9, 76 and 84.

which the stone was being brought to the Courthouse by Woods. Capitals would also, however, be needed for the wooden columns which were set on the galleries above the first level and Thornton may have been responsible for carving them. The records maintained by the County Court are too imprecise to allow any degree of certainty about Thornton's contribution. It is nevertheless certain that the stone bases set into the floor were completely hidden by the square plinths of the columns since the latter were more than a foot wider than the former.³²

The judges of the County Court devoted a great deal of attention to contractors who were engaged in the fabrication of columns for the Courthouse between 1842 and 1844. The firm of Gaty, Coonce and Belzhoover began work on cast-iron columns a year before Woods was given his contract for the stone columns. The record of their company's association with the process of construction dates from July 1842 when a \$500 payment was made "for the casting of iron columns." That was followed by the appointment of Meriwether Lewis Clark and Martin Thomas as a committee to examine the "cast iron fluted Grecian Doric columns now practically made," an examination which led to the annulment of the original agreement on February 3, 1843. In the firm's own statement on the questions which had arisen, a statement which is undated but which must have been submitted just before the contract was voided, reference was made to instructions it claimed to have received from Henry Singleton pertaining to "six cast-iron columns for the Southern front of the Court House."³³

Gaty, Coonce and Belzhoover's total effort has to have been concentrated on columns which were intended to be erected on the exterior of the building. Even beyond the fact that they said as much in their account of the agreement reached with Singleton, the plan for the rotunda had not attained its final form when the contract for the cast iron was voided. No further references to metal columns are to be found in the minutes of the County Court for the two years that followed, making it evident that the support for the galleries was provided by the four stone columns on the first level and by wooden columns above.

A final step in the preparation of such wooden columns for installation in the rotunda caught the attention of the People's

32. HABS Survey No. 31-8, sheet 42, "Elevation of the Original Rotunda Column," March 7, 1938, JNEM, demonstrates that the columns are 14'-5" high and gives the measurement of their bases.

33. Court Records, III, 179, 258 and 290-291. The firm asked for \$2,000 as payment for the work done. That was the exact amount awarded on February 3, 1843.

Organ on September 3, 1844.

In our stroll through the building and yard yesterday, we noted an apparatus in the course of construction in which the columns to be used in the interior and which are constructed of oak are to be subjected to a steaming process which will prevent decay and add to their durability.³⁴

Since the final work in the courtrooms of the west wing--the only other interior spaces that had columns at the time--was recorded on September 12, 1844, the oak described just nine days earlier had to be intended for use in the rotunda.

The presence of oak columns within the rotunda was again alluded to when preparation was made in 1844 for painting the space, and a total of twenty-four was then mentioned.³⁵ For evidence concerning the exact number on a particular gallery, and for a clear indication of the ultimate fate of the oak columns, the terribly limited information presented in the records of the original construction of the rotunda must be fitted together with the far more detailed documentary material which is available for the remodeling of the space completed in 1862.

The same Joseph Foster who was responsible for the carpentry required in 1845 obtained the contract for the major renovations carried out less than twenty years later. In his account of the latter, he indicated that he cut eight holes "through floor and timber" at the second and third level galleries and filled an identical number of openings of a similar size at the third and fourth level galleries.³⁶ The newly made openings were meant to allow the cast-iron columns installed just before 1862 to penetrate those galleries and thereby form continuous supporting members.³⁷ The steaming of the oak in 1844 may well have added to the durability of the wood, but the columns made from it were removed and discarded as part of the fulfillment in 1862 of William Rumbold's scheme for the replacement of the original dome.

34. People's Organ, September 3, 1844, quoted in John A. Bryan, "The Rotunda, 1839-1955: Its Changing Styles of Architecture, Its Historic Events and Mural Paintings, Its Restoration," 10.

35. Clark Hooper to James J. Purdy, October 1, 1844, Misc. Legal Documents, JNEM.

36. "Bill of Corrected Measurements," items 327, 328, 330, 346, 348 and 350.

37. Daily Democrat, July 4, 1862.

Filling of the holes in the floors of the third and fourth level galleries is noted in Joseph Foster's accounts for 1859-1861. It was another part of the work required when the oak columns were taken away. Foster installed new flooring at the places where those columns had stood since 1845, and his record of the project fixes the number on each of the galleries at eight. Because a total of only twenty-four was mentioned in the specifications for painting of the rotunda in 1845, the conclusion that columns were installed on only three galleries is inescapable. That is important because it provides an initial indication of the form which the rotunda took atop the fourth level gallery or, to put that another way, suggests a great deal about the treatment of the space between the 55' and 67' elevations above the first floor.

Based simply on the number described in the documents, there could not have been any columns placed on a gallery at that elevation. All twenty-four were needed on the second, third and fourth levels. Such a conclusion also fits neatly with the records of 1845, which demonstrate that there was nothing above the floor of the fifth level gallery requiring any columns for support. All to be found there was the inner dome and it rested on top of the octagonal stone drum. That method of construction must have been employed because the plastering of the inner dome, and the painting of its surface, was completed almost seven months before the steaming of the oak columns as part of the preparation for their installation.³⁸ Quite obviously, the fifth level gallery could not be created until those columns were in place, and in light of that it would have been impossible for there to have been any structural elements on that highest gallery to carry the weight of the inner dome.

The fifth level gallery, those bits and pieces of evidence suggest, had a floor which was 55' above the first floor, and a balustrade at its inner edge. The inner dome, springing from the top of the exterior wall, began its upward curve 12' above the fifth level flooring and thereby served as a curved ceiling for the gallery as well as for the rotunda as a whole.

One facet of the work done at the fifth level gallery lends itself to only the most general of descriptions. Foster's reference on August 14, 1843, to "Stairs leading to the top of dome between the plastering and the outside"³⁹ makes it necessary to believe that a pair of stairs entered into some form of projections which began at the level of the gallery's floor and at a height of 12'

38. Court Records, III, 484 and 520.

39. Joseph Foster to County Court, August 14, 1843.

above it began to follow the curve of the inner dome. Everything indicates that the bases of both the inner and outer domes were set on the stone wall of the octagonal drum, and no stairway to the observatory at the top of the dome could have been built without there having also been projections offering a means of entry as well as headway. Since there were two stairways, there had to be at least that many projections but an additional set may have been constructed to maintain symmetry.

The stair in the lower portion of the rotunda was the subject of comments that were generally devoid of real detail. It was praised at the time of its construction as "a splendid piece of mechanism; in it we find united massive strength with elegant proportions. The work will be a feather in the cap of our St. Louis mechanics." As for its actual form, it was called only a "spiral staircase."⁴⁰ Limited though the information contained in such statements may be, it constitutes the fullest available basis for a description of the stair in 1845. A resort to conjecture is once again demanded.

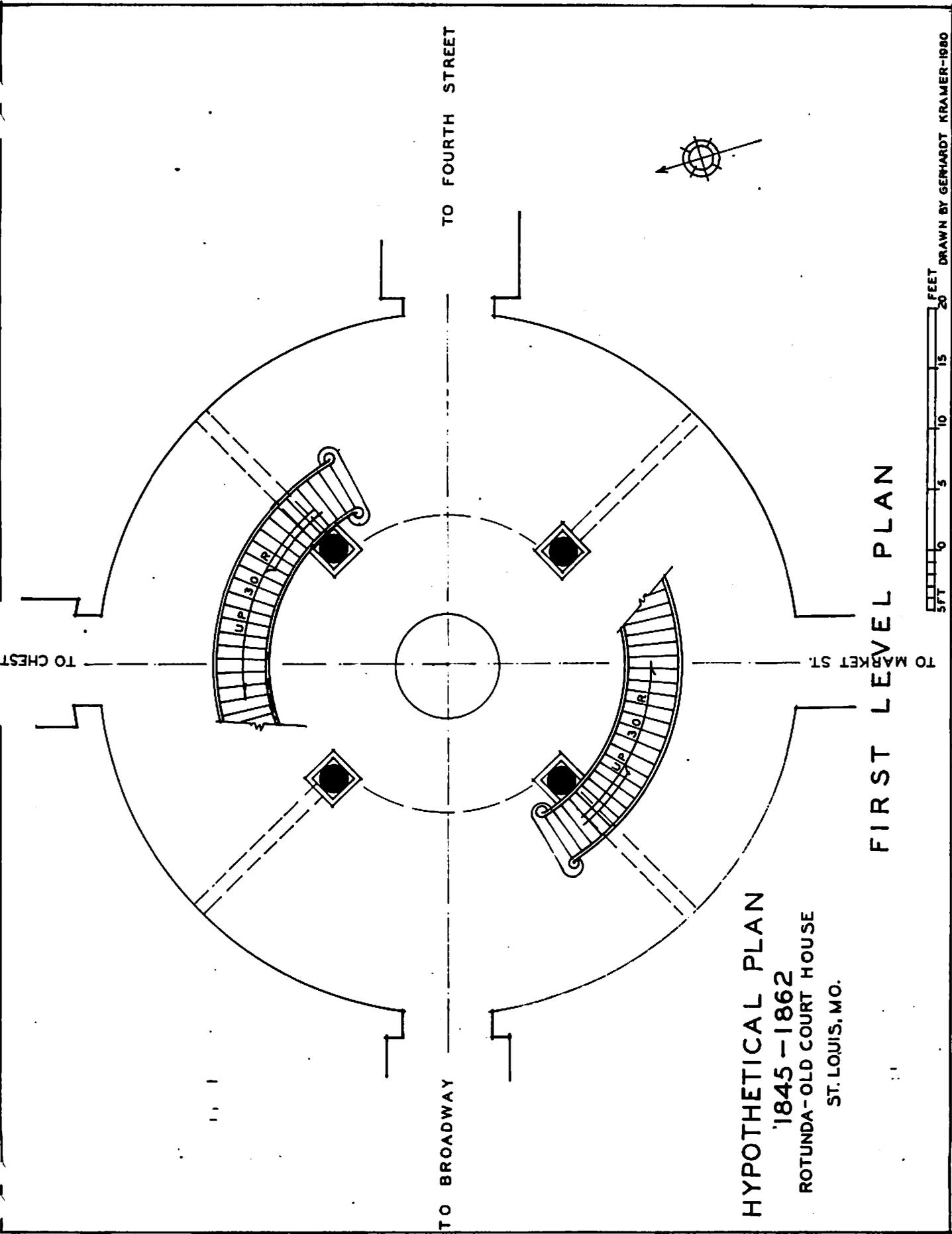
The material used for the stair was not mentioned in 1845 but all the evidence indicates that it was wood. The initial reason to believe that to be true is largely negative, there being nothing in the minutes of the County Court which indicates that payment was made for enough cast iron to be used in erecting the staircase. John D. McMurray, a manufacturer of iron railing, did receive \$736.94 on November 1, 1844, but the size of that expenditure points to his having been the supplier of the exterior balustrade at the top of the dome. Foster, furthermore, incorporated some 800' of yellow pine or oak for "Stairs in Rotunda" when in August 1843 he drew up estimates of the building material he would need.⁴¹ A conclusion that such wood was actually used is warranted.

Had the stair stones which were called for in the contract for flagging the ground floor been retained, the precise location of the "spiral staircase" could be readily ascertained. Unfortunately, those stones were taken up during the remodeling directed by William Rumbold before 1862, ridding the space of any tangible evidence relating to that part of the work carried out before 1845. The fact that the plural term "stair stones" was used indicates that the stairway was actually formed in two separate parts, a conclusion supported by all of the other documentary references. As to the places at which they were erected, the simple dimensions of the rotunda again become important. The pair which began at the

40. People's Organ, September 3, 1844, in Bryan, "Rotunda," 10.

41. Court Records, IV, 84; Joseph Foster to County Court, August 19, 1843, Misc. Legal Documents, JNEM.

Figure 11

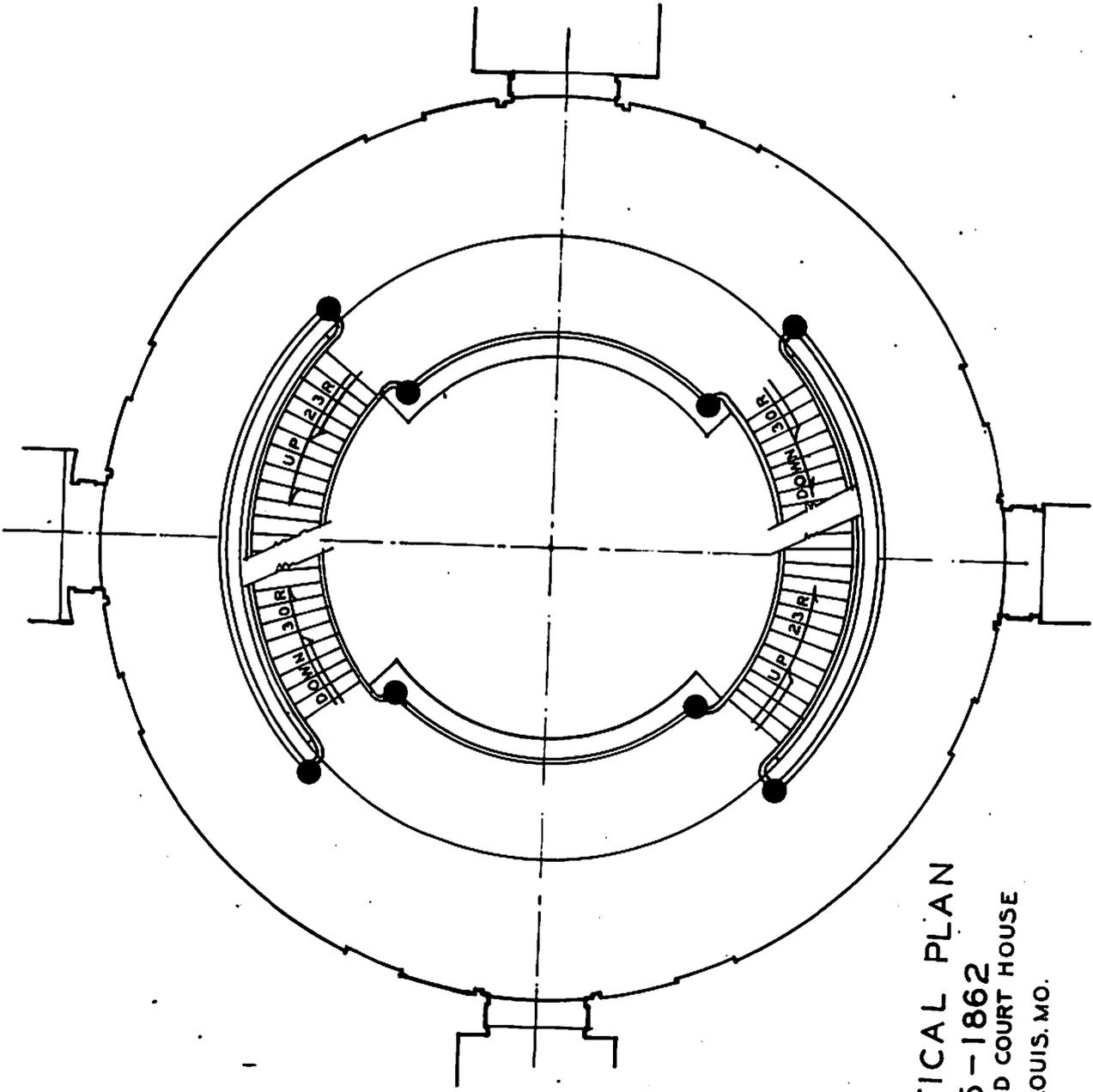


HYPOTHETICAL PLAN
 '1845 - 1862
 ROTUNDA - OLD COURT HOUSE
 ST. LOUIS, MO.

FIRST LEVEL PLAN

5 FT 10 15 20 FEET
 DRAWN BY GERHARDT KRAMER-1980

Figure 12



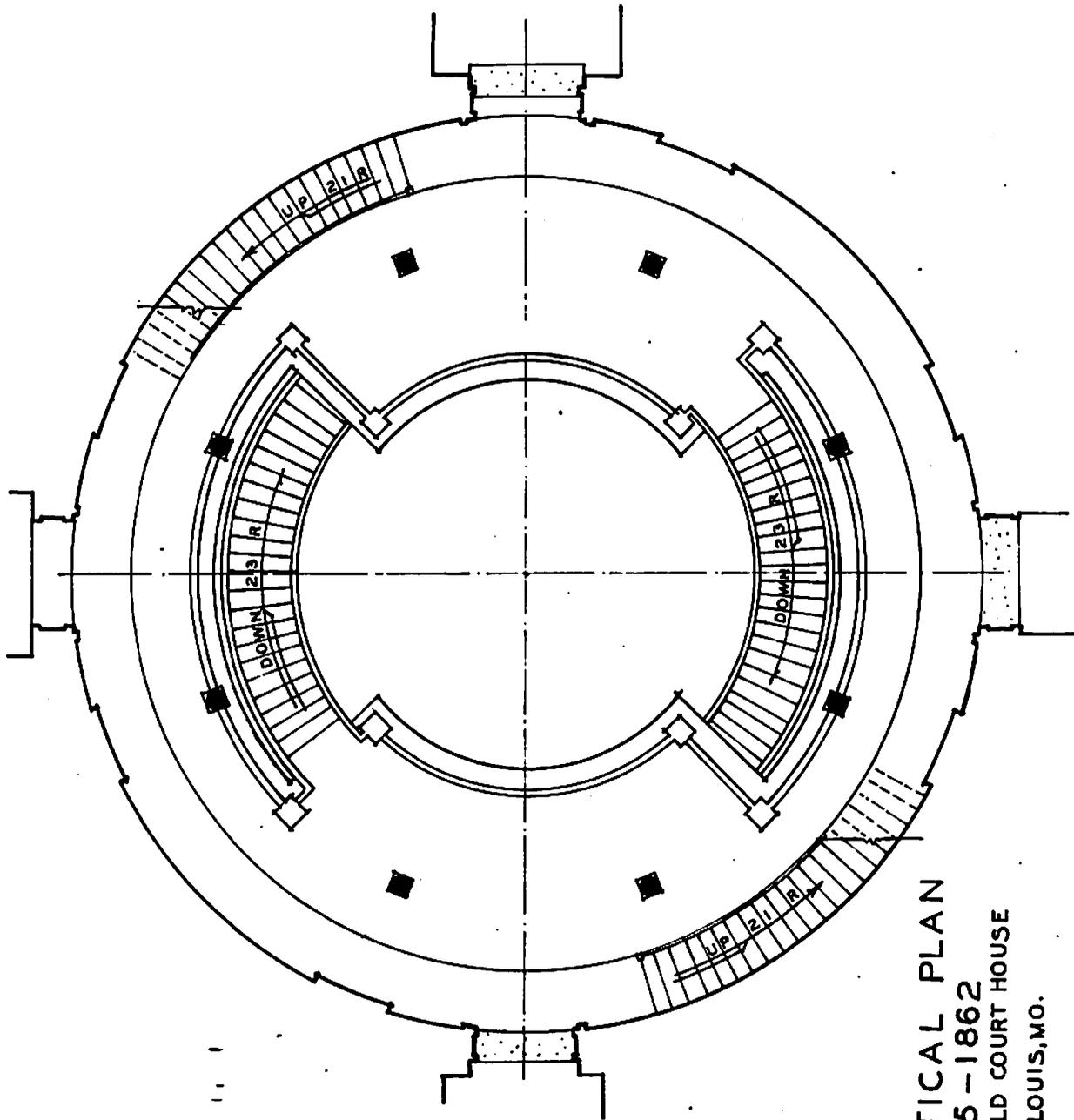
HYPOTHETICAL PLAN
1845 - 1862
ROTUNDA-OLD COURT HOUSE
ST. LOUIS, MO.

SECOND LEVEL PLAN



DRAWN BY GERHARDT KRAMER - 1980

Figure 13



HYPOTHETICAL PLAN
1845 - 1862
ROTUNDA - OLD COURT HOUSE
ST. LOUIS, MO.

THIRD LEVEL PLAN



DRAWN BY GERHARDT KRAMER - 1980

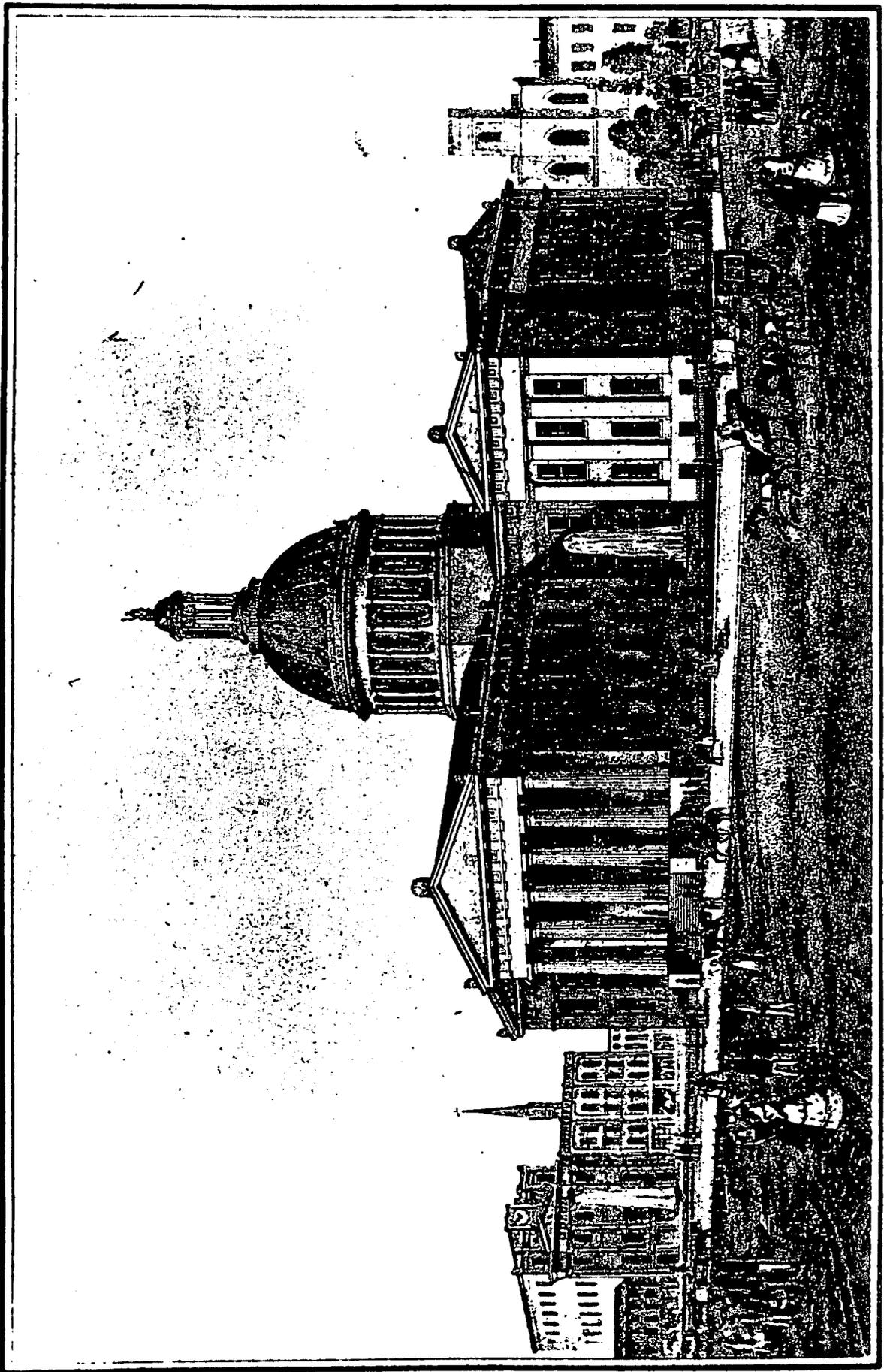
first level and rose as high as the third level must have been set outside the circle described by the four stone columns because placement within the interior circle would have limited the open space there to a mere 12' or 13', rendering the rotunda unsuitable for use as a place at which major public meetings could be held. By locating the twin stairways outside the circle of the stone columns, that is between the columns and the wall of the rotunda, an inner circle with a diameter of 22'-23' would have remained unobstructed.

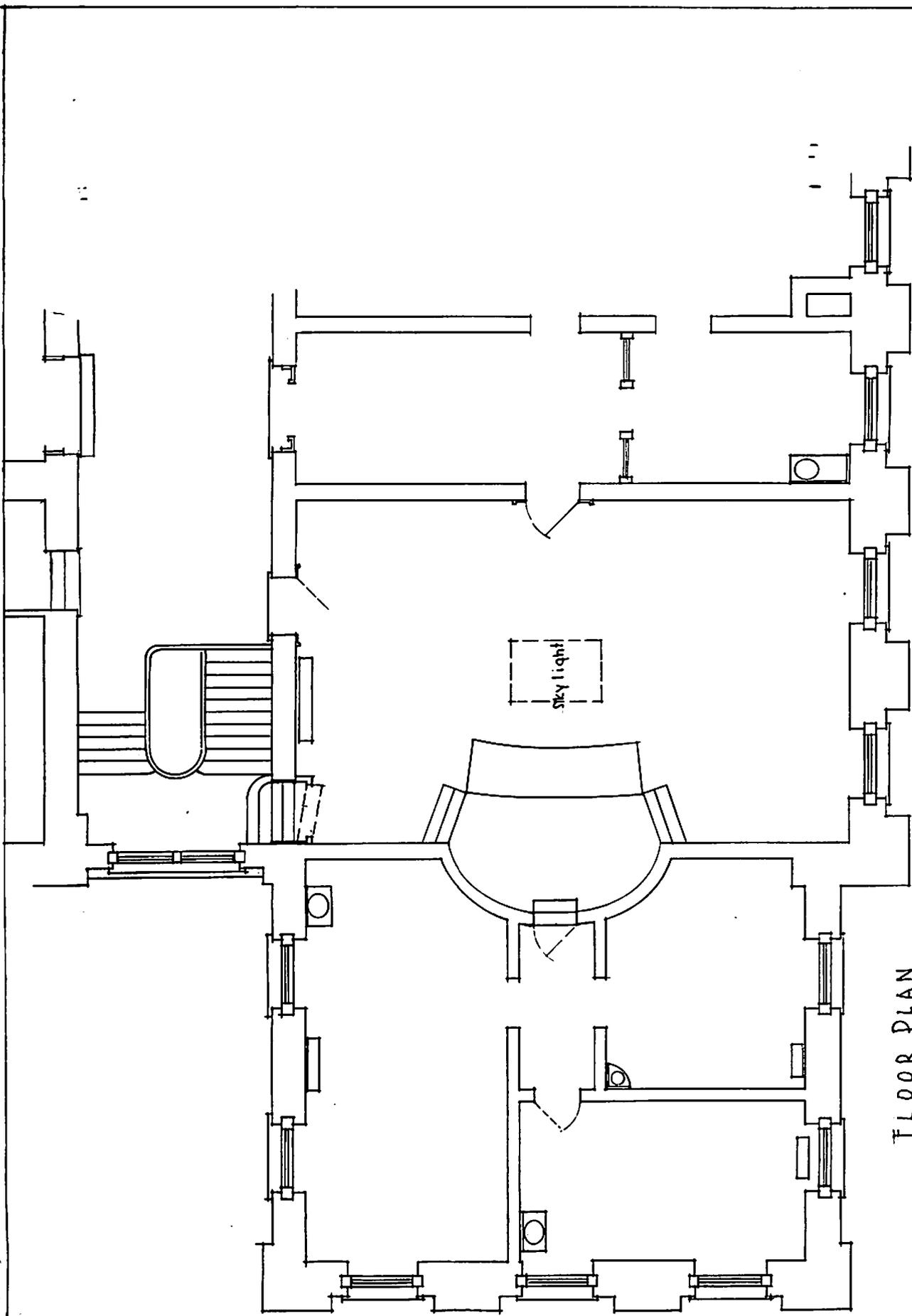
A hypothesis about the placement of the lower stair can be developed on the basis of the over-all plan for the enlargement of the Courthouse which was adopted in 1839. It left the Laveille and Morton building intact on the east side, brought the west wing into being, and caused the addition of only small extensions to the south and north of the rotunda. The entries from the east and west would therefore have been the most important, and it would have seemed desirable to design the rotunda in a way which did not place any obstruction in front of the passages leading to the east and west. A slight hinderance to access into the northern and southern extensions would on the other hand have been of far less consequence, a consideration that prompts a belief that the stairs were placed in front of the southern and northern entrances to the rotunda, leaving a semi-circular space with a width of about 10' open between the stair and the wall. The base of one would have been close to the western entry to the rotunda, the other would have been near the eastern entrance. (Figure 11)

Another pair of stairs leading to the third level was constructed at the second level gallery, similar in their general form to those on the first level. The bottom step of each was directly above the base of the stair beneath it. A visitor who wished to reach the third level could therefore at the second level either double back from the ending of one stair to reach the base of the stair over it or could continue around to the other side to reach the first of the steps there. (Figure 12)

A second pair of stairs began at the third level and continued the ascent all the way up to the observatory at the top of the dome. Foster's record of the work he performed prior to 1862 makes note of his putting joists and flooring at two openings, each 4'-6" by 24'-6", at the fourth level through which the original stairs had passed.⁴² The wall of the third level gallery, furthermore, still has shallow, rectangular projections at six locations but those are lacking at the northeast and southwest (see Figure 4),

42. "Bill of Corrected Measurements," items 320-322.





SUPREME COURTROOM
SECOND FLOOR, SOUTHWEST WING
OLD COURTHOUSE
St. Louis, Mo. 1872

FLOOR PLAN
Scale 1/4"=1'-0"

Drawn by: Gerhard Kramer
15 August 1914

indicating that the early stairs were affixed at those places. The pairs of stairs on the fourth and fifth level galleries would also have been attached to the wall until they entered the space between the inner and outer domes.

Taking the whole of the written material into account, and adding the required amount of conjecture, an idea of the appearance of the rotunda as it was in 1845 emerges. The second and third level galleries were then about four feet wider than they now are, their greater width being needed to allow for landings for the lower pairs of stairs. The four stone columns on the first floor supported the second level gallery and four oak columns were placed immediately above them on the second level. A second oak column was set between each of those four second level columns and the rotunda wall, causing the openings for the stairs to be flanked by columns. All eight wooden columns on the third level gallery were placed at the same distance from the rotunda wall as the four inner columns on the second level, and the fourth level columns were in vertical alignment with those of the third level. The fifth level gallery had no columns and its floor was of the same width as that of the fourth level. The view of the ground floor which could be obtained from the fourth or fifth level galleries was thereby partially obstructed but such a description of the rotunda fits well with all of the evidence which can be assembled concerning the space.

Completion of the galleries and stairs in 1844 was followed by a flurry of additional activity required to give the rotunda its final form. What can be viewed as finishing touches had, however, been applied at a much earlier date. The County Court made arrangements for plastering long before the carpenters began work on the galleries or stairs, an action which indicates the approximate date of the completion of the inner dome. John Stewart, who called himself a "Mud Dauber," obtained the contract for the plastering on November 1, 1843, in which separate provision was made for the cornice at the dome's base. He was to be paid 16 2/3¢ per foot, suggesting that it was rather ornate.⁴³

The scaffolding erected to allow the plasterers to work on the inner dome was also of use to the painters when the plastering was complete. Asa Wilgus was hired on December 20, 1843, to decorate the surface of the inner dome "in the best manner for the sum of two hundred dollars and to complete the job within six weeks." Approval of the payment to him of \$250 was granted on March 6, 1844,

43. John Stewart to County Court, November 1, 1843, Misc. Legal Documents, JNEM.

long before the carpenters finished the galleries.⁴⁴ All traces of the painting were destroyed when the original dome was demolished, and there is no way to determine what sort of decorative scheme was employed. It may well have been akin to the type of decoration which was popular on the ceilings of steamboats that plied the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. Wilgus listed such work as one of his specialities in a contemporary city directory.

A less expensive form of painting was seen as adequate for the rest of the rotunda. It was carried out by Clark Hooper under a contract dated October 1, 1844. The specifications called for varnishing the oak columns and "the caps of same, if required, or paint them if preferred."⁴⁵ Because those columns were subsequently removed, it is impossible to determine how the capitals were actually treated.

Hooper's other work was quite diverse in nature. He gilded the metal parts of the oil lamps which were installed to light the rotunda and did some oak graining. The lamps were, as one would expect, one of the last features of the rotunda to demand the attention of the County Court. They were mounted on cast-iron brackets and there were six "on each gallery and one lamp on each of the stone columns."⁴⁶ The lighting devices were purchased in December 1844.

Virtually all of the carpentry work must have been completed before Hooper went to work on the painting of the space. Joseph Foster, however, may well have still been engaged during this closing stage of the over-all project in building the rostrum which was later used by Thomas Hart Benton during his celebrated address in 1849. That piece of furniture stood in the rotunda until 1862, and it was probably made before the end of 1844. Aside from some finishing touches to the painting which required Hooper's attention, the space was by the beginning of 1845 substantially ready for its public debut on February 22.

The assumption made by the judges on December 30, 1844, that very little more work in the rotunda would be required in the immediate future proved, however, to be faulty. The public had no sooner seen the space for the first time during the ceremonies held on Washington's Birthday than it began to be altered as problems became apparent. \$17.62 was spent for carpeting in the rotunda on

44. Court Records, III, 484 and 520.

45. Clark Hooper to James J. Purdy, October 1, 1844, Misc. Legal Documents, JNEM.

46. Court Records, IV, 13, 114 and 131.

March 3, 1845, perhaps to be used as runners on the stairs after it was discovered that the treads became slippery on snowy or rainy days. The cost of applying oak graining on the wainscot of the first gallery was discussed four days later, and Clark Hooper resumed painting at about the same time. He continued to receive payments for his services until mid-December. Payment for oil and for five additional lamps was made on March 15, 1845. On June 12, the doors of the rotunda--doors which no longer exist--were altered by setting glass panels into them. Joseph Charles did part of that alteration, apparently working on the doors in the east and west entries although that is not specifically stated in the record. Clark Hooper is definitely known to have put glass into the north and south doors.⁴⁷

The havoc created in the area around the newly constructed building led to its being covered with tanbark in July 1844 and to a re-grading of the entire square in the fall of that year. While the latter was being accomplished, proposals were received for the demolition of the buildings at the northwest and southwest corners. Although the purpose which those structures had served is not mentioned in the records of the period, it seems clear that at least one had been a privy. The building on the northwest corner was removed in March 1845 but no further reference was made to that at the southwest.⁴⁸ It must, however, have been razed before work began on the new fence.

So grand and elegant a structure as the enlarged Courthouse required a fence to match. Specifications for its stone base--described as "hammered stone work...the top to be dressed to the segment of a circle"--were drawn up in November 1844 and a contract was let to Solomon Woods in the following January. Installation of the wrought-iron fence atop that base was underway by September 12, 1845. The supplier of it, McMurray and Dormand, continued to submit bills until mid-June of 1846. Although it had obviously taken quite a long time to complete the installation, the fence would prove to be one of the most durable features of the Courthouse. New sections were added in 1861 on the northern side, but the other original wrought-iron remained in place until 1884. The stone base lasted a decade longer than that, finally being removed during the course of extensive work on the grounds in 1895-1896.⁴⁹

47. Ibid., 117, 134, 139, 150-151, 162, 187 and 262.

48. Ibid., 55, 69-70 and 157.

49. Ibid., 86, 122-123 and 302; Daily Missouri State Journal, April 19, 1861, transcript in the archives at JNEM; Mayor's Message with Accompanying Documents...May, 1884, 196; Ibid.... 1897, 22.

The bricks used for the sidewalk created during the early 1830s were still in acceptable condition but new curbstones and guttering were now installed. Work began on the north and west sides in September 1845 and a coal vault beneath the paving on the west side, discussed by the County Court a year earlier, could have been built at the same time. The balance of the curbing and gutters was replaced by James Kahoe between November 1845 and August 1846. Once that was done, the appearance of the sidewalks was very much like that of the present pavement. The sole exception to that was the "wagon tract" on the south side which was made in November 1846.⁵⁰

The original locust trees had fared less well than the early brick. Thirty-eight new trees of the same variety were planted along the edge of the sidewalks in November 1845, and tree boxes were placed around them during the following summer.⁵¹

Two separate projects were undertaken to provide water. The first produced a cistern, the work of Peter Brooks, in April 1843. It required repair in July and was, on the request of the City of St. Louis, altered in order to make it possible for fire engines to draw water from it sometime after June 1845. It was clearly functioning properly at that time, leaving it difficult to understand why a well was dug at the corner of Fifth (now Broadway) and Market in April 1844.⁵²

The effect of all that activity, as well as an indication of what was planned for the immediate future, can be seen in an account published in the New Era toward the beginning of 1846:

We see that the work of enclosing the Court House grounds with iron railing has been commenced and is progressing rapidly. New and substantial sidewalks of brick are to extend around the whole enclosure, and on the outer edge a regular row of white locust trees are being planted. If they arrive at maturity and the yard is graded and covered with greensward, the gates erected, mounds and gravel walks made, and everything else that is in contemplation about the premises for use or ornament completed, it will be one of the handsomest and most magnificent squares in the land. The work is to be

50. Court Records, III, 75, 219, 248 and 367.

51. Ibid., 246 and 342.

52. Ibid., 334, 336 and 395; IV, 157 and 170; City Ordinance 1477, June 6, 1845.

finished in the most elegant and substantial manner, at a total cost of between six and seven thousand dollars. The railing, which we saw going up yesterday, is of a beautiful pattern, and all wrought iron. It was manufactured in this city by Messrs. McMurray & Dorman, at a cost of three thousand dollars. It is but reasonable that a building of the magnificence and cost of our County Court should have an enclosed yard and ornaments to correspond with its own magnificence. St. Louis cannot, and but few other cities can, boast of a more commanding or valuable structure.⁵³

A sign that the County Court could not relax for very long and that it would again need to turn its attention to major construction came on February 4, 1847. The State of Missouri then increased the power of the law commissioner, a post that had been created in 1845, in a fashion that made it the equivalent of a court of law. In the not too distant future, the commissioner would have to be provided with space at the Courthouse.

For a few years, nonetheless, the County Court did not need to wrestle with decisions pertaining to new construction or renovation. A ceiling had to be plastered in August 1846, and a screen for the Court of Common Pleas on the second floor of the west wing as well as new carpet for the stairs were purchased in February 1850. For the most part, however, the interior of the Courthouse would show little sign of change until 1851.⁵⁴

53. Quoted in John A. Bryan, "A Physical History of the Old Courthouse, St. Louis, Missouri, 1826-1938," 14-15.

54. Court Records, IV, 35 and 344; VI, 35.

EARLY EXPANSION, 1851-1859

The older building on the east side of the Square must have struck the County Court as being out-of-keeping with the now completed west wing and rotunda, for the judges had Joseph Foster draw up a plan and an estimate of the cost of a new east facade on March 9, 1850. Later in the same year, they again indicated that they were willing to consider the demolition of the structure. A meeting was held with the mayor of the City of St. Louis for the purpose of discussing "the application embraced in the letter of said Mayor addressed to the Court June 28, 1850 for permission of the city to erect east front of Courthouse for city offices, etc."¹

Nothing came of that but the intention to demolish the old building and to erect the present east wing on its site was now completely accepted. The hope that such construction would induce the federal government to create a Circuit Court and the State of Missouri to hold sessions of its Supreme Court in St. Louis was, when added to any other reason for doing so, found to be sufficient cause to order the demolition in February 1851. Robert S. Mitchell's plans for the new wing were completed during the following eight months, making it possible to begin work on the foundation within a year after the decision to demolish the old structure had been reached. It was completely down by March 19, 1852.²

The loss of office and courtroom space which resulted from that demolition was offset by the construction of two brick buildings, each having two stories. They are described only as being on the north and south sides, but must have been located close to the eastern or western corners of the square since they are known to have remained in existence after the foundations were dug for the present north and south wings.

The first to be built--that on the north--was requested by the sheriff, he agreeing to bear the cost. The ground floor, that being all that he needed, had a second story added to it by the County Court in order to make an office for the architect. Construction began in September 1851, and the fact that it was not completed until the same month of the following year suggests that it was reasonably substantial.³

1. Court Records, VI, 48 and 162.

2. Ibid., VI, 282; VII, 43, 81 and 97.

3. Ibid., VI, 422; VII, 118 and 206.

Work on the second structure, that on the south side, was begun in December 1851, in order to meet the statutory requirement that an office for the Probate Court be located within two hundred yards of the courthouse. It was no doubt the twin of the sheriff's building, and an idea of the size and general appearance of both can be gained from the record of the hanging of six window shutters on the second floor. That would reflect a building with two bays on the front and rear and one on each side. It was ready for occupancy by the Probate Court and the county marshal in June 1853.⁴

The use of whitening, as distinguished from painting, is mentioned for the first time in the records of the County Court on May 26, 1851. From that time on, the references to whitewash or calcimine being applied become fairly common although the specific location of the work is seldom identified. Much of the work was done by M. L. Julian, who gained a virtual monopoly on painting contracts given out by the County Court over the next decade.⁵

The walls of the east wing were not yet complete in April 1853 when the excavation for the south wing was undertaken. Still, the progress on the two additions quickly became almost parallel. The glass for both was ordered on the same day in 1855 and interior carpentry was underway at roughly the same time in the following year.⁶ Things seemed to go much more smoothly than they had in the construction of the west wing, perhaps because Mitchell was less subject to changing his original plans or less willing to accept ideas for alterations from the judges of the County Court.

One other difference is apparent in the record of the east and south wings. In the case of the west wing, the original, if futile, hope was that both floors within it would be ready for use by the courts at the same moment. The rooms in the wings now being added were fitted up as soon as the course of exterior construction permitted. Space in the basement could, therefore, be assigned to the circuit attorney as early as October 22, 1855, and the Probate Court's new room on the south side of the first floor of the east wing was usable by July 8, 1856.⁷

The first indication of the laying of carpeting in a courtroom came on March 8, 1853, when \$44.74 was spent on such material for the Circuit Court. It was placed over the bricks in the first

4. Ibid., VII, 39, 151, 230 and 345.

5. Ibid., VI, 345. For further references to such work, see Ibid., VII, 82, 143, 412, VIII, 50, 59, 105, 526, XI, 154-155.

6. Ibid., VII, 311; VIII, 279, 340 and 391.

7. Ibid., VIII, 292; Daily St. Louis Intelligencer, July 8, 1856.

Figure 14

Lithograph by Leopold Gast of Robert S. Mitchell's Perspective Rendering of the Courthouse, Published in John Hogan's Thoughts About the City of St. Louis... (St. Louis, 1854). The illustration indicates that the proposed development of the grounds included fountains in both the southeast and the northeast yards, and that the general form of the building at its completion in 1861 had already been determined upon. From the Collection of the Missouri Historical Society.

floor of the west wing. The other innovation of the year, more significant in terms of the overall appearance of the interior, was the introduction of gas lighting in November. A deposit of carbon from the earlier oil lamps in the rotunda may have been very evident because it was again painted, this time by M. L. Julian, in May 1854. Prior to that, in February, he had grained and varnished a case for the office of the clerk of the Land Court, giving an indication of the finish which was applied to furniture at the time and, because of the identity of the court, helping to point to the reason new construction was needed.⁸

Actually, there was a variety of new needs for space. The Land Court had been created in August 1853; the Supreme Court of Missouri was now to hold annual sessions in St. Louis; and the Law Library, a privately supported organization, had outgrown the space on the west side of the second floor of the north extension which had been given it in 1843. As even further inducement for pressing ahead on the expansion of the building, the west wing had developed serious problems and it was about to require extensive renovation.

The changes to be made on the first floor of the west wing were underway in March 1855, and they were nicely described by a local newspaperman. He also neatly pinpointed the problems generated by constant changes in the wishes of the men who were responsible for the building.

"The House That Jack Built"--This thing of "shreds and patches," the St. Louis County Court House, appears to be in a constant state of metamorphosis. The carpenters and other workmen are now busily engaged in tearing down and ripping up everything inside of the beautiful room heretofore occupied by the Circuit Court, for the purpose of running a hall through it similar to the one in the opposite wing fronting on Fourth-street. This will leave a long room on each side, full of large columns, which cannot but be very much in the way. One of these rooms is to be occupied by the Circuit Court, and the other by the Criminal Court. The Jury Rooms, which are to be taken off at the West-end, will reduce the main rooms to something like just proportions. This building has already cost about twice what two better ones could be erected for, and it is not half done yet.⁹

8. Court Records, VII, 286 and 450; VIII, 25 and 72.

9. St. Louis Daily Evening News, March 13, 1855. The rooms were in fact assigned to the Land Court and the law commissioner.

Mitchell would later take credit for the alteration on this floor as well as for those which would soon afterward be made on the upper story of the same wing, and he may not at the time have been pleased by a reference to the "Grand, Gothic and Peculiar" appearance of the Courthouse.¹⁰

The plan of the first floor when the work was finished was identical to that of today except for the fact that the partitions creating the jury rooms are no longer in existence. Nor are the columns which are mentioned in the newspaper's description. They may have been remnants of the earlier construction which were in fact scheduled to be removed during the process of remodeling.

Further evidence concerning the work that was done in 1855 may be inferred from the discovery in 1940 of an early layer of paint on the north wall of the room on the south side of the corridor. That wall was built in 1855 and it was found to have a "high wainscot of marbeling."¹¹

The renovation of the first floor was still in progress in October 1855, the Circuit Court then being required to open its session at the Central Fire House. The disarray visible to visitors at that time became more widespread during the year that followed. Preparations for the impending demolition of the separate building on the north side, the structure which the sheriff had requested in 1851, began to be made in September 1856 "for the purpose of commencing the erection of the north wing," but the razing of it was, typically, deferred for a year.¹² To add further to the impression of general upheaval, a complete renovation of the courtroom on the second floor of the west wing had been inaugurated in July 1856. "Unightly columns" and "three useless galleries" which had been there in the past were now to be removed.

Other work of 1856 in that room involved placing the judge's bench at the south side, instead of the west where it had previously stood, and dividing off thirty feet of the area for jury rooms. Further changes described at the time included a full replacement of the roof above.

10. St. Louis Missouri Republican, July 24, 1855 and November 10, 1859. Latter quoted by Charles E. Peterson in "Memorandum for the Files," May 28, 1946, JNEM.

11. "Old Courthouse Interior Survey," June 25 and 27, 1940, OCH Interior Survey--West Wing, JNEM.

12. Missouri Republican, October 22, 1855; Daily St. Louis Intelligencer, September 19, 1856.

A new roof will also be put on, the old one having so decayed as to be unsafe. Formerly, the weight of the floor was sustained by the roof, to which it was attached by heavy iron rods. By means of the partition walls recently built in the room below, the room is now supported without any attachment to the roof, and the rods are therefore rendered useless. The new roof will be of iron, covered with copper, as is the case with all the roofing put up since this. All the repairs are to be completed in time for the next term of the Court [of Common Pleas], commencing on the third Monday in September.¹³

The same report indicated that the south wing was "in a very forward condition" and the east wing was "almost entirely finished, the only unfinished room being that intended for the Circuit Court." Of that space on the second floor, it was said that "it will be the most beautiful room in the building, if not in the West."

Part of the praise directed toward the new courtroom on the second floor in the east wing can be attributed to the installation there of the finest flooring that to date could have been found in the Courthouse. While brick set on edge had been considered an appropriate material for the earliest courtroom to be occupied by the Circuit Court--that on the first floor of the west wing--the sense of fitness that prevailed in May 1855 demanded "the fine variegated marble known as McPherson marble" which was described in the contract with the Empire Stone Company.¹⁴ The same flooring was used in all the rooms and corridors of the east wing.

The Court of Common Pleas, which returned to the second floor of the west wing when the renovation there was complete, would a little more than a year later obtain flooring which was superior in appearance to that of the east wing. On November 24, 1856, the County Court agreed to pay for the installation of "tiles of the fine marble obtained near the Iron Mountain in this State...The tiles are to be 12" x 12" (except for making out the borders) one inch thick....surface well laid in best quality of Hydraulic Cement and finely smoothed off--the tiles to be alternate--Light and Flesh Color." Since the alteration of the space remained unfinished at the time the October 1856 session of the Court of Common Pleas opened, its judge was given temporary possession of the oval courtroom on the second floor of the east wing; a fact which helps to

13. Daily St. Louis Intelligencer, July 3, 1856.

14. "Contract for tiling and flagging the East Wing...May 11, 1855," Court Records on Construction, JNEM.

provide an idea of when the construction there was complete.¹⁵

The first major adornment of the grounds is a product of the same period. On August 11, 1855, the City of St. Louis granted to the county "the free use of water from the Waterworks...for a fountain to be erected by the County Court in the Courthouse yard." The provision was made subject to the amount used not being in excess of "the capacity of water issuing from a three-inch pipe," an indeed liberal restriction. No definite date for the erection of the fountain has been located in the official records but it was, according to a newspaper account, present during at least "several seasons" before March 1861. A further embellishment--the substitution of stone flagging for the brick sidewalk around the Courthouse--was also contemplated in June 1855. While the members of the County Court thought that the cost would be "only three times that of brick, and the durability ten times as great," they abandoned this part of their plans for exterior changes.¹⁶

The time, effort and money that had been expended in the construction of the south wing began to pay dividends on August 21, 1856. On that day, the room at the west side of the second floor was ready for occupancy by the State Supreme Court and the space on the east side of the same floor was assigned to the Law Library. Very little information is available concerning the appearance of the latter space at the time. All that can be determined is that it was furnished with twelve cuspidors--a common feature in all of the rooms within the building--and that there were three tables.¹⁷

A far better impression of the arrangement and appearance of the Supreme Court can be gained as a result of the existence of plans made at the time it was remodeled in the early twentieth century. It was originally divided into two areas: the courtroom proper adjacent to the corridor, and a set of three rooms located behind an interior partition built of brick. (Figures 15 and 16) The wall behind the bench had an elliptical niche with a curved top. The ceiling had a heavy cornice and a circular dome in its center. All things considered, the proportions were somewhat awkward but the

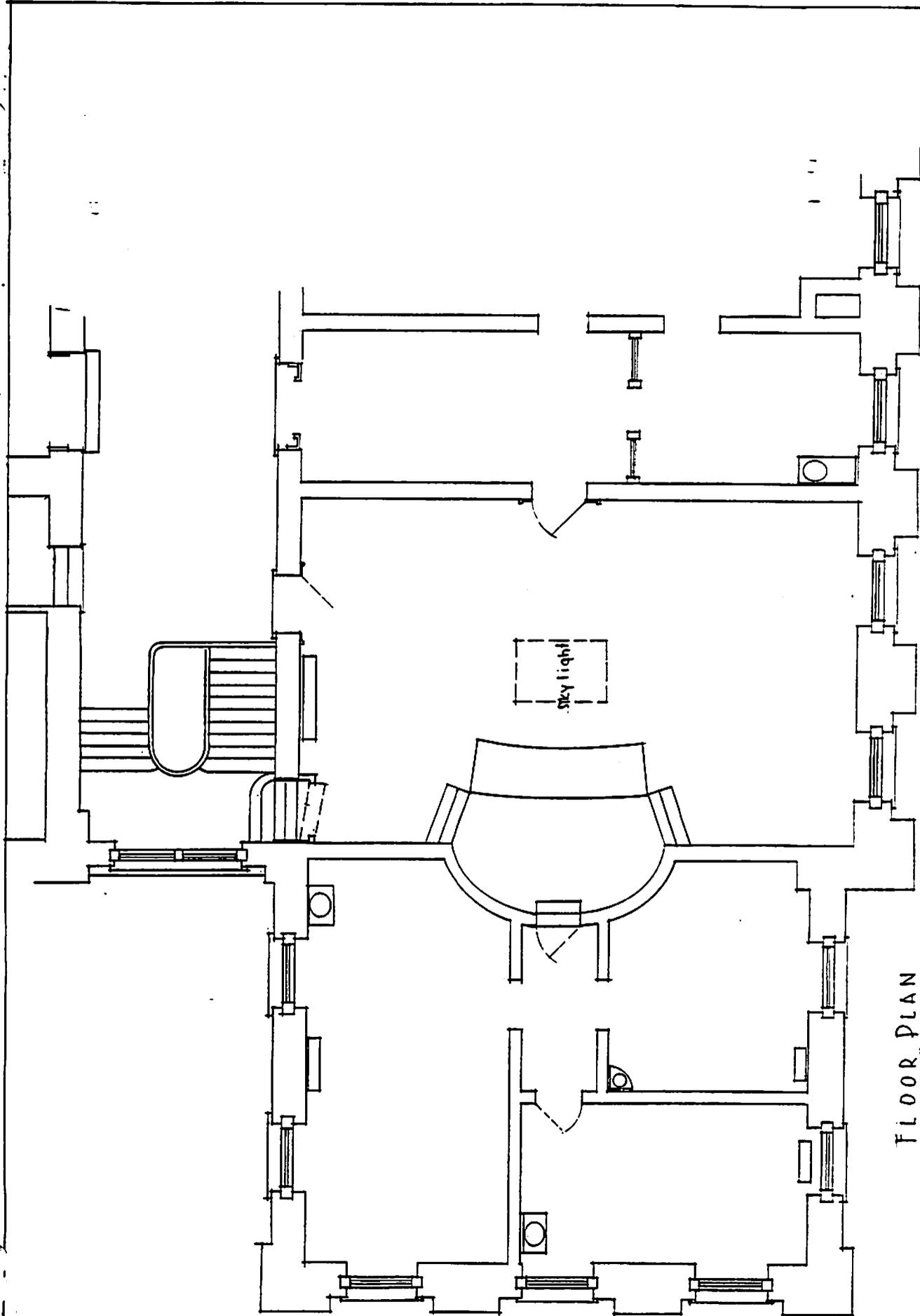
15. "Contract for tiling floors in Courthouse...November 24, 1856," Court Records on Construction, JNEM; Daily St. Louis Intelligencer, October 14, 1856.

16. City Ordinance 3425, August 11, 1855; Daily Missouri State Journal, June 1, 1855, typescript extract at JNEM.

17. Court Records, VIII, 408; "The Law Library Association of St. Louis (A Brief History)," 3, Ms copy in Law Library of St. Louis.

Figure 15

Based on "Blueprint plan for alterations, approved on January 22, 1904," Archives of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial.



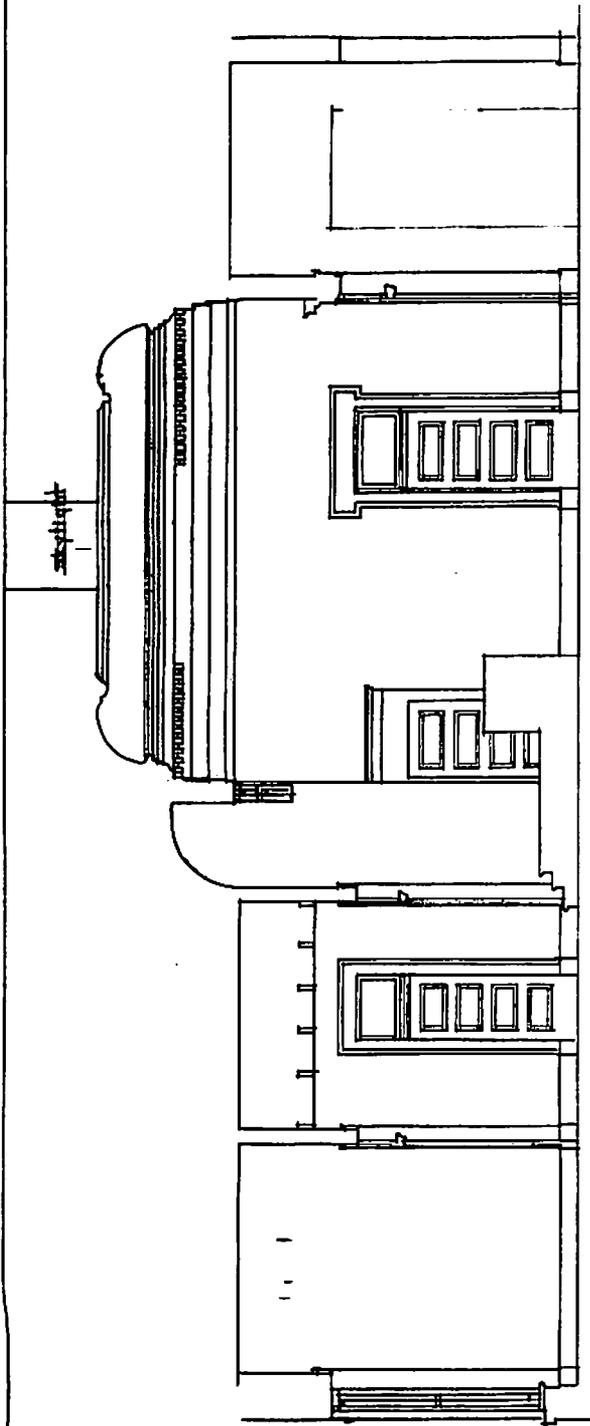
SUPREME COURTROOM
SECOND FLOOR, SOUTHWEST WING
OLD COURTHOUSE
ST. LOUIS, MO.
SHEET 102

FLOOR PLAN
Scale 1/4"=1'-0"

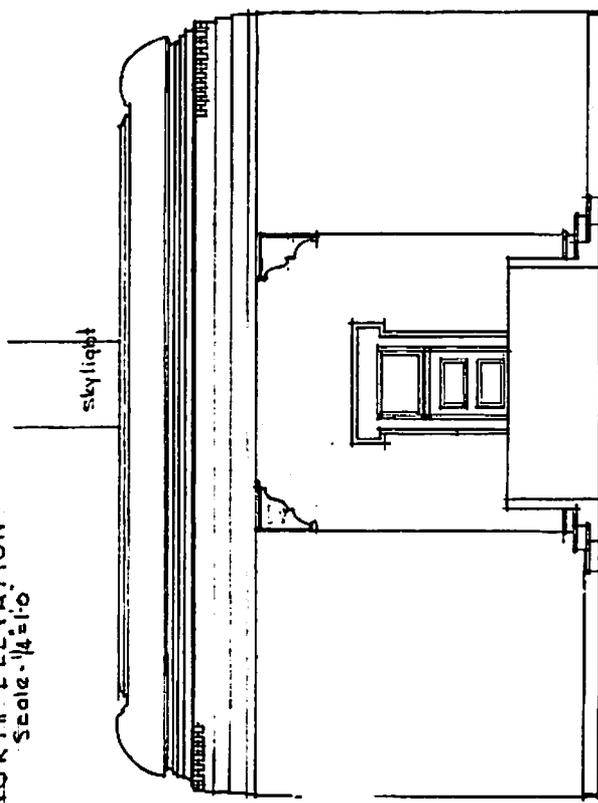
Drawing by: Garhardt Kramer
15 August 1914

Figure 16

Based on "Blueprint plan for alterations, approved on January 22, 1904," Archives of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial.



NORTH ELEVATION
Scale - 1/4" = 1'-0"



WEST ELEVATION
Scale - 1/4" = 1'-0"

SUPREME COURT ROOM
SECOND FLOOR, SOUTHWEST WING
OLD COURTHOUSE
St. Louis, Mo. April 7/22

Drawn by Garbards Kramer
13 August 1919.

room must have been as impressive as space intended for so important a judicial body should be.

Justices of the Supreme Court had become accustomed to having living quarters provided for them within the courthouse at Jefferson City. That tradition was maintained in St. Louis with beds and other furniture being placed in the three rooms which were located at the rear of the courtroom.¹⁸

Mitchell provided the design for the Supreme Court as well as for the Criminal Court which held its first session in the room on the east side of the first floor of the south wing on November 3, 1856. He did not, however, work on the room which would be occupied by the Law Library. According to the County Court, plans for that area were submitted by "Mr. Drake," a reference to Charles D. Drake, a prominent local attorney and one of the founders of the Law Library Association in 1838.¹⁹

The problem of sanitation and the carrying off of sewage was considerably lessened when the City of St. Louis on December 5, 1856, in response to a request from the County Court, made provision for "a sewer to connect with the one now terminating at the corner of Fifth and Market streets, for the purpose of draining the basement rooms of the Court House." That must have vastly improved conditions in the basement of the west wing where privies with cast-iron vessels which were emptied once each week had been in use since 1844.²⁰

An intriguing entry appears in the minutes of the County Court for June 2, 1856. It calls for the payment of \$203.18 to Hunt & Wiseman for "hardware for courthouse." Since an iron double-door was found in one of the entries to the west room on the first floor

18. Barton Bates, a justice of the court, mentioned living in the Courthouse in a letter to his daughter on April 3, 1862, Bates Papers, Missouri Historical Society. Reference to these "private apartments" is also to be found in the Daily St. Louis Intelligencer, January 30, 1857.

19. Daily St. Louis Intelligencer, November 3, 1856; Daily Missouri Democrat, July 4, 1862; Court Records, VIII, 396, 408 and 440; Joseph F. Callahan, "Law Library Completes Century of Service," The Bench and Bar (February, 1938), 1.

20. City Ordinance 3751, December 5, 1856; Court Records, IV, 70. Another reference to "sewers at Courthouse" appeared on May 26, 1851. The meaning of that is far from clear but it seems apparent that it did not apply to a connection with an exterior sewer line. See Court Records, VI, 345.

of the south wing in 1940, there is at least circumstantial evidence that the door was a part of the original features of the wing. The amount of the bill suggests that the company supplied a fair amount of material, pointing thereby to a conclusion that such iron doors were installed in more than one place.²¹

The earliest indication of a fire at the Courthouse dates from February 7, 1857. As is frequently the case with such incidents, the report is of more importance for the detail it offers than it is because it documents a simple fact. The fire broke out in the room in the east wing basement which was occupied by the county treasurer, and involved lathing on the east side of the office. The account notes that "owing to the dampness of the stone wall, some studding had been put up to keep the lath and plaster from it and it was behind this that the fire caught."²² That is the sole evidence which demonstrates that difficulty with water seeping through the foundation had arisen so early in the building's history and also documents the mid-nineteenth-century response to the condition.

Much greater knowledge about the appearance of the building at the time would be attainable if the results of a project undertaken for the county in May 1857 had been preserved. J. H. Fitzgibbon was then paid \$18.00 "for photographs of Court House."²³ Aside from the daguerreotype made in 1845 or 1846 (Figure 9), no earlier evidence of the creation of photographic illustrations of the Courthouse has come to the surface. Unfortunately, a search of local collections has failed to disclose any examples of the work done in 1857 by Fitzgibbon. If those are ever located, understanding of the history of the structure will be considerably enhanced.

The desire to have such photographs made may have been prompted by the fact that the building was about to undergo yet another major enlargement. With the completion of the south and east wings, it had become an imposing edifice but had also taken on what must have seemed a rather strange aspect. The squat dome atop the rotunda rose between the east and west wings. The stone columns of the east portico had been put in place in 1855 but those at the west side would not be completed until late in 1859.²⁴ The south wing looked much as it does today except for the fact that the

21. Court Records, VIII, 376; Historic American Buildings Survey, 31-8, Sheets 50 and 51, JNEM.

22. Daily St. Louis Intelligencer, February 7, 1857.

23. Court Records, VIII, 462.

24. Ibid., 158-159, IX, 54 and 108; X, 36 and 40.

transverse hall, the space between the early extension from the rotunda and the new wing itself, was not yet enclosed. The ground on the north side was still occupied by the two-story office building which sheltered the sheriff and the county architect. Both it and the similar structure on the south side of the square which had been erected for the Probate Court were not razed until September 1857. All in all, the feeling of balance or symmetry which Singleton had attempted to create in the design he provided in 1839 had not yet been attained.

The men who built the south wing found that an early error in the placement of the west wing and rotunda would produce a minor asymmetry which persists to this day. The facade of the south wing had to parallel the sidewalk on Market Street but it was discovered that the porch which had been added to the southern extension was several inches out of line. Compensation for that was made by placing the rear wall of the new construction at a very slight angle to the earlier facade, creating a space that is slightly wider at the east side than it is at the west. When the north wing was added, a similar correction would need to be made there. The floor of its transverse hall is wider at the west than it is at the east.

The first signs pointing toward the addition of the north wing were noted during 1857, and the Courthouse was finally on a course which would over the next four years make it both complete and substantially symmetrical. On June 19, the fence along Chestnut Street was taken down. That was eighteen years after the construction of the west wing had begun and the opportunity to remind the County Court of how prolonged the work had been was not overlooked. As the Daily St. Louis Intelligencer put it, "a great deal of stone is already dressed and we may expect soon to see at least the exterior of the courthouse finished."²⁵ Further proof to the public that county officials were now determined to complete the structure was provided in September when the buildings created for the sheriff, the architect and the Probate Court were demolished.

Even that much progress during the summer of 1857 did not totally satisfy local newspaper editors. One printed two articles about the Courthouse in a single issue: the first speaking of the excavation for the north wing as an "inscrutable structure" that was probably intended for use as the "reservoir" and the other referring caustically to the razing of the "temporary" offices which had stood since 1851. "A singular anomaly," the writer said, "the history of the court-house in this 'fast city.'"²⁶

²⁵ Issue of June 19, 1857.

²⁶ St. Louis Daily Missouri Democrat. September 1, 1857.

Thomas Lanham, who had replaced Mitchell as architect in May 1857, did attempt to carry out his duties with reasonable dispatch. He awarded a contract for the rubble and ashlar foundation of the north wing on September 10, 1857, and the brickwork was to begin in the following August. Typically in the history of this problem-plagued building, the contract for the laying of the brick was voided by William Rumbold, Lanham's replacement, in August 1859. By that time, however, the building had reached a point at which the copper for the roof had been ordered.²⁷

Passers-by in the summer of 1857 would have been even more struck by the appearance of the dome than they would by the work being done on the north side of the lot. By August 21, the old, squat dome had been removed and in its place had risen "the elegant framework which for some days past has adorned the noble elevation." A discussion of it was said to have produced two conflicting opinions: one maintaining that it was meant to be a "hen coop," the other that it was a "hog pen." Happily, the report concluded, "the intricate case has been dismissed by the carpenters, who have taken down the portentous frame, and will soon erect something which shall give beautiful promise of a work for the ages and the world to admire."²⁸ In fact, the rotunda would be open to rain and snow for several more years but the last steps toward the completion of the present structure were now being taken.

Lanham would seem by August 1857 to have drawn up plans for much more than the replacement of the squat dome with a larger one of his own design. He caused the installation of additional means of access to the upper floors of the building under a contract granted to James G. McPheeters on September 5, 1857, and which was approved by the County Court two months later. There were to be two flights of steps placed in the transverse hall of the south wing, each running from the first to the second floor, and "two in the same hall of the west wing one from the first floor to the second and the other from the second floor to the third." All were to be made of iron "ready to receive the wooden rail."²⁹

When McPheeters finished his project, the Courthouse became endowed with an overabundance of stairways. There was the circular

27. "Contract for Rubble Masonry for North Wing...September 15, 1857," Court Records on Construction, JNEM; Court Records, IX, 44 and 136; X, 41.

28. Daily Missouri Democrat, August 21, 1857.

29. "Contract for four flights of stairs...September 5, 1857," Court Records on Construction, JNEM; Court Records, VIII, 501.

stair in the rotunda, the cast-iron staircase which was part of the original construction of the east wing and which ran from the basement to the third floor, the new stairs in the south and west wings, and a "temporary" stair which had been built in the north wing to provide access to the room on the west side of the second floor of the extension from the rotunda. Little is known about that stair in the north wing, but it was probably erected shortly after the Law Library moved into the Courthouse in January 1843. It remained in being until Joseph Foster removed it in about 1860.³⁰

The installation of the stairs in the south and the west wings thereby appears to have been a prelude to the remodeling of the rotunda, and the award of the contract to McPheeters affords an indication that by September 1857 Lanham had produced a plan that called for the removal of the old circular stairs. Once the work in the south and the west wings was completed, he may in fact have begun to make changes in the rotunda including the demolition of the hypothesized fifth level gallery and the taking down of the stairs which ran from the third level gallery to the observatory.

Further reason to believe that Lanham envisioned a great deal of remodeling in the rotunda is presented in May 1858 when M. L. Julian, noted previously as the County Court's favorite painter of the decade, was given a contract for "knobbing, stopping, painting, varnishing & glazing" both there and in the north wing. Neither of those spaces was then under cover but the architect must have believed that his new dome above the rotunda and the roof over the north wing would soon be in place. Julian was paid \$2,500 on February 5, 1858; \$300 on February 5, 1859; and \$500 on July 12, 1859.³¹ While the first of those payments had to be for work in the east, south or west wings, the second and third could reflect the completion of painting in the rotunda or the north wing. The documentary record is once again not specific as to what it was that Julian was painting in late 1858 and early 1859.

Lanham did have in May 1858 very good reason to believe that there would soon be a new dome over the rotunda. He had made provision for its support slightly more than three months earlier, contracting on February 12, 1858, with James G. McPheeters for the twenty-four cast-iron columns which were to be placed atop the

30. "Bill of Corrected Measurements," item 409.

31. "Contract for painting, glazing etc. North Wing and Rotunda... May 15, 1858," Court Records on Construction, JNEM; Court Records, VIII, 529; IX, 84 and 132.

existing octagonal drum.³² Such work was the prelude to the completion of the dome itself, it being intended to be made from "heavy iron plates representing paneling,"³³ and in the early part of 1858 Lanham could turn his attention to the remodeling of the interior because it then seemed safe to assume that his entire plan would be brought to completion in the very near future. That would serve to explain the absence in Joseph Foster's accounts of any mention of the cutting back of the second and third level galleries or the removal of the stair above the third level gallery since he described only work done after Lanham was dismissed as the architect in September 1859. Lanham's tenure, it should also be remarked, stretched some twenty months beyond the date at which he made provision for the erection of the exterior cast-iron columns of the dome and it is highly unlikely that he did nothing which affected the interior of the rotunda during that amount of time. He must indeed have begun the work which would eventually be completed by his successor in July, 1862.

That Lanham was not dilatory in his duties is demonstrated by the rapid progress he made in the construction of the north wing. The agreement he reached with James McPheeters in February 1858 called upon McPheeters to "make deliver & put up at said Court House the inside columns to support the floors of said north wing."³⁴ Those columns were therefore ordered only five months after provision was made for the foundation of the wing. If the architect could manage that rate of speed in the work there, it is doubtful that he acted sluggishly in carrying out his ideas for the rotunda.

The north wing, it should be noted, was unusual in one respect. Earlier expansion of the building had followed closely, or slightly preceded, a growth in the local legal system. No new courts were anticipated in the late 1850s and it is more than possible that the north wing was begun with the assumption that it would eventually be occupied by the City of St. Louis. The notion that city offices would someday be located within the Courthouse had arisen as early as 1850, and the county now willingly allowed a single city agency --the Fire and Police Telegraph--to take the third floor of the northern extension from the rotunda. The necessary equipment was installed and the service entered operation on February 22, 1858, coincidentally the thirteenth anniversary of the formal opening of the rotunda.³⁵

32. "Contract for Cast Iron...February 12, 1858," Court Records on Construction, JNEM.

33. Daily Missouri Democrat, July 4, 1862.

34. "Contract for Cast Iron...February 12, 1858."

35. Daily Evening News and Intelligencer, February 19, 1858.

The lack of a need to locate new courtrooms on the second floor of the north wing had the effect of making it possible to have there the only full third floor in the structure. The placement of domes in the ceilings over the oval courtrooms of the east and west wings and above the Supreme Court on the west side of the south wing had been the product of the need to contend with the judges' sense of what was proper to their dignity. Those domes also made the space above the rooms totally unusable. Because the second floor of the north wing was to be turned to non-judicial purposes, and because the always delicate sensibilities of the judges did not need to be considered, simple flat ceilings were sufficient there. That permitted the space above to be used as a third floor.

Attention was also being given at the time to the exterior of the Courthouse. On November 4, 1858, the County Court directed that "a suitable dial or plate to show the hour by sun and shadow" be procured and indicated confidence in the ability of Major W. H. Bell, then stationed at the United States Arsenal in St. Louis, to supervise the erection of the device in the southeast yard. Payments to various individuals, but none to Bell himself, appear in the records between March 25 and July 25, 1859. In the midst of that period, Benjamin F. Crain was appointed "Superintendent of the County Sun Dial,"³⁶ and he may have taken on the task originally assigned to Major Bell.

Regard for the appearance of the interior did not slacken during the course of the work on the north wing and the dome. The various court officials were never averse to making requests for new or better furnishings and there was consequently a considerable amount of carpeting done at this time, including enough to create a bill for \$104.20 as a result of work for the Supreme Court. The Circuit Court obtained a chandelier and two stoves, while the Probate Court had "gas fixtures" put up several months later. Those fixtures may also have taken the form of a chandelier.³⁷ With the passage of time, the courtrooms were becoming increasingly elegant.

Delay bred by controversy marked the history of the construction of the new dome during 1859. It has been ably described by John A. Bryan and Donald Dosch, and need be followed here only in its general outline. A commission to inspect William Rumbold's proposed design was appointed on October 4, an event which was followed by an order of October 24 that "all workmen whose services are at present unnecessary" be discharged. The question of the strength of the dome which Rumbold intended to erect was not finally settled

36. Court Records, IX, 54, 93, 101, 108, 117 and 138.

37. Ibid., VIII, 525; IX, 56, 81 and 98; X, 50.

until January 1860, indicating that the suspension of work had spanned more than three months.³⁸

The progress which was apparent in the construction of the north wing, on the other hand, caused the interest of the City of St. Louis in the acquisition of space there to become ever greater. In October 1859 the mayor of St. Louis reported to the city's legislative body that there was "reasonable assurance" that the north wing would be made available for use as a City Hall. He recommended the appointment of a committee to discuss the matter with county officials, noting that the city could in such fashion secure fireproof quarters which would be superior to the rented space which had been used for municipal offices since 1849. As to the relationship of the city and the county, he offered his belief that "our interests have now become so blended that that which is beneficial or injurious to one is so to both."³⁹ His observation would soon prove to be in keeping with the views of county officials as well.

His statement was, in fact, intended as much for the county commissioners as it was for the members of the City Council. The former made up a relatively new governing body, having replaced the old County Court as the result of a controversy centering on financial mismanagement which had begun to brew during 1858. The state legislature had reacted to an ever-deepening scandal by abolishing the County Court. One of the men who became involved in the sequel to all of that opined that the highly charged atmosphere of local politics at the time led the legislators astray. They thought, he argued, that the act creating the Board of County Commissioners would not change the party affiliation of local leadership. It was meant to be a piece of gerrymandering which would insure continued control of the county by Democrats. To their chagrin, the election of the new governing body for the county produced a Republican majority.⁴⁰

The immediate impact of that change was sufficiently important to merit attention. Thomas Lanham was dismissed and William Rumbold, architect of the existing dome and critic of Lanham's plan for the

38. Ibid., IX, 136; X, 28, 39, 58 and 89.

39. Mayor's Message with Accompanying Reports of City Officers... October 10, 1859 (St. Louis, 1859), 4.

40. William Taussig, "Personal Recollections of General Grant," Missouri Historical Society Publications, II (1903), 5. See also St. Louis Daily Express, August 10, 1860, for an account of continuing Republican electoral success that supports Taussig's contention.

same work, was installed in his place. The change in party control, however, had a more subtle influence on the original decorative work inside the new rotunda. Like most things that related to governmental affairs in St. Louis during the mid-nineteenth century, it took on all the trappings of party allegiance.

COMPLETION, 1860-1862

In spite of the delay caused by the controversy over the strength of the dome which Rumbold proposed to erect, the work above the rotunda progressed with pleasing speed. A group of local officials and newspapermen were invited to a "collation" on July 4, 1860, which was held in celebration of the fact that "at last the work of generations bids fair to be perfected."

For weeks past workmen have been engaged in elevating to their position the massive iron ribs, each weighing two tons, which are to form the frame work of the dome. The progress of the workmen has been watched with eager interest by our citizens, who expressed their admiration as the ribs was [sic] slowly but surely elevated to the dizzy height where they were to find a resting place...on the morning of the glorious Fourth, a party of fifty well-known citizens, members of the press and others, at the invitation of the Contractors assembled on a platform on top of the rotunda, to honor the occasion....¹

With that amount of work complete, Rumbold's attention could turn to the features planned for the upper level of the rotunda. One of those, the glass to be set into the walkway at the lantern, could be attended to locally. That glass was meant to admit light onto the two sets of stairs which Rumbold caused to be installed: one in the space between the inner and outer domes which rose thirty feet and ended at a point level with the inner surface of the top of the dome; the other placed above the eye of the dome, affording access to the walkway above. The glass which would eventually be installed in that eye was also illuminated by the light which entered through the glass in the walkway.

Since the work it entailed posed no serious or complex technical problems, it proved possible to procure the glass for the walkway from a firm based in St. Louis--that headed by the same James G. McPheeters who had been successful in obtaining contracts for the cast-iron stairs in the south and west wings and for metal which had been used in the construction of the dome.² Rumbold's second concern of the moment, that of finding a supplier for the glass to be set into the eye, proved much more troublesome for him.

1. Daily Express, July 6, 1860.

2. J. G. McPheeters Contract--Glazing on Dome, August 29, 1860, County Court Records--OCH Transactions, JNEM.

Like the glass installed in the walkway, the material used in the eye was to serve more than a single function. It would, in the first place, allow some of the light which passed through the walkway glass to be admitted into the upper reaches of the interior of the rotunda. In that sense, it can be considered to have formed a skylight. The degree to which it helped to illuminate the interior was, however, greatly diminished because, as Rumbold described it, it was "done in enamel colors mixed with stained colors on the glass, and vitrified."³ The purpose of that was not made clear in the accounts of the work done before 1862, but a statement made in 1869 offers complete clarification. While the vitrified colors were then said to have "prevented the light from being reflected downward," Rumbold had not used clear glass in the eye for a very good and simple reason: it "was painted and stained to hide the stairs over it from being seen from below."⁴ Because it was intended to fulfill that function, it would never provide more than a minimal amount of illumination for the interior.

The space which was hidden from view was that which is now the upper dome, a feature of the rotunda that did not yet exist in 1862. There was then a single dome, which has since come to be termed the "lower," and the interior was described by the Daily Democrat in 1862 as rising to a point which was only 131' above the stone floor of the rotunda. The same report specifically added that the height "of the dome (inside) is 30 feet,"⁵ a measurement which corresponds to the present lower dome as neatly as does the figure given for the height of the entire space. With that knowledge as a guide, it is possible to envision the appearance of the rotunda as it was when Rumbold completed his work. (Figure 17)

The "painted and stained" glass was at that time fitted into the circular opening created by the cornice atop the present lower dome. A space which was approximately 12' in height was thereby set off from the sight of the visitors below, and it contained an iron staircase which ran up to the walkway of the lantern.⁶ To reach that stair, a person had first to ascend one of the stairways placed between the inner and outer domes and then to pass through one of the doorways in the partition which surrounded the space above the eye of the dome. Joseph Foster accounted for the hanging of at least one door with a lock in this part of the building,

3. William Rumbold to Board of County Commissioners, May 31, 1862. County Court Records--OCH Transactions, JNEM.

4. Daily Democrat, November 7, 1869.

5. Ibid., July 4, 1862.

6. Ibid., November 7, 1869.

Figure 17

Hypothetical Sectional View Through the Rotunda, 1862-1870. This drawing will be provided by the Denver Service Center.



Figure 18

The drawing reflects changes made subsequent to 1862.

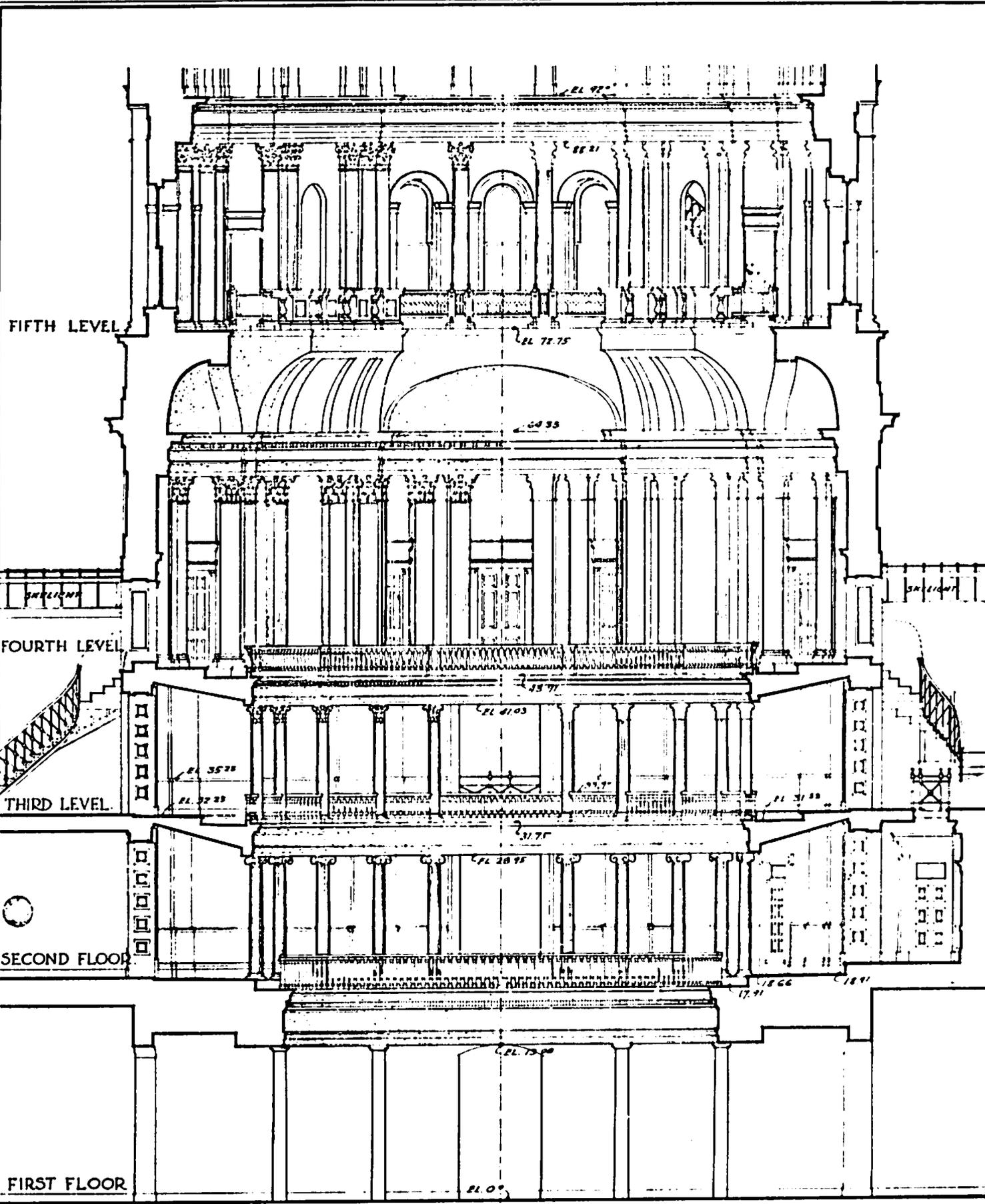
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 OFFICE OF NATIONAL PARKS BUILDINGS AND RESERVATIONS
 BRANCH OF PLANS AND DESIGN

NAME OF STRUCTURE
OLD ST. LOUIS COURT HOUSE
 BROADWAY, MARKET, CHESTNUT,
 & FOURTH STREETS - ST. LOUIS, MO.

SHEET NO.
34-B
 C. & G. 1934

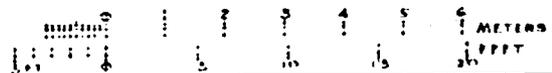
HISTORIC AMERICAN
 BUILDINGS SURVEY
 SHEET **9** OF **17**

DATE



SECTION THROUGH ROTUNDA
 LOOKING SOUTH

GEORGE HARKNESS II.
 ROBERT M. PRICE.



27004 100P 50



Figure 19

Changes made in the lantern after 1862 are shown.

OFFICE OF NATIONAL PARKS, BUILDINGS, AND RESERVATIONS
 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 BRANCH OF PLANS AND DESIGN

NAME OF STRUCTURE
OLD ST. LOUIS COURT HOUSE
 BROADWAY, MARKET, CHESTNUT
 & FOURTH STREETS, ST. LOUIS, MO.

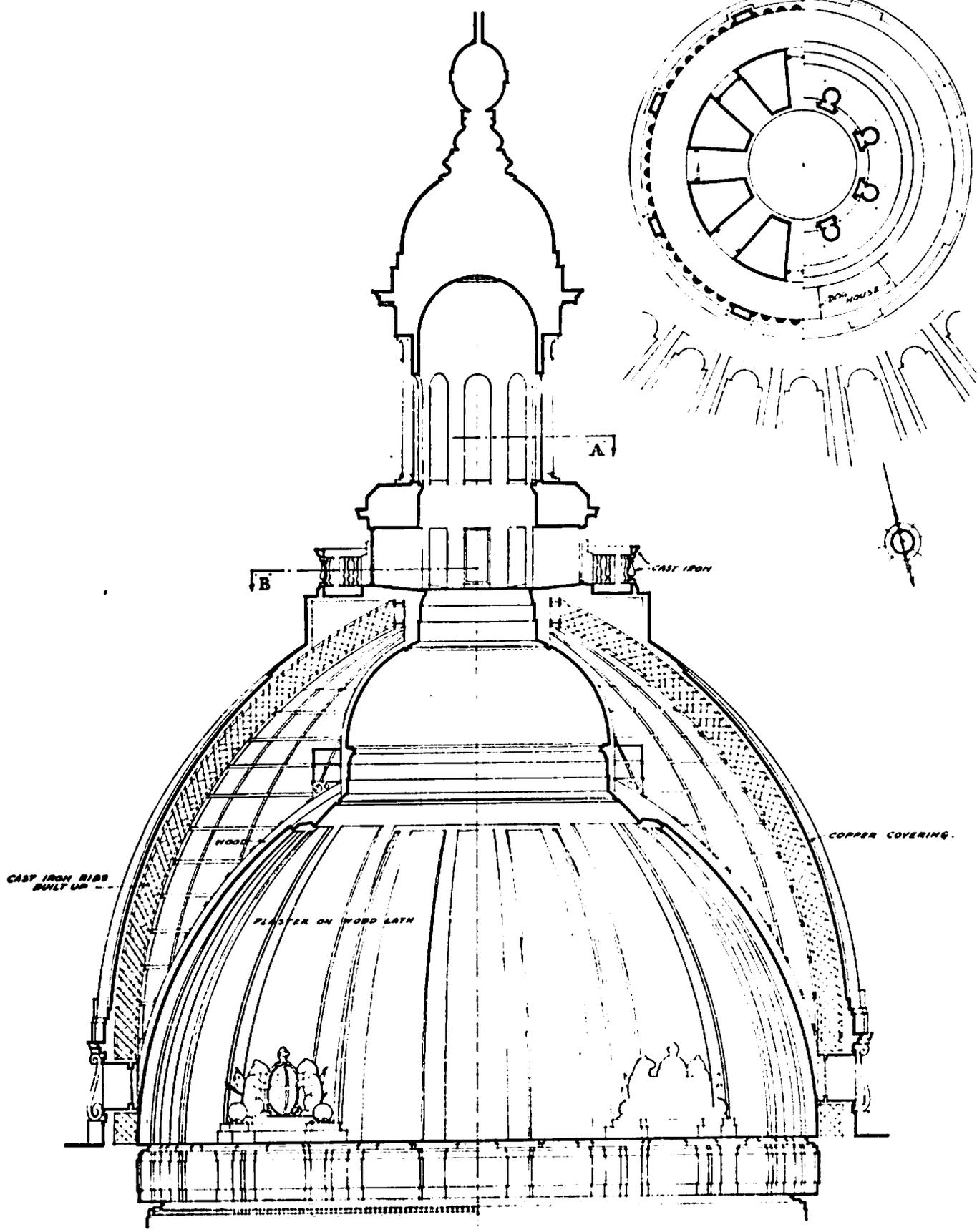
SURVEY NO.
37-B
 APRIL, 1934

HISTORIC AMERICAN
 BUILDINGS SURVEY
 SHEET 10 OF 17

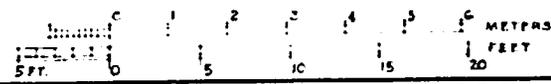
NOTE NO.

HALF
 PLAN AT 'B'

HALF
 PLAN AT 'A'



SECTION THROUGH DOME



GEORGE HARKNESS, III, DEL.

210210 11 05 50

Figure 20

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 OFFICE OF NATIONAL PARKS, BUILDINGS, AND RESERVATIONS
 BRANCH OF PLANS AND DESIGN

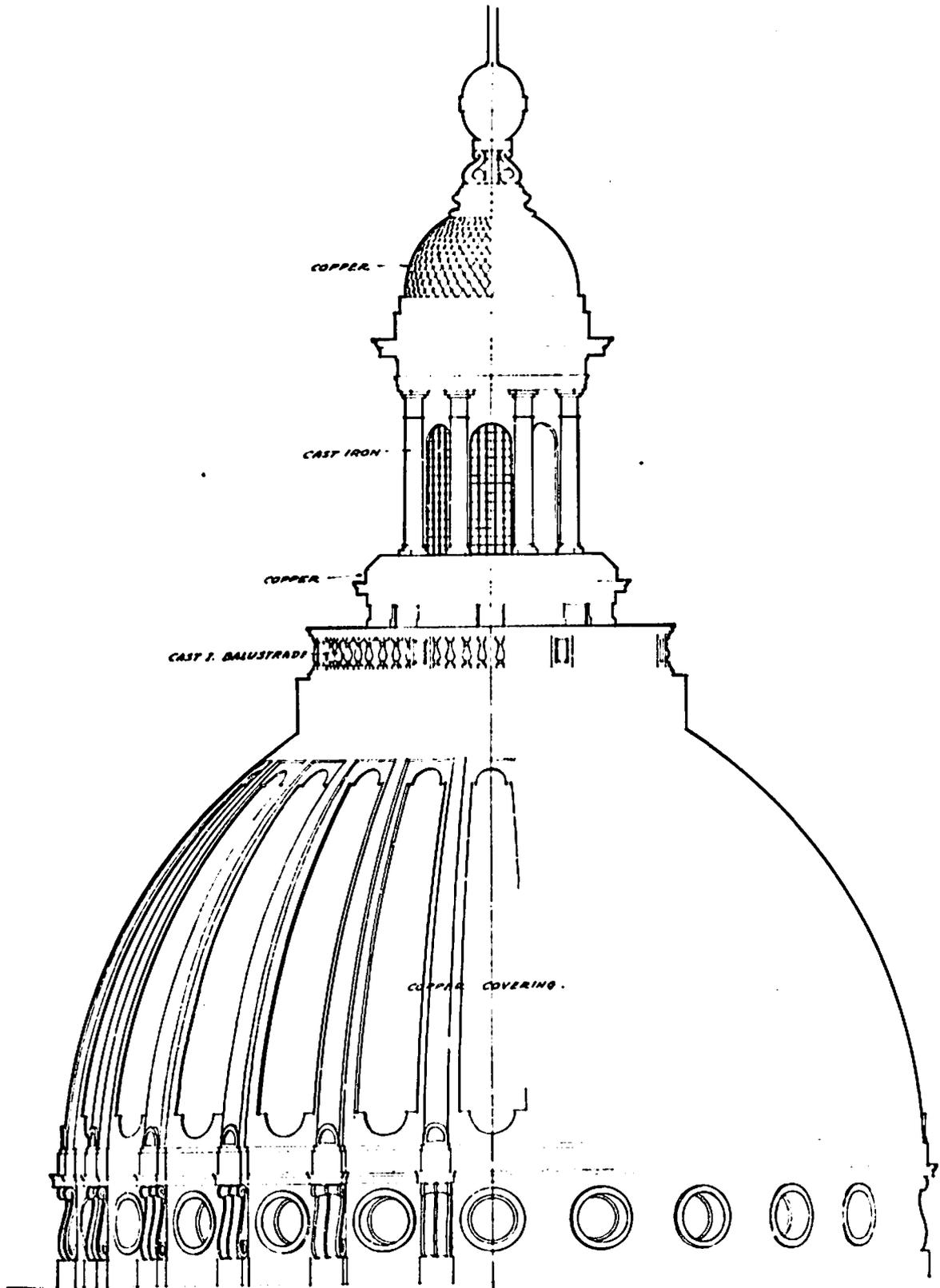
NAME OF STRUCTURE
OLD ST. LOUIS COURT HOUSE

BROADWAY, MARKET, CHESTNUT
 & FOURTH STREETS, ST. LOUIS, MO.

SHEET NO.
31-B
 APR. 1934

HISTORIC AMERICAN
 BUILDINGS SURVEY
 SHEET 3 OF 17 SHEETS

DATE NO.



ELEVATION OF DOME.



GEORGE HARKNESS R.
 ROBT. M. PRICE.

270014 4 OF 50

indicating that it was possible to block admission to the lantern whenever that was deemed desirable.⁷

A sweeping remodeling of the rotunda under the direction of Thomas Walsh in 1869 destroyed all of the physical evidence which would permit a precise description of the work supervised by Rumbold. There is, nevertheless, very good reason to suspect that the glass which was placed in the eye had a diameter of about 12'-6". A proposal for its fabrication was received on August 3, 1860, and it was accepted by the county commissioners three weeks later. No one in St. Louis was found to be capable of doing the required work, and Rumbold was forced to turn to a firm in New York. The cost was to be computed on the basis of \$1.25 per square foot, with delivery to be taken at the company's headquarters rather than in St. Louis. An initial payment of \$152.25, representing the amount which would have been due if the diameter was approximately 12'-6", was authorized on December 13, 1861, and a bill for a smaller amount--\$31.64--was presented on January 3, 1862.⁸

There is yet another reason to believe that the glass for the eye was of that size. It would have permitted the inclusion of a circle of flooring which was roughly 5' in width around the perimeter of the glass, thereby solving the problem of how one reached the iron staircase leading up to the walkway of the lantern. Anyone standing in the rotunda below and looking up into the dome would have seen within the eye a ring encircling the glass, but would not have been aware that a staircase was present above it.

The payment made in January 1862 represented the last reference to the original contractor in the minutes of the county commissioners. Whether by reason of difficulties encountered in shipping the glass to St. Louis, or for other reasons, Rumbold found it necessary to institute another search for a supplier. He reported on May 31, 1862, that he had "found that it was impossible to execute the designs in stained glass" and indicated that he had come to the conclusion that enamel and stain would have to be vitrified to the surface of the glass. Only one proposal for the work was obtained "on account of the size of the lights; or rather the lack of capacity of the kilns to burn the enameling." He therefore recommended that the proposal of the sole bidder be accepted "for the manufacture, transportation and setting of said glass at their own risk."⁹ The failure of the original contractor to complete the project may, in short, have been the result of difficulties encountered in

7. "Bill of Corrected Measurements," items 71-79.

8. Court Records, X, 191; XI, 48 and 63.

9. William Rumbold to Board of County Commissioners, May 31, 1862.

attempting to make use of stained glass rather than of problems which arose in shipping the material from New York. Be that as it may, the outcome of the change in manufacturers was yet another setback in the progress of construction. Since Rumbold submitted his views on the matter only a little more than a month before the formal opening of the remodeled rotunda on July 4, 1862, placement of the glass within the eye had to be deferred until after the date at which the work in that part of the Courthouse was supposed to have been brought to completion.¹⁰

The rest of the work in the upper reaches of the new dome was carried out more expeditiously. Joseph Foster and his employees are known to have been engaged with the carpentry by August 1859 but, as was noted before, they were probably then continuing an effort begun earlier under Thomas Lanham's direction. Foster's accounts, because they were subjected to a very thorough review in 1863, went into minute detail and they constitute the best available source of information on major construction at the Courthouse during the nineteenth century. With regard to the lantern, however, they offer only a partial picture because it was made of cast iron as well as wood. Foster did only the carpentry, and he made no reference to the installation of any of the metal in the lantern, that being some other contractor's concern. The first entries in his statement nevertheless help to illuminate one part of the history of the structure. He describes the "1st Base of lantern" as having a diameter of 16'-10" and as being 4'-0" in height. Quite clearly, that was the section of the lantern immediately above the walkway; a place at which there are now eight casement windows. In building it, Foster used three circular ribs of two-by-fours and a total of 211'-8" of lining.¹¹ He created neither openings nor jambs in that lining, leaving thereby no possibility that the present windows could have been installed at that time.

With regard to other parts of the lantern, Foster's account of what he termed "the ceiling to lantern" is also of interest. He shows it to have been made of tongue-and-groove boards which were furnished to him by the county. To that surface, he attached "8 diminished ribs forming panels 9" x 18" = 4'-6" long", inside of which was a circular panel with a 3'-7" diameter. The latter had within it a "moveable panel or trap door 3'-0" diameter." From those specifications, it is easy to mentally reconstruct the original treatment of this part of the lantern. Ribs radiated from a circle in the center to form a circular design divided into eight

¹⁰ Court Records, XI, 139.

¹¹ "Bill of Corrected Measurements," items 1 and 2.

segments. This would have been the feature which was shortly afterward described as the "star".¹²

Within the rotunda, specifically at the present fifth level gallery, the work done by Foster was subsequently altered. He accounts for the use of eighty full and forty-eight half balusters. That number can be made to fit into the balustrade there only if the wooden rail and balusters extended around the entire opening. The four sections of iron railing which are now present are the result of a very early change. They were already in place on July 22, 1872, a fact that can be determined from a report by the building's janitor that they were in an unsafe condition.¹³ Why the wooden railing was removed, and why the ironwork that replaced it required repair less than a decade later, has not been ascertained.

The county commissioners were obviously satisfied with the progress of the work during the first half of 1860. A confident prediction was issued that the Courthouse would be complete by July 1861, an announcement which was greeted with "three times three" cheers.¹⁴ Indeed, a sense of urgency seems to have developed which had never before been so evident. In December, the idea was advanced by Rumbold, and accepted by the commissioners, that plastering of the north wing could be pushed forward during the winter--if the roof was finished in time--by putting stoves into the rooms. One day after he made that suggestion, Rumbold was told to advertise for proposals for the plastering.¹⁵

Court officials made requests during the course of 1860 which required attention and which made it impossible to concentrate totally on the new construction. In January, the clerk of the Land Court complained that his office was "small & inconvenient, but with some alterations and arranging of desks and railing can be made to answer." He was speaking of a room on the north side of the first floor of the west wing, probably that at the west end which had been called a jury room in 1855. The commissioners

12. Ibid., items 38, 42 and 43. The "star" is mentioned in "Contract for painting the exterior of the Courthouse, October 19, 1863," Court Records on Construction, JNEM. It was to be varnished.

13. "Bill of Corrected Measurements," items 233 and 234; Court Records, XVIII, 108.

14. Daily Express, July 6, 1860.

15. William Rumbold to Board of County Commissioners, December 3, 1860, County Court Records--OCH Transactions, JNEM; Court Records, X, 246.

agreed that the renovation was necessary and ordered Joseph Foster to include it in his work.¹⁶

Extensive changes were made to improve the clerk's working conditions. The existing floor had sleepers placed on it and tongue-and-groove boards were nailed to those. It is possible that the new flooring covered a section of brick paving which had survived the alterations made in 1855. A railing with a gate and an attached desk was run across the room. Bookcases, shelving and banks of pigeonholes were built, all being set behind double-doors. Writing surfaces were covered with what Foster called "oil cloth" but which Rumbold later referred to as "enamel cloth." (It would be replaced in 1863 with green baize.) Foster also rehung the door leading into the courtroom in order to compensate for the change in the floor level. All in all, the remodeling produced a complete change in appearance. The county even paid for nearly four days of labor spent in "removing furniture rubbish etc."¹⁷

What would generally be called a secretary, but described by Foster as simply a desk, was constructed for the county treasurer and a rail was built around it. While the rail made for the clerk of the Land Court was supported by balusters, this railing was fixed to posts with the openings between them filled with latticework. A small shelf was fitted into the curve of the rail and a desk was placed on the top of the treasurer's safe.

The county auditor, who shared the room on the west side of the first floor in the south wing with the treasurer, obtained a similar desk. The writing surfaces were made in two parts, with hinges, and were covered with oil cloth. A foot stool, 5'-0" long 9" wide, made with two brackets was also provided for the auditor. Desks and other types of furniture were prepared for the use of other county officials at the same time, and Foster's work made a significant change in the appearance of the various offices. He did not do any cabinetwork within the actual courtrooms at this time.¹⁸

A sharp criticism of a part of the interior of the building was leveled on May 14, 1860, by the Hon. H. A. Clover, judge of the Criminal Court. He had held sessions on the east side of the first floor of the south wing since November 1856 and obviously felt that

16. Edward N. Tracy to Board of County Commissioners, January 23, 1860, County Court Records--OCH Transactions, JNEM; Court Records, X, 91.

17. "Bill of Corrected Measurements," items 833-991.

18. Ibid., items 992-1127.

the date at which his courtroom should have received attention had long since passed.

The room is now, and since the occupation of it by the Court has always been in an incomplete condition and so as to make it very unpleasant to hold Court in. Of course it is the intention of some time to put it another condition. I allude particularly to the flooring of the Room, which is of rough undressed plank hastily put down for the purpose of making it temporarily tenantable by the Court. It operated as a sounding board, every foot-fall upon it is completely echoed, and persons cannot walk ordinarily in & out of the Room without causing such noise as to almost make it impossible for parties speaking in the Court Room to be heard.

Also of the Door, and the general furniture of the Room need redressing. I also need & ask the Court to furnish a chair for the Court. This chair I at present occupy is delapidated & falls occasionally. It has been used ever since I can recollect in the old Criminal Court Room in the old East Front of the Court House & I believe at one time was used by the late Judge Manning who was many years ago judge of the Court.¹⁹

The commissioners found that his plea was justified. They appropriated \$2,000 on May 22, 1860, for the needed renovation, making it possible for Rumbold to enter into a contract in July for a new floor made up of white and black marble tiles set in an alternating pattern. New furniture was also provided but no documentary evidence concerning it has been preserved.²⁰

Given the need to make so many interior changes during the year, the commissioners may well have been delighted that a request made by the Law Library Association on December 5, 1860, was accompanied by a statement that the organization was willing to absorb the cost. They were, needless to say, told that it would be all right for them to make the changes they deemed necessary in the gas lighting.²¹

¹⁹. H. A. Clover to Board of County Commissioners, May 14, 1860, County Court Records--OCH Transactions, JNEM.

²⁰. Court Records, X, 156-157; Simon Clark's contract, July 17, 1860, County Court Records--OCH Transactions, JNEM.

²¹. Court Records, X, 248.

Those widespread changes in the interior during 1860 are described only incompletely in the records but clues of real interest are provided about the appearance of the various offices and the Criminal Court. In the case of the Court of Common Pleas in the oval courtroom of the west wing, a much better form of insight is available. A celebrated trial occurred there between March 20 and April 1, 1860, involving an allegation of breach of promise against a prominent St. Louisan.²² The event received widespread attention from the press, and two illustrations of the courtroom and the participants in the litigation were printed.

By far the better, and more accurate, of those appeared in the New-York Illustrated News on April 14, 1860. (Figure 21) It depicts a row of desks with curved legs, probably of iron, at the side of the courtroom which are said to have been used during the trial by reporters but which may normally have been occupied by attorneys. The judge's bench has pigeonholes at the front, a feature which is known to have been common in furnishings constructed at a later date, and imposing lighting fixtures. The jury is provided with chairs which, in a deviation from practices known to have been followed subsequently, rest on the floor rather than on a raised platform.

The participants in the trial are arranged around circular tables; some occupying chairs which are like those used by the jurors, while others are seated on a slightly different form of chair. The greatest number of the spectators are, however, standing. All in all, those features of the illustration match almost perfectly other documentary evidence from the period.

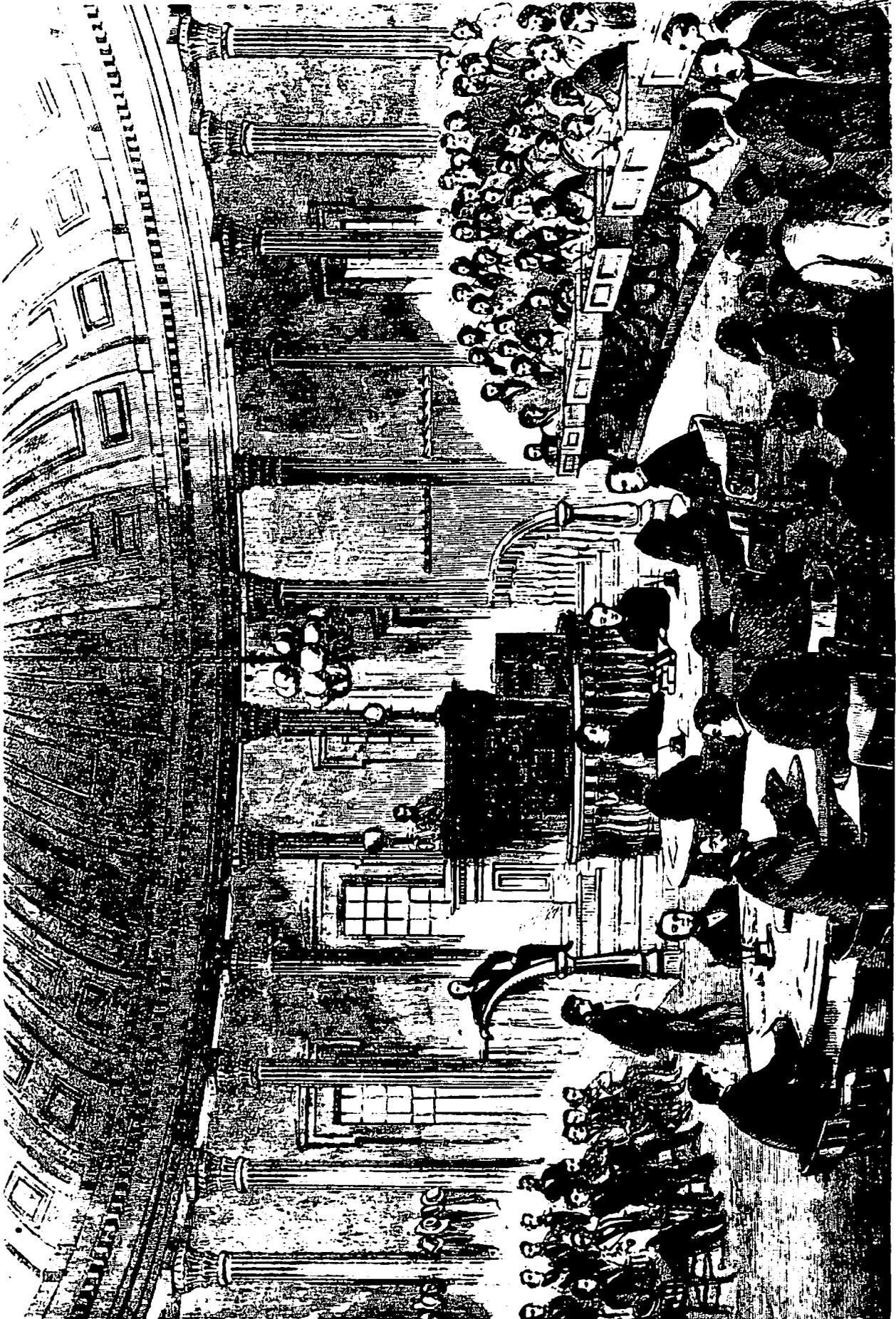
So far as the room itself is concerned, several matters of interest are depicted. Coat hooks attached to rails are present on the walls of the partitions, and the windows, as well as the only visible door, are akin to those which are presently to be found on the north side of the first floor of the east wing. The similarity does not, nevertheless, extend to all of the features of the windows. The sash shown in the illustration seems to have been of nine-over-nine rather than six-over-six lights.

The molding applied to the ceiling is like that which was found when the Historic American Buildings Survey created its record of the room in 1940. On the other hand, a chandelier is hung at the center of the room, and it must have been suspended from the spot which after 1870 would be taken up by a skylight.

²² Donald F. Dosch, "History of the Old St. Louis Courthouse," (1969), 56-57; Daily Express, March 20-April 1, 1860.

Figure 21

Illustration of the Court of Common Pleas from the New-York Illustrated News, April 14, 1860. Courtesy of the Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis.



THE COURT-ROOM IN THE COURT-HOUSE AT ST. LOUIS, AS IT APPEARED DURING THE TRIAL OF THE GARSTANG-SHAW CASE.—JAMES A. FERRIS MADE BY OUR ARTIST.—(See page 248.)

Figure 22

Illustration of the Court of Common Pleas from Harper's Weekly,
March 31, 1860. Courtesy of the Mercantile Library, St. Louis.



THE TRIAL OF THE BREACH OF PROMISE CASE, CARSTANG vs. SHAW, AT ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, MARCH, 1860.—[FROM A SKETCH BY G. G. FRIEDLEIN, Esq.]

Harper's Weekly on March 31, 1860, provided the second illustration. It was far less skillfully drawn and it is useful more as further corroboration of the graphic evidence provided by the Illustrated News than it is in its own right. The artist's talents left a great deal to be desired and many significant details are either poorly rendered or are totally lacking. Parallels are, nonetheless, to be found in the shape and form of the windows, doors and lighting devices. Of great significance, the heating system is shown as a free-standing stove located within the courtroom. (Figure 22)

The placement of that stove runs counter to the persistent legend that the heating system for this courtroom was hidden behind the curved partitions in the corners and that the grilles set into the walls of those areas were intended to allow the warm air to flow into the courtroom. The subsequent history of the building, to be treated later, indicates that the artist's efforts were in this instance accurate and that the legend is unfounded. There is indeed every reason to believe that the stoves were exposed to view in 1860.

While, therefore, the illustration published in the Illustrated News is far and away the best evidence that has been found pertaining to the appearance of a courtroom at so early a date, the view contained in Harper's Weekly does add to our knowledge of the interior. Should it ever prove practical or feasible to undertake a full restoration of the courtroom, much of the basic data could be gleaned from the combination of the two views.

Both of those views of the interior, it should be noted, depict furnishings that would be changed only two years later. Judge Reber then deemed

it my duty to call the attention of your Board to the Room of the Court of Common Pleas; and to state that the present arrangement of the attorneys desks (& seats) is in the highest degree inconvenient and detrimental to the rapid dispatch of the public business...If the desks & seats (& the platforms on which they stand) were removed from within the Bar, and their places supplied with two plain tables (one on each side of the entrance) with a suitable number of chairs--And a small semi-circular table in front of the Clerks Desk--it would be a vast improvement. There is too little lobby to the room and the plan proposed would much increase the capacity to accommodate those whose business brings them there without

encroaching on the convenience of the Bar.²³

With no major expenses being entailed in the project as envisioned by Judge Reber, the commissioners happily approved the "change of furniture" on June 2, 1862.²⁴

Some thought may have been given in July, 1860 to a major addition in the grounds. A casting of Jean Antoine Houdon's statue of George Washington had earlier been offered to the City of St. Louis. The city had declined the opportunity to spend \$10,000 and the statue wound up on the southwest corner of the Courthouse Square while a campaign to raise the purchase price through public subscriptions was inaugurated.²⁵ The effort proved to be unsuccessful but the statue itself did eventually find a place in St. Louis. It has been in Lafayette Park since 1869.

The commissioners did not leave any record of a discussion of making an appropriation toward the cost of purchasing the statue but they clearly, in allowing it to be brought onto the grounds, supported the effort. The suspicion that it was hoped that it would remain there permanently does arise.

As what would prove to be only a temporary measure, \$300 had been spent on repairs for the pavements around the building in 1859. The wear and tear created by the movement of so much stone and other material intended for the construction which had been done during the previous decade, as well as the age of the existing sidewalks, made it necessary to completely replace the brick pavements in 1861. Rumbold's advertisement on October 11 for proposals stipulated that the new sidewalk was to be made "with hard Paving Brick, laid in Sand." That was a common practice in St. Louis, one that must have been employed in the earlier paving as well. Jacob Corneli was granted the contract but no indication of the date at which he completed the work has come to light.²⁶

That new sidewalk must have been badly needed for the commissioners were faced with severe financial limitations. The local economy was severely affected by the outbreak of the Civil War and the consequent closing of the lower Mississippi. Shut off from traditional markets, St. Louis entered a period of economic difficulties

23. Sam Reber to Board of County Commissioners, May 31, 1862, County Court Records, OCH Transactions, JNEM.

24. Court Records, XI, 139.

25. Daily Express, July 27, 1860.

26. Court Records, IX, 92; XI, 28; Daily Evening News, October 11 and 22, 1861; Daily Missouri Republican, October 23, 1861.

and the county found that it had to accept in payment of taxes notes that had been issued by banks which had ceased operations. When the commissioners refused in September 1861 to allow the purchase of new furniture and fixtures for the office of the clerk of the law commissioner, they cited "hard times" as the reason for their action. In light of the supposed affiliation of the law commissioner with the Douglas faction of the Democratic Party, the refusal may have had some political undertones but the county treasury must indeed have been nearly bare. When, nevertheless, a second petition was presented--this time signed by "various members of the St. Louis Bar"--the original decision was reversed. The clerk was thereupon given a new bookcase and desk.²⁷

Completion of the construction of the north wing was near; the plastering, with a finish coat of Plaster of Paris, having been attended to by April 24, 1861. The question of the use to which the space within it would be devoted had engaged a great deal of attention in the preceding months. The City of St. Louis had made an overture in November 1860 for a lease covering the entire wing and indicated a willingness to find other quarters for the Recorder's Court. That was the place at which trials for such things as drunkenness or prostitution were conducted and the county was adamant in its refusal to permit persons charged with such offenses to be brought into the Courthouse. With the city now willing to agree that some other location should be found for it, as well as for the Department of Health, discussions began on the more vital matter of the amount of the annual rental and the length of the lease. An agreement acceptable to both city and county was reached at the end of June 1861.²⁸

The lease may have been doubly welcome to the county because it was thereby relieved of any responsibility or expense in furnishing the rooms in the new wing. Those duties were delegated to the city engineer for all of the space except the room at the west side of the second floor, the Common Council reserving the right to furnish that for use as its own chamber. Appropriations totaling \$1500 were made, suggesting that a rather well-appointed interior was found by people who came to the new City Hall after the movement of

27. Court Records, XI, 19-20; Daily Missouri Republican, September 11 and 26, October 2, 1861; Daily Express, August 4, 1860.

28. "Contract for plastering...April 24, 1861," Court Records on Construction, JNEM; Court Records, X, 240-241, 355 and 376; City Ordinance 4871, June 28, 1861.

the municipal offices to it was completed during the closing days of 1861.²⁹

The records of the City of St. Louis do not contain any reference to the installation of a stairway in the transverse hall of the north wing, indicating that the county included such work in the over-all program of construction. The minutes of the county commissioners are, however, equally silent on the subject, and the only clear statement made in the documentary material from the time is contained in Joseph Foster's description of the removal of a "temporary" stair from the north wing as part of his efforts between 1859 and 1861.³⁰

Were there no conflicting evidence, one would assume that shortly after Foster removed that stair, J. G. McPheeters would have been given the task of installing two flights of cast-iron steps, one at the east and the other at the west end of the transverse hall. The latter would be the stair that is in existence; the former would have since been removed, leaving marks on the stone wall which are still visible. Such a straightforward account seems, unfortunately, to be belied by the fact that the stone of the wall at the west side clearly show that a stair once existed there which ran across the full width of the hallway and which was attached to both the southern and the northern walls of the present space. The south wall was created before 1845 and its use as the support for a stair which existed prior to 1859-1861 is no occasion for surprise. The fact that the same stair was also attached to the northern wall is, however, a wholly different matter since that wall is a part of the north wing which had begun to be erected in 1857, only a very short time before Foster removed the "temporary" stair.

No further information bearing on the question of the stair in the north wing appears until October 19, 1863, the date at which a contract was awarded to James S. Wilgus and Ewing C. Kitchen for painting "the iron stairs" in "the open Courts in the North and South sides of the building."³¹ That demonstrates the existence of a stair in the northern transverse hall on that date, but does not completely clarify the question of precisely where it was located. It could have been the stair which left marks on both walls at the

29. City Ordinance 4897, November 4, 1861; Daily Evening News, October 23, 26 and 30, 1861; Daily Missouri Republican, October 13 and 15, December 13, 22, 29 and 31, 1861; Mayor's Message ...October 14, 1861, 5.

30. "Bill of Corrected Measurements," item 409.

31. "Contract for painting the exterior of the Courthouse, October 19, 1863," Court Records on Construction, JNEM.

west end of the space. The painters may, on the other hand, have been told to work on the cast-iron stair which is now in place as well as on its counterpart at the east end of the hall.

The written record of the process of construction of other parts of the Courthouse offers good reason to believe that the architects and county officials could frequently change their minds and, consequently, their plans. That may very well have happened in the case of the stair for the north wing, and Foster's "temporary" stair could have been erected only two or three years before he removed it. While acceptance of that premise simplifies the story to a very considerable degree, some caution still must be exercised in reaching a conclusion. The physical evidence presented by the fabric of the structure is in this part of the building among the most baffling facets of the history of the interior, and it remains only probable that the cast-iron stairway now found in the northern transverse hall was installed before 1863.

The contract let to the painters in 1863 is of particular interest by reason of the fact that it describes both the south and the north stairs as being in "open courts," a further indication that there were neither windows nor doors in the transverse halls at the time. Joseph Foster, however, included in his account the work of "piecing out window casings over the platform of the north stairs on the west side" which included an architrave, sill and a fascia below the sill. He made no reference to jambs or to windows, making it difficult to fully comprehend what it was that he did.³² He seems, nevertheless, to have at least partially filled the opening in one part of the transverse hall of the north wing.

The platform to which Foster referred was, of course, the old north wing porch for which columns had been intended but never erected. During the course of the work on the wing, stone steps with iron railings were placed at the northern edge of its east and west sides. They appear in a number of photographs dating from the mid-nineteenth to the early-twentieth centuries, and they were approximately four feet wide. (Figure 23; see also Figures 32 and 34)

The transverse hall of the south wing also had steps leading to it. They too were of stone but were broader than those on the north, a condition made possible by the fact that there was no sunken areaway there, as there was at the north, to interfere with

³². "Bill of Corrected Measurements," items 387-402.

Figure 23

Portion of a Photograph, c.1868, Showing the Exterior Stair Leading to the Transverse Hall of the North Wing and Awnings at the Windows. From the Collection of the Missouri Historical Society.



their placement. The steps on the west side of the southern transverse hall remained in place until as late as 1904.³³

Because the north wing was to be used as municipal offices rather than as courtrooms, it may have been separated from the rest of the building by the erection of a partition across the transverse hall. Clear evidence of the drilling of a line of regularly spaced holes into the stone floor is present and they could have been intended to receive anchors for such a partition. The fact that the existing concrete ceiling is of recent origin makes it impossible to determine if other signs of such partitioning were once present in that space.

The existence of partitions somewhere within the north wing during the period immediately following the completion of that wing was noted by Truman J. Hosmer, the city engineer, in May 1862. He did not identify their location, saying only that it might later be deemed necessary to extend them "up to the ceilings with sash work." He added that he would make no recommendation until the fall because "the experience of the hot weather may prove that it should not be done."³⁴ He may have been describing work which had been done in the transverse hall but that is by no means definite. Aside from the Council Chambers on the west side of the second floor, each of the rooms in the wing was shared by more than one municipal office and partitions would have been desirable within them.

By mid-1861, Rumbold was able to concentrate completely on the task of finishing the rotunda. There is reason to believe that in spite of the fairly advanced state of the work there some changes were still being made. For example, William Smith & Co. on April 24, 1861, entered into an agreement which stipulated that "all columns and pilasters with their caps are to be made of wood in the first and second storey New finish All others made and formed in plastering."³⁵ Smith was clearly preparing the wooden columns which, with their cast-iron counterparts, would be located on the second and third level galleries as replacements for the oak columns which had been installed there in 1845. Foster made everything on the galleries above, using wood supplied by the county. The notion of facing any of the columns with plaster must have been discarded soon after Smith started work.

33. Blueprint plan, "Alterations in the Court House," approved on January 22, 1904, JNEM.

34. Mayor's Message...May 12, 1862, 31.

35. "Contract for plastering the Rotunda, Inner Dome & North Wing ...April 24, 1861," Court Records on Construction, JNEM.

Foster's accounts point to one other change made in the closing stages of the process of bringing the rotunda into being. His men spent fourteen to sixteen days in re-doing the soffits over the elliptical lunettes.³⁶ He does not, unfortunately, offer any information on the nature of the change which was made or on the question of whether the original work was ordered by Lanham or Rumbold.

A series of articles published by the Daily Missouri Republican indicates that the two staircases to the lantern were in place by October 1861. Titled "The Man in the Cupola," the articles proved to be an attempt at satirical humor but the running joke suggests something about the progress of the work.³⁷ The end of the long years of construction was rapidly approaching and reports of the rotunda began to be filled with statements concerning its decorative details.

An important part of the preparations for the renovation of the rotunda was the removal of the old circular stair, a project which had been recommended as early as 1855 and which was probably begun by Lanham.³⁸ It was gone by June 18, 1862, a date on which a report was issued indicating that the stair and "other rubbish" would no longer be in evidence. The term "rubbish" had been used by the county commissioners, one writer presumed,

to insure a general sweep of everything old or musty, or that tended in the slightest degree to obstruct the view of the beholder while surveying from the expansive area at the bottom of the gorgeous and imposing structure above. If this was the object, it has been attained. The stairway, that wound like a huge monster of life from the base to the floor above, and whose immense strength and capacity have for years defied the mass of human beings that have swayed and stamped and pressed upon it with a violence at times perfectly fearful to contemplate, has been torn away.³⁹

36. "Bill of Corrected Measurements," item 270.

37. Daily Missouri Republican, October 31, November 1 and December 8, 1861.

38. Ibid., May 2, 1855, quoted in Bryan, "Rotunda," 22.

39. Daily Evening Democrat, June 18, 1862. The order of the county commissioners was issued on June 2. See Court Records, XI, 139.

The same report went on to describe the demolition of another feature of the rotunda that had stood since 1845: the rostrum.

The structure that supported the stalwart frame of the mighty Benton, while he held forth to his enraptured listeners, has crumbled beneath the blows of the County Architect, and will henceforth be remembered, like the towering Missourian himself, only in connection with the triumphs and glories of the Dead Past.

The description of the appearance of the rotunda on that day provides further reason to believe that the original stairway was made from wood. The writer mentioned that the ground floor was filled with broken wood from the former stair. That the material was "broken" is nevertheless doubtful since Foster claimed to have taken down "2 flights of Geometrical Stairs...leading to the 3rd Gallery in Rotunda with the view to using same again" and the stair was advertised as being for sale on July 2, 1862.⁴⁰ Foster did not, it should again be noted, take out the stair above the third level gallery during the work he described as having been done after 1859. That bolsters the contention that Thomas Lanham was responsible for the beginning of the remodeling of the upper part of the rotunda.

The second and third level galleries at the time the remodeling was inaugurated had been of the same width but the third level was now cut back and cast-iron columns were installed. Foster, as was previously indicated, did the carpentry work required for the erection of the cast-iron columns. When those were in place, the second level gallery rested on two sets of supports: the four stone columns dating from 1845 and the eight newly-created cast-iron columns. The cast iron was said to be intended to both carry the weight of the galleries above and to afford support for the dome, a dual purpose which demanded that the metal form continuous units for the full height of the rotunda. The stone columns thereby took on the very limited function of upholding only the second level gallery, a gallery which in 1862 was left at its original width. It would remain substantially wider than the other galleries for another seven years.

With the visitor's vision of the upper dome no longer obstructed by the rotunda stair and the forward projection of the third level gallery, the most significant part of the work undertaken in 1862

40. "Bill of Corrected Measurements," item 349. Evening News, July 2, 1862, quoted in Charles E. Peterson, "The Development of the Courthouse Rotunda," 4.

became more apparent--the murals and frescoes being created by Carl Wimar and his half-brother, August Becker. They were the major figures in one of the most fascinating aspects of the history of the interior of the Courthouse even if only a limited amount of what they did during the year is still to be seen.

The first official record of their involvement appears on January 22, 1862, when M. L. Julian relinquished his rights stemming from a contract with the county, probably that which had been approved in 1858. He was neither a frescoer nor an artist, and he willingly surrendered the responsibility for such work. Rumbold thereupon submitted specifications for the "fresco finish" and two of the county commissioners, John Lightner and William Taussig, were named as a special committee to which the "eight principal designs for the main panels of the Rotunda" were referred. August Becker's proposal for the work was accepted at the same time.⁴¹

The reference to "eight panels" at that time is of interest because it fits with an account which appeared more than thirty years later but was filled with sufficient detail to indicate that it was based on an interview with one of the men involved in the work in 1862. The panels to which the committee gave its attention were all in the dome, four being projected forward to afford space in which to conceal stairs and to maintain symmetry. The lunettes, therefore, were not included in the original discussion of the work which was to be done.

Exactly that point was made in 1894. Wimar's allegorical figures were described in an account published at that time, and it was said that all four were completed before any decision was reached about the lunettes. William Taussig was said to have thereafter determined that Wimar should be commissioned to do the four murals in the lunettes. That part of the account is straightforward, but a statement was then made by the author which defies belief. He maintained that in rendering the sky in each lunette, Wimar combined water and oil paints "to secure that peculiar light effect which he had seen and become imbued with while on the plains." No evidence exists that Wimar ever used water colors, and that part of the account of his work at the Courthouse runs afoul of the historical record.⁴²

41. Court Records, XI, 71.

42. Missouri Republican, November 18, 1894, typescript in St. Louis Buildings-Old Courthouse, Missouri Historical Society; Author's interviews with Lincoln Spiess, St. Louis, 1979. The notion that the lunettes were an "afterthought" was again expressed by the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, March 5, 1899.

Taussig offered his own version of the story in 1886, none too surprisingly presenting himself in a crucial role. He indicated that the appointment of the committee on January 22, 1862, was simply a device meant to circumvent any legal need for an open competition with the contract to be awarded to the lowest bidder. The decision to employ Wimar as the artist had been made in advance of the meeting of the commissioners, and their action was simply a formality required by law. As for the choice of subjects to be depicted, Taussig made no statement about the point in the process at which it occurred but he denied that Wimar had any responsibility. The "two paintings on the east and west side were decided by us [i.e., the committee] and for the historical paintings on the north and south sides we consulted the late Judge Wilson Primm, who had published some historical researches about St. Louis. It took the artist but a few days to bring those ideas in firm and clear cut lines...."⁴³

All of that does fit together. The south and north lunettes were to be devoted to historical events: the discovery of the Mississippi by Hernando DeSoto and an attack on St. Louis which took place during the American Revolution, respectively. Reports of the ceremony held to commemorate the completion of the rotunda indicated that Wimar also drew upon Primm's knowledge of the founding of the community in 1764 for the east lunette, and that the artist was still engaged in "touching" the mural depicting the attack.⁴⁴

The several accounts that suggest that Wilson Primm was involved with those lunettes make very good sense. He had published one of the early histories of St. Louis as a series of articles in the Illinois Monthly Magazine in 1832. As one of the men who presided in a court within the building, his interest in the Courthouse was obvious.

The east and west lunettes, devoted to the founding of St. Louis in 1764 and the Cochetopa Pass, were those which Taussig indicated were filled with scenes chosen by the committee of the county commissioners. The western scene, he maintained, was inspired by a "picture by Leutze." He meant "Westward the Course of Empire Takes

43. Typescript translation from Westliche Post, September 29, 1886, JNEM. The transcript contains one apparent error. Taussig named John Fisee as the other member of the committee; the minutes of the county commissioners say that it was Board President Lightner.

44. Daily Democrat, July 4, 1862. The complete text of the article is given in Appendix B, part 1.

Its Way" at the National Capitol, and that points to one of several rather curious facts about the scene.⁴⁵

In the first place, Leutze had been one of Wimar's instructors at Düsseldorf between 1852 and 1856. In the second, the Cochetopa Pass had been studied by John C. Fremont several years earlier as a possible route for a railroad to connect St. Louis with the Pacific coast. The fact that Fremont had been the presidential candidate of the Republicans in 1856 would hardly have escaped the attention of the county commissioners. The inclusion of a view of the pass within the rotunda in 1862 had, in short, both local and political significance. It would in the immediate future come to be regarded as artistically superior to the scenes rendered in the other lunettes.⁴⁶ It was also the only one of the four for which major work remained to be done after July 4, 1862. Wimar's efforts in the rotunda thereby had to be continued during the subsequent period, and he may have given much more careful attention to the treatment of the western view.

Contemporary accounts of Wimar's involvement in the decoration of the rotunda offer support to the theory that the four scenes in the lunettes were included in the over-all plan only after the completion of the allegorical figures in the dome. A report printed on July 5, 1862, stated that work on the lunettes was begun only "two months ago,"⁴⁷ and one of the surviving sketches for the figures in the dome is clearly dated March 10. (Figure 24) Wimar's effort, all of the accounts of the time as well as the later recollections of men such as Taussig seem to agree, was divided into two distinct stages. The allegorical figures came first and they were finished before even the subjects to be depicted in the lunettes were determined.

The earlier work, indeed, fit even better with the political situation of 1862 than did the lunettes. A majority of the county commissioners were Republicans and within the rotunda they openly expressed their political inclinations by causing it to become what one writer of the time called "a patriotic and starry dome." It can be properly interpreted as a statement of support of the Union cause, made little more than a year after the Civil War had begun, and a challenge to the Confederate sympathizers who were numerous in St. Louis. In keeping with that, Becker placed stars in the panels of the dome where rosettes might have been more traditional.

45. Ibid.; Daily Evening News, November 29, 1862.

46. Globe-Democrat, December 5, 1880.

47. Daily Evening News, July 5, 1862.

His work above those stars was equally clear in its political connotation. The cornice beneath the eye of the dome was described on July 4, 1862 as being

composed of ovelos and two large beads; the upper ornamented by an oak wreath in stucco, and the lower by an olive wreath in fresco. The moldings are enriched with the ivy ornament, and the frieze with a luxurious running scroll. Within the latter is to be wrought a grand American eagle, with all the stars of the Union above.⁴⁸

The stuccoed oak wreath was the work of William C. Smith and Becker may have added color to it. At any rate, he, like his co-artist Carl Wimar, had to resume work in the rotunda after the opening ceremony in order to create a further expression of patriotism and allegiance to the Union.

A number of Wimar's preliminary studies for the work in the rotunda have been preserved. Those done for the allegorical figures, because that facet of his efforts has since been obliterated, are of particular interest, and they merit comparison to a description which was published in 1862.

LIBERTY, occupying the northeastern panel, is the serenely radiant American divinity, in her right hand bearing the "Star-Spangled Banner," her left the Union fasces, while below, at the right, are the national shield and bird.

In the southwestern panel towers stern JUSTICE, holding the scales of trial, grasping the sword of retribution, and having the eyes bandaged, to denote that she regards not persons, and cannot be moved to mercy.

LAW, personified by the figure of the great lawgiver, Solon, stands meditatively in the southeastern panel, leaning upon a column, and pondering the code he is engaged in perfecting.

COMMERCE is fitly represented by the winged Mercury, born of the brain of Jove, tripping fleetly over the globe, bearing the sceptre of power, while beneath him are the symbols of navigation and transportation.⁴⁹

48. Daily Democrat, July 4, 1862.

49. Ibid.

The surviving sketch for Liberty, rendered in full color and bearing the date March 10, 1862, fits very neatly the written description. The figure is indeed a "serenely radiant American divinity" and the symbols of the United States are very obvious. All in all, this part of Wimar's effort served well the apparent intent of the county commissioners to make use of the rotunda for a statement of allegiance to the Union. (Figure 24)

Two entirely different versions of Law are in existence. The more finished sketch is the earlier of those and it differs in every respect from the published description. (Figure 25) The principal figure is decidedly feminine and is not leaning "upon a column." A cherub is also present in this version, adding further weight to the conclusion that someone determined that major revisions should be made.

The second sketch for Law, done in pencil and obviously a very preliminary study for the work, corresponds in at least a general way with the newspaper account. Whether, however, the word "Drago" which appears on the base of the column and the representation of a face on the shaft were included in the final work is impossible to ascertain. (Figure 26)

In the case of Justice, four different studies still exist. They indicate a great deal about the process through which the figure reached its final form. The version which Wimar rendered in full color, furthermore, has had its surface scored to create a grid pattern. That strongly suggests that he actually used it in transferring the design to the larger surface of the rotunda. It thereby offers as precise an indication of the appearance of one of the allegorical figures in 1862 as will ever be likely to be obtained. (Figures 26-28)

No sketch for Commerce has been found. Every contemporary attempt to describe it implies that it was much more complex in design than the other three works. It was also the subject of comments which were both critical and derisive. Mercury was portrayed by Wimar as a typical figure from Roman mythology and was "in want of a summer coat."⁵⁰ Always eager to take advantage of any opportunity to use satire in comments about lawyers and judges, local newspapermen also reminded their readers that Mercury was the god of thieves and had "more votaries in the building than all the rest united."⁵¹

50. Globe-Democrat, July 2, 1880.

51. Daily Democrat, November 7, 1869.

Figure 24

Wimar's Sketch of "Liberty" for the Northeast Panel of the Dome,
Dated March 10, 1862. From the Collection of the Missouri Historical
Society.



156/62

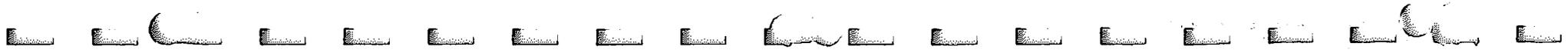


Figure 25

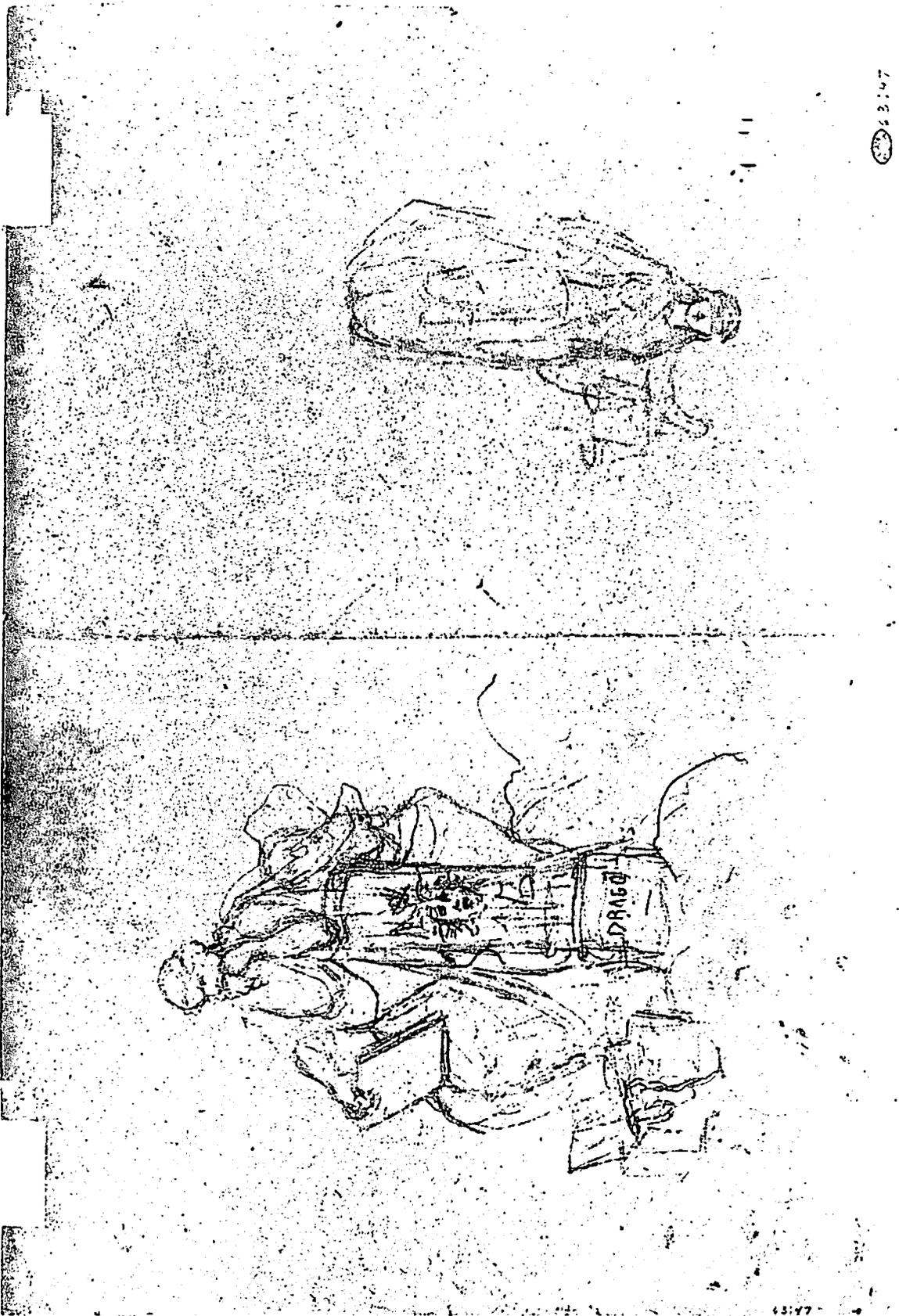
Carl Wimar's Sketch of "Law" for the Southeast Panel. From the
Collection of the Missouri Historical Society.



1862

Figure 26

Preliminary Studies for "Law" and "Justice." From the Collection
of the St. Louis Art Museum.



63107

63107

Figure 27

Preliminary Studies for "Justice." From the Collection of the St. Louis Art Museum.

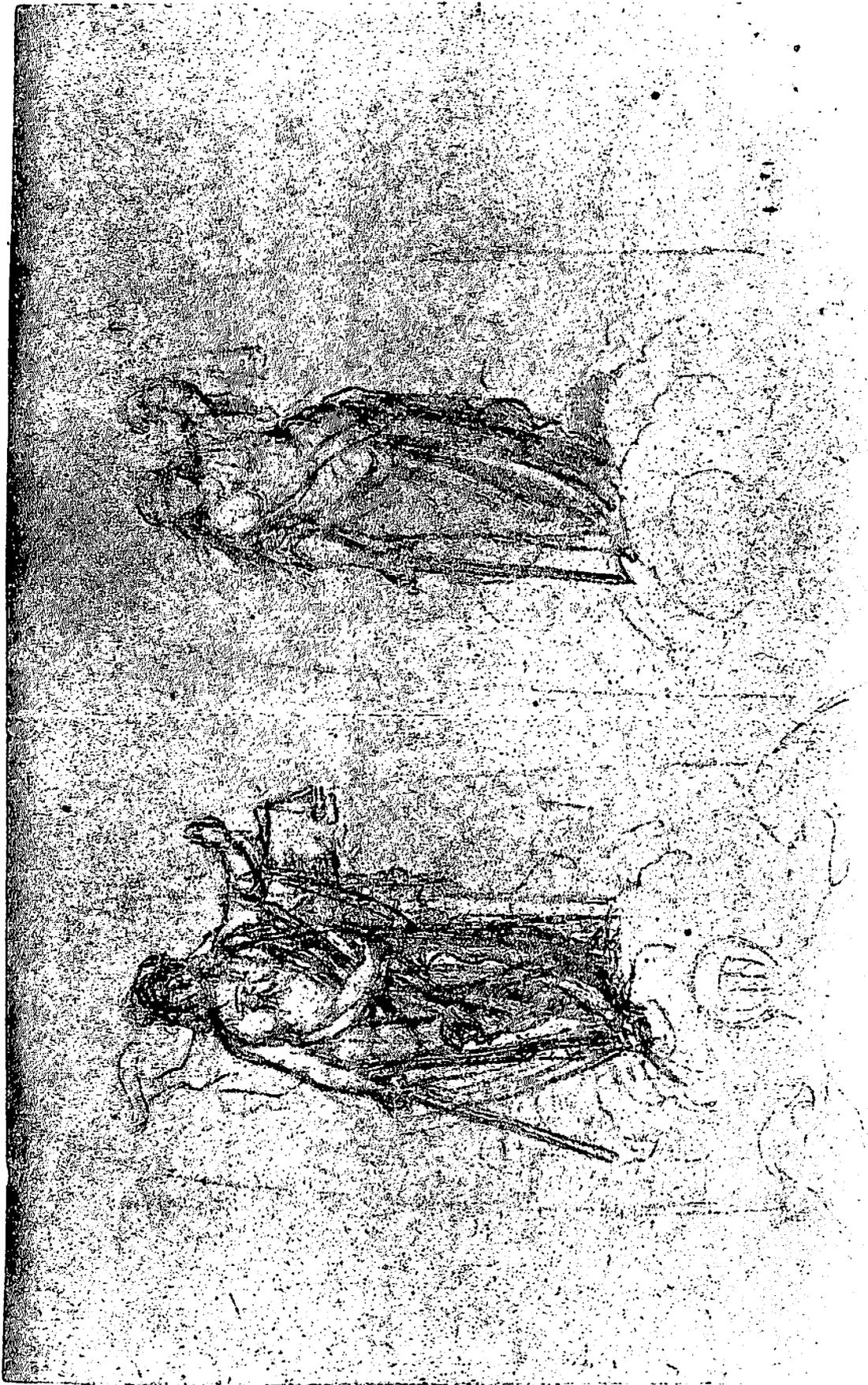


Figure 28

Wimar's Sketch of "Justice" for the Southwest Panel of the Dome.
From the Collection of the Missouri Historical Society.



A surviving and fairly detailed sketch for the east lunette, that which shows the founding of St. Louis, is by no means the final version which Wimar produced. The placement of the figures differs from that in the actual lunette and the inclusion of a pennant bearing the name of St. Louis adds a touch of whimsy. (Figure 29) The only other existing sketch for a lunette pertains to that at the west. It is so lacking in detail as to make it more an interesting piece of evidence on the evolution of the design than a fitting subject for close comparison to the finished version. (Figure 30)

The final product of Wimar's work was fascinating to the people who viewed it and it was important within the context of the history of the entire building as well as that of the rotunda. Unfortunately, the ravages of time, fire, water and overpainting in 1880 and 1921 have destroyed or obliterated much of what he did in 1862. Studies by the National Park Service concluded that only the north lunette, that showing the attack on St. Louis in 1780, could be brought to a state close to that of the original painting. That finding corresponds with the views of the leading authority on Wimar.⁵²

Becker's decorative work in the Courthouse has also been either completely lost or covered over by later painters and artists. His efforts never reached the artistic level of Wimar's, but they certainly covered a far greater amount of surface within the building. In fact, he became what could be termed the county's resident frescoer between 1862 and 1873. Payments to him during 1862 came to nearly \$3,000, a part of which he must have diverted to Wimar since no direct payment to the latter appears in the documentary sources.

So far as Becker was concerned, the original decorations in the rotunda brought a long, and lucrative, association into being with the county commissioners. He frescoed the Law Library on the east side of the second floor of the south wing in 1863, the Criminal Court at the east side of the first floor of the south wing and the Law Commissioner's Court in the southern half of the first floor of the west wing in 1864, and the Land Court on the north side of the west wing's first floor in 1865. Another \$980 in commissions was given him during 1866, and almost as great an amount was paid to him in 1872-1873, marking the end of a six year gap in such work.⁵³ All of that is proof not only of his personal contribution to the

52. Author's interview with Lincoln Spiess, St. Louis, 1979.

53. Court Records, XI, 103, 117, 148, 158, 179, 189-190, 202 and 341; XII, 51, 144, 206 and 375; XIII, 64; XVIII, 67 and 360; XIX, 13.

Figure 29

Sketch for the East Lunette. From the Collection of the St. Louis Art Museum.

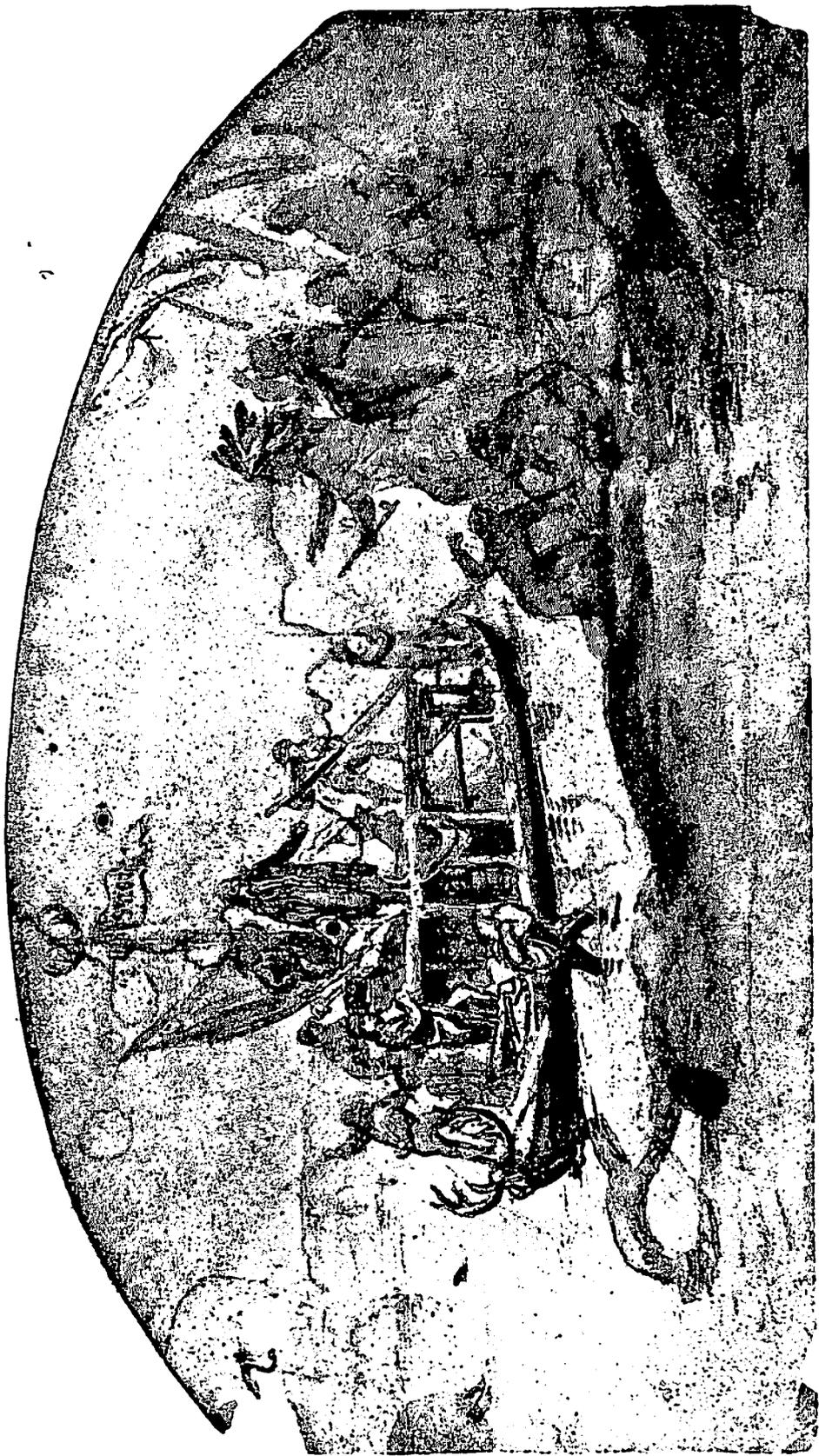


Figure 30

Pencil Study for the West Lunette. From the Collection of the St. Louis Art Museum.



decoration of the interior of the Courthouse but also of the extent of the frescoing which was done. The absence of any record of work by him after 1873 indicates that he fell from political favor for he is known to have continued to make frescoing his principal business.

Favorable comment in 1862 was also directed toward the plastering done by William C. Smith, particularly the three-dimensional representations of the Seal of the State of Missouri which were situated below each of Wimar's allegorical figures in the dome. Less enthusiasm was shown over the work which had been done at the second level gallery, it being described in July 1862 as "unornamented." The third level gallery was then said to have been equally devoid of decoration, having only "a plain whitewashed wall."⁵⁴ Two years would pass before those galleries took on an aspect which came even close to matching the richness above.

All things considered, the formal opening of the rotunda was premature since the eye had not yet been filled with glass and the decorative painting was incomplete. Rumbold and the county commissioners could, however, take some consolation from the fact that they had managed to make the space a much loftier and more imposing part of the structure while also making far better provision for the admission of natural light than had been included in the construction completed in 1845. That was assured by the twenty-four double-hung windows which Joseph Foster had been told to create on the fifth level gallery.

Foster described them as having six-over-six lights with four circular lights filling the arched top of the upper sash.⁵⁵ It is clear that this part of his work at the fifth level of the rotunda was, like the balustrade he installed there, changed within less than ten years. A photograph made prior to the alteration of the lantern in 1869-1870 shows single panes in both sashes of all the circular-headed windows. (Figure 31) The oldest glass now present in those windows provides a basis for speculation as to why the original material was discarded so soon after it was first installed. That glass has an etched surface which serves to diffuse sunlight, suggesting the possibility that the windows which Foster made admitted so much sunlight as to produce discomfort for people standing on the fifth level gallery or caused the temperature there to rise to an undesirable degree. Installation of the glass which

54. Daily Democrat, July 4, 1862; Daily Missouri Republican, July 4, 1862.

55. "Bill of Corrected Measurements," items 170-184.

Figure 31

Portion of a Photograph of the Courthouse, c.1868. From the Col-
lection of the Missouri Historical Society.



contains a design set against a background of etching may well have been seen as a form of response to such problems.

The process by which the etching of the surface was accomplished is most intriguing. The polished sections which create the design are the thinnest, indicating that the entire surface was etched and the design was then cut into it. Why the less complicated method of masking the parts which were to remain clear prior to the etching of the rest was not employed is yet another matter of uncertainty in the history of the interior of the Courthouse.

Whether with six-over-six lights of clear glass or one-over-one lights containing etched glass, the twenty-four windows certainly admitted enough sunlight to make the rotunda a far less gloomy place than it had been since 1845. Conditions there before 1862 were at best dim and at worst so bad that in January 1858 two prisoners could effect an escape from their guards in mid-afternoon because the rotunda was so dark.⁵⁶ The entire rotunda had now been considerably improved, and the men who were involved in its alteration must have felt a sense of deep satisfaction. The Courthouse was at long last complete; twenty-three years of labor were at an end. The fact that continuing complaints would necessitate further remodeling of the rotunda before less than a decade passed was yet to be discovered.

^{56.} Daily Evening News and Intelligencer, January 16, 1858.

MORE COURTS AND MORE PROBLEMS, 1863-1879

The completion of the rotunda and the north wing in 1861 and 1862 ushered in a brief period of relative tranquility in the history of the interior of the Old Courthouse. Aside from an unsuccessful attempt by the Land Court to gain permission to use the room at the east end of the second floor of the south wing which was occupied by the Law Library, and the frescoing of that very room by August Becker in October 1863, little of note happened. The only real exception to that was the cause of the displeasure of the judge of the Land Court with his room on the north side of the first floor of the west wing--the installation "in the recess near the east door" of a privy.¹

August Becker continued his work on the interior during 1864. A request by Judge Primm of the Criminal Court--the man who had provided the historical expertise for the north and the south lunettes--for "certain changes" was soon followed by a payment to Becker for frescoing Primm's courtroom at the east side of the first floor of the south wing. Another commission came in October, this calling for Becker to "paint the Law Commissioner's Court" on the south side of the first floor of the west wing. His most lucrative work of all, nevertheless, was gained as the result of the contract granted to the firm of Alexander and Yule on December 27, 1864. William Rumbold had reported to the county commissioners in November that the "inside walls of the Court House need painting" and, whether by his direction or that of the commissioners, a clause was placed into the resultant contract to insure that the "Fresco painting may be done well." The contractor was, toward that end, to be required "to employ August Becker, artist, to do all said fresco painting that is specified in said specifications for said work."²

The contract affords a good opportunity to mentally reconstruct the general appearance of interior spaces. The corridor walls were to be "laid off in blocks of stone, tinted so as to show the same in a distinct manner. This includes the halls of the stairways, except for the part that is to be laid off in panels and the same moulded with also a cap mould in imitation of wainscoting which will be done as directed." So far as the specifications for work on the ceilings of the corridors are concerned, they tell us almost as much about the contemporary courtrooms as they do about the

¹ Court Records, XI, 309, 341, 350, 355 and 362.

² Ibid., XII, 1, 122, 135, 144 and 161.

public areas. The ceilings were to be "finished with a neat cornice, similar to that in the Law Commissioner's Court Room."³

Paint used in the rotunda was to be "tinted to correspond with balance of the work in the new finish," apparently meaning that Alexander and Yule were to use the earlier work done in the upper galleries and the dome as a guide. A similar instruction was given with regard to the columns. They were to "correspond with the pilasters of said new finish in tone and execution of work marbeling the whole in the same style." "Moldings on the walls and ceilings" were made a part of the work but the cornices and soffits of the second, third and fourth level galleries were to be simply covered with three coats of paint. No directions on ornamental detailing were given for them. Wainscoting was to be grained "in imitation of light oak."⁴

The same form of graining was specified for all of the interior doors. That work would have matched the finish applied to the exterior doors by Wilgus and Kitchen under a contract awarded to them in October 1863.⁵ The specifications for the work they were required to do, it should be noted, imply that the exterior doors of the west wing were actually made of oak rather than simply being grained to simulate that type of wood.

Alexander and Yule were also instructed in December 1864 to decorate the transverse halls of the north and south wings. Those parts of the building were still exposed to the weather, and it is not possible to determine from the language of the contract if the walls and ceilings of the two halls were to be painted at this time. The cast-iron stairs certainly were, the specifications calling for two coats of light bronze paint on "the underside, front ends and balusters."⁶ In all probability, that was the only work done there by Alexander and Yule. Painting of the rest of the two spaces had been covered by the contract given to Wilgus and Kitchen in October 1863, and the walls and ceilings certainly should not have been in need of additional attention only fourteen months later.

3. "Contract for Painting the Walls & Rotunda...December 27, 1864," Court Records on Construction, JNEM.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.; "Contract for painting the exterior of the Courthouse, October 19, 1863," Court Records on Construction, JNEM.
6. "Contract for Painting the Walls & Rotunda...."

Monochromatic painting was called for in the Alexander and Yule contract in the basement of the east wing, an area which had undergone change in the spring of 1864. "2 open work wrought iron doors, 2 locks for same & five open work window guards or gratings" were ordered in March, the final payment for them being made in May.⁷ The office of the county treasurer was located in this basement, and the ironwork and locks must have been intended to provide security.

When all that painting and frescoing was complete, the interior of the Courthouse presented, truly for the first time, an appearance of being both finished and elegant. Frescoed ceilings and cornices, simulated stonework on the corridor walls, and frescoed moldings or panels on the ceilings and walls of the rotunda--the whole of it must have given an impression of almost incredible richness.

In at least one room, the richness had already become tarnished. Justice Moody of the Circuit Court filed a petition with the county commissioners on February 13, 1865, asking that the oval courtroom in the east wing be cleaned and painted. Rumbold examined the room and filed a report that offers quite a bit of detail about the interior. Moody's courtroom, according to Rumbold, was

in need of cleaning only by washing down the walls & ceiling and other wood work by a proper person, also the better keeping in proper condition the floor matting, and washing the floor to cleanse the same.

One of the principal objects in fresco painting the walls of these court rooms was that the same might be easily cleansed by washing without injury to the paint or walls, and present a new room when so cleaned.

I would also remark that the stoves are the principal cause of the walls being in their present condition either from the smallness of the flues, or the winds when in certain directions, causing almost continual smoking [in] the rooms.⁸

Robert Rombauer, the president of the Board of Assessors, had a more serious problem with his office. It was located beneath the

7. Court Records, XII, 33, 51 and 61.

8. William Rumbold to Board of County Commissioners, February 23, 1865, Misc. Legal Documents, JNEM. See also Court Records, XII, 184 and 191.

Fire and Police Telegraph in the north wing, and acid from the batteries used by that agency was leaking through the ceiling of the assessor's office in November 1864. His request that something be done did not lead to any immediate remedy. He again complained about the same problem in April 1865, this time adding a request for a new clock.⁹ His subsequent silence on the matter suggests that corrective steps were at last taken.

At the instigation of the Law Library, a change in the configuration of the interior spaces was made in 1865. The first request of the association for permission to erect on the second floor of the south wing a partition across the hall which ran between the Law Library and the Supreme Court was presented on November 13. It was denied but Charles Drake repeated the plea two weeks later and the commissioners then granted their approval.¹⁰ The space affected was, of course, between two walls which no longer exist.

No action at all was recorded with regard to a request submitted by the Probate Court on August 7, 1865, for alterations and additional furniture for the courtroom and clerk's office. The judge there may not have been in the best of favor since he was directed in the following February to take the space in the west wing formerly occupied by the law commissioner. That order was, however, rescinded a few months later and the Probate Court was not forced to move from its quarters on the south side of the first floor of the east wing.¹¹

Rumbold's duties as architect during the year included a survey of the toilet facilities. His report to the county commissioners on November 2, 1865, like the statement he had made earlier about the frescoping in the Circuit Court, is full of detail:

I would call the attention of your honorable body to the Water Closets in the north part of the Court House. They are in want of repairs to prevent the noxious vapors from arising from the sewer, and which finds its way into the stairs of the east wing.

To prevent this, it will be necessary to have stoppers either of cast iron or lead. I would recommend cast iron, as the most durable for such a place--

9. Court Records, XIII, 133 and 139.

10. Ibid., XII, 331.

11. Ibid., XII, 270 and 372; XIII, 14.

Also there were preparations made for Water Closets in the South Wing, and a Sewer has been made coming into the same, for said water closets. I would like to know the pleasure of the Court whether these are to be made as arranged for.¹²

He was instructed to carry out "the recommendations set forth in said report."¹³

If it could be accepted at face value, an account published in the Daily Democrat on June 29, 1865, would offer a unique description of the type of carpet which was then to be found in the Courthouse. It stated that it was red, white and green; colors which were supposed to symbolize red tape, the dingy appearance of the exterior, and the grass which the groundskeeper had to cut by hand because the stingy county commissioners would not provide the proper equipment.¹⁴ The whole thing, unfortunately, has to be regarded as another in a long series of satirical jabs at the county government.

The structure of the local system of civil courts had by this time come to include the Circuit Court, Land Court, Court of Common Pleas and the Office of the Law Commissioner. The state legislature determined in December 1865 that the cumbersome division of jurisdiction should be ended, a goal which was reached by abolishing all but the Circuit Court and adding two new divisions to it. That meant that for a few months one fewer courtroom would be required but the creation of the Court of Criminal Corrections on March 15, 1866, caused the number to return to its former level.¹⁵ In light of the county's earlier refusal to allow the city to locate the Recorder's Court in the building, it is highly ironic that the Court of Criminal Corrections was the site of trials of individuals charged with such misdemeanors as drunkenness or prostitution, the very offenses which had made people brought before the Recorder's Court odious to the county's leaders.

The City of St. Louis began in this period to make changes in the north wing. A library, "to be located in the hall occupied by the

12. William Rumbold to Board of County Commissioners, November 2, 1865, Misc. Legal Documents, JNEM.

13. Court Records, XII, 316.

14. The story is presented in Donald Dosch, "History of the Old St. Louis Courthouse," 20.

15. Hyde and Conard, Encyclopedia of the City of St. Louis, 508 and 1952.

Council" to afford "better means for obtaining information on matters pertaining to municipal legislation," was brought into being. At roughly the same time, that room on the west side of the second floor was frescoed but the report of the work makes no mention of the name of the artist. Within but a few more years, close to \$3,400 was expended for office furniture and general repairs within City Hall, apparently reflecting costs entailed in refitting the room on the east side of the second floor of the north wing when the Board of Aldermen took it over. The city engineer was thereby displaced, and the room was given "frescoing and ornamentation" as a result of its change in purpose.¹⁶

Had its wishes been fulfilled, the city would a short time later have caused a major change in the lantern. On March 29, 1867, an ordinance was enacted calling for the installation of a clock with four faces, each to be five feet in diameter, "which shall be capable of being illuminated at night."¹⁷ Even though the city was willing to spend as much as \$3,500 for such a device, the county commissioners placidly ignored the proposal. They were far more concerned at the time with the expenses which built up as various officials ordered furniture. The commissioners denied responsibility in December 1867 for any costs incurred "unless permission is first had from the Committee on Court House." The offender was not mentioned, but the source of the commissioners' testiness was revealed a month later when a payment of \$477.90 was made for furniture.¹⁸

Their desire to hold down expenditures was understandable but they would within less than two years find it necessary to embark on a series of major projects which would entail a substantial drain on the county's financial resources. The exact direction those took would be shaped by a newcomer in the history of the Courthouse, Thomas Walsh. William Rumbold's death in 1867 made it necessary to find a replacement for him when major work began to be contemplated in 1869, and Walsh was then a quite familiar person to the commissioners. He had been awarded the commission as architect for the new county jail as well as for the Four Courts building in St. Louis, a structure which would house the criminal courts when it was completed.¹⁹ The commissioners were therefore fully aware of his professional qualifications for work at the Courthouse. Of

16. City Ordinance 5033, November 4, 1865; Mayor's Message...1866, 20 and 34; 1869, 14.

17. City Ordinance 6130, March 29, 1867.

18. Court Records, XIV, 89 and 120.

19. Daily Democrat, February 14, 1869.

perhaps equal consequence, Walsh's record during the Civil War was found to be acceptable. The Daily Democrat denounced rumors which began to circulate concerning him and assured its readers that "we happen to know where Mr. Walsh was at the time referred to, and take pleasure in saying that he was on the side of loyalty. It is but just to Mr. Walsh that this disclaimer should be made, although the source of the slander is hardly worthy of notice."²⁰ He could, in short, be trusted both professionally and politically.

Conditions in the rotunda had become the subject of a number of pointed criticisms during the 1860s. The acoustics were said to make it an undesirable setting for large public meetings.²¹ More to the point, it offered a "dark and gloomy appearance" which one writer attributed to mistakes made by Rumbold during the remodeling completed in 1862.

After years of labor and enormous sums of money spent in designing and decorating the interior of the Court House and its ornamental dome, it was supposed that all was completed by the County Architect under a former administration. But it was found deficient in one of the most essential points--that of light.²²

Walsh responded by making sweeping changes and the rotunda thereupon took on its present form.

The work which he supervised was well underway by August 16, 1869, the date at which the county commissioners directed that the "four stone columns which were taken out of the Rotunda of the Court House be turned over to the Commissioners of Tower Grove Park for the use of such park."²³ The columns had become superfluous because Walsh had cut back the second level gallery by roughly four feet, making the floor there similar in width to those of the galleries above. The cornices of all the galleries were thereby brought into approximate vertical alignment, enhancing the sense of visual unity. Aesthetics were not, however, the architect's principal concern. The four feet of flooring had served to darken the first level by blocking sunlight admitted into the rotunda through the windows on the fifth level. Walsh's remodeling was praised for

20. Ibid., March 16, 1870.

21. Missouri Republican, July 28, 1867.

22. Daily Democrat, November 7, 1869. The text of the article is given in Appendix B, part 2.

23. Daily Democrat, August 17, 1869. See also the account in the Missouri Republican, October 30, 1870.

the effect it had in "allowing the windows in the drum of the dome to be seen from the ground floor, thus enabling them to reflect light below."²⁴

Removal of the four stone columns and remodeling of the second level gallery produced a sort of anomaly in the stone first floor of the rotunda. The stone bases on which the columns had rested were allowed to remain in place, there being no real reason to add to the over-all cost of the work by taking up enough flagging to make it possible to use similarly sized stones for the whole of the floor. Indeed, the work on the first and second levels of the rotunda was but a very small part of the total project envisioned at the time, and the commissioners simply could not authorize any expenditure which did not relate to the major purpose of the remodeling: making the interior less dark and gloomy.

Everyone was in agreement that the installation of the enameled and stained glass in the eye of the dome had in that respect been a serious mistake, and Walsh included its removal among the work begun in 1869. The stair to the walkway of the lantern was thereby exposed to view, and it too was taken out. With the stair gone, the circular platform inside the eye of the dome ceased to serve a purpose. Walsh had it and the partition around the space above the lower dome demolished in order to create the upper, or, as it was dubbed at the time, the "counter" dome.²⁵ He topped the dome with a three-part cornice which terminated at a newly-created circular opening in the base of the lantern. While the exact date of this work cannot be positively determined, the authorization of the sale of old iron beams from the rotunda on November 15, 1869, probably signals that the old oculus and the stairs above were then gone.

Walsh's work greatly increased the amount of natural light which entered the rotunda. Rumbold's design had indeed been flawed because it permitted the admission of only as much light as could penetrate both the glass set into the walkway of the lantern and the "dingy colored glass" in the eye of what now became the lower dome but which was previously the only dome over the rotunda.²⁶ As an answer to the problems which had prompted the remodeling in 1869, Walsh's plan drew compliments. As a purely practical matter, he was also forced to include a great deal of work on the lantern since it now had to be made watertight. That had not been a matter of concern to Rumbold because the base of the lantern had not had an opening in it and had acted as a roof over the space in which

24. Daily Democrat, November 7, 1869.

25. Ibid.; Court Records, XV, 179.

26. Daily Democrat, November 7, 1869.

the stair had been set. When Walsh caused an opening to be cut into the base, he increased the amount of sunlight which could enter the rotunda but he also made it necessary to enclose the openings between the columns of the lantern with cast-iron grids and glass.

W. H. H. Russell, in an address to the members of the Missouri Historical Society delivered in January 1870, provided an imperfect clue as to the time at which remodeling of the lantern was completed. His topic was the Courthouse, and he mentioned that "the eye of the dome is now about being finished, all the glass being in."²⁷ Glass in the eye of the original dome had without question been removed rather than installed by Walsh, and Russell must have intended his comment to be a description of changes made in what would properly be called the lantern. Indeed, it is very possible that he was referring to much more than simply the glazing of the openings between the columns there. The casement windows now at the landing of the lantern were definitely not a part of the original construction by Joseph Foster. They may well be the product of the work which Walsh supervised in 1869. Because those windows serve to increase the amount of sunlight which is cast down through the upper, or "counter," dome, they are certainly in keeping with the purpose for which the remodeling was instituted. There is no known documentary evidence relating to the installation of the casement windows, but the dating of them from 1869 at least has logic on its side.

The enclosed lantern and the newly-created upper dome were each deemed to be in need of decoration and the services of Leon Pomarede, "a St. Louis artist of recognized genius," were engaged. Both Carl Wimar and August Becker, the men responsible for the adornment of the rotunda in 1862, had been apprentices of Pomarede at the outset of their own careers, and St. Louisans of 1869 expressed a higher regard for their old mentor's work, finding it to be "in better taste."²⁸ He was said to have done decorative painting in the lantern "in the Greek Corinthian style, with cornice, pilasters, imposts and arches" but that report may have been meant to apply to the upper dome as well as to the lantern itself. Quite obviously, the balance of the work which he was described as having completed must have been on the surface of the upper dome even though the implication is left that all of his efforts were concentrated in the lantern.

27. Ibid., January 7, 1870.

28. Ibid., November 7, 1869.

The decorations are divided into four sections, representing four eras in the history of the State. First, the figure of King Ferdinand represents the Spanish era, when all the Southern and Western portions of the continent were under Spanish rule. Second, the French period, shown by the striking figure of Napoleon the Great, who acquired the Louisiana Territory from Spain. Third, the age of Western pioneers, represented by President Jefferson, who purchased Louisiana from Napoleon, and sent Lewis and Clark across the continent to the Pacific slope. Fourth, the present era, represented by the figure of Columbia in a proud and defiant attitude; the stars of the States cluster in her diadem, and not one has been lost, although many have grown dim in the process of reconstruction. Between these figures are smaller groups, and a picture of the coat of arms of the United States.²⁹

The inclusion of the "stars of the States" is of special interest. The chance to make a statement on political questions had once again arisen and had once again been seized. The county leaders in 1862 had been Unionists and the work of Wimar and Becker was shaped by that fact. With the Civil War in the past, Pomarede's efforts in 1869 became a form of symbolic comment on the problems which the United States faced during Reconstruction.

Pomarede's commission to decorate the upper dome and the lantern came at virtually the mid-point in the six-year-long period between 1866 and 1872 during which the minutes of the county commissioners contain no record of payments to August Becker for frescoing. That may indicate Becker's having fallen out of favor for either political or artistic reasons. A published comment on "Weimer's" south lunette which speculated that it was "a copy, we believe, of the painting in the Capitol at Washington" seems, however, to have caught Becker's attention and to have aroused his indignation over such a slight to his deceased half-brother's reputation. The newspaper which printed the article carried a retraction only two days later. The source of the new information was not supplied, but a most apologetic tone was employed and the correct spelling of Wimar's name was used. "Wimar's picture was entirely original, as were all his productions. He was possessed of too much genius to allow him to be dependent on any one for ideas."³⁰ Although some other interested or knowledgeable person may have risen to Wimar's defense, Becker certainly would have been the most likely individual in St. Louis to have done so.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid., November 7 and 9, 1869.

The combined efforts of Wimar, Becker and Pomarede had by the beginning of 1870 caused a great deal of the upper part of the rotunda to be covered with artistic work. To some local residents, nevertheless, at least a small degree of an appearance of incompleteness remained. In drawing a verbal picture of the fourth level gallery, one took note of the fact that the "niches" there were "yet to be filled with some fine work of art."³¹ The surfaces of them would, in fact, remain undecorated until another decade had passed and Ettore Miragoli joined the list of artists who plied their craft within the rotunda.

A less immediately apparent part of Walsh's remodeling in the rotunda became the subject of highly flattering comments. Removal of the staircase which had been in the space below the lantern demanded that a new means of access be provided to the exterior walkway. The substitute for the older stair was placed so that it led "outside to the same place, but still concealed from view," taking the form of "ascending and descending stairs made free from danger or embarrassment" for visitors who "by an ingenious plan are aided in the ascent at every winding of the stairway."³² Even though no complete account of this part of the changes effected in 1869 has been discovered, the weight of the evidence points to a conclusion that the present stair between the inner and outer dome is completely Walsh's doing and that he removed the earlier stair in that space which had run only to the level of the top of the lower dome.

People who entered the Courthouse in the closing months of 1869 were greeted by further evidence of Walsh's alterations in the corridors leading into the rotunda. As yet another response to the "dark and gloomy appearance" of the interior, "large iron skylights" were set above those spaces and were described as throwing "not only a flood of light into these passages but also into the rotunda of the dome."³³ The use of iron for the skylights installed in 1869 suggests that a great deal had been learned over the past decade. As part of the original construction of the north wing, Joseph Foster had built a number of wood-framed skylights containing in some instances "sash fitted to slide on iron railway" so that it could be opened to admit fresh air.³⁴ That form of construction seems to have proven a source of problems, and Walsh's skylights were made more durable and less complicated.

31. Ibid., February 4, 1870.

32. Ibid., November 7, 1869, February 4, 1870.

33. Ibid., November 7, 1869.

34. "Bill of Corrected Measurements," items 469-516.

The published accounts of the remodeling demonstrate that it had a widespread, indeed profound, effect on the interior of the Court-house. That view is further bolstered by a report on January 24, 1870, indicating that "the alterations in the dome of the Court House have cost, up to date, about \$25,000. When completed the total cost will be about \$30,000."³⁵ While that affords insight into the chronology of the work, it also gives rise to further puzzlement. Another account published more than two months earlier had indicated that all of the major parts of Walsh's project had by then been brought to completion.³⁶ The exact nature of the work which was expected to demand an outlay of some \$5,000 after January 24 is indeed an intriguing question.

Quite conceivably, the placement of the eight casement windows in the base of the lantern had been added to the remodeling program and was still to be undertaken in late January. Walsh may also have decided to replace sections of the old wooden balustrade which Joseph Foster had described at the fifth level. That work had been done prior to July 22, 1872--the date at which the iron railing there was in unsafe condition.³⁷ It is however just as likely that the change from a wooden balustrade to an iron railing occurred at a time previous to 1869. An alteration at this level of the rotunda, specifically the change of the twenty-four windows from six-over-six to one-over-one lights, is known to have been carried out before Walsh set to work on the rotunda and the lantern. The iron railing may have been installed at the same time the new glass was placed in those windows.

While court officials must have been impressed by the evidence of a great deal of money having been spent to make the interior a brighter place, they were by no means disinclined from brewing further proposals which would keep Walsh busy during 1870. The campaign they conducted showed them to be politically sagacious since, in the first place, they banded together to present their requests at the same time. They also managed to enhance their chances for success by means of a judicious leak of the contents of their petition to local newspapers before they presented it to the county commissioners. The editorial response was most favorable and helpful.

35. Daily Democrat, January 24, 1870.

36. Ibid., November 9, 1869.

37. Court Records, XVIII, 108. Foster's reference to the number of balusters he installed is in "Bill of Corrected Measurements," items 233 and 234.

A petition signed by Judges Rombauer and Knight, of the Circuit Court; Judges Wagner, Bliss and Currier, of the Supreme Court; Colonel Julius Conrad, County Recorder; and the Directors of the Law Library Association, will be presented to the County Court on Monday, asking that certain much needed improvements be made in some of the rooms of the Court House. What is wanted is more light and fresh air--especially fresh air. The court rooms are a disgrace to the city, and detrimental to health, and should be altered so as to make them in keeping with the recent salutary improvements in the rotunda and dome, which meet the approbation of the public.³⁸

The use of the term "County Court," it should be noted, was again common in St. Louis and was even preferred to the more accurate "Board of County Commissioners." For purposes of clarity, however, that body will here be called the county commissioners.

In the petition which was submitted on March 28, R. E. Rombauer, of Circuit Court No. 1 in the oval room of the east wing, and James K. Knight, Rombauer's counterpart in Circuit Court No. 3 in the oval room of the west wing, requested similar improvements. Rombauer called for:

In Court Room No. 1, being the old Circuit Court, a skylight and ventilator above the chandelier--a skylight will save the County in gas bills (now absolutely necessarily incurred) its cost within a few years.

Water closets if they can be constructed without creating smells in the jury room and judge's room in the small corner rooms on the south east and north east corner of Court Room. A flew broken through into the jury room, as now no stove can be placed into that room--and in cold weather jurors suffer very severely.³⁹

Knight requested the same sort of work, adding that he would like to have "the Judge's Desk...altered to correspond with the one in Court Room No. 1."

The description of the jury rooms is of particular interest for it offers firm evidence that the stoves used to heat the oval courtrooms were not hidden behind the partitions in the corners of

38. Daily Democrat, March 27, 1870.

39. "Petition of Judges and Bar for Alterations, March 28, 1870," Misc. Legal Documents, JNEM.

those spaces. Had they been, there would have existed no need for "flems" to allow warm air to enter them.

The part of the petition drafted by the judges of the Supreme Court mentioned a need for a water closet and "pipes for conducting water in the rooms" on the west side of the second floor of the south wing. The Law Library asked for a water closet, perhaps intended to mean the same plumbing fixture which the Supreme Court desired, as well as repairs and painting of the walls on the east side of the second floor of the south wing. The county recorder wanted, quite simply, new shelving to accomodate the records accumulated by his office. Over the past twenty-five years, those had grown from a mere eighty volumes to close to five hundred, making his request seem eminently reasonable.⁴⁰

The advance publicity given to the need for further expenditures within the Courthouse did not cause the county commissioners to act precipitously. They decided on March 28 to "make a personal inspection" and directed Walsh to conduct his own study of the problems.⁴¹ Such a cautious approach did not shield them from further editorial scrutiny. The Daily Democrat on April 1, 1870, continued to wage its campaign:

Judicial Darkness--Justice Not Blind--The architect who drew the plans of the Court House appears to have entertained the pagan idea that Justice is blind. At any rate, he fashioned the court rooms in such a manner that very little solar light can shine upon the judicial altars, and in all the court rooms gas is used at midday to enable the eyes of Justice to gaze upon the briefs of the lawyers. Judge Knight's court, in particular, is be-knighted, and might be mistaken for a heathen temple, in which a perpetual flame is kept up. In the basement, where the Sheriff and Collector, the County Surveyor, the dram shop Collector, and other officers, are buried far from the light of day, a perpetual dampness prevails, and the officers have a ghoul-like appearance, like men who live in mines or prison cells.⁴²

Walsh prepared his own report on the conditions within the Courthouse in time to be able to submit it to the county commissioners on April 7, 1870. They, however, determined that yet another week of study and contemplation should be given to the petition and did

40. Ibid.; Compton and Dry, Pictorial St. Louis, 15.

41. Daily Democrat, March 29, 1870.

42. Ibid., April 1, 1870.

not reach their decision until April 14. They then ignored the request of the Supreme Court and the Law Library. Nothing whatever was ordered done to make life more pleasant for the officials in the basement of the east wing. Those men had not, after all, been parties to the drafting of the original petition.

The two judges of the Circuit Court and the recorder, on the other hand, obtained everything for which they had asked. The recorder was given the shelving he needed; the judges got a great deal more.⁴³ By October 30, 1870, the oval courtrooms were

so changed and remodeled that they are scarce recognizable to those accustomed to their old condition. Circuit Courts No. 1 and 3 are really elegant, and have lost their old sombre, uncomfortable appearance. The judges' benches and railings are changed both in position and form, and greater and better accomodation is given the public.⁴⁴

Movement of the judges' benches from one location to another was in this instance clearly a part of an effort to give the judges better light to read by. They were placed in front of the windows on the east and west sides of the second floor. The new location of the bench in the oval courtroom of the east wing can still be traced in the marks left on the marble floor tiles by the framing of the platform. The general setting, that is the appearance created by the columns and the partitions between them, was not changed by Walsh.

The most basic fault found in both courtrooms was attended to in a fashion that caused a quite important change in the two ceilings.

The old ventilators over the courtrooms are taken out and the eye of the domes covering these courts are enlarged and wrought iron sky lights placed over them, and the sub-domes underneath reflecting rays of light directly down into the court-rooms below, and over the lawyer's desks. These sub-domes are a very handsome feature in the courts and are tastefully frescoed.⁴⁵

The frescoing was probably also the work of Leon Pomarede, but no proof of that has been located. The report of the result of

43. Ibid., April 15, 1870.

44. Missouri Republican, October 30, 1870.

45. Ibid.

Walsh's remodeling in each of the courtrooms does, nonetheless, make it clear that their ceilings took on a wholly new appearance in 1870.

Walsh's report to the county commissioners on April 7, 1870, went beyond a mere examination of the complaints received from the petitioners. Even before they presented their requests, the notion had been advanced that "the building should be heated as other buildings are in every civilized country. The old coal stoves should be retired, and heating furnaces substituted."⁴⁶ There was ample precedent for that in St. Louis since both the city hospital and the new county jail had "steam heating apparatus."⁴⁷ Walsh's criticism of the coal-burning stoves was neither novel nor surprising but it was strongly phrased: "the heating of the building by steam is an improvement which should be made; the stoves now used for that not only blacken the frescoed walls, and ceilings, and annoy the Court, but are insufficient to heat the rooms; this mode of heating belongs to the past." The county commissioners may by April 15, 1870, have begun to wonder if anyone would ever be satisfied with the conditions in the building, but on that date they authorized Walsh to install steam heating. The contract was let in June 1870, and the appointment of an engineer on October 1 signaled that all would be in readiness for the coming winter.⁴⁸

The new heating system would prove to be far less than totally satisfactory. Complaints concerning the smoke it produced were voiced only a few months after it came into service, and the level of heat inside the building was said to have varied a great deal in spite of an early belief that it could be "increased or modified at pleasure."⁴⁹ Part at least of the initial problems stemmed from insufficient insulation on the pipes which carried the steam. Steps to correct that were taken in November 1871. That did not, however, put an end to problems. A new furnace and water circulator were installed in March 1873; a water tank was added in the following July; and the commissioners heard a report concerning the "Morgan Smoke Burner" in February 1874. Notwithstanding all of that attention, the heating system continued to function poorly. The engineer presented a request for "alterations, improvements and

46. Daily Democrat, March 27, 1870.

47. Ibid., February 1, 1870.

48. Thomas Walsh to Board of County Commissioners, April 7, 1870, Misc. Legal Documents, JNEM; Court Records, XVI, 3 and 71; Daily Democrat, April 15, 1870.

49. Daily Democrat, December 29, 1870, January 8, 1871; Missouri Republican, October 30, 1870.

repairs" in June 1874, and in the same month a bid was accepted for "covering steam pipes"--the second time such work had been found to be necessary after only three seasons of operation. Four years later, it was declared that the "heating apparatus and pipes are in very unsafe condition," a report that could also have justly singled out problems with the amount of heat which was delivered in some parts of the building. A stove was required on the second floor of the south wing in 1882, affording a form of testimony to the defects which were inherent in the steam system which was installed in 1870.⁵⁰

The initial reaction to the steam heating was, nevertheless, generally favorable. To our fortune, one newspaper article directing compliments toward the county commissioners for ordering the installation of it in 1870 included a good description of the radiators which were placed in the rooms of the south, east and west wings.

The steam coils are enclosed by brass screens and covered by polished marble slabs....The ventilation is found to work well in all the rooms and offices, and is so arranged as to carry off all rarified air from the courts both in summer and winter.⁵¹

Because it was still occupied by the City of St. Louis, the north wing was not meant to be heated by the system installed in 1870. Extension of the pipes to the rooms there would be delayed until November 1873, after the municipal offices had been moved to a newly-constructed City Hall and the county had taken possession of the north wing for its own use.⁵²

The furnace and boiler were located in the eastern end of the basement of the south wing, and that part of the building could be used for no other purpose until the twentieth century. Other work completed before October 30, 1870, made the east wing basement more functional, and may have constituted a form of response to the criticism of conditions under which county officials there had to work. On behalf of the county collector, a brick partition was removed from the room on the south side of the corridor, iron beams and columns being put in place to provide the support which it had previously afforded. New counters, desks and tables were purchased, making the collector's office "one of the handsomest and

50. Court Records, XVII, 121; XVIII, 417; XIX, 26, 140 and 378; XX, 35; XXII, 233; Mayor's Message...1878, 196.

51. Missouri Republican, October 30, 1870.

52. Court Records, XIX, 261 and 302-303.

most convenient in the building."⁵³ The iron gates which had been installed in 1866 now served to provide additional security for the taxes which were collected.

Improvements in the ventilation and waste disposal pipes for the public toilet in the basement of the west wing were also urged by Walsh. The commissioners left no record of any action being taken on that recommendation but on November 10, 1871, they did authorize the "Committee on County Buildings...to have such changes made in the construction of the water closets in the west end of the south wing of the Court House as they may deem necessary and proper." That may have been a delayed response to the Supreme Court's request for a toilet on the second floor of that wing in March 1870.⁵⁴

Had Walsh had his way, 1870 would have been the year in which the transverse halls in the north and south wings would have been enclosed. With all of the work which was actually undertaken in that and the previous year, the county found that it simply did not have the two thousand dollars which the architect estimated would be needed to build "sash doors, frames &c" even though the proposal evoked a generally favorable public response.⁵⁵

In comments concerning the painting of the wrought-iron fence around the Courthouse which were incorporated in his report of April 10, 1870, Walsh made a most interesting point. The fact that the iron-work was in need of paint is not at all surprising but his inclusion of an estimate of the cost of "painting the cut stone base under it, when painted in dark colors" is the sole indication that the natural color of the stone was hidden by paint at the time.⁵⁶

Maintenance of the building and grounds was the responsibility of the janitor of the Courthouse, an office to which James Quigley had received reappointment on an annual basis since 1844. He is without question one of the most colorful characters in the story of the building and he was always the darling of local journalists who regularly described his antics. On September 3, 1869, for example, he was reported to have "made an ascent to the dome of the Court House, yesterday, by means of a rope. A bucket was attached to one

53. Missouri Republican, October 30, 1870.

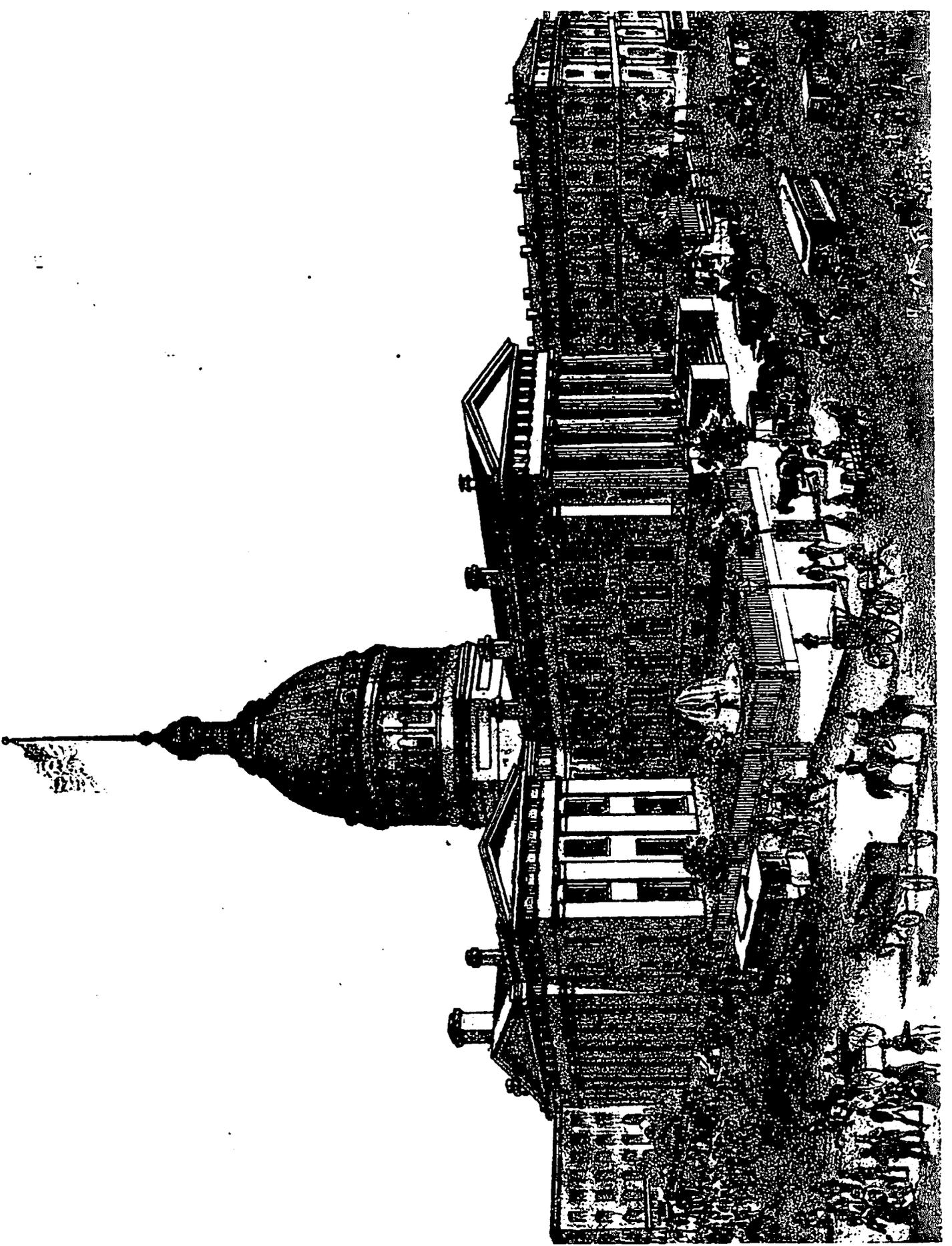
54. Thomas Walsh to Board of County Commissioners, April 10, 1870, Misc. Legal Documents, JNEM; Missouri Republican, October 30, 1870.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.

Figure 32

The Exterior and Grounds in 1875, From the Collection of the Missouri Historical Society.



end of the rope, and in this the adventurous Janitor placed himself, while several men hauled him up." ⁵⁷ That may have been a simple statement of fact but it must be noted that the newspaper in which the story appeared had a month earlier described a rather unlikely visitor to the building:

A large spider, belonging to a species that is rare in this region, has taken a position on the outer wall of the Court House, near the office of the Dram Shop Collector. Its body is covered with brilliant and variegated spots, and the top of its head is of downy whiteness. The legs are about three inches long, and the two fore-legs are cloven for three-fourths of their length, so that it can spread them out and use them as a separate pair. It has woven a singular looking web, of brilliant whiteness and unique form. It is conjectured that this spider has taken his position for the purpose of observing the eclipse. ⁵⁸

A solar eclipse did occur at that time, but the account of the spider, and perhaps of Quigley's adventures in the bucket, has all the hallmarks of an attempt at levity with a meaning which is now totally obscure.

Quigley's turtle, a well-established feature of Courthouse lore, was the subject of published comments that sometimes betray signs of humorous invention. Actually, the documentary evidence indicates that a different turtle was placed in the fountain each year "as soon as the frost is out of the ground." ⁵⁹ That which was there in 1868 would have been a most noteworthy specimen for it was said in the following spring that "workmen are engaged in repairing the fountain in the Court House yard. The cement at the bottom is loose and leaky, caused, probably by the scratching of the turtle that formerly inhabited that aqueous dwelling." ⁶⁰ Since the fountain had an iron bottom, the credibility of that story becomes rather tarnished, leaving one to speculate on how many of the other reports regarding Quigley stretched the truth.

Popular though he was with journalists and the general public, and automatic though his reappointment as janitor may have become,

57. Daily Democrat, September 3, 1869. See also Daily News and Intelligencer, February 3, 1858 for evidence of Quigley's popularity.

58. Daily Democrat, August 5, 1869.

59. Ibid., March 15, 1869. See also the issue of March 26, 1870.

60. Ibid., March 16, 1869.

Quigley did not always manage to get what he wanted from the county. Relief from the drudgery involved in tending the lawn seemed at hand in July 1869 when it was announced that

Yesterday a benevolent young man who had doubtless been a frequent witness to the efforts of Janitor Quigley to keep down the weeds, and preserve his pasture in good condition, walked into the Court-house yard with a patent lawnmower, and in a few moments shaved the grass down as nicely as a Brussels carpet. After the job was finished a petition to the County Court was drawn up, and signed by many who had witnessed the mowing.⁶¹

Already aware that a substantial amount of money would have to be expended in remodeling the interior of the building, the commissioners were in no mood to authorize the purchase of a lawnmower. The petition was summarily rejected.⁶²

Completion of the Four Courts Building in 1871, and the movement there of the Criminal Court and the Court of Criminal Corrections, increased the space available for the civil courts and for other county offices. The marshal took over the former office of the clerk of the Criminal Court and the assessor moved into the courtroom on the east side of the first floor of the south wing. He had previously been located across the hall in a room which was now remodeled. A partition which divided the space formerly occupied by the assessor from the office of the county treasurer was left in place, the clerk of the Supreme Court moving into the area which the assessor now vacated. The flagging of the treasurer's office with DeSoto stone already in the possession of the county may have extended into the clerk's new quarters as well.⁶³

The transfer of the assessor was accomplished during February 1871, and his first request for better furniture was probably made shortly afterward. It was not acted upon for a full year, the commissioners finally deciding that the room should only "be fitted up in a plain manner according to the design submitted...by Thomas Walsh."⁶⁴ While the product may have been "plain", the work done in the assessor's office was extensive. It entailed carpentry, gas-fitting, plumbing, steam-fitting, painting, carpeting and

61. Ibid., July 23, 1869.

62. Ibid., July 27, 1869.

63. Court Records, XVI, 349.

64. Ibid., XVII, 281.

cabinetwork. Single doors leading into the corridor were probably installed at this time and they were fitted with glass.⁶⁵

The final expenditure for the changes made to accomodate the assessor, dating from March 31, 1873, mirrors one incurred for the treasurer's office during the period. Both were for awnings and together they constitute the earliest documentary evidence of the use of such means to shade the interior from the summer sun. A photograph made before 1870, conversely, indicates that awnings were then in use and gives visual proof that the surviving written matter does not offer a complete account of the structure. (Figure 23) Whether the interior shutters which are known to have been present in all four wings were now being removed is not at all clear, but the appearance of the exterior during the summer months had certainly undergone change. An estimate in 1876 that about four hundred dollars would be needed to repair and re-cover awnings is further evidence that they had come into general use.⁶⁶

The expiration of the lease which the City of St. Louis held on the north wing was at hand, and the process of renegotiating it was marked by growing rancor on both sides. The county wanted the city to pay more than the \$1,000 annual rental which had been called for in the original lease. In response to that, the city sent a bill for water it claimed to have been used at the Courthouse which totaled more than \$16,000. The county commissioners reacted by ordering that the water closets near the north wing be closed. To add to the county's problems, the roof began to leak.⁶⁷

The mood of the commissioners became quite unpleasant. They even took the unprecedented step of over-ruling their own Committee on the Court House in the matter of the request received from the Supreme Court on October 30, 1871, to have "the two doors leading to said Court Room fastened together so as to make one, or that a new door be made."⁶⁸ That is an isolated reference to a desire to replace the double-doors but it could indicate a more general dissatisfaction which produced other changes at the interior entries during the period.

65. Assessment and Bond of F. G. Boehme, March 28, 1872, County Court Records--OCH Transactions, JNEM; Court Records, XVI, 223; XVIII, 32, 44, 47 and 302.

66. Court Records, XVII, 389; XVIII, 445; XXII, 121.

67. Ibid., XVII, 107 and 171.

68. Ibid., XVII, 171.

Awnings on the south side of the first floor of the east wing, and a new carpet, were requested by the Probate Court in August 1872. The description of the existing carpet is phrased in an intriguing fashion. It was said to be "very much wore, entirely through in some places, and should be covered (partially at least) with matting or oil cloth."⁶⁹ The concluding phrase of that indicates that the judge was willing to accept some sort of linoleum.

The Probate Court occupied both rooms on the south side of the first floor in the east wing and each was developing problems. The ceiling and cornice in one--probably the office of the clerk at the east end--were replaced in 1873. The judge himself ordered the work without first obtaining authorization from the commissioners, a tactic that led to a running dispute over payment of the bill. Four years later, installation of a second new ceiling for the Probate Court was approved without dissent or even comment.⁷⁰

A new local official, the jury commissioner, made his appearance before the commissioners on July 8, 1872, requesting "such office furniture as he may require to facilitate the transaction of the increase of business in his said office." In the same year, the old office of the Keeper of the Rotunda was abolished, either for economy or as a result of dwindling interest in that part of the interior.⁷¹

A great deal of the county commissioners' time and attention had to be spent in attending to the assignment of the rooms in the north wing following the vacation of them by the City of St. Louis during the last half of 1873. An overture for the return to county control of the second floor of that wing had been made in December 1870. When it became certain that the city would not renew the lease, a number of petitions were directed to the commissioners. The Supreme Court and the Circuit Court, for example, both asked for the same room on the second floor. The latter was successful. Both the county auditor and the Circuit Court desired another of the rooms. With Solomon-like wisdom, the commissioners resolved that matter by approving the Circuit Court's request and assigning the room which it vacated on the north side of the west wing's first floor to the auditor.⁷²

69. Ibid., XVIII, 146

70. Ibid., XIX, 100 and 208; XXIII, 62.

71. Ibid., XVII, 279; XVIII, 88.

72. Ibid., XVI, 166; XIX, 246 and 261.

Movement of the Circuit Court into the north wing obviously could not be accomplished without some cost even if it had not been necessary to extend the steam heating system to it. The county commissioners would order that the old furniture and fixtures which the city had left behind should be used whenever possible but the sensibilities of the judges had to be considered. From the judge of Circuit Court No. 4, to whom had been assigned the east room on the second floor, came requests for carpet to replace the existing matting, a thermometer, and a dozen chairs. The former office of the mayor, on the west side of the first floor of the north wing, was converted for the use of Circuit Court No. 2 by installing furniture and fittings which are most likely to have been identical to those shown on a plan of the space made in 1903. (Figure 33) An additional appropriation of \$5,000 for repairs came in handy, allowing that work to be accomplished as well as the installation of gas chandeliers in the five jury rooms. Work was also approved within the oval courtroom of the west wing, but no indication of its nature was offered.⁷³

Information about the fountain in the southeast yard, and about the areaways around the building, becomes plentiful in 1872. The "chain railing and posts" which had been in place around the fountain and atop the walls of the areaways was removed, the material then being sold to the Commissioners of Lafayette Park. Further need for work on the fountain became evident when the city's Board of Water Commissioners, no doubt inspired by the controversy which revolved around the cost of the water supplied to the Courthouse, protested in June 1872 that the nozzle which had just been installed was too large. They suggested one of "the Rose pattern," and of a smaller size, be substituted.⁷⁴

The lawns also required attention. The earliest record of sod being used at the Courthouse appears on March 22, 1872, and references to such treatment of the grounds are to be found almost annually between 1872 and 1876.⁷⁵

Repairs to the roof of the north wing made during 1871 had not been completed in time to save the ceiling of the room on the east side of the second floor. Bids for its removal and reconstruction were solicited in March 1874, the commissioners finding it necessary to order that it "be painted plain (i.e. cornice and walls)

73. Ibid., XVII, 325; XVIII, 109, 260, 324 and 393; XIX, 261.

74. Ibid., XVII, 384; XVIII, 81.

75. Ibid., XVII, 335; XX, 29; XXI, 51; XXII, 152.

Figure 33

Plan of Circuit Courtroom No. 6, Designated No. 2 from 1873 to 1896, August 1903. The dotted lines indicate existing furniture and fittings at the time the plan was made. From "First Floor Plan," August 8, 1903, Archives of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial.

the ceiling to be neither frescoed nor painted, but simply white-washed."⁷⁶ The room had been assigned to Circuit Court No. 4 in November 1873 but was by August 1874 transferred to the county engineer. Circuit Court No. 4 was moved to the space on the east side of the first floor of the north wing where it remained until 1896.

Pressures on the treasury having been made even more intense by the onset of the Panic of 1873, and there being more space available than was actually needed for official use, the commissioners decided to rent out rooms in the basements of the east and north wings to private concerns. The first lease was for the offices which the county collector had previously occupied in the east wing and it was to run for five years.⁷⁷ The tenants were title examiners, and their movement into the building provided a new form of convenience for people who came to it on matters pertaining to the sale or transfer of real estate.

The entire basement of the north wing was now vacant and it too was turned into a source of income. C. R. Clarke, an architect, took a lease on February 9, 1874, for the room at the east side. Ten days later, H. M. Thompson, proprietor of the St. Louis Potteries, established an office on the west side under an agreement which permitted him to display samples of his company's products "inside of the iron railing." That could have included a wide range of things since the St. Louis Potteries made sewer pipe, drain tile, mineral paint, queensware, terra cotta and hydraulic cement.⁷⁸

Even the space under the portico of the north wing was turned to the generation of revenue. A notary public took one-half of the space there after agreeing to pay \$50 in rent each year. As was the case with the earlier leases, the tenant had to pay all the costs for work required to make the space usable, including those of extending the steam lines in order to provide heat.⁷⁹

The proceeds that could be derived from such leases were not sufficient to cause the commissioners to allow them to remain in effect for very long. In response to a request on December 7, 1874, for new jury rooms, they ordered the county counselor to find a way

76. Ibid., XIX, 408; XX, 181.

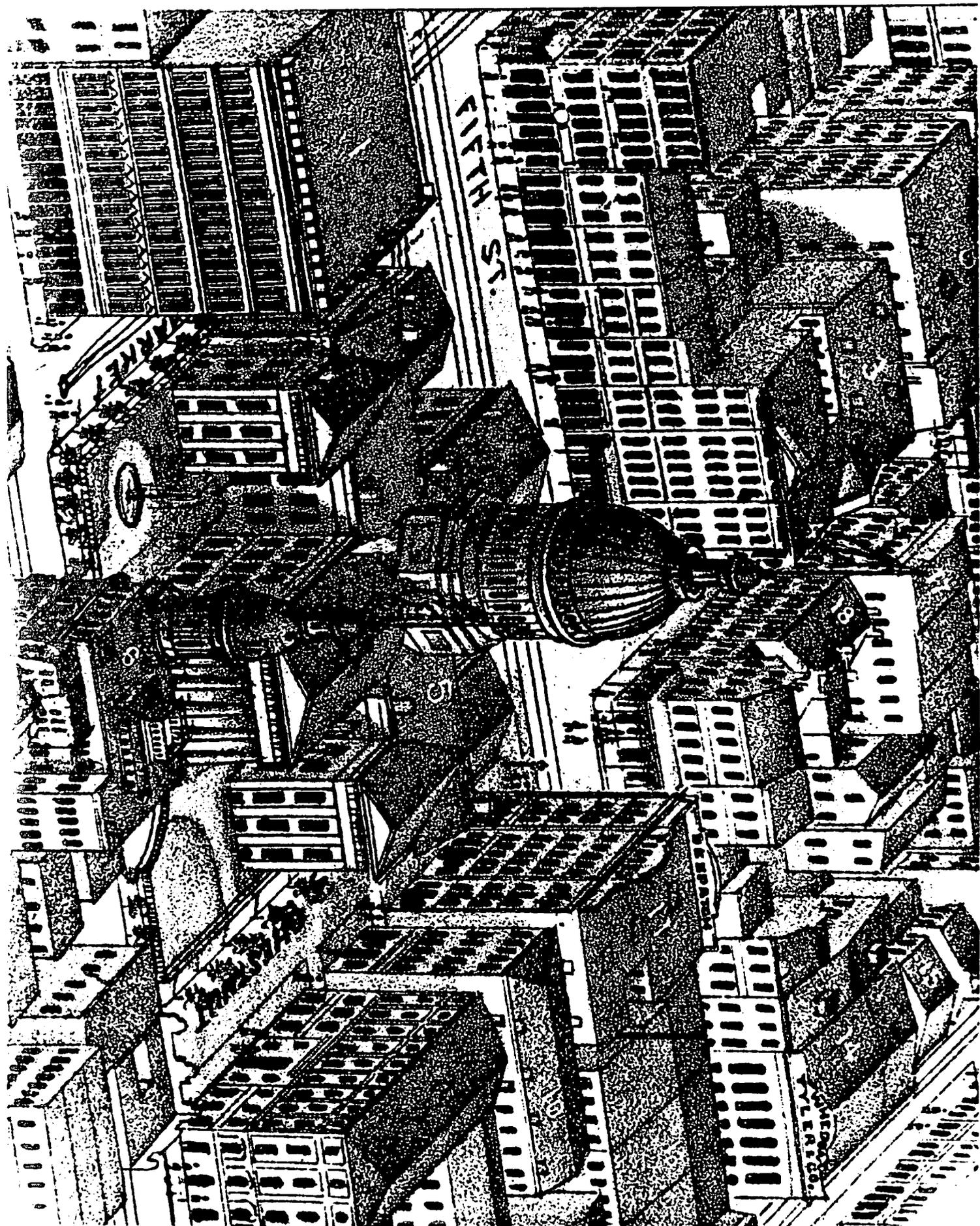
77. Ibid., XIX, 272, 284 and 293.

78. Compton and Dry, Pictorial St. Louis, 50. Record of the leases is to be found in Court Records, XIX, 376-377 and 395-396.

79. Court Records, XIX, 377.

Figure 34

Bird's-Eye View of the Courthouse and Grounds, 1875. From Richard J. Compton and Camille N. Dry, Pictorial St. Louis. Courtesy of the Mercantile Library, St. Louis.



to get the tenants out of the basement of the north wing in order to make the space there available for the jurors.⁸⁰

Limited though the income from those leases may have been, it must have helped when an unexpected expense arose as a result of the collapse of the flag pole atop the lantern in September 1873. It had lasted for a bit more than a decade, and its replacement was directed in January 1874. That would last for almost exactly the same amount of time as had the original. The City of St. Louis in 1884 spent \$1,191.50 for a "new flag pole, ball and repairs." The ball at the base of the present pole was, however, found in 1979 to have an inscription on one of its parts which is dated June 18, 1861, indicating that repairs rather than complete replacement of it occurred in 1884.⁸¹

The curious relationship of city and county continued to impinge on the history of the Courthouse. After sending a bill on March 30, 1874, for "a lot of secondhand furniture" left in the room which was now occupied by Circuit Court No. 5, the city did a volte-face by willingly paying for a six-inch water main which was laid in Fourth Street between Market and Chestnut in the following July.⁸²

The iron fence and its stone base had now stood for almost thirty years. Their condition prompted a discussion in March 1875 of the desirability of moving them to the new County Poor House and of flagging the grounds.⁸³ The question was taken under advisement but nothing was done at the time. The fence would in fact remain in place for another decade and its stone base was not removed until 1895-1896. The idea of placing flagging in the yards was dropped completely.

The need of both the assessor and the recorder of deeds for additional office space was brought to the attention of the commissioners in May 1875. Charles Green, President of the Board of Assessors, drew up a plan for changes in the south wing

which utilizes very nicely a lot of what has heretofore been waste room in the building. The wide and commodious

80. Ibid., 329 and 350.

81. Ibid., 337; Mayor's Message...May, 1885, 127. Information about the inscription supplied by Michael G. Hunter, 1979.

82. Court Records, XIX, 438; City Ordinance 9069, July 7, 1874.

83. Court Records, XIX, 404 and 413.

hall, which separates the south wing from the main building, has never been of the least practical use and it is a rare thing that anyone passes through, there being more convenient means of access to the various rooms than through it. The alterations contemplated will close this hall up on each side of the entrance to the rotunda from the Market street front and that portion east will be united to the assessor's office, also including what is now the sheriff's office in the main building. The space taken in on the west side will be added in like manner to the recorder's office....The work of making these alterations will be proceeded with immediately, and when completed will transform these offices from the most inconvenient to the most convenient in the court house.⁸⁴

The newly-created offices would have been on the first floor of the transverse hall between the rotunda and the south wing, and the account of the work that would have been required fails to note that it would indeed have been substantial and costly. Windows or doors would have been required at the east and the west ends of the hall and the cast-iron stairs which had been installed in 1857 would have to be removed.⁸⁵ That much work was beyond the county's means and, desirable though the enlargement of the two offices may have been, the project was quietly abandoned.

In the course of the discussion of the plan which Green advanced, a description was given of the existing office of the recorder which would also apply to other quarters within the Courthouse. It was said to have "never been fitted up with any conveniences, and its appearance is very like that of a hospital for disabled furniture, or a junk shop."⁸⁶ Few of the county officials, one suspects, could boast of anything that was much more elegant.

The earliest reference to a rest room for women had come in 1868 when a request was received for permission to run a water pipe from the battery room of the Fire and Police Telegraph in the north wing "to the ladies privy directly underneath." That received a favorable response from Edward Mortimer, then the superintendent and architect, but it is not clear if the pipe was ever actually installed. The "Ladies Saloon" was, however, refurbished in 1875.⁸⁷

84. St. Louis Republican, May 30, 1875.

85. The fact that the hall would have to be "blocked up" was mentioned in St. Louis Globe-Democrat, May 30, 1875.

86. Republican, May 30, 1875.

87. Court Records, XIV, 243 and 251; XXI, 386.

Evidence of the continuing financial difficulties faced by the county is scattered through the records of the 1870s. An attempt to force the Law Library to pay for the gas it had consumed served only to draw the ire of the local Bar Association, the county commissioners ultimately finding it politic to assume all responsibility for the bills from the past as well as those of the future. That is an indication of both the influence of the attorneys and of the condition of the county's treasury. The expense of maintaining the Courthouse was becoming increasingly onerous.⁸⁸

Changes in furnishings and lighting fixtures made in the past had produced an accumulation of "old tables, benches, chandeliers and other old rubbish." The commissioners ordered that all of that be sold in June 1875. If court officials had their way, the money derived from the sale could be quickly spent. James J. Lindley, the Judge in Circuit Court No. 4, requested repairs and improvements in his room on the east side of the first floor in the north wing early in 1876, and the Probate Court asked for a new ceiling over the courtroom on the south side of the east wing in February of the following year.⁸⁹

Another alteration of the basement of the east wing was conducted in March 1876. In this instance, a partition was run across the space under the portico in order to create an office for the county's school commissioner.⁹⁰ That partition remained in place at the time the National Park Service moved into the building.

Minor though that work was, it represented the only real change made in the interior during 1876. The county commissioners' accustomed reluctance, or inability, to provide funds for renovating or remodeling the structure had now increased for a very obvious reason. It had become certain that the City of St. Louis would separate from St. Louis County and that ownership of the Courthouse would be transferred to the city as part of the process. There was, therefore, little if any inducement for the county to appropriate funds for projects at the building during the year.

Among the first expenses to be absorbed by the City of St. Louis were those connected with changes made in the Supreme Court's room on the west side of the second floor of the south wing. That court discontinued its sessions in St. Louis and the space it had occupied was assigned to a newly created Court of Appeals. Roughly

88. Ibid., XX, 362, 375, 382 and 414.

89. Ibid., XXI, 154; XXII, 21; XXIII, 67.

90. Ibid., XXII, 52.

\$900 were spent to provide furniture, carpets, oil cloth, matting and curtains for the judges of the new Court of Appeals during 1877.⁹¹

The cost to the city of maintaining that particular courtroom decreased sharply in each subsequent year until 1885 when the State of Missouri assumed responsibility for its upkeep or improvement. The work undertaken during the brief period in which the city provided for the needs of the Court of Appeals does, however, contain one minor mystery. \$46 were spent to cut a window for the court in 1877 but the record is tantalizingly silent as to where the opening was located.⁹²

There is equal uncertainty about whether a change in the kind of storage facilities which were used by the clerk of the Circuit Court occurred at this time or if the body to whom he now reported simply began to record transactions which the county commissioners had not noted in their own minutes. The clerk, once the city and the county became separate political entities, was under the jurisdiction of the judges of the Circuit Court meeting in General Term. They would on uncounted occasions pass on expenditures for tin boxes, always appropriately painted and lettered, to be used for the storage of records.⁹³ Such entries continue until well into the twentieth century and the number of tin boxes which were then to be found within the Courthouse staggers the imagination. The space assigned to the clerk came to contain many thousands of such document boxes.

Both curtains and window shades were in use by this time, and the furniture in the chambers of the judges had taken on a rather comfortable character. Lounges had been purchased as early as July 1878. Similar furnishings, sometimes further described as having leather covers, continued to be acquired throughout the balance of the period in which the Circuit Court was located within the Courthouse.⁹⁴

Although the damage it caused was minor, a fire at the Courthouse on May 28, 1877, brought forth information on the space between the

91. Mayor's Message...1878, 147-149. For the final statement of expenses incurred by the city for the Court of Appeals, see Ibid....1886, 14.

92. Mayor's Message...1878, 157.

93. For the earliest record see, Minutes of the General Term, II, 389, dated July 12, 1877.

94. General Term, II, 383 and 409.

inner and outer domes. One would not expect gas lighting to have been installed there and the record of this episode demonstrates that such a conclusion is warranted. Smoke was seen issuing from the circular windows at the base of the dome at about 11 a.m. Firemen ascended the staircase, described as being narrow and dark, and "groped about, feeling for the heat, and wondering where the concealed flame could be." That tactic proved unsuccessful, and one of their number, Phelim Toole, decided that the location could more easily be determined at the exterior. He had recently been the hero of the Southern Hotel fire, one of the worst ever to occur in St. Louis, and he now climbed through one of the circular windows and made his way up to the outer surface of the dome where he extinguished the smoldering fire. The entire incident is of more than passing interest and not only because it creates a link between the structure and a celebrated character in local history. The description of the fire, in the first place, gives an indication that the light provided by the glass in the walkway and by the twenty-four circular windows was rather limited, but that no artificial system was present to act as a supplement. Secondly, the report of the location of the fire raises a question as to whether it might have been caused by lightning.⁹⁵

Expenditures for furnishings in the rooms of the Circuit Court were somewhat above average during 1877 and 1878. The city's accounts, however, do not make clear what was purchased or specifically where work was done. They state simply that close to \$1,200 were spent for "carpets, oil cloths, matting and window curtains" in 1877; another \$470 for similar purposes in 1878; and over \$900 for carpenter work and repairs in the latter year. Significant changes in the lighting system are shown in a series of payments made between October 7, 1878, and February 3, 1879. All of the bills were presented to the Circuit Court and they totaled \$584.50. In the same general period, nearly \$1,000 were spent for new furnishings in the Court of Appeals.⁹⁶ Appreciable changes must have been made in the courtrooms or in the offices but we have no way of determining what they were.

A new, as well as unusual, use for the basement of the east wing began to be discussed in 1878. The Missouri Historical Society

95. Globe-Democrat, May 29, 1877. The report attributed the fire to a cigar having been discarded but did not offer an explanation of why the location could be determined only from outside the dome, a fact that suggests an exterior cause.

96. General Term, II, 410, 412, 416 and 424; Mayor's Message... 1878, 147-149; 1879, 12.

indicated a desire to locate a museum there and the request was approved in November. The society remained at the Courthouse until 1886.⁹⁷

While the furniture and display cases, which the society had designed especially for it by a local architect, were described as "elegant," the published accounts of the museum were quite critical of the over-all conditions in the east wing's basement. One visitor referred to it as a "dingy chamber." Another indicated that it was still, as it had been in 1869, "gloomy, dismal and dusty and unfit for habitation."⁹⁸ Similar comments could, in all probability, have been made about the basements of the other wings at the time.

The persistent legend that the historical society installed the iron gates in this area as a form of protection for its exhibits does not stand to a test. Those gates had been hung more than a decade earlier and they simply remained in place during the time the museum was located within the basement.

Wallpaper and electric clocks began to be mentioned in the records pertaining to the Courthouse during 1878. The clocks, running on current supplied by batteries, were the subject of special maintenance contracts in the ensuing years, indicating that the janitorial staff at the Courthouse found it impossible to keep them in running condition.⁹⁹

An additional ventilator in the oval courtroom in the east wing and the installation of a chandelier in the Probate Court on the south side of the first floor of the same wing were noted toward the end of the decade, but work of that nature did little to meet the scope of the problems which had arisen. The Board of Public Improvements estimated that \$5,000 were required for repairs to the heating system and for work on leaking roofs and gutters. The plumbing system was found to be in need of a complete overhaul. Furthermore, as early as May 17, 1878, it was glumly noted that "the frescoing on the interior of the dome is gradually scaling off. At an expense now of \$250 or \$300 the whole can be retouched and placed in good condition, but if allowed to remain as at present the expense hereafter to place it in proper order will be

97. City Ordinance 10893, November 25, 1878; George R. Brooks, "The First Century of the Missouri Historical Society," Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society, XXII, No. 3 (April, 1966), 283.

98. Brooks, "First Century," 280-281.

99. City Ordinance 10817, March 28, 1879; Mayor's Message...1879, 12.

greatly increased."¹⁰⁰ All that provides the background for the events of 1880.

¹⁰⁰ General Term, II, 403 and 446; Mayor's Message...1875, 195-196; 1879, 12.

RENOVATION IN THE ROTUNDA; DECLINE EVERYWHERE ELSE, 1880-1902

The Courthouse continued to be regarded as the most significant public structure in St. Louis, and the city's mayor in 1880 advanced the notion that it should be made even larger. Expressing the general dissatisfaction with the City Hall which had been erected in 1873, he called for the creation of additional space to house the municipal offices through

the extension of the wings of the present court house
....The design of this imposing structure is cruciform and the extension of the northern and southern wings to Fourth and Fifth streets respectively would add to rather than impair its architectural beauty if properly executed.¹

His suggestion was given due consideration by the city's legislative body but by June 5, 1880, it "decided to give up the project of building another wing on the Court-house, preferring to use the money which would be required for the improvement in repairing streets." The report of that action concluded with an observation that "this is probably a sensible thing to do. We can get along, after a fashion, without an enlargement of the Court-house, but street repair is something which cries to Heaven every hour in the day."² The mayor's plan was therefore shelved--the city would eventually erect the present City Hall at Tucker Boulevard and Market in the 1890s--but the men who oversaw the city's budget still found it necessary to pay heed to increasingly obvious damage done in the rotunda by the intrusion of water.

It is ironic that the work which Thomas Walsh had overseen in 1869 and 1870 had been so lavishly praised at that time as a vast improvement over the faulty construction which had been supervised by his predecessors. He would at least indirectly take a great deal of the blame for the problems which were apparent to all visitors to the rotunda only a decade later although Wimar, Becker and Pomarede were not found to be above criticism. On July 2, 1880, it was said that

The City authorities have at last decided that the interior of the Court House dome is in need of renovation. The fresco work has an antique appearance and the figures

1. Mayor's Message...1880, 13.

2. Post-Dispatch, June 5, 1880.

are decidedly ancient. The picture of Justice, for instance, shows signs of rough usage which may be mistaken as emblematic of the article dispensed in the Court-rooms. The large paintings executed by Weimar, representing the discovery of the Mississippi by DeSoto, the landing of Laclède, the Indian attack on St. Louis in 1764 [sic], and a view of the Chatopa Pass [sic] in the Rocky Mountains, have been somewhat damaged by time, and need a little retouching. Some of the allegorical figures are out of fashion and require new robes, or an entire blotting out. The Mercurial gentleman, especially, who has just lighted on a heaven-kissing hill, is in want of a summer coat, and may well be placed on the retired list.³

While that would suggest that changing tastes influenced the decision to alter the appearance of the rotunda, the same report also took note of purely physical deficiencies which called for correction.

At present the dome is in a leaky condition, and the "water colors" on the walls and floors are certainly a "touch of nature" worthy of the attention of the roofer and glazier. The biggest leak is directly in the eye of the dome, from which the rain-drops descend whenever there is a shower. This leak has existed for many years and ought to be stopped before the artist begins work.⁴

The remodeling conducted in 1869 had, in short, to bear a large part of the responsibility for the fact that yet another major expense had to be faced in 1880 in order to make the rotunda presentable.

Scaffolding began to be erected in that space by July 11 and city officials took the precaution of posting placards on it "cautioning people to keep away." Plastering was started six days later, and the workmen spent roughly a month working in the rotunda.⁵ That is in itself a measure of the extent of the damage which had been done by the leakage of water since Walsh had completed his project. The plaster of the upper dome, along with Pomarede's paintings of Ferdinand, Napoleon, Jefferson and Columbia, could not be saved even if anyone had truly considered it desirable to attempt to do so.

3. Globe-Democrat, July 2, 1880.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., July 11 and 17, 1880; Post-Dispatch, July 22 and August 11, 1880.

The basic decisions concerning which portions of the decorative work would be retained, and which would not, had been made before July 2. Wimar's four lunettes were found to need only "retouching" by Ettore S. Miragoli who was then already at work on the design of new embellishments for other surfaces in the rotunda. As the Globe-Democrat noted, "some of his designs are said to be very fine, and special pains will be taken to give the interior a more imposing and more artistic appearance." A week later, the same newspaper alluded to Miragoli's search "for somebody to sit for a portrait of Justice. It is surmised that he will have to go abroad for a sitter."⁶ Leaving aside the sarcasm of the concluding sentence, that is clear proof that much, if not all, of the general nature and extent of the work which the artist was to do had been determined by July 9. Since he did not actually begin working in the rotunda until more than another month had passed, it is equally clear that the men who had hired him had advance knowledge of his plans as well as full opportunity to demand any revisions which may have seemed appropriate or necessary.

Miragoli's career in St. Louis can be traced only in its broad outlines and much about him remains shrouded in shadows. He had appeared in that city in 1873, then establishing himself in business as a fresco artist. Between 1875 and 1878, he worked in partnership with Attilio Moretti, and continued to style his firm "E.S. Miragoli & Co." until 1886. The name or names of the people who worked with him after 1878 have not come to light but his wife, Margaret, may have been involved. She continued to operate the business after her husband's death in 1890.⁷

Contemporary comments by St. Louisans about Miragoli were uniformly laudatory. On two occasions he was called "a distinguished Italian artist" and on another "the celebrated Italian artist."⁸ The decision of local officials to employ him to do the decorative work within the rotunda was based on that reputation and on their own personal knowledge of the quality of his work. Miragoli was no stranger to them in 1880 for he had completed the frescoing of Circuit Court No. 2 at the west side of the north wing's first floor by October 6, 1879.⁹ August Becker was still active and advertised

6. Globe-Democrat, July 2 and 9, 1880.

7. Information derived from directories of the City of St. Louis, 1874-1891.

8. Globe-Democrat, August 14, 1880; M. M. Yeakle, Sr., The City of St. Louis of To-Day: Its Progress and Prospects (St. Louis, 1889), 79; Missouri Republican, November 28, 1880.

9. General Term, II, 446-447.

his services as a frescoer on June 20, 1880, boasting that "many of the finest residences in this city have been decorated by him after the new process."¹⁰ He may have entertained some hope of securing the commission for the work in the rotunda but, in light of Miragoli's local stature, Becker could hardly have been surprised by the city's choice of his competitor.

1880 was something of a banner year for Miragoli, and he was so successful in obtaining work that a question arises as to whether he could have single-handedly accomplished everything. His firm was paid for "painting and frescoing Courtroom No. 4," located on the east side of the first floor of the north wing, on October 26.¹¹ Only a month later, the first service was held in the newly-constructed Compton Avenue Presbyterian Church at Compton and Washington in St. Louis. That building also contained a display of Miragoli's talents which prompted more praise.

The decorations of roof and walls are by Miragoli, the celebrated Italian artist in fresco painting, who has achieved such a fine reputation by other works of similar character. All gloomy effects are avoided, and delicate tints and fine effects are produced by the master artist.¹²

The work in both the courtroom and the church was being brought to completion at the very time Miragoli was involved in the decoration of the rotunda. Because of the need for replastering of the upper dome, frescoing within the rotunda was not begun until August 13, 1880, even though the artist had been at work on the designs since early July. An announcement that the "frescoing of the Court-house dome has been completed, and the unsightly scaffolding is being removed" was printed on November 27, 1880, just a day before the report appeared concerning the Compton Avenue Presbyterian Church's inaugural service in the congregation's new building.¹³ Given all that, one must abandon the notion that Miragoli was personally responsible for the redecoration of the rotunda. A report noting that he was not working alone appeared at the time in the

10. Globe-Democrat, June 20, 1880.

11. General Term, II, 490.

12. Missouri Republican, November 28, 1880. The article refers only to "Dr. Brookes' church" but James H. Brookes is known to have been the minister at the Compton Avenue congregation from 1864 to 1897. See Hyde and Conard, Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis, 244.

13. Globe-Democrat, August 14, 1880; Post-Dispatch, November 27, 1880.

Globe-Democrat, it mentioning that he "was assisted by some of the best fresco artists in America."¹⁴ Miragoli was the designer and the true guiding force behind the work but in a strict sense credit for the final product must be given to "E.S. Miragoli & Co." and a part of it may well belong to his wife Margaret.

The belief that Miragoli was an arrogant Italian who obliterated the work of Carl Wimar out of a callous disregard for its true artistic merit must also be forsaken. Nor is there any basis for the legend that he would have created new works over Wimar's four lunettes if August Becker had not rushed to their defense. In truth, Miragoli's commission from the very beginning called only for the "retouching" of those scenes and local officials had determined that no more extensive work was required on them before Miragoli undertook the task of devising new designs for the decoration of the rotunda. Such retouching was all that was required to bring the lunettes back to a satisfactory state and was therefore all that Miragoli was asked or expected to do.

The balance of the work by Wimar, and all of the products of the efforts of Becker and Pomarede, were found to have reached a level of deterioration which demanded complete replacement. One St. Louisan put it succinctly: "When the city fathers decided to renovate and repaint the dome, it was in a shamefully dilapidated state. Nearly all of the paintings and emblems were unrecognizable and the frescoing was cracked and tarnished."¹⁵ The judgment as to what spaces should be covered with new paintings or frescoing and what elements of the older work should be saved was, therefore, based on very practical standards.

The upper dome, the feature which had been created in 1869 and on which Leon Pomarede had then done portraits of Ferdinand of Spain, Napoleon Bonaparte and Thomas Jefferson as well as the figure of Columbia, had been either replastered or extensively patched during the month before Miragoli and his crew began their project. None of Pomarede's work could be saved and the artists now rendered in place of it portraits, set within wreaths, of Christopher Columbus, Abraham Lincoln, John Adams and Ulysses Grant. Spaced between those were compositions representing "agriculture, commerce, the United States and the administration of Government."¹⁶ All eight

14. Globe-Democrat, December 5, 1880. See Appendix B, part 4, for the text.

15. Post-Dispatch, November 27, 1880. See Appendix B, part 3, for the text.

16. Ibid.

works were placed within frames that extended upward to form trapezoidal panels which terminated just below the cornice over the dome.

The whole of those decorative features created in the upper dome in 1880 were given detailed study by Walter Nitkiewicz of the National Park Service in 1955-1956. He subsequently directed the reconstruction on canvas of this part of Miragoli's work and the portraits and emblems which are now visible in the upper dome represent an accurate reproduction of the decoration as it was in 1880.

All trace of William Smith's stuccoed oak wreath or August Becker's frescoed eagle and wreaths of ivy and olive on the cornice which runs between the upper and lower domes disappeared during the course of the redecoration accomplished in 1880. Miragoli's craftsmen painted the cornice to look like marble. The ribs of the lower dome were also made to resemble that material. There is no evidence to indicate the form of embellishment, if any, that had been applied to those ribs before 1880. They may have simply been given a coat of paint in 1862. At any rate, the marbleizing done under Miragoli's direction was one of the first features of his effort to be covered over by subsequent painters. A band of red cherries and green leaves set against a monochromatic background was created on the ribs in 1905.

The simulation of marble in the lower dome disguised the fact that it was actually constructed from such pedestrian materials as lath and plaster. That attempt to create an illusion of a more costly building material is also evident in the four portraits in the upper dome. They were rendered in a way that made it seem to a viewer that they were carved from stone rather than painted on a smooth plaster surface.

Walter Nitkiewicz's study in 1955-1956 showed that the remains of Wimar's allegorical figures in the lower dome which could be found underneath Miragoli's work were far from complete. The patching or replastering which was needed in 1880 explains that finding, and the conclusion that much of Wimar's work was then in ruins is bolstered. Under those conditions, city officials had no real choice as to whether Miragoli should be told to create new art work there, but the matter of what subjects should be included was completely open. The desires or wishes of the municipal leaders would prevail in that regard and a significant shift away from the attitudes or perceptions which had underlain the earlier decoration of the rotunda became apparent. The "patriotic and starry dome" that had in 1862 offered graphic evidence of the political allegiance of the county commissioners during the Civil War was transformed in a way

that made it consistent with the tastes and views of a new age. Allegory continued to be dominant but in a reshaped, more subdued and far less partisan form. It would, all things considered, not be inappropriate to deem the new decorative work as much a reflection of the climate of the period of post-Reconstruction as Wimar's efforts had been of the Civil War or Pomarede's of the immediate post-war period.

The possibility certainly exists that the original plan devised in 1880 called for new figures representing the four subjects which Wimar had treated in the lower dome. Miragoli was said in July to be searching for a model on which he could base his version of Justice. Law, another of the four topics to which Wimar had addressed himself, was in fact included in Miragoli's project. That opens the intriguing possibility that Liberty and Commerce were also considered for reinclusion when the work of 1880 began to be discussed and that new versions of all four of the subjects which Wimar had depicted were envisioned. Be that as it may, by August 14, 1880, it had been determined that Miragoli would create representations of Law, Knowledge, History and Instruction.¹⁷ Each of those figures is a matter of interest.

Miragoli's attempt to depict Law replaced Wimar's treatment of the same topic in the southeast panel. Whether knowingly or not, the Italian did just what Wimar had at first intended to do--he made the figure female. Liberty, the "serenely radiant American divinity" which in 1862 graced the northeastern panel, gave way to the much blander character of Knowledge. At the northwest, Commerce, which had in a sense reflected the hopes and the dreams of St. Louisans about their city's future economic supremacy, was supplanted by a figure meant to represent History. The scantily-clad Mercury which Wimar included in that panel had been found semi-scandalous, partially explaining the change to a decorously garbed woman, but a conscious desire to make the symbolism more general and less locally oriented appears evident. "Stern Justice," in the southwestern panel, was superceded by Miragoli's attempt to depict the non-judicial Instruction.

His artists also covered over the five-pointed stars which Becker had placed in the lower dome. All of the written comments on that part of the work done in 1862 stress the degree to which patriotic fervor had been represented. In 1870, for example, reference was made to the "cluster of stars, that bright emblem of American freedom."¹⁸ Those stars now disappeared from view as the allegorical

17. Globe-Democrat, August 14, 1880.

18. Daily Democrat, January 7, 1870.

and symbolic purpose of the rotunda decoration was turned toward intellectual generality and away from chauvinism.

Some significance might be attached to the fact that Wimar had in the lower dome depicted two male figures--Solon and Mercury--but that Miragoli used females for all four of his representations. Miragoli's efforts struck a journalist of the time as appearing "at first view, rather masculine in frame,"¹⁹ a judgment which an examination of the dome as it is today supports. Indeed, the four other allegorical figures in the rotunda, those at the fourth level gallery, are far more feminine, giving rise to speculation that a different artist painted them. Since the figures in the dome are the most important element in the decorative work done in 1880, one is inclined to attribute those four to Miragoli himself and to suspect that he planned but did not personally execute the four figures at the lower level.

The subjects of the allegorical works on the fourth level gallery were described on August 14, 1880, as "Diligence, with all the appliances of persistent application; Constancy, with the emblems of undeviating devotion; the Republic, with its universal liberty emblems; and the Administration, with its evenly equalized scales of justice."²⁰ That, however, represents work that was planned before Miragoli and his employees actually ascended the scaffolding, and by the time the project was completed the topics treated in this part of the rotunda had been changed to "the Republic, Vigilance, Constancy and Assiduity."²¹ The notion of including a figure to represent Administration had been discarded and Vigilance had been selected as its replacement. The change from Diligence to Assiduity lent intellectual tone to the listing but did not reflect any true difference in subject matter.

None of the accounts of those four figures offered any indication of the precise location in which each subject was rendered. The Republic would seem to be the female on the northeast who holds a fasces in her left hand and has a liberty cap on her head. Vigilance is likely to be represented at the northwest side by the figure bearing a sword in her right hand and resting her left hand on a column. Constancy is probably the woman on the southwest with an hour glass in her right hand, leaving the woman at the southeast, garbed in a green blouse and a red scarf, to denote Assiduity or Diligence. Such identifications are, to be sure, matters for speculation and cannot be proven from the written record of the period.

19. Globe-Democrat, December 5, 1880.

20. Ibid., August 14, 1880.

21. Ibid., December 5, 1880.

The amount of retouching which was required on Wimar's four lunettes can be determined in but a general way. The view of the Cochetopa Pass, regarded in 1880 as the finest of the four scenes, was found to have been "but little injured by the dampness." The state of the south lunette, that showing DeSoto's discovery of the Mississippi, was not specifically mentioned, but its accuracy was challenged since the men "are depicted in gay holiday costume by the artist, but history describes them as in a very dilapidated condition when they reached the left bank of the Father of Waters." That scene, as well as the rendering of Laclede's landing at St. Louis in 1764, may have been on a writer's mind when he alluded to "the old paintings that were retouched" and which "had decayed a good deal, on account of the leakage of the roof."²²

The artistic merit of the north lunette caused it to be deemed a matter apart from the other work by Wimar.

On the north side is a miserable attempt to portray the attack made upon St. Louis by the British and Indians while many of the inhabitants were gathering strawberries on Corpus Christi day near the Cardinal Spring....A fine likeness of Martha Washington, painted by Miragoli, is under this battle scene, which he scorned to retouch.²³

Since it is highly unlikely that the north lunette was not in need of some retouching, Miragoli must have delegated that task to one of his employees while taking personal responsibility for the refurbishment of the other lunettes.

While the portrait of Martha Washington below the north lunette was determined to be "fine," and that of Edward Bates beneath the south lunette was called a "good likeness," the attempt to depict Thomas Hart Benton was found wanting. His portrait below the east lunette was regarded as "not good."²⁴ No comment was passed on the artistic merit of the likeness of George Washington under the view of the Cochetopa Pass.

There are in all twelve different historical figures depicted within the rotunda: Columbus, Lincoln, Adams and Grant in the upper dome; the two Washingtons, Bates and Benton beneath the lunettes; and Daniel Webster, Hernando DeSoto, Andrew Johnson and Francis Blair immediately below the three-dimensional representations of

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

the Seal of the State of Missouri. Whether by reason of a conscious decision made in 1880 or not, that unites three men who held political office with a non-political person in each of the three sets of portraits. The list of the twelve also gives additional reason to believe that indecision or changes of mind still affected the Courthouse. As late as August 14, 1880, it was stated that there were to be portraits of both Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin.²⁵ Neither was represented in the work completed in November.

The frescoed panels and moldings which Becker had created on the walls within the rotunda were covered with new frescoing which was described as "well done and a close inspection only will reveal that the walls are not of variegated marble artistically joined together."²⁶ The columns and pilasters at all levels of the space had been made to resemble marble in 1862 and 1864, and that form of painting was repeated by Miragoli's craftsmen in 1880. No written description has been found that suggests anything of the appearance of the earlier work. That of Miragoli is, conversely, mentioned in two different places: once as simulating "brocadella, sarojard-briche, ron-torato, serfontane, etc," and on the other occasion as "green Egyptian, brocatella, Savoyard, Rosso Florato, Serfontane, and antique green."²⁷ Such nomenclature suggests that shades of green and pink were dominant on all of the surfaces which were not covered by allegorical figures, emblematic work or portraiture.

A wholly new appearance greeted St. Louisans who entered the rotunda at the beginning of December 1880. The last part of the scaffolding which the plasterers and artists had used was taken away on December 4, revealing that

the whole interior of the rotunda and dome, from the ground floor to the eye of the cupola, has been painted and frescoed, the fine paintings at the four sides retouched, and a large number of new figures added, all in oil colors, that will remain for many years and grow more attractive under the mellowing touch of time...the rotunda has a more imposing look. It presents a scene that is extremely pleasant to the eye, and everything is indicative of artistic taste and skill of the highest order.²⁸

25. Ibid., August 14, 1880.

26. Post-Dispatch, November 27, 1880.

27. Globe-Democrat, August 14, 1880; Missouri Republican, November 28, 1880.

28. Globe-Democrat, December 5, 1880.

The contrast between the old and the new decorative work was not overlooked:

One of the principal faults in the general effect heretofore was that it gave the appearance of being too long. It is now better proportioned, the strong coloring in the middle of the rotunda decreasing that objectionable defect. The work is classed as classical decoration, in the Greek-Roman style, and is in keeping with the interior architecture....In all, it is a very fine and artistic conclusion of the labors of this distinguished artist, and reflects credit upon his taste, skill and judgment.²⁹

Further praise was also forthcoming from the judges and lawyers, taking the form of a "complimentary letter" which they sent to Miragoli.³⁰

Without any question, the work done in 1880 was received very favorably and struck at least a vocal element of the community as being far more appropriate to the importance of the Courthouse than had been the examples of the talent of Wimar, Becker and Pomarede. The retouching of Wimar's lunettes was not, however, completely successful. In 1885, and again in 1887, comments were published indicating that the scene on the north side had become faded; that the view of the Cochetopa Pass was peeling and suffering from loosened plaster; and that all four views were coated with a layer of dust.³¹ August Becker indicated that he was willing to restore and retouch the lunettes but, having paid the cost of bringing them to a desirable condition in 1880, the city showed no desire to provide further money for such a purpose after less than a decade had passed. No corrective measures would be taken until after the beginning of the twentieth century.

The expense of everything that had been done to create the "very fine and artistic conclusion" of Miragoli's effort had been fairly substantial. He received \$3,073; repairs to the lantern and dome came to \$193.62; and a total of \$479.65 was spent for whitewashing and plastering during the fiscal year which ended on April 11, 1881. Much of the last item must have been required for work within the rotunda. That created a strain on the appropriation made for the upkeep of the Courthouse, and the judge of the Probate

29. Missouri Republican, November 28, 1880.

30. Post-Dispatch, November 27, 1880.

31. Globe-Democrat, May 22, 1885 and October 5, 1887.

Court could well consider himself fortunate to be able to obtain more than \$400 for carpets and linoleum along with \$449 for a "pigeon hole case."³² Those represented far and away the highest expenditures for furnishings or equipment during the period in which Miragoli and his workers were engaged in redecorating the rotunda.

There was, however, some sort of work underway in the various courtrooms on August 19, 1880, which was meant to ready them for the opening of the October term. That effort was then described as "being pushed languidly forward," a comment that seems quite apt in the case of Circuit Court No. 1 in the oval courtroom of the east wing. The judge of that division was forced to make use of the room assigned to the Court of Appeals, that on the west side of the second floor of the south wing, in early October. The work done in the room which he would normally have occupied may have involved the "galvanized iron ventilators" for which the city expended \$135.25.³³

Tightened control over expenditures became obvious in other ways as well. Even a recommendation made by the commissioner of public buildings, duplicating that advanced by Thomas Walsh in 1870 and again intended to lead to a decrease in the cost of heating the structure, was ignored:

The open areas or corridors connecting the north and south wings of the building with the center should be thoroughly cased up and glazed so that the building would not be so exposed to the weather, from which it suffers greatly, and the expense of heating would by these measures be lessened.³⁴

The same local official would, with equal lack of success, repeat that plea a year later.³⁵

Corrective steps of a sort nevertheless do appear to have been taken in 1880. The report of expenses incurred during the year included \$90 for "storm doors." In the absence of other information, that would be taken as a reference to the exterior of the building. Evidence that the doors were actually installed in the interior came four years later when the storm door of Circuit Court No. 2

32. Mayor's Message...1881, 89-90, General Term, II, 505 and 513.

33. Post-Dispatch, August 19 and October 4, 1880; Mayor's Message ...1881, 90.

34. Mayor's Message...1881, 194.

35. Ibid....1882, 164.

was repaired.³⁶ The courtroom was on the west side of the first floor of the north wing; it had no exterior doorway; and its entries from the corridor still had two sets of double-doors in 1940. The outer pair was, the earlier record strongly suggests, installed as added insulation required during the time in which the transverse hall remained open to the weather.

People who worked on the second floor of the south wing had additional problems during each winter in this period. Stoves had to be used to supplement whatever heat was being provided by the steam system throughout every winter between 1881 and 1884.³⁷

On the other hand, modern conveniences began to appear during 1880. Telephones and a "telegraphic connection" between the courtrooms and jury rooms were made available for the use of the judges by the end of the year.³⁸

The space on the third floor of the north wing was now taken up by nearly 900 batteries--and would soon contain 1300--which were used to provide electricity for the Fire and Police Telegraph. The office of that agency had simply run out of space, and it was moved to the room on the east side of the corridor leading from the rotunda on the second floor of the north wing. The Bar Association of St. Louis formerly occupied that space but had vacated it before June 11, 1880. Evidence of the change in the usage of the room was given when the words "Fire Alarm Telegraph Department" were painted in gold "on the glass panels of the door." Furnishings moved from the third floor were rather spartan in nature, the major item being "a table with huge round legs" which extended "around the north and east sides." Sixty-four yards of linoleum ordered in August 1880 for the use of the department represented the only recorded attempt to alter the appearance of the room.³⁹

The Courthouse grounds at this time had lawns in which grass and clover were deliberately intermingled. Flower beds were present as early as 1878, and the iron tree boxes along the curbs were replaced during 1881. Installation of the new tree boxes was accompanied by the placement of iron railings along the tops of the walls of the recessed areaways. Some sort of repairs were made to

36. Ibid...1880, 95; General Term, III, 15.

37. Mayor's Message...1882, 90; 1883, 80; 1884, 114; 1885, 127.

38. Ibid...1881, 90; General Term, II, 485.

39. Post-Dispatch, June 11, 1880; Mayor's Message...1880, 462; 1881, 484.

the hitching posts, but their location and number were not indicated in the records of the period.⁴⁰ No other reference to those posts has been located.

By order of the judges of the Circuit Court, renovations were made in the oval courtroom in the east wing during 1881. These repairs, costing about \$400, were completed with, once again, no indication being given of the exact nature of the work which was accomplished. The judge of the court there also received a leather chair and a revolving office chair as new furniture. Circuit Court No. 2, located on the west side of the first floor of the north wing, had a new railing put in place in October 1881.⁴¹

The major alteration of 1882 affected the Law Library at the east side of the corridor on the second floor of the south wing. The skylight which was installed there at this time was paid for by the city.⁴² Remodeling of the interior of the room, however, was the responsibility of the Law Library Association and the nature of the work done is reflected in the plan of the space which was drawn by J. W. Ginder at the end of the century (Figure 43) and a blueprint created for the city in 1903. (Figure 35) They show an irregularly-shaped mezzanine, the edges of which were sufficiently far from the line of the walls to allow light from the windows to reach the floor below. The center was open beneath the new skylight, and sets of steps which offered access to the floor of the mezzanine were placed at the east and the west edges of that opening. Those internal features would remain in being until after the Law Library moved out of the Courthouse and the room was adapted for use as a courtroom in 1908.

No interior remodeling of similar magnitude to that which had been done in the Law Library during 1882 would be accomplished for several more years. Major expenses in the immediate future would be incurred for such things as bookcases and shelves for the recorder of deeds in 1883 and for the creation of a "wire station" on the roof of the north wing in order to improve the service of the Fire and Police Telegraph. The outward appearance of the building would be further changed by the installation of lightning rods, and the replacement of the flag pole, during 1884. In response to a recommendation from the commissioner of public buildings, the iron fence was finally removed in 1884, but an appropriation sufficient

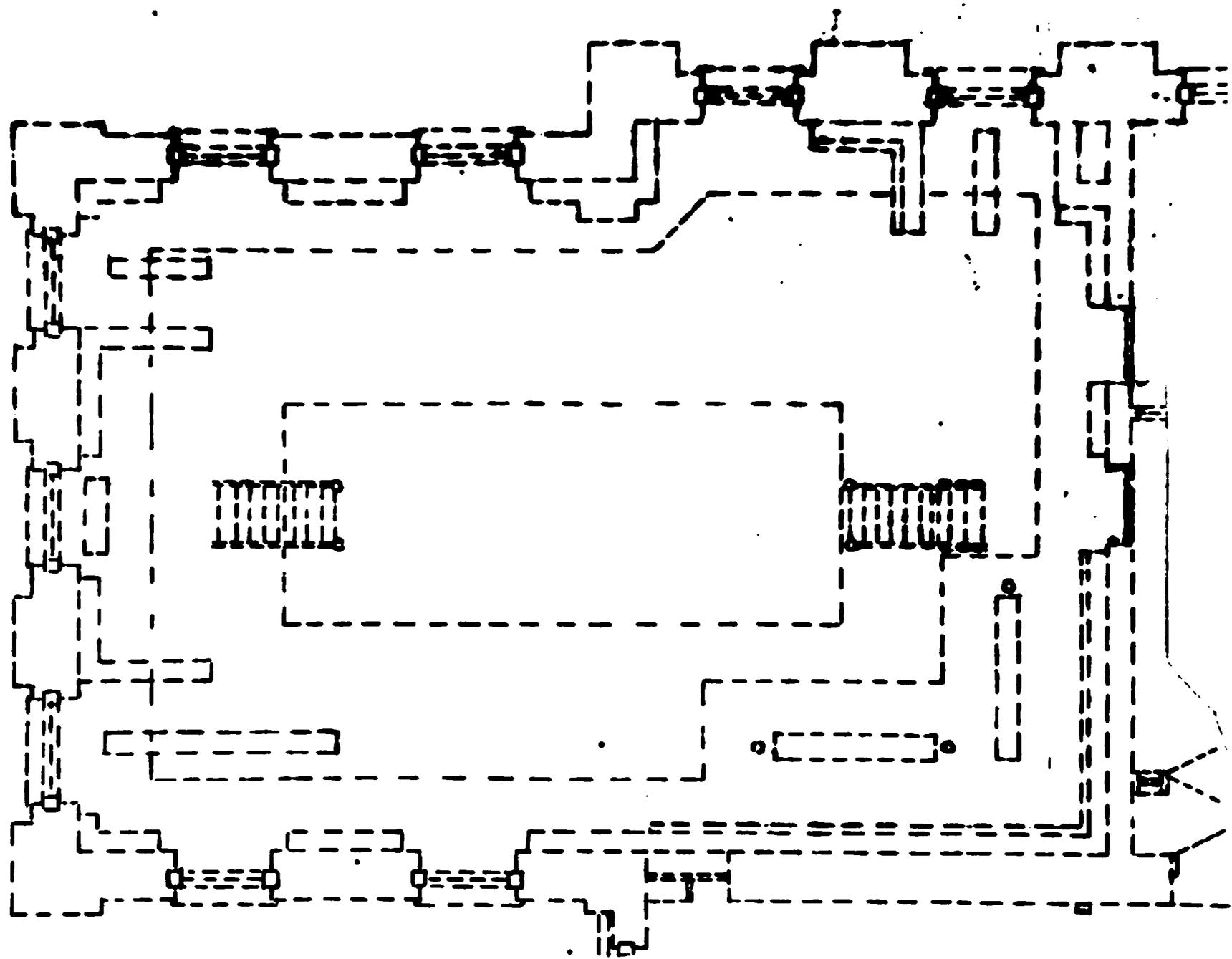
40. Mayor's Message...1881, 89-90; 1882, 90; J. A. Dacus and James W. Buel, A Tour of St. Louis...(St. Louis, 1878), 37.

41. General Term, II, 490, 500, 505 and 526.

42. Mayor's Message...1883, 80.

Figure 35

Plan of the Law Library, East Side of the Second Floor of the South Wing, 1903. Dotted lines indicate furnishings or fittings which existed at the time the plan was drawn. From plan of "Second Floor," August 8, 1903, Archives of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial.



to cover the cost of taking away its stone base was not made until 1895. The name of Fifth Street was changed to Broadway in 1883 and, certainly of greater significance to the men and women who traveled over that thoroughfare, it continued to be paved with wood blocks. The first use of a macadam surface for the streets around the Courthouse would not occur until the nineteenth century had drawn almost to a close.⁴³

A new rail, to divide the official from the public sections, was built in the oval courtroom of the west wing during 1883, and "several water closets for the accomodation of judges and clerks of the several courts" were nearing completion somewhere in the building in April 1884. Painting, papering and glazing costs in 1884 almost exactly matched those incurred in the same period for work on the plumbing, lighting and heating systems. Remodeling and maintenance costs, in short, attained a sort of parity. The largest expense which had to be met during 1884, however, was derived from the laying of "cement floor in basement." The exact location of that work was not specified in the record of the payment. The city spent a total of \$4,425 and that suggests a large area having been paved.⁴⁴

An expense of that magnitude almost invariably caused the men responsible for the operation of the Courthouse to seek out ways in which other costs could be pared to the barest minimum. Their reaction in 1884 was indeed typical, and it drew an irate comment from a person who used the pen name "Reader" when he wrote to the Post-Dispatch.

I would like to ask through the medium of your valuable paper why it is that the gas in the corridors of the Court House is never lighted; the fixtures are there. It certainly would be an improvement that would call for the thanks of all those whose business call them to this gloomy building.⁴⁵

No record of the city's response has been found, but the resurrection of the term "gloomy" as an adjective appropriate to the interior of the building must have stung.

43. City Ordinance 12130, February 11, 1883; City Ordinance 12505, May 20, 1883; City Ordinance 12454, March 27, 1883; City Ordinance 21895, March 24, 1895; Mayor's Message...1883, 50; 1884, 129-130 and 196; 1885, 127 and 143.

44. General Term, II, 579; Mayor's Message...1884, 196; 1885, 127.

45. Post-Dispatch, June 18, 1884.

Plumbing, gas-fittings and sewers would again gain the attention of the commissioner of public buildings in 1885. At the end of the year, he optimistically announced that the repairs and alterations which had been made would mean that little more money would have to be spent in the near future. That did not, he cautioned, mean that problems did not remain in evidence at the Courthouse.

The gutters on the dome are rotten and destroyed, and should be replaced with new ones. The public water closets and urinals in the basement have been a cause of complaints from officers of the building for a number of years, and in fact their sanitary condition is so bad that the Board of Health declared them a nuisance, and recommended their replacement with new and better ones. Steps were taken to accomplish this, but owing to insufficient means available for the purpose, the project was abandoned. It should, however, receive prompt attention.⁴⁶

Any hope he may have had that an appropriation for those purposes would be forthcoming was dashed in the next year. The plumbing, gas-fittings and heating system--the very things he had believed would not create any immediate problems--required repairs which cost nearly \$2,000. All other projects had to be deferred.⁴⁷

The sidewalk which had been laid under the direction of William Rumbold in 1861 was declared to be in need of repair as early as 1878. By 1885, it was in such poor condition that the bricks were taken up and the entire perimeter of the Courthouse was repaved with granitoid at a cost of more than \$8,300.⁴⁸ The new sidewalk would prove to be the most durable ever put down at the square. It was not replaced until after the National Park Service took over the property.

Although little of consequence was done in the rooms occupied by the Circuit Court until 1886, several clues pertaining to their appearance were incorporated into the documentary record for the preceding five years. "Bent office chairs" are known to have been purchased in July 1884. Curtains were hung in the windows in 1885; references to them also being made in 1886, 1893, 1901 and 1904. Painted benches, as opposed to such furniture in natural finish,

46. Mayor's Message...1886, 343.

47. Ibid....1887, 13-14.

48. Ibid....1878, 196; 1886, 29.

were mentioned in 1886.⁴⁹ As such things go, those are only scattered indications of how the interior looked but they are the best that have been preserved.

The furnishings which were found in the oval courtroom of the west wing in 1940 dated from this period. The evidence is fragmentary for that, consisting only of an expenditure of \$1,062.56 in the year preceding April 11, 1887, for furniture, fixtures and repairs for the Circuit Court, and a payment of \$133.50 made on March 8, 1886, "for extras in fitting up Court Room No. 3."⁵⁰ The meaning attached to the word "extras" becomes crucial. It generally signified that the amount was paid as an adjustment to an earlier agreement which was occasioned by a change in plan. In this instance, then, it would point toward a thorough refurbishment of the furnishings in the oval courtroom. (Figure 36)

The president of the Board of Assessors, having lost his campaign to gain more office space in 1875, resumed his attack in April 1884. Probably as a result of his earlier effort, space somewhere in the basement had been allocated for use as a "sub-office" but it was "small and cramped...poorly lighted and the ventilation is of the worst kind." His office must, he insisted, be given more space.⁵¹ Persistence counted, especially if it was combined with patience, for in April 1887 it was reported that

an ordinance recently passed authorizes the removal of the iron stairs and the conversion of the east hall rooms in the south wing of the Court House into rooms for the use of the Assessor on the first floor and Judge's reading room on the second floor, and the fitting up of the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court with record cases and permanent office fixtures. Plans and specifications for the alterations have been prepared and approved by the Mayor...and the work will soon commence.⁵²

That statement ranks among the most revealing single comments on the Old Courthouse since it pinpoints the period in which the transverse hall of the south wing was finally enclosed; explains

49. General Term, III, 18; V, 182 and 338; Mayor's Message...1886, 15; 1893, 19.

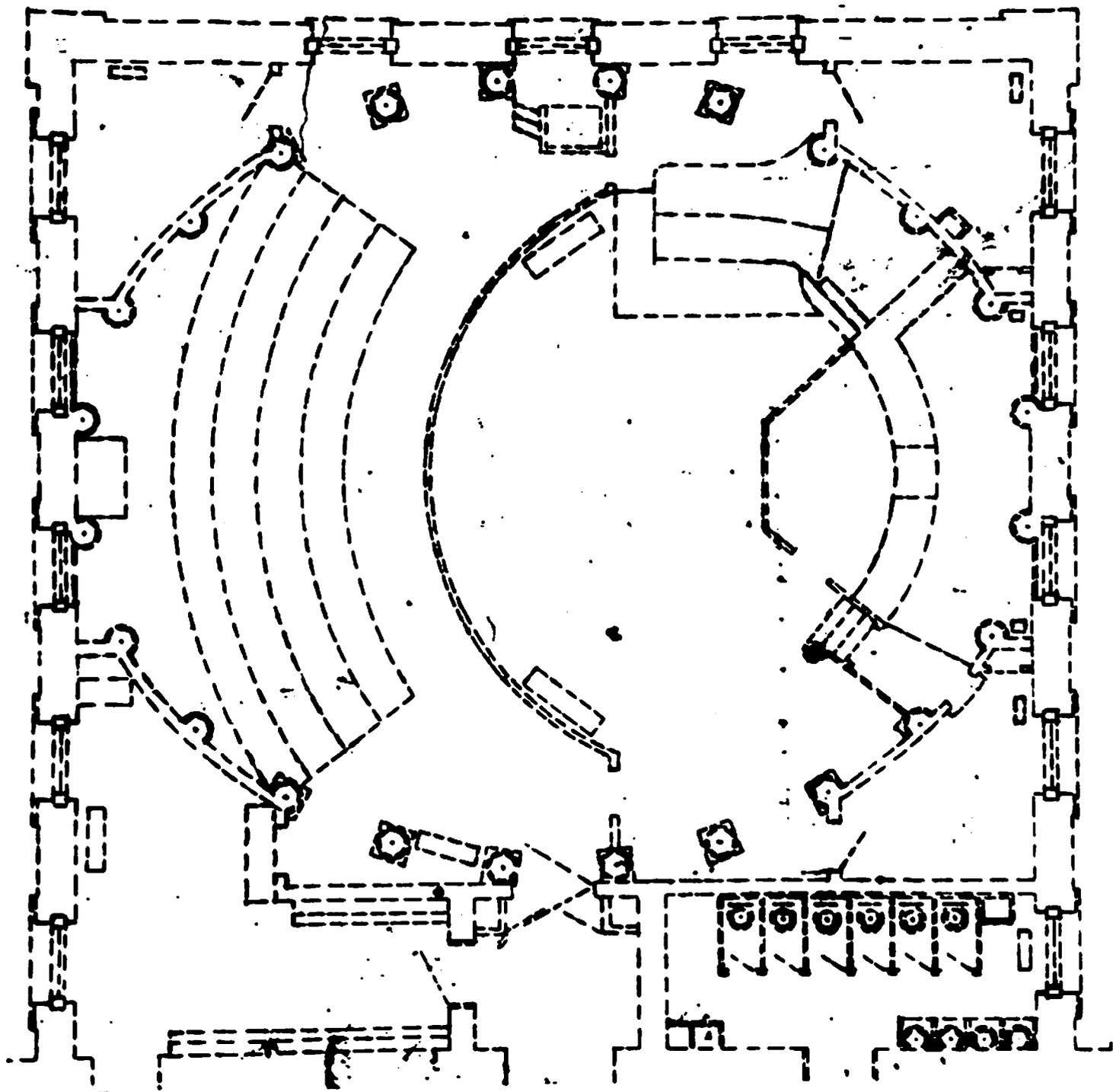
50. Mayor's Message...1887, 14; General Term, III, 78.

51. Mayor's Message...1884, 165.

52. L. Kledus, Commissioner of Public Buildings, to Henry Flad, President of the Board of Public Improvements, April 25, 1887, in Mayor's Message...1887, 363.

Figure 36

Plan of the Oval Courtroom of the West Wing, 1903. Dotted lines indicate existing furnishings and fittings at the time the plan was drawn. From plan of "Second Floor," August 8, 1903, Archives of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial.



the origins of the partitioning which was run across the hall; and dates the removal of one of the two cast-iron stairs that had been installed in 1857. Marks remaining on the walls at the east side of the second floor, it might be added, show that the "Judge's reading room" had a ceiling built at the line above the top of the partition.

More detail on the fitting up of the office for the clerk of the Circuit Court is offered in the text of the ordinance which authorized the work. It called for "railings, record cases and permanent office fixtures." When an account of the expenses was tendered, it indicated that very similar amounts were spent on carpentry and on office furniture.⁵³ The mental image which is left is one of an area divided by a wooden railing within which were placed desks, cabinets and cases which may have been ready-made.

Perhaps because the state legislature had authorized the employment of official stenographers for the Circuit Court, purchases of typewriters began to be entered into the record in 1887. The equipment used in the building thereby continued to be about as modern as could be.⁵⁴

The enclosure of the transverse hall of the north wing was never mentioned in the official records. It must, however, have been accomplished as a result of an ordinance adopted on June 21, 1888, which was meant to provide "more office room for the Recorder of Deeds and Collector, and fitting up new offices for the Sheriff and Jury Commissioner."⁵⁵ The jury commissioner was then located on the first floor of the north wing, and the sheriff moved during the course of the year to the basement of that wing. The changes which were made under the ordinance were extensive, the city eventually finding it necessary to appropriate over \$4,000 for the purpose. Not even that amount, however, was sufficient to provide for all the work required. A supplementary appropriation was approved in March 1889 to cover unanticipated expenditures.⁵⁶

The latter ordinance contains references to "partitions" but it is not specific on the matter of the location of them. The partitioning may have been run across the transverse halls on the first

53. City Ordinance 13991, April 9, 1887; Mayor's Message...1888, 17.

54. General Term, III, 132; Mayor's Message...1888, 18.

55. City Ordinance 14509, June 21, 1888.

56. City Ordinances 14831, March 18, 1889, and 14980, March 30, 1889.

and second floors in the north wing after doors and windows had been installed at the east and west ends. In light of the magnitude of the cost involved, and in view of the fact that the project stretched across eight months, there does in spite of the uncertainties appear to be very good reason to conclude that the transverse hall of the north wing was enclosed in 1888-1889.

The commissioner of public buildings on April 25, 1887, made another of his pessimistic statements about the over-all condition of the building. He estimated that \$3,400 would be needed for general repairs and at least \$4,000 for work on the roof. He pointed out damage done during the previous winter by water which "leaked through in many places to the offices below on the second story." The gutters and downspouts were too small and in generally poor condition, causing "the rapid decay of the roofs." Drastic though the situation may have been, the city found that it could not afford to spend much more than \$800 for repairs to the roof in the ensuing year.⁵⁷

The heating system would, in fact, be given greater immediate attention than the roof. More than \$2,000 were devoted to an effort in 1887 to bring the system into proper condition. Even that gave only temporary relief. The system which had been installed in 1870 had been a source of constant problems and the only real answer was a complete replacement of it. The city was given a strong reminder of that simple fact by the commissioner of public buildings in April 1892, a reminder which again failed to generate an appropriation of the required funds.⁵⁸

Toward the end of 1888, the judges of the Circuit Court began an association with J. C. Miller which would continue for nearly two decades. He became, in effect, the resident carpenter at the Courthouse, performing work described as "repairing," "repairing Court furniture," "carpentering &c." and "remodeling &c." The payments made to him in some years assumed fairly substantial proportions, totaling over \$525 in 1899 and more than \$425 in 1901.⁵⁹ No indication is given in the documentary sources of how he obtained a virtual monopoly on such work nor why he proved to be so popular during the period.

57. Mayor's Message...1887, 363; 1888, 18.

58. Mayor's Message...1888, 18; 1892, 313.

59. See, for example, General Term, III, 185, 235 and 274; V, 82, 90, 91, 115, 167, 192 and 209.

The advisability of using electricity for the lighting of the City Hall, the Four Courts building and the Courthouse was mentioned as early as 1884. Conversion of the system in the Courthouse came four years later, as is attested by the fact that expenses were incurred then for both gas and electricity. As of March 31, 1891, 712 incandescent bulbs were in use within the building but they were not yet present in all parts of the structure. Gas continued to be consumed by the Fire and Police Telegraph station, and an inclusion of electrical service to the jury rooms (apparently those in the basement of the north wing) was not arranged until 1900.⁶⁰

Judicial patience once more grew thin over the city's lack of response to conditions at the Courthouse. On January 4, 1900, the judges of the Circuit Court took the matter of the lighting of the rooms into their own hands:

It appearing to the Court that the City of St. Louis has failed to provide and still fails to provide the light necessary for the due and proper conduct of the several divisions of the Circuit Court of the City of St. Louis, held in the Court House and in the Four Courts Building, and for the due and proper use of the several rooms and offices connected therewith and pertaining thereto: it is ordered by the Court in General Term that the Presiding Judge of the Court make and enter into a contract with the Missouri Edison Electric Company of the City of St. Louis for the temporary supply of electric light with the same number of light bulbs heretofore used until the further order of the Court in the premises for the following rooms and places, viz: In the Court House: Seven (7) Circuit Court Rooms: Seven (7) Judge's Rooms, The Judges Consultation Room, all the Circuit Clerk's offices, Two Judge's Toilet Rooms, Two Public Water Closets, The Jury Commissioner's office, the Engineer's Office and the Engine Room in the basement, the halls and stairways and the first and second floor of the rotunda.⁶¹

Their ire did at least cause them to provide a splendid account of the areas which were then electrically lit.

60. Mayor's Message... 1885, 274; 1891, 346-347; 1896, 475; General Term, V, 118.

61. General Term, V, 117.

Electricity was still a novelty and the city lighting department included in its annual reports an inventory of the number of incandescent bulbs at each of the municipal buildings until well into the twentieth century. From those it is evident that a substantial change was made at the Courthouse in 1903. 486 bulbs were added during that year, bringing the total to more than 1,100.⁶²

Critical though they could be of the city for its reluctance to spend money on the Courthouse, the judges of the Circuit Court were well aware that expenses had to be kept down. They showed that in a resolution adopted on March 9, 1891, forbidding the clerk of the court to order any "repairs, furniture or other matters needed by the Clerk or in the several Court rooms" which would cost more than \$10 unless he had first received the approval of a majority of the judges.⁶³ They also proved willing to accept relatively inexpensive cleaning of the wallpaper in courtrooms 1, 2 and 3 instead of replacement during 1890.⁶⁴

That cleaning of wallpaper affords an insight into the appearance of the oval courtrooms in both the east and west wings toward the end of the nineteenth century. Wallpaper had been hung in each a sufficient number of years before 1890 for it to have then been in need of refurbishment.

The Probate Court's expenses during the last twenty years of the nineteenth century prove that very little redecorating was done on the south side of the first floor of the east wing in those decades. Expenditures that would otherwise appear to be routine stand out sharply: \$129.20 for "carpets, linoleum, rugs, mats, etc." in 1886, and \$110.41 for "furniture, etc." in 1889 are examples. Utilitarian needs did continue to be met as when, in 1888, \$800 were spent on "cases for law books" or, in 1890, when a new water closet was installed. Records of the two decades also show that calcimine was used during 1887 on the walls or the ceiling.⁶⁵

Continuing use of iron shutters is demonstrated by the need in 1891 to attend to the repair of them.⁶⁶ They could have been those which were installed during the construction of the west wing but a greater likelihood seems to attach to their being hung in basement windows.

62. Mayor's Message...1904, 40.

63. General Term, III, 276.

64. Mayor's Message...1891, 20.

65. Ibid....1887, 14; 1888, 18; 1889, 17; 1890, 16.

66. Ibid....1892, 17.

Major problems which had been described almost annually by the commissioner of public buildings had neither been corrected nor had magically vanished. Indeed, the report he issued in 1892 indicated new causes for dismay about the Courthouse.

I would recommend that an appropriation be made to carry out the plans prepared some time since for heating this building as the present plant is in such bad condition that it must be taken out.

The coping surrounding the yard has become unsightly and affords a comfortable place for loafers to congregate, making it impossible to keep the sidewalks clean; I would therefore recommend that the coping be removed and that the courtyard be paved with granitoid from the building to the sidewalk.

The entrance steps to the building on both Chestnut and Market streets are so worn that they are unsafe to use in wet weather, as they afford a very precarious footing; they might be re-cut and re-set.

I would also recommend a thorough painting of the outside of the building and the inside where necessary.

The plumbing is in need of considerable repairs; the roof is leaking badly and needs a thorough repairing; it will take considerable of an appropriation to do the work.

The court rooms and public offices in general need painting and cleaning; new floors are needed in some places; the entire second story in rotunda should be re-floored; the area way on Chestnut street is in danger of caving in; the fountain in yard should be repaired and put in order.⁶⁷

The city's comptroller may well have been sympathetic but he recommended that the request for \$27,740 for improvements, repairs and alterations at the Four Courts and the Courthouse be pared to only \$1,640 for work at the Four Courts. He left nothing in the budget for the things which the commissioner of public buildings had indicated were so badly needed. In consequence, less than \$2,700 were actually spent for general maintenance and repairs during 1892. By the end of that year, the commissioner felt it

^{67.} Ibid., 313-314.

necessary to comment, with no little bitterness, on "the dilapidated and unwholesome condition of the Courthouse."⁶⁸

The difficulty of finding money to pay for the work which so obviously needed to be done once again increased considerably. The relatively new City Hall which had been completed in 1873 proved almost from the first to be totally unsatisfactory as a center for the municipal government and, a mere two decades later, the construction of a magnificent new building had been undertaken. That would eventually cost the city more than \$2,000,000, an expense that was met out of general revenues rather than through a bond issue. The impact of that on the maintenance of all other buildings owned by the city was pronounced, and the situation was due to become even worse. A tornado in 1896 destroyed the city hospital and two of the buildings at the poor house. Rebuilding of those facilities placed an even greater strain on the local treasury.⁶⁹

In the midst of all the expressions of concern over the condition of the Courthouse as a whole, a few more bits of information about the interior furnishings were made a matter of record. As a result of a dispute concerning the results of the election for the office of sheriff, an inventory was taken on April 4, 1892, in the quarters occupied by that official at the Courthouse. It showed "1 office safe, 1 large desk, 4 small desks, 3 tables, 18 chairs, 1 counter, 2 water coolers, 1 letter press with stand."⁷⁰ That gives at least some indication of the way in which an office within the building would have been furnished at the time.

Other entries of the period make it evident that working during the hot and humid days of summer was made less onerous as a result of the introduction of electric fans in 1893. The records of that and of subsequent years also indicate a gradual shift away from custom-made furniture and toward the purchase of objects from commercial dealers such as Mueller Brothers, the Scarrit Furniture Company or F. J. Comstock & Co. The last named of those provided chairs and a lounge in December 1893, a purchase which suggests that the judges' chambers continued to be comfortable places.⁷¹

The City of St. Louis finally found it possible in June 1894 to begin to attend to some of the myriad problems at the Courthouse. In a single ordinance, appropriations totaling \$12,000 were made to

68. Ibid., xiii and 18; 1893, 304.

69. Ibid....1893, xiv; 1896, 451n.

70. General Term, III, 322.

71. Ibid., 370, 375, 383 and 389.

contend with the repairs which the commissioner of public buildings had discussed two years earlier, including the overhauling and reconstruction of the plumbing, granitoid paving of the yards and the areaways, repairing of the roof and downspouts, and the alterations required to create three additional jury rooms.⁷²

The work on the plumbing proves to be the easiest to follow in the records. Close to \$4,300 was expended during 1894, which covered the cost of totally new construction in the west wing as well as the overhaul and reconstruction mentioned in the ordinance. Stairs which had been installed in the west wing in 1857 were removed, the openings in the floors were filled in, and space was thereupon created for four new toilets, one on each level of the wing. Blueprints for the project have been preserved, and they show that an artificial stone floor was laid in the restroom in the basement. On the levels above, marble tile was installed. Interior partitions of Italian marble were placed on brass legs. A new skylight was put in above the room on the third floor, and that room was the only one of the four to be set aside for women.⁷³

Pavement of the yards was not accomplished. By a subsequent ordinance, the appropriation of \$3,000 made for that purpose in 1894 was returned to the treasury, the city now having decided that it would be preferable to

cause the stone coping around the Court House Square to be removed and a low granitoid curb to be substituted therefore; also, to cause granitoid walks to be laid in the areas around the Court House Building and around the grounds of said Court House and to make such changes by regrading the surface of said grounds as may be expedient and necessary.⁷⁴

The intent can be readily followed on the plans which were drawn at the time. Slight humps in the yards were removed, and the grading there was made as level as possible. A six-inch layer of what was called "burnt clay ballast" at the time, material later referred to as either "cinders" or "burnt brick," was applied to almost the whole of the northeast and southeast yards, granitoid walks existing there only along the walls of the north and south wings. In the other yards, the ballast was visible in only four places. Two

72. City Ordinance 17689, July 17, 1894.

73. "Proposed Water Closets to be put in the shaft occupied by stairway in West Wing...approved on November 16, 1894," JNEM.

74. City Ordinance 18006, March 28, 1895.

were rectangular areas flanking the sides of the east and west wings, the others being formed within the granitoid walks that covered most of the surface.⁷⁵

The sundial in the southeast yard was allowed to remain in place but the fountain there was removed as was the most poorly documented feature of the grounds in the latter part of the nineteenth century, a second sundial which until 1895 stood about 6' inside the stone base surrounding the northeast yard. That second device is visible in a photograph made between 1884 and 1895--the dating being possible because the iron fence is missing but the stone base is still in existence. (Figure 37) The place at which the sundial stood is, furthermore, shown on the plan drawn in 1895 which called for its removal. (Figure 38) Beyond that, however, it remains a mystery. A comment made in March 1870 indicated that as part of his preparations for the coming summer, "the dial" was to be dusted by Janitor Quigley,⁷⁶ and the use of the singular noun at that time suggests that the device in the northeast yard had not yet been installed. It may well have had a somewhat limited history.

The plans made in 1895 show that limestone curbs were used at all of the walkways and that iron railing installed in 1881 was still in place atop the walls of the areaways of the north wing. With the plans complete and the necessary funds available, the work could begin in earnest. All of it, including the removal of the stone base for the fence, was started in 1895 and completed in the following year.⁷⁷

The greatest part of the money made available for painting at the Courthouse in 1894 was used for the exterior. \$2,646.49 was spent for that purpose, and only a little more than \$600 was actually devoted to the interior. That was sufficient to paint "the interior halls and corridors of said Court House as high as the top of the second story, also the fronts and pillars of the second and third interior balconies," a terse description which suggests the obliteration of whatever may have remained in the hallways of the frescoed panels and moldings of the earlier part of the century as well as the covering over of Miragoli's marbling on the columns in the rotunda. Painting within the various courtrooms had, it might be

75. "Proposed alterations to Court-House Square, approved October 4, 1895," JNEM.

76. Daily Democrat, March 26, 1870.

77. Mayor's Message... 1896, 20; 1897, 22.

Figure 37

The Exterior of the Courthouse before the alterations were made in 1895. From the Collection of the Missouri Historical Society.

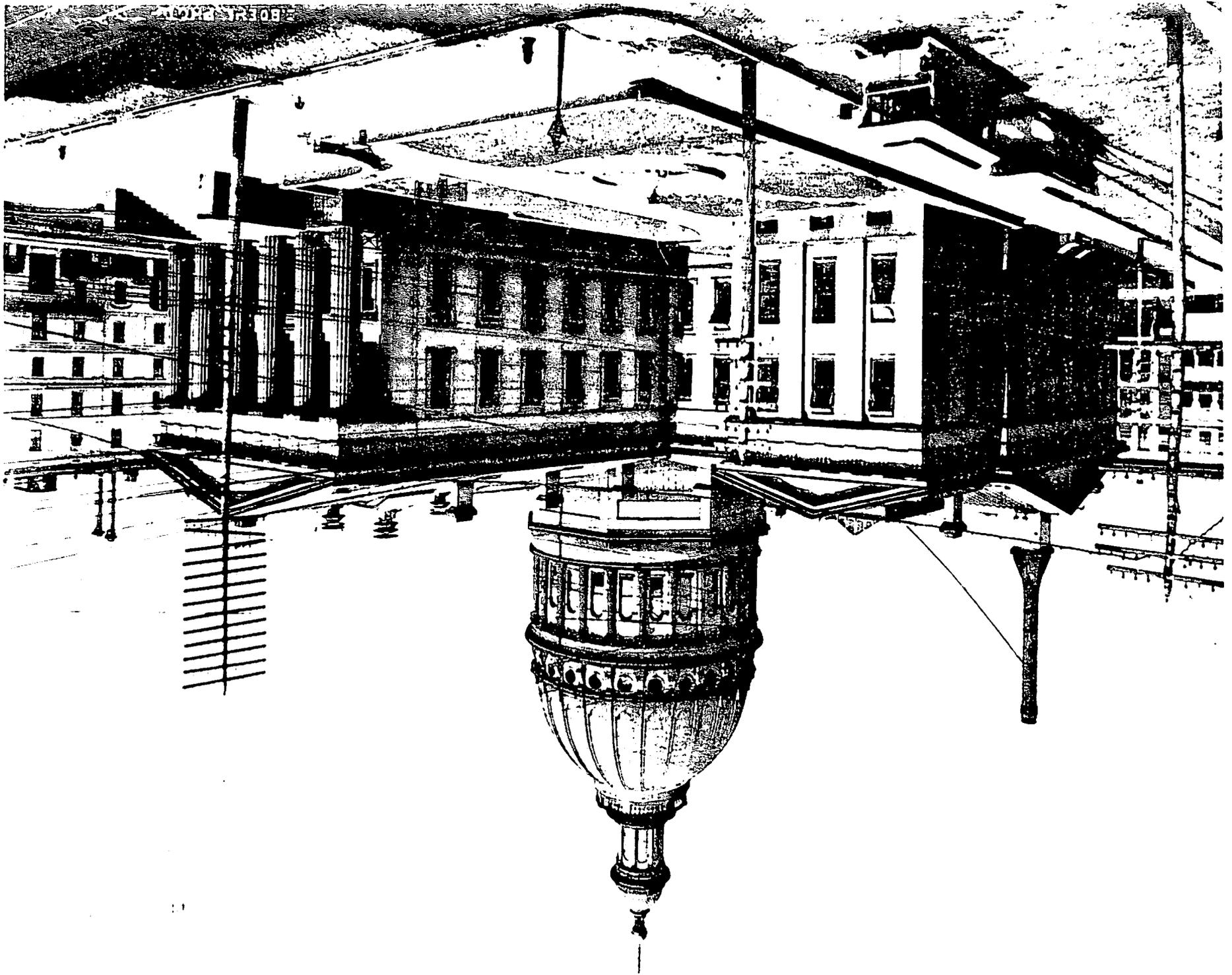
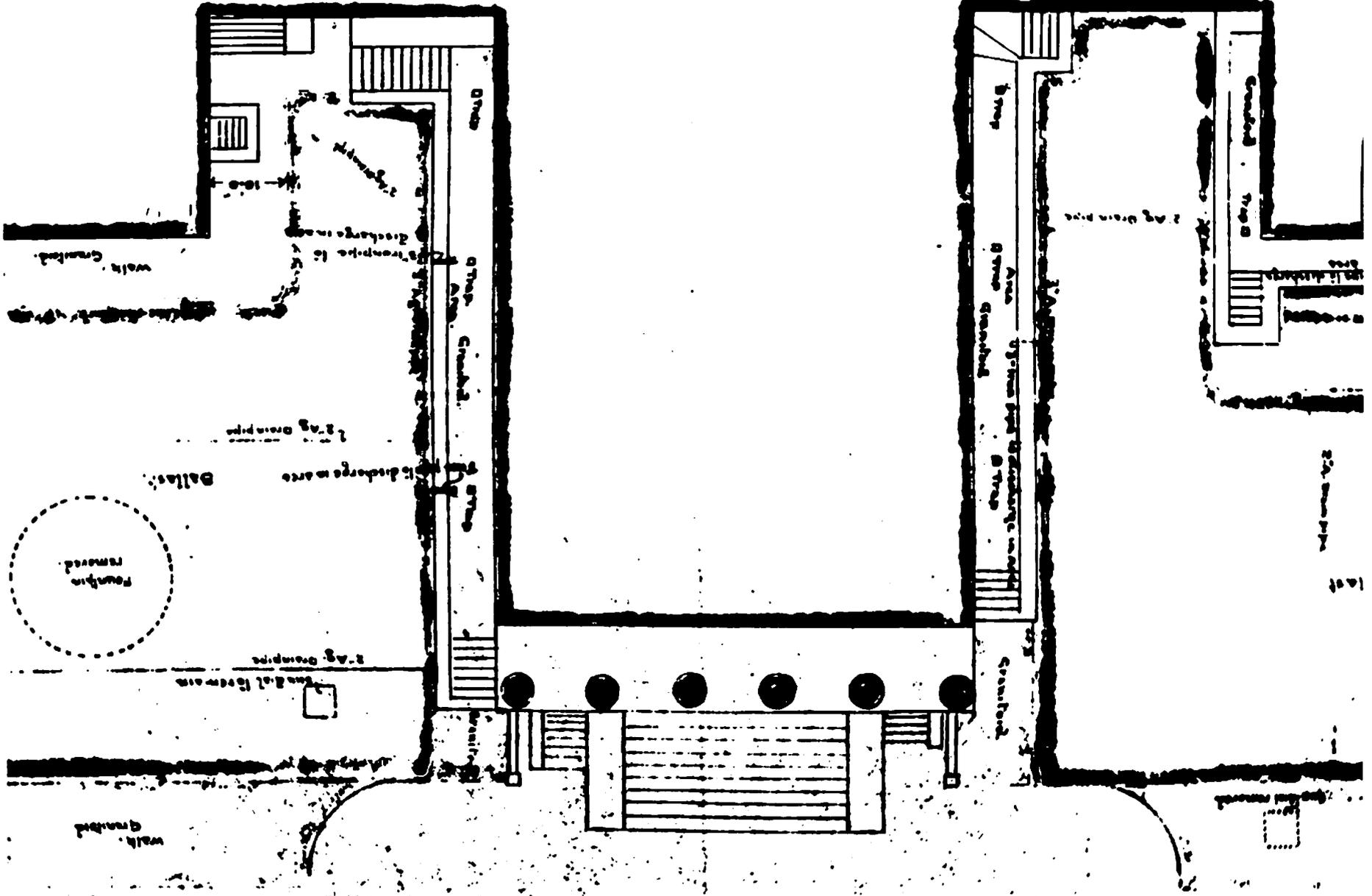


Figure 38

Location of the Sundials in 1895 Prior to the Removal of the Time-piece from the Northeast Yard. From "Proposed Alterations to Court-House Square," October 4, 1895, Archives of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial.



noted, been rendered unnecessary by reason of the application of wallpaper.⁷⁸

Alterations necessary for the expansion of the space afforded for the use of the jurors were completed during 1894. The work could not have been at all extensive since only \$560 were spent. The space affected appears to have been in the east basement. Three tables, "without rollers" and measuring twelve feet by three feet, along with thirty-six chairs were purchased for those rooms.⁷⁹

While contemporary descriptions of the condition of the roof would cause one to expect that it would have been numbered among the projects authorized in 1894 which were quickly completed, the exact reverse proved to be true. Work on the roof and the downspouts was not done until 1896, and even then only a little more than one-third of the original appropriation of \$3,000 was actually expended.⁸⁰

By that time, yet another reason had been created for significant expenses to be incurred in remodeling interior spaces. The addition of two new divisions of the Circuit Court--Numbers 6 and 7--had brought on such a need in 1895. The rooms they would take were made available when the collector and the assessor both moved to the new City Hall during that year; Circuit Court No. 6 thereafter being assigned the assessor's room on the east side of the first floor of the south wing, and No. 7 moving into the collector's former office on the east side of the same floor in the north wing.

In contrast to most of the major work done between 1894 and 1914, the plans for fitting-up these two courtrooms were not preserved. A very good idea of the changes made in 1895 can, however, be adduced from a general plan of the interior made in 1903. It displays marked similarities in the two courts. Doorways were cut into the walls of the transverse halls to afford access at the rear of the judges' benches and each judge used the area located behind a partition in those halls as office space. Within the actual courtrooms, the area in which the public sat was divided from the rest of the space by metal railings with gates. Both rooms were readied for use during 1895 and they obviously met with the approval of the judges. In fact, the judge in Circuit Court No. 6 was subsequently told to trade rooms with his colleague in Court No. 2

78. Ibid....1894, 20; 1896, 21; City Ordinance 17756, September 22, 1894; General Term, III, 421.

79. Mayor's Message...1895, 21.

80. Ibid....1897, 21.

Figure 39

Plan of Circuit Court No. 2, Formerly No. 6, on the East Side of the First Floor of the South Wing, 1903. The dotted lines were used to indicate existing features at the time the plan was made. From "First Floor Plan," August 8, 1903, Archives of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial.

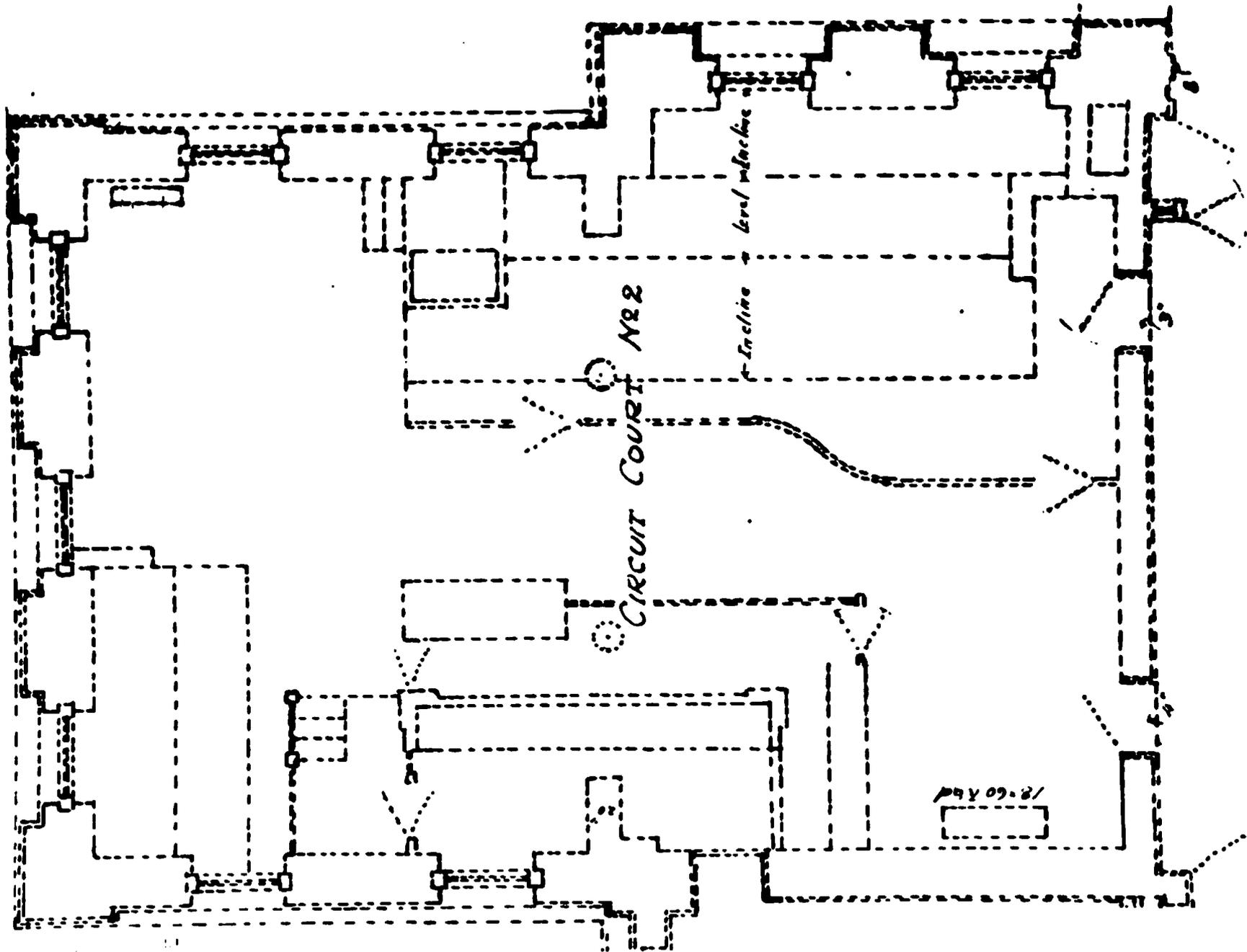
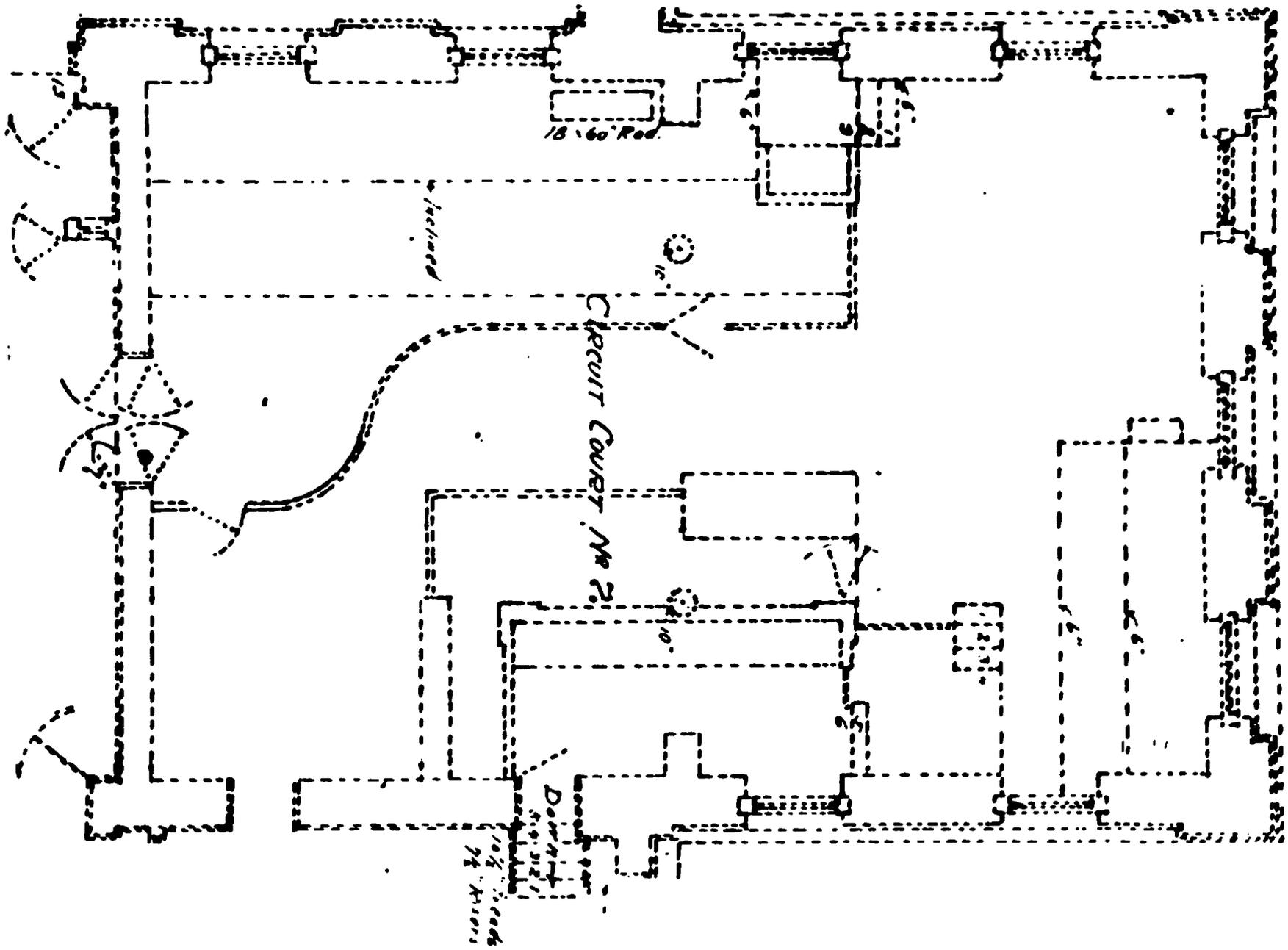


Figure 40

Plan of Circuit Court No. 7 on the East Side of the First Floor of the North Wing, 1903. The dotted lines represent features which existed in 1903. From "First Floor Plan," August 8, 1903, Archives of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial.



and the new division thereupon took the room on the west side of the first floor of the north wing.⁸¹ (Figures 39 and 40)

The constant problems with the heating system again became apparent in the closing years of the nineteenth century. A new smoke stack was installed, repairs were made to the boiler and the steam pipes, and a new smoke consumer was brought into service during 1895 and 1896. The need to use stoves for supplementary heating, however, continued.⁸²

Publication of a heavily illustrated work on St. Louis in 1895 provided evidence for a contemporary feature of the building that was never mentioned in the official records. The book, entitled Art Work of St. Louis, offers an illustration of the Courthouse shortly before the stone base of the fence was removed and, far more importantly, indicates the presence of iron grilles in all of the windows on the ground floor of the west wing. When they were put in place is unknown. (Figure 41)

Some form of remodeling and repairs were undertaken both inside the rotunda and on the exterior of the dome during the course of the fiscal year which ended in April 1896. Once again, the documentary evidence presents no clear account of the work. Repairs to both the "roof and rotunda gallery" were approved in July 1898, but the whole of the \$2,000 which was then appropriated was not spent. All but \$150 was returned to the city's treasury in the following February.⁸³

The clerk of the Circuit Court's sundry duties and responsibilities caused the assignment to him of a number of rooms. His account of his needs, presented to the judges on May 19, 1896, mentions all of them, but it is impossible to determine from the surviving records the exact location of each. His principal office at the time is almost certain to have been on the north side of the first floor of the east wing. Even without a precise understanding of the rooms he mentions, the petition tells us a great deal about the appearance of the interior.

81. "First Floor Plan," August 8, 1903, JNEM; Mayor's Message... 1896, 35 and 463; General Term, III, 588.

82. City Ordinance 18505, May 1, 1896; Mayor's Message... 1896, 23-24; 1897, 21.

83. City Ordinance 19423, July 24, 1898; City Ordinance 19700, February 24, 1899; Mayor's Message... 1896, 24.

Figure 41

The Exterior of the Courthouse. From Art Work of St. Louis, Chicago, 1895. Courtesy of the Mercantile Library of St. Louis.

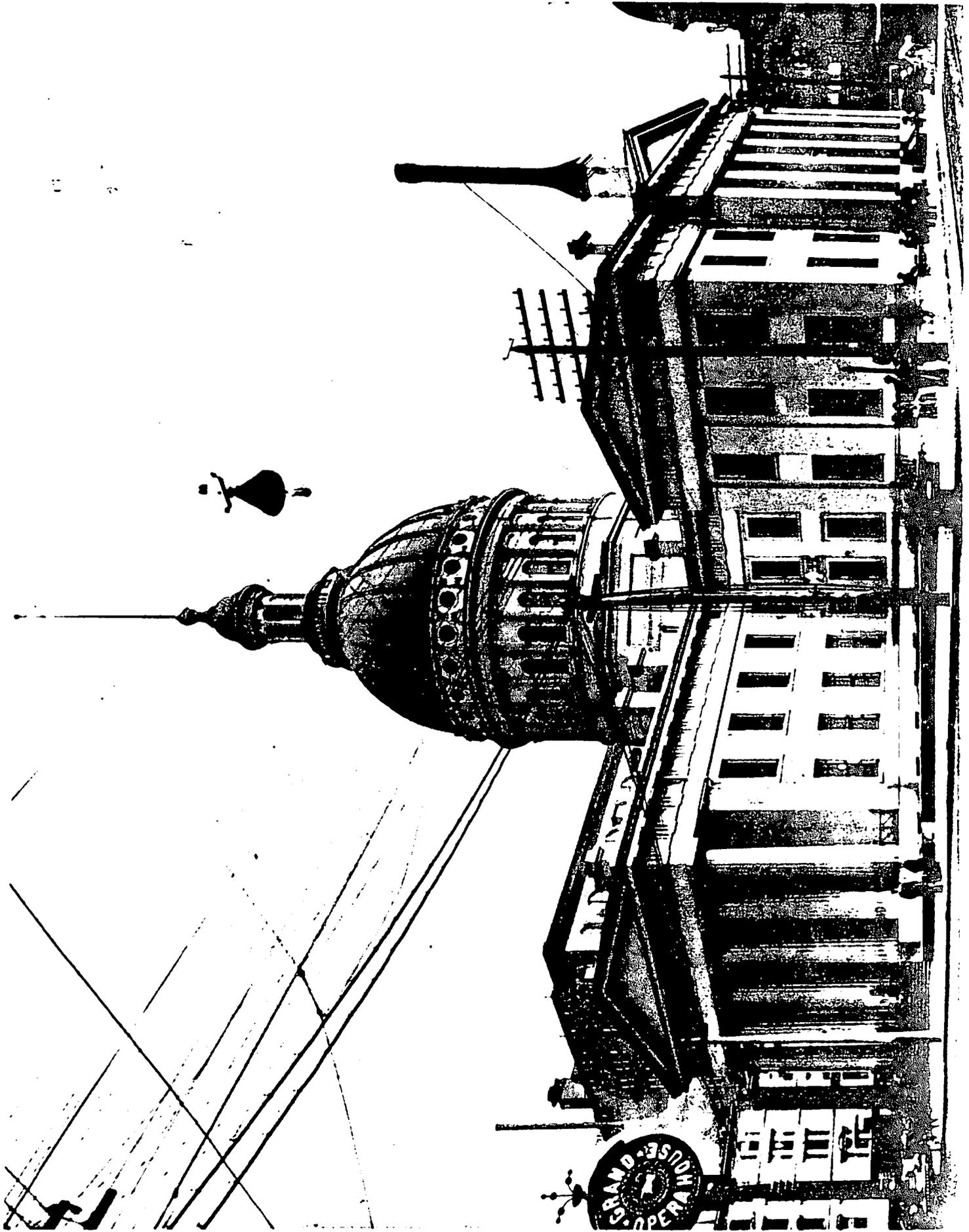
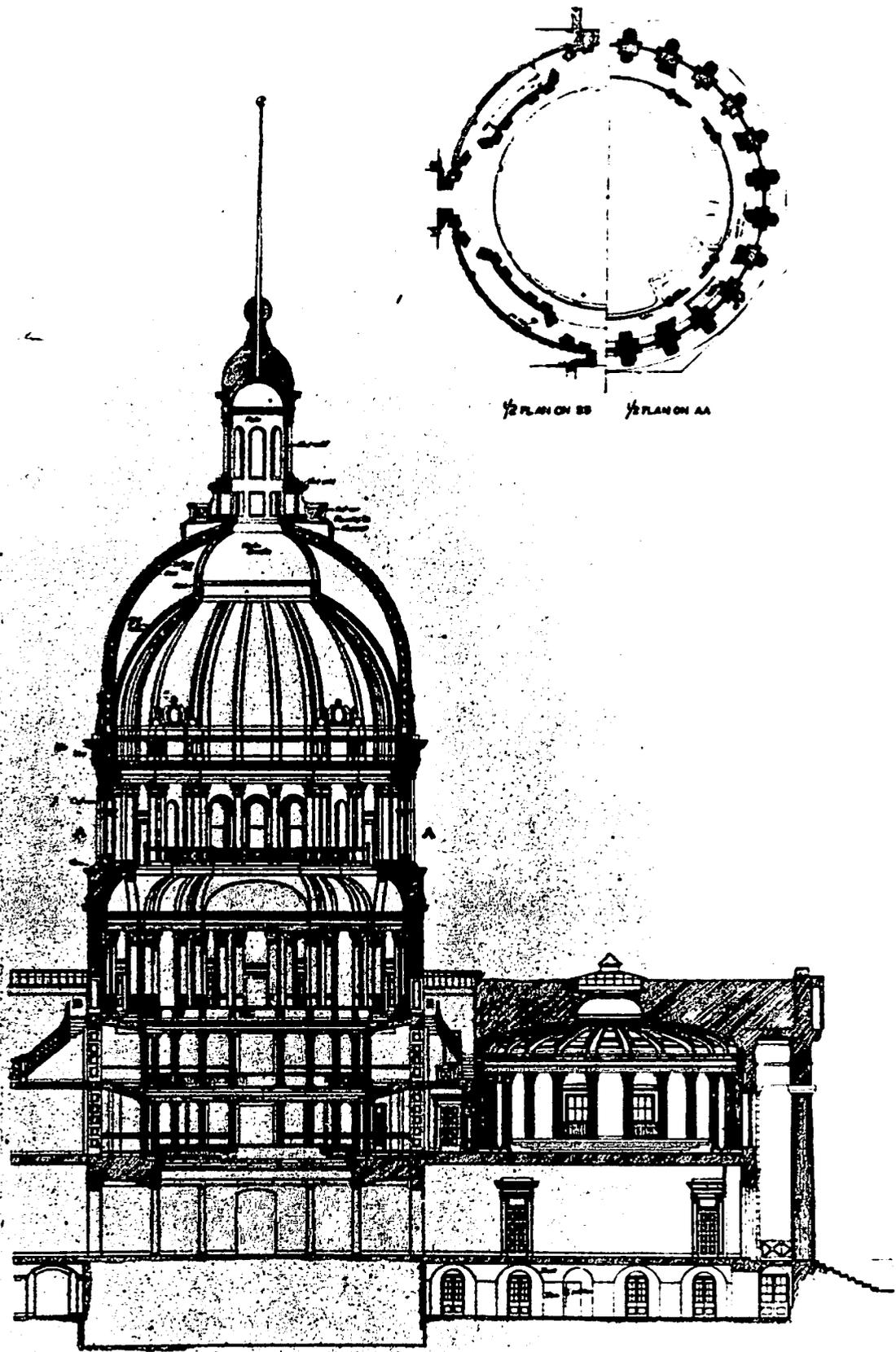


Figure 42

Sectional View of the Courthouse by J.W. Ginder, 1898. From the Catalogue Published by the St. Louis Architectural Club in 1900. Courtesy of the Mercantile Library of St. Louis.



1/2 PLAN ON BB 1/2 PLAN ON AA

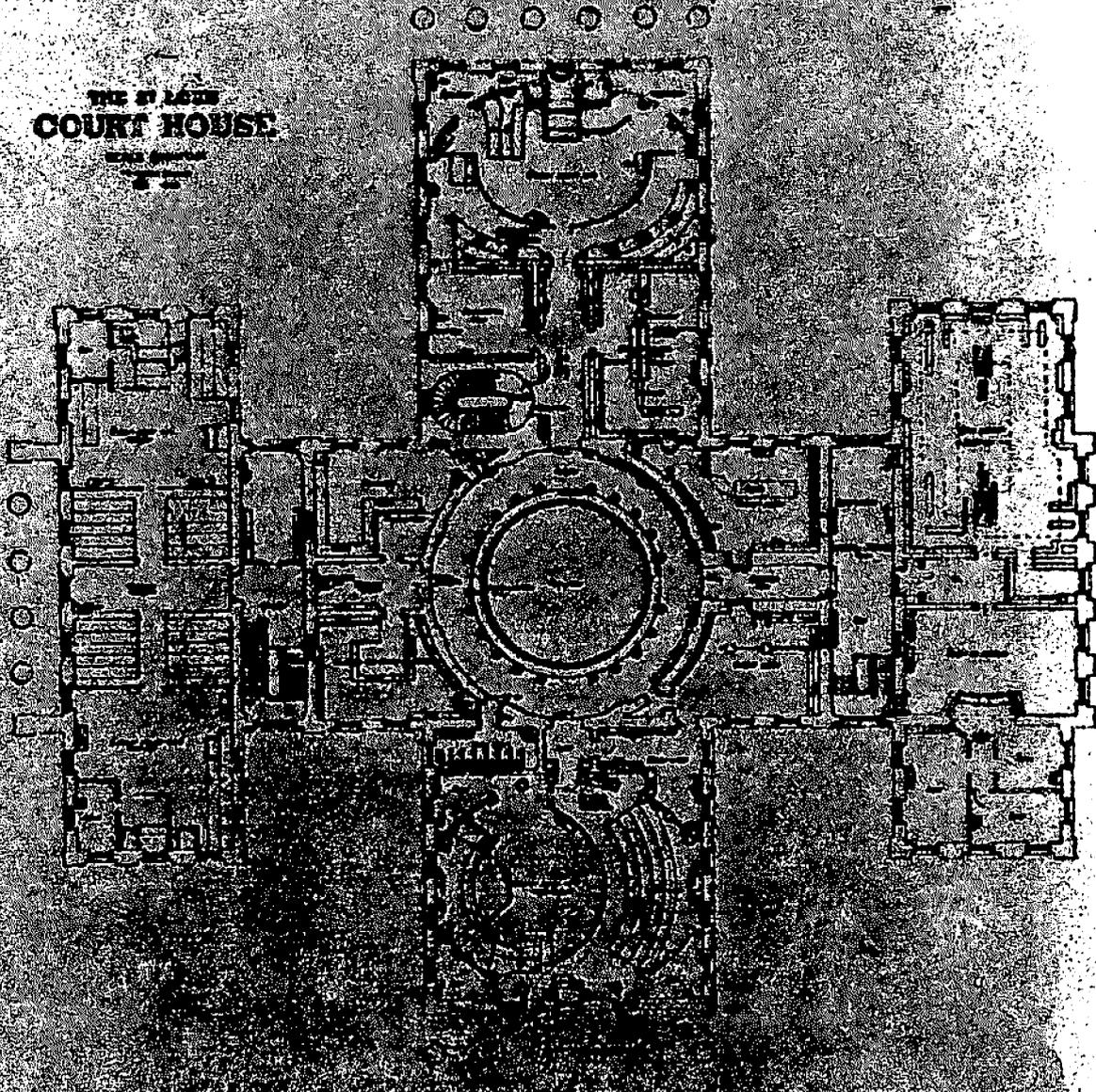
SECTION

St. Louis Court House
Section through Main Corridor, looking South
Measured Drawing by J. W. Ginder

Figure 43

Plan of the Second Floor by J.W. Ginder, 1898. From the Catalogue
Published by the St. Louis Architectural Club in 1900. Courtesy of
the Mercantile Library of St. Louis.

**THE ST. LOUIS
COURT HOUSE**



St. Louis Court House
Second Floor Plan
Measured Drawing by J. W. Glider

I desire...to call the attention of the Judges of the Circuit Court to the following repairs which I consider absolutely necessary to be made at an early a date as possible in this office. 1st Private office ceiling to be papered and new carpet for floor casements to be cleaned carpet now on floor to be put on the floor of Back Tax room, which is now bare 2nd Linoleum for floor of main office ceiling and wall to be papered. 3rd Ceiling to be papered in Taxing Clerk's Dept. 4 Ceiling to be papered and linoleum on floor of Execution Clerk's Dept. 5 Ceiling and walls to be calsomined in Mr. Walsh's room 6. Back Tax Office ceiling and walls to be repainted. Nothing whatever was done last year in this regard and it is absolutely necessary that the office should be put in decent shape this year.⁸⁴

Some of the rooms to which he referred must have been in the basement of the east wing, an area that had been used earlier for the storage of records. The movement of such material to the third floor of the north wing, authorized in 1895, had made it possible to renovate the area for use as offices.⁸⁵

In the course of 1901, specifications for work in both courtrooms on the second floor of the north wing were drawn up. At a cost of \$1,088, the remodeling of them was completed in the following year. That was a rather exceptional project for the time, and it did not produce sufficiently widespread improvement to belie a comment made in 1902. The Courthouse, it was then said, had reached "the last stages of dissolution."⁸⁶ That was not unlike earlier statements which had been made about the building. Indeed the only novel thing about it was that it was soon followed by major changes.

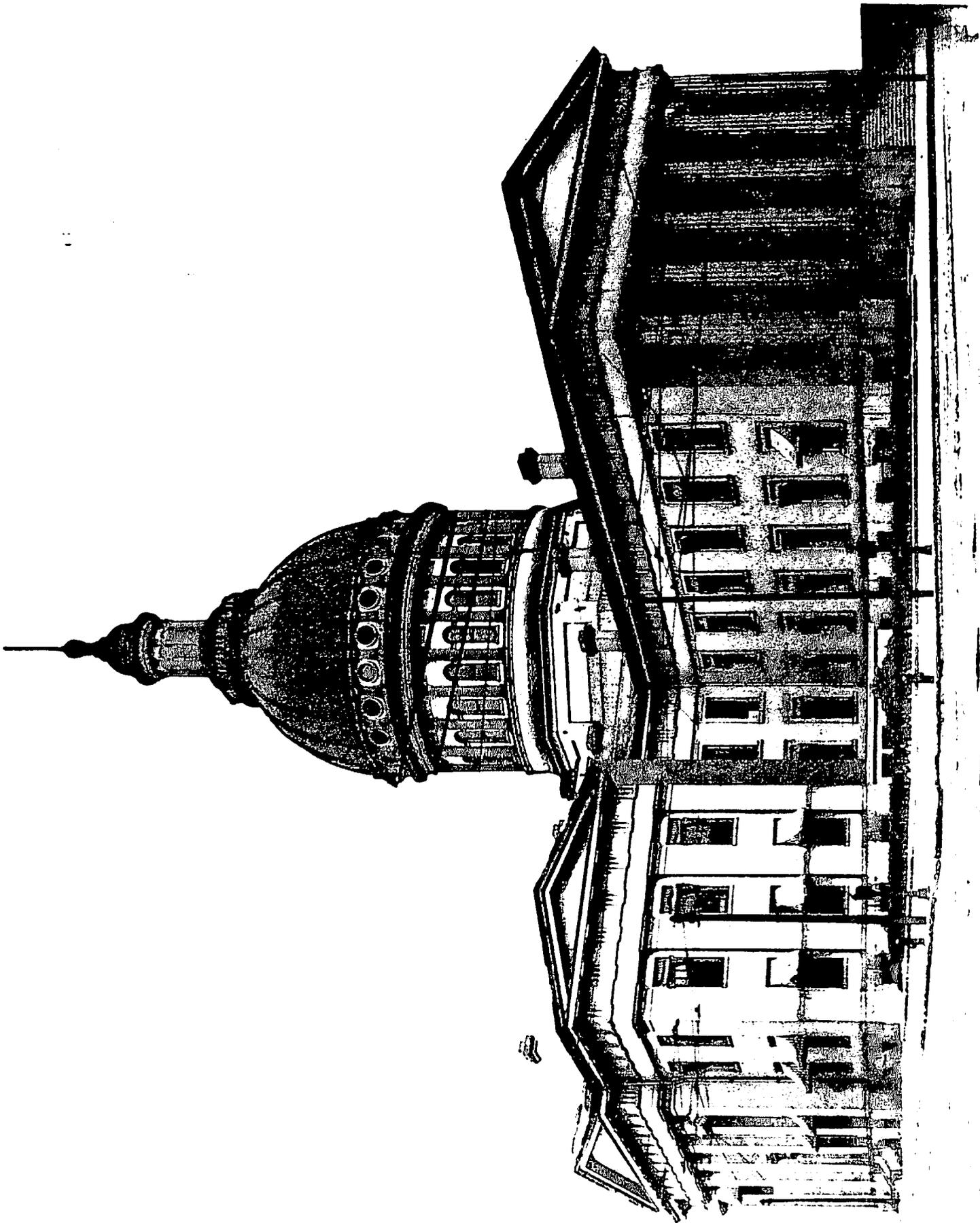
84. General Term, III, 495.

85. City Ordinance 17912, March 4, 1895.

86. Mayor's Message...1902, 655 and 725; 1903, 28.

Figure 44

The Courthouse, c. 1907, showing the hedging. From the Collection
of the Missouri Historical Society.



A LAST HURRAH, 1903-1914

The condition of all the structures owned by the City of St. Louis was neatly, if tartly, described by the commissioner of public buildings in his annual report on May 1, 1903.

The insufficient authority vested in [my] department and its subordination to the office of the President of the Board of Public Improvements operates to the decided detriment of the public buildings....The condition to which the public buildings have been reduced through forced neglect and lack of funds may, however, prove in the end to be not wholly a misfortune. When the now expected financial relief is realized we may then have the opportunity to make a new beginning, and to provide ourselves with public buildings befitting the new St. Louis.¹

He was anticipating the passage of legislation which would raise the debt ceiling of the municipality, and his implied observation that such an act would make it possible to replace such older buildings as the Courthouse may have quickened interest in finding the money needed to bring it back to a decent state.

Local architects were not at all pleased with the general appearance of the now venerable building. They published a statement indicating their belief that the work on the grounds in 1895 could only be characterized as "stupid." They found no reason at all to praise the treatment of the Courthouse Square, suggesting that the old sundial had been saved only through "some mysterious dispensation of Providence."²

The city proved to be both willing and able to admit that a costly mistake had been made, a blunder which was to be rectified after May 1904 when an appropriation of \$2,000 was approved for "removing gravel from Court House yard and replacing same with soil." Responsibility for the new landscaping was given to the St. Louis Park Commission, and that body removed the layer of ballast, regraded the yards, applied a new covering of soil and sod, planted hedges around the sides of the square, and created new circular beds for "foliage plants."³ (Figure 44)

1. Mayor's Message...1903, 121.

2. St. Louis Architectural Club, Catalogue (St. Louis, 1900), 7.

3. Mayor's Message...1905, 24-25.

Their published report on the project revealed that the park officials foresaw problems in the maintenance of the work that had been accomplished. Particular concern was expressed about the chance that the hedge would not survive through the winter. They were right about the fact that the combination of cold weather and smoke from coal fires would take a toll. To their surprise, however, the hedge came through fine. It was the newly laid sod that really suffered. By the spring of 1906, "there was not one blade of blue grass visible."⁴

Alterations made in the areaways during 1904 were quite durable and they are represented in a set of plans, dated January 22, 1904, which are still in existence. Using the fund created by the appropriation made in the previous December, a great number of changes were made.

The west wing areaways, running parallel to the walls on the south and the north, had previously been accessible only by descending steps which were placed at the eastern ends. Those steps, to put that another way, were against the walls of the extensions between the rotunda and the north and south wings. Both flights were now removed, new stone being used to extend the walls of the areaways across the former opening. Steps at the western ends of both areaways which had led up to the floor of the portico were also removed, opening space in which to place steps leading down into the areaways. The installation of those steps made it necessary to partially fill the former door openings at the western end of the areaways, turning them into windows.

The north wing had had four sets of steps, leading down into the areaway at each corner. All of those were now removed, and the steps at the east side of the cheekwall of the Chestnut street entry were widened. That set of steps was subsequently replaced by a concrete ramp. The old stone stair, with its iron balustrade, which had run up to the floor of the transverse hall at the west side, was left in place. It would, however, be demolished within the next seven years.

Steps leading down to the areaways on the north and south sides of the east wing had existed at the western ends. Those on the north were taken out in 1904 but the other set continued to be in use until 1907. Sets of steps leading down at the east end of the areaways, and paralleling the walls of the wing, had also been in use. Steps on the north side were allowed to remain and those on the south were removed as part of the renovation in 1904. Along with the steps which flanked the cheekwalls of the eastern entry,

⁴. Ibid....1906, 9.

the steps on the north were subsequently removed. The doors that had stood at the base of the steps by the cheekwalls were converted into windows by bricking-up the area below the new sills.

The south wing did not, of course, have any areaways. There were instead two sets of steps leading to the entries to the basement; one on the northwest wall and the other on the northeast. The former was removed in 1904 but the latter remained until 1907.⁵

Impetus for all of that work around the building, particularly for those things that were basically cosmetic in nature, had been provided by a desire to have the city's public buildings in a condition which would impress the hordes of tourists who would be attracted to St. Louis by the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, popularly known as the World's Fair of 1904. Hopes were expressed in April of that year that the interior of the Courthouse would not be "suffered to continue in a shabby condition." Even with an appropriation from the State of Missouri to provide assistance for such interior work, the appearance of the rotunda and the halls underwent no change during the year. As the Post-Dispatch put it on November 15, 1904, "not a daub of paint or cleaning material has been applied to the grimy-looking old Temple of Justice." Some St. Louisans would claim that the problem was essentially political, that the fear of being called a "boodler" had deterred local officials from participating in any project that involved sizable expenditures.⁶ A better explanation is that so much else was being done inside the Courthouse that the task of repainting it was pushed off into the future.

The judges of the Circuit Court adopted a lengthy resolution in May 1903--almost a year before the Exposition was to open--in which the need for a substantial amount of work was made obvious.⁷ Simply carrying out the projects which the judges now deemed to be required would make the months to come a period of real significance in the history of the building.

The most extensive work would be conducted in the rooms on the west side of the first floor of the south wing and the south side

5. "Plan alterations in the Court-House, approved on January 2, 1904," and "The St. Louis Court House, First Floor Plan," c. 1911, JNEM.

6. Post-Dispatch, February 24 and November 15, 1904, quoted in Bryan, "Rotunda," 46; William Marion Reedy, "The City, The Fair and Boodle," The Mirror, XIV, no. 1 (February 11, 1904), 3.

7. General Term, V, 299-300.

of the west wing's first floor. Those were to become the location for two new divisions of the Circuit Court, the recent creation of which had been one of the major reasons for a general reassignment of rooms in April 1903.

Plans for the carpentry and cabinetwork for both courtrooms were completed in August 1903. The room in the west wing would have a railing, supported by heavy, turned balusters, located at a point equidistant between the entries from the corridor. Two doors--one opening inward and the other outward--are shown at both entrances from the corridor. The platform of the jurors' stand, however, ran across the eastern entry. It must, therefore, have been decided that that entrance would no longer be used. A new doorway was cut into the east wall to provide a connection with the judge's private office. His bench, placed against the east wall, was to be made of cherry with a marble facing at the base. Four engaged columns with turned bases and capitals were attached to the front of the bench. Rectangular panels, broken to receive diamond-shaped inserts, provided the other major decoration on the new furniture. (Figures 45-48)

To afford chambers for the judges of both of the newly created divisions, a partition was erected across the room to the west of the corridor which connects the rotunda and the south wing.⁸

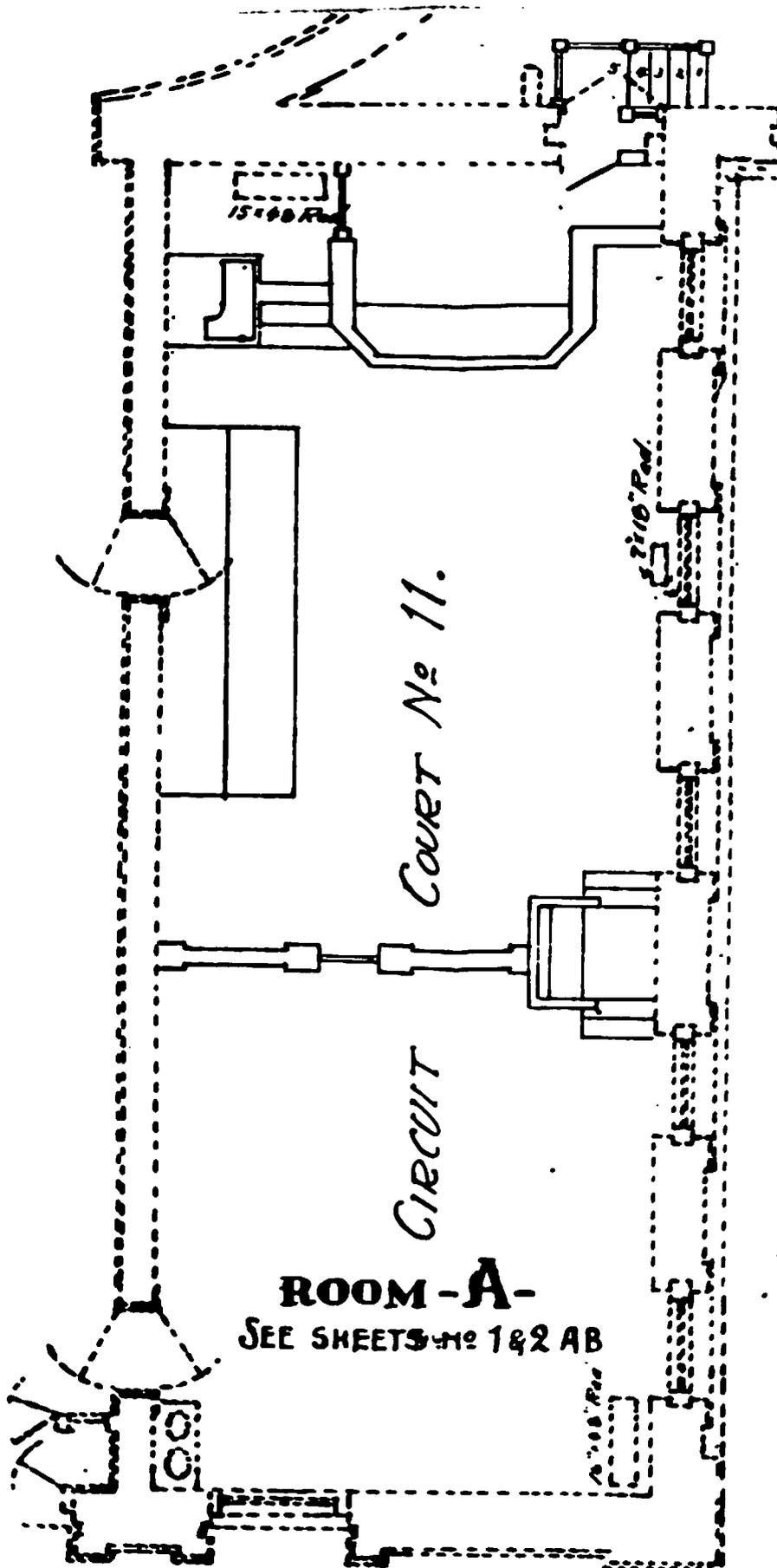
If the plan for the new courtroom in the south wing had been followed completely, casement windows would have been installed. New, double-hung windows were placed there just a few years later, and it is clear that part of the scheme for the room was not carried out. The removal of iron shutters from the windows was, however, effected.

The platforms beneath the judge's bench, the jurors' stand and the area set aside for public seating ran under five of the windows. Wrought-iron guards were installed at each of those windows as a safety measure. The platform intended for public seating offers something of a minor puzzle. The floor of its fourth level was two feet above the normal level of the room but ran across the southern entry from the corridor. The door there was to be made to correspond to that across the corridor, and it may have been sealed for the whole of the time during which the space was used as a courtroom. (Figure 49)

⁸. "Plan, Circuit Court No. 11," approved August 8, 1903, JNEM. The designation of the court was changed in December, 1903, and it was thereafter known as No. 9.

Figure 45

Plan of Circuit Court No. 11, August 1903. This court was redesignated No. 9 in December 1903. Solid lines indicate proposed construction; dotted lines represent features which existed when the plan was drawn. From "First Floor Plan," August 8, 1903, Archives of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial.



ROOM-A-
SEE SHEETS NO 1 & 2 AB

COURT No 11.

CIRCUIT

15' x 10' Rad.

2' x 10' Rad.

2' x 8' Rad.

Figure 46

Above: Judge's Bench, Front Elevation, Circuit Court No. 9, 1903.
Below: Railing planned for the Courtroom. Figures 46, 47 and 48
reproduced from the Blueprint Plan approved on August 8, 1903,
Archives of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial.

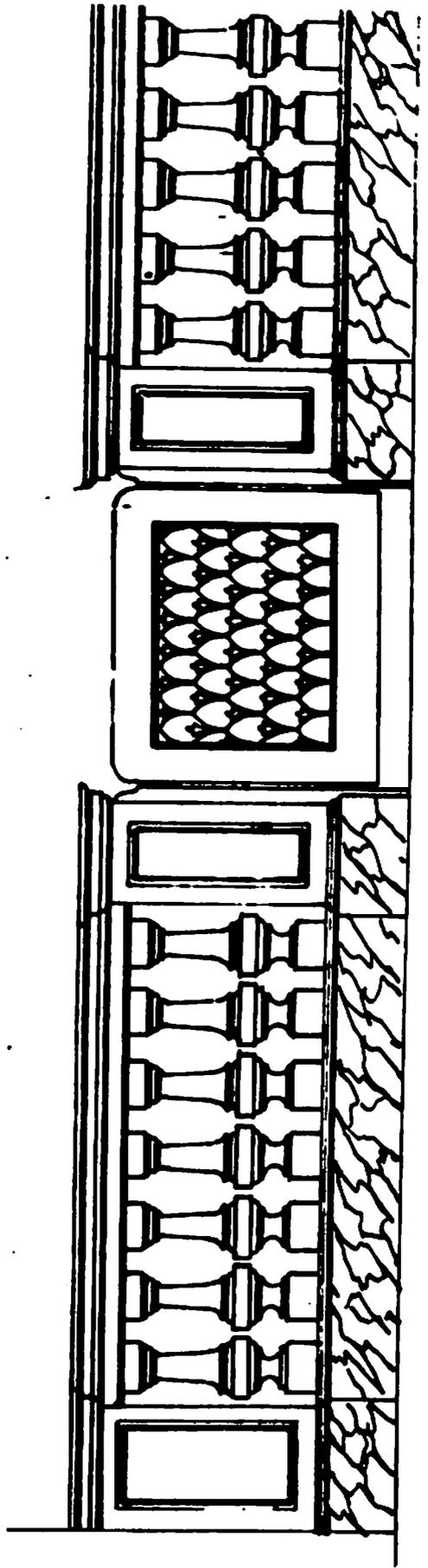
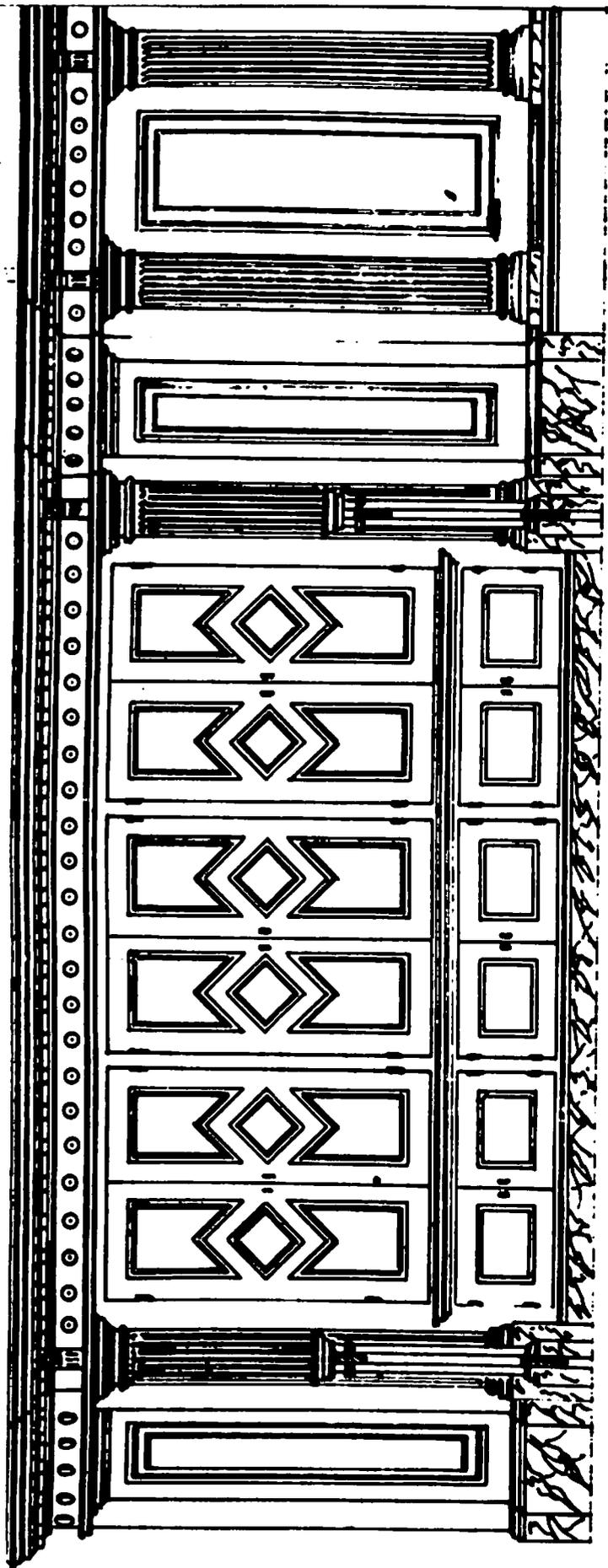


Figure 47

Front, Rear and Side Elevations, Clerk's Desk, Circuit Court No. 9,
1903.

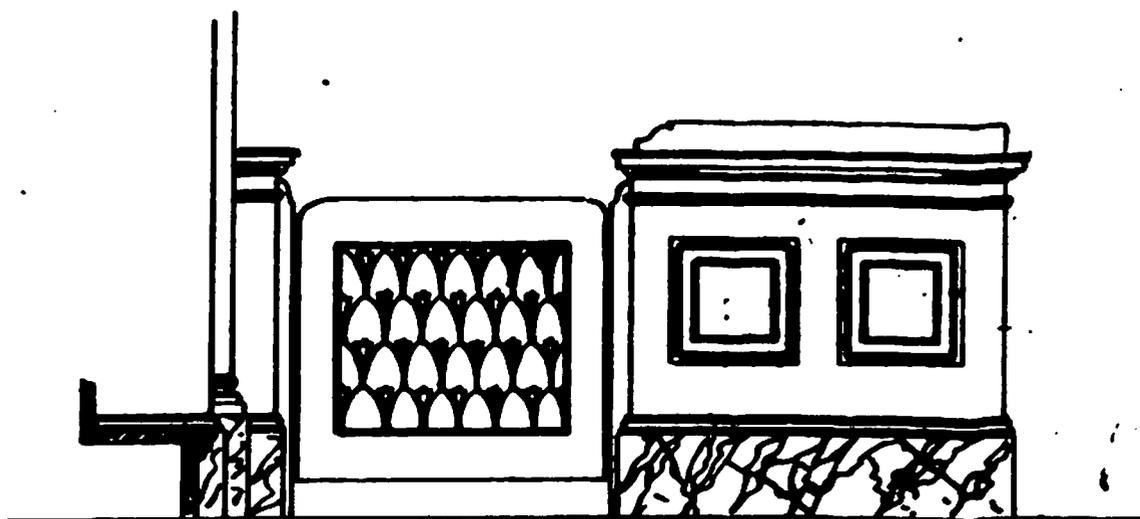
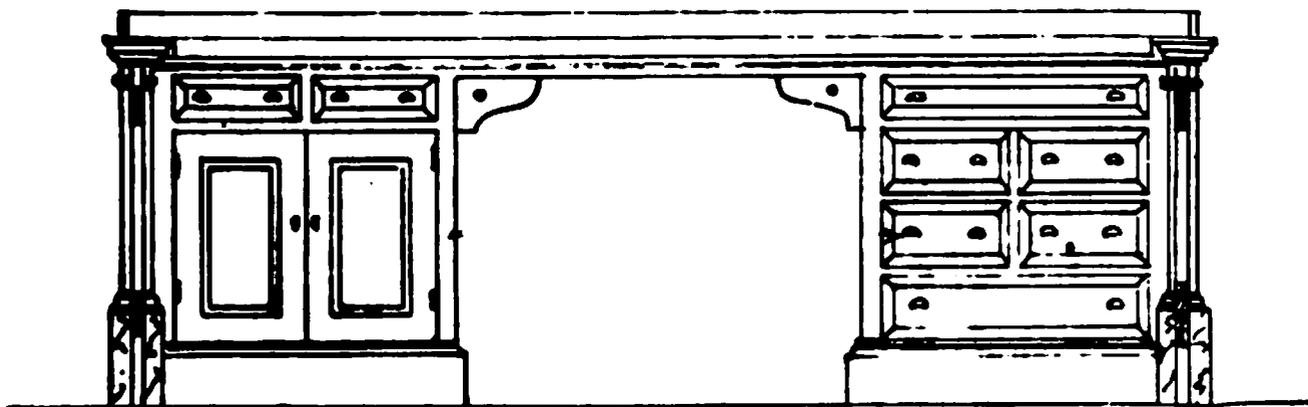
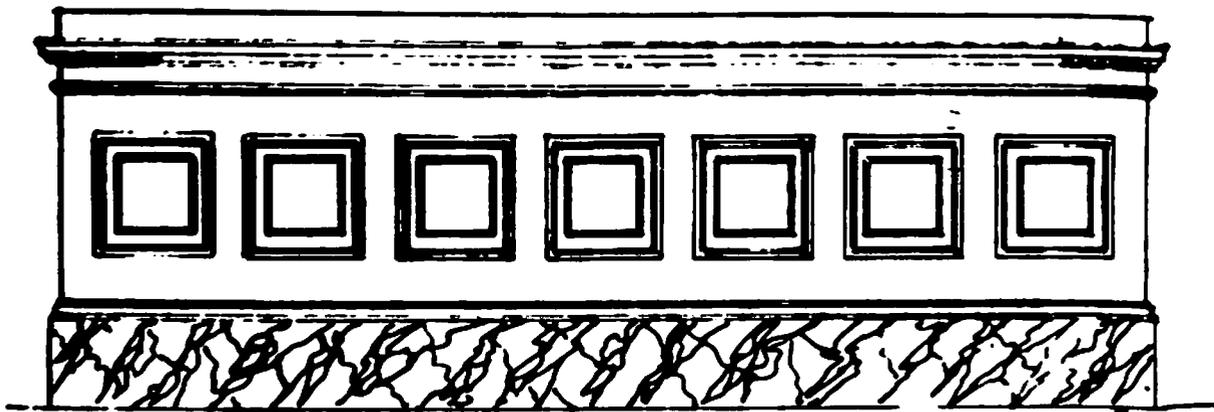


Figure 48

Front and Side Elevations, Sheriff's Stand, Circuit Court No. 9,
1903.

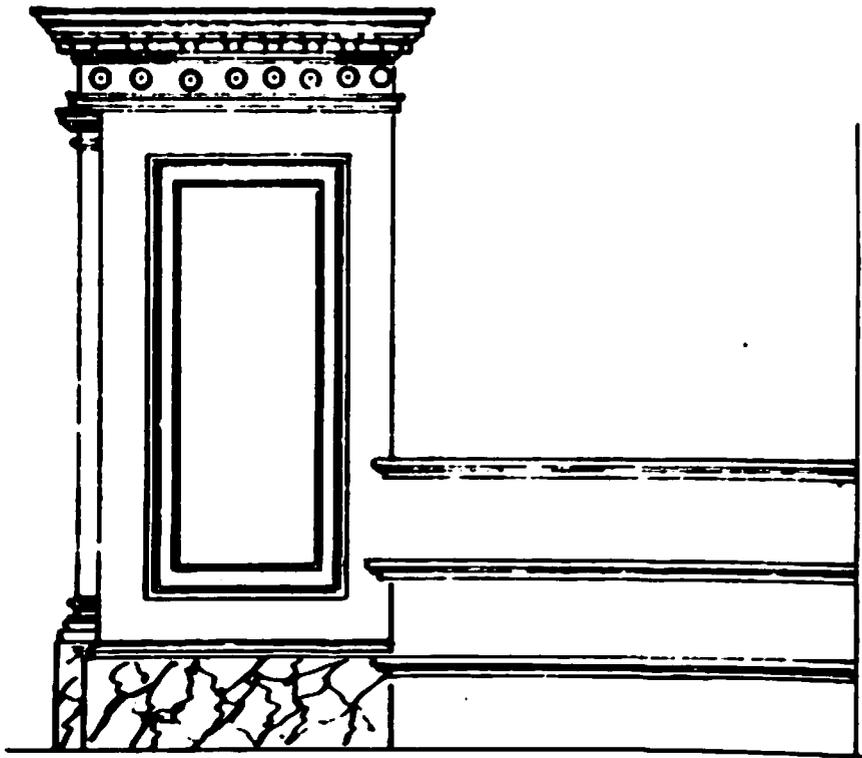
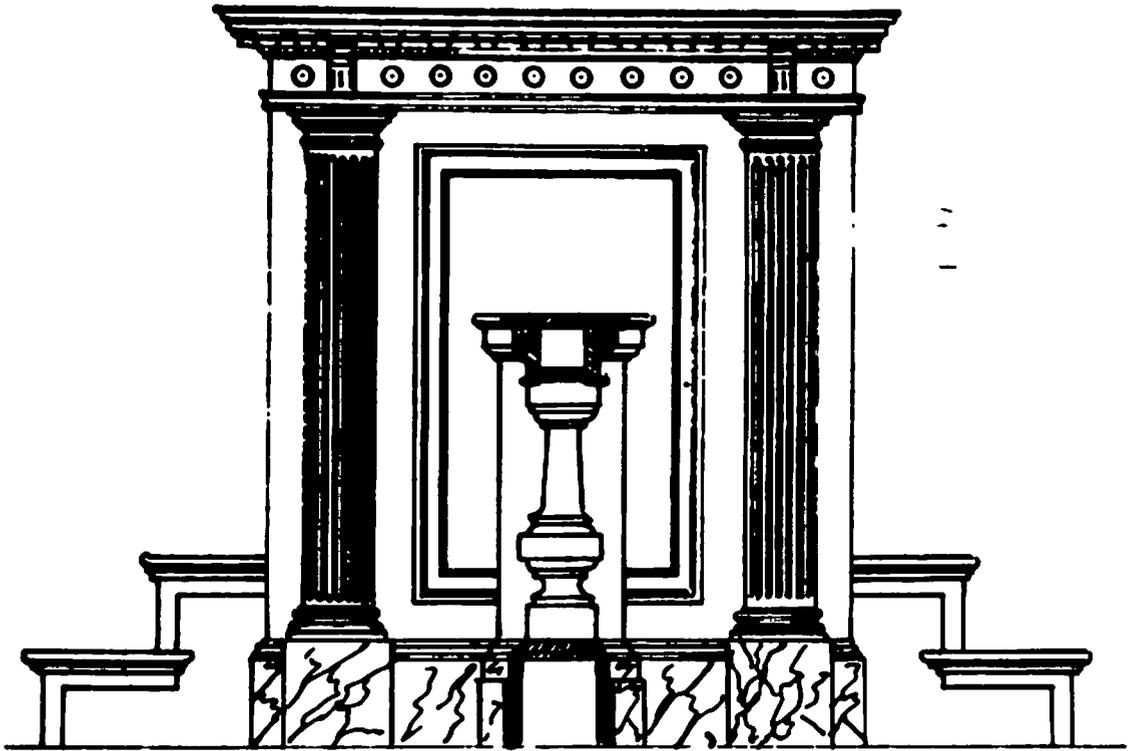
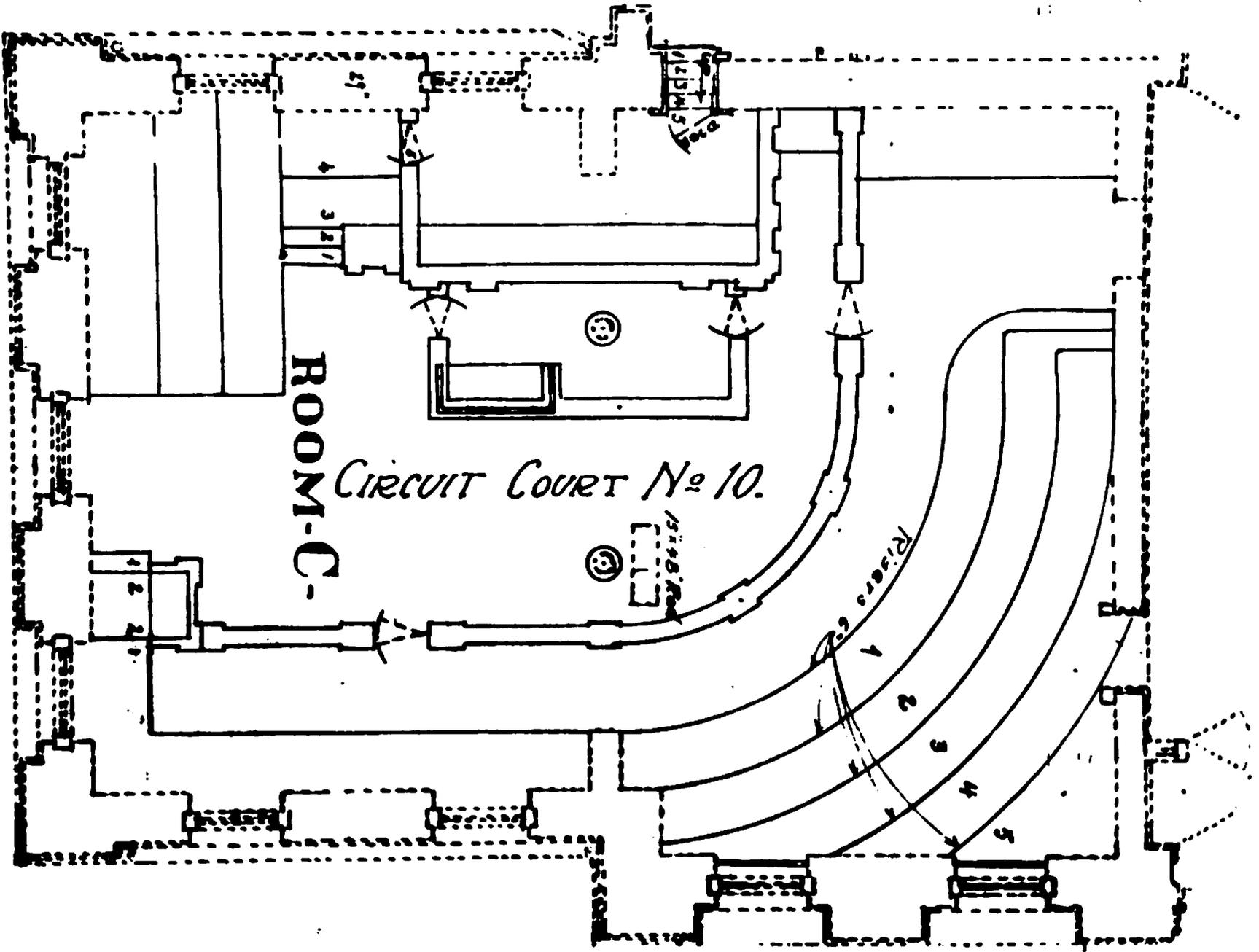


Figure 49

Plan of Circuit Court No. 10, August 1903. This court was redesignated as No. 8 in December 1903. The solid lines show proposed construction; dotted lines indicate existing features when the plan was drawn. From "First Floor Plan," August 8, 1903, Archives of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial.



The judge's bench was located against the north wall. To provide access to it, a doorway was cut into the wall below the cast-iron stair in the transverse hall of the south wing. The cabinetwork done within the room was essentially similar to that in the other new court although Corinthian capitals were used on the engaged columns and the rectangular panels on the front of the bench did not have diamond-shaped inserts within them. The latter type of decorative element was, however, applied to the new door and casing behind the bench.

That diamond motif, it might be noted, was very popular at the time. It is also to be found on the exterior between the windows at each of the transverse halls.

Fifty-eight chairs, joined together and fixed to the platform, were provided for the use of the spectators. That represented, in a sense, a return to an earlier form of public seating and a deviation from the generally common use of benches. The jurors' stand was, for reasons that are not at all clear, given eighteen chairs.⁹

The cabinetwork called for at the court in the west wing was also virtually duplicated in the room on the east side of the second floor of the north wing during the remodeling of Circuit Court No. 3 in 1903. In the earlier plan of that court, the bench had been placed at the east side. Partitioning which had been used to form a small chamber for the judge inside the room was now removed, and a new bench was built on the south wall. A doorway was cut into the wall behind it, opening into the transverse hall. Sections of the old iron railing within the room were left in place with new railing of a similar type being run between. The use of that material for the railing imparted the only significant difference in appearance between the room and the new court in the west wing.¹⁰

Major work was carried out on the third floor of the north wing at the same time. The judges of the Circuit Court had determined that jury rooms should be placed there, and four were created by erecting partitions in the rooms adjacent to the rotunda. That required the cutting of two new doorways immediately north of the entrance to the rotunda. Two windows in the hall leading to the rotunda were filled at this time. They were a part of the construction which dated from 1845, and they represented only one-half of the early features which were scheduled for removal. The two

9. "Plan, Circuit Court No. 10," approved August 8, 1903, JNEM. This was changed to No. 8 in December, General Term, V, 389.

10. "Plan Circuit Court No. 3," approved August 8, 1903, JNEM.

windows on the north wall of the transverse hall were also meant to be bricked-in, but, for unexplained reasons, that was not done. Those windows are still present there.

A fifth jury room was located behind a brick partition that then ran across the east end of the transverse hall. All sign of its existence was obliterated during the later creation of the present roof and concrete floor.

To provide better lighting in that third floor space, the stone metopes in the entablature were cut out and windows, similar to those which Joseph Foster had installed in the rest of the third floor in the early-1860s, were put in. A bathtub and washstand, needed when the space housed the Fire and Police Telegraph, were now removed.¹¹

Circuit Court No. 4, in the oval courtroom of the west wing's second floor, underwent change as the judge's bench was moved from the north to the south side sometime after August 8, 1903. The earlier furnishings could simply be relocated, but an entirely new platform beneath the bench was constructed. The door within the curved partition on the northeast was removed, and a new opening was made in the partition at the southeast in order to make the space behind it available for the judge.¹² That gave him a far larger chamber than he had under the older arrangement of the room.

Relocation of the bench in the oval courtroom of the east wing was authorized by the judges meeting in general term on May 23, 1903. It had previously been placed against the east wall and was now to be moved to the north side of the room. The plans drawn for the use of the workmen have not been preserved but it is clear that the city made no appropriation to cover the cost of any extensive cabinetwork.¹³ The furnishings, therefore, remained substantially as they had been, and a photograph made about a decade later provides insight into the general appearance of the room both before and after 1903. (Figures 50 and 51)

The option of having the bench in his court enlarged was given to the judge of Circuit Court No. 6 in the western room on the first floor in the north wing. He exercised that right and changed the

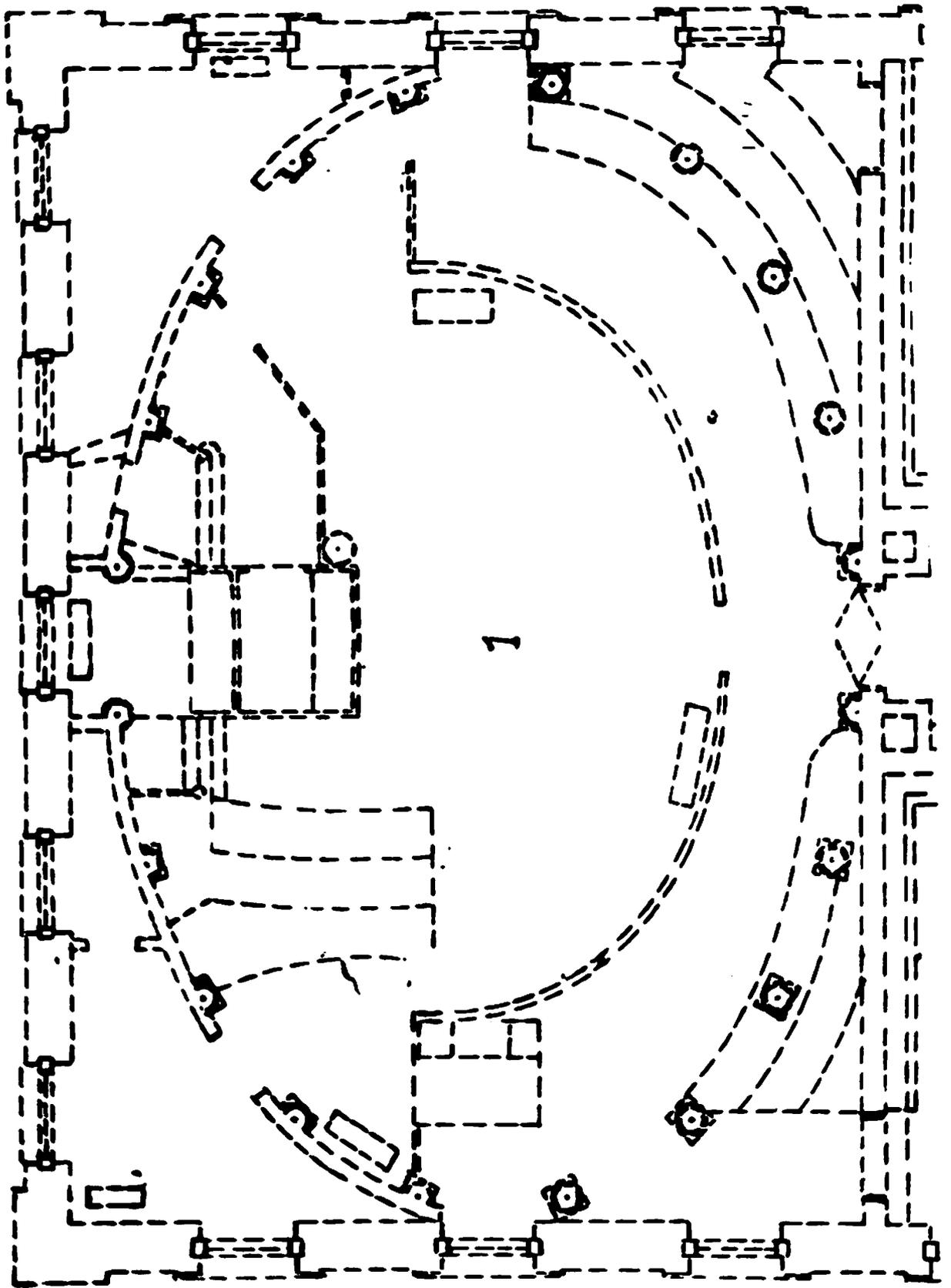
11. "Plan, Third Floor," approved August 8, 1903, JNEM.

12. "Plan, Circuit Court No. 4," approved August 8, 1903, JNEM.

13. General Term, V, 300; Mayor's Message...1904, 100.

Figure 50

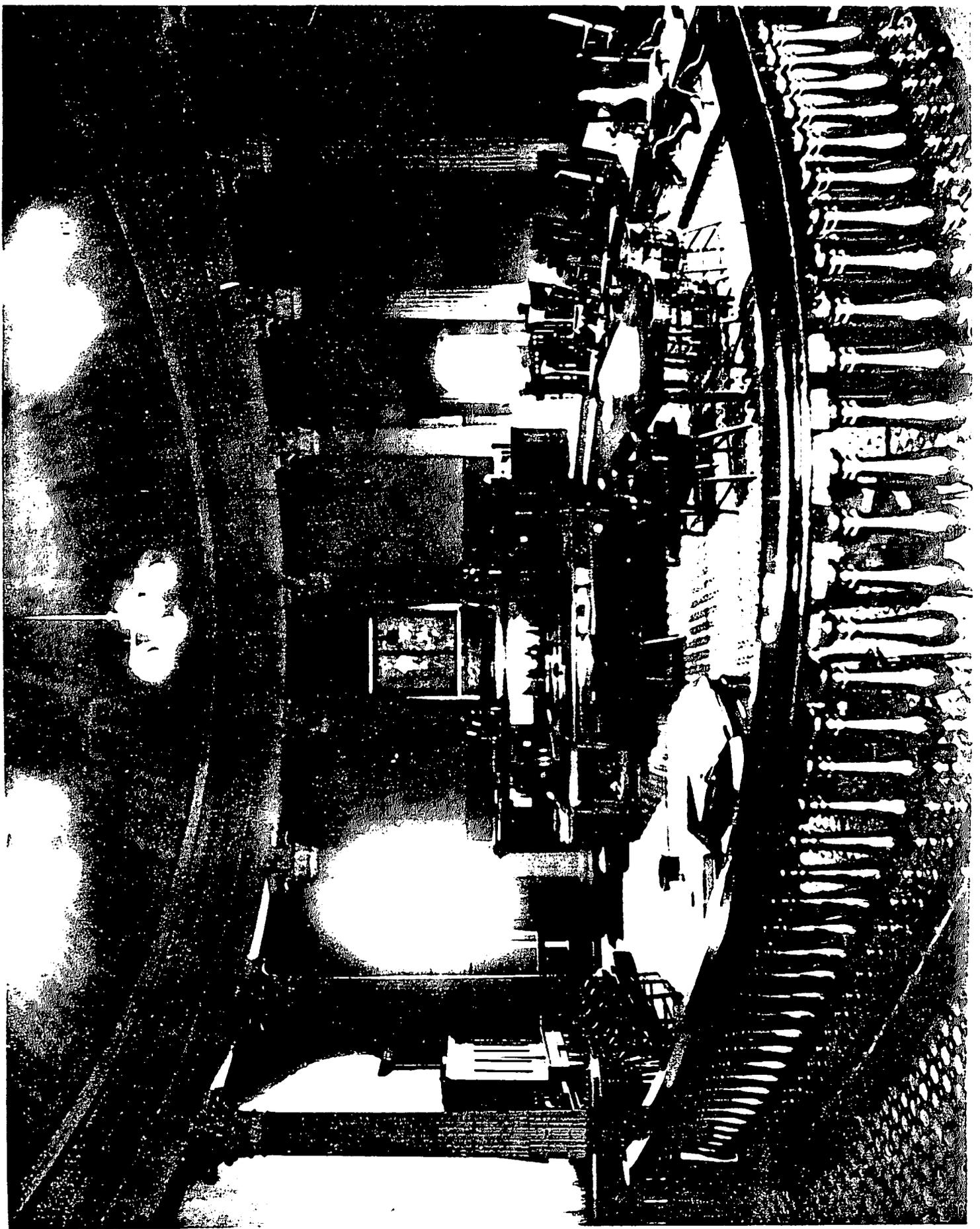
The Oval Courtroom of the East Wing, August 1903. Dotted lines indicate existing features at the time the plan was drawn. From plan of "Second Floor," August 8, 1903, Archives of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial.



1

Figure 51

The Oval Courtroom of the East Wing, c. 1915. From the Collection
of the Missouri Historical Society.



location of the bench at the same time.¹⁴ The partition enclosing the small chamber in the northwest corner of the room was taken out and a newly remodeled bench was placed against the south wall. That change led to the creation of yet another new doorway, cut into the wall beneath the cast-iron stair in the transverse corridor, to allow the judge to enter the courtroom from behind the bench.

The most recently furnished courtrooms, those on the east side of the first floors of both the north and the south wings, were now slightly altered. The judges' benches, the seats and the railings were rearranged in some unspecified fashion, and the corners of the benches and the jury boxes were rounded.¹⁵

The space assigned to the Probate Court on the south side of the first floor in the east wing was thoroughly overhauled. A new judge's bench with a marble base was built against the west wall, replacing that which had previously been there, and the old entrance from the corridor was filled. A new door, set next to the partition which separated the courtroom from the clerk's office, was cut into the wall of the corridor. "Old cases and lockers" which had stood against the interior partition were now discarded. (Figure 52)

While the clerk of the Probate Court did not obtain new office furnishings, he did gain far easier access to the records which were stored in the basement. An iron stairway, with a railing made of gas pipe, was created in the southeast corner of his office. Within the basement space, nine new cases, each containing 425 pigeonholes, were added to the seven such storage facilities which had previously existed.¹⁶

The commissioner of public buildings also provided plans and specifications for work in the offices of the sheriff and the clerk of the Circuit Court. Only scattered evidence has been found to indicate the nature or the scope of the changes made in either place. The vestibule at the exterior entrance to the clerk's room on the north side of the east wing was removed, leaving the stone base which is still to be seen. Of far greater consequence, the Circuit Court paid over \$14,000 for "metallic office equipment" on November 21, 1903. Most, if not all, of that is likely to have

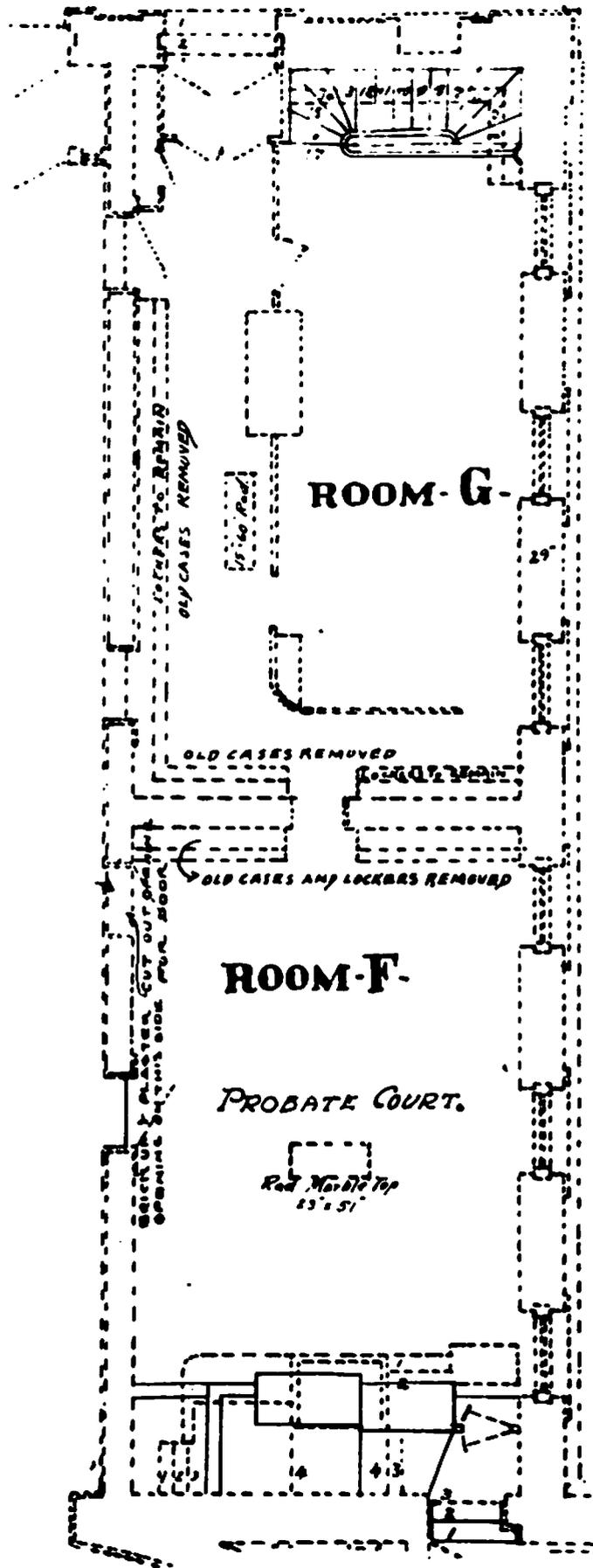
14. General Term, V, 300.

15. Ibid.

16. "First Floor Plan," approved August 8, 1903; "Probate Court," undated blueprint, JNEM.

Figure 52

Plan of the Probate Court, South Side of the East Wing, August 1903. Dotted lines indicate existing features; solid lines show work proposed at the time the plan was drawn. From "First Floor Plan," August 8, 1903, Archives of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial.



ROOM-G

11'6" Red

OLD CASES REMOVED

OLD CASES REMOVED

OLD CASES AND LOCKERS REMOVED

ROOM-F

PROBATE COURT.

Red Marble Top
13' x 51'

SECTION OF PLASTER CUT OUT AND OPENING SET INTO SIDE WALL. BOOR

been used for filing cases which were placed in the east wing basement. The \$9,195.17 expended on the sheriff's office definitely was devoted to improvements made when he moved from the first floor of the east wing to the basement of the north wing. Beyond that, nothing can be ascertained about the work which was accomplished.¹⁷

The impression is left that there was indeed a great deal of activity within the Courthouse. Ten courts held session there at the beginning of 1905 and all but one of them had undergone either complete remodeling or less sweeping change within the previous seventeen months. Circuit Court No. 5, on the west side of the second floor of the north wing, was in fact unique in that its courtroom looked the same at the beginning of 1905 as it had in August 1903. The judge there had to be content with having had repairs made to the cornice of the room in 1904.¹⁸ He would, however, obtain a complete remodeling a decade later.

The jury commissioner, not to be outdone, undertook a do-it-yourself project at the beginning of 1904 in his office on the west side of the first floor of the northern extension from the rotunda. As he described it:

Immediately upon assuming the duties of the office, the Jury Commissioner took steps to have the room renovated and redecorated, which was done, and the room has since presented a very much improved and inviting appearance; tasteful selections of wallpaper, linoleum and new furniture were made, and the old, worn-out articles were given into the custody of the Comptroller; the former and much soiled coating of white paint on the woodwork was replaced by a beautiful cherry mahogany.

In addition to the above improvements the Jury Commissioner has supplied a long-felt and long-deferred want in the office in the purchase of a fire-proof steel cabinet for the protection of the office's Jury Registers and Biennial Canvass Records....The steel cabinet is by far the most important and valuable accession that has ever been made to the fixtures of the office, and its ornate exterior adds materially to the pleasing effect of the new paint and decorations.

17. "Plan, Alterations in the Court House," sheet no. 2, approved January 22, 1904; Mayor's Message...1904, 26; 1905, II, 96; General Term, V, 322.

18. Mayor's Message...1905, II, 96.

The cost of these improvements, which came out of the appropriation for the Jury Commissioner's office, was \$254.88.

The Commissioner spent considerable time personally in selecting the various articles and obtained the lowest prices possible on all the supplies furnished.¹⁹

In short, he did it cheaply but, by his lights, well. The only work that remained to be done--the installation of a new floor and a "handsomely decorated new door in place of the unsightly old one"--was accomplished during 1905.²⁰

The extent of the work carried out in 1903 and 1904 clearly refutes the premise that the failure of the city to complete the re-decoration of the rotunda or the interior halls in those years was a symptom of an over-all inertia. To the contrary, there was in fact at least a limited amount of attention given to the south lunette which depicts DeSoto's discovery of the Mississippi. Charles Ives, a prominent local artist who would also serve as the director of the local art museum, spent three days in retouching that part of Wimar's work, those services being rendered without compensation from the city. That formed a sort of prelude to far more sweeping work which was carried out in 1905, work that must be seen as having been delayed by the pressure of all the other forms of remodeling and change which had been conducted within the building during the preceding years. When finally it became possible to attend to the restoration of the rotunda and to repairs of damage inflicted by what was termed "recent rain water leaking through the roof of the great dome," it cost a total of \$5,397 and brought Edmund Wuerpel onto the scene.²¹ He was a painter of some distinction in his time and a friend of James McNeil Whistler. That noted artist was said to have considered Wuerpel to be "the coming great American landscape painter." What may have been more important in terms of his being hired by men with conservative tastes, he had largely abandoned impressionism a few years earlier.²²

19. Ibid.....1904, 190-191.

20. Ibid.....1906, II, 184.

21. Ibid.....1905, 25; 1906, I, 28; Charles Reymershoffer, "History of the Four Famous Historic Wimar Murals...." Ms at the Missouri Historical Society, 5b and 9.

22. Maurice Godwin, "St. Louis--Art Center?," The Mirror, XIII, no. 21 (July 2, 1903), 7; Elizabeth Rochelle, "Art and Emblems," Ibid., XIII, no. 3 (February 26, 1903), 8.

Wuerpel's account of his activities at the Courthouse in 1905, as published in 1921, was essentially accurate. He had been asked to work on the lunettes which Carl Wimar had painted in 1862, and every bit of evidence concerning them demonstrates that those four scenes were in wretched condition. Wuerpel afforded a proper regard for their artistic integrity:

Where the original work of Wimar was still intact I did not touch it. I filled in the gaps where paint and plaster had scaled off. Where I found that sections of the painted surface had become loose from the wall I carefully lifted them off, spread sizing on their back and put them in their proper places, thus preserving as much of Wimar's work as possible. I did not paint over any of the outlines or colors put on by Wimar. I would have thought it desecration.²³

Prior to his effort, the lunettes had become, according to one of the men who worked in the Courthouse, "much injured by the effects of time." When Wuerpel finished, they were again features of the rotunda which deserved to be singled out for special comment.²⁴

Questions directed to Wuerpel about the changes made in the rotunda during 1905 always focused specifically on the lunettes. Had someone asked if he was working alone, more information might have been recorded about a wide range of other changes made at the time. It would indeed seem that more of Miragoli's work was affected than was that of Wimar. The bands of leaves and cherries on the ribs of the dome, and perhaps the stenciled rectangular panels with borders made up of circles on the rotunda walls, which were revealed during the study conducted in 1955-1956 by National Park Service conservator Walter Nitkiewicz, were products of the work of anonymous craftsmen during 1905. The marbling which Miragoli's firm had done in the dome and on the rotunda walls now disappeared. Wuerpel described his own work fully but his account should not be taken to mean that little change was made in the appearance of the rotunda. He simply neglected to tell the people who interviewed him in 1921 that the restoration of Wimar's lunettes was but a small part of the work done in 1905. All in all, the documentary sources prove that the changes made then were comprehensive.

23. Post-Dispatch, October 12, 1921.

24. Edmund P. Walsh, "Address Before the Circuit Clerks' Convention," July 14, 1908, typescript in the Missouri Historical Society.

The pace of activity slackened considerably in 1906. Plans were made in August for repairs to the ventilators and skylights, (Figure 53) and \$300 were spent for such purposes by April 1907. The courtroom on the east side of the first floor of the north wing was painted and papered but no other redecoration is evident in the records of the time. It was almost as if everyone had paused in anticipation of another round of work in the near future. Drawings were, in fact, prepared for a major undertaking: the construction of a new boiler room. Winter came, however, before anything further had been done to replace the heating system which Thomas Walsh had installed in 1870.²⁵

The last vestiges of the patience of the judges of the Circuit Court vanished when the old system broke down in January 1907.

It appearing to the Court that the Court House is without heating apparatus, capable of operation, and that the construction and installation of a new heating plant will not be completed until considerable time has elapsed, and that the work of the Court in its several divisions cannot in consequence be conducted, and it being the statutory duty of the Sheriff to provide for the heating of the Court within his jurisdiction, it is ordered that the Sheriff of the City of St. Louis be, and he is hereby authorized and directed to rent and procure the temporary installation and connection of a boiler and equipment of sufficient capacity to heat the Court House building, pending the installation of the permanent boiler.²⁶

That brought action. The City of St. Louis not only paid \$2,789.86 for the rental of a "90 horse power portable boiler...including all fixtures and connections, and steam pumps" but also pushed forward on the replacement of the permanent system. The rented boiler would remain in place until June 1907, at which time the new system was at long last complete.²⁷

The most obvious evidence of the work done in 1907--the boiler house which was erected in the courtyard between the south and east wings--has since been demolished. Placement of it there, however, caused other changes to be made which are still visible. The sets of steps which had led to the basement of the south wing and to the west end of the areaway of the east wing were now taken out.

25. "Drawing showing the Roof and Skylights," August 13, 1906, JNEM; Mayor's Message...1907, I, 24, II, 156.

26. General Term, V, 482.

27. Ibid., 492 and 509.

Figure 53

"Drawing Showing the Roof and Skylights of the St. Louis Court House," August 13, 1906. Archives of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial.

In design and in placement, the boiler house was out-of-keeping with the remainder of the building. The tall, iron stack which would eventually rise above its chimney may have been its worst single feature. Demolition in 1941 of the structure created for the heating plant in 1907 was a welcome and appropriate part of the early restoration of the Courthouse under the direction of the National Park Service. The sole physical evidence of the heating system which was installed in 1907 is to be found in the metal cover in the stone floor at the south side of the rotunda. It provided access to the new steam pipes.

The efficiency of the new system would, to be sure, have been of far greater concern to people at the time than would have been any effect on the external appearance of the Courthouse. Five oil-burning stoves were discarded in 1908, indicating that the need for supplementary heating had disappeared. That condition did not prevail for very long. A heater was purchased in February 1912; two more were ordered in 1918; and another two were purchased in 1920. The "Cozy Glow Heater" which was installed in 1924 was notable only for its name. It was but one more sign of continuing, chronic problems with the steam system.²⁸

Completion of the Pierce Building on the northeast corner of Fourth and Chestnut set things in motion for a total revision of the second floor of the south wing during 1908 and 1909. The Court of Appeals and the Law Library both moved to the Pierce Building, the latter leaving the Courthouse in February 1908.²⁹

Even before the spaces were vacant, plans were devised for remodeling required to make them usable by the Circuit Court. By the end of the project, both rooms had been completely transformed. As is indicated in Figures 15 and 16, the Supreme Court, and subsequently the Court of Appeals, had made use of a courtroom on the west side of the floor that was far smaller than those to which the judges of the Circuit Court were accustomed. All of the interior brick walls therefore now had to be demolished, creating a room of a size typical in other parts of the building. Placement of the judge's bench in front of the existing door to the corridor obviated any need for new openings in the wall. The old woodwork was, however, discarded, and the entrance was partially filled with casing in order to make it possible to hang a door of smaller size than that which was removed.

28. Mayor's Message...1908, I, 155; General Term, VI, 202, 532 and 564; VII, 407.

29. "Law Library Association of St. Louis," 4; Mayor's Message... 1909, II, 97-99.

The furnishings of both of the new courtrooms were made of oak and they were far plainer in design than those which had been installed in the spaces which had been remodeled earlier in the twentieth century. The rectangular panels which were attached to the front of the judges' benches were almost without detail. Brackets under their tops were somewhat more elaborate, but still lacked sufficient character to lend any particular distinction. The railings, again supported on heavy, turned balusters, were much like those in the other courtrooms. (Figures 54-56)

The mezzanine in the former Law Library on the east side of the south wing's second floor was necessarily demolished. The judge's bench in this new courtroom was set on the north wall and a new door and casing were placed behind it. That door opened into the office in the transverse hallway which had been created by erecting a partition there in 1887. Seating for the public was provided in the form of benches in this courtroom as well as in that on the west side of the floor. As a finishing touch, chandeliers were hung in both spaces.

A very good impression of the appearance of the room on the east side of the south wing can be gained from a photograph made within it on June 20, 1930. (Figure 57) Apparently because the trial which was then in progress was the last to be conducted within the building, the normal prohibition on such photography was waived. In appearance, the furniture is much what one would expect to find on the basis of the plans which were drawn in 1908.

The corridor that ran between the two newly renovated rooms on the second floor of the south wing had previously been divided by the partition which the Law Library erected. That partition was now taken out and a new divider was constructed closer to the entry from the transverse hall. The new work included sidelights and a transom of Florentine glass, both of which made it possible to install a door of normal dimensions. The space to the south of the partition was assigned to the judge of the court on the west side of the corridor. Two doorways which had led into the room on the east were now located behind the partition and they were filled with brick.³⁰

None of that work within the corridor can be traced in the present fabric of the interior. The walls that formed the corridor have since been removed, and the sole physical evidence that they ever existed is to be found in the four piers which remain at what had been their southern and northern ends.

30. "Court House, Remodeling Portion of South Wing," undated blueprint, JNEM; General Term, V, 616.

Figure 54

Front Elevation, Judge's Bench, Circuit Court No. 6, 1908. Reproduced from "Court House, Remodeling Portion of South Wing," Blueprint in the Archives of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial.

Figure 55

Front and Rear Elevations, Clerk's Desk, Circuit Court No. 6, 1908.

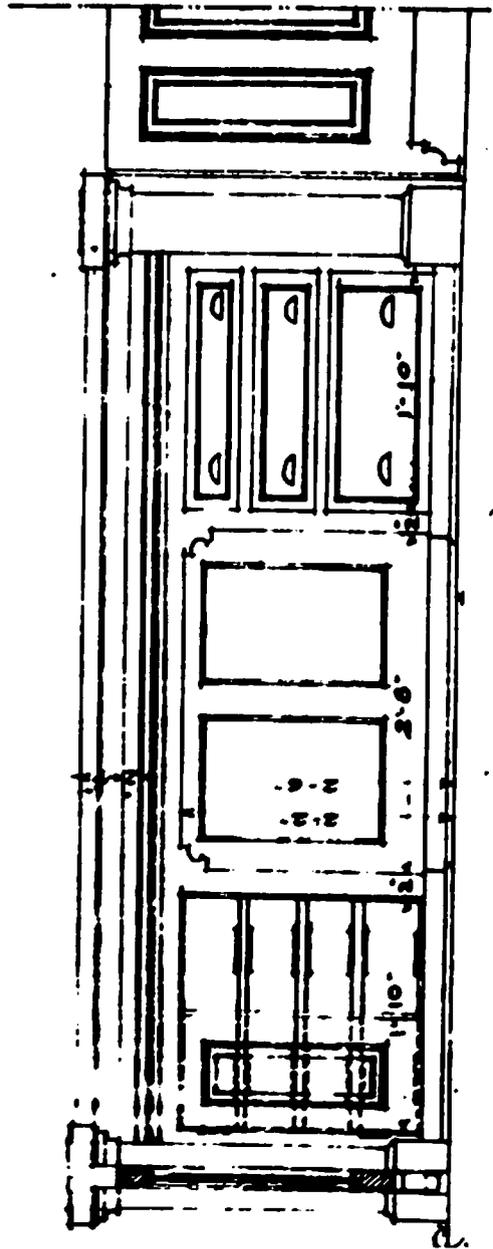
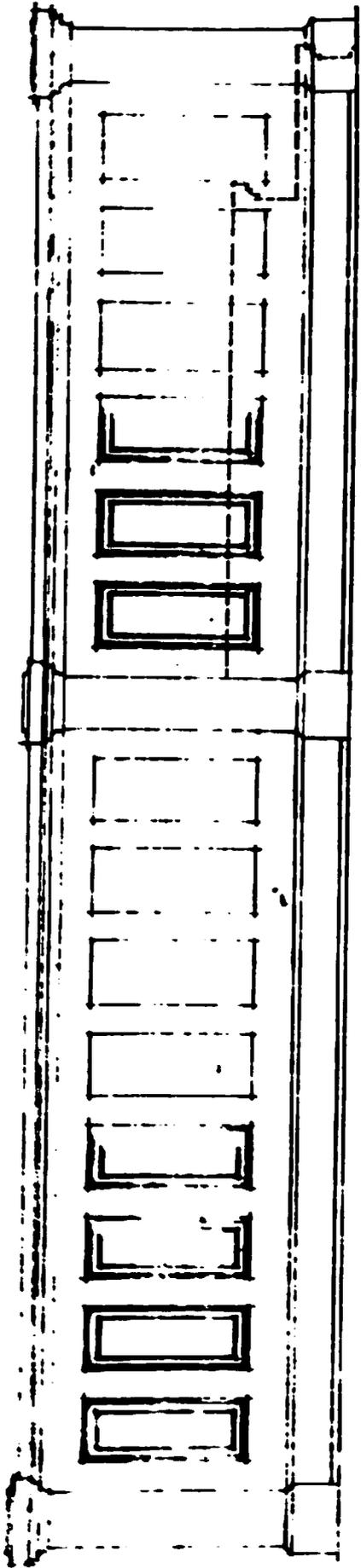


Figure 56

Front and Side Elevations, Filing Case, Circuit Court No. 6, 1908.

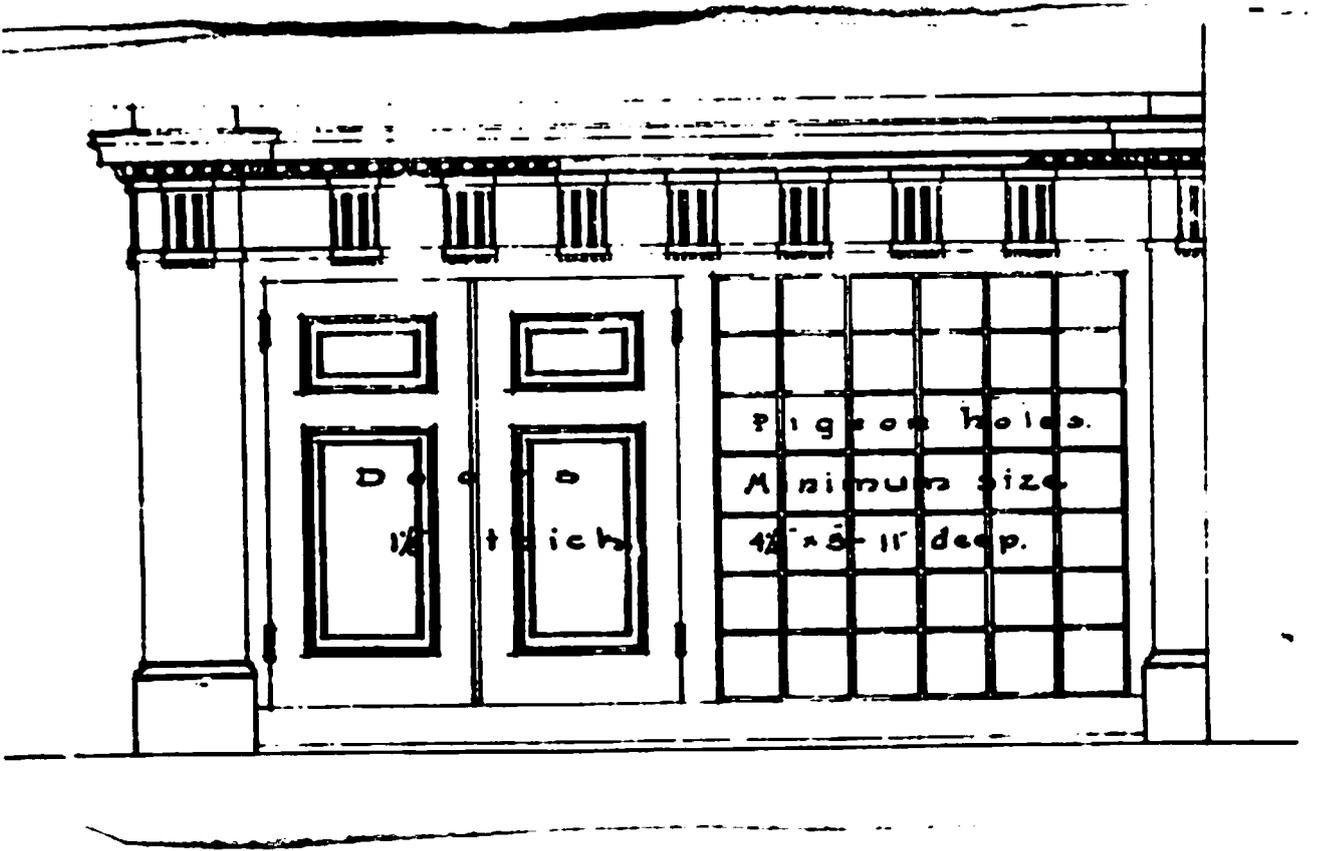
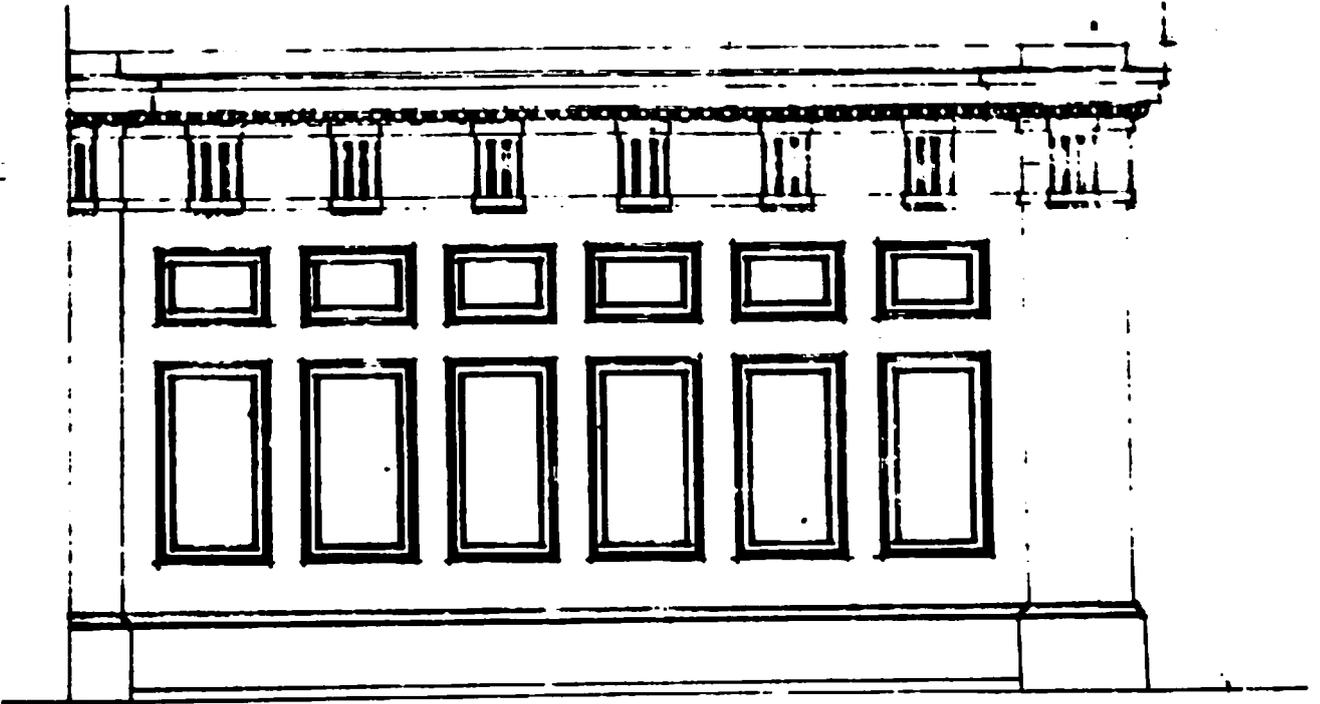
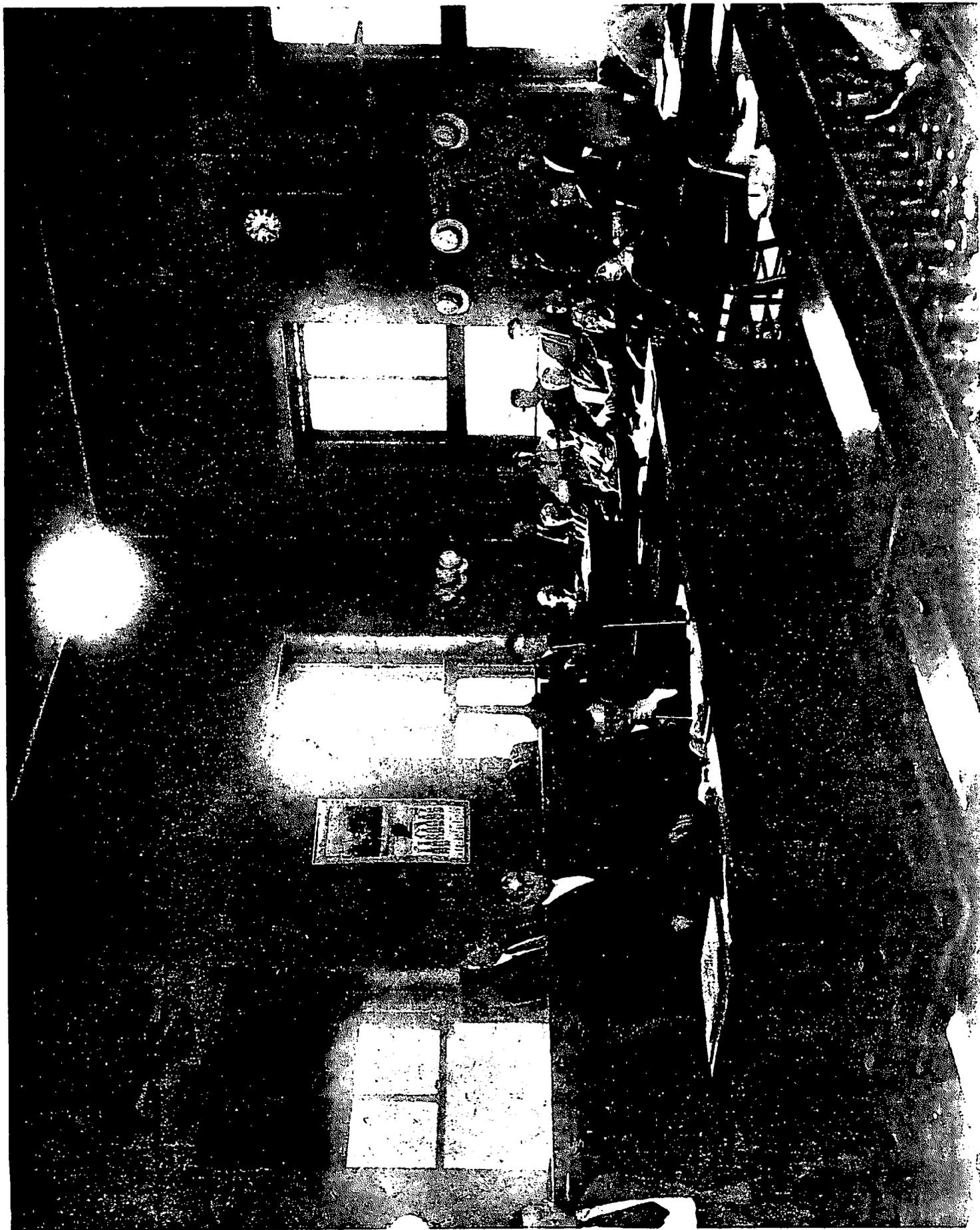


Figure 57

Circuit Court No. 6, June 20, 1930. From the Collection of the Missouri Historical Society.



Preparations for the movement of the Law Library to the Pierce building were begun in 1907, when the city gave its approval to a plan for the construction of a book conveyor which was to be operated between the library's new quarters and the second floor of the north wing. It was meant to be used to provide access to reference material needed by the judges of the Circuit Court, and its outlet at the Courthouse was located in the room on the east side of the corridor which connects the rotunda and the north wing. Authorization to run the conveyor under the street was gained in April 1907 and the system was ready for operation in March 1908. The judges meeting in general term approved the movement of a jury room to free the required area. When a need for more space for the library's extension of service was indicated in 1909, the judges proved willing to allow such an expansion. That led to the removal of a partition within the room, it thereupon regaining its original dimensions. The conveyor, nevertheless, proved to be untrustworthy and a messenger service was instituted in its place a short time later.³¹

Expenses for furniture and repairs in the Probate Court during 1907 came to close to \$1,100 and involved the removal of the existing brick wall which had run across the room on the south side of the first floor of the east wing. Plans drawn at the time indicate the space across the corridor was now to be used by that court's clerk and the room was to be given new wallpaper. Work there was not completed until the following year, as is attested by an expenditure of nearly \$1,000 for a counter and cabinet.

The changes made for the Probate Court were the product of its need for an expansion of the area assigned to it. An appropriation of \$12,000 on March 6, 1909, for furnishing the rooms of the clerk of the Circuit Court was a direct result of that earlier remodeling because it was intended to be used in providing a replacement for the space on the north side of the first floor of the east wing which the clerk had handed over to the Probate Court.³² The long-standing tradition of frequent re-assignment of rooms was perpetuated.

Maintenance of the grounds around the structure was made the responsibility of the Park Department of the City of St. Louis in 1908. Under its auspices, part of the privet hedge that had been

31. General Term, V, 553, 589 and 614; "Law Library Association of St. Louis," 5.

32. Drawing showing proposed alterations of the Probate Court, JNEM; Mayor's Message...1908, I, 26; 1909, I, 29; General Term, V, 589.

planted in 1903 was replaced, the flower beds were improved and a kiosk "containing U.S. Weather indicator" was constructed. The location of the kiosk has not been definitely determined but contemporary illustrations indicate the presence of a small structure at the southwest corner of the square.³³

The cast-iron stairs in the transverse halls of the north and south wings had begun to show signs of wear and tear. New tread plates were attached to them during 1908 as part of the general rehabilitation.³⁴

New streetlights around the Courthouse were installed during 1909. Some of the fixtures had "three light clusters" in which "two of the lamps hang from cross-arms while a third lamp is supported from a bracket above the pole, about five feet higher." There were also "single lampstands" of a similar design but with only one arm. The poles were about eighteen feet high. Fourteen "lamps" were in place by April 1910, a fact that suggests that the plan mentioned in May 1908 to install the new streetlights only along Broadway had been modified.³⁵

As a result of a donation made by an anonymous citizen to the Civic League of St. Louis, the basement of the west wing was completely altered in order to create there a public comfort station in 1910. It was the only such facility then to be found in St. Louis outside of the public parks and, having been "finished throughout with Italian marble," it represented a fairly substantial expense. Use of it exceeded all expectations from the day it first opened, reaching more than 1,200,000 within a single year. The number of people willing to pay a three-cent charge never, however, attained the level that had been anticipated in the beginning. The greatest part of the general public seemed more than willing to accept the less grand accommodations which were offered free of charge, rather than to gain increased privacy by paying the small fee. The comfort station would remain open for the whole of the three remaining decades the City of St. Louis owned the Courthouse.³⁶

33. Annual Report of the Park Department...1909, 8-9.

34. "Plan of North and South Stairs," August 1, 1908, JNEM.

35. Mayor's Message...1910, II, 61; City Ordinance 23599, May 13, 1908.

36. Annual Report of the Park Department...1910, 5 and 17; 1911, 21 and 29.

The windows and exterior doors of the building had reached an advanced age, as well as an advanced stage of deterioration, in 1910. A complaint was lodged in that year and on June 5 a resolution was adopted by the judges of the Circuit Court "that the President of the Board of Public Improvements be notified, calling his attention to the windows and doors of the various rooms and other repairs that same may be attended to during summer vacation and before cold weather sets in."³⁷ That produced a three-part reaction.

Replacement of the four major exterior doors was the first work to be completed. Before the project was started, there were three sets of double-doors at the entrances on Broadway, Fourth and Chestnut: storm doors at the outside; vestibule doors inside; and wooden doors between. The Market street side had only wooden outer doors with vestibule doors behind. Outer storm doors were not practical there because of the lack of a portico.³⁸

By the time of the completion of the work done in 1910, all of those doors and their casings had been removed. In their place were installed four revolving doors which would remain in use until the original treatment--omitting only the storm doors--was recreated by the National Park Service.

A short time after the installation of the new revolving doors, plans were made for replacement of the windows on the first floor of the south wing. The earlier, six-over-six light windows were removed and one-over-one, double-hung windows were installed. The changes made on the interior walls were quite extensive. The jambs which had extended down to the floor were removed, and the spaces beneath the sills were filled with brick in order to make the surfaces flush with the adjacent walls. After new sills were put in place, and the bricks and jambs were covered with plaster, the rooms took on a wholly new appearance.³⁹

The third stage of the interrelated process was essentially a repeat of the second, the same sort of work being done in almost all of the other parts of the building. An exception was, however, made on the north side of the first floors of both the east and west wings, a fact which suggests that the sash there had been replaced at an earlier date and that the original six-over-six light treatment had been duplicated when that was accomplished. At any

³⁷. General Term, VI, 3.

³⁸. "Revolving Doors for Entrances," March 12, 1910, JNEM.

³⁹. "New Window Frames," July 18, 1910, JNEM.

rate, the exclusion of those windows from the project undertaken in 1912 caused them to retain their original appearance.⁴⁰

Completion of the remodeling of the second floor of the south wing in 1909 made it possible to provide an office for the sheriff on the first floor of the north wing. The typical furnishings of a division of the Circuit Court were removed from the room on the west side of that floor, and the old counter which had been used in the basement was reinstalled there. The partitioning which had enclosed the sheriff's private office was also moved to the first floor and was placed in the northwest corner. A section of that partition was removed in order to provide space for a telephone booth, perhaps the first to be found inside the Courthouse. The deputy sheriffs were provided office space within newly created partitioning in the southeast corner.⁴¹

The second floor of the north wing would soon afterward be the subject of a major alteration. Plans for an entirely new ceiling over both of the courtrooms there were drawn in May 1911. The work, completed by the following April, included the removal of all the joists on which the third level flooring had rested. The space formerly taken up by the large rooms on the east and west sides of the third floor was thereby made a part of the second floor. In effect, the third floor of the wing ceased to exist except for the dividing corridor and the area adjacent to the rotunda--that in which jury rooms were located at the time. (Figure 58)

In carrying out the work, curved members were attached to the upper walls to form coves, framed into a horizontal center section, to which were applied metal lath and plaster. The surface was decorated with ornamental plaster ribs which formed a rectangle at the point at which the coved sides ended. A square panel was set in each corner of that rectangle, and the line of the ribs was extended past each panel and down to the cornice. Other such ribs were run from the square panels to the corners of the room, thereby bisecting the space between the extensions of the ribs of the central rectangle.⁴² (Figure 59)

Circuit Court No. 5, as well as No. 3--the occupants of the rooms on the second floor of the north wing until 1930--came as a result to have the highest ceilings in the Courthouse. The former was located on the west side of that floor, the only space which had not

40. "New Window Frames, Sash Etc.," May 29, 1912, JNEM.

41. "Remodeling Circuit Court Room No. 6," August 19, 1909, JNEM.

42. "Alteration Details, Court House," May, 1911, JNEM; Mayor's Message...1912, I, 25.

Figure 58

The framing of the ceilings in the north wing, February 1941.
Above: east side. Below: west side. From the Archives of the
Jefferson National Expansion Memorial.

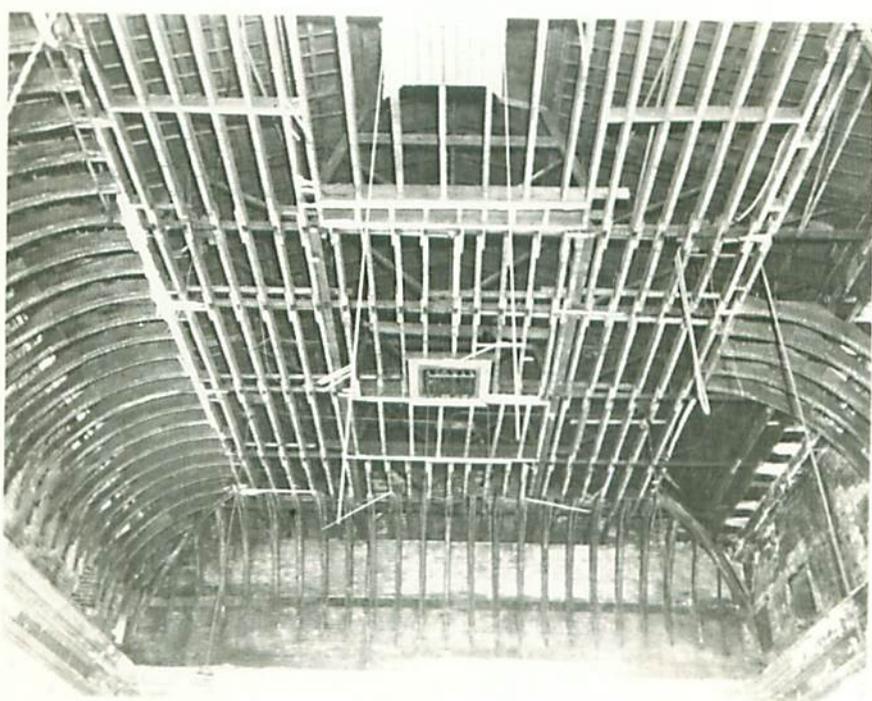
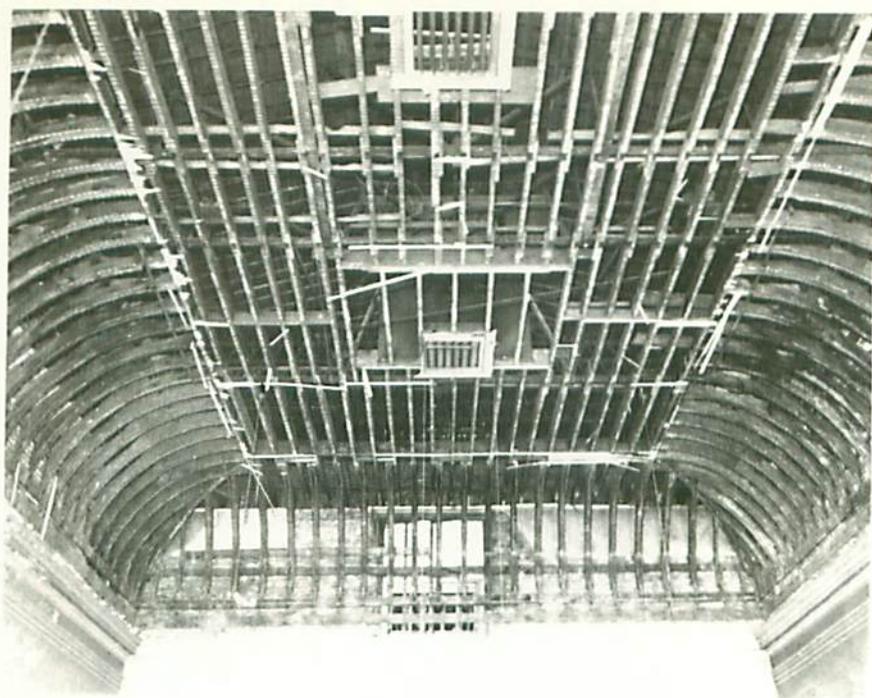
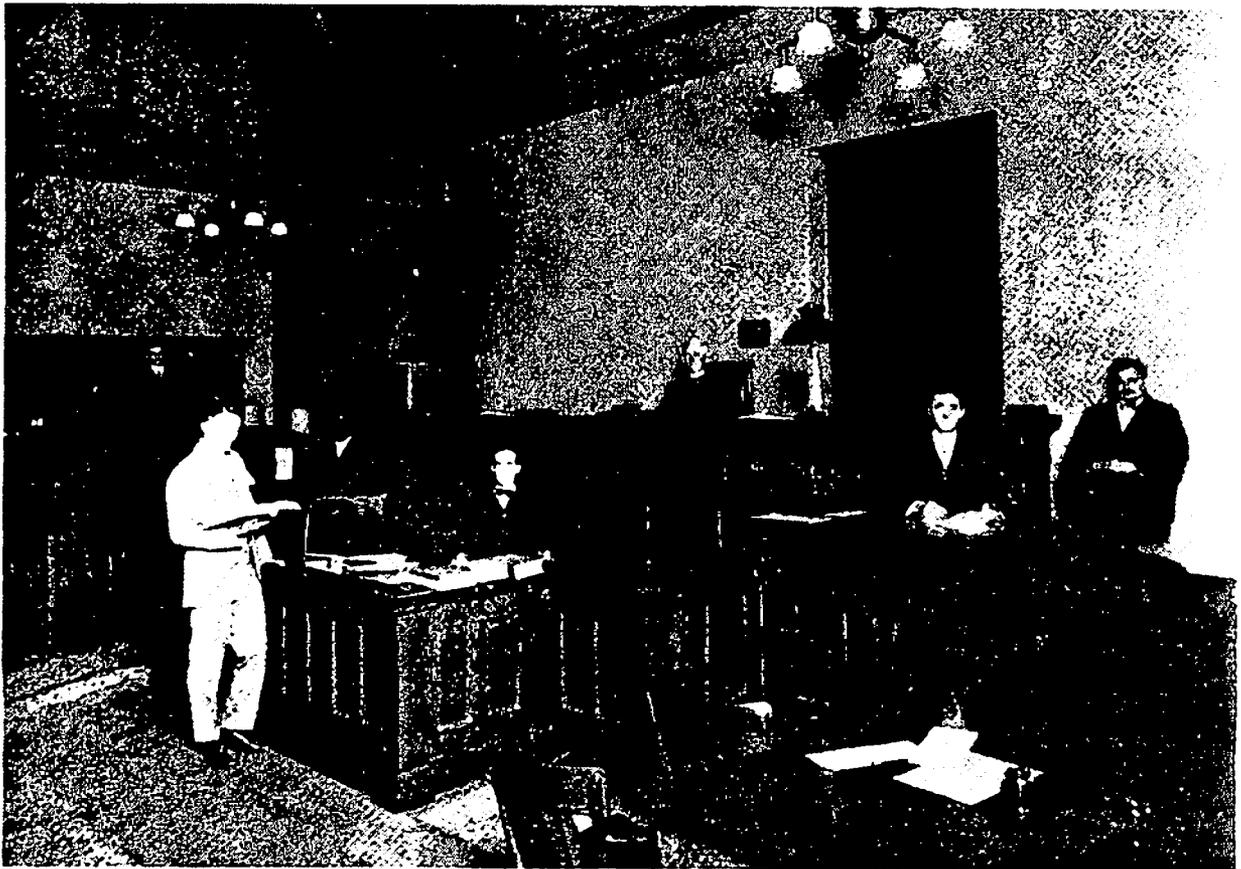


Figure 59

Photograph of Courtroom No. 5 on the West Side of the Second Floor of the North Wing, after 1914. The coved ceiling and the arrangement of the furnishings are indications of both the location of the room and the date of the photograph. From the Archives of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial.



undergone remodeling during the flurry of work in 1903-1905, and it continued in 1911 to hold the furnishings which had been created under Thomas Walsh's direction some forty years earlier.

Judges of the Circuit Court could become quite testy about anything that could be taken as an adverse reflection on the dignity of their office, and the judge in Circuit Court No. 5 may not have been pleased by the fact that no major refurbishment had occurred there for so long a period of time. If so, he did not need to suffer any sense of resentment for much longer. A complete change in the courtroom was to be made in 1914.

New furnishings of oak, very similar in design to those which had been made for Court No. 7 in 1907, were brought into being and the orientation of the room was altered. The old plan had put the bench at the east end of the courtroom and had provided the judge with a partitioned chamber inside the room. Under the new scheme, the bench stood against the south wall. An opening was made in that wall, and a door was installed beneath the cast-iron stair which leads to the third floor. (Figure 59) The room across the transverse hall was assigned to the judge for his new office and the window there, a reminder of the time when the wall had been a part of the exterior, was replaced by a door. To compensate for the fact that the door was narrower than the window had been, wood panels were placed between the jamb and the stone wall giving the work a rather awkward, lopsided appearance. All things considered, the refurbishment of Circuit Court No. 5 did not cause it to take on a very elegant character.⁴³ (Figures 60-62)

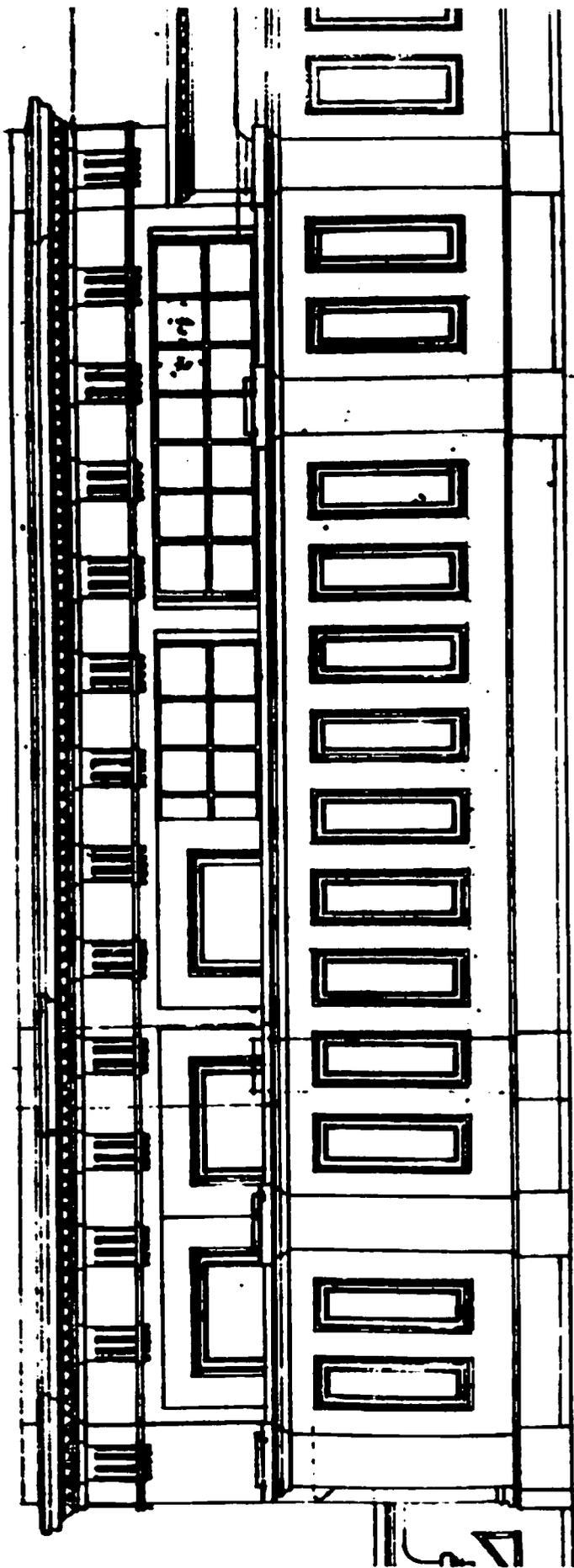
The remodeling in 1908 of the former Law Library on the east side of the second floor of the south wing for the use of Circuit Court No. 6 had not been completely successful. The skylight was found to admit too much light for the needs or comfort of court officials. Its glass was painted in 1909 to provide some relief and the entire skylight was removed during 1911.⁴⁴ Complaints, however, continued to be directed at the room, it being charged that it "has been since its adaptation from other uses to use as a Court room, so lacking in proper acoustics as to make the conduct of public business there difficult and at times impossible because of confusion of noises therein." That caused the installation in October 1912 of felt tile "placed against ceiling and walls in panels," the contractor stipulating that "after felts have been

43. "Courthouse, Remodeling Portion of North Wing, 2nd Floor," March, 1914, JNEM.

44. General Term, V, 615; "Skylight No. 10 Over Court Room No. 6," June 27, 1911, JNEM.

Figure 60

Judge's Bench, Front Elevation, Circuit Court No. 5, 1914. Figures 60, 61 and 62 reproduced from "Court House, Remodeling Portions of North Wing, 2nd Floor," April 27, 1914, in the Archives of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial.



1511

Figure 61

Sheriff's Stand and a Portion of the Railing, Circuit Court No. 5,
1914.

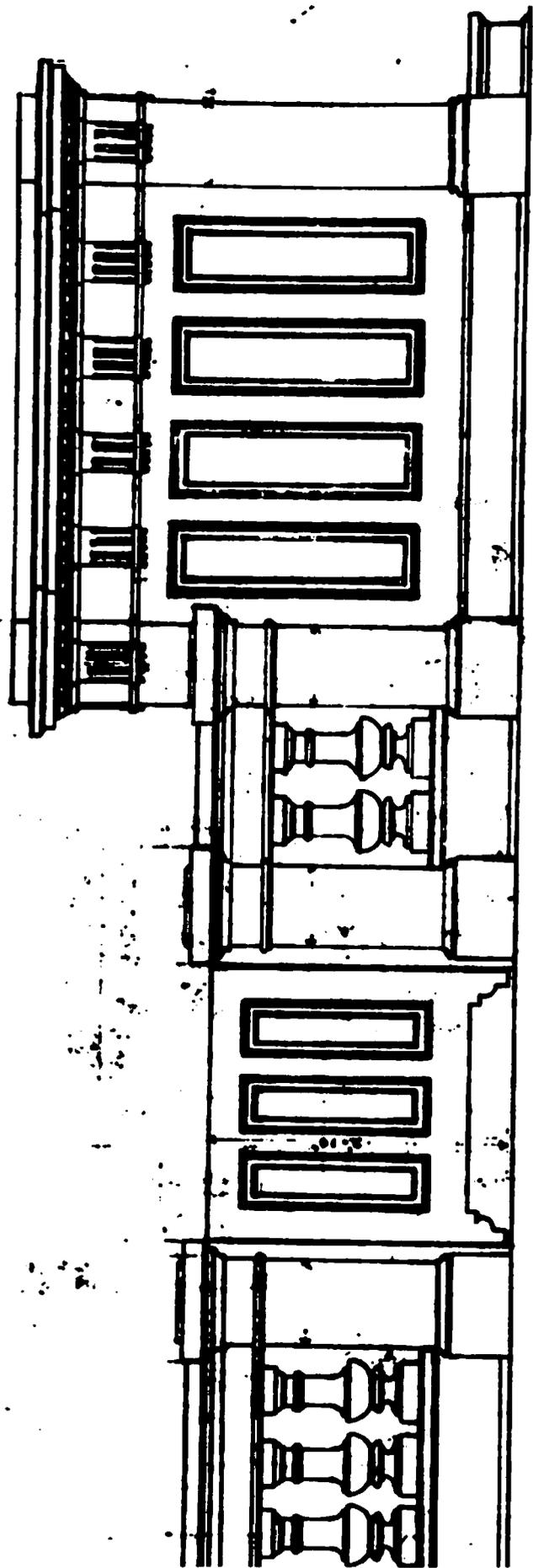
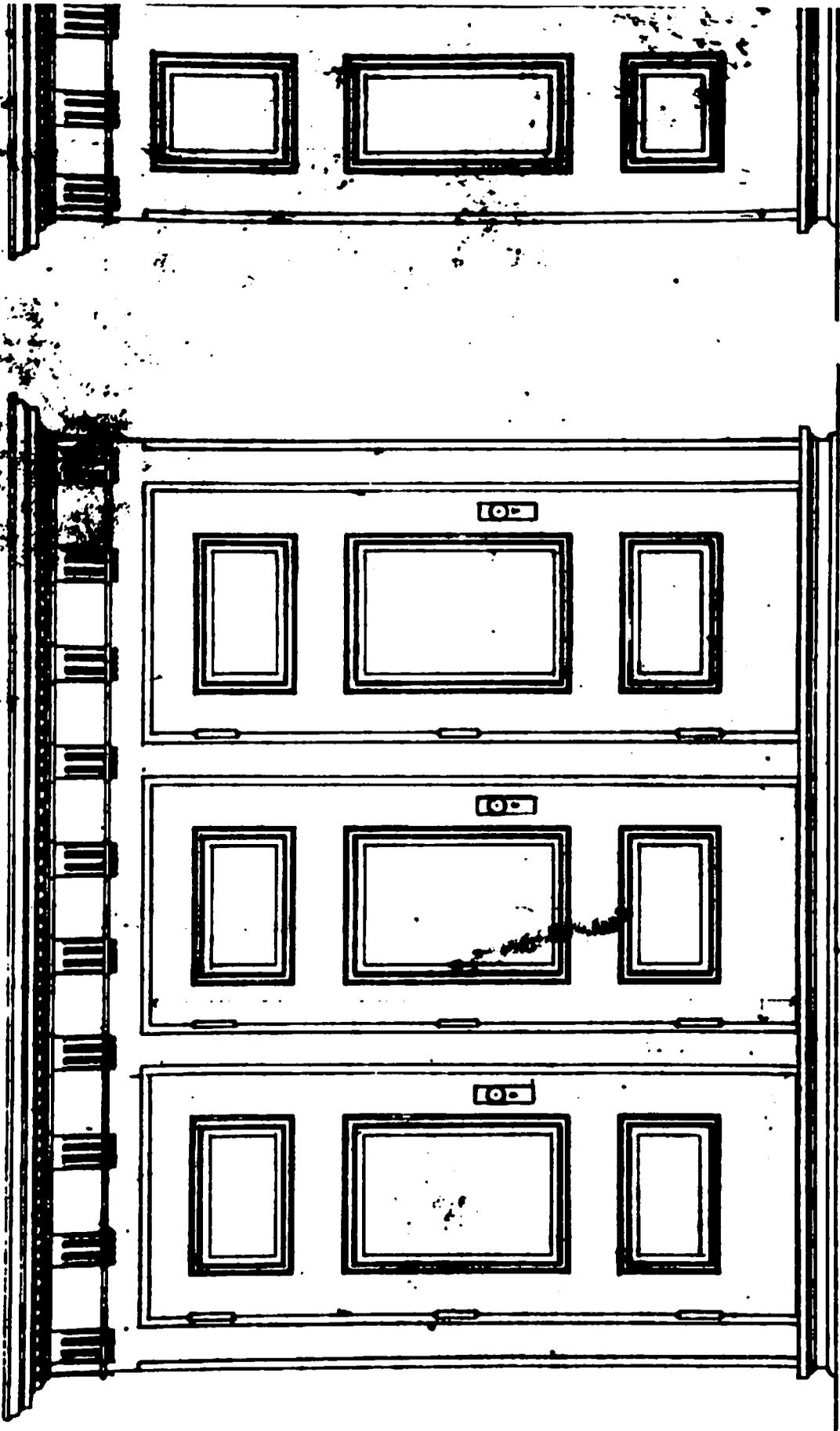


Figure 62

Locker, Side and Front Elevations, Circuit Court No. 5, 1914.



placed, we will cover them with a Decorative Fabric and finish the panels in a manner as near as possible in keeping with the present architectural effect of the interior. We will finish the Decorative Fabric with a stain that will harmonize with the furnishings of the room."⁴⁵

A need for "sanitary plumbing" was mentioned by the judges of the Circuit Court in June 1909, but the records of the period do not indicate what, if anything, was done. It may be that work done in the women's rest room on the first floor of the north wing in 1911 was a part of the response to the need which had been expressed two years earlier.⁴⁶

The western half of the basement in the south wing, probably used for the storage of coal until the boiler house was constructed in 1907, was remodeled in 1911. There had been three openings on each side of the central corridor. Four of those were now filled in, leaving only the northern opening on the east side and the central doorway on the west. An iron door was installed in the latter, sealing the west side of the basement from the dust and grime created by the heating system. A granitoid floor was laid, and new sash, within which iron guards were placed, were installed. The space obviously was being prepared for use in the storage of records.⁴⁷

The initial work done in this part of the basement ignored the fact that access to it was possible only through the boiler room. That would remain true until 1913 when an opening was made in the stone floor at the west side of the transverse hall of the south wing and in the foundation wall below. The metal stairway which is still in place was then installed.⁴⁸

Normal maintenance and minor repairs could be attended to after 1910 by the "House Carpenter" and "House Plumber." They were joined in the following year by a "House Steamfitter." The services of all three must have been shared with other buildings belonging to the city, the combined value of their work generally being less than \$500 for an entire year.⁴⁹

45. General Term, VI, 149.

46. Ibid., V, 610; "Alteration Details," May 13, 1911, JNEM.

47. "Alteration Details," May 13, 1911, JNEM.

48. Drawings for "Iron Stairs to Basement," November 4, 1913, JNEM.

49. See Mayor's Message...1914, II, 10-11.

The privet hedge which had been planted in 1903 did indeed suffer the fate that had originally been feared--it was destroyed by a sleet storm during the winter of 1909-1910. The Park Department, which had assumed the task of caring for the courtyards in the previous summer, replaced it with new plants. The square thereafter came to be treated exactly as if it were a small public park. The flower beds were removed and "many large beds of shrubbery" were created in 1912.⁵⁰ A year later, at the instigation of the Daughters of the American Revolution, a granite boulder with a polished surface was placed on the east side of the Courthouse, commemorating the fact that the old Boonslick Road had started near the spot in the eighteenth century.

Two changes were made in 1911 which affected the lighting of the Courthouse. The completion of work on a power plant located in the basement of City Hall caused a change in the source of supply and a shift to direct current. The people who used the building would, however, be more likely to have noticed the effect of a switch from lamps with carbon filaments to tungsten bulbs. The latter, it was said at the time, provided twenty-five percent more light, and a marked reduction in the number of bulbs used at the building was quickly accomplished. 870 had been counted in 1913; only 751 remained in 1914.⁵¹

An interesting, albeit minor, change in customary practices can be traced in the records for 1913. It would appear that all of the water coolers in the Courthouse had had a metal cup attached for the use of anyone who wished to take a drink. The abandonment of that practice can be seen as early as March 1913 when great quantities of paper cups began to be purchased. From then on, more than fifty thousand were used in a typical year.⁵²

Although the changes made between 1903 and 1915 were very sweeping, and although they greatly altered the appearance of the interior, not all of the work that was envisioned in those years was ever actually completed. A plan of the first floor, drawn in March 1911, shows an intention at that time to cut down the stone in the floors leading to the north and south wings in order to remove the steps at the entry to the transverse halls. Had the work been undertaken in those areas, there would have been gradually inclined ramps in both corridors. The ramps, as well as all of the stone in the rotunda and the corridors of the first floor, would have also been covered with what was called "new sanitary floor."

50. Ibid....1910, I, 244; 1911, II, 11; 1913, 13.

51. Ibid....1912, II, 468; 1915, II, 293.

52. General Term, VI, 170, 351, 360, 368, 382, 391 and 395.

The same plan contains evidence of an earlier proposal to create within the rotunda a stairway to the basement of the west wing. It would have followed the curve of the wall and was to be located to the west of the northern entry to the rotunda. Such a stairway was never actually built, nor were the elevators which are indicated in the blueprint ever brought into being. They were to be placed at the east sides of the transverse halls of both the north and the south wings and each would have taken up a portion of the space behind the partitions across those hallways.⁵³

While the existence of that blueprint demonstrates that not all of the plans devised for alterations and improvements during these twelve years were brought to fruition, the need for a structure as large as the Courthouse was made apparent in 1915 when space had to be found to house two newly created divisions of the Circuit Court. The question most frequently raised at the time was not, however, that of how the old structure could be made to serve modern needs and demands. For more than ten years, the assumption had become increasingly common that a completely new building would have to be erected.

⁵³. "Alteration Details, Court House," March 15, 1911, JNEM.

A QUARTER CENTURY OF DECLINE, 1915-1940

In two articles published in McClure's Magazine--one in October 1902, the other in March 1903--Lincoln Steffens brought national attention to what he called the "financial corruption" of the government of St. Louis. The "boodling aldermen" were found by him to be willing to sell just about anything which was under their control, including street railway franchises and the Union Market. According to Steffens, they were not always successful; one scheme that "failed was to sell the court-house, and this was well under way when it was discovered that the ground on which this public building stands was given to the city on condition that it was to be used for a court-house and nothing else."¹

The information which Steffens brought to light in one sense pre-figured aspects of the history of the Courthouse in the 1930s when an attempt was made by the heirs of Auguste Chouteau and John B.C. Lucas to claim a legal right to the Courthouse Square on the basis of an alleged violation of the restrictions contained in the original gift of the land. In a more immediate sense, however, the journalist had simply unearthed a symptom of a growing attitude toward the building. The premise that it was no longer adequate for the city's current conditions and needs, and that it should consequently be replaced, was in fact adopted explicitly by three distinguished local architects who made up the Public Buildings Commission in 1904. William S. Eames, Albert B. Groves and John Lawrence Mauran agreed that a new building should be constructed and

the courts now occupying the fine old structure on Broadway should be moved into it as this Court House is thoroughly unsuited to modern needs and requirements of comfort and safety and economical administration. The old Court House, with its imposing and dignified exterior is too fine an architectural monument for the city to ignore. It should be thoroughly remodeled inside, fire-proofed and modernized to the fullest extent possible, repaired but not painted on the exterior, and its purpose changed from a Court House to a Hall of Records and Museum of Archives pertaining to the city's history.²

1. Lincoln Steffens, The Shame of the Cities (American Century Series: New York, 1957), 83.
2. Public Buildings Commission, Report to the Honorable Rolla Wells, Mayor of St. Louis (St. Louis, 1904), 10.

The same sort of comments were directed at the Four Courts building, and the commission leaned toward the view that a single structure should be erected to provide space for the whole of the local judicial system. City officials, nevertheless, determined to devote attention and money to only a part of the over-all problem by demolishing the Four Courts and erecting a new building, called the Municipal Courts, on Market Street near Thirteenth. That provided more suitable accommodations for the criminal courts which had been located in the Four Courts. While, on the other hand, it left the civil divisions of the courts in the "fine old structure" which had been deemed "thoroughly unsuited to modern needs" in 1904, the completion of the Municipal Courts building in 1911 offered at least a means by which room in the Courthouse could be found to house two new divisions when they were brought into being in 1915. The courtrooms of the civil divisions would simply take over the space which had been occupied by the jury commissioner and the sheriff.

The jury commissioner was instructed to move to the Municipal Courts in April 1915. The sheriff, now quartered in the room on the west side of the first floor of the north wing, was also told to move at the same time. His former office, which had been converted from a courtroom only six years earlier, was re-transformed into a courtroom for Circuit Court No. 1. That division had held its sessions in the oval court of the east wing, a room which was now assigned to one of the newly created divisions, No. 13, the designation of which was thereupon painted onto the glass transom over the door leading into the room.

The other new division, No. 14, was given the space which had previously been used for meetings of the Circuit Court in General Term. Its location was never mentioned in the documentary records but since all the major spaces are accounted for at the time, it must have been located in the northern or southern extension.³

The plans for the work done within the two new courtrooms have not been preserved, but their general appearance can be surmised. The marked similarity of all work done within courtrooms during the earlier years of the twentieth century must have also been evident in each of the new courts. That is, their furnishings would have reflected the generally plain character of the rooms used by Circuit Courts Nos. 5 and 7.

3. General Term, VI, 249-250 and 259; Mayor's Message...1915, II, 644. The room used for sessions of the general term was of sufficient importance to require the Board of Public Improvements to prepare specifications for its painting in 1909. See Mayor's Message...1910, II, 8.

The age of the Courthouse had nothing whatever to do with a problem that caused a formal protest to be delivered to the city's Complaint Board on April 7, 1915. Thomas C. Hennings, judge of Circuit Court No. 3, went before the board to describe "the filthy condition of the Court House." That brought prompt and seemingly adequate action, the Complaint Board replying that

This matter was taken up with James N. McKelvey, Building Commissioner, and the building was put in the best shape possible under the circumstances, and to the satisfaction of the Judges of the Circuit Court.⁴

Their sense of satisfaction proved to be short-lived. The supervision of cleaning and repairs was delegated to the judges' own building committee, and that body was asked in February 1917 to confer with the mayor and the Board of Estimate and Apportionment --the agency that passed upon the city's annual budget--"for the purpose of having the Court House improved and renovated." If any such conference did take place, it proved futile for the judges found it necessary to resolve on December 3rd that "the Building Commissioner be notified to clean the interior of the Court House before the Christmas Holidays and upon failure to do so the same will be ordered by the General Term of this Court at the cost of the City of St. Louis."⁵

Conditions within the actual courtrooms, where cleaning was done by janitors employed by the Circuit Court, were apparently quite a bit better. More than \$1,000 were spent in 1919 for linoleum in Court No. 4, indicating that the marble floor of the oval room in the west wing was hidden from sight at that time. Almost as much linoleum was laid in Court No. 9, at the east side of the first floor of the south wing. At about the same time, a great deal of carpet--in one instance specifically called "Wilton Velvet"--was purchased for the use of the Circuit Court.⁶

The chambers used by the judges still provided for their comfort. A rocker was bought in 1915; four couches were obtained in 1916; and three more of the latter were acquired in the following year. Purchases of that nature continued to be made throughout the ensuing decade, even including a "davenport and cover" in 1927.

4. Mayor's Message...1916, 239.

5. General Term, VI, 348, 374 and 389.

6. Ibid., 457, 548, 554-555 and 558.

Roll-top desks with glass covers appear to have been in general use.⁷ The private offices and chambers were, in short, well-maintained.

Far greater costs were incurred in an effort to provide proper storage facilities for the ever-growing mass of official records. The Probate Court expended more than \$3,000 for filing cases in 1915, and another \$1,000 in 1919. Steel cases and "book racks for the basement" cost the Circuit Court more than \$2,300 in 1917, and nearly \$1,600 were paid in 1920 for "steel filing cases."⁸

In that period of time, the attitude of the judges toward the future of the Courthouse shifted appreciably. A plan proposed by the Bar Association for the "improvement of part of the Court House Block for additional Court purposes" was referred to a special committee on June 5, 1916, but no more information about the matter was entered into the record. The idea of constructing an addition to the building, to be located in the space between the north and west wings, was examined in 1919 but the funds for it proved to be unavailable. So far as the judges were concerned, it probably would not have been considered sufficient anyway. They had already decided on December 14, 1918, that what they really needed and wanted was a brand new courthouse.⁹ The sole outstanding questions were those of how, when and where it would be built.

When balanced against the economic realities of the time, the cost of properly maintaining the Courthouse had indeed begun to seem excessive. A request for an appropriation of \$11,000 for the coming year was pared by the Board of Estimate and Apportionment to \$2,050 in 1919.¹⁰ In fact, if there is anything surprising about the history of the Courthouse, it is that enough money was found to permit the painting of the exterior and the interior in 1921. City officials would find that a mixed blessing because it brought James Lyons to the building.

Bids for the work must have been solicited before April 1921 because the estimated cost as shown in the budget for the forthcoming fiscal year was fixed at \$12,618. Much of the interior painting would be accomplished without occasioning any comment, and the report which appeared in the Post-Dispatch on October 8, 1921, was

7. Ibid., 279, 281, 292, 370 and 385; VII, 199 and 356.

8. Mayor's Message...1916, 30; 1920, 12; General Term, VI, 393 and 556.

9. General Term, VI, 322, 399, 452 and 471.

10. Board of Estimate...1919-1920, 36.

not the least bit critical. It noted that Lyons was mystified by the portraits in the upper dome, but that he could identify George Washington and Ulysses Grant. He thought that another might be of Abraham Lincoln and had to ask for help from the city's director of public safety, James McKelvey, before determining what should be done with the remaining portrait. He was, according to the report, told to put in a likeness of Theodore Roosevelt.¹¹

Lyons had already, clearly under instructions from local officials, completed his work on the north lunette. That depiction of the attack on St. Louis during the American Revolution was described as the "massacre" and the Post-Dispatch stated simply, if cryptically, that "those who viewed the completed work said it was a highly successful massacre." McKelvey later denied that he had ordered the inclusion of Roosevelt among the people to be depicted in the upper dome, but he did not suggest any lack of responsibility for the painting done over Wimar's scene in the lunette.¹²

The initial report set off a storm that came to involve all manner of individuals and groups. Virtually everyone was in agreement on the question of the propriety or the value of the work which Lyons had done on the north lunette--it was objectionable when judged on any standard. What is, however, equally intriguing is that the need to replace one or more of the portraits in the upper dome was tacitly accepted by the Missouri Historical Society, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the St. Louis Historical Society and the Patriotic Societies Committee of St. Louis. All were critical not of the decision to paint in new figures; they said instead that Theodore Roosevelt should not be included. Other figures associated with the early history of the area received their preference. No one was reported at the time to have expressed any awareness that the work which was central to this part of the entire controversy was by Ettore Miragoli. In fact, no comments at all were published about the origin of the portraits. Obliteration of at least one, and perhaps two, was found acceptable by obviously well-intentioned organizations.¹³

The Municipal Art Commission now entered the lists. It was not reported to have taken any stand on the subject of the portraits in the upper dome but it delivered the most bitter criticism of all at the work which had been done on the north lunette. Wimar's work now began to be described as terribly important, and a rapid shift

11. Ibid....1921-1922, 27; Post-Dispatch, October 8, 1921.

12. Post-Dispatch, October 13, 1921.

13. Ibid.

in expressed attitude can be seen in the reports which appeared in the local press. On October 12, readers were told that

Aided only by an old newspaper print of the painting, Lyons did this [the north lunette] over in his own style. It is now a vivid, brilliant picture with dominant notes of crimson and vermilion--a rich red massacre, not bad in general effect, but differing greatly from the general style of Wimar, who favored colors which were warm, but not gaudy.¹⁴

Only three days later, the same newspaper was totally aghast:

Will Mayor Kiel permit the vandal work that is being done in the Courthouse to continue, as McKelvey says it will, because the City has a contract with a firm of house painters? Mayor Kiel should take the matter in hand and call upon the Municipal Art Commission or appoint a competent committee to see if it is possible to restore the Wimar paintings from destruction.¹⁵

After a lapse of but three days, the painting that had been deemed "not bad" was being compared to the efforts of a vandal!

The actions of both McKelvey and Lyons must be viewed in that historical context. The question which McKelvey posed on October 17--"who was this Wimar?"--was neither rhetorical nor disingenuous. He simply doubted that the lunettes were worth all the furor that had arisen.¹⁶

The effort waged by the Municipal Art Commission must on the other hand be considered as a praiseworthy attempt to, in the first place, prevent any further overpainting by Lyons of the other lunettes and, in the second place, to bring about the proper restoration of the work that he had already covered. The members of the commission were partially successful in that Lyons was turned to work for which he was better qualified. Any hope that the effect of what he had already done could be removed, however, ran counter to the same need for municipal frugality that had in the past bedeviled the judges of the Circuit Court.

14. Ibid., October 12, 1921.

15. Ibid., October 15, 1921.

16. Ibid., October 17, 1921.

Offers of expert assistance in October 1921 elicited no response from local officials and the entire issue of what would indeed be done remained unresolved until the following February. By that time, the director of the City Art Museum had reached the conclusion that \$4,000-\$5,000 would be needed for the proper restoration of all four lunettes. The chairman of the Municipal Art Commission, on the other hand, hoped that \$10,000 would be made available for redecorating the "whole interior of the dome....Details such as the restoration of the present (Wimar) frescoes, use of gold leaf, etc., should be left entirely to the judgment of the artists."¹⁷

The statements of the two men are of great interest. Both agreed that the condition of the lunettes was such that restoration was necessary. Lyons was criticized for the quality of the work which he had done but local experts were united in the belief that Wimar's work needed attention. Furthermore, the Municipal Art Commission had now taken the position that the whole of the rotunda should be the subject of the restoration, and not simply the lunettes. Having already spent more than \$6,000 on painting at the Courthouse, the City of St. Louis, perhaps understandably, balked at expending another \$10,000. The mayor, caught up in a controversy that he surely would have liked to avoid, expressed concern over so large an amount being spent to beautify the interior of a single building when financial conditions had forced the city to lay off employees during the previous winter.¹⁸ His position on the question ultimately had to prevail and nothing further was done at the time. Lyons' repainting of the north lunette, and the signature he placed there, would be visible for decades.

One of McKelvey's comments in October 1921 touched on other work done at the time which, he believed, played a role in the development of hostility to the painting which Lyons had done. McKelvey noted, with regard to the criticism of the gaudiness of the work, that "some new, large lights were responsible for the brightness."¹⁹ Records of the period show that the electric bulbs then in use were of 60, 100 and 300 watts. There is no way to determine what the wattage was of those used in any specific place, but photographs made for the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1934 show a total of eighty bare bulbs, in flush-mounted fixtures, within the rotunda. The soffits beneath the fourth and fifth level galleries each had twelve, and sixteen were in evidence on the ribs of the projections beneath the State seals and on the ribs of the upper and lower domes. What is more to the point, two bulbs were mounted

17. Ibid., February 9, 1922.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid., October 13, 1921.

on the soffits above each of the lunettes. Even if those were of only sixty watts, the murals would have suddenly become far more visible. If they were of a higher wattage, the effect would indeed have been startling. That change in the lighting system provides no reason to question the validity of the criticism directed toward Lyons. It is, however, something that must be viewed as a factor in the events of 1921.²⁰

Hidden within the reports of the dispute at the time is a single observation that offers a broader perspective on the work which was done in the rotunda. Lyons, on the morning of October 14, "was painting a stencil design on the main floor corridor of the courthouse,"²¹ and that comment completes the explanation of the results of the study of the interior painting which was conducted by the National Park Service. The earliest layer of work found on the ribs of the dome, consisting of a design incorporating stars, was the original work of Becker. The second layer, made up of cherries and leaves, dated from 1905. The most recent work--the stenciling--was done by Lyons in 1921. Once again, so much attention has been given to one facet of the repainting of the rotunda--the work done on Wimar's historical murals--that the question of whether it was but a part of a great deal of redecoration has been ignored. The restoration of the lunettes by Edmund Wuerpel in 1905 was far from the whole of the change made in that year. In similar fashion, Lyons did greatly alter the north lunette but that was not all he did. To the contrary, he was responsible for a sweeping alteration in the appearance of the interior. When it came to stenciling, however, he was on familiar grounds and no one at the time found reason to comment on the changes he effected.

Day-to-day events continued at the Courthouse during the course of the dispute and, with no particular attention being given to the fact, the sheriff was allowed to return to the building, taking space in the basement of the north wing. That would be of little moment were it not for the decision of the Circuit Court in 1922 to spend nearly \$600 to have a stairway constructed between the sheriff's office and the first floor.²² That brought into being the stair to the basement of the north wing which continues in use.

20. General Term, VI, 575; photographs by Alexander Piaget, April 1934, JNEM.

21. Post-Dispatch, October 14, 1921.

22. General Term, VII, 7.

Having caused a corner of Court No. 2 to be carved out for that stair, the judges decided to take away the southeast corners of the rooms on both floors of the west side of the north wing in order to install two elevators. The idea of having such conveniences made available at the Courthouse had been advanced at least a decade earlier with no result. Now, however, the place for them was decided upon. Of far greater significance, an allocation of funds was requested on April 3, 1922, and an appropriation of \$9,300 was subsequently made. Less than a year later, the appropriation was transferred back to the municipal treasury.²³ Between those two events a most important event had occurred--the vote on a series of bond issues.

St. Louisans were given, on February 9, 1923, the opportunity to cast their ballots on twenty-one propositions which called for a total expenditure of \$75,000,000. Four millions of that were to be used for the acquisition of a building site and for the subsequent erection on it of a new courthouse. The voters proved as eager to provide a modern building for the Circuit Court as the judges had become to obtain such a facility. The proposition was approved by a vote of 67,578 to 23,019.²⁴

The site for the new building, and even the inscription which should be carved on the walls by its entries, would occupy a great deal of attention in subsequent years. But the salient point was that the City of St. Louis would soon have no real use for the Courthouse. Coupled with the inability of the municipality to find the funds necessary to properly maintain the structure in previous years, that fact spelled near disaster.

Obvious problems, such as a leak in the ceiling of the chambers of the judge in Circuit Court No. 4, located in the west wing, would continue to receive attention. Anything that would entail a substantial appropriation, however, had to be forgotten. In that vein, the Board of Estimate and Apportionment again wielded its scalpel on the request for an appropriation of \$20,000 for "special purposes" at the Courthouse for fiscal year 1923-1924. Aware that the passage of the bond issue would bring a new courthouse into being in the near future, the board recommended that no appropriation be made.²⁵

23. Ibid., 21, 42, 43 and 76; "Annual Report of the Department of Public Safety...1922-1923."

24. Transcript of Proceedings, \$75,372,000 City of St. Louis Public Buildings and Improvements Bonds, 1923, 82-85.

25. Board of Estimate...1923-1924, 56; General Term, VII, 67.

The judges who held court within the building were also completely convinced that their best interests would be served by maintaining constant pressure on local officials to get the new construction underway. Their characterization of the old structure in November 1924 took on a tone of complete hopelessness about its future: "the present Court House, with its poorly ventilated, ill-accomodating and noisy quarters, musty and antiquated rooms and conveniences, having long ago outlived its usefulness, and being wholly inadequate to serve the needs of the courts in a great city like the City of St. Louis" should be abandoned at as early a date as possible.²⁶

The reference to noise in that dreary assessment reflected the growing problem created by vehicular traffic on the surrounding streets. To cope with the effect that had inside the courtrooms, the judges on October 1, 1923, had asked that "Quiet Zone" signs be posted at each of the four corners of the block. Anything that cost a fair amount of money, anything that could possibly be done without, was more or less forgotten. On the same day that they made the request for the signs at the corners, the judges authorized the purchase of "small silk desk flags and holders," apparently as replacements for full-sized flags in the courtrooms.²⁷ If that is indeed the meaning of the purchase, it was wholly in keeping with the cost-cutting trend at the time.

Ground-breaking ceremonies for the Civil Courts Building at Tucker Boulevard and Market were held in 1926. The structure would not be ready for occupancy for another four years, but the record of work at the Old Courthouse in the interval is virtually barren. Salaries of the janitors came to be the only sizable item in each year's budget, the city continuing to view major maintenance or repair programs as poor investments. A request for an appropriation of \$8,300 to paint the exterior during 1930 met the usual fate, the Board of Estimate and Apportionment recommending that no money be spent.²⁸ The courts would, after all, be leaving the building in but a few months.

One of the decisions made by the judges meeting in general term completed a kind of circle in the history of the rotunda. On June 3, 1929, they granted permission to the St. Louis Art League to stage an exhibition of the work of its members.²⁹ For the first

26. General Term, VII, 193.

27. Ibid., 98.

28. Ibid., 288; Synopsis of Expenditures...1930-1931, 30.

29. General Term, VII, 423.

time in seventy-five years, paintings would be brought into the rotunda.

Chester Harding's portrait of William Clark was, until 1929, the only painting that is known to have been displayed in the rotunda. It was described as having been stood, rather than hung, on the third level gallery, overlooking the speaker's rostrum, in 1848. The transfer of it to the Mercantile Library Association in 1854 had marked the end of any displays of works of art, other than the murals and frescoes, in the public areas of the Courthouse. There had, to be sure, been other portraits hung on the walls within at least two of the rooms. The common council of the City of St. Louis accepted portraits of two former mayors, William Carr Lane and Peter S. Camden, in 1861 and 1871, and a portrait of Erastus Wells in 1869. Those, probably along with other likenesses of early city officials, were hung in the council chambers on the west side of the second floor in the north wing. At least one portrait, of Edward Bates, was displayed on the walls of the Law Library during its occupancy of the east room on the second floor of the south wing.³⁰

The Art League's exhibit was still in place on June 21, 1930, the date at which, with fitting ceremonies in the rotunda, the Circuit and Probate Courts moved to the new Civil Courts Building. Shortly before that day, yet another division of the Circuit Court had been created but provision of a courtroom for it had been accomplished in make-shift fashion.³¹ With the abandonment of the old building so near at hand, there was no real need or desire to do anything more.

Expenditures for repairs had been kept at minimal levels for quite some time. They now dropped even further: to \$85 in 1931-1932; and \$48 in 1933-1934. An increase, bringing the total to all of \$149, occurred in 1934-1935. Nothing at all--not a single dollar--was expended in the five years that followed.³²

From the city's point of view, the Old Courthouse had become nothing more than an extravagance. For official purposes, the local government needed only enough space on the first floors of the

30. Court Records, VIII, 4; St. Louis Weekly Reveille, October 15, 1848; Daily Missouri Republican, December 4, 1861; Daily Democrat, February 13, 1869; City Ordinance 7713, June 21, 1871; Bay, Bench and Bar of Missouri, 136.

31. General Term, VII, 466 and 478.

32. See "Annual Report of the Department of Public Safety" for the years indicated.

east and north wings to provide for the justices of the peace and their constables in the Fifth District. The balance of the space was useless, and it was turned over to such private agencies as the Board of Religious Organizations, the St. Louis Art League and the St. Louis Museum of Science and Industry. Even so, three rooms, including the oval court in the west wing, were not occupied in 1937.³³

For those St. Louisans who still thought that the Old Courthouse was worthy of preservation, the programs instituted by the federal government to combat the effects of the Great Depression appeared to be the only real source of hope. The local chapter of the American Institute of Architects appointed a committee in June 1933 to consider the future uses which might be made of the building. That committee, including one of the major figures in the restoration which would later be instituted--John A. Bryan--reported in September that a physical survey of the Courthouse indicated the modest sum of \$50,000 would be sufficient to attend to urgently needed repairs. They expressed particular concern about the condition of the electrical wiring, finding that there was a real fire hazard present.

Bryan's account of the work of the committee suggested that "it was thought that this would be a worth-while program for a W.P.A. project" but "those who were in charge of the W.P.A. program for this State did nothing about improving the old Courthouse."³⁴ There must, however, have been a gap of nearly two years between the time of the committee's original examination and the application for financial assistance because the Works Progress Administration, later to be called the Works Projects Administration, was not created until 1935.

The electrical system which had caused the committee to be concerned would later be described as the source of the fire which broke out early in the afternoon of May 19, 1936. That may be a correct conclusion about the reason for the blaze, but accounts published at the time all agreed that it had originated in rubbish which had accumulated on the third floor "at the angle between the west and north wings." The fire took a little more than an hour to extinguish and the initial reports suggested that very little damage had been done. The director of public safety, George W.

33. Gould's Directory of the City of St. Louis, 1931; John A. Bryan, "An Architectural Sketch of the Old Courthouse," (1937), 8-10.

34. Bryan, "Rotunda," 52-53.

Chadsey, believed that about \$3,500 would be required for repairs and he indicated that Wimar's murals had not been affected.³⁵

Chadsey's appraisal of the situation in the oval courtroom of the west wing may well have been warranted: Had the repairs been ordered immediately, the amount of destruction which finally occurred could very well have been reduced. That was the substance of a statement which appeared in January 1937:

Fire damaged the roof last May, and the roof was not made water tight until six months later, with the result [that] rain caused plastering to chip off. The water also splotted murals in the dome. Charred wood dating from the fire still remains in the upper reaches of the structure.³⁶

Inability, or unwillingness, to act promptly was, it would seem, as much a cause of subsequent problems in the restoration of the building as was the fire itself.

Paradoxically, the city at the same time seems to have had a heightened sense of appreciation of the value of the Old Courthouse. Plans for repairs and general rehabilitation were made, and the estimated cost of carrying out the work was fixed at \$200,000.³⁷ The inclusion of the building within the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial was already under discussion at the time, and that may have caused the study to be made. Be that as it may, the matter was dropped by the city. Repairs required to halt the leakage of water through a ventilator in the east wing were, however, completed less than a month after the need for them was brought to the city's attention in December 1937.³⁸

The condition of the grounds was never allowed to deteriorate to an extent that matched that of the building. Annual expenditures by the Department of Parks from 1923 to 1940 ranged between \$828

35. See accounts published in the Globe-Democrat, Post-Dispatch and Star and Times, May 19 and 20, 1936.

36. Globe-Democrat, January 8, 1937.

37. Engineering News Record, January 21, 1937, typescript at JNEM.

38. G. V. Davis to John L. Nagle, December 22, 1937, January 13, 1938, Documents Relating to the Preservation, Restoration and Alteration of the St. Louis Courthouse, JNEM.

and \$1,512.50, and they were slightly in excess of \$1,000 in virtually all of those years.³⁹ The exterior of the building might have been allowed to become quite a bit shabbier, but the lawns and shrubbery of the grounds were given proper attention.

As practical men confronted with the normal financial burdens of municipal government, local officials had to view appropriations for the rehabilitation of the Old Courthouse as a matter of ever-dwindling concern. It had become increasingly likely that the property would be transferred to the federal government, and that would also shift responsibility for finding sufficient money to effect the restoration of the structure.

This was not the first occasion on which some consideration was given to the subject of federal ownership. As one of the symptoms of the local drive to have St. Louis made the nation's capital, a proposal was made in 1871 that the Courthouse be sold to the United States. The county commissioners were unanimous in their opposition and the entire scheme came to nothing.⁴⁰

Sale of the building was again considered in 1925, leading Mayor Victor J. Miller to ask for an opinion from the city counselor on the validity of the city's title. Charges had been made during the bond issue campaign in 1923 that the movement of the courts to another site would constitute a breach of the terms of the donation of the land by Auguste Chouteau and John B. C. Lucas in 1823. The mayor was advised that research had been done into the question during 1923 and that it had been found that the City of St. Louis held an "indefeasible title."⁴¹

Miller was also told that the city counselor considered it "inadvisable to file a suit to quiet title." That was politic advice at the moment, but the issue would soon be carried to the courts anyway. Heirs of Chouteau and Lucas, basing their claim on the fact that the property was not being used for the purposes stipulated in the deed which St. Louis County had received, instituted a suit against the city. The case wended its way up to the State Supreme Court which, in December 1932, ruled against the plaintiffs. The

39. See Annual Report of the Department of Parks for the years indicated.

40. Court Records, XVII, 221.

41. Victor J. Miller to Oliver Senti, June 19, 1925; Memorandum to Miller, June 23, 1925, Misc. Legal Documents, JNEM.

city did indeed hold a valid title even if the building was no longer the center for the local courts.⁴²

Eight years later, the title was again closely examined, this time in the office of the Attorney General of the United States. The City of St. Louis had enacted an ordinance under which ownership was to pass to the federal government but proper caution was observed before the Department of the Interior was told that the warranty deed was legally acceptable. The mayor was advised of that finding on September 20, 1940, and the way was at long last clear for major work to begin.⁴³

42. Bryan, "Rotunda," 51-52.

43. A. E. Demary, Acting Director, National Park Service, to Bernard F. Dickman, Mayor of the City of St. Louis, September 20, 1940, General Correspondence, OCH Restoration, JNEM.

PRESERVATION, REHABILITATION AND BEYOND, 1940-1960

Studies of the Old Courthouse had already been undertaken by the National Park Service long before the structure became the property of the federal government. As early as 1937, John A. Bryan had completed a preliminary report on its history which would provide the basis for some of the early decisions which had to be made concerning the shape of the work to be done in the future. The effort expended in the 1930s proved important because it made it possible for the initial steps toward preservation, stabilization and restoration to be taken before the end of 1940.

Drawings and specifications for a completely new roof were ready in November 1940 and the contract was awarded early in December.¹ The clutter of ventilators and skylights which had been present on the old roof was not duplicated. The architects determined that skylights should be placed on only the east and west wings. Indirect, artificial light was used in the other corridors to simulate the effect which had previously been created by the skylights over them.²

Sufficient work to make the south wing and two rooms on the second floor of the east wing usable for offices and storage rooms was begun in June 1940.³ The people who worked within the building would need to spend one winter under conditions which had become familiar to employees of the various courts in the earlier part of the century. Contracts let on February 28, 1941, called for new electrical and plumbing installations and for a connection with the steam line of the local electric company.⁴ When complete, that work made the building far more comfortable than it had been for many years.

Understandably, the earliest work was intended to make it possible to attend to the restoration of the interior at some time in the future. Even before it was fully underway, nevertheless, contact was made with a local firm to gain an estimate of the cost of

1. "Specifications for Constructing a New Roof...", Unsigned memorandum, April 24, 1941, Documents Relating to the Preservation, Restoration, and Alteration of the St. Louis Courthouse, JNEM. (Hereinafter cited as Restoration file.)
2. "Project Construction Program Proposal Form, Index No. B-8," February 29, 1952, Restoration file.
3. Ibid., Index No. B-14.
4. Unsigned Memorandum, April 24, 1941, Restoration file.

replastering the ceiling of the oval courtroom in the west wing in a way that would reproduce the old work there. Two estimates were submitted: one based on the installation of metal lath; the other on the possible re-use of the existing wooden lath. The project was thereupon shelved, perhaps because hopes were high that the Works Projects Administration would agree to undertake a substantial part of the interior restoration. It was proposed in April 1941 that the WPA take on fourteen different tasks ranging in importance or magnitude from the construction of ceilings and floors to the repairing of doors and the moving of furniture to its original position. Some of the projects which were proposed to the WPA may have been intended to be completed only at some far distant date. The installation of period lighting would, for example, have demanded a fair amount of research which had not as yet been completed.⁵

The exterior doors of all four wings, along with the interior doors opening into the corridors of the south wing, were recreated during 1940-41. Appropriate locks had not as yet been designed, and for some time the doors had to be braced from within.⁶ The revolving doors, a fixture of the building for the past three decades, were removed, and a major step was thereby taken toward restoration of the appearance of the building.

The proposal to move the Regional Office of the National Park Service to St. Louis made speed seem even more urgent while also serving to raise some of the first significant questions about the restoration of the interior. Two different ideas were advanced about the rooms which could appropriately be devoted to the regional and local offices. One would have placed the regional employees on the first floor of the north wing and the local offices in the south wing. The second notion also called for the local personnel to take the south wing but allocated the oval courtroom in the east wing to the regional headquarters. So far as the Regional Director was concerned, that courtroom offered nothing "historically or otherwise, to justify its retention."⁷ Resistance began to mount in St. Louis to any plan which would not embrace the full restoration of the courtroom, and the foreshadowing of a real

5. Anderson Plastering Company to Charles E. Peterson, October 17, 1940; Unsigned memorandum, April 24, 1941, Restoration file.

6. "Project Construction Program Proposal Form, Index No. B-9," February 29, 1952, Restoration file.

7. Regional Director, Region Two, to Julian C. Spotts, November 30, 1940, Restoration file.

confrontation is to be seen in the documentary material. Perhaps fortunately, the issue became moot in June 1941 when it was decided that the regional headquarters would remain in Omaha.

For the general public, the most noticeable sign that the building was indeed to regain its early appearance and beauty must have been the removal of the old smokestack and chimney. That was accomplished during the course of the installation of the new roof in January-June, 1941. The boiler house which had been built in 1907 was also demolished as soon as the new heating system was ready for use.⁸

A taste of the problems and frustrations which inhere in the restoration of a major building came in August 1941. Samples of stone to be used in repairing the floors of the corridors in the east wing were submitted but they were found not to match "the existing stone either as to color or texture."⁹ That would prove to be the case in every later attempt to replace broken or worn stone flooring throughout the structure.

Matching of the old material was not a problem in the work which was found to be necessary within the north wing. Plans were created for the complete replacement of the old wooden floors with reinforced concrete. Steel reinforcing bars, tie wires and nails began to be purchased in November 1941. Some thought was entertained that the WPA might be interested in providing the required work force. The project, however, proved impossible to complete at the time for a totally extraneous reason--the beginning of World War II. In spite of commendable persistence in pressing the claim that the material needed had already been procured and that the work should be allowed to proceed, the War Production Board found that it would not contribute to the war effort and denied permission in January 1943.¹⁰

The long-awaited help of the Works Projects Administration had earlier appeared to be at hand. In June 1942 a \$158,000 fund had been set aside "to complete the interior renovation of the historic old building" and "restoration of the faded murals that adorn the

8. J.S. Rasbach to Arthur Cochrane, January 31, 1941, General Correspondence--OCH Restoration, JNEM. (Hereinafter cited as Correspondence file.)
9. Charles E. Peterson to Contracting Officer, August 13, 1941, Restoration file.
10. War Production Board to JNEM, January 6, 1943, Correspondence file.

curving walls of the dome."¹¹ Julian C. Spotts, the Superintendent of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, then asked for advice from Louis LaBeaume, a prominent architect in St. Louis, and Charles Nagel, Jr., the Director of the City Art Museum, and he obtained from those men recommendations as to restoration artists. Both included the name of Oscar Berninghaus, a former St. Louisan who had developed a national reputation as a painter of western scenes.¹² No further attention was given to the subject of the restoration of the murals at the time, the WPA seemingly having informally rescinded any commitment to pay for such work.

Much the same frustrating absence of result followed a conference in October 1942 with the Golden Eagle Club concerning the possibility of installing an exhibit relating to river traffic in the southwest corner of the first floor of the west wing. The National Park Service indicated that it would spend \$2,500 to prepare that space for such usage if the club would sign a lease calling for an annual rental of \$840.¹³ Whether because of that stipulation, or for entirely different reasons, the club's interest seems to have waned.

Wartime conditions slowed the pace of the work on the structure, but pride in what had been accomplished was evident in a report made in 1944 on work which had been done since the National Park Service had assumed control.

The building was then in a sad state of disrepair, was deteriorating rapidly and was in danger of total destruction by fire. Contracts for work required to halt deterioration, safeguard the structure and make portions available for use were let, the work involving \$151,322 in contracts, and including a new roof, plumbing, heating, electrical and fire protection systems, the removal of much wood construction, and the restoring of the south wing and a small portion of the east wing, second floor. The offices of the Memorial were moved in on December 1, 1941, just before Pearl Harbor.

The remainder of the building, nearly three-fourths of its total volume, is not usable, and, because of the

TT. Post-Dispatch, June 1, 1942.

12. LaBeaume to Spotts, September 1, 1942; Nagel to Spotts, September 5, 1942, Courthouse Murals--Restoration, JNEM.
13. Julian C. Spotts to Mildred F. Wright, October 28, 1942, Restoration file.

large amounts of wood construction remaining, is hazardous from the standpoint of merely safeguarding the historic structure. It is proposed to remove all unnecessary wood construction, and chemically treat or otherwise protect all wood which feasibly cannot be removed.¹⁴

The end of the war a year later made it possible to resume the project of installing concrete floors in the north wing, the actual cash outlay being quite small because the plans and the materials acquired during 1941 and 1942 were still available. Plastering in the north and east wings was also accomplished in 1945.¹⁵

Seven rather lean years would pass before the funds allocated to the restoration of the Old Courthouse would again allow any substantial work to be accomplished. When at long last appropriations began to be made, it was decided that the sidewalks around the building were in need of the earliest attention.

Heaving of the old granitoid slabs had created problems and hazards which were highly evident as early as 1941. A report was then filed that a pedestrian had received a bloody nose as a result of stumbling over one of the blocks that had become raised. That sort of accident was likely to occur many times, and everyone involved agreed that replacement of the sidewalk was essential. They did not, however, share the same opinion on how the work should be done. Julian Spotts insisted that a reinforced concrete slab with expansion joints be placed under the bricks used on the surface. He also argued that the brick should be set in mortar. The Regional Director countered that Spotts was right about the problems that would be likely to arise if any other form of construction was employed, but added that "the historic and aesthetic should take precedence, in spite of the known handicaps and possible defects." The traditional method of setting the bricks in a bed of sand was his choice. A compromise position--calling for a concrete slab with a layer of sand atop it--also had at least one advocate.¹⁶

14. "Justification, Major Repair and Rehabilitation Program," Index No. 201, August 16, 1944, Restoration file.
15. Memorandum for the Regional Director, September 7, 1945, Correspondence file; "Summary of Restoration," JNEM.
16. H.L. Gruber to Mr. Kerlin, April 25, 1941, Restoration file; Spotts to Regional Director, August 8, 1952 and February 3, 1953; Howard Baker to Spotts, March 18, 1953, Construction C/R Repairs, JNEM.

The difference in opinions, indeed in philosophies of restoration, delayed the start of the work until May 1954, and Spotts' view finally prevailed. The brick was placed over a concrete base and was laid in a herringbone pattern like that which was visible in a photograph made in 1868.¹⁷

Work in the basement of the east wing was inaugurated on June 24, 1953, the date at which a bid was accepted for a series of projects. They included closing the opening in the southeast corner of the ceiling which had been made when the stair was built leading down from the Probate Court clerk's office, plastering of ceilings and walls, new sash for most of the windows, sundry minor repairs and the cleaning and painting of the iron grille doors on the south side of the corridor.¹⁸ While that work was scarcely apparent to many visitors to the Old Courthouse, it marked the beginning of the thorough restoration of the entire wing.

The room on the north side of the first floor of the east wing was plastered and painted as part of the work done in 1954, and a concrete floor was installed in 1956 in the space across the hall which had earlier housed the Probate Court. The rehabilitation of this part of the east wing was completed in 1957, when lighting fixtures, furnishings and display cabinets were acquired in order to make the room on the north side usable as a reception center for visitors.¹⁹

Restoration of the second floor, and of the oval courtroom there, was being carried out at the same time. Investigation of the ceiling in the courtroom, and the removal of a covering which had been applied to it in the closing years of the nineteenth century, revealed deteriorated remains of early decorative painting which was carefully reproduced. Attempts to establish the color which had originally been applied to the walls proved fruitless, and they were now painted a color called "crushed strawberry" which was felt to be appropriate to the mid-nineteenth century. The pine railing which was found in the room was discarded when it was decided that it was a relatively recent replacement. New work, based on the design of a newel post and column found in front of the judge's bench, was then fabricated, with balusters like those found in the oval courtroom of the west wing. Changes in the platform under the

17. John A. Bryan, "Preliminary Draft; JNEM Administrative History," (undated), 24.

18. "Specifications for Restoring Portions of the Old Courthouse," June 24, 1953, 12-13, JNEM.

19. Bryan, "Administrative History," 38.

bench were made in order to cause the steps to follow the curvature of the room as a whole.

The furnishings of the room had previously been painted to resemble golden oak. In removing that finish, a walnut panel was revealed and it formed the basis for wood tones applied to all of the furniture. Venetian blinds were hung in the windows, but they must be regarded as inappropriate to true restoration since no indication of their use during the historic period is available. Other interior appointments were added which, when they were placed beneath the new ceiling of acoustical plaster, were deemed to have given the room a "new dignity."²⁰ That such a condition was attained on the basis of very little solid evidence pertaining to the appearance of the room in the third quarter of the nineteenth century might now be lamented, but the simple fact is that the best available knowledge was brought to bear during the restoration of the courtroom.

The stairwell in the east wing was replastered during 1954 and work on the lighting above it was completed in the following year. Painting of the well rounded out the major work in the wing. All that remained to be done in the future was the installation of iron gates at each landing in 1959.²¹

Replacement of the windows which had been installed in 1910-1912 was begun under a contract entered into in February 1954, the new work following the original pattern of six-over-six lights.²² No effort was made to reconstruct the early jambs--those which had extended to the floor--nor to remove the bricks which had been used to build up the area under the window sills.

The task of restoring the west wing was undertaken at virtually the same time that work in the east wing was underway. The program adopted for the west wing would, once again, be based on the best available information; such things as the wainscot painted to resemble marble which was found on the north wall of the "Dred Scott" room on the south side of the first floor being duplicated. An asphalt tile floor was laid in that space in 1954, and linoleum was installed over masonite on the floor of the room on the north side of the west wing corridor during 1958.²³

20. Ibid., 35-36.

21. Ibid., 37.

22. Ibid., 23.

23. Ibid., 23 and 41-42.

Restoration of the oval courtroom of the west wing was included in a project which began in 1955 and was finished four years later. An inspection of the ceiling led to a conclusion that the damage which had been done as a result of the fire in 1936 had been great and that dry-rot of the wooden ceiling members had added to the problem. The entire ceiling had to be replaced, and all of the walls in the room were replastered at the same time. Lighting fixtures akin to those found in another mid-nineteenth-century building in St. Louis were fabricated and affixed to back-plates based on a design found in an issue of the London Illustrated News published in 1851. The last step in the restoration, the repair of the stone flooring, was hampered by the fact that the quarry from which the brown marble had originally been obtained no longer existed. The best substitute that could be located was used where necessary in 1959.²⁴

Work carried out in the rotunda during 1955 took what can be viewed as somewhat diverging courses. On the one hand, Walter Nitkiewicz carefully bared the successive layers of decorative painting which had been applied to the "undecorated panels and ribs of the large dome." He found the results of the painting done in 1880, 1905 and 1921, and twenty-two years later he wrote an account of his investigation that becomes fully understandable after it is compared with the evidence presented in the documentary sources: "The first, and perhaps most impressive, was the simulated lacunar ceiling of pink marble; the second, red cherries and green leaves; and the third appeared to be a simple stencil design."²⁵

The color scheme which was actually adopted in 1955, nonetheless, was derived more from a set of convictions about how the rotunda should appear than from any actual evidence pertaining to the earlier painting. A decision was reached that little of the work which had been done under Rumbold's direction during the 1860s would ever be found, and John Bryan's understanding and knowledge of the tastes of Americans during that period were utilized. A "dusty pink" was thereby chosen as the predominant color in the upper part of the dome.²⁶

24. Memorandum to the Regional Director, March 30, 1955, Correspondence--Restoration of the Rotunda and West Courtroom, JNEM; Bryan, "Administrative History," 40-41.

25. Memorandum written by Walter Nitkiewicz, October 6, 1977. Julian C. Spotts, Monthly Narrative Report, June 13, 1955, JNEM, affords a contemporary description of the restoration.

26. Bryan, "Administrative History," 26.

Studies carried out by Nitkiewicz, on the other hand, provided the information required for the restoration and reproduction of the work of Wimar and Miragoli. He supervised the artist who copied the portraits and the symbolic paintings in the upper dome. They were reproduced on canvas and attached to new plaster which was placed over metal lath. The upper dome's decorations, therefore, are now an accurate duplication of the work which Miragoli painted in 1880 but the original material is gone.

Nitkiewicz's efforts were at times impeded by contractors who became careless or unthinking. In one instance, "approximately half of one of the monochrome cartouches, on the level of the lunettes, was scraped off by an un instructed paint scraper hired by the painting contractor in 1955."²⁷ Nevertheless, Nitkiewicz managed in that and succeeding years to bring back much of the glory of the rotunda and added a great deal to the store of knowledge concerning the various earlier attempts at the restoration or over-painting of the lunettes.

Projects affecting the lower levels of the rotunda had already been instituted in 1953. The contract for work there called for closing up a doorway on the northeast side of the first floor level and for a complete replastering of all surfaces below the fourth level gallery. Repairs to the flooring at the south side of the second floor level, "reconditioning" of columns, removal of glass panels from the doors on the fourth level gallery, and restoration of the windows at the fifth level gallery was conducted in 1955. All of the wall surfaces of the second, third and fourth level galleries were now repainted in "egg-shell" tones. Electrification of the gas fixtures at the upper levels completed the effort expended in the rotunda during 1955.²⁸

The contract for the work carried out in the rotunda during 1953 had also contained provisions pertaining to the small room on the east side of the first floor corridor leading to the south wing. The brick floor there was taken up and, with the addition of brick which had been removed from a similar room to the north, was relaid in a herringbone pattern. The walls and ceiling were replastered, a form of work that was eventually to be duplicated on all of the interior walls throughout the building except those on the fourth and fifth level galleries of the rotunda. Necessary replacement was made of the sash of both windows in the room, and new doors

27. Memorandum written by Walter Nitkiewicz, October 6, 1977.

28. "Specifications for Restoring Portions of the Old Courthouse," June 24, 1953; "Specifications...West Courtroom," February 21, 1955, JNEM; Bryan, "Administrative History," 28.

were fabricated for both entries.²⁹ The care taken to salvage the brick from the floor served to preserve a rare example of interior material that dated back to the earliest construction of the Old Courthouse.

Within a span of only fifteen years, a major part of the program to stabilize, preserve and restore the interior features of the building was complete in spite of the fact that World War II had caused an almost total cessation of work. In fact, it could well be argued that the National Park Service had finished the best part of its effort in a far shorter period of time, that of the major activity of the 1950s. With hindsight based on knowledge gained since that time, a number of decisions which were made could quite easily be challenged. The elementary fact must, however, be acknowledged that the program which was followed was as good as time and circumstances permitted and it was indeed commendable when judged by any rational standard.

The same judgment must be applied to the work which took place after 1955, that which created the present appearance of the grounds. A photograph taken before 1870 was carefully examined, producing conclusions about the early appearance of the iron fence. That source of information was used to best advantage and, because a tree had obscured the gate when the photograph was made, an educated guess had to be made about that part of the enclosure of the square. The design which was adopted was laced with a touch of pure whimsy. The turtles that were used as a decorative element on the new gates were certainly not intended to serve as an authentic recreation of anything from the past but they do reflect a legend that runs through the history of the Old Courthouse. The decision to use granite for the new stone base was, on the other hand, made deliberately even though all of the evidence indicates that the original base was limestone. After weighing the merits of both, granite was selected because it would be far more durable.³⁰

The sundial and the fountain in the southeast yard presented entirely dissimilar problems. While in poor condition, the sundial was still in place and a similar device on the grounds of the St. Louis Arsenal was used to create patterns for replacement parts required at the Old Courthouse. So far as the fountain was concerned, careful investigation of the grounds provided information

29. "Specifications for Restoring Portions of the Old Courthouse," June 24, 1953, JNEM.

30. Julian Spotts to Mrs. Edward G. Brungard, January 16, 1956, Correspondence--Lawn Fence, JNEM; Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report, May 12, 1955.

only on its location since the early ironwork had been removed in 1895. Using information derived through excavation of the lawn, that location was ascertained and a new fountain was fabricated which was meant to reflect the design of the earlier work as it had been depicted in a variety of illustrations and photographs from the nineteenth century.³¹

Here again, it could be charged that the restoration was by no means totally authentic. The turtles do not belong on the gates, the fountain seems to be smaller than that which was erected in the nineteenth century, and the second sundial was omitted. Unlimited money and unlimited time might have made it possible to provide a more accurate restoration both within and without the building. The people who carried out the work done before 1960 had neither. Given finite funds and time, they managed to do an awfully good job and their legacy is the Old Courthouse as it exists today.

³¹. Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report, September 11 and October 7, 1958; Bryan, "Administrative History," 30-31.

APPENDIX A: USE OF INTERIOR SPACES

Aside from the courtrooms, the purposes for which rooms within the Old Courthouse were used are frequently difficult, and occasionally impossible, to follow with any certainty. Changes were frequently made and, in the case of the county or city offices and the jury rooms, no documentary notice was made to indicate the exact location. The account which has been constructed must, therefore, be viewed as incomplete and in some instances conjectural. Where uncertainty continues to prevail about the period in which a particular space was used for the purpose given, a question mark has been appended to the dates. The use of a question mark at the name of a particular agency indicates that its occupancy of the room is not fully proven.

Room numbers are derived from "Third Preliminary Layout, 1941 Rehabilitation of the Old St. Louis Courthouse." (Figures 63-66)

WEST WING

Basement

The basement of this wing is known to have been the location of public toilets as early as 1844. Scattered evidence suggests that it continued to be devoted to that purpose for most, if not all, of the nineteenth century. S-12 had new toilet facilities installed in 1894 with an entrance from the exterior. Use of the remaining space at that time is not indicated in the documentary sources.

S-1 through S-11 were remodeled in 1910 for use as a Public Comfort Station. That usage continued until 1940.

First Floor

The entire space of the first floor was used by the Circuit Court as a courtroom from 1844 to 1855, the date at which it was divided and the present hallway was created.

S-102	1857-1865	Law commissioner's courtroom
	1866-1874	Court of Criminal Corrections
	1877-1903	General term room of the Circuit Court (?)
	1903-1930	Circuit Court No. 9
	1945	Information and Referral Center, Veteran's Administration

West Wing, First Floor, Continued

- S-104 1856-1865 Land Court
1865-1873 Circuit Court No. 2
1874-1876 County Auditor (?)
1877 County Court (?)
1878-1888 Sheriff (?)
1889-1896 Clerk of the Circuit Court (?)
1897-1899 Recorder of Deeds (?)
1900-1930 Clerk of the Circuit Court (?)

Second Floor

- S-207 1856-1865 Court of Common Pleas
1865-1896 Circuit Court No. 3
1896-1930 Circuit Court No. 4
- S-201 through S-205 Used as jury rooms, judges' chambers etc. In 1907, S-201 and S-202 were designated for use by the judge; S-204 was assigned to the janitor of Circuit Court No. 4; S-203 was a "telephone room;" and S-205 was used by Judge Valliant of the Missouri Supreme Court.

- S-206 until 1894 Stair
1894-present Toilet

Third Floor

- S-304 until 1894 Stair
1894-present Toilet

EAST WING

Basement

The office of the circuit attorney was located in this area in 1855.

- S-35 and S-36 1858-1873 Offices of the sheriff, county collector, county engineer, treasurer, and dram shop collector.
1873-1878 Rented to Williams, Tittman and Lee.

East Wing, Basement, Continued

- 1878-1886 Museum of the Missouri Historical Society
1886-? Jury Rooms (?)
?-1930 Storage for the Probate Court (S-35 known to have been used by a janitor in 1907)
S-32 and S-34 1858-1872 County Surveyor
S-27 to S-30 Appears to have been used by the clerk of the Circuit Court for storage and offices from 1858 to 1930.

First Floor

- S-114 and S-115 1856-1877 County Court and Board of County Commissioners (?)
1877-1895 County collector (?)
1896-1903 Sheriff and clerk of the Circuit Court (?)
1903-1909 Clerk of the Circuit Court (?)
1909(?)-1930 Clerk of the Probate Court
S-118 1856-1930 Probate Court
1930 Circuit Court No. 7
1930-1940 Justice of the Peace and/or constable for the Fifth District
S-117 1856-1930 Clerk of the Probate Court
1930-1940 Justice of the Peace and/or constable for the Fifth District

Second Floor

- S-219 1858-1873 Office of the county treasurer and auditor
1873-1930 Chambers for judge of the Circuit Court
S-220 1858-1915 Courtroom for Circuit Court. Designated Circuit Court No. 1 in 1865.
1915-1930 Circuit Court No. 13
1930s Classroom for the St. Louis Art League
S-221 Probably used as the office or chambers of judges of the Circuit Court in the early years. Known to have been in use as a "storage room" in 1907.
S-222 May have been used as a jury room in the early period; known to have been devoted to that purpose in 1907.

East Wing, Second Floor, Continued

- S-223 1858-1873 County engineer, road superintendent, county architect
1873-1876(?) Office for State Supreme Court
1876-1907 Unknown
1907-1930 Law Library

SOUTH WING

Basement

The whole of the basement of the south wing seems to have been utilized for fuel storage and, after 1870, as the location of the central heating system. Rooms S-45 through S-50 were rehabilitated in 1911 for the storage of records.

First Floor

- S-125 and S-126 1845-1903 Recorder of deeds. Partition installed in 1903; S-125 thereafter used by the judge of Circuit Court No. 8; S-126 as chambers of judge of Circuit Court No. 9.
- S-120 1842-1871 (?) Office for Probate Court
1871-1872 Clerk of the Criminal Court and county marshal
1872-1903 Assessor's office
1903-1909 (?) Judge of the Probate Court
- S-121 Partition erected to set off this space in 1887
1887-1903 Office of the assessor
1903-1909 Chambers for Circuit Court No. 2
1909-1930 Chambers for Circuit Court No. 9
- S-122 1856-1871 Criminal Court
1871-1876 County collector
1876-1896 Recorder of deeds
1896-1909 Circuit Court No. 2
1909-1930 Circuit Court No. 9
1930s Board of Religious Organizations

South Wing, First Floor, Continued

- S-124 1856-c.1860 County recorder of deeds
c.1860-1871 County treasurer and assessor
1871-1876 County treasurer and clerk of the Supreme Court
1876-1893 Treasurer
1893-1903 Unknown
1903-1930 Circuit Court No. 8

Second Floor

- S-228 and S-229 Use prior to the twentieth century has not been determined. The clerk of the Court of Appeals used the entire space in 1903 and the jury commissioner was assigned this area in 1909.
- S-227 The space at the east end of the transverse hall was partitioned off for use as a judges' reading room in 1887. It continued to be used for that purpose until c.1907 when it was assigned to the Law Library.
- S-225 and S-226 The judge of the Circuit Court was assigned this space in 1842. No further indication of the use of the area is available until 1907 when the jury for Circuit Court No. 2 was located in S-225, and the jury for Circuit Court No. 6 used S-226.
- S-236 to S-238 1856-1876 State Supreme Court
1876-1908 State Court of Appeals
1909-1917 Circuit Court No. 2
1917-1930 Circuit Court No. 7
- S-232 to S-234 1856-1908 Law Library
1909-1930 Circuit Court No. 6

NORTH WING

Basement

The city collector, inspector of weights & measures and the office of the House of Refuge are known to have been located here in 1869.

- S-15 and S-16 Use uncertain before the twentieth century: known to have been utilized by the sheriff in 1903 and by the "official reporter" in 1907.

North Wing, Basement, Continued

- S-17 1861-1873(?) Superintendent of the city waterworks
1873 Rented to St. Louis Potteries
1873-1903(?) Jury rooms
1903-? Office of the sheriff
- S-19 1861-1868(?) Superintendent of the city waterworks
1869-1873(?) City collector
1873 Rented to R. Clarke, architect
1873-1903(?) Jury rooms
1903-(?) Office of the sheriff
- S-20 1861-1873 City register of water rates
1873-1903(?) Jury rooms
1903-? Office of the sheriff

First Floor

- S-107 1843 Office of the sheriff
1843-1871(?) Clerk of the Criminal Court(?)
1871(?) -1909 Jury commissioner
1909-1930(?) Clerk of the Circuit Court's transcript room
- S-112 and S-127 1843-1856 Criminal Court
S-112 partitioned off c.1861 and used thereafter as the womens' toilet. S-127 probably used by the jury commissioner from c.1871 to 1907, and by the judge of Circuit Court No. 6 from 1907 to 1909. This room seems to have been used by the clerk of the Circuit Court between 1909 and 1912 and is known to have been the "press room" in 1936.
- S-109 1861-1873 Office of the mayor of St. Louis
1873-1896 Circuit Court No. 2
1896-1909 Circuit Court No. 6
1909-1915 Office of the sheriff
1915-1930 Circuit Court No. 1
- S-111 1861-1873 City auditor and treasurer
1874-1896 Circuit Court No. 4

North Wing, First Floor, Continued

1896-1917 Circuit Court No. 7
1917-1930 Circuit Court No. 2
1930 Circuit Court No. 17

Second Floor

S-200 1843-1856 Law Library
1856-1907 Unknown
1907-1930 Chambers of judge of Circuit Court No. 5
S-212 1861-1873 Common Council of the City of St. Louis
1873-1930 Circuit Court No. 5
S-215 1861-1873 City engineer and counselor (and perhaps shared
by the Board of Aldermen for a portion of the
period)
1873-1874 Circuit Court No. 4
1874-1876 County engineer
1876-1896 City engineer and Board of Aldermen
1896-1930 Circuit Court No. 3
1930s Board of Religious Organizations
S-211 The area at the east end of the transverse hall was parti-
tioned off in 1907 for the use of the Circuit Court.
S-217 From an unknown date to 1880, used as an office by the Bar
Association of St. Louis.
1880-1903 Fire and Police Telegraph
1908-? Conveyor installed to carry books from the Law
Library in the Pierce Building
1917 Southern half of room being used by the judge of
Circuit Court No. 6.

Third Floor

The clerk of the Circuit Court and the county recorder were as-
signed space on this floor for the storage of their records in
1845.

S-305, S-307, S-308 and S-313 1858-1903 Fire and Police Telegraph

North Wing, Third Floor, Continued

1903-1930 Jury rooms for Circuit Courts No. 3, 4, 5, 8 and 9.

S-309 1861-? Superintendent of sewers and sergeant at arms. May have subsequently been used for housing batteries of Fire and Police Telegraph.

1911-1941 Space occupied by the ceiling of the room below.

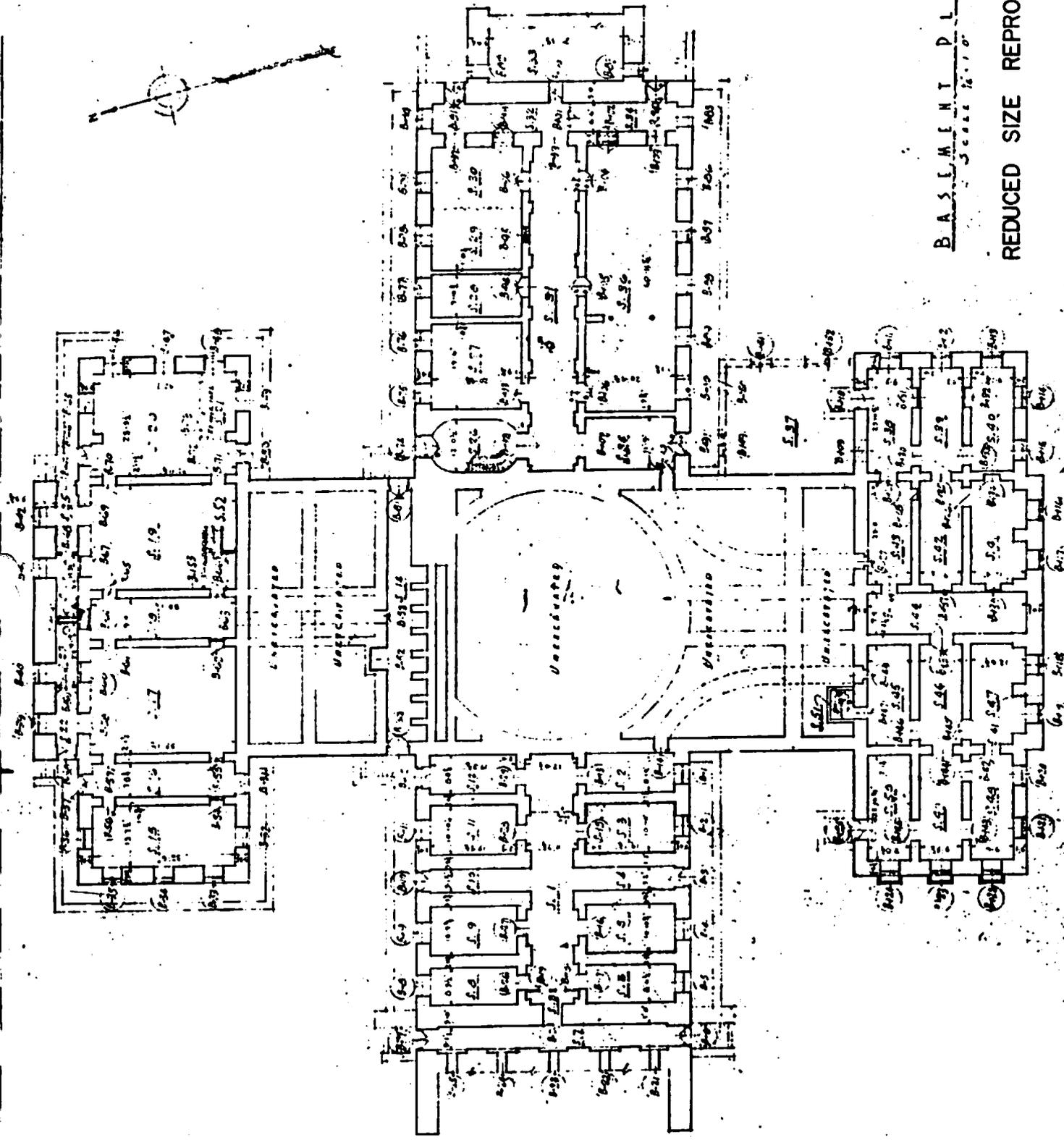
S-312 1861-? Board of assessors of the City of St. Louis. The space may thereafter have been used to house batteries of the Fire and Police Telegraph.

1911-1941 Space occupied by the ceiling of the room below.

Figures 63-66

Plans of the Basement, First, Second and Third Floors, 1941. The room numbers used in these plans are the basis for the designations used in Appendix A.

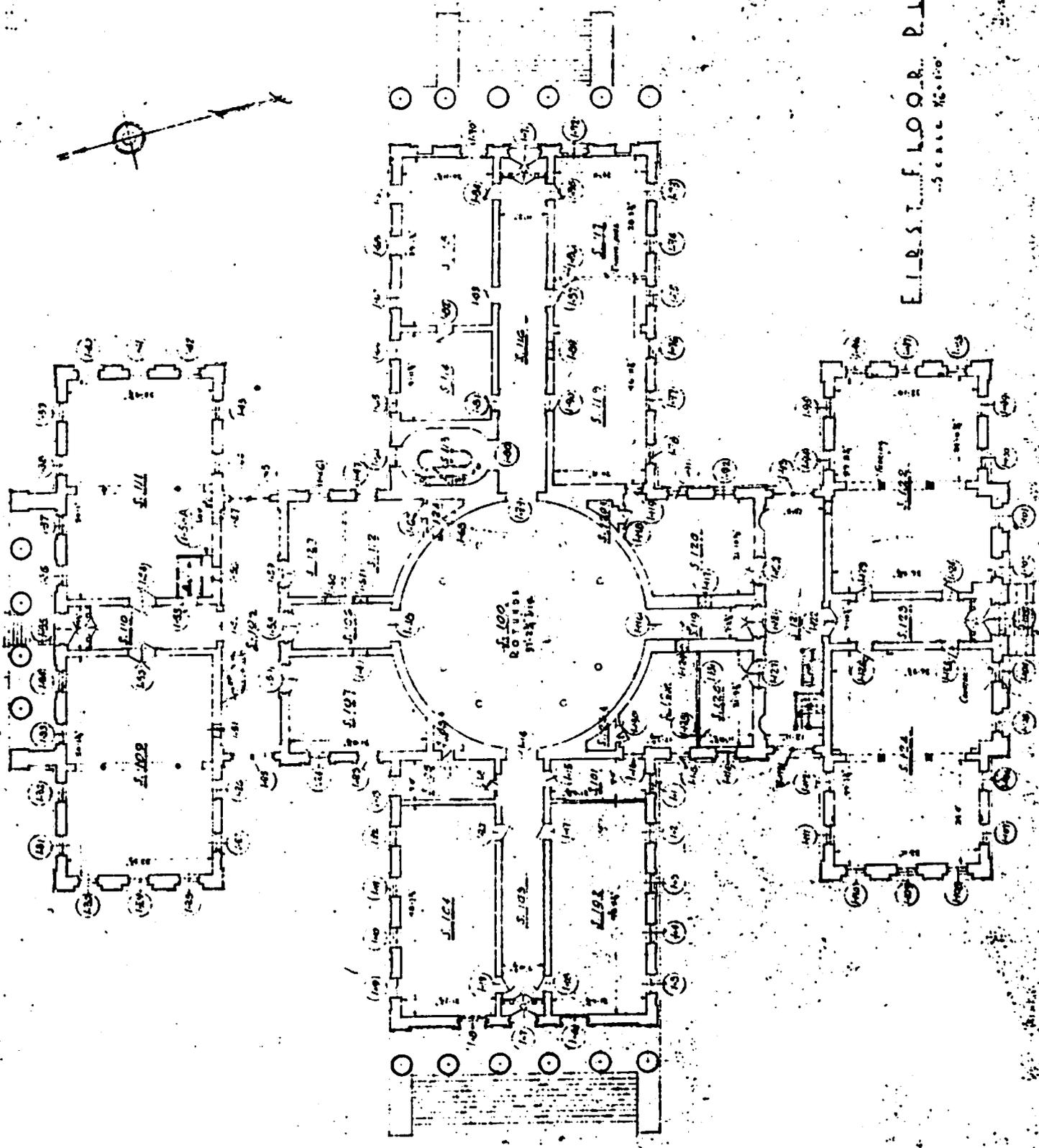
Figure 63



B A S E M E N T P L A N
Scale 1/8" = 1'-0"

REDUCED SIZE REPRODUCTION

Figure 64



E. 1. D. S. T. FLOOR PLAN
Scale 1/8"

Figure 65

SECOND FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

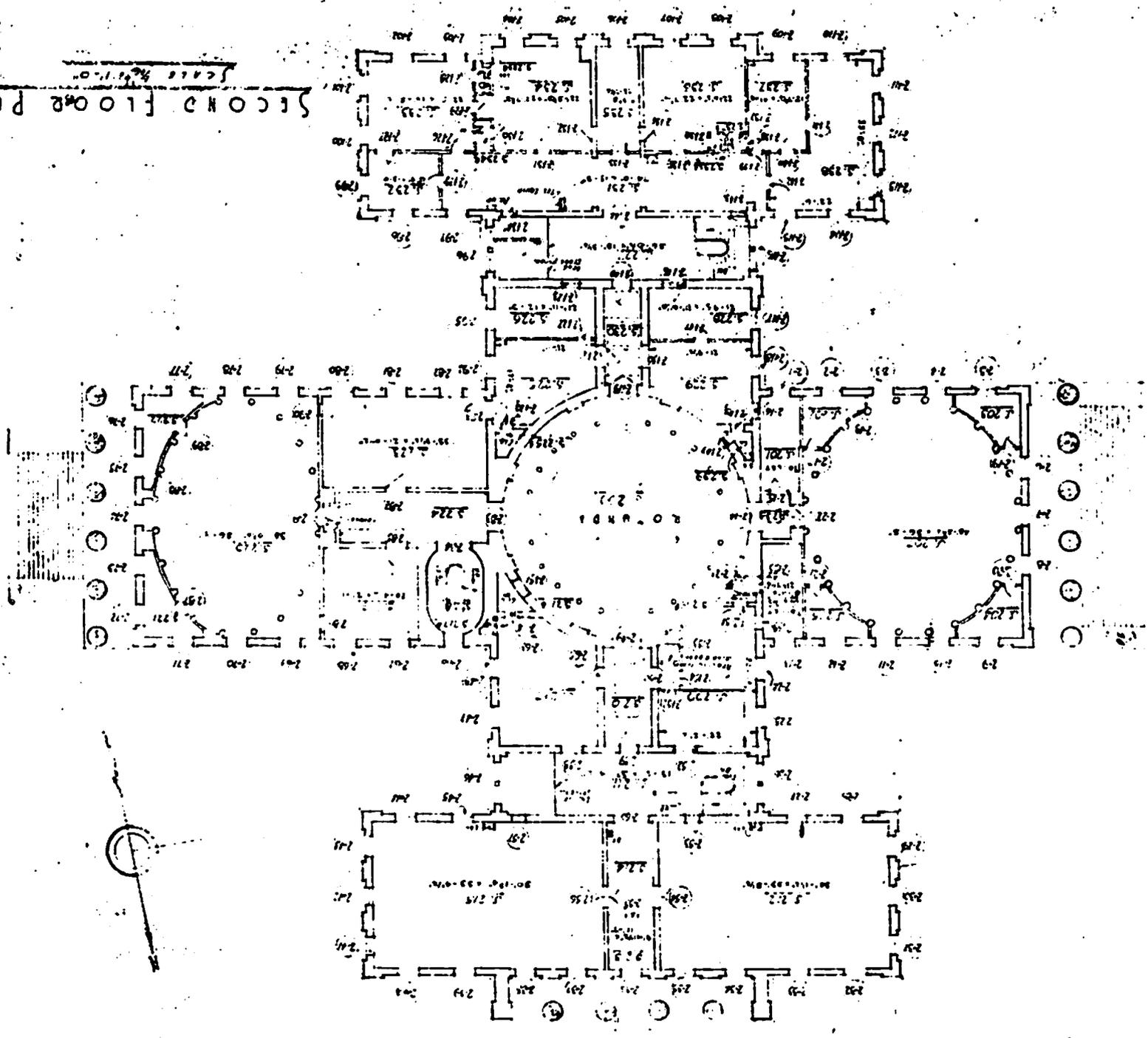


Figure 66

APPENDIX B: SELECTED NEWSPAPER REPORTS, 1862, 1869 and 1880

1. St. Louis Daily Democrat, July 4, 1862.
2. St. Louis Daily Democrat, November 7, 1869.
3. St. Louis Post-Dispatch, November 27, 1880.
4. St. Louis Globe-Democrat, December 5, 1880.

APPENDIX B: PART 1

COMPLETION OF THE ST. LOUIS
COURT HOUSE

History and Cost of its Construction.
The Rotunda and Dome--Wimar's Decorations--
The Frescoing, Etc.

After the lapse of a quarter of a century from its inception, the St. Louis Co. Court House is at last completed. Its estimated total cost is one million one hundred and ninety-nine thousand dollars and ninety-one cents, the whole of which has been paid, except \$30,000 in bonds not yet matured, but to be met as fast as they fall due.

For such an expenditure of time, labor and money, there ought to be substantial excellence as the result. The work is truly a grand and enduring one. It is such a piece of beautiful massiveness, as will command the admiration of mankind long after all now living are dead, and for many generations to come. For a history of its construction, and the items of its cost, we refer to the detailed account given below, and which has been courteously furnished by the Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners, Samuel W. Eager, Jr. To appreciate the extent and grandeur of the structure, whoever is interested in it must leisurely survey it for himself. It is far from our purpose, by any description, to relieve the reader of that pleasant task, but simply to direct attention to the later improvements in the plan for the edifice, and the graces that have been lavished upon the rotunda and dome.

The community is deeply indebted to the Board of County Commissioners, with President Jno. H. Lightner at its head, for their wisdom in selecting, for the responsible post of County Architect, a mechanic remarkably endowed with energy and genius---qualities indispensable for bringing the great work to a successful close. Such an artist, pre-eminently, has William Rumbold proven himself to be. His peerless design for a St. Louis City Hall, which was adopted above the elaborate and worthy plans of many gifted competitors, and which is destined at some day to become a splendid reality in architecture, doubtless won for him the patronage of the County Commissioners. To him, at a critical period of their enterprise, they assigned the duty of investigating and reporting upon its alleged imperfections, and of devising and executing a remedy.

The old plan of constructing the Court House dome had been partly carried through, when its awkwardness and peril became painfully conspicuous. An impartial examination resulted in a verdict of unqualified condemnation. In response to the request of the Court, Mr. Rumbold presented a plan for bracing and sustaining the walls of the rotunda, and the construction of a lighter dome. His views were acquiesced in, and the finished result is now before the eyes of our citizens. His well-known promise that the Court House should be completed by the Fourth of July, 1862, has been richly fulfilled.

All observers have marked with delight the exquisite proportions and beauty of the exterior dome, months ago perfected, but comparatively few have dreamed of the scene of harmony and magnificence that has long and tediously been growing within. The visitor to the Rotunda saw only a dark and confused mass of intricate staging through which the obscure ascent seemed equally perilous and dreary. Light, and gorgeous loveliness has since taken the place of the dimness and chaos. On entering, one is impressed with the artistic unity of the lofty interior, and, at the same time, with the variety of beauty around and above him. The eye gazes long and delightedly at each central feature, yet contemplates with scarcely inferior pleasure the grand contour of the charmingly varied parts. Most difficult it is to convey by words a correct impression of such a scene, and we therefore aim only to give such facts as may be of use to the visitor or suggestive to others.

The old central stair-ways having been removed, an unobstructed view of the lofty interior is afforded. The clean hight [sic] from the first floor to the tholus or eye of the inner dome is 131 feet; diameter of the rotunda and base of the dome, 60 feet; hight to base of the dome, 100 feet; hight of first gallery, 18 feet; from that to the second, 13 feet; thence to the third, 12 feet; from the third to the fourth, 32; thence to base of the dome, 26 feet. The hight of the dome (inside) is thirty feet.

THE DOME

Attention is first resistlessly drawn to the dome. It is first divided, longitudinally, into eight main compartments, four projecting, and four receding. The receding ones are again each subdivided into five divisions, three regular and two small ones. These separations are architectural, and not the effect of frescoing. The three regular subdivisions are again each divided into six panels in hight, by enriched moulding done in fresco. In the center of each panel, instead of the rosette usual in such panels, is an American star. The dome is thus a patriotic and "starry dome."

Each of the four projecting divisions has but one panel, and in these panels the artist, Chas. Wimar, had drawn and painted the personifications of Justice, Law, Liberty and Commerce. These grand figures are each nine feet in altitude, and appear to rejoice in a distinct empyrean of its own. At a considerable remove below each is the coat of arms of the State of Missouri, with her motto, the one for these times, "Salus populi suprema lex esto," easily legible.

LIBERTY, occupying the northeastern panel, is the serenely radiant American divinity, in her right hand bearing the "Star-Spangled Banner," her left the Union fasces, while below, at the right, are the national shield and bird.

In the southwestern panel towers stern JUSTICE, holding the scales of trial, grasping the sword of retribution, and having the eyes bandaged, to denote that she regards not persons, and cannot be moved to mercy.

LAW, personified by the figure of the great lawgiver, Solon, stands meditatively in the southeastern panel, leaning upon a column, and pondering the code he is engaged in perfecting.

COMMERCE is fitly represented by the winged Mercury, born of the brain of Jove, tripping fleetly over the globe, bearing the sceptre of power, while beneath him are the symbols of navigation and transportation.

These figures are executed in a most masterly style, and in the details exhibit great study and significance. They are memorable monuments to the genius of the artist. It is proper to say that the figures of Justice and Liberty were suggested by Architect Rumbold, and adopted by Messrs. Lightner and Taussig, as Committee of the County Commissioners. The remaining two figures were selected by the Committee. The general design of the dome, panels and decorations, is of course to be credited to the Architect as to the conception, and to the Committee as to the adoption.

The eye of the dome, above, is as yet unfinished--for the reason that the glass has not yet been received. The cornice is composed of ovelos and two large beads; the upper ornamented by an oak wreath in stucco, and the lower by an olive wreath in fresco. The mouldings are enriched with the ivy ornament, and the frieze with a luxurious running scroll. Within the latter is to be wrought a grand American eagle, with all the stars of the Union above.

The harmonies of the dome projections with the work below, attract the spectator's attention to the successive galleries of the rotunda. From the first floor rise the four massive stone columns, supporting the first and unornamented gallery connecting with the halls and offices on the second floor of the Court House. Iron columns support the second gallery or the third story of the rotunda, which has also a plain whitewashed wall. On another series of iron columns rests the third gallery or fourth story of the rotunda. From this floor it was necessary to construct steps to ascend to the dome. This simple necessity inexorably controls the construction of the interior of the rotunda and dome yet has suggested to the architect the very design of beauty, consisting of balancing projections, recesses and niches, with which the eye and taste are charmed. With this result he has also combined increased usefulness--constructing a light and strong flight of steps--the one flight for ascent, and the other for descent, in opposite and well-proportioned projections. To balance those, two other opposed projections are similarly formed. By an ingenious arrangement, only one stairway will be used for ascending, and the other almost invariably in descending. This general arrangement admirably "works in" with the construction of the inner and outer dome, between which the stairways continue.

Around these projections and recesses of the third gallery are arranged ornamental pilasters, forty in number, supporting a rich block cornice which also "cuts around" the recesses and projections. In the center of each of the latter is a niche to be hereafter filled.

The fourth gallery on the fifth story contains the four elliptical niches in which the artist, Wimar, has depicted the historical scenes assigned him, as follows:

In the south ellipse: The discovery of the Mississippi river by DeSoto, May 1st, 1541. The gallant party of Spanish cavaliers and fortune hunters, with their horses, equipments and wagon trains, are finely represented.

In the east ellipse is given the landing of Laclède at St. Louis, Feb. 15th, 1764. This picture has peculiar interest from its studious truth to history by consultations with Wilson Primm, Esq. of Carondelet, who is known to have devoted much attention, under special advantages to the early history of St. Louis. The artist has been able to give to this portion of his work inestimable value of verity. It is believed that the barge in which the Laclède party arrived is accurately delineated. The landing place at the foot of what now is Market street, and the spring of water that welcomed the voyagers, are also exhibited.

The northern ellipse bears another memorable scene in St. Louis history, the attack on its inhabitants by fourteen hundred Indians and a few British, on the 26th of May, 1780. Wimar is still engaged in touching this piece. It exhibits the bastions, towers and wall built by the settlers for their defense. For the curious we will state that a portion of these fortifications, consisting of a Spanish tower and barracks, adorned what is now the intersection of Walnut and Third streets. A bastion was located at what is at present the corner of Green and Third streets. Another tower stood at the present corner of Biddle street and the levee, and a fourth at about the junction of Myrtle and Third streets. All except the last are exhibited in the painting, which also bears a faithful picture of the old Chouteau Mansion, which stood till about 1828 on the levee between Market and Walnut streets. The artist selects the period of the first attack, when a party of the towns folks was suddenly arrested while gathering strawberries in the rear of the town.

The remaining ellipse is to be filled with a Rocky Mountain scene, probably the Cochetopa Pass, the natural gateway of the Central Pacific railroad. A buffalo chase and the characteristic adjuncts may be introduced.

In illustration of the three historical scenes, we present the following interesting statements condensed from authentic narratives.

DISCOVERY OF THE MISSISSIPPI

Ferdinand [sic] de Soto had been with Pizzaro in the conquest of Peru, and longed to make himself as rich and noted as the great captain of the day. He obtained leave of the King of Spain to conquer Florida. In May 1539, he anchored his vessels in Tampa Bay, and set out upon a march into the interior in quest of gold. Continuing his pursuit, in 1540 he turned westward to the Mobile river, and on the 1st of May, 1541, reached the banks of the Great River of the West, not far from the 35th parallel of latitude. The locality is believed to be the Lower Chickasaw Bluffs. He and his party spent a month in preparing barges to convey their horses across the stream, and then moved northward into the neighborhood of New Madrid. Having traveled thence to White river, and then traversed the banks of the Washita, DeSoto sank beneath his toils and disappointments. He died May 21, 1542, and his body was buried in the stream of the Mississippi. His party, reduced from 600 to 300 men, reached the Gulf of Mexico in July, 1543. Such was the first expedition of Europeans into the valley of the Mississippi.

THE LANDING OF LACLEDE AT ST. LOUIS IN 1764.

Pierre Liguette Laclède, an enterprising trader, obtained a grant from M. D'Abadie, Director General of Louisiana, with "the necessary powers to trade with the Indians of the Missouri, and those west of the Mississippi above the Missouri, as far north as the river St. Peters." Laclède organized a company under the firm of Laclède, Maxan & Co.; fitted out an expedition, started from New Orleans August 3rd, 1763; reached St. Genevieve on the 3rd of November; proceeded thence to Fort Chartres and Kaskaskia; stopped a short time at Cahokia, then called Notre Dame des Kahokias, and engaged several families to accompany him to his projected settlement.

On the 15th of February, the party landed on the present site of St. Louis, at the spot which is now the foot of Market street, and commenced cutting down the trees and erecting accommodations for the goods and men. Laclède proceeded to lay off a village plat, with narrow streets, naming it St. Louis, in honor of Louis XV, of France.

At that time, skirts of tall timber, free from undergrowth, lined the bank of the river, and extended back to a line about the range of Eighth street. In the rear was an extensive prairie. The first cabins were built near the river and Market street. Neither "Bloody Island" nor "Duncan's Island" then existed, but the river was narrow and exceedingly deep.

THE INDIAN ATTACK ON ST. LOUIS, MAY 26, 1780.

The territory on which St. Louis stood and the surrounding region, was claimed by the Illinois Indians, but they apparently acquiesced in the intrusion of the whites, and had never molested them. The war of the Revolution was waging on the seaboard, and British emissaries were soon found to be inciting the Indians to destroy St. Louis, the people of which, though colonists of another nationality, were known to be inimical to Britain and in favor of the American cause. The town was almost destitute of defenses, but all the laboring inhabitants, only a few more than a hundred men, proceeded to inclose their homes in a species of wall, formed of the trunks of small trees planted in the ground, the interstices being filled with earth. The wall was five or six feet high. It began from a kind of fort situated on the river near the site of the Floating Dock, in the form of a half moon, and ran thence in a semi-circle a little above the brow of the hill, till it reached the river above the old bridge on Second street. Three gates were formed in it; one near the bridge and two others on the hill, at the points where the northwestern and southwestern parts of the common fields came in. At each gate was placed a heavy piece of ordnance. Having completed this work and hearing no more of the

Indians, it was supposed the attack had been abandoned. Winter passed and spring came, still nothing was heard of the Indians. May arrived, the labors of planting were over, and the peaceful and happy villagers gave themselves up to such pursuits and pleasures as suited their taste. Leyba, the Governor, did all in his power to persuade the people that the rumor of the proposed attack was false. About the 20th of May an old man named Qu nelle [sic], being across the river, saw another Frenchman named Ducharne, who had formerly absconded from St. Louis, and who told him of the projected attack. For giving the warning, the Governor called Qu nelle an "old dotard," and put him in prison.

Meanwhile some 1,400 Indians and Canadians--the former consisting of Winnebagoes, Sioux, Sacs, &c.--had assembled on the eastern bank of the river, a little above St. Louis, awaiting the 26th of May, the day fixed for the attack. The 25th was the feast of Corpus Christi, and was devoutly observed by the Catholic inhabitants. Had the assault taken place then it would have been fatal to them, for after divine service the men, women and children had flocked to the prairie to gather strawberries, which were very abundant and fine. But on that day, fortunately, only a few of the enemy had crossed the river, and ambushed themselves in the prairie. They knew not how many whites remained in the town, and feared to attack lest their preconcerted plan should be defeated.

On the 26th, the main body of the Indians crossed and marched directly toward the fields, expecting to find the greater part of the villagers there; but in this were disappointed, a few only having gone out to gather strawberries. They perceived the approach of the savage foe and immediately commenced a retreat towards the town, the most of them taking the road that led to the upper gate, nearly through the mass of Indians, and followed by a shower of bullets. The firing alarmed those in town, and the cry, "To arms! to arms!" was heard in every direction. They marched toward the works and threw open the gates to their brethren. The Indians advanced slowly but steadily towards the town, and the inhabitants, though almost deprived of hope by the vast numerical superiority of their assailants, determined to defend themselves to the last.

On expectation of an attack, Silvio Francisco Cortabona, a governmental officer, had gone to Ste. Genevieve for a company of militia to aid in defending the town, and had at the beginning of the month, returned with sixty men, who were quartered on the citizens. As soon as the attack commenced, however, neither Cortabona nor his men could be seen. Through fear or treachery, the greater part concealed themselves in a garret, and there remained till the Indians retired! The assailed were still resolute. About fifteen men

were posted at each gate and the rest were ranged along the line of defense in the most advantageous manner.

When within proper distance, the Indians began an irregular fire, which was answered with grape shot from the artillery. The firing for a while was warm, but the Indians perceiving that all their efforts would fail to carry the entrenchments, deliberately withdrew. At this stage the Lieut. Governor appeared. He ordered several pieces of cannon at the government house to be spiked and filled with sand! He then bade the inhabitants cease firing and return to their houses! Those at the lower gate did not hear his order and remained. He thereupon ordered a cannon to be fired at them.

The volley passed over them and struck the wall, tearing much of it down. These proceedings agreed with his previous conduct. A few days before, he had sold to the traders all the government ammunition and the people would have been defenceless had they not seized eight barrels of powder belonging to a trader. Representations of his perfidy were sent to New Orleans, and he was deposed. A short time afterwards, he died beneath a load of merited scorn, and was thought to have hastened his end by poison.

As soon as the Indians had retired, the inhabitants went out and buried their dead. Seven were at first found, and interred in one grave. Ten or twelve others, in the course of a fortnight, were discovered in the long grass that bordered the marshes.

Some of the victims were horribly mangled. A young man named Calve was found with his skull split open, and a tomahawk, in the blade of which was written the word Calve, sticking in his brain. He was supposed to have fallen by the hand of his own uncle, a Canadian among the Indians. About twenty persons were killed in endeavoring to get within the entrenchments. None of those within were killed, nor were any bodies of the Indians found. They did not improve their opportunity to plunder, nor did they attack any of the neighboring towns, where the danger would have been less. The conclusion is that the only object was to destroy St. Louis, that they were instigated by the English, and that the Governor was an aider and abettor in the effort.

This Indian attack forms an era in the history of the place, and the year of its occurrence has ever since been designated as the "year of the blow," "L'annee' du coup." The population at the time of the attack was eight or nine hundred. The number of houses was one hundred and twenty.

The four projections on the scenic gallery are finished with a deeply shaded niche in each, to be filled as may at some future day be thought best. Above, and in the spandrels formed by the elliptical niches, are panels made by enriched mouldings, and scrolled ornaments. The cornice above the coved ceiling is of the richest workmanship, and most luxuriously wreathed. The heads of the ellipses are adorned with figures emblematical of the products and industry of our country.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DOME.

It may not be generally known that Mr. Rumbold has awarded to him a patent, to extend for seventeen years, of the style of the dome which he has placed upon the Court House. The improvement consists in dispensing with the cone upon which domes are usually built. By the use of ribs of wrought iron, springing from an immense iron ring at the base, and converging to a small one at the top, where they are most strongly secured, the weight and expense of a supporting core are avoided. The architect has also succeeded in relieving the walls of the rotunda of a vast portion of the weight of the dome. Having first strengthened these walls by the insertion of eight iron pillars on the foundation below, he has carried, in substance, an independent series of columns to the base of the dome, and by the slow and gentle insertion of fine wedges, has actually lifted the dome, slightly indeed, and transferred a large share of its pressure to these columns. By still another shrewd arrangement, he had guarded against the remote contingency of such a pressure of air within the dome as might remove it from its base.

Praise is not only due to the gentlemen above named, but to Augustus Becker, who has executed an indispensable and most important part in frescoing the walls, cornices, panels, &c. Also, to Wm. C. Smith, performer of the stucco work, and to Joseph Foster, as the master carpenter. The iron work, partially and well contributed by McPheeters and Co., has been completed in excellent style by Thos. Howard & Co.

THE ORIGINAL BUILDING.

AN ACT concerning a Court House and Jail in county of St. Louis,

Approved Dec. 14, 1822.

Section 1. Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, That Thomas Sappington, of Gravois; Ludwell Bacon, of Bonhomme; Robert Quarles, of St. Ferdinand; and Pierre Chouteau, Jr., and Wm. Carr Lane, of the town of St. Louis, be, and they are hereby appointed Commissioners, for and in behalf of the county of St. Louis, to select a proper site within the town of St.

Louis, whereon to select [sic] a court house for said county; and the said commissioners are hereby empowered to receive proposals from all persons who may be willing to make donation of land, to the said county, for the purpose aforesaid, and to accept and receive such proposed donation as to them shall seem most beneficial to the county; and they are moreover authorized and empowered to cause a deed of conveyance to be executed, whereby the land so offered shall be conveyed to the Justices of the County Court and their successors in office, forever, in trust for the use of said county to be applied to the purposes aforesaid."

From a parchment record on file in the county office, dated in 1823, we find that a majority of the commissioners appointed under said act, selected the ground now occupied by the present magnificent Court House, which has just been completed.

We copy from the parchment as follows:

We, the undersigned, commissioners appointed by an act of the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, entitled 'an act concerning a Court House and Jail in the county of St. Louis, approved the 14th day of December, 1822' have this day selected, as a proper site whereupon to erect a Court House for the county of St. Louis, a square of ground offered by John B. C. Lucas and Auguste Chouteau, Esquires, situated on the hill in that part of the city of St. Louis laid out by the said Lucas and Chouteau, bounded on the east by Fourth Street, on the south by Bonhomme street, being the cross street that comes up from the market house, on the west by Fifth street, and on the north by a cross street; and the said Commissioners are by the said act authorized, do by these presents accept and receive the said square of ground of said John B. C. Lucas and Auguste Chouteau, Esqrs., the donors, as the site whereon the Court House of the county of St. Louis shall be built. The said Lucas and Chouteau are requested to execute a deed for said square, as is required by the act above referred. Given under our hands at St. Louis, this 25th day of August, 1823.

"THOMAS SAPPINGTON,

"WILL CARR LANE,

"P. CHOUTEAU, Jr."

Which deed was executed by Auguste Chouteau, Theresa Cerre Chouteau, and John B. C. Lucas, and is dated in September, 1823.

The spot selected for the Court House, seems to have been dedicated to justice long before the building was erected, for we find from the early records that the whipping post was established there, and that stern justice was administered to offenders, both before and for some years after the old building was built, the whipping post was on the spot now occupied by the city offices.

The first step towards the erection of a Court House on the ground selected, was made by the County Court, composed of Judges Joseph V. Garnier, Peter Ferguson and Francis Nash, on the 9th day of November, 1825, and their action is recorded as follows:

"The Court deeming it expedient to erect a Court House on the public square, deeded to the county by Lucas and Chouteau, do order that a Court House be erected on said square, and that a sum of seven thousand dollars be appropriated for that purpose, to be raised from the tax on licenses; and the Court appoint Alexander Stuart commissioner to superintend the building of said Court House."

The judges seem to have concluded that a seven thousand dollar Court House would not be "exactly the thing" in a growing town as St. Louis then was, and no doubt looked forward to the time when she would become "the great and mighty heart of the great and mighty West," as expressed by one of our orators a few years ago, and accordingly at the next session, on the 7th February, 1826, made the following order:

WHEREAS, The Court at their last November term, deeming it expedient to erect a Court House for St. Louis county, made an order for the building thereof, and at the same time appropriated a sum of \$7,000 to be drawn from the tax on licenses; and, whereas, it appears to the Court that the appropriation then made may be inadequate to the object intended. It is therefore ordered that an additional sum of \$5,000 be appropriated to arise from the same source, and the Court authorize the Superintendent, when he advertises for proposals, for erecting said building, (should he think proper to do so), to state that there is now in the treasury, specie of the aforesaid appropriation, the sum of eight thousand and twenty-five dollars, that the probable receipts from the said source will be about four hundred dollars per quarter, and that the Court, when they have not money arising from the appropriation aforesaid under their control, or funds which may properly be applied in aid of said appropriation, will, on certificate of the Superintendent, as required by law, direct the issue of certificates of not

less than \$100 each, bearing an interest of six per cent. per annum, for the redemption of which the aforesaid fund shall remain pledged, subject, however, to be redeemed at any time the Court may have funds to do so, and which they may think proper to apply to that purpose."

The said Superintendent, Alex. Stuart, on the 9th of February, 1826, submitted to the County Court, a plan of the building to be erected, with the dimensions thereof, and an estimate of the probable cost, being the sum of twelve thousand dollars, which, (says the Court Record,) after being maturely examined, was approved.

There appears to have been some difficulty about the plans for the building, for at the next meeting of the Court on May 1, 1826, we find that then a plan for a building submitted by Messrs. Morton & Lavielle was also approved, and \$2,000 additional appropriated, and the contract for the erection of the building awarded to said Joseph C. Lavielle and George Morton for \$14,000; the contract is dated May 25th, 1826, thus virtually rescinding their acceptance of Stuart's plan.

We suppose that Mr. Stuart, the first Superintendent, must have become dissatisfied with this action of the Court, for at the very next meeting of the Court on July 25th, 1826, "Henry S. Greyer [sic] was appointed Commissioner to superintend the building of the Court House in the city of St. Louis, vice Alexander Stuart resigned.

Mr. Geyer certified the building accounts from time to time as the work progressed, and the final settlement was made by Mr. Geyer, Superintendent, with Morton and Lavielle on the 10th day of August, 1838, [sic] the building then being entirely completed, the cost of which was found to be \$14,416 16.

From time to time between this date and June 1838, there were orders made in regard to the several offices and rooms in the old building, until it was found that the increase of legal business and the growing wants of the county required more room for the transaction of the same, accordingly, on June 1st, 1838, the Court made an order that proposals be invited for the erection of a building for Clerk's offices on the southwest corner of the square (corner Fifth and Market streets,) to be 132 feet long by 36 feet in width. And on September 7th, 1838 another notice was given and an offer for one hundred dollars for the best plan was made for a building on the public square either adjoining the Court House or adjacent thereto, which resulted in the adoption of a plan submitted by Henry Singleton, on July 8, 1839, and the appointment of

said Singleton as Architect and Superintendent. This was the commencement of the present splendid edifice whose magnificent dimensions and towering dome rises so conspicuously amid the surrounding buildings, and from the lofty summit of which the distant city of Alton can be seen lying like a snow drift among the hills, and the mighty Father of waters can be traced from a point far in the North, winding his serpentine course past our great metropolis, till he is hidden from our vision by the high bluffs through which he rushes to the South.

The first contract for work upon the present building under the above order, was made by said Architect Singleton with Jos. Foster for the carpenter work under date of Aug. 12, 1839, and in April, 1842, a contract for the cut stone work of the rotunda was awarded to H. J. Hull, and the contract for plastering to John Shannon.

We find a little incident recorded under date of July, 1841, which serves to show how little the financial condition and resources of the West were appreciated in the East. A committee having been appointed by the County Court to procure a loan of \$30,000, to be applied to the completion of the Court House, the capitalists in Boston were applied to for the money, but it was not obtained in that city, they deeming that St. Louis was situated at too distant a point in the West to be a safe place for the investment of so large a sum.

On October 28, 1842, the court ordered that a room be set apart for the use of the St. Louis Law Library, then in its infant days, and on the 10th of January, 1843, the northwest corner room in the second story was selected, which continued to be used for the Library until the completion of the south wing, at which time the books were removed to the spacious room, where they now are, and the library itself has increased in size so that it is now inferior, in the number of volumes, to but few, if any, in this country.

June 21, 1843, Murison & Morrison, contractors for erecting the steps on the west front, having completed their work, were paid \$1,520 therefor.

June 26, 1843, Francis McDermott's bid for erecting the stone steps on the north and south fronts, was accepted at a price of \$2,200, and under a contract at that sum they built the steps.

August 19, 1843, Joseph Foster, the contractor for the carpenter work, was instructed to complete the old rotunda with dispatch, which was done.

From this time until 1851, there was but little work done upon the building, and there being no architect, what was done was executed under the immediate direction of the County Judges.

On February 19, 1851, the court made an order for the erection of the present east wing, and in December, 1851, appointed Robert S. Mitchell, Architect and Superintendent, with a compensation of four per cent. upon all expenditures. Mr. Mitchell immediately proceeded to tear down the old building, which stood where the east wing was to be erected, and in October, 1852, contracted with Mr. Bernard Crickard for the cut-stone work for the wing, letting out the brick work to John C. Evens.

It having been decided to have the south and north wings also erected, Mr. Architect Mitchell contracted on the 28th of May, 1853, with said Crickard, for the cut stone work of the south wing, and in July 1853, for the six stone columns for the portico of the east wing.

The work thus progressed up to 1857, when a disagreement arose between the architect (Mr. Mitchell) and the contractor (Mr. Crickard) in regard to the measurement of the cut stone work, which was only settled after a long investigation by two different sets of arbitrators, their award being in favor of Mr. Crickard for \$68,755 78.

On the 14th day of May, 1857, the County Court superseded Mr. Mitchell and appointed Mr. Thomas D. P. Lanham, to the office, at the same rate of compensation, 4 p. cent. on the amount of work done under his supervision. Under Mr. Lanham the work on the left wing progressed, (there having been some alterations made in said wing,) the foundation of the north wing was laid and the changes in the rotunda commenced by the removal of the upper portion of the dome, and the substitution of heavy iron plates representing paneling, the design being to increase the height of the rotunda in this manner.

The plastering of the west wing was also done under Mr. Lanham's supervision, by Mr. Patrick Gregory, and the contract for the brick work of the north wing was awarded to James George, on the 30th of August, 1858.

In January, 1859, the County Court was abolished by the Legislature, and on the first Monday in August, 1859, the Board of County Commissioners were elected. The first meeting of the Board was on August 15 of that year.

July 16th, 1860, the architect submitted a report in relation to covering the stone and glass for the walk of the observatory and for the eye of the dome, and specifications were ordered to be made, and proposals for the work and materials advertised for.

August 24th, 1860, Mr. Rumbold contracted with Mr. A. A. Briggs, of New York, for glass for the eye of the dome, and the 29th of August, agreed with Hall & Cozzans for putting the copper covering on the dome. The copper having been furnished by Park, McCurdy & Co., of Pittsburg, and was manufactured from the best quality of Lake Superior copper; and with J. G. McPheeters for the glass pavement of the observatory.

The erection of the wing being completed, excepting the columns, the Board directed Mr. Rumbold, on the 8th of October, 1860, to instruct the contractors, Crickard & Doyle, to proceed without delay to procure and erect said columns, which they accordingly did.

The architect, Mr. Rumbold, having previously advertised for proposals for plastering the inside of the dome and the ornamental work thereon, on the 19th of April, 1861, several proposals were received, and that of Wm. C. Smith accepted. Mr. Smith in due time completed the work, and an inspection of it will show with what skill and masterly workmanship he executed it. We believe it will compare favorably with any work of the kind in the country.

The ordinary painting of the several wings and other portions of the Court House was done by Mr. M. L. Julian, under a contract, and has been executed with great neatness, and with credit to the contractor. The contract being for all the paint work, and it being desirable that the fresco and scenic work should be done in the style of the art, Mr. Julian very magnanimously relinquished his right to execute said fresco and scenic painting, and on the 22d June, 1862, the Board authorized Mr. Rumbold to enter into an agreement with Mr. Augustus H. Becker, an artist of great skill, for the fresco painting of the rotunda. The Architect having submitted specifications for the architectural fresco finish of the rotunda, the same were approved, and a committee of the Board (consisting of Mr. Lightner and Dr. Taussig, []) was appointed to consult in relation to the eight principal designs for the main panels of the rotunda.

Mr. Becker, without delay, proceeded to the execution of the fresco work, and progressed with the rapidity and skill of a perfect master of the pencil.

COST OF THE COURT HOUSE--ITEMS OF EXPENDITURE.

Cut-stone work, (to Crickard & Doyle).....	\$383,647	05
Other stone work.....	48,455	91
Iron work.....	151,342	22
Brick and material.....	71,115	23
Plastering.....	21,054	65
Carpentry.....	146,607	19
Painting and glazing.....	21,650	13
Roofing.....	23,825	49
Sundries, labor, materials, &c.....	288,329	71
Architect and Superintendent.....	<u>43,844</u>	<u>33</u>
Total.....	\$1,199,871	91

St. Louis Daily Democrat, July 4, 1862

APPENDIX B: PART 2

COURT HOUSE ROTUNDA

The Recent Alterations and Decorations

The dark and gloomy appearance of our St. Louis Court House is about to be illuminated by rays of light, diffused not only from the apex or termination of the dome, but also from the four wings or transepts connected with the rotunda. After years of labor and enormous sums of money spent on designing and decorating the interior of the Court House and its ornamental dome, it was supposed that all was completed by the County Architect under a former administration. But it was found deficient in one of the most essential points--that of light.

The present County Judges, seeing the necessity of obviating this difficulty, instructed their Architect, Mr. Thomas Walsh, to remedy this serious defect, which he has accomplished in a most satisfactory manner by the following means: First, by allowing the windows in the drum of the dome to be seen from the ground floor, thus enabling them to reflect their light below. Secondly, by cutting down the ceilings in passages leading to the offices in the four transepts, and placing large iron skylights over them, thereby throwing not only a flood of light into these passages, but also into the rotunda of the dome. Thirdly, by removing the dingy colored glass over the eye of the dome and displacing the iron staircase which passed over it leading to the balcony outside and on top of the dome. This is most ingeniously contrived, and reflects great credit on the architect in the opinion of all who are conversant with the difficulties to be encountered, as the glass removed was painted and stained to hide the stairs over it from being seen from below, but at the same time it prevented the light from being reflected downwards.

A visit to the most important buildings having domes in Europe will convince anybody of the necessity of this change, which has been overcome by the removal of the iron stairs and placing them so that they lead outside to the same place, but still concealed from view. The glass in the eye of the dome has also been removed and a counter dome placed over it, having the base of the lantern over the eye of the last. The lantern being enclosed by iron sash and glass, is also brought into requisition in assisting the lighting of the interior. It will, when finished, be a beautiful piece of work, and accord in architectural taste and form with some of the best examples in Europe. The whole interior, up to the top of the lantern, will be exposed to view from the ground floor, and the desired purposes accomplished.

by the figure of Columbia in a proud and defiant attitude, the stars of the States cluster in her diadem, and not one has been lost, although many have grown dim in the process of reconstruction. Between these figures are smaller groups, and a picture of the coat of arms of the United States.

The decorations of Mr. Pomarede give the lantern a cheerful and pleasing appearance, and have been done in excellent style, exhibiting the genius of the artist to great advantage.

When the alterations in the rotunda are completed and the debris removed, the Court House will be an attractive object to the visitor, and by the addition of ample light, the different corridors and court rooms will be greatly improved.

St. Louis Daily Democrat, November 7, 1869

APPENDIX B: PART 3

THE COURT-HOUSE
Description of the New Decorations
and Frescoes Under the Dome

The work of frescoing the Court-house dome has been completed, and the unsightly scaffolding is being removed. A very good view of the work can now be obtained, and every one who has seen it has passed the highest encomiums upon it. When the city fathers decided to renovate and repaint the dome, it was in a shamefully dilapidated state. Nearly all of the paintings and emblems were unrecognizable and the frescoing was cracked and tarnished. The contract for repairing and frescoing the edifice was given to Mr. E. S. Miragoli, and the result shows that it could not have been placed in better hands. The work is done in the highest style of art, and is in perfect keeping with the Greek architecture of the building. The whole thing is allegorical and has been completely changed. Only a few of the old emblematic designs are retained, the principal of these being the landing of Laclede. The portraits with which the rotunda and alcoves are ornamented are all fresh and are admirable likenesses of American statesmen and heroes, even of the present time. At the top the portraits of Christopher Columbus, Abraham Lincoln, John Quincy Adams and U. S. Grant look down upon the figures below. Between these portraits, at even intervals, are emblems representing agriculture, commerce, the United States and the administration of Government. Just below these is a large figure, ten feet in height, representing Law, which is admirably executed in colors. With this are allegorical representations of Knowledge, Instruction and History.

Following these in the descent, are portraits in color of Daniel Webster, DeSoto, Andrew Johnson and Frank P. Blair. Then there is an enormous eagle, in colors, representing the American bird, and Cupid in bas relief. More portraits in beautiful colors come next, showing the remembered faces of Washington, Martha Washington, Senator Benton, Missouri's great statesman, and Judge Bates. From the central column, the spaces between these are seen to be occupied by emblems of the American Republic--Constancy, Perseverance and Assiduity. The representation of the Republic is a figure eight feet high.

The frescoing of the walls is well done and a close inspection only will reveal that the walls are not of variegated marble artistically joined together. The judges of the Circuit Court and the lawyers are high in praise of the work, and a complimentary letter

will be sent to the artist, who has in addition to this just completed a handsome piece of frescoing in Dr. Brooke's church. The cost is estimated at \$4,000.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, November 27, 1880

APPENDIX B: PART 4

WONDERFUL WORK.

The Interior Decorations of the Court House Dome Completed.

The removal of the scaffolding used by the painters in frescoing the interior of the Court House dome was completed yesterday, and the public was afforded an opportunity of inspecting the work and passing judgment upon its merits. The opinion of all, so far as expression was heard, was that the artist had accomplished a wonderful work, considering the short time allocated for its completion. The whole interior of the rotunda and dome, from the ground floor to the eye of the cupola, has been painted and frescoed, the fine paintings at the four sides retouched, and a large number of new figures added, all in oil colors, that will remain for many years and grow more attractive under the mellowing touch of time. The general appearance of the interior is entirely changed, and the rotunda has a more imposing look. It presents a scene that is extremely pleasant to the eye, and everything is indicative of artistic taste and skill of the highest order. Mr. Miragoli, the noted Italian artist, did the greater portion of the fine work himself, and was assisted by some of the best fresco artists in America. He has reason to be proud of the old Court House as it now appears.

A few of the more striking features of the embellishments are here given for the benefit of those who may have occasion to inspect the work. The old paintings that were retouched had decayed a good deal, on account of the leakage of the roof, which injured the water colors in places. The artists who painted them looked more to fineness of details than durability, and used water colors and oil in the same picture. The finest work of art is the view of Ochetopa [sic] Pass, painted by Weimer from a sketch taken on the spot. This is on the west side, over the portrait of Washington, and was but little injured by the dampness. The opposite picture on the east, over the portrait of Benton, represents the landing of Pierre Ligest Laclède at the site of the present City of St. Louis--a low, rocky bluff, overgrown with large trees, at the foot of Market street. The highly-colored painting on the south side is an imaginary picture of DeSoto discovering the Mississippi River. The Spanish adventurer and his band are depicted in gay holiday costume by the artist, but history describes them as in a very dilapidated condition when they reached the left bank of the Father of Waters. A good likeness of Edward Bates is under this picture. On the north side is a miserable attempt to portray the attack made upon St. Louis by the British and Indians while many of the inhabitants were gathering strawberries on Corpus Christi day near the

Cardinal Spring, on what is now called Cardinal avenue. A fine likeness of Martha Washington, painted by Miragoli, is under this battle scene, which he scorned to retouch.

The four female figures in the space between these old pictures represent the Republic, Vigilance, Constancy and Assiduity. Those further up are Knowledge, Law, History and Instruction. These are in the cupola, and are ten feet high and in colors.

In the upper part of the cupola, in light and shade, are medalion portraits of Columbus, Lincoln, Adams and Grant, and figures representing Agriculture, Commerce, the United States and Administration. On what may be called the fifth floor are portraits in alto relievo of Webster, DeSoto, Jackson [sic] and Blair.

The largest four female figures appear, at first view, rather masculine in frame, but it must be remembered that Sara Bernhardt has not been to St. Louis yet, and the skeleton style of beauty is not in vogue here. The portrait of Benton is not good, but the others can readily be recognized.

The coloring of the figures, and on the walls and panels, is of a tinge pleasant to the eye--light brown with a pale blue as the eye glances upward, producing a pleasing effect upon the senses.

The work of Mr. Miragoli upon the Court House rotunda and dome was commenced last summer during the recess of the Courts, and was prosecuted through the terribly heated term of August--a time when labor of any kind was enervating, but it was completed with the utmost care and nothing was slighted. It is proposed to place an electric light in the rotunda to afford the citizens a view of the grand edifice to the greatest advantage. If this is done, a rare treat will be offered and the Court House will become the center of attraction.

St. Louis Globe-Democrat, December 5, 1880

APPENDIX C: STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The county courthouses of Missouri are of sufficient historical interest and possess enough architectural character to have caused the State Council on Historic Sites and Preservation to create a special thematic category for them when its Preservation Plan was adopted in accordance with federal guidelines. The Old Courthouse in St. Louis is an especially notable and significant example of that aspect of Missouri's historic and architectural legacy, and it indeed merits national attention. It has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places and included in the Historic American Buildings Survey.

The Old Courthouse's major architectural features are the product of construction programs and alterations carried out between 1839 and 1870. Further changes to, and repairs or replacement of, original material have, to be sure, been made in subsequent years but the fact remains that the building now presents a strong over-all indication of its appearance after the completion of the remodeling of the rotunda and the lantern in 1870. The replacement of the roofs of all four wings by the National Park Service is an example of work carried out in the post-1870 period which required the removal of original building material but which produced a result that is faithful to the structure's historic character. That point also applies to the existing windows. They are reproductions of the originals and the installation of them in place of the windows which were in use after 1911-1912 was a positive step in the restoration of the building.

Of all the structural components created between 1839 and 1870, the greatest significance must be attached to the dome which was fabricated almost entirely from wrought iron under William Rumbold's pioneering design in 1860-1861. Use of iron for such a purpose was then a decidedly novel idea, and the success of the effort in St. Louis--along with the completion of the cast-iron dome of the National Capitol at a slightly later date--caused the technique to gain widespread acceptance in the United States. For that reason, the Old Courthouse is a reflection of technological innovation and growth as it applied to the development of American architecture.

The oval courtrooms on the second floors of the east and west wings were intended at the time of their creation to be visually impressive spaces and to bespeak the dignity of the law. The restoration of those two spaces during the work carried out between 1940 and 1960 was not, and in light of the pressures of time could

not be, based on exhaustive research. The use of venetian blinds in each room is in that regard a present feature for which no documentary justification has been found. Both spaces, nonetheless, continue to convey a direct and powerful impression of the architectural and aesthetic character of the interior of the Old Courthouse in the mid-nineteenth century. Neither room is totally authentic in every detail but each possesses an ambiance which adds to the significance of the entire structure.

While those two courtrooms are noteworthy interior features, the rotunda holds far greater interest from either an architectural or an aesthetic point of view. The columns and pilasters which form the support for the galleries become ever more ornate on each successive level, adding a touch of richness to the vast space and making it a compelling sight. The viewer's eye is indeed carried upward to the major decorative work in the rotunda, the historic and symbolic representations which are the products of Carl Wimar, Ettore Miragoli and "restorers" of varying degrees of competence in the past century. Wimar's talents are now visible only in the four historical lunettes, and much of the existing paint on their surfaces was applied by subsequent artists. It remains true, nonetheless, that the history and the origins of the lunettes are inextricably bound to the career of one of the most famous artists of the mid-nineteenth-century American West.

Miragoli's contribution to the decoration of the rotunda has been re-evaluated in the preceding account of the history of the interior of the Old Courthouse. The conclusion is there advanced that he deserves a less harsh treatment than he has generally been accorded. The allegorical figures he created in the lower dome and on the fourth level gallery will never be considered to possess outstanding artistic merit, but they must be evaluated on the basis of the extent to which they mirror the values and aspirations of St. Louisans in 1880. On that count, they are significant.

Because it was the location of a host of meetings at which important issues were discussed or debated, the Old Courthouse played a major role in the history of St. Louis and it has a profound local significance. Use of the rotunda for the meeting in October 1849 at which Thomas Hart Benton delivered the justly famous speech which set in motion the process by which St. Louis came to have a rail link to the West Coast is but one example of such a gathering in the building. That event lends to it a significance which transcends the immediate geographical locale. So too do the first legal tests of the claim to freedom of Dred and Harriet Scott in the courtroom located on the ground floor of the west wing in 1847 and 1850. Remodeling of that floor in 1855 stripped it of the

physical characteristics it possessed when the case was tried, but the visitor's sense of personal contact with a dramatic and overwhelmingly important chapter of American history continues to be both direct and strong. The Old Courthouse has great value simply as an excellent example of the effects of technological innovation and of architectural design; beyond that it is a place where one can obtain a rewarding feeling of confrontation with the national heritage.

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