

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Mckoon, John, House

other names/site number Johnson House

2. Location

street & number 500 West Monroe Street [n/a] not for publication

city or town La Grange [n/a] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Lewis code 111 zip code 63448

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 [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO

30 April 1999
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

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date

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 see continuation sheet [].

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	3 building
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	0 sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0 structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	0	0 objects
		1	3 total

Name of related multiple property listing.

Historic Resources of La Grange, Missouri

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

Current Functions

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

MID-19TH CENTURY: Greek Revival

Other: I-house

see continuation sheet [].

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet [x]

Materials

foundation Limestone

walls Brick

roof asphalt

other wood

see continuation sheet [].

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

ARCHITECTURE

Periods of Significance

ca. 1857- ca. 1876

Significant Dates

ca. 1857

ca. 1876

Significant Person(s)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographic References

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

A. Zone 15	Easting 627790	Northing 443360	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Debbie Sheals
organization Private Consultant date December 11, 1998
street & number 406 West Broadway telephone 573-874-3779
city or town Columbia state Missouri zip code 65203

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

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

Additional Items

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

Property Owner

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

name Melvin and Jane Illa
street & number 840 County Road telephone (573) 655-4306
city or town Taylor state Missouri zip code 63471

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Section 7 Page 1

McKoon, John, House
Lewis County, Missouri
Historic Resources of La Grange, Missouri, MPS

Summary: The John McKoon house is located at 500 W. Monroe Street in La Grange, Lewis County, Missouri. It is a representative example of the I-house property type in La Grange. (See MPS cover document "Historic Resources of La Grange, Missouri: Antebellum Affluence: 1795-1861.) The five bay Greek Revival style house was built ca. 1857, with load bearing brick walls. The facade is distinguished by an original two story portico with square wood columns and a simple wide cornice with delicately scaled dentil molding. A matching cornice runs along the entire roofline on the front part of the house. The original doors and six-over-six windows are all in place and in fair to good condition, as is nearly all interior woodwork. Woodwork in all rooms in the front portion of the house features shouldered trim with high quality false graining.

The house has a large rear ell, also of brick, which is 1-1/2 stories tall. The rear ell was built in two stages; rooms closest to the front of the house appear to be original, while the back part of the ell was added sometime before 1877. There are three frame outbuildings on the property, two of which date to the early part of the 20th century. A small one bay garage is near the back lot line, and a larger combination garage and storage shed sits just east of the rear corner of the house. There is also a large low frame shop building at the rear lot line built in the early 1970s. The house is a contributing building; all outbuildings are non-contributing. The house, which is in fair to poor physical condition, has seen no major alterations since the rear ell was completed, and exhibits a very high level of integrity, both inside and out. The period of significance for the property runs from the first phase of construction, ca. 1857 to the completion of the rear ell, ca. 1876.

Elaboration: The McKoon house occupies a level lot on the north edge of Washington Park, which is one of the town's earliest public parks. The house sits fairly close to the sidewalk on a heavily overgrown lot, facing south to the park. It is flanked by brick dwellings of similar age and size; both neighboring houses are two story brick dwellings built in the mid-1800s. The house is located at the intersection of Monroe Street, which it faces, and Fifth Street, which runs along the east edge of the property.

There are three frame outbuildings on the property, two of which are well over fifty years old. At the northeast (rear) corner of the lot is a small, one bay, frame garage that faces Fifth Street. (See Photo 4.) It measures roughly 15 feet by 20 feet, and has a gable roof and vertical board walls. A second outbuilding sits closer to the house, just opposite the back door. (See Photo 5.) That building is approximately the same size and shape, and also has an open porch along the west wall, which is closest to the house. It has board and batten wall sheathing and a gable roof that faces Monroe Street. A garage door faces north to a small driveway leading to Fifth Street, and a standard residential door opens toward the house. Although both of those buildings appear to date to the early twentieth century or before, they were built outside the period of significance and are therefore non-contributing. A third outbuilding is located at the northwest corner of the property. (See Photo 6.) It is a large, low, frame workshop that was built in the early 1970s.

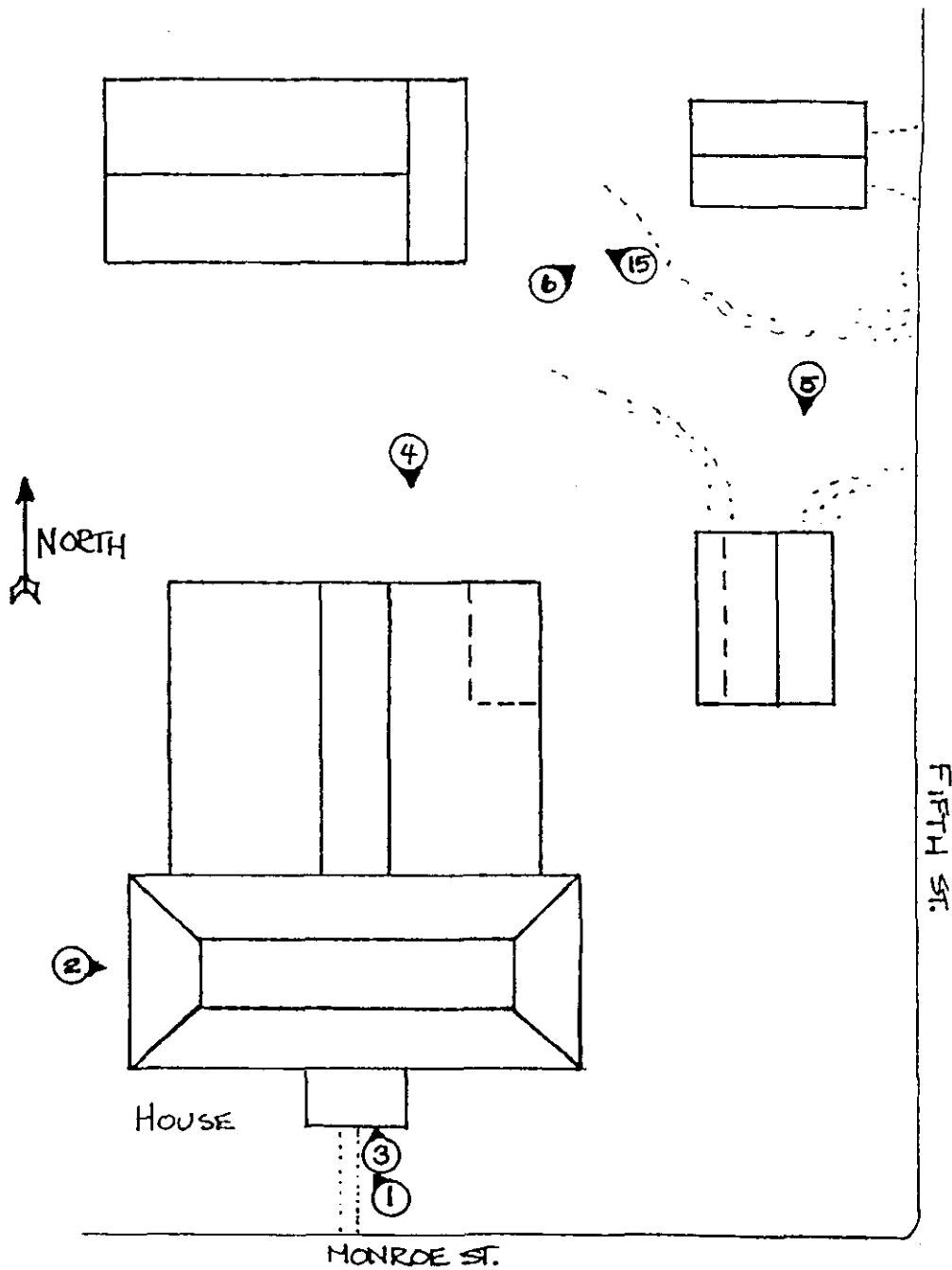
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McKoon, John, House
Lewis County, Missouri
Historic Resources of La Grange, Missouri, MPS

Figure One. Site Plan. Drawn by Debbie Sheals.



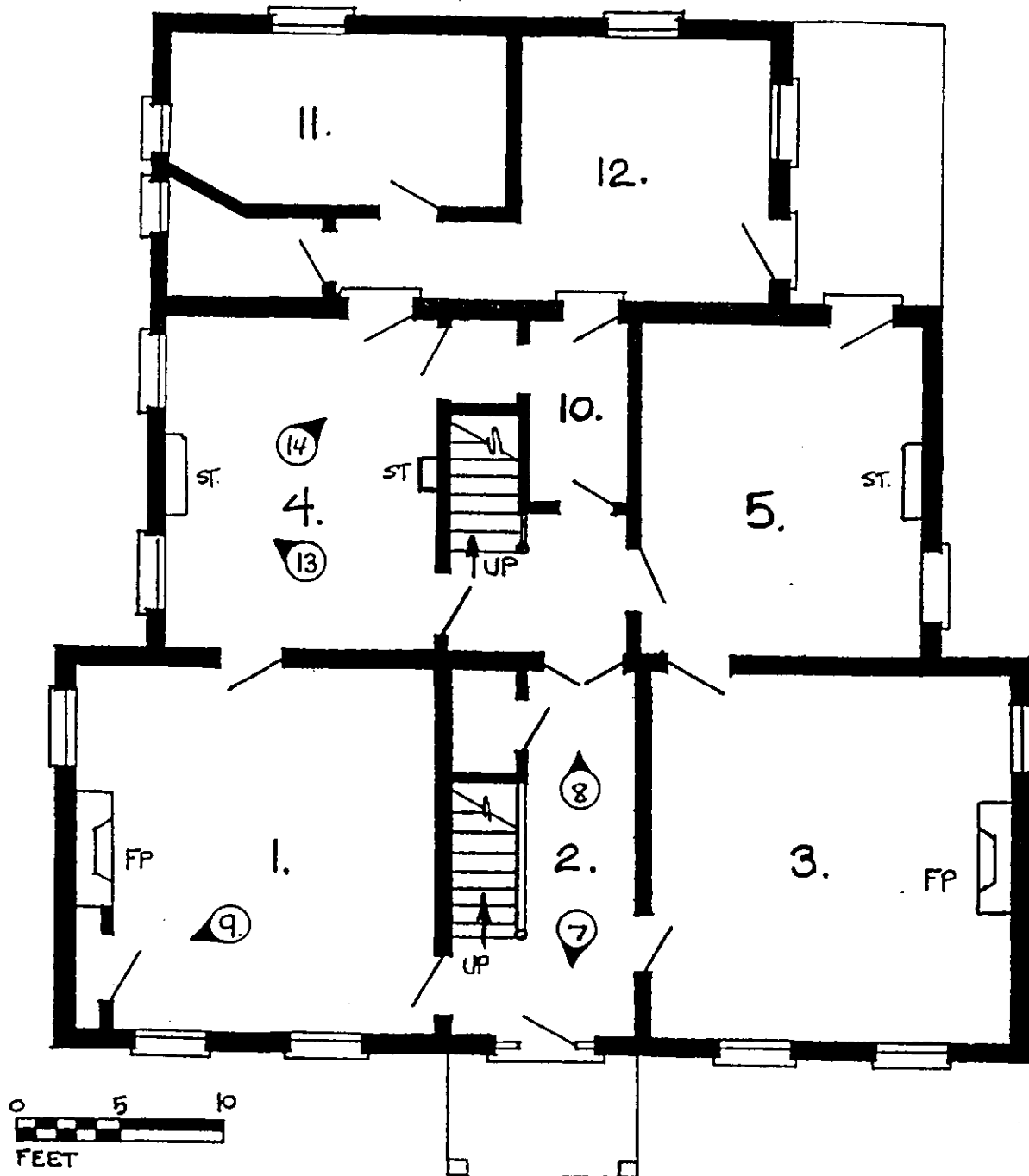
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Figure Two. Ground Floor Plan. Drawn by Debbie Sheals and Becky Snider.



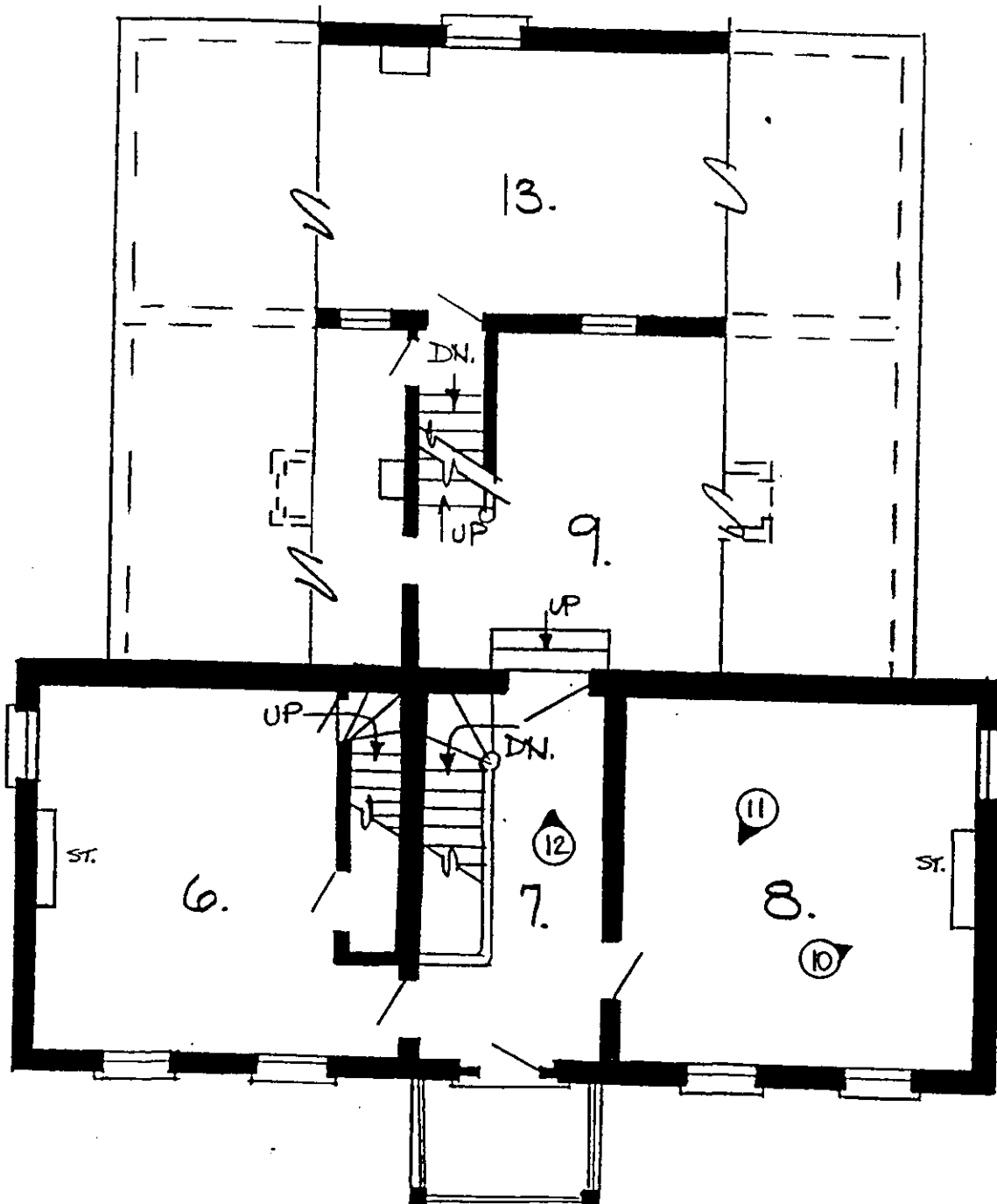
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Figure Three. Second Floor Plan. Drawn by Debbie Sheals and Becky Snider.



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It has a gable roof and garage doors that open eastward. It is a non-contributing building.

The house itself is one of the largest and most intact antebellum I-houses in La Grange. The five bay house is two stories tall, with a two level portico over the central bay. (See Photo 1.) The portico has a flat roof, and square columns that support a wide cornice that also runs along the roofline of the front part of the house. (See Photo 3.) The cornice is gently curved, with a band of small dentils near the bottom edge. Both the porch and cornice are in very poor condition. A diamond-patterned wooden balustrade runs between the portico columns at the second floor. The portico shelters a large two panel door at each level. The doorways are nearly identical. Each door has a horizontal division to create two large panels, and each is topped by a four light transom and flanked by simple square pilasters.

The house has load bearing brick walls and a stone foundation. The front section is covered with a low hip roof with a flat top, and the rear ell has a flattened gable roof with a steeper pitch. There are corbeled brick chimneys at each outside wall of the front, and three different chimneys in the rear ell. All windows have six-over-six double hung sash with very narrow muntin bars, and all appear to be original. Most windows have operable louvered shutters that are early or original.

A close look at construction details reveals that the builder gave special attention to the more publicly visible parts of the house. The bricks of the front wall are laid with a running bond, while all secondary wall surfaces are built with the stronger and more frequently found common bond. Also, the windows of the front part of the house have tooled stone sills and lintels, while most of those in the rear have wooden sills and wooden or arched rowlock headers. (This attention to the facade is also found on other brick houses of the period, and it is not unusual to find antebellum houses in the area that have a running bond and stone lintels only on the front wall.)

The rear part of the house was apparently built in two stages. The rooms closest to the front on both floors appear to be original, while the very rear rooms were added by 1876. There is a seam in the brickwork on the west wall between those two parts of the house, and the front halls both have obviously original interior doors that lead to the rear ell. (See Photos 8 and 12.) Also, the mantel in the west ground floor room of the ell (Room 4, see Floorplan), is nearly identical to those found in the front part of the house. (See Photos 10 and 13.) Finally, the rear doorways in Rooms 4 and 10 have stone sills that appear to have been made for exterior use, and there are two square casement windows still in the wall between Rooms 9 and 13 on the second floor of the ell.

The rear ell appears to have reached its present form by 1877, as the rear window in the current kitchen (Room 12) has the following scratched into the glass in cursive handwriting: "John Quintyn March 1877." The east window in that same room bears other writing, including one mostly illegible inscription that starts "W W..." and, printed more clearly, "Emma Glo." The latter is credited to Emma Glover, likely the daughter of John Glover who owned the house from 1865 until the 1880s. It is a fair guess that young Miss Glover was interrupted by a parent before she could complete her inscription.

The interior of the house is impressive and remarkably intact. (See Figures Two and Three.) The front part of the building has a central-hall plan with large rooms and high ceilings. The ceilings of the ground floor are 10 feet 3 inches high, while those on the second floor rise to a full 11 feet 6 inches. The

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formal stair hall is 8-1/2 feet wide upstairs and down, and the flanking rooms are each roughly 18 feet square.

A wide set of double doors in the ground floor hall leads to the rear hall, which opens onto the other rooms as well as to the second of four stairways found in the house. The second set of stairs leads up directly to the back room of the second floor (Room 13), which is set apart from the rest of the house. The back hall next to the stairs (Room 10) was converted to a bathroom around mid-century.

The second floor hall also has a back door; it leads to the middle portion of the rear ell, which is largely unfinished. That center room contains the third set of stairs, which have turned walnut balusters. The stairway originally led to the roof of the ell; the roof opening has been sealed. The use of the rooftop for an observation deck may explain the use of the flattened roofs found on both parts of the house. Both roofs offer a sweeping view of the nearby Mississippi River.

The final set of stairs is located in the west bedroom of the second floor. The stairway there leads up to the main roof. It is a small winding enclosed stairway. One of the few original closets in the house is tucked into the space beneath those stairs. (See Figure Three.)

The interior woodwork is intact and in good condition throughout the house, and the millwork of the front rooms all have what appears to be the original finish. The hand grained doors and trim simulate two different woods. The ground floor woodwork has a dark walnut or mahogany pattern, while the upper rooms feature intricately rendered "bird's eye maple." All door and window openings in the front rooms, even the door to and from the unfinished attic space, have well-crafted Greek Revival style shouldered trim. (See Photos 7, 9, 11, and 12.) Most of those door and window surrounds exhibit the further refinement of side trim tapered slightly inward at the top. The simpler woodwork of the rear rooms is also intact, and mostly painted white.

The doors throughout the front part of the house are original and well crafted, the most notable of which is in the west front room, (Room 1) leading to a small closet or cupboard next to the fireplace. That door, which opens onto a space that is not much more than 12 inches deep, measures a noteworthy 3 feet 6 inches by 8 feet 11 inches, not counting surrounding trim. (See Photo 9. Note the size of the door in relation to the 10 foot 3 inch ceiling.)

The windows are also of generous proportions. The front windows measure 3 feet 8 inches by 6 feet 6 inches, and with base panels and surrounding trim, the total window units are an imposing 5 feet 9 inches wide by 10 feet tall. The front rooms on both floors have mantels, as does the east room of the original ell (Room 4, see photos 10 and 13.) Many of those mantels appear to be merely ornamental, as there are more stove thimbles than open fireplaces. Nearly every room has original wide plank flooring that is in good condition.

The McKoon house has never functioned as anything except a single family residence, and it has seen remarkably few alterations in the 140 years it has been in existence. It is, however, in relatively poor physical condition. The lot is extremely overgrown, and vines and other foliage are causing significant damage to exterior woodwork. Leaks in the roof and built-in gutters have allowed water to run down an inside wall, and the floor joists of the east ground floor room are severely decayed. Interior finishes have, surprisingly, suffered little water damage; the leaks are very isolated. Also, the brick

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walls and general structural system remain in very good condition; there is little evidence of movement, and the house remains as plumb as the day the walls were finished.

It remains one of the most historically intact houses in La Grange today, and with the proper maintenance, should be around for another century. △

Statement of Significance

Summary: The John McKoon House, at 500 W. Monroe Street in La Grange, is significant under Criterion C, in the area of ARCHITECTURE. Constructed of brick ca. 1857, it stands as a remarkably intact example of a Greek Revival style antebellum I-house in La Grange. (See MPS cover document "Historic Resources of La Grange, Missouri: Ante-Bellum Resources of La Grange, ca. 1848-1861.") The large five bay house exemplifies the Central Bay I-house subtype identified in the above document. The basic vernacular I-house form of the McKoon house is embellished by Greek Revival detailing that includes shouldered trim around many interior openings, a full height portico with square columns, and a symmetrical facade with evenly spaced windows and doors topped with heavy straight lintels. The interior millwork of the house is exceptional, with high quality false graining and well-crafted doors and windows, all of which appear to be original. A ca. 1870s expansion of the rear ell, which is extremely common to the I-house form, had no impact upon the Greek Revival facade. The period of significance for the house runs from its construction ca. 1857 until ca. 1876, when the rear ell reached its current form. The McKoon House retains integrity of design, materials, workmanship, location, and setting.

Elaboration: The earliest known record of the house dates to August of 1858, when John McKoon advertised it for sale in the La Grange National American.¹ (See Figure Four). Census figures show that McKoon, who was born in Virginia around 1812, was living in La Grange in 1850, with his wife and three children. He was working as a merchant, and owned no real estate at that time. He apparently did well in the mercantile business, since by 1858 he owned both his residence by the park and another house on the bluff, which was offered for sale in the same ad. The tone of the ad indicates that he was planning to leave the area at that time, an assumption supported by his absence in the 1860 population census for the town.

¹ A check of deed records found no recorded deed for McKoon's purchase of the property, and it is not clear how long he lived there before putting the house up for sale.

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Figure Four.

Headline for classified ad from the La Grange National American, August 21, 1858.
(Entire text of ad is reproduced below.)

“fronting on 240 feet on Monroe street, running back 300 feet—said property is situated in the American part of the city having the public square on the opposite side: it is one of the highest and healthiest locations in the city, the House is two stories high, having 9 rooms, Entry, Pantry and Cook room, there is on said premises a good Brick Smoke House, a good wood-house, Stable, Barn, Crib and all other necessaries to make it a comfortable place and two of the very best Cisterns. I will sell the property together or divide it and sell the five lots that has the buildings on it—the above property will be sold very cheap. Also, a HOUSE & LOT immediately on the bluff, near Main Street, said lot is 60 by 150 feet.
John A. McKoon.”

The ad reveals that the house was originally the only dwelling on the block, and that there were a number of agricultural outbuildings associated with it at that time. The presence of a stable, barn and crib indicates that McKoon engaged in at least some small scale farming in addition to his business pursuits.

The east half of the block, with the house and outbuildings, was purchased by Jos. S. Todd in 1859, for \$5,000.² Although nothing is known of Todd, various historical accounts note that Dr. J. A. Hay, who lived one door west, was a long acquaintance of Abraham Lincoln's, leading to speculation that Todd was a relative of first lady Mary Todd Lincoln. Todd sold the property shortly after the Civil War to John M. Glover, who kept it into the 1880 or 1890s. Glover sold it to Cortez Johnson sometime before 1899, and it remained in the Johnson family well into the 20th century.

Tax records show that the parcel of land associated with the house had reached its current size by 1914. A 1914 tax assessment for Sue M. Johnson, the owner at the time, shows that she owned only lots 3, 4, and 5, on the block, the same lots associated with the house today. It is also likely that the two earlier outbuildings were built around that time as well. Therefore, the site and surroundings have

² Lewis County Deed Records, Lewis County Recorder's Office, Monticello, MO. Deed Book X, p. 286.

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changed very little since the early 1900s, and the house itself appears today very much as it did in the 1870s.

The McKoon house is a fine example of the central bay I-house property type, with refined Greek Revival styling, and an especially high level of integrity of design, materials, craftsmanship, setting and association. △

Sources.

Lewis County Deed Records, Lewis County Recorder's Office, Monticello, MO.

La Grange National American, August 21, 1858.

Sheals, Debbie. Inventory Forms and Summary Report, Architectural and Historical Survey: La Grange, Lewis County, Missouri. July 15, 1997. (On file with the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office, Jefferson City, MO.)

United States Census Records. Census Indexes and Population Schedules for Lewis County, 1850-1860.

(For additional bibliographic information, see MPS cover document "Historic Resources of La Grange, Missouri.)

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McKoon, John, House
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Verbal Boundary Description

All of Lots 3, 4, and 5, of Block 24 Wright and Shropshire's Addition to La Grange.

Boundary Justification

The current boundaries encompass all of the land associated with the house since before 1914, as well as all which is currently associated with the house and outbuildings.

Photographs

The following information is the same for all photographs:

McKoon, John, House
500 West Monroe St., La Grange

Lewis County, MO
Photos 1-6, and 15, Becky Snider; November, 1998
Photos 7-14, Debbie Sheals, August 1998
Negatives on file with Debbie Sheals, 406 W. Broadway, Columbia, MO

List of Photographs

See Figures 1-3 for indication of camera angles.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Facade, south elevation. | 9. Door to closet in front room, note size in relation to 10'-3" ceiling. |
| 2. West elevation, with rear ell. | 10. Mantel, second floor, east room. (Room 3.) |
| 3. Portico detail. | 11. Door and window, Room 3. |
| 4. Rear ell, north elevation. | 12. Second floor hall, door to rear ell. |
| 5. Outbuilding near house. | 13. Mantel, Room 4. |
| 6. Outbuilding near Fifth Street. | 14. Doors in Room 4. |
| 7. Interior, ground floor front door. | 15. Modern outbuilding. |
| 8. Ground floor hall doors to rear rooms. | |







