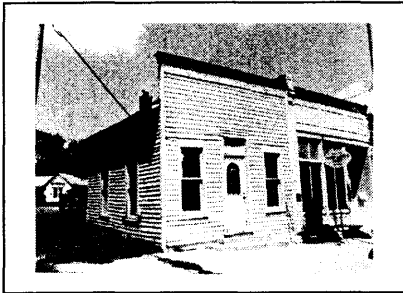


# Historic Resources Survey

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## Pleasant Hill, Missouri



Prepared for  
The City of Pleasant Hill  
By  
Historic Preservation Services, LLC

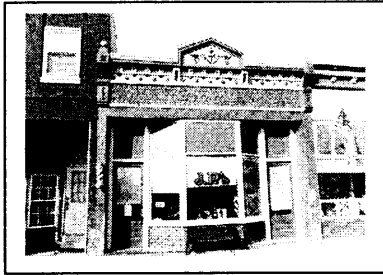
May 2004



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## Pleasant Hill, Missouri



Prepared for  
The City of Pleasant Hill

By  
Historic Preservation Services, LLC

**May 2004**

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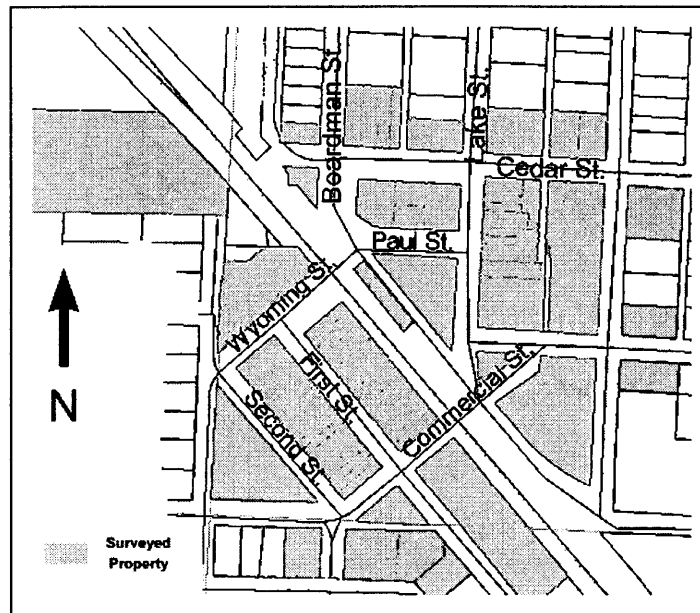
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*This program receives federal funds from the National Park Service. Regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination in departmental federally assisted programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, or handicap. A person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility operated by a recipient of federal assistance should write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C.*

# INTRODUCTION

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The City of Pleasant Hill, Missouri contracted with the firm Historic Preservation Services, LLC, Kansas City, Missouri ("HPS") to complete a historic resources survey of downtown Pleasant Hill (Figure 1). The State Historic Preservation Office, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, administered grant funds from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund. The goal of the survey was to identify and evaluate architectural and historic cultural resources in the Survey Area and to ascertain if any individual properties and/or groups of properties may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the designation of resources and information gathered in the survey will provide critical information for future City and neighborhood planning activities.



**Figure 1:  
PLEASANT HILL, MISSOURI  
Survey Area**

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<sup>1</sup> The entire survey area is currently designated a local historic district.

Between August and October 2003, HPS architectural historian Kerry Davis conducted survey activities under the supervision of HPS partner Elizabeth Rosin. These activities included field inspection and photography of each property in the Survey Area, data entry, preparation of individual building descriptions and histories, analysis of data, evaluation of property integrity, research and preparation of the historic context for this report, and development of management recommendations.

# METHODOLOGY

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Historic Preservation Services completed the Pleasant Hill Survey in conformance with the procedures for reconnaissance level survey outlined in *National Register Bulletin 24: Guidelines for Local Survey: A Basis for Preservation Planning*. Evaluation of resources for significance was in accordance with *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. In addition to these guidelines, the consultants relied on criteria in the Missouri Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation Program's "Minimal Guidelines for Professional Surveys of Historic Properties" and the "Missouri Historic Property Inventory Form Instructions."

## SCOPE OF WORK

The scope of work for the project included the following.

- Field inspection and photo documentation of all properties in the Survey Area.
- Compilation of physical and historical information in a database and preparation of a report and maps that summarize the findings.
- Determination of broad patterns of development that include historic contexts, cultural themes, geographical limits, and chronological limits.
- Preliminary identification of all historically and/or architecturally significant sites, objects, buildings, structures, and districts within the defined Survey Area.
- Preliminary identification of each resource's history and significance, architectural style or property type, period, architect, builder, construction types, etc., if known.
- Evaluation and determination of properties and districts that appear to be potentially eligible for listing in the *National Register of Historic Places* and the *Pleasant Hill Register of Historic Places*.
- Recommendations for future preservation of identified cultural resources in Pleasant Hill.
- Recommendations for future identification and evaluation of additional historic resources.

## **FIELD SURVEY**

The field survey component included field inspection and black-and-white photography of each building, site, and object in the Survey Area to confirm building form and materials. The consultants relied on the data gathered in the field as well as that supplied by the photographs when developing written building descriptions and determining architectural integrity for each property.

## **ARCHIVAL RESEARCH**

In addition to documenting architectural styles, property types, and the evolution of land use in Pleasant Hill, research focused on preparing historical contexts for the time period in which the Survey Area developed and on identifying dates of construction and the original property owners. Historic Preservation Services used the archival and research collections of the City of Pleasant Hill; the Pleasant Hill Historical Society Museum archives; and the Kansas City (Missouri) Public Library Special Collections. Among the most useful resources was Norma Middleton's *Echoes of Home: Memories of a Hometown*. Local historian Bob Kennedy provided extensive insight during oral interviews and reviewed the draft property histories.

## **ESTABLISHING DATES OF CONSTRUCTION AND PROPERTY HISTORIES**

### **DATES OF CONSTRUCTION**

Due to the absence of building and water permits, HPS staff used plat and fire insurance maps, historic photographs, newspaper clippings, and architectural style to establish construction dates. When information documenting the exact date of construction was lacking, the consultants used available resources to narrow the construction period and estimated the date based on the similarity of architectural features to other buildings in the Survey Area and in the region. As a result, dates of construction for many properties are not exact, but are estimated to a circa (c.) date, which denotes the age to be within five years of the year listed.

## **PROPERTY HISTORY**

Without building permits, the consultants relied on information appearing in secondary historical accounts or on maps to develop the history of each surveyed property. Research materials included Norma Middleton's regular newspaper column "Snapshots of Yesterday," published in the *Pleasant Hill Times* during the late 1980s and early 1990s; newspaper clippings and photograph files at the Pleasant Hill Historical Society Museum archives; Cass County histories at the Kansas City, Missouri Public Library; and Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps dating from 1883 to 1932.

## **COMPILATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA**

Historic Preservation Services used a Microsoft Access 2002 database to compile the survey information and prepared a template of fields for the Missouri Historic Property Inventory Form. The database fields include records for each building's physical features (e.g., plan, height, materials, style, environment) as well as historical information (e.g., date of construction, ownership). When linked with the digital records from future surveys, this database will enhance the understanding of historic resources in Pleasant Hill. The database utilizes the City's parcel identification information system<sup>2</sup> so that it can link to geographic information systems (GIS) and mapping software to facilitate analysis and to create visual presentations of the data more easily.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

The consultants analyzed four categories of data to identify contiguous historic districts and/or individual properties that are potentially eligible for National Register listing. The following four categories address issues important in determining the significance of a property or properties for listing in the National Register.

- Original Building Use/Function
- Architectural Style/Property Type
- Date of Construction
- Architectural Integrity

A detailed description of the four areas of analysis and results is in the "Survey Results" section of this report.

## HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

After compiling and reviewing the results of the field survey and completing the archival research, HPS identified broad patterns of development of the City of Pleasant Hill. At the same time, analysis of architectural styles and property types began with the review of photographic documentation and database information obtained during the field survey. Historic Preservation Services assigned architectural styles and vernacular property types to all buildings surveyed. *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture* by Richard Longstreth and *A Field Guide to American Houses* by Virginia and Lee McAlester provided guidance for identifying properties by architectural style, building form, and function, and they assured the use of terminology consistent with National Register nomenclature. The survey data not only revealed the architectural styles and vernacular building forms, it also provided information to determine Pleasant Hill's development patterns and trends.

In order to make management recommendations, the consultants conducted preliminary evaluations of all inventoried properties according to the criteria and standards for historic resources established by the National Park Service. This included a preliminary assessment of individual eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and/or as contributing elements to a National Register Historic District.

In addition to retaining the integrity of their historic architectural design, properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places must meet certain criteria of historic significance. Historic significance is the importance of a property to the history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture of a community, a state, or the nation. To be listed, properties must have significance in at least one of the following areas.

- Criterion A: Association with events, activities, or broad patterns of history.
- Criterion B: Association with the lives of persons significant in our past.

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<sup>2</sup> City staff furnished street addresses, legal descriptions, and parcel numbers.

- Criterion C: Embody distinctive characteristics of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- Criterion D: Have yielded, or be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

## **EVALUATION OF INTEGRITY**

All properties eligible for listing in the National Register, whether for individual significance or as contributing elements to a district, must retain sufficient architectural integrity to convey the period of time in which they are significant.<sup>3</sup> The National Park Service uses the following areas to define integrity and a property must retain integrity in a majority of these areas.

- Location: The place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred.
- Design: The combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.
- Setting: The physical environment of a historic property.
- Materials: The physical elements that were combined during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property.
- Workmanship: The physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.
- Feeling: A property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
- Association: The direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> A contributing property to a historic district does not have to meet the same threshold for significance as an individual landmark, but it must contribute to the significance of the district. Properties contributing to a district that is significant in the area of architecture must retain a higher degree of architectural integrity than properties in a district significant for associations with an important individual or with historical events or patterns of history.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, D.C.: National Register Publications, 1998), 45.

Based on visual inspection, each building receives an integrity rating of Excellent, Good, Fair, or Poor based primarily on how much of the building's original design, workmanship, exterior materials, and overall feeling of a past period of time remain. The following criteria serve as the basis for rating architectural integrity.

### **EXCELLENT**

- The majority of the building's openings are unaltered or were altered in a sensitive and appropriate manner, using similar materials, profiles, and sizes as the original building elements;
- The exterior cladding material has not been altered;
- Significant decorative elements are intact;
- Design elements intrinsic to the building's style are intact;
- The overall feeling or character of the building for the time period in which it was erected is intact. Changes over a period of time are sympathetic and compatible to the original design in color, size, scale, massing, and materials;
- Character-defining elements from the time period in which the building had significant associations with events or important individuals remain intact; and
- If over fifty years in age, the building is individually eligible for listing in the local or *National Register of Historic Places* or would be a contributing element to a historic district.

### **GOOD**

- Some alteration of original building openings or spaces has occurred using new materials and profiles, but not causing irreversible damage to the original configuration of openings and spaces;
- Significant portions of original exterior cladding material remain;
- Significant decorative elements remain intact;
- Alterations to the building are reversible and the historic character of the property could be easily restored;
- Additions to a secondary elevation are in an appropriate manner, respecting the materials, scale, and character of the original building design;
- The historic feeling or character of the building is slightly weakened by change or lack of maintenance; and

- The building would be a contributing element to a historic district and/or it might be independently eligible for register listing if restored in conformance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*.

## **FAIR**

- The majority of the building's openings were altered in an inappropriate manner using new materials, profiles, and sizes;
- Exterior cladding material has been altered or added, however there is some indication upon visual inspection that if removed, enough of the original cladding material might remain that the property could be restored to its original appearance;
- Additions were made in a manner respecting the materials, scale, and character of the original building design and, if removed, the essential form of the building remained intact;
- Historic feeling or character of the building is compromised, but the property could be restored, although reversal of alteration and removal of inappropriate materials could be costly; and
- If restored in conformance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, and if the property has associations with a district's area of significance, the property might be a contributing resource to a historic district.

## **POOR**

- The majority of the building's openings, such as windows and doors, were altered in an inappropriate manner using new materials, profiles, and sizes;
- Exterior materials were altered;
- Alterations are irreversible or would be extremely difficult, costly, and possibly physically damaging to the building to reverse;
- Later additions do not respect the materials, scale, or character of the original building design;
- The overall historic feeling and character of the building is significantly compromised; and
- Further investigations after removal of non-historic materials and alterations may reveal that the structure retains greater architectural integrity than originally apparent and should be reevaluated.

## INTEGRITY THRESHOLDS

To qualify for listing in the *National Register of Historic Places* under National Register Criterion A and/or C, properties must retain strong integrity in the areas of association and location. To be eligible for **individual listing under Criterion A**, a building should retain a high degree of architectural integrity in setting, materials, and workmanship for its period of significance. It should also clearly illustrate its property type, possessing the distinct physical characteristics that define it as this property type. For example, because many commercial resources in Pleasant Hill are one or two stories tall, are on narrow nineteenth century lots, and have restrained commercial styling, it is important that the primary façade retain its original fenestration and spatial arrangements; in particular, the historic storefront elements or entrance treatments that define this property type. In addition to the above requirements, to be listed as an **individual resource under Criterion C**, the property must be an excellent example of a specific style of architecture, retaining a high degree of integrity in setting, materials, and the architectural elements that define the style.

To be eligible for listing as a **contributing element to a historic district under Criterion A**, a property should retain sufficient stylistic and structural features to link the property with its period of significance. Specifically, integrity of façade arrangement and fenestration are important. Additions are acceptable if they are on secondary elevations and are subordinate in size, scale, and massing to the original building. On commercial buildings, façade arrangement and fenestration define the property type. The primary façade should retain sufficient character-defining elements to express the distinct separation of upper floors from the ground floor. Historic individual windows do not have to be present as long as the rhythm of the fenestration and bays is evident. Window, door, and storefront infill or replacement should not destroy or obscure original openings. These types of alterations must be judged in accordance with the architectural style and impact on character-defining features to determine if the property retains sufficient integrity to contribute to a district. Alterations to the primary façades of large buildings may be acceptable if they do not alter a significant portion of the façade and the original appearance of the façade can be restored. Alterations to the façades of simple small buildings should be minimal and should not significantly impact the original appearance of the building. In addition to the above requirements, buildings that are part of a larger grouping may also be eligible for listing as **contributing elements to a district under Criterion C** as representative examples of a specific style of architecture or property type. In both

instances, integrity of design, materials, and workmanship associated with its period of significance are necessary.

## **NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY STATUS**

Physical characteristics and historic significance provide the basis for evaluating resources. Information about each resource, such as date, function, associations, and physical characteristics, also affects the significance of the property.

The consultants analyzed data relating to the architectural integrity and historic significance of each property within the Survey Area to identify contiguous districts, discontiguous thematic resources, and individual properties that are potentially eligible for National Register listing. Missouri Historic Property Survey guidelines require that National Register eligibility status be expressed using established standard terminology.

- **Not Eligible** applies to those properties that do not retain sufficient integrity to be individually eligible or contributing to the significance of a district.
- **Individually Eligible** applies to those properties that retain a high degree of historic architectural integrity and clearly represent associations with established historic context(s).
- **Contributing to a District** applies to properties located within a historic district that reflect the district's historic context(s) and enhance the historic associations and historic architectural qualities for which the district is significant. A National Register District is a significant concentration of sites, buildings, structures, or objects that are united historically or aesthetically by design or physical development. Contributing properties do not have to be individually distinctive, but must contribute to a grouping that achieves significance as a whole. The majority of the components that define a district's historic character, even if they are individually undistinguished, must possess integrity, as must the district as a whole. A property that independently meets National Register Criteria for Evaluation can also be a contributing property to a district if it has associations with the district's areas of significance.
- **Non-contributing to a District** applies to properties that are located within a historic district, but were not present during the period of significance, do not relate to the documented significance of the district, or no longer possess historical integrity due to alterations.

- **Less than Fifty Years of Age** applies to properties that are less than fifty years in age. The National Register Criteria for Evaluation exclude properties that achieved significance within the last fifty years unless they are of exceptional importance. Fifty years is the general threshold of time needed to develop historical perspective and to evaluate significance.
- **Not Evaluated** applies to properties not yet evaluated for National Register eligibility.

# HISTORIC CONTEXTS

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## PREFACE

To fully understand the findings of the survey, it is important to interpret survey information in context with the development of the City of Pleasant Hill. The National Park Service defines historic context as “a broad pattern of historical development in a community or its region, that may be represented by historic resources.” The development of a historic context identifies important connections between local, regional, state, and national history and a defined sub-area. When survey findings are viewed in relationship to a broader historical context, it is possible to apply the criteria for evaluation and the determination of eligibility for designation to the national and/or local historic registers. The historic contexts developed for this survey are examined within the general chronological periods dictated by national and local events.

- The Evolution of the City of Pleasant Hill as a Regional Commercial Hub: 1828-1959
- The Development of Architecture in Downtown Pleasant Hill: 1865-1959

## **THE EVOLUTION OF THE CITY OF PLEASANT HILL AS A REGIONAL COMMERCIAL HUB: 1828-1959**

### **EARLY SETTLEMENT (1828-c.1840)**

Pleasant Hill is located within Pleasant Hill Township in the northeast corner of Cass County, Missouri, once part of a vast hunting area used by the Kansa, Dhegiha, and later the Osage Indian Tribes. In 1808, the United States government established Fort Osage as a trade, factory, and military compound overlooking the Missouri River in the north part of Jackson County. After the legalization of trade with Mexico and the attainment of Missouri statehood in 1821, regional population increased rapidly. An 1825 treaty extinguished the Osage Nation’s title to their lands in western Missouri and the area officially opened for Euro-American settlement.

The first permanent settler of present-day Cass County, David Creek, arrived from Indiana in 1828. For his homestead, he chose the site of a spring near what is now Pleasant Hill. Histories of Cass County identify its numerous water resources as the

attraction for most early settlers: “[the county] is so well supplied with living streams of water and they are so well distributed that the people of the county could not possibly make an improvement on the arrangement.”<sup>5</sup>

Like David Creek, most early residents of central western Missouri were from the Middle South and Ohio River Valley. Many settlers to present-day Cass County arrived during the early 1830s and made their homes in the vicinity of an ancient trail along the crest of a ridge between the valleys of Big Creek and Duncan Branch.<sup>6</sup> By 1833, the nucleus of the Pleasant Hill community had formed; there were enough families in town to support a school and a Baptist congregation.

Initial commercial enterprise in pioneer settlements typically followed the establishment of a mill. In 1832, near the ridge-top settlement of what is now “Old Town” Pleasant Hill, William Savage built the first recorded mill in Cass County on Big Creek. Prior to this, area farmers traveled almost thirty miles to Independence, a two-to three-day roundtrip, to have their grist ground.<sup>7</sup> The arrival of the mill led immediately to the 1833 opening of Pleasant Hill’s first commercial store, the Blois Store, which continued under various owners throughout the next decade as the only trading post in northern Van Buren (Cass) County.<sup>8</sup>

Responding to increased settlement in the area, the Missouri Legislature established Van Buren County (present-day Cass County) as a detachment from Jackson County in 1835. The county’s name honored then Vice President Martin Van Buren.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *The History of Cass and Bates Counties, Missouri* (St. Joseph, Missouri: National Historical Company, 1883), 86.

<sup>6</sup> This ridge now carries State Highway 7. The flanking valleys are Big Creek valley to the west and Duncan Branch to the east.

<sup>7</sup> Norma Middleton, *Echoes of Home: Memories of a Hometown* (Pleasant Hill, Missouri in cooperation with *The Pleasant Hill Times*, 1988), A2.

<sup>8</sup> These owners included William Wright who took ownership in 1836. Middleton, A5.

<sup>9</sup> In 1836, Van Buren ran for President as a candidate for the Free-Soil party on an anti-slavery platform, which displeased Missouri Democrats. As a result, when Bates County was formed from southern Van Buren County in 1849, the Democratic state legislature changed the name from Van Buren County to Cass County to honor General Lewis Cass of Michigan, the 1848 democratic candidate for president who ran on a platform that allowed slavery. Martin Van Buren served as Vice President of the United States from 1833 to 1837 and as President of the United States from 1837 to 1841. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7, *Total Maximum Daily Load Report for Pleasant Hill Lake*, August 2001 [article online]; available from <http://www.epa.gov/region7/water/pdf/PleasantHillFinalTMDL.pdf>; Internet; accessed 10 November 2003.

## **THRIVING STAGE STOP AND TRADING CENTER (c.1840-1861)**

Boasting a mill and a store and located on a well-traveled road, the hamlet that would become Pleasant Hill drew farmers and traders from miles around, as well as new settlers and businessmen. By 1836, the village had a harness/saddle shop and by 1841 the Van Hoy Hotel.

Settlement and commercial expansion continued at a steady pace. Local businessmen, William Ferrell and William Wright anticipated future growth and filed papers in January 1844 for the “Original Town of Pleasant Hill.”<sup>10</sup> The town plat featured twelve rectangular lots flanking the ridge-top road identified as Main Street.<sup>11</sup> Later that year, Wright purchased Ferrell’s interest for \$1,050 and hired a surveyor to lay out the Town of Pleasant Hill. Three years later, in February 1847, Wright’s widow filed a plat for an additional twelve lots.<sup>12</sup> These twenty-four lots constitute what is now known as “Old Town” Pleasant Hill.<sup>13</sup>

The prime location left Pleasant Hill poised for continued growth. Numerous stage lines criss-crossed the area, with principal lines linking Pleasant Hill to Independence, Harrisonville, and Warrensburg. Oxen also carried goods to and from Westport Landing. The steady traffic supported local commerce and the town did a hearty business during the two decades leading up to the Civil War.

During the 1840s and 1850s, Pleasant Hill provided townspeople, area farmers, and stage travelers with a variety of goods and services. The town boasted a blacksmith shop, a carding business, at least three general store/mercantile shops, a storehouse, a second mill, three doctors’ offices, and a drugstore. In 1848, a second hotel opened for business and Pleasant Hill’s first Masonic Lodge formed. By the end of the following year, the post office began receiving mail. During this period, three new churches held services for Pleasant Hill area residents and the Presbyterian Church built the Young Ladies Seminary. Main Street took shape with a mixture of wood frame and brick commercial structures and residences.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Although the source of the name “Pleasant Hill” is not clear, it is probable that it is a reflection of the geography and a ridge that commands views across the valleys of Big Creek to the west and Duncan Branch to the east.

<sup>11</sup> What is now State Highway 7.

<sup>12</sup> William Wright died in 1846.

<sup>13</sup> This reference is as opposed to “New Town,” the current commercial heart of Pleasant Hill that developed one mile southwest along the Missouri Pacific railroad tracks after 1865.

<sup>14</sup> Middleton, A8.

The town grew from 45 residents in 1845 to 500 by the late 1850s, and was not far behind Harrisonville, the county seat, which claimed 675 residents at the time.<sup>15</sup> In response to increased growth, Pleasant Hill officially incorporated as a city in 1859<sup>16</sup> with Dr. Logan McReynolds as mayor.

“Railroad mania” began to sweep the nation during this period. Widespread projecting, promoting, and speculating took place with towns competing for the favor of railroad companies and convenient access to new rail lines. Connection to the railroad was a matter of economic life or death for many growing rural communities. Towns in the Kansas City region raced to establish the first rail connections with the East, hoping to become the “great commercial funnel to the Plains.”<sup>17</sup> Although the Hannibal & St. Joseph line spanned the state of Missouri by 1859, it lacked a river crossing to points west. Evidenced by its name, the Pacific Railroad Company<sup>18</sup> held grand intentions of becoming a transcontinental line. The planned line would travel west from St. Louis, staying south of the Missouri River. Among towns lacking a railroad connection and competing for access, Pleasant Hill and Kansas City fought hard for the Pacific Railroad’s western terminus. The company profited from this competition by choosing routes that ran through the towns that pledged the highest bids.<sup>19</sup>

Pleasant Hill’s financial offers, rapid growth, and role as a regional commercial hub attracted railroad planners. As early as 1858, Pacific Railroad Company agents purchased dozens of acres of land for road right-of-way and commercial lots near Pleasant Hill. The new railroad would travel through the settlement of Wyoming, just a mile down the hill to the southwest from town.<sup>20</sup> Area residents greatly anticipated the coming of the railroad; however, the track had only made it to Sedalia by the outbreak of the Civil War, at which time the company suspended construction.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., A6.

<sup>16</sup> Secondary resources indicate various dates for the incorporation of the City of Pleasant Hill. The City’s charter from the State of the Missouri is dated 1859.

<sup>17</sup> Rick Montgomery and Shirl Kasper, *Kansas City An American Story* (Kansas City, Missouri: Kansas City Star Books, 1999), 65.

<sup>18</sup> The Pacific Railroad Company was later known as Atlantic Pacific (c.1866-c.1876); Missouri Pacific (c.1876-c.1982); and Union Pacific (c.1982-present).

<sup>19</sup> Sherry Lamb Schirmer and Richard D. McKinzie, *At the River’s Bend: An Illustrated History of Kansas City* (Woodland Hills, California: Windsor Publications, Inc. in association with the Jackson County Historical Society, 1982), 41.

<sup>20</sup> Middleton, A7.

## **CIVIL UNREST — BORDER AND CIVIL WARS: 1855-1865**

The rural settlements and small communities of Cass County had barely established themselves when sectional conflict interrupted their growth. Rescinding the Missouri Compromise, Congress voted to allow the citizens of the new Kansas and Nebraska territories to decide the issue of slave status. The conflict over admission of slave or free territories soon consumed the area along Missouri's western border. Pro-slavery supporters crossed the line, staked claims in Kansas, and sought to establish the institution in the new territory. Among those opposed to slavery were abolitionists who were just as determined that Kansas should become a free state. As the Kansas-Nebraska territory opened for settlement in 1856, both sides tried to control the election of either a pro- or anti-slavery legislature. As a result, open conflict along the Missouri-Kansas border escalated and dominated events for the next decade.

Sharing its western boarder with the Kansas Territory, Cass County became a center of conflict. Pleasant Hill Township became a route through which opposing forces traveled. Settlers in the area suffered numerous raids. Theft, destruction of property, and outright killings were not uncommon prior to and during the Civil War. As hostilities escalated in 1858 and 1859, a general exodus from the region began.

Federal troops occupied Pleasant Hill when the Civil War began and remained for the duration of the conflict. Partisan raids across the Missouri-Kansas border began anew and the area became a war zone. From this time forward, troops from each side regularly rounded up livestock and confiscated wagons, foodstuffs, and other private property. Pleasant Hill suffered the consequences of occupation as pro-slavery Bushwhackers regularly raided and burned federally occupied buildings and the surrounding countryside served as battlefields for various skirmishes.

On August 25, 1863, Brigadier General Thomas C. Ewing, in an effort to stop guerrilla efforts along the border, issued "General Order Number Eleven," which established martial law in the four counties bordering the Kansas territory, including Cass County. The order required all civilians to leave their homes and businesses and to move to Union Army outposts and register. The order forced those who could not prove their loyalty to the Union to leave the county. Federal and Kansas volunteer troops then confiscated all crops and livestock and burned the farms and businesses in the countryside in an effort to destroy any shelter or foodstuffs accessible to the southern guerrilla forces. The order effectively depopulated Jackson, Cass, Bates, and

part of Vernon counties and caused great bitterness among the area's residents. The fires from burning homes, businesses, crops, fields, and woods gave the area the name "Burnt District."<sup>21</sup> At the close of the Civil War, Pleasant Hill residents faced the near complete destruction of their town on the ridge.

### **BOOM YEARS: THE ARRIVAL OF THE RAILROAD (1865–1870)**

Immediately following the Civil War, the Pacific Railroad Company resumed grading and laying tracks west from Sedalia. Though commercial development had stagnated during the previous five years, Pleasant Hill's position as a regional trading hub remained intact. The resumption of railroad plans through Pleasant Hill fed the physical and emotional need to rebuild after a decade of conflict and destruction.

By June 1865, the road reached Kingsville, with grading complete through Pleasant Hill. The flanking acreage purchased by the Pacific Railroad Company seven years earlier had been surveyed and platted into commercial lots, effectively engulfing the Wyoming settlement with what quickly became known as "New Town" Pleasant Hill.<sup>22</sup>

The Pacific Railroad Company advertised the sale of their new town lots. A 1913 account from George D. Hope recalled the June 1865 sale as having "the usual accompaniment of brass band and free lunch."<sup>23</sup> The lots reportedly went for "big prices" because "money was beginning to come in plentiful to the 'New Town' Pleasant Hill." As a result, Hope and two business partners "concluded that there would be considerable building [in Pleasant Hill] and immediately made [their] plans to open a lumber yard."<sup>24</sup> Anticipation ran high and within four months of the sale, six additional plats were filed for approximately sixty blocks, extending in each direction from the Pacific Railroad additions.

Typically, town streets throughout the Midwest were oriented by compass points. While each of the new additions followed this traditional plat configuration, The Pacific Railroad bisected the town on a bias and platted its additions parallel to the tracks. As a result, the layout of downtown Pleasant Hill includes irregular and triangular lots

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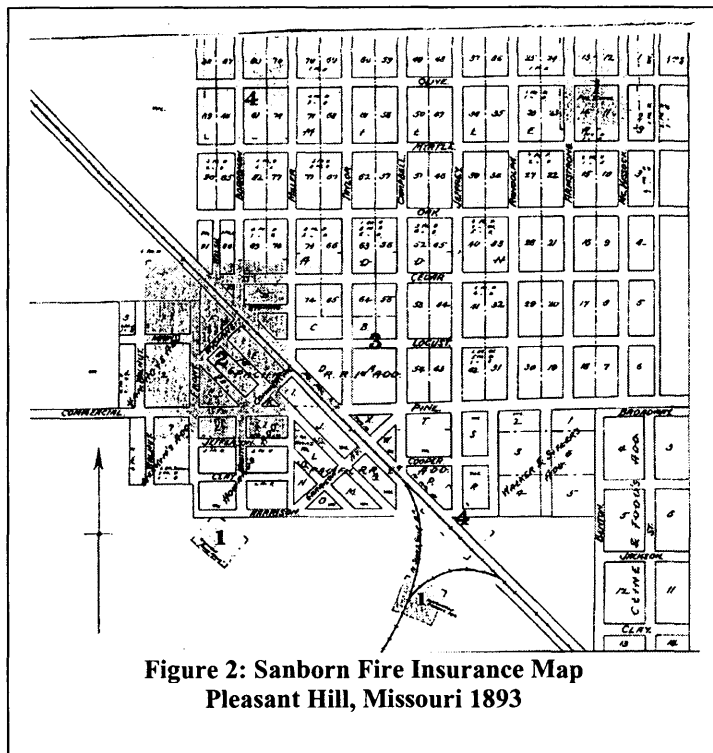
<sup>21</sup> Edward E. Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride* (New York: Random House, 1996), 258-62.

<sup>22</sup> At present, no map has been located of the Wyoming settlement and its original configuration is unknown. Pleasant Hill's Wyoming Street is a reference to the original settlement

<sup>23</sup> Middleton, A21.

<sup>24</sup> Middleton, A21.

and odd intersections that continue to organize the central city landscape today (See Figure 2).



Railroad crews completed the new railroad through Pleasant Hill in July, working their way toward crews concurrently rebuilding tracks southeast from Kansas City, Missouri.<sup>25</sup> They met in Independence, Missouri and the first train passed through “New Town” Pleasant Hill on September 20, 1865 on its way from Kansas City to St. Louis.

Even before a depot could be constructed, the promise of the railroad brought new investors to Pleasant Hill and business houses previously established in “Old Town” began moving to “New Town.” Within four years,

thirteen additions were made to the City of Pleasant Hill, expanding “New Town” in all directions. Residents even moved homes not destroyed during the Border and Civil Wars to “Middle Town” or “New Town.”<sup>26</sup>

By 1867, the city had quadrupled its pre-Civil War population, boasting 2,200 residents — more than twice Harrisonville’s population at the time. As the City surged past Harrisonville in regional importance, some of the City’s residents promoted a passionate but short-lived campaign to form a new county with Pleasant Hill as the county seat.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> The line from Kansas City to Independence was completed in 1864, but was destroyed by Sterling Price’s Raid later the same year. Missouri Pacific Historical Society, *Missouri Pacific (Railroad) History* [article online]; available from [http://mopac.org/history\\_mp.html](http://mopac.org/history_mp.html); Internet; accessed 02 December 2003.

<sup>26</sup> Middleton, A21.

<sup>27</sup> The new county was to be named Richland County.

While some businesses and residents stayed in “Old Town,” “New Town” rapidly took shape as the commercial heart of Pleasant Hill. A streetscape of wood frame buildings interspersed with brick commercial blocks emerged along First and Wyoming streets. The enormous amount of construction during this short period supported three local lumberyards: Scott-Hope; William Myers; and Farmer-Jones, the predecessor of J. C. Jones Lumber Company.

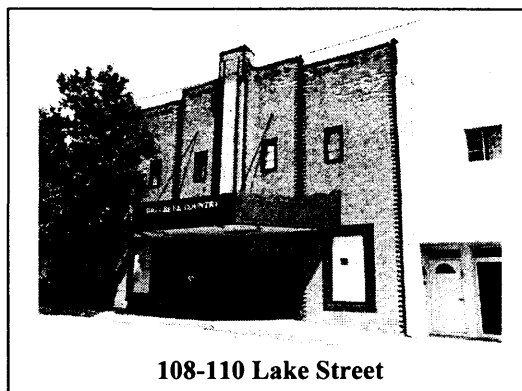
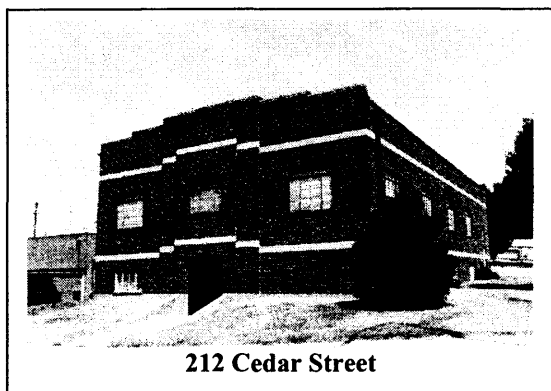
Within five years, Pleasant Hill boasted three druggists, nine doctors, two banks, two newspapers, a meat market, numerous mercantile and dry goods stores, as well as a jeweler, a wholesale harness and saddle dealer, and at least two beer breweries and a beer garden. Carpenters, undertakers, various merchants, and stove and tinware salesmen operated shops in these newly constructed buildings. At least five mills and factories operated around the clock, shipping a variety of goods to locations as distant as Texas and New York. New saloons and hotels prospered with the booming population and steady stage and rail traffic.



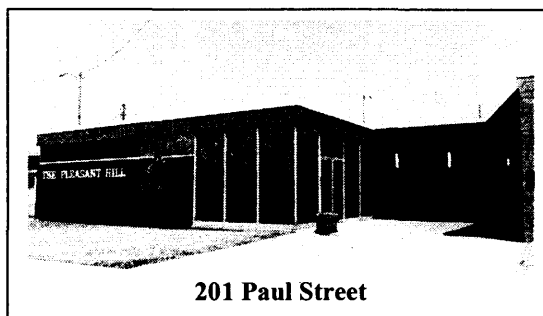
**1869 Bird's Eye View  
Pleasant Hill, Missouri**  
*(Library of Congress Railroad Map Collection)*

## MODERN MOVEMENT

In Pleasant Hill, examples of Modern Movement design date from 1918 to 1959. During this period, architects began applying the streamlined forms popular in industrial design to buildings.<sup>69</sup> In the 1930s, the Moderne style featured cubic and cylindrical forms with a horizontal emphasis, smooth surfaces, curving shapes, and a minimum of ornamentation. Cast concrete, buff-colored brick, glass, and steel replaced dark red brick and stone. The vertical, rectilinear Art Deco style brought structural glass and marble, bronze, and terracotta into common usage in commercial and institutional buildings. The result was an overall geometrical treatment of the primary façades.<sup>70</sup> Contrasting brick and/or stone elements and stepped parapets often delineated these motifs. The Memorial Building at **212 Cedar Street** and the People's Theatre at **108-110 Lake Street**, both constructed in 1948, exhibit Modern Movement stylistic influences.



The contemporaneous International Style favored the removal of decorative detailing to emphasize flat roofs, cantilevered projections, and long ribbons of windows balanced by blank expanses of exterior wall. After World War II, the low, wide form of the International Style became Americanized as wood, brick, or stone often replaced the stark white stucco walls that characterized the European version. The Booth Public Library at **125 Lake Street** and the Pleasant Hill Bank at **201 Paul Street** reflect these influences.

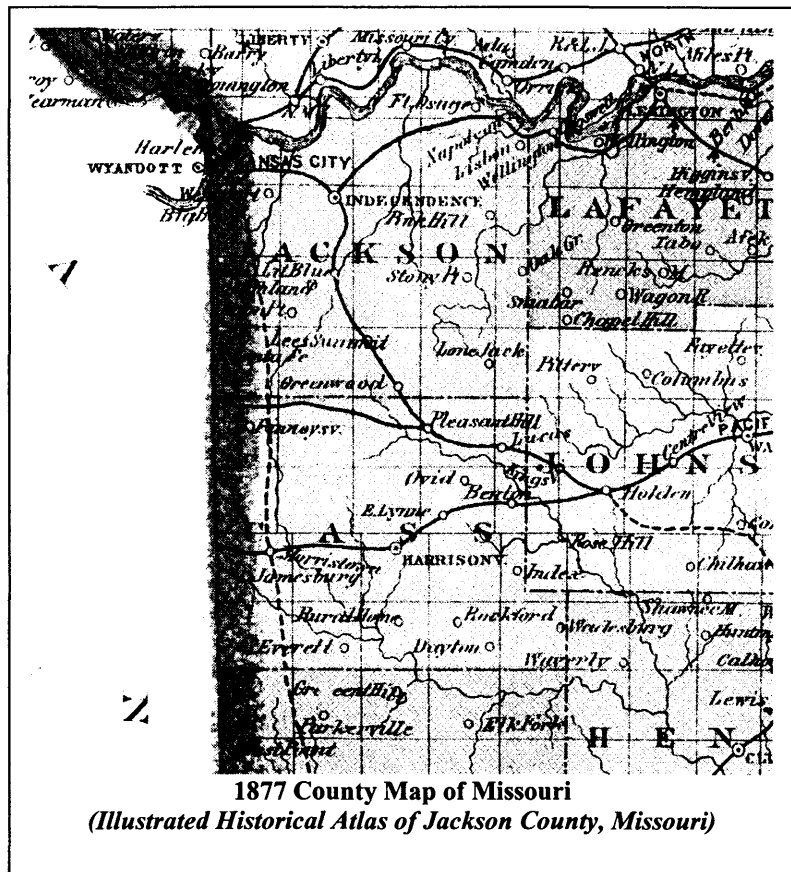


<sup>69</sup> McAlester, 468.

## THRIVING COMMERCIAL HUB OF CASS COUNTY (1870-1900)

Widespread railroad expansion across the nation quickly blanketed Missouri. Of the 114 counties in the state, only 6 were without a railroad at the end of the century.<sup>28</sup> Regional hubs like Pleasant Hill reaped the benefits of this expansion. In addition to daily stage lines to and from various inland locations, Pleasant Hill boasted three rail connections by the end of the nineteenth century. The growing number of businesses in Pleasant Hill reflected prosperous times. Despite national economic depressions in 1873 and 1893, Pleasant Hill's access to multiple transportation routes ensured a stable local economy during the latter part of the nineteenth century.

In 1869, Kansas City's new bridge across the Missouri River and its pending connection to the Hannibal & St. Joseph railroad had St. Louis fearing diminished trade with the west. As a result, the St. Louis owners of the Pacific Railroad Company pushed for the completion of a branch line from Pleasant Hill to Lawrence, Kansas. Concurrently, Pleasant Hill feared a pinch on their regional trade due to the construction of the Ft. Scott and Gulf Road forty miles to the west and of the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Lines twelve miles to south. Eager for additional railroad access, the



<sup>28</sup> Howard L. Conrad, ed., *Encyclopedia of the History of Missouri: Railroads* (New York, Louisville, and St. Louis: Southern History Co., 1901) [book online]; available from <http://tacnet.missouri.org/~mgood/history/railroads.html>; Internet; accessed 10 November 2003.

City pledged \$50,000 toward the Pacific Railroad branch line.<sup>29</sup> Completed in 1871, the St. Louis, Lawrence & Denver<sup>30</sup> line saved twenty miles over the earlier route through Kansas City, effectively bypassing it. The additional line further boosted Pleasant Hill's growth and confidence as the most rail-accessible point in the county at the time.

Within a decade, the Atlantic Pacific Railroad Company (previously Pacific Railroad Company) completed a second branch line south from Pleasant Hill through Harrisonville for the Lexington & Southern Railway Company. All freight from Kansas City bound for the Missouri, Kansas & Texas line (which ran through Harrisonville) now passed through Pleasant Hill. With three railroad lines through town, the *Local-Dispatch* warned readers against leaving horses unhitched with "trains passing through almost every hour."<sup>31</sup> Railroad maps from the era show Pleasant Hill as a hub with "spokes" in four directions.

Pleasant Hill's robust economy expanded and diversified, supporting numerous competing businesses, including dozens of grocery stores and meat markets, seven clothing houses, five saloons, and five hotels. One- and two-part commercial buildings lined the blocks adjacent to the railroad tracks and from the retail center,



<sup>29</sup> Belton, Grandview, and Kansas City Railroad Co., "Belton's Railroad History 1880's to 1960's" (Belton, Missouri: Smoky Hill Railway & Historical Society, Inc., 2003) [article online]; available from <http://www.orgsites.com/mo/beltonrailroad/LBR-43.doc>; Internet; accessed 10 November 2003

<sup>30</sup> The 1887 *Commissioners Official Railway Map of Missouri* shows this line as the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railroad. By 1901, it was known as the Kansas City, Clinton & Springfield railroad.

<sup>31</sup> Middleton, A40.

industrial businesses extended along the tracks in each direction. Local businessmen formed trade groups and commercial clubs, striving to build on Pleasant Hill's commercial power to attract new industries and businesses to town.

In addition to retail businesses and professional services, Pleasant Hill rose to prominence as a leading manufacturing and wholesaling center in the region. Inland mills and manufacturing enterprises could not compete as railroad access had become essential for business success. Pleasant Hill's transportation connections brought Noah Hunt and his flour mill works from Lone Jack to Pleasant Hill in 1897.<sup>32</sup> His Pleasant Hill Milling Company thrived and became one of the leading milling enterprises in the region. The Kellogg Cut Flower and Plant Company became the "largest greenhouse west of the Mississippi."<sup>33</sup> A carriage factory, a woolen mill, a cigar factory, an electric belt manufactory, two canning factories, a bottling works, a marble works, a brick works, a chair factory, and a wagon scale manufacturing company all took advantage of the commercial synergy created by multiple transportation routes.

While commercial growth was solid within Pleasant Hill, the economy of the region remained largely dependent on agricultural production, which grew steadily. During this period, Cass County consistently reported corn and hay yields that were better than the statewide average.<sup>34</sup> As the shipping point for the surrounding agricultural region, most area harvests passed through Pleasant Hill. In addition to widespread cultivation, livestock was a significant component of the regional economy and stockyards developed along the railroad tracks in Pleasant Hill. According to Missouri State Agricultural census data from the period, there was more than one milk cow and three pigs for every person in Cass County.<sup>35</sup> To be at the center of the regional livestock trade, T. A. Simpson established his prize-winning Hereford stock farms at Pleasant Hill during this period.

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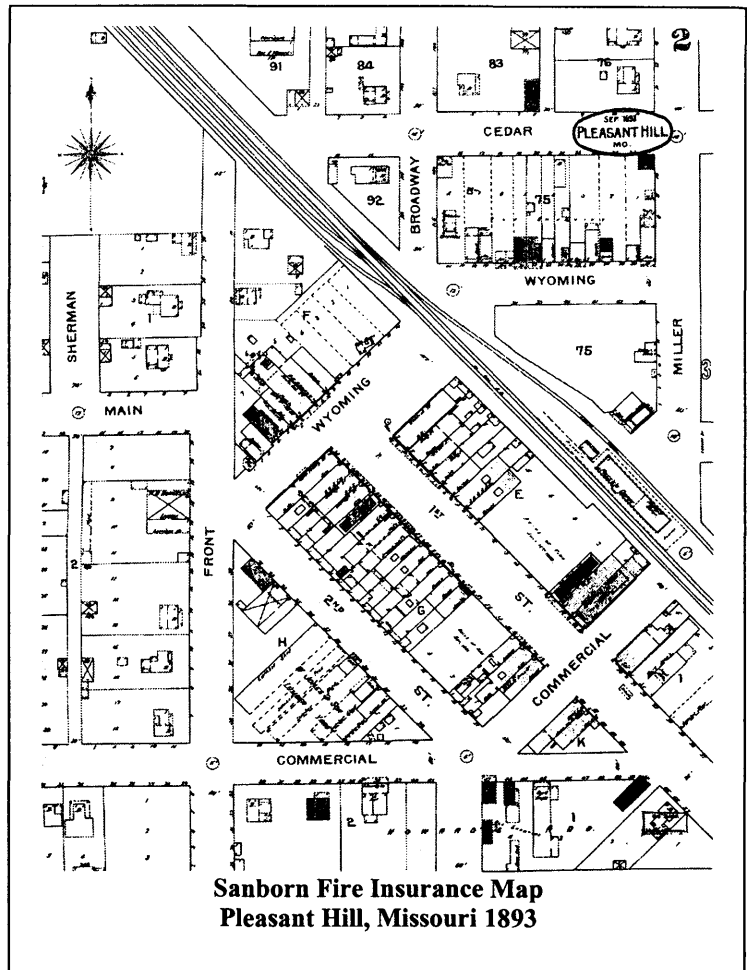
<sup>32</sup> Middleton, A77.

<sup>33</sup> Middleton, A35.

<sup>34</sup> Missouri Agricultural Statistics Service, *Missouri State and County Agri-facts* (Jefferson City, Missouri: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, 1999) [census statistics online]; available from <http://agebb.missouri.edu/mass/agrifact/index.htm>; Internet; accessed 18 November 2003.

<sup>35</sup> Missouri Agricultural Statistics Service, *Missouri State and County Agri-facts* (Jefferson City: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, 1999) [census statistics online]; available from <http://agebb.missouri.edu/mass/agrifact/index.htm>; Internet; accessed 18 November 2003.

The cohesive appearance of downtown Pleasant Hill changed drastically during the final decades of the nineteenth century as fire plagued the City on numerous occasions. With no city water system or fire department, many of these fires almost burned out of control. Three in particular proved significantly destructive to the downtown commercial district. The first occurred on July 13, 1888 and destroyed a row of seven frame buildings on the east end of Wyoming Street, next to the railroad tracks. The second engulfed four buildings on the southwest side of First Street on the night of February 13, 1891. Less than three years later, on the night of July 15, 1893, a third fire destroyed an additional six buildings on the southeast side of First Street. Six weeks later, Pleasant Hill's fire department formed.



Constructed at 121 First Street in 1894, one of the earliest buildings to fill one of the gaps left by the fires was a two-story drug store and office building described as “a jewel in a pig’s snout” in reference to the poor appearance of the surrounding streetscape.<sup>36</sup> The gaping holes on Wyoming and First streets were slow to fill; as late as 1898, only six buildings had been constructed on the seventeen lots laid to waste by fire.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Middleton, A76.

<sup>37</sup> It would take another two decades to fill most of these lots. Two of these lots (103-105 Wyoming Street and 125 First Street) remained vacant until circa 1995.

**Figure 3:  
Population of Pleasant Hill<sup>38</sup>**

| <b>1867</b> | <b>c.1885</b> | <b>1890</b> | <b>c.1895</b> |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| 2,200       | 3,000         | 2,200       | 2,500         |

### **EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900–1929)**

At the turn of the twentieth century, Pleasant Hill's commercial strength continued to lie in its transportation connections. The multiple railroad lines provided the underpinning for manufacturing and freight businesses and the regional roads facilitated the farm-to-market economic sector. In spite of wartime restrictions, an agricultural recession, and the



**Train Passengers at Pleasant Hill, circa 1910**  
*(Pleasant Hill Historical Society Archives)*

onset of the Great Depression, Pleasant Hill provided critical trade and employment opportunities for the surrounding region during the early twentieth century.

Nationwide railroad expansion continued into the early twentieth century and Cass County boasted approximately two hundred miles of track along seven main and branch lines during this period. Rock Island Railroad Company's new line to Kansas City from Johnson County, Missouri arrived in Pleasant Hill in 1904. Crews constructed a "Y" track to connect the new road with the Missouri Pacific (previously Pacific Railroad) tracks southeast of downtown and, shortly thereafter, a depot was erected. That year, after their loss of the Kansas City, Clinton, & Springfield line through town, and with Harrisonville's solid role as the railroad hub of the county, Pleasant Hill welcomed the new Rock Island line enthusiastically.

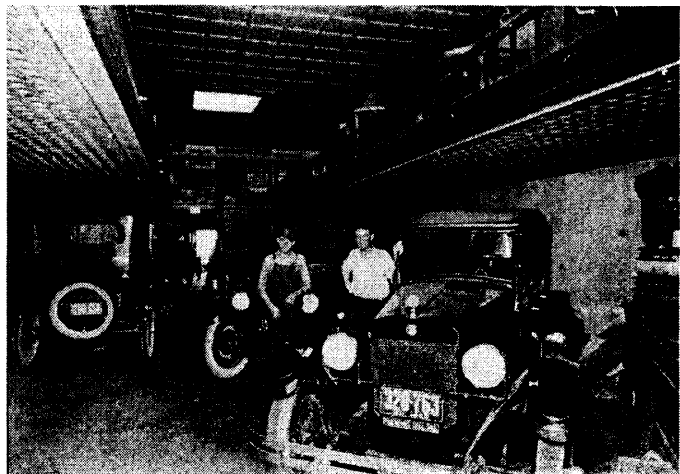
During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the railroad was the primary means of long-distance travel. However, the growth of the market economy across the

<sup>38</sup> Middleton and Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.

rural Midwest during this period underscored the need for all-weather roads. Well-maintained roads provided farmers easy access to markets and made a significant difference in the economic health of rural trade centers such as Pleasant Hill.

Vehicular roads became increasingly important priorities for local and county governments and Cass County developed rock road initiatives as early as the mid-1890s. The City of Pleasant Hill responded by purchasing a rock crusher in 1904 for the specific purpose of improving City's streets. Upon completion in 1909, the North Rock Road — which began at the intersection of Cedar and Lake streets in Pleasant Hill, traveled east to Main Street, then went north to the Jackson-Cass county line — was the first road of its kind in the county.

The nationwide fascination with the automobile reached Pleasant Hill and by 1909, about a dozen automobiles maneuvered the City's streets and Schultz' Garage became the first auto repair shop in town. What was initially deemed a passing infatuation became a valid means of transporting goods and passengers. As early as 1915, the *Kansas City (MO) Star* reported that diminished railroad passenger volume was resulting in higher rates for train travel.<sup>39</sup> By the late 1920s, Missouri Pacific began



**Knorpp Auto on South First Street, circa 1922**  
*(Pleasant Hill Historical Society Archives)*

cutting passenger trains through Pleasant Hill. Also reflecting this shift were the new taxi and bus services available in Pleasant Hill, three new filling stations, and an auto campground that hosted an average of three groups a night.

As roads improved and automobiles became increasingly affordable, the car became ubiquitous in the United States. In 1917, with Jackson County's completion of White Cloud Road, which connected North Rock Road to the Lee's Summit-Lone Jack Road,<sup>40</sup> a hard-surface road linked Pleasant Hill to Kansas City.<sup>41</sup> In Pleasant Hill, the

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<sup>39</sup> Middleton, G19.

<sup>40</sup> What is now Highway 50.

number of automobiles downtown led to traffic congestion by the mid-1920s. As a result, the City authorized parking regulations that prohibited parking down the middle of First Street.<sup>42</sup> Additionally, the City established a parking lot at the northeast corner of Lake and Locust streets.



South First Street (Looking South), 1920s  
(Pleasant Hill Historical Society Archives)

During the 1910s and 1920s, local, state, and federal highway projects responded to the growing demand for paved roads. Such projects profoundly affected and were influenced by commercial centers like Pleasant Hill. The routing of highways through, around, or past communities created growth patterns that often changed the town's physical orientation and stimulated development away from the traditional town center.

While the railroad provided market transportation during the previous half-century, truck delivery of goods was on the rise and the automobile was increasingly the preferred mode of travel. At this time, Pleasant Hill experienced the beginning of a physical shift to the east of its established commercial center, ironically returning to the location of the town's commercial beginnings along Main Street. A 1912 resurfacing project map shows State Highway 7 continuing south along Main Street, with the route through downtown shown as a business "loop."

Constructed using a total of \$52,000 from local landowners along the route, as well as city, state and federal monies, the development of a permanent highway between Pleasant Hill and Harrisonville extended and improved State Highway 7 to the south. Landowners along Main Street anticipated the potential commercial and residential growth east of the town center and subscribed to pay for grading and the installation of culverts.

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<sup>41</sup> Middleton, A75.

<sup>42</sup> Henceforth, diagonal parking along the curbs was required.

During the summer of 1929, road crews paved State Highway 7 with concrete slab, beginning in Pleasant Hill and continuing north to the county line. State Highway 7, which was already a well-traveled road, became a thoroughfare for traffic leading across eastern Cass and Jackson counties.

Due in large part to solid transportation routes, commercial and manufacturing investment marked this period in Pleasant Hill. As the twentieth century progressed, late nineteenth century commercial businesses evolved with the City's economy. The local mercantile or dry goods store became the dime store. Automobile service stations replaced harness shops and livery stables, and movie theaters replaced the opera house. New buildings and new businesses filled lots that were vacant for two decades, and downtown commercial lots doubled in value from \$250 in 1901 to \$500 in 1902.<sup>43</sup> By 1915, downtown buildings were selling for between \$4,000 and \$6,000.<sup>44</sup> A 1925 *Pleasant Hill Times* article reported that downtown Pleasant Hill property values had risen 60 percent from 1918 values.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to new construction, this era of commercial growth resulted in numerous expansions and remodeling projects. Downtown building owners and retailers "modernized" their "old" nineteenth century storefronts by covering upper façades with pressed metal or stucco or by installing new storefront window systems that often included brick bulkheads and tinted prism transom glass.

Coinciding with downtown retail investment, Pleasant Hill's industrial sector grew significantly during this period. Existing companies such as McDonald Scale, Hunt Brothers Milling, and Kellogg's Flower & Plant modernized machinery, expanded their facilities, and improved infrastructure to bring water, electricity, and good roads to their plants. Many new manufacturing enterprises arrived in Pleasant Hill during this time as well, often citing transportation connections and complementary businesses as their attractions to the area. By the 1920s, new industrial concerns in Pleasant Hill included a poultry plant, a slaughterhouse, two milk plants, a Coca-Cola distribution facility, a publishing company, and garment and glove manufactories.

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<sup>43</sup> Middleton, B8.

<sup>44</sup> Middleton, C13.

<sup>45</sup> Middleton, D38.

One of the most significant investments was the development of the Green Power & Light Company plant in 1918. The plant not only provided additional electric service to Pleasant Hill,<sup>46</sup> it also provided power to over fifty towns and small cities throughout



**Green Power & Light Company Plant, circa 1920**  
(*Pleasant Hill Historical Society Archives*)

west central Missouri. In addition, to have a stable water supply for their power generation needs, the company constructed Baldwin Lake, which also served as a new City reservoir.<sup>47</sup> When the Green Power & Light Company was consolidated into the Missouri Public Service Company in 1927, the *Pleasant Hill Times* lamented the loss of the family business and heralded their achievements in Pleasant Hill: “[they have] been one of the greatest factors in the development the community . . . with[in] the last decade.”<sup>48</sup>

The national agricultural recession of the 1920s substantially affected rural Cass County. Farm ownership dropped 20 percent and tenant farming increased by approximately the same amount.<sup>49</sup> *The Pleasant Hill Times* reported a drop in farm

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<sup>46</sup> Pleasant Hill began using electricity in 1903.

<sup>47</sup> The City struggled with poor water quality from its well-water works since 1911.

<sup>48</sup> Middleton, D48.

<sup>49</sup> Missouri Agricultural Statistics Service, *Missouri State and County Agri-facts* (Jefferson City: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, 1999) [census statistics online]; available from <http://agebb.missouri.edu/mass/agrifact/index.htm>; Internet; accessed 18 November 2003.

prices from \$120 per acre in 1920 to \$88 per acre in 1925. These values dropped an additional \$5 per acre by 1929.

Though the value of farmland and publicly traded agricultural products dropped, agriculture-related industries in Pleasant Hill prospered and provided a much needed economic lifeline for area farmers. Improved roads and proximity to Kansas City provided an additional boost to regional agriculture during this period. In Pleasant Hill, truck farming became common. Small ten-acre farms devoted to supplying produce for the Kansas City market developed along Main Street and the North Rock Road. As the farthest point from which truck-delivered milk could still be considered Grade A, Pleasant

Hill's location became a great advantage for local dairies during such lean times. The two milk plants in Pleasant Hill, which received a combined 3,900 gallons of milk per day during the early 1920s, reported increased volumes during the mid-1920s. Booth Farms & Hatchery Company, established in Pleasant Hill in the early 1920s, expanded rapidly during this period to become one of the largest hatcheries in the nation.<sup>50</sup> *The Pleasant Hill Times* declared these industries extremely valuable assets to



**Pleasant Hill Cooperative Dairy Association's  
Delivery Truck in Kansas City, 1920s  
(Pleasant Hill Historical Society Archives)**

Pleasant Hill, providing a steady stream of cash for area farmers who came to town regularly to do business.<sup>51</sup>

Improvements in public facilities and citywide services marked the period leading up to the Great Depression. In the downtown commercial district, "granitoid" sidewalks

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<sup>50</sup> Complementing the hatchery business, Booth established *The Standard Poultry Journal*, which circulated 150,000 copies per month by 1929.

<sup>51</sup> Middleton, D13, D35.

replaced the nineteenth century wooden plank walkways and electric lamp posts lined First Street. During the early 1910s, telephone service reached 750 Pleasant Hill residents, and six rural mail delivery routes served area farmers. By 1915, the City had macadamized First Street out to the eastern city limits. The public passed bond issues for the completion of new City water and sewer systems by 1919 and for the construction of the first local high school in 1923.

**Figure 4: Population of Pleasant Hill<sup>52</sup>**

| <b><u>1900</u></b> | <b><u>1910</u></b> | <b><u>1913</u></b> | <b><u>1920</u></b> | <b><u>1925</u></b> | <b><u>1932</u></b> | <b><u>1960</u></b> |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 2,002              | 2,065              | 2,500              | 1,965              | 2,235              | 2,330              | 2,689              |

“Today the town has everything — electricity, gas, water, sewers, highways, mail delivery, over four hundred automobiles, it has . . . great greenhouses . . . it has the big milk plants, the big flour mills, the Standard Poultry Journal now circulating 150,000 copies monthly, the Belsaw Corporation, the huge Booth hatcheries, the biggest postal receipts of any town in the 6<sup>th</sup> congressional district save Clinton, the American Scale, Kansas City freight rate, bus and railroad service. It is within an hour by highway of the heart of Kansas City. These are elements of growth. And Pleasant Hill will grow.”<sup>53</sup>

*Pleasant Hill Times*, August 16,  
1929

## **THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND WAR (1930–1945)**

The Great Depression hit Cass County full force. Already hit by recessions in the 1920s, the county’s many farmers were particularly vulnerable. A regional drought from 1935 to 1937 compounded the austere conditions for farm families and dimmed hopes of immediate recovery. Many regional farmers lost their farms and a number of Cass County banks folded. Although Pleasant Hill lost several businesses and the growth of the previous decades slowed, the City’s banks continued to be solvent and the local economy remained relatively steady. Recently improved transportation arteries and economic staples such as the milk plants, the hatchery, the mill, and other manufacturing concerns provided critical stability.

<sup>52</sup> Middleton and Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps.

<sup>53</sup> Middleton, D59.

Responding to the combination of drought and the Great Depression, Federal relief programs came to the nation's aid. Numerous programs, such as the Works Projects Administration (WPA); the Public Works Administration (PWA); and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) had a significant impact on local economic conditions and on the visual landscape. Through these programs, local governments received funding for construction of public buildings and infrastructure, both of which provided jobs and stimulated the economy.

Projects receiving PWA funds were usually major long-range construction programs that employed skilled workers and benefited the general public. A \$55,000 PWA grant enabled the City of Pleasant Hill to build the Municipal Power Plant in 1939 and disconnect from the Missouri Public Service Corporation.

Additional Depression-era programs included commissions for works of art in public places through the U.S. Treasury Department's Section of Painting and Sculpture. In particular, this program was responsible for the installation of artwork in over 1,100 post offices nationwide, including the Pleasant Hill post office constructed in 1938. The mural, *Back Home: April 1865* by Tom Lea, depicts the destruction and desolation of the region during the Border and Civil wars.



**Detail of *Back Home: April 1865*  
by Tom Lea**

Although private construction and expansion generally stalled during this period, significant investment continued in Pleasant Hill. At least six downtown buildings underwent remodeling and Colonial Poultry and the Masonic Lodge constructed new buildings on Cedar Street.

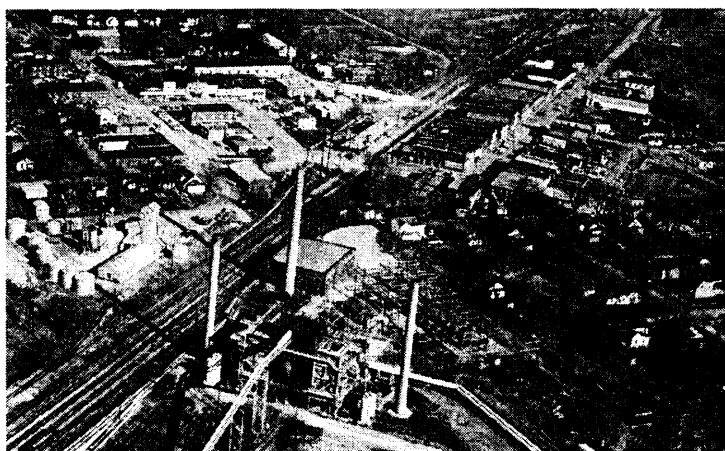
The general disruption of private construction resulting from the Great Depression continued after the United States entered World War II. As the nation refitted for wartime production, public works efforts also ceased. During the war years, while a housing shortage in Pleasant Hill resulted in the relocation from Belton of at least

eleven bungalows, little change occurred to the infrastructure or the appearance of the downtown commercial district.<sup>54</sup>

## **POST-WORLD WAR II PLEASANT HILL**

By the end of World War II, Pleasant Hill's nineteenth- and early twentieth-century commercial district reflected the effects of the Great Depression and the rationed resources of the wartime period. As in many American cities in the late 1940s, poorly maintained older buildings received storefront "updates." An immense wave of new construction also significantly altered the appearance of downtown Pleasant Hill, particularly on the east side of the railroad tracks, along Paul, Lake, and Cedar streets. The amount of post-war remodeling and new construction is not surprising. Almost twenty years passed during which the Great Depression and wartime restrictions severely constrained construction and commercial opportunities. Thus, there was a real and psychological need for new clear symbols of progress.

Reportedly inspired by the American Legion War Dads cooperative efforts to construct a Memorial Building, the Pleasant Hill Chamber of Commerce sponsored and promoted what became known as the "Big Build." Beginning at the close of World War



**Aerial View of Pleasant Hill, Missouri, circa 1960**  
(Pleasant Hill Historical Society Archives)

II in 1945, it was to be the "most ambitious project for town beautification ever undertaken in Pleasant Hill."<sup>55</sup> The heart of this community development project centered on the transformation of the nineteenth century Paul Street business block into a modern civic center.<sup>56</sup> The plan commenced in 1948 with the demolition of late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings, the widening of Paul Street, and the construction of

<sup>54</sup> Norma Middleton, "When the houses came rolling to town," *Pleasant Hill (MO) Times*, Pleasant Hill, Missouri: Pleasant Hill Historical Society & Museum Archives.

<sup>55</sup> Norma Middleton, "Pleasant Hill's new Civic Center," *Pleasant Hill (MO) Times*, April 25, 1990, p.10.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

the Memorial Building. Coinciding with these improvements, numerous additional projects took place throughout Pleasant Hill during the same year, with the investment totaling almost \$1 million.<sup>57</sup> New buildings under construction included James Rowe's new auto garage on Boardman Street, the Allen Motor Company dealership on Cedar Street, and the Booth Public Library on Lake Street. The People's Theater underwent a major remodeling, as did the neighboring commercial building at 104 South Lake Street and the Prewitt & Sons factory on lower South First Street. In addition, the construction of the State Highway 7 bypass and the Lake Pleasant Hill reservoir were both underway at this time. More construction occurred in Pleasant Hill during the "Big Build" than during any other period since the late 1860s.<sup>58</sup>

The momentum of the "Big Build" continued through the 1950s, resulting in additional remodelings, new construction, and the eventual completion of the 1945 revitalization campaign. The development project culminated in 1959 with the erection of the Pleasant Hill Bank and the Pleasant Hill City Hall buildings in the Paul Street Civic Center block.

The completion of the State Highway 7 realignment in 1949 effectively diverted traffic about a mile east of the downtown commercial district. New construction and commercial development concentrated along the improved route and national trends materialized in Pleasant Hill as convenience stores, gas stations, restaurants, and new housing developments appeared along State Highway 7.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCIAL ARCHITECTURE IN PLEASANT HILL: 1865-1959**

### **LOCATION AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

During western Missouri's early settlement period, access to water, suitable building materials, and roads influenced the location, configuration, and physical appearance of towns such as "Old Town" Pleasant Hill. The arrival of the railroad and its alignments drastically effected the location and configuration of new and existing towns. While many new towns were born by the railroad, existing towns like Pleasant Hill physically moved to meet the new transportation line.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

Railroad companies anticipated this shift and in addition to the right-of-way, they often bought supplemental acreage to plat into saleable commercial and industrial lots. Typically aligned parallel to the railroad tracks, the configuration of lots and streets in downtown Pleasant Hill, specifically along First, Front, Wyoming, and Commercial streets, reflects this development pattern.

## **PROPERTY TYPE AND MATERIALS**

The evolution of Pleasant Hill's commercial center mirrored that of other growing commercial centers in the region. Most of the early commercial buildings were simple wood frame structures capable of housing various business functions. As soon as possible, often due to fire damage, owners replaced their first buildings with more permanent masonry structures. Most were one or two stories in height with local merchants and businesses occupying the ground floor. Rooms on the upper floors served as professional offices, assembly rooms, or residential space for the merchants' families or tenants.

After the Border and Civil Wars, the cities and towns of western Missouri experienced a physical and emotional need to make order from the chaos of these conflicts. Through the boom years of the late nineteenth century, the shape of the downtown business center expanded as more retail shops, banks, industrial supply companies, offices, and hotels began to appear.<sup>59</sup> Within five years of the end of the Civil War and the subsequent arrival of the railroad, beginning at the Missouri Pacific depot, Pleasant Hill's central commercial district at "New Town" expanded two blocks in each direction.

Most nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial buildings were built to be seen from the front rather than as freestanding objects. As a result, the main façade provided commercial architecture with its distinctive qualities. Sidewalls were often party walls shared with or secured to those of the adjacent structure. Walls at the end of blocks or facing onto alleys had simple, utilitarian design treatments. Lot dimensions determined form and commercial buildings filled most if not all of their respective lots. Most lots shared standard dimensions, were rectangular, and were much deeper than they were wide.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Early accounts indicate that many of the first buildings on South First Street stood on pilings above the chronically flooded lowland of Big Creek.

<sup>60</sup> Richard Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture* (Washington D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1987), 17.

The composition of most retail and industrial building façades can be reduced to a few simple designs that reveal the major divisions of function. Those designed for human occupation, rather than industrial processing or storage, reflect an effort to provide the greatest possible amount of natural light and air through the use of large display windows, transom windows, light wells, and skylights.<sup>61</sup> Those designed for industrial processing and/or storage, provide space to accommodate machinery, shelter and store goods, and have limited front office space. Materials such as doors, windows, cornices, decorative details, and stylistic expressions were secondary characteristics reflecting the basic composition of the building.<sup>62</sup> In downtown Pleasant Hill, the extant historic commercial buildings fall into two distinct types — one- and two-part commercial blocks and industrial facilities.

Whether executed in a popular style or a simple generic design, the downtown retail commercial buildings found in communities like Pleasant Hill most commonly took the form of one- or two-part commercial block types.<sup>63</sup> Other identified forms include False Front and Tapestry Brick designs.

The industrial buildings found in downtown Pleasant Hill are located at the edge of the retail district. Their design and materials are function-specific. The builders utilized both traditional and new construction techniques and materials in a variety of combinations to create efficient, functional space. Stylistic concerns were secondary for these building types, often resulting in a false front treatment, restrained brick pattern work, or no decorative embellishment at all. While several of downtown Pleasant Hill's industrial buildings include design elements that could be considered commercial, the absence of storefront display windows distinguishes them as being industrial in function.

Through World War II, the demand for cheap materials and improved construction techniques led to numerous innovations. Materials such as aluminum and concrete gained increased use and widespread acceptance. By 1930, improvements to concrete block included the introduction of a standard size and the use of a lightweight aggregate.<sup>64</sup> It became a quick, cheap, and easy substitute for the more

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 24, 29, 31.

<sup>64</sup> Richard Bergmann, "Blocks Like Rocks," *Building Renovation* (Spring 1995) : 49.

labor-intensive traditional building materials. Growing communities like Pleasant Hill took advantage of these developments, especially for the construction of functional and industrial buildings.

### **LATE VICTORIAN STYLES**

The prosperity during the decades following the Civil War continued into the early twentieth century, resulting in rapidly changing architectural styles. Late Victorian design reflected a new taste for decoration and the increasing desire to have the buildings themselves perceived as ornaments to the community. Downtown buildings typically featured applied cornices with patterned brickwork and corbels, elaborate brackets, dentils, and complex moldings carved from wood or made from pressed metal. Storefronts and window surrounds also featured cast iron, stone, or wood trim. Advances in technology allowed for the mass production of this type of architectural ornamentation. With access to rail lines, builders could easily order standard products from catalogs or purchase stock items at the local lumberyard or iron works.



140-136 South First Street, Pleasant Hill, Missouri, circa 1900  
(Pleasant Hill Historical Society Archives)

The builders of the first permanent buildings in “New Town” Pleasant Hill adapted the popular styles of the time according to the skills and materials available in the new community. Surviving examples of “high style” Late Victorian style commercial buildings in Pleasant Hill include versions of the Italianate and Romanesque Revival styles.

### **HISTORIC ECLECTICISM**

Beginning in the 1890s and continuing into the twentieth century, a shift in American architecture toward historic eclecticism occurred. The Eclectic Movement drew inspiration from American Colonial-era architecture as well as the architecture of Europe. Designs emphasized strict adherence to stylistic traditions and minimal variation and innovation. Chicago’s Columbian Exposition in 1893 played a major

role in popularizing these changes. The Exposition introduced classical architectural forms and mass-produced building materials and products to the owners of businesses in rural and urban commercial centers. Among the revival styles represented in Pleasant Hill are Jacobethan Revival, Colonial Revival, and Classical Revival.

## **MODERN MOVEMENT**

Concurrent with the increased popularity of Historic Eclecticism, a growing progressive movement occurred in architectural philosophy. The change rejected the sentimentality and ornamental excesses of the Victorian era and historic eclecticism. Recent technological advances, including steel and reinforced concrete construction, allowed freedom from the design restrictions of load-bearing masonry or wood-framed structures. Early Modern Movement styles evolved from these influences and it embraced and expressed the machine age, often using broad bands of windows and brick and/or terracotta veneers to emphasize building structure.

Prosperity in the 1920s brought a general acceptance of Modern Movement designs. As the sobering realities of the Great Depression set in, designs inspired by the austere Modern Movement began to appear in smaller communities nationwide. Buildings constructed in Pleasant Hill during this period exhibit the influences of Art Deco, Moderne, and International Style architectural design, as well as the vernacular Tapestry Brick sub-type.

## **HISTORIC ALTERATIONS**

During the first decades of the twentieth century, prosperity in Pleasant Hill spurred enhancements to existing nineteenth century façades and storefronts in an effort to modernize commercial space. Popular twentieth century alterations to commercial buildings included new façade treatments such as the application of stucco, which achieved a much-desired smooth and modern appearance. New brick facing with decorative corbel courses was another widespread early twentieth century alteration. At mid-century, the influence of Modern Movement styling was reflected in the installation of aluminum-framed display windows, structural glass, or tile bulkhead cladding. Completed before 1954, many of these alterations have gained historical significance in their own right. Buildings that exhibit historic alterations reflect patterns of architectural development that occurred in downtown Pleasant Hill and may retain National Register eligibility.

# SURVEY RESULTS

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## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF SURVEY AREA

### LOCATION AND SETTING

The Pleasant Hill Historic Resources Survey examined ninety-two properties in the central commercial area of Pleasant Hill, which is generally bounded by Front Street to the west, Commercial Street to the south, Taylor Street to the east, and Cedar Street to the north (Figure 1). Of these ninety-two properties, seventy-nine contained a total of eighty-four resources, which include eighty buildings, two structures, and two objects. The remaining thirteen properties were vacant lots.

Late nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth century commercial development characterizes the Survey Area. Interspersed among the commercial properties are buildings of various functional types, including those with governmental, educational, recreational, and industrial uses. The survey documented a number of mid-twentieth century infill buildings, predominantly to the east of the railroad tracks.<sup>65</sup>

The commercial area's arrangement reflects a development pattern that results when railroad tracks run diagonally through an existing town, illustrating the juxtaposition of two platting systems. The first is the traditional town grid oriented toward the cardinal compass points. The second grid, platted by the Pacific Railroad Company, parallels the railroad tracks, resulting in numerous triangular and odd-shaped lots. Lot size also varied depending on whether it was for commercial, industrial, or governmental use.

The Survey Area features deep lots with uniform setbacks. Paved streets, steep curbs, concrete sidewalks, and tall lampposts characterize the streetscapes throughout the Survey Area. Gravel shoulders flank the streets along the southern and western fringe of the Survey Area. Adjacent to the northeast section of the railroad tracks, the City maintains two open triangular lots as parks, both of which contain non-historic park structures including a gazebo and a fountain. A historic stone retaining wall surrounds the larger of the two parks, which is known as Depot Park and is at the southwest corner of Paul and Lake Streets. The survey identified thirteen vacant lots scattered throughout the Survey Area, one of which has been historically vacant since 1893.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Commercial buildings erected after the block was developed.

<sup>66</sup> The lot at 125 South First Street has been vacant since a fire destroyed much of this block in 1893.

Map research revealed two street name changes after publication of the 1883 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Subsequent maps indicated different street names than those recognized today. These variations are as follows:

- Lake Street appeared as Miller Street until at least 1898.
- Paul Street appeared as Wyoming Street until at least 1913.

## **HISTORIC PROPERTY TYPES**

To assist in developing historic property types for Pleasant Hill, HPS identified historic properties based on both their original function as well as their architectural style and/or building form/type. A property type is a set of individual properties that share physical or associative characteristics. Property types link the ideas incorporated in the historic contexts with actual historic properties that illustrate those ideas.

As a starting point for identifying and defining historic property types for the City of Pleasant Hill, HPS identified resources according to (1) original function and (2) architectural style; thus including both shared associative (functional) as well as physical (architectural style/building form/type) characteristics.

### **ORIGINAL BUILDING FUNCTION PROPERTY TYPE**

Drawn from the National Register subcategories for function and use, the consultant identified different categories of historic building function for surveyed properties. While the functions of some buildings had changed from their original use, this analysis was based on the original building function. The commercial building functional property type was the most dominant functional property type identified in Pleasant Hill. There is a high degree of diversity within this functional category due to the nearly 130-year span (1865-c.1992) in building construction dates. Figure 5 shows the distribution of buildings by historic function.

**Figure 5: ORIGINAL RESOURCE FUNCTION AND PROPERTY TYPE**

| <b>FUNCTION</b>              | <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>PERCENT</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| COMMERCE/TRADE               | 60           | 76.0%          |
| INDUSTRY                     | 5            | 6.3%           |
| RECREATION AND CULTURE       | 3            | 3.8%           |
| AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE      | 2            | 2.53%          |
| GOVERNMENT                   | 2            | 2.53%          |
| SOCIAL: MEETING HALL         | 2            | 2.53%          |
| TRANSPORTATION: RAIL RELATED | 2            | 2.53%          |
| TRANSPORTATION: AUTO RELATED | 1            | 1.26%          |
| EDUCATION: LIBRARY           | 1            | 1.26%          |
| DOMESTIC: HOTEL              | 1            | 1.26%          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                 | <b>79</b>    | <b>100.00%</b> |

### **Commercial Building Functional Property Type**

Commercial buildings were by far the most common property type in the Survey Area. The majority of commercial buildings have retail sales or service functions typical of small railroad-town business districts throughout the Midwest. They are business houses designed for small operations providing financial, legal, and other professional services or wholesale or retail sales involving the receipt and disbursal of goods. Usually sited on one or two lots, the commercial buildings have rectangular plans with the short side facing the street. They are one to three stories in height. The two- and three-story designs incorporate public spaces on the first floor and storage or secondary commercial space on the upper floors. A defining feature of the taller commercial property types is a well-defined ground floor “storefront” that is distinctly separate from the upper stories and reflects a difference in public/private uses. Private uses included storage, office, meeting hall, and residential space. Storefronts offered retail or wholesale vending, lobby space, showroom, or office space. Stylistic treatments for the commercial property type in Pleasant Hill reflect commonplace commercial styles popular in the era in which they were built. They typically have a flat roof and masonry construction, which is usually brick. Depending on the date of construction, structural elements include the use of load-bearing brick walls, concrete block, cast iron, or steel construction. Similarly, storefronts incorporate combinations of brick, cast iron, and wood.

### **Industrial Building Property Types**

Although fewer industrial resources were identified in the Survey Area, they comprise the second most common functional property type in downtown Pleasant Hill. The

industrial buildings in the Survey Area are typically adjacent to the railroad tracks and reflect manufacturing, processing, and power generation functions. Although their designs and materials are functionally defined, two of these buildings include architectural embellishments. Sited on large or multiple lots, they are between one and two stories in height with flanking driveways and/or street/alley access. Roofs are either flat or barrel-shaped. Depending on the date of construction, structural elements include load-bearing brick, concrete block, or steel. This property type often includes vehicular bays and large interior work/processing spaces. Often, the processing machinery determined the building form.

### **Additional Resources**

The survey also identified three recreational resources (an opera house, a theater, and a fountain); two governmental buildings (a city hall and a post office); two social facilities (meeting halls); two agricultural facilities (hatchery buildings); two railroad-related resources (the railroad alignment structure and depot building); one auto-related resource (the street network structure); one domestic building (a hotel); and one educational property (a library). Because the survey included so few examples of these property types, it is not possible to define property type characteristics for these buildings.

## **ARCHITECTURAL STYLES AND VERNACULAR BUILDING FORMS**

Classifications based on shared physical attributes include categorization by building styles and/or forms. The architectural styles and vernacular forms identified in the survey and assigned to the properties follow the terminology and classifications accepted by the *National Register of Historic Places* program. This hierarchy and nomenclature relies heavily on forms and styles discussed for commercial buildings in *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture* by Richard Longstreth and *American Architecture Since 1780* by Marcus Whiffen. Some of the categories for commercial buildings relate to building form,<sup>67</sup> such as the “one-part commercial block.” Despite the inclusion of building form categories by Longstreth, there are a number of building forms that this authority does not address. When no standard style or building form/type reflects a building in the Survey Area, this does not imply that the building cannot be classified, but merely that the usual survey nomenclature is not appropriate.

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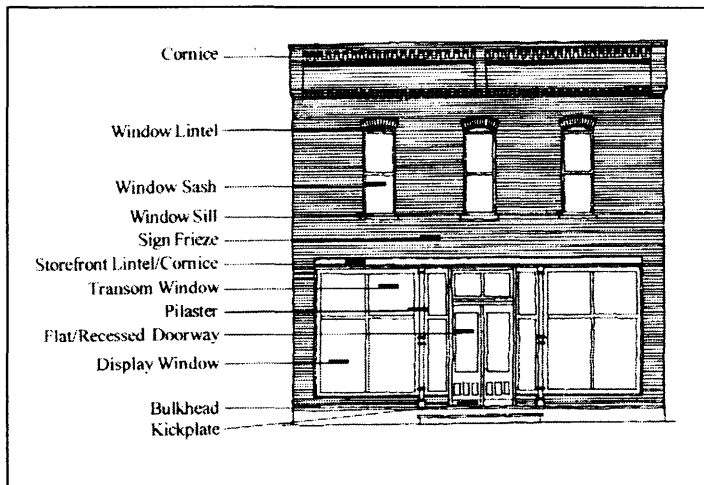
<sup>67</sup> Commercial buildings’ physical components and their arrangement are often related to function.

## COMMERCIAL ARCHITECTURAL STYLES AND PROPERTY TYPES

Commercial buildings and the streetscape they create in downtown Pleasant Hill define both the functional and visual character of the City's central business district. Their appearance and physical condition play a significant role in defining the community. Dating from the late 1860s through the mid-twentieth century, most of Pleasant Hill's commercial buildings are simple structures of one or two stories. The traditional building material is dark red brick. Some façades have been altered with inappropriate infill or siding. The majority of changes reflect the modernization of the first-story display windows and entrances. The replacement of display windows and the covering of transoms above the storefronts are the most conspicuous alterations. Many of these alterations have left the original openings and spatial relationships of the storefront intact. Other changes are reversible, such as the addition of awnings and applications of wood or metal sheathing over original openings. The second stories often retain their original integrity and are the principal means to identify the original appearance and style.

Commercial architecture is distinguished first by building form and secondly by its architectural style. Due to their functional nature, many commercial buildings exhibit restrained architectural details. The first-story storefront is the most prominent and distinctive feature of a commercial building and is an important merchandising element. The rest

of the commercial building's key design elements visually relate to the storefront. Important character-defining elements are display windows, bulkheads, signs, doors, transoms, kick plates, corner posts, and entablature.

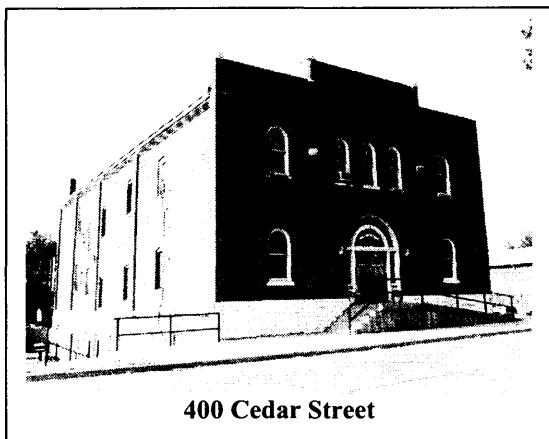


## LATE VICTORIAN STYLES

In downtown Pleasant Hill, extant Late Victorian buildings date from 1870 to 1904 and represent the Italianate and Romanesque Revival sub-types.

### Italianate Style

Surviving examples of “high style” Late Victorian style commercial buildings in downtown Pleasant Hill include three versions of the Italianate style. All are two-story brick buildings with flat roofs. Pronounced cornice moldings and details such as cast iron window hoods accentuate the formal balance of the design. The buildings at **111 and 121 South First Street** are excellent examples of this style.



### Romanesque Revival

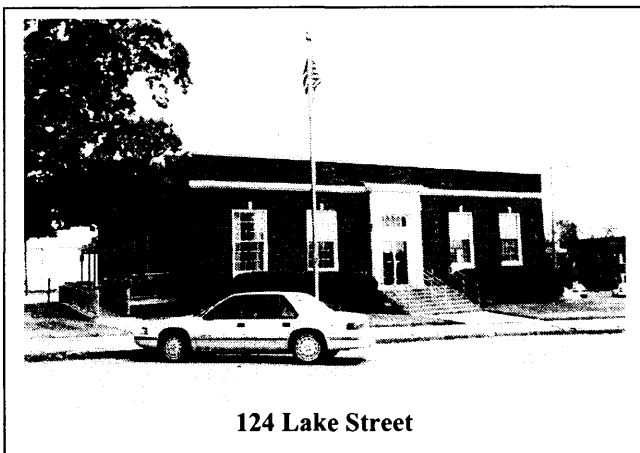
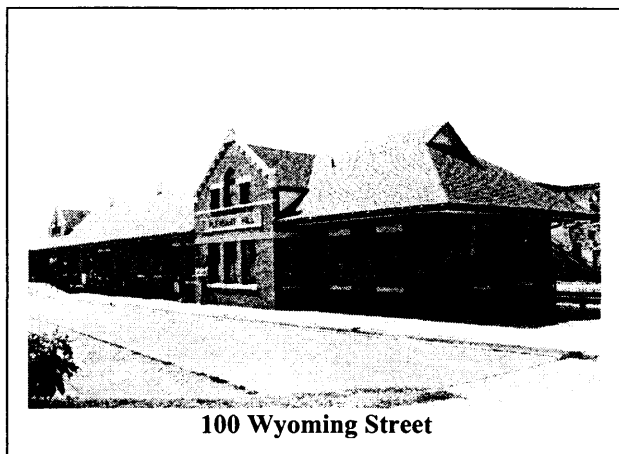
Defining characteristics of Romanesque Revival buildings include heavy round-arched openings and a solid masonry structure. Because these designs were often more expensive to build than other Victorian styles, in smaller Midwest communities, the style was often applied to landmark properties. The large round-arched entrance and rounded piers of the dark red brick Kellogg Opera House at **400 Cedar Street** represents a typical application of this style.

## ECLECTIC MOVEMENT<sup>68</sup>

In Pleasant Hill, surviving examples of Eclectic Movement architecture were constructed between 1903 and 1940. As described in the context, the Eclectic Movement sub-types include Jacobethan Revival, Colonial Revival, and Classical Revival designs.

### Jacobethan Revival

Based on formal Late Medieval English prototypes, the treatment of the gables, which are typically steep and rise in a parapet above the roof, defines the style. Dressed stone and groups of rectangular windows are additional character-defining features. The Missouri Pacific Railroad Depot at **100 Wyoming Street** is a simple vernacular application of this style to the standard depot form.



### Colonial Revival

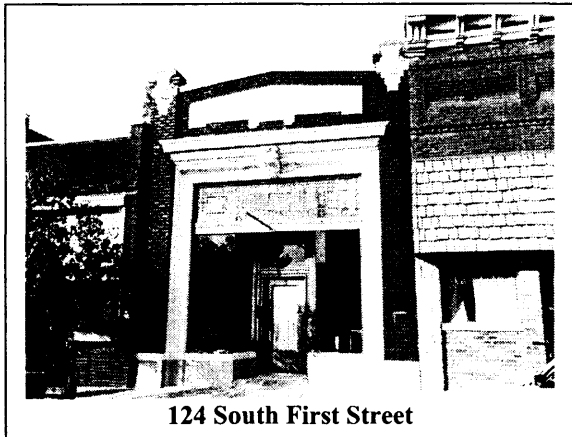
The term “Colonial Revival” refers to the rebirth of interest in the styles of early English and Dutch buildings on the Atlantic Seaboard. By the mid-twentieth century, examples of the style were stylized. Colonial Revival buildings in Pleasant Hill are one story in height and have symmetrical façades with limited styling at the entrance. The post office at **124 Lake Street** exhibits typical

Colonial Revival elements, including an asymmetrical façade, window keystones, and a central entrance featuring a formal surround with pilasters, an entablature, and a flat cornice with dentils.

<sup>68</sup> The Missouri Historic Resources Survey Guidelines categorize this style period as “Late 19th & Early 20th Century Revivals.”

## **Classical Revival**

This design treatment was popular from the turn of the twentieth century through the 1930s, especially for institutional and financial buildings. Columns, pilasters, and/or piers define the primary façade, which often features a portico or recessed entrance. In Pleasant Hill, excellent examples of this style are found across the street from one another at the former bank buildings at **124 and 127 South First Street**.



**124 South First Street**



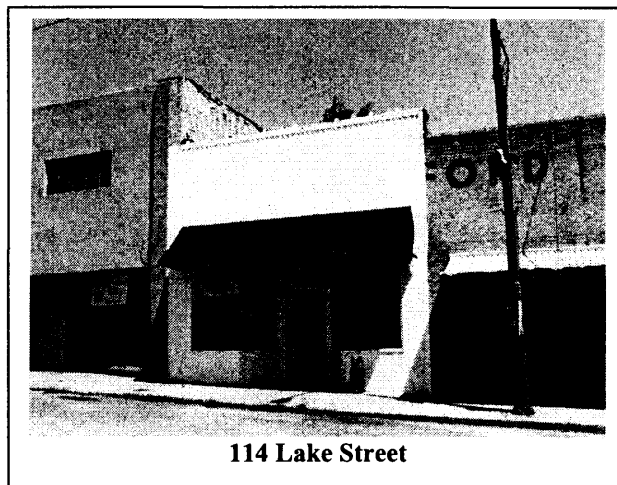
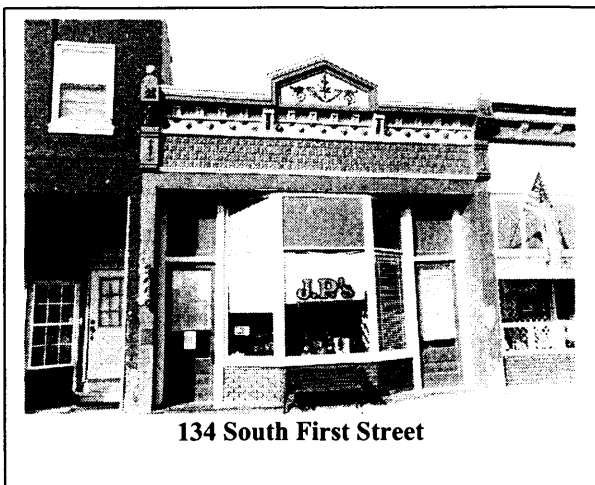
**127 South First Street**

## VERNACULAR BUILDING FORMS

One and two-part commercial blocks are the most dominant vernacular building type in downtown Pleasant Hill. Typically of masonry construction, these buildings are between one and three stories tall and represent a simpler variation of the Late Victorian commercial block. Architectural styling emphasizes the storefront display windows. Additional stylistic applications might include decorative pressed metal siding, a decorative brick corbel at the roofline, and date stones or cast stone, or terracotta panels near the roofline. The storefront area typically features a transom window that spans the width of the building, display windows, and one or more recessed entrances. Below the display windows is a solid bulkhead that supports the window frames. Pilasters and/or columns often provide additional vertical definition, framing the ends of the display windows as well as the transition to the entrances.

### One-Part Commercial Block

This basic commercial building form is one story in height and generally housed a single business. The buildings at **134 South First Street** and **114 Lake Street** are excellent examples.



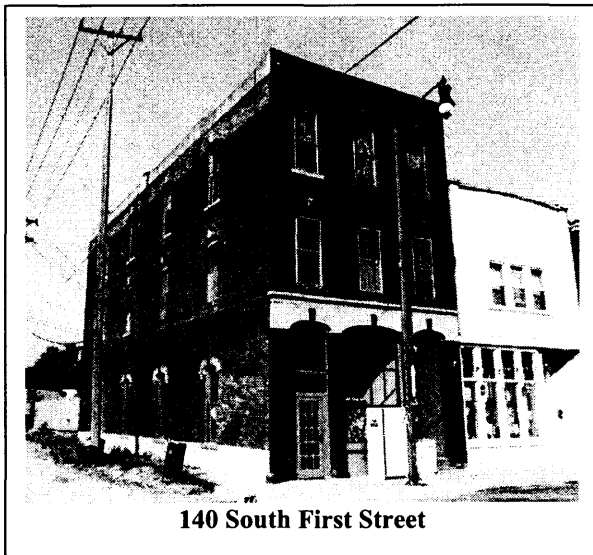
<sup>70</sup> Ibid.



105 South First Street



128 South First Street



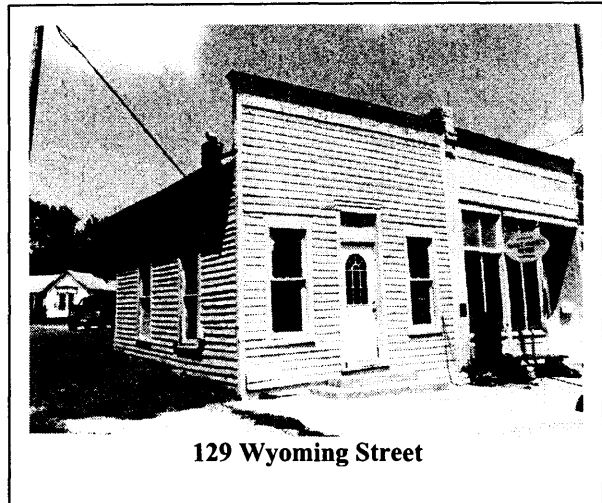
140 South First Street

## Two-Part Commercial Block

Slightly more complex than their one-story cousins, two-part commercial blocks are typically two to four stories in height. There is a clear visual separation of use between the first-story customer service/retail and upper-story office, meeting room, or residential uses. Similar to one-part commercial blocks, styling on the first story focuses on the storefront glazing and entrance(s). Design of the upper stories identifies the building's architectural influences. The buildings at **105, 128, and 140 South First Street**, although representing a forty-year span of construction, each illustrate the character-defining features of the two-part commercial block form, with decorative treatments of upper-story windows and cornice embellishment offsetting the first-story storefront. All retain the original components of their storefronts and a separate entrance door to the second story that denotes its distinct function.

### **False Front**

False front commercial buildings were quite common in small towns. These buildings are generally one to two stories in height, of frame construction with wood cladding or brick veneer, and have gable, barrel-shaped, or flat roofs hidden behind the false fronts on the primary façade. The false front wall typically has a flat roofline, as at **129 Wyoming Street**. The narrow fronts and disproportionately deep plans were adaptations to the narrow commercial downtown lots of the nineteenth century.

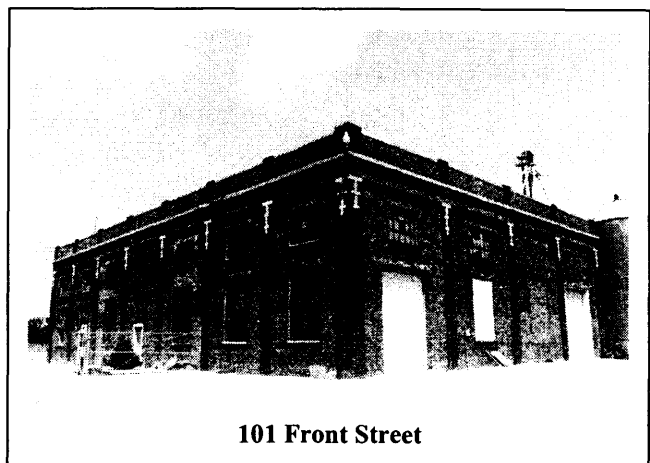


### **TAPESTRY BRICK**

Tapestry Brick buildings represent a vernacular interpretation of Modern Movement design elements. Brick coursing, cast stone, and/or terracotta panels are typically arranged in geometric motifs and applied to an otherwise purely functional building. The Green Power & Light Company Plant at **101 Front Street** clearly exhibits these character-defining features.

### **INDUSTRIAL DESIGNS**

The design and materials of these buildings reflect their specific functions, although architectural design elements were also sometimes incorporated into the functional form. As mentioned above, the Green Power & Light Company Plant at **101 Front Street** incorporates tapestry brick stylistic elements into a building form defined by its interior power generation function, which required tall vertical bands of windows and vehicular bays.



## **AUTOMOTIVE BUILDINGS**

Automobile-related buildings first appeared in the early twentieth century to meet the growing needs of automobile and truck owners. Those identified in the survey include gas stations, automobile dealerships, and auto service facilities.

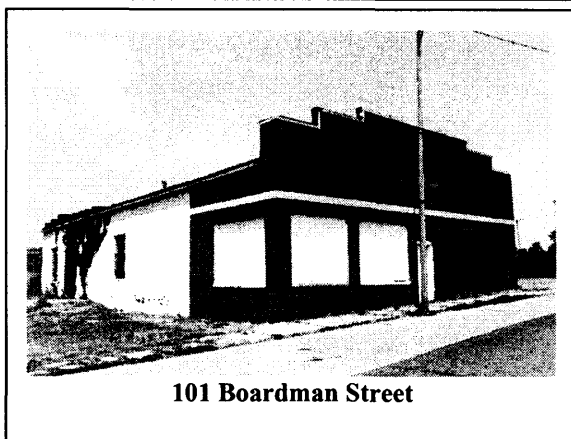
### **Gas Station**

The function of gas stations – providing fuel, routine service, and repairs – determined their design. They feature one or more drive-in vehicular bays and a small office at one end. Styling ranged from picturesque to utilitarian. The gas station at **204 South First Street** illustrates the latter.



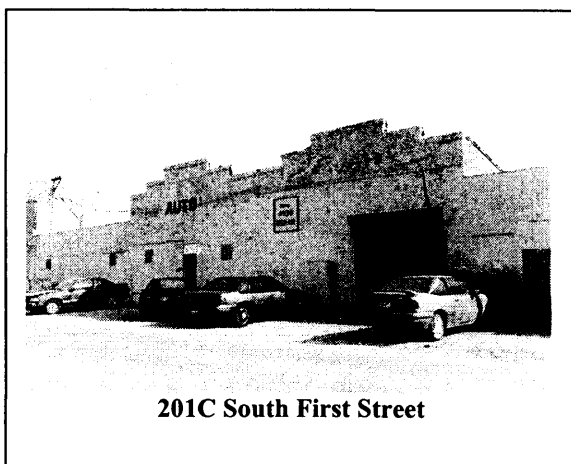
### **Automobile Dealerships**

Two buildings in downtown Pleasant Hill housed early automobile dealerships. This property type featured broad showroom display windows and specialty areas at the rear of the showroom for sales offices and merchandising. At the rear of the building was the service garage, equipped for repairing and cleaning vehicles. The building at **101 Boardman Street** illustrates this property type.



### **Auto Service Facility**

In contrast to the retail nature of the gas station and the auto dealership, the auto service facility property type lacks ornamentation and takes on a more industrial appearance. Typically one story in height, the roof shapes were either flat or barrel-shaped, often supported by steel trusses to provide uninterrupted interior space. As seen at **201C South First Street**, the façade commonly features irregular fenestration that includes both pedestrian and auto entrances.



The architectural analysis of the Survey Area reviewed the seventy-five primary buildings surveyed.<sup>71</sup> Seventeen of these buildings represent a formal architectural style and fifty-eight illustrate vernacular building forms. Figures 6 and 7 and Appendix B show the distribution of properties by building style and type.

**Figure 6: ARCHITECTURAL STYLES**

| <b>STYLE</b>  | <b>TOTAL</b> |
|---|--------------|
| MODERN MOVEMENT   | 6            |
| ITALIANATE  | 3            |
| LATE VICTORIAN: ROMANESQUE REVIVAL  | 2            |
| COLONIAL REVIVAL  | 2            |
| CLASSICAL REVIVAL   | 2            |
| LATE NINETEENTH & EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY<br>REVIVALS: JACOBETHAN REVIVAL | 1            |
| OTHER: TAPESTRY BRICK   | 1            |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>17</b>    |

**Figure 7: VERNACULAR STYLES / FORMS**

| <b>STYLE</b>                        | <b>TOTAL</b> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| ONE- AND TWO-PART COMMERCIAL BLOCKS | 45           |
| OTHER VERNACULAR                    | 11           |
| FALSE FRONT                         | 2            |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                        | <b>58</b>    |

## **DATE OF CONSTRUCTION**

Using the information provided by historic maps, archives, and other secondary sources, as well as architectural style, the consultants estimated dates of construction for the seventy-nine primary resources surveyed. Dates of building additions and alterations were not considered in the analysis. Figure 8 and Appendix C present the distribution of buildings by dates of construction.

<sup>71</sup> While the survey identified seventy-nine primary resources, this number includes two structures (the railroad alignment and the street network); one object (the fountain); and one site (the Depot Park) that cannot be classified by architectural style. Likewise, the architectural analysis did not consider the design of secondary resources, including buildings, sites, structures, and objects.

**Figure 8: ESTIMATED DATE OF CONSTRUCTION**

| <b>ERA</b>                                      | <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>PERCENT</b> |
|---|--------------|----------------|
| MID-TO-LATE 19 <sup>TH</sup> CENTURY: 1865-1899 | 30           | 38.0%          |
| EARLY 20 <sup>TH</sup> CENTURY: 1900-1929       | 20           | 25.3%          |
| GREAT DEPRESSION, WORLD WAR II: 1930-1945       | 8            | 10.1%          |
| POST-WAR: 1945-1959                             | 16           | 20.3%          |
| MODERN ERA: 1960-PRESENT                        | 5            | 6.3%           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                    | <b>79</b>    | <b>100.00%</b> |

### **ARCHITECTURAL INTEGRITY**

All properties eligible for listing in the *National Register of Historic Places* and for local designation as Landmarks or Historic Districts must retain sufficient architectural integrity to convey the period of time for which they are significant. As described above in the Methodology, each building received an integrity rating of Excellent, Good, Fair, or Poor. Figure 9 and Appendix D illustrate the results of the Architectural Integrity Analysis.

**Figure 9: ARCHITECTURAL INTEGRITY ANALYSIS**

| <b>INTEGRITY</b>          | <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>PERCENT</b> |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| EXCELLENT                 | 15           | 19.0%          |
| GOOD                      | 35           | 44.3%          |
| FAIR                      | 9            | 11.39%         |
| POOR                      | 8            | 10.12%         |
| LESS THAN 50 YEARS OF AGE | 12           | 15.19%         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>              | <b>79</b>    | <b>100.00%</b> |

Among these seventy-nine resources, three of the buildings with poor integrity may be potentially eligible for register listing if the non-historic materials that cover their façades are removed and the original building fabric remains intact.

Of the twelve resources that are less than fifty years of age, five have strong associations with Pleasant Hill's "Big Build" period and would be contributing resources to a Downtown Pleasant Hill Historic District under National Register Criterion Consideration G. Four of the remaining seven resources will reach the fifty-year threshold within the next decade, at which time they may also have the potential to be contributing resources to a Downtown Pleasant Hill Historic District.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

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The Pleasant Hill Historic Resources Survey compiled physical and historical information on eighty-four resources located on seventy-nine properties in downtown Pleasant Hill (Figure 1). Based on an analysis of the data collected, the consultants offer the following recommendations for management of historic resources in Pleasant Hill.

## NOMINATION OF RESOURCES

Although surveyed resources were listed in the local register in 2002, no historic resources in Pleasant Hill have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places. This survey identified both individual resources and a historic district that appear eligible for National Register listing.

### INDIVIDUALLY ELIGIBLE PROPERTIES

The survey identified seven individual resources that appear to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places for local significance.<sup>72</sup> These properties are:

- **Citizens Bank Building, 124 South First Street:** Criterion A for local significance in Commerce and Economics and Criterion C for local significance in Architecture.
- **Green Power & Light Company Plant, 101 Front Street:** Criterion A for local significance in Commerce and Industry and Criterion C for local significance in Architecture.
- **Kellogg Opera House, 400 Cedar Street:** Criterion A for local significance in Recreation and Culture and Criterion C for local significance in Architecture.
- **Memorial Building, 212 Cedar Street:** Criterion A for local significance in Social History and Criterion C for local significance in Architecture.

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<sup>72</sup> All of these properties are located within a potential historic district and, therefore, would also be contributing elements to that district. For the purposes of this report, they are counted as being "Individually Eligible."

- **Missouri Pacific Depot, 100 Wyoming Street:** Criterion A for local significance in Transportation and Criterion C for local significance in Architecture.
- **Pleasant Hill Bank Company Building, 127 South First Street:** Criterion A for local significance in Commerce and Economics and Criterion C for local significance in Architecture.
- **US Post Office, 124 Lake Street:** Criterion A for local significance in Government and Art and Criterion C for local significance in Architecture.

## **POTENTIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT**

The survey identified one contiguous group of resources that retains its historical/architectural integrity and meets at least one of the four National Register criteria. These resources contribute to the significance of downtown Pleasant Hill in the areas of Commerce, Community Planning and Development, and Architecture. Located primarily along South First, Wyoming, Lake, and Cedar streets, this potential district is organized around the historic railroad grade and the street grid that define the cultural landscape of downtown Pleasant Hill. It contains buildings that served a variety of historic functions and that represent a one-hundred-year continuum of architectural styles and vernacular building forms that convey the history and evolution of Pleasant Hill. Notably, this potential historic district includes buildings that are less than fifty years of age, yet are contributing resources due to their strong associations with the “Big Build” period in Pleasant Hill’s history. As a grouping of resources, the setting, design, materials, and workmanship of these resources convey feelings and provide associations with the City’s commercial past as it evolved over time. Appendix A shows the boundary of this potential historic district.<sup>73</sup>

## **ADDITIONAL SURVEY**

Over the course of the project, it became apparent that Pleasant Hill contains concentrations of historic resources outside the Survey Area. Because they are beyond the present survey boundaries, these resources were not evaluated. It is therefore recommended that the following areas be surveyed in the future.

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<sup>73</sup> Historic Preservation Services developed boundaries for this potential historic district in consultation with the staff of the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

- **Residential Neighborhoods.** cursory review revealed the potential for residential historic districts in the neighborhoods surrounding the Survey Area. These areas should be surveyed and evaluated for register eligibility.
- **“Old Town” Pleasant Hill.** Research and a windshield survey revealed that several structures and cultural landscape features remain intact from the “Original Town of Pleasant Hill.”<sup>74</sup> These properties should be surveyed and evaluated for register eligibility as individually significant properties or as part of a Multiple Property Submission (MPS).
- **Historic Light Industrial District.** cursory review and research revealed that a potential historic industrial district exists along the railroad tracks to the northwest of downtown Pleasant Hill. These resources, including the Central Coop Grain Elevator, clearly convey associations with the commercial/agricultural development of Pleasant Hill and should be surveyed and evaluated for register eligibility.
- **Rural Resources.** Pleasant Hill’s proximity to Kansas City leaves it poised for continued development as a former urban enclave. Windshield survey revealed the beginnings of sub-division development on the surrounding historically open agricultural land. In order to prevent the widespread loss of increasingly rare rural resources, as has occurred in neighboring communities, Pleasant Hill should survey the outlying areas of the City to determine what historic resources may remain intact and establish a policy for the preservation of significant properties.

## **POST-WORLD WAR II RESOURCES**

The City should continue to inventory and monitor its post-World War II development, including commercial, civic, and residential resources. There appear to be unsurveyed commercial and residential resources with architectural significance and integrity throughout Pleasant Hill. Over the next decade, many of these properties will also reach fifty years of age and become eligible for the local and national registers and for incentives, such as rehabilitation tax credits. Awareness of general construction trends will help City staff anticipate when these resources will reach that threshold and which individual properties or clusters of buildings may be or become eligible for listing. Because some time must pass before these resources reach the fifty-year threshold for register eligibility, before a nomination is initiated for these properties,

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<sup>74</sup> The “Original Town of Pleasant Hill” comprised twenty-four lots flanking what is now State Highway 7. Today, this area is referred to as “Old Town.”

the City should verify that the resources within the proposed boundaries retain sufficient integrity for register listing.

## **ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **MULTIPLE PROPERTY SUBMISSION**

One vehicle to facilitate future nominations is a National Register Multiple Property Submission (MPS). A MPS addresses the range of historic resources found citywide, describing property types and integrity requirements for register listing. Subsequent individual or district nominations need only provide the physical description and history of the resource(s) being nominated and refer to the MPS for the context. This makes the nomination process significantly easier, quicker, and more cost-effective. With a MPS in place, property owners or the City can initiate nominations that require significantly less time and effort to prepare. The extensive context and description of property types included in this survey report will facilitate the preparation of an MPS.

### **CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

A tool that is gaining popularity nationwide for upgrading properties to meet National Register standards or for buffering historic districts and providing limited protection to non-designated historic resources is the creation of conservation districts. Created at the local level, conservation districts can be used to stabilize and increase property values in older neighborhoods and to create a buffer zone for National Register or locally designated historic districts. Through designation of Conservation Districts, a local government can also establish specific design guidelines to guide improvements that will upgrade historic resources to meet National Register criteria. This can enable properties to be listed in the National Register and qualify for incentives reserved for National Register properties. Limited design review of major changes (such as new construction and demolition) occurs in Conservation Districts in an effort to limit adverse changes to the context of the district, while encouraging property owners to make positive changes to their buildings. The scope of the review helps to maintain the appropriate size, scale, massing, and building setbacks within the designated area. Residential neighborhoods in particular can benefit from a Conservation District program.

## **BENEFITS OF REGISTER LISTING**

Commitment to preservation can be the single most effective act of fiscal responsibility governmental entities can undertake. The existing built environment, including

Pleasant Hill's sizable inventory of buildings, established businesses, and neighborhoods represents a massive taxpayer investment in infrastructure and building stock. Decisions regarding Pleasant Hill's built environment merit both short-term and long-term fiscal accountability. In particular, conservation of buildings, neighborhoods, and sites of historic value is one of the best tools for recovering the worth of past investments while fueling a new economic force. The most successful revitalization efforts, in both large and small communities, use rehabilitation as the core of their revitalization strategies.

The State of Missouri and the federal government recognize the role rehabilitation of historic buildings can play in strengthening the local economy. To encourage sustainable neighborhoods and communities as well as to promote preservation of important cultural resources, they provide incentives for the rehabilitation of historic buildings in the form of investment tax credits. To receive the tax credits, properties must be listed in the *National Register of Historic Places*, either individually or as a contributing element to a certified Historic District.

The **20 percent Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit** applies to owners and some renters of income-producing National Register properties. The rehabilitated building must be subject to depreciation. The law permits depreciation of such improvements over 27.5 years for a rental residential property and over 31.5 years for a nonresidential property.

All of the state's National Register properties (commercial and residential) are eligible for a **25 percent Missouri Rehabilitation Tax Credit**. When used together, the federal and state tax credits can recapture up to 38 percent of eligible rehabilitation costs in tax credits. The state tax credits can be sold and, while federal tax credits cannot be sold directly, a project can involve an equity partner, such as a bank, who participates in the project by contributing funds toward the rehabilitation in exchange for some or all of the tax credits.

To qualify for the tax credits, the rehabilitation work must comply with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. The Standards are designed to accommodate changes that will allow older buildings to function in the twenty-first century without sacrificing their historic character. The common sense guidelines address new construction (such as additions) as well as rehabilitation.

These incentive programs are part of a larger pool of federal, state, and local government preservation programs aimed at the identification, evaluation, and protection of historic resources. Cultural resource survey is an important first step in

the identification and evaluation of cultural resources and the integration of protection and incentive programs into community planning efforts. The Pleasant Hill Historic Resources Survey identified a number of properties worthy of preservation and eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, either individually or as contributing elements to a historic district.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP**

Using preservation as tool for conservation of resources provides a rational and effective economic and environmental strategy for the future. After years of exploiting resources, people are now beginning to consider how their surroundings fit into the larger environment. The growing recognition that built resources contain embodied energy is encouraging better stewardship of older buildings and structures. Embodied energy reflects the materials that have been mined or harvested, manufactured, shipped, and assembled. Material from demolished buildings account for up to 40 percent of landfill materials, the cost of which is indirectly borne by taxpayers. At the same time, new construction consumes more energy and resources.

To aid the City's development and transformation in the future, Pleasant Hill should develop a clear public policy that promotes historic preservation (particularly when integrated in the planning process and targeted at identifiable districts) and provides a level of certainty and stability that is necessary to attract investment. Preserved neighborhoods create stability of population, a greater tax base, increased job retention, and less drain on City services.

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# **APPENDIX A**

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## **Surveyed Properties Base Map of Potential National Register Eligibility**

# **APPENDIX A**

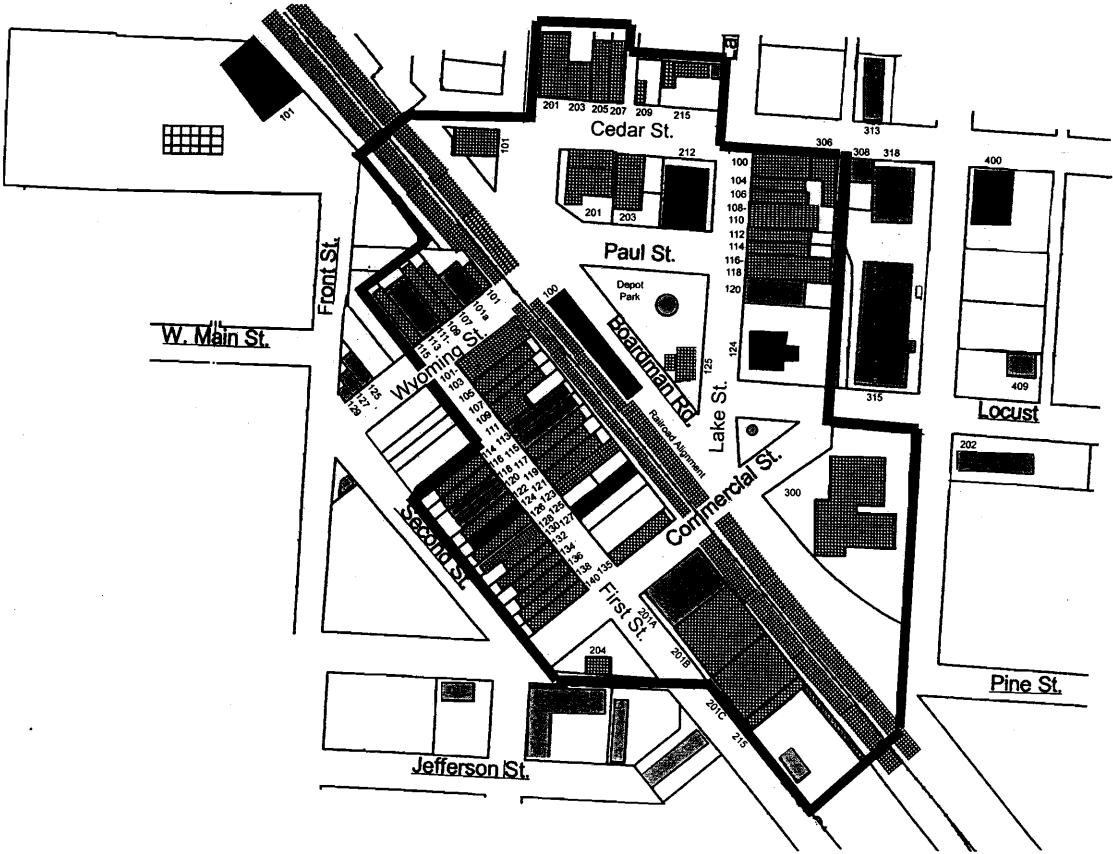
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## **Surveyed Properties Base Map of Potential National Register Eligibility**

Pleasant Hill, Missouri Survey  
Historic Preservation Services

# Pleasant Hill Downtown Survey Area

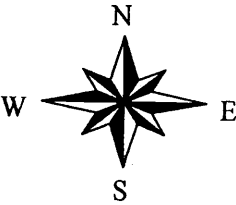
maps at end  
Niles



## Potential Historic District

- Individually Eligible
- Contributing\*
- Non-contributing
- Historic District Boundary
- Railroads
- Parcels Surveyed

\* The street network is counted as a contributing resource, however this structure is not shaded to retain visual clarity.



1" = 200'

# **APPENDIX B**

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## **Surveyed Buildings by Architectural Style and Vernacular Type**

Pleasant Hill, Missouri Survey  
Historic Preservation Services

# **APPENDIX C**

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## **Surveyed Resources by Date of Construction**

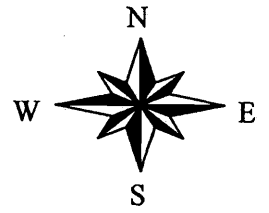
Pleasant Hill, Missouri Survey  
Historic Preservation Services

# Pleasant Hill Downtown Survey Area



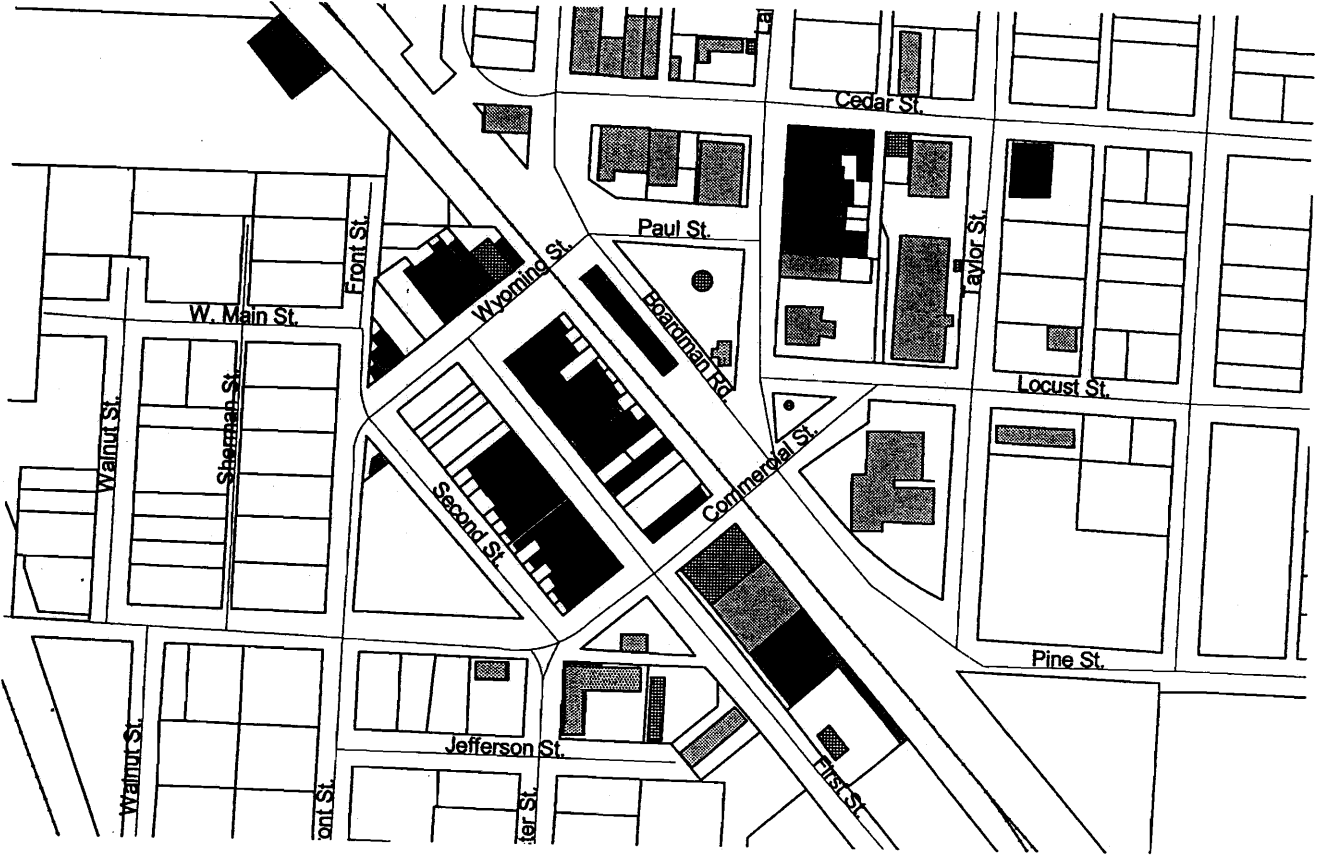
## Building Style & Vernacular Type

- Late Victorian
- ▨ Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals
- ▩ Modern Movement
- False Front
- ▨ One or Two Part Commercial Block
- Other Vernacular
- Roads
- Railroads
- Parcels



Not to Scale

# Pleasant Hill Downtown Survey Area

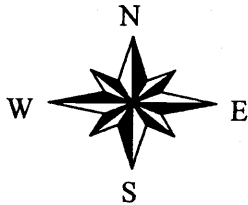


Not to Scale

## Date of Construction

- 1865 - 1899 \*
- 1900 - 1929
- 1930 - 1959
- 1960 - present
- Roads
- Railroads
- Parcels

\* The railroad alignment and street network both date to 1865, however these structures are not shaded to retain visual clarity.



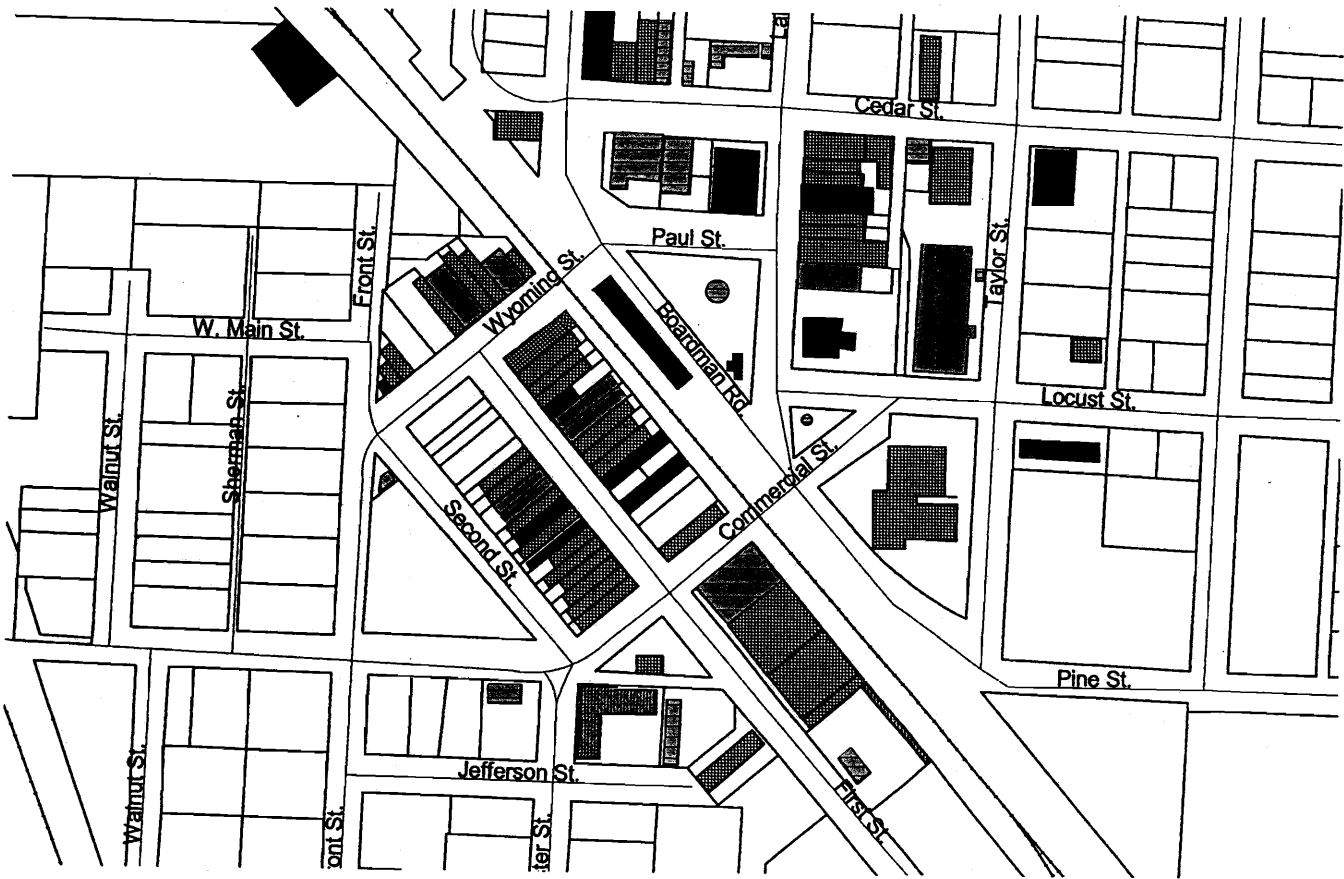
# **APPENDIX D**

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## **Surveyed Resources by Historic Architectural Integrity**

Pleasant Hill, Missouri Survey  
Historic Preservation Services

# Pleasant Hill Downtown Survey Area



Not to Scale

## Resource Integrity

- Excellent
- Good-Fair
- Poor or < 50 years old
- Railroads
- Parcels

\* The railroad grade and street network both retain good integrity, however they are not shaded to retain visual clarity.

