

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Masonic Temple

other names/site number Corinthian Lodge No. 265

2. Location

street & number 101-103 East Market Street and 301-303 North Holden Street [n/a] not for publication

city or town Warrensburg [n/a] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Johnson code 101 zip code 64093

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 [])

Signature of certifying official/Title *Claire F. Blackwell*
Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO

20 Nov. 1998
Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [])

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- [] entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet [].
- [] determined eligible for the
National Register
See continuation sheet [].
- [] determined not eligible for the
National Register.
- [] removed from the
National Register
- [] other, explain
See continuation sheet [].

Signature of the Keeper

Date

5. Classification

| Ownership of Property | Category of Property | Number of Resources within Property | | |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| | | Contributing | Noncontributing | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | 1 | 0 | buildings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-local | <input type="checkbox"/> district | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-State | <input type="checkbox"/> site | 0 | 0 | sites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal | <input type="checkbox"/> structure | | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> object | 0 | 0 | structures |
| | | 0 | 0 | objects |
| | | 1 | 0 | Total |

Number of contributing resources
 previously listed in the National
 Register.

Name of related multiple property listing.

n/a

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function
Social/meeting hall
Commerce/Trade/department store
Commerce/Trade/financial institution
Commerce/Trade/office building

Current Functions
Work in progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification
Italianate

Materials
foundation sandstone
walls brick
sandstone
roof synthetics
other cast iron
wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

Social History

Periods of Significance

circa 1894-1948

Significant Dates

n/a

Significant Person(s)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Matthews, William S.; and Sanders,
Lewis L./unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State Agency

Federal Agency

Local Government

University

Other:

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

| A. Zone | Easting | Northing | B. Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|----------|
| 15 | 435730 | 4290770 | | | |
| C. Zone | Easting | Northing | D. Zone | Easting | Northing |

[] 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 Roger Maserang
organization _____ date August 28, 1998
street & number 113 West Gay Street telephone 660/747-2126
city or town Warrensburg state MO zip code 64093

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Masonic Building LLC
street & number 201 S. Holden Street, Ste. 200 telephone _____
city or town Warrensburg state MO zip code 64093

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1

Masonic Temple
Johnson County, MO

Summary: Constructed in 1893-94, the Masonic Temple is a rectangular three-story red brick building with extensive sandstone trim. It is located at the northeast corner of North Holden and East Market Streets, adjacent to the public square in downtown Warrensburg, a small city in west-central Missouri. Designed for a commercial function as well as a meeting hall for local Masonic organizations, the Victorian Italianate styled building rises from a sandstone foundation resting on bedrock to a bracketed metal cornice.¹ Measuring approximately 48 feet by 92 feet, the building is divided vertically into bays defined at street level by piers of rock-faced sandstone blocks. Brick piers continue above a metal stringcourse between the first and second floors, forming recessed panels containing windows in groups of three and four. These groups of round and flat-arched windows are elaborated with smooth dressed and carved sandstone elements. A bold entrance surround on East Market--a massive construction with an entablature, rendered in sandstone, framing a large, round-arched doorway--is the Masonic Temple's most striking architectural feature. Raised sandstone letters spell out the building's name, MASONIC TEMPLE, above the entrance and Masonic symbols fill the spandrels. Segments of sandstone trim show typical deterioration for this once-popular, locally quarried building material but some portions are relatively undamaged. The distinctive primary entrance is basically intact. Storefronts have been altered although original cast iron columns and sills are retained in the south elevation. Spacious first floor rooms have ceilings of decorative pressed metal. Load bearing interior walls on the first and second floors have tall archways. An intricately carved oak staircase to the second floor is intact. Although third floor lodge rooms are no longer apparent and most Masonic trappings have been removed, traces such as a wall emblem and remnants of a metal ceiling with Masonic symbols are still present. Renovation of the building is in progress.

Elaboration: Currently, the Masonic Temple has four entrances with individual addresses on its two public facades: 101 and 103 East Market Street (south elevation) and 301 and 303 North Holden Street (west elevation). On the south elevation, an original fifth entrance has been covered with brick infill. (See photos #1 and 2.) On the north, the Masonic Temple shares a common wall for two stories with a slightly older (circa 1890) brick and stone building. Above this, the Masonic Temple's brick third floor wall is windowless and has been stuccoed. (See photos #6 and 7.) The east elevation faces a narrow, closed alley. (See photo #8.) The building occupies an important position on the public square, opposite the Johnson County Courthouse which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places (Johnson County Courthouse, (04/07/94). (See photo #9.)

Although the Masonic Temple is nearly twice as long on its east-west axis (92 feet) as on its north-south axis (48 feet), the plan is not a perfect rectangle. Like other commercial buildings on the east side of North Holden from East Gay Street through East Pine Street, the Masonic Temple is slightly trapezoidal with parallel east and west walls. North and south walls are skewed approximately five degrees to align with the previously constructed north building with which it shares a common wall. The trapezoidal

¹The Victorian Italianate style was essentially a loose interpretation of Italian architecture. Stylistic elements present in the Masonic Temple include a heavy bracketed cornice, tall, round-headed windows with elaborate surrounds, and cast iron in the storefront. See Carley, Rachel, The Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture (New York: Henry Holt & Co., Owl Book Edition, 1997), pp. 143-145, 179; and Whiffen, Marcus, American Architecture Since 1780 (Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press, 1969), pp. 97-101.

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configuration also aligns the building with East Market, one of four similarly angled streets in downtown Warrensburg.² (See Figures 1-3)

The building's shallow foundation rests on a sandstone deposit that begins just below ground level. Solid masonry walls rise three stories, terminating in a stuccoed brick parapet which wraps around the west and south elevations. Rafters are supported by a bridgelike truss system involving upper and lower cross beams with inclined end beams, supported by diagonal members inserted in notches. (See photo #24.) The resulting roof has a moderately truncated hip with a large rectangular deck. The roof is metal with a synthetic rubberized surface. A large brick chimney protrudes above the northeast corner. A basement with sandstone block walls is under the east quarter of the building. Here steel I-beams provide support for the building's central load bearing brick wall. Except for a narrow crawlway, clearance between the bedrock and floor joists averages a foot or less. The empty basement originally contained boilers for a steam heating system.

The primary south facade (East Market) contains four recessed corbelled bays defined by irregularly spaced piers. (See photo #3.) First floor piers consist of large blocks of rock-faced sandstone with margins. Between the first and second floors, a denticulated metal stringcourse is a continuation of the denticulated sandstone architrave above the primary entrance. The piers--brick above the stringcourse, sandstone below--are continued in a parapet topped with a stone coping. The parapet and coping have been stuccoed. Below the parapet, a metal cornice with closely spaced curvilinear brackets and a denticulated lower edge continues around the west facade and wraps for a few feet into the north and east facades. An otherwise plain frieze between the cornice and recessed bays carries a corbeled brickwork stringcourse. (See photo #15.)

The pressed bricks used on the public facades are laid in stretcher bond with precise, narrow joints. Bricks in the east wall are laid in common bond. Most of the exposed gray sandstone has acquired a tan patina. All storefront wood (nonoriginal) is painted a brownish color which approximates the shade of the brick walls.

Fenestration is identical on both upper floors with closely spaced tall, narrow windows arranged in matching groups between piers. On the south elevation, the larger west bay contains a group of four windows while the other three bays have groups of three windows. Second floor windows (recessed aluminum sash 1/1s with hoppers) have flat stilted arches, a defining characteristic of High Victorian Italianate architecture, according to Whiffen.³ (See photo #13.) Pilasters with foliated capitals and molded bases of carved sandstone support smooth dressed entablatures (lintels) outlined with narrow projecting strips of molded sandstone with labels terminating in volutes. Attached to brick mullions, the pilasters have smooth-dressed shouldered extensions or "stilts." Outer bases of the end windows are chamfered

²When Benjamin W. Grover platted his addition east of Holden Street, East Gay Street was angled southward to avoid a log house erected by Martin Warren, an early settler after whom Warrensburg was named, then owned by Grover. Three other streets platted southward from East Gay to the railroad right-of-way were similarly angled (East Market, East Culton and East Pine).

³Whiffen, op.cit.

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to align with the recessed mullions and shed water. Lugsills, also recessed, are sandstone. The upper edge of the pressed metal stringcourse is directly below the base/lugsill line. Third floor windows (recessed aluminum sash 1s with hoppers) have round arches which are angled inward, supported by brick pilasters. (See photo #14.) Each third floor window is enhanced by a moderately raised molded sandstone eyebrow terminating, at the outer ends of each group, in a volute except where deterioration has removed it. Smooth sandstone bases are chamfered similar to those on the outer edges of second floor window groups. Each group rests on a continuous projecting sandstone lugsill.

The south facade is dominated by a massive primary entrance with a round arched portal rendered in smooth dressed, molded and carved elements of sandstone. (See photos #9, 11, and 12.) This construction in the east half of the building completely occupies the narrowest first floor bay between two of the facade's piers of rock-faced sandstone blocks. The projecting surround rests on two deteriorated molded bases topped with smooth engaged pilasters with smallish, denticulated capitals. Large, curvilinear brackets spring from these midpoint capitals to support larger denticulated capitals, a narrow architrave and a three-part frieze with a molded cornice and a coping. Panels in the bracket fronts contain a form of reeding. In the central frieze section, MASONIC TEMPLE is spelled out in block sandstone letters. Projecting square stones which flank the central frieze have recessed panels with the numbers 18 and 93, the year construction began. The round arch above the portal consists of radiating voussoirs with a projecting keystone. The outer front corner of each stone in the arch and supporting elements is cutaway. Terminating in a capital, the keystone contains eight Masonic letters arranged in a circle. Spandrels contain Masonic symbols carved in relief against backgrounds of oak branches and acorns. In the west spandrel, a square and compass signifying reason and faith with a letter G for God or geometry is depicted. In the east spandrel, a design consisting of a crown, crosses and a knight represents York Rite, a major branch of Masonry. The doorway--a modern glass and metal door with metal framing, and glass and wood side panels--is a replacement of original double-leaf panel doors. A fanlight contains plain glass or acrylic instead of glass with tracery. Patterned brickwork, set at sidewalk level and continuing into a small lobby, replaces a raised sandstone stoop.

Historic views show the primary entrance flanked by identical cast iron storefronts but only the altered east storefront, with a central recessed entrance flanked by display windows, is functional today. Wood sheathing from a postwar modernization was recently removed to expose square columns with panels and flared capitals, and the iron sill is also intact. (See photo #10.) No other historic material is present below the signboard. A single-leaf entrance with a panel door and a sidelight is a replacement of the original double-leaf construction. Transom and bulkhead areas are covered with wood sheathing containing closely spaced vertical strips with beveled ends. West of the primary entrance, brick infill with a sandstone coping covers most of what had been the facade's other storefront. The infill is broken only by an altered window opening with modern wood trim. Upper portions of two square cast iron columns are visible above the infill, where transom areas are covered with panels, one containing a small louver window. This storefront, which also had a central recessed double-leaf entrance flanked by display

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windows, was enclosed in circa 1920. Then or later, historic material with the exception of the cast iron was removed.⁴

The storefront portion of the large, extreme western bay on East Market also contains a large area of brick infill. Originally, first floor storefronts on East Market and North Holden were probably brickless except for this section which is depicted in an artist's drawing published two years after completion of the building.⁵ Also within this bay, modern wood sheathing covers a transom, part of a display window and a lower panel with decorative vertical strips. The windowed area is adjacent to the corner pier.

On the west elevation (North Holden facade), two identical recessed bays and two storefronts are divided, as on the south elevation, by piers of sandstone and brick. (See photos #4 and 5.) Faintly visible in the cornerstone is the Masonic date, A.L. 5893.⁶ Above the first floor, the facade matches the previously described south elevation (windows with round arches in groups of three on the third floor and windows with stilted flat arches in groups of three on the second floor, all elaborated with sandstone trim). How the Masonic Temple's north wall interlocks with an adjacent older building is clearly visible in this facade. No historic material is present in the North Holden storefronts. Typical of Victorian Italianate buildings of the period, these storefronts originally featured recessed central entrances with canted sides, double-leaf doors, fluted cast iron columns with capitals, flanking display windows with large transoms, and low bulkheads. In circa 1920, the cast iron was removed and, probably at the same time, the double entrances were converted to singles. In circa 1980, central entrances were replaced with the present off-center configuration of single recessed entrances flanking the middle sandstone pier. Both entrances are skewed to align with the east-west interior wall that divides the first and second floors into halves. Transom and lower panel areas are covered with modern wood sheathing, various panels of which contain closely spaced vertical strips with beveled ends. Thresholds consist of nonoriginal bricks set flush with the sidewalk in the north storefront and of square tiles in the south.

The east facade, on a narrow closed alley, is relatively austere. (See photo #8.) Sandstone is used only for lugsills, which are plain. Window openings vary, however. A one-story concrete block addition, circa 1956, contains two restrooms and storage space. A diagonal metal fire escape is bolted to the wall between the southernmost third floor window and a window-to-doorway conversion in the middle of the second floor; a short metal ladder descends to the addition roof. The four third floor windows have round arches consisting of three courses of headers set flush. The second window north of East Market is blind; at lodge ceremonies, the Master Mason sat on the other side of it, facing west. The second floor has five window openings with segmental arches, including the doorway conversion. The ground floor originally

⁴In circa 1920, as Shepard's Dry Goods expanded into that part of the first floor previously used by a bank, the two storefronts on the west facade were overhauled and the westernmost storefront on the south facade was enclosed with brick infill below its transom windows. On the west facade, the overhaul including removing the cast iron and filling the transom area with panels of prism glass.

⁵Warrensburg Standard-Herald, March 6, 1896.

⁶Ancient Masons and Corinthian Lodge 265 added 4,000 years to the "common era" (1893 plus 4000 = 5893). Other Masonic organizations have their own unique calendars.

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had a transomed single-leaf entrance flanked by transomed segmentally-arched windows, plus another transomed window. The former doorway/transom (the third opening north of East Market) has been sealed with brick infill. The window in the first opening north of East Market is relatively intact. The second window opening is now a doorway into the addition. The northernmost window is boarded up. Note: The fire escape and addition are slated for removal in connection with the building's rehabilitation.

Interior

The original plan provided for three stores on the first floor, eight offices on the second and lodge rooms--a large main hall with, on the west end, reception rooms and an anteroom--on the third.⁷ The largest first floor store (89 feet by 22 feet) occupied the entire north half and had entrances at both ends. (See photo #18.) The primary entrance with display windows was on North Holden and a secondary entrance was in the east facade, on an alley. The second largest store (49 feet by 21 feet), which became a bank early in the building's history, was in the southwest portion between the North Holden facade and a load-bearing wall west of the lobby. (See photo #20.) Entrances were on North Holden and on East Market west of the building's main entrance. The smallest store (19 feet by 20 feet) was in the southeast corner and had an entrance on East Market. This store had a vault, which is intact, as did the former bank. Mazelike, nonoriginal partition walls and lowered ceilings added in various reworkings of the interior are being removed on all three floors in preparation for rehabilitation, probably exposing more of the original structure than has been seen since before World War II.

Load bearing interior brick walls are present on the first and second floors only. A central load bearing wall runs lengthwise and is depicted on Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps.⁸ Two other load bearing brick walls connect the central wall with the south exterior wall, enclosing the lobby and main staircase. On the first floor, north and south rooms communicate thanks to three tall archways in the central wall. (See Figure Four and photos #18-19.) Two archways and four square window openings are in load bearing walls on the second floor. Second floor archways are in the central wall and in the wall between the staircase landing and southeast room. (See photo #21.) The four window openings are in the central wall--three in the room above the building's primary entrance and one at the staircase landing. Not counting additional inches of plaster, these load bearing walls are approximately 16 inches thick on the first floor and 13 inches thick on the second. Some original partition walls are present on the upper floors.

The first floor has a decorative pressed metal ceiling which is largely intact except for extensive punctures from suspended ceiling supports and badly damaged small areas. On the third floor, only the coved edges plus a few additional feet remain of its "tin" ceiling, the central portion which contained Masonic symbols having been cut out when the lodge vacated the building in 1980. The top of a Masonic symbol is visible above a partition along the east wall. (See photo #23.) The second floor ceiling is plaster over lath strips. The first and third floors have 14-foot ceilings; the second floor has a 12-foot ceiling. Where layers

⁷Warrensburg Journal-Democrat, July 20, 1894.

⁸The Masonic Temple is depicted on 1893, 1898, 1907, 1914, and 1924 Sanborn maps for Warrensburg.

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of carpeting, tile and other material added over the years have been removed, pine flooring has been revealed.

Inside the primary entrance, a small lobby contains the lower landing of the building's original three-flight oak staircase and an elevator, installed in 1981, that accesses all three levels. (See photos #16 and 17.) First floor areas are not accessible from the lobby. The staircase occupies a rectangular space and includes two corner landings. The anchoring newel post contains carved floral designs as do six secondary but equally ornate posts, some with pendants. The molded banister and turned balustrade are also oak. Scroll-sawn curvilinear designs are nailed to the stringers. Pine wainscoting lines the stairway and second floor hall, except where it has been temporarily removed. The stair treads, probably pine, are carpeted. A separate, boxed two-flight stairway off the second floor hallway (nonoriginal) leads to the third floor. A smaller boxed two-flight stairway leads to the attic. A single-flight stairway to the basement, accessed from the southwest room, is under the main staircase. At some point, an ornate two-flight oak staircase leading from the second floor to the third floor lodge rooms was removed from along the north wall in the west portion of the building. (See photo #22.)

Slabs of polished marble serve as interior window sills on the second and third floors. Since casings were not used, window openings on these floors are flush with the plastered wall surfaces.

Some old millwork remains, such as that framing the primary entrance and fanlight opening, but most has been removed. Except for cast iron in the south facade, all historic material from the original construction apparently has been removed from the four storefronts. Mosaic thresholds recently uncovered in the west facade probably date from the 1920s.

While architecture is not cited as an area of significance because of storefront and interior alterations, the Masonic Temple nonetheless remains a dramatic building strongly evocative of its 1894-1948 period of significance. The storefronts are the main problem, since the 19th century exterior is essentially unaltered above the first floor except for a coating of stucco added to the parapet and replacement windows with aluminum sash in their original openings, neither of which would make it ineligible. Except for storefront and interior alterations as noted, the Masonic Temple exhibits a high level of integrity of design, setting, materials, workmanship and association. Storefront integrity will be enhanced in connection with a rehabilitation project by the building's current owner. Still a powerful symbol of Masonic stability although no longer used as a lodge, the building should remain a focus of Warrensburg's business community for many years by virtue of its downtown location and solid construction.

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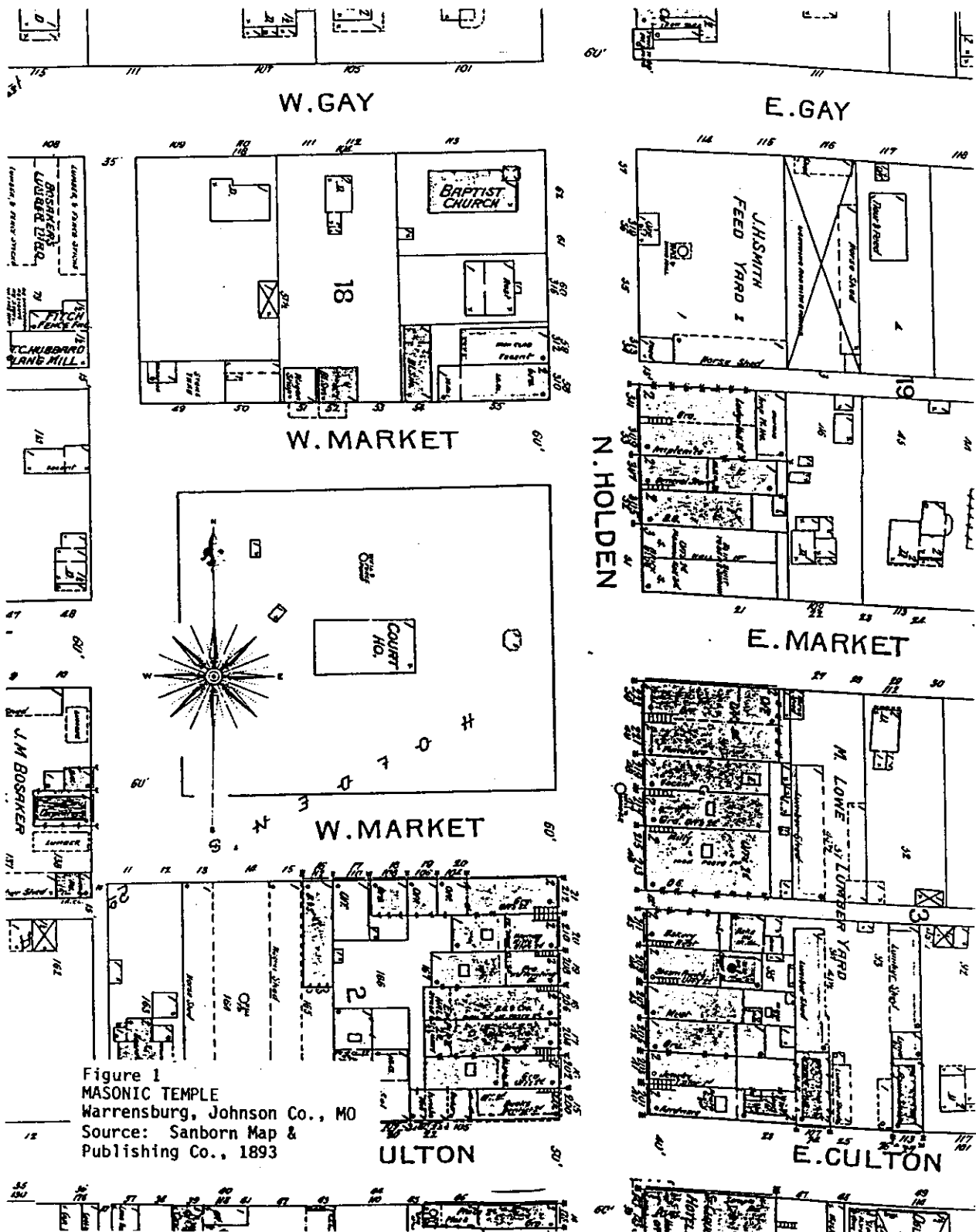


Figure 1
MASONIC TEMPLE
Warrensburg, Johnson Co., MO
Source: Sanborn Map &
Publishing Co., 1893

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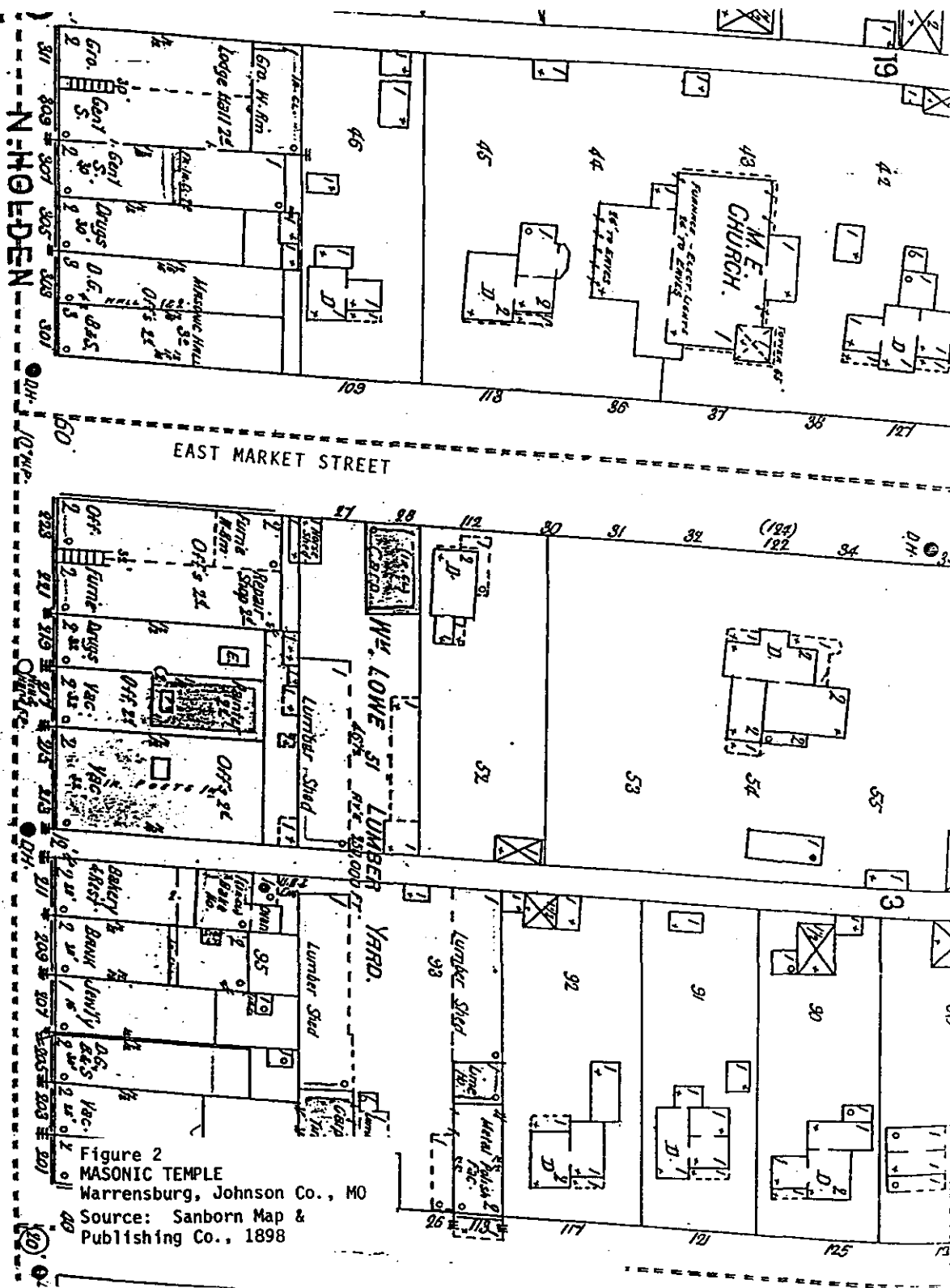


Figure 2
MASONIC TEMPLE
Warrensburg, Johnson Co., MO
Source: Sanborn Map &
Publishing Co., 1898

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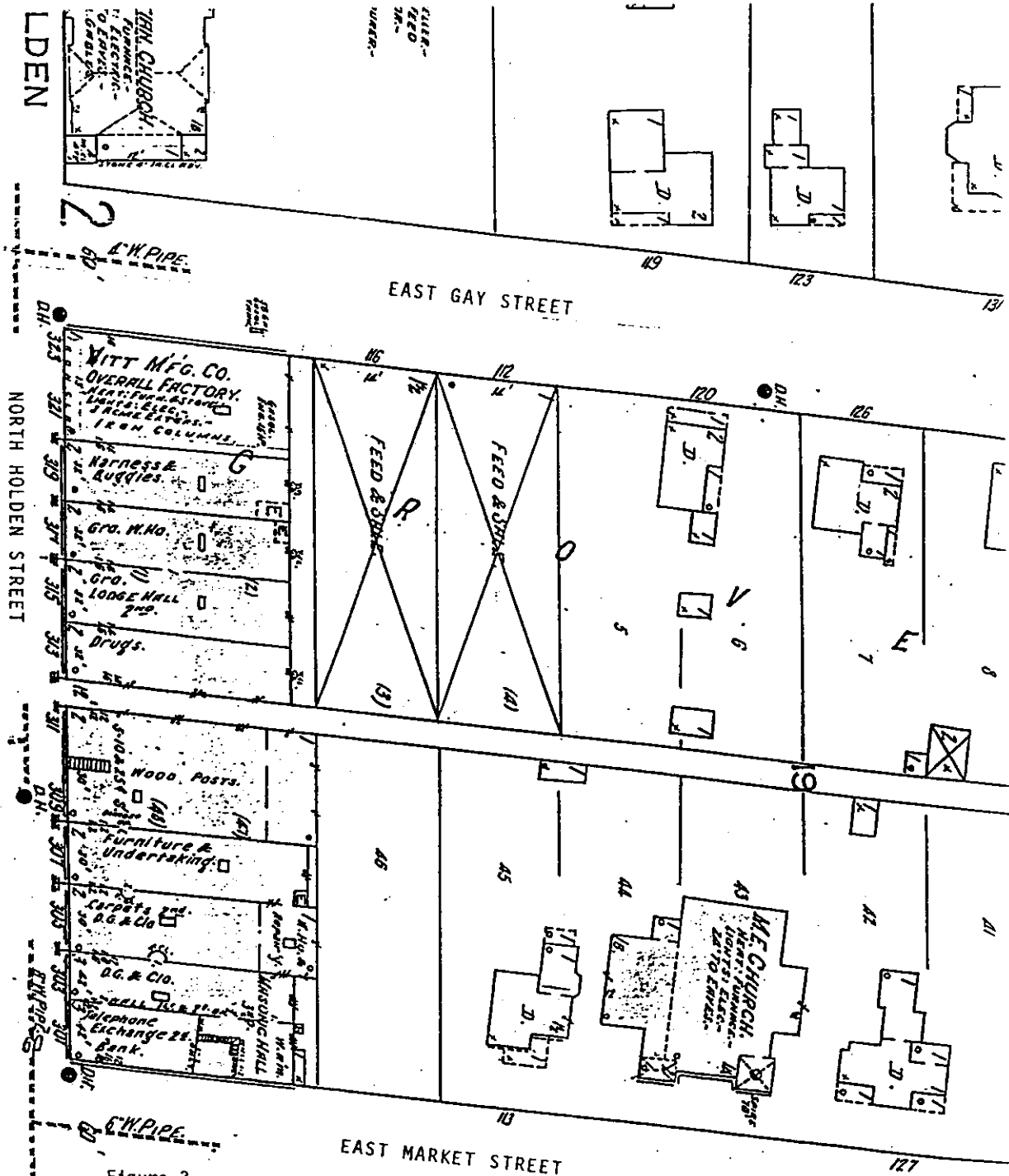


Figure 3
 MASONIC TEMPLE & VICINITY
 Warrensburg, Johnson Co., MO
 Source: Sanborn Map &
 Publishing Co., 1914

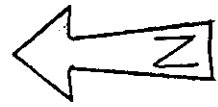
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Masonic Temple
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Figure 4



MASONIC TEMPLE
WARRENSBURG, JOHNSON COUNTY, MISSOURI

First Floor Plan
Scale: 1 inch = 12 feet

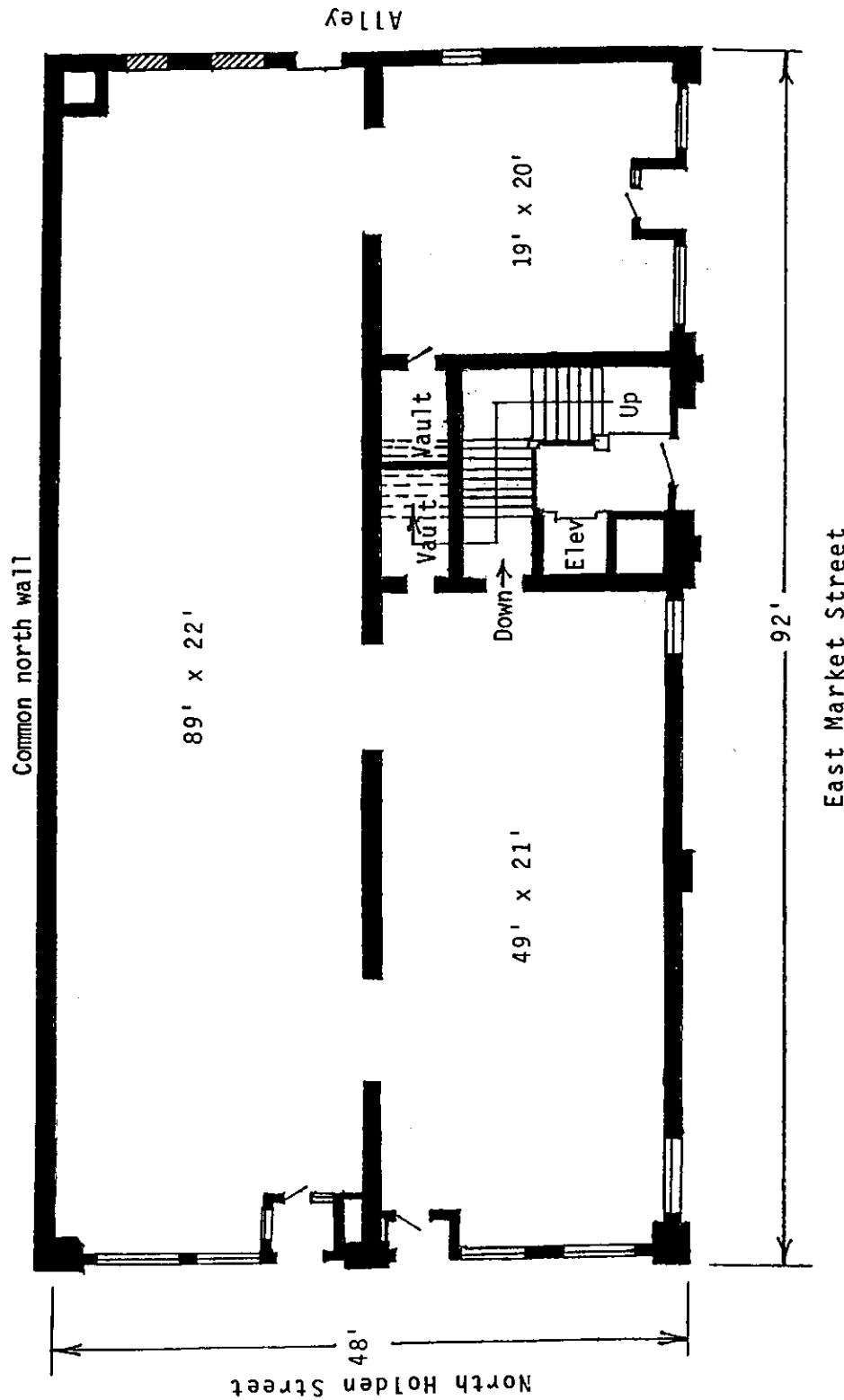


Figure 4

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Masonic Temple
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Summary: Completed in 1894, the Masonic Temple in Warrensburg, Johnson County, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the category of SOCIAL HISTORY. Clearly a diminishing type of resource, the Warrensburg Masonic Temple is associated with the history of a local lodge of the Ancient, Free and Accepted Order of Freemasonry and its efforts to promote the welfare of society through the reaffirmation of traditional values. For 87 years, the third floor of this impressive building served as a meeting hall for members of Corinthian Lodge No. 265 and other Masonic bodies, and it is the only intact 19th century Masonic lodge in Warrensburg. While exemplifying the thousands of lodge buildings erected across America by secret fraternal orders in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Warrensburg's Masonic Temple is especially noteworthy because of its monumental architecture. The largest and most ornate of 19th century buildings constructed for use by fraternal organizations in Johnson County, it projected an image of permanency and stability which presumably symbolized Masonry itself. The 1894-1948 period of significance reflects the decades when religion and ritual were central to Masonry as well as the fraternity's later efforts to adapt to an increasingly secular society. Although Lodge No. 265 used this building as a meeting hall until 1980, the traditional 50-year cutoff point for National Register properties is 1948. Despite various alterations, considerable historic material is present overall and the Masonic Temple evokes its period of significance with ease.

Lodge Background

As the hardships of pioneer days dwindled, social development became an important part of everyday life in progressive towns and villages across Missouri. With more time available, fraternal organizations and various other social groups could develop and flourish. Freemasonry (usually shortened to Masonry), said to have evolved from the guilds of cathedral builders in the Middle Ages to become the world's oldest organized group, reached Missouri Territory in 1807, only four years after the Louisiana Purchase. On July 17, 1807, 14 years before statehood was achieved, Missouri's first Masonic Lodge was chartered at the old Mississippi River settlement of Ste. Genevieve. The Masonic Grand Lodge of Missouri, which has authority over local lodges throughout the state, was established in 1821.⁹

Prior to the Civil War, higher education was a major concern of Missouri's Grand Lodge. In 1844, a Masonic College said to have been the first institution of its kind in America was opened near Philadelphia in Marion County, Missouri. That institution was closed in 1847, but a new Masonic College which opened the next year at Lexington in Lafayette County functioned until 1859. Lexington, then home of the old Lafayette Lodge No. 32, won out over other communities by subscribing \$30,000 toward its construction. Standards were high and the school, which resembled a Greek temple, had a sterling reputation: "To say that a man was a graduate of the Masonic College of Missouri was to place upon him a mark of

⁹The New Encyclopedia Britannica, Volume 4: Micropaedia, p.966; Meyer, Duane, The Heritage of Missouri: A History (St. Louis: State Publishing Co., Inc., 1973), p. 762.

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distinction, and left nothing more necessary to be said."¹⁰ Graduates included Governor John S. Marmaduke, Senator Stephen F. Boyle, and Stephen B. Elkins, a Congressman from New Mexico.¹¹

During the Civil War Battle of Lexington, September 18-21, 1861, the Masonic College--closed two years earlier--was the center of the position defended by more than 3,000 Federal troops commanded by Colonel James A. Mulligan. Surrounded by a much larger force of Missouri Confederates led by General Sterling "Old Pap" Price, the outcome of the "Battle of Hemp Bales" probably was never in doubt. Mulligan's besieged men surrendered, and the college hall--on high ground overlooking the Missouri River--escaped damage and continued to be used alternately by both sides throughout the war, as a military post.¹²

Missouri's Masonic College was opened out of a sense of duty to society and, especially, to provide a place of higher learning for orphans and the sons of indigent members. American Masons of this period were doing their utmost to overcome various anti-Masonic sentiments that flared in the 1830s, and the establishment of such a high quality school would be a visible act of redemption. But ultimately the Masonic College proved too costly for the fraternity to operate, especially given the unstable social conditions that prevailed in the years immediately preceding the Civil War. After the war, the Grand Lodge transferred the property to the State of Missouri which briefly converted it into a military school. In 1871, however, the property was transferred back to the Grand Lodge--which immediately donated the building to the M.E. Church South, on condition that the church operate a female college and provide free tuition for a limited number of daughters of deceased Masons. Central Female College was chartered by the Methodists that same year, and soon became one of the finest institutions for women in Missouri.¹³ Today Masons remain involved in education, primarily by offering scholarships and through contributions to adult literacy programs.¹⁴

Fraternal organizations were active in Warrensburg since early in the town's history. Predating the organization of most local churches, not to mention other social groups, Johnson County's first Masonic lodge--Johnson Lodge No. 85--was organized in Warrensburg on April 13, 1846. Warrensburg had been platted only ten years earlier, in 1836. For a meeting hall, Lodge No. 85 used the second floor of a brick building on Main Street. This was a prominent location in the original settlement of Warrensburg, before

¹⁰Chiles, Henry C., The Masonic College of Missouri (Fulton, Mo.: The Ovid Bell Press, 1935), p. 27. Chiles' comment was made during an address before the Masonic Research Society of Missouri in St. Louis on September 23, 1934. At the time, Chiles was Grand Senior Deacon of the Grand Lodge of Missouri.

¹¹Lexington, Missouri, 1822-1972 (Higginville, Mo.: The Higginville Advance, Inc., 1972), pp. 28-30.

¹²*ibid.*

¹³*ibid.*, and Chiles, *op.cit.*, pp. 7-10, 28-30. In 1906, after expansion, the Central Female College was reincorporated as the Central College for Women. In 1932, the structure was destroyed by fire.

¹⁴Interview with Robert Williams, August 18, 1998.

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the business center shifted eastward when the Missouri Pacific Railroad came through the area in the mid-1850s. The first floor doubled as a public school and religious meeting house. Lodge No. 85 disbanded at the start of the Civil War, however, and their building was eventually demolished. Another early fraternal lodge was organized in Warrensburg by the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, in 1856. Still later came such non-Masonic lodges as the Knights of Pythias (1877), the Ancient Order of United Workmen (1879), the Knights of Macabees and various others.¹⁵

Shortly after the Civil War, two new Masonic lodges were organized in Warrensburg in successive years. The first was Warrensburg Lodge No. 135, organized October 19, 1867. The second, ostensibly formed because Lodge No. 135 denied admittance to several would-be Masons, was Corinthian Lodge No. 265, organized October 15, 1868. Several years later, Lodge No. 135 disbanded and its members joined Corinthian Lodge No. 265, which remains active today. The first officers of Lodge No. 265 were George R. Hunt, who had been a member of the original Warrensburg lodge, worshipful master; J. A. McSpadden, senior warden; and A. J. V. Wadell, junior warden.¹⁶ Thirteen times through 1886, Hunt served as master of Lodge No. 265 and later was elected Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Missouri.¹⁷

Like the earlier lodges, Lodge No. 265 was a Blue Lodge, the basic unit of Masonry. Upon achieving the rank of Master Mason in a Blue Lodge, members could join auxiliary, supposedly more elite Masonic organizations such as York Rite or Scottish Rite. The York Rite branch was active in Warrensburg with two chapters: Mary Commandery, Knights Templar No. 19 (organized in 1872) and De Molay Chapter No. 26, Royal Arch Masons (chartered in 1867). When the Masonic Temple was constructed, these smaller, more exclusive units of Masonry shared third floor space with the Blue Lodge. Masonic symbols and letters representing these locally active bodies are carved in the sandstone entrance surround of Warrensburg's Masonic Temple. For several years prior to construction of the Masonic Temple, these groups rented the mansard third floor of a commercial building on the northwest corner of North Holden and West Culton. Although extant, this earlier building has lost integrity and apparently was not constructed for lodge purposes.¹⁸

By the turn of the century, Masonry's reputation as a prestigious organization was strong and growing and it seemed that nearly every small town had a Masonic lodge whose members shared a belief in God, brotherhood and charity for the needy. In 1900, Warrensburg Chapter No. 3 of the Order of Eastern Star--

¹⁵North, F. A., Managing Editor, The History of Johnson County, Missouri (Kansas City: Kansas City Historical Company, 1881), pp. 412-419, 432.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 412-419.

¹⁷Sweeney, S. Ray, Biographies of Past Grand Masters of the Grand Lodge of Missouri Who Were From Johnson County, unpagued, 1951.

¹⁸Cockrell, Ewing. History of Johnson County, Missouri (Topeka, Kansas: Historical Publishing Company, 1918), pp. 415-417; and Crissey, William E. Warrensburg, Mo.: A History with Folk Lore (Warrensburg: Star-Journal Co., 1924), (unpagued).

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for female relatives of Masons--was formed.¹⁹ Even before the Masonic Temple was built, Warrensburg's Lodge No. 265 was one of the largest lodges in west-central Missouri. In 1890, four years before completion of the Masonic Temple, Lodge No. 265 had 104 members representing 2.2 per cent of the city's total population. While this was a growth period for Masonry, the construction of a new and prestigious temple undoubtedly added to its appeal locally. By 1900, Lodge No. 265 had 126 members, an increase of approximately 21 per cent and representing 2.7 per cent of Warrensburg's population. Nationwide, there were an estimated 854,000 Masons in 1900. Masonry's popularity continued in the early 20th century, with greater emphasis placed on social activities and less on ritual and religion, in response to changing times. Growth of the lodge continued through the 1920s, numerically as well as by percentage of the city population.²⁰

Since the Great Depression, however, Masonry has declined in spite of modernization efforts. Although Masonry became more service-oriented and offered increased social activity in the 20th century, memberships fell significantly behind population growth due to cultural and social transformations in the world outside of Masonry. Masonry remains important, but fraternal organizations of all kinds have gone somewhat out of fashion. Even the ceremony of laying cornerstones for new public buildings, long a Masonic tradition which among other things provided public exposure, has become increasingly rare.²¹

Masonic Temple Construction

In 1893, Warrensburg Masonic bodies met in rented quarters that probably had become too small for the growing fraternity. Desiring a prestigious building of their own in which to entertain and impress visiting brethren, members of Corinthian Lodge No. 265 encouraged the formation of a stock company to raise money for construction purposes. Four hundred shares were quickly sold at \$50 each and on April 21, 1893, the Masonic Temple Association stockholders met in the Bank of Warrensburg and elected some of the city's leading citizens to the board of directors: William E. Crissey, Jehu H. Smith, J. M. Bosaker, E. N. Johnson, J. H. Christopher, E. A. Nickerson and William P. Hunt. Hunt, then presiding judge of the Johnson County Court and cashier of the Bank of Warrensburg (as well as a member of Lodge No. 265),

¹⁹Cockrell, *op.cit.*

²⁰Membership figures were provided by the Grand Lodge of Missouri. In 1901, Corinthian Lodge No. 265 had 154 members and was the largest Masonic lodge in the Show-Me Region of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Lafayette Counties. However, Sedalia had two lodges which, if added together, would have greatly exceeded Warrensburg's membership.

The percentages are only for very rough comparison since most of the citizenry--women, men under 21, blacks, men without right hands, etc.--were ineligible candidates for Masonry. Also, Lodge No. 265 drew its members from a somewhat larger area ("jurisdiction") than just the city of Warrensburg.

²¹Lodge No. 265 conducted a re-laying ceremony last year after the original cornerstone in the Johnson County Courthouse was removed for access to a time capsule. But prior to that, the last cornerstone ceremony recalled by Past Master Robert Williams was for Ridgeview School in Warrensburg, in 1969.

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but apparently no relation to George R. Hunt who had been one of the lodge's original members, was elected president. Crissey, Bosaker and Nickerson were elected to the building committee. Crissey, Smith, Christopher, Hunt and perhaps others on the board were Masons.²² Although not a director, Mason Charles A. Shepard-- who later opened a dry goods store on the first floor of the Masonic Temple-- was described as the "moving spirit" in the building program.²³

Architectural plans for the Masonic Temple were prepared by William S. Matthews and Lewis L. Sanders (aka Saunders), of Kansas City.²⁴ For their services, Matthews and Sanders received \$305 (after the Masonic Temple Association deducted a \$20 penalty because the architects failed to provide an estimated cost of materials). Whether Matthews and Sanders designed other Warrensburg buildings is undetermined, but an example of a Richardsonian Romanesque house designed by Matthews is depicted in Missouri's Contribution to American Architecture. Completed in 1890, the George F. Winter residence in Kansas City featured walls of rough-faced sandstone which may well have come from a Warrensburg quarry.²⁵ Despite a national depression in 1893, construction flourished in Warrensburg. Also, many commercial buildings and private residences were initially wired for electricity at about this time, the Masonic Temple included.²⁶

²²Warrensburg Standard-Herald, April 11, 21, and 25, 1893; The Portrait and Biographical Record of Johnson and Pettis Counties (Chicago: Chapman Publishing Co., 1895), pp. 127-128; and Masonic Temple Association Minutes, April 21, 1893.

²³Ferguson, J. L. "Masonic Lodge Organization Here When Warrensburg Was Ten Years Old," Warrensburg Star-Journal, May 30, 1939.

²⁴First names are not used, but brief references to "the architect, Matthews and Saunders" are found in the Masonic Temple Association Minutes of 1893. The architectural firm of Matthews and Sanders (not Saunders) is listed in the Kansas City directory for 1893 (pp. 393 and 501), but neither Matthews, Sanders nor Saunders is listed in the only Warrensburg city directory available for the period, published in 1895. The Warrensburg Standard-Herald on February 17, 1893, reported that "Lee Matthews, architect, is preparing plans and specifications for several brick business houses to be built in the near future." Whether the paper got the first name wrong or a different Matthews (other than William S.) was indeed an architect for the Masonic Temple is unknown, but unlikely.

²⁵Bryan, John Albury. Missouri's Contribution to American Architecture (St. Louis, Mo.: St. Louis Architectural Club, 1928), p. 85.

²⁶In addition to the Masonic Temple, various 1893 issues of the Warrensburg Standard-Herald describe the construction of a two-story city hall on the public square, a two-story brick commercial building opposite the Magnolia Opera House on West Pine, a Methodist Episcopal Church on Market (begun the previous year), an electric light plant on Warren, at least one other brick commercial building on West Pine, a city waterworks system fed by nearby Pertle Springs, an expanded railroad depot, several residences and other improvements.

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Source: John Albury Bryan, Missouri's Contribution to American Architecture (St. Louis: St. Louis Architectural Club, 1928), p. 85.



Residence of George F. Winter, Kansas City
Completed in 1890
Wm. S. Matthews, Kansas City, Architect

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The Masonic Temple was constructed in slightly more than a year, from June 1893 through June 1894. However, the basic building was completed by October 1893. Throughout construction, local newspapers described the project's progress in sporadic and usually brief reports:

The plans of the new Masonic Temple have arrived and work on the foundation has been commenced.²⁷ Before long the work [on the Masonic Temple] will be in full sway and a large force of hands employed.²⁸ The cellar under the Masonic Temple, in which the boilers are to be placed, is completed.²⁹ Work on the Masonic Temple is being pushed rapidly. A large force of brick layers and stone masons are employed.³⁰ The magnificent stone arch over the Market street entrance of the new Masonic Temple is in place. All of the walls are up to the first story, and the brick and stone masons have been laid off until the carpenters can catch up.³¹ The walls of the new Masonic Temple are nearly finished. The finishing up of the interior can hardly be completed before cold weather, but everything will be finished when spring opens.³² The walls of the Masonic Temple are complete and it makes a very imposing appearance.³³ The Masonic Temple is a beauty.³⁴ A large force of workmen are at work on the Masonic Temple. They are building two fire proof vaults.....We trust one of them will receive the Recorder's office records.³⁵ The plastering of the Masonic Temple building is rapidly approaching completion. Mr. W. R. Hawkins, the contractor, informs us that his part of the work will be finished sometime next week.³⁶ The furniture for the new Masonic Hall...has arrived and it is said by all who

²⁷Warrensburg Standard-Herald, June 23, 1893.

²⁸Warrensburg Standard-Herald, June 27, 1893.

²⁹Warrensburg Standard-Herald, July 25, 1893.

³⁰Warrensburg Standard-Herald, August 25, 1893.

³¹Warrensburg Standard-Herald, September 1, 1893.

³²Warrensburg Standard-Herald, September 22, 1893.

³³Warrensburg Standard-Herald, October 3, 1893.

³⁴Warrensburg Standard-Herald, October 10, 1893.

³⁵Warrensburg Journal-Democrat, March 16, 1894. This comment probably included a slap at the frame building then serving as the Johnson County Courthouse, considered inadequate and apparently reviled by many citizens.

³⁶Warrensburg Journal-Democrat, May 4, 1894.

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have viewed it to be the finest ever brought to the city.³⁷ An excellent bird's-eye view of the city can be had from the roof of the Masonic Temple.³⁸ The work on the Masonic Temple is being pushed vigorously. The offices and store rooms are in demand, and when completed this will be one of the finest office buildings in this part of the state.³⁹

The Masonic Temple cost \$20,720, including \$4,500 for the lots. The basic building, including labor, cost approximately \$10,050. Among other things, the remaining \$6,170 included \$1,880 for sandstone sawed to order, \$500 for constructing a cellar, \$438 for a tin roof with ventilators, \$340 for a bracketed metal cornice, \$748 for cast iron storefronts, \$106 for "stairwork," \$305 for plans and specifications, \$313 for hardware, \$252 for two vaults, \$325 for plastering, \$288 for painting, \$206 for sidewalks, \$75 for electric wiring, \$18 for awnings and \$155 for shelving.⁴⁰

The project foreman was N. Johnson, a local carpenter who was paid \$3 per day for his services. Few Masons actually worked in stone or brick by the 1890s, but numerous stone and brick masons lived in Warrensburg during this period; several of them undoubtedly worked on the project as day laborers. At least two of the stone cutters came from Kansas City. Johnson's services apparently were dispensed with in November 1893 after the basic structure was completed. Building committee member Bosaker, a Warrensburg builder and lumber dealer who had been supplying construction material, probably replaced Johnson as foreman.⁴¹ The extent of direct involvement by members of Lodge No. 265 is unknown, but some labor was probably donated.

Sandstone used in the impressive main entrance and elsewhere in the building was provided by Erath and Thym, who operated a local saw mill. Erath and Thym's bid for furnishing sandstone sawed to order was \$2,500.⁴² According to the Masonic Temple Association Minutes, however, the firm was paid only \$1,880, possibly indicating that less sandstone was used in the building than originally planned.⁴³ The sandstone undoubtedly came from either the Bruce or Pickel Bros. quarries north of Warrensburg. Both quarries were in operation at this time, shipping the popular building material to several states where it was used in the construction of many government buildings, university halls, churches, hotels, banks and private mansions. Locally, extant public buildings constructed entirely of Warrensburg sandstone include the

³⁷Warrensburg Journal-Democrat, May 18, 1894.

³⁸Warrensburg Journal-Democrat, June 8, 1894.

³⁹Warrensburg Journal-Democrat, June 15, 1894.

⁴⁰Masonic Temple Association Minutes, September 7, 1894.

⁴¹Masonic Temple Association Minutes, June 2, July 5, November 19, December 5, 1893; January 2, 1894; Warrensburg Standard-Herald, September 1, 1893.

⁴²Warrensburg Standard-Herald, July 14, 1893.

⁴³Masonic Temple Association Minutes, September 14, 1894.

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Missouri Pacific Depot, various buildings on the Central Missouri State University campus, the National Register-listed Johnson County Courthouse (4/07/94) and Garden of Eden Station (4/08/94), and churches. During its heyday, sandstone from the local quarries also was widely used in retaining walls, foundations, sidewalks, porch supports and building trim. The extensive use of sandstone trim in the Masonic Temple makes it very much a "Warrensburg" building.

Other contracts were awarded to the Hubbard Planing Mill for providing wood frame members; W. F. Vaden for plastering interior walls; and Ol Miller for painting and decorating. Vaden apparently either subcontracted the plastering job or was joined or replaced by W. R. Hawkins.⁴⁴

Warrensburg's Masonic Temple was constructed during the period when many local lodges began building their own meeting halls instead of adapting existing buildings. Architecturally, these halls ranged from the sublime to the relatively austere (the vast majority), depending on the size, wealth and aspirations of the lodge. Only two years earlier, a pioneer skyscraper of 22 stories had been erected in Chicago as a Masonic Temple. Although very few lodges could afford to hire the likes of Root and Burnbaum, the architects who designed Chicago's 1892 Masonic Temple, it was highly desirable that the buildings be sufficiently monumental to give an impression of permanency and stability. Appropriately, Warrensburg's Masonic Temple has a massive, rugged quality and fine brickwork suggesting these very things. This was exactly the image that members wanted to present about Masonry itself, that it was solid and safe in a society often marked by disharmony and disorder.⁴⁵

On August 22, 1893, Masons from throughout Johnson County came to Warrensburg for the cornerstone ceremony: "The weather was fine and large numbers of people from the country came in. Holden, Centreview and Knob Noster sent large delegations. At 10 o'clock the procession, headed by Day's Comet Band, marched to the corner of Holden and Market streets, where the structure is in progress of erection. The ceremonies were conducted by Worshipful Grand Master B. H. Ingram of Sedalia. After the stone was laid the Masons, their wives and families repaired to Pertle Springs, where they are spending the day."⁴⁶ Pertle Springs, a popular local resort with lakes, woods and picnic areas, was developed by J. H. Christopher, a Mason.

Eleven months later, on July 17, 1894, the Masonic Temple was formally dedicated with typically ritualistic, sacred overtones: "Tuesday was Masonic Day in this city and the craft, according to ancient usage, dedicated their magnificent home to Freemasonry, virtue and universal benevolence."⁴⁷ Following a song by the Elk Quartet from nearby Sedalia, Past Grand Master B. H. Ingram "selected a body of Masons to

⁴⁴Warrensburg Standard-Herald, August 4, 1893; Warrensburg Journal-Democrat, March 9, May 4, 1894.

⁴⁵Dumenil, Lynn, Freemasonry and American Culture 1800-1930. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 18-19.

⁴⁶Warrensburg Standard-Herald, August 22, 1893.

⁴⁷Warrensburg Standard-Herald, July 20, 1894.

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assist him in the work. As they marched around the large hall the Sedalia quartet sang a beautiful hymn and when they reached the alter Mr. Ingram called them to a halt and poured upon the alter the "corn" which signified the dedication of the hall to Freemasonry, and the march was taken around the room until the alter was again reached and then the "wine," which indicates virtue, was poured upon the alter. They marched around the room for the third time, and the "oil" which represents universal benevolence, was poured upon the alter. P. G. Master Ingram then asked for the benediction which was pronounced by Rev. Finis King, Grand Chaplain.⁴⁸

After the ceremony, "the brethren repaired to Pertle Springs, where a bounteous spread had been prepared by the wives and daughters of resident Masons. The banquet was given in the restaurant building near the auditorium, and 150 people could be seated. Over 300 regaled themselves at the feast, and the menu perhaps was the finest ever spread at Pertle Springs." Later that afternoon, the brethren assembled in the auditorium for an address on the subject of Freemasonry by Rev. Xenophan Ryland, of Lexington, whose remarks were described as "eloquent and masterly."⁴⁹

Standing three full stories and with a monumental arched entrance, Warrensburg's Masonic Temple was clearly a source of pride for the entire community, not just Masons. The local press described it as "an imposing structure built of hard pressed brick, a model in architecture and a credit to the enterprise and pluck of the parties who were instrumental in its construction."⁵⁰ The massive entrance was described as "magnificent."⁵¹ Certainly no fraternal lodge in Johnson County had anything comparable. With its Victorian Italianate styling and extensive use of decorative sandstone trim, it was perhaps the most ornate of Masonic buildings constructed in the Show-Me Region.⁵² The Masonic Temple was the largest building on Warrensburg's public square until the present Johnson County Courthouse, an impressive example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture, was completed in 1898.

Like most other Masonic meeting halls of the period, the Masonic Temple consisted of multiple stories so the members could have an entire upper floor for conducting ceremonies with the necessary privacy. Plus by collecting rent from the building's commercial tenants as well as from the Masons, the Masonic Temple Association was able to maintain the building and gradually recoup construction costs. Initially, Lodge No. 265 and other local Masonic organizations paid \$25 monthly to the Association for sole use of the third floor. Other monthly rental fees ranged from \$6 for a single office room on the second floor to \$35 for a street level business house. A second floor suite cost \$13, while the smallest first floor room rented for

⁴⁸Warrensburg Journal-Democrat, July 20, 1894.

⁴⁹Warrensburg Standard-Herald, July 20, 1894.

⁵⁰Warrensburg Journal-Democrat, July 20, 1894.

⁵¹Warrensburg Standard-Herald, September 1, 1893.

⁵²The Show-Me Region is a politically-defined area in west-central Missouri consisting of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties.

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\$15.⁵³ By around 1924, the Masonic bodies had repurchased the last of the bonds and owned the entire building outright.⁵⁴

The third floor lodge rooms were opulent, particularly the meeting hall which occupied much of the space: "When you step into the Masonic hall...you are surrounded with luxurious furnishing that would befit a king. The walls are richly painted and suspended from the ceiling are numerous incandescent lights. The furniture is elaborate in the extreme, and the carpet which covers the main hall, ante room, reception rooms, and the room where the 'royal bumper' lives is Moquet that does honor to the members of Corinthian Lodge No. 265 and credit to His royal Highness the 'bumper'.⁵⁵ The hall could be spacious because there was no need for load-bearing walls on the third floor. At some point the lodge began using part of the second floor as well, constructing a kitchen and dining room in the east portion.⁵⁶

Original first floor tenants were J. W. Snoddy, a jeweler, occupying the large store on the southwest corner; Welch & Embree Boots & Shoes in the large north storeroom fronting on North Holden; and the H. J. Wall Abstract Co., in a smaller first floor room east of the main entrance on East Market. The large southwest store and the east store were equipped with vaults. Original second floor tenants included Dr. J. D. Peak, a dentist; Dr. Z. Case, a physician; and an insurance company represented by _____ Schwartz. Second floor tenants could rent one room or a suite.⁵⁷

Other early tenants of the Masonic Temple included Shepard's Dry Goods, J. B. Clark Shoes & Boots, Everhart's Watches & Jewelry, the Missouri & Kansas Telephone Co., the American Bank, Dr. C. E. Jamison and Gilkeson's. The bank, organized in 1905, was in the southwest corner originally occupied by J. W. Snoddy and Everhart's. Shepard's, the dry goods firm, replaced Welch & Embree in the north half before 1900. Sanborn fire insurance maps indicate that by 1907, Shepard's had expanded into the south half of the building east of the bank. Except for Lodge No. 265, Shepard's remained in business in the Masonic Temple longer than any other occupant, until 1979. In 1913, the American Bank and the Johnson County Trust Company became the American Trust Company. Many other private and public tenants have occupied space in the building over the years. Postwar tenants include Sears, Roebuck & Co., a Missouri Equal Employment Opportunity office and Dr. D. L. Quibell, a chiropractor.⁵⁸

⁵³Masonic Temple Association Minutes, September 7, 1894.

⁵⁴Ferguson, *op.cit.*

⁵⁵Warrensburg *Journal-Democrat*, July 20, 1894.

⁵⁶Interviews with Robert Williams, 8/18/98, and D. L. Quibell, 8/19/98.

⁵⁷Masonic Temple Association Minutes, September 7, 1894.

⁵⁸Missouri Historic Inventory Survey Form No. 89, "Masonic Temple Building," Warrensburg Business District Survey, July 1981; Masonic Temple Association Minutes, *op.cit.*; "Bright Future Seen For Masonic Building," article in Warrensburg *Daily Star-Journal*, December 8, 1980.

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In 1980, some 87 years after construction of the Masonic Temple, Corinthian Lodge No. 265 (through the Masonic Temple Association) erected a new one-story building behind the local Wal-Mart. The old building was sold and has since been used strictly for commercial purposes. But although the opulent furnishings and the symbols of Masonry--such things as emblems of the seasons, the solar system, twin pillars and other representations of Solomon's Temple in the east wall--have been removed, the building itself remains as a monument to local Masonry.⁵⁹

Social History

The 1894 Masonic Temple in Warrensburg is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the category of SOCIAL HISTORY. Constructed during a period when organizational activity swept America, the Masonic Temple is associated with the history of a local Masonic lodge--Missouri's Corinthian Lodge No. 265, organized in 1868--and its ongoing efforts to promote the welfare of society through the reaffirmation of traditional values. For 87 years, the third floor of this large and ornate building served as a Masonic meeting hall where ideals of fellowship, charity and moral behavior--central to the Ancient, Free and Accepted Order of Freemasons--were discussed, charitable deeds were planned, and rituals of membership necessary to the order were carried out. The 1894-1948 period of significance reflects the decades when religion and ritual were emphasized as well as the secret fraternity's 20th century efforts to adapt to an increasingly secular society. Warrensburg's Masonic Temple also is significant because it successfully projects a strong image of permanency and stability, qualities that became particularly important to the order as lodges increasingly built their own temples in the late 19th century.

Masonry, which apparently evolved from medieval guilds of stonemasons in England and Scotland, is often described as the oldest fraternal organization in the world. The first lodges on American shores were formed around 1730 in Boston and Philadelphia, and these early lodges were politically active; Masons were involved in the American Revolution, and the Boston Tea Party is said to have been planned in Boston's St. Andrew Lodge. As Masonry flowed westward with civilization, lodges were formed in the new territories, evidently fulfilling a need for social interaction of a type not provided by churches or other organizations of the period. Eventually, each state had a Grand Lodge with administrative powers.⁶⁰ The Masonic Grand Lodge of Missouri was organized in 1821, in St. Louis.⁶¹ Missouri's Grand Lodge was

⁵⁹Masonic rules required lodges to be oriented from the east wall, in front of which the Master Mason sat facing west.

⁶⁰For short histories of Freemasonry, see Axelrod, Alan, The International Encyclopedia of Secret Societies and Fraternal Orders (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1997), pp. 90-97; MacKenzie, Norman, ed., Secret Societies (New York, Chicago and San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), pp. 152-177; Hughan, William James, "Freemasonry" in the Encyclopedia Britannica Eleventh Edition (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1910), Vol. XI, pp. 78-85.

⁶¹Meyer, op.cit.

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nearly abolished in the 1830s during a nationwide anti-Masonic movement, but the fraternity recovered and became more popular than ever.⁶²

Of American Masonry's many spokesmen, Scottish Rite Mason Albert Pike was especially prominent. Pike saw numerous parallels between Masonry and organized religion and described Masonry as "a continual struggle toward the light."⁶³ Although nonsectarian by policy, Masonry has a religious quality that stops short of theology. Masons must believe in a God, but no creed is excluded. Spokesmen such as Grand Orator W. F. Packard often spoke of Masonry as a "hand-maid" of religion, but not a substitute for it.⁶⁴ In Masonic lodges where Christianity prevails, such as Lodge No. 265, an open Bible rests on the altar and three religiously-oriented ceremonies are required of any man wishing to become a Mason. In 1888, two (highly uncommon) cases involving Missouri Masons accused of "denying the existence of God and the truth of the Bible" ended in expulsions which were sustained by Missouri's Grand Lodge.⁶⁵ Particularly in the 19th century, the religious component of Masonry with its "temples," open Bibles, prayers and ritualistic ceremonies sometimes provoked resentment by, for example, Evangelical Christians who saw Masonry as evil. Historically, the relationship between Masonry and Catholicism has been rather stormy and few Catholics are Masons even today.⁶⁶

Pike also was a stickler for education, describing the "true object" of Masonic studies as the gaining of wisdom rather than merely the gaining of knowledge. To Pike, wisdom was closely associated with political freedom: "The wiser a man becomes, the less will he be inclined to submit tamely to the imposition of fetters or a yoke, on his conscience or his person."⁶⁷ For these and other reasons, many Masons have strongly supported legislation aimed at improving public education and keeping it beyond the control of special interest groups.⁶⁸ While the fraternity seldom became directly involved in the education process, the Masonic College of Missouri, located briefly at Philadelphia and then at Lexington

⁶²Chiles, op.cit., pp. 7-10.

⁶³Pike, Albert, Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry (Charleston, S.C.: The Supreme Council of Scottish Rite, Southern Jurisdiction, 1871 [1942 reprint]), p. 223.

⁶⁴"The Language of Symbolism," address by Rev. W. F. Packard, D.D., published in Proceedings, Grand Lodge of Missouri, 1900, p.47.

⁶⁵Voice of Masonry 26, November 1888, pp. 1120-1121.

⁶⁶Dumenil (op.cit., p. 9) points out that while nationality, class and religion are technically irrelevant if other high standards of membership are met, Masons predominantly have been white, middle-class, native-born, Protestant men.

⁶⁷Pike, op.cit., p. 26.

⁶⁸Dumenil, op.cit., pp. 137-147.

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prior to the Civil War, was an important exception.⁶⁹ Fraternal organizations of all kinds grew tremendously in the decades following the Civil War.

When Warrensburg's Masonic Temple was completed in 1894, the primary attractions of Masonry were probably sociability, brotherhood, relief in times of distress (Masons had long been known for taking care of their own, including distressed families and orphans) and possible financial and political advantages from being associated with influential members of the community.⁷⁰ Plus Masons knew that "As a Mason you are never down and out. There is always a brother to help you."⁷¹ Among other things, dues and initiation fees collected from lodges across the state were used to finance a Masonic home and orphanage in St. Louis for needy families of Masons and orphans; later, hospitals were added.⁷²

Getting ahead in the business world was an unacceptable motive for becoming a Mason, but the likelihood of making potentially important professional connections was undoubtedly an attraction. Prominent members of Lodge No. 265 in the 1890s included William P. Hunt, a banker and presiding judge of the Johnson County Court; William E. Crissey, who ran an abstract and title company and was president of the Warrensburg school board; Jehu H. Smith, who operated a feed store and was a former mayor of Warrensburg; Charles A. Shepard, who ran a mercantile store soon to occupy most of the first floor of the Masonic Temple; George W. Patten, who operated a farm implement business and founded a local abstract company; J. H. Christopher, developer of Pertle Springs and the Estes Hotel; Frank B. Fulkerson, a lawyer soon to be elected county prosecuting attorney; A. H. Gilkeson, who ran a dry goods store; L. M. Berry, a Baptist minister; and many others of high standing in the community who could presumably be counted on to assist an aspiring newcomer. The lodge had 111 members in 1894.⁷³

While men became Masons in the late 19th and early 20th centuries for various personal reasons, the fraternity's greatest importance was its strong commitment to preserving and extending the traditional values of society. Character and moral behavior, rather than wealth and social standing, were

⁶⁹Chiles, op.cit.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 30.

⁷¹Owens, Bill. Our Kind of People: American Groups and Rituals. (San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books, 1975), (unpaged).

⁷²In 1900, the Masonic Home of Missouri in St. Louis reported 119 "inmates" consisting of 78 children and 41 "old people," with admission dates back to November 1889. See Proceedings, Grand Lodge of Missouri, 1900, pp. 249-262.

⁷³These names were compiled in part from a list of lodge officers published in the Warrensburg Journal-Democrat, July 20, 1894. Various sources were consulted for determining occupations.

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emphasized as preconditions for membership.⁷⁴ Early Masonry was steeped in mysticism and secrecy but its tenets stressing morality, charity, and obedience to the law and to God, etc., were clear and contributed to its generally sterling reputation. During Masonry's heyday, it was practically taken for granted that the "best" men in the community were Masons.⁷⁵ Fourteen Presidents of the United States have been Masons, the fraternity proudly points out, starting with George Washington; President Harry Truman of Missouri was a Mason.⁷⁶ Many individual Masons were pillars of their communities, and the tenets of Masonry were ingrained, in varying degrees, in the social and cultural development of the many towns and cities where the organization thrived.

Occupying luxurious third floor rooms in the Masonic Temple, members of Corinthian Lodge No. 265 discussed and reinforced the tenets of Masonry in Warrensburg. Here also, ritualistic ceremonies were conducted by men dressed in strange garb, new members were initiated, complaints of nonmasonic behavior by members were aired and resolved (suspensions or expulsions were possible), and various charities were considered and often approved.⁷⁷ Presumably, the local Masons came away from their meetings with a renewed sense of purpose: "Good of the order was discussed in all its phases and all present retired to their homes not only better Masons but better men," said the Warrensburg Journal-Democrat in reporting a meeting of Lodge No. 265.⁷⁸

The degree of success these ostensibly "better men" enjoyed as role models in Warrensburg society as a result of being Masons is, of course, unknowable. The order's great reputation notwithstanding, it would be difficult to make a case that Masons influenced the cultural or even the physical development of Warrensburg more than any other well-meaning social group of long standing in the community, such as Odd Fellows. But since 19th and early 20th century Masonry reflected society's own highest values of morality, temperance, industry and sobriety, which were reaffirmed on a regular basis within the confines

⁷⁴Times have changed and "special dispensation" can be obtained from the Grand Lodge to accommodate *problematical memberships*. In 1901, however, an otherwise excellent candidate for Masonry with an artificial right hand was ineligible for membership, in the opinion of Grand Master Campbell Wells of the Grand Lodge of Missouri. It apparently had to do with the various grips used in Masonry; an artificial left hand was no problem. Proceedings, Grand Lodge of Missouri, 1901, p. 25.

⁷⁵Dumenil, op.cit., pp. 72-111,

⁷⁶Demott, Bobby J., Freemasonry in American Culture and Society (New York: University Press of America, 1986), pp. 62-64.

⁷⁷To maintain tax exempt status under present federal law, Masonic lodges today are required to direct much of their funding to charities outside of Masonry. For example, Lodge No. 265 in recent years has supported such activities as Adult Literacy, Survival (a local shelter for abused women), and needy individuals brought to the lodge's attention.

⁷⁸Warrensburg Journal-Democrat, October 20, 1905.

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of the lodge and then put into daily practice by many of the members, the Masonic influence can only be considered as for the better.

Early Masonry's high standing in the community was bolstered by the press, which at times reported Masonic affairs in a manner bordering on reverence. In the 1890s, enthusiastic local supporters of Masonry included the editors of both Warrensburg newspapers, perhaps Masons themselves. The Journal-Democrat's awkwardly worded but heartfelt account of a reception for Masons and their families in the newly-completed lodge rooms was fairly typical: "The order has stood for centuries and which is today doing such a grand work, is still increasing in good works.....Everywhere in the hall last night were seen evidences of the secrets of that mystic brotherhood, but no one could penetrate the veil. Masonry is known by its principles and by its works; its accomplishments for the good of humanity are not secrets, and its work in a social way was seen and enjoyed last night by scores of people who can testify to its success. Long live the Masons!"⁷⁹ Actually, the writer of the Journal-Democrat item probably was not a Mason because public promotion of this sort would have been considered bad form.

Reflecting changes in society, Masonry became increasingly secular and service-oriented beginning in the 1920s. Although religious and ritualistic elements have been de-emphasized, intricate ceremonies are still conducted and the Bible is ever-present. Masons still help those who are economically distressed by providing direct aid, but Masonic affiliation is no longer required of the recipient.

Ritualistic cornerstone-laying ceremonies gave Masons a direct, physical connection with many new public buildings.⁸⁰ In certifying cornerstones as square, level and plumb, Masons were in effect certifying the buildings themselves as good and true. This activity not only kept alive their ancient image as stonemasons but provided free advertising, especially when the cornerstones featured Masonic symbols. If the decline of cornerstone ceremonies in recent decades reflects the overall decline of Masonry, its demise seems highly unlikely. Masonry's creed of God, brotherhood and charity is hard to seriously fault. Strong bonds are formed among the members and even today, on the brink of a new century, many business deals very likely begin and are sealed with a "secret" Masonic handshake. Presumably, Masons entering into business affairs with brethren would do so with utmost confidence since their Masonic responsibilities, quoting Pike, include "honesty in contracts, sincerity in affirming, simplicity in bargaining, and faithfulness in performing."⁸¹

While Masonry apparently has developed into more of a civic club than a ritualistic order, older meeting halls such as Warrensburg's Masonic Temple are significant because they provide tangible links to the classic period of Masonry in the late 19th and early 20th centuries when organizational activity engulfed America. The Masonic Temple is a valuable local example of a 19th century Masonic meeting hall because it is sufficiently monumental to symbolize the desired attributes of wealth and strength, it is unique in Warrensburg, and it remains evocative of its period of significance. Following a sensitive in-

⁷⁹Warrensburg Journal-Democrat, June 22, 1894.

⁸⁰See footnote 21.

⁸¹Pike, op.cit., p. 116.

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progress rehabilitation by its new owner, Warrensburg's Masonic Temple should stand for many years as a local reminder of this important and still evolving social group.

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Warrensburg Journal-Democrat and Warrensburg Standard-Herald. Various dates.

Personal Interviews:

George, William, current secretary of Lodge No. 265, July 16, 1998.

Quibell, D. L., Mason and former commercial tenant on first floor of Masonic Temple, August 19, 1998.

Williams, Robert, past Master Mason of Lodge No. 265, August 18, 1998.

10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description: South one-third of Lots 47 and 48, Block C, Benjamin W. Grover's First Addition to the City of Warrensburg, Johnson County, Missouri.

Boundary Justification: The boundary includes that portion of the town lots historically associated with the property.

Accompanying Documentation

Photographs

The following information is the same for all photographs, except as noted:

Masonic Temple, Warrensburg, Johnson County, Missouri

Photographer: Roger Maserang

Negative Source: Roger Maserang

#1: West and south elevations, facing northeast.
June 1998.

#2: West and south elevations, facing northeast.
Historic postcard view, circa 1910.
Photographer: C. H. Harrison.

#3: South elevation, facing north.
June 1998.

#4: West elevation, facing east.
June 1998.

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Masonic Temple
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- #5: West elevation, facing east.
Historic depiction, circa 1895.
Artist: Unknown
- #6: Masonic Temple block, facing northeast.
June 1998.
- #7: View from northwest.
August 1998.
- #8: South and east elevations.
June 1998.
- #9: Side view looking west toward Johnson County Courthouse.
June 1998.
- #10: Storefront east of main entrance, facing north.
August 1998.
- #11: Main entrance, facing north.
June 1998.
- #12: Main entrance, facing northwest.
June 1998.
- #13: Second floor window group, facing north.
June 1998.
- #14: Third floor window group, facing north.
June 1998.
- #15: Cornice at southwest corner.
June 1998.
- #16: Lobby view with staircase, facing northwest.
July 1998.
- #17: Newel post detail.
July 1998.
- #18: North first floor room, facing west.
August 1998.
- #19: Central load bearing wall with archways, facing southwest.
August 1998.

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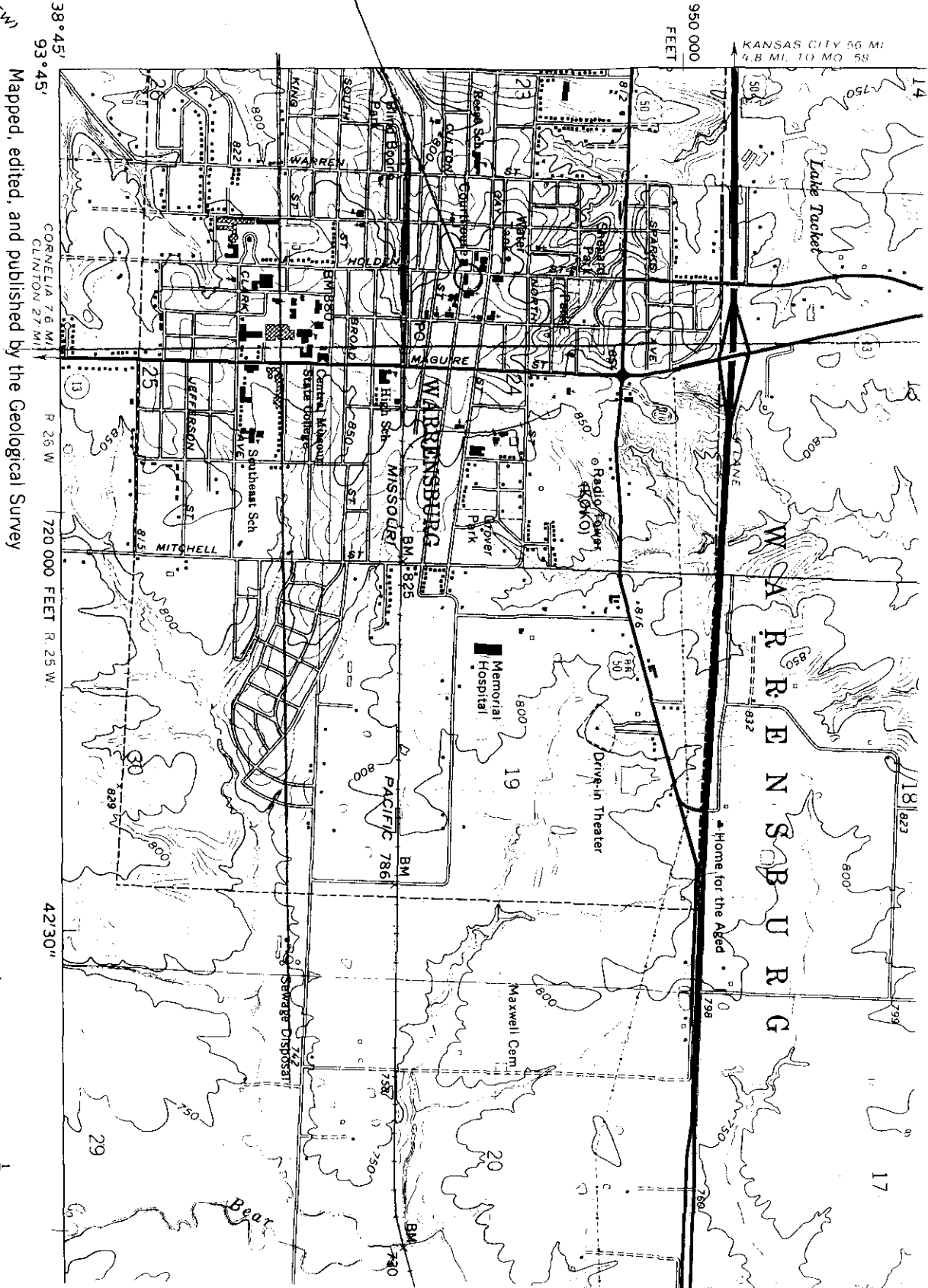
Section Photographs Page 31

**Masonic Temple
Johnson County, MO**

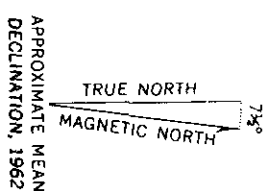
- #20: Southwest corner of first floor.
August 1998.
- #21: Second floor room in southeast corner, facing southwest.
August 1998.
- #22: North second floor room with "ghost" of lodge staircase.
August 1998.
- #23: Masonic symbol on east wall of third floor (partially visible).
August 1998.
- #24: View of bridgelike rafter support system.
August 1998.

MASONIC TEMPLE WARRENSBURG, JOHNSON CO., MO 15/435730/4290770

(CENTERVIEW)

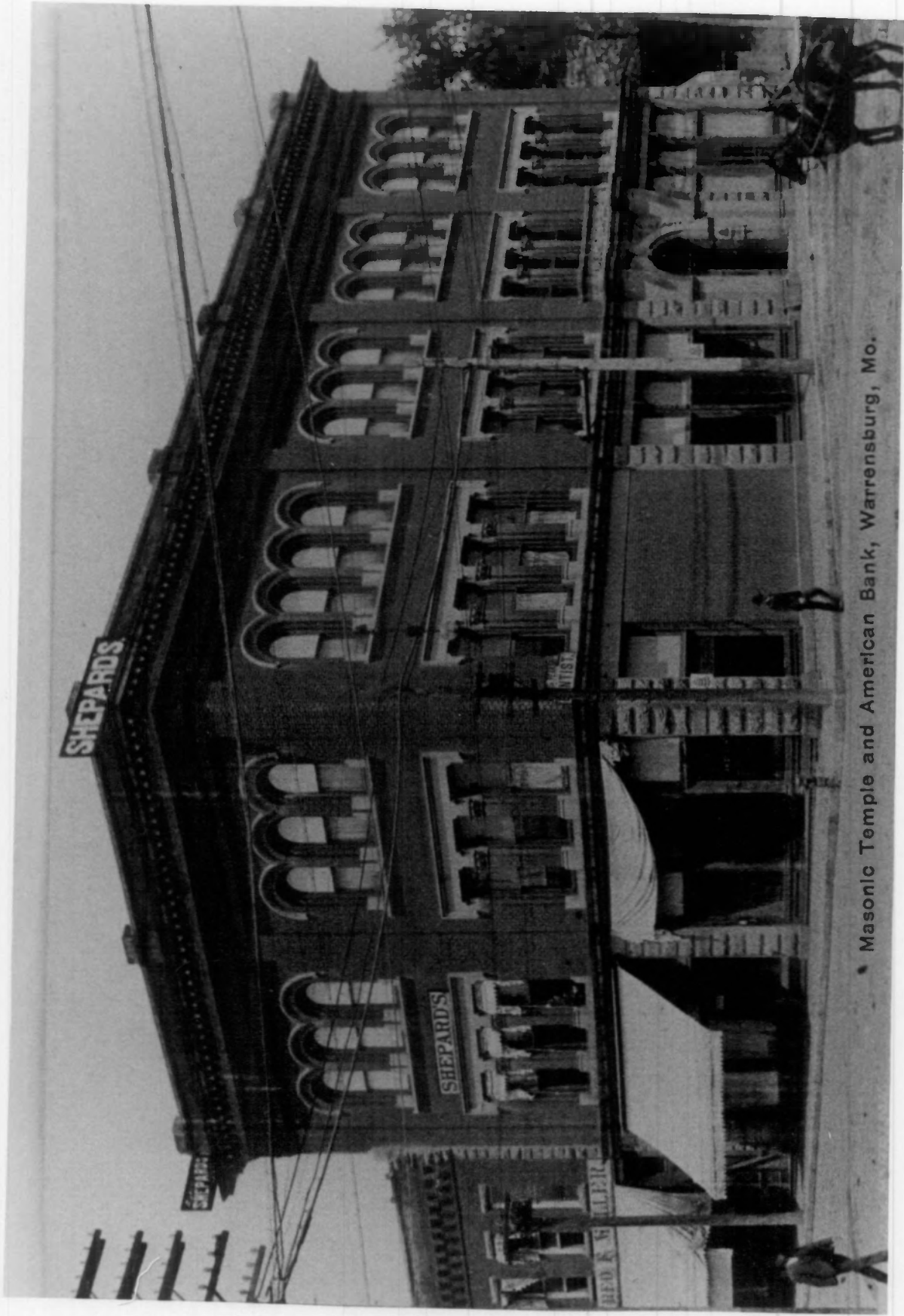


Control by USGS and USC&GS
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial
photographs taken 1958. Field checked 1962
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Missouri coordinate system, west zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 15, shown in blue
Red tint indicates area 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



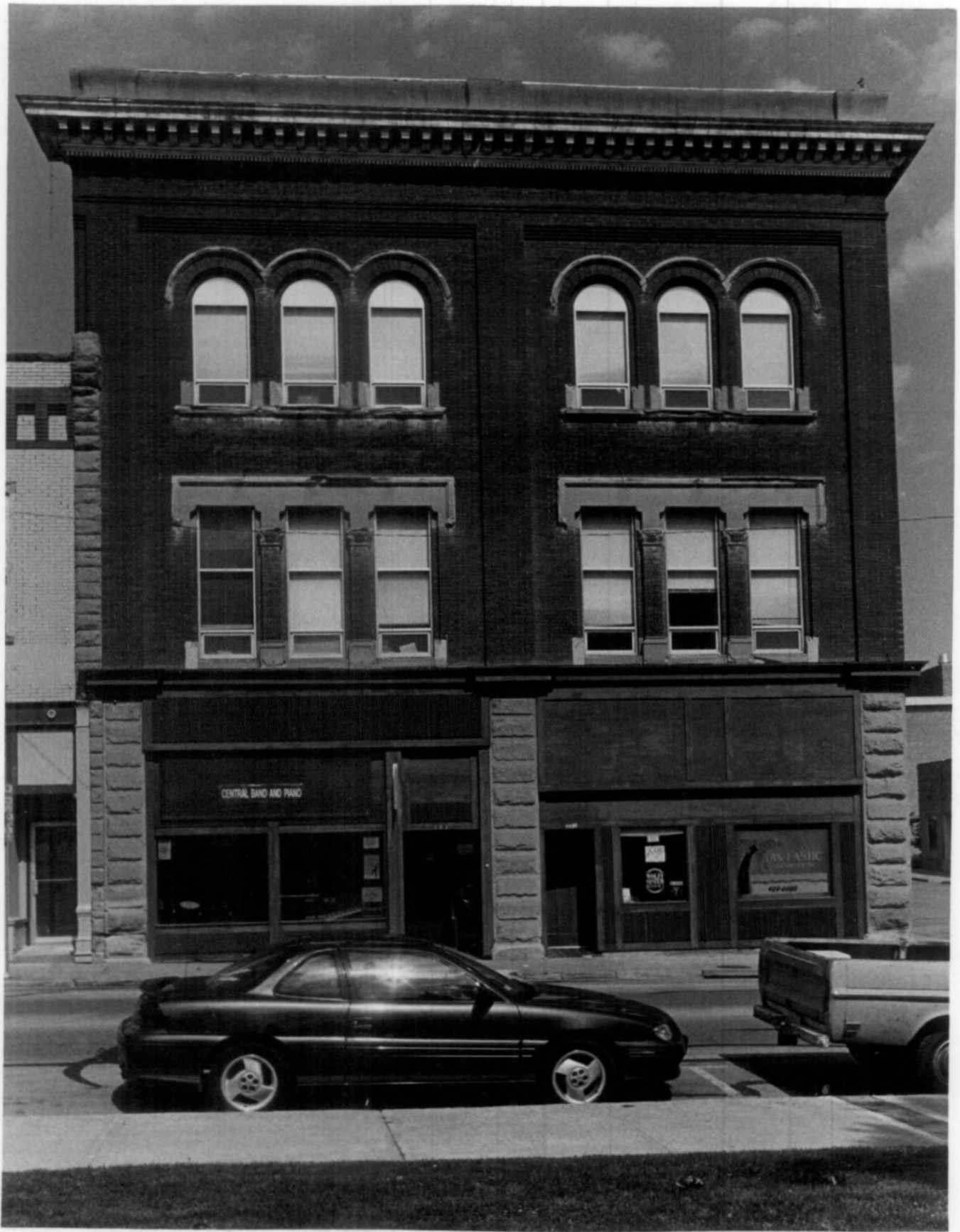
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AND BY THE MISSOURI
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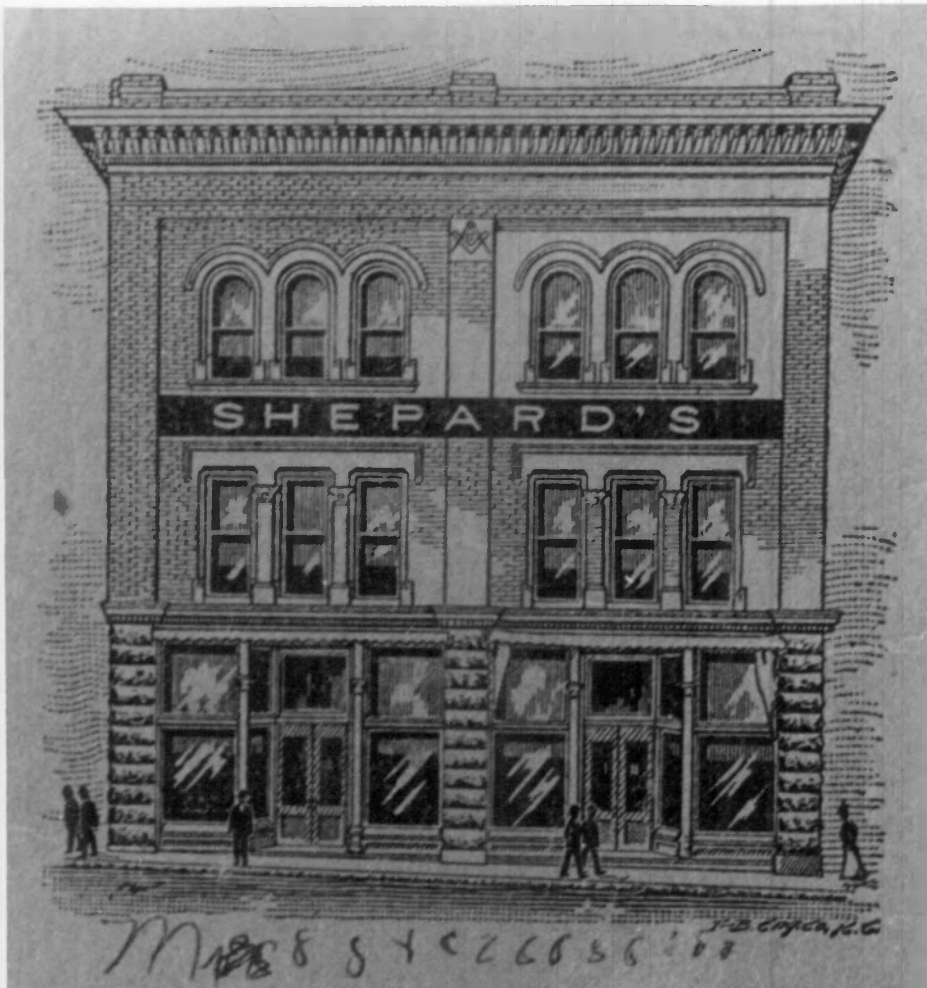




Masonic Temple and American Bank, Warrensburg, Mo.



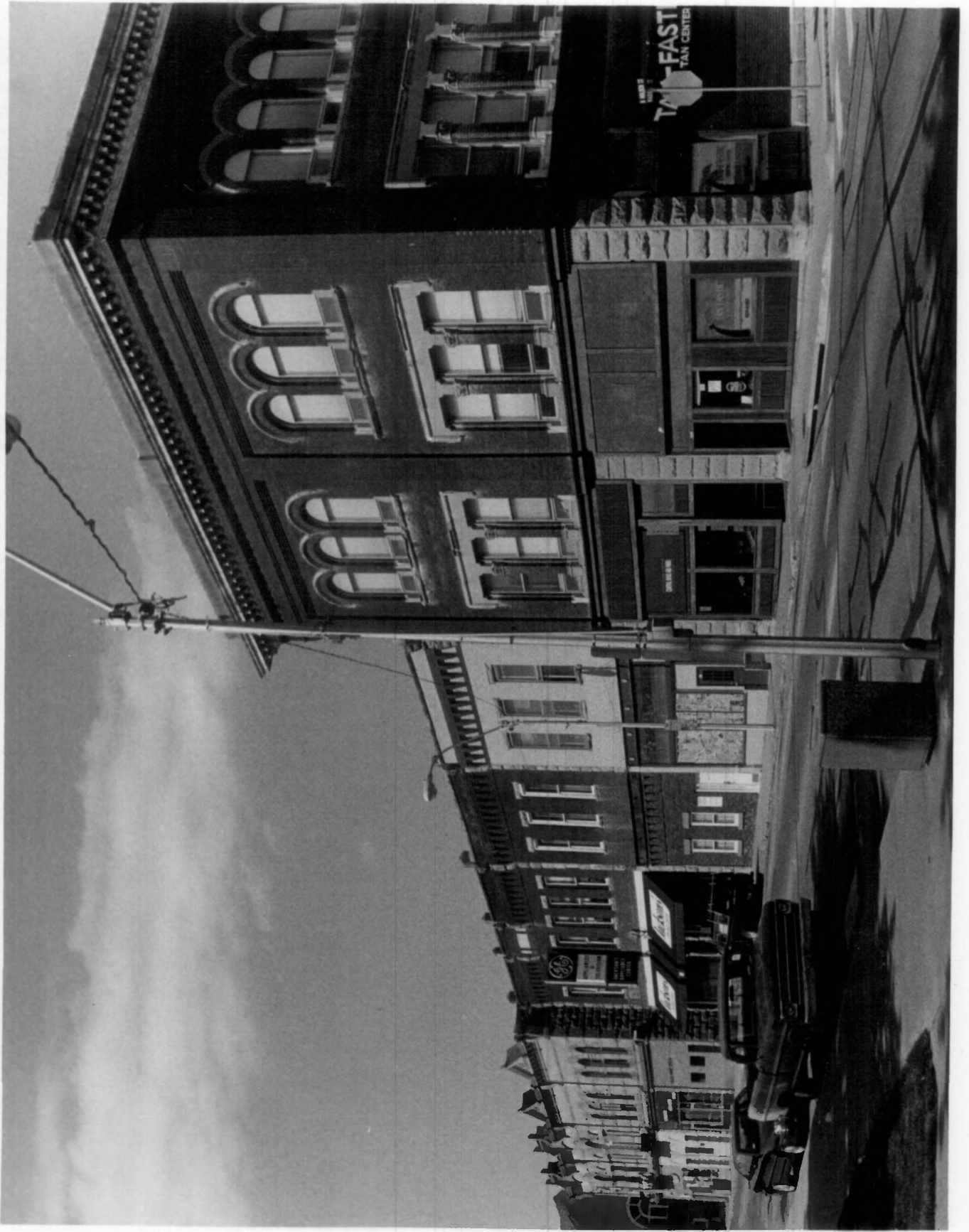


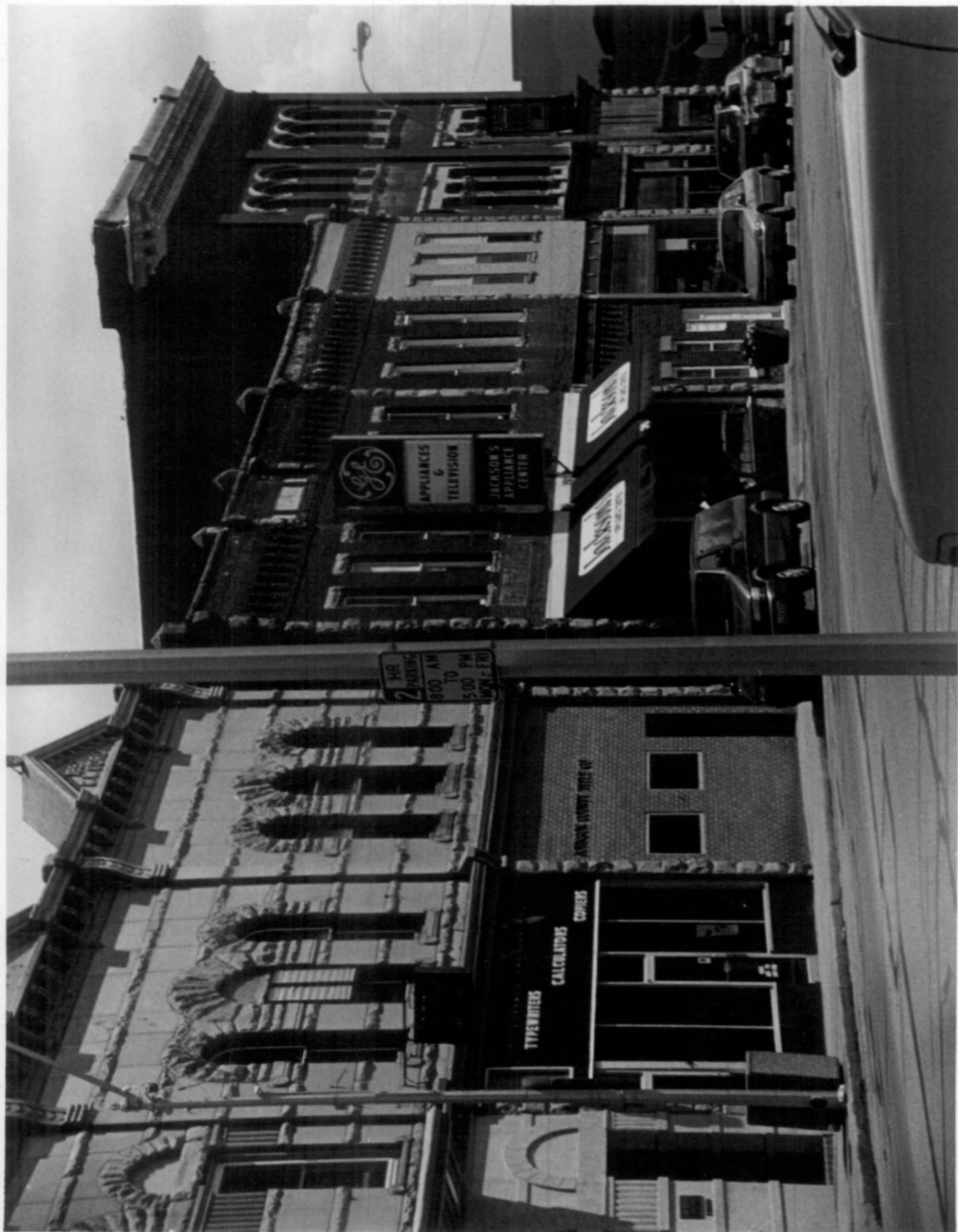


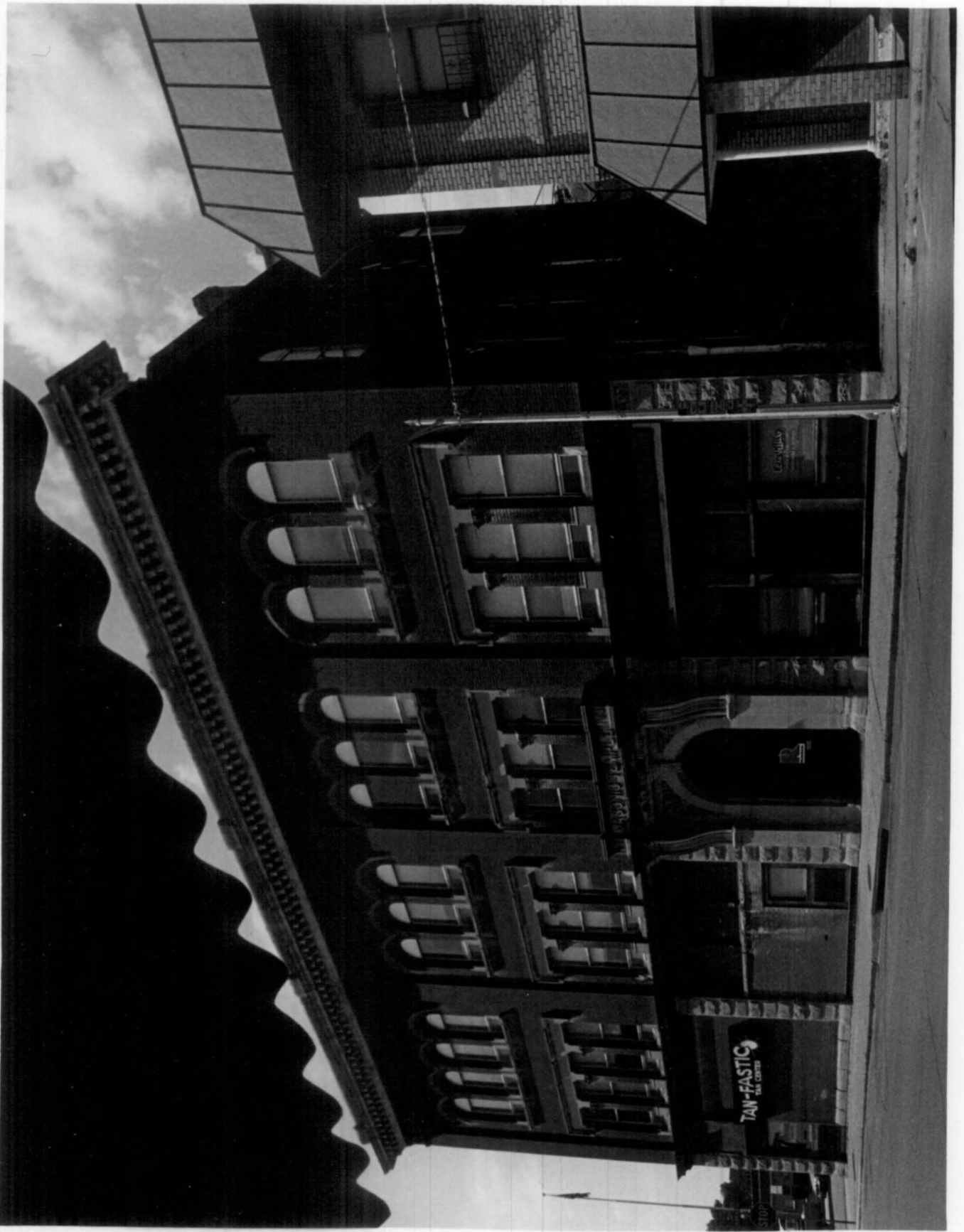
The
Busy Store of
Warrensburg.

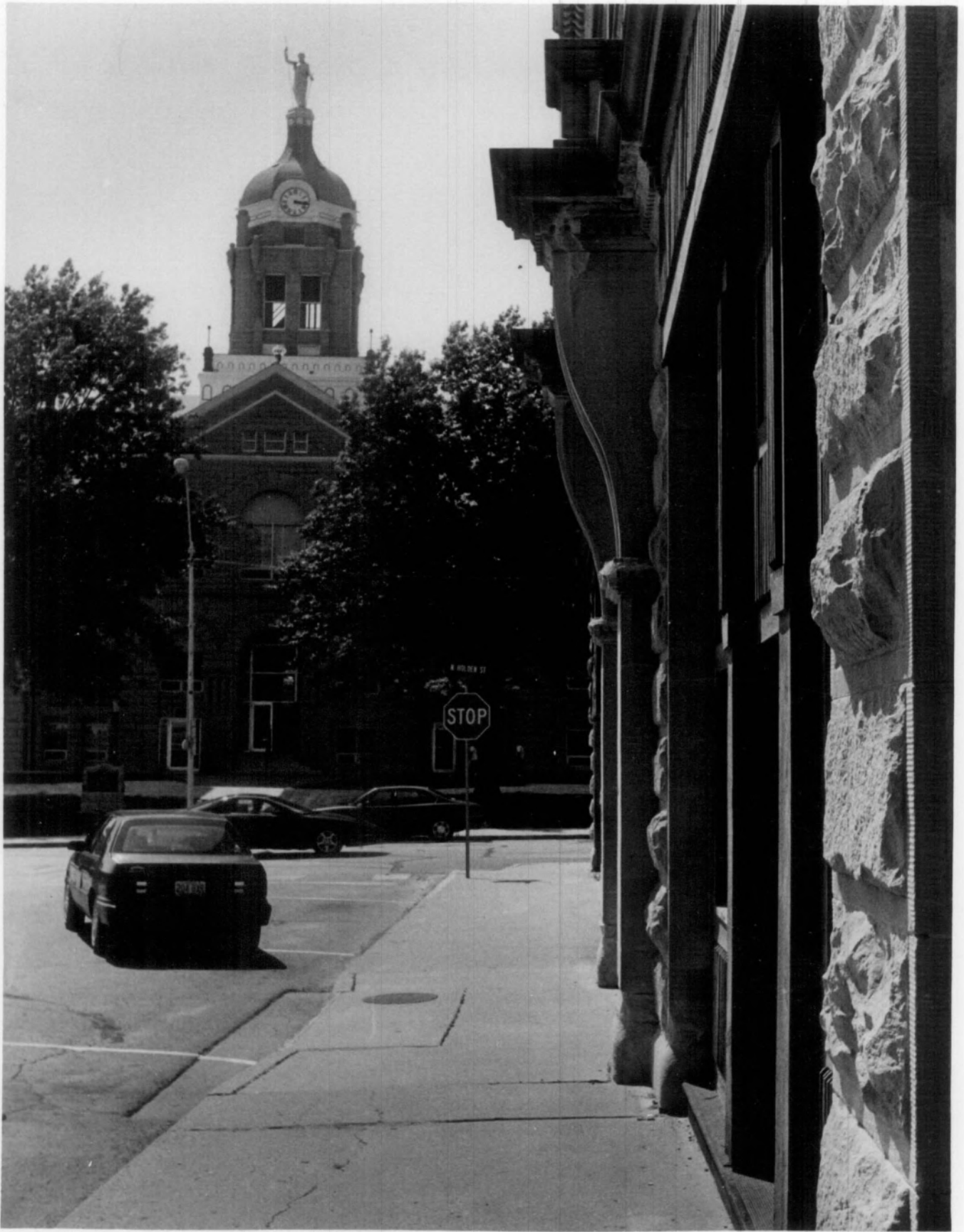
But never too busy to
give you a hearty wel-
come and the glad hand.

STAR PRINT.

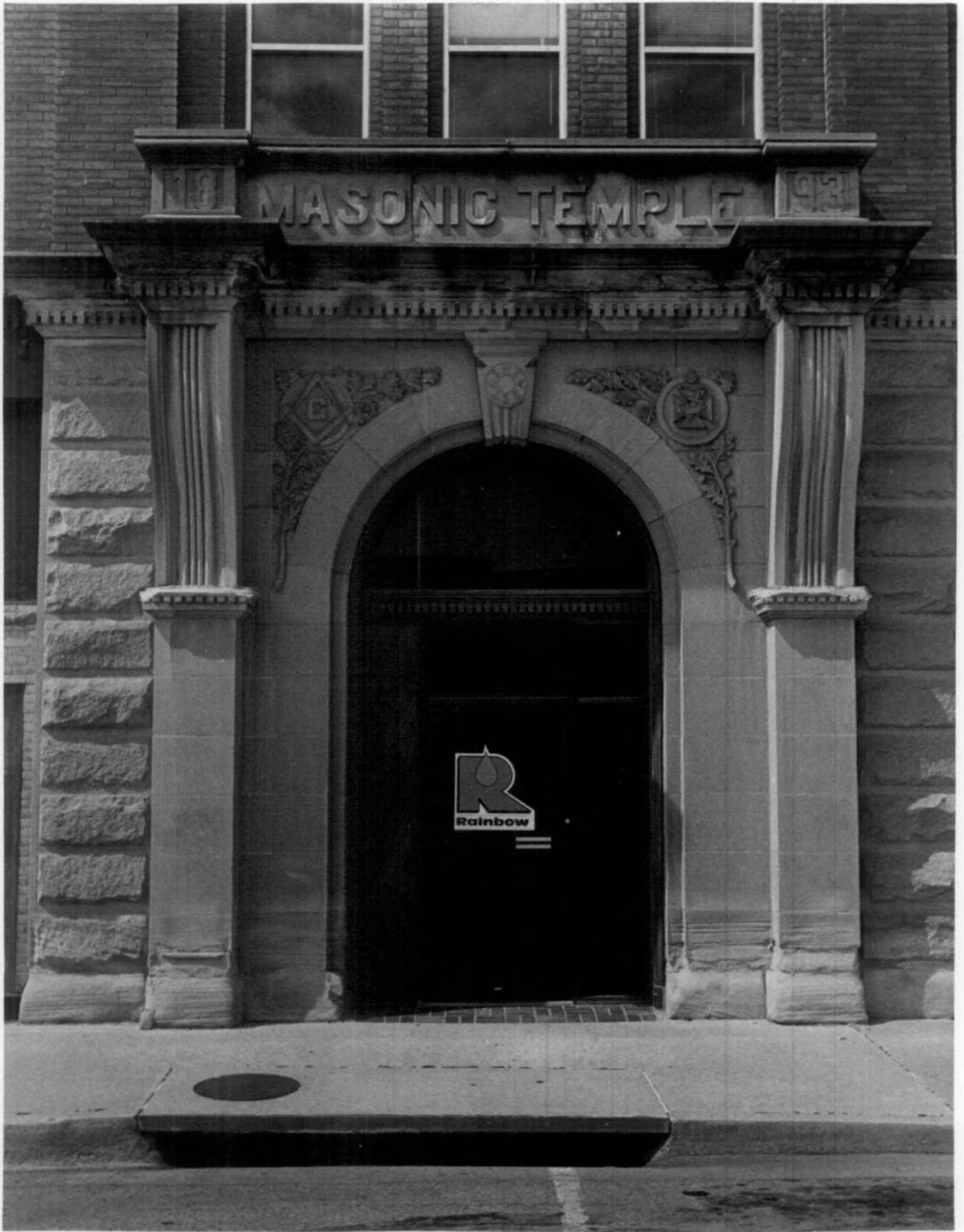


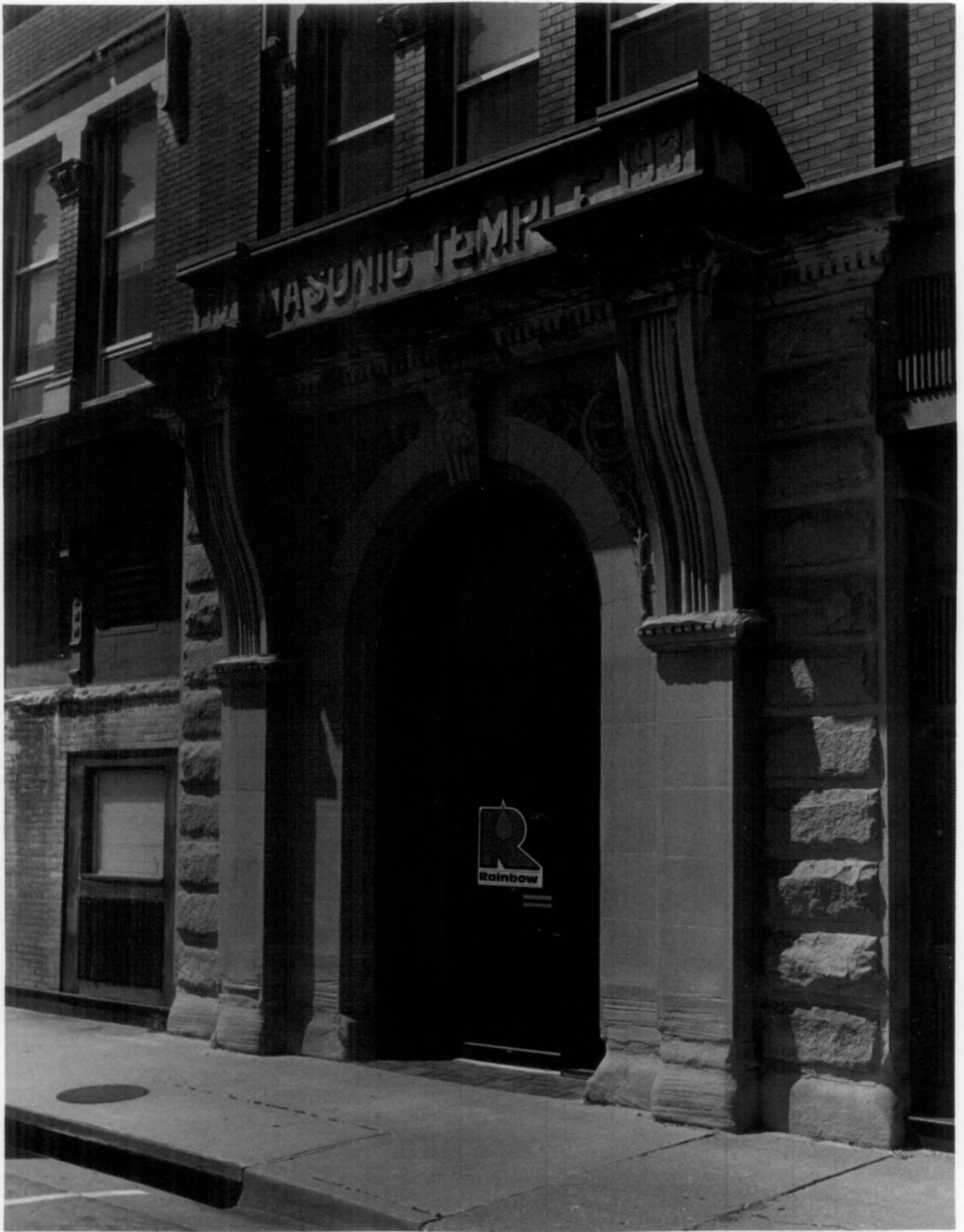


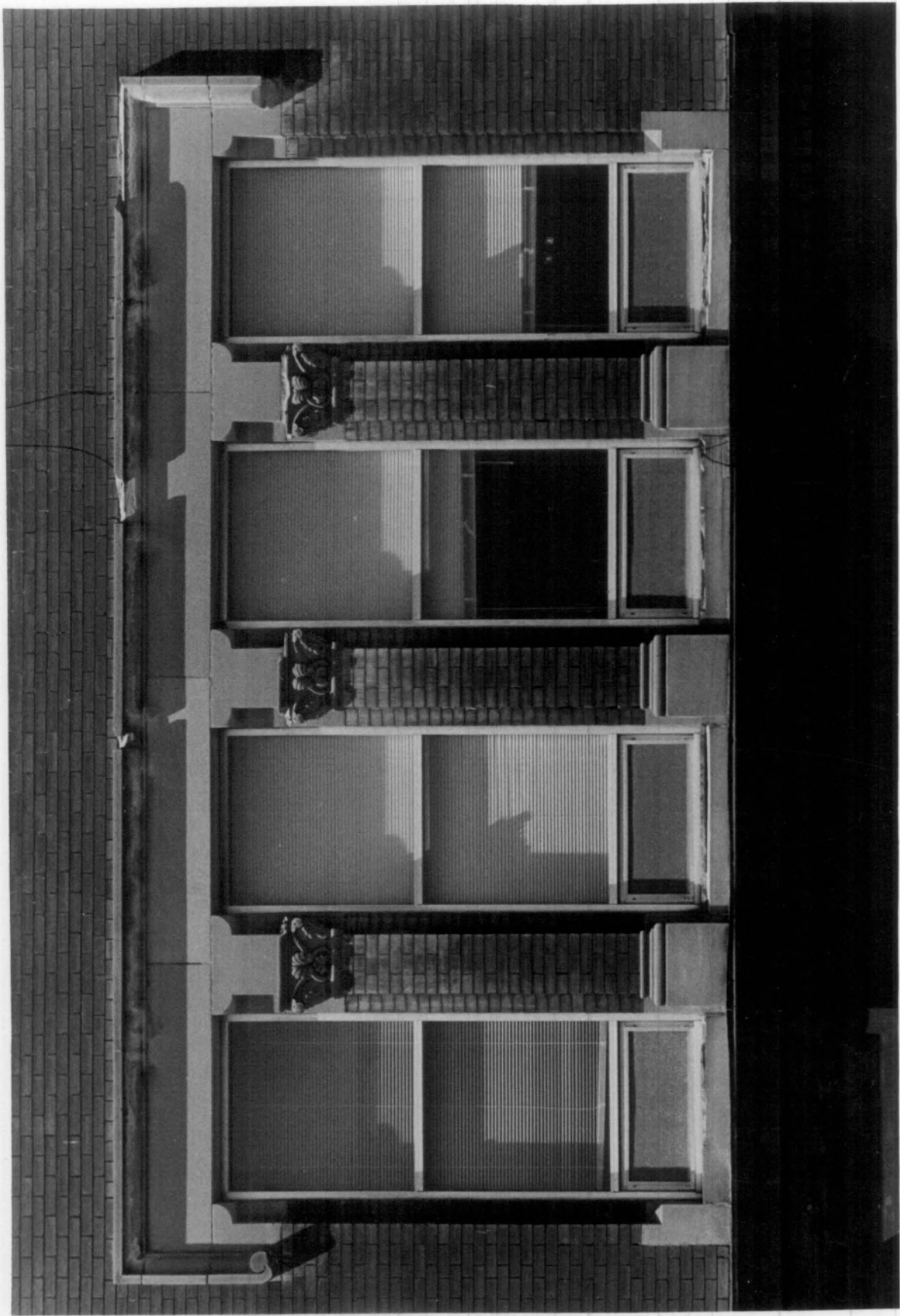


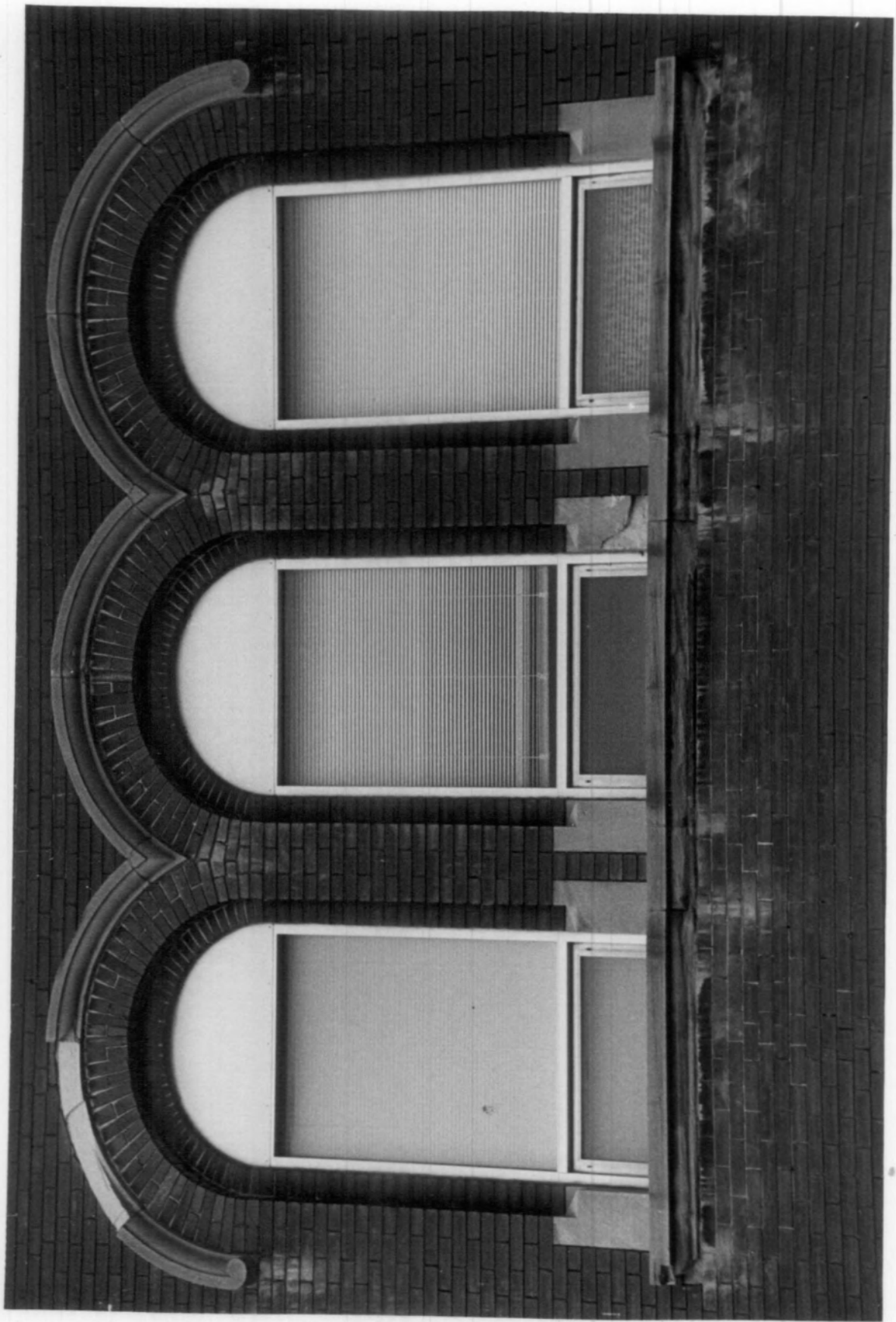


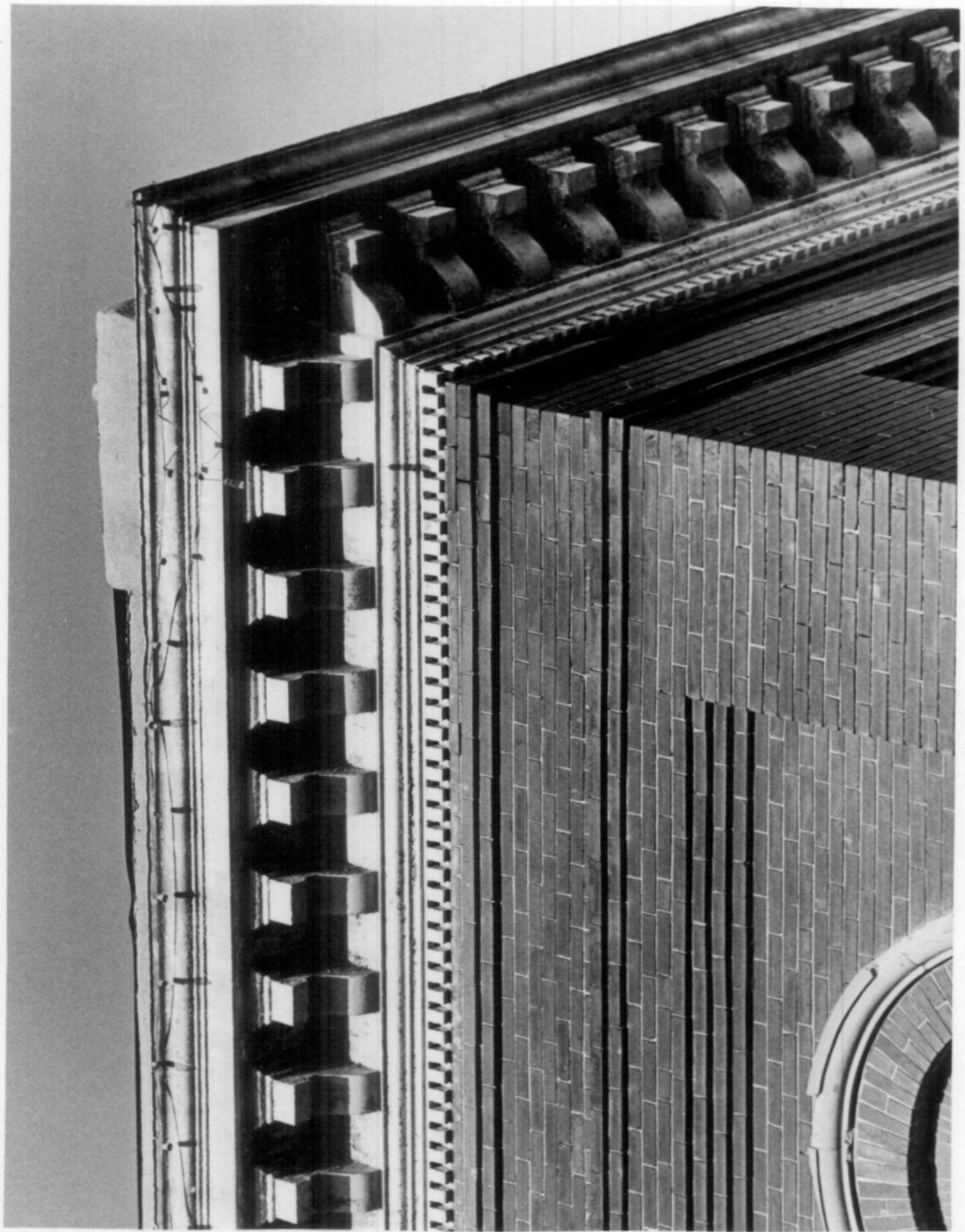














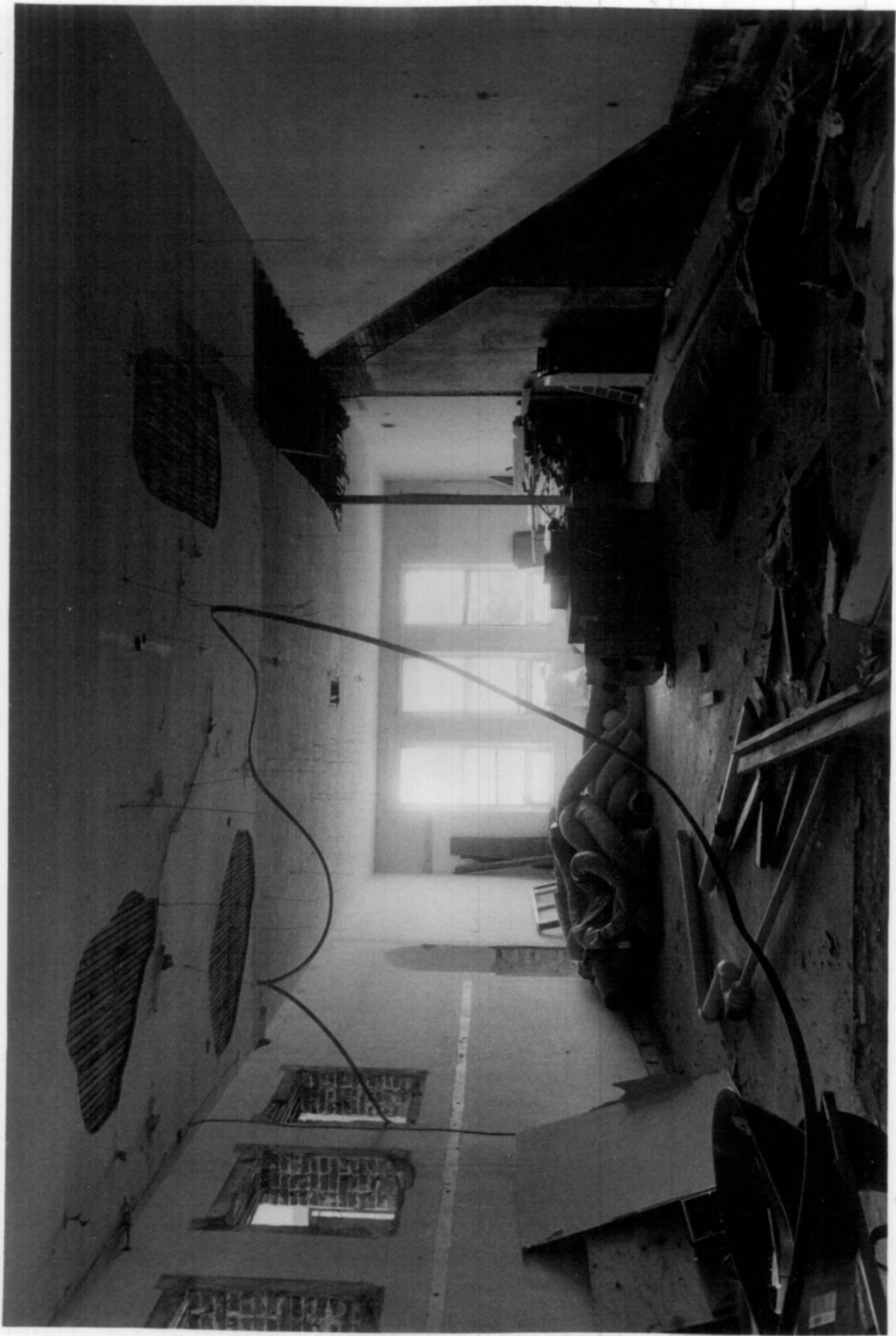




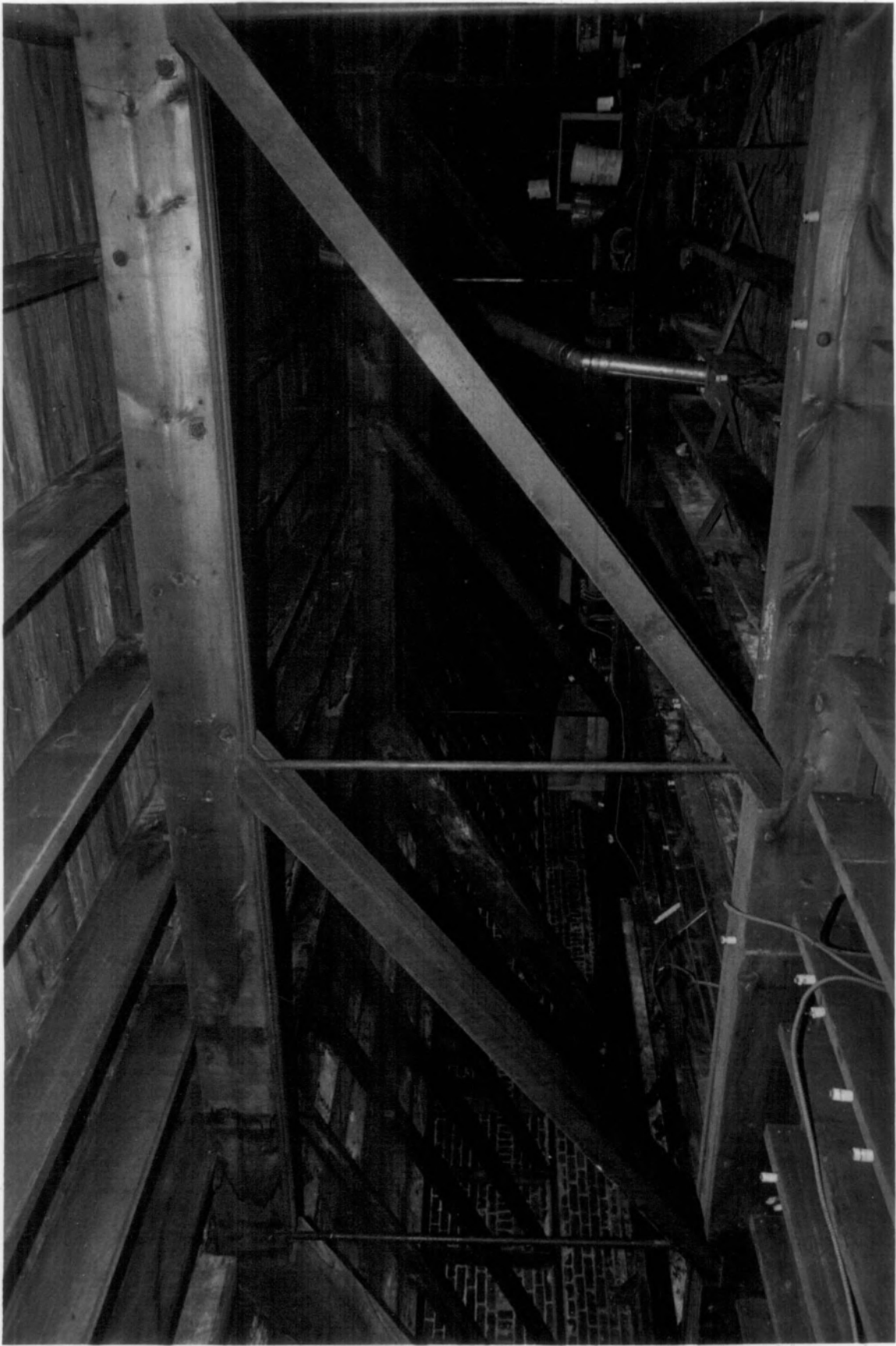












EXTRA
PHOTOS



Masonic Temple and American Bank, Warrensburg, Mo.





