

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.

1. Name of Property

historic name Parnell, Samuel T. and Mary B., House

other name/site number Mt. Branson Lodge

2. Location

street & town 220 Angels Trail N/A not for publication

city or town Branson X vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Taney code 213 zip code 65616

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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 MARCH 07, 2008  
Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO 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

4. National Park Service Certification

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:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Parnell, Samuel T. and Mary B., House  
Name of Property

Taney County, MO  
County and State

## 5. Classification

### 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	
2	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2	1	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

0

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC/ Secondary Structure

### Current Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ Multiple Dwelling

DOMESTIC/ Secondary Structure

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movements:

Bungalow/Craftsman

OTHER/ Ozark Rock Masonry

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation

walls

Stone

roof

Asphalt

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

Parnell, Samuel T. and Mary B., House  
Name of Property

Taney County, MO  
County and State

## 8. Description

### 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.)

## 9. 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)

Architecture

### Period of Significance

ca. 1912

### Significant Dates

ca. 1912

### Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Unknown

☒ 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

Parnell, Samuel T. and Mary B., House  
Name of Property

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County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 5.86

### UTM References

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

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

2 1 1/1/1/1/1 1/1/1/1/1  
Zone Easting Northing

3 1 1/1/1/1/1 1/1/1/1/1  
Zone Easting Northing

4 1 1/1/1/1/1 1/1/1/1/1  
Zone Easting Northing

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Mount Branson - Bungalow Addition Blocks 1 through 5; vacated Poplar, Cedar, and Elm Streets; vacated Parnell and Bluff Parks, in unincorporated Taney County, plat map E-10, in the records of the Taney County Recorder's Office, Forsythe, Missouri.

Property Tax No. 17-2.0-04-001-002-001.00

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries incorporate all of the property that has been historically associated with this building and the property's legal description

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

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Dr. Sherry Piland, Architectural Historian  
organization Private Consultant date August 23, 2007  
street & number 2132 Regency Place telephone (417) 890-9779  
city or town Springfield state MO zip code 65804

## 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 Dr. and Mrs. Carlos Tomelleri  
street & number 4602 S. Biloxi Ave. telephone (417) 882-6161  
city or town Springfield state MO zip code 65804

**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 Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.



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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Parnell, Samuel T. and Mary B., House  
Taney County, Missouri

The Samuel T. and Mary B. Parnell House, 220 Angels Trail, in unincorporated Taney County, Missouri, is a well-preserved example of a Craftsman style house constructed of native Ozark rock. It is less than a mile from the northern city limits of Hollister, Missouri, and directly across Lake Taneycomo from Branson on Mt. Branson. The property of slightly less than 6 acres extends approximately 1400 feet along the north side of Highway 76 and approximately 275 feet along Lakeshore Drive. The two-story house, built c. 1912, has a dramatic setting overlooking Lake Taneycomo and the town of Branson. It is sited at the western end of the irregularly shaped property. The main elevation of the two-story house faces west. The house is basically rectangular in shape and is constructed of irregular rubble courses of native stone. The main facade of the house is dominated by a partial-width, two-story porch, supported by massive, battered stone piers. The gable roof of the porch is placed slightly below the roof of the house and intersects with that roof. All the windows in the house have concrete sills. With few exceptions, the windows are one-over-one light, double hung, with wooden sash. Rudimentary voussoirs created by stones placed in a vertical pattern are located over all the doors and windows. The exterior of the house retains integrity, reflecting its ca. 1912 design, materials and setting. Several alterations have occurred to the interior over the years, however, most of those alterations could be reversed. The original floor plan appears to have been changed very little.

Also located on the property are a contributing one-story, rock and wood frame garage of the approximate date of the house; a non-contributing frame and stucco, one story residence; the remnants of a stone cistern; a patio area; and stone garden terracing and steps.

### SETTING

The property is accessed from Angel's Trail, on the north side of Highway 76. Angels Trail is a dirt lane that leads briefly north into the property and turns west to lead to the house at the western edge of the parcel. The house sits at an elevation of approximately 800 feet. It is positioned close to the edge of a bluff, so there is virtually no front yard. In fact, looking down from the porches on the west elevation, one can see the roadway of Lakeshore Drive hugging the base of the cliff, one hundred feet below. Another one hundred feet below Lakeshore Drive is Lake Taneycomo. The approximate eastern half of the property remains wooded with dense underbrush. Vacant parcels and commercial and residential structures are to the north and south of the subject property. Commercial property is to the east.

### ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

There are three small projections from the principal rectangular mass of the house (a secondary entrance porch on the south elevation, a potting shed at the east end of the north elevation, and a well house at the east end of the south elevation). The walls of the house, approximately eighteen inches thick, encompass a variety of native stones, including sandstone, limestone, and

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Parnell, Samuel T. and Mary B., House  
Taney County, Missouri

dolomite. Interspersed among the rubble are split stone slabs. Some of the rocks, especially in the porch piers, are placed to project at irregular intervals, in essence creating small ledges. A thin layer of unworked, beige-colored mortar holds the stone courses together. The house has a complex roof with gables and gablets that intersect a hip roof. The roof is covered with composition shingles. The wide, unenclosed eave overhang reveals exposed roof rafters. Although the house has a partial basement, there is no visible foundation.

### West Facade

The first floor porch is accessed at both the north and south ends by a series of concrete risers. The first floor of the porch has a concrete floor and a knee wall of stone. Weathered, irregular stones are placed vertically along the top of the knee wall, effectively preventing it from being used for seating. The ceiling of the first floor porch is wood. A French door provides access to the first floor from the porch. A window at the north end of the west façade has been in-filled.

Access to the second floor porch is from a walled, concrete stairway on the north side of the main (west) façade. The second story porch has a wood floor and a balustrade with flat wood balusters. A king truss is located in the gable end of the porch. The gable is enclosed on the interior side. The second floor entrance door has an upper panel of three vertical lights with a square glass light in the lower panel.

### South Elevation

Originally, a stone stoop with a shallow shed roof, supported by knee braces, was located on the south elevation. The shed roof sheltered a secondary entrance to the house. French doors separated by a stone pier opened into the first floor living room and into the kitchen. Sometime before 1964, the stoop was enclosed and the shed roof was extended. The French door of the porch is offset to the east. Wooden casement windows are located to the west of the door and on the east wall of the porch. The porch has a stone knee wall. A break in the knee wall indicates that a door may also have been located on the west elevation of the porch at some point in time.

Pairs of sash windows are located to the east and west of the porch. The windows to the west provide light to the living room. The windows to the east provide light to the kitchen. An additional kitchen window is located east of the paired windows.

Paired windows on the second story are placed above those on the first story. In addition, at the eastern end of the south elevation, second story, is a group of three sash windows.

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Parnell, Samuel T. and Mary B., House  
Taney County, Missouri

Projecting at the southeast corner of the house is a well house with stone walls and shed roof covered with composition shingles. The well house is likely a later addition to the house. Another well has been identified on the eastern half of the property.

### North Elevation

The dominant feature of the north elevation is an exterior stone chimney. The uppermost layers of stones that comprise the chimney are placed in a vertical position, giving the chimney a rustic, crenelated appearance. The chimney serves a fireplace on the second floor. The first floor fireplace is no longer extant. A window to the east of the chimney on the first story has been enclosed. A paired, multipane casement window is located to the west of the chimney on the first story. East of the chimney the wall steps back about one foot. Beyond this step back, on the first story, is a single, sash window.

The windows flanking the chimney on the second story have been in-filled. To the east of the step back is a pair of sash windows. At the easternmost end of this north wall is a group of three sash windows.

A potting shed projects from the north elevation. Entry doors on both the east and west elevations of the shed have glass panels in the upper portions. The floor is composed simply from the stone of the top of the bluff. The shed has a composition shingle, gable roof.

### East Elevation

The only window on the first story of the east elevation is a four-light, wood sash window, hinged at the top. This window is at the north end of the rear (east) elevation and provides natural light to the basement. What was once a sleeping porch on the second story of this elevation has been enclosed with two groups of four sash windows, separated by a stone pier.

### Interior

The Parnell House has a simple interior, without notable architectural embellishment. The wood baseboards, door and window surrounds are simple. The first floor consists of an L-shaped kitchen, a living room, a bedroom, and a bath. The living room has built-in shelving on one wall. The second floor consists of a living room with a stone fireplace, two bedrooms, a bath/dressing room, and a combined sitting room/kitchen (originally a sleeping porch).

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Parnell, Samuel T. and Mary B., House  
Taney County, Missouri

A partial basement at the northeast corner of the house is accessed from the kitchen. The floor of the basement is actually the top of the cliff on which the house is sited. Remarkably, the rock basement floor is located about two feet above the floor of the kitchen, so one actually steps up into the basement.

### Integrity/Alterations

The exterior of the building is remarkably intact. The exterior modifications that have been made are for the most part reversible. For example, the few windows that have been in-filled retain their original surrounds. The major exterior alterations consist of:

1. In-filling of the westernmost window on the first floor of the north elevation, and of both windows flanking the chimney on the second story of this elevation (date unknown)
2. In-filling of the window on the south end of the west façade, second floor, which would have provided light to the interior of the stairway (after 1964).
3. Creation of an enclosed porch on the south elevation by adding walls to a stoop and extending the roof (before 1964).

The use of the structure first as a residence, later as a lodge, and then again as a residence, over a span of almost 100 years, has necessitated a number of alterations and modernizations, especially in the kitchens and bathrooms. However, the floor plan appears to have changed very little. The major interior alterations consist of:

1. The enclosure of an interior stairway at the southwest corner. While the interior stairway could be reopened, unfortunately the balustrade is no longer extant (after 1964).
2. Enclosure of the first floor fireplace with finished concrete (before 1946)
3. A pergola on the west façade, shown on one historic photograph, is no longer extant.

### Landscape Features

A number of stone walkways, low rock walls, and terraced areas embellish the grounds to the east and to the south of the house. The walls and walkways have slightly curving patterns, enhancing their natural appearance. The stone walls of a cistern are located to the east of the house. The cistern is no longer in use and appears to have been filled in.

A patio is located just south of the house and is defined by a low rock wall. The patio floor consists of stone slabs. A low, rock storage structure and a rock barbeque grill are located on the east edge of the patio.

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Taney County, Missouri

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### Garage

A contributing garage is located to the southeast of the house. The garage is rectangular in shape, with a gable roof of composition shingles. A pair of hinged, swinging garage doors are located on the north elevation. Because it sits on a site that slopes to the south, it is taller at the south end than the north end. The lower portion of the walls are of stone and are unfinished on the interior. The upper portion of the walls consists of vertical boards. A wooden sash window is located on the west elevation. Similar windows on the south and east elevations are covered over.

### Noncontributing Residence

A noncontributing, single story residence is located to the east of the primary residence. This frame and stucco structure is in disrepair. It was probably built in the mid-1920s when the property saw use as a lodge. It has been altered and enlarged.

### CONCLUSION

The Parnell House retains its overall integrity of design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The modifications that have occurred do not substantially affect the property's ability to convey its sense of time and place.

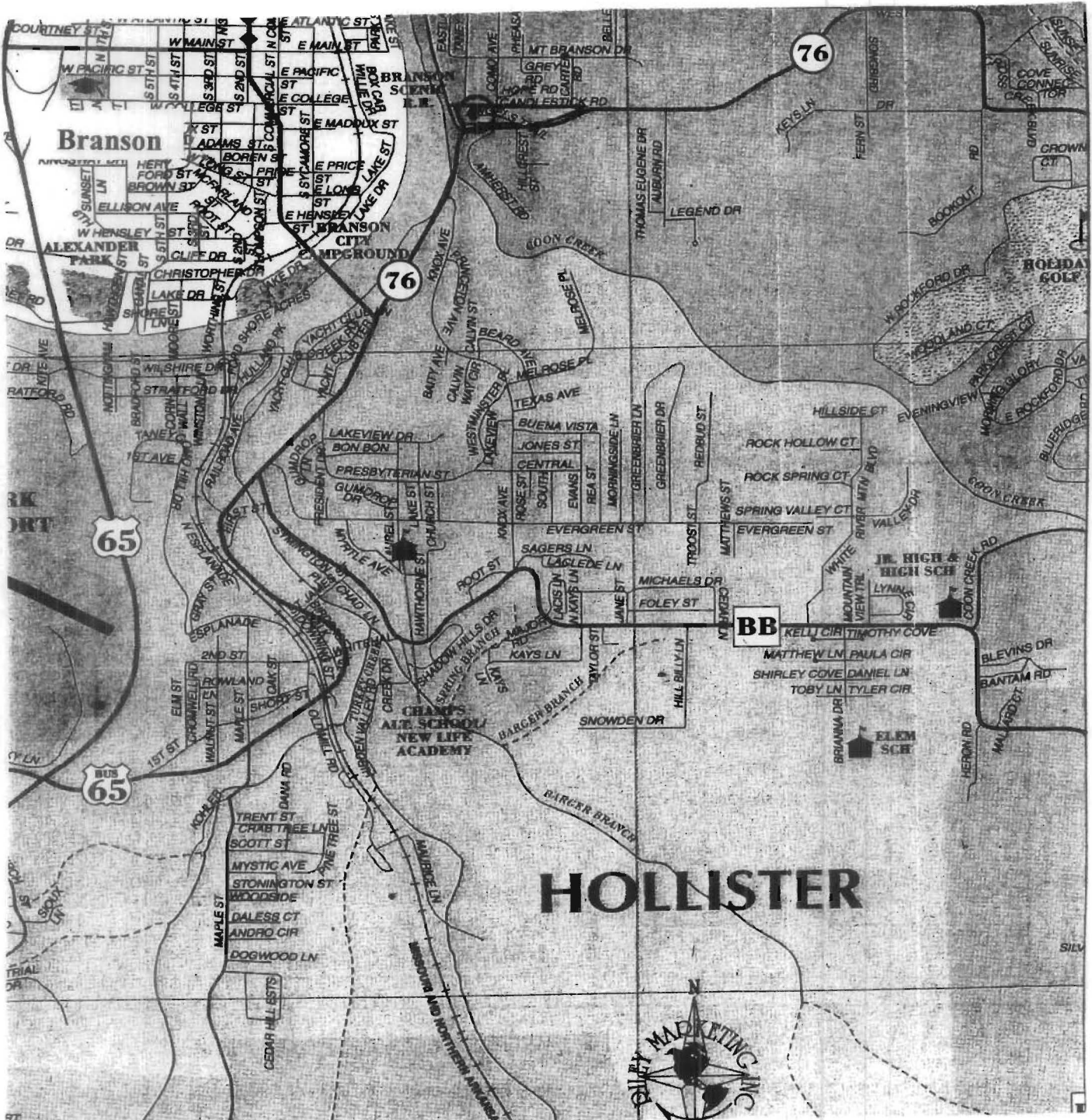
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Parnell, Samuel T. and Mary B., House  
Taney County, Missouri

### Property Location

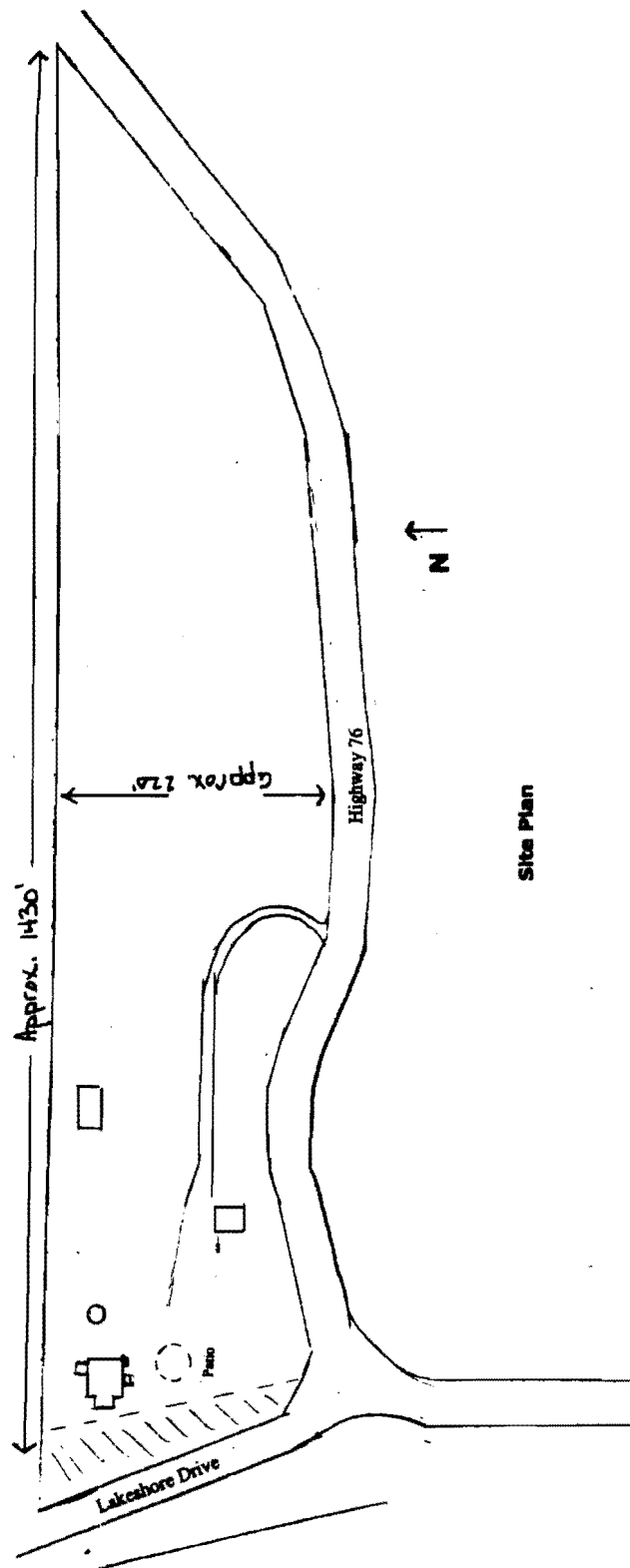


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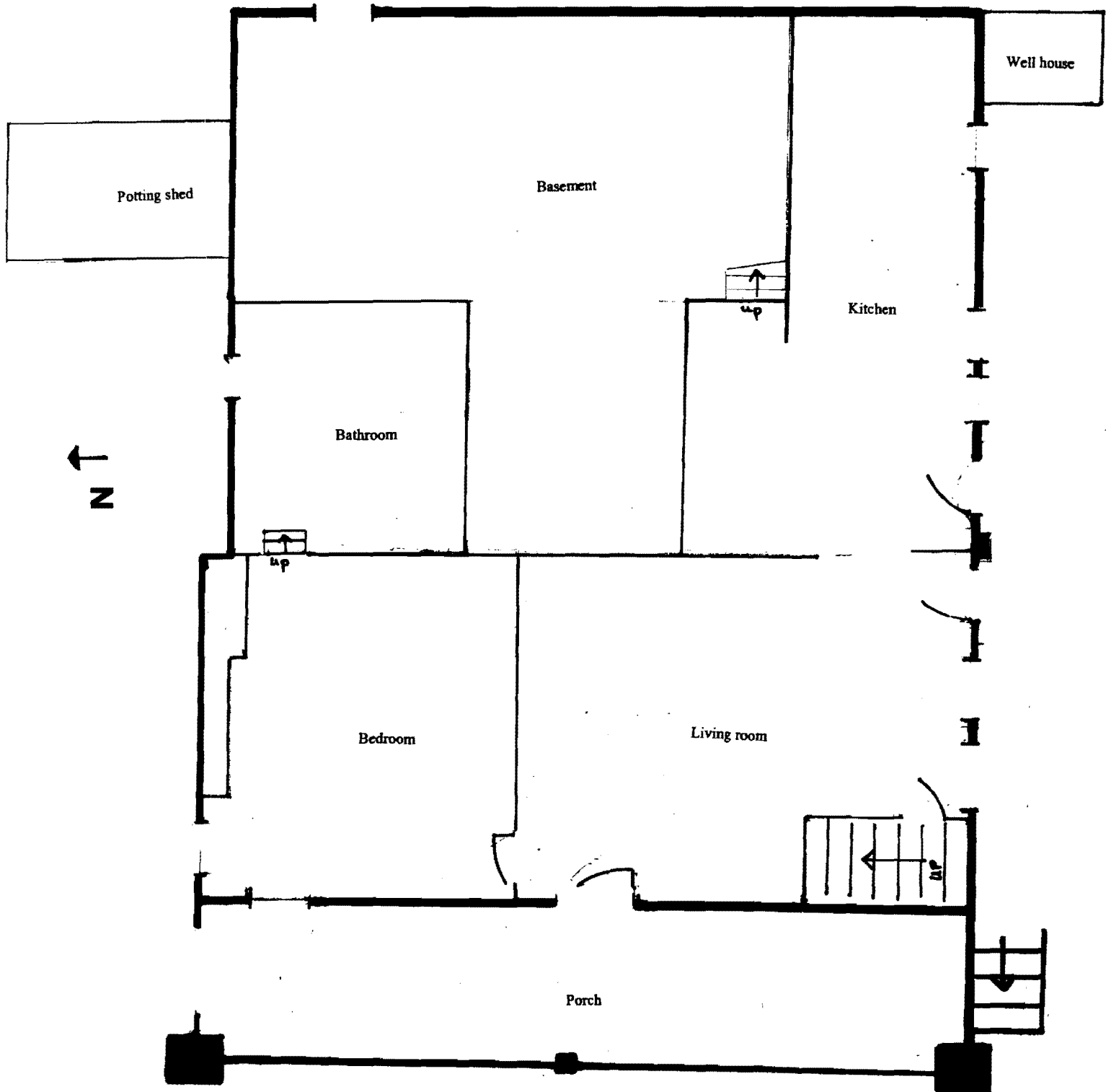


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Taney County, Missouri



### First Floor Plan

**Bar Scale = 4 feet**

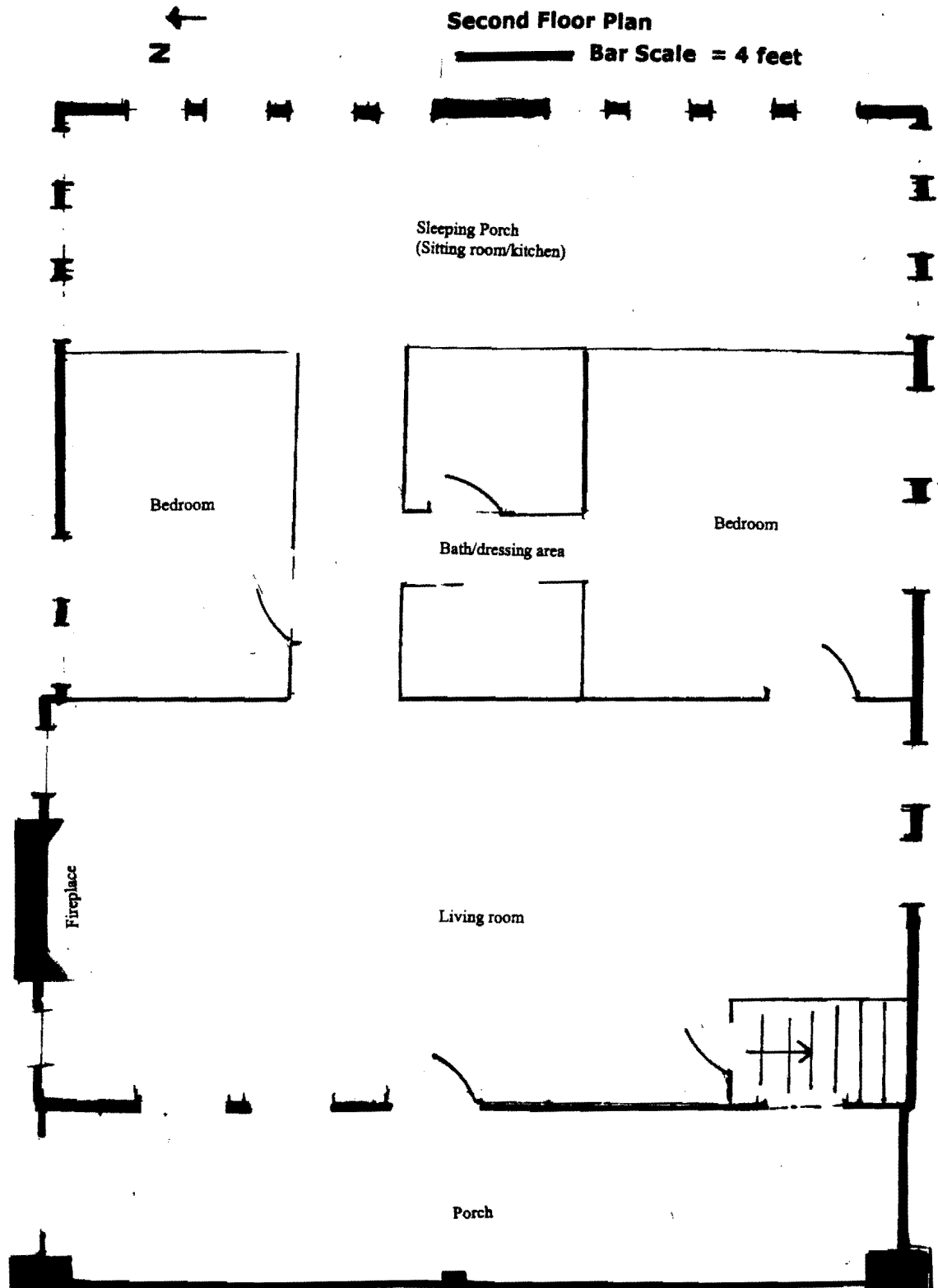


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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Parnell, Samuel T. and Mary B., House  
Taney County, Missouri

The Samuel T. and Mary B. Parnell House, 220 Angels Trail, in unincorporated Taney County, near Branson, Missouri, meets National Register Criterion C in the area of ARCHITECTURE. Constructed c. 1912, the two-story house is significant at the local level as an important example Ozark rock masonry construction with Craftsman stylistic elements. In addition, the house reflects the aesthetic of rustic architecture that was popular in the development of resort architecture in the Branson area. Samuel Parnell positioned himself to take advantage of the evolution of Branson into a popular tourist destination. He became a Branson merchant in 1907, the year after railroad service came to the town and spurred its growth. This house was constructed for Parnell c. 1912, the year preceding the completion of the construction of the Powersite Dam. The dam and the resulting Lake Taneycomo were instrumental in securing continuing tourist interest in Branson. The period of significance of the house is c. 1912, the date of construction.

### Ozark Rock Masonry

Ozark rock masonry is a vernacular form found with frequency in the Ozark region. Vernacular is a term used to characterize buildings crafted without the assistance of a trained architect. Instead, the building forms were transmitted by memory or pattern books, constructed by builders who used traditional building techniques, and utilized locally available construction materials. The primary concern was to provide economical, functional and comfortable spaces for the owners. Vernacular buildings often reflect a local adaptation to the landscape, climate, and cultural patterns. The earliest vernacular structures in Missouri were of log construction. However, the use of native stone also had an important place in traditional building in the area. Ozark rock masonry utilizes a readily available building material – the stone that often is literally only inches below the top soil, the stone that forms the river bluffs, and the stone that is found in the stream beds. The rocks are not finished in the tradition of quarried stone blocks. Ozark rock masonry generally falls into two categories: rubble construction and split slab construction. Rubble construction is the oldest type of Ozark rock masonry and in the nineteenth-century was frequently used for foundations and for chimneys. However, by the early twentieth-century, rock masonry in the form of rubble stone was being used for the entire building. Split slab masonry uses larger slabs of sandstone which have been split to form thin sheets of stone that are generally less than three inches thick but that have a larger surface area than the rocks used in rubble construction. Split slab construction was not widely used until the 1930s.<sup>1</sup>

The Parnell House, an outstanding example of this traditional use of local materials, was probably constructed by skilled builders who likely learned their craft by working with other builders. The identity of the builder(s) of the Parnell House is not known.<sup>2</sup> The use of rubble stone in the Parnell

<sup>1</sup>Debbi Sheals. "Survey of Ozark Rock Masonry in Springfield." Documentation on file with the Planning Department, City of Springfield, Missouri. Survey undertaken 2004-2005.

<sup>2</sup>Lynn Morrow and Robert Flanders. "An analytical and Evaluative Survey of Taney County, Mo." Center for Ozark Studies: Southwest Missouri State University, 1985. On file with the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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House at once establishes an organic relationship with its surroundings. The house appears to grow out of the bluff on which it is sited for there is no visible foundation. The bluff is actually incorporated into the construction of the building with the top of the bluff forming the floor of the basement. The rock itself became the decorative feature of the house, removing it from other expressions that relied heavily on applied ornament or decorative woodwork. Two-story, Ozark rock masonry residences, like the Parnell House, are less common than the one or one-and-a-half-story variations, adding to the uniqueness of the residence. The use of rustic stone for ledges, walkways, and the cistern walls further visually ties the house to its setting.

### Craftsman Architecture

The Craftsman style had its origins in the English Arts and Crafts movement and was based on dissatisfaction with industrialism and a desire to return to a simple, good life embodied by higher aesthetic qualities in objects of everyday use.<sup>3</sup> Gustav Stickley, an American furniture maker, found inspiration in the ideas of the Arts and Crafts movement. He visited England in early 1903, where he very possibly attended the 7<sup>th</sup> exhibition of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society.<sup>4</sup> From 1901 to 1916, Stickley published The Craftsman magazine.<sup>5</sup> Through this publication, he began to explore architecture that would complement his interior decorative motifs. The "Craftsman House" became a regular feature in the magazine by 1904. Popular magazines, such as Good Housekeeping and House Beautiful, also helped popularize the style, which became the dominant residential fashion in the early twentieth-century. Craftsman stylistic elements, such as a gentle roof slope; wide eaves; exposed rafters, broad, open porches; simple interior detailing; the use of built-in elements such as cabinets and shelves; and an open, simple, interior plan are present in the Parnell house. Additionally, at one time, the Parnell House had a pergola extending from the porch. The use of a pergola to extend the lines of a house and to create the visual interest of light and shadow is another hallmark of the Craftsman style.<sup>6</sup>

Stickley advocated locating a home "in some place where there is peace and quiet, plenty of room and the chance to establish a sense of intimate relationship with the hills and valley, trees and brooks and all the things which tend to lessen the strain and worry of modern life by reminding us

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Linda Myers-Phinney and David Quick, "An Overview and Survey of Lake Taneycomo Towns and Resorts, Phase II." Missouri Department of Natural Resources and the Center for Business Research, Southwest Missouri State University, 1991. On file with the Missouri State Office of Historic Preservation. Morrow and Flanders feel that professional assistance would have been sought for the construction of stone architecture and they identify a group of houses built in Taney County by Hube Holliday and his brothers in the 1920s and 1940s. Myers-Phinney and Quick note the work of Jerry Butterfield in Hollister. Butterfield, a landscape architect who work for the railroad, was responsible for many of the rock landscape features in Hollister.

<sup>3</sup>W. R. Curtis, Modern Architecture Since 1900, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1987), 48.

<sup>4</sup>Karen Livingstone and Linda Parry, International Arts and Crafts (London: V & A Publications, 2005), 156.

<sup>5</sup>Curtis, 56.

<sup>6</sup>Renee Kahn, "The Perennial Pergola," Old House Journal 12 (April 1984): 53 and 64-67.

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Taney County, Missouri

that after all we are one with Nature.”<sup>7</sup> No better description of the Parnell House could be expressed. Stickley also advocated planning the house so that it harmonizes with its natural surroundings and of using local material whenever possible.<sup>8</sup>

### Tourism and the Rustic Design Aesthetic

A 1991 survey of the towns and resorts of the Lake Taneycomo area emphasized the “picturesque” quality of the architecture<sup>9</sup>. The “picturesque” movement was popularized in England in the eighteenth century. It emphasized irregularity, asymmetry, and dramatic compositional arrangements. It found its greatest expression in the English garden and in a reawakening of interest in medieval and Gothic architectural forms. The “picturesque” concept of building in harmony with nature gained popularity in the United States through the writings of Andrew Jackson Downing during the mid-nineteenth century. In his Cottage Residences (1842) and Architecture of Country Houses (1850), Downing advocated designs based on English cottages architecture.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps a stronger, or alternative, argument could be made for the reflection of ideological values through the expression of the “rustic” as it appeared in the resort architecture around the lake.

The “rustic” movement in architecture became popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries, and was based on a nostalgia for the past, historic building forms (such as log construction), the use of natural materials, the principles of the Arts and Crafts movement, and a desire for harmony with the landscape. Unlike Downing’s “picturesque” concepts based on historical styles of the past, “rustic” architecture looked more to the pioneer heritage of the United States. Rustic architecture was especially associated with wilderness tourist destinations. It appeared in New York’s Adirondack Mountains in the 1870s and was seen in park architecture after 1900. By 1916, it was the popular presentation for buildings in the National Park System.<sup>11</sup>

A significant development of tourism in the remote Ozark region was not feasible until adequate transportation became available. Passenger service to Branson began in 1906. Almost coinciding with the arrival of rail service was the publication, in 1907, of Harold Bell Wright’s epic novel of the Ozarks, The Shepard of the Hills. This immensely popular book had sold more than 500,000 copies by 1934. The book spurred national fascination with the Ozark region. By 1910, visitors were traveling to the Branson area specifically to visit the locations described by Wright and to

<sup>7</sup>Gustav Stickley, Craftsman Homes (New York: Craftsman Publishing Company, 1909; repr., Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1979), 198.

<sup>8</sup>Stickley, 113.

<sup>9</sup>Myers-Phinney and Quick, 1991, 35-39.

<sup>10</sup>Marvin Trachtenberg and Isabelle Hyman, Architecture from Prehistory to Post Modernism (B.V., The Netherlands: Harry N. Abrams, 1986), 398-399, David P. Handlin, The American Home, Architecture and Society 1815-1915 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), 36-40.

<sup>11</sup>Merrill Ann Wilson, “Rustic Architecture: The National Park Style,” Trends (July-September 1976): 4-5.

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experience the natural beauty of the area.<sup>12</sup> As tourism in the area continued to grow with the formation of Lake Taneycomo, resort developers began to create an architecture that would serve as an attraction in itself. Often that architecture had a distinctive rustic quality featuring either log or stone construction. In Hollister, stone architecture based on an English village concept found popularity in the downtown area. A number of the nearby residential structures were bungalows crafted of stone.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, the earliest resort buildings along the Branson water front featured the use of round logs. The log house was an important Ozark vernacular form and was the house type used by Wright in describing the lives of his fictional Shepard of the Hills characters.

### Historic Context

Taney County was organized in 1837, and was named for U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Taney. The town of Forsyth was selected as the county seat. The county is located approximately 220 miles southwest of St. Louis. Taney County encompasses 660 square miles and borders Arkansas on the south, Christian and Douglas counties on the north, Ozark County on the east, and Stone County on the west. The topography consists of heavy woods, numerous creeks and streams, abundant limestone, and large uplifts of stone.<sup>14</sup> The first settlements in Taney County were established along the White River in the mid-1820s. The river originates in the Boston Mountains in northwest Arkansas, and then flows northward into southwest Missouri before turning back into Arkansas and eventually flowing southeast to join the Mississippi River. Bluffs along the river rise from 200 to 500 feet, often at the water's edge. Even though the White River frequently doubled back upon itself, it was the major transportation route for people and goods into this remote area of the Ozarks which had no railroads and only primitive roads.<sup>15</sup> The Springfield-Harrison Road traversed Taney County and was used as a freight road to move goods between Springfield, Missouri, and Harrison, Arkansas.

In 1882, Ruben Branson opened a post office in the general store at the mouth of Bull Creek, near present-day Rockaway Beach. The following year he moved to the Roark Creek area of White River (just north of present day Branson) on the west wide of the river and again opened a post office, that he named Branson. Settlement on the east side of the river was hampered by steep bluffs in this area. In 1901, a rail line through Branson was organized as the White River Railway

<sup>12</sup> Lawrence V. Tagg, Harold Bell Wright, Storyteller to America (Tucson: Westernlore Press, 1986), 27, 54, and 118.

<sup>13</sup> Myers-Phinney and Quick also argue that a hierarchy of social status and function is seen in the location of resorts and residences, with the highest status of both designated by location that afforded grand vistas over the lake. The Parnell House is included in their "Survey of Lake Taneycomo Beach Towns and Resorts," as Site No. 187, but little information on the structure is provided. However, the "Overview" notes its prominent location on Mount Branson and the use of large vertical stones in the arches over openings.

<sup>14</sup> Howard L. Conard, editor, Encyclopedia of the History of Missouri (New York: Southern History Company, 1901), vol. VI, 151-152.

<sup>15</sup> Walter B. Stevens, Missouri: The Center State 1821-1915 (Chicago, S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1915), vol. 1, 113.

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Company. In 1903, it was sold to the St. Louis Iron Mountain and Southern Railway Company and subsequently reorganized as the White River Iron Mountain Railway Company. Charles Fulbright was the immigration agent for the railroad, with the responsibility to bring new people and businesses to sites along the rail line. As president of the Branson Town Company, he was responsible for purchasing enough land to file a plat for the Town of Branson. This was accomplished in 1903 and in January of 1906, railroad passenger service began in Branson. The presence of a railroad spurred the growth of the town. The population was 600 in 1908. Roads in the area remained rudimentary, so river traffic connecting to rail lines remained an essential transportation option.

A major boost to the community was the construction of Powersite Dam on the White River two miles upstream from Forsythe. Construction began in 1911 and was completed in 1913. The impounded lake, named Taneycomo, began to create an influx of tourists to enjoy recreation on the water. Although the dam was constructed to bring electric power to Springfield and Joplin, Branson eventually received electricity in 1916.<sup>16</sup> Beginning in 1916, federal money was allotted to Missouri to construct rural roads for mail delivery. Simultaneously, automobile ownership in the state was growing and creating a demand for improved roadways. A bond issue in 1920 funded the construction of roads.<sup>17</sup> The improvement in roads facilitated the growth of Branson and the Lake Taneycomo area as tourist destinations.

### Samuel T. and Mary B. Parnell

Samuel Parnell was one of the fourteen children of James Madison Parnell. J. M. Parnell (1848-1918) was born in Arkansas. He married Sarah Springer in 1869, and the couple farmed near Lowry, Arkansas, for 25 years. In 1894, Parnell moved his family to Kirbyville, Missouri, where he continued to farm. Kirbyville was on the Harrison-Springfield road and therefore, a reasonable place to establish a business. With the assistance of two of his sons, Benjamin Albert (known as Albert) and Samuel, J. M. Parnell opened a general store in Kirbyville.<sup>18</sup> James Parnell's wife, Sarah, died in 1906. That year, his sons bought him out of the Kirbyville store. While living in Kirbyville, Samuel and his wife, Mary, lost six children below the age of five, stark evidence of the difficulties of life in this remote area of the Ozarks.<sup>19</sup> The Parnell brothers opened a second mercantile store in Branson in 1907, known as the "Parnell Brothers Store." They were counting on the railroad that began operating in Branson the previous year to bring visitors and goods more effectively than by the Springfield-Harrison Road. In fact, the railroad led to Kirbyville's decline. As a result, in 1911, the Parnell brothers disposed of the Kirbyville store. The following year,

<sup>16</sup> Albers and Stacey, 44 and 46.

<sup>17</sup> Duane Meyer, The Heritage of Missouri (St. Louis: State Publishing Company, 1963), 601.

<sup>18</sup> Todd Parnell, Postcards From Branson (Springfield: PFLP Publishing, 2006), 20-25.

<sup>19</sup> Lee and Betty Brown, transcribers, "Van Zandt Cemetery, Kirbyville, Missouri," White River Valley Historical Quarterly 6 (Spring 1977): 15-16.

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their Branson store burned when the fledgling business district of Branson suffered a major fire that consumed 21 businesses. Undeterred, the brothers built a new store and opened for business again in January 1913.<sup>20</sup> That store still stands in downtown Branson, with the name "Parnell Brothers" in a stone panel above the entrance.

The land on which the Parnell house stands was acquired by Samuel A. Coggburn in 1902 as a land patent from the federal government. Coggburn, in turn, sold the land to Samuel T. Parnell in 1912, and the house was probably constructed that year, making it possible for Parnell to be closer to his business interests in Branson.<sup>21</sup> Handily, that same year, the Main Street Bridge was erected, spanning the lake from the eastern terminus of Main Street to the eastern shore of the lake, at the base of the bluff on which the Parnell House was sited.<sup>22</sup>

Samuel Parnell became an active participant in the civic life of Branson. Samuel and his brothers Albert and Dave, in 1912, were instrumental in having Branson incorporated as a 4<sup>th</sup> class city.<sup>23</sup> In 1914, a committee of men from Springfield and the Branson/Hollister area met to consider the best route for a road between the communities. One of the participants was Samuel Parnell. In 1916, Albert Parnell bought out Samuel's interest in the Branson store.<sup>24</sup> In 1916, Samuel Parnell had the subject property platted as the Mount Branson-Bungalow Addition. He was likely hoping to benefit from the tourist interest in the area that had followed the completion of the Powersite Dam and the creation of Lake Taneycomo in 1913. As platted, the parcel would have been divided into numerous lots of various shape and size (many as narrow as twenty-five feet), with a park at the base of the bluff to be known as Bluff Park, and a park along a portion of the north side of today's Highway 76, to be known as Parnell Park. Two streets would have run north/south within the plat, and another would have bisected the plat from east to west.<sup>25</sup> The subdivision never developed, perhaps because of the uncertainties brought on by the entry of the United States into World War I in 1917. By 1925, Samuel Parnell and his wife were living in Ottawa County, Oklahoma. The following year, Mary Parnell was a widow and had returned to Taney County.

Ownership of the subject property over the ensuing years is unclear. Apparently it changed hands within the Parnell family several times. The property was purchased in 1925 by Laura Shinn. She had been the proprietor of a tourist establishment, Camp Yocum, at Galena, Missouri. Still interested in benefiting from the tourist trade, Shinn planned to convert the "beautiful Sam Parnell residence" into a resort hotel and add numerous cottages to the premises.<sup>26</sup> How long the house was used as a lodge or hotel is unknown.

<sup>20</sup>Parnell, 25.

<sup>21</sup> Taney County Land Sales, Taney County Plat Book (Springfield: Greene County Archives, Bulletin 1948).

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Jo Stacey Albers, 17 August 2007.

<sup>23</sup> Albers and Stacey, 47-49.

<sup>24</sup> Albers and Stacey, 179.

<sup>25</sup> Plat for Bungalow Addition to Mount Branson, Plat Map E10, Taney County Recorder's Office, 1916.

<sup>26</sup> "Stone Building on Mount Branson to be Resort Hotel," White River Leader, 10 December 1925.

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Elmer P. and Iva Claudia Rose sold the Parnell House to Percy and Regina Howard in 1946.<sup>27</sup> Howard was an accountant and Regina was the City Clerk in Branson.<sup>28</sup> Dr. Margaret Jones, the widow of Dr. J. L. Jones, sold the property to the family of the current owner in 1964.<sup>29</sup>

### Conclusion

The rustic quality of the Craftsman architectural style of the Parnell House coupled with its incomparable setting, distinguish the Parnell House as a unique feature of the Taney County landscape. Development pressures are increasingly grave in the Branson area. Many of the surrounding hills have been cleared of their trees, the tops have been leveled, and highways have been blasted through the rock substructure, effectively reconfiguring the historic landscape. A number of historic structures, such as the Branson City Park and the Sammy Lane Resort, both listed in the National Register of Historic Places, have fallen before the onslaught of development. Properties such as the Parnell House are increasingly important in their ability to convey an authenticity of the historic past that is becoming increasingly scarce for the thousands of tourists who visit the area. The historic and architectural significance of the Parnell House, with its unique and prominent setting and its clear visibility from the new Branson Landing and Branson Convention Center, is a resource that conveys a unique and compelling glimpse into the past.

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<sup>27</sup>Taney County Recorder's Office, Deed Book 124, p. 71.

<sup>28</sup>Interview with Virginia Howard Johnson, 14 August 2007.

<sup>29</sup>Taney County Recorder's Office, Deed Book 168, p. 171.



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The following is true for all photos:

Parnell, Samuel T. and Mary B., House

Taney County, Missouri

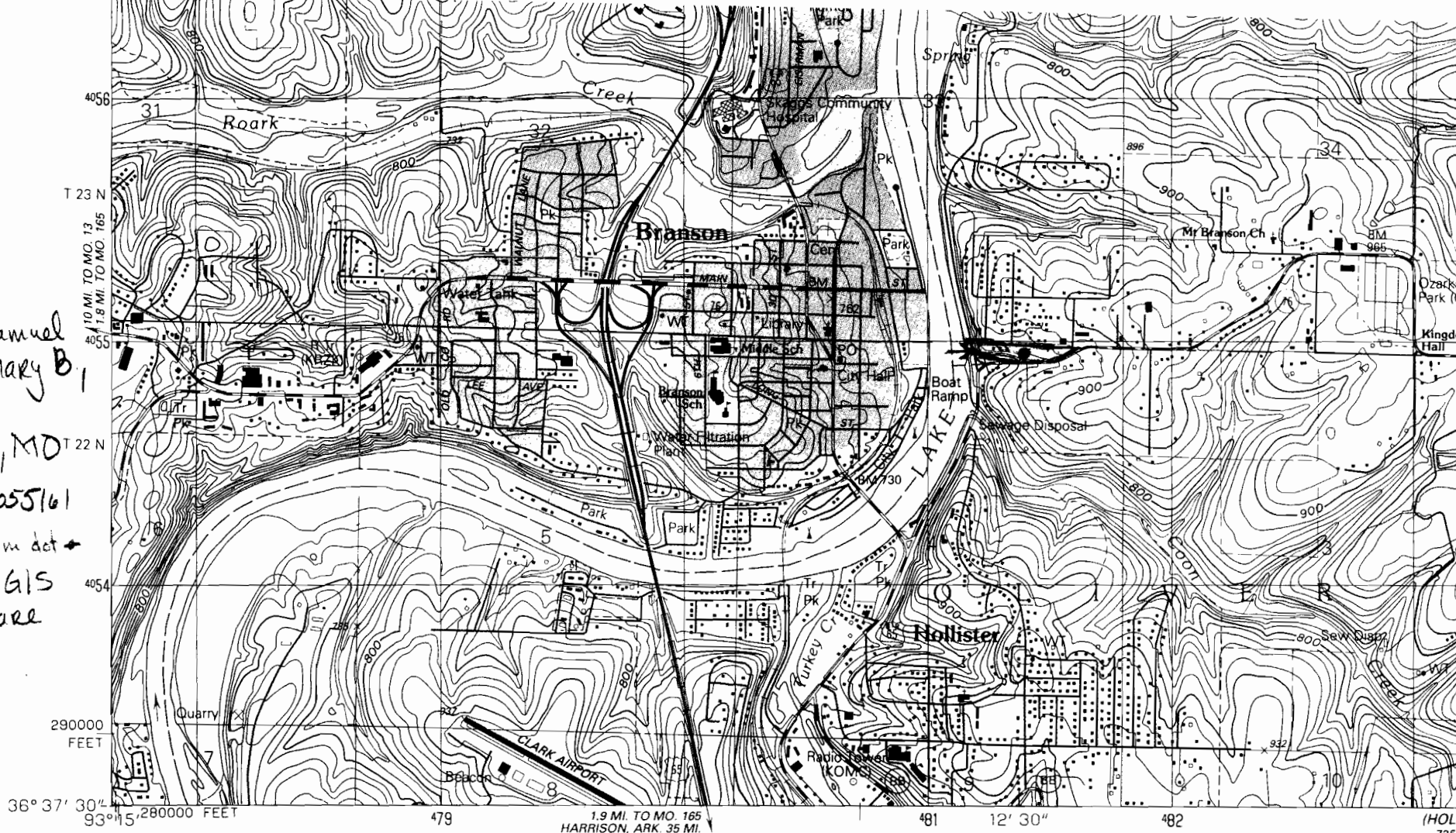
Photographer: Sandi Simmons

Date of Photos: August 2007

Location of Negatives: On file with Elizabeth Tomelleri, property owner

1. View west, down Angels Trail, toward residence
2. West elevation, looking east
3. West elevation, looking east
4. West elevation, looking northeast
5. West elevation porch detail, looking northeast
6. North elevation porch detail, looking south
7. West elevation, second story porch detail, looking southwest
8. Detail, west elevation, second story entrance, looking northeast
9. South elevation, looking northwest
10. Detail, south elevation, looking northwest
11. Detail, southwest corner of porch, looking northwest
12. North elevation, looking southeast
13. Partial view, north elevation, looking southeast
14. North elevation, looking southeast
15. Interior, sleeping porch, looking southeast
16. Interior detail, sleeping porch wall and floor, looking east
17. Interior fireplace, second floor, looking north
18. Interior built-in shelves, first floor, looking north
19. Interior, basement, view looking northeast
20. Cistern wall, stone terracing and steps, looking north
21. Garage, north elevation on left, west elevation on right; looking southeast

Parkell, Samuel  
T. and Mary B,  
House  
Taney Co, MO  
15/481362/4055161  
(Ready room dot)  
using ArcGIS  
software



(TABLE ROCK DAM)  
7357 MI SE

# Produced by the United States Geological Survey

Control by USGS and NOS/NOAA

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1952. Field checked 1956. Revised from aerial photographs taken 1986. Field checked 1987. Map edited 1989

Projection and 10,000-foot grid ticks: Missouri coordinate system, central zone (transverse Mercator)

1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 15 1927 North American Datum

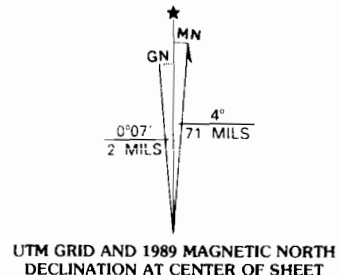
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983, move the projection lines 4 meters south and 16 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

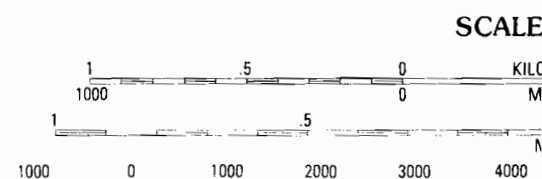
Areas covered by dashed light-blue pattern are subject to controlled inundation

Gray tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



UTM GRID AND 1989 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



SCALE

CONTOUR IN  
NATIONAL GEODETIC

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