NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Butler County Courthouse

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Public Square not for publication N/A

city or town Poplar Bluff vicinity N/A

state Missouri code MO county Butler code 023 zip code 63901

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide X locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Claire L. Blackwell 26 October 1994

Signature of certifying official Claire F. Blackwell Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

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

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

___ private
_X_ public-local
___ public-State
___ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

_X_ building(s)
___ district
___ site
___ structure
___ object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
__1__	__0__	buildings
__0__	__0__	sites
__0__	__1__	structures
__0__	__0__	objects
__1__	__1__	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register ___N/A____

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

_Historic Resources of Poplar Bluff, Missouri_____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

__GOVERNMENT_____ __courthouse_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

__GOVERNMENT_____ __courthouse_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/
_Classical Revival_____

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation __concrete_____
roof __asphalt_____
walls __concrete_____
other __wood_____

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

_Butler County Courthouse__
Name of Property

__Butler County, Missouri__
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

_X__ A — Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

____ B — Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

_X__ C — Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

____ D — Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

____ A — owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

____ B — removed from its original location.

____ C — a birthplace or a grave.

____ D — a cemetery.

____ E — a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

____ F — a commemorative property.

____ G — less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions).
_Politics/Government_____
_Architecture_____

Period of Significance
__1928 - 1943_____

Significant Dates
__1928_____

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
__N/A_____

Cultural Affiliation
__N/A_____

Architect/Builder
_Architect/N.S. Spencer and Son, Chicago_____
_Builder/George H. Gassman Construction Co.__

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS)
___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data
_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other

Name of repository: _Historic Preservation Program, Missouri Department of Natural Resources__

_Butler County Courthouse__ _Butler County, Missouri_
Name of Property County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property _Less than 1 acre___

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
__15_	732790_	4070820			

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title___Philip Thomason/Principal_____

organization__Thomason and Associates_____date_____

street & number__P.O. Box 121225_____telephone_. 615-383-0227_____

city or town___Nashville_____state__TN_____zip code __37212_____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

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

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number_____telephone_____

city or town_____state_____ zip code _____

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

Narrative Description

The Butler County Courthouse is located in the center of the Public Square in downtown Poplar Bluff, Missouri. The Public Square is bounded on the north by Pine Street, on the east by S. Second Street, on the south by Vine Street, and on the west by S. Main Street. The Butler County Courthouse was built in 1928 to replace an earlier courthouse damaged by the tornado of May, 1927. The courthouse occupies the center of the Public Square and there are no adjacent outbuildings. A small open frame gazebo built in recent years is located at the southwest corner of the Public Square and is included as a non-contributing structure. The building has not been extensively altered and retains its integrity of design.

The Butler County Courthouse is a three-story Neo-Classical style building of cast concrete construction. The building was constructed with a full basement and the foundation is of concrete. All four facades of the building are identical in plan and have nine bays. The central five bays project from the main block of the building and have two-story Doric engaged columns and pilasters on the second and third floors. The first story has quoins with a water table separating the first and second stories. The central bay of the first story of each facade contains an entrance which has an original pedimented surround with dentils and volutes. The entrances have ca. 1980 aluminum and glass doors and transoms. At the entrances are original cast concrete light fixtures with oval globes.

Above the second floor windows are enriched heads with voluted brackets and dentils. The third floor windows have architrave molding and original multi-light transoms. All windows were replaced in 1993 with one-over-one baked enamel aluminum windows. Above the third story windows is a dentilled cornice. At the roofline is a projecting wooden eave, below which is a blind balustrade. In the basement are original one-over-one wood sash windows which open onto sunken light wells. The building has a hipped roof of asphalt shingles. At the east facade of the roof is a concrete block chimney. On the east facade of the building is a handicapped access ramp which is sunken and leads to a door in the basement.

The courthouse was originally built with a jail in the attic story.[1] The use of this jail was discontinued in the 1970s and the roof was rebuilt to enclose the attic story. The jail is no longer visible and is hidden beneath the roofline.

The interior lobbies have terrazzo floors and marble wainscoting. At the entrances are terrazzo stairs which lead to original single light glass and wood double doors which open into the lobby. These entry doors have sidelights and transoms. Individual offices have plaster walls and ceilings, original single-light glass and wood doors and transoms, and marble wainscoting. Some office areas have wood leaf and dart, acanthus leaf molding, and dentils at the ceiling.

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[1]George R. Loughead, Early History of Butler County, Missouri (Stinson Press, 1987), p. 43-45.

The Circuit Court at the third floor has original terrazzo floors, Art Deco stencilling on plaster walls, and egg and dart molding at the ceiling. The courtroom retains an original desk, jury chairs, railing and benches. On the walls are pilasters with egg and dart molding. The first floor lobby has terrazzo floors, marble wainscoting, coffered ceiling with dentils, leaf and dart, and acanthus leaf molding. The doors are original single-light glass and wood design with single-light transoms.

The Butler County Courthouse retains much of its integrity on both the exterior and interior. The primary exterior alterations have included the rebuilding of the roof to conceal the attic story, and the replacement of the original windows with new windows in 1993. The attic story was built set back from the roofline, and prior to the roof remodeling it was not readily visible from the street. The original windows were one-over-one sash design and this appearance has been maintained through the one-over-one replacement windows. No major interior alterations have taken place to the building.

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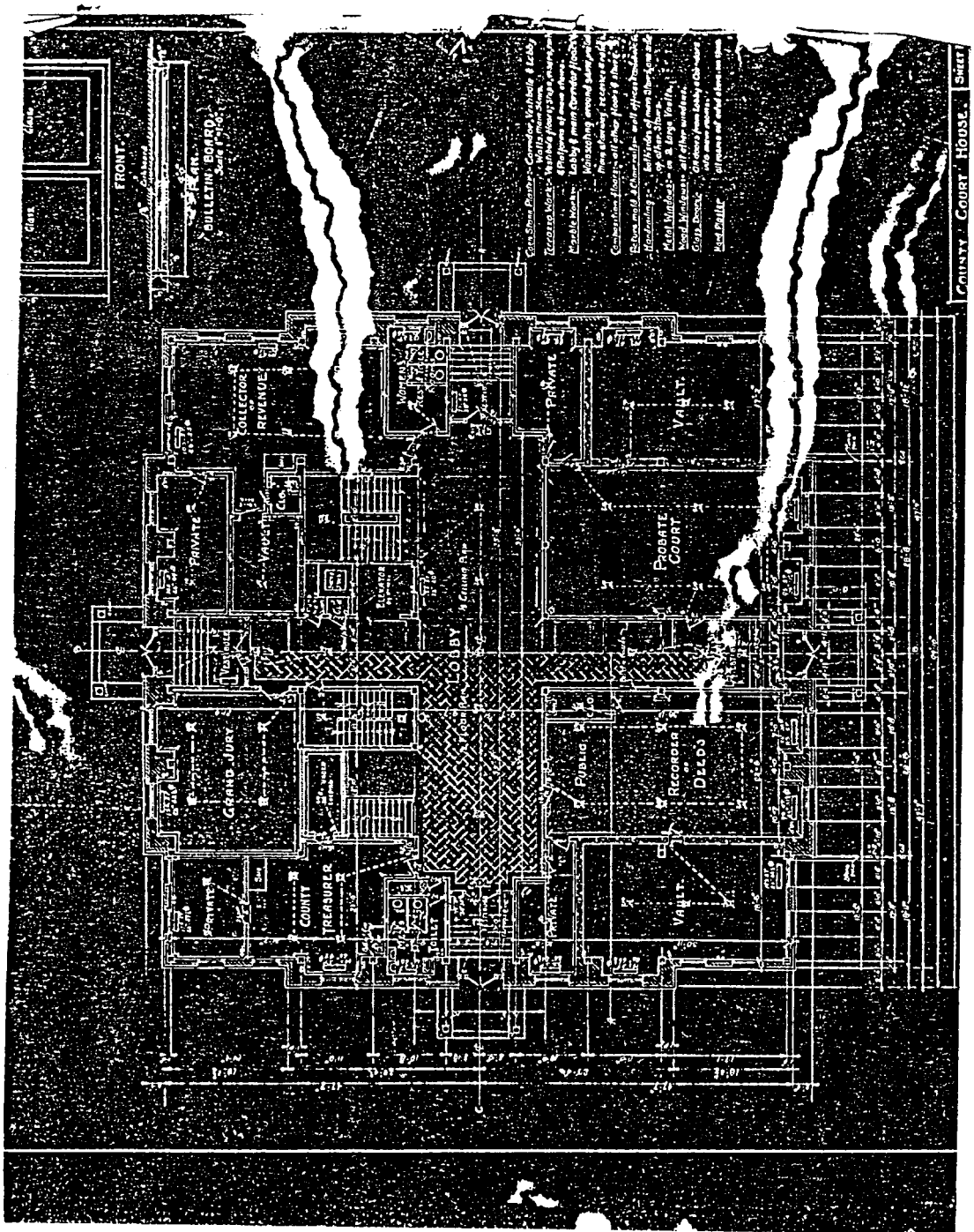
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section __7__ Page _3_

Butler County Courthouse
name of property

Butler County, Missouri
county and state



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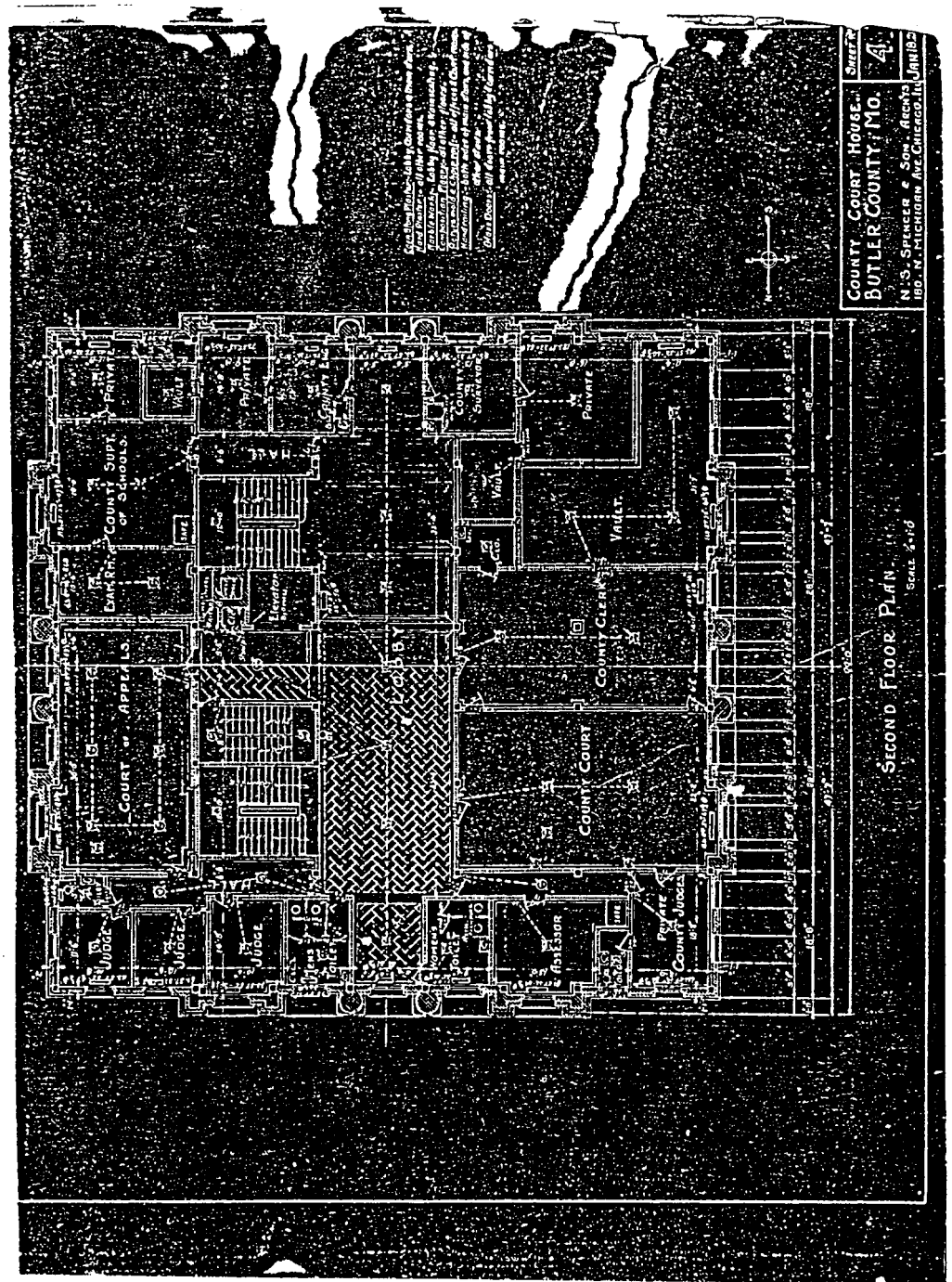
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section __7__ Page _4_

Butler County Courthouse
name of property

Butler County, Missouri
county and state



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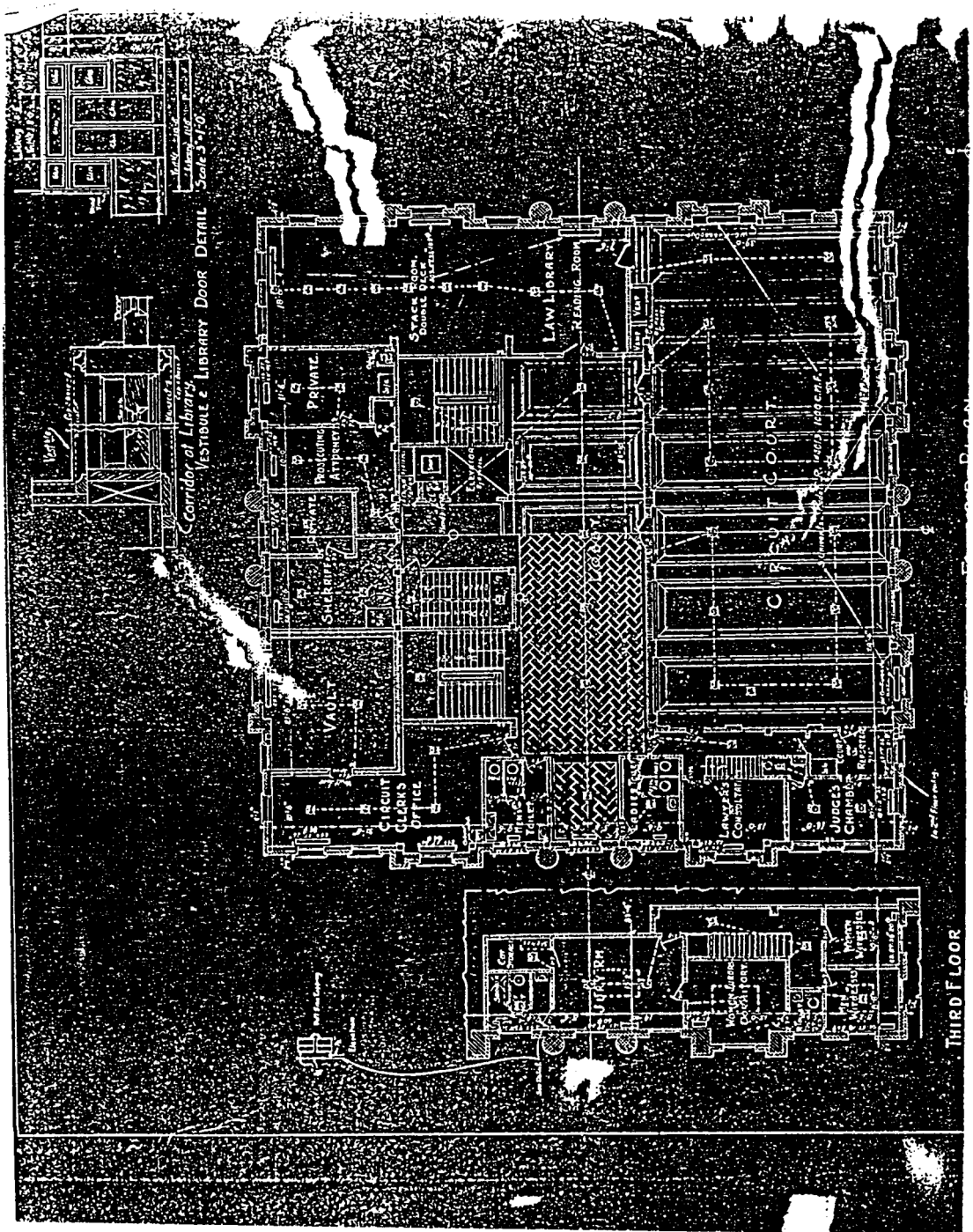
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 5

Butler County Courthouse
name of property

Butler County, Missouri
county and state



Statement of Significance

The Butler County Courthouse is significant under Criteria A and C for its association with local government and for its architectural design. In addition to serving continuously as the seat of Butler County government since 1928, the courthouse is the oldest remaining building in the county which has served that function. The courthouse is the center for county government and legal proceedings (see "Historic Resources of Poplar Bluff, Missouri" MPS: Public Buildings of Poplar Bluff, Missouri, ca. 1883-1943). The most prominent and distinctive example of the Public Buildings Property Type, the building is also significant for its Neo-Classical architectural design. The building is constructed of cast concrete and has prominent Doric engaged columns on all four elevations. The building has not been extensively altered on either the interior or exterior and retains much of its original character.

Butler County was formed in 1849 and Poplar Bluff was designated as the county seat.[2] The first courts of the county were held at various residences until a small log building was constructed on the Public Square in 1850.[3] This log building was replaced in 1852 by a small frame building. Like most public squares in Missouri, the Poplar Bluff Public Square plan was laid out in the Shelbyville Square design with a central courthouse block set within a rectangular grid.[4] Plans for a permanent brick courthouse were submitted in 1859 but because of the Civil War, the building was not completed until 1867. The 1867 courthouse served Butler County until it burned during 1884 and was replaced by a two-story courthouse completed in 1887 at a cost of $11,475.[5] This brick courthouse stood until it was badly damaged by the tornado of 1927.[6] The remnants of the building were then razed and funds were appropriated for the construction of a new courthouse. The upper floors of the Begley Building on Vine Street housed various court offices while the courthouse was under construction.

The present Butler County Courthouse was completed in 1928 and designed by N.S. Spencer & Son, Architects of Chicago. The building was designed in the Neo-Classical style which was a common style for public buildings in the early 20th century. The building was constructed of cast concrete with large two-story Doric engaged columns

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[2]Ibid., p. 7.

[3]David Bruce Deem, History of Butler County, Missouri: A Narrative Account of its Historical Progress, its People and its Principal Interests (Poplar Bluff, MO: Poplar Bluff Printing Company, 1925), p. 23.

[4] Thomason and Price, "Overview of the Ozark Foothills Regional Planning Area," p. 56.

[5]Ibid., p. 120-121.

[6]Helen Sparkman, "Butler County Courthouse," Butler County Missouri, Vol. II (Poplar Bluff, MO: Butler County Genealogical Society, 1988), p. 48.

on all four facades. The interior of the courthouse was divided into various offices on the first and second floors with court rooms located on the third story and a small jail in the attic story. Interior finishes included terrazzo floors, plaster walls, marble wainscoting, and decorative ceiling moldings. Few changes or alterations have taken place to either the interior or exterior. In the past year new one-over-one sash windows of baked enamel aluminum replaced the original one-over-one wood sash windows. The new windows were designed to replicate the original windows as closely as possible.

The Butler County Courthouse has been the center for county government for over sixty years. It houses most of the county's legal and administrative offices and the county courts. The building has been well maintained and retains its integrity of plan and design. The building is the most notable example of the Neo-classical style of any public or commercial building in the city.

Additional information on the historic contexts and significance of the Butler County Courthouse is located in the accompanying Multiple Property Cover Document, "Historic Resources of Poplar Bluff, Missouri".

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Verbal boundary description

All of Lot 1 of Block 17, City of Poplar Bluff, Butler County.

Verbal boundary justification

The boundary for the Butler County Courthouse includes all property historically associated with the building. The Public Square consists of just under one acre which has been the site of all of the county's courthouses since the county was formed in 1850. The boundary is drawn to include the entire Public Square which includes both the courthouse and a small non-contributing gazebo at the southwest corner of the square. There are also several small monuments and a flagpole on the courthouse lawn which are not included in the count of resources.

Butler County Courthouse, Public Square, Poplar Bluff
Butler County, Missouri
Photo by: Thomason and Associates
Date: August, 1993
Location of Negatives: Missouri Cultural Resources Inventory
Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Jefferson City, MO

Photo No. 1: North and west facades, view towards southeast.

Photo No. 2: View of west facade, view towards northeast.

Photo No. 3: View of south and east facades, view towards northwest.

Photo No. 4: Interior view of second floor lobby.

Photo No. 5: Interior view of Circuit Court on thrid floor.

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BUTLER COUNTY COURTHOUSE 15/732790/4070820

THE BUILDING 15/732790/4070720

ST. LOUIS, IRON MOUNTAIN AND SOUTHERN R.R. 15/732710/4070510

ST. LOUIS-SAN FRANCISCO R.R. DEPOT 15/732530/4070580

POPLAR BLUFF COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

A. 15/732570/4070870

B. 15/732700/4070850

C. 15/732695/4070800

D. 15/732660/4070800

E. 15/732620/4070640

F. 15/732570/4070650

G. 15/732590/4070770

H. 15/732480/4070790

I. 15/732490/4070840

1 MILE
4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET
1 KILOMETER

AL 20 FEET
5-FOOT CONTOURS
AL DATUM OF 1929

MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
OLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
URVEY, ROLLA, MISSOURI 65401
D SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, all weather, hard surface
Secondary highway, all weather, hard surface
Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface
Unimproved road, fair or dry weather

Interstate Route U. S. Route State Route

MISSOURI

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

HISTORIC RESOURCES OF POPLAR BLUFF (BUTLER COUNTY) MO

POPLAR BLUFF, MO.
SW/4 POPLAR BLUFF 15' QUADRANGLE
N3645—W9022.5/7.5

1966
PHOTOREVISED 1979
AMS 7957 IV SW—SERIES V879

Photo #1 of 5, Butler County Courthouse - Public Square, Poplar Bluff, MO - Butler Co.

Photo #2 of 5, Butler County Courthouse - Public Square, Poplar Bluff, MO - Butler Co.

Photo #3 of 5, Butler County Courthouse - Public Square, Poplar Bluff, MO - Butler Co.

Photo #4 of 5, Butler County Courthouse - Public Square, Poplar Bluff, MO - Butler Co.

Photo #5 of 5, Butler County Courthouse - Public Square, Poplar Bluff, MO - Butler Co.

BUTLER COUNTY COURTHOUSE

TURN
LEFT
TURN
YIELD
NO
LEFT
TURN

1887