

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Peters Shoe Company Building

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 1232-36 Washington Avenue not for publication

city, town St. Louis vicinity of

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

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. Jerome J. Schlichter

street & number 412 Missouri Avenue

city, town East St. Louis vicinity of state IL 62201

5. Location of Legal Description

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

street & number Market Street at Tucker Boulevard

city, town St. Louis state MO 63103

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

I. Architectural Survey of the  
title Central Business District, St. Louis has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date October 1975; revised, April 1977; February 1982 federal state county  local

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

city, town St. Louis state MO 63101

1983, Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc.

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

State

MO 65102

## 7. Description

### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved date \_\_\_\_\_

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

The Peters Shoe Company Building is an eight-story buff brick commercial warehouse employing heavy timber mill construction. The building was designed by St. Louis architect Isaac S. Taylor in 1901 and is located on the southeast corner of 13th Street and Washington Avenue at the northern edge of the city's business district.

Fronting 100 feet on Washington Avenue and 150 feet on 13th Street, the building's two principal elevations are articulated with light buff brick piers and spandrels trimmed with classical terra cotta ornament of the same color. (Photo #1) Following the classical convention of a tripart vertical division, rusticated piers of the building's base are accented with decorative terra cotta roundels and running dog patterned panels recessed behind the projecting brick. In the five-story shaft, brick piers rise from terra cotta bases to Corinthian capitals on the north elevation and corner bays of the west elevation; generous windows are divided by two wooden mullions on the north elevation and one on the west elevation and all are installed with double hung wooden sash. Large transom windows over a first story loading dock at the southern end of the west elevation feature glass etched with "Weatherbird" figures -- a Peters Shoe Company logo identified with one of the firm's line of shoes. The attic story rises from a stepped terra cotta frieze and is defined by brick piers; windows also employ double hung wooden sash. An elaborate terra cotta cornice with acroteria crowns the building on the north and west elevations. The red brick rear (south) elevation extends five bays along an alley; double hung wooden sash windows are divided into three units by two wooden mullions. The interior of the building features straightforward mill construction with tongue and groove diagonal decking.

A comparison of Photo #1 with Photo #2 (showing the building as it appeared shortly after completion in 1901) reveals that it has survived virtually unaltered. First story windows on Washington Avenue have been converted to storefronts but without disturbing the piers or spandrels; gray paint covers the street level pier bases and two piers of the first story. Although darkened by soot, the brick and terra cotta appear to be in very good condition.

## 8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1901 Builder/Architect Isaac S. Taylor, architect

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Peters Shoe Company Building qualifies for listing in the National Register of Historic Places according to Criteria A and C and is eligible under the following areas of significance: ARCHITECTURE: Designed in 1901 by St. Louis architect Isaac S. Taylor, the Peters Shoe Company Building is one of the Washington Avenue wholesale district's most distinguished examples of turn-of-the-century masonry commercial warehouses. Combining modern functional design requirements with historical conventions, the building's streamlined pier and spandrel system in buff brick is artfully enriched with finely detailed terra cotta classical ornament. In near-original condition, the building survives with a full cornice crowned with acroteria and only minor alterations to the first story. COMMERCE: The building was first occupied as corporate headquarters of the Peters Shoe Company, one of St. Louis' earliest and largest shoe manufacturers. After 1911, when Peters Shoe merged with the Roberts, Johnson & Rand Company, the building continued to be used for almost twenty years as offices and salesrooms of the Peters Shoe Branch of the International Shoe Company -- a period during which International Shoe was rapidly developing into the nation's largest shoe company.

When sixteen-year-old Henry W. Peters began work for St. Louis shoe jobbers Claflin, Allen & Company in the early 1870s, the city's boot and shoe industry was in its infancy operating principally as wholesale jobbers of eastern-made shoes. Peters' nineteen-year career rising from shipping clerk to salesman and finally President of Claflin, Allen & Company paralleled the emergence of the local shoe industry which increased production from one-half million pairs in 1883 to four and one-half million a decade later. Backed by his father and uncle (local German-born dry goods merchants) Peters, in 1891, incorporated the Peters Shoe Company with a capital stock of \$200,000. Construction of the first factory was begun the same year in North St. Louis and a sales force of eight reported to their office located downtown at Seventh and Washington.<sup>1</sup> Despite the general depressed state of industrial growth nation-wide in the 1890s, the boot and shoe industry was one of a few local industries which continued to make spectacular gains, nearly doubling the \$4 million value of manufacture between 1890 and 1900.<sup>2</sup>

From one viewpoint, the growth of the Peters Shoe Company during these years could be measured by its westward advance on Washington Avenue, a center of wholesale and light manufacturing firms. In 1901, the St. Louis-Post Dispatch observed:

The trend of the wholesale business on Washington Avenue for the past two years has been westward and it is noteworthy that the Peters Shoe Co. removed from Seventh and Washington to their

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present location at 11th and Washington less than four years ago, into what were considered ample quarters, but which have grown too small.<sup>3</sup>

As recently as 1899, Washington Avenue development first forged across 12th Street, for many years the outer limits of business property. The completion in 1900 of a seven-story wholesale and manufacturing building on the southwest corner of 13th and Washington (built for Washington University for investment and listed in the National Register) was viewed as a "record breaker" for Washington Avenue, assuring development as a wholesale street as far west as 18th Street.<sup>4</sup> The announcement in April 1901 of plans for another "imposing structure" on the southeast corner of Washington and 13th was a significant indicator of growth and progress both for the avenue and Peters Shoe to whom the building would be leased.

The construction of the new building was financed by the Thirteenth Street Realty Company, incorporated in 1899 by officers of the Mercantile Trust Company which was also organized that year. In less than two years, Mercantile Trust had mushroomed into the "greatest financial company in point of capital and surplus west of the Allegheny Mountains"<sup>5</sup> and its real estate division was fast becoming the "most powerful stimulant on values all over the business district of St. Louis."<sup>6</sup> Mercantile's expertise in organizing companies such as Thirteenth Street Realty for the purpose of purchasing corner parcels and improving them with first-class buildings was credited as a major factor behind the construction boom responsible for creating the "New St. Louis."<sup>7</sup>

Never compromising on architectural quality, Mercantile and its subsidiary firms always worked with the city's most capable designers. Their selection in 1901 of architect Isaac C. Taylor for three major commercial buildings -- Peters Shoe, the Silk Exchange Building at 12th and Washington (listed in the National Register) and Mercantile's own corporate offices at Eighth and Locust -- brought the city sophisticated expressions of turn-of-the-century classicism. A native of Tennessee, Taylor (1850-1917) trained in the St. Louis office of George I. Barnett, one of Missouri's most-distinguished nineteenth century architects. By the early 1880s, Taylor was practicing alone and receiving important commissions; in 1895, he was offered the position of Supervising Architect for the U. S. Treasury. His appointment as Director General of Construction and Maintenance for buildings at the Louisiana Purchase Exhibition which opened in St. Louis in 1904 further enhanced his reputation. Typical of his work, the Peters Shoe Company Building exhibits a striking clarity of design achieved through the architect's skillful integration of traditional classical motifs with utilitarian requirements of maximum space, light and air. The building met high standards already established on Washington Avenue for six- to eight-story monumental, solid masonry buildings which were visual evidence of the city's commercial leadership.

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By 1905, St. Louis had leaped from ninth to third place nationally in shoe production and the city's aggressive, rapidly expanding industry was challenging New England's hegemony.<sup>8</sup> Competing for top place in the local shoe market, Peters Shoe Company production had increased 270 percent between 1901 and 1906.<sup>9</sup> Within five years the company's capital stock was raised to \$2 million; eight factories were operating, 120 salesmen employed and shipments reached almost every state in the country as well as Mexico and Europe.<sup>10</sup> In 1911, however, the fierce rivalry among the city's major shoe manufacturers led to an innovative merger between the Peters Shoe Company and the Roberts, Johnson & Rand Company (incorporated in 1898) in which each kept its separate corporate identity, brand names and sales branches while consolidating as the International Shoe Company. Such an arrangement eliminated wasteful price-cutting and over-production but maintained the benefits of a competitive spirit between the divisions of the parent company.<sup>11</sup> International Shoe absorbed five additional companies in 1912 making it the city's largest shoe industry.

During the 1920s when Washington Avenue was known as "Shoe Street U.S.A." and claimed more shoe trade than any other street in the world, the Peters Branch of International Shoe continued to occupy the building at 13th and Washington where salesrooms displayed their nationally advertised brands such as Weatherbird shoes. International Shoe in these years was rapidly developing into the nation's largest shoe company, acquiring and constructing factories, tanneries, rubber plants and so forth in numerous Midwestern and Eastern states.<sup>12</sup>

In 1930, Peters Shoe moved their offices into a building at 15th and Washington erected in 1909 by the Roberts, Johnson & Rand Shoe Company and still occupied today by the International Shoe Company. From that time forward, the building at 13th and Washington has housed a variety of wholesale and light manufacturing firms. Renewed interest in the future of the Washington Avenue district has brought about the transfer recently of several underutilized buildings in the area<sup>13</sup> including the Peters Shoe Company Building whose new owner is proposing adaptive reuse of the historic structure as residential and commercial space. Although the heyday of Washington Avenue as a thriving center of the city's shoe and garment industry has passed, it is hoped by all that renovation of the building will help generate the preservation of one of downtown St. Louis' densest concentrations of monumental commercial warehouses.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Harry J. Boswell, St. Louisans with Records: City Builders, Representative Missourians (St. Louis: By the Author, 1911), pp. 11-12; H. L. Purdy, An Historical Analysis of the Economic Growth of St. Louis: 1840-1945 (St. Louis: n.p., 1946), p. 72.

<sup>2</sup>Purdy, p. 88.

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<sup>3</sup>St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 14 April 1901.

<sup>4</sup>St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 4 June 1899.

<sup>5</sup>St. Louis Builder 8 (July 1901): 6.

<sup>6</sup>St. Louis Builder 7 (November 1901): 17.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>David Rodnick, "The Economic Development of St. Louis and the Surrounding Area: 1764-1914," St. Louis, 1944, Missouri Historical Society Collections. (Mimeographed.)

<sup>9</sup>North St. Louis (St. Louis: n.p., 1906), p. 55.

<sup>10</sup>Boswell, p. 12.

<sup>11</sup>Maxine Faye Fendelman, "Saint Louis Shoe Manufacturing" (M.A. thesis, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, 1947), pp. 45-47.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 72-76.

<sup>13</sup>Plans have recently been announced for the conversion to loft apartments of a National Register property on the southwest corner of 13th and Washington for which the owners have been awarded an Urban Development Action Grant.

Item number 11

Page 1

2. James M. Denny, Chief, Survey & Registration  
Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Parks & Historic Preservation  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City

August 2, 1983  
314/751-4096

Missouri 65102

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Granite City, IL/MO

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A 

|      |         |          |
|------|---------|----------|
| 115  | 743806  | 4279480  |
| Zone | Easting | Northing |

B 

|      |         |          |
|------|---------|----------|
|      |         |          |
| Zone | Easting | Northing |

C 

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D 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Peters Shoe Company Building is located in City Block 835; the building fronts 100 feet on Washington Avenue and 150 feet on 13th Street.

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

state code county code

state code county code

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

name/title Mary M. Stiritz, Research Associate

organization Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc. date 21 July 1983

street & number 721 Olive Street, Room 1113

telephone (314) 421-6474

city or town St. Louis,

state MO 63101

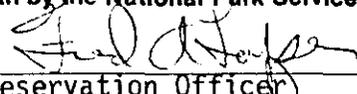
## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



Director and State Historic Preservation Officer

title Department of Natural Resources

date 12/12/83

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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|                  |
|------------------|
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Item Number 9

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Boswell, Harry J. St. Louisans with Records: City Builders, Representative Missouriians. St. Louis: By the Author, 1911.

Fendelman, Maxine Faye. "St. Louis Shoe Manufacturing." M.A. thesis, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, 1947.

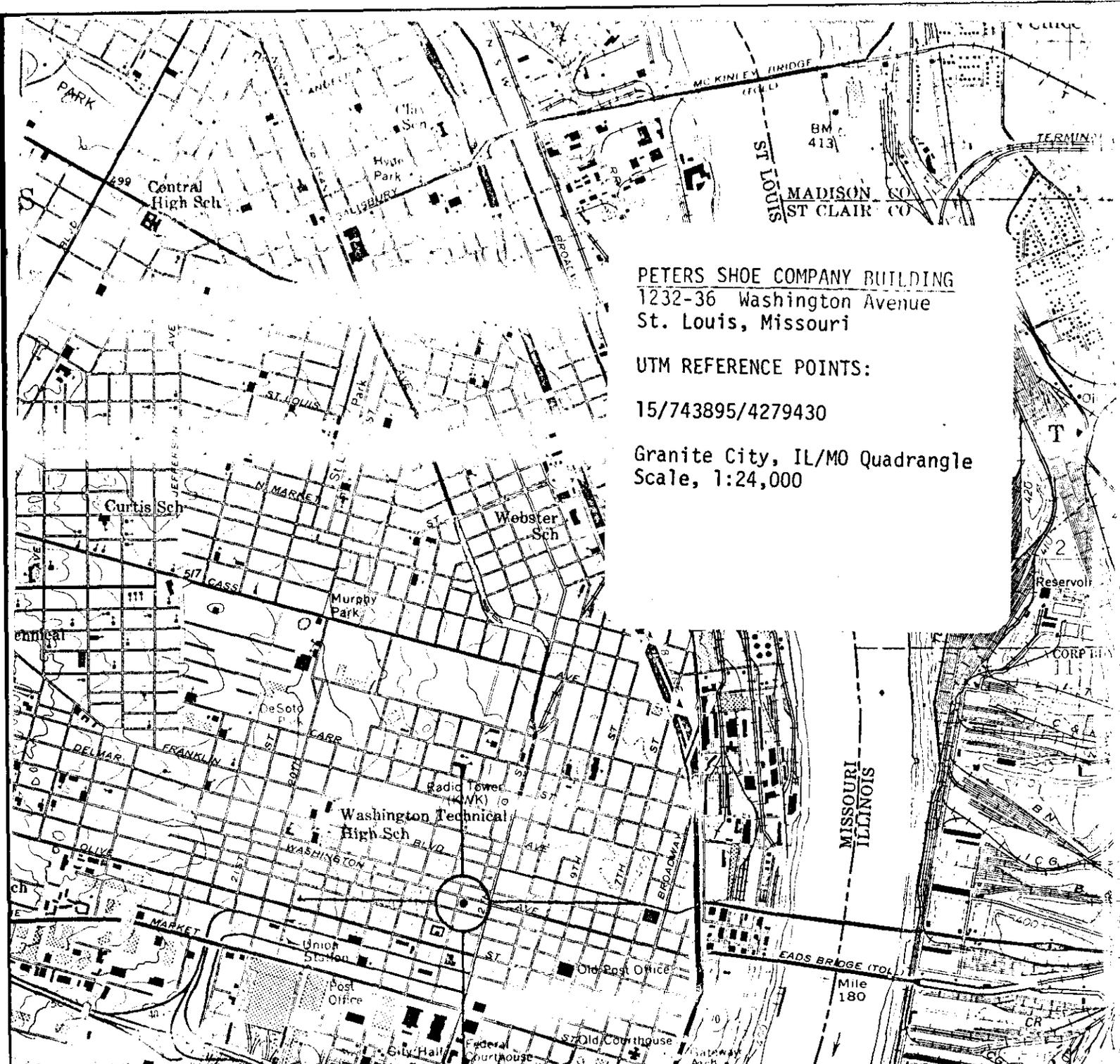
North St. Louis. St. Louis: n.p., 1906

Purdy, H. L. An Historical Analysis of the Economic Growth of St. Louis: 1840-1945. St. Louis: n.p., 1946.

Rodnick, David. "The Economic Development of St. Louis and the Surrounding Area: 1764-1914." St. Louis: 1944. Missouri Historical Society Collections. (Mimeographed.)

St. Louis Builder 7 (July 1901); 7 (November 1901); 7 (December 1901).

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 4 June 1899; 14 April 1902; 9 February 1902.



**PETERS SHOE COMPANY BUILDING**  
 1232-36 Washington Avenue  
 St. Louis, Missouri

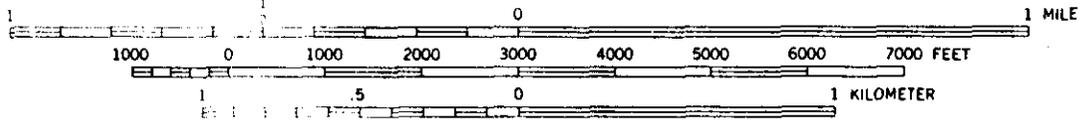
UTM REFERENCE POINTS:

15/743895/4279430

Granite City, IL/MO Quadrangle  
 Scale, 1:24,000

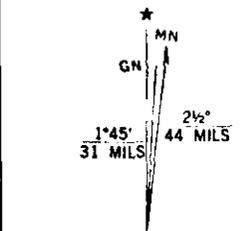
742 12°30' 1744 (CAHOKIA) 745 10'

SCALE 1:24 000



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

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



UTM GRID AND 1982 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET  
 There may be private inholdings within boundaries of the National or State Reservations shown on this map

Revisions shown from aerial photo  
 Map edited 1982  
 Purple tint in 1982

PETERS SHOE COMPANY BUILDING

1232-36 Washington Avenue  
St. Louis, Missouri

#1 of 2 Washington Avenue  
(principal) and 13th  
Street (west) eleva-  
tions.

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

Camera facing southeast.



FOR LEASE

WALK IN  
SALE  
EVERY  
DAY  
50-40% OFF

ANATOL'S FABRIC OUTLET

ANATOL'S  
FABRIC  
OUTLET  
SALE  
EVERY  
DAY  
50-40% OFF

SALE

ST

PETERS SHOE COMPANY BUILDING  
1232-36 Washington Avenue  
St. Louis, Missouri

#2 of 2 Washington Avenue  
(principal) and 13th  
Street (west) elevations.

Photocopy from: St. Louis  
Builder 7 (December 1901),  
by Mary M. Stiritz.

Negative: Landmarks Association  
of St. Louis, Inc.

Camera facing southeast.



THIRTEENTH STREET REALTY CO. BUILDING, 13th and Washington Ave.  
Isaac S. Taylor, Architect. Westlake Con. Co., Contractor. Brick Work by Reinhardt & Haerdt.