

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Liggett and Myers/Rice-Stix Building

and/or common Gateway Merchandise Mart

2. Location

street & number 1000 Washington Avenue \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town St. Louis \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of

state Missouri code 29 county City of St. Louis code 510

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name One Thousand Washington Avenue c/o Mr. Clifford E. Drozda III

street & number 1000 Washington Avenue

city, town St. Louis \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of state MO 63101

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Louis City Hall

street & number Tucker Boulevard at Market Street

city, town St. Louis, \_\_\_\_\_ state MO 63101

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title 1. Architectural Survey of the Central Business District has this property been determined eligible? \_\_\_\_\_ yes  no

date October 1975; revised April 1977, Feb. 1982 \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county  local

depository for survey records Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc.  
721 Olive Street, Room 1113

city, town St. Louis state MO 63101

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Liggett and Myers/  
Rice-Stix Building

Continuation sheet

Rice-Stix Building

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2. Landmark of the City of St. Louis  
November 1979  
Heritage & Urban Design Commission  
Room 416 City Hall  
St. Louis,

City/County

MO 63103

3. Missouri State Historical Survey  
November 1983  
Historic Preservation Program  
Missouri Department of Natural Resources  
P. O. Box 176  
Jefferson City,

State

MO 65102

## 7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Completed in 1889, the Liggett and Myers/Rice-Stix building is a seven-story commercial building constructed of red brick and trimmed with terra cotta. It occupies all of City Block 179 at the northern edge of St. Louis' business district.

The building fronts approximately 264 feet on Washington Avenue and St. Charles Street and 145 feet on Tenth and Eleventh Streets. Rising two stories from polished pink granite bases, quarry-faced pink granite piers define twelve bays on Washington Avenue and eight bays on Tenth and Eleventh Streets. Two tiers of arcaded central bays flanked by trabeated bays unify the facades on all but the rear elevation (Photos #1 and #3). Horizontal divisions are marked by a granite sill course at the second story and pink sandstone sill courses at the third and fourth stories; the attic story is set apart by a course of terra cotta foliate ornament. The building is crowned with a richly detailed terra cotta frieze and a copper cornice. (Photo #2) Slender cast iron mullions divide double-hung windows into triplets on the Washington Avenue facade and into halves in the central bays of the side elevations. Terra cotta ornament is employed extensively on the principal Washington Avenue elevation to accent architectural features including spandrels of seventh story arches, intrados and impostes of arches at the third story, second story window lintels in the central bays and cornice finials which mark divisions of the arcaded bays. (Third and sixth story window lintels of the corner bays on the three primary elevations may be either terra cotta or molded brick.) The attic story is embellished with colonettes with terra cotta capitals and molded brick lintels below flat arches (Photo #2). Bands of red sandstone define story divisions on the piers. The upper halves of ground floor storefronts appear to be wood framed.

On the rear elevation quarry-faced pink granite piers establish six major divisions in the two-story base while slender cast iron piers divide the base into twenty-four bays. Vertically proportioned double-hung windows are headed with segmental arches. Two bridges connect the building to annexes on the south side of St. Charles Street. Turn-of-the-century spiral and ladder fire escapes are installed on the rear and side elevations.

The interior features cast iron columns aligned with piers on the Washington Avenue elevation. Original decorative iron stairs are installed beside the three north/south brick partition walls.

A comparison of the exterior of the building today (Photos #1 and #2) with its appearance circa 1910 (Photo #3) reveals only minor alterations. All but two of the original ground floor entrances on Washington Avenue have been closed and several of the original six-light upper halves of the storefronts have been removed or concealed by paneling on the Washington Avenue and Eleventh Street elevations. The tops of the finials on the principal elevation are missing.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)	

Specific dates 1889

Builder/Architect Isaac S. Taylor, architect

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Liggett and Myers/Rice-Stix Building in St. Louis qualifies for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C, and is eligible under the following areas of significance: ARCHITECTURE: Completed in 1889 from plans drawn up by architect Isaac S. Taylor, the former Liggett and Myers/Rice-Stix Building is one of St. Louis' few remaining examples of early commercial buildings employing Richardsonian Romanesque forms. The bold articulation of the facades, unusual high quality of the brickwork and extensive use of finely detailed terra cotta ornament make it one of the masterpieces of nineteenth century St. Louis commercial design. The exterior has survived in a remarkably unaltered condition. COMMERCE/INDUSTRY: For nearly seven decades, the building served as corporate headquarters of St. Louis' leading dry goods firm, the Rice-Stix Company whose growth contributed to the city's position as an important wholesale distributing center for the West and South. Between 1890 and 1907, part of the building was also occupied for manufacturing and as sales office of the Brown Shoe Company -- a period of significant growth for St. Louis' first successful manufacturer of shoes.

At the time John E. Liggett and George S. Myers<sup>1</sup> purchased City Block 179 in 1886, modest one- and two-story wood houses filled the block bounded on the east and west by Tenth and Eleventh Streets and on the north and south by Washington Avenue and St. Charles Street. Standing between a declining residential area to the west and a developing mercantile wholesale district to the east, the block was a speculative purchase by investors who correctly anticipated the redevelopment of Washington Avenue west of Tenth Street as the hub of the city's wholesale and light manufacturing district. In fact, a few years earlier, Liggett and Myers had relocated their own company to 13th and St. Charles where they constructed new tobacco factories and offices which occupied over half a city block. Within a year after their purchase of City Block 179, the pace had quickened for Washington Avenue property and it was reported that Liggett and Myers refused a \$100,000 bonus for the land.<sup>2</sup> By 1887, new buildings were filling the south side of Washington Avenue all the way to Tenth Street and, on the north side of the avenue between Ninth and Eleventh Streets, St. Louis University's campus awaited commercial redevelopment following the removal of the school to its new site in 1888.

The increased realty and building activity on Washington Avenue in the 1880s was a result of the city's post-Civil War prosperity greatly aided by the completion in 1874 of Eads Bridge at the foot of Washington Avenue which spurred railroad construction west of the Mississippi River bringing St. Louis merchants

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new trade territories in the South and West. By 1889, St. Louis was second only to New York City in wholesaling and the rapid growth of local wholesale firms required larger and larger quarters. Many of the new buildings were constructed by speculators who were meeting market demands for more space and modern facilities. While part of this general surge of building activity, the Liggett and Myers block was nonetheless singled out by contemporaries as clearly the most ambitious and significant undertaking of the time:

No monument of St. Louis' prosperity has been or will be erected in 1889, so massive and grand as the structure which occupies the entire block between Tenth and Eleventh, and Washington and St. Charles Street. No one building in the city compares in size and ground space to this, and the change in two years from the unsightly pile of tumble down shanties that once occupied the site to this magnificent structure is a wonderful evidence of St. Louis' building progress.<sup>3</sup>

The \$900,000 projected cost of the structure supported the claim that the "wealthy proprietors have been unsparing of money in order to make of their block one rarely equaled for utility and grandeur"<sup>4</sup> -- an attitude in sharp contrast to many clients of Chicago School architects.

Liggett and Myers' building was one of a group of new structures which were setting new design standards for St. Louis commercial architecture and attracting considerable notice from local critics. Designed perhaps as early as 1887 by St. Louis architect Isaac S. Taylor (1851-1917), the building was under construction by 1888 when it was published in Commercial and Architectural St. Louis. The author of that book observed:

The straight flat fronts of brick work with square openings and stone lintels, and the vast facades of cut stone pierced with tiers of narrow openings, crowned with heavy projecting cornices, that were considered fine a few years ago, are rapidly giving way to massive commercial structures of imposing architecture. . . in bold, heavy outlines with carved ornamentations, . . . and lighted through shapely, well-proportioned, polished plate-glass windows, set deep back into the walls, giving a rich and solid effect.<sup>5</sup>

The building in fact was among the city's earliest commercial designs to depart from a Renaissance Italianate mode (still popular in St. Louis in the mid-1880s) and experiment with Richardsonian Romanesque Revival forms. One of Isaac Taylor's first major commissions after early training and then partnership with pre-eminent nineteenth century St. Louis architect George I. Barnett, the building undoubtedly secured his reputation as a leading architect in the city. In the next few years, Taylor designed a number of other important commercial buildings in the Romanesque mode; all but one have been demolished.

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Interpreting new design concepts in an individual manner, Taylor boldly articulated the Liggett and Myers building's massive facades with two tiers of arcaded stories flanked with trabeated bays and effectively integrated lavish terra cotta ornament (along with molded brick detailing) in the spirit of Chicago architect John Wellborn Root's Rookery. Taylor's extensive use of terra cotta embellishment is also noteworthy as a prominent early demonstration in St. Louis of the material's artistic possibilities.

The architect's attention to the structural and functional aspects of design were also applauded by his contemporaries. The solid masonry construction, "entirely fireproof," featured a two-story base of pink Missouri Syenite granite and upper stories of red St. Louis Hydraulic-Press brick "including those of diverse form" made especially for the building. Enormous windows nearly three times the width of the piers admitted abundant light on the Washington Avenue facade and corner bays of the side elevations. Steel floor beams were covered with seven inches of yellow pine topped with dressed maple one-inch thick. Cast iron interior columns encased in hollow tile were manufactured locally by the Pullis Brothers whose work for the building was reported to be the largest contract for architectural iron ever awarded in the city. St. Louis-made plate glass, "not excelled in clearness and strength by the best French made," was installed in all windows and doors. Steam heated, the building employed gas lights and included "numerous elevators and laboratories."<sup>7</sup>

The interior plan, arranged so the building could be occupied by multiple tenants or the "entire structure thrown into one magnificent establishment as occasion demands,"<sup>8</sup> proved to be well-adapted to the building's subsequent use. When the block was completed in 1889, the eastern half was leased to the Rice-Stix Dry Goods Co.; by 1891, Schwab Clothing Co. and Brown-Desnoyers Shoe Co. were located in the western end. All three wholesale firms previously occupied buildings east of Ninth Street which had become too small for their rapidly expanding business. Founded in 1878 with only \$12,000 capital, hand tools and five shoe workers, Brown-Desnoyer grew from sales of \$110,000 the first year to over a million dollars in 1891, becoming St. Louis' first successful shoe manufacturer.<sup>9</sup> Their former six-story office and warehouse space fronting thirty feet in the 800 block of Washington Avenue was more than tripled when they moved into the Liggett and Myers block (half of which they used for manufacturing and the remainder for sales). Both Schwab Clothing and Rice-Stix (established in 1861) had moved to St. Louis from Memphis in 1879 after repeated yellow fever epidemics paralyzed business there. Rice-Stix moved from a five-story building (measuring 100 by 110 feet) at Fifth and St. Charles to the spacious seven-story Liggett and Myers building, greatly increasing their footage.

The dramatic growth of the Rice-Stix Company and its eventual expansion, by 1907, into the entire Liggett and Myers block are graphic indicators of St. Louis' rise in dry goods wholesaling and manufacturing. By 1889, in addition to their wholesale jobbing, Rice-Stix began manufacturing shirts, pants and overalls which

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catered to the taste and needs of the Western and Southwestern markets. A decade later, in 1899, the firm was incorporated at \$2 million and acquired the space vacated when Schwab Clothing moved to larger quarters. By 1903, Rice-Stix was one of the city's three leading dry goods wholesalers and their capital stock had increased to \$4 million.<sup>10</sup>

When, in 1907, Brown Shoe (already one of the nation's largest shoe companies) moved into their new building at 17th and Washington (demolished), Rice-Stix took over all of the Liggett and Myers building -- thereafter known as the Rice-Stix building. At that time, Rice-Stix employed 175 traveling salesmen, operated three factories with 600 workers and leased a seven-story warehouse in the Cupples Station district.<sup>11</sup> In the next few years, their growth required the construction of ten- and eleven-story annexes on St. Charles Street which were joined by tunnels and bridges to their headquarters in the Washington Avenue building. At the time Rice-Stix renovated all seven floors of salesrooms in 1940, the company operated twelve factories located in St. Louis, Arkansas, Illinois and out-state Missouri; their fourteen branch offices and salesrooms reached from coast to coast in addition to Mexico, South America, Hawaii and Cuba.<sup>12</sup>

By the late 1950s, when Rice-Stix vacated their Washington Avenue building, the heyday of the avenue as a thriving center of the city's wholesale business had passed. New owners acquired the Rice-Stix building from the Liggett estate and reopened it as the Gateway Merchandise Mart. Renewed interest in the future of Washington Avenue has brought about the recent transfer of several under-utilized buildings in the area including the Rice-Stix building whose new owners are proposing adaptive reuse of the historic structure as offices and retail space. It is hoped by all that renovation of the building will help generate the preservation of one of downtown St. Louis' densest concentrations of monumental commercial warehouse buildings.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Liggett purchased the east half of the block and Myers the west half. Their partnership was created in 1873, although both men previously had been involved in the manufacture of tobacco. By the time the Washington Avenue building was completed, the Liggett & Myer Tobacco Co. was the largest manufacturer of plug tobacco in the world and shortly afterwards, both men were included in the New York Tribune list of millionaires.

<sup>2</sup>St. Louis Republican, 11 May 1887.

<sup>3</sup>The Spectator, 24 August 1889, p. 858.

<sup>4</sup>M. M. Yeakle, The City of St. Louis Today (St. Louis: J. Osmon Yeakle & Co., 1889), p. 149.

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<sup>5</sup>Commercial and Architectural St. Louis (St. Louis: Jones and Orear, 1888), p. 178.

<sup>6</sup>Taylor's major later work included commercial designs in St. Louis, Chicago, Arkansas and Texas as well as public buildings in St. Louis. His late 1890s design for the Liggett & Myers Tobacco Co. complex near Tower Grove and Park Avenues was an important industrial commission. He is well known locally for his positions as Chairman of the Commission of Architects and Director in Chief of Construction and Maintenance of the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition.

<sup>7</sup>The Spectator, p. 858; Yeakle, p. 149; Commercial and Architectural St. Louis, p. 178.

<sup>8</sup>Yeakle, p. 148.

<sup>9</sup>Brown Group, Inc., The First Hundred Years (St. Louis: Brown Group, Inc., 1978), pp. 1-10.

<sup>10</sup>St. Louis Star-Times, 14 May 1914.

<sup>11</sup>Rice-Stix Dry Goods Co., The Progress of a Progressive House (St. Louis: Rice-Stix Dry Goods Co., 1907), n.p.

<sup>12</sup>Rice-Stix Dry Goods Co., Talking It Up: The Story of 81 Years of Achievement (St. Louis: Rice-Stix Dry Goods Co., 1942), n.p.

Item number 11

Page 1

James M. Denny, Chief, Survey and Registration and  
State Contact Person  
Department of Natural Resources  
Historic Preservation Program  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City,

November 28, 1983  
314/751-4096

Missouri 65102



# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Granite City, IL/MO

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A	1 5	7 4 4 2 1 0	4 2 7 9 3 3 0
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

D			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

E			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

F			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

G			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

H			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Liggett and Myers/Rice-Stix Building occupies all of City Block 179, and fronts approximately 264 feet on Washington and St. Charles and 145 on Tenth and Eleventh.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By © 1983, Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc.

name/title Mary M. Stiritz, Research Associate

organization Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc. date 4 November 1983

street & number 721 Olive Street, Room 1113 telephone (314) 421-6474

city or town St. Louis, state MO 63101

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Director and State Historic Preservation Officer,  
title Department of Natural Resources

date 12/12/83

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Item #9, Bibliography

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Talking It Up: The Story of 81 Years of Achievement. St. Louis: Rice-Stix Dry Goods Co., 1942.

St. Louis Republican, 11 May 1887.

St. Louis Star-Times, 14 May 1914.

The Spectator, 24 August 1889.

Yeakle, M. M. The City of St. Louis Today. St. Louis: J. Osmun Yeakle & Co., 1889.

**LIGGETT AND MYERS/RICE-STIX BLDG.**

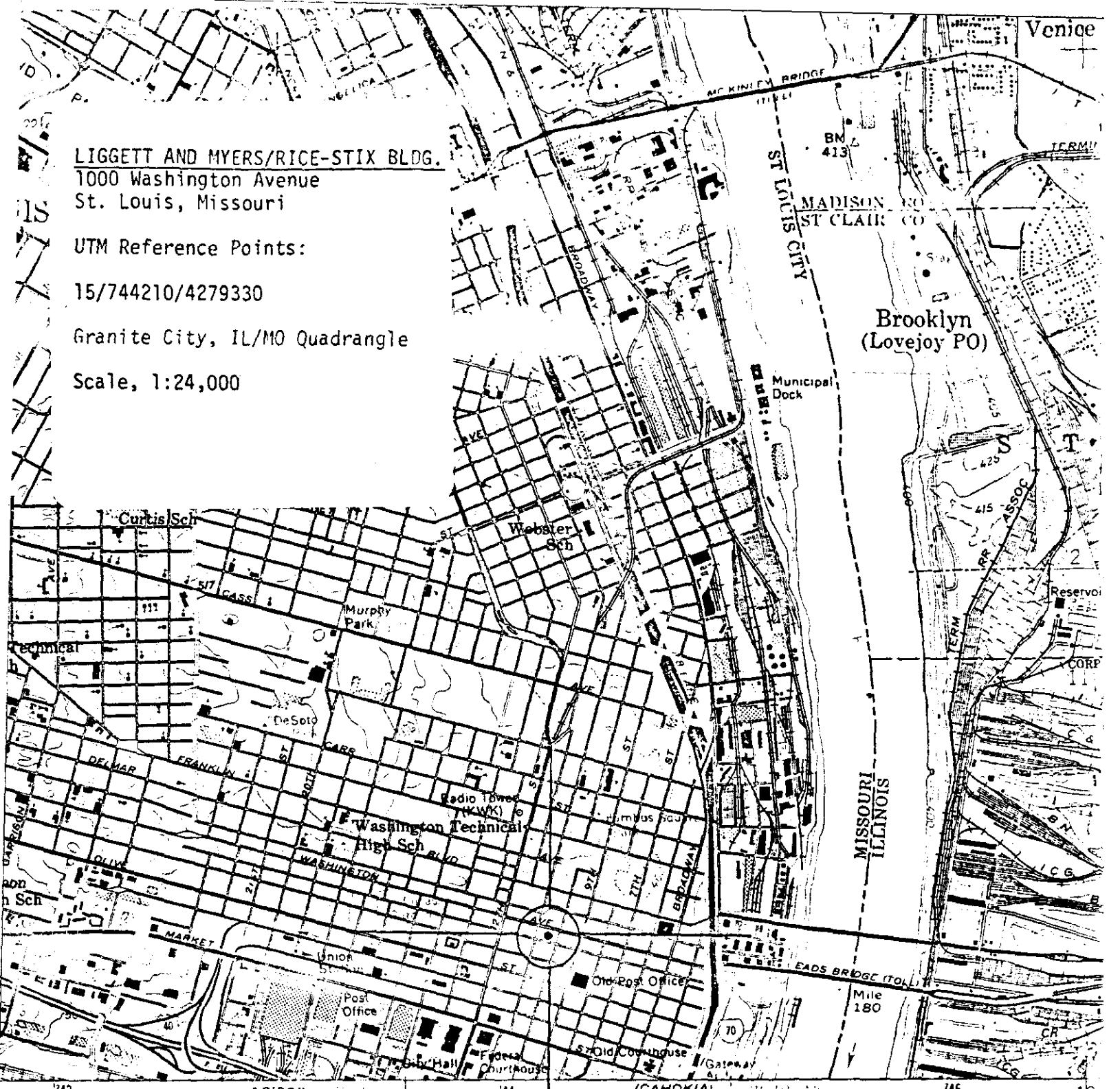
1000 Washington Avenue  
St. Louis, Missouri

UTM Reference Points:

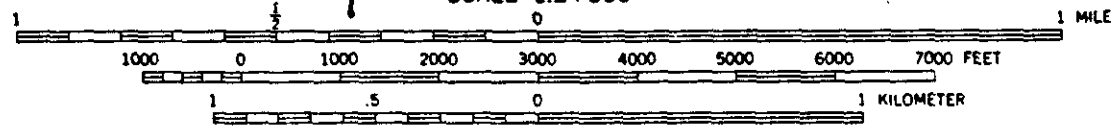
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Granite City, IL/MO Quadrangle

Scale, 1:24,000



SCALE 1:24 000



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
DASHED LINES REPRESENT 5-FOOT CONTOURS  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092,  
STATE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, URBANA, ILLINOIS 61801,  
AND THE DIVISION OF GEOLOGY AND LAND SURVEY  
MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, ROLLA, MISSOURI 65401  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

UTM GRID AND 1982 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

Revisions from aeri. Map edit. Purple tin

LIGGETT AND MYERS/RICE-STIX BLDG.  
1000 Washington Avenue  
St. Louis, MO

#1 of 3 Washington Avenue (north  
and principal) and 11th  
Street elevations.

Photographer: Mary M. Stiritz

Date: October 1983

Negative: Landmarks Association of  
St. Louis, Inc.

Camera facing southeast.

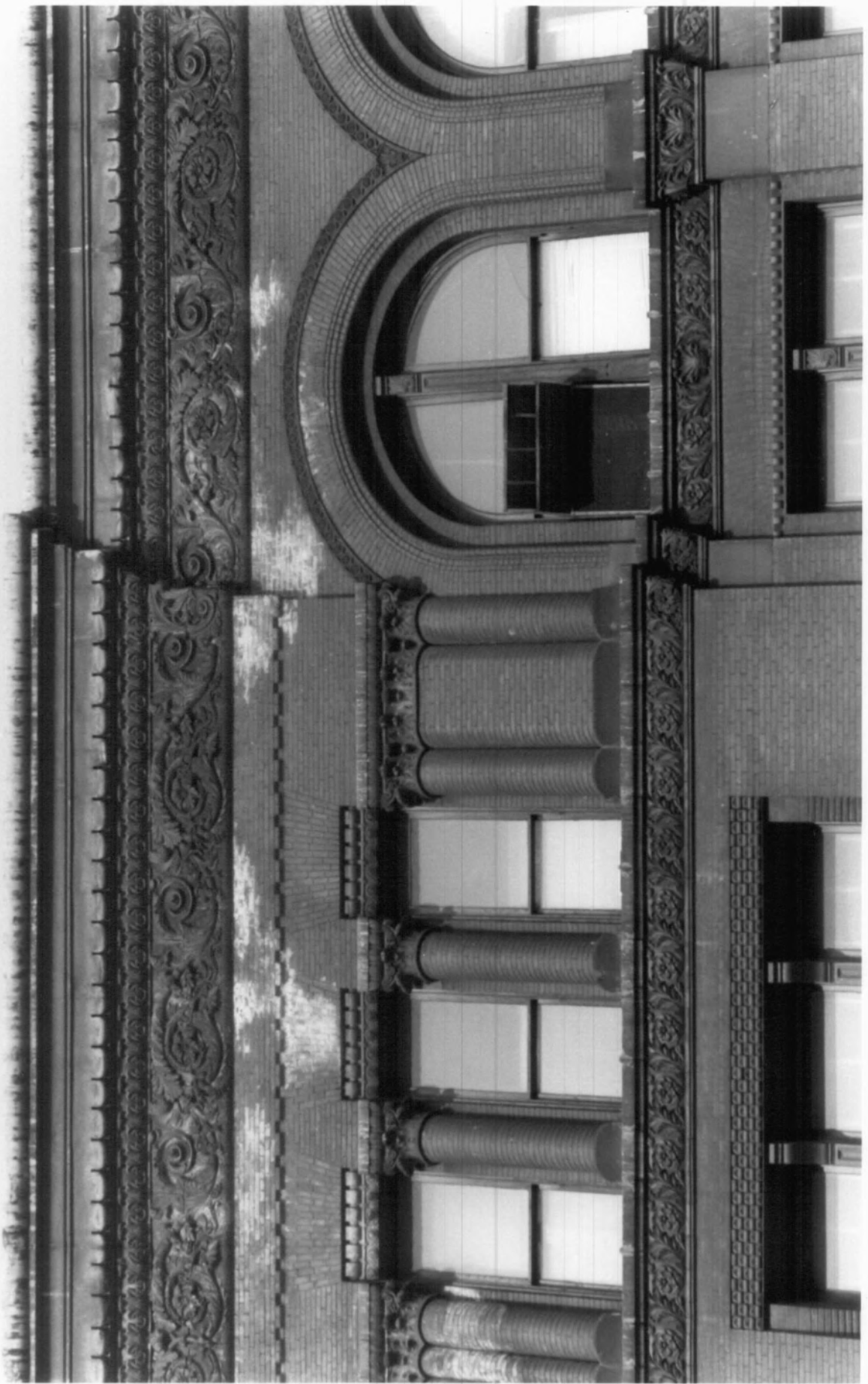


LIGGETT AND MYERS/RICE-STIX BLDG.  
1000 Washington Avenue  
St. Louis, Missouri

#2 of 3 Detail of Tenth Street  
(east) elevation.

Photographer: Mary M. Stiritz  
Date: October 1983  
Negative: Landmarks Association  
of St. Louis, Inc.

Camera facing west.



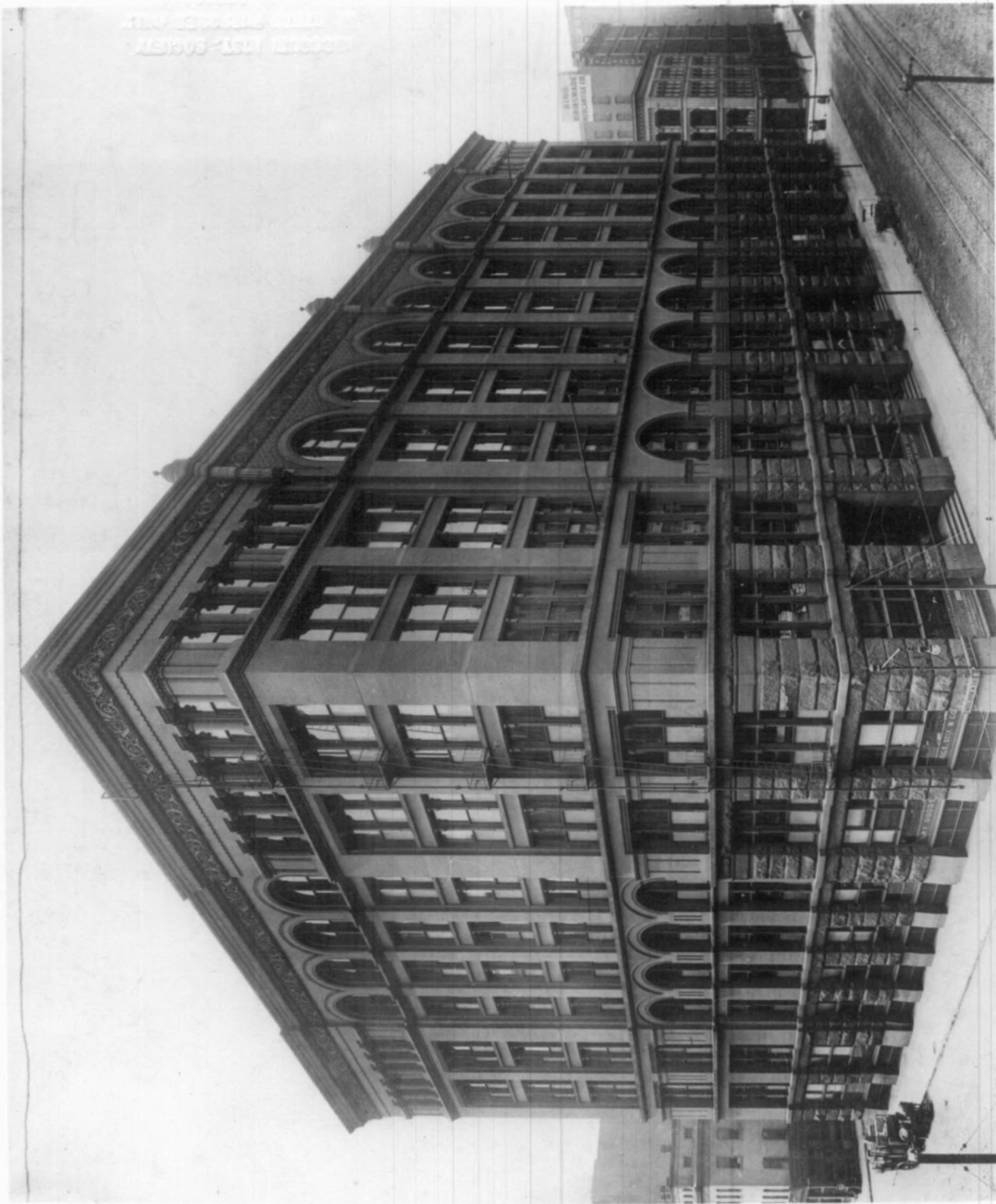
LIGGETT AND MYERS/RICE-STIX BLDG.  
1000 Washington Avenue  
St. Louis, Missouri

#3 of 3 Tenth Street (east) and  
Washington Avenue (north  
and principal) elevations.

Photographer: Unknown  
Date: Circa 1903-11  
Photocopy & Negative: Missouri  
Historical Society,  
1983.

Camera facing southwest.





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12305 - 12310

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