

United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Jesse James House

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 12th Street and Mitchell Avenue not for publication

city, town St. Joseph vicinity of congressional district 6th - Hon. E. Thomas Coleman

state Missouri code 029 county Buchanan code 021

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<u>  </u> district	<u>  </u> public	<u>  </u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<u>  </u> agriculture <u>  </u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<u>  </u> building(s)	<u>  </u> private	<u>  </u> unoccupied	<u>  </u> commercial <u>  </u> park
<u>  </u> structure	<u>  </u> both	<u>  </u> work in progress	<u>  </u> educational <u>  </u> private residence
<u>  </u> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<u>  </u> entertainment <u>  </u> religious
<u>  </u> object	<u>  </u> in process	<u>  </u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<u>  </u> government <u>  </u> scientific
	<u>  </u> being considered	<u>  </u> yes: unrestricted	<u>  </u> industrial <u>  </u> transportation
		<u>  </u> no	<u>  </u> military <u>  </u> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Pony Express Historical Ass. Inc.

street & number 12th and Penn Street

city, town St. Joseph vicinity of state Missouri 64501

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder of Deeds, Buchanan County Courthouse

street & number 5th and Jules Street

city, town St. Joseph state Missouri 64501

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title 1. St. Joseph Landmarks has this property been determined eligible?    yes    ☒ no

date 1978    federal    state    county    ☒ local

depository for survey records St. Joseph Landmarks Commission

city, town St. Joseph state Missouri 64501

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Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places  
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JESSE JAMES HOUSE

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2. Missouri State Historical Survey

1980

state

Department of Natural Resources

P.O. Box 176

Jefferson City

Missouri 65102

Item number 9

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4. Milwaukee Sentinel. July 1, 1948.

5. The Missouri Historical Review, Vol. II, pp. 141, 153, 235, 236, 239; Vol. III, p. 314; Vol. X, pp. 123, 124, 294; Vol. XI, pp. 286, 352; Vol. XII, p. 46; Vol. XV, pp. 481, 744; Vol. XVII, p. 246; Vol. XVIII, 118; Vol. XIX, pp. 493, 516, 538, 548; Vol. XX, pp. 84, 172, 194, 358; Vol. XXI, pp. 57, 281, 313, 316, 487, 513; Vol. XXII, p. 425; Vol. XXIII, pp. 344, 345, 559; Vol. XXIV, 116-117, 129, 291, 298, 303, 482; Vol. XXV, 337. State Historical Society of Missouri: Columbia.

6. Settle, William A. Jr. Jesse James Was His Name. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1966.

7. St. Joseph Gazette. June 22, 1972.

8. St. Joseph News-Press. April 3, 1957; April 2, 1959; November 14, 1964; September 22, 1971; December 25, 1979.

9. Triplett, Frank. The Life, Times and Treacherous Death of Jesse James. Chicago: J.H. Chambers and Co., 1882.

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sixty-two and one-half feet; thence south twenty-three and one-half feet; thence east twenty-two feet; thence south thirty-six and one-half feet; thence west eighty-four and one-half feet to the place of beginning; all in part of lot three Block Thirty-one Patees Addition located in Section Seventeen (17), Township Fifty-seven (57) North, Range Thirty-five (35) West.

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2. James M. Denny, Section Chief, Nominations-Survey and State Contact Person

March 7, 1980

Department of Natural Resources

Historic Preservation Program

314/751-4096

P.O. Box 176

Jefferson City

Missouri 65102

**Condition**☐ excellent☒ good☐ fair☐ deteriorated☐ ruins☐ unexposed**Check one**☒ unaltered☐ altered**Check one**☐ original site☒ moved

date May, 1977

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

This rather plain, simple Greek Revival structure measures twenty-four feet two inches wide on the north-south axis and thirty feet four inches on the east-west axis. The focus of the house is on the gable end rather than on the long side of the house. There is a shed porch addition on the east facade.

There is a window at the attic level in the west facade which has a semi-circular window head. This window is louvered just as it appears in an 1882 photo of the house. The other windows are 4/4 single glass panes. The window heads are pediment shaped with shouldered architraves.

The front door (west facade) has the same architrave trim, as the windows. The door has two lights in the upper half. There is a transom above the door. This also appears in the 1882 photo.

There is a wide entablature with pronounced architrave, and projecting cornice. Pilaster corner boards are used. The siding is clapboard which has been oiled.

The roof is wood shingle with a single chimney in the south slope.

The interior of the house appears as it was in 1882. There are ten foot ceilings, and plastered walls. The floor boards are four inch wide pine. The spot where Jesse James fell has been chipped away by souvenir hunters.

The noted changes in the structure are:

- 1) The shutters have been removed from the outside of the windows.
- 2) The rear door (east facade) is a modification.
- 3) The porch on the east facade is an addition.
- 4) The window in the north end of the east facade is a change.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Murder/Folklore

Specific dates prior to 1880 Builder/Architect Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Jesse James house is significant as the place where the famous outlaw Jesse James was killed, an episode of treachery that has entered into popular folklore and legend.

Jesse Woodson James was born September 25, 1847, at the farm home of his parents near Kearney, Missouri. His father, Robert, was a Baptist minister and a member of the first Board of Trustees of William Jewell College at Liberty, Missouri. By 1850, Mr. James owned 275 acres of land, 30 sheep, 6 cows, 3 horses, a yoke of oxen and 7 slaves. In 1851, for reasons unknown, Rev. Mr. James joined the California Gold Rush. He lived only a few weeks after reaching California, and was buried there at the age of 32.

Zerelda Cole James remarried twice, the first lasting only a few months, and the second time to Dr. Reuben Samuels in 1855. It was in the Samuel menage, including several Samuel children, that Frank and Jesse grew up. Since the Coles, James and Samuel families were all southern sympathizers it is not surprising that both Frank and Jesse were involved in the border warfare prior to and during the Civil War. Both probably served as members of Quantrill's Missouri Irregulars. Jesse apparently never surrendered after the war. During what was perhaps an abortive attempt to surrender at Lexington, Missouri in early 1865, Jesse was very severely wounded by a gunshot in the chest. The wound was so severe that he spent most of the rest of the year recuperating. During this period he spent several months at the home of his uncle, Robert Minns in Harlem Missouri. Minns was the brother-in-law of Robert James and the father of Zerelda, who was, incidentally, named for Jesse's mother. Jesse and Zee had played together as children in Kearney and they became engaged during that summer in Harlem. Following his recovery Jesse became involved in the escapades for which he became famous, but proof is very hard to find because he was never apprehended.

On April 24, 1874, Jesse and Zee were married at the home of her sister in Kearney by the Rev. William James, a Methodist minister and uncle to both. The couple apparently spent the first months of their marriage in or near Sherman, Texas, but were back in the Kearney area by the January, 1875 raid on the Samuel's home when Archie, Jess's half-brother was killed and Mrs. Samuel's arm was so badly mangled that it had to be amputated.

Following this event in his life, Jesse, while remaining a brigand, would show up in various places living under pseudonyms and functioning as an apparently law-abiding citizen. For the six months prior to their arrival in St. Joseph, the James lived in Kansas City as the J.T. Jacksons.

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**  
**National Register of Historic Places**  
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JESSE JAMES HOUSE

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received

date entered

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In November, 1881, Jessie James (alias Tom Howard), cattle buyer and his family appeared in St. Joseph. They spent two nights at the Patee House and then rented a house at 21st and Lafayette. On Christmas Eve 1881, the "Howard" family moved into the house at 1318 Lafayette, owned by Henrietta Saltzman, for which they paid \$14 a month. There were in addition to Jesse and Zee, two children, Jesse Edwards and Mary Jones, in the family.

Jesse was a man with a price on his head. Upon his inauguration in 1881, Gov. Crittenden was determined to wipe out the James gang. He lacked authority to offer rewards so he induced several railroad and express companies to put up \$50,000. The proclamation was dated July 28, 1881. On February 13, 1882, Bob Ford, a member of the gang surrendered to the Kansas City police and was taken to a rendezvous to rejoin Jesse and try to get him one way or another.

On April 3, 1882, Bob Ford a relatively new member of the "gang" and a cousin to Jesse and Frank James, shot Jesse through the head in this house and reported the killing to Governor Crittenden. Sheriff Timberlake of Clay County and Henry R. Craig, Kansas City Police Commissioner came to St. Joseph immediately to claim and identify the body. James was buried in the yard of the farm home in Kearney.

The Jesse James home, the only structure remaining in St. Joseph which has a direct connection with Jesse James, has been moved twice. Once in 1939 from its original site to the Belt Highway for a tourist attraction, and in 1977 when it was moved back near its original site.

The house at the time Jesse was killed, was on a high hill at 1318 Lafayette Street. It overlooked Patee House, which at that time was called World's Hotel. The house was very inaccessible because of the steep hill. In 1939, when the Miller family purchased the house, they moved it to 801 South Belt Highway, where thousands visited it for 38 years.

In 1977, the Pony Express Historical Association purchased both the house and the original site from Miller. However, by then, the hill had been graded down about 50 feet and even more on the south side of the lot.

For several reasons, it was decided it was not practical to place the house at 1318 Lafayette. First, it could never be in the original location, because the hill has been graded. Second, a 30-foot drop is now in the "back yard" and would be a hazardous area for visitors. Thirdly, the lot is still at the crest of a hill on a narrow street surrounded by private homes. It is not zoned for museum purposes, and there would be almost no on-street parking, and no place for off-street parking. For these reasons, it was decided to place the James Home on property adjoining the Patee House Museum.

For those who want to see where the house originally stood, the Pony Express Historical Association has seeded the 1318 Lafayette site, and constructed a rustic fence across the back, making it into a private mini-park.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

1. Charleston Daily Mail. April 4, 1954.
2. James, Jesse Jr., Jesse James My Father. Independence, MO: Sentinal Printing Co., 1957
3. The Lethbridge Herald. Alberta, Canada December 11, 1947

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property ~~less than one acre~~

Quadrangle name "St. Joseph North, MO.-KANS."

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A 

1	1	5
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 Zone 

3	4	1	9	1	3	1	0
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 Easting 

4	1	4	0	1	2	0	1	4	1	0
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 Northing

B 

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 Zone 

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 Easting 

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 Northing

C 

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 Zone 

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 Easting 

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 Northing

D 

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 Easting 

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 Northing

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 Zone 

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 Easting 

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 Northing

H 

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 Zone 

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 Easting 

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 Northing

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Beginning at a point on the inside east curb line of Twelfth Street one-hundred and fifteen feet north of the northeast insection of Twelfth and Mitchell; then north along the inside east curb line of Twelfth Street for fifty-six and one half feet; thence east

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

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title 1. Thomas W. Carneal - Assistant Professor of History

organization Northwest Missouri State University date February 20, 1980

street & number 306 Colden Hall telephone 816/582-7141 ext. 1289

city or town Maryville state Missouri 64468

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☒ national ☐ state ☐ local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

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

date

For HCRS use only

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

date

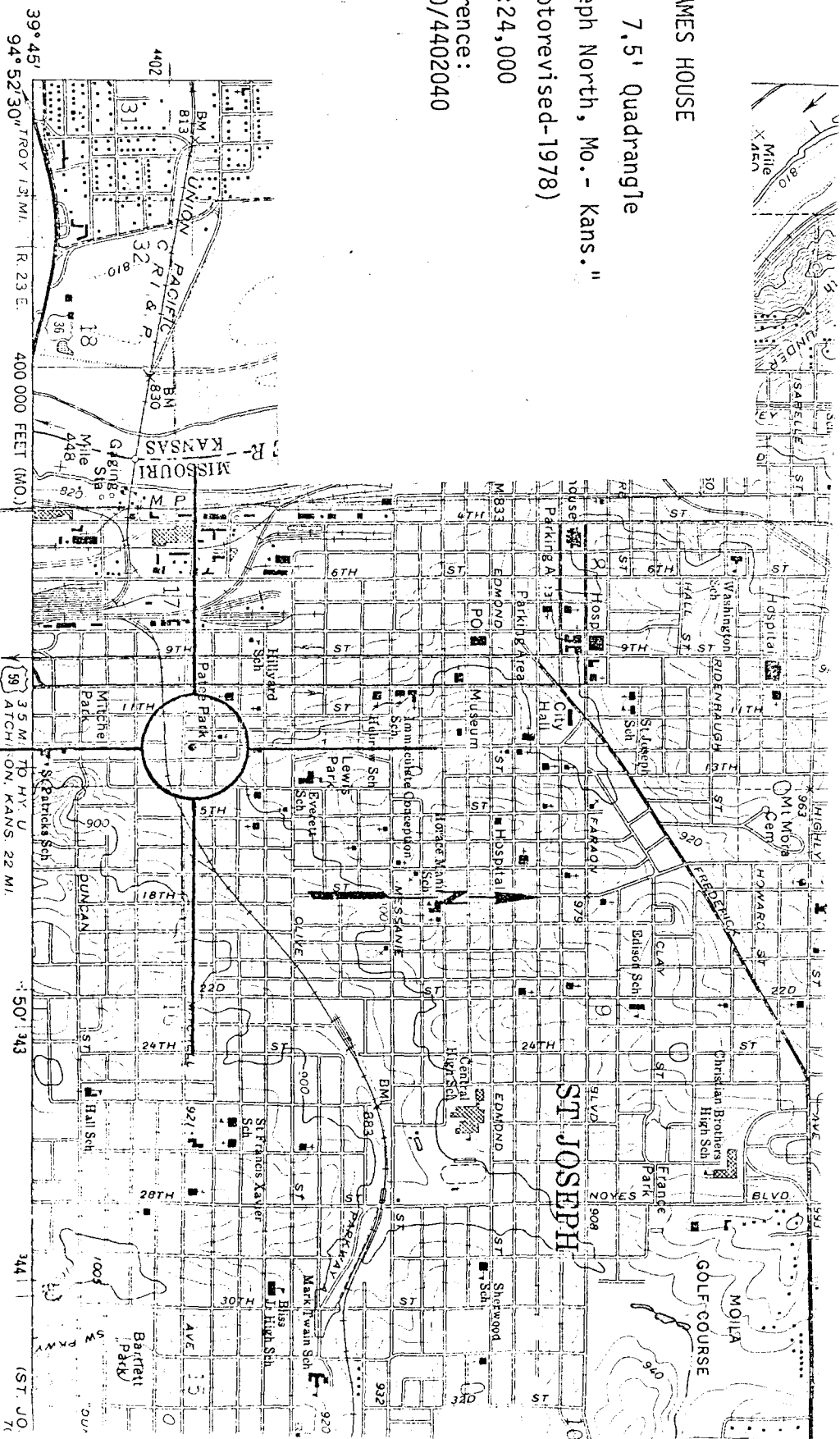
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

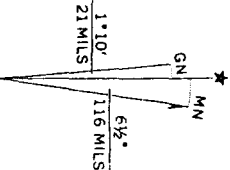
JESSE JAMES HOUSE  
 U.S.G.S. 7.5' Quadrangle  
 "St. Joseph North, Mo. - Kans."  
 (1971-photorevised-1978)  
 Scale: 1:24,000  
 UTM Reference:  
 15/341930/4402040



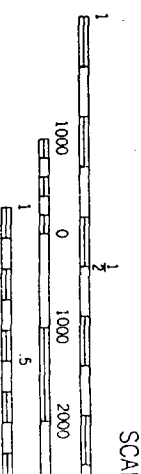
(HALLS) NW  
 7065 111 NW

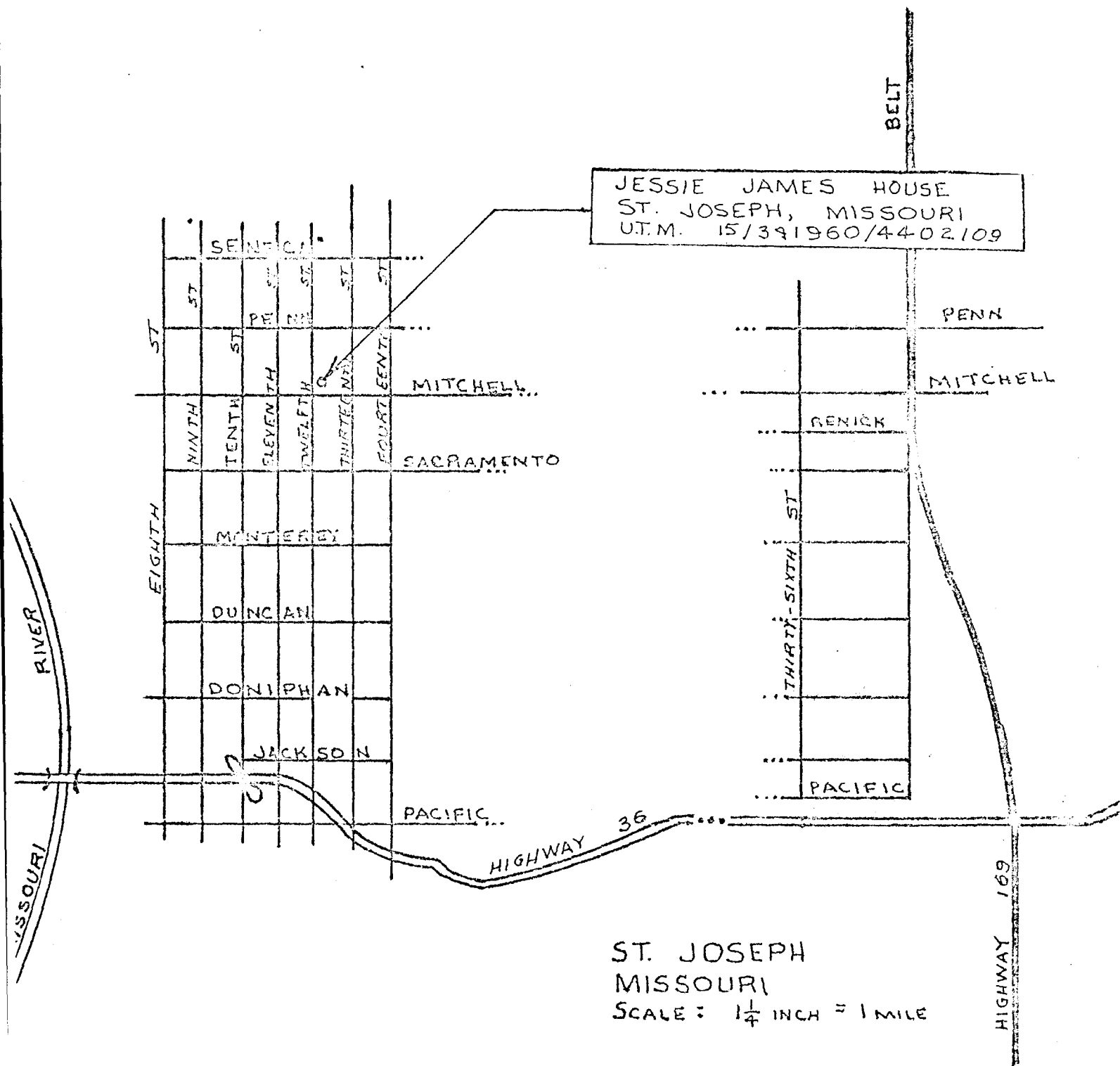
39° 45' 30" N  
 94° 52' 30" W  
 R. 23 E. 400 000 FEET (MO.)  
 Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
 Control by USGS and USCGS  
 Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial  
 photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1971  
 Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
 10,000-foot grid based on Missouri coordinate system,  
 and Kansas coordinate system, north zone  
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
 zone 15, shown in blue  
 Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown  
 Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where  
 generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked  
 Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken,  
 1977. Map edited 1978. This information not field checked  
 Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

UTM GRID AND 1978 MAGNETIC NORTH  
 DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

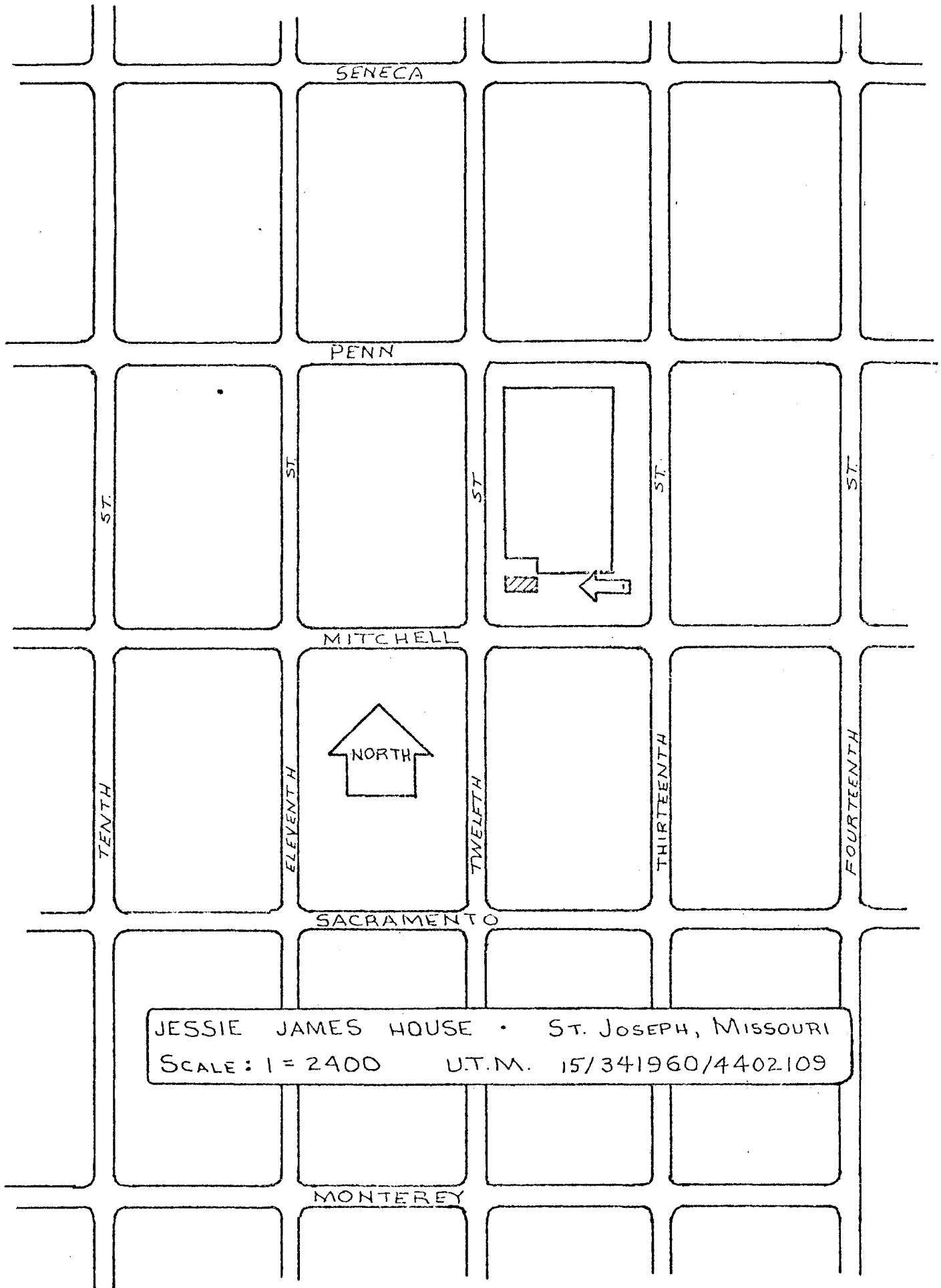


FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DEPT.  
 AND THE DIVISION OF RESEARCH,  
 MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL  
 RESOURCES AND STATE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS









JESSIE JAMES HOUSE • ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI

SCALE: 1 = 2400 U.T.M. 15/341960/4402109

JESSE JAMES HOUSE

#435

COUNTY:

Buchanan

LOCATION:

12th Street & Mitchell Avenue, St. Joseph

OWNER:

Pony Express Historical Ass. Inc.

ADDRESS:

12th & Penn. Street, St. Joseph, Mo. 64501

DATE APPROVED BY A.C.:

April 25, 1980

DATE SENT TO D.C.:

June 16, 1980

DATE OF REC. IN D.C.:

June 18, 1980

DATE PLACED ON NATIONAL REGISTER:

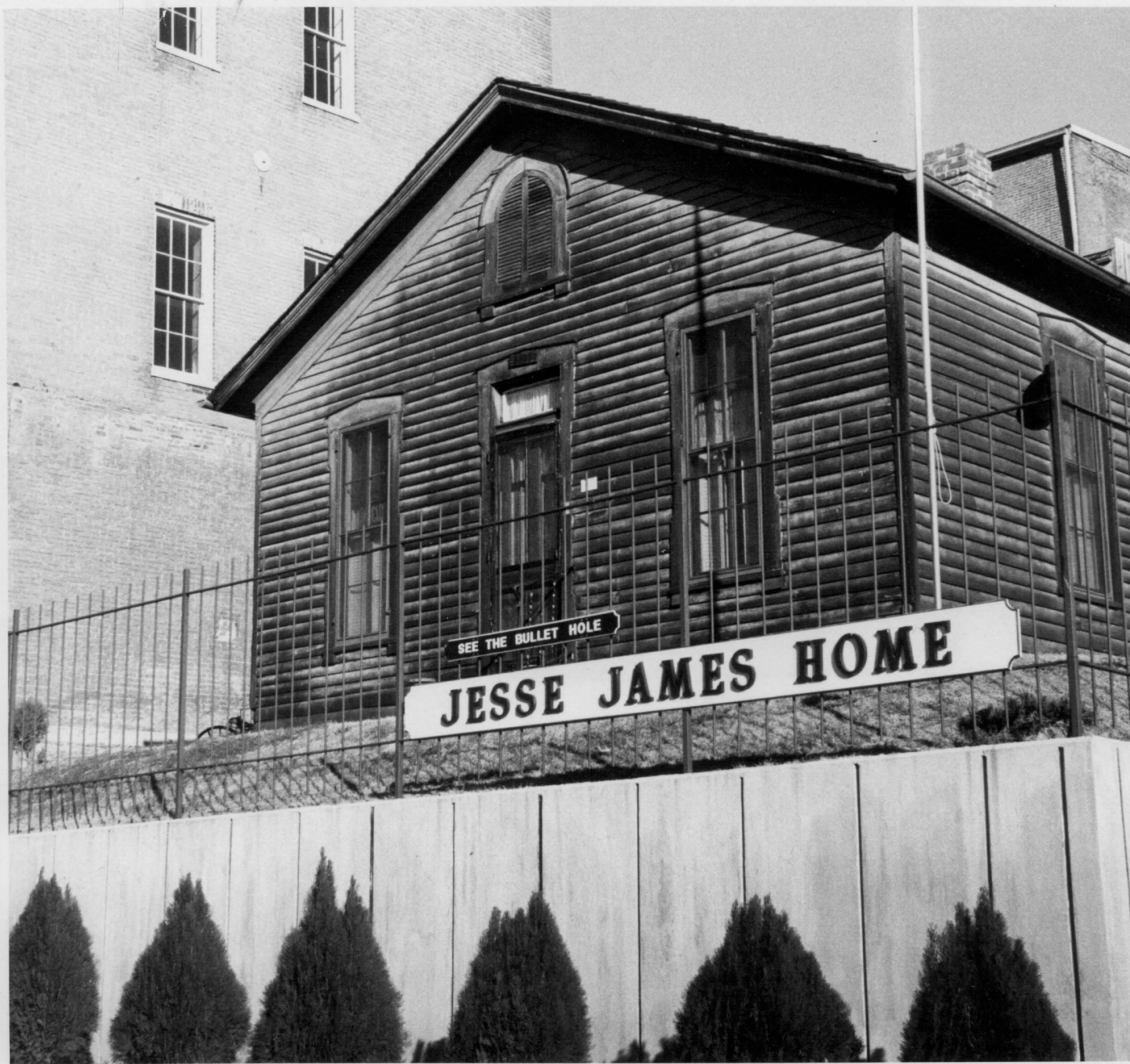
September 4, 1980

DATE AWARDED CERTIFICATE  
(AND PRESENTOR):

DATE FILE REVIEWED:

The Jesse James house is significant as the place where the famous outlaw Jesse James was killed, an episode of treachery that has entered into popular folklore and legend.

Jesse James House 1 of 13  
Cor 12th and Mitchell  
St. Joseph, Buchanan, Missouri  
Tom Carneal December 12, 1979  
Carneal's Office, 306 Colden Hall  
Northwest Missouri State University  
Maryville, MO 64468  
Southwest  
1 of 12



Jesse James House 2 of 13  
Cor 12th and Mitchell  
St. Joseph, Buchanan, Missouri  
Tom Carneal December 12, 1979  
Carneal's Office, 306 Colden Hall  
Northwest Missouri State University  
Maryville, MO 64468  
Southwest  
2 of 12





Jesse James House 3 of 13  
Cor 12th and Mitchell  
St. Joseph, Buchanan, Missouri  
Tom Carneal December 12, 1979  
Carneal's Office, 306 Colden Hall  
Northwest Missouri State University  
Maryville, MO 64468  
northwest  
3 of 12







Jesse James House  
Cor 12th and Mitchell  
St. Joseph, Buchanan, Missouri  
Tom Carneal      December 12, 1979  
Carneal's Office, 306 Colden Hall  
Northwest Missouri State University  
Maryville, MO 64468  
East  
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4 of 13



Jesse James House  
Cor 12th and Mitchell  
St. Joseph, Buchanan, Missouri  
Tom Carneal      December 12, 1979  
Carneal's Office, 306 Colden Hall  
Northwest Missouri State University  
Maryville, MO 64468  
Interior/ South  
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Jesse James House  
Cor 12th and Mitchell  
St. Joseph, Buchanan, Missouri  
Tom Carneal      December 12, 1979  
Carneal's Office, 306 Colden Hall  
Northwest Missouri State University  
Maryville, MO 64468  
Interior/ West  
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Jesse James House  
Cor 12th and Mitchell  
St. Joseph, Buchanan, Missouri  
Tom Carneal      December 12, 1979  
Carneal's Office, 306 Colden Hall  
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Interior/ South  
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Jesse James House

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Cor 12th and Mitchell

St. Joseph, Buchanan, Missouri

Tom Carneal December 12, 1979

Carneal's Office, 306 Colden Hall

Northwest Missouri State University

Maryville, MO 64468

Interior/ West

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9 of 13

Jesse James House  
Cor 12th and Mitchell  
St. Joseph, Buchanan, Missouri  
Tom Carneal      December 12, 1979  
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Maryville, MO 64468  
Interior/ West  
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Jesse James House  
Cor 12th and Mitchell  
St. Joseph, Buchanan, Missouri  
Tom Carneal      December 12, 1979  
Carneal's Office, 306 Colden Hall  
Northwest Missouri State University  
Maryville, MO 64468  
Interior/ Floor  
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Jesse James House 11 of 13  
Original site/1318 Lafayette  
St. Joseph, Buchanan, Missouri  
Tom Carneal December 12, 1979  
Carneal's Office, 306 Colden Hall  
Northwest Missouri State University  
Maryville, MO 64468  
South  
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Jesse James House 12 of 13  
Original site/1318 Lafayette  
St. Joseph, Buchanan, Missouri  
Tom Carneal December 12, 1979  
Carneal's Office, 306 Colden Hall  
Northwest Missouri State University  
Maryville, MO 64468  
Street Scene/ South  
12 of 12

Jesse James House 12 of 13

Original site/1318 Lafayette

St. Joseph, Buchanan, Missouri

Tom Carneal December 12, 1979

Carneal's Office, 306 Colden Hall

Northwest Missouri State University

Maryville, MO 64468

Street Scene/ South

12 of 12





13 of 13

Jesse James House  
Original Site/1318 Lafayette  
St. Joseph, Buchanan, Missouri  
Unknown Copy of 1882 Photo  
Carneal's Office, 306 Colden Hall  
Northwest Missouri State University  
Maryville, MO 64468  
Southeast



Miss James Home  
St. Joe, Mo.



