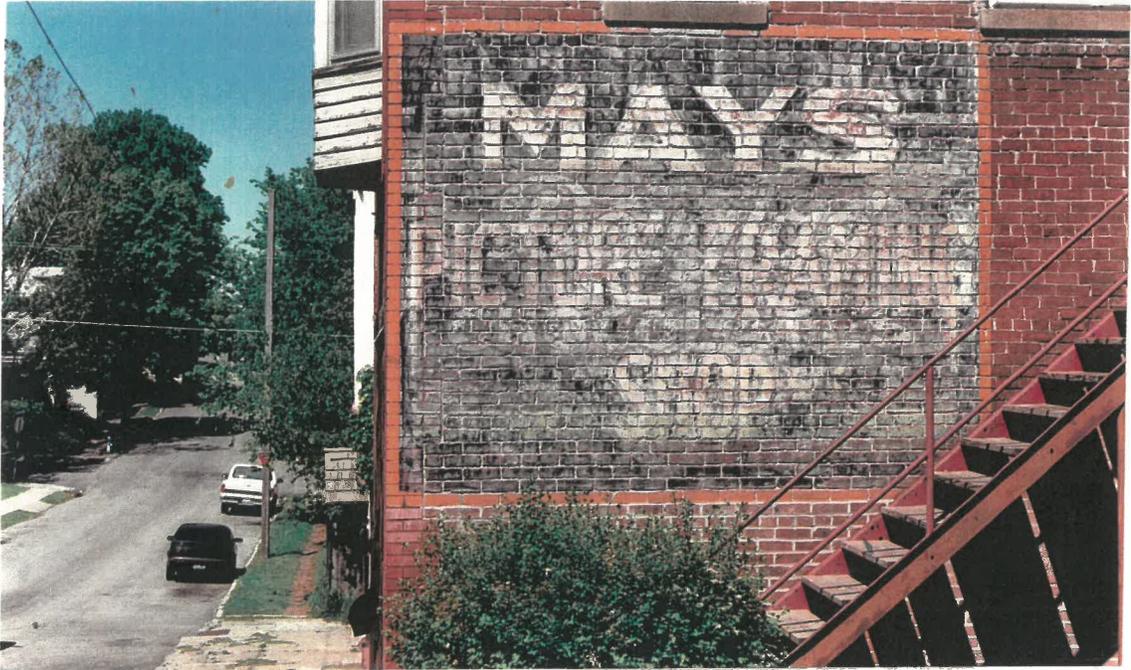


ST. JOSEPH



GHOST SIGNS

*BRICK WALL SIGNS
IN ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI*

WRITTEN by Joyce Schutte

PHOTOGRAPHS by Steve Schutte

INTRODUCTION

This study of St. Joseph Ghost Signs was done in about 2010, and when you look at the pictures you will see why it is important. Many of the signs pictured here are no longer extant or are significantly faded. As Joyce points out on the first page, we need to photograph these signs because there really is not any other way to preserve them.

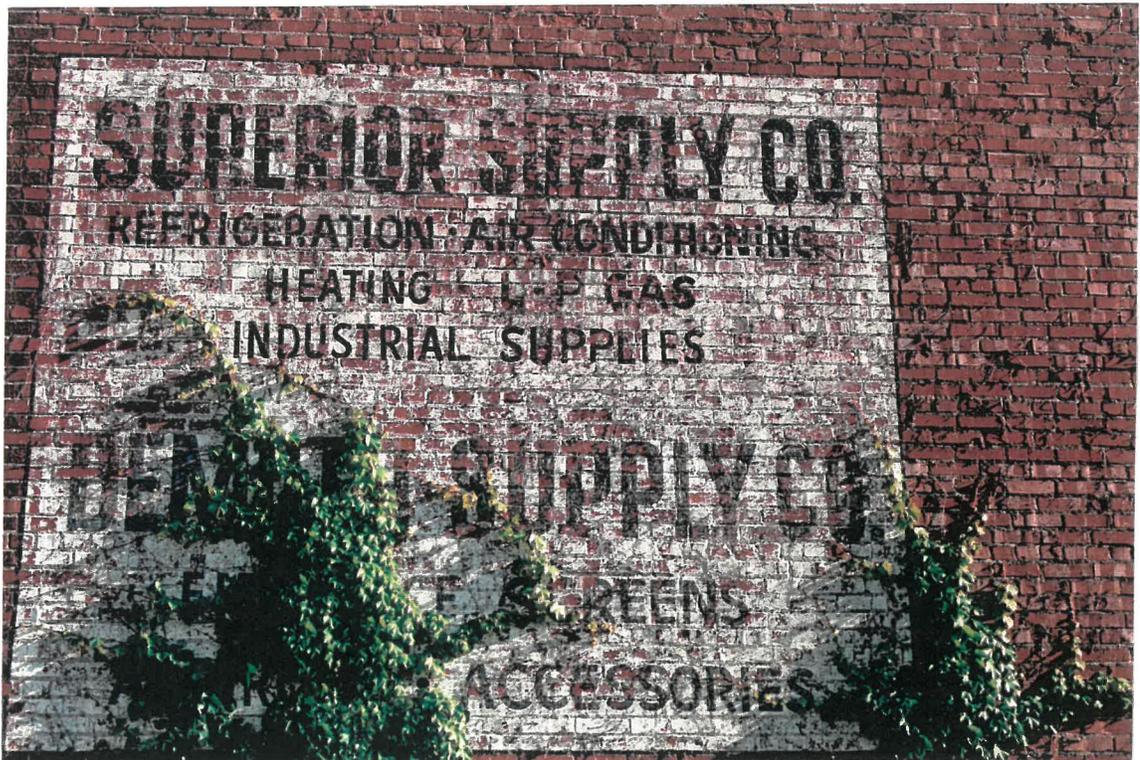
And yet, as you drive around St. Joseph, if you look closely, you can still see these faded ghosts of our past. They speak to an era when the Downtown was full of thriving businesses and every neighborhood had a local grocery. They remind us that there are many stories still to be told about St. Joseph.

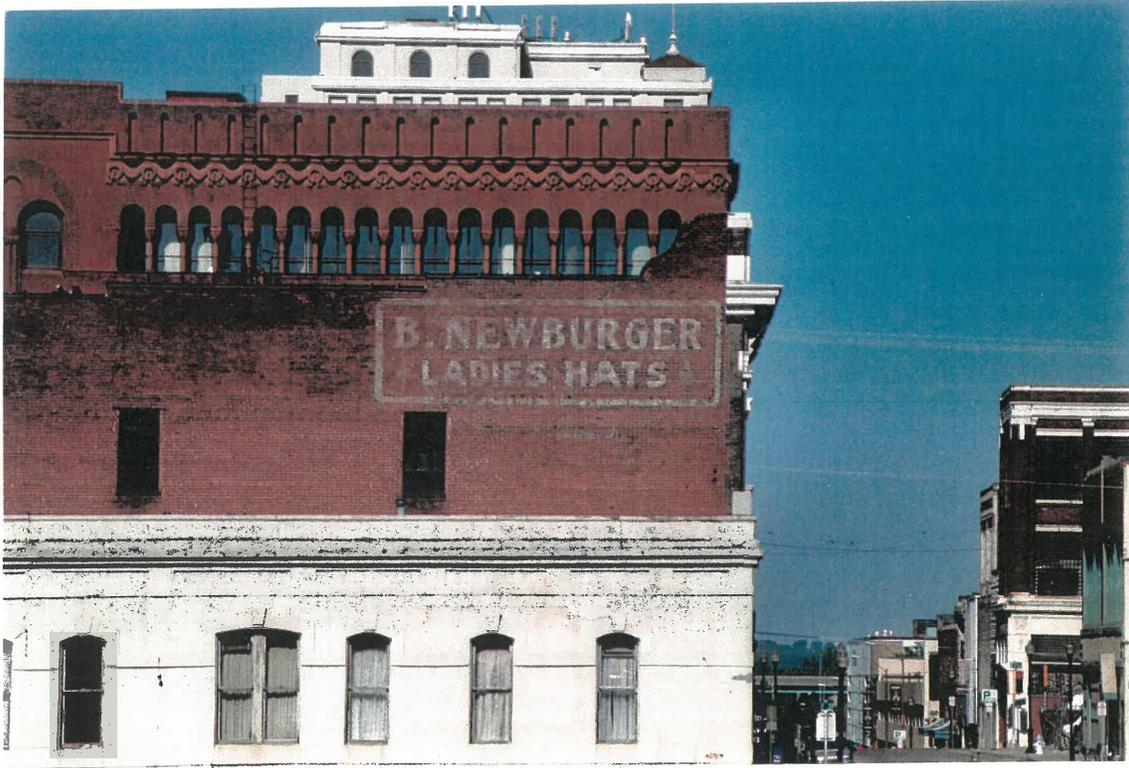
Joyce Schutte (1939-2018), who did the research and wrote this study, was my mother. She was a librarian and a passionate amateur local history buff. Though not a native to St. Joseph, she loved this city and its history.

Kim Schutte
Historic Preservation Planner
2022

Brick wall signs provide valuable local business history giving clues to prices, products, vocabulary, and past business locations.

Wall signs need to be preserved photographically because it is difficult to preserve them any other way. They cannot easily be placed in a museum.



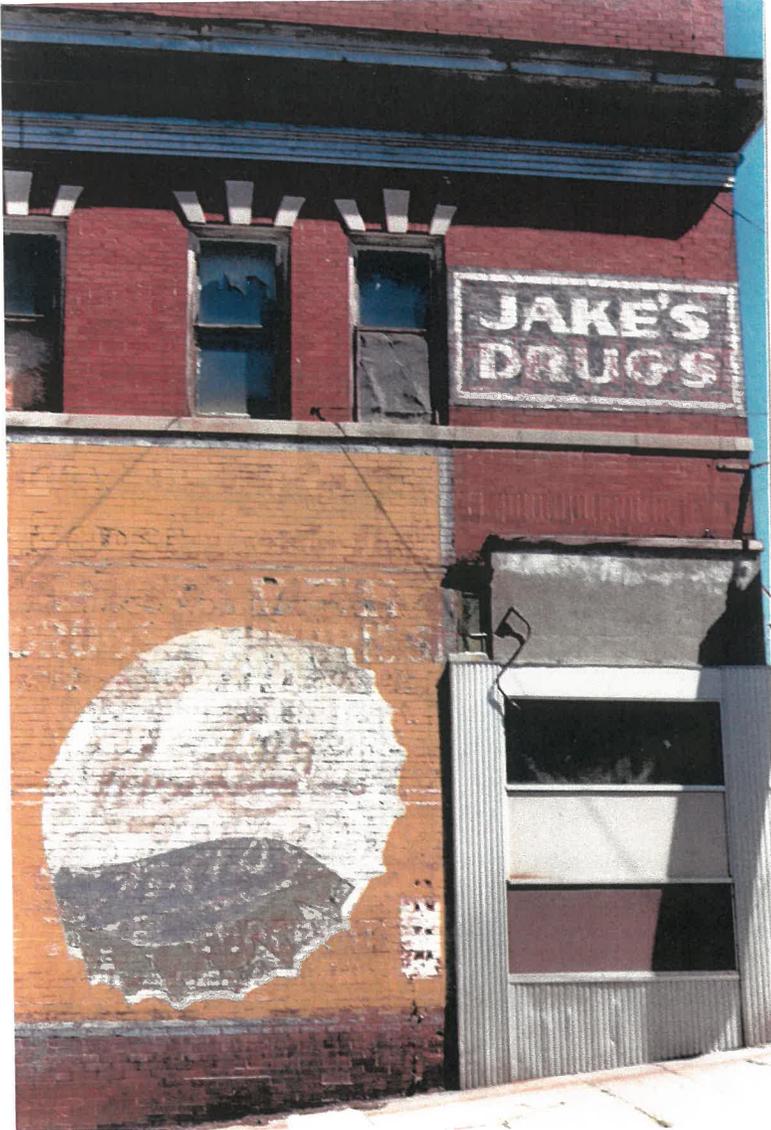


This sign conjures up memories of the time when every lady wore a hat. Millinery was big business in the late 19th, early 20th century. The Newburger sign is on the side of the building at 716 Felix. It is fortunate that the sign was placed on this building rather than (or in addition to) the one which housed the business across the street because that building no longer exists. Newburger Hats was located 711-713 Felix from 1889 until 1915.

Benjamin Newburger, president of the company, was a member of the St. Joseph Board of Trade as early as 1879. He is listed as a wholesale milliner. He was president of the new Sons of Israel in 1879. He and his family resided at 518 North 6th until 1918 when he moved to Louisville, Kentucky.



This sign at 1310 South 6th Street is one of the later signs. Flora's Cafe was at this address from 1951 until 1968. The proprietor was Flora Knorr. The cafe advertised "Home Cooking, Homemade Pastry". It replaced California Fruit Market at this location in 1951 and was replaced by Johnnie's Cafe, run by John McDaniel in 1969.

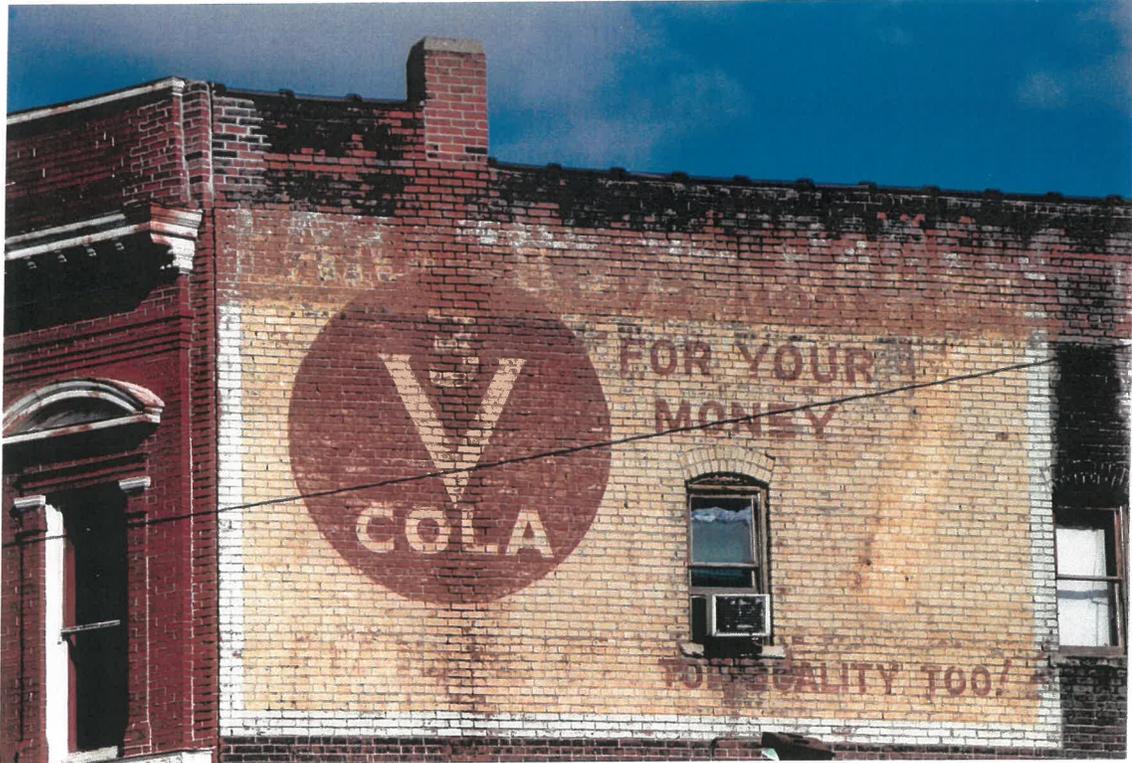


PRIVILEGE SIGNS

There are two types of privilege signs. One type is where the product sign is painted on a building that the product company has paid the building owner for the privilege of displaying the sign.

A second type is where the product company pays for a sign on a building of a business that sells the product. The merchant's name is included in the sign as payment for the use of the wall. There is a banner (usually small) displaying the name of the business. Sometimes the privilege sign is one place on the wall with the product sign (usually very much larger) elsewhere on the wall. The merchant's name is usually painted with white letters on a black background.

Many of the wall signs in St. Joseph were simply paid for by the merchants with their names and their own advertising with no privilege involved. Some St. Joseph signs, however, are privilege signs.



This 3V Cola privilege sign on Frederick Avenue is a true ghost sign with an older sign at the top of the panel peering ghost-like through the cola sign. Or is the cola sign older and showing through the smaller, not so well preserved sign at the top?

This Phenix Cheeses privilege sign is at 1011 North 12th Street. The Phenix Cheese Company made Philadelphia Brand Cream Cheese from 1880 until the company was bought by Kraft Cheese Company in 1928.

This building was first occupied by a grocery store in 1906 with A.J. Myers & Son, grocer. It housed a grocery until the 1930s. The grocers operating the store after Myers were Joseph Hobiltzall, Edward F. Courtney, Julia Mahoney, Thomas Morrissey, James Fitzgerald, Leo G. Felling, Lawrence G. Byrne, and Harry Schwartz chronologically from 1908 through the 1920s. Most of the grocers also lived in the building. The first half decade of the thirties the building was occupied by the Basket Store Grocery, one of several in St. Joseph.

