

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 06000332

Date of Listing: May 5, 2006

Property Name: Fortmann, Herman H., Building

County: Warren

State: Missouri

none
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

for Daniel J. Vizza
Signature of the Keeper

May 5, 2006
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 10. Geographical Data

The northing coordinate in the UTM reference is hereby changed to: 4277282.

[This change was made in consultation with and approved by the National Register staff of the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.]

The Missouri State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Fortmann, Herman H., Building
other names/site number Dickmann Store

2. Location

street & number 207 Depot Street [N/A] not for publication
city or town Marthasville [N/A] vicinity
state Missouri code MO county Warren code 219 zip code 63357

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [x] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [x] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [x] locally.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

MARCH 21, 2006

Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO

Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

[] entered in the National Register.
See continuation sheet [].

[] determined eligible for the National Register.
See continuation sheet [].

[] determined not eligible for the National Register.

[] removed from the National Register.

[] other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**Fortmann, Herman H., Building
Warren County, Missouri**

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources Within Property	
		Contributing	Non-contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	2	2 buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	0	0 sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	0 structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0 objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	2	2 Total

Name of related multiple property listing.

 N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed
 in the National Register.

 N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 COMMERCE/TRADE: department store

Current Functions
 Vacant Not In Use

7. Description

Architectural classification
 Late Victorian

Materials
 foundation stone
 walls metal
 wood
 roof metal
 other _____

See continuation sheet []

Narrative Description See continuation sheet [x].

**Fortmann, Herman H., Building
Warren County, Missouri**

**8. Statement of Significance
Applicable National Register Criteria**

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

See continuation sheet [x].

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography See continuation sheet [x].

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other:

Name of repository:

Areas of Significance

Commerce

Architecture

Period of Significance

1904-1956

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person(s)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Callaway, Teach (mason)

Mittler, John (builder)

**Fortmann, Herman H., Building
Warren County, Missouri**

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: less than one acre

UTM References

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	668675	277282			
C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Debbie Sheals
 organization Private Contractor date 12-6-05
 street & number 29 S. 9th St. Suite 204 telephone 573-874-3779
 city or town Columbia state Missouri zip code 65201

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FOP for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Cyndie and Justin Stauffer
 street & number 403 E. Main Street
 telephone 636-433-2806
 city or town Marthasville state MO zip code 63357

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**Fortmann, Herman H., Building
Warren County, Missouri**

Summary: The Herman Fortmann Building, at 207 Depot Street, in Marthasville, Missouri, was built in 1904, and it has seen remarkably few changes since then. It is a two-story frame building with a stone foundation, a standing seam metal roof, and an elaborate pressed metal façade. The building sits close to the street, facing south, to Depot Street, on a corner lot which is just east of Three Street. The property is part of the small commercial center of Marthasville, which occupies a few blocks on the north side of Depot Street. The building has two main sections. The front section, which is the largest, sits close to the streets at the south and west edges of the property, and there is a smaller two-story ell near the back of its east elevation. The rear ell is either original or very early. The façade of the main block features an open wood and glass storefront at the ground floor, and an ornamental pressed metal front at the second floor. All other exterior walls of the building are faced with sheet metal that is stamped to emulate rock-faced stone masonry. The side ell has the same type of stamped metal siding and exterior woodwork as the main block, and all other exterior detailing matches as well. The windows of both sections have one-over-one wood sash, topped with simple pedimented trim. There is an open store space on the ground floor of the main block, and support and living spaces in the rest of the building. Most interior finishes are early or original, especially in the store space, which has plaster walls, wood floors, and a pressed metal ceiling. There is a small frame garage at the back of the lot that is probably not as early as the store, but well over fifty years old. It is a contributing building, as is the main building; they are the only two resources on the property. The Fortmann Store is notably intact, both inside and out, and it strongly reflects its long years of service as a general store.

Elaboration: The Fortmann building occupies a corner lot on the northeast corner of Depot Street and Three Street, in the southern part of Marthasville. Depot Street runs along the edge of the cross-state Katy Trail State Park, which follows the historic route of the Missouri Kansas and Texas Railway. The commercial area on Depot Street developed after the railroad came through in 1892, and several buildings near the Fortmann store were built around that time. Neighboring properties on that street include both commercial and residential buildings, most of which are set close to the street, on fairly small lots. The property is in Lagemann's Addition to Marthasville, which is directly west of the Original Town. North-south streets in Lagemann's Addition are named One Street, Two Street, Three Street, etc., in contrast to those of the original town, which have the more traditional names of First Street, Second Street, etc. (See Figure One.)

The main block of the store building is tucked into the southwest corner of the lot, and the side ell is set well back from the street, on the east side of the building. There is a small

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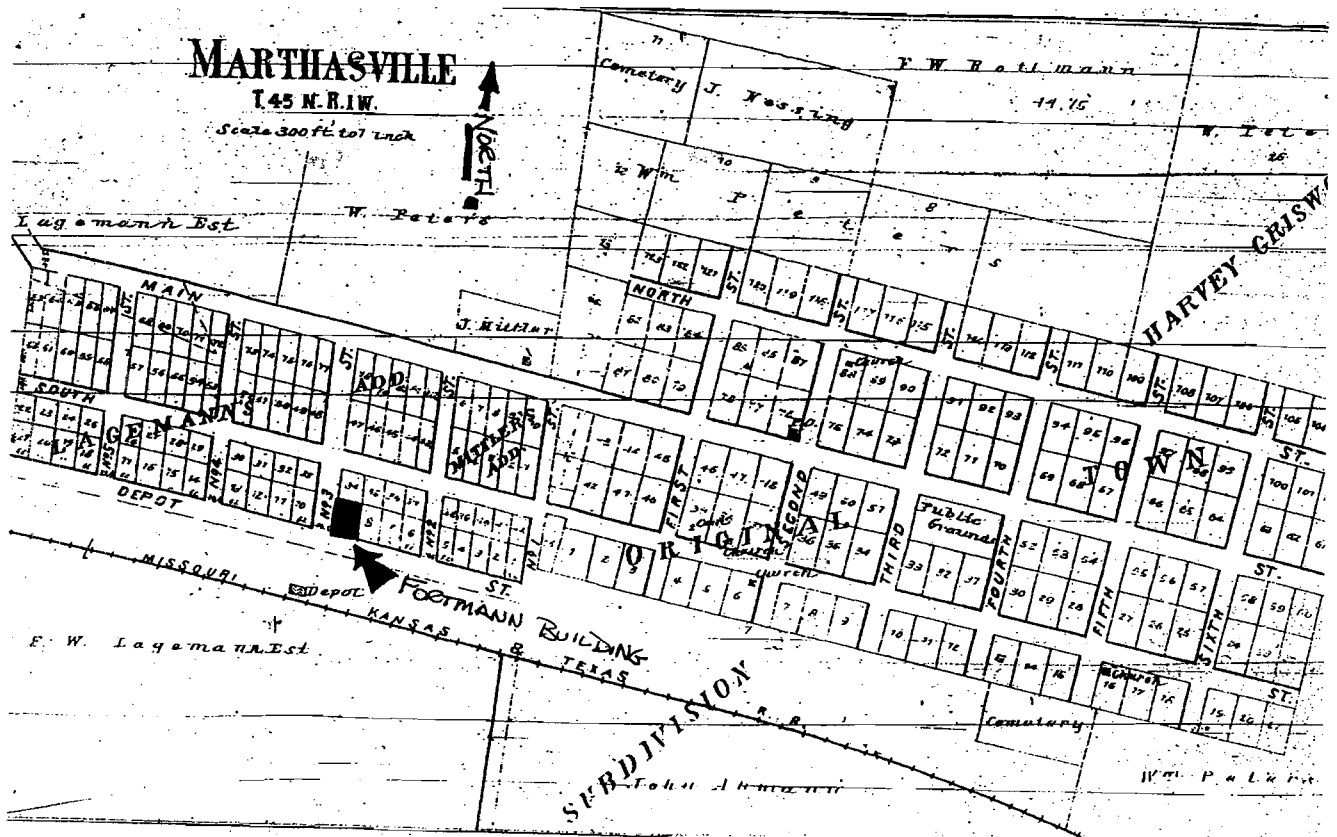
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Fortmann, Herman H., Building
Warren County, Missouri

level lawn in front of the side ell, and a very shallow back yard runs along the north edge of the lot. The garage is located at the very north end of the property. It is of frame construction, with brick-patterned asphalt siding, and a tin roof. It has a gable roof that faces the side street, and an early sliding door on its west wall. The garage appears to have been built in the first third of the 20th century, and it is little-altered; it is a contributing building.

Figure One. 1901 Atlas Map of Marthasville, the store lot is darkened.



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**Fortmann, Herman H., Building
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The façade of the store building is tall and narrow, with an open storefront at the ground floor and embossed metal sheathing on the upper part of the wall. The top edge of the façade has a parapet wall which runs in front of the low gable roof, and an ornamental signboard is centered on top of it. The metal signboard, which matches the rest of the façade, has a recessed center panel, flanked by angled supports and small pilasters which have the same ornamental motifs found elsewhere on the front wall. (The original sign itself is no longer in place.) Wide bands of ornament along the top of the façade emulate a cornice, and the edges of the facade are accented with two-story tall pilasters. Smaller ornamental bands outline the three windows of the second floor, and rock-faced blocks are stamped into the panels between and beside the windows. Another band of ornament acts as a secondary cornice at the first floor line.

The ground floor of the façade is sheltered by a large metal canopy that has scrolled side brackets, and slender metal support posts. A wooden storefront occupies the entire ground floor of the façade. The storefront has large open display windows and transoms, and paneled wooden bulkheads. The central entrance is recessed, with a pair of glass and wood doors that match the rest of the storefront. (See photo 7.) A pair of wide stone steps leads down from the entranceway to the concrete sidewalk. The bases of the pilasters that flank the storefront have simple flat plaques that contain the name of the storefront maker, the Geo. L. Mesker Company of Evansville, Indiana. A check of that company's 1905 catalogue indicates that all or most of the Fortmann building façade was manufactured by them.¹ All of the metal on the exterior of the building is painted silver, and it appears that it always has been. A much-needed new coat of paint will be included in an upcoming rehab project, and the building will continue to be silver.²

The rest of the building exterior is relatively unadorned, with the exception of rock-faced steel siding, which is used for all of the other exterior walls. The front wall of the east side ell sits well back from the street. (See photo 1.) It originally served as the entrance to the residential quarters located there, and has patterns of fenestration more typical of residential use. A narrow sidewalk leads from the street to a wooden door which is centered on that elevation. Large one-over-one windows flank the doorway, and the façade still shows the marks of an open porch which originally sheltered part of the ground floor. The second floor has similar fenestration, with a door and two windows. All of the windows are one-over-ones, and each door has a single large light, over three horizontal wood panels. The upper door originally led to the roof of the porch, which doubled as a deck for the second floor. The

¹ See Section 8 for further discussion of the Mesker Company.

² The owners are just beginning a comprehensive rehabilitation of the building, which will involve full restoration of all exterior, and most interior features. The ground floor will be returned to commercial use, and the second floor spaces will be residential.

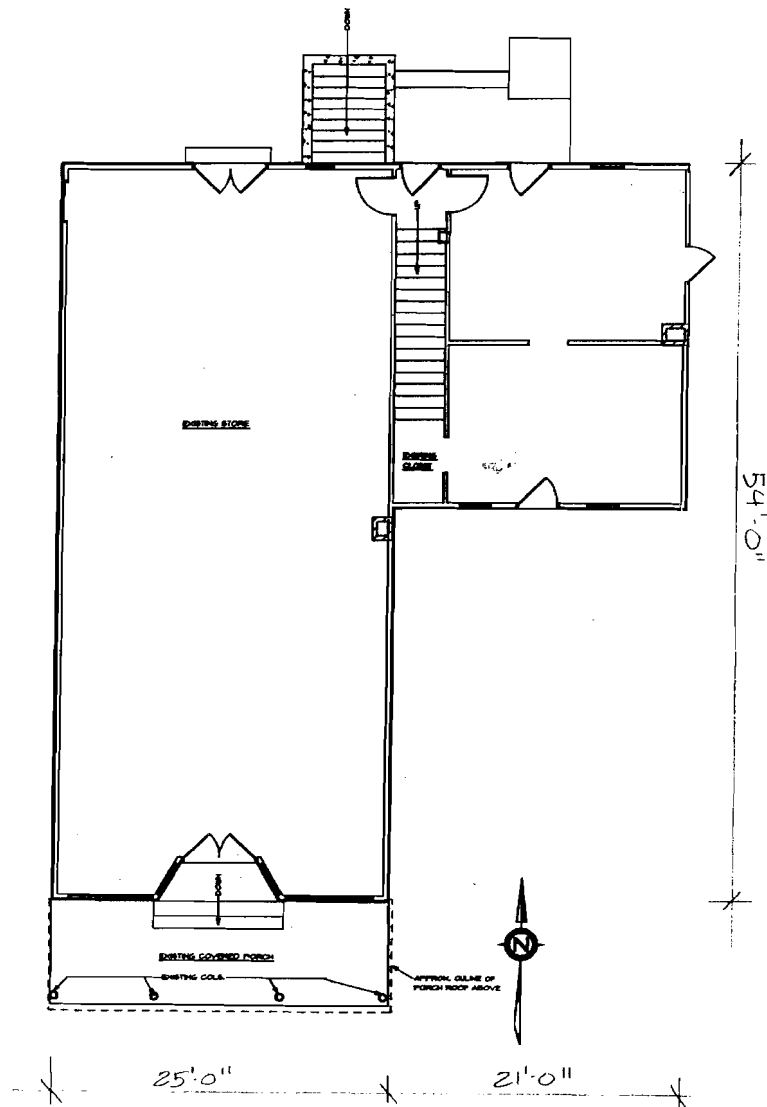
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Figure Two. Ground Floor Plan. Drawn by Lauren Strutman Architects, Chesterfield.



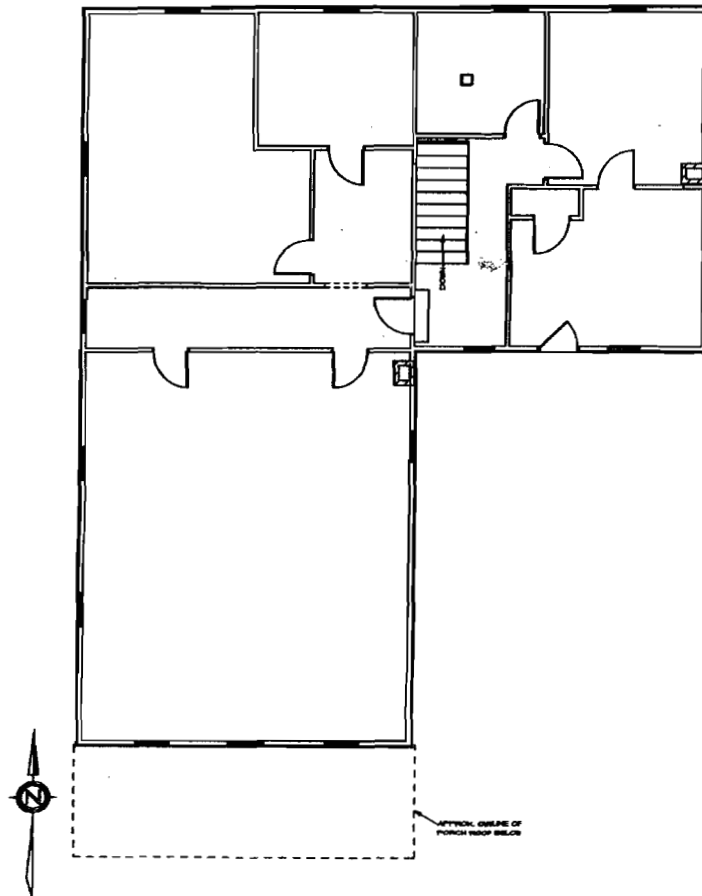
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Figure Three. Second Floor Plan. Drawn by Lauren Strutman Architects, Chesterfield.



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missing porch represents the only change of note to have occurred to the exterior of the building in decades. The upcoming rehabilitation project will include reconstruction of the porch, using marks on the building and historic photos as a guide.³

The west elevation, which faces Three Street, is a simple flat wall, with widely spaced wood windows at the second floor, and one small doorway near the back edge of the ground floor. (See photo 4.) The back (north) wall of the building has a wide double doorway that is opposite the front door of the store, and two other single doors that lead to the east ell. Double-hung windows at both floors are like those elsewhere on the building, with one-over-one wood sash and simple pedimented trim. One of the single doors leading to the side ell may be a later addition; everything else appears to be original. The back wall also contains a large bulkhead door which shelters stone steps that lead to the basement. The basement is open, with heavy timber posts and beams, and the foundation walls are constructed of large blocks of limestone.

Much of the interior of the building is as intact as is the exterior. The ground floor store space in particular is little-changed. The front doors open to a single large retail space, which has an embossed metal ceiling, wood floors, and plaster walls. All of the finishes appear to be original. The front doors are directly opposite the rear doors in that room, to provide for cross-ventilation, while the side walls have no windows, which left room for display shelves. A door at the back of the room leads to the side ell, which contains two rooms at the ground floor, and a stairway to the second floor. The stairway is enclosed at the lower level, and opens to a small stair hall on the second floor. (See photo 10.) It has a simple balustrade, with turned balusters and a slender top newel post.

The second floor of the side ell is about 18 inches lower than the second floor of the main section of the building, which may indicate that it is not an original feature. That side ell is clearly quite early, however, and if not original, was probably constructed within a few years of the main store. The second floor finishes have seen some changes over the years, and several of the rooms in the living quarters have modern paneling over their plaster walls, and carpet over wood floors. Much of the original millwork remains in place, however, and most of the modern alterations will be reversed as the rehab of the building progresses. The rooms over the store space are more intact; they feature an early or original beadboard ceiling, plaster walls, and wood floors, all of which will be retained and repaired. (See photo 11.)

Overall, the Fortmann store building is impressively intact. It was accurately described as "pristine" in a architectural 1986 survey of the community, and it has seen very few

³ It should also be noted that the small frame lean-to on the east wall of the side ell which shows in the attached photos has since been removed. That structure, which was added sometime after WWII, was termite-ridden and structurally unsound.

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changes since that time.⁴ The current rehab project will include restoration of the most important features, as well as a much-needed upgrade of mechanical and structural systems. The missing porch will be put back, and the building will be returned to service. It will continue to function much as it did in the past, with commercial uses on the ground floor, and residential space above. This highly intact building clearly evokes a sense of its time and place, and strongly reflects its historic association with railroad-era commerce in Marthasville.



⁴ James Denny, et. al. "Cultural Resources Along the Missouri, Kansas and Texas (Katy Trail) Railroad Route," (Typescript. Jefferson City: MO Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Program, Sept. 1986.) p. 17.

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**Fortmann, Herman H., Building
Warren County, Missouri**

Summary: The Herman H. Fortmann Building, at 207 Depot Street, in Marthasville, Missouri, was built in 1904, to house the general store of long-time area merchant Herman H. Fortmann. It is significant under Criteria A and C in the areas of Commerce and Architecture, with a local level of significance. Fortmann built his store in a commercial area that developed in Marthasville after the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad built tracks through the area. It utilizes the common commercial building form of a two-part commercial block, with a smaller side ell that was used for residential purposes. Fortmann and his family operated a store in the building for several decades, and it continued to serve a commercial function for much of the 20th century. The period of significance therefore runs from 1904 to 1956, the standard fifty year cut-off point. The building is also significant for its elaborate storefront and exterior wall sheathing, which were manufactured by the Geo. L. Mesker Company, of Evansville, Indiana. It is the only Geo. Mesker façade left in the community today, and one of few in the region to sport rock-faced wall siding on the back and side walls as well. The building today is in fair condition, and in the early stages of a rehabilitation project that will leave it in excellent condition and ready for many more decades of service. The Fortmann store provides a significant, highly intact example of 19th century commercial architecture in Marthasville, Missouri.

Elaboration: Marthasville differs from many of the small towns on the Katy Trail, in that it was an established community long before rail service was introduced in the 1890s. It is, in fact, the oldest community in Warren County. The town has its roots in a settlement established by Daniel Boone and his son-in-law, Flanders Callaway, in 1801, and it has been an official town since 1818.⁵ The town of Marthasville was platted in 1818 by Dr. John A. Young, of Virginia, who named it after his wife, Martha.⁶ The community is located on high ground at the edge of the Missouri River bottoms, and for much of the 19th century, the river landing nearby was a principal river port in the county. That landing is just across from Washington, Missouri, which was also an important early settlement in the region.

The first wagon factory in the county was started there in 1837, and by the mid-1800s, Marthasville had developed into a regional trading center. By 1870, the town had a population of just over 170, with three churches and several businesses. An 1874

⁵ State Gazetteers published in the late 1800s all cite Boone and Callaway as having established the community.

⁶ Mildred Simon, "Early History of Other Warren County Towns," Warren County Sesquicentennial Program and Souvenir. (Warrenton: Warren County Sesquicentennial Committee, 1968) p. 24.

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gazetteer listed 2 stores, 2 blacksmith shops, a wagon maker, and a saw and grist mill.⁷ The town also became home to a large hotel in the 1870s, when area resident Charles Mittler opened the Merrimake Hotel. Mittler was still operating the hotel when the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad came through in 1892.

The new railway was laid out along the south edge of the community, and in 1892, what local histories call "downtown Marthasville" was laid out to maximize access to the new railroad. The new part of town was located just north of the railroad tracks, at the southwest corner of the Original Town. (See Figure One.) The new "downtown" included Mittler's Addition, a small area presumably filed by Charles Mittler or his sons, as well as a larger parcel named Lagemann's Addition, which was laid out on land owned by F. W. Lagemann. The Fortmann property is on Lot 9 of Lagemann's Addition. That corner lot, which is right across from the site of the early depot, would have been a prime spot in the new development.

Herman Fortmann's choice of that select parcel was probably no accident. He had been in business for decades by then, and would no doubt have had a good solid business sense as well as the financial wherewithal needed to purchase the property. Herman Henry Fortman was, like many of his neighbors, a German immigrant. He was born in Hanover in the mid-1840s, and emigrated to the United States in 1865. According to a biography that was included in an 1885 Warren County history, he started out clerking at a store in Baltimore, and then he moved to St. Louis. After that he moved to Wright City, where he opened the first of several stores he was to operate in Warren County over the years.⁸ He had a store in the now-vanished town of New Boston in 1885, and moved to Marthasville about the same time the railroad came through. Gazetteer listings for Marthasville in 1893 show that he had a store under the name of "H. Fortmann and Co." at that time, and by the time of the 1898-99 Gazetteer, he was one of four general store owners in town.

Fortmann apparently did enough business in Marthasville to merit the construction of an all-new building in 1904. The local paper first mentioned the project in June of that year, when it was noted that the "foundation for the new H. Fortmann Store building is to be completed soon. Teach Callaway is in charge of the mason work."⁹ The project moved quickly; just two weeks later it was announced that the

⁷ Robert Allen Campbell, Campbell's Gazetteer of Missouri, (St. Louis: R. A. Campbell, 1875.)

⁸ National History Company, History of St. Charles, Montgomery and Warren Counties, Missouri, (St. Louis: National History Company, 1885; reprint by the Warren County Historical Society, 1993.), pp. 1039-1040, and United States Census Records, population figures.

⁹ Marthasville Record, "Local Pick-ups," June 3, 1904, p. 1.

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“framework for H. Fortmann’s new store is being put up this week. John Mittler is doing the work,” and a month after that, “H. Fortmann’s new store building is rapidly nearing completion.”¹⁰ John Mittler, who was probably related to early hotel owner Charles Mittler, operated a sawmill in Marthasville for many years.¹¹ Mittler’s great-grandson, Vernon Dickmann, noted recently that Mittler’s sawmill was close to the store on Depot Street, and that Mittler and his sons built a house for the Fortmanns’ as well as the store.¹²

By late summer and early fall, Fortmann was making trips to St. Louis “to buy goods for his store,” and he had a tenant for the upstairs in place by the end of the year.¹³ The paper included a notice in November of 1904 that dentist Charles Gruebbel had an “office over Fortmann’s Store.” Fortmann continued to improve the property, and in December that year, he “had a fine concrete sidewalk put down in front of his new store building.”¹⁴

The new store building can be classified architecturally as a Late Victorian style two-part commercial block. Architectural historian Richard Longstreth describes the two-part commercial block as “the most common type of composition used for small and moderate sized commercial buildings throughout the country. Generally limited to structures of two to four stories, this type is characterized by a horizontal division into two distinct zones.”¹⁵ The single story lower zones of such buildings were designed to be used as public or commercial spaces, while the upper floors were used for more private functions, such as offices, residences or meeting halls. In the case of the Fortmann Store, that dual function was continued with the inclusion of the side ell, which appears to have always been intended for residential use.

Two-part commercial blocks with Victorian detailing were extremely popular in America from 1850 into the first decades of the 1900s, and by the turn of the century, Main Streets throughout the country were lined with them. One scholar noted that the “buildings on Main Street reflect a standardization that became a fact of life in the American small town in the latter half of the nineteenth century.”¹⁶ In Missouri, one agent of such standardization was the railroad, which linked previously isolated areas

10 Marthasville Record, “Local Pick-ups,” June 17, 1904, p. 1, and July 15, 1904, p. 1,

11 Gazeteer listings show that he had the only sawmill in town from 1893 at least until the turn of the century.

12 Vernon Dickmann, Letter to Mrs. Cyndie Stauffer, September 16, 2004.

13 Marthasville Record, “Local Pick-ups,” August 19, 1904, p. 1, and October 7, 1904, p. 1.

14 Marthasville Record, “Local Pick-ups,” November 25, 1904, and December 2, 1904, p. 1.

15 Richard Longstreth, The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture, (Washington, D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2000) p. 24.

16 Richard V. Francaviglia, Main Street Revisited, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996) p. 35.

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with national markets and information networks. Towns along the MKT corridor, for example, share many features, ranging from such things as street plans oriented to the railroad tracks to a number of individual building types, including the two-part commercial block. Historic two-part commercial blocks in both frame and masonry construction can still be found all along the former railway.¹⁷ The Fortmann Building is one of two remaining on Depot Street in Marthasville, and early photographs of the street show that there was at least one other there in the early 20th century.

Physical layout and patterns of use were not the only standardized features of such buildings; many, like the Fortmann Building, also used prefabricated ornamentation, often in the form of entire storefront “kits.” Mass-produced architectural elements were available from a number of manufacturers, all easily shipped by rail to any interested building owner. Such components were especially attractive to small town merchants who wished to present an up-to-date image, but lacked access to affordable architectural design services. As one account noted: “Factory-produced architectural elements, sold by catalogue, offered small-town merchants...an opportunity to order complete ‘store fronts’ for their buildings. Even without a local architect, the latest in eclectic and lavish ornament could be added to any kind of building, of any age, or any material.”¹⁸

In Missouri and elsewhere, numerous commercial buildings were constructed with architectural elements manufactured by one of two firms operated by the Mesker family. The original Mesker front business was founded by John Bernard Mesker, a native of Holland who came to the United States as a child in 1825. He opened a sheet metal business in Cincinnati in the 1840s, and moved to Evansville, Indiana sometime before 1859, where he established a similar business. He and his wife Elizabeth also raised three sons in Evansville: George L., Bernard Thomas, and Frank.¹⁹ Frank and Bernard T. moved to St. Louis in the late 1870s, where they established the Mesker Bros Iron Works. George L. stayed on in Evansville, and took over the family business there. The two firms operated separately from that time on, although they manufactured similar products. The Evansville company, from which Fortmann purchased his front, became known as Geo. L. Mesker & Company. Although both companies shipped their products via railroad and could ship to any part of the country, the St. Louis firm naturally could charge less for shipping to nearby towns, and Mesker Brothers fronts are

¹⁷ Denny, et. al.

¹⁸ Lee Nelson ed., “The 1905 Catalogue of Iron Store Fronts Designed and Manufactured by Geo. L. Mesker and Co.” *Bulletin of the Association for Preservation Technology*. Vol. IX, No. 4, 1977. p. 3.

¹⁹ “Frank Mesker: In Memoriam.” *Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society*. January 1953, p 199.

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**Fortmann, Herman H., Building
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therefore more common in Missouri today.

The two firms produced similar products over the years, and fronts tend to have as many similarities as differences. They comprise such a distinctive genre that the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office has published an identification guide to help interested parties determine from whence their buildings came.²⁰ Both companies routinely included embossed nameplates on their storefronts, and in case those got lost or were not installed, they utilized separate identifying ornamental elements. Geo. L. Mesker fronts, for example, often featured a stylized "morning glory", while the Mesker Brothers fronts utilized a "fleur-de-lis," in honor of their home city of St. Louis.²¹

The Mesker Brothers firm also offered distinctive large panels embossed with a classically derived ornament consisting of stylized dolphins. There is a large two-part commercial block just a little east of the Fortmann Building that has a front manufactured by Mesker Brothers; it features large dolphin panels as well as fleur-de-lis. Those two stores are the only Mesker buildings in the town, as well as the only ones to have metal fronts of any kind.

The George L. Mesker Company eventually became one of the largest storefront makers in the country. A 1906 catalogue from the firm included a drawing of a huge brick factory, convincingly titled "Largest and Most Complete Establishment in the United States."²² That same catalogue included a map which showed the distribution of their products in the United States and beyond. Every state in the nation had at least a few Geo. L. Mesker fronts, and several in the mid-west had hundreds. Indiana, not surprisingly, had the most, with more than 1,100, but even states as far away as Maine and Washington had more than a dozen each. The map even included Bermuda, where five fronts had been shipped.²³ Missouri at that time had 112 George Mesker fronts, one of which was the Fortmann store in Marthasville.

A look at the Geo. L. Mesker Catalogue of 1905 shows many fronts that are similar to the Fortmann Building. It also shows that the company offered the type of rock faced steel siding used on the other walls of the Fortmann building. The text beneath one such drawing reads:

20 Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, "Got Mesker?: Identification Guide to Sheet-Metal Facades and Building Components Manufactured by Mesker Brothers Iron Works, and George L. Mesker and Company." online at www.gotmesker.com

21 Nelson, p. 3.

22 Geo. L. Mesker and Co., 1906 Catalogue. (On file at the Missouri Historical Society Library, St. Louis, MO) p. 1.

23 Ibid, back cover.

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National Park Service**

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**Fortmann, Herman H., Building
Warren County, Missouri**

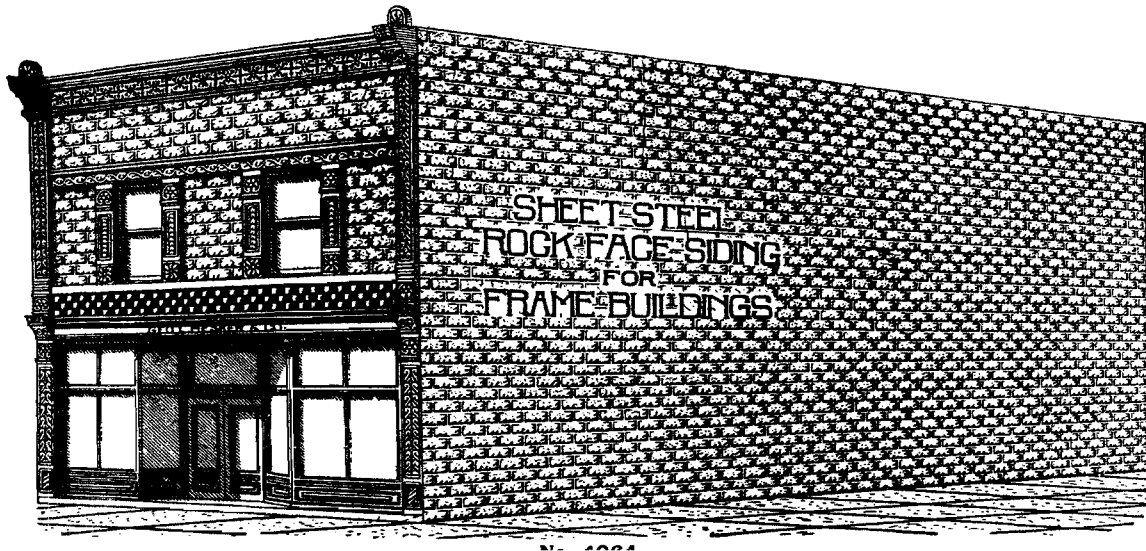
A design for a two story frame building, showing a cheap store front with sides of building covered with stamped metal brick or rock....the cost comparing favorably with weatherboarding, when appearance, durability and fire protection are taken into consideration....see how cheap we can make a handsome and attractive steel covered building of it; equal in appearance to a fine brick or stone building."²⁴

Figure Four. Illustration from the George L. Mesker Catalogue of 1905, p. 21.

GALVANIZED IRON FRONTS.

GEO. L. MESKER & CO.

EVANSVILLE, IND.



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**Fortmann, Herman H., Building
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That claim for a “cheap store front” would have been an important feature, especially to a typically frugal German merchant. Other pages in that same catalogue show that Fortmann probably paid less than \$150 for the wooden storefront and metal sheathing of the façade. Other pages show that one could get a signboard like the one used by Fortmann for just \$11.25, while cornices were anywhere from 60 cents to \$1.05 per foot. Fortmann may have decided to go with a flat parapet instead of the more typical cornice to save money, which he could then spend on the elaborate signboard and steel siding. He did not skimp on ornament, however; the detailed front of the Marthasville Store matches or exceeds that shown on many of the sample fronts shown in the catalogue, and the lack of a cornice may simply have been a matter of choice.

The Fortmann family operated a store out of the new building on Depot Street for much of the next quarter century. Herman H. retired not long after the store was completed, after which his son, Herman H. Fortmann, Jr. took over the business. Census records show that the older Fortmann had retired by 1910. The younger Herman Fortmann was working as a merchant then, and his brother George, who was living with him, was listed as a clerk, presumably in the family store. By 1920, George was no longer involved, but Herman Fortmann, Jr. was still listed as a merchant. The elder Fortmann died in 1921, and the property left the Fortmann family around the time of the depression. Emma Mittler is known to have owned it in the early 1940s; it is likely she got it from the Fortmanns.²⁵

In the fall of 1941, another local merchant, Otto F. Dickmann, and his wife Hedwig, purchased the Fortmann Building from Emma Mittler, who was Mrs. Dickmann’s mother. Otto Dickmann had been operating a store in a building nearby, and the family moved the entire contents of that store in to the Fortmann building overnight, so as not to lose a single day’s business.²⁶ They also moved into the living quarters, something the full Fortmann family may not have done. The Fortmanns had a house just a block or so north of this building, and it is not clear if they ever occupied the living quarters of the store building while they owned it. It could be that the elder Fortmanns lived on Depot Street, while Herman Jr. and his family used the house nearby, or vice versa.

The Dickmann family definitely lived there. Their son, Vernon, was a child when they bought the property, and he still remembers moving the store contents as well as other events associated with life at the Depot Street property. The Dickmanns owned

²⁵ Vernon Dickmann, letter of Sept. 16, 2004.

²⁶ Ibid.

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**Fortmann, Herman H., Building
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and occupied the property for the next 22 years, and the building was known to a whole generation of Marthasville residents as the Dickmann Store. They sold the property in the early 1960s, and it has had a variety of owners since that time. The current owners, Cyndie and Justin Stauffer, are just beginning a long-needed rehabilitation project, and hope to have the building back in use in the first half of 2006.

The Fortmann Store stands as a significant, highly intact link with Marthasville's railroad-era commerce. It appears today much as it did when Herman Fortmann and his sons were running their store, and it strongly evokes a sense of its time and place.

Figure Five. Historic Photo of the Store, from the personal collection of Cyndie and Justin Stauffer.



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Warren County, Missouri

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Interview conducted by Debbie Sheals.

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Warren County, Missouri

Verbal Boundary Description

All of Lot 9 of Lagemann's Addition to Marthasville, Warren County, MO.

Boundary Justification

The current boundaries encompass all of the land currently and historically associated with the building.

Photographs

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Fortmann, Herman H., Building
207 Depot Street, Marthasville
Warren County, MO
Taken by Debbie Sheals, July, 2005

List of Photographs

See photo key for description of camera angle.

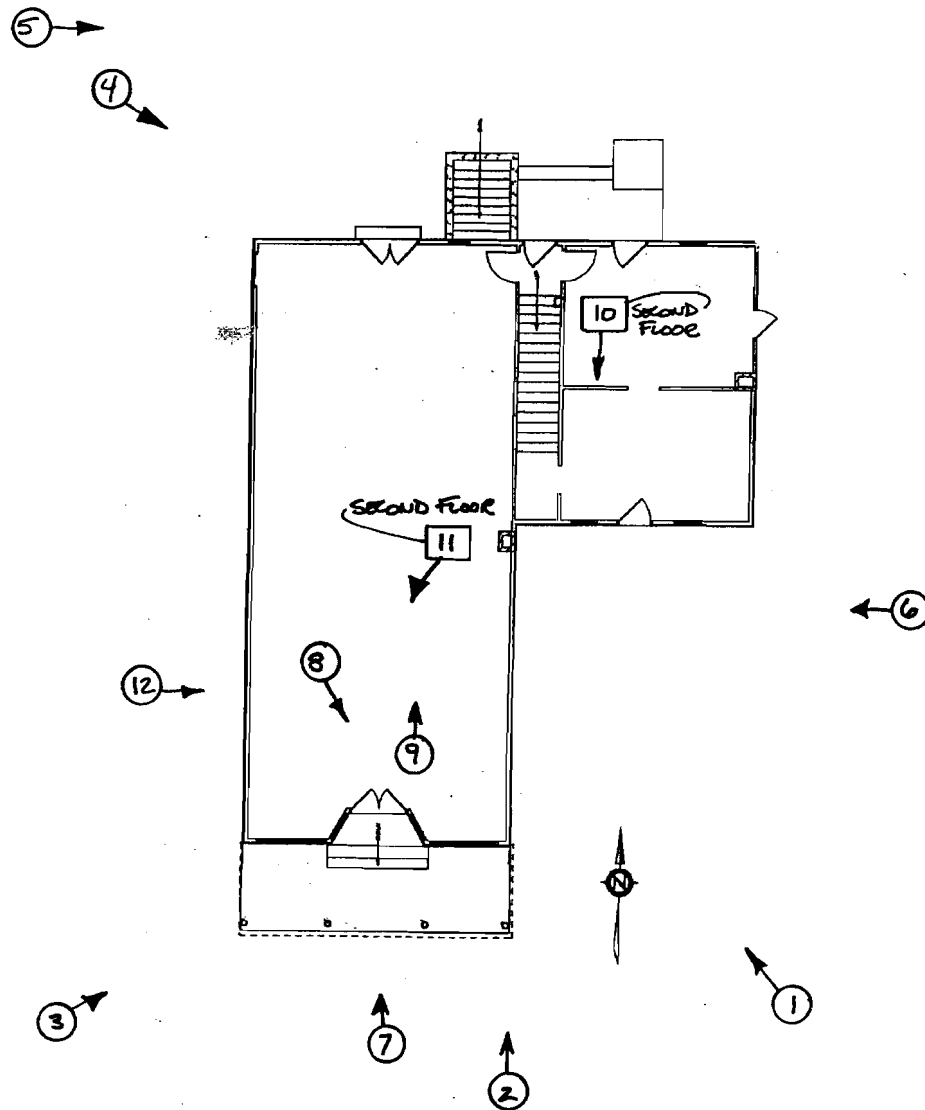
1. Southeast corner, from Depot Street.
2. South elevations.
3. Southwest corner.
4. Northwest corner and rear elevation
5. Rear elevation and garage, looking southeast from Three Street.
6. East elevations. (Small ell to the right has since been demolished due to structural instability.)
7. Display window and entrance detail.
8. Storefront, interior looking south.
9. Main store space, ground floor looking north.
10. Second floor stairhall, looking south.
11. Second floor of the main section, looking southwest.
12. Detail, second floor window and siding.

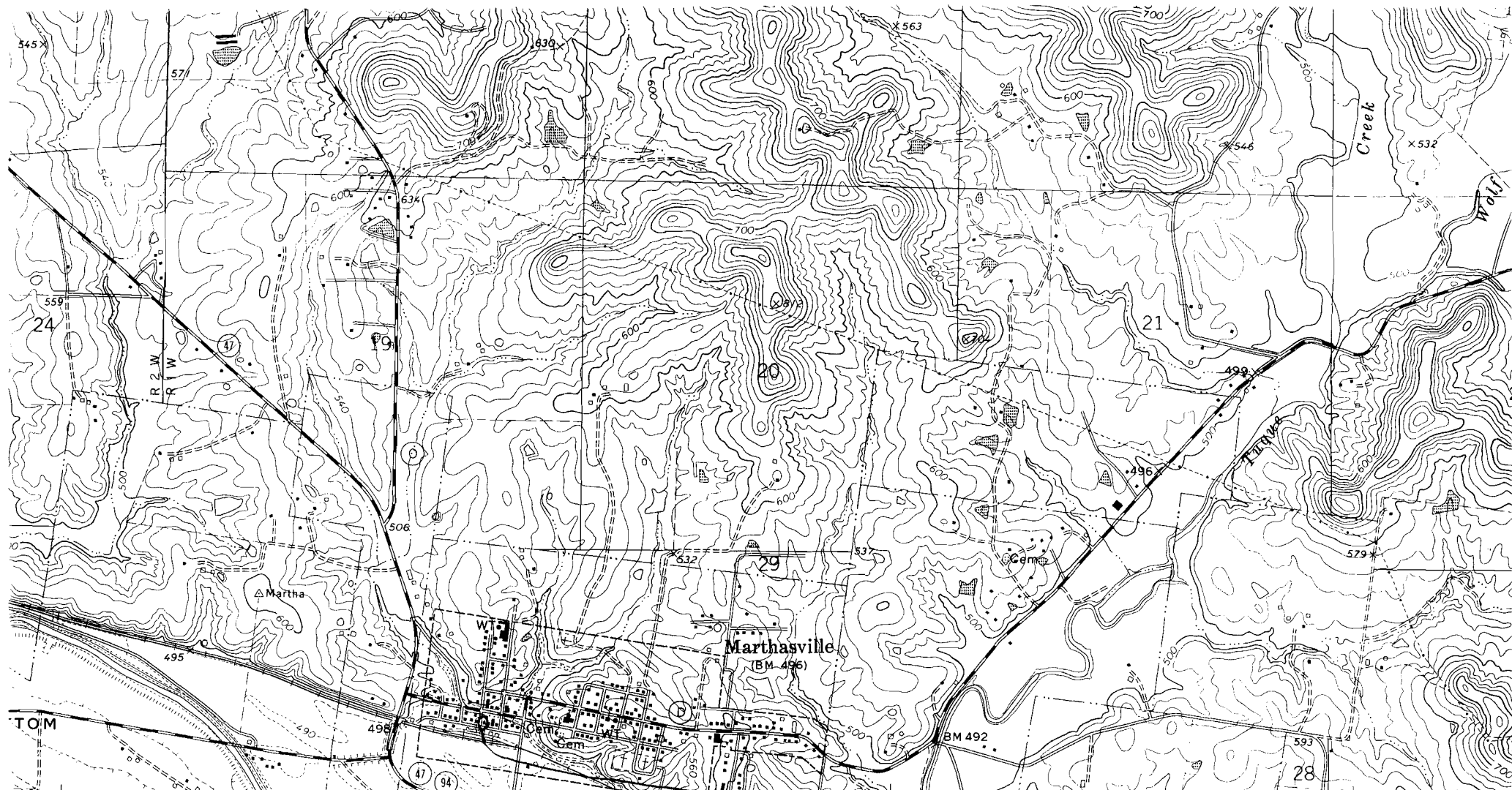
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Fortmann, Herman H., Building
Warren County, Missouri

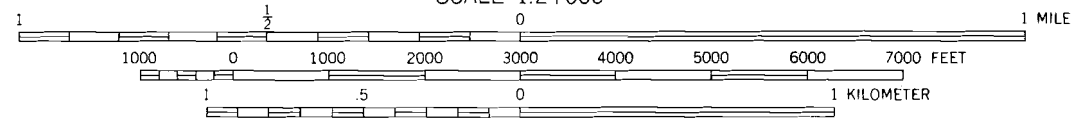
Photo Key





3.6 MI. TO JUNC. MO. 47 & 94 (WASHINGTON WEST)
 WASHINGTON (VIA MO. 47) 7 MI. 7761 II SE

SCALE 1:24 000



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
 DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 5-FOOT CONTOURS
 NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
 FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
 AND DIVISION OF GEOLOGY AND LAND SURVEY
 MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, ROLLA, MISSOURI 65401
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

FOOTMANN, HERMAN A., BUILDING
 207 DEPOT ST.
 MARTHASVILLE, WARREN
 COUNTY, MO



UTMS
 15/668675/211282

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ROAD CLASSIF
 Primary highway, hard surface _____ Lig
 Secondary highway, hard surface _____ im
 Interstate Route _____ Un
 U. S. _____ U. S.

MA







S THREE ST
DEPOT ST











207









