

MISSOURI COURTHOUSES

PEMISCOT COUNTY

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Fig. 1. Pemiscot County Courthouse, Gayoso, ca. 1883-1899. (Courtesy: State Historical Society of Missouri, gift of Mrs. Josamyn S. Garrett)

Pemiscot County has known five courthouses, three in Gayoso, which was the county seat from 1851 until 1899, and two in Caruthersville, the present county seat. The county purchased 50 acres in Gayoso in 1854 and built a small frame building on the public square.

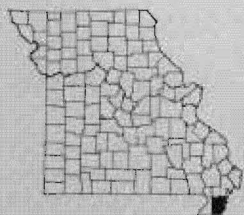
County officials used this courthouse until 1873, when it was moved and converted for another purpose.

The second courthouse was built in 1873 with \$750 obtained from the state legislature. This building burned December 2, 1882.

Again the county obtained an appropriation from the state, this time of \$4,000. Maj. George W. Carleton superintended construction of a two-story, square, frame building with cupola, which continued in use until the county voted to move the seat to Caruthersville in 1899, after repeated flood damage at Gayoso (Fig. 1). The courthouse was adapted to other use.

For the new county seat in Caruthersville, residents donated the site and Charles B. Faris superintended

County Pemiscot
Organized Feb. 19, 1851
Named After . . . Pemiscot, its
principal bayou
County Seat . . . Gayoso initially,
Caruthersville
currently



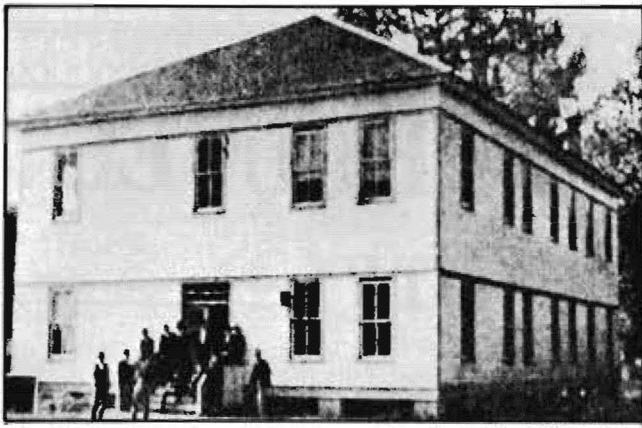


Fig. 2. Pemiscot County Courthouse. Caruthersville, 1899-1924. (Courtesy: Ophelia Wade. From: *Riparian Lands of the Mississippi River*)

construction on the square of a two-story, white, frame courthouse with hip roof, which the county used until 1925 (Fig. 2).

In 1924, as preparation began for building the fifth and present courthouse, the county offered the old courthouse for sale. When no acceptable bids came, officials decided to move the courthouse to the northwest corner of the square, where it continued in use until dismantled and sold in 1925.

Caruthersville planned simultaneous construction of a school and courthouse to save money and assure close supervision of both projects by the architect, Henry H. Hohenschild. The building contract for the

courthouse was given in June 1924 to McCarthy Construction Co. for about \$114,000, less than the original estimate because prices had declined.

Cornerstone ceremonies for the stone-trimmed, brick courthouse took place on September 30, 1924, and the building was completed in the fall of 1925 (Fig. 3). Scott County, just two counties north of Pemiscot, had built a similar design by Hohenschild in 1911. Both courthouses are fine examples of one of Missouri's most prolific architects.

Renovation of the courthouse was undertaken in July 1974; Henry Creighton, architect, planned the interior and Bien Construction, Dexter, were general contractors. Work was completed in June 1975.

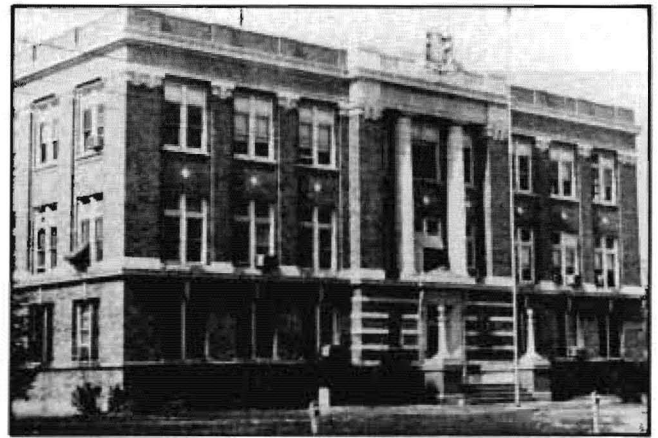


Fig. 3. Pemiscot County Courthouse, 1924. Architect: Henry H. Hohenschild (From: *Caruthersville Centennial, 1857-1957*)

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