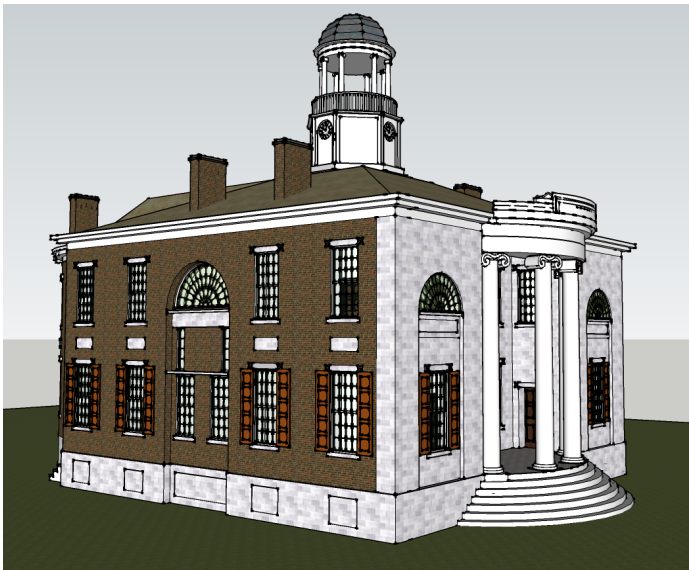


THE 1828 ST. LOUIS COURTHOUSE

by Bob Moore

Historian, Jefferson National Expansion Memorial

As St. Louis began to grow as a city in the 1820s, and shook off its chrysalis of French Colonial city planning and house design, one building stands out as an impetus to a new direction and the emergence of an American rather than a French city on the banks of the Mississippi. Ironically, that structure stood for less than 25 years and is all but forgotten by St. Louisans today. It was supplanted by the spectacular Greek Revival Old Courthouse, famous in U.S. history as the site of the Dred Scott case. But prior to the first stone being laid for the Old Courthouse, another building once stood on that same square.



The 1828 St. Louis Courthouse by Morton & Laveille, seen from the southeast, near Fourth Street and Market, from a Sketchup model by Bob Moore

The public square as designated by the Americans by 1822 was not the same public square, the “place publique,” that the French had known. The French Place d’Armes, located on Block 7, was central to a town that hugged the river; the growing town was moving to the West, and the new square, on Block 102, was central within it. At the time, it should be noted, the city’s western boundary extended only to Seventh Street, placing the public square at the center of St. Louis when measured from north to south or from east to west. It was thought that future development in the area between Fourth Street and Seventh Street would eventually surround the public square with homes and businesses, for in 1822 Block 102 was still very much on the western fringe of the town, and little had been built out that far save for the City Jail.

A public, urban place like the public square was the setting where all sorts of people came together informally, where collective civic rituals such as markets and parades took place, and where the prevalent values and beliefs of the community were made manifest. In the American form of the public square, an institutional building usually dominated, most often a courthouse, in a city design seen particularly in Pennsylvania and which spread westward in the early 1800s to the Midwest.

In the early 1820s St. Louis was, for the first time, feeling an acute need for a court building. On December 14, 1822, a commission was appointed by the county of St. Louis to select a site for a permanent, dedicated courthouse. The committee consisted of Thomas Sappington (whose house on Sappington Road is still standing), Ludwig Bacon, Robert Quarels, Pierre Chouteau (son of city founder Pierre Laclède), and William Carr Lane (soon to become the first mayor under the 1823 St. Louis city charter). By August 25 of the following year they chose the space that was already being called by St. Louisans “the Public Square” as the site.¹ Besides the fact that court functions were already being conducted near the site, and that the jail was one block away, the American style of a central, prominent location for the courthouse (Block 102 was at the crest of the ridge along Fourth Street overlooking the river), certainly figured into the recommendation.

Up to that time, the courts had been housed in several places, including the commandant’s house of the old Spanish fort near Fourth and Walnut, James Baird’s former blacksmith shop on Third Street between Almond and Spruce, and the Baptist church at the southwest corner of Third and Market.² By the early 1820s, a two-story town house, located where the UMB Bank and Tony’s Restaurant are today at Fourth and Market, was in use as the court house. The original description of the building was that it was a two story frame dwelling built in 1817 by James Sawyer, and by 1821 sold to Presbyterian missionary Salmon Giddings. The 1821 City Directory stated that the courts met on the first floor, and the second floor was occupied by the clerks of the court.³

The project to build a designated courthouse building for the growing town moved slowly. By September 1823 the Public Square (which was not actually owned by the city or the “public”!) was deeded by Auguste Chouteau and John B.C. Lucas, who each owned a portion of the block, to the city for the purpose of erecting a courthouse. On August 28, 1824, nearly a year later, the county appropriated \$1,541 for a clerk’s building, which was probably built shortly thereafter. Over a year after that, on November 9, 1825, \$7,000 was appropriated for constructing the new court house, and Alexander Stuart was appointed Superintendent of the project.⁴

Apparently Stuart drafted a plan for the new courthouse, which the County Court records state was estimated in February 1826 at a building cost of \$12,000. They considered the plans and appropriated \$5,000 more for potential construction. By May 1, however, a plan by architects Joseph S. Laveille and George Morton, who had been approached by Stuart as he searched for a proper design, had been reviewed by the County Court and approved in lieu of Stuart's own. This new plan required a further appropriation of \$2,000. By May 26 a contract was signed with Morton and Laveille. This may have resulted in some sour grapes, for soon afterward Stuart stepped down as judge and resigned as superintendent of the project. Henry S. Geyer was appointed superintendent to replace Stuart on July 25, 1826.⁵

Joseph C. Laveille and George Morton formed the first architectural firm west of the Mississippi River in St. Louis about 1823. They designed not only the first courthouse for St. Louis, but also the Old Cathedral, the city's first Episcopal church on the northwest corner of Third and Chestnut (1825-1826), St. Louis University at Christy (now Lucas) and 9th Streets, and the first buildings at Jefferson Barracks (1826).

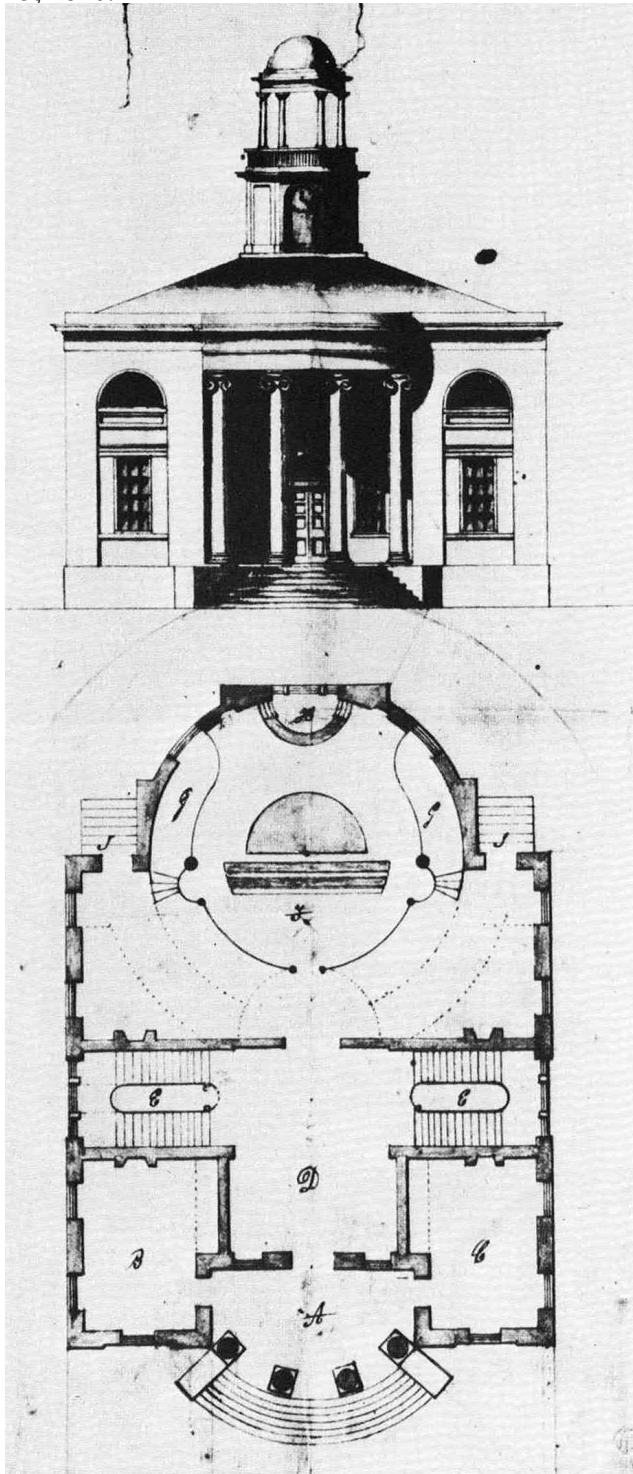
Joseph C. Laveille was born in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in 1790 and grew up in Philadelphia. He moved to St. Louis in 1821. In addition to his architectural work, Laveille was the city's street commissioner from 1823 to 1826, and was responsible for proposing that the city's east-west streets be renamed for trees, as they were in Philadelphia. Laveille served as alderman from the 2nd ward and was the aldermanic president. In 1820 Laveille advertised himself as an architect and practical builder of "long experience in the principal cities and towns in the United States." With Morton he prepared "skids for steam boats" and made "sundry coffins for paupers."⁶

George Morton was born in Scotland in 1790 and immigrated to the United States, first settling in Pittsburgh. He married Margaret Morrison in 1812 in Allegheny City and moved his family to St. Louis between 1818 and 1822. Morton first formed a partnership with Philip Rochblave as carpenters and builders but by 1823 was linked with Laveille. Morton also served as a city alderman. In later years he retired due to ill health. In 1834 Morton and Laveille dissolved their partnership; Laveille went into the lumber business while Morton went into real estate. Joseph Laveille died in 1842, while George Morton lived until 1865.⁷

On July 11, 1826, Rene Paul was hired to make a survey of the Public Square, which he measured at 273 feet by 250 feet. This measure, by the way, is smaller than the size of the current block, which measures 301 feet by 257 feet, wider by 7 feet north and south and 28 feet east and west than it was in 1826.⁸

Specifications put forth by Morton and Laveille to get the contract for the new courthouse described a building with a "foundation . . . of stone sunk about three feet below the surface of the ground, the outside walls of which are to be two and one half feet in thickness, those of the inside to be about two feet and secured from settling by reversed arches under all the openings, so placed and formed as to give the wall in its whole extent an equal pressure on its foundation.

The Architecture to be executed in a style of simple Elegance – The Circular Portico of the principal front to be of the Grecian Ionic Order, the proportions of which are taken from the beautiful & Chaste temple of that Order on the River Illissus at Athena [*sic*] – The Shafts of the Columns to be of Brick neatly plastered in imitation of Cut Stone with real Cut Stone Caps and bases, the Whole resting on a Circular border or step Forming the front of the floor of the portico and to which you ascend by a flight of six Circular steps. The Foundation above the surface of the ground to the height of the lower edge of the Water Table to be of What is termed Range Work Masonry Executed in the neatest manner and Capped with a water table of Cut Stone about twelve inches in height encircling the Whole



The 1828 Courthouse, east front elevation and first-floor plan by Morton & Laveille, taken from a photograph of a now-missing document

building, to be Cut in the neatest manner and the Joints to be properly secured by Iron Clamps. – All the door and window Sills to be of Cut Stone. The whole of the windows except those of a circular form or those termed Venetian will contain 24 lights of glass each of 11 by 16 inches in the lower story and 11 by 15 in the 2nd story. The walls of the building to be (Exterior) 1½ Brick or 23 inches, those of the Interior 16 inches –

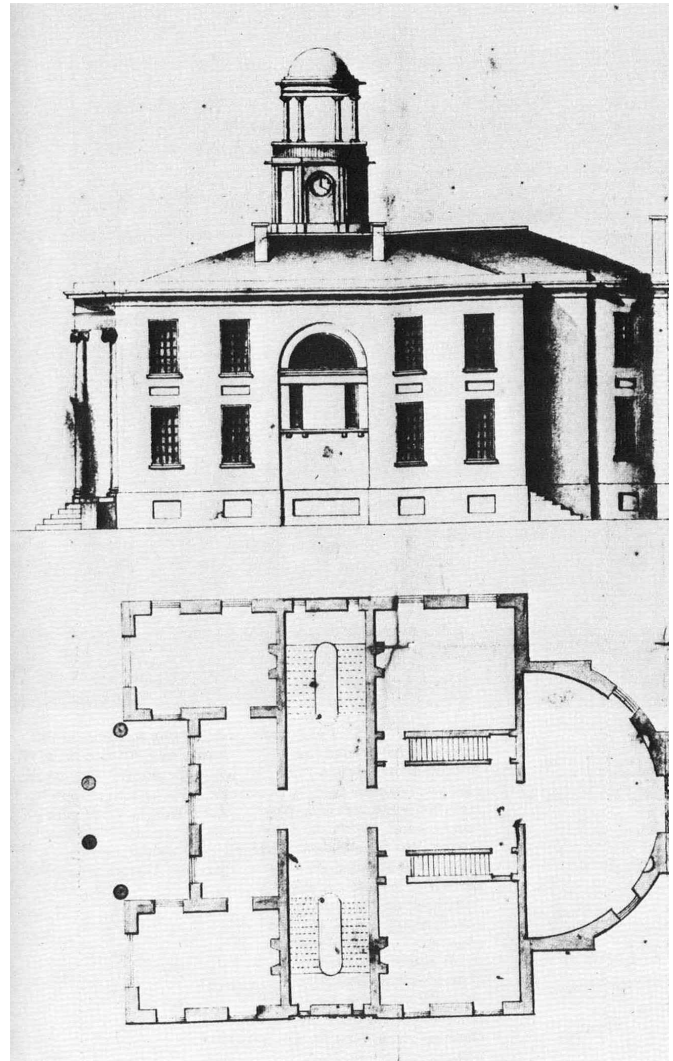
The Cornice round the whole of the building to be neat and Chaste and Crowned with a Blocking Course of 10 or 12 inches in height behind which will be formed the gutters or conductors & to be furnished with four pipes or outlets for the Water, each of which will be decorated with a handsome ornamental head. – The Roof to be framed in the most secure and substantial manner and covered with walnut shingles neatly shaved and joined and to be surmounted with a Cupola executed for the reception of a Clock. – The interior (with the exception of the two offices and Jury Rooms which are to be perfectly plain) to be finished in a neat handsome style. The Stair Cases leading to the second story to be finished with a Continued Rail – . . . The windows of the lower story to be secured by Shutters Venetian or panel as may be required, the framing of which is to be of 2 in. plank and also the framing of all the doors to be of that Material – The lower floor to be paved with good smooth Brick or tile. – We deem it unnecessary to particularize further as it is our intention to Execute the whole of the Work and of such Materials as the nature and magnitude of an Edifice of this kind requires.⁹

The contract for the new courthouse added further details about the building, which accompanied a two-sheet plan and elevation. As a side note about this plan, it was lost for many years and discovered by Lucius H. Cannon, librarian of the reference library at City Hall, in 1929. The two pages of the plan were photographed, and then lost again prior to 1938.¹⁰ They have remained missing since that time and are not known to exist today. Luckily, we have the 1920s photographs of the plans, along with the daguerreotypes of the building made by Easterly and Boehl prior to its being torn down in 1851, through which to form an understanding of what the structure was like. The contract with the county stated:

The main building to be sixty feet square from out to out with a semicircular projection of twenty by forty feet, the lower story to be fifteen feet high in the clear, and the upper story thirteen feet high in the clear . . . the partition walls to be of brick, eighteen inches thick from the foundation, except those commencing in the second story which shall be what are called truss partitions six inches thick - - the circular portico of the principal front (represented in the plan) to be of the Grecian Ionic order, the shafts of the columns to be brick neatly plastered in imitation of cut stone, with caps plinth & bases of cut stone the whole resting on a circular border or step of cut stone forming the front of the floor of the portico, with a flight of six circular steps of wood extending along the whole front of the portico – . . . the windows in front to correspond with the plan, those lighting the stairs, and the two in the extreme rear for lighting the judges seats to be Venetian, all the

others to contain each twenty four lights, those of the lower story the glass to be eleven by sixteen and in the second story eleven by fifteen, the whole of the windows to be furnished with weights & pulleys and those of the lower story with shutters . . . The whole building to be completely finished and delivered to the Superintendent for the use of the county of St. Louis on or before the first day of December in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and twenty eight, unavoidable accidents only excepted – ¹¹

This completion date of December 1, 1828 was not met, as we shall see.



The 1828 Courthouse, east elevation and second-floor plan by Morton & Laveille, taken from a photograph

It is interesting to note similarities between the court house and the Old Cathedral, also designed by Morton and Laveille about four years later. Both include numbers of “Venetian” fan-shaped windows, both have recessed porticoes, both utilize more expensive materials in the front façade and lesser materials on the other sides. Both rely on some of the most popular ancient models for Greek Revival buildings, yet are still quite rooted in the Federal Era in their overall design. In this sense they can be seen as transitional buildings, moving from a neoclassical context to the new Greek Revival motifs just gaining popularity nationwide at the time of their construction.

Morton and Laveille were certainly on the cutting edge of the styles of the era with these designs.

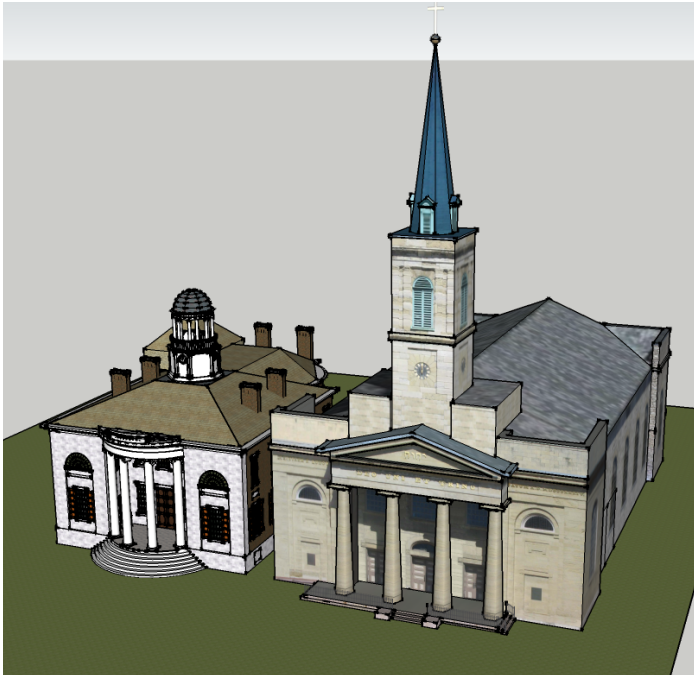
On August 10, 1833 the first Courthouse was finally considered completed at a total cost of \$14,416 and over four and a half years late, although the building was in use by 1828, long before official completion. The completion report, written by superintendent Henry S. Geyer, had these interesting details:

Messrs. Laveille & Morton being desirous to make a final settlement as undertakers for building the court house of the county of St. Louis, I have examined the said court house and the work thereof and find that the same has been completed according to their contract, as modified by authority of the county court in relation to the substitution of stone window heads for a stone water table, with the following exceptions, that is to say: the whole work was to have been completed on the 1st Dec. 1828, [but] it was not finished for more than two years thereafter, but the county had the use of the house before the day appointed and the delay in the completion may be imputed to the fact that for the greater portion of each year some one or more of the courts were in session.¹²



A Sketchup model by Bob Moore of the first-floor courtroom of the 1828 Courthouse; note raised areas to left and right and tall judge's bench under fanlight.

In 1838 a contest was announced for the design of a new, larger courthouse building, with a first prize purse of \$100 and a second prize of \$70. Although the contest was held and the prizes awarded to Peter Brooks and Henry Spence, neither design suited the city fathers. It was then that a man named Henry Singleton proposed a stunning Greek Revival plan to be executed in stone and brick consisting of four wings, with two large porticoes, stone columns 32 feet tall, and a low dome rising 130 feet above the yard. The structure, of cruciform shape, would fill the entire city block. An advantage to the plan was that it could be built in stages, enabling the 1828 courthouse to remain standing until substantial portions of the new courthouse could absorb court functions.



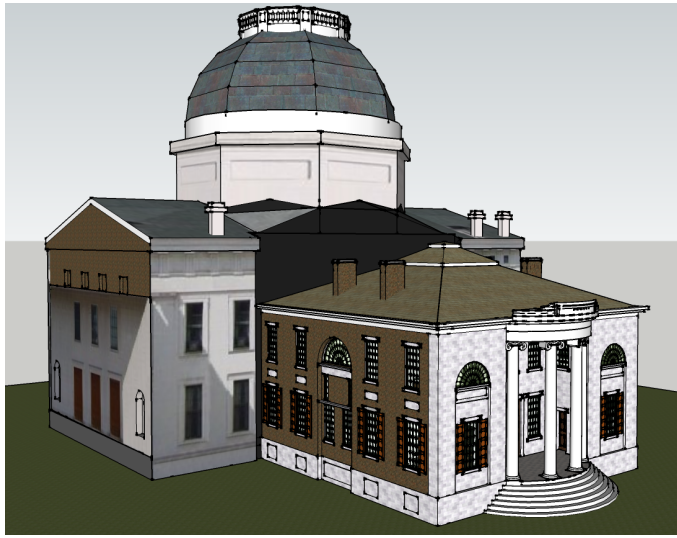
An imaginary comparison of the 1828 Courthouse on the left and the Old Cathedral on the right, both designed by Morton & Laveille; a Sketchup model by Bob Moore

The new brick courthouse was problematic almost from the very beginning. It lacked space, for it had a total of but nine rooms and just one large courtroom. When it was completed in 1833, St. Louis had about 6,000 residents. By 1840, the population had nearly tripled to 16,469, with a proportionate increase in the caseload for the courts. The growing number of St. Louis city and county courts, including criminal, civil, probate, common pleas, land and orphan's, not to mention the State Supreme Court which met in St. Louis twice each year, could no longer be contained within the building, and the city fathers resolved to remedy the situation.



The daguerreotype by Emil Boehl dates from about 1851. It shows the 1828 Courthouse with the unfinished Henry Singleton building behind it. The south wing to the left was intended to have a pediment and portico, but instead an office wing was added by Robert S. Mitchell, and the Singleton dome was replaced by William Rumbold's iron one.

Construction began on October 21, 1839, when the cornerstone was laid. The first phase of construction included only the west wing, the rotunda, and two short extensions that would later serve as links to the north and south wings. The Federal-style brick courthouse of 1828 remained on the east side as part of the new building. Construction proceeded slowly at first. The building was financed by the county court, which ran short of money, and had to borrow \$30,000.



A Sketchup model by Bob Moore based on the Boehl photo showing the 1828 Courthouse with the unfinished Singleton building behind it. Evidence shows that the clock cupola shown in the original Laveille & Morton drawings was built, but it must have been removed in conjunction with the new building's construction.

As the first phase of construction on the new court building neared completion, on June 17, 1842, “the court appropriate[d] thirty seven dollars to paint and white wash the lower room of the old court house and appoint[ed] George H. Kennerly a commissioner to have same performed with all convenient dispatch.”¹³ On July 21, the Lower Courtroom of the old building was being “refurbished, repaired, etc.,” for the Clerks of the Common Pleas and County Courts. It seems likely that the east side of the large first floor courtroom, which would have survived demolition during the construction of the Rotunda, was divided into two rooms for the use of the clerks. This probably allowed the demolition of the small buildings on the northwest and southwest corners of the block, which from indications in the record did not happen until 1845.¹⁴



West end of the 1828 Courthouse, showing side entrance and fanlights on both floors

An article on the Courthouse which appeared in the *St. Louis Weekly Reveille*, on October 3 and 15, 1848, lamented the shabby appearance of the building. Remember that at this time the building was less than 20 years old and the new building,

what then existed of it, had only been in use for five years. Also, this was written at the time of the Dred Scott case:

The bright sun is shining upon it revealing its proportions – deformed, unfinished. Its dome looks, phrenologically speaking, like a huge cranium upon a disproportionate body. The old building on Fourth Street appears to the eye like an unhealthy decaying fungus which had grown out from beneath its overshadowing neighbor. Loose pieces of marble lie scattered about the base of the building, whose antique front conveys a confused idea of age and ruin. There is an apparent struggle in its different parts, as if the modern march of improvement were laboring to usurp the place of the old and faded grandeur of past days... We enter the new Rotunda, lit by its conical sky-light, which, like a great eye, seems scanning the tortuosities of the staircase beneath. Here all, architecturally, is modern and massive. Viewed from the upper gallery, the lawyers glide about, looking as solemn as if burdened with the weight of empire.”¹⁵

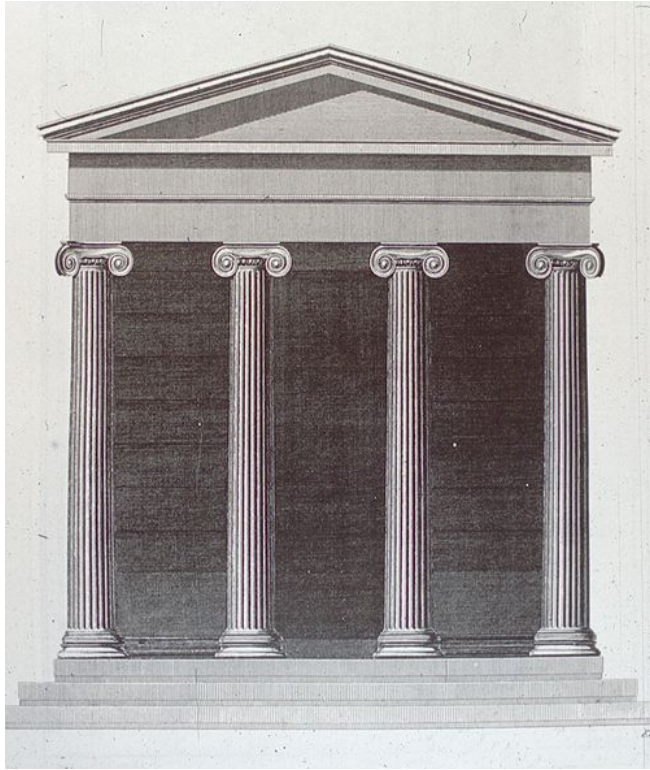
On March 9, 1850, Joseph Foster submitted a plan and estimate of costs for building the East Wing of the Courthouse. In early 1851, “the Court, deeming the erection and completion of the East Wing of the Courthouse a matter of first importance to the City and County of St. Louis, therefore order that a competent person be appointed to make all detailed plans and specifications and to receive bids from competent persons for the several branches of said work and also for the tearing down of the old building.”¹⁶ On October 7, 1851, the Court ordered the demolition of the 1828 Courthouse on Fourth Street. The *Missouri Republican* reported on the 26th:

Twenty-five years ago St. Louis was but a village, and in that time what a change; the old land-marks and familiar places are ‘passing away,’ while costly edifices are taking the place of the humble cottage, which even in its turn must yield to the despotism of change and progress. . . The old east wing, or in other words, the old Court House, was commenced in 1826. The County and Circuit Courts prior to that time had been in the habit of holding their sessions in the old brick house on the corner of Third and Walnut, and at the old Baptist church, which stood on the site where Scott’s Hotel now stands. The present additions to the old Court House were commenced, we believe, in 1839, and, we might add, are not yet finished. . . “¹⁷

The demolition of the building must have been complete by March 1, 1852, when James McGue was paid \$150.00 for grading and excavating for the basement of the East wing of the Courthouse. By April 7 McGue was paid \$100.00 more for the excavation for the foundation of the east part of Courthouse, and two days later John Shaw was paid \$1000.00 for rubble masonry for the foundation of the East Wing.¹⁸ It should be noted that the East Wing of the present building is just slightly wider along Fourth Street than the old building was; 64 feet, as opposed to 60 feet for the older building. The persons excavating the basement had to dig much deeper (the old basement went only 3 feet below ground level) and dig outward toward Fourth Street another 32 feet, 2 inches, not allowing for extra excavations to make sure that the basement walls could be constructed within the hole. This means that not only was the

1828 courthouse torn down, but that all vestiges of the building, including its foundations, were removed to make way for the present building.

Altogether, the 1828 Courthouse lasted only 25 years before it was torn down. What was once called “the most beautiful building in Missouri” was considered to be an eyesore 25 years later.



James Stewart & Nicholas Revett, restored front elevation of the so-called Temple on the Ilissus, a river near Athens, from *The Antiquities of Athens*, published in 1762. This was cited as the source for the Ionic order used in the front portico of the 1828 courthouse.

NOTES

1. St. Louis County Court Record Books.
2. Recollections of Richard Dowling, *Missouri Republican*, March 8, 1868.
3. Paxton, *1821 St. Louis City Directory*; Frederic L. Billon, *Annals of St. Louis in Its Territorial Days From 1804 to 1821*. St. Louis: Press of Nixon-Jones Printing Co., 1888.
4. Book H, Office of the Recorder of Deeds, St. Louis, pp. 421-422; St. Louis County Court Record Books.
5. St. Louis County Court Record Books.
6. Billon, *Annals of St. Louis in Its Territorial Days*, pp. 151, 331-332, 350-351; *Missouri, A Guide to the “Show Me” State*, Missouri Writers Project, Missouri State Highway Department, 1941, p. 188.
7. Billon, *Annals of St. Louis in Its Territorial Days*, pp. 151, 331-332, 350-351; *Centennial History of Missouri*, Vol. IV, St. Louis & Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing, 1921, pp. 530 and 535; John A. Bryan, “Outstanding Architects in St. Louis Between 1804 and 1904,” *Missouri Historical Review*, January 1934, pp. 83-90.
8. National Park Service, Jefferson National Expansion Memorial Archives, Record Unit 144, Old Courthouse Contracts, Box 1; Modern CAD drawings and other plans shared by Park Engineers Dave Casseli and Jack Blasé.
9. Laveille & Morton, April 29, 1826, Specifications for court house to the Able Judge Stewart. *Proposals for Erecting a Court house in St. Louis*, JNEM Archives. The temple on the Ilissus at Athens, the name of which was spelled incorrectly in the specifications, was one of three Greek designs which became essential to American designers of Greek Revival structures in the second quarter of the 19th century. The other two were the temple of the Erechtheum and the choragic monument of Lysicrates, also located in Athens. These designs were prized for their simplicity and “rustic” character, one Ionic, one Doric and the last Corinthian. Although the small temple on the

Ilissus River was taken down in 1778, it had been recorded by James Stuart and Nicholas Revett in the first volume of *The Antiquities of Athens*, published in 1762. This, along with Minard Lafever’s *The Modern Builder’s Guide*, published in America in 1833, provided ample documentation of the building and inspired architects throughout the United States, including Morton and Laveille. See the blog entry written by Calder Loth at <http://blog.classicist.org/?p=191> and W. Barksdale Maynard, *Architecture in the United States, 1800-1850*, Yale University Press, 2002, p. 232.

10. See John A. Bryan, “A Physical History of the Old Courthouse,” National Park Service Report, October 1938, p. 2.
11. Laveille & Morton, A. Gamble, Alexr. McAllister, Johns Smith, O.N. Bostwick & Robert Simpson – to the County of St. Louis, bond for Building a Court House, JNEM Archives.
12. JNEM Archives.
13. Records of St. Louis County Courts, Vol. III, p. 155.
14. JNEM Archives.
15. *St. Louis Weekly Reveille*, October 3 & 15, 1848.
16. St. Louis County Court Records, Vol. VI, p. 28; February 19, 1851.
17. *Missouri Republican*, October 26, 1851.
18. JNEM Archives

MORE HUXTABLE ON ST. LOUIS

The Fall Extra issue of the NewsLetter reviewed the many times that Ada Louise Huxtable reported on architectural issues in St. Louis for the *New York Times* between 1964 and 1979. SAH Chapter member Emily Pulitzer reminds us that Huxtable did not forget St. Louis in her later years, when she was associated with the *Wall Street Journal*. One memorable visit here resulted in the article on March 13, 2002, “Two New Museums Reveal the Virtues of Intimacy.” In it, she compared the then newly opened Pulitzer Foundation here and the Neue Museum in New York with classic small museums of previous generations, such as the Dulwich Gallery and Soane Museum in London, the Fondation Maeght in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, and the Morgan Library and Frick Museum in New York.

Huxtable wrote of Tadao Ando’s Pulitzer, “A faultless synthesis of art and architecture, it enhances the experience and understanding of both. . . . The insistent horizontality of the linear plan, the discreet distancing of the real world and the minimal, elegant detailing focus all of one’s senses on a serene interior of art, light and form. . . . In this rational, reductive space, one is forced to look at the art – not a bad thing at all.”

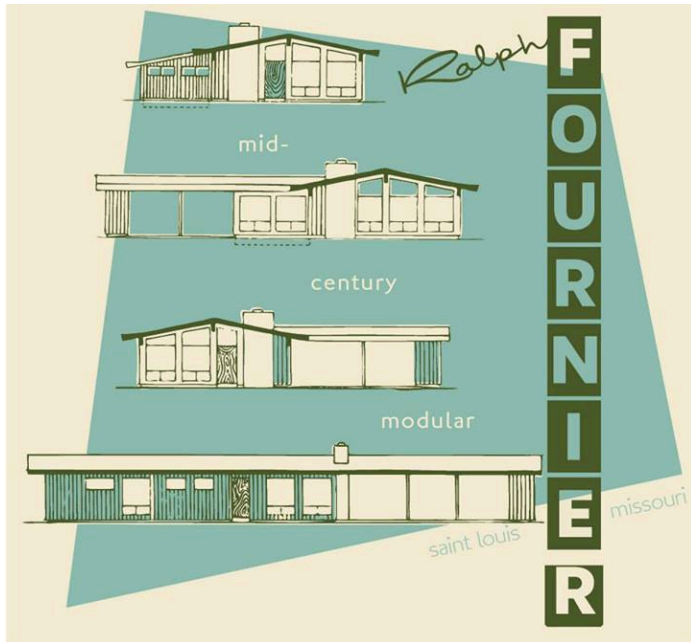
Typical of her interest in the broader context of architecture, Huxtable used part of her space to discuss the Pulitzer’s exhibition philosophy of keeping labels off the walls. She also reviewed the national tax policy that encourages private donors to provide public access to their collections, an incentive that other countries envy.

While many writers have discussed Huxtable’s keen eye and intellectual savvy, few have mentioned a quality that struck Emily Pulitzer when she met her in 2002 – she was beautiful, possibly more so in her later years than when younger.

Exhibit: "Suburban Modernism: The Architecture & Interior Design of Ralph & Mary Jane Fournier"

Monday January 13 to Saturday, February 22
 Reception Thursday, January 16, 5 to 8 p.m.
 Morton J. May Foundation Gallery,
 Maryville University Library

Ralph Fournier was a 1952 graduate of Washington University. As a designer primarily of residences, he had the rare fortune to work for some developers who thought that contemporary design would sell, and he became virtually the only St. Louis architect responsible for entire subdivisions of modern homes, among them, Craig Woods (a Kirkwood historic district), Sunswept in Creve Coeur, and the upscale Arrowhead in Creve Coeur. Ridgewood in Crestwood has 250 houses, some on Fournier Drive.



All Along Press has designed this image for use by Modern STL, as a poster for the upcoming exhibit, and for designer T-shirts, out soon.

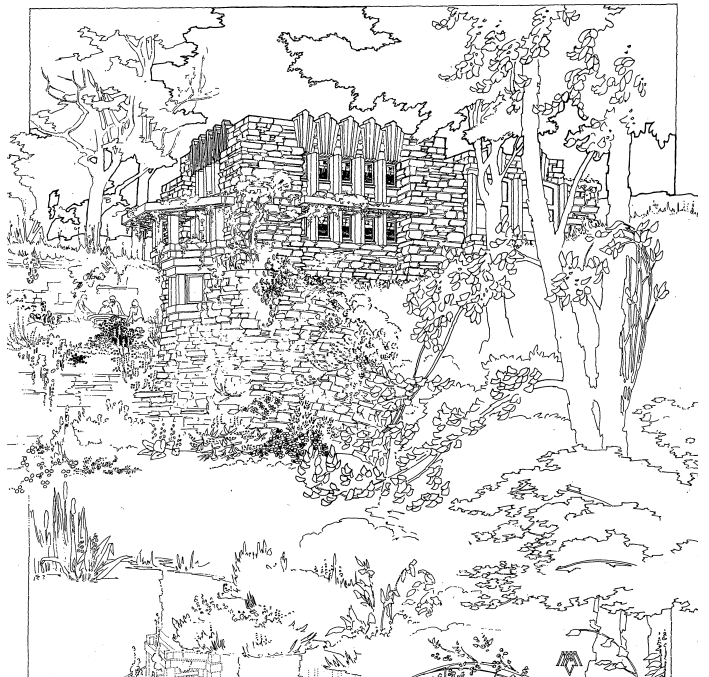
After working in the shadow of more famous modernists for most of his life, Fournier, now in his 90s, has become a hero to the Mid-Century Modern movement. This exhibit is curated by Jessica Senne, AIA, NCIDQ, assistant professor of Interior Design at Maryville, with special thanks to Modern STL, American Institute of Architects St. Louis Scholarship Fund, and Maryville University. Financial Assistance for this project has been provided by the Missouri Arts Council, a State Agency. The May Gallery is on the ground floor of the University Library at Maryville and is open the same hours as the library, which makes it one of the most accessible exhibit spaces ever: Mon-Thurs 7 a.m. to midnight; Friday 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sunday 11 a.m. to midnight.

Conference: Walter Burley Griffin Society

Friday and Saturday, May 30 and 31
 Mason City, Iowa

In 1912, The Chicago architect Walter Burley Griffin won the competition for the design of the new Australian capital city of Canberra. He and his equally talented wife Marion Mahony Griffin then moved to Australia and later to India, where he died in 1937. Before that, though, Griffin designed some of the most masterful products of the so-called Prairie School, inspired by Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright. Examples in striking distance of St. Louis include the Stinson Memorial Library at Anna, Illinois, near Carbondale, and the house for his brother Ralph Griffin in Edwardsville.

The Walter Burley Griffin Society of America is based in St. Louis due to the interest of Ralph's grandson Peter. Each year the Society holds a meeting combining tours and talks by some of the leading scholars. The fifteenth annual meeting will be in Mason City, Iowa, Meredith Willson's River City in "The Music Man". It promises to be one of the best. Griffin designed the Rock Glen/Rock Crest subdivision there, and it includes five houses by him plus two by Barry Byrne, and one by William Drummond, constituting more Prairie School houses than any other subdivision in the country. Wright himself designed the Stockman House, which is now open to the public, and the Park Inn Hotel and City Bank, outstandingly restored a few years ago. To attend, look for registration information on the Griffin website, WBGriffinSociety.org, or e-mail wbgociety@charter.net.



Walter Burley Griffin, Joshua G. Melson House, 56 River Heights Drive, Mason City, Iowa, 1912-1914. Detail of a presentation drawing in the style of Marion Mahony Griffin, Walter's talented wife.

2014 ANNUAL GATHERING RETURNS TO THE FEASTING FOX



The Feasting Fox, built in 1913 as the Gretchen Inn, was designed by Klipstein & Rathmann as one of the showplaces among the neighborhood taverns Anheuser-Busch was building to counter the negative stereotypes fostered by the Prohibition movement. Known for many years as Al Smith's, the building closed in 1987 and would have been replaced by a fried chicken franchise except for grassroots opposition working through the Dutchtown South Community Corporation. The building reopened in 1995 as the Feasting Fox. The name comes from the image of a lederhosen-wearing fox eating a drumstick, which was associated with Anheuser-Busch's near-beer, Bevo. The building has regained its position as a community landmark, recognized as a City Landmark in 2001.

Our event will cost \$30, payable at the door. You may renew your membership for 2014 at the same time for \$15. Please RSVP to Esley Hamilton at 314-615-0357 or ehamilton@stlouisco.com. The deadline for reservations is Wednesday, February 5. We'll have our own room in the building facing Meramec behind the main building.

Our custom is to share images (digital or celluloid) of buildings or places our members think are interesting. They may be anywhere in the world. To use PowerPoint or other computer visuals, please contact John Guenther at 314-560-1493 or john.c.guenther@gmail.com. Contact Esley if you want to use slides. We depend on the courtesy of our presenters to limit themselves to four minutes so that everybody who wants to speak can be accommodated.

**St. Louis and Missouri Valley Chapters
Society of Architectural Historians
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News Letter

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Spring issue	15 February
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