



Missouri Alliance for Historic Preservation

Missouri's Most Endangered Historic Places 2013

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Missouri Preservation announced its List of Most Endangered Places for 2013 at a press conference held at the Historic Henry Miller House at 106 Cape Road in Bloomfield, which is included on the 2013 List of Most Endangered Historic Places. The Most Endangered Historic Places Program, one of Missouri Preservation's most visible programs, brings much needed attention to threatened historic resources throughout the state. The Most Endangered Program annually spotlights historic resources that are imperiled. Each year Missouri Preservation solicits nominations from around the State, evaluates the merits of the submissions, and announces the Most Endangered. Throughout the year, Missouri Preservation provides technical assistance, advocacy, and planning support for the listed properties.

Penny Pitman, Chairperson of the Most Endangered Historic Places Committee, and Bill Hart, Missouri Preservation's Field Representative, made the announcement. An additional list of Watched Properties was announced. "The Watched Properties include historic sites where there is concern, but no immediate threat to their existence at this time," Pitman said, "We are happy to recognize properties around the state which are imperiled for one reason or another, including abandonment, proposed development, or lack of available resources. The first Endangered Historic Places announcement was made in 2000 and was instituted as a media campaign aimed at calling attention to endangered historic resources statewide, serving as a call to action. In 2010 the program was expanded and staff support and a board liaison was assigned to each of the endangered places to assess the immediate needs of the endangered resource and assist the nominators to help ensure the preservation of each of the endangered resources. The announcement of The Most Endangered Historic Places is made at one of the sites chosen to be on the official list, usually during May, which is National Preservation Month.

We at Missouri Preservation would like to thank our hosts, the people of Bloomfield. We'd like to extend a special thanks to Chris Kinder for coordinating our visit there. After the announcement, Drs. Bert and Mary Ann Kellerman and Annie Criddle of the Kellerman Foundation for Historic Preservation hosted a reception in honor of our Most Endangered Places at the Kellermans' fabulous historic home in Cape Girardeau. Our deepest gratitude to them for their generosity and commitment to historic preservation in Missouri. Read more about the Foundation in the article about the Henry Miller House below.

We are indeed grateful to the preservationists who chose to nominate these historic places to our Most Endangered List. It is through you that we give voice to the cause of saving places that matter.

The 2013 List of Missouri's Most Endangered Historic Places (in no particular order) is as follows:

- The Henry Miller House, Bloomfield – Stoddard County**
- The Poage-Arnold House "Three Gables," Kansas City – Clay County**
- The Ozark Community Building, Ozark – Christian County**
- The Phillip Kaes House, Sherman – St. Louis County**
- Camp Zoe, Round Spring – Shannon County**
- The James Clemens House, City of Saint Louis**
- The Frizel-Welling House, Jackson – Cape Girardeau County**
- Greenwood Cemetery, Hillsdale – St. Louis County**
- The Book House, Rock Hill – St. Louis County***



On the 2013 List of Missouri's Most Endangered Historic Places

The Book House

9719 Manchester Road
Rock Hill, St. Louis County, Missouri 63119



The "Book House," as it is known by the business that has been located there for the past thirty years, is a center hall Gothic Revival Style house, and was likely constructed in the early 1860s. The property switched hands among early French St. Louis settlers and eventually ended up in the hands of noted Mississippi River Captain George C. Keith, who was most likely the owner at the time that this building was constructed. The style that Captain Keith chose for the home he built on Manchester Road became popular in the early 1800s beginning with the works of Maryland architect Alexander Jackson Davis, who published a design book in 1832 entitled *Rural Residences*.

His guide book featured the romantic, picturesque Gothic Revival houses as the ideal style in which to construct a country house. American landscape designer, horticulturist and writer Andrew Jackson Downing promoted the Gothic styled house as perfect for the country, with its wide, often double-gabled front and expansive porch. It may be that, if Captain Keith were the house's first owner, that the style might have also been derived of the "Steamboat Gothic," which was used for many of the river boats he encountered, with their wrap-around galleries decorated with ornate wood "gingerbread" trim. Buildings in the Gothic Revival Style are quite rare in Missouri and especially in St. Louis County where this building is located, and this is possibly the oldest Gothic Revival style house in St. Louis County.

The owner of the Book House building is entertaining a sale to a developer of the property on which the Book House stands. The developer reportedly wants to build a drive-in self-storage facility. Although neither application for a demolition permit nor plans for the new storage facility have yet been submitted to the City of Rock Hill, the owner has acknowledged that this is his intention and has served the Book House tenants with a notice that their lease will not be renewed and advised them to vacate within ninety days.

It is hoped that by calling attention to the House through Missouri Preservation's Most Endangered Historic Places Program, that the City of Rock Hill might be persuaded to reject the demolition permit and that the owners and developers would consider other real estate development that would preserve this rare and significant example of Gothic Revival architecture in St. Louis County.