

Discover Missouri Courts Challenge

In 2020, the Missouri court system celebrated its 200th anniversary. Missouri's first constitution was adopted in July 1820. At that time, four judicial circuits and a state supreme court, known as the Supreme Court of Missouri, were created. That Court consisted of three judges, who traveled to four judicial districts. Today, there are 46 judicial circuits, an intermediate court divided into three districts (Eastern, Western, and Southern) known as the Court of Appeals, and seven judges who sit on the Supreme Court of Missouri. Find out more about the third branch of government through the Discover Missouri Courts Challenge.



*Discover Missouri Courts Challenge is sponsored by **The Supreme Court of Missouri**. The Supreme Court of Missouri has been the state's highest court since 1820, when Missouri's first constitution was adopted. The Supreme Court's role is to ensure a stable and predictable system of justice by serving as the final arbiter of disputes involving the state's constitution and laws. As such, it hears and decides many of the most important – and often the most controversial – legal issues affecting Missouri citizens, businesses, organizations and even factions of government.*

***Discover Missouri Courts Challenge**... Complete all 4 parts of the challenge. Remember: Missouri Explorers must be registered in the program, and they are responsible for checking hours and availability of sites. Upload your verification photographs using the online submission form at <https://missouri2021.org/missouriexplorers/> to receive your merit badge button.*



Remember, Missouri Explorers, you are responsible for checking hours and availability of sites before arriving.

Part 1: Complete one of the listed virtual challenges.

Part 2: Visit two local courthouses in two different Missouri counties. Need help? Search here: <https://www.courts.mo.gov/#findacourt>

Part 3: Visit one Missouri Court of Appeals office and answer the following question: How many judges serve with each of the Missouri Court of Appeals districts? Snap a photograph of your answer in front of the building. <https://www.courts.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=261>

Part 4: Visit two of the listed historical locations and snap your photographs as indicated at each location.

Virtual Challenges

Missouri Constitution Quiz

June 12, 2020, marks the two hundredth anniversary of the convening of the first Missouri Constitutional Convention in St. Louis. After nearly six weeks, the delegates adopted a constitution on July 19, 1820, taking another critical step towards Missouri statehood. To

commemorate the creation of the 1820 Missouri Constitution, the Supreme Court of Missouri Bicentennial Committee created the Bicentennial Constitution Quiz. Take the quiz, and snap a photograph of your score.

<https://missouri2021.org/missouri-constitution-quiz/>

Happy Birthday Missouri Courts: A Celebration of Your Courts' 200th Anniversary 1820-2020 kids – presentation

The Bicentennial of the Missouri Judiciary: A Celebration of Your Courts' 200th Anniversary 1820-2020 – adult presentation

Have gavel, will travel – or go virtual! Join in celebrating the state's third branch of government by inviting a local judge to speak with your school class or civic or community group about the history and development of Missouri's courts. Two new presentations – one for younger students and one for older students and adults – celebrating the bicentennial of our state's third branch of government can be presented virtually or in person. Participate in one of these presentations and write a paragraph (4-6 sentences) about the significance of 1820 to Missouri Courts. Snap a photograph of your paragraph.

<https://www.courts.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=170273>

The Bicentennial of the Missouri Court Judiciary Website

More than a century ago, the Missourians who built a permanent home for the state's highest court carved some of their highest ideals into stone. In doing so, they ensured their ideals would be permanent even as the judges and staff of the Supreme Court Building came and went over time. Two ideals are carved in Latin but translate to: "Where there is a right, there is a remedy" and "To declare the law, not to make it." The final ideal – carved right above the front door – is in English: "The law has honored us. May we honor it." Learn about Chief Justice McGirk at the Bicentennial of the Missouri Judiciary website, the draw a portrait of Chief Justice McGirk. Snap a photograph of your art.

<https://www.courts.mo.gov/bicentennial/>

2021 State of the Judiciary Speech

Due to COVID-19 precautions, Missouri Chief Justice George W. Draper III delivered this

State of the Judiciary address virtually Tuesday morning, February 2, 2021, from the Supreme Court of Missouri in Jefferson City, Missouri. Answer the two multiple choice questions listed and snap a photograph of your answers.

The first Supreme Court of Missouri courthouse, located in Jefferson City, was completed in which of the following years?

- a) 1820
- b) 1875
- c) 1878
- d) 1907

When did the Supreme Court of Missouri first hear cases in the current building?

- a) November 1820
- b) March 1821
- c) January 1907
- d) October 1907

<https://www.courts.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=173134>

Nonpartisan Court Plan on the Missouri Courts Website

During the 1930s, the public became increasingly dissatisfied with the increasing role of politics in judicial selection and judicial decision-making. Judges were plagued by outside influences due to the political aspects of the election process, and dockets were congested due to time the judges spent campaigning. The Missouri nonpartisan court plan, commonly called the Missouri Plan, since has served as a national model for the selection of judges and has been adopted in more than 30 other states. List five questions that you would ask a judge. Snap a photograph of your list.

<https://www.courts.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=297>

Historical Locations

Cape Girardeau County

Cape Girardeau Court of Common Pleas
44 N. Lorimier

Cape Girardeau, Missouri
573-335-1631

The Common Pleas Courthouse was completed in 1854. It sits high atop a hill, overlooking downtown. It played a big part in our history, from American Indian council meetings to the Civil War. The dungeon was used to jail southern sympathizers and perhaps Confederate soldiers. The lawn of the Common Pleas Courthouse was recently named Ivers Square in honor of James Iver, a local slave who enlisted in the Union Army. On the west side of the courthouse stand memorials: A cast of a Union soldier, who sits atop a fountain way, was presented by the Women's Relief Corps in 1911; another is a Vietnam Memorial. Snap your photograph in front of the building.

<https://www.visitmo.com/things-to-do/cape-girardeau-common-pleas-courthouse>

Cole County

Supreme Court of Missouri Courthouse
207 West High Street
Jefferson City, Missouri
573-751-7331

This three-story, red-brick building, which opened in October 1907, features French Renaissance architecture, stone pillars at each wing of the front façade, stone trim and a slate roof. Prominent in its lobby is a massive marble staircase. The building houses the offices of the Supreme Court clerk and the clerk's staff, two courtrooms, the two-story Supreme Court Library, and, by statute, the office of the state attorney general. When the building was designed, Supreme Court judges came from their hometowns around the state to Jefferson City three months out of the year to hear and decide cases. For that reason, their chambers included small apartment areas off each judge's office. Today the judges hear cases nine or 10 months each year, and their chambers have been remodeled to accommodate their staff of two law clerks and an administrative assistant. Snap your photograph on the front steps of the building.

<https://www.courts.mo.gov/page.jsp?id=100>

Jackson County

Historic Truman Courthouse
112 West Lexington Avenue
Independence, Missouri
816-252-7454

Situated in the very heart of the Historic Square of Independence, Missouri, the Truman Courthouse has a history that dates back to before Independence's most famous (and only) US President served as the Presiding Judge (known as County Executive today) of Jackson County. Snap your photograph in front of the building.

<https://www.jchs.org/truman-courthouse/>

Jasper County

Jasper County Courthouse – Carthage
302 South Main Street
Carthage, Missouri
417-358-0450

The Jasper County Courthouse in Carthage was built between 1894 and 1895. This highly photographed Richardsonian Romanesque edifice designed by architect Max A. Orlopp Jr. was constructed with local Carthage marble and has medieval castle features that include turrets, towers, and arches. It is the second most photographed building in Missouri. It remains in use by Jasper County officials. The county clerk at the time the courthouse was approved was Annie White Baxter, the first woman to be elected a county clerk in the United States. As a member of county government, she exerted a significant degree of influence in the planning of the building, and she is memorialized on the grounds. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. Snap your photograph in front of the courthouse.

<https://jaspercountycourts.org/>

Lafayette County

Lafayette County Courthouse

1001 Main Street
Lexington, Missouri
660-259-6101

The Lafayette County Courthouse was built in 1847 in the Classic Greek Revival design, and is the oldest courthouse in continuous use west of the Mississippi River. It is well known for the cannonball embedded in the upper left column, a remnant of the Battle of Lexington during the Civil War in 1861. Snap your photograph in front of the courthouse.

<https://www.lafayettecountymo.com/>

Saint Louis City

The Old Courthouse at Gateway National Park

11 North 4th Street
St. Louis, Missouri
314-655-1600

The Old Courthouse was the site of the first two trials of the pivotal Dred Scott case in 1847 and 1850. It was also where Virginia Minor's case for a woman's right to vote came to trial in the 1870s. You may tour this historic structure, and visit the restored courtrooms to learn more about our 19th century judicial system. Snap your photograph outside the building.

<https://www.nps.gov/jeff/planyourvisit/och.htm>