

preservation **issues**

NEWS FOR THE PRESERVATION COMMUNITY

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

★ Vol. 6 No. 3 ★

Historic Clarksville: Back From the Edge

On a recent Saturday morning, a group of Clarksville citizens met at a local building rehabilitation project in progress to make a decision. After a period of debate concerning the merits of a number of paint samples displayed for their consideration, a consensus was finally reached—on exactly the right shade of off-white paint for the commercial building's interior.

Although this kind of gathering would be rare in most towns, local resident Ralph Huesing says, "that's

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it's the only thing that ever has.

—Margaret Mead

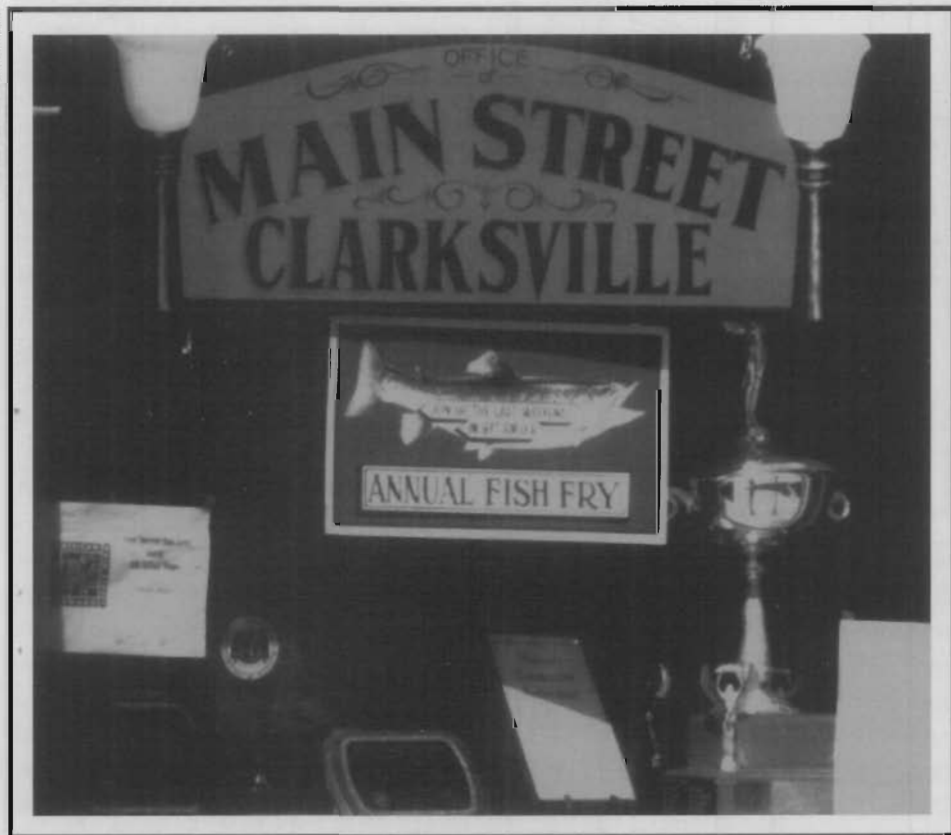
the way things are done in Clarksville. Everyone has a voice on even the most minor issue concerning the town." The meeting to select a paint color is indicative of the deep commitment Clarksvillians have to the

preservation of their local heritage; and it is their commitment that is the secret of their astounding success in rescuing the small Mississippi River town from almost certain oblivion.

Clarksville's revival can be traced to 1983. That's when Huesing and his business partner Vernon Hughes saw Clarksville for the first time. Huesing, a guidance counselor, and Hughes, a teacher from St. Louis County, were looking for a suitable house for their anticipated retirement from the public school system. "We found a house we both really liked"

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PHOTO MARK MILES



Clarksville's city hall windows are nearly filled with awards won by the small Pike County town.

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May/June 1996

Historic Preservation Grants Available Soon

The Historic Preservation Program (HPP) is pleased to announce the beginning of the fiscal year 1997 grant cycle for Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grants. The HPP will be awarding matching grants to citizens, organizations, local governments and other qualified entities to help identify, evaluate and protect Missouri's historical and archaeological resources.

In FY '97, survey and planning, pre-development and development grants will be considered. Eligible survey and planning activities include surveys, nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, planning and promotional educational activities. Pre-development activities include the preparation of architectural plans and specifications, feasibility studies and historic structures reports for properties listed in the National Register. Development involves actual construction.

Applications will be judged competitively. Grant priorities for FY '97 were published in the March/April edition of *Preservation Issues*. In addition, special priorities for FY '97 include surveys of areas targeted for highway expansion by the Missouri Highway and Transportation Department; surveys and nominations of properties related to agriculture, ethnic heritage, and transportation; and planning and development projects for county or municipally-owned buildings.

Grant application packets will be available on July 15, 1996; applications must be postmarked or delivered by 5 p.m. Friday, August 30. To request an application, call Nancy Faerber at (573) 751-7857.

The amount of Missouri's FY '97 Historic Preservation Fund allocation will not be known until the U.S. Congress approves the federal budget, probably in the fall. Final grant availability will be contingent upon notification by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, of Missouri's FY '97 HPF appropriation.

—Mark Miles

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in Clarksville," said Huesing, "and bought it the same day."

It wasn't until later, when they brought family and friends to see their purchase, that they realized their "dream house" was in a bad neighborhood. "Our family was horrified," said Huesing. "They couldn't believe we were leaving a nice St. Louis County neighborhood to live in Clarksville. We had to do something to improve the town's appearance in order to vindicate our decision to buy the house."

What was obvious to almost everyone was that the town was so severely deteriorated, its chances for survival seemed almost non-existent. "A large number of buildings in town were for sale," recalls Huesing. "And most of those had been vacant for years, abandoned by their owners. One or two commercial buildings had been torn down and the rear wall of another had collapsed." The farming and lumber industry that once sup-



ported the town had long been in decline. Young people left town searching for jobs, leaving a smaller and increasingly elderly population and few businesses to provide the necessary tax base for streets, sewers and other public works projects. With fewer than 500, mostly retired, citizens, the town was too small to lure

industry or large retail businesses.

Clarksville's assets in the mid-'80s were its beautiful river setting, its proximity to St. Louis (just 80 miles south), its largely intact stock of historic buildings, with many dating to the mid-19th century, and a small group of dedicated retirees, mostly women, who had a strong desire to save their community and were willing to donate the time and labor to do it.

At Huesing's invitation, three Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Historic Preservation Program (HPP) staff members traveled to Clarksville in 1986 to meet with a small group of concerned citizens, and to listen and make suggestions as to how they might rebuild their town by capitalizing on their existing assets. HPP staff made several suggestions: first, that Clarksville should become a Certified Local Government (CLG), a federal program administered by the HPP that assists towns in preservation

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Missouri's Main Street Program

Clarksville's success in community revitalization can be traced, in part, to its participation in "Missouri Main Street," a preservation-based downtown revitalization program.

In the mid-1970s, preservationists across the country were growing increasingly concerned with the deterioration of the downtown commercial areas of our small cities and towns. In 1976, the Midwest Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation began a three-year pilot project to promote preservation-based downtown revitalization in three small Midwestern towns. Based on the success of that pilot effort, the National Main Street Center was established. Today the center has worked in 38 states and more than 1,000 communities.

The "Main Street Approach" involves coordinated efforts in four key areas: organization, promotion, economic restructuring and design. Organization involves improving the leadership and management structure of a downtown. Promotion entails enhancing the image of the entire downtown through special events and coordinated advertising. Economic restructuring involves looking at the market dynamics in a given community and working to better respond to those forces. Lastly, design improvements involve making physical improvements to the downtown environment through building rehabilitations, improved signage and public improvements.

In 1988, legislation was passed to establish the Missouri Main Street program. The first five communities—Boonville, Clinton, Hannibal, Nevada and Washington—were selected in the fall of 1989. The following year, five additional communities—Carthage, Clarksville, Kirkwood, Poplar Bluff and Unionville—were selected.

Although Missouri Main Street is based in the Missouri Department of Economic Development, the Historic Preservation Program (HPP) within the Missouri Department of Natural Resources plays an active role, as does the National Main Street Center. HPP staff members have participated in reconnaissance and resource team visits to the selected communities and have conducted design training for program managers and design committee members in the participating communities. Using Historic Preservation Fund monies, the HPP awarded grants to the Missouri Downtown Development Association to provide professional design assistance to the participating towns. The grant permitted Kansas City architect Bob Claybaugh to be employed to provide free preliminary design assistance to building owners and merchants in the communities.

This February, two new communities were selected to participate in the Missouri Main Street program. Warrensburg and Mountain Grove are the two newest members of the official Main Street family.

The success of Missouri Main Street can be traced to a number of key factors. Main Street is a comprehensive, incremental self-help program. Its success depends on creating a public/private partnership that identifies and capitalizes on existing assets and that emphasizes quality in all activities. The program is implementation-oriented, building on small successes and recognizing that a positive momentum for change must be created to improve current economic conditions.

The marriage of economic revitalization and historic preservation embodied in the Main Street Approach has produced some impressive results in Missouri. Since its inception, the Missouri Main Street Program reports the following indicators of positive change in the participating communities: more than 400 new businesses and 1,400 new jobs have been created; more than 400 building rehabilitations were accomplished with more than \$53,000,000 reinvested locally.

Notes Missouri Main Street Coordinator Randy Gray, "Our traditional downtowns not only represent the historical and cultural heritage of the community but also provide an exceptional environment for economic benefit from their unique appearance and distinct character."

—Mark Miles

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This recently rehabilitated building is the new headquarters for a local construction company.

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planning; second, that they should apply for a matching Historic Preservation Fund grant (HPF) through the program to conduct a historical/architectural survey of the town in order to accurately assess the existing building stock; third, that Clarksville apply for a second HPF grant to list eligible properties in the National Register of Historic Places, which would make them eligible for tax benefits and grants for restoration; and finally, staff suggested the group contact the Missouri Department of Economic Development concerning possible grants and loans.

It had been the HPP's experience that many small towns start a revital-

ization project with great enthusiasm, but when it comes down to appropriating funds from tight city budgets, the whole thing falls apart. Huesing and his supporters overcame this hurdle by promising that "the preservation plan won't cost the city one cent."

Clarksville passed a preservation ordinance to protect its historic resources and became a CLG in 1987, a status that made it eligible for a special pool of matching HPF grant monies. They used this first grant award to survey the town's historic buildings. Huesing admits now that he wasn't sure at the time what a survey was or why they were doing one, so when townspeople asked, he admitted his ignorance but said, "the HPP said

we have to do it so we should. The survey was the single most important thing we ever did," Huesing said.

"Since we didn't have cash to match the grant, we had to use volunteers—a group of older women, mostly homemakers, who discovered they had the skills to research. Esley Hamilton [a historian for the St. Louis County Department of Parks and Recreation], trained the volunteers on weekends and stayed at local homes. Pretty soon, everyone wanted to be involved with the survey, and by the time it was completed [in 1988] we had the grassroots support we needed to accomplish anything." In addition to a groundswell of town pride and support for preservation, the Clarksville survey provided the necessary documentation to list one third of the town's 200 buildings in the National Register of Historic Places in 1991. The listing also, eventually, helped the town get more than \$600,000 in government grants for historic building and infrastructure improvements; an equal amount has been raised by holding fund-raisers and donations. Huesing says he doesn't even have to ask anymore. "People say please take this money for Clarksville. Once people could really see things happening, they wanted to give more money."

The group's first visible project was a small park on a vacant lot built with volunteer labor and at-cost materials. "The park had an immediate psychological effect," said Huesing. "People looked at it and said, if we can do this we can do other things too." A not-for-profit corporation, Historic Clarksville, Inc. was formed in 1988 to purchase and rehabilitate historic commercial buildings in town. The group now owns 16—most have been rehabilitated and are filled with successful new businesses that cater primarily to the upscale tourist trade. A low-interest revolving loan fund helps homeowners make needed improvements to houses in the his-

toric district.

After numerous early successes and awards that included the Governor's Trophy from the Community Betterment Association in 1989 (and again in '95) and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Resource Steward of the Year Award in 1990, Clarksville

applied to be a Missouri Main Street pilot town, and was, once again, among the winners. (see related story on page 3.) Clarksville is the second smallest town ever to participate in the nationally acclaimed economic revitalization program (only Bonaparte, Iowa, is smaller) out of the 1,100 towns that have participated

since the program began in 1980. Size was not an indicator of success, however; Clarksville proved itself once again by winning the Edward D. Jones first Great American Main Street Award in 1995.

Ten years of intensive preservation planning and consensus building paid off during the Great Flood of '93; a

(See CLARKSVILLE, Page 6)

PHOTO MARK MILES



Historic Clarksville, Inc.'s most recent project was the former I.O.O.F. Hall. The second story meeting room now serves as a community center. A new elevator (only the second in the county) provides accessibility.

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well-oiled preservation machine was already in place, ready to spring into action to save the historic downtown, which is adjacent to the river. The town built and maintained an 8 by 10-foot levee that, Huesing says, "the corps [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers] said was the best in the state." And, even before the flood waters had receded, they were cutting through the tangle of red tape to receive federal

flood grants for their historic buildings—a process that stymied much larger towns for months. In all, 14 historic buildings in Clarksville were repaired using federal flood grants totalling more than \$140,000, which were administered by the HPP.

No sooner had the town recovered from the flood than another natural disaster occurred; the rear wall of a brick commercial building they thought was stable blew down in a

violent storm. "Not one person suggested tearing it down," relates Huesing. "They asked, how can we save it?"

A recent visit confirmed that Clarksville is now not only a town that looks good, it feels good about itself. "Historic preservation brought our town together," says Huesing. And the town's hard work and commitment has paid off. In the last few years, property values have risen as

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Workshop Series Planned

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Historic Preservation Program is pleased to announce that a series of three one-day workshops have been planned for 1996. The workshops are How to Teach with Missouri's Historic Places, Historic Storefront Design for Architects, and Preservation and Repair of Native Missouri Stone Buildings. All three of the workshops will be held in Jefferson City at the Capitol Plaza Hotel, which is located in the heart of the state capital's historic business, commercial, and government district. The State Capitol Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1976, will be used for a field study associated with each of the workshops. Those attending will receive a packet of printed materials. A continental breakfast and lunch is included in the fee.

June 20: **How to Teach With Missouri's Historic Places** will be co-sponsored by the Landmarks Association of St. Louis and facilitated by **Kathleen Hunter**, an educational consultant and former director of educational initiatives for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Hunter is the author of *Preservation Education: A Community-School Partnership* and assisted in the development of the How to Teach with Historic Places workshop format, a joint project of the National Trust and the National Park Service. Hunter's current

contract with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will develop a one-semester course in Missouri history and heritage for middle school students. Designed primarily for classroom teachers and site interpreters, this workshop emphasizes the use of historic places as primary sources of information. It can be used both in the classroom and in field studies, can be adapted to all grade levels, and is interdisciplinary. New DESE performance standards are integral to the workshop design.

COST: \$60, STUDENT RATE \$40.

July 18: **Historic Storefront Design for Architects** will be facilitated by **Ron Frantz**, AIA, architect for the Oklahoma "Main Street" economic revitalization program and a presenter at numerous National Main Street Center conferences. Participants will learn: the basics of historic storefront design; the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*; how to guarantee that clients will receive federal tax credits for the rehabilitation work and the effective use of short-cuts and substitute materials.

COST: \$75, STUDENT RATE \$50.

July 19: **The Preservation and Repair of Native Missouri Stone Buildings** will be facilitated by **Barbara Anderson**, preservation architect for the Kansas State Office of Preservation from 1985-1993. Anderson currently teaches

historic preservation technology and community design and preservation at Kansas State University and is the owner of Barbara G. Anderson, LLC. The workshop will focus on the performance of the most common native stone materials used in Missouri's historic buildings. Through case and field studies, the participants will learn about the most common deterioration problems and appropriate preservation treatments. Cleaning, repointing, consolidation, water repellents, mechanical reattachment and repair, and composite patching materials will all be covered. Architects, preservation professionals, masonry contractors and caretakers of historic stone buildings are encouraged to attend. **COST: \$75, STUDENT RATE \$50.**

Architects who complete either July workshop will have their names added to a state-maintained list that will be distributed to potential clients on request. Both are co-sponsored by American Institute of Architects Mid-Missouri.

Provisions for CEUs (Continuing Education Units) are currently being arranged and will be announced at a later date. Individual brochures for each workshop will be available approximately six weeks in advance. For more information, call Preservation Education Coordinator Karen Grace at (573) 751-7959

—Karen Grace

MISSOURI

Historic Architecture

Four-Square Houses

ca 1890-1920

Characteristics:

- Most popular in rural and suburban areas of the state, this form emerged in the late 19th century as part of the "Rectilinear" movement, a resistance toward the ornate detailing of Queen Anne architecture. This same rebellion produced the Craftsman, Prairie School, and Colonial Revival aesthetics, which are often incorporated into the Four-Square's architectural detailing.
- Houses are simply massed, two or two-and-a-half stories in height and "cube" shaped with a hipped roof. One or more dormers is usually present as is a wide one-story front porch.
- The most common exterior treatment is weatherboard siding. However, examples of brick and stucco are not unusual. In the Kansas City area, Four-Squares with first story masonry combined with second story wooden treatments are very common; locally this type of house is referred to as a "Shirtwaist."
- Fenestration is generally symmetrical, with side bay windows being common. Windows are most often double-hung wooden sash, with some examples of casement windows appearing in high style Prairie School and Craftsman models.
- Interiors usually consisted of four nearly equal-sized rooms on each floor. Stairways usually contained one or more landings, with placement varying. The first floor was characterized by an open floor plan that included a reception hall, parlor and dining room. The kitchen was generally placed to the rear of the first floor and was almost always partitioned off. The second story consisted of three or four bedrooms, and late in the period, a bathroom. The attic sometimes contained one or two additional rooms.
- A very popular style with mail order plan books and the ready-cut housing industry, the Four-Square was variously produced by Sears & Roebuck, Montgomery Ward, Aladdin, and Lewis Homes.
- The Four-Square began to wane in popularity after World War I, with a dramatic increase in favor of English and French-styled cottages during the 1920s and 1930s.

PHOTO ESLEY HAMILTON



The Duvall House (ca 1912) in Clarksville is a typical Four-Square of brick construction with Colonial Revival details, including the paired Roman Doric columns with slight entasis supporting the full-width porch roof. Note the pronounced linear facade treatment, emphasized by the broad frieze, the stone sills, straight lintels, and paired one-over-one double-hung windows. The arched lintels and bay window along the south side of the house provide a slight deviation from the strong horizontal patterns.

—Allen Tatman

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much as 400 percent for residential buildings and 1,000 percent for commercial buildings; there have been 35 new jobs created; and, there is virtually no unemployment. "We have a housing shortage now," Huesing says seriously. New families are moving to town drawn by the town's historic ambiance and attractiveness. Two new houses have been built, the first since the 1950s, and more are planned.

"People really want to live in Clarksville now," said Huesing. That is hardly surprising—now that they're back on top.

—Karen Grace

Dates to Remember

Missouri Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, May 24, Louisiana. For more information call (573) 751-7858.

Queen of the Suburbs Centennial House Tour, June 8-9, Webster Groves. For more information call Mary Jo Mahley (314) 968-1857.

Landmark Listings

FOR SALE:

Original main office building for the Missouri Lumber and Mining Company in Grandin. Built in 1889 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1981. May be eligible for federal grants or tax credits.

Call Paul H. Joplin at (314) 322-5729 or write RFD 1, Ellsinore, MO 63937.



PHOTO RANDY COTIER

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