OWENS-MCCOY HOUSE

HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT

Prepared by the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation

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This report was prepared by:

Amy Kostine, Trail of Tears Project Coordinator
Savannah Grandey, Fieldwork Coordinator

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INTRODUCTION

This study was made possible by a Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) Task Agreement with the National Trails Intermountain Region of the National Park Service (NTIR) in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The Owens-McCoy House in Independence, Missouri, is a certified site on the Santa Fe National Historic Trail associated with two Santa Fe Trail traders: Samuel Combs Owens and William McCoy. Both Owens and McCoy were also associated with caravans of goods on the El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail, while McCoy also had ties to the Oregon and California National Historic Trails. Staff from the Center for Historic Preservation (CHP) at Middle Tennessee State University first visited the property in 2017, as part of an ongoing partnership project with NTIR to survey buildings associated with the Santa Fe National Historic Trail in Missouri. In September 2017, CHP staff members Dr. Carroll Van West and Amy Kostine, along with Michael Taylor from NTIR, met with Brian and Sharon Snyder, owners of the Owens-McCoy House, to discuss their goals for the property. As a result of this meeting, NTIR and the CHP agreed to partner together to prepare a Heritage Development Plan for the building in order to provide guidance to the owners in helping them achieve their goal of turning the home into a museum. In October 2018, CHP staff members Dr. Carroll Van West, Amy Kostine, and Savannah Grandey visited the property in preparation for this report.

Special thanks are due to property owners Brian and Sharon Snyder for allowing us to complete this study, review and borrow the extensive research they’ve conducted on the building over the years, and for their kind hospitality.
GENERAL LOCATION

The Owens-McCoy House (NAD83: 39.096154, -94.420307) is located on parcel 26-220-16-02-00-0-00-000 at 410 West Farmer Avenue in Independence, Missouri. The parcel that the home is located on measures 95’ x 175’ and contains approximately 16,263.33 sq. ft. (.37 acres) of land. The property is located in a predominately single-family residential neighborhood with the eight-story Heritage House apartment building and associated parking lot located to the immediate north of the home.
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

SAMUEL C. OWENS

Growing Up in Green County, Kentucky

Samuel Combs Owens was born to Nathaniel Owens, Jr., and Nancy (Graham) Owens in Green County, Kentucky, on October 6, 1800.1 Samuel’s father, Nathaniel, was born in Virginia and served in the Revolutionary War and, reportedly, the War of 1812.2 It is unknown exactly when Nathaniel moved to Kentucky, but he was most certainly among Green County’s earliest settlers. He was a respected community leader and well-connected politically, elected as the first high sheriff of Green County in 1792. He later served as a justice of the peace and a judge of the Green County Quarter Session Court.3 On December 8, 1795, Nathaniel wed Nancy Graham, a native of South Carolina.4 By the time Nathaniel wed Nancy, he owned a staggering 7,500 acres of land, making him one of the largest, if not the largest, land owners in the area.5 Much of Nathaniel’s wealth was rooted in the money and land grants he received as compensation for his service during the Revolutionary War.6 The couple had five children before Nancy’s death on August 9, 1814: William Graham (b: November 5, 1796), Benjamin L. (b: February 8, 1798), Samuel Combs, Elizabeth (b: August 6, 1804), and Mary Smith (b: September 29, 1808).7

Nathaniel raised his children on his Little Brush Creek plantation, known as Lashfield, in an opulent, federal-style, brick home, constructed in 1797 and located approximately one mile south of the present-day community of Allendale and a half mile east of Kentucky Highway 61 (see Figure 2-3).8 The home had two rooms downstairs and four rooms upstairs with a one-story, three-room ell connected by a brick-covered breezeway.9 Owens’s lavish home reflected his wealth and status as a planter and community leader. Based on the inventory of Nathaniel’s estate upon his death in 1844, he practiced diversified agriculture and most certainly grew corn and wheat, in addition to tobacco and cotton, and likely bred horses.10 The plantation was also home to a number of livestock, including hogs, pigs, sheep, steer, and cows.11 Spinning wheels and a loom listed on the inventory suggest the household produced its own thread, yarn, and fabric, while “smith tools” indicate the plantation likely had its own blacksmith.12 Although Lashfield was self-
sustaining, the wealthy estate could also afford luxurious furnishings and imported goods, such as carpets from Turkey, fine china, a pianoforte, and finely crafted furniture. The Owens family certainly did not need or want for anything.

While a considerable amount of Owens's wealth was tied to his land holdings, a portion was also tied to enslaved African Americans who maintained his home, farmed his land, and cared for his livestock. The number of African Americans enslaved by Owens increased from fourteen in 1810, to twenty in 1820, to twenty-three in 1830. At the time of Nathaniel's death in 1844, he owned nineteen enslaved African Americans, all of whom were listed, named, and assigned a value in the inventory of his personal estate:

One Negro Man, named Paul, aged 26 years - $550
One Negro Man, Munday, aged 51 years - $350
One Negro Man, Big Tom, aged 30 years - $750
One Negro Boy, Clinton, aged 19 years - $500
One Negro Man, Primas, aged 25 years - $450
One Negro Man, Little Tom, aged 25 years - $450
One Yellow Boy, Rolon, aged 14 years - $400
One Black Boy, Bill, aged 11 years - $375
One Black Boy, Sanders, aged 14 years - $400
One Black Girl, Ann, aged 16 years - $400
One Black Woman, Cintha, & her two twin children - $600
One Little Girl, Margaret, aged 5 years - $200
One Little Girl, Sally, aged 3 years - $100
One Little Girl, Mary, aged 3 years - $100
One Old Negro Woman, Rachel, aged 45 years - Nothing
One Old Negro Woman, Mary, aged 60 years – Nothing
One Old Negro Man, York, aged 64 years - Nothing

Nathaniel’s ownership of enslaved people did not win him any support with Brush Creek Baptist Church. Upon purchasing his first enslaved person, Owens was reportedly expelled from the church and declined a later invitation to rejoin.

Nathaniel was described as a “farmer of good education…a man of untiring perseverance and industry…[who] was thought by many to be selfish in his disposition… [and] a close, economic, money-making man, but punctiliously honest in all his dealings.” In addition to farming, Nathaniel was a teacher. He highly valued education and ensured that his children received the best schooling he could offer. In about 1812, Nathaniel opened the Brush Creek Academy, sometimes referred to as the Owens Rural Seminary, on the second-floor of his home where his children and some of his neighbors’ children were enrolled. Arguably one of the most famous students of Brush Creek Academy was Mentor Graham, a nephew of Nathaniel who became Abraham Lincoln’s teacher during his time in New Salem, Illinois. Nathaniel taught algebra, astronomy, and surveying, while James McElroy was hired to teach English, Greek, and Latin.

In August 1814, Nathaniel’s wife, Nancy, died of influenza. Approximately eight months later, on April 3, 1815, Nathaniel married Mary Ann Yates, who was reportedly hired by Nathaniel to tutor his children. Five children were born to this union: Nancy Graham (b: March 16, 1816), Eleanor Mitchell (b: July 1, 1818), John Yates (b: January 8, 1821), Margaret J. (b: December 7, 1823), and Sarah T. (b: October 8, 1826). In the years following Nathaniel’s second marriage, all of his children with his first wife more or less left the family plantation in pursuit of education, marriage, or opportunities, with only Mary returning to reside for a length of time.
1816, Nathaniel enrolled his two oldest daughters, Elizabeth and Mary, at Nazareth Academy, a Catholic institution located near Bardstown, Kentucky (see Figures 4-5).\(^{23}\) While enrolled at Nazareth, Elizabeth met and later married Bennett Abell in January 1822.\(^{24}\) Mary, on the other hand, returned to Lashfield and tutored students at her father’s Brush Creek Academy for a time.\(^{25}\) She is now perhaps best remembered for her courtship with future President Abraham Lincoln, a union that was encouraged by Mary’s sister Elizabeth, who became acquainted with Lincoln when she moved to Illinois. When Elizabeth went home to visit her family in Kentucky in 1836, she playfully told Lincoln that she would bring back her sister Mary, whom he had met briefly three years earlier, if he agreed to marry her. Lincoln agreed, although possibly in jest, and found himself entangled in a union he may not have necessarily wished to be in. Lincoln wrote Mary three letters during their courtship, painting a grim image of their future together and giving Mary the opportunity to end the relationship, if she so desired. In a letter to Mary on May 7, 1837, for example, Lincoln stated:

> I am often thinking about what we said of you coming to live at Springfield. I am afraid you would not be satisfied. There is a great deal of flourishing about in carriages here; which it would be your doom to see without sharing in it. You would have to be poor without the means of hiding your poverty…You have not been accustomed to hardship, and it may be more severe than you now imagine.\(^{26}\)

Although Lincoln did eventually propose to Mary, she turned him down believing that he lacked “in those little links which make up the chain of a woman’s happiness.”\(^{27}\) She later married Jesse Vineyard in 1841.

Nathaniel’s three sons from his marriage with Nancy also left the family plantation in the years following his second marriage. Nathaniel’s second-eldest son, Benjamin, married Elizabeth Barbee on January 12, 1819 and was the only one of Nathaniel’s children from his first marriage to remain in Kentucky.\(^{28}\) The couple continued to reside in Green County in 1830 and 1840, but moved to Taylor County by 1850, where they resided until their deaths from typhoid fever on September 4, 1858, and September 11, 1858, respectively.\(^{29}\)
Nathaniel’s eldest son, William Graham, married Lucinda Young Cowherd on December 10, 1817, in Green County, Kentucky (see Figure 6). William and Lucinda’s families had much in common. Lucinda’s father was also a Revolutionary War veteran from Virginia, who owned a large, 1,000-acre plantation, worked by enslaved labor. Their similar background and status would have made their union favorable in the eyes of their families. The couple did not remain in Kentucky for long, though. One year following their marriage, they moved to Franklin County, Missouri. William’s younger brother, Samuel, also came to Missouri with his brother at this time or shortly after.

**Opportunities in Missouri**

What drew William and Samuel to move to Missouri? There are a couple of likely reasons. Lucinda did have at least one family tie to Missouri. Her uncle, Dr. John Young, moved to Warren County, Missouri, in 1816 and laid out the town of Marthasville in 1817 near the Missouri River. He, no doubt, sent word back to his family of his newfound economic success there. After William, Lucinda, and Samuel moved to the area in 1818, Dr. Young’s brothers Benjamin and Aaron followed suit the following year. Benjamin opened a store in Marthasville, becoming the first merchant of the new town and later moving to Calloway County, where he was a county judge and member of the state legislature and the Missouri Convention of 1845, while Aaron settled in Marthasville and served as a county judge for several terms before moving to St. Louis County.

Another possible factor behind the Owens’s move was the opportunity to build their own wealth and prestige via land acquisitions and economic and political opportunities on the Missouri frontier not afforded to them in Kentucky. Land in Missouri was cheaper and much more plentiful than land in Kentucky, and it would be decades before the brothers would inherit anything from their father’s estate. Both William and Samuel would benefit economically and politically on the Missouri frontier.

William and Lucinda first settled in Newport (also known as Campbellton), which served as Franklin County’s seat from 1818 until 1826. William first worked as a lawyer and storekeeper, before serving as clerk of the circuit court in 1819 and Newport postmaster in 1820. In 1821, he became the first clerk of the county court. William invested his income in a considerable amount of land around the nearby area of present-day Washington, believing it would serve as a key landing for increasing riverboat traffic and trade and therefore an opportunistic location for a town. Unfortunately, William would not live to see his goal of establishing the town of.
Washington. On November 16, 1834, he was shot and killed, presumably for his role as an important witness in an upcoming trial. Lucinda eventually carried out her husband’s dream and filed the paperwork to establish the town of Washington on May 29, 1839, platting the town with her home, which is still extant, just outside the city limits (see Figure 7).³⁹

Samuel Owens initially settled near his brother William. He quickly gained political prestige and was elected circuit court clerk of Gasconade County in 1821, and the following year, he was elected as a representative to the state legislature at just twenty-two years of age.⁴⁰ On January 28, 1825, Samuel married Frances Maria (Fanny) Young in Fayette County, Kentucky.⁴¹ Reportedly around this time, he moved farther west to Jackson County, Missouri, where he would help found the town of Independence, plat and incorporate the “Town of Kansas” (present-day Kansas City), raise his family, and build his fortune via the Santa Fe Trail trade.⁴²

**Establishing Roots in Independence**

Present-day Independence was initially inhabited by the Osage and Missouria, followed by the Spanish and French. It became part of the United States in 1803 with the Louisiana Purchase. Its location along the Missouri River and the Santa Fe Trail, along with its abundant fresh water springs, made the area ideal for settlement and economic opportunities via river travel and trade. Named for the Declaration of Independence, the town was founded by men who came from the Upper South and laid out in 1827, serving as the county seat of Jackson County.⁴³ This important frontier town played a significant role in westward migration, international trade, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

As Samuel established roots in Independence and Jackson County, his prior political experience helped propel him into new positions in public service. Over the years, Samuel served in a number of positions, including the first treasurer, ex-officio recorder of deeds, circuit and county clerk, and county commissioner.⁴⁴ Early Independence was a melting pot of individuals with varying political, social, economic, and religious interests. In 1831, Joseph Smith, Jr., religious leader and
founder of Mormonism and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, announced he had received a revelation that the Independence-area was Zion, the New Jerusalem. As a result, members of the Latter-day Saints flocked to Independence to build their holy city. Peace between the earlier settlers of Independence, such as Samuel, and the Latter-day Saints was short-lived, as a result of social, religious, and political differences. Owens, a slaveholder, and others reportedly disliked the Church of Latter-day Saints because of its practice of polygamy and its anti-slavery views.

Hostilities between the Latter-day Saints and their neighbors reached a breaking point in July 1833, when Samuel and other Jackson County public officials, along with hundreds of others, signed and circulated what Mormon publications named the “Mob Manifesto,” calling members of the Latter-day Saints “deluded fanatics,” “lazy,” “idle,” and “vicious” and accusing them of “tampering with [their] slaves, and endeavoring to sow dissensions and raise seditions amongst them.” Along with these and other reasons, those individuals at the meeting agreed to form a company for the purpose of removing the Latter-day Saints peacefully, if possible, or forcibly if not.

After this meeting, a mob consisting of approximately four hundred to five hundred individuals destroyed the printing office of the Mormon newspaper Evening and Morning Star, the home of the newspaper’s publisher, W. W. Phelps, and the Gilbert, Whitney, and Co. general store. In addition, the mob tarred and feathered Bishop Edward Patridge and Charles Allen. Three days later, on July 23, 1833, the mob re-assembled, armed with “rifles, dirks, pistols, clubs, and whips,” and declared that the Mormons must leave Jackson County or die. The mob also chose a new committee, consisting of Samuel Owens and fifteen others, to address their desire to remove the Latter-day Saints from Jackson County. Tensions between the Latter-day Saints and other Missouri residents continued to escalate and reached a culmination on October 27, 1838, when Governor of Missouri Lilburn Boggs issued Missouri Executive Order 44, also known as the Extermination Order, effectively leading to the expulsion of most Mormons from Missouri.

In addition to serving as a public official and working to remove the Latter-day Saints from Jackson County, Samuel Owens was also a partner in the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, and he profited off of the Santa Fe Trail through a number of business ventures. From 1827 to 1831, Samuel was employed as a manager at James Aull’s general store in Independence and its successor, J. & R. Aull, from 1831 until 1836. The J. & R. store in Independence was one of four stores operated by James and Robert Aull. The other three stores were located in Lexington, Liberty, and Richmond. In 1836, Samuel and Robert Aull purchased the J. & R. Aull
store in Independence and continued to operate it under the name of Samuel C. Owens & Co., and in 1844, Samuel became the sole owner of the business.51

Samuel, James, and Robert, along with fellow Santa Fe Trail merchant Michael Rice, also owned a gristmill and sawmill, known as Blue Mills and constructed in 1834-1835.52 The mill complex was located halfway between Fort Osage and Independence, serving as a key provisioning point for trail merchants, traders, travelers, and settlers.53 The mill’s commercial and transportation networks were far-reaching, with flour from the mill shipped not only locally to Independence, but as far away as Fort Leavenworth, St. Louis, New Orleans, and even Europe.54 By about 1829, Samuel also owned a landing on the Missouri River, several miles upstream from Fort Osage, which became a key economic asset for the mill business.55 Owens Landing, later known as Blue Mills Landing, provided the men with a place to export their products via river travel and also to land goods for their stores. The landing was significant for other reasons, too, as the National Register nomination for the Blue Mills site explains:

As steamboat use moved the eastern terminus of the [Santa Fe] Trail farther westward to the new town of Independence, Blue Mills Landing took on a lead role as the transition point between water transport and land transport. By 1832, Independence was pre-eminent as the eastern outfitting point on the Trail.56

As Samuel grew his business interests, he also acquired land and looked to build a home in Independence to raise his family and reflect his growing wealth and political prestige. On August 5, 1833, Samuel purchased Lot 39 in Independence for $75 from Leonard Dodge.57 Four days later, he purchased adjacent Lot 40 for $100 from James and Elizabeth Allen.58 At this time, Samuel and his wife Frances had already welcomed two children into the world: Ambrose Young (b: February 1826) and Maria Frances (b: December 11, 1831).59 After purchasing the lots, Samuel had a fine, two-story brick home constructed on Lot 39 that is now part of today’s Owens-McCoy House. It was here that Samuel and Frances raised Ambrose, Maria, and three additional children born to the couple: Anne “Nannie” (b: March 18, 1835), Henry Clay (b: February 12, 1838), and Laura A. (b: March 8, 1844). As previously mentioned, Owens also owned enslaved African Americans, and by 1840, his home consisted of himself, his wife Frances, their five children, three enslaved men, and nine enslaved women.60

On the Santa Fe and Chihuahua Trails

Complex partnerships, business alliances, mutual cooperation, and the ability to work with a diverse group of individuals were key to achieving success in the international trade between western Missouri and Mexico. Samuel certainly understood this. In addition to his businesses, Samuel participated directly in trade on the Santa Fe Trail and the Chihuahua Trail (part of the El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail) by regularly leading his own wagon trains west. Samuel and his occasional business partner David Waldo also spoke some Spanish, allowing them to remain more autonomous in their own affairs through their ability to negotiate contracts and deals without relying on the accuracy of an interpreter.61 Samuel successfully navigated the complex workings of the Mexican trade and was one of Independence’s most successful traders.

Samuel was one of the few commission merchants involved in the Mexican trade in Independence during this time and was well-respected by others in the business.62 Fellow Santa Fe Trail trader James Josiah Webb noted that he applied to Samuel for an outfit on credit in 1844 and
“was met with that kindness and liberality which was his custom to extend to Santa Fe traders.” Samuel furnished James with a wagon, four yoke of oxen, and other supplies, and he agreed to rendezvous with James at Council Grove. The following year, the Boon’s Lick Times reported, “Samuel C. Owen’s company arrived at Santa Fe on the 20th October.” Newspaper articles in 1846 shed light on just how large Samuel’s wagon trains were and how much goods he was transporting. A May 26, 1846, article in the New Orleans-based The Times-Picayune stated that Samuel “takes out the present season $50,000 worth of merchandize to Santa Fe and Chihuahua,” while a September 13, 1846, article in the same newspaper indicated that Samuel’s outfit contained 25 wagons, which was the fourth-largest of those listed (see Figure 9).

The year 1847 marked Samuel’s last trading excursion, which occurred in the middle of the Mexican-American War. Samuel and his partner James Aull decided to send a load of goods to Chihuahua. The men traveled with Colonel Alexander William Doniphan’s First Missouri Mounted Volunteers. Approximately fifty miles south of El Paso, Doniphan ordered the merchant caravan to meet and organize themselves into companies of volunteers and elect officers to command them in case they came across any opposition on their way south. They organized themselves into two companies, forming a battalion that was commanded by Samuel, whom the group elected as Major. The group of 924 soldiers and 300 civilians continued south unopposed until they reached the Sacramento River, approximately fifteen miles north of Chihuahua, and clashed with Mexican forces. On February 28, 1847, Doniphan’s men defeated the Mexican forces there, even though they were outnumbered four-to-one, with only two fatalities, one of which was Samuel C. Owens.

There are several varying accounts of Samuel’s death. According to an article in The Spirit of Democracy, Samuel charged into battle on a “young horse” and “much in advance of his men,” and was shot three times. Colonel Doniphan stated, “Col. Samuel C. Owens lost his life by excessive bravery, or rather rashness. He rode up to the redoubt, filled with armed men, and continued to fire his pistols into it until himself and horse fell, pierced with balls, upon its very brink.” Susan Shelby Magoffin, wife of Santa Fe Trail trader Samuel Magoffin, was traveling with the merchant caravan and recorded in her diary that “Col. Owens was killed in the battle by a rifle ball shot at him, a league and a half off.”

Figure 9. List of wagon trains in the September 13, 1846, issue of The Times-Picayune. Courtesy of Newspapers.com.
There is some belief that Samuel charged into battle intentionally trying to kill himself after feeling shamed from an ongoing family scandal involving his eldest daughter, Maria Frances, although this is mere speculation. On May 29, 1845, Maria secretly married attorney John Henry Harper, reportedly by a Justice of the Peace in a carriage in the middle of a road and despite her parents strong opposition to the union. Maria was only thirteen years old at the time. After the spontaneous marriage, the couple lived with Maria’s parents and had a second marriage ceremony on October 6, 1845, performed by Rev. Robert D. Morrow of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The following year, a man named William Wirt Meredith came to Independence to make a trip west with Samuel Owens for the benefit of his health, staying in the Owens home until travel could commence. William and Maria allegedly began flirting with one another, sending John into a jealous rage. On May 27, 1846, John invited William into his office and immediately shot him dead, staging the scene to look like there had been an argument over a card game.

Following the death of her husband, Samuel’s widow Frances moved from her home in Independence to Platte County, Missouri. On April 1, 1848, Maria Frances Harper and John Harper sold her undivided share of Lot 39 and 40, where her parents’ home was located in Independence, to Lorenzo D. Bird for $1,000. Curiously, five days later, Bird and his wife Anne sold the one-fifth share back to John Harper for just one dollar. The following month, Samuel’s widow Frances died on May 31, 1848, in Platte County. In March 1850, Ambrose Young became the second heir to sell a share in the former Owens family home on Lots 39 and 40 in Independence. Ambrose Young and his wife Helen sold their share to John F. McCauley for $1,760. Later that year, McCauley filed a petition for partition of the lots. The Jackson County Circuit Court ruled that the property was “not susceptible of division and that partition thereof cannot be made without prejudice to the owners.”

As a result, the court ordered Sheriff George M. Buchanan to oversee a public auction of
the property. On September 10, 1851, between the hours of 9am and 5pm on the courthouse steps, Buchanan sold Lots 39 and 40, containing the Owens family home, to the highest bidder, fellow Santa Fe Trail trader William McCoy, for $1,755.84.

WILLIAM MCCOY

Following in his Father’s Footsteps

William McCoy was the third child born to John and Jane (McCracken) McCoy in Chillicothe, Ohio. He was born on May 13, 1813, and had five siblings: Elizabeth (b: August 1809), Alexander Watts (b: April 14, 1811), John (b: March 27, 1816), Samuel Finley (b: March 5, 1820), and Jane Sarah (b: August 23, 1822). William's parents were both natives of Pennsylvania and of Scottish and Irish decent. John, Sr., moved from Pennsylvania to Ohio in about 1793 and married Jane in 1807, shortly after she relocated from Pennsylvania to Ohio. John, Sr., earned his income and supported his family as a successful dry goods merchant in Chillicothe, a trade that would have great influence on William and his brother John.

William initially studied medicine after graduating from Ohio University in 1831, but ultimately decided to follow in his father’s footsteps by working in the mercantile business. He learned the business methods associated with the mercantile trade from his father, before seeking his own opportunities on the Missouri frontier. In 1838, William, his brother John, and friend and business partner Carey A. Lee from Kentucky brought stock from John McCoy, Sr.'s business in Ohio to Missouri with the intention of opening their own outfitting store under the name of McCoy & Lee, which would later be known as McCoy, Russell, and Company in 1849, and William and John McCoy by 1852. According to family oral tradition, one of the McCoy brothers wanted to settle in St. Joseph, Missouri, while the other one favored Independence. They reportedly left the decision to a coin toss, resulting in their subsequent move to Independence and the establishment of their store on the Independence Square. Samuel and Alexander McCoy would soon join their brothers in Independence, with Samuel employed as a lawyer and Alexander joining his brothers as a merchant.

Letters written by Carey and William shortly after arriving and settling in Independence illuminate their personal thoughts and first impressions of their new home. On June 14, 1838, still waiting for their goods to arrive, Carey described Independence as a “village containing about 800 inhabitants handsomely situated on the South Side of the Missouri river three miles distant from the river and the Same distance from a beautiful Prairie.” Although he admitted that he was not ”delighted with the
place," he was "better pleased than with any place [he had] seen west of St. Louis." In addition, Carey commented on Independence’s significance as a growing hub for trade, noting that the “Indians, Spaniards French Americans are all engaged in the business” and that approximately “one hundred waggons have passed thro here to day from the mountains, loaded with Fur.” The following month, William confided to Ellen Waddle, his future wife, about the lack of “Society” in town, but admitted that “there are some very intelligent & affable people” and that the social scene was improving. He also mentioned the great diversity of individuals traveling through the town for trade. In addition to “mountain & Santa fe traders,” William remarked:

_There are sometimes Indians here of almost all the tribes known, as entirely different from each other in language, manners, & customs as the antipodes. There were some here a few days ago of the Black-feet, Flatheads, & Snakes who had never seen a white settlement before. There are Shawnees, Delawares, Peorias, Potawatomies, Kickapoos, Kaskaskias, Wehaws, Miamis, Sacs, Foxes, & and I don't know how many more situated on the frontier who make occasional peregrinations through this place. Mexicans, Californian and strangers from every state in the union find their way thither._

William’s observations certainly speak to Independence’s role as a bustling frontier town rooted in trade networks and westward migration with opportunities to gain wealth.

_“It is a slow business to get rich”_

William’s entry into the Independence mercantile and trading business may have had a more sluggish start than he initially anticipated. In January 1840, he confided to Ellen, “It is a slow business to get rich but I have long since overcome that desire. I care but little for wealth & am not going to harass myself much about it[,] I should like to be engaged in some more quiet pursuit that would yield me a competency but circumstances have not so willed it.” Despite the seemingly slow start, McCoy did receive a two-year license in 1839 to trade with the American Indian tribes under the jurisdiction of the Fort Leavenworth Agency, which included the Delaware, Shawnee, Kansa, and Kickapoo. Business for the McCoy brothers would continue to increase throughout the 1840s, particularly in the late 1840s, and into the 1850s as the men expanded their business ventures.

The deaths of two of the most powerful traders in Independence, Samuel C. Owens and his partner James Aull, in 1847 caused a shift in the town’s mercantile power base. As a result, David Waldo, one of Samuel Owens’s former partners, looked for new business associates and found them in William McCoy and slave speculator and freighter Jabez Smith. This alliance became known as McCoy, Waldo, and Smith, and these men replaced Samuel C. Owens and James Aull as the premier merchants in the Mexican trade in Independence from 1848 until 1860. According to historian William Patrick O’Brien, the firm “worked with various influential politicians and businessmen, including Manuel Álvarez of Santa Fe and the brokerage and commission merchant house of Peter Harmony and Nephews of New York, in the movement of merchandise for the Mexican trade.” The firm included commission merchants, independent freighters, and wealthy speculators, with William acting as a forwarding agent and a commission merchant. He also served in this capacity for other, similar incorporations, such as McCoy, Russell, and Company; Waldo, Hall, & Co.; and others. Incorporations such as these commonly changed seasonally as new business alliances were regularly created.
On May 6, 1848, William wrote to Ellen, “We will most likely be engaged in carrying out freight for the Government the general arrangement of which falling upon me will demand my time & presence most assiduously throughout the season.” John and William had recently formed a company, this time in partnership with David Waldo, Silas Woodson, James Brown, and others, to transport goods and supplies to United States Army outposts in the West. Government freight contracts were competitive and could be very lucrative. Eleven days after William penned his letter to Ellen, the company was contracted to transport 200,000 pounds of government supplies from Fort Leavenworth to Santa Fe. One hundred and twenty wagons, led by Waldo, carried the goods at a freight rate of $11.75 per hundred pounds. William McCoy would be involved in government freighting contracts for Fort Leavenworth in Kansas and Fort Laramie in Wyoming throughout the late 1840s and into the 1850s, thus tying him to several significant, nineteenth-century emigrant trails. Fort Leavenworth, established in 1827 to protect the fur trade and safeguard international commerce on the Santa Fe Trail, was also an early stop for tens of thousands of westward-bound emigrants on the Oregon, California, and other trails. Soldiers stationed at the fort help protect wagon trains and emigrants. Originally established by Robert Campbell and William Sublette as a private fur-trading post in 1834, Fort William, later known as Fort John, was purchased by the U.S. Army in 1849 and renamed Fort Laramie. It grew to become the principal military outpost on the Northern Plains. Traders, trappers, missionaries, soldiers, miners, ranchers, homesteaders, American Indians, and tens of thousands of emigrants traveling on the Oregon and California trails, as well as Mormons on their way to the Salt Lake Valley, stopped at the fort to resupply, repair equipment, and prepare for the next leg of their difficult journey through the Rocky Mountains.

Increasing business meant increasing work for William. He confessed to Ellen that she “could have but little conception of the trouble and annoyance of sending out a train (as we term it here) of merchandise Waggonns. There are things innumerable to do or rather to have done & when it seems completed there is still something undone – as the least limit of absence is usually twelve months. & the stock &c to sustain all that time it requires no little fitting out to get them off.” William regularly mentioned in his letters throughout 1848 how busy work had become and how little time he had for anything else. It was during this year that William began his ascension to become one of the premier Mexican traders and merchants in Independence, filling in the void left by Samuel C. Owens and James Aull. He also remarked about the great desire by so many individuals to travel and trade with Mexico, terming it “Mexican mania.” He noted that traveling west “used to be something of an arduous undertaking & was attended with a good deal of privation but now there is a beaten highway the whole distance & so much travelled, that it is rather a tame affair,” speaking to the sheer volume of individuals traveling the Santa Fe and Chihuahua trails at this time.

While William occasionally mentioned in his letters his desire to travel to Santa Fe and Mexico, he left that task of the trade to others, including his brother John. In August 1848, William mentioned that his brother John had just left Santa Fe with a wagon train and was heading to Chihuahua, but was mulling over the idea of traveling even further to “St. Juan” for the “success of the business,” with an expected return date to Independence sometime in the spring of 1849. John got held up in El Paso while he made “arrangements to lessen the heavy imports which the Mexican Authorities had imposed upon [merchandise] carried in by that point.”

The trips out west carried some danger, did not always go as planned, and were sometimes not as profitable as
anticipated. John lost a friend and member of his wagon train, Chas Ashbury, near El Paso. Despite warnings not to travel unprotected alone or in small numbers, Ashbury left the wagon train to do some business in town and was killed in an ambush by a group of American Indians.\textsuperscript{113} In December, William noted that winter weather was having a negative impact on the wagon train associated with the large government freighting contract for supplies to Santa Fe. While William and his partners believed the contract promised “a profitable return,” he noted that “contrary to expectation it has been prolonged into the winter or rather the winter has overtaken them while returning & the teams by which the wagons were drawn having mostly perished a considerable amount of property has been abandoned on the road which will have to be cared for.”\textsuperscript{114} This was one of a number of less-profitable business ventures William was involved in.

On July 18, 1849, William took on another role as the first mayor of Independence, serving a single, one-year term, although he continued to serve on the City Council and served as the city’s treasurer during the Civil War.\textsuperscript{115} In addition, he led in community education by serving on the first Independence School Board. As William was wrapping up his term as mayor, he entered into another business venture, partnering again with David Waldo and also Jacob Hall, under the name of Waldo, Hall, & Co. In addition to receiving a license to trade with the Kansa, the company successfully bid on a four-year mail contract from Independence to Santa Fe, which would be the first government-subsidized mail service between the United States and New Mexico (see Figure 11).\textsuperscript{116} The company would receive $18,000 per year for transporting the mail with additional profits expected by also transporting passengers in the company’s Dearborn or Jersey wagons, with passenger fares ranging from $100 to $120.\textsuperscript{117} An article in the Palmyra Weekly Whig described the heavily armed coaches:

\textit{The stages are got up in splendid style and are each capable of conveying eight passengers. The bodies are beautifully painted, and made water tight, with a view of using them as boats in ferrying streams. The team consists of six mules to each coach. The Mail is guarded by eight men, armed as follows: Each man has by his side, strapped up in the stage, one of Colt’s revolving rifles; in a holster, below, one of Colt’s long revolving pistols, and in his belt a small Colt revolver, besides a hunting knife—so that these eight men are prepared in case of attack, to discharge one hundred and thirty-six shots without stopping to load! This is equal to a small army.}\textsuperscript{118}

Unfortunately, the mail contract did not produce the desired profits. At the end of the four-year contract, Hall and Waldo bid separately, with Hall winning the bid and purchasing the interests of William and Waldo in the Waldo, Hall & Co.\textsuperscript{119} It is doubtful that either William or Waldo were upset to lose the bid, as the profit margin was much less than initially expected.
Building a Home

In 1850, William turned thirty-seven years old. He had a real estate valued at $2,000 and owned six enslaved African Americans (five females aged 26, 10, 7, 3, and 6 months and one male aged 18). \(^{120}\) He was keenly aware of his age and eager to settle down. Since moving to Independence in 1838, William kept in contact with Eleanor “Ellen” Waddle, daughter of merchant John Waddle, from his hometown of Chillicothe, Ohio, but his various business ventures and his time serving as mayor meant increasingly less time to write her (see Figure 12). As a result, the two became estranged. On February 28, 1850, William looked to repair their relationship by writing her a letter asking for her forgiveness and revealing that he still had affections for her, hoping she did as well. The letter William wrote to Ellen was included in a letter to her written by her friend Betsey (Woodson) Lee, the wife of William’s friend and business partner Carey A. Lee. Betsey tried to help William’s cause by urging Ellen to “forget the past” and marry William, writing:

> You know for the least two years he has been engaged in a very hazardous business, indeed so much so that his friends were fearful that he would be entirely [sic] broken up. and I can truly say that he has scarcely [sic] had an hour that he could call his own…I know he loves you yes devotedly loves you. Since the estrangement which has sprang up between you I have never seen any one so unhappy…Oh will you not lay aside all feeling of pride & let the past pass into oblivion and be happy.\(^{121}\)

William planned to return to Chillicothe within the following few weeks with the goal of visiting his aging father and marrying Ellen. Before arriving in Chillicothe, William stopped in Cincinnati and wrote to Ellen asking if she would marry him. If she refused, he would not visit Chillicothe. Ellen agreed, and the two were married on March 28, 1850, in their hometown of Chillicothe; however, Ellen did not move to Independence until 1852.\(^{122}\)

After his marriage to Ellen, William continued his work as a trader and merchant, handling government freighting contracts. On May 3, 1851, he wrote to Ellen, “I know you do not like it much but may be we make it profitable this time – Nothing like trying --- it is harassing at times, tis true but then it is a connstant [sic] employment.”\(^{123}\) While the freighting contracts may not have initially proven as lucrative as hoped, business was booming at William’s outfitting store in Independence. By the early 1850s, credit reporters noted that the store was the largest in Independence and had an excellent reputation. As historian William Patrick O’Brien notes, “Merchants from as far away as Philadelphia listed McCoy’s business house in Independence as one of the best in Missouri and did not hesitate to sell to them, even in the midst of border war and Civil War.”\(^{124}\)
In addition to his role as a forwarding agent and commission merchant for various partnerships, William created a coal company with Waldo and others that seemed to promise high profits. William also served as the business manager for Hiram Young. Hiram was born into slavery in about 1812 in Tennessee and later moved to Missouri. He reportedly earned enough money by whittling and selling ox yokes that he was able to purchase his wife Matilda’s freedom and his own from George Young of Greene County, Missouri, in 1847. In 1850, Hiram moved to Independence and entered the carpentry business, manufacturing yokes and wagons with the capacity to haul 6,000 pounds, primarily for government freight contractors, such as William and his many partners. Unable to read and write, Hiram entrusted and depended on William to act as his business agent. Hiram was immensely successful. By 1860, his real estate was valued at $36,000, while his personal estate was valued at $20,000. His business employed between 50 and 60 men on his 480-acre farm and 20 men at his shop in Independence. His business, Hiram Young and Company, produced thousands of ox yokes and between 800 and 900 wagons each year.

More than a year after William wed Ellen, he finally found a home to settle down in and purchased Samuel C. Owens’s former home on lots 39 and 40 at auction in Independence on September 10, 1851. It was here that William and Ellen would raise their two children: Nancy “Nannie” (b: July 14, 1853), born deaf, and Allen Lee (b: September 16, 1854). Reflecting his growing wealth, in about 1856, McCoy greatly expanded his home by constructing a two-story, brick, side-hall-plan, main-block addition with Greek Revival and Italianate influences, a style popular in his hometown of Chillicothe, to the south side of the home Samuel Owens had built (see Figure 13). Bricklayer and stonemason George A. Wilcox (b: November 27, 1832) was reportedly the builder. Wilcox was a native of St. Louis, and like so many others at this time, had the urge to go to California in seek of gold and fortune. Sometime in the early 1850s, Wilcox left St. Louis and traveled with a group of young men to Independence to
join a caravan headed to California. The cost of the journey was $600.135 The night before the wagons were supposed to leave, the organizer of the caravan vanished, leaving the wagons and provisions, but taking all of the cash and leaving the gold-seekers stranded in Independence.136 Wilcox stayed in Independence, where he utilized his skills as a stonemason and brick layer, went into the contracting business, and reportedly “erected many of the town’s first buildings.”137 In addition to the fine brick home located on 14 acres of land, William McCoy’s residence included a carriage house, ice house, smoke house, garden, shed, barn, flower garden, vegetable garden, and an herb garden, all an indication of William’s increasing wealth.138

The year after he expanded his home, William fulfilled his desire to engage in work in a “more quiet pursuit” and entered the banking field, helping to establish the Independence Savings Bank, which was the first private bank in Independence.139 It was soon after known as Stone, McCoy & Co and operated from the Independence courthouse.140 In 1868, the bank’s name was changed to Stone, Sawyer & Co. after McCoy ended his partnership in the venture.

The 1860s: A Time of Change

William’s diverse business ventures in the 1850s paid off. By 1860, his real estate was valued at $18,000, up from $2,000 in 1850, and his personal estate was valued at $40,000.141 In addition, Ellen had real estate valued at $8,000.142 At this time, William owned two enslaved African Americans (one male aged 30 and one female aged 33), down from six in 1850.143 These two enslaved individuals were named Ben and Amanda. William regularly mentioned them in his letters to Ellen throughout the 1850s and early 1860s when she was visiting family in Chillicothe, often providing updates on their health and work. In June 1859, for example, William mentioned that Ben, who attended the yard, gardens, and fields, had become ill and as a result the yard was now full of weeds, but Ben had “no time to attend to it as he is much behind with his other more important operations.”144 William also noted, “We are not getting along well...He is a slow horse at best,” which was not the last time William complained about Ben being slow to get work done.145 At this time, Amanda had also become ill with a “disease threatening dangerous results.”146 William had various women help nurse Amanda back to health, including his sister-in-law Mary McCoy.147 While away on a trip in 1863, William left Amanda and Ben to care for his home. The first Saturday that they were alone, someone tried to break into the house at two o’clock in the morning. A “Mr. Wilcox” stayed at the house for the next two or three nights, but the intruder did not return, and William noted that Amanda and Ben “were much rejoiced at my coming to relieve them of the great responsibility they felt resting upon them.”148 While little else is known about Ben and Amanda, they reportedly continued working for William after they were freed, and the 1880 census reveals that the two were married and took the last name of McCoy.149 They were employed in housekeeping at the time, likely for William, and living at 202 Liberty Street in Independence.150

The 1860s also brought the Civil War to the doorstep of the McCoy family. While the residents of Independence remained divided in their loyalties, William and his family supported the Union and remained in Independence throughout most of the war, with William taking some trips for work and Ellen making occasional visits to Nannie at the Missouri Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb (present-day Missouri School for the Deaf) in Fulton. Throughout the war, the city was occupied by both Union and Confederate forces. During the First Battle of Independence on August 11, 1862, an estimated 700-800 Confederate men, under the command of Colonel John T. Hughes with assistance from William Clarke
Figure 15. Detail, “Bird’s eye view of the city of Independence, Jackson Co., Missouri,” 1868. Source: Library of Congress.
Quantrill, attacked approximately 350 Union soldiers under the command of Lieutenant Colonel James T. Buel. Buel was using William’s bank building as headquarters at the time, which was reportedly “bombarded severely, but survived all attempts to burn it down.” As the battle broke out, approximately 50 Union soldiers were forced north and took position at William McCoy’s home and fired on some of the Confederate troops. Union Cavalryman Homer Harris Jewett wrote about the skirmish in his diary:

“[We] took possession of Wm McCoy’s house, a large two story brick. We knocked all the windows out and took our stations, some up stairs and some down below. His house was richly furnished. As we came to the house 3 pickets ran and we fired on them. This was about 9 AM... About 10 AM some 200 Cav came marching towards us from the ME Church. When within 200 yds of us we opened fire from every window which emptied some saddles. They ran without even returning our fire. The family now cooked us some breakfast and we did it justice. Some ate while others watched and vice versa.”

Overwhelmed by the Confederate forces and surprised by their attack, Col. Buel eventually surrendered. The city was later re-occupied by Union forces and the Second Battle of

Figure 16. Homer Harris Jewett, 1862. Courtesy of Sharon and Bryan Snyder.
Independence broke out in October 1864, resulting in another Confederate victory. Independence was quickly recaptured again by Union forces, though.

William was well-respected by both Union and Confederate supporters and often served as a mediator between the two. Perhaps his greatest service to Independence during the Civil War was when he helped save its destruction by Union Colonel Charles Jennison, a staunch abolitionist and Jayhawker (see Figure 17). Jennison threatened to burn Independence to the ground, and William pleaded with him not to do so until the early hours of the morning. At 3 o’clock in the morning, Jennison was notified that a wagon train had been attacked by Quantrill at Harrisonville and ordered his troops to pursue them, rather than burn Independence.

The Civil War interfered with the operations of William’s coal company, which was subsequently terminated as a result. In 1868, William also ended his partnership with the Stone, McCoy, & Co. bank, but not before he was the victim of a bank robbery. In late-September 1867, the Stone, McCoy, & Co.’s bank was robbed after hours. The burglar had a copy of the key that unlocked the safe and a “large amount of money” was taken, estimated between $20,000 and $30,000. Approximately two months later, the First National Bank of Independence was robbed. William helped organize this bank and worked there as a cashier. On the evening of November 27, 1867, two to three armed men broke into the bank, startling both William and bank clerk Isaac N. Rogers, who were there at the time. The thieves unlocked the vault with William’s key, took what was inside, and locked William and Rogers in the vault. They remained locked inside the vault for hours before William’s wife Ellen arrived with the spare key. Ironically, Stone, McCoy, & Co. had just placed their funds in the vault at the National Bank for safety, as they had been doing since their bank was robbed in September. William reported to a newspaper that the First National Bank lost $11,000 in the robbery, while Stone, McCoy, & Co. lost $5,300. Specialty deposits of gold were also lost in the robbery. A $10,000 reward was offered for the arrest and conviction of the robbers or the return of the money, but the thieves were never caught. Years later, an unidentified, well-known citizen of the area reportedly confessed to William that the thieves from the November 27 robbery took the money to his house to be divided, but threatened him with death if he told anyone about it. He allegedly confessed this days after the death of Jesse James, but never gave up the name(s) of the individuals involved in the robbery. Thus, some people suspect it may have been Jesse James because of the timing of his confession, but there remains no concrete evidence that it was he.
Throughout the 1870s and 1880s William continued to work as a banker. By 1880, he formed the banking house of McCoy & Son, with his son Allen Lee joining him in the business (see Figure 20). In 1886, the McCoy Banking Company was formed, with William serving as the president, Preston Roberts as the vice president, and Allen Lee as the cashier. By this time, Allen had married Mary Scott “Scottie” Buchanan on September 14, 1882. Mary was the daughter of George and Eliza (Galbraith) Buchanan. The couple had two children: Nancy Catherine (or Katharine), born on November 23, 1885, and William Stewart, born on April 12, 1888. A year after her brother’s marriage, Nannie wed Charles L. Minor on December 19, 1883. Charles was born on November 22, 1852 to John W. and Catharine D. Minor. Like Nannie, Charles was also deaf, but as a result of scarlet fever when he was four years old. He was educated at the Nebraska Institute for the Deaf and Dumb, which was founded in 1869 by William DeCoursey French. Nannie and Charles had two daughters: Eleanor, born April 9, 1888, and Grace, born August 31, 1893.

On March 1, 1893, William’s wife Ellen died at the age of seventy-five as a result of an illness she had been suffering from for the last two to three months. Three years later,
in December 1896, the McCoy Banking Company announced the voluntary liquidation of the bank and its subsequent closure. Although the bank was in excellent standing, the reason for liquidation, according to the Kansas City Journal, was that “the stockholders are men quite advanced in years, who, being wealthy, desired to free themselves from their exacting duties necessarily incident to their respective positions and retire from the active banking business.” The closing of the bank marked the end of a thirty-year relationship between William and Preston in the banking business. Aging, widowed, and with failing eyesight, William retired entirely from the banking business in 1898 at the age of eighty-five.

William continued to reside in his home with his daughter Nannie, her husband Charles, grandchildren Eleanor and Grace, and servant Frank Wilson until his death on September 13, 1900. William left most of his property and fortune to his two children. Nannie was bequeathed a farm (NW ¼, SE ¼ and W ½ of NE ¼ of Section 34, Township 50, Range 31 and the SE ¼ of SW ¼ of Section 27, Township 50, Range 31) in Jackson County that was then occupied by Nelson Adams, along with various stocks and bonds. Her husband Charles was also willed $2,500. Like his sister, Allen was bequeathed a farm (N ½ of Section 14, Township 47, Range 31) in Jackson County, then occupied by Weldon Smith, along with stock from various corporations. William left other family members and trusted associates money, as well. He bequeathed his sister Jane S. Waddle, sister-in-law Jane C. McCoy, and sister-in-law Mary E. McCoy each

$1,000, while he left sister-in-law Lucy A. Waddle $1,500. William also left $500 to African American Frank T. Wilson for “his long faithful service” and cleared any outstanding debts to William “not evidenced by promissory notes or written obligation.” The remainder of William’s real estate and personal property was to be shared equally between Nannie and Allen.
Figure 21. The Charles Minor House, built in 1895. Eleanor and Grace Minor were close friends of Bess Wallace Truman, wife of Harry S. Truman, whom they entertained at the home. The sisters remained close with the Truman family and visited the White House on a number of occasions. Source: Dorothy M. DeTray, “Charles Minor House,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Jackson County, MO, listed on March 22, 1984.

SUBDIVIDING AND SELLING: THE MCCOY PROPERTY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

At the time of William’s death, his son Allen and his family were living at 122 South Spring Street in Independence, and daughter Nannie and her family were residing with William at the old McCoy family home at present-day 410 West Farmer Avenue. After William’s death, Allen and his family remained living at their home on South Spring Street, while Nannie and her family purchased and moved to a recently constructed home at present-day 314 North Spring Street, located approximately one-half block south of her father’s former home (see Figure 21). Charles and Nannie resided at this home until their deaths in 1911 and 1935, respectively. Their daughters, Eleanor and Grace, known locally as the “Minor Sisters,” never married and continued to live together in this home until Eleanor’s death in 1982.

Upon William’s death, Allen and Nannie became the joint owners of their father’s residence on lots 39 and 40 in Independence, with his two-story brick home located on lot 39 (see Figure 22). Decades after growing up in the old McCoy House, Nannie’s daughters, Eleanor and Grace, described what the property was like when they were children around the turn of the twentieth century at the time of William’s death:

- It was a large tract of land bounded by Spring, Farmer, McCoy and College streets…
- The front yard was fenced in with a wrought iron fence and a beautiful swinging gate. A flagstone sidewalk in front of the place is the same sidewalk that is there now. A hedge of arborvitae was at the west of the house about where Ridgeway is now
and there began the flower gardens which extended almost to what is Pleasant now. All varieties of flowers grew there in profusion… There was a formal garden, an informal one, also a kitchen garden, and then a vegetable garden.

The yard was full of flowers too – white and purple lilacs, syringa, wiegela – unusual trees and all sorts of fruit trees. We remember particularly a white cherry, green gage plum and apricot trees which all bore fruit.

Raspberry bushes, grape vines and so on, everything that grew was given a chance and it usually flourished.

Aside from the barn yard to the north of the house, the rest of the 14 acres was in pasture. In the backyard was the smoke house, the carriage house, storm cellar and the barns for the horses and cows.175

The McCoy property of Eleanor’s and Grace’s memories changed drastically in the decades following William’s death. Independence was growing and its older, large lots were being subdivided into smaller parcels to make way for more homes. William’s property was no exception.

On June 19, 1903, Allen, his wife Mary, Nannie, and her husband Charles agreed to subdivide lot 40 into 26 smaller parcels, collectively known as “McCoy Place” (see Figure 23 and 25). Two years later, the four sold lots 1-12 and 14-26 to William Stewart, and Stewart immediately sold lots 3, 4, 8, 9, 12, 14, 15, 21, and 26 back to Allen.176 Nannie and Allen retained ownership of lot 39, where their old family home was located, until 1908 when it was sold. The property changed hands several times over the next five years, until it was sold by John Pickney Gabriel, Sr., to John M. Spradling in 1913. Spradling retained ownership of the property for fifteen years, selling it to Benjamin and May Sturges in 1928. By this time, lot 39 had also been subdivided into twenty-two lots, collectively known as “McCoy Homestead,” with the old McCoy family home on lot 12 (see Figure 25).

Benjamin Sturges was born on August 25, 1860, in Worcester, England, to iron worker Joseph Richard and Mary Sturges.177 He immigrated to the United States on January 31, 1880, with his father Joseph and older brother George,
Figure 23. McCoy Place, subdivided plat of lot 40. Courtesy of Brian and Sharon Snyder.

Figure 24. Detail, September 1907 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing the location of the McCoy Place Annex. Lot 40 is outlined in blue and lot 39 is shown in red with the Kansas City and Independence Airline Railroad transecting the property. Source: Digital Library, University of Missouri.

Figure 25. Detail, August 1916 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing subdivided lot 40 (outlined in blue), known as McCoy Place, and the subdivided lot 39 (outlined in red), known as McCoy Homestead. The McCoy House parcel is outlined in green. Source: Digital Library, University of Missouri.
arriving in New York on the steamship Baltic (see Figure 26).178 After arriving in New York, Joseph, George, and Benjamin settled in Albany and found employment in the iron industry.179 Ten years later, Benjamin married Effie A. Wilcox in Troy, New York.180 Effie was born in New York on November 21, 1863, to laborer and ice dealer Ambrose Wilcox and his wife Lucy Jane.181 By 1896, the couple had moved to Missouri, and in 1900, they were living at 210 South Main Street in Independence with their children Florence (b: January 4, 1891), Gladys (b: May 19, 1896), and Ralph (b: January 2, 1899), along with Benjamin’s widowed mother Mary, brother Matthew, and sister Ruth. At this time, Benjamin was employed as an iron roller. By 1910, Benjamin and Effie welcomed three more children into their home: Benjamin Jr. (b: May 31, 1904) and twins John and Albert (March 24, 1906). On September 15, 1913, Effie tragically lost her life as a result of a blood clot in her brain.182

Benjamin remained single for the next ten years, until he married May Kurtz on August 20, 1923.183 May was born on March 10, 1881, in Weston, Missouri, to postal clerk Joseph M. Kurtz and his wife Jennie. Prior to their marriage, May was employed as a stock bond clerk in Kansas City, living as a boarder in the home of Wilson and Marguerite Durandt, who were neighbors of Benjamin.184 Five years after their marriage, the couple purchased the old William McCoy home in Independence and reportedly began converting it into five apartments in 1935. By 1930, though, the Sturges family was already renting part of their home to an additional two families: accountant Homer L. Swenson, his wife Hazel, and his sister Margaret Brand; and factory worker Harry Brown, his wife Frances, daughter Patricia, and mother-in-law Maud Williams.185 In 1940, Benjamin and May were renting space at their home to department store cashier Rachel Jones, retail store assistant manager Carston Jackson and his wife Gertrude, pipe fitter Charles Reagan and his daughter Genevieve, who worked as a doctor’s office assistant, and cosmetics selector Burell Black and his wife Virginia Lee, who worked as a technician at the local sanitorium.186

Benjamin passed away on March 31, 1945, from heart disease. After the death of her husband, May continued to rent out apartments in her home and lived there until her death on July 21, 1971. On November 16, 1971, retirees Forest and Martha Ingram
purchased the old McCoy home at 410 West Farmer Avenue from the estate of May K. Sturges with the intention of restoring it. The Ingriams already had considerable experience restoring historic buildings. They restored several homes in Independence, and Forest Ingram helped save the Watkins Woolen Mill, built in 1860, in Lawson, Missouri (see Figures 27-29). The mill was dedicated as a state park in 1964 and designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1966.187

Excited to share their restoration journey of the McCoy House with friends and local residents, the Ingriams hosted a “new life for an old house” party, attended by 250 people, and held an open house on New Year’s Day in 1972.188 Forest planned to do the bulk of the restoration work himself, and in just six weeks, he had already removed evidence of the five apartments the home had been divided into, in addition to moving the staircase from the front hall back to its original location in the east hall.189 During the party, Martha carried a tape recorder with her in order to capture stories about the home’s history that guests to her party
shared. Margaret (Kerr) Hudnall of Kansas City, for example, lived in the house in the early 1900s and told Margaret that her sister Erma Kerr wed John H. Hardin in the parlor of the home in 1906. William McCoy’s granddaughters, Eleanor and Grace Minor, attended the party, as well. The Minor sisters played a significant role in the Ingarm’s restoration of the McCoy Home. They shared their memories of growing up there, described the floorplan of the home, and even donated their grandparents’ bedroom furniture to the Ingams, which remains in the home today (see Figure 30-32).
Martha and Forest continued to reside in the McCoy home until their deaths in 1991 and 1992, respectively. After their deaths, the home was purchased by Brian and Sharon Snyder, who continue to restore and maintain the home (see Figure 33). In 1994, the home was listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and in 2009, it became a certified site on the Santa Fe National Historic Trail. Today, Brian and Sharon actively work to continue restoration of the home with the goal of turning it into a house museum.

Figure 33. Brian and Sharon Snyder.
ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

LOCATION AND LEGAL DESCRIPTION

The current (2019) owners of the property are Brian and Sharon Snyder. The property is zoned R6-HL – Single Family Residential with local historic landmark designation.

Figure 34. Aerial view of Owens-McCoy House’s setting in a residential neighborhood. Owens-McCoy property is highlighted in red. Basemap courtesy of Google Earth.

SITE AND VICINITY CHARACTERISTICS

Though the property was once part of a much larger land holding that included a number of outbuildings, the property boundaries now encompass 0.37-acres, including treed greenspace, sidewalks, and a concrete paved parking area near the northwest corner of the lot. The only extant building is the Owens-McCoy House, a 4,660 sq. ft., two-story brick building with basement comprised of various phases of construction that began c.1840.

The property has local historic landmark designation through the City of Independence, is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is a contributing property within the Truman National Historic Landmark District, and is a certified site on the Santa Fe National Historic Trail.

The Owens-McCoy House is situated on a corner lot in a residential neighborhood, with single-family residences to the east, south, and west, and a large affordable-housing unit complex to the north. The Gabriel House, a c.1930 bungalow, is located immediately east of the Owens-McCoy House. Between the two houses is greenspace with mature, deciduous trees located roughly along the property line dividing the two lots.
The primary façade and front yard of the Owens-McCoy House are oriented south to face West Farmer Avenue. Five concrete steps rise at a perpendicular angle from the public sidewalk along Farmer Avenue to a concrete sidewalk that leads north across the yard to the entryway stoop of the house. The house's front yard contains a circular, manicured hedge to the east of the sidewalk. Ornamental landscaping and trees begin at the southwest corner of the yard near the intersection of West Farmer Ave and North Ridgway Street and run north along the public sidewalk that parallels North Ridgway Street. A historical marker about the home is located near the property's southern boundary.

On the west, the Owens-McCoy property is bordered by the public sidewalk and North Ridgway Street, both of which lead to the large housing complex to the north. There is a brick walkway that runs perpendicular from the public sidewalk to the entryway stoop on the primary façade. Manicured hedges border this walkway on its south side.

There is a narrower bricked walkway located several feet north of the wider one that leads from the public sidewalk to an outdoor living area along the west elevation of the house. This area is landscaped with various ornamental plants and its bricked flooring is continuous with the two bricked walkways that lead from the public sidewalk.
At present, there is an ornamental metal fence that encompasses this outdoor living area to the west of the house. Vegetation grows along this fence line between the public sidewalk and outdoor living area. Just north of this outdoor living space, the private concrete driveway that serves the Owens-McCoy House runs perpendicular to N Ridgway St.

The asphalt parking lot of a large housing complex borders the Owens-McCoy property to the north. This property line is currently marked by a wooden fence, medium-sized trees, and vegetation overgrowth. Between this wooden fence and the backside of the Owens-McCoy House is a strip of greenspace and a second outdoor living area. The greenspace is fenced to separate it from the public sidewalk, private driveway, and second outdoor living space.

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

While planning for the construction of the two-story frame addition to the home in 2006, the Snyders found several archaeological resources near the northern elevation. These included a brick vent, brick cistern, and salt-glazed pottery pipes (see Figures 38-49). The home owners are actively planning to hire an archaeologist to conduct archaeological work in the home’s old crawl space where the remnants of the old kitchen and slave quarters foundation are located.
Figure 38. Sketch by Brian Snyder of the archeological resources found near the buildings north elevation. Courtesy of Brian and Sharon Snyder.

Figure 39. Glazed pottery pipes in situ. Courtesy of Brian and Sharon Snyder.

Figure 40. Glazed pottery pipes found near north elevation.
Figure 41. Image looking southeast (along North Ridgway Street) at the north and west elevations of the McCoy House and concrete driveway. Source: Google Earth.

**HOUSE DESCRIPTION**

The Owens-McCoy House is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (1994) for Criteria B (significant person) and C (architecture). While the National Register nomination form contains a fairly thorough description of the home’s exterior, much work has been done to the house since its listing in 1994. Major exterior work completed by the Snyders has included: restoration of a formerly bricked-in window on the ground floor of the west elevation (early 2000s); a two-story frame addition to the north elevation (rear) of the house (2006); eave and millwork restoration (2014); replacement of sills where needed; restoration of the two historic chimneys (2017); and brick masonry restoration in various locations, particularly around windows (various dates). Restoration work continues today.

Since its construction in c.1840, the Owens-McCoy House’s various owners have shaped and reshaped the dwelling into what we see today. The original portion of the house, built c.1840 likely by enslaved African Americans, is the rectangular, two-story, gable-roofed wing located at the northeast corner of the house’s main block. Enslaved laborers likely built the home’s main block c.1856. The builders attached this new addition to the south elevation of the original home, transforming the house into a statement building, while also reorienting the main façade to the south as it appears today.

Sometime during or shortly after this major addition, a separate, two-story building was constructed just northwest of the new main block. This building, thought to have been approximately 20’ x 20’, included a kitchen and living space for enslaved people and servants. A two-story porch/breezeway connected this separate building to the original c.1840 wing as well as the main block that fronts West Farmer Avenue (see Figure 42).

The next major change to the house occurred in c.1910s when builders enclosed the porch and breezeway space between the detached building, the main block, and the original c.1840 wing of the house. It is believed that the detached dwelling was demolished around the same time and some of the bricks were used to erect the new wing. It was also around this time that the house was divided into a 5-unit apartment building and rented to tenants. This continued until the 1970s when Martha and
Forest Ingram acquired the home and converted it back into a single-family residence. The current property owners, the Snyders, acquired the home in 1992 and began a more than two-decades-long process of repairing and restoring the home. The final extant addition is the frame, two-story section attached to the building’s north elevation. The current property owners constructed this 12.7’ x 27’ addition c.2006.192

The different phases of building construction are evident through the observation of changing rooflines, window sizes, brick patterns, and stylistic elements. While acknowledging the consistent evolution of the house, and the historical and cultural significance of these changes, the following description focuses on how the building appears today. Information about the extensive restoration and repair completed by the Ingram and Snyder families is included where possible. It should be noted that the Snyders continue to complete repair and restoration projects in the home as they address structural issues and investigate the building’s historic evolution.

After completing a 3-D laser scan of the entire building, resulting in 360,000,000 data points and a colorized virtual 3-D computer model of the building, the Snyders found that the c.1910 west elevation’s wall is leaning four inches near the north corner and has a three-inch bulge and displacement of the brick adjacent to the downspout. As a result, the Snyders have indicated future work will likely include razing the 1,600 sq. ft. c.1910 addition/enclosure of the porch due to “inherent deficiencies in most of the original construction” exacerbated by unregulated heavy truck and bus traffic along Ridgway Street.
The Owens-McCoy House is a two-story brick house with partial basement that boasts elements of Greek Revival and Italianate architectural styles. The Greek Revival influence is most evident in the classical Ionic-columned portico on the home’s main facade, while the Italianate features are found in a secondary portico and elements such as large eave brackets that decorate the trim band beneath the cornice.

This mixing of styles was common during the mid-nineteenth century. As Italianate followed Greek Revival as the next dominant style, the two enjoyed considerable overlap, with architects and builders choosing elements of both to produce buildings that appeared up-to-date but reverential to the still-popular and once-dominant Greek Revival. The Italianate style had become prevalent during the construction of the home’s main façade in the mid-1850s and was “particularly common in the expanding towns and cities of the Midwest,” such as Independence, Missouri.193

**South Elevation/Main Façade**

The south elevation is comprised of the three-bay, c.1856 addition to the house, which has functioned as the home’s main façade since its construction. A truncated hipped roof with asphalt shingles caps this portion of the building. Beneath the molded cornice is a wide band of trim with dentils alternating with Italianate brackets. Between the brackets are raised, oblong decorative panels that themselves alternate with molded attic vents.

The brick on the south façade is laid in running bond. The difference in the mortar color of the south brick wall indicates the masonry restoration and repair work completed by the current property owners. There are two star-shaped structural retaining washers, or anchor plates, located at the height of where the first and second story meet, one on each side of the middle bay. These exterior elements are anchor tie rods that structurally reinforce the c.1856 main block of the home. They are also visible on the west and east elevations, with two on each wall.

A Greek Revival-style entry portico is located in the west bay of the south elevation. Two fluted, Ionic columns support
Figure 45. Detail of Italianate cornice details on south elevation. Also notice modern, unadorned chimney stack before reconstruction of historic double chimneys. **Courtesy of Brian and Sharon Snyder.**

the portico roof and two plain wood pilasters are attached to the house on either side of the doorway. The single-leaf wood paneled door in the portico is flanked by three sidelights above a single wood panel on either side. A five-light transom sits above the door.

The floor of the portico is laid with modern brick. The ceiling is paneled in wood and painted light blue, a popular color choice for porch ceilings in nineteenth century America. Crowning the portico is an entablature with architrave, frieze, and cornice. The portico has a flat roof encircled by iron balustrade fencing that has been painted black.

One window is situated directly above the portico in the west bay. The middle bay has one ground floor window and one second floor window directly above, as does the east bay. Each window on the main façade has a limestone sill and wooden lintel with bull’s eye corner blocks. All windows are six-over-six, double-hung sash windows, with the exception of the bottom sash in the window above the portico. This sash is made of a single pane.

Since the early 2000s, the Snyders have completed major restoration of various components of the house. The work on the south façade included structural stabilization, restoration of bricks and mortar in some places, restoration of eaves and millwork, and restoration of the window sills and lintels as needed. The work is most clearly apparent in the difference in brick and mortar color, especially in the middle and east bays near the windows.

Figure 46. Masonry restoration and repair in 2014 near east side of portico on south elevation. **Courtesy of Brian and Sharon Snyder.**

Restoration work in the summer of 2017 included reconstructing the ornate double chimneys originally located near the center of the house’s hipped roof. A modern, unadorned chimney stack replaced the double chimneys at some point around the middle of the twentieth century. Using photographic evidence from images dating from the 1870s through the early 1900s, the Snyders rebuilt the corbelled chimneys, which are now very conspicuous elements of the home’s exterior.
Figure 47. c.1900 view of the south and east elevations showing original chimney stacks. *Photo courtesy of Jackson County Historical Society.*
Figure 48. Photo taken in fall of 2018 showing reconstructed chimneys.

Figure 49. Detail of reconstructed chimneys.

Figure 50. Detailed drawing of reconstructed chimney by Brian Snyder for Missouri State Tax Credit Application.
The west elevation of the Owens-McCoy house faces Ridgway Street and is comprised mainly of the c.1856 main block of the house and the c.1910s enclosure/addition. The two-story frame rooms added to the rear of the house in 2006 is also visible when viewing the northern end of the west elevation.

The elaborate cornice with alternating dentils, brackets, and oblong decorative panels continue from the façade to crown the c.1856 portion of the west elevation. Differing from the running brick bond on the south elevation, the bricks on the c.1856 portion of the west elevation are laid in common bond with five stretcher rows per header row. This portion of the west elevation has two bays and, according to photographic evidence and physical evidence on the wall, originally had a total of four windows, one ground-floor and one second-floor window in each bay. The north bay retains its windows. Both windows of the south bay had been bricked up. The Snyders restored the ground floor window to its original location in the south bay. The original window space above it remains bricked in. All windows are double-hung sash windows. The ground-floor windows are six-over-six, the second-floor window is currently one-over-one. The sills and lintels on all three windows are plain.

The Snyders have done much work to this section of the west elevation since the early 2000s, including brick and mortar repair, lintel and sill repair where needed, and the restoration of the six-over-six, double-hung sash window on the ground floor that had been previously filled in with brick. As in other places where masonry restoration has taken place, the work is most obviously apparent in slight difference in mortar color.

The c.1910 addition’s shed roof with shallow pitch falls slightly lower than the c.1856 block’s roofline and has boxed eaves. The building projects about 6 feet farther than the c.1856 block, and the brick is a brighter red laid in a different bond, making the building seam between the c.1910 and c.1856 portions of the house a prominent feature of the west elevation. The c.1910 portion of the west elevation is laid in a common bond variant pattern: six rows of
stretchers per single row of alternating stretchers and headers. This portion of the west elevation has a molded cornice that returns six feet to the east to dress the projecting wall from the c.1856 portion of the elevation. The six-foot-wide wall projecting from the main block contains one single-leaf door with a double-hung sash window directly above it on the second floor.

The windows in the c.1910 portion of the west elevation include six double-hung sash windows, identical in size, three on the ground floor with three second-floor windows directly above. In the north bay of the c.1910 addition is a small double-hung sash window on the second floor. Below it is a slightly larger double-hung sash window on the bottom floor. All windows have simple sills and lintels, consistent with those on the c.1856 portion of the west elevation. It is this west wall of the c.1910 portion that has been deemed structurally flawed and leaning. As mentioned previously in this report, the Snyders plan on razing this section of the home in the near future.

The 2006 two-story frame addition makes up the northernmost segment of the west elevation and sits back approximately ten feet from the c.1910 addition. Two double-hung windows made of modern materials are located on the west elevation of the frame addition, one on the ground floor and one on the second floor.
North Elevation

The 2006 two-story frame addition covers much of the north elevation of the house. This frame addition sits back from the c.1910 addition, leaving about ten feet of the c.1910 addition exposed on the north elevation. This ten-foot-wide space contains a single-leaf door on the ground floor and a double-hung sash window above on the second floor. The western half of this ten-foot-wide wall on the north elevation is brick, while the other half is frame.

The 2006 addition has two bays on its north elevation. The west bay is covered in siding with one modern casement window in the second story. Beneath this single window is another casement window to the west of single leaf door. A prominent awning shelters the door and ground floor window of the west bay.

The east bay of the frame addition rests on modern brick piers and is comprised of four sets of modern casement windows. A single rectangular wooden panel is located beneath each of the second story windows. The ground floor casement windows on the east bay are identical in material and style to those above them but appear “taller” because of two awning-style windows that are contiguous with each. Similar to the second-floor windows, a single rectangular wooden panel is located under each of these ground floor windows. In addition to the wood panels beneath each window, wood pilasters, running from the eaves to the bottom of the building, are located between each window. All decorative wooden components are painted contrasting colors.
The 2006 addition is the second addition ever made to the north elevation of the home. As indicated by historic photographs, another frame addition sat attached to the north elevation when the house was divided into apartments. Without these frame additions to the north elevation of the house, the north gable end of the original c.1840 portion of the house is visible as well as the building seams and cladding that enclosed what is thought to have been a two-story gallery porch on the west elevation of the original c.1840 building. On the north elevation of the c.1840 portion of the home were two six-over-six, double-hung sash windows, one each on the first and second floors. There is also a basement window directly beneath the first-floor window.

To the right, or west, of the building seam (where the c.1840 brick segment and c.1910 frame segment meet) is the frame wall that contains a double-hung sash window in the second story and a basement window directly beneath.

Figure 56. c.1963 photo of east elevation. Frame addition is located on right side of image. Courtesy of the Jackson County Historical Society

Figure 57. Westernmost basement window in north elevation. Picture taken during excavation of brick foundation. Notice brick building seams along left edge of window. Courtesy of Brian and Sharon Snyder.
Looking from north to south, the east elevation of the Owens-McCoy House is comprised of the 2006 frame addition to the rear of the house, the original c.1840 building, and the c.1856 main block. The frame addition sits back one foot from the c.1840 portion’s east wall. The east elevation of the frame addition looks much like its north elevation’s east bay: four sets of modern casement windows, two on the ground floor and two directly above on the second floor. Each of these windows has a single rectangular wood panel beneath it. The ground floor windows are taller due to the transom-style windows above each. Wooden pilasters that match those on its north elevation are also located between the window bays on the frame addition’s east elevation.

The c.1840 portion of the east elevation has molded cornice and boxed eaves. This segment of the east elevation has three bays, each with a six-over-six, double-hung sash window on the first and second floors. Each bay also has a basement window beneath each of the three ground floor windows. A single, simple chimney stack rises from the ridgeline of the gable roof.

Figure 58. View of home’s east elevation. Courtesy of Brian and Sharon Snyder.

Figure 59. View of Italianate portico on east elevation. Courtesy of Brian and Sharon Snyder.
The elaborate cornice with alternating dentils, brackets, and oblong decorative panels continue from the south façade to crown the c.1856 portion of the east elevation (see Figure 60). The brick is laid in common bond pattern with six stretcher rows per one header row. This portion of the east elevation has two bays. There is one six-over-six, double-hung sash window on the first and second floor of the south bay. The sills and lintels of these windows mimic the style of those on the south façade of the house. The northern bay contains the Italianate entryway portico and single-leaf door above it on the second floor.

To prevent redundancy, the following description of the east portico as documented in the National Register of Historic Places nomination form is provided below:

“An Italianate influenced porch is …supported by four square wood posts and two pilasters; the porch rests on molded limestone piers. Both the posts and pilasters have rope molded corners and plain capitals. Paneled brackets rise from the capitals to support a three-part entablature with architrave, plain frieze, and scroll brackets set over the posts, and cornice with dentils.”194

Figure 60. View of cornice on east elevation above east portico.

The double-leaf doorway beneath the portico is flanked by a long sidelight pane above a smaller one on each side. There is an updated, wall lantern-style light fixture on either side above these sidelights. There is a four-light transom above the door with a single wood panel at each end. The doors themselves each have a long, one-light glass pane above a smaller wood panel.

As shown in photographs, when the house was divided into apartments, the east portico’s roof was enclosed for extra living space. Evidence of this former use still exists on the wall surrounding the doorway above the portico. The single-leaf door has a single glass pane over wood panel. There is a three-light transom above the door. A lintel with bull’s eye corner blocks is located above the transom.
Interior – First Floor

Figure 61. First-floor floorplan. Courtesy of Brian and Sharon Snyder.
Though the exterior of the building has seen major changes and alterations since its original construction date, the building’s interior has arguably undergone more modification considering its division and use as apartments during the mid-twentieth century and conversion back to a single-family residence in the late-twentieth century. Unfortunately, the 1994 National Register of Historic Places nomination form for the Owens-McCoy House did not include a description of the interior. However, the Snyders have completed and documented their extensive repair and restoration work on the home’s interior. Though the evolution of the home’s interior is historically and culturally significant, the following description focuses primarily on how the building currently looks inside, highlighting the historically significant features. The Snyders continue to repair and restore components of the interior.

Figure 62. Front entry hall in c.1856 portion of the house, photographer facing north.

c.1856 Front Entry Hall

Through the primary doorway on the south façade of the c.1856 addition, is the long, narrow hall room of a classic hall and parlor plan, which was popular in the nineteenth century (see Figure 62). The west wall of this room contains two double-hung sash windows, the southernmost of which was recently restored as it had been bricked in by previous owners. The north wall of the hall room contains a doorway leading to the c.1910 addition. The east wall contains two doorways, one near each corner. The northernmost door leads to the hall space that contains the stairway to the second floor and the house’s east façade entry door. The southernmost doorway on the east wall of the hall room leads to the parlor.

The entry hall contains molded baseboards, picture rail, and crown. The trim around each window and doorway in this space, including the primary entrance, is elaborate and reaches to the ceiling with the exception of the parlor room doorway where the trim falls below the picture rail. Simple, flattened pilasters flank each opening and support a plain frieze and intricate, molded cornice above. The five-light transom of the primary entrance door is located below the plain frieze, and the flanking sidelights above a single wood panel are located between the single-leaf door and the pilasters.
Figure 63. Detail of primary exterior entrance in the front entry hall, photographer facing south.

Figure 64. Wall in the c.1856 entry hall in the process of demolition. Photographer facing southwest.

Major restoration work completed by the Snyders in this space include: demolition of non-historic wall that ran east-west to cut off the northernmost portion of the entry hall space; restoration of southernmost window on the west wall that had been bricked in by previous owners (new sashes, frames, and interior molded trim--pilasters, plain frieze, elaborate cornice--were duplicated using the details of the extant window); rewiring of all services in the space; rewired gas light fixtures for electricity; addressed the plumbing in the restroom directly above hall space; plumbing and wiring moved to west wall; installation of new ceiling (see Figure 64).
c.1856 Parlor Room

The parlor room of the c.1856 hall and parlor addition is located to the east of the entry hall. There are two double-hung sash windows in the parlor’s south wall and one window of the same style in the east wall. There are two doorways in this room, one located near the room’s southwest corner in its west wall (to entry hall) and another doorway in the north wall that leads to the hallway with staircase and east façade entry.

The window and door trim in the parlor, with its pilasters, plain frieze, and elaborate cornice, matches the window and door trim of the adjacent entry hall. The room also features molded baseboards and picture rail that match those found in the entry hall. Above the picture rail in the parlor is cove crown molding. Between the picture rail and the molding is reproduction Victorian wallpaper.

The ceiling of the parlor boasts restored paintings of roses and leafy vines at the room’s corners, with tapering vines framing much of the ceiling’s perimeter. A fireplace is located in the middle of the parlor’s west wall, north of the doorway, and projects outward into the room’s floorplan. A Victorian, carved-slate mantel dresses the fireplace.

Major restoration work completed by the Synders in the parlor include: removal of deteriorated extant ceiling paper, leading to the discovery of floral artwork on the underlying plaster ceiling; restoration of floral artwork by local artist Amy Harvey (using a black light, Harvey traced the original designs on the plaster surface); installation of new molding on ceiling and walls; rewired and reinstalled historic light fixtures, outlets, and switches.
Figure 67. Restored ceiling paint in northwest corner of parlor.
**c.1856 East Entry Hall**

The east entry hall is located to the north of the parlor and contains the stairway to the second floor of the home (see Figure 68). This space contains four entries: doorway in the west wall that leads to the front entry hall; doorway in the south wall that leads to the parlor; exterior double-doorway in the east wall that leads to the portico on the home’s east elevation; and a doorway in the north wall that leads to the c.1840 portion of the home. The door trim in this space matches that found in the parlor and front entry hall rooms.

The staircase is located along the hall’s north wall and features a carved, open stringer board above wood-paneled spandrel, turned balusters, and Victorian box newel post with flower motif. There is a paneled door along the spandrel wall that leads to the space beneath the stairs.

**c.1840 portion of the house – Current Dining Room**

The doorway in the north wall of the east entry hall leads to a room in the c.1840 portion of the house that is currently used as a dining room (see Figures 69-70). The space contains two additional doorways: a doorway with three-light transom in the west wall, near the southwest corner of the room that leads to the c.1910 portion of the house; and a doorway in the north wall of the room that leads to the current kitchen in the c.1840 portion of the house. There are two identical, double-hung sash windows in the east wall. There is one double-hung sash window identical to these in the room’s west wall that looks into the c.1910 portion of the home.

The wood trim around the doors and windows in this c.1840 room differ from that found in the c.1856 rooms. The dining room trim around these openings are much simpler and feature crossetted corners at the top that reach the ceiling. All windows recess into the wall, leaving substantial stool space. There is a single wood panel above the door in the north wall that leads to the kitchen. This room also features ceiling beams, boxed crown molding with cove, plain wooden wainscoting, and molded baseboards. A fireplace with simple, classic mantle, and what is believed to be the original brick hearth, is located in the middle of the north wall. The hearth projects outward into the room’s floorplan. To the west of the

Figure 68. Staircase in c.1856 east entry hall

fireplace are cabinets that have been built into the wall. The ceiling beams, wainscoting, mantle, and cabinetry were most likely added after this room’s original c.1840 construction, possibly at different times as the room’s functions evolved.
The current kitchen space is located northeast of the dining room (see Figure 71). There are three doorways in this room: one doorway in the room’s south wall that leads to the dining room; one doorway in the room’s west wall near the northwest corner that leads to a mud room in the c.1910 portion of the house; and one doorway in the north wall that leads to the c.2006 frame addition. There is one double-hung sash window located near the middle of the east wall. This space features simple, cove crown molding and baseboards. The window and door trim is crossetted similar to that in the dining room. There is evidence of a former staircase in the northwest corner of the room. This is corroborated by the configuration of some of the flooring in the northwest corner of the bedroom directly above the kitchen.
c.1910 portion of the house - Current Mud Room Area and Family Space

The mud room area and family space is an L-shaped room that makes up the northwest corner of the house and is comprised mostly of the c.1910 addition. The northernmost section of this space is accessed through the west wall of the kitchen. A door in the room’s north wall, near the northeast corner, leads to a small and narrow space that leads to the c.2006 frame addition to the house. Across from this doorway is a doorway to a small bathroom located in the southeast corner closest to the kitchen. A third door is located in the room’s north wall near the northwest corner and leads outside.

There are four double-hung sash windows along the west wall of this space. A door in the south wall, near the southwest corner of the room, leads outside. There is a second door with three-light transom in the south wall, near the room’s southeast corner, that leads to the c.1856 entry hall. A doorway in the room’s east wall, near its southeast corner leads back into the current dining room in the c.1840 portion of the house. A staircase is located on the east wall near the door to the dining room and leads to a bedroom directly above.

The walls in this space were originally finished in plaster. The Snyders removed the plaster, exposing the bricks and the building seams. The Snyders eventually plan to raze this c.1910 portion of the home due to its later construction date (beyond the period of significance) and its structural deficiencies.

Figure 72. View of original brick on north elevation now covered by c.2006 addition, photographer facing south.

Figure 73. Exterior door located in southwest corner of the c.1910 addition. Notice the building seam to the left of the door.
Interior – Second Floor

Figure 74. Second-floor floorplan. Courtesy of Brian and Sharon Snyder.
The second floor of the Owens-McCoy House is accessed by two staircases: one in the c.1856 east entry hall and the other in the c.1910 mud room and family space that the Synders plan to eventually raze. Accessing the second floor through the c.1856 staircase leads to a landing that provides access to the c.1856 portion of the house to the south (left) and the c.1910 portion of the house to the north (right).

*c.1856 Section of House - Hall at Northwest Corner*

The c.1856 portion of the second floor is slightly elevated about 1’ from the stair landing and has a single ascending stair flanked by handrails with balusters that leads to an open hall space in the northwest corner of the c.1856 block. It is thought the slightly higher level was to provide adequate space for higher ceilings downstairs in the c.1856 addition.

This hall space has one double-hung sash window in its west wall that looks over Ridgway St. At the time of survey, the Synders were in the process of repairing this window. A single-leaf wood paneled door leads to the dressing and bathroom space located directly south of the hall. Above this doorway is a three-light, awning-style transom window (not original). This space has simple crown molding and baseboards. The trim around the doorway and window is crossetted similarly to that found downstairs in the dining room and kitchen areas.

*Figure 75. Window in west wall of hall, photographer facing northwest.*
c.1856 Section of House – Bathroom

Currently located in the southwest corner of the c.1856 portion of the house is a bathroom. There is a six-over-one double-hung sash window located in the room’s south wall that looks over the home’s front yard. Two doorways lead to the space: one in the room’s north wall that leads to the hall; the doorway located in the east wall leads to the master bedroom. The space has cove crown molding and baseboards with quarter-round shoe. The window and doorway trim is crosseted similarly to that found in other parts of the house. The Snyders installed beadboard wall paneling as well as Victorian-style wall and ceiling borders. There is a square-shaped space in the floor covered in linoleum on which the bathroom facilities sit. In the ceiling near the room’s southwest corner is a covered access point to the attic space.

Figure 76. Bathroom, photographer facing west.

Figure 77. Doorway between northwest hall and bathroom, photographer facing southeast.

Figure 78. Access to attic in bathroom near southwest corner.
Located east of the dressing room and bathroom space is the master bedroom that takes up the southeast corner of the c.1856 portion of the home. This room has three windows: two double-hung sash windows are located in the south wall; one double-hung sash window in the east wall. There are two doorways: one in the room’s west wall that leads to the combined dressing and bathrooms and one in the north wall that leads to a hall.

This space has cove crown molding and baseboard with flattened shoe. The window and door trim is crosssetted similarly to that found in other parts of the house. There is a marbleized, carved slate fireplace located in the middle of the master bedroom’s west wall. It projects outward into the floorplan. To the north of the fireplace in the room’s northwest corner is a closet with crosssetted trim that reaches from the floor to the ceiling.
c.1856 Section of House - East Hall

Through the master bedroom’s north door is another hall space that is connected to the hall previously described. This hall takes up the northeast corner of the c.1856 portion of the house. There are no windows in this space. There are four doorways: the doorway in the north wall leads to a bedroom in the c.1840 portion of the house; a door in the east wall leads outside to the east portico roof; the door in the south wall leads back into the master bedroom; and, the door in the west wall leads to the adjacent hall space with staircase.

The space has cove crown molding and baseboards. The door trim is crossetted similarly to that found in other parts of the house. There are two closets, added by the Ingram family, that flank either side of the master bedroom doorway in the south wall (see Figure 82). These closets project out into the floorplan of the hall. The trim around the closets is also crossetted to match the door trim.

c.1840 Section of House – Southeast Bedroom

Accessed through the north wall of the c.1856 east hall is a bedroom located in the original portion of the house (see Figure 83). The c.1840 room is situated lower than the c.1856 portion of the house, indicated by the two stairs that descend into the room under its southern doorway (see Figure 84). As previously mentioned, it is thought the second floor of the c.1856 portion of the house was built higher to allow space for high ceilings in the formal spaces below. There are two more doorways in the room: the doorway in the west wall leads to a room in the c.1910 portion of the house, and the doorway in the north wall leads to another bedroom in the c.1840 portion.

There are two double-hung windows in the bedroom’s east wall. The crown molding in this room is heavier and more elaborate than that found in the c.1856 portion of the second floor. There are two beams that run east-west across the ceiling. The baseboards in this space are also higher and appear more substantial than in the c.1856 portion of the second floor. The trim around the windows and doors is crossetted.

There is a fireplace with wood mantle and ceramic tile hearth near the middle of the room’s north wall. To the west of the fireplace is a built-in walnut closet executed in the Eastlake Style, likely added in the late-nineteenth century (see Figure 85). At the time of survey, William McCoy’s original furniture (bed and three marble-top pieces) were kept in this room.
Figure 82. Bedroom in c.1840 section of the house. Notice the stairs to the right that descend from the c.1856 section of the house. This photograph shows William McCoy’s original bedroom furniture set, photographer facing east.

Figure 83. Detail, stairs leading to southeast bedroom.

Figure 84. Eastlake Style built-in closet located in northwest corner of room.
**c.1840 Section of House – Northeast Bedroom**

The northeast bedroom in the c.1840 portion of the house has one double-hung sash window located in the middle of the room’s east wall. There are three doorways: one located in the south wall that leads into another bedroom in the c.1840 portion of the house; a doorway in the west wall leads to the c.1910 portion of the house; and a doorway in the north wall leads to the sleeping porch of the 2006 frame addition. The doorway in the north wall has a single-pane glass transom above. The crown molding and baseboards in this bedroom match those of the bedroom directly south (also in the c.1840 portion). The door and window trim is crossetted similarly to that found in other rooms. It is thought that at one time there was a stairway that landed in the northwest corner of this room and began in the northwest corner of the current kitchen room below.

**c.1910 Section of House – Northwest bedroom**

Located at the home’s northwest corner in the c.1910 addition to the house is a small bedroom. Exiting through the northeast bedroom’s west wall, there is a small hallway that leads west to the northwest bedroom. In this hallway is a closet to the south and a small bathroom to the north.

The northwest bedroom has two windows: one double-hung sash window in the north wall and another, smaller, double-hung sash window in the west wall. There are two doorways: one doorway in the east wall leads back into the small hallway and c.1840 portion of the house; a doorway in the south wall leads to another, larger room in the c.1910 portion of the house. The Snyders plan to raze this room as it is part of the c.1910 portion of the house.
This room makes up the southwest corner of the c.1910 addition to the home. There are three double-hung windows along the room’s west wall. There are three doorways: the doorway in the north wall leads to the c.1910 northwest corner bedroom; the doorway in the east wall leads to the southeast bedroom of the c.1840 portion of the house, and the doorway in the south wall leads to the staircase in the c.1856 portion of the house. There is also a half-turn stairway, located in the room’s northeast corner that leads to the family room on the first floor.

There is no crown molding in this room. Baseboards are simple and quarter-round shoe. The window and door trim is also simple and lacks the crossettes present in other parts of the house. The staircase in this room has a simple, boxed newel post and slender, turned balusters beneath the handrail.
The Future of the Owens-McCoy House

The last three years have been difficult ones for history museums across the country. The impact of the pandemic, culture wars, and general economic instability turned many local governments away from support for their community's heritage, and, whatever support governments did provide often was diminished, and proved inadequate. Thus, in the face of that recent history, 2022 does not seem to be an auspicious time to launch considerations of a new museum in Independence, Missouri. Yet, to walk away from next steps is even more of a problem, and certainly would be a lost opportunity, one that might well never return. As this report fully documents, the Owens-McCoy House is a nationally significant property, one that allows potential visitors to:

- Experience a historic place directly associated with the Santa Fe Trail
- Experience a multi-layered story of settlers, community builders, enslaved workers, and American Indian peoples
- Experience a carefully-restored house and learn valuable lessons of stewardship
- Enjoy mid-19th century architecture, craftsmanship, and decorative arts
- Consider how these places of exchange, between cultures, generations, and motivations have shaped the diversity of the nation.

Protecting these values is, in a word, invaluable. Plus, there are opportunities in the years to come that the Owens-McCoy House and its stories are in a good place to take advantage of and benefit.

There has been little demonstrated interest to date from the National Park Service, the State of Missouri, or the City of Independence on the public acquisition of the property to be administered as a historic site. Without that public commitment of funding and management, the best options are to explore hybrid models that are grounded in not-for-profit organization and principles.

First steps

Establishing the Vision and Mission Statement
A strong vision and mission statement identifies conservation and preservation priorities, drives the practices to achieve those goals, and helps determine what type of changes will follow. A clearly stated vision also allows both existing supporters and new or potential new supporters to understand what the property's values are, what strategies are being implemented, and how to support plans for the future. In short, the vision and mission statement allow people to see where the project is headed, and how they might want to be involved in helping to get there. A good vision and mission statement always clearly informs the public of the following:

- Making the story matter--keep the property's historical significance at the forefront
- Making the property a community space, a place for education, reflection, community interaction and engagement
- Remain consistent, knowing that it's inevitable that any plan will require minor changes, but the primary mission should remain true to the original vision
• Dream big, developing significant and inspiring goals for the future, and achieving those goals step by step over time

Recommendation: We recommend the creation of the Owens-McCoy Heritage Center, rather than attempting to establish and sustain a historic house museum of period rooms or a museum of the Santa Fe Trail period that does not have period rooms but uses the historic spaces to tell the Trail's stories.

The Heritage Center approach has several advantages:

• Sustainability. Instead of the cost of restoration and maintenance of the entire building, focus of historical restoration can be a section of the house, one that includes both major sections of its history, c. 1840, and c. 1856.

• Adequate areas for public interpretation. The Heritage Center would use the east entry hall (c. 1856) as the primary entrance, flanked by two large, well-restored rooms, the c. 1856 parlor and the c. 1840 dining room. These two rooms represented the most significant periods in the property's history. They would be the primary exhibit rooms for the heritage center.

• Creation of Adaptive Reuse Spaces for Offices, Conference Rooms. Accessible from the front of the house is the front entry way, c. 1856, which then connects to the 1910 addition. These two spaces would be used as conference rooms, or as media rooms for the heritage center to show videos, films, or PowerPoints. These spaces could be rented to groups, small business meetings, and other similar income-generating business. A major advantage is that the rooms have direct access to a restroom and a modern kitchen.

• Reserving the second floor for future opportunities, lodging, co-working spaces. The east entry staircase provides the best accessible entrance to the second floor. These second-floor rooms are in excellent condition and are well maintained.
Figure 89. Detail of possible media room and conference rooms, first floor.

Figure 90. Detail of second floor spaces.

But they are not crucial interpretive spaces; to make them so may require the installation of an elevator.

- Options for the second floor could include maintaining it as living quarters for the family, or an apartment for live-in caretaker/director for the heritage center, using the current master bedroom, east hall, and dressing room/bathroom. The existing sewing room would be used for storage and office space for the heritage center. Another option would be the conversion of the second floor rooms into co-working space, an alternative growing in favor in mid-sized cities.

- The key is for the second floor rooms become part of the sustainable funding for the project either as income producing, housing for staff, or both.

Formation of a 501(c)3 non-profit organization
If the choice is for a Heritage Center, the family should strongly consider administering the Owens-McCoy Heritage Center through a governing board representing different components of the local community and government.

- Nine members are an excellent starting number, including one or two
of the current owners. The owners carried out remarkable restoration of the property and their knowledge of the building and its history is unparalleled.

- Terms should be staggered. At the beginning, three serve one-year terms, three-serve two-year terms, and three serve three-year terms. Considering limiting the number of consecutive terms an individual may hold. Three consecutive terms would be a recommended number—that would mean a dedicated individual could serve up to 9 years on the board.

- Board members must believe in the project, believe in partnerships, and be willing to make their own financial commitment to the project. They must have "skin in the game."

- Board members must be willing to sign conflict of interest disclosures.

Developing a sustainable organization requires a need to revitalize relationships within the community, taking on the mantra that the project is not about you, but about them, the people who reside there. Learning how to effectively recruit good partners and allies is critically important when developing a new idea. By inviting and encouraging participation from residents, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and private businesses, more can be done together than individually.

Independence, Missouri, has strong preservation, conservation, and/or economic development organizations already in place that drive their agendas and manage projects. The greatest success comes when projects are community-driven by local energy and expertise, rather than a top-down approach that dictates what to do and how to do it. In selecting board members, it is crucial to identify and recruit members based on a commitment to working together toward common goals and coordinating diverse interests and perspectives.

Will everyone agree on the best course of action every time? No. But when economic and cultural survival is at stake, people tend to be more willing to work together. Encourage opportunities for people to meet, discuss options, and work together to generate plans. Differing ideas and viewpoints often spur even more creative solutions, where the old and new find ways to join forces in surprising ways toward a common beneficial goal.

Rely on Reciprocal Partnerships

Partnerships should be reciprocal. Since everyone has a stake in the outcome, all partners need to support and participate.

- The best partners are those that are willing to share the workload, share a similar vision, and have an incentive to make the community a better place.

- It doesn't require a lot of financial investment from every partner, but rather a commitment to help and accept a stake in the outcome.

- Partnerships can be formed at the local level, but don't forget about resources that are statewide, regional, or even nationwide.

- Local colleges and universities can also be excellent sources of expertise and support. The MTSU Center for Historic Preservation remains committed to professional services involving the public interpretation and continued preservation of the property. Partnerships may also involve the University of Missouri-Kansas City and its MA in History with
emphasis in Public History program and Digital and Public History class at Truman State University.

- Coalitions that incorporate a variety of public and private partners are valuable. The Santa Fe Trail Association is one of those groups along with the Historic Preservation Division of the City of Independence and the National Trails Museum in Independence.

- It is vital to incorporate local leadership, including city, county, and state governments.

Hiring an Executive Director/Manager
The governing board, once formed, immediately has two important responsibilities: create and approve bylaws to govern the property and to develop a job description, then identify and hire an executive director or manager of the property.

Developing Strategic Goals and a Work Plan
The executive director/manager works with the board on the strategic plan and goals of the project and identify and carry out the work plan to achieve those goals every year.

Community Outreach and Engagement
Board members should help the executive director/manager to identify community outreach opportunities. Engaging and empowering the community to participate gives people a feeling of ownership in the project.

- Recruit volunteers, which gives ownership and gets people excited about opportunities to shape their own community.

- Focus on your shared vision and goals.

- Celebrate and invest in the existing community events, sites, and traditions that have already engaged residents in the past.

- Encourage stakeholder collaboration in making decisions - allow room for diverse ideas and perspectives, giving an opportunity for competing views and interests to find a way to work together toward a common goal.

- Buy goods and services directly from the local population instead of hiring outside companies.

- Emphasize social inclusion and avoid bringing in an exported culture - support the local population in what they are already doing.

- Focus on serving local institutions such as schools and heritage groups.

Capitalize on What's Being Done Around You
The Independence Visitor Center is only a few blocks away as are the decades-old markers for the Santa Fe Trail on the courthouse grounds.

- Don't re-invent the wheel, learn from situations around you!

- Providing a welcoming environment for residents and visitors doesn't always require a huge financial investment or participation in a formal organization.
Building new relationships is often about hosting and hospitality, simply being willing to “open your home.”

Sometimes it’s as easy as simply inviting organizations and individuals to a location to experience it. There is tremendous value in someone having a great experience firsthand.

Invite representatives from Chambers of Commerce, convention and visitor bureaus, Main Street programs, downtown business/merchant associations, newspaper and magazine writers, and anyone else that would benefit from visiting and helping promote it.

A big advertising budget isn’t initially necessary, especially when communities are just beginning to promote what they have to offer.

Digital Presence and Strategies
It is becoming increasingly important for historic and cultural sites to bolster their online presence. A significant portion of your audience’s first contact with your organization will likely come through social media or other digital means. While building an online presence can be intimidating, you can take steps to build a sustainable foundation for an online presence.

- Identifying which social media site works best for your organization. Facebook, unlike Twitter, does not restrict the number of characters or images you can post or upload. Furthermore, Facebook still retains the largest user base of all social media platforms.

- It is important to maintain a consistent Facebook presence by regularly posting about activities taking place on the site. This does not have to be daily, but these Facebook posts should keep your audience informed of any upcoming events, recent progress, and meetings or partnerships taking place that involve your organization.

- Studies show that more than one post per day can result in a significant drop in an audience’s engagement with your post.

- Another suggestion for improving social media presence is by creating an Instagram account. Instagram and Facebook can also be connected, meaning that Facebook posts can be automatically posted to Instagram.

- A dedicated website can also be a powerful tool, though developing and maintaining one requires consultation with a professional.

- Once a website is built, it then needs to be maintained, preferably by someone familiar with running and operating web-based services.

- Though websites can be a powerful tool for reaching out to new audiences and driving visitors to the site, it can be a time consuming and complicated process, and a bad website is worse than no website at all.

Funding Opportunities
Grant and funding opportunities depend on the development of a respected non-profit government board that could except private and public funding for historic preservation, museum, and heritage tourism projects. Potential national funding sources include:

- Historic Preservation Fund grants. Congress annually funds each state's historic preservation office and from
that funding the state historic preservation offices choose what amounts to place into historic preservation projects. Most states have annual open competitions for funding, usually targeted at not-for-profit organizations.

- **Preserve America Program, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.** Independence, Missouri, is a Preserve America Community. This federal program emphasizes the use of heritage tourism approaches for historic preservation ends.

- **Johanna Favrot Fund, National Trust for Historic Preservation.** The Johanna Favrot Fund was created to save historic sites and environments that foster appreciation of the nation’s diverse cultural heritage. This is an extremely competitive grant that supports bricks-and-mortar activities, such as restoration work and site development.

- **250th Commemoration. America 250, chartered by Congress, is the national organization leading efforts to tell the nation’s story at the time of the 250th anniversary.** At this time, 30 states have established their own programs and several are incorporating grants to local projects as part of their programs.
APPENDIX A: SAMUEL C. OWENS INVENTORY OF ESTATE

Inventory of the estate of Samuel C. Owens, deceased, filed with the papers pertaining thereto, shows the following described real estate in Jackson County, Missouri, to-wit:

¼ part of the following described lands, to-wit:

1. The Northeast fractional ¼, Section 8, Township 50, Range 31.
2. Also the S.E. ¼ of the N.E. ¼ Section 36, Twp. 51, Range 31, 40 acres.
3. Also the N.W. ¼ of the S.E. ¼ Section 36, Twp. 51, Range 31, 40 acres.
4. Also the N.W. ¼ of the N.W. ¼ Section 11, Twp. 50, Range 31, 40 acres.
5. Also the N.E. ¼ of the N.E. ¼ Section 9, in Township 50, Range 31, 40 acres.
6. Also the N.W. ¼ of the N.E. ¼ Section 9, Twp. 50, Range 31, 40 acres.
7. Also the N.E. ¼ of the N.E. ¼ Section 15, Twp. 50, Range 31, 40 acres.
8. Also the N.E. ¼ of the N.E. ¼ Section 36, Twp. 50, Range 31, 40 acres.
9. Also the West ½ of the S.E. ¼ Section 10, Twp. 50, Range 31, 80 acres.
10. Also the East ½ of the S.E. ¼ Section 10, Twp. 50, Range 31, 80 acres.
11. Also the E. ½ of the S.W. ¼ Section 9, Twp. 50, Range 31, 80 acres.
12. Also the East ½ of the S.E. ¼ Section 4, Twp. 50, Range 31, 80 acres.
13. Also the East ½ of the N.E. ¼ Section 10, Twp. 50, Range 31, 80 acres.
14. Also the West ½ of the S.E. ¼ Section 10, Twp. 50, Range 31, 80 acres.
15. Also West ½ of the S.W. ¼ Section 14, Twp. 50, Range 31, containing 80 acres.
16. Also the East ½ of the S.W. ¼ Section 11, Twp. 50, Range 31, 80 acres.
17. Also the S.W. ¼ of Section 36, Twp. 51, Range 31, 160 acres.

Total amount of acres in above 1228 42/100, held by deed from James Aull, recorded in the office of the Recorder of Jackson County, in deed Book F Page 38 & following.

18. The E. ½ of the N.E. ¼ Section 3, Twp. 49, Range 32, by patent from State of Missouri 83 25/100 acres.
19. Also fractional Section 7, Township 50, Range 31, held by patent from the State of Missouri, 35.82 acres.
20. Also the E. ½ of the N.W. ¼ of Section 34, Twp. 50, Range 33, by patent from State of Mo. 80 acres.
21. Also the N.E. ¼ of the N.E. ¼ of Section 11, Twp. 49, Range 33, by patent from State of Mo. 40 acres.
22. Also the N.E. and N.W. ¼ of the N.E. ¼ of Section 28, Twp. 51, Range 30, by patent from State of Mo., 80 acres.
23. Also the N.E. ¼ of the N.W. ¼ of Section 28, in Tp. 51, Range 30, by pat. from State of Missouri, 40 acres.
24. Also the N.W. ¼ of the S.W. ¼ of Section 34, Twp. 50, Range 33, by pat. from State of Mo. 40 acres.
25. Also the S.W. ¼ of the N.W. ¼ of Section 34, Twp. 50, Range 33, by pat. from State of Mo. 40 acres.
26. Also the N.E. and N.W. ¼s of the N.E. ¼ of Section 34, Twp. 50, Range 33, by pat. from State of Mo. 80 acres.
27. Also the East ½ of the S.E. ¼ of Section 34, in Township 50, Range 33, held by patent from State of Missouri, containing 80 acres.

28. Also the S.W. ¼ of Section 11, Township 50, Range 32, held by deed from William Crenshaw & wife & recorded in the office of the Recorder of Jackson Co. in deed Book H page 646, acres 154.95.

29. Also the W. ½ of the N.E. ¼ Section 22, Twp. 49, Range 32, by patent from State of Mo. 82.64 acres.

30. Also the S.W. ¼ of the S.E. ¼ of Section 34, in Township 50, Range 32, by pat. From State of Mo. 40 acres


4/9ths of 103.96 acres being part of the N.W. ¼ of Section 34, Tp. 50, Range 32, held by deed from Joseph H. Reynolds, as Sherriff of Jackson County, executed to Owens & Aull.

4/9 of the following described lands, to-wit: The N.E. ¼ of Sec. 33, and the E. ½ of N.W. ¼ of Sec. 33, and the N.E. ¼ of the S.E. ¼ of Sec. 28, and the N.E. ¼ of the N.E. ¼ of Sec. 28, and the S.W. ¼ of the N.W. ¼ of Sec. 27, and the E. ½ of the S.E. ¼ of Sec. 21, and the S.E. ¼ of the N.E. ¼ of Sec. 21, and the N.W. ¼ of the S.E. ¼ of Sec. 28, and the S.W. ¼ of the N.E. ¼ of Sec. 28 all in Twp. 49, Range 31, and the S.W. fractional ¼ of Section 11, and the S.E. fractional ¼ of Sec. 3, Twp. 50, Range 32 held by deed from J. H. Reynolds sheriff of Jackson County to Owens & Aull.

Also the undivided interest of Thomas Foster in the following lands lying in Jackson County to-wit:

The E. ½ of the S.E. ¼ of Sec. 28, Twp. 50, Range 32, and the S.W. ¼ of the S/E/ ¼ of same Sec. Twp. And Range held by deed from Shff. Of Jackson Co. Interest of William Cockrell in the following lands lying in Jackson County, to-wit: N.E. ¼ of the ¼ of Sec. 28, and the S.W. ¼ of the N.W. ¼ of Sec. 27, and the S.E. ¼ of Sec. 21, and the N.W. ¼ of the S.E. ¼ of Sec. 28, and the S.W. ¼ of the N.E. ¼ of Sec. 28, all in Twp. 49, Range 31, held by deed from the Sheriff of Jackson County. (Here follows the property in town of Lexington, Missouri, and Lafayette Co., Mo)

3/8 of the following lands & property belonging to the firm of Michael Rice & Co:

30 acres N. end of N.W. ¼ of S.E. ¼ Sec. 17, Twp. 50, Range 31, held by deed from Stewart Lewis and wife. 14 9/100 acres fractional section 5, Township 50, Range 31, held by deed from Lewis Franklin & wife.

44/12 acres N.W. fractional ¼ of Sec.8 Twp. 50, Range 31, held by deed from Robert Richman. 80 acres, W. ½ of S/W/ ¼ Section 10, Twp. 50, Range 31, held by Duplicate of Receiver at Lexington. 80 acres W. ½ of N.E. ¼ of Section 10, Twp. 50, Range 31, held by deed from Daniel P. Lewis and wife.
ENDNOTES


8 The home was razed in 1959; “Lincoln Country,” Greensburg Record Herald, Greensburg, Kentucky, October 12, 1967, 15.


11 The home was razed in 1959; “Lincoln Country,” Greensburg Record Herald, Greensburg, Kentucky, October 12, 1967, 15.


15 Thomas, Lincoln’s Old Friends of Menard County, Illinois, 17.

16 Allen, A History of Kentucky, 383.


18 Thomas, Lincoln’s Old Friends of Menard County, Illinois, 67.

19 “Attended ‘Blab’ School, Mentor Graham, ‘Lincoln’s Teacher,’ was a Co. Native, Born at Brush Creek,” Greensburg Record Herald, Greensburg, Kentucky, October 12, 1967.


24 Ibid., 15-17, 56.

25 Ibid., 57.


32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.


43 *The History of Jackson County, Missouri, Containing a History of the County, its Cities, Towns, etc.* (Cape Girardeau, MO: Ramfree Press, 1966), 634.

44 Ibid., 179, 185, 189-190.


46 Ibid.

47 Ibid., 517.

48 Ibid.
49 Webb, Adventures in the Santa Fe Trade, 42.
51 Webb, Adventures in the Santa Fe Trade, 42.
52 The URBANA group, “Blue Mills,” National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Jackson County, Missouri, listed on April 21, 1994, sec. 8, pg. 6.
53 Ibid., sec. 7, pg. 1.
54 Ibid., sec. 8, pg. 6.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid., sec. 8, pg. 7.
57 URBANA Group, “Owens-McCoy House,” sec. 8, pg. 5
58 Warranty Deed from James and Elizabeth Allen to Samuel C. Owens, August 9, 1833 (filed August 28, 1833), Jackson County, Missouri, Deed Book B, page 284 (copy), Brian and Sharon Snyder Private Collection, Independence, Missouri.
61 Ibid., 124-125.
64 Ibid.
65 “From Santa Fe,” Boon’s Lick Times, Fayette, Missouri, March 1, 1845.
68 Ibid.
69 "From New Mexico," The Spirit of Democracy, Woodsfield, Ohio, May 15, 1847.
73 Sharon and Brian Snyder to Gail Fines, email communication, February 25, 2006, Brian and Sharon Snyder Private Collection, Independence, Missouri.
74 Connelley, 26.
75 Ibid., 26-27.
76 Ibid., 29.
77 John H. Harper was pardoned on December 2, 1855, on condition he leave California.
78 Ibid., 446.
79 Guardianship of Henry C. Owens, Book 6, page 547 (copy), Brian and Sharon Snyder Private Collection, Independence, Missouri; Guardianship of Ann Owens, Book 7, page 144 (copy), Brian and Sharon Snyder Private Collection, Independence, Missouri; Guardianship of Laura Owens, Book A, page 90 (copy), Brian and Sharon Snyder Private Collection, Independence, Missouri.
80 Deed of Sale from John H. Harper and wife Maria F. to Lorenzo D. Bird, April 1, 1848 (filed July 1, 1848), Jackson County, Missouri, Deed Book N, page 227.
81 Deed of Sale from Lorenzo D. Bird and wife Anne S. to John H. Harper, April 6, 1848 (filed July 1, 1848), Jackson County, Missouri, Deed Book N, page 233.
82 Deed of Sale from Ambrose Y. Owens and wife Helen to John F. McCauley, March 2, 1850 (filed April 2, 1850), Jackson County, Missouri, Deed Book P, page 190; Deed of Sale from Ambrose Y. Owens and wife Helen to John F. McCauley, March 9, 1850 (filed April 2, 1850), Jackson County, Missouri, Deed Book P, page 189.
83 Sheriff's Deed, filed May 14, 1853, Jackson County, Missouri, Book U, page 55.
84 Ibid.
86 Lewis Publishing Company, Portrait and Biographic Record of the Scioto Valley, Ohio (Chicago, IL: Lewis Publishing Company, 1894), 11.
91 Ibid.
93 Carey A. Lee to Ellen, June 14, 1838, Independence, Jackson County, Missouri, transcription by Annette W. Curtis, Brian and Sharon Snyder Private Research Collection, Independence, Missouri.
94 Ibid.
95 William McCoy to Ellen Waddle, Independence, Missouri, July 24, 1838, transcription by Annette W. Curtis, Brian and Sharon Snyder Private Research Collection, Independence, Missouri.
96 Ibid.
97 William McCoy to Ellen Waddle, Independence, Missouri, January 1840, transcription by Annette W. Curtis, Brian and Sharon Snyder Private Research Collection, Independence, Missouri.
99 O’Brien, Merchants of Independence, 121.
100 Ibid., 122.
101 Ibid., 147.
102 Ibid., 119.
103 William McCoy to Ellen Waddle, Independence, Missouri, May 6, 1848, transcription by Annette W. Curtis, Brian and Sharon Snyder Private Research Collection, Independence, Missouri.
105 Goodrich, 174.
108 William McCoy to Ellen Waddle, Independence, Missouri, May 6, 1848, transcription by Annette W. Curtis, Brian and Sharon Snyder Private Collection, Independence, Missouri.

109 Ibid.

110 Ibid.

111 William McCoy to Ellen Waddle, Independence, Missouri, August 1848, transcription by Annette W. Curtis, Brian and Sharon Snyder Private Collection, Independence, Missouri.

112 William McCoy to Ellen Waddle, Independence, Missouri, November 2, 1848, transcription by Annette W. Curtis, Brian and Sharon Snyder Private Collection, Independence, Missouri.

113 Ibid.

114 William McCoy to Ellen Waddle, Independence, Missouri, December 23, 1848, transcription by Annette W. Curtis, Brian and Sharon Snyder Private Collection, Independence, Missouri.

115 William McCoy also established the City of Independence Seal, which features an animal-drawn covered wagon to symbolize and commemorate the industry which was the foundation of the city. This seal remained in place for nearly 170 years.


117 Ibid.

118 “Santa Fe Stages,” Palmyra Weekly Whig, Palmyra Missouri, August 1, 1850.


121 Betsey Lee to Ellen Waddle, Independence, Missouri, February 28, 1850, transcription by Annette W. Curtis, Brian and Sharon Snyder Private Collection, Independence, Missouri.


123 William McCoy to Ellen McCoy, Independence, Missouri, May 3, 1851, transcription by Annette W. Curtis, Brian and Sharon Snyder Private Collection, Independence, Missouri.

124 O’Brien, Merchants of Independence, 151.

125 Christensen, Foley, Kremer, and Winn, eds. Dictionary of Missouri Biography, 532


127 Ibid.

128 Ibid.


130 O, Brien, “Hiram Young.”

131 Ibid.


133 URBANA Group, “Owens-McCoy House,” sec. 8, pg. 7.

134 Ibid.

135 “George A. Wilcox, St. Louis Pioneer, Dies Here, Aged 90,” The St. Louis Star and Times, St. Louis, Missouri, July 9, 1923.

136 Ibid.

137 “George A. Wilcox, Retired Contractor, Dies at Age of 90,” St. Louis Post-Dispatch, St. Louis, Missouri, July 9, 1923.


139 Christensen, Foley, Kremer, and Winn, eds. Dictionary of Missouri Biography, 532.


142 Ibid.

144 William McCoy to Ellen McCoy, Independence, Missouri, June 7, 1859, transcription by Annette W. Curtis, Brian and Sharon Snyder Private Collection, Independence, Missouri.

145 Ibid.

146 Ibid.

147 Ibid.

148 William McCoy to Ellen McCoy, Independence, Missouri, May 17, 1863, transcription by Annette W. Curtis, Brian and Sharon Snyder Private Collection, Independence, Missouri.

149 Eleanor Minor and Grace Minor, “Granddaughters of First Mayer Have Fond Memories of Old Home,” newspaper clipping, Brian and Sharon Snyder Private Collection, Independence, Missouri. The Snyders believe that Ben’s last name was Tucker, a prominent African American family name associated with the enslaved African Americans of Jabez Smith.


154 Ibid.

155 Ibid.


157 *History of Jackson County*, 447.


159 [No Title,” *The Weekly Caucasian*, Lexington, Missouri, December 7, 1867.


161 Christensen, Foley, Kremer, and Winn, eds. *Dictionary of Missouri Biography*, 532

162 Ibid.


166 “Death of C. L. Minor,” newspaper clippings, Brian and Sharon Snyder Private Collection, Independence, Missouri.


173 Ibid.

174 Ibid.

175 Eleanor Minor and Grace Minor, “Granddaughters of First Mayer Have Fond Memories of Old Home,” newspaper clipping, Brian and Sharon Snyder Private Collection, Independence, Missouri.

176 General Warranty Deed from Allen L. McCoy, Mary Scott McCoy, Nannie M. Minor, and Charles L. Minor to William Stewart, March 6, 1905, (filed March 8, 1905), Jackson County, Missouri, Deed Book 257, page 18; General Warranty Deed from William Stewart to Allen L. McCoy, March 6, 1905 (filed March 8, 1905), Book 257, page 19.


188 Sue Gentry, “Old McCoy Home Here Bulges with Visitors,” January 8, 1972, newspaper clipping, Brian and Sharon Snyder Private Collection, Independence, Missouri.

189 Ibid.

190 Ibid.

191 The URBANA Group, “Owens-McCoy House.”

192 This c.2006 frame addition built by the Snyders replaced an earlier, poorly built frame addition constructed sometime during the mid-twentieth century, likely to add more space when the house was divided into rental apartments.


194 The URBANA Group, “Owens-McCoy House.”