

# LANDMARKSLETTER

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## DO YOU LOVE DOWNTOWN HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURE? BECOME A TOUR GUIDE NOW!

By Ilissa Staadeker



Downtown West Tour, Union Station

**I**t will be spring before we know it, and that means it is time to volunteer to become a downtown walking tour program tour guide! WE NEED YOU to keep this program going for another year. Not surprisingly, a tour program led by volunteers requires volunteers! At this critical time, we need new people to train as guides in order to operate the program in the upcoming season.

Please consider becoming an ambassador for St. Louis by serving as a volunteer tour guide for Landmarks Association's Walking Tours. Without new guides supplementing our existing volunteers, there is a very real possibility that we will not be able to offer regularly scheduled downtown tours in 2025 as we have done for many years.

From April through October, we offer our East Tour from the Arch to Tucker and our West Tour from Tucker to 15th Street every Saturday morning. Our volunteer guides are given extensive training and materials to pair with their own knowledge of the area to craft their tour. Groups are a mix of residents and visitors who are interested in the architecture, history and culture of our fair city.

*"One of the great things about being a tour guide is meeting some very interesting people – actually from all over the world. The best thanks you receive is having someone say – 'I've lived in the area my whole life and I never knew that was there. I had no idea.' Surprisingly you will hear that a lot."*

— Warren, tour guide

Continued on pg. 11 >



Can you guess which building this signage is from? See Elements article on pages 4-7.

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### LANDMARKS LETTER

is the official publication of Landmarks Association of St. Louis, Inc. for its members and friends. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the Editor and contributors and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Board or membership of Landmarks Association. Please address all correspondence, comments and inquiries to the Editor.

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# LANDMARKS HOLIDAY WISH LIST

Dear Landmarks members,

We are currently looking for a few items that will improve our office space and help staff members with their work. If you would like to sponsor any of the following items or if you have items you may wish to donate, please contact Operations Manager Zeck Schultz at 314-421-6474 or email them at [office@landmarks-stl.org](mailto:office@landmarks-stl.org). Thank you!



**1** iPad or tablet for checking people in at events and selling merchandise



**2** Barrister bookcase (wood with glass front) to display rare books and artifacts



**3** Antique cast iron "Summer Covers" for fireplaces

**Save the Date**

LANDMARKS  
ASSOCIATION of SAINT LOUIS

**Trivia night**

**March 29, 2025**

**St. LOUIS BLUES**

Doors at 6:15 PM, Trivia at 7 PM  
IBEW Local 1, 5850 Elizabeth Ave.  
8 Rounds of General Trivia

Test your knowledge across 8 exciting rounds of trivia, featuring questions we've crafted on everything from pop culture to St. Louis history. Registration details coming soon — email [kgraebe@landmarks-stl.org](mailto:kgraebe@landmarks-stl.org) for sponsorship opportunities or more information. Stay tuned!



## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear friends,

In 2025, Landmarks Association is turning 66 years old! While we're eligible for social security, I assure you that Landmarks has no plans to retire; there is still far too much work to be done!

Every day, Landmarks' staff assist researchers and interested citizens with inquiries about buildings, neighborhoods and architecture. We walk people through the basics of redevelopment incentives and help people navigate their rehabilitation projects by connecting them with the right resources. We refer people to relevant city agencies, explain applicable ordinances, assist with finding architects, craftspeople, and contractors that understand the nuances of historic buildings.

We plan and execute educational programs, tours, events, lectures, and other experiences that help people to explore and learn about the architectural heritage of the region. We conduct primary research that adds to the ever-growing body of scholarship focused on St. Louis's built environment. We give guest lectures for a range of audiences and consult with community decision-makers about plans that have the potential (good or bad) to impact historic architecture.

Importantly, due to the generosity of our members, we are increasingly in a position to support "brick and mortar" efforts through targeted lending (as we most recently did with two significant buildings on Olive that were slated for demolition but are now being restored and reactivated). We try to play matchmaker when neglected buildings and capable developers look like a good fit, and sing the praises of the myriad success stories that enrich our community when lights and life return to moribund structures.

We search out and research potential new city landmarks and National Register properties to ensure that our heritage is recognized and respected. We participate in public meetings and provide testimony to help inform members of city government and municipal review boards. We generate social media posts that are designed to stimulate and enrich dialogue about preservation issues and, when needed, we request activism from the community and provide guidance on avenues for action.

All of these efforts and more comprise our activities on any given day. On behalf of our board and staff I would like to say thank you for supporting our efforts. We love what we do and believe deeply in our mission. As supporters of Landmarks Association, you can take pride in the fact that you are an integral component of a historic preservation constituency that has to be reckoned with.

We wish you all the best in the coming year and are grateful for your ongoing support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew B. Weil'.

Andrew B. Weil  
Executive Director



# THE POCKELS BUILDING

By Andrew Weil

The story of the “Pockels Building” at 2344 Gravois begins with the migration of pharmacist Herman Pockels (born 1844) to the United States in 1866 from the Duchy of Braunschweig, which is also known as “Brunswick”. Pockels married a woman named Sophia (born in Missouri) and in 1873, the couple welcomed their first daughter Agnes.

The growing Pockels family purchased land/buildings for a home and a drug store on the east side of the intersection of Sidney Street and Gravois in the 1870s. By 1879, Herman was doing well enough to build a twelve-room, three-story brick home at (what was then) 2322 Sidney Street. The home featured a glass sun porch on the east side, a vine-covered carriage house, a rock garden and fishpond immediately southeast of the pharmacy at 2322 Sidney Street. The home seems to have featured architectural references to prominent buildings in Braunschweig including Romanesque arches like those on St. Blasii Cathedral and trapgevels (sometimes known as “crow steps” or “stair step gables”) reminiscent of those on the Altstadttrathaus (town hall).

Around the same time that the family home was built, Pockels appears to have constructed a new building for his pharmacy business on Gravois. This building was needed to accommodate Pockels’ expanding commercial endeavors which grew from a simple pharmacy to become the Pockels Drug, Glass and Paint Company as well as the Pockels Real Estate Co. The new signature building wrapped eastward around the northeast corner of Gravois and Sidney and was accentuated by a four-story tower with a pointed hexagonal roof that rose through the three-story façade.



*The Pockels residence. Note trapgevels on parapet and Roman arches  
Swekosky Collection, Missouri History Museum*



*Saint Blasii Cathedral Braunschweig with Octagonal Tower*



*Braunschweig Altstadttrathaus*





*Dankwarderode Castle with tower and Romanesque arches, Braunschweig*

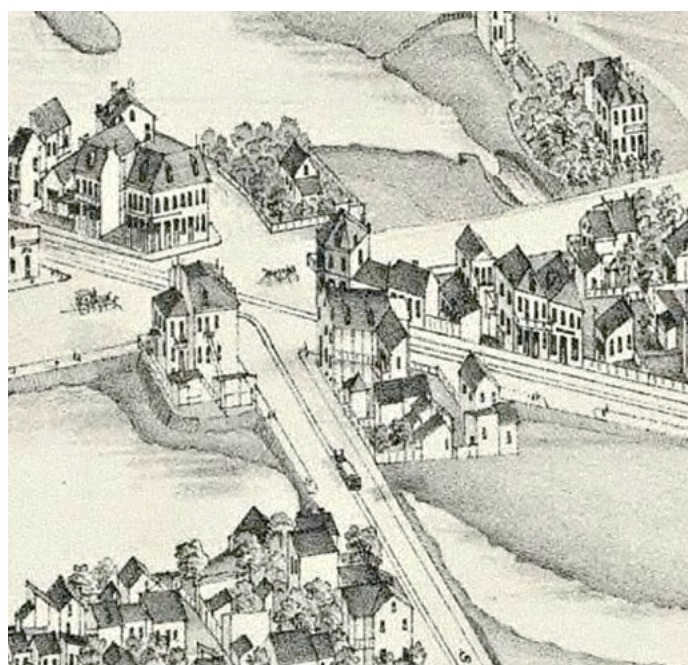


*Commercial building in Braunschweig with side tower and Roman arches*

This tower seems to reference buildings in Braunschweig including prominent commercial buildings in the main square as well as the tower of St. Blasii Cathedral. Interestingly, the tower that Pockels built appears to have been constructed to complement another commercial building with a similar hexagonal tower on the opposite (west) side of Gravois (at Sidney). This building is visible in the 1875 Pictorial St. Louis map. Together, the two towers would have given travelers along Gravois the impression of passing through a prominent gate at this busy intersection.

In 1880, the Pockels household was comprised of Herman and Sophia, daughters Agnes (7) and Harriet (2), Hermann's brother Carl (39, employed as a civil engineer), Charles Boeckler (a 25-year-old clerk in Pockels' store), 19-year-old porter John Gosh, and a 22-year-old domestic servant named Katie Brucks.

By 1900, Agnes Pockels had married physician Otto Kollme and moved out of the family home on Sidney Street to 2354 Park (demolished). The Pockels household now included daughter Alice (19) and son Sidney (17) who worked in the family business



*1875 St. Louis pictorial map looking northwest, showing the intersection of Gravois and Sidney. The Pockels Building was built opposite the existing tower building.*



*Pockels Building with engaged octagonal tower*



*The Pockels residence  
Swekosky Collection, Missouri History Museum*

*Continued on pg. 6 >*



*The family business thrived at this busy intersection where Jefferson Avenue, Sidney Street, and Gravois Avenue converge until the 1920s when a series of disasters struck*

as a drug clerk in preparation for starting school at the St. Louis College of Pharmacy.

In 1901, Sophia Pockels passed away. Her death likely prompted her husband Herman to purchase a large family plot at Bellefontaine Cemetery where the entire family is interred today.

The family business thrived at this busy intersection where Jefferson Avenue, Sidney Street, and Gravois Avenue converge, until the 1920s when a series of disasters struck. On New Year's Eve 1927, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reported that a fire in the upper residential floors of the Pockels' building injured two female tenants. It was believed that the fire started in the store and the damage was estimated at \$50,000, which is nearly a million dollars in today's value.

Then in July of 1929, just three months before the stock market crashed on "Black Friday" another fire was reported in the Pockels' store. The newspaper reported that Sidney, who had taken over the business from his father, started the fire while "heating a can of wax" burning his hands and quickly spreading to the stock. This fire chased the residents of the second and third floors into the street and caused over \$17,000 in damage (more than \$300,000 today). Two St. Louis City firefighters were injured in the blaze.

It appears that the damaged buildings may never have been fully repaired because in 1931 (less than two years later), Gravois Avenue was widened, resulting in substantial alterations to many adjacent businesses. The ornate three-story Pockels' elevation with its elaborate cast iron storefront and four-story tower were sacrificed for another two lanes of traffic on Gravois. The alteration left only a portion of the two-story "back of the house" building standing.

When the dust settled on a widened Gravois, a new "modern" façade, complete with a green terracotta sign, was added to the remains of the original building. This greatly diminished building still stands today at 2344 Gravois.

Herman Pockels, who still lived in the family home to the southeast of the store with son Sidney and daughter Alice, probably barely lived to see the "new" building completed. He died in 1932.

Sidney continued to operate the drug, glass and paint business as well as the family realty company until his death in 1955. After Sidney died, Alice moved out of the family home and sold the property to the Jefferson Gravois Bank (extant), which demolished

it in 1956 to "make room for its new drive-in facilities."

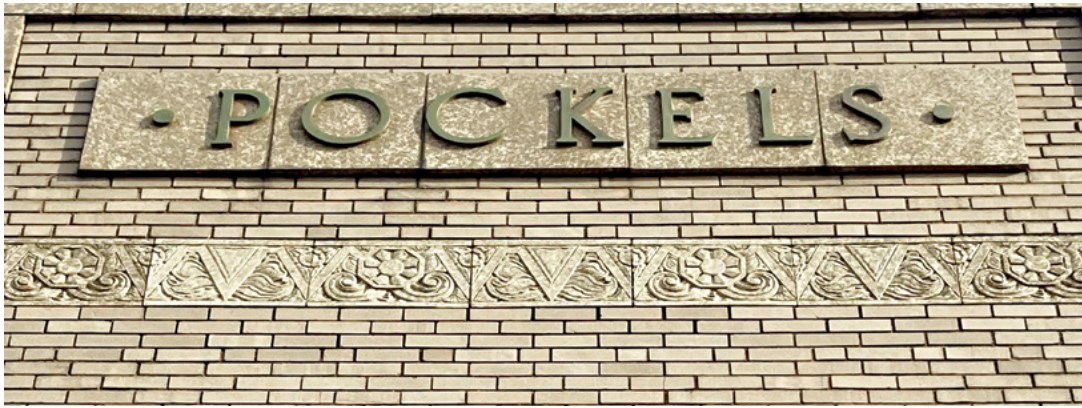
Currently, the Pockels building is vacant and owned by the Degels Truck Center next door which uses the lot at the rear of the building for parking. Degels applied for demolition permits in 1992, 2004, and 2019. All apparently were denied due to the building's location within the Benton Park National Register Historic District. If redeveloped, the remains of the Pockels complex could once again become an important anchor at this busy intersection. Prior to the rise of the automobile, the intersection of Sidney, Gravois and Jefferson was defined by prominent businesses and buildings. Due to disinvestment, a lack of planning and a lack of vision, today the intersection is primarily defined by a gas station, Lees Fried Chicken, a 7-11 and a payday lender.



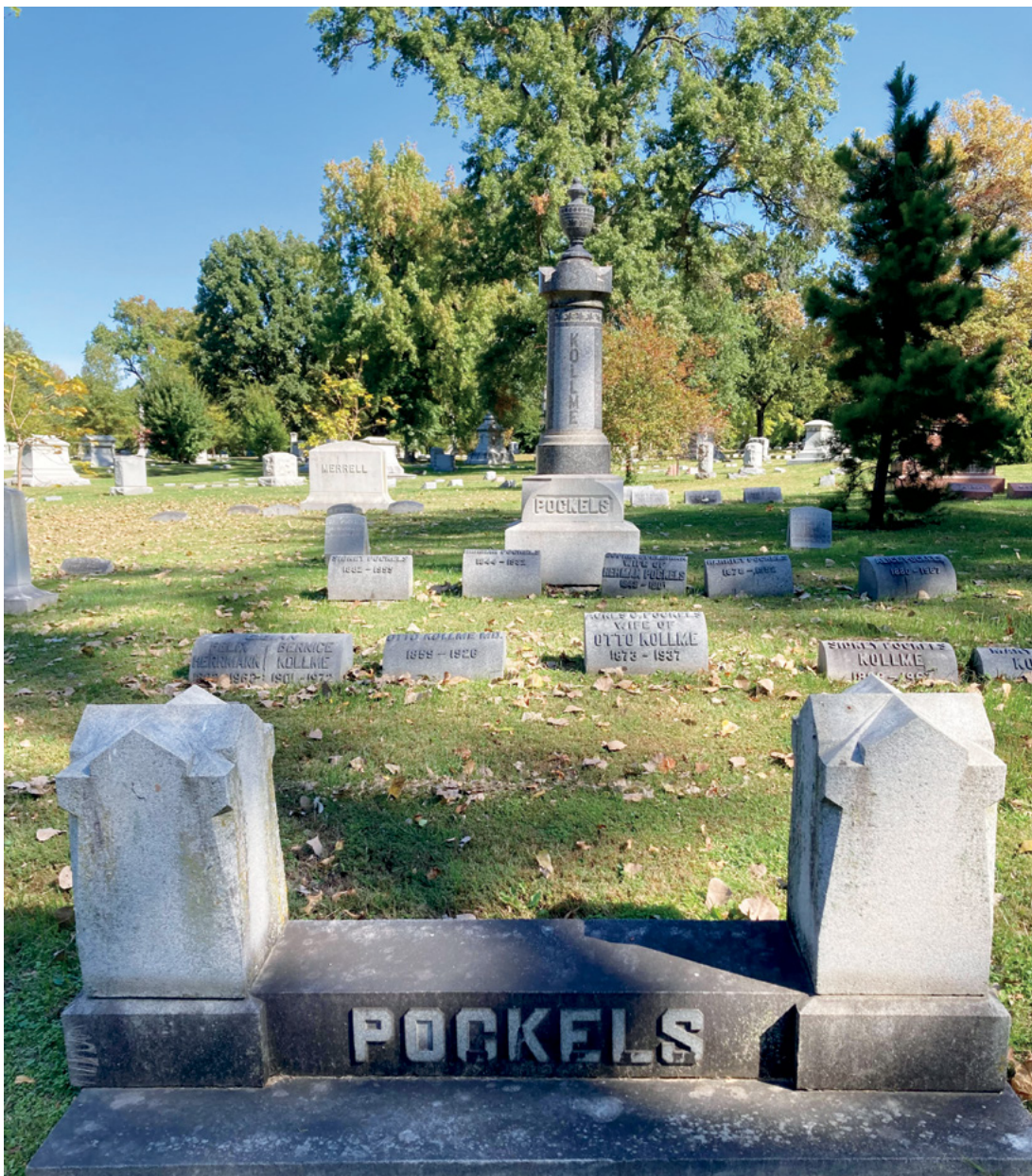
*Remaining portion of original Pockels Building facing northwest from Sidney*

*If redeveloped, the remains of the Pockels complex could once again become an important anchor at the busy intersection of Sidney, Gravois and Jefferson.*





Signage on the original Pockels Building



Pockels family plot at Bellefontaine Cemetery



# ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL MARKS ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

By Chris Naffziger.

Roosevelt High School marks its 100th anniversary in 2025, and the storied Tower Grove East institution boasts a rich history. In 1925, the neighborhood was growing rapidly, the St. Louis Public Schools were likewise at the forefront of education in America, and the district had turned to a succession of talented and forward-thinking architects to design what would become landmarks throughout not just the city but around the country. Following in the footsteps of William Ittner, St. Louis Public Schools had now hired Rockwell Milligan as its new commissioner of school buildings to design the next high school in the burgeoning South Side.

The site for this new high school had its own history, one that was common for many large parcels of land in the city. Originally the land situated between Hartford and Wyoming streets on the north and south, and South Compton and Louisiana avenues on the east and west was a cemetery that was known by various names including Old

Picker's, Old Picotte or Holy Ghost Cemetery. The land was purchased in 1846 with an expansion in 1853; the cemetery was owned by the Holy Ghost German Evangelical Church, founded by the famous German pastor Frederick Picker. At the time of the opening of the cemetery, the land surrounding the burial ground was far out in the country along Gravois Road. But as the city grew up around the cemetery and the church became less interested and able to maintain the grounds, a new location, further southwest and now known as Gatewood Gardens was opened. Slowly and not without controversy, the old Picker's Cemetery was removed and the property sold in 1917.

Enter St. Louis Public Schools and the plan for a new high school. Crowding at McKinley High School necessitated the building of what would become the largest high school in the district. Rockwell Milligan, the commissioner of school buildings, was certainly up to the task. Milligan was born January 10, 1868 in Centerville, Ontario to a family originally from northern New York State. Milligan left Canada and attended high school in Wichita where he then graduated from Garfield University. After graduating, Milligan trained under an unknown architect in Denver, Colorado before moving to St. Louis on August 10, 1890.

He worked for two of the most influential architects in St. Louis, including Isaac Taylor during the construction of the 1904 World's Fair and George R. Mann during the design of St. Louis City Hall in 1897.<sup>1</sup>

After a brief stint as chief draughtsman for St. Louis Public Schools, Milligan formed the firm of Milligan & Wray and turned to the design of hospitals. Notable works during this period in St. Louis include the Frisco Railroad Hospital in the Central West End, expansions to the State Psychiatric Hospital and the St.

Vincent's Insane Asylum. Finally, after well over a decade designing hospitals, Milligan returned to the design of schools, ascending to the position of commissioner of school buildings on October 10, 1914.<sup>2</sup>

Milligan lived at 4156 Flora Boulevard and was married to Maude Marquardt. He was paid \$12,000 a year and was a president of the National School Building Officials' Association as well as one of the founders of the St. Louis Architectural Club, where he also was an

instructor. Milligan was also a Freemason, a member of the American Society of Heating and Ventilating Engineers and the National Association of School Accounting Officers.<sup>3</sup>

It was almost after a decade on the job as commissioner that Milligan was confronted with one of his most important school designs: Roosevelt High School. First, the high school was planned to accommodate a huge number of students, 2,000 pupils.<sup>4</sup> The budget would come in at \$1,472, 575.63 though final expenses would be under that with a final price of \$1,357,987.88.<sup>5</sup> No expense was spared; the stage curtain alone in the theater came in at a cost of \$16,785.<sup>6</sup>

The official authorization for the high school came from the



W.C. Persons, Roosevelt High School, 3230 Hartford Street, February 12, 1937

<sup>1</sup> "Rockwell Milligan," *Centennial History of Missouri (The Center State)*, Vol III. St. Louis: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co, 1921, p. 185-6

<sup>2</sup> "R. M. Milligan, Architect of Schools, Dies," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 1, 1929.

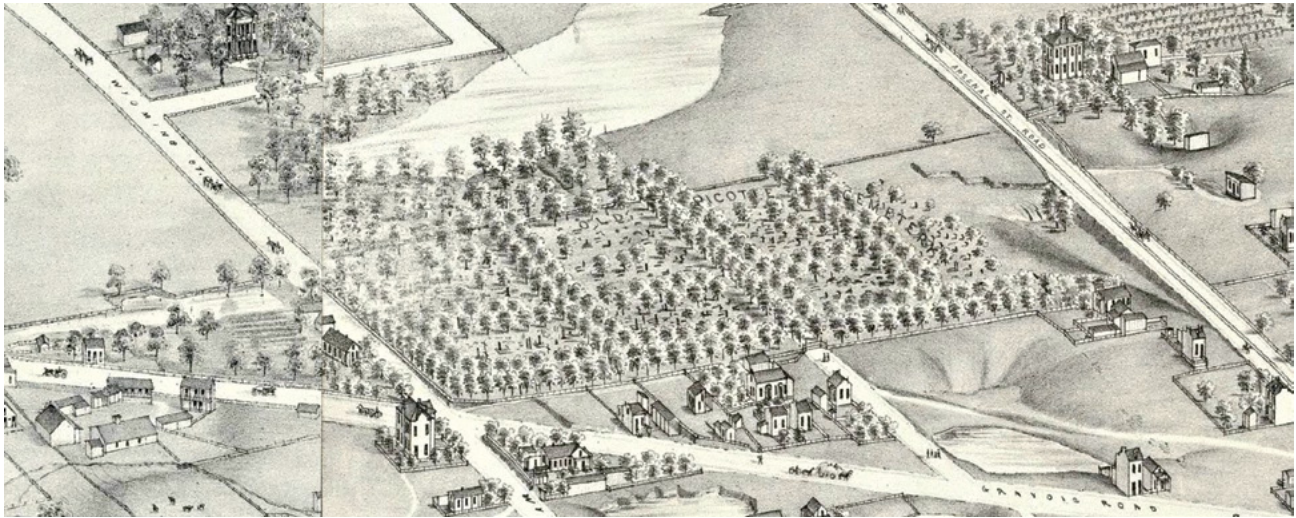
<sup>3</sup> "Rockwell Milligan," *Centennial History of Missouri (The Center State)*, Vol III. St. Louis: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co, 1921, p. 185-6

<sup>4</sup> "Rotarians in Charge," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, January 14, 1925, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Board of Education of the City of St. Louis Mo. *Annual Report - St. Louis Board of Education*. Vol. 71. 1925, p. 248.

<sup>6</sup> Board of Education of the City of St. Louis Mo. *Annual Report - St. Louis Board of Education*. Vol. 71. 1925, p. 251.





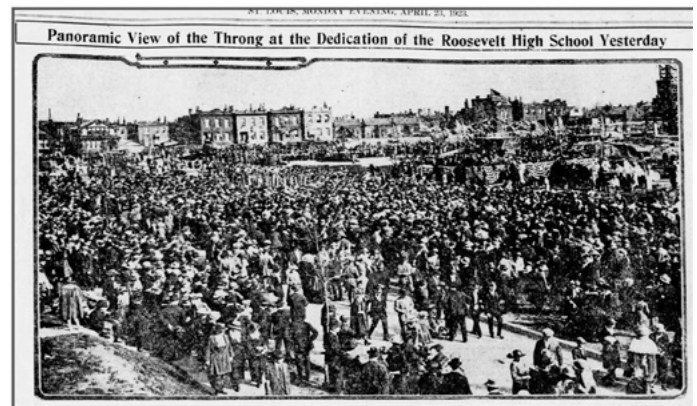
Picotte Cemetery

school board's Joint Committee of Instruction and Finance on January 10, 1922, and the contract for the erection of the structure of the building without furnishings was signed on September 19, 1922. The corner stone was laid on April 22, 1923.<sup>7</sup> Approximately, two years later, on June 24, 1924, the school board signed the contract for the furnishings and equipment.<sup>8</sup>

The new high school was designed in the style of many English places of primary education in what could be best described as the Tudor Revival. The style represented the architecture that fused the transition of the Gothic with the Renaissance during the reigns of particularly the Tudor monarchs Henry VIII and his daughter Elizabeth I in the late Fifteenth and early Sixteenth Centuries. That period in history saw the rise of highly educated commoners such as Thomas More to critical and powerful positions in the English government, so perhaps the style of architecture is only appropriate. Typified by pointed Gothic arches, turrets, brick curtain walls with stone quoining and H- or E-shaped floor plans, the Tudor Revival was a break from Italian and French or classically inspired styles popular in Nineteenth Century St. Louis.

However, while the exterior may have been looking to historical models, the interior was thoroughly modern, just as the St. Louis Public Schools were at the time. The high school was fitted with modern laboratories, including a biology lab that connected directly to a conservatory filled with plants. There was even a functioning bank where students could make deposits into savings accounts. A library with thousands of books also served students and art classrooms featured windows facing north, the preferred direction for the best light during lessons. The lunch-room, divided into two halves for boys and girls, could serve 1,200 students at one time from the centrally located kitchen.<sup>9</sup>

All the new school needed now was students, and that came on January 26, 1925. A grand parade and celebration, attended by 20,000 people heralded the opening of the newest high school in the St. Louis Public Schools. The parade began at the old Battery A Armory on Grand Boulevard and Hickory Street at 1:30 PM, led by the American Legion Band, and concluded at the new high school, with speeches evoking President Theodore Roosevelt, the high school's namesake. Roosevelt's Rough Riders, the heroes of San Juan Hill in the Spanish American War, became the school's official mascot.



St. Louis Post-Dispatch, April 23, 1923

Rockwell Milligan would die at his home on Flora Place in 1929, having completed well over a dozen schools for St. Louis, including Tower Grove East's Shenandoah Elementary in 1926.<sup>10</sup> His legacy lives on in the built environment of his adopted city and the pursuit of quality design in education.

Chris Naffziger is the owner of St. Louis Patina ([www.stlouispatina.com](http://www.stlouispatina.com)) where he writes about the history and architecture of St. Louis. He has also written extensively on St. Louis' brewing history and his work has been published in *St. Louis Magazine*.

<sup>7</sup> "Corner Stone of New Roosevelt High School to Be Laid April 22," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, April 5, 1923, p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> Board of Education of the City of St. Louis Mo. *Annual Report - St. Louis Board of Education*. Vol. 71. 1925, p. 266.

<sup>9</sup> Board of Education of the City of St. Louis Mo. *Annual Report - St. Louis Board of Education*. Vol. 71. 1925, p. 267-271; "High School Bank Shows Growing Deposits," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, October 25, 1925, p. 39.

<sup>10</sup> "R. M. Milligan, Architect of Schools, Dies," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, October 1, 1929.



# MAGAZINE STREET

By Andrew Weil

For years I have wondered about the origin of the name of *Magazine Street*. It's a short street that today runs east-west between North Leffingwell and Bacon Streets and is bounded on the north and south (respectively) by North Market and Cass Avenue. As a reference, Magazine is the northern boundary of the Vashon High School property.

I knew that the street likely referred to a military facility that once existed in the area but could never find the real story until Andy Hahn (Director of the Campbell House Museum) gave a talk at Landmarks' office about his fabulous new book *Mapping St. Louis: A History of the Gateway City in 40 Rare Maps* (published by Reedy Press) as part of our fall lecture series.

Included in Andy's presentation was an architectural plan of one of the Civil War fortifications that were built to protect St. Louis in the 1860s. I had only seen rough maps of the approximate locations of these structures before, but never a measured and annotated drawing! I almost fell out of my chair. Andy directed me to the source of the plan in a Library of Congress collection and I immediately dived in.

While the contents of the collection deserve their own book, a quick look at one of the maps led directly to the origin of today's Magazine Street in north St. Louis. The "Map of St. Louis, MO and its Fortifications, 1861-1865" (also held by the Missouri History Museum) showed "Fort No. 8" with nearby streets marked. The locations of Cass, Garrison and Glasgow were clearly marked as was a barely legible line bisecting the fort labeled "Magazine Street".

Fort Number 8 was a substantial polygonal fortification that boasted a curtain wall, deep ditch, and stout earthen walls supported by heavy log construction. According to the plan, it

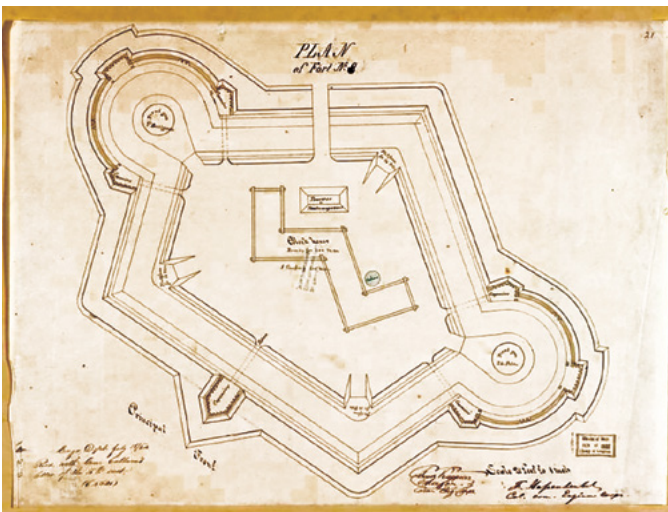


Magazine Street between Garrison and Glasgow

had a block house/barracks with "bunks for 200 men" (though the standing garrison was a company of 110), a water cistern, two platforms for 32lb cannons mounted on pivots, three platforms for mounting 12lb cannons and seven "caponieres," which were re-enforced covered firing positions built into the walls/ramparts. The facility also had a centralized subterranean powder magazine. This magazine lined up on an east-west axis with the fort's two gates, and the two gates were accessed by an unfinished track named "Magazine Street"!

While the fort is long gone, Magazine Street remains as a reminder of a turbulent time in St. Louis' history and the major system of fortresses that ringed our strategically important city.

*For years I have wondered about the origin of the name of Magazine Street.*



Fortress No. 8 Library of Congress



Map of St. Louis, MO and its Fortifications 1861-1865 marked



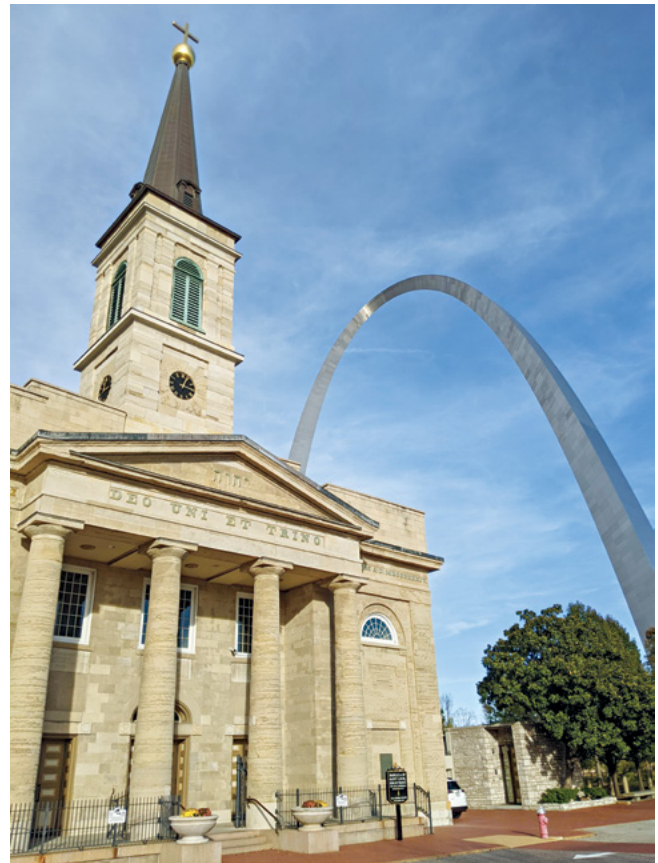
Landmarks handles all administration so guides can focus on giving the tours. Guides are scheduled based on availability. Each tour group is limited to just 15 people, allowing for lots of interaction. Tours usually last approximately two hours and cover about two miles at a leisurely pace.

*"Becoming a tour guide was a great way to expand my knowledge and also gain an opportunity to learn more about the details of our city. I was amazed at how much information I didn't know about our city's buildings and the history."*

—Charlie, tour guide

If you enjoy history, architecture and engaging with people, check out our Tours website [landmarkstours-stl.org/](http://landmarkstours-stl.org/) volunteer and complete our Volunteer Interest form (or scan the QR code). Or simply call our tour program at 314-690-3140 and ask to have one of our guide trainers contact you.

Thank you!



Downtown East Tour — Old Cathedral



Tour group at the St. Louis Arch



Tour guide Glenn and group visiting the Old Post Office interior



Downtown East Tour — Court House



Downtown West Tour — Stifel Theatre



Stifel Theatre architectural elements



Downtown West Walking Tour

*"This experience lets me make a contribution to this great community and to Landmarks."*

—Rich, tour guide



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## LANDMARKS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

OCTOBER 1, 2024 – NOVEMBER 20, 2024

### DEAR FRIENDS,

As you know, Landmarks Association relies heavily on the support of our membership to meet our humble financial needs. We would like to thank you for your continuing support, and encourage you to pass this newsletter along to a friend with an invitation to join! Becoming a member is easy. Simply call the office at 314-421-6474 or visit [landmarks-stl.org](http://landmarks-stl.org) and click on the "join" tab, or scan this QR code to go to our membership page.

Thank You!



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