

# “Sixty on the Grid”

*Historic Florissant Inc. hopes you enjoy this information about these significant sites in the history of Florissant. Please visit our website at [www.HistoricFlorissant.com](http://www.HistoricFlorissant.com).*

## *A Very Brief History of Florissant*

French trappers and farmers looked upon this valley in the late 1700s and called it Fleurissant. When the Spanish obtained control of the land, they named it St. Ferdinand. It was not until 1939 that the name officially became Florissant.

It was a typical French village of small square lots, usually a quarter of a block in size. Their tiny homes typically had a long porch, or gallerie, across the front and back. Fenced lots had a pen for a goat, cow or a few chickens and a kitchen garden near the back door.

For many years the small village remained predominately French with a Catholic parish church, St. Ferdinand, located near Cold Water Creek.

In the 1840s the German immigration began and in 1866 they petitioned for a church of their own. Sacred Heart Parish was established on the hill, just seven blocks from St. Ferdinand.

Florissant was the first city in Missouri to establish a zoned historic district and because of that legislation many of its landmarks have been preserved.

## *How to Use this Guide*

With limited space, we are able to provide only a few details on these 60 sites, there are many more historic sites outside the Old Town Area and much more information on some of the sites available at Historic Florissant Inc. For more information on any of the sites, buildings or families, or for answers to any questions on Florissant's history, please visit Historic Florissant Inc. at the Gittemeier House, call 314-565-1468 or e-mail us at [historicflo@aol.com](mailto:historicflo@aol.com). Our office is open by appointment. And there is often staff there 10am – 4pm, Monday – Saturday and 1 – 4pm Sundays.

## **Three Significant Old Homes**

### **Franz Gittemeier House • 1067 Dunn Road**

Built about 1860 by Franz Gittemeier with money he made in the California gold rush. It remained in the Gittemeier family through the 1920s. In 1938 Mae Pondrom purchased it. Historic Florissant, Inc. acquired it in 1990, to save it from demolition and restore it.

### **Taille de Noyer • 1896 S. Florissant Road**

Taille began as a two-room log cabin hunting lodge, built by Hyacinthe Deshetres about 1790. John Mullanphy, purchased the house and land in 1805. In 1817, he gave it to his daughter and her husband, Charles and Jane Chambers who expanded the house. In 1960 it was moved 200 yards by Florissant Valley Historical Society and became their headquarters after the school district acquired the land.

### **John B. Myers House & Barn • 180 W. Dunn Road**

John B. Myers purchased 50 acres in 1867 and began building this classical Palladian home, but he died in 1869 before its completion. His widow oversaw its completion in 1870. Construction details were very well documented, including paint colors. In 1974, Historic Florissant, Inc. saved the house from demolition and proceeded with the task of restoration.

# Sixty on the Grid

## 1) **St. Ferdinand Shrine** • #1 rue St. Francois

The convent was built in 1819 for Rose Philippine Duchesne and the Sisters of the Sacred Heart. The church, built in 1821, is the oldest Catholic Church in the Louisiana Territory. The parish schoolhouse was added in 1888. In 1957 the parish moved and the buildings became a museum managed by the Friends of Old St. Ferdinand, a not-for-profit organization.

## 2) **Reeb House** • 444 rue St. Charles

Antoine Reeb, a carpenter, emigrated from France in 1865. At one time he owned three blocks and four houses in the area. He built this house 1890. The side porch was added in 1950.

## 3) **Reeb House** • 446 rue St. Charles

This Second Empire style with a mansard roof was where Reeb lived and raised his family. It remained in the family until at least 1947.

## 4) **Mottin House** • 111 rue St. Catherine

Felix Mottin built several homes in the Florissant area including this 1905 vernacular style home. The front porch was enclosed in 1955.

## 5) **William Albers House** • 606 rue St. Ferdinand

This vernacular frame house, built in 1890, was the home of William Albers, son of Auguste Albers.

## 6) **Spanish Land Grant Park** • St. Ferdinand

Established in 1789, it was the original location of the St. Ferdinand parish church and cemetery. Gravesites were moved to a new cemetery prior to 1900, however some early graves were missed in the move as discovered by archaeological excavations in 2004.

## 7) **Casa Alvarez** • 289 rue St. Denis

Legend has the house built around 1790 for Eugenia Alvarez, storekeeper to first Spanish Governor, Piernas. Recent evidence has brought that into question. However, it is one of the oldest homes in Florissant. The original portion is Missouri French Colonial style. In 1914, Hermann Von Schrenk added the water tower.

## 8) **Brand House** • 305 rue St. Louis

This c. 1845, home exhibits much of its original Greek Revival style.

## 9) **Montaigne House** • 306 rue St. Louis

Considered Federal in style with Germanic, Creole and Greek Revival overtones. A one-story home built in 1833 and expanded in 1859, with second story added around 1900. Owned by Montaigne family until the 1950s.

## 10) **Raymond Aubuchon House** • 290 rue St. Louis

A typical vernacular frame built in 1897, it shows the usual lot arrangement of the former agricultural era.

## 11) **Nemnick House** • 667 rue St. Pierre

This Greek Revival brick home was built c. 1865. Henry Nemnick bought it in 1872. The NE portion was added in 1882 and it was remodeled in 1901.

## 12) **Henry Albers Mercantile** • 305 rue St. Francois

Henry Albers, a merchant in Florissant for 10 years, bought the property in 1885 and built this building. While Henry was Postmaster, the store also served as the Post Office. His sons took over the business in 1917.

**13) Dobo Bakery • 315 rue St. Francois**

Built in 1886, it has had several alterations over the years. Long time residents remember Joseph Dobo's Bakery at this location.

**14) DeLisle Building • 298 rue St. Francois**

This commercial vernacular style was built c. 1870 as a saloon and restaurant with living quarters upstairs. This block, known as DeLisle Park, was a popular area after the Narrow Gauge Railroad arrived in 1878.

**15) Henry Albers House • 250 rue St. Catherine**

This c. 1860 Missouri German style house was acquired in 1877 by Henry Albers. In 1998, Historic Florissant, Inc. purchased it to protect it from demolition and, after restoration, sold it for commercial use.

**16) Louisa Garrett House • 280 Washington St.**

This c. 1853 home was recently restored to its original French Colonial style and added to the National Register of Historic Places.

**17) Moeller House • 300 Washington**

A beautiful Greek Revival brick home built c. 1830, with a denticulated cornice and an entablatured entryway.

**18) Magill House • 410 Harrison St.**

c. 1840, it is a fine example of the Missouri German style for its decorative corbeled cornice. The original small central has had many additions. By 1854, it was owned by the widow and children of Dr. Samuel Magill.

**19) Ouvre House • 359 rue St. Jean**

Alexander Bellissime was the first owner on record of the land, but it was transferred to Louis Ouvre in 1810. This c. 1820 house is Florissant's only brick Missouri French Colonial. It was constructed in two matching sections over the years.

**20) Settle House • 349 Washington St.**

In 1913, Felix Mottin built this house with its classically inspired portico porch. It has had two additions to the back since that time.

**21) Elk Spring • rue St. Francois & rue St. Jean**

Stand at the southeast corner of rue St. Francois and rue St. Jean, Elk Spring can be heard underground as it runs toward Cold Water Creek. This was an important water source for the original village and a mill stood on this block.

**22) Steudeman House • 310 rue St. Francois**

This tiny house was built in 1909. It served the town as a confectionary for many years as well as the home for Frederick Steudeman.

**23) Dr. Jensen House • 406 rue St. Louis**

Believed to have been built about 1890 by Arnold Ellerbrock and purchased by Dr. Nicholas Jensen in 1896. The porch was added in 1903.

**24) Belleville-Castello House • 385 rue St. Louis**

A fine example of Greek Revival, this c. 1860 home has beautiful cornice modillions. Home to John and Mary Belleville and later it was home to the Castello family.

**25) Laramie House • 405 rue St. Louis**

Built c. 1880, this house has a classical flavor with its central gable and its entablature window heads.

**26) Moynihan House • 401 rue St. Denis**

A frame example of the Missouri French style, c. 1890, it has had three additions to the rear over the years.

**27) Hendel's • 599 rue St. Denis**

Built in 1873 by Henry Bockrath and operated as a grocery store until the 1990s. Nick Hendel opened his store there in 1915, followed by his son, Henry. It has been enlarged over the years. The restaurant owners, the Bennett's kept the Hendel's name.

**28) Archambault House • 603 rue St. Denis**

Built in 1850 by Auguste Archambault, a mountain man and explorer who served as a guide to John Fremont. It was the first house rescued from demolition by Historic Florissant, Inc.

**29) Herz Jesu Schule • 751 Jefferson St.**

The Sacred Heart Parish school building, built in 1889, is a fine example of the Missouri German style.

**30) Sacred Heart Church • 751 Jefferson St.**

Built in 1893, this Gothic Revival style Catholic Church is on the highest point in Old Town and can be seen for miles in all directions.

**31) Sacred Heart Convent • 751 Jefferson St.**

Built in 1904, it combines the Missouri German style of the school building with the Gothic Revival style of the church.

**32) Timme's Market • 700 Jefferson St.**

Built in 1858, this Missouri German style was once Timme's Store. The front was enclosed and it was remodeled into apartments with several rear additions.

**33) Aubuchon-Herbst House • 695 Jefferson St.**

Possibly the oldest house in Florissant, c. 1790, it features the poteaux sur sole (post-on-sill) construction. Although altered extensively, the half-timbered construction is visible in places on the interior.

**34) Auguste Albers Store • 601-607 Jefferson St.**

Built in 1904 by Auguste Albers, this Missouri German style was altered in 1960 when the porch was enclosed. A portion was the original site of Citizens Bank until the bank built on rue St. Francois at Lafayette in 1905.

**35) Sidney Garrett House • 549 rue St. Jacques**

This c. 1870 home has had several additions that gave it a rambling appearance. Sidney Garrett built a mill just north of his house in 1897. He became Postmaster in 1898 and mayor in 1910, reelected 18 times.

**36) Baptiste G.Aubuchon House • 450 rue St. Jacques**

Believed to have been built in 1842. This balanced Federal style home has two rooms up, two down and a central hallway. Also known as the Goldbeck House, it was restored in the 1970s.

**37) Hennequin House • 350 Jefferson St.**

A small brick house, c. 1858, with a remote classical feeling created by a boxed central gable and small portico porch.

**38) Kramer House • 520 rue St. Catherine**

The construction of this frame Missouri French Colonial is credited to Louis Ouvre. Its long front gallerie was enclosed in 1937 and modernizations in the 1950s have hidden its original appearance.

**39) Ryan Butcher Shop • 620 rue St. Francois**

This small commercial building, c.1905, was once a butcher shop. In 1945, a room was added at the back.

**40) Union Church • 646 rue St. Francois**

Land was set aside in 1857 to build a Protestant Church but it was not erected until 1897. The Union Church was shared by protestant denominations, mostly Baptists, Methodists and Presbyterians.

**41) First City Hall & Calaboose • 619 rue St. Francois**

This simple Romanesque Revival built in 1870 as the city hall and calaboose, has served many purposes over the years. A 1919 addition made it the fire station. It has also been a library, the police station and it's currently the Florissant Senior Center.

**42) Wiethaupt General Store • 650 rue St. Francois**

This Missouri German building was opened as general store in 1885 by Stephen Wiethaupt and turned over to his son, John, in 1893. Some believe it was originally only one story and John may have added the second story to be used as living quarters.

**43) Citizens Bank • 699 rue St. Francois**

Built in 1906, it originally had an entrance at the corner of the building and in 1926 the front façade was altered to its present appearance. Joseph Peters, Sr. was the first bank president.

**44) Dr. Millman House • 693 N. Lafayette St.**

George Klima is credited with the building of this house in 1887. The central gable and open portico porch give this house a classical look. Dr. John Millman purchased the house in 1903 and added the section on the north end to use as his office. It remained in the Millman family into the 1960s.

**45) Wesling House • 701 N. Lafayette St.**

Described by the National Register nomination form as one of the most substantial residences in the district, this 1918 home exhibits classical detailing in the area of its pilastered porch.

**46) Kienstra House • 710 N. Lafayette St.**

The first building to be built on this lot was a log cabin about 1800 or 1810. In 1857, Franz Kienstra purchased the property and opened a tin and coppersmith shop on the grounds next to his home. The horizontal log structure is covered with clapboard. A porch and other additions have been made.

**47) Hansen House • 704 rue St. Catherine**

Built c. 1890 and also known as the Herman House, this vernacular frame is best known for the beautiful Eastlake front porch.

**48) Rickelmann House • 680 Washington St.**

Believed to have originally been a one-room house built in 1875, this Missouri French has had several additions prior to its restoration.

**49) Michael Castello House • 755 rue St. Francois**

Michael Castello bought this property in 1820 and it's believed the house was built soon after. The house has classically derived detailing in its side lighted front entrance and portico porch.

**50) Douglas House • 801 rue St. Francois**

One of only two homes in Florissant that has a mansard roof of the Second Empire style. Built c. 1878, it was the summerhouse of Walter Douglas and his family. Called "Spot" by the Douglas family, it was considered a cool and clean country estate away from the city of St. Louis.

**51) Way-Keeven House • 889 rue St. Louis**

Built c.1862, the main section of this house is horizontal log. The house had the characteristics of a typical French Colonial until the front porch was enclosed about 1945.

**52) Meiner House • 889 rue St. Denis**

This small Missouri French Colonial was moved to this location from rue St. Catherine and Lafayette prior to 1878. Perhaps built c. 1850.

**53) Wellinghoff House • 921 rue St. Louis**

This simple vernacular style house, c.1844, exhibits classically derived entablature window heads and a simple portico porch. The two front doors and brick nogging are of the German style. Brick nogging was used occasionally as insulation on frame houses.

**54) Landscaping at City Hall • 955 rue St. Francois**

The present Florissant City Hall was built in 1970 on the lot where the home of Joseph Peters, Sr. once stood. Although the beautiful home is now gone, many of the unusual trees and shrubs collected by Mr. Peters remain, and are actually protected Florissant landmarks.

**55) Auguste Aubuchon House • 1002 rue St. Louis**

Often referred to as the “Jewel of Florissant,” this French Colonial, c. 1800, is constructed of horizontal logs and covered with weatherboard. Several additions have been made, but its architectural style remains pure.

**56) Goldbeck House • 1061 rue St. Louis**

This typical Missouri French style, c. 1864, was moved from another location on this block at an unknown date. Another section that had been a saloon was moved in 1929 and added to the rear of the house.

**57) Peters House • 990 rue St. Francois**

Joseph Peters, Sr. built this impressive home in 1912 as a rental property. For a time it was home to Joseph, Jr., his son. In 1978, it was saved from demolition by Historic Florissant, Inc.. The restoration was extensive, as the home had been divided into two apartments for several years. It is now privately owned.

**58) Peters Gardener’s House • 520 Brown St.**

Joseph Peters owned several houses, rental properties, in the area near his own home. Only two remain standing. This house was home to his gardener, the man responsible for caring for the many rare and beautiful trees, shrubs and flowers in his gardens.

**59) Narrow Gauge RR Depot • 1060 rue St. Catherine**

Built as the depot for the Narrow Gauge Railroad when it made its way to Florissant in 1878, it stood along rue St. Ferdinand at rue St. Catherine. It was Burcke’s Confectionary in the 1950s and 1960s. When the road was to be widened in the 1967, it was moved Tower Court Park. HFI and volunteers restored the building.

**60) Log Cabin in Tower Court Park • 1065 Washington St.**

This small log cabin had been added onto several times and covered with clapboard siding. In the 1960s, when the area became a park, it was dismantled and reassembled as its original log cabin. Many repairs were made by Historic Florissant, including the fireplace. It is currently property of the City of Florissant.