



MISSOURI PRESERVATION

Preserving Place And Community For Future Generations

SPRING 2021 PRESERVATION NEWS

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OZARK STONE ARCHITECTURE ON ROUTE 66

Ruth Keenoy

Commonly seen along Missouri's Route 66 are buildings patterned with Ozark stone exteriors – restaurants, cabins, stores, gas stations and houses. Ozark stone buildings are popular on Route 66 for a variety of reasons. Materials were easy to come by and inexpensive to use – particularly in southwestern Missouri where Ozark stone is most plentiful. The eye-catching stonework was a way to attract customers. Architecture was an important part of selling, particularly for businesses along a well-traveled highway such as Route 66. As the road became increasingly busy and populated with roadside businesses, owners sought ways to attract customers – often the building itself provided the appeal. Regional associations were charming to tourists and local businesses played on this technique. Nothing demonstrated a regional Ozark connection quite as effectively as giraffe stone. A great example that unfortunately burned in the 1970s (and was never rebuilt) is Devil's Elbow Café. According to Pulaski County historian Terry Primas, local residents referred to the building as "The Alamo" in reference to the building's "rustic stone" exterior and flame-like stone detail spanning the upper façade.

Ozark stonework is frequently referred to as "giraffe" stone because the colorful mortared stone resembles the pattern of a giraffe's coat. The vernacular building tradition was inexpensive and easy to assemble – two factors that worked exceedingly well, particularly during the Great Depression when money and materials were difficult to obtain. The Ozarks region of Missouri, Oklahoma, Kansas and Arkansas provided the source of the colorful rocks used to create the patterned masonry buildings (hence the nickname, Ozark stone). Builders used rocks found close to the surface – "sandstone, limestone and dolomite," incorporating a building method known as "web wall construction" (Sheals, 2013, p. 12). Utilizing flat stones no more than four inches in width, the stones were stacked in an irregular pattern and mortared together.

During times



*The former Devil's Elbow Cafe near the Big Piney River
(Image courtesy of Joe Sonderman).*

when cement and concrete were hard to come by, mortar was made from lime (crumbled limestone), sand and water and sealed with a ribbon joint which is raised, rounded and smooth. Often builders painted or darkened the mortar to set off the contrasting color of the stones. The finished effect was colorful and no two buildings looked exactly alike.

Situated approximately one-half mile west of the former Devil's Elbow Café is another example of Ozark stonework along Route 66, the Piney Beach Cabins. Constructed as eight individual stone cabins to serve as a roadside motor court along the "new" Highway 66 in Pulaski County near Hooker's Cut (a divided four-lane section of the road constructed in the 1940s), each cabin represented an individual



*Piney Beach Cabins near Hooker
(Photo by Ruth Keenoy, 2015)*



Dallas E. Wells, the stone cutter whose work Piney Beach displays today (Source: Veterans Magazine, September 1947. Clipping courtesy of Terry Primas and Sherry Wells Ernst — daughter of Dallas E. Wells)

state – the eight states that Route 66 extends through (Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California). All but one of the original cabins still stands. Piney Beach Cabins are believed to have been constructed using stone that came from property owned the Wells Family. Dallas Wells was a stone cutter who quarried "milky white to deep red" Ozark stone – colors demonstrated in the Piney Beach Cabins (Toops, 1947). After World War II, Dallas and his older brother, Sterling, built a service station and garage near Hooker's Cut. The family also operated a grocery store near the service station, relocated from the Old Route 66 alignment that was bypassed when the new route opened in the 1940s. The Wells capitalized on their Route 66 location by setting up displays of the cut stone along the highway

– it was not only intended to advertise the stone cutting business but to provide a colorful advertisement for the gas station, garage and store owned and operated by the family.

By the late 1930s, a method known as "split slab" stone cutting had been introduced which utilized larger, thinner pieces of stones as an exterior veneer. The method worked extremely well with giraffe pattern work and made the process less labor intensive. Dallas Wells did not subscribe to the practice, however, continuing to produce stones no less than two (preferably three) inches deep – another indication that his stone work was used for Piney Beach Cabins. In Wells' view, a building constructed with the thicker stones would "last forever" (Toops, 1947). Certainly in the case of Piney Beach Cabins, the stone has lasted throughout the duration, including a recent flood in 2017 that resulted in all of the cabins being underwater for days. When the river receded, interiors were ruined but the Ozark stone exteriors were unscathed – as colorful and varied as when constructed by owner Riley Davenport in the early 1950s.



*Shamrock Court, Sullivan
(Photo by Ruth Keenoy, 2014)*

Ozark stonework is one of the most popular and enduring of Missouri's vernacular building traditions. Treasures such as these are not infrequent in Missouri but many are endangered. Some have been successfully preserved and are currently in use, such as the Wagon

Wheel in Cuba, Missouri, which opened in 1938 and is reportedly the longest continuously operating Route 66 roadside motel in the United States. Others are in serious need of attention and face imminent loss if secure ownership cannot be assured in the near future. One example is Shamrock Court in Sullivan, Missouri, which is vacant and for sale. Each year that passes without an owner provides a greater chance that this building will not be saved. While abandoned Ozark stone buildings may be interesting to observe along Route 66, such properties – if not stabilized – disappear from our roadsides and are a lost opportunity for smaller communities to capitalize on Missouri's Route 66 tourism.

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THANK YOU, BILL HART

It is with a mix of sadness and gratitude that Missouri Preservation announces the departure of Bill Hart as Executive Director, effective December 15, 2020. Bill started with Missouri Preservation as a Field Representative in 2008 and transitioned to Executive Director in the summer of 2014. His travels as field representative brought him to all of Missouri's 114 counties and made him the go-to resource on small-town Missouri. We would like to thank him for his many years of service and wish him luck in his new role as the Executive Director of the Perry County Historical Society.

Administrator Riley Price has assumed the role of Interim-Director.



Bill at the 2019 Gala with Mimi Stiritz and Mary Pillsbury-Wainwright

ADVOCACY UPDATE

Missouri Preservation was excited to participate in the 2021 National Preservation Advocacy Week. Normally held as a week-long gathering in Washington D.C., advocacy week went virtual for 2021. This annual meet-up is hosted by Preservation Action, a 501(c)4 nonprofit created in 1974 to serve as the national grassroots lobby for historic preservation. A huge thank you to Elizabeth Rosin and Rachel Consolloy of Rosin Preservation for organizing the meetings with Missouri legislators. The primary goal of these meetings was to encourage legislators to support the federal historic tax credit, including newly proposed efforts to strengthen and increase the tax credit.



Proposed Measures

Temporary Enhancements

- Increase the HTC from 20% to 30% to address pandemic related challenges

Permanent Enhancements

- Make it easier to complete small rehabilitation projects by increasing the credit to 30% for projects with less than \$2.5 million in qualified rehabilitation expenses;
- Make more buildings eligible for historic tax credits by lowering the substantial rehabilitation threshold;
- Increase the value of HTCs by eliminating the requirement that the value of the HTC must be deducted from a building's basis (assessed property value);
- Make the HTC easier to use by non-profit organizations for projects like community health centers, local art centers, and affordable housing, by eliminating IRS restrictions that make it difficult to partner with developers.

Legislators were also asked to support the Historic Preservation Fund, which is currently being funded but not to the full extent. The Historic Preservation Fund supports State Historic Preservation Offices among other things, and is responsible for the grants that CLG communities and other organizations in Missouri receive for preservation activities, including past funding of Missouri Preservation conferences.

Elizabeth Rosin, Rosin Preservation
 Rachel Consolloy, Rosin Preservation
 Jason Swords, Sunflower Development Group
 Jeff & Carolina Neal, Neal Group Construction
 Erika Brice, Rector Development

We met with the offices of:
 Senator Roy Blunt
 Representative Cleaver
 Representative Blaine Luetkemeyer
 Representative Sam Graves
 Representative Jason Smith
 Representative Billy Long



Pictured (l to r): Riley Price, Elizabeth Rosin, Sean Manzelli, Rep. Billy Long, Jeff & Carolina Neal, and Rachel Consolloy.

REMEMBERING OUR FRIEND, JAMES BAUGHN

Missouri Preservation was saddened to receive the news in December of 2020 of the sudden passing of our dear friend and board member, James Baughn. James served on the Board of Missouri Preservation since 2016 and was the mastermind behind the creation of our interactive Places in Peril map. Outside of Missouri Preservation, his contribution to the world of preservation and beyond were enormous, including the creation of bridgehunter.com. He will be deeply missed.



Old Appleton Bridge by James Baughn

A memorial service for James will be held Sunday, June 6, 2021 at Bollinger Mill State Historic Site. The memorial will start at 1:00 pm. Please bring a blanket or chair for seating.

Information obtained via Cape Girardeau County History Center.

WELCOME TO THE BOARD!



We want to welcome John Rodgers of Phoenix Preservation and Consulting to the board of Missouri Preservation! John served as the Executive Director of the Donaldsonville, Louisiana Downtown Development District for three years, served three years as the Main Street Donaldsonville manager and also served on their Industrial Development Board and local historic district commission. He and his family moved to St. Joseph, Missouri in 2018 where John now focuses full time on his company Phoenix Preservation & Consulting, LLC primarily working on historic window and door restorations, traditional wooden storm windows, and occasional plaster work.

We also would like to welcome back Carolee Hazlet of Moberly!

HELP MISSOURI PRESERVATION GROW OUR MEMBERSHIP — TELL A FRIEND!



With so many forces
dividing us,
preservation is one of
the few things that
brings us together —
as a nation,
as communities and
as people

STEPHANIE K. MEEKS

Did you know that Missouri Preservation relies almost solely upon the generosity of our members to exist? We would not be here without your continued support!

Help us grow awareness for our organization and our mission of preserving place and community for future generations by telling your friends!

UPCOMING WEBINARS

Look Up! Using Facade Assessment as a Preservation Tool

Thursday, June 10, 2021 | 12 pm via ZOOM | FREE
with Julia Manglitz of TreanorHL

Deferred or insufficient maintenance is all too common for existing buildings. If left unchecked, maintenance issues can cause a building to become dangerous for occupants or passersby. What best practices can we use to better care for historic and older buildings? How can we ensure that historic buildings are safe and do not play into negative stereotypes about such buildings?

Facade assessments provide a snapshot in time that enable informed planning for repair projects. These assessments aim to understand the construction techniques, materials, and developmental history of a building and prioritize repairs — including identifying which conditions require immediate attention for safety and which do not. The team performing the assessment should be customized to the building needs and can be scaled to support short-term needs, long-term goals, or both. Come to understand the diversity of facade assessment techniques, when to employ them, and how to build the best team to suit a project.

To register, visit www.preservemo.org or click this direct link in your browser <https://preservemo.org/event/look-up-using-facade-assessment-as-a-preservation-tool/>





SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 2021 VIRTUAL HONOR AWARDS ANNOUNCEMENT!

TUESDAY, JUNE 8TH @ 6PM

More information will become available in the coming weeks. Get updates at www.preservemo.org or make sure you're subscribed to our email list. Members will receive an invitation in the mail and/or via email.

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MISSOURI PRESERVATION
Preserving Place And Community For Future Generations

MANGROVE
*Restoring Community...
One Historic Building at a Time.*

 **JOPLIN** HISTORICAL
NEIGHBORHOODS