

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name St. Louis Post-Dispatch Building

other names/site number Old Post-Dispatch Building (current), Centennial Building, Missouri State Bank Building

2. Location

street & number 1139 Olive Street not for publication N/A
city or town St. Louis vicinity N/A
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 of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

 4 Dec. 95
Signature of certifying official Date Claire Blackwell Deputy SHPO

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 commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register
 other (explain):

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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 (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a 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 (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMUNICATIONS

COMMERCE

Period of Significance 1917-1949

Significant Dates 1917

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder Barnett, George D. (Barnett, Haynes, & Barnett)

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

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 Association of St. Louis, Inc.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	15	744 000	4279200	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

____ 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 Aimee Pellet, Research Assistant

organization Landmarks Association of St. Louis date September 21, 1999

street & number 917 Locust 7th Floor telephone (314) 421-6474

city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63101-1413

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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name OLTUC, L.L.C. - Jerome E. Glick and H. Meade Summers, III

street & number 18 S. Central Avenue telephone 314-726-0000

city or town Clayton state MO zip code 63105

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 1

St. Louis Post-Dispatch Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Description of Building

The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch Building* is an eight-story steel frame office/publishing building located in downtown St. Louis on the northeast corner of Tucker Boulevard (formerly 12th Street) and Olive Street. Faced with gray limestone in the Beaux-Arts Classical style, the building was constructed (1916-1917) from a design by George D. Barnett of Barnett, Haynes & Barnett (St. Louis). In a 1965 modernization project, the building received a curtain wall which covered the primary south and west elevations as well as one bay on the east elevation. Thirty-four years later (1999) the curtain wall was removed, returning an important design and significant history to St. Louis' central business district. Fortunately, damage as a result of the curtain wall was confined principally to the loss of segments of ornament (in the beltcourse above the 6th story and in the cornice above the 8th floor); and the loss of lower portions of the two-story fluted Ionic columns at the base. Vertical stripes of black paint and blocked-in windows (reversible alterations) also detract from the original facades. However, despite the impact of these losses, the dominant defining characteristics of the strongly stated tripartite Beaux-Arts Classical design survive intact and convey the building's historical associations. Major articulating features that remain include the monumental two-story Corinthian colonnade with recessed arches at the top of the building; the four-story shaft with carved stone portrait roundels and pierced work; and the entablatured center bays at the base which feature arches with intrados of carved stone rosettes. Interior renovations over the year have obliterated virtually all of the original floor plans and materials which have been replaced with drywall partitions.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 2

St. Louis Post-Dispatch Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

EXTERIOR

The exterior of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch Building* consists of two primary elevations, as well as two secondary ones. The primary elevations, which face major thoroughfares, are more elaborate and classically designed. Those two elevations are documented in an historic photo taken soon after the building was completed (Photo #1) and a current photo (Photo #2). The other two elevations were not meant for the public to see and are, therefore, simpler. The west elevation, with a frontage of 126 feet 9 inches, faces Tucker Boulevard (formerly Twelfth Street). The south elevation, with a frontage of 100 feet 3 inches, faces Olive Street. These relatively small frontages, coupled with the soaring height of nearly 140 feet from sidewalk to roof, dictated a vertical rather than the originally conceived horizontal scheme (See Section 8).

A photo from the construction of the building (see Photo #3) shows the steel frame construction filled in with hollow clay tiles. The weight of the building is supported by forty-eight caissons placed 50 to 70 feet down to the bedrock to the specifications of engineer H. H. Humphrey.¹ The exterior is faced with a layer of gray granite at the base. The remainder of the building is gray Bedford limestone. All of the original six-over-six and arched window panes were replaced with smaller ones during the 1965 alterations and the remaining space in the windows has been filled in with cinder blocks. When the curtain wall was added in 1965 every third or fourth vertical section was composed of metal mesh to allow for proper airflow. In order to mask the

¹ Engineering was unusually important during the design process due to the great weight of the presses and other equipment along with the desire to provide support for four additional should the need for expansion arise. These four floors were never added.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 3

St. Louis Post-Dispatch Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

gray limestone behind the mesh, the masonry was painted black behind these sections. *Current plans call for the removal of the paint.*

The west elevation is seven bays in length (see Photo #2). The first and second stories form the base which has a combination of pilasters and Ionic columns separating the bays with slightly recessed spandrels. The three center bays feature arched windows with decorative keystones at the second floor; the surrounding columns and entablature of these bays project slightly from the rest of the building. There is egg and dart molding on the entablature frieze and dentil work on the string course at the second story. *Installation of the curtain wall damaged the two Ionic columns.* Original cast iron storefronts were removed and the bays recessed to create an open arcade, but original Tudor rose guilloche is still visible on the underside of the eaves. The original main lobby entrance in the center bay of this elevation is still used as the main entrance for the Board of Election Commissioners.

The exterior of the third through the sixth floors is a simple design of flat limestone until it reaches the string course. There are two windows in each of the second through sixth bays and a larger, tripartite window in bays one and seven. The only decoration on this portion of the building is a series of pierce-work squares under each window of the fifth floor in the second through fifth bays and sculptured roundels representing figural heads under the windows in the first and seventh bays. The string course of this four story section is comprised of fretwork above foliated garlands. Small sections of this are missing, as the supports for the 1965 curtain wall were drilled in at regularly spaced intervals.

The sixth and seventh floors comprise the attic section. The second through the sixth bays have recessed arched windows that are separated by four rounded, Corinthian columns. Each arched window has a decorative keystone and recessed

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 4

St. Louis Post-Dispatch Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

spandrels that separate the sixth and seventh floors. The first and seventh bays have a single window on each floor, the one on the sixth being topped off with a hood mold. There is a nearly intact rounded molding on the frieze at the top of the building. Directly above this molding there are several intermittent dentils. The missing dentils, along with the bracketed balustrade, were removed to allow for the addition of the sheathing in 1965. The roof itself is flat with a group of original, connected utility buildings perched atop.

The south elevation is nearly identical to the west elevation with the following exceptions. The first floor center bay of this five-bay elevation was originally the *entrance to the elevator lobby*. Unlike the *Twelfth street elevation entrance*, this doorway is recessed with a decoratively coffered intrados. One of the original cast-iron storefronts remains in the westernmost bay and, unlike those on the west elevation, the columns that surround the center bay here are nearly intact.

Neither the north nor the east elevation has street frontage so both were, therefore, designed along much simpler lines with less expensive materials. The ornate design of the south elevation wraps around the east elevation but only through the first bay, as this was visible to passersby on Olive Street (see Photo #4). The piers and spandrels of the remaining six bays of the east elevation are grayish-brown brick. The original large windows have been replaced with smaller ones, two to an opening. The remaining space has been filled in with red brick. Much of the view of the first four floors of this elevation is obstructed by the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch Printing Building* (NRHP 1984), which is separated by a narrow ally and connected to the *Post-Dispatch Building* at the second and third floors of the second bay.

The view of the north elevation is also obstructed from the street to the fifth floor by a parking garage at the corner of Tucker Boulevard and Locust Street. This five-bay

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 7 Page 5

St. Louis Post-Dispatch Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

elevation also has grayish-brown brick piers and spandrels and red brick in-fill in the space surrounding the smaller windows. Unlike the east elevation there is no wrap-around of the detailed work from the Tucker Boulevard elevation.

INTERIOR

Upon entering the building from the Tucker entrance, one can still envision the original layout of the building, with the staircase and mezzanine level to the north and the elevator lobby to the south (see Photo #5). The original walls and columns have been covered with modern drywall and glass partitions have been added to section off the elevator lobby. This leaves nothing of historic significance visible with the possible exception of the terrazzo floors (see Photo #6). However, the removal of the exterior curtain wall revealed the original arched, decorative plaster ceiling above the acoustical tiles in this first floor elevator lobby. Upper floors have been continually updated to accommodate modern offices. Each is bisected by four north-south rows of six structural columns. Two floors, the fourth and seventh, remain mostly open and unsubdivided while the others have been partitioned with drywall into smaller spaces. The ceilings have been dropped, although the original high ceilings are visible underneath on most floors.

There is 129,175 square feet of floor area including basement space. The floors themselves are all twelve inches thick and composed of concrete and steel. The passenger elevators in the center of the building are not original, although they do use the original elevator shafts. The freight elevator in the northeast corner is the same one that was installed during construction of the building. The original cast iron staircase, used as a fire escape, runs the height of the building behind the elevator shaft.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 6

St. Louis Post-Dispatch Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Statement of Significance

The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* Building is significant under Criterion A in the area of COMMUNICATIONS from 1917 until 1949, the fifty year closing date for significance. When opened in 1917, the building became home to the leading newspaper in St. Louis, the sixth largest city in the United States. The growth of the paper had already warranted three previous moves from smaller buildings (all since demolished) and required the construction of this eight-story building. While in the building at 1139 Olive Street, the paper became widely recognized as a forerunner of "crusading journalism", investigating and exposing many of the political and community issues of the time. In 1922 the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* Building was home to St. Louis' first broadcast radio station, KSD, which was owned by the *Post-Dispatch*. Later (1938) the *Post-Dispatch* was the first in the world to publish a daily paper by radio. The importance of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* Building is further magnified by the fact that it is one of only three remaining historic newspaper buildings in a city with strong journalistic heritage.

BACKGROUND

Joseph Pulitzer (1847-1911) was born in Mako, Hungary and made his way to America by agreeing to substitute for a wealthy draftee in the Civil War. After serving in the Lincoln Cavalry, he worked his way to St. Louis with aspirations of becoming a journalist. By the time Pulitzer bought the *Evening Dispatch* on Dec. 9, 1878, he already had quite a reputation as a newsman, having worked for ten years at the *Westliche Post* often beating out the larger, English papers for stories. Pulitzer purchased the fledgling *Evening Dispatch*, which was housed in a small, renovated

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 7

St. Louis Post-Dispatch Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

residence at 111 North Fifth Street, for the modest sum of \$2,500. He quickly merged with the *Evening Post*, the editor of which said he would "rather be with [Pulitzer] than have [him] buck me."¹

Pulitzer's first paper, called the *Post and Dispatch*, hit the stands on December 12, 1878. The offices were quickly renovated and new printing equipment was purchased to accommodate the newspaper. On March 10, 1879 Pulitzer changed the name to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and a media dynasty was born. From the outset, the *Post-Dispatch* maintained a platform of advocacy for the people of St. Louis. It pledged that it "will serve no party but the people . . . will oppose all frauds and shams whatever and wherever they are; will advocate principles and ideas rather than prejudices and partisanship".² In these early years Pulitzer and his staff gained a solid reputation by addressing numerous issues that other papers ignored or overlooked. These included gambling, prostitution, street paving, garbage disposal, economic monopolies and the abuse of recruits at Jefferson Barracks.

Circulation on the first day was 4,020 copies, which were delivered to customers by wheelbarrow. By 1881 circulation had jumped to 20,330 from its everyday 1878 circulation of 3,160 and the following year Pulitzer again moved his growing business to new facilities at 513-15 Market Street. Continuing success of the paper prompted two more subsequent moves; one in 1888 to 513 Olive Street and another in 1902 to 210-12 North Broadway, where the paper remained until 1917. All four of these early buildings have since been demolished.

¹ Wilensky, Harry. *The Story of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. St. Louis: St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1981. p.6.

² Wilensky, Harry. *The Story of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. St. Louis: St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1981. p.6.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 8

St. Louis Post-Dispatch Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

During this period, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* saw changes in more than their physical surroundings. In 1883 Joseph Pulitzer, tiring of the hostile backlash he faced in St. Louis and worried about his son Ralph's failing health, purchased the *New York World*. He moved his family to New York and rarely returned to St. Louis. In 1907, poor health forced Pulitzer to retire. He died in 1911 at the age of 64. Operation of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* fell to his son, Joseph Pulitzer II, and more changes were on the horizon.

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1917-1949

With Joseph Pulitzer II (1885-1955) at the helm, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* continued to grow. It soon became clear that the small six-story building at 210-12 North Broadway would not support a paper the size of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* much longer. So concerned with the superior function of his newspaper's office, Pulitzer devoted a year to the study of all the prestigious newspaper offices in America, as well as London, Paris, and Berlin. Original concepts called for a "long, low-lying structure, by passing from end to end of which an observer could have beheld the entire process of newspaper making spread out before him on a single level, as in a panorama".³ However, given the constraints of available real estate, a prominent corner at Twelfth and Olive was chosen over a large building site.

Deeds for this property are registered to Daniel Catlin (and later in one third partnership to his heirs Theron, Daniel K. and Irene) for the entire length of time in which the *Post-Dispatch* occupied the building. Daniel had purchased the land in 1913 from the Culver Real Estate and Investment Company. Fortunately for Pulitzer, Daniel

³ St. Louis Post-Dispatch. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1918: a description of the new building*. St. Louis: St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1918. p.6.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 9

St. Louis Post-Dispatch Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Catlin was the uncle of Elinor Wickham Pulitzer, his wife⁴, thus this prime piece of real estate was easily leased. On January 1, 1916, one minute after midnight, workers began razing the Culver Building, which had occupied the site since 1908.

The locally prominent architect George D. Barnett, of the firm Barnett, Haynes & Barnett, was chosen to design the new building. H. H. Humphrey was selected as the consulting engineer. Building permits for \$220,000 were filed for the construction; final costs including the building and new equipment totaled \$1,400,000. In anticipation of the inevitable growth of the newspaper, extra space was built into the building and only the sub-basement, basement, and first five floors were used by the *Post-Dispatch*. The sixth, seventh, and eighth floors were leased to other tenants, which gave the *Post-Dispatch* room to expand at a later date. A branch office of the Associated Press was located on the east side of the third floor. Joseph Pulitzer credited Assistant General Manager of the *Post-Dispatch*, B.E. Bradley, with overseeing the construction of the building, "for its mechanical efficiency, for its healthfulness and cheerfulness, and for its success in general."⁵

On October 9, 1916, ten months after razing of the Culver Building began, the cornerstone of the new building was laid. Those in attendance read like a virtual "who's who" of prominent Missourians including Senator James A. Reed, Mayor Henry Kiel, and of course Joseph Pulitzer II himself. Nearly a year later construction was complete and the building officially opened on August 13, 1917 as the newest star on an impressive street (See Photo #7). Six days later the *Post-Dispatch* carried a self-

⁴ Pfaff, Daniel W. *Joseph Pulitzer II and the Post-Dispatch*. University Park (Pennsylvania): Pennsylvania State U P, 1991. p.131.

⁵ St. Louis Post-Dispatch. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1918: a description of the new building*. St. Louis: St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1918. p.4.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 10

St. Louis Post-Dispatch Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

congratulatory editorial equating the magnificence of its splendid corporate headquarters with the lofty expectations of its mission: "It is a symbol of the institution which it houses -- its growth, progress, increasing power and influence. It is the physical and visible instrumentality of a finer spiritual structure, the great journal with heart and soul, wielding for civilization the force of publicity -- the most potent moral force in the world. The meaning and purpose of the building are to expand the field and enhance the beneficent moral power of the newspaper."⁶

The building had everything a well thought out office and printing press of the time should have. Five new then-state-of-the-art Hoe octuple presses dubbed "leviathans of their species"⁷, as well as a color press, resided in the spacious basement. Pulitzer felt that the comfort of his employees was vital to the success of his paper. Thus even those who worked in the presses were treated to "a washroom worthy of a high-class hotel, ice water drinking fountains, shower baths and individual metal lockers".⁸ Desks for the proofreaders were specially designed to accommodate the vision-intensive work. The most elaborate and up-to-date utility systems were used including those for fire prevention, air purification, heating and cooling. Various working sections of the paper could travel from one department to another by means of

⁶ "For a Greater *Post-Dispatch*". *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. 19 August 1917, Sunday Morning edition, editorial section: 2.

⁷ *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1918: a description of the new building*. St. Louis: St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1918. p.4

⁸ *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1918: a description of the new building*. St. Louis: St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1918. p.4.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 11

St. Louis Post-Dispatch Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

a system of unmanned elevators and compressed air tubing. Even the colors of the walls were chosen, from the advice of optical experts, for their beneficial effect on the eyes.

Although there were more than 300 newspapers being published in St. Louis in 1917, most were small and devoted to religious, agricultural, commercial or cultural audiences. True competition for the *Post-Dispatch* during the period of significance came from three larger newspapers: the *St. Louis Star*, *Globe-Democrat*, and *Times* as well as a handful of German-language publications, one of which being the *Westliche Post* for which the first Joseph Pulitzer had worked many years before. In the late 19th and early 20th all major newspapers constructed prestigious downtown office buildings. All but three of these have since been razed.⁹ By the time the *Post-Dispatch* was preparing to move to the new building in 1916, circulation had risen to 181,717 daily and 260,193 Sunday, ahead of all its competitors.¹⁰ Throughout the period of significance, the paper continued to run neck and neck with the morning *Globe-Democrat* and easily triumph over the *Star*, *Times*, and the Sunday *Globe-Democrat*.¹¹

⁹ *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* Building (1916), 1139 Olive Street; *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* Building (1930), 900 North Tucker Blvd.; *Globe Democrat* Building (1931), 710 North Tucker Blvd..

¹⁰ Pfaff, Daniel W. *Joseph Pulitzer II and the Post-Dispatch*. University Park (Pennsylvania): Pennsylvania State U P, 1991. p.131..

¹¹ The following statistics are taken from Editor & Publisher Co., comp. *Editor & Publisher International Year Book*. New York: 1929, 1939, 1949. 1929: *Globe-Democrat* (m) 273,657, (S) 252,893; *Post-Dispatch* (e) 236,571, (S) 335,109; *Star* (e) 135,075; *Times* (e) 74,811. 1939: *Globe-Democrat* (m) 217,032, (S) 218,865; *Post-Dispatch* (e) 217,602, (S) 260,088; *Star-Times* (e) 148,883. 1949: *Globe-Democrat* (m) 289,902, (S) 375,742; *Post-Dispatch* (e) 271,047, (S) 409,088; *Star-Times* (e) 178,089.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 12

St. Louis Post-Dispatch Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

By 1948, Missouri ranked ninth in the United States in overall newspaper circulation, due in no small part to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.¹²

While in the building, the *Post-Dispatch* continued to maintain its reputation as a crusading publication. The *Post-Dispatch* was instrumental in bringing about the downfall of the Kansas City mob boss, Thomas J. Pendergast, and his protégé, R. E. O'Malley when they exposed a corrupt fire insurance deal. At the insistence of the *Post-Dispatch*, the Teapot Dome scandal was reopened after it was considered closed and the paper exposed a deceitful alliance between politicians and oil companies. The St. Louis Board of Election Commissioners was also a target of the *Post-Dispatch's* crusading when in 1935 reporters were sent door-to-door to confirm that "ghost" voters had been used to stuff ballot boxes. After printing this story and demanding a new board of commissioners, the paper won a Pulitzer Prize for public service.

The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* was also the first to deliver the news of numerous historic events. Immediately following Germany's surrender in World War II, Pulitzer himself toured concentration camps just days after their liberation. So moved by what he saw, he urged the release of Army Signal Corp's motion pictures taken at the camps and showed the footage to more than 80,000 viewers at the city's Kiel Auditorium. To coincide with this he commissioned twenty-five life-size murals of photographs taken at the camps which were displayed in the new 1941 Printing Building annex to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* Building.

In 1938 the *Post-Dispatch* became the first newspaper in the world to publish a daily paper by radio. This "radio edition", as it was dubbed, was set up in much the

¹² Editor & Publisher Co., comp. Editor & Publisher International Year Book. New York: Jan. 30, 1948. vol. 81 no. 5. p. 81.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 13

St. Louis Post-Dispatch Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

same way as a facsimile machine. A transmitting device was configured with the day's news on a photoelectric cell at the W9XZY, the *Post-Dispatch's* experimental radio newspaper station located in the *Post-Dispatch* Building. The information was then transmitted and picked up by receiving sets in fifteen homes and printed out with a specially prepared facsimile paper. Although only published for two years, the radio edition was put on the air every day at the 1939 New York World's Fair.

Perhaps the Pulitzer family empire is best known for the Pulitzer Prize, which thrust the name into the national spotlight. In his will, the senior Joseph Pulitzer (I) set up provisions for the establishment of the award as an incentive for journalists and writers to excel at their craft.¹³ The prizes are awarded by the president of Columbia University at the recommendation of the Advisory Board. The quality of journalists that the *Post-Dispatch* employed is evident in the fact that during the stated period of significance (1917-1949), the *Post-Dispatch* was the recipient of ten Pulitzer Prizes for everything from distinguished editorial writing to outstanding cartoon. As a member and subsequent chairman of the Advisory Board for nineteen years, Pulitzer always made it a point that he never had any part in the selection of awards for his own paper.¹⁴

Having long been one of the forerunners in the newspaper business, Joseph Pulitzer II decided that the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* should also be one of the pioneers of radio broadcasting. On February 14, 1922, a 20-minute discourse on radio development was delivered via radio waves from a small room in the *Post-Dispatch*

¹³ Pulitzer Board. "The Pulitzer Prizes: History". <http://www.pulitzer.org/history>.

¹⁴ Wilensky, Harry. *The Story of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. St. Louis: St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1981. p. 52. and Pfaff, Daniel W. *Joseph Pulitzer II and the Post-Dispatch*. University Park (Pennsylvania): Pennsylvania State U P, 1991. p. 328.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 14

St. Louis Post-Dispatch Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Building. After obtaining a license from Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover, KSD officially hit the airwaves. A small velvet-draped studio was set up in a corner of the second floor of the *Post-Dispatch* Building. The early broadcasts rarely conflicted with the business of running a newspaper. Most programs were confined to the evening hours because those who could afford a radio were usually employed during the day and the evening atmosphere proved better suited for the weak signals of early broadcasting.

In 1926, four years after the first broadcast, KSD became one of the first five stations to join the newly formed National Broadcasting Company (NBC). Just as this provided the station access to national programming, it also allowed KSD the reciprocal opportunity of airing its own original programs to a national audience. Some of the most successful national shows from the early days of radio came out of KSD in St. Louis. These included "The Land We Live In" and "Highway Patrol", a drama series about the adventures of the Missouri and Illinois State Patrols. KSD continued successfully, even after the advent of television in the 1950's, until it was traded in 1979 for two radio stations in Arizona.

Always looking forward, Joseph Pulitzer founded KDSK in 1947. It was the country's first fully equipped postwar television station. Like its sister station, KSDK joined the National Broadcasting Company and gained a national reputation for quality news reporting. After the addition of the television station, the broadcasting facilities were moved to the 1111 Olive annex of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* Building (Printing Building).

Employees of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* would see yet another move four years after the death of Joseph Pulitzer II in 1955. The third Pulitzer, Joseph Jr., took over the paper after his father's death and purchased and renovated the former *Globe-*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 8 Page 15

St. Louis Post-Dispatch Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Democrat Building (1930) at 900 North Tucker in 1959, the building in which the newspaper currently resides. By 1960 the building at Twelfth and Olive was vacated of all newspaper operations and only a few small tenants resided in the otherwise vacant building. Since then the property has changed hands many times.

A curtain wall was added in 1965 as an attempt at modernizing the exterior. This curtain wall was removed in 1999 by the current owner, Oltuc, LLC, which has plans to rehabilitate the building for office space. Oltuc, LLC has already contacted the senior staff architect at the State Office of Historic Preservation for initial guidance in developing their plans to rehabilitate the building to the Secretary of Interior's Standards. Discussion of which missing elements should be replaced will take place after National Register listing when it is clear that the project can go forward. Although original plans for the building are not available, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* has a number of historic photographs not used in this nomination which should prove very helpful to the rehabilitation process.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 9 Page 16

St. Louis Post-Dispatch Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

BIBLIOGRAPHY

City of St. Louis Building Permit records. St. Louis City Hall Comptroller's office.

City of St. Louis Deed Abstracts. St. Louis City Hall Assessor's office.

Editor & Publisher Co., pub. & comp. Editor & Publisher International Year Book. New York: Jan. 26, 1929. vol. 61, no 36.

---. Editor & Publisher International Year Book. New York: Jan. 28, 1939. vol. 72, no. 4.

---. Editor & Publisher International Year Book. New York: Jan. 30, 1948. vol. 81, no. 5.

---. Editor & Publisher International Year Book. New York: Jan. 31, 1949. vol. 82, no. 6.

"For a Greater Post-Dispatch". St. Louis Post-Dispatch. 19 August 1917, Sunday Morning edition, editorial section: 2.

Gould's St. Louis City Directories. St. Louis: Polk-Gould Publishing Co., various years.

Gould's St. Louis Red-Blue Books. St. Louis: Pold-Gould Publishing Co., various years.

Pfaff, Daniel W. Joseph Pulitzer II and the *Post-Dispatch*. University Park (Pennsylvania): Pennsylvania Sate U P, 1991. p.131.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch. St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1918: a description of the new building. St. Louis: St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1918.

Wilensky, Harry. The Story of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. St. Louis: St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1981.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section 10 Page 17

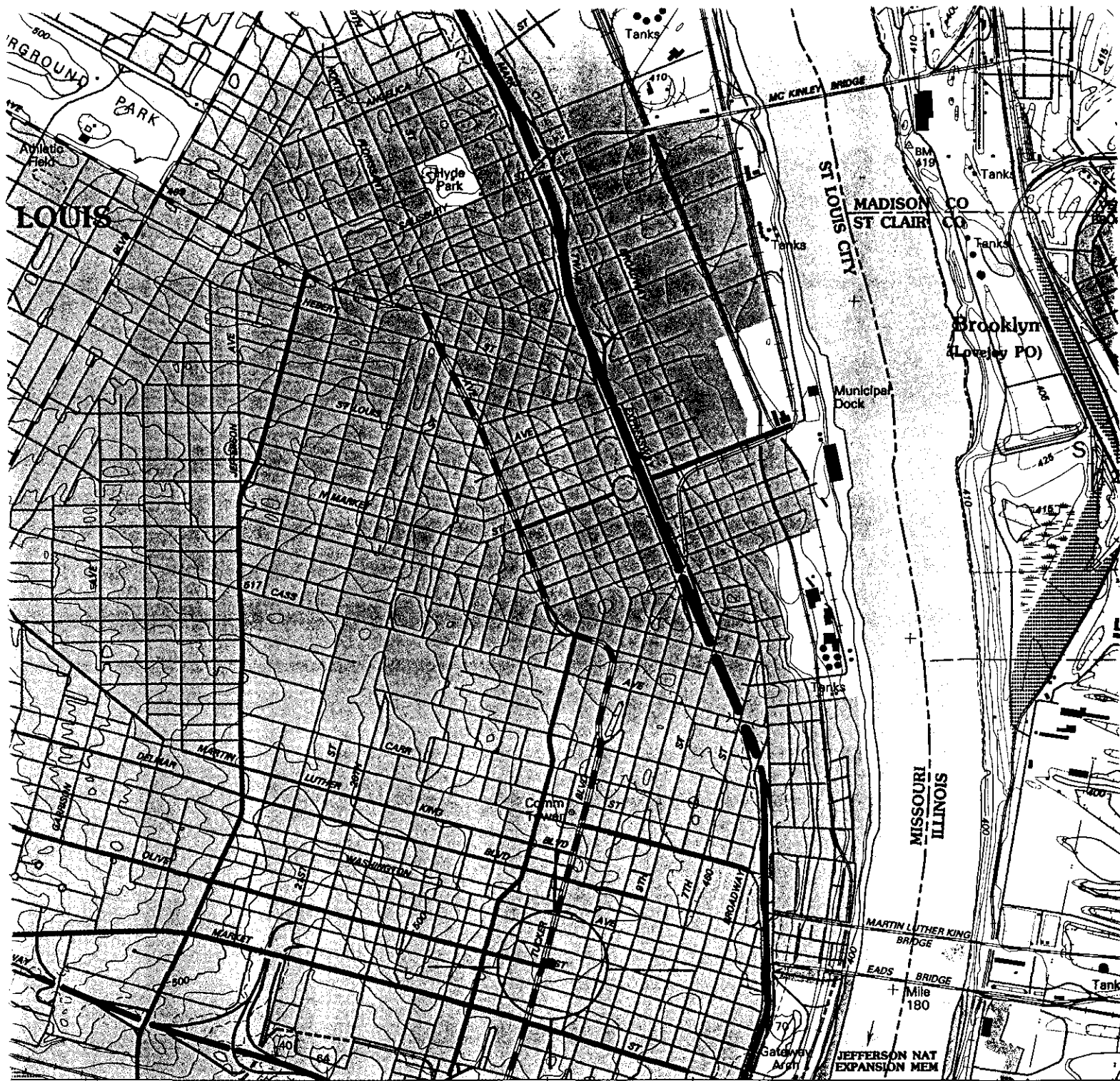
St. Louis Post-Dispatch Building
St. Louis [Independent City], Missouri

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the nominated parcel are indicated with a broken line on the accompanying map entitled "*St. Louis Post-Dispatch* Building Boundary Map" (Continuation page 18). Note: This map dates to the time the building was called the Centennial Building, thus it is labeled accordingly.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is the same as the footprint of the building, which is the parcel of land leased to the Pulitzer Publishing Co. by Daniel Catlin for the construction of the structure.



2 280 000 FEET (ILL.)

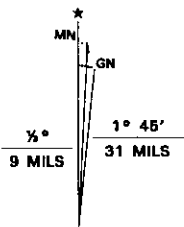
12' 30"

744

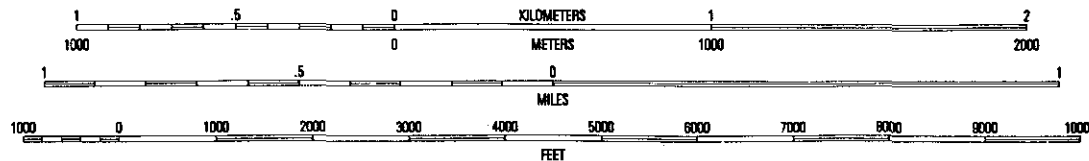
745

746

SCALE 1:24 000



UTM GRID AND 1996 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
 SUPPLEMENTARY CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET
 NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

POST-DISPATCH BLDG FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 2209
 1139 OLIVE BOULEVARD
 ST LOUIS, MO 63101
 NORTHING: 4279200
 EASTING: 744000

ILLINOIS GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, CHAMPAIGN, ILLINOIS 61820
 AND DIVISION OF GEOLOGY AND LAND SURVEY
 MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, ROLLA, MISSOURI 65401
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

PHOTO #1 OF 7
ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH BLDG.
1139 OLIVE ST.
ST. LOUIS (INDEPENDENT CITY), MO
PHOTO BY: UNKNOWN
C. 1917
NEG.: ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH ARCHIVES

HISTORIC PHOTO LOOKING NORTHEAST AT THE
TWELFTH AND OLIVE ELEVATIONS.



PHOTO # 2 OF 7

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH BLDG.

1139 OLIVE ST.

ST. LOUIS (INDEPENDENT CITY), MO

PHOTO BY: AIMEE PELLET

8/97

NEG.: LANDMARKS ASSOCIATION OF ST. LOUIS, INC.

CURRENT PHOTO LOOKING NORTHEAST AT THE
TWELFTH (WEST) AND OLIVE (SOUTH) ELEVATIONS.



PHOTO # 3 OF 7
ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH B. DG.
1139 OLIVE ST.
ST. LOUIS (INDEPENDENT CITY), MO
PHOTO BY: UNKNOWN

10/9/1916

NEG. ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH ARCHIVES

CORNER OF TWELFTH AND OLIVE
LAYING OF THE CORNERSTONE

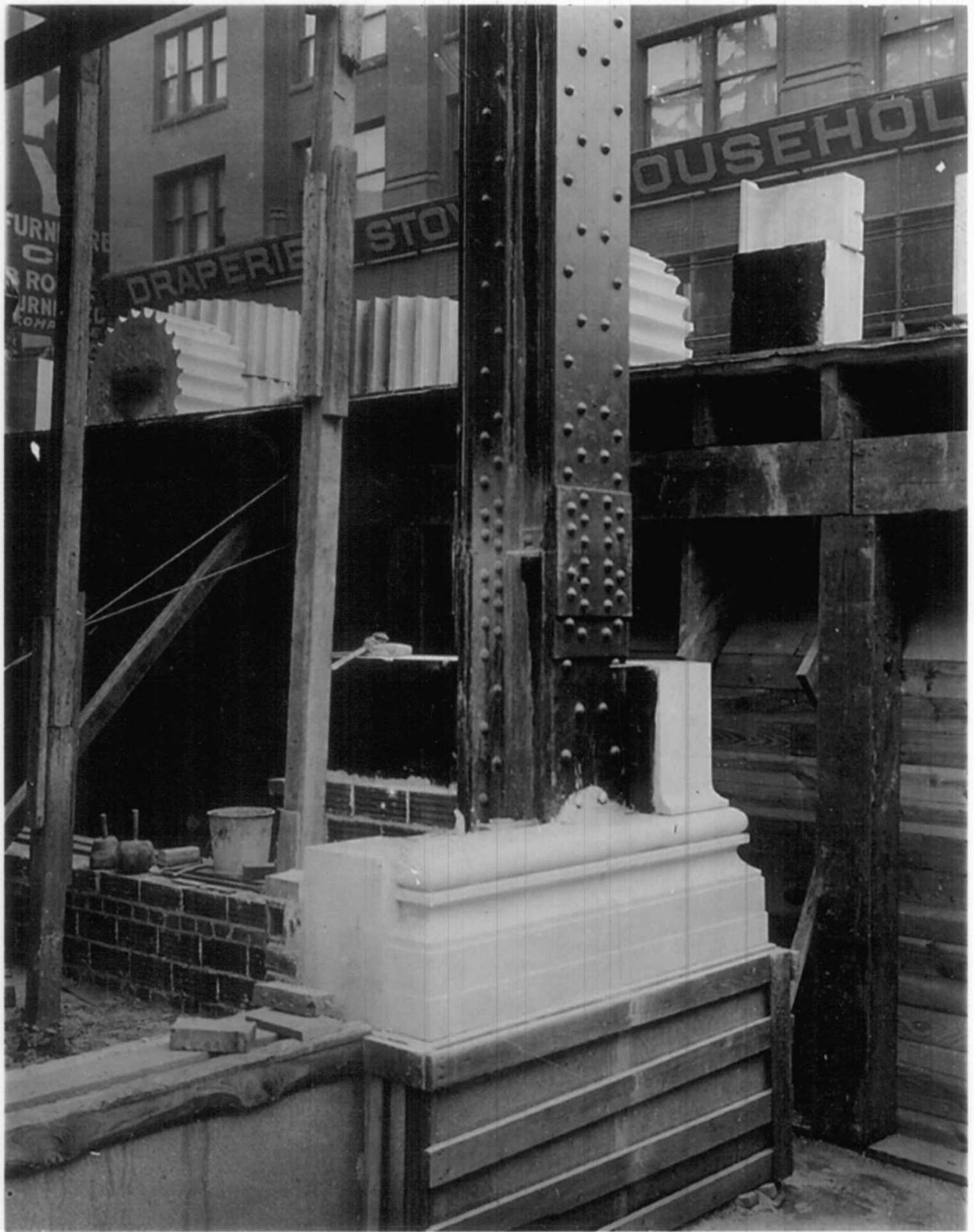


PHOTO #4 of 7

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH BLDG.
1139 OLIVE ST.

ST. LOUIS (INDEPENDENT CITY), MO

PHOTO BY: AIMEE PELLET

9/99

NEG.: LANDMARKS ASSOCIATION OF ST. LOUIS, INC.

EAST ELEVATION.



PHOTO #5 OF 7

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH BLDG.
1139 OLIVE ST.
ST. LOUIS (INDEPENDENT CITY), MO

PHOTO BY: UNKNOWN
G. 1917

NEG.: ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH ARCHIVES

HISTORIC INTERIOR SHOT OF
ELEVATOR LOBBY



PHOTO # 6 OF 7

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH BLDG.

1139 OLIVE ST.

ST. LOUIS (INDEPENDENT CITY), MO

PHOTO BY: AIMEE PELLER

8/99

NEG.: LANDMARKS ASSOCIATION OF ST. LOUIS, INC.

ELEVATOR LOBBY (CURRENT)



PHOTO #7 OF 7

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

1128 OLIVE ST.

ST. LOUIS (INDEPENDENT CITY), MO

PHOTO BY: UNKNOWN

C. 1917

NEG.: ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH ARCHIVES

LOOKING NORTH UP TWELFTH (TOWER) ST.

