

INTRODUCTION

The historic inventory of the Tri-County Historical District was conducted during the last six months of 1978 and the first three months of 1979. In attempting to locate the various sites, buildings and objects local resource persons were contacted in each township. The Tri-County Historical Society served as the local resource agent and nominated the majority of the architectural sites. Mr. James Gibson of Union Star, Missouri was of valuable assistance in surveying the area.

Another source of obtaining site and architectural locations in the county was by using the windshield technique. This was extremely useful in discovering agricultural architecture since a majority of these structures were missed in the first survey of the area,

The final forms were completed by Thomas W. Carneal. John Huffman of Architects and Planners Collaborative, Kansas City, Missouri, served as the architectural resource person and Robert Bray of the State Archaeological Survey office as the archaeological resource person. Mr. Bob Sunkel and Dr. John Harr of Northwest Missouri State University served as advisors on the project.

After completing the initial survey one must conclude that some sites were missed and therefore the survey must remain open for further addition as more research is carried out.

The survey indicates there is a wealth of ~~Queer. Arne~~ architectural styles in the area. There are several areas which possess the possibility of being developed as historical districts, especially King City, Missouri. There is a voluminous amount of sites and material which portray the agricultural nature of the county.

In attempting to evaluate the **significance** of **the** inventory in each township the resource **and** advisory group looked at each **nomination**. The most **significant** for each township was **given** township number 1. The other sites in each **township inventory** were **numbered** in consecutive order from the most **significant** to the least significant.

The **inventory** definitely indicates several sites that are worthy of **nomination** to the National Register. The primary project for the next year should be the nomination of:

1. The Nolt Apartments, pg. 15.
2. (Gareld Harris) Culver Barn, pg. 25.
3. Liberty Trail, pg. 42.

TRI-COUNTY HISTORIC DISTRICT

The "Tri-County" area is **not** three counties, but **rather** adjacent portions of three counties. There are no identifiable features or characteristics of religion, geography, industry or politics which **explain the area**. It seems only **to have** taken its identity and structure **from the** Tri-County School District **centered** in King City. This community also serves as the trading center. Portions of Polk and Grant Township in Northwest DeKalb County; Jackson and Miller Townships in Southwest Gentry Comty; and an area of some six miles by seven miles in Northeast Andrew County, constitute the "Tri-County" Historical District survey **area**.

The tracks of the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy originally tied much of the area together **running southwesterly from** Albany through King City in Gentry County; crossing the northwest corner of DeKalb County, intersecting the south fork of the Platte River at Union Star and continuing **into Andrew County** through Helena and Cosby, thence,, into Buchanan County and on into St. Joseph, Missouri. This route **is now** a part of the Burlington Northern system. A number of improved state roads and U.S. 169 provide **an adequate** highway system throughout the area.

The three counties were all organized **in the 1840's**: Andrew on January 29, 1841, Gentry on **February 12, 1841**, and DeKalb on **February 25, 1845**. Early settlers came **from** Kentucky, Tennessee, and the Carolinas Kith a few from Indiana and Illinois, plus a scattering of German immigrants. Immediately after statehood, **adventureers and squatters tenated the area** but **the permanent** settlers came **in the late 1830's** and early 1840's. **Most** of the settlers were farmers with an

appropriate number of artisans, craftsmen, professional men and opportunists, Being Southerners they were generally Democrat (Lincoln received 7 out of 702 votes in DeKalb County in 1860) in their politics but opposed to war and secession. DeKalb and Gentry returned to the Democrat fold after Reconstruction with Andrew remaining sharply divided between the Republican and Democrat parties.

The religious preference of the early settlers reflected their southern background as surely as did their politics. Various sects of the Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Christian churches were predominant. That same southern mountain heritage appeared in the use and possession of "corn juice" as trade goods in local stores, as social equalizer and again in the "local option" decisions in 1887. At special elections on September 6, 1887, Andrew County voted 1,598 against local option (in favoring of selling intoxicants) and 900 in favor. DeKalb carried local option by 30 votes; 1,069 against, 1,099 in favor.

King City, a community of 1,060, remains the only active trading center in the area. The town was laid out July 6, 1879 and incorporated in May of 1881. A post office had been applied for in 1858 and the name "Petersburg" chosen, but Postmaster General, Horatio King, named it after himself claiming the name Petersburg was too similar to another post office in the state. The town grew slowly until the completion of the St. Joseph, Des Moines Railroad in 1879-1880 and then it began to blossom into a trading center. In 1880, the town consisted of a blacksmith shop, a saddlery, a livery stable and four general stores. In the early Twentieth Century King City was regarded as one of the major centers in the nation for the production of blue grass seed. The town was also a prime producer of dairy and poultry products, and the growth of the King City creamery to the point where it produced 750,000 pounds of butter annually by the 1940's points out the significance of this type of agricultural activity.

Flag Springs was settled in 1840 or 1841. Its major attraction was the large spring of pure water which accounts for its name and may account for the production of spirituous drink there along with a number of early businesses, including a cheese factory, saw mill, woolen mill and general store. Much of the town was damaged by a cyclone in 1881, which swept through the region of the Tri-County District. Ford City, formerly Yolo and then Miller, was originally located on the farm of John G. Miller and still had a bank and a number of business enterprises in the 1920's. The small hamlets of Island City, Berlin, Winslow, and Empire Prairie (Empire City) were never much more than crossroads stores.

The Tri-County District is a major agricultural area of gentle rolling prairie all lying within the glacial plains or loess soil region of Northwest Missouri. The creeks and tributary streams of the Flatte and Grand Rivers once nourished huge stands of timber dominated by white and black oak, walnut, elm, hickory, cottonwood, and ash. Little remains today as the more valuable of the woods were harvested for construction and the rest destroyed to clear the land for farming. Corn was and remains the principle agricultural crop. Wheat, oats, barley, and rye were also grown in significant quantities. Hemp and flax were also grown in the area at one time as well as tobacco. Orchards of apple, peach, pear, cherry and plum trees were common both as commercial enterprises and as family orchards. Most of the crops and fruits were natives to the area and along with grapes were cultured and domesticated by thrifty farmers. As is true of most similar communities based on agriculture and removed at a distance from fast growing urban areas, there has been a steady decline in population since 1910 with a fairly rapid acceleration following World War II. The enrollment of the King City School District gives a clear picture of the current declining population trends of the area.

Total School Enrollment:

1960-1961 ---- 524
1971-1972 ---- 478
1978-1979 ---- 421

The **story** of the Tri-County Historical District is **quite** **synonymous** with the experience of **other** Northwest Missouri agricultural **counties**. Although **the** story of **this area** is not **unique**, the Tri-County Historical District remains a "special place" for those whose ancestry have roots **there**.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abstracts to **the** properties listed in the survey,
- Ancient **Craft** Lodge #377 A.F. & A.M. 100th Anniversary Program. October 24, 1971.
- Ancient Craft Lodge #377 A.F. & A.M. Lodge Records, 1871-1979.
- Centennial Committee, Once upon a Railroad, Stanberry, Missouri 1879-1979.
Shawnee Mission: Intercollegiate Press, 1979.
- DeKalb County Historical Society, Mayville, MO. (compiler) Memories
From Polk Township. Marceline, MO: Walsworth Publishing Co., 1976.
- History of Andrew & DeKalb County, Missouri From Earliest Times to Present.
St. Louis: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1888.
- Historical Atlas of DeKalb County. St. Louis: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1877.
- History of Daviess & Gentry County, Missouri Topeka, KS: Historical Publishing
Co., 1922.
- King City Chronicle, August 9, 1976.
- On **site** observation of all properties listed in the survey.
- Town records of King City, MO., 1881-1979.

PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

Area Residents	Combs, Mr. & Mrs. Larry
Bennett Family	Combs, Mr. & Mrs. Roger
Bulla, William III	Culver Family
Burke, W.P.	Davidson, Dudley
Burl, John	Ferguson, Miller
Clark, Carl G.	Huntsman, Wilson
Clark, Clifford	Gibson, James

PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

Limpp, Rufus H.	Simmons, Carroll B.
Limpp, Isabel B. .	Smith, Albert
Lux, Roy	Smith, Emma
Officers of the Tri-County Museum	Spiking, Gordon
Owens, Phyllis	Turpin, Harry B.
Roberts Family	Wall, Lester
Scott, Freeman	Weathed, Dixie
	White, Kenneth

Historic Sites of King City

3. King City Creamery
4. Amble Inn
5. First State Bank Building
6. Nolt Apartments
7. Carl C. Clark and Thelma A. Clark
8. Colonial Apartments
9. Liberty Tree
10. Leith Apartments
11. Jewell Zohner
12. Masonic Building

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