



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-COLUMBIA

The Graduate School and Office of Research

Missouri Cultural Heritage Center

400 Hitt Street
Columbia, Missouri 65211
Telephone (314) 882-6296

21 Nov 83

Seymour Rosen
SPACES
1804 Van Ness
Los Angeles CA 90028

Seymour:

Jesse Howard passed away last night. I believe the funeral is tomorrow or Wednesday.

I am enclosing a brief note on his death for your SPACES newsletter, though you may want to write your own as you've visited him and knew him. July 4, 1885 - November 20, 1983.

I plan to send Dan Ward the Howard essay anyway, and intend to largely use it "as is" (with added notice of Howard's death).

Thanks for the generosity and hospitality in LA....

Best regards,

Howdy

Howard Marshall

ENCL: Jesse Howard obituary

JESSE HOWARD, July 4, 1885 - November 20, 1983

The man of "signs and wonders," Missouri's reknowned and redoubtable Jesse Howard, is dead at 98. He passed away in his sleep the crisp fall night of November 20, 1983, in his home of forty years on the old Jeff City road on the edge of Fulton, amidst the remarkable and little-understood environment of painted signs and eccentric constructions that brought celebrity to the fascinating man with a penchant for display of Bible verse, political editorials, and personal homilies. At the time of his death, there had been more writing about him than any other living Missouri artist, and a movement was under way to bring him a long-overdue award of recognition from the Missouri Arts Council. Last month the University of Missouri in Columbia mounted a retrospective exhibition and sale of his works, an event appreciated by his family and wife, Maude Howard.

Journalist Sheri Berliner and I had gone to visit the Howards two weeks ago, but he was quietly asleep that afternoon. We visited with Mrs. Howard and she reported Jesse's health to be in continuing decline following bouts with various infections and a pierced lung. The town is finally paving the old road that runs by their house and there is talk of naming it "Sign Painter Road."

Those who knew "Jess" well, beyond the many who tolerated or were amused by him, took his labors seriously. Few scholars of art gave him his due, since his work fit no easy category and called into question the very nature and definition of "art" as usually construed.

We will miss this unusual and rare individual, Jesse Howard.

Rest in peace.

-- HOWARD W. MARSHALL

University of Missouri

Columbia 20Nov83