

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

Historic name Hazelle, Inc. Building
 Other names/site number Tiphereth Israel Hebrew Synagogue; Kansas City School of Watchmaking
 Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

2. Location

Street & number <u>1224 Admiral Boulevard</u>	N/A	not for publication
City or town <u>Kansas City</u>	N/A	vicinity
State <u>Missouri</u> Code <u>MO</u> County <u>Jackson</u> Code <u>095</u> Zip code <u>64106</u>		

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
 I hereby certify that this x nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide x local

Applicable National Register Criteria: ___ A x B ___ C ___ D


 Signature of certifying official/Title

12/15/20
 Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
 State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Hazelle, Inc. Building
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5. Classification

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

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

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

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

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

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	
<u>1</u>		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce: Professional

Industry: Manufacturing Facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals: Tudor Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Stone

walls: Brick

roof: Clay Tile

other: Stone

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION ON CONTINUATION PAGES

Hazelle, Inc. Building
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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.

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.

Areas of Significance

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

circa 1958-1975

Significant Dates

circa 1958

1975

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Rollins, Hazelle Hedges

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Simon, Herman F. (attr. architect, 1920)

Flanagan Construction Co. (1920 builder)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE ON CONTINUATION PAGES

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

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: Jackson County Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____ N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 39.105651 -94.567243 3 _____
Latitude: Longitude: Latitude: Longitude:

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

Verbal Boundary Description (On continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (On continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Amanda Loughlin/National Register Coordinator
organization Rosin Preservation, LLC date July 2020; rev. Sept., Oct., Nov. 2020
street & number 1712 Holmes telephone 816.472.4950
city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64108
e-mail amanda@rosinpreservation.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: Hazelle, Inc. Building

City or Vicinity: Kansas City

County: Jackson County State: Missouri

Photographer: Brad Finch, f-stop Photography

Date

Photographed: June 24, 2020

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

See Figures 10, 15, 16, 17 for photo keys.

- 01 of 15:** Looking NE at the west and south elevations
- 02 of 15:** South (primary) elevation, looking north
- 03 of 15:** Looking NW at south and east elevations
- 04 of 15:** Looking SW at east and north elevations
- 05 of 15:** West elevation, looking ESE
- 06 of 15:** First floor, east foyer, looking south from near north end
- 07 of 15:** First floor, sanctuary, looking west from bimah
- 08 of 15:** First floor, sanctuary, looking SE at bimah along east wall
- 09 of 15:** First floor, southeast office, looking west from east wall
- 10 of 15:** Main stair, looking south from landing between first and second floors
- 11 of 15:** Second floor, corridor, looking south from north end
- 12 of 15:** Second floor, sanctuary, looking east from near center of room
- 13 of 15:** Second floor, sanctuary, looking ESE from NW corner of stage
- 14 of 15:** Basement, looking NE from stair down into area
- 15 of 15:** Basement, east room, looking SE

Figure Log:

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

- 01 of 29:** Contextual map, showing the building within Kansas City. Source: Base map from Google.
- 02 of 29:** Boundary map. Parcel/boundary denoted by dashed line. Source: Base map from Kansas City, Missouri Parcel Viewer (maps.kcmo.org/apps/parcelviewer)
- 03 of 29:** Contextual photos of buildings along Admiral. Sources: Brad Finch, June 2020 and Google, March 2019
- 04 of 29:** Diagram showing Hazelle Building within its context. Base map from Kansas City, Missouri Parcel Viewer (maps.kcmo.org/apps/parcelviewer).
- 05 of 29:** North side of the Hazelle, Inc. Building, looking west from Tracey Avenue through gate and showing the narrow gap between the building and the lawn to the north. Source: Brad Finch, June 2020.
- 06 of 29:** South façade of adjacent garage and CMU retaining wall on property to the north of the Hazelle Building. Source: Brad Finch, June 2020.
- 07 of 29:** The building in 1940, looking NW, when functioning as a synagogue. Source: Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City 1940 Tax Assessment Photograph Collection, District 5, Block 45.
- 08 of 29:** A circa 1949 photograph of the building used in promotional literature created by and for the watchmaking school. The circa date is based on this photograph's use in an advertisement in the *Kansas City Star* (12 June 1949): 22A; photographs within this brochure also appear in a small advertisement in *The Kansas City Centennial*, 64. Source: *Kansas City School of Watchmaking*, cover.

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- 09 of 29:** The building at 1224 Admiral Blvd. in 1971 while occupied by Hazelle, Inc. View is to the northwest. Source: Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 89.
- 10 of 29:** Exterior photo map. Base map from Google.
- 11 of 29:** Detail of main entrance, showing current front doors. Source: Brad Finch, June 2020.
- 12 of 29:** Image of the second floor as utilized in circa 1949 by the Kansas City School of Watchmaking. The camera is facing east-southeast. Note historic windows in place and no partitions within the corners. Source: *Kansas City School of Watchmaking*, 7. Photo also featured in *The Kansas City Centennial*, 64.
- 13 of 29:** First floor of sanctuary, looking SW from bimah. Source: *Kansas City School of Watchmaking*, 11.
- 14 of 29:** First floor sanctuary, looking NW from bimah. Note glass block and plaster wall. This wall encloses a small conference room in the office area today and is visible in the hallway connecting the foyer to the sanctuary. Source: *Kansas City School of Watchmaking*, 15.
- 15 of 29:** Current first floor plan and photo map. Base map from Caton Architectural Design, 2020.
- 16 of 29:** Current second floor plan and photo map. Base map from Caton Architectural Design, 2020.
- 17 of 29:** Current basement floor plan and photo map. Base map from Caton Architectural Design, 2020.
- 18 of 29:** View looking southwest from top of entry stair, showing the entry vestibule. Source: Source: Brad Finch, June 2020.
- 19 of 29:** Second floor, sewing area circa 1970. Source: Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 97.
- 20 of 29:** Hazelle Rollins inspecting marionette parts in the 1940s. Source: Joly, 22.
- 21 of 29:** Hazelle's diploma from Tony Sarg's Marionette Summer Course. 1935. Source: Smithsonian, National Museum of American History, 1981.1085.05
https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_662431
- 22 of 29:** Hazelle Hedges Rollins' first patent. Filed 1936, patented 1938. Inset is an example of one of her controls. Sources: Google Patents and Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 17,19.
- 23 of 29:** Teto the Clown, Hazelle's most popular character. At center is the 1930s version with wooden head. At left is the 1940s version with composition head, plastic hands, and wooden feet, and at right is the 1956 Teto with Tenite head. Source: Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 20-21, 170.
- 24 of 29:** Design patent (no. 171367) for a puppet stage. Source: Google Patents.
- 25 of 29:** Snippet of the 1939 Sanborn, vol 1, sheet 69, showing the synagogue. Boundary shown in dashed line.
- 26 of 29:** Houses (all extant) in Kansas City associated with Hazelle Hedges Rollins. Source: Google Streetview (image dates March-April 2019).
- 27 of 29:** The Thayer (Bracken) Building, 820-822 Broadway, looking northwest at its south and east elevations. Source: Google Streetview, image date April 2019.
- 28 of 29:** The building at 107 West 8th Street, looking SE from the intersection of 8th & Baltimore. Source: Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City 1940 Tax Assessment Photograph Collection, District 4, Block 72.
- 29 of 29:** The headquarters of Hazelle's Marionettes in 1946. Source: Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 31.

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Summary Description

Between circa 1958 and 1975 Hazelle, Inc. occupied the former Congregation Tiphereth Israel Synagogue at 1224 Admiral Boulevard, Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri. The three-story Tudor Revival building was constructed in 1920 at the northwest corner of Admiral Boulevard and Tracy Avenue. The brick building rests on a stone foundation, and clay tile covers the side gable roof with gable end parapets. The interior of the former synagogue today reflects changes to the building utilized by Hazelle, Inc. when the company was headquartered here. These changes include the 1947 extension of the balcony in the sanctuary to create a full usable floor and the addition of glass block partitions on each floor. The building retains its historic integrity from its association with Hazelle Hodges Rollins and her company, Hazelle, Inc. from circa 1958 to 1975. As mentioned in Section 8, this building is locally significant under Criterion B in the area of Commerce for its association with Hazelle Hedges Rollins. Character-defining features include masonry exterior, clay tile roof, terrazzo and wood floors, plaster walls, remnants of its use as a synagogue, extensive use of glass block, and open area of each floor (*Table 1*).

Narrative Description

Setting and Site

The Hazelle, Inc. Building is located at the northwest corner of Admiral Boulevard and Tracy Avenue, approximately one mile northeast of downtown Kansas City, Missouri, and two blocks east of the I-70/I-29/I-35 interchange (*Figures 1 & 2*). Historically, the surrounding neighborhood, north and south of Admiral, contained a mixture of single-family and multi-family dwellings. Today, turn-of-the-twentieth-century residential buildings occupy the immediate environs north of Admiral Boulevard while across Admiral to the south, industrial buildings and parking lots replaced some of the older dwellings (*Figure 3*).

The nominated property occupies the southeastern corner of the block. A north-south mid-block alley creates the west boundary; Admiral Boulevard is the south boundary; and Tracy Avenue is the east boundary. Retaining walls create the north boundary due to the property to the north being approximately six feet higher than the grade of the Hazelle Building (*Figures 4 & 5*). A historic stone retaining wall lines the north boundary from Tracy Avenue to the west side of the Hazelle Building. From there a concrete block (CMU) retaining wall (date unknown) supports the hill west

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to the alley. The CMU wall merges into the south elevation of a CMU garage located on the property to the north (*Figure 6*).¹

The retaining walls sit approximately three feet north of the north elevation of the Hazelle Building. As a result, a narrow concrete path runs along the north side of the building at grade (*Figure 5*). The narrow walkway, accessed from a non-historic metal gate at Tracy Avenue, extends west to the center of the north elevation. At this point, the stone retaining wall along the north edge of the walkway turns to the south and blocks access to the west half of the walkway. A stucco wall of unknown date or function extends from the south side of the house to the north and intersects the north elevation of the Hazelle Building at this point. On the west side of this short wall, the walkway continues for an unknown distance under the stucco wall above it, which appears to sit atop a concrete slab.²

Wide concrete sidewalks line the east and south facades; a grassy verge with street trees and streetlights separates the sidewalk from Admiral Boulevard to the south. The sidewalk and planted verge are character-defining features of the historic Kansas City boulevard system; though the date of the concrete is unknown, the design is historic and within the public right-of-way (*Figure 7*).³ A concrete and asphalt lot extends west of the building to the alley. This area contained houses until the Hazelle Building was constructed in 1920; available Sanborn maps and aerial images show this portion of the property remained vacant during the period of significance, allowing access from the alley to the loading dock on the west side of the building.⁴ A narrow grassy planting strip with evergreens separates the paved area from the sidewalk along Admiral; both the paved area and this planting strip are within the nominated boundary.

¹ This one-story concrete block garage was built into the hill of the property to the north and along the alley to the west. This rectangular building has a flat roof that slopes west to the alley and measures approximately 23 feet wide by 80 feet long. A garage bay with external overhead door is at the west end of the south façade. To its immediate east, a pedestrian door pierces the wall, accessed by a stone and metal stair from the driveway. Both doors open onto the parking lot associated with the Hazelle, Inc. Building. The west wall contains no openings. The date of its construction is so far unknown, and its association with Hazelle, Inc. is undocumented. There is no internal connection between this garage and the Hazelle Building.

² Dense vegetation on the west side of this wall and house prevented a closer inspection of this portion of the site.

³ Admiral Boulevard was in place by 1909. See Cydney Millstein and Paul Novick, "The Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (2013): E-15, F-12.

⁴ *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Kansas City, Jackson, Clay, and Platte Counties, Missouri, 1906-1917, Vol 2* (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1909): 198 and *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Kansas City, Jackson, Clay, and Platte Counties, Missouri, 1939-Dec. 1950, Vol 1* (New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1939): 69. See also *Historic Aerials, 1955, 1959, 1963, 1969, 1970*, historicaerials.com.

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Exterior

The Hazelle, Inc. Building is a three-story brick building with a rectangular footprint and a stone foundation. Clay tile covers the side gable roof whose gable ends terminate at gabled parapets. Smaller gabled parapets accent the front (south) façade. The simple building massing exhibits restrained Tudor Revival details that include a steeply pitched roof, gabled parapets with stone coping and round finials, engaged buttresses, stone architraves, and tabbed window surrounds, all character-defining features.

The exterior has undergone few alterations since its construction in 1920. The most noticeable change is the replacement of windows and doors. Between circa 1947, when the Kansas City School of Watchmaking acquired the building, and 1971, most of the original (1920) windows were removed (*Figures 7 through 9*).⁵ Glass block filled some masonry openings during this time. This condition continues today; the exterior glass block is historic unless otherwise noted.⁶ In 1986, anodized metal fixed window units replaced the non-glass-block units in most other masonry openings; this condition remains today, filling the remaining historic masonry openings unless otherwise noted.⁷ All exterior doors post-date the 1920 construction and are further clarified below. The other alteration is a one-story concrete block appendage at the northwest corner of the building, which appears to have been installed during the period of significance; this is discussed more in depth below.

South Elevation

The primary elevation faces south onto Admiral Boulevard (*Photos 1 & 2; Figure 10*). Dressed limestone accents the base of the brick façade, and a stone water table caps the base. Five bays organize the symmetrical façade. Gabled end bays rise above the façade, and engaged stepped brick buttresses separate each bay. The westernmost bay contains the main entrance into the building. Two round arch stone surrounds each feature a pair of metal doors with fixed arched glass transom. While the age of these doors is currently unknown, they are not the original doors their design indicates they likely date to the period of significance, ca. 1958-1975 (*Figures 9 &*

⁵ See also Figure 12 from 1949, showing the second floor. Original windows remain in place at ground level of the east elevation.

⁶ Building permit #52826, September 10, 1957, "Alterations—Building and driveway as per plan and letter of 9-10-57; concrete masonry." Alterations to the building could have included the removal of the remaining original windows; the plan and letter noted in the permit no longer exist.

⁷ Figure 9 shows that the original units had been removed and replaced, but the replacement units are unclear. Some openings appear to contain opaque panels with smaller window units within the panels. No window openings today retain this condition, as all were replaced in 1986 (Permit #86-10616, August 9, 1986 "window replacement").

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11); each features a decorative metal grid under a clear glass panel. A set of four stone steps leads up to the doors from the sidewalk; these steps span the width of the bay between the buttresses. Directly above the doors is a rectangular tripartite stone window unit with tabbed surround, typical of the south elevation. Historic stone mullions separate the three non-historic fixed windows with the central masonry opening wider than the end openings (typical). A non-historic cloth awning covers this window unit. A rectangular stone plaque centered in the wall above this window reads “Congregation Tefirat Israel” in Hebraic characters above a Star of David; “1920” and “5680” flank the star. A stone roundel centered in the gable at the top of the bay contains the faint remnant of a Star of David.

The remaining four bays are nearly identical to each other. Each features a tripartite stone window unit with tabbed surround. Glass block infills all first story masonry openings with one exception. The center opening of bay two contains a pair of metal doors that match the current front doors with upper glass panels. Tripartite windows pierce the upper two stories of each bay; each features non-historic fixed glass windows. Stone trim accents decorative brick panels between the second and third story windows. The easternmost bay features a gabled parapet with a roundel centered in the gable, matching the westernmost bay. A cornerstone located at the base of the east brick buttress reads (in English) “CONGREGATION/TIPHERETH ISRAEL/1920 5680” with a Star of David between the dates.⁸ This inscription is on each face of the cornerstone.

East Elevation

The gabled east elevation fronts Tracy Avenue (*Photo 3*). Four bays organize the symmetrical façade; engaged stepped brick buttresses separate the end bays from the center bays with the center buttresses taller than the end ones. The gabled elevation forms a parapet to the building’s side gable roof. The identical north and south bays of the elevation feature a pair of windows within historic stone surrounds that match the details of the south elevation. The first-story windows are historic units dating to the building’s 1920 construction. These wood double-hung units feature decorative glass upper sashes over a single clear glass lower sash (visible in *Photo 15*); a historic metal mesh covers each window.⁹ The upper two stories contain non-historic fixed windows, and like the south façade, a decorative brick panel connects the second- and third-story windows. The center two bays of the façade are also identical. The first- and second-story windows match those of the north and south bays. Historic glass block infills the third story masonry openings; a round

⁸ The 5680 date is the Hebraic calendar year.

⁹ Plywood covers the south pair of windows, which are visible on the interior.

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arch clear glass transom surmounts these two pairs of windows. These transoms may date to the installation of the glass block; they are in place by 1971 (*Figure 9*). A round stone masonry opening with stone keystones pierces the center of the wall above the third story windows; the opening contains a vent.

North Elevation

The north elevation faces the property to the north (*Photo 4*). Five bays organize this unadorned façade. Brick pilasters with rusticated stone bases separate each bay; unlike the buttresses on the south and east elevations, these full-height components are not stepped. A square brick chimney adjoins the pilaster between the east bays and the center bay. Dense vegetation obscures the western two bays of the north elevation. The visible center and eastern two bays have similar fenestration patterns. Each contains three masonry openings at each story. The openings have stone sills but no decorative surrounds. Openings in the upper two stories contain either fixed glass windows or glass block infill as previously noted; plywood obscures some windows. As observed from the interior, the second story of the westernmost bay has three glass-block filled masonry openings lighting the main stair. The visible first-story masonry openings feature a range of original wood windows with metal grates, stucco or concrete block infill, or are obscured by large plywood sheets.

West Elevation

The utilitarian west elevation faces and is set back from the mid-block alley (*Photos 1 & 5*). Four bays organize this façade. An engaged stepped brick buttress separates the south bay from the center bays, and a brick pilaster separates the north bay from the center bays. The brick of the south bay matches the finish of the south and east elevations while the brick of other three bays have the utilitarian finish of the north elevation.¹⁰ Like the east side of the building, the gabled elevation forms a parapet to the building's side gable roof. A stone foundation of random ashlar forms the first story of this elevation. No openings pierce the north bay. Except for the first story, the center two bays are nearly identical. At the second story, a pair of masonry openings with stone sills pierces the center bays; each contains a fixed window. A pair of masonry openings with stone sills pierces the wall at the third story, and a round brick arched transom with fixed window and stone sill spans each pair of openings; the north opening of the north center bay contains an original (1920) fixed nine-lite wood window;¹¹ a vent fills the opening to its south. The south center

¹⁰ This corner would have been, and remains, most visible from Admiral, so this may have been an intentional design decision to give this corner a finished appearance from the public right-of-way.

¹¹ The bottom center sash and muntins have been removed to accommodate A/C equipment.

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openings have non-historic fixed windows. A round brick masonry opening centered in the wall above the third story windows contains a vent. The first story of the north center bay contains two masonry openings. The north opening features a metal pedestrian door (circa 1957) that leads onto a metal stair landing. This door corresponds to an internal stair, dating to 1920; brickwork around this door appears to indicate a masonry opening was either created or altered to fit this door. A loading bay with short steel dock, dating to circa 1957, pierces the stone wall to the south of the pedestrian door. An exterior steel roll door (unknown date) covers an interior overhead wood garage door (circa 1957).¹² The first story of the south center bay features a large masonry opening with center brick mullion; glass block infills the opening on either side of the brick mullion. The south bay of the west elevation contains a single masonry opening at the top of the wall.¹³ This opening contains a non-historic double-hung window within an existing, widened opening, that corresponds to a bathroom (*Figure 8*).

A one-story concrete block appendage dating to between 1957 and 1975 extends from the northwest corner of the elevation and blocks the west entrance to the narrow path on the north side of the building.¹⁴ A flat concrete slab roof covers this sixty-square-foot addition used for chemical storage, according to signage on the west-facing metal slab door;¹⁵ a metal security gate covers the door. Mechanical equipment rises from the roof. The south elevation of this appendage contains no openings, and the north wall abuts the north retaining wall.¹⁶ Although attached to the corner of the building, there is no internal connection between the 1920 building and the appendage.

Interior

The Hazelle, Inc. Building contains three full stories, including a full basement. Spatial arrangements today occurred after the building ceased to be a synagogue. When constructed as the

¹² The roll door could date to any time between the 1960s and 1990s. Because there is an interior garage door, this outer door may date closer to the end of the period of significance and added for security purposes. The interior garage door is of a design and material dating closer to the beginning of the period of significance.

¹³ Figure 8 shows a window in center of this bay. Today, there is no visual evidence within the brick wall that shows where openings would have been infilled. The interior does not show evidence of former openings; plaster covers the corresponding interior wall. Programmatically, the north and south bays of the first story correspond to internal stairs.

¹⁴ This likely dates to circa 1957; although, the building permit from that year does not specify, cf. footnote 6.

¹⁵ The date of the applied signage is unknown and includes a National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) placard, a danger sign for LP gas, and a sign indicating oxygen.

¹⁶ The east facing wall was unobservable during a June 2020 site visit.

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Congregation Tiphereth Israel Synagogue in 1920, the raised first floor provided primary access into to the two-story sanctuary with U-shaped balcony. In 1947, when the Kansas City School of Watchmaking acquired the building, the school altered the interior to allow for their programmatic needs. At this time, the balcony was extended to create a full useable floor above the first story of the former sanctuary and plaster and glass block partition walls were added (*Figures 12 through 14*).¹⁷ During the tenure of Hazelle, Inc., additional plaster and gypsum board partition walls further divided the floors (*Figures 15 through 17*).¹⁸

Finishes and details throughout the building reflect the layered history of the building. Terrazzo and wood floors, plaster walls and ceilings, ornate light fixtures, and Stars of David highlight the original use of the building. These character-defining features, along with the interior layout, were retained by successive tenants who also added mid-century details during renovations. The 1947 addition of glass block is one of the most common and character-defining of these materials, filling exterior masonry openings and creating full or partial partition walls. Mid-century (1945-1970) details also include doors, trim, and decorative paneling; the exact dates of these finishes are unknown at this point, but the design and materials used are common to the time period, which corresponds to the period of significance for this building. The building continues to reflect its appearance (materials and design) from circa 1958 to 1975 when it gained its significance of association with Hazelle Rollins.

First Floor (*Figure 15*)

The western fifth of the first floor contains the circulation core of the building. The two pairs of exterior doors at the west end of the south façade open into a two-story vestibule. A door within the east wall of this vestibule provides access into the basement. To the north of the entry, an open flight of terrazzo steps leads up from the vestibule to an open foyer (*Photo 6*). The date of the handrail in the center of the flight is unknown, but its design and materials indicate it could date to the period of significance (*Figure 18*). At the north end of the foyer, a U-shaped terrazzo stair provides access up to the second floor and down to the basement and outside.¹⁹ Two windows in

¹⁷ "School in Snyagogue [sic]," *Kansas City Star* (17 August 1947): 8D; Permit No. 22399A, 22 September 1947.

¹⁸ Building permit #52826, September 10, 1957, "Alterations—Building and driveway as per plan and letter of 9-10-57; concrete masonry." The plan and letter noted in the permit no longer exist, so whether additional plaster partitions were added in 1957 is unknown.

¹⁹ This stair formerly led directly into the basement. Today, a concrete block wall (unknown date) separates the basement from the stair, and a door in the east concrete block wall at the bottom of the stair leads into the northwest corner of the basement.

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the north wall light the landing between the first floor and basement; three tall glass block windows light the landing between the first and second floors.

Three evenly spaced plaster beams line the ceiling of the foyer and connect to plaster pilasters on the east and west walls. Two pairs of doors within the east wall (plaster and brick, dating to 1920) lead into what was formerly the sanctuary. These French doors are within historic openings, but their construction and design support the fact that they post-date the period of significance. The vestibule, foyer, and stair have plaster walls and ceiling and terrazzo floor and base. A chandelier from 1920 adorns the ceiling above the vestibule.

The north pair of doors in the east wall of the foyer leads into a small hallway with historic wood floor and plaster ceiling. The north and east walls of this hallway appear to be gypsum board; the south wall is glass block (1947).²⁰ A wooden door at the west end of the north wall leads into a men's restroom, and a pair of wooden doors centered in the east wall of the hallway leads into the former sanctuary. The doors and trim details within this hallway to date to the period of significance.

The former sanctuary is the largest open space on the first floor (*Photo 7*). The second floor balcony extension in 1947 required the installation of the round steel columns and steel beams seen today in the first floor; these beams run north-south between plaster bulkheads, denoting the edge of the former balcony. Gypsum board walls on the north and south sides of the former sanctuary extend up to these plaster bulkheads and were likely installed during Hazelle Inc.'s tenure in the building.²¹ The wooden bimah from the synagogue remains centered on the east wall (*Photo 8*).²² The bimah features a short set of steps on either side of a rounded middle section, and turned balusters support the railing. Between the windows in the east wall and centered on the pulpit is the lower half of the two-story arched casing that likely held the Holy Ark. A series of wood doors pierce the west wall to the south of the entrance and open into closets; the materials and trim of these doors are common to the mid-century era. A narrow L-shaped hallway to the north of the entrance provides access to a small kitchenette, restroom, and closet; fixtures and finishes within them are non-historic. A pair of non-historic glass and metal doors in the north wall leads into a small hallway that provides access into large rooms to the east and west (both were

²⁰ See Figure 14.

²¹ Painted stenciling uncovered at the top of the south wall (plaster bulkhead) near the pulpit may date to the years the building functioned as a synagogue.

²² In Jewish synagogues, the bimah is the podium or platform from which the Torah is read.

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inaccessible during a June 2020 site visit); these non-historic rooms divided a larger space along the north side of the building.²³ A mid-century wood slab door in the south wall leads into offices. Non-historic gypsum board covers the ceiling at the west end of the former sanctuary. The ceiling at the center and east ends of the room has been mostly removed to reveal the wooden joists of the floor above; however, pressed board ceiling tiles from the 1950s remain around the perimeter of these ceiling sections.

The south pair of doors in the east wall of the foyer leads into the administrative area along the south quarter of the building (*Figure 15*). The foyer doors open into a waiting area; a square glass block conference room (1947) sits within the northwest corner of this waiting room. A wood door (probably 1947) with square glass window at the top pierces the south wall of the conference room. The east wall and ceiling of the waiting room are plaster. The floor is wood covered with carpet, which is typical of this portion of the building. The waiting area opens directly into an open office to the south. A short hallway along the north side of this open area organizes the offices. A glass-and-wood walled office sits to the east of the open office area. Wood paneling covers the east wall of this office. Continuing east, a narrow storage room separates the glass-walled office from the primary office at the east end of the hallway. A door in the north wall of this hallway, across from the storage room, leads into the former sanctuary. The east office has square wood panel walls and a wood floor (*Photo 9*). The plaster ceilings of the offices slope down from south the north, following the tiers of an upper balcony. The wood paneling, door trim, and wood-and-glass office walls appear to date to the mid-century when Hazelle, Inc. occupied the building.

Second Floor (*Figure 16*)

The main stair in the northwest corner of the building leads up to the second floor. The materials of the walls and partitions within the second floor indicate they were utilized or installed by Hazelle, Inc. A wall at the top of the stairs features a pair of wood-and-glass doors within a wood frame at the east end and a glass block wall at the west end; all likely date to 1947. A strip of glass blocks adorns the east wall of the stair (*Photo 10*). The stair doors lead into a wide hallway (*Photo 11*). The hallway has a wood floor (1920) and a dropped gypsum board ceiling (date unknown) below the original vaulted plaster ceiling.²⁴ A series of offices lines the west side of the hallway; wood doors in metal frames provide access into these offices, and the partition wall between the

²³ Observed materials, including hollow metal framing and unpainted gypsum board, indicate the walls were installed after 1975.

²⁴ The gypsum board ceiling likely dates to the period of significance due to the integration with the glass block and gypsum board partition walls, but the exact date between circa 1957 and 1975 is unknown.

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offices and hallway is glass block and gypsum board. The south office has a curved northeast corner. An opening within a wall at the south end of the hallway leads to the women's restroom in the southwest corner of the building. A door in the north wall of the hallway to the east of the stair doors leads into a kitchen with remnants of mid-century finishes, appliances, and fixtures; the ceiling of the kitchen is vaulted. The hallway's gypsum board east wall contains four wooden doors with wood frames matching those of the door to the second floor; these materials appear to date to Hazelle, Inc.'s tenure. The south door leads into a small storage room. The north pair of doors, with diamond lites at the top, and the door to the north of the storage room lead into the upper half of the former sanctuary, which Hazelle, Inc. used as production space (*Figure 19*).

The former sanctuary has a vaulted plaster ceiling with four round plaster medallions evenly spaced along the center of the vault (*Photos 12 & 13; Figures 12 & 19*). Each medallion features a Star of David. All but the easternmost medallion retain their decorative chandeliers from 1920. Between the windows in the east wall is the upper half of the two-story arched casing that likely held the Holy Ark. A carpeted platform (unknown date) fills the east end of the room. Small rooms at the northeast and southeast corners of the platform lead into larger rooms in the northeast and southeast corners of the building. These rooms have gypsum board walls, vaulted plaster ceilings, and wood doors and frames. The west wall of the former sanctuary features two half-round glass block windows at the top of the wall.

Basement (*Figure 17*)

A pair of doors in the south exterior wall leads directly from the sidewalk into the basement, as do the pedestrian and garage doors at the north end of the west elevation. A single door within the east wall of the first-floor vestibule leads on to a small landing with stairs leading down to the north (*Figure 18; Photo 14*). Glass block and plaster walls (1947) partition spaces within the basement. The floor is concrete. A small hallway at the bottom of the stairs leads west to bathrooms within the southwest corner of the building. A pair of metal doors due north of the basement steps leads into a series of mechanical rooms that occupy the northwest and north quarter of the basement (most were inaccessible during a June 2020 site visit).

Integrity

The Hazelle, Inc. Building retains historic integrity from its period of significance, circa 1958 to 1975. The building retains its historic location along Admiral Boulevard, and although the environs of the building have changed since it was constructed in 1920, the setting today reflects changes in place when the Hazelle company occupied the building.

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The building's design reflects changes that occurred after the building ceased to be a synagogue. The only major structural change occurred in 1947 when the balcony of the former sanctuary was extended, dividing the former two-story volume into two usable floors. This alteration was utilized by Hazelle, Inc., and the spaces were further subdivided by the company during the period of significance. Plaster and glass block walls also were installed during this 1947 alteration. These changes pre-dated Hazelle, Inc.'s occupancy, but the company utilized the configuration for its marionette production. The building's historic materials reflect the layers of its history; features from its days as a synagogue reside along mid-century details installed for both the Kansas City School of Watchmaking and the Hazelle company. Apart from some windows and doors, the majority of the building's design, workmanship, and materials reflect what was in place when the building gained significance for its association with Hazelle Hedges Rollins. As a result, the building today reflects the integrity of feeling and association with Rollins and her successful marionette business during the apex of her career.

Table 1. Character-defining Features of the Hazelle, Inc. Building

Exterior

- Gabled parapets
- Clay tile roof
- Steeply pitched roof
- Stone coping and finials
- Engaged buttresses
- Stone architraves and tabbed window surrounds
- Original 1920 double-hung windows on east elevation
- Loading bay on west elevation
- Glass block windows

Interior

- 1920s light fixtures in the entry and second floor
- Bimah and niche in east wall of former sanctuary where Holy Ark was located
- Terrazzo floors in stairs and entry
- Glass block partition walls
- Wood paneling in office
- Vaulted ceiling in second floor
- Northwest stair

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Summary Paragraph

The Hazelle, Inc. Building at 1224 Admiral Boulevard in Kansas City, Missouri, is locally significant under Criterion B in the area of COMMERCE for its direct association with marionette creator, innovator, and entrepreneur, Hazelle Hedges Rollins (1910-1984). Hazelle created a niche within twentieth century American puppetry through exclusively mass producing these toys for the education and entertainment of children. Hazelle believed puppets were ideal learning toys for children, and this philosophy allowed her to transform an interest in and talent for marionette design and construction into an international business. Ever the eager saleswoman, Hazelle grew her business from a group of eight women constructing marionettes in 1935 to fifty employees producing marionettes, hand puppets, and accessories by the mid-1970s and from a local audience to worldwide distribution. In 1962, during the company's tenure at the building on Admiral Boulevard, Hazelle, Inc. was one of the, if not the, largest exclusive puppet manufacturers in the world, producing and distributing over two hundred fifty thousand puppets annually. Between 1935 and 1975, Hazelle Hedges Rollins designed over three hundred puppets and received four patents for her designs; her innovations bolstered the appeal and production of her marionettes. As her company grew, Hazelle became a respected businesswoman in Kansas City. Hazelle operated solely out of Kansas City, Missouri, first as Hazelle's Marionettes then, beginning in 1956, as Hazelle, Inc. In circa 1958, the company relocated into the former Tiphereth Israel Synagogue, a three-story brick building constructed in 1920 on Admiral Boulevard. Hazelle Rollins retired in 1975 and sold the company, which finally closed in 1984. The Hazelle, Inc. Building at 1224 Admiral Boulevard is the best representative resource associated with the productive life of Hazelle Hedges Rollins. Its period of significance, circa 1958 to 1975, includes the years the company, led by Hazelle, operated out of this building and the years in which Hazelle reached the apex of her career. Because the period of significance ends in 1975, Criteria Consideration G applies. This building meets the consideration because of the importance of Hazelle Rollins and this building's direct association with her productive life and the apex of her career; she retired in 1975 while the company was still housed at 1224 Admiral Boulevard.

Narrative Statement of Significance

American Puppetry in the Early Twentieth Century

Puppetry is an ancient form of communication found in almost every culture. Puppets, through their human manipulators, tell stories. Be they fairy tales, cultural narratives, or political messages, puppets are an extension of the people manipulating them. American puppetry in the early twentieth century derived from European traditions, especially those in France and Germany,

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where theatrical puppet shows were performed privately in sitting rooms and nurseries by adults or children or publicly by traveling puppet troupes.²⁵ In America, as in Europe, this artistic medium took the form of marionettes—dolls that moved through the manipulation of strings—and hand puppets. By the early twentieth century, two parallel ideas emerged in American puppetry. One embraced puppets as an adult artistic expression, exploring modern questions related to politics and identity. The other upheld the medium as ideal for children’s entertainment and development. Together, the two beliefs formed the American Puppet Modernism movement that supported a range of expressions, from art performances with custom puppets to the mass production of the toys.²⁶

Proponents of puppet-as-art established what came to be known as the Little Theater Movement. Artists such as Ellen Van Volkenburg and Maurice Browne initiated the movement in Chicago in 1911 as a conscious alternative to commercial theaters. Custom-made marionettes, hand puppets, masks, and other props featured prominently in performances.²⁷

Puppeteers such as Tony Sarg chose to create puppets to perform in traveling shows. Born in Guatemala to a German father and English mother, Sarg (1880-1942) pursued a career in art, emigrating to the United States at the start of World War I. Sarg also created marionettes and entertained friends with them; he eventually established his own theater troupe, performing to adult and children’s audiences until the start of World War II. Sarg’s artistic expertise was sought by countless businesses and amateurs, the latter of whom he assisted through summer courses. Several leading puppeteers of the early twentieth century studied under Sarg, including Hazelle Rollins.²⁸

Innovation and technological advances characterize the puppetry of this era. The leading puppet master at the time, Tony Sarg, invented the first large balloon puppets for Macy’s Thanksgiving

²⁵ Paul McPharlin, *The Puppet Theatre in America: A History: 1524 to Now [1948]* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), 320.

²⁶ University of Connecticut, Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry (UCONN), “American Puppet Modernism: The Early 20th Century” Exhibit, text from panels (February-July 2018).

²⁷ UCONN “American Puppet Modernism.”

²⁸ UCONN, “Tony Sarg,” Puppeteer Biography Database <https://bimp.uconn.edu/education/american-puppeteers/tony-sarg/>; Mike Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes: Creating the World’s Largest Puppet Company* (Independence, Missouri: The Puppetry Arts Institute, 2005), 13-15; McPharlin, *The Puppet Theatre in America*, 334-335.

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Day Parades and created mechanized displays for department store windows.²⁹ New forms of puppets like the giant parade balloons often necessitated experimenting with manipulation methods such as the use of rods or the invention of new controls. New materials such as composites and plastics replaced more traditional materials such as wood, paper, and papier mache. Hazelle Rollins was one of the first puppet makers to utilize plastics in the production of her dolls.³⁰

Technological innovation in puppetry helped the commercial and advertising industries in the United States. As television became more commonplace, toy manufacturers sought to mass produce puppets based on favorite children's characters like Howdy Doody and Davy Crockett. Peter Puppet Playthings, based in New York, and Hazelle's Marionettes in Kansas City, Missouri, successfully capitalized on the popularity of children's television. Television also provided a new medium for advertising. Puppeteers such as Bil Baird, Frank and Elizabeth Haines, and even Jim Henson created puppets for products commonly advertised on television. Eventually, television and puppets merged into puppet shows for children. Baird created his own show in 1953; his show helped to keep an interest in puppets going in the post-World War II era. Born in Nebraska, Bil Baird (1904-1987) created and performed puppets for advertisements, night clubs, trade shows, children's television, and even the Broadway show *The Sound of Music*.³¹

Hazelle and Her Marionettes

Hazelle Hedges Rollins contributed to American Puppet Modernism movement through her innovative nature and philosophy that believed in the ability of a child to learn confidence, dexterity, and creativity through puppets. She combined these skills and her business savvy into a niche market within the toy industry.

Hazell Harriet Hedges (*Figure 20*) was born in Kansas City, Missouri in January 1910, the oldest child and only daughter of Ralph and Jessie Hedges. Named after her mother's maiden name, Hazelle added the ending "e" during her college years to emphasize the last syllable of her name (as in *gazelle*). Hazelle excelled as an artist and received a fine arts degree in 1932 from the

²⁹ UCONN, "Tony Sarg," Puppeteer Biography Database; Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 13-15; McPharlin, *The Puppet Theatre in America*, 334-335.

³⁰ Lemelson-MIT Program, "Hazelle Rollins: Advance in Puppetry," Historical Inventors Database, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

³¹ UCONN "American Puppet Modernism;" UCONN, "Bil Baird," Biography; Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 40-42.

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University of Kansas, intending to enter the fashion design profession. To that end, the year after graduation, Hazelle continued her education through classes at the Kansas City Art Institute.³²

The summer following her college graduation, twenty-two-year-old Hazelle unknowingly began her lifelong career when she befriended her eleven-year-old neighbor, Donald Newlin. Donald showed her an Italian-made marionette he had recently received. As Hazelle adeptly manipulated the puppet, Donald asked if she could make a marionette to accompany the one he had been given. She accepted the challenge, and within a few months, Donald, his brother, and several other neighborhood children each owned handmade marionettes from Hazelle. She designed the clothes, crafted the body parts and joints, painted the faces, and assembled each puppet. Throughout the next few years, Hazelle and the Newlin boys performed half-hour plays with their marionettes in schools and at birthday parties. Local department stores Emery, Bird, Thayer and Pecks even invited the trio to perform. In August 1934, Hazelle also taught children's marionette-making classes at the newly opened Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. Over one hundred children attended her classes, which culminated in the production of marionette plays also written by the students.³³

Hazelle's Marionettes (1935-1956)

Hazelle continued crafting marionettes during the early 1930s in the recreation room in her family house. Most of the dolls went to the children in her neighborhood, but some small local stores also sold her puppets. Demand continued to increase in late 1934 when larger local department stores placed orders for Christmas. In the spring of 1935, the toy buyer at Emery, Bird, Thayer suggested Hazelle attend the New York Toy Fair with some of her creations. This fair, held every March, was one of the biggest in the industry, bringing together buyers, manufacturers, and distributors from all over the country. Her marionettes were so popular that when she arrived back in Kansas City in the late summer of 1935, she had dozens of orders. The recreation room out of which she worked became so overwhelmed with parts that her father suggested she try to find an office. That fall, Hazelle hired seven women and established her company, Hazelle's Marionettes, within the Thayer Building (extant) in downtown Kansas City.³⁴

Between the New York Toy Fair and founding her company, Hazelle spent the summer in New York City with renowned puppet designer Tony Sarg. Hazelle worked backstage for Sarg,

³² Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 1-2, 9.

³³ Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 3, 10.

³⁴ Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 10-12, 16-17; Jane F. Flynn, "Hazelle Hedges Rollins," in *Kansas City Women of Independent Minds* (Kansas City, Fifield Publishing Co., 1992), 132.

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performed in his troupe's off-Broadway children's theater productions, and attended his two-week summer course on marionette design (*Figure 21*). While working for Sarg, she was encouraged to expand her marionette business, as the only exclusive puppet manufacturers in the world were in France, Italy, Germany, and what was then Czechoslovakia. Stores throughout the country, which imported puppets, would be eager to secure a domestic manufacturer.³⁵

Hazelle's Marionettes saw almost instant success. Department stores throughout Missouri and Kansas, as well as Chicago's Marshall Fields, increased their orders throughout the fall of 1935. In 1936, stores in New York and Philadelphia also sold her dolls, and by the end of that year, a quarter of the company's products were sold outside of the United States. Johannesburg, South Africa, sold more puppets in 1937 than retailers in Kansas City. Hazelle continued attending as many toy fairs and expositions as she could in order to increase her volume. Her company sold over fifty thousand marionettes by the end of 1938. While other toy manufacturers produced puppets, Hazelle's Marionettes remained the only domestic manufacturer exclusively producing them. As World War II approached, Hazelle's Marionettes shipped to every state in the country and to every continent (except Antarctica), and the company employed thirty-five people.³⁶

Part of the appeal of Hazelle's Marionettes had to do with the design of the puppet itself. Since Donald Newlin's challenge to create a marionette, Hazelle had experimented with the design of limbs and jaws to make the puppets move in a more lifelike manner.³⁷ The marionettes were constructed with carved wooden blocks attached with cloth joints. Wood composite was used to make the heads; these required up to fifteen dips in lacquer to make them shine after being hand painted. Hazelle designed each costume, which she and her staff hand sewed, using a machine only for seams. Wool crepe or English mohair, glued by hand, topped the heads. Hazelle also refined the design of the marionette controller. The "airplane controls," as she called them, allowed the puppeteer to manipulate the strings more easily because they kept the strings from tangling. Hazelle filed her first patent for her marionette design, including the controller, in the summer of

³⁵ Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 12, 16; Ann K. Ragan, "Hazelle Hedges Rollins, A Kansas City Puppet Phenomenon," *The Jackson County Historical Society Journal* (Summer 2015): n.p.

³⁶ Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 17-19, 21; Ragan, "Hazelle Hedges Rollins," n.p. Joly notes Great Britain, South America, Africa, Australia, and the Philippines.

³⁷ Lemelson-MIT Program, "Hazelle Rollins."

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1936 and received patent 2113839 in April 1938 (*Figure 22*). Hazelle also designed the packaging and advertising and wrote many of the scripts for the plays that accompanied each marionette.³⁸ Hazelle's business prowess is evident early in her career. Perhaps remembering Donald Newlin's interest in a second puppet, Hazelle marketed to the desire of children to not be content with just one. The plays she produced for her marionettes included multiple characters, and every year, Hazelle retired four characters to be replaced with four new ones. While individual dolls could be purchased for between \$2 and \$3.50 (wholesale), she also offered sets of dolls for between \$4 and \$12. These sets included Cinderella, Red Riding Hood, and the Three Little Pigs. She also provided marionette kits for children to assemble, complete with directions. She had learned through her time at the Nelson-Atkins that children could build the puppets themselves and have fun doing so. Her marketing matched the quality of her marionettes, as evidenced by the volume sold during the Great Depression. The prices assigned to each product were not insignificant, yet the company increased profits and volume during the difficult economic times of the 1930s.³⁹

Hazelle marketed her puppets to children. Her earliest brochures made sure to note that the characters offered were favorites in fairy tales popular with children. She also touted the use of marionettes in schools across the country to both assist in teaching and to spark creativity in children as they developed. Marionettes also became popular with adult interest groups to relay important messages. In the late 1930s, the Missouri State Conservation Commission used her puppets to help explain the need for wildlife preservation. During World War II, army bases utilized the dolls to help soldiers suffering from anxiety.⁴⁰

The increased demand for Hazelle's Marionettes necessitated larger quarters. In 1940, the company relocated from the Thayer Building to a larger space on 8th Street (not extant) approximately four blocks east. The following year, in 1941, Hazelle Hedges married John "Woody" Rollins, an industrial engineer. Rollins became integral to the company, first handling sales and advertising, and then, after World War II, helping improve production methods. The war saw a slight decrease in puppet production, mostly due to material shortages; however, Hazelle's

³⁸ Lemelson-MIT Program, "Hazelle Rollins;" Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 17; "Her Dolls Come Alive All Over the World," *Kansas Citian Magazine* 37, no. 27 (6 July 1948): 13.

³⁹ In 2020, the prices for each product ranged from approximately \$37 for a single puppet to \$220 for the sets. Brochures with prices and offerings reprinted in Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 21. "Her Dolls Come Alive All Over the World," 13.

⁴⁰ Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 21, 29.

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Marionettes continued to employ over thirty people and sell thousands of puppets across the country.⁴¹

Hazelle's Marionettes flourished in the years following World War II. The company moved into a new headquarters in 1946 at 10th and Campbell streets in Kansas City (not extant), just east of the central business district. At the time of the relocation, twenty-five employees produced one hundred fifty marionettes every day, but by the end of 1948, output nearly doubled due to new technology. That year, the company purchased its first injection molding machine, a six-ton unit that would be used to manufacture the heads and shoes, and installed the machine in the basement of their headquarters. The wood composition heads took between one and four weeks to cure; the new injection-molded Tenite (cellulose acetate) heads were ready for painting and assembly almost instantly (*Figure 23*), reducing the production time by almost one month. The company produced over forty different characters by the post-war years, including marionettes with moving jaws. They also started producing finger puppets, which were especially popular with schools. In the 1950s, over eight hundred department and toy stores across the country sold Hazelle's Marionettes, including F.A.O. Schwartz, Macy's, and Marshal Fields. Orders continued to be exported to international markets. Annual output from the factory on 10th Street averaged around fifty thousand dolls with only 1 percent remaining in Kansas City.⁴²

The 1950s saw competition increase for Hazelle's Marionettes. As television increased in popularity, toy companies such as New York's Peter Puppet Playthings and England's Bob Pelham introduced characters commonly seen on shows watched by children. Marionettes emulated the characters seen on Davy Crockett, the Lone Ranger, and other children's shows. Hazelle's Marionettes joined the trend, introducing new characters such as Buckaroo Bill and Sagebrush Sal.⁴³

Hazelle continued to refine her marionette designs in the early 1950s in order to remain competitive. In January 1950, she filed two inventions. Patent 2657499, issued in November 1953, improved the joints of a marionette's ankles and shoes to create more lifelike movements. In April 1957, she received her third patent, number 2788609; this design improved upon the jaw

⁴¹ Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 24, 29, 31; Ragan, "Hazelle Hedges Rollins," n.p.; "Her Dolls Come Alive All Over the World," 39.

⁴² Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 31, 26-27, 35; "Her Dolls Come Alive All Over the World," 13, 39; Flynn, *Hazelle Hedges Rollins*, 132.

⁴³ Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 40-41.

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movement. Other “talking” marionettes required a string to pull in order to close the mouth; when the string was slack, the mouth opened. Hazelle reversed this design. Using a spring, hinge, and lever, the mouth remained closed until a string was manipulated to open it. Whereas in the late 1940s, the company offered two dolls with moveable jaws, in the 1950s, Hazelle’s Marionette catalogue included twenty-three along with eleven traditional marionettes. In 1954, Hazelle received her fourth patent for the design of a two-sided stage, which her company also sold. One side featured a proscenium for marionette plays; the other side featured a raised wall for hand puppets (*Figure 24*).⁴⁴

Hazelle, Inc. (1956-1975)

The company relocated for the fourth and final time between the end of 1957 and the beginning of 1958.⁴⁵ Construction of the eastern portion of the highway encircling downtown Kansas City, Missouri, began in late 1957, forcing residents and businesses to relocate. At 10th and Campbell, Hazelle’s Marionettes was directly within the path of the highway corridor, and newspaper articles from August 1957 indicate block clearance was to begin in the fall of that year.⁴⁶ The company moved into the three-story brick building at 1224 Admiral Boulevard shortly after incorporating with the State of Missouri. Hazelle’s Marionettes became Hazelle, Incorporated in December 1956.⁴⁷ By the late 1950s, Hazelle, Inc. produced nearly fifty thousand marionettes annually, along with tens of thousands of hand puppets, stages, and other accessories. They employed eleven field representatives and distributed to over eighteen hundred stores.⁴⁸

Hazelle continued marketing her products to children. She believed puppets to be more than toys, stating, “They are widely used in teaching, in audio visual education in the primary grades, and in speech classes.”⁴⁹ In the late 1950s, Hazelle introduced another type of puppet to her product list. During a visit to children hospitalized at the University of Kansas Medical Center in Kansas City, Kansas, Hazelle realized that marionettes were too difficult for the kids to manipulate while bedridden, and at roughly \$4 a piece (\$37 in 2020), too expensive to hand out in bulk as gifts to

⁴⁴ Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 42, 50-53; patents available from Google Patents.

⁴⁵ The first mention of Hazelle at 1224 is a March 19, 1958 clipping in the *Kansas City Star* about a missing woman who worked at the company.

⁴⁶ “To Start Southeast Freeway Razing,” *Kansas City Star* (4 August 1957): 1A-2A; “Big Award for Right of Way,” *Kansas City Star* (30 August 1957): 2A.

⁴⁷ Missouri Secretary of State Business Entity Search, Hazelle Inc., Charter No. 88734 (registered 26 December 1956).

⁴⁸ Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 57.

⁴⁹ As quoted in Ragan, “Hazelle Hedges Rollins,” n.p.

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the children. She and Woody developed a hand puppet with vinyl heads and hands and a cloth body. The first hand puppets sold for just under eighty cents (\$8 in 2020) a piece. In 1964, Hazelle, Inc. distributed almost seventy different hand puppet characters—inspired by popular television shows, fairy tales, and animals—in three different styles. Her basic puppets operated with three fingers (one for each arm and the head); another line included puppets with operable mouths, and her “Head and Toe” puppets also had operable feet. The company also reintroduced a line of finger puppets geared toward preschoolers. These were popular with school districts all over the country, evidenced by one order for over ten thousand by the New York City school district in the late 1960s. Schools utilized the puppets as therapy tools to help children process trauma and anxiety.⁵⁰

The competition Hazelle, Inc. faced in the 1950s waned in the 1960s. The Peter Puppet Playthings out of New York discontinued their production of marionettes, and England’s Pelham Puppets Company marketed to more niche audiences. Toy manufacturers such as Effanbee introduced puppets along with other items, but Hazelle, Inc. remained the largest exclusive manufacturer of puppets and marionettes, claiming to be the largest such company in the world in 1962.⁵¹

As founder and namesake, Hazelle eagerly promoted her business throughout its existence. She attended every trade and industry show, including the annual New York Toy Fair and included an exhaustive brochure within shipments to department stores on how to sell the marionettes. She was even known to take marionettes out of the packaging in stores to show children how they worked, and to make pit stops to potential new customers while on family vacations.⁵² Along with the company’s field representatives, Hazelle’s Marionettes employed young puppeteers to show off the marionettes in local stores. Pady Blackwood recalled an incident when he worked as a young salesman in the 1950s; Hazelle guided him to smile, be confident, and demonstrate the resiliency of the Tenite heads by smacking them on the counter.⁵³

As a successful businesswoman, Hazelle became involved with several organizations in the Kansas City area. Mayor H. Roe Bartle appointed her to the Women’s Commission for International Relations and Trade in 1957. The thirty-woman commission toured South America on a goodwill trip in October of that year, around the same time Hazelle Inc. was relocating from 10th Street to

⁵⁰ Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 77-80; 89; Ragan, “Hazelle Hedges Rollins,” n.p.

⁵¹ Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 77-80; Ragan, “Hazelle Hedges Rollins,” n.p.

⁵² Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 40.

⁵³ Pady Blackwood, “Remembering Hazelle,” *The Puppetry Journal* 53, no. 4 (Summer 2002): 7.

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Admiral Boulevard, to learn about and form relationships with business leaders in cities across the continent.⁵⁴ She also served as director of the Kansas City Women’s Chamber of Commerce. In the 1960s and 1970s, Hazelle served on a number of boards and received several awards. The University of Kansas named her one of their Outstanding Business Women in 1966. In 1972, Hazelle became the first chair of the Kansas City Region of the United States Small Business Administration. The year after she retired, United States Treasury Secretary William E. Simon appointed Hazelle to the twenty-five-person Treasury Small Business Advisory on Economic Policy in 1976.⁵⁵

Hazelle sold her business in 1975 at the age of sixty-five. At the time of the sale, the company continued distributing hundreds of thousands of puppets annually. In the 1970s, hand and finger puppets had become the primary product manufactured by Hazelle, Inc. Between 1975 and 1984, the former Hazelle, Inc. went through four new owners, each of whom were unable to sustain the business started by a twenty-five year old woman in the midst of the Great Depression.

The Occupants of 1224 Admiral Boulevard

In its first fifty-five years, the three-story building at 1224 Admiral Boulevard hosted three diverse functions. Congregation Tiphereth (Tifereth; Tefaris) Israel constructed the brick Tudor Revival synagogue in 1920 (*Figure 7*). The building replaced an existing Lutheran church that the congregation utilized from 1908.⁵⁶ Tiphereth Israel was one of five Orthodox congregations in Kansas City at the time. Herman Simon is the attributed architect and Flanagan Construction Company the contractor.⁵⁷ The basement level of the new synagogue functioned as a social hall. The sanctuary occupied all but the western fifth of the main floor; this western portion of the building contained the circulation core with primary entry and stair, and a plaster wall separated the sanctuary from this lobby area. The stair, located in the northwest corner of the building,

⁵⁴ Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 53, 55; “Tell of Goodwill Trip, *The Kansas City Star* (21 November 1957): 22.

⁵⁵ Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 143-144; “Ragan, “Hazelle Hedges Rollins,” n.p.; Flynn, *Hazelle Hedges Rollins*, 132.

⁵⁶ Missouri Historic Property Inventory Form (93JA0343) for Tiphereth Israel Synagogue (May 1993); advertisements for Memorial Lutheran at Admiral and Tracy appear in the 1907 *Kansas City Star*. The 1909 Sanborn (vol. 2, sheet 198) shows a brick church structure at this location and notes that Congregation Tefaris Israel occupied the building.

⁵⁷ Permit No. 12687, 25 June 1920. The architect listed on the permit is H. Siamon; however, this name does not appear in any Kansas City directories of the time period. Herman F. Simon, owner of the Kansas City Architectural Decorating Company, is the likeliest person responsible for the design. Apart from directories and census records, little is known of Simon.

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provided access to each floor. The balcony level of the sanctuary covered almost all of the second floor. The U-shaped balcony spanned the north, west, and south sides of the main sanctuary (*Figure 25*). The east wall featured the Holy Ark and bimah. Congregation Tiphereth Israel joined with four other area Orthodox congregations in 1945 to form Kehilath Israel. After twenty-five years in their synagogue on Admiral Boulevard, the congregation offered the building for sale.⁵⁸

In the summer of 1947, the Kansas City School of Watchmaking purchased the former synagogue from the congregation. The school sought to use the building as their permanent headquarters. Gustave Van Erp established the school in 1936, and at the start of World War II, it was one of eleven in the country, operating out of multiple locations within the city until 1947.⁵⁹ An August article in the *Kansas City Star* from that year reported that the school intended to consolidate into this single location and considerably remodel the building's interior, spending more than \$50,000. The most substantial alteration was the extension of the sanctuary's balcony to create a full usable second floor out of the two-story volume.⁶⁰ The alterations also included the installation of glass block windows and partitions (*Figures 12 through 14*). The article also noted that once completed, the school would have an auditorium along with smaller classrooms, "cafeteria, tool cribs, lathe rooms, storage space and other training rooms."⁶¹ A circa 1949 promotional brochure for the school shows the second floor hosting the watchmaking classroom, the first floor's former sanctuary as an engraving studio and stone setting classroom, with laboratories, polishing, and casting in the basement.⁶²

The building on Admiral allowed the watchmaking school to operate out of a single facility larger than any of their other locations. The school targeted returning veterans, and enrollment substantially increased in the decade following World War II; this prompted the need of the larger space. The enrollment increase followed national trends, which saw the number of watchmaking schools proliferate in the immediate post-war years. The Kansas City School of Watchmaking was

⁵⁸ "History of Kehilath Israel," Kehilath Israel Synagogue website, <https://www.kisyn.org/who-we-are/history-of-kehilath-israel> (accessed 30 May 2020).

⁵⁹ David A. Christianson, "Watchmaking Education in America: 1708-2006," *Horological Times* (Dec. 2006): 9.

⁶⁰ "School in Snyagogue [sic]," *Kansas City Star* (17 August 1947): 8D; Permit No. 22399A, 22 September 1947.

⁶¹ "School in Snyagogue [sic]," 8D.

⁶² *Kansas City School of Watchmaking*, promotional brochure, undated [circa 1949]. Jackson County (Mo.) Historical Society. L94.05 F11.

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one of over eighty schools in the United States in this era, four of which were located in Missouri.⁶³ The Kansas City School of Watchmaking maintained its presence within this building from 1947 through 1969, sharing the building with Hazelle, Inc. for nearly twelve of those years.⁶⁴ By 1950, the school also maintained an auxiliary space on 31st Street.⁶⁵ Following national trends, enrollment in the school decreased in the decades following the war, and as a result, the school required less space, diminishing their presence in the building.⁶⁶ Gem City College of Quincy, Illinois, acquired the Kansas City Watchmaking School in 1969 as a satellite campus. The school moved to the Fairfax Building (101 W. 11th Street) that year and then to 4528 Main Street in 1971.

By March 1958, the building at 1224 Admiral Boulevard also housed Hazelle, Inc. In the summer of 1957, demolition crews began clearing Campbell Street between 6th and 12th streets for the construction of the Southeast Freeway (I-35/I-29). Hazelle's Marionettes, located at 10th and Campbell streets, was directly affected by this civic project, and the company received \$42,000 in federal funds to mitigate their forced relocation.⁶⁷ When interviewed in August 1957 about the impending highway project, Hazelle simply expressed the hope that they would not have to move before Christmas due to the holiday rush in the fall.⁶⁸ How or why the Admiral Boulevard building was selected as the new headquarters of Hazelle, Inc., is so far unknown. However, the building did provide a larger production area than their previous location on 10th Street. A September 1957 permit for this building states alterations to the building were estimated at \$5,000.⁶⁹ The exact use of every space within the building by Hazelle, Inc. is currently unknown. However, the company used the third floor, designating a specific area for sewing (*Figure 19*), and Hazelle utilized the bimah in the former sanctuary on the main floor to conduct shows for visitors.⁷⁰ The heavy machinery necessary for extruding and painting doll parts likely occupied at least a portion of the

⁶³ Christianson, "Watchmaking Education in America," 10.

⁶⁴ City directory entries and newspaper advertisements list the school at 1228 Admiral after 1957. From 1958 to 1969, the school may have operated out of the basement of the former synagogue, using the exterior access door on the south side of the building.

⁶⁵ *The Kansas City Centennial* (Kansas City, Missouri: The Kansas City Centennial Association, 1950), 64.

⁶⁶ Christianson, "Watchmaking Education in America," 12. The peak enrollment period for these school was 1950-1953, according to Christianson.

⁶⁷ "Big Award for Right of Way," 2A. This is equivalent to over \$380,000 in 2020.

⁶⁸ "To Start Southeast Freeway Razing," 1A-2A.

⁶⁹ Permit No. 52826, 10 September 1957. Specific alterations to the building are not mentioned in the permit, cf. footnote 6.

⁷⁰ Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 98.

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basement due the proximity to the chemical storage appendage, the loading bay, and the concrete floor. The remaining spatial use is unknown.⁷¹

Despite housing two functions for nearly twelve years, the significance of the building at 1224 Admiral is directly tied to its association with Hazelle Hedges Rollins and her company. The company owned and altered the property to be their headquarters for seventeen years, longer than any other facility in Kansas City, and it is the best representative property associated with Hazelle's productive life.

Additional Resources Related to Hazelle Hedges Rollins

The building at 1224 Admiral Boulevard is the resource best associated with the productive life of Hazelle Hedges Rollins. However, in order to understand why, the following section explores other resources associated with her. Because Hazelle spent most of her life in Kansas City, several buildings in the city are associated with her. The residences in which she lived still stand (*Figure 26*). Hazelle and her family lived in a two-story Prairie style house at 4118 Holly from her birth in 1910 to 1932. The house today no longer retains sufficient historic integrity, as it is missing a distinctive one-story front porch, and secondary siding covers most of the exterior walls. Further, while she grew up in this building, the house is not associated with her productive life.

In 1932, following Hazelle's graduation from the University of Kansas, the family moved to a larger two-story Tudor Revival house at 815 West 59th Street. Soon after relocating, Hazelle befriended Donald Newlin, who unknowingly sparked her successful career. It was in the house on West 59th Street that Hazelle began constructing and selling her first marionettes.⁷² This house is significant to Hazelle's productive life as the location where the idea formed, and the business began. The house appears to retain historic integrity. She lived at this house until 1941, but her business relocated in circa 1936.

As orders for her marionettes grew, Hazelle's Marionettes occupied three rooms in the extant Thayer (Bracken) Building at 820-822 Broadway (*Figure 27*), a contributing building to the

⁷¹ Sources and repositories searched include newspapers, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, Missouri Valley Special Collections at the Kansas City Public Library, Jackson County Historical Society.

⁷² The 1932 city directory lists the family on Holly; the 1933 directory has them on West 59th Street. Also according to the 1933 directory, the Newlin family lived at 805 West 59th Street.

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Wholesale District in downtown Kansas City.⁷³ Built between 1883 and 1884, this four-story Italianate commercial building at the northwest corner of 9th Street and Broadway housed a number of Kansas City businesses of varying sizes. While here, in 1936 Hazelle filed her first of four patents, receiving patent 2113839 in 1938. Hazelle Marionette's occupied the Thayer Building until 1940. Orders for her puppets continued to increase during the 1930s, necessitating the relocation to a larger facility. The Thayer Building was listed in the National Register in 1979 as part of a historic district significant to Kansas City for its architectural and commercial history. Part of its commercial significance could be attributed to its housing Hazelle's Marionettes during the company's formative years.

From 1940 to 1946, Hazelle's Marionettes operated out of 107 West 8th Street (*Figure 28*).⁷⁴ Even during the uncertainty of World War II, Hazelle managed to employ nearly forty people and distribute tens of thousands of puppets each year from this building on 8th Street. After the war, demand for toys increased, and Hazelle's Marionettes answered the call. For the third time since establishing her business, Hazelle relocated to a larger facility. The building on 8th Street, directly north and within the same block as the New England Life Building, was demolished in the 1960s; today a parking garage covers the north half of this block.

In 1941, Hazelle moved out of her family house on West 59th Street due to her marriage to John "Woody" Rollins. The couple lived in a modest two-story Prairie style house at 3945 Benton Boulevard from 1941 to 1947, adding their two children to the family while here. For the next three years the family lived in a one-and-a-half story brick Minimal Traditional at 707 East 72nd Street. She entertained her children, and likely any other guests, in the basement of this house, using a colorful stage with mini floodlights.⁷⁵ Beginning in 1950, the Rollins family settled in a large two-story Tudor Revival at 801 West 63rd Street, not far from the house on 59th Street where Hazelle started her business. Each of these houses are associated with Hazelle's productive life in that these were houses in which she lived while growing and thriving in her marionette business. Neither the house on Benton Boulevard nor the house on East 72nd Street appear to retain sufficient historic integrity to be individually listed due to later alterations. The house on 63rd Street does appear to retain historic integrity. Hazelle resided at this house longer than any other, and it was while living here that Hazelle became a leader in the women's business community of Kansas

⁷³ "Her Dolls Come Alive," 39; Edward J. Mischuk, "Wholesale District," National Register nomination (1978): 7-4 & 8-0. District was listed in 1979. NRIS #79001375 primarily for its commercial and architectural significance.

⁷⁴ Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 17; city directories; "Her Dolls Come Alive," 13, 39.

⁷⁵ Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 33.

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City. No doubt Hazelle and her family entertained important businesspeople and community peers while at the house on 63rd Street. However, the building at 1224 Admiral is directly tied to the business through which she gained her significance.

While the Rollinses lived on East 72nd Street, Hazelle's Marionettes relocated from their headquarters on 8th Street to a larger facility at 901-905 West 10th Street in Kansas City in 1946 (not extant). Almost two years after locating to this two-story commercial building at the southeast corner of 10th and Campbell (*Figure 29*), the company remodeled it in order to expand the usable factory space. They fully operated out of the building's two stories and the basement, designing, producing, and shipping toys across the world.⁷⁶ Hazelle's Marionettes employed twenty-five people at this factory who produced one hundred fifty marionettes every day; after the remodel, the output doubled. The company hit its stride in the decade it occupied the building at 10th and Campbell. In 1948, the company purchased an injection molding machine that initiated the shift from using a wood composite material to Tenite in the production of doll parts. The plastic parts reduced production time and increased output. Hazelle filed two additional patents in 1950, receiving them in 1954 and 1957, and in 1953, she filed her final patent, which also was awarded in 1954. Hazelle's Marionettes remained at 10th and Campbell until 1958 when, due to the construction of the Southeast Freeway, the company once again relocated. The building at 901-905 West 10th Street was demolished sometime between the fall of 1957 and the spring of 1958.

The Admiral Boulevard building is the best extant resource associated with the commercial significance of Hazelle Hedges Rollins and specifically with the productive life of her marionette business. The company, which incorporated in 1956 under the name Hazelle, Inc., remained at this location until 1975 when Hazelle retired, longer than any other within the city. By the time of its relocation, Hazelle was already an internationally known producer of marionettes and puppets. During the 1950s and 1960s, she continued to diversify her puppet offerings, producing puppets of various levels of difficulty and introducing a new hand puppet for children who could not operate marionettes. In 1962, Hazelle, Inc. was the largest sole producer of puppets and marionettes in the world, and by the time she retired in 1975, Hazelle, Inc. employed fifty people. The only other extant commercial building associated with Hazelle Hedges Rollins is the Thayer Building where she began her company. The building on Admiral Boulevard represents the apex of the career of a woman who successfully turned her initial interest in creating a marionette for a neighbor boy into an international puppet business.

⁷⁶ "Her Dolls Come Alive," 13.

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Conclusion

The legacy of Hazelle Hedges Rollins is the role she played in the history of American puppetry, specifically as a successful leader in marketing marionettes and puppets for children. As an inventor, Hazelle patented marionette designs to aid children in their growth and education; as an entrepreneur, she established a business in Kansas City that built, marketed, and sold marionettes and puppets she designed. Her company grew almost every year she was in business as she developed new characters and diversified the types of puppets offered. Her company produced thousands of products each year, selling to a toy market that covered the United States and extended into several countries. As a student of Tony Sarg, Hazelle was also the peer and friend of puppeteers like Bil Baird and Jim Henson, and she is credited in numerous sources as the founder of Puppeteers of America.

Upon her retirement, Hazelle donated her private marionette collection, as well as several examples from her own company, to the Kansas City Museum, the University of Kansas, the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, and the Smithsonian Institution. Her contributions to the world of puppetry are noted in the Lemelson-MIT Program's database of innovators and at the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry at the University of Connecticut. In 2018, this institution included Hazelle Rollins in its exhibit about Twentieth Century American Puppet Modernism. She successfully marketed her talents to bring puppets to a mass audience of children throughout the world; without her business acumen, Hazelle never could have succeeded in reaching so many people. Therefore, the building at 1224 Admiral Boulevard in Kansas City, Missouri, is nominated to the National Register in the area of Commerce for its direct and best association with entrepreneur Hazelle Hedges Rollins. The building also meets Criteria Consideration G because of its direct association with Hazelle Rollins's productive career.

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Geographic Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The building at 1224 Admiral Boulevard occupies the eastern two-thirds of Lot 10 and the south 25' of Lot 9 in Ranson & Talley's Addition, Block G. The nominated boundary includes all of lot 10 and the south half of lot 9 further defined as a rectangular area bounded by Admiral Boulevard to the south, a mid-block alley to the west, stone and CMU retaining walls to the north, and Tracy Avenue to the east. See Figures 2 & 3.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the land occupied by the Hazelle Building as well as the vacant west portions of the lots. The 1909 Sanborn map of this block shows two wood frame houses occupied the now-paved lot to the west of the building. These houses presumably were razed around 1920 when the current building was constructed. Subsequent Sanborn maps and aerial images show this lot remained vacant. The paved lot facilitated access to the loading dock at the ground level of the west elevation. The boundary is drawn to include the most significant resource associated with Hazelle Hedges Rollins.

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Figure 1. Contextual map, showing the building within Kansas City. Source: Base map from Google.



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Figure 2. Boundary map. Boundary denoted by dashed line. Source: Base map from Kansas City, Missouri Parcel Viewer (maps.kcmo.org/apps/parcelviewer)



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Figure 3a. Photo at left is looking NE along Admiral; at right, the view is to the NW. Source: Brad Finch, June 2020.



Figure 3b. View SE across Admiral from the Hazelle Building. Source: Google Streetview, March 2019.

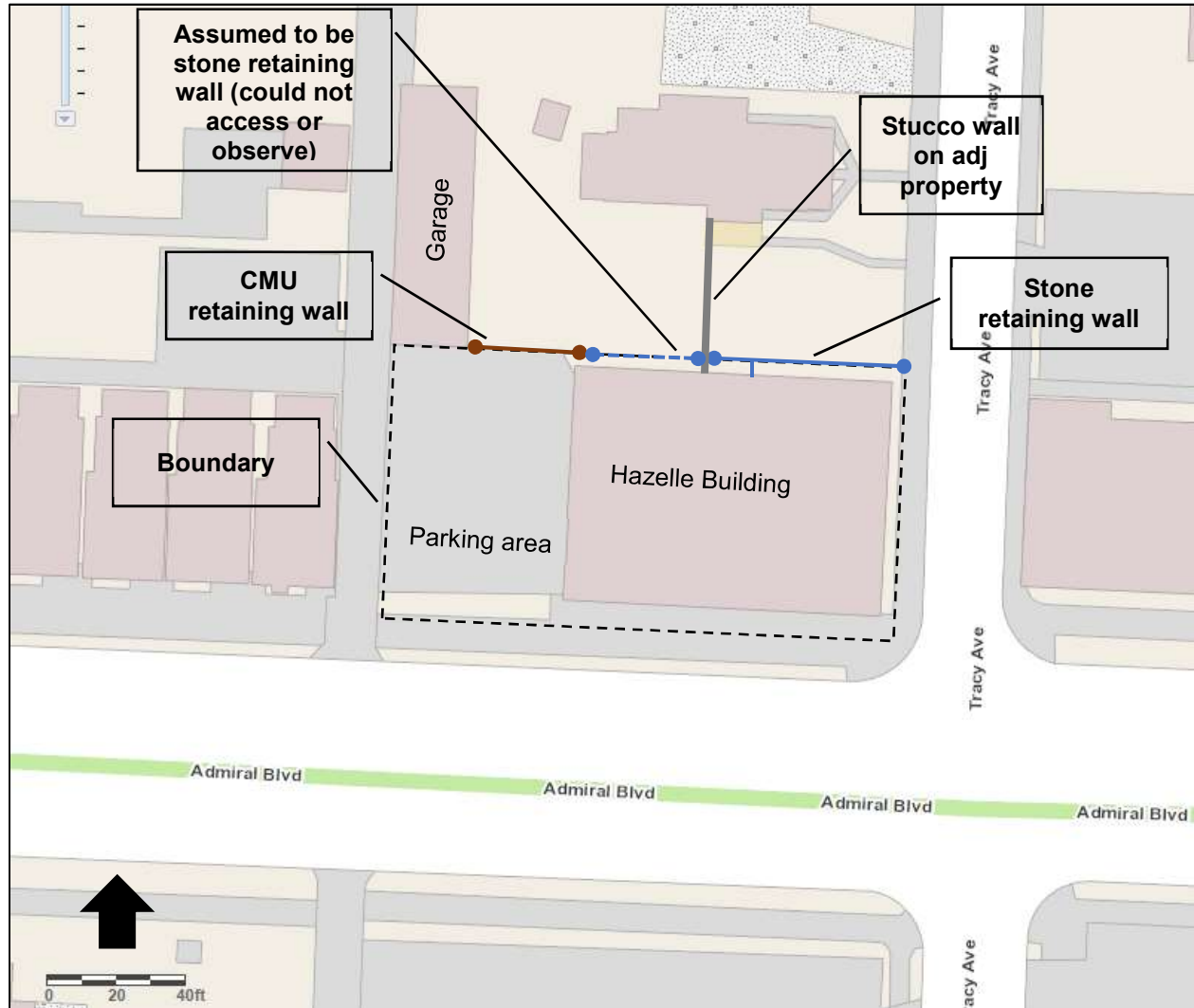


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Figure 4. Diagram showing Hazelle Building within its context. Base map shows building outlines, paved surfaces, and landscape areas. Base map from Kansas City, Missouri Parcel Viewer (maps.kcmo.org/apps/parcelviewer).



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Figure 5. North side of the Hazelle, Inc. Building, looking west from Tracey Avenue through gate and showing the narrow gap between the building and the lawn to the north. Source: Brad Finch, June 2020.



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Figure 6. South façade of adjacent garage and CMU retaining wall on property to the north of the Hazelle Building. Source: Brad Finch, June 2020.



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Figure 7. The building in 1940, looking NW, when functioning as a synagogue. Note presence of sidewalks and grassy verge. Source: Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City 1940 Tax Assessment Photograph Collection, District 5, Block 45.



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Figure 8. A circa 1949 photograph of the building, showing glass block at ground level. Source: *Kansas City School of Watchmaking*, cover.



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Figure 9. The building at 1224 Admiral Blvd. in 1971 while occupied by Hazelle, Inc. View is to the northwest. Note glass block at ground level of the main façade and center windows of the third story on the east elevation. Source: Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 89.

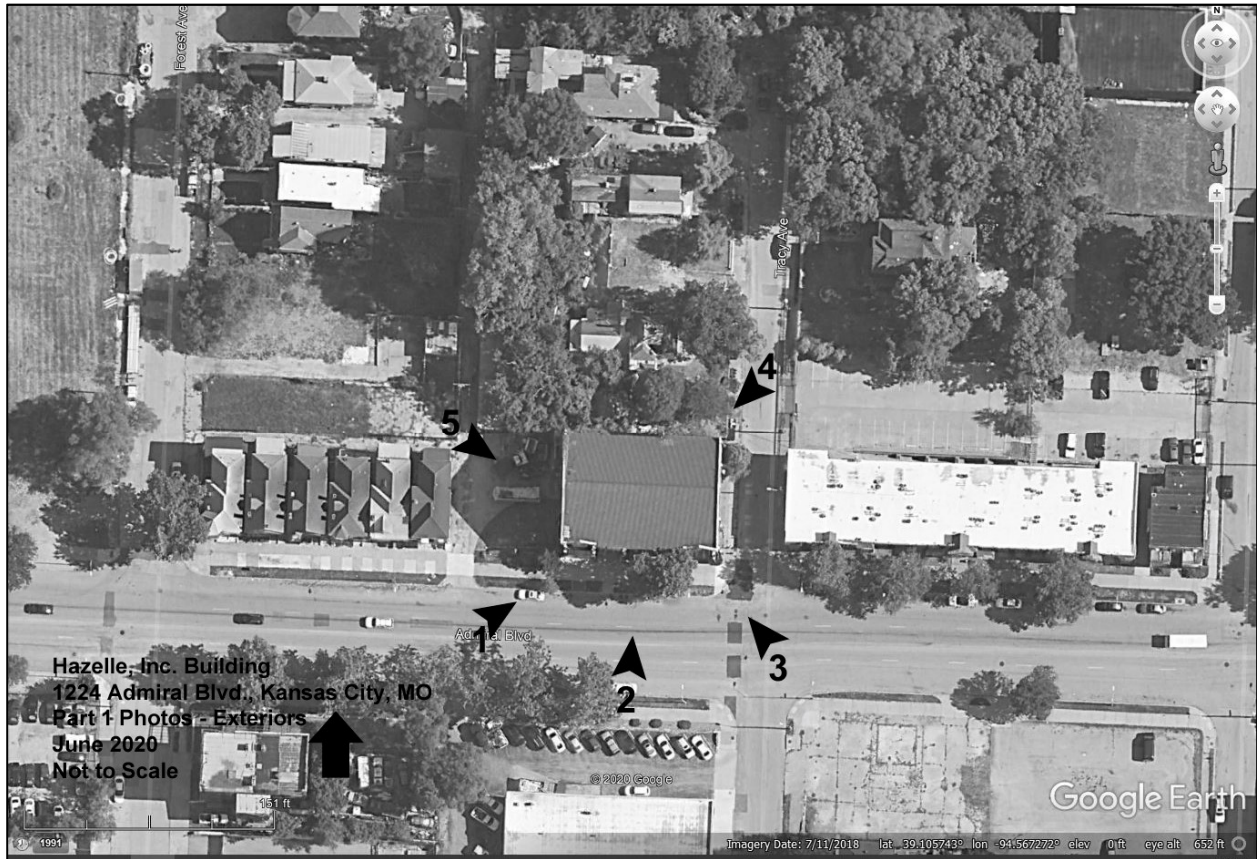


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Figure 10. Exterior photo map. Base map from Google.



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Figure 11. Detail of main entrance, showing current front doors. Source: Brad Finch, June 2020.

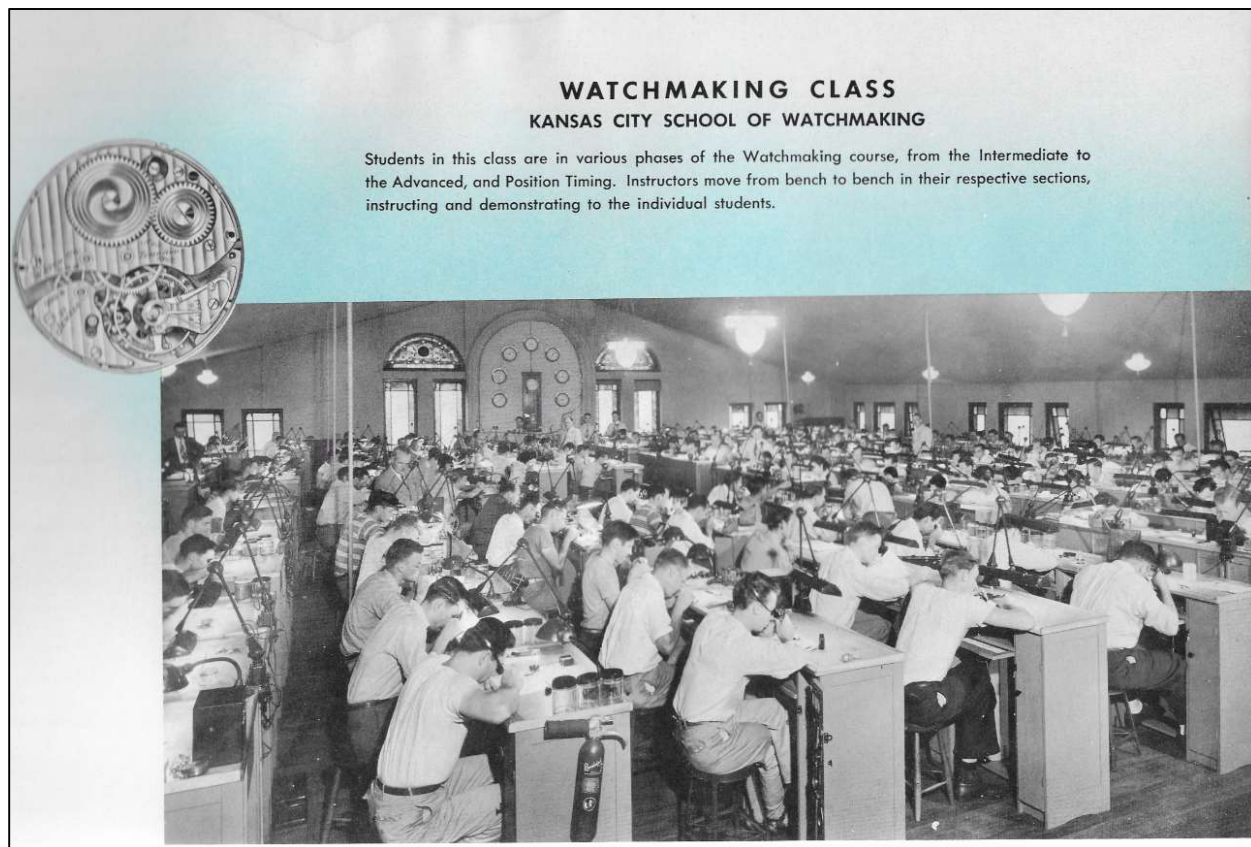


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Figure 12. Image of the second floor as utilized in circa 1949 by the Kansas City School of Watchmaking. The camera is facing east-southeast. Note historic windows in place and no partitions within the corners. Source: *Kansas City School of Watchmaking*, 7. Photo also featured in *The Kansas City Centennial*, 64.



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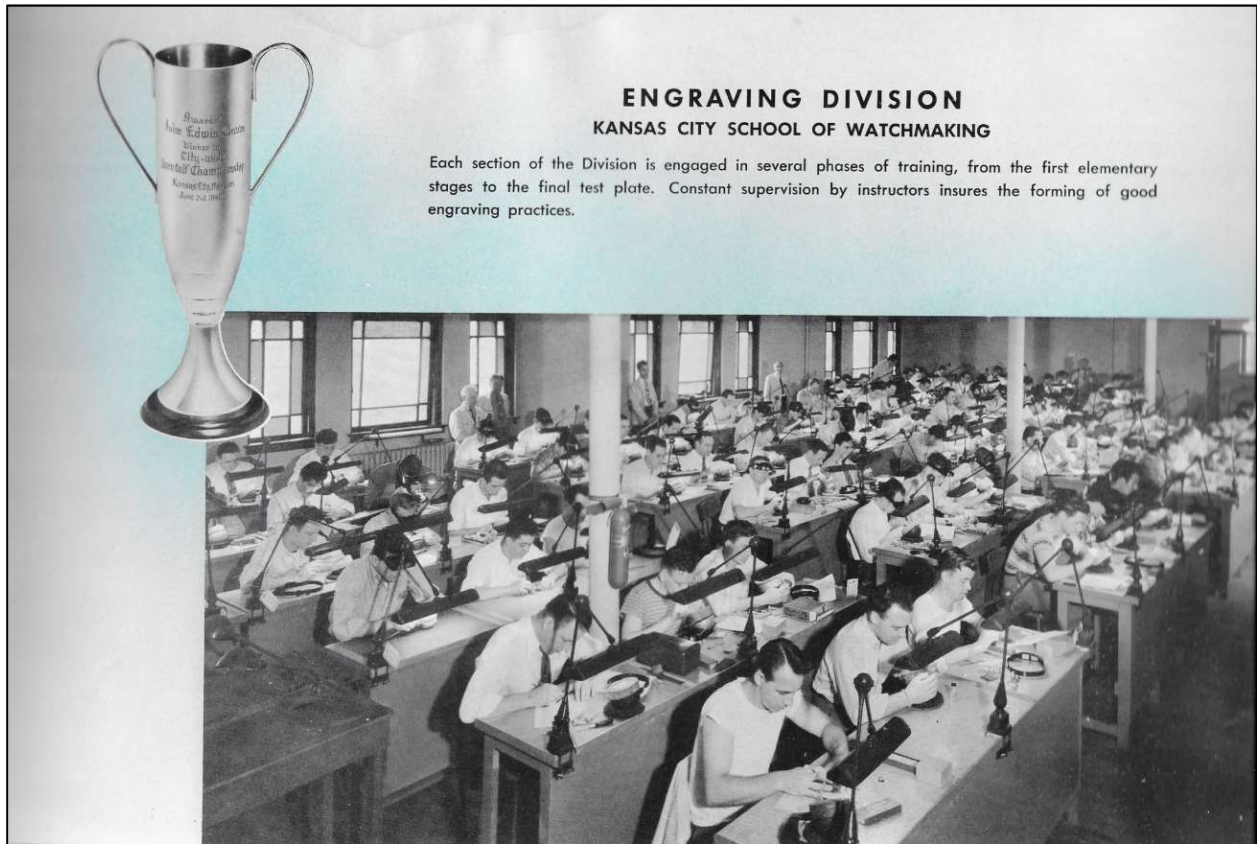
Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

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Figure 13. First floor of sanctuary, looking SW from bimah. Source: *Kansas City School of Watchmaking*, 11.



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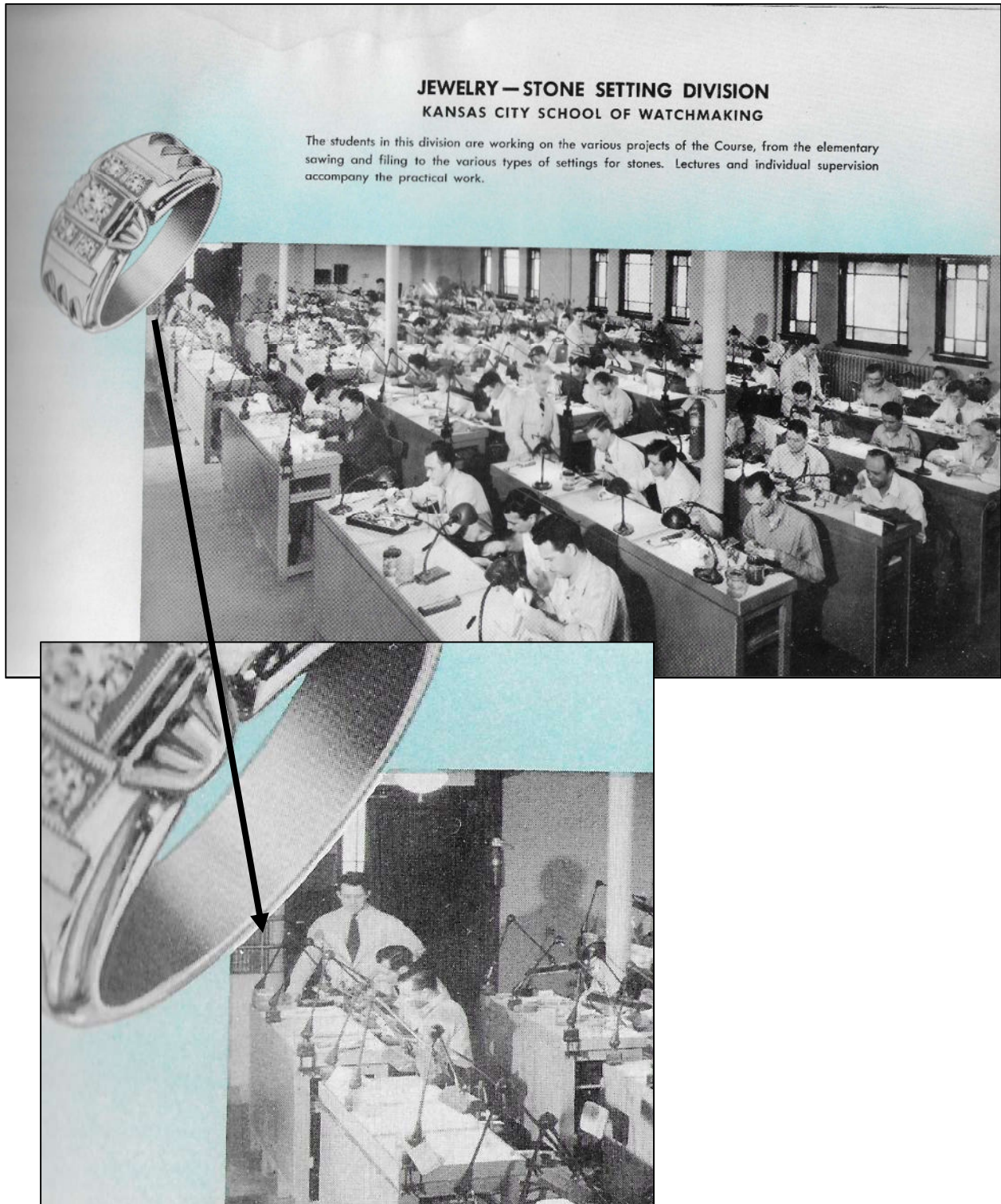
Jackson County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

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Figure 14. First floor sanctuary, looking NW from bimah. Note glass block and plaster wall. This wall encloses a small conference room in the office area today and is visible in the hallway connecting the foyer to the sanctuary. Source: *Kansas City School of Watchmaking*, 15.

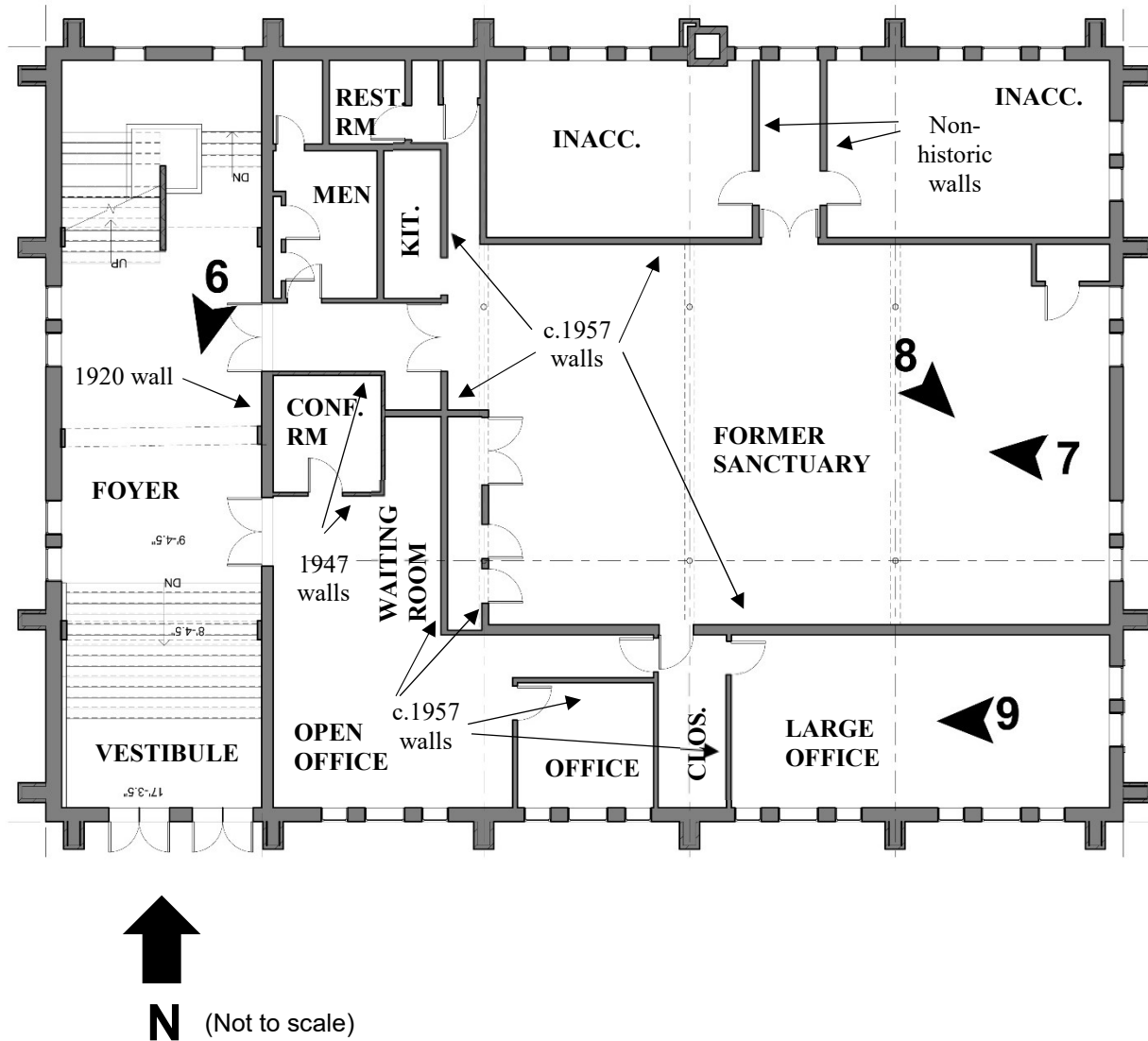


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Figure 15. Current first floor plan and photo map. Base drawing from Caton Architectural Design, 2020.

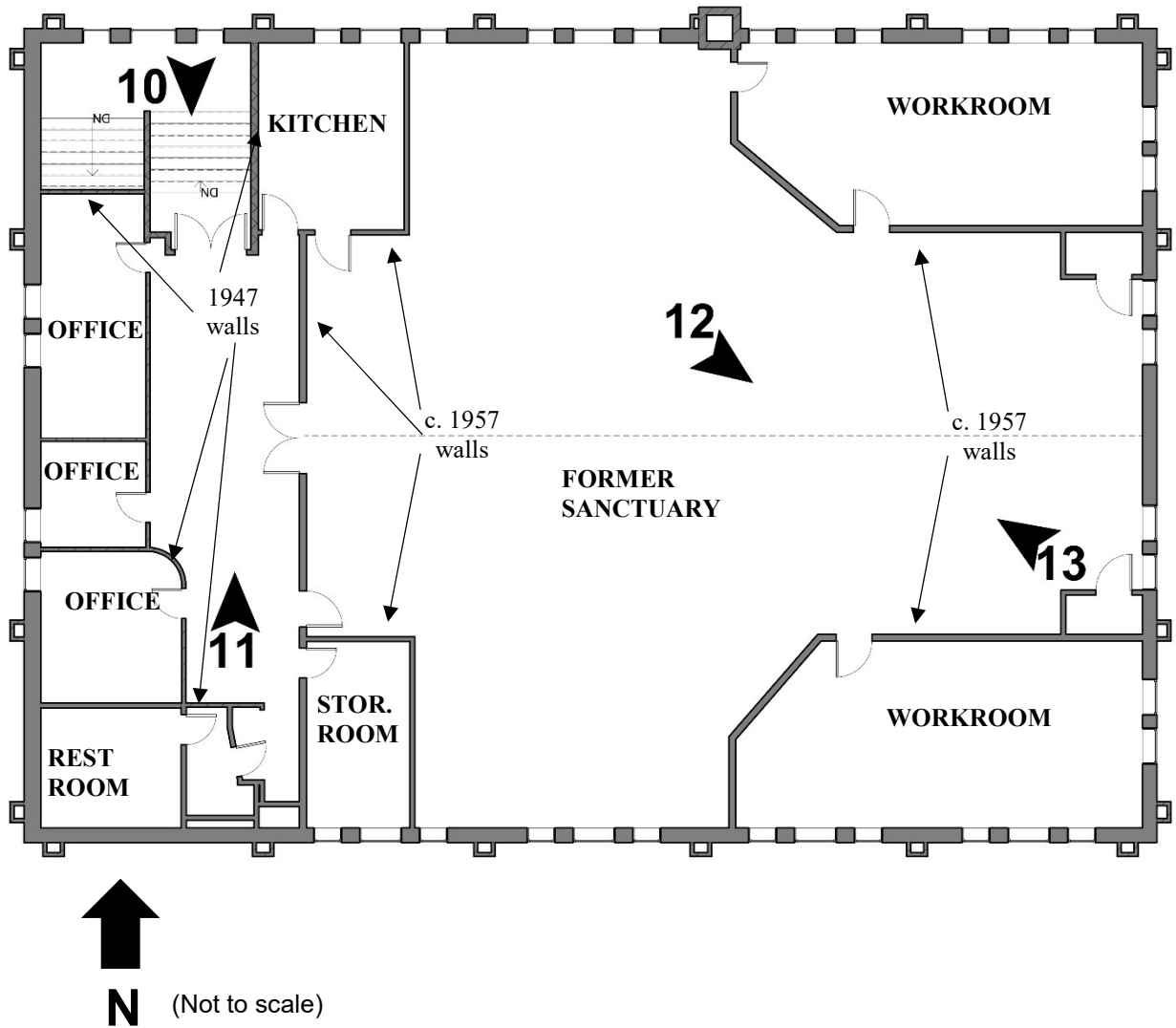


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Figure 16. Current second floor plan and photo map. Base drawing from Caton Architectural Design, 2020.

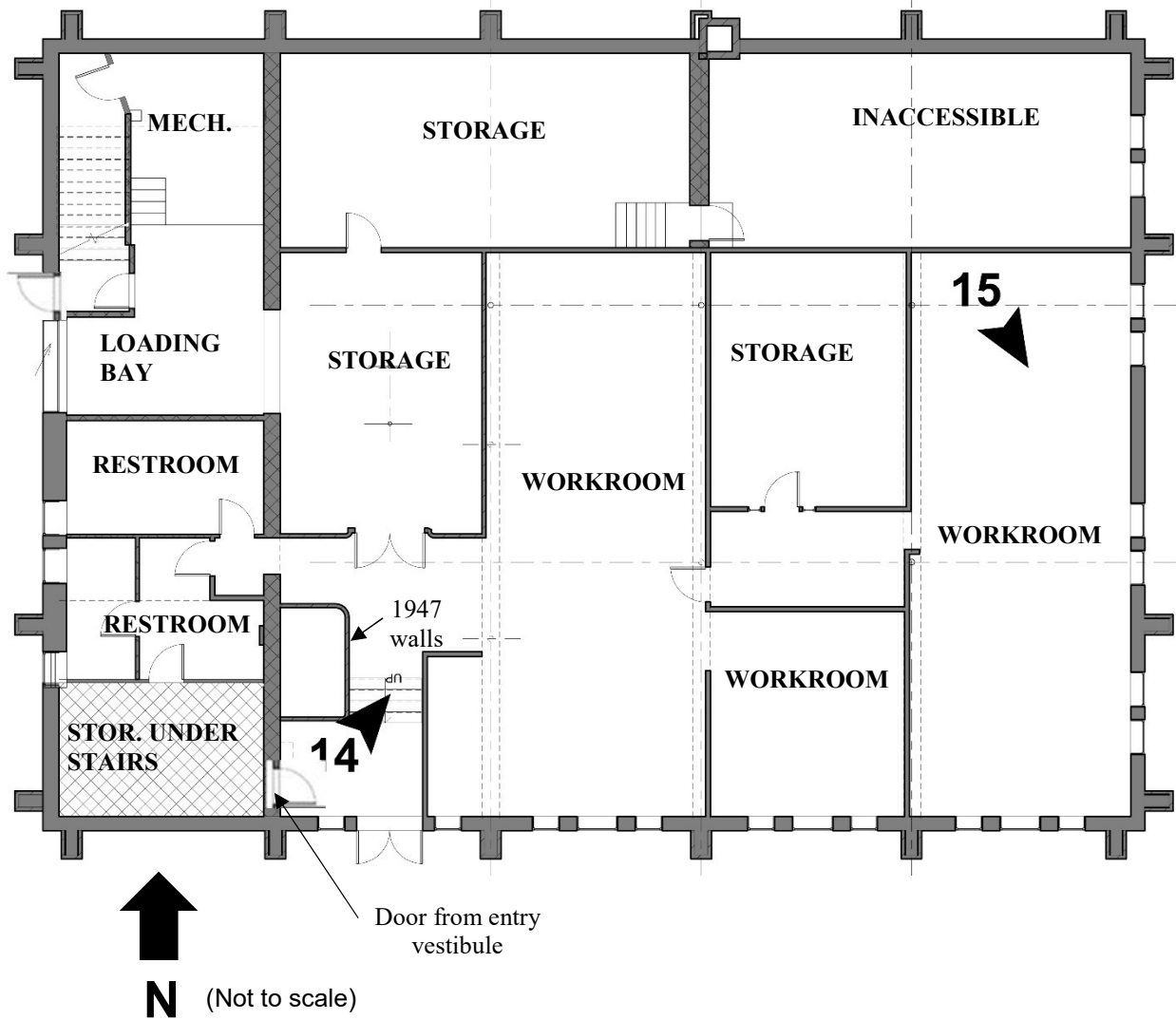


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Figure 17. Current basement plan and photo map. Base drawing from Caton Architectural Design, 2020.

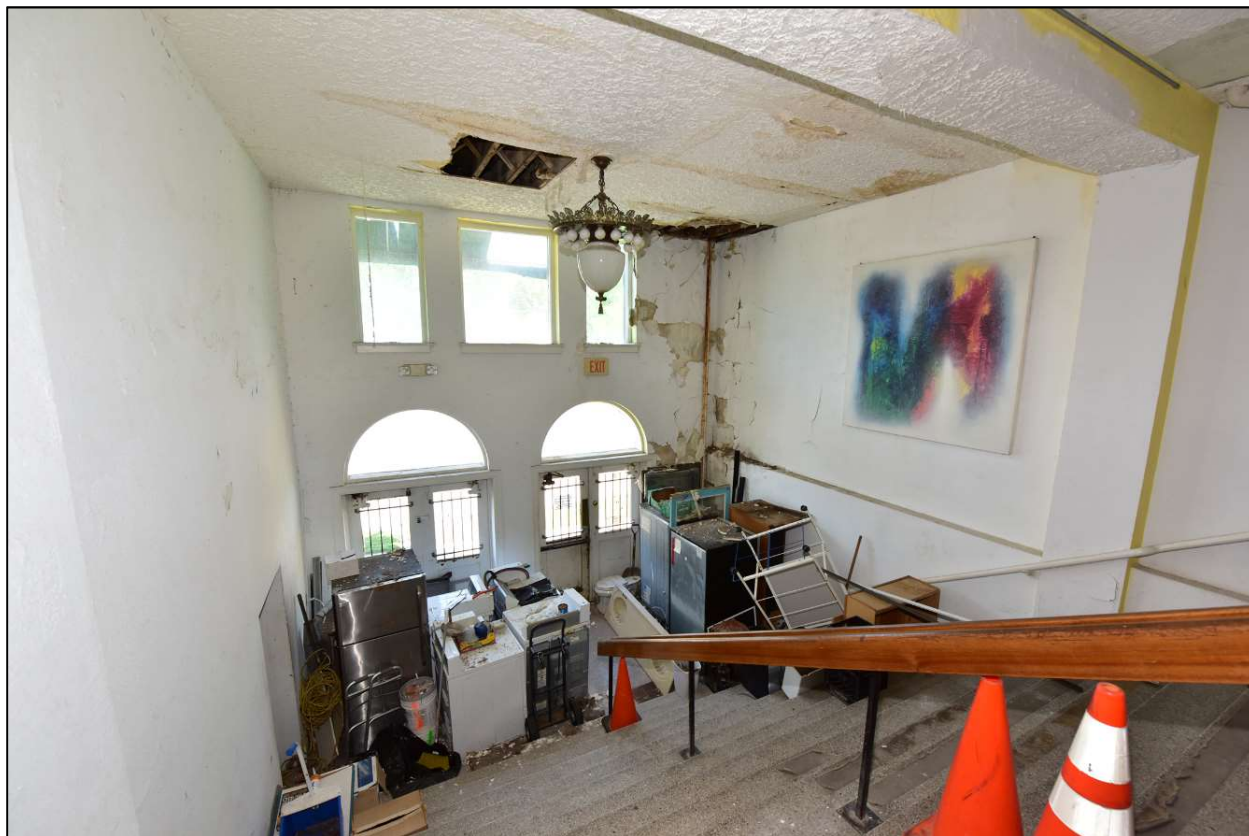


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Figure 18. View looking SW from top of entry stair, showing the entry vestibule. Source: Brad Finch, June 2020.



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Figure 19. Second floor, sewing area circa 1970. Source: Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 97.



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Figure 20. Hazelle Rollins inspecting marionette parts in the 1940s. Source: Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 22.

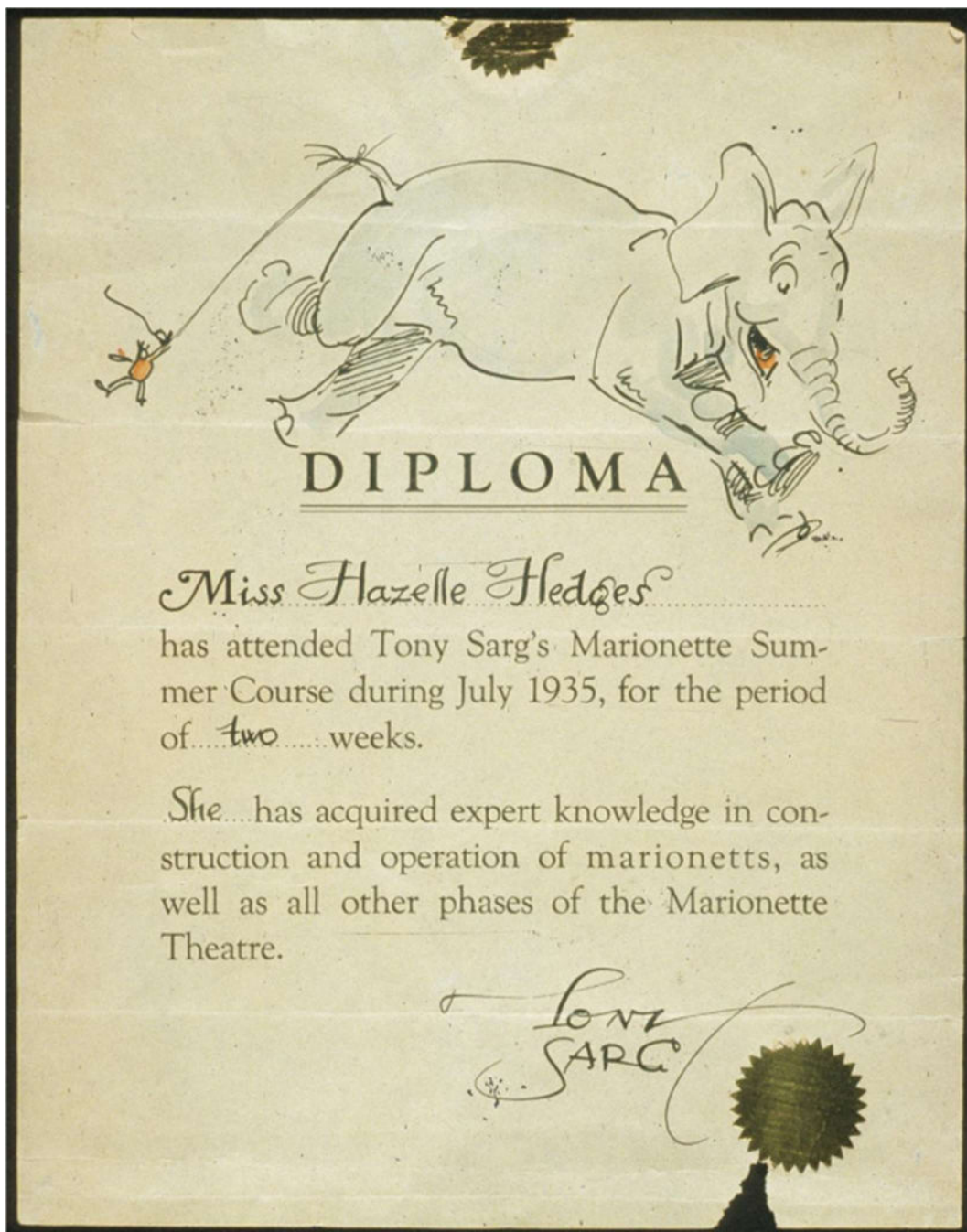


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Figure 21. Hazelle's diploma from Tony Sarg's Marionette Summer Course. 1935. Source: Smithsonian, National Museum of American History, 1981.1085.05.

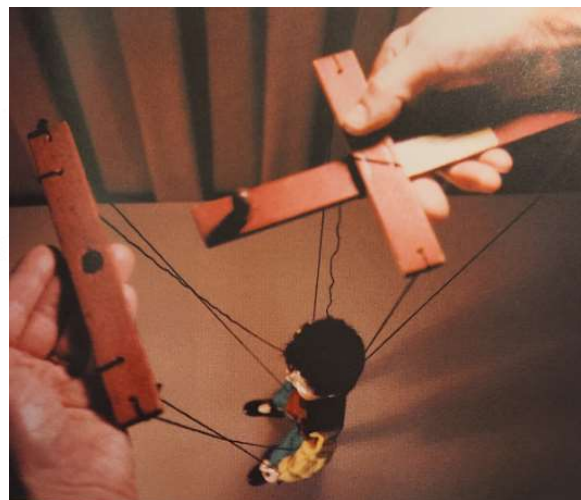
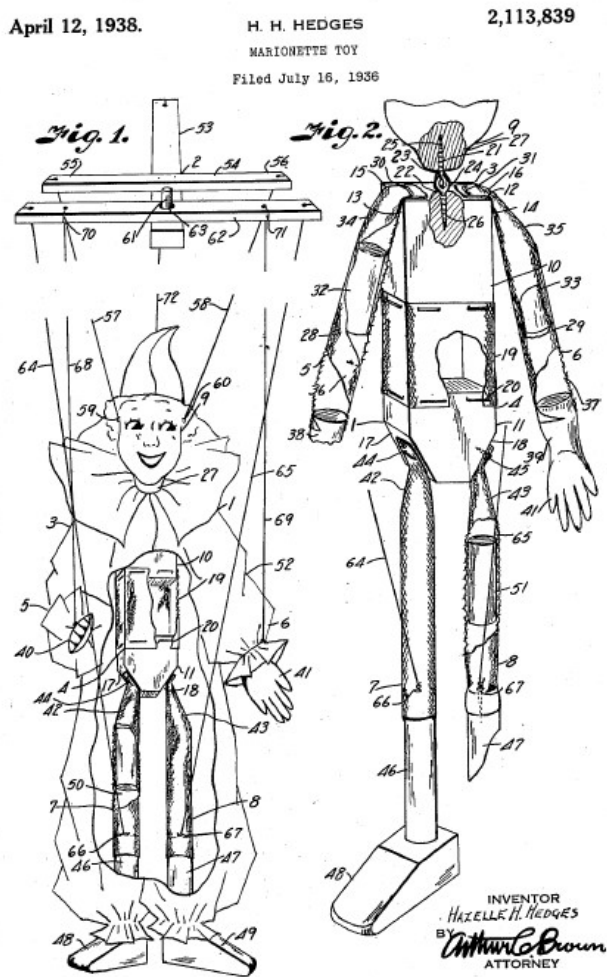


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Figure 22. Hazelle Hedges Rollins' first patent. Filed 1936, patented 1938. Inset is an example of one of her controls. Sources: Google Patents and Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 17,19.

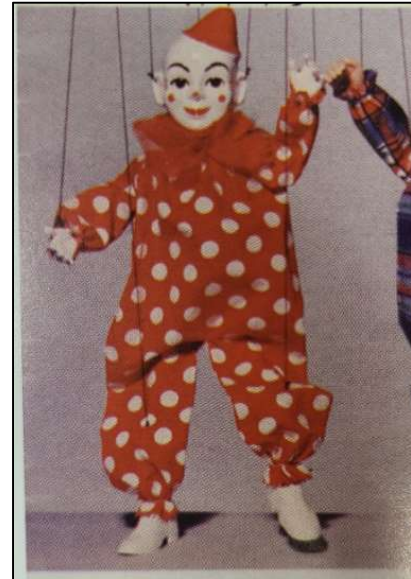


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Figure 23. Teto the Clown, Hazelle's most popular character. At center is the 1930s version with wooden head. At left is the 1940s version with composition head, plastic hands, and wooden feet, and at right is the 1956 Teto with Tenite head. Source: Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 20-21, 170.

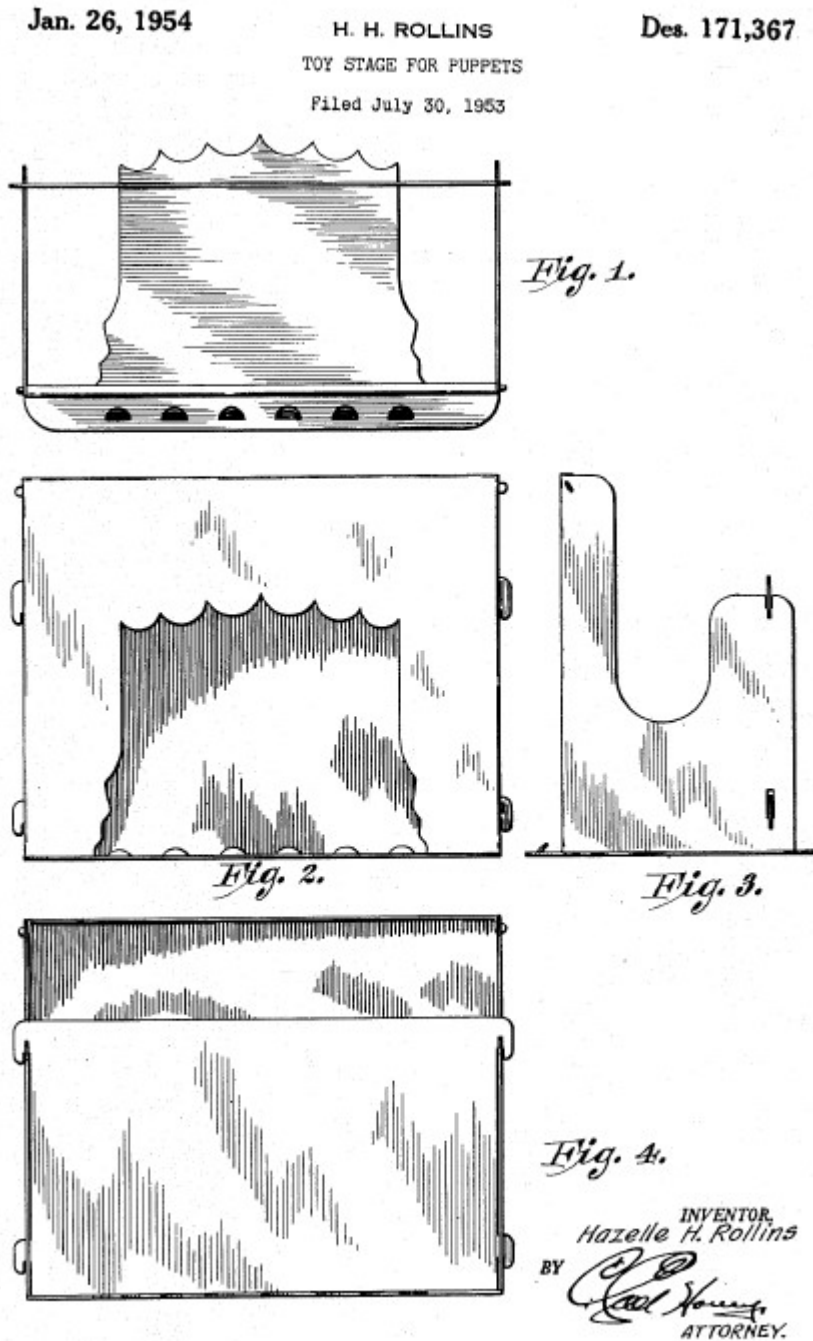


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Figure 24. Design patent (no. 171367) for a puppet stage. Source: Google Patents.

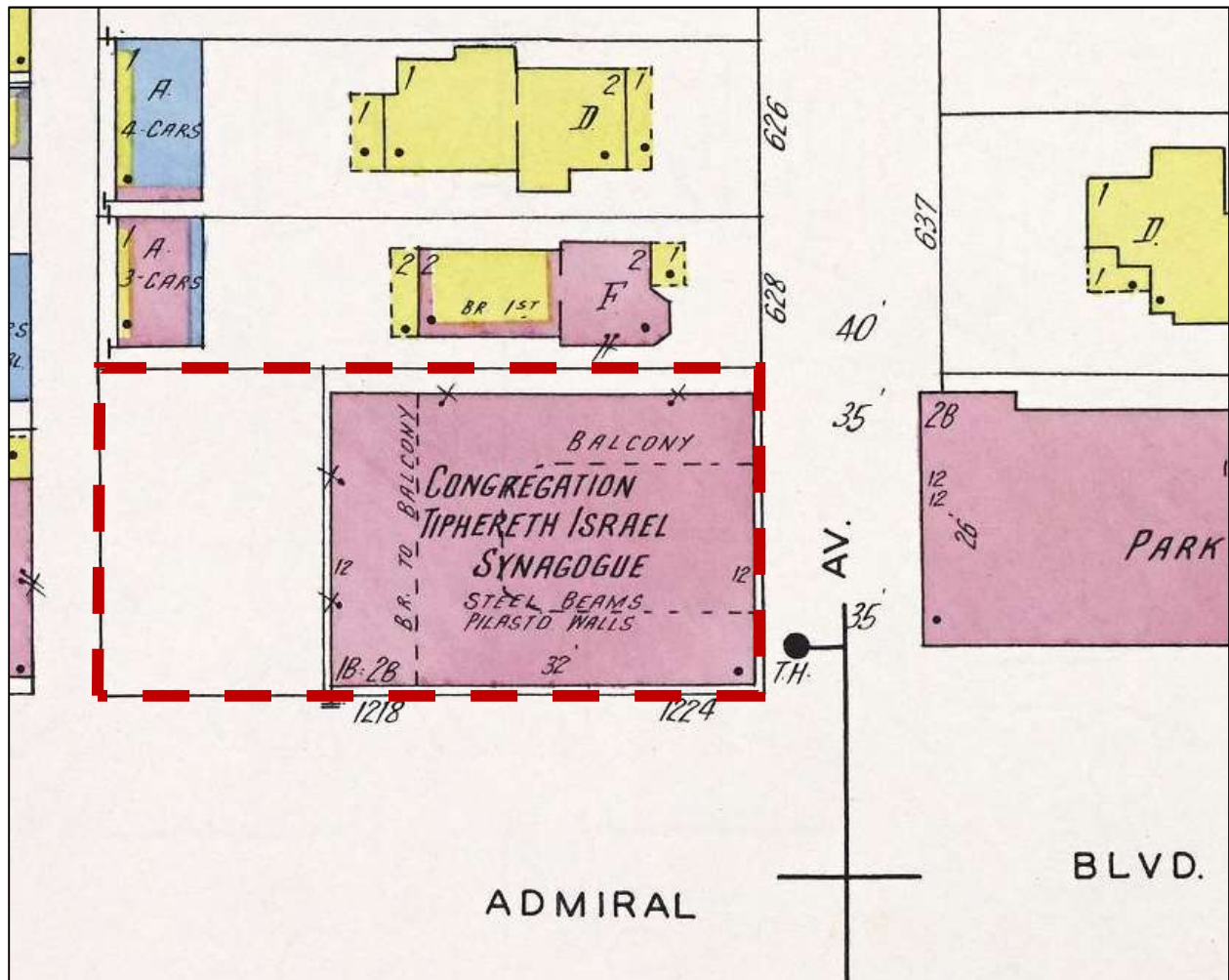


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Figure 25. Snippet of the 1939 Sanborn, vol 1, sheet 69, showing the synagogue. Boundary shown in dashed line.



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Figure 26. Houses (all extant) in Kansas City associated with Hazelle Hedges Rollins. Source: Google Streetview (image dates March-April 2019).



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Figure 27. The extant Thayer (Bracken) Building, 820-822 Broadway, looking northwest at its south and east elevations. Source: Google Streetview, image date April 2019.



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Figure 28. The former building at 107 West 8th Street, looking SE from the intersection of 8th & Baltimore, in 1940. Hazelle's Marionettes operated here from 1941 to 1946. Demolished.
Source: Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City 1940 Tax Assessment Photograph Collection, District 4, Block 72.



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Figure 29. The former headquarters of Hazelle's Marionettes on 10th Street in 1946. The company remained here from 1946 to 1957. Demolished. Source: Joly, *Hazelle & Her Marionettes*, 31.









Tracy
Memorial

DEAD
END





STOP

No Parking























THIS SIDE UP



2100065806

KRAFT
DELUXE DINNER
Macaroni & Cheese

17-190

Everything in this box
is 15¢ each. Under
14 bags + 90¢

Los Angeles