

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only

received

date entered

1. Name

historic Ruskaup House

and/or common Ruskaup-Niewoehner House

2. Location

street & number Highway 50

___ not for publication

city, town West of Drake

☒ vicinity of

state Missouri

code 29

county Gasconade

code 073

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
___ district	___ public	___ occupied	___ agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	___ unoccupied	___ commercial
___ structure	___ both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	___ educational
___ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	___ entertainment
___ object	___ in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	___ government
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA	___ no	___ military
			___ museum
			___ park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			___ religious
			___ scientific
			___ transportation
			___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Joyce and Harry Niewoehner

street & number 60 Meppen Drive

city, town St. Louis,

___ vicinity of

state Missouri 63128

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the Recorder of Deeds

street & number Gasconade County Courthouse

city, town Hermann,

state Missouri

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Survey of Architectural Styles and Building Techniques in Gasconade County

title Tolles and Towey

has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes ☒ no

date 1981

___ federal ☒ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Department of Natural Resources

city, town Jefferson City

state Missouri 65102

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Ruskaup farmhouse and smoke (cure) house were constructed with variations on the rubble technique. The hills surrounding this area are rich in suitable limestone (dolomite), locally known as "cotton rock". Natural stratification in dolomite formations facilitates the quarrying, as it is easily split and worked. The major portion of the house is of random rubble construction, well slashed and covered with a thin coat of lime mortar, and originally white-washed. This mortar facing has never been renewed, and portions of the limestone rubble are visible on the exterior. The summer kitchen, an addition of ca. 1880, is of coursed limestone rubble, well slashed with lime mortar, and scored to replicate ashlar coursing. The smoke house is of coursed rubble, now badly in need of pointing and repair, a serious fault being visible on the east wall.

The Ruskaup House is a fine example of the vernacular architecture in the area. The low porch, extending the length of the primary facade, is commonly found on half-timbered examples in the region, though it is unusual on stone houses. An original board and batten Dutch door (in fine condition) is centered in the four bays of the facade. A central hall divides the ground floor, and to the left is a single room originally designed as a store. Centered in this gable is a stone chimney and raised stone hearth. This is an unusual feature, as German immigrants generally preferred stoves -- most frequently vented with a narrow brick chimney. Other noteworthy features include the walnut sashes with splayed casings, and the shelves of butternut which project as headers above each architrave over the two doors which provide access to the room. The hewn floor joists are visible, as are the floor planks of the attic above; these appear to have been stained with either lamp black or tar. The two rooms to the right of the central hall were heated by a stove with chimney vent centered in the gable end. While sashes are of walnut, the casings and aprons are of pine, unsplayed. The ceiling in the first bedroom (SE corner) is now covered with yellow pine tongue and groove, though I suspect this dates from ca. 1880. The handsome green stenciling which decorates the ceiling is well preserved, and probably original. A fragment of plaster in the summer kitchen (ca. 1880) reproduces this pattern in blue. This bedroom also contains a well preserved (and unpainted!) set of walnut cupboards which extend the length of the North wall. The photograph reveals the raised diamond panels, which match those on the interior doors of the house. These matching interior doors were once grained in imitation of oak, but have since been painted white. It is probable that these wardrobes were added when the second section of the house was completed (ca. 1860). What appears to be a double gun rack is preserved over the door leading to the central hall (partially visible in the photograph above.) The floor joists in the second bedroom are visible, being approximately three inches larger than those exposed in the living room. The unfinished attic is lit by two dormers on the front facade and one in the rear -- set low in the eave line -- and by two small windows in each gable end. The roof is not original, and dates from ca. 1880. Evidence of the original roof includes the notches in the rafter plate which supported the hand hewn beams (roughly 8 in.) which have been replaced by a smaller rafter framework. It is reported that strong winds destroyed the original roof. The structure was altered with this addition. The roof was made steeper, a new slope deviating by about ten degrees from the original. This is obvious from an inspection of the attic, where the addition is in places four inches smaller than the original wall. This alteration is visible on the photograph of the West facade. Important exterior details include the extension of the foundation approximately one inch beyond the wall line, an unusual feature in this area. The stone drain

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RUSKAUP HOUSE

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which was presumably connected to a dry sink in the present living room, is visible on the North facade. The summer kitchen includes a cornice return typical of later nineteenth century architecture in the area. Varmint bars which covered the windows of the cellar are original to the design, though they have been replaced. The wooden posts supporting the porch roof were chamfered above the ballustrade, typical of German designs in the area. Though the porch has been replaced, an examination of timbers confirms that the design was original. Noteworthy also are the narrow wooden lintels which extend well into the stone walls -- stone lintels being more common on stone structures in Gasconade County.

The house was constructed in three easily defined stages. The oldest section, dating from ca. 1845-50, is found to the right of the central hall, and in the original plan probably resembled a modified outlooker with an entrance in the gable end. I suspect that the central hall and large room designed to accomodate the mercantile experiment, were added no later than 1860-64. This division in building projects is evident from an inspection of the attic, where a portion of the gable wall (for the original West wall) is extant. In addition clear lines of division are visible in walls and foundation on the South facade. It is certainly possible that the project was conceived as a uniform plan, though execution was delayed. Finally in ca. 1880, the summer kitchen and cure house were added. The structures have thus remained unaltered for at least one hundred years.

The three log structures on the property probably antedate the stone farmhouse. Of the three, the single pen cabin now to the West of the house, was probably the original home on the site. It was moved (possibly by H. Ruskaup), for evidence of a spring tap and stone foundation are still visible near Second Creek. Two barns are also extant: one of a double crib design, and the other with stalls for livestock. The three structures were V-notched, and originally chinked. The upper and lower surfaces of the timbers were not hewn, thus saving time and better bonding the chinking. The notching of timbers is technically the most critical factor in the stability of the structure.

Here, for reasons not apparent, the logs were notched to leave open angles on both sides of the top joint -- an oblique necking. Van Ravenswaay, noting this feature, speculates:

The treatment may have permitted better drainage away from the notch; it was not the result of the cornerman's inability to hew a tight joint. (p. 119)

Though I agree that it was not a careless joining, it seems unlikely that drainage inspired the original design -- as the joints were originally chinked. Without such chinking, the joint would rapidly decay for the notch would be more exposed than in a conventional V-notch. Though the technique may be noted on other log structures in the area, it is not commonly found in the County. I suspect that the reason for the unusual technique concerned the problem of reching after the timbers had seasoned. With such necking, it would be possible to remove the original chinking more easily in order to reseal -- thus achieving a tight joint which prevented decay. In addition, the entire surface of the joint could be effectively sealed. Certain features in the log construction are common in German inspired architecture of the region: the ceiling joists were often carried through to the wall line, adding stability to the structure. The door in the cabin is typically off center (and not in a gable end). The rafters

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are joined without a ridge pole, rather butted at the ridge, mortised, and secured with wooden pegs.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates ca. 1845-1860 Builder/Architect unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Ruskaup House is significant under Criteria C and A to wit: That is an early Missouri example of a Germanic stone farmhouse with modifications influenced by its American setting which still retains significant exterior and interior features and which still has associated with it a horizontal log outbuilding; that is a product of the German settlement of the Missouri River Valley, a major event in the history of immigration in Missouri and the United States.

The history of the Ruskaup House offers insight into the settlement patterns and building practices of German immigrants in Gasconade County. In 1838, Charles Osterwald purchased from the United States a tract of land which included the present site of the Ruskaup farm. It is suggested through an oral history compiled in conversation with a Ruskaup descendant, that the log structures date from this period and that the cabin was the original house on the site. In 1842 Osterwald sold the property to Heinrich Peters who remained in the area for only three years. In 1845, Heinrich Ruskaup purchased the land for 400.00 dollars, 100.00 dollars less than Peters had paid in 1842. Descendants relate that Ruskaup and his wife Maria had immigrated from southern Germany to Louisiana in the late 1820's. He was employed on a riverboat operating between New Orleans and St. Louis, while his wife served as a maid for wealthy French families. The stone house which Ruskaup built was clearly constructed in two building phases, and it is suggested that the second section was designed as a store. This mercantile venture was not successful, however, and the store operated for only three years. H. Ruskaup died in 1864, and the graves of both he and his first wife are still to be found in Atkins cemetery — property once owned by the Ruskaup family.)Stone: Hier ruht im Gott Heinrich Ruskaup. Gest. d. 19. Jan. 1864 / Im Alter 53 Jahren....) The Ruskaup House remained in the family until 1977, when Joyce and Harry Niewoehner purchased the property. The Niewoehners, with the assistance of their son John, have invested considerable time and energy in the restoration project. The front porch was rebuilt, and though new timbers were used, the design reproduces accurately the original plan. Both the plank floors and sub flooring have been extensively repaired, and the badly deteriorating floor in the living room replaced. The sashes have been stripped and repaired, thus preserving the original six over six lights. The wooden lintels and sills, as well as the varmint bars, were replaced with timbers of the same dimensions. Additions to the interior, as the closet in the kitchen and the cupboard in the living room have not significantly altered the original plan. Though not completed, the owners intend to renovate not only the house, but also the log structures described above.

The Ruskaup House was inspired by German prototypes (possibly of the Palatinate). Unfortunately, it is difficult to identify either the stone mason or the specific area in Europe from which the building techniques are derived. By 1860 there is evidence in Gasconade County of Swiss and Dutch masons, as well as immigrants trained in Hesse, Prussia, and Bavaria.

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It is interesting to note, however, that a similar house was constructed in the area. The Nesse House, approximately three miles east of the Ruskaup House was originally similar in design, though now substantially altered. This was a gable roofed structure of one and one half stories with small stone chimneys centered in each gable. Two small dormer windows were set low in the eave line with windows on the first floor irregularly spaced. The original floor plan was apparently similar, with a central hall and three (or four) rooms. This suggests that the same mason was involved in the construction of the Nesse House (ca. 1850) and the reconstruction of the Ruskaup House (ca. 1860). The Ruskaup House shares with half-timbered examples in the county, the low porch which extends the length of the primary facade. Though it has been suggested that the porch is typical of German architecture, the practice is neither German nor typical on stone houses constructed elsewhere in Gasconade County. If this house is compared to other stone structures in the area, however, it is clear that the house is unique. This structure represents a tradition different from the common modified-Georgian farmhouse for which the area around Hermann is noted. This is thus an excellent example of the synthesis of German building techniques and vernacular American traditions. The result is a folk architecture grounded in established European craft traditions and executed with frontier innovations.

9. Major Bibliographical References

- 1) Erixon, Sigurd, "The North-European Technique of Corner Timbering" in *Folkliv*. I, 1937, pp. 13-63.
- 2) Henning, Rudolf, *Das Deutsche Haus in Seiner Historischen Entwicklung*. Strassburg: Trubner Verlag, 1882.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 8.39

Quadrangle name "Bland, Mo."

Quadrangle scale 1:62,500

UTM References

A

1	5
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6	2	8	1	0	0
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4	2	6	0	4	0	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification

A tract of land being part of Lot 1 of the Southwest quarter (SW $\frac{1}{4}$) of Section 7, Township 43 North, Range 5 West in Gasconade County, Missouri, lying immediately West of Missouri Route "50" being more fully described as follows:

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title 1) Martin G. Towey, Ph.D., Associate Professor of History
organization St. Louis University date July 15, 1981
street & number 221 North Grand Boulevard telephone 314/658-2910
city or town St. Louis, state Missouri.

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☒ state ☐ local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

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

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

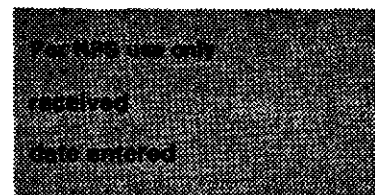
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

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Continuation sheet RUSKAUP HOUSE

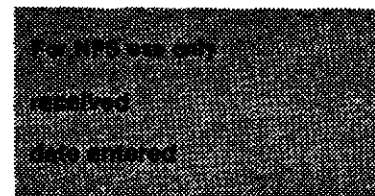
Item number 9

Page 1

- 3) McKee, Harley. Introduction to Early American Masonry. New York: Columbia University Press, 1973.
- 4) Perrin, Richard. Wisconsin Architecture, A Catalogue of Buildings Represented in The Library of Congress....Washington: GPO, 1965.
- 5) van Ravenswaay, Charles. The Arts and Architecture of German Settlements in Missouri. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1976.
- 6) History of Franklin, Jefferson, Washington, Crawford, and Gasconade Counties, Missouri. 1888 (Reprint of Ramfre Press, 1958).

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National Park Service**

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Commencing at the Southwest corner of Section 7, thence North 62 degrees 41 minutes East 1,849.2 feet to a point on the West Right of Way of Missouri Route "50", said point is the point of beginning, thence North 55 degrees 58 minutes West 751.1 feet, thence North 14 degrees 0 minutes East 190.0 feet, thence North 79 degrees 46 minutes East 745.1 feet to a point on the West Right of Way of Missouri Route "50", thence with said Right of Way South 1 degree 10 minutes East 2.4 feet, thence continuing with said Right of Way North 88 degrees 50 minutes East 10.0 feet, thence South 1 degree 10 minutes East 182.2 feet, thence with a curve to the left having a radius of 925.4 feet and a length of 588.4 feet at the point of beginning, containing 8.39 acres more or less.

This boundary is the entire tract owned by the present owners and provided a suitable setting for the house and contributory outbuildings.

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Page 1

2) James M. Denny, Chief, Survey-Nominations
and State Contact Person
Department of Natural Resources
Historic Preservation Program
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City, MO

July 15, 1981

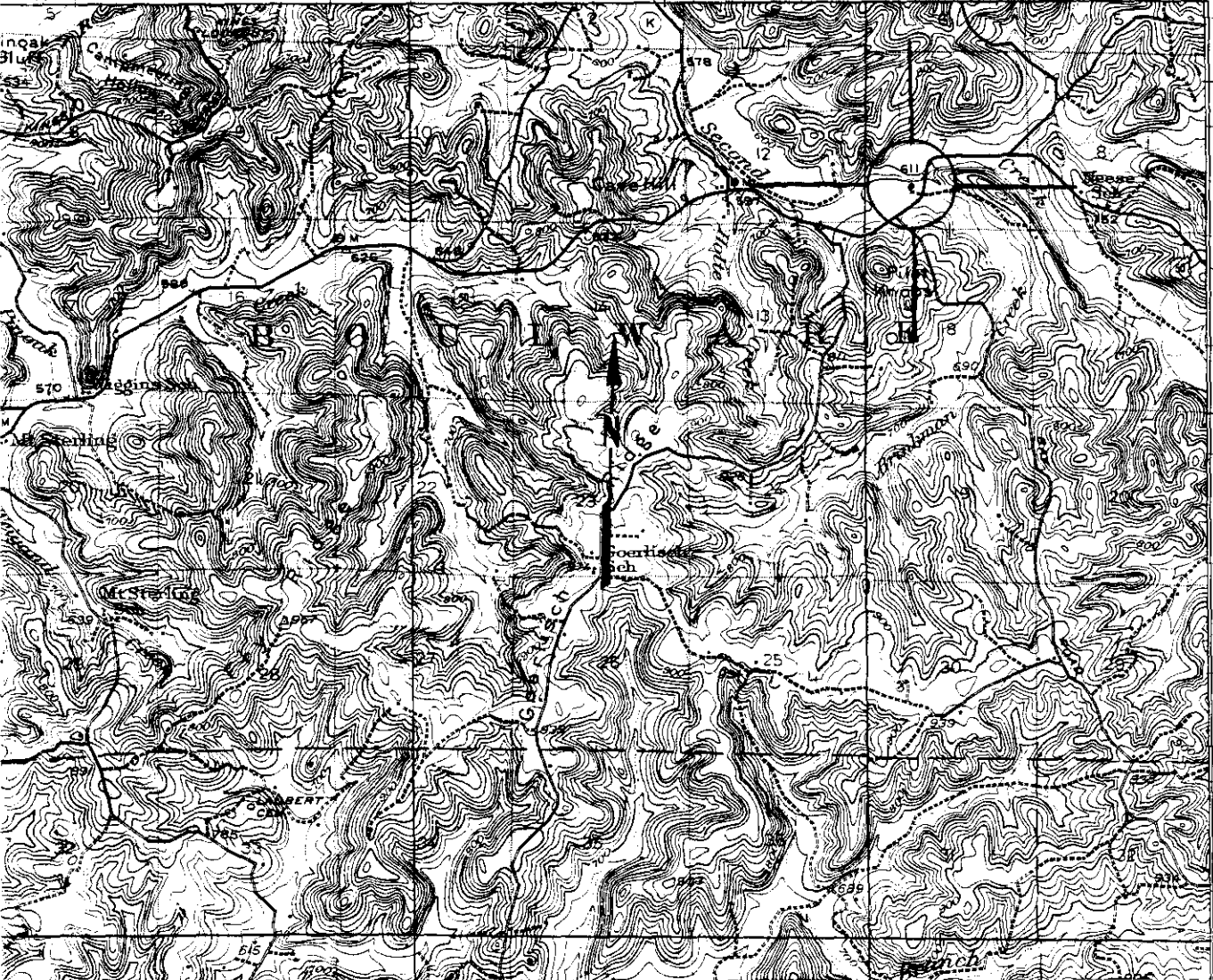
314/751-4096

Missouri 65102

MISSOURI
ED BY THE
AND WATER RESOURCES

MISSOURI
BLAND QUADRANGLE

(Hermann)



970 000 FEET
(EAST)

DRAKE 2.3 MI.
40 MI. TO U.S. 66

T. 43 N.

RUSKAUP HOUSE

Gasconade County, MO.

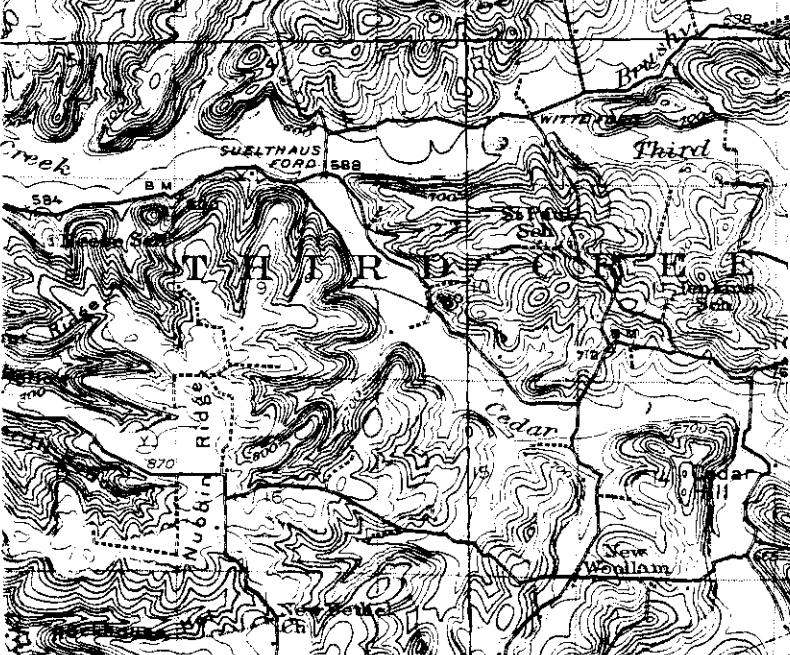
U.S.G.S.
Bland, MO.

15'

Quadrangle
1934

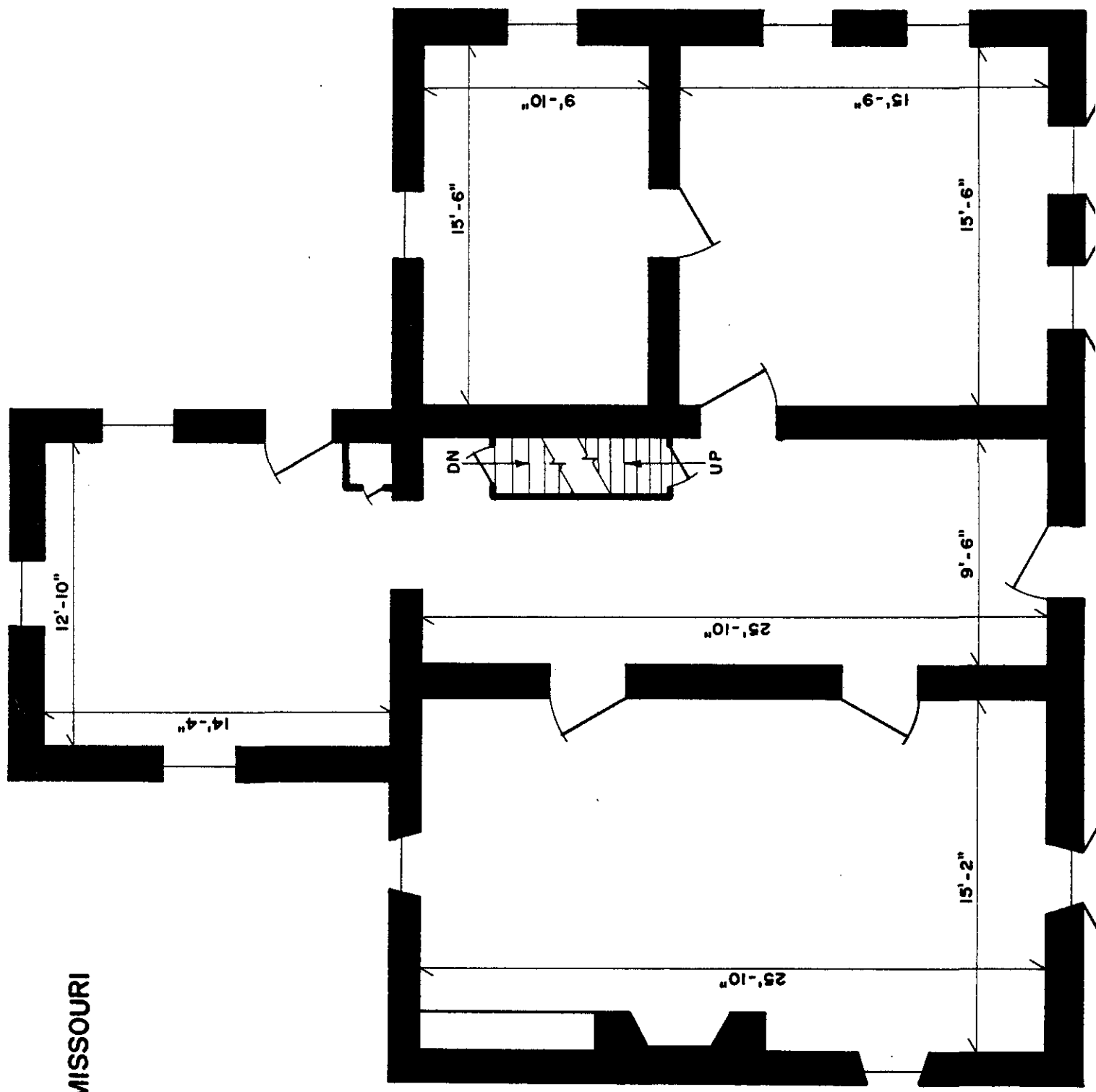
UTM REFERENCE

15/628100/4260400



Gerald

FIRST FLOOR PLAN
RUSKAUP HOUSE
GASCONADE COUNTY, MISSOURI



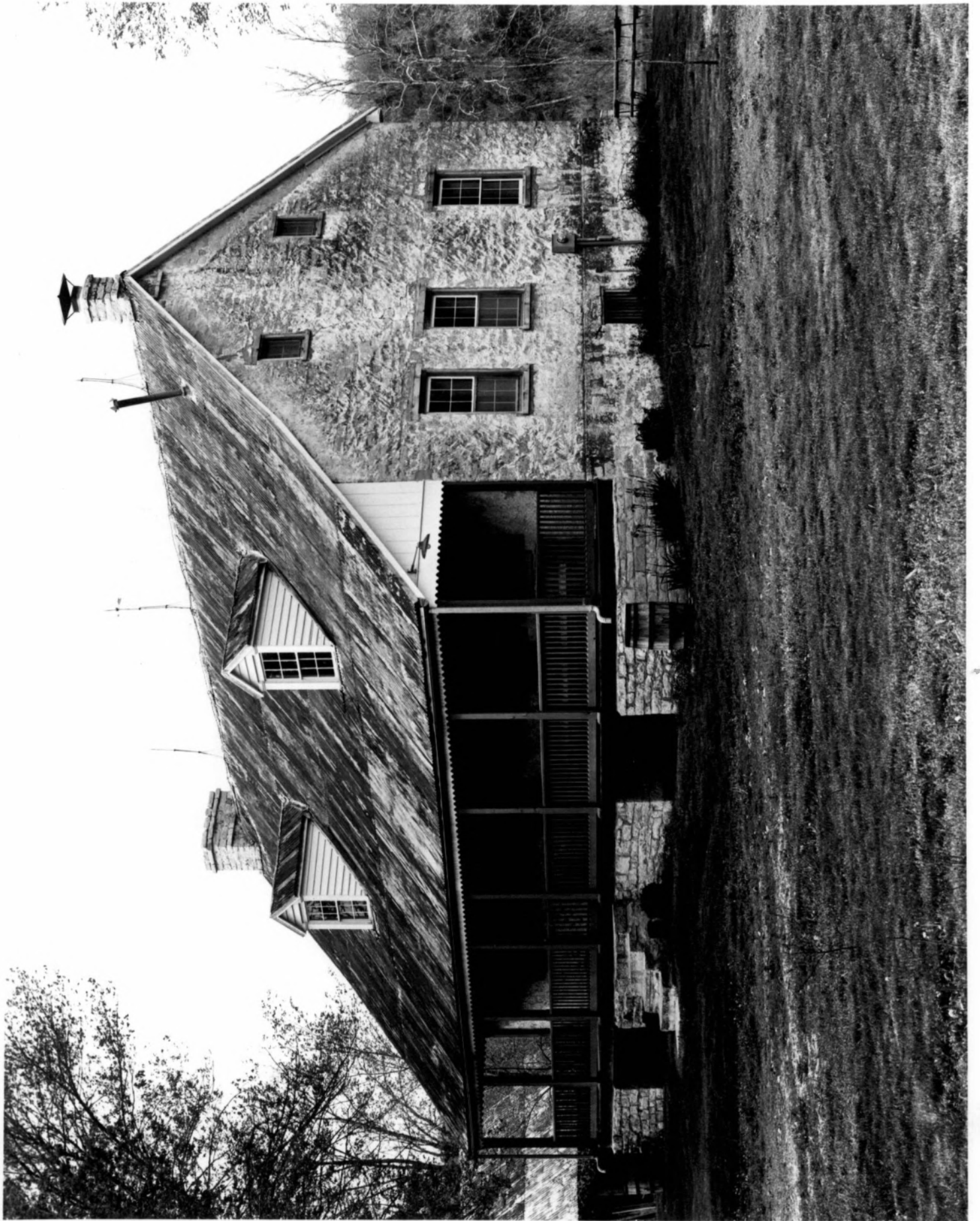
NOT TO SCALE

#1 of 10

Ruskaup House
Gasconade County, Missouri

Photographer: Thomas G. Tolles
Date: July 1981
Neg. Loc.: Martin G. Towey
St. Louis University
221 Grand Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri

House, from the South-East



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Ruskaup House
Gasconade County, Missouri

Photographer: Thomas G. Tolles
Date: July 1981
Neg. Loc.: Martin G. Towey
St. Louis University
221 Grand Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri

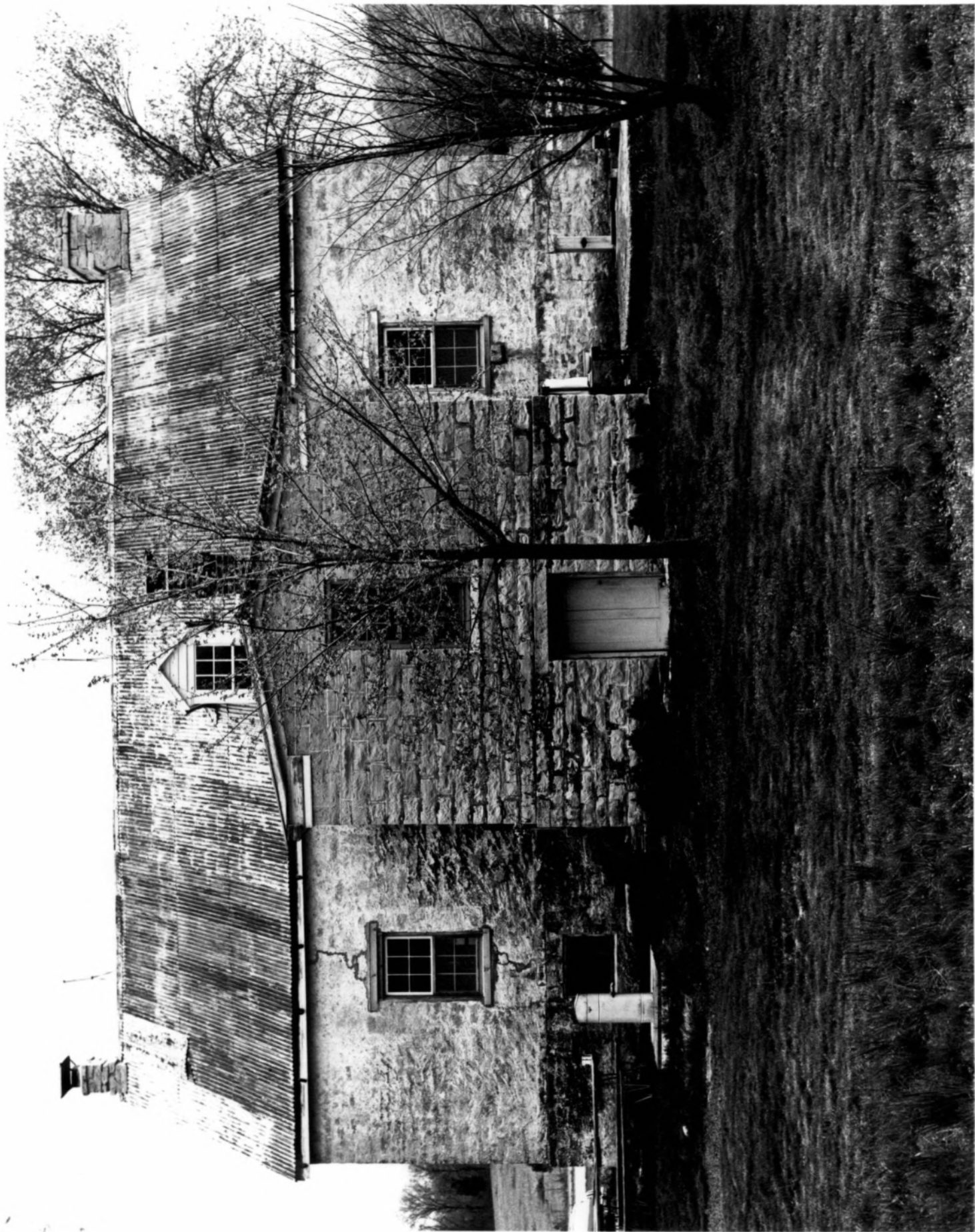
House, from the East



Ruskaup House
Gasconade County, Missouri

Photographer: Thomas G. Tolles
Date: July 1981
Neg. Loc.: Martin G. Towey
St. Louis University
221 Grand Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri

House, from the North



#4 of 10

Ruskaup House
Gasconade County, Missouri

Photographer: Thomas G. Tolles
Date: July 1981
Neg. Loc.: Martin G. Towey
St. Louis University
221 Grand Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri

House, detail of cupboards on North
wall



Ruskaup House
Gasconade County, Missouri

Photographer: Thomas G. Tolles
Date: July 1981
Neg. Loc.: Martin G. Towey
St. Louis University
221 Grand Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri

House, detail of stone hearth on West
wall.



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Ruskaup House
Gasconade County, Missouri

Photographer: Thomas G. Tolles
Date: July 1981
Neg. Loc.: Martin G. Towey
St. Louis University
221 Grand Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri

Smoke House, from the South-West



Ruskaup House
Gasconade County, Missouri

Photographer: Thomas G. Tolles
Date: July 1981
Neg. Loc.: Martin G. Towey
St. Louis University
221 Grand Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri

Log cabin, from the South-East

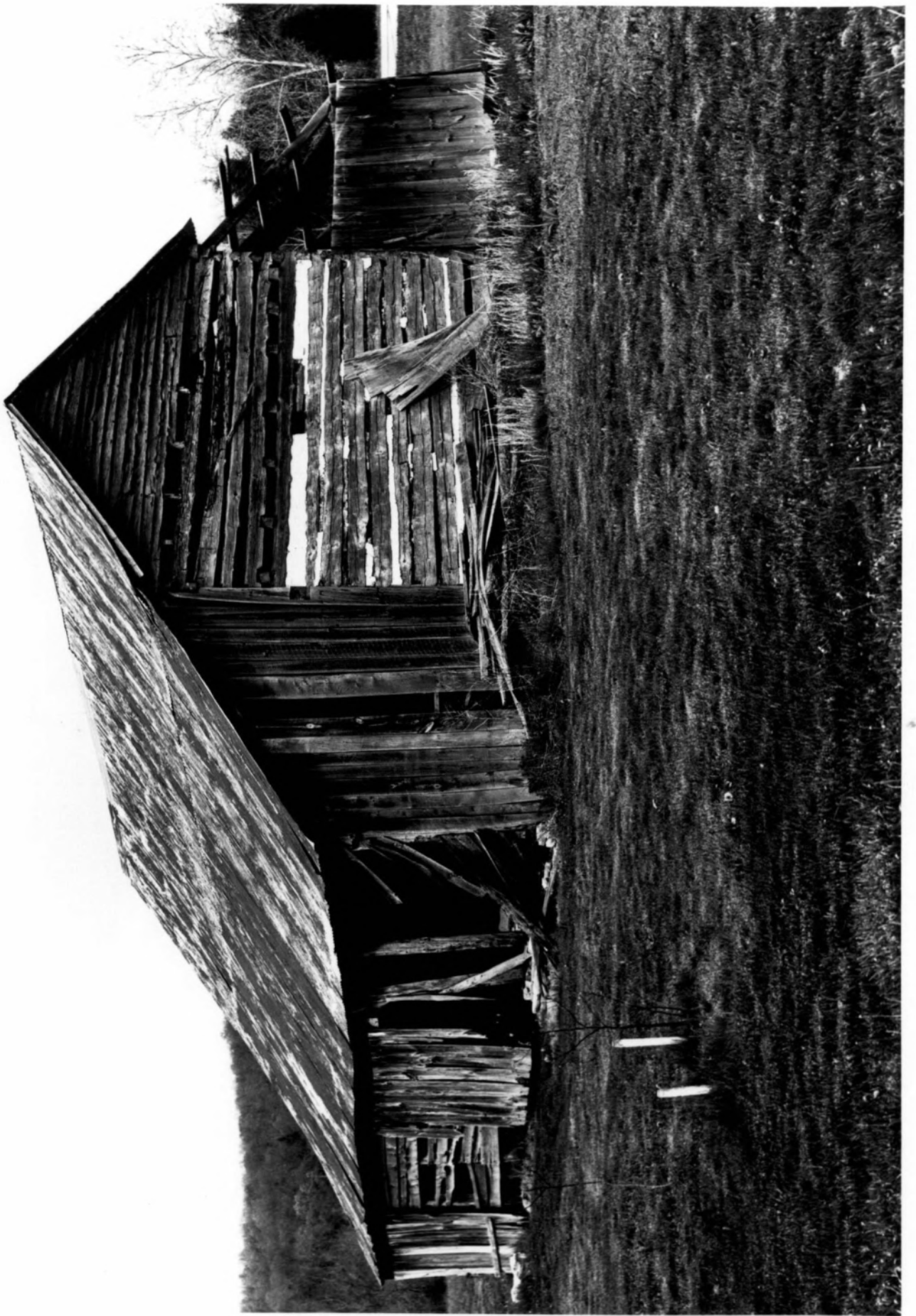


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Ruskaup House
Gasconade County, Missouri

Photographer: Thomas G. Tolles
Date: July 1981
Neg. Loc.: Martin G. Towey
St. Louis University
221 Grand Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri

Double pen barn, from the South-West

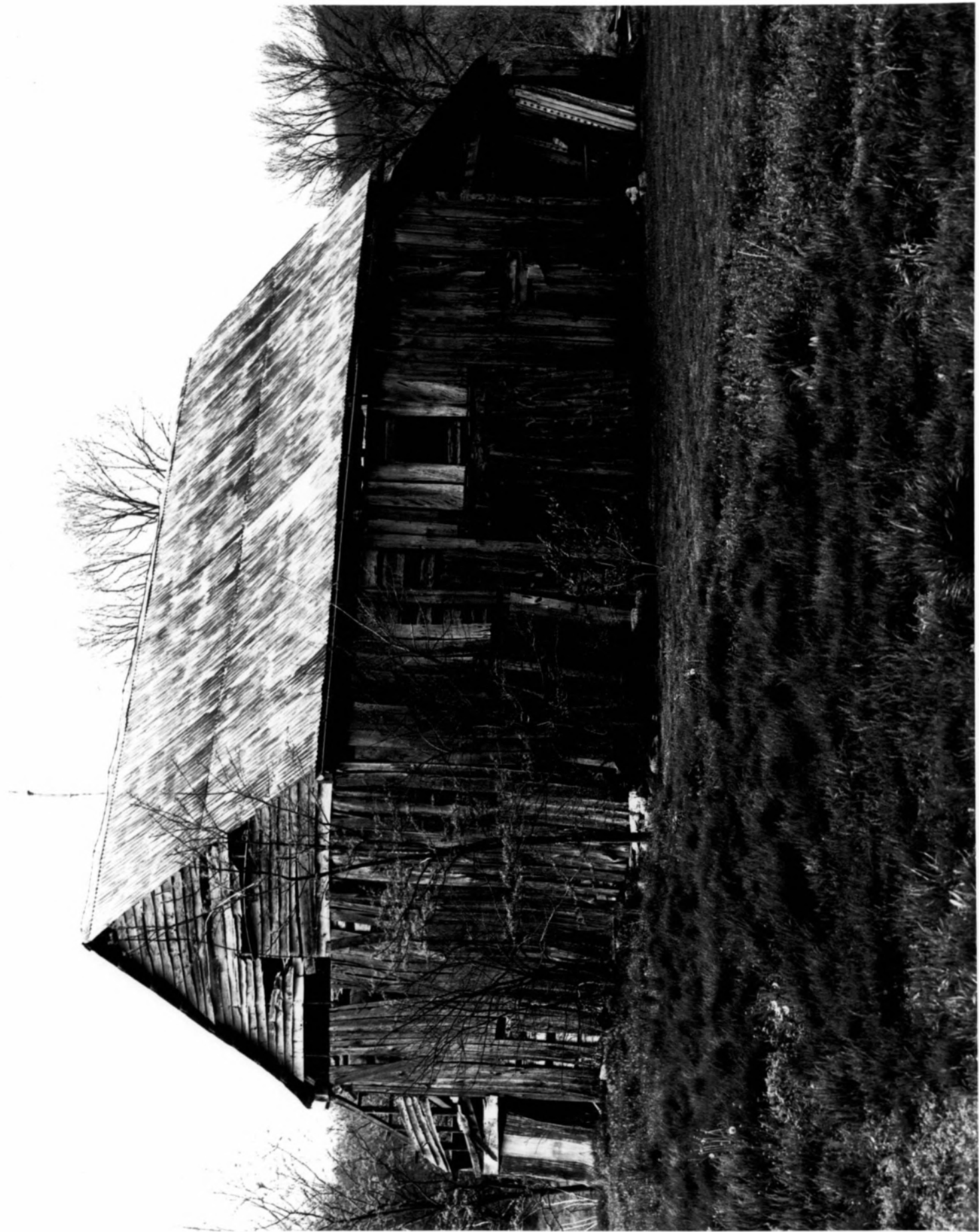


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Ruskaup House
Gasconade County, Missouri

Photographer: Thomas G. Tolles
Date: July 1981
Neg. Loc.: Martin G. Towey
St. Louis University
221 Grand Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri

Barn, from the South-East



#10 of 10

Ruskaup House
Gasconade County, Missouri

Photographer: Thomas G. Tolles
Date: July 1981
Neg. Loc.: Martin G. Towey
St. Louis University
221 Grand Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri

Barn, detail of joining technique,
North Wall.

