

HISTORY OF SOUTHERN GASCONADE COUNTY



**MERAMEC REGIONAL PLANNING
COMMISSION**

101 WEST 10TH STREET • ROLLA, MO 65401 • (314) 364-2993

MERAMEC REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

PHASE VI

**HISTORIC INVENTORY OF SOUTHERN GASCONADE
COUNTY**

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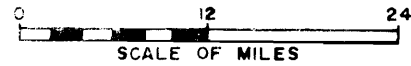
**HISTORY
OF
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**PREPARED BY
MERAMEC REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
101 WEST 10TH STREET
ROLLA, MISSOURI**

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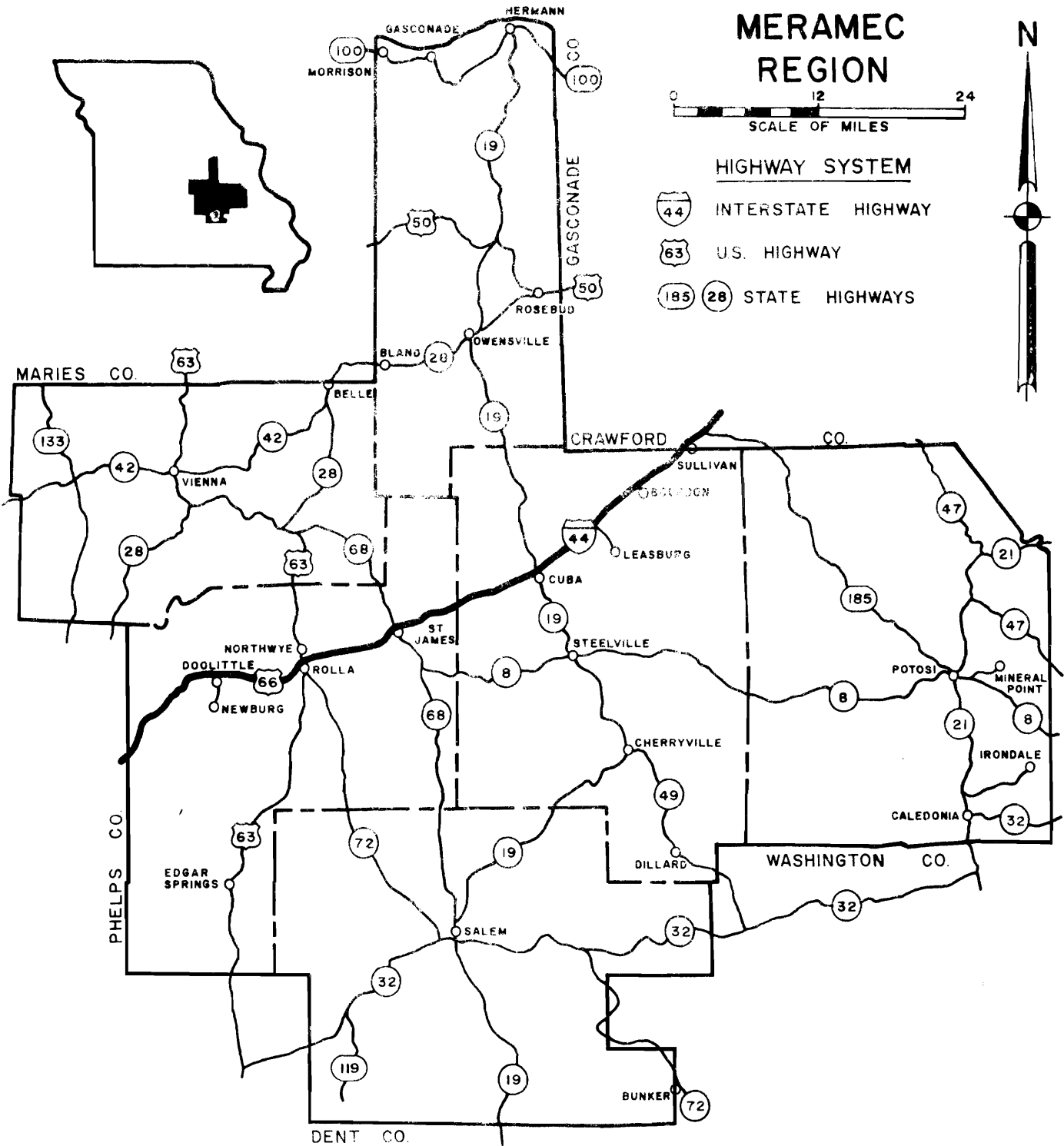
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MERAMEC REGION



HIGHWAY SYSTEM

- INTERSTATE HIGHWAY
- U.S. HIGHWAY
- STATE HIGHWAYS



METHODOLOGY

Background - The project initially began with an application to the Department of Natural Resources, Office of Historic Preservation. The Meramec Regional Planning Commission authorized its staff to seek a matching grant to conduct an inventory of historic structures within the Meramec Region. Negotiations with the DNR Office of Historic Preservation led to a contract to accomplish an historic inventory of Southern Gasconade County. The survey or inventory was to consist of 175 historic inventory data sheets, a 3 by 5 inch photograph of each structure or object inventoried, a comprehensive map of the county and each site location, topographic maps detailing the exact site location according to the UTM (United Tic Mark) References, and a final comprehensive history of the county with the major emphasis being the historical and architectural development of the communities.

Research - Research began by reviewing pamphlets from the DNR/OHP to learn the basic styles and terminology necessary for the complete assessment of architectural styles and structural aspects of prospective sites. In addition, perusal of earlier surveys completed in relevant MRPC counties was conducted for additional guidance and assistance in style and content of such inventories. An attempt was made to learn as much as possible about Southern Gasconade County before actually beginning the field work; reference to historical books written about the area and identification of communities through the use of topographic maps prefaced a great deal of the initial interviewing and survey work. Becoming acquainted with many of the early members and settlers of the community obviated repetitious questions during the interviews and provided a basic understanding of

the development and settlement of small towns as well as the people who settled them and many of their descendents who still live there.

Encouragement - The HPP staff has received encouragement from everyone with whom they have come in contact. Members of local historical societies have provided a good source of information. They also have encouraged the furtherance of the historical identification program by giving HPP staff tours of their homes to show salient points of local architecture, by explaining vagaries of local history which could not be known by an outsider, and in fact are known to only a few of the residents of the local areas, and generally by supporting the objectives of the program.

Co-operation - The HPP staff has received a tremendous amount of cooperation from the residents of the communities surveyed. There were many times when no effort was spared by the people interviewed in providing detailed information, records and abstracts, photographs, house tours, and other references. Even those who perhaps had not heard of Historic Preservation exhibited remarkable efforts and personal time in sharing their knowledge and personal memories of specific sites and local history. Certainly the cooperation and willingness to share such time and knowledge has provided the essence of capturing and recording local history which has contributed to the unmitigated success of the Historic Preservation Program at MRPC.

Field Work - Work in the field began in July, 1986. It included the use of knowledge gleaned from the research and local sources which had been done to that date, and both field work and research proceeded simultaneously.

Field work in Southern Gasconade County was at first conducted in Redbird. Later, work branched out to include Canaan, Cleavesville, New & Old Woollam, Rosebud, and to all other towns in Southern Gasconade; the rural sites were also extensively surveyed. The large maps of Southern Gasconade County show the locations of the sites

surveyed in the county. As can be seen by a glance, surveys were spread across the length and breadth of the county.

Mapping - The maps used by the MRPC/HPP were prepared by the staff. Map arrows show the locations of the sites identified by the historic reports. Item #1 on the map is the number which identifies the location of the property being described. These map arrows designating the sites are followed by the initials of the architectural styles of the sites. The numbering and initial system was decided upon after a lengthy discussion of the best way to graphically show the location of the property site and appropriate architectural styles.

Results - The result obtained by conducting this research has been a compilation of a specific as well as a general history of the development of Southern Gasconade County. Specific questions, such as construction dates and who built the house, were always asked of the people interviewed. Other pertinent questions about community history were asked, as well as questions about housing and structural materials used, alterations made, and dates of remodelling, as well as other historical questions such as initial land use and history of ownership. The architectural features of these sites was determined by an analysis of the design and features derived from the photographs taken; in this way the objectives of this project, a survey which combines history and architectural information about communities, was fulfilled. The following pages depict the historical record of events leading to the settlement in Southern Gasconade County and conclusions about the types of structures to be found in the communities of Southern Gasconade County.

HISTORY OF GASCONADE COUNTY

Gasconade County was organized in November, 1820, and was named for the Gasconade River. Gasconade City was selected as the first seat of justice for the county. Gasconade City remained the county seat until 1825 when, on account of a flood, it was deemed advisable to move the seat to Bartonville. Bartonville was located on the Gasconade River in what is now Osage County and remained the county seat until it too was flooded. The county seat was thereupon moved a second time to Mount Sterling, located at a place known variously as Shockley's Bluff or Starky's Bluff. The county seat remained at Mount Sterling until 1842 when an election was held to determine if the seat should be moved to Hermann. Hermann had promised to render substantial financial assistance to the county if the county seat would be located there. As a result of the election held march 14, 1842, the county seat moved to Hermann.

The selection of the town site of Hermann was originally made under the auspices of the Deutsche Ansiedlung Geschellschaft (German Settlement Society) of Philadelphia. After looking at sites in Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Missouri the president of the society announced a large piece of land had been purchased in Missouri; this was announced October 5, 1837.

Minerals - According to the most recent listing of mineral producers and processors, most clay production in the region occurs in Gasconade county with lesser amounts produced in the other Meramec Region Counties. The refractory of fire clays produced in the region are those which are resistant to high temperature without change other than dehydration. Fire clay deposits in the region are present principally as sink hole filings, or pocket deposits in depression on an old erosion surface. Individual pairs range from less then 100 feet in diameter to several acres in area covered, with depths ranging

from 25 to more than 100 feet. Fire Clay was an important source of mining for the southern gasconade area and several towns were established because of the mining of this material from the surrounding area.

The majority of the fire clay produced in the region is shipped to refractory plants within the state. Fire clays are used to make fire-brick, high temperature resistant mortars, clay crucibles, zinc retorts, and condensers. Small tonnages of clay from the region are being shipped to cement plants for use as a high alulmina sweetening admixture in the cement raw mix.

Topography - The topography in Gasconade County can be divided into two areas: the area to the south, within the Bourbeuse Watershed; and the area to the north, which drains into the Gasconade and Missouri Rivers. In the Bourbeuse Watershed the topography is fairly gentle with rolling hills. North of Highway 28 the topography becomes rough, with steep sided valleys and narrow ridges. The maximum relief in the county is approximately 500 feet, with the highest area being at the north edge of the Bourbeuse River Valley, and the lowest at the Missouri River.

COMMUNITY HISTORIES

There are several communities that were settled on what is now Highway B between the northern boundary of Phelps County and the town of Bland. These communities are Redbird, LeDuc, and Cleavesville.

Redbird is located in Bourbois Township. Before the actual settlement of Redbird as a town the iron ore road ran between Meramec Springs and Hermann; the ore was hauled through Crawford County and then taken across the Bourbeuse River and through the Bourbeuse Valley. Part of this iron ore road is roughly where Hwy. B is now. At the crest of the Bourbeuse Valley approximately 100 yards east of the highway is what was originally the Licklider homestead cabin. The construction of the original log cabin is dated to around 1877 although the original settlement was made around 1850.

Redbird - Isahiah Bowen, an employee of the Meramec Springs Furnace works, settled Redbird in 1829. A mile south of Redbird at the junction of Gorrel Rd. and Bowen Rd. is the Bowen family home built by a descendent of Isahiah Bowen. The house has been allowed to deteriorate but it still retains a great many of its original and once elegant features. Built around the early 1900s it is a unique example of Queen Anne architecture in the Redbird area.

There was much about Redbird that attracted a great number of people to the area and at one time there was a multitude of businesses within this town including general grocery stores; blacksmiths; marble makers; wood workers and casket builders; a sawmill and the Redbird Mill.

At the "T" section formed by Redbird and Gorrel Rds. is the Redbird Mill. Fortunately the mill has been kept in very good condition by its present owners and they hope to restore it one day. Redbird Mill is one of the few mills left standing and in good

condition around the Meramec Region. The mill became an important focal point for the agricultural economy of the area. There are people still living in Redbird who remember long lines of wagons lined up along Redbird Rd. and the families patiently waiting their turn to unload their corn and wheat for processing. The Redbird Mill is a three story building with an oak frame and a sandstone rock foundation cut from the bluffs in around the river. At the beginning of the second World War the scrap iron from the mill was sold to Japan. The present mill owners bought the mill in 1943. Redbird Mill was built upon Price Creek; so named because General Price and his soldiers camped in this area during the Civil War.

Although the last general store in Redbird closed in 1970, the buildings still remain. South on Gorrel Rd. is the store that Harrison Gibson built in 1915; Harrison Gibson had built a house in Jake's Prairie in Crawford County before he moved to the town of Redbird.

The most architecturally elaborate structure remaining in Redbird is the Redbird Church. It is a frame building which was built alongside the Redbird Rd. It was built around 1915 and is a Victorian Gothic style of architecture accented by a spire perched upon the ridge of the tower. The Church has been relatively unaltered with the exception of panelling put on the inside walls. The ceilings are high and vaulted and the original wooden pews, arranged in half curves, remain. The Church is not used for services any longer.

Redbird was also known as sort of a resort area for hunting and fishing sport. The demise of Redbird's activity began with the construction of the railroad through the town of Bland located north of Redbird. As mentioned above, the last Redbird Grocery Store closed in 1970. Now people shop in Owensville and Bland for their groceries and other items.

LeDuc - LeDuc was originally settled in 1839 by Thomas Veach. LeDuc did not grow very much nor did it have many businesses. The LeDuc Methodist Church remains in the area but there is no trace left of the first log house. The LeDuc Church and Cemetery are located in Bourbois Township.

Cleavesville - Cleavesville is located one mile southeast of the town of Bland in Clay Township. The town was named after the first merchant who was J. Cleveland Luster. There are no businesses remaining in Cleavesville and although there was once a Church and a school the Church has been demolished and the school has been converted into a private residence. Most of the older buildings in Cleavesville were constructed between the years of 1900 and 1910.

Other Towns - There are many other small towns in the southern Gasconade area whose settlements pre-date 1900.

Old Woollam - The towns of New Woollam and Old Woollam are located in Third Creek Township. These towns are several miles apart and are separated by Cedar Branch Creek. Old Woollam was the original settlement in this area and although the tiny settlement never reached town size, the examples of architecture within the immediate area are very impressive. Old Woollam began with the town's namesake, Joseph Woollam, originally settling in this area. Woollam was actually on his way to California when he instead decided to build a general store around the Goerlich Ridge area. This store was converted into a house in the 1950s after the store itself went out of business in 1940. The Old Woollam Store is a three story building constructed of locally kilned brick with a stone slab foundation. The building has had many alterations made to it since it was converted into use as a house. However, it is a nice example of brick construction and of Greek Revival architecture; it was built in 1879.

Close to the Old Woollam Store is a two story house constructed of stone. The original section of this building was constructed before the Civil War around 1850. This rock house has limestone walls 12" to 18" thick originally excavated from a nearby rock quarry. The Mellies were bricklayers from Germany and immigrated to this country; they were a well known family and built several other houses in the area including one in Owensville. The Mellies family also built a three story brick building located a mile west of the Old Woollam store. This house is a unique example of brick construction and the architectural style of the building is reminiscent of Southern Colonial architecture. There is also a brick summer kitchen in back of the house and a brick barn to the side. All of these structures are over 100 years old; the house itself was constructed in 1864.

New Woollam - Old Woollam was undoubtedly the inspiration for the town of New Woollam. Although the exact settlement date of New Woollam is not known it became a very active community from 1880 until the mid 1930s. New Woollam was established after a general store was built and the post office was transferred there from Old Woollam. Apparently the town had far more businesses and services than did Old Woollam. Within New Woollam there was a general mercantile store, a sawmill, and a blacksmith shop. New Woollam is located on the banks of Cedar Branch Creek and although it is not known for certain, there was possibly a mill there at one time.

There is still a blacksmith and a blacksmith shop operating in New Woollam but it is the only business left in the small town and one of the few blacksmith shops left in Missouri. The New Woollam Mercantile Store was built in 1890 after the first one burned down; a photograph of New Woollam during the 1890s shows the store located next to a house lived in by Dr. Edward Mellies who practiced in New Woollam for many years before moving to Owensville. Both the store and the Mellies house are in good condition and have been restored by the owners.

Two of the three Churches built around the New Woollam area are still structurally standing. The New Woollam Methodist Church is built on a hill several miles from the town. The Church was built in 1889 with a front brick and frame added in 1957. The Church was constructed in a Gothic Revival architectural style with lancet pointed arched windows and a steep gable pitch roofline with return cornices. Services in the New Woollam Methodist Church were held in German until the first World War; after which they were held partially in German until 1932.

The second Church around the New Woollam area is the New Bethel Church. This Church was originally a log Church . It is a small one story structure originally built in 1890. The outers walls have recently been covered with aluminum siding which probably helps to preserve the original structure even though it detracts from the quaintness of its appearance. Services are rarely held in this Church and only on very special occasions as it has neither electric lights or other convenient amenities.

Charlotte - One of the older communities in southern Gasconade County is the town of Charlotte. Charlotte no longer exists and apparently has not for a long time as it is difficult to find many records of it. Apparently, Charlotte only had a post office, a general store, and possibly a brick kiln in the area. Its life span may have been relatively short with the town eventually being absorbed into the Old and New Woollam Communities. However, its brief existence inspired several churches and houses to be built in the area. Charlotte was located in Canaan Township several miles northwest of Rosebud. A German immigrant, August Wacker, built a two story brick house and, once the post office was established, named the town after his wife, Charlotte. The Post Office was located in the house that Wacker built; although the post office has long since been discontinued from the area the house still stands and is privately owned by descendents of August Wacker.

Within the area of Charlotte are two brick Churches: St. John's Church (or St. Johannis Kirche) and the St. James Church. The St. John's Church is of a Gothic Revival style of architecture and was built in 1880; the St. James United Church of Christ was built around the turn of the century and is of a Victorian Gothic style. These churches are located within one mile of each other on the Charlotte Church Rd.; the erection of two churches was the result of a doctrinal dispute between Lutheran and Evangelical denominations. Around Hwy. 50 area and Charlotte Church Rd. are several houses constructed of home-made brick fired at the local brick kiln. Most of these brick houses were built before the turn of the century and have been well maintained through the years.

Tea - The town of Tea is located in Brush Creek Township and is located on a slope overlooking the Bourbeuse river. John Hartmeister established the town of Tea and also built a steam powered mill on the banks of the river. Within the area were two general stores and a post office as well as a blacksmith shop and a wood working shop. Tea never became very large but it was relatively active at one time and there are still several of the buildings lined alongside the Tea gravel rd. The Tea Mercantile store was built in the late 1890s by William Judemann; the store is no longer open and has been closed for several years. A first store, built and operated by Hartmeister was originally located on the southern side of the Tea rd. but it was destroyed by a tornado in 1927. Next to the Judemann store is a house that has been beautifully remodelled and is currently owned by a descendent of Hartmeister's. This house is a two story frame building built in 1905. It has a rock foundation, weatherboard siding, and vergeboard trim. A second story has detailed lattice work. The woodwork and other sections of the house were remodelled in the late 1970s. A railroad built through the area in 1901 missed the town of Tea and this began the town's decline. The 1927 tornado which destroyed the Hartmeister's store also destroyed other businesses and homes and furthered the demise of the town.

Canaan - Canaan is located between Owensville and the town of Bland. It is located on Hwy. 28 in Clay Township. At one time both a freight and a passenger train ran through this town. At one time Canaan was a focal point for the shipping of fire clay which was the prevalent source of mining in the area. Canaan had a variety of businesses at one time but, although there are still many houses around this town, the businesses have long since disappeared. The last general store burned several years ago while the old Canaan schoolhouse and Canaan depot have long since been converted into private residences. The oldest house in Canaan is a log house that has had a frame house built around it. It was built in 1880.

Old Bland - Old Bland was the precursor of the present town of Bland. Old Bland had its origins at the bottom of a steep hill (Hwy A) one mile north of Bland. There were several mills in this area built on the Old Bland Creek. There was also a post office, a store, and a blacksmith shop. The railroad was built on the crest of the hill in the early 1900s and from then on the businesses and private homes were attracted away from Old Bland to the new town of Bland.

Bem - The town of Bem is located in Brush Creek Township around seven miles south of Owensville on Hwy.19. Bem began with the establishment of a post office. At one time Bem was fairly active but now only the St. John's Church and the Kreter general store remain amongst the cluster of houses in the area.

CONCLUSION

Southern Gasconade has a variety of small towns within its borders. Most of these small towns began as settlements and were attractive because they had an abundance of natural resources and natural beauty. Settlements grew and reached a certain point of maturity before technological and societal changes shifted the emphasis to larger towns. Larger towns offered more opportunities and many of the rural population gravitated toward these larger centers. Left behind were the remnants of the small towns which had been settled by many of the ancestors of those who are now gone to larger cities. During this interim period many of these towns, once active, began to fade. Even the general stores, rural schools, and other tiny businesses became relatively inefficient and were absorbed into the mainstream of larger towns.

Southern Gasconade County has three very active communities which provide a variety of services to the surrounding rural communities. Owensville, Bland, and Rosebud have a healthy population and a healthy economic outlook. They are situated on transportation lanes that make it easy to transport goods. These larger towns are easily accessible to and from the rural areas and offer employment in the economic sectors of industry, retail and wholesale, and services, as well as other sectors. People are once again being attracted to the assets that rural communities have to offer such as small town lifestyles and lower costs of living. In addition, appreciation of old houses and the challenge of restoring them are enticing the middle class back into the rural sites. The area can offer moderate to above average economic gains, and an excellent standard of quality of life.

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BEM

1. St. John's Church, *Victorian Gothic*, 1887
2. The King House, *Greek Revival*, 1890
3. The O.L. Stewart House, *Vernacular*, 1890
4. Red Oak Church, *Victorian Gothic*, 1890
5. The Green House, *Greek Revival*, 1890
6. Bem Store, *Vernacular*, 1900

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7. The Ripp House, *Greek Revival*, 1886
8. The Wheeler House, *Greek Revival*, 1886
9. Victorian Gothic House, *Victorian Gothic*, 1890
10. The S & M Cafe, *Vernacular*, 1890
11. The Krause House, *Vernacular*, 1890
12. The Monroe House, *Victorian Gothic*, 1890
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14. The Roberson Rock House, *Semi-Bungalow*, 1900
15. The White Church in Bland, *Victorian Gothic*, 1904
16. The Goodman House, *Princess Anne*, 1910
17. The Bland High School, *Renaissance Revival*, 1910
18. The Jones House, *Greek Revival*, 1910
19. International Shoe Company, *Vernacular*, 1910
20. Leland M & H Market, *Commercial*, 1910
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23. The Lunsford House, *Victorian Gothic*, 1915
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29. The Drewel House, *Vernacular*, 1880
30. Old Bland Church Foundation, *Foundation*, 1880
31. The Jenkins House, *American Foursquare*, 1886
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33. Old Blacksmith Shop, *Vernacular*, 1920
34. Old Bland School, *Utilitarian School*, 1920

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38. Leduc Church, *Gothic Revival*, 1893
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40. The Baxter House, *Log House*, 1880

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41. The Dittman House, *Log Style*, 1886
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55. The Brick House, *Victorian Gothic*, 1870
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58. The Charlotte Store, *Utilitarian*, 1900
59. New Salem Baptist Church, *Utilitarian Church*, 1900
60. St. James United Church of Christ, *Victorian Gothic*, 1902
61. St. John's Parsonage, *Princess Anne*, 1905
62. Log Cabin, *Log Cabin*, 1935

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63. The Dozier House, *Victorian Gothic*, 1904
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73. The Faucett House, *American Foursquare*, 1880
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77. The Vandegriff House, *American Foursquare*, 1890
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81. The Owensville Railroad Hotel, *Greek Revival*, 1900

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86. The Berger Summer Kitchen, *Victorian Romanesque*, 1906
87. The Presbyterian Church, *Victorian Gothic*, 1910
88. The Johnston House, *Victorian Gothic*, 1910
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91. *Victorian Gothic*, *Victorian Gothic*, 1914
92. The Roe House, *Greek Revival*, 1915
93. The Fay House, *Vernacular*, 1916
94. The Dunton House, *Colonial Revival*, 1917
95. The Owensville Elementary School, *Victorian Romanesque*, 1920
96. The Neece House, *Greek Revival*, 1924

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98. The Rothemeyer House, *Greek Revival*, 1890
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- 142. Immanuel Lutheran Church, *Victorian Gothic*, 1914
- 143. The Henry Rasmussen House, *Foursquare*, 1915
- 144. Winter's Summer Kitchen, *Utilitarian*, 1920
- 145. Winter's Barn, *Utilitarian*, 1920
- 146. Meyer's antiques, *Commercial*, 1926
- 147. The George Langenberg House, *Greek Revival*, 1929
- 148. The Wehmeyer Townhouse, *Townhouse*, 1930
- 149. Brinkman's Store, *Greek Revival*, 1930
- 150. Bethel ME Fellowship Hall, *Utilitarian School*, 1930
- 151. Rosebud Restaurnat, *Commercial*, 1935
- 152. Rosebud Hardware Store, *Commercial*, 1935

(RURAL) ROSEBUD

- 153. The Charles Tomid House, *Greek Revival*, 1910
- 154. The Sassenrath House, *Vernacular*, 1920

TEA

- 155. The Percival House, *Greek Revival*, Unknown date
- 156. The Tea Mercantile Store, *Commercial*, 1890
- 157. Warren Church, *Utilitarian*, 1900
- 158. The Hartmeister House, *Gothic Revival*, 1905
- 159. The Leo Seeger House, *Vernacular*, 1930

OLD WOOLLAM

- 160. The Idel Stone House, *Greek Revival*, 1850
- 162. The Vernon Nicks House, *Southern Colonial*, 1864
- 163. Vernon Nick's Summer Kitchen, *Utilitarian*, 1870
- 164. St. John's Church, *Victorian Gothic*, 1879
- 165. The Bernard & Maxine Brown House, *Greek Revival*, 1879
- 166. The Niedert House, *Vernacular*, 1886

SOUTHERN GASCONADE COUNTY REPORTS

- 167. New Bethel Church, *Utilitarian Church*, 1890
- 168. The Jawer Stucco Building, *Utilitarian*, 1900
- 169. The Mellis Brick Barn, *Barn*, 1906
- 169. School N. of Old Woollam, *Utilitarian School*, 1910

NEW WOOLLAM

- 170. The Bier House, *Vernacular*, 1880
- 171. New Woollam Methodist Church, *Gothic Revival*, 1889
- 172. New Woollam Mercantile Store, *Utilitarian*, 1890
- 173. The Al & Fran Hirsch House, *Homestead*, 1900
- 174. The Gene Bradley House, *Ozark Greek Revival*, 1910
- 175. The New Woollam Blacksmith Shop, *Vernacular*, 1936

SOUTHERN GASCONADE COUNTY CHURCHES



New Salem Baptist Church

The original building was erected in 1829, and was replaced by a log cabin in 1854. This church was the third one constructed. It was built in 1900 at a cost of \$200.00



The St. James United Church of Christ at Charlotte

This church was built in 1901, but the Evangelical Church of Charlotte was organized in 1857 by the early pioneers. Services were held in German until 1940.

SOUTHERN GASCONADE COUNTY CHURCHES



St. John's Evangelical and Reformed Church at Woollam

St. Johannes Evangelische Kirche was organized in 1858. The original church was a log building. The present church was built in 1879 and was constructed of locally kilned brick.



St. John's United Church of Christ at Bem

The first church was constructed of logs and erected in 1869. The log church was replaced with a frame church in 1887.

SOUTHERN GASCONADE COUNTY CHURCHES



Woollam Methodist

The first church building, constructed in 1868, is gone but the cemetery remains. The congregation divided in 1889 and the south side members built a church building south of Bland; the northern part of the congregation built the present church at New Woollam. Services were held in German the first World War; then services were partly conducted in German until 1932. The present front addition of the church was added in 1957.



Redbird Church

Victorian Gothic architecture. Built circa 1890.