

**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 Ryan Block

other name/site number Conroy's Grocery; Suddarth Granite Company; Steven's Dry Cleaner's; Frank's Market; Al's Market; and Crowley Heating & Cooling Services

2. Location

street & town 1137-1141 Frederick Avenue N/A not for publication

city or town Saint Joseph N/A vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Buchanan code 021 zip code 64501

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 Dec 6, 2012
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:)

Ryan Block
Name of Property

Buchanan County, MO
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
3	N/A	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Historic Resources of St. Joseph, Buchanan Co., MO (Amended) 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

Current Function
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Multiple Dwelling

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate

OTHER/Two-part Commercial Block

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls brick

roof asphalt

other wood

limestone

metal

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

Ryan Block
Name of Property

Buchanan County, MO
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

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.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

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 # _____

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

Ryan Block
Name of Property

Buchanan County, MO
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

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

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

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

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

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

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated property occupies all of Lots four (4), five (5), and six (6) in Fink's Addition to the City of Saint Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri.

Property Tax No.

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The Boundary includes the portion of the city lot which retains its original property lines and has been historically associated with the nominated property.

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Penelope Kress, Consultant

organization Kress & Sons, LLC date September 19, 2012

street & number 120 South 15th Street telephone 816-646-9943

city or town Saint Joseph state MO zip code 64501

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 Olin Cox

street & number 1723 Francis telephone 816-676-8184

city or town Saint Joseph state MO zip code 64501

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.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Ryan Block
Buchanan County, Missouri
Historic Resources of Saint Joseph, Missouri MPDF (amended)

Narrative Description

Summary:

Constructed in 1889, the Ryan Block is a good representative example of a late 19th century commercial building with Late Victorian styling. The red brick, three-story building is located at 1137-41 Frederick Avenue in St. Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri. The Ryan Block exemplifies the Small Scale Commercial Block property type as described in the "Historic Resources of Saint Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri (Amended)" MPDF.¹ The flat-roofed, south-facing building consists of three units in a row with common walls and cast iron storefronts, a dentillated metal cornice, and a two-story oriel window sheathed in decorative metal at the southeast corner. Both the storefront and the private spaces above are well-defined, contributing to a sense of the building as a distinct compositional whole. The storefronts have recessed entrances and boast a profusion of plate glass including semicircular transoms. Above the first floor, twenty-two double-hung, flat-arch windows are symmetrically arranged across the façade (eleven per floor, with decorative brickwork between the floors). Like many buildings fronting on Frederick Avenue, the Ryan Block is trapezoidal with parallel east and west walls while the primary south elevation is aligned with the diagonally oriented Frederick. Since its construction in 1889, the Ryan Block has experienced few exterior changes. It substantially reflects its period of historic significance and consequently easily fulfills the registration requirements for its property type.

Elaboration:

The Ryan Block is located on the north side of Frederick Avenue between Eleventh and Twelfth Streets in Fink's Addition, which was platted in 1886 within the city limits. Frederick Avenue remains a main thoroughfare approaching Saint Joseph's Central Business District.² It had several small-scale commercial blocks and apartment houses among other structures. An historical survey and inventory of Frederick Avenue was conducted in the early 1980s, however, due to the amount of loss of architectural integrity and/or of structures themselves, a district was not formed. The Ryan Block is mentioned in that survey as being "significant for a highly decorative oriel window at its southeast corner."³ The last major investment in this area was the construction of City Hall⁴ at 1100 Frederick (just west and across the street from the Ryan Block) in the mid-1920s which is still in use today.

Presently, the surrounding neighborhood remains a mix of residential, governmental, and commercial. Immediately to the north of the Ryan Block is the Cathedral Historic District.⁵ Immediately to the east of the Ryan Block is a single-story commercial block with a thriving Hispanic grocery store and a guidance counseling office. This building retains no historic integrity and is covered in sheet metal. The adjacent

¹ The Small Scale Commercial Block subtype is three or fewer stories tall while the Large Scale Commercial Block subtype is four or more stories tall. The property type was described in the 1991 amendment to the MPDF, while a subsequent amendment in 2000 justified extending the period of significance from 1929 to 1945.

² "St. Joseph's Commerce and Banking Historic District" (St. Joseph MPS), roughly bounded by Francis, Edmond, Third, and Ninth streets, St. Joseph (7/5/01).

³ Frederick Avenue MRA.

⁴ "St. Joseph City Hall" (Frederick Avenue MRA), Frederick at 11th St., St. Joseph (10/25/85).

⁵ "Cathedral Hill Historic District" (St. Joseph MPS), North 9th Street, Powell Street and North 13th Street, St. Joseph (6/15/00).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Ryan Block
Buchanan County, Missouri
Historic Resources of Saint Joseph, Missouri MPDF (amended)

property to the west housed a single-story building that was used as an auto repair shop and parts store for many years; it was demolished in 2005 after the roof collapsed. The current owner of the Ryan Block owns the now-vacant property and is using it for off-street parking for tenants of the Ryan Block. The property to the south, across Frederick Avenue in the 1100 block, includes a small one-story building that was once a filling station and garage. The first two lots in the 1200 block are vacant, but the remaining adjacent property is known as the Kelley and Browne Flats⁶ which are adjacent to the Lawler Motor Building.⁷

The Frederick Avenue MRA describes the diagonally-planned thoroughfare as thus, "Originating at the intersection of Eighth Street and Felix Street, Frederick Avenue cuts through a variety of business and residential sections of St. Joseph. At Twenty-Fifth Street, the avenue changes dramatically from a bustling commercial strip to a wide residential street. ...[Frederick Avenue] has retained its historic character as a well-traveled thoroughfare lined with taverns, small stores, workshops, and small factories."⁸ Today, the small factories are gone, but alive and well are taverns, small stores, commercial and financial institutions, restaurants, grocery stores, automotive shops, and residential space.

Exterior:

The Ryan Block's building form is a modified rectangular plan with nine bays. The building follows the diagonal slope of Frederick Avenue. It has a flat roof with parapet walls on the front and side walls. There is a dentillated metal cornice which runs across the width of the main façade. There is a two-story highly decorated metal clad oriel on the southeast corner. The walls and foundation are of red soft brick. The one-over-one double-hung flat-arched windows have limestone sills and brick soldier lintels. The building's storefronts are set adjacent to the sidewalk on the property line on the south and east sides. On the north side an alley runs the length of the back of the building and an empty lot is on the building's west side. Concrete "brick" sidewalks surround the south and east sides of the building.

Each storefront has a large plate glass window with an arched transom flanking the recessed entrance which has smaller plate glass windows and narrower transoms. The storefronts of 1137 and 1139 retain original double entry doors while the storefront of 1141 had been modified sometime in the mid-1900s to house a single entry door. A separate entrance between 1137 and 1139 retains its original single door and leads to a staircase to the private spaces on the upper floors above 1137 and 1139 respectively. The storefronts retain original decorative cast iron supports. In addition, original decorative Italianate wood elements remain. Between the first and second floor remains a metal support running the length of the façade which would have anchored an awning to the building. The awning was removed prior to 1972 as shown in a photo from that year included herein. The two upper floors have one-over-one double-hung wood sash windows and retain their original openings and fenestration. There is a row of decorative brick between the second and third floors. A decorative two-story oriel window caps the corner of the unit at 1141. It has three one-over-one double-hung wood sash windows on each floor. A decorative metal cornice runs the length of the main façade and has detailing consistent with Italianate design.

⁶ "Kelley and Browne Flats" (*St. Joseph MPS*), 1208-1216 Frederick Ave., St. Joseph (8/03/89).

⁷ "Lawler Motor Co. Building" (*St. Joseph MPS AD*), 1224 Frederick Ave., St. Joseph (1/08/09).

⁸ Frederick Avenue MRA.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Ryan Block
Buchanan County, Missouri
Historic Resources of Saint Joseph, Missouri MPDF (amended)

The east side consists of five bays, with one small single sash window on the main floor and an entrance that appears to have been added at a later time. The entrance is at the rear of the building, has a wooden stoop, and is accessed by an exterior concrete staircase. The second story has two single one-over-one double-hung wood sash and one double one-over-one double-hung wood sash. There is evidence that a metal balcony was once located under the two single windows. The third floor has one small single sash window, one double one-over-one double-hung wood sash, another small single sash window, and a single one-over-one double-hung wood sash window. The decorative cornice is much smaller than on the main façade and is simply brick.

The rear (north) elevation has ten bays and is relatively plain. A step between the units of 1137 and 1139 allowed for a porch—a private outside area for the early residents of these two units. The original rear porch is long gone and a deck has been constructed in its place. The first floor at this point is partially underground. The portion of the wall for units 1141 and 1139 has a small single sash window in the first bay and the remaining window openings have been bricked in. The second floor has a pair of double doors and evidence of a balcony, which no longer remains. Next to the door is a double one-over-one double-hung wood sash followed by a single one-over-one double-hung wood sash. The third floor of this section has five single one-over-one double-hung wood sash. The window in the fourth bay is significantly smaller than the others.

The second floor has an original door with transom to the 1139 unit in the sixth bay and a single one-over-one double-hung wood sash in the seventh. The eighth bay has another original door with transom to the 1137 unit and two single one-over-one double-hung wood sash in bays nine and ten. The third floor simply has a single one-over-one double-hung wood sash in each bay.

A massive, nearly solid brick wall makes up the west façade. A one-story building which at one time shared a common wall with it was demolished several years ago. It appears that a taller building never shared this wall as no evidence exists of attachment. Flaking paint from long-ago advertisements remain on the front portion of the wall. Towards the rear, a small single sash window and a single one-over-one double-hung wood sash remain on the second floor and two single one-over-one double-hung wood sash remain on the third.

Interior:

The interior of the building remains largely intact. The three storefronts on the first floor retain their original openings, 16' high ceilings, much of their wood trim, and most of their plaster walls and ceilings. The units in 1137 and 1139 at some point had a doorway made between them to join the two spaces, but otherwise retain their original configuration. The storefront in 1141 has had some alteration. It remains separate from the other two units but at some point it had an interior staircase to the floors above it. That access was removed by a previous owner and the exterior door on the west elevation provides a separate entrance to the private quarters above.

As described above, access to the private areas above 1137 and 1139 is by a separate door on the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Ryan Block
Buchanan County, Missouri
Historic Resources of Saint Joseph, Missouri MPDF (amended)

exterior of the main façade which leads to a long, tall staircase to a shared hallway. There, one either enters the space above 1137 or 1139 via doors into each respective unit. These units were in fact built as two-story townhouses with 12' ceilings on each floor above the retail space on the first floor. According to the St. Joseph city directories, these units haven't been inhabited since the early 1920s.⁹ Nearly all of the original elements of these spaces remained, including staircases, woodwork, hardware, fixtures, and floor plan. Both spaces have been retained and restored as two-story townhouses.

The private space above 1141 has been somewhat altered. In addition to once having interior access from the main floor, this unit has been occupied for most of the building's existence. It was originally a two-story townhouse with 12' ceilings like the other two units. Previous owners modified it sometime in the late 1930s, however. They removed the interior staircase between the second and third floors, modified the floor plan, and dropped the ceilings making it into two apartments. The current owner has removed some of the changes, returning to a period-appropriate look, but kept the townhouse as two separate apartments.

⁹ St. Joseph City Directory, 1920, 1921, 1924, 1926, and 1928 (not published in 1919, 1922, 1923, 1925, 1927, and 1929).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Ryan Block
Buchanan County, Missouri
Historic Resources of Saint Joseph, Missouri MPDF (amended)

Statement of Significance

Summary:

The Ryan Block at 1137-41 Frederick Avenue in St. Joseph, Missouri, is eligible for listing in the National Register with local significance under Criterion A in the area of COMMERCE and under Criterion C in the area of ARCHITECTURE. Constructed of brick with a cast iron storefront in 1889, the three-story Ryan Block was an important contributor when the city's economy was based primarily on its success as a wholesale distribution and manufacturing center in northwestern Missouri. Its commercial importance continued in later years when times changed and the St. Joseph Stock Yards and grain processing facilities became the city's dominant areas of commercial influence. Located on Frederick Avenue, a primary vehicular artery into the central business district, the Ryan Block is also a good example of a Small Scale Commercial Block in St. Joseph, with Italianate affinities and featuring a two-story oriel window, a well-defined storefront, and distinctive private space on the upper floors. Commissioned by John B. Ryan, the first floor originally housed a meat market and a grocery store; Ryan was active in city affairs, and later operated a hotel and restaurant although not in the nominated property. The Ryan Block is associated with the "Historic Resources of St. Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri (Amended)" Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) under the historic context "Queen City of the West: Commerce in St. Joseph, ca. 1865-ca. 1945." The building meets the registration requirements for its Small Scale Commercial Block subtype under both Criteria A and C. The period of significance runs from the 1889 date of construction through 1945 when, following World War II, commercial development began changing to accommodate an increasingly automobile-driven economy.

Elaboration:

The Ryan Block is significant under Criterion A in the area of COMMERCE as it represents commercial expansion during this significant period of St. Joseph history. As stated in the MPDF, "With a national...reputation as a distribution center, the city progressed steadily from frontier days through the industrialization period to the early twentieth century, serving as one of the largest and most profitable commercial centers in the country."¹⁰ Called the "Gate to the Rocky Mountains" as well as "Queen of the Missouri Valley,"¹¹ St. Joseph's population grew from approximately 19,500 in 1870 to over 52,000 by 1890. "Her main and more recent phenomenal growth is owing...to her being the railroad centre of what is historically known as the 'Great American Desert,' and the most convenient distributing point for all classes of stock, produce and merchandise between the east and the west."¹² The MPDF goes on to say that in 1887 over \$30,000,000 was invested by the city in its infrastructure, including the macadamizing of the streets. Cable and streetcars extended well throughout the city by this time, providing transportation along main thoroughfares into the city center from the outlying residential neighborhoods.¹³ While the wholesale businesses of Saint Joseph continued to prosper and grow there existed a significant local population who needed their own goods and services. Thus, there existed a need for living spaces as well as a market for smaller retail businesses. The MPDF states that there were over 800 retail

¹⁰ 1991 Amendment, p.E-16 .

¹¹ *Historical and Descriptive Review of Saint Joseph, Missouri*, 1889, p. 27.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ 1991 Amendment, p. E-20.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Ryan Block
Buchanan County, Missouri
Historic Resources of Saint Joseph, Missouri MPDF (amended)

establishments by the early twentieth century.¹⁴

John B. Ryan was born in Ireland in 1840 and immigrated to the U.S. in 1849 with his parents, locating first in Philadelphia, PA before moving to a farm in Andrew County, MO in 1858. Ryan enrolled in the Missouri militia in 1862 and drove a stage for the Overland Stage Company until 1864.¹⁵ Marriage records indicate that he married Miss Rebecca A. Lewis on March 5, 1867 in Andrew County, MO. Ryan is first found in the 1872 St. Joseph City Directory as operating a meat market on the west side of Sixth street between Mitchell and Renick, where he also resided. Deed records show he purchased property in 1873 on the west side of South Sixth between Monterrey and Sacramento, a bustling part of the city near Union Station and the newly opened railroad bridge over the Missouri River. He and his bride remained there until purchasing the property at 1701 South Eleventh Street around 1879, moving his residence and meat market there. He retained ownership of the South Sixth Street property until selling it in 1885.¹⁶

Business was good and in 1888 Ryan was able to buy property along Frederick Avenue which was a bustling thoroughfare into the heart of the city. According to Buchanan County deed records, John B. Ryan purchased lots 4, 5, and 6 in Fink's Addition for \$4,800 on May 3, 1888. Using investment money from John Lemmon and Charles Lins, Ryan, working with Mrs. Ellen Stewart, obtained a building permit on September 6, 1889 for a "store" valued at \$6,500 on lots 4, 5, and 6. The September 7, 1889 issue of the *Catholic Tribune* states "Mrs. Stewart and J.B. Ryan are putting up a fine three-story brick building on the corner of Twelfth and Frederick Avenue. It is their intention to have three store rooms on the ground floor. The building will be a good one, and will have all modern improvements." Ryan then expanded his meat business, retaining his location on South Eleventh and opening a second location in the middle unit (1139 Frederick), where he also moved his residence.¹⁷

In 1889, the *Historical and Descriptive Review of Saint Joseph, MO* described Ryan's business in glowing terms: "J. B. Ryan, Meats, Frederick Avenue, corner Faraon, and Eleventh and Duncan Streets. – Among the many fine meat stores in St. Joseph, none are more worthy of consideration than Mr. J.B. Ryan. He has been established eighteen years, and from the start has met with the most complete success. His premises are commodious, four hands and two wagons being constantly required. He deals in fresh and salt meats, lard, sausages, etc. All that is found in his store is of the best, and most reasonable in price. Courteous attention awaits customers at this store, while confidence in the proprietor and his assistants is fully justified."¹⁸

During this time, John Ryan was active in local city matters. According to his obituary in the October 5, 1912 issue of the *Catholic Tribune*, "Mr. Ryan always took an active part in politics and was a staunch Democrat, serving two terms in the city council in the '80's under Mayors T.H. Doyle and George J. Englehart. He ...successfully led the fight for the granting of the franchise for St. Joseph's first electric railway line... ...[He] assisted in obtaining for the city its electric street lighting plant." It also states that he was an appointed member of the board of public works and served from about 1906-09; two of those

¹⁴ 1991 Amendment, p. E-23.

¹⁵ *Daily News History of Buchanan County and St. Joseph, MO, 1898.*

¹⁶ Buchanan County Deed Records.

¹⁷ St. Joseph City Directory, 1892.

¹⁸ *Historical and Descriptive Review of Saint Joseph, Missouri, 1889, p. 116.*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Ryan Block
Buchanan County, Missouri
Historic Resources of Saint Joseph, Missouri MPDF (amended)

years as board president. The article goes on to say "... [He] was considered as one of the best posted men on city affairs...and city officials often sought his advice and counsel. He was highly respected by citizens and was known for his sterling honesty and strong character."

Upon his "retirement" in 1897,¹⁹ Ryan bought property near the east edge of town and moved his family out to 2801 Mitchell Avenue. But John Ryan didn't stay retired long. In 1898 he went into the restaurant business, opening J.B. Ryan's Restaurant at 426 Felix. According to the *Daily News History of Buchanan County and St. Joseph, MO, 1898*, John B. Ryan was a restaurant keeper and dealer in real estate. An ad in the 1899 St. Joseph City Directory states, "Go to J.B. Ryan's restaurant, No. 426 Felix St. Good Meats A Specialty. Serves best meals in the city for the money. Give him a trial." Ryan operated this restaurant until taking over as proprietor of the Union Hotel at 313-15 South Sixth in 1902. He found that the hotel business suited him and sold 1137-39 Frederick in 1902 and sold the property on South Eleventh in 1903.²⁰ He changed the name to the Ryan Hotel in 1903. During this period, he purchased property surrounding his home and platted "Ryan's Addition to the City of St. Joseph," naming it "Ryan Place," and sold several lots.²¹ Perhaps it was a fondness for Mr. Ryan that the citizens recognized his contributions to the city and beginning in the 1910 City Directory, 1137-41 Frederick was referred to as the "Ryan Block" although he had sold it eight years prior. It was referred to as such until 1920 when the directory began listing addresses only.

Ryan suffered a stroke and passed away a few days later on September 27, 1912 at his home with his family at his side. He had one son and four daughters. His obituary in the October 5, 1912 *Catholic Tribune* stated, "He was, in the true sense of the word, a self-made man, and to a great extent, self-educated. He was a tireless worker in every enterprise he engaged in, and was remarkably successful in all." His funeral was held at the Cathedral and he was buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery. Upon his death, his wife Rebecca moved into the hotel, continuing to operate it for several more years.

Mrs. Ellen Stewart was granted ownership of 1141 Frederick in the Ryan Block (Lot 6) through a warranty deed in 1891.²² City directories from the 1870s and 80s show that Ellen and her husband Robert Stewart operated a boarding house in the 1200 block of South Sixth. Ellen was widowed but continued to operate the boarding house with her sons John and Nathaniel. They also operated a restaurant and saloon in the early 1890s. By 1895, Ellen is listed as living at 504 North 12th and operating "Stewart Grocery Co." at 1141 Frederick with her sons John and Nathaniel.²³ The address of 504 North 12th is referred to at all other times as 1141½ Frederick; the entrance door is on the northeast corner of the building and is still used today to access the upper floors. The relationship of Mrs. Stewart and Mr. Ryan is unclear, although it appears they were once neighbors in the 1870s on South Sixth Street. According to the Federal Census records in 1900, Mrs. Stewart and her family had relocated to Kansas City, Missouri. Mrs. Stewart retained ownership of 1141 Frederick until her death in 1916 at which time the property passed on to her daughter Mary Stewart.²⁴ Mary sold it in 1923; neither she nor her brothers ever lived in St. Joseph again

¹⁹ St. Joseph City Directory, 1898

²⁰ Buchanan County Deed Records

²¹ *ibid*

²² *ibid*

²³ St. Joseph City Directory, 1895, 1896

²⁴ Buchanan County Deed Records

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Ryan Block
Buchanan County, Missouri
Historic Resources of Saint Joseph, Missouri MPDF (amended)

and had left Missouri in the early part of the century.

The Ryan Block building itself has undergone few physical changes from its original purpose during its 123-year existence. Data compiled from city directories and deed records indicate that 1137 and 1139 Frederick (Fink's Addition, Lots 4 and 5) has been owned by only six people. John Ryan is the only owner (1889-1902) known to have lived in the building (1139½ Frederick, 1892-1897). James Hartigan, who was also in the meat business, purchased 1137-39 Frederick from Ryan in 1902. During Hartigan's ownership, different businesses occupied the spaces: 1137 housed various-owned grocery stores, a cigar store, plumbing/gasfitting/radiator repair shop, a soda fountain, a liquor store, a cabinet shop, and 16 various years of vacancy prior to James Steven opening a dry cleaner's there in 1946; 1139 housed butchers, a tinner (who also lived in 1139½ from 1912-17), and Suddarth Granite Company from 1926-1947 in addition to seventeen various years of vacancy. The residential units were abandoned during Hartigan's ownership. 1137½ was last shown as occupied in 1921 (directories were not printed in 1922 and 1923; from 1924 on it is listed as vacant) and 1139½ was last occupied in 1917. Many of the residents of the Ryan Block were working-class people who were roommates; there were bartenders, waiters, pressmen, dressmakers, travel agents, musicians, clerks, woodworkers, foremen, etc. It seemed to be a temporary location for most who resided here: these tenants never stayed more than a year or two.

The property remained in the Hartigan family until 1957 when James Steven purchased it after having operated his dry cleaning business there for ten years. While he owned the two storefronts and operated his dry cleaning business in 1137, 1137½, 1139, and 1139½ remained vacant during his ownership. He sold the building and closed his business in 1974. John DeShon purchased it and only used the 1137 space—he kept storage for his auto parts business there from 1975 to 1988 when he sold it to Ed Crowley.

As stated previously, 1141 Frederick (Fink's Addition, Lot 6) was sold to Ellen Stewart by John Ryan in 1891. Mrs. Stewart resided in the building in 1895 and operated a grocery store during the same time. She then relocated to Kansas City with her children and rented out the space to Michael Conroy who operated a grocery store there from 1896 until 1911. A grocery store operated there for another eight years before a cigar store opened. During this time, Ellen Stewart died and left the property to her daughter Mary in 1916. Mary owned it until selling it in 1923 to Walter Maskau who operated a grocery store there during his three-year ownership. During these years, 1141½ was consistently occupied. The next owner, William Wheeler, rented it out to Hafner Reming, a grocer who was there from 1930-39. Wheeler didn't always rent out 1141½, but beginning in 1938, a directory listing for the Du Club appears and lasts for at least five years (no directories were printed for 1943, 44, or 45). It is thought that at this time 1141½ was divided into two separate units with the Du Club on one floor and an occupied apartment on the other. Beaty Retail Store opened after Hafner Reming closed and operated there from 1940-41. Frank's Cash Grocery opened soon after in 1942. Frank Datillo liked the location so much he purchased the property in 1945 and moved into 1141½. He lived there until 1954. Frank operated his grocery there until 1953 when it became H&S Market. By 1955 it was called Al's Market and it remained so until Frank sold the building in 1975. Paul Greene purchased it and operated Greene's TV Service & Repair there until 1983. The next owner was Billy Dunlap who kept 1141 and 1141½ vacant. He sold it to Ed Crowley in 1990.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

Ryan Block
Buchanan County, Missouri
Historic Resources of Saint Joseph, Missouri MPDF (amended)

Crowley only utilized the 1141 space where he operated Crowley's Heating and Cooling Service from 1989 to 2003. He lived in 1141½ from about 2000-2003. He sold the building to the current owner, Olin Cox in 2004. Cox has since restored 1137½ and 1139½ into their originally-configured two-story townhouse plans and rehabbed 1141½ into two separate apartments. The four spaces are currently occupied and Cox is currently working on 1137, 1139, and 1141 Frederick as retail spaces.

From its beginning in 1889 as the home to a grocer and a meat market, the Ryan Block was a prime, centrally located building that drew people to its goods and services from Frederick Avenue and the surrounding residential neighborhoods, including what is now the Cathedral Hill Historic District to the north and the Museum Hill Historic District to the south. Heading into the mid-1940s the Ryan Block was home to Frank's Market, Suddarth Granite Company, Steven's Dry Cleaners, and the Du Club – still providing goods and services to the surrounding residential neighborhoods along a still thriving thoroughfare into downtown. Although the Ryan Block's period of significance ends in 1945, it continues to play an important role within the context of Frederick Avenue as a thriving artery into the city's central business district.

Under Criterion C, the Ryan Block is a good and representative example of an Italianate style Small Scale Commercial Block as defined in the MPDF "Historic Resources of Saint Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri" under the historic context: "Queen City of the West: Commerce in St. Joseph ca. 1865-1945 (Amended)." The Ryan Block retains strong integrity of its stylistic and structural features, including its well-defined storefront arrangement, fenestration, and division on the first floor and distinctive private space on the upper floors. The Ryan Block consists of three separate units in a row, with common walls and each having original cast iron storefronts, recessions, windows, and doors. The building was built of brick, has a flat roof, and features decorative uses of cast iron and metal sheathing. The building has strong Italianate affinities in common with other commercial blocks in St. Joseph. It retains an overhanging metal dentillated cornice and a two-story oriel window sheathed in decorative metal. The Ryan Block retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, thereby fulfilling the registration requirements as listed in the MPDF.

When admiring the architectural design of the Ryan Block and noting the degree of slope as the building follows the layout of Frederick Avenue and the engineering issues this might ensue, one would assume this building was designed by an architect—although none has been identified. Only four architects or firms are listed in the 1889 city directory: Francis Boettner; Eckel & Mann (who had in their employment at the time Harvey Ellis); W. Angelo Powell; and T.C. Smales. E.J. Eckel and his associations with various designers, architects, and firms in St. Joseph has been well-documented by Toni Prawl, PhD. While many of Eckel's papers and drawings exist, nothing has been found to suggest that Ryan hired the firm of Eckel & Mann to design the building. While it is impossible to rule out W. Angelo Powell (or any of the four), the overall design of the Ryan Block is lacking the creative details and flair that are found on even the simplest of Powell's known designs. Not much is known about T.C. Smales, and only a handful of buildings have been attributed to him. He appeared in the city directories from 1886-1890 and apparently practiced in St. Joseph until 1896. Finally, Francis Boettner came to St. Joseph in 1868 and worked with Louis Stigers and a young E.J. Eckel among others. Boettner practiced in the city until 1896. Again, there are a few designs attributed to him, but no evidence has been found to indicate that he designed the Ryan

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

Ryan Block
Buchanan County, Missouri
Historic Resources of Saint Joseph, Missouri MPDF (amended)

Block. Another possibility is that the building did not have an architect per se. Jimmy Counts, a contemporary architect from St. Joseph who is currently researching Powell's life and work, suggested that a trained architect may not have designed the Ryan Block: "The city," Counts noted, "had a lot of competent builders [at the time the building was constructed] who could have been retained directly by the original client."²⁵

More than a thousand building permits were issued in St. Joseph in 1888 (and presumably an approximately similar number were issued in 1889), according to the St. Joseph Board of Trade's *Ninth Annual Report*.²⁶

The Ryan Block remains an impressive structure today and it is the only extant three-story small commercial building of its kind along the Frederick Avenue corridor. As the Frederick Avenue MRA states: "More than half of the architectural resources of Frederick Avenue date from the period between 1880 and 1919. Representing this prosperous era on the avenue are groups of ornate storefronts, crowded together in blocks, exhibiting a marvelous variety of decorative elements, including parapets, elaborate cornices, turrets, oriel windows, and applied ornamentation in cast iron and pressed tin. Outstanding examples of these turn-of-the-century storefronts' include the little group located between 11th and 12th Street."²⁷ Two other buildings representing the same era as the Ryan Block have been individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places. These include: Kelley and Browne Flats (St. Joseph MPS), 1208-1216 Frederick Ave., St. Joseph (8/03/89) and Christian Sachau Saloon (Frederick Avenue MRA), 1613-1615 Frederick Ave., St. Joseph (10/25/85).

²⁵ Correspondence with Jimmy Counts, AIA LEED AP.

²⁶ *Ninth Annual Report*, St. Joseph Board of Trade, p.31.

²⁷ "Historic Resources of Frederick Avenue, St. Joseph" MRA, pp.7.1-2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 11

Ryan Block
Buchanan County, Missouri
Historic Resources of Saint Joseph, Missouri MPDF (amended)

Bibliography

Buchanan County Deed Records, Buchanan County Courthouse, St. Joseph, Missouri.

Davidson, Hugh, and Wolfenbarger, Deon. "Historic Resources of St. Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri." National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form, St. Joseph / Jefferson City, 1988-89 (as amended with the addition of the historic context "Queen City of the West: Commerce in St. Joseph, c. 1865-1945) (Amended).

Database search www.ancestry.com July, 2012, September, 2012.

St. Joseph City Building Permit Records. St. Joseph, MO: City Hall.

St. Joseph City Directories, 1867/68-1875, 1878, 1882, 1887-1890, 1892-1911, 1912-13, 1915-1918, 1920-21, 1924, 1926, 1928, 1930, 1932-33, 1935, 1937-42, 1946-47, 1949, 1951, 1953, 1955-65, 1967-93, 1995-2007, 2009-11.

St. Joseph Gazette, September 28, 1912.

Catholic Tribune, September 7, 1889; September 28, 1912; October 5, 1912.

Secretary of the State of Missouri, Death Records; accessed online July 16, 2012.

Sanborn-Perris Map Co. Limited. St. Joseph, Buchanan County, MO. New York: 1888, 1897, 1911.

United States Census, 1880, 1900, 1910.

Daily News' History of Buchanan County and St. Joseph, Missouri. St. Joseph: St. Joseph Publishing Co., 1898.

Last Will and Testament of John B. Ryan, May, 1909.

Historical and Descriptive Review of St. Joseph, MO, 1889.

Wright, Bonnie. "Historic Resources of Frederick Avenue, St. Joseph" National Register of Historic Places Multiple Resource Area Nomination. Accessed online. Jefferson City, Missouri: Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks and Historic Preservation, 1985.

Correspondence with Jimmy Counts, AIA LEED AP.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10/ Photo Log Page 12

Ryan Block
Buchanan County, Missouri
Historic Resources of Saint Joseph, Missouri MPDF (amended)

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies Lots Four (4), Five (5), and Six (6) of Fink's Addition to the City of St. Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the portion of the city lot which retains its original property lines and has been historically associated with the nominated property.

Photographs

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Ryan Block

1137-1141 Frederick Avenue, Saint Joseph,
Buchanan County, MO

Photographer: Penelope Kress

Photos 1-5, August 2012

Digital photos on file with Penelope Kress, 120 South 15th Street, St. Joseph, MO 64501

List of Photographs

1. Primary (southeast) elevation, facing north.
2. Rear (north) elevation, facing southeast.
3. Southeast and east elevations, facing northwest.
4. First floor interior.
5. Upstairs apartment.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10/ Photo Log Page 13

Ryan Block
Buchanan County, Missouri
Historic Resources of Saint Joseph, Missouri MPDF (amended)



Ryan Block, 1137-41 Frederick Avenue; 1972

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10/ Photo Log Page 14

Ryan Block
Buchanan County, Missouri
Historic Resources of Saint Joseph, Missouri MPDF (amended)

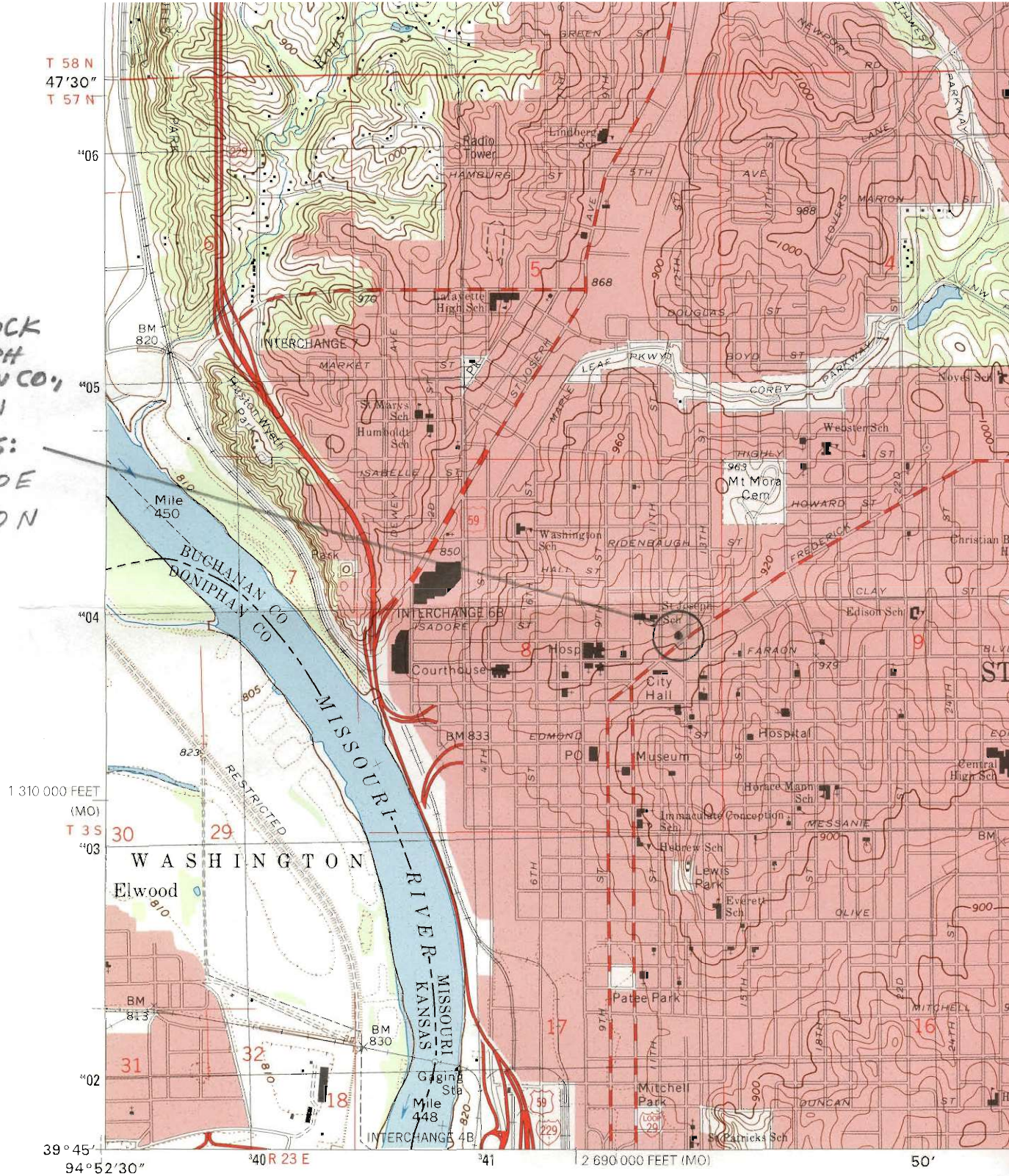


East view of Frederick Avenue; the NR listed Kelley and Brown Flats and Lawler Motor Company are on the right.



West view of Frederick Avenue; City Hall is towards the back on the left

RYAN BLOCK
 ST. JOSEPH
 BUCHANAN CO.,
 MISSOURI
 UTM REFS:
 15/341920 E
 4403840 N



Produced by the United States Geological Survey

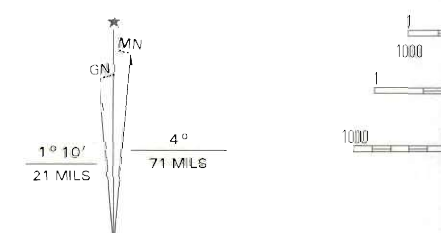
Topography compiled 1969. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1997 and other sources. Public Land Survey System and survey control current as of 1971

North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). Projection and 1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 15 10 000-foot ticks: Missouri Coordinate System of 1983 (west zone). 2 500-meter ticks: Kansas Coordinate System of 1983 (north zone)

North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 83 and NAD 27 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software

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

Landmark buildings verified 1971



UTM GRID AND 2000 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

