

HISTORY OF WASHINGTON COUNTY



**MERAMEC REGIONAL PLANNING
COMMISSION**

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MERAMEC REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

PHASE V

HISTORIC INVENTORY OF WASHINGTON COUNTY

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HISTORY OF WASHINGTON COUNTY

**PREPARED BY
MERAMEC REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
101 WEST 10TH STREET
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

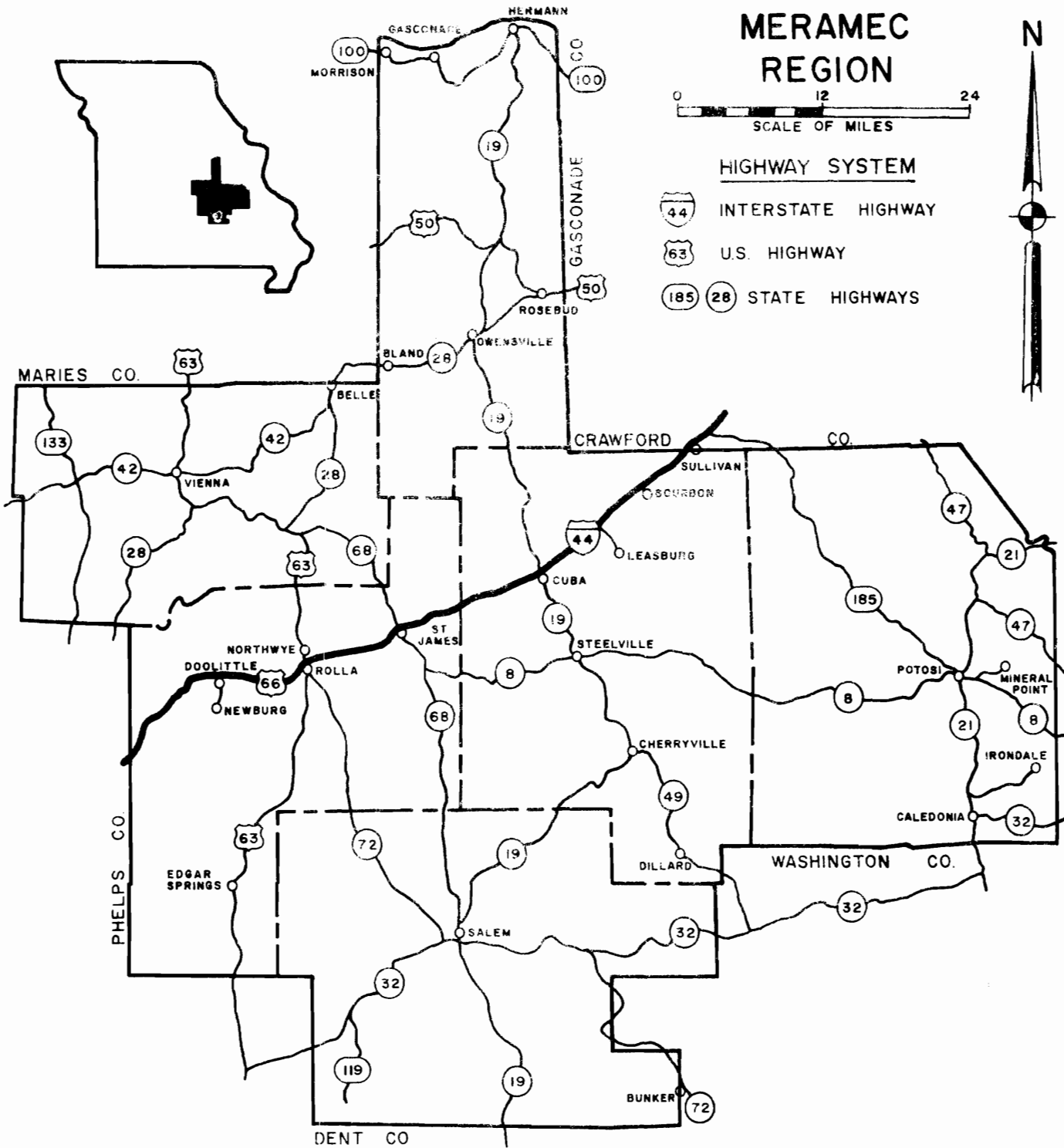
<u>Topic</u>	<u>Page</u>
TITLE PAGE.....	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iii
METHODOLOGY.....	1
Background.....	1
Research.....	1
Encouragement.....	2
Cooperation.....	2
Field Work.....	2
Mapping.....	3
Results.....	3
HISTORY OF WASHINGTON COUNTY.....	5
Minerals.....	6
Topography.....	7
COMMUNITIES OF WASHINGTON COUNTY.....	9
Courtois.....	9
Adam.....	9
Quaker.....	9
Palmer.....	10
Sunlight.....	10
Tiff.....	11
Old Mines.....	12
Mineral Point.....	12
Irondale.....	13
Baryties.....	14
Fertile.....	15
Richwoods.....	15
Shibboleth and Cadet.....	16
Shirley.....	16
CONCLUSION.....	17
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	19
LIST OF SURVEY REPORTS.....	21
RURAL CHURCHES.....	25

MERAMEC REGION

0 12 24
SCALE OF MILES

HIGHWAY SYSTEM

-  INTERSTATE HIGHWAY
-  U.S. HIGHWAY
-  STATE HIGHWAYS



METHODOLOGY

Background - The project initially began with an application to the Department of Natural Resources, Office of Historic Preservation. The Meramec Regional Planning Commission authorized its staff to seek a matching grant to conduct an inventory of historic structures within the Meramec Region. Negotiations with the DNR Office of Historic Preservation led to a contract to accomplish an historic inventory of Washington County. The survey or inventory was to consist of 175 historic inventory data sheets, a 3 by 5 inch photograph of each structure or object inventoried, a comprehensive map of the county and each site location, topographic maps detailing the exact site location according to the UTM (United Tic Mark) References, and a final comprehensive history of the county with the major emphasis being the historical and architectural development of the communities.

Research - Research began by reviewing pamphlets from the DNR/OHP to learn the basic styles and terminology necessary for the complete assessment of architectural styles and structural aspects of prospective sites. In addition, perusal of earlier surveys completed in relevant MRPC counties was conducted for additional guidance and assistance in style and content of such inventories. An attempt was made to learn as much as possible about Washington County before actually beginning the field work; reference to historical books written about the area and identification of communities through the use of topographic maps prefaced a great deal of the initial interviewing and survey work. Becoming acquainted with many of the early members and settlers of the community obviated repetitious questions during the interviews and provided a basic understanding of the development and settlement of small towns as well as the people who settled them and many of their descendents who still live there.

Encouragement - The HPP staff has received encouragement from everyone with whom they have come in contact. Members of local historical societies have provided a good source of information. They also have encouraged the furtherance of the historical identification program by giving HPP staff tours of their homes to show salient points of local architecture, by explaining vagaries of local history which could not be known by an outsider, and in fact are known to only a few of the residents of the local areas, and generally by supporting the objectives of the program.

Cooperation - The HPP staff has received a tremendous amount of cooperation from the residents of the communities surveyed. There were many times when no effort was spared by the people interviewed in providing detailed information, records and abstracts, photographs, house tours, and other references. Even those who perhaps had not heard of Historic Preservation exhibited remarkable efforts and personal time in sharing their knowledge and personal memories of specific sites and local history. Certainly the cooperation and willingness to share such time and knowledge has provided the essence of capturing and recording local history which has contributed to the unmitigated success of the Historic Preservation Program at MRPC.

Field Work - Work in the field began in July, 1986. It included the use of knowledge gleaned from the research and local sources which had been done to that date, and both field work and research proceeded simultaneously.

Field work in Washington County was at first conducted in Belgrade. Later, work branched out to include Sunlight, Quaker, Irondale, Old Mines, and to all other towns in Washington; the rural sites were also extensively surveyed. The large maps of Washington County show the locations of the sites surveyed in the county. As can be seen by a glance, surveys were spread across the length and breadth of the county.

Mapping - The maps used by the MRPC/HPP were prepared by the staff. Map arrows show the locations of the sites identified by the historic reports. Item #1 on the map is the number which identifies the location of the property being described. These map arrows designating the sites are followed by the initials of the architectural styles of the sites. The numbering and initial system was decided upon after a lengthy discussion of the best way to graphically show the location of the property site and appropriate architectural styles.

Results - The result obtained by conducting this research has been a compilation of a specific as well as a general history of the development of Washington County. Specific questions, such as construction dates and who built the house, were always asked of the people interviewed. Other pertinent questions about community history were asked, as well as questions about housing and structural materials used, alterations made, and dates of remodelling, as well as other historical questions such as initial land use and history of ownership. The architectural features of these sites was determined by an analysis of the design and features derived from the photographs taken; in this way the objectives of this project, a survey which combines history and architectural information about communities, was fulfilled. The following pages depict the historical record of events leading to the settlement in Washington County and conclusions about the types of structures to be found in the communities of Washington County.

GENERALIZED TOPOGRAPHY
WASHINGTON COUNTY
CONTOUR INTERVAL 100 FEET

5 0 5
SCALE OF MILES



HISTORY OF WASHINGTON COUNTY

Washington County was organized August 21, 1813, and was named after George Washington, the first president of the United States. The territory of which the county is composed had previously been part of Saint Genevieve County. St. Genevieve County had been one of the original five districts of which the Territory of Missouri had been composed at the time of its organization in 1812. As it was originally laid out the county contained more territory than it does at the present time. By subsequent acts of the legislature the county has been reduced in size to its present limits.

The commissioners appointed to select a site for the county seat designated the village of Mine a Breton as the temporary seat of justice for the county. On February 26, 1814, the permanent county was established on 40 acres of land donated by Moses Austin, and 10 acres of land donated by John Rice Jones. The town was platted with a public square and 22 blocks with 147 lots. The new town was briefly named St. George, but was later renamed Potosi in honor of the Spanish silver mining town in Bolivia. Potosi and Mine a Breton remained separate villages until May 2, 1826, when they were incorporated under the single name of Potosi.

A large court house, suitable for a future state capital was planned for Potosi. It was to be financed by the sale of several of the city lots. In the Territorial Convention Potosi lost in its bid for the site of the capital to Jefferson City, and lost by only one vote to St. Charles as the temporary capital until the capitol building could be constructed in Jefferson City. Although not successful in becoming the capital of the new state, the State Supreme Court met twice a year in Potosi between 1837 and 1843.

In May 1861 the citizens of Potosi went on record in favor of armed neutrality in the civil war, and organized a home guard to maintain their neutrality. Later that month

Union troops over ran the town and arrested several southern sympathizers. In August, Colonel White and a Confederate cavalry detachment invaded Potosi, but left shortly thereafter. In September 1864, General Shelby and his troops invaded the town, only to be met by a resistance force which had barricaded itself in the court house. The defenders were unsuccessful, and several of them were shot on the court house lawn following the engagement. After the Civil War the surface lead deposits in the area were depleted and Barite mining became prominent.

Barite - The Washington County barite district is responsible for Missouri being the leading barite mining state in the nation. In fact, almost all of the barite produced in the country comes from Washington county. Recently, though, barite mining in the county has been drastically reduced. This is due mainly to the increased availability of low-priced barite imported from other countries, principally China.

Production of barite in Washington county began as early as 1850. Most of the present production in ground and solid for oil-drilling mud use, while the remainder is processed for higher valued chemical grade uses. The most important chemical uses are in paint, rubber, and glass manufacturing. Barite can be prepared from the ore concentrates quite economically.

Iron Ore - The only iron ore mining facility now in operation in Missouri is the Pea Ridge Mine in northwestern Washington Co. This mine is also unique for the fact that it is the only underground iron ore mine in the United States.

stone quarries can be found in every county of Meramec Region with the exception of Washington.

Lead, Zinc, Copper and Silver - Washington county has been important in lead mining since about 1725. The small, near surface mines eventually became depleted and only minor amounts of lead ores were produced during the 1930's and 1940's. In

1950, however, a new ore discovery was made at Indian Creek in north-central Washington county. In 1955, new ore discoveries were made near Viburnum, in Iron county, and have since been found stretching from Viburnum to near Bunker, in Reynolds county. This is called the Viburnum Trend or the new lead belt.

Topography - The topography of Washington county is divided by a line coincident with Highway 21. The topography west of Highway 21 is very hilly. The ridges in this area are sharp, and the hills are steep sloping. East of Highway 21 the topography is gentle, with broad valleys and rounded ridges. The maximum relief in the county is approximately 700 feet.

COMMUNITIES OF WASHINGTON COUNTY

The towns once located in the Southwestern part of Washington County, now roughly encompassed by the Mark Twain National Forest, are melodious,almost gentle sounding names: Brazil; Ishmael; Courtois; Delbridge; Palmer; Shirley; and Quaker. There are just bare traces left of some of these places.

Courtois - The town of Courtois was established with the beginning of a post office in 1846; the post office was discontinued in 1848. However, it currently has one now. Courtois was named, no doubt, after the Courtois Creek which runs through it. Around this town is the Indian Creek Church also known as Emmaus Missionary Baptist Church; the Church was organized in 1861 but the actual construction date of the present building is probably later. The Courtois Schoolhouse also remains although it was closed in the 1930s; it is located on a rise above Indian Creek and, although many alterations have been made, it still partially rests upon its original stone foundation.

Adam - Some of the names of the towns were derived from Biblical sources such as as the towns of Adam, Ishmael, Quaker, and Antioch. Adam did have a post office established in 1907, but it was very short lived. However, the Adam Bethel Church remains; it is located on a gravel road which parallels a stream branch of the Courtois River.

Quaker - Very little remains in the town of Quaker; a post office was initially established here in 1892 but was discontinued in 1954. Although no longer in existence the town once had a general store and post office as well as a sawmill. The store has been torn down,but there are still several houses in this area which, although in fairly poor condition, were constructed in the early 1900s and which leave a vague reference as to the location of the town of Quaker. West of Quaker about one-half mile is the Joseph Chapel

Anotioch Methodist Church and the Antioch Community Building; the community building was once used as a school and may have been part of the Quaker community. However, it is unlikely because both buildings pre-date Quaker.

Palmer - Three miles north of Quaker, in Harmony Township, is the only building, Palmer Church, left standing in what was once known as the town of Palmer. Palmer was established in 1830; the town was originally known as Harmony until the post office was established in 1827. Palmer was owned and laid out by the Palmer Lead Co. and a great deal of lead mining surrounded the town - at one time there were 94 lead diggings in and around Palmer.

The Palmer post office was the first post office in the southwest part of the county. The town once contained a store, blacksmith shop and Post Office. The store was torn down in the 1970s by the U.S. National Forest Service but the Palmer Church, now restored and repainted, was saved. Many of the Civil War's guerrilla action took place around Palmer and a grave, marked by several crosses, is located south of the town. The grave is known as the the grave of the "Unknown Soldier" who was killed after a skirmish. Although not easily distinguishable, the grave is located on the side of Hwy. Z and is covered with a mound of rocks and dirt. The crosses placed on top of the grave indicate that even though the name of the soldier is unknown, his sacrifice has not been forgotten nor does it go without respect.

Sunlight - The towns of Sunlight and Belgrade are located very close to one another - Sunlight is four miles west of Belgrade. Sunlight is as pleasant a community as its name indicates; it is located on Brock's Creek in Belgrade Township. The post office was established in 1885 and operated until the services were moved to Belgrade in 1927.

Sunlight was once very active and had several businesses including several general stores. The Sunlight blacksmith and wagon shop - the only 'business building' left

standing is now used to store hay. All others have been torn down. Perched above Brock's Creek is the Sunlight Church which was built around 1890. It is a small rural Church with a rock foundation, and a frame construction. The Church and the cemetery were both originally known as Ramsey Grove.

Many of the towns were named from the mining activity in Washington County . As mentioned before Washington County is a leading barite production district in the nation. It is also important in lead mining. The names of many of these towns such as Tiff, Old Mines, Mineral Pt., Irondale, Indian Mines, Cannon Mines, Baryties, Fertile and Potosi are obviously derived from the mining industry which was once so prevalent in the county.

Tiff - Tiff is located in Union Township next to the St. Francois Co. line. Tiff is another name for Barite - a soft white mineral used in oil drilling and in some chemical products. Presumably a great deal of barite mining was conducted in this area which is the reason for the town's name and location. Barite production became prevalent after the Civil War and after much of the lead had been depleted from the area. Although the date of its construction is not known - the railroad also runs through Tiff and was instrumental in the transporting of the mineral.

Little if any tiff mining is conducted here anymore. The town of Tiff has one general store left and the old Tiff Schoolhouse, a small one room rural school, was converted into a private residence thirty years ago. However, the St. Joseph Catholic Church , rectory (now a rental home), and the St. Joseph Hall (now used to hold boy scout meetings) are still in Tiff; Father John H. Cook was the founder of the Parish. Services are now only held on Sunday and the priest comes from the Old Mines Parish. These buildings are large, thoughtfully constructed buildings that almost border on the grandiose compared to the general architectural styles found in Tiff. The Church and its outbuildings

were built sometime in the early 1900s and, although most of the houses in this town now are fairly modern, are certainly remnants of the town's population and activity that once went on here.

Old Mines - Old Mines began with a Spanish land grant of 10,548 acres of land; this grant was conceded to thirty-one people under Spanish authorities in 1803. Tracts from Spanish land grants were different from tracts adopted under the United States Government in that the grants were rectangular shaped as compared to one-mile squares; when the U. S. Government began surveying and dividing areas into districts the Old Mines area (as well as the rest of northern Washington County) belonged to the St. Louis district.

Old Mines is located in Union Township on the banks of the Old Mines Creek. Highway 21 now runs through Old Mines and a lot of strip development has happened as evidenced by the number of modern houses and businesses constructed alongside the roadway.

At one time Old Mines had several lead furnaces, a company store and post office, several independent stores, the Catholic and the Baptist Churches, and a public schoolhouse. The St. Joachim Church is the oldest structure in Old Mines. It is constructed of brick and was built in 1828 with a rear section added in the 1900s. Old Mines is the center of the Old Mines Historical Society which hold French festivals (Jour de fete) in the fall and spring seasons.

Mineral Point - The town of Mineral Point is located east of Potosi and was laid out in 1858 by William C. Inks. It was originally located on the St. Louis Iron Mountain & Southern Railway which was later changed to a branch of the Missouri Pacific Railways. The town of Mineral Pt. has grown and now has a fairly large population. The oldest part

where the railroad depot, now demolished, once stood. It is rumored that Jesse James and his Gang used to drink and play cards at the Terrell saloon.

The United Methodist Church was once the Methodist Episcopal Church, South - the split between Methodist Church North and South had occurred during the Civil War. The Civil War also left its mark on Irondale in another way. In 1864, General Price and his troops raided the town of Irondale, looting the stores and burning the railroad bridge which was built over Big River. After the Civil War the Churches reunited to create the United Methodist Church; the Church is located on Main St. and is partially constructed of the same locally made brick as is the Company Hotel and Terrill Saloon. It is a Victorian Gothic style of architecture built in 1866. The interior was remodelled after a fire occurred within some years ago. There are many older Churches in Irondale and many older houses reminiscent of its age and history. Currently, Irondale has a fairly sizable population and has sustained a fair growth throughout the years.

Baryties - Baryties and Fertile are located within several miles of each other in Union Township close to the St. Francois Co. Line. Baryties was never a very large town and only several houses remain within the immediate vicinity. Alongside the road is a Spring house which has been solidly constructed from stone slabs presumably taken from the rock beds along the Maddin Creek, which is undoubtedly fed by the spring itself. The spring house has a cedar shake roof covering which helps to shelter the spring's source; its year of construction is inscribed on one of the stone slabs and dates it to 1889.

Across Hwy. CC is the Baryties Schoolhouse which is now used as a private home and is generally constructed along the lines of rural schoolhouses. Most of the interior has been remodelled to accommodate the conveniences of a house. A large strip mine area is directly in back of the house which may have been the source of Baryties namesake; within this area is allegedly a mill built on Maddin Creek.

Fertile - Fertile was settled by Z. P. Higginbotham in the late 1800s. Higginbotham built a two story mansion which overlooks Hwy. CC. It was built around 1870 and is a huge building principally constructed of locally made brick. This house is now owned by the Rural Parish Workers of Christ the King - its owners and helpers have provided much economic and spiritual assistance to the surrounding families in the rural community. Within the area are the Maplewood School and Maison De Boyer Noad - or the Boyer house. These buildings are owned by the Old Mines Historical Society and have been well maintained. The School was constructed with lumber used from the original 1906 World's Fair in St. Louis. The Maison De Boyer Noad is an excellent example of log construction; it has been moved from its original site. Boyer was one of the earlier settlers in the area.

Richwoods - The town of Richwoods is located in the Northern part of Washington County close to the Franklin County border. It has a fairly large population and a number of houses and businesses within its boundaries. One of the oldest houses is located on a hill overlooking a small creek and the Richwoods Methodist Church. The Horine house been kept in the Horine family and was built around 1860 by Alexander Horine - an immigrant from Austria. The Richwoods Methodist Church was built around 1880 and was moved sixty years ago from its original site outside of Richwoods. The property surrounding both the Methodist Church and the Horine house were occupied by General Price and his Confederate Soldiers who camped in the copse of trees on their retreat from the Battle of Leasburg.

Richwoods once had several blacksmith shops, stores, a wagon shop, and a schoolhouse as well as a post office. Later a mill was built on the banks of the tiny stream which flows through the town. The mill, once three stories in height, was cut down to two stories and used as a house.

Many of the people who now live in Richwoods commute to and from employment in St. Louis.

Shibboleth and Cadet - The small towns of Shibboleth and Cadet are located very close to one another. There is little left in either town however both towns had their origins as centers for mining activity. Shibboleth had its start as a mining center with a company owned store. Most of the buildings are of recent construction. Cadet is located on what was the St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern Railway. Cadet still has around a dozen houses but most of these are of fairly recent construction dates; one of its oldest houses was built around 1890.

Shirley - Shirley is located in Walton Township on Hwy. 8. The oldest structure standing in Union is the beautiful and quaint Shirley Union Church. It was originally built in 1860 and used for non-denominational services. The Union Church has a rock foundation, a wood frame, and a gable pitch roofline. The front wooden door has a transom of stained light overhead. The Church has been fairly well taken care of but is still very old and Sunday services are attended at one of the newer Churches that have been built in Shirley. The Union Church is now only used for funeral services.

Potosi, Caledonia, and Belgrade are the three largest towns in Washington County. They are all fairly prosperous and economically healthy towns. They are beautiful and historical places and both their beauty and their histories have been well protected and documented by local historical societies.

CONCLUSION

Mining has played a major role in the economic base of Washington County even before the county's creation in 1813; lead mining in the area began around 1725. A multitude of small communities, some still in existence and some not, dot the county attesting to the importance that mining interests played in the creation of these towns. Within recent years, however, the mining industry has drastically declined leaving behind high unemployment and low income in the area.

Potosi, Belgrade, Caledonia, and Irondale are the largest towns in Washington County and provide some employment to the surrounding rural communities. These towns are also very rich in history as is each of the small communities in Washington County such as Old Mines and Tiff. As a result of the decline in the mining industry efforts have been and are being made to attract other sources of employment into the area which will provide a more stable base for future economic equilibrium. Certainly one of the diversifications being planned is the development of tourism in the area. Historical sites in Washington County are being preserved and restored and are a potential source of attracting a number of people into the area. Certainly the natural geographical features provide additional enticement. The combination of history and natural features can attract both a stable population and a viable economy.

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WASHINGTON COUNTY REPORTS

BARYTIES

1. Boyer House
2. Baryties Schoolhouse
3. Baryties Spring House

BELLEFONTAINE

4. Bellefontaine School
5. Wicker House
6. Degornia Store
7. First General Store in Racola
8. Racola Barber Shop
9. Cannon Mine Store
10. Cannon Mines Log Cabin
11. Boyer's Log Structure

BELGRADE

12. Henderson House
13. Cantrell House
14. Crawford House
15. Holdman House
16. Jesse Ship House
17. Barr House
18. Liberty Baptist Church
29. First Church of God
20. Jarvis Antique Shop
21. Farrell Grain
22. Farrell Warehouse
23. Dunn House
24. Belgrade Post Office
25. O.B. Farrell Mill

CADET

26. Roderick House
27. Politte Log House
28. Cadet House
29. Bourbon House

COURTOIS

30. Antioch Methodist Church
31. Antioch Community Building
32. Adam Bethel Church of God
33. Barr's Store
34. Courtois School

DELBRIDGE

35. Marler Chapel
36. Dunn House
37. Belgrade Masonic Hall

WASHINGTON COUNTY REPORTS

EBO

- 38. Ebo Store
- 49. Ione Yarbrough House
- 40. Soul's Chapel

FERTILE

- 41. Maison de Boyer Noad
- 42. Jackson House
- 43. Z.P. Higginbotham House
- 44. Politte Log Cabin
- 45. Maplewood Building
- 46. Maplewood School

HOPEWELL

- 47. Hopewell General Store
- 48. Betty Smith House
- 49. Hopewell Church

IRONDALE

- 50. Irondale Bank
- 51. Bodehamer House
- 52. Donzy House
- 53. Irondale Bottling Co.
- 54. Irondale Hotel
- 55. Arthur Smith House
- 56. Irondale Market
- 57. Eastern Star Masonic Hall
- 58. Irondale Post Office
- 59. Dickey House
- 60. Chapel House
- 61. Irondale School
- 62. Park house
- 63. Blue Haven Cafe
- 64. Santschi House
- 65. Carlock House
- 66. Silverbird Studio
- 67. Walter Smaltz House
- 68. Nazarene Church
- 69. Laura Lucy House
- 70. Methodist Church
- 71. Smaltz House
- 72. Short House
- 73. Irondale Garage
- 74. Hensley House
- 75. Irondale Bridge
- 76. Irondale Garage
- 77. Eichelberger House

KOCH

WASHINGTON COUNTY REPORTS

- 78. Koch Building
- 79. Koch Store
- 80. Koch Granery
- 81. Boots Koch House
- 82. Tony Koch House

MINERAL POINT

- 83. Mineral Point Store
- 84. William's House
- 85. Mineral Point Hotel
- 86. Mineral Point Church
- 87. Mineral Point Lion's Club

OLD MINES

- 88. Renault Brigade Log Cabin
- 89. Unknown at Old Mines
- 90. Dalee House
- 91. Old Mines Store
- 92. Madame Marie Louise Lamarque House
- 93. Renault Brigade II
- 94. St. Joachim's School
- 95. St. Joachim's Church

PALMER

- 96. Palmer Church

POTOSI

- 97. M E church
- 98. Presbyterian Church
- 99. St. James Catholic Church
- 100. The DeCleau House
- 101. Huff House
- 102. Hedley House
- 103. Stang House
- 104. Long Slave Cabin
- 105. Casey House
- 106. Casey House
- 107. Flynn House
- 108. Banta House
- 109. Wright House
- 110. Woods House
- 111. Potosi Masonic Lodge

QUAKER

- 112. Gillam House
- 113. Stanley Dow House
- 114. Indian Creek Church
- 115. Bone House

WASHINGTON COUNTY REPORTS

SHIRLEY

- 116. White Oak Baptist Church
- 117. Shirley Post Office
- 118. Shirley Union Church
- 119. Lawrence Woods House
- 120. Ray Benson House

SUNLIGHT

- 121. Sunlight Church
- 122. Nickelson House
- 123. Dickey House
- 124. Blacksmith Shop

TIFF

- 125. St. Joseph's Hall
- 126. Boyer House
- 127. St. Joseph's Catholic Church
- 128. Tiff Schoolhouse

RICHWOODS

- 129. Horine House
- 130. John Baker House
- 131. Cardeell House
- 132. Charboneau House
- 133. Failess House
- 134. Cordia House
- 135. Griggs House
- 136. First Richwoods Bank
- 137. Richwoods Feedstore
- 138. Richwoods Methodist Church
- 139. Suiter's Store
- 140. Voyle House
- 141. Richwoods Town Hall

RURAL WASHINGTON COUNTY CHURCHES



Emmaus Missionary Church (Indian Creek Baptist Church)

The Emmaus Missionary Church was organized around 1861 but the actual construction date of the present church is probably later. The Church was built circa 1915 and is located in Courtois Township near the town of Courtois.



Adam Bethel Church of God

The Adam Bethel Church of God was built circa 1911. It is located in Courtois Township.

RURAL WASHINGTON COUNTY CHURCHES



Palmer Church

The Palmer Church was built circa 1910 and is a modified Victorian Gothic style of architecture. It is located in the old town of Palmer in Harmony Township.



Sunlight Church

The Sunlight Church is located in Belgrade Township on the banks of Brock Creek. It was constructed circa 1890.

RURAL WASHINGTON COUNTY CHURCHES



Shirley Union Church

The Shirley Union Church is located in the town of Shirley in Walton Township; it was built in 1860 and was attended by all denominations.



Souls Chapel

Souls Chapel is located in the town of Ebo in Liberty Township. Souls Chapel, originally constructed circa 1900, served this community for many years. It is now only used for funeral services.