

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Missouri Electric Light & Power Co.
other names/site number Missouri-Edison Electric Co., Union Electric Co., Stern Fixtures

2. Location

street & number 1906-32 Locust Street [n/a] not for publication
city or town St. Louis [n/a] vicinity
state Missouri code MO county St. Louis code 510 zip code 63101

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

07/25/05

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:		
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register See continuation sheet [].	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet [].	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, explain see continuation sheet [].	_____	_____

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form
 Missouri Electric Light & Power Co.
 St. Louis (Independent City), MO

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	1	0
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> site		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		
		1	0

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

INDUSTRY
energy facility

Current Functions

COMMERCE/TRADE
warehouse
business

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Romanesque Revival

Materials

foundation Limestone
 walls brick
terra cotta
other
 roof asphalt
 other

see continuation sheet []

see continuation sheet []

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION
 See continuation sheet [x]

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

1889-1955

Significant Dates

n/a

Significant Person(s)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Milburn & Rich / architect and contractor

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:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other:

Name of repository: Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis

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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property under 1 acre

UTM References

A. Zone 15	Easting 743 060	Northing 4279 700	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
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 Tom Duda/Intern with Carolyn Toft/Executive Director and Matthew Bivens/Researcher
organization Landmarks Association of St. Louis date January 3, 2005
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 Bill Davis (Stern Fixture Co.)
street & number 1910 Locust Telephone 314-436-5400
city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63103

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

Missouri Electric Light & Power Co.
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Summary

The Missouri Electric Light & Power Company complex is located at 1906-32 Locust Street in St. Louis, Missouri. At the heart of the complex, two adjoining Romanesque Revival style red brick buildings (an 1889 electric works at the southeast corner of Locust and 20th Streets and an 1891 boiler house addition to the east) read as a single building. The primary facades of these gable-roofed buildings have brick pilasters that terminate in paneled parapets; extensive brick corbelling along the roofline adds further visual interest. The west elevation features tall semi-circular windows that march from one end to the other. Resting on an exposed foundation of rock-faced, coursed limestone, these one-story buildings have high, metal truss ceilings which eliminated the need for supporting columns. As a result, vast open interiors were created to house the massive generating equipment needed to provide their customers with power. Two 1893 brick warehouses and a 1941 mixed-material office and showroom addition complete the complex at the far east. Exterior alterations on the historic power plant buildings include several boarded or shuttered and one bricked-in window bay; some retain original windows behind. Some newer window and door openings are also present. A rear elevation garage bay is closed in by concrete blocks; the bay is intact. Interior alterations appear minimal and include some new office partitions. Newer composite panels on the 1941 office and showroom addition impact only this minor portion of the complex which is easily distinguished from the much taller, historic red brick power plant. Overall, the complex remains sufficiently evocative of its industrial past. The Missouri Electric Light & Power Company complex retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

Electric Works

The 1889 electric works building stands at the southeast corner of Locust and 20th Streets. Sitting atop a rock-faced, coursed white limestone foundation, the high one-story building fronts 70 feet along Locust and 155 feet along 20th (**photo 1, right side**). The primary (Locust Street) façade features three bays divided by pilasters with bull-nosed bricks that terminate in a paneled parapet; a corrugated metal monitor behind extends the length of the roof ridge. Extensive brick corbelling along the roofline adds further visual interest; the parapet is capped with red terra cotta. A former segmental arch entrance in

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the center of the façade has been altered to house a tall rectangular window with closed shutters; concrete fills the gap to ground level. A square multi-light metal frame window above (c. 1940) is headed by a low profile, paneled rectangle with outer edges framed by pyramidal-shaped brick. A round window above formed by three rows of headers is boarded (**photo 2** is adjacent building but panel, circular window, pilasters and cornice are identical). On each side of the pilasters, the symmetrical façade has an identical shuttered window above the foundation; identical metal windows are above. Two small vents are cut in the wall. The parapet on these portions slopes downward following the pitch of the roof and continues from a height of four-fifths that of the adjacent pilaster until it angles parallel to the ground. A look at an historic photograph shows that above the pilasters there were originally blunt pyramidal-shaped caps; it is unknown when they were removed (**figure 1**, page 3).

The 20th Street (west) elevation is spanned by 13 tall semi-circular window openings. The openings extend from sawn stone sills in the top course of the white limestone foundation to a few feet below a corbelled cornice (**photo 1**). A gable-roofed, corrugated metal monitor for ventilation is perched atop the ridge. The window openings are comprised of two semi-circular arches, one even with the wall and one inset; the sides are also recessed. Bull nose bricks form the jambs of these openings as well as the voussoirs that create their semi-circular shape (**photo 3**). Although most openings are covered by composite panels, some original windows are intact behind; one bricked in window appears to be original. The seventh bay (from the corner at Locust) contains a small door cut through the foundation on its right side.

The rear (south) elevation is spare; the foundation is comprised of smaller, rough-hewn limestone. Various intact window bays (square, circular and segmental arch) are filled in by concrete or glass blocks. A gable-shaped roof is capped with terra cotta; circular tie-rod ends are visible below and elsewhere on the wall. A small Koken Iron Works coal bin is still located within the foundation and wall (**photo 3**).

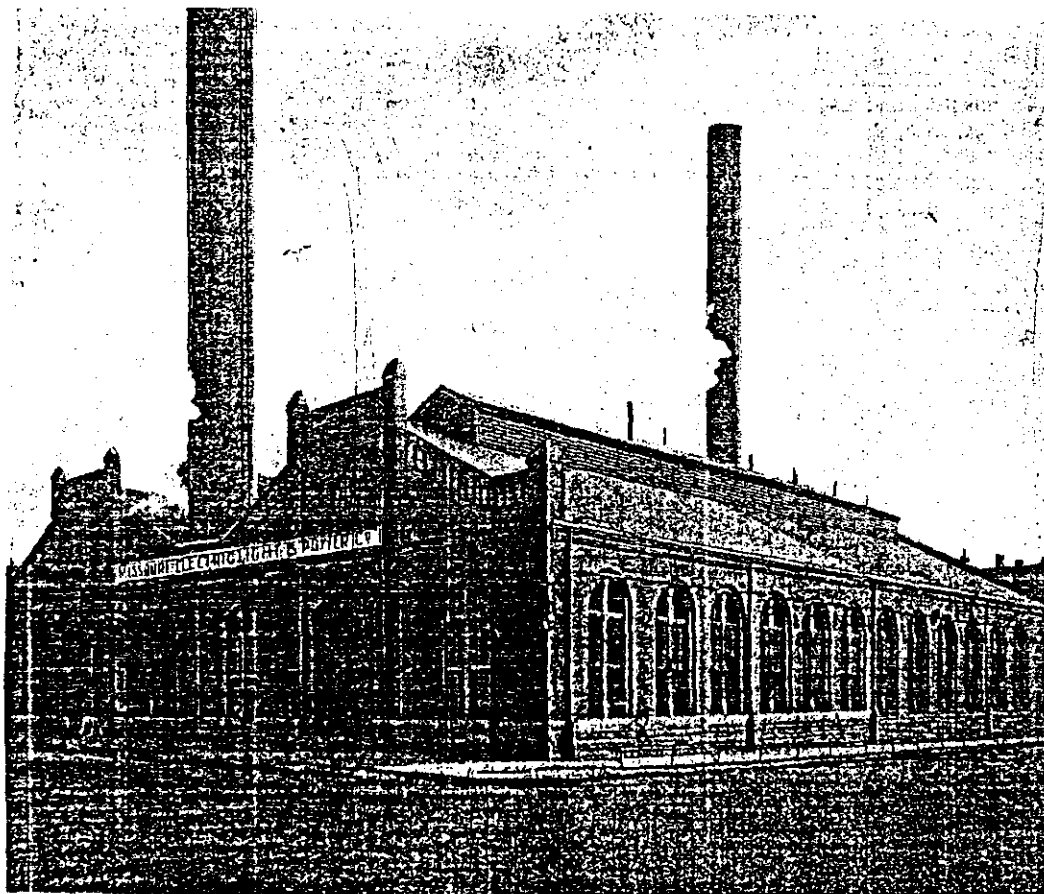
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Missouri Electric Light & Power Co.
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Figure 1: The Missouri Electric Light & Power Co. circa 1895. Source: *St. Louis Up to Date*. (St. Louis: Consolidated Illustrating Co., 1895), p. 82.



Boiler House

An 1891 boiler house addition (to the east) is connected to the original building by seamless brickwork. It mirrors the electric works with identical pilasters and ornamental detail to create a virtual copy of the original façade (photos 1, 2, 4). At the center of the two buildings is a downspout, which collects rainwater from the two sloping roofs. Originally identical to the electric works primary facade (figure 1 above), the boiler

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house retains its original segmental arch window openings (now shuttered); the central garage bay retains its original segmental arch although the door has been altered. A small entrance is located to the left of the garage bay; the opening appears to be original or at least very early. The center rectangular panel and circular window are identical to the original building. Instead of a monitor, this roof contains four paired sets of skylights on either slope. Star-shaped tie-rod ends accent the façade (**photos 1, 2, 4**).

On the rear (south) elevation of the boiler house, the connection to the electric works is also virtually seamless (**photo 3**). Joined to the electric works where the parapet is parallel to the ground, a downspout takes water away from the slopes of the two roofs. Again, intact window bays (square, circular and segmental arch) are filled in by concrete or glass blocks. A gable-shaped roof is capped with terra cotta; circular tie-rod ends are visible below and elsewhere on the wall.

Office and Showroom

A 1941 office and showroom addition adjoins at the east of the 1891 boiler house. Atop a smooth concrete foundation, a few rows of stretchers are topped by a concrete sill course. Above the sill course, newer composite panels (c. 1970s) span the remainder of the façade; concrete caps the flat roofline (**photo 4, left side and photo 5**). Panels presumably covered original window bays, however, they impact only this minor portion of the complex which is easily distinguished from the much taller, historic red brick buildings. The east side of the addition contains the main entrance to the complex, an aluminum-framed glass door with canvas awnings. To the left of the door is a wide opening of aluminum-framed windows set within identical composite panels (**photo 5**). At the south elevation of the addition, the height increases due to a slightly taller low-gable roof. The elevation consists of a brick wall with single bricked-in opening. At ground level is a small shed roof storage building with single entrance (**photo 6**).

Warehouse

At the south end of the office and showroom addition are two brick warehouses that were originally added to the boiler house in 1893 (**photo 6**). Capped by terra cotta, their appearance blends with the rest of the brick complex. A large garage door is on a protruding section of the warehouse addition facing east; a pair of windows is to the right. A small entry door faces south around the corner from the garage bay. At the rear (south) of the building is an entrance with a limestone lintel. A rough-hewn limestone

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foundation is visible. An 1895-99 storeroom was demolished in the 1960s for a parking lot (see **figure 3**, section 8, page 11).

Interior

The interior of the electric works building is divided into three sections accessed by two steel fire doors. A steel truss ceiling and a newer wooden mezzanine are prominent features of the southern half of the electric works. Below the steel truss ceiling semi-circular arch window openings are visible (**photo 7**). The reinforced concrete floor in this space is punctuated by trap doors that provide additional access to the basement, which is primarily accessed by staircases at the southwest and northwest corners of the space. The northern half of the electric works is separated from this room by a non-structural unglazed tile block wall. Lower portions of the brick interior walls on the east and west are white glazed brick; upper portions are red brick. A workshop space, near the center of the building, is defined by its concrete ceiling and hydraulic pressed-brick floor. A bronze-glazed tile wall (painted white but peeling) separates the workroom from a washroom (c. 1940) nearest Locust Street; the washroom retains its original fixtures. A steel staircase between the washroom and workroom leads to a second floor office area that overlooks the workshop below through metal multi-light windows. Art Deco ceiling light fixtures are extant (**photo 8**).

The boiler house building is a large open space; it is notable for its metal truss ceiling that provides roof coverage without the need for interior columns (**photo 9**). Other features of interest include a concrete loading dock, a reinforced concrete floor, and a brick wall that divides the boiler house from the electric works.

The office and showroom addition has wood partition walls that divide individual offices along the north side. A wood-framed mezzanine level sits below the raised metal portion of the ceiling on the west side of the room overlooking the showroom floor (**photo 10**). Large sliding steel fire doors separate the showroom and office space from the warehouse to the south and the boiler house to the west. The warehouse portion of the complex is mostly open; ceilings have skylights. A 1951 "concrete brick air wash spray booth" is located between the southernmost portion of the warehouse and the showroom.

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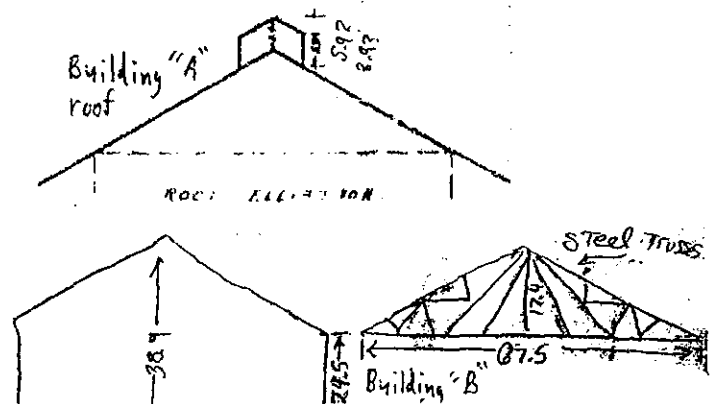
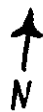
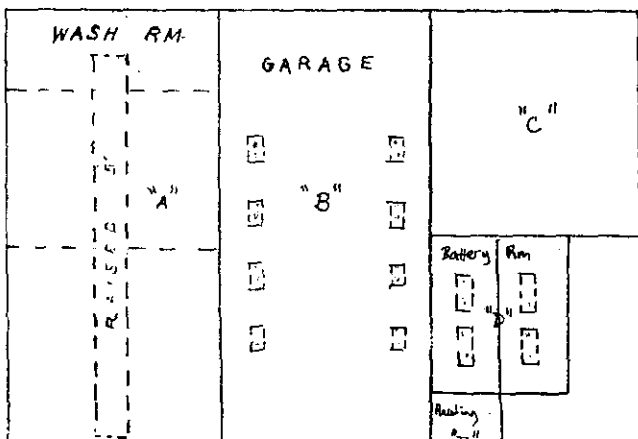
Missouri Electric Light & Power Co.
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The basement is notable for its ten different ceiling heights and various passages that originally served as routes for electrical conduits and steam pipes; these tunnels ran throughout the downtown area.

Integrity

Exterior alterations at the heart of the complex (the Romanesque Revival red brick 1889 electric works and the 1891 boiler house) include several boarded or shuttered and one bricked-in window bay; some retain original windows behind. Some newer window and door openings are also present (but date to the period of significance if extended to 1955). A rear elevation garage bay is closed in by concrete blocks; the bay is intact. Interior alterations appear minimal and include some new office partitions (again dating To the period of significance if extended to 1955). Newer composite panels on the 1941 office and showroom addition impact only this minor portion of the complex which is easily distinguished from the much taller, historic red brick power plant. Milburn & Rich's masterful construction techniques are still clearly evident today on the exterior brickwork of the facility as well as on the interior, where the metal truss ceiling is exposed. Overall, alterations do not detract from its significance and the complex remains sufficiently evocative of its industrial past. The Missouri Electric Light & Power Company complex retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

Missouri Electric Light & Power Co. floorplan. Source: St. Louis City Hall, data engineering cards, Microfilm department.



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Missouri Electric Light & Power Co.
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Summary

The Missouri Electric Light & Power Company complex located at 1906-32 Locust Street in St. Louis, Missouri is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of INDUSTRY. In 1889, Missouri Electric Light & Power Company entered a crowded field of local entrepreneurs in an important and lucrative new industry. Competing aggressively, Missouri Electric added capacity at this site before constructing an additional facility in the Mill Creek Valley area just west of downtown. But in late 1903, Missouri Electric became one of the last independent power companies to be absorbed by the giant Union Electric Company. The red brick Romanesque Revival buildings on Locust Street comprise the only extant properties associated with Missouri Electric and, additionally, constitute the oldest surviving electric power generating station in St. Louis. The site continued to serve as a substation of the rapidly expanding Union Electric Company until 1974. The period of significance runs from 1889 to 1955, the arbitrary fifty-year cutoff.

Background

The earliest efforts at lighting the City of St. Louis began with the St. Louis Gaslight Company, a company that incorporated in 1837. Four years later, the company began to erect a works "for manufacturing gas for lighting purposes."¹ Coupled by the slow works construction and the lack of a signed City contract, the city's streets were not illuminated with gas until 1847. Charles Heisler of Conrad's Brewery is credited with the first local experiments with commercial lighting in 1878, using alternating current to operate arc lamps at the brewery.² In 1881, Brush Electric Association became the first St. Louis company to distribute electric energy commercially.³ Their extensive display of street illumination was the novelty hit of "Fall Festival" time in 1882. A trailblazer in the nascent industry, Brush experienced early success, leading to the incorporation of dozens of competing electricity producers hoping to profit from the widespread introduction of

¹ William Hyde & Howard L. Conard. *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis*. (New York, Louisville, St. Louis: The Southern History Company, 1899), Vol. II, p. 875.

² *Journal of the Association of Engineering Societies*. "Electrical Industries in St. Louis." Address by Francis E. Nipher, Retiring President of the Engineers' Club of St. Louis. December 17, 1890, p. 1.

³ A "Century Plus" of *Electrical Progress: History of the Electrical Industry in Metro St. Louis*. (St. Louis: St. Louis Electrical Board, no date).

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electricity in the city. In 1884, City Ordinance #12723 enabled broad competition in the new field of electricity production, for it permitted "almost anyone... to install wires, conduits, and cables, and go into the electric utility business."⁴ By 1901, more than thirty companies operated as power producers in St. Louis, fulfilling city officials' earlier hopes that the ordinance would make "opportunity available to all [in the electrical industry]."⁵

Elaboration: The Missouri Electric Light & Power Company

Missouri Electric Light & Power Company entered the competition in 1889. Led by president and former dry goods executive Samuel Morris Dodd, vice president and prominent banker Jacob Craig Van Blarcom and secretary-treasurer Sherman B. Pike, the venture began operations in 1889 with a capital stock of \$600,000. Dodd, a native of New Jersey, moved to St. Louis to pursue a career in the dry goods industry. Following his tenure (1866-85) as the successful head of Dodd, Brown & Company, he served as a director of the National Bank of Commerce. Van Blarcom, president of the National Bank of Commerce, lent his considerable financial abilities and prominence to the new venture. Pike is apparently the only partner to have had previous experience in the electrical industry. A native of St. Louis, Pike worked as the operator of the Excelsior Electric plant in the seven years preceding the founding of Missouri Electric Light & Power.

Headquartered in the American Central Building (415 Locust, now demolished), the new electric company began to implement an ambitious plan to provide both metered arc and incandescent lighting at a reasonable price to residential and commercial customers. Acquisition of an appropriate site for a generating station was a key to this plan.⁶ The southeast corner of Lucas (present day Locust Street) and 20th Streets on City Block 900 (part of William Lucas's subdivision) proved to be an ideal location. Acquired as two separate parcels, land for the new electrical complex was deeded fully to Missouri Electric Light & Power and president Samuel M. Dodd by March 19, 1889.⁷ (January 3, 1889, however, had marked the first transfer of land; the western portion of the block

⁴ J. W. McAfee. "St. Louis and the Union Electric Company." (Speech to the Newcomen Society of England [in New York], 1947), p. 17.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ *The City of Saint Louis and Its Resources*. St. Louis Star-Sayings, 1893. Missouri Historical Society.

⁷ St. Louis City Deed Microfilm Records (Assessor's Office), book 124, page 92.

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Missouri Electric Light & Power Co
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along 20th Street was deeded to the company for a consideration of \$18,590.)⁸ In just over a month after the site was assembled, a building permit for the one-story brick "electric works" was issued for a facility with projected construction costs of \$15,000.⁹

Contractors Milburn & Rich were selected to design and build the electric works.¹⁰ Sharing space in the American Central Building (demolished, built by Milburn & Rich) with the Missouri Electric Light & Power Company in 1889, the firm was well established by this point. Notable projects included construction of the full city block "Famous" Building (St. Louis's largest mercantile house c. 1880, demo), L.G. Nichols's 1872 Second Baptist Church (demo), a former Hargadine-McKittrick Co. building at Eighth and Washington (demo) and "many more not necessary to name."¹¹

Henry Milburn, born in 1830 on the Isle of Man, was a self-made businessperson who moved to St. Louis in 1850 to work in cabinetry. In 1856, he opened a small contracting firm with Thomas H. Rich, an acquaintance from the Isle of Man. Milburn gained fame during the Civil War for overseeing the construction of thirty gunboats for the "general government," averaging the production of one a day.¹² Following this achievement, his firm experienced incredible growth until by 1899 it was widely known as "one of the oldest and most prominent building firms in St. Louis."¹³

Milburn & Rich's construction expertise is evident in their relatively straightforward challenge at the corner of Locust at 20th. Designed to accommodate large machinery, the complex at Locust and 20th served its purpose of providing large floor spaces absent troublesome interior columns, allowing for utmost flexibility in the arrangement of equipment within. Quality corbelling and the integration of arches in an arcade of windows along 20th give the facility an integrated series of modest Romanesque elements punctuated by the ventilation monitor. The electric works began operations August 1, 1889, utilizing the latest Westinghouse generating equipment (**figure 2**).¹⁴

⁸ *ibid.* Book 115, page 35.

⁹ City of St. Louis Inactive Building Permit Microfilm (Comptroller's Office).

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ *St. Louis: Queen City of the West.* (St. Louis: Mercantile Advancement Co., 1889-99), p.138.

¹² William Hyde & Howard L. Conard, Vol. III, p. 1488.

¹³ *St. Louis: Queen City of the West*, p.138.

¹⁴ *Journal of the Association of Engineering Societies.*

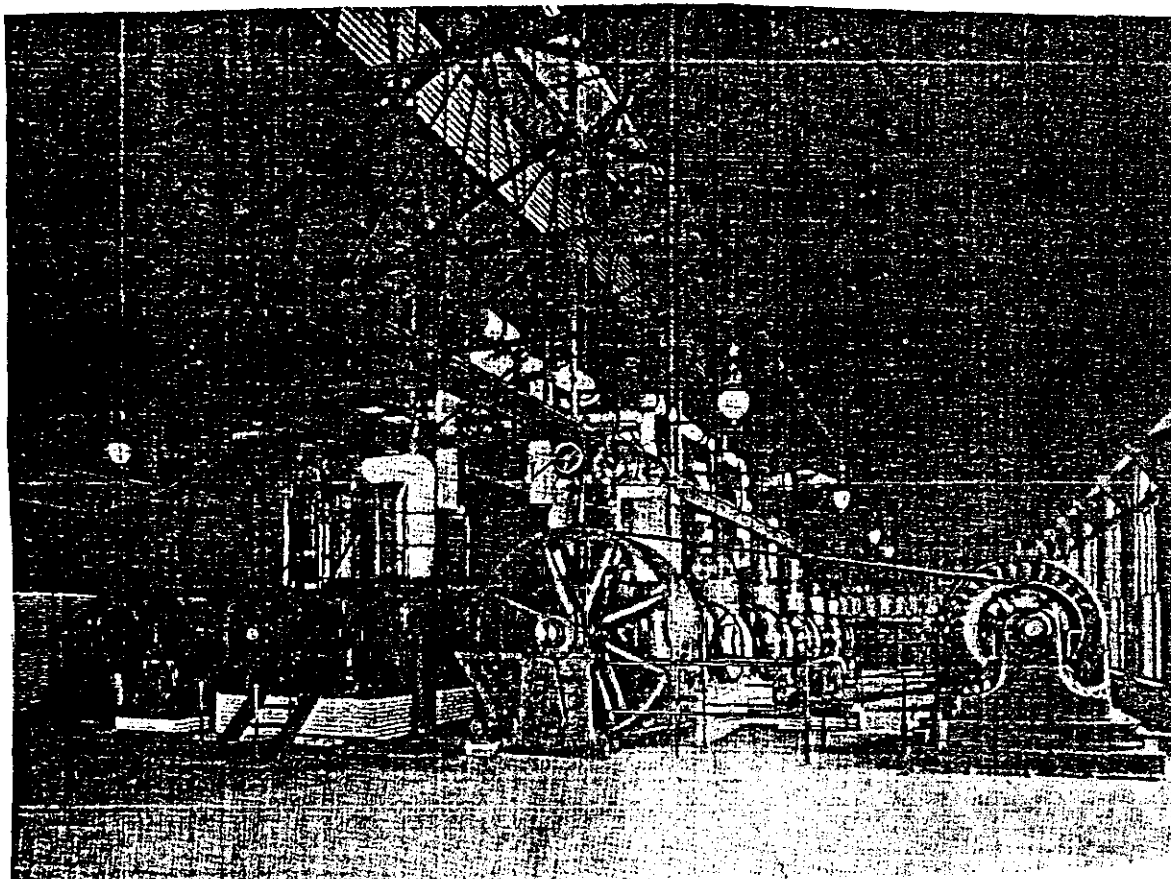
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Missouri Electric Light & Power Co.
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Figure 2: Interior of the Electric Light & Power Company, circa 1893. Source: *The City of Saint Louis and Its Resources*. (St. Louis: St. Louis Star-Sayings, 1893), p. 120.



With over twenty power line “feeds” leading from the station, the company was able to transmit power for five miles at its longest point. Missouri Electric Light & Power in 1899 also operated 150 miles of alley lamps, with “700 lights on 35 lines, between three mains, and covering an area of about 12 square miles.”¹⁵

¹⁵ *ibid.* p. 3.

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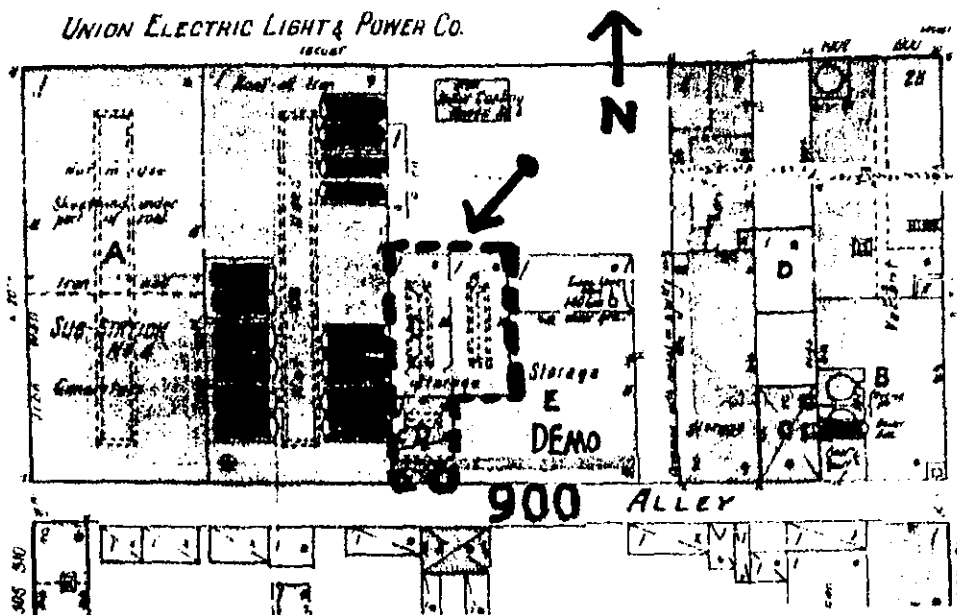
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After the first two years of operation, the company broke ground on two substantial additions to expand capacity. Milburn & Rich were granted these commissions, which included in 1891 a \$12,000 boiler house addition to the east of the electric works followed in 1893 by a \$3,500 warehouse addition along the back of the property (figure 3). In both of these facilities, Milburn & Rich's masterful engineering and quality brickwork blended with the façade of the original electric works.

Figure 3: *Whipple Fire Insurance Map*. Vol. 2, plate 70, circa 1907. The warehouse addition in question is identified with a dotted black line (also marked "C" and "D"). An 1895-99 store room (marked "E") was demolished in the 1960s for a parking lot.



The expansion helped bring the company lavish press coverage. The "Electric Lighting and Supplies" section of *The City of Saint Louis and Its Resources* published in 1893 stated:

The Missouri Electric Light & Power Company is one of the greatest electrical companies in the world by reason of the extent of its business and the superiority of its lights. . . . An idea of the popularity of the company's

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system may be seen when it is stated that out of a total of 115,000 lights, this company supplies 80,000, among them 600 private residences, largely in the west end. Of the balance supplied, 5,000 are city lights furnished in the southern district and 50,000 commercial. This company's lights have all modern advantages in a most marked degree, being clear and steady as a means of efficient illumination. In conducting the vast work of this company, 300 miles of pole lines are utilized, covering almost the entire city and running west five miles.¹⁶

The year 1893 also brought a change in management. While retaining its name and even its three principal directors, Missouri Electric consolidated management with the Edison Illuminating Company to "insure the most thorough efficiency in every department." Edison Illuminating, which is first listed as a separate company in the *1894 Gould's St. Louis City Directory*, was already closely tied to the team of Dodd, Van Blarcom and Pike, sharing office space at 415 Locust Street with Missouri Electric Light & Power. Following this reorganization, Missouri Electric focused its efforts exclusively on generating for an incandescent circuit.¹⁷ Until 1893, Missouri Electric Light & Power's generating facilities supported both arc and incandescent lamps.¹⁸ The arc light was a far more intricate type of light, requiring a small mechanism to function. The *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis* explained:

The arc light consists of two points or pencils of graphite carbon, placed in line with one another, with a common axis, and with the tips nearly together. These, with the intervening air space between their points, form part of an electric circuit. As long as the air between the points remains cold it is a poor conductor, and it must, therefore, be heated to enable it to do its part in the circuit. This is done by drawing the points together till they are in contact, and then, as the air at the point of contact becomes heated, gradually separating them. There is a clock-work arrangement by which the double movement of the carbon points toward and from one another is automatically regulated.¹⁹

¹⁶ *The City of Saint Louis and Its Resources*, p. 120.

¹⁷ *St. Louis Up to Date: The Great Industrial Hive of the Mississippi Valley*. (St. Louis: Consolidated Illustrating Co., 1895), p. 82.

¹⁸ *Journal of the Association of Engineering Societies*.

¹⁹ William Hyde and Howard L. Conard, Vol. II, p. 672.

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Following the transition to an exclusive incandescent circuit, the company by 1895 had expanded to a system with 300 miles of wire with over 140,000 incandescent lights billed by meter.²⁰ By 1898, the Missouri and Edison companies were clearly interconnected enterprises, for in this year *Gould's St. Louis Commercial Directory* lists the company name as Missouri-Edison Electric Company.

Meanwhile, a formidable new player, the Laclede Power Company of St. Louis, had organized in 1891 for the purpose of making, distributing and selling electricity and electrical devices. By early 1901, Laclede Power had broken ground for a small power plant at 1240 Lewis Street (North Riverfront Industrial Historic District NR listed May 1, 2003). Mergers including Laclede would soon result in the giant Union Electric Light & Power Co. Consolidation in the local electrical industry was commonplace around the turn of the century, as is evident from the far fewer listings for providers during this time under the "electric light" headings in *Gould's St. Louis Commercial Directory*.

Missouri-Edison scrambled to stay competitive. A 1901 advertisement is the first of many that refers to the company's "two mammoth stations" (figure 4).

Figure 4: Missouri-Edison Electric Co. ad. Source: *Gould's Directory*, 1903, p. 2267.



²⁰ ibid.

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Photographs exist of Missouri-Edison's larger, more sprawling works adjacent to railroad tracks in the Mill Creek area of St. Louis. An analysis of *Whipple Insurance Maps* from the time period verified the exact location of this alternate facility.²¹ Located on City Blocks 2286 and 456, the company's other facility is now the site of the headquarters of the Ameren UE Corporation.²²

One of two remaining city-based electric producers in 1903, Missouri-Edison fought hard to retain its independence until the board under presumable pressure from Union Electric Light & Power Co. (UE) capitulated, merging with the new utility giant by the end of the year.²³ The pull of UE's low rates permitted by economies of scale combined with the prominence of Board members (exemplified by industrialists Adolphus Busch, Samuel Kennard, William Nolker and William J. Lemp) ensured the inescapable demise of Missouri-Edison.

UE gained rights to the name of the Missouri Electric Light & Power Company and moved into its office space at 415 Locust.²⁴ By September of 1903, the offices had relocated to a substantial building (now razed) at the southwest corner of 12th and Locust Streets; the former Missouri Electric Light & Power facility farther west at 20th and Locust Streets was retained as a substation. One of the first challenges facing the company was to supply electricity for the World's Fair of 1904; production had to be doubled.²⁵ The Ashley Street Plant (North Riverfront Industrial District, NR 5-1-03) completed in 1904 combined with the newly acquired Missouri Electric substation delivered a brilliantly lighted exposition and ensured the company's continued success. By December of 1905, Union Electric had acquired the Suburban Electric Light & Power Company—the only remaining county power producer. For the first time, the generation of electric power for the Missouri side of the St. Louis metropolitan area was under the operation of one management.

Both residential and commercial demand for electricity surged after the Fair. Homeowners wanted to replace gaslights with modern electrical wiring that could power their new gadgets such as electric fans and irons; business hoped to increase productivity

²¹ *Whipple Fire Insurance Map*. Volume 1, p. 38. (1897 base map, updated to 1903).

²² *Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps* p. 66 Vol. 1W (updated to 1967).

²³ *A "Century Plus" of Electrical Progress*, p. 10.

²⁴ St. Louis City Deed Microfilm (Assessor's Office)

²⁵ *A "Century Plus" of Electrical Progress*, p. 26.

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along with wattage. Government also was an important customer. *The Realty Record & Builder* in February 1909, featured a proposal by the new Down Town Lighting Association asking for 470 arc lamps to be suspended on "suitable ornamental" standards in the district bounded by Washington, Market, 4th and 12th Streets. With higher candle power and far greater efficiency than those operating under a city contract nearly ten years old, the scheme was already in the hands of the Union Electric Light & Power Company which had been re-awarded the contract for the street lighting on a basis of \$50 per arc lamp per year. The final step would be the Board of Public Service; no opposition was expected. Readers were assured that this cost was commensurate with other cities.²⁶ Already somewhat sensitive to criticism as a monopoly, Union Electric produced a business policy intended to reassure the public:

Our business, like that of any other merchandising institution, is dependent for success upon the high quality and fair price of its service; upon the skill, courtesy and loyalty of its employees; and upon the ability of its management to forecast and provide for the steadily increasing electric service requirements for the communities it serves.²⁷

By 1912, Union Electric's generating capability had reached more than 50,000 kilowatts, but demand continued to grow. In 1913, the company contracted to buy power generated by the new Keokuk Dam (150 miles north of St. Louis on the Mississippi River) before acquiring the plant. This acquisition allowed Union Electric to move into rural areas. Meanwhile, arc lamps in St. Louis had been replaced in 1915 by incandescent street lights and a 1922 investment in a twenty-two mile downtown loop harnessed the recaptured steam used to drive the massive turbines at Ashley. Completion of the Cahokia Plant on the riverfront in Illinois the following year brought cables under the river to transmit energy on the Missouri side where some industries previously dependent on dirty coal began to convert to electric power. In 1924, Union Electric succeeded in buying out East St. Louis Light & Power.

The design of Klipstein & Rathmann's Art Deco jewel of a substation (Washington Avenue/West of Tucker District: NR 2-12-87) constructed in 1930 at 710 North 15th coincided with Union Electric's decision to proceed with construction at Bagnell Dam and the Osage Plant where work had started only a few months before the crash. Along

²⁶ *The Realty Record and Builder*. (St. Louis: Master Builders Association of St. Louis), Feb. 1909, p. 6.

²⁷ J. W. McAfee, p. 21.

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with its massive Depression-era expansion, Union Electric produced statistics to reassure the consumer: "Kilowatt-hour sales increased ten-fold from 1909 to 1935, yet gross revenues increased only 5.8 times. As a result, the average price per kilowatt-hour sold decreased 57 per cent from 1909 to 1935."²⁸ Another unit was added to the Cahokia Plant in 1937. The company agreed as part of the Smoke Abatement effort to install new smoke eliminating devices on its boilers in 1940. Although Union Electric expressed concern about restrictions and shortages during World War II, an office addition was completed at the Locust Street substation in 1941. (Little other information about that property is available after 1903, perhaps due to its background role as an existing substation.)

In 1947, J. W. McAfee, the President of Union Electric, delivered a stirring, patriotic address linking private ownership of public utilities with the very essence of the American Way: "Possibly the best trait in the American's makeup is his inexorable demand for a better life—for more goods—and for more leisure. There is but one answer—more production, greater mechanization, more kilowatts-per-man-hour of labor." Commenting upon the potential for Marxism to gain ground in post-War United States, McAfee offered a telling quote attributed to Lenin: "Socialism is state electricity plus bookkeeping."²⁹

In 1952, McAfee was one of eight men appointed by Mayor Joseph Darst to a new and exclusive business elite—Civic Progress, Incorporated.³⁰ There was no question that Union Electric had become a major player in civic affairs and a corporate giant. Expansion continued with the Meramec Plant (1960), the Taum Sauk Storage Plant (1963), the Sioux Plant in St. Charles (1967 and 1968) and the Labadie Plant (1970 and 72 and 73).³¹ In 1974, Union Electric sold the outmoded Missouri Electric Light & Power Company buildings to Stern's Fixtures and began planning for a nuclear plant in Calloway County. The current owner envisions an adaptive reuse including a restaurant and entertainment center.

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 23.

³⁰ James Neil Primm. *Lion in the Valley*. (Boulder: Pruett Publishing Company, 1981), p. 493.

³¹ *A "Century Plus" of Electrical Progress*, p. 30.

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The City of Saint Louis and Its Resources. (St. Louis: St. Louis Star-Sayings, 1893).
Missouri Historical Society vertical file.

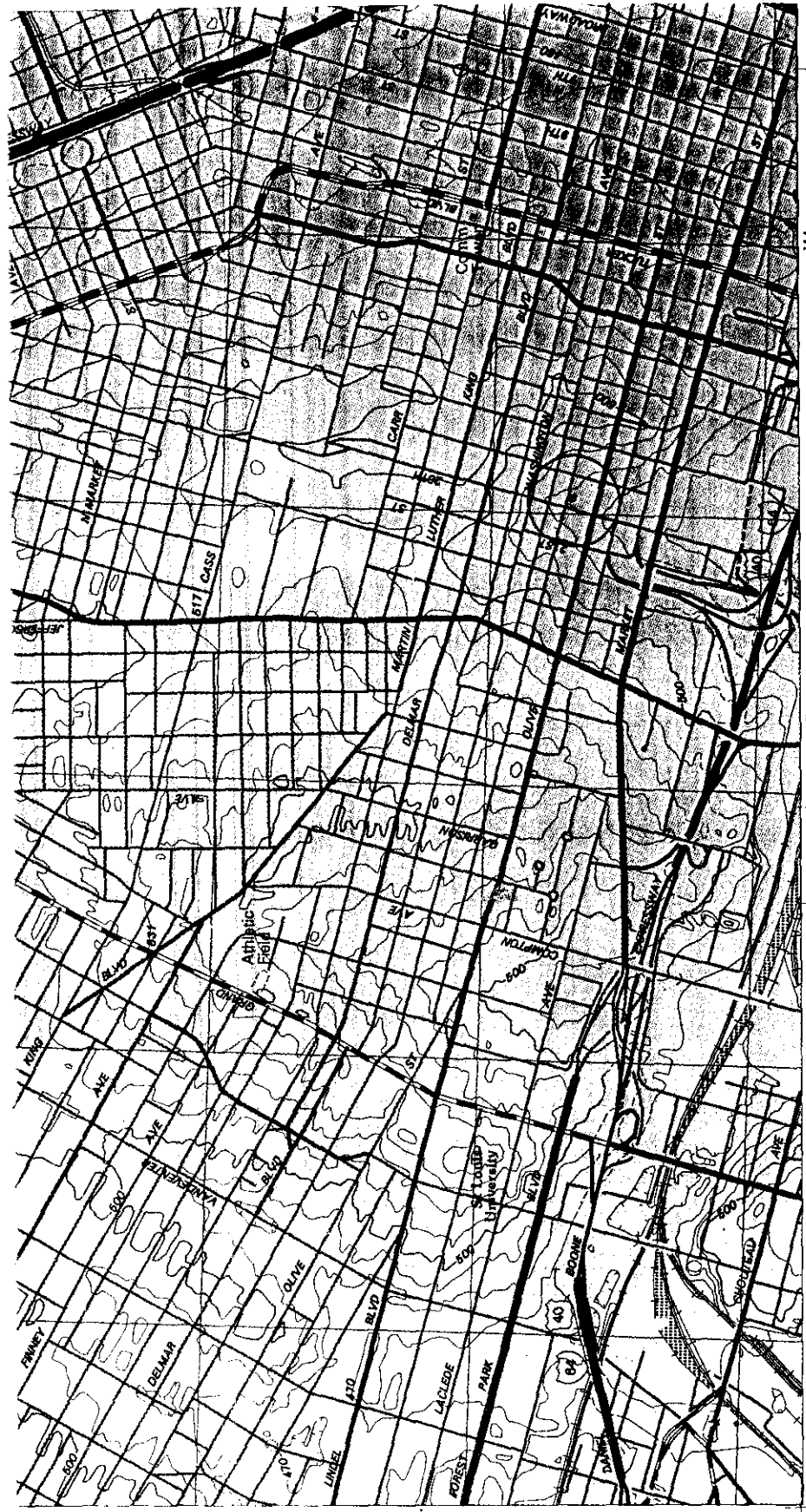
Whipple Fire Insurance Map. Vol. 1, p. 38 & Vol. 2, p. 70. (1897 updated to 1907).

Boundary Description

The former Missouri Electric Light & Power Company complex is located at 1906-32 Locust Street in St. Louis, Missouri. The building is on city block 900; it is a parcel of J. H. Lucas & Ann L. Hunt's Addition. The parcel measures approximately 269' by 155' and is bound by Locust Street at the north, 20th Street at the west and an alley at the south; a lot and two buildings and 19th Street are at the east. The property is legally known by the Assessor's office as parcel number 09000000100. The nominated parcel is indicated by a dashed line on the accompanying map entitled "Missouri Electric Light & Power Company Boundary Map."

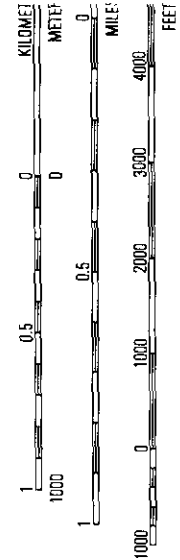
Boundary Justification

The nominated parcel includes all of the property historically associated with the Missouri Electric Light & Power Company.



Missouri Pacific
 Power Co.
 1906 South St.
 St. Louis, Missouri, MO.
 Zone 15
 Elevation 743.060
 Northing 7879.700

38°37'30" 90°15' 40 41 42 43 44
 12°30' 743



Produced by the United States Geological Survey
 Topography compiled 1952. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1993 and other sources. Photoinspected using imagery dated 1998; no major culture or drainage changes observed. PLSS and survey control current as of 1954. Boundaries, other than corporate, verified 1999

North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). Projection and 1000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, zone 15
 10 000-foot ticks: Illinois (west zone) and Missouri (east zone) Coordinate Systems of 1983
 North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 83 and NAD 27 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software

Contours that conflict with revised planimetry are dashed
 There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

UTM GRID AND 1999 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



CONTOUR INTERSECTIONS
 SUPPLEMENTARY CONTROL POINTS
 NATIONAL GEODETIC SURVEY
 TO CONVERT FROM FEET TO METERS
 THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL GEODETIC SURVEY, P. 1
 AND ILLINOIS GEOLOGICAL SURVEY AND DIVISION OF GEOLOGY
 MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS



