

HISTORIC SURVEY
OF
WASHINGTON, MISSOURI

by
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The area surveyed is located in Township 44N, Range 1W, Section 22 in the City of Washington, Missouri. Specifically properties surveyed were those with lot lines fronting on Jefferson Street, between Fifth and Front Streets, and Front Street between Market Street up to and including the property known as Elijah McLean's Restaurant, 600 Front Street.

This area is comprised of approximately twenty-four non-contributing buildings and forty-three contributing buildings. These numbers include four additions to the Missouri Meerschaum Pipe Factory and two additions to the Narup, Trentmann Lumber Mill. All non-contributing buildings are designated with an asterisk on the Architectural Survey Map. They include buildings which are less than fifty years old, such as 532, 534, 536 Front Street-residential, 314 Jefferson Street-commercial, 18-22 East Front Street-industrial. An example of non-contributing historic buildings which have lost integrity through radical facade alternation can be seen at 17-21 Jefferson Street. All contributing buildings have a date on the Architectural Survey Map.

1800-1839 - Early Exploration, Rural/Farming Community and Settlement

The majority of early settlers were Americans migrating from southern states, such as Kentucky and Tennessee. Settlement followed the Missouri River Valley. Early settlers homesteaded areas near the site of Washington, at St. John's Creek and Dubois Creek, beginning approximately 1800. Until the coming of the railroad in the 1850's, the river provided the main source of transportation. Steamboats were the fastest and cheapest means of transporting settlers and their agricultural products to and from the settlement of St. Louis. Convenient and accessible landings such as "Washington Landing" are where towns developed.

The City of Washington was platted May, 1839. The layout of the streets now follow the original grid pattern. Within the current city limits, early

settlement developed near the site of an 1822 ferry boat landing known as Washington's Landing. Besides offering a natural landing, this site was a good place for connecting developing settlements across the river, thus giving the settlers a sense of unity and making Washington the point of shipping for many nearby settlements.

Among the early American settlers was William G. Owens, who came from Kentucky in 1827. He was attracted to the location as an early point of the Missouri River. He became an early land speculator selling lots on credit to encourage development of residential and commercial building. Owens was murdered in 1834. Land titles were not cleared until 1839, at which time Lucinda Owens, his widow, platted the town. At that time the town was an established economic hub of the area and consisted of 144 lots in 25 blocks of public streets. Washington, Franklin, Market, Jefferson and Lafayette Streets were the north-south streets; east-west streets were Front, First, Second and Third Streets. The ferry landing was at the foot of Lafayette Street east of Front Street.

A report written by Gottfried Duden regarding his two year stay across the river from Washington, published in Germany in 1829, urged immigration to the Missouri River Valley. German immigration began as a cultural pattern in the 1830's with the major settlement in areas of Warren and St. Charles Counties as mentioned in Duden's writings; and across the river, particularly in Franklin, Gasconade and Osage Counties. The Germans gradually bought the farms of the early American settlers. By the 1880's the area of the Missouri River Valley in Franklin and Gasconade Counties became known as Missouri Rhineland.

Although the majority of German settlers came to Washington after 1839, among early settlers was a German immigrant named Charles Eberius. He erected a frame building, circa 1834 (demolished). No buildings from the time the town was platted have been found to exist.

1839 - 1895 Development of the Town

By 1840 Germans composed approximately one-third of the Franklin County population. The ratio in the town of Washington was even higher. A number of eastern Europeans also settled in Washington at this time. However, by 1850 Germans were the dominant cultural group. Many of the German immigrants established farms. Major crops were corn, wheat and tobacco. The farmers provided the base for economic growth for the town merchants and craftsmen. The advent of the railroad in 1855 coincided with the agricultural prosperity. Economic growth took place as the town continued as a major shipping point for agricultural and shop products to the St. Louis market. During these years a great number of brick buildings were erected and from this time on brick continued as the favored building material in Washington.

New buildings were made of local brick, which was slightly longer than standard sized bricks. Bricks were a favored material, especially by the immigrants from the lower Rhine region of Germany. According to the 1850 census Washington had four bricklayers. A building boom is indicated in the 1860 census which shows the number of bricklayers to have increased to thirteen. Only two of these were Americans. The majority were German born.

The greatest single building style in Washington is Federal, with the majority of the buildings dating from the period 1850-1860. This style was brought west by the American settlers. However, the use of this style saw many adaptations that were German; such as the almost exclusive use of brick as a building material, the German sense of expression in proportion and scale, the use of gabled roofs and paired chimneys at the gabled ends, ornamental iron balconies, and details such as brick cornices, moldings and arched openings above doors and windows. Gabled roofs with stepped parapets is also a German feature seen in high numbers in Washington as compared to other German settlements. A representative example of this roof type on a Federal style building can be seen at 120 Front Street, circa 1855. This building was constructed near the ferry landing as an inn and residence by August Roetger. His wife ran the inn while he operated a carpentry business in the building. A feature of many Washington buildings, including-but not limited to the Federal style buildings, are located adjacent to the sidewalk without any setback. Buildings

situated with the gabled ends toward the street are a German settlement feature which seems to be distinctive of Washington, not being seen as frequently in other German settlements such as St. Charles or Hermann. Another feature of the Washington German built buildings is the use of small attic windows on the facades, usually incorporated into the gable design as seen at 200 Jefferson Street, built for Henry Eitzen, circa 1854, in the Greek Revival style. Most of the buildings in the survey area, like the Eitzen building, were constructed for merchants; many of whom lived on the upper floors while maintaining businesses on the first floor. Eitzen, born in Prussia in 1827, like many of the German immigrants came to Missouri in the 1840's. Also, like many immigrants who came to Washington early, he became a leader in business and the professional life of the town serving as town trustee, treasurer and auditor.

The Eitzen Building is attributed to Otto Brix, an immigrant who arrived after the German revolution of 1848. A civil engineer and "architect", Brix designed, among other major buildings, the Turnverein, 1866, and Liberty Hall, 1855. A mark of Brix's work is the use of brick pilasters on exterior walls.

German culture included the development of social and cultural institutions. Liberty Hall, a Federal style building at 8 Third Street, was built for the Theatreverein, a local dramatic group organized in 1854. The building featured a stage and drop scenery. It was sold after the Civil War. The Washington Turnverein was founded in 1859 and disbanded in 1862 at the time of the Civil War. It was reorganized in 1865. In 1866 the hall at Third and Jefferson Streets was built. Activities included gymnastics. In 1868 a dramatic section was formed. Much of Washington's social life centered around gatherings held at the Turnverein. This extended to a brass band era of the 1890's. The Turnverein ended in 1932 when the building was purchased by the current owners, the Elks Club.

Washington was sympathetic to the Union during the Civil War. Although a second frame railroad depot was built in 1865, after the original depot was

destroyed in a Confederate raid, Washington suffered little damage from the war. The town continued to prosper. Construction also continued. Many shops and factories began to appear during this period. This period of prosperity continued for a number of years. During the period 1839-1895 the majority of buildings constructed within the survey area were commercial and industrial. Small industries began to dominate the economic scene.

An 1860 engraving by Robyn shows a three story frame mill (demolished) on the site of 514 Front Street, owned by John Schwegmann. He arrived in Missouri in 1851 from Germany and worked as a miller in Washington from 1855 until 1888. His mill was located directly west of his house. According to the 1860 census he owned the largest grist mill operation in Franklin County. He also served as a town trustee.

In 1860 German born carpenter/builder Frederick Narup went into business with a Hanoverian carpenter/builder named Louis Trentmann, who came to Washington in 1859. For many years they dominated local construction. Circa 1865, they erected a three story brick lumber mill at 26 East Front Street in Victorian Commercial style. By 1870 they were the leading contractors with a millwork shop producing an annual output valued at \$13,000 and planing mill which produced 500,000 feet of lumber valued at \$20,000. Receipts from construction and repair jobs totaled \$75,000. Circa 1880 an addition was added adjoining the west elevation of the older building attesting to the continuing economic growth of the company.

Circa 1865 a two story brick pork packing factory in Victorian Commercial style was built for a man named Todd at 314 Front Street. His residence was directly to the west at Front and Cedar Streets (demolished). This was a substantial industry which shipped in quantity to St. Louis markets. By 1900 Hirschl and Bindheim Pipe Company occupied the building.

While German merchants continued to dominate the Washington market, an Eastern European immigrant from Holland had remarkable success in Washington. The three story brick buildings at 400-420 Front Street contained the Missouri Meerscham Pipe Company owned by Henry Tibbe. Tibbe worked making furniture and spinning wheels in Enschede, Holland. After a fire destroyed home and busi-

ness he immigrated to the United States. He opened a woodcraft shop circa 1868. He produced a lathe turned corn cob pipe in 1872 at 209 W. Second Street (demolished), using a method which he patented in 1878. That year he moved to a building at Jefferson and Front Streets (demolished). In 1883 Tibbe began the first building in an industrial complex now known as the Missouri Meerscham Pipe Factory. This building, now altered at the roofline, was originally a two and one-half story brick Federal style building with a tin covered pyramidal hipped roof. Under Henry Tibbe and his son Anton after his death in 1896, the corn cob pipe became an international commodity. The original building received four brick additions, circa 1890, 1895, 1910 and 1920. Each of these three story additions retained the original design integrity of the older building by virtue of material, height and window proportion.

The advent of the railroad in 1855 brought another type of large commercial building to Washington. Circa 1855 C. H. Kahmann built a three story brick hotel and tavern at 300 Front Street. Originally Federal style, the roofline has since been altered. Named the Pacific House for the Missouri Pacific Railroad, the building was purchased by Frederick Wohlgenuth in 1857 who continued to operate it as a public hotel and tavern.

Wolf's Hotel, across the street from the Pacific House, built circa 1865, is one of Washington's largest brick buildings. Owned and operated by William Wolf this three and one-half story brick building in the Italianate style was used as a hotel until 1899 when Stoenner Shoe Company occupied it.

Buildings from the 1839-1895 period represent the largest period of economic growth in the town, and also the period of the largest numbers of residential, commercial and industrial buildings constructed within the survey area.

1895-1940 Town Changes from Fourth Class to Third Class City

In the area surveyed there is only a small number of buildings from this period to represent the continued development of the town. However, this period saw the continuation of economic growth in Washington, but not at the rate of the 1839-1895 period.

In 1985 the city changed from a fourth class city to a third class city designation which resulted from increased population and revenue. A re-evaluation of

merchant classifications and taxes took place at this time.

During this period industry continued to prosper. Missouri Meerscham Corn Cob Pipe Factory expanded adding three, three-story brick additions, circa 1895, 1910 and 1920. A special strain of corn was grown locally to provide the type of cob necessary in the manufacture of cob pipes. Henry Tibbe's son Anton, erected the Craftsman Style Power Plant at 426 Front Street in 1915. Designed by Theodore Link the one and one-half story brick building contains some Romanesque elements, such as the segmental brick arches above door and window openings. This feature is in keeping with the character of many of Washington's older German designed buildings.

In 1900 Hirschl and Bindheim Pipe Company, previous jobbers for Missouri Meerscham, moved into the Circa 1865 Pork Packing Plant at 314 Front Street to establish their own cob and regular pipe manufacturing business. They remained in the building until 1977 when it was sold to Langenberg Hat Company, a formerly St. Louis based concern.

In 1923 a new City Hall building was erected on the site of the old City Hall (also a two story brick building, dated 1851). The new two story brick building is in the Neo Classical style and features a number of arched window openings, as seen in numerous Washington buildings. Until recently the second floor contained the City Library.

That same year the continued use of the railroad called for the third construction of a depot in Washington. The first depot was destroyed by fire during the Civil War. The second, a frame depot, 1865, was moved to the west of the site and began use as a freight depot to make way for the one and one-half story brick depot of 1923. Designed by E. M. Tucker for Missouri Pacific Railroad. This Craftman style building became the new passenger depot.

With the advent of the auto in the 1920's Highway 100 became increasingly important as a link between St. Louis and Washington. The increase in automotive transportation led to the building of a bridge in Washington, completed in 1935 and spanning the Missouri River.

In 1932 the Elks Club purchased the Turnverein. In 1940 the Elks added a new facade addition in the Art Deco style. The scale and use of exterior brick

pilasters relate the building to the German built buildings of an earlier time. While it appears that the German population of Washington was largely assimilated at this time, the essence of earlier architectural types can be seen in the features of buildings of this later period.

The majority of buildings constructed during this period within the survey area are commercial and industrial. The majority are two-three story brick with planar facades. While stylistic variance occurs in scale, color and material, they match earlier buildings.

CONCLUSION

The majority of buildings surveyed are brick, the favored building material of Washington. The earliest brick building found to exist is at 104 Front/3 Lafayette Streets. This Federal style building is near the original ferry landing and is reported to be an early inn and residence. Further research is necessary to substantiate original ownership of the building. Early exceptions to the use of brick as building material are a vernacular style log house at 124 Jefferson Street, circa 1845, now covered with clapboard siding; and the Zakariah Foss house at 24 Front Street, circa 1846. The majority of brick buildings from all periods tend to have common features. They are generally two-three stories high with three-five bays at the facade. Individual detailing is such as brick corbelling and roof types provide some stylistic variation. However, most buildings are unified by overall planar facades, similar cornice treatments, materials, color, scale and setback. There is an unusually high density of buildings with a low loss of integrity. Building alterations have been minor. The most frequently seen alteration occurs where original openings have been infilled. However, the original openings are usually still apparent. Most of the buildings surveyed within the given area are commercial or industrial. Most are well maintained. Some, like the Missouri Meerscham Pipe Factory, utilize only a small portion of the building for current operation.

To locate a cohesive district, it will be necessary to look at the central business district which developed concurrently with the surveyed area. It appears that this may best be accomplished by surveying the area bounded by

Market, west to Cedar, and Main, south to Fifth. Buildings in this area appear to be related to those surveyed in this survey architecturally, as well as representative examples of the economic development of the city.

The photography is by Maureen Jones. The negatives are located at 1910 Virginia Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63104, (314) 771-9121.

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Water Department Map of City of Washington, Mo. 1926

Boundary Sketch Map of Washington, MISSOURI

- Original Town of Washington
- Original Town of Bassora
- Original Town of South Point
- Original Town of Nierstein
- 1873 Boundary of Washington
- 1987 Boundary of Washington

