

# preservation **issues**

NEWS FOR THE PRESERVATION COMMUNITY

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

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## Jefferson City: An Architectural Biography

Jefferson City owes its existence to the 1822 decision by the first Missouri General Assembly to locate the permanent state capital on public land near the geographic center of the state. The legislative commission named the new town Jefferson in honor of the president who had acquired the vast western territory called the Louisiana Purchase and of which Missouri was a part.

The townsite, "Howards Bluff" on the south bank of the Missouri River at Weirs Creek, was laid out by the commission in March 1822, and an initial offering of 1,000 building lots was made soon after. Thirty-one pioneer Jefferson City families had established homes in the new town by 1826 when the legislature first met in the new Capitol there.

Steamboats plying the Missouri River provided the principal means of transporting goods and people to the capital. Among the passengers were significant numbers of German immigrants attracted to the area south of the river by glowing reports of the area's rich resources. The German settlers brought with them many social and cultural traditions that were very different from those of the old-stock Americans from the Upper South who had first settled the town but had later migrated to the area north of the river.

Remnants of the ante-bellum commercial development of the city are found along the river's edge on State (originally Water) Street and reflect German architectural influences. These buildings include the ca 1835 Lohman Building, the Union Hotel built in the



1850s, and the Christopher Maus House, ca 1850, which, collectively, make up the Jefferson Landing State Historic Site owned by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, and the Israel Reed Building, ca 1840, on High Street, which is privately owned; all are survivors of and are directly related to the steamboat era.

By 1860, the Pacific railroad line had reached Jefferson City and enhanced the city's future commercial importance. During the Civil War (1860-1864), the capital was the focus of considerable military and political activity as the pro-Union German and "Yankee" population south of the river and the pro-Confederate slave holders to the north vied for control of the state. Following the war, several railroads — the Missouri Pacific; Missouri, Kansas, and Texas; and the Chicago and Alton —

*An early lithograph of Jefferson Landing shows the Lohman Building (foreground) with the second state Capitol on the bluff above.*

(See JEFFERSON CITY, Page 2)

### Inside

Frank B. Miller . . . . .	4
The Big, The Bad and The Ugly . . . . .	6
Italianate Commercial Buildings . . . . .	7
Dates . . . . .	8

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PHOTO CARL DEEG

*This photograph was taken looking east from the top of the Capitol dome in 1891. In the lower left of the photo is the Lohman Building (1), the Union Hotel (2) directly east and the Christopher Maus House (3) south on Jefferson Street. The Governor's Mansion (4) faces Madison Street directly across from the B. Gratz Brown (5) and other houses in the row. The (old) Supreme Court Building (6) and the Missouri Armory (7) are in the lower right of the photo. The street adjacent running east and west is now Capitol Avenue (8). The walls of the Missouri State Penitentiary (9) are barely visible on the horizon.*

**(JEFFERSON CITY, from Page 2)**

met at Jefferson City, and the Missouri Pacific Railroad established shops and yards there.

The town's physical growth reflected the influence of the river trade and the Missouri Pacific Railroad, which ran parallel to the river. Commercial development expanded southward from the historic boat landing at the Lohman Building, located at the foot of Jefferson Street, to the new ca 1898 Missouri Pacific depot at the foot of Monroe Street and concentrated on High Street.

Commercial buildings dating from the period just following the Civil War to approximately 1930 are clustered on a four-block stretch of High Street and form the core of Jefferson City's central business district or downtown. Most downtown buildings are two or three stories and constructed of brick. A variety of architectural styles are represented; the oldest, dating from the 1840s to early 1870s, exhibit the Germanic influences of the city's earliest buildings. They are more simply detailed than the later buildings and have side-gabled roofs; an excellent example of this style can be seen in the Israel Reed building at 201 East High St. Italianate styles are well represented, although many have had their elaborate cornices removed. The restored ca 1885 Lohman Opera House building, which has a replacement cornice, is a particularly fine example of the

Italianate style on High Street, as is the ca 1870s Monroe House (a former hotel and saloon with shops on the first floor).

Two good examples of the Victorian Gothic style exist in the Merchants Bank building, ca 1889, and a smaller commercial building at 300 East High Street. Romanesque Revival styles are well represented downtown; the magnificent ca 1895 Cole County Courthouse and the ca 1895 Burch-Berendzen Grocery Company across the street are good examples. Both buildings were designed by local architect Frank B. Miller.

The location of state government in Jefferson City has historically had and continues to have a profound impact on the growth and development of the city. While state government continued to grow during the period 1830-1911, building two Capitol buildings, an armory, two governor's residences, and various smaller buildings housing departments of state government, the city did not keep pace. The economic uncertainty caused by constant efforts on the part of other Missouri communities, most frequently Sedalia, to rob the city of the seat of state government, was noted by contemporary observers as a major obstacle to significant commercial investment in Jefferson City until 1911. Following the fire in 1911 that destroyed the second state Capitol, the issue was finally settled by the public decision to keep state government in Jefferson City, and a legislative appropri-

tion to build a new Capitol building there.

Jefferson City entered a "boom" period of economic growth following the decision. And the population of the town also increased dramatically, from 11,800 in 1910 to 25,000 in 1930. By the later date, most of the town's population lived outside of the original townsite in newer annexed suburbs east, west and south of downtown, while commercial and institutional buildings occupied the streets surrounding the Capitol. Today, there are few reminders of the many houses that once stood on those streets; most have been replaced by newer public or commercial buildings, some have been altered beyond recognition, and a few have been sacrificed for surface parking lots.

A few notable exceptions include the state-owned Maus House on Jefferson Street and a brick residential row on Madison Street that includes the ca 1871 [Governor] B. Gratz Brown House, a museum owned and operated by the Cole County Historical Society. The other residences in the row are used as professional offices. The oldest house in Jefferson City is probably the ca 1830 Parsons House on Jackson Street, which has a first story constructed of stone and a second story of log covered with clapboard.

Hotels and boarding houses have, since the 1830s, been an important part of the built environment of the city,

*(See JEFFERSON CITY, Page 8)*

*The Lohman Building (right), ca 1835, and Union Hotel (ca 1850) are part of the Jefferson Landing State Historic Site owned by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources*

*The Monroe House (below), a hotel and saloon, is shown in this drawing prior to its construction ca 1870s. The building currently houses the Monaco law firm.*

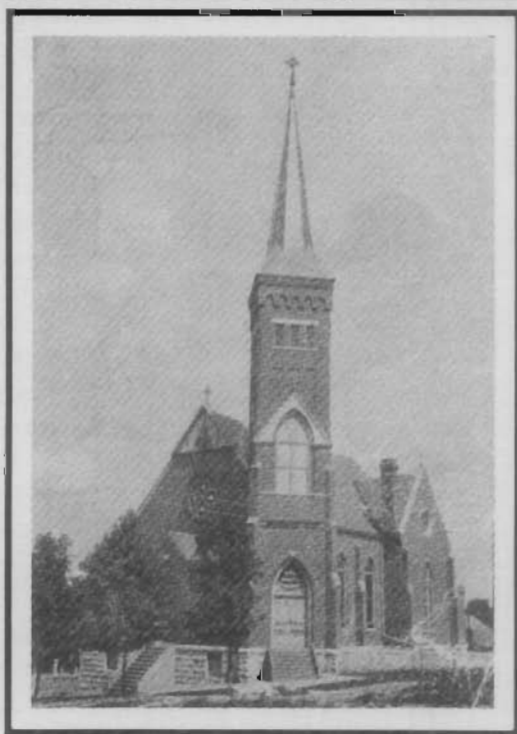


PHOTO LEE GILLEARD



PHOTO LEE GILLEARD

*The Missouri Pacific Depot, ca 1899, currently houses freight offices for the same railroad.*



*The German Evangelical Church on Washington Street is in the heart of the Dutchtown neighborhood, an area settled primarily by German immigrants.*



PHOTO KAREN GRACE

*Urban row houses built by Gov. B. Gratz Brown in 1871. The house on the left houses the Cole County Historical Society.*



# MISSOURI

## Architect and Builders

### Frank B. Miller (1859-1939)

**B**orn in St. Joseph, Frank Miller was the son of Sinclair Miller, a state representative from Buchanan County, and Margaret Basye, the daughter of a pioneer resident of Jefferson City, Alfred Basye. Because of the family's southern sympathies, they were forced to leave St. Joseph early in the Civil War to take refuge with a relative in Manchester, St. Louis County. Margaret Basye died there in 1866 and Frank, along with two brothers and a sister, was brought to Jefferson City to be reared by their aunt, "Elizabeth Basye who," Miller recalls, "undertook the responsibility of directing my life into the paths of rectitude; a path I fear I often strayed from greatly to her disconcertment. [I was] a rather wild but ... not a vicious kid."

The Miller children and their Aunt Elizabeth lived in what had been the Sunrise Hotel, owned and operated by their grandfather Basye but converted to a private residence by the time the Millers moved there. The two-story brick house was located at the "foot of Madison Street" directly across the street from the Governor's Mansion grounds. Miller's keen observations of the material and built environment and the social and political life of the city during his youth were recounted in the *History of Jefferson City* by James E. Ford published in 1915. His "birds-eye view" of the city in the decade following the Civil War is still treasured today by architectural and social historians of the period.

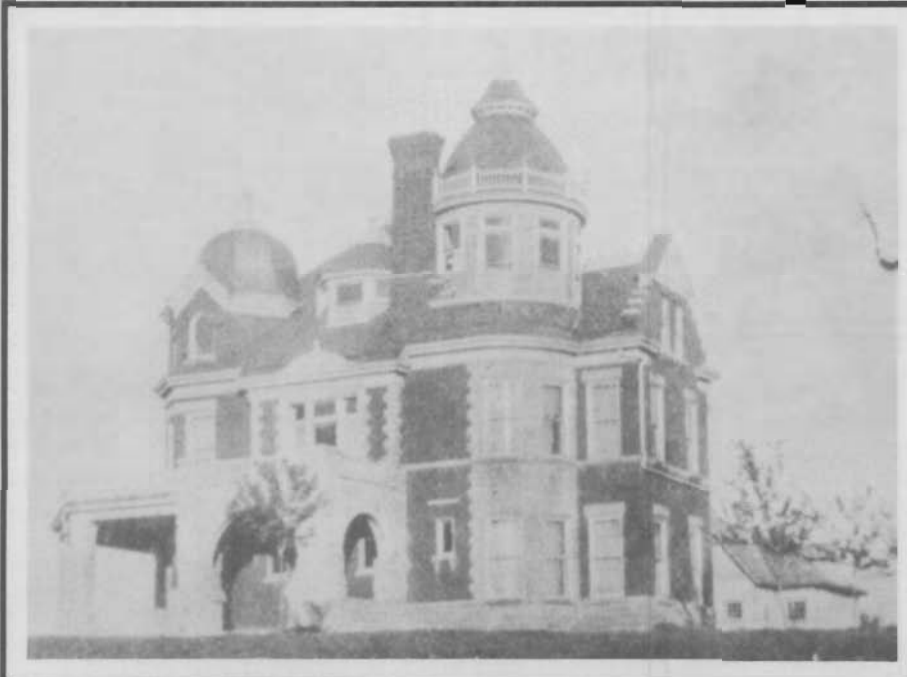
Miller's early proclivities for architectural form and

function led to his adult career as Jefferson City's most prolific architect. Many of the community's most prominent buildings still stand as monuments to his talent and include such landmarks as the Cole County Courthouse, the Central Bank building, the Carnegie Library building, the First Christian Church, the Merchants Bank building, St. Peter's School and the Burch-Berendzen Brothers Gro-

cery on East High Street. Residential designs by Miller include houses for Lawrence Price, Sam B. Cook, Ada Price, W.A. Dallmeyer, Houch McHenry, S.V. Bedford, G.E. Haigh, Louis Lohman (with Charles Opel), the Moerschel, Happy and Ramsey houses on Swifts Highway, and the Dewey and Nacy houses on Greenberry Road.

In 1924, Miller invented and patented an innova-

tive new type of school locker and moved to Kansas City to oversee its manufacture. The final years of his life were spent in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Silver Springs, Maryland, with his children. He died on January 21, 1939, in Silver Springs. Miller was survived by his wife Laura Dewey, whom he married in 1885, four children - H.S. Miller of Baltimore, Mrs. Ben F. Seward of Kansas City, Mrs. Elmer Freudenberg and Miss Frances Miller of Silver Springs, and seven grandchildren. Miller's remains were returned to Jefferson City for funeral services at Grace Episcopal Church. He is buried in Woodlawn Cemetery. - Karen Grace





*Houses designed by Miller included those for the McHenrys (top left), Nacys (below), Moerschels (middle left) and Dallmeyers (bottom left). Historic photo of the Dallmeyer House courtesy of the State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia. Contemporary photos, Lee Gilleard.*



*The Victorian Gothic-style Merchant's Bank Building (right), ca 1889, once housed a bank on the first floor; the Jefferson City Commercial Club shared the second floor with professional offices. The third floor housed two fraternal organizations. Photo courtesy of the State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia.*



# The Big, The Bad, The Ugly

Its residents refer to it as "The Big, the Bad, the Ugly." It's the Missouri State Penitentiary, just downriver seven blocks from the Missouri State Capitol in Jefferson City. The facilities housing these two institutions are at opposite ends of the architectural spectrum. The State Capitol building is stately, graceful, and considered one of the most beautiful of all state Capitol buildings. By contrast, the Missouri State Penitentiary (now the Jefferson City Correctional Center) is a lumbering behemoth comprised of old stone buildings and newer brick structures surrounded by grim, gray, barbed wire-topped stone walls that tower above East Capitol Avenue on its south side and the Missouri River on the north.

The penitentiary, established by an act of the state legislature in 1833, was designed by English-born John Haviland, whose credits included the castle-like structure of the Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia. Haviland's design for one-man cells allowed prisoners to be totally isolated from one another. The philosophy was to keep prisoners in solitary confinement so that by the time they were released, they would have reflected on their lives of crime and could go back into society as productive citizens.

A warden was appointed by the Missouri General Assembly and given full authority, with a three-man board of prison inspectors established to report to the governor. However, the office of warden was abolished and a lease system was set up in 1839. Management of the prison was turned over to a lessee who worked, fed, clothed, and guarded the inmates. The leasing venture was not a success; the practice of taking prisoners outside the prison walls to do contract work resulted in a number of escapes. Yielding to public pressure, allegations of abuse, mismanagement, and lack of profit, the lease system ended in 1853 and the office of warden was reestablished.

The lease system gave way to a contract system of prison labor with the warden serving as overseer. In 1862, a two-year contract employing between 100 and 300 prisoners was accepted. In 1870, the governor was authorized to order the warden to furnish over 25 inmates to aid in the construction of Lincoln Institute (now Lincoln University). Under the contract system, the state constructed factories within the prison and negotiated with the manufacturers who signed multi-year contracts. Between 1876 and 1884, the state constructed seven new factories, allowing the institution to reach its management goal of self-sufficiency.

By 1903, the prison complex contained five shoe factories with a collective output of 10,000 pairs of shoes daily, one of the largest saddletree factories in the world, and a workingmen's clothes factory. By the early 20th century, the penitentiary had become the "industrial heart of Jefferson City." Contained within its walls were the Star Clothing Company, the Economy Stay Company, and the No. 3 Harness Works. State-run businesses within the prison included a clothing factory, laundry, and carpenter shop. By 1905, the Missouri State Penitentiary had become the largest single institution of its kind in the United States.

The oldest building still in existence, Housing Unit #4, or "A" Hall (known as "Q" Hall prior to 1937), was built in 1868 during the term of the first officially appointed warden, Horace A. Swift, who took office Jan. 5, 1865, and served until March 3, 1869. The building is constructed of blocks of gray limestone, handhewn by prisoners. It contains 152 cells in four tiers, each cell having its own venti-

lation. During its 127-year history, "A" Hall has been used continuously as a housing unit for inmates. Its overall complexion has remained essentially the same during that period.

The building has survived serious riots and fires over the years, including a riot in 1873 during which \$250,000 in property was destroyed, and the 15-hour 1954 riot in "the bloodiest 47 acres in America:" five prisoners killed, other guards and inmates injured, seven major buildings destroyed, and three to five million dollars in property damage.

Historical accounts indicate that the Missouri State Penitentiary had more impact on the seat of state government remaining in Jefferson City than any other single factor. This was because the institution was the largest single employer in the area for many years. In addition to buildings within the prison complex, other structures associated with the prison were found outside its walls. These included not only commercial buildings, like factories and warehouses, but also homes, like the Warden's House, now restored and used by a local law firm, and other Victorian-era houses along East Capitol Avenue. — *Janet Musick*

*Janet Musick is an avocational historian and a native of Jefferson City.*



Located on the north side of the quadrangle in the upper prison yard stands "A" Hall, the oldest building still in existence.

PHOTO MARK SCHREIBER



# MISSOURI

## Historic Architecture

### Small-Scale Italianate Commercial Buildings ca 1840s-1880s

#### Identifying characteristics:

- Most are two or three stories in height with flat roofs.
- The first-story storefront is often iron; upper stories are masonry.
- Roof parapets on primary elevations are crowned by elaborate metal cornices dominated by large brackets. These brackets are uniformly present but exhibit a great variety of shapes and spacing. They may be arranged singly or in pairs and are placed on a deep trim band that may also often be elaborated with panels or moldings.
- Centered on the cornice is often a built-in sign board; the name of the building or business housed there or the date of the building's construction is often pressed permanently into the metal sign.
- Emphasizing the verticality of the style, the upper-story windows are tall and narrow and are one-over-one or two-over-two lite. Round or segmentally arched windows were the most common but rectangular or flat-top windows also occur.
- Some upper-story windows may be single or grouped in pairs or threes. Nearly all are elaborated with hoods (more common on arched windows), bracketed lug sills or pediments or richly molded frames (more common on rectangular shapes). Window trim is most often pressed metal with stone sills, but brick lintels and sills are also common in Missouri.
- The storefront cornice is also made of pressed metal and is generally smaller than the roof cornice. This decorative cornice covers a cast-iron lintel, which supports the upper masonry facade.
- The storefront lintel is supported by evenly spaced cast-iron piers or columns that rest on the ground. Numerous decorative effects were achieved in the casting process - the piers might be fluted, paneled or chamfered and have elaborate Capitols and bases. A cast panel containing the name and location of the foundry is often located on one or more of the piers.
- The commercial entrance is usually centered in the storefront opening and is nearly always recessed. Doors are tall, wide-stile, full-lite with either an arched or flat top and a kick panel below. Double-leaf entrance doors are typical. The doors are topped by a single-lite transom. Both doors and transoms may be elaborated in a similar manner to the windows above.
- The entrance opening is flanked by single-lite transoms immediately under the storefront cornice. The transom rests on a transom bar, which separates it from the large single-lite display window below. The display window

rests on a bulkhead or kick panel and all may be elaborately trimmed. The entire assemblage - transom, display window, bulkhead - is repeated in the "cheeks" of the recessed entrance.



*Lohman's Opera House, ca 1889, was built by first-generation German-American L.C. Lohman, 1850-1921. L.C. was the son of Charles and Henrietta, natives of Prussia, for whom the Lohman Building at Jefferson Landing is named. The opera house is an excellent extant example of the Italianate style and is also a good example of the opera house type found in small towns throughout Missouri. Typically, the auditorium was on the second floor with commercial space on the first. Entry to the auditorium was through the center pair of doors and up a steep flight of stairs. A balcony divided the window-wall horizontally; the stage was against the back wall. The drawing above is from a photograph by local photographer F. G. Souden; it was first published with other drawings of city buildings in Souden's *Souvenir of Jefferson City*, published in 1891.*

(JEFFERSON CITY from Page 2)

serving both commercial and political travelers. Strategically located in the middle of the state between the large metropolitan centers of Kansas City and St. Louis, Jefferson City each legislative session witnesses a large influx of elected officials, lobbyists, and public participants in the political process from throughout the state. The city then becomes the temporary home of a political system that has been described as essentially conservative and rural-based. The capital's location in the rural heartland was reflective of the outstate rural interests ability to control state government and outmaneuver the metropolitan delegations; that situation has probably not changed significantly.

First-time visitors to Jefferson City are often surprised to learn that the population of the city is only slightly more than 35,000. As one enters the city across the Missouri River bridge, the impression is of a much larger town. This phenomenon is due in large part to the number of skyscrapers, both privately and state-owned, clustered around the mammoth domed Capitol building that impart a big city skyline to a relatively small town. It is also due to the fact that the operation of state government is largely concentrated in Jef-

## Dates to Remember

**Missouri Advisory Council on Historic Preservation** quarterly meeting, November 17, Kirksville. For details call Maggie Barnes (314) 751-5365.

**Missouri's 11th Annual Historic Preservation Conference**, April 12-14, 1996, St. Joseph.

ferson City's commercial core. State government is the city's largest single employer, which brings thousands of state employees into the historic downtown on workdays. But, in addition to the "size factor," few cities of 35,000 could boast of the quality of the built environment that has been Jefferson City's legacy from state government.

The centerpiece of Jefferson City's downtown is the magnificent Missouri State Capitol building. Tracy & Swartwout of New York were the architects for the Beaux Arts style building that covers three acres and contains 500,000 square feet of floor space. Artworks, both inside and on the grounds, rival the holdings of some big city museum collections. Other notable state-owned buildings include the ca 1905 Missouri Supreme Court Building, the Broadway State Office Building, the Truman

Building, the Missouri Highway and Transportation Department Building, and the Governor's Mansion. - *Karen Grace*

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Editor: Karen Grace  
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Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
Historic Preservation Program  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City, MO 65102

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