

James Poff House
Paradise Road
Smithville Vicinity
Clay County
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1225

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY HABS No. MO-1225

JAMES POFF HOUSE

- Location: Paradise Road, .5 miles east of Farm Route F, 1 mile north of its intersection with Farm Route W, approximately 3.5 miles northeast of Smithville, Smithville Vicinity, Clay County, Missouri.
- USGS Smithville Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 15.3666595.436860.
- Present Owner: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Kansas City District.
- Present Use: None. Scheduled to be used as the residence of the Director of the Clay County Parks and Recreation Authority.
- Significance: The James Poff residence is a frame bungalow constructed circa 1918. Such features as the shallow gable porch roof supported by battered columns, the extended eaves with exposed rafters and simple bracket supports, and shed dormers make this a good example of a regional interpretation of the bungalow style. Like the exterior, the interior woodwork reflects the influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement and the possibilities of its incorporation in a modest rural dwelling.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Circa 1918, according to C.O. Neth, nephew of the original owner.
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners: James Poff bought this property in 1912. Three-fourths of a mile to the northwest is a Victorian house owned by his father. Poff first built a house located half a mile to the southwest of this one in 1913. He built this one about five years later, creating something of a family complex. Poff was employed as a livestock buyer with the Kansas City stockyards.

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Mr. and Mrs. Perry Winn owned the property from 1942 to 1961. During this period, Mr. Winn died and the house was rented out to a number of different tenants. The next owner was Rudolph J. Zurbuchen, who held it until its sale in 1976 to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

A complete chain of title follows. The property conveyed includes the SE 1/4 of Section 1 and the NW 1/4 of NE 1/4 of Section 12, Township 53, Range 33, Clay County, Missouri.

Warranty Deed, Book 171, page 565, September 11, 1912, recorded March 3, 1913. Lucy Wright to James F. Poff. Consideration of \$14,500.

Warranty Deed, Book 242, page 76, March 1, 1926, recorded March 2, 1926. James F. Poff and Stella P., Wife, to Luther F. Boyd and Susie M., Wife. Consideration of \$21,000.

Warranty Deed, Book 299, page 605, February 12, 1935, recorded March 14, 1935. Luther F. Boyd and Susie M., Wife, to James F. Poff and Stella P., Wife. Consideration of \$1.00.

Warranty Deed, Book 359, page 34, April 11, 1942, recorded June 3, 1942. James F. Poff and Stella P., Wife, to Perry Winn and Opal, Wife. Consideration of \$1.00.

Warranty Deed, Book 712, page 209, March 31, 1961, recorded April 7, 1961. Perry Winn and Opal, Wife, to Rudolph J. Zurbuchen and Elinor, Wife. Consideration of \$1.00.

Warranty Deed, Book 1211, page 290. Rudolph J. Zurbuchen and Elinor, Wife, to U.S.A. Consideration of \$205,600.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: The house was built by a local builder; Mrs. Neth thought that one of those involved in its construction was a Mr. Stanley.
5. Original plan and construction: The Poff House retains its original exterior appearance with its assortment of bungalow characteristics: the gabled front facade, shallow gabled porch with battered columns, brackets and exposed rafter ends under wide eaves, and shed dormers. The interior has been altered somewhat, but the remaining oak woodwork complements

the style of the house. Straight-lined and heavy in appearance, with hardware an integral ornament, the interior woodwork is a striking feature of the house.

6. Alterations and additions: Although the exterior has remained intact for the most part since construction, the interior has been altered. All plaster has been removed from all interior walls and replaced with painted or papered dry wall or wood paneling. Built-in cabinetwork originally in the dining area has been removed. Most of this remodeling occurred under the ownership of Rudolph Zurbuchen in the 1960s.

Alterations in the rear rooms of the structure include the replacement of an original pantry with an addition which housed a bathroom and laundry area. The room to the west of the kitchen, originally a bedroom, was converted to a large bathroom.

In 1966-68, the garage with connecting breezeway was added to the rear of the structure.

B. Sources of Information:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

- a. Deed Books: Recorder of Deeds, Clay County Courthouse, Liberty, Missouri.

- b. Interviews:

Bowman, Mrs. Edward. Tenant of house, 1959-60. Kearney, Missouri, telephone interview, August 4, 1978.

McNeil, Michael. Clay County Parks and Recreation Authority, Smithville, Missouri, telephone interview August 4, 1978.

Neth, Mr. and Mrs. C.O. Mr. Neth is nephew of original owner of the house. Smithville, Missouri, August 17, 1978.

2. Secondary Sources:

Blumenson, John J.-G. Identifying American Architecture: A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms 1600-1945. Nashville: AASLH, 1977.

Melnick, Robert, principal investigator. "Architecture of the Smithville Lake Area." Contract study conducted by Kansas State University, College of Architecture, May, 1977.

Whiffen, Marcus. American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1969.

Prepared by Kathryn A. Burns
Historian
Historic American Buildings
Survey
August, 1978

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Poff House is a fine local example of the bungalow style prevalent in the United States at the turn of the century until well into the 1930s and '40s. A broad gable facing the street, shed dormers, battered porch columns, and exposed rafter ends are typical elements of this style.
2. Condition of fabric: Good to excellent.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The one-and-one-half story rectangle is two bays wide across the front, measuring 27' by 42' deep.
2. Foundations: The foundations are coursed rough-cut stone blocks with beaded mortar joints, about 18" thick. The rear addition has a concrete block addition.
3. Wall construction, finish, color: The building is of wood frame construction with wood clapboards about 2-1/2" wide. The clapboards on the addition are about 4" wide. The house is painted white.
4. Structural system, framing: There are three structural bays in a transverse (east-west) direction. From north to south, the bays are approximately 11'8", 11'1", and 8'4-1/2" wide. Two steel jacks per beam carry steel I-beams approximately 4"

wide by 8" deep. A third I-beam in the center of the middle bay supports the stair framing. There are bearing stud walls atop the I-beams. The rear addition forms a fourth bay, about 8' wide.

5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads: The front porch has a stone foundation with a concrete cap on top of a 19" high wall and corner and center piers. Three 9" square posts support the gable roof, covered with asphalt shingles. There is a single bracket in the gable peak and exposed rafter ends with a decorative cut. The porch has a concrete floor with three concrete steps.

In the southwest corner there is a porch approximately 8' x 7', with a concrete floor and steps and wrought iron roof supports and railing.

6. Openings:

- a. Doors and doorways: The front door is wood with fifteen lights, each 7" x 11", with beveled edges. The door is 3'9" wide including trim.

- b. Windows and shutters: The windows have a narrow cornice molding. The north (front) elevation has triple windows 8'10" wide. Each window opening is 2'4" x 4'10", has nine-over-one lights and a double-hung sash. The east elevation has four sets of windows. On the north end are three leaded glass windows, each about 24" x 30". The projecting bay of the dining room has four windows, each 1'9" x 5', with nine-over-one lights and a double-hung sash. The bay is supported by brackets. The kitchen has a 28" x 43" double window, and the addition has one 1'9" x 5' window with one-over-one lights and a double-hung sash. The south (rear) elevation has four windows with a common cornice, nine-over-one lights and a double sash at the second level. The west elevation has two 3'11" x 2'8" windows with nine-over-one lights and a double-hung sash. There is a single leaded glass window, about 24" x 30", at the stairs.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles.

- b. Cornice, eaves: The wide eaves have a barge board with decorative cut. The front gable end has five brackets. The rafter ends are covered with an eaves fascia.
- c. Dormers, vents: There are two dormers, one on the east and the other on the west side. The dormers have shed roofs with asphalt shingles and the rafter ends are exposed. The window opening is approximately 2' x 3'10". There is a louvered roof vent in the middle of the roof ridge.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: The full open basement has a small concrete block area in the southwest corner, constructed as a shower room. The boiler and hot water heater stand in the middle bay on the west side.
- b. First floor: The entrance from the front porch leads into a large living area running the full width of the house. A stairway to the second floor is off the west end of the living room. A woodwork dividing wall with lower oak cabinet work and an upper open portion supported by battered oak columns separates the living and dining rooms.

South of the dining room is a large kitchen with a bathroom to the west.

Just beyond the kitchen, a small addition houses a narrow hallway running east-west, a laundry area on the west end, a small bathroom in the center, and a staircase leading to a rear exit and continuing down to the basement.

- c. Second floor: The stairway opens into a narrow hall running north-south. Three bedrooms and a bath are off the center hall. The master bedroom is to the north with a smaller dormer-lit room to the east and a full bathroom to the west. Off the hall to the south is a bedroom with rear sleeping porch.

2. Stairways:

- a. A narrow stairway in the back of the house leads from the rear hallway to a back door and basement.

- b. The front staircase just off the living room leading to the second floor is varnished oak and a dominant feature of the living room. A double newel post, one a step higher than the other, stands at the base of the stairs. The banister has a molded handrail and simple square balustrade.
3. Flooring:
 - a. First floor: The front rooms have wall-to-wall carpeting with exposed 2-1/2" floor boards in the dining room. The rear kitchen, bath and utility area have linoleum tile flooring.
 - b. Second floor: With the exception of the second floor bath, wall-to-wall carpeting is found throughout. The bath has a linoleum floor.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: All original plaster has been replaced by painted dry wall in most areas. Paneling is found in the kitchen, dining room, and second floor. Kitchen walls also have tile and papering.
5. Doors and doorways: A closet door under the staircase on the first floor is of varnished oak with raised panels and has attractive hinges. All other interior doors are new hollow-core plywood.
6. Special decorative features: The most dominant decorative feature is the varnished oak woodwork remaining in the two first-floor front rooms. Varnished wood cabinetwork serves as a room divider between the living and dining area, an oak window seat runs along the east wall of the dining room, and the oak staircase is located off of the living room.

Leaded glass windows are found at the west end of the living room and along the staircase.
7. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Lighting: There are modern overhead ceiling fixtures throughout.
 - b. Heating: There is gas-operated forced air heat.

D. Site:

1. The structure faces north on Paradise Road, with the residence shaded by silver maple trees.
2. Outbuildings: There are a tool shed and a workshop/garage/office, both of painted stucco. A wood frame structure stands at the north edge of a small lake southwest of the structure.

Prepared by Bethanie C. Grashof
Project Supervisor
Kathryn A. Burns
Historian
Historic American Buildings
Survey
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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Smithville Survey was undertaken in 1978 by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Kansas City District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in compliance with Executive Order 11593 as a mitigative effort in the construction of the Smithville Dam and Reservoir. Under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, and Kenneth L. Anderson, Principal Architect, the documentation was prepared on site by Project Supervisor Bethanie Grashof (HABS Office); Historian Kathryn A. Burns (George Washington University); Foreman Darl Rastorfer (University of Pennsylvania); and student architects Kimberly I. Merkel (University of Virginia), Leonida Cubellis (Syracuse University), Jeffrey M. Laufer (Temple University), Barney H. Silver (University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee), and Douglas R. Taylor (Auburn University). Work on the drawings was continued in the HABS office by Ms. Grashof and Peter Darlow (McGill University), and completed by Mr. Taylor in 1979. The data was edited in the HABS office in 1979 by Alison K. Hoagland (George Washington University).