

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Oliver-Leming House (Home of the Missouri State Flag)
and/or common Oliver House; Leming House; Oliver Heights

2. Location

street & number 740 North Street ___ not for publication
city, town Cape Girardeau ___ vicinity of congressional district #10 - Hon. Bill D. Burlison
state Missouri code 029 county Cape Girardeau code 03i

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Mrs. M.E. Leming, Jr.
street & number 740 North Street
city, town Cape Girardeau ___ vicinity of state Missouri 63701

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Assessor's Office, Cape Girardeau City Hall
street & number 401 Independence
city, town Cape Girardeau state Missouri 63701

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Missouri State Historical Survey has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes no
date 1979 ___ federal state ___ county ___ local
depository for survey records Department of Natural Resources
Historic Preservation Program
city, town Jefferson City state Missouri 65102

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

St. Louis architect J.B. Legg's Oliver-Leming House of 1898-1899 is located in an established Cape Girardeau neighborhood sporting substantial houses dating from the turn-of-the-century to the present day. Effectively sited at the head of North and Ellis Streets, the Oliver-Leming House commands the T-shaped intersection from an ample setback of 75'. A monumental Ellis Street approach, achieved by centering the house on the road's axis, emphasizes the symmetry of the classicizing prostyle addition of 1915 and reinforces the stateliness and repose of the refashioned design.

The house measures 53' north-south by 65' east-west and rises 2 1/2 stories above the original rubble foundation and the appendaged cement foundations of the 1915 front and side porch additions and the 1950's first floor bedroom addition. Cut limestone lintels and sills accent the red brick walls and add prescribed emphasis to the doors and windows. The replacement of the original slate shingles with black asphalt provided a more strident color contrast between wall and roof materials while uniformly covering the original and added roof surfaces.

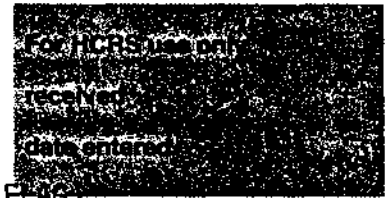
The principal elevation's giant Corinthian order with inserted balcony was executed after drawings by an unknown designer to succeed an equally wide, yet more modest one-storied balconied entrance porch. Aggrandizing the restrained design, the annexed two story frontispiece garnered prominence away from the central bay by interrupting the strong vertical motion established by the sidelighted and transomed entrance, the second story bay window and the pedimented dormer. This vertically oriented grouping of generalized elements which draw from diverse stylistic sources documents the turn-of-the-century propensity to liberally interpret and mix classic architectural forms. However versatile they may be, the axially arranged and centrally positioned elements contribute a stylistically proper sense of balance and inward focus to Legg's loosely adapted neo-Georgian design. The truncated hip roof, balustrated dormer and proposed widow's walk (which, although intended, may not have been installed) underscore the Georgian inspiration for Legg's work.

Because the symmetrical facade belies a fluid, irregular plan, the Oliver-Leming House illustrates a popular turn-of-the-century combination which permitted the carry over of flowing spatial arrangements from the Queen Anne style and the donning of mismatched, symmetrical elevations in the current revival styles. Legg, an adroit Queen Anne designer, disregarded the Colonial tradition of 4-square plans for the Oliver-Leming House, perpetuating instead familiar Picturesque elements, such as asymmetrical axes and external projections, to encourage peripheral and sinuous traffic patterns and extend the interior space outward.

Legg's liberal handling was carried throughout the interior to flavor major appointments. While neo-Georgian buildings of the Colonial period provide sources for the columnar hall screen and the delicate classical detailing of the parlor mirror and the oak and mahogany mantelpieces, these classicized furnishings were so widely used in variously styled turn-of-the-century houses that they cannot be exclusively associated with the Georgian revival. Hardly a Colonial-inspired feature, the art glass window at the stairway landing emerged, possibly from the crafts movement, as standard residential fare by the 1890's.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



OLIVER-LEMING HOUSE (HOME OF THE MISSOURI STATE FLAG)

Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page

1

Most if not all of the major interior features survive a late 1940's or 1950's remodeling that imposed wooden paneling and acoustic ceiling tile on most of the first floor rooms and a second floor bedroom. The conversion of one of the kitchen pantries into a bathroom and a hall and the enlargement of the back porch constitute other key modifications.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1898-99; 1915

Builder/Architect John Madden/J.B. Legg Architectural Co.

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Oliver-Leming House is significant as the home of two prominent civic-minded Missouri families who have successively occupied the house since its completion in 1899. The house is additionally important as an example of the late work of influential St. Louis architect Jerome Bibb Legg. Perhaps its greatest importance, however, derives from associations with the design of the Missouri state flag and efforts to gain its official sanction by the state legislature.

Outstanding contributions in both the public and private sectors distinguish the lives of the first occupants, Judge Robert Burett Oliver (1850-1934) and Marie Watkins Oliver (1854-1944). Graduated with honors from the University of Missouri law school in 1877, Robert Burett Oliver held public office in various capacities, serving as county prosecuting attorney, state representative and state senator. As a member of the senate judiciary and education committees, he championed, among other causes, increased appropriations for state universities. Oliver's success in procuring construction funds for Academic Hall at Southeast Missouri State University, which his constituents tagged his most important local contribution to education, was equalled in other courts by authorship and passage of legislation governing the drainage of swamp land and adjustment of bonded county railroad debts in southeast Missouri.¹

Oliver was already a prominent attorney and civil servant by the time he moved from Jackson, Missouri, to nearby Cape Girardeau on October 2, 1896.² In the new locale, he purchased an expansive tract of land on North Street, intending to build a new home on a sizeable parcel and profitably subdivide the periphery of the property for residential development.³ The Oliver commission was awarded to the J.B. Legg Architectural Company of St. Louis who enjoyed considerable local popularity and reputation designing dignified houses for esteemed Cape Girardeau residents.⁴

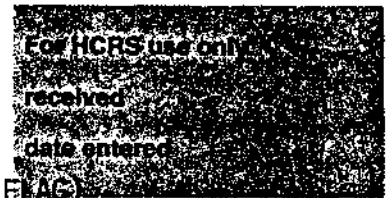
Legg, who trained as a draftsman under St. Louis architect George I. Barnett during the late 1860's, is perhaps best remembered for superintending construction of Centenary Methodist Church in St. Louis and extensive additions and alterations to the second Missouri state capitol building in Jefferson City.⁵ A prolific Queen Anne stylist during the 1870's and 1880's, Legg heeded fashion, designing in the Colonial revival styles during his later years. Because the neo-Georgian and neo-Federal modes afforded a polished, rational expression steeped in national sentiment, they were the preferred styles of successful, monied clients such as Oliver.

Marie Watkins Oliver, no less civic-minded than her husband, devoted her energies to numerous patriotic organizations. Under the auspices of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, she designed and sponsored the official Missouri state flag,⁶ which symbolically combines the state seal and twenty-four stars (signifying that Missouri was the twenty-fourth state to enter the Union) against a striped field of red, white and blue. Although the design was completed in 1909, events prevented its

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

OLIVER-LEMING HOUSE (HOME OF THE MISSOURI STATE FLAG)



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 1

official approval until March 22, 1913.⁷ Because the 1915 addition of a monumental porch to the Oliver-Leming House followed just two years after the flag was officially recognized, the porch perhaps can be cast as a bold, formal proclamation of this and other Oliver family achievements.

The house remained in the possession of Mrs. Oliver until her death in 1944. Three years later, her heirs sold the property to lumberman M.E. Leming, Jr. who acquired it as a birthday present for his wife. Leming, who succeeded his father as president of the M.E. Leming Lumber Co. in 1938, was politically and civically active during his lifetime, serving on Gov. Blair's staff and various state university committees.⁸ His widow still presides over the impeccable upkeep of the house and grounds which to this day foster a formidable sense of community pride.

In the Bicentennial year, local citizenry secured passage of municipal and state legislation recognizing Cape Girardeau as "Home of the Missouri State Flag." This nomination, which was initiated locally, seeks complementary national recognition for the Oliver-Leming House.

FOOTNOTES

1. "R.B. Oliver, Lawyer, Former Senator, Dies at Home in Girardeau," Southeast Missourian, 17 October 1934.
2. Ibid.
3. It is believed that the low rock-faced limestone wall bordering the property on North Street marks the original 500' frontage of Oliver's parcel. Specifications stipulating a reduced house lot measuring 225' by 180' record Oliver's early intention to carve other home sites -- collectively called "Oliver Heights" -- out of the surrounding property. Additional paring has decreased the size of the Oliver-Leming House lot to 130' by 168'.
4. "Mixed Up," Cape Girardeau Democrat Weekly Newspaper, 19 November 1898.
5. John Albury Bryan, "Outstanding Architects in St. Louis Between 1804 and 1904," Missouri Historical Review 28 (January 1934): 88.
6. Cape Girardeau artist Mary Kochtitzky assisted Mrs. Oliver in design, painting a two-dimensional representation of the final combination.
7. Robert Burett Oliver, "History of the State Flag of Missouri," Missouri Historical Review 13 (April 1919): 226. Allen L. Oliver, "The Missouri State Flag," Missouri Historical Review 52 (October 1957): 35. The flag was not officially dedicated, however, until May 1, 1944, only a few weeks before Mrs. Oliver's death. Her handmade model, presented to the Secretary of State on June 14, 1961, hangs in the state capitol building.
8. "M.E. Leming, Jr., Fatally Stricken," Southeast Missourian, 23 March 1967.

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Bryan, John Albury. "Outstanding Architects in St. Louis Between 1804 and 1904". Missouri Historical Review 28 (January 1934): 83-90.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .501 acres

Quadrangle name "Cape Girardeau, MO-ILL"

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 6	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 15 <input type="checkbox"/> 9 <input type="checkbox"/> 18 <input type="checkbox"/> 10	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 17 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 12 <input type="checkbox"/> 10 <input type="checkbox"/> 13 <input type="checkbox"/> 10	B	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	D	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	F	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	H	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Verbal boundary description and justification

Begin at a point on North Street at the Southwest corner of Lot 37 in Out Lot 5 to the City of Cape Girardeau in Range K; then run West along and on the North line of North Street 140 feet for a beginning point; thence continuing East on North line of North

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

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title 1. Mrs. Jess E. Thilenius, Historian

organization Cape Girardeau County Historical Society

date June 12, 1979

street & number 319 Park Drive, Apt. 184

telephone 314/335-6784

city or town Cape Girardeau

state Missouri 63701

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

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

date

For HCERS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

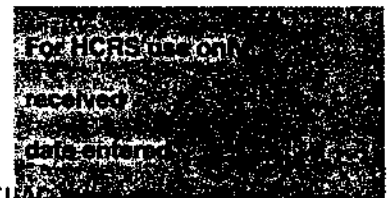
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



OLIVER-LEMING HOUSE (HOME OF THE MISSOURI STATE FLAG)

Continuation sheet

Item number

9

Page

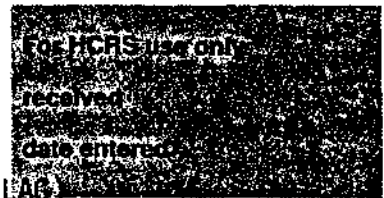
1

2. Jackson, Missouri. Cape Girardeau County Courthouse. Recorder of Deeds. "Rosa L. and Walter S. Albert, Executors, to R.B. and M.W. Oliver," 13 June 1896. Book 29, pp. 552-554.
3. Jackson, Missouri. Cape Girardeau County Courthouse. Recorder of Deeds. "Robert Burett Oliver, Jr., Jessie McCreery Oliver, John Byrd Oliver, Mable Oliver, Allen Laws Oliver, Olivia L. Oliver, William Palmer Oliver, Irene Williams Oliver, Julia Dearmont Fischer, Hickman Y. Fischer, Marguerite Oliver Dearmont Lewis, Ceylon S. Lewis, Jr., and Sarah Lee Dearmont, all the heirs of Marie Watkins Oliver, to Thelma C. Leming and M.E. Leming, Jr.," 20 April 1947. Book 134, pp. 465-466.
4. Conard, Howard L., ed. Encyclopedia of the History of Missouri, A Compendium of History and Biography for Ready Reference. 6 vols. New York: The Southern History Co., 1901.
5. "Historical Notes and Comments." Missouri Historical Review 29 (January 1935): 131-157.
6. "Historical Notes and Comments." Missouri Historical Review 30 (July 1936): 422-464.
7. Hyde, William, and Conard, Howard L., eds. Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis. New York: The Southern History Company, 1899.
8. "It's Official: Girardeau, Home of Missouri Flag." Southeast Missourian, 23 January 1975.
9. Legg, J.B. "First Floor Plan of Residence for R.B. Oliver, Esq., Cape Girardeau, Mo." St. Louis, 1898.
10. Legg, J.B., Architectural Co. "Front Elevation of Residence for R.B. Oliver, Esq., Cape Girardeau, Mo." St. Louis, 1898.
11. Legg, J.B., Architectural Co. "Specifications for Hon. R.B. Oliver, Cape Girardeau, Mo.:" St. Louis, 1898.
12. Leonard, John William. The Industries of St. Louis: Manufacturing Establishments and Business Houses. St. Louis: J.M. Elstner and Co., 1887.
13. "M.E. Leming, Jr., Fatally Stricken." Southeast Missourian, 23 March 1967.
14. "Mixed Up." Cape Girardeau Democrat Weekly Newspaper, 19 November 1898.
15. "Mrs. Oliver Passes Away." Southeast Missourian, 18 October 1944.

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

OLIVER-LEMING HOUSE (HOME OF THE MISSOURI STATE FLAG)



Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 2

16. "Nearly 200 Buildings Erected in Cape Girardeau at Cost of \$500,000." Cape Girardeau Weekly Republican, 7 January 1916.
17. Oliver, Allen L. "The Missouri State Flag," Missouri Historical Review 52 (October 1957): 35-39.
18. Oliver, Robert Burett. "History of the State Flag of Missouri." Missouri Historical Review 13 (April 1919): 226-231.
19. "R.B. Oliver, Lawyer, Former Senator, Dies at Home in Girardeau." Southeast Missourian, 17 October 1934.
20. "Senate Makes It Official . . . Cape Is Home of the State Flag," Cape Girardeau Bulletin-Journal, 10 September 1974.

Item number 11

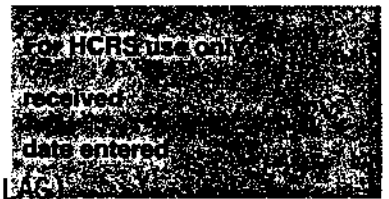
Page 1

2. Jill Johnson, Architectural Historian
Department of Natural Resources
Historic Preservation Program
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City
- February 20, 1980
314/751-4096
Missouri 65102

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

OLIVER-LEMING HOUSE (HOME OF THE MISSOURI STATE FLAG)

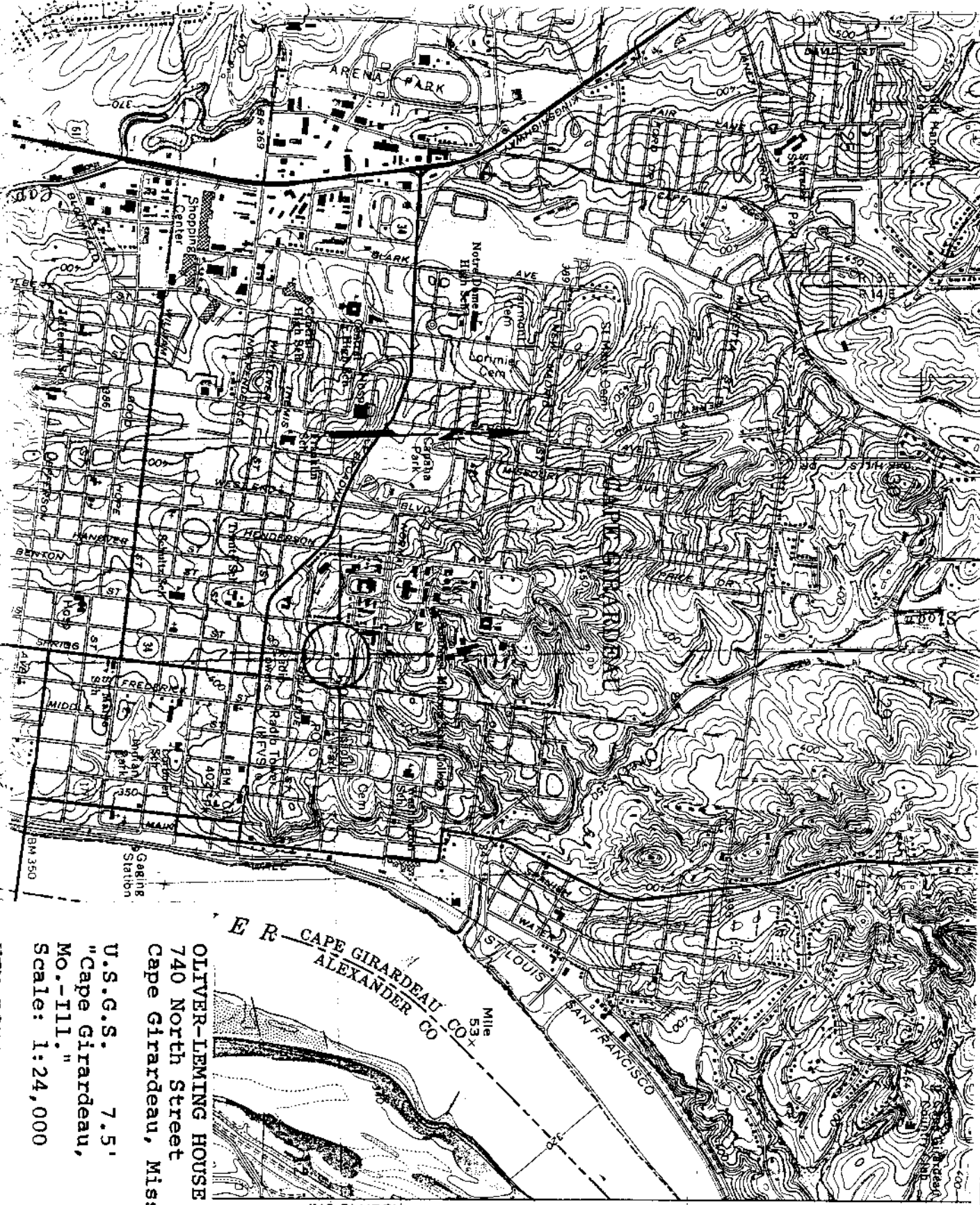


Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 1

Street 140 feet to a corner; thence North parallel with Pacific Street 142.5 feet to a corner; thence West parallel with North Street 12 feet to a corner; thence North parallel with Pacific Street to the South line of Watkins Drive, as shown on Plat of Oliver Heights Subdivision to City of Cape Girardeau, recorded in Plat Book 3 at Page 61 in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds in Cape Girardeau County, Missouri; thence East along South line of Watkins Drive 140 feet to a corner; thence South parallel with Pacific Street to a point 142.5 feet North of the North line of North Street; thence East parallel to North Street 12 feet to Northeast corner of lot sold by Grantors to R.M. Stevenson and Eula Stevenson; thence South along East line of said Stevenson lot to place of beginning.



E R. CAPE GIRARDEAU CO.
 ALEXANDER CO.
 Mile 5.3
 ST. LOUIS
 SAN FRANCISCO

OLIVER-LEWING HOUSE
 740 North Street
 Cape Girardeau, Missouri 63701

U.S.G.S. 7.5'
 "Cape Girardeau,
 Mo.-Ill."
 Scale: 1:24,000
 Quadrangle
 (1967; Photo-
 revised 1978)

UTM REFERENCE:
 16/275980/4132000

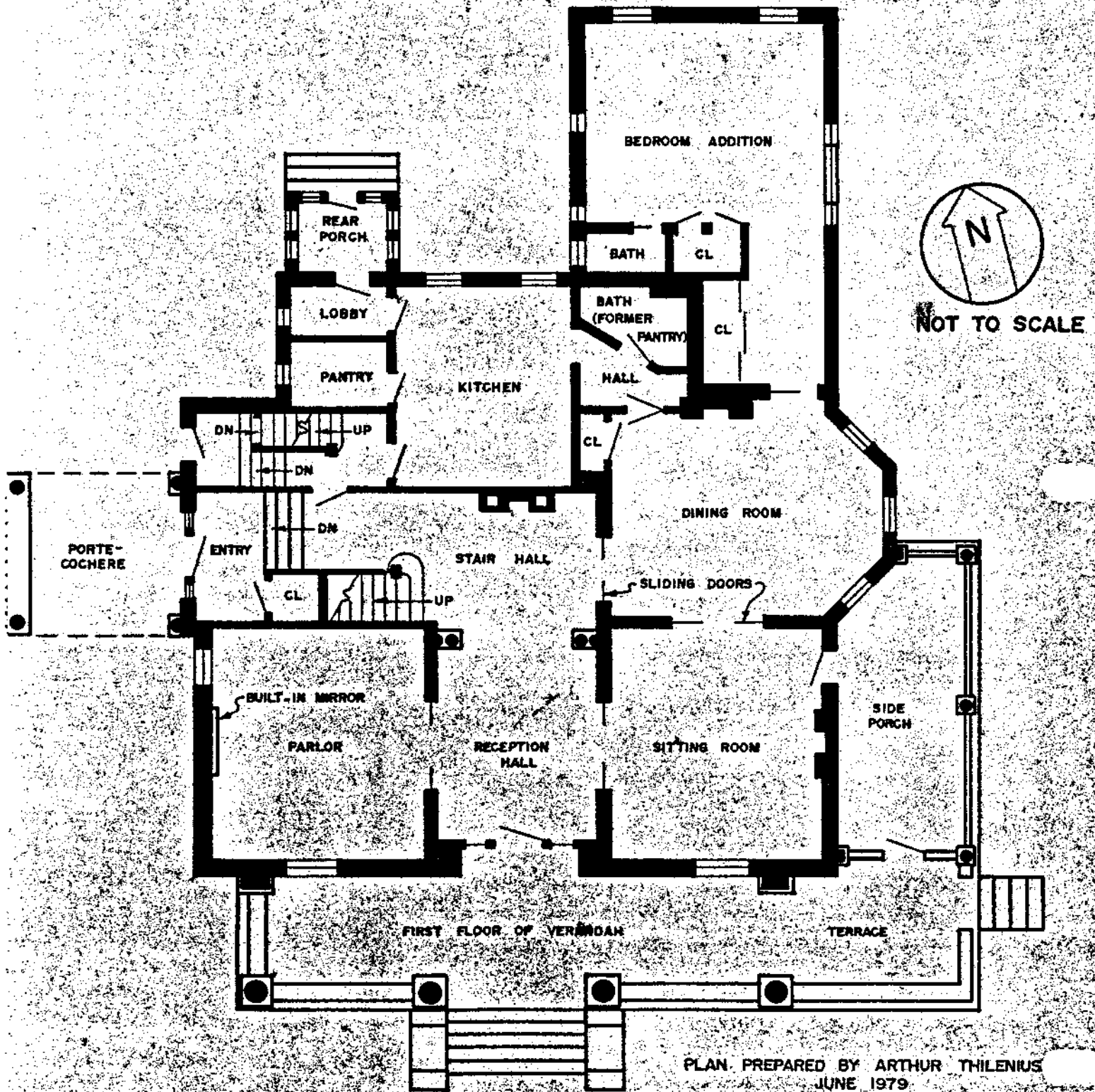
(MC CLURE)
 3158 IV SW

4133

4134

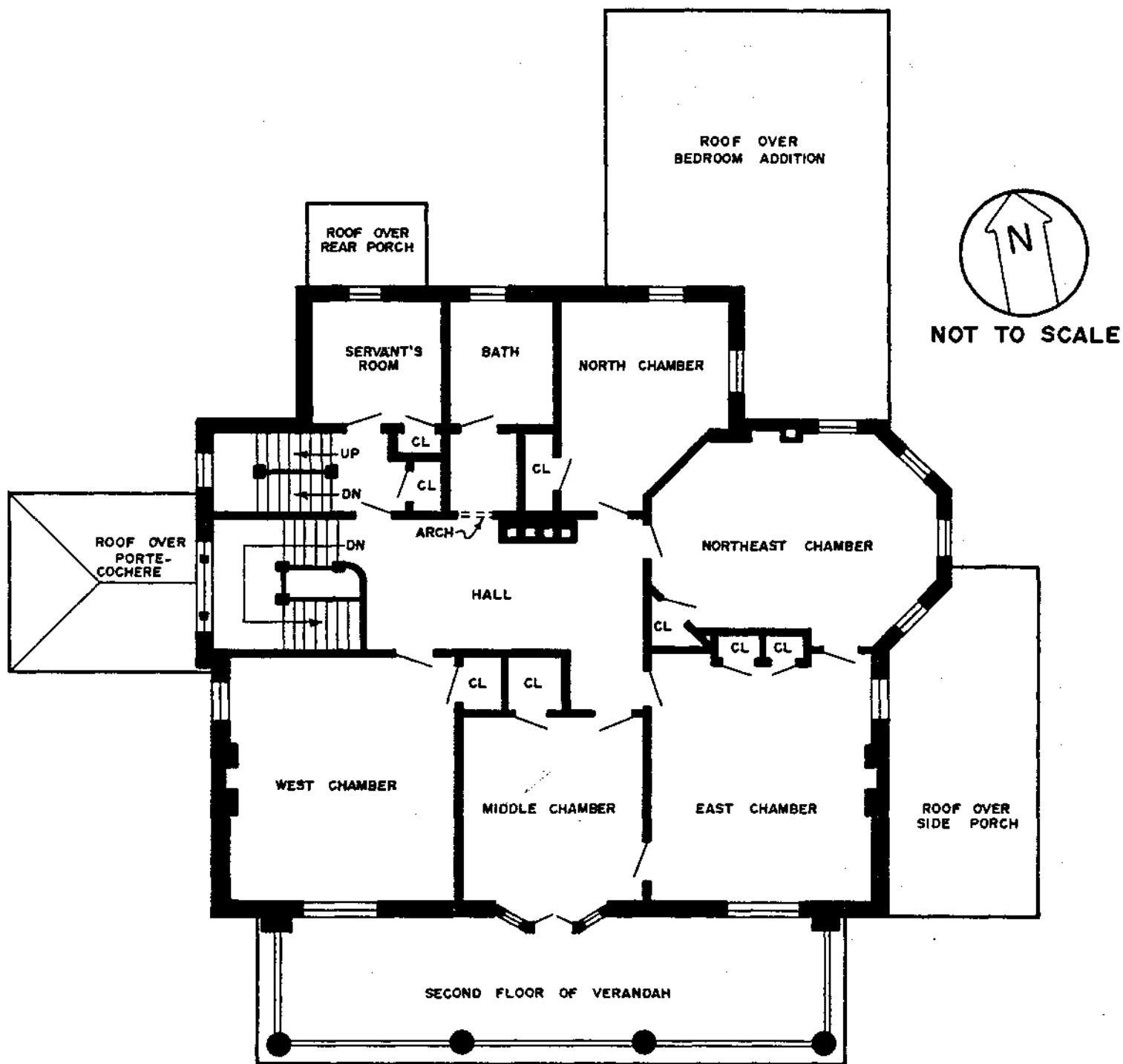
20'

FIRST FLOOR PLAN
OLIVER-LEMING HOUSE
(HOME OF THE MISSOURI STATE FLAG)
CAPE GIRARDEAU, MISSOURI



PLAN PREPARED BY ARTHUR THILENIUS
JUNE 1979

SECOND FLOOR PLAN
OLIVER-LEMING HOUSE
(HOME OF THE MISSOURI STATE FLAG)
CAPE GIRARDEAU, MISSOURI



PLAN PREPARED BY ARTHUR THILENIUS
JUNE 1979

OLIVER-LEMING HOUSE

#443

COUNTY:

Cape Girardeau

LOCATION:

740 North Street, Cape Girardeau, Mo.

OWNER:

Mrs. M.E. Leming, Jr.

ADDRESS:

740 North St., Cape Girardeau, Mo. 63701

DATE APPROVED BY A.C.:

April 25, 1980

DATE SENT TO D.C.:

June 16, 1980

DATE OF REC. IN D.C.:

June 18, 1980

DATE PLACED ON NATIONAL REGISTER:

September 12, 1980

DATE AWARDED CERTIFICATE
(AND PRESENTOR):

DATE FILE REVIEWED:

The Oliver-Leming House is significant as the home of two prominent civic-minded Missouri families who have successively occupied the house since its completion in 1899. The house is additionally important as an example of the late work of influential St. Louis architect Jerome Bibb Legg. Perhaps its greatest importance, however, derives from associations with the design of the Missouri state flag and efforts to gain its official sanction by the state legislature.



OLIVER-LEMING HOUSE

2 of 7

740 North Street

Cape Girardeau, Missouri

Photographer: McBride Photographic
Services, May 1979

Neg. Loc.: McBride Photographic
Services, 716 North Sprigg
Street, Cape Girardeau,
Missouri 63701

View of west and south facades, show-
ing 1915 front porch addition.



OLIVER-LEMING HOUSE

3 of 7

740 North Street

Cape Girardeau, Missouri

Photographer: Jean Bell Mosley

June 1953

Neg. Loc.: McBride Photographic
Services, 716 North Sprigg
Street, Cape Girardeau,
Missouri 63701

View of east and south facades,
showing terrace and front and side
porch additions. Photographed before
the removal of the side porch
balustrade.



OLIVER-LEMING HOUSE

4 of 7

740 North Street

Cape Girardeau, Missouri

Photographer: Cape Girardeau Daily
Republican, May 1905

Neg. Loc.: McBride Photographic
Services, 716 North Sprigg
Street, Cape Girardeau,
Missouri 63701

Early view of south facade showing
noteworthy features of original
neo-Georgian design--the one-storied,
balconied entrance porch, the promi-
nent central bay and the truncated
hip roof.



OLIVER-LEMING HOUSE

5 of 7

740 North Street

Cape Girardeau, Missouri

Photographer: McBride Photographic
Services, May 1979

Neg. Loc.: McBride Photographic
Services, 716 North
Sprigg Street, Cape
Girardeau, Missouri 63701

Interior detail of parlor, showing
original built-in mirror and added
wall paneling and ceiling tile.

