

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Gentry Apartments

other name/site number Zahn Apartments

**2. Location**

street & town 318 S. Wall Street N/A not for publication

city or town Joplin N/A vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Jasper code 097 zip code 64801

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mark A. Miles 06/26/06  
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:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

- 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:)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Gentry Apartments  
Name of Property

Jasper County, MO  
County and State

**Ownership of Property**  
(check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

NA

0

**Historic Function**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Function**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Multiple Dwelling

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

VACANT/NOT IN USE

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Commercial Block Apartment Building

foundation concrete

walls brick

roof asphalt

other terra cotta

**Narrative Description**  
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

Gentry Apartments  
Name of Property

Jasper County, MO  
County and State

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- 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**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

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**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance**

(enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1918

**Significant Dates**

1918

**Significant Persons**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Michaelis, August C., architect

Hoffman, Roy, contractor

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other Name of repository:

Post Memorial Art Reference Library, Joplin, MO

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

Gentry Apartments  
Name of Property

Jasper County, MO  
County and State

**Acreage of Property** less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 1/5 3/6/5/2/8/2 4/1/0/5/7/1/1  
Zone Easting Northing

2 / / / / / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing

3 / / / / / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing

4 / / / / / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Property Tax No.

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

name/title Cydney E. Millstein  
organization Architectural and Historical Research, LLC date January 30, 2006  
street & number 1537 Belleview Avenue telephone 816.472.4154  
city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64108

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 FPO for any additional items)

name/title Zahn Apartments, LP  
street & number 5079 E. F. R. 122 telephone 417.832.1320  
city or town Springfield state MO zip code 65802

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

**Gentry Apartments  
Jasper County, Missouri**

### Summary

Designed by prominent local architect August C. Michaelis, the Gentry Apartments, 318 S. Wall Street, Joplin, Jasper County, Missouri, was constructed in 1918. The Gentry Apartment building was renamed the Zahn Apartments sometime after 1935. The most recognized name for the Gentry Apartment is the Zahn Apartment Building, which will henceforth be used. Located two blocks west of Main Street, the Zahn Apartment Building was built in a residential area platted as the Original Town of Murphysburg — an area developed adjacent to Main Street, a thoroughfare located in the heart of the central business district of Joplin. This six-story, “U-shaped” buff brick building measures approximately 45’ x 120’ feet and retains its original open storefront with large display windows and transoms. Two side bays consisting of multipaned single-leaf doors flanked by multipaned sidelights characterize the upper floors. Though the original metal balconettes are missing, few other changes have occurred. With few exceptions, the Zahn Apartments possesses integrity of design, materials, workmanship, setting, feeling, association and location. It remains in good condition, and has retained the majority of its historic features to convey its historic significance.

### Elaboration

The Zahn Apartment building, constructed in 1918, is a six-story, buff brick and stone building, divided into two main bays at the front or east facade. This main façade is a narrow end of the building. The building as it stands today features thirty-six apartment units. The majority of the storefront elements, including framing, wood transoms, sidelights, fanlight over the main entrance, are original. Mullions and single-leaf doors are aluminum-framed, non-original. Plate glass windows are extant and obscured by plywood. The original canopy at the main entrance is cast-iron with wood bottom and chain attachments. The two bays of the upper floors at the main facade feature tripartite configuration of a central multi-paned wood framed door flanked by multi-paned single-hung wood framed windows. The center bay at each floor features a blind arch with a fixed, multi-paned wood framed window. The end bays feature single-hung, six over one, wood framed windows set below blind arches. The cast stone balconette areas at the upper stories of the main facade originally featured iron railings.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**Gentry Apartments  
Jasper County, Missouri**

The first story of the north facade features industrial sash multipaned windows with operable center units. Upper fenestration is original steel, three-over-three single-hung, sash.

The south facade features a light court beginning at the second floor, and stretching to the sixth floor. The south wall features wood framed single leaf multi-paned doors and wood framed, one-over-one fenestration. The south wall of the wings feature industrial sash, multi-paned units like those of the north facade. The east and west light-court walls feature doors and windows like those of the south facade. Metal fire escapes are located at the east and west wing. The first story of this facade is without articulation.

All openings at the west facade have been either modified with plastic, non-original overhead door, and/or covered with plywood. Other character-defining features include limestone bulkheads and sills, terra cotta elements including cornice, fanlight surround, and keystones at the main facade. The south facade features original plaster.

The first floor interior is open to columns; vestibule at northeast corner features marble walls, stairs, and ceramic tile floor, in good condition. Upper floors feature single-loaded corridors with cork flooring and original plaster walls and stained woodwork to include doors, baseboards and ceiling cove molding. All units at upper floors feature original oak flooring; some areas have been covered with sheet vinyl and/or carpet.

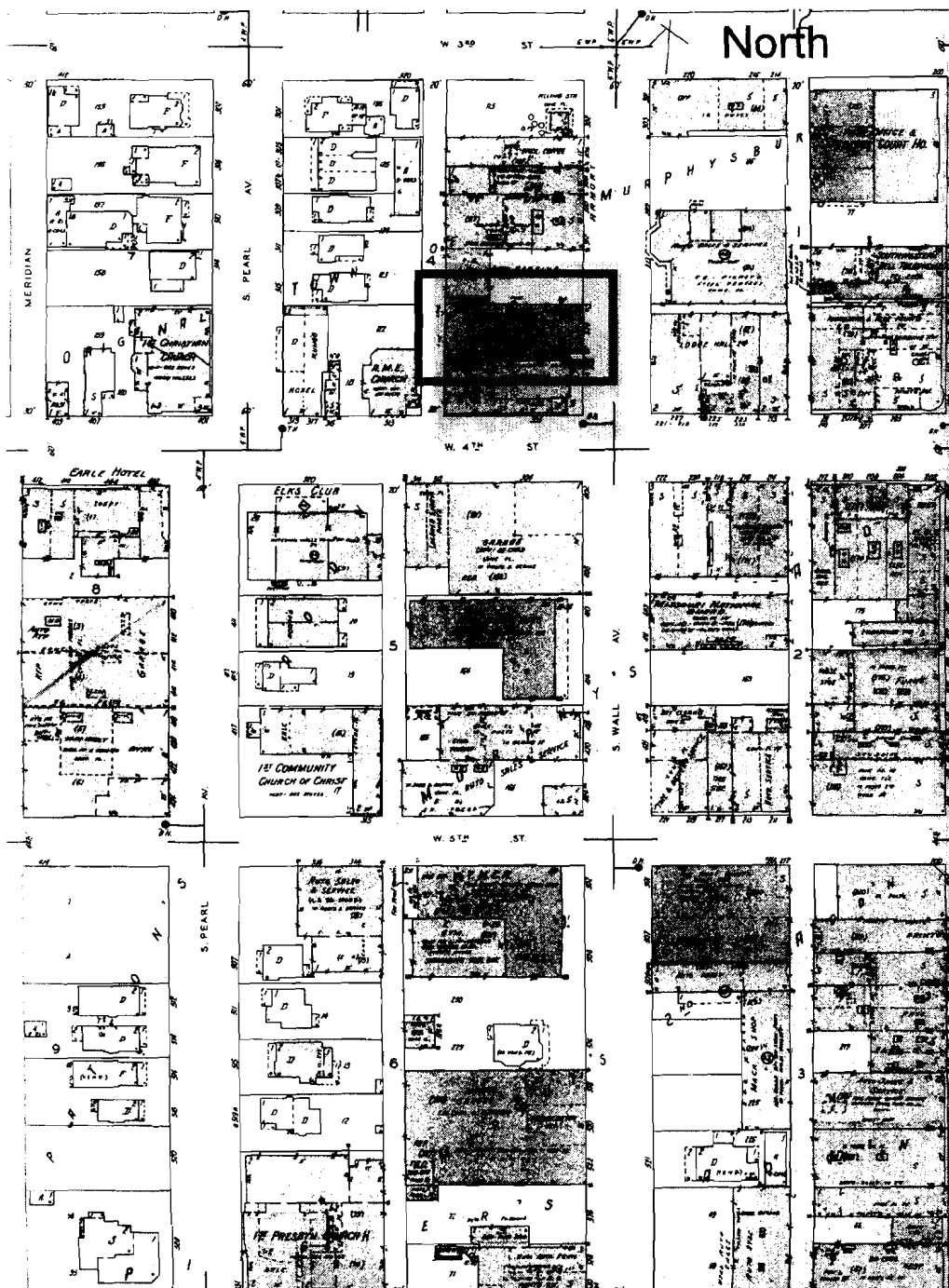
### **Future Plans**

Currently, there are proposed plans for the rehabilitation of the Zahn Apartments. Plans for the project have been prepared in accordance with The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and have been sent to the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office for review and compliance.

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**Gentry Apartments**  
Jasper County, Missouri



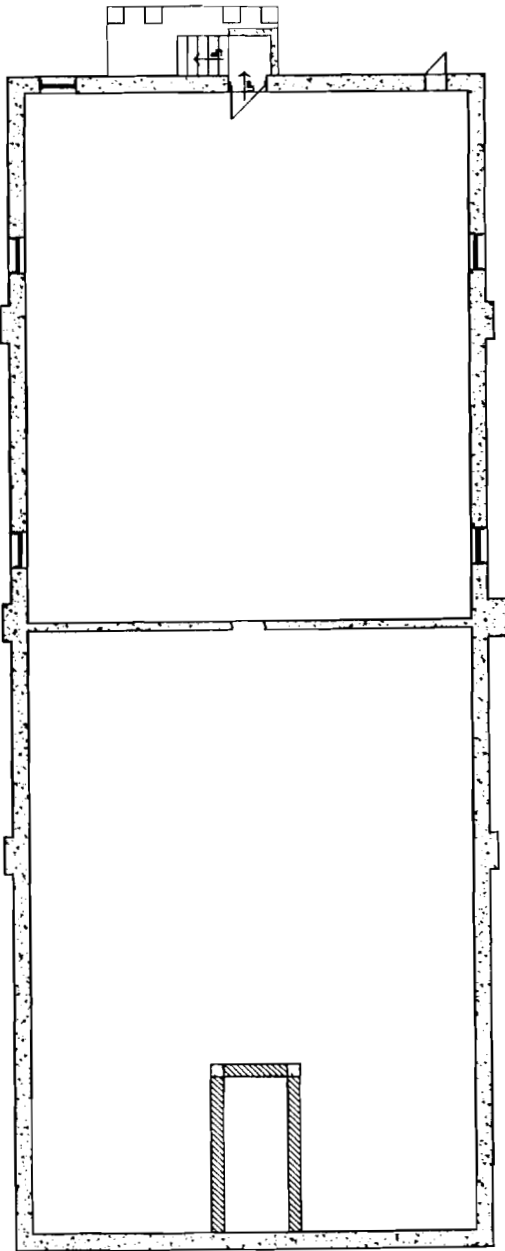
**Zahn Apartments**

Sanborn Map: Joplin 1941 (courtesy of the Post Memorial Art Library, Joplin)

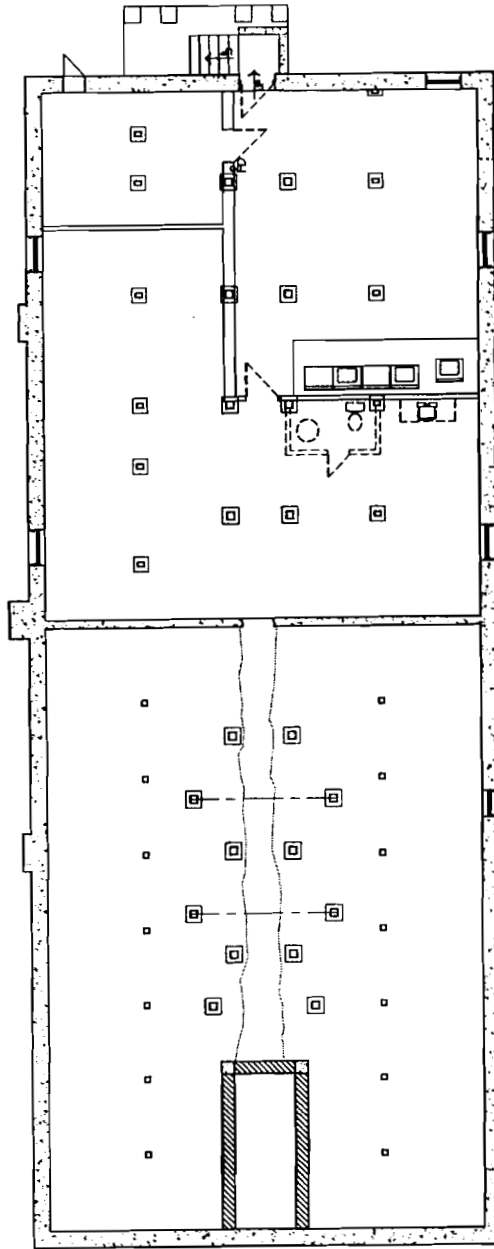
# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Gentry Apartments  
Jasper County, Missouri



404



402



BASEMENT DEMOLITION PLAN  
SCALE 1/8"=1'-0"

A6

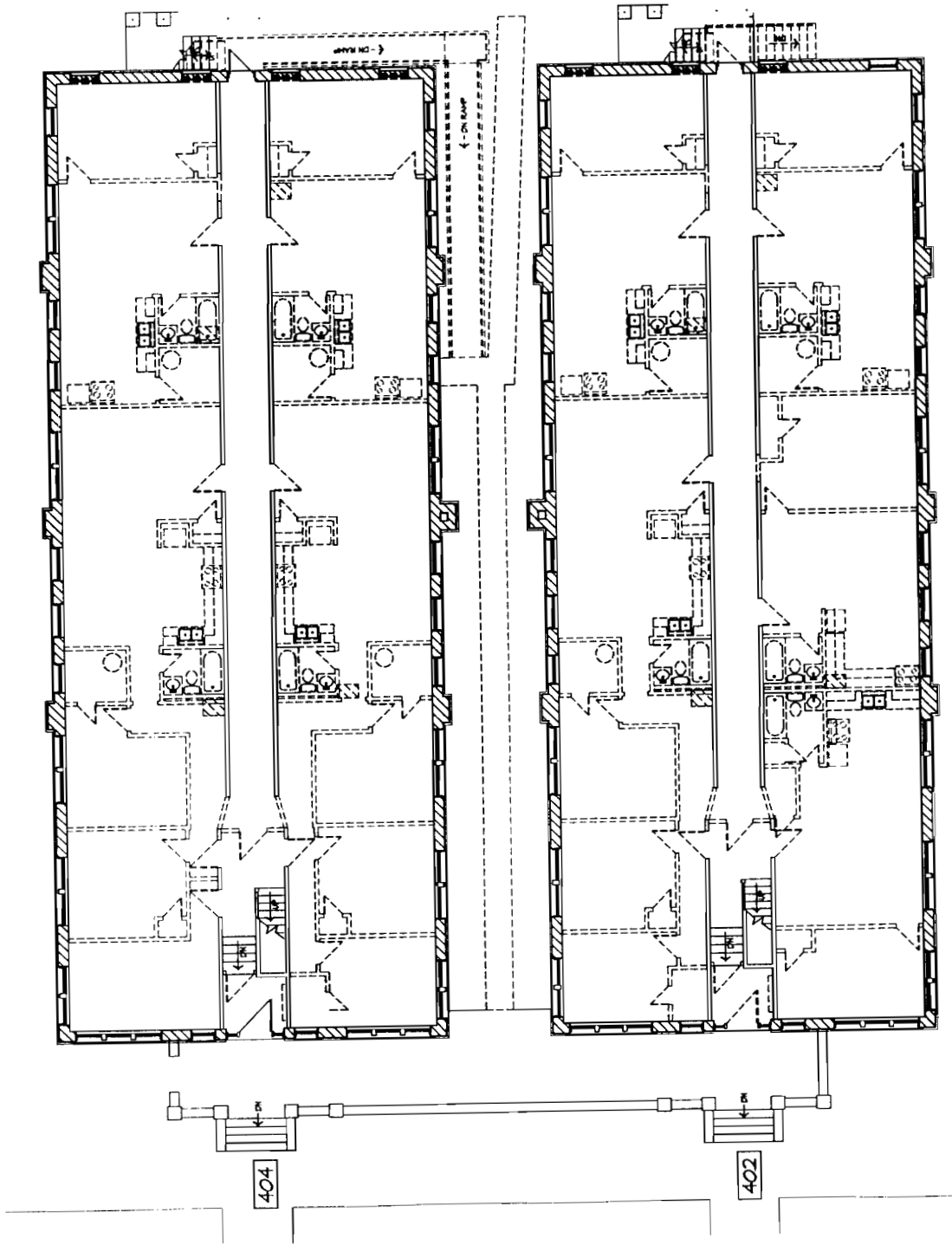
RIDGEWAY APARTMENTS  
402-404 BYERS AVE  
JOPLIN, MO



# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Gentry Apartments  
Jasper County, Missouri



FIRST FLOOR DEMOLITION PLAN  
SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"

A6

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**Gentry Apartments  
Jasper County, Missouri**

### Summary

The Zahn Apartments, 318 S. Wall Street, Joplin, Jasper County, Missouri, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C in the following Areas: COMMERCE: The Zahn Apartments, built in 1918, is associated with the urbanization of Joplin's downtown as the city became known for its zinc and lead mining during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The development of apartment buildings, such as the Zahn, within a previously established residential neighborhood adjacent to the city's central core was in response to the rising demand for middle and upper-middle class multiple dwelling rental housing during the city's period of greatest economic growth.<sup>1</sup> To this end, the Zahn reflects the introduction of the important apartment building industry that today remains an essential part of Joplin's commercial interests.

ARCHITECTURE: The Zahn Apartments is representative of the work of prominent architect August Michaelis, who was responsible for many of Joplin's commercial, residential and institutional buildings. Michaelis's design for the Zahn was particularly sensitive to the established single-family housing in the area and is significant for the initial design approach taken to complement the established residential feeling and sense of place, later evolving to a more distinctive urban aesthetic. As originally designed, the Zahn offered retail space on the first floor, a feature that appears to be unique to apartment design in Joplin. The period of significance of the Zahn Apartments is 1918, the date of its construction.

### Elaboration

Joplin's economic boom in the 1890s brought new businesses as well as residents. This expansion drastically increased the need for new housing that offered efficient and affordable options to the single-family home. Many residents were single individuals who had jobs within the business district. These residents found their needs met in the apartment buildings that were built within a few blocks distance of Joplin's central business district. Joplin's continued business growth into the twentieth century made housing for those who worked in the city a necessity. This phenomenon had already occurred in larger cities, beginning as early as the 1870s in New York City with the Stuyvesant Apartments on Eighteenth Street. By 1900, such apartments were being

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<sup>1</sup> A similar pattern of growth occurred in Springfield, Missouri, as described in Richard Lee Burton, "Historic and Architectural Resources of Springfield, Missouri," MPS listing, Section F, page 18.

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**Gentry Apartments  
Jasper County, Missouri**

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constructed in Kansas City.<sup>2</sup>

Construction of upper-class apartment housing in Joplin began around 1906 with the construction of the Olivia Apartment Building at 320 Moffett Street. The Olivia was constructed in center of the wealthy residential area located just west of downtown Joplin. It was home to many of Joplin's up-and-coming young bachelor business and professional men, as well as older wealthy residents who wanted the comfort of a hotel-like atmosphere while remaining close to family and friends. The fine homes of civic leaders and business owners, such as O.S. Pilcher of Pilcher Lead and Zinc Company Mines, were less than one block away.

The population of Joplin consisted of individuals from diverse economic levels. Entrepreneurs, corporate officers, law enforcement and government employees, elected officials, and laborers were all part of Joplin's economy. As the city's population increased, adequate housing became an important factor in Joplin's continued prosperity. Many of the wealthy residents of Joplin, who made their fortunes in real estate, mining and banking, resided in the Original Town of Murphysburg and in the neighboring subdivisions within four blocks of the city's business district. A number of multi-family dwellings and apartment buildings, constructed along Byers Avenue, Pearl Wall and Joplin Street between 1<sup>st</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Streets after 1905, provided a buffer between the downtown business district and the upper class residential district located west of Byers Avenue in the area known as the Murphysburg residential area.<sup>3</sup>

Murphysburg was a forty-acre tract of land purchased by Patrick Murphy in 1871. The area ran from 1<sup>st</sup> Street to 4<sup>th</sup> Street and from Main to Byers. It was the original plat for the Town of Murphysburg that, shortly thereafter, merged with Union City. By 1873 Murphysburg and the surrounding area incorporated as Joplin and Murphysburg became a subdivision of Joplin.<sup>4</sup>

During the 1880s, Original Town of Murphysburg as well as Murphys 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> and Sergeant's subdivisions

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<sup>2</sup> Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford Press, 1985), 89-92.

<sup>3</sup> Joplin Convention and Visitors Bureau, Brochure, *Joplin Missouri: Historical Guide*, 36-37.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 22-23.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**Gentry Apartments  
Jasper County, Missouri**

became booming residential areas where the wealthy civic leaders and businessmen of Joplin built some of the finest Victorian and post-Victorian era homes in Joplin. The growth of Joplin during the 1880s was a direct result of the success of the lead and zinc mines in Jasper County. After 1905, the business district began to expand west from Main Street between 1<sup>st</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>5</sup> The largest jump in population seems to have occurred during the ten years between 1890 and 1900, thereafter, Joplin's population continued to steadily grow. According to US Census figures, by 1941 the city was home to 37,144 people.

Apartment construction in Joplin's business district began in 1906 and continued through 1928. The area covered is located between Wall and Moffett and from 2nd Street to 10<sup>th</sup> Street adjacent to the downtown business district and is called the Murphysburg subdivision. The five-story, 34-unit Olivia Apartment Hotel (1906; Austin Allen & Company, architects) at 320 S. Moffett, offered a hotel like atmosphere with a large kitchen and dining room for its residents. The Olivia appears to be the oldest surviving apartment building in the Murphysburg residential area. Still extant, the Olivia has been altered over the years. The Robertson Apartments (1916; Charles H. Sudhoelter, architect) at 410-414 Wall Avenue is a three-story, L-shaped, fireproofed, reinforced concrete and brick apartment house. The Ridgeway Apartments (1918; J. L. Heckenlively), consisting of two, three-story buildings, were also known as North Ridgeway and South Ridgeway. These apartments were equipped with the efficiency features of Murphy Beds and a central vacuum cleaning system, like the Zahn. Different from the Zahn, these apartments catered to a working class client. The Mayflower Apartments (1928), 608 W. 5<sup>th</sup> Street, was the last to be built in the Murphysburg neighborhood. Featuring 48 units, the Mayflower was designed with efficiency apartments to three-six room suites.

By 1918, the Zahn Apartments became an example of the new style of efficient, residential living offered to the upper class residents of Joplin in close proximity to the business district allowing shop owners, bankers and lawyers housing close to their place of business. Joplin General Hospital was located on 4<sup>th</sup> Street between Byers and Moffett Avenues, less than four blocks west of the Zahn, and would account for the many doctors, nurses and pharmacists that lived in the local apartment houses.

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 36-37.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

**Gentry Apartments  
Jasper County, Missouri**

The owner on record of the Zahn Apartments was Overton. H. Gentry, a local businessman and land investor whose office was located at 602 Main Street. The architect for the Zahn was August C. Michaelis, a resident of Joplin, Missouri. Roy Hoffman of Royal Heights, a local Joplin subdivision, was listed as the general contractor. Michaelis was a prominent Joplin architect working between 1896 and 1925. Michaelis designed many business and residential buildings throughout Joplin and Jasper County, Missouri.<sup>6</sup>

By April 13, 1918, construction of the Zahn Apartments was underway. First planned as a three-story building as described in the March 13, 1918, *Western Contractor*, by March 27, 1918, the building's design had changed to a six-story, 60' x 120' building. The total revised estimated cost of construction for the six-story building was \$60,000.<sup>7</sup> Construction of the Zahn was completed in the winter of 1918. The apartments were equipped with many modern features that introduced their residents to conveniences that were not typical to single family housing during this era. Each apartment featured Murphy beds, a modern vacuum cleaning system and fire escapes.

The storefront was originally occupied by the B. F. Goodrich Rubber Company. The upper five floors were strictly residential and featured six apartments per floor with balconettes.<sup>8</sup> The residents of the Zahn Apartments were professional people and business owners. Listed among the occupants in the 1920 Joplin Directory was Dr. C. C. Cummings, the father of Hollywood actor Bob Cummings who was born in Joplin 1910. The Cummings family resided in the Zahn when Bob was ten years old. Other residents included: John R. Taylor, owner of the Taylor Candy Company; J. A. Desbonne, secretary and treasurer of Central Foundry; Rev. A. G. Van Elden, rector of St. Phillips Church; Robert J. Eitel of the Lead and Zinc Company; and Philip R. Coldren, editor for the *Joplin Globe* newspaper. Overton H. Gentry also resided on the fourth floor of his apartment building in 1920.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> "Michaelis," Archives, Post Library, Joplin Public Library, Joplin, Missouri.

<sup>7</sup> "Missouri Reports," *Western Contractor* 13 March 1918, 18; 20 March 1918, 18; 27 March 1918, 18; 3 April 1918, 18.

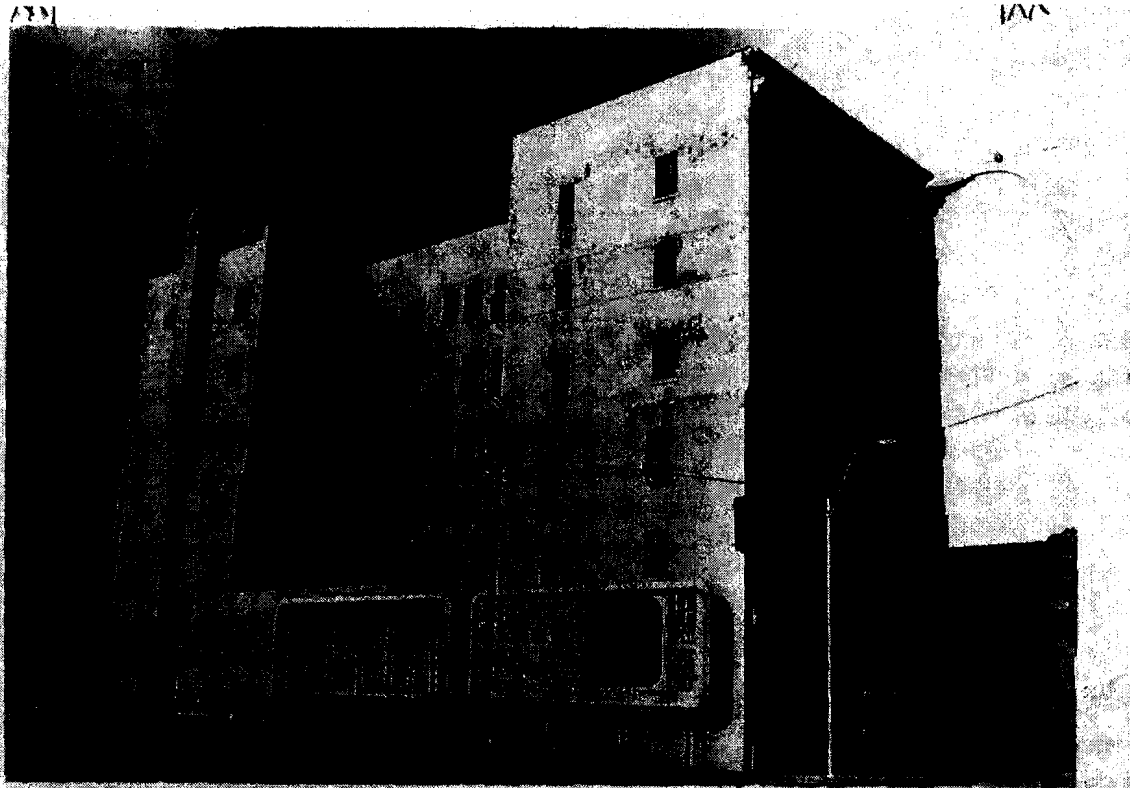
<sup>8</sup> *Joplin Missouri: Leshnick's 1920 City Directory*, Post Memorial Art Reference Library.

<sup>9</sup> *Joplin City Directory: Leshnick 1920 Directory*, 532. Very little information other than his occupation and residence was found on Overton H. Gentry. The name seems to have been a common name in Missouri, as there have been over four Overton Gentry's

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Continuation Sheet**

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**Gentry Apartments  
Jasper County, Missouri**



**Zahn Apartment Building: c. 1960  
Source: The Post Memorial Art Reference Library, Joplin, Missouri**

**Architect: August C. Michaelis**

August C. Michaelis was a prominent architect in Joplin. In 1905, he was the president of the Empire Oil Company and eventually became building superintendent for the City of Joplin. During his years as an architect, Mr. Michaelis designed a number of prominent Joplin buildings including: Joplin High School (c.1896), the American Hotel also known as the Clarketon Hotel (1899), the Joplin First Presbyterian Church (c.1898) and the Miners Bank Building (c.1904). He also designed a number of smaller businesses as well as local residences.<sup>10</sup> By 1918 Michaelis' younger brother, Alfred, had joined the firm and may have assisted in

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identified during the course of this study. It was unclear as to which one was the Joplin O.H. Gentry.

<sup>10</sup> Howard L. Conard, *Encyclopedia of the History of Missouri* Vol. IV (New York: The Southern History Company, 1901), 374-375.

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**Gentry Apartments  
Jasper County, Missouri**

designing the Zahn Apartments. August C. Michaelis was the architect responsible for the design of the Joplin Carnegie Library, also known as the Joplin Public Library. This building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.<sup>11</sup>

Michaelis' design for the Zahn Apartments employs a two-part commercial block in that the main façade features a clear base, topped by a prominent shaft. These two zones, somewhat similar in design and proportion, reflect the varying uses of the building where the first floor was used for a public, retail space and the remaining floors were more private in character. Because the building was constructed close to the central business district of Joplin, Michaelis was keen in devising a combination retail and residential scheme, most unusual for Joplin. It is unknown whether Michaelis was responsible for any other apartment buildings in Joplin, but with the plan for the Zahn, he was clearly sensitive to melding the design and materials of the building with the single-family residences in the surrounding neighborhood, while expanding its function to meet the demands of the growing commercial core.

The Zahn appears to be a departure for Michaelis. Most of his work that has been documented is institutional in nature and carries the use of Neo-Classical, Greek Revival and Romanesque motifs in their stone facades. Memorial Hall (1925), the Carnegie Library (1910), and the First Presbyterian Church (1913), all constructed in Joplin appear to be typical of his design character, where prominent pediments, colonnades, and pavilions are hallmarks of these buildings. However, with the Zahn Apartments, Michaelis turned to the use of brick and decreased the scale of the building so that it would blend with the existing, residential neighborhood, yet it does not fail to deliver a refined sensibility in its Italianate influenced and rhythmic design.

In 1925, Michaelis and his younger brother, Alfred, were overseeing the construction of Joplin's Memorial Hall located at 212 West 8<sup>th</sup> Street. On July 29, 1925, Alfred died after a fall from the scaffolding while he was inspecting the loft area of the new building. August was devastated by his brother's death and left Joplin. He and his wife returned to Joplin in the 1940s to open the Michaelis Cafeteria, but August was in ill health and

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<sup>11</sup> Noelle Soren and Claire Blackwell, Joplin Carnegie Library, National Register of Historic Places, March 23, 1979, Sect. 8; 2-3.

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**Gentry Apartments  
Jasper County, Missouri**

died two weeks later.

### **An Overview of the History of Joplin, Missouri**

The City of Joplin was founded in 1873. The development of Joplin was led by a few individuals that believed the region to contain natural resources that were capable of developing and sustaining a city. The main source of economic growth in Joplin came from rich supplies of zinc and lead mineral deposits. In fact, the area in and around Joplin was so rich with zinc that Joplin became known as the Zinc Capital of the world. Joplin was the richest mining town in a four state area, supporting a mining industry for well over seventy-five years.<sup>12</sup>

The first settler to arrive in the southern portion of Jasper County, Missouri, in 1838 was Judge James C. Cox from Tennessee. His home was just outside the eastern edge of the Joplin city limits. The first post office in the area, known as Blytheville, was established in his cabin.<sup>13</sup> According to legend, Judge Cox was a slaveholder. The young son of one of his slaves found a blue rock while digging for fishing worms along the banks of Joplin Creek. Cox recognized the rock as lead and quickly filed a claim for the land along the banks of the creek. As word got out about the discovery of lead, other landholders began digging on their property and found the mineral to be in large quantities throughout Jasper County. During the Civil War nearly all mining ceased and did not resume until the 1870s.<sup>14</sup> It wasn't until after the war that Joplin finally realized the potential for wealth from these mineral deposits.

Rev. Harris G. Joplin, the namesake of the city, arrived in 1839. Reverend Joplin, also from Tennessee, was a Methodist Episcopal missionary preacher who established the Joplin's first church. He lived just outside the city limits where he owned an eighty-acre tract of land that he farmed and from which he also ministered to his congregation. A small spring on the farm was the source of Joplin Creek and eventually supplied the name for

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<sup>12</sup> Joplin Convention and Visitors Bureau, Brochure, *Joplin Missouri: Historical Guide*

<sup>13</sup> Howard L. Conard, *Encyclopedia of the History of Missouri* Vol. III (New York: The Southern Publishing Co., 1901), 474.

Conard's history of Joplin appears to be one of the best and most thorough primary sources found. Many of the other sources reiterate that which was written and published by Conard in 1901 and is frequently cited in all subsequent works that have been reviewed for this study.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*



## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**Gentry Apartments  
Jasper County, Missouri**

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the City of Joplin as well.<sup>15</sup>

The history of Joplin and Jasper County, Missouri, prior to the Civil War is not readily assessable. However, data shows that the population of Jasper County was very sparse prior to the outbreak of the Civil War. When the war broke out, the few settlers in the area were further dispersed, apparently leaving no records behind. Most of the recorded history of Joplin, Missouri, begins in the 1870s, coinciding with resumed interest in the local mines. It is the mining activity in the region that established Joplin, Missouri, as a third class city by 1888.<sup>16</sup>

The founding of Joplin was a process that did not go smoothly. On July 28, 1871, John C. Cox filed the town plat of Joplin, located on the east side of Joplin Creek. On July 12<sup>th</sup> Davis and Murphy, along with Moffett and Sargeant, owners of the Moffett and Sargeant smelting furnaces and a local newspaper, filed a plat for the Town of Murphysburg, on the opposite side of Joplin Creek. As neither town had law enforcement or a court system in place, corruption was rampant.<sup>17</sup>

The two towns existed side by side until 1872. Subsequently, the Jasper County government established law enforcement and a court system, as well as merging the two towns into one under the name of Union City. As confidence grew, more people began to move into the area. Plans were made for churches and schools but rivalry remained an issue that was not resolved until March 23, 1873. Under a new charter and General Assembly, Union City was renamed Joplin. By 1888 Joplin became a third class city in the State of Missouri.<sup>18</sup>

Corporate existence in Joplin was largely established by the mining industry that brought rapid economic growth to the area. Oddly enough, until 1872, zinc was thrown aside as a waste material after it was separated from lead. A reporter by the name of D. Baumann, from the *St. Louis Times*, informed the superintendent of the

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<sup>15</sup> Joel T. Livingston, "Joplin, Missouri: the City that "Jack" Built: Some of Its Business and Its Beauties," *A Brief History of Joplin, and Something About the People, Wealth, and Resources*. (Hutchinson & Co., photographers, 1902), n.p. Online Resource: Post Memorial Art Reference Library <http://www.joplinpubliclibrary.org/postcards/J02p002th.jpg>

<sup>16</sup> Conard, 471, 474.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 475.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*.

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Porter Land Company of zinc's actual worth. After further investigation, the quality of the zinc was found to be of a very high grade. A representative from the Illinois Zinc Company was the first to purchase the zinc in 1872 for \$3.00 per ton. However, by 1874 other zinc companies were buying Joplin zinc at the rate of \$10.00 per ton and by 1899, Joplin zinc was selling at its highest rate, \$55.00 per ton.<sup>19</sup>

Transportation became another important industry in Joplin. The first railroad reached Joplin in 1877, at which time the St. Louis and San Francisco railway laid its last spike. The spike was made of lead to commemorate Joplin's source of wealth from the lead mines. Three years prior to the railroads arrival, the city's planning committee platted out additions; banks were established, special attention was given to organizing schools and churches were formed. All of the planning that went into Joplin led to the steadfast and cohesive purpose of building a city. In 1890 Joplin's population was 9,943 but just ten years later, the number increased to 26,023. Over \$1.5 million was expended in business and residence building that same year.<sup>20</sup>

Wholesale and manufacturing was also important. By 1902, three major wholesale grocers along with numerous other wholesalers doing business in drug, hardware and dry goods were located in Joplin. Foundries and machine shops that manufactured boilers, drill tools and mining equipment were also found in Joplin. Milling companies, paint factories, building and brick supplies, along with stone quarries were all part of Joplin's economic base.<sup>21</sup>

During World War I, the operations of the lead and zinc mines were limited to minimum production for two reasons; man power was required for the military, and the railroads were required for transporting troops and

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Livingston, "Joplin, Missouri: the City that "Jack" Built: Some of Its Business and Its Beauties,"  
<http://www.joplinpubliclibrary.org/postcards/J02p002th.jpg>

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moving equipment and food supplies. Construction of housing and new business came to a halt during World War I but quickly resumed in 1918 and continued into the 1920s. The last apartment building that was constructed, adjacent to Joplin's business district, was the 48 unit Mayflower in 1928. After the war individual incomes increased and cities began to experience a shift in population as people migrated away from the central city business districts. The automobile heavily influenced this phenomenon as wealthy individuals relocated their residence to the edge of the city limits and commute by car to their places of employment.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Jackson, p. 252.

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### Verbal Boundary Description

The North Forty-four (44) feet of lot numbered One Hundred Nineteen (119), in the Original Town of Murphysburg, now a part of the City of Joplin, Jasper County, Missouri, according to the recorded plat thereof.

### Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Zahn Apartments, Joplin, Jasper County, Missouri.

### Key to Photographs

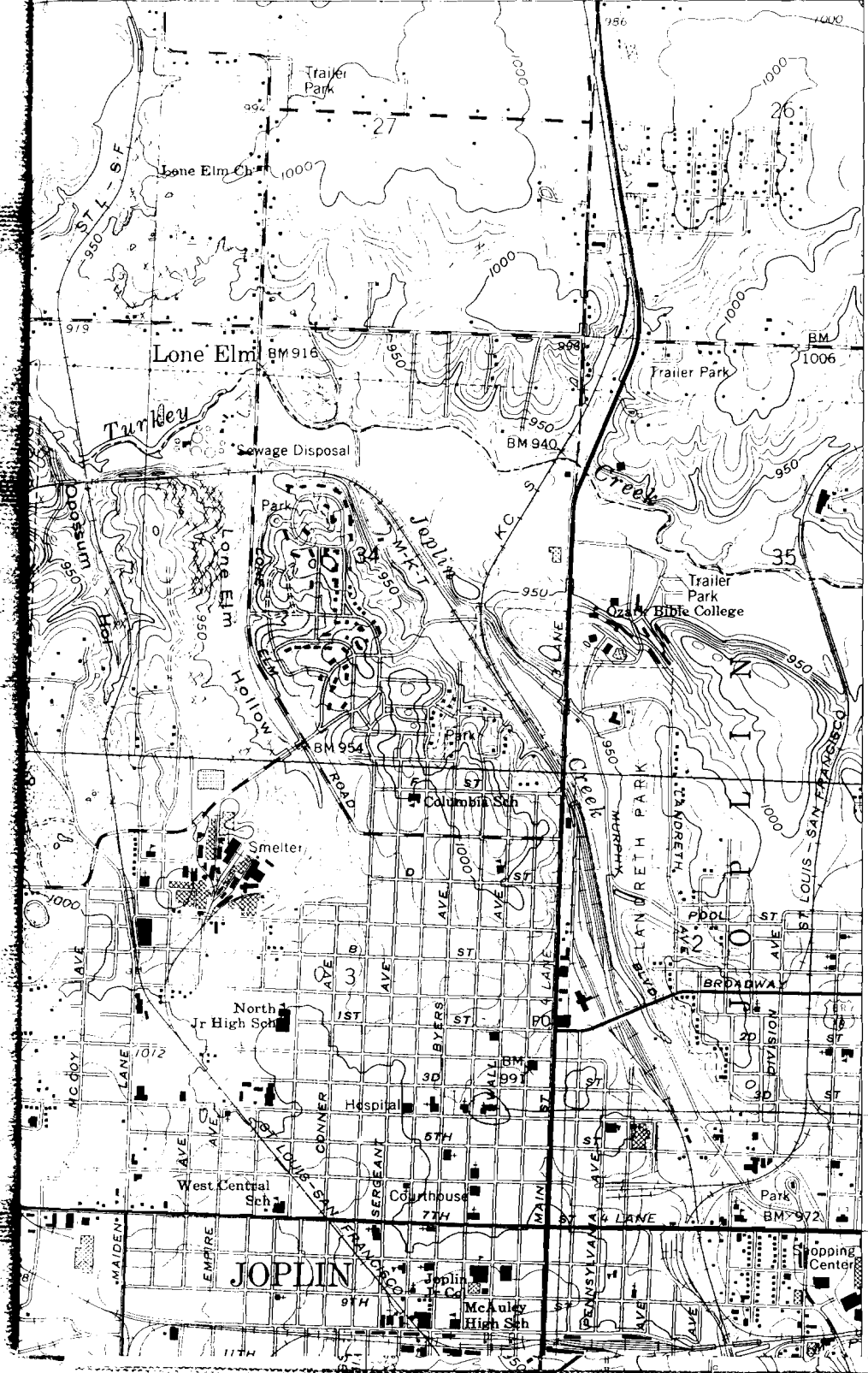
Len Fohn, photographer, December 2005.

1. Main or east façade; view facing west
2. Detail of main or east façade; view facing west
3. Main and north facades; view facing southwest
4. Main and south facades; view facing northwest
5. South façade; view facing northeast
6. Detail of south façade; view facing north, northwest
7. West façade; view facing east
8. Third floor interior; view facing northeast
9. Fifth floor interior; view facing southwest

JOPLIN WEST QUADRANGLE  
 MISSOURI-KANSAS  
 7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

7188 III NW  
 (WEBB CITY)

490 000 FEET (M.C.) 365 94°30' 37°07'30"



4109  
 4108  
 4107  
 340 000 FEET (M.C.)  
 T 28 N  
 T 27 N  
 4106  
 7 MI. TO INTERSTATE 44

Gowley 1st District  
 Jasper County, MO  
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 UTM Reference from  
 Arc GIS software



