

LANDMARKS LETTER



Can you guess the building this architectural detail is from? See *Elements* on page 2.

Overshadowed & Overlooked: The Publicity Building, 1133 Pine

AS WE ALL KNOW, some streets downtown are more intact than others. As the fortunes of the central business district declined in the second half of the 20th century and downtown workers came to rely heavily on personal automobiles for transportation, many buildings in the central business district were converted into parking lots and garages. This trend was particularly destructive to the older, smaller-scale buildings which were easier to demolish and whose relatively small numbers of tenants could more easily relocate. With the exception of Washington Avenue, where a more varied mix of building sizes and forms remains, downtown's historic building stock tends to be over-represented by enormous office buildings, former department stores, hotels, warehouses, and buildings constructed for civic, legal, and banking purposes. The smaller, more "human scaled" commercial and mixed use buildings are few and far between.



The Publicity Building, present day.

Today, it is difficult to imagine (or remember) how the parking lots and garages of downtown were in many cases once land that was tightly packed with "main street" scale architecture. Such three, four, five story buildings supported a dizzying array of businesses and facilitated a teeming pedestrian environment. Sadly, even where examples of this type of building still remain in the central business district, they very rarely retain much semblance of their original context and are thus read as isolated monoliths rather than components of what was once a rich architectural tapestry. Because these buildings are usually survivors of unfortunate development patterns, they have a tendency to exist in fairly dismal environments. In such places, pedestrian traffic is predictably light, passersby tend not to linger, and interesting little buildings sometimes fly below the radar. The 1100 block of Pine Street is one such environment where a fragment of a once beautiful, functional and humane scale of urban architecture still exists in the form of the Publicity Building.

If you have never noticed the now ironically named "Publicity Building," you are in good company. Its surroundings are far from beguiling. Its neighbor to the east is a surface parking lot, to the south is a block long parking garage, to the north an alley, and to the west the uninviting (at least to the pedestrian) blank walls of two 1960s era office buildings. Of course it wasn't always this way. A heart wrenching photo from the *Post Dispatch* Sunday Pictures Magazine of December 1965 provides a glimpse of the building's former context on the south side of Pine Street where the parking garage is today. The last home of the *Westliche Post* can be seen at the western (shown, right) end of the row against the backdrop of the former Southwestern Bell office building.

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1100 block of Pine, 1965

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Elements

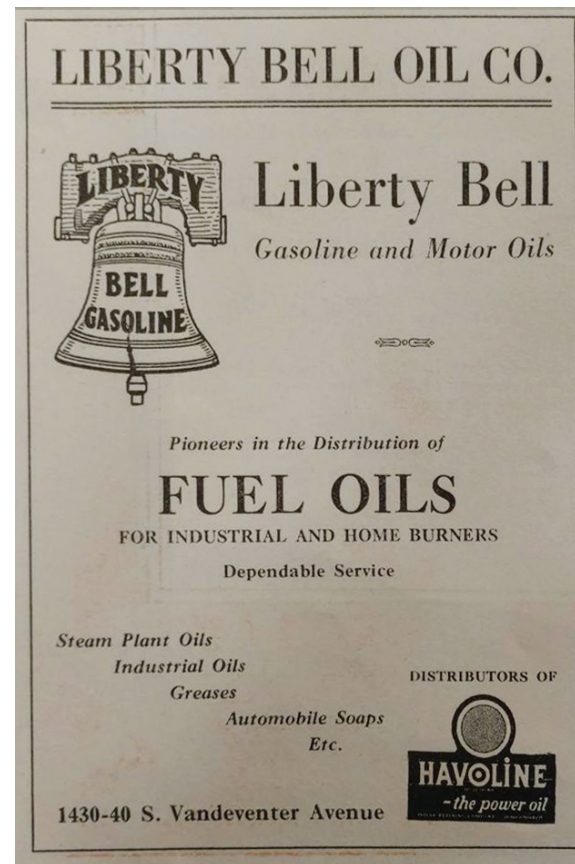


**LIBERTY BELL OIL COMPANY,
1430 S. VANDEVENTER**

THIS TERRA COTTA INSTALLATION is situated above the entrance to the former Liberty Bell Oil Company office at 1430 South Vandeventer. Constructed in phases between 1910 and the 1940s, Liberty Bell was a distributor of a wide range of petroleum products including fuel oils, industrial lubricants, kerosene and gasoline, which it received on a dedicated rail spur from the nearby Missouri Pacific tracks. Liberty Bell's main office building, constructed in 1930, faces Vandeventer and features variegated brick contrasting with the extensive use of cream colored terra cotta. On the first floor, brick pilasters are connected by round arches of terra cotta tiles forming a blind arcade that spans the width of the building. The name of the company is written in terra cotta lettering on the raised parapet and the main entrance features an elaborate terra cotta surround with a custom made Liberty Bell logo in relief. Today the building is vacant, but its new owners have big plans and a strong track record of successful rehabilitations, so hopefully life will be returning soon. The Liberty Bell Building is a potent reminder of a day when the architecture of even something as mundane as an oil distribution facility was designed not just to serve a purpose, but to delight.



Corporate letterhead, featuring the building, 1949.



Cherokee Hopping: A Brewery Renewed

by Katie Graebe

WHILE ST. LOUIS' MICROBREWERIES HAVE been doing great work adapting and rehabilitating historic buildings around the city for many years, until now, no new brewing operations have utilized any of the city's surviving brewery buildings. This is now changing as Earthbound Brewery is expanding and hopping from its current location at 2710 Cherokee a few doors west to 2724 where the co-owners of the company have been working tirelessly to renovate the last surviving building of the Cherokee Brewery Company.

The Cherokee Brewery descended from an earlier brewery founded by the Meier brothers in 1866. Bought out by Ferdinand Herold and George Loeb in 1867, the brewery was situated on the southwest corner of Cherokee and Ohio Avenue. Under Herold and Loeb, the complex expanded to encompass the entire block between Ohio and Iowa Avenues and was officially incorporated as the Cherokee Brewery Company in 1877.

The Whipple and Company's c.1872-c.1878 insurance map illustrates an early version of the complex which contained four main buildings and a rear beer garden. By 1909 the majority of the complex was demolished save for the two buildings on the corner of Iowa and Cherokee. Whipple's "building B" (2724 Cherokee, see rendering below) is all that survives today. Originally constructed as a two-story brick ice-warehouse, by 1895 two additional stories had been added and the building converted to a stockhouse. This building will soon be Earthbound Brewery's new indoor/outdoor taproom and production complex.

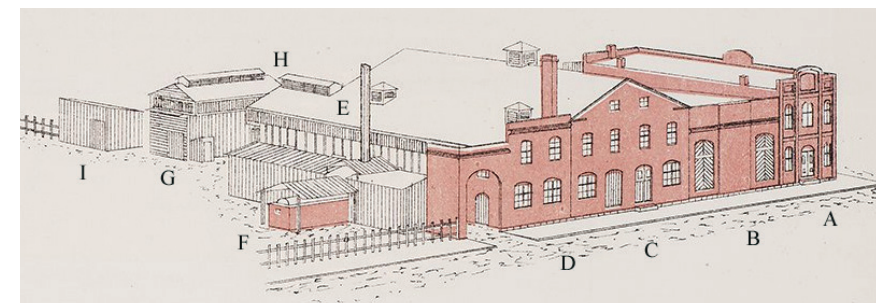
As they did with their earlier location, Earthbound Brewery is personally doing the teardown and build-out for their new venue. Co-owners Stuart Keating, Rebecca Schranz, and Jeff Siddon have been working with Will Lieberman, the property owner, and architect Nathan Dimberge to restore the original look, feel, and purpose of the building with the support of both Federal and State Historic Rehabilitation Tax credits.

Since the start of the work in 2015, they have removed a prior tenants' non-original exterior cladding, interior structures including a catwalk and a 30 ton plaster and lath drop ceiling, and have added bathrooms and a commercial kitchen. This work uncovered original interior openings which they have highlighted in the build-out. Exterior restoration has been aided by the existence of 1870s period photographs.

The warehouse was built on top of a pit or quarry and it eventually contained two large ice machines that cooled the building's three expansive cellars 45 feet underground. When the neighboring building was demolished, the debris was deposited in the vaulted brick basement and adjacent cellars with stone groin vault ceilings. Much of this subterranean space was recently excavated by hand with the help of wheel barrows and a belt conveyor. In all, over 15,000 cubic feet of soil, clay, rock, and bricks have been removed from the basement and cellar and sump pumps are draining the flooded subbasement.

Work is steadily progressing, with a focus on improving access to the lower levels, finishing interior spaces, completing exterior restoration and adding the most important element...the brewing equipment! Rebecca Schranz emphasized that they are also excited about getting the biergarten, to be situated on the now empty lot on the corner of Cherokee and Iowa Avenue, completed soon. We look forward to seeing the finished product next year.

Special thanks to Ryan Reed, Rebecca Schranz, and Stuart Keating



Whipple Fire Insurance Map. Building B is base of current building. c.1872-78.



Brewery letterhead c. 1880. By Wittenberg-Sorber, StL.



Courtesy Ryan Reed, 2016.



Cherokee Brewery Postcard, c.1895.

Mapping the Bissell Point (Red) Water Tower

IN SEPTEMBER, WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY architecture students under the direction of Landmarks' Andrew Weil, architect Tomislav Zigo of Clayco, and architect/drone pilot Nathan Wambold took what we hope will be an important first step toward pursuing much needed restoration work on the two north St. Louis water towers. St. Louis is very fortunate to have three of the reported seven remaining Victorian Era standpipe water towers in the United States; the age, rarity, and beauty of these structures qualifies them as irreplaceable landmarks in our community. While the Compton Hill water tower (1898, Harvey Ellis) is fortunate enough to have the Compton Hill Water Tower Park and Preservation Society taking care of it, the two north side towers have no such supporting organization.



The Red Water Tower being surveyed by drone, upper left.

Both the Bissell Street (aka "The Red" or "The New Red") Tower (1886, designed by William Eames) and the "Old White" or "Grand Avenue" Water Tower (1871, George Barnett) are in need of significant maintenance. Of course, before a plan of action can be formulated, existing conditions need to be assessed. As one can imagine, closely examining these vertical structures which respectively soar 196 and 154 feet above the ground has, until recently, been a very difficult task. Fortunately, advances in technology (drone aircraft and 3D point cloud modeling) have given us the tools necessary to inspect the exterior of the towers with safety and ease.

The mapping exercise carried out this fall grew out of a generous offer from Mr. Zigo of Clayco to work with Landmarks Association to identify significant and potentially endangered buildings in St. Louis that could benefit from scanning and modeling using the company's advanced technology. Their scanner allows a building (or interior space) to be captured and modeled in three dimensions at a sub-millimeter level of accuracy. While this type of model is an amazing way to preserve the data embodied by a building in perpetuity for future generations, it can also serve as a valuable point of departure for assessing needed repairs and monitoring the progression of known problems. Because the water towers are so critically important, but so difficult to assess using conventional methods, we decided that they would be a good place to begin our collaboration. As the Bissell Tower is the tallest and the more ornate of the two (meaning it likely has a wider variety of preservation needs), we decided to focus on it for our initial effort.

The mapping process involved architect and drone pilot Nathan Wambold using his aircraft to orbit the tower at different altitudes taking high resolution, geo-referenced images, while Mr. Zigo and his assistant scanned the building from the ground. Together the activities made for quite a futuristic scene playing out around the tower that September afternoon. The effort recorded the structure down to the level of the grains of sand in its mortar joints and created a model that will prove immensely useful as we move forward with trying to muster the assistance needed to keep this and our other iconic water towers standing for generations to come.

Publicity Building continued...

The Publicity Building was constructed by the Nelson Chesman Advertising Agency in 1903. At the time, Nelson Chesman & Co. was among St. Louis' oldest advertising concerns and the building was erected in anticipation of a boom in the need for advertising as the 1904 World's Fair approached. Nelson Chesman & Company grew out of an earlier advertising agency called Rowell & Chesman, which was founded in St. Louis in 1874. A partnership of George P. Rowell and Nelson Chesman, the company began advertising its services in the St. Louis Post Dispatch in 1875. At that time, the company was one of only three advertising agencies that were listed in the city directory. Because professional advertising agents were something of a new phenomenon in the city, Rowell & Chesman, appropriately, took out a detailed ad to explain exactly what it was that they did. In it they wrote:

"We undertake the management of the advertising business for reputable and responsible advertisers...we undertake to secure for every advertiser the lowest cash rates...and to contribute our services in obtaining attractive display, good position, and in keeping the expense of any proposed advertisement within prudent limits...All the leading papers of the entire country may be found on file at our office. We specially solicit business for Texas, Arkansas, the Territories, and all sections of the country which are tributary to St. Louis."

As children, Rowell and Chesman had been schoolmates and friends at Lancaster Academy in Lancaster, New Hampshire. When Rowell founded the *American Newspaper Directory* in New York in 1869, Chesman may have been its first editor and was certainly serving in that capacity by at least 1871. With this publication, George Rowell set out to standardize what had previously been a chaotic and ambiguously defined system for pricing advertising space.

As he described in his autobiography, in the middle of the 19th century, publishers set their own rates for advertising based on what Rowell considered secretive and arbitrary criteria. Rowell was aggravated by this system because it relegated advertising agents like him to the status of middlemen who were stuck trying to buy and sell a product (ad space) whose value had no metric. As he put it, "[E]vidently, it is not the space he occupies that an advertiser pays for, but an indefinite something the exact value of which neither the man who buys, nor the man who sells quite understands."

Continued >



In order to try to create a context for evaluating the fair price of space in a given publication, Rowell set out to systematically document everything he could learn about every American paper that regularly sold advertising. According to historian Jackson Lears, Rowell and his agents traveled the country collecting data on circulation, sales, paper quality, quality of the typesetting, the political leanings of editors, advertising policies, and useful details about the readership of thousands of papers. He and his editor Nelson Chesman then packaged the information into the *American Newspaper Directory* so that they could use it to inform their clients as well as other ad agents about how and where to spend their advertising budgets. Rowell's innovation has been called the birth of modern media consulting because he moved beyond brokering the purchase advertising space and instead became a purveyor of the information that advertisers and advertising agents needed to craft and place their campaigns.

The Directory that Rowell compiled and Chesman edited was the first essentially complete list of American publications that sold advertising (nearly 6,000 initially) and is considered an important step toward modern advertising practices and the standardization of the value of advertising space. In his seminal work *The History and Development of Advertising* Frank Presbrey wrote that "George P. Rowell did perhaps more than any other man to develop advertising in the 19th century..." As editor of the Directory, Chesman clearly played an important role as well.

In 1874, Chesman decided to seek his fortune out west in the burgeoning metropolis of St. Louis and his friend George Rowell agreed to support the endeavor. Rowell and Chesman became partners in a new agency, which brought the concept of the *American Newspaper Directory* to St. Louis. The ad men quickly found a ready audience in the growing city, which, as city directories indicate, was awash in print media, but virtually devoid of professional ad agents.

It seems that Rowell was essentially just helping to set his friend up in business as he never actually moved to St. Louis as Chesman did; he retired his name from the company after just four years.

After Rowell's departure, Nelson Chesman continued doing business in St. Louis under the name "Nelson Chesman & Co." although he didn't formally incorporate the company until 1888. That same year the company opened a branch office in New York City and in 1891 an office in Chicago was added.

Originally located in a building (demolished) at 312-314 Chestnut Street, the growth of the company in the last two decades of the 19th century led Chesman to begin to explore the construction of a headquarters building by the turn of the century. Where the firm had begun with fewer than five employees, by 1900 it had grown to more than sixty workers. Chesman's success, like that of his former partner Rowell, stemmed from the systematic approach he took to his trade. For his rate book, he invested enormous resources in researching all the major publications across the country, the characteristics of their readership, and their current advertising rates. He also worked to educate businessmen about the benefits of advertising and how best to target a particular audience through a campaign.

In 1903, the company decided to move forward with the construction of its national headquarters in St. Louis. The city was selected over the other branches because of its central location and because of the enormous business opportunities that were expected to be created by the upcoming St. Louis World's Fair. Newspapers praised the company as being among the "longest established" advertising firms in St. Louis and stated that it stood "...in the vanguard with the biggest advertising agencies in the country."

The new building was to be designed by the (presently obscure) local architectural firm of Kennedy & Matthias and rise to a height of 12 stories. The *St. Louis Post Dispatch* called the announcement one "[o]f the numerous important realty transactions consummated during the past year...", but buried within the article was the admission that "Owing to the inability to secure structural steel, the owners will take possession of their new home upon the completion of the first five stories of the building, which will be carried to 12 stories as the steel may arrive." It is unclear whether Nelson Chesman ever really intended to construct such a large building, or if the company made the announcement about construction of a larger building as what amounted to a publicity stunt. If it was done for the latter reason, it was a successful gambit as publications from the *Post Dispatch* and *Globe Democrat* to the *American Architect and Building News* covered the story.

Circumstantial evidence that the twelve story building announcement may indeed have been a publicity stunt can be found in the fact that the company never occupied more than half of the building at any one time. While the St. Louis office coordinated the efforts of other branches of the company which, by 1912 included offices in New York, Chicago and Chattanooga, Nelson Chesman was usually listed as occupying only the second and third floors on Pine Street. Other floors were generally rented by trades such as lithographers and type setters who would have worked hand in hand with the advertising agents.

Another possible explanation for why the company never realized its vision of a twelve story building could be that just three years after the building permit was issued, Nelson Chesman died. At that point, vice president and treasurer Conrad Budke took over and the company continued to operate out of the Publicity Building until 1936 when it disappeared from the St. Louis City Directories.

Today the Publicity Building represents a direct link back to pioneers of the advertising industry in St. Louis and the United States at large. Would this connection ever have been discovered without the building itself requiring an explanation? Historic architecture serves so easily as a point of departure for exploring the stories of the people and industries that shaped our community. This fact reminds us that the loss of a building is not merely the removal of a physical object, but the destruction of what may be the only trail marker that still points the way down a long forgotten path.



The Publicity Building as originally proposed.



LANDMARKS

ASSOCIATION of SAINT LOUIS

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St. Louis, Missouri 63101

PRESORTED
Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
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Permit 495

Welcome Katie!



I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS opportunity to introduce our newest staff member Katie Graebe. Some of you may know her from previous work she has done for our organization as an intern and a subcontractor, as a past volunteer with the Chatillon-DeMenil Foundation, or as the administrator for the Missouri Alliance for Historic Preservation. Katie was born in Belleville, Illinois and has always been fascinated with the architecture of her community and the St. Louis Region at large. She graduated from Miami University, in Oxford, Ohio, with a dual major in History of Art and Architecture and Classical Humanities, complimented by a minor in Eastern Religions. She then pursued graduate coursework at the Savannah College of Art and Design in the Historic Preservation program. During that time she

interned with Landmarks Association, volunteered for DOCOMOMO (an organization dedicated to the documentation and conservation of Modern Movement resources) volunteered with the Historic Savannah Foundation, and traveled to southern France where she gained hands-on, technical preservation experience. We are excited to welcome Katie to the staff and are very confident that her skills, experience, passion, and work ethic will serve Landmarks Association and its mission well in the future.

A FRIENDLY REMINDER

DEAR FRIENDS,

Earlier this month, you received a letter highlighting a few of the organization's accomplishments over the course of 2016 along with a request for an additional contribution as the year draws to a close. I would like to humbly reiterate that appeal, and to remind you how heavily we rely on the financial support of Landmarks' members to maintain operations. St. Louis is too important a city and our architectural heritage is too valuable an asset, for us to allow the voice of preservation advocacy to fade. Instead, I ask that you help strengthen that voice for the coming year by personally taking a moment to consider the things that make you proud to be a St. Louisan, and to contribute to the organizations and institutions that make our community great. With your help, we will all step confidently into 2017 ready to continue the exciting work of building, and restoring (!), a better St. Louis.

Thank you,
Andrew B. Weil,
Landmarks Association Executive Director



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