

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections**1. Name**

historic Minor, Charles, House

and/or common The Minor House

**2. Location**

street &amp; number 314 North Spring \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Independence \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of

state Missouri code 29 county Jackson code 095

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name Mrs. Robert DeTray

street &amp; number 308 North Spring

city, town Independence \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state Missouri 64050

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder of Deeds

street &amp; number Jackson County Courthouse

city, town Independence \_\_\_\_\_ state Missouri 64050

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**title Missouri State Historical Survey has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_\_\_ yes ☒ nodate 1983 \_\_\_\_\_ federal ☒ state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ localMissouri Department of Natural Resources  
depository for survey records P.O. Box 176

city, town Jefferson City, \_\_\_\_\_ state Missouri 65102

## 7. Description

### Condition

☒ excellent  
☐ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved      date \_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Minor House is a detached house, rectangular in plan, which faces east from its lot on North Spring Street, two blocks from the historic courthouse square of Independence, Missouri, home of former President Harry S Truman. An eclectic mixture of the Italianate, Second Empire and Stick styles, the house is a wood frame structure resting on a brick foundation, three chimneys, a basement, two stories and an attic. The house is capped by a mansard type roof of composition shingles which is broken by dormers, facing north, south and east. The house has a very good quality Eastlake style interior.

The Minor House was built in 1885. In 1900, architect John Van Brunt was engaged to make some minor repair and remodeling changes which did not significantly alter the original structure.

The original structure had no front porch. The small front door was a chubby hole sized stair going straight up to the second floor level. An "L" shaped porch was built across the front and down the south side to a door into the family or back sitting room. Double front doors which have leaded and etched opaque glass panels with a transom above were added. To the left of these doors is a large window, the upper half of which is matched to the door panels. The stairway in the front hall was redesigned wider, with a graceful curved landing at the third step level and another landing at the mid-point. At the mid-way landing is a stained glass leaded window.

The floor in the front hall is of hardwood parquet blocks with an outstanding Greek scroll design achieved with three shades of hardwood inlay. The chandelier, of brass, with original glass globes, gas-converted-to-electricity, still has the two chains for regulating the gas flame. The chandeliers in the parlor, library, and family sitting room are like the one in the front hall. All lighting fixtures throughout the house with the exception of the one in the dining room are the original ones. Two doors opening off the hall, one to the parlor and one to the family sitting room have unique wood doorknobs of an unusual design. The parlor to the right of the front hall has a carved plaster ceiling design around the center hung chandelier. The fireplace has a walnut mantel-piece in a decorative but simple design made to match the woodwork of the hall. An insert and hearth apron of green and brown marbelized ceramic tile fit around a coal burning unit with a practical but decorative cast iron brass front cover.

Behind the parlor is the library or music room. There is a built-in closet with shelves to one side. To the right of the library is the family sitting room; connecting the two rooms is a double-width sliding door which moves into the space between the walls, making the two rooms into one ideally suited for dancing and parties, especially so since these rooms lead into the large dining room.

The family sitting room has a door into the front hall as well as another onto the south side-front porch. The fireplace in this room is of black marble with a smaller coal burning unit fitted into it. The woodwork in this front part of the house is all matched and has the same decorative treatment, blocks of carved wood design inset into each window and door frame. The dining room,

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behind the library and sitting room, spans the entire width of the house, north to south. The floor in this room is also of hardwood parquet block design with a border. There is tongue and grooved paneling set vertically to chair-rail height, with paper over plaster walls above. A built-in china cupboard set flush with the wall has double tongue and grooved doors above with six smaller drawers in two vertical rows of three each. The chandelier is electric and was installed at a later date. It has crystal prisms right in the back wall of the dining room opens to the short back hall. The right side of this hall was partitioned off to make a half bath downstairs. A door from the left of this hall leads into the kitchen. There is a section of tongue and grooved doored cupboards on one wall. A large coal burning enamel range was used here. From the kitchen to the right, behind the short hall is a small butler's pantry, beyond which is the stairway to the basement. From the kitchen to the right behind the pantry is a long back wall, and following the corner of the structure, is the narrow back stairs with a sharp turn at the corner, leading to the servants' quarters above.

A door from the left of the kitchen opens onto the "L" shaped screened south or back porch. Originally this was a short straight porch with a cistern at the end. Mr. Van Brunt redid the porch which now covers the old cistern, which is thought to have been filled in. An outside cellar door at the back northwest corner of the house opens into what was the old coal bin.

Going downstairs from the front entry hall; the upstairs landing hall was partitioned off into a sewing room with two windows by Mr. Van Brunt. This was the only structural change made on the second floor.

There is a long central hall with three bedrooms and a full size bathroom. The bathroom was modernized but no structural changes were made here. The light fixtures in the bedrooms and the hall are the original gas-converted-to-electric wall sconces. The floors are of wider planks than the downstairs. They appear to be of white pine under the present finish.

At the back or west end of the central hall is a large room corresponding in size to the dining room below. This no doubt was planned and used by the first owner of the house for a nursery and classroom for the children. Each upstairs room has a built-in closet. A door the right of the back wall of the nursery opens onto the back up-stairs hall. On the right of this hall following the corner of the building is the back stairs down to the kitchen. The servants' bathroom is at the end of the short hall. An old, deep, round bottomed tin tub enclosed in a tongue and grooved frame stood there.

A door off the hall to the left opened into the servants' quarters, a large room to be used as a sitting-sleeping room. Each room in the house now has a steam radiator with a boiler in the basement. There are no fireplaces on this floor. Inside two closets are flue openings, for which research indicates two uses: 1) access for cleaning the chimneys, and 2) with closet doors open, stove pipes for heaters set well out into the room and were set into the flues

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for winter heat. These were removed and stored with the heaters for the summer season.

A straight up stairway in one of the upstairs closets gives access to the attic. There is one large room over the front of the house with three double-windowed dormers facing north, east and south. The attic seems to have been used only for storage, although original plans may have been for additional servants' quarters here.

A ladder from the attic to a trap door gives access to the flat central roof. The windows throughout the house are narrow and tall, almost to the floor, typical of architecture of this period.

Behind the house is a barn structure of small, plain, but utilitarian design. It housed the family carriage on the south side, with double doors front and back. Two stalls remain where the carriage horses were housed on the north side. A tack room and space for tool storage was in the center with a straight up stairway to the hayloft above. The floor is in an advanced state of decay but can easily be replaced.

## 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	<input type="checkbox"/> 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 type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1885

Builder/Architect

John Van Brunt

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Social/Humanitarian: The Minor House is important in the history of Independence because of its architecture, because it is nearly 100 years old and is practically unaltered, and because the two Minor sisters who lived for eighty years were grand-daughters of the first mayor of Independence, William McCoy. McCoy Park was named by the city for the first mayor, and is located just two blocks north of the Minor House. The Minor sisters were close friends of the Truman family and of many other prominent Independence and nationally known persons. The house was on the Independence Historical Survey in 1976, also the 10th annual Homes Tour of the Independence Junior Service League on May 10, 1980. It has been written about in several locally published articles in the newspapers. Also it is significant because of the fact that the ground on which it stands was originally the property of Samuel Weston, pioneer blacksmith, and is now owned by a great-great-grand-daughter of Samuel Weston, Mrs. Robert DeTray, who has restored the home to preserve it from being destroyed by developmental interests.

The Minor sisters as has been mentioned, came from a distinguished Independence family. Their grandfather was William McCoy. He and his brother, John, came to Independence in 1838 from Chillicothe, Ohio, flipping a coin to see whether they went to St. Joseph or Independence. William McCoy opened a dry goods store outfitting the wagons going west from Independence, which was the starting point of the Santa Fe, California, and Oregon Trails. In 1849 Independence was incorporated and McCoy was elected the first mayor. He found after a year that he was not interested in politics and resumed his business career.

William McCoy opened a bank around the time of the Civil War. The bank was organized by William McCoy and Preston Roberts and was known as the "McCoy Bank". This was located on West Lexington next to the Chrisman-Sawyer bank. In 1850 William McCoy married Ellen Waddle of Chillicothe, Ohio. He built for her the big brick house which still stands at 410 West Farmer, 1/2 block north of the Minor House. Two children were born to William McCoy and Ellen Waddle, Nancy (Nannie) and Allen. Nannie married Charles L. Minor in 1883. From this union two daughters were born, Eleanor and Grace, who lived in the Minor home for eight years until the death of Miss Eleanor Minor in 1982, when the home was purchased by a next door neighbor, Mrs. Robert DeTray.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Minor acquired the home in 1900. Mrs. Minor was the former Nancy M. McCoy, daughter of William McCoy, an early Independence business man and the first mayor when the town was incorporated in 1849. The Harry S Trumans were often entertained in the Minor home by the Minor sisters. The Minor sisters were guests of the Trumans at the White House during the time Mr. Truman was president. When President Truman died, they were escorted to his funeral by Washington dignitaries.

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The Misses Eleanor and Grace Minor were contemporaries and close friends of Mrs. Harry S Truman, the former Miss Bess Wallace. The Minor sisters grew up with and moved in the same social circles as Bess Wallace. Another prominent guest entertained here who was a close friend was Blevins Davis of Glendale Farm and New York City. He was a theatrical producer known in theatrical and social circles of both the east and west coasts as well as Europe, a patron of the arts, and a friend of the Trumans as well. The Minor sisters were acquaintances of the Vanderbilts of New York and were entertained at the same dinners and parties when they were in New York. They traveled extensively and often in Europe, the Orient, South America and Mexico.

Final Comment: Because of the relationship of the Minor sisters to the Truman family, because of its unique architecture which has been carefully preserved to this day and carefully restored, and because of interest shown in the house by various historical groups through the years, it would seem fitting and proper that the Minor House be given serious consideration in regard to the National Register of Historic Places.

Architecture: The house possesses the following significant architectural features:

- \* Elongated Fenestration
- \* Original Hardware
- \* Leaded and etched opaque glass panels on double front doors with a matching transom above.
- \* Newell post in entry hall.
- \* Double entrance door.
- \* Fireplace has walnut mantel-piece.
- \* Interior and exterior trim.
- \* Hardwood parquet block floor in entrance hall with an outstanding Greek scroll design achieved with three shades of hardwood inlay.
- \* Brass chandeliers with original glass globes, gas-converted-to-electricity.
- \* All lighting fixtures with the exception of the one in the dining room are original.
- \* Unique wood door knobs.
- \* Carved plaster ceiling.
- \* Fireplace has an insert and hearth apron of green and brown marbelized ceramic tile fit around a coal burning unit with a cast iron/brass front cover.

All of these surviving features combine to make the Minor House an important representative of the Victorian era in Independence--a town richly blessed with architecture of this period including the Wallace-Truman House--home of President and Mrs. Harry S Truman.

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1. Newspaper clippings and articles.
2. Taped interview with Miss Grace Minor.
3. Abstract of property.
4. Weston Family history.
5. Weston Family bible.
6. McCoy Family pedigree charts.
7. Personal interviews with individuals residing locally.
8. Letter written by Mrs. Emory H. Wright, wife of Judge Wright, of Blue Springs, Missouri.
9. Notes written by Miss Grace Minor on July 6, 1983 and given to Mrs. Robert DeTray.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

(see attached)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Independence

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

1	5	3	7	7	2	2	0	4	3	2	8	0	0	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B 

Zone			Easting					Northing						

C 

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D 

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G 

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H 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

(See attached)

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

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title 1. Mrs. Dorothy M. DeTray

organization

date September 1983

street & number 308 North Spring

telephone

city or town Independence

state Missouri 64050

## 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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Fred A. Lyman*

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

date 1/18/84

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



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Beginning at 419 feet south of the northeast corner of lot 41 annexed part to the town of Independence, a subdivision of Independence, Jackson County, Missouri, thence west to westside of said lot, thence south along the western side of said lot, 61 feet, thence east to eastern line of said lot, thence north 61 feet to place of beginning excepting 16 and 1/2 feet off west end thereof reserved for an alley; also excepting the western 105 feet of the north 61 feet of the south 224 and 1/2 feet of said lot.

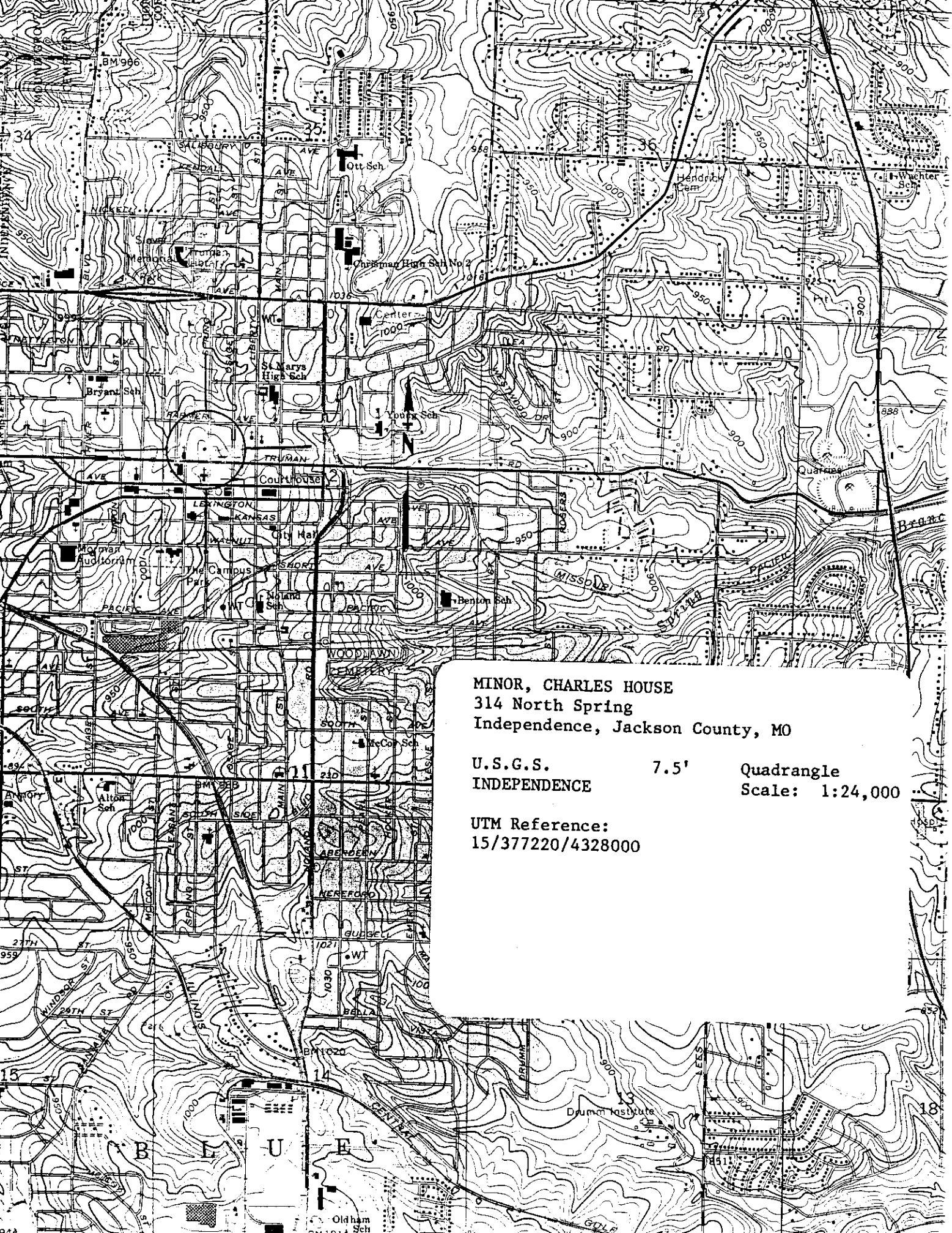
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2. James M. Denny, Chief Survey-Nomination and  
State Contact Person  
Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
Historic Preservation Program  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City,

September, 1983  
314/751-4096

Missouri 65102



MINOR, CHARLES HOUSE  
314 North Spring  
Independence, Jackson County, MO

U.S.G.S.  
INDEPENDENCE

7.5'

Quadrangle  
Scale: 1:24,000

UTM Reference:  
15/377220/4328000

**Photo Log:**

Name of Property: **Minor, Charles, House**

City or Vicinity: **Independence**

County: **Jackson County** State: **MO**

Photographer: **C. Douglass DeTray**

Date

Photographed: **Sept. 1983**

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 9. E façade. Looking SW.
- 2 of 9. S façade. Looking N.
- 3 of 9. S façade. Looking NE.
- 4 of 9. W façade. Looking SE.
- 5 of 9. Front entrance hall. Looking E.
- 6 of 9. Entrance door detail. Looking E.
- 7 of 9. Living room. Looking NW.
- 8 of 9. Living room. Looking SW.
- 9 of 9. Parlor. Looking SW.



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