

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCBS use only
received
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic St. Joseph Public Library
and/or common Free Public Library/Public Museum, Public Library and Board of Education Building

2. Location

street & number 10th and Felix Streets not for publication
city, town St. Joseph vicinity of congressional district 6th-Hon. Tom Coleman
state Missouri code 029 county Buchanan code 021

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" 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 School District of St. Joseph
street & number 10th and Felix Streets
city, town St. Joseph vicinity of state Missouri 64501

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of Recorder of Deeds
Buchanan County Courthouse
street & number 5th and Jules Streets
city, town St. Joseph vicinity of state Missouri 64501

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Missouri State Historical Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date 1980 federal state county local
depository for survey records Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 176
city, town Jefferson City vicinity of state Missouri 65102

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

St. Joseph Public Library, located in the downtown neighborhood of St. Joseph, Missouri, is a two story building with basement which measures approximately 123' along the east and west axis and 108' along the north and south axis. The library rests on foundations of stone and brick. It is constructed of brick and reinforced concrete faced with beige marble and limestone on its ornate exterior and is capped with a red tiled roof which culminates in a skeletal glazed dome. The exterior of the building has recently been cleaned with pressurized hot water and coated with Hydrocide tinted waterproofing by Sonneborn, applied by Mid-Continent Waterproofing Co., Fort Scott, Kansas. Notable decorative features include a pedimented projecting central bay on the primary facade embellished with Ionic Half-columns on bases, an entry loggia, heavy almost Manneristic voussoirs at the first floor level and Michaelangelesque window surrounds capped with the characteristic Eckelian wreath motif.

The interior plan of the library is the product of the original construction and, probably, two later additions: that section of the building to the north-east (1918) and that to the north (date unknown) (see plan). The original library is represented by the southern core of the building. Notable interior features include a curving staircase of Tennessee marble with an ornamental iron and oak balustrade, a stained glass window in the center of the lobby ceiling lit by daylight through the dome over the second floor lobby, heavy oak woodwork embellished with classical moldings, Tennessee marble wainscoting and Ionic columns and pilasters composed of scagliola. The interior walls are plastered and rest on floors of terrazzo over cement. In places, vinyl tiles now cover original terrazzo floors.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1901-1902 **Builder/Architect** Edmond Jacques Eckel

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The St. Joseph Public Library is significant as the building which has housed this city's free public library for 79 years and which served as the birthplace and first location of the St. Joseph Museum, two leading social institutions of St. Joseph. In addition, it is a fine example of civic architecture influenced by French Baroque Classicism, designed by Edmond Jacques Eckel, one of the foremost architects of St. Joseph and of the mid-western United States.

In May, 1887 Mr. Warren Samuels announced in the St. Joseph newspapers that he would donate free use of a room in his building at 6th and Charles Streets for a library if money could be raised for books. A subsequent campaign led by Mrs. John S. Lemon, Mrs. T. F. Van Nattan and Mrs. George Hull raised \$3000 by August of that year through the sale of life memberships to the library at \$50 each. The library opened November 8, 1887 and accumulated over 3,200 books by the end of its first year. In 1890, Mr. Purdy Wright, City Clerk of St. Joseph, being impressed by city-wide interest in the organization of a free public library, began circulating petitions to obtain a 3/10 of a mill tax to finance such an institution. In 1891, this proposal was approved by voters with a margin of 6 to 1.¹

By the 1890's the library had outgrown its small space. Since state law did not recognize a library as a legal entity qualified to float a bond issue for funds, the Library Board joined forces with the School Board to plan a building to benefit both. In March, 1900 a bond issue of \$200,00 both for a library building to house the free library and administrative offices of the School District and for other elementary school buildings was submitted to the voters. It passed and construction began in 1901. The new library opened on March 13, 1902.²

The library has always been a center for information and assistance to clubs, schools and local colleges. In addition, in 1907 it was designated as a depository for publications of the United States Government Printing Office. This collection has grown to 78,024 items. Moreover, in the files of the Office of the Superintendent of Schools are records of thousands of students covering the years 1854 to 1981. These are used as a research resource by local citizens interested in genealogy and local history.

A room in the basement of the library was reserved for use as a museum in 1902. It was not until 1926, however, that a movement initiated by local college students, led by their science teacher, Mr. Orrel M. Andrews, resulted in the establishment of a natural science museum. By 1927, a Board of Directors was elected and the Board of Education donated space on the second floor for the fledgling museum. It opened with 6,100 exhibits, and by 1940 had a paid director. Gifts and loans soon made the space inadequate so the museum moved to a building of its own in 1942. It is now a city-supported, nationally accredited St. Joseph Museum with an outstanding American Indian collection.

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The elegant French Baroque Classical design of the library was produced in the office of Edmond Eckel, one of St. Joseph's and the Mid-west's notable architects.

Edmond Jacques Eckel was born in Strasbourg, the province of Alsace, France in 1845. His early schooling was at the Gymnase Protestant of Strasbourg, supplemented by architectural study under the city's architect.³ From 1864 to 1868 he studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris in the ateliers of Paccard and Vaudoyer.⁴ Some of his drawings survive from this period which show him to be imbued with beaux arts design principles and a fine artist, even at this early date.⁵

In 1868 Eckel came to the U.S.A. and worked for several months in New York and Cleveland. En route to Kansas City in 1869, his train was delayed in St. Joseph. It is reported that he liked the town so much that he decided to stay.⁶ He first worked as an architect for P.F. Meagher and later joined the firm of Stigers and Boettner. In 1872 he became a partner of the firm and with the retirement of Mr. Stigers, the firm became known as Boettner and Eckel. From 1880 to 1893 Eckel worked in association with George Mann, an architect from Indiana who had studied at M.I.T. and had previously practiced in Minneapolis, Detroit and Washington, D.C. as a draftsman. From 1893 to 1903 Eckel practiced alone. In 1908 he joined into partnership with Walter Boschen and in 1910 with William Aldrich. Still later, he joined with Otto Brunner. This firm exists today as Brunner and Brunner, with William, the son of Otto, as senior architect. Eckel, who has been described as "the oldest and most successful architect and respected practitioner of architecture in the central western United States", was a member of the Western Association of Architects from 1885 to 1889 when that organization merged with the American Institute of Architects.⁷ At that time Eckel was made a fellow of the A.I.A. He died in St. Joseph in 1934.

Since Eckel studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, it is not surprising that he found his inspiration for the library design in buildings such as the Orleans wing of the Chateau de Blois (Francois Mansart, 1635-38), the garden facade of the Palace at Versailles (Louis Le Vau, Jules Hardouin Mansart, 1669-85) and the east facade of the Louvre (Claude Perrault, Louis Le Vau, Charles Le Brun, 1667-70). Other buildings designed by Edmond Eckel and his firm, which have already been placed on the National Register, include the German American Bank (November 24, 1978), the Edmond Jacques House (January 31, 1980), the Corby-Forsee Building (March 27, 1980), Wholesale Row (September 19, 1977) and several of the residences, including the A.N. Schuster House, the James H. Robison House and the Herschel Bartlett House, in the Hall Street Historic District (July 17, 1979), all in the city of St. Joseph, Missouri.

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Footnotes

1. Chris L. Rutj, History of Buchanan County and the City of St. Joseph, Missouri (Chicago: Biographical Publishing Company, 1904), pp. 100-101.
2. Draft Inventory-Nomination form submitted by Mr. Gerald Troester, Superintendent of Schools of the City of St. Joseph, December, 1980.
3. Men Who Make St. Joseph "The City Worthwhile" (St. Joseph: W.P. Tracy, 1920), unpagued.
4. Ulrich Thieme and Felix Becker, Allgemeines Lexicon der bildenden Künstler, Vol. X (Leipzig: Verlag von A.E. Seemann, 1914), p. 318.
5. "Contemporary Architects and Their Works: E. J. Eckel", Western Architect, XVII, No. 9 (September, 1911), 77-84.
6. Ibid, p. 80.
7. Men Who Make St. Joseph "The City Worthwhile" and John Albury Bryan, (ed.), Missouri's Contribution to American Architecture (St. Louis: St. Louis Architectural Club, 1928), p. 50.

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Annual Report of the Public Library, 1902.
2. Board of Education Minutes, Building Plans and Specifications.
3. St. Joseph Public Library Board Minutes, 1887-1903.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name "St. Joseph North, MO-KANS."

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	1 5	3 4 1 7 0 5	4 4 0 3 3 0 0	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots Seven (7) and Eight (8) in Block No. Thirty-Three (33) in Smith's Addition to the City of St. Joseph, Missouri.

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. Noelle Soren/Historic Architecture Specialist

organization Historic Preservation Program date August 3, 1981
Department of Natural Resources

street & number P.O. Box 176 telephone 314/751-4096

city or town Jefferson City state Missouri 65102

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Department of Natural Resources, Director and
Stat Historic Preservation Officer date _____

For HCRRS use only

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

date _____

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date _____

Chief of Registration

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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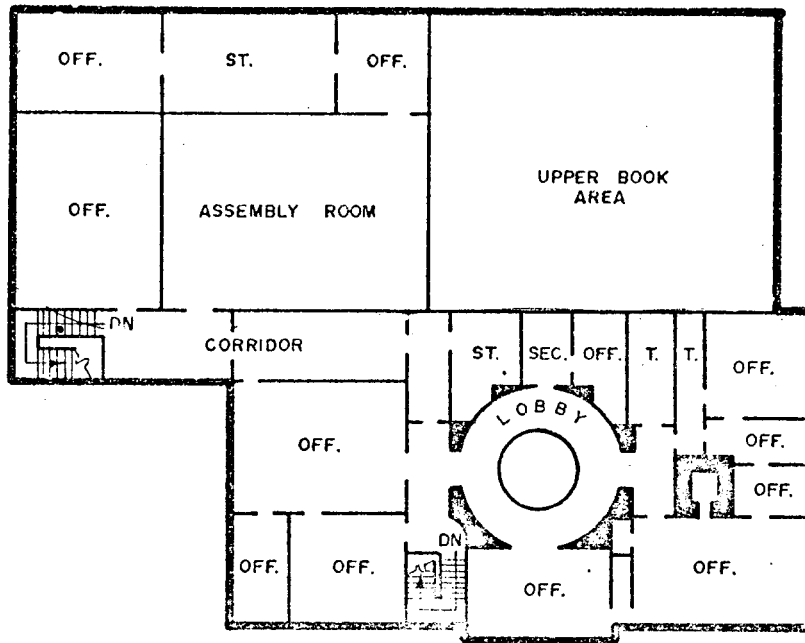
ST. JOSEPH PUBLIC LIBRARY

CONTINUATION SHEET

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2. Gerald D. Troester, Superintendent of Schools
St. Joseph Board of Education
10th and Felix Streets (816) 233-1301
St. Joseph Missouri 64501
-

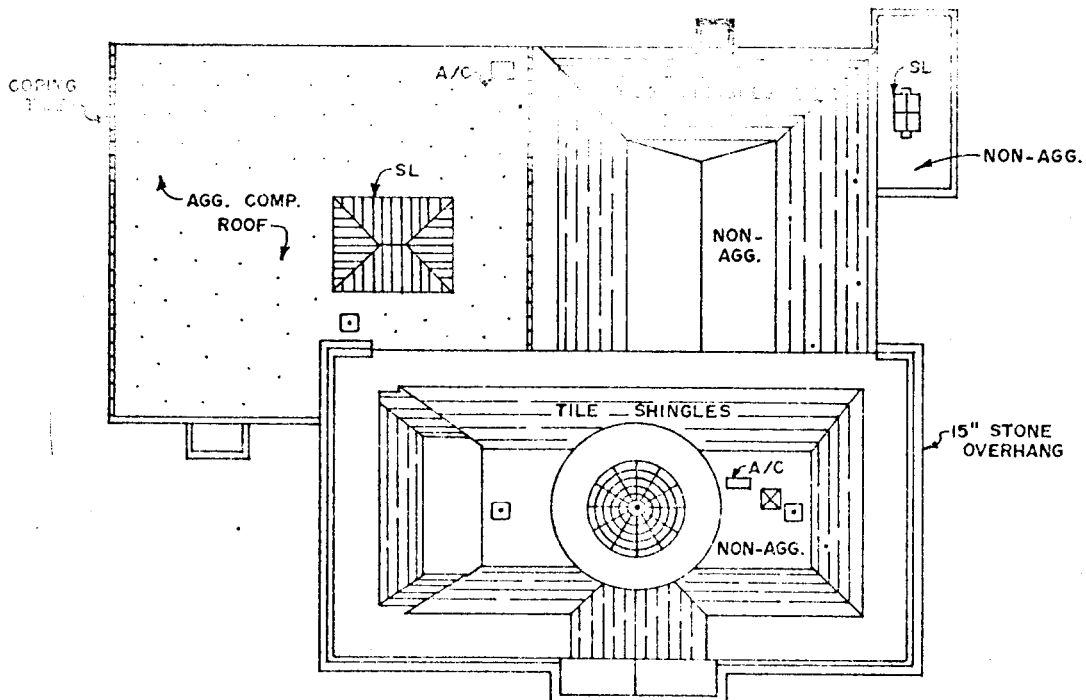
ST. JOSEPH PUBLIC LIBRARY ST. JOSEPH, BUCHANAN COUNTY, MISSOURI



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

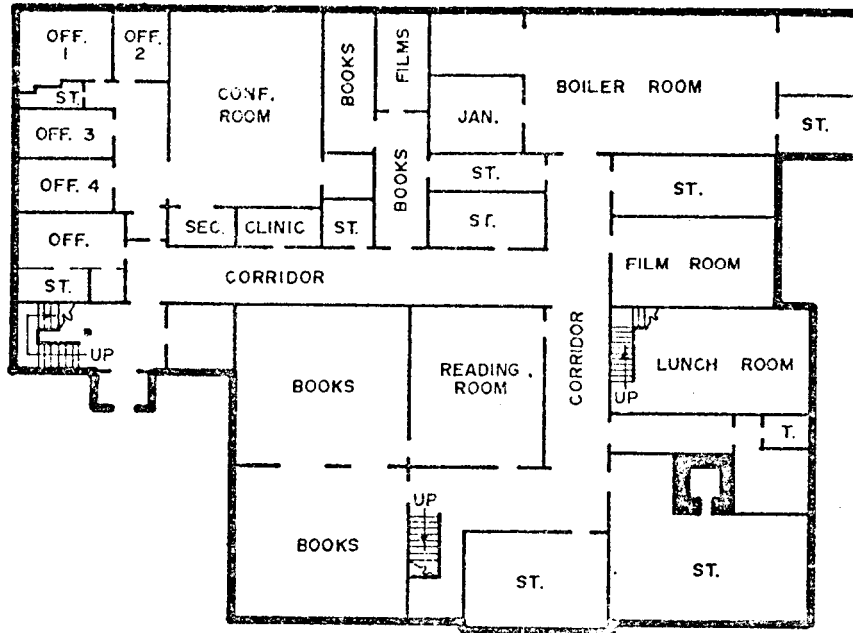


SCALE 1" = 30'



ROOF PLAN

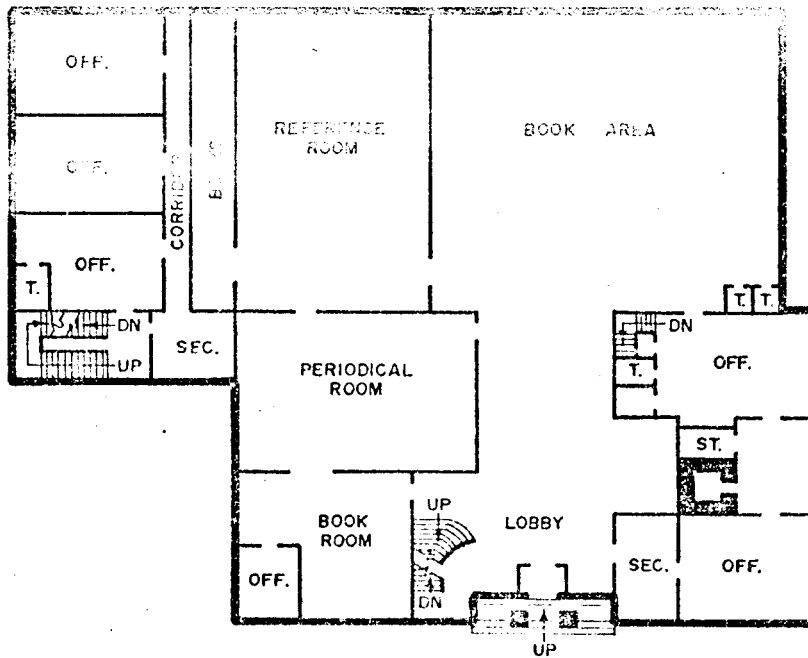
ST. JOSEPH PUBLIC LIBRARY ST. JOSEPH, BUCHANAN COUNTY, MISSOURI



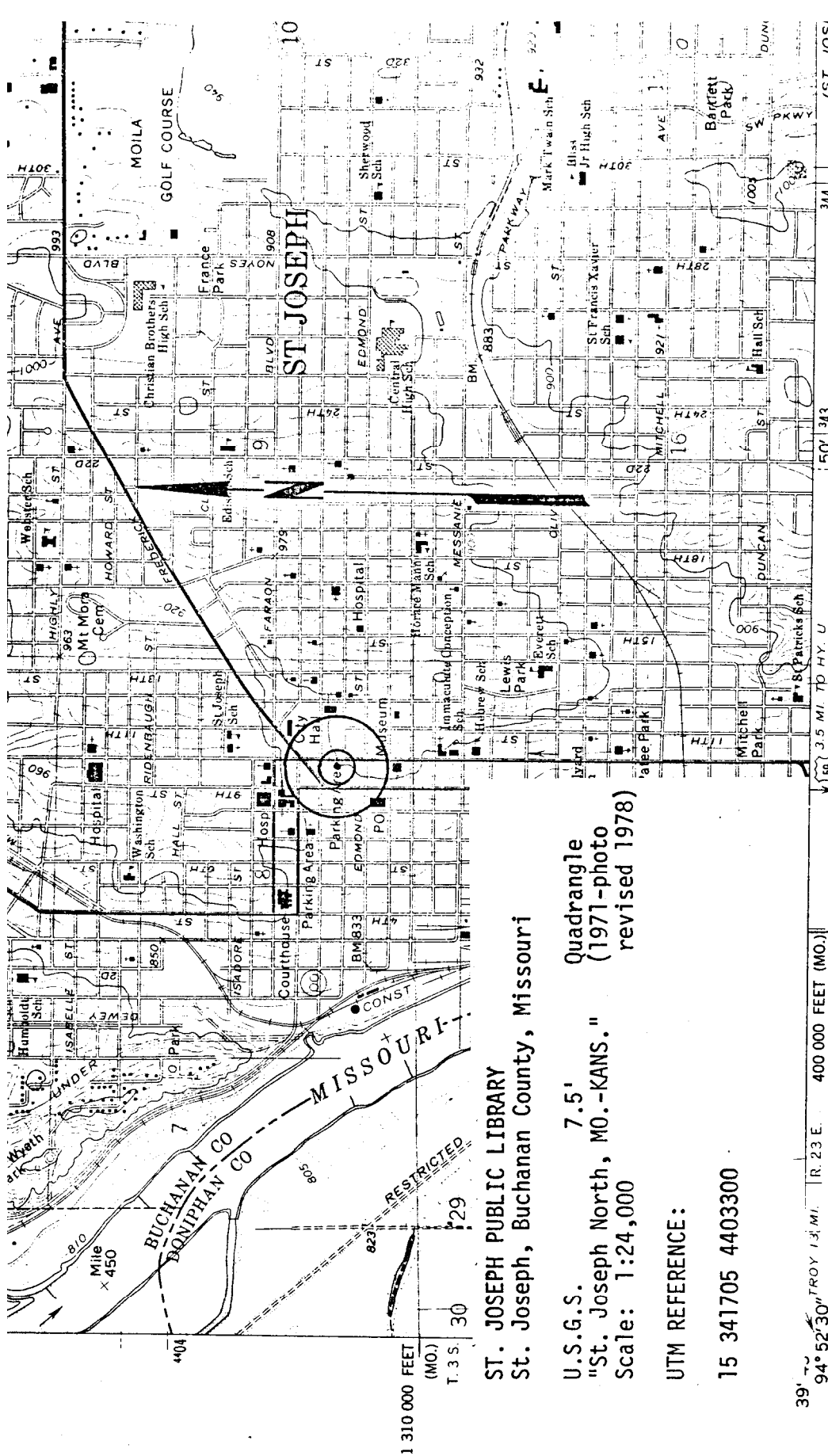
BASEMENT PLAN



SCALE 1" = 30'



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



1 310 000 FEET (MO.)
T. 3 S. 30

ST. JOSEPH PUBLIC LIBRARY
St. Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri

U.S.G.S. 7.5'
"St. Joseph North, MO.-KANS."
Scale: 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCE:

15 341705 4403300

39° 52' 30" TROY 1 1/2 MI. R. 23 E. 400 000 FEET (MO.)

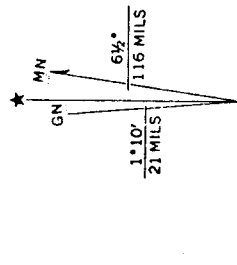
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

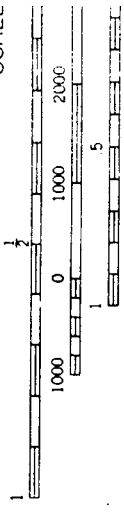
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1971

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum 10,000-foot grid based on Missouri coordinate system, west zone and Kansas coordinate system, north zone 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked
Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1977. Map edited 1978. This information not field checked
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



UTM GRID AND 1978 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



CONTOUR IN'
DOTTED LINES REPRE
NATIONAL GEODETIC V

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NAT.
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER
AND THE DIVISION OF RESEARCH
MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURA
AND STATE GEOLOGICAL SUR
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

Photo Log:

Name of Property: St. Joseph Public Library

City or Vicinity: St. Joseph

County: Buchanan County State: MO

Photographer: Bray Photographers

Date

Photographed: Dec. 1980

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 11. Primary façade, view to NW.

2 of 11. View to NE of W side.

3 of 11. View to SW of N side.

4 of 11. Historical view of E side of building before recent cleaning and color coating. Photo taken by Cook Camera Shop, 1954.

5 of 11. Interior, view to SW of lobby and staircase.

6 of 11. Interior, view to N of lobby and book area.

7 of 11. Interior, view up into shallow ornamental stained glass dome over lobby.

8 of 11. Interior, 2nd FL lobby. Balustrade encircles the stained glass window.

9 of 11. Interior, 2nd FL lobby, view up into dome over stained glass window.

10 of 11. Interior view of the 1st FL staircase leading to the school district offices on the 2nd FL.

11 of 11. A close view of the circular balustrade, especially showing spot lights to illuminate stained glass for observers on the 1st FL.



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FELIX ST.

P
PARKING

CHEVROLET

CHEVROLET

LOCAL



















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OFFICES SECOND FLOOR

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