



The 2000 Birthday Party Wall was a tableau for a costume shop, a scrim ready for players, scripts, and dressers. But production people pick up and leave, costumes change, especially when it comes to fashion. And this was a one time Garment District.



### Images and text map the site

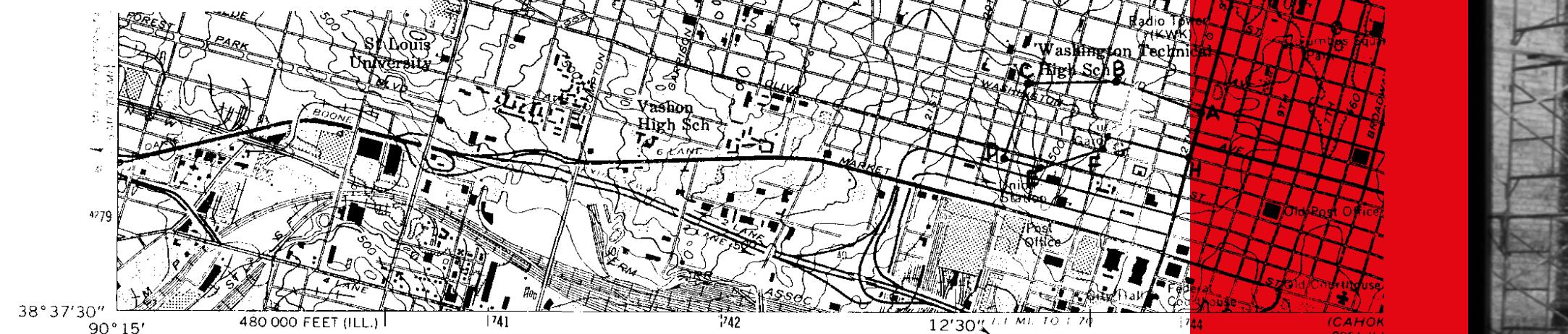
This archive was extracted from an on-line National Register of Historic Places Nomination Inventory Index. The Nominations were filed with the United States Department of the Interior-National Park Service for inclusion in the National Register Index. The Director of the Department of Natural Resources Title and the State Historic Preservation Officer certified that the nominated properties were evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service. Certain documents were prepared by Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc. Further material was provided by the State Contact Person of the Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation Program Jefferson City, Missouri. Photographs that accompanied the Historic Places Inventory Nominations were taken in 1986.



~~SECRET~~  
WASHINGTON AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT  
St. Louis, Missouri

U.S.G.S. 7.5" Scale: 1:24,000  
GRANITE CITY, ILL-MO Quadrangle 1954  
(Photorevised 1968 and 1974)

U.T.M. Reference Point:  
A. 15/744060/4279570  
B. 15/743690/4279690  
C. 15/743300/4279670  
D. 15/743200/4279350  
E. 15/743360/4279310  
F. 15/743630/4279390  
G. 15/743650/4279450  
H. 15/744020/4279370



(WEBSTER GROVES  
7961 1/1 SE)

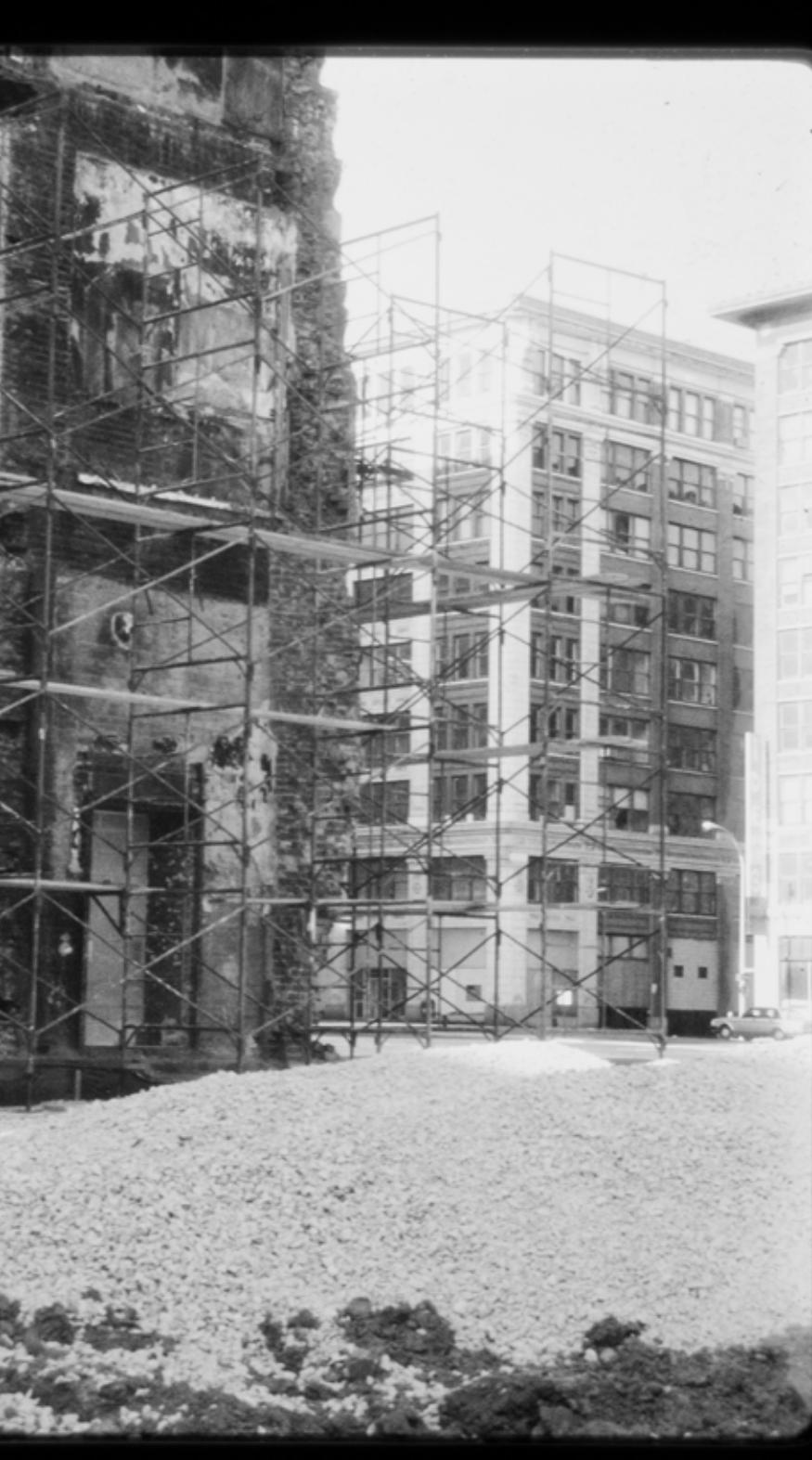
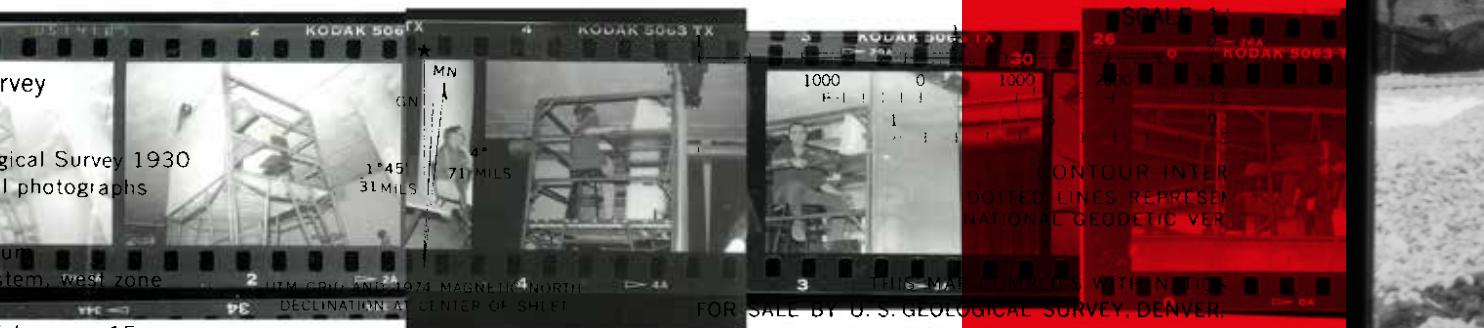
Mapped by the Geological Survey  
Revised by the Army Map Service  
Published for civil use by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography from planitable surveys by the Geological Survey 1930 and 1933. Planimetric detail revised from aerial photographs taken 1952. Field check 1954

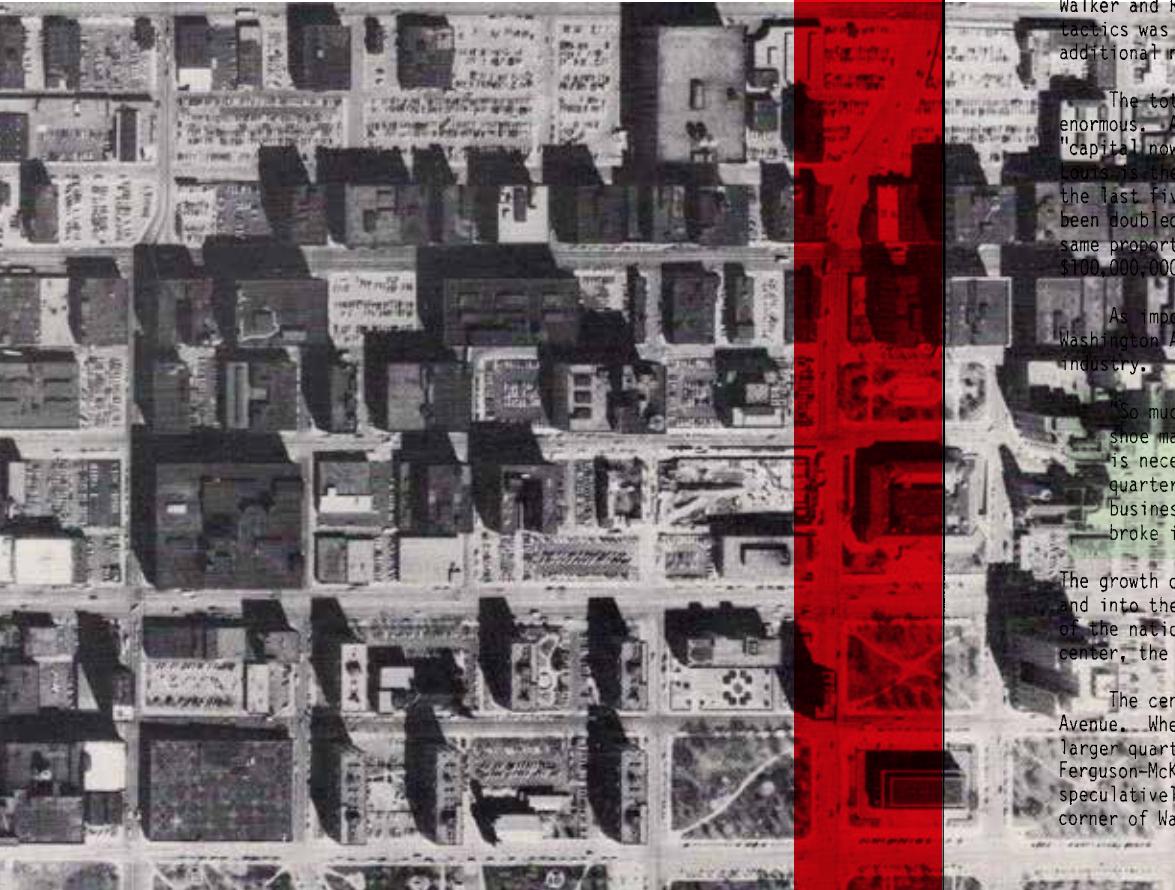
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grids based on Illinois coordinate system, west zone  
and Missouri coordinate system, east zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 15,  
shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



United States Department of the Interior  
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(3-82)

ONR No. 1024-0018  
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Washington Avenue

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facilities for manufacturing plants and for wholesale business. A number of establishments removed to St. Louis from other cities... further bolstering this segment of the City's economy.<sup>8</sup>

Further, threatened by the growth of large, powerful retailers who were able to deal directly with manufacturers, the dry goods wholesalers, in an effort to protect their markets, began to integrate vertically. Some, like Hargadine and McKittrick, bought out aggressive retailers (i.e., the William Barr Company, St. Louis' biggest department store). Others, such as Ely and Walker and Rice-Stix, moved into manufacturing.<sup>9</sup> The result of these survival tactics was to generate even greater business for the wholesalers and create additional need for more space.

The total volume of business done by the St. Louis wholesalers was enormous. According to the Merchant's Exchange Annual Report for 1899, the "capital now engaged in the wholesale drygoods business in the City of St. Louis is the largest amount of any single mercantile pursuit in this city. In the last five years not only has the capital invested in the drygoods trade been doubled, but the selling space and warehouse room has increased in the same proportion."<sup>10</sup> By 1901, total sales in dry goods amounted to well over \$100,000,000.00.<sup>11</sup>

As important as the dry goods industry was to the City, St. Louis and the Washington Avenue District are best known for their association with the shoe industry.

"So much has been written from time to time of the growth of the shoe manufacturing and wholesaling business of St. Louis that it is necessary only to quote a few figures to show that the last quarter of the century, which witnessed the development of the business from a mere bagatelle to one of the largest in the world, broke its own record in its closing year."<sup>12</sup>

The growth of the industry during the latter part of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century propelled St. Louis to a position as one of the nation's top five shoe manufacturing centers. As a distributing center, the City was, according to some accounts, unrivaled.<sup>13</sup>

The center of all this glorious commercial activity was Washington Avenue. When the need for more space sent the wholesalers scurrying for larger quarters, one of the first to make the jump across 12th Street was the Ferguson-McKinney Dry Goods Company which, in 1902-03, moved into the building speculatively constructed by the Lesser-Goldman Cotton Co. at the northwest corner of Washington and Twelfth. A wholesaler-turned-manufacturer, Ferguson-

**8. Significance**

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archaeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archaeology-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/humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
				<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1875 - c. 1955      Builder/Architect Various

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Washington Avenue:East of Tucker District is eligible for listing in the National Register according to criteria A and C and is significant in the following areas: ARCHITECTURE: The District comprises one of St. Louis' best remaining ensembles of late 19th and early 20th century commercial warehouse buildings. Many are significant designs by some of the most distinguished local and outside architects working in St. Louis at that time. Articulated in Italianate, Romanesque and Renaissance Revival styles with Sullivan-esque and Arts & Crafts influence, the buildings exhibit a high quality of traditional brick masonry construction and of craftsmanship in terra cotta and stone. A consistency of design attitude, similar size, scale and materials combine to make the Avenue an unusually coherent and monumental urban corridor. COMMERCE/INDUSTRY: From the last quarter of the 19th century continuing into the middle of the 20th century, the District evolved as a center of St. Louis' leading wholesale and light manufacturing industries. Drygoods, shoe and clothing firms, (some rising to the highest national rank in production and sales and serving national and international trade territories), occupied District buildings during significant periods of growth.

Boundaries were determined on the north, south and east by a significant drop in density and presence of non-contributing buildings and on the west by Tucker Boulevard, a busy multi-lane thoroughfare which is also the eastern boundary of another proposed National Register District (presently in the process of review) which continues westward along Washington Avenue.

**COMMERCE/INDUSTRY**

In the prosperous decade following the close of the Civil War, St. Louis was rapidly growing as a distribution and jobbing center of Eastern-made goods. The market was facilitated by completion in 1874 of Eads Bridge across the Mississippi which spurred rail construction, opening new trade areas in the South and West. Selection of the bridge site at the foot of Washington Avenue was in part determined by the prominence of the street which then divided the city into north and south, and its exceptional width of eighty feet which accommodated heavy traffic and also fit the four-lane upper level of the bridge.<sup>14</sup>

By the mid-1870s, Washington Avenue to Sixth Street was the hub of the wholesale dry goods trade whose principal firms were housed in large commercial palaces (Photo #14). The city boasted twice as many dry good jobbers as Chicago in 1882 and almost as many as New York; total capital invested was in excess of ten million dollars. The continuing expansion of

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Washington Avenue:

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(1009-13). The Dorsa Dress Co.'s sole designer, Bessie Recht (190-1932), is credited by some as having designed the first junior dresses in the city.<sup>20</sup> Incorporated in 1937 by Martin, Samuel and Sarah Weber, Dorsa was clearly among the first producers of junior clothes. It was also the only firm on the Avenue to carry out the new awareness of style and modernity in their headquarters, which was refitted in 1946 with a Modern facade and a stage inside for fashion shows.

At the beginning of the 1950s, St. Louis was still the country's leading fashion center in junior and misses dresses, reporting over 50 manufacturing plants and an annual product value of \$170 million.<sup>21</sup> Within that decade and the following one, however, the city declined as a prestigious trend-setting hub of dress designing. Although as late as 1967 St. Louis' garment industry held a good market share with \$198 million products, local manufacturers no longer attracted New York fashion editors to seasonal previews. Outstanding among multiple causes of decline was import competition with "low-labor" countries like Mexico and Korea.<sup>22</sup> As a consequence, many Washington Avenue companies started manufacturing in small town plants where more favorable labor conditions could be found and newer plants operated more efficiently than outdated Washington Avenue factories. Then too, juniors stopped wearing dresses.<sup>22</sup>

Today, a few remnants of the garment industry are involved in small-scale manufacturing along the Avenue, but most buildings have been unoccupied for some time. In recent years, a Redevelopment Plan for the Washington Avenue area has provided impetus for rehabilitation of three District buildings for office/retail use and work on a fourth is in progress. The Plan holds promise for further adaptive reuse of one of the most significant groups of buildings in St. Louis' Central Business District.

**ARCHITECTURE:**

The majority of District buildings served as corporate headquarters as well as warehouse and manufacturing facilities for the city's leading wholesale merchants. Artistic considerations therefore figured more prominently in exterior design than was characteristic of the more strictly utilitarian warehouse or industrial class of buildings in St. Louis. By the last quarter of the 19th century, the eastern leg of Washington Ave., then centered around Broadway (Fifth Street), was already the locus of some of the city's largest and finest commercial palaces, the work of talented designers who followed the latest national styles. The Avenue's reputation as an architectural showcase continued to grow decade by decade as new buildings pushed the trade area westward towards Twelfth Street (now Tucker). The monumental sweep of buildings was an on-going topic of interest and discussion with the local press and professional critics as well. Over the years, exhibition catalogues of the St. Louis Architectural Club recognized the special merit of the street with publication of numerous designs and laudatory

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largest establishment of its kind, leading in sales and size of operation.(6) Another leading milliner, the Rosenthal-Sloan Co. (established in 1874), took over 1015 Washington when it was completed in 1901. Regular employment of 150 rose an additional 100 during the principal seasons. The company's trade territory reached to the Pacific Coast, Gulf of Mexico, Great Lakes and as far east as Ohio.(7)

Established ca. 1897 by Leo G. Hadley and Owen M. Dean, Hadley-Dean Glass Co. was the largest independent factory in the country and the only plate glass firm west of the Mississippi by 1901. Their continued growth prompted construction of a seven story building at 701-05 N. Eleventh in 1903. During the first decade of the 20th century, Hadley-Dean produced every type of glass from plate glass to art glass to mirrors. Early contracts included glass for the Adolphus Busch Hotel, Dallas, the Hybernian Bank Building, New Orleans, and the Carleton Building in St. Louis, which called for the largest piece of plate glass in the world to date (measuring 142 x 210 feet and weighing 400 pounds, it took nine months to manufacture). Awarded the largest glass contract received by a single firm, Hadley-Dean furnished glass for numerous buildings of the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis.

Several District buildings have important associations with the boot and shoe industry which experienced phenomenal expansion both in jobbing and manufacture between 1890 and 1910. St. Louis moved from fifth to third largest shoe-producing city in the country between 1900 and 1905; by 1908, it was the largest shoe distributing center in the United States. (Locally, boots and shoes ranked third in dollar value of product). St. Louis' three largest shoe companies, along with smaller firms, occupied District buildings during this period. The Brown Shoe Co., founded in 1878 by George Warren Brown, was the city's first successful manufacturer of shoes. 1018-26 Washington (part of the Liggett & Myers Building) served as their corporate headquarters and sales and manufacturing facility from 1891 until 1907 when they moved into new headquarters at Seventeenth and Washington (demolished).

George Brown's brother, Alanson D. Brown, co-founded another shoe firm in 1872 which figured prominently in the city's economy. In 1897, Hamilton-Brown Shoe Co. erected a building of impressive size at the southeast corner of Tucker and Washington which signaled the company's rise by 1910 to first rank world wide in shoe production and sales. The building housed the firm's offices and served as a distribution center for its seven factories. In 1908, a branch distributing house was opened in Boston, marking a significant entry of Western products into an established center of the nation's shoe trade. The newly completed Sullivan Building (1899) at 1001-07 Washington became the home of Roberts, Johnson & Rand Shoe Co. (established in 1898) where manufacturing and wholesale merchandizing were conducted. When they moved in 1909 to their new building at Fifteenth and Washington, the firm was producing shoes in two additional factories and the boot and shoe industry was the largest employer and leading producer in St. Louis with an output valued at

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