NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property.

historic name Endicott-Johnson Shoe Distribution Plant

other names/site number Columbia Transfer Company Warehouse

2. Location

street & number 1132 Spruce Street [n/a] not for publication

city or town St. Louis [n/a] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county St. Louis [Independent City] code 510 zip code 63102

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [x] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [x] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [x] locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ].)

Mark A Miles — Aug 24, 2007

Signature of certifying official/Title — Mark A. Miles / Deputy SHPO — Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ].)

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

I hereby certify that the property is:

[ ] entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet [ ].
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register
See continuation sheet [ ].
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[ ] removed from the National Register
[ ] other, explain see continuation sheet [ ].

5.Classification

Ownership of Property

[x] private
[ ] public-local
[ ] public-state
[ ] public-Federal

Category of Property

[x] building(s)
[ ] district
[ ] site
[ ] structure
[ ] object

Number of Resources within Property

contributing	noncontributing	
2	0	building
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	total

Name of related multiple property listing.

(n/a)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register. 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

COMMERCE/warehouse
COMMERCE/specialty store

Current Functions

COMMERCE/warehouse
COMMERCE/specialty store

7. Description

Architectural Classification

CLASSICAL REVIVAL
COMMERCIAL STYLE

see continuation sheet [ ]

Materials

foundation Concrete
walls Brick
Terra cotta
Limestone
Stucco
roof Asphalt
other Metal

see continuation sheet [ ].

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION
See continuation sheet [x]

8.Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

[x] **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

[ ] **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

[ ] **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

[ ] **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

[ ] **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

[ ] **B** removed from its original location.

[ ] **C** a birthplace or grave.

[ ] **D** a cemetery.

[ ] **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

[ ] **F** a commemorative property.

[ ] **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

Industry

Periods of Significance

1925-1957

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person(s)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Bonsack, Frederick C. (arch.)
Nolte & Naumann (arch.)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

[ ] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

[ ] previously listed in the National Register

[ ] previously determined eligible by the National Register

[ ] designated a National Historic Landmark

[ ] recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

#_____

[ ] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

#_____

Primary location of additional data:

[x] State Historic Preservation Office

[ ] Other State Agency

[ ] Federal Agency

[ ] Local Government

[ ] University

[ ] Other:

Name of repository:_____

10.Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.53 acres

UTM References

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	743820	4278760			
C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing

[ ] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Section 7: Michael Allen/Research Associate. Section 8: Andrew B. Weil/Researcher

organization Landmarks Association of St. Louis date April 25, 2007

street & number 917 Locust Street, 7th floor telephone (314) 421-6474

city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63101

Additional Documentation
Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner
(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name R & G Investment Co.

street & number 2626 Cherokee Street telephone

city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63118

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Summary

The Endicott-Johnson St. Louis Shoe Distribution Plant at 1132 Spruce Street in downtown St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri, consists of two interconnected flat-roofed concrete-framed warehouse buildings with brick walls and terra cotta details. The rectangular south building, built in 1915 in the Classical Revival style from plans by Frederick C. Bonsack, is three stories tall at the north end and two stories tall at the south. This building employs restrained ornamentation and window opening sizes that do not openly express the building's form. Connected to the north is a six-story Commercial style building built in 1923-24 from plans by Nolte and Naumann that is a straightforward expression of the building's form and mass. This building has a rectangular footprint although the southeast corner is chamfered; the first floor on this corner is an open bay that once accommodated a rail spur. The buildings present formal elevations on the south, west and north sides and an informal elevation on the east. Both buildings make use of steel sash windows and restrained use of terra cotta and concrete ornament. The interiors of both buildings consist largely of open floors, although the south building is divided into three distinct sections on the first floor. Together, the buildings create 292,000 square feet of enclosed space. The exteriors of both buildings have changed very little since construction; the largest change has been some infill of windows with brick on the first two levels of the north building and on the first floor on the south building. On the primary elevation of the south building, the first floor retains elements of a 1940s remodeling. However, the remodeling traces are reversible concrete and tile cladding. Otherwise, there are few instances of alteration. Thus, the buildings retain historic appearance and integrity.

Site

When the south building was constructed in 1915, the site was located in the dense southern end of downtown St. Louis adjacent to the busy central rail yard. By the time the north building was built in 1924, the area had increased density with large multi-story manufacturing and wholesale buildings as well as civic buildings to the north. Today, the only change to the setting is the decline and disappearance of large parts of the central rail yard. The immediate surroundings remain dense with multi-story historic buildings.

Exteriors

South Building

The primary elevation of the southern building faces north onto Spruce Street, while a secondary elevation faces west onto Tucker Boulevard; the building's formal elevations are clad in smooth red engineer brick with smooth red face brick on the informal elevation. The primary elevation is divided into seven bays distributed symmetrically (see photograph #1). Paired window openings on the second floor are centered above paired windows on the mezzanine and single

windows on the first floor. The steel-sash second floor windows feature six panes distributed vertically, while the steel-sash false mezzanine windows feature double rows of five panes; the openings are jack-arched with steel headers. Both levels' openings feature terra cotta windowsills with slight upward returns at each end. The first floor windows feature a wooden center single-paned sash flanked by two others and topped by a transom ribbon; etched into the glass of some center panes is a company crest featuring the abbreviation "E-J." These windows are surrounded by a concrete casing likely dating to a 1940s remodeling.

At the base of the building, stucco covers the wall to just above sill level. Above the first floor windows, a steel beam box runs along the wall suggesting that there may have been a cornice above the first floor. At each end bay, a pair of steel-sash windows fills a second floor opening. On the first floor of the leftmost bay is a bricked in window opening with limestone sill to the left of a first-floor window like the others on that elevation. On the rightmost bay, original wooden double doors are flanked by aluminum windows and surrounded by ceramic tile. The windows and tile were installed during the 1940's remodeling, although the windows fill original openings. Above the second floor windows at header level, a terra cotta stringcourse runs continuously across the elevation, broken only by the blind arches above the second floor windows in the end bays. Over the center bays, tapered brackets with rounded heads rise from this course to support a projecting cornice; between each bracket between the stringcourse and cornice are recessed panels clad in stucco. A flat band course that forms an arch shape over each end bay continues the cornice line; this course wraps each corner. Terra cotta coping caps the parapet, which is raised at the center of each end bay. Terra cotta keystones connected to exaggerated imposts by arches composed of three rowlock courses head the windows in each end bay.

The secondary elevation is divided into fifteen bays. The parapet and cornice ornamentation follows the same pattern on this side. The stucco covering at the base of the primary elevation wraps continuously on this elevation. The end bay at left (north) features paired windows in one opening centered over paired false mezzanine windows. The other bays feature one second floor window in an opening over one false mezzanine window, except for the ninth bay, which only features a small window high on the second floor, and the tenth and eleventh, which feature paired windows on the second floor. The first floor features a door opening at the eighth bay from left (north), and a recessed entrance in the fourteenth bay topped by a terra cotta rounded pediment and brackets and bearing a steel door with boarded light. Other windows in the ninth through fifteenth bays are bricked in.

The informal eastern elevation makes evident the segmentation of the first floor into three sections: a storage area at the south end, a large garage in the center, and a narrow store at the north end (see photograph #5). This elevation also shows the third floor at the southeast corner of the building. The elevation is divided into fifteen bays, evident on the second floor although more informally arranged on the first floor and the four-bay-wide third floor section. The

rightmost (north) bay returns the formal ornamentation and fenestration pattern of the primary elevation end bays. However, the same terra cotta coping from the other elevations continues here.

North Building

The primary (west) elevation of the northern building features twelve bays distributed symmetrically (see photograph #2). The building is faced with dark, machine-raked brick with rough texture. Due to the raised level of the street, only five floors are visible above sidewalk level. The center ten bays' openings bear original large multi-paned steel sash windows on all five floors; the windows on the first floor are bricked over but the sashes remain in place. Each opening features a wider central window flanked by two narrower windows; steel mullions divide the windows. Under each opening is a rowlock sill course, and above is a soldier course header. In the eight bay from left (north), the sashes are missing and replaced with plywood. The outer two bays correspond to stairwells. The leftmost (north) bay features the building's main entrance with three offset stairwell window openings at the left side of the bay. The entrance features a buff glazed terra cotta name table stating the name "ENDICOTT-JOHNSON SHOES" above a recessed doorway at the right of the bay (see photograph #3). The plaque is flanked by projecting scrolls. Under the plaque, differentiated brickwork provides the entrance stylization. The door openings feature wooden double doors with large single, center panes (now boarded) above a set of limestone steps. Limestone runs to door level at the base of the entrance bay. To the left of the recess, high on the wall, is a window opening with a ten-light steel-sash window inside. Under that window are three tall, narrow columns of terra cotta tile. The rightmost (south) bay features paired openings surrounding steel doors on the upper four floors and a single door at the second floor (sidewalk level). Cast iron balconies at each upper floor level and iron ladders create a fire escape. Near the top of the elevation, a continuous terra cotta stringcourse runs along the parapet, wrapping the northwest corner and wrapping around to run along the south elevation. The same type of terra cotta is used for coping. At each end bay, the parapet is shaped to form a pediment. At the ends of each pediment, vertical terra cotta tiles connect the stringcourse and coping. At the peak, a terra cotta shield bears the letters "EJ." On either side of the shield are two square terra cotta tiles inset into the brick wall.

On the asymmetrical north elevation, above the roofline of the south building, six bays are evident on the upper two stories with centered window openings. The rightmost bay carries smaller windows corresponding to an elevator shaft, while the other bays carry the same window arrangement found in the large openings on the primary elevation. The terra cotta stringcourse and coping wrap around to terminate at the shaft that rises above the roofline to form a penthouse; clay tile coping is found along the rest of this elevation. At the left (east) end, a second penthouse is evident. The asymmetrical south elevation is divided into six bays (see photograph #4). The leftmost bay features offset window openings marking a stairwell; to its right are two bays of wider windows arranged like those on the primary elevation. The center of

the wall is blind, corresponding to an elevator shaft that rises above the roofline to form a penthouse; to the right of the center is one bay of openings bearing single windows and then two more bays of the wider openings. The terra cotta stringcourse and coping continue across this elevation and wrap around to the east elevation; here decorative tablets project between each bay at the top of the parapet. This elevation extends down to the true ground level; the first two floors' windows are filled in with smooth red brick.

The east elevation begins with a chamfered corner at the south featuring a large two-story open bay at the base (see photographs #5 and #6). That bay served as a rail loading dock, and its interior remains much the same although the extant tracks are no longer functional. Above the entrance are wide openings carrying groups of four windows; at the top is parapet decoration similar to the corners on the primary elevations. The rest of the elevation is divided into eleven bays. With the exception of a garage door and a doorway on the first floor, all of the openings on the first and second floors are infilled with brick although all window sashes remain. The leftmost (south) bay features openings bearing paired steel sash windows, while the bay to its right features narrow windows corresponding to a stairwell. To the right of the stairwell are eight bays of the wide openings bearing three windows like those on the primary elevation; the sixth and seventh bays have some variation on the first three levels including a roll-up door in an opening in the seventh bay. To the right of these bays is a stairwell bay featuring two doors and a window on each floor save the first, where there is a single door opening (now bearing a solid steel door). A cast iron fire escape system rises up this bay.

Interiors

South Building

The first floor of the south building is divided by solid clay tile and plaster partitions into three sections; the false mezzanine windows provide overhead light in tall-ceiling areas with exposed columns, joists and walls. The north section is an open storage area connected to the north building by a large opening. The center section is a large open storage area that was originally the loading area for the Columbia Transfer Company. The north end of this space features a raised storage room (raised to the height of a truck bed) separated by a wooden bead-board wall and wooden doors. The narrow south section is currently set up as a store space. A lobby at the northwest corner retains original wooden vestibule, window surrounds and an original cast-iron staircase to the second floor. To the east of this lobby is the store area, featuring plaster walls and a later suspended ceiling of acoustical tiles. Original wooden window casements are evident, as is an original wooden door separating the store from a small eastern room.

The second floor is an open area that was remodeled into a show room by Endicott-Johnson (see photograph #7). The floors are covered in composite tile. Cylindrical cast concrete columns and poured joists are exposed, as is the concrete underside of the roof and third floor slabs. Around

the north and west walls are smaller rooms separated by wood-framed partitions of plaster on metal lath. Among these rooms are restrooms, offices and storerooms. On the north wall are two openings connecting the south and north buildings; steel fire doors are overhead on both sides. The third floor consists entirely of two large cold-storage rooms that are accessed primarily through a connection to the north building (a stairway does connect the third floor to the second). The rooms have exposed concrete ceilings, plaster walls and brick partitions; their employment as cold storage facilities post-dates Endicott Johnson's use of the building.

North Building

The north building's interiors are mostly devoid of partitions (see photograph #8). The building's concrete structure is exposed, with cast lotus-head columns and poured floor slabs creating a raw interior character. Except for those that are missing or covered by exterior masonry, the steel sash windows are fully exposed inside. Two elevators and two stairwells are located on the north wall at each corner, with enclosures projecting into the room. Between these enclosures on some floors are wooden partitions creating offices and storerooms. On the east wall near the chamfered corner is another stairwell. On the south wall in the center is an elevator shaft and at the southwest corner is a vestibule leading to the exterior fire escape. Starting on the sixth floor near the north wall and terminating at the third floor is an original spiral chute used to move shoes between floors. Some other shoe conveying equipment remains, although it is largely incomplete. Overall, the interior spaces are raw and typical of a twentieth century wholesale warehouse. The character of the interior has changed little since construction.

Integrity

The buildings have received minor alterations typical for their use, and present a historic appearance consistently inside and outside. The most obvious exterior change has been infilling some windows, probably due to concerns for security or less need for natural light with modern electrical service. Alteration to the first floor of the south building's primary elevation changed window surrounds, added modern tile and perhaps removed a cornice. These changes did not disrupt fenestration or scale, and are largely reversible. The north building has had only infilling of windows for exterior alterations. Inside, the floors are open as they were historically; exposed structural elements and surviving industrial equipment convey historic character. Some floors have not been in use since Endicott-Johnson left the building. Overall, the two interconnected buildings retain integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship and association and reflect their historic appearance.

Summary

The Endicott-Johnson Shoe Distribution Plant at 1132 Spruce Street in St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the category of Industry. The building is locally significant as an important component of the historic landscape of the St. Louis shoe industry. This landscape is critically linked to the economic development of St. Louis, and is recognized by a growing list of shoe-related National Register properties in the city. [1] The Endicott-Johnson Distribution Plant is actually composed of two interconnected buildings, which were constructed in 1915 and 1923-24 respectively (Photos 1 and 2). The former building was designed by Frederick C. Bonsack and was originally constructed on behalf of the Columbia Transfer Company. This building was later incorporated into a larger facility, which was designed by the architectural partnership of Nolte & Nauman to house a distribution plant and sales room for the Endicott-Johnson Shoe Company (E-J). Endicott-Johnson was a major player in the American shoe business throughout the first half of the 20th century. Throughout much of that time they battled with St. Louis-based International Shoe and Brown Shoe for dominance of the U.S. market. The company opened its first modest office in St. Louis in 1907, but rapid growth among its competitors necessitated the implementation of an increasingly aggressive strategy; in 1925, they opened the major distribution plant on Spruce Street. This plant can be seen as a reaction to both the threat that E-J felt from the St. Louis companies, and to the opportunity it saw in the burgeoning Western markets. Significantly, it is the only facility the company ever constructed outside of its traditional home in New York and Pennsylvania, and was built specifically to contest St. Louis' attempted domination of the markets of the Midwest, West, and Upper South. As such, the building is not only important to the history of St. Louis, but is also representative of a crucial chapter in the history of this remarkable company. The period of significance (1925-1957) spans Endicott-Johnson's initial occupation of the buildings through the arbitrary 50 year cut-off.

Columbia Transfer Company

While the building (as it exists today) is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places based on its association with the E-J company, a portion of the building started off as a warehouse for the unrelated Columbia Transfer Company. Columbia Transfer appears for the first time in the St. Louis City Directory in 1898. Transfer Companies of this sort were responsible for the movement of freight between railroad cars and businesses, and vice versa. In 1902, the company hired Levi Wade Childress (a man who would come to dominate the business throughout the 20th century) as its traffic manager. Childress had extensive experience

[1] Among those currently listed on the National Register are the Brown Shoe Company's "Homes-Take Factory" [NR 10/20/80]; Brown Shoe's "Buster Brown Blue Ribbon Shoe Factory" [NR 1/26/05]; the Hamilton Brown Shoe Factory [NR 5/5/00]; Peters Shoe Company Building [NR 1/26/04]; as well as Roberts Johnson & Rand-International Shoe Company Building [NR 8/23/84].

working with freight having been employed by the St. Louis Drayage Company and later by the Illinois Central and Missouri-Kansas-Texas railroads. Childress quickly took over the company; by 1903 he was general manager and by 1905 he had assumed the position of president as well. The company appears to have thrived under his leadership.[2] A 1906 advertisement in a publication of The Business Man's League of St. Louis called *St. Louis Today*, shows the Company's new depot building (not the building at 1132 Spruce) at the southeast corner of 9th and Clark. The Columbia Transfer Company advertised as storage, transferring, and distributing agents for all railroads terminating in East St. Louis and claimed to have the "[l]owest insurance rates in the city." [3] Childress remained at the helm until being superceded by his son Fielding Turner Childress in the mid 1950s. The company was listed for the last time in the St. Louis City Directory in 1960.

It is unclear why the Columbia Transfer Company commissioned the building at the corner of 12th and Spruce. They began acquiring the land from a number of different owners in 1914, and construction was completed in 1915. The building was one of the last, if not the very last, designs executed by Frederick C. Bonsack. A contractor and later an architect of great local prominence, Bonsack died in 1917 shortly after the building was completed. As a contractor, he assumed complete control over the erection of the magnificent Bell Telephone Building [NR 8/5/99] in St. Louis, in addition to numerous warehouses, factories, and residences across the city and in neighboring Illinois. Later, he turned his attention from contracting to architecture. He designed a diversity of buildings, including the "Persian Pavilion" at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition, though much of his important commercial work fell victim to demolition or heavy alteration in the late 20th century. Among the more notable of these unfortunate buildings are Bonsack's Coliseum (demolished), The American Hotel and Theater (demolished), and the 16-story Pierce Building, whose bones are now part of the Adam's Mark Hotel.[4] Fortunately, much of Bonsack's residential work has survived; representative examples can be found at # 18 Kingsbury Place, 6300 Waterman, and 6632 McPherson. All of these properties contribute to St. Louis City Historic Districts. [5]

For the Columbia Transfer Company, Bonsack designed a restrained two-story building (with partial third floor) in the Classical Revival style. The flat-roofed building utilized common materials in warehouse construction: a framework and floors of concrete, durable steel-sash windows that combined fixed and hinged sashes, buff terra cotta, thin cement stucco, and red engineer brick on the formal elevations. The building's formal elevations on both 12th and

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[2] The St. Louis Republic, "Levi Wade Childress." *The Book of St. Louisans* (St. Louis: The St. Louis Republic, 1912), p. 118.
[3] Businessman's League of St. Louis, "Columbia Transfer Company's New Depot." *St. Louis Today* (St. Louis: Robert A. Reid and Company, 1906 [?]), p. 88.
[4] Landmarks Association of St. Louis Architect Files: F.C. Bonsack.
[5] Carolyn Hewes Toft, "Frederick C. Bonsack. (Architects Famous and Not So Famous, Part 7)." St. Louis: Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Landmarks Letter. 1985.

Spruce streets presented a unified appearance, with first floor, mezzanine and second floor clearly defined in the fenestration and continuous ornament on the parapet. However, the rear elevation showed that the building actually consisted of interconnected separate spaces: a large center opening on the first floor for loading; a storage area on the south end of the first floor and a narrow office bay at the north end; a mostly open-plan second floor, and a small third floor at the south end. The spaces were separated according to the functioning of a transfer company, but apparently the design was not too restrictive because its later adaptation by Endicott-Johnson preserved the spatial divisions.

The location that Columbia Transfer selected for Bonsack's design was prime for a railroad transfer company. The site was along the tracks near the main freight depot in the midst of the Mill Creek rail yards. Despite this, the company only operated out of the building for a brief period between 1920 and 1923 when they sold the facility to the Mercantile Trust Company. The building may have proved unsuitable for Columbia Transfer's needs, or might have been constructed as an investment. Before and after this time, they were located in various facilities on Washington Avenue, South Broadway, the corner of 9th and Clark, the 400 block of Clark, Poplar Street, North Broadway, and even East St. Louis, Illinois.[6] The closest their operations ever came again to the site of their Spruce Street building after 1923 was a depot that was irregularly listed in the city directories through 1946 one block to the east at 1100 Spruce.

At the same time that the Mercantile Trust Company acquired the Columbia Transfer building in 1923, they also acquired adjacent land that was owned by the Mississippi Valley Trust Company. Mercantile Trust was working on behalf of the Endicott-Johnson Shoe Company, which had hired it to assemble a property that could accommodate a large new distribution plant.

Overall, the Columbia Transfer Company (later the Columbia Terminal Company) was in operation from 1898 through 1960, though their association with (a portion) of the current building at 12th and Spruce was limited to its construction in 1915 and a brief period of occupation between 1920 and 1923.[7]

Elaboration: Endicott-Johnson, Origins and Labor-Relations

The Endicott-Johnson Shoe Company originated with the Lester Boot and Shoe Company of Binghamton, New York. Founded in 1854, the Lester Company was having financial difficulties by 1890 and a controlling interest in the company was sold to Henry Endicott of Massachusetts. Endicott undertook a major re-organization in 1892-93 and his financial assets, coupled with managerial skills, succeeded in salvaging the business. When George F. Johnson (the former assistant superintendent of the old Lester Brothers firm who had been retained by Endicott during the 1892 takeover) became a partner in 1899, the Endicott-Johnson Shoe Company was born.

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[6] St. Louis City Directories, 1898-1960; *Gould's Blue Book, Gould's St. Louis Directory.*
[7] Ibid.

Based in the New York factory towns of Binghamton, Johnson City and Endicott, the company was run by George F. Johnson, or "George F." as he was commonly known. George F. was a shrewd businessman, but he also had strong populist sentiments which made him a sympathetic and progressive capitalist in a time when many industries were dominated by exploitative "robber barons." Johnson publicly regarded the company as a family, and himself as its father. He once wrote "[a]s I go among my...neighbors, I am their 'father'—even some of the older men and women, older than myself. They look to me for everything they lack or think they need, to make life happy...." [8] This attitude was a direct reflection of the early 20th century progressive movement which, for a diversity of reasons, sought to improve the moral, economic, and physical well-being of the working classes.

While Johnson's concern for workers was apparently genuine, the benefits he gave to his employees were equally calculated to maintain the health and profitability of his company. Johnson operated under the theory that workers who derived comfortable lives from the beneficence of the company would be loyal and impervious to the influence of labor unions. As the labor movement became more unruly, and World War One created a shortage of manpower on the home front, Endicott-Johnson increased both financial and social benefits for its workers. By the end of the war, employees were paid better than the national average (for shoe workers), and the company was providing a wide array of services including free legal advice; medical care; subsidized food markets; subsidized housing; inexpensive company bakeries; cafeterias; sports teams; recreational facilities such as gymnasiums, parks, and carousels; and of course, free shoes.[9]

While these benefits succeeded in making some aspects of life better for employees and maintaining a loyal workforce for the company, Endicott-Johnson had created an industrial juggernaut that infiltrated nearly every aspect of its employee's lives. Even two of the three towns that were dominated by the company were respectively named Endicott and Johnson City. A cult of personality was deliberately fostered by the company. George F. constantly wrote letters and manifestos to his employees and personally toured each of his factories every year. He made a point of learning individual names, and purposely cultivated a reputation for generosity. In response (with support from the company) towns held parades to celebrate George F's birthday, and erected triumphal arches in his honor.[10] Interestingly, George Zahavi, an authority on Endicott-Johnson, asserts:

> "E-J managers never disguised that their labor policies were designed to maintain worker docility, and to retain managerial control over the workforce. They merely asserted that liberal

[8] Gerald Zahavi, *Workers, Managers, and Welfare Capitalism : the shoe workers and tanners of Endicott-Johnson, 1890-1950*. Champagne: University of Illinois Press, 1988:44-45.
[9] Ibid., p. 44
[10] Ibid.

> welfare policies were a far more effective means of control than was repression."[11]

This paternalistic strategy was in stark contrast with the practices of many St. Louis competitors like Brown Shoe (BSCO) and International Shoe (ISCO). These companies essentially kept themselves in cheap labor (and suppressed unionization) by creating dependence, fear, and fierce competition for work among the disenfranchised poor.

When labor started violently clamoring for better wages and working conditions in the early 20th century, large St. Louis shoe companies like BSCO and ISCO began relocating their factories to depressed rural areas where people were desperate for work. In many cases, towns actually financed the construction of a factory, or paid some other bonus to the company to attract the jobs.[12] In many cases, the factories became so important to the economies of small towns that elected officials and law enforcement officers were known to actively persecute union representatives who attempted to visit. This rural industrial system was made more exploitative by the fact that companies often kept their facilities from working at full capacity. This practice ensured that they could exert coercive control by moving (or threatening to move) production away from any laborers that became troublesome. While factory workers and entire towns would be devastated by the loss of production, the companies remained unaffected because their supply chain was built to easily absorb shifting demands. Furthermore, ISCO and BSCO alike were notorious for the sweat-shop conditions of its early 20th century factories and their use of child labor. In addition, Brown developed a deserved reputation for its employment of spies and thugs.[13] Throughout the first three decades of the 20th century, these companies were in constant conflict with workers and labor organizations over what today would be considered highly illegal and unethical practices.[14]

A graphic example of the philosophical differences between George F. Johnson (of E-J) and Oscar Johnson (one of the organizers of ISCO) can be found in their own words. A colleague of Oscar Johnson once recalled that to Johnson labor was simply "a commodity...he would purchase it at as low price as possible."[15] Conversely, in a 1937 letter addressed to "the workers," of Endicott-Johnson, George F. Johnson condemned a "time when labor was a commodity and capital bought it in the lowest market, as if it were hides, leather, or raw cotton." That system exploited workers, Johnson said, by paying "...not what labor was honestly worth..." but "...what labor could be purchased for...." [16]

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[11] Ibid., p. 105

[12] Rosemary Feurer, "Shoe City, Factory Towns: St. Louis Shoe Companies and the Turbulent Drive for Cheap Rural Labor, 1900-1940." *Gateway Heritage Volume 9, Number 2. Fall.* St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society, 1988.

[13] Ibid., p. 6-13.

[14] Ibid., p. 13.

[15] Ibid., p. 4.

[16] Letter from George F. Johnson, reprinted in: *Partners All: A Pictorial Narrative of an Industrial Democracy.* New York: Endicott-Johnson Corporation, 1938.

Endicott-Johnson remains a fascinating example of the influence of the progressive movement on the relations between labor and capital in the first half of the 20th century. The success of their policies can be measured through their ability to survive and grow through an historical period which saw violent labor unrest, World War I, the depressions of the 1920's, the Great Depression, and the labor shortages of World War II. In addition, their foresight and aggressiveness with regard to the rise of the St. Louis shoe companies enabled them to maintain a prominent position in the industry despite a general marginalization of other Eastern competitors in the first half of the 20th century.

Endicott-Johnson in St. Louis: 1907-1971

Endicott-Johnson came to St. Louis in 1907 in an effort to compete more efficiently with the growing St. Louis shoe industry. They also desired a greater share of the expanding market in the center of the country. In the early 20th century, St. Louis, the Midwest, and the Upper South in general were large and highly lucrative markets for manufactured goods of all kinds. Traditionally, the shoe market in the region was supplied by jobbers who imported and distributed shoes from the early production centers in the Northeast. Endicott-Johnson, an Eastern company, was interested in getting closer to this pool of consumers and in exploiting the advantages St. Louis possessed in terms of geography and transportation.

As the St. Louis shoe industry expanded, the role of the Eastern jobber decreased. This situation left Eastern shoe companies with the choice between abandoning a huge portion of their market share, or adapting and fighting back with new strategies. From the late 1870's through the middle of the 20th century, the St. Louis shoe industry grew exponentially until, by the 1940's, two of the three largest shoe companies in the country were based there.[17] Between the late 1870's and the 1910's, the major players in the market came into being including Hamilton Brown; Brown; Johnson, Stevens & Shinkle; Roberts, Johnson & Rand; Pedigo-Weber; Johansen Brothers; Peters; International Shoe, and others. In response, Endicott-Johnson, an extremely successful and savvy company, decided to carve out a place for themselves in closer proximity to their competitors. By opening shop at the center of the market in St. Louis, they ensured equal access to consumers. In addition, their presence was a constant reminder to their rivals that they would not be out-done by upstart Westerners.

Endicott-Johnson's concern over the increasing power of the St. Louis companies at the time of their relocation can be inferred by association from the thoughts of another shoe manufacturer in Lynn, Massachusetts from 1906. At the time, Lynn was one of the major manufacturing centers in the Northeast, and Massachusetts was the greatest shoe producing state in the union. If Lynn was concerned, it can be certain that E-J was as well. The Lynn representative wrote:

> The growing competition between east and west lately has been

[17] Maxine Faye Fendelman, "St. Louis Shoe Manufacturing" (M.A. thesis, Washington University, 1947), p. 75.

> much discussed....There is undoubtedly an opinion among Lynn firms that hustling Westerners are taking orders that our Lynn manufacturers ought to get....Lynn needs to strengthen the selling end of the business. It already beats any other shoe center in the country in making shoes, but it does not put enough energy into selling its goods....I do not believe that any Lynn manufacturer today is employing more than 25 salesmen.[18]

The quote then goes on to compare Lynn unfavorably with the well-developed sales forces of R. J. Rand, and Hamilton Brown (of St. Louis). This statement clearly states some of the problems, and the solutions, that were on the minds of many of the dominant Eastern shoe manufacturers in 1906. In 1907, Endicott-Johnson opened its St. Louis sales office.

The St. Louis shoe industry arose at the end of the 19th century when the factory system was changing the trade from one based on skilled workers, to one largely dependent on unskilled factory labor. In the late 19th century, shoes were primarily imported to the St. Louis market from the factory towns of New England and New York (the predecessors of Endicott-Johnson). Until the 1880's, the factory system in the East was such that Western importers or "jobbers" could bring in large quantities of shoes and still undercut the prices of local craftsmen. The factories of the Northeast were universally regarded as the premier shoemaking facilities. Rosemary Feurer notes in her article "Shoe City, Factory Towns," the deference for the Eastern factory system in the Midwest in the late 19th century was such that when George Warren Brown started Brown Shoe in 1878, he brought highly skilled workers from Rochester, New York to St. Louis to form the core of his company. [19] Gradually, as the production system became increasingly reliant on non-skilled assembly-line techniques, the availability of low-wage labor (an abundant resource in the Midwest) became the primary consideration of shoe companies. The factory system and the practice of farming out production to rural factory towns, enabled St. Louis' upstart shoe factories to successfully challenge the primacy of Eastern companies by the first decades of the 20th century.

Though they never set up manufacturing capacity in St. Louis, Endicott-Johnson began an increasingly vigorous infiltration of the market in 1907. Though probably coincidence, this was the year of the first major shoe worker strike in the city. Jumping directly into the breach, E-J opened an office at 1412 Washington Avenue in the heart of the St. Louis wholesale district where several shoe companies were already headquartered. The office was a jobber facility where St. Louis-based company salesmen took wholesale orders for E-J shoes. These shoes were then brought in by rail and delivered to retail establishments. The reasons why Endicott-Johnson never set up a manufacturing facility in the Midwest probably include powerful resistance from local shoe manufacturers, as well as the difficulty inherent in transplanting their entire system of

[18] Herbert J.Vogt, "Boot and Shoe Industry of St. Louis" (M.A. thesis, Washington University, 1929), p. 82.
[19] Feurer, p.3.

company towns and worker amenities to a new locale.

During World War I, Endicott-Johnson won a lucrative contract to supply almost all the shoes for the United States Army resulting in wartime growth. Furthermore, during the war, American shoe companies were contracted to make service boots for Allied armies. Because of disruptions in shipping across the Atlantic, many materials were routed through the Pacific via Russian ports, meaning increased rail-traffic through St. Louis and an advantage for shoe companies that were already established there. [20] Endicott-Johnson, and St. Louis-based International Shoe, used their wartime stability to dominate the American shoe market. By 1923, the year Endicott-Johnson initiated a major expansion in St. Louis, ISCO was the largest shoe company in the United States; E-J was the second largest.[21]

That year, Endicott-Johnson took over a five-story, 125,000 square foot building at 2204 North Broadway as a temporary distribution facility. At the same time, they retained the Mercantile Trust Company to assemble property for a new permanent distribution plant. The opening of the temporary facility was published with great fanfare and an eye-catching graphic in a St. Louis Chamber of Commerce publication entitled *Greater St. Louis* in September, 1923.[22] This "article" was a thinly veiled advertisement aimed at raising the company's profile in preparation for the upcoming opening of their larger, costlier, and permanent facility at what is now 1132 Spruce Street. The new facility was established with the sole purpose of taking a more significant and efficient role in the trans-Mississippi trade. In a nod to the clannishness of St. Louis society, the company noted that it had joined the city's manufacturing association, and insisted that it planned "to identify...with St. Louis thoroughly, both through employing residents of [the] city and through purchase here of all equipment and materials for the St. Louis [Distribution] Plant."[23]

The Mercantile Trust Company assembled an excellent parcel of land for Endicott-Johnson within the Mill Creek Industrial District. The site was ideally situated along the tracks of multiple railroads and even had a right of way for a designated spur-line to run directly into the building. The property consisted of the Columbia Transfer Company's barely-used building at 12th and Spruce in addition to several parcels of land to the south on which an adjoining warehouse space was to be built. An indication of E-J's commitment to St. Louis and the western markets can be found in the fact that the building they constructed on the site had 275,000 square feet of floor space and cost approximately $1 million to complete.[24] This is remarkable considering that the

[20] Vogt, p. 17.
[21] Fendelman, p. 79-80.
[22] St. Louis Chamber of Commerce, "Building and Industrial Developments; Endicott Johnson Corporation Now Operating from New St. Louis Distributing House." *Greater St. Louis* (St. Louis: St. Louis Chamber of Commerce, 1923), p.9.
[23] Ibid., p. 9.
[24] Ibid., p. 9.

company had been suffering from a national economic depression at the time, and had been forced to cut employee wages and benefits. The loyalty E-J had so carefully cultivated among its workers paid dividends at this point, and the company was still taking in net profits between $3 million and $5 million (a significant sum, but a steep reduction from earlier years).[25] Somewhere between one third and one fifth of their annual profit was deemed a necessary expense for a Midwestern facility, and the St. Louis architectural partnership of Nolte & Nauman was engaged to design the new building. These architects were quite prolific and created many iconic St. Louis buildings including the Lambskin Temple (NR 8/12/87) and some of the grand homes in the Parkview Historic District (NR 3/14/86), the Holly Place Historic District (NR pending 3/07), and Waterman Place (a City Historic District). They also designed buildings in the Delmar Loop Historic District (NR 2/16/84) as well as upscale neighborhoods in Clayton, University City, and the Compton Heights Certified Local District (1/29/82).[26]

Nolte and Nauman's Commercial Style design for the new building was in contrast to the former Columbia Transfer Company building to the south and illustrated ongoing changes in warehouse design. The six-story, flat-roofed building was even more barren of ornament than its neighbor; its design was rather functional in its stark articulation of pier spacing, floor height and placement of stairwells and elevators. Terra cotta ornament was sparse, appearing only at the parapet and building entrance with geometric designs rather than classical patterns. The windows were standard multi-pane steel sash windows that made no attempt to mask the building's use. Structurally, the building utilized the newer lotus-shaped cast concrete columns rather than the plain cylinders its neighbor used; the lotus-head columns provided greater resistance to floor loads and allowed for higher dead loading. The building adapted to the demands of its site. To accommodate the elevation of 12th street on the west (primary elevation), the building's main entrance was on the third floor and its primary elevation appeared to be four stories. On the south and east sides, where the street level was at ground level, the building showed its full six-story height. To accommodate a curving rail spur, the southeast corner of the building is chamfered; that same corner also utilized the spur with a two-story-high open bay for railcar loading.

Endicott-Johnson moved into its new building in 1925, and long time manager Roger E. Lord remained in control of the greatly expanded operation. The 1923 article which advertised the upcoming completion of the building stated that "the future organization, as now contemplated, will require about 250..." employees.[27] Though the exact number of employees E-J actually hired to staff the new plant was not determined, the projected increase was more than fourfold over the 60 workers it employed when the article was written. While the corporate office at 1412 Washington Avenue was retained until 1928, between 1925 and 1926 the sales room and warehouse opened in the new building at 412 South 12th Street. Additionally, a shipping

[25] Zahavi, p. 131.
[26] Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Architects Files: Nolte & Nauman.
[27] St. Louis Chamber of Commerce, p. 5.

department was opened in the same building at 1132 Spruce.

Endicott-Johnson weathered the Depression and earned great respect among its workers for continuing many social programs throughout the economic turmoil. Though some cuts had to be made, E-J's creativity enabled it to continue to provide critical core benefits, which it supplemented with inexpensive, but important, assistance. For example, the company periodically distributed free food and fuel, reduced the mortgage payments on company housing, and encouraged employees to plant vegetable gardens through aid programs which included providing a free plowing and harrowing service. Though the size of the workforce was reduced, historian Gerald Zahavi asserts that those who were able to keep their jobs with the company "were largely insulated from the Depression."[28]

The difficulties caused by the Depression appear to have somewhat reduced activity at the St. Louis Distribution Plant. One indicator of this is that the Browning Arms Company took over a portion of the offices formerly occupied by Endicott-Johnson in the building (1132 Spruce) in 1931. Another subtle indicator is the fact that in the years leading up to the stock market crash, the company had been taking out increasingly large advertisements in the St. Louis City Business Directories. Through the 1920's, E-J advertised with a larger-than-average, bold typeface. In 1928 and 1929, they even took out prominent display adds along with competitors like Hamilton Brown as well as Johnson, Stephens & Shinkle (Figure 1). This practice abruptly ended in 1930.

By 1935, the company began to recover from the worst of the Depression, and in 1936, Browning left the Spruce Street office and Endicott-Johnson returned. From then on, 1132 Spruce was E-J's only address in the city. During World War II, the company once again supplied the United States Army with footwear, a contract which brought them out of the economic doldrums of the Depression years. The Korean War also was a boon to the company's coffers, though their focus on work shoes and heavy boots hurt their ability to capitalize on the lucrative market for stylish women's shoes. This capricious market had been growing since the post-World War I era, and had come to dominate the industry by the end of World War II.[29] In the post-World War II period, the company experienced a series of "boom and bust" cycles, though the general trend was downward. The office at 1132 Spruce remained Endicott-Johnson's address during a long period of decline. In 1957, outside management was brought in, and the Johnson family ceased to run the business. Endicott-Johnson Shoe Company was listed at the Spruce Street address for the last time in 1971. The company closed the last of its footwear factories in New York in 1998, and in 2004 was acquired by Rocky's Shoes and Boots.

Conclusion

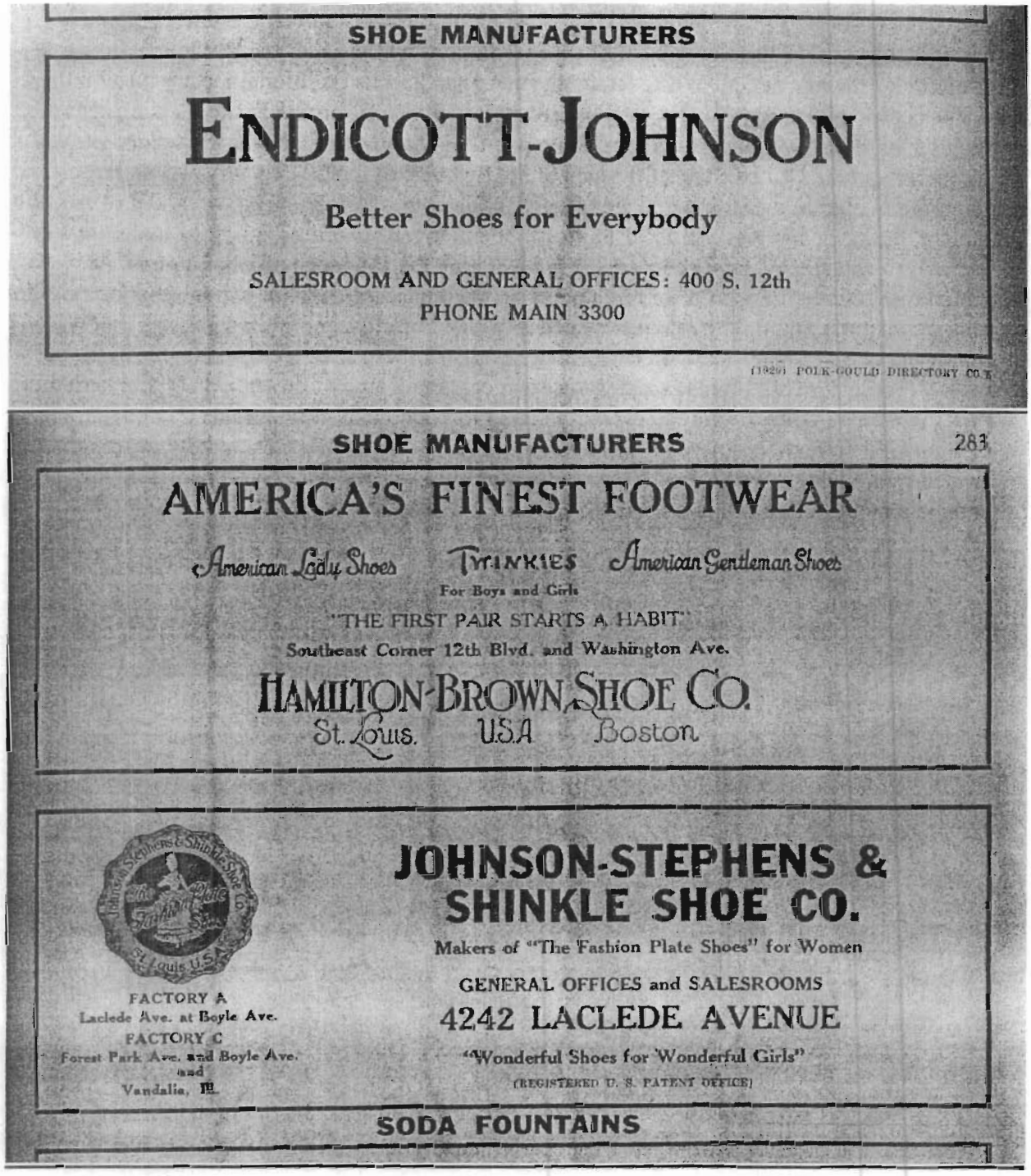
The Endicott-Johnson St. Louis Shoe Distribution Plant represents the efforts of the New York-

[28] Zahavi, p. 142.
[29] Fendelman, p. 49.

based firm to react to major changes in the American shoe industry in the early 20th century. By the first decade of the 20th century, the company could no longer ignore the growing importance of the St. Louis shoe industry and the Trans-Mississippi market. As other Eastern companies watched the aggressive and flexible St. Louis corporations assume increasing control, Endicott-Johnson took effective action. While retaining and expanding its traditional factory base in the East, it succeeded in gaining access to Western markets and confronting St. Louis competitors through its far-flung, yet powerful, distribution plant. Endicott-Johnson was the second largest shoe company in the United States for much of the first half of the 20th century and an important player in the evolution of American labor relations. Famous for its progressive model of welfare capitalism, the company was a pioneer in its use of employee benefit programs to foster loyalty and employee well-being, while consequently frustrating the influence of labor unions. A testament to Endicott-Johnson's abiding impact on the landscape of labor-capital relations can be found in the list of extant public facilities such as parks, libraries, and even carousels that were originally provided for the use of their workers; several of these sites are listed on the National Register.[30] Today, the building at 1132 Spruce Street is in an area of downtown St. Louis that is undergoing a renaissance. With the ever-expanding loft and condominium market consuming vast amounts of former commercial space in the Central Business District, and the development associated with the new Busch Stadium and the adjacent Cupples Warehouse complex, the building is an excellent candidate for rehabilitation and adaptive re-use.

[30] "Endicott-Johnson Square Deal Arch" [NR 2/23/01]; "Johnson City Square Deal Arch" [NR 2/16/01]; "Fred C. Johnson Park Carousel" [NR1/25/92]; George F. Johnson Recreational Park Carousel" [NR 1/25/92]; George W. Johnson Park Carousel" [NR 1/25/92]; and the "Endicott Estate" [NR3 3/06/02].

Figure 1: Polk-Gould St. Louis Directory, 1929



SHOE MANUFACTURERS

ENDICOTT-JOHNSON

Better Shoes for Everybody

SALESROOM AND GENERAL OFFICES: 400 S. 12th
PHONE MAIN 3300

(1929) POLK-GOULD DIRECTORY CO.'S

SHOE MANUFACTURERS 283

AMERICA'S FINEST FOOTWEAR

American Lady Shoes — Trinkies For Boys and Girls — American Gentleman Shoes

"THE FIRST PAIR STARTS A HABIT"

Southeast Corner 12th Blvd. and Washington Ave.

HAMILTON-BROWN SHOE CO.

St. Louis. U.S.A. Boston

JOHNSON-STEPHENS & SHINKLE SHOE CO.

Makers of "The Fashion Plate Shoes" for Women

GENERAL OFFICES and SALESROOMS
4242 LACLEDE AVENUE

"Wonderful Shoes for Wonderful Girls"
(REGISTERED U. S. PATENT OFFICE)

FACTORY A
Laclede Ave. at Boyle Ave.
FACTORY C
Forest Park Ave. and Boyle Ave.
and
Vandalia, Ill.

SODA FOUNTAINS

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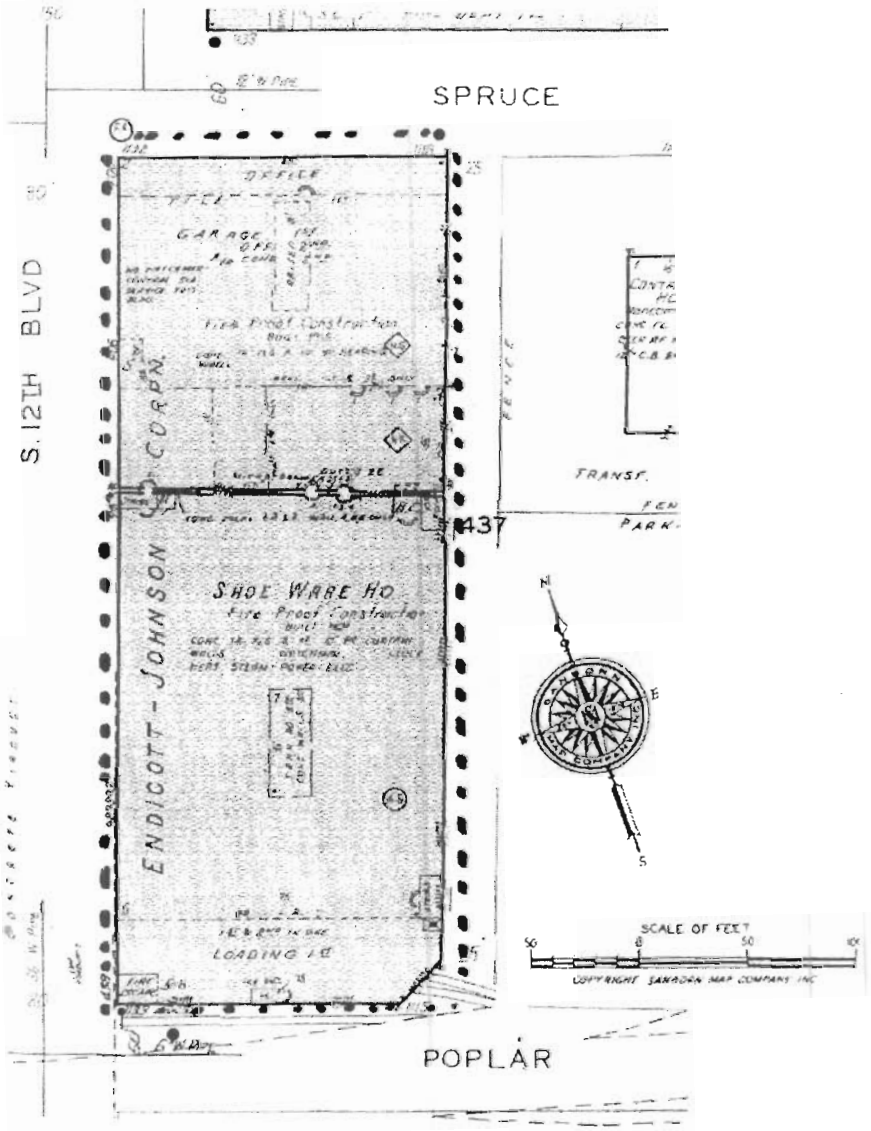
Boundary Description

The Endicott Johnson Shoe Distribution Plant occupies the western half of St. Louis City Block number 437. The building spans the block from Spruce Street on the north, to what used to be Poplar on the south. The southern edge of the building now borders surface parking lots underneath an elevated section of Highway 64/40. To the east, the building is bounded by an unnamed alley. To the west, the building is bounded by South Tucker Boulevard (aka 12th Street), a major north-south thoroughfare. The boundary of the nominated parcel is indicated with a broken line on the accompanying map entitled "Endicott Johnson Distribution Plant." (Section 10, Page 20)

Boundary Justification

The boundary is the same as the parcel property line.

Endicott-Johnson Shoe Distribution Plant.
Source: Sanborn Map Company. Volume 1 East, Plate 57, 1968

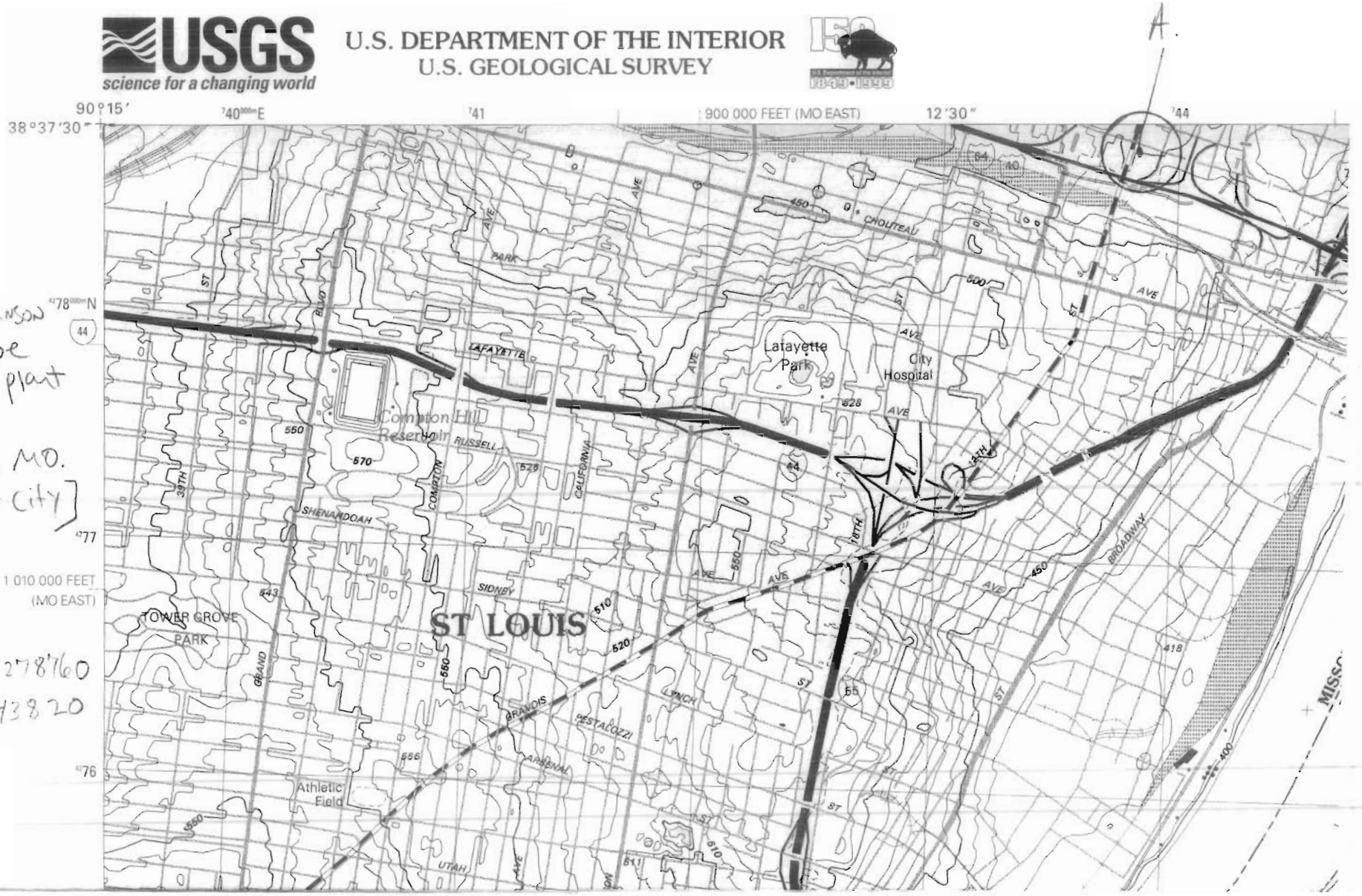


Unless otherwise indicated, the following is true for all photographs submitted with this nomination:

Endicott-Johnson St. Louis Shoe Distribution Plant
1132 Spruce Street
St. Louis [Independent City], MO
Photographer: Michael Allen
Date: April 2007
Negatives on file at: Landmarks Association of St. Louis.

The descriptions of each photograph number are:

1. Looking southeast at the south building.
2. Looking southeast at the north building.
3. Main entrance, north building.
4. Looking northeast at the south elevation of north building.
5. View of chamfered corner on rear elevation of north building.
6. View southwest showing rear elevations of both buildings.
7. Typical upper floor in north building.
8. Second floor in south building.



Endicott Johnson
St Louis Shoe
Distribution plant

St. Louis, MO.
[Independent City]
Zone 15.

A. Northing: 4278760
Easting: 743820


GLOBE DRUG STORE WAREHOUSE
FOR SALE
781-0001


ENDICOTT-JOHNSON SHOES


FOR SALE


TRAKIA