

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Gilbreath-McLorn Residence

AND/OR COMMON

McLorn House, Gilbreath Homestead

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

225 North Owenby

\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

La Plata

\_\_ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

#9 - Hon. Harold L. Volkmer

STATE

Missouri

CODE

29

COUNTY

Macon

CODE

121

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

\_\_ DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

\_\_ STRUCTURE

\_\_ SITE

\_\_ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

\_\_ PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

\_\_ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

\_\_ IN PROCESS

\_\_ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

\_\_ OCCUPIED

☒ UNOCCUPIED

\_\_ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED

\_\_ YES: UNRESTRICTED

\_\_ NO

## PRESENT USE

\_\_ AGRICULTURE

\_\_ COMMERCIAL

\_\_ EDUCATIONAL

\_\_ ENTERTAINMENT

\_\_ GOVERNMENT

\_\_ INDUSTRIAL

\_\_ MILITARY

\_\_ MUSEUM

\_\_ PARK

☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

\_\_ RELIGIOUS

\_\_ SCIENTIFIC

\_\_ TRANSPORTATION

\_\_ OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Olive Gilbreath McLorn

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Kirksville Manor Care 1705 East LaHarpe

CITY, TOWN

Kirksville

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Missouri 63501

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Macon County Courthouse, Recorder of Deeds

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Macon

STATE

Missouri

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Missouri State Historical Survey

DATE

1978

\_\_ FEDERAL ☒ STATE \_\_ COUNTY \_\_ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDSOffice of Historic Preservation  
Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 176

CITY, TOWN

Jefferson City

STATE

Missouri 65101

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT

☒ GOOD

☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED

☐ RUINS

☐ UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED

☒ ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE

☐ MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Gilbreath-McLorn Residence, 225 North Owenby, La Plata, Missouri is a two-story house with full attic and basement which is constructed in a restrained Queen Anne style with Eastlake detailing. The plan of the house rambles visually, but the room arrangement is actually compact and well organized.

#### Overall dimensions.

The east and west facades each measure approximately fifty-four feet in length. The north facade measures twenty-two feet and the south, sixty-six feet.

#### Construction Materials and colors.

The house, which faces east, is an exposed frame structure supported by a raised basement and a foundation of red-glazed and painted brick. The frame is exposed on the exterior around windows, doors, corners and bays and is painted white throughout. Elsewhere, the frame is covered by yellow clapboarding and ornamental, trilobed, wooden shingles. The house is capped by a sharply angled, green, shingled roof which features six gables of various sizes and an octagonal tower at its northeast corner.

#### Important design features.

### EXTERIOR

The major facade of the Gilbreath-McLorn residence faces east. Here, an encircling veranda hugs the house. It is entered on the northeast by a flight of double-wide stairs, beneath a projecting gable. This gable is ornamented with curved pseudo-half-timbering, trilobed shingle imbrications, jig-sawed floral motives on the vergeboard, and a raking cornice which features a cyma recta molding. A finial in the form of an urn filled with flowers and trilobed decorative ridging complete the adornment of this gable. The turned posts, which support this pedimented area and the sloping roof which covers the veranda, are embellished with Eastlake scrolled brackets and engaged, turned half-spindles.

At the first floor level, the east facade features a three-sided bay just south of the main entrance. The windows here, as well as those on the first tower level (the stair landing between the first and second floors), are double-hung sash with transoms leaded in both lozenge and floral patterns. The three-sided bay extends through the second story where it includes a bracketed double-hung window and a balconet with spindle balusters at the southwest corner. The remaining windows at this level also have double-hung sash. The attic gable decoration here is similar to that on the projecting porch gable with the addition of two double-hung sash windows which have their upper sash leaded in a lozenge pattern. This window pair is grouped beneath an oversized, molded pediment. Above, the gable is topped by a griffin and spear finial, an original glass-bulbed lightning rod and decorative trilobed ridging.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
	<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES	BUILDER/ARCHITECT
1896	William T. Gilbreath

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Gilbreath-McLorn residence, 225 North Owenby, is a significant example of the Queen Anne architectural style in La Plata, Missouri. In addition, as the home of the locally prominent Gilbreath family, this structure provided the ambiance for the development of the personality and world view of Olive Gilbreath McLorn, adventurer, novelist and journalist.

The Gilbreath family, Hugh, his wife, Flora, and their son, John, originally migrated to Cooper County, Missouri from Tennessee in 1826. Hugh bought large tracts of land which he farmed until his death in 1851. After his marriage to Martha Clayton, formerly of Maryland, in February, 1840, John Gilbreath moved to Macon County in 1841 and established a farm near La Plata.<sup>1</sup> Here, on March 26, 1849, William T. Gilbreath was born. He grew up to be a prominent local stock raiser and farmer and the first president of the La Plata Savings Bank. In 1871 George married Sarah Gates, the daughter of George Gates, one of the pioneer settlers of Macon County.<sup>2</sup> Their daughter, Olive May, was born in 1883. She grew up in La Plata where, due to the influence of family friends, she became fascinated with Russia and Russian literature. She attended Wellesley College in Massachusetts and received a M.A. from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor.<sup>3</sup>

After college, Olive Gilbreath left to travel in the Far East, visiting friends and relatives on an odyssey which carried her to China, Japan and Russia at a time when these countries were just beginning their often violent emergence from feudalism into the twentieth century. These turbulent times served as a backdrop for both her documentary and her romantic, fictional writings.

Olive Gilbreath was caravanning in Mongolia, beyond the Great Wall of China, when World War I broke out in 1914. A railroad ticket for Russia was already in her pocket, but American officials in China refused to allow her passage. The Russian minister, however, allowed her to cross Siberia to Petersburg via the trans-Siberian railroad in the private car of a Russian General and his aid-de-camp. This journey lasted sixteen days and was highlighted by the many luxuries attendant upon her position both as an American woman and the personal guest of the General. Upon her arrival in Petersburg in 1915, where she lived for a time with her godmother while working at the American Hospital there, she was witness to the last days of the brilliant, extravagant life of the nobility of Czarist Russia which centered around the theater, ballet and an elegant, bejeweled and brocaded aristocratic society.

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. "Along the Trail With the Editor," Asia Magazine, XXIX (June, 1929), p. 443.
2. Baumann, Richard, Curator of Renaissance and Modern Art, Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri. Personal interview, February 8, 1978.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 1/2 (21,672 square feet)

QUADRANGLE NAME La Plata, Mo.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 543275 4430470

B         

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Eastern section of lots 1, 2 and 3 of City Block #1, McDayitt Addition measuring 126' along Owenby Street and 172' along Colbern Street.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Noelle Soren, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Office of Historic Preservation, Dept. of Natural Resources

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 176

DATE

TELEPHONE

314/751-4096

CITY OR TOWN

Jefferson City

STATE

Missouri 65101

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE X

LOCAL   

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

Director, Department of Natural Resources, and  
State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

GILBREATH-MCLORN RESIDENCE

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1

North of the three-sided bay, at the second floor level on the east facade, a small rectangular porch is nestled next to the octagonal tower. The porch features a spindle balustrade and a hip roof supported by turned posts and carved brackets. It is topped by another griffin and spear finial and additional decorative ribbing. The doorway here, which enters the second floor hall, is ornamented with trilobed floral motives.

The octagonal tower at the northeast corner completes the east facade. At its second floor level it has double hung windows. At its attic level, it is capped by a steeply sloping tent roof which is concave in profile, and a decorative kantharos finial. This roof is supported by a cyma recta molding and a series of Eastlake scroll brackets.

The north facade of the Gilbreath-McLorn Residence is similar in design to the east. It features, at the first floor level, a complex, leaded glass window just west of the tower. Atop this sits a double-hung window, capped by a tiny gable which is decorated in a manner similar to the main gable on the east facade. This gabled area marks the location of the interior staircase which is partly within the tower. To the west, a three-sided bay projects which is capped by a gable designed in a manner similar to that of the bay on the east facade. In addition, on the north facade the red-glazed brick walls of the basement are visible as well as several of the bipaned basement awning windows. Also in evidence is the interior brick chimney which is decorated with four corbel courses near its summit.

At the west end of the house, two additional hip-roofed porches are located. Each is furnished with a single door into the house which is reached in each case by a double-wide stairway. These stairways are ornamented with spindle balusters, turned posts and Eastlake scrolled brackets which are carved rather than incised. Also visible on this side are several lattice-work porch bases and one bipaned basement window. The west gable is plainer than the others. It is embellished only with jig-sawed vergeboard decoration, ridging and a griffin and spear finial.

The south facade shares the encircling veranda which began on the east. In addition, it features a single-wide stairway of its own leading to a single doorway into the living room at the veranda's west end. The projecting attic gable here, over another three-sided bay, is identical in decoration to that on the east facade.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

GILBREATH-McLORN RESIDENCE

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

INTERIOR

The Gilbreath-McLorn residence is entered through a set of double, molded and paneled wooden doors which lead from the east veranda to the entry hall.

First Floor. The main floor of the house includes five rooms plus an entry hall and a pantry. The entry hall adjoins the sitting room to the south and the dining room to the west. To the north, the curving, oak staircase rises to the first landing which serves as a small sitting room within the northeast tower. A spindle balustrade adorns this stair. Its oak newel post is embellished with carved, tendrilous garlands, and pearl and egg and dart moldings. Capping this post is an elaborate bronze torchere with a spherical central globe and five peach-colored, tear-drop pendants. At the tower landing, the stairs turn to the west and rise six steps, then turn south and rise six more to the second floor. Beneath these rises, to the west side of the entrance hall, at the first floor level, a small nook is located which is decorated by the ornate, leaded glass window described on the north facade. The walls of the main hall are covered with Lincrusta which is stamped with a delicate art nouveau ivy design. Below, these walls are protected by oak wainscotting and paneling beneath the windows.

Directly south of the main hall, the sitting room occupies the area of the three-sided bay on the east facade. It is linked to the hall on the north and the living room on the west by two sets of double-wide, paneled, sliding oak doors. The use of oak wainscotting is continued here, and oak moldings in a simple profile surround the doors and windows.

The living room carries on the decorative scheme which began in the sitting room. In addition, it is furnished with a carved oak fireplace and mantel in its west wall which is embellished with five, floreated bosses and a decorative iron gate.

To the west, the living room is linked by a single door to a small study at the extreme west end of the house. This room is linked by a door to the rear southwest porch.

To the north, another set of double-wide, paneled, sliding oak doors leads from the living room to the dining room. This room is nearly identical in form and appearance to the sitting room, and it occupies the three-sided bay of the north facade. In its west wall another fireplace is located which has an elaborate cherry-wood mantel. It is hand carved and Neo-Classical in style. Its Ionic columns flank an ornamental grate and support a frieze which is embellished with a rinceau and gargoye of acanthus, capped by an egg and dart molding. In the same wall, a

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

GILBREATH-MCLORN RESIDENCE

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 3

single, transomed door leads to the kitchen where a stairway to the second floor and another to the basement are to be found. This room is linked by a single door in its west wall to the northwest back porch which has been closed in and now serves as a pantry.

The circle of the first floor is completed by the single, transomed and paneled door in the east wall of the dining room which links it to the entry hall.

When ascending the stairway to the second floor, one first reaches the first floor landing, within the octagonal tower. Located here is a small sunroom that features a wooden bench, built-in below window level and adorned with a scrolled arm rest and a series of egg and dart moldings.

Second Floor. On the second story, the northeast tower is the site of another sunroom. The entrance to this is provided beneath an elaborate Victorian treillage with jig-sawed curves and turned spindle members. In the east wall, a single door opens onto the second floor porch. Beginning at this door, a corridor runs the length of the house from the east to the west off of which open the master bedroom, a bath, a library, a staircase to the attic and another to the kitchen and two additional bedrooms. The woodwork on this floor is entirely of cypress and the flooring is of pine. The moldings and wainscotting are similar in style to those of the first floor.

Attic. The unfinished attic covers the entire house including the tower. Its floor is boarded in white pine.

Basement. The basement, which is reached by a stair descending from the kitchen, is constructed of the same red glazed and painted brick as the exterior foundation. Bricks are also used in the floor where they have been laid in herringbone bond. The basement, which covers the area of the main structure excluding the porches, is half-raised and pierced at intervals by small, bipaned, glass awning windows. In addition, it is the location of the furnace.

**ALTERATIONS**

The kitchen and baths of the Gilbreath-McLorn residence were modernized in the early twentieth century. At an unknown date, the northwest porch was closed up to make a large kitchen pantry.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

<b>FOR NPS USE ONLY</b>
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

GILBREATH-MCLORN RESIDENCE

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 4

**SITE**

The house is located on a spacious wooded lot at the corner of Owenby and Colbern Streets in the small town of La Plata, Missouri. The area is residential and is the site of several other old homes, one of them similar in style to the Gilbreath-McLorn residence. To the east and south several schools and churches are located. The McLorn property has one outbuilding, a small shed at the west end of the lot which is built of tongue and groove paneling and has two paneled doors in its east side.

**STATUS**

The Gilbreath-McLorn residence is not immediately threatened, though it is now vacant. The owner has moved to a nursing home in the near-by town of Kirksville. She is very concerned about the future of her house and is considering bequeathing it to some interested party or organization so that it will not be destroyed or altered.

**FOOTNOTES**

1. Lincrusta was a common wall and ceiling covering used in the late nineteenth century. It was made from a heavy fabric which was coated with thickened and colored linseed oil and stamped with decorative designs. This information is taken from Webster's Third International Dictionary (Springfield: G & C. Merriam Co., 1966), p. 1314.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

GILBREATH-MCLORN RESIDENCE

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

This trip, and its staggering effect on a sophisticated yet impressionable young woman, formed the basis of the first novel by Olive Gilbreath, *Miss Amerikanka*, which was originally serialized in *Harper's Magazine* in 1918. Her trans-Siberian journey and the days immediately following in Petersburg and Moscow are described in a romantic, diaristic style. The cast of characters includes a fierce Russian General and his cultured and distinguished aid-de-camp. M. Dimitri Novinsky, Madame Novinska, the mother of Dimitri and matriarch of a great Russian noble family and Madame Berentskaya, a friend of Mme. Novinska, a scion of Russian nobility and an intimate of Tolstoi and translator of his works.<sup>4</sup> The unabashed wonder which prompts the thoughts and dreams of the main character reveals that Gilbreath, at this point in her life, is highly sophisticated from an educational point of view, yet full of naive wonder at "the nomadic turbulence, thinly veneered by civilization"<sup>5</sup> which she sees around her and the many facets of simple existence which are common knowledge to cultures nearer to nature and its vagaries than our own. Note her reflections while observing fellow travelers on the trans-Siberian railroad:

"The Russians pulled fur around them and shivered in their greatcoats. Too many centuries had winds from glaciers blown in their faces, and laid deep in their memory a race-terror, while I, with a less bitter ancestral memory, breathed greedily of the freedom and the ecstasy of space! Sky, black velvet and crystal; stars, pendant points of light and the plain a luminous blue-white reflector; horses with high-arched collars; furs shaggily blotching the snow. A magnificent fantasie; it rushed upon me, an engulfing sea. It rocked my ears like a storm, the brilliant, the savage North! I looked to the horizons; in every direction spread (sic) these terrible white distances....."<sup>6</sup>

The experiences of Olive Gilbreath served to point up to her the shallowness of cosmopolitan American life, making her a precursor to the expatriates of the "lost generation" of the 1920's. She wrote:

"America is like a design leading out from the center and leaving one restless and dissatisfied. But Russia, thrown constantly back upon herself, has built up a soul to pit against the world....The West has laid ingenious hands upon the trappings, the substitutes and the imitations, all the anodynes of life, but I cannot but feel that Russia has the quivering reality"...."Never again shall I be free from Russia...It flashes various colors through me, this modern Byzantium; sometimes I feel positively iridescent with the radiance--gorgeous, barbaric--unleashing everything that the Anglo-Saxon has trained in me....Sometimes this fragrant melancholy old land calls to something strange and deep within me. A strange white peace fills my soul; at the heart

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

GILBREATH-MCLORN RESIDENCE

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

of the turbulence lies infinite repose...I feel all the hopes and loves of all the ages breaking about me and the beauty and pathos of life become poignant, unendurable...And yet it draws me...Like death, Russia throws everything into greater significance...Beside it, placid English life flowing between its lush banks seems spiritually flat and commonplace."<sup>7</sup>

Even in this early work, Gilbreath's gift for evocative description is apparent, as for example, in this scene on Easter eve in Moscow:

"I was just crossing the snowy square in front of St. Isaac's, returning from the light Mass before the Easter service, when suddenly..Down the aisle of columns, out from among the dusky pillars of the great cathedral, in twos and threes--or sometimes alone--came figures-gravely intent little figures, each carefully shielding his candle with tiny cupped hands or twists of white paper, the yellow candle light flaring up into faces as cherubic as Reynold's "Age of Innocence" but weighted with all the sweet solemnity of Miltonic angels; children bearing home sacred candles lighted at the altar for their own Lares and Penates. Out from among the inscrutable shadows and down the steps of the vast cathedral they flickered and floated in twos and threes, and still farther down the canyons of the dark streets, the spirit lights wavering and gleaming like myriad will-o'-the-wisps, phantom ships floating on a phantom tide. It reminded me of nothing so much as of the night of ancestor worship in the East, when lotus lanterns burning for the dead are set afloat on river and bay and far out to sea..<sup>8</sup>

Later, the author's wonderment at Russian life turned to humanitarian concern, as her writings from 1917 to 1920 reveal. In 1918, when she was living in Vladivostok and acting as an interpreter for the American Red Cross, she was asked by the American Army to act as an interpreter for a contingent of Czech soldiers who had deserted to the allies. They were being sent to France by the eastern route, via the trans-Siberian railroad to Vladivostok and by a boat from there to Europe, after the Moscow Soviet had promised them safe passage. A small incident and exchange of words, however, between a Russian and one of the Czechs led to a virtual declaration of war between the Red Guard and the Czech contingent. With the train as their only fortress, the Czechs fought their way to Vladivostok, winning each village from the Red Guard as they went so that they might leave the train to find food and water. Just as Vladivostok and the sea came into view, however, the Czechs were ordered back to the front by their own government. Their struggles provided the backdrop for two documentary articles - "Siberian Notebook", by William V. Duncan, edited by Olive Gilbreath, published in the Yale Review of October, 1919 and "Men of Bohemia" by Gilbreath which appeared in Harper's Magazine in January, 1919.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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DATE ENTERED

GILBREATH-MCLORN RESIDENCE

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

In the later writings of Olive Gilbreath, her style has matured considerably and has lost the gloss of naivet  of her earlier works. Her second novel, If Today Have No Tomorrow, is a poignant tale of the effect of the Russian Revolution on an aristocratic Russian family after February, 1917 and through the bloody Bolshevik October Revolution the same year. Today, her skillfully depicted scenes call to mind images from the novel Dr. Zhivago and the movie of the same name, though Gilbreath's was written over twenty years earlier than Pasternak's famous work.<sup>9</sup> A realism pervades her novel, and it is clear throughout that her sympathies lie with the side of cultured, civilized intelligence, be it aristocratic or peasant bred. Near the climax of the novel, Michael Acar, a Russian nobleman and the novel's main character, has fled Moscow and the Bolsheviks via the trans-Siberian railroad in search of a friend who has been swallowed up by the Revolution. The train stops briefly in a small station at dawn:

"When the car was emptied, the figure huddled in the coat let himself down the steps, and looked about in the pale sunshine for the station. It was a small cupolaed wooden structure such as is seen in hundreds along the trans-Siberian. Making his way through the groups of medieval faces on the platform, he stopped at the door of the waiting room, took a deep breath, and then resolutely opened the door.

Here, evidently was no knowledge of the dawn. Under the miasma, piles of bodies lay like mountain ranges in convulsion. The tiny oil lamp burning before an ikon tried to pierce the atmosphere in vain. The sleepers were piled four deep. From the slimy floor, the dead had not yet been removed. In one corner, under a tattered coat thrown carelessly down, a pair of boots stuck out stiffly. Picking his way carefully, the grey figure searched slowly as he searched at every station among this rootless, drifting Inferno.

On every wooden seat and on the floor, packed with greasy newspaper bundles and littered with sunflower seeds, heavy limbs were rolled together like logs under a suffocating blanket which raised, shifted, and settled again. It was cold, so cold that the breaths stood for a moment before they dissolved in the fetid air. A rusty stove stood in one corner, but the fire had gone out and there was no fuel.

Tea-kettles, chunks of fat, loaves of black bread, and piles of rags--on windows, floors, benches. And everywhere guarding the debris, the backwash of the struggle--apathetic bundles, their heads drawn into the oblivion of their shawls or sheepskins like turtles; drear hordes, all reduced to sameness, all adrift, without hope, without joy, without despair. Flooding across the Urals before the Bolsheviks, uncaring pestilence breeders, stopping neither to die nor to bury their dead; cryptic hooded figures, their eyes turned away from the future."<sup>10</sup>

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

GILBREATH-McLORN RESIDENCE

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 4

In "Where Yellow Rules White" from the February, 1929 issue of Harper's Magazine, Gilbreath's skill in documentary writing is again utilized in a description of life in Harbin, China (Manchuria) where, in the late 1920's, a society of aristocratic Russian emigrés survived which struggled to keep up grand pretences even though its members were reduced to begging in the streets. This poignant description is made more so with the realization that Gilbreath had observed the apex of Russian aristocratic society as well as this its nadir.

In 1934 Gilbreath was married in London to Daniel David McLorn, an Englishman who was serving as the Deputy-Director General to the Postal Bank for all China. On July 7, 1937 an unofficial war between China and Japan began. Since David McLorn had been largely instrumental in establishing many small banks all over China which gave the peasants low rates of interest against the rapacious rates of the moneylenders, he refused to leave when war broke out. He realized that the Japanese would ultimately destroy the banks, but he hoped that his staying would keep them open longer. This was accomplished, but he paid the penalty of two and one half years in a Japanese concentration camp near Shanghai. As an American, Olive Gilbreath McLorn could have returned to America, but she chose to remain with her husband during his internment.

In the late 1940's both returned to the United States and La Plata, Missouri. Mr. McLorn died in June, 1974. Mrs. McLorn still lives in a nursing home in near-by Kirksville, Missouri. Her home, with all its Queen Anne grandure and eccentricities, stands as a memorial to the continuing saga of her life.<sup>12</sup>

The survey of Missouri's historic sites is based on the selection of sites as they relate to theme studies in Missouri History as outlined in "Missouri's State Historic Preservation Plan." The Gilbreath-McLorn Residence, therefore, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as an example of the themes of "Fine Arts and Humanities" and "Architecture".

FOOTNOTES

1. History of Randolph and Macon Counties, Missouri (St. Louis: National Historical Co., 1884), pp. 952-953.
2. Ibid., pp. 953-955.
3. Olive Gilbreath McLorn, "Olive Gilbreath McLorn" (unpublished reminiscence, La Plata, Missouri, 1975), p. 1.

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GILBREATH-MCLORN RESIDENCE

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 5

4. It is not surprising that this figure was based on an actual person since Mrs. McLorn was a friend to several great figures in the arts. Among them was Alexander Jakovleff, a well-known Russian artist who was born in Petersburg in 1887. He studied art at the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts and was the leader of the group of young artists of his day in Petrograd. After serving in the army of the Czar and traveling extensively in the Far East, he settled in Paris in 1919 as an emigré, since, as an aristocrat, he dared not return to Russia. He was best known as the official artist for the Citroen Expeditions to Asia and Africa in 1924 and 1930. These expeditions were undertaken to prove the feasibility of auto transport across uncharted regions. In the end, however, they came to be recognized as one of the most outstanding anthropological adventures of their day. Jakovleff became famous for his colorful, linear drawings and paintings depicting ethnic types and scenes from the journey. In 1935, he was appointed head of the Department of Painting at the Boston Museum School of Art. His works have been exhibited in London (1920), Paris (1925), Boston (1937) and at the Carnegie Institute and the National Geographic Society in Washington, D.C. (1934 and 1938). He died of cancer in 1938. Recently, his works have been sold through such prestigious firms as Sotheby's in London. In 1919, Gilbreath took Jakovleff behind the scenes at the Chinese Theater in Peking to observe and draw. Some of the resulting drawings and paintings were recently donated by her to the Museum of Art and Archaeology at the University of Missouri in Columbia. See Richard Baumann, Curator of Renaissance and Modern Art, Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri, personal interview, February 8, 1978, Gropper Art Gallery, Alexander Jakovleff: An Exhibit of Fifty Drawings and Paintings (Cambridge: Gropper Art Gallery, 1972), pp. 1-10 and Chu-Chaia-Chien, The Chinese Theater, trans. by James A. Graham, illustrated by Alexander Jakovleff (London: John Lane, 1922).
5. Olive Gilbreath, "Miss Amerikanka," Harper's Magazine, 136 (February-April, 1918), 506.
6. Ibid., p. 377.
7. Ibid., pp. 715-717.
8. Ibid., pp. 519-520.
9. Dr. Zhivago was written in the early 1950's and announced for publication in Russia in 1954, but subsequently withdrawn. It had already been published in Italy, however, and won its author the 1958 Nobel Prize for Literature. See

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 6

9. Boris Pasternak, Dr. Zhivago (New York: New American Library - Pantheon Books, 1958). This novel had the advantage of having been written by a Russian who had suffered through the experience of a thoroughly Russian existence and who could express his feelings about that existence in incredibly poetic terms. Nevertheless, whether through coincidence, the empathy of shared cultural experiences or something else, the images evoked in Gilbreath's novel, the snow bound plains of Siberia, the interminable train rides and the ravages of the Revolution are, at times, astonishingly similar to Pasternak's.
10. Olive Gilbreath, If Today Have No Tomorrow (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1926), pp. 329-331.
11. Olive Gilbreath McLorn, "Olive Gilbreath McLorn", p. 2.
12. In a personal interview on January 20, 1978, Mrs. McLorn stated that she is in the process of composing her memoirs with the aid of a tape recorder.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

3. Chu-Chaia-Chien, The Chinese Theater. Translated by James A. Graham, illustrated by Alexander Jakovleff. London: John Lane, 1922.
4. General History of Macon County. Chicago: Henry Taylor and Co., 1910.
5. Gropper Art Gallery. Alexander Jakovleff: An Exhibit of Fifty Drawings and Paintings. Cambridge: Gropper Art Gallery, 1972.
6. History of Randolph and Macon Counties, Missouri. St. Louis: National Historical Co., 1884.
7. McLorn, Olive Gilbreath. Personal interview, January 20, 1978.
8. ----- "Olive Gilbreath McLorn". Unpublished reminiscence, La Plata, Missouri, 1975.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF OLIVE GILBREATH MCLORN

1918 -

"Beyond the Great Wall of China," Asia Magazine, XVIII (January, 1918), pp. 8-16.

"Black Earth Russia," Yale Review, VII (January, 1918), pp. 382-395.

"Miss Amerikanka," Harper's Magazine, 136 (February-April, 1918), pp. 372-387, 503-520, 714-727.

"Coolie Ship," Asia Magazine, XVIII (June, 1918), pp. 459-464.

1919 -

"Men of Bohemia," Harper's Magazine, 138 (January, 1919), pp. 247-255.

"Economic Aid for Ivan Ivanovitch," Asia Magazine, XIX (February, 1919), 127-132.

"Sick Man of Siberia," Asia Magazine XIX (June, 1919), 546-552.

"Siberian Notebook," Yale Review, IX (October, 1919), pp. 154-184.

1920 -

"Kungur Treasure," Asia Magazine, XX (February, 1920), pp. 218-220.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

1926 -

If Today Have No Tomorrow. New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1926.

1928 -

"China's Covered Wagon," Harper's Magazine, 157 (April-December, 1928),  
pp. 467-477, 526.

1929 -

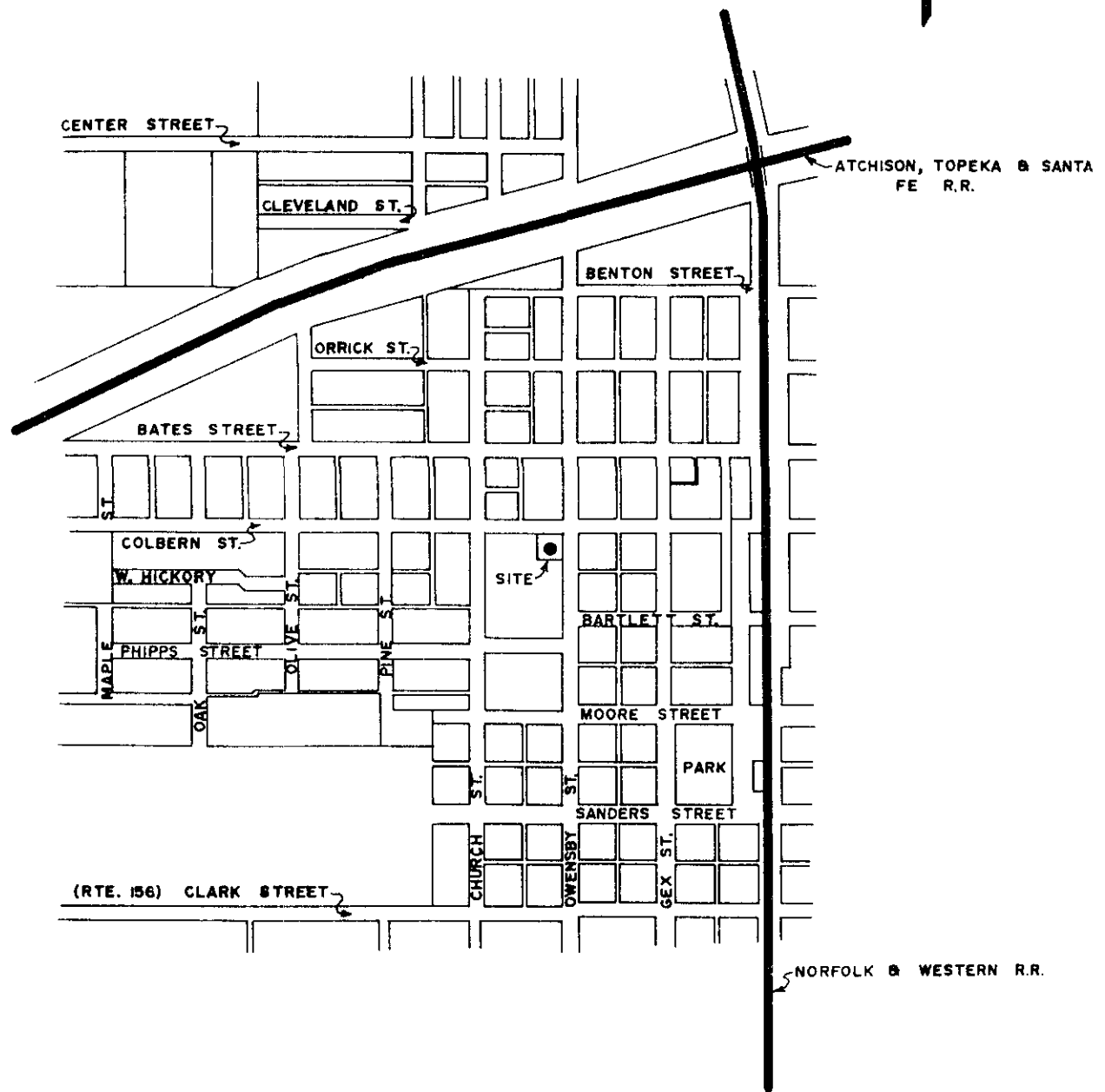
"Where Yellow Rules White," Harper's Magazine, 158 (February, 1929), 367-374.

"Tibetan Banner," Asia Magazine, XXIX (June, 1929), 474-477.

"Ware the Pitcher Plant," Asia Magazine, XXIX (July, 1929), pp. 524-531.



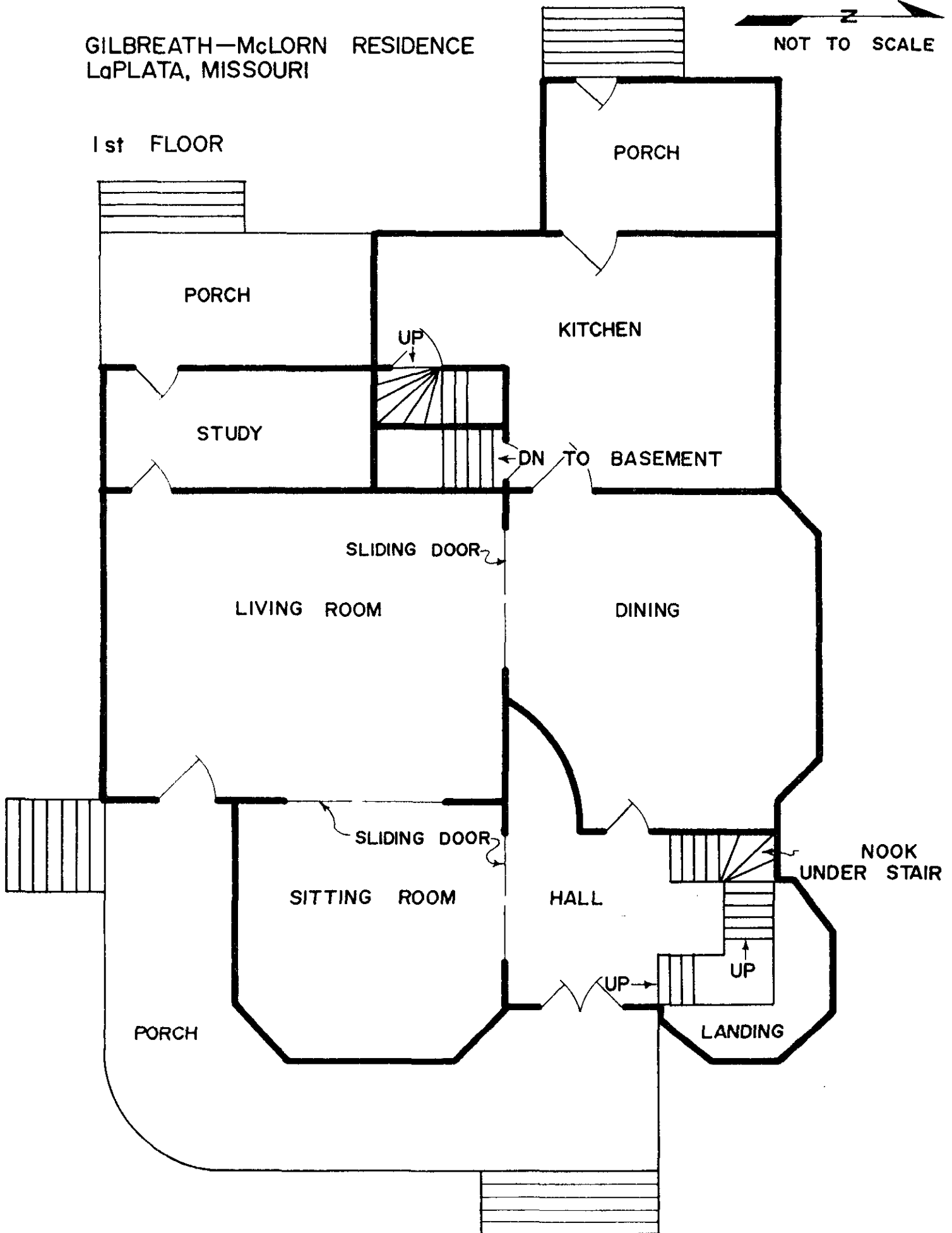
SITE PLAN MAP  
ILBREATH-McLORN RESIDENCE  
LaPLATA, MISSOURI



GILBREATH—McLORN RESIDENCE  
LaPLATA, MISSOURI

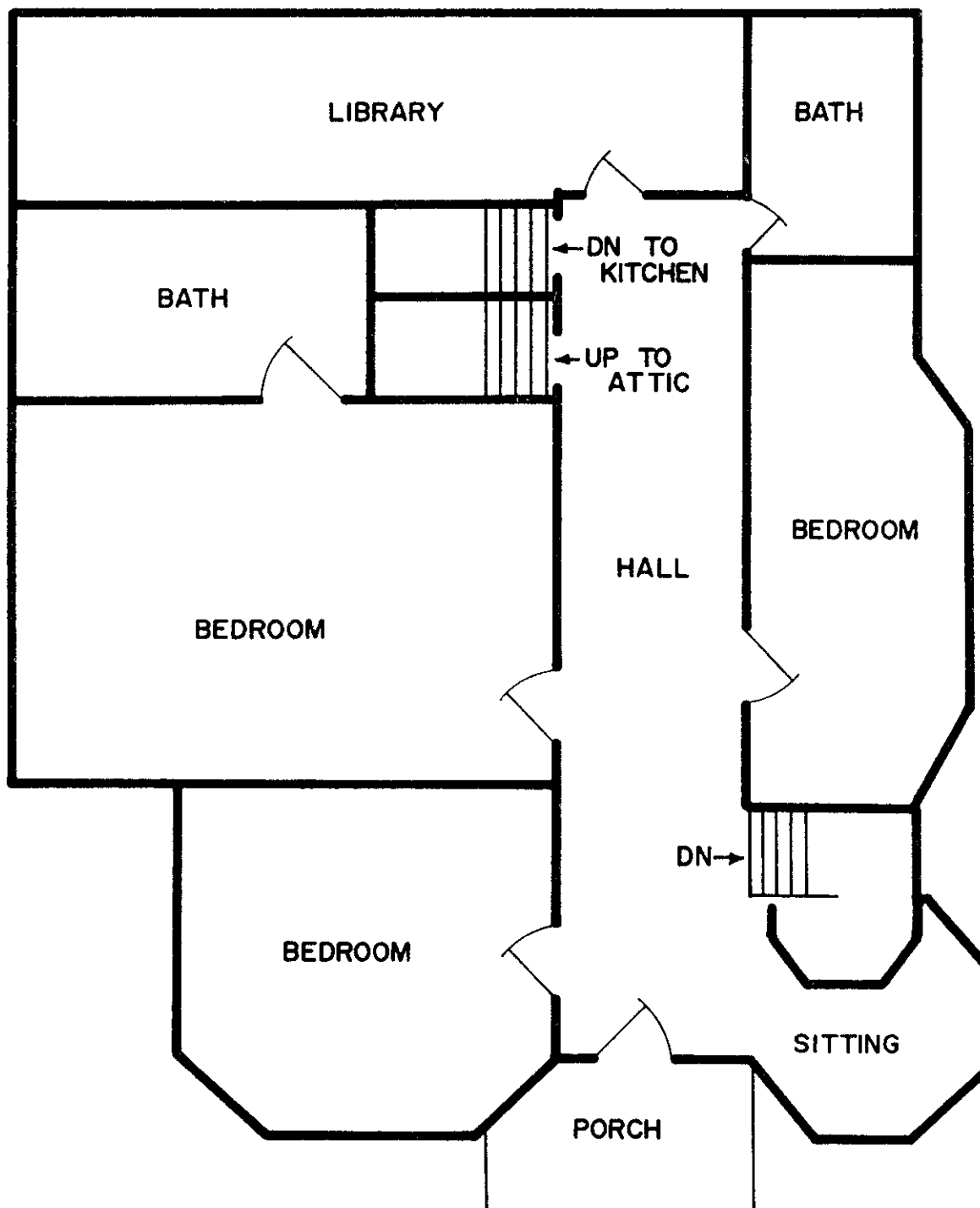
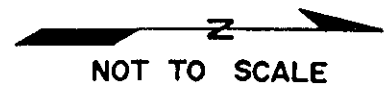
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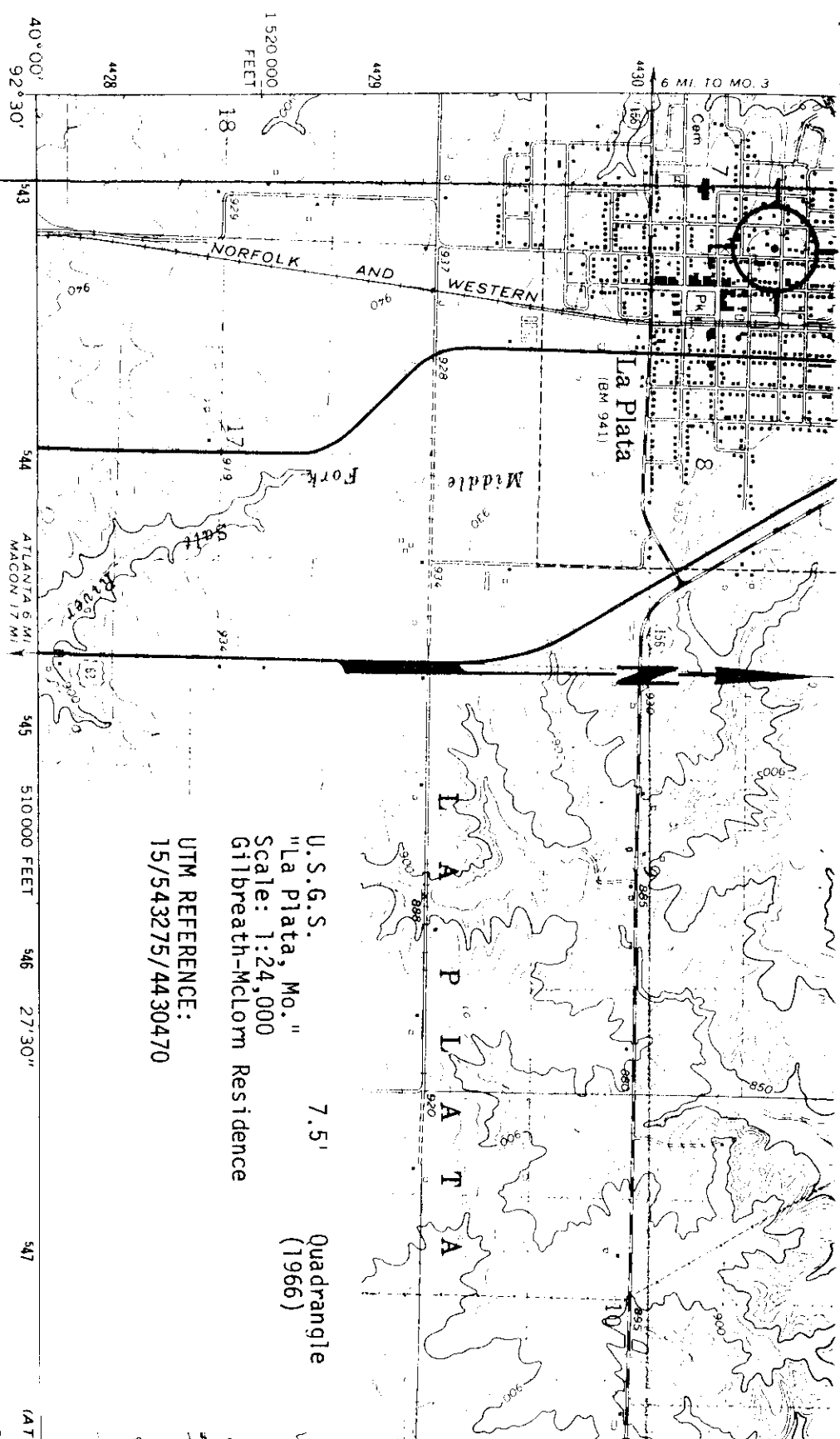
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GILBREATH—McLORN RESIDENCE  
LaPLATA, MISSOURI

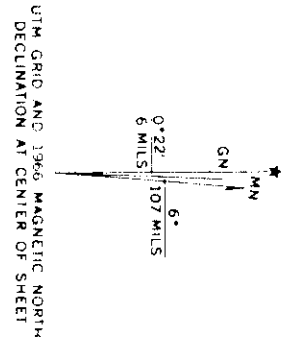
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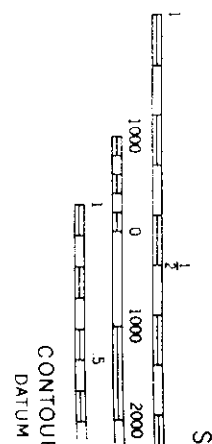


(ELMER 1 62 500)  
1463

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS and USCGS  
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial  
photographs taken 1964. Field checked 1966  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Missouri coordinate system, central zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks.  
Zone 15, shown in blue  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where  
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



U.S.G.S.  
"La Plata, Mo."  
Scale: 1:24,000  
Gilbreath-McLorn Residence  
UTM REFERENCE:  
15/543275/4430470  
7.5'  
Quadrangle  
(1966)



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DE  
AND BY THE MISSOURI GEOL  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC

#319

GILBREATH-MCLOM HOUSE

COUNTY:

Macon

LOCATION:

225 North Owenby  
LaPlata

OWNER:

Olive Gilbreath McLorn

ADDRESS:

Kirksville Manor Care, 1705 E. LaHarpe  
Kirksville

DATE APPROVED BY A.C.:

April 28, 1978

DATE SENT TO D.C.:

May 18, 1978

DATE OF REC. IN D.C.:

May 22, 1978

DATE PLACED ON NATIONAL REGISTER:

November 16, 1978

DATE CERTIFICATE AWARDED  
(AND PRESENTOR):

July 10, 1979  
Keith Graf

DATE FILE REVIEWED

The Gilbreath-McLorn residence, 225 North Owenby, is a significant example of the Queen Anne architectural style in La Plata, Missouri. In addition, as the home of the locally prominent Gilbreath family, this structure provided the ambience for the development of the personality and world view of Olive Gilbreath McLorn, adventurer, novelist and journalist.

GILBREATH-McLORN RESIDENCE #1

La Plata, Missouri

Photographer: Noelle Soren  
January, 1978

Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box  
176, Jefferson City, Mo. 65101  
East facade. Note the octagonal tower,  
encircling veranda and three-sided projecting  
bay.





GILBREATH-McLORN RESIDENCE #2

La Plata, Missouri

Photographer: Dr. Leon Karel  
April, 1976

Neg. Loc.: Northeast Missouri State University,  
Kirksville, Mo. 63501

East facade, detail. Note the decorative  
ridging, the urn and griffin and spear finials,  
Eastlake scroll brackets and imbrications  
with pseudo-half-timbering.



GILBREATH-McLORN RESIDENCE

#3

La Plata, Missouri

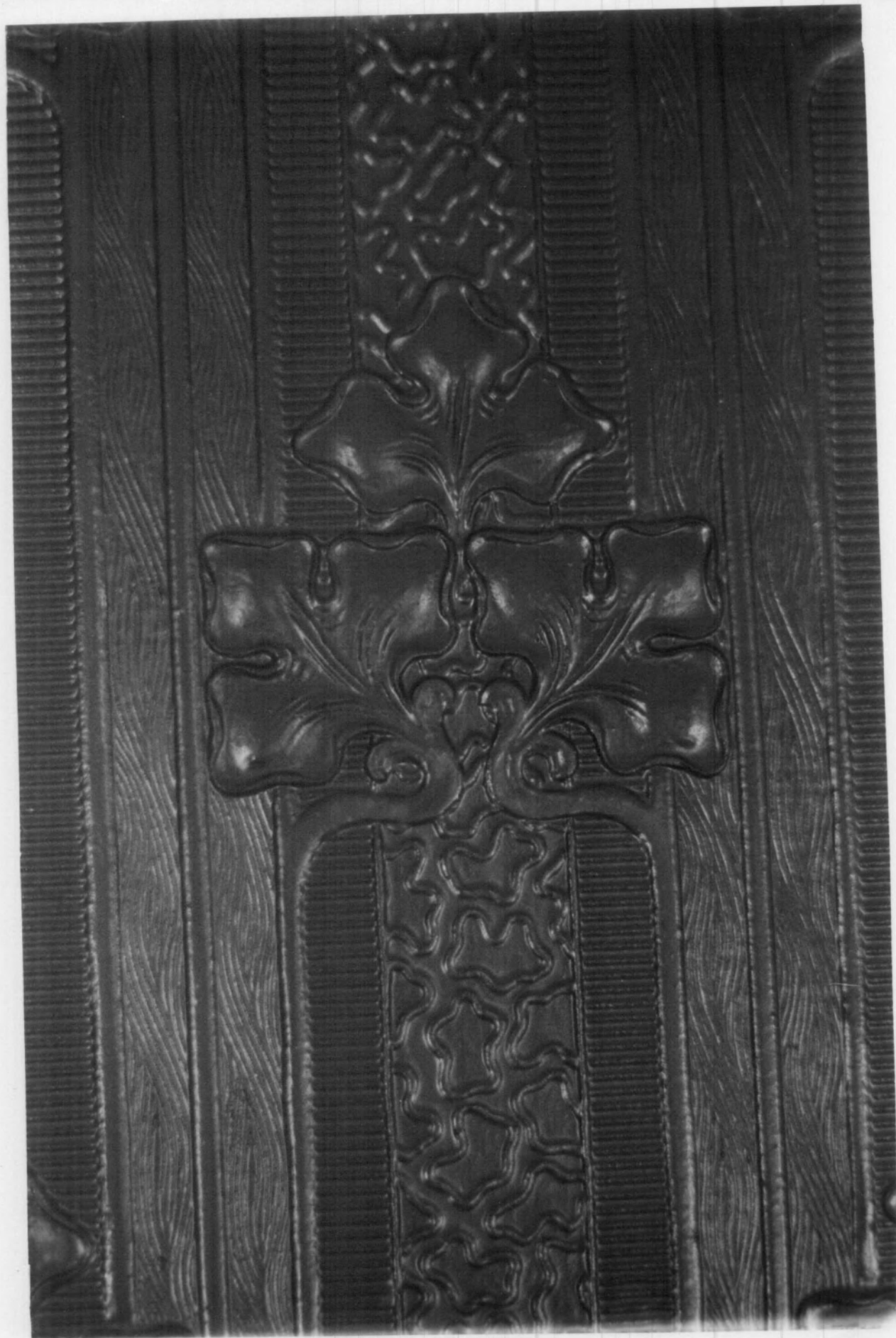
Photographer: Noelle Soren

January, 1978

Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box

176, Jefferson City, Mo. 65101

Interior, entry hall, Lincrusta wall covering,  
detail.



GILBREATH-McLORN RESIDENCE

#4

La Plata, Missouri

Photographer: Dr. Leon Karel

April, 1976

Neg. Loc.: Northeastern Missouri State

University, Kirksville, Mo. 63501

Interior, dining room, fireplace in west wall.



GILBREATH-McLORN RESIDENCE

#5

La Plata, Missouri

Photographer: Noelle Soren

January, 1978

Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box  
176, Jefferson City, Mo. 65101.

Interior, dining room, fireplace in west  
wall, carved mantel with acanthus rinceau  
and grotesque.



