

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Downing House

AND/OR COMMON

Downing House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

311 S. Main

CITY, TOWN

Memphis

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
#9 - Hon. Harold L. Volkmer

STATE

Missouri

CODE

029

COUNTY

Scotland

CODE

199

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: <u>Headquarters</u>

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Scotland County Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER

311 S. Main

CITY, TOWN

Memphis

VICINITY OF

STATE

Missouri

63555

Scotland County
Historical
Society

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Recorder of Deeds, Scotland County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Memphis

STATE

Missouri

63555

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

1. Missouri's Contribution to American Architecture

DATE

1928

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

published: St. Louis: St. Louis Architectural Club

CITY, TOWN

STATE

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-
2. Missouri Historic Sites Catalogue State
1963
State Historical Society of Missouri
Corner, Hitt and Lowry Streets
Columbia, Missouri 65201

 3. Missouri State Historical Survey State
1979
Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City, Missouri 65201

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT

GOOD

FAIR

DETERIORATED

RUINS

UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED

ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE

MOVED

DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Downing House is a two-story, brick building exhibiting features of both Greek Revival and Italian Villa architectural styles. Highlighted by a three-story tower, the house is further distinguished by prominent quoins, a modillioned cornice and a mixture of round-arched and linteled windows. Although twentieth-century frame additions partially obscure the original exterior plan of the structure, these alterations could be removed easily, restoring the building to near-original appearance.

Overall dimensions of the house, excluding the frame garage on the south, are approximately 68' north-south and 48' east-west. The house is constructed of brick laid in common bond and currently painted white. The plan consists of a rectangular, north-facing block, with a square tower centered on its eastern facade and a T-shaped section located on its southeast edge, its eastern end aligned with that of the tower. Evidently the house was built in two stages, as the bricks do not interlace between the various sections.¹

The main block, which appears to have been built first, is Greek Revival in style. Its northern gable end forms the primary facade, and a modillioned cornice frames the pediments on both gable ends. Floor-length, double-hung windows pierce the three-bay northern facade, and a wrought iron balcony provides interest at the second story level. The tower and rear section, which lend the building the appearance of the Italian Villa style, appear to have been built after the main block. However, construction and decorative details indicate they were probably built shortly after the main block.² Three stories in height, the tower is pierced by tall, round-arched windows. The quoins and modillioned cornice of the main block are continued on the tower and on the rectangular, two-story portion of the rear block. Alterations obscure the construction details of the one-story, rear kitchen.

During the twentieth century, successive alterations were made which modified the exterior appearance of the house. The open area between the tower and the rear block, which had been the location of a balustraded balcony, was entirely enclosed. The rear kitchen wing was completely enveloped in additions. A balustrade which had capped the tower was removed, as were the original, louvered window shutters. The porch nestled in the northeast corner of the house was raised slightly and modified, and its original balustrade was replaced. The east entrance, under that porch, superceded the north door as the primary entryway. A two-story, frame garage was constructed on the south, adjoining the kitchen wing.³

The interior of the house also suffered many alterations. Its capacious rooms were partitioned into smaller areas; all but one of the many original fireplaces were closed off; many of the original pine floors were covered; plumbing was added; and the high ceilings were lowered. Fortunately, despite these modifications, most of the exceptional Greek Revival woodwork which characterized the interior remains intact. Classically inspired surrounds, consisting of pilasters supporting entablatures with dentate bands and projecting cornices frame the doorways and windows of the major first floor rooms. Simpler, eared surrounds frame the openings of the remaining first and second floor rooms.

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The Downing House is located in a quiet, residential area about one and 1/2 blocks from the Memphis courthouse square. Despite insensitive alterations, the house retains many of its salient features. It is structurally sound and has recently been equipped with a new wood shingle roof. The Scotland County Historical Society is in the process of removing partitions and lowered ceilings, with the ultimate goal of complete restoration of the house as a community center and local historical museum.

FOOTNOTES

1. The theory of the two-stage construction of the Downing House was advanced by W. Philip Cotton, Jr. in consultation with the Scotland County Historical Society.
2. The two stages of construction may reflect a delay or interruption of the completion of the original design, rather than a stylistic shift from Greek Revival to Italian Villa. Early examples of the Italian Villa style, such as Henry A. Sykes' Stebbins House in Springfield, Mass., often retained prominent Classical features while incorporating elements such as towers and round arched windows into the design. See: Henry Russell-Hitchcock, Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1971), pp. 138-139.
3. During the period the house functioned as a hotel, a large frame addition was added on the west. Although since removed, the outline of that wing is still evident on the west facade.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) local historical significance.
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1858

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Thomas J. Broadwater/Solomon Jenkins

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

One of the oldest remaining structures in Scotland County, the Downing House is an important northeast Missouri example of a house incorporating architectural elements of both the Greek Revival and Italian Villa styles. The home was built ca. 1858 for William G. Downing, Scotland County pioneer and prominent Memphis citizen. Recently acquired by the Scotland County Historical Society, the house has become the focal point of an enthusiastic local preservation effort.

One of Scotland County's earliest settlers, William G. Downing (1821-1901) came to Missouri from Fauquier County, Virginia, with his father and brother in 1837. Reaching Scotland County, the family settled in the Smoot neighborhood about eight miles west of Memphis, in an area known as the "Pulled Tight" district. There Downing taught school, later moving to Memphis and establishing a thriving mercantile business. In 1853 he was appointed one of the original trustees of the town of Memphis, and in 1884 he was appointed a member of the Board of Railroad and Warehouse Commissioners of Missouri, serving in that capacity until 1891.¹

Downing built his house ca. 1858, utilizing the labor of slaves he brought with him from Virginia. Thomas J. Broadwater, also a Virginian, was hired as contractor² and Solomon Jenkins, architect of the Scotland County Courthouse (1858), is thought to have been the architect. Although Jenkins' earlier known works, such as Westminster Hall, the State School for the Deaf, and the State Mental Hospital (all in Fulton, Mo.) were wholly Classical in style, his Brannock Hall (1856) at Central Methodist College in Fayette was an experiment in the Italian style, with two asymmetrical towers flanking a central, pedimented bay.³ A similar, square, flat-roofed tower adorns the Downing House, suggesting the hand of Downing in the second stage of construction at least. In addition, Jenkins, Broadwater and Downing were all involved in the construction of the Scotland County Courthouse, as is evidenced in the court records.⁴ Downing may well have provided some of his slaves for hire in the construction. At any rate, he was certainly acquainted with Jenkins and the Downing House bears such similarities with Brannock Hall as to suggest Jenkins as the architect or consultant in the design and construction of the Downing House.

A variety of romantic legends recall the Downing House during the Civil War years. According to one story, Downing, a southern sympathizer and slave owner, traded houses with his friend and neighbor H.G. Pitkin, in order to spare his newly-built house from destruction by Union soldiers.⁵ The house changed hands several times after it was sold by Downing in 1865, and eventually fell into service as the Park Hotel, a rooming house for salesmen and theatrical people.⁶ Following its use as a hotel, it changed hands again and eventually was purchased by Dr. A.M. Keethler, a prominent local citizen who owned the house for many years.⁷

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On September 1st, 1978, the Scotland County Historical Society obtained ownership of the Downing House. The Society hopes to remove the exterior and interior alterations which detract from the building's original integrity and to restore it as closely as possible to its nineteenth-century appearance. Undoubtedly the most architecturally and historically significant building in Memphis, the house will be a choice location for a museum and civic/cultural center.

The survey of Missouri's historic sites is based on the selection of sites as they relate to theme studies outlined in "Missouri's State Historic Preservation Plan." Therefore, the Downing House is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as an example of the theme of "Architecture."

FOOTNOTES

1. Biographical information on William G. Downing was found in: History of Lewis, Clark, Knox and Scotland Counties, Missouri (St. Louis: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1887), pp. 420, 429, 537; Walter Williams, ed., A History of Northeast Missouri (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1913), p. 615; "Hard Boiled Eggs Cause Death of William G. Downing," St. Louis Republic, April 10, 1901.
2. Mention of Broadwater as contractor of the courthouse and the Downing House was found in obituary notices (origin and date unknown) contained in the files of the Scotland County Historical Society, Memphis, Mo.
3. A study of public buildings known to have been constructed by Jenkins was included by H. Gale Shipman in "Brannock Hall" (University of Missouri, Columbia, 1967).
4. County Court Book A, Scotland County, Memphis, Mo.
5. "Traded Residences to Prevent Destruction," The Memphis Reveille, September 18, 1941; A.M. Keethler, "A History of the Old Downing Property at 311 South Main Street" (Memphis, Mo., 1967), p. 2. Marie Pitkin Bourn, granddaughter of H.G. Pitkin, related this story in her handwritten history of the Downing House.
6. Bourn, handwritten history of the Downing House. In the Plat Book of Scotland County, Missouri (northwest Publishing Co., 1898), p. 19, the Downing House is shown labelled as "hotel."
7. Keethler, "A History of the Old Downing Property," pp. 2, 3.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Bourn, Marie Pitkin. Handwritten histories of the Downing House, Memphis, Mo., 1978.
2. "Hard Boiled Eggs Cause Death of William G. Downing," St. Louis Republic, April 10, 1901.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .46 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME _____

QUADRANGLE SCALE _____

UTM REFERENCES

A 1,5 5,7,0 3,0,0 4,4 7,8 5,0,5

B

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: Commencing 130 feet south of the southeast corner of Block 17, in the original town, now City of Memphis, Missouri, thence west 240 feet, thence south 80 feet, thence east 240 feet, thence north 80 feet, to the point of beginning.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

1. Claire F. Blackwell, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Dept. of Natural Resources

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 176

TELEPHONE

314/751-4096

CITY OR TOWN

Jefferson City,

STATE

Missouri 65102

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Director, Department of Natural Resources and State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

ATTEST: KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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3. History of Lewis, Clark, Knox and Scotland Counties, Missouri. St. Louis: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1887.
4. Hitchcock, Henry-Russell. Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1971.
5. Illustrated Historical Atlas of Scotland Co., Missouri. Philadelphia: R.H. Harrison, 1876.
6. Keethler, A.M. "A History of the Old Downing Property at 311 South Main Street." (Typewritten) Memphis, Mo., 1967.
7. Memphis, Mo. County Record Book A, Scotland County, Mo.
8. Memphis, Mo. Files of Scotland County Historical Society. Obituaries of Thomas J. Broadwater.
9. The Memphis Reveille, September 18, 1941.
10. Plat Book of Scotland County, Missouri. Northwest Publishing Co., 1898.
11. Scotland County Missouri in Retrospect 1976. Memphis, Mo.: The Scotland County Bi-Centennial Committee and Historical Society, 1977.
12. Shipman, H. Gale. "Brannock Hall." (Typewritten.) University of Missouri, Columbia, 1967.
13. Williams, Walter, ed. A History of Northeast Missouri. Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1913.

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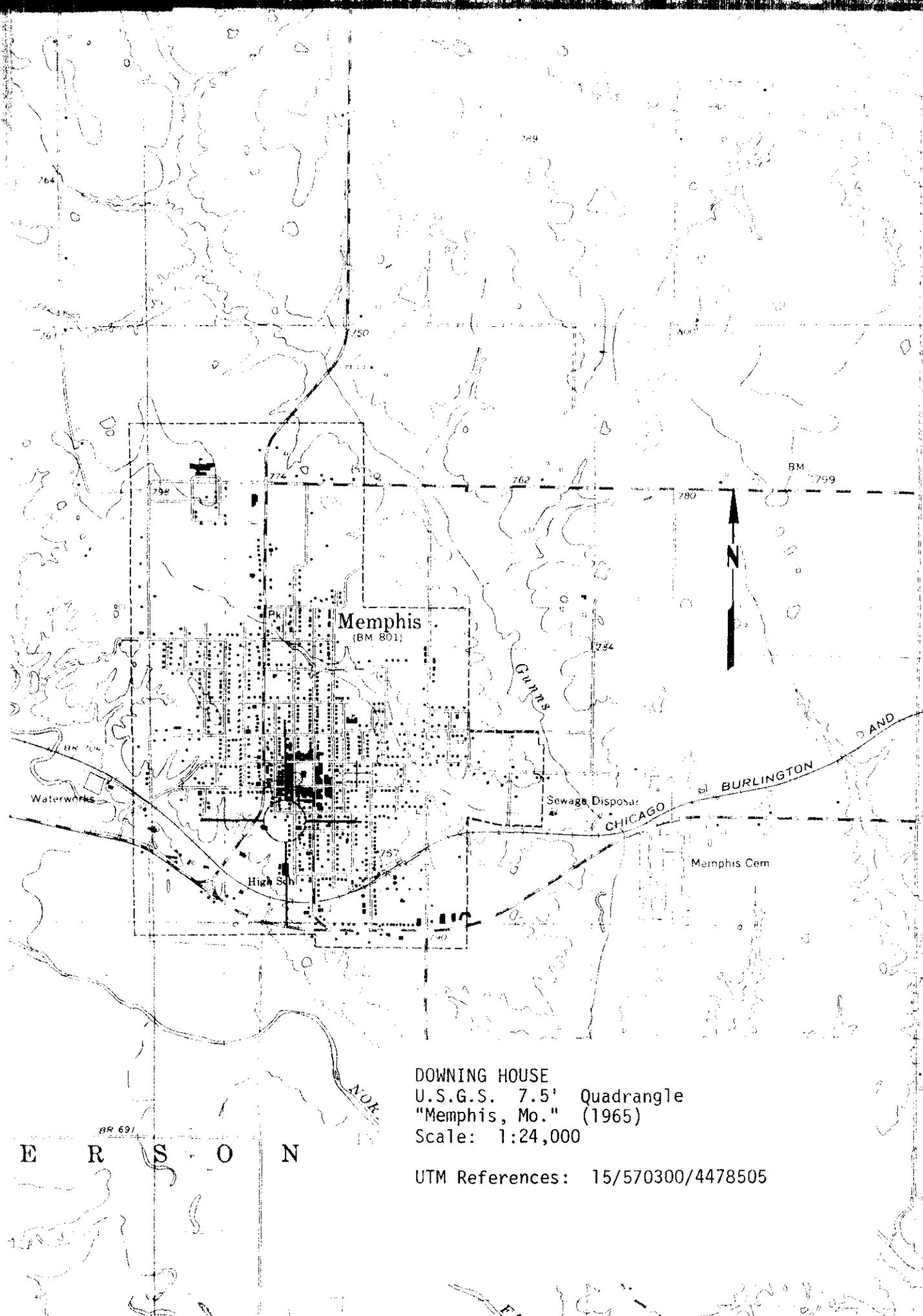
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2. LeGene S. Padgett
Scotland County Historical Society
Scotland County Courthouse
Memphis, Missouri 63555

June, 1978

816/465-2404



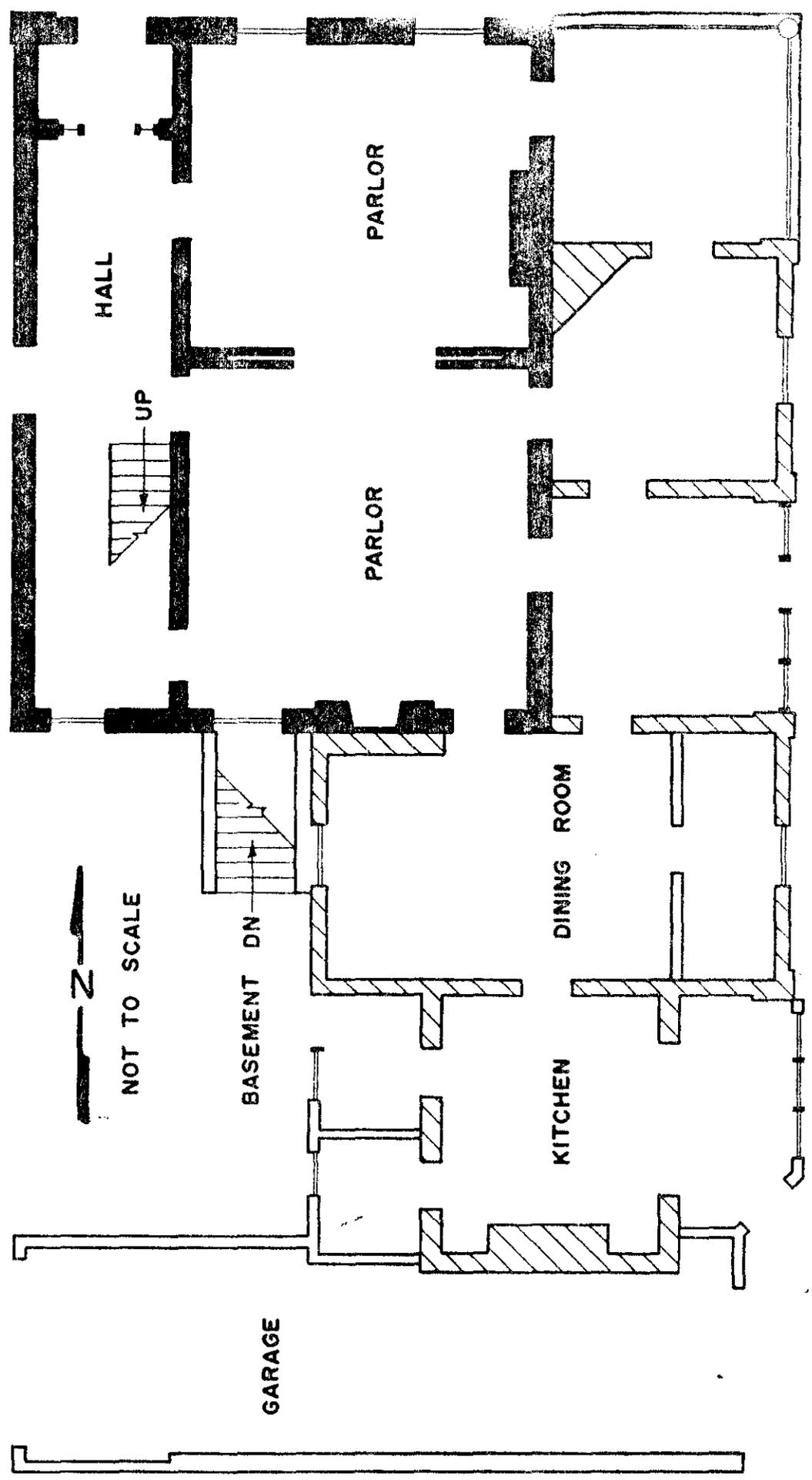
DOWNING HOUSE
U.S.G.S. 7.5' Quadrangle
"Memphis, Mo." (1965)
Scale: 1:24,000

UTM References: 15/570300/4478505

FIRST FLOOR PLAN
 DOWNING HOUSE
 MEMPHIS, MISSOURI

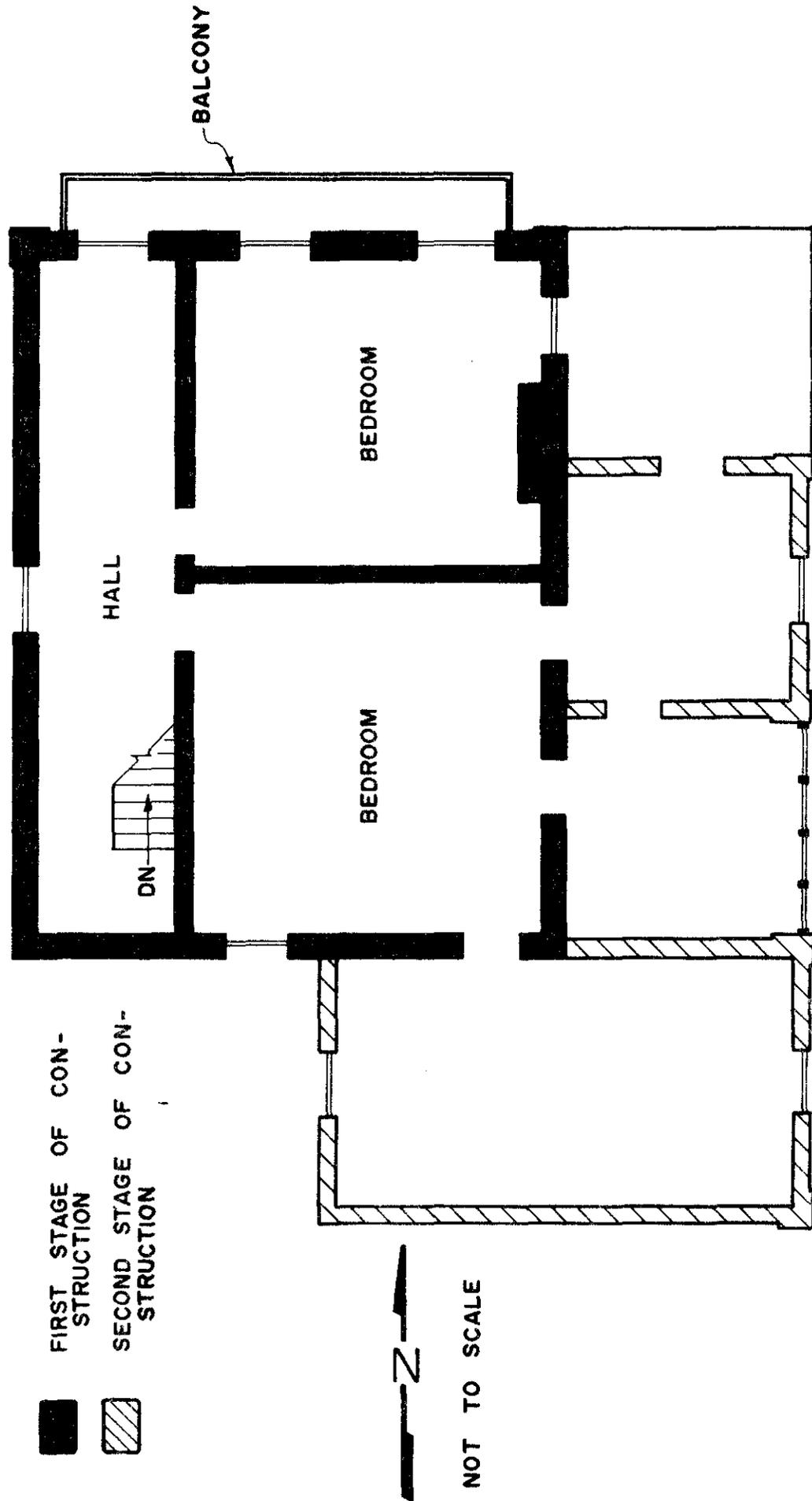
- FIRST STAGE OF CONSTRUCTION
- ▨ SECOND STAGE OF CONSTRUCTION
- TWENTIETH-CENTURY ALTERATIONS

FROM PLANS BY W.P. COTTON 21 AUGUST 1978



SECOND FLOOR PLAN
DOWNING HOUSE
MEMPHIS, MISSOURI

FROM PLANS BY W. P. COTTON 21 AUGUST 1978



DOWNING HOUSE

Memphis, Missouri

Photographer: C.F. Blackwell

March 1979

Neg. Loc.: Dept. of Natural Resources,

P.O. Box 176, Jefferson City, Mo. 65102

View from northeast, showing frame additions.

#1



#2

DOWNING HOUSE

Memphis, Missouri

Photographer: C.F. Blackwell

March 1979

Neg. Loc.: Dept. of Natural Resources,
P.O. Box 176, Jefferson City, Mo. 65102

View from southeast.



DOWNING HOUSE

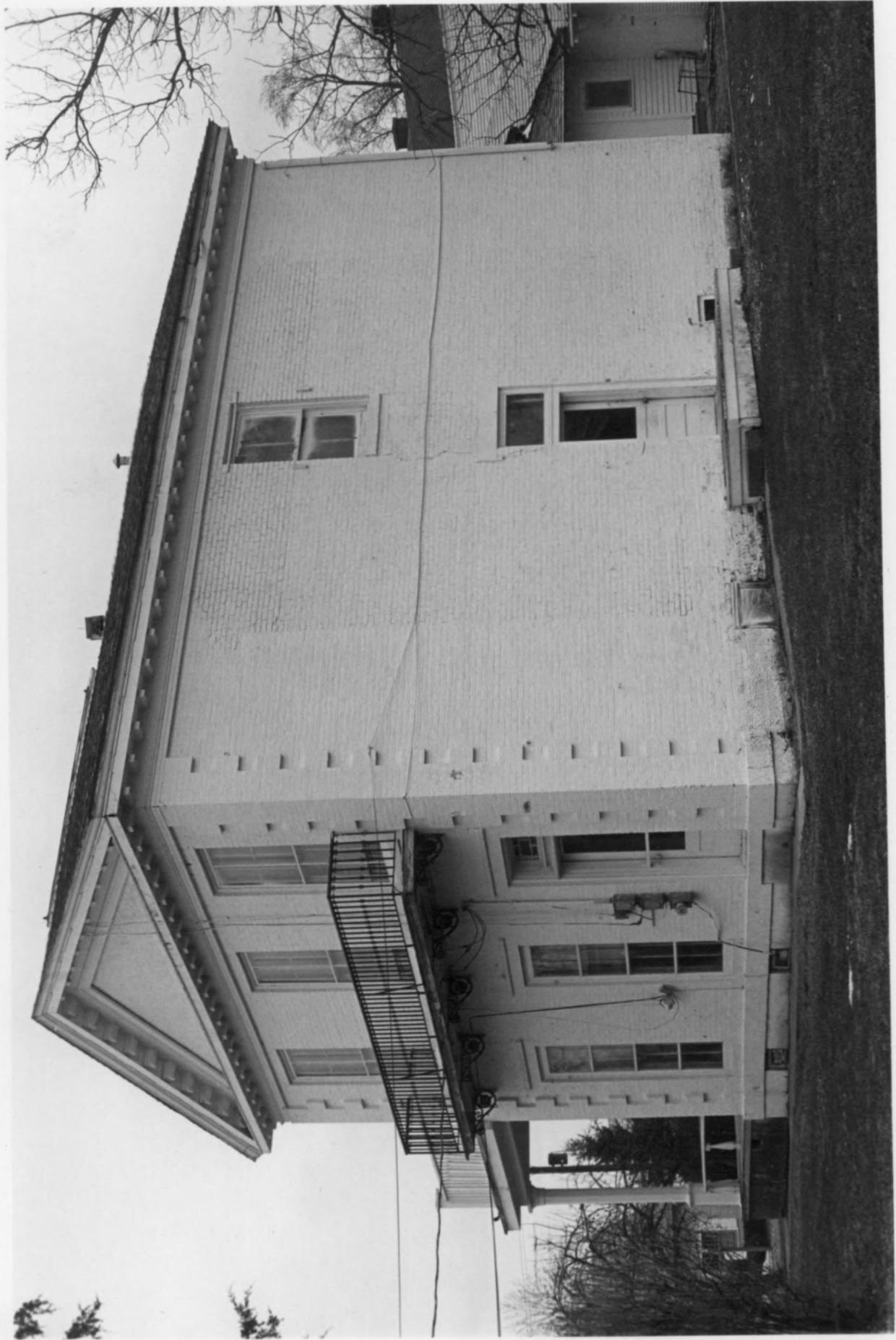
Memphis, Missouri

Photographer: C.F. Blackwell
March 1979

Neg. Loc.: Dept. of Natural Resources,
P.O. Box 176, Jefferson City, Mo. 65102

View from northwest. Outline of frame
addition added during the building's use as
the Park Hotel visible on west facade.

#3



DOWNING HOUSE

Memphis, Missouri

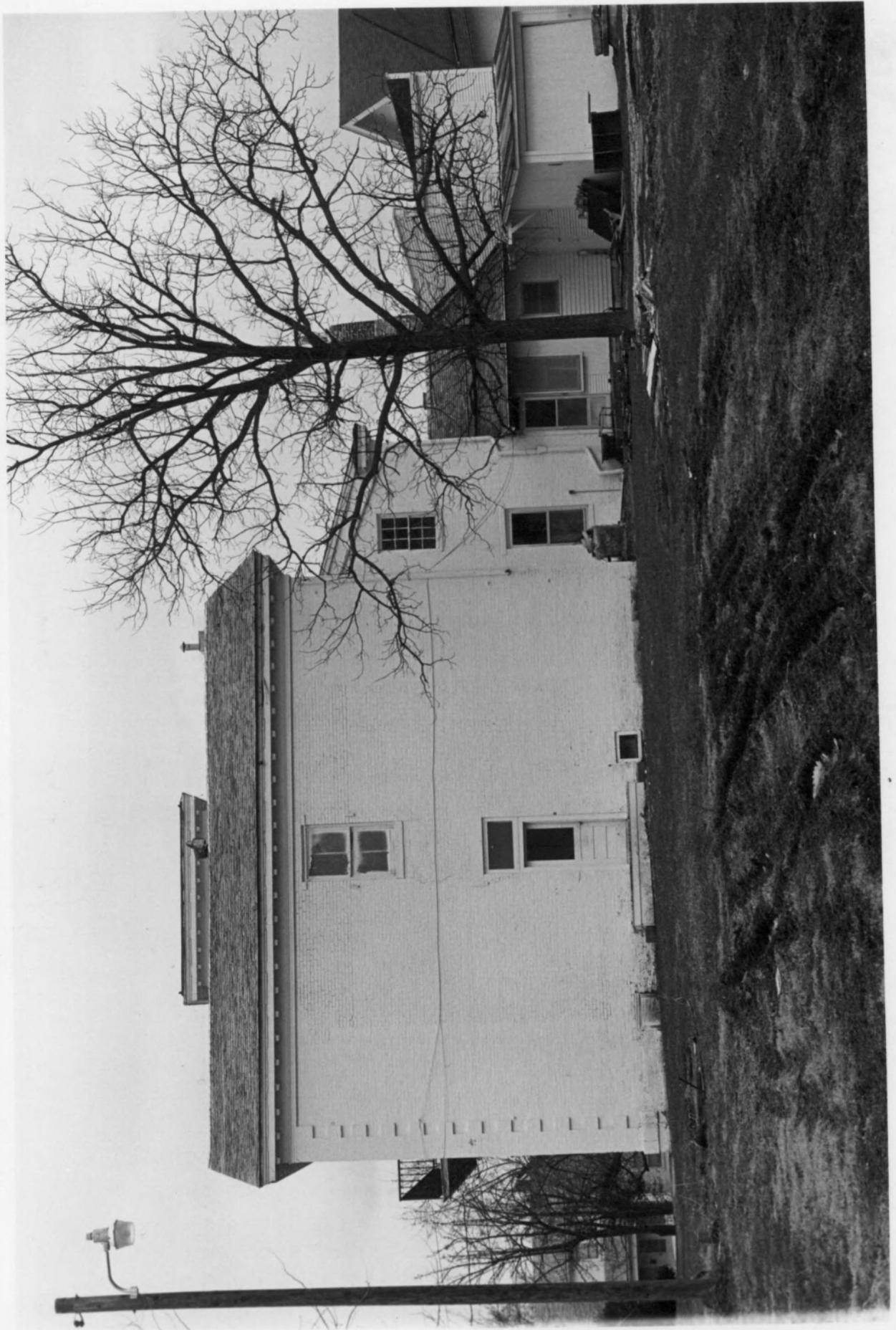
Photographer: C.F. Blackwell

March 1979

Neg. Loc.: Dept. of Natural Resources,
P.O. Box 176, Jefferson City, Mo. 65102

View from west, with frame additions
visible on right.

#4



DOWNING HOUSE

#5

Memphis, Missouri

Photographer: C.F. Blackwell

March 1979

Neg. Loc.: Dept. of Natural Resources,
P.O. Box 176, Jefferson City, Mo. 65102

View from northwest.



DOWNING HOUSE

#6

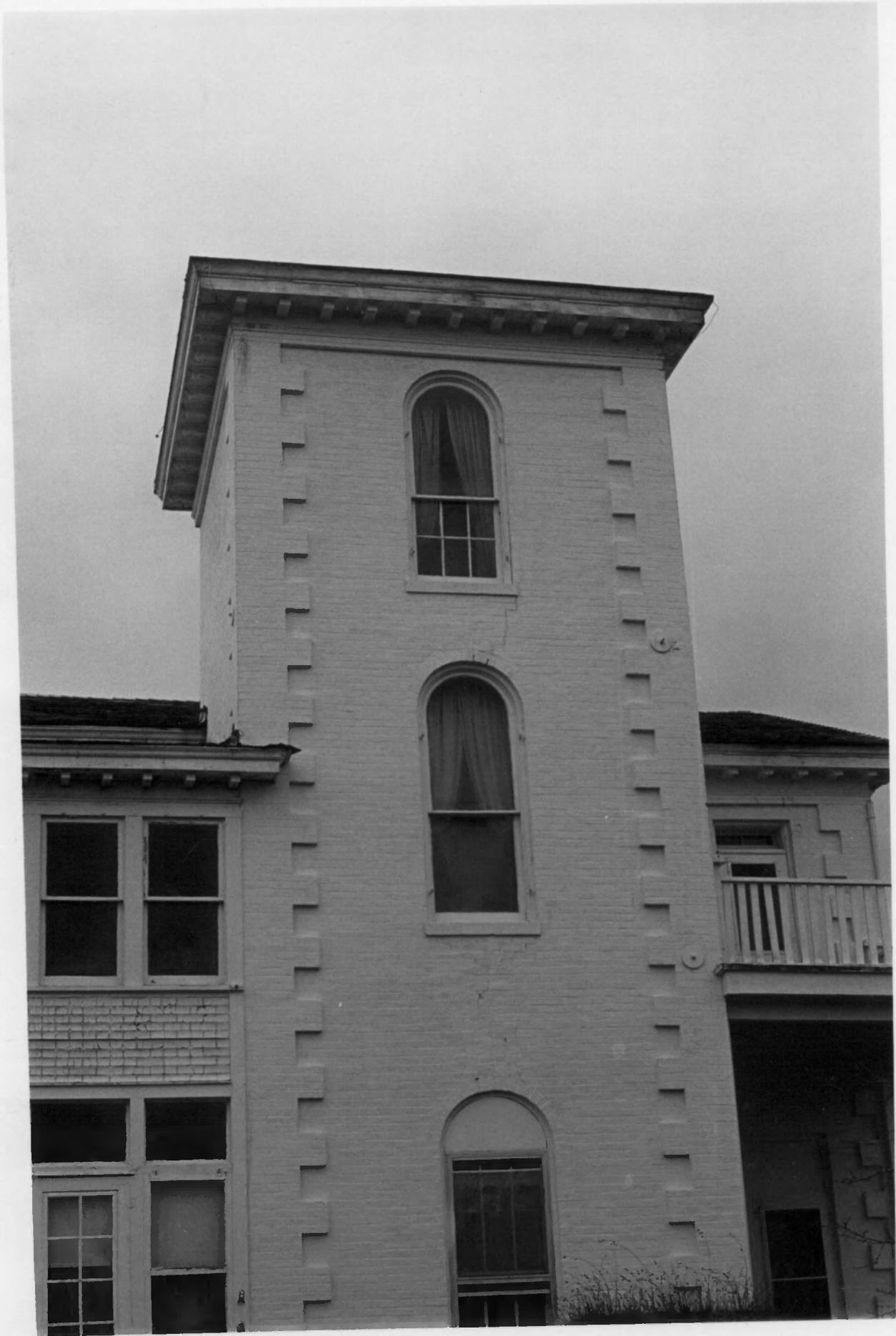
Memphis, Missouri

Photographer: C.F. Blackwell

March 1979

Neg. Loc.: Dept. of Natural Resources,
P.O. Box 176, Jefferson City, Mo. 65102

Detail of tower, view from east.



#2

DOWNING HOUSE

#7

Memphis, Missouri

Photographer; W. Philip Cotton, Jr.
April 1978

Neg. Loc.: c/o W. Philip Cotton, Jr.
806 Chestnut Street
St. Louis, Mo. 63101

Interior view, showing characteristic
Greek Revival door surround.



#1

DOWNING HOUSE

#8

Memphis, Missouri

Photographer: W. Philip Cotton, Jr.

April 1978

Neg. Loc.: c/o W. Philip Cotton, Jr.

806 Chestnut Street

St. Louis, Mo. 63101

Interior view, door leading from first
floor parlor to tower.



DOWNING HOUSE

Memphis, Missouri

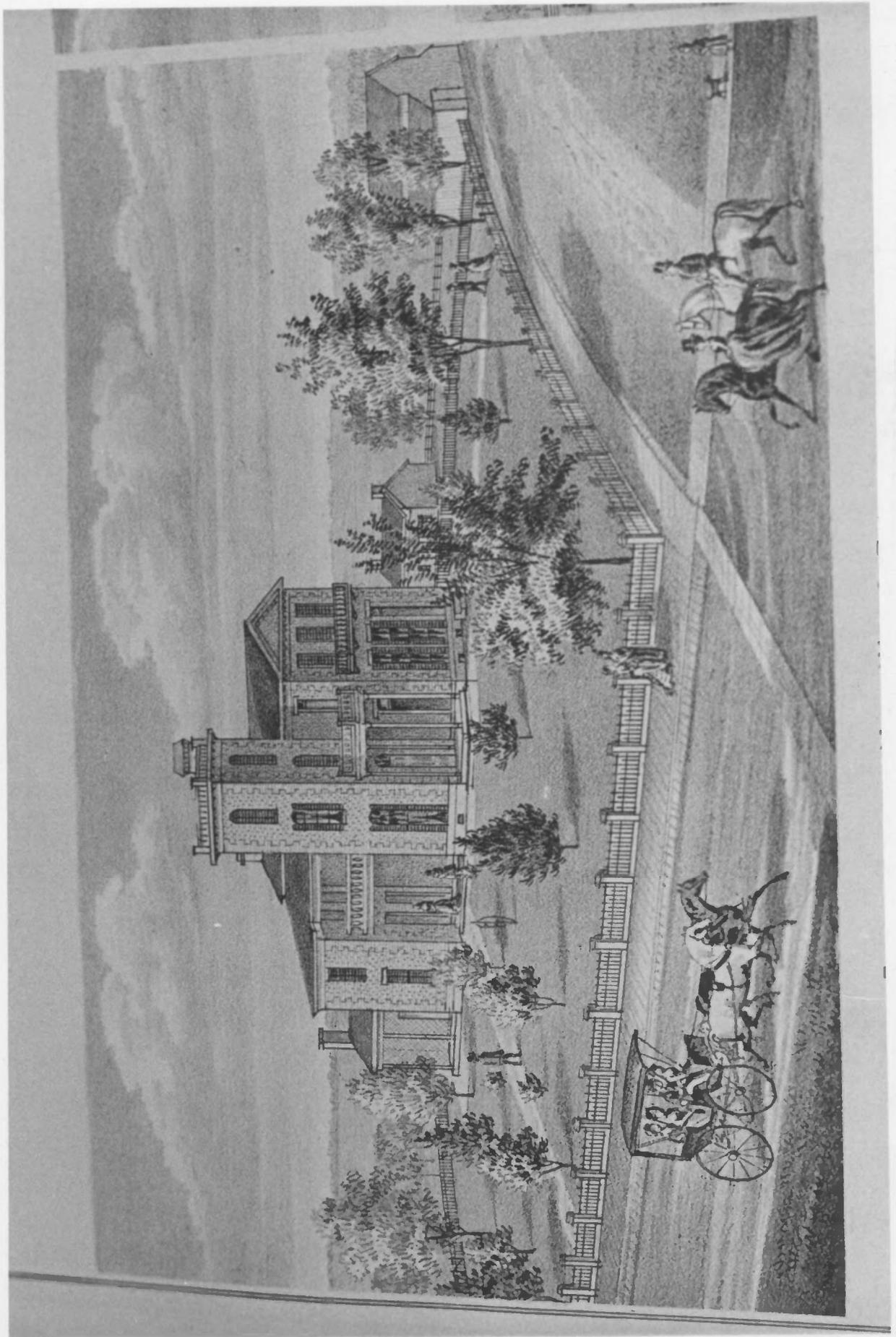
Photographer: C.F. Blackwell

March 1979

Neg. Loc.: Dept. of Natural Resources,
P.O. Box 176, Jefferson City, Mo. 65102

Illustration of the Downing House appearing
on p. 72 of Illustrated Historical Atlas
of Scotland Co., Missouri (Philadelphia:
R.H. Harrison, 1876).

#9



DOWNING HOUSE

#10

Memphis, Missouri

Photographer: unknown, before 1928

Copy Neg. Loc.: Dept. of Natural Resources,
P.O. Box 176, Jefferson City, Mo. 65102

This photograph of the Downing House before alterations appeared on p. 43 of John Albury Bryan's Missouri's Contribution to American Architecture (St. Louis: St. Louis Architectural Club, 1928).

