

IT BEGAN AS A CHALLENGE.

Angus McDougall was the J-School's new photo-journalism chairman, and his students wanted to see what he could do. He wanted to see what they could do. To find out, cameras, lenses, lightmeters, film, faculty and students all converged on Lupus, Missouri, for the Easter weekend of 1973.

Six years and three towns later, 104 photo-journalists had exposed 1,910 rolls of Tri-X and seven editors had published *Lupus: Portrait of a Missouri Rivertown*, *Berger: Life in a Missouri Rivertown*, *Rhineland: Winter in a Missouri Rivertown* and *Glasgow: Story of a Missouri Rivertown*.

The students of Journalism 342 who participated in the project got a chance to practice people-oriented journalism, while documenting the quality of life and the unique character of each community.

"These are not Chamber of Commerce 'PR' jobs," says McDougall, the tie that binds the four-volume series. "Although complete objectivity is never possible, we tried to be fair. There are a lot of problems in small towns that people want to cover up. If you're honest you have to show some warts. We're trying to say this is what a small town is like."

Each of the rivertowns, well off the beaten track, has preserved its Nineteenth Century charm despite

Twentieth Century technology and each has maintained its distinctive personality.

Lupus, at the dead end of a road, is like a little toy village laid out in a formal grid of streets and alleys. Once a business center for area farmers, such prosperity is just a memory for Lupus' 68 residents.

In contrast, Berger is a thriving community of 226. Its bustling industrial-agricultural economy is based on a cap factory, a hatchery, a grain elevator and farming.

Rhineland, centered around a Catholic church and school, is an agricultural retirement town. Many of its 190 inhabitants are widows.

The industrial river port of Glasgow, population 1,336, is the only one of the four big enough to be found in the *Rand McNally Road Atlas*. Its rich historical background dates to the Southern plantation owners who settled the region.

Initially funded by McDougall's personal \$1,000 Distinguished Journalism Faculty Award in 1973, the project has been financed from book sales since. The Lupus and Berger books are no longer available, but the Rhineland and Glasgow books are hot off the presses and at \$8 per copy they're almost as reasonable as a Sunday drive.

Here is a sampling of the rivertown series.

Missouri Rivertowns:

A Lesson in Personal Journalism

Photographer: Greg Dorsett/Berger

Berger's Market Street drops from the hills above the Missouri River to the fertile flood plains.



Photographer: David Walters/Glasgow

Clattering a stick on a slat fence is a temptation too great to resist.

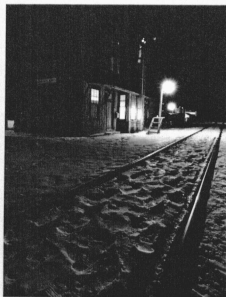
Photographer: Cathy Bosold/Rhineland

For a hot meal, cold beer or some friendly conversation, the Corner is the place to go, especially on a Saturday night.



Photographer: Tim McKay/Rhineland

The passenger trains are gone and freight trains stop infrequently, but Rhineland is the only station between St. Louis and Jefferson City that still relays messages to trains.





Photographer: Bob Mercer/Lupus

Going to church in Lupus is still a family affair, and if a preacher can't make it for the Sunday service, Sunday School classes are held anyway.

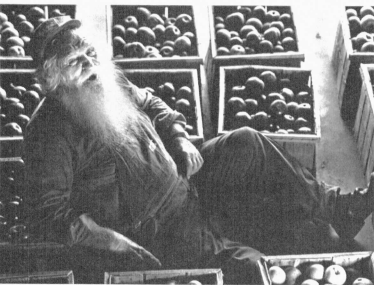


Photographer: Donna Holman/Rhineland

Peggy Grotewil is one of Rhineland's 30 widows, almost 16 percent of the population. The ratio of widows to widowers is 10 to one.

Photographer: Carol Archer/Glasgow

Jimmie Kuhn may be Missouri's official Santa Claus, but he doesn't have any elves to help out at the Kuhn Apple Orchard.



Photographer: Donna Holman/Rhineland

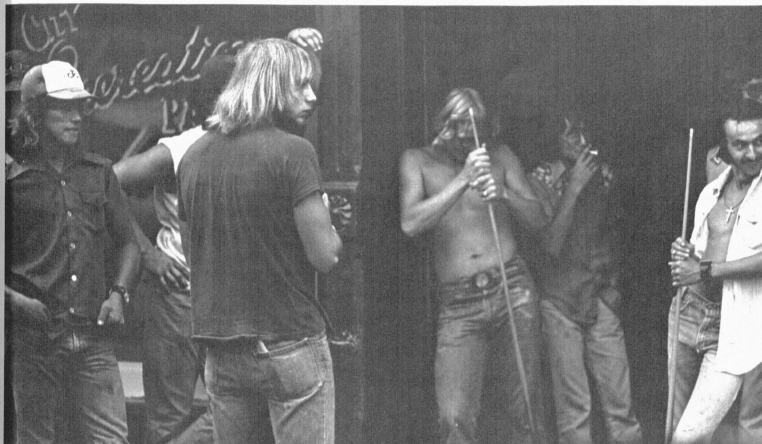
For Frank Schluss, far left, and his friends, hog butchering is more of a rural tradition than a chore. And it's a good time to pass around a jug of homemade cherry wine, too.

Photographer: Nick Kelsch/Berger

A front porch swing can stir up a breeze even on a sultry day.

Photographer: Thomas J Nord/Glasgow

The place to shoot snooker, eight ball and the bull in Glasgow is at the City Recreation Parlor, better known to its regulars as "old man Sears' pool hall." Other popular diversions for young folks in this small town include dancing at the disco, cruising the strip and drinking beer.



Photographer: Leilani Hu/Lupus

Shadowy, but sunwarmed, the sidewalks of Lupus are a favored snoozing spot for the town's dogs.