

## **Demographic Change in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Murphysburg**

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### *Abstract*

Cities change over time – from economic fluctuations to population pressures, changes in social realities result in changes in the places and ways in which people live. Joplin, Missouri, is no exception, and the change that has occurred between the city's heyday as a mining hub and the present can be observed if one knows where to look. Murphysburg, a residential district on the National Register of Historic Places, provides something of a timeline of social change in Joplin. The earliest residences in the area, grand single-family houses with beautiful facades, were followed by modest (and in some cases luxurious) apartment buildings designed for middle- to upper-class professionals and, ultimately, utilitarian apartment buildings designed to house growing numbers of working-class individuals.

This research connects data from various sources – including historic registers, community groups, and a local historian – with historical and contemporary photographs to provide a look at the effects of community change over time. By examining the residences in a small section of the neighborhood and comparing their dates of construction with economic and demographic profiles of Joplin at these points in time, one is left with a visual representation of the ways in which economic and population changes can shape the development of a city. Joplin is not unique in the way its development has been shaped over time, but Murphysburg presents a convenient setting to observe the intersection of economy, class, and population change.