

ST. LOUIS COUNTY NORTH  
INVENTORY OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS  
PHASE TWO: BLACK JACK

1989

Prepared by Esley Hamilton  
for the St. Louis County Department of Parks and Recreation  
under a grant from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources

## RESEARCH METHODS

The area included in the present inventory forms an irregular four-sided shape, bounded on the north by Lindbergh Boulevard (U.S. Highway 67), on the east by Lewis and Clark Boulevard (Missouri Highway 367), on the south by Interstate 270, and on the west by New Halls Ferry Road, which has the state designation AC. This area is part of a larger inventory area including the entire northeast corner of St. Louis County north of I-270 and east of New Halls Ferry Road. That study was begun in 1988, and this part completes it. The present inventory also stands on its own as an investigation of the historic rural crossroads sometimes called New Bielefeld in the nineteenth century and incorporated as the City of Black Jack in 1970. In spite of extensive urbanization, the district has retained a number of old farmhouses as well as some buildings of more than routine interest from the early phases of suburbanization.

The selection of properties to be inventoried was based almost entirely on visual inspection. Only one building, the Salem Lutheran or Parker Road School, had ever been the subject of a previous inventory, and it was incorrectly identified then as a public school. No general history of Black Jack has been located either, with the exception of a two-page brochure distributed by the city. Local historical societies have been formed in Spanish Lake, immediately east of here, and more recently in the Jamestown Road area to the north, but no such organization exists specifically for Black Jack.

The technique of visual identification employed in this inventory probably excluded a few old structures whose historical integrity has been obliterated by additions and alterations, but it permitted inclusion of several notable structures that were built since the most recent county atlas was published in 1909. Most buildings in this survey had to be researched from primary sources -- deeds and probate records -- which meant that exact dating was not possible. This is a common problem in rural surveys. Dating of buildings on the basis of land records is always approximate, and this is especially true in the case of rural buildings. Farm complexes usually include buildings from several different periods, and a site in long continuous occupancy may be rebuilt piecemeal once or even twice. Such events are not detectable through land records. Building permits began to be issued by St. Louis County in 1907, but they were long ago discarded. Trace of them survives in the pages of the St. Louis Daily Record, but they require hours or even days to track down since they are not indexed in any way.

Estimates of a building's date based on stylistic considerations must also be treated with caution in rural areas, as changes in fashion are so late in reaching the country. Many rural buildings have few style-based architectural features, and alterations over the years have further disguised the original age of many of these buildings.

The two standard histories of St. Louis County are William L. Thomas's History of St. Louis County (1911) and the History of St. Louis County published in 1920 by the Watchman-Advocate newspaper. Both have scattered references to Black Jack and its more prominent families, including

Poggemoeller and Rosenkoetter. Ferdinand Hartwig's house on Parker Road is illustrated in the Watchman-Advocate history. The Salem Lutheran School was included in an inventory conducted for the St. Louis County Historic Buildings Commission in 1965 by Kenneth Coombs and Robert Elgin, and is was subsequently published in the 1970 publication 100 Historic Buildings in St. Louis County.

Research compiled as part of the first phase of this inventory covering properties east of Lewis and Clark Boulevard proved to be helpful in this phase, as several of the old families owned land in both districts.

The following inventory forms have been arranged according to the street addresses of the properties, alphabetically and numerically. Maps for many of the properties are taken from the records of the St. Louis County Department of Revenue. They show property lines and subdivision outlines as well as building outlines. The building outlines are in pencil and do not reproduce well, but they are more detailed and accurate than any other source.

Inventory forms have been numbered according to St. Louis County's locator system. This nine-digit system is based on a coordinated grid that covers the entire county and gives each parcel of land a unique identification. Most county records are keyed to this system, and it is hoped that inclusion of it on these inventory forms will facilitate further research. All photographic negatives are in the files of the St. Louis County Department of Parks and Recreation. Roll and frame numbers have been included on the inventory forms under item three. The roll numbers are assigned by the photo processing companies. Roll and frame numbers have also been marked on the backs of the inventory photos.

## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The most dramatic topography in the northeastern portion of St. Louis County is all on the edges, overlooking the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, and in the karst topography nearby. The Black Jack district, located a few miles back from these streams, lacks sharp bluffs and overlooks, but it shares the deeply rolling topography of much of St. Louis County which is such a surprise to strangers coming from the flat prairies of Illinois. The major physical feature of the district is Coldwater Creek, which roughly parallels Lindbergh Boulevard across the whole northern boundary of the district in a series of whiplash curves. For most of its length, Coldwater Creek is relatively untouched by suburban developments but it has been channelized, obliterating its natural appearance. The still-untouched lower stretch of the creek, just outside the northeast corner of the inventory district, has recently been acquired by the County Parks Department.

Veterans Memorial Park is another County park. It is a regional recreational facility with a swimming pool, indoor skating rink and community rooms. A public golf course, the Paddock Country Club, is located in the northwestern part of the district. The City of Black Jack has developed one 75-acre park south of the creek and west of Old Jamestown Road, and a second 12-acre park on the east side of Old Jamestown just above Parker Road.

Most of the other open space in this district is in pockets located behind development along the major highways. This includes several small ponds. Most of the older buildings, however, are along the old main roads. The district is bisected by Parker Road, which connects Black Jack with Spanish Lake to the east and Florissant to the west. Old Halls Ferry Road is the historic north-south route, supplemented north of Parker Road by Old Jamestown Road. Redman Road, running east from Old Halls Ferry, is a somewhat newer road, a series of old farm lanes opened to the public about the turn of the century.

The City of Black Jack occupies about a third of the survey area but includes the majority of the historic resources, as it centers on the major intersection of Parker, Old Jamestown, and Old Halls Ferry Roads. The city limits encompass 1700 acres or 2.65 square miles. About 300 acres at the northwest corner of the district are part of the City of Florissant. They were historically part of the common fields of St. Ferdinand (the old name for Florissant), but no historic resources were identified in that area. Proposals for the reorganization of St. Louis County have suggested that the whole district be incorporated into Black Jack.

The district is overwhelmingly residential in character. Commercial uses dominate the roads that border the districts, however, with major commercial nodes at the intersection of Parker Road and 367 (Paddock Forest Mall), New Halls Ferry and Lindbergh (Cross Keys Shopping Center), and Lindbergh at Old Jamestown (Jamestown Mall, a regional shopping center). More modest commercial activity is seen at the center of Black Jack defined above. While the district has only one historic church, several newer churches are present. The one major institutional facility is Christian Hospital Northeast, at I-270 and Missouri 367.

## HISTORY

Most of this inventory area lies in Congressional Township 47, North Range 7 East, with a few of the western properties in Township 46 North Range 7 East. Most of this land was claimed by settlers before the Louisiana Purchase, particularly along the riverfronts. Farther inland, too, all the land available from the U.S. government was soon claimed. Old Halls Ferry Road, which meandered out to Edward Hall's ferry across the Missouri River, was surveyed in 1815; for years it was designated County Road Number One. Fuller development of the Black Jack area did not take place, however, until the 1840's and 1850's. In those years the lands which had been set aside for the benefit of the schools were sold, and the school lot where the Black Jack City Hall now stands was purchased by the local school board. New Halls Ferry Road was built on a new straighter route by a plank road company, and the three large land grants just east of Black Jack were finally subdivided into more manageable parcels. These opportunities were just in time to attract the Germans who were then coming to Missouri in large numbers. Many of them came from the north central region of Westphalia, located east of Cologne, particularly from the area around Bielefeld, and the area came to be called New Bielefeld.

The name Black Jack is supposed to have come from a grove of exceptionally large trees of that species (quercus marilandica) that shaded farmers from the Sinks and Jamestown areas on their trip to market.

By this time the intersection of Parker Road and Old Halls Ferry Road had become a focus of development. Parker Road, named for Isaac Parker, marked the boundary between Sections 19 and 20 on the north, and Section 30 and Surveys 2962 and 2495 on the south. Development had been slowed at that crossroads because the southwest quarter of Section 19, which included both sides of Old Halls Ferry and Old Jamestown Roads north of Parker, had been held by the government for the benefit of the schools. It was finally sold by the marshall in 1845. The tract including the northwest corner of Old Halls Ferry (not the northeast corner, as William L. Thomas writes in his 1911 history) was purchased in 1846 by Joseph Leber, who is credited with being the founding businessman of Black Jack. The house at 4665 Parker Road may have been built by him; it was owned from 1860 to 1871 by Isaac Parker himself. Thomas notes that Leber was the pioneer businessman of Black Jack, starting a blacksmith shop and later a wagon making place. The northeast corner of the same intersection was acquired in 1853 by William Bogeholz (whose brother Johann lived at Bischofshagen, Westphalia). Thomas shows Bogeholz establishing a general store and saloon there as early as 1849. At any rate, by the time Bogeholz died in 1881, the property had two one-story frame dwelling houses as well as a blacksmith and wagonmaking shop. None of these are still standing, but homes of several of his relatives have been identified. On the south side of the intersection was a twelve acre tract purchased in 1835 by John Mulhall. He may have had a tavern there by the time of his death in 1840. The present flower shop at 12385 Old Halls Ferry Road may incorporate that building; it was later operated as a creamery by Julius Nolte, who is said to have been the first postmaster when the U.S. Postal Department granted Black Jack a post office in 1865. The public school was built just west of Isaac Parker's house on land sold to the school trustees by

William Evans in 1844, and Jacob Nolte's son Christian served in the 1890's as schoolmaster in the third building on the site. The present Black Jack City Hall is the former school built in 1925.

Farther east, Henry Clausmeyer or Klausmeyer acquired about 50 acres in 1844. He donated ten of them to the fledgling Salem Lutheran Church in 1851. Clausmeyer died in 1862 but his son Dietrich inherited the property and built the attractive house at 4960 Parker Road. The church was the most important institution in the region. The majority of the Germans in the region belonged to it, including many in Spanish Lake and Jamestown. The church school at 5195 Parker Road was built about 1895, and the church itself was rebuilt in 1899 on a scale most other rural churches didn't achieve until the 1920's.

A description of the county in 1877, reprinted by Thomas in 1911, reported that Black Jack proposed to put in a bid for the permanent county seat. At that time the population was about 300. It was reported to be "in the heart of a splendid farming country." Most of this farm land east of the crossroads had been tied up in the first part of the century in three large Spanish land grants: Surveys 1012, 2771, and 2495. At mid-century all three of these were subdivided, just in time to be available to the early wave of German immigrants. Christian Poggemoeller (1826-1911) acquired land in all three surveys. His homestead, now 12255 Benham Road still survives, including a very early log cabin now incorporated inside a later house. Carl Rosenkoetter settled near about the same time. Poggemoeller's daughter married Rosenkoetter's son, and her house is at 6465 Parker Road. Poggemoeller's daughter-in-law Annie lived at 4925 Parker Road. Franz Rosenkoetter, perhaps a brother of Carl, lived in Section 28 at 2270 Redman Road. That house may incorporate an older house built by Samuel Henley, who was described by Thomas as "the old steamboat pilot" and who was a participant in the Gold Rush of 1849.

The prosperity afforded by the good farming conditions in Black Jack was reflected in the substantial houses built after the turn of the century, and several of these are still in very good condition. William Mueller built his brick house at 11385 Old Halls Ferry Road. The large tract off Parker Road owned by Jane Chambers began to be subdivided at this time, and the big late-Queen Anne house at 5365 Parker Road resulted. It was owned for many years by Yunker Hamerson or Hammersen. Both Hamerson and Landwehr, and probably many others, were truck farmers, taking advantage of the rich soil and the proximity to burgeoning St. Louis.

On the other hand, Black Jack was too far from St. Louis to be attractive to daily commuters, and few suburban residences or retreats were built here. Only two notable houses of this type were identified in this inventory. "Sharon Farms," the George Laufer House, is a period-style residence comparable to those being built in Clayton and Ladue and at the same time, 1938. Its site was probably made attractive to Laufer by the work that had been done by the state to convert the old Poggemoeller Road, little more than a farm lane, into the Lewis and Clark Boulevard, a major highway connecting St. Louis with Alton, Illinois. Everett D. Fry was probably similarly motivated, but his house at 11851 Benham Road (the outer service road for

Lewis & Clark) was much more modern in style, reflecting the Streamline Moderne movement of the previous decade.

The name Black Jack came to the attention of the St. Louis metropolitan area for the first time in the late 1960's, when a non-profit organization proposed the construction of a moderate-income housing project near the intersection of Parker and Old Halls Ferry Roads. The reaction of the community was to incorporate a 2.65-square-mile area as the City of Black Jack in 1970 and to impose a zoning code that prohibited construction of the housing. The charges of racism that were leveled as a result of these actions produced litigation that went as far as the U.S. Supreme Court and gave the name Black Jack a connotation far removed from its original meaning. Eventually the housing project was built with little adverse effect on the community, and today Black Jack is widely recognized as a well-run, desirable place to live. The city has recognized its historic heritage by becoming a sister city of Bielefeld, Germany.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Further research is needed in the history of the whole north county area. The Spanish Lake Historical Society has made good progress in collecting data since its founding several years ago, and the Old Jamestown Association was established more recently, but neither group takes responsibility for the Black Jack area. Some agreement should be reached soon as to jurisdiction, perhaps with the cooperation of the Black Jack city government. A systematic effort should be made to interview descendants of the early families, many of whom are still represented in the community. This should lead to genealogical and biographical studies, too few of which are currently available. Such an effort should also bring to light papers, photos and other memorabilia which could then be copied or donated to publicly-accessible collections.

The historic resources identified in this study are in need of considerably more local protection. The City of Black Jack has no historic preservation legislation of any kind, while the ordinance applying to the incorporated parts of the county is extremely limited in its coverage. It requires the owners to petition for designation and to pay a fee of three hundred dollars or more. The City of Black Jack has the opportunity now to benefit from the Certified Local Government program administered by the State Historic Preservation Program. CLG funds could help the city draft a model historic preservation ordinance which would provide the best available protection for its historic resources. As the rest of the North County becomes increasingly built up with anonymous-looking subdivisions, the older historic buildings that give Black Jack its distinctive character are going to become more and more important to the community. They should be protected now, not only against unnecessary demolition, but against inappropriate alterations which could destroy their visual and historical value.

Both jurisdictions could also encourage preservation by careful subdivision regulations. Often historic buildings on large tracts of land can be preserved when those tracts are developed more intensively simply by drawing the lot lines thoughtfully. The success of this policy is seen in many of the properties included in this inventory.

Several buildings identified in this inventory may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as historic resources of Black Jack. The following buildings, clustered at the center of the city, but not close enough to constitute a district, highlight the history of the community:

|                         |                            |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Peter Graf House        | 4215 Parker Road           |
| Charles Hamel House     | 4605 Parker Road           |
| Black Jack School       | 4655 Parker Road           |
| Isaac Parker House      | 4655 Parker Road           |
| Ferdinand Hartwig House | 4905 Parker Road           |
| Clausmeyer House        | 4960 Parker Road           |
| Salem Lutheran Church   | 5180 Parker Road           |
| Salem Lutheran School   | 5195 Parker Road           |
| Charles Fricke House    | 12615 Old Halls Ferry Road |

Other buildings might be added to this list depending on the criteria established.

Of the sites named above, the Salem Lutheran School presents the clearest case for individual National Register recognition, since it is one of the largest and least-altered nineteenth-century rural schools in the county. The school's external condition has been improved in recent years by the church which owns it. So far only one nineteenth-century school in St. Louis County has been listed, and that is the urban, multi-room Central School in Ferguson. Other good nineteenth-century schools have already been identified in county publications and previous inventories, so the potential exists for a multiple-property nomination.

## Black Jack Inventory

|     |  |                                       |
|-----|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1.  | Everett D. Fry House                     | 11851 Benham Road                     |
| 2.  | Poggemoeller-Hogan House                 | 12255 and 12257 Benham Road           |
| 3.  | "Sharon Farms," George B. Laufer House   | 12591 Benham Road                     |
| 4.  | Moemeller-Lemkemann House                | 21 Dana Drive                         |
| 5.  | John Edward Hockensmith                  | 11505 Mehl Road                       |
| 6.  | Elizabeth Zollman House                  | 11285 Old Halls Ferry Road            |
| 7.  | William Mueller House                    | 11385 Old Halls Ferry Road            |
| 8.  | Carl Landwehr House                      | 11410 Old Halls Ferry Road            |
| 9.  | William Kappel House                     | 12290 New Halls Ferry Road            |
| 10. | Nolte Creamery                           | 12385 Old Halls Ferry Road            |
| 11. | Dr. Emanuel D. Block House               | 12510 Old Halls Ferry Road            |
| 12. | August Hartwig House                     | 12530 Old Halls Ferry Road            |
| 13. | Charles Fricke House                     | 12615 Old Halls Ferry Road            |
| 14. | Graf-Schlegel House                      | 12890 Old Halls Ferry Road            |
| 15. | John Boad House                          | 13050 Old Halls Ferry Road            |
| 16. | Christian Burgdorf House                 | 13085 Old Halls Ferry Road            |
| 17. | Martin Keubler House                     | 13680 Old Halls Ferry Road            |
| 18. | Chambers Tenant House                    | 13125 Old Jamestown Road              |
| 19. | Peter Graf House                         | 4215 Parker Road                      |
| 20. | Herman C. Kummer House                   | 4555 Parker Road                      |
| 21. | Charles Hamel House                      | 4605 Parker Road                      |
| 22. | Black Jack School (Black Jack City Hall) | 4655 Parker Road                      |
| 23. | Isaac Parker House                       | 4665 Parker Road                      |
| 24. | Ferdinand Hartwig House                  | 4905 Parker Road                      |
| 25. | Annie Poggemoeller House                 | 4925 Parker Road                      |
| 26. | Susanna Mills House                      | 4935 Parker Road                      |
| 27. | Clausmeyer House                         | 4960 Parker Road                      |
| 28. | Salem Lutheran Church                    | 5180 Parker Road                      |
| 29. | Salem Lutheran School                    | 5195 Parker Road                      |
| 30. | Yunker Hamerson House                    | 5365 Parker Road                      |
| 31. | Charles Brackmann House                  | 5825 Parker Road (140 Brackmann Lane) |
| 32. | Augusta Rosenkoetter House               | 6465 Parker Road                      |
| 33. | Henry Lampe House                        | 6555 Parker Road                      |
| 34. | Franz Rosenkoetter House                 | 2270 Redman Road                      |