

70-72 MONROE AVENUE (COMMERCIAL)
Detroit
Wayne County
Michigan

HABS No. MI-328

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MICH
82-DETRO,
57-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Mid-Atlantic Regional Office
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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Location: 70-72 Monroe, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan

USGS Detroit, Michigan Quadrangle
UTM: 17.331470.4688570

Significance: This building contributes to the last intact pre-Civil War commercial block remaining in Detroit, and was the site of the Casino Theater.

Description: The structure is a commercial building constructed in brick masonry in 1852. It measures 30' wide and 100' deep on the first story. On the second story, the south bay is 100' deep, while the north bay is 60 feet deep. On the third and fourth stories, the building is 60' deep. It is similar in design to the one at 58 Monroe, except it is four window bays wide instead of three. The building features cast-iron window lintels with urn and acroll motifs over its rectangular windows (with one-over-one-lights). Remnants of a cast-iron entablature with triglyphs is evident over the second story.

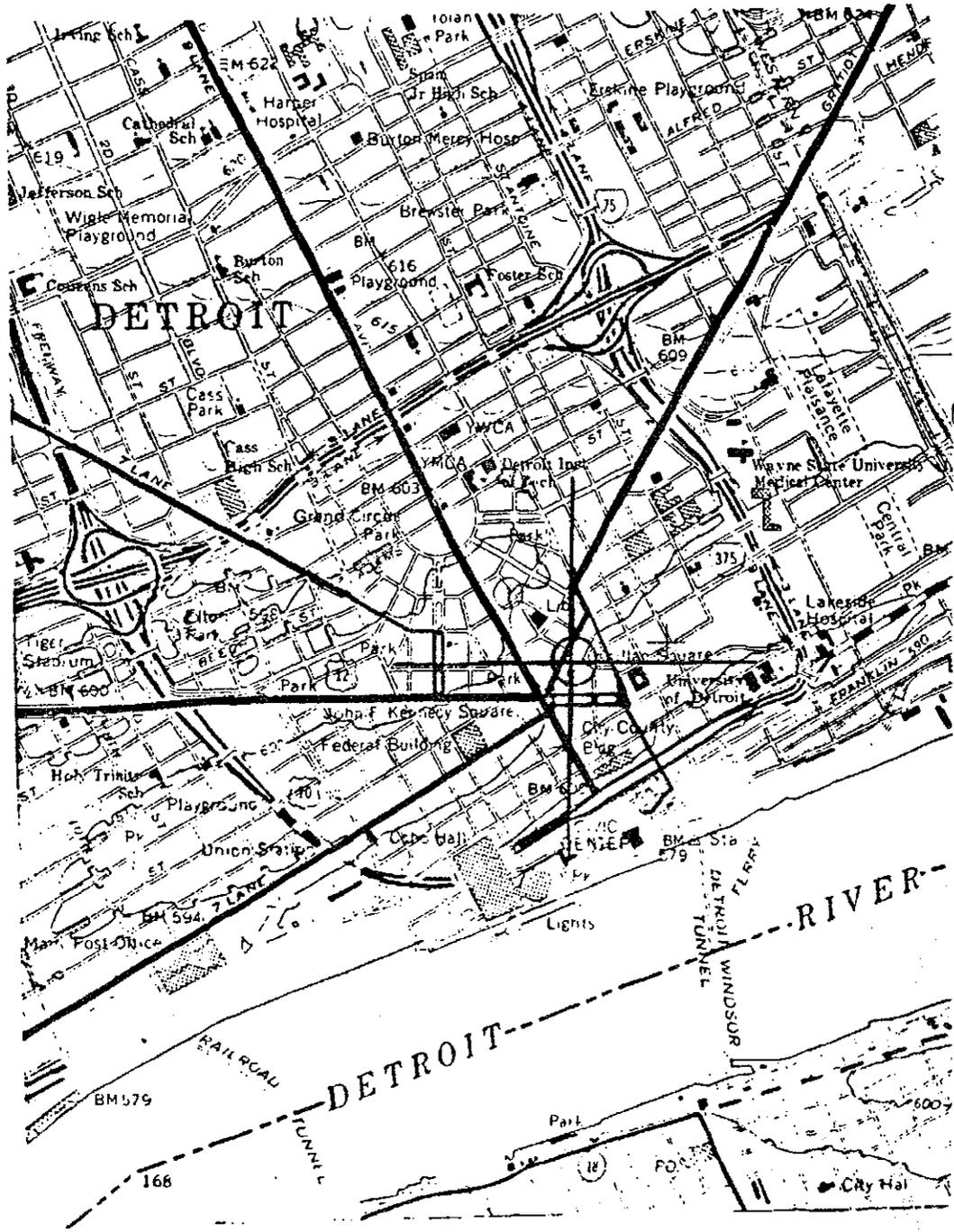
History: Hiram R. Johnson (1825-1894), a prominent Detroit businessman, bought the real estate where this building stands in 1852 and erected a series of commercial buildings known as the Johnson Block. The architect is unknown. Detroit's first nickelodeon movie house, the Casino Theater, occupied the first floor from 1906 until 1915. More recent tenants included the Famous Barrel Bar, from 1937 on, and Father & Son Shoes, from the early 1950s until 1975. The upper-floor tenants are not listed in the City Directories and cannot be identified.

Sources: Fred Carlisle, Chronology of Notable Events in the History of the Northwest Territory and Wayne County (Detroit, 1890); Detroit City Directory, 1888-1974; Silas Farmer, History of Detroit and Wayne County and Early Michigan (Detroit, 1890); Andrew Craig Morrison, Opera House, Nickel Show, Palace: An Illustrated Inventory of Theater Buildings in the Detroit Area (Dearborn, Michigan, 1974).

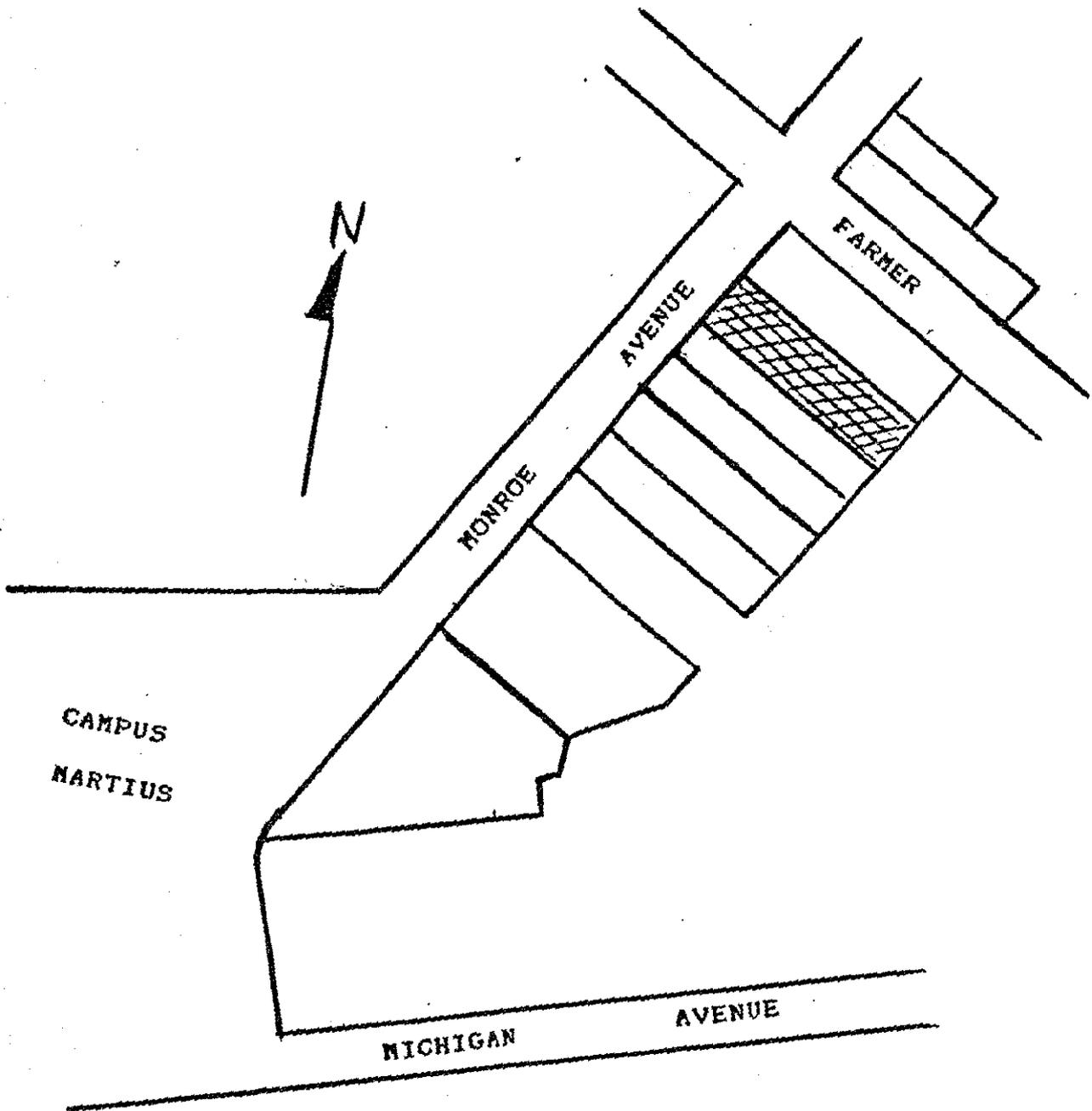
Historian: Charlea K. Hyde, Department of History, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan

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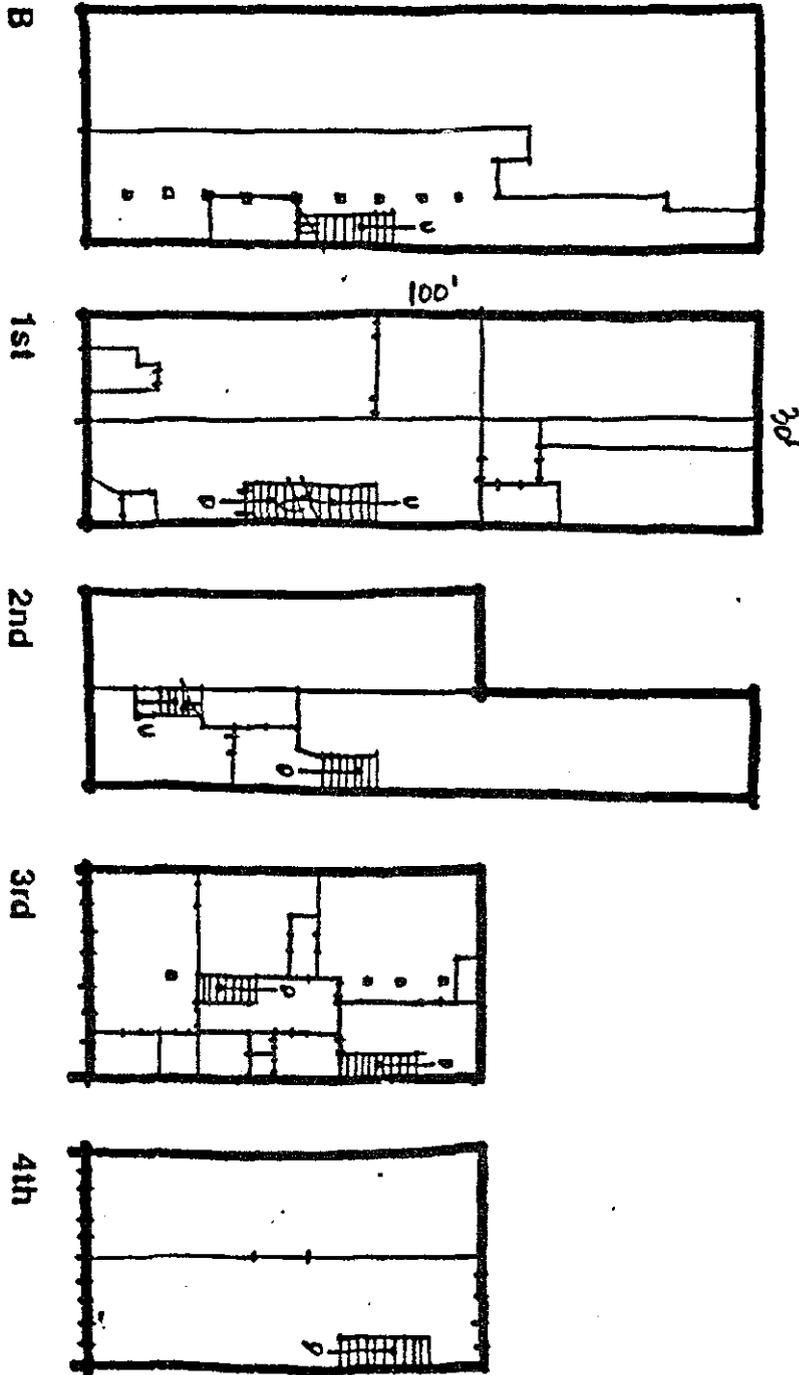
DETROIT, MICHIGAN QUADRANGLE
UTM: 17.331470.4688570



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EXISTING FLOOR PLANS