

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	
DATE ENTERED	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Corby-Forsee Building

AND/OR COMMON

Corby Building

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

5th & Felix

\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

St. Joseph

\_\_ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

#6 - Hon. Thomas Coleman

STATE

Missouri

CODE

29

COUNTY

Buchanan

CODE

021

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDEN
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATIO
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

The Corby Estate

STREET & NUMBER

Corby Building

CITY, TOWN

St. Joseph

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Missouri 64501

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Registrar of Deeds - Buchanan County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

5th & Jules

CITY, TOWN

St. Joseph

STATE

Missouri 64501

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

1. Historical Preservation Inventory St. Joseph, Missouri

DATE

July, 1972

\_\_FEDERAL \_\_STATE  COUNTY \_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Department of Zoning and Planning

CITY, TOWN

St. Joseph

STATE

Missouri 64501

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

## CORBY-FORSEE BUILDING

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 6 PAGE 1

- 
2. Missouri State Historical Survey  
1979  
Department of Natural Resources  
P.O. Box 176  
Jefferson City  
state  
Missouri 65102

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ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

3. Rutt, Chris, (ed.). History of Buchanan County and the City of St. Joseph, Missouri. Chicago: Biographical Publishing Co., 1904.
4. Portrait and Biographical Record of Buchanan and Clinton Counties, Missouri. Chicago: Chapman Brothers, 1893.

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ITEM NUMBER 11 PAGE 1

2. Thomas W. Carneal  
Northwest Missouri State University  
305 Colden Hall  
Maryville  
816/582-7141  
Missouri 64468

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

EXCELLENT                     DETERIORATED  
 GOOD                             RUINS  
 FAIR                              UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Corby-Forsee Building is located in the business district of downtown St. Joseph, Missouri. As originally constructed, the building rose twelve stories, but a one story addition was built at its apex in 1927 to house the trade halls of the St. Joseph Grain Exchange. The Corby-Forsee Building measures 80' along the north and south and 114'6" along the east and west and is constructed of reinforced concrete faced with yellow brick and grey-buff terra cotta detailing at the first, second, eleventh and twelfth floor levels. Below, the terra cotta facing along only the Fifth Street and Felix Street facades echoes a modest version of Beaux Arts detailing with exaggerated floral and faunal rinceaux, anthemion antefixes, egg and dart moldings and a frieze of oval escutcheons in a sea of acanthus tendrils, birds and floral imagery (see photos #4,5 and 6). This decor reaches a crescendo at the main entrance in the west end of the north facade. Here, massive modillions of Michaelangesque design support a lintel which acts as a base for a large glazed tympanum. The plain flat archivols of this feature are embellished by the addition of plain and enriched water leaf moldings and are topped by an enlarged anthemion supported by flanking volutes.

Above this zone of decoration rise eleven stories, articulated by plain yellow brick piers and spandrels broken only by a terra cotta string course above the third floor. Just below the eleventh floor, terra cotta decoration begins again with a zone of plain panels and bosses. Acanthus encrusted terra cotta verticals rise to a second decorative zone where laurel wreaths surrounding large escutcheons are featured. Above, floreate verticals rise to cornice level. Here, the arcuated theme of the design recalls that of the main entrance and, like it, features elaborate moldings and oversized modillions which support a heavy denticulated cornice.

The addition of 1927 which sits above the cornice measures 30' along the north and south and 45' along the east and west. It is of a contrasting plain utilitarian style of construction which is vaguely Renaissance in inspiration. Notable features include its broad ornamental iron cornice featuring acanthus and anthemion motives and its corner pavilions on the north side.

Inside the building, just beyond the Italian marble foyer, the barrel vaulted marble faced lobby is located with polished brass elevators in its south wall; embellished with the coats of arms of the Corby family. Their molded paneled and voluted surrounds are flanked by broad marble pilasters capped with highly embellished floor indicators. Above, the barrel vaulted ceiling, which is painted gold, features extensive coffering and bronze chandeliers. To the east and west the lobby walls are pierced by doorways enclosed beneath Michealangesque segmentally pedimented surrounds.

The remainder of the interior features 200 rental offices, each with its own lavatory. The corridors carry white tile floors, white Italian marble wainscoting and oak millwork.

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1910  
: o 1927 - addition

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Selden-Breck, Eames-Young  
Addition by Eckel and Aldrich

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Corby-Forsee Building, the first multistory office building in St. Joseph, is significant due to its imposing architectural character which dominates the downtown (see photo #1). In addition, because the history of this building is intimately linked with the stories of the Corby and the Forsee families, two of St. Joseph's most prominent, its significance is further enhanced.

John Corby, a former Mayor of St. Joseph (1856), was born in Limerick, Ireland in 1808. He came to America with his family in 1820 and a few years later he began a career in railroad contracting. In 1843 his job led him to St. Joseph where he became a banker and merchant of note. Corby was instrumental in the establishment of the Hannibal - St. Joseph Railroad in the 1850's, and he served as its director and as the vice president of the Roseport and Maryville Railroad Company during the same period. Later in his career he served as president of the St. Joseph - Denver City Railroad Company and of the St. Joseph - Topeka Railroad Company. In addition to his business success, John Corby was known for his philanthropies. He has been especially noted for his charity work and financial assistance to the Seminary of the Sacred Heart, St. Joseph Hospital and St. Joseph Cathedral. Corby died in 1870 (Rutt, pp. 467-468; Portrait and Biographical Record, pp. 238-239; Hardman, p. 400).

Colonel Joseph A. Corby, nephew of John Corby, arrived in St. Joseph in 1867 from Ohio on a visit to his uncle. He stayed and eventually became involved in his uncle's interests. In addition, he was owner and publisher of the St. Joseph Daily Gazette (1873-1875) and he was a pioneer in the establishment of telephone service in the Midwest. In 1879 he built the Bell Telephone Exchange in St. Joseph. In 1881 he constructed a line linking that city with Atchison, Kansas, the first such line west of Buffalo, New York to connect two cities. In 1882 he assisted in the establishment of the Missouri-Kansas Telephone Company. Colonel Corby's other interests included transportation and utilities. In 1878 he built and operated the Frederick Avenue Street Railway. Later, in 1883, he brought the Pacific Mutual Telegraph lines into this city and he constructed and managed the first electric light plant in town (Rutt, p. 448).

John Corby, the eldest son of Joseph, was vice president of the Zeilda Forsee Investment Company, the corporation which constructed the Corby-Forsee Building (Combe Printing Company's Directory, p. 238).

HR-8-300A  
11/78)

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ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

Dr. Edgar B. Forsee came to St. Joseph with his family from Kentucky in 1856. He became known as an outstanding citizen, doctor and businessman. His wife, Zeilda, managed his large estate after her husband's death. The corporation formed by her constructed the Corby-Forsee Building (Rutt, pp. 263-264).

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Combe Printing Company's 1909 Directory of St. Joseph, Missouri. St. Joseph: Combe Printing Co., 1909.
2. Hardman, Lon. The Daily News History of Buchanan County and St. Joseph, Missouri. St. Joseph: St. Joseph Publishing Co., 1898.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

QUADRANGLE NAME "St. Joseph, North"

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 34,11,8,5 4,4,0,3,2,6,0

B               

C               

D               

E               

F               

G               

H               

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

A tract of land encompassing all of Lots seven (7), eight (8) and nine (9), in Block fifty-one (51) of original town of St. Joseph, Missouri.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

1. Noelle Soren, Architectural Historian

September 20, 1979

ORGANIZATION

Department of Natural Resources

DATE

314/751-4096

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 176

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Jefferson City

STATE

Missouri 65102

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL     

STATE     

LOCAL x

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Director, Department of Natural Resources and State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

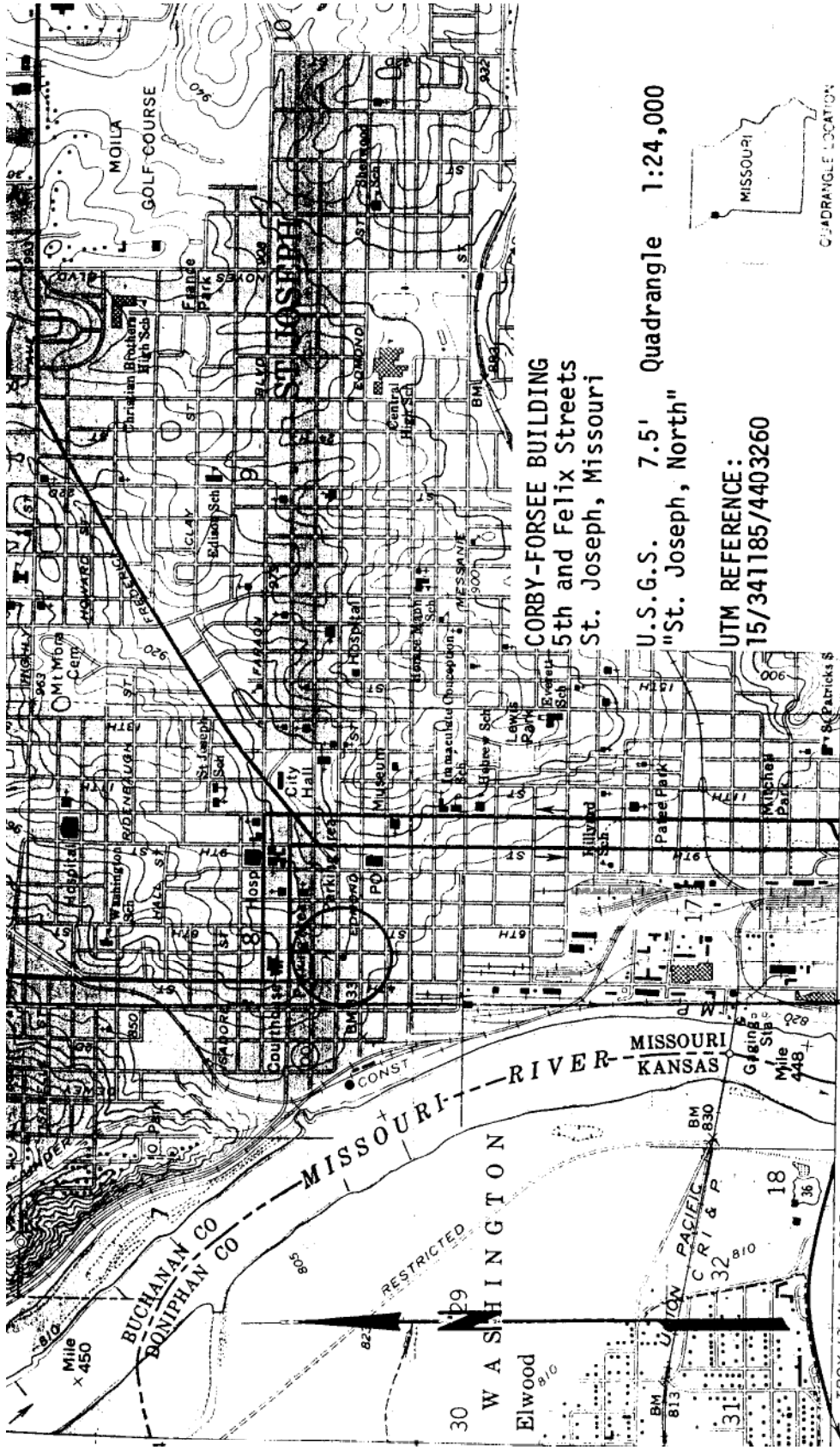
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

ATTEST: KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

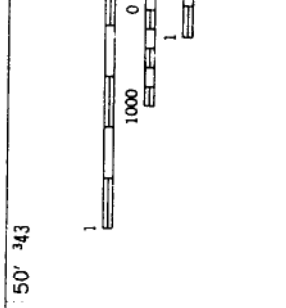
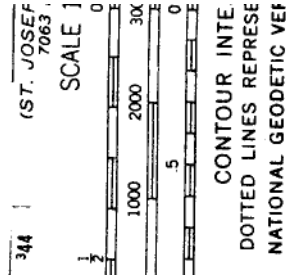
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION



**CORBY-FORSEE BUILDING**  
 5th and Felix Streets  
 St. Joseph, Missouri

U.S.G.S. 7.5' Quadrangle 1:24,000  
 "St. Joseph, North"

UTM REFERENCE:  
 15/341185/4403260



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL  
 GEOGRAPHIC SURVEY, DENVER,  
 MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL  
 AND STATE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS

UTM GRID AND 1978 MAGNETIC NORTH  
 DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
 Control by USGS and USC&GS

Photography by photogrammetric methods from aerial  
 photographs taken 1969. Field checked 1971.

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
 630,000-foot grid based on Missouri coordinate system, west zone  
 and Kansas coordinate system, north zone  
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
 zone 15, shown in blue

Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown  
 Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where  
 generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked  
 Emissions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken  
 1977. Map edited 1978. This information not field checked  
 Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

**Photo Log:**

Name of Property: **Corby-Forsee Building**

City or Vicinity: **St. Joseph**

County: **Buchanan County** State: **MO**

Photographer: **As noted**

Date Photographed: **As noted**

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

1 of 11. Colonel Joseph A. Corby, member of the Corby family, namesake of the Corby-Forsee Building of St. Joseph, MO. Photo taken by unknown, date unknown.

2 of 11. View to N along 5<sup>th</sup> St. showing the dominant position of the building. Photo taken by Noelle Soren, Aug. 1979.

3 of 11. View to SW of upper position of the building showing terra cotta trim and the addition of 1927. Photo taken by Jill Watrous, May, 1979.

4 of 11. SE corner, facing Felix St., showing the location of the terra cotta trim at first and second floor levels. Photo taken by Jill Watrous, May, 1979.

5 of 11. Near NE corner, detail of terra cotta rinceaux at floor level. Photo taken by Noel Soren, Aug. 1979.

6 of 11. Main entrance on N side (Felix St.). Photo taken by Noelle Soren, Aug. 1979.

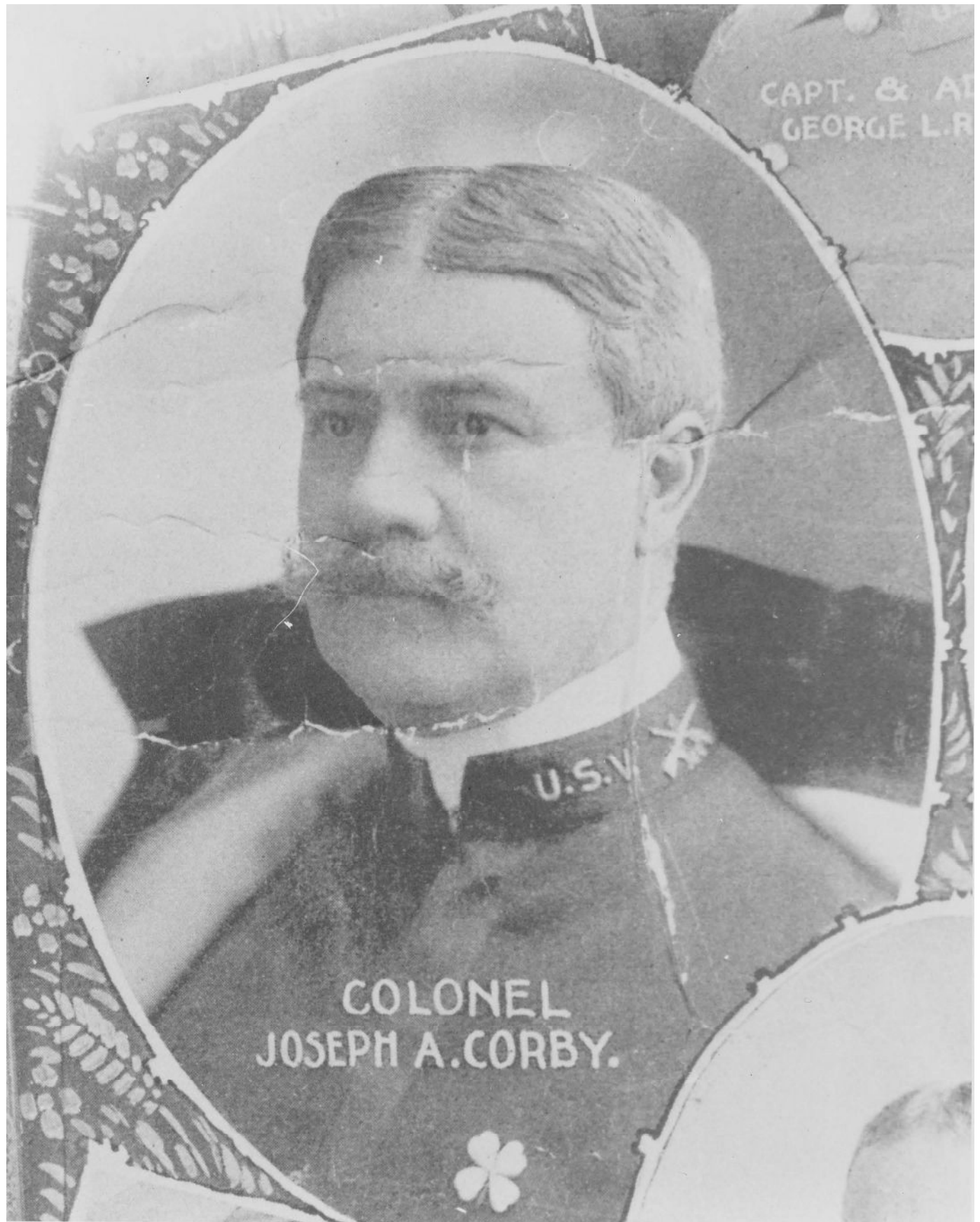
7 of 11. Main entrance, detail showing embellished archivolts, frieze and anthemion cap. Photo taken by Noelle Soren, Aug. 1979.

8 of 11. Carved marble embellishment separating the small foyer from the lobby. This feature is barely visible in photo #6. Photo taken by Noelle Soren, Aug. 1979.

9 of 11. Interior, lobby on N side, view to SE. Surfaces are faced with white marble and the polished brass doors feature arms of the Corby family. Photo taken by Noelle Soren, Aug. 1979.

10 of 11. Interior, lobby ceiling. The entablature and ceiling are painted gold and the segmental pediment features arms of the Corby family. Photo taken by Noelle Soren, Aug. 1979.

11 of 11. Interior, lobby, E wall, a decorative marble Michaelangelesque entryway. Photo taken by Noelle Soren, Aug. 1979.

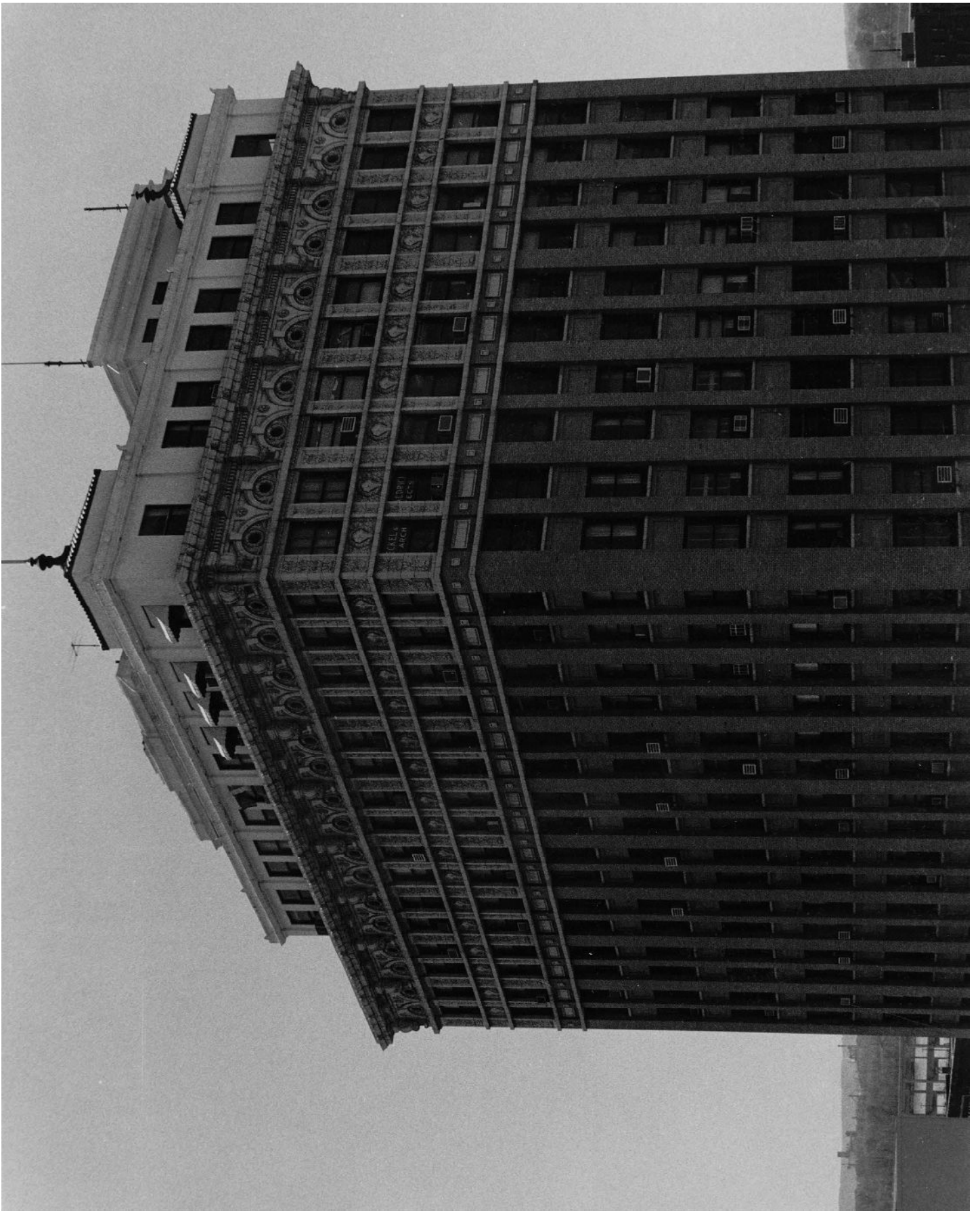


CAPT. & AD.  
GEORGE L.R.

COLONEL  
JOSEPH A. CORBY.

U.S.V.









al center

METH CLOSED











