

Gensky, H.E., Grocery Store Building
Cole County, MO

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Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing.

N/ANumber of contributing resources
previously listed in the National
Register.N/A**5. Function or Use****Historic Function**COMMERCE/department storeSOCIAL/meeting hall**Current Functions**SOCIAL/meeting hall**7. Description****Architectural Classification**Other: Two-story commercial
building**Materials**foundation Brick
walls Brickroof Asbestosother**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

☒ **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

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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of SignificanceCOMMERCEARCHITECTURESOCIAL HISTORY**Periods of Significance**1915-1951**Significant Dates**N/A**Significant Person(s)**N/A**Cultural Affiliation**N/A**Architect/Builder**Builder/Schmidli, Joseph**Narrative Statement of Significance**

Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

2. Major Bibliographic References**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State Agency

☐ Federal Agency

☐ Local Government

☐ University

☐ Other:

Name of repository: _____

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0. Geographical DataAcreage of Property less than one acre**UTM References**

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	572740	4269020			

C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

1. Form Prepared ByName/title see continuation page

Organization _____ date _____

Street & number _____ telephone _____

City or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**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.**Photographs**Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.**Additional Items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

Name Capitol City Lodge No. 9 F. & A. M. (Contact Person: Kenneth Logan)Street & number 423 Cherry Street telephone 634-2036City or town Jefferson City state MO zip code 65101

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Gensky, H.E., Grocery Store Building
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Summary

The H.E. Gensky Grocery Store Building, 423 Cherry Street, Jefferson City, Cole County, is a brick, two-story, commercial building. Constructed in 1915 as a grocery store with an apartment upstairs, the gable-front, rectangular design features a two-tiered, recessed front porch supported by continuous, slender brick columns. The building exemplifies Missouri-German vernacular architecture applied to a commercial building. Touches of Craftsman styling are found in the gable in the form of knee braces and cross-bracing. Primarily historic material remains throughout the building and the floorplan is substantially intact. The main alteration occurred in 1934, when the original contractor replaced a frame, upstairs rear porch with a two-bedroom brick addition supported by three brick columns. Some partition walls were removed when the second floor was converted into a lodge hall by the present owner, Capitol City Lodge No. 9 F. & A. M., in circa 1950. Cosmetic interior modifications also occurred in the 1960s when the main floor was converted for use as a doctor's office. Some porch balusters and exterior wood trim are in need of painting, but overall the building is in good condition. Because the original form of the building as a store with an apartment above is unchanged and interior changes have been minor, strong integrity is retained overall.

Elaboration

The Gensky Store is situated on a 40' x 104' lot on the northeast corner of Cherry and Miller Streets. The building faces northwest. The location is near what had been the main concentration of immigrant, primarily German, settlement in Jefferson City. Historically, the neighborhood was predominately residential and the grocery store serviced a roughly four-block area bordered by McCarty and Lafayette Streets to the north and west, and Clark Avenue to the east. The southern perimeter of the trade area extended toward Dunklin Street and the Lincoln University campus. Another historic building, the Dunavant AME Zion Church, is diagonally opposite the store at the southeast corner of Miller and Cherry. Pedestrian access from this direction was virtually eliminated when the Whitton Expressway (Highway 50/63) was constructed in 1962. The immediate area was altered in the early 1980s when the Jefferson City Transit System expanded its complex and replaced several adjacent dwellings with storage buildings.

Exterior

Constructed of brick laid in a common bond, the rectangular, front gabled plan has various features which confirm that it was constructed by a contractor well-versed in the Missouri-German building tradition. Such features include the two-story recessed front porch, triple-header brick segmental arches above exterior openings, and the use of casement windows in a rear second-story addition. The German tradition of emphasizing the primary façade while leaving the remaining elevations relatively unadorned is also employed.¹ Other buildings of generally similar design are located throughout Jefferson City's German neighborhoods. However, these buildings

¹Charles van Ravenswaay, The Arts and Architecture of German Settlements in Missouri (Columbia & London: University of Missouri Press, 1977), pp. 226-236.

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differ from the Gensky property in that they were constructed as four-to-six unit residential apartment buildings rather than as general stores.

The Gensky Store has a full basement, which is accessed from the exterior. The brick exterior, includes the foundation. The bricks are laid in a seven-course common bond. The roof consists of diamond-shaped asbestos cement shingles.

In the northwest (primary) elevation, a two-tiered porch across the facade is recessed below the projecting front gable. The porch, with a concrete deck, is supported by a pair of continuous, square brick pillars. The lower storefront consists of a transomed display window in the south half and, in the north, adjacent transomed single-leaf entrances for the store level and second floor. The upstairs porch has a simple wood balustrade on all three sides and, centered, a square wood post for additional support of the overhanging gable. A one-light two-panel door with a transom is positioned in the north half and a paired 1/1 sash is located in the south half. Segmental arches are above these openings. Virtually all of the building's decorative features are concentrated in this facade.

The north entrance (to a stairway leading upstairs) has an original one-light door. The steps are intact but the stairway opening at the second floor was closed in circa 1950 in connection with converting the front portion of the building into a lodge hall. The adjacent entrance to the former store room has a modern door with a small diamond-shaped window. The large display window has a two-paneled apron and a seven-light transom. A decorative wooden arch below a wide trim board divides the first and second stories. All openings on the second story are finished with double header brick segmental arches and rough limestone sills. A frieze-like panel is above the second story. Wood shingles clad the gable wall. Paired single-light sash with a pediment head are centered in the gable. Craftsman elements such as cross bracing at the apex and four evenly spaced triangular knee braces provide a decorative touch.

On the southwest elevation, the first story has four window openings with triple-header brick segmental arches and lugsills of rock-faced limestone. Windows are two-light sash. A metal awning tops a below-grade center basement entry near the middle of the building. A cornerstone set flush in the brick wall at the west edge of the elevation reads: CAPITOL CITY LODGE, NO. 9 F. & A.M.; ORGANIZED 1867, RELAID 1962; THOS. R. NORMAN W.M.; LAID BY MOST WORSHIPFUL PRINCE; HALL GRAND LODGE; F. & A.M. OF MO; M.W.W. KIRKPATRICK 33°; GRAND MASTER. The second story has five window openings (containing double-hung 1/1s) with segmental arches and limestone sills. A brick chimney emerges from the roof at the side wall near the east end. Farther east, the 1934 rear addition includes a window group consisting of four eight-light casements. A second chimney, originally located west of the one remaining, was removed in the early 1930s.

The fenestration is somewhat different, but the northeast elevation closely resembles the southwest. Three two-light sash windows run parallel across the first story. The second story contains three double-hung 1/1 sash windows. A brick chimney projects from the roof in the east half of the building. An eight-light casement window group is in the second story rear addition.

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The southeast (rear) elevation is dominated by a 1934 second story addition, supported by three brick piers. These piers are slightly more massive than those on the front. The area below the addition remains open as a covered porch. Two window openings with segmental arches and limestone sills are arranged in the north two-thirds of this elevation. These windows (1/1 double-hung sash) are grated. A single-leaf entrance containing a two-panel, one-light door with a transom is at the south corner of the facade. The second story addition has two sets of eight-light casement windows and an entrance or rear exit with a replacement panel door in the south corner. In the 1950s, wooden stairs were replaced with the present metal porch and stairwell. The rear gable is wood shingled and contains a central double-hung window with a louvered upper sash.

Interior

The original store room, which measured 21 x 48 feet and occupied the entire main level, was altered in 1966 when the space was remodeled as a physician's office. The ceiling was lowered, the plaster walls were paneled, the wood floors were carpeted, and a kitchen and bathroom were added at the rear of the building. A new furnace was installed and the ceilings were lowered in order to conceal the ductwork. An inside entry to the basement was eliminated. These main floor alterations gave the interior a modern look but are largely reversible.

The upstairs, which originally contained the family living quarters, is more intact. The front portion of the apartment was altered subsequent to the building's purchase by Capitol City Lodge No. 9 F. & A. M. Partition walls of three rooms--the living room, dining room and master bedroom--were eliminated in order to create the main lodge room. The ceiling in this portion was raised approximately 18 inches and the stairwell leading from the front (Cherry Street) entrance was closed to create additional floor space.

The rear half of the second floor where the family's kitchen, bathroom, two bedrooms and hall were located is essentially intact. Original millwork is intact throughout the second floor and some original doors remain. Windows and doors are topped with single-light transoms. Surrounds are finished with starburst corner blocks. The original plaster walls, hardwood floors, and kitchen cabinets are intact.

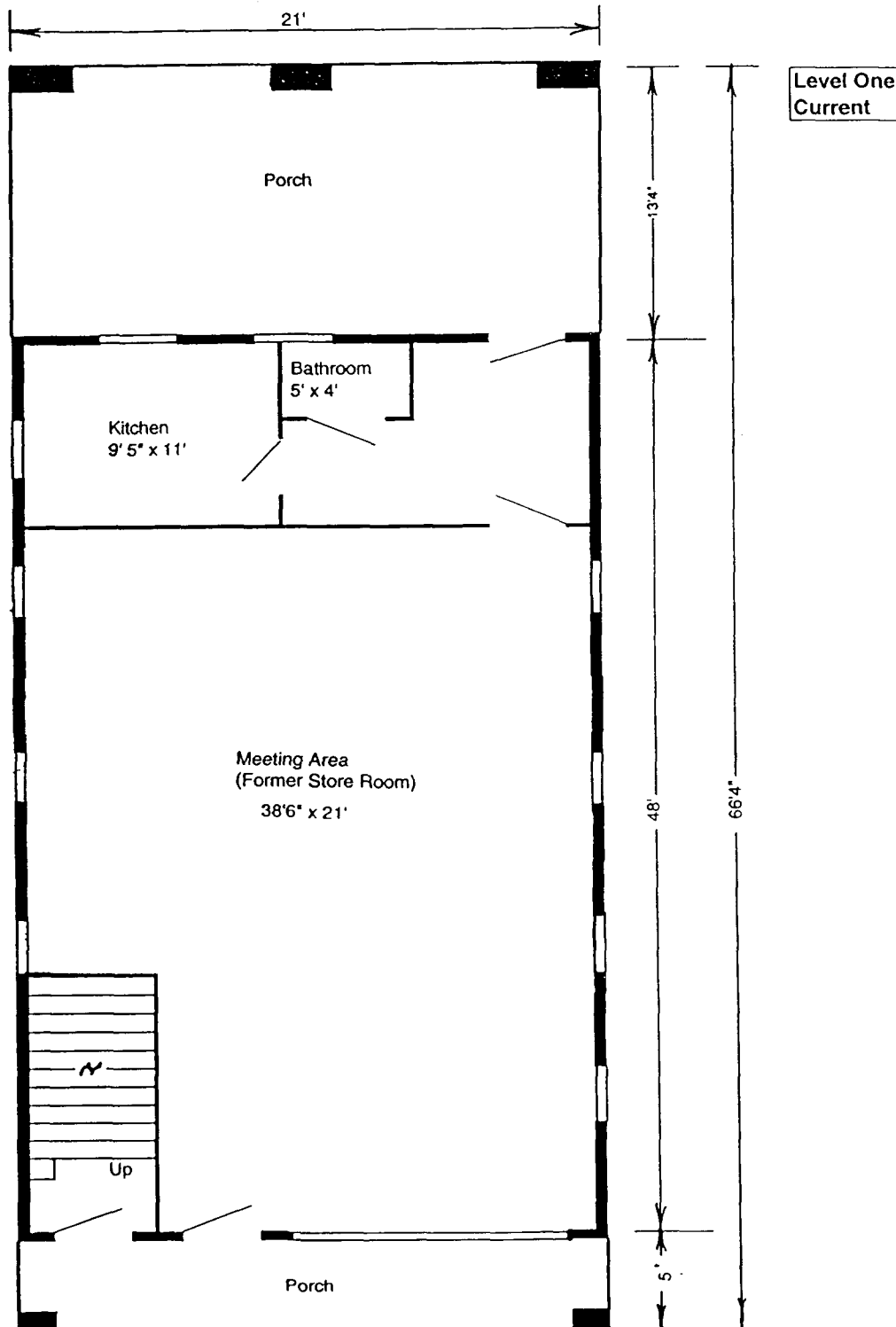
Despite interior alterations in transforming the building into a lodge hall and a physician's office, the Gensky Store has been preserved remarkably well. The exterior and much of the second floor are substantially intact from early in the building's history. Historic photographs display a storefront that remains essentially unaltered since the time when the Gensky family lived and worked in the building. Upon entering the second-floor apartment area (complete with vintage furnishings dating back to the 1930s), the sense of the building's historic past as an early 20th century grocery store with living quarters above is particularly strong.

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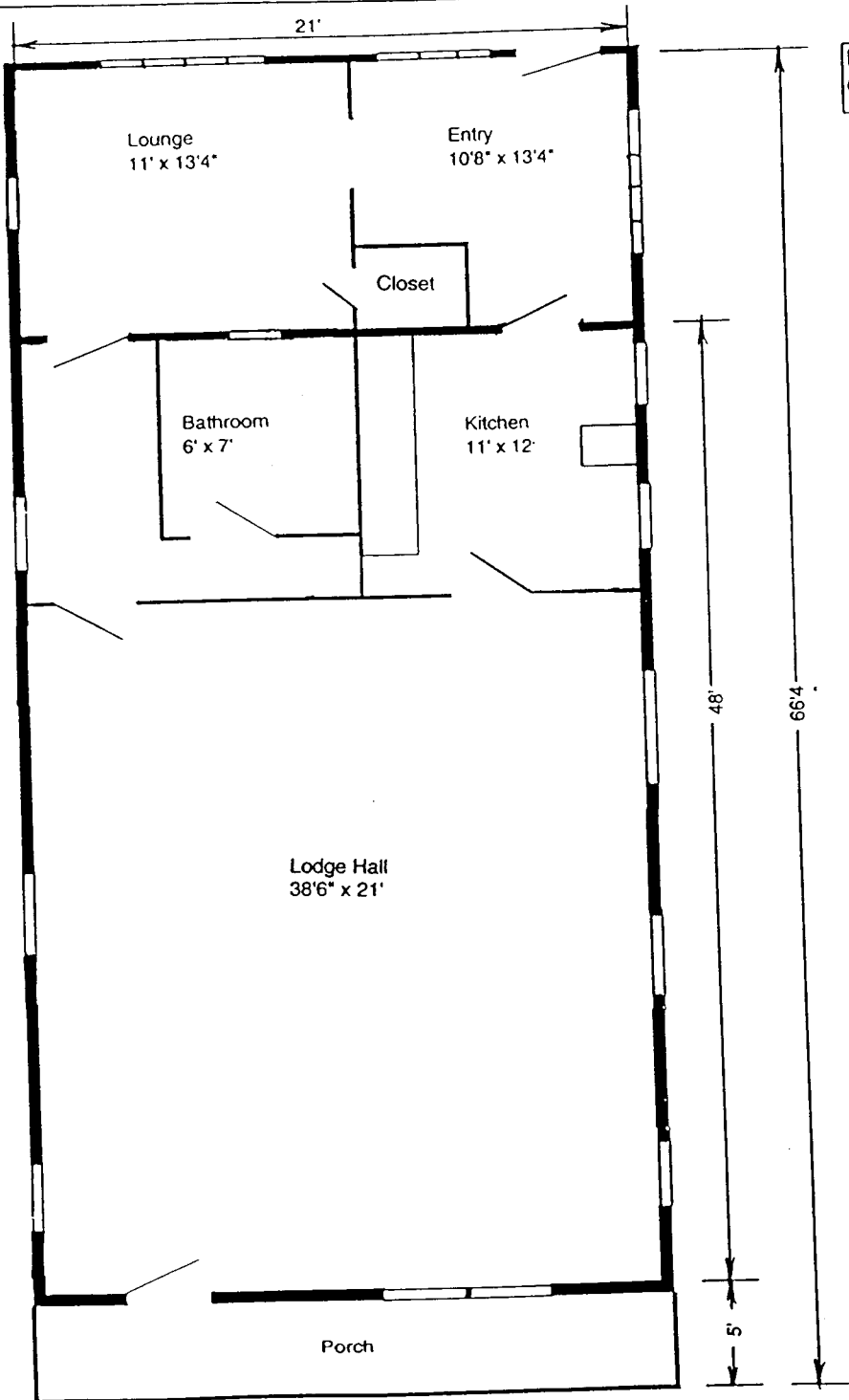


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Level Two
Current

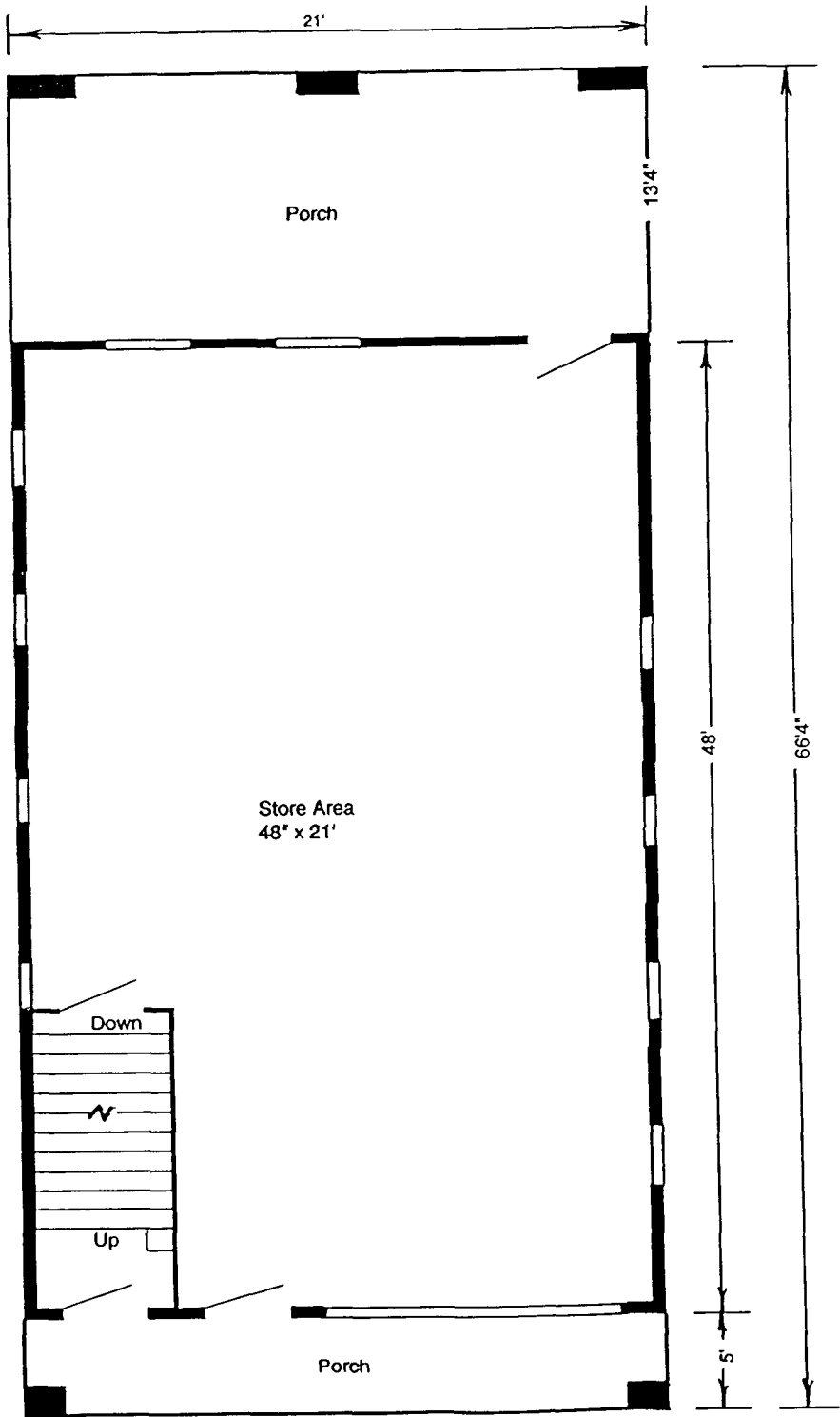


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Level One
After 1934 Addition

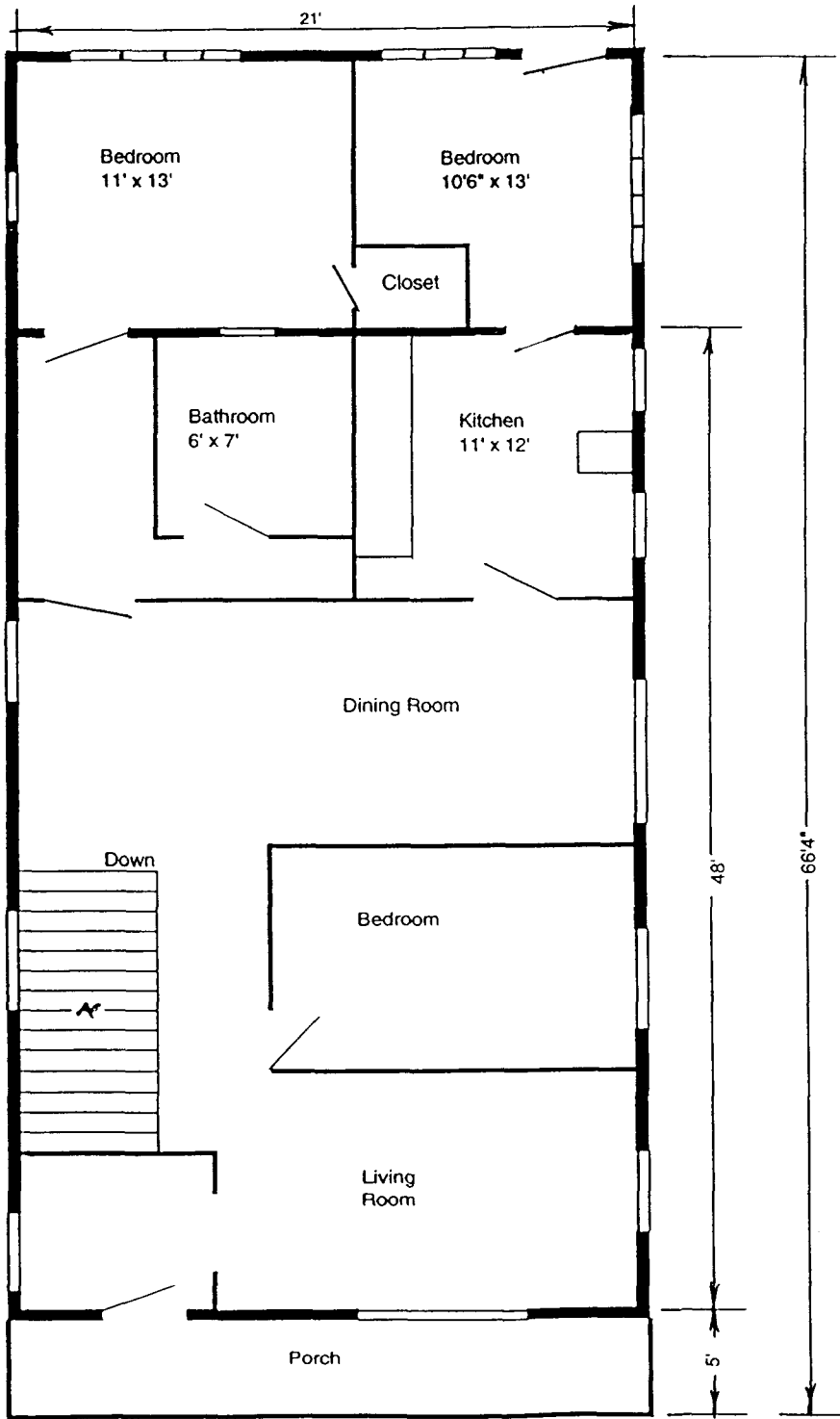
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Level Two
After 1934 Addition



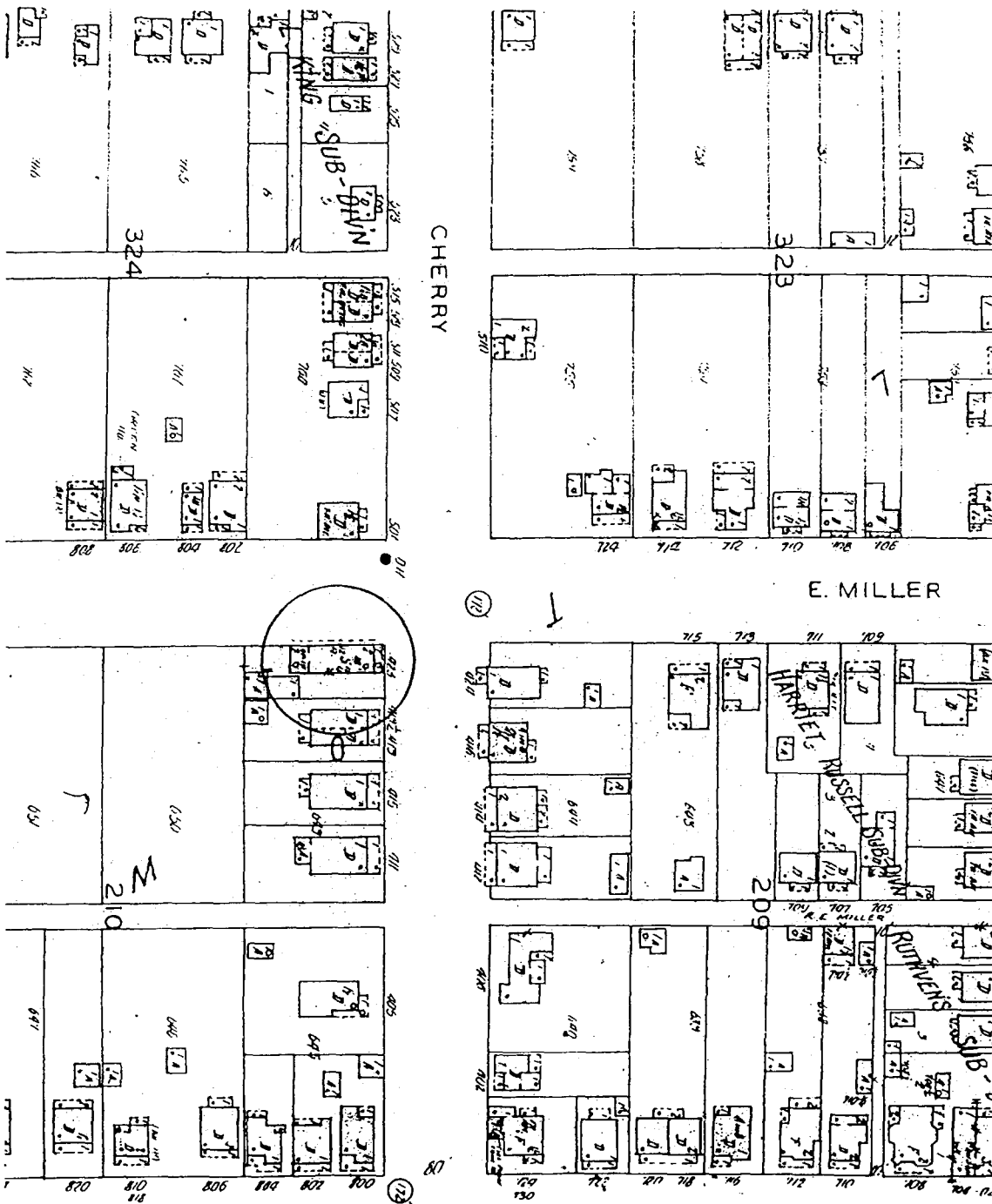
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Sanborn Map, Jefferson City, Cole County, Missouri, 1939



E. McCARTY

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Summary

The H. E. Gensky Grocery Store Building, 423 East Cherry Street, Jefferson City, Missouri, Cole County, is locally significant under National Register Criteria A (Commerce and Social History) and C (Architecture). The Gensky Store exemplifies an early 20th century neighborhood grocery store with living quarters above. In 1950, the upstairs became a Prince Hall-affiliated Masonic lodge which it remains today, while the downstairs functioned as a grocery store for 35 years. Architecturally, the Gensky Store exemplifies Missouri-German craftsmanship as applied to a combination grocery store/apartment building. The building also reflects elements of the Craftsman style which was in vogue in America at the time of its construction. The period of significance is from 1915, the date of construction, until 1951, the arbitrary 50-year cutoff date for National Register listing. Capitol City Lodge No. 9 F. & A. M., which purchased the property and began using it in 1950, remains the owner today.

Commerce

The H. E. Gensky Grocery Store remained a full-service neighborhood grocery store, operated by the Gensky family, from 1915 until 1942. It remained a grocery store, first as Glover's market and then as the Cherry Street Market, until 1966. During the 1930s, the Gensky Store was considered one of the largest independent grocery stores in Jefferson City.² Once a common neighborhood institution, "Mom and Pop" grocery stores as exemplified by the Gensky Store appear to have become a dwindling property type. Before the advent of today's supermarkets, however, they played an important role in the composition of American neighborhoods.

Modern grocery trade has its roots in the general store. In order to adequately serve their broad customer base, early storekeepers were required to stock a diversified inventory that often included farm supplies and construction materials. As the nation's population increased, so did the demand for increasingly specialized retail trade. Establishments that primarily stocked edibles began appearing on main streets throughout the United States. Westward expansion of the railroads boosted the grocery retail trade by facilitating the mass distribution of prepackaged goods. For the first time, consumers had easy access to a variety of processed food supplies. By the early 20th century, neighborhood grocery stores had become integral components of many communities.³ The Gensky Store at 423 East Cherry Street is typical of these neighborhood markets.

Following the statewide decision in 1911 to keep the seat of state government in Jefferson City, the town enjoyed a previously unequaled economic boom.⁴ In 1912 Joseph Pope, an

²The Jefferson City News and Tribune, Jefferson City, Missouri, July 23, 1937.

³James M. Mayo, The American Grocery Store (Westport, CT & London: Greenwood Press, 1993), p. 68.

⁴Karen Grace, "Jefferson City: An Architectural Biography," Preservation Issues, Vol. 5, p.2 (September/October 1995).

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entrepreneur who was one of the first to capitalize on the city's expansion, hired Joseph Schmidli to construct a two-story commercial building on what was then a vacant lot at the northwest corner of Cherry and Miller Streets. Schmidli, a German brick mason known for his work throughout the Jefferson City area, constructed the building in its original form and later was hired to add a rear upstairs addition. Upon completion of the building in 1915, Henry Gensky rented it from Pope and opened the H.E. Gensky Grocery Store. Contractor Schmidli's daughter Stella was employed as a clerk in the store, and in 1917, she and Gensky were married. The Genskys were soon able to purchase the property from Pope for \$4,000. By 1921, they had paid off the lien. The business enjoyed continued growth and prosperity throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Henry Gensky, Jr. credits the store's success during the Great Depression to the fact that many patrons were Missouri state employees with relatively stable incomes. Most early grocery stores allowed their regular customers to buy on credit, and the Gensky Store was no exception. The accounts which were expected to be paid in full on a monthly basis.⁵

The Genskys hired an additional clerk (Stella's sister, Mrs. Edna Manes) and a delivery driver (Earl Williams, a local part-time preacher). The Gensky Store had an extensive home delivery route throughout the Jefferson City area. Until 1924, deliveries were made by a horse-drawn wagon. In 1924, the Genskys purchased a Model-A Ford for making deliveries. Marketing was often on a person-to-person basis. For example, regular delivery customers who neglected to call in their weekly list of supplies were contacted by Mrs. Manes who took their orders over the phone. This extra effort helped ensure that customers would continue patronizing the Gensky Store. The store's delivery service was extensively used by the staff of Lincoln University.⁶

The era of the independent store has been called "the era of the storekeeper." As small entrepreneurs in an emerging capitalist economy, storekeepers were largely responsible for managing all aspects of the business.⁷ This was true for the Gensky establishment, which offered a full range of services. Upon entering the store, customers were immediately drawn to the oak display case that ran along the south wall for nearly the length of the building. Canned goods and other boxed items were stocked on floor-to-ceiling shelves behind the case, which also served as a counter. A raised, glass-enclosed portion of the case displayed cigars and candies. Coffee, flour, dried beans and other miscellaneous items were stored below in pull-out bins. To the left of the entry, fresh produce was displayed in wire and wicker baskets. A meat and dairy counter, advertising "City View Dairy" products, was situated centrally.

Kenneth Logan, a long-time resident of Jefferson City's East End, recalls making frequent trips to Gensky's store as a youth. His mother would send him "to purchase a quarter's worth of sugar." He also remembers the full-service aspect of the grocery store. "Back then," he pointed out, "you didn't have supermarkets. Instead, Mr. Gensky would slice your lunch meat, and Mrs. Gensky

⁵Henry Gensky Jr., "H.E. Gensky Grocery," unpublished store history.

⁶Interview with Henry Gensky Jr., by Dana Miller, November 1, 2000.

⁷Mayo, p. 43.

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would fetch canned goods from behind the counter.”⁸

In *The American Grocery Store*, James Mayo refers to the grocery store as “a common ground for American society” and “a place where all classes of people can meet face to face.”⁹ The Gensky Store, serving a racially-mixed neighborhood, was such a “common ground.” Area residents recall an invisible boundary dividing the white and African-American communities. The area north and east of Miller Street was inhabited by a white (mostly German) population. South of Miller, extending west to Dunklin Street, the neighborhood was predominately black. Approximately half of the store’s customers were of African- American descent. Henry Gensky, Jr. recalled that black and white customers regularly mingled in the store, which he said was a somewhat uncommon practice locally during the 1920s and 30s.

The Gensky Store’s position on a corner lot was both typical and practical. The “corner” grocery store’s origins are directly related to the growth of the American suburb. With suburban building being largely devoted to residential development, commercial enterprises were no longer relegated to a town’s primary business district. For convenience, they were generally constructed amidst residential housing at sites with the most traffic. Corner lots, with their greater visibility, were more expensive than other lots on the block. Given these conditions, a commercial property was more likely than residential to be sited on a corner. The Gensky property fits this description. According to the 1939 Sanborn map for Jefferson City, it was the only commercial enterprise within a two-to-three block residential area. Consequently, it was probably natural that the store would serve as a neighborhood gathering place for old and young alike.

Several adults who frequented the store sometimes spent the better part of their day visiting and trading gossip. Henry Gensky, Jr. recalls one local woman in particular who became involved in the 1936 presidential campaign of Alf Landon, the Republican candidate from Kansas. Carrying a Kansas sunflower all the while, she spent hours canvassing the neighborhood for prospective Landon votes. She became quite despondent, he recalled, and never quite recovered when Landon was defeated in a landslide by Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and ended up in a mental asylum.¹⁰

Following Henry Gensky’s death in 1937, Mrs. Gensky continued operating the store for another five years. In 1942, she rented the business to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Glover, who continued the store as Glover’s Market until 1946. Later in 1946, Mr. and Mrs. Ben Anthony rented the store and called it the Cherry Street Market. In 1950, Capitol City Lodge No. 9 F. & A. M. purchased the building and remodeled the second floor for use as a lodge hall. The Cherry Street Market continued on the main level until 1966. After renovations, Capitol City Lodge rented the main floor

⁸Interview with Kenneth Logan by Dana Miller, December 14, 2000.

⁹Mayo, xv.

¹⁰Gary Kremer, “Genskys’ Grocery an Important Eastside Institution.” *The Jefferson City News Tribune*, January 3, 1999.

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space to Dr. Charles Cooper who used it as a medical office until 1982. At present, the main level is used occasionally by the lodge for various social functions but has ceased to exist as commercial space.¹¹

Social History

Since 1950, the H. E. Gensky Grocery Store Building has been significant for its association with a Prince Hall-affiliated Masonic lodge in Jefferson City. The second floor continues to serve as the meeting hall where ideals of fellowship, charity and moral behavior are discussed, charitable deeds are planned and rituals of membership necessary to the order are carried out. Like other Masonic lodges, Capitol City Lodge No. 9 is dedicated to promoting the welfare of society through the reaffirmation of traditional values. In addition, since Prince Hall Masonry is essentially an organization for African-Americans, black lodges, like black churches, have been important to the development and maintenance of solidarity in the African-American community.

Masonry has long been a part of American culture. Records indicate that the Massachusetts A.F. & A.M. was functioning as early as 1733, and by 1800, 11 Grand Lodges had been established and were operating within the newly-formed United States.¹² Although brotherhood and equality among men was a fundamental concept within Masonry, blacks were excluded from membership during colonial times. The formation of exclusively black freemasonry in America is credited to Prince Hall, a free, property-holding black man who immigrated to Boston in 1765. Although little is known about Hall, it appears that in 1775, he was denied admittance into the Boston-based St. Andrews Lodge of Massachusetts. Undaunted, Hall petitioned and was subsequently admitted into British Lodge No. 441, a traveling military lodge. He, along with 14 other black initiates, quickly attained the status of "Master Mason." After the military lodge into which they were inducted had moved on, Hall and his associates were authorized to operate under a dispensation until they had received their charter. However, the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts refused to grant a warrant for their lodge. Consequently, in 1782, Hall petitioned the Grand Lodge of England for a warrant, which was granted on September 29, 1784. African Lodge No. 459 was formally constituted on May 6, 1787, with Prince Hall as Master. Soon after, the African Lodge of North America was formed. In 1827, after several unsuccessful attempts to communicate with the Grand Lodge of England, it declared its independence of any external authority and began functioning as African Grand Lodge No. 1. Over the years, the African Lodge of North America began to function as "Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts," in honor of their founding member.¹³

¹¹Henry Gensky Jr., "H.E. Gensky Grocery," unpublished store history.

¹²Bobby Demott, Freemasonry in American Culture and Society (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 1986), p. 44.

¹³Allen E. Roberts, FPS, "Who Are These Prince Hall Masons?" Indiana Masons Online. 1999.
<http://www.indianamasons.org/imomiddle/prince.html>.

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Prince Hall Masonry began in Missouri 1865 when a group of St. Louis citizens successfully petitioned the Grand Lodge of the United States for charter of constitution to organize a Grand Lodge of Missouri.¹⁴ Soon after, in 1867, Capitol City Lodge No. 9 A. F. & A. M., Prince Hall-affiliated (now known as No. 9 F. & A. M.) was established in Jefferson City.

The local lodge originally occupied one of two meeting rooms on the second level of the old Cook Paint and Varnish building, located at the corner of Jefferson Street and the alley between Capitol Avenue and High Street on the site of the present Jefferson State Office Building. Meeting minutes from January 1, 1948 indicate that the lodge (which owned the property) rented an unused room to both the Elks Lodge and the American Legion "for the sum of \$17.50 per month." These organizations apparently shared the hall, meeting at different times. Records from the same year also indicate that Bryan Electric occupied the first floor of the building, apparently for a very brief time in the building's history.¹⁵

Capitol City Lodge No. 9 moved to its present location in the Gensky Store in December 1950. The lodge purchased the property for \$19,500. Currently, Lodge No. 9 has a membership of 57. Although historically a "black" lodge, membership is open to all races and nationalities. Currently, several white members participate as members.

Fraternal orders have been likened to religious entities in that they are "expressive" organizations, and are directed primarily toward meeting the social and personal needs of their members.¹⁶ The social cohesion that develops between "brethren" has great appeal to prospective members, so it is not surprising that during the first half of the 20th century, black fraternal groups and lodges experienced considerable growth within Missouri. They provided relief for impoverished members who, often due to discrimination, had nowhere else to turn for assistance.¹⁷ Capitol City Lodge No. 9 continues to participate in community-based volunteer work, mostly in the form of contributions to the elderly and needy. Lodge No. 9 also sponsors scholarships for area youth and donates food and clothing to needy families in the Jefferson City area.¹⁸

Architecture

The Gensky Store Building can be categorized as Missouri-German in stylistic affinities. But while

¹⁴Most Worshipful Grand Lodge, Official Proceedings of the 43rd Annual Communication, August 11, 12, and 13, 1909, p. 11.

¹⁵Capitol City Lodge No. 9 F. & A. M., January 1, 1948, meeting minutes recorded by Carl Johnson, Past Master.

¹⁶Lynn Dumenil, Freemasonry and American Culture - 1880-1930 (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. xi.

¹⁷Greene, et al., Missouri's Black Heritage (Columbia & London: University of Missouri Press, 1993), p. 114.

¹⁸Interview with Alexander Bell by Dana Miller, December 6, 2000.

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the building retains distinctive traits of a traditional German-built property, perhaps most noticeably in the placement of segmental arches over windows and doors, it has been enhanced with Craftsman decorative elements and thus achieves its own unique vernacular form. The German tradition of emphasizing the primary facade while leaving the remaining elevations relatively plain is also demonstrated. Buildings of roughly similar form to the Gensky property are located in Jefferson City's German neighborhoods. These differ from the Gensky building in many ways, however, because they were constructed exclusively for residential use as four-to-six unit apartment buildings. The Gensky Store Building is architecturally unique in Jefferson City.

Brick construction in towns and villages along the Missouri River dates from the earliest periods of German settlement in Missouri. Brick, when affordable, was the building material of choice for most German immigrants, and the abundance of suitable clay deposits along the Missouri River led to increased usage throughout the 19th century. By the 1850s, brick construction had become so common that even minor buildings, such as smokehouses, privies and sheds were constructed of it.¹⁹

The mid-19th century was a time of transition in which German brick masons adopted the vernacular tradition that became known as Missouri-German. Charles van Ravenswaay, one of the best-known scholars of this state's German cultural heritage, notes that:

Very few of the brick buildings in the German towns have a self-conscious or designed look about them but, instead, were built in what might be called a Missouri-German vernacular style. This local building tradition...had its origins in the various German states from which the builders and their clients had emigrated and which they adapted to the needs of their new situation in Missouri.²⁰

Accordingly, the "style" that resulted from this blending of traditional German forms with those of Americans and other Europeans displayed a wide range of characteristics, often reflecting the individual taste of the contractor.

The popularity of the Craftsman style which is also reflected in the Gensky Store Building reached its zenith in the early decades of the 20th century. This style became increasingly common after retailers such as Sears, Roebuck & Company advertised "craftsman packages" in their construction catalogs.²¹ Although some residences (particularly those located north of McCarty Street) were built in the late 19th century, most houses in the vicinity of the Gensky property were built within the first two decades of the 20th century; several of these possess various Craftsman affinities. Most of the Craftsman detailing on the Gensky Store is in the primary facade. Notable elements include cross bracing at the apex of the gable, knee bracing along the gable's perimeter,

¹⁹van Ravenswaay, p. 221.

²⁰van Ravenswaay, p. 225.

²¹Cyril Manton Harris, American Architecture (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), p. 81.

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Cole County, MO

and exposed roof rafters.

Joseph Schmidli Construction

Henry Gensky's father-in-law, Joseph Schmidli, was contracted to construct the Gensky Grocery Store Building during a local economic boom in 1915. The Gensky Store is one of approximately 400 buildings constructed by Schmidli during his career as one of Jefferson City's leading German brick masons. Schmidli was a native of Jefferson City. He was born in his parent's home on south Jefferson Street on January 20, 1870.

Joseph Schmidli's father, Peter Schmidli, was a Swiss-trained wood carver who immigrated from Germany to Boonville, Missouri in 1867. A year later, the family relocated to Jefferson City to work on the construction of the Missouri Governor's Mansion (listed in the National Register of Historic Places, 5/21/69). Peter Schmidli is said to have carved the mansion's famous curved staircase as well as wood elements below the mansard roof. Many buildings along High Street in Jefferson City are still adorned with wood moldings carved by Peter Schmidli.

Joseph Schmidli was similarly talented as a craftsman. At the age of 20, he trained under Miller and Geisler to be a stonemason. Four years later, he learned the bricklaying trade under Fred Buehrle.²² In 1897, due to the increasing usage of cement in the construction industry, he moved to St. Louis to learn what he foresaw as a promising new trade. Schmidli returned to Jefferson City where he is credited with laying the first cement sidewalk. He remained in the masonry industry for the next four decades.

In addition to many residential dwellings, Schmidli is credited with constructing or being involved in the construction of several "landmark" properties in Jefferson City. For example, his masonry skills were employed on both the East and West End International Shoe Factories and on St. Marys Hospital. When brick and stone veneer buildings became popular locally, Schmidli was at the forefront: He claimed to have laid the first brick and rock veneer buildings in Jefferson City. He also supplied the sand, brick and tile for the Missouri Hotel (now known as the Baptist Building).

By 1935, at the age of 65, Schmidli owned his own "cotton rock" and limestone quarries, and had added "trucking" to his list of business enterprises. At about this time he noted Jefferson City's continued expansion and indicated his willingness to continue in the construction profession: "I am not finished or ready to retire," he declared to a reporter. "I will excavate your basement, do your concrete work and brick work...Jefferson City has grown in leaps and bounds and it is still

²²Miller and Geisler were a local stone mason firm. Fred Buehrle was a German immigrant brick mason known for his work on Jefferson City's "Southside."

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growing. There are many changes still coming."²³

ADDITIONAL FAMILY HISTORY

Henry Gensky Sr. immigrated from Bremen, Germany in 1904 when he was 14 years of age. Kord Meyer, an uncle who had arrived in Missouri years earlier, arranged to pay for Gensky's passage. In return, Gensky was expected to help Meyer operate his farm in the Concordia area of Lafayette County. Six months later after an argument with his uncle, Gensky left the farm and traveled to Sedalia in adjacent Pettis County. There, the Fifer family took him in and offered him a job in their restaurant. When the Fifer's moved to Jefferson City in 1907, Gensky came along. In 1915 after several years in the restaurant business, Gensky opened a grocery store (not the nominated building) in the 200 block of Jefferson Street. The market was in one of the storefronts below the Central Hotel. Later that year while delivering groceries, Gensky's horse bolted he was ejected from the wagon, breaking a hip. Because of this injury, Henry was forced to close the Jefferson Street store.

During his convalescence, Gensky rented a room on the city's South Side from his future parent-in-laws, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Schmidli. After recuperating, Gensky was ready to go back into business. In 1916, he opened the H.E. Gensky Grocery Store at 423 Cherry Street, and one year later, he married Stella Schmidli, his store clerk. Together, the Genskys operated their business until his death on July 23, 1937. Mrs. Gensky continued to run the store until 1942, at which time she rented the business to Mr. and Mrs. Glover (Mrs. Glover was Mrs. Gensky's niece), who operated the store until 1946. Later that year, Mr. and Mrs. Ben Anthony reopened the business as the Cherry Street Market, and it remained a grocery store until 1966.

Both Henry Gensky, Jr. and his elder sister Ruth were born in the apartment above the grocery store.²⁴

²³"Veteran Building Contractor Tells of Pioneering Days in That Industry Here," Jefferson City News and Tribune, January 13, 1935.

²⁴Henry Gensky Jr., "H.E. Gensky Grocery," unpublished store history.

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"Veteran Building Contractor Tells of Pioneering Days in That Industry Here," Jefferson City News and Tribune, January 13, 1935.

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Personal Interviews

All interviews by Dana Miller:

Bell, Alexander, current member of Capitol City Lodge No. 9, December 6, 2000.
Gensky, Jr., Henry, son of original owner Henry Gensky, Sr., November 1, 2000.
Johnson, Carl, past master, Capitol City Lodge No. 9, January 4, 2001.
Logan, Kenneth, current secretary, Capitol City Lodge No. 9, December 14, 2000.

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description:

The Gensky Store is part of Inlot No. 649 in Jefferson City, Cole County. Beginning at the property line at the intersection of Cherry and East Miller Streets, proceed northwest along the right-of-way of Cherry Street 40 feet 9 inches; then proceed southeast along the property line 104 feet 4 ½ inches; then proceed southwest along the property line 40 feet 9 inches; then proceed along the right-of-way of East Miller Street 104 feet 4 ½ inches to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The boundary encompasses that portion of Inlot No. 649 that has been historically associated with the H. E. Gensky Grocery Store Building.

11. Form prepared by

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January 5, 2001
Original draft nomination
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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The following information is the same for all photographs, except historic views which were taken by family members:

H.E. Gensky Grocery Store Building
423 Cherry Street
Jefferson City, Missouri
Roger Maserang
March 2000

Negatives: Missouri Cultural Resource Inventory, Historic Preservation Program, Jefferson City, Missouri

Photo 1. Primary (northwest) and southwest elevations, facing east.

Photo 2. Historic view of northwest and southwest elevations, facing east.

Photo 3. Southwest elevation, facing northeast.

Photo 4. Southeast (rear) and northeast elevations, facing southwest.

Photo 5. Detail of front gable, facing southeast.

Photo 6. Lower storefront, facing southeast.

Photo 7. Cornerstone detail, facing north.

Photo 8. Rear door on first floor, facing northwest.

Photo 9. Meeting area in former store room, facing northwest.

Photo 10. Meeting area in former store room, facing southeast.

Photo 11. Historic view of store area, facing southeast, circa 1921.

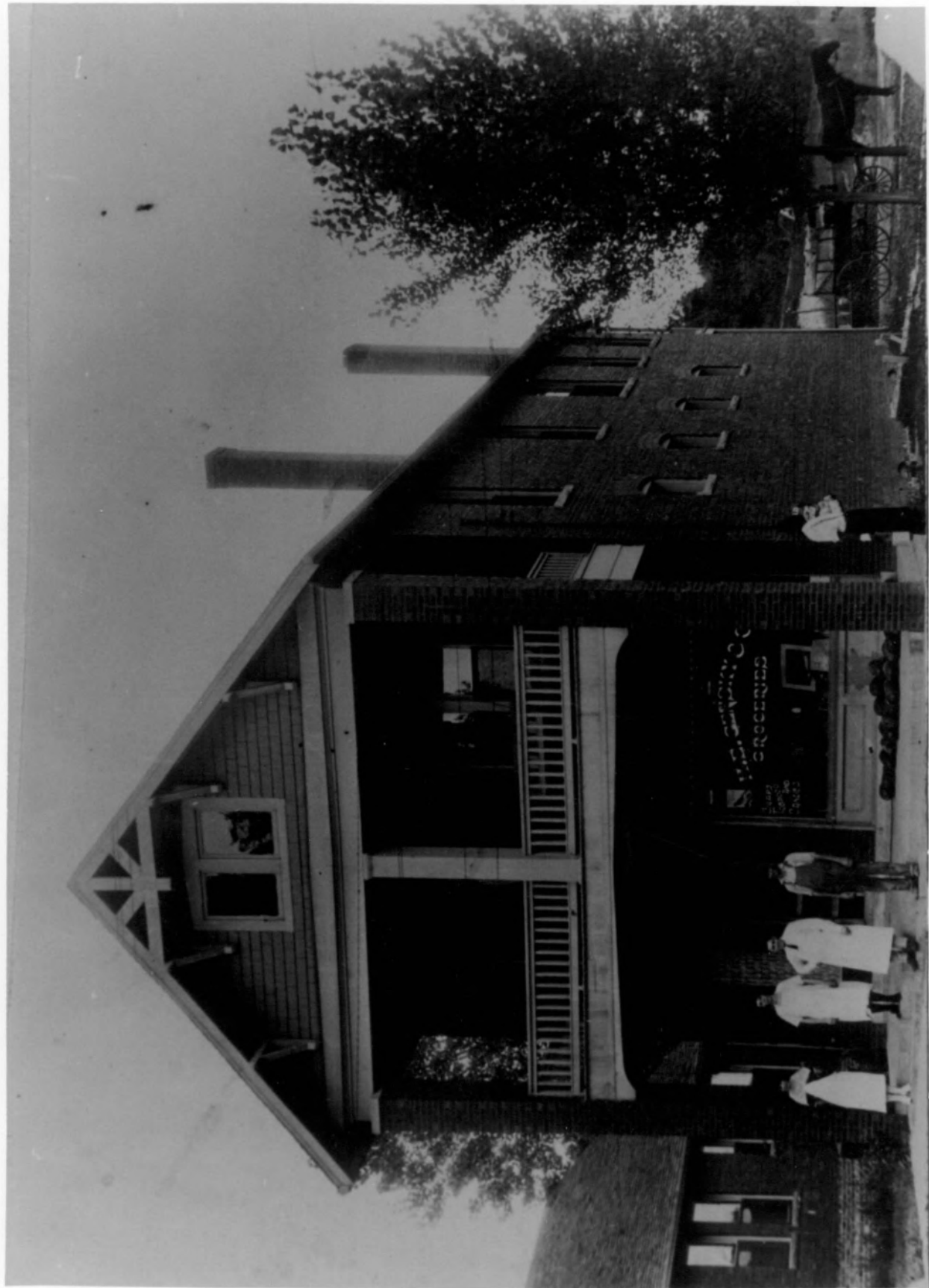
Photo 12. Historic view of store area, facing southeast, circa 1933.

Photo 13. Lodge meeting room, second floor, facing northwest.

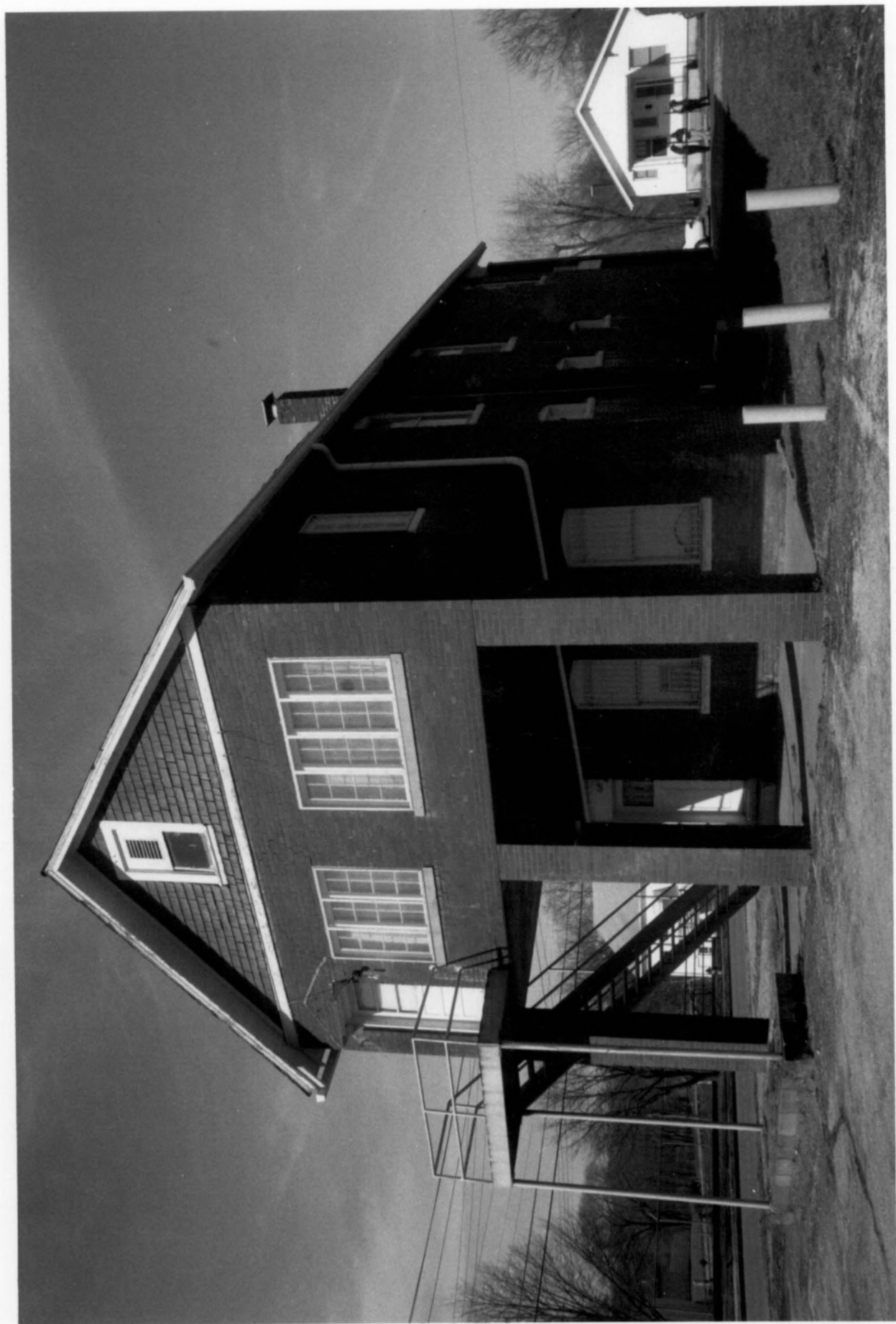
Photo 14. Lounge area in former second floor bedroom, facing north.

Photo 15. Hallway, second floor, facing southeast.













CAPITOL CITY LODGE
No. 9 F. & A. M.



Prince Hall Affiliated
Founded 1866

NO PARKING
IN FRONT OF THIS BUILDING
FOR ANY PURPOSE
EXCEPT AS AUTHORIZED
BY THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
A. J. B. 10-1-66

423



CAPITOL CITY LODGE
NO. 9. F. & A. M.



ORGANIZED 1867
RELAID 1962

THOS. R. NORMAN W.M.
LAID BY MOST

WORSHIPFUL PRINCE
HALL GRAND LODGE

F. & A. M. OF MO.

M. W. W. KIRKPATRICK 33°
GRAND MASTER



