

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

historic name Lentz-Carter Merchandise Store

other name/site number Lentz-Carter Building

street & town 744 Ozark Street N/A not for publication

city or town Stella N/A vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Newton code 145 zip code 64867

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ 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 ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

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

July 2, 2008
Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the
National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.

☐ removed from the National
Register.

☐ other, (explain:) _____

Lentz-Carter Merchandise Store
Name of Property

Newton County, MO
County and State

Ownership of Property

(check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade: Sepcialty Store

Current Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: two-part commercial block

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone
walls Wood-Weatherboard

roof Metal
other _____

Narrative Description

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

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

Lentz-Carter Merchandise Store
Name of Property

Newton County, MO
County and State

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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Major Bibliographical 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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Period of Significance

1890-1940

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other Name of repository: _____

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

Lentz-Carter Merchandise Store
Name of Property

Newton County, MO
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than one

UTM References

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 1/5 3/9/3/5/0/2 4/0/6/8/7/6/5
Zone Easting Northing

2 / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

3 / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

4 / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Property Tax No.

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

☒ See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Charles J. Dalbom and Doris W. Dalbom
organization Owners date 11/27/07
street & number 20768 Reindeer Drive telephone 417-628-3253
city or town Stella state MO zip code 64867

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

name/title Charles J. and Doris Dalbom
street & number 20768 Reindeer Drive telephone 417-628-3253
city or town Stella state MO zip code 64867

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. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

**Lentz-Carter Merchandise Store
Newton County, MO**

Summary

The Lentz-Carter Merchandise Store is located at 744 Ozark Street on the south edge of Stella, Newton County, Missouri. Built in 1890, the rectangular two-story building measures approximately 60x22. It is constructed primarily of oak studs and clapboard siding. The property faces east and shares a party wall with a smaller one-story building to the north. The primary façade originally featured a high tombstone-shaped parapet that can be seen in the mural in the Newton County Courthouse, depicting the early life in Newton County. In 1934¹ the parapet was replaced with a shorter, narrower parapet that echoes the gabled roof save for the clipped top. The lower story features a storefront with a recessed entry that sits on a limestone foundation in a poor state of repair. The storefront appears for the most part unaltered. Large four-pane display windows flank a double-leaf entrance. Below the windows are painted molded panels that extend along the bottom of the storefront. A metal shed-roof awning, historic but not original, extends over the storefront to the buildings to the north. Although there have been minor changes to the fenestration, the Lentz-Carter building largely retains its original appearance and much of its original materials.

Elaboration

Constructed in 1890, the Lentz-Carter building is the oldest building standing in Stella, a small town in the southwestern corner of Missouri. It is located at the south end of Ozark Street, close to Indian Creek, which meanders south of the property. The building sits on a limestone foundation on the corner lot on the north edge of the property. The south edge was intentionally left vacant for displaying farm machinery.

The property was constructed out of two-by-four oak studs and is covered by pine clapboard. The storefront features a recessed entry of double doors flanked by large four-paned display windows. Although the woodwork has been painted, all of the materials of the storefront appear to be original. Decorative pilasters at opposite ends of the storefront are the only feature not visible in historic photos. However, it could be that the pilasters were not painted in the historic photos and thus do not show up. There are two two-over-two double-hung windows on the second story that also appear original to the building. These have been boarded from the inside leaving the windows visible. In historic photographs, a small air-vent to the attic space is centered above these windows. A few of the clapboards are missing in the upper portion of the façade so it is unknown if this air vent was removed or simply lost when the boards fell off. The building is accessed by a raised concrete sidewalk (with the stairs to the south of the building) that extends to the north. It has a pipe hand rail, which connects to the metal awning.

¹ Howard Spiva, citizen of Stella, interview with Charles and Doris Dalbom (original preparers), November 11, 2007.

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**Lentz-Carter Merchandise Store
Newton County, MO**

Historic photographs and the mural in the Newton County Courthouse depict the Lentz-Carter building with a large tombstone-shaped parapet. In 1939 the parapet was narrowed to more closely follow the gable roofline. This change occurred within the period of significance (1890-1940). The windows and remaining clapboard of this area appear unaltered. As mentioned a few portions of the clapboard have fallen away beneath the apex of the clipped parapet. This has left some of the roof beams exposed.

The north side of the building shares a party wall with a smaller one-story commercial block property. The back (west side) of the building has one doorway on the second-story that leads to a modern wooden landing and at one time a stair (this was later torn down due to deterioration). It is assumed this was originally a fire escape, as a two-foot step was needed to reach the door jam in the interior of the building. An attic air vent with a metal grill is the only other feature on this side of the property.

The south side has a door at the rear and three small fixed windows on the first floor. These windows do not appear in historic photos and it is unknown when they were installed. The upper floor has three gabled dormers.

The interior of the building is very plain. The walls and ceiling are covered with beaded board and are unbroken except for two doors on the north wall. The first floor is relatively open with two small rooms in the back. The room to the south has a door leading to the outside. The other small room was converted into a bathroom around 1950². The stairs proceed to a landing in the northwest corner and then turn south to the second floor. What is believed to be the fire escape door is on the rear wall and two feet above the stair treads. Except for a small room next to the stairway, the upper floor is one large room. The north and west walls of this level are windowless. The two windows on the east side are boarded while the three windows on the south side are still open. The upper floor's walls and ceiling are covered with beaded board. The ceiling is down in part of this area exposing the truss structure that supports the roof. The ceiling is eight feet in the center to four feet from each wall where it slopes to the outside wall to a height of six feet.

The roof is a combination of ribbed steel and asphalt shingles. While this is most certainly not the original roof, the historic roofline is maintained.

Although there have been some minor changes such as the metal awning and additional windows on the south side, much of the building remains original. The clapboard, admittedly in need of repair, appears to be the same depicted in historic photos of the business's early years. Likewise the storefront windows and the windows on the east and upper level of the south side also appear original.

² Spiva interview, November 11, 2007.

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**Lentz-Carter Merchandise Store
Newton County, MO**

The building is in dire need of repair. There is a large rod with nut on the south side of the building between the floors to keep the building from collapsing. The owners plan to restore this building to its former historic splendor.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

**Lentz-Carter Merchandise Store
Newton County, MO**

Summary

The Lentz-Carter building, historically called the Lentz-Carter Merchandise Store, is located at 744 Ozark Street in Stella, Newton County, Missouri. Opened in 1890 as a general merchandise store, the Lentz-Carter building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A with local significance in the area of COMMERCE. It is the oldest surviving building in Stella and is considered the first commercial building in the area. J.G. Lentz and James Carter opened the building in 1890 to provide the community with general goods and wares and as a market for the local farmers. In addition to serving as an outlet for essential wares and groceries, the Lentz-Carter Merchandise Store was also important as a location for social gatherings. Like most general stores of its time, locals would congregate in or outside the shop to share the news of the day. The Lentz-Carter building was also utilized as a meeting hall by the community and by organizations. For instance, its upper floor served as a Masonic lodge for over sixty years. It was such an important meeting place in southeastern Newton County that the first telephone in Stella was installed in the building. It played a crucial role in the community for fifty years. The period of significance (1890-1940) reflects the Lentz-Carter Merchandise Store's years of operation.

Elaboration

Stella, Missouri, population 178, is located 17 miles southeast of Neosho in the southeastern part of Newton County. It is located near a group of natural clear springs that form Indian Creek, which winds south and west to Elk River and on to Oklahoma into Grand Lake. It is near this fertile location that Henry Taylor built a log house for himself and his family in the early half of the nineteenth century. Later, the Ezekiel Carter family either bought or traded for this land and property. By 1844 it, and 8,000 acres of land, was acquired by Moses Eagle. By 1856 several other families (including the Lentz family) traveled from Gold Hill, North Carolina to settle in the area.³

Very little is known about this early settlement other than that it was a crossroads community. The buggy trails leading to the Stella area later became Highway O, Highway D, and Highway A.⁴ In addition to its closeness to the trails, it is assumed that the location was desirable because of the proximity of the streams for fishing and fresh water (apparently Stella was known as the "Village of Springs," although when is not certain).⁵

This land was originally owned by the St. Louis and San Francisco Rail Road for possible rail

³ Clanton. *The Story of Stella; Pioneer Town of Newton County, Missouri*, Newton County. :Pogue, 1976 pp. 5-9

⁴ Via maps courtesy of the Stella Historical Society, accessed December 2007.

⁵ Clanton, pp. 5-9

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Lentz-Carter Merchandise Store Newton County, MO

line use. It was never so utilized; thus in 1880 Moses Eagle was able to purchase a portion of the land that would later be known as Stella for \$200. By 1887 Moses Eagle sold it to Crawford Eagle for the amount of \$300 who then sold it for the same amount to James Carter and Calvin Lentz who finally transferred it to the public in 1896.⁶ It is unknown if the land was platted at this time or not.

On March 10, 1884 the post office moved to this small settlement from Kent, two miles to the west.⁷ With a post office now in the village (exactly where it was during this period is unknown), the town was in need of a name. Eagle's granddaughter, Stella, became the source of the name of the post office and by extension the town. Although now named, the settlement was not incorporated as a town until 1930 when the population was recorded at 226. Despite this, there were early commercial trades that supported the local community. In 1890 a blacksmith, a drug store, a mill, and the Lentz-Carter Merchandise Store were built to serve the local population.⁸

James Carter and J.G. Lentz started the mercantile firm on July 5, 1885. They constructed the building and opened the Lentz-Carter store in 1890. The store was a general merchandise store in every sense of word. It provided the local citizens with groceries, farm machinery, household items, hardware, and farm supplies. It has been described as a "...mall of yesteryear."⁹

General stores were the hub of early village life. They served as a center of cohesion in an otherwise spread-out agricultural community. By providing a variety of goods, general stores offered everyday items ranging from clothing and food to hardware to those who would otherwise have to travel to larger settlements to make their purchases. Likewise they were crucial to the farming community. Farmers would often bring their produce to the general store to either sell or trade for other goods. In fact it was not uncommon that general stores extended credit to farmers in exchange for a portion of their produce during harvest time.¹⁰ This relationship (although at times harder on the farmer who could amass debt) did supply a market for the farmer and by extension credit for his own needs while also providing the owner of the general store fresh goods for personal use and marketable products.¹¹ The Lentz-Carter Merchandise Store catered to Stella's farming community via goods but also sold farming equipment. In fact a piece of land to the south was intentionally left vacant for displaying large farm machinery.

The general store was usually one of the first buildings to be constructed in a newly formed settlement especially in crossroad communities like Stella. In the early 1800's these 'stores' were

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Stella Historical Society, *The Story of Stella and More: Pioneer Community of Newton County Missouri: Book Two*, Cassville, Mo. : Litho Printers and Bindery, 1988 p. 8

⁸ Clanton p. 5-10

⁹ Howard Spiva, citizen of Stella, interview with Charles and Doris Dalbom (original preparers), May 2007

¹⁰ Freeman, *The Country Store*, Watkins Glen, NY. :Century House, 1955 p. 14

¹¹ Ibid p. 14

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**Lentz-Carter Merchandise Store
Newton County, MO**

hardly more than crude trading posts, however as time progressed they generally evolved into simple buildings barely distinguishable from a residence save for a banner or sign.¹² By the late 19th century the general store had reached its apex as a one, two, or three-story building often times sporting a false front or large parapet to cover an ordinary gable roof. This not only made the building look bigger at a lower cost but also provided space to boldly write the store's name.¹³ Often times these stores were raised a few feet off the ground so that horse and buggies could pull up directly to them and load and unload their cargo without having to unload and lift from the ground.¹⁴ The two-story Lentz-Carter building, with its large parapet and raised sidewalk, is a shining example of these practices.

The Lentz-Carter Merchandise Store was the first building built solely for commercial purposes but was quickly joined by other trades. As stated, by 1890 there was a blacksmith, a bank, a mill, and a drug store. Not long after, there was also a bank, hardware store, an undertaker, a livery stable, a tree nursery, two hotels, a photographic studio, and a buggy shop.¹⁵

Possibly, there was competition. By 1910 the Shepherd and Lentz Store offered a place for customers to trade their goods. It is unknown if this was the same Lentz that co-owned the Lentz-Carter General Merchandise Store, however the Shepherd and Lentz store appears to have dealt in general goods that could have attracted customers away from the Lentz-Carter Merchandise Store. Another business that may have offered similar goods at this time was Atkinson and Carter who sold ladies dresses, groceries, and men's clothing.¹⁶

By the 1920's, although still not incorporated, Stella had progressed to a bustling small community. Automobiles were popular in the village by this time and two garages were operating to provide customers with brand new vehicles. One of these was owned by J.C. Bowers and Bill Collings who operated a Ford dealership in the early 1920s. Medical services also expanded. A doctor's office was in the upper floors of the bank building not far from the Lentz-Carter building. Across the street from the new office, Dr. C. C. Cardwell opened a hospital in 1920. By 1931 it had a capacity of 10 beds. It closed in 1972, by which time it had grown to 50 beds and employed 112 people.¹⁷

In the 1920's to the late 1930's the Lentz-Carter building was utilized by the community primarily as a commercial center; however it also served as a gathering place for locals and organizations. The upper floor was used by the Masonic Lodge of Stella as a meeting hall. The Mason's meetings were scheduled on Saturday nights at 7:30 PM on or before the full moon.

¹² Ibid p. 10

¹³ Ibid p. 37

¹⁴ Atherton, *Main Street on the Middle Border*, Bloomington. : Indiana University Press, 1954 p. 44

¹⁵ Clanton p. 9-11

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid p. 10

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**Lentz-Carter Merchandise Store
Newton County, MO**

This was to accommodate members who traveled from outside of town, some as far away as Powell (about ten and a half miles from Stella), who needed the moonlight to navigate. The meetings generally took place in the spring, winter, and fall as the second story of the building was too poorly ventilated to comfortably endure the heat of a Missouri summer.¹⁸ Although it is uncertain exactly when the Mason's first used the upper floors of the building (most likely in the 1910s or 1920s), it was utilized by the fraternal organization up to the 1970s.¹⁹

Another reason locals may have congregated at the Lentz-Carter building was that the first telephone in Stella was installed in this location. According to the August 31, 1899 Newton County News, "The hustling little town of Stella is jubilant over the completion of her telephone line to Neosho. It is a great convenience...Jas. Carter informs us that great care will be necessary to prevent injury to the instrument which has been placed in the Lentz-Carter building."

Having served the community for over fifty years the Lentz-Carter General Merchandise Store closed its doors in 1940. Shortly after (in the 1940s), the building was reused as a dry goods and shoe store on the lower floor while the Masonic Lodge continued to utilize the upper floor for thirty or more years.²⁰

Stella, as a center of commerce, began to decline as automobiles and highways were improved. Larger communities that were served by rail lines could provide the goods consumers needed and also presented a greater variety. During this decline (late 1940s and onward) the Lentz-Carter building has been used by the community as a religious facility, a school for mentally challenged children, and a flea market. It has recently been purchased by Charles and Doris Dalbom who plan to restore the building that once was a social centerpiece of Stella's commercial downtown.

¹⁸ Ibid p. 59

¹⁹ Charles and Doris Dalbom, local citizens, interview with Michelle Diedrich (editing), April 14, 2008

²⁰ Ibid

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**Lentz-Carter Merchandise Store
Newton County, MO**

Sources:

Atherton, Lewis. *Main Street on the Middle Border*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1954.

Clanton, Blanche P. *The Story of Stella; Pioneer Town of Newton County, Missouri*. Newton County, Pogue, 1976.

Clymer, Ada Fern, interviewed by Charles and Doris Dalbom, April 2007.

Cullers, Phyllis, interviewed by Charles and Doris Dalbom, July 2007.

Dalbom, Charles and Doris, interviewed by Michelle Diedrich, April 2008.

Fidelity Abstract, information on Lentz-Carter building owners, Neosho MO, accessed June 2007.

Freeman, Larry. *The Country Store*. Watkins Glen, NY, Century House, 1955.

Hart, Robert, interviewed by Charles and Doris Dalbom, June 2007.

James, Larry, interviewed by Charles and Doris Dalbom, May 2007

Newton County Courthouse, property description of the Lentz Carter Merchandise Store, accessed October 2007.

Shipley, Sybil Jobe, *A History of Newton County, Missouri: As Portrayed in the Courthouse Mural*. Newton County, Newton County Historical Society, 1998.

Spiva, Howard, interviewed by Charles and Doris Dalbom, May 2007, November 2007.

Stella Historical Society, *The Story of Stella and More: Pioneer Community of Newton County Missouri: Book Two*, Cassville, MO: Litho Printers and Bindery, 1988.

Stewart, Billie, interviewed by Charles and Doris Dalbom, October 2007.

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**Lentz-Carter Merchandise Store
Newton County, MO**

Photographs:

The following is true for all photographs:

Lentz-Carter Building
744 Ozark Street
Stella, Newton County, Missouri

Date: March, May, and July of 2007

Disc included

- #1 Front façade and south exterior, photographer facing northwest.
Photographer: David Weems July 5, 2007
- #2 Rear and side elevation, photographer facing northeast.
Photographer: Deb Sheals March 2008
- #3 Detail of storefront, photographer facing north.
Photographer: Deb Sheals March 2008
- #4 Interior upper floor, photographer facing east.
Photographer: Deb Sheals March 2008
- #5 Photograph of mural from the Newton County Courthouse
Photographer: Chuck Dalbom May 2007
- #6 Undated photograph of the Lentz Carter building, most likely early 1900's. Scanned from Clanton's 1976, *The Story of Stella; Pioneer Town of Newton County, Missouri*. P.8

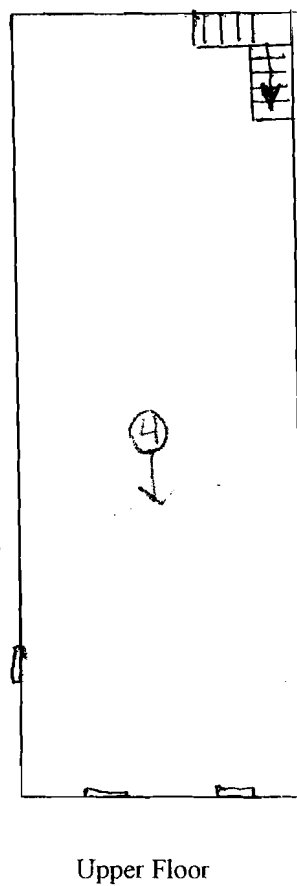
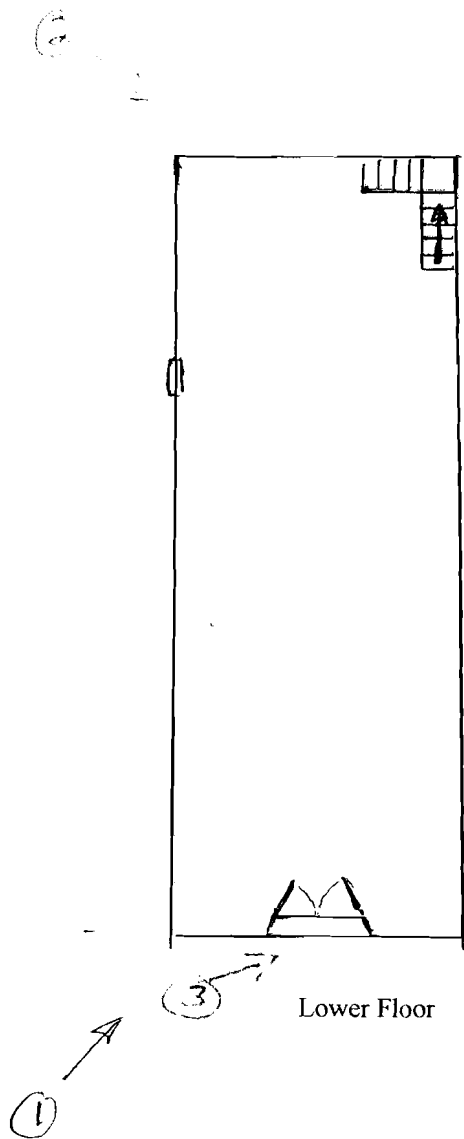
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**Lentz-Carter Merchandise Store
Newton County, MO**

Photograph Location:



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Section number 10,11 Page 11

**Lentz-Carter Merchandise Store
Newton County, MO**

Verbal Boundary Description:

Parcel #23-9.0-32-001-012-009.000

Stella, Newton County, MO

Section 32 Town 24 Range 30 Acres 0.00

Pt SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Beginning SE Corner of Lot 1 Block 1 Stella SW 102' to point of beginning SW 30'

Westerly 77'NE52'SE 94 to point of beginning

Verbal Boundary Justification:

The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Lentz-Carter Building.

Form Prepared By:

Charles and Doris Dalbom

20768 Reindeer Drive

Stella MO 64867

417-628-3253

November 27, 2007

Original preparers

Michelle Diedrich

State Historic Preservation Office

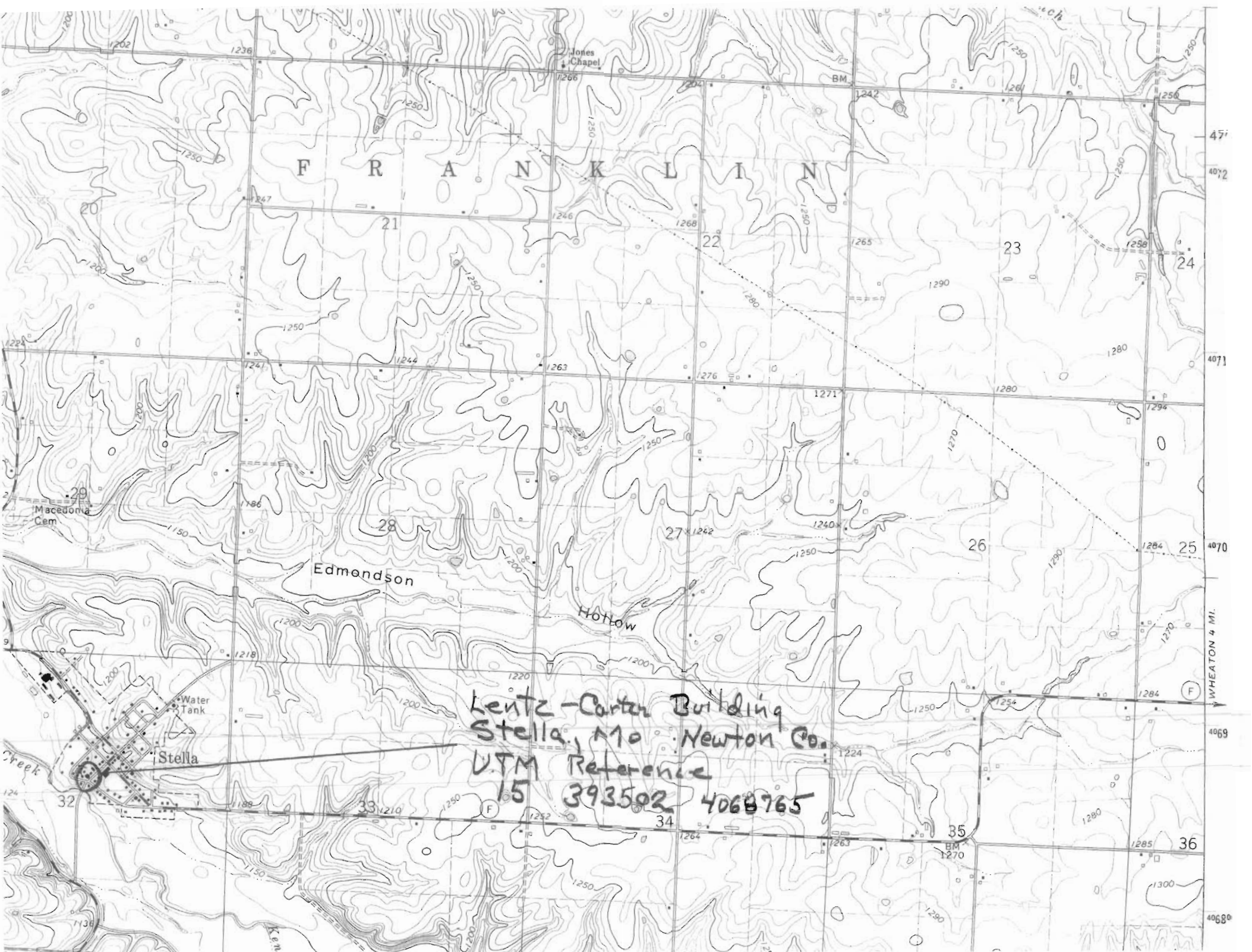
P.O. Box 176

Jefferson City MO 65102

573-526-1680

April 13, 2008

Additional research and editing





LOST TREASURES















Lentz and Carter General Merchandise