



# LANDMARKS LETTER



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

## The United Railways' Spring Avenue Substation and Trouble Station Building

by Andrew Weil



*Trouble Station 1908*



*Trouble Crew*

THE UNITED RAILWAYS' Spring Avenue Substation and Trouble Station Building 2423 N. Spring first came to our attention when it was included on Landmarks' Most Endangered List back in 2010. The scale and stately design of this building stood out in an area of JeffVanderLou that is otherwise, unfortunately, significantly depleted of its original architecture. Constructed in 1908 for the United Railways Company, which operated the City's streetcar system, the facility served two distinct streetcar-related purposes: the rear portion of the building was an electrical substation where high voltage electricity from power plants was transformed into lower voltage direct current. This power was then distributed via overhead lines, from which streetcars drew electricity to power their onboard electric motors. The front portion of the building is the only known purpose-built "trouble station" in the city. Trouble stations housed specialized equipment and teams of workmen who, like firefighters, could be deployed at a moment's notice to respond

to any number of problems that might arise along the transit lines. The first floor section of the building housed equipment and vehicles, (in the case of this facility, trucks) and the second and third floors served as barracks and offices for the station operators. This highly specialized building provides an interesting glimpse into two of the lesser known aspects of how the streetcar system operated, as well as a jumping off point for an examination of some of the City's remaining transit-related architecture.

The first horse-drawn, rail-based streetcars in St. Louis began operating around 1859 and continued through the mid 1880s when the system began shifting to the use of electrical motors.<sup>1</sup> The first electrical cable car was opened in 1886 and the entire system had abandoned the use of horse-drawn lines within a decade.<sup>2</sup> The early cable car system of St. Louis relied upon huge electrical motors situated in powerhouses around the city that dragged a cable through a slot in the street beneath the rails. A grip mechanism controlled

*continued on pg. 4 >*

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## Volume 52 Issue 4 Winter 2019

3115 S. Grand Blvd. Suite 700  
St. Louis, MO 63118  
Ph: 314-421-6474  
[www.landmarks-stl.org](http://www.landmarks-stl.org)

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<sup>1</sup>Andrew Young, *Street Cars, Light Rail & Utility Cars of St. Louis*. (St. Louis, Archway Publishing. 2003) p. 3

<sup>2</sup>United Railways and St. Louis Public Service Co. ,1926.p.7

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LANDMARKSLETTER

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Elements

OTTO F. STIFEL  
UNION  
BREWERY

THIS ELEMENT IS A terra cotta detail from the former “Otto F. Stifel Union Brewery” at the south east corner of Michigan Avenue and Gravois. Stifel was a member of a prestigious brewing family that brought their trade to St. Louis from the Kingdom of Wurtemberg, Germany where their ancestors had operated a brewery in the town of Neuffen.

For all the details, please see the article at right.



Stifel Brewery at N. 14th and Howard Streets, 1895



These windows are in Otto Stifel's Union Brewery.

Otto F. Stifel Union Brewery

by Andrew Weil

Otto’s father Charles had come to St. Louis along with his brothers Jacob and Christopher in 1849 hoping to find success in the brewing industry as their other brother Frederick had already done. Frederick was a partner in the Winklemeyer Brewery, which was located at 1714 Market Street where the large downtown post office stands today. Their arrival was poorly timed as St. Louis was in the midst of the worst cholera epidemic in the city’s history. Indeed, the Winklemeyer Brewery backed up to Chouteau’s Pond, whose fetid waters were widely believed to be a primary source of the outbreak, and both Frederick Stifel and his wife Louise died of the disease.

Charles and brother Jacob along with one other partner set up shop in rented quarters on the riverfront. Within three years, Charles bought his partners out and seven years later began constructing his own brewery, the City Brewery, at north 14th Street and Howard, one block north of where the Mullanphy Emigrant Home stands today. As the Civil War began to loom on the horizon, Charles raised and equipped a company of his fellow Germans for federal service, drilling them in his cavernous malt house. Following the Camp Jackson affair, The Company presented itself at the St. Louis Arsenal where it was given formal military status and Stifel commissioned Colonel. Shortly thereafter, the men were involved in a deadly skirmish with Confederate rioters near Broadway and Walnut. Stifel went on to lead with distinction at the battles of Lexington, Missouri, and Blue Mills Landing near present day Independence. Stifel then resigned his commission and returned to St. Louis where his wife Louise gave birth to their son Otto in 1862. He continued to work as a brewer for the rest of his life and was also known as a philanthropist. The home he built in 1880 still stands at 2013 St. Louis Avenue although its 3rd floor has been heavily altered, and the statue of German polymath Friedrich Schiller he financed for St. Louis Place Park now stands in Memorial Plaza downtown.

Otto received a premier brewing education that took him from Washington University to Stuttgart, Chicago, Milwaukee and New York. He worked for his father at the City Brewery through its consolidation by the St. Louis Brewing Association (SLBA) in 1889 and the death of his father in 1900. In 1906 he resigned from the SLBA and purchased the Union Brewery, which had been founded in 1898 at the corner of Michigan and Gravois on the city’s south side. Here he added additional facilities and proudly put his stamp on many of the buildings with prominent “OFS” (for Otto F. Stifel) ornaments executed in terra cotta.

Stifel was very involved with horse racing and breeding and in 1912 purchased a farm in Valley Park for his stable. He was also invested in many ventures across the city including involvement with the St. Louis Baseball Terriers of the Federal League, the St. Louis Browns, and the Grand Central Theater at Grand Boulevard and Lucas among other pursuits. Unfortunately, he also had a gambling problem, which resulted in major debts that were only compounded when Prohibition shuttered his brewery. Otto F. Stifel committed suicide at his farm in August of 1920.



The Stifel house, built in 1880, still stands at 2013 St. Louis Avenue.

\*This article relied heavily on the excellent research of Henry Herbst, Don Roussin, and Kevin Kious in their book *St. Louis Brews, 200 Years of Brewing in St. Louis, 1809-2009*, as well as the family archives of the Bill and Gina Wischmeyer family.



Letter from the Director

Dear friends,

In December, you received a letter highlighting a few of the organization’s accomplishments over the course of 2019 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.

I ask that you help strengthen that voice for the coming year by 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 strong and unique. Thanks to your support, Landmarks Association has been in operation for 60 years (!) researching, promoting, educating, and serving as an advocate for St. Louis’ architectural heritage.

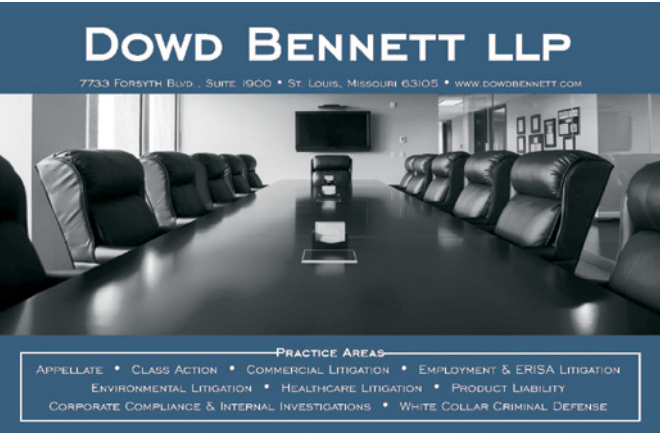
I know that the end of the year is a busy time with many obligations and activities, so if a year-end gift to Landmarks Association fell through the cracks, DON’T WORRY, it’s never too late. We are in need of, and grateful for, gifts at any time of the year!

Thanks again for your support and stay tuned. 2020 is shaping up to be an exciting year in which we intend to embark upon the rehabilitation of a fabulous, but endangered historic building complex in Soulard as our new home.

With sincere gratitude for your contributions and for six decades of support from the St. Louis Community,

Andrew B. Weil  
Executive Director

Thanks to the Following Sponsors of Our 60th Anniversary Fall Fundraiser Honoring the Preservation Legacy of Eugene Mackey III with the H. Meade Summers Jr. Award!



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GST Properties



Streetcar Facilities at Geyer and Missouri



Trouble Station Today

United Railways' Substation and Trouble Station continued from page 1

by the driver would seize this perpetually moving cable when the car needed to move forward, and release it to stop. As electromotive technology progressed, this system was abandoned in favor of self propelled cars powered by onboard motors fed by overhead electrical lines. The transition from cable grip technology to self-propelled cars was swift and between 1895 and 1900 all of the cable lines operating in St. Louis' had made the change.<sup>3</sup> Electric streetcars remained the standard for the St. Louis system until the last line was shut down in 1966.<sup>4</sup>

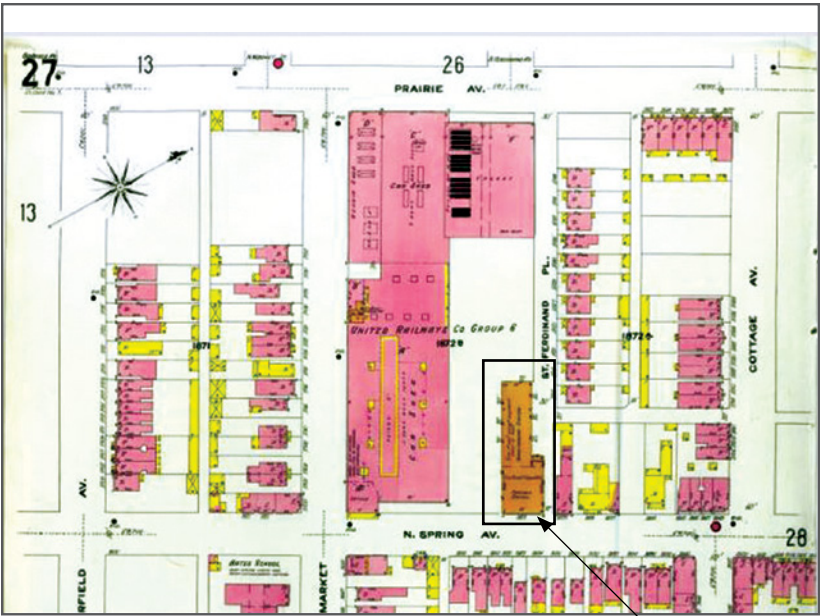
Up until the very end of the 19th century, St. Louis' public transit system had evolved organically with many different entrepreneurial companies formed to provide transportation for profit along important commercial and commuting streets. This resulted in a confusing and chaotic system which used different kinds of technologies, fare structures, timetables, etc., and did not allow for convenient transfers from one line to another. By the end of the 19th century, some consolidation had taken place, but there remained 27 different companies in the city operating 27 different systems.<sup>5</sup> In 1899, the United Railways Company (U.R.) began assimilating these companies into a single system which, after taking over the last holdout (St. Louis & Suburban Railway Company) in 1906, contained infrastructure that had been developed over time by 66 different companies.<sup>6</sup>

Such a disparate system was untenable and U.R. immediately began to address the challenge of completely overhauling its fare structure, labor pool, and infrastructure including cars, tracks, transmission lines, and buildings.<sup>7</sup> With regard to buildings, this plan required the closure of some inherited outdated facilities, the expansion of others, and strategic new construction.<sup>8</sup> For example, the former Lindell Railways facility at 39th and Park (demolished) in the center of the city was designated as the new headquarters of the company and outfitted with extensive new buildings capable of doing everything from upholstering seats to building entire new cars from the ground up.<sup>9</sup> On

the south side, U.R. closed the former Union Depot's powerhouse at its facility at Geyer and Missouri Avenues (a portion of which today is occupied by Randalls Wine & Spirits), and the same year, took out a permit to construct a thoroughly modern north side electrical substation and trouble station at 2324 N. Spring.<sup>10</sup>

Between 1899 and 1908, U.R. created eight multi-purpose facilities strategically situated across the city to improve efficiency and standardize service.<sup>11</sup> City directories and the 1909 Sanborn Map paint the following picture of U.R.'s empire at the time. Division One was at the intersection of Delmar and DeBaliviere Avenue, where today only the historic power house survives. Division Two was at 1914 S. Jefferson where today there is an extant, one-story car "barn" and repair shop. Division Three was centered around the 2400 block of N. Spring, where today only the combined electrical substation and trouble station survive. The 1909 Sanborn Map for St. Louis shows that a series of low brick car sheds and shop buildings were once situated across the alley to the south and west of the Spring Avenue Station on land that is now Rumbold Park. Division Four was at 4041 S. Broadway (demolished), and Division Five at 20 S. Compton (demolished). Division Six was at 3820 Easton (today Dr. Martin Luther King) where a one story complex consisting of a car house, repair shop, private car storage facility and "conductor's room" still survive in modified form. Division Seven was at the intersection of Virginia Avenue and Walsh Street where today some one story car sheds survive, and Division eight, which consisted of the company's massive general office, repair, storage, and construction complex was at 3869 Park Avenue (demolished).<sup>12</sup>

Strangely, in a city where the streetcar was once king, the architecture that supported the system is not well preserved. While the following may not be a completely accurate accounting, this research indicates that most of St. Louis' surviving streetcar-related infrastructure consists of large, one story warehouse type buildings where a variety of maintenance and storage functions took place. In addition, there are



1908 Sanborn Map of the Spring Avenue Complex

three waiting stations (Wellston Loop, Thurman Loop, and the modified Lindell Pavilion, which is now the Jones Visitor's Center in Forest Park), three electrical-related buildings (the Delmar Powerhouse/Substation, the Central Substation, and the Spring Avenue Substation. Lastly, there is the lone trouble station on North Spring.

### TROUBLE STATION

Streetcar trouble stations functioned much like modern day fire stations in that they were built to house trained companies of men and specialized equipment that could be dispatched on a moment's notice to deal with problems that arose in the transit system. With hundreds of miles of track and power lines, thousands of streetcars, and hundreds of thousands of customers relying on predictable service, the trouble men were in constant demand. While traditionally trouble crews had relied on horse-drawn wagons with trailers, United Railways was an early adopter of the automobile for its rapid response vehicles. While articles appeared in national publications like the *Street Railway Journal* into the 1920s encouraging companies across the country to abandon wagons in favor of trucks, a photo taken the year the Spring Avenue Station opened (1908) shows that, in St. Louis, United Railways had already made the switch years earlier.<sup>13</sup>

Trouble trucks were customized with special lift mechanisms that allowed electrical linemen access to poles and overhead wires.<sup>14</sup> They also were rigged to carry equipment like derricks, gin poles and cement mixers to be used in setting new electric poles, as well as devices for reeling wire, welding tracks, tearing up and laying down paving stones.<sup>15</sup> They even carried "hose bridges" which were used to carry hoses up and over the tracks and lines so that transit wouldn't be interrupted by nearby fire fighting activity.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the activities of the trouble crews were closely coordinated with the city fire department to the point that when St. Louis installed a new citywide electrical fire gong system in 1909, alarms were also placed in the U.R. trouble stations including the one on Spring Avenue.<sup>17</sup>

All of these specialized functions and equipment, in addition to a truck maintenance garage complete with its own blacksmith/tool and die shop for repairing parts, would have been housed by the Spring Avenue Station's first floor.<sup>18</sup> The second and third floors served as a barracks for the men.<sup>19</sup> The



Streetcar System 1903



Trouble Truck, Courtesy of Joe Sonderman

<sup>3</sup>American Institute of Engineers *St. Louis Electrical Handbook: Being a guide for Visitors from Abroad Attending the International Electrical Congress* (St. Louis, American Institute of Electrical Engineers, 1904). p. 140

<sup>4</sup>Young, 2003 p. 11

<sup>5</sup>Brown Bros. & Co. *Plan and Agreement for the Purchase by United Railways Co. of St. Louis of Certain Street Rail Roads in the City of St. Louis* (New York, Brown Bros. & Co. 1899) p. 24-27

<sup>6</sup>United Railways and St. Louis Public Service Co. 1926. p. 8

<sup>7</sup>Young 2013, p. 4-7

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 6-7

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 6

<sup>10</sup>Mary M. Stirtz, *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: Union Depot Building, St. Louis* (Washington D.C.: Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 2005) p. 5; Stl City Building Permits on file, Comptroller's Office, St. Louis City Hall, 1200 Market Street, St. Louis, MO. 63103.

<sup>11</sup>St. Louis City Directory 1908.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.; Sanborn Map Company St. Louis, Volume (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1909)

<sup>13</sup>*Electric Railway Journal*, 1921, p. 242.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>City of St. Louis. *Mayor's Message with Accompanying Documents to the Municipal Assembly of the City of St. Louis*. (St. Louis, City of St. Louis 1909) p. 336

<sup>18</sup>Swartz, A. "Street Railway Track Work at Toledo" *Engineering News* Vol. 68 No. 23, 1912 p. 1050

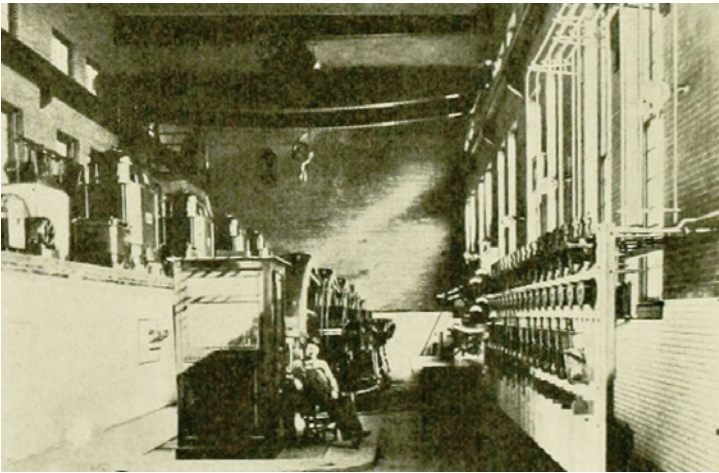
<sup>19</sup>E.D. Smith, 1908 p. 481

building was constructed to be fireproof with brick walls and reinforced concrete floors and ceilings to maximize protection for these vital services. As was common with the earliest buildings that used reinforced concrete in St. Louis, the facility was designed to masquerade as typical brick construction and the concrete structural elements are not expressed on the building's exterior.<sup>20</sup>

SUBSTATION

The substation portion of the building attaches to the rear (west) wall of the trouble station and the two buildings are internally connected. A description of the building's functions, equipment, and arrangement appeared in *Electric Railway Review* in April of 1908, just months after the station came online. Prepared by E. D. Smith, United Railways' Superintendent, for the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, the description speaks to the manner in which the building was designed around its purpose.

The Spring Avenue Substation is situated at Spring Avenue and North Market Street. This station contains four 1,000-kilowatt, 600 volt, six-phase rotaries with room for two additional rotaries of the same capacity. It also has in connection a battery room, together with space for the necessary apparatus, such as a booster, etc. This is the last station we have erected, having been in operation only about five months, and so far as our present experience is concerned, seems to give us the best layout for a combination rotary and battery station. The transformers are placed on a balcony. This enables us to transfer the air chamber and high-tension bus compartments from the basement to the first floor, leaving the basement to be used entirely for battery purposes. All the apparatus in this station is of General Electric make, the auxiliary apparatus being practically the same as before described. This station is built in connection with a trouble station, above which are living apartments for the station operators.<sup>21</sup>



Substation Interior

A picture that accompanied the article shows the aforementioned transformers atop a balcony or platform that once ran along the north side of the room with the air chambers and high tension bus compartments situated in specialized concrete mounts in the center of the room. These mounts contained openings into the basement so the equipment could communicate with the lower battery level.

<sup>20</sup>Michael R. Allen, "Reinforced Concrete Industrial Architecture in St. Louis" *Missouri Valley Chapter, Society of Architectural Historians Newsletter*. Vol. XIX, No. 2, 2013 p. 1  
<sup>21</sup>E.D. Smith, 1908 p. 481



Delmar and Debaliviere Power Substation



Wellston Loop Station

The purpose of the substation was to take high voltage alternating current from power generating plants and transform it into lower voltage direct current to electrify the streetcar motors. In the early years, United Railways generated a significant amount of its power from its own steam powered plants and contracted with the local Union Electric Company for additional capacity.<sup>22</sup> Gradually United Railways shut down its power generating infrastructure as the energy industry matured and it became cheaper and easier to contract with local power companies for electricity.<sup>23</sup> After the Keokuk & Hamilton Water Power Plant began operation on the upper Mississippi in 1913, United Railways contracted to buy power from them directly.<sup>24</sup> Located more than 100 miles upstream from St. Louis at Keokuk, Iowa this contract as well two others executed with St. Louis firms was revolutionary at the time for the distance the power was transmitted from source to consumer.<sup>25</sup> The electricity that powered the system came into the City on high voltage overhead lines from the north and was fed directly into the substations where it was converted for daily use.<sup>26</sup> Through a complex system that integrated all of the substations, power could be stored and/or redirected to different sections of the City to accommodate spikes in demand due to large public events or the cycles of rush hours.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.  
<sup>23</sup>Stacy Sone, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: DeHodiamont Car House District, St. Louis. (Washington D.C.: Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 2004) p. 12  
<sup>24</sup>United Railways and St. Louis Public Service Co. 1926, p. 9  
<sup>25</sup>Ibid.  
<sup>26</sup>Ibid.  
<sup>27</sup>*Electric Railway Review*, 1908 p. 481.



Substation Today

The building served the streetcar system under the ownership of United Railways and the St. Louis Public Service Company (a reorganization of United Railways) through the rise and decline of the streetcar era. Ridership began to decrease in the late 1920s as personal automobiles became more accessible and buses emerged as an increasingly popular public transit option in the years leading up to World War II.<sup>28</sup> United Railways had always struggled to handle its debt, much of which was incurred during its earlier period of expansion, and its fleet was aging and starting to break down.<sup>29</sup> U.R. declared bankruptcy in 1922 and was reorganized into the St. Louis Public Service Company, which kept the system running despite also struggling with debt issues of its own.<sup>30</sup> Despite ridership decline, the streetcar system remained an important and viable mode of public transit for St. Louis, especially for those people who couldn't afford automobiles. It also remained vitally important for the city's commercial corridors such as Wellston, Cherokee Street, and Gravois Avenue, which had developed in response to the fixed lines. Throughout the streetcar era, the Spring Avenue facility continued to be occupied and used by United Railways and later the St. Louis Public Service Company until approximately 1952. After that time city directories indicate that the building went vacant.<sup>31</sup> The last day of streetcar service in St. Louis was May 21st, 1966.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup>Young, 2013 p.10-11  
<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 10  
<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 10-11  
<sup>31</sup>St. Louis City Directories, 1908-1953  
<sup>32</sup>Andrew Young, *Streets and Streetcars of St. Louis; A Sentimental Journey* (St. Louis, Archway Publishing 2002) p. 3



2423 N. Spring Avenue

In later years, the building was reused as an automobile repair shop before becoming vacant prior to the year 2000. The Architect of the building was William Cann of St. Louis.<sup>33</sup> Cann was a fairly prolific architect in St. Louis around the turn of the century designing several prominent institutional buildings such as the Beethoven Conservatory at 4505 Olive (NR 3/2/1989), Fry Memorial Church in Clifton Heights, the Second German Presbyterian Church, Lafayette Park Methodist Church, the Taylor-Olive Building (NR 12/12/02) and the South End Masonic Temple (demolished). An obituary for him in the *Construction News* in 1912 stated that he specialized in churches and that he had designed many of them across the country during his eighteen year career.<sup>34</sup> He also designed buildings for Henry Kendall College, which was the forerunner of the University Of Tulsa, Oklahoma.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup>St. Louis City Building Permits, Office of the Comptroller, St. Louis City Hall, 1200 Market Street, St. Louis, MO 63103  
<sup>34</sup>*Construction News*, "William Cann" *Construction News* Vol. 34, 1912 p. 12  
<sup>35</sup>*Manufacturers' Record*, "William Cann" *Manufacturers' Record* Vol 52. 1907 p. 74



11805-1807 S 9th, c1890s.  
Courtesy of “Frenchtown” by John Rodabough, October 1980,  
Missouri Historical Society



1805-1807 S. 9th, December 2019, Graebe

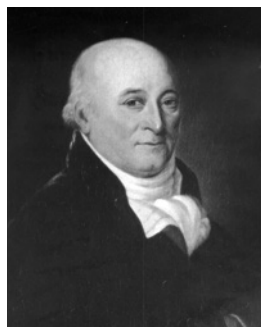
## A New Office for Landmarks [1805-1807 S. 9th]

by Katie Graebe

IF ALL GOES ACCORDING TO PLAN, Landmarks’ new office, library and classroom space will be located in a very old and interesting building complex at 1805-07 S. 9th Street in Soulard. The buildings are situated very close to Downtown with great views of the skyline and Arch, but embedded in one of St. Louis’ oldest and most intact historic neighborhoods. This plan takes us back to the 1970s when the organization was involved in rehabilitation projects in Soulard that were designed to prove that historic properties in the neighborhood could be restored for current needs and that there was a market for such buildings. Decades later, that hypothesis has obviously been supported by the evidence! We are excited to be charting a course back toward

this destination neighborhood where we can celebrate the historic architecture of St. Louis with visitors from all over the region, and the country.

The land where the buildings are situated can be traced back to a grant made by the Spanish to Jean-Gabriel Cerre, a wealthy French Canadian merchant. Cerre was born May 22, 1734, in Montreal, Canada. As a young man, he became involved in the fur trade and traveled south to the village of Kaskaskia, Illinois, which was an important trading post and administration center for the Illinois Country. It is there that he married



Jean Gabriel Cerre.  
Courtesy Missouri Historical Society

Catherine Gerard in 1765. In the years Cerre used Kaskaskia as a base of operations, control of the surrounding territory transferred from French, British, and eventually to American rule when Kaskaskia was captured by George Rogers Clark during the American Revolution. Due to the chaos of the Revolution, Gabriel, his wife Catherine and children Marie Therese, Marie Julie/Julia, and Paschal Leon moved to St. Louis by 1779 or 1781.

By that time, Cerre had already started speculating in property on the Spanish side of the Mississippi. Dates and amounts of land vary across records, but in 1782, under the petition of Gabriel Cerre, the then

lieutenant governor of Upper Louisiana, Don Francisco Cruzat, conceded him a tract of land south of the village of St. Louis on the road that led to the village of Carondelet (today’s Broadway). In 1786, he extended this land east to the Mississippi River.

During this time, Gabriel married off his daughters to two of the most prominent men in the area who owned large swathes of land: In September 1786, daughter Marie-Therese married Founding Father Auguste Chouteau, and in November 1795 daughter Marie Julie Cerre married Antoine Pierre Soulard, the “King’s Surveyor” for the Spanish territory. Soulard, a French navy sub-lieutenant, had arrived in St. Louis a year earlier and was on the cusp being appointed Royal Surveyor for Upper Louisiana by the governor-general, Baron De Carondelet. The marriage of Julia Cerre and Antoine resulted in the line of inheritance that placed much of today’s Soulard neighborhood into the hands of its namesake family.



Antoine Pierre Soulard.  
Courtesy Missouri Historical Society



Marie Julia Cerre Soulard.  
Courtesy Missouri Historical Society

After his marriage, Soulard acquired land adjacent to his father-in-law. This western portion of land is set at an angle in line with Cerre’s boundaries. The book *Frenchtown* notes that Soulard was granted these 122 acres which stretched southwest from the intersection of Park and Carondelet Road (Broadway) as payment for his surveying.

According to the 1845 Supreme Court of Missouri OTT v. SOULARD this land pertained to:

“On the 7th of August, 1798, Antoine Soulard petitioned for a grant of a tract of fourteen arpents in front, by fifteen in-depth, opposite to a piece of land asked in augmentation by Don Gabriel Cerre, and granted to him; the same tract of land to be bounded north, by lands adjoining St. Louis, south of Mill Creek, south and west by vacant lands of the royal domain, and east by a public road eighty feet in width, that leads from St. Louis, to the village of Carondelet, and that divides the said land of Gabriel Cerre, from that solicited. On the same day the land was granted, and the petitioner was ordered to survey and make a certificate.”

The death of Catherine Cerre in July 1800 spurred Gabriel into realizing that he needed to make a will to pass his land on to his children and to make use of His Majesty’s royal decree of January 20th, 1792 which allowed him to dispose of his estate without the assistance of Justices. On June 1, 1802, Gabriel Cerre partitioned his [wife’s] estate and allocated it to his daughter Julia that was, in turn, confirmed to Antoine [survey #1333, 64 65/100 acres]. This country estate was occupied by Gabriel and partially fenced. After he passed in 1805 he left the home for Julia and Antoine where they resided most of their married life.

After the United States made the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, many early St. Louis settlers’ claim to the land was questioned. Soulard’s land remained mired in legal cases with Antoine filing several times and his family appealing after his death in 1825. Many of Soulard’s claims were controversial; among the complaints levied against them were:

- It was asserted that he falsified dates on survey plats
- He was unable to provide documentation of his own surveyed land, claiming them to be lost or destroyed. In one of his cases against the U. S. Government, testimony revealed that his “concession and certificate of survey were, by mistake thrown into the fire and destroyed”
- He refused to answer questions under oath regarding acts that transpired as the surveyor under Spanish authorities
- He obtained blank land concessions signed by Spanish Governor, Zenon Trudeau, which he reportedly distributed to his friends after learning that the Americans would soon be in power.

Several of his cases for claims outside the city ended with a verdict that the “alleged” concession and claim were “illegal in its origin and invalid.” However, Cerre’s grants of 1782 and 1786 were confirmed by the American adjustors on August 30th, 1806 with a patent granted to Soulard, under Cerre, for the land originally granted to Cerre on April 30, 1828. It wasn’t until 1836 that the Supreme Court of the United States made their final rulings and Julia acquired the deed to the land.

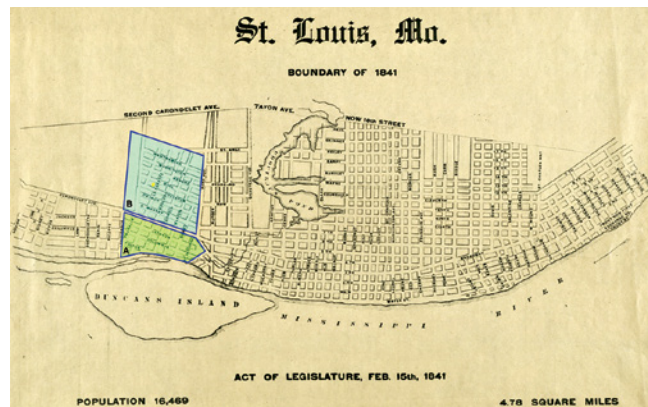
### THE LAND:

Soulard’s 1803 survey map of the Upper Louisiana District of St. Louis illustrates the Soulard and former Cerre land. The eastern section is Gabriel Cerre’s 76 arpents from the 1782 and 1786 concessions later confirmed to Soulard [labeled A on the map] and the western section is Antoine Soulard’s 206 arpents acquired in 1798 [labeled B on the map]. In the area separating the two lands was a fence, trees, and undergrowth that became the primary road from St. Louis to Carondelet [Carondelet Avenue]. By February 1841, the Cerre/Soulard tract of land was incorporated into the City of St. Louis.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>This was done by an Act of Legislature approved on February 15th, 1841. The 1846 Hutawa map shows portions of sand banks or formerly Duncan’s Island incorporated into the banks of Missouri and marked as Public Ground.



1803 Survey of Upper Louisiana District of St. Louis by Antoine Soulard.  
Courtesy of Missouri Historical Society



1841 Boundary Map of St. Louis, Norbury L. Wayman.  
Courtesy of St. Louis Mercantile Library at the University of Missouri-St. Louis



1841 Boundary Map of St. Louis, Norbury L. Wayman.  
Courtesy of St. Louis Mercantile Library at the University of Missouri-St. Louis

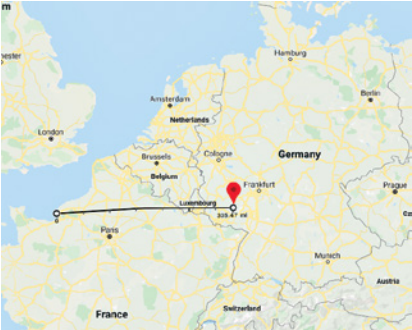
Julia started to sell off and subdivide some of this land as well as build a mansion (c. 1837) at the northwest corner of Decatur (9th) and Marion. The combined land was large enough that at least nine subdivisions were platted from the Soulard estate from 1836 to at least 1839. In 1836, Soulard’s First Addition was created from the former Cerre land on the eastern side of Carondelet Road.<sup>2</sup>

The area where the building Landmarks plans to rehabilitate is in the portion of Antoine Soulard’s land which is to the west of Soulard’s First Addition. Soulard’s land is notable via the 1803 Survey Plat compared with the 1846 Julius Hutawa Plan of the City of St. Louis. His land is bound by Linn to the west [now portions of Tucker/Route 66],

continued on pg. 10 >

<sup>2</sup>Soulard’s First Addition (Soulard Place) boundaries: East side of Carondelet Road (Broadway) on the west, east to river from Miller St (the eastern part of Park Ave) and south to Lesperance St.

Park Ave. to the north, Carondelet Ave. to the east and Lesperance St. [now Geyer Ave.] to the south. Within this area, Julia C. Soulard's Third Addition was created [1840, Sept. 26] and bound by Decatur [9th] to Rosatti [11th] between Marion St. and Allen Ave. In a bid to get her son to move up from his farmland in the south, the aged Julia gave Henry Gustav Soulard in March 1841, three & 65/100 acres at the southwest corner of Hamtramck (now 12th) and Soulard (now Lafayette Ave.) where he proceeded to build his large residence.



Lauterecken, Germany to Le Havre, France.  
Google Maps

migrants was Georg Francois / Georgius Franciscus Hesch. Franz or Francis as he was known was born in Lauterecken, Pfalz, in the kingdom of Bavaria, Germany on March 4, 1802. Lauterecken is a very small town in a valley between four intersecting hills where the Glan and Lauter rivers diverge. In a broader sense, it is in southwestern Germany, near the French and Luxembourg border.

Franz posted his declaration to immigrate with his family to the United States to the Royal County Commissioner on January 31, 1846. It



“American Packet-Boat Entering Le Havre”  
by Louis Le Breton.  
Courtesy Royal Museums Greenwich

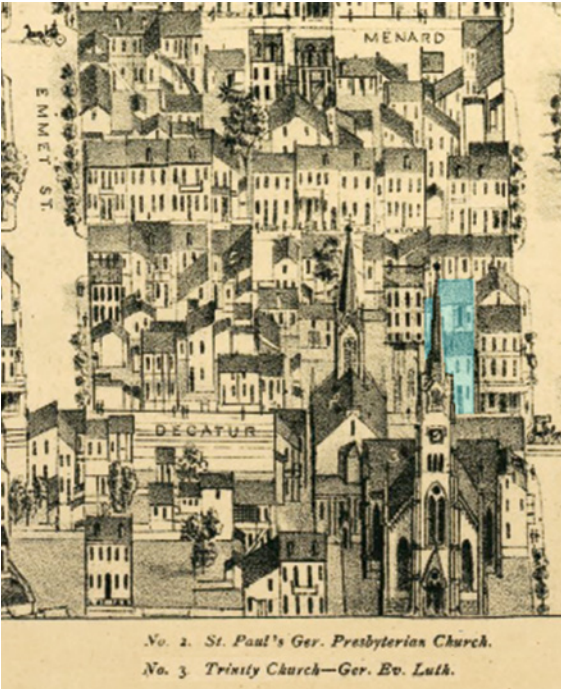
was listed in the newspaper on Feb. 9, 1846, in order to give public notice for those who wished to collect debts or press legal claims before the family departed. The family, listed as Francois, wife Elisabeth, and children Barbara, Philip, and Margueretha, left from Le Havre, France and arrived in New Orleans via the ship Vesta on June 1, 1846.

A year later, on September 25, 1847, the Hesch family ended up in St. Louis, purchasing Lot 2, block 112 of Julia C. Soulard's 3rd Addition from her son and daughter-in-law Henry G. & Harriett Soulard for \$240. Hesch did not have the entire purchase price in hand, so a three-installment payment plan was created. He made his promissory notes to Benjamin A. Soulard, paying it off on April 9, 1849. Then in 1854, July 26, Francis Hesch bought a one-foot wide portion of the adjacent Lot 3 from Mary Walker.

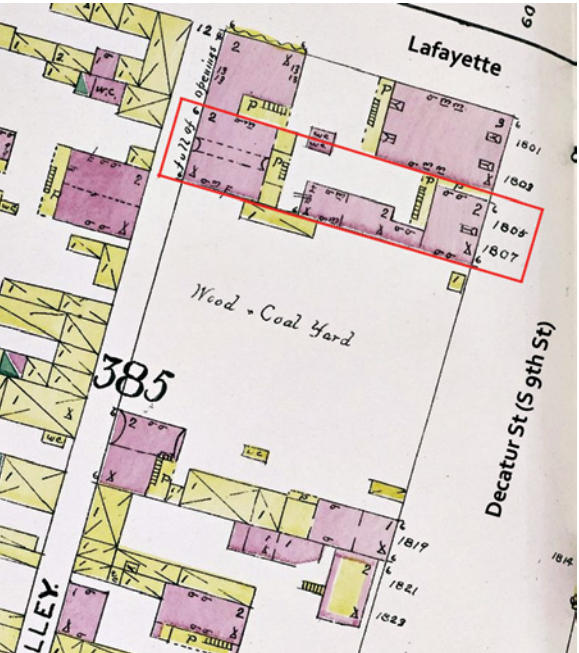
Franz is listed as a bricklayer, later stonemason, and is noted as living with tinnern Jacob Kannegiesser and John Hanselmann and bricklayer John Gerk (son-in-law and husband to Hesch's daughter Barbara), according to the 1850 census. The census describes a blue-collar neighborhood of laborers, carpenters, draftsmen and other working-class trades occupying the surrounding buildings. These are people who built Soulard and likely some of the people who helped Hesch construct the buildings he erected on his lot.

### THE GERMANS

Soulard's subdivision helped the family capitalize on the increasing numbers of immigrants coming into the city during a tidal wave of German immigration. These immigrants included educated professionals as well as craftsmen and laborers fleeing political unrest and seeking opportunities in the new world. Typical of these



“Pictorial St. Louis, the great metropolis of the Mississippi valley; a topographical survey drawn in perspective A.D. 1875, ( plate 25)”  
by Richard J. Compton and Camille N., Dry.  
Courtesy Loc.gov



Oliver & Whipple, “Insurance Maps of Saint Louis, Missouri,” 1876, Volume 1, Page 14.  
Courtesy St. Louis County Library

The earliest depictions of the property are on the 1875 Compton and Dry Pictorial St. Louis and the 1876 Whipple Maps. Pictorial St. Louis illustrates a completely saturated community with a wide variety of modest buildings. The double passage house fronting on 9th Street and the alley house, both of which survive, are visible. The map highlights the address as 1805-1807 Decatur (now S. 9th) between Lafayette (now Soulard St.) and Emmett.<sup>5</sup>

continued on pg. 12 >

<sup>5</sup>Decatur Street between Sidney street and park avenue renamed to Ninth street [CITY ORDINANCE 12,454] on March 27, 1883

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*A New Landmarks [1805-1807 S. 9th] continued from page 10*



*Building Episode #1. 1805-07 S. 9th Inner core*



*Building Episode #2. 1805-07 S. 9th Front House*



*Building Episode #3. 1805-07 S. 9th Alley House*

### **BUILDING EPISODE #1**

The lot appears to have at least three construction phases. The central “ell” represents early, one-story vernacular German rubble stone dwelling similar to several rare surviving buildings in Carondelet. Typical of the style, it has flat arches above its window and door bays and would have likely had a side gable roof. It appears to have been constructed in two segments. The earlier, western structure [right side in photos] is a single room building with flat wood lintels. The eastern (left) single room was rebuilt at a later date and has a steel lintel and stone sills. At some point, the gable

roof was removed and a second story was constructed of brick atop the stone walls.

### **BUILDING EPISODE #2**

The second building to be constructed on the lot is likely vernacular, Federal style home fronting on S. Ninth Street. Typical of the decades that straddled the Civil War; this building was actually constructed as a multi-family dwelling with two entrances separated by an interior bearing wall.

### **BUILDING #3**

The final building constructed on the lot is the

rear 2-story brick alley house. It is as wide as the lot and is similar in design to the row houses seen throughout Soulard. The door to the alley house actually leads to a double-loaded “mouse hole” hallway that passes through the building to the courtyard beyond.

The Hesch family fully capitalized their lot through these expansions, which allowed them to profit by renting space to the deluge of immigrants flooding the city. The Hesch family owned the property from 1846 until 1977 when it was sold by Louis G. Hesch, the grandson of German immigrant mason and early settler of Soulard, Franz.