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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**
**Multiple Property Documentation Form**

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

_X__ New Submission ____ Amended Submission

## A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic and Architectural Resources of Cape Girardeau, Missouri

## B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

19th and Early 20th Century Commercial Buildings, ca. 1850 - 1950

## C. Form Prepared by

name/title __Philip Thomason/Principal

organization ___Thomason and Associates_____ date_December, 1999_____

street & number __P.O. Box 121225_____ telephone _(615) 385-4960_____

city or town __Nashville_____ state_TN____ zip code_37212_____

## D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Claire F. Blackwell 12 June 2000
Signature and title of certifying official Date
Claire F. Blackwell, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

for Edson H. Beall 7·20·00
Signature of the Keeper Date

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The multiple property group submittal for the historic and architectural resources of Cape Girardeau, Missouri includes an historical overview of the community, and the context of 19th and Early 20th Century Commercial Buildings, ca. 1850 - 1950. This nomination discusses buildings and structures, and no archaeological resources are included within this multiple property group.

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Cape Girardeau, Missouri, is located on the west bank of the Mississippi River approximately 115 miles south of St. Louis. Incorporated in 1808, Cape Girardeau developed as a major steamboat port in the early 19th century and continued as a regional commercial center during the 20th century. The city has strong Spanish, French, and German influences in its heritage, and in 1990, had a population of 34,438 residents.

The City of Cape Girardeau evolved from a frontier trading post along the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River. French ensign Sieur Jean B. Girardot established the post in the early 1700s and his name became so strongly associated with the area, that it remained the namesake of the town that was to emerge there almost a century later. The town itself, however, was founded by French Canadian Louis Lorimier, who received the land from the Spanish in 1793. Also a trader, Lorimier established a post near Girardot's bluff and erected a home near the river's edge. Due to its location along the important trade and travel route of the Mississippi, the post drew numerous traders and frontiersmen.[1]

As American settlers pushed further west they soon arrived at Lorimier's post, which remained Spanish territory until the early 1800s. Lorimier readily accepted the newcomers and the area became one of the most American districts in the otherwise French Creole region. In 1803, the region became official U.S. territory as part of the Louisiana Purchase, and the percentage of Americans increased dramatically.[2] In the spring of 1806, local trader Barthelemi Cousin platted the town of Cape Girardeau.[3]

Confusion over land ownership and loss of its position as county seat slowed the initial growth of the town. Soon after the region came under control of the United States, the government declined to authorize

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[1]Felix Eugene Snider and Earl Augustus Collins, *Cape Girardeau: Biography of a City* (Cape Girardeau, MO: Ramfre Press, 1956), 16-19.

[2]Ibid., 30.

[3]Ibid., 65; and *Goodspeed's History of Southeast Missouri* (Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1888; reprint, Ramfre Press, 1955), 413.

wholesale confirmation of Spanish land grants, on which the majority of property ownership was based. With legal title to property questionable, many settlers avoided the area.[4] Another setback came to Cape Girardeau in 1815 when it lost its designation as the county seat. The town had initially been chosen as the seat of justice for Cape Girardeau County, and arrangements were made for the construction of a courthouse and jail. But when the contractor failed to complete the necessary public buildings, officials opted to change the county seat to the nearby town of Jackson. This proved to be a severe blow to Cape Girardeau's development as few improvements were made to the town in the next twenty years.[5]

Most of Cape Girardeau's early settlers were trappers and fur traders who traveled the Mississippi River to take their pelts to market. Furs were frequently used as a medium of exchange and were useful in the making of durable garments, which were much needed on the frontier. As the area became more permanently settled, agriculture became the major commercial activity with cotton, tobacco, and wheat as major crops.[6] During this early settlement period, Cape Girardeau residents established essential industries such as flour mills, sawmills, cotton gins, and tanyards. These industries were commonly built near the river or other nearby watercourses. Town founder Louis Lorimier erected a total of three mills on Hubble and LaCroix Creeks. Early settler Barthelemi Cousin had an ingenious design of a mill mounted on two flatboats and I.R. Wathen's Marble City Mill was built on North Main Street. The largest mill in the area was that of George Frederick Bollinger, which continued to operate until the mid-20th century as part of the Cape County Milling Company's system.[7] Cape Girardeau also had a number of blacksmiths, gunsmiths, carpenters, wheelwrights and distilleries.

Timber was another valuable resource on the frontier and several waterpowered sawmills scattered throughout the Cape Girardeau area were an important part of the local economy. Cape Girardeau's hilly terrain contained an ample supply of hard woods like poplar, tulip, and cottonwood to provide settlers with building materials for homes and other buildings. Families also depended on wood for fuel, and settlers often made log rafts to carry their produce down the river to market. After the goods were sold, the rafts would be dismantled and sold for timber.[8]

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[4]Snider and Collins, 31.

[5]Goodspeed, 413; and Howard L. Conrad, ed. *Encyclopedia of the History of Missouri*, Vol. I (New York: The Southern History Company, 1901), 488.

[6]Snider and Collins, 218-220.

[7]Ibid., 211-213.

[8]Ibid., 204-205.

In addition to these enterprises, a considerable export trade based on the Mississippi River developed in Cape Girardeau. "As early as 1802, Cape Girardeau exported to New Orleans 371 barrels of salt pork, 14 barrels of refined lard, 7,000 pounds of bacon, 8,675 pounds of beef, 1,000 pounds of cotton, and some maple sugar and corn."[9] One- and two-story frame commercial buildings were constructed along Water and Main Streets to provide goods and services for the Mississippi River trade.

Steamboats first appeared on the Mississippi in the early 1810s, but regular use of the vessels did not become common until the 1830s. The river had always been of great importance to Cape Girardeau since its early days as a trading post in the wilderness. Traders and travelers alike used flatboats and keelboats to reach Cape Girardeau, and settlers carried their goods downstream on rafts to markets in New Orleans and beyond. But the steamboat greatly increased the speed and lowered the cost of transporting goods, and Cape Girardeau's superior location on the Mississippi made it an ideal shipping point.

Due to the steamboat traffic, Cape Girardeau experienced tremendous commercial growth in the mid-19th century, and the town incorporated as a city in 1843. Loads of cotton, corn, hides, livestock, and other products entered the port to be bought by Cape Girardeau wholesalers and reshipped to other cities. Nearly every steamship line on the Upper Mississippi made stops and had representatives in the city. Cape Girardeau soon became a regional distribution and trading center for the vast remote areas of the Ozarks to the west and portions of Arkansas to the south. Traders traveled over a hundred miles in freight trains to deliver cotton and wheat to Cape Girardeau gins and mills. Once in town they picked up shipments from wholesalers and made purchases from local merchants.[10]

By the 1850s, residential areas had expanded six blocks west of the Mississippi River and commercial area along Main Street. Dwellings from this period were of both brick and frame construction, and reflected common building designs and styles. In addition to the expansion of the residential areas, a number of notable buildings were completed in the years prior to the Civil War. The Cape Girardeau Common Pleas Courthouse was completed in 1854 to provide county governmental functions for the city. The building's original appearance was altered in 1888 when it was expanded and the cupola added. The St. Vincent De Paul Catholic Church is the oldest religious building in the city and was completed in 1853 on Main Street south of the commercial area.

The Civil War temporarily interrupted Cape Girardeau's steamboat boom. Missouri was a major battleground during the Civil War, and like the rest of the state, Cape Girardeau's population was divided over the conflict. Many of its early settlers were slaveowners from southern states and were largely

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[9]Ibid., 220.

[10]Ibid., 224, 250.

secessionists. Many others, including the large German population, held Northern sympathies. Because of the its strategic location along the Mississippi River, Federal troops took control of the city early in the conflict. From July 10, 1861 to August 14, 1865, federal troops occupied Cape Girardeau and business in the city came to a standstill. and little in the way of commercial construction took place. Cape Girardeau escaped major conflict during the war; however, a small battle did occur when Confederate troops attempted to invade the city on April 26, 1863. The battle proved to be a short one and little damage occurred to the city.[11]

After the Civil War, Cape Girardeau resumed its healthy business operations. Steamboat traffic remained the impetus behind the wholesale and industrial markets which supported the economy. In 1874, nearly a million dollars worth of commodities were exported via the river. Flour constituted 77% or $720,000 of this value. Other leading exports were lime, bacon, poultry, cotton, and tombstones.[12] New industries in the post-war years included a washing machine factory, a broom factory, various breweries, and several carpenter and cabinet shops.[13] The strong economy supported a number of commercial enterprises such as hardware and dry goods stores, groceries, and other businesses typical of the era. In 1867, Cape Girardeau was home to "27 dry goods stores, 3 hardware stores, 12 grocery and provision stores, 5 drug stores, 5 furniture stores, 1 notion store, 14 shoe shops, 5 tinshops, 2 jewelry stores, 11 blacksmith shops, 7 tailor shops, 5 hotels, 3 livery stables, 3 flouring mills, 1 sawmill, 5 breweries, 1 distiller, 2 tanneries, and 2 cotton gins."[14] These businesses remained concentrated along Main and Water Streets in the downtown area near the river and the trade the watercourse brought to the city.

By 1870, Cape Girardeau had reached a population of 3,640, a large percentage of which was of German heritage. A large influx of German immigrants came to the city in the late 1840s and early 1850s with another peak in the years following the Civil War. Germans coming to America in the early 19th century who settled in rural areas tended to originate from common locales in Germany. As initial settlers kept in touch with friends and relatives in their homeland, they told of the ample opportunities available and encouraged their peers to join them in the United States. Upon deciding to immigrate, German families then predominantly settled in the same areas as their predecessors. This process of chain migration often created pockets of homogeneous immigrant populations and settlements, particularly in rural areas of the

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[11]Ibid., 48-50.

[12]Ibid., 222.

[13]Ibid., 214.

[14]Goodspeed, 415.

United States.[15] The Cape Girardeau area exemplifies this process with an overwhelming majority of its German immigrants originating from the two German states of Hannover and Brunswick.

In 1860, over 2,000 German immigrants resided in Cape Girardeau County, and nearly sixty (60) percent of these residents came from the adjacent northern German states of Hannover and Brunswick. Several other German states were represented as well with Prussia and Bavaria being the next largest places of origin. However, the numbers from the two leading states far outweighed all others. In the 1860 census, 845 residents of Cape Girardeau County reported being born in Hannover, Germany, and 479 noted Brunswick as their birthplace.[16] This latter group is especially interesting as "only three of every thousand German-Americans hailed from the tiny Duchy of Brunswick, but in Cape Girardeau County people of these origins made up over one-fifth of the Germans. . . . In fact, about ten percent of all immigrants from Brunswick in the whole United States lived in Cape Girardeau County."[17] In a 1988 study, the origins of Brunswick immigrants were traced to the village level and revealed that over twenty-five percent came from the village of Schlewecke, and a fair amount hailed from three villages within a six mile radius of Schlewecke. It is also estimated that a large percentage of immigrants from Hannover who trekked to Cape Girardeau County hailed from the Hildesheim region, which borders Brunswick and is only eleven miles from the village of Schlewecke.[18]

Immigrants from the Hildesheim-Brunswick region arrived in Cape Girardeau County as early as 1834.[19] Although chance was most likely the determining factor in the choice of location for these initial settlers, it set the stage for others to follow and shaped the history of Cape Girardeau. A strong German presence could be found throughout the city in a variety of occupations, organizations, and churches. The German population also had a strong impact on the city's built environment with both residential and commercial buildings reflecting German building forms. Street names also reflected this impact with Main Street officially known as German Street until the 1890s. Several German residents constructed commercial buildings along Broadway in the mid to late 19th century. These two-story gabled brick buildings

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[15]Walter D. Kamphoefner, "Chain Migration and Local Homogeneity of Immigration: Cape Girardeau County Germans in Comparative Perspective," in *French and Germans in the Mississippi Valley: Landscape and Cultural Traditions*, Michael Roark, ed. (Cape Girardeau, MO: Center for Regional History and Cultural Heritage, Southeast Missouri State University, 1998), 179-180.

[16]Ibid., 180-181.

[17]Ibid., 181.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid., 182.

typically served as both a residence and a place of business with stores and shops located on the first floor and living space on the upper story.

In 1868 a German social hall was erected at 300 Broadway. Known as Turner Hall, the three-story brick building was the meeting place of the local chapter of the Turner Society, or Turnvereins, organizations of German immigrants that specialized in recreational activities such as gymnastics. The Turners were an important social organization and between 200 to 250 men from Cape Girardeau's leading families were members. Nicholas Gonner, a native of Luxembourg, was the architect and contractor for the building. It is assumed that many in the society were skilled artisans and contributed their talent as carpenters, brick masons, and so on, to the Hall's construction. Although no record exists of the society's disbanding, the building was sold to the Masonic Lodge in 1888 and its name was changed to Opera House and Masonic Hall. The building has served many purposes over the years and has housed a variety of businesses including restaurants, theaters, newspapers, and a Chinese laundry. In 1955, the historic building was threatened with demolition but it escaped this fate due to the efforts of the business owners who occupied it at the time.[20]

As the end of the nineteenth century approached, advances in transportation would again have a significant impact on Cape Girardeau. The heyday of the steamboat was passing and railroads were quickly becoming the transportation method of choice for both passengers and freight. Trains reached destinations much faster than steamships, and these destinations were not limited to river towns. With each railroad built in the region surrounding Cape Girardeau, another portion of the city's trade was lost. The worst blow came when tracks were laid connecting the St. Francis and Mississippi Rivers, and ports downstream from Cape Girardeau began to get the trade. A large part of the Ozark trade area was also cut off by an extension of the Iron Mountain Railroad, which operated between St. Louis and Pilot Knob.[21] Because it lacked a railroad, Cape Girardeau business suffered.

Efforts to establish a line through the city resulted in the formation of the Cape Girardeau and State Line Railroad Company. Its goal was to create a line from Cape Girardeau to a point beyond the Arkansas line. German immigrant and entrepreneur Colonel George Thilenius was the company's president. Many individuals bought bonds in 1869 to support the railroad, and the City of Cape Girardeau itself invested $150,000 in the project. The Township put in an equal sum and construction commenced. The city,

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[20]Judith Crow, "Turner Hall....Symbol of Heritage," in *Biography of Historic Cape Girardeau County*, Jess E. Thilenius, comp. (Cape Girardeau, MO: Bicentennial Commission of Cape Girardeau, Missouri, 1976), 70-71.

[21]Snider and Collins, 224-225, 252.

however, was devastated as funds were mismanaged and the company folded before even a mile of track was completed. The city and township then faced a huge debt as well as loss of trade.[22]

This severe blow to Cape Girardeau's economy brought a depression upon the community. Properties were abandoned or sold at half their value in order to pay taxes. To make matters worse, courts ruled the bonds uncollectible. An enterprising individual bought the bonds at ten cents on the dollar, then persuaded the courts to reverse their decision, thus making the city's debt even larger. In addition, new manufacturers and investors avoided the city due to its heavy indebtedness. In 1919, fifty years after the issue of the bonds, the city finally paid off its debt.[23]

In the 1880s Cape Girardeau entrepreneur Louis Houck organized the Cape Girardeau Railway Company and under adverse conditions and a tremendous lack of support was able to complete the city's first railroad. A stone railroad depot was erected at the intersection of Middle Street and Independence and the line continued to undergo improvements and extensions until it connected with the Frisco line. Houck continued to invest in railroad construction with a road from Kennett to Leachville, Arkansas, and another from Brownwood to Bloomfield. In 1894, Houck began work on his most important venture, the Missouri and Arkansas Railroad from Cape Girardeau to a connection with the St. Louis, Kennett and Southern in Dunklin County. With a distance of over one hundred miles, the road was finished in 1900 and connected all of Houck's lines.[24]

Houck's system eventually became sold to the St. Louis and San Francisco Railway Company. Under its management, lines were improved and extended including a line through Saint Genevieve that stimulated Cape Girardeau's lagging trade. The Frisco railroad, as it became known, had over 500 miles of track in southeastern Missouri at the turn of the century, but it did not have a direct connection with St. Louis or Memphis. This situation was corrected in 1904 and this vital link gave Cape Girardeau a much needed boost. Business grew steadily and the population rose dramatically.[25] Steamboats remained an important option for Cape Girardeau's trade due to its prime location on one of the most traveled river routes, but this freight method gradually became obsolete and the last packet line entered the port around 1932.

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[22]Ibid., 256-257.

[23]Ibid.,256-257.

[24]Ibid., 258-263.

[25]Ibid., 263-264.

The railroad helped to revive Cape Girardeau's failing economy, and once again downtown bustled with commercial activity. The population grew significantly from 4,815 in 1900 to 16,227 in 1930, as new industries came to the area. The most significant of these was the International Shoe Company at 700 North Main Street. Said to be the largest single unit of its kind in the world, the factory began operation in 1907 and expanded in 1921.[26] The factory became one of the city's largest employers. Its work force grew to nearly seven hundred, and houses were built on factory lots. In the 1920s, the International Shoe factory was the world's largest producer of welt shoes producing 3,600,000 pairs in 1924. At its peak, the plant employed more than 1600 workers and produced and shipped 12,000 pairs of shoes daily. The company acquired Florsheim Shoe Co. in 1953. Operations at the International Shoe Company came to a halt in the mid-1960s; however, Cape Girardeau officials enticed the Florsheim division to establish operations at the old plant. A need for modern equipment prompted Florsheim to erect a more modern facility on a 126-acre lot in 1969.[27] The original 1907 complex was completely razed in recent decades.

Other important products manufactured in the area included portland cement, cigar tobacco, brick, and lumber products. The Marquette Cement Manufacturing Company was a particularly important industry as one of the area's top employers. Begun in 1910 at the southern edge of the city near the river, the plant became one of the nation's major producers of portland cement of the 20th century. As industry in the city increased from 1904 to 1914, Cape Girardeau climbed from twentieth to eighth place in the state in manufacturing.

The coming of the railroad to Cape Girardeau in the late 19th and early 20th century resulted in a major period of growth and expansion. From 1880 to 1910, the population doubled to almost 8,500 residents. The decade of the 1920s witnessed another major increase in population as the number of residents rose from just over 10,000 in 1920 to over 16,000 in 1930. Residential areas continued to expand westward past Minnesota Avenue and numerous subdivisions were platted during the 1930s and 1940s. Cape Girardeau's post-World War II growth and development has been extensive. From 1950 to 1990, the city's population grew from just over 21,000 residents to nearly 35,000. The city has expanded its corporate limits several times to accommodate this growth, especially to the northwest and west. Residential development has been substantial in the areas northwest of the University while commercial development has evolved adjacent to Interstate 55 which was built in the 1970s along the western edge of the city. Along the southern edge of the community the Greater Cape Girardeau Industrial Park was developed along with the Regional Airport. In recent years there has been renewed interest in revitalizing the city's older residential and commercial areas.

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[26]Ibid., 214-215.

[27]The Heritage Review, (Cape Girardeau, MO), October 1971.

## 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS, ca. 1850 - 1950

In 1818, Cape Girardeau expanded its borders for the first time when Louis Lorimier's large estate was divided into lots and sold at public auction. This extensive first addition to the town was very successful and lots sold quickly. Houses erected on these lots were primarily of frame or log construction. The growing number of residents increasingly depended on imported merchandise such as dry goods and clothing, which stimulated commercial development. One of Cape Girardeau's first stores was that of D.F. Steinbeck, Louis Lorimier's son-in-law. Another was operated by Garah Davis and William Ogle. Charles G. Ellis managed a hotel in the town until 1831. He also stocked dry goods and ran a general mercantile business in the two-story log building for some time.[28] In 1821, Missouri became a state, and by 1826, the United States agreed to recognize the original Spanish land grants. This action put an end to the previous discrepancies over land ownership and Cape Girardeau's growth soon accelerated. It wasn't until the mid 1830s, however, that Cape Girardeau assumed a position of much importance. It was then that a great increase in steamboat traffic along the Mississippi transformed Cape Girardeau into a major trading and distribution center.

Cape Girardeau soon became the industrial and commercial center of Southeast Missouri. This prosperity altered the city's landscape as several brick commercial buildings were constructed near the waterfront to accommodate the growing warehouse business. These were primarily two- and three-story brick buildings that faced the river for easy loading and unloading access. Among them is the ca. 1855 three-story building at 43-49 N. Water Street. Buildings from this era along Water Street, Main Street, and Broadway remain some of Cape Girardeau's oldest standing commercial buildings. Many of these buildings' facades were rebuilt in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

In addition to the commercial buildings, numerous woodyards were established along the river to supply ships with fuel, and many large mills were built to accommodate the increased grain and flour business. The Huters Brothers operated a mill at Frederick and Good Hope Streets, and a wind-powered mill sat at the end of Bellevue Street. George Thilenius' 160-barrel mill, erected in 1866 at 430 Broadway, produced award-winning flours, and the Stein, Vogelsang, and Lane Mill produced 150 barrels of flour daily. The greatest of the local mills began as a steam-powered mill built by B.M. Horrell and James Reynolds ca. 1850. It operated in a log building that projected over the river north of Broadway, and business was so prosperous that within seven years, the owners had the building rebuilt with brick at a cost of over $6,000. The mill later operated as the Union Mill and produced 300 barrels daily.[29]

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[28]Goodspeed, 411-414; and Snider and Collins, 220.

[29]Center for Regional History and Cultural Heritage, Southeast Missouri State University, "Reconnaissance Historic Structure Survey, City of Cape Girardeau, Volume I" (November, 1985), 6.

The prolific mill business created a large demand for barrels, and Cape Girardeau's twenty-five cooperages produced a large quantity to meet this need. Barrels were produced for both flour and lime, and about fifteen percent of the containers were exported to other cities. In turn, a number of stave mills were established to support the town's coopers.[30] Several limestone and marble yards and quarries also produced building stone for the growing community. The Edward Hely Stone Company opened its quarry on South Sprigg Street in 1896, and the Cape Lime and Marble Co. had the honor of supplying stone for the Washington Monument. The area's timber industry also continued to flourish during the steamboat years as numerous woodyards were established along the river to supply the ships with fuel.[31]

Throughout the late 19th century, Cape Girardeau's commercial activity remained centered in the downtown area, which parallels the Mississippi River. Most commercial buildings in the city were constructed along N. Main and Water Streets, near the Mississippi River and the all important river trade. As a result of the railroad, Cape Girardeau's downtown area experienced considerable expansion and new construction in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. From the time of the city's first railroad in 1881 through the 1920s, larger two- and three- story brick buildings appeared along Main Street replacing earlier one-story buildings.

Construction in the downtown area reflected the city's growing importance as a regional commercial center. Some of the earliest buildings of this turn of the century construction boom are the three-story brick building at 112-114 N. Main Street and the two-story brick building at 120-124 N. Main Street, both erected ca. 1890, and the two-story brick buildings at 116 and 123 N. Main Street, constructed ca. 1900. Construction continued north on this block of Main Street with three more brick commercial buildings being erected on the block by 1916. These included the Buckner-Ragsdale Company's two-story brick building at 132-134 N. Main Street, erected in 1916. One of the area's first chain department stores, the Buckner-Ragsdale store made products available that were comparable to those found in the stores of larger cities such as St. Louis. It rapidly drew people to Cape Girardeau from surrounding communities, and its prime location at the juncture of Main Street and Broadway became known as "Quality Corner."[32]

Soon joining Buckner-Ragsdale was Hecht's Department Store at 107 N. Main Street, which was built ca. 1920. This two-story Tudor Revival style commercial building displayed one of the most notable storefronts in the city. Its large recessed entry has an arched ceiling decorated with plaster and terra cotta

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[30]Historic Structure Survey, 206.

[31]Ibid., 204-208.

[32]*The Cape Girardeau (Missouri) Republican*, Tenth Anniversary Issue, 1914, p. 49.

in an angel motif, and an octagonal free standing glass display case sits in the center of the entryway. Like the Buckner-Ragsdale store, Hecht's offered quality merchandise to local clientele. A new type of commercial establishment, department stores provided customers with an innovative and unique experience, and Hecht's and Buckner-Ragsdale soon became anchor businesses in the downtown area, drawing a wide range of customers throughout the region.

In 1903, Cape Girardeau businessmen established a Commercial Club to encourage new commercial and industrial development, secure internal improvements, and to protect local businesses from exorbitant freight charges. Located at 102 Main Street, the organization was a pivotal force in the business and professional community. The Commercial Club also encouraged organizations to come to Cape Girardeau for meetings and conventions.[33] Considerable municipal improvements were also made in the first decade of the 20th century. By 1914, the city had a sanitary sewer system installed and an improved fire-fighting system established. Brick, plank, and stone sidewalks were replaced with modern "granitoid" walks, and a total of 109 blocks of the city had paved streets.[34]

The downtown area was also the center for the city's entertainment and social life with numerous restaurants, saloons, hotels, and fraternal halls. One of the city's prime hotel establishments was the St. Charles Hotel located at 45 Main St. The Saint Charles Hotel was in operation until the 1950s at the southwest corner of Main and Themis Streets. This brick building was the city's main hotel during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The building was razed in the 1950s. The Hotel Idan-Ha on Broadway, also demolished, was another frequent stop for visitors to the city. The Elks Club on Themis Street and the Masonic Hall at 117 Broadway were also established in the downtown area during this period.

The blocks of Main Street also became the hub of the city's financial activity with several banks lining Main Street. Downtown banks included The Sturdivant Bank, the German-American Bank, First National Bank, and the Southeast Missouri Trust Co., all of which were located on Main Street. The Sturdivant Bank, the oldest bank in southeast Missouri, was established at 101 N. Main Street; and the German-American Bank was chartered in 1902 between Themis and Independence. Organized in 1891, the First National Bank opened at 118 Main Street and erected a new building at 115-117 N. Main Street in 1905. At the time of its construction, this large stone Richardsonian Romanesque style building was considered

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[33]*The Daily Republican's City Directory of Cape Girardeau, MO., for 1906* (Cape Girardeau, MO: Naeter Brothers, 1906), 32; *Cape Girardeau Republican* (Cape Girardeau, MO), Tenth Anniversary Issue, 1914, 32.

[34]*Cape Girardeau Republican* (Cape Girardeau, MO), Tenth Anniversary Issue, 1914, 34.

"the most elegant and costly bank building in Missouri outside of St. Louis and Kansas City."[35] This building was razed in 1956 and a one-story brick veneer commercial building was erected on the site.

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the commercial district also expanded west along the 200 to 500 blocks of Broadway replacing earlier residences. By 1906, numerous businesses lined Broadway and included grocers, hardware stores, druggists, jewelers, restaurants, and feed companies.[36] One of the earliest commercial buildings constructed during this period was the two-story brick building located at 115 Broadway, which was erected ca. 1880. Like many early commercial buildings, this building was built to house a place of business on the first floor and a residence on the upper story. Many of these "house stores" were built by German families and reflect traditional architectural styles of their heritage. These buildings were typically two- to three-stories in height and had a gable roof. Few examples of these buildings remain, and over time the storefronts have been altered.

By the end of the 19th century a second commercial area developed west of the downtown area to accommodate Cape Girardeau's growing population. Located at the corner of Good Hope and Sprigg Streets, this commercial hub became known as the Haarig district and served the nearby primarily German neighborhood. The development of the Haarig commercial district can be traced using the city's Sanborn Fire Insurance maps and city directories from the turn of the century. By 1884, a row of two-story brick commercial buildings lined the south side of Good Hope Street housing two dry good stores, a drug store, a barber, and other businesses. The Haas Saloon was a well known establishment in the prominent corner building situated at 637 Good Hope Street, and H. A. Nussbaum's general merchandise store was located at 633 Good Hope Street in the 1890s.

By 1908, a similar row of commercial buildings had been erected on the north side of Good Hope Street, replacing dwellings and a few one-story commercial buildings. Businesses included a butcher, cobbler, two saloons, a bakery, a bank, a hardware store, blacksmith, and a hotel. The area also contained three doctors, two dentists, a photographer, a haberdasher, a wagon maker, and at least three restaurants. This thriving commercial hub continued to grow through the 1920s and during this decade added two gas stations, a billiard hall, a fruit market, and a movie theater. Throughout its commercial development, Haarig businesses provided numerous goods and services to residents of the surrounding neighborhoods.

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[35]*The Daily Republican's City Directory for Cape Girardeau, MO., for 1906* (Cape Girardeau, MO: Naeter Brothers, 1906), 38.

[36]Ibid., 170-186.

The Haarig district had a strong German character with a majority of the businesses owned and operated by German merchants and professionals. In 1906, these included photographer G. A. Kassel, at 632 Good Hope Street, the Nussbaum & Stehr Mercantile Company at 613 Good Hope, Fred Dietiker, grocer and restaurateur located at 701 Good Hope, and the Hirsch and Nenninger Meat Market at 625 Good Hope.[37] Typical of these businessmen, was Charles Kaess, who owned and operated the Good Hope Bakery at 624 Good Hope Street. Born in Marbach, Wuertemburg, Germany, Kaess came to America at age sixteen. He gained work as a baker in Philadelphia, and after traveling to various cities, settled in Cape Girardeau in 1889. Kaess worked at a local bakery for five years, then opened his own business on Good Hope Street in 1904. The bakery became well-known and held a successful retail and wholesale business. In addition to being a prominent businessman, Kaess was an active member of the Masons and served his community as a city councilman.[38] The Good Hope Drug Store was established at 627 Good Hope Street in 1906 by James A. Kinder and Ben Miller. In 1914, the local newspaper praised the business as "one of the best known pharmacies in Southeast Missouri, where the best of everything is kept in stock and where prescriptions are given the careful attention of Mr. Kinder himself."[39] In addition to pharmaceuticals, the Good Hope Drug Store also contained "a refreshment department, where is served the best of ice cream, fruit ices, fountain drinks and confections, making it one of the popular places of Cape Girardeau."[40]

Several long-lasting businesses in the area became well-known landmarks of the Haarig district. In operation for decades, these establishments served generations of customers in the community. The most notable of these is the Meyer Hardware store. George Meyer and Herman Schwab established the business, called Meyer and Schwab Hardware Company, in 1900 at 626 Good Hope Street. In 1912, W. F. Suedekum purchased Schwab's share and the operation became known as Meyer and Suedekum Hardware. In 1916, W.H. Meyer had a two-story brick building erected at 620 Good Hope Street to house the business. Built with Colonial Revival influences, this building has original glazed tile detail around the window bays and a terra cotta panel inscribed "Meyer Bldg" on the upper facade. Suedekum bought out Meyers in 1926 and the name was shortened to Suedekum Hardware. The ownership returned to the Meyer family in 1982 when Robert E. Meyer purchased the business and assumed operation of the

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[37]*The Daily Republican's City Directory of Cape Girardeau, MO., for 1906.* (Cape Girardeau, MO: Naeter Brothers, 1906), 170-192.

[38]*Cape Girardeau Republican*, 1914 Tenth Anniversary Edition, 42.

[39]Ibid., 48.

[40]Ibid.

store. The name was officially changed to Meyer Supply in 1990.[41] In operation on Good Hope Street for nearly one hundred years, the Meyer Hardware store remains a landmark business in the Haarig district today. Another notable example is Unnerstall's Drug Store, which opened for business in 1927 at 626 Good Hope Street and eventually moved to 630 Good Hope. In operation until the late 1990s, the business remained in the Unnerstall family over generations and was a key business in the Haarig district.

The downtown commercial district continued to grow with the arrival of the automobile age in the early 20th century. In 1928, a bridge was built across the Mississippi River giving Cape Girardeau a direct connection with Illinois. Commercial buildings continued to be constructed along Broadway as the city remained a regional commercial area. Notable buildings erected during this period include the Southeast Missourian building, the Marquette Hotel, and Hecht's Department Store. Printers George and Fred Naeter began the *Southeast Missourian* newspaper in 1904 when they purchased the defunct *Daily Republican*. The brothers initially set up shop in a storeroom of the old Opera House, but the noise of the presses interfered with the theater's programs and the paper eventually was evicted. A third brother joined the family business as the paper relocated its offices to a residence at Broadway and Spanish. By 1908 the paper's success led the brothers to plan their own building at the corner of Lorimier and Broadway. When the building was completed in 1923, the paper had changed its name permanently to the *Southeast Missourian*.[42] The new Spanish Revival style building occupied an entire quarter of a block, and in 1947, two tile murals depicting the history of printing were put on its exterior east wall. The scenes depicted the newspaper industry and were titled "The Art of Printing," and "Gathering and Disseminating the News." The *Southeast Missourian* has played a large role in Cape Girardeau's history. It was instrumental in enticing factories to the city, promoting community beautification and the establishment of parks, and sponsoring a range of improvements from arts and entertainment to better roads and street lighting. The paper supported the "anti-booze campaign" which led to prohibition and furnished free movies for rural people in the late 1920s.[43]

The city's early 20th century commercial development peaked in 1928 when the Marquette Hotel was completed in conjunction with the opening of the Mississippi River bridge. The bridge was expected to bring new commerce to the city, and increase Cape Girardeau's prominence as the main city on the Mississippi between St. Louis and Memphis. At six-stories, the Spanish Revival style Marquette Hotel was the tallest building constructed in the city. Over 8,000 citizens showed up to celebrate its grand

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[41]*The Southeast Missourian* (Cape Girardeau), article on file at the Kent Library archives, Southeast Missouri State University, Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

[42]Snider and Collins, 280-282.

[43]Ibid., 282-284.

opening, and the building soon came to be one of Cape Girardeau's most well known landmarks. Well-known local contractor J.W. Gerhardt was in charge of the construction. A prominent local builder, Gerhardt also built the Southeast Missourian building, Hecht's Department Store, Central High School, and Southeast Missouri Hospital. The grandest hotel in the area, the Marquette was in operation until June of 1971. It has stood unused for several years and in 1989 its furniture and fixtures were sold at auction.[44] The building is presently vacant awaiting a new use.

Due to the economic constraints of the Great Depression and America's involvement in World War II, little construction took place in downtown Cape Girardeau during the 1930s and 1940s. The popular Art Deco and Art Moderne styles of this period are limited in the city. A few notable examples include the one-story commercial building at 221 Independence Street. This building was constructed ca. 1935 and reflects the Art Moderne style with a curved corner and structural glass blocks.

In the years after World War II, Cape Girardeau continued to expand its role as a distribution and service center. Developments were largely in the areas of health, education, legal services, building supplies, and recreation.[45] From 1950 to 1990, the city's population grew from just over 21,000 residents to nearly 35,000. The city expanded its corporate limits several times to accommodate this growth, especially to the northwest and west. The downtown area began to decline, however, in the 1970s as suburban shopping centers became the focus of consumer dollars. Commercial activity began to move away from the historic downtown center as development evolved around Interstate 55, which was built in the 1970s along the western edge of the city. Efforts to revitalize the downtown area came in the 1980s with the development of Riverfront Park, remodeling of key intersections, and various beautification projects. These improvements, which largely were funded by private capital and emphasized the city's historic character, brought new life to the downtown area and new businesses began to appear.

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[44]Southeast Missourian (Cape Girardeau, MO), 3 September 1989.

[45]Heritage Review, (Cape Girardeau, MO), July 1980.

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## PROPERTY TYPES

## COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS, ca. 1850 - 1950

Cape Girardeau's commercial buildings date from the 19th and early 20th centuries and reflect the city's commercial growth and development. These properties are primarily located in the downtown area within a few blocks of the Mississippi River and along major streets and prominent corners of early residential neighborhoods. An overwhelming majority of these buildings are of brick construction and were built with storefronts with large expanses of glass for display of goods.

### Description:

Commercial buildings in Cape Girardeau are typically one- to three-story brick buildings constructed from ca. 1850 to ca. 1950. Most of these properties are one-part or two-part commercial blocks that reflect common building forms and designs prevalent during these years.[46] One-part commercial blocks are single story buildings characterized by storefronts with large plate glass display windows, transoms, and frame or brick bulkheads. Above the storefronts are usually ornamental cornices or parapets. Decorative brick panels, or wood or sheet metal cornices are common. Two-part commercial blocks are multi-story buildings and have separate storefronts and upper facades. The storefronts of these buildings are similar in design to one-part commercial blocks and often display cast iron pilasters or brick piers. The use of Carrara glass panels for storefront remodeling in the 1930s and 1940s was also prevalent along Main Street and Broadway. Many masonry upper facades are embellished with brick corbelling at the rooflines, and arched or rectangular one-over-one sash windows. Several buildings also have upper facade decoration including terra cotta panels, cast iron hood molding, sheet metal cornices, and Tudor Revival half-timbering.

Architectural styles that are prevalent in the city's commercial areas include Italianate, Colonial Revival, Spanish Revival, and Tudor Revival. In addition, many of Cape Girardeau's turn of the century commercial buildings can be described as "Brick Front." The city also has limited examples of the Art Deco and Art Moderne styles. Commercial Italianate buildings are those that were built between ca. 1850 and ca. 1910 and feature arched windows in the upper facade, and brick or sheet metal cornices at the roofline. The oldest remaining commercial buildings in the city were designed in the Italianate style and include the Turner Hall at 300 Broadway and the three-story brick building at 43-49 N. Water Street. The use of stamped metal for building facades was also common for Italianate commercial buildings. The best

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[46]Richard Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture* (Washington, DC: The Preservation Press, 1987), 24.

example of this design is the Klostermann Block at 1-7 S. Spanish Street (National Register 1994). The influence of the Colonial Revival style is also evident on a number of turn of the century commercial buildings. These designs include quoins, jack arching over windows with keystones, and classical pilasters. The two-story building at 116 N. Main Street is representative of this style, and features windows with terra cotta pediments, jack arches, and keystones, and a decorative sheet metal cornice.

The vernacular form of Brick Front refers to buildings constructed from ca. 1910 to ca. 1940 that were built with traditional storefronts and upper facades displaying rectangular windows, corbelled brick cornices, and decorative brick panels.[47] This building form has also been referred to as "Tapestry Brick." Several of Cape Girardeau's commercial buildings reflect this terminology and can be classified as Brick Front designs. Decorative details on many of these properties include transoms of tinted leaded glass known as Luxfer glass, and terra cotta panels.

Commercial buildings designed in the Tudor Revival and Spanish Revival styles were constructed in the city's commercial areas during the 1920s. Tudor Revival buildings display gable roofs, stucco and half-timbering in the gable fields, and decorative brickwork. The most notable example of this design is the Hecht's Building at 107 N. Main Street, which displays an arched opening with a decorative ceiling of plaster and terra cotta. Other buildings with Tudor Revival detailing include the one-story buildings at 312-318 S. Ellis Street, 1127 Broadway, and 314-316 S. Sprigg Street. The building at 314-316 S. Sprigg Street was constructed ca. 1925 and retains original recessed entrances, transoms with soldier course lintels, and gable wall dormers with stucco and half-timbering.

Elements of the Spanish Revival style include terra cotta tile roofs, upper facade balconets, arched openings, and stucco exteriors. The Hotel Marquette, Cape Girardeau's most notable remaining hotel building, was constructed in the Spanish Revival style. The six-story building was designed with corner towers, terra cotta decoration, and arched openings on the storefront. Another prominent example of the Spanish Revival style is the Southeast Missourian Building at 301 Broadway, which was designed with a terra cotta tile roof, arcaded entrances, balconets on the upper facade, and a stucco exterior.

Use of the Art Deco and Art Moderne styles of the 1920s and 1930s was limited in Cape Girardeau. The one-story building at 221 Independence Street is reflective of the Art Moderne style with details such as a curved corner and structural glass blocks. The city's most notable building in this style is the Esquire Theater at 826 Broadway. This building was designed with an exterior of porcelain panels, structural glass blocks, and stepped rectangular panels in the upper facade.

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[47]Herbert Gottfried and Jan Jennings, *American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1985), 240.

## Significance:

Commercial buildings in Cape Girardeau may be significant primarily under National Register Criteria A and/or C for their role in the commercial history of the city, their ethnic heritage association, and for their architectural design. During the mid-19th century, increased steamboat traffic and Cape Girardeau's superior location on the Mississippi River established the city as a regional trading and distribution center. By 1850, several commercial buildings were constructed near the waterfront to house the growing warehouse business. A commercial district grew westward from the river banks primarily along Main and Water Streets and along the 200 to 500 blocks of Broadway. Cape Girardeau soon became the commercial center of southeast Missouri. The commercial district was lined with traditional businesses of the period such as dry goods stores, groceries, hardware stores, drugstores, furniture stores, and various other enterprises. In 1867 the city was home to twenty-seven dry goods stores, twelve groceries, five drug stores, five furniture stores, and three hardware stores. Fraternal halls, banks, and hotels were also constructed in the area.

Much of Cape Girardeau's commercial activity and landscape was shaped by its large German population, who came to the city in the 1840s and 1850s. Many German families built house stores in the downtown commercial area where they operated a business on the first floor and used the upper floors as living quarters. These buildings were typically two- to three-stories in height and had a gable roof. Few remaining examples of these buildings exist. Extant examples of this building type include the ca. 1880 two-story brick building at 115 Broadway and the two- and one-half brick building at 621-623 Good Hope Street in the Haarig district. This ca. 1875 building retains original stone sills and header course brick segmental arches and a corbelled brick cornice. The city's German residents also erected a social hall on Broadway in 1868.

As Cape Girardeau's population grew, commercial areas began to develop along major arteries near the edge of residential neighborhoods. By the 1890s, several commercial buildings had been constructed at the corner of Good Hope and S. Sprigg Streets. Known as "Haarig," this commercial area provided goods and services to residents in the south and west Cape Girardeau neighborhoods. Businesses found in the Haarig area at the turn of the century included several grocery or provision stores, various drug stores, a large furniture store, and restaurants, saloons, and hotels. Local fraternal orders also used the upper stories of these buildings for meetings and social gatherings. The Haarig district was primarily German in character with businesses serving the nearby largely German communities. This strong ethnic association continued for many decades until Haarig began to decline as a commercial center in the late 1960s. Prominent buildings which remain from this period include the Meyer Building at 620 Good Hope, constructed in 1916, the three-story brick building at 629-631 Good Hope, built ca. 1880 with Italianate influences, and the two-story brick building at 635 Good Hope, also built ca. 1880.

By the end of the 19th century, railways were replacing steamboat traffic as the main source of freight and passenger transportation. The city's first railroad appeared in 1881 and, by 1904 direct service to St. Louis was available through the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad (Frisco) line. As a result of the railroad, Cape Girardeau's downtown area experienced expansion and new construction. Larger brick buildings appeared along Main Street replacing earlier one-story buildings. The commercial district expanded west along Broadway replacing residences, and the neighborhood commercial district of Haarig developed.

Commerce and trade continued to be centered in the commercial areas of Broadway, Main Street, and Haarig in the early 20th century. With the arrival of the automobile age, a bridge spanning the Mississippi River was constructed in 1928 and Cape Girardeau became the major river crossing in the region. This led to several years of intense development with major construction of notable commercial buildings along Broadway, including the six-story Hotel Marquette, one of the region's most elite accommodations. As use of the automobile became more commonplace, new commercial construction occurred along the city's main corridors such as Morgan Oak and Sprigg Street in addition to Broadway.

Cape Girardeau's commercial properties provide important information on the growth and development of the city and the lifestyles of its inhabitants. Dozens of late 19th and early 20th century buildings remain along Water Street, Main Street, and Broadway, and in the Haarig district at Good Hope and Sprigg Streets. These buildings housed the city's most notable businesses, which had a direct impact on the economic viability of the community and provided the goods and services required for everyday life. These commercial areas were also the center for social life with numerous restaurants, lodge halls, hotels, theaters, and saloons.

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**Registration Requirements:**

Commercial buildings in Cape Girardeau are significant primarily either because of their association with the commercial growth and development of the city, or their historic association with the area's ethnic heritage, and/or their architectural design.

In order to be historically significant under National Register Criterion A, a building must be the site of a business of particular importance to the community, exemplify a notable building type or use, or be associated with an important event or occurrence. The Klostermann Block (National Register/1994) was previously listed under this criteria. This 1905 building housed one of the leading retail operations in the region and reflects Cape Girardeau's early 20th century prosperity. The Klostermann Block is the only commercial property in Cape Girardeau that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

To be architecturally significant under National Register Criterion C, a building must be a notable example of a particular style or possess unusual design elements and detailing. The building must also possess integrity of setting and location, design, workmanship, and materials. To be individually eligible under this criteria, a building must retain the majority of its original storefront design, original upper facade decoration, and notable interior details. The Klostermann Block also met this criteria when it was listed on the National Register in 1994.

Commercial buildings may also meet registration requirements if they form a cohesive grouping to meet historic district criteria. To be eligible as an historic district under Criterion A, a grouping of buildings will be within the traditional commercial areas of Cape Girardeau and reflect traditional businesses, and the growth and development of the community in the 19th and early 20th centuries. This growth and development in Cape Girardeau includes the historic impact and importance of ethnic groups to the community. To be eligible, these buildings must be contiguous at their original locations, and a significant concentration and majority must retain integrity of design, workmanship, materials, feeling and association. Buildings may retain integrity if they possess original or rebuilt storefronts in traditional patterns. Rebuilt storefronts should reference their original configuration including central or offset entrances and be largely translucent in design. Buildings with storefronts which have been enclosed with solid panels of brick, frame, or other materials will no longer retain integrity. Multi-story commercial buildings retaining integrity will also possess the majority of their original upper facade detailing which will be readily visible, and not concealed or obscured.

To be eligible as an historic district under Criterion C, most buildings must pre-date 1950, be within the traditional commercial areas of Cape Girardeau, and the majority must retain integrity of location, design, workmanship, materials, feeling and association. Buildings which retain integrity are those which retain most of their original upper facade detailing and materials, and collectively possess the feeling and

association of the pre-1950 era. Buildings may retain integrity if they possess original or rebuilt storefronts in traditional patterns. Rebuilt storefronts should reference their original configuration including central or offset entrances and be largely translucent in design. Buildings with storefronts which have been enclosed with solid panels of brick, frame, or other materials will no longer retain integrity. Multi-story commercial buildings retaining integrity will possess original upper facade detailing which will be readily visible and not concealed or obscured. Contributing buildings will have the majority of their window openings extant, and windows will not be enclosed with brick or other materials.

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## GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

This multiple property documentation form was prepared to include historic properties within the 1999 boundaries of the City of Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

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## SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS

This multiple property documentation form was prepared at the request of the Cape Girardeau Historic Preservation Commission. In 1999, the Historic Preservation Commission contracted with Thomason and Associates of Nashville, Tennessee (Contractor) to conduct an intensive level historic resource survey of the downtown and Haarig areas and to prepare a nomination for commercial properties within the city limits. The survey included residential, public, and religious properties in addition to commercial properties.

Initial efforts included the surveying of all pre-1950 properties within the downtown area of Cape Girardeau. The boundary of this survey was approximately Water Street on the east, Middle Street on the west, Broadway on the north, and Morgan Oak Street on the south. A second area of the survey was conducted in the district known as "Haarig" along the 600 block of Good Hope Street and the 300 block of South Sprigg Street.

The Contractor photographed all properties within this area, prepared architectural descriptions, and completed Missouri Historic Property Inventory Forms. Following the on-site field survey, the Contractor completed extensive research on the history of Cape Girardeau at the archives of Kent Library on the campus of Southeast Missouri State University and at the Cape Girardeau Public Library.

On July of 1999, the Contractor met in Cape Girardeau with representatives of the Historic Preservation Program of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. The purpose of this meeting was to review the project area and identify potentially National Register eligible buildings and districts. As a result of this meeting, a potentially eligible district was identified along North Main Street and Broadway, and along in the Haarig area at Good Hope and South Sprigg Streets. It was recommended that a multiple property documentation form be prepared on the commercial history and architecture of Cape Girardeau along with accompanying historic district nominations.

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