

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

### 1. Name of Property

historic name McKittrick Farmers Mercantile

other names/site number N/A

### 2. Location

street & number 500 Washington Street N/A not for publication

city or town McKittrick N/A vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Montgomery code 139 zip code 65041

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Mark A. Miles  
Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles, Deputy SHPO

April 19, 2010  
Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Name of Property

Montgomery County, MO  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
1		<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/department store

SOCIAL/meeting hall

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Vacant

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: Two-part commercial block

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

foundation: Concrete

walls: Brick

\_\_\_\_\_

roof: Metal

other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Name of Property

Montgomery County, MO  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

Commerce

Entertainment/Recreation

**Period of Significance**

1897 – c. 1945

**Significant Dates**

1897

1930

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Montgomery County Library and Montgomery County Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Name of Property

Montgomery County, MO  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** Less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 635220 4288260  
Zone Easting Northing

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Cynthia Strawn Browne

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date November 15, 2009

street & number P.O. Box 435 telephone 573-486-3218

city or town Hermann state MO zip code 65041

e-mail [browneecindy@gmail.com](mailto:browneecindy@gmail.com)

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:**
  - A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
  - A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Photographs.**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Richard Lauer, Lauer Investment

street & number P.O. Box 111 telephone 314-603-2889

city or town Hermann state MO zip code 65041

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Montgomery County, Missouri

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**Summary Paragraph**

The McKittrick Farmers Mercantile is located at 500 Washington Street in the small town of McKittrick, Montgomery County, Missouri. This two-story brick commercial building is rectangular in shape and was built on a concrete foundation in circa 1897. Situated on the corner of Main and Washington Streets, the mercantile building faces the primary street winding its way from Missouri State Highway 19 to the town and former MKT railroad line. Small Victorian houses dot the landscape leading into town and line the streets up the hill to the north from the town center. Several larger brick houses from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century occupy the prominent hillsides. Built on the lot line, this brick building is one of only two such brick commercial structures in the town, the other was built as a bank to the northeast on Main Street. The town is platted in a regular grid of nine blocks with Main and Washington as the primary commercial streets, the south boundary of town parallels the former Missouri, Kansas and Texas (MKT) railroad line. The mercantile is notable with its standing seam pavilion roof that shelters the assembly hall located on its second floor. A metal canopy shades the storefront and sidewalk that at one time led to adjoining, but now missing, wood frame commercial buildings. Other commercial buildings were free standing, scattered along Main Street to the east. Across a small slough to the south is an open area that was the site of the railroad depot, water tanks and coal chutes, a grain elevator and livestock pens and is now a gravel parking lot and way-station for the KATY trail hike and bike path.

**Narrative Description**

The east facing front façade of the McKittrick Farmers Mercantile features a three bay wood storefront with a centered, recessed double leaf door opening, elevated two steps from the concrete walk, with transom above. On either side of the entry bay are cast iron columns and large storefront windows with painted wood panel bulkheads below. The storefront display areas retain their original interior sliding wood sash with glass panels. The front storefront is surmounted by a metal awning extending across the entire front façade, supported by wrought iron brackets extending from the façade and metal poles at the curb, with corrugated iron roofing, curved down at the front edge. A matching awning fronts the brick bank building to the northeast on Main Street (see photo 1 and figure 11).

Above at the second floor, are three bays of single window openings, with segmental arches of double coursed brick with wood sills and one over one wood window sash. On the secondary street elevation or north side, single window openings of similar design form four bays at the second floor level. At the rear lower bay is a large sliding door constructed of vertical wood planks (see photo 1 and figure 12). The sill is at the interior floor level sufficiently above grade to create a loading dock. Further to the rear a single passage door with three horizontal panels, the top further divided into three elements, and a glass panel above provides access to the second floor stairs through a vestibule to the first floor space. Two short windows with matching brick arch openings are placed high in the wall within the first two bays of the north façade. Their placement on this and the south façade preserved interior wall space for display cabinetry, now missing. The south façade has two single passage doors with transoms above, matching the door on the north elevation, one is at the rear bay and the other mid point. The west facing rear façade features three bays of windows on the second floor and a single high window at the

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Montgomery County, Missouri

south corner, first floor. A small, concrete block single story extension to the building has been added at the northwest corner, covering a set of stairs leading to the basement of the building. Windows openings in the concrete foundation to the basement are on each side, rectangular in shape with arch opening of brick, all with sash missing. The standing seam roof structure has integral gutters with wood soffit and fascia.

Interior of the first floor is one large open space featuring wood floors, plaster walls, simple wood trim and pressed tin ceiling (see figure 9 and photo 4). Plain wood columns extend down the center of the building and a wood stud and plaster partition encloses the stairway and entry vestibule at the rear wall. The sliding dock door opens into the main space. Faint images remain on the wood floors revealing the location of the original general store display cabinets. One display case remains on the back wall. The second floor is also plaster wall finish with wood floors and pressed tin ceiling, coved on three sides some five feet in overall depth and dropping from the 14' tall flat center ceiling section to 10' side walls to create an assembly hall. At the west end is a projecting stage platform raised some two feet above the main floor (see figure 10 and photo 6). A stage door right and left open to a small dressing room on one side and the entry space at the top of the stair on the other. A small stage closet door opens at rear, right of center stage. A raised wood platform one step high with built-in wooden bench seating extends all along the north and south walls under the coved ceiling area. Simple wood trim of the windows and baseboards matches that of the first floor.

The concrete walled basement has a low exposed wood joist ceiling. The floor, likely of concrete as well, is silted in with dirt. Window openings with missing sash are set high in the basement walls along the north and south sides. A concrete stair leads to the exterior and a wood frame stair, rotted from damp, leads to the main floor, also at the rear wall.

Nearly all elements of the building are original, though some are poorly maintained. The roof is leaking; repaired in the past with an asphaltic sealant that was poorly applied and stained portions of the brick facade. Gutters, wood soffit and fascia must all be replaced. Water damage has caused some plaster failure in the rear corner of the first and second floor and the pressed tin ceiling has significant rust damage on the second floor. The storefront is remarkably intact and in good condition. Overall the building retains its historic integrity and can be restored to its original appearance and use.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Montgomery County, Missouri

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**Summary Paragraph**

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile, 500 Washington Street in McKittrick, Montgomery County is locally significant under Criteria A in the areas of Commerce and Entertainment/Recreation. The McKittrick Farmer's Mercantile was the commercial and entertainment center of this small Missouri town that grew with the completion of the Missouri Kansas and Texas Railroad line in the 1890s. This two story brick building located on the prime commercial corner of Washington and Main served the trade needs of the local farming community housing a general store and post office on the first floor. The second floor with its stage and large assembly area hosted theatrical performances, church gatherings and community events. Built circa 1897, the period of significance is from its construction through c. 1945 when the store closed and post office moved to a new location.

**Elaboration:**

**Historical Background**

Located on the north bank of the Missouri River, the area surrounding McKittrick had been home to farmers in the Missouri River bottoms and Loutre Island since the early 1800s. As was the case with early settlements, the first pioneers followed the Missouri River and its exploration. "The island was first discovered by the French trappers and *voyaguers*, and by them called Loutre—meaning 'otter', doubtless from the number of these valuable fur-bearing animals found in the slough which surrounds it."<sup>1</sup> Though called an "island," the area is a large swath of land sandwiched between the wide Missouri River on the south and the narrower Loutre River to the north (see figure 1).

**Early Settlement**

The earliest permanent settlers in this area were of English descent. Hail Talbott and his oldest son, Christopher ("Kit") Talbott, were among the first to arrive in 1809 from Madison County, Kentucky, bringing slaves to put in a crop; the rest of the family arriving the following year. During the War of 1812 Loutre Island was important to continued development of the area. The pioneers of Montgomery County were frequently attacked by the hostile Indian tribes from the north and for protection many retreated to Ft. Clemson, constructed on the upper part of Loutre Island in what is now Warren County. The Talbott family prospered and played a role in the development of the county and state. Dr. James Talbott was one of the first physicians in the area and a delegate to the state convention that framed the first Missouri constitution. One of the first three Supreme Court Justices appointed in the state, Matthias McGirk, was married to Elizabeth Talbott, a daughter of Col. Hail Talbott.<sup>2</sup>

Settlement and farming interests were initially located in the fertile Loutre bottoms until successive years of floods, culminating in the catastrophic flood of 1844, forced settlers to move to higher ground. In the 1850s the Talbot family built, using slave labor, a large brick house on the hill overlooking what would become the town of McKittrick. The 1878 Atlas (see figure 1)

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<sup>1</sup> History of St. Charles, Montgomery and Warren Counties, Missouri [1885] St. Louis, Mo: Paul Cochrane, reprinted 1969.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 753.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Montgomery County, Missouri

shows the Talbotts owned hundreds of acres of the land in the area and the landowners surrounding them were of English descent, with names like Lee, Woodruff and Anderson.

German Settlement

Meanwhile, across the Missouri River, the town of Hermann was founded in 1837 by the German Settlement Society of Philadelphia. With river bluffs and hills wrapping its site, Hermann lacked agricultural crop land and developed into a wine-making community intent on preserving its German culture. Its location provided a riverboat landing with access to markets and distant destinations; adding to its commercial growth, a railroad was built through Hermann in the 1850s. The Herman Historic District in Gasconade County is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NR2/1/1972, amended 10/30/09). Hermann's settlement and rich cultural and architectural heritage are there detailed.

Some of Hermann's early German settlers chose to take advantage of the fertile river bottom land on the north side of the river in Montgomery County and settled the town of Rhineland in the 1850s. Over time others of German heritage acquired land from the original American settlers, consistent with the development pattern of German American settlement along the Missouri River west from St. Louis.

Rhineland and Hermann were the closest towns to meet the needs of those in the Loutre Island area. Rhineland was five miles to the east over dirt roads on horseback or in a wagon. "Roads were bad, hub-deep in mud in wet weather, dusty in dry . . . The road building binge of the nineteenth century did not last long, and in the 1880s roads were actually in worse condition than in the 1830s, railroads having superseded them. For most customers a trip of even four or five miles to a store in town was a great inconvenience..."<sup>3</sup>

A trip to Hermann required crossing the Missouri River, about a mile south across the river bottom from Loutre Island and the future site of McKittrick; the ferry's exact location on the north bank of the river varying on the conditions of the Missouri River, ever changing its banks with the formation of sand bars.<sup>4</sup> According to A Pictorial History of Montgomery County, a ferryboat was operated by the Ferry and Packet Company, owned by August Wohlt of Hermann. However, reaching the ferry could be a challenge in wet weather, as horse and wagon would bog down in the deep gumbo mud. A long time McKittrick resident, Lenora Spencer, attended high school in Hermann, boarding there during the week and coming home only on the weekends. She related that her father would take her and other children down to catch the ferry. "Sometimes the mud was so deep the old horses could barely get through." During extremely cold weather, "she and a friend would take a willow and loop it through the handles of their suitcases for a better grasp."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> J. R. Dolan, The Yankee Peddlers of Early America, 264.

<sup>4</sup> Wilbur Bezold interview, December, 31, 2009

<sup>5</sup> Lenora Spencer interview, Hermann Advertiser Courier, June 8, 1988.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Montgomery County, Missouri

The coming of the Missouri, Kansas & Eastern (later Missouri, Kansas & Texas) Railroad

With the addition of a railroad on the north bank of the river in 1892, transportation options in southern Montgomery County expanded. Fritz Theissen described the coming of the railroad in "The Rhineland Story" stating:

One morning in the year 1891, Dad was surprised to see a group of strangers walking around in the area of the horse lot. Upon inquiring as to what they were doing, Dad was informed that they were surveying for a railroad that was coming through. Dad said, 'Surely not through my horse lot. Can't you go around the barn?' They not only went straight through the horse lot, but later Dad had to move the barn.<sup>6</sup>

The Missouri Kansas Texas Railroad (Katy) began construction from eastern Missouri in the 1860s, connecting from Sedalia, Missouri, to Parsons, Kansas, in 1871. From Parsons the line pushed through Oklahoma's Indian Territory reaching Texas in December of 1872. The original objective was to connect with Chicago and by 1873 the railroad had reached Hannibal, Missouri, at which point it achieved its goal via a connection with the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy (C, B & Q) Railroad. In the 1880s the MKT was leased to the Missouri Pacific Railroad and lines were extended to Fort Worth, Dallas and Waco, Texas. The MKT was hampered, however, by lack of access to St. Louis from the west. V. V. Masterson in his 1988 book The KATY Railroad and the Last Frontier states "Entry into St. Louis was achieved by the Katy's taking over the operation of the Missouri, Kansas and Eastern railroad which was originally financed by a group of St. Louis capitalists, some of whose names appear in towns along the right of way: McKittrick, Case, Gore, Wainwright, Steedman." The MKT purchased the Missouri, Kansas and Eastern Railroad in 1896 and merged with the company in 1897.

Though it provided access to St. Louis, the Missouri, Kansas & Eastern line also came with many problems. The railroad builders took engineering shortcuts to quickly connect New Franklin with the C, B & Q line in Machens, a 162 mile line constructed largely in the floodplain of the Missouri River. Completed in 1895 this route would result in millions of dollars in losses and an operational nightmare throughout its lifetime.<sup>7</sup> According to a history of Rhineland, Missouri, one visitor in the early 1920s arrived when the Missouri was in flood stage. She recalled that approaching Rhineland the train moved literally at a walking pace because it followed a track-walker checking for washouts of the rail bed caused by the high water.<sup>8</sup> This is the line that reached McKittrick in late 1892 and despite its problems would become an integral part of life in the area allowing crops to be shipped, people to travel and business to be conducted over great distances.

Not even a village at the time of the 1885 publishing of the History of St. Charles, Montgomery and Warren Counties, with the coming of the railroad the town of McKittrick was established. Small towns, such as McKittrick, were platted to support the steam engines that required

<sup>6</sup> Siegmar and Lois B. Muehl, ed. *In and Around a Small Missouri Town: Rhineland, 1837-1952: An Historical and Genealogical Resource*, 1995.

<sup>7</sup> "The M in the MKT Katy's Missouri Heritage", <http://www.missouri-central.railfan.net/history1.html>, December 29, 2009.

<sup>8</sup> Muehl, 26.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Montgomery County, Missouri

refueling with water and coal at regular intervals. Generally considered a “railroad town,” owing its existence to railroad construction, the location of McKittrick may also have resulted from earlier development and settlement patterns. As noted earlier, Loutre Island and southern Montgomery County had, by 1890, been settled for over 80 years and had been extensively developed for agricultural purposes. The town was also platted near the intersection of two early transportation routes in the county. The 1878 Montgomery County Atlas (see figure 1) shows the route of the road to the county seat Montgomery City (roughly along today’s Highway 19) and its connection to the east-west road (now Highway 94) paralleling the Missouri River approximately ½ mile south of the future site of McKittrick. The atlas also shows that “Sch. No. 4”, one of the county’s district schools, was in operation at the rough site of McKittrick, indicating that this was the location of a social center in the county if not a small settlement community by the 1870s.

Never a large town, McKittrick grew to be a thriving settlement within five years of the completion of the railroad line. The 1897 Atlas shows the town of “McKittrick (originally platted as Loutre)” with a blacksmith shop, a saloon, a hotel, a mill, a post office and the store at the corner of Washington and Main (see figure 3). No record of an original plat for Loutre has been documented. Over the next decades the town grew to a population of over 200 citizens. According to long time resident Wilbur Bezold, born in McKittrick in 1920, the community grew to have two hotels, one at the east end of Main (a frame two story building now used as a residence) and another just to the west of the Mercantile (no longer standing). Across to the north from the mercantile was the two story frame Woodman’s Hall and a blacksmith shop. The frame buildings adjacent to the Mercantile housed a harness shop and another general type store (see figure 5). Bezold’s great uncle was a part owner in both.

According to Mr. Bezold, both the McKittrick Bank and the McKittrick Farmers Mercantile were constructed by a mason from Marthasville; the brick taken from the same boxcar load. Remaining brick was used to build the Bezold house north of town where Wilbur stills resides. The frame church was built in 1908. Near the railroad tracks were the depot, livestock pens, a grain elevator, the coal chutes and the water tanks that served the railroad steam engines. Mr. Bezold recalled that as many as five engines might overnight in McKittrick, their crews staying at the hotel behind the Mercantile. The MKT line to St. Louis was one of the last to use steam. Mr. Bezold stated that the 1951 flood returned steam engines to the line as they could handle the flooded tracks. According to MKT history, “having been built for most of its length in the flood plain of the Missouri River. . . this resulted in a flooded mainline every time the river spilled its banks . . . As a matter of fact, the St. Louis line was one of the last strongholds for Katy steam, as frequent flooding of the route prohibited the use of diesel-electric locomotives.”<sup>9</sup>

The McKittrick Farmers Mercantile—Commerce and Recreation

The McKittrick Farmers Mercantile was central to the town, serving not only its commercial trade needs but also as the social center for the surrounding community. Mr. Bezold recalled the building was jammed with merchandise and at one time had three employees, a lady that helped with the ladies wear, bolts of fabrics and notions, the store manager and another man

<sup>9</sup> “The M in the MKT,” <http://www.missouri-central.railfan.net/history3.html>. Accessed December 29, 2009.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Montgomery County, Missouri

that handled groceries and hardware. His great uncle Charlie worked in the store as manager for many years. Groceries were located in the back of the store with general merchandise along both sides.

Bezold's description of the store in its heyday and the building's historic features are characteristic of general store property type. Like many historic commercial buildings, the Farmers Mercantile building exhibits the characteristics of a two-part commercial block. The building is two stories in height, and the division of function is clearly seen on the facade. The first floor contains large display windows that invite customers to examine the wares and enter to make purchases. The second floor is less open to public view and is characterized by a wall with smaller windows punched in.

The similarities to characteristic general stores carries through the interior of the store. The walls were historically lined with high wood shelves and display cabinets. As Atherton notes, the emphasis for the general store interior was "illustrating the range of stock"<sup>10</sup> more than any form of true organization. The center of the store would have had shelving islands holding all manner of merchandise. Carrying on the tradition of the general store property type, the store was "jammed" or "cluttered with piles of merchandise and space was at a premium."<sup>11</sup> As with most general stores, the nature of the community demanded that store buildings be multifunctional to serve both commercial and social needs. Atherton notes that it was common for the upper stories to be used as lodge halls, opera houses, or offices.<sup>12</sup> National Register listed country store buildings in nearby counties in Missouri have also been historically used as post offices and poling places.

The function of general store as post office was an essential service before the days of free rural home mail delivery. No visit to town was complete without a stop at the post office and the general store that housed it. Records at the Montgomery County Historical Society indicate the first post office had been established at Loutre Island in 1866, located on the north bank of the Missouri River near the ferry location. In November of 1893 an application was filed to change the name and to move the site 2 ½ miles by the "usually traveled route north westerly" to a new post office to be called McKittrick. Presumably this was to make its location more convenient to the newly built railroad. As shown on the 1897 town plat, Mr. Charles Fahrner, then the postmaster of Loutre Island and subsequently of McKittrick, located the newly named post office in his store fronting the railroad tracks. A series of postmasters followed in the next year or two until 1899 when Mr. Jacob Karl was named postmaster, serving in that capacity for over forty years. Presumably the relocation of the post office within McKittrick occurred following the construction of the more substantial Farmer's Mercantile. Its designation as the post office location was noted in the 1918 plat (figure 4). Evidently a successful landowner, as far back as 1881, Mr. Jacob Karl was listed in various county records as having "farming and stock" interests. He owned much of the land immediately to the south and west of McKittrick, including that bounded by Karl Street, the Mercantile and adjoining lots, all land once owned by the Talbott family.

<sup>10</sup> Lewis Atherton. Main Street on the Middle Border. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1954, 44.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 43.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Montgomery County, Missouri

Above the mercantile, the second floor was dedicated to a town hall and “opera house”, with elevated bench seating on two sides and a projecting stage. According to the caption in A Pictorial History of Montgomery County, “The town’s opera house was located on the second floor of the two story building. . . Theatrical troupes traveled down the Missouri River and performed in communities along the river.”<sup>13</sup> Local church groups and schools produced plays that toured between neighboring communities and were well attended (see figures 6, 7, and 8). An advertisement in the Rhineland paper in November of 1923 featured a “Pie Supper and Dance” at the McKittrick Mercantile Hall with the McKittrick Band headlining. While admission for gents was 50 cents and Ladies 25 cents, “Ladies bringing pies were admitted free” of charge. An advertisement in the Rhineland Courier from June 16, 1921 featured a “comedy-drama in three acts” at Rhineland Hall on Saturday and at the McKittrick Mercantile Hall on Monday beginning at 8:00 pm. Another Amateur Club play was featured in both towns and was reported as “taken to McKittrick Saturday night and was enjoyed by a large crowd. The large audience thoroughly enjoyed the play and bestowed well-merited praise upon the youthful actors.”<sup>14</sup>

Many of those young actors came from the McKittrick school, located on the hill to the west of town. The lower grade school was housed on the first floor; the upper grades above. Mr. Terry Loehnig whose great grandfather purchased the former Talbott house in 1904, recalled a family story about his Uncle Verdi who at age 4 (about 1912) started school and came home his first day upset because he could not understand what was being said. At home his family, the Scharnhorsts, only spoke low German. His parents then began to speak English at home so the children could learn at school. Language was not the only one difference in the communities along the Missouri. While in German communities holidays like Ascension Day were observed by not working, in McKittrick, this was not the custom and so all worked.<sup>15</sup>

With several trains a day hauling freight and passengers, the communities along the MK&T line were well connected. Ms. Spencer described how at the height of rail service, when at least two passenger trains used to pass through McKittrick, she would take trains to Rhineland with other youths. ‘We used to have a young people’s league there and we’d put on plays at Rhineland.’<sup>16</sup> Mr. Bezold recalled traveling as a young teenager to Sedalia for the state fair and his family occasionally took the train to Case (the railroad stop and town about five miles to the east) to visit relatives. The railroad permitted travel even further from home as well. A 1905 newspaper advertisement touted an excursion on the MK&T Railroad to Alton, Illinois, with privilege of a 40-mile ride on the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers on the palatial steamer, Corwin H. Spencer. A special train carried participants for \$1.75 round-trip.<sup>17</sup> Posted 1911 train schedules on the MK&T featured twice daily passenger service and one local freight train to St. Louis and Hannibal, to Kansas City, Oklahoma City, Houston, Dallas, Forth Worth, San Antonio, Galveston and “all points beyond.”

<sup>13</sup> W. J. Auchly, David Barker and Peggy Oliver Rogers, *A Pictorial History of Montgomery County, 175 Years 1818-1993*, Virginia Beach, VA: Donnig Company, 1993.

<sup>14</sup> Muehl, 70.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Terry Loehnig, December 30, 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Lenora Spencer interview, *Hermann Advertiser Courier*, June 8, 1988.

<sup>17</sup> Muehl, 24.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Montgomery County, Missouri

Though automobiles arrived around 1915, local road conditions continued to make it difficult to travel very far or dependably by car, especially in wet or winter weather. "Even as late as the 1920s most of Missouri's roads were nothing more than dirt and remained nearly impassable in wet weather."<sup>18</sup> Reported as part of the Rhineland history in 1939, Father A.A. Ripper of Rhineland said "The eleven miles from Rhineland to Case are not over the best roads, for while they have become better than years ago, they are among the worst in Warren and Montgomery counties. As a consequence the business of selling horses and livery as a reliable mean of transportation and field work continued for years after."<sup>19</sup> Well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century the MK&T railroad connection was a vital link to the outside world and between the communities it served on the north bank of the Missouri River. Difficulty in daily travel also made a local general store an important aspect of rural and small town life.

In 1930 a bridge over the Missouri River made access to the goods and services in Hermann much easier. State highway improvements made travel by automobile convenient (Highway 19 running next to or through McKittrick and Highway 94 to the south were designated state highways in 1922 and targeted for improvement). The ferry remained in service for a year or two after the bridge was opened, the bridge toll keeping it a competitive alternative until the toll was ended. Some McKittrick businesses, including the blacksmith garage and service station, relocated to the edge of town to be near the new highway and access to the bridge. In 1935 the McKittrick bank closed, dissolved by its members during the Depression. Mr. Karl retired as postmaster in 1941 after forty years of service and sometime thereafter the McKittrick Farmer's Mercantile was also closed. Mr. Loehnig related that his aunt Lenora, at that time a spinster who taught school for 18 years in Case, was "swept off her feet" and in 1946 married Mr. E.L. Spencer, the promoter hired to liquidate the store's remaining inventory. Her brother, Edwin Loehnig, was the postmaster from 1941 until 1967, the post office having relocated from the mercantile to a small former garage building behind it.

The changes in McKittrick were typical to those in small towns across America. R.B. Fleming, a historian writing about general stores, noted "The golden age of general stores, roughly the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, gradually ended with the motor car, catalogue shopping, and community splintering as well as with the rise of urban department and specialty stores."<sup>20</sup>

By the 1950s, travel by automobile was the norm and passenger service on the M.K&T ended; all train service came to an end in McKittrick in 1966. The coal chutes were demolished in the 1950s; Mr. Loehnig recalled that school was let out so the children could watch the dynamiting of the structures from the hillside above. His father had worked at the railroad coal chutes on Sundays in addition to his postmaster duties and in 1967 his father was paid \$26 by the railroad to tear down the depot. He would come home from his demolition work covered with black soot; the depot having sat across the tracks from the coal chutes and its lumber thick with coal soot.

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<sup>18</sup> Paul C. Nagel, *The German Migration to Missouri*, Kansas City: Kansas City Star Publishing, 2002, 130.

<sup>19</sup> Muehl, 92.

<sup>20</sup> R.B. Fleming, "The Golden Age of General Stores", *Beaver*, 2002 82(4), 38.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number   8   Page   10  

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Montgomery County, Missouri

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The local grain elevator and bulk fertilizer plant remained open for the farmers in the area. In 1967 the post office became a rural route served out of Hermann; the last vestiges of the McKittrick post office still housed in the small frame building heated by a pot bellied stove. It too closed in 1988; Ms. Spencer, the last mail clerk, giving her interview in the *Hermann Advertiser Courier* at the occasion of her retirement.

Not until the former M.K.&T. ("Katy") right of way was converted to the "Katy" trail in the 1990s did the town again see outside traffic, now in the form of hikers and bicyclists enjoying the scenery of the Missouri River valley. McKittrick is one of the way stations with trail facilities and a link to Hermann over the new Missouri River Bridge that in 2008 replaced the original 1930 connection. The Katy trail and the proximity of tourism in Hermann has created an opportunity for the McKittrick Farmers Mercantile to return to its original purpose as a general store and place for entertainment, to be enjoyed not only by town residents but by those passing through.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number   9   Page   11  

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Montgomery County, Missouri

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Muehl, Siegmar (whose forebearers came from the Rhineland area) and Lois B. Muehl, ed and compiled, *In and Around a Small Missouri Town: Rhineland, 1837-1952: An Historical and Genealogical Resource*, 1995.

Nagel, Paul C. *The German Migration to Missouri My Family's Story*. Kansas City, Mo: Kansas City Star Books, 2002.

Interviews

Personal interview with Marjorie Miller, Montgomery County Historical Society, conducted by Cynthia Browne, 10/21/2009. Notes on file with author.

Personal interview with Terry Loehnig (Scharnhorst family descendant), conducted by Cynthia Browne, 12/30/2009. Notes on file with author.

Personal interview with Wilbur Orle Bezold, conducted by Cynthia Browne, 12/31/2009. Notes on file with author.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10/ Photo log Page 12

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Montgomery County, Missouri

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

All of Lot Number One (1) and East One Half (E ½) of Lot Number Two (2) in Block Number Nine (9) in the town of McKittrick, Montgomery County, MO

**Boundary Justification**

This boundary represents the entire town lot(s) historically and currently associated with this building.

**Photo Log:**

The following is true for all photographs:

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
McKittrick, Montgomery County, Missouri  
Photographer: Cynthia Strawn Browne  
Date of Photographed: June 2009  
Total number of photographs: 6

1. Exterior Front, looking to the south-west
2. Exterior Side, looking west
3. Exterior south side, looking north from the MKT tracks
4. Interior First Floor, looking east
5. Interior Second Floor (Stage), looking west
6. Interior Second Floor (Assembly hall), looking east

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 13

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Montgomery County, Missouri

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**Figure Log:**

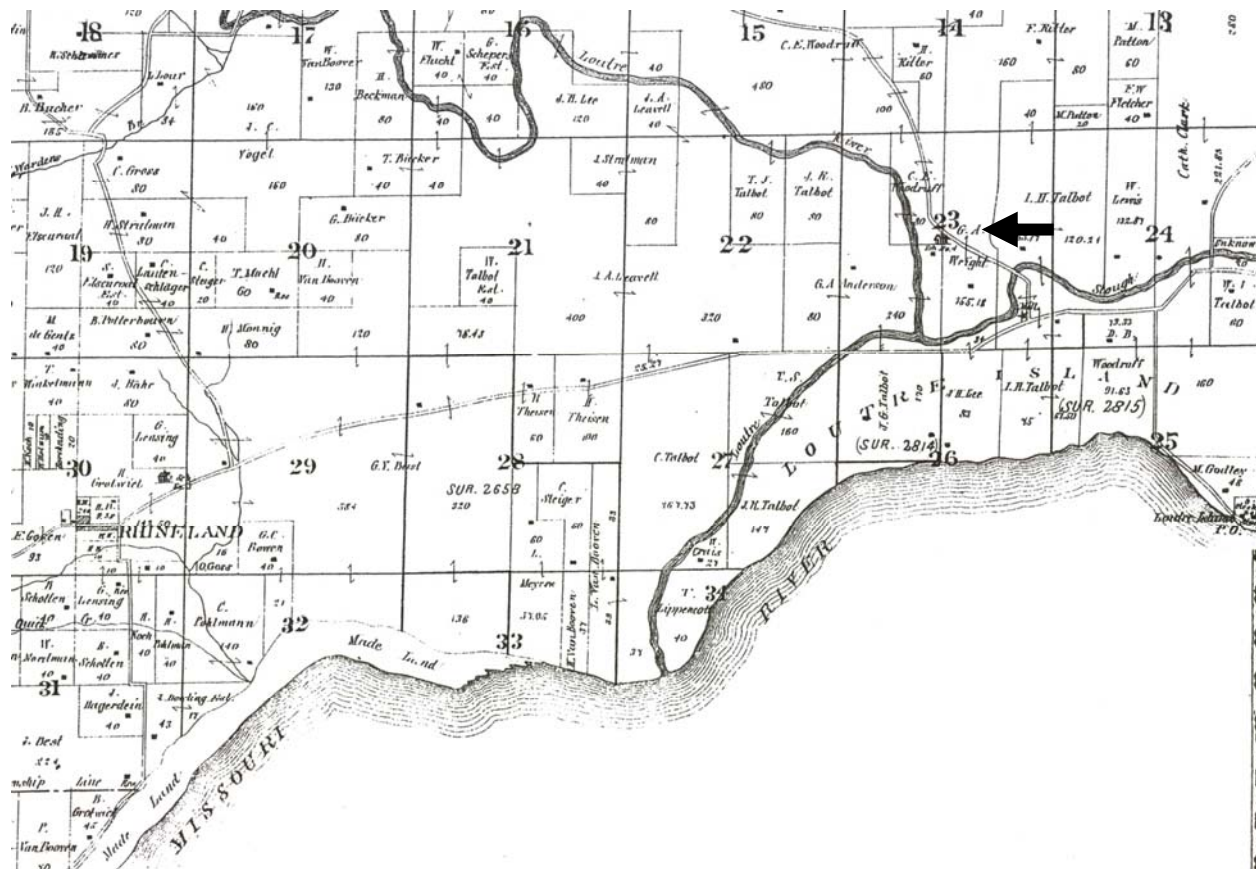
1. *Historical Atlas Montgomery County, Missouri*, 1878.
2. *Montgomery County Atlas*, 1918.
3. Map of McKittrick, *Standard Atlas of Montgomery County*, 1897.
4. Map of McKittrick, *Montgomery County Atlas*, 1918.
5. Historic Photograph, McKittrick, c. 1910.
6. Ad for pie supper and Dance at Farmers Mercantile, November 1923.
7. Ad for "Mother Mine," a play performed at the McKittrick Famers Mercantile from the *Rhineland Record*, April (3 or 10), 1931.
8. Playbill for play, "George in a Jam" performed in the McKittrick Farmers Mercantile, n.d.
9. First Floor Plan, drawn by author.
10. Second Floor Plan, drawn by author.
11. Front and rear elevations, drawn by author.
12. North and south elevations, drawn by author.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 14

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Montgomery County, Missouri

**Figure 1:** *Historical Atlas Montgomery County, Missouri, 1878.* Arrow denotes future location of McKittrick. Also note the location of Loutre Island on the southeast portion of the map.

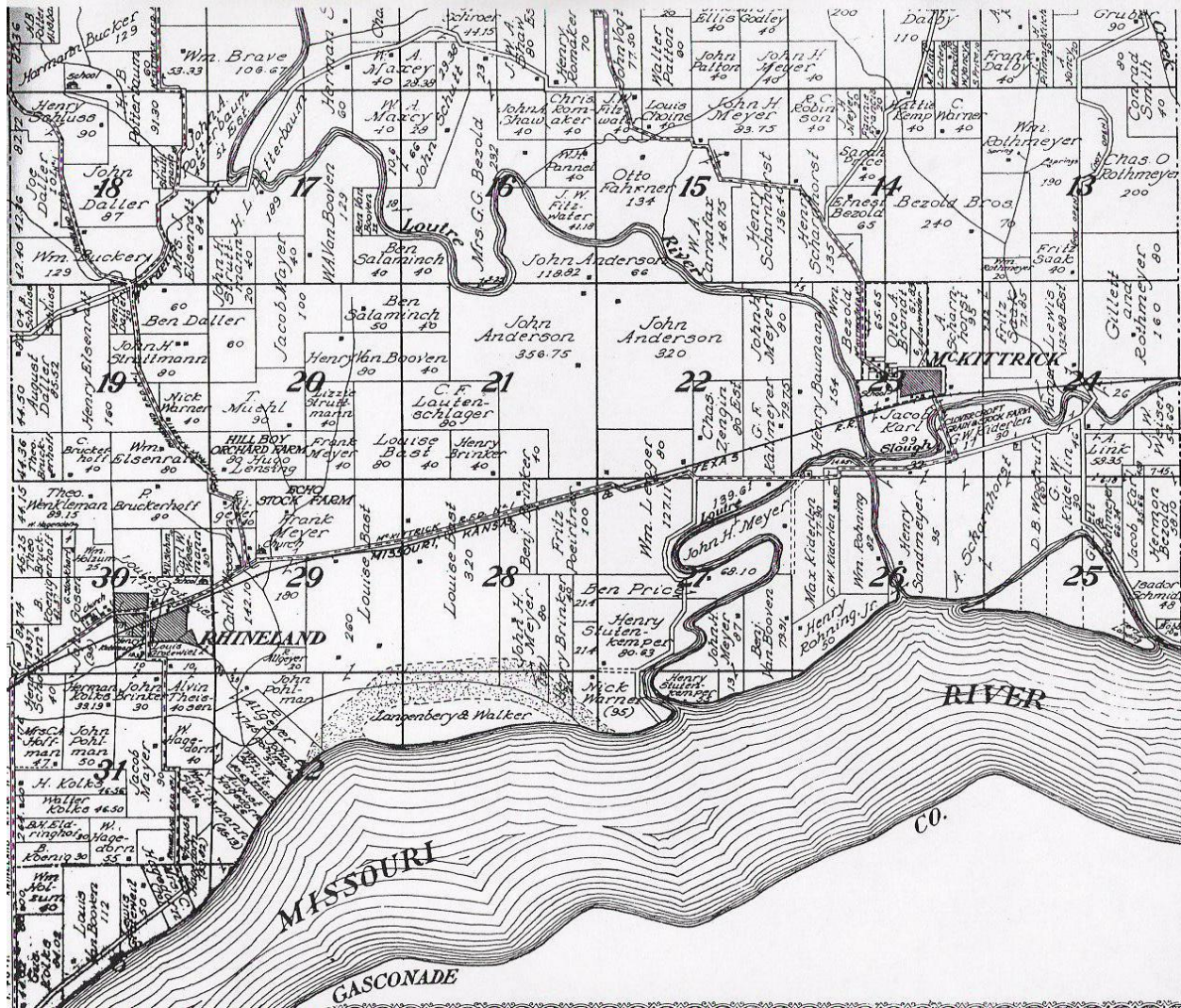


National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 15

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Montgomery County, Missouri

Figure 2: Montgomery County Atlas, 1918.

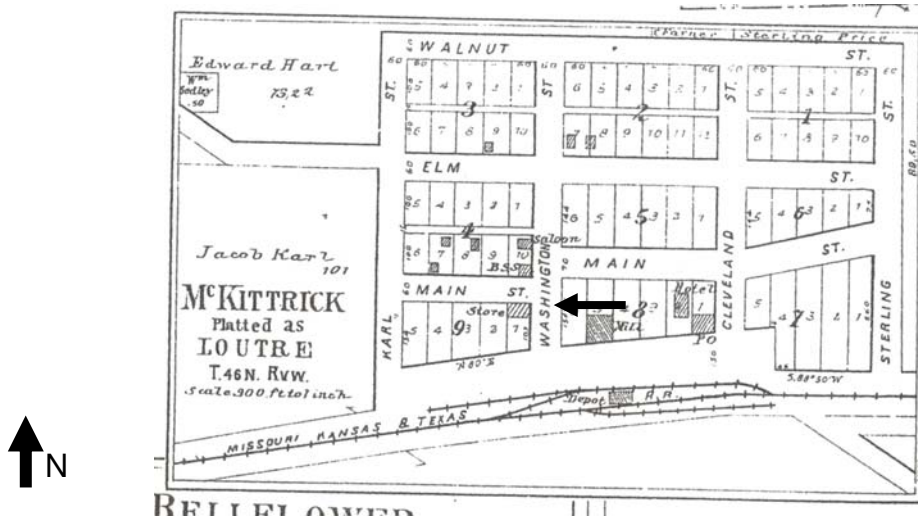


National Register of Historic Places  
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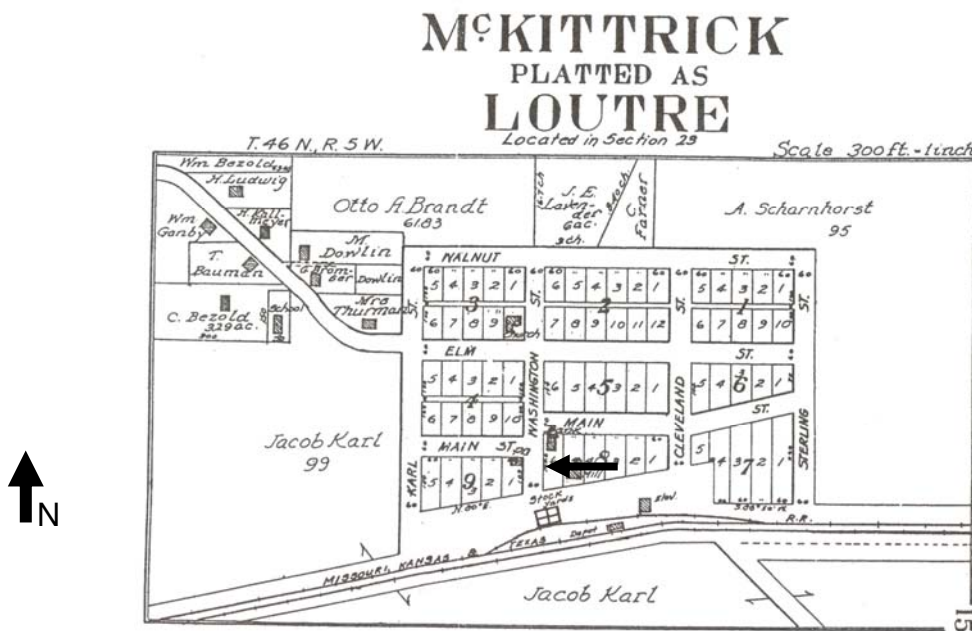
Section number Figures Page 16

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Montgomery County, Missouri

**Figure 3:** Map of McKittrick, *Standard Atlas of Montgomery County, 1897*. Arrow points to nominated building.



**Figure 4:** Map of McKittrick, *Montgomery County Atlas, 1918*. Arrow points to nominated building.

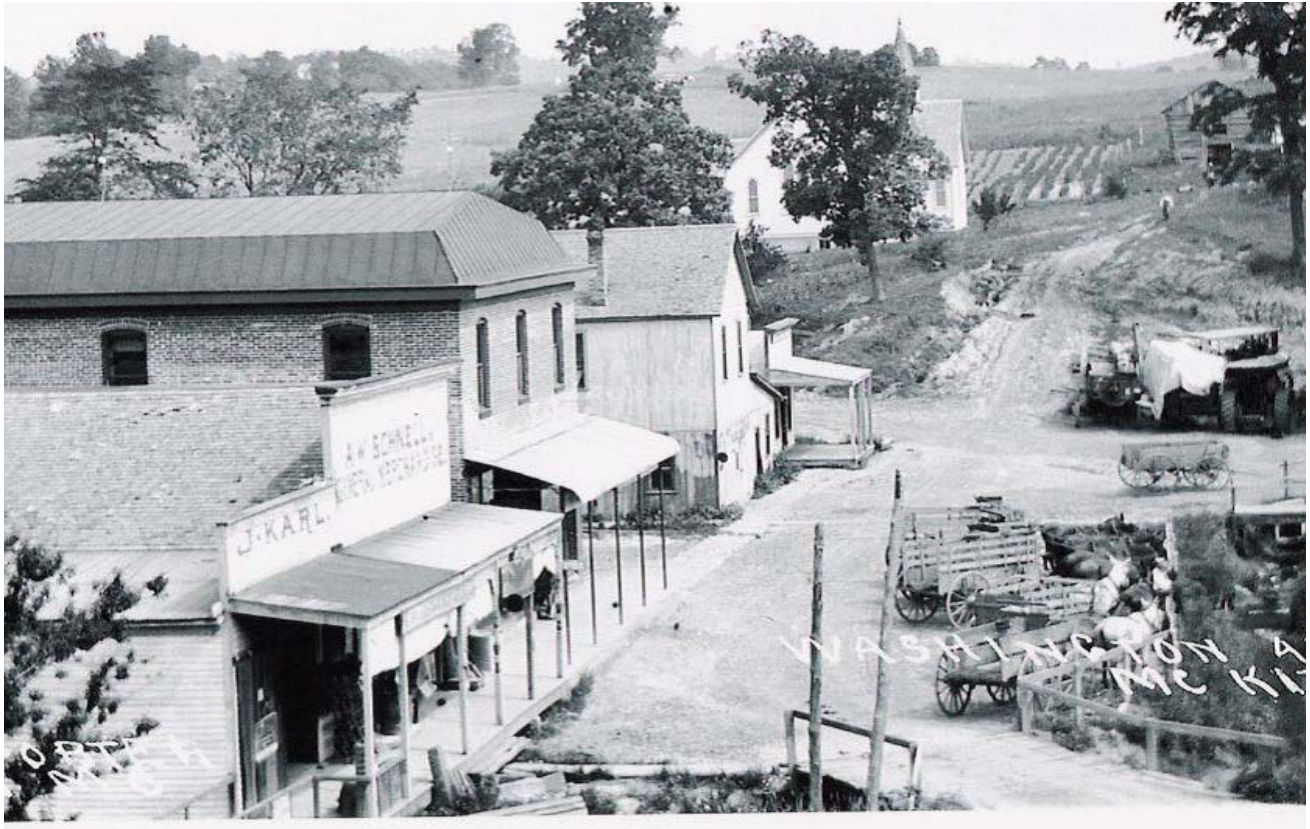


National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 17

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Montgomery County, Missouri

**Figure 5:** Historic Photograph, McKittrick, c. 1910. McKittrick Farmers Mercantile shown with current roof configuration and extant metal awning.



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 18

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Montgomery County, Missouri

Figure 6 (below left): Ad for pie supper and Dance at Farmers Mercantile, November 1923.

**Pie Supper and Dance**  
...AT...  
**Farmers Mercantile Co's Hall**  
McKittrick, Missouri  
**SATURDAY NIGHT, NOV. 24**  
**Music by McKittrick Band**  
Admission: Gen's 50c; Ladies 25c.  
Ladies bringin' pies admitted free.  
You are cordially invited. Bring your friends and enjoy  
the evening.  
**McKittrick Band**  
(Nov. 16, 1923)

**"MOTHER MINE"**  
Comedy-Drama by Gladys Ruth Bridgman  
Presented by the McKittrick High School  
**At Mercantile Hall, McKittrick, Mo.**  
Saturday Evening, April 11, at 8 O'clock  
Cast of Characters  
Cynthia Whitcomb—The Deacon's wife..... Noweta Sandmeyer  
Miranda Peasley—"Mother Mine"..... Mrs. Mae Hickman  
Martha Tisdale—A neighbor..... Grace Gregory  
Lettie Holcomb—With a nose for news..... Mabel Scharnhorst  
Lillian Whitcomb—The Deacon's daughter..... LaRue Huenefeld  
Mary Tisdale—Martha's daughter..... Bertha Heck  
John Whitcomb—The Deacon..... Vincent (Doc) Holt  
Jack Payson—The merchant's son..... Lemmel Sandmeyer  
Joe Payson—The merchant..... Gilpin Armstrong  
Jerry McConnell—The newcomer..... William Hord  
Oscar Lewis—From Boston..... Howard B. Baker  
Sam Blunt—The Constable..... Ralph Godley  
Place—The entire action of the play occurs in the sitting room of  
Miranda Peasley's home in Tapley Village, Maine.  
Time—The present. Time of Playing—About Two Hours.  
Synopsis  
ACT I. An evening late in August.  
ACT II. Three weeks later than Act I.  
ACT III. Two days later than Act II.  
Directed by I. J. Hickman.  
Reserved seats 35c. General admission 25c. Tickets on sale at  
Farmers' Mercantile Store, McKittrick.

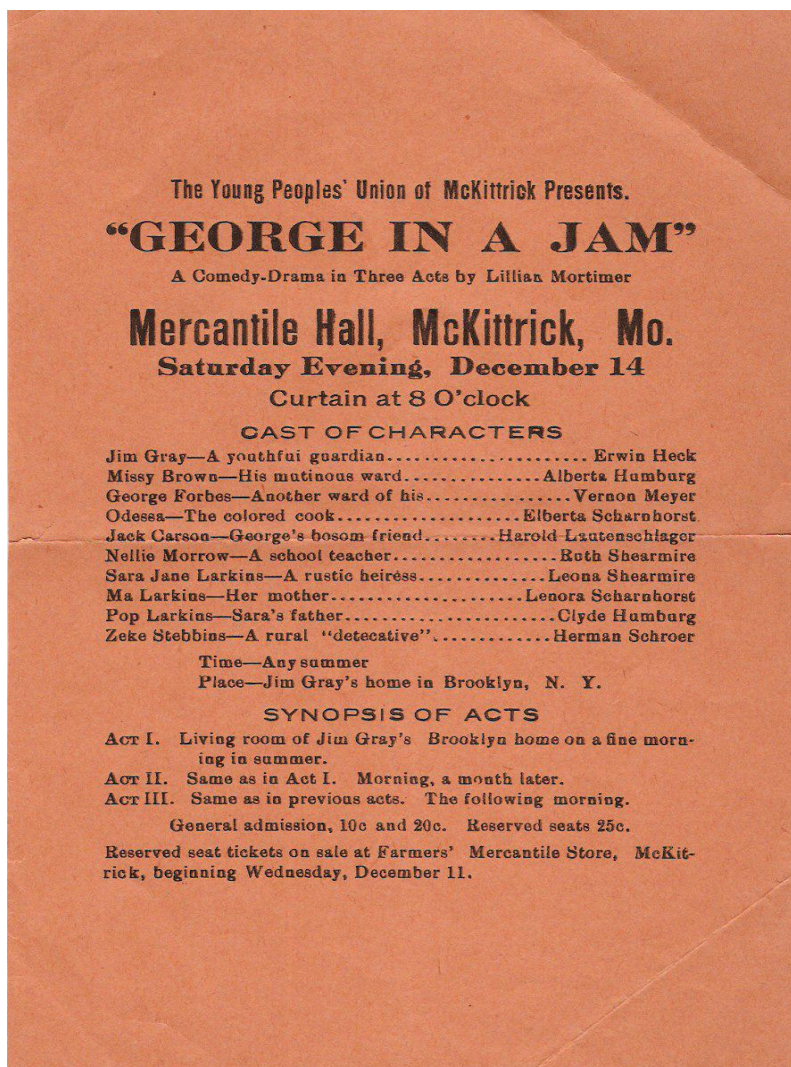
Figure 7 (above right): Ad for "Mother Mine," a play performed at the McKittrick Farmers Mercantile from the *Rhineland Record*, April (3 or 10), 1931.

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 19

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Montgomery County, Missouri

**Figure 8:** Playbill for play, "George in a Jam" performed in the McKittrick Farmers Mercantile, n.d.

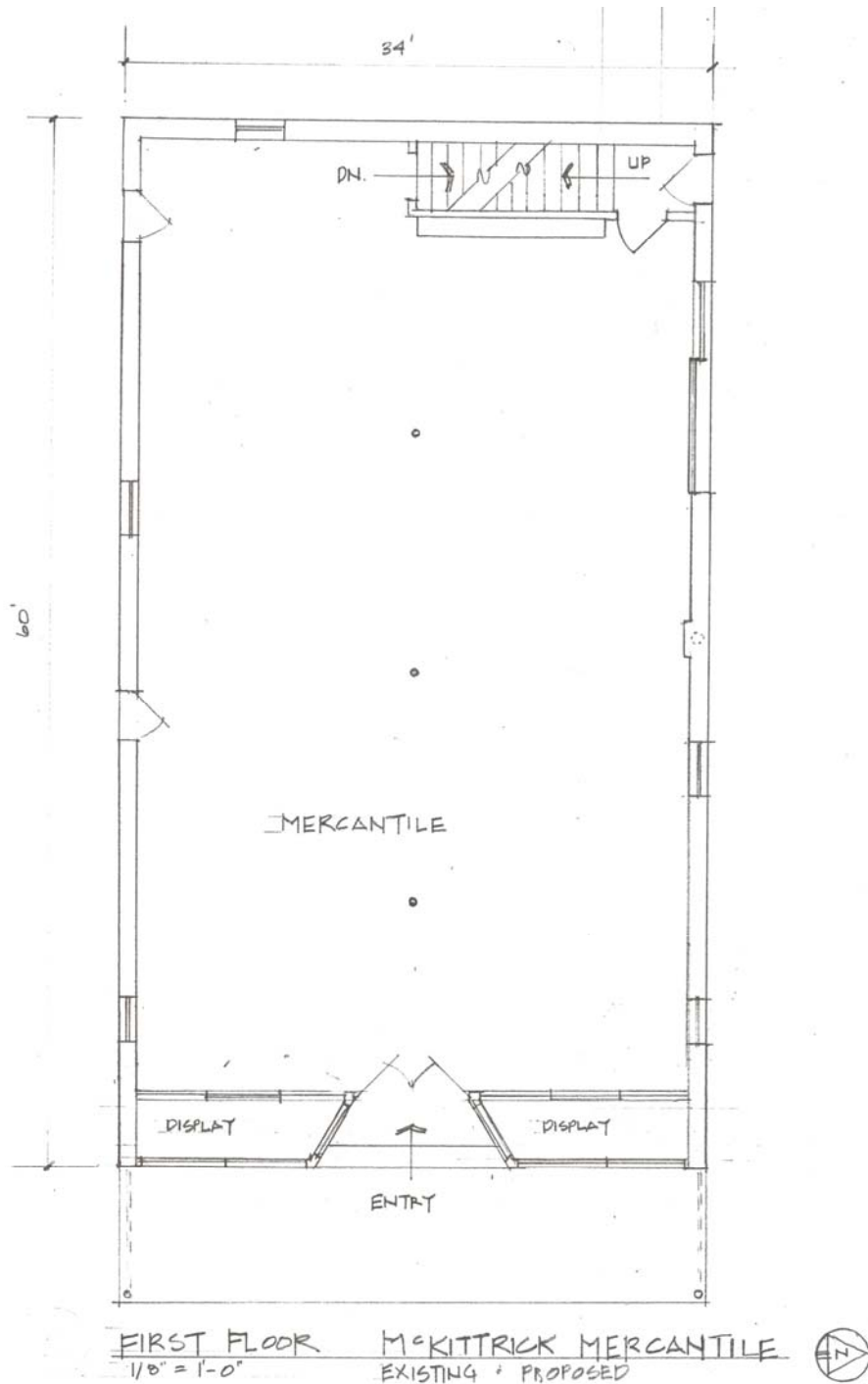


National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 20

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Montgomery County, Missouri

**Figure 9:** First Floor Plan, drawn by author.

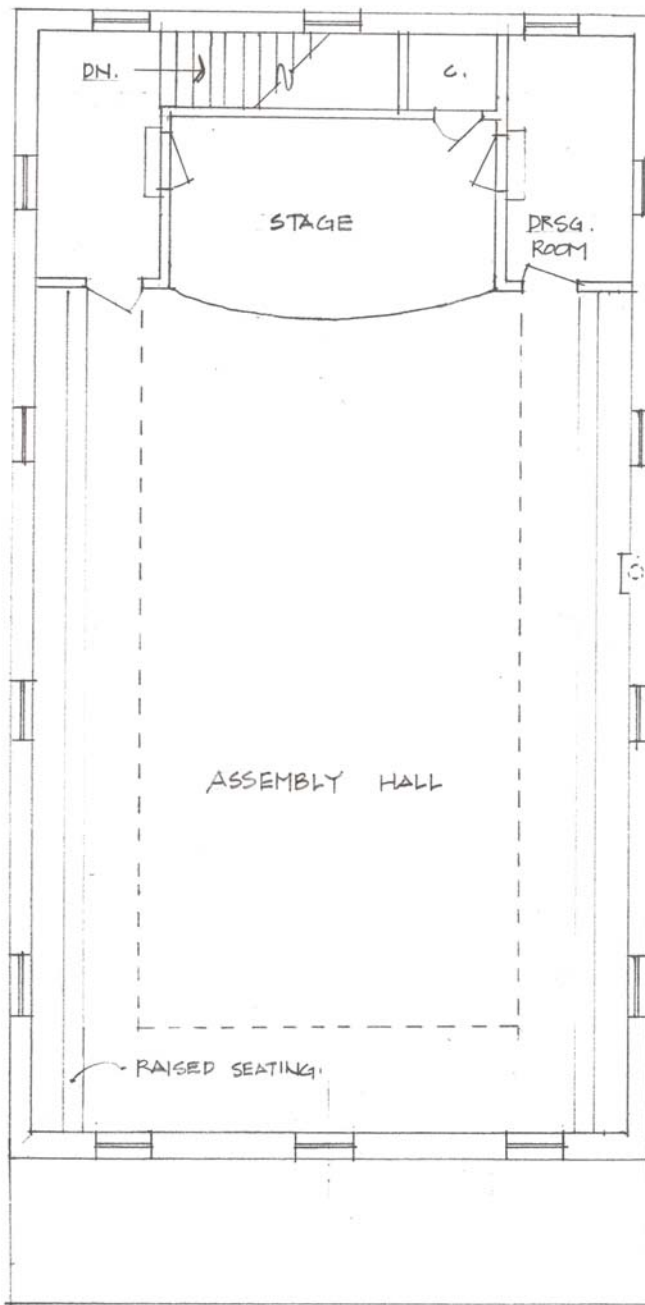


National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 21

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Montgomery County, Missouri

**Figure 10:** Second Floor Plan, drawn by author.



SECOND FLOOR - MCKITTRICK MERCANTILE  
1/8" = 1'-0" EXISTING + PROPOSED



National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

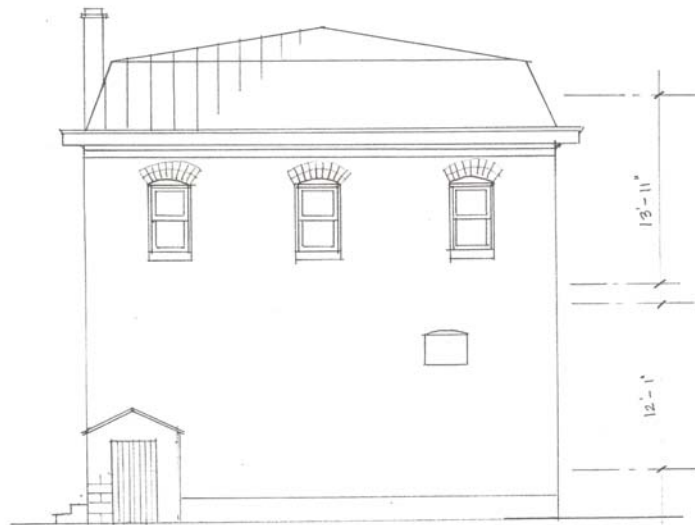
Section number Figures Page 22

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Montgomery County, Missouri

**Figure 11:** Front and rear elevations, drawn by author.



FRONT (EAST) ELEVATION  
McKITTRICK MERCANTILE  
1/8" = 1'-0" (EXISTING)



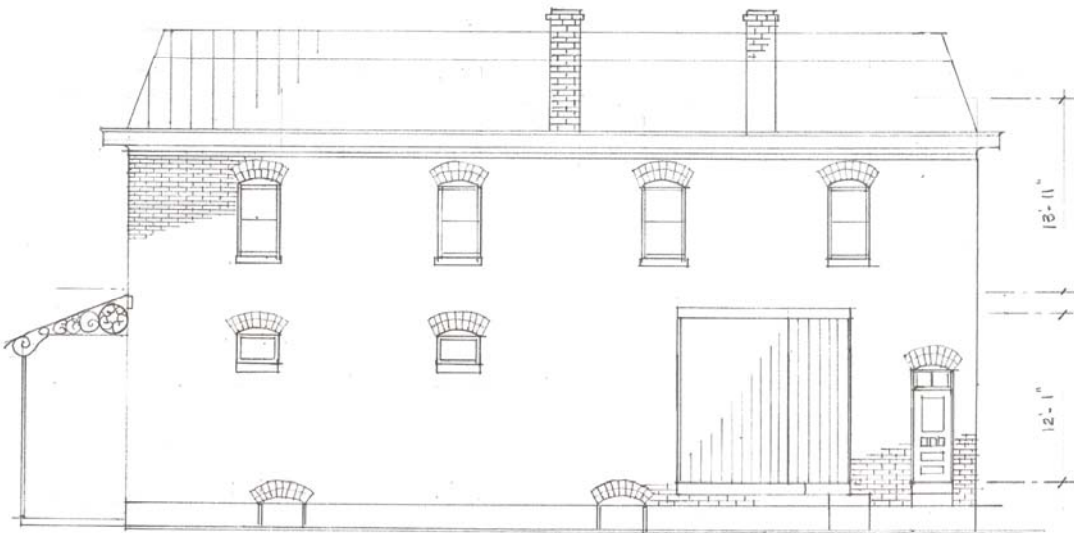
REAR (WEST) ELEVATION  
McKITTRICK MERCANTILE  
1/8" = 1'-0" (EXISTING)

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

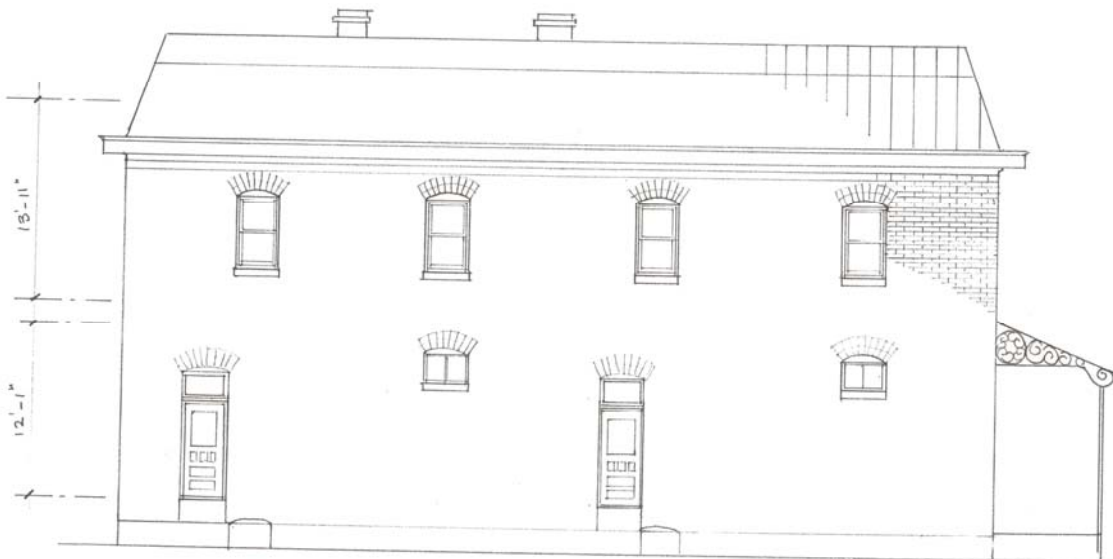
Section number Figures Page 23

McKittrick Farmers Mercantile  
Montgomery County, Missouri

**Figure 12:** North and south elevations, drawn by author.



NORTH ELEVATION - MCKITTRICK MERCANTILE  
1/8" = 1'-0" (EXISTING)



SOUTH ELEVATION - MCKITTRICK MERCANTILE  
1/8" = 1'-0" (EXISTING)

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UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

McKittick Farms Mercantile  
Montgomery County, MO  
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STATE OF  
DEPARTMENT OF I  
WALLACE B. HOWE









McKITTRICK, MO

P.O. & Community Services

McKITTRICK, MO

FLAT TRAIL





