

SITE FILE COPY

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <p style="text-align: center;">Missouri</p>	
COUNTY: <p style="text-align: center;">Ralls</p>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:

Ralls County Courthouse and Jail-Sheriff's House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

Courthouse Square *

CITY OR TOWN:

New London

STATE <p style="text-align: center;">Missouri</p>	CODE <p style="text-align: center;">63459</p>	COUNTY: <p style="text-align: center;">Ralls</p>	CODE <p style="text-align: center;">173</p>
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	_____	_____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:

Ralls County

STREET AND NUMBER:

Ralls County Courthouse, Courthouse Square

CITY OR TOWN:

New London

STATE: <p style="text-align: center;">Missouri</p>	CODE <p style="text-align: center;">63459</p>	COUNTY: <p style="text-align: center;">Ralls</p>	CODE <p style="text-align: center;">29</p>
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

Office of Recorder of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:

Ralls County Courthouse, Courthouse Square

CITY OR TOWN:

New London

STATE: <p style="text-align: center;">Missouri</p>	CODE <p style="text-align: center;">63459</p>	COUNTY: <p style="text-align: center;">Ralls</p>	CODE <p style="text-align: center;">29</p>
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

1. Missouri: A Guide to the "Show-Me" State (WPA project)

DATE OF SURVEY:

1941

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

published: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, Inc., New York, New York

STREET AND NUMBER:

n.a.

CITY OR TOWN:

n.a.

STATE: <p style="text-align: center;">n.a.</p>	CODE	COUNTY: <p style="text-align: center;">n.a.</p>	CODE
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*9th Congressional District: Hon. William L. Hungate
House of Representatives

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Missouri
COUNTY: Ralls
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Ralls County Courthouse, facing west on New London's courthouse square, is designed in the Greek Revival temple-type, with cupola, style. The courthouse is two-storied and T-shaped in plan, the foot of the "T" being the original, 1858 portion of the courthouse and the crossbar the lower, 1936 annex wing. A two-story, tetra-style portico spans the entire width of the west facade of the courthouse. An unusually tall cupola is centered over the west wall, extending westward over half of the portico and eastward to the west edge of the first bay window.

EXTERIOROver-all dimensions

The original portion of the courthouse is three bays (54 feet) on the west facade and four bays (60 feet including the portico) on the north and south facades. (Eight feet of the original length of the north and south facades has been incorporated into the annex wing). The annex wing is five bays (50 feet) on the south facade and four bays (50 feet) on the north facade. The east facade (104 feet), however, does not conform to this regular system of bay divisions. The annex and original section of the courthouse are connected along the west facade of the annex, eliminating the central bays on this side. The remaining four bays are located on the north and south ends of the annex's west wall, two bays (25 feet) on each end. Other dimensions include the columns which are four feet four inches in diameter at the base of the shaft.

Construction materials

The courthouse is constructed of dressed limestone, hand-hewn in the original section, and wood. The stones are laid in courses 13 inches high, a typical stone being 13 x 40 inches. The west wall, within the portico, has been given special attention by tooling each separate stone with a one and a half inch border. (This treatment calls attention to the craftsmanship with which the exceptionally fine masonry joints are executed). The stone window sills and lintels are finished smoother than the regular ashlar wall blocks.

Portico

A portico dominates the west facade of the original portion of the courthouse. Four, massive, modified, unfluted, Doric columns support a simple pediment. Each column rests on a separate plinth. The shafts of these columns are tapered inward at the neck and are constructed of stone ashlar built up and finished with cement. The pediment is simple with no major decorative details except for modillions along the undersides of the raking cornice and an inscription with the name of the courthouse and the date centered in the triangular space of the pediment.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1858, 1936 courthouse; 1869 jail-sheriff's

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Ralls County Courthouse, in New London, Missouri, is significant as an example of Greek Revival architecture in Missouri; a style distinctive of Missouri in the nineteenth century, particularly in the 1850's and 1860's. This significance is enhanced by the fact that this courthouse is one of the three surviving courthouses in Missouri in this style, the only one derived from the Doric order, and by the building's good state of preservation. Both its exterior and interior exist in a state very close to their original condition. The courthouse is also noteworthy as the scene of the trial of Alexander Jester for the murder of Gilbert Gates, brother of Chicago multi-millionaire John W. (Bet-You-A-Million) Gates.

The courthouse was built in the later years of the Greek Revival period when other cities and counties were choosing newer and more florid fashions of the early Victorian era, with turrets, bays, and gingerbread excrescences.¹ The use of this style, as opposed to these newer styles, typified the continuing efforts of designers, architects, and builders to bring to Missouri the most developed fruits of American architecture.² This period became known as Missouri's "Golden Age of Art."³

The idea for the courthouse was officially conceived on March 5, 1857, when the Ralls County Court appointed a committee of Chapel Carstarphen, James Dimmitt, and John Biggs to submit a plan and an estimated cost for a new courthouse building.⁴ It was to be the county's third such "Hall of Justice." The first courthouse, completed in August, 1822, was a two-story, 20 feet x 18 feet, log structure constructed two blocks west of the present courthouse. The lower story housed the jail and the upper story the courtroom.⁵ It was abandoned and sold in 1834 when a new, two-story, 50 feet square, brick building was erected on the current courthouse square.⁶ The courtroom was on the ground floor with the clerks' offices and jury rooms on the second floor.⁷ This courthouse became unsafe and was torn down in 1858, being replaced by the present courthouse.⁸

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Ankeney, J. S. "A Century of Missouri Art," The Missouri Historical Review, Vol. XVI, No. 4, July, 1922, pp. 481-501.
2. Burnett, Joe. A Brief History of Ralls County Missouri. Perry, Missouri: N. Pub., 1936, p. 5.
3. Caldwell, Dorothy J. (ed.). Missouri Historic Sites Catalogue. Columbia, Missouri: State Historical Society of Missouri, 1963, p. 139.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES			
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE			
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than 10 acres

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

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

11. FORM PREPARED BY

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

ORGANIZATION: Missouri State Park Board DATE: June 9, 1972
State Historical Survey and Planning Office

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

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

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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

National State Local

Name Joseph Jaeger, Jr.

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

Date _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

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6.

RALLS COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL-SHERIFF'S HOUSE

2. Missouri Historic Sites Catalogue (state)
1963
The State Historical Society of Missouri
Corner, Hitt and Lowry streets
Columbia, Missouri 65201 Code: 29

3. Missouri State Historical Survey
1972
Missouri State Park Board
P.O. Box 176
1204 Jefferson Building
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101 Code: 29

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7. #1

RALLS COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL-SHERIFF'S HOUSE

Openings

Windows. The first floor windows on the north and south sides of the original portion of the courthouse are rectangular with eight-over-eight light, double-hung sash. The second floor windows are also rectangular-shaped and are the same width as the first floor windows, but are now twelve-over-twelve light, double-hung sash. All these windows have stone sills and lintels. The windows on the west facade are identical to the corresponding windows on the north and south facades, except for the central second floor window. The central portion of this window matches the other second floor windows in shape and number of lights. The difference results from the added sidelights, six to each side. The fenestration conforms to the one-window-per-bay plan. The windows on both floors of the annex are rectangular, complete with stone sills and lintels. These windows are six-over-six light, double-hung sash. On the west and south facades these windows follow the arrangement of the windows on the original section. The fenestration pattern is similar on the north facade, with one window missing from the first floor in the second bay from the east, and becomes completely irregular on the east facade. Three, small, one-over-one light, double-hung sash windows are also placed at various locations on the east facade.

Doorways and doors. The courthouse has three entrances, a main entrance in the original section and two secondary entrances leading into the annex. The main entrance is centered on the west facade between the second and third columns and is flanked by two pilasters which support an entablature, all constructed of wood. The doorway has a single set of double doors (not original to the 1858 construction), half glass, half wood, the upper portion of which is flanked by six sidelights (appear to be original), three to each side. Each door has four lights in the upper section. A transom, nine lights wide by one light high, spans the entire width of the door proper and the sidelight sections. A light fixture is centered under the dentils on the entablature. Secondary entrances are located on the east and south facades of the annex. The east facade doorway is similar to the main entrance in elements employed, with several variations. This doorway is flanked by two pilasters and is surmounted by a modified entablature. The doorway is slightly recessed. The door jamb has three-panel wood facings. The door proper is identical to the main door, but with only one sidelight section located on the

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7. #2

RALLS COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL-SHERIFF'S HOUSE

north side of the door. This sidelight section has only two lights. A five-light transom spans the entire width of the doorway and the sidelight section. A light fixture is centered over the transom on the entablature. The second annex entrance is located on the south side. This entrance has no wood trim. The door is single with four lights in the upper half and is flanked by two sidelight sections, two lights to each section. A four-light transom spans the entire width of the doorway.

Cupola

The wooden cupola is octagonal-shaped and sets on a square wooden base. The bottom of the cupola is flared to create a transition between the octagonal cupola and the square base, which has simulated horizontal rustications. Each side of the cupola has a round-arched opening which is filled with louvers and is flanked by two pilasters. A moulding decorated with a keystone trims the upper edge of these openings. The width of each side of the cupola corresponds with the width of the louvered opening plus pilasters, creating the illusion of an arcade being wrapped around the cupola. The octagonal portion of the cupola is surmounted by a cornice with dentils which, in turn, supports an octagonally-faceted dome. The vertical proportions are noteworthy; the cupola stands nearly as high above the roof as the main portico cornice rises above the ground.

Roof

A low-pitched gable roof of seamed sheet-tin is over the original section; a low hip roof is over the annex.

Chimneys

A tall, slender chimney is located in the annex section, with several smaller chimneys in the original section.

Decorative details

The frieze and cornice of the portico are continued across all the facades of the original section. On the annex the same elements are employed, being appropriately reduced in scale and lowered in height. These features are wooden and contrast with the limestone of the walls. Modillions are evenly spaced under the cornice and raking cornice.

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7. #3

RALLS COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL-SHERIFF'S HOUSE

INTERIOR

The interior of the courthouse is divided into two floors.

First floor

The original section of the courthouse has a center hall running in an east-west direction. Four offices open off this hallway, including the Lawyers' Office. This is the 1858 office of the lawyers O. H. P. Ledford and J. P. Lancaster and includes much of the original furniture used by these men while they rented this office.

The annex wing has two hallways, one running north-south and a second being a continuation of the east-west hallway found in the original section. The north-south hall does not run the entire length of the annex, but stops at the doorway of the County Clerk's Office, which is located in the north end of the annex. There are two other offices in the annex wing, one located to each side of the north-south hallway in the south end of the annex.

Stairways are located 1) in the northwest corner of the original section, immediately to the north of the main entrance; 2) in the southeast corner of the original section, in the Assessor's Office; and 3) in the annex, on the east wall, immediately to the north of the rear entrance in the east-west hallway.

The walls of the corridors are painted light green and the ceilings are white. In the original section the ceiling is metal embossed with an over-all geometric pattern, while the annex ceiling is accoustical tile. The floors are concrete in the original section and wood flooring in the annex wing.

The doors, which are paneled on the face, have diagonal batten backs.

The first floor ceiling height in the original section is ten and a half feet.

Second floor

The courtroom is located in the original section of the courthouse. Various other county offices are located along the north-south hallway in the annex wing.

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RALLS COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL-SHERIFF'S HOUSE

The courtroom uses most of the original section of the courthouse. The west (rear) wall of the courtroom is a partition angled concavely toward the sides, enclosing a stairway (in the northwest corner), a central vestibule, and an anteroom (in the southwest corner). A rear entrance into the courtroom from the vestibule is centered on this partition. A second entrance is on the east wall, to the south of the judge's bench. The ceiling height is 12 feet. The spectators' pew-like benches are separated from the front of the courtroom by a curved walnut railing. This front area is carpeted while the remaining portion of the room has wood flooring. The walls of the courtroom are wallpapered in a shade of green similar to that found on the painted corridor walls. Around the lower section is a white and green dado. The ceiling is also papered, being mostly white with a green and pink striped border and two interior stripes, which intersect each other at the center of the courtroom and the outer border midway along each side. The elaborate, monumental, classical frames around the doors and windows are handcarved and consist of pilasters supporting entablatures. These decorative frames are white with a touch of gold added to the dentils. The frames for the original windows on the east wall have been preserved; one contains a door to the annex's north-south hallway and the other a blind opening which serves as a decorative niche. The interior walls and floor are packed with sawdust to dampen sound transmission.¹

RALLS COUNTY JAIL-SHERIFF'S HOUSE

Ralls County Jail-Sheriff's House is a two-story, "T-shaped" limestone building with a one-story frame addition on the rear, north-east corner and a one-story porch attached to the west (front) facade. The crossbar of the "T" is the main (west) section of the building, while the foot is the lower, rear (east) wing.

EXTERIOR

Porch

A one-story, wooden porch (not original) is attached to the west facade of the main section and is centered under the second story windows. The porch is supported by four, slender, Doric-like columns. Two pilasters, identical in form to the columns, visually attach the porch to the building. A low-pitched, modified gable roof surmounts the porch.

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7. #5

RALLS COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL-SHERIFF'S HOUSE

Openings

Windows. The windows, on the west, north, and south facades of the main section of the building are identical in form, but not in arrangement. On the three-bay west facade, there are five windows, two on the first floor and three on the second floor. These windows are six-over-six light, double-hung sash with stone lintels and sills. There is one window per bay on each floor except for the center bay on the first floor. The windows on the north and south facades are identical to each other in arrangement; two windows on the first floor, one window on the second floor (centered between the first floor windows), and a single, bull's eye window, with radiating stone voussoirs, centered above on the gable. There are four windows on the rear wing, two on the north facade and two on the south facade. There are no windows on the east facade of this section. These rear wing windows are of the horizontal sliding type. They are tall, being four lights high, and narrow, being two lights wide. Sills are found under the south windows only, having been eliminated from the north facade because of the frame addition. Stone lintels are positioned over all four windows. On the frame addition there are two windows, one being single and the other double. These windows are double-hung with large, single panes of glass in each sash. Both of these windows are located on the north side.

Doorways and doors. There are two doorways. The primary (west) doorway is located in the center first floor bay. It is recessed, between wood jambs, and has a three-light transom. The east doorway is located at the south end of the east wall on the frame addition. Both doorways have half glass, half wood doors and metal screen doors.

Roof

A gable roof is over the main section, a flat roof over the rear wing, and a shed roof over the frame addition.

Other features

Other features include: 1) a boxed cornice on the main section and 2) two chimneys symmetrically placed on the rear slope over the main section.

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7. #6

RALLS COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL-SHERIFF'S HOUSE

ALTERATIONS

The only alteration of the courthouse has been the addition of the 1936 annex wing which changed the rectangular plan of the courthouse to a "T-shaped" plan. The frame addition to the jail-sheriff's house was replaced in 1961.² The front porch was added at an undetermined date.

SITE

Ralls County Courthouse is located on the southeast corner of New London's courthouse square (Block 15). (This asymmetrical position is due to the fact that the second courthouse, a brick structure, was still on the square and in use, being vacated room by room as the new courthouse was made ready).³ The jail-sheriff's house is situated on the northwest corner (Lot 57) of Block 14, directly east of the square. The square is bordered by commercial buildings on the south and west and by private dwellings on the east and north. A church is also located to the east, next to the jail-sheriff's house. Sidewalks run along the curbs of the east, west, and south sides of Block 15 and lead to the courthouse's east, west, and south doors. A fourth sidewalk, running from the south curb to the portico, intersects the west sidewalk leading to the main entrance.

FOOTNOTES

1. Goldena, B. Howard, Ralls County Missouri Historic Past--Prosperous Present (New London, Missouri, 1959), p. 5.
2. Dorothy J. Caldwell, ed., Missouri Historic Sites Catalogue (Columbia, Missouri: State Historical Society of Missouri, 1963), p. 139.
3. The New 1968 Atlas of Ralls County Missouri (Webster Groves, Missouri: Fred C. Shepherd and Associates, [1968]), p. 3.

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8. #1

RALLS COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL-SHERIFF'S HOUSE

In creating a plan for the new courthouse, the committee consulted two contemporary handbooks, Thomas Tredgold's 1820 Principles of Carpentry and Minard Lefevre's Modern Builder's Guide, issued in 1833.⁹ With the aid of these sources, they developed a plan for a rectangular structure similar to the central portion of the Virginia State Capitol, topped by a cupola modeled after the belfry on Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia. This mixture of details was fitting since Ralls County's farm population originated in Virginia and the artisan population came from Pennsylvania.¹⁰

On July 8, 1857, the County Court accepted the plans and ordered the building erected. It was completed three years later at the sum of \$18,000.¹¹ No major alterations took place until 1936 when the annex was added across the back of the building, changing it from a rectangle into the present "T" form.

The building achieved national attention in 1939 when its facade was chosen as the model for the Missouri buildings at the World's Fair in New York and the Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco.¹²

In 1842, while the County Court was located in its second building, the jail was moved to a separate building across the street, on the southeast corner of Ralls and Third streets. "This structure was 14 feet square; two stories; with a roof and floor of wood, inlaid with square logs fitted [sic] closely together, and lined with sheet-iron. Entrance to the jail was gained by a wooden stairway on the outside leading to the second floor."¹³ The lower story was the dungeon, and the entrance to it was through a trap door in the upper floor. "This was, at the time it was built, thought to be a remarkably safe prison."¹⁴ The cost of the building was \$2,000. In a brief period the building was found to be worthless as a jail and was torn down and the present building erected at the cost of \$12,000 in 1869.

The trial of Alexander Jester for the murder of Gilbert Gates was the center of much controversy due to 1) the 30-year time lapse between the time the crime was alleged to have been committed and the time the trial took place; 2) the use of money by the prosecution to further its case; and 3) the use of the Pinkerton Detective Agency. In closing statements, defense lawyers stated:

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RALLS COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL-SHERIFF'S HOUSE

"This is not a case of Missouri against Jester--that is a misnomer--it is a case of John W. Gates and the Pinkerton Detectives, guardians for the State of Missouri, vs. Jester;¹⁵ and it is admitted that in the trial the state is unable to enforce the law and order and protect the peace and dignity of the state without the aid of millionaires and their Pinkerton detectives. The state has enforced law and order for a century without such aid, and, let old man Jester be guilty or innocent, it is a burning shame and a humiliating admission that at this late date that the great state of Missouri is compelled to have the aid of Pinkertons and millionaires before it can enforce law and order."¹⁶

Jester was acquitted of the charge of murder. "It is a just and righteous verdict and is a vindication of the old man, and better still, it is a rebuke for the use of Pinkertons and money in a court of justice" (defense attorney's statement).¹⁷

COMPARISON WITH OTHER MISSOURI COUNTY COURTHOUSES

Ralls County Courthouse is one of the three surviving Greek Revival courthouses in Missouri designed in a rectangular plan, the others being the Lafayette County Courthouse, dated 1848, and the Moniteau County Courthouse, 1867-1868. Five other counties had courthouses in this style, but have since replaced them with newer buildings in different styles. These counties in chronological order are: Buchanan, 1842; St. Charles, 1849; Gentry, 1853; and Caldwell, 1860. Ralls County Courthouse (1858) was the fifth courthouse built in this style. (St. Louis City Courthouse is not included in this comparison for several reasons: 1) the courthouse was not designed or built in a rectangular plan, but in a cross-shaped plan and 2) the building was more monumental in scale and proportions).

All eight courthouses shared three main characteristics: a rectangular floor plan (before alterations and additions), a columned portico, and a two-stage cupola topped by a dome. Seven of these courthouses were three bays wide on the portico facade and two-storied. Six were in the Doric order. The exceptions were St. Charles, Buchanan, Moniteau, and Lafayette counties. St. Charles County Courthouse was five bays wide and only one story high. Buchanan County and Lafayette County courthouses were in the Ionic order and Moniteau County Courthouse was in the Corinthian order.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Missouri	
COUNTY	
Ralls	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

8. #3

RALLS COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL-SHERIFF'S HOUSE

The survey of Missouri's sites of historical and architectural significance is based on the selection of sites as they relate to theme studies in Missouri history as outlined in Missouri's "Comprehensive Preliminary Historic Preservation Plan." The Ralls County Courthouse and Jail-Sheriff's House are therefore being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places 1) because as an example of the theme study of Missouri county courthouses, this courthouse is one of the three surviving examples of the Greek Revival period of architecture in Missouri, the only one in the Doric order, and 2) because it served as the scene of the trial of Alexander Jester for the murder of Gilbert Gates.

FOOTNOTES

1. Goldena B. Howard, Ralls County Missouri Historic Past--Prosperous Present (New London, Missouri, 1959), p. 2.
2. Talbot Hamlin, Greek Revival Architecture in America, (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1964 [original edition 1944]), p. 255.
3. J. S. Ankeney, "A Century of Missouri Art," The Missouri Historical Review (Columbia, Missouri: State Historical Society of Missouri, July, 1922), Vol. XVI, No. 4, p. 489.
4. Howard, Ralls County Missouri Historic Past--Prosperous Present, p. 2.
5. Walter Williams, ed., A History of Northeast Missouri (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1913), Vol. I, p. 533.
6. Ibid., p. 533; and Joe Burnett, A Brief History of Ralls County Missouri (Perry, Missouri, 1936), p. 5.
7. Edwards Brothers of Missouri, An Illustrated Historical Atlas of Ralls County Missouri (Philadelphia: Edwards Brothers of Missouri, 1878), p. 10.
8. Williams, A History of Northeast Missouri, p. 533.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Missouri	
COUNTY	
Ralls	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

8. #4
RALLS COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL-SHERIFF'S HOUSE
9. Howard, Ralls County Missouri Historic Past--Prosperous Present, pp. 2, 3.
10. Ralls County [Missouri] Record, July 17, 1959. (Centennial edition).
11. Howard, Ralls County Missouri Historic Past--Prosperous Present, p. 4.
12. Missouri State Department, Official Manual (Jefferson City, Missouri, 1939-1940), pp. 833-835; and St. Louis [Missouri] Post-Dispatch, March 27, 1938, p. 4a.
13. Edwards Brothers of Missouri, An Illustrated Historical Atlas of Ralls County Missouri, p. 10.
14. Ibid., p. 10.
15. St. Louis [Missouri] Globe-Democrat, July 31, 1900, p. 7, col. 3.
16. Ibid., p. 7, col. 3.
17. St. Louis [Missouri] Globe-Democrat, August 2, 1900, p. 3, col. 6.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Missouri	
COUNTY	
Ralls	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

9. #1

RALLS COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL-SHERIFF'S HOUSE

4. Edwards Brothers of Missouri. An Illustrated Historical Atlas of Ralls County Missouri. Philadelphia: Edwards Brothers of Missouri, 1878, p. 10.
5. Hamlin, Talbot. Greek Revival Architecture in America. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1964 (original edition 1944), pp. 250-255.
6. Howard, Goldena B. Ralls County Missouri Historic Past-- Prosperous Present. New London, Missouri: N. Pub., 1959. (This source is based on the records of the County Court).
7. Missouri State Department. Official Manual. Jefferson City, Missouri: N. Pub., 1939-1940, pp. 833-835.
8. Ralls County [Missouri] Record, April 1, 1938, p. 7.
9. _____, July 17, 1959.
10. St. Louis [Missouri] Globe-Democrat, July 8, 1900 - August 2, 1900.
11. St. Louis [Missouri] Post-Dispatch, March 27, 1938, p. 4a.
12. The New 1968 Atlas of Ralls County Missouri. Webster Groves, Missouri: Fred C. Shepherd and Associates, [1968], pp. 3, 27.
13. Williams, Walter (ed.). A History of Northeast Missouri. Vol. I. Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1913, p. 533.

OTHER PERTINENT SOURCES

1. Bock, James and Philip Cotton. Field Report, received September 19, 1969, and filed at the central office of the Missouri State Park Board, P.O. Box 176, 1204 Jefferson Building, Jefferson City, Missouri 65101.
2. Bryan, John Albury (ed.). Missouri's Contribution to American Architecture. St. Louis: St. Louis Architectural Club, 1928, p. 44.
3. Conard, Howard L. (ed.). Encyclopedia of the History of Missouri. Vol. V. New York: The Southern History Co., 1901, pp. 292-294.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Missouri	
COUNTY	
Ralls	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

9. #2

RALLS COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL-SHERIFF'S HOUSE

4. History of Gentry and Worth Counties, Missouri. St. Joseph, Missouri: National Historical Co., 1882, p. 223.
5. Lefevre, Minard. The Modern Builder's Guide, 1833. New York: Dover Publications, 1969.
6. Lovelace, R. Lloyd (ed.). "Missouri's Fair Building is Tops," Missouriana, Vol. XI, No. 5, September, 1939, p. 28.
7. Missouri: A Guide to the "Show Me" State. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, Inc., 1941, p. 445. (WPA project).
8. Personal correspondence with Buford L. Pickens, Professor, Washington University, School of Architecture, April 30, 1972.
9. Ralls County [Missouri] Times, July, 1900.
10. _____, August 3, 1900.
11. Rutt, Chris L. (ed.). History of Buchanan County and the City of St. Joseph and Representative Citizens. Chicago: Biographical Publishing Co., 1904. pp. 144-145.
12. S. S. Carroll & Company. Atlas of Ralls County Missouri. Des Moines, Iowa: The Kenyon Printing and Manufacturing Co., 1904.
13. St. Louis [Missouri] Daily Globe-Democrat, March 27, 1938, p. 5b.
14. Shoemaker, Floyd C. (ed.). The Missouri Historical Review. Vol. 32. Columbia, Missouri: State Historical Society of Missouri, July, 1938, p. 571.
15. _____. The Missouri Historical Review. Vol. 34. Columbia, Missouri: State Historical Society of Missouri, October, 1939 - July, 1940, pp. 101-102.

Form 10-301
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE	Missouri
COUNTY	Ralls
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	
DATE	

1. NAME: Ralls County Courthouse and Jail-Sheriff's House

COMMON: Ralls County Courthouse and Jail-Sheriff's House

AND/OR HISTORIC: Ralls County Courthouse and Jail-Sheriff's House

2. LOCATION: Courthouse Square

STREET AND NUMBER: New London

CITY OR TOWN: Missouri 63459

STATE: Missouri 63459

CODE: 29

COUNTY: Ralls

CODE: 173

3. MAP REFERENCE: U.S.G.S. 15' Hannibal Quadrangle

SOURCE: U.S.G.S. 15' Hannibal Quadrangle

SCALE: 1:62500

DATE: 1936

4. REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.

S E M I N S T R U C T I O N S

BASSINGER CORNER (JUNC. U.S. 64) 20 MI.
CENTER 2 MI.

T. 55 N.

895000
YARDS

1040000
FEET (ILL.)

39°30' 765000 YARDS
31 130000 FEET (ILL.) R. 5 W.

Topography by H.E. Simmons, B.H. Yoakum, F.L. Whaley,
E.J. Fennell, S.B. O'Hara, W.A. Tingey, C.A. Killian, T.A. Magee,
K.D. Cox, J.A. Logan, and A.R. Friend
Surveyed in 1921, 1928, 1935-1936

Red tint indicates area in which only
landmark buildings are shown

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

APPROXIMATE MEAN
DECLINATION, 1938

U.S.G.S. 15' Quadrangle
"Hannibal" (1936)
Scale 1:62,500
Ralls County Courthouse and Jail-
Sheriff's House

Lat 39°35'09" Long 90°24'02"

CURRYVILLE (JUNC. U.S. 64) 16 MI.

SCALE 1:62500



CONTAINS INFORMATION OF THE

Form 10-301
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE	Missouri
COUNTY	Ralls
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	
DATE	

COMMON: AND/OR HISTORIC:	Ralls County Courthouse and Jail-Sheriff's House		
LOCATION:	Courthouse Square		
STREET AND NUMBER:	New London		
CITY OR TOWN:	New London		
STATE:	Missouri	63459	CODE COUNTY: Ralls
		29	CODE 173

MAP REFERENCE:	W. Phillip Cotton, Jr., A.I.A.		
SOURCE:	1" = 80'		
SCALE:	September, 1969		
DATE:			

REQUIREMENTS:	TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS		
	1. Property boundaries where required.		
	2. North arrow.		
	3. Latitude and longitude reference.		

Property being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places is indicated on the map.

S M I N I S T R U C T I O N S

Form 10-301
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM**

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE	Missouri
COUNTY	Ralls
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME
COMMON: Ralls County Courthouse and Jail-Sheriff's House
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION
STREET AND NUMBER: Courthouse Square
CITY OR TOWN: New London

STATE: Missouri 63459
CODE: 29
COUNTY: Ralls
CODE: 173

3. MAP REFERENCE
SOURCE: W. Philip Cotton, Jr., A.I.A.

SCALE: 1/16" = 1'

DATE: September, 1969

4. REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

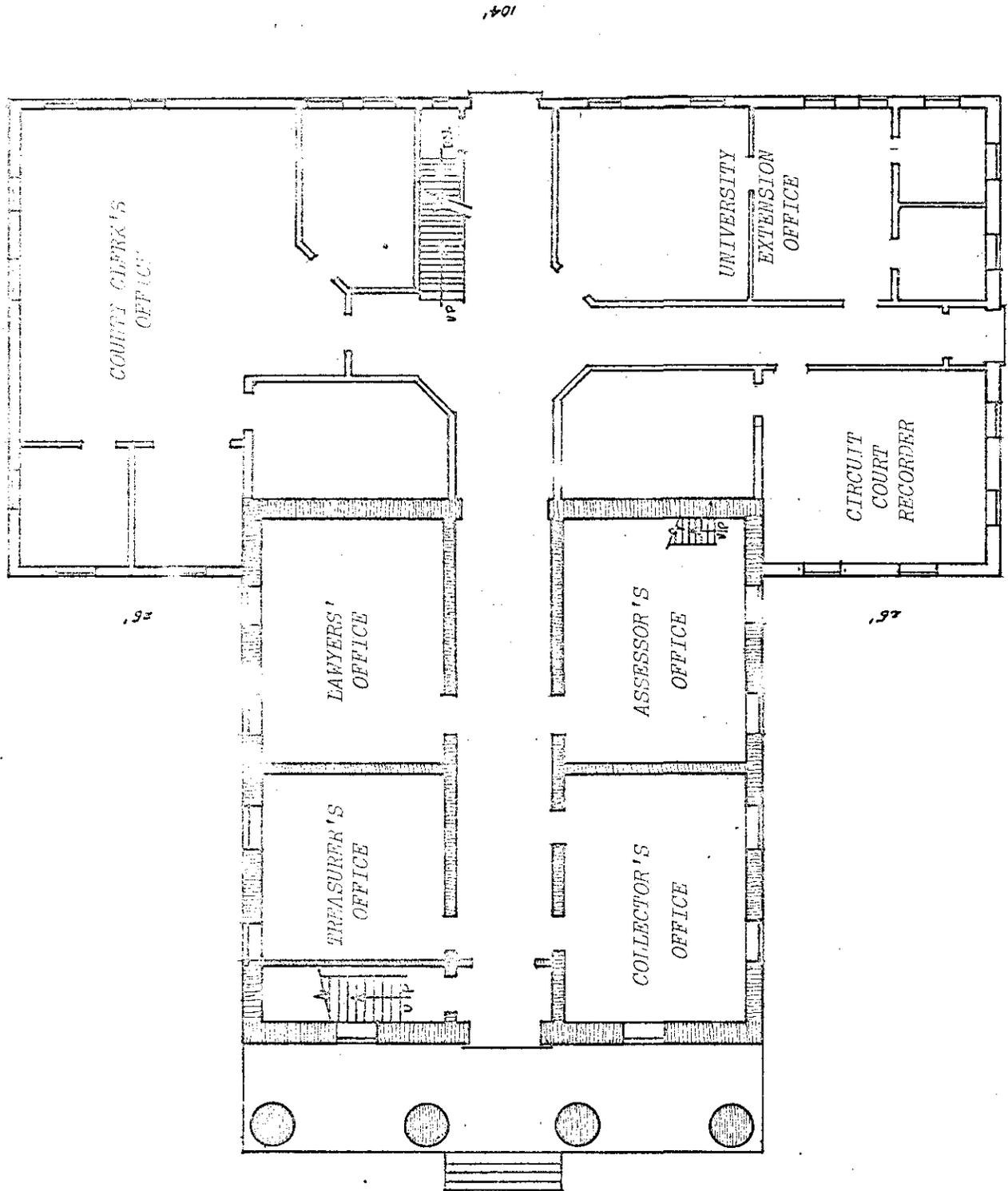
1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.

First floor plan

S T R U C T I O N S

110' 5"

50'

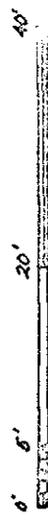
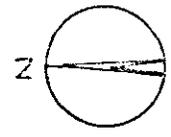
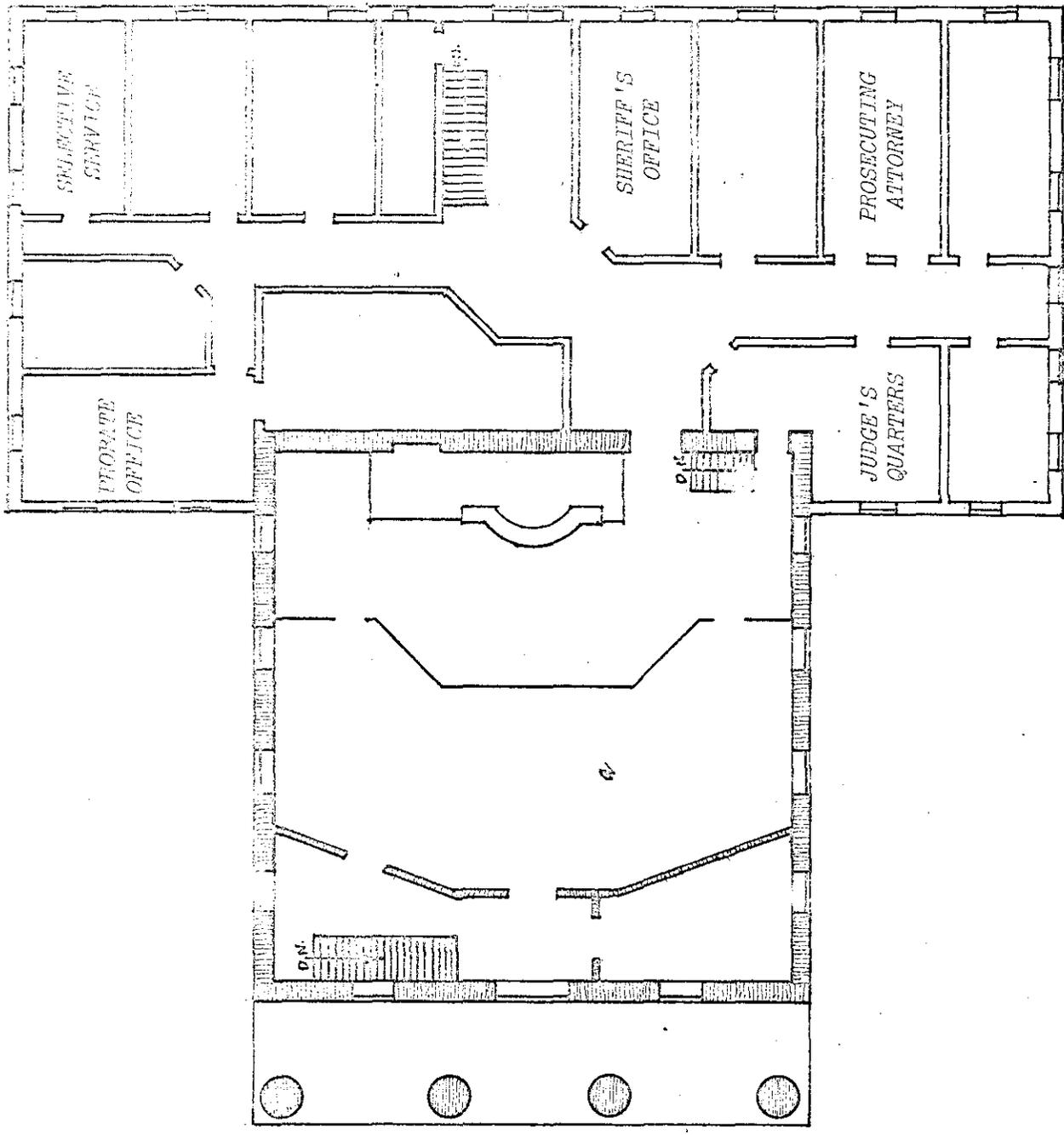


Shaded walls indicate original building

RALLS COUNTY COURTHOUSE 1st Floor

NEW LONDON, MISSOURI

SCALE 1/16" = 1'-0"



SCALE 1/16" = 1'-0"

© 1900

RALLS COUNTY COURTHOUSE 2ND FLOOR
 NEW LONDON, MISSOURI

RALLS COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND JAIL-SHERIFF'S HOUSE

COUNTY: Ralls

LOCATION: Courthouse Square (See Site Plan Map)

OWNER: Ralls County
ADDRESS: Ralls County Courthouse, New London, Mo.

DATE APPROVED BY A.C.: 05-15-71

DATE SENT TO JEFF. CITY: 06-09-72

DATE SENT TO D.C.:

DATE OF REC. IN D.C.:

DATE PLACED ON NATIONAL REGISTER: 09-14-72

DATE AWARDED CERTIFICATE
(AND PRESENTOR): 11-16-76
Orval L. Henderson, Jr.

DATE FILE REVIEWED:

Ralls County Courthouse, New London, Missouri, is significant as an example of Greek Revival architecture in Missouri; a style distinctive of Missouri in the nineteenth century, particularly in the 1850's and 1860's. This significance is enhanced by the fact that this courthouse is one of the three surviving courthouses in Missouri in this style, the only one derived from the Doric order, and by the building's good state of preservation. Both its interior and exterior exist in a state very close to their original condition. The courthouse is also noteworthy as the scene of the trial of Alexander Jester for the murder of Gilbert Gates, brother of Chicago multi-millionaire John W. (Bet-You-A-Million) Gates.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

STATE Missouri	
COUNTY Ralls	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME			
COMMON:		Ralls County Courthouse and Jail-Sheriff's House	
AND OR HISTORIC:			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
Courthouse Square			
CITY OR TOWN:			
New London			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Missouri	63459	Ralls	173
3. PHOTO REFERENCE			
PHOTO CREDIT:		W. Philip Cotton, Jr., A.I.A.	
DATE OF PHOTO:		September, 1969	
NEGATIVE FILED AT:		Missouri State Park Board, P.O. Box 176, 1204 Jefferson Building, Jefferson City, Missouri 65101	
4. IDENTIFICATION			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.			
Ralls County Courthouse--west facade, view from the west looking east. The cupola and portico are the outstanding features.			



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

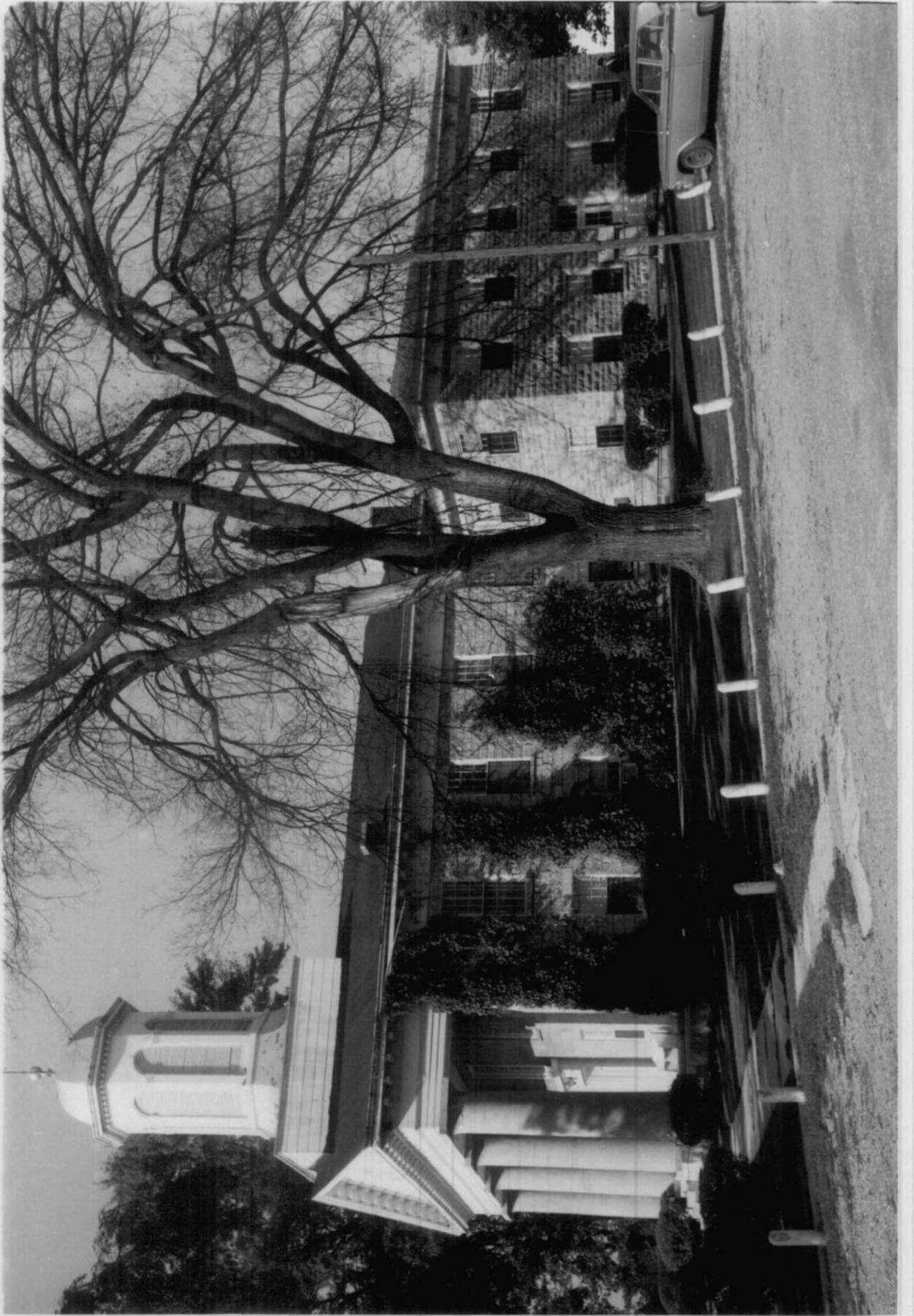
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2. LOCATION			
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Courthouse Square			
CITY OR TOWN:			
New London			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Missouri	63459	29	Ralls
			173
3. PHOTO REFERENCE			
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DATE OF PHOTO:		September, 1969	
NEGATIVE FILED AT:		Missouri State Park Board, P.O. Box 176, 1204 Jefferson Building, Jefferson City, Missouri 65101	
4. IDENTIFICATION			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.			
Ralls County Courthouse--south facade, view from the southwest looking northeast.			

SITE FILE #100V



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COUNTY Ralls	
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COMMON: Ralls County Courthouse and Jail-Sheriff's House
AND OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Courthouse Square
CITY OR TOWN: New London
STATE: Missouri 63459 CODE 29 COUNTY: Ralls CODE 173

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: Nancy B. Breme
DATE OF PHOTO: March 15, 1972
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Missouri State Park Board, P.O. Box 176, 1204 Jefferson Building, Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

Ralls County Jail-Sheriff's House--northeast corner, view looking southwest with east facade (left), north facade (right) and wood frame addition (foreground). Church in background (far left) is located immediately south of the Jail-sheriff's house.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

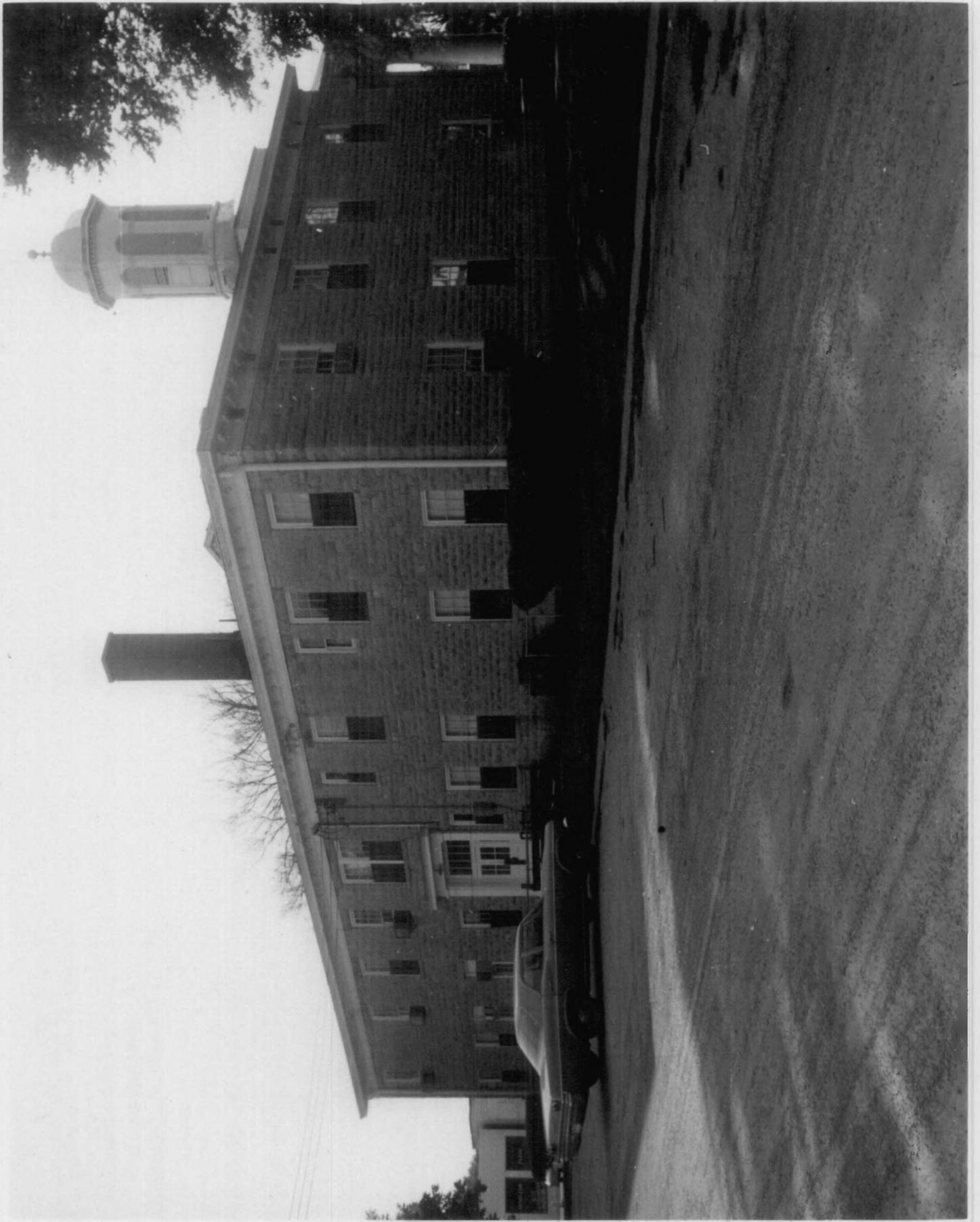
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1. NAME			
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AND/OR HISTORIC:			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
Courthouse Square			
CITY OR TOWN:			
New London			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Missouri	63459	Ralls	173
3. PHOTO REFERENCE			
PHOTO CREDIT:		W. Philip Cotton, Jr., A.I.A.	
DATE OF PHOTO:		September, 1969	
NEGATIVE FILED AT:		Missouri State Park Board, P.O. Box 176, 1204 Jefferson Building, Jefferson City, Missouri 65101	
4. IDENTIFICATION			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.			
Ralls County Courthouse--east (left) and north (right) facades of the rear addition, view from the northeast looking southwest.			



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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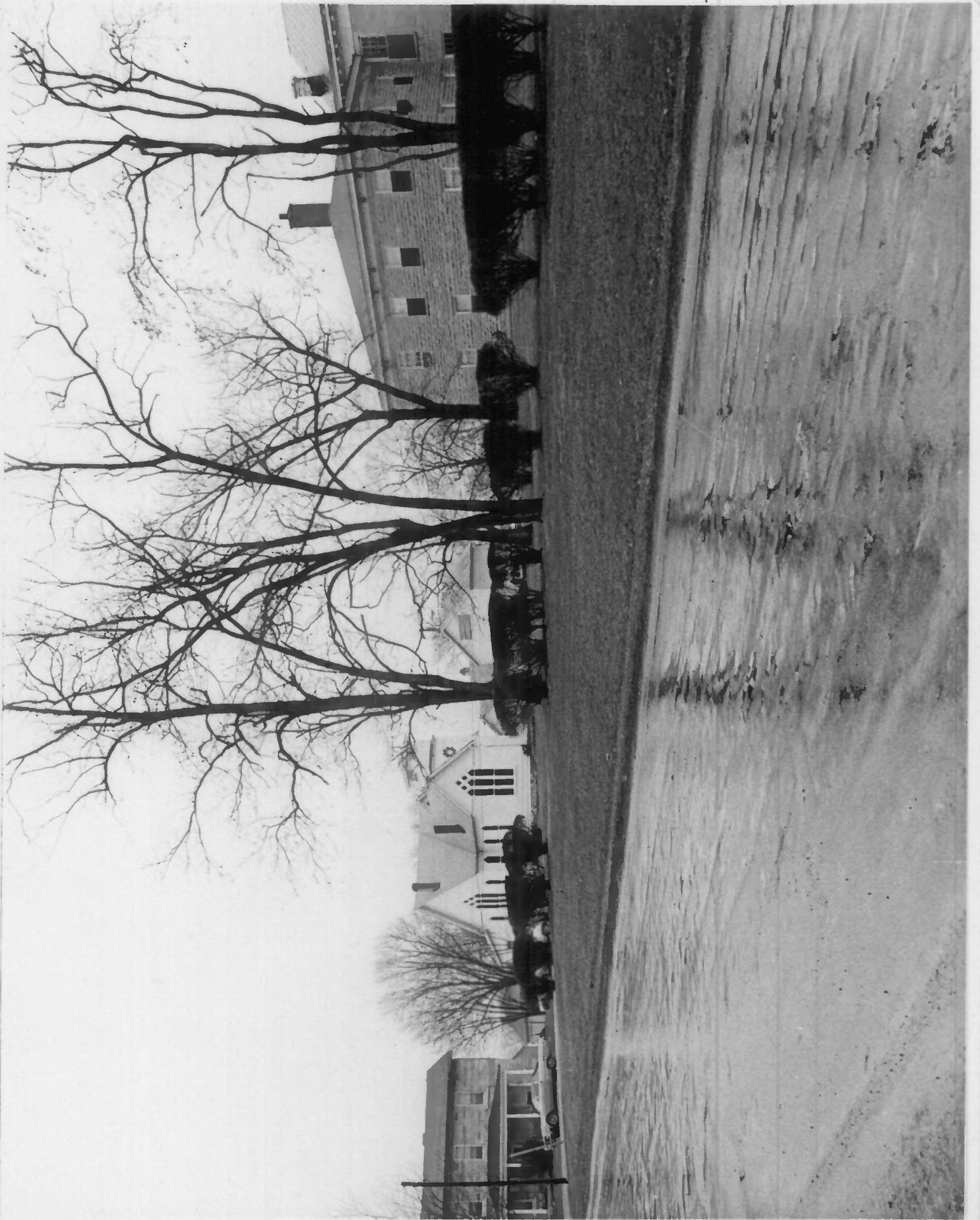
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AND OR HISTORIC:			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
Courthouse Square			
CITY OR TOWN:			
New London			
STATE:		CODE	COUNTY:
Missouri 63459		29	Ralls
			CODE
			173
3. PHOTO REFERENCE			
PHOTO CREDIT:		Nancy B. Breme	
DATE OF PHOTO:		March 15, 1972	
NEGATIVE FILED AT:		Missouri State Park Board, P.O. Box 176, 1204 Jefferson Building, Jefferson City, Missouri 65101	
4. IDENTIFICATION			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.			
General view showing Ralls County Courthouse Square and adjoining block to the east--the courthouse on the right and the jail-sheriff's house on the far left. View looking southeast with 3rd Street in the foreground.			



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

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4. IDENTIFICATION			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.			
Ralls County Courthouse--interior of the courtroom on the second floor, view from the west looking east. The judge's bench is in the background, pew-like benches for spectators in the foreground.			



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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STATE: Missouri 63459 CODE 29 COUNTY: Ralls CODE 173

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4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

Ralls County Jail-Sheriff's House--southwest corner, view looking northeast with west facade (left), south facade (right), and rear wing to the far right.

