

A Growing County

Riverside County entered the twentieth century on a wave of surging enthusiasm, prosperity, and visionary enterprise. As one of the geographically largest counties in the nation, it had population of 25,000.

Located amidst 20,000 acres of Washington navel orange groves, Riverside served as a hub for agricultural advancements and wealth at the turn of the century.

From Concept to Completion

In 1902 the Board of Supervisors launched a competition for the design of a new courthouse. They selected Burnham and Bleisner, a Los Angeles architectural firm.

Architect Franklin Pierce Burnham designed the Courthouse in the French beaux arts style, then internationally in vogue. Burnham's design is a combination of the Petit Palais and Grand Palais of Fine Arts in Paris, France, which were built for the 1900 Paris Exposition.

The Historic Courthouse was dedicated in 1903, ten years after the county was formed. Construction was completed on June 23, 1904 at a cost of \$160,280.

The courthouse originally contained one courtroom (Dept. 1). It also housed many county offices such as: Sheriff's Office, District Attorney, County Clerk, Tax Collector, Auditor, Assessor, Recorder, Superintendent of Schools, Coroner, and the Board of Supervisors.

Over the years, the Courthouse has become a symbol of the County of Riverside, embodying both the spirit and the history of a diverse community.

Cover photo courtesy of Tilden-Coil Constructors (1998 Courthouse Restoration)

Cornerstone & Time Capsules

The original courthouse cornerstone was laid on May 7, 1903, the same date President Theodore Roosevelt visited Riverside on a campaign tour. In the cavity of the cornerstone lay a vault, which held a number of contents including:

- A copy of E.W. Holmes' History of Riverside County
- Lists and Photographs of officials and supervisors
- A copy of the May 7th Morning Press and Evening Press
- Photographs of the new Glenwood Hotel (now the Mission Inn Hotel)
- Scenic town views
- A sprig of the parent navel orange tree

On May 6, 1993 during the celebration of the Riverside County Centennial, the cornerstone and capsule including its contents were temporarily removed and given to the County Historical Commission for safekeeping.

The new capsule containing more than 500 items was buried on Tuesday, May 10, 1994 and lies under the floor, just inside the main entrance. The time capsule will be opened during Riverside County's Bicentennial in 2093.

Items in the capsule include:

- Freeze-dried sprig and orange from Riverside's Parent Navel Orange Tree (tree located at Arlington Ave. and Magnolia Ave.)
- Commemorative coins
- Bottles of special-labeled Centennial wine
- Vials of water from the Colorado and Santa Ana rivers
- Photographs
- A gold nugget from the Eagle Mountain Mine
- Video and audiotapes of the Centennial events.

Court Information

Address:
4050 Main Street
Riverside, CA 92501

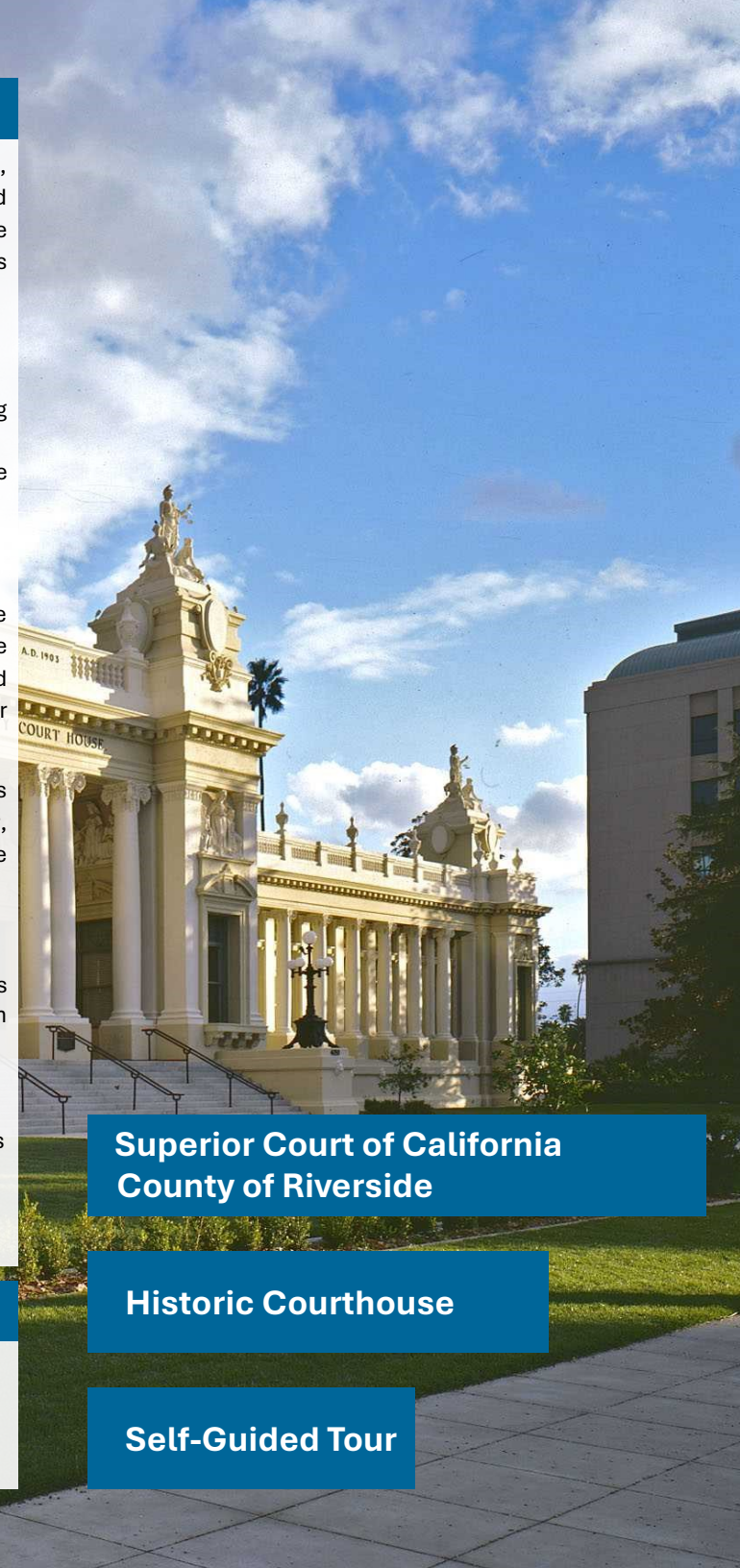
Hours:
Monday - Friday
7:30 AM - 4:00 PM

www.riverside.courts.ca.gov

**Superior Court of California
County of Riverside**

Historic Courthouse

Self-Guided Tour



Attic Sculptures

Inspired by classical Greek and Roman mythology, the attic sculptures depict the harmonious union of commerce, agriculture, industry and constitutional and criminal law under the rule of law.



(Sculptures shown from left to right when facing the courthouse on Main St.)

1. Far left: Commercial Law and Agriculture. Justice (central figure) holds a staff and scale, cogged wheel rests at her feet. Agriculture (left figure) holds grapes and stalks of grain. Trade (right figure) holds a scroll and a baton that represents authority.
2. Center left: Constitutional Law. Justice (central figure) holds sword and scales and represents the Judicial Branch of Government. The left figure represents the authority of the Executive Branch of the Government, holds an orbed scepter and a book of law. The right figure represents the Legislative Branch of Government, holds a quill and a tablet.
3. Center right: Criminal Law. The Justice (central figure) holds a sword and scales. A union shield sits at her feet. Power of Incarceration and Pardon (left figure) holds chains and an olive branch. Power of Capital Punishment (right figure) holds a legal proclamation and a sword.
4. Far right: Commercial Law and Industry. Justice (central figure) holds a spear and scales. A damaged anvil lies at her feet. Industry (left figure) holds a hammer. Technology (right figure) holds dividers and a scroll.

1933 Addition

Local architect G. Stanley Wilson designed a major addition to the courthouse in 1930. The design, visible on Orange Street, complimented Burnham's original classical lines.



Main Entrance

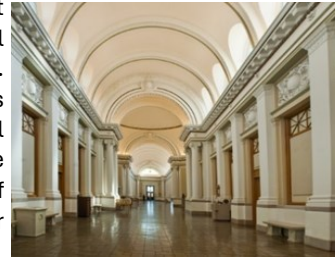
The building's only remaining original chandelier hangs in the main entrance of the courthouse. Fixtures on the chandelier have been modified to use electricity, instead of gas. The gas jets were used for backup lighting in the early days of the courthouse.

A time capsule has been buried in the entrance just past security. A small metal circle serves as the ground marker for the capsule. Can you find the ground marker on the floor? The time capsule will be opened in **2093** during Riverside County's bicentennial celebration.

Great Hall and Rotunda

The great hall features rows of stately ionic columns embedded in the walls and vaulted interiors with ceiling arches adorned by decorative plaster crown molding which extends up from the column capitals.

At the center of the great hall is a 45-foot tall rotunda ringed in lights. The Beaux Arts style is extensively ornamental as visible through the decorative aspects of the cast plaster elements in the hallway.



Pink cast marble lies above and below the tile wainscoting. The color of the marble is known as Tennessee Pink.

Bust of Justice John G. Gabbert



Justice John G. Gabbert became a superior court judge in 1949 and served for 21 years before being appointed to the District Court of Appeal in 1970. He was a founding member and president of the Citizens University Committee, which successfully lobbied for the creation of the University of California, Riverside in 1959.

Statue of "The Advocate"

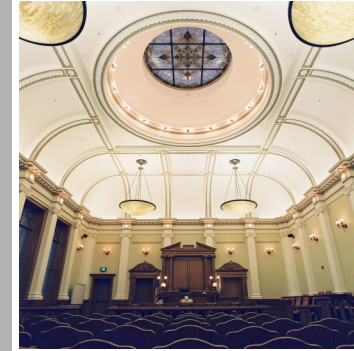
The statue (left of Dept. 1) is a tribute to the attorney, who, along with the judges and court staff, serves as an integral part of the justice system.



Department 1 - Ceremonial Courtroom

Department 1 was the largest courtroom in the state when the courthouse first opened in 1904.

The central domed skylight features a leaded art glass oculus (eyelike) window. During a remodel in the 1950's, crews installed a drop ceiling to accommodate air conditioning and heating ducts. The original ceiling remained hidden for several decades.



A contractor uncovered the domed skylight in 1992 while installing an

additional air conditioning unit in the County Clerk's office next to the courtroom.

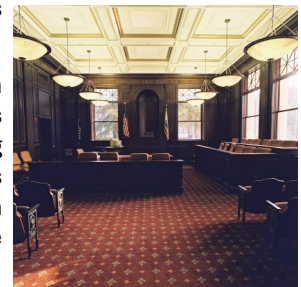
Department 1 is an operating courtroom and functions as a ceremonial venue for judicial enrobements and swearing-in ceremonies for county officials.

Department 8

Department 8 was built as part of the 1930's courthouse addition. Until the early 1970's, the space served as the Riverside County Board of Supervisors' meeting room.

The rich mahogany paneling and gold decorative wording painted along the room's cornice are original.

The crown of the room features four quotes emblazoned in gold, among them, George Washington's quote: "Our constitution enjoins that the will of the majority shall prevail."



Famous Trials

- State of California v. Jukichi Harada (1916)
- Northcott Murders/Chicken Coop Murders (1928)
- People v. John Chauncey Lawrence (1952)