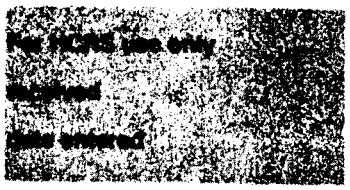
FHR-8-300 (11-78)

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



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

1. Name

historic Richardson, John D., Dry Goods Co.

and/or common American Electric Company

2. Location

street & number 300 North 3rd ___ not for publication

city, town St. Joseph ___ vicinity of congressional district #6 - Hon. Thomas Coleman

state Missouri code 29 county Buchanan code 021

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	X occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
X building(s)	X private	___ unoccupied	X commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	___ private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	X yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
		___ no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name American Electric Co.

street & number 300 North 3rd

city, town St. Joseph ___ vicinity of state Missouri 64501

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the Recorder of Deeds, Buchanan County Courthouse

street & number 5th and Jule

city, town St. Joseph state Missouri 64501

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

1. Historic Preservation Inventory, St. Joseph, Missouri

title Johnson, Johnson & Roy, Inc. has this property been determined elegible? ___ yes X no

date 1972 ___ federal ___ state ___ county X local

depository for survey records St. Joseph City Planning Department, City Hall

city, town St. Joseph state Missouri 64501

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

RICHARDSON, JOHN D., DRY GOODS CO.



2. Missouri State Historical Survey
1980 — state
Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City • — Missouri 65102

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3. St. Joseph City Directories, 1920-1976.

4. Scrapbooks maintained by the American Electric Co. in the offices of the Co.

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2. Thomas W. Carneal, Associate Professor of History
Northwest Missouri State University — June 24, 1980
306 Colden Hall — 816/582-4171 ext. 1289
Maryville — Missouri 64468

3. James M. Denny, Section Chief, Nominations-Survey
Reviewer and State Contact Person
Department of Natural Resources — September 5, 1980
Historic Preservation Program — 314/751-4096
P.O. Box 176
Jefferson City — Missouri 65102

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	_X_ original site
_X_ good	___ ruins	_X_ altered	___ moved date _____
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Richardsonian Romanesque style of public buildings is characterized by a straightforward treatment of stone, broad roof planes and a select distribution of openings. The John D. Richardson Dry Goods Co. warehouse in St. Joseph, Missouri is a fine example of this style of architecture which bloomed impressively in the West where cities achieved their first maturity in the heyday of Richardsonian Romanesque architectural style.

The John D. Richardson Dry Goods Co. warehouse is a seven story structure which measures approximately 196 feet along the Third Street facade and 136 feet on the Jules Street facade. The building displays the heaviness, solidity and ruggedness of brick and stone masonry which is characteristic of the style.

The south and east facades are punctuated with transomed windows set deeply into the wall and arranged in groups (singly on the first story, in pairs on the second and third stories, singly on the fourth story and in groups of three on the top three stories) in ribbon-like fashion. At first and fourth floor levels the windows are set in large arched openings without columns or piers.

The terra-cotta faced facades on Jules and Third Street are detailed with Renaissance derivation motifs. Some of these are the scroll shapes, wreaths and garlands which decorate the facades at the fourth floor area and on the southeast and southwest corners of the building.

The main entrance to the building is recessed into an open corner on the first story at the southeast corner (Third and Jules). The opening is supported by a massive granite column with foliated forms on the capital. The ceiling of the entrance is coffered.

The interior of the structure shows the construction of a nearly fireproof structure with steel and concrete load bearing beams and columns. The steel columns vary from floor to floor with the columns becoming smaller as the load weight decreases. The first floor has been remodeled into office space for the present occupant of the building.

Styles of the late 19th century changed with staccato-like speed. But the rich, robust, straightforward design of the Richardsonian style is most eloquently demonstrated in the John D. Richardson Dry Goods Co. warehouse.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1892 **Builder/Architect** ~~Unknown~~ E.J. Lckel

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The John D. Richardson Dry Goods Co. is significant as a good example of a warehouse designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style and as the building housing one of St. Joseph, Missouri's most important wholesale companies.

The overall stylistic impression of the building is Richardsonian Romanesque: its massiveness, its use of round arch forms, and its fenestration. This impression is diluted, however, by the robustness that rock faced surfaces might have provided and by the use of Renaissance elements - the rusticated first story and the terra cotta decoration which is classical, not romanesque. This type of free wheeling eclecticism is common in Missouri where since the mid-nineteenth century various concurrent architectural styles have been overlapping and intermixing to produce hybrids of different types. In this instance, the hybridization is understated enough that a clashing effect is not created.

The wholesale merchant has been an important figure in the development of St. Joseph, Missouri. The building being nominated to the National Register has been occupied, successively, by three of the major wholesale firms of the city.

In the 1850's, St. Joseph was the major outfitter for the California/Colorado/Oregon-bound wagon trains. From this function prior to the Civil War, St. Joseph grew into one of the three major wholesale centers in the United States--on a par with Chicago and New York City. By the late 1880's and early 1890's seven railroads were operating in and out of the city, there was a massive Union Station, the city boasted a first class water system and the banks of the city had deposits of over 6 and 1/3 million dollars.

This building was constructed in 1892 for the Richardson, Roberts, Byrne Dry Goods Co. It is adjacent to the Wholesale Row Historic District; is one block west of the Buchanan County Courthouse and two blocks north of the Missouri Valley Trust Company Historic District.

John D. Richardson, the majority stockholder of the dry goods firm, was born in 1847 in Dorchester County, Maryland and emigrated to St. Joseph in 1870. When Richardson arrived in St. Joseph, he was employed by the firm of Donnell and Saxton, one of the earliest business partnerships of the city. Donnell and Saxton were involved in the construction of the St. Joseph and Grand Island Railroad west from St. Joseph. The St. Joseph and Grand Island Railroad incorporated trackage of the Marysville or Palmetto and Roseport Railroad, the first railroad in Kansas. This trackage is now a portion of the Union Pacific System.

By 1882, Richardson had become a partner of John S. Brittain in the Brittain, Richardson & Co. wholesale dry goods firm. The building constructed by this company is a part of Wholesale Row Historic District.

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National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

RICHARDSON, JOHN D., DRY GOODS CO.



In 1890 Richardson withdrew from the partnership with Brittain and formed his own firm. His partners were Joseph F. Roberts and T.B. Byrne. In 1892 the firm erected this magnificent seven story building at a cost of $60,000.00. By 1900 the firm had become known as John D. Richardson Dry Goods. In 1901 $20,000.00 was spent on remodeling the building and in 1917 another $40,000.00. By this time it was the largest wholesale dry goods plant in the city.

Following the death of Richardson in 1924, the firm remained in business for some years but had disappeared from the St. Joseph scene by 1930.

Richardson was married to Allie Donovan in 1897 at Christ Episcopal Church where he later served many terms as Vestryman. Mrs. Richardson was the sister of John Donovan Jr. who was an organizer of the St. Joseph Stockyards. and was instrumental in attracting several major meat packing houses to St. Joseph.

Following the demise of the Richardson firm, the building stood vacant until about 1940 when the southern portion of the building was occupied by the Kansas City Quartermaster Sub-Depot. Also, in 1940 the northern portion was occupied as a "storeroom" by Wyeth Hardware and Manufacturing Co., another wholesale giant of the city. By 1947, Wyeth had occupied the entire building and remained in occupancy until the building was purchased by American Electric. This latter firm was forced to move from the building they had occupied since 1927 when the Urban Renewal plans for St. Joseph called for the demolition of the structure.

American Electric Co. was founded in 1897 by Luther Reid and E.L. Platt. Platt was apparently an inactive partner in the firm before his death in 1926. Reid was a native of rural North Central Missouri, born on a farm six miles north of Moberly in 1869. He moved to St. Joseph in 1891 where he was employed by Frank Yenawine, the first "electrician" of the city. It was while he was working for Yenawine that Reid conceived the idea of a wholesale electric supply house. The firm has not only served through the years as a wholesaler for electrical contractors but has also held the wholesale franchise for Edison Mazda lamps, Maytag washers, G.E. refrigerators, and Crosley radios, among others. He was an organizer of the Community Chest, the Humane Society, the St. Joseph Rotary Club (now the Downtown Rotary), and the St. Joseph Museum and served on the boards of these groups for many terms.

9. Major Bibliographical References

1. History of Buchanan County and St. Joseph, MO. St. Joseph: Midland Printing Co., 1916.

2. Logan, Sheridan. Old Saint Jo, Gateway to the West, 1799-1932: Private Printing by the John Sublett Logan Foundation, The Meriden Gravure Co., The Stinehour Press, 1979.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name "St. Joseph, North, Mo." Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	15	340960	4403520
B			
C			
D			
E			
F			
G			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

All of Lots 7 through 12, Block 28, Original Town of St. Joseph, Missouri.

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title J. Nancy Sandehn, Research Consultant

organization Northwest Missouri Historical Inventory date August 1, 1980

street & number Box 43 telephone 816/279-3558

city or town St. Joseph state Missouri 64501

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state X local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Signed

title Director, Department of Natural Resources and State Historic Preservation Officer date 16 Feb 82

For HCRS use only

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

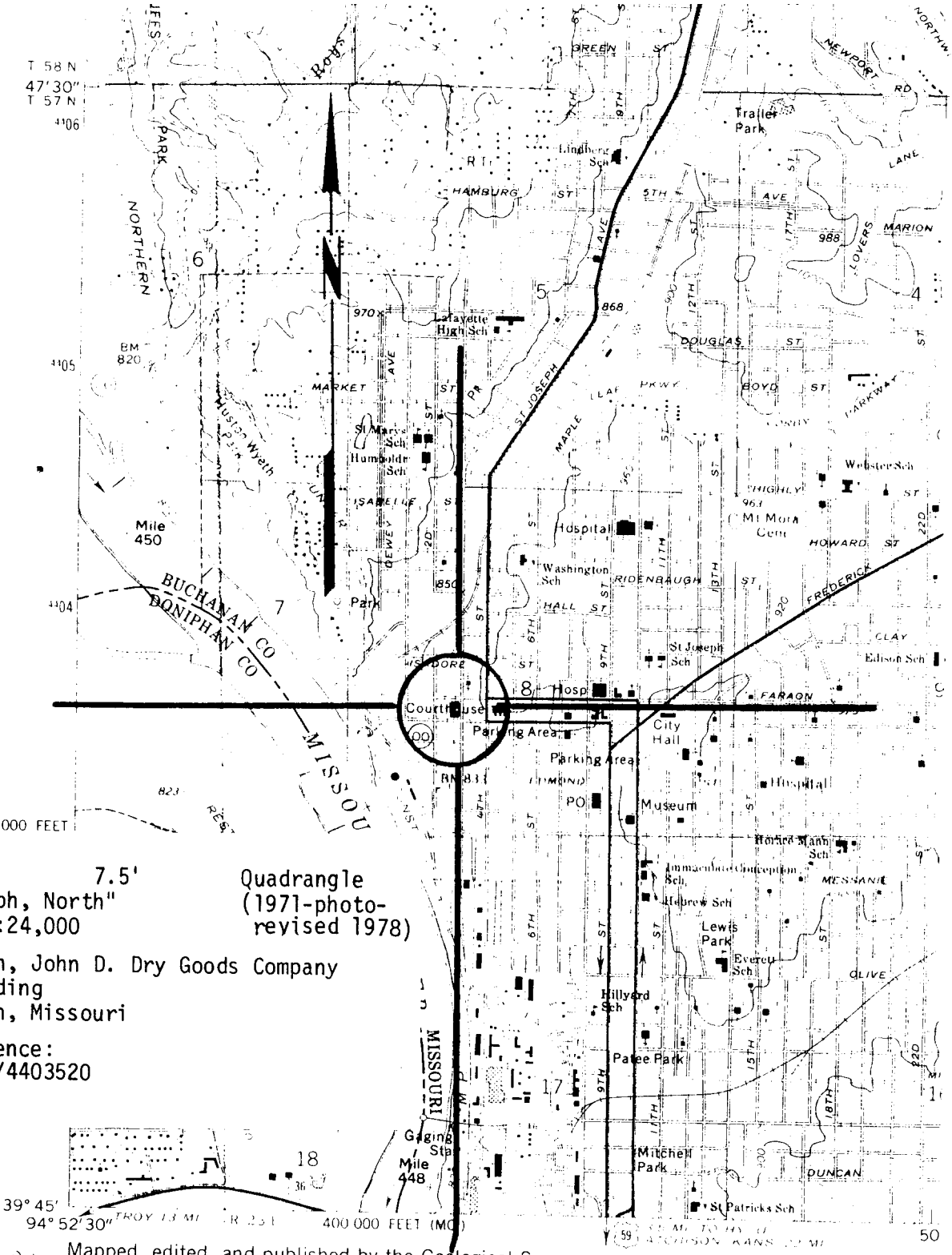
date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

GPO 938 835



U.S.G.S. 7.5' Quadrangle
"St. Joseph, North" (1971-photo-revised 1978)
Scale: 1:24,000

Richardson, John D. Dry Goods Company Building
St. Joseph, Missouri

UTM Reference:
15/340960/4403520

(HALLS) 7063 III NW

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1971

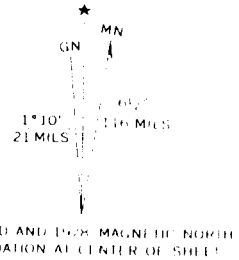
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Missouri coordinate system, west zone and Kansas coordinate system, north zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

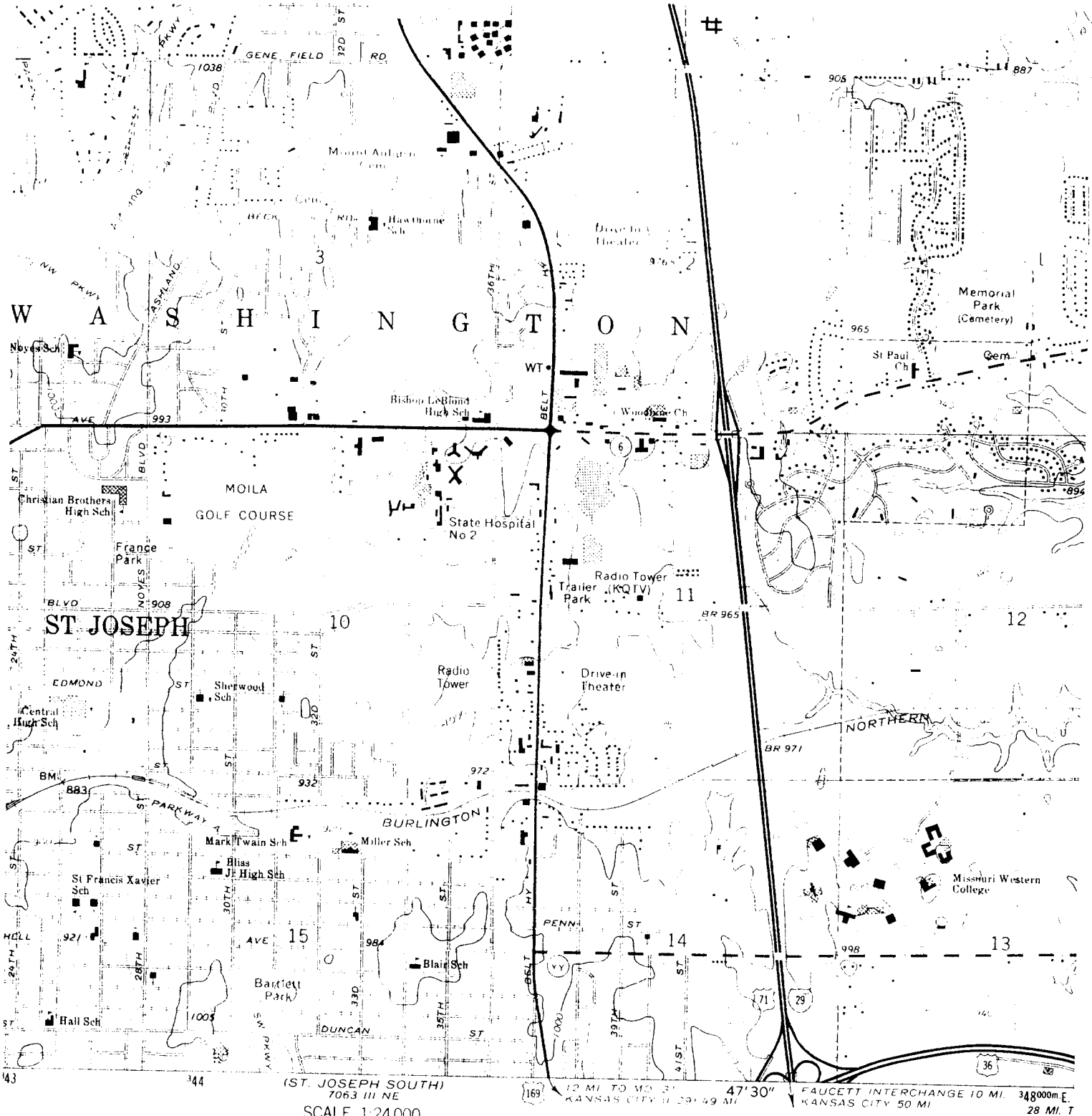
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1977. Map edited 1978. This information not field checked

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



UTM GRID AND 1978 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



SCALE 1:24000

1 MILE

1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET

1 KILOMETER

CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET

DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 5 FOOT CONTOURS

NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS

FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092

AND THE DIVISION OF RESEARCH AND TECHNICAL INFORMATION

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, ROLLA, MISSOURI 65401

AND STATE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, LAWRENCE, KANSAS 66044

A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

Photo Log:

Name of Property: **Richardson, John D., Dry Goods Company**

City or Vicinity: **St. Joseph**

County: **Buchanan County** State: **MO**

Photographer: **Tom Carneal**

Date Photographed: **Jun. 1980**

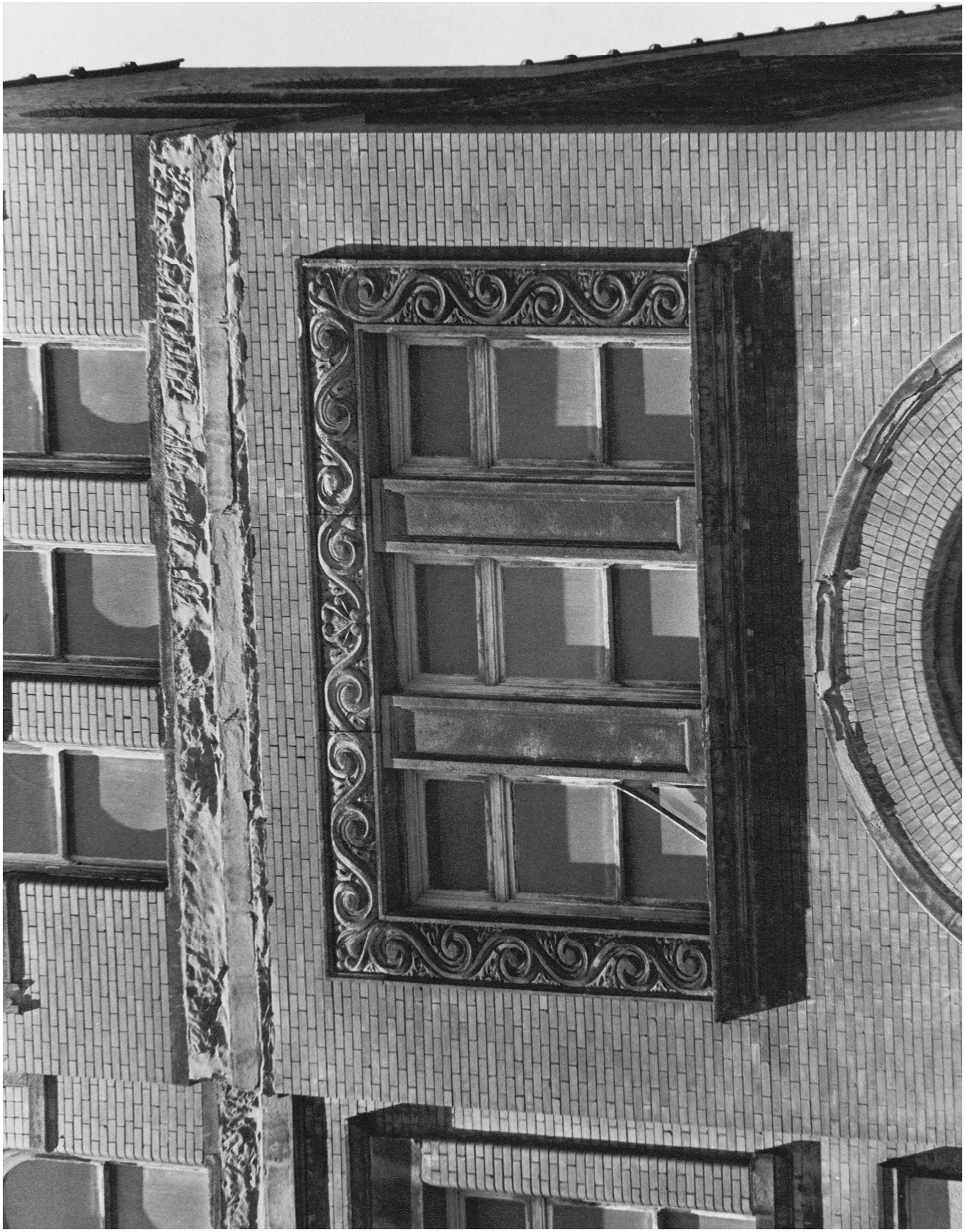
Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

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2 of 14. NE.
3 of 14. S.
4 of 14. S.
5 of 14. S.
6 of 14. S.
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8 of 14. S.
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11 of 14. E.
12 of 14. N.
13 of 14. Interior.
14 of 14. Interior.


American
Elec.
Co.


ONE WAY
STOP
American
Electric
co.





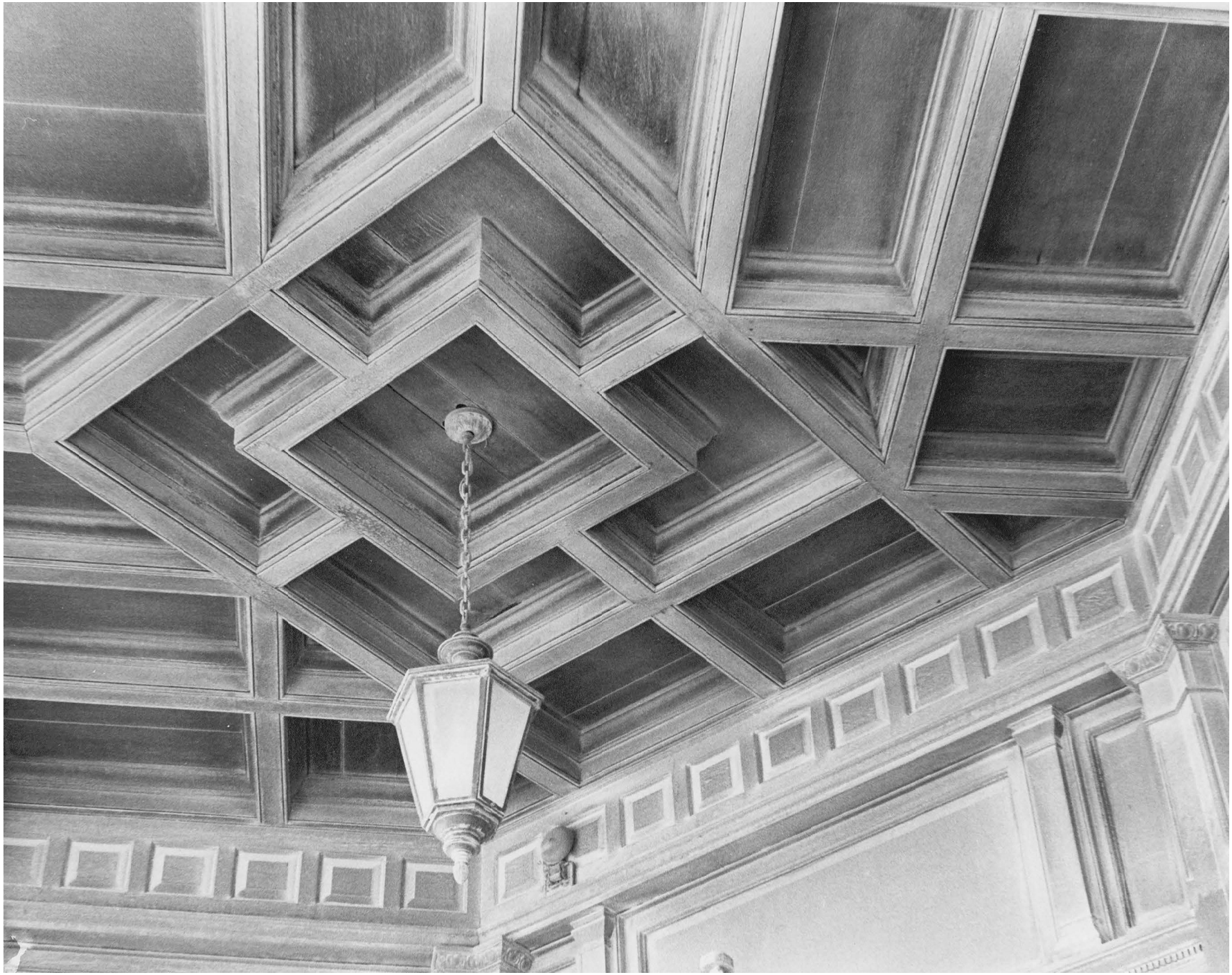







NO
PARKING
OR
STANDING
EVROLET


STOP




RECEIVING DOCKS


FRAGILE
GLASS

