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ABSTRACT

A HISTORY OF THE STRAND THEATRE

LANSING, MICHIGAN

MARCH 1920--MARCH 1922

By

Betty Kopit

This thesis is a history of the Strand Theatre, in the Strand-Arcade Building, in Lansing, Michigan, during the period of its construction, which began in 1920, through the first year of its operation, in 1922. The theatre was a vaudeville house. Two, and sometimes three shows a day were presented, in the typical vaudeville manner, with singers, comedians, dancers, jugglers, and animal acts performing to an audience that at one time came back night after night to see the shows.

The Strand Theatre was built for mass entertainment, and it was built on a grand scale. Everything about the theatre invited the patron to a splendid, exciting evening, even before the curtain went up. The theatre's lavish ornamentation and design provided the vaudeville patrons with greater comforts than they might have expected, so that the physical structure became a part of the entertainment.

By the end of the Strand Theatre's first year of vaudeville, this type of entertainment had been superseded

by the public's interest in the newly emerging film industry, and the theatre started showing films.

* * *

Research on this theatre involved investigating the previous theatrical activity in Lansing, and then compiling information on the early days at the Strand. The commercial aspects of the building were studied, as well as the physical structure itself.

The first appendix to this thesis includes the Articles of Incorporation and the Annual Reports of 1921 of the two corporations involved in the operation of the theatre and the arcade. The second is a group of photos that delineate the weekly progress of the construction of the building. A compilation of the vaudeville acts that appeared at the Strand in its first year is the third appendix, followed by an interview with a former stagehand at the Strand, James Maher.

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MARCH 1920-MARCH 1922

By
Betty Kopit

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Theatre

1976

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Betty Newberger Kopit
1976

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Mr. Gvozden Kopani

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PLATE I

Opening Night at the Strand Theatre

April 21, 1921, 7:15 p.m.

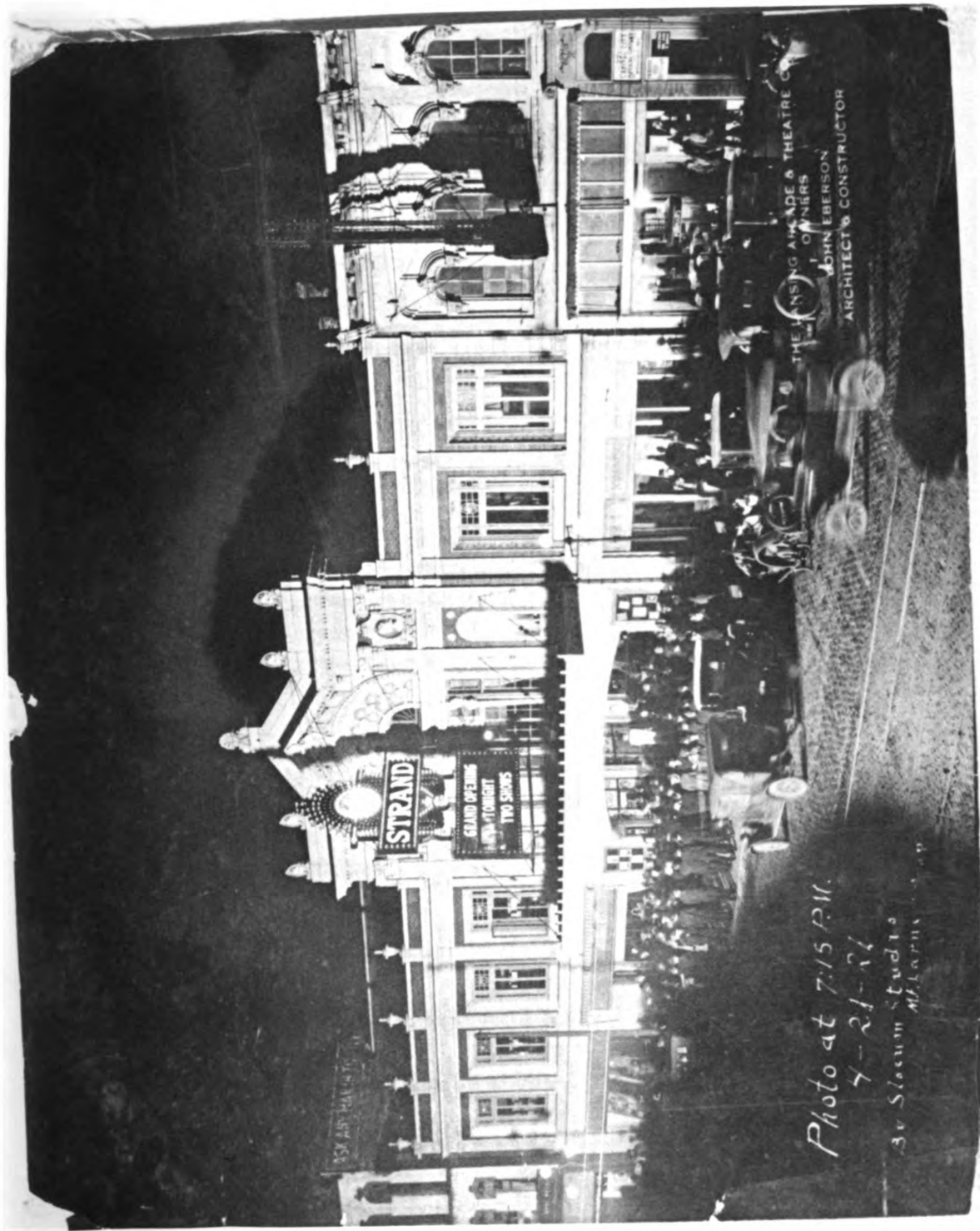


PLATE II

Plaque in the outer lobby of the Theatre.

Notice that the date at the bottom is incorrect.

The actual date of the opening was April 21, 1921.

"ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE
AND ALL THE MEN AND WOMEN
MERELY PLAYERS"

SHAKESPEARE.

DEDICATED TO ART, MUSIC AND
WHOLESOME ENTERTAINMENT
IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION OF
THE SUPPORT ALWAYS GIVEN
ME BY THE PEOPLE OF LANSING.

W. S. BUTTERFIELD. PRESIDENT.

EARL H. RATHBUN

E. C. BEATTY

A. E. DENMAN

E. C. SHIELDS

D. S. CROYDON

DIRECTORS

THE LANSING ARCADE AND
THEATRE COMPANY.

JOHN EBERSON-ARCHITECT
AND CONSTRUCTOR.

MARCH 27TH 1921.

PREFACE

In the early twentieth century, theatres in the Midwest were usually constructed near or above, civic/commercial spaces. Therefore, the theatre was not seen by the owner/entrepreneur as a separate space, but as a contributing part of a rental structure. Theatres in the Michigan cities of Vassar, Belding, Portland, and Grand Rapids were combined with commercial spaces, while the theatres of Calumet and Cheboygan shared space with civic offices (the City Hall and Fire Department).

The Strand Theatre, at 215 South Washington Avenue, in the Strand-Arcade Building, in Lansing, is an example of the former arrangement. Walter S. Butterfield, a Michigan theatre entrepreneur, built the elaborate structure in 1920 as a commercial space. The arcade included fourteen stores, an enormous multi-use space above the arcade, and a 1600-seat theatre.

This thesis traces the origins of the Strand Theatre from March, 1920 to March, 1922, after the theatre's first year of operation. Soon after it opened, movies superseded vaudeville as an entertainment priority for the public, and the theatre responded by showing photoplays exclusively.¹

This study has been undertaken with several limitations. The present owners of the theatre were unable to persuade

1. The basic form of the photoplay was a one-reel, fourteen-minute melodrama. This form was expanded, and eventually evolved into the silent movie, encompassing melodrama, comedy, westerns, and dramatized "real-life situations."

Mr. Wardwell, the current manager, to share all his information with me, including a "daybook,"² that would have become a primary source. But Mr. Wardwell did permit me to photograph some of the weekly, dated construction photos that he had found in the theatre. They are included in an appendix. Furthermore, the State Journal, Lansing's local newspaper, is frequently inaccurate, in terms of its own research and dating procedures. My search for memorabilia from the theatre yielded nothing. An ad placed in the State Journal seeking such artifacts as tickets, posters and programs received no response. Finally, the research was limited by the fact that most of the business information had been destroyed. For example, specific tax information was unavailable.³

* * *

Despite these limitations, my research on the Strand Theatre has been extremely interesting. This thesis will hopefully document the local history of this period.

2. A "daybook" is a book that lists the vaudeville acts that appeared at the theatre on a show-by-show basis.

3. Tax records were researched in an effort to detect the motivations for building the Strand Theatre in its elaborate style at that time. The information revealed an interesting interlock of corporations and directors typical of American business practice, but was otherwise fruitless.

CHAPTER ONE

A BRIEF SURVEY

OF

THEATRE IN LANSING

BEFORE 1920

In order to put the Strand Theatre in perspective, it is necessary to look back at Lansing's theatrical history, specifically the theatre structures that existed before the Strand was built. Lansing became the state capitol in 1847. A year later a hotel called Benton House was opened. It stood at the northwest corner of South Washington Avenue and Main Street. The proprietors presented "dramatic entertainments" in the ballroom of the hotel for twenty-five cents, and a "wandering" group of actors called the Olympic Players appeared there year after year.¹

In 1862 a very modest entertainment hall was opened over two stores at 109-111 South Washington Avenue. It was called Capitol Hall and was built by Judge William H. Chapman. This hall accommodated traveling shows during the Civil War,² but went out of business when it was superseded by Mead's Hall.³

The Mead Block, as it was known, was built during the "boom days" that followed the Civil War, and it was Lansing's first legitimate theatre. It opened in 1866, and was located at the southeast corner of Washington and

1. Centennial Issue, The State Journal, April 28, 1955, p. M-16.

2. George N. Fuller, ed. Michigan: A Centennial History of the State and its People, II. (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1939), p. 558.

3. "Renewal to Wipe Out Last of 'Old Rialto,'" The State Journal, June 10, 1967, p. B-7.

Ottawa Avenues. The Mead Block, a three story structure with an arched roof, was built by James I. Mead in the manner that was fairly typical for that time. Like Capitol Hall, the first floor of the building contained retail businesses while the theatre occupied the upper space. This theatre was also used as a meeting hall, and in fact, its name was eventually changed to "Mead's Temperance Hall," reflecting both the temperance fervor at the time and Mr. Mead's interest in the movement. Later, in an effort to revive its theatrical use, the name was changed again to the Star Theatre, and many improvements were made on the building. As the Star Theatre, it showed silent and sound movies for several decades.⁴

In 1873, Buck's Opera House opened at 233 North Washington Avenue. It was built by one of Lansing's pioneers, Daniel W. Buck, and was promoted by Daniel W. and Benjamin F. Buck, F. M. Cowles, and W. S. Elliott. Everything at this theatre was on a grand scale. It had 1100 seats, gilded pillars on either side of the stage, and a mansard roof. On opening night, May 3, 1873, Edwin Booth, the brother of John Wilkes Booth, appeared in the leading role in Macbeth, and in 1889, the "Battle of Gettysburg" was presented, ". . . from first shot to last."⁵

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

In 1890, Daniel Buck sold the theatre to James J. Baird, who promptly renamed it Baird's Opera House. In 1910, this site became the Gladmer Theatre.⁶

In 1900, the Colonial Theatre opened. It was located at 122 East Michigan Avenue. Stock companies appeared there as well as photoplays. Five years later, Dwight Robson opened the Bijou Theatre on East Ottawa Street. Al Jolson appeared in 1905 at the Bijou, and was paid \$35 a week. Ben Turpin also appeared on that stage, in a surprise appearance as an acrobat. The Bijou was later renamed the Regent Theatre, after it moved to the lot where the Olds Plaza Hotel now stands.⁷

Another vaudeville house opened in 1907, but for a very short time. This was the Idlehour Theatre. It was located at 119 South Washington Avenue.⁸

Three years later, in 1910, the Gladmer Theatre opened its doors. Its opening night program featured Pavlova with the Russian Imperial Ballet.⁹

In 1911 Charles H. Davis changed the name of the Colonial Theatre to the Lansing Theatre. Mr. Davis set a record during the time that he operated the theatre by the

6. "Renewal. . .," The State Journal, June 10, 1967, p. B-7.

7. Ibid.

8. "Flickering Flame Ended Theater's Illusion," The State Journal, April 28, 1955, p. M-17.

9. "Renewal. . .," The State Journal, June 10, 1967, p. B-7.

fact that in three years, the house was "dark" only seventeen nights! The name of the theatre changed again later to become The Esquire.¹⁰

* * *

In the late nineteenth century, theatres enjoyed enormous popularity among people whose lives now included ever-increasing amounts of leisure time. The burlesques and melodramas of the 1880's and 1890's were a great attraction despite the prevalence of strong religious forces that frowned, to say the least, on commercial theatrical activity. Traveling companies of widely disparate acts toured the country, and as vaudeville spread beyond the big cities, the theatres became organized into chains, where booking organizations sent the acts out "on the circuit," that is, to a prescribed group of theatres in a particular geographical area.¹¹

These acts included acrobats, trained animals, dancers, musicians, fancy roller-skaters, singers of comic songs and sentimental ballads, jugglers, magicians, minstrels as well as others far too various to mention here.¹²

10. "Flickering Flame. . .," The State Journal, April 28, 1955, p. M-17.

11. Foster Rhea Dulles. America Learns to Play (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1940), p. 219.

12. For further details on the types of acts that appeared on the vaudeville circuit in Lansing, refer to Appendix C, which lists the acts and photoplays that appeared bi-weekly at the Strand Theatre.

One-act comedies, farces, minstrel shows, and melodramas comprised the other elements of the entertainment of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that vied for the attentions of the American populace. The theatre patrons of the working class responded enthusiastically, filling the theatres for every show, thereby sparking the innovation of the theatre that ran continuous performances, which was introduced by B. F. Keith at a theatre in Boston in 1883. Mr. Keith and F. F. Proctor combined forces to further the expansion of vaudeville by grouping together even greater numbers of theatres into circuits. Their business established a circuit that eventually controlled 400 theatres.¹³

The vaudeville acts were booked individually through a nation-wide system that was run in different geographical areas. The practice was for each act to play at one theatre at the beginning of a week, and to move on to another theatre in another town for the rest of the week, with the possibility of staying longer at a particular theatre if they became popular. Those acts that became overwhelmingly popular played only the larger cities, and commanded large sums of money for their appearances.

The men who ran the booking organizations and owned the theatres (B. F. Keith, F. F. Proctor, Claude Cady,

13. Ibid., Dulles, p. 219.

W. S. Butterfield, among others), made vaudeville big business. But this business changed with the whimsical nature of the American people's interests. At the turn of the century, vaudeville ". . . had become the principal commercial amusement of this country's urban populace,"¹⁴ but for a variety of reasons, to be discussed later, vaudeville eventually was superseded by the nickleodeon, the photoplay and finally, the movie.

Silent moving pictures fascinated the American public, and when it became clear that this interest was equalling and overtaking the vaudeville audience, theatre owners quickly and decisively remodeled their theatres to accommodate this less costly, more lucrative entertainment.

However, theatre patrons were beginning to grow scarce anyway, for the vaudeville show at the local Opera House no longer played a predominant role in the American people's leisure priorities. High school curricula were being expanded during the first two decades of the twentieth century, as were extra-curricular sports, which caused people to spend their evenings at the high school gym watching a home basketball game rather than a vaudeville show.

14. Ibid., p. 219.

Other factors that decreased the vaudeville audience were the interest in the Chatauqua movement; the ubiquitous automobile, which gave people greater mobility; and the radio.¹⁵

Aside from vaudeville, other forms of theatrical activity were flourishing at this time. Serious drama and musical comedies enjoyed lengthened runs that grew into full seasons at big-city houses. When the play drew lesser attention in the city, it was put "on the road" to tour the provinces,¹⁶ and while these shows did well monetarily, they were a less attractive business proposition than the movies because the road companies had high transportation costs and high salaries for the actors.¹⁷ The vaudeville theatres, or Opera Houses, were therefore transformed rather simply into movie houses.

In Lansing, the trend toward more movie houses was equally apparent. In 1914, Claude E. Cady, who owned other theatres, opened the Vaudette Movie Theatre. He later bought the Colonial Theatre and remodeled it into a movie house. In 1918 and 1919, Cady brought musical

15. Willis Frederick Dunbar, "The Opera House as a Social Institution in Michigan," Michigan History, XXVI, 661-673.

16. Willis Frederick Dunbar, Michigan: A History of the Wolverine State (Grand Rapids: Erdmans Publishing Company, 1965), p. 729.

17. "Lansing and its Yesterdays," State Journal, January 1, 1930. By 1930, Lansing saw less road shows in a season than it had seen in a fortnight a decade earlier.

comedies into his theatres, because they were very popular at that time. In 1921, Cady bought the Empress Theatre, that had been operated by Joseph M. Neal, and changed the name to the Capitol Theatre.¹⁸

Walter S. Butterfield was another theatre entrepreneur in Michigan. He owned many theatres and decided to build a new theatre structure in Lansing in 1921, which was to be the Strand-Arcade Building. During the 1920's, Butterfield, along with Herbert Fowser, Benjamin Vollmer, Claude Cady and Joseph Neal,¹⁹ established himself in Michigan with a chain of theatres that grew to be one of the largest organizations in the country.²⁰

Butterfield had earlier been the manager of the Blaney Attractions, Rose Stahl's "Chorus Lady" company, and the original "Buster Brown" musical comedy organization. But in 1904, he leased the second floor of the Hamlin Opera House in Battle Creek, Michigan, and hired three acts to perform, thereby establishing a vaudeville policy at that theatre. The venture was only moderately successful, but Butterfield went on to add the Bijou theatres in Kalamazoo and Jackson to his enterprise. The latter theatres were small store rooms that were converted into variety houses.²¹

18. Ibid., State Journal, April 28, 1955, p. M-17.

19. Ibid., Fuller, p. 559.

20. Ibid., State Journal, April 28, 1955, p. M-17.

21. Ibid., p. M-17.

By the time Butterfield built the Strand Theatre in 1921, he owned twenty theatres in nine Michigan cities.²² In 1923 he bought all of Claude Cady's theatres including the Gladmer, Capitol and Colonial theatres in Lansing, as well as the Cady houses in Jackson and Battle Creek. In 1927 he opened the State Theatre in East Lansing, and in 1939 he remodeled the Gladmer Theatre, razing the entire structure except the stage, and rebuilding it. Butterfield died in 1939, but in 1941, the Strand Theatre was remodeled, and the Butterfield chain of theatres continued to expand. By 1955, the chain owned more than one hundred theatres in Michigan.²³

Butterfield wanted to build a jewel of a vaudeville theatre in the 1920's. He contracted a world-renowned theatre architect, John Eberson, to design the space. That theatre became part of the Strand-Arcade structure in Lansing.

The following chapter discusses the details of the construction of the building.

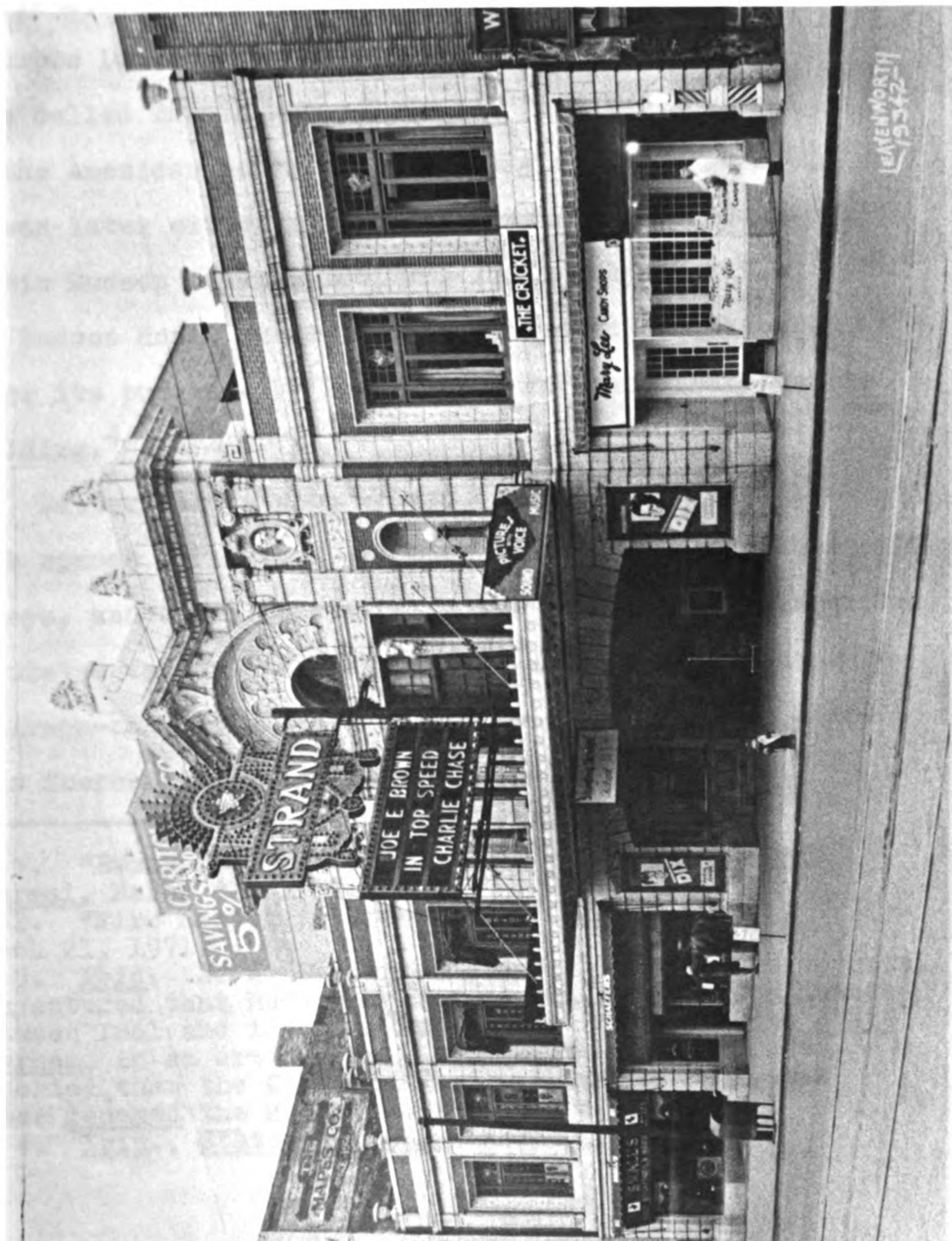
22. Arthur Frudenberg, An Achievement (Battle Creek: Ellis Publishing Company, 1921), p. 17. The theatres that Butterfield owned by 1921 were: Ann Arbor; Majestic, Arcade, Bay City; Orpheum, Battle Creek; Bijou, Flint; Palace, Regent, Garden, Majestic, Royal, Jackson; Orpheum, Kalamazoo; Regent, Majestic, Lansing; Strand-Arcade, Bijou (Regent), Port Huron; Majestic, Family, Saginaw; Jeffers-Strand, Franklin, Regent, Auditorium.

23. Ibid., State Journal, April 28, 1955, p. M-18.

CHAPTER TWO
PHYSICAL ASPECTS
OF THE
STRAND-ARCADE
BUILDING

PLATE III

The Strand-Arcade Building
from South Washington Avenue



The site Butterfield chose for the Strand-Arcade Building was at 215 South Washington Avenue. Between 1847 and 1852, one of Lansing's earliest pioneers, Christopher Columbus Darling, built a three-story frame hotel on the site called The Columbus House.¹ It later became known as the American House, then the Eagle Hotel, in 1863.² It was later either rebuilt or renamed Hudson House by Martin Hudson between 1861 and 1865, and rebuilt in 1870.³ The Hudson House burned to the ground on December 18, 1919, after its purchase by Butterfield for the Strand-Arcade Building.⁴

Butterfield's plan was to build a commercial building with spaces for retail establishments in the Arcade, bowling alleys, and a billiard room in the basement, an elaborately decorated vaudeville theatre, and a combination banquet-ballroom-convention hall on the second floor. He hired John Eberson to design the building.

1. "Early Days at Strand Recollected," The State Journal, March 21, 1971.

2. "Fire Helped to Clear Site," State Journal, March 21, 1971.

3. Ibid. W. H. Porter, a pioneer Lansing businessman, conjectured that Hudson House was built by Martin Hudson between 1861 and 1865 and rebuilt in 1870, but the State Journal, in an article in the paper on June 10, 1967, reported that the Columbia House, built in 1852, was later renamed the Hudson House.

4. Ibid., State Journal, March 21, 1971.

Eberson was well-known as a theatre architect. For the Strand Theatre, he designed a space that included a huge lobby, a large orchestra pit, and lavish smoking and retiring rooms in the mezzanine. He used ornate sculptures, imported chandeliers, and intricately molded plaster work to achieve a consistently plush interior.

The space was designed, however, as a unique real estate combination that would provide Butterfield with a full-time rental-real-estate investment in the Arcade, as well as the theatre.

When the ground was broken for the Strand-Arcade on March 16, 1920, Eberson estimated that the cost of the building would be \$500,000. The grand opening was scheduled for March 27, 1921,⁵ and Eberson spoke of the architecture as being "predominantly Gallic."⁶

The Strand Theatre and the Arcade were built with material furnished as much as possible by local Lansing firms, and by the labor of local men. The construction ". . . provided work for a small army of men for more than one year."⁷

5. Though the grand opening of the Strand-Arcade was scheduled for March 27, 1921, there were construction delays which forced the opening beyond the projected date. It opened on April 21, 1921, but the lobby plaque had already been cast with the incorrect projected date. It was never changed.

6. Ibid., State Journal, March 21, 1971.

7. Ibid., An Achievement, p. 41.

The following firms provided the construction materials: The R. C. Smith Company of Battle Creek provided 194 tons of structural steel. They erected steel roof trusses tested to many times the actual strength needed. The steel truss that supported the balcony in the theatre had a span of sixty-four feet and weighed more than fifteen tons. The proscenium arch girder was forty-six feet long, four feet wide, five feet high, and weighed in excess of twelve tons. Nine steel girders supported the roof of the enormous convention hall-ballroom-banquet space.⁸ The Goldsmith Metal Lath Company of Cincinnati, Ohio provided slab construction for all the fireproof, reinforced floors, and the roof. They used the Shurebond Unit System of Metal Tile for this work.⁹ The MacDougal Brothers Company of Lansing furnished the "built up compound asphalt fireproof Ru-Ber-Oid" roofing material for the theatre. Another Lansing firm, Heller Brothers, provided the sand and gravel for the building.¹⁰

The firm of Young Brothers and Daley, from Lansing, provided three thousand barrels of cement, three cars of plaster, three cars of hydrated lime, thirty thousand feet of gypsum block and twenty tons of art stucco.¹¹

8. Ibid., p. 42-43.

9. Ibid., p. 45.

10. Ibid., p. 36.

11. Ibid., p. 40.

The Architectural Decorating Company from Chicago provided the ornamental and plain plasterers for the building, and another Chicago firm, the Major Equipment Company, Incorporated, supplied the "major pre-selective lighting systems and apparatus" for the theatre.¹²

The Briggs Company supplied the brick and terra cotta for the exterior of the building, the steel, reinforced concrete for the floors, tile walls for the interior, and a large variety of other permanent materials. The Clippert-Spaulding Company also provided common bricks that were used in the construction.¹³

The heating and ventilation systems for the building were supplied by several firms. The ILG Electric Ventilating Company provided the fans and blowers for the ventilation system. The firm of R. R. Brenner and Son, provided heating, ventilation and plumbing equipment, and the B. F. Reynolds Company of Chicago supplied Reynolds Unit Heat Generating Equipment, eliminating the need for boilers, steam coils, or radiators in the structure.¹⁴

The brass railings for the theatre and the arcade were supplied by the Newman Manufacturing Company of Cincinnati, Ohio. The American Rug and Carpet Company of Chicago furnished all the rugs and carpets used in the theatre.¹⁵

12. Ibid., p. 42, 50.

13. Ibid., p. 51, 55.

14. Ibid., p. 52, 30, 56.

15. Ibid., p. 46, 44.

The glass and lighting fixtures were supplied by two firms. The T. W. Wilmarth Company of Chicago designed and manufactured the lighting fixtures for the theatre and the arcade, and the Eastwood Glass Company from Saginaw, Michigan provided the plate and window glass, mirrors, wire and ornamental glass, and the store-front construction for the building.¹⁶

Safety was a paramount concern when the building was constructed. Numerous exits on both the sides and the front of the auditorium of the theatre were designed to allow a capacity house to empty in less than three minutes. The theatre was designed with thirteen double exits on the main floor and six exits leading from the balcony. Ventilation was also a major concern. "Washed air" was pumped into the auditorium for a complete change of air every ~~six~~ minutes.¹⁷

Both Butterfield and Eberson were committed to the grand scale of this structure. The preceding list of the construction materials indicates that they were also interested in the more modern techniques of ventilation, heating and safety, in order to make the Strand-Arcade Building as modern as possible.

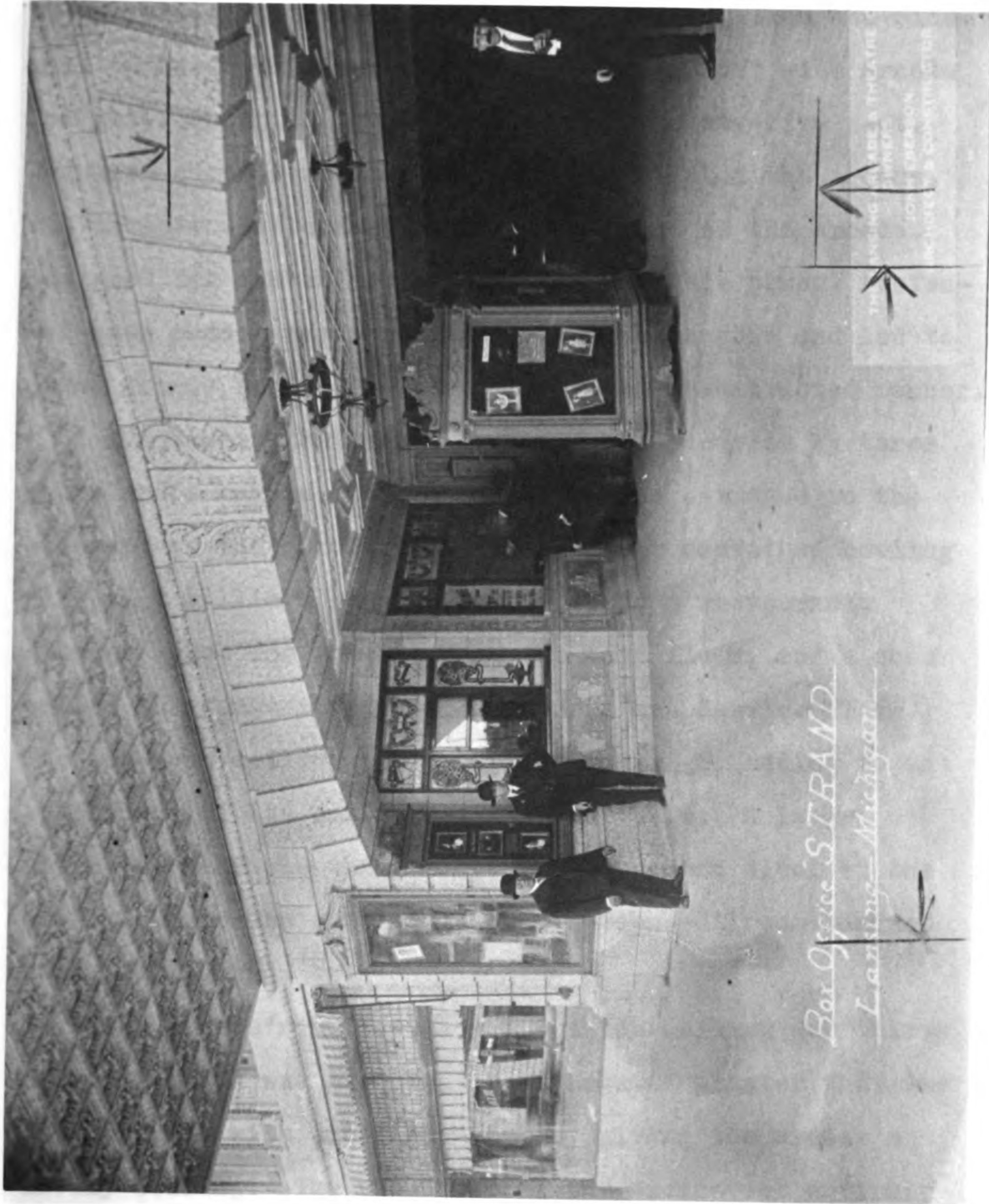
* * *

16. Ibid., p. 54, 55.

17. Ibid., p. 49, 52.

PLATE IV

Original Box Office Outside the Arcade.



The Strand-Arcade Building was designed as a combination retail business-theatre-public space, but the outer facade of the building invited one into a theatre. From the sidewalk on South Washington Avenue, a twenty foot wide arcade led into the building for a distance of sixty-five feet. Fourteen shops were located on either side of the arcade. The theatre was located at the rear right of the arcade. Designed for convenience, there was a marble paved, roofed-but-open passageway that paralleled the theatre and led to Grand Avenue behind the structure in an unobstructed manner.

The Washington Avenue frontage was occupied by three shops and a marble stairway that was the entrance to the basement of the structure. The basement contained bowling alleys, a billiard room, a barber shop, a restaurant, storage space for the shops on the main floor, and a room called the Community Center Amusement and Service Place. The basement ceiling was exceptionally high, adding to the appearance of the businesses located there. A large staircase near the theatre led to the second floor of the arcade, where the combination convention-ballroom-banquet hall was located.¹⁸

The arcade's multi-colored Spanish ceiling was thirty feet high, and was executed in ornamental plaster that was interspersed with amber sky lights, giving the arcade a lively feeling. The vestibule of the arcade was entirely

18. Ibid., An Achievement, p. 19.

PLATE V

First Floor View of the Arcade of Stores.
The Theatre is at the Rear of the Arcade.

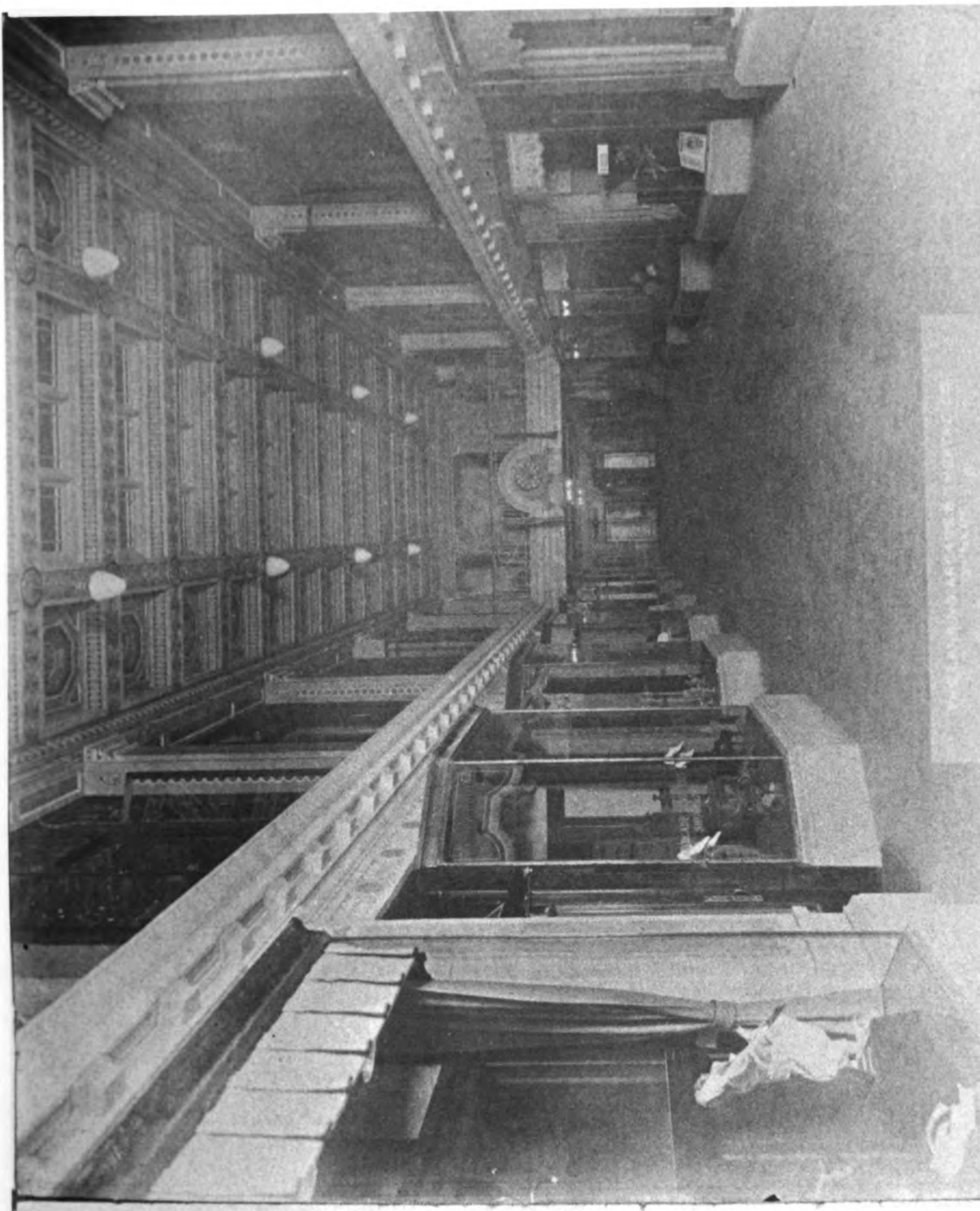
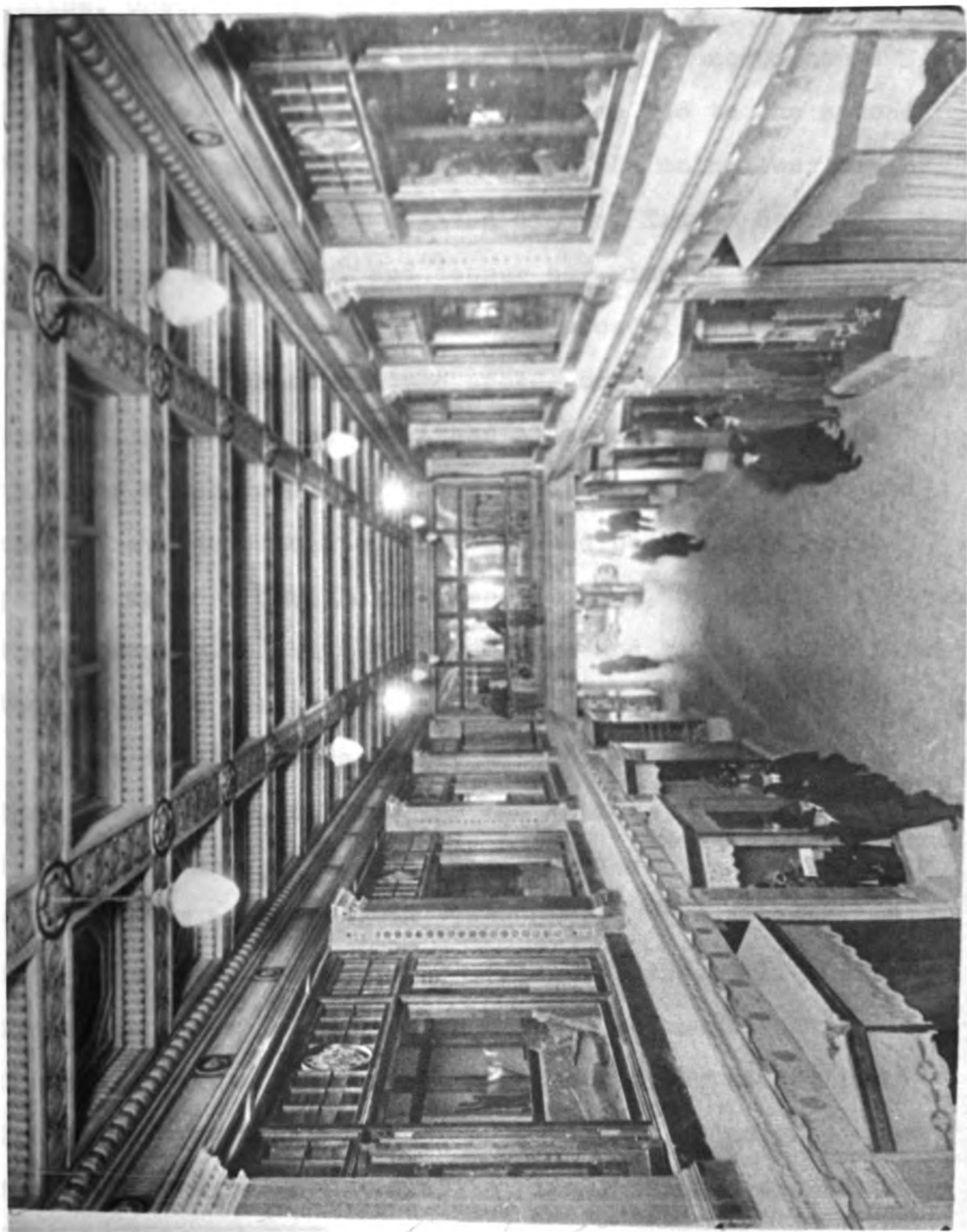


PLATE VI

Second Floor View of the Arcade
Looking Toward the Street Entrance



constructed of polychrome terra cotta, and contained a box office, check room, and the grand staircase. The conveniently located box office was able to accommodate large crowds. A marble grand staircase led to the second floor of the building. The shops on the main floor of the arcade had electrically lighted display frames near the entrance of each shop, and copper bay windows with marble bases that faced the center of the arcade.¹⁹

The second floor of the arcade contained the space that was available for use as either a banquet or convention hall, or a ballroom. It was an enormous space that could easily have accommodated one thousand people. It had a parquet dance floor, lavish appointments, as well as all the necessary checking room, storage and kitchen facilities that might be needed.²⁰

The Arcade was certainly a beautiful structure, but the jewel of the building was the theatre. One entered the theatre at the end and to the right of the arcade, through four sets of beveled plate glass doors. These doors led into a two-story stone foyer of the theatre. All the floors were marble and the cornices were beautifully decorated with an egg-and-dart motif. A curved stairway led to an open balcony under an intricately designed dome that formed a rotunda. Classic fluted columns around the

19. Ibid., p. 19.

20. Ibid., p. 19.

PLATE VII

Interior Foyer and Box Office of the Theatre
Inside the Arcade



PLATE VIII

Foyer and Grand Staircase



*Foyer
showing Grand Stair
& door to theatre.
-Strand-Lansing.*

THE LANSING ARCADE & THEATRE CO.
OWNERS
JOHN EBBERSON,
ARCHITECT & CONSTRUCTOR

PLATE IX

Grand Staircase Leading From the
Foyer of the Theatre to the Mezzanine

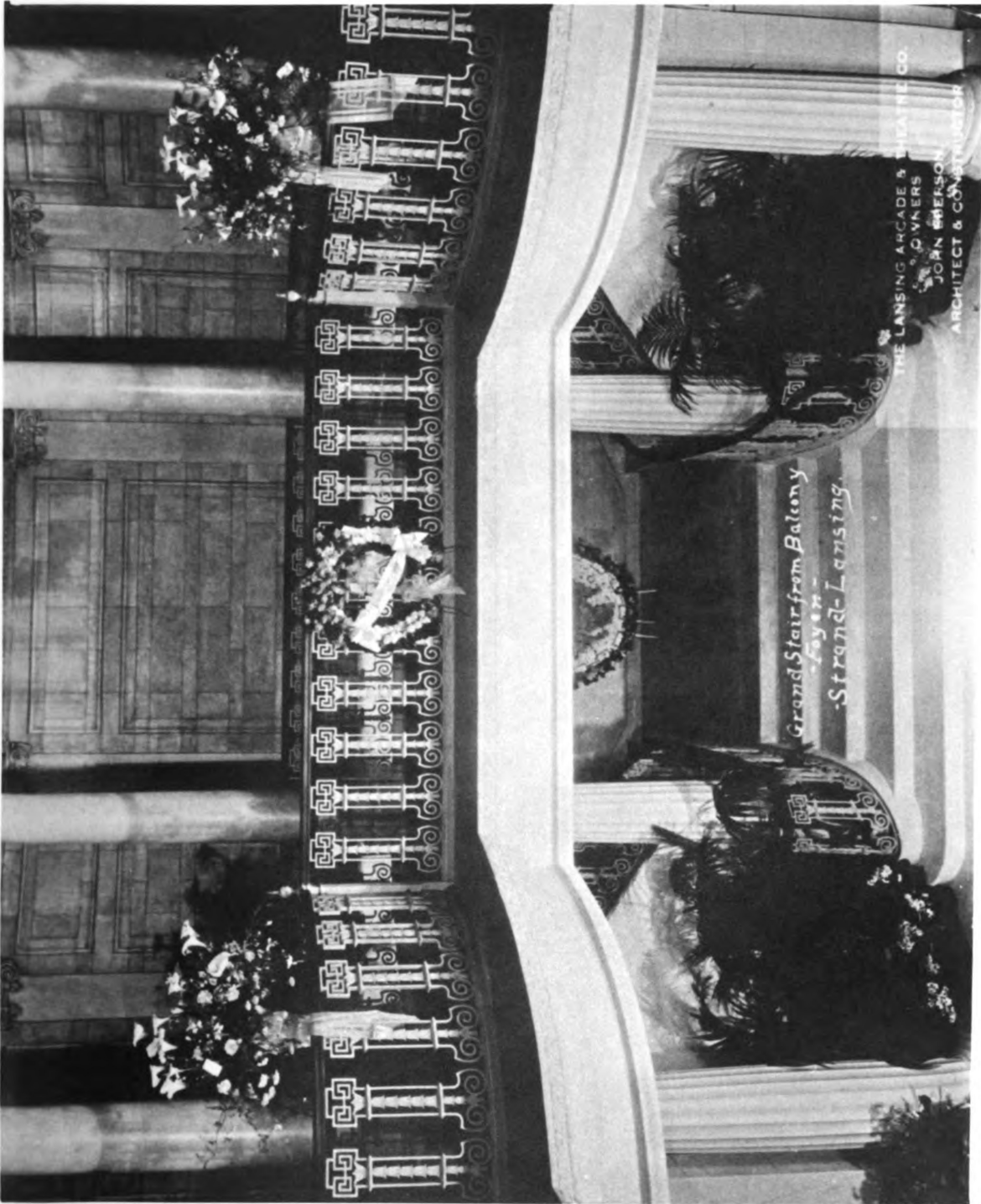


PLATE X

Foyer Domed Ceiling

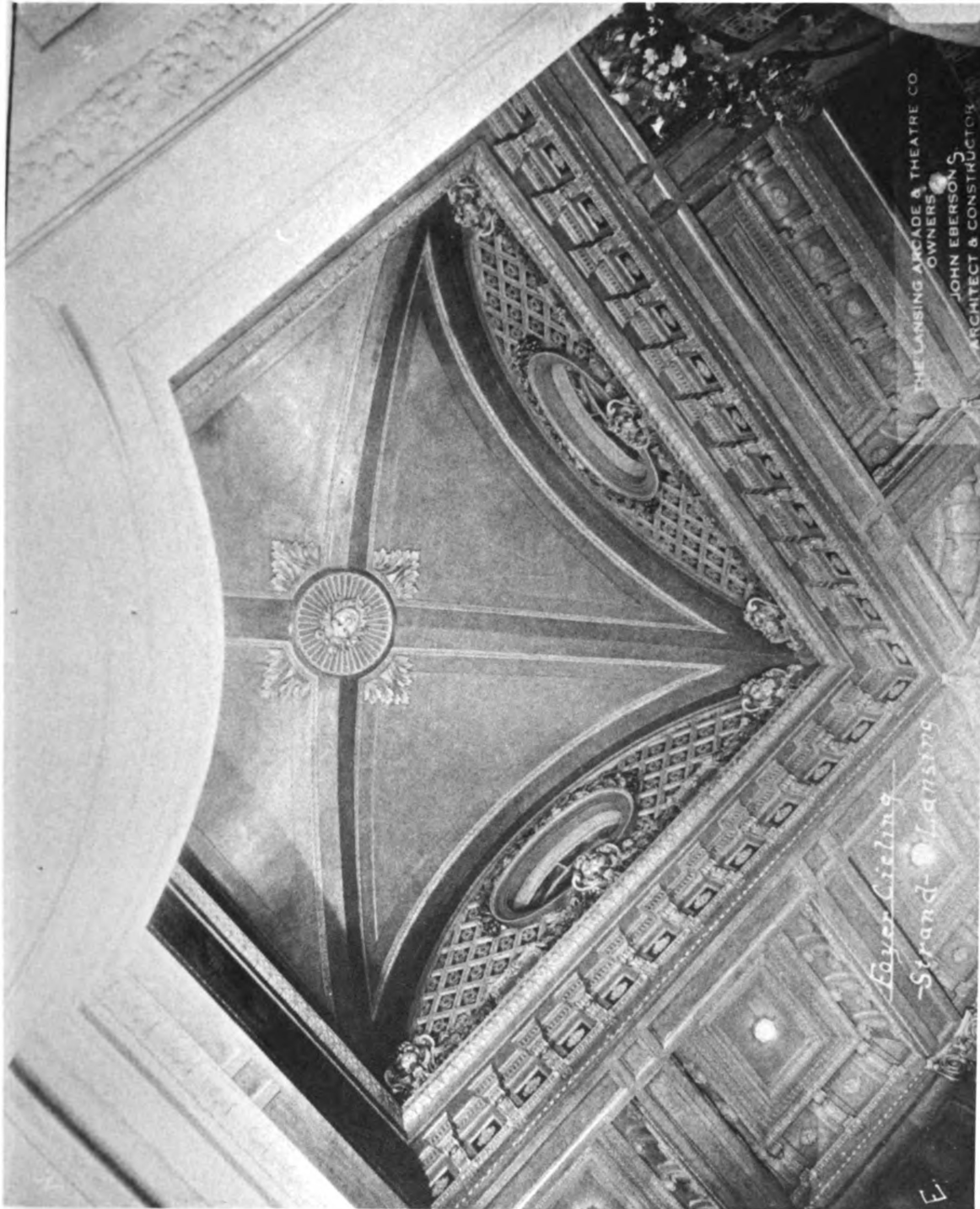
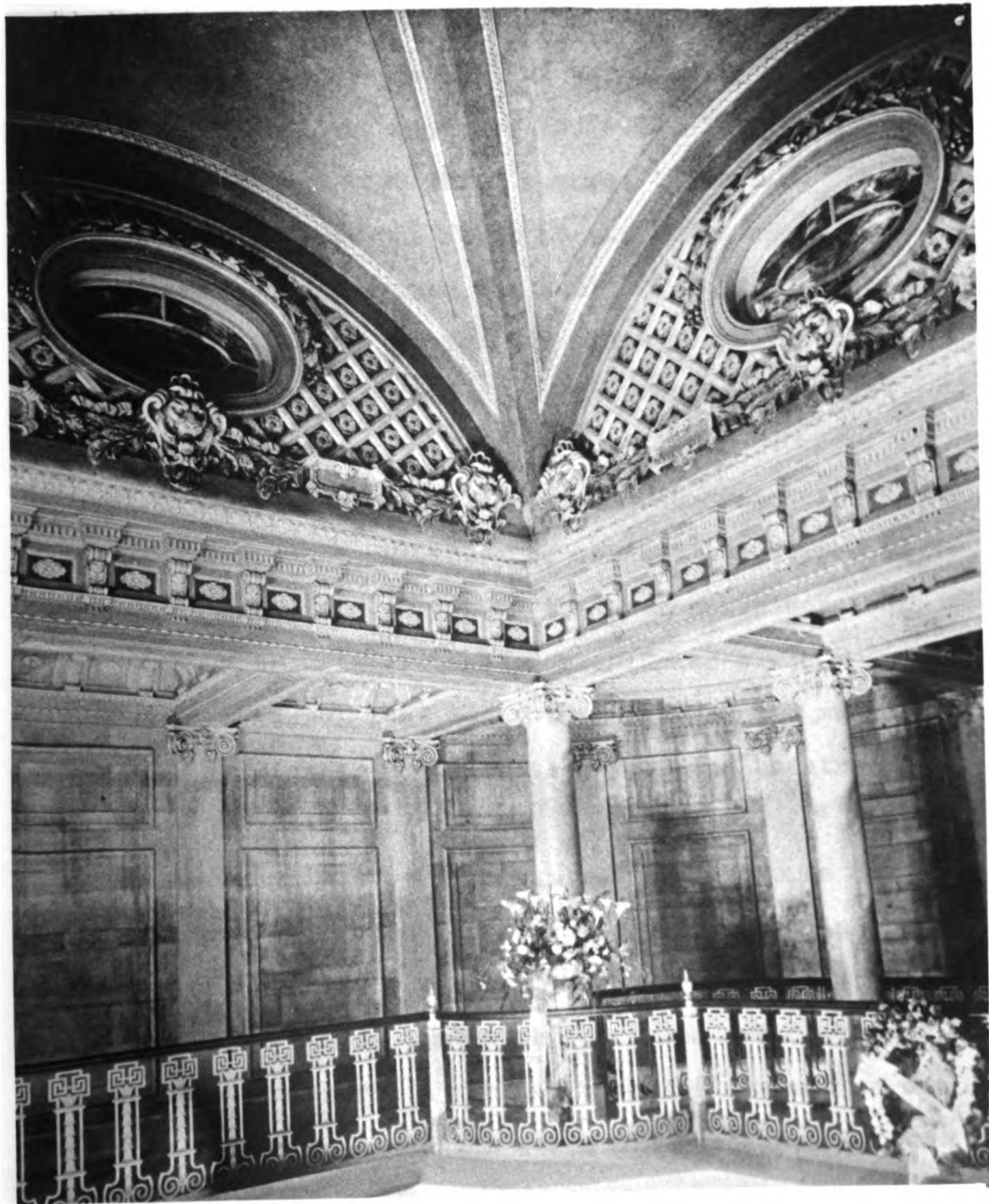


PLATE XI

Upper Foyer and Dome Ceiling Detail



balcony and iron railings finished the decor of this area. A bronze and cut glass lamp that Mr. Butterfield imported from Italy was near the center of the rotunda.²¹

The main floor of the theatre was equally impressive. Designed to reflect the style of Louis XV, this area was richly carpeted, and tapestries covered the walls. Three sets of doors led from the foyer to the auditorium, and this area was separated from the auditorium by a fireproof wall. Patrons entered through the aisle doors, thereby preventing drafts and noises from interfering with the comfort of the audience.²²

The interior of the auditorium was decorated in "Roman gold," rose and ivory colors. The cornice was supported by classical columns that were near the proscenium boxes on either side of the stage. The proscenium arch was decorated in a laurel leaf motif that represented music and dance. The main floor and the balcony of the theatre had seating for 1786 patrons.²³

The mezzanine was perhaps the most lavish area of the theatre, and it reflected the designer's interest in the comfort of the theatre's patrons. The space was divided into a series of salons that were furnished and decorated in an elaborate manner. A smoking room for men was on one side of the mezzanine, and the other side was designed to

21. Ibid., p. 20.

22. Ibid., p. 20.

23. Ibid., p. 21.

PLATE XII

Mezzanine Looking Toward the
Ladies' Retiring Rooms



PLATE XIII

Mezzanine Looking Toward
the
Gents' Smoking Room



PLATE XIV

Ornamental Plaster Cornice
in the
Mezzanine



PLATE XV

Detail of Mezzanine Cornice

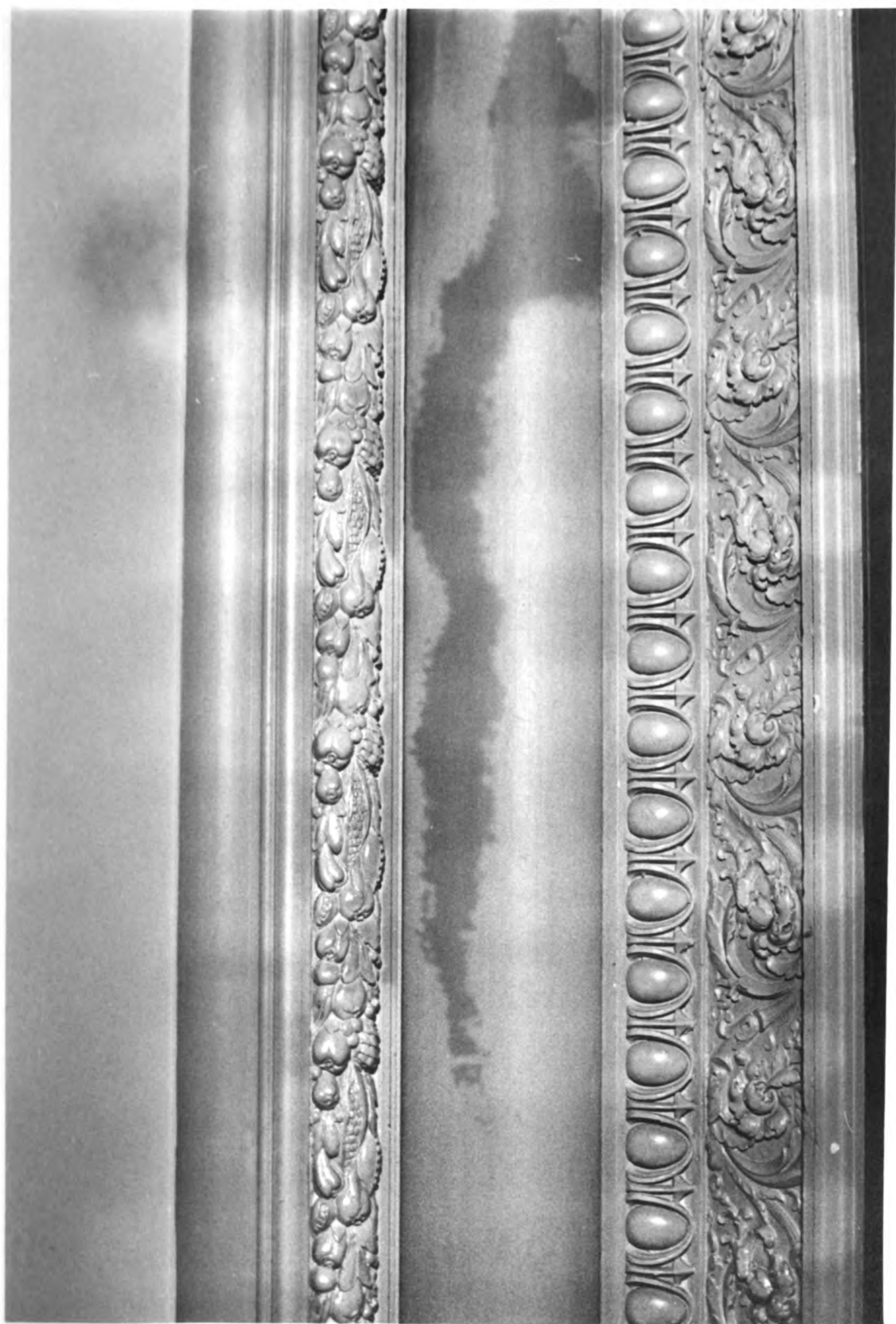


PLATE XVI

Detail of Ornamental Plaster
on
Balcony Ceiling



include not only a "retiring and parlor room for the ladies,"²⁴ but a nursery for children. In between, there was ample space for the audience to promenade before, during, and after the show.

The stage of the theatre, which was not remodeled during the 1941 renovation of the theatre, is approximately seventy-six feet wide and forty feet deep. There is a wooden grid and a hemp system. A baggage trap is located near the loading dock. It was used to lower trunks to the basement, where there are five dressing rooms. There is also a small dressing room on the right side of the stage. The stage house is sixty feet high. The Strand made use of an "advertising curtain" in its vaudeville days.

An elaborate "tempered air" heating and ventilation system pumped fresh "modulated and washed air" into the theatre. This system allowed "for a complete change of air in less than seven minutes."²⁵

Music was an important element at the Strand Theatre in its vaudeville days, as well as when the theatre started showing photoplays. There was a large orchestra pit, and the orchestra accompanied the vaudeville acts and provided overture and intermission music during the show. When the theatre started showing photoplays almost exclusively in 1922, the orchestra punctuated and illustrated the drama on

24. Ibid., p. 21.

25. Ibid., p. 21.

PLATE XVII

Floorplan of the Stage

Scale: $3/32" = 1'0"$

PLATE XVIII

The Proscenium Arch

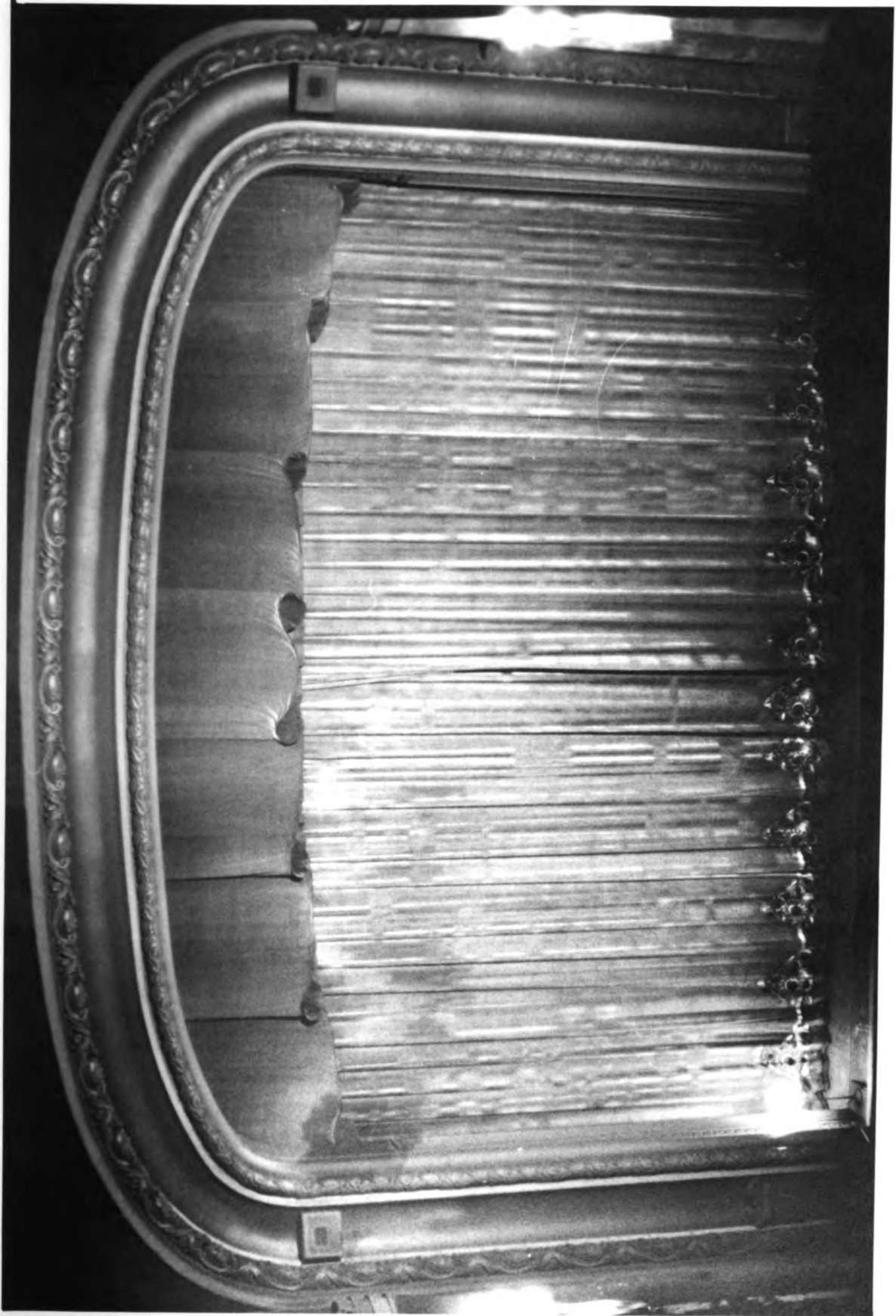


PLATE XIX

Proscenium Arch Stage Right Base Detail



PLATE XX

The Pinrail



PLATE XXI

The Grid From Stage Right



PLATE XXII

View of the Orchestra and Balcony
From the Stage

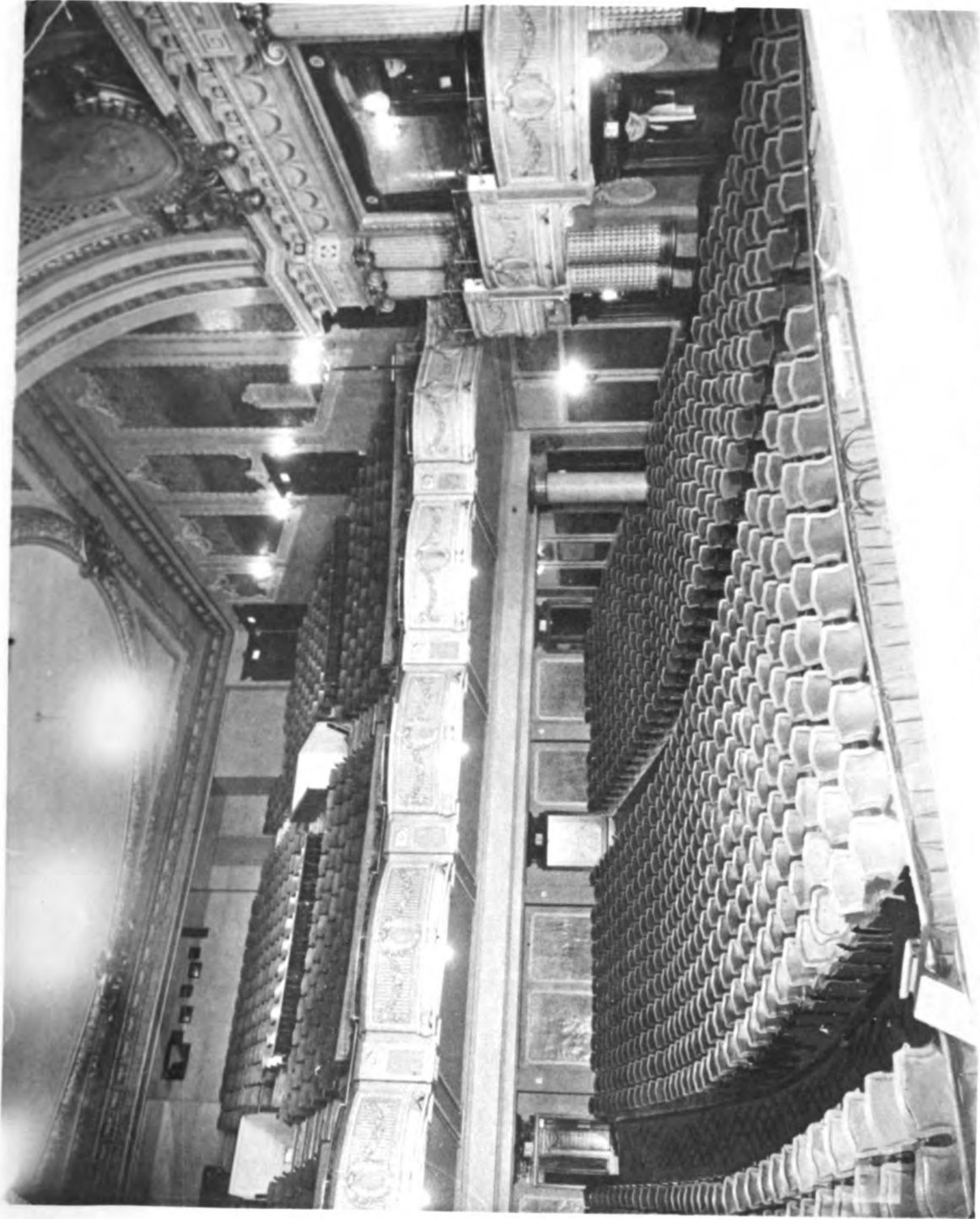


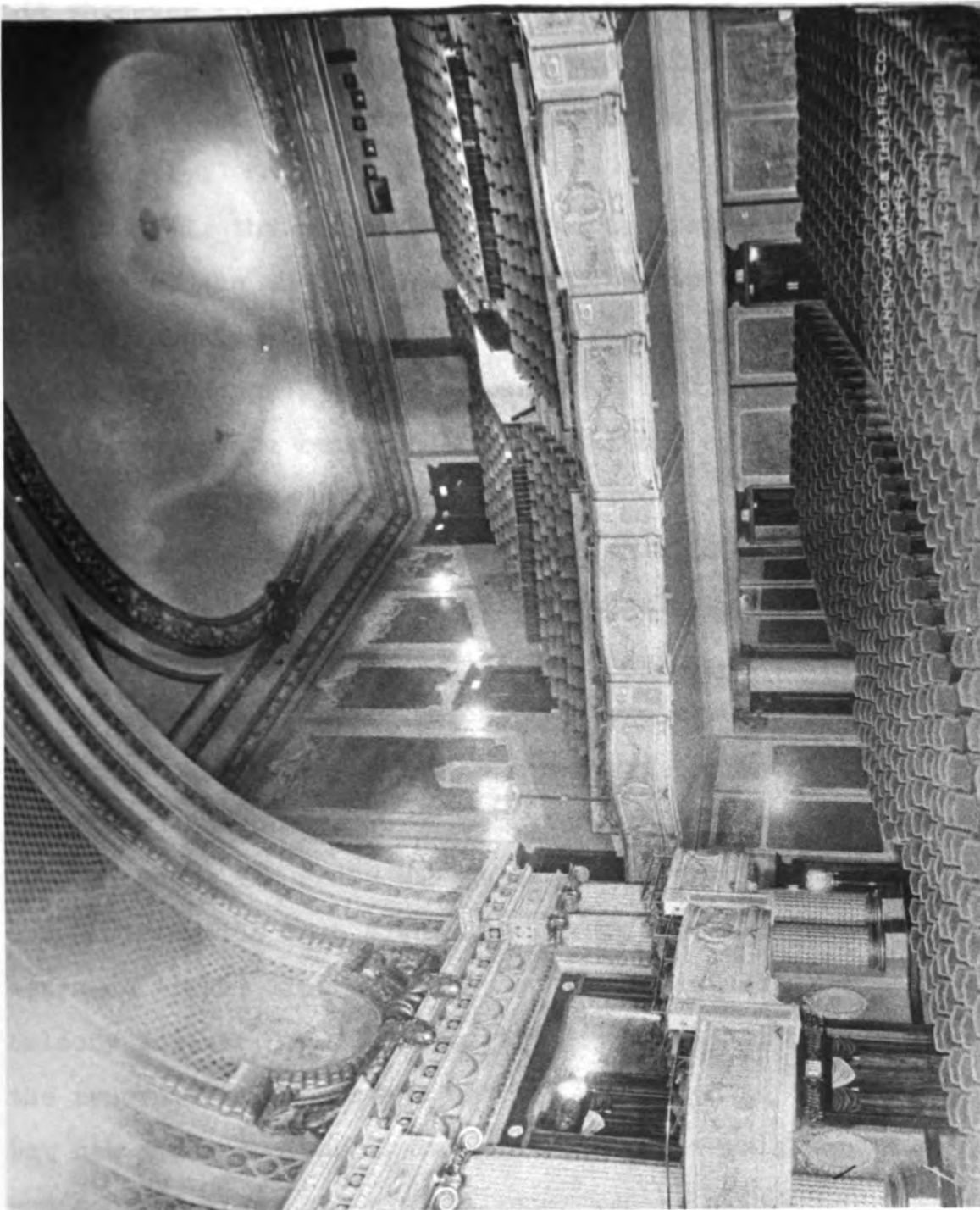
PLATE XXIII

View of Orchestra and House Right Box



PLATE XXIV

View of the House and Balcony



the screen. In 1928 an organ was installed in the orchestra pit, and it was raised on an elevator out of the pit whenever it was used. A local chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society has restored and maintained the instrument, and it is still used, although much too infrequently.

In 1941, the structure received a massive renovation. The name of the theatre changed, and became the Michigan Theatre, showing films exclusively. The building's outer facade was changed, but the commercial business space inside the arcade remained. The multi-use upper arcade space was remodeled for offices, but the ballroom area was so vast that much of it was not used at all.

The Strand Theatre changed drastically when it was remodeled in the manner of "Art Deco." The lobby was redone, the Classic, fluted columns were covered with wood and accented with red paint, and many of the intricate details in the plasterwork, cornices, and elaborate ironwork were masked. The seats were altered, so that there were 800 seats on the main floor and 700 in the balcony. The boxes on either side of the stage were eliminated. The balcony however, remained practically untouched during the renovation. The stage was not remodeled in any way, but new apparatus was installed. A counter-weight system was added to the hemp system.

PLATE XXV

Lobby Interior After 1941 Remodeling

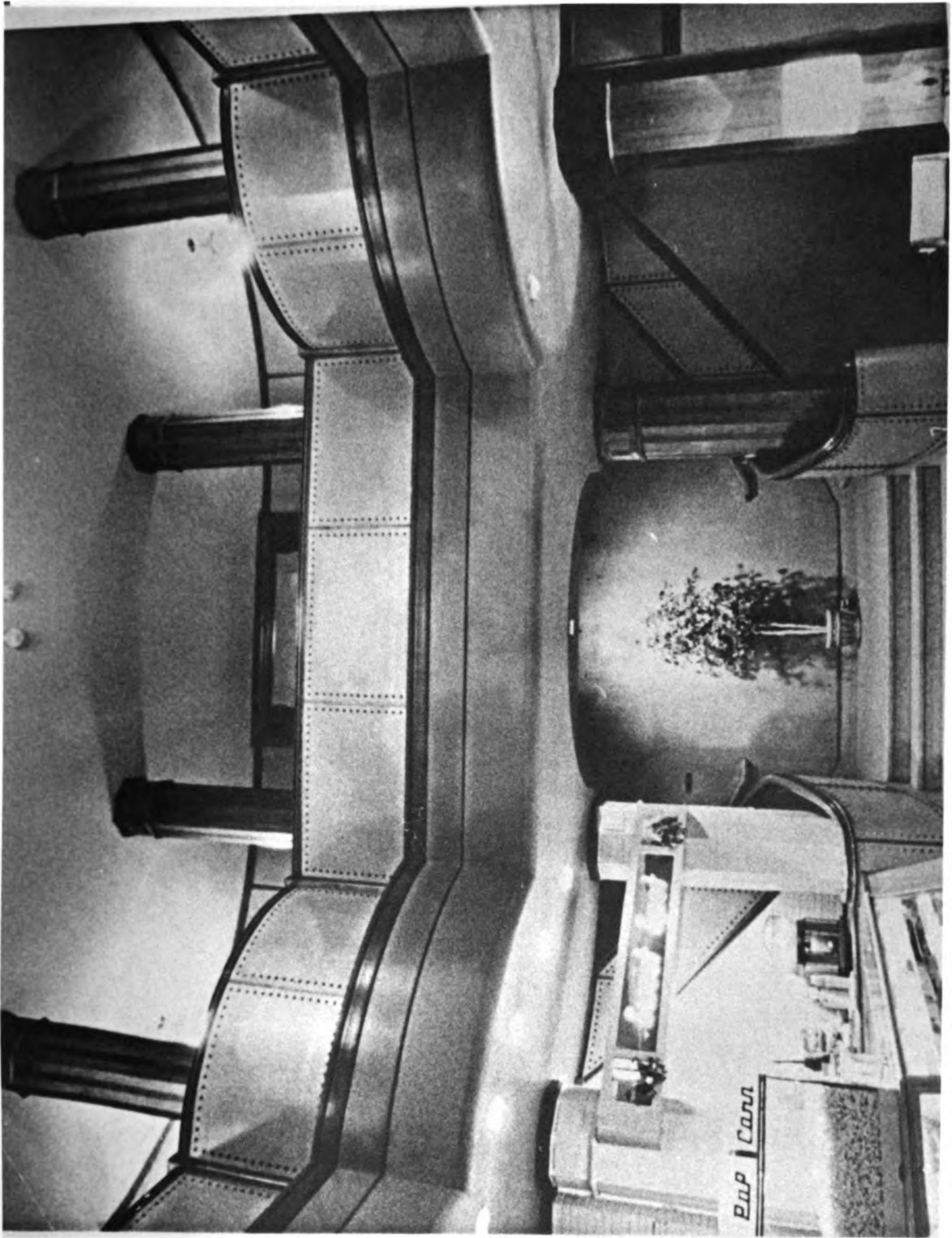
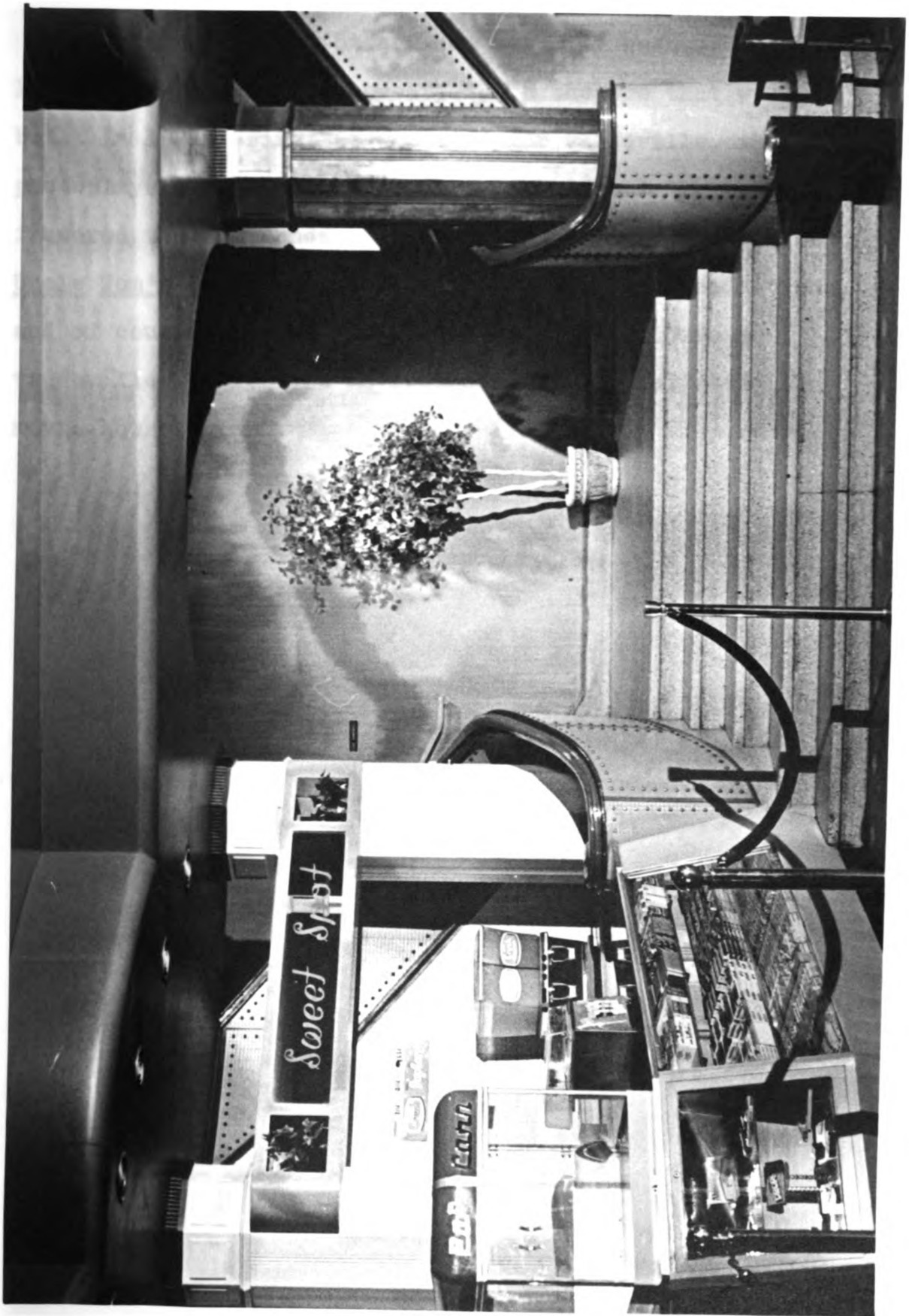


PLATE XXVI

Lobby of the Theatre After 1941 Remodeling



The stage of the Strand has actually been used very little for live entertainment, for a theatre that was built in 1921. First it was used for vaudeville, then photoplays, and through the years, the Strand Theatre has featured the big bands, Oldsmobile shows, productions of Uncle Tom's Cabin, various comic and dramatic productions, and of course, movies. Built as a lavish tribute to vaudeville, it remains an enormous, elaborately detailed movie house.

CHAPTER THREE
COMMERCIAL ASPECTS
OF THE
STRAND THEATRE

This is reprinted in its entirety from An Achievement, the opening night souvenir book of the Strand Theatre.

"The Strand; Its Policy"

The Lansing Strand was not built for today only, but constructed in the hopes that it might be a monument for years to come and a credit to the community even when the city is many times its present size. To that end the attractions which the theatre will present promise to be in keeping with the magnificence of the playhouse. Keith vaudeville will be offered the preponderant share of the time but the policy will be more or less elastic so as to permit the presentation of musical comedy or a picture of unusual worth. No theatre in the state has a stage more completely equipped or of larger dimensions and it would be possible to successfully stage here a road production of the magnitude of "Ben Hur" or "Mecca."

With vaudeville but two performances daily will be offered from Monday to Friday inclusive. On Saturday, Sunday or holidays three shows will be the rule. Matinees start daily at 2:30. Monday to Friday the one evening performance begins at 8:15 with 7:30 and 9:15 the starting hours for the evening performances on Saturday and Sunday.

PLATE XXVII

Department of Labor Notification Found

Outside the Basement Dressing

Rooms of the Theatre

FORM NO. L-47 - REV. 1-18-64

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
 LANSING, MICHIGAN



LEGAL REQUIREMENTS GOVERNING EMPLOYMENT OF ADULT FEMALES

Section 9, Act No. 285 of the Public Acts of 1909, as amended

Section 9. No female shall be employed, permitted or suffered to work in any factory, mill, warehouse, workshop, quarry, clothing, dress-making or millinery establishment or any place where the manufacture of any kinds of goods is carried on, or where any goods are prepared for manufacturing, or in any laundry, store, shop, or any other mercantile establishment or in any office or restaurant, theater, concert hall, music hall, hotel, hospital, or operating an elevator, or on street or electric railways, for a period longer than an average of nine hours a day or fifty-four hours in any week nor more than ten hours in any one day; and all such establishments shall keep posted a copy of this section printed in large type, in a conspicuous place. In establishments having a time clock such copy shall be posted near the time clock. Copies of this section suitable for posting shall be furnished upon the application of any employer by the commission: Provided, however, That the provision of this section in relation to the hours of employment shall not apply to nor affect any person, corporation or association engaged in preserving and shipping perishable goods in fruit and vegetable canning or fruit packing establishments, or student and graduate nurses in hospitals or nurses in fraternal or charitable homes. Such employment shall be approved by the commission, or any duly authorized representative, as not being injurious to the health of the person or persons so engaged.

The major business aspects of the Strand Theatre involve the operating policies of the theatre and the organization of the corporations that ran the theatre.

When the Strand was operating as a vaudeville house in 1921, the theatre was affiliated with the Western Vaudeville Managers' Association, and the individual acts on the circuit were booked by the B. F. Keith Vaudeville Exchange.¹ This meant that there was a particular manner in which the theatre could operate, because the individual acts being booked into the Strand Theatre were following the "two-a-week" schedule set up for them by the latter two organizations. If the Strand did not follow the prescribed schedule of bookings, then no acts on the circuit could appear there.² There were, of course, certain variables in this arrangement. For instance, if a particular act was known to be extremely popular, or if a musical-comedy revue came to town, these acts would sometimes get booked for a solid week at the Strand, while the other acts on the bill played only the regulation split-week. The week was divided into the first half

1. Arthur Frudenfeld, An Achievement (Battle Creek: Ellis Publishing Company, 1921), p. 60.

2. Appendix C, the list of vaudeville acts and photoplays that appeared at the Strand from 1921-1922, shows that whenever the Keith circuit changed their policy, the Strand followed. However, the Strand adapted the Keith policy when there was patron resistance to particular changes in the programming format.

(Sunday through Wednesday, or Monday through Thursday) and the last half (Thursday through Saturday, or Friday through Sunday). Each act got paid at the end of every day.³

The management of the Strand tried several methods of planning its show times. Sometimes there were matinees and evening performances ("two-a-day"); other times there were continuous performances, with the theatre opening up at 11 a.m. and not closing until after 11 p.m.; and still other times there were three performances a day. It probably fluctuated with how well the theatre was doing monetarily, and the apparent belief by the management that the public would respond to constant changes in its policies!

The management must have wanted to encourage family patrons to come to the shows, because their children's policy sounds quite generous. "Saturday matinees at the Strand will be largely devoted to children. Parents may send the kiddies in perfect assurance that the management will pay especial attention to the welfare and comfort of the little ones."⁴ They did, in fact, have children's shows at the Strand, with bleachers on stage for the children to sit on, and Uncle Howdy and animal acts to entertain them.⁵

* * *

3. Interview with James Maher, Appendix D, p. 181.

4. Ibid., An Achievement, p. 42.

5. Ibid., Interview with James Maher, p. 179.

Mr. Butterfield, as owner of a chain of vaudeville/movie theatres, could easily manipulate the schedule of one theatre in order to accommodate the opening, closing or renovation of another one of his theatres. When the Strand opened on April 21, 1921, as a vaudeville house, plans had already been made for vaudeville to end there on June 19, 1921, and to resume at the end of the summer. The State Journal reported this fact as the management's "reversion" to a summer policy of featuring photoplays,⁶ but the opening night souvenir booklet of the Strand explains it more clearly.

W. S. Butterfield's Bijou Theatre will close for a 10 week period Sunday, June 11, 1921. During this time the house will be remodeled and refurnished and when it opens in the fall under the name of the 'Regent', it will be one of the coziest photoplay houses in the state.⁷

When the Bijou Theatre closes June 11, for extensive remodeling, the Strand will institute a policy of presenting master picture productions. Vaudeville will be resumed about August 15.⁸

One can see, therefore, that Mr. Butterfield's commitment to vaudeville was more incomplete than his commitment to a successful business venture. By priming his vaudeville audience for the success of a remodeled movie house, he was obviously anticipating the changeover of the Strand from vaudeville to photoplays. That change came within the first year of the Strand's existence.

6. State Journal, June 17, 1921.

7. Ibid., An Achievement, p. 55.

8. Ibid., An Achievement, p. 40.

The theatre did go back to a vaudeville schedule on September 1, 1921, but on October 3, 1921, the management added a five-reel feature photoplay, thus providing ". . . a double attraction at no advance in price. . . ." ⁹ At the end of March, 1922, the management again "reverted" to its summer policy of showing movies exclusively, but this time it did not "revert" back to vaudeville at the end of the summer. From then on, except for infrequent one-act additions to the photoplay bill, the Strand Theatre was basically a photoplay/movie house.

* * *

At this same time, the Butterfield management of the Strand-Arcade Building was attempting to attract business to the convention-banquet-ballroom space on the second floor of the structure. Evidently, they did not get the private parties, conventions, etc. that they had planned the space for, and the space became a public ballroom that charged fifteen cents admission to the dances held there on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings.

One can compare the Arcade's inability to attract convention business with the Lansing Civic Center's current inability to attract conventions to the Lansing area.

* * *

The organizations that ran the Strand Theatre were corporate structures. The Arcade Building Company of

9. State Journal, September 29, 1921.

Lansing became a corporation in 1919, and Walter S. Butterfield was one of the three primary stockholders. This corporation eventually became the Lansing Arcade and Theatre Company, and Butterfield and E. C. Shields, another of the original stockholders, were two of the directors of this corporation. The latter corporation dealt solely with the Strand-Arcade Building.

Another corporation that Butterfield was a director of, was the Bijou Theatrical Enterprise Company. This corporation evidently involved the operation of all the Butterfield theatres in Michigan. This is the corporation that currently pays the taxes on the Michigan Theatre.¹⁰

10. The Articles of Incorporation for the Arcade Building Company of Lansing and the Lansing Arcade and Theatre Company are in Appendix A. Also included are the Corporation Annual Reports for the Lansing Arcade and Theatre Company and the Bijou Theatrical Enterprises for the year 1921.

CONCLUSION

Like many American vaudeville houses, the Strand Theatre succumbed to the rising popularity of cinema and became a movie house. The theatre changed its policy from vaudeville to photoplays in 1922, and thereafter vaudeville acts appeared only sporadically. Other live entertainments appeared at the theatre in later years, but Mr. Butterfield made the Strand, as well as his other theatres, part of a movie-house circuit, whose operation in some ways paralleled the vaudeville circuit. In 1941, the house of the theatre was completely remodeled, and no longer appears in any way like it did when it opened on April 21, 1921.

Today the house is known as the Michigan Theatre. There are fewer seats (1533, as opposed to 1786 in the Strand), and the balcony is infrequently used. Therefore, the rotunda, promenade space, the smoking room, ladies' retiring room and nursery are in disuse. There are 800 seats on the main floor. An electrical fire in 1975 totally destroyed the light board, so that one sees only the blank gray surface covering the wires, rather than the complex of switches on the original light board.

The mammoth multi-use space on the second floor of the arcade is partially filled with offices, but much of the space is vacant. The basement of the arcade has been closed for years. The shops still exist in the arcade, but there are very few people shopping there. The movie theatre has the greatest audience on Monday evenings, when the

admission price of \$2.50 admits two for the price of one, and other nights the partially filled seats on the main floor make the theatre seem even more vast than it is. Just as the vaudeville theatre was superseded by the cultural and life-style changes of the 1920's, the downtown movie theatre today has been superseded by the intimate shopping mall movie theatre that has free parking and is more conveniently located than a downtown theatre.

It is important to put the Strand Theatre in the perspective of other theatres of its time. The Strand is typical of the grandiose, elaborately-detailed theatre houses that were built in the early decades of the twentieth century in many cities in the United States.

These theatres manifested a singular interest in fire safety, as is shown by the enactment of fire, building, and operating codes that were written to protect the public from any such disaster. The builders of the Strand Theatre had the same concerns, and were quite proud of the structure's safety features.

Theatre, at the time that the Strand was built, was a major social event. The majesty of the theatre itself, as well as its immediate environs, such as grand entrances, foyers and staircases, provided its patrons with an opportunity to share in the fantasy and glamour of the entire occasion. However, the theatres of this type were forced to succumb to the whimsical nature of the American

public's interests. As the interest in live entertainment dwindled, the theatres either closed their doors or adapted to the public's new interest in films that precluded the formality of live theatre.

Typical of these massive, ornate structures, the Strand/Michigan Theatre today is still struggling to comply to the changing tastes of the public. Quite recently, rock concerts have been scheduled in the theatre, attracting large audiences that fill the theatre and the balcony. At the same time, there has been a revival of interest in the theatre as a structure, as the public's aesthetic priorities return to the appreciation of these "temples of mass entertainment."

* * *

My basic recommendation for further research on the Strand Theatre would be to seek out further ways to collect ephemera, i.e. the tickets, posters, give-aways, and other theatrical memorabilia that this thesis lacks. The probate files of Mr. Butterfield and local theatre historians and collectors could be further investigated, to see if anything is held by their heirs. More ads could be put in local newspapers to see if anyone with a trunk in their attic responds to a researcher's plea for memorabilia. My final recommendation for further research would be to try to locate Mr. Eberson's construction sketches, for I believe that they would be highly informative and interesting to peruse.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CORPORATE INFORMATION

ON THE

STRAND-ARCADE BUILDING

APPENDIX A

CORPORATE INFORMATION ON THE STRAND-ARCADE BUILDING

Articles of Incorporation

Arcade Building Company of Lansing¹

Capitol Stock = \$20,000

Number of Shares into which capitol stock is divided is
200 of the par value of \$100 each.

The amount of capitol stock subscribed is \$10,000.

The amount of said stock actually paid in at the date
hereof equals \$2,000 of which \$2,000 has been paid in
cash.

The term of existence of this corporation is fixed at 30
years.

Names of stockholders and amounts they own:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Number of Shares</u>
Walter S. Butterfield	33
Harris E. Thomas	33
Edmund C. Shields	34

November 4, 1919.

1. Michigan Department of Commerce, Corporation and Securities Division, Liber 210, p. 349.

Articles of Incorporation

Lansing Arcade & Theatre Company²

Incorporated March 9, 1920

Dissolved January 13, 1938

Total authorized capitol stock - \$20,000

(Paid in \$2,000 of the \$20,000)

Increased to \$300,000:

\$150,000 - common stock

\$150,000 - preferred stock

On day of incorporation (March 9, 1920) authorized capitol
increased from \$20,000 to \$300,000.

2. Michigan Department of Commerce, Corporation and
Securities Division, Liber 216, p. 469.

Michigan Annual Report of the Lansing
Arcade and Theatre Company, 1921³

The place or places at which the corporation's business has been engaged during the year is: Strand Theatre and Arcade, South Washington Avenue and South Grand Avenue, Lansing, Michigan.

Names of Officers

Pres. W. S. Butterfield

V. P. E. C. Shields

Sec. H. A. Rowles

Tres. H. A. Rowles

Directors

W. S. Butterfield

E. C. Shields

E. C. Beatty

B. J. Onen

H. A. Rowles

The amount of authorized capitol stock - \$300,000

The number of shares of each class:

15,000 common

15,000 preferred

none non-par value

3. Michigan Department of State, History Division, Archives Section: Record Group 61-11, Records of the Corporation and Securities Commission.

The number of capitol stock subscribed - \$300,000

The amount of capitol stock paid in cash - \$150,000

The amount of capitol stock paid in property - \$150,000

The par value of each of the different classes of
authorized capitol stock:

common - \$10.00

preferred - \$10.00

No non par value stock

No other classes of stock

The nature and kind of the business in which the
corporation has been engaged during the year:

Real estate rentals and theatrical operations

The nature, location, and value of all property owned by
the corporation:

Real estate - \$601,902.15

Goods, chattels, merchandise,	}	\$39,306.20
material & other tangible property		

Cash on hand - \$3,893.33

Patent rights, copyrights,	}	NONE
trademarks, formulas		

Goodwill - \$139,600.00

Value of credits owing to the corporation - \$2,538.63

Deferred expense - \$8,199.84

Totals: \$795,445.15

Lansing Arcade & Theatre Company
Report of Condition as of June 30, 1921

Assets

Real Estate & Buildings	\$601,902.15
Theatre Equipment	12,182.58
Furniture & Fixtures	27,123.62
Accounts Receivable	2,538.63
Franchises	50,000.00
Leases	39,600.00
Goodwill	50,000.00
Prepaid Expenses	8,199.84
Cash	<u>3,898.33</u>
Totals	\$795,445.15

Liabilities

Capitol Stock - common	\$150,000.00
Capitol Stock - preferred	150,000.00
Notes Payable	195,445.15
Bonds	<u>300,000.00</u>
Totals	\$795,445.15

Michigan Annual Report of the
Bijou Theatrical Enterprise Company, 1921⁴

The place or places at which the corporation's business has
been engaged during the year is:

Kalamazoo, Battle Creek, Ann Arbor, Lansing, Flint,
Port Huron, Saginaw, Bay City, Michigan

Names of Officers

W. S. Butterfield

E. C. Beatty

H. A. Rowles

H. A. Rowles

Names of Directors

W. S. Butterfield

E. C. Beatty

H. A. Rowles

The amount of authorized capitol stock is \$75,000.00

The number of shares of each class

common - 7,500

preferred - 0

non-par value - 0

The amount of capitol stock subscribed \$53,500.00

The amount of capitol stock paid in cash \$3,590.00

The amount of capitol stock paid in property \$49,910.00

4. Ibid.

The par value of each of the different classes of authorized
capitol stock:

Common \$10.00

Preferred 0

The nature and kind of the business in which the corporation
has been engaged during the year:

Operating Vaudeville, Motion Picture and other
theatres

The nature and location and value of all property owned by
the corporation:

Real Estate	\$ 80,247.50
-------------	--------------

Goods, chattels, merchandise, material and other tangible property	54,658.99
--	-----------

Cash on hand	6,157.70
--------------	----------

Patent rights, copyrights, trademarks & formulas	0
---	---

Goodwill	0
----------	---

Value of credits owing to the corporation	114,541.35
--	------------

All other property (securities)	<u>417,061.75</u>
------------------------------------	-------------------

Totals	\$672,667.29
--------	--------------

Assets

Real Estate	\$ 80,247.50
Goods, chattels, merchandise, material & other tangible property	54,658.99
Cash on hand (including deposits in banks)	6,157.70
Value of credits owing to the corporation	114,541.35
Securities	<u>417,061.75</u>
Totals	\$672,667.29

Liabilities

Liability on Real Estate Mortgage	\$102,500.00
Liability on all other secured indebtedness	184,523.92
Liability on all unsecured indebtedness	75,496.45
Surplus	256,646.92
Capitol stock subscribed	<u>53,500.00</u>
Totals	\$672,667.29

APPENDIX B

CONSTRUCTION PHOTOGRAPHS

PLATE A

Washington Avenue View of Theatre Site
Before Start of Construction, March 17, 1920.



PLATE B

Grand Avenue View of Theatre Site Before Start
of Construction, March 17, 1920.

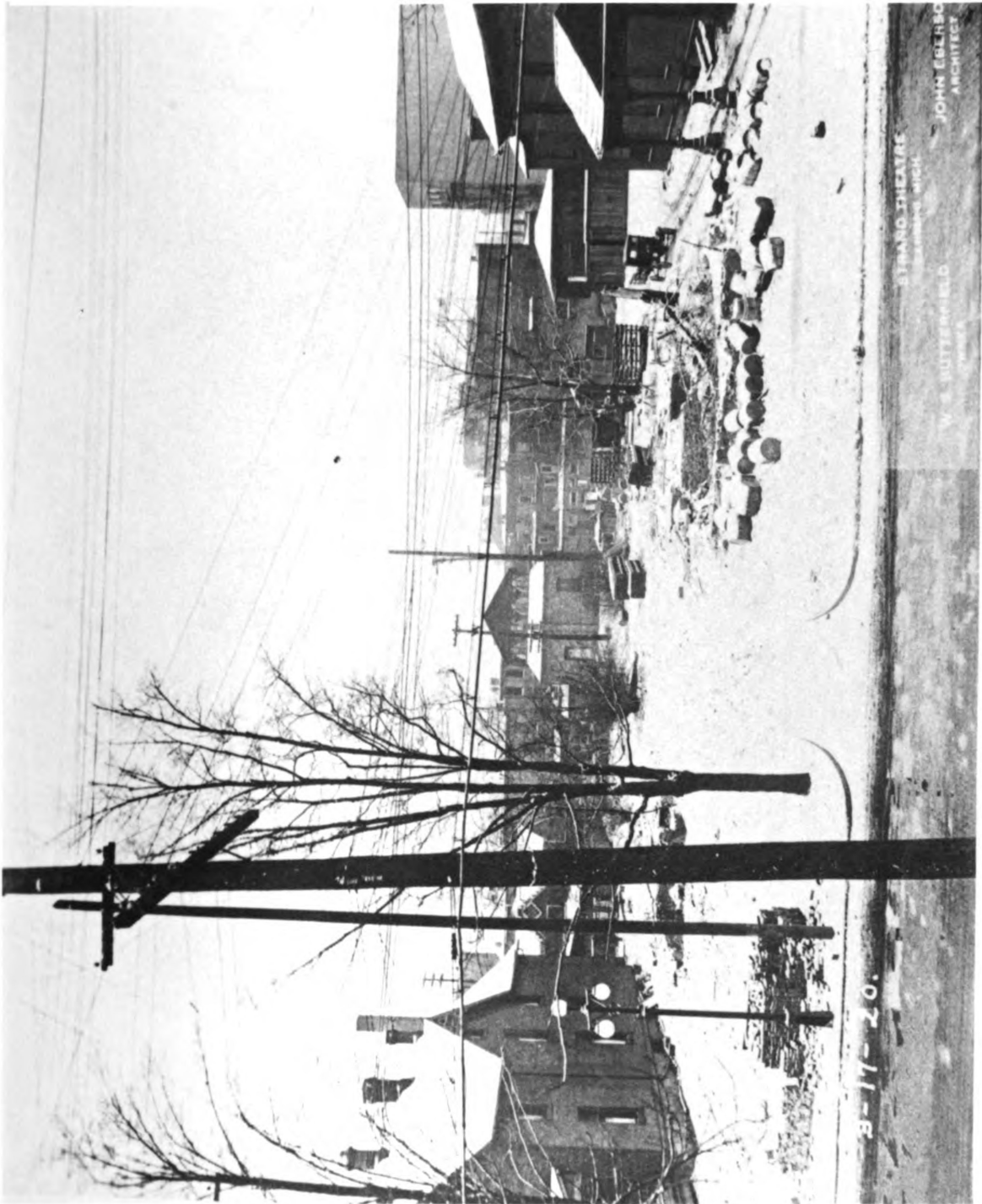


PLATE C

Washington Avenue View of Theatre Site

March 24, 1920.

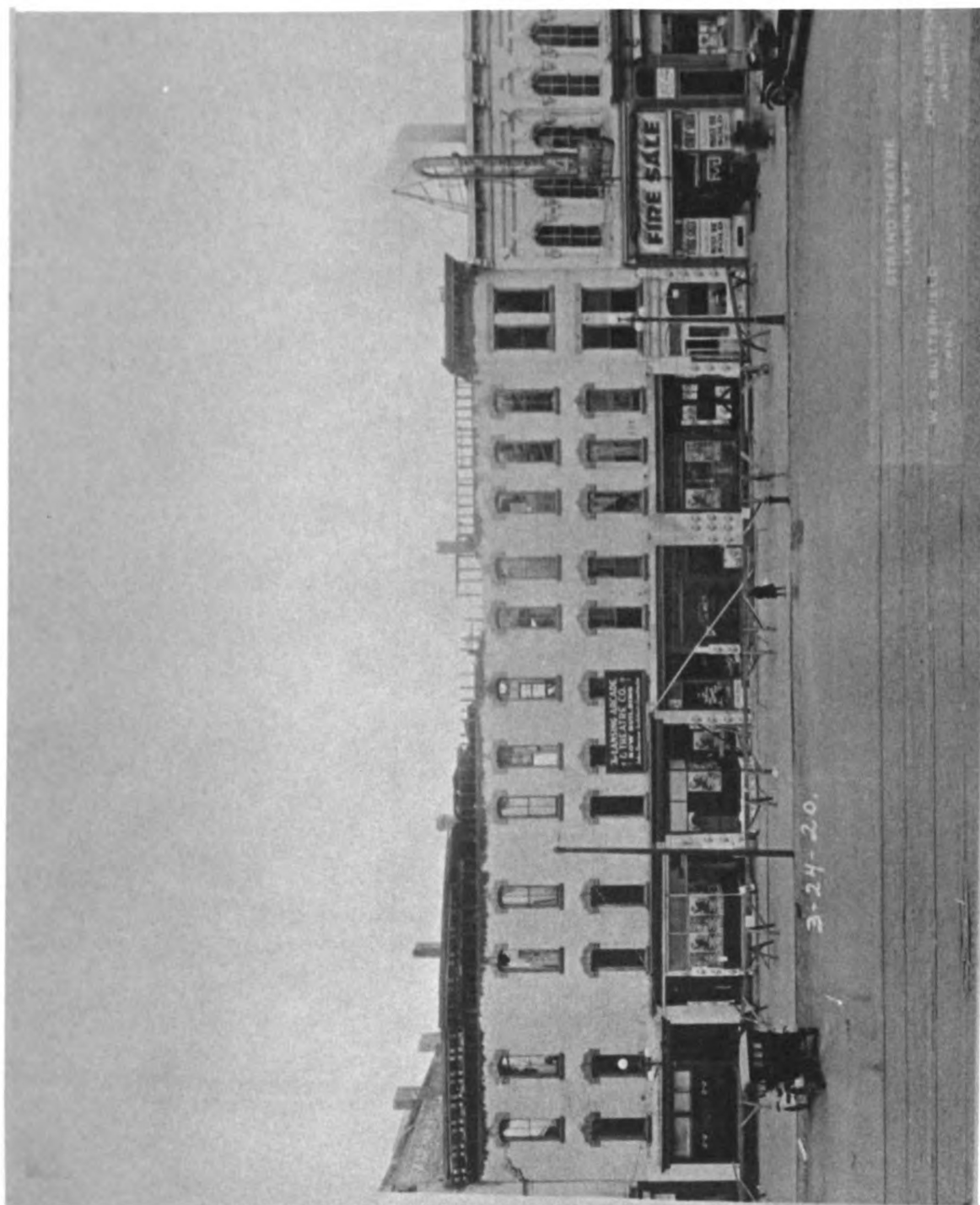


PLATE D

Grand Avenue View of Theatre Site

March 24, 1920.



PLATE E

Washington Avenue View of Construction Site

March 31, 1920.

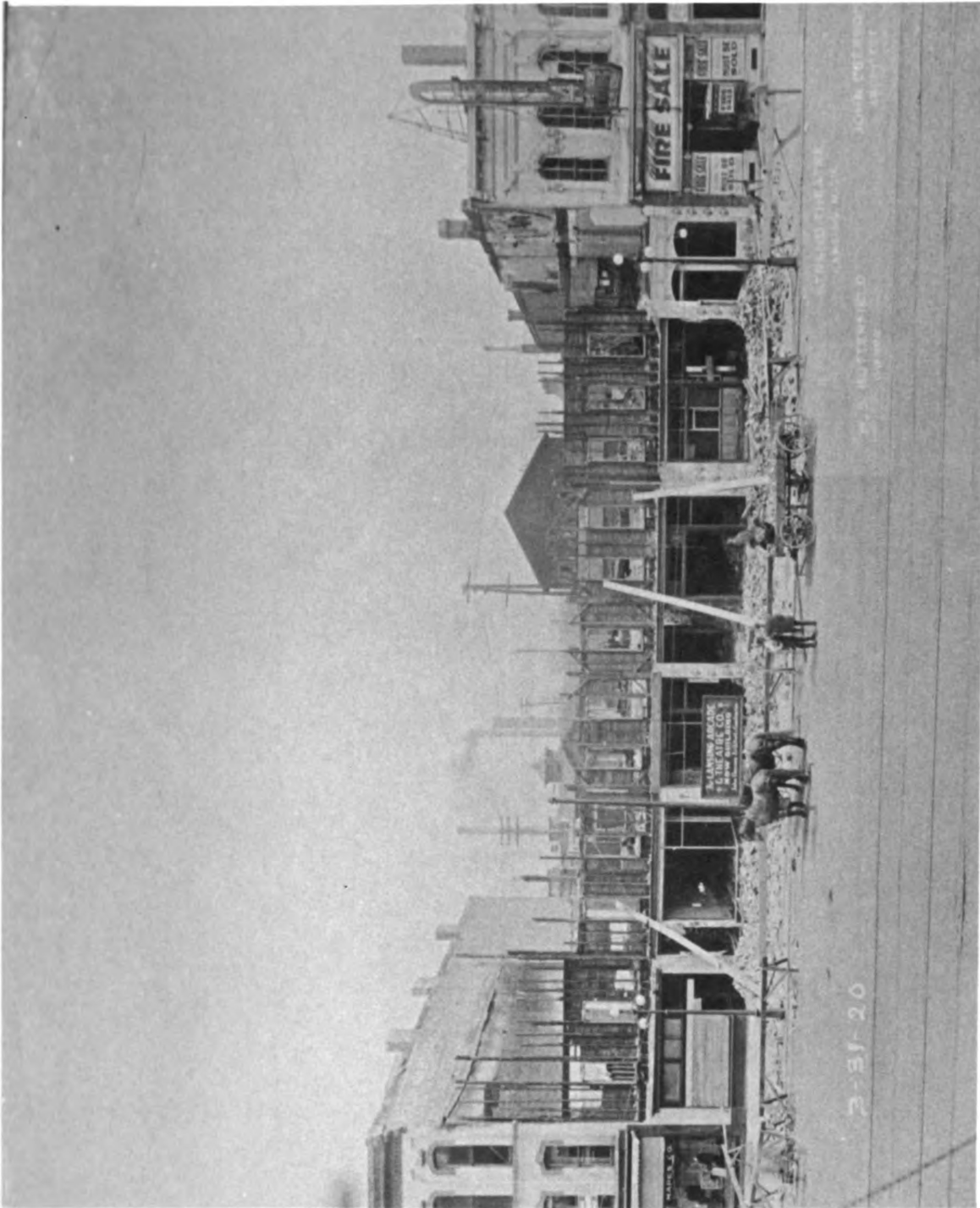


PLATE F

Grand Avenue View of Construction Site

March 31, 1920.



PLATE G

Washington Avenue View of Construction Site

April 7, 1920.

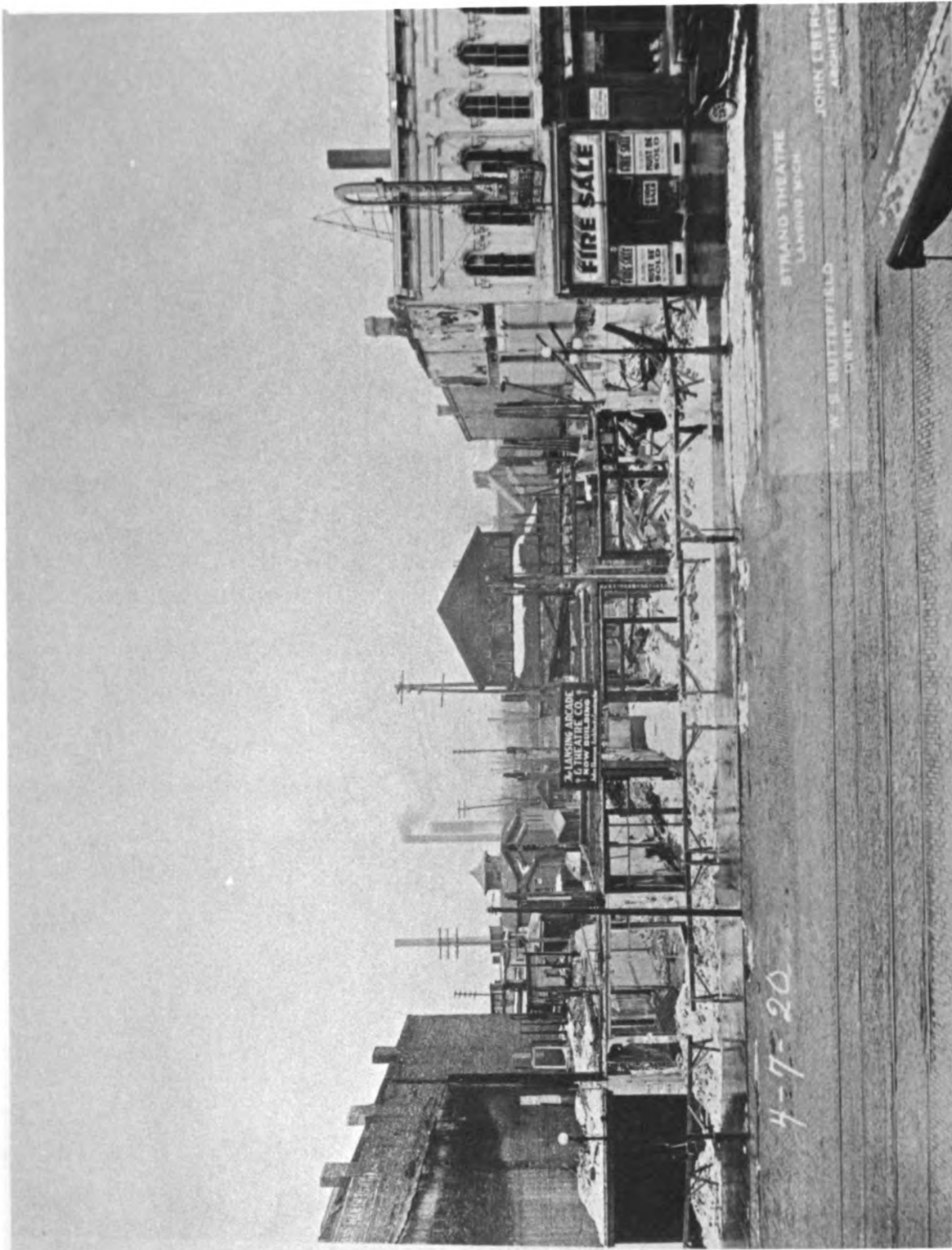


PLATE H

Washington Avenue View of Construction Site

April 14, 1920.

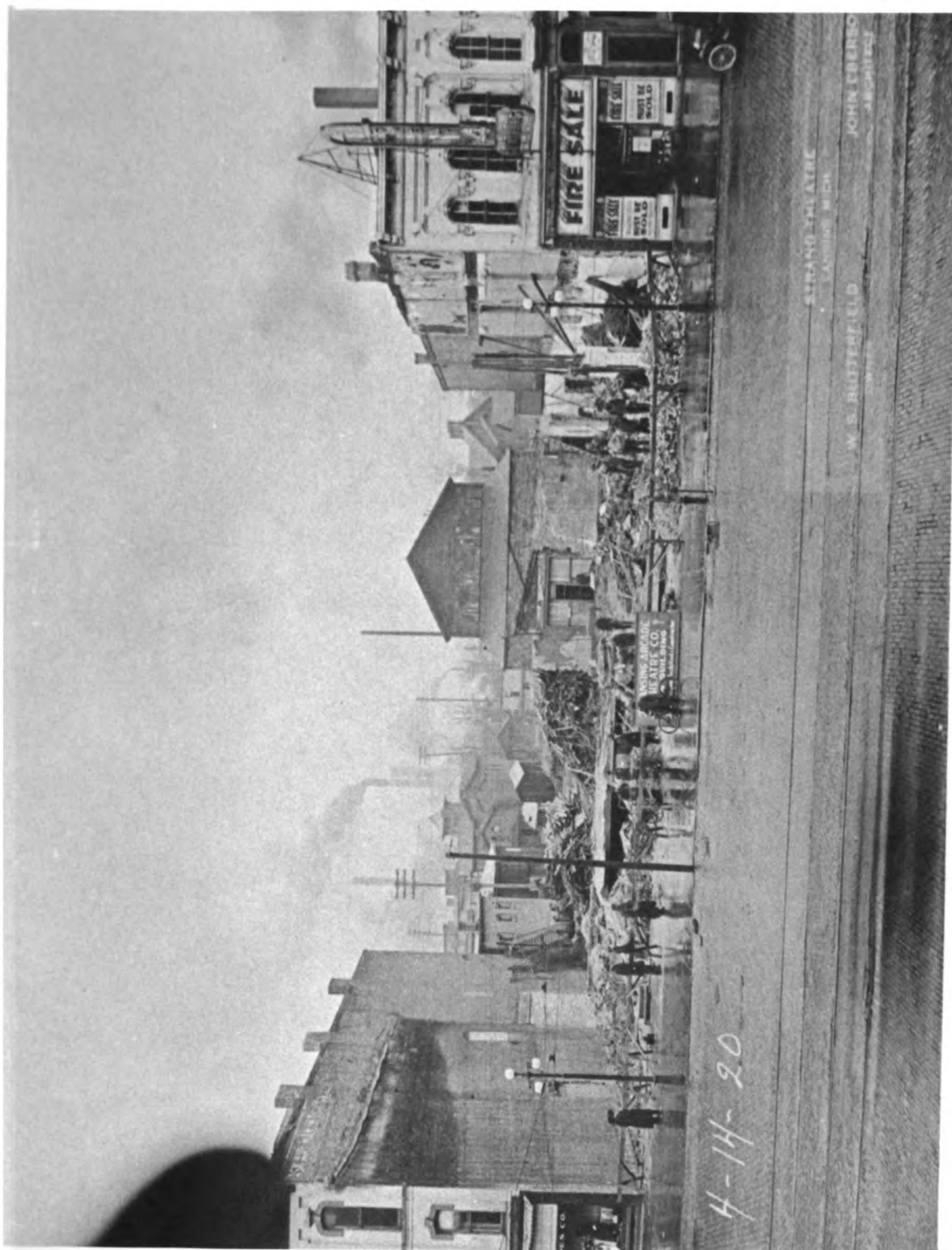


PLATE I

Grand Avenue View of Construction Site

April 14, 1920.

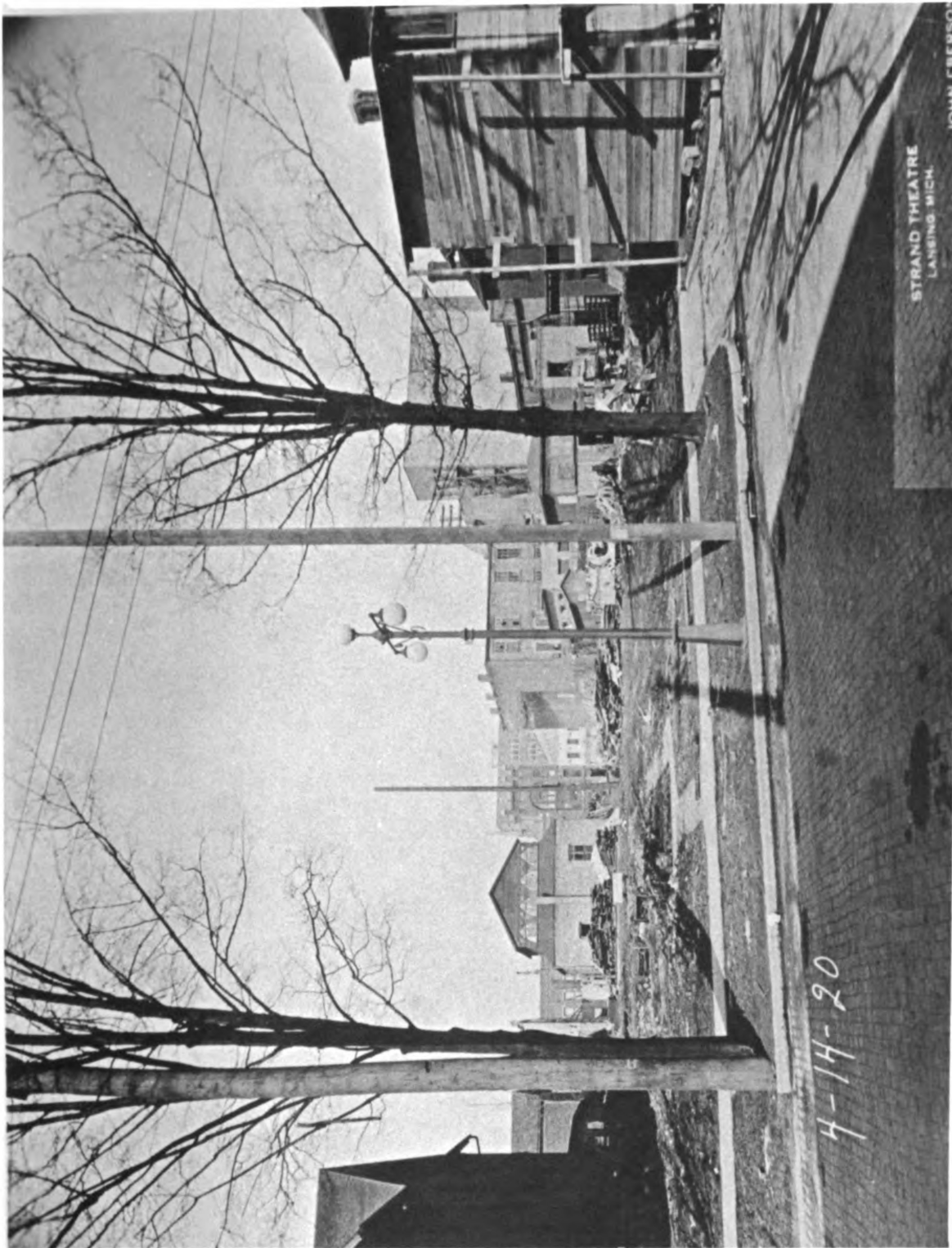


PLATE J

Grand Avenue View of Construction

April 21, 1920.

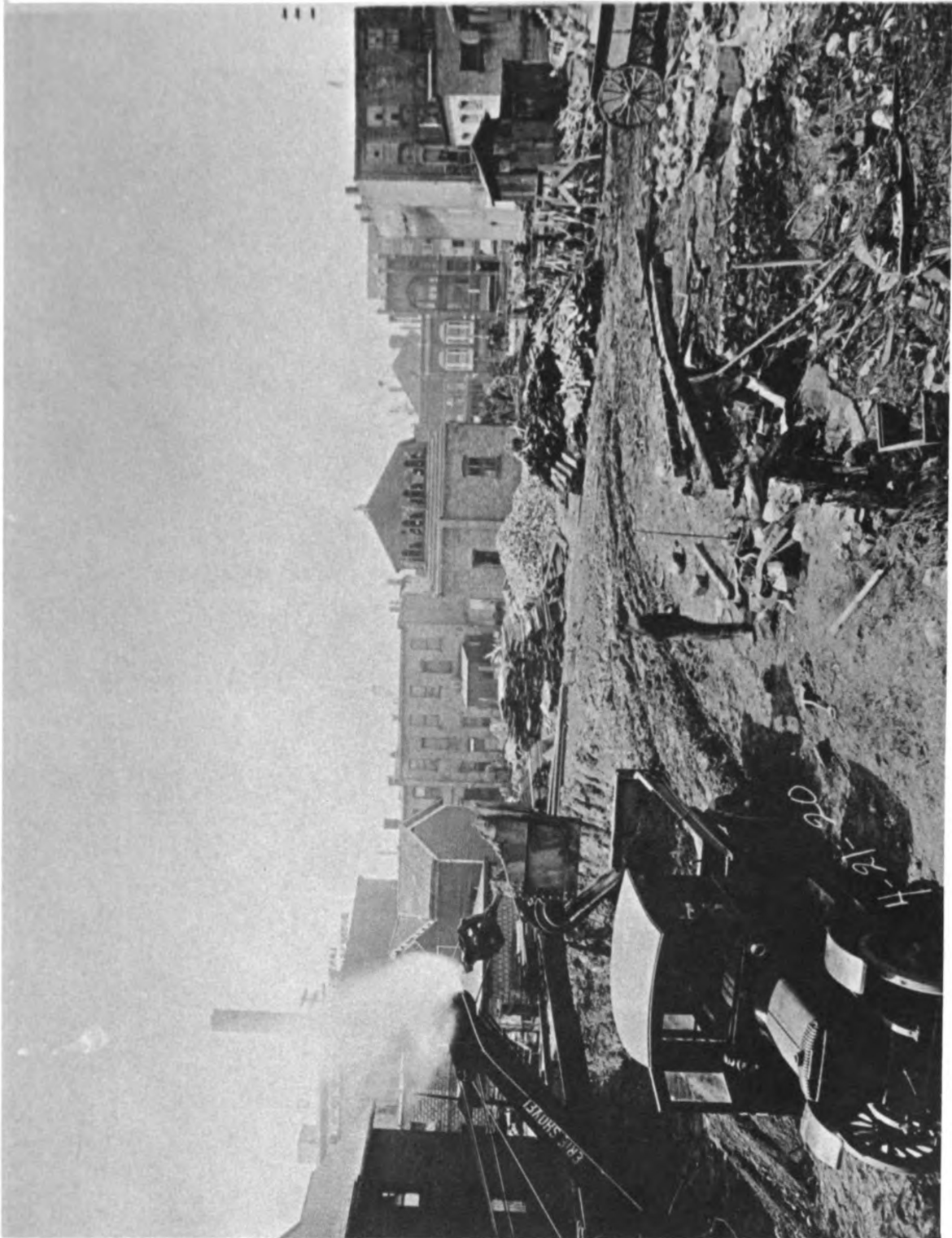


PLATE K

Grand Avenue View of Construction



PLATE I

Washington Avenue View of Construction

April 21, 1920.

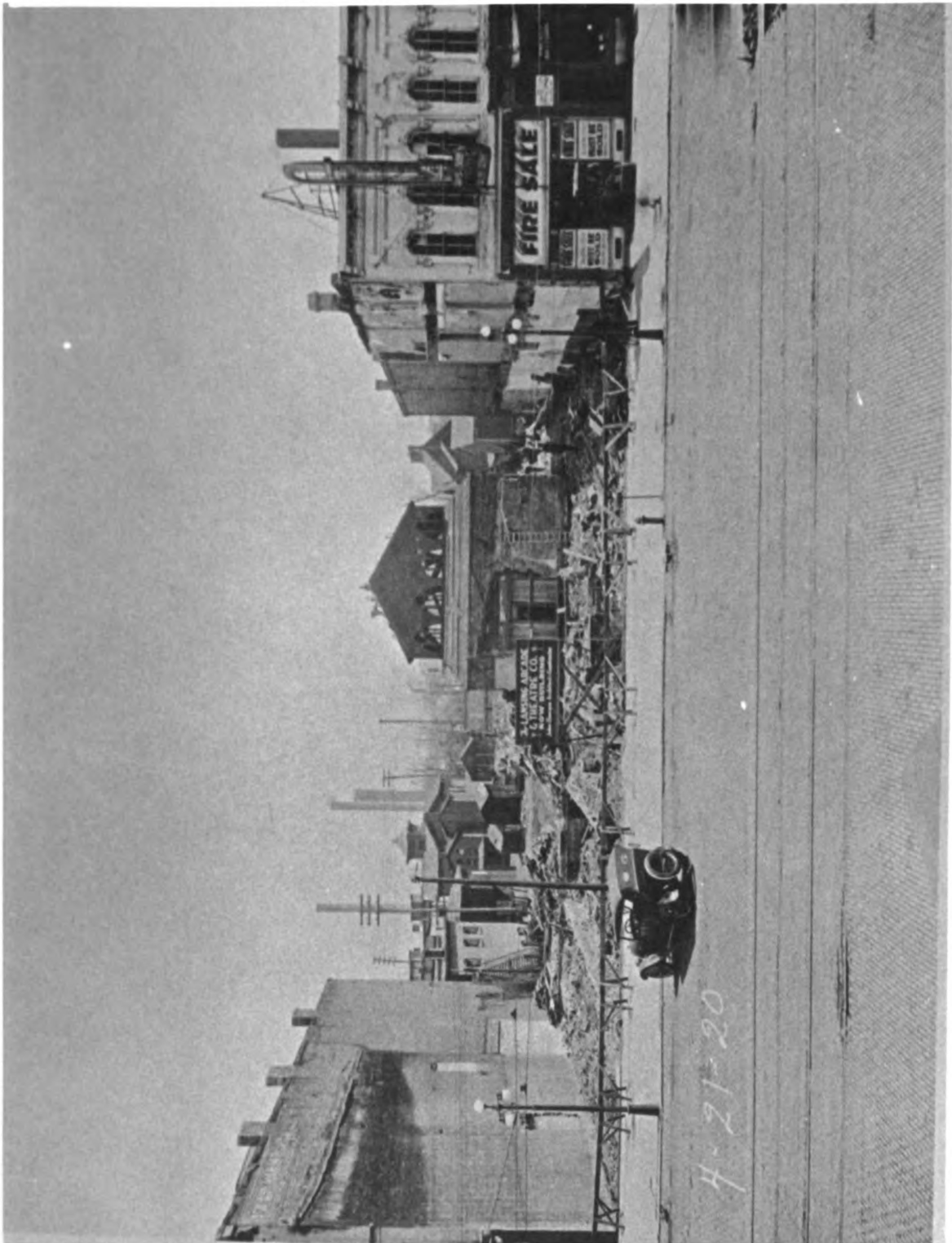


PLATE M

Grand Avenue View of Construction

May 5, 1920.

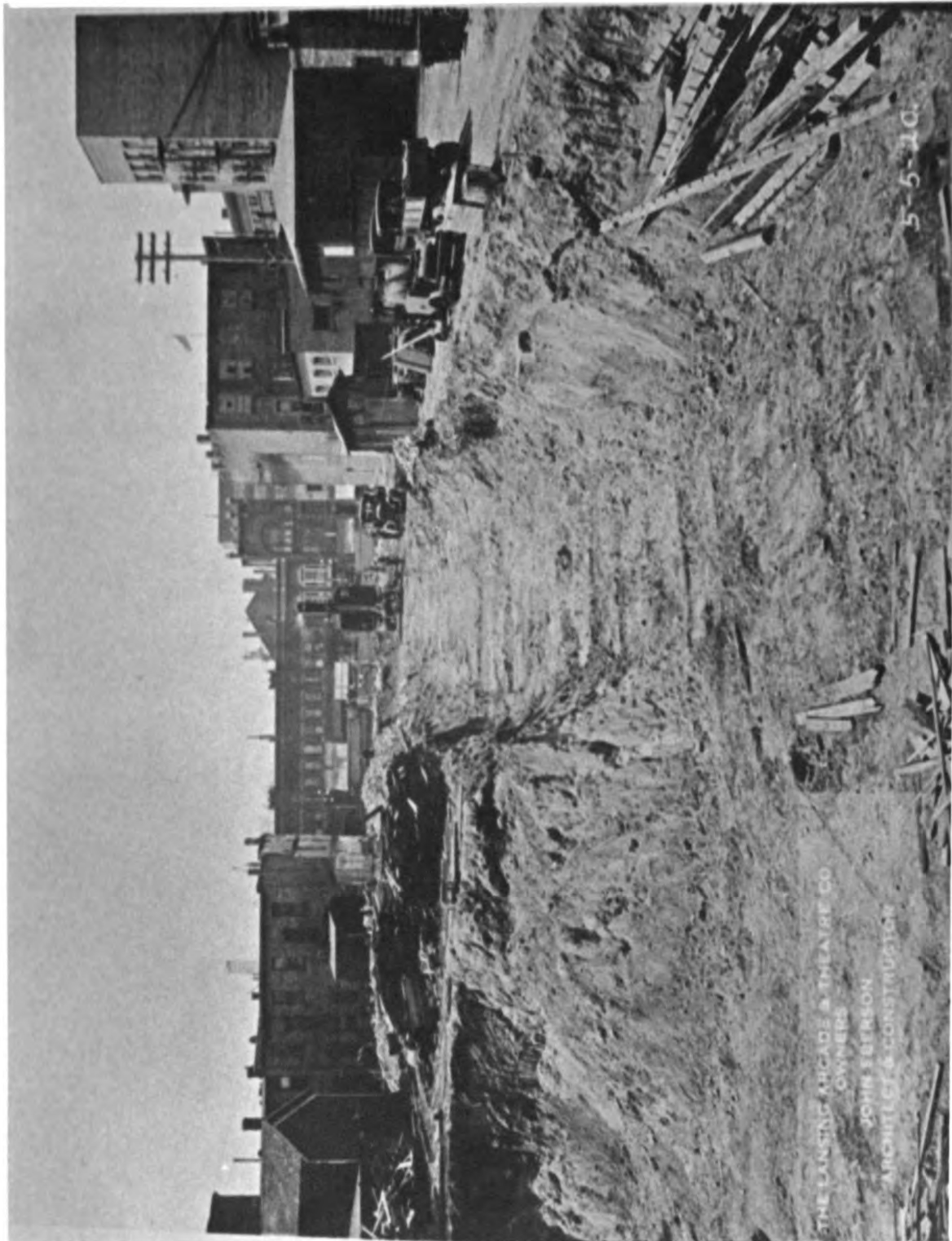


PLATE N

Grand Avenue View of Construction

May 10, 1920.

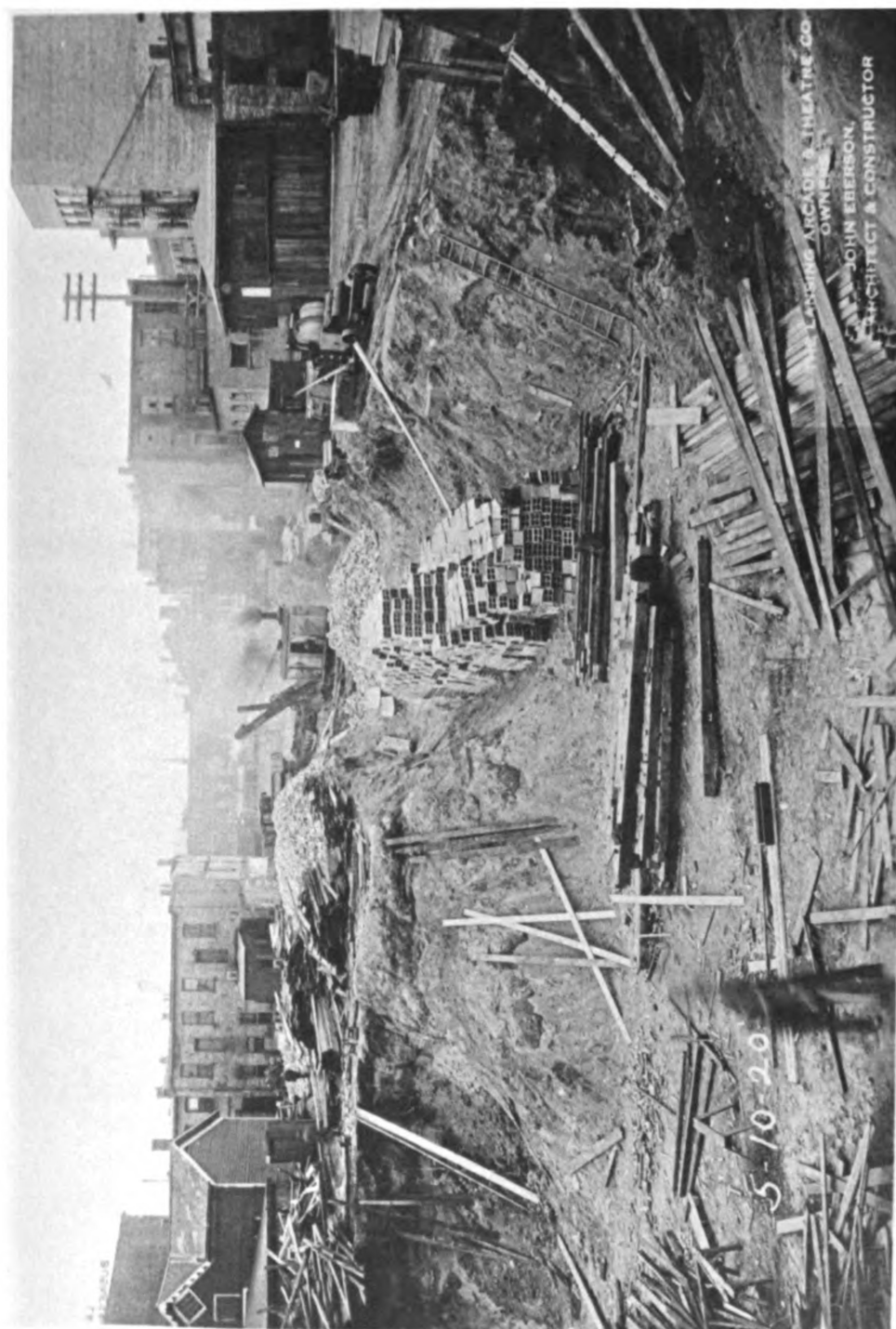


PLATE O

Washington Avenue View of Construction

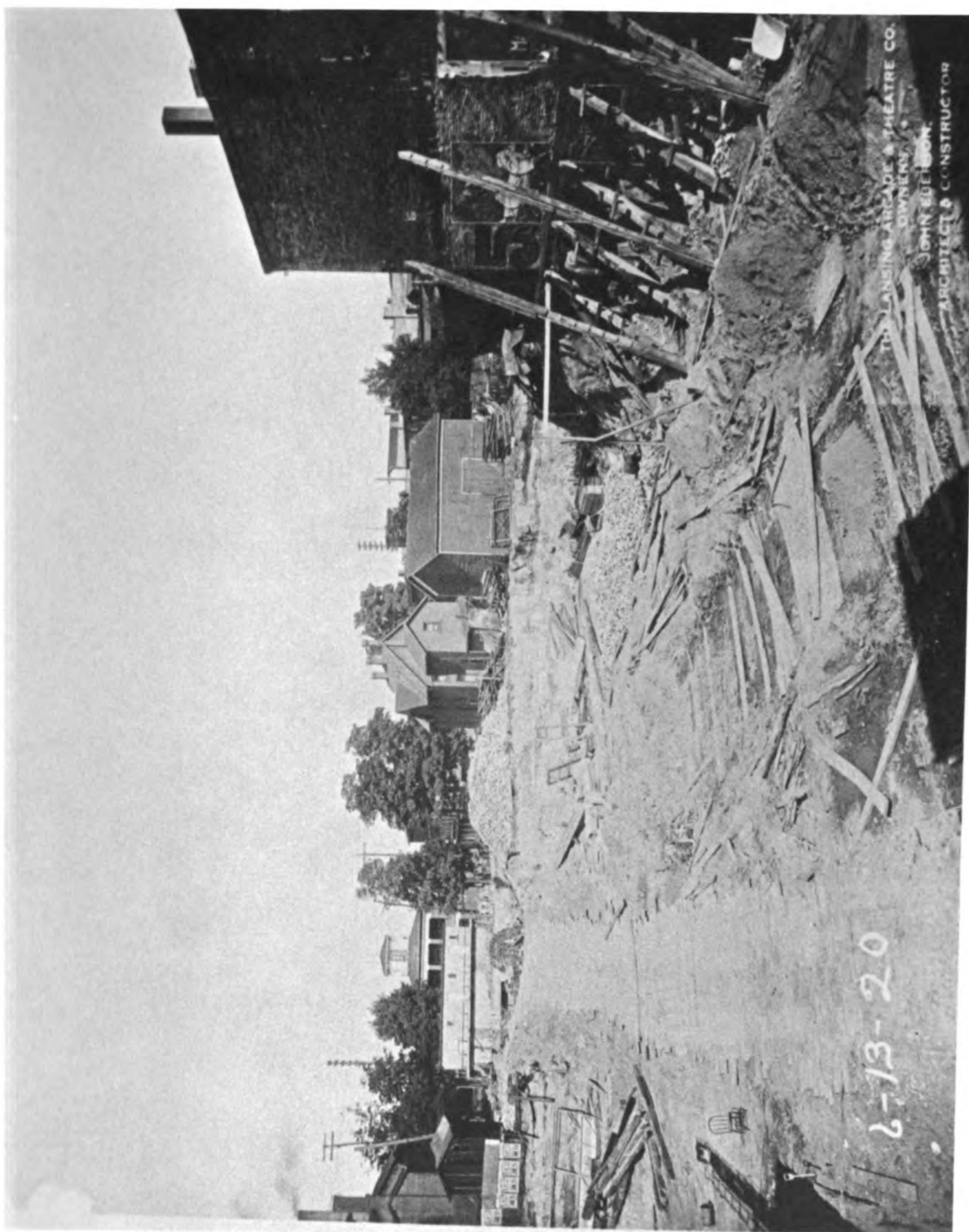
June 8, 1920.



PLATE P

Washington Avenue View of Construction

June 13, 1920.



1

PLATE Q

East Section of Construction

Viewed From the North

June 20, 1920.

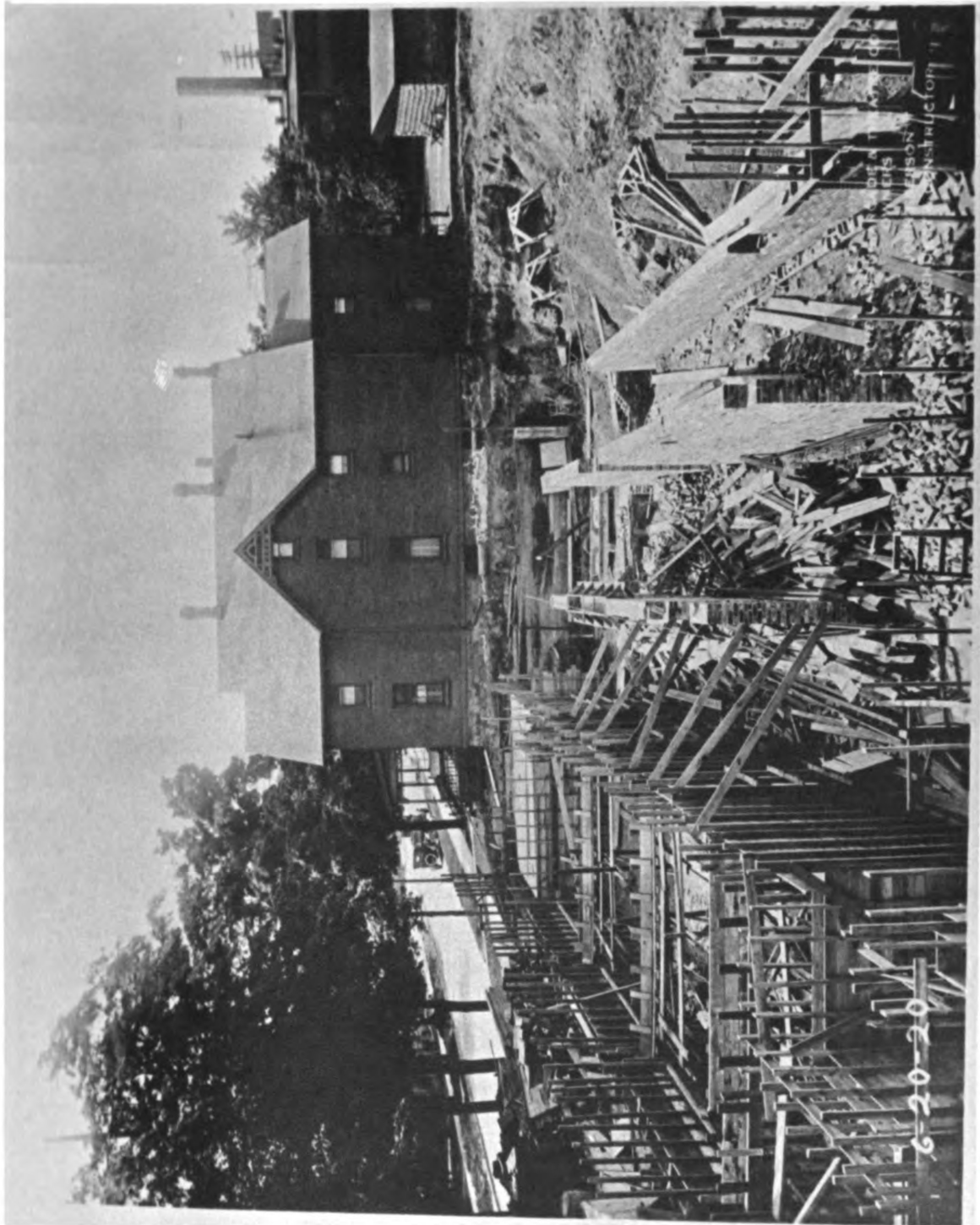


PLATE R

West Section of Construction

Viewed From the North

June 20, 1920.

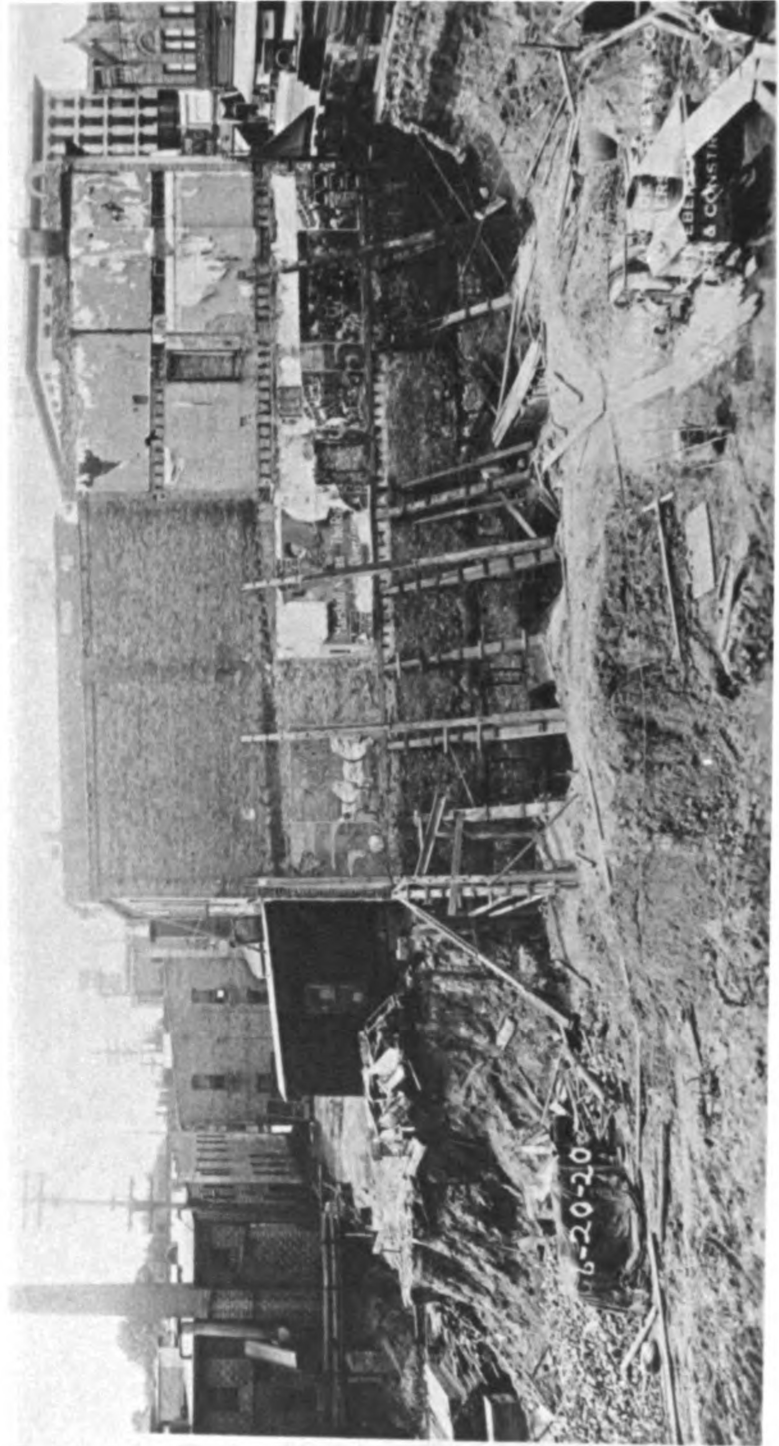


PLATE S

Construction Site, June 27, 1920.

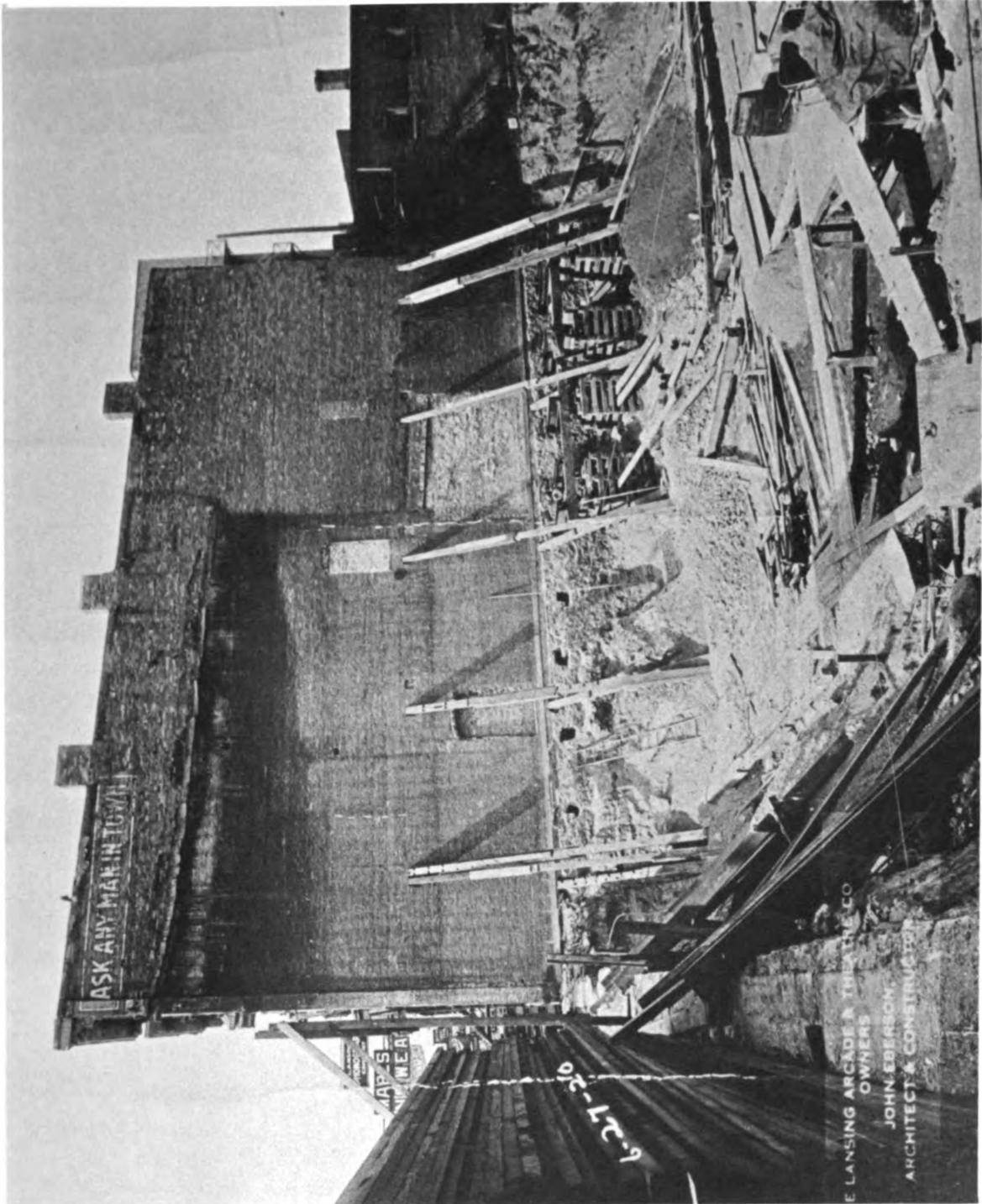


PLATE T

Construction Site, July 22, 1920.

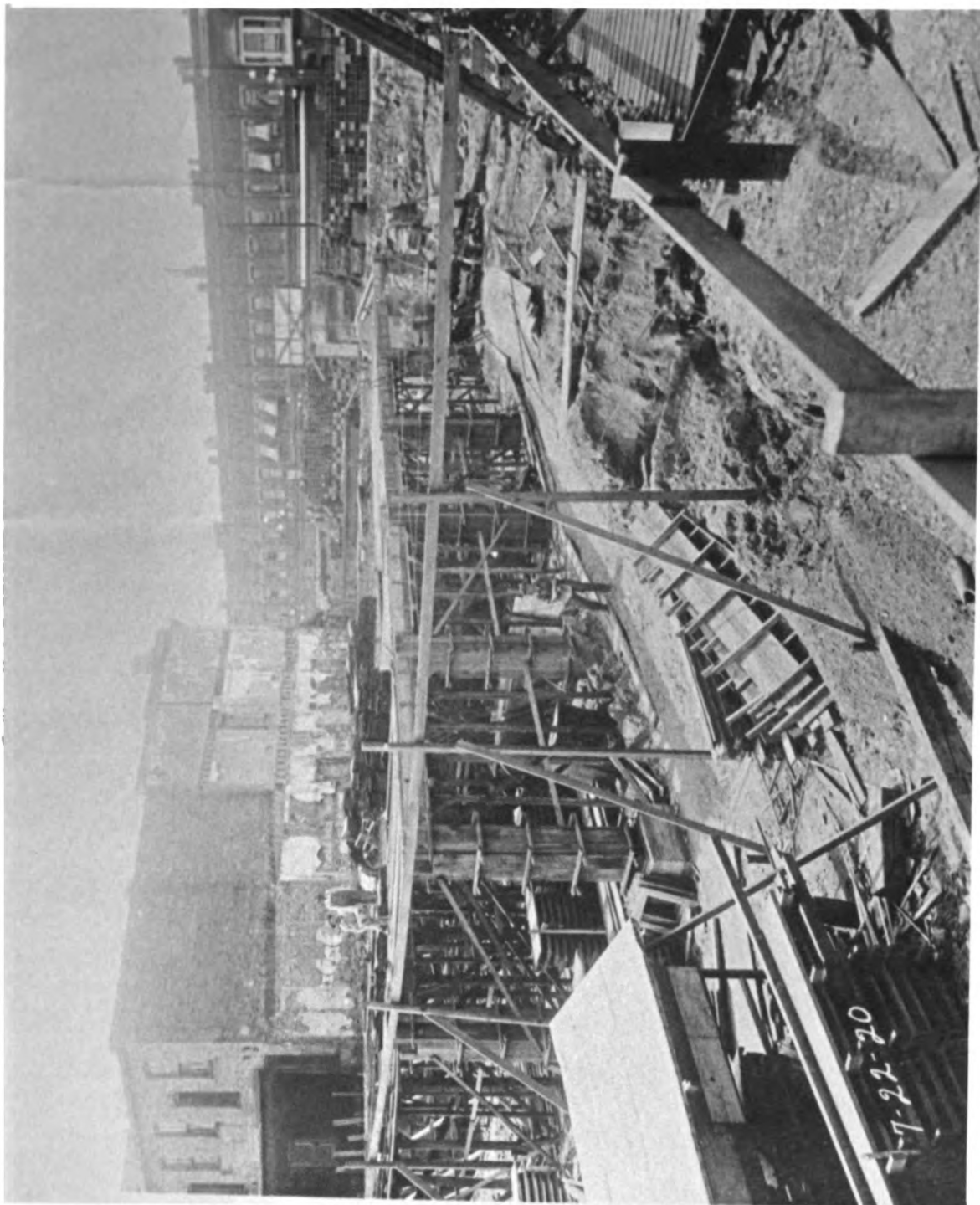


PLATE U

Construction Site, August 23, 1920.

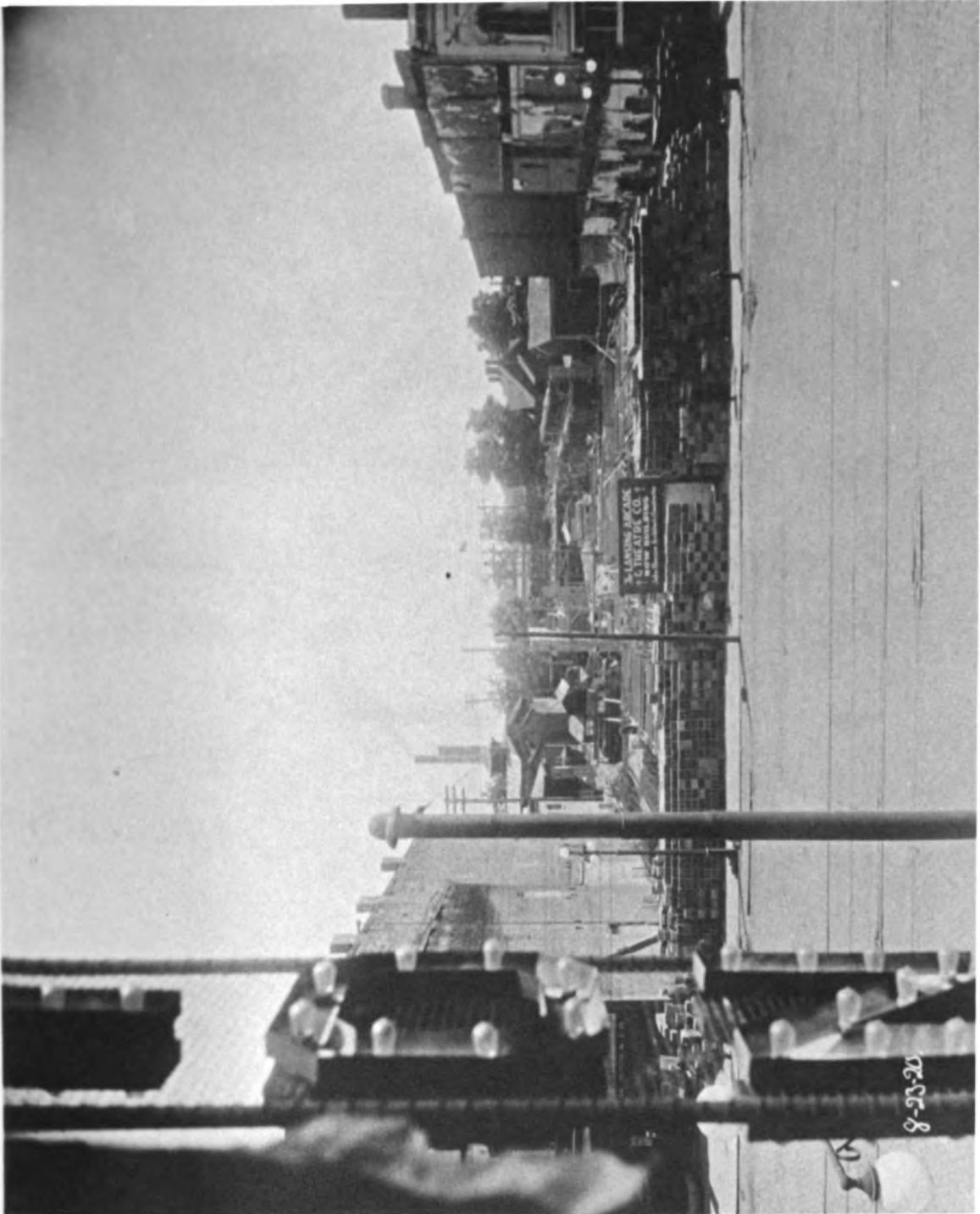


PLATE V

Construction Site, August 23, 1920.

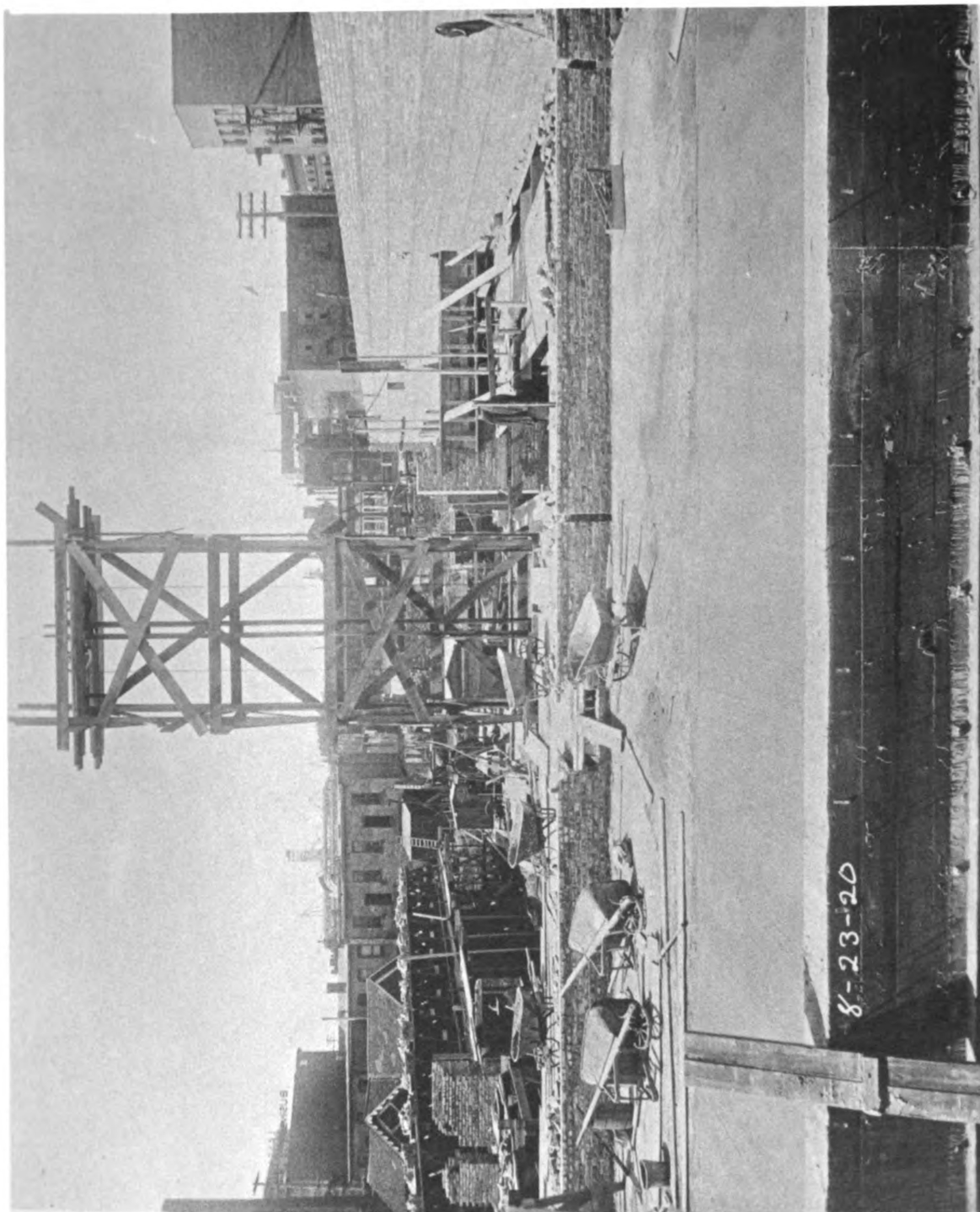


PLATE W

Construction Site, August 24, 1920.

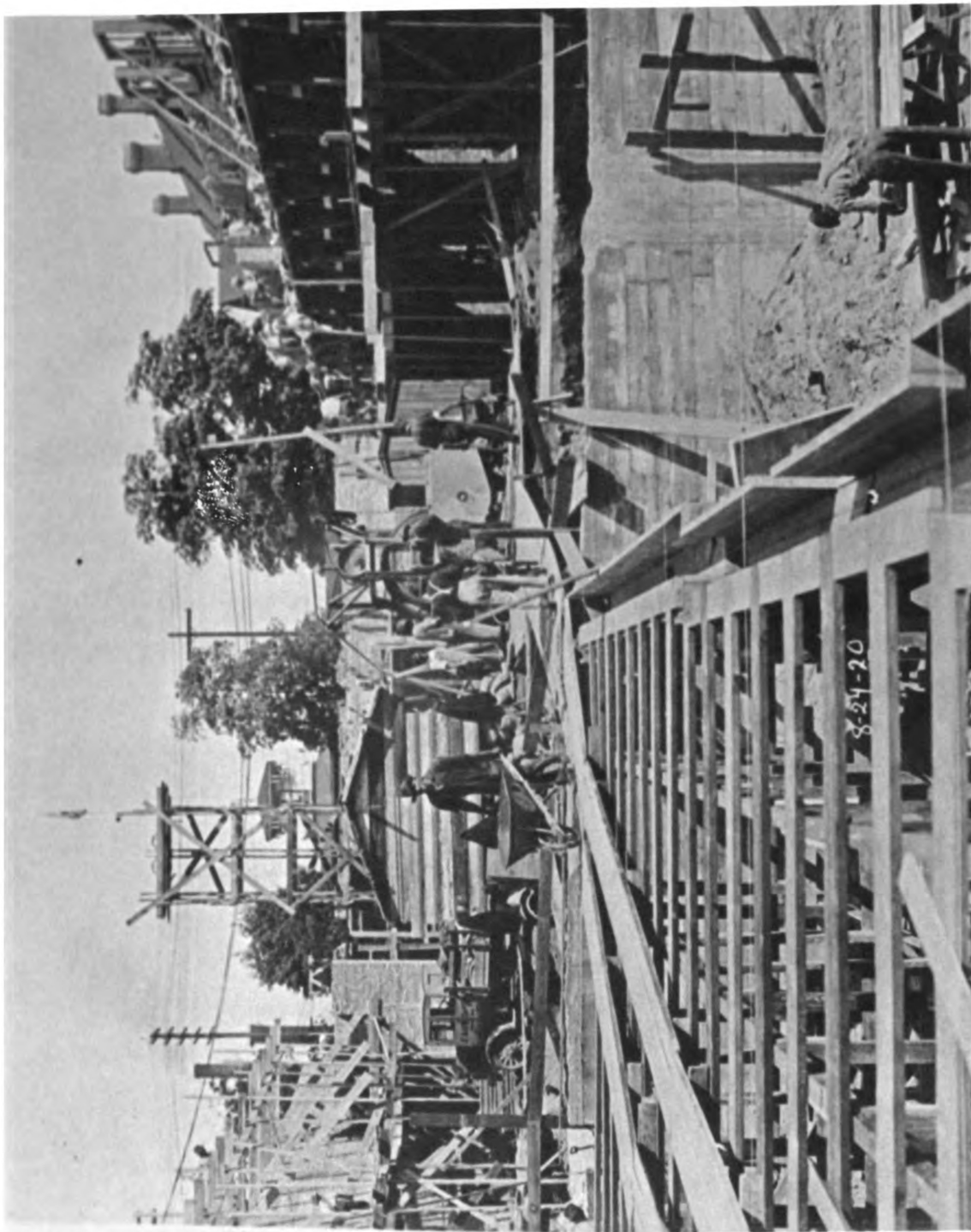


PLATE X

Construction Site, August 24, 1920.

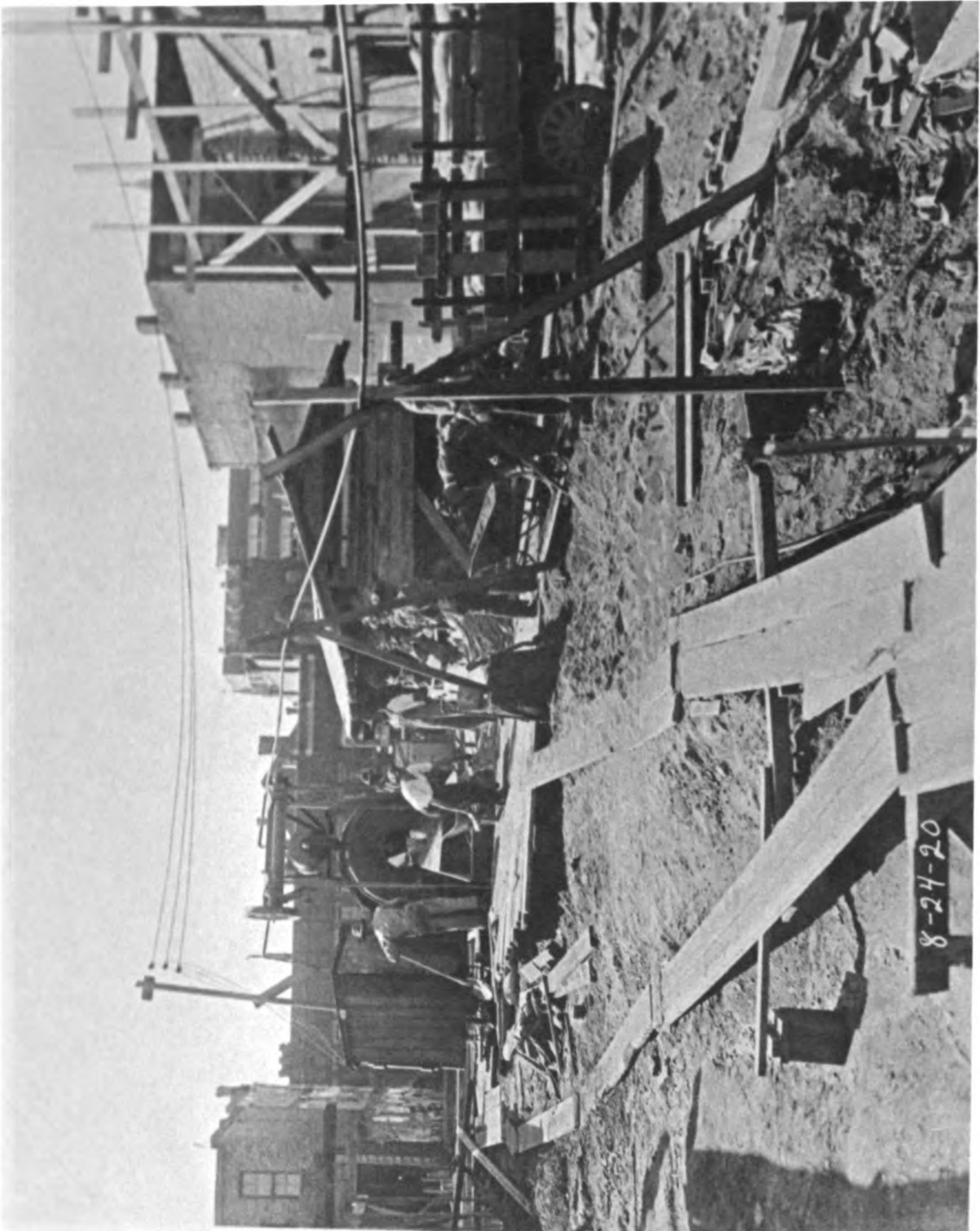


PLATE Y

Construction Site, September 7, 1920.

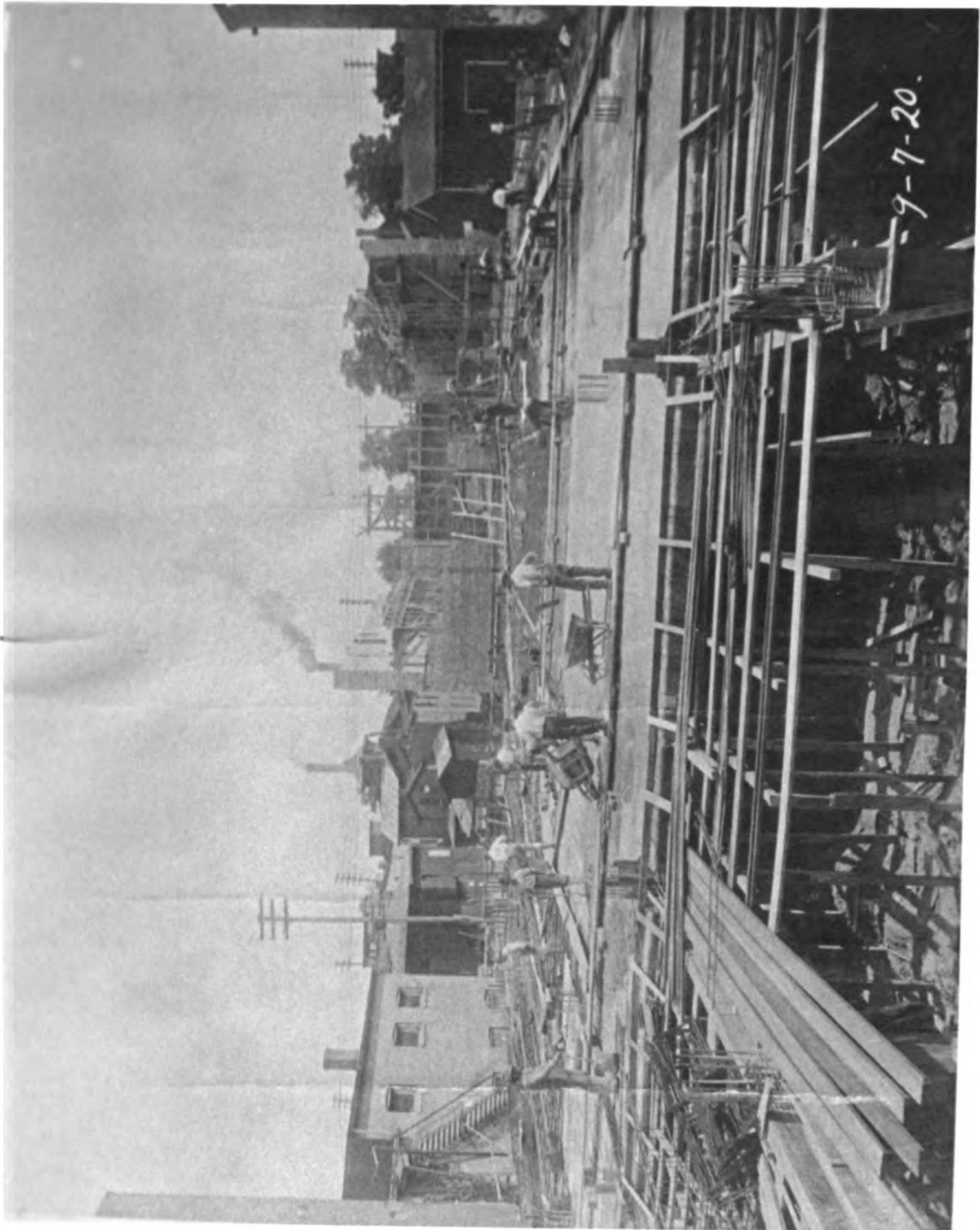


PLATE Z

Washington Avenue View of Construction

October 3, 1920.

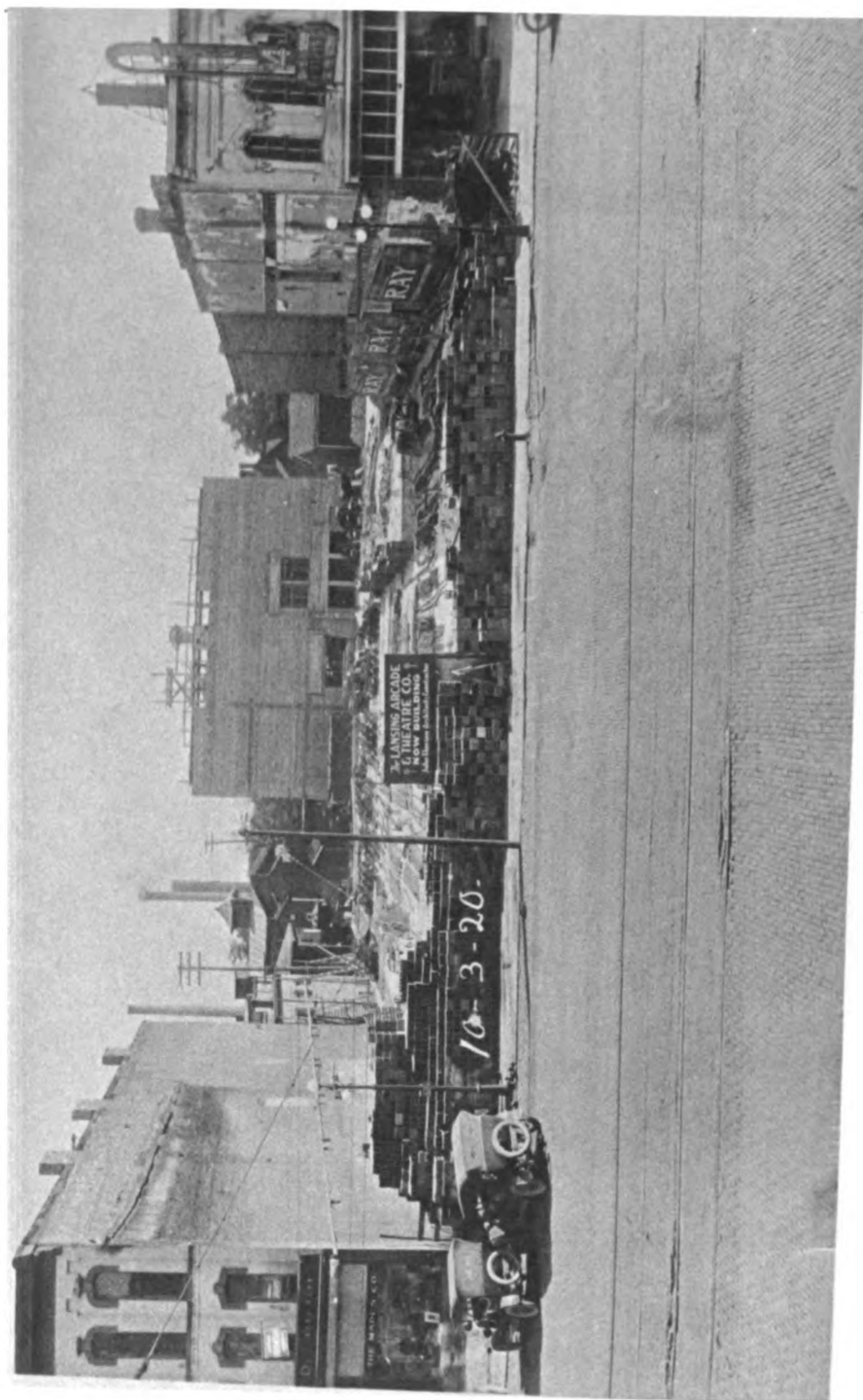


PLATE AA

Construction Site, October 9, 1920.

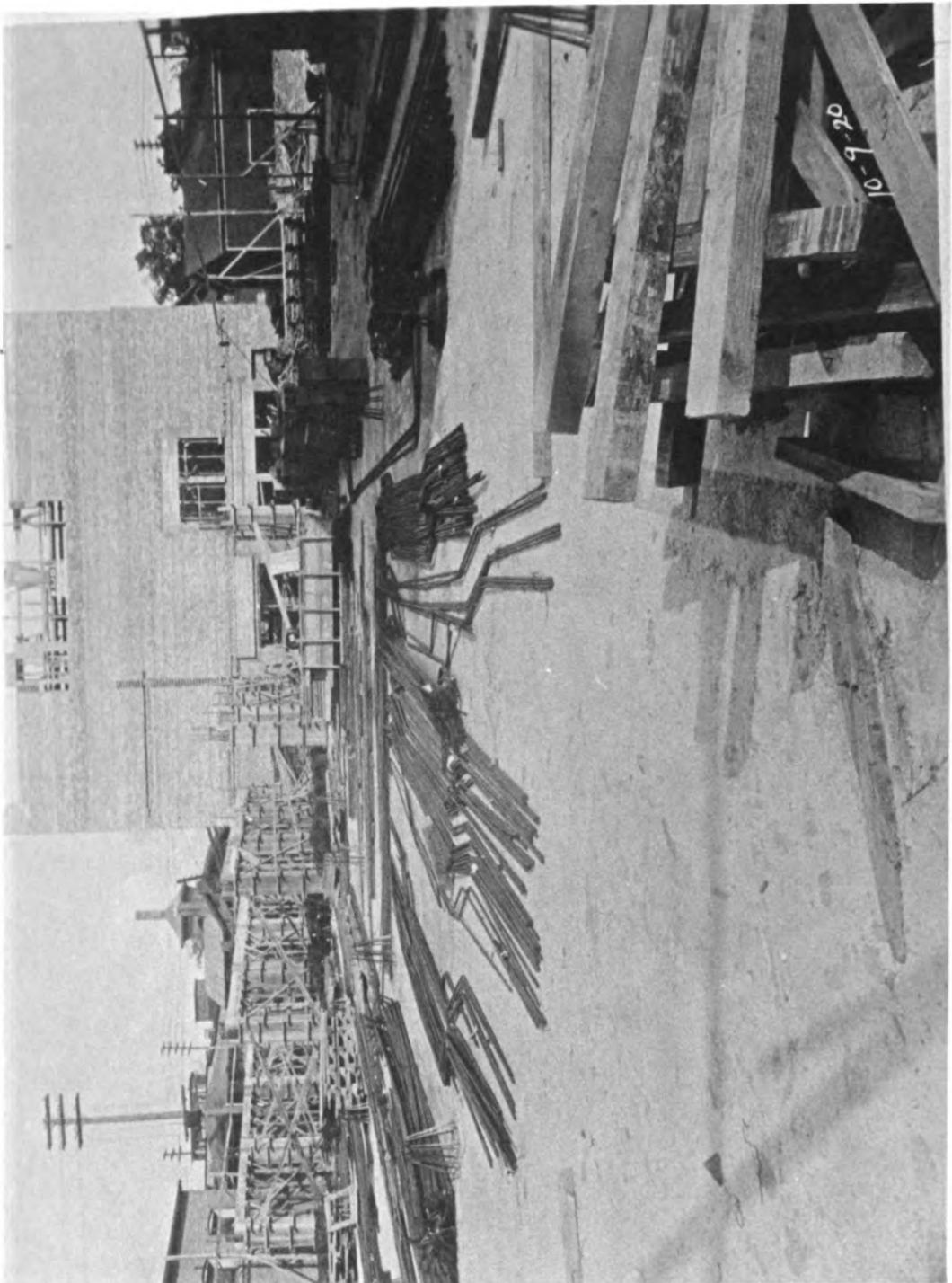


PLATE BB

Construction Site, October 9, 1920.

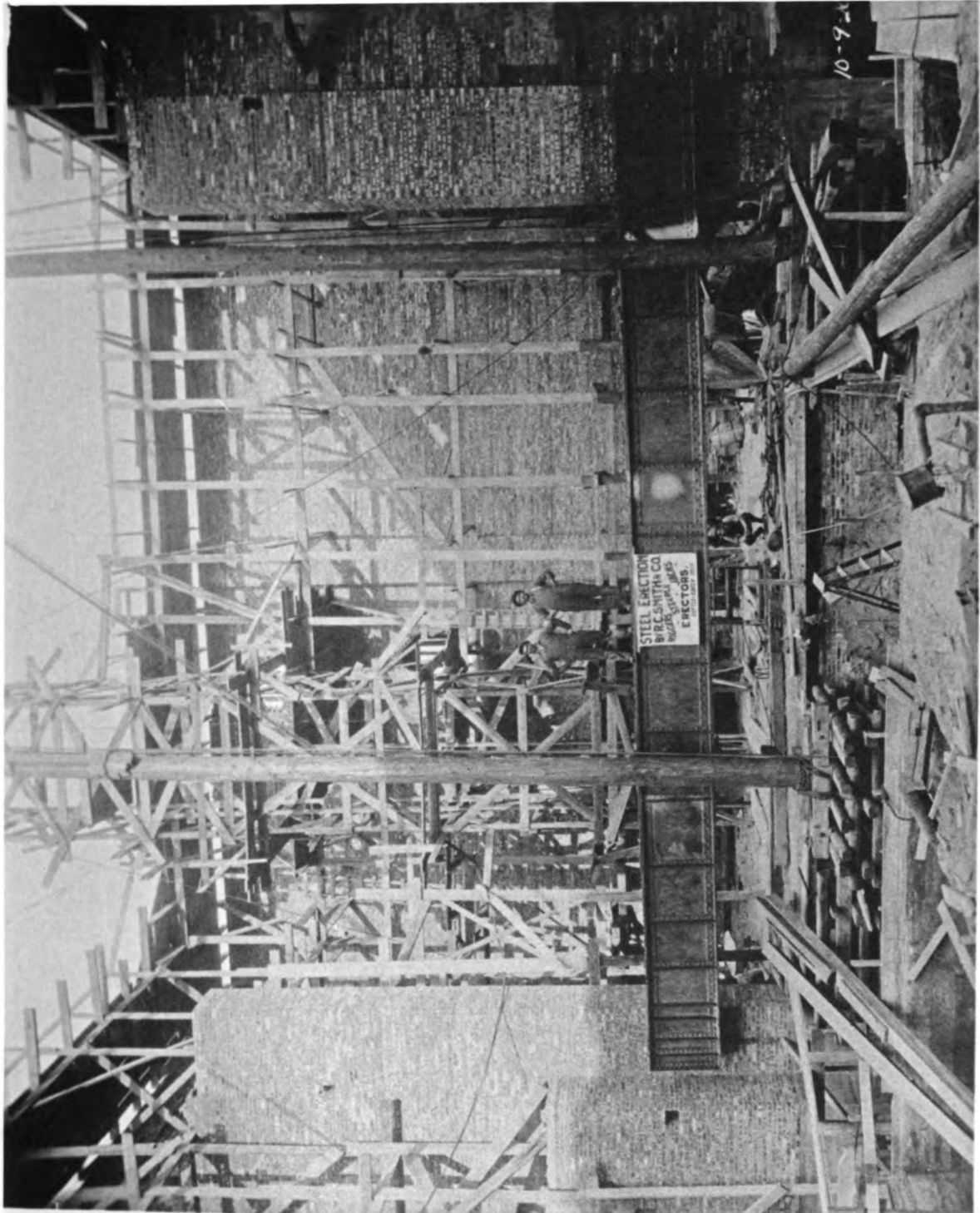


PLATE CC

Construction Site, October 9, 1920.

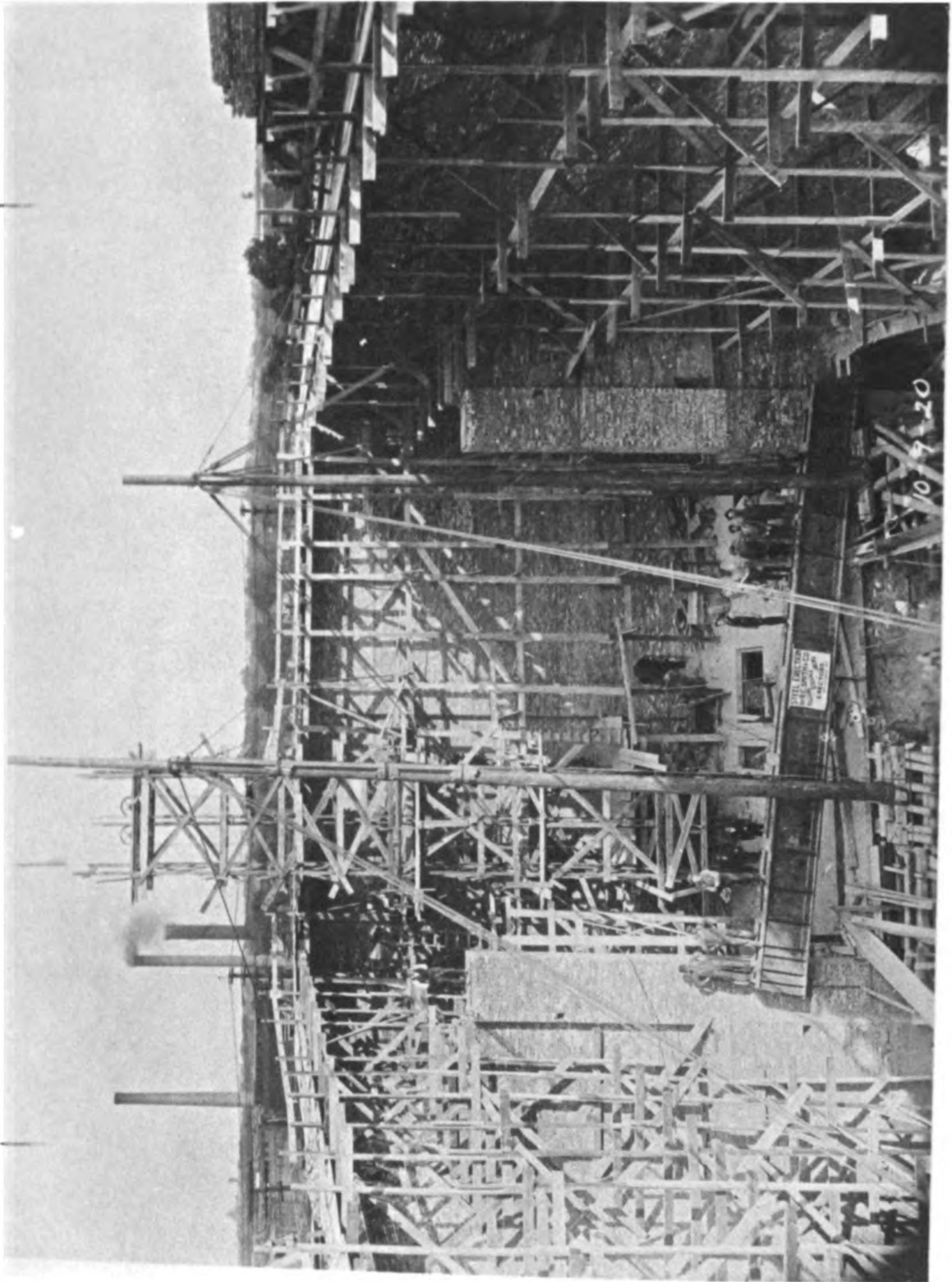


PLATE DD

Construction Site, October 22, 1920.

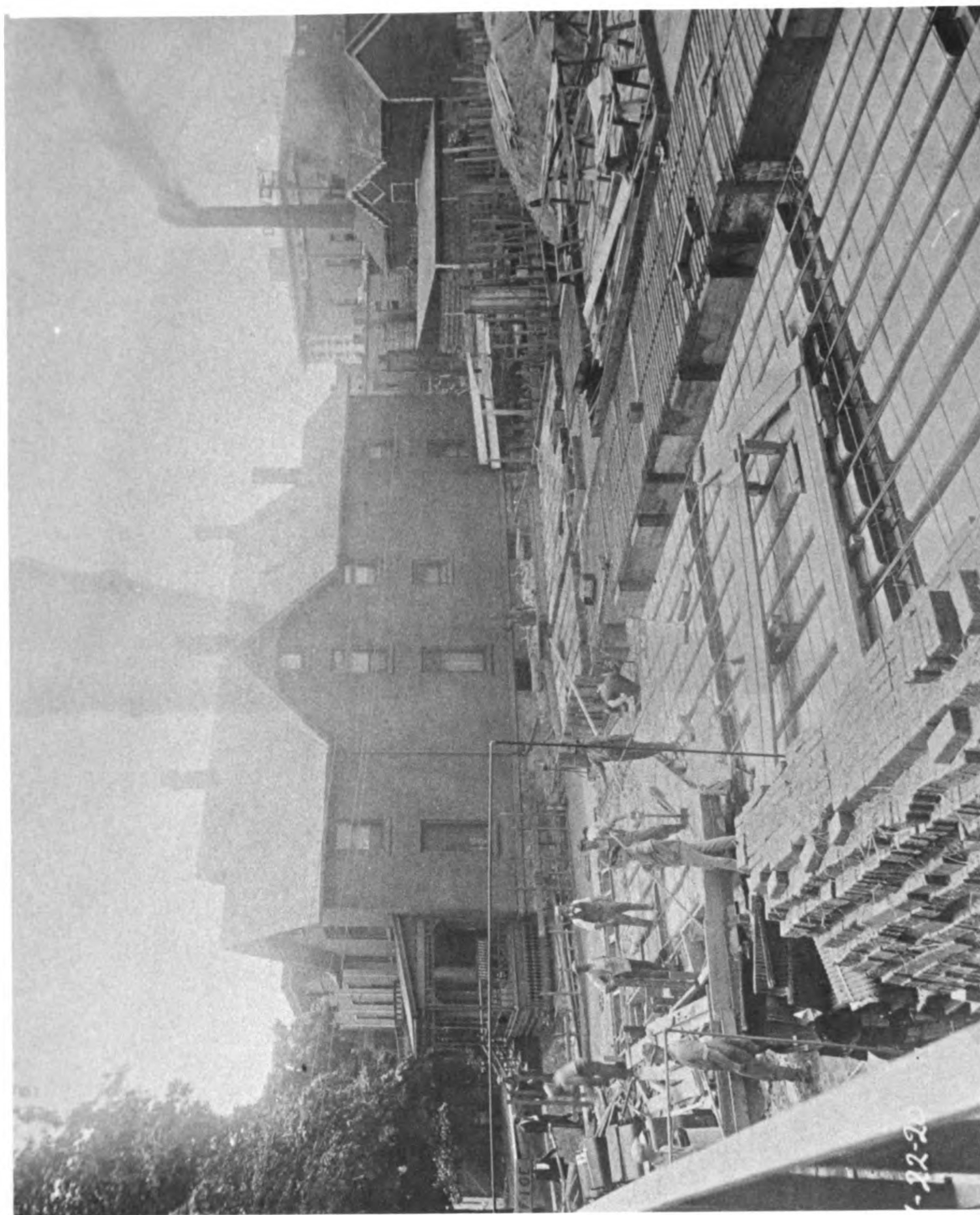
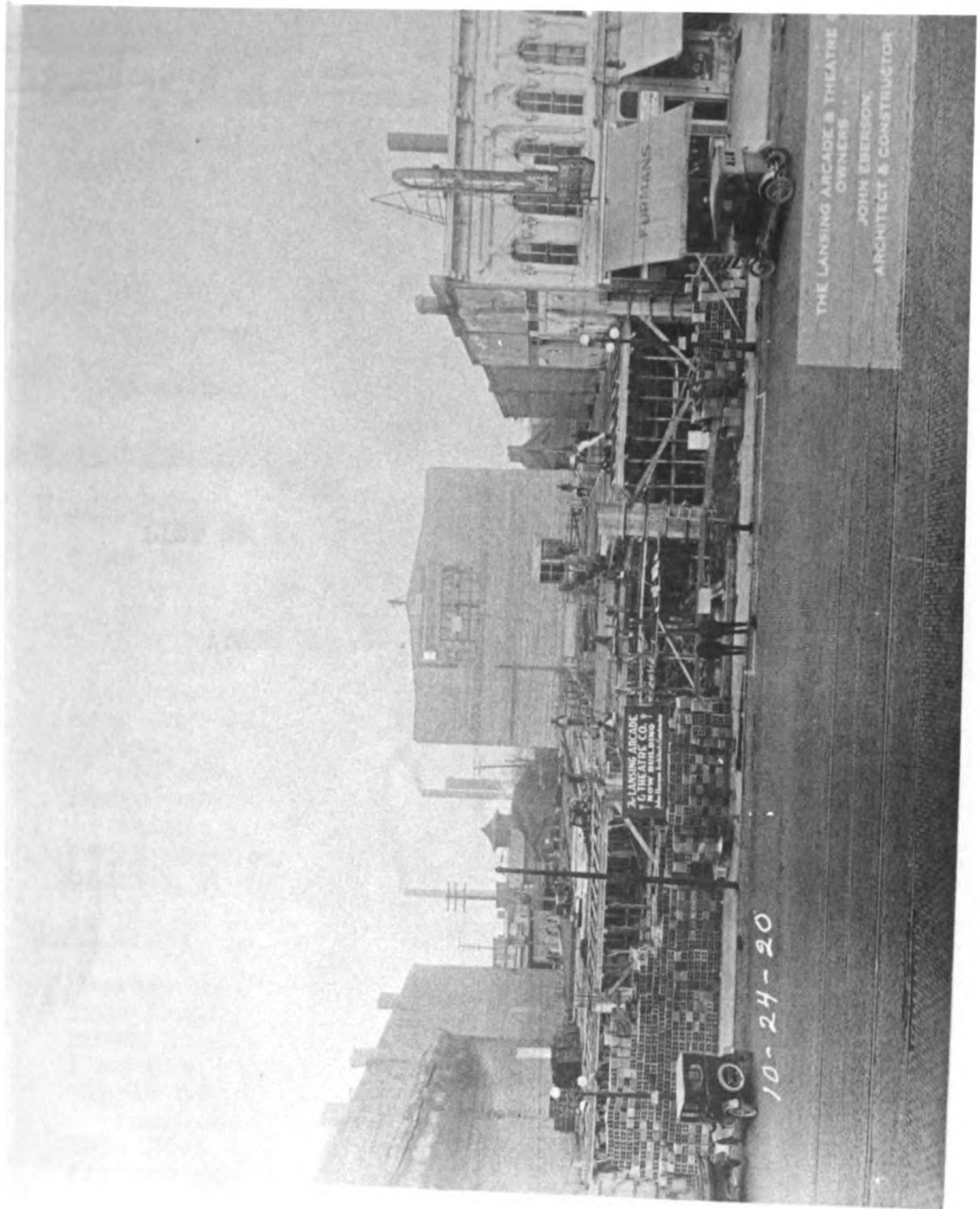


PLATE EE

Construction Site, October 24, 1920.



APPENDIX C

LIST OF VAUDEVILLE ACTS & PHOTOPLOTS

AT THE STRAND THEATRE

APRIL 21, 1921—MARCH 19, 1922

Appendix CListing of Acts Appearing at Strand Theatre 1921-22Week of April 21, 1921:April 21--Opening Night:

Herbert Clifton, "Travesties of the Weaker Sex"
 Musical revue; William Bandell presents Johnny Dyer and
 Earle B. Mountain in "My Soul Mate"
 Dennis Chabot, "The Boy From Belgium"
 Monette Tortini, "This Girl From France"
 "When the Clock Rings"
 DeWitt Burns and Torrence, "The Awakening of Joys"
 Murphy Reinhart and Gibner, "Harmony Singing Comedians"
 Alaska Duo offer "A Night in the Yukon", a special
 photoplay

Week of April 26, 1921:First Half:

Hope Eden, Clairvoyant
 Special performance for ladies, Friday afternoon after
 the regular show
 The local Elks will see her performance en masse
 Thursday evening
 Frescott and Hope Eden, "The Miracle Girl"
 Mme. Jean Berzac's circus
 Violet and Lois Weber and Elliott, harmonious songsters
 and funsters
 Lewis and Norton in "Touring From Cost to Cost", a
 satire by Jack Lait
 Harry and Anna Scranton
 Special photoplay

Last Half:

Kennedy and Nelson, "The Speed Boys"
 Fred Hughes
 Brown Weston & Co., "Terpsichorean Cocktail With a Kick"
 King and Irwin, comedy skit, "The Divorce Lawyer"
 "Apple Sauce" Jack Clifford and "Fig" Johnston in a
 conglomeration of mostly everything
 Hope Eden and Frescott
 Feature photoplay

Week of April 30, 1921:First Half:

Ralph Dunbar's "Nine White Hussars"
 Charles Middleton and Leora Spelimeyer, "Lonesome Land"
 Murray Bennett, "Bag o' Tricks"
 Arcos Brothers, Athletes of Distinction
 Strand Trio, "Comedy Talking and Singing"
 Frazer Cardwell and Co., "Assistance Please"
 First National News

Last Half:

Maud Daniel's "The Rising Generation" ("Endorsed by
 the Pulpit, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Secretary of
 the Navy, and Rupert Hughes, the playwright and
 Military Censor of the United States")
 Same acts as First Half of the week

Week of May 4, 1921:First Half:

"The Rising Generation"
 Olson and Johnson, "The Likeable Lads Loaded with Laughs"

Last Half:

The Briants, "The Dream of a Moving Man"
 Guy Weadick and Flores LaDue, "Ropin' and Gab"
 Jennings and Mack, "The Camouflage Taxi"
 Jack Hedley Trio, "In the Moonlight"
 Feature news

Week of May 7, 1921:First Half:

The Swor Brothers, black-face comedians
 Helen Staples, soprano
 Fulton and Burt, "The Hold-up Girl"
 Johnny Small and the Small Sisters, "Puppy Love"
 Walter Ward and Ethel Dooley, "What We Can Do"
 The Three Alex

Last Half:

Leon Kimberly, Helen Page and Co., "Location"
 J. C. Nugent, author-comedian
 Powel Troupe, wire experts
 Olive Brisco, Al Raub, "The Brave Coward"
 Lewis and Henderson
 Wastika and the Understudy, trained sea lions

Week of May 14, 1921:First Half:

The Two Edwards, "The Hunter's Dream"
 Meredith and Snoozer, "The Intelligent Bull Dog"
 Billy Arnold and Shirli Rives, "A Big Sale"
 Billy Montgomery Assisting Minnie Allen and George Kirby
 Chas Althoff, "The Sheriff from Hicksville"
 Thomas Trio, gymnasts

Last Half:

Sailor "Ragtime" Reilly, "Special Songs and Stories"
 Henry's Pets, "Novel Animal Actors"
 Jas. Grady and Co., "The Toll Gate"
 Sam and Blanche Ross, "Fun in One"
 Newkirk and The Fayne Sisters, "Songs and Steps"
 Six American Belfords, Risley acrobats

Week of May 21, 1921:First Half:

Bessie Rempel, "The Four of Us", harmony boys
 Hunting and Francis, "The Flower Shop"
 Pearl's Roumanian Gypsies, "Frolicking in a Romany Night
 Camp"
 Cook and Valdere, "The Versatile Girl and Huck Finn"
 Hal Newport and Cliff Strik

Last Half:

Jimmy Hodges Musical Comedy Co., "Honeymoon Isle"

Week of May 28, 1921:First Half:

Will J. Ward and "Five Symphony Girls"
 Courtney and Irwin, "Build Your Own House"
 Follette, Pearl and Wicks, "The Coal Driver"
 Jerry and Gretchen O'Mera
 Elly, the Girl Juggler
 Mack and Sallie, "A Sure Thing and a Guess"

Last Half:

Don Lanning in musical comedy, "That's My Wife"

Week of June 4, 1921:First Half:

Knight's Roosters, a chicken act
 Dora Hilton, assisted by Fred Ahl at the piano
 Stuart, the Male Patti
 Ray Lawrence, "The California Baritone" in "A Cycle of Songs"
 Princess Kalama assisted by William Kal
 The Hickey Boys, "Varieties of Vaudeville"
 "The Carnival of Venice," songs and dances

Last Half:

Georgia Minstrels
 Richards, "The Wizard," mind reader
 The Seven Philippinoe

Note: Starting Sunday, June 19, 1921, the Strand Theatre "reverted" to its summer policy of feature pictures. This statement was given by Manager Roy Tillson. (State Journal, June 17, 1921) The Strand Orchestra, under the direction of Roy Prescott, scored each feature picture, in addition to playing a special overture, "The Strand March," composed by August Wesche and dedicated to Roy Tillson. The overture was played during the comedy and news feature at every performance. (State Journal, May 23, 1921)

The Strand Theatre changed back to its Winter Vaudeville policy on September 1, 1921. The only change was that the bills changed every Monday and Thursday instead of Sunday and Thursday as in the past. The change was due to the fact that acts on Keith Circuit were only available each Monday. From this time, the Strand conformed to the Keith Circuit's policies and regulations. (State Journal, August 23, 1921)

Week of September 1, 1921:

Don C. Alfonso Zelaya, "Music and Philosophy"
 Baldwin, Austin and Gaines, singing comedians
 Valentine and Bell, "Furniture Movers"
 Stone and Hayes, "Green Goods"
 Frank Rich and Co., "The District School"
 Feature photoplay

Note: The Strand instituted the use of the "Strand Usherettes" in September, 1921. (State Journal, August 27, 1921)

Week of September 5, 1921:First Half:

Milo Danse, "A Whiff of the Follies", with Gene and
 Mignon, Florence Anderson, Stanford Glore and
 Connie Bemis
 Lulu Cates and her Crackerjacks, "Singing and Dancing"
 Goetz and Duffy, "The Bride and Groom"
 Lynn and Laraye, "The Beach Nuts"
 Frank and Clara Latour, pantomime comedian and the
 Bubble Girl

Last Half:

Joe Fanton and Co., "A Palace of Surprises"
 Lee and Cranston, "A Mountain Romance"
 Helene Collins and Co., "Windows"
 Cook and Vernon, "Slater Susie"
 Marcelle Hardy, "The Personality Girl"

Week of September 12, 1921:First Half:

Jo-Jo Harrison, "A Comedy Oddity"
 Byron Bros., "Another Saxe Band"
 Wintergarden Four, "A Treat in Harmony"
 Jack Gregory and Co., "Novelty Land", juggling and
 acrobatic act
 Noel Lester and Co., with Alice McDonald, "A Variety
 Novelty"

Last Half:

Five Minstrel Monarchs, "A Unique Offering in Minstrelsy"
 Tilyon and Rogers, "Show Me"
 Three Lees, "Juggling Comedians"
 Fenwick Girls, "Those Clever Misses"
 Dancing Dorane, "Just a boy and girl"

Week of September 19, 1921:First Half:

Al and Fannie Stedman
 Steed's Septette, "A Symphony of Spicy Syncopation",
 featuring Anna Mae Bell and Ralph Hertlein
 John Geiger and his talking violin
 Robert and Demont, "Novel Melodies and Dance Oddities"
 Willis and Harold Brown, "Artistic 'Ray' Pictures"

Last Half:

The Cappe Family, "An Evening at Home"
 Raffin's Monks, "Comedy Animal Novelty"
 Harry and Sally Keller, "Sensational Wire Novelty"
 King and Wyse, "Is Friday the 13th Unlucky?"
 Austin and Delahey, "Thy Syncopated Hotel," blackface
 comedians

Week of September 26, 1921:First Half:

Bert Fort and Pauline Price, "Dances on the Silver Wire"
 Al Gamble and Co., "The Human Comptometer"
 Howard and Jean Chase, "That's Mine"
 Charles Seaman, "The Narrow Fellow"
 Phina and Co., "Fifteen Minutes of Real Entertainment"

Last Half:

"The Cotton Pickers," singing and comedy, including a
 "scenic environment" that was a silk scrim scenic
 drop with appliqued cotton blossoms and leaves
 Watman and Berry, "A Treat in Music"
 Alf Ripon and Jiggs, "A Night at Dirty's"
 The Nagyfys, "Defying Nature's Laws"
 Frank and Eddie Monroe, "The Bouncing Babies"

Note: On Monday, October 3, 1921, the Strand Theatre changed its policy. In addition to the usual five-act vaudeville bill, they began showing a five-reel feature photoplay, thus providing ". . . a double attraction at no advance in price."

They ended the practice of having reserved seats in the theatre, and began continuous performances. The shows continued to change every Monday and Thursday, but there were now three vaudeville performances on Saturdays and Sundays. (The State Journal, September 28, 1921)

Week of October 3, 1921:First Half:

Jack and Jessie Gibson, "Talkative Unicyclists"
 Earnest Hiatt, "Nothing Serious"
 Ryne and Rhythm, "A Tempting Tid Bit"
 Hall and Dexter, comedians
 Mabel Fonda Four, Juggling Comiques
 "A Perfect Crime," feature photoplay, with Monte Blue

Last Half:

Frazer and Peck, "Gymnasts Deluxe"
 Fisher and Lloyd, "Two Shades of Burnt Cork"
 Lewis and Gordon Producing Co. present Jack Delman,
 "The Question"
 Professor Peake, "His Family of Animated Blockheads"
 Al Ross and Olga Foss, "Just Music"
 Mack Sennett's "Home Talent," featuring Ben Turpin
 For children: A puppet show, "The Origin of the
 Drama," presented on a puppet stage placed on the
 regular stage

Week of October 10, 1921:First Half:

Eddie Hume and Co., "Oh, Hector"
 Reathans and Barette, "Aeroplane Courtship"
 Jones and Crumbly, eccentric comedians
 Ray Conlin, assisted by "Sparks"
 Madge Kennedy in photoplay, "Oh, Mary! Be Careful!"

Last Half:

McIlvar and Hamilton, "Comedy Novelty Barrel Jumpers"
 Mack and Stanton, "Home Sweet Home"
 Jack Lee, "The Salesman"
 Gill Brown, "Blossoms"
 Feature photoplay, "The Ten Dollar Raise"

Week of October 17, 1921:First Half:

Folkis and LeRoy, "From Fifth Avenue to the Bowery"
 Elsa Fond, "The Little Runabout"
 Fields and Harrison, "In the Navy"
 Joseph E. Bernard and Inez Regan, "Who Is She?"
 Feature photoplay, "Old Dad"

Last Half:

Gordon and Gordon, "Titters, Twists and Turns"
 "Pinched," comic, dramatic playlet
 Mabel Blondell, "The Female Frisco"
 Khyam and Co., "The Mystery Man and His Company of
 Mental Marvels"
 Feature photoplay

Week of October 24, 1921:First Half:

McRae and Clegg, "The Intruder and the Queen of the Wheel"
 Howard and Hanley, "The Percolators of Comedy"
 Peters and West, "Mirth and Melody"
 The Seven Sweethearts, musical comedy revue
 Photoplay

Last Half:

Lind Brothers, "In the Apple Orchard"
 Kennedy and Davies, "Fun in One"
 Cliff Clark, "Tunes and Topics"
 Beatrice Morrell Sextette, "A Study in Blue"
 Photoplay

Note: The Strand Theatre changed its policy on Sunday, October 30, 1921 going back to changes in the shows on Sundays and Thursdays, as in the past, because the former policy was more popular with the Strand patrons. (State Journal, October 28, 1921)

Week of October 31, 1921:First Half:

Billy Lightelle with Geraldine Coffman, "Bright Bits of Musical Comedy"
 Shriner and Fitzsimmons, "The News Dealer"
 Mary Door, "The Unusual Comedienne"
 Gardner and Aubrey, "Melodies of the Moment"
 Photoplay, "Big Game", with May Allison

Last Half:

Alexander Melford Trio
 Howard and Ross Elliott
 Coscia and Verdi, "Stringing Comedy"
 Elliott Johnson Revue
 Photoplay, Ina Claire in "Polly With a Past"

Week of November 6, 1921:First Half:

Felix Rice, "Rice Pudding"
 George Morton, "The Black Dot"
 The Bally Hoo Three, "La Petite Circus"
 DeNoyer and Danie, "Fifty-Fifty"
 Photoplay, "Homespun Folks"

Last Half:

Ray and Fox, "Vaudeville Oddity"
 Nelson and Bailey, "Give Me a Chance"
 Fiske and Lloyd, "Look What the Boat Brought In"
 Rose, Ellis and Rose, "The Jumping Jacks"
 Photoplay, "The Old Oaken Bucket"

Week of November 13, 1921:First Half:

John T. Ray and Co., "Check Your Hat"
 Lola Senna and Co.
 Willis-Bessie Gilbert and Co., "The Masked Frolic"
 Dave Marley, "Fun, Frolic and Amusement"
 Photoplay, "Devotion", featuring Hazel Dawn

Last Half:

Three Victors, "Smiles"
 Ethel Keller and Chums, "Snappy Songs and Dances"
 Flaherty and Stoning, "Vaudeville Tidbits"
 Chapman and Chapman, "Dancing Comedians"
 Photoplay, "A Broken Doll", featuring Monte Blue and
 Mary Thurman

Week of November 21, 1921:First Half:

Sister Brockman and Blanche Howard and Co., "Toyland
 Frolics"
 Volante Bros., "Accordionists DeLuxe"
 Orren and Drew, "A Barnyard Episode"
 Al Abbott, "World's Premiere Character Comedian"
 Photoplay, "The Devil", featuring George Arliss

Last Half:

Johnny Alexander and Billy Fields, "Two of the Idle Rich"
 "Tips and Taps", terpsichorean novelty
 Sullivan and Mack, "A Decided Novelty"
 Billy Miller and Co., "Adam Killjoy"
 Photoplay, "The Girl From Nowhere", featuring Elaine
 Hammerstein

Note: The Strand Theatre produced three shows on
 Thanksgiving Day, 1921, instead of two. (State Journal,
 November 23, 1921)

Week of November 27, 1921:First Half:

Charles W. Cross, "Ruffles", Melody of Fashions, Dance
and Song
Frear, Baggot and Frear, "Baseball Idiosyncrasies"
Musical Shermans
Ralph Seabury, "The Illustrating Comedian"
Photoplay, "Gilded Lies" featuring Eugene O'Brien

Last Half:

Kale and Indetta, Hawaiian Melodists
Dollie Bingham and Margery Myers, "Right Off the Reel"
Al Raymond, "The United Statesman" by Darby Aaronson
Will Hill, Society Circus, trained animals with a
Trick Jazz Mule
Photoplay, "The Man of Stone" featuring Conway Tearle

Note: Beginning Sunday, December 4, 1921, the Strand presented five vaudeville acts instead of four, as it had been doing in the recent past. Photoplays continued to be shown at each show. There was no increase in admission price. (State Journal, November 29, 1921)

Week of December 5, 1921:First Half:

Yip, Yip Hankers, "A Day in Camp"
The Rose Sisters, "Whirls and Girls"
Gualano and Marguerite, "Comedy and Music"
Hall and West, "Taking a Chance"
Lew Wells, "Monologist and King of the Saxaphonists"
Photoplay, "The Sin That Was His" featuring
William Faversham

Last Half:

"A Possible Impossibility"
LaPlano, "Sawing a Woman in Half"
Claymo, "Comic and Artistic Clay Modler"
Holly, "The Golden Voice"
Four Gypsy Songsters, "A Singing Novelty"
Photoplay, "The Hunch" featuring Gareth Hughes

Week of December 11, 1921:First Half:

The Robbins Family
Milton and Lehrman, "Two Kings of Kutology"

Avondi Duo, "Spanish Whirlwind Xylophonists"
 LeRoy and Mable Hartt, "Love in the Southland"
 Nash and Thompson, "Tumbling Humorists"
 Photoplay, "Greater Than Love," featuring Louise Glaum

Last Half:

Francis and Stone, "Harmony Songs"
 E. J. Moore, "The Gabby Trickster"
 Dave Dillon and Edith Milton, "Moonshine," a Wee Story
 in Song
 Harris and Gilbert, "Blackstone a la Carte"
 Leach Laquinlan Trio, "Something Different in Aerial
 Entertainment"
 Photoplay, "The Hole in the Wall," featuring Alice Lake

Week of December 18, 1921:

First Half:

John A. West, "The Musical Brownie"
 "Rayolite, The Act Amazing"
 Yamamoto Duo
 O. K. Legal and Co., "The Silent Comedian"
 Howard and Aitkent, "The Honeymoon Seekers"
 Photoplay, "The Last Door," featuring Edmund O'Brien

Last Half:

Kinzo, "The Novel Comedian"
 Joseph McShane and Arria Hathaway, "Woof Woof"
 Gordon Walton presents Mme. Verobell and Co., "Songs and
 Dances of 1921"
 Blanche Franklyn and Nat Vincent
 Darling Mule, "One Kick After Another"
 Photoplay, "The Match Breaker," featuring Viola Dana

Week of December 25, 1921:

First Half:

Frank and Gracia DeMont, "Nonsensicalities"
 Violet and Charles, "Acrobatic Entertainers DeLuxe"
 Phillips and Glendale, "Stylish Steppers"
 Harry Golden and Co., "Fooing Father"
 Taylor, Macy and Hawkes, "The Three Aces of Harmony"
 Photoplay, "Nobody," featuring Jewel Carmen

Note: "Doll Party at Strand Proves Real Success"

"Christmas afternoon found about 50 kiddies from the
 stork pants age up climbing all over the nursery at the

Strand Theatre. Mrs. Lucas found it impossible to keep order and after a while she didn't try. All the little folks whose names were registered on the Strand guest book were entertained at a doll party and later in the afternoon each child was given a present from the Christmas tree by an impressive looking Santa Claus. (State Journal, December 27, 1921)

Last Half:

Garnet and Hill, "The Ginger Snaps of Songland"
 Marion Gibney, "Songs and Stories"
 Hal Johnson and Co., "Mr. Chaperone"
 William and Howard, "A Sure Cure for the Blues"
 Marie Delight, "Bits of Clever Minstrelsy"
 Photoplay, "After Midnight," featuring Conway Tearle

Note: A special show was held at the Strand Theatre on New Year's Eve, 1921, at midnight. The seats were reserved and the special acts were:

Horan Bros., Novelty Skaters
 Geo. Elliott, Soloist
 Sam, "The Newsboy"
 Geo. Camp, Mimic
 Arnold Stolz, Magician

(State Journal, December 31, 1921)

Week of January 1, 1922:

First Half:

Washington Trio, "The Village Choir"
 Paul Brady, "Eccentricities"
 Roder and Dean, "The Sky Drop"
 Johnny Scott and Earl Woods, "Behave Yourself"
 Marie Correla and Co., "An Athletic Surprise"
 Photoplay, "Alias Ladyfingers," featuring Bert Lytell

Last Half:

Four Camerons, "Like Father Like Son"
 Kincaid Kilties, "Scotch Dancers"
 Bob Hardie, "The One String Wizard"
 George F. Hall, "The Globe Trotter"
 Eugene Bros., "A Feat or Two, A Laugh or Two on a Bar or Two"
 Photoplay, "Handcuffs or Kisses," featuring Elaine Hammerstein

Week of January 8, 1922:First Half:

Pinto and Boyle, "The Mysterious Trunk"
 Nifty Trio, "A Mirth Provoking Frolic"
 Hanson and Burton Sisters, "The Magic Man and his
 Magical Maids"
 Three Hamel Girls, "Music and Songs"
 George Akron, "The Man on the Wire"
 Photoplay, "The Fourteenth Lover," featuring
 Viola Dana

Last Half:

Dell and Edna Elliott, "Oh, Edna"
 Maxwell Quintette, "A Night at the Club"
 Sol Bernes, "The Character Comedian"
 Charles Frink, "The Wizard of the Banjo"
 Maurice and Girlie, "The Unexpected"
 Photoplay, "Bucking the Tiger," featuring Conway Tearle

Week of January 15, 1922:First Half:

McCarver and Robinson, "A Study in Black and Tan
 entitled 'Two Jazz Fools'"
 The Four Balmaines, "Wizards of the Wire"
 Edah Delbridge and Tobe Gremmer, "Song and Story"
 Lamey and Pearson, "A Tale of Two Cities"
 Thomas P. Jackson, "The Stenographer"
 Photoplay, "The Way of a Maid," featuring
 Elaine Hammerstein

Last Half:

The Seven Venetian Gypsies
 Billy Fields and LaAdelia, "The Rehearsal"
 Rose and Thorn, "The Yale Boy and the Swede Girl"
 Joe and Agnes Riley, "Songs and Irish Music"
 Nora and Sidney Kellogg, "Hidden Talent"
 Photoplay, "Little Eva Ascends," featuring
 Gareth Hughes

Week of January 22, 1922:First Half:

Brown and Simmons, "Yennie"
 Hank Brown and Co., "Come Here, Come Here"
 Cato S. Keith with Maude Parker and Ben H. Howe,
 "R. U. Married"

McMahon Sisters, "Exponents of Real Harmony"
 LaMont's Cockatoos, "Tropical Scenes From Birdland"
 Photoplay, "Is Life Worth Living?" featuring
 Eugene O'Brien

Last Half:

The Glencoe Sisters
 Roth and Slather, "The Wop and the Maid"
 Baby June and Pals, "The Maid of the Movies"
 Mort Infield and Venza Noblet, "The Song Booth"
 Maud Ellet and Co., "Girls of Altitude"
 Photoplay, "Love," featuring Louise Glaum

Week of January 29, 1922:

First Half:

Ethel and Ward Shattuck, "The Flower Shop"
 Bayle and Patsy, "Atta Boy"
 Five Yodeling Troubadours
 Hill and Crest, "Naturalization"
 Tom Brown's Saxe Six, "A Musical Offering DeLuxe"
 Photoplay, "Jim the Penman," featuring
 Lionel Barrymore

Last Half:

Prof. Paoli, "Melody and Art"
 J. C. Nugent, "Vaudeville's Most Talked Line of Talk"
 DeWinters and Rose, "A Scenic and Spectacular Dancing
 Offering"
 Messenger Trio, "Comedy and Songs"
 Kanui Duo, "Hawaiian Music and Songs"
 Photoplay, "Shadows of the Sea," featuring Conway Tearle

Week of February 5, 1922:

All Week:

Sternad's Midgets, featuring a real live elephant,
 educated ponies, trained dogs
 Photoplay, "Small Town Idol," Max Sennett's Six Reel
 Comedy-Drama, featuring Ben Turpin

Week of February 12, 1922:

First Half:

Jimmy Hodge's Musical Comedy Co., "At Tampa Bay,"
 featuring Verne Phelps, Sid Harrison, Jimmie Hollis,
 Hazel Mack and Helen Stanzel
 Photoplay, "Chivalrous Charley," featuring
 Eugene O'Brien

Last Half:

Jimmy Hodge's Jolly Jolliers, "His Royal Majesty"
Photoplay, "The Golden Gift," featuring Alice Lake

Week of February 19, 1922:First Half:

Hart and Francis, "The Aeroplane Hoopsters"
Ferry and Hawthorne, "Bits From Life"
Young and Francis, "The Military Duo"
Great Lester, "The International Ventriloquist"
Keno Kayes and Melrose, "That Fellow Don't Like Me"
Photoplay, "Wife Against Wife," featuring
Pauline Starke

Last Half:

Hugh Johnson, "Comedy Conjurer"
Knight and Sawtelle, "A Nightmare of Comedy"
Fred Hagan and Co., "The Bear-Cat"
Bert Rose and Neil Schaffner, "Figure It Out"
The Wonder Girl, "A Sensational Novelty"
Photoplay, "A Dog's Life," featuring Charlie Chaplin

Week of February 26, 1922:First Half:

DeVaro and DeCarlo, "The Flying Minstrels"
Ridgon Dancers, "Dancers Supreme"
Maybelle Phillips, "Exclusive Songs and Sayings"
Twyman and Vincent, "Pancakes and Flapjacks"
Spanish Goldinis, "An Artistic Novelty"
Photoplay, "The Great Adventure," featuring
Lionel Barrymore

Last Half:

Rago, "The World's Master Escape Artist"
The Blue Bird Revue, "A Harmonious Treat"
McConnell and West, "Comedy Singing"
Millard Brothers, "The Music Teachers"
Aldine and Wright, "A Novelty Wonder"
Photoplay, "Serenade," featuring Miriam Cooper

Week of March 5, 1922:First Half:

Gibson Sisters, "The Cozy Revue"
Kahn and Boone, "Mirth and Melody"

Ollie Young and April, "Bubbleland"
 Boothby and Everdean, "Songs and Travesty"
 Antonieta Dvorak, "Cymbalon and Violin Virtuoso"
 Photoplay, "His Nibs," featuring Chic Sale

Last Half:

Rice Brothers, "Real Comedians"
 Baley and Burlew, "Premier American Dancers"
 Willie Missem and Co., "Unique Novelists"
 "Clownland"
 Photoplay, "Salvation Nell," featuring Pauline Starke

Note: By March 4, 1922, the ads for the Strand Theatre in the State Journal emphasized the photoplays, with the names of the attendant vaudeville acts in much smaller print. (State Journal, March 4, 1922)

Week of March 12, 1922:

First Half:

Rossow Midgets, "Acrobatic Boxers"
 Adler and Clark, "Hangnails"
 Genevieve May and Co., "A Jazzless Divertisement"
 Culfport and Brown, "Darktown Comics"
 Time and Ward, "Sensational Bicyclists"
 Photoplay, "The Prophet's Paradise," featuring Eugene O'Brien

Last Half:

Al Striker, "Position Means Everything in Life"
 Halligan and Lee, "A Smile a Minute"
 Tom Davies and Co., "The Persuader"
 Speaker Lewis, "The Twelve Minute Man"
 Verna Merseyan and Co., "Dances Classique"
 Photoplay, "Glass Houses," featuring Viola Dana

Week of March 19, 1922:

First Half:

Jolly Jolliers Musical Comedy Co., "The New Cook"
 Photoplay, "Straight From Paris," featuring Clara Kimball Young

Last Half:

Jolly Jolliers Musical Comedy Co., "Mum's the Word"
 Photoplay, "The Devil's Garden," featuring Lionel Barrymore

Note: The Jolly Jolliers closed the vaudeville season at the Strand Theatre, as it "reverted" to its summer policy of showing movies exclusively. The orchestra remained, however, to provide accompaniment for the photoplay. (State Journal, March 18, 1922)

But the fact of the matter was, that movies became so popular, that, except for infrequent one-act additions to the regular photoplay bill, the summer policy remained in effect from then on. By December, 1922, the program at the Strand Theatre was:

The Overture (8 minutes)
Strand News (10 minutes)
Comedy (a vaudeville act) (15 minutes)
Feature Movie

(State Journal, December 6, 1922)

Of the other theatres in Lansing at that time (December, 1922) the Gladmer, the Plaza, and the Colonial Theatres were showing movies exclusively, while the Regent and the Capitol Theatres were producing shows that included three-to-five vaudeville acts followed by a photoplay, in shows that changed twice a week. (State Journal, December 23, 1922)

Over a year later, from the time that the Strand "reverted" to its summer policy, in March, 1922, the theatre was still committed to the movies, and the summer policy of 1922 was still in effect into 1923. (State Journal, March 31, 1923)

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW WITH JAMES MAHER

Appendix D

Interview with James Maher

This interview was recorded July 27, 1976 by Betty Kopit, with James Maher in Lansing, Michigan. It was recorded from 1 o'clock to 2:30 in the afternoon at the home of Mr. Maher at 1212 Eureka Street, in Lansing. Mr. Maher is 84 years old, appears to be in good health, is spry, lucid and a delightful gentleman to talk to. He had a cigar in his mouth the entire time. This interview has been edited.

* * *

Q. How long did you work at the Strand Theatre?

A. Well, between the Strand and the Michigan it must have been several years. I went out to the college and worked 18 years there after I left the Strand. They retired me there and then I went to the Gladmer and worked.

Q. After you worked at the University?

A. Yeah, after I retired.

* * *

I had my blue room where I had my desk and everything (at M.S.U.). I had all kinds of, oh hundreds, of pictures all around the walls.

Q. What was your job at the Strand Theatre?

A. Well, I was flyman there. Flew the scenery up after each act. That was the time of the big bands and all the big vaudeville acts coming through.

Q. Can you describe your typical day and the tasks that were involved? What time you would get to work and what you would do after each act?

A. We'd come in at 10 o'clock in the morning and they'd change the bill. Vaudeville, twice a week, see, and sometimes they'd stay for all week. Me and the stage manager, the property man and an extra man would hang the scenery for these acts.

Q. What kind of scenery was it?

A. Oh, flats and stuff that flew up in the air, drops that flew up in the air and down.

Q. So, you'd get there at 10 o'clock in the morning.

A. Ten o'clock and we'd stay 'til night. Then that's just when Uncle Howdy had the kids in there, and we used to have to set up the bleachers for the kids, maybe a hundred of them or so.

Q. Where were the bleachers located?

A. On the stage, see, in front of the footlights. Then, when it come time to put the moving picture on after the kids sang, we'd have to tear them bleachers down and we had to do it in less than five minutes. It kept us pretty busy.

* * *

Then the picture'd go on and the close of the bill, the show.

Q. Can you tell me any recollections you have of the vaudeville acts that appeared at the Strand?

A. I worked Will Rogers for \$35 a week and oh, all them old-timers. I got pictures with a lot of them. It was quite a coincidence for me to meet all of them people. They was so nice.

* * *

Q. Was the theatre always crowded?

A. In vaudeville days, we had an organ, and a lady used to play the organ. We'd raise it up from a pit, up even with the stage. She played two or three numbers. They used to have it in vaudeville in the theatre, see. I guess it's still in the Michigan yet. They don't use it.

Q. They haven't been using it during the summer. They used to use it every Sunday night, just in the past few years. What time was the first show given?

A. They'd have a morning show for the kids, see. Uncle Howdy. He used to be at WJIM.

Q. But, it was really all day long.

A. Yeah, it was.

Q. Was the theatre crowded?

A. Oh, yes, they used to pack the theatre, them days in vaudeville, the big bands.

Q. Would people stay all day long, for both shows or just come for one?

A. A lot of them stayed for both shows.

Q. What was the admission price?

A. Oh, boy. Not so much as it is now days. I forgot about that, what they were charging. It was way down low with what they are paying now to see a movie.

Q. And do you know how much they used to pay the vaudeville acts?

A. Vaudeville acts? Well, it varied, see. It all depended what position. The next to the closing act was always the money act, see. That was the big act. The last act was usually an animal act or a bunch of girls dancing or the chorus, see.

Q. So it would be the act that was next to closing that would get the most money.

A. Yeah, it gets the most money.

Q. I see. Do you know how often the acts would get paid? Would they just get paid every week or would they get paid daily?

A. They'd get paid right there and then after the show.

Q. When the vaudeville acts came to appear at the Strand Theatre, where did they stay in town?

A. Years ago they used to come walking in with suitcases, see. They'd stay at private homes. Some would go to

hotels. The ones that were making the best money would go to the hotel.

Q. Were they the private homes of people that they knew, or people that they had met when they had appeared here earlier?

A. They got a list of people where they could rent a room for a day or two.

Q. Were there many acts that came back to Lansing year after year?

A. Oh, yeah.

Q. That became very familiar?

A. We had repeats. The good acts would come back.

Q. Can you remember any that were regulars--that came back to the Strand year after year?

A. Boy, Al Jolson, Rudy Vallee, Will Rogers (Some man with a rope. All he knew was what he read in the newspapers!)

Q. He was pretty funny.

A. He was quite a comic.

Q. Who were your favorite vaudevillians? Who were your favorite acts?

A. Well, the Opera, Lily Pons. (and)

* * *

Yeah, who's the colored woman there?

Q. Marion Anderson?

A. Anderson. They was getting pretty good money then, and for the service, they used to be pretty fair to me by giving me a tip, see, \$5 or \$10.

Q. They'd give you a tip?

A. Oh, I got a lot of tips.

Q. Really, why would they give you tips?

A. For the service I'd give them. One time there was a lady (who) had a doorman, an officer, at the door. You couldn't smoke on the stage. So, in the dressing room they'd always sneak a smoke, see, and a big star was in the dressing room and the officer seen some smoke coming from under the door, and he rushed right in and opened the door without rapping. Usually when you're on the stage, before you go into a dressing room, you gotta rap. He busted right in and there was a woman in the nude, see, and oh boy, she screamed! You could hear her way over the foot lights, and the first act was on and, I runned over there, and I says "What in the world did you do? Did you go in that dressing room without rapping?" And he says, "Yeah, smoke was coming out of the door." I says, "You get off of the stage." He wouldn't, so I says, "Get over there by the door." And the next day I talked to the manager, and I says, "I don't want no policemen on this stage anymore." So we stopped putting a policeman on the door watching. Boy, she screamed something awful.

Q. And you got a tip out of that, huh?

A. Well, I didn't see nothing.

I'd ask them for an autograph and a picture and if they wanted to leave it, they'd do it, see. But, they used to put the pictures out on a board out on front of the theatre, of the acts. They used to bring them backstage. So I'd take them off. Some of the acts would want them back, but others, they didn't care, they had so many. I'd take them and then I'd go and ask them for autographs. So I had hundreds and hundreds of pictures.

In bootlegging days they had these bootlegging joints where you'd go in and get beer, you know, and whiskey and alcohol. I lent this fellow about two hundred of my pictures and he put them all around this room. Then they made a raid and they took all my pictures, two hundred of them, but I have a lot of them left.

* * *

Q. Can you tell me anything about the animal acts that appeared at the Strand?

A. Oh, we had a number of dog acts.

Q. What would the dog acts be like? What would they do?

A. Oh, all different sizes, little ones and big ones. One time I come into the theatre early. This trainer had a whip and was whipping these dogs. And, Holy Cats, I got so mad, I went over and told him. I says, "What the . . ." He says, "None of your business. I'm training these dogs."

I called up to the humane society and the next day they come down and they had a talk with him and boy, they bawled the life out of him. He was trying to train them with this whip and he was hitting them pretty hard too. They put a stop to that. I guess they were about to fine him.

Q. What other kinds of animal acts were there?

A. An elephant act.

Q. Elephant?

A. Yeah, (there was an) elephant room and the elephants walked down the cement stairs into the elephant room. It was quite a thrill for the children.

Q. I'm sure. What did they do with the elephants when the other acts were on?

A. Well, there wasn't but one animal act that would come in on a bill. They'd usually pick the acts so there wouldn't be two singers or two or three dancers with the same music dancing, pretty near alike.

Q. And the people who owned the animals would just take care of them while they were there? If a vaudeville act was going to appear for a week, or a split-week at the theatre, where would they keep the animals while they were here?

A. In the animal room.

Q. Was the animal room on the stage or in the basement?

A. In the basement. A lot of them coming down the stairs used to be a kind of a task.

Q. I'm sure.

A. But they had attendants to keep them clean and brushed. Dog acts usually bark a lot of time. They were hungry I think half of the time. They'd spill the food. The main thing was, with a dog act, they'd have to do their tricks before they'd give them something to eat.

Q. Right. I read an article that said that one time there was a chicken show at the Strand Theatre.

A. Chicken?

Q. Yep.

A. I don't remember. . . a lot of bird shows there.

Q. Bird shows? What did the birds do?

A. Oh, there was a parrot there one time that talked. Birds that would roll over on the stage and jump up on the perch. They had them trained to do different tricks.

Q. Did they ever fly out into the house?

A. No, oh yeah, they would fly out around the stage and they'd land on a man's head.

Q. Were there many backstage problems when the animals appeared?

A. We had one time we had to stop the show. I was working on the fly gallery and they had big sandbags for weights and balance so it wouldn't be so hard to pull. They had the hooks where they hooked them on the bags, and I was pulling this up, and all at once the hook caught in the sand, up there way up in the air, and the whole stage pulled it down and it went out in the audience and they

had to stop the show 'til it settled down. I got bawled out for that. It was an accident but still I should have kept the bag away from that hook. That's been the only thing bad we ever had happen there at the Strand.

* * *

Q. Were the audiences very responsive to the actors? Did they shout, clap, yell their approval if they liked an act or if they didn't like an act, what would they do?

A. Well, they usually would be nice. For some acts they'd do a lot of applauding and whistling and everything . . . the good acts. We had an aerial act, circus act. In them days, I had to go way up a hundred foot ladder way up in the flyloft with a man or a woman. One time it was a woman, with all her rigging up in the flyloft, and I walked up there and helped them put their rigging up, see. But they never had no accidents cause they knew how to tie the knots.

Q. Did they bring their own people in to rig it or did you guys rig it?

A. Usually the act would do it. Two or three of the act. A lot of them wouldn't have nets underneath them too. If they'd fall, they'd fall on the stage. Others would have nets.

* * *

Q. What would happen if the audience didn't like an act? What would they do?

A. Oh, they'd boo sometimes. The managers wouldn't take an act that wasn't up to standards. They'd want a good act.

* * *

I used to take a lot of the acts out after the show, take them to the Elks Club, see, and they'd entertain for the Elks there, see. They used to have the Elks Club where the Michigan Bank is now, back of the Regent Theatre and the old Bijou Theatre. I used to take the acts over there and they'd entertain and have two drinks and stuff.

When I first come here I went and worked at the (oh boy) not the Capitol Theatre, before the Capitol, (the) Empress (Theatre).

Q. What did you do at those theatres?

A. I was electrician on the stage.

Q. At the Empress and the Capitol? That was before you worked at the Strand Theatre?

A. Oh, yeah, it was before. The first talking picture was Al Jolson in "Sonny Boy" and we used to have the record, you know. We used to play the record. I went in the booth to work there at the Capitol and son of a gun, if we didn't have a lot of trouble with the records. The booth would, if you'd walk across it, would shake it and knock the needle off the record. We'd have to stop and put it back on. I went from there. I traded with Coski Higgins and went to the Strand to work. I didn't like the booth. It was too confining. I liked to be out amongst the people.

Q. I don't blame you. Did the vaudeville actors who were on the circuit watch the other acts?

A. Oh, yeah, they'd stand in the wings and watch the other acts.

Q. Did they ever steal material from one another or end up singing the same songs or telling the same jokes?

A. Sometimes the number one song was repeated with other acts.

Q. Do you remember what any of those songs were?

A. "When you were sixteen, my village queen," "Weep no more my lady," "Down by the old mill stream." All them old-timers. I like to hear them yet when they sing them.

Q. Did any of the acts besides the circus aerial acts ever bring any unusual scenery to the theatre?

A. Oh, my yeah. There used to be these musical tabs. Oh boy, (they were) loaded with scenery. Had a bunch of girls and it was vaudeville, like. They had scenery, a lot of it hanging in the flyfloor, up and down with it all the time.

Then Uncle Tom's Cabin would come in. Then they used to have a band out in front of the theatre before the show. Then Uncle Tom's Cabin come into the Gladmer Theatre and they had 51 hanging pieces. They started at the foot-lights and went right back until Little Eva went up in heaven, see. I was working the flyfloor up above the Gladmer. The Gladmer flyfloor was way up high. The Strand

was on the same level with the stage. There must have been 16 men up there working with me. Of course, I run the curtain and they'd start with one and go right back. Everybody had a cue, a green light to go and a red light to stop. We'd have it there and I'd tap them on the shoulder to go, and save them from watching the light. I'd go along behind them.

Q. Were there other legitimate plays put on at the Strand?

A. Every bill would have this drama act or some kind of an act. They always had one with furniture and everything. When I was property man I used to go out and get all this furniture and of course they'd put a card on where the furniture was from, from different stores.

Q. That's when you were the property man at the Regent?

A. Yeah.

Q. That must have been a very busy job, going out and finding all the props.

A. Yeah, yeah, used to bring in big van loads of it. Used to get them from Arbaugh's and different stores.

Q. And you rented the furniture?

A. They'd send us, they'd list, the acts would, what they wanted to dress the stage up, and we'd get as near as possible what they called for. But they always used what we got.

* * *

Out to State we had Mr. Laughton come in, Charles Laughton. And he come in and I had myself, property man, stage manager and property man, flyman and another man working the show. He was on the stage giving this talk, you know, and son-of-a-gun, the boys come in and they walked across the back of the stage, back of the drops, bang, bang with their shoes. So, he stopped his act and come up to me and says, "Who's making that noise?" Even the audience heard it. See, he was mad and he said, "I want you to take your shoes off, every one of you, or sit down!" He said, "I don't want this noise back of this drop!" So, I said, "The boys ain't going to take their shoes off, Mr. Laughton." I said, "They'll be quiet." So then it was quiet after that.

Q. And they all took their shoes off?

A. He wanted us to take our shoes off, so if we walked around again back of the drop he wouldn't hear it. He was nice after that though.

Q. Were other actors very tempermental?

A. Some were, some was tempermental, but out there (we had) Jimmy Milton, the singer. We had the Auditorium just packed full and Dean Cole, my manager there. . .

Q. What theatre was this at?

A. At the Auditorium out here at State, out at Michigan State. He come back and says "Jimmy, we've got about 700 or 800 students out here that can't get in the

theatre." He says "Can you get them in on the Fairchild Theatre?" I says, "Yes in about three or four minutes." So, we got busy and we hung a drop up and fixed up the stage for the Fairchild Theatre. He let them all in, see, free. Jimmy Milton sang to the people mostly out in the audience, so he says, "Jimmy, you got the drink of water over there?" I had a nice decanter in the wings and a glass and a table and I says, "Yeah, right here," and I waved the men over. He says "Bring it out to me." So I went out with the pitcher and a glass, see, and poured him a glass of water and handed it there. He said "Now, take a bow." The house all applauded like the dickens. So he says "Well, I sang enough songs now for the paid people. I'm gonna sing a few for the people in the back room." So he turned around and sang a couple of songs to them, to the Fairchild side.

Q. That's interesting. Did that ever happen again where both sides, the Auditorium and Fairchild, were used at the same time?

A. Oh, yeah, we used them a couple of times. We had some wonderful times out to the State. I'm getting so that I'm getting forgetful. I think of something and the next minute. . . well, old age, I guess.

Q. The Strand was a beautiful theatre, wasn't it?

A. I worked when we changed it over to the Michigan. They hung drapery all around and everything. I worked all during that time, rigging it. I rigged the Strand. I

worked out there (at Oldsmobile) on shows too and the Civic Center. I did all the hanging, the rigging, up on putting the headblocks in and the shivs, a cable that runs over. At the Civic Center I worked for years at the ice show. First ice show come out to Michigan State in the old Demonstration Hall. That was the first one. I had to take 3 or 4 hanging pieces from the Auditorium and take it over to the Demonstration there and hang it in there. But it was too small for the ice show. They sold too many tickets, so they switched them down to the Civic Center where they can get 8-9,000 in. I worked all them ice shows.

Q. And you mentioned Oldsmobile. They had Oldsmobile shows at the Strand Theatre, didn't they?

A. No, Oldsmobile had their own shows, see. They'd go out every change of model and they'd travel all over the United States. I went out four different times with them on the road. I went to the Coast two times and went to New York and Oklahoma, Dallas, all them places where they'd put their car on a turntable. I used to run the car, see, push the button and also the curtain, for them. The personnel, big shots, they, about three of them, didn't like to fly. That's when they had the old crates, not like ships they've got now with everything on them.

Q. Did they have any Oldsmobile shows at the Strand Theatre?

A. Oh yeah, they put their show on at the Strand too. They put the car on the turntable, but that was before they built their own auditorium out there (at Oldsmobile).

Q. Did you ever meet Colonel Butterfield?

A. Oh, yeah. I was working at the Gladmer Theatre and he come in, had this old hat pulled over his eyes, cap it was, and he come by as I was taking tickets at the door. The lady in the box office would sell the tickets, and I was taking tickets. After that I'd go back on the stage. A guy come in and he brushed by me and I grabbed him like that, and I said "Hey, where's your ticket?" He says, "Ticket? You gotta have a ticket to come in here?" It was the Colonel, old Colonel Butterfield. He tapped me on the shoulder and he said "You're all right." He had a big laugh out of that.

Q. Can you tell me more about Colonel Butterfield?

A. Well, he started out in Battle Creek with one theatre. Then he jumped around to have a theatre in pretty near every big town. He was a little fellow about my size, short. He used to go from one theatre to the other. We didn't see him in Detroit at the main office much, he was always on the go.

Q. So, you got to see him a lot in the years you worked in his theatres?

A. Oh, yeah, I've seen him a lot of times.

Q. Can you think of any other stories about him?

A. Well, I never conversed much with him outside to say "Hello" and "How are you?", but he was a jolly fellow, seemed to be very pleasant. Yep, old Colonel Butterfield.

Q. Did you ever meet John Eberson who was the builder and architect of the Strand Theatre?

A. Eberson? Yeah, I met him.

* * *

Q. This article mentions Midsummer Night's Dream at the Michigan State College Theatre and (the fact) that they had twelve electricians.

A. Yeah, twelve electricians, yeah.

Q. Why did they need that many?

A. Oh, they had a nice display of the lighting on that. I'd cue everything. On and off, yellow, red, blue, white.

Q. And it took seven hours to set up that stage?

A. Yeah. That was a heavy show. Well, there must have been about, I'd say, 23 or 25 of us on the stage working that show, 'cause they had two property men, or a property man and assistant with the show, and they carried three electricians. They had their own three electricians, then they told our electricians what to do. They must have had about 8 or 10 grips that moved the scenery you know, set it up and lashed it together.

* * *

Q. Were you there during the fire at the Regent Theatre?

A. At the Regent? Oh yeah.

Q. You were there the night it burned down?

A. I was property man there at the time. They had a little party down in the basement with the acts and the stage hands. After the show the stage hands, and Curly Burns and his company went to the hotel. We were there about an hour or so. All at once they said the theatre was on fire. We rushed over there, and of course there was a fire down in the basement, cigarettes or something, and it burned down, yeah.

* * *

Q. Would you like to just look through these (a stack of old 8 x 10 glossies) and tell me anything you remember about any of these people?

A. Oh, yeah. There's one from the blue room at Michigan State.

Q. Oh, with all your photographs. (Jimmy covered the walls of the Stage Manager's office on the Fairchild Stage with old photographs of vaudeville and opera stars.)

A. Marian Anderson.

Q. Did you like Marian Anderson?

A. Oh, she was very nice, yeah. She was a talented woman. Oh, there's Sarah Vaughn.

Q. Sarah Vaughn when she was very young.

A. That was a good act. There is the best banjo player in the world.

Q. Really?

A. Eddie Peabody.

Q. Oh, this says "To Jimmy, the best man behind the man upon the stage. Best personal regards, Len Steadaman."

A. There was an ice show crazy guy. I've played with Gene Autry a lot of times.

Q. What did he do in his act?

A. Huh?

Q. What did Gene Autry do in his act?

A. Oh, he sang with his wife and rope and also the horse. He always had his horse. . . with him. Here's a guy. That guy (referring to a photo of Adolph Menjou) give me a twenty dollar tip.

Q. Adolph Menjou gave you a \$20 tip? How did that happen?

A. Oh, when I played him. Some of them that was very good, some of them would tip, but I never kept them. I split it up amongst the crew, see. Twenty dollars. There was usually four of us on the stage. I'd split it up.

I ain't looked at these in years. Oh here it is. This is the guy that wanted us to take our shoes off!

Q. A picture of Charles Laughton.

A. You don't know who that is, do you?

Q. Is that you. . . in front of a beautiful office? You have lots of pictures up on the wall. This is a picture of you putting up another picture of a football

player. Is that a picture of you? Wow, what an old picture. When do you think this was taken? You were in spats.

A. That was taken in Bay City when I first started in show business.

Q. Right next to the stage entrance.

A. I was stage manager at the Regent Theatre there in Bay City.

Q. This is a picture of Jimmy next to the stage entrance, all dressed up with spats on.

A. That was in the wintertime, I guess. It was cold. I've got my cigar there in my hand. . . .

Q. Like you do right now.

A. I smoke 10 or 12 a day. R. G. Dunns. All the time. I buy them by the box.

Q. Well, I'd like to say thank you very much for letting me talk to you. I've really enjoyed it.

A. Too bad, if I was twenty years younger I could've given you more information.

Q. Well, you've given me a great deal of information. Thank you very, very much.

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