

Biddle Street Market
Name of Property

St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE/marketplace

COMMERCE/TRADE/warehouse

COMMERCE/TRADE/warehouse

GOVERNMENT/Public Works

SOCIAL/civic

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals/Italian

foundation: Concrete

Renaissance

walls: Brick

Steel

roof: Asphalt

other: Limestone

Terra Cotta

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION ON CONTINUATION PAGES

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1932-1946

Significant Dates

1932

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Osburg, Albert A./Architect

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE ON CONTINUATION PAGES

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Landmarks Association of St. Louis

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Under 1 acre

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 38.637713 -90.194920 3 _____
Latitude: Longitude: Latitude: Longitude:

2 _____ 4 _____
Latitude: Longitude: Latitude: Longitude:

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

_____ NAD 1927 or _____ NAD 1983

1 15 744152.43 4280308.21 3 _____
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

2 _____ 4 _____
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (On continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (On continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Matt Bivens, Historic Preservation Director

organization Lafser & Associates date 9-25-2012/ REV 3-1-2013

street & number 1215 Fern Ridge Parkway, Suite 110 telephone 314-560-9903

city or town St. Louis state MO zip code 63141

e-mail msbivens@lafser.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:**
 - A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
 - A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Photographs**
- **Owner Name and Contact Information**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log:

Name of Property: Biddle Street Market

City or Vicinity: St. Louis

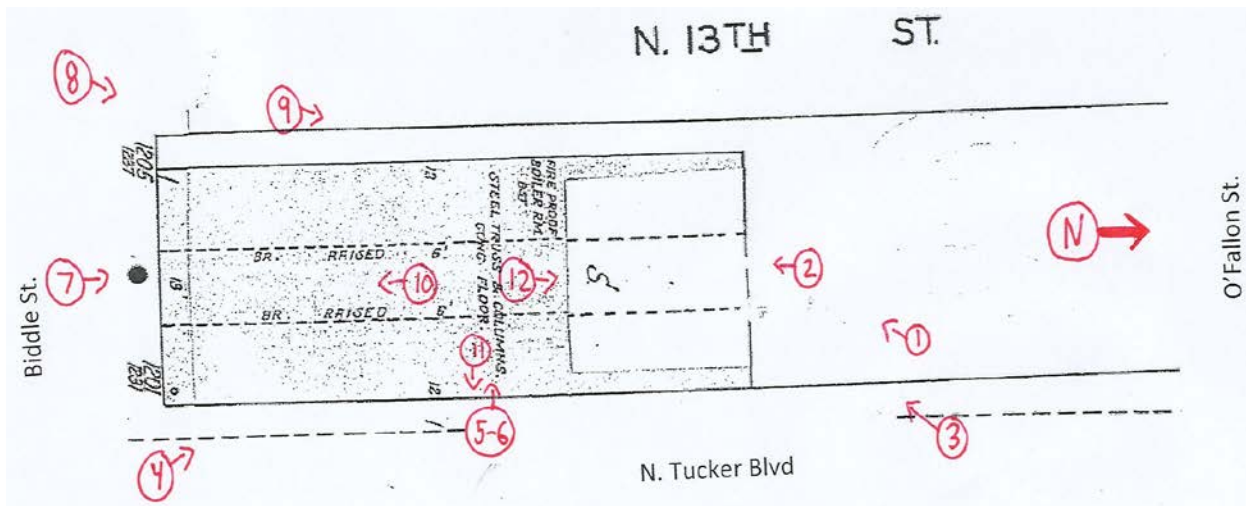
County: (Independent City) State: Missouri

Photographer: Matt Bivens, Historic Preservation Director, Lafser & Associates

Date Photographed: October 1, 2012

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

- 1 of # 12: Exterior north elevation; camera facing southwest
- 2 of # 12: Exterior north elevation window detail above entrance; camera facing south
- 3 of # 12: Exterior north (right) and east (left) elevations; camera facing southwest
- 4 of # 12: Exterior east elevation; camera facing northwest
- 5 of # 12: Exterior east elevation terra cotta surround at entry detail; camera facing west
- 6 of # 12: Exterior east elevation terra cotta details above entry; camera facing west
- 7 of # 12: Exterior south elevation; camera facing north
- 8 of # 12: Exterior south (right) and west (left) elevations; camera facing northeast
- 9 of # 12: Exterior west elevation; camera facing northeast
- 10 of # 12: Interior showing main arcade and roof structure; camera facing south
- 11 of # 12: Interior east entry; camera facing east
- 12 of # 12: Interior showing main arcade, roof structure, and side bays; camera facing north



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Figure Log:

Include figures on continuation pages at the end of the nomination.

Figure 1: Advertisement from "The Pictorial Guide to St. Louis with Plans and Views." (St. Louis: Slawson & Pirot/Camille N. Dry) 1878. Page 42.

Figure 2: Drawing of original South Public Market in Carondelet circa 1870 (top) and present building today in 2012 (below). Note that the original structure is extant behind a modern store front and that the side bays are bricked-in.

Figure 3: Kilbum wood engraving of the 2nd Biddle Market (the first was wood frame), circa 1860s.

Figure 4: Biddle Market, photographer unknown 1900. Top: intersection; bottom-close.

Figure 5: Oliver & Whipple's Fire Insurance Map of St. Louis, Mo., 1876. Vol. 2. (St. Louis: Oliver & Whipple, 1875). View of market and surrounding blocks.

Figure 6: Oliver & Whipple's Fire Insurance Map of St. Louis, MO, 1876. Vol. 2. (St. Louis: Oliver & Whipple, 1875). Detail of market.

Figure 7: Dry, Camille N. and Richard J. Compton. *Pictorial St. Louis: The Great Metropolis of the Mississippi Valley-A Topographical Survey Drawn in Perspective A.D. 1875.* (St. Louis: Compton & Dry, 1876).

Figure 8: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Volume 2, plate 102, 1909.

Figure 9: "Twelfth Street: St. Louis' Most Needed Commercial Thoroughfare." (St. Louis: City Plan Commission, 1919).

Figure 10: From "Old Biddle Market Will Be Razed Soon for New Structure." *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. October 4, 1931.

Figure 11: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Volume 2, plate 15, 1950.

Figure 12: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Comparison of markets: 1909 (left) & 1950 (right).

Figure 13: *City of St. Louis: New Biddle Market.* Albert A. Osberg. Architectural Drawings, 16 sheets, 1931. This is from sheet number 5.

Figure 14: *City of St. Louis: New Biddle Market.* Albert A. Osberg. Architectural Drawings, 16 sheets, 1931. This is from sheet number 5. (Large Format)

Figure 15: *City of St. Louis: New Biddle Market.* Albert A. Osberg. Architectural Drawings, 16 sheets, 1931. This is from sheet number 6. (Large Format)

Figure 16: *City of St. Louis: New Biddle Market.* Albert A. Osberg. Architectural Drawings, 16 sheets, 1931. This is from sheet number 6 (top) and Sheet number 3 (bottom). (Large Format)

Figure 17: *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. "Biddle Market." Real Estate Section. May 1, 1932.

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ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Summary

The Biddle Street Market is located at 1211-19 North Tucker Boulevard in St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri. Constructed in 1932, the building is a rectangular one-story commercial building of steel frame construction with variegated buff brick curtain walls laid in a Flemish bond. The long north-south axis has a full-length gabled monitor with boarded clearstory windows. A slightly projecting frontispiece with a shaped parapet and Italian Renaissance detailing is centered in each elevation. Brick pilasters and pilaster strips with limestone bases define corners and the building's twenty-eight recessed, former market stall openings. North and east elevations retain terra cotta, semi-circular arch surrounds with acanthus leaves and rope moldings but the south and west elevations have been simplified. A rose window with terra cotta tracery and inset stained glass is above the north entrance. Ornamental terra cotta rosettes, tiles, and stone insets embellish cornices and rooflines. Despite infilled areas and other changes, the original design is readily identifiable. The interior retains its open arcade, pedestrian axis, and radiating divided rooms that served as market stalls. Despite these alterations, the Biddle Street Market continues to reflect its historic past as a public market.

Site

The Biddle Street Market occupies St. Louis City Block 564 east whose boundaries include North Tucker (Twelfth) Boulevard to the east, Biddle Street to the south, North 13th Street to the west, and a fenced-in parking area and O'Fallon Street at the north. New construction and the historic Shrine of St. Joseph Church (NRHP listed as St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church 5-19-1978) are visible to the south and east while a fast food restaurant, vacant lots, and an automotive impound yard are to the west and north. Also, immediately north is a metal-clad brick and cast iron building which is the last physical remnant of the former dense residential and commercial neighborhood. (See Biddle Market Boundary Map).

Exterior

The Biddle Street Market has a rectangular footprint measuring 194' 10" by 72' 2" with the shorter north and south as well as the longer east and west elevations being symmetrical—and technically serving as four primary facades. The short elevations front along Biddle Street at the south and the fenced-in, poured concrete yard at the north. All elevations are comprised of variegated buff brick laid in Flemish bond with terra cotta and stone ornamentation. A terra cotta blind arcade comprised of semi-circular arches (reminiscent of Italianate window hoods) accents the rooflines of the

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north and south building ends. Multi-colored rosettes, panels, and details embellish each elevation.

The north façade is symmetrical and comprised of five bays within three building sections separated by brick pilasters set upon limestone bases (Photo 1). A centralized entry with newer metal door and brick infill is set within a semi-circular arch and is situated within a slightly projecting bay framed by brick pilasters that terminate above the roofline. Terra cotta surrounding the entry is highly stylized with acanthus leaves and rope molding. A low gable roof with ornamental terra cotta cap, panel insets, and cornice accent the parapet. A terra cotta blind arcade comprised of semi-circular arches (reminiscent of Italianate window hoods) accents the roofline. Above the primary entrance is a rose window with terra cotta tracery and inset stained glass (Photo 2). Flanking the entrance are two storefronts per side—set above ornamental brick knee walls with bricks stacked on header side. Storefront openings have recessed brick infill and a double-hung metal window per bay. The sides are framed with brick stacked on stretcher side, and above each of the four storefront openings are two soldier courses of buff brick.

The east elevation at North Tucker features a centered entrance bay which projects from the main building (Photos 3 and 4). Terra cotta surrounding the entry is highly stylized with acanthus leaves and rope molding (Photo 5). Crowned by a similar, ornamented gable roof, a smaller oculus window with marble inset is comprised of terra cotta and cut brick (Photo 6). The entry is a newer door within an infill brick field set inside of a semi-circular arch opening. Flanking the entry wing are five storefront bays at either side with a low-slope shed roof visible above. Each storefront bay is separated by a pilaster of brick above a limestone base. Two of the northernmost storefront bays have newer entry doors and all of the bays have buff-colored brick infill recessed back from the exterior wall. Either single or paired, newer metal double-hung windows are placed within the bays. Above the storefronts is a double row of soldier courses. Immediately under the roofline are three corbelled courses with a band of modified herringbone brick below; separating the sections between bays and at the center of each bay is a colored terra cotta tile laid square and diagonally. Visible above the main roofline is a projecting monitor with low gable roof and boarded windows. Here, a course of soldier bricks contains similar colored tiles set under a dentilled brick cornice barely visible under a metal gutter. A single brick chimney is visible above the roofline.

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The south elevation is identical to the north with the exception of the former entrance bay which has been converted to a garage opening with brick infill above. A vented louver is installed within the rose window beyond (Photo 7). Curb cuts allow access into the building from the street. Within the interior beyond the garage bay is a parking area. Brick kneewalls on this elevation are also slightly different and contain a recessed tripartite design with a diagonal Della Robbia Bond (reminiscent of woven fabric) flanked on each side by bricks stacked on header sides (Photo 8).

Again, the west elevation is nearly identical to the east with the exceptions of a garage door installed in the former pedestrian entrance at the center of the building and with four of the storefront bays containing newer entrance doors (Photos 8 and 9). The similar details of the monitor are also visible above the main body of the building. The chimney stack originates on this elevation and intersects the monitor structure near the north wall. A series of smaller vents protrude from the roofline.

Interior

The interior of the Biddle Street Market is comprised of an axis floor plan. Running north and south the space is entirely open to the full building height where the original steel roof trusses are exposed at the ceiling (Photo 10). Above the trusses the original wood roof decking is exposed. Intersecting at the center of this main arcade are smaller wings running west and east denoted by wide arches. These smaller corridors are contained under the one-story portion of the building (Photo 11). The ceilings have exposed concrete while the walls are exposed brick that are either natural (variegated buff brick) or painted. Radiating from the center arcade and in line with the smaller corridors are several one-story spaces denoted by flat arches supported on steel lintels. Dividing these spaces are brick pilasters visible from the main arcade. Steel columns are encased in concrete behind the pilasters (Photo 12).

At the north end of the building is a newer, removable wall which separates the space from the remainder of the building. Some of the side bays have concrete block infill while others are open and some have fencing in order to create locked storage. The majority of the interior is used for automobile parking. Behind the garage bay at the south wall the interior arch detail is intact above the door. The pedestrian entrances, although modified for smaller doors, have intact ornamentation and their original dimensions are clearly identifiable. A partial boiler room is located under the structure and is equipped with steam tunnels to the main building.

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Integrity

Typical of a city-owned and operated structure, the Biddle Street Market was renovated for historic and later uses after its short life as a public market. Unfortunately no building permits exist that illustrate what changes were made and when. However, historic building plans indicate that the building was first modified in 1946 when it became a privately-owned supermarket. It was likely at this time that many of the original storefront openings were adapted to either be closed-in with the insertion of windows or to have the storefront removed and replaced with infill while the entrance was retained.

Additional physical evidence that exists is a set of plans from 1969 which show the existing conditions in 1946 and the proposed renovation. At this time the building was proposed for reuse as offices for an extension center for the University of Missouri. It appears that at least three additional openings were closed and new pedestrian doors and a garage bay entry door was installed. It also is evident that the temporary wall at the north end was installed at this time.

Despite these renovations, all of the original storefront openings are visible from the exterior and on the interior. Each of the twenty-eight storefront openings remains to be defined by its original brick pilasters and flat arch. Also, many of the storefront openings retain their original decorative brick kneewalls as well as evidence of original door locations. In fact, replacement doors, when installed in the 1946 and later 1969 renovations respect the original openings. In addition, brick was recessed back from the storefront openings, and thus provides a visual link to the original design intent. Some original dividing walls were removed in 1946 and additional were removed during a 1969 alteration. Most of the interior bays are still open and a few have recessed concrete block infill. Despite the interior modifications the space within continues to evoke a market structure, visually defined by a high ceiling, and brick piers creating intimate spaces. Regardless of overall reversible changes, the building retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Despite the loss of much of the historic neighborhood that originally surrounded the market the building retains some integrity of setting.

The original design of the building is provided in figures 12-15.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The Biddle Street Market at 1211-19 North Tucker Boulevard in St. Louis is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of COMMERCE. Constructed in 1932 during a period of city reform, the building is locally significant for its role as a public marketplace for farmers' produce. Like an earlier Biddle Market on the same site, it was an integral element of its diverse neighborhood although it soon came to be considered a 'white elephant' due to the rapid growth of small, private grocery stores and larger supermarkets across the city. Designed by city architect Albert A. Osburg, the rectangular building features a monitor roof, intricate brickwork and terra cotta detailing suggestive of Italian Renaissance styling. The nominated building was the last of three city markets to be constructed under a 1923 public improvements bond issue.¹ The period of significance begins with the Biddle Street Market's opening in 1932 and ends in 1946 when the building was last used as a public market. The property has been altered but remains sufficiently evocative of its historic appearance through the Great Depression and World War II. After the period of significance it became a modern supermarket, operating as such from 1947 through the early 1960s. It remains a city-owned property today, housing a division of the St. Louis Health Department.

Background: Early Markets

Throughout recorded time, trade has depended on the congregation of people in open sites, thoroughfares, and later public squares. The evolution of a permanent gathering place can be drawn from nomadic convoys and eventually, stable marketplaces. Individually-owned and operated market stalls would become permanent once settlements were stationary and clientele could be predictable. To house these stalls, public market places evolved and soon contained a variety of goods and services. Along with the access came the unpredictability of prices and quality when weights and measures were not commonplace. American markets, first beginning with the native populations and then with the first permanent European emigrants were similar.

Marketplaces for foodstuffs and trade items have always been essential to developing villages and early St. Louis was no exception. The founding of St. Louis in the 1760s included the provision for a public market and additional blocks for public use, located

¹ The other two were the Union Market, built in 1924 (NR listed 1-16-1984) and the Souldard Market (NR listed in Souldard Neighborhood Historic District on 12-26-1972), built in 1929.

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at the very heart of the village and immediately situated along the Mississippi River. The first public market was officially established in 1812. Immediate access to boat landings was crucial and the market provided a connection between the permanent settlers of the future city with trade routes north and south and across the country. Assuring complete control of the supply to a population who could not grow all of its own food, an ordinance was passed in 1812 prohibiting the sale of foodstuffs at any other locations in the city except for the primary market.

An increase in population and a steady demand for goods led to the construction of a larger, mixed-use market building by 1830. While the market stalls were placed on the ground floor, the building also housed the city jail in the basement, city offices on the 2nd floor and rental space on the 3rd. Once the village became a town and the town evolved into a city, its fathers planned construction of additional markets laid throughout the grid—many of them on lands that were donated to the city by its wealthier and founding families.

Common fields which formerly dotted the St. Louis once provided ample land for farming but soon each site was swallowed by city growth. Such subsequent expansion of the city coupled with changes in transportation methods of goods (especially with the emergence of the railroad in the 1860s) resulted in continued construction of supplementary market places and open air structures.²

Population increased steadily, from 160,773 in 1860 to 310,000 in 1870 and to 500,000 by 1875. In 1870 St. Louis was served by the principal Union Market. Fourteen other smaller markets were soon scattered within its boundary (Figure 1). Such markets included the South Public Market in Carondelet (Figure 2), the Sturgeon Market at Broadway and North Market, the Souard Market at 7th Street near Carroll Street, and the Carr Market at the corner of 24th and Wash (now Cole) Streets. Each market represented the points furthest north, south, and west of the city core and identified by multiple ethnic groups who settled in those areas.

At the beginning of the fiscal year for 1875, the City of St. Louis had assets in real estate and personal property valued at a little over \$13.7 million of which public markets and grounds was \$762,850.³ Markets were spread across the city, most of them not further

² One of the earliest markets built in the city, still extant, was Reservoir Market built circa 1865. Located at 2616 North 22nd Street the building served residents of the northern parts of the city but today sits vacant.

³ Camille N. Dry and Richard J. Compton. *Pictorial St. Louis: The Great Metropolis of the Mississippi Valley—A Topographical Survey Drawn in Perspective A.D. 1875.* (St. Louis: Compton & Dry, 1876), page 14.

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than a few blocks from one another, serving every populated neighborhood. Eventually markets began to close and only ten remained in 1888 but the cultural impact of the market was already engrained. As *Commercial and Architectural St. Louis* put it:

“St. Louis maintains a system of markets where the production of the gardener, the florist, the fruits of all climes, and where fish, foal, dressed meats, game, butter, etc., are to be had in great abundance and at all times of the year. These market places are a great convenience to the people, and one of the sights of this city is the crowds, the lights, the display and the traffic at Union Market, especially on Saturday evening.”⁴

Market Building Improvements

Between 1904 and 1930, the City had transitioned from the end of the grandiose Victorian period marked by the World’s Fair (Louisiana Purchase Exposition) into a period more progressive and marked with long-range planning and municipal improvements. Following New York in adoption of official zoning regulations, St. Louis was the second city to implement a plan in 1918. However, efforts to improve city-owned property began nearly two decades earlier when in 1900 the Municipal Code of St. Louis was annotated and republished to address the four city-operated markets including the Union, City, Souard, and South markets. It was also during this period that the city began to plan for the replacement of its early public markets as a direct response to their condition and lack of sanitation. The negative image of the long-deteriorating city market had to be addressed and it was soon proved that “specialized market houses were objects of city boosterism, praised not only for their architectural merit but also their ability to contain a city’s food marketing under one roof.”⁵

By 1910, the City of St. Louis was operating three municipal markets and owned the land under a fourth (the original Biddle) which was privately run. The downtown Union Market (*original since demolished and replaced by the new Union Market in 1924-25*) at Broadway and Morgan (*now Convention Plaza /Delmar*) was touted as “one of the most important markets in the country, though not the finest.”⁶ The other two city-

⁴ *Commercial and Architectural St. Louis*. (St. Louis: Jones and Orear) 1888. Page 207.

⁵ Helen Tangires. “Public Markets and Municipal Reform in the Progressive Era.” From *Feeding the Cities*. Spring 1997, volume 29, number 1.

⁶ Charles Claude Casey. “Municipal Markets of St. Louis.” *Municipal Journal and Engineer*. New York. Volume XXVIII, Number 17, page 611. April 17, 1910.

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owned markets included the Soulard and the South Markets (*at 7701 South Broadway in Carondelet*- see Figure 2). The former was mostly deserted with the exception of its wagon business while the later had steady patronage; both markets were allowed to run down and were considered to be a burden to the city. The privately-run Biddle Market on the other hand, was managed more energetically and was highly profitable (Figure 3 shows early view). Despite its great success, Biddle was classified as unsanitary by 1910.

In 1910, the *Municipal Journal and Engineer* launched a series of articles which, for the most part, were critical of municipally-owned markets including those in St. Louis. At that time, St. Louis was among at least 59 American cities owning such properties. While it was common knowledge that the markets were deteriorating, the publication of details about their poor condition (specifically in the April 1910 issue) hit home, causing great concern among city fathers. In early 1914, in connection with a proposed general bond issue for the construction of new markets on existing sites, the Civic League of St. Louis asked the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to evaluate the city's four public markets. The USDA's report was highly negative, citing the lack of inspections and asserting that "a city cannot establish a market and expect it to run itself." The Biddle, Soulard and South markets were described as having fallen into decay and disuse, while conditions at the Union Market were said to be intolerable. Suggestions were made for improvements, but it was apparent that all of the buildings would soon need to be replaced altogether.⁷

The criticism continued through 1915 as the condition of the markets worsened. As a result, the Civic League proposed a "public markets bill" which would place the four public markets under the jurisdiction of the Health Commissioner in addition to appointing a market inspector. Accordingly, out of the \$40,000 annual revenue received from market stall rentals, the city only used \$7,000 for their supervision—which was often under an unqualified market master.⁸ Also proposed under the bill were standard measures for the sale of eggs, fruit and vegetables, the wrapping of bread and provision of sanitary containers for bakery items, and improvements to the market sites including street shade trees and other landscaping.

⁷ Charles Claude Casey. "Municipal Markets of St. Louis." *Municipal Journal and Engineer*. New York. Volume XXVIII, Number 17, page 611. April 17, 1910.

⁸ "Civic League to Support Many Pending Bills." *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. October 3, 1915, page 14.

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The Biddle Market

Ground for a public market in the central, northern part of the city was donated to the city by Mrs. Ann Mullanphy Biddle via her will dated January 2, 1845. In it, the property was conveyed in trust to the city under the condition that the “same shall always be for a market place;” Ordinance #1672 was then approved and the land was declared “public property for market purposes.”⁹ A few years later, in 1849, Ordinance #2288 authorized erection of the original Biddle Market at Thirteenth and Fourteenth Streets between Biddle and O’Fallon.¹⁰ Built initially as a wooden structure in the mid-1850s, it was replaced by a brick building in the 1860s (Figures 3 and 4). Like the other city-built markets, a dense neighborhood around it was served and the building quickly became a social and commercial center (Figures 5 and 6).

A decade after the land donation, on December 20, 1855, Ordinance #3498 was approved, giving the city the right to take possession of the market upon paying the stock holders the value of the market. (*No historic records have yet been discovered that name these stock holders but what is known is that the market structure was still privately-owned while the land below it was the city’s in perpetuity.*)

Rivaling the city-owned Union and the Souard Markets both in capacity and diversity, the Biddle Market was the last privately-owned market in business in St. Louis in 1910. From the 1850s to the 1910s, it had grown and served the population of the “tenement district” surrounding it (Figure 7). As can be imagined, the building fabric (as did that of the other markets) took a heavy toll during that period. In addition, neighborhood decline and overcrowded conditions resulted in a lack of sanitation and within these six decades of heavy use, the market was no longer maintained in a hygienic condition. In fact, the structure had no sanitary or drainage provisions, only street gutters.¹¹

Maintenance and operating expenses of the three St. Louis markets had increased from a little over \$6,600 in 1902 to nearly \$12,000 by 1909—practically doubling expenses in just seven years.¹² The Biddle Market, although fully rented, had claimed to make such little profit that a maintenance staff could not be retained. Ultimately the

⁹ City of St. Louis Assessor Office. Abstract from Comptroller’s Office. Book 358, page 55, 1909. Instrument Will # 2133 Mrs. Ann Biddle to City of St. Louis.

¹⁰ The Revised Ordinances of the City of St. Louis, 1850, page 261.

¹¹ Charles Claude Casey. “Municipal Markets of St. Louis.” *Municipal Journal and Engineer*. New York. Volume XXVIII, Number 17, page 611. April 17, 1910.

¹² Charles Claude Casey. “Municipal Markets of St. Louis.” *Municipal Journal and Engineer*. New York. Volume XXVIII, Number 17, page 611. April 17, 1910.

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market declined enough to require replacement (Figure 8 shows market site). By September 25, 1914 the city assumed ownership of the building and by 1920 had begun to impose regulations on it as part of the approved Public Markets Bill.

Efforts such as the Twelfth Street plan proposed by the City Plan Commission in 1919 and the creation of a bond issue in 1923, resulted in the planning for and the funding of a new Biddle Market. The city fathers were motivated to make a change for its citizens and a new marketplace would be the answer.

Elaboration: Construction of the new Biddle Market

Although a new market building was prematurely illustrated on the street plan at Biddle Street as published in the Twelfth Street plan in 1919 (Figure 9), planning was slow and the decade following the 1923 bond issue saw only the construction of the new Union Market in 1924-25 and the Souard Market in 1929 out of the \$1,250,000 fund. It was not until September of 1931, that Chief Engineer of the Division of Bridges and Buildings in St. Louis, L. R. Bowen approved designs for a third new market. With a full allocation of the remaining \$80,000 left over from the bond, the remaining balance was taken from the municipal budget. Designed by city architect Albert A. Osburg, this "New Biddle Market" was to be located on the site of the original and early Biddle Markets at High (*later Twelfth and now Tucker*), Biddle, Thirteenth, and O'Fallon Streets. Bids for the construction were due by contractors on October 27, 1931 with a decision by the Board of Public Service some ten days later. Bowen expected construction of the new edifice to take six months.

By the beginning of October 1931, the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* had enthusiastically announced "Old Biddle Market Will Be Razed Soon for New Structure; Trading Place Has Been Visited by Throngs Since Year 1845" (Figure 10). The unknown writer elaborated:

"Work of tearing down the ramshackle frame building that for generations has been the Biddle Market will begin early next month, and in its place will be erected a new modern structure of brick, steel, and tile that will cost the city approximately \$100,000."¹³

¹³ "Old Biddle Market Will Be Razed Soon for New Structure." *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. October 4, 1931.

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Assuming that the writer was referring to the wooden additions that were associated with the brick market, he was unaware that the first structure was not built until the mid-1850s, was replaced, and had evolved over time.

Demolition and site clearing was quick and on November 22, 1931, the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* announced "Work is Started on Biddle Market." Winning the bid for the new building, the Kaplan-McGowan Company of St. Louis was to complete the building, platforms, and site improvements by May 1, 1932. The *Globe-Democrat* announced that a total of sixty stores and shops, with fifty-three of them having street frontage was planned within the main structure while the sheltered platform would contain an open market allowing approximately 400 feet of curb space for wagons to back in and sell their products.¹⁴ (A review of the original plans confirms these numbers.) The city had surely outdone itself and the patience of the area's citizens would soon pay off with a clean, new building providing the freshest and greatest variety of produce, meats, breads, and other commodities.

The new building's design was a sharp contrast to the old Biddle Market in that it was based on a Renaissance style with Italian motifs. The city architect chose an inspiring design sure to attract customers as well as to illustrate the city's desire to provide its residents with stimulating, new buildings. The structure as designed included a total of twenty-four individual stores under the lower-ceilinged spaces with a small-sized restaurant situated at the northeast corner of the building. Additional shops were located in both the main arcade and the smaller corridors as well as at the exterior of the building to achieve a grand total of sixty. The long north-south axis contained the main arcade while smaller circulation corridors ran east and west with access to High and Thirteenth Streets. Separate restrooms for men and women were adjacent to the westernmost side corridor; the market master's office was adjacent to the women's restroom. Constructed of steel columns and trusses supported by concrete stanchions and girders with a concrete floor and brick veneer curtain walls, the main market building was complemented by a steel-framed sheltered market and an open air market (both since replaced by a vacant, paved lot). (Figures 11 and 12 show the market on site with details of the area; Figures 13-16 show the original building design plans). Regardless of the city's intentions and the contractor's expectation the building was not yet complete by the May 1932 deadline (Figure 17 shows the status).

¹⁴ *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. "Work is Started on Biddle Market." November 22, 1931.

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Construction of the Biddle Market was not without controversy. Some residents and city officials simply questioned the need for another public market. The Union Market had then recently come under scrutiny due to a decline in business and the city had refused a request by stall owners asking for lower rents. Old market buildings were sold by the city and began to provide new uses. At the end of 1930, only four public markets existed in the city including the Biddle (old), the St. Louis County Producers Market (at 4060 West Pine), and the Soulard and Union Markets. However, even with the arrival of smaller, private corner grocery stores and meat markets, public markets still provided better food with a greater variety. But with the emergence of refrigeration and later improvements in transportation and distribution of foodstuffs, the 1920s saw private neighborhood stores becoming sufficient for the needs of its populations, forcing the city fathers to reevaluate their intentions. Biddle Market would be the last of its kind.

Architecture of the Market

The new Biddle Market was designed in an Italian Renaissance Revival style in the early 1930s (Figures 13-16). The architectural style of the Renaissance was considered to be flexible—that is, a style which lent itself to fluent architectural expression in many types of building.¹⁵ It was a style that had proportion as well as detail and typically Italian designs were refined and more subtle than other styles. Besides domestic preferences in use of the style it was highly popular as the design of choice for many important city buildings. Architects employed by the city during the early decades of the 20th century were deeply influenced by both Classical and Renaissance Revival motifs and Albert Osburg, the building's architect, was no exception. City buildings of this period often had Italian characteristics, especially city markets and other municipal buildings that were constructed in the 1920s and 1930s.

After working for the city since 1912, Osburg was appointed city architect in 1925. Two years before designing the nominated building in an Italian Revival style in 1931, Osburg designed the Soulard Market in 1929 (inspired by Brunelleschi's Foundling Hospital in Florence, Italy). Osburg was born in St. Louis in 1887 and received his higher education at Washington University's School of Fine Arts. Employed with the city until 1954, he died in 1976. His prolific career included a variety of styles and building types and are best witnessed in the portions of the eclectic Robert Koch Hospital (NRHP listed 10-31-1984), the Art Deco Homer G. Phillips Hospital beginning in 1933 (NRHP listed 9-23-

¹⁵ Charles Matlack Price. "The Practical Book of Architecture." (Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1916). Pages 157-158.

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1983), several city police stations in the 1930s, the Vashon Community Center in 1936 (NRHP listed 8-11-2005), the Municipal Bath House Number 6 in Old North St. Louis in 1937 (NRHP listed Murphy Blair District 1-26-1984), the Tandy Community Center in 1938 (NRHP listed 9-17-1999) and several others.

The Role of the new Biddle Market

Almost as long as the site had been occupied by a public market in the mid-1850s its significance to the population it served was unmistakable. In a time where the majority of residents' only means of transportation were their own two feet, access to a centrally-located "neighborhood" market to obtain fresh food and produce was essential. In the first half of the nineteenth century the area saw emigrants from Ireland, Germany, Austria, Eastern Europe, and Italy and eventually saw heavy Polish populations along O'Fallon Street and Cass Avenue nearby. These populations depended heavily on easily accessible, fresh foodstuffs, especially in a time before refrigeration.

It was however the Jewish population who had begun to settle on Morgan (now Delmar), Carr, and Biddle Streets particularly in the last half of the nineteenth century. In fact, the Biddle Street Market became a hub of commerce to the Jewish citizens with merchants who "sold Jewish foods, literature, religious artifacts, and newspapers from the storefronts along Biddle Street, O'Fallon Street, Carr Street, and Franklin Avenue...non-Jewish residents shared in the local culture and gradually adopted a variety of Yiddish expressions used in the area, which was sometimes called Little Jerusalem or the Ghetto."¹⁶ By the time the new Biddle Market was constructed in 1932, the site had become a vital meeting area for social engagements and exchanges of Jewish culture. The new market assumed its role as a primary source for Jewish essentials and kosher foods. The market would continue in this important role through the 1930s.

Constructed at a time when the public market was beginning to phase out, the Biddle Market was one of four "white elephants" left in the city by 1940. In comparison to the Union Market which had been converted to partial usage as a bus terminal in the mid-1930s and the Souard Market which contained a central gymnasium and community center, the Biddle Market remained as originally intended. Beginning in 1939, the Hampton Village Market at Chippewa and Hampton significantly changed the game, serving the new subdivisions further west of Kingshighway and to the city limits,

¹⁶ Bonnie Stepenoff. "The Dead End Kids of St. Louis." (Columbia, Missouri and London: University of Missouri Press, 2010), page 14.

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providing over 10 acres of mixed-use market space and a focus on automobile accessibility. In addition, neighborhood corner stores and chain stores were becoming popular alternatives. Biddle Market had continued to serve the walking classes primarily and soon saw its first African-American residents who began to call the “north side” home. The Biddle Market operated at full capacity into the early 1940s.

Conditions and Competition Worsen

Although the city markets were still quite new the sanitary conditions were of continuous grave concern. In 1941, the Mayor’s Advisory Committee on City Survey and Audit published a summary report entitled “The Government of the City of St. Louis” which stated that “immediate steps be taken to clean up the markets, especially Biddle Market, and that if thereafter the market is not kept clean and in order steps should be taken to replace present employees with others who will...”¹⁷

Conditions began to slowly improve at the markets and residents could always depend upon a fresh pick to feed their families but the growth of smaller, family-owned neighborhood stores quickly began to negatively impact the public marketplace. As a result, traffic to Biddle Market began to slow and competition from other alternative stores reduced those vendors within the premises who depended on a steady clientele. As the Jewish population moved farther west and a surrounding neighborhood lay in physical decline, poorer emigrants from the south began to occupy the age-worn structures of the area and established new stores and business types. By February of 1946, the Biddle Market was only about half occupied and as a result, the city council made an important decision to end its operation.

Short-lived as the structure’s service was, the life of the Biddle Market as a public marketplace for farmers’ produce ended in September of 1946 when it reopened as a privately operated supermarket. Leased from the city by Food Center of St. Louis, Inc., the company remodeled the structure at a cost of \$175,000. A simple decision based on best financial gain of the structure to the City of St. Louis—the income produced yearly by the market was only \$6,000 compared to a five-year lease taken by Food Center for an annual rental of \$7,500—a dependable \$37,500 and no longer requiring the city’s concern for maintaining it.¹⁸ Along with a 5,000 square foot food and vegetable department (*created within the original open-air addition, then enclosed*),

¹⁷ “The Government of the City of St. Louis.” Mayor’s Advisory Committee on City Survey and Audit. 1941. Page 38.

¹⁸ “Old Biddle Market to Be ‘Super’ Store.” *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. September 8, 1946.

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departments of the building included a phonograph record and sheet music section, a liquor, drug, and tobacco section, and two lunch counters.

Coverage of the building conversion was provided in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* on September 8, 1946, which stated "White Elephant Biddle Market Converted into Super Food Store." The source indicated that the building's high cost of maintenance coupled with its location in a deteriorated neighborhood signaled its demise. However, new life of the building was promising. The open-air portion at the north was enclosed, keeping with the trend in super stores at the time. Inside the main structure was a frozen food and dairy section, a 100-foot meat department, a New York style delicatessen, a specially-designed glass-enclosed fish department, and other specialty areas.¹⁹

Ceasing operations just over a decade later in April 1957, Food Center abandoned the structure, and the building remained vacant until October of that year. The vacancy was temporary since a plan to renovate and reopen the Biddle Market was on the table. Approved during a meeting of the Biddle Market Association (a group of nearby business owners) on October 14, 1957, the plan included members' personal pledges of \$10,000 to improve the structure, as well as, to provide a parking area adjacent the structure. Considered to be highly lucrative because of the needs of the 7,000 plus families who resided in the immediate area, the Association's plan was to lease the building from the City and then to sublease it to individual merchants within.²⁰ The Association also planned to include different types of shops including a restaurant, a furniture store, a dry goods and a hardware store.

The Market Today

With the loss of Biddle Market as a public market only the Souard and the Union Markets existed through the 1950s. With the emergence of larger supermarkets in the 1960s, the public market ideal quickly began to fade into obscurity. Ultimately changes in inner city neighborhoods lead to the decline of the Souard Market in the 1960s. The Union Market was eventually abandoned and it closed in 1982 only to be remodeled as a Drury Inn. Eventually the Souard Market reinvented itself through a period of neighborhood revitalization in the 1970s and today remains an active public market within the city limits. The Biddle Market closed for its original purposes forever.

¹⁹ "White Elephant Biddle Market Converted Into Super Food Store." *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. September 8, 1946.

²⁰ "Plan For Reopening of Biddle Market: Civic Group Also Adopts Proposal for Large Parking Lot." *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. October 15, 1957.

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In 1969, plans to redevelop the Biddle Market as an extension of the University of Missouri required some minor, reversible modifications of the building. Ultimately the City began to use the structure to house its health division section for rat and mosquito control—an undeserving purpose for this former social city center. In the near future, the building will be rehabilitated and put to active, adaptive reuse as an office and mixed-use structure.

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Biddle Street Market
Name of Property
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Biddle Street Market
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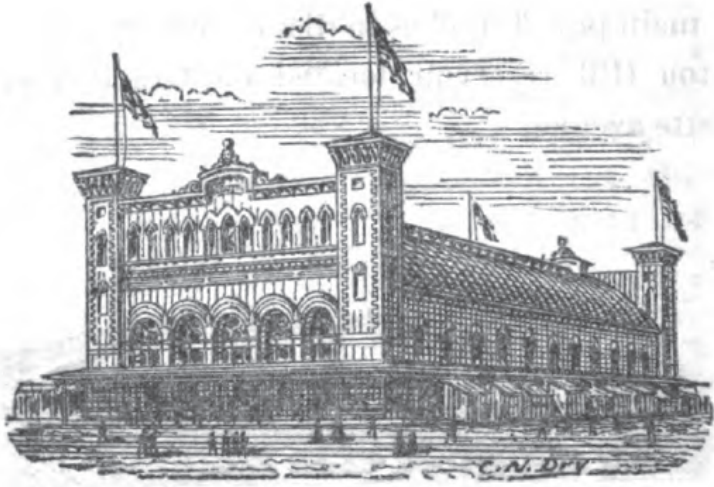
Section number Figures Page 21

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Figure 1: Advertisement from "The Pictorial Guide to St. Louis with Plans and Views." (St. Louis: Slawson & Pietro/Camille N. Dry) 1878. Page 42.

MARKETS.

UNION MARKET.



THE principal Market in the City is Union Market, Situated on Christy Avenue to Morgan, 5th and 6th Streets.

Following are the names and locations of the others.

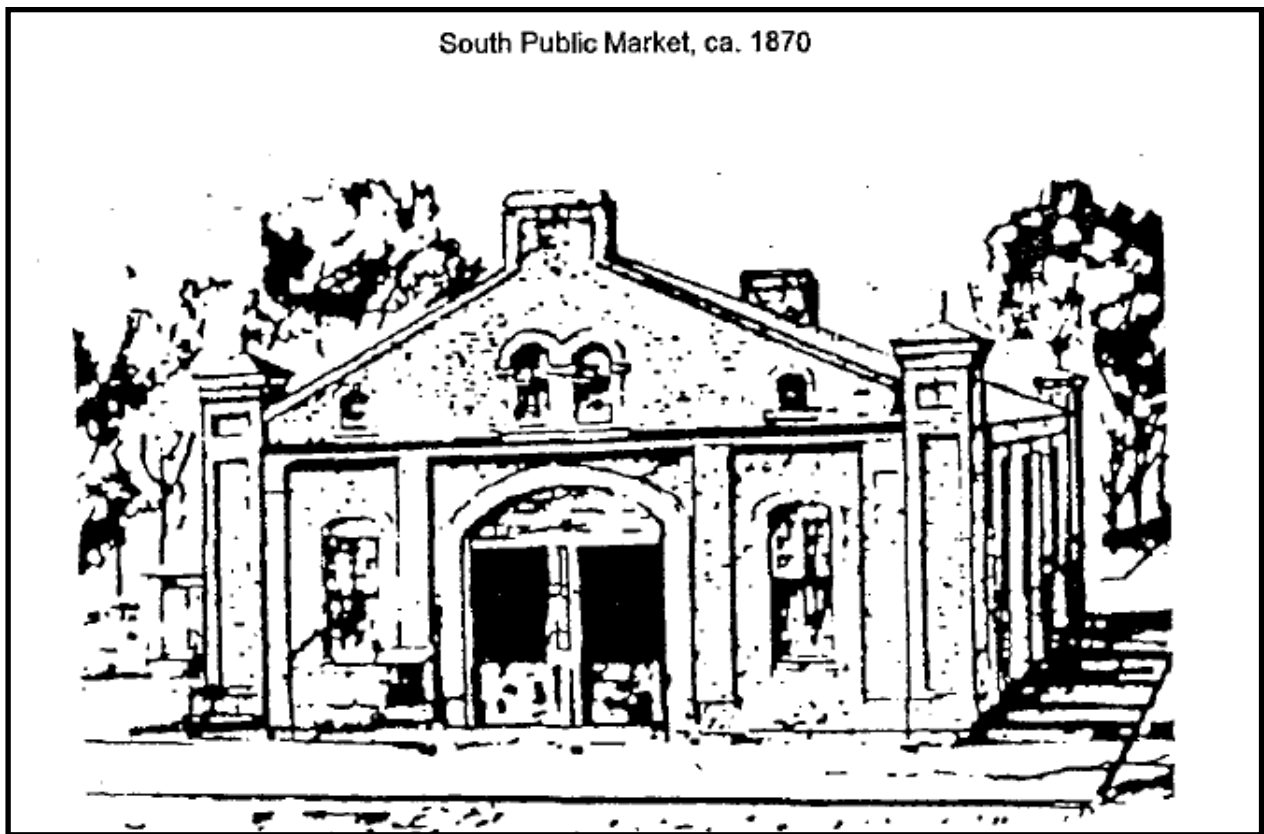
Allen Market.....cor. State & Ru-sell Aves.
Biddle Market.....cor. 13th & Biddle Streets.
Carr Market.....cor. 24th & Wash Streets.
Center Market.....on 7th bet. Spruce & Poplar.
City Market.....cor. Broadway & Biddle.
French Market.....on Convent, junc. 4th & 5th Sts.
Lucas Market.....on 12th, Chestnut to Olive Sts.
Maguire Market.....Broadway & Bremen Aves.
Mound Market.....Broadway & Howard St.
Reservoir Market.....W. 18th near Benton Sts.
Soulard Market.....on 7th St. near Carroll St.
Sturgeon Market.....Broadway & North Market.
HAY MARKET.....on 12th bet. Olive & Locust Sts.
COAL MARKET.....on 12th bet. Chestnut & Market Sts.

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Figure 2: Drawing of original South Public Market in Carondelet circa 1870 (top) and present building today in 2012 (below). Note that the original structure is extant behind a modern storefront and that the side bays are bricked-in.



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Biddle Street Market

Name of Property

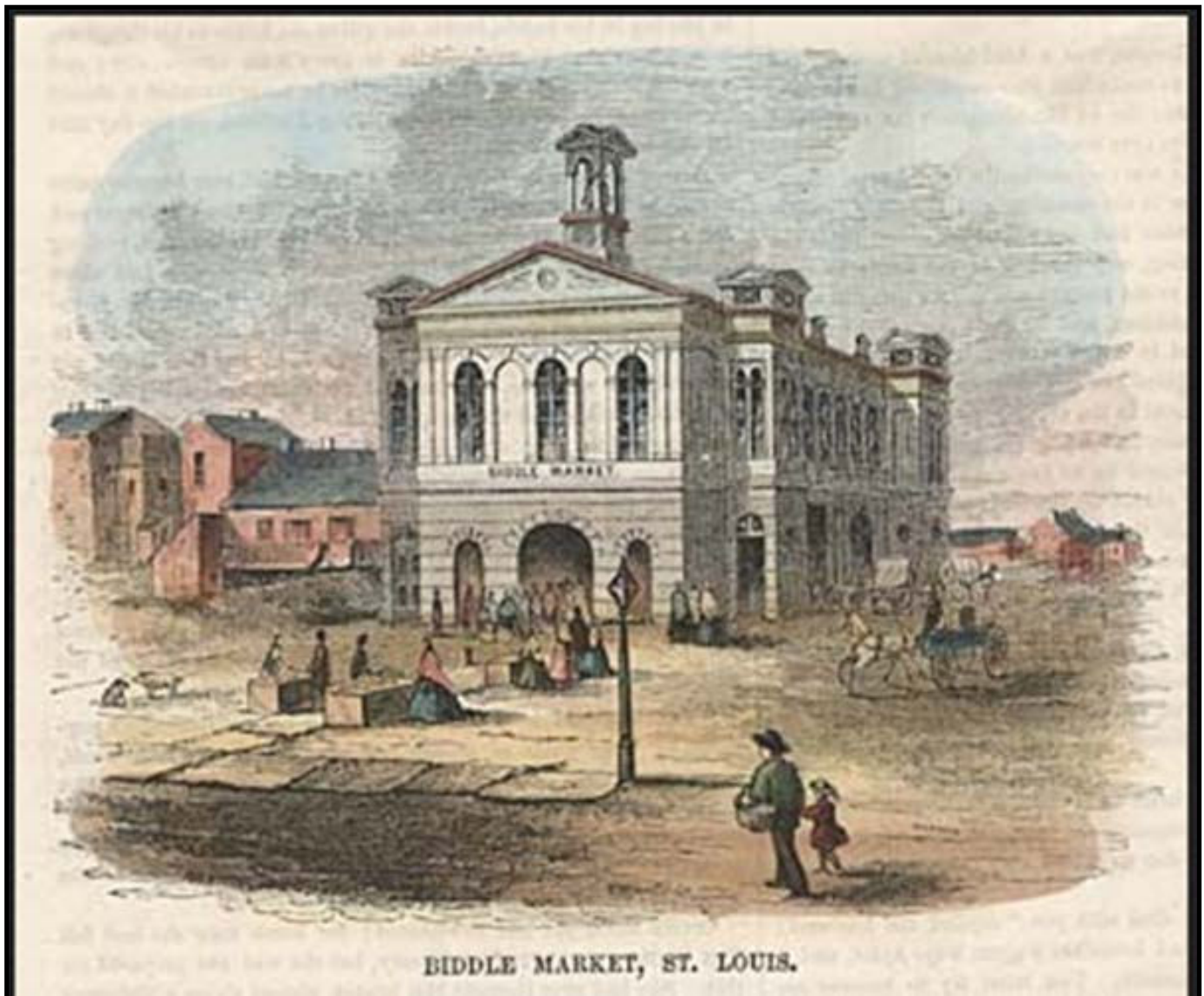
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri

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Figure 3: Kilbum wood engraving of the 2nd Biddle Market (the first was wood frame), circa 1860s.



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Figure 4: Biddle Market, photographer unknown 1900. Top: intersection; bottom: close.

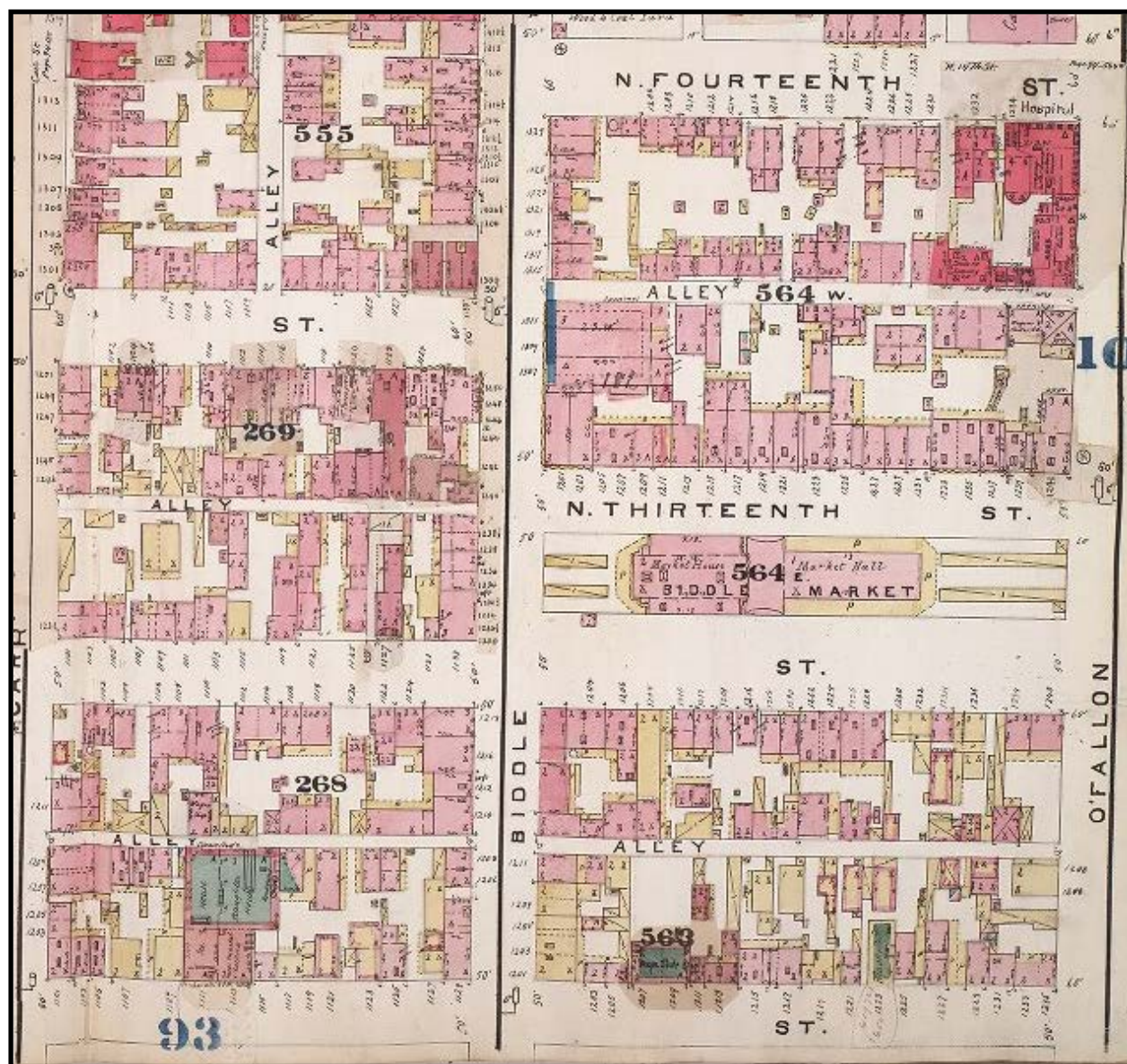


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Biddle Street Market
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Figure 5: Oliver & Whipple's Fire Insurance Map of St. Louis, Mo., 1876. Vol. 2. (St. Louis: Oliver & Whipple, 1875). View of market and surrounding blocks.

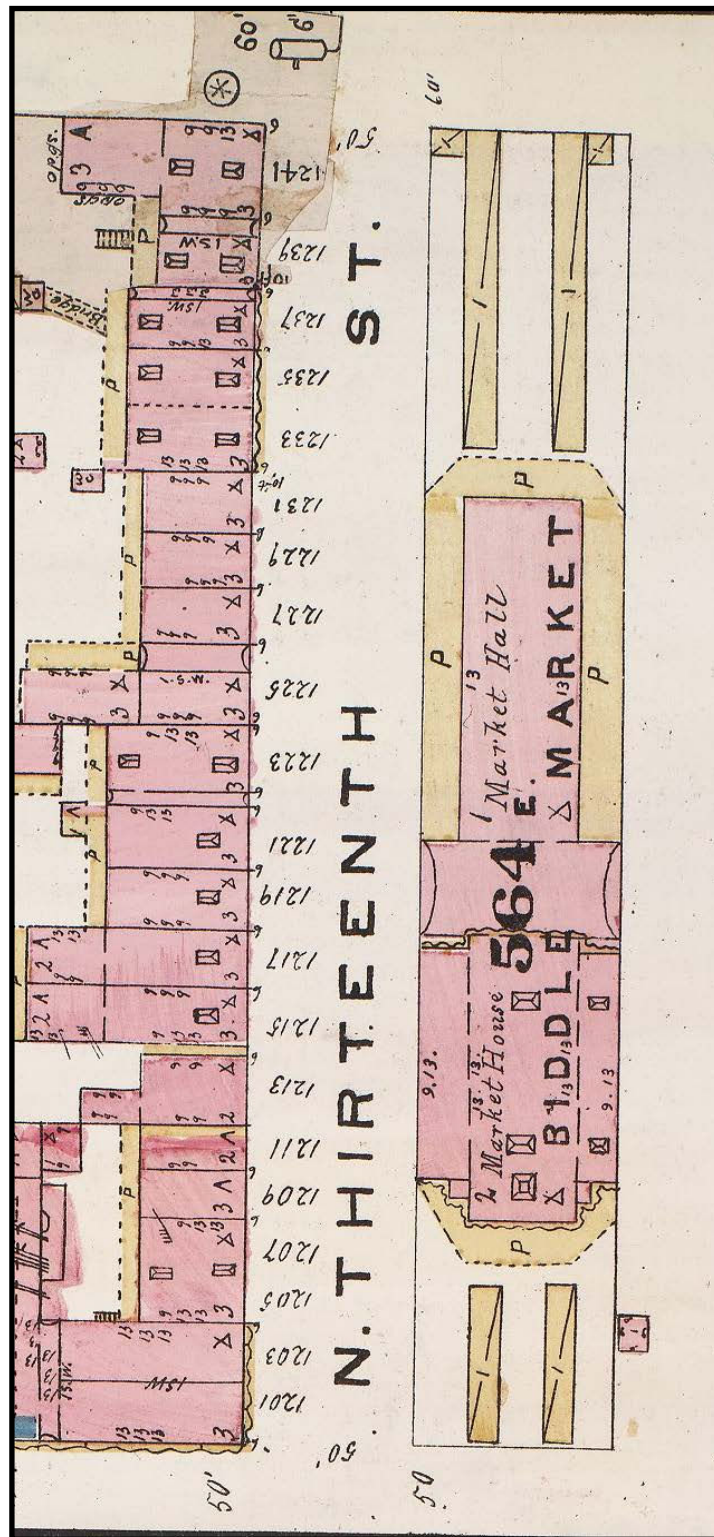


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Biddle Street Market
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Figure 6: Oliver & Whipple's Fire Insurance Map of St. Louis, MO, 1876. Vol. 2. (St. Louis: Oliver & Whipple, 1875). Detail of market.



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Section number Figures Page 27

Biddle Street Market

Name of Property

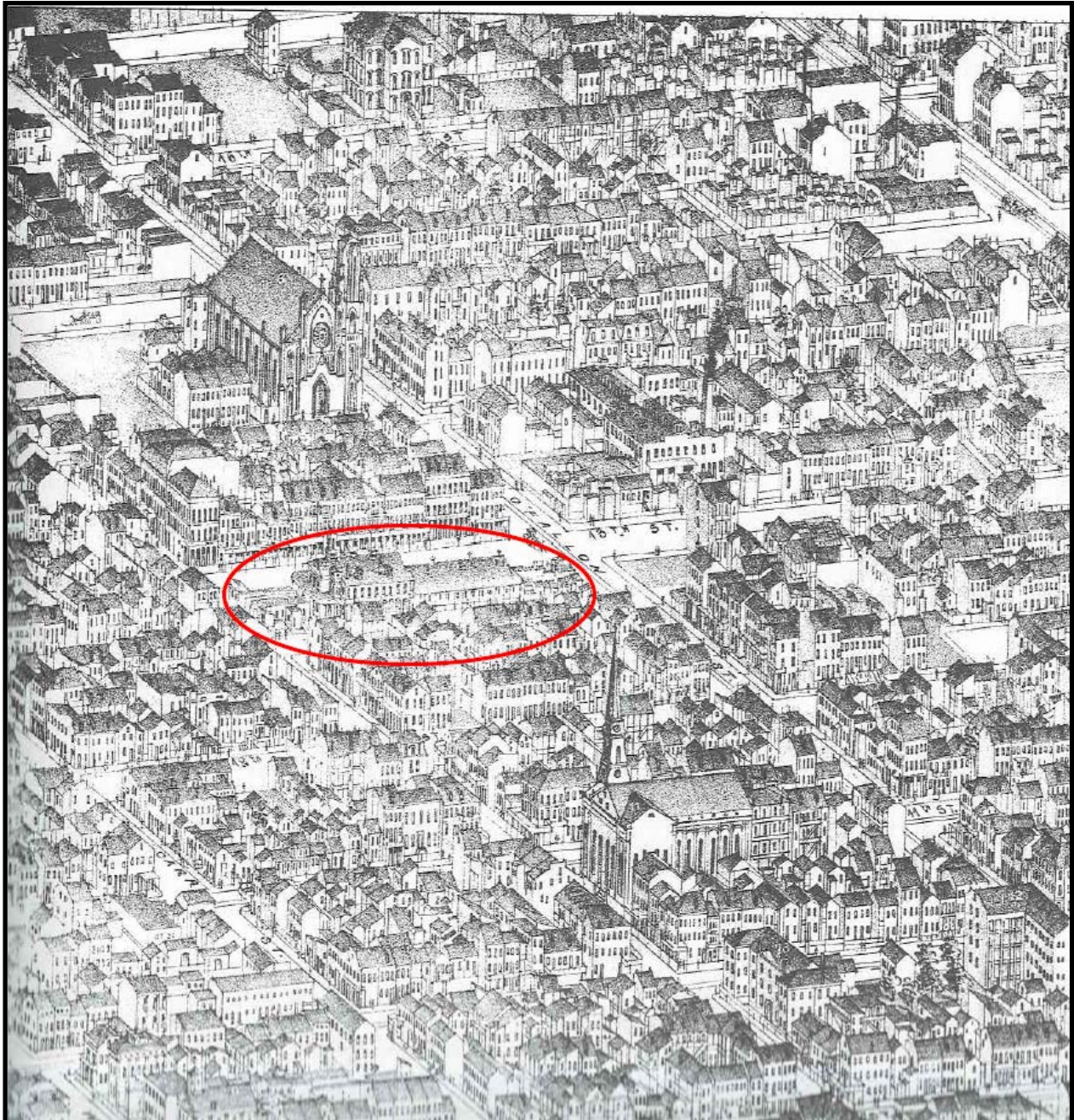
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 7: Dry, Camille N. and Richard J. Compton. *Pictorial St. Louis: The Great Metropolis of the Mississippi Valley-A Topographical Survey Drawn in Perspective A.D. 1875.* (St. Louis: Compton & Dry, 1876).

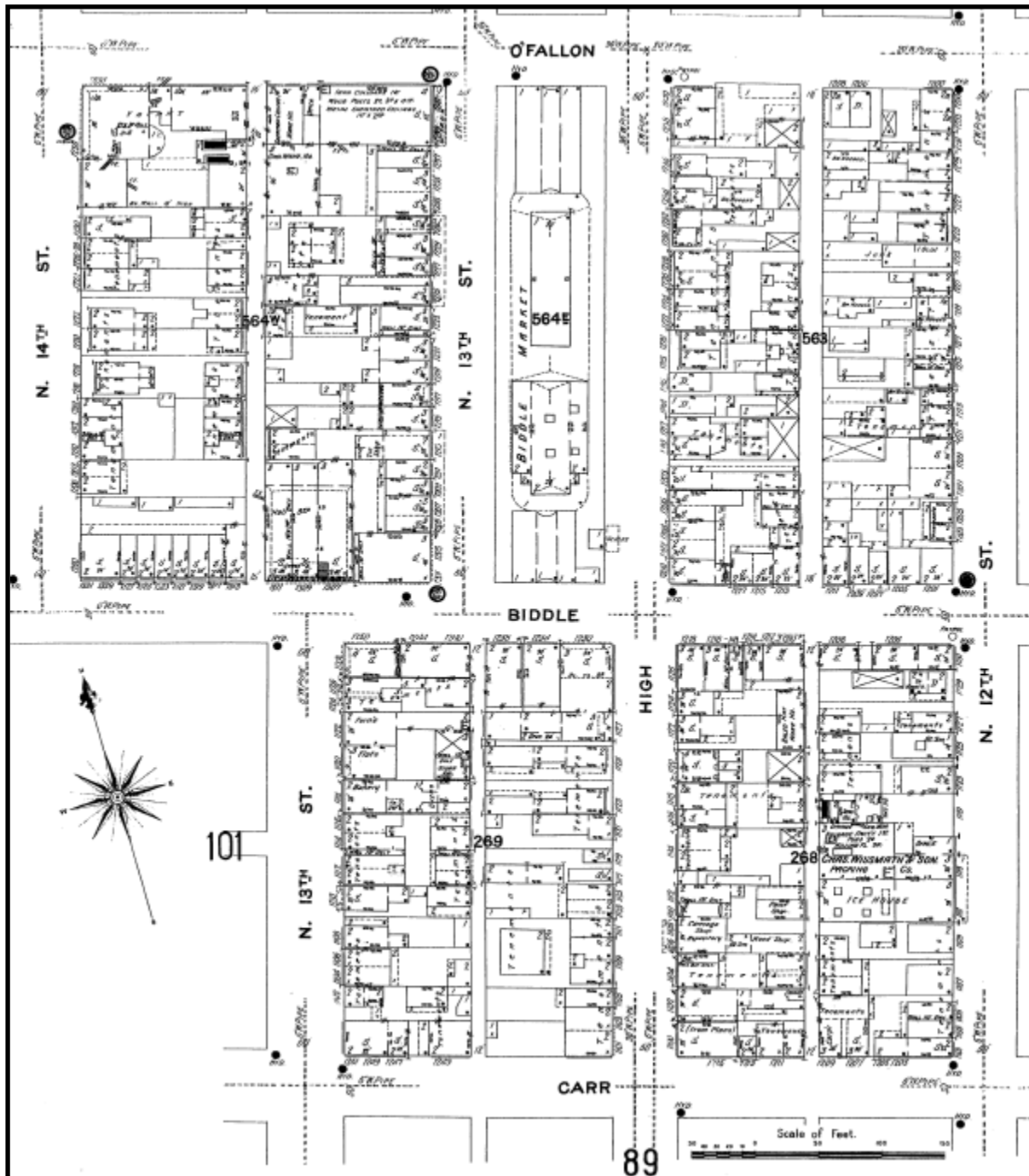


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Biddle Street Market
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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 8: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Volume 2, plate 102, 1909.

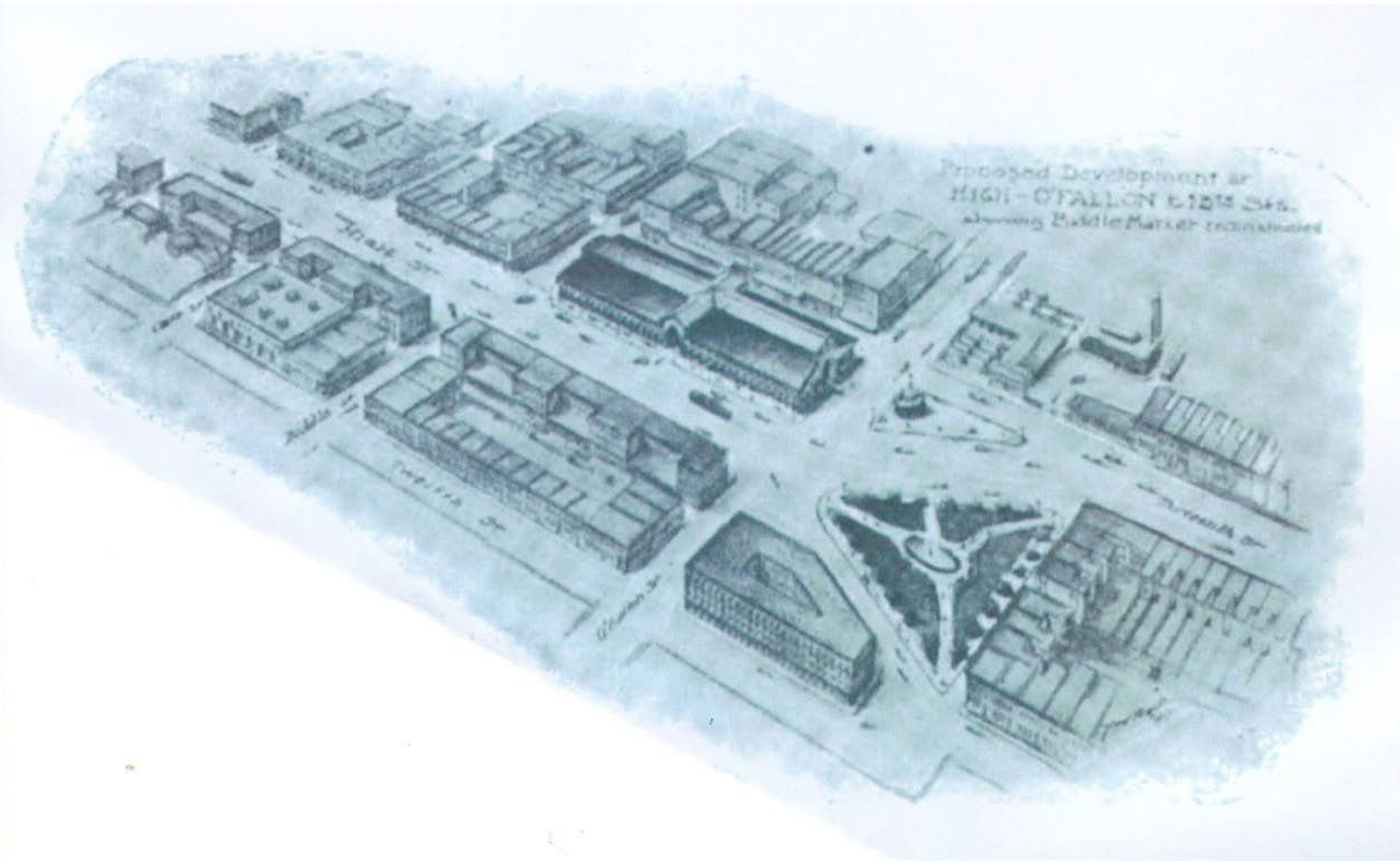


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Section number Figures Page 29

Biddle Street Market
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N/A
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Figure 9: “Twelfth Street: St. Louis’ Most Needed Commercial Thoroughfare.” (St. Louis: City Plan Commission, 1919). Note that a new Biddle Market is clearly illustrated below and located at a major thoroughfare. Indicated in a section of the report under “Connections North” the proposal was to create an ordinance for the extension of Twelfth Street north from Washington Avenue via High Street (soon to be Twelfth and now Tucker) and ultimately meeting with Florissant Avenue farther north. The plan also included an illustration of the extant Biddle Market seen in Figure 4 earlier.



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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 10: From "Old Biddle Market Will Be Razed Soon for New Structure." *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. October 4, 1931.

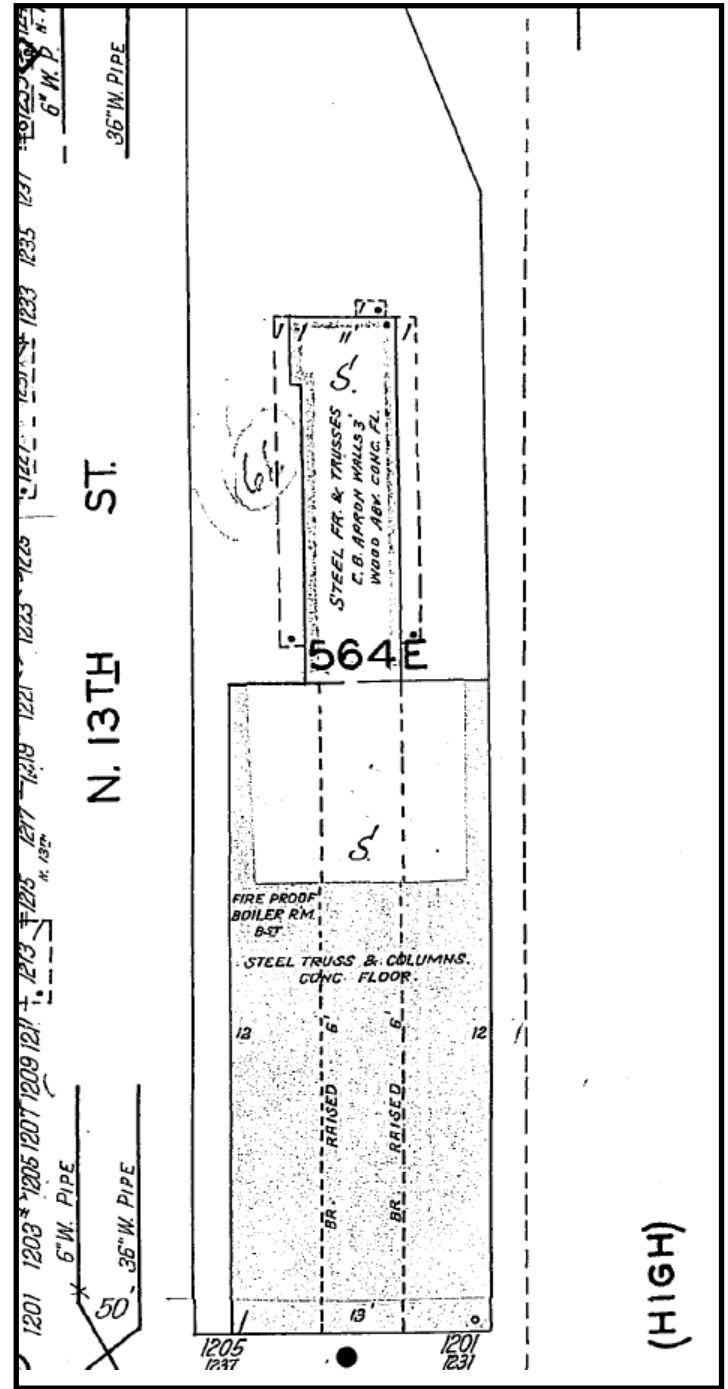
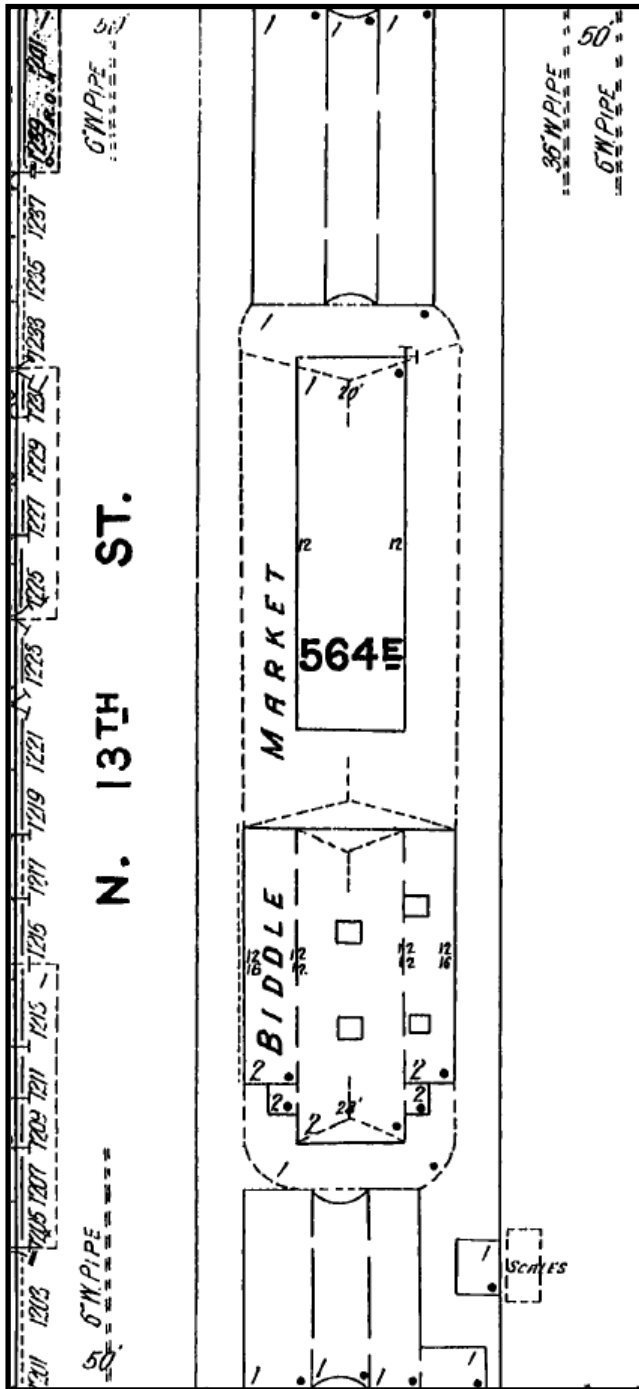


National Register of Historic Places
 Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 32

Biddle Street Market
Name of Property
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 12: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Comparison of markets: 1909 (left) & 1950 (right).



National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 33

Biddle Street Market

Name of Property

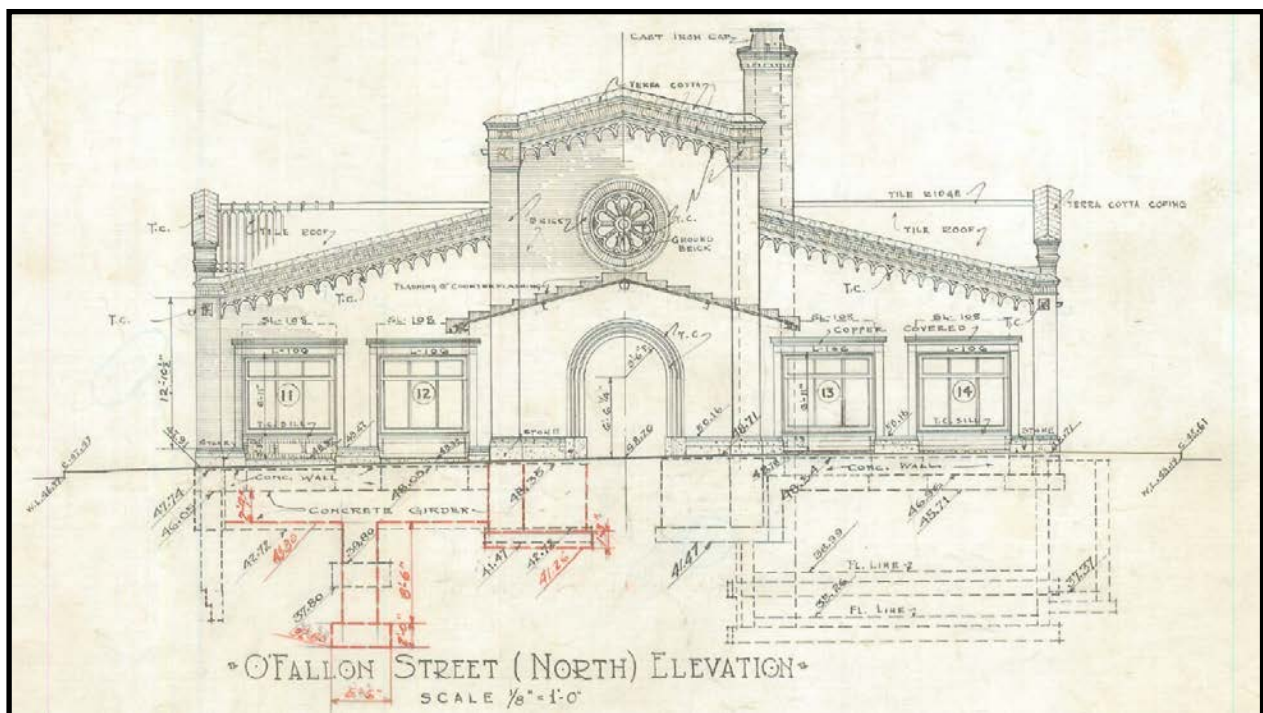
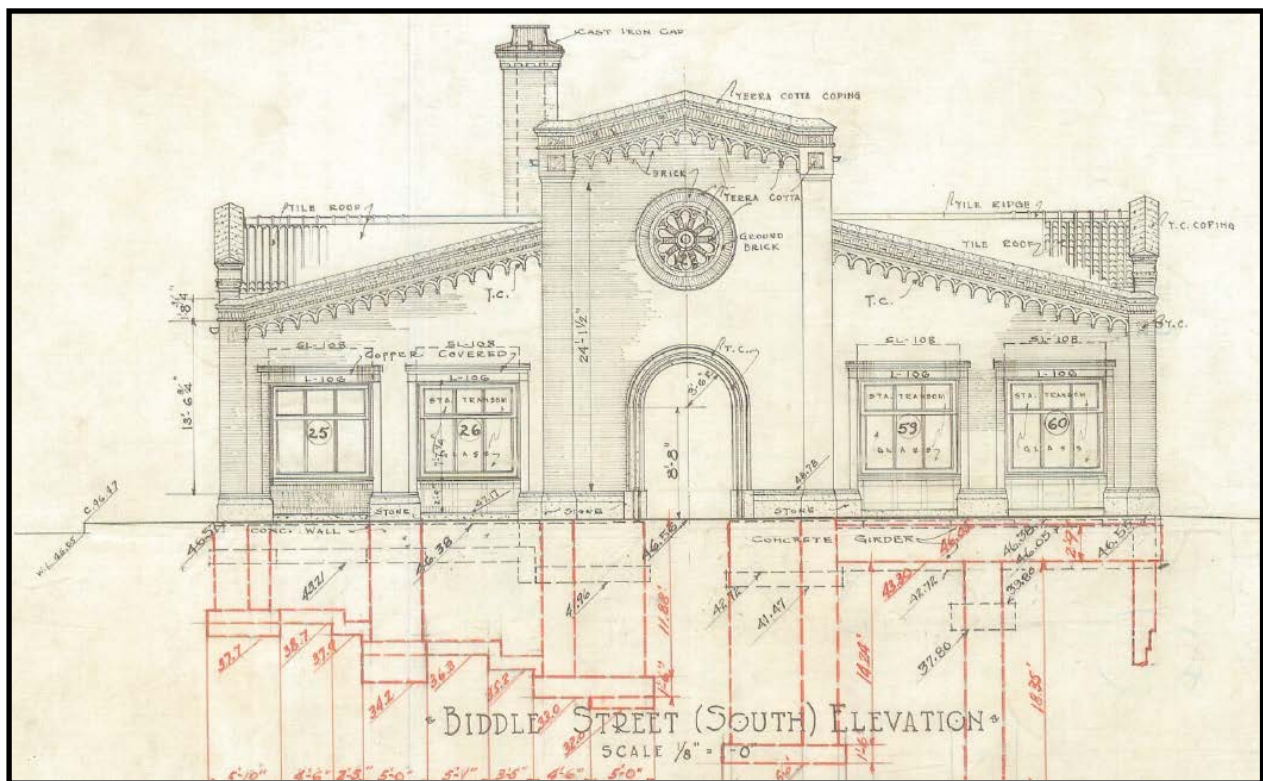
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 13: City of St. Louis: New Biddle Market. Albert A. Osberg. Architectural Drawings, 16 sheets, 1931. This is from sheet number 5.



National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 34

Biddle Street Market
Name of Property
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 14: *City of St. Louis: New Biddle Market.* Albert A. Osberg. Architectural Drawings, 16 sheets, 1931. This is from sheet number 5.

Building Plans (see 11x17 version).

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 35

Biddle Street Market
Name of Property
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 15: *City of St. Louis: New Biddle Market.* Albert A. Osberg. Architectural Drawings, 16 sheets, 1931. This is from sheet number 6.

Building Plans (see 11x17 version).

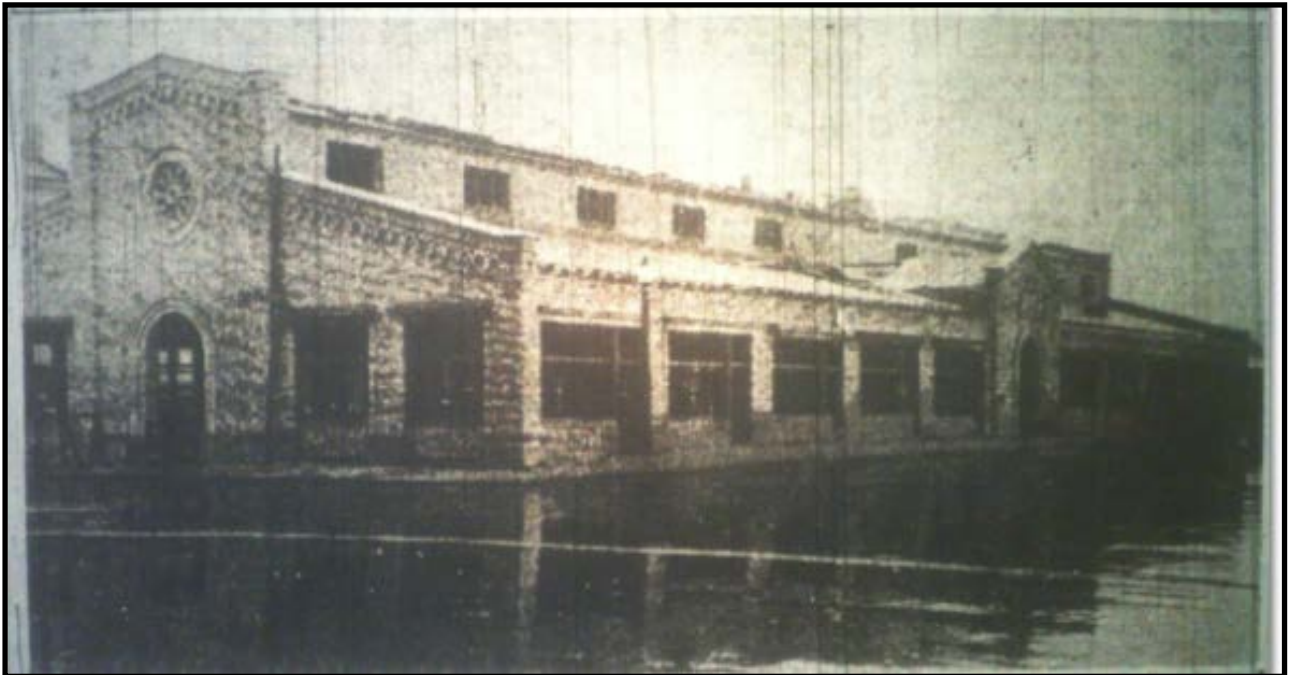
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 36

Biddle Street Market
Name of Property
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 16: *City of St. Louis: New Biddle Market.* Albert A. Osberg. Architectural Drawings, 16 sheets, 1931. This is from sheet number 6 (top) and Sheet number 3 (bottom).

Building Plans (see 11x17 version).



National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number Figures Page 37

Biddle Street Market
Name of Property
St. Louis (Independent City), Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 17: *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*. "Biddle Market." Real Estate Section.
May 1, 1932.





CITY OF ST. LOUIS
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
MOSQUITO AND RAT CONTROL
1212 NORTH 13TH ST
ENTRANCE ON LEFT SIDE

SNOW
ROUTE





















NO SMOKING

FLAMMABLE
3



CITY OF ST. LOUIS
HEALTH
48-715

12-7