8. Significance

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The primary significance of the Historic Lexington Multiple Resource Area lies in the town's growth and development as a major area of commerce in the Missouri River valley and in the architecture which was the result of this growth. Initially developing as an overland trading center on the Santa Fe Trail, Lexington was important in the settlement of western Missouri and played a significant role in the early settlement of the frontier. With the development of commerce on the Missouri River, Lexington attained a unique and prosperous position, and was for a time head of navigation on the Missouri River.[1] Architecture from these periods when viewed individually, includes some outstanding stylistic representations on a state-wide level and when viewed in its entirety, Lexington constitutes the finest ensemble of antebellum architecture in Missouri. Less significant periods of development include the growth of the mining industry after the Civil War and a German immigration.

In 1815 the first white settler of Lafayette County, Gilead Rupe, settled about two miles south of the present site of Lexington.[2] By 1819 a ferry was established across the Missouri River at Lexington by Capt. William Jack, and the first hemp crops began to be raised along Dover Road (the old Santa Fe Trail). In the early 1820's the development of the Santa Fe Trail established Lexington as one of the primary areas of commerce and trade along the frontier. The trail ran west from Dover and connected in Lexington at its eastern boundaries. In April of 1822 "Old Town" was platted. The Santa Fe Trail became the main thoroughfare, labelled Main Street. Today this is South Street. Lexington rapidly became a primary gathering point for shippers, trappers, explorers, and settlers. By 1827 trappers and fur traders had made Lexington their center, and by 1829 Robert Aull had established a private bank as a facility for his shipping business. Robert was to join with James Aull in 1831 to develop probably the best known and largest shipping business in the West outfitting westward bound pioneers.[3] In 1832, a new Court House was built in Old Town.

Soon commerce also began growing on the Missouri River, located some distance north and west from the original town plat. The first steamboat, the "Western Engineer", had passed up the river as early as 1820. By the early 1830's the main area of activity began to shift from the Santa Fe Trail connection north to the river, and in 1836 the shift was completed with the platting of the First Addition of New Town.

The riverfront rapidly became an area of great activity and bustling commerce. Broadway became the main business center: "Wagons were sometimes lined up a half mile long with produce brought from as far away as Warrensburg or even Springfield."[4] By 1837 Lexington was an outstanding outfitting post and trading center and was the eastern terminus of the trade with Mexico and California. In 1848 Alexander Majors established a freighting business which was to go on to become one of the most successful shipping firms in the nation. By 1858 Russell, Majors and Waddell had increased their equipment to

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3,500 wagons and teams and employed over 4,000 men.[5]

In the period between 1835 and 1845 Lexington became the head of navigation along the Missouri River, and the trade reached its peak. The hemp industry became an important economic mainstay. This prosperous period was to last to the Civil War. A German immigration also took place during this period with the Germans contributing a valuable service to the town as mechanics, saddlers, shoemakers, blacksmiths, wagonmakers.[6] Prominent German families established in Lexington during this time included the Winkler Brothers who started the Winkler Furniture Factory and John Goehner, who established the Goehner Marbleworks.

Lexington's primary significance lies in its architectural development during these antebellum years. There are approximately 96 residential buildings in Lexington dating to the period between 1836 and 1865. Log construction within the Multiple Resource Area is scarce, due to the fact that the boundaries reflect the development of "New Town" and do not include the Old Town area. One log structure survives in relatively good condition, #555.

The most prominent building style of this period was Greek Revival, and Lexington's major architectural resource is its wealth of finely proportioned and classically constructed Greek Revival buildings. The majority of the buildings in this style are located along South Street (the old Santa Fe Trail) and Highland Avenue, the street running along the Missouri River bluffs. Usually laid out in a two story brick "L" plan, this type features the classical doorway with the transom often broken by two engaged piers flanked by sidelights. This entry is often accompanied by a two-story balconied portico. Perhaps the finest example of this type is the Waddell-Pomeroy House, c. 1936 (#26). It features a finely detailed Grecian meander frieze and is one of the earliest homes constructed in the First Addition, along South Street. Other fine examples include the Waddell-Young House, c. 1840 (#30); the Harkelroads House c. 1840 (#37); the Winkler House, c. 1840 (#95); the Russell House, c. 1850 (#426); the Arnold House, c. 1848 (#509); the Gillen House, c. 1840 (#518); 778 Highland Avenue (#522); the Elizabeth Aull Seminary, c. 1850 (#523); the Chadwick House, c. 1850 (#532); the Boulware-Gruber-Hopkins House, c. 1843 (#535); the old Winkler House, c. 1855 (#565); the Gruber House, c. 1852 (#584); the Capt. Triggs House, c. 1852 (#585); and the Beck-Todhunter House, c. 1840 (#589).

There are several Greek Revival examples that exhibit tall parapet chimneys as opposed to the norm, twin end chimneys. These include 1421 South Street, c. 1846 (#36); the Hinesley House,, c. 1840 (#521); 403 Highland Avenue, c. 1853 (#555); O'Malley-Kelly House, c. 1850 (#557); 509 Highland Avenue, c. 1850 (#559); 685 Highland Avenue, c. 1840 (#572); the Ardinger House, c. 1848 (#281); the Farmer House, c. 1847 (#359); the Eggleston House, c. 1840 (#144); and the Goehner House, c. 1857 (#187). Other styles of this period not in a Greek Revival mode include a one-story square plan with an attic story. This type is characterized by a large chimney, usually on the end, and is most prevalent in brick. Highland Avenue has two houses of this type (#547, 564) but

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the style is not confined to any one area. The Capt. Jack House (#576) is on a high hill at the foot of Highland Avenue; the Heathman House (#462), and #440 are in the 17th Street area. The Romanda House (#252) also features an ornate curvilinear vergeboard. A fine frame example is the Walton House (#595). Although later than the above, this house features a unique classical molding over the doors and windows on the front facade. Another mode features a flat roof with a decorative brick cornice (#65, 497).

There are several fine examples of small one story Greek Revival residences, such as the William H. Russell House, c. 1845 (#489) and 517 Highland Avenue (#561). Without a doubt the finest example of this type is at 1413 Lafayette Street (#469), this last house being in an unaltered state. Two other houses of this period warrant special attention, although they are not of the common type. The Andreen Home c. 1840 (#87), is a Greek Revival example in walnut clapboard. The Jack Spratt House, c. 1850 (#579) is one of the finest examples of Temple form Greek Revival to be found in Missouri. In meticulous condition, a very significant outbuilding on this property is an octagonal ice house in the Carpenter's Gothic style.

Greek Revival commercial architecture of the period was not as well preserved in Lexington as its residential examples. Three fine original commercial Greek Revival buildings remain in the downtown area-- the old Fifth Branch Bank, c. 1846 (#329); a lesser example with cast-iron classical lintels, #335, and a fine three story Greek Revival commercial building c. 1859, #194. The Goehner Marbleworks Building, c. 1857 (#186) is a charming and significant antebellum example of the German influence with its facade and landscape almost perfectly intact, including the nine light windows and monuments still in the yard.

The most prominent civic structure built during this period was the Lafayette County Courthouse, constructed in 1848 (#307). It is on the National Register of Historic Places. Several significant examples of ecclesiastical architecture survive from this period. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church, c. 1846 (#289), built in a pedimented Greek Revival style, is the only church in Lexington to retain its original frame steeple. The First Baptist Church c. 1842 (#357) is a fine two-story brick Greek Revival example. It has unfortunately lost its steeple, and stained glass. The Episcopal Church, c. 1848 (#212) has been described by Charles Van Ravenswaay as "one of the most important examples of religious architecture in Missouri."[7] A fine and unusual early Gothic example, it is almost unchanged, with the original pews and alter rail still intact.

Other structures built during this period include characteristic stone retaining walls, the finest of which are found on Highland Avenue (#496, 505, 519).

During the Civil War, the Battle of Lexington was fought September 18-20, 1861. Confederate forces under Sterling Price met Federal troops under Colonel Mulligan on a high hill overlooking the Missouri River. This battlefield and a Greek Revival home, the Anderson House, used as a field hospital during the Battle, are now a part of the Battle of Lexington State Historic Site. Lexing-

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ton has been notorious through the years for its pro-southern tendencies. Many homes carry legends from these days, and an occasional cannonball did escape from the Battlefield and made its way downtown. However, there was not an overwhelming physical change due to the War.

The Civil War brought an end to Lexington's slavery system and forced the town to seek new commercial pursuits and industry not dependent upon this system. The decade following the war saw a major agricultural change to the growing of grains instead of hemp. The railroad came in 1871 when the Missouri Pacific built a branch from Sedalia to Lexington.[8] The railroad, however, was never to be a great financial asset to Lexington except as a carrier of coal. Exploration for coal had started soon after the war but did not become profitable until after the railroad was established. The mining industry grew rapidly, and by the Victorian era it had been established as the major financial and economic base. The mining industry brought an influx of great cultural diversity to Lexington due to the importation of French, Swedes, Italians, Syrians, Irish and others as laborers. By 1900 over 2,000 persons of foreign descent had been brought to the area.[9] Many Lexingtonians today share this heritage, and names such as Collobert and Giovanelli are common. It was not until after the First World War that the mines were to finally give out.

Architecture during this period was manifested in the Italianate and Victorian style. The Italianate style in Lexington was introduced soon after the Civil War and continued to about 1875; there are approximately 23 good examples. Typical of this style as manifested in Lexington were paired elongated windows with decorative brick lintels; three-cornered moldings in window frames; arched and pedimented brick rooflines with circular windows; decorative brackets, many with acorn drops; and curvilinear vergeboards. This style is visible in several small structures in frame such as Wentworth Place, c. 1870 (#574) but is most prevalent in larger two-story examples. Perhaps the finest example is the Withers Home, c. 1870 (#140). The Tevis House (#596) is very similar. Two fine structures attributed to James Cheatham, a local architect practicing around 1870, include the Cheatham House (#583) and its identical twin the Wood-Ryland House (#406). Other significant structures in this style include the Hickman House (#587); the Wilmot House (#134); 1604 South Street (#89); 115 North 17th (#397); the Day House (#407); the L.E. Graham House (#590); the O'Donnell House (#578); and the King House (#216). Significant one story examples include 1114 Southwest Blvd. (#45) and 103 S. 23rd Street (#581).

The Victorian period from 1875 to 1900 is the most evident in terms of construction with approximately 137 buildings of Victorian vintage present in the Multiple Resource Area. However, in architectural terms, the Victorian mode was never to reach the height of significance found in the Greek Revival and Italianate periods. Only two Victorian structures are of transcendent importance, the Taubman House, c. 1890 (#88), which is in immaculate condition, and the Stramcke House, c. 1887 (#586). Both were products of mining wealth.

Several frame cottages are congregated in one block on Main Street, exhibiting boxed bays, round arched art glass windows, irregular sloped roofs, and a finesse in detail and trim not visible in later Victorian mass-produced examples.

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Some of these have been attributed to James Cheatham, such as the Haerle Home,
c. 1887 (#372), which features fine cresting. Other examples are #272, 371 and
370. Queen Anne structures can be seen in brick as well as in frame; the
finest and purest Queen Anne mansion is the Stramcke House, already mentioned.
Other notable Queen Anne houses include the McGrew House (#8)c. 1885; #487, 527
and 528; #573; #366 and 367; #390; and a recently restored and elegantly fur-
nished Queen Anne, the Whitecastle House (#591). A particularly fine block of
late Queen Anne houses features three out of four houses in this style.

Several Greek Revival structures were made over by the additions of Victorian
features such as turrets, cresting, brackets, and decorative brickwork. Per-
haps the most interesting is the Wright House, c. 1841 and 1885 (#185) in which
the two styles exist side by side on the interior. Two other examples are #501
and 81.

The Italianate and Victorian styles prevalent in the residential area were also
extended to commercial structures. Some especially fine Italianate buildings
are still visible downtown, several of them attributed to James Cheatham. Out
of nine of these structures, the Morrison-Wentworth Bank (#324) is the finest
example and is stylistically identical to the Cheatham House. Other Italianate
commercial buildings include #325, 311, 327, 345, 347, 166, 209, and a fine
example with cast-iron arched hood molds and an overhanging bracketted cornice,
#203.

Several fine Victorian examples remain, notable #315, an Eastlake example, and
also #333, 343, and 198. A German influence can be seen in the 1900 Leiter
Building (#211). However, the "Dutch Row" that once existed on the north side
of Main[10] was lost to fire.

Lexington began the new century with a population of 4,190.[11] Wentworth
Military Academy had been established in 1880 and provided an important mili-
tary training establishment for the surrounding area, to become even more im-
portant in the next two wars. Lexington actually was to experience a slight
decline, stabilizing during the first quarter of the 20th century. It was
during this period that much of the historic commercial architecture was lost
to fire; much of the architecture extant from this rebuilding reflects a shrewd
building style of the early teens and 20's, and, when compared to the Italian-
ate high style commercial structures, is relatively undistinguished. A major
event of this period was the opening of the Lafayette-Ray County Bridge in
1925. The Beaux Arts Post Office was constructed in 1912 (#290), and the
Winkler Theatre in 1925 (#361). The theatre is still relatively intact with
the stage, orchestra pit, and dressing rooms. The Goose Pond Athletic Field
(#363) was drained in 1915 and the present cottonwoods planted. In 1926, the
Gothic Revival Lexington Middle School was constructed. The Missouri Pacific
Railroad Depot was built c. 1905. Other significant commercial structures in-
clude the Eagle Building in 1915, originally used as a theatre house (#314),
#340 with fabricated tiles, c. 1928; #344, a Beaux-Arts bank facade added to an
earlier structure c. 1910, and #353, a three story tan brick Renaissance Revi-
val example, c. 1930.

Late Victorian styles persist into the 1900's with the two story brick tur-

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retted Tabb House (#389) being built in 1901. The Sturgis House c. 1900 (#368) is also a fine example of the diversity apparent at this time, with its shingling and curious multi-sloping roofline.

Between 1900 and 1915 approximately 50 houses were constructed in Classical Revival or Neoclassic Styles. Perhaps the finest block of this type of house is the 1900 block of South Street, which features six houses (#10, 11, 103, 104, 105, 106) in a Neoclassic style with the characteristic two story frame or brick building topped by a hipped roof with hipped dormers. One of the finest examples of this style is #39. In the 1600 block of Main several diversely-styled large houses of this period remain, including the William Aull Jr. Home c. 1915 (#280) with its flanking pergola-covered porches. The finest example of pure Classical Revival remains the Aull House, c. 1904 (#369).

The Bungalow style did not become prominent in Lexington, with only about 34 buildings constructed in this style. However, two fine large examples of the style exist in #74 and 279. 279 with a tile roof and six-light shed dormer is a particularly fine design. More common types can be seen in #514 and 525.

The Historic District #1 in the Multiple Resource Nomination, the Older Neighborhood Historic District, encompasses the residential area containing the highest concentration of historic residential architecture. District #2, the Commercial Community Historic District, encompasses all of the traditional business district of Lexington and includes several residences and adjacent blocks whose future and viability are directly linked to the success of the business community. The Highland Avenue Historic District is an area geographically separated from the Central Business District by its prominence overlooking the Missouri River and its significance as an area with a large concentration of Greek Revival structures. The majority of the contiguous sites represent significant examples of Italianate architecture but also include structures close to the area but not adjacent.

The Multiple Resource Area includes properties that individually would be exempt from National Register criteria. However, when considered as an integral part of the overall history and aesthetic ambience of the area, their preservation is desirable. These properties include:

(1) Macpelah Cemetery (#588). Macpelah Cemetery was one of the first corporations to be established by an act of the Missouri Legislature in 1849. It contains significant examples of local ironwork made in the Morrison Foundry.

(2) Two monuments are included in the Multiple Resource Area: 1. The Madonna of the Trail; erected in 1928 by the Daughters of the American Revolution to commemorate the pioneer mother. Aesthetically, this statue creates an important design element, overlooking the Missouri River and located at a strategic point after rounding a curve on one of the major entries to downtown from the River. 2. World War I Monument; erected in 1925. This architectural monument is an aesthetic addition to the Missouri River bluff below Highland Avenue and is a focal point after crossing the Lafayette-Ray County Bridge from Ray

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County.

(3) Fifteen religious structures are included in the Lexington Multiple Re-
source Nomination. All of these are historically and architecturally signifi-
cant; the scattering of these buildings throughout the residential community
creates a close-knit neighborhood appearance and provides visual focal-point.

(4) #306, The Lafayette County Sheriff's Office and Jail (10 S. 11th), was
built in 1939. However, it is a very fine example of "Modern" architecture
being modelled in a Greek Revival style so that it would not be intrusive to
the adjacent 1848 Lafayette County Courthouse.

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FOOTNOTES

[1]Sesquicentennial Commemorative Booklet, Lexington, Missouri
   (Higginsville, Missouri: Advance Publishing and Printing Company, 1972),
   p. 5.

[2]Ibid., p. 2.

[3]Ibid., p. 4.

[4]Katherine Wilson Sellers, Historical Glimpses of Lexington (Lexington
   Library and Historical Association, January, 1980), p. 13.

[5]Sesquicentennial, p. 6.

[6]William Young, Young's History of Lafayette County (Indianapolis, Indiana:
   B. F. Bowen and Company, 1910), p. 20.

[7]Sesquicentennial, p. 54.

[8]Sellers, p. 34.

[9]Sellers, p. 34.

[10]Young, p. 20.

[11]Sellers, p. 39.

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3. Young, William. Young's History of Lafayette County. Indianapolis,
Indiana: B.F. Bowen and Co., 1910.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Lexington, Missouri Sesquicentennial Commemorative Booklet, Higginsville, Missouri 'vance Publishing Co., 1972

...lers, Katherine Wilson. Historical Glimpses of Lexington. The Lexington Library and Historical Association, 1980.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property __approx. 5,057 Acres__
Quadrangle name __Lexington West and East__   Quadrangle scale __1:24,000__

UTM References

A | 1,5 | 4,2,6,2,7,0 | 4,3,3,8,5,4,0
Zone | Easting | Northing

B | 1,5 | 4,2,6,2,2,0 | 4,3,3,3,4,3,0
Zone | Easting | Northing

C | 1,5 | 4,2,2,1,6,0 | 4,3,3,3,5,0,0

D | 1,5 | 4,2,2,2,2,0 | 4,3,3,8,5,8,0

E | | |

F | | |

G | | |

H | | |

See Continuation Sheet

Verbal boundary description and justification

See appropriate district boundary descriptions contained in Item 7.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state _____ code _____ county _____ code _____

state _____ code _____ county _____ code _____

11. Form Prepared By

name/title 1. Mary J. Matthews

organization __Lexington Historical Foundation__   date __April, 1980__

street & number __P.O. Box 433, Lexington Landmarks__   telephone __816/259-6414__

city or town __Lexington,__   state __Missouri 64067__

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national   _X_ state   ____ local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _Fred A Lafser_

Director, Department of Natural Resources and
State Historic Preservation Officer   date __6/8/83__

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date _____

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date _____

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HIGHLAND AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT

	Zone	Easting	Northing
E.	15	422950	4336980
G.	15	423120	4338510

	Zone	Easting	Northing
F.	15	422280	4337580
H.	15	423810	4337910

COMMERCIAL COMMUNITY HISTORIC DISTRICT

I.	15	423510	4337280
K.	15	424020	4337800

J.	15	423540	4337810
L.	15	424010	4337250

OLD NEIGHBORHOODS HISTORIC DISTRICT

M.	15	424010	4337250
O.	15	425000	4338140

N.	15	424060	4338180
P.	15	424990	4337210

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2. James M. Denny, Chief, Nominations-Survey
   and State Contact Person
   Department of Natural Resources
   Historic Preservation Program
   P.O. Box 176
   Jefferson City,

April, 1980
314/751-4096

Missouri   65102

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Inventory: Historic and Architectural
Properties) Lexington, Missouri, Lafayette Co.

U. S. G. S. 7.5'   1949 Quqdrangle
"Lexington East & West(photorevised 1979)

UTM References
A. 15/426270/4338540   B. 15/426220-4333430

C. 15/422160/4333500   D. 15/422220/4338580