

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination FormSee instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only

received

date entered

## 1. Name

historic      Worth County Courthouse

and/or common

## 2. Location

street &amp; number    Public Square      \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town      Grant City      \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of      Cong. Dist. 6th-Hon. E. Thomas Coleman

state      Missouri      code    029      county      Worth      code    227

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name      Worth County Court, Worth County Courthouse

street &amp; number    Public Square

city, town      Grant City      \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of      state    Missouri    64456

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.    Office of Recorder of Deeds  
Worth County Courthouse

street &amp; number      Public Square

city, town      Grant City      \_\_\_\_\_ state    Missouri    64456

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title 1. Historic Inventory of Worth County has this property been determined eligible?    \_\_\_\_\_ yes    ☒ nodate      1980      \_\_\_\_\_ federal    \_\_\_\_\_ state    \_\_\_\_\_ county    ☒ localdepository for survey records    Department of Natural Resources  
Historic Preservation Programcity, town      P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City      state    Missouri    65102

## 7. Description

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☐ original site  
☐ moved      date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The third Worth County Courthouse was constructed in 1898-1899. The architects for the building were Orff and Guilbert of Minneapolis, Minnesota and Edward J. Tochtermann was the superintendent of construction.<sup>1</sup> The heating and plumbing system was designed by Edmund J. Eckel of St. Joseph and Charles P. Farrel was the superintendent of the work.<sup>2</sup> The brown exterior bricks for the building was furnished by Stanberry Pressed Brick Company of Stanberry, Missouri.<sup>3</sup>

The Worth County Courthouse is a synthesis of 2nd Renaissance Revival and Neo-Classicism. The structure lacks the extensive use of colossal columns and the balustrade typical of the Beaux Arts period, but displays projecting facades and a pronounced cornice. The Neo-Classical influence can be seen in the portico, treatment of windows and capped dormers. The rect angular plan of the structure is symmetrical, measuring seventy-one (71) feet east to west by eighty-four (84) feet from north to south. The main entrance is centered in the south facade beneath a portico of three semi-elliptical arches and parapet. The arches have stone keystones and are separated by brick pilasters. Three other entrances are centered on the other facades of the building and lead, via wide corridors, to the center of the building. There is one stairway in the east hallway that leads to the second, or courtroom, floor.

A partial basement under the southeast corner of the building houses the Sheriff's Office and County Jail. The foundation is twelve (12) inch thick poured concrete with an exterior of rusticated stone. All facades are symmetrical and are of 9 bays with a projecting bay of one width on each end. Copper capped pyramidal roofs are placed over each bay and copper capped bell shaped gabled dormers occur all facades. Centered on the roof is a galvanized iron tower with a clock face on each facade. The height of the top of the tower is seventy-seven (77) feet, five (5) inches from the ground.

Openings are flanked by brick pilasters from whose capitals springs semi-elliptical rowlock arches. Keystones and lugsills of each double-sash window are of stone. Evidence indicates that the dormers once contained double sash windows, but they have since been closed.

Corbelling ornaments the balcony of the portico and the cornice. Further variation to the surface was added to the first story by a pattern of quoining at each corner.

The interior of the building remains much as it was in 1899 with the exception of lowered ceilings on the first floor and carpeting over the wooden floor. The ceilings are ten (10) feet, one (1) inch in the basement; twelve (12) feet, three (3) inches on the first floor and seventeen (17) feet on the second floor. The woodwork is oak with carved balustrades used in the staircase and three foot high wainscoting used along the walls. Many of the pieces of furniture purchased in 1899 are still in use in the different court offices. Although the County Court records have been searched, few repairs are recorded. There have been no major alterations on the structure in 81 years.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

WORTH COUNTY COURTHOUSE

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The original construction of the Courthouse cost \$19,360 plus \$1,929 for the plumbing and heating system.<sup>4</sup> The cost of the vaults were an additional \$1,300<sup>5</sup> and the furnishing \$166.50.<sup>6</sup> The low cost of the furnishing can be explained by the fact that the judges and prosecuting attorney were told, if they wanted furniture they would have to buy it themselves, which they did.<sup>7</sup> Additional finishing expense was to include walks, which were laid in 1910; the Howard Tower clock which was installed in 1912 at a cost of \$1,050; gas lights by the Swem Gas Light Manufacturing Company in 1898 and steam heat in 1906<sup>9</sup> at a cost of \$670.00.<sup>8</sup> The bonded debt for the structure was paid off in 1907.<sup>9</sup>

Around the grounds of the public square is the water tower for Grant City, a picnic area and two granite markers that honor Worth County's Centennial in 1961 and the Nation's Bicentennial in 1976.

FOOTNOTES

1. Contract with Orff and Guilbert, Worth County Clerk's Office, Grant City, Missouri.
2. Contract with Edmund J. Eckel, Worth County Clerk's Office, Grant City, Missouri.
3. Contract with Stanberry Pressed Brick Co., Worth County Clerk's Office, Grant City, Missouri.
4. County Court Book E, Worth County Clerk's Office, Grant City, Missouri, p. 440.
5. County Court Book E, Worth County Clerk's Office, Grant City, Missouri, p. 446.
6. Country Court Book E, Worth County Clerk's Office, Grant City, Missouri, p. 443.
7. Interview with Martha A. Stevens, Worth County Clerk, Grant City, Missouri, November 18, 1980.
8. Contracts in Worth county Clerk's Office, Grant City, Missouri.
9. Walter Williams, History of Northwest Missouri. Vol. 1. (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1915), p. 635.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
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<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1898-1899

Builder/Architect E. J. Tochterman/Orff & Guilbert

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Worth County Courthouse is significant as an important regional example of Second Renaissance Revival civic architecture, and as the seat of government for Worth County for 81 years.

The Worth County Courthouse was the first large, stylish building in this remote county. It has remained, not only the imposing center of the small county seat town, but in many ways the unique public center for a quintessentially rural county society. Closed recently due to the financial inability of the county to maintain and operate it, the courthouse has been a symbol of the effects of population decline and social depression that characterizes that region of the state in the present generation. Recent interest in rehabilitating and reopening the building symbolizes a renewal of local pride in the county's history, a reawakening of interest in Worth County's roots in the great rural culture of Missouri.

Worth County is located in the northwest part of the State of Missouri. It did not exist as a separate government unit until 1861, when it was the last county to be organized in the State. Worth County is the smallest county in the state, being twenty-one (21) miles from east to west and thirteen (13) miles from north to south, and containing 174,720 acres. The county is bounded on the north by Iowa, the east by Harrison County, the south by Gentry County, and the west by Nodaway County.

Worth County was originally part of Ray County, later a part of Clay, then Clinton, DeKalb and lastly of Gentry. The first county seat was at Smithton, but in 1863, it was moved to the new city of Grant City. The first frame courthouse burned in 1866 and another frame building was erected in that same year to serve as a Courthouse. This building later became unsuitable, and the County Court sought bids for a new Courthouse in 1897.

The building was constructed between 1898 and 1899, with final completion and acceptance on January 24, 1899. The architects were Orff and Guilbert of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Edward J. Tochterman was the superintendent of the construction project. The heating and plumbing system was designed by Edmund J. Eckel and installed by Charles P. Farrel of St. Joseph, Missouri. Mr. Eckel was involved with many other public buildings in northwest Missouri and his Gentry and Nodaway County designed Courthouses are already on the National Register of Historic Places.

The vaults of the Courthouse were provided by Saint Louis Arts Metal as well as part of the furnishings. A three cell jail was added to the southeast basement room which was made out of Bessemer steel. This still is in service.

The style and date of construction makes the Worth County Courthouse an exceptional structure for Worth County and the State of Missouri. The structure has served as the seat of government for Worth County for 81 years.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Architectural Drawings of the Worth County Courthouse, Worth County Clerk's Office Grant City, Missouri.
2. Contracts for work on the Worth County Courthouse, Bridge and Courthouse File Box, Worth County Clerk's Office, Grant City, Missouri

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of nominated property** less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name "Grant City, Mo." U.S.G.S. 15'  
UTM References Quadrangle, (1943)

Quadrangle scale 1:62,500

### UTM References

**A**    1 5    3 8 0 5 8 0    4 4 8 2 4 6 0  
**Zone      Easting      Northing**

**B**

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**D** 

[illegible]

**F** 

**G**

**I**

**Verbal boundary description and justification** A square tract of land located in the Northwest Quarter of Section thirty-three (33) of Township sixty-six (66) North, Range thirty-one (31) West, described as follows: Beginning at the inside curblin at the Southwest corner of what is known as the Courthouse Square, Original Town; thence North along the inside

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	1. Thomas W. Carneal, Associate Professor
------------	---

**organization** Northwest Missouri State University **date** December 3, 1980

street & number telephone 816/582-7141, ext. 1289

city or town	Maryville	state	Missouri	64468
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## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

**The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:**

       national             state        X   local

**As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.**

**State Historic Preservation Officer signature**

Director, Department of Natural Resources and  
title State Historic Preservation Officer

**date**

**For NPS use only**

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

**data**

**Keeper of the National Register**

**Attest:**

date

### Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
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WORTH COUNTY COURTHOUSE

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

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3. History of Gentry and Worth Counties. St. Joseph, Mo.: National Historical Company, 1882.
4. Illustrated Historical Atlas of Worth County, Missouri. Philadelphia: Edwards Brothers, 1877.
5. Plat Book of Worth County, Missouri. Rockford, Ill.: W.W. Hixson & Company, 1925.
6. Standard Atlas of Worth County, Missouri. Chicago: George A. Ogle & Company, 1902.
7. Williams, Walter. A History of Northwest Missouri. Vols. I-III. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1915.
8. Worth County Missouri Centennial. Worth County Centennial Corporation, 1961.
9. Worth County Court Book, Book E, August 1, 1893 to December 31, 1900. Worth County Clerk's Office, Grant City, Missouri.

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curbline for two hundred and thirty-four (234) feet to the Northwest corner of said square; thence East along the inside curbline for two hundred and thirty-four (234) feet to the Northeast corner of said square; thence South along the inside curbline for two hundred and thirty-four (234) feet to the Southeast corner of said square; thence West along the inside curbline for two hundred and thirty-four (234) feet to the point of beginning.

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2. James M. Denny, Section Chief, Nominations-Survey  
and State Contact Person  
Department of Natural Resources  
Historic Preservation Program  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City

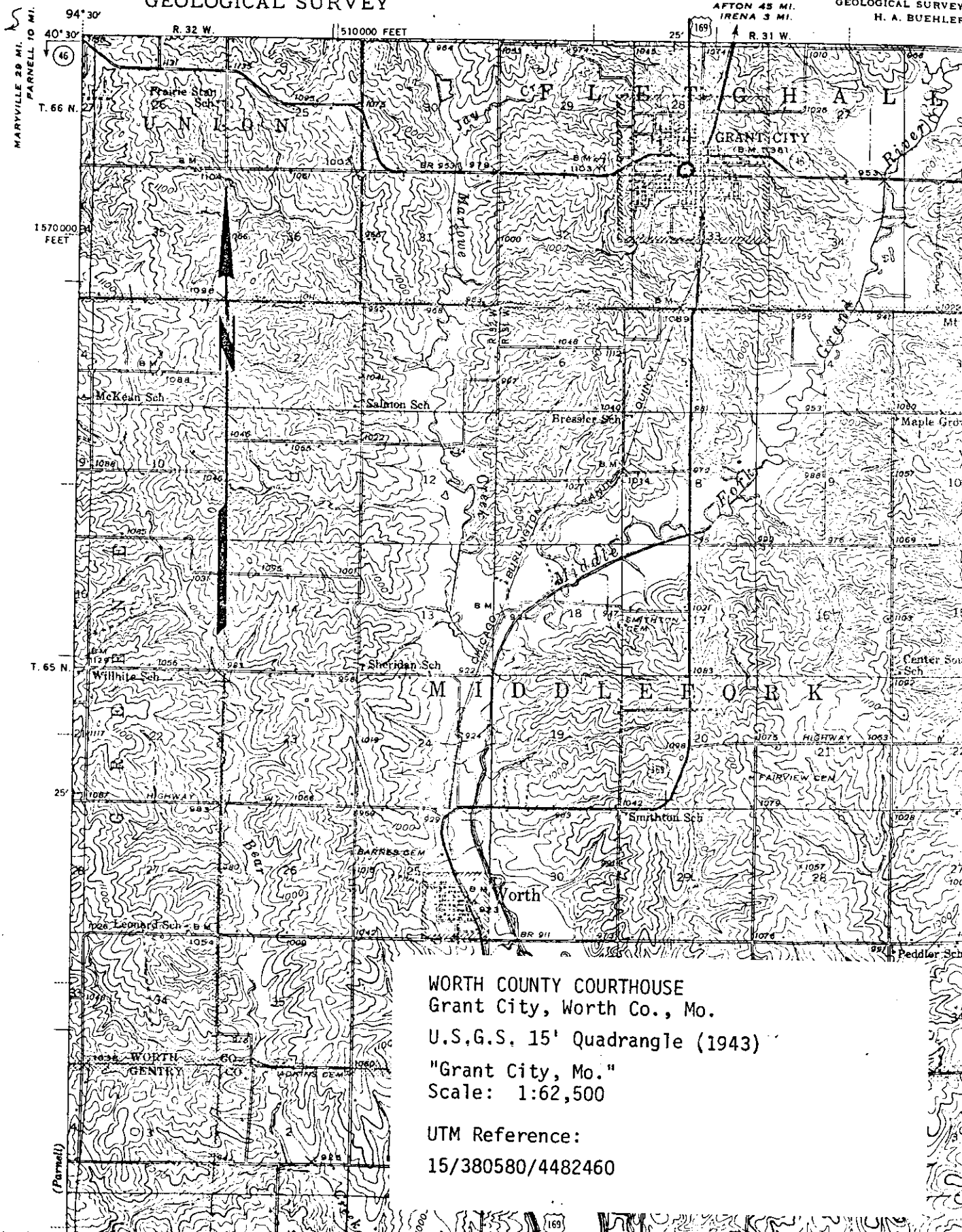
July 1981

(314) 751-4096

Missouri 65102

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATE OF MISSOURI  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
H. A. BUEHLER



WORTH COUNTY COURTHOUSE  
Grant City, Worth Co., Mo.

U.S.G.S. 15' Quadrangle (1943)

"Grant City, Mo."

Scale: 1:62,500

UTM Reference:

15/380580/4482460





DO NOT  
ENTER

SPEED  
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