

MISSOURI COURTHOUSES

HOWARD COUNTY

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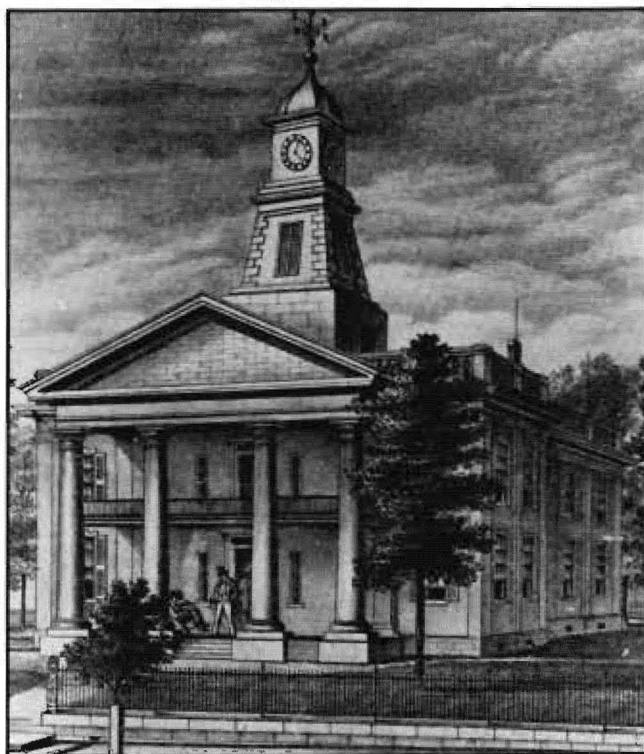


Fig. 1. Howard County Courthouse, illustration, 1857-1886.
Architect: Joseph Megraw
(From: *An Illustrated Atlas Map of Howard County, Missouri*, 1876)

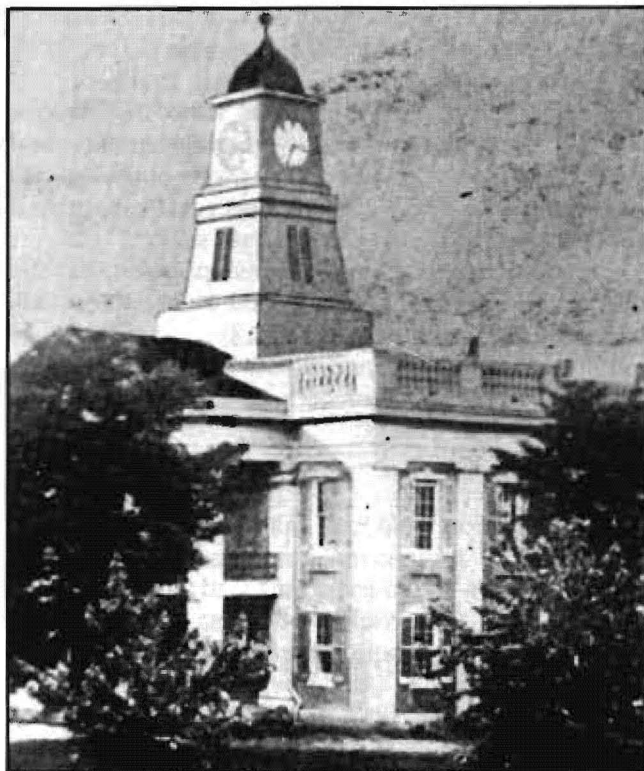


Fig. 2. Howard County Courthouse, 1857-1886.
(From: *Picturesque Fayette*, 1905)


After the county seat of Howard County moved to Fayette from Franklin, court officials planned to build the shell of a courthouse. Advertisements in July 1823 asked for bids on a brick, 35-by-45-foot, two-story building with stone foundation. The first stage of

construction was reported near completion in June 1826. J. W. Garner and Stephen Trigg were contractors. Bids for finishing and interior work were solicited in August 1827.

A year later plastering was completed and 30 pairs of window shutters were hung.

Joseph Megraw, an Irishman, built Howard County's second courthouse in 1857. Megraw had come to Howard County in 1852; previously he studied carpentry in Pittsburgh. The court appropriated \$25,000 for the two-story, brick porticoed building (Figs. 1 and 2). A balustrade concealed the tin-covered roof. A cupola with a clock, weathervane and decorative eagle sat toward the front. The courtroom and jury

County	Howard
Organized	Jan. 23, 1816
Named After . . .	Gen. Benjamin Howard, governor of Kentucky and Missouri and Louisiana territories
County Seat . . .	Fayette



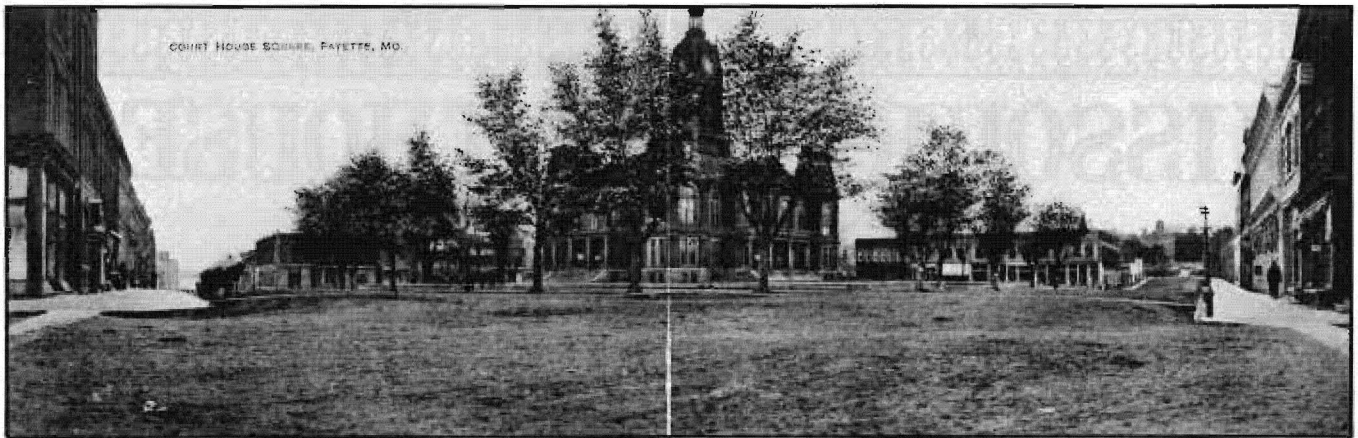


Fig. 3. Howard County Courthouse, 1887-. Architects: firm of Schrage and Nichols (From: postcard, Trenton Boyd collection)

room were on the second floor; eight offices were on the first floor. Wings were added sometime before 1883. Fire destroyed the building December 1, 1886.

After the fire the neighboring town of Glasgow publicly expressed hope of having the county seat moved there, but Fayette residents were confident that Glasgow could not muster the necessary two-thirds vote required to relocate the county seat.

Representatives from the townships met in Fayette during February 1887 to consider the indebtedness they would incur for reconstruction. In a petition, they requested that the voters consider the sum of \$25,000. Proceeds from an insurance policy on the destroyed building assured \$10,000.

In an election held the following month, voters approved the proposition, and planning proceeded rapidly. By May the court had engaged the architectural firm of Schrage and Nichols of Kansas City for plans, drawings and specifications for Howard County's third courthouse (Fig. 3). The cornerstone ceremony took place September 15, 1887. The cost of the building was \$32,942.

In 1968 a bond issue for \$350,000 permitted remodeling and exterior renovation for the deteriorating building; Carroll Hutchens served as architect. Final costs came to about \$375,000.

December 31, 1975, fire gutted the building. In

extensive repair and rebuilding, the exterior walls were retained, but the original interior design has been lost.

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