

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Missouri	
COUNTY: Jackson	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME				
COMMON: 20 West Ninth Street Building				
AND/OR HISTORIC: New York Life Building				
2. LOCATION				
STREET AND NUMBER: 20 West Ninth Street				
CITY OR TOWN: Kansas City				
STATE Missouri	CODE 24	COUNTY: Jackson	CODE 95	
3. CLASSIFICATION				
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP		STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) 	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
4. OWNER OF PROPERTY				
OWNER'S NAME: 20 West Ninth Street Corporation				
STREET AND NUMBER: 20 West Ninth Street				
CITY OR TOWN: Kansas City	STATE: Missouri		CODE 24	
5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION				
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Registrar of Deeds				
STREET AND NUMBER: Jackson County Courthouse				
CITY OR TOWN: Kansas City	STATE: Missouri		CODE 24	
6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS				
TITLE OF SURVEY: The need for the preservation of Kansas City's architectural heritage				
DATE OF SURVEY: 1969 <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local				
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Kansas City Chapter, The American Institute of Architects				
STREET AND NUMBER: John Hancock Building Suite 215/800 West 47th Street				
CITY OR TOWN: Kansas City	STATE: Missouri		CODE 24	

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The New York Life Building at the corner of Wall and Ninth Streets in Kansas City, Missouri is a large stone and brick building of Neo-Renaissance design built between 1887 and 1890. It is an H plan structure possessing two ten story arms linked together by a twelve story square tower. A classical facade design is applied to its south and west street elevations, while the north and east inner block sides remain unadorned.

EXTERIOR

The south facade of the New York Life Building is visually divided into a series of several major horizontal sections. The first two stories constitute the first of these sections. They are faced with ranged brownstone ashlar and cut by five arches, each thirty-three feet high. The central arch is the widest of the five and serves as the main entrance. Inside of the central arch are two polished granite monolithic columns of the Doric order. They rest on pedestals of Worcester granite and support a brownstone transom beam upon which appears "The New York Life Insurance Company." The semi-circular transom is fitted with a wrought iron grille.

The remaining four arches symmetrically flank the entrance, two to each side, and serve as frames for the first and second story window spaces.

The third story elevation of the south facade is purely transitional in design. Like the two floors below it, it is faced with brownstone and visually divided into five verticle areas. Over the central entrance is an open roof with a stone screen wall in front to soften the transition. To each side of the screen are two pairs of simple rectangular windows arranged directly over the windows of the lower levels. The window motif is repeated on the face of the tower wall.

The brownstone facing terminates at the fourth floor with a string-course of that material, and the remainder of the building is common bond brick with quoins of brick and terra cotta to strengthen the corners. The fourth to seventh floors of the structure constitute the next horizontal section. It consists of five arches arranged in line with the arches at the lower levels, one on the tower elevation with two to each side on the arm facades. The arches are four stories high and encompass a series of window pairs identicle to those of the third story. A band of terra cotta ornament separates the sixth and seventh floors, while a terra cotta string-course terminates the section.

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NEW YORK LIFE BUILDING

The next two floors make up the fourth architectural segment. Four two-story arches extend across the facade of each arm, each arch framing two windows placed one above the other. At this level the tower no longer repeats the fenestration of the arms, but only reflects it with two small windows in the center of the tower's eighth and ninth floors.

The fenestration of the arms ends with a series of eight small windows, four to either arm, which are placed directly above the line of lower windows and alternated with large circular terra cotta ornaments. The building terminates in a terra cotta architrave-cornice topped with antifixae.

The elevation of the west facade identically repeats the design of the south in eight verticle sections. The north and east sides are devoid of any ornamentation.

The tower above the roof line is broken on all four sides by three arch-framed windows. Above them is a terra cotta string-course which forms the base of three rectangular openings on each of the four sides. Each void is filled with a single, smooth, Ionic column. The tower is capped with a hip roof and finial reaching a total height of 210 feet.

Centered over the main entrance of Ninth Street is a sculpture of an eagle with outstretched wings, protecting her young from a large snake. The group is cast of one piece of bronze and weighs two tons. The eagle's wings measure twelve feet from tip to tip. (The Kansas City Star. Wednesday, February 25, 1891.)

INTERIOR

The interior of the building is characterized by an entrance vestibule, main lobby and offices on the ground level with secondary lobbies and office space on the upper floors. The vestibule is on a level with the sidewalk and has floors of red Vermont marble and walls of pink Tennessee marble. Seven marble steps lead up to the main lobby located in the central tower area. The lobby floors are a rich mosaic tile and the walls are again pink

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NEW YORK LIFE BUILDING

marble. The room is covered with a barrel-vaulted ceiling of pressed metal and contains four elevators, tow to each side of the room. The woodwork throughout the building, including doors, window sashes, door trims and cabinet work is cherry.

This description of the physical appearance of the building is based on the data included in a field report by K.E. Coombs, received May 1, 1970 and filed at the central office of the Missouri State Park Board, P.O. Box 176, 1204 Jefferson Building, Jefferson City, Missouri 65101.

2. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1887 - 1890

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The New York Life Company's Building in Kansas City is significant architecturally and historically as a fine example of fashionable American architecture of the 1880's and as a superb manifestation of a particular period in the growth of Kansas City. Its significance is heightened by the fact that it was designed by the famous New York architectural firm, McKim, Mead & White whose practice is recognized as one of the main influential forces in the United States' architecture of the turn of the century. (J.M. Richards. An Introduction to Modern Architecture. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1962.) Of similar artistic importance is the bronze sculpture of the eagle over the building's main entrance on Ninth Street, for it was produced in the studio of the popular American sculptor, Augustus Saint-Gaudens. (G.C. Mitchell. There Is No Limit. Kansas City: Brown-White Company, 1934.)

The construction site for the building, a 160 x 120 foot plot on the corner of Ninth and what was then Amarette Streets, was purchased on Tuesday, December 13, 1886 for \$373,000.00. It was the largest real estate transfer ever made in Kansas City to that date and was procured with the first New York capital to be invested in the city. (The Kansas City Journal, Tuesday, December 14, 1886.) Construction began early in January, 1887 and was terminated in 1890. When completed at the cost of \$1,000,000.00, it was the largest and tallest office building in Kansas City.

The New York Life Building is an exemplary product of one of the major high points in the development of Kansas City. Throughout the 1880's the metropolis experienced unprecedented growth and prosperity in trade, production, industry, population, and real estate transfers. This rapid growth was sustained by a corresponding pecuniary increase as is evident in the transactions of Kansas City's clearing house, which from \$204,333,144 during the year ending June 30, 1885, increased to \$353,895,458 during the year ending June 30, 1887. In 1887 Kansas City also passed New Orleans in the magnitude of her clearings and took rank as the tenth city in the nation in that respect. (W. Griffith. History of Kansas City. Kansas City: Hudson-Kimberly Publishing Co., 1900.)

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All this successful activity attracted very wide attention to Kansas City as an area of great potential, and money was sent for investment from all parts of the country, especially the East. The New York Life Building stands as one of the earliest manifestations of this state of prosperity, for it was built by an eastern insurance company in hopes of making a profit on Kansas City's rapid growth and gaining an early stronghold in a city that it felt "was to be the future center of western commerce." (The Kansas City Star. December 13, 1886).

Of more current importance is the structure's contribution to the present urban fabric of the central business district of Kansas City. The location of the building at the foot of Baltimore Avenue, positioned slightly to the right of center, forms a visual terminal and center of attention for activity up Baltimore, yet subtly and beautifully announces the fact that Baltimore does not end at Ninth, but jumps to the west. Because of its tower the building dominates a vista of more than a mile, and forms a center of attention for Ninth Street, from Main Street to Central Avenue. (The need for the preservation of Kansas City's architectural heritage; a statement by the Historical Buildings Committee of the Kansas City Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.)

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Coombs, K.E. Field Report, received May 1, 1970 and filed at the central office of the Missouri State Park Board, P.O. Box 176, 1204 Jefferson Building, Jefferson City, Missouri 65101.
2. Griffith, W. History of Kansas City. Kansas City: Hudson-Kimberly Publishing Co., 1900.
3. Mitchell, G.C. There Is No Limit. Kansas City: Brown-White Company, 1934.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		39° 06' 13"	94° 35' 02"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Sheila M. Hannah, Research Architectural Historian		
ORGANIZATION	Missouri State Park Board State Historical Survey and Planning Office	DATE May 18, 1970
STREET AND NUMBER: P.O. Box 176, 1204 Jefferson Building		
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE	CODE
Jefferson City	Missouri	65101
		24

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☒

Name

Joseph Jaeger, Jr.

Title **Director, Missouri State Park Board, and Missouri State Liaison Officer**

Date

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date

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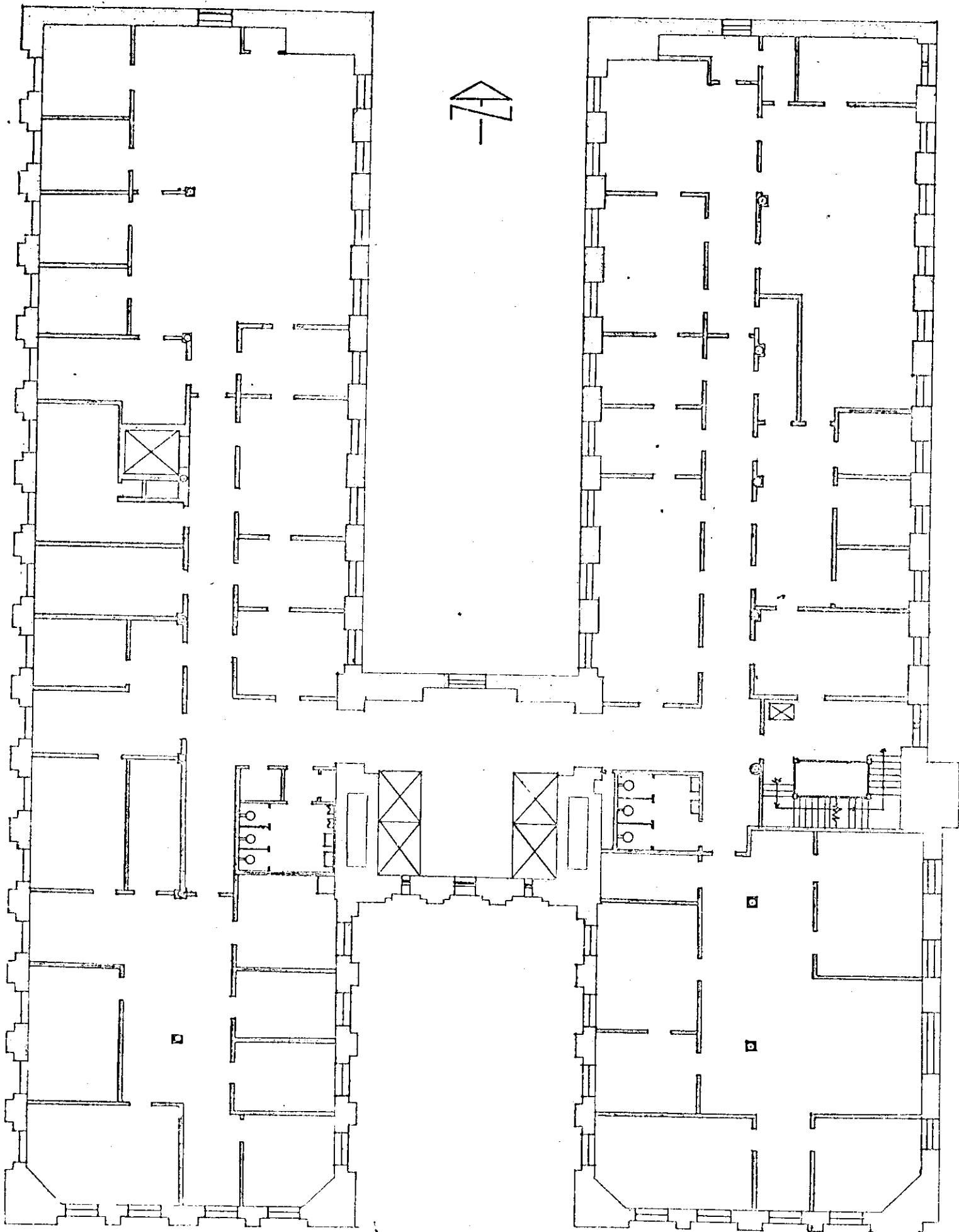
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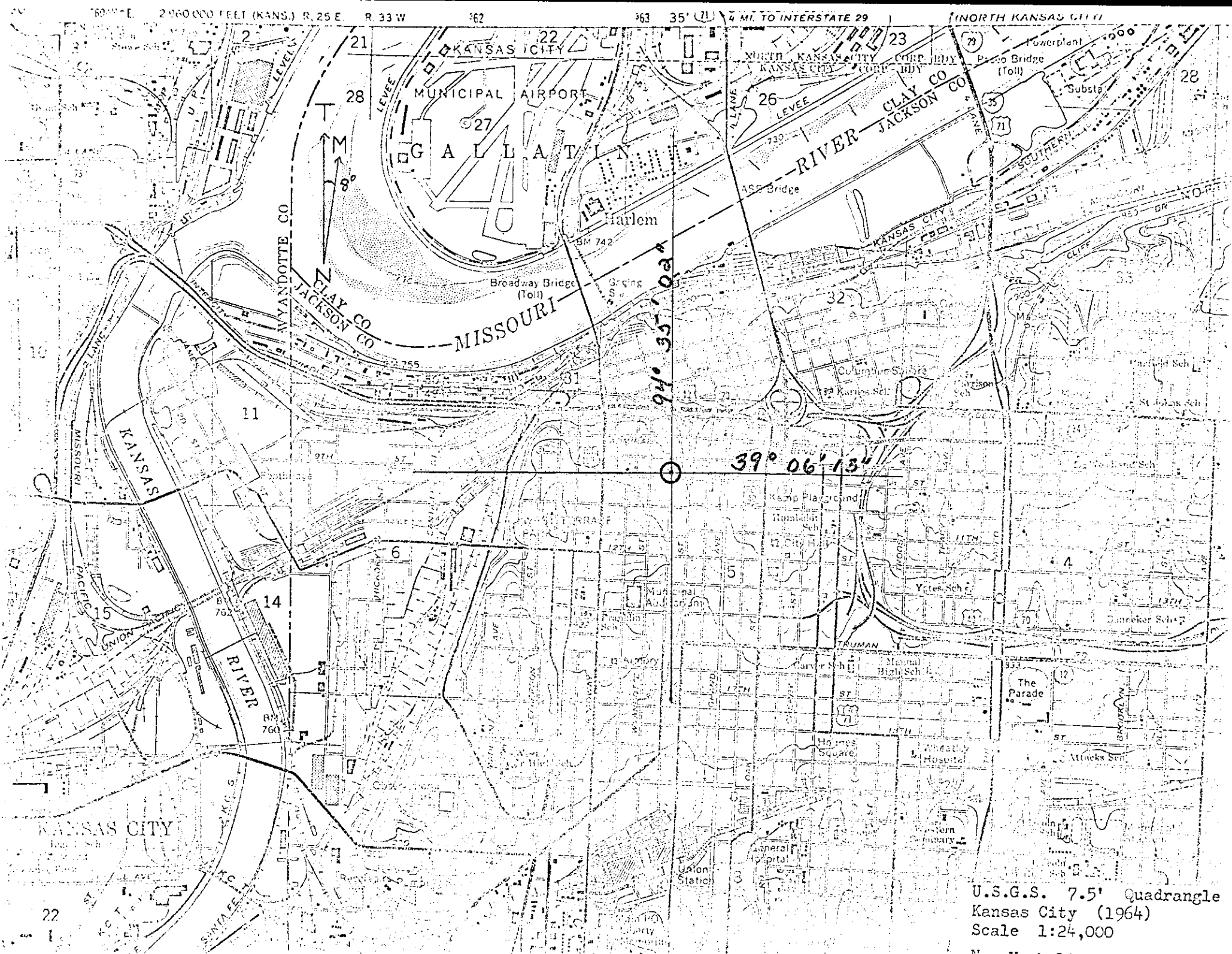
9.

NEW YORK LIFE BUILDING

4. Richards, J.M. An Introduction to Modern Architecture.
Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1962.



20 WEST 9TH BUILDING - 9TH FLOOR - SCALE 1/16" = 1' - 0"



U.S.G.S. 7.5' Quadrangle
Kansas City (1964)
Scale 1:24,000

New York Life Building

Photo Log:

Name of Property: **New York Life Building**

City or Vicinity: **Kansas City**

County: **Jackson County** State: **MO**

Photographer: **R.L. Walker**

Date
Photographed: **April, 1970**

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

1 of 6. Main entrance of the south façade; view from the south facing north.

2 of 6. East side of the New York Life Building; view from the northeast facing the southwest.

3 of 6. West side of the New York Life Building; view from the northwest facing southeast.

4 of 6. North side of the New York Life Building; view from the north facing south.

5 of 6. Photocopy of an old view of the south façade of the New York Life Building; view from the south facing north.

6 of 6. Photocopy of the Bronze eagle over the main entrance of the New York Life Building; view from the south facing north. Copied from G.C. Mitchell's There Is No Limit. Kansas City: Brown-White Co., 1934.







800 S
W 8th ST

BALTIMORE

WENZEL

GRAPHIC SUPPLIES - SYSTEMS EQUIPME







im, Mead & White, architects