

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name North Riverfront Industrial Historic District
other names/site number n/a

2. Location

street & number roughly bounded by Dickson, Lewis, O'Fallon, 2nd, Ashley, Biddle, and the Mississippi River [n/a] not for publication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 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 [].)

LaVerne Brondel Signature of certifying official: LaVerne Brondel/Deputy SHPO Date 3/18/02

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

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	8	0 building
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	0	0 sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-state	<input type="checkbox"/> site	0	3 structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	0	0 objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	8	3 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: business
INDUSTRY: energy facility
COMMERCE: warehouse
HEALTH CARE: resort

Current Functions

VACANT
INDUSTRY: energy facility
COMMERCE: warehouse
INDUSTRY: manufacturing facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Classical Revival
Beaux Arts
Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals

see continuation sheet [].

Materials

foundation Stone: limestone
 walls Brick
Stone: limestone
 roof Unknown
Asphalt
 other Terra Cotta

see continuation sheet [].

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet [x]

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form
North Riverfront Industrial Historic District
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

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

COMMERCE
INDUSTRY

Periods of Significance

1894-1953

Significant Dates

n/a

Significant Person(s)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

please see continuation sheet

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: _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 8.5 acres

UTM References

A. Zone	Easting	Northing	B. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	745 350	4280 420	15	745 370	4280 260
C. Zone	Easting	Northing	D. Zone	Easting	Northing
15	745 430	4280 270	15	745 440	4280 070

[x] 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 Lynn Josse
organization Landmarks Association of St. Louis date December 19, 2002
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 please see attached
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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North Riverfront Industrial Historic District
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Summary

The North Riverfront Industrial Historic District is located directly north of downtown St. Louis adjacent to the Mississippi River. The eight contributing buildings are located on seven city blocks roughly bounded by Dickson, Lewis, O'Fallon, 2nd, Ashley, Biddle and the Mississippi River. Heights range from one story to six, with four large smokestacks on the roof of the Union Electric Light & Power Company plant towering over the district. The irregular, roughly T-shaped footprint of the district results in a fairly tight concentration of historic resources. There are also three noncontributing structures within district boundaries. Most buildings are of red brick, although two use brown brick as their primary exterior material. The district is further united by at least some degree of Revival styling on virtually every building. The area surrounding the district consists largely of vacant land and some new construction, along with at least two historic buildings that did not fit well into the district but may be individually eligible. Other historic buildings in the vicinity. The district retains a remote and uninhabited feeling from its location between the river on the east and Interstate 70 a few blocks to the west. This sense is magnified by the fact that most buildings are either used for storage or not at all.

Elaboration

1200-24 Lewis Street (Photo 1; Photo 2, far right)

Union Electric Light & Power Company plant
1903

architect: Charles H. Ledlie

contractor: Hill-O'Meara Construction Company

(Foundation permitted 1902 to McArthur Bros. Construction Company and American Bridge Company)

Constructed of brown brick and terra cotta, the massive power plant rests on a poured concrete foundation. The classical exterior is organized by a series of terra cotta arches supported on fluted Ionic pilasters which read as two extra-tall stories high. The south elevation may be considered the primary elevation since it faces downtown and bears the original name (Union Electric Light & Power Co.) in terra cotta across and below two pediments. This elevation is nine bays wide. Above the arches which order the first eight bays is a dentil course; the top story of large windows is topped by a dentilled cornice with two projecting shallow pediments. At the west elevation facing Lewis Street, similar devices separate the bays (including three bays at the northern end which project out from the body of the building). At this elevation, there are five separate pediments which creatively place acanthus scrolls to either side of large round vents. At

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the ninth and tenth bays from the right, massive metal venting equipment protrudes from where the windows once were. The north elevation is mostly blind, with a full-height poured concrete addition in the middle. The east elevation faces the river and was not accessible for description.

Four large smokestacks and a set of multi-story metal additions are located on the building's roof.

To the north of the plant on property owned by the city's Port Authority are three related non-contributing structures, all identified on the boundary map. The first is a disused fuel oil tank. Its outer shell is painted and partially corroded. Not present on a 1968 Sanborn map, this tank likely dates from the 1970s.

The second is a coal elevator. A metal chute runs from the north side of the plant to a metal tower with two rusty corrugated enclosures (labeled on the Sanborn map as coal hoppers and elevator) and from there to the ground. According to the Sanborn map, the tower structure is 40 feet tall and constructed of iron. The date of this structure is unknown: it is present on Sanborn maps dated 1968. It is not considered contributing.

The third noncontributing resource is a fairly new (1990s) structure of 4x4 construction covered with corrugated metal siding. This construction partially conceals two water collector tanks.

1228 Lewis Street (Photo 2, center; Photo 3, far right)
1902

contractor: Hill-O'Meara Construction Company

Designed in 1902 as a machine shop for the power plant just getting underway, the two-story brown brick building was permitted at a cost of \$12,000. Tightly sited between Lewis Street to the west and railroad tracks to the east, the building's footprint is an irregular wedge shape. The building features a terra cotta stringcourse below terra cotta dentils topped by an outsize terra cotta cornice. Eleven bays of sixteen pane windows with concrete sills face Lewis on the front elevation (at the seventh bay, a former door has been bricked in); a single door (not original) provides access to the building on the otherwise blind south elevation. The door at the west (Lewis) elevation is boarded. The concrete basement is exposed on the irregularly shaped east elevation.

1240 Lewis (Photo 3, center; Photo 4; Photo 8, far left; Photo 10- historic)
1901

architect: Mauran, Russell & Garden

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Engineer: Albert Borden
contractors: Goesse & Remmers

A permit was issued in January 5, 1901 for a \$55,000 powerhouse for the Laclede Power Company of St. Louis. A firm distinguished by its design skill and understanding of brickwork, Mauran, Russell & Garden produced a splendid industrial example of their talent. Above a concrete foundation, the red brick is interspersed with burnt headers at every other course below the stone water table and every sixth course above. Like the machine shop at 1228-12 Lewis Street (above), the unusual footprint of this building was determined by the configuration of nearby railroad tracks. The primary elevation along Lewis Street is divided into eight bays with double-height corbelled brick arches. Within the arches, a variety of treatments are seen, from brick and concrete block infill to doors to boards. Above a corbel course, the top story features one round opening above each keystone. Most have two-part metal covers. The two-bay north elevation is treated in a similar manner and is topped by a pediment. Instead of roundels above the arches, a terra cotta plaque reads "Laclede Power Co."; the arched bay to the right has a loading door (non historic) built into it. At the south and east, three walls meet at irregular angles. The southern point is one bay wide, with rectangular windows at three stories above a door. It continues the west elevation's corbel course between the windows at the third and fourth stories, as does the next wall which faces sort of southeast. The final wall section, facing roughly east, has bricked in roundels at the top and loading doors (now covered with board & batten wood) at the ground level. Between, white bricks spell out "The Laclede Power Co." in large letters. (This may have been for identification from the river.)

Union Electric Company acquired the plant in 1907 and made \$25,000 of unspecified alterations in 1913. The current owner, Trailnet, Inc., is exploring plans to convert the 16,000 square foot property into a multi-use trailhead facility for the St. Louis North Riverfront Trail which begins just outside the door.¹

1312-22 Lewis (Photo 5: Photo 6, background; Photo 3, far background)
1900
architect: Widmann, Walsh & Boisselier

A permit was issued to the St. Louis Cold Storage Company on March 15, 1900, for a boiler, machine and freezing house. The cost was \$70,000. This building occupies the northern half of a long city block, resulting in a nearly square footprint. The foundation is limestone and the walls are red brick. A tall three-story L at the east and south sides wraps around a lower, two and three story square at the northeast corner. All sections

¹

The trail runs approximately 11 miles from the Gateway Arch to Riverfront Park in North St. Louis. Trailnet Inc. is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating and conserving multi-use recreational trails and greenways in the St. Louis bi-state region of Missouri and Illinois. Trailnet owns and maintains the trail.

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employ corbelled cornices, corner projections and other brick detailing. (The decorative motifs established in this building would be used again the following year in the same company's storage facility to the southwest – see below.) Segmental arched windows throughout are boarded or bricked. Round-arched first floor openings are used at the east, north and west elevation. At the southern elevation, the lower half of the wall is composed of non-historic concrete block where the building's ice plant was once located. The extant building was once the northern half of a complex which covered the entire block. The southern half, noted as extremely deteriorated in a 1989 survey, was razed in the 1990s. The northern half remains in good condition and is occupied by a sign company.

1301 Lewis (Photo 6; Photo 8, right)
1894/1919

architect: Stewart, McClure & Mullgardt (1894); Charles H. Wray (1919)
contractor: Fred Thelemann (1894); Hartmann & Schuermann (1919)

The western half of this building was the brick bathhouse constructed for the Belcher Water Bath Company in 1894. It faces south on O'Fallon Street. Two round arched door openings flank a blind arch with a small rectangular window. The façade and west elevation's small windows are placed near the roof on a limestone course. At the façade, two windows are to the left of the entry and six to the right, all boarded. (There are also basement windows beginning as the site slopes away to the east). There are eight windows at the east elevation. The low hipped roof's shaped rafter tails are exposed at both elevations. To the east, a single-story 1919 addition of brown brick has seven openings at the south elevation, five of which are filled in with concrete block. One opening is obviously altered and now contains a metal garage door. The east elevation contains a loading bay. The north elevation of both sections is a red brick blind wall.

1232-40 N. First (Photo 7, right)
1903/1911

architect: none listed for 1903; Klipstein & Rathmann (1911)
contractor: B. Wussler (1903)

The red brick building constructed for the Beck & Corbitt Iron Company was built in two stages. The northern half appears to have been built from a 1903 permit. A single story warehouse was once attached at the northern end where the concrete loading dock is now

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located. The southern half of the building was constructed from a 1911 permit for the same client by architects Klipstein & Rathmann.

The building occupies almost a quarter of the block on which it is sited. The footprint is an almost square diamond shape. Although the whole building is 75 feet tall at the western elevation (according to Sanborn maps), unequal floor levels allow five stories at the northern four bays and six at the southern five. The northern section has four tall loading doors at the first story above a limestone foundation. Wide segmental arched openings on limestone sills are at the next three stories, connected by recessed spandrels between raised vertical strips. At the fifth story, the rectangular windows have brick sills. It is possible that this fifth story is a historic addition.

At the southern section, the center three of the five bays also have loading doors, much shorter than those to the north. The second story has rectangular window openings. Starting at the third floor (which is only slightly higher than the second story at the original section), the windows at the center three bays are articulated in a manner similar to those at the southern section (the windows are narrower here and the sills are brick). The first and fifth bays have narrow segmental arched window openings set into the sheer walls without recessed spandrels. The building terminates in an unornamented parapet wall. The secondary elevations at south and east are articulated in a somewhat similar manner, although the northern half of the east elevation uses rectangular window openings above the second floor. At the north elevation, the first floor is painted white above a concrete loading dock. The third and fourth stories have three segmental arched openings each; there is no additional architectural elaboration. A ghost sign still reads "Beck & Corbitt Iron Co.," apparently painted over an even earlier sign which appears to read "Beck & Corbitt Iron Co. Shelter Top Co." The south elevation also has ghost signs advertising the company.

Most windows are boarded except at the east elevation.

1257-63 Lewis Street (Photo 2, left; Photo 8, center --tall building with crenellation)
1901

architect: Widmann & Walsh
contractor: Kellermann Contracting

This six-story building was constructed for the St. Louis Cold Storage Company from a permit issued in 1901. The exterior's sheer walls with minimal fenestration reflect the original use. Elements common to the north, east and west elevations include chamfered corners, crenellated projections at the four corners, a corbelled brick cornice, and an additional corbelled course between the fifth and sixth stories. The north wall is blind

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above the first two stories, which have metal-filled horizontal openings, five at the lower floor and three above. Both east and west elevations have awnings over the first floor sheltering loading docks where the red brick exterior has been painted white. Center bays both east and west have a pair of blind arches which run from sills at the second floor to just below the lower corbelled course. At the top story, two arched windows are filled in. A single bay one-story projection at the top of the building stretches across the middle of the building, and is elaborated at both the east and west elevations with a cornice and corner projection similar to the main body of the building. At the east elevation, both the northern and southernmost bays have segmental arched windows at each of the six stories (doors at the first story).

The south elevation is brick up to the top of the second story and concrete block above this, indicating an earlier building attached here. Returns on the brick cornices at the east and west elevation indicate that the removed building or portion of building was not more than four stories high. A portion of the removed building's west wall still runs along the lot to the south.

1230-54 N. 2nd Street (Photo 9: Photo 7, left: Photo 8, far background)
1904/1906

architect: Isaac Taylor

contractor: Kellermann Construction Co.

This full-block red brick warehouse was constructed in two sections. Permits were taken out in 1904 and 1906 with the same architect and contractor.

The main organizational device at all elevations is fenestration, which is similar to that at the Cupples Station warehouse complex (Cupples Station Warehouse District, NR 6/26/1998). All windows above the first floor are lined up within vertical surrounds, five stories high (four at the west elevation) outlined by four courses of brick which terminate in an arch at the top. From the east and west elevations, the building reads as a three-part composition. Twelve tightly spaced sets of windows define the center. The outer sets are more widely spaced, with four at the north and five at the south. There are four fire escapes on the west elevation. A break in the brick bond forms an obvious line between the northern section and the center, clearly indicating where the southern addition was added in 1906. Rectangular two over two sash windows are used at the 1904 section, while the rest of the building employs segmental arched windows.

The north elevation is seven bays wide. The center bay is made more prominent by a rooftop projection and a vertical offsetting of the windows, indicating the stair bay. Some windows at this elevation are blind: the brick filling the window location matches

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the wall brick well enough that the work could be original or historic. The south elevation reads as 12 bays, with an off-center roof projection at the fifth and sixth bays.

The entire building is set on a limestone foundation. At the western elevation the foundation is only a few feet high, but as the ground slopes away toward the river, more and more foundation is exposed until it is a full story high at the east. For this reason, the east elevation reads as six stories high while the west is five stories. Both sides have loading doors across the first story.

Painted "ghost signs" at all elevations advertise the Shapleigh Hardware Company (this was its Warehouse No. 3, according to the signs) and the J. Kennard & Sons Carpet Company.

Integrity

Although there are several areas in the City of St. Louis which retain concentrations of buildings representing the city's industrial heritage, only this one retains ties to the critical industries of power generation and cold storage. The district retains sufficient integrity to express these associations. Individual buildings display a variety of alterations. The most intact are the Kennard Warehouse and the Union Electric machine shop, neither of which has extensive alterations. As a working power plant, the Ashley Street Station has a number of exterior modifications, but its overall design is still clearly readable and most exterior materials remain intact. The same can be said of the Laclede Power building, where many of the modifications were made during the building's association with the power industry.

The two buildings associated with the St. Louis Cold Storage Company both started out larger than they are today: portions of both buildings have been demolished. In both cases, the remaining section of the building is larger than the part that was removed. Both buildings retain a majority of the historic exterior features that are associated with their period of significance, and the two buildings tie together as part of the same corporate complex through specific details that are used on both. The Beck & Corbitt Iron Company Building also has had a relatively small section removed, but the part that remains amply conveys the building's industrial associations. The final building, the Belcher Bath House, has altered openings on its addition but the original bathhouse section is fairly intact.

A unique aspect of the district's integrity is that many of the buildings (including Beck & Corbitt, Laclede Power, the Ashley Street station, Kennard Warehouse) retain signage indicating the original or historic use of the building. Most are painted, but "Laclede

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Power" is written into its building in glazed brick while the Union Electric label on the Ashley Street plant is part of the terra cotta ornament which faces downtown. In all of these cases, the buildings convey their historic associations in the most literal manner.

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North Riverfront Industrial Historic District
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Architect/Builder

Architects:

Klipstein & Rathmann
Ledlie, Charles
Mauran, Russell & Garden
Stewart, McClure & Mullgardt
Taylor, Isaac
Widmann & Walsh
Widmann, Walsh & Boisselier
Wray, Charles H.

Contractors:

Goesse & Remmers
Hartmann & Schuermann
Hill-O'Meara
Kellermann Construction Company
Fred Thelemann
Wussler, B.

Engineer:

Albert Borden

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The North Riverfront Industrial Historic District is located in St. Louis, Missouri and is locally significant under National Register Criterion A in the areas of COMMERCE and INDUSTRY. In a section of the city nearly wiped clean by the tornado of 1896 but rich with connections to rail lines and the Mississippi River, this small grouping is a significant concentration surviving in the midst of what was once a much larger linear industrial and commercial district. Two specific industries, power generation and cold storage, account for five of the eight contributing buildings. All buildings and their major additions were constructed between 1894 and 1919.

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most falling within the first seven years of the 20th century (1900-1906). The period of significance begins in 1894, the construction date of the oldest building, and ends in 1953, an arbitrary 50-year cutoff. Although not every building is completely intact, the district retains sufficient integrity to convey the scale of the industrial and commercial activities that thrived here in the early 20th century.

Background

St. Louis' riverfront was the focus of industrial and commercial activity as long as the Mississippi remained the primary transportation route in and out of the region. Although the arrival of the railroad caused dramatic shifts in the geography of St. Louis, in some cases rail and river complemented each other. Early rail lines in St. Louis were concentrated at the north and south riverfront and in the drained Mill Creek Valley. The completion of the Eads Bridge Tunnel routed trains into the Mill Creek route, but the riverfront remained a secondary focus of rail activity. Compton & Dry's view from 1875 illustrates the jumble of lines in the nominated area just north of downtown. Farther north, riverfront warehouses are shown loading directly onto riverboats and rail lines.

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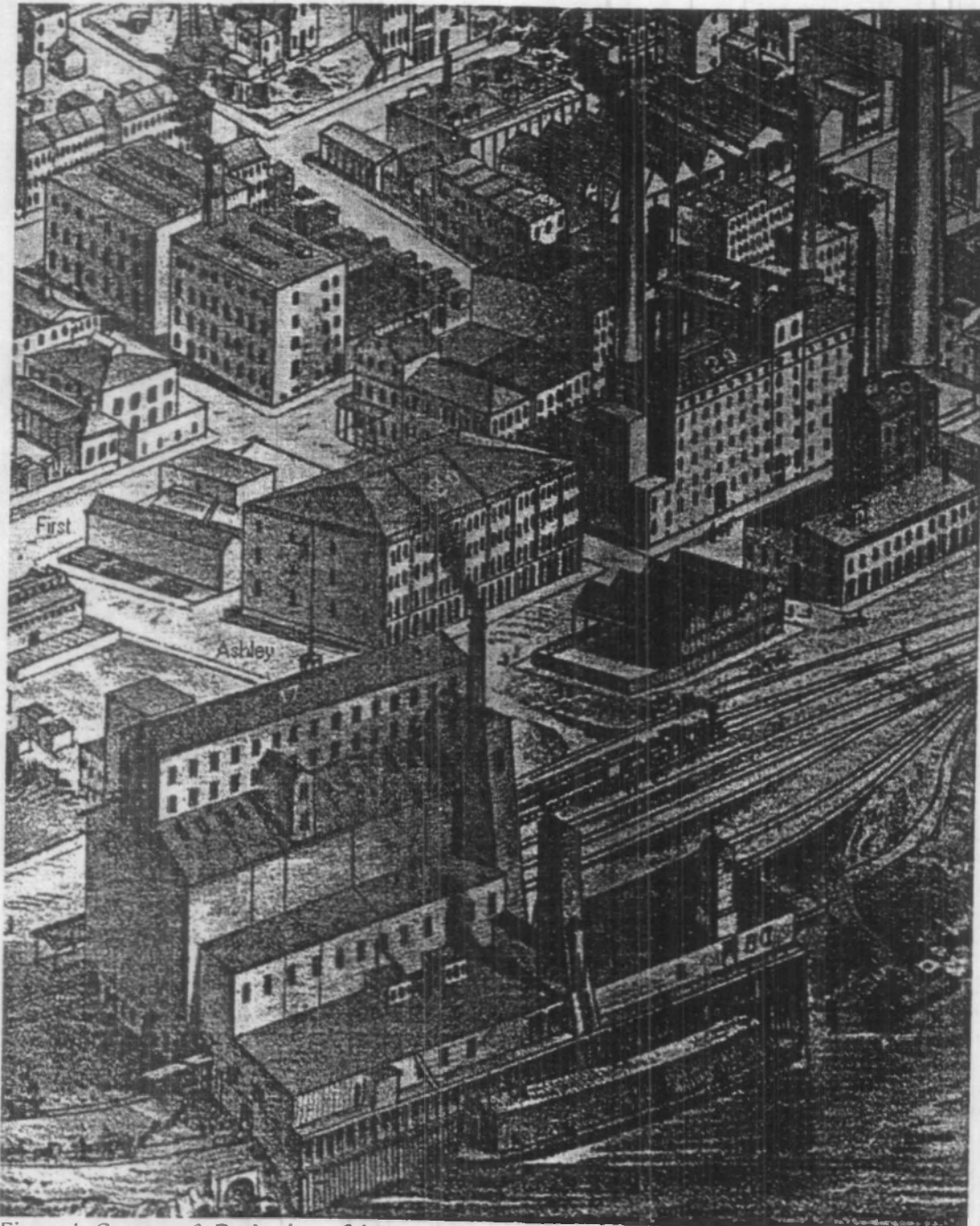


Figure 1: Compton & Dry's view of the nominated area in 1875. The Merchants' Elevator is in the foreground: all of the buildings with a "20" are the Belcher Sugar Refinery, and the tower in the back labeled "26" is the St. Louis Shot Tower.

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None of the buildings depicted in the 1875 view is extant. Between about 1880-1910, shifts in industry brought about the near-complete replacement of most buildings in the district, resulting in the landscape of today. The tornado in 1896 moved things along by taking down many of the buildings on its own.

From 1844 until the mid-1880s, most of the property within district boundaries was owned by the Belcher Sugar Refinery. An 1870s article described the company as "preeminent, not only among the manufacturing establishments of St. Louis, but of the entire West, with immense ranges of buildings, employing over three hundred men, the value of its products annually being over four millions of dollars."¹ After Belcher liquidated, two other refineries came and went on the site. In the 1890s most of the mill's property was parceled off, and new buildings replaced the sugar industry resources. The last Belcher building, located just outside the district boundaries, was demolished by the City of St. Louis after a fire in 2001.

Also visible on the Compton & Dry view at the eastern end of the district is the Merchants' Elevator. The Merchants' Exchange first attempted to develop a grain elevator for its members in 1860. As soon as the Civil War ended, the elevator was constructed at the foot of Ashley Street. Additions in 1869 and again in 1874 combined to produce a complex that by 1875 handled 5.5 million bushels of grain annually.

The landscape of the district was dramatically altered in May of 1896, when the worst tornado ever to hit St. Louis swept from the southwest across Eads Bridge into Illinois. Vivid, hyperbolic descriptions include information about the damage to the north riverfront: "...forever sealed the doom of the St. Louis Elevator Company.... Its individual loss is the greatest in the city." Damage from the cyclone combined with a disastrous crop failure in 1895 did indeed spell the end for the elevator.² Henry Wedermeyer, a switchman at work in the yard of the Wabash Railroad Company when the storm hit provides an eyewitness account:

I went over to the buildings of the Belcher Sugar Refinery and climbed in a tank in one of the old sheds to take refuge from the storm. As I stood there pieces of flying boards and broken glass fell all around me. While looking south I saw the cupola of the St. Louis Elevator and the biggest part of the roof blow off. The old buildings of the Belcher Sugar Refinery, between Dixon and Ashley and Lewis

¹ "Sugar" undated clipping, source unknown, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis. Content points to an 1870s date.

² Curzon, 170.

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and Main Street, were nearly entirely unroofed. ... The steamboats Polar Wave, Benton, Charlotte Boeckler and Jack Frost, lying between Smith and O'Fallon Street, were damaged³

The tornado hastened shifts which were already underway in the industrial landscape. Between about 1880 and 1910, nearly every building in the district and surrounding area was demolished and replaced. The blocks around the nominated area have been decimated by a more recent wave of demolition, but within the district boundaries a cross-section of early 20th century industrial buildings remains intact.

Buildings

The oldest building in the district, the only one remaining from the 19th century, was actually not built as an industrial building. The Belcher Bath House tapped a unique resource known as "Belcher water." In the refinery's quest to find a purer substitute for the muddy Mississippi water, a 2,200 foot well had been drilled between 1849 and 1854. When the mineral content of the water turned out to be unsuitable for refining, Belcher opened the well to the public. In an 1871 account, an observer noted that the fountain was surrounded by a lively crowd at all hours, even though the water "tastes like a mixture of salt and sulphur."⁴ Prized for its medicinal qualities, Belcher water was apparently served at breakfast in hotels throughout the city.

Capitalizing on the fame of the well, in 1894 the Belcher Water Bath Company (which had no connection to the refinery, although apparently members of the Belcher family were involved) acquired the site and built a small bath house. The \$14,000 building was designed by local architects Stewart, McClure & Mullgardt. (Ten years later a downtown hotel, the "Belcher Bath Hotel," opened at Lucas and 4th Street, connected to the water source by a mile-long pipe. The hotel, characterized as a "plush health spa for the rich and influential," was demolished in 1976 to make way for a parking lot.)⁵ The bathhouse was converted to a storage facility after a few years, and in 1919 an eastern addition in the Arts & Crafts style approximately doubled the building's storage capacity.

³ Curzon, 376-77.

⁴ *Every Saturday Magazine*, October 14 1871, v. 111 #94, 382.

⁵ Presberg, Edward J., "An End to a Tale of Glory and Decline," *The St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, April 5, 1976.

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Power

St. Louis' first extensive display of street illumination was the hit of "Fall Festival" time in 1882. An Ordinance of 1884 allowed virtually anyone to install wires, conduits, cables and go into the electric utility business. Soon, twenty-two individuals and companies were in competition. In 1891, electric trolleys appeared on St. Louis streets and the City began subsidizing electric street lighting.

In 1891 a new player, the Laclède Power Company of St. Louis, organized for the purpose of making, distributing and selling electricity and electrical devices.⁶ The company grew, recapitalizing from \$75,000 to \$400,000 in 1895 and again voting to double the capital stock in 1900. Five days into the following year, a permit was issued for a \$55,000 powerhouse at 1240 Lewis. Although there is no comprehensive survey of electrical generating facilities in St. Louis, this is undoubtedly one of the earliest still in existence. Its vast open interior, with most of the machinery now removed, indicates the large scale of the generating equipment housed here. Originally operated with three 500-kilowatt engines, the plant had a capacity of 4,500 kilowatts by 1906. Its footprint was determined by the property lines adjacent to the railroad track, resulting in an unusual wedge-shaped design. A 1906 internal report stated that the "power station property is well located, but of the most unfortunate size and shape. The most serious feature, however, is the capacity limitation and the awkward manner in which apparatus must be installed."⁷

With the proliferation of new electrical companies, consolidation was inevitable. A series of mergers at the turn of the century led to a major consolidation in 1902 of the Imperial Electric Light and Power Company and two others. The resulting Union Electric Light & Power Company quickly commissioned a lavish new plant on the site of the Merchants' Elevator, which offered both rail and barge access for fuel shipments. The new plant was a prominent example of public works initiatives undertaken in preparation for the 1904 World's Fair.⁸

Although not on the World's Fair, Grounds, a major point of interest during the exhibit was the ultra-modern Ashley Street Station. This was the first central generating Station in St. Louis and possessed the astounding capacity of 12,000 kilowatts. Engineers and

⁶ Laclède Power was apparently a New Jersey company from 1889-1891, when its properties and interest were acquired by the new St. Louis corporation. "The Laclède Power Company of St. Louis" unpublished report, 12-22-1906, from M. S. Hopkins to E. W. Clark & Co. On file at Ameren-UE, St. Louis.
⁷ *ibid.*, 20.

⁸ J.W. McAfee, *St. Louis and the Union Electric Company*, New York: Newcomen Society of England, American, 1947.

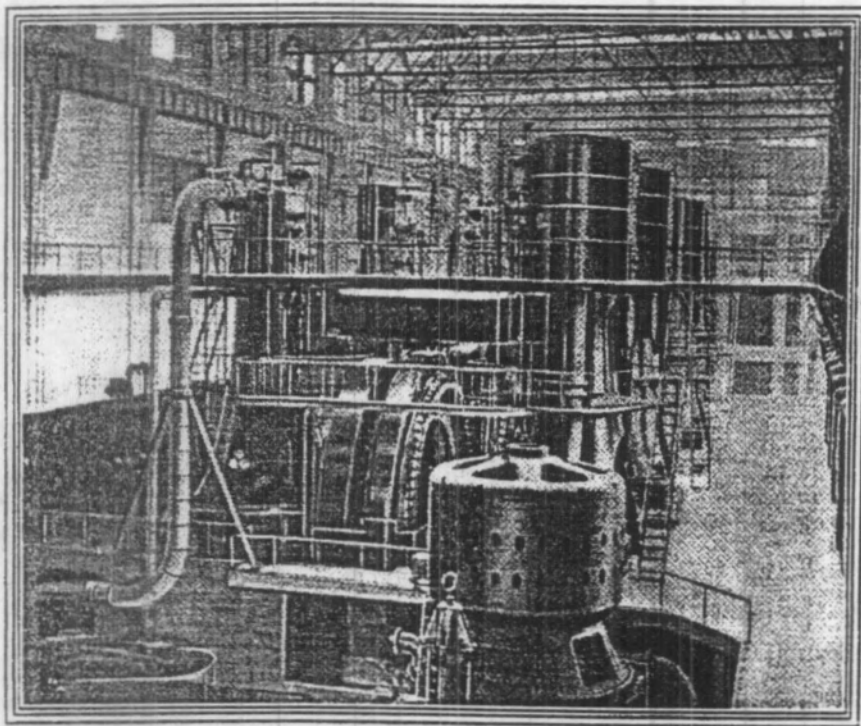
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St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

others interested in power production flocked to the plant. Foreign travelers instructed their secretaries to record every word uttered by the guides on the plant tours.⁹



INTERIOR VIEW OF OUR PLANT AT ASHLEY STREET.

Figure2: Ashley Street plant view of 1907.

A machine shop across the railroad tracks, permitted in 1902, was probably complete long before the Ashley Street plant itself.

By 1906, directors of the Laclede Power Company of St. Louis decided to sell the company. The stock was transferred through a series of holding companies and finally purchased by Union Electric in a deal forged at the end of 1907. UE had purchased the 1240 Lewis Street station in a separate transaction earlier that year.

⁹ "UE's Growth in Half-century Reflects Electricity's Progress," *Union Electric News*, January 1950. 2.

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North Riverfront Industrial Historic District
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

The heyday of the Ashley plant and its subsidiaries was brief. By 1912, Union Electric supplied over 50,000 kilowatts of energy to its customers. In 1913 UE began to purchase electricity from the Keokuk hydroelectric plant in Iowa; it bought the plant in 1926. Technology and demand advanced so rapidly that the new Cahokia plant, brought on line in 1923, had 25 times the generating power that Ashley Street did. With upgrades and new technology, however, Ashley Street has remained an important part of St. Louis' power supply. Purchased by the Trigen energy Corporation in the 1980s, the plant now powers the downtown steam loop, which includes many old and new office buildings and the Dome at America's Center among its customers.

The Ashley Street Station was listed as a City Landmark in 1971.

Cold Storage

Mechanical icemaking technology was introduced in the 1860s, giving rise to new options in home and commercial refrigeration. One of the most famous examples of early ice-powered refrigeration technology was the refrigerated railcars of Anheuser-Busch, which allowed the distribution of lager beer throughout a wide territory. The use of ice for refrigeration was successful for home and small-scale applications, but really large-scale commercial refrigeration became far more viable after the widespread introduction of mechanical cooling towards the end of the century.

One of St. Louis' pioneers in the area of cold storage was Thomas S. McPheeters. Already president of a large warehouse company, McPheeters was well-prepared to found the St. Louis Refrigerating & Cold Storage Company at the turn of the century. Although not the first to attempt large-scale mechanical refrigeration in St. Louis, within a few years the company was claimed to be the best equipped and one of the largest in the United States.¹⁰

McPheeters had a long-standing investment in the area with his 1881 warehouse located on the 1100 block of Lewis Street (still extant about a block south of district boundaries). His first district building for the cold storage company was constructed in 1900 at 1312-22 Lewis, just north of the LaClede Power plant. The second building followed in the next year on the city block immediately southwest. Designed by the same firm, the two buildings used similar architectural devices to establish their common purpose and ownership.

¹⁰ Walter B. Stevens, *Centennial History of Missouri: (the Center State), One Hundred Years in the Union, 1820-1921* (St. Louis: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1921), 631.

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North Riverfront Industrial Historic District
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

By 1904, St. Louis had four cold storage companies with any real capacity. McPheeters' company boasted more powerful equipment than any other.¹¹ It is one of two which shows a cold storage capacity of one million cubic feet.

By 1925, St. Louis Refrigeration & Cold Storage's capacity had doubled to two million square feet. All of its original equipment had been updated, and its total refrigerating capacity remained one of the highest in the city at 1316 tons.¹²

In 1912, the largest building from the Belcher Sugar Refinery was obtained by one of McPheeters' competitors, the Mississippi Valley Cold Storage Company. The building was sold to the Booth Cold Storage Company in 1915, and was used for cold storage for many years before becoming vacant and ultimately being demolished in 2001. Despite the enormous amount of space within the building, the 1925 Blue Book shows only 300 tons of refrigerating capacity, less than a fourth of McPheeters' facilities across the street.

Other Uses

Accessible to the north riverfront rail lines and close to downtown, the North Riverfront Industrial District hosted a variety of other uses. Among the most intact buildings in the district is the warehouse constructed for the Kennard & Sons Rug Company at 1230 N. 2nd Street. The firm goes back to 1857 (or 56 by some accounts) when Baltimore rug dealer John Kennard arrived here and established a shop near 4th and St. Charles. Joined by sons John, Jr. and Samuel, Kennard built the company into "one of the most extensive dealers of carpets, foreign and domestic, oil cloths, curtains and lace goods, in the West."¹³ In 1901, Samuel Kennard built a new downtown headquarters designed by Isaac Taylor, at that time one of the most prestigious architects in St. Louis. Taylor's unusual interpretation of the Italian Renaissance (perhaps the

¹¹ *Ice and Refrigeration Blue Book, 1904-1905* (Chicago: Nickerson & Collins, 1905?). This national guide appears to be quite exhaustive, with listings for 92 separate facilities in St. Louis. The majority are for small manufacturing or processing enterprises, twenty are breweries, seven are for exhibits at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, and three are for private residences (including August and Adolphus Busch). Of all of the listings, only three have a higher refrigeration capacity than the St. Louis Refrigeration and Cold Storage Company: Anheuser-Busch Brewery, Anheuser-Busch Ice Plant, and the Lemp Brewery. As an interesting but irrelevant side note, 13 out of the 15 listings in the state of Montana are for breweries.

¹² *Ice and Refrigeration Blue Book and Buyers' Guide, 1925* (Chicago: Nickerson & Collins, 1926). By this time, many of St. Louis' 323 listings are for individual stores and markets with average capacities of 2-4 tons. Refrigeration was also found in hospitals, private clubs, the custom house, and at least one skating rink.

¹³ Compton & Dry, 186.

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North Riverfront Industrial Historic District
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

work of his assistant Oscar Enders) was a showplace not just for the company's goods but for the company itself.¹⁴ Kennard turned to Taylor again for his north riverfront warehouse, constructed in stages in 1904 and 1906. The rug company used some of the building for its own storage; the other main tenant was the Shapleigh Hardware Company (one of St. Louis' largest hardware and lumber suppliers).

The Beck & Corbitt Iron Company built its offices and stores at 1232-40 N. First Street in 1903. A large addition was constructed in 1911. There was also a one-story section at the site of the present loading dock on the north side of the building. It appears that the company also had a factory in Little Rock, Arkansas (according to the 1899 city directory). Established in 1852, the company sold "iron, steel pipe, boiler tubes, mining, railway and mill supplies, machinery and supplies for blacksmiths, machinists, garages, wagonmakers and carriage trimmers."¹⁵ Beck & Corbitt managed the transition from the wagon age into the automobile age: by 1924 the company had a new location in the automobile district (at 3010-12 Locust) and styled itself as an automotive equipment company.

Integrity

Technological changes shaped the North Riverfront Industrial Historic District, and it was *changing technology that eventually rendered it obsolete*. Large-scale warehousing and power generation both eventually moved away from the urban cores to much larger facilities than those in the district. Many buildings bear the scars of their disuse: partial demolition of three of them; infill and board-ups at others. Nonetheless, the buildings of the district retain ample integrity to convey the character of an early 20th century industrial center. Richly detailed buildings in close proximity to rail, river and each other offer rare insight into the way industry worked at the dawn of the 20th century.

¹⁴ Landmarks Association of St. Louis. "J. Kennard & Sons Carpet Company Building" National Register nomination, listed 5/5/2000.

¹⁵ *Gould's St. Louis Red Book for 1916* (St. Louis: Gould Directory Company, 1915), cover advertisement.

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St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

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St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

UTM References (continued)

E. Zone	Easting	Northing
<u>15</u>	<u>745 320</u>	<u>4280 060</u>

F. Zone	Easting	Northing
<u>15</u>	<u>745 310</u>	<u>4280 210</u>

G. Zone	Easting	Northing
<u>15</u>	<u>745 130</u>	<u>4280 170</u>

H. Zone	Easting	Northing
<u>15</u>	<u>745 120</u>	<u>4280 260</u>

I. Zone	Easting	Northing
<u>15</u>	<u>745 240</u>	<u>4280 320</u>

J. Zone	Easting	Northing
<u>15</u>	<u>745 280</u>	<u>4280 390</u>

Verbal Boundary Description

Boundaries of the North Riverfront Industrial Historic District are defined by the dashed line shown on the accompanying map titled, North Riverfront Industrial Historic District.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries are drawn as tightly as possible around the eight contributing resources which comprise the district in order to exclude surrounding, noncontributing vacant land. Other historic buildings in the vicinity (in particular, an 1881 warehouse to the south and an early 20th century train depot to the north) did not fit well into the district but may be individually eligible.

North Riverfront Industrial
 Historic District
 St. Louis, MO
 (Independent City)

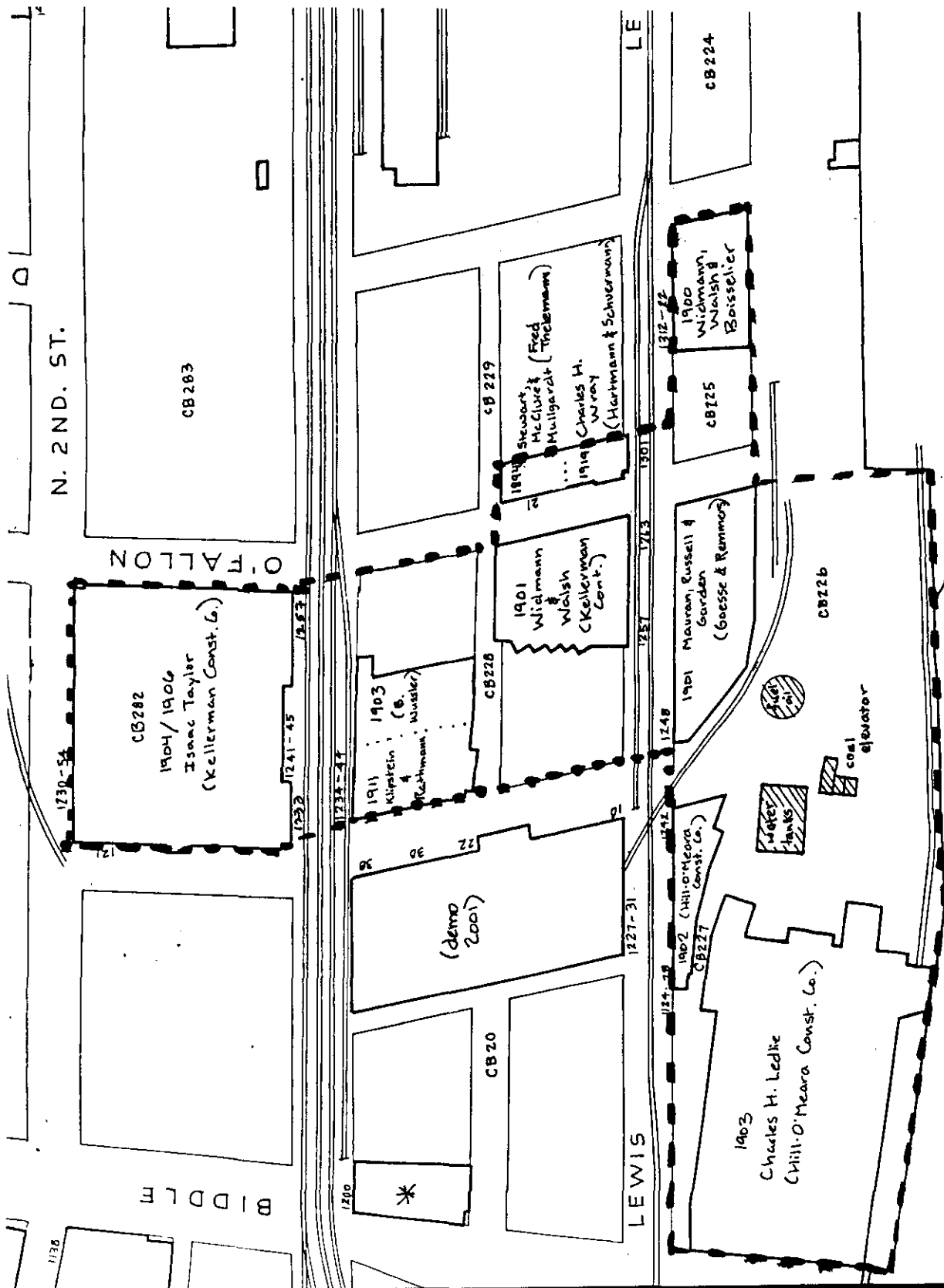
Boundary map

Base map: Pat Hays Baer, 2001

Boundaries indicated by
 dashed line

Architects indicated with date
 Contractors in parentheses

Noncontributing: 



MISSISSIPPI



NORTH
 RIVERFRONT
 INDUSTRIAL
 HISTORIC
 DISTRICT
 ST. LOUIS
 [Independent
 City], MO
 ZONE 15

- A: EASTING 745 350
NORTHING 4290 420
- B: 745 370
4280 260
- C: 745 430
4280 270
- D: 745 440
4280 070
- E: 745 320
4280 060
- F: 745 310

- 1 020 000 FEET
(MO EAST)
4280 210
- G: 745 130
4280 170
 - H: 745 120
4280 260
 - I: 745 240
4280 320
 - J: 745 280
4280 390

10' 47' 48' 920 000 FEET (MO EAST) 49°00' E 90°07' 30"

INTERIOR - GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA - 1999

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Primary highway hard surface
- Secondary highway hard surface
- Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
- Unimproved road

- Interstate Route
- U.S. Route
- State Route



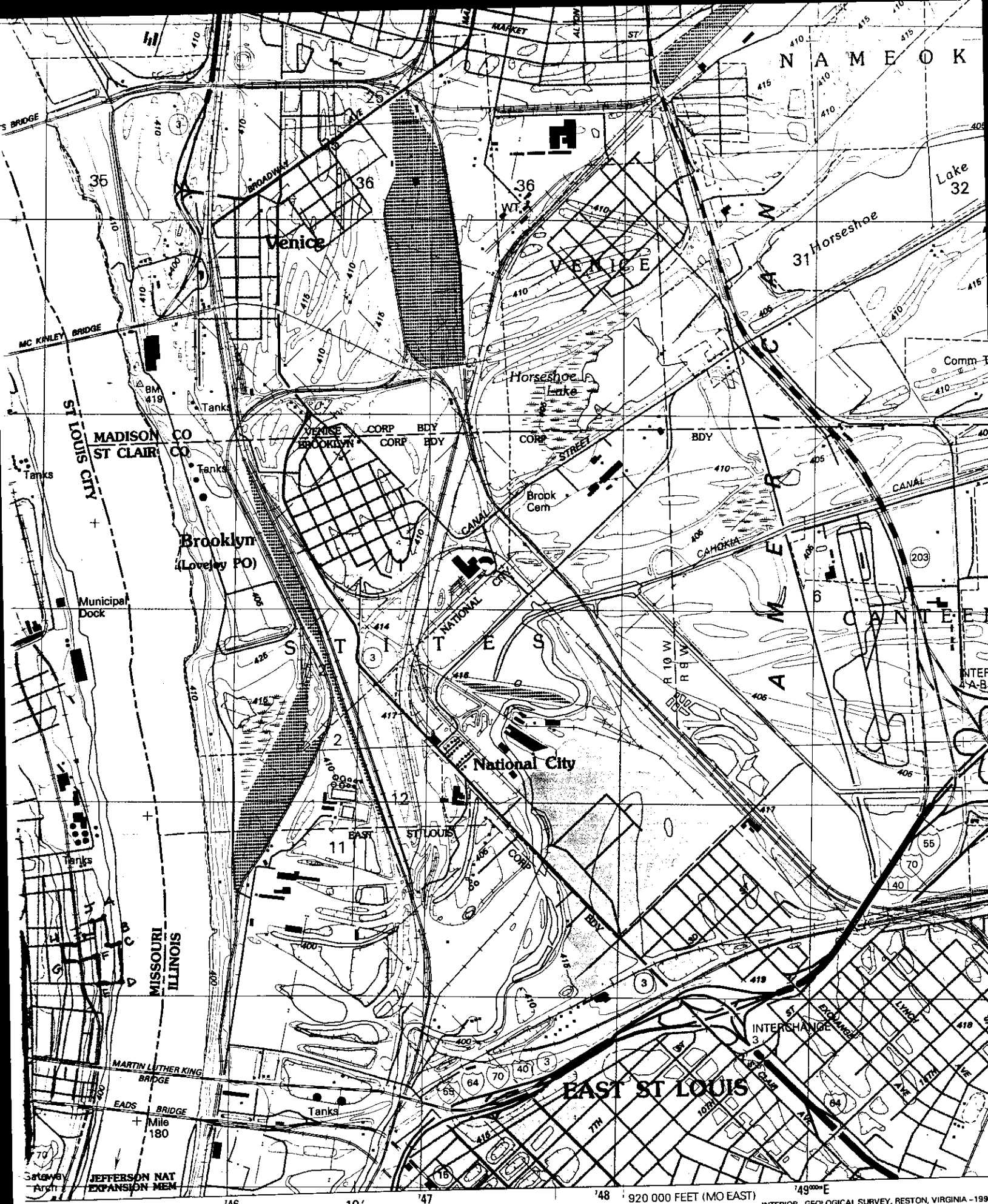
QUADRANGLE LOCATION

1	2	3	1 Florissant
			2 Columbia Bottom
			3 Wood River
4	5		4 Clayton
			5 Monks Mound
			6 Webster Groves
			7 Cahokia
6	7	8	8 French Village

GRANITE CITY, IL-MO

1998





Primary highway hard surface Light-duty road, hard or improved surface

INTERIOR - GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA - 1991

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

920 000 FEET (MO EAST)

4 000

1200-1224 LEWIS ST.
1200-1224 LEWIS ST. INDUSTRIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
ST. LOUIS (INDEPENDENT CITY), MO

6/10/2006

12/2001

Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis

#1

1200-1224 Lewis St.
North Riverfront Industrial Historic District
St Louis (Independent City), MO

Lynn Jesse

12/2001

Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis

#1



1228 Lewis St. (center)

North Riverfront Individual Historic District
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Lynn Jusse

12/2001

Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis

Facing N
#2



1240 Lewis St, center (Laclede Pouson Co)
North Riverfront Industrial Historic District
St Louis (Independent City), MO

Carolyn Tett

12/2020

Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis

camera facing N

Photo 3



1240 Lewis St
North Riverfront Industrial Historic District
St Louis (Independent City), MO

Lynn Jossa

12/2001

Landmarks Assoc of St. Louis

Facing SW

4



1312-22 Lewis St.

North Riverfront Industrial Historic District
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Carolyn Teft

12/2000
Landmarks Assoc. of St Louis

Camera facing SE

Photo 5



1301 Lewis

Near Riverfront Industrial Historic District
St Louis (Independent City), MO

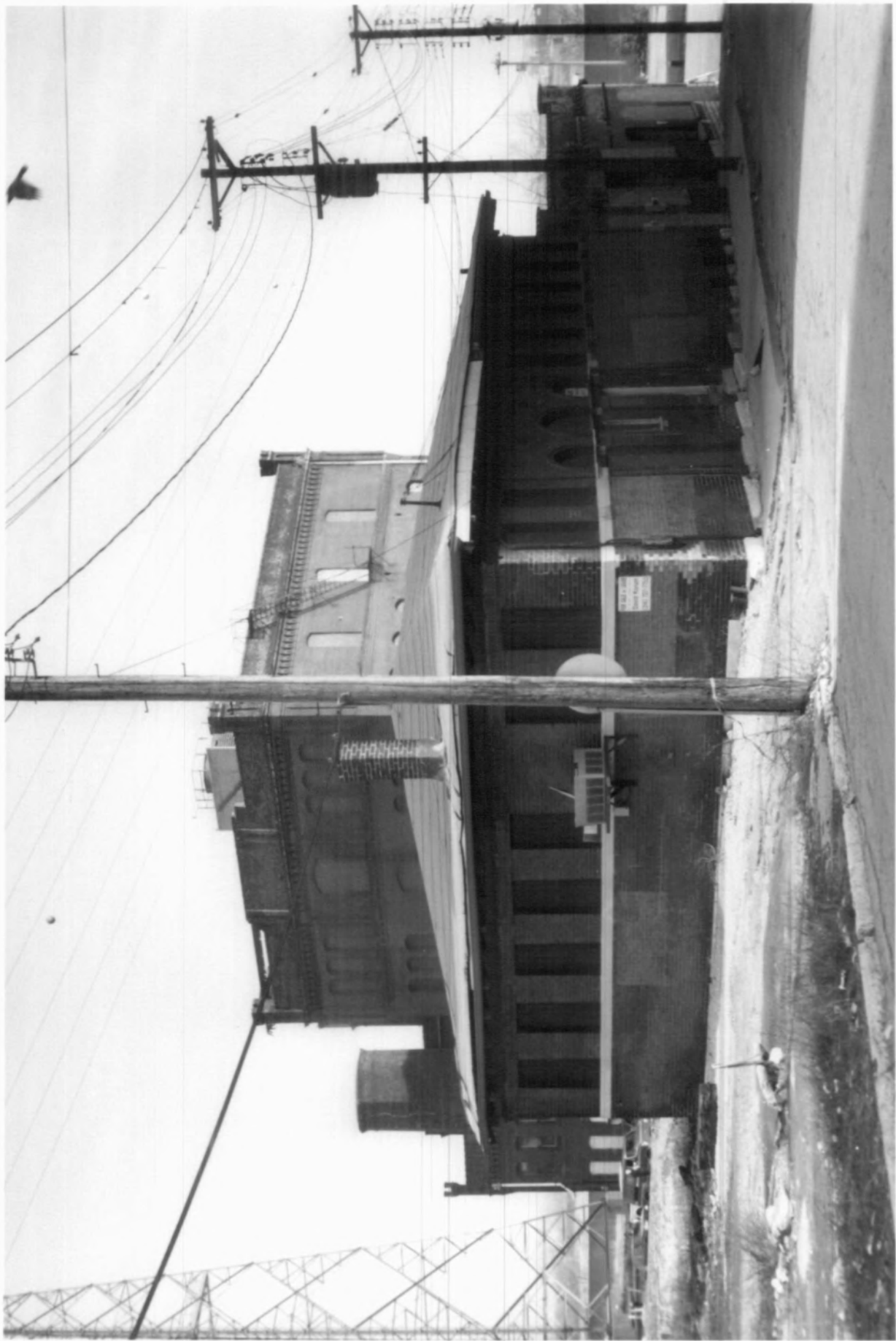
Lynn Jesse

12/2001

Landmarks Assoc of St. Louis

Facing NE

#6



1232 410 N First (right)
North Riverfront Industrial Historic District
St. Louis (Independent City), MO

Lynn Josse
12/2001
Landmarks Assoc of St. Louis

Facing NE
7



1240 Lewis St (left), 1257-63 Lewis, 1230-54 N. 2nd (background), 1301 Lewis

North Fivefoot Industrial Historic District

St Louis (Independent City), MO

Lynn Jesse

12/2001

Landmarks Assoc. of St Louis

#8



1230-54 N. 2nd Street
J. Kennard & Sons Carpet Company Warehouse

North Riverfront Industrial Historic District

St. Louis [Independent City], MO

Carolyn Tott

12/2000

Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis

Facing SE

Photo 9



1240 Lewis St.

Laclede Power Co

N Riverfront Industrial Historic District

St Louis (Independent City), MO
Photographer unknown (courtesy AmerenUE)

date unknown - Pre-1970s

AmerenUE, St Louis

Camera facing SE

#10
photo 10



Ashley Street Power Plant
North Riverfront Industrial & Historic District
St. Louis [Independent City], MO

Lynn Jesse
5/2002

Landmarks Assoc. of St. Louis

Turbine Hall, camera facing south

Photo 11

