

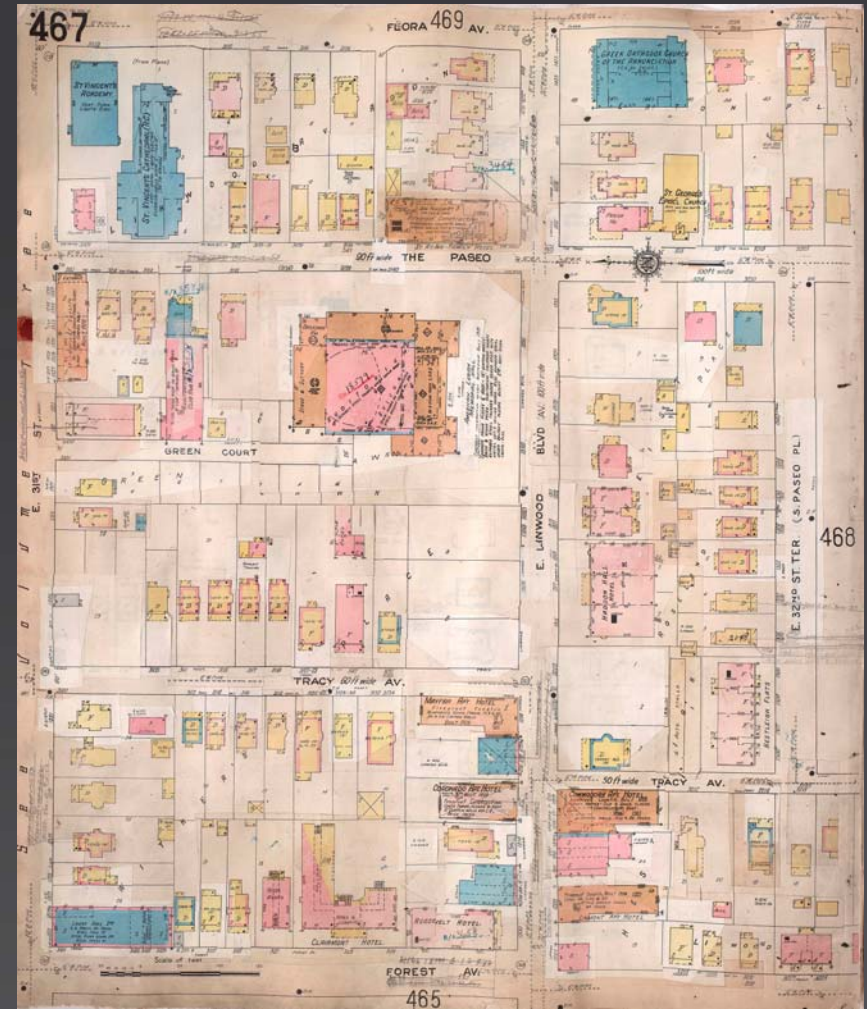
MISSOURI VALLEY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Using the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps A Tutorial

Created by MVSC Librarians

MISSOURI VALLEY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

1. What are Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps?
2. History
3. Using the maps
4. How to make the most of the images in the MVSC Digital Gallery



MISSOURI VALLEY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

1. What are Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps?

- Large scale, 21 x 25 in., maps of each city block with building details
- Bound in volumes
- Color-coded according to construction material
- Usually on a scale of 50 feet to an inch
- Used by fire insurance companies to assess risk for properties

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Typical Sanborn maps include

- Business and building names
- Building footprints and construction materials
- Addresses, new and old
- Street names and dimensions
- Types of businesses
- Churches, schools, and public buildings
- Railroads, parks, rivers, and viaducts
- Addition and subdivision names

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2. History

Fires, a hazard of the industrial revolution, often caused uninsured property owners to suffer great financial loss. To protect against such calamity, fire insurance companies sprang up all over the U.S.

INDUCEMENTS.

FIRE INSURANCE!

We are offering the best Insurance contracts there are for sale. Our Companies are the very best and our agency the largest in Kansas. On a personal interview we believe we can convince you it is to your interest to patronize us.

WILLARD MERIAM,

511 MINNESOTA AVENUE.



Fire destroys Nichols & Shepard Co., dealer of agricultural implements, at 1323 Hickory, August 9, 1893. They lost everything but were fully insured.

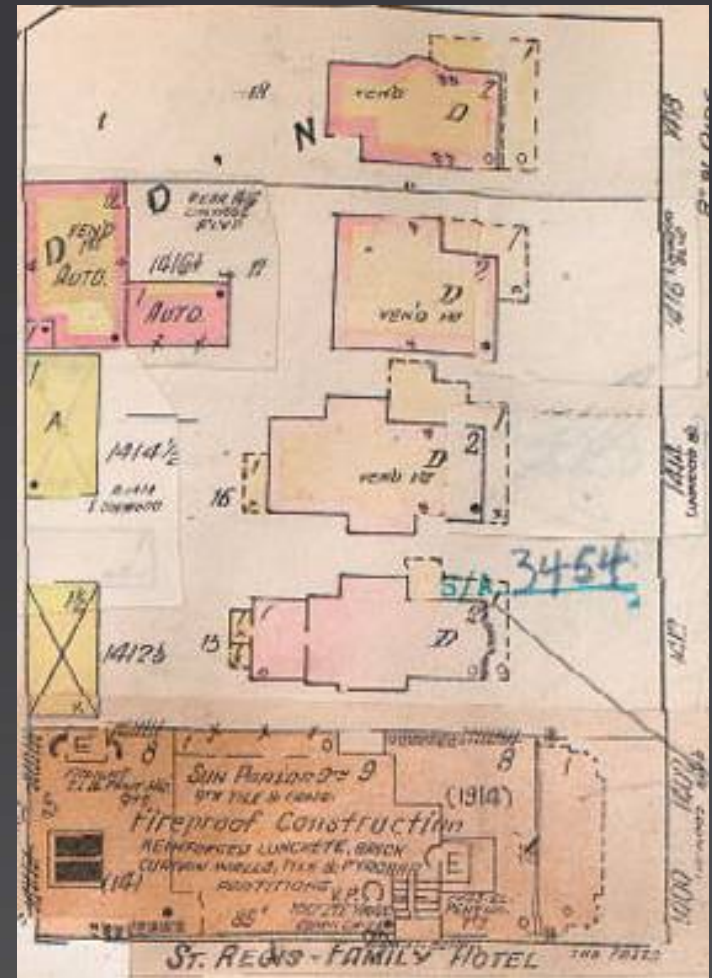
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Policy writers, however, could not always inspect properties in person. In 1866, D. A. Sanborn, an enterprising surveyor in Massachusetts, began creating specialized maps to help underwriters evaluate the risks.

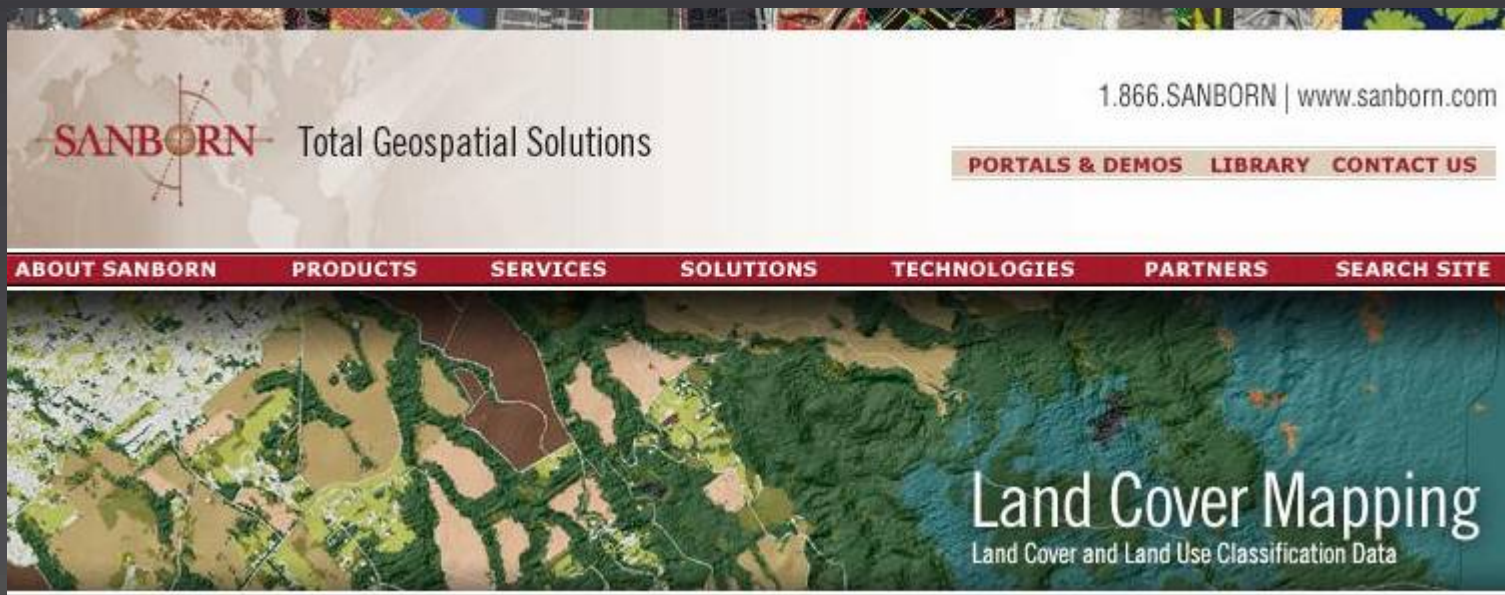
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- The standardized maps in color-coded detail include number of stories, windows and doors, construction material, hydrants, street elevation, and much more.
- Over the years, surveyors with the company created maps for more than 12,000 American cities and towns.



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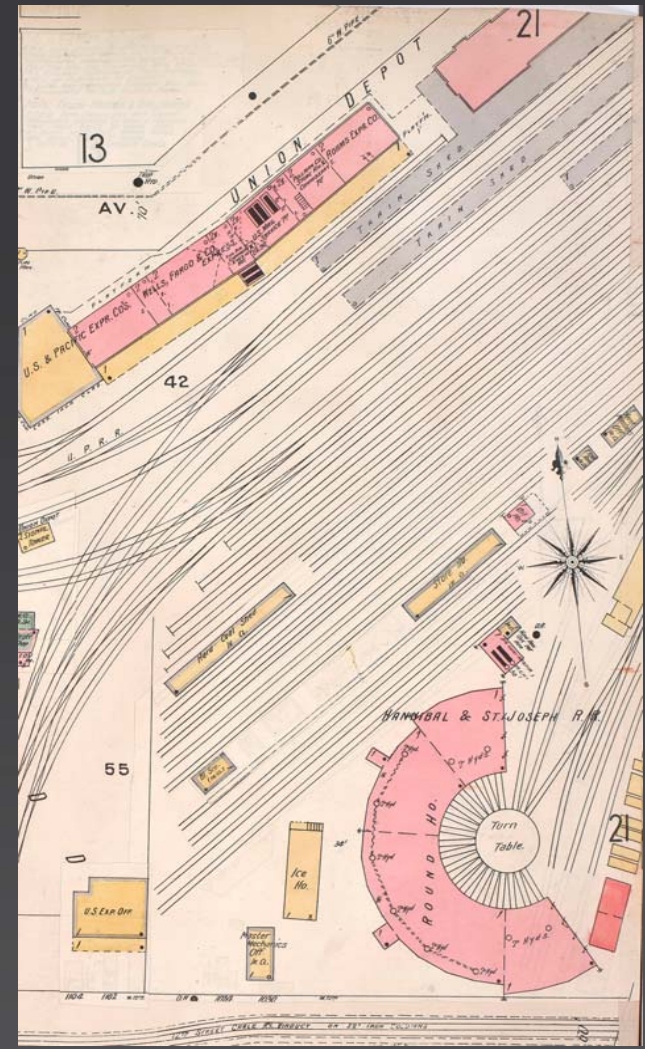
Sanborn's company eventually became known simply as the Sanborn Map Company and today specializes in geographic information systems.



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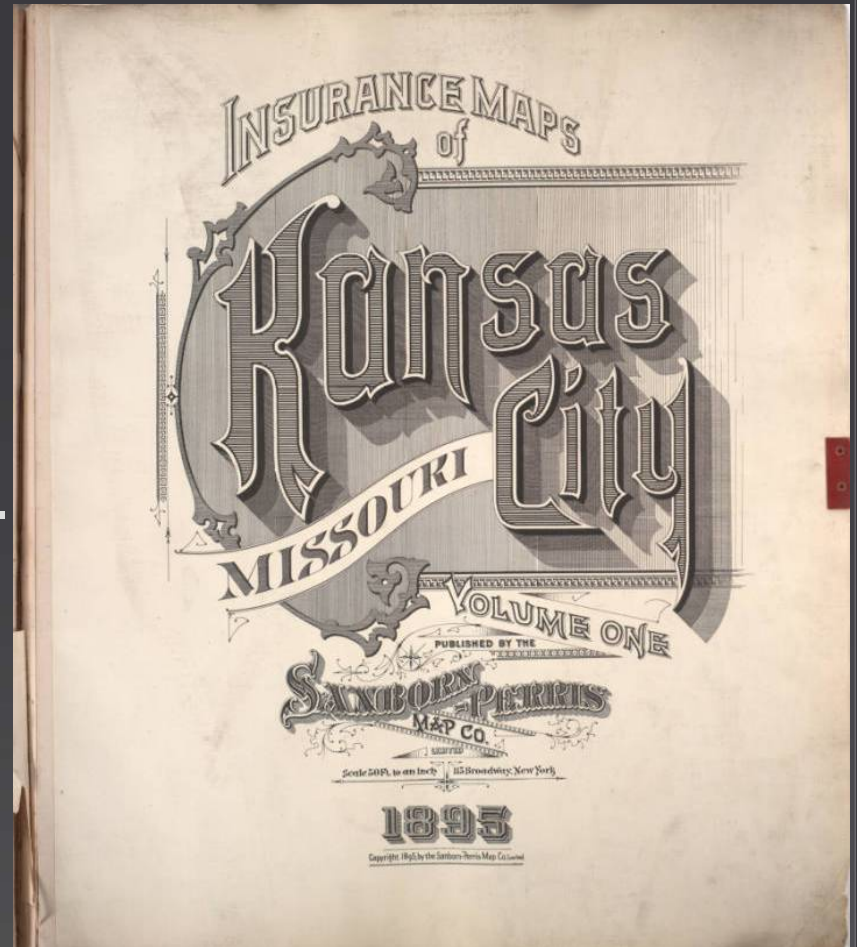
The tens of thousands of fire insurance maps published by the Sanborn company up to the 1950s have become a treasured resource for

- Historians
- Genealogists
- Environmentalists
- Archaeologists
- Students and
- Others



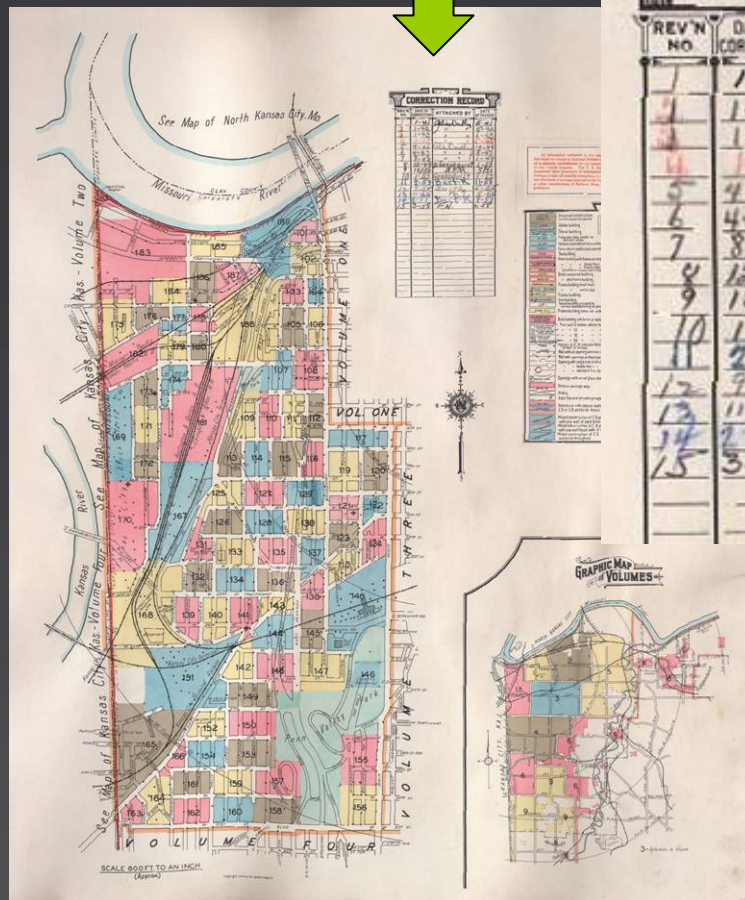
MISSOURI VALLEY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

- The Missouri Valley Special Collections (MVSC) has 20 bound Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps volumes for Kansas City, 1895-1957.
- These have been digitized and are online at www.kchistory.org under Maps.



MISSOURI VALLEY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

The correction dates were noted on a table on the Key page.



CORRECTION RECORD

REV'N NO	DATE OF CORRECTION	ATTACHED BY	DATE ATTACHED
1	1-41	John Dudley	5-41
2	1-42	"	5-42
3	1-43	"	6-43
4	1-44	"	5-44
5	4-46	John Dudley	10-46
6	4-47	"	8-47
7	8-48	"	1-49
8	12-49	D. GRANDQUIST	6-50
9	12/50	A.P.R.	5/51
10	1-52	GRANDQUIST	8-52
11	2-53	Bart-R	11-53
12	9-54	St. L. Co.	5-55
13	11-55	M.T.	5-55
14	2-57	Bart-R	7-57
15	3-58	F.N.	0-58

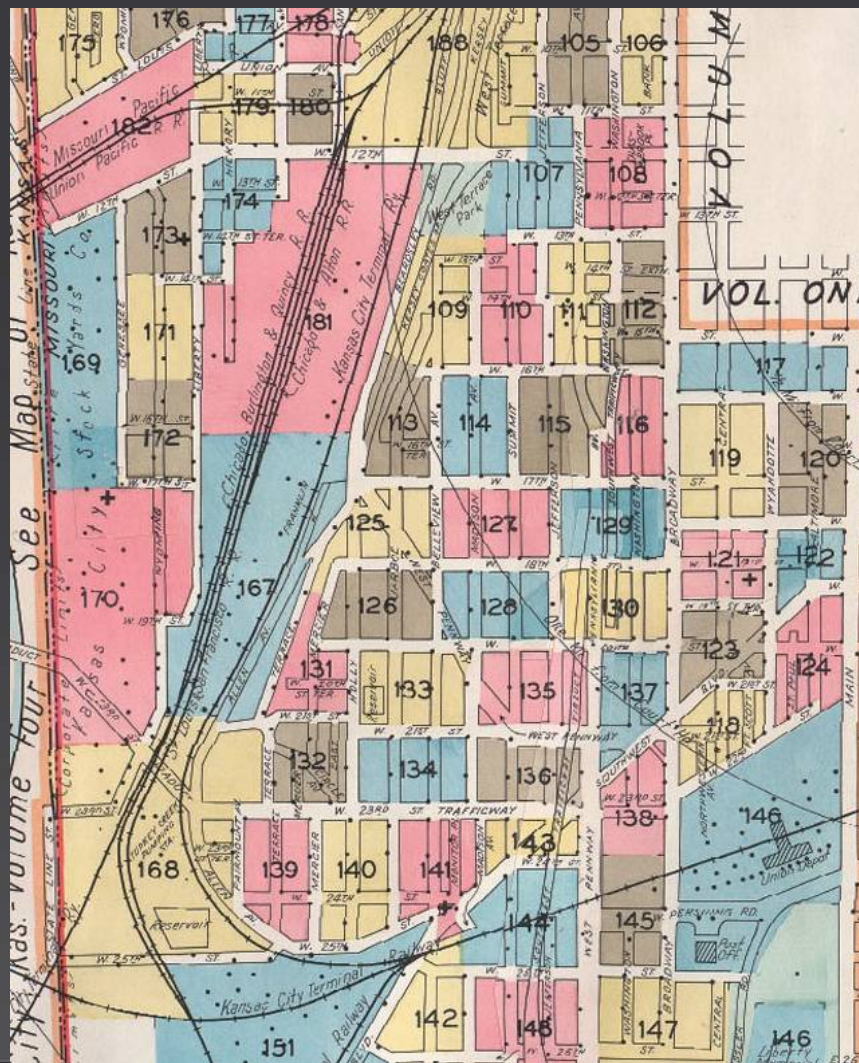
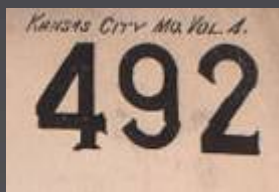
CORRECTION RECORD

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14	2-57	Bart-R	7-57
15	3-58	F.N.	0-58



MISSOURI VALLEY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

The Key page also indicates what areas of the city are covered in the volume. The number refers to the sheet in the volume for that portion of the city.



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Colors indicate construction material. Shades vary between volumes.

 Fire proof, shades of brown

 Iron, light grey

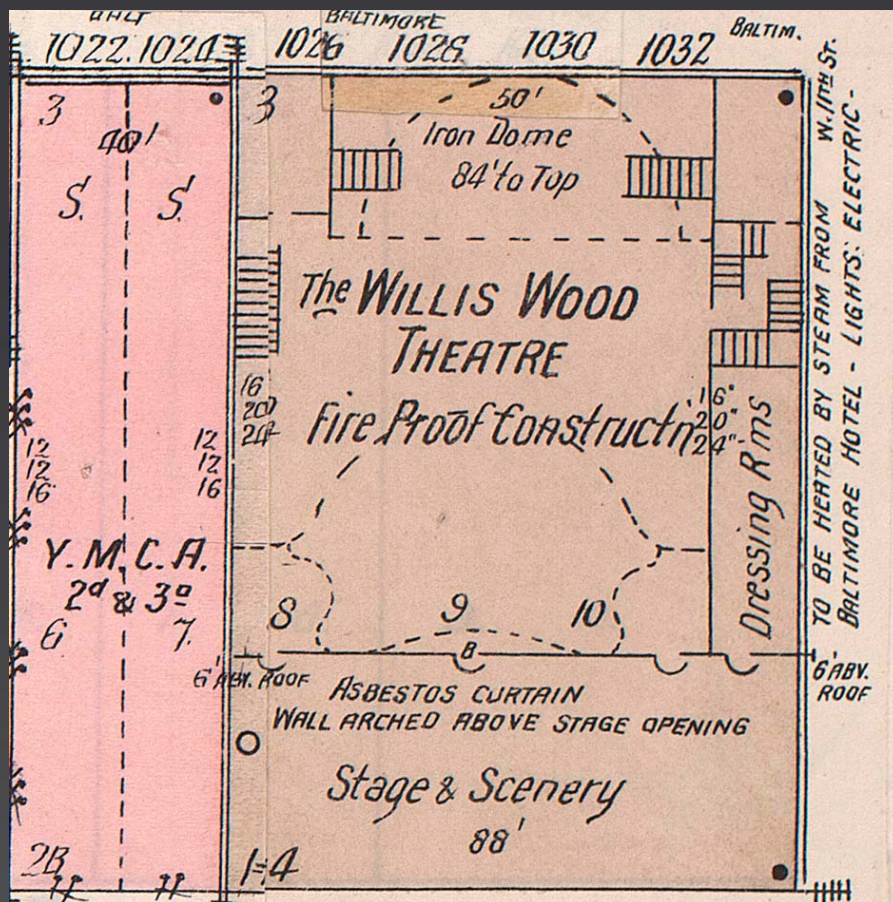
 Stone, blue

 Brick, pink

 Frame, yellow

 Adobe, drab olive

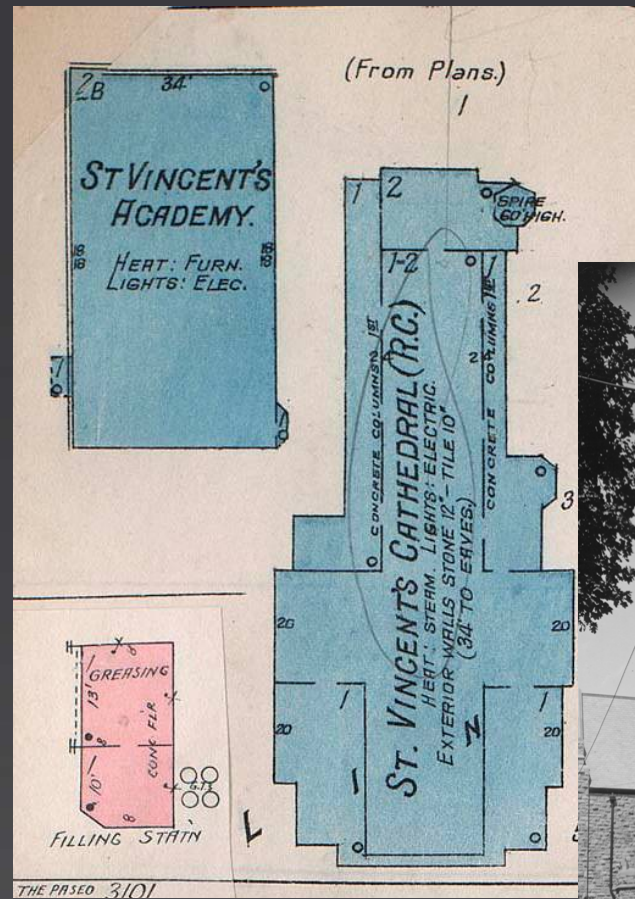
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- YMCA building is brick, pink.
- The Willis Wood Theater, fireproof, brown.

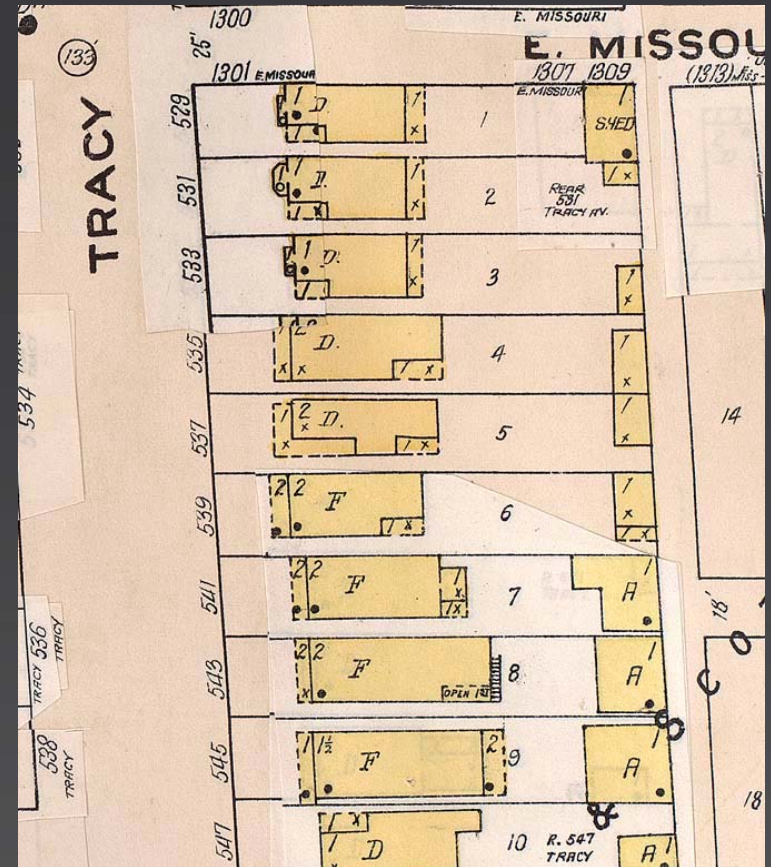
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- St. Vincent's Church and Academy, stone, blue.
- Filling station, brick, pink.



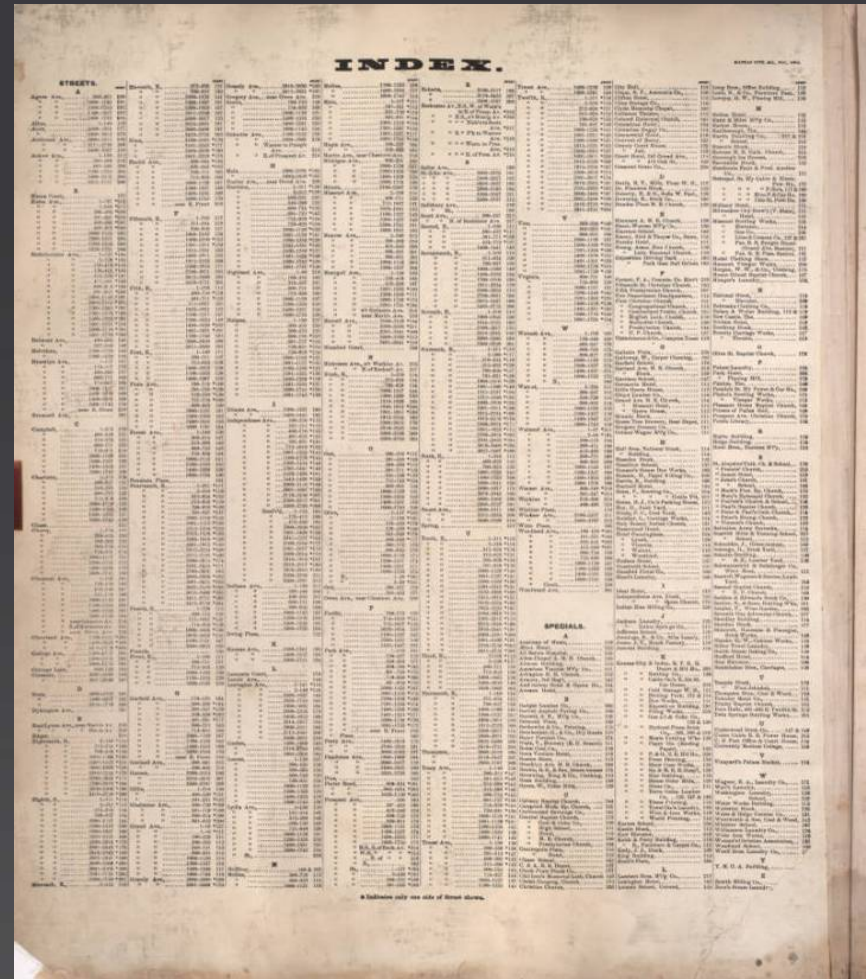
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- Residences 500 Block Tracy, frame, yellow



MISSOURI VALLEY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

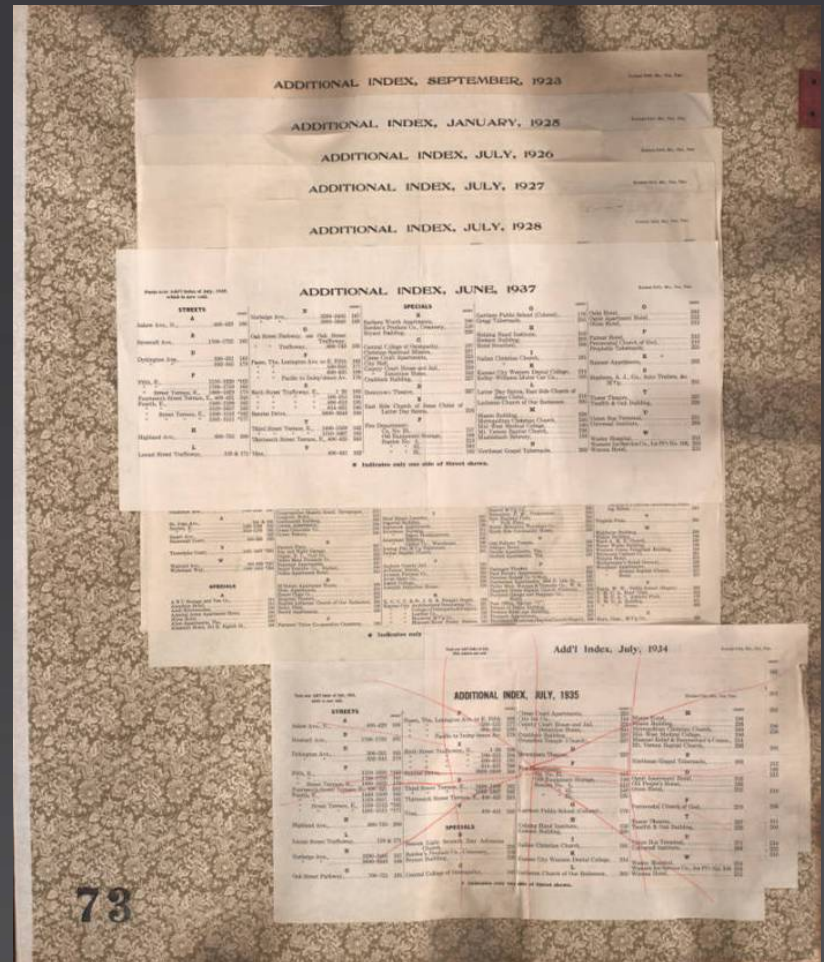
Each volume also has an Index page in the front that lists streets with address ranges and their page number. Under “Specials” are names of buildings like churches, schools, businesses, etc.



MISSOURI VALLEY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

The Index page is helpful when using microfilm or the ProQuest database of the maps. These differ from the 20 volumes online in the Digital Gallery.

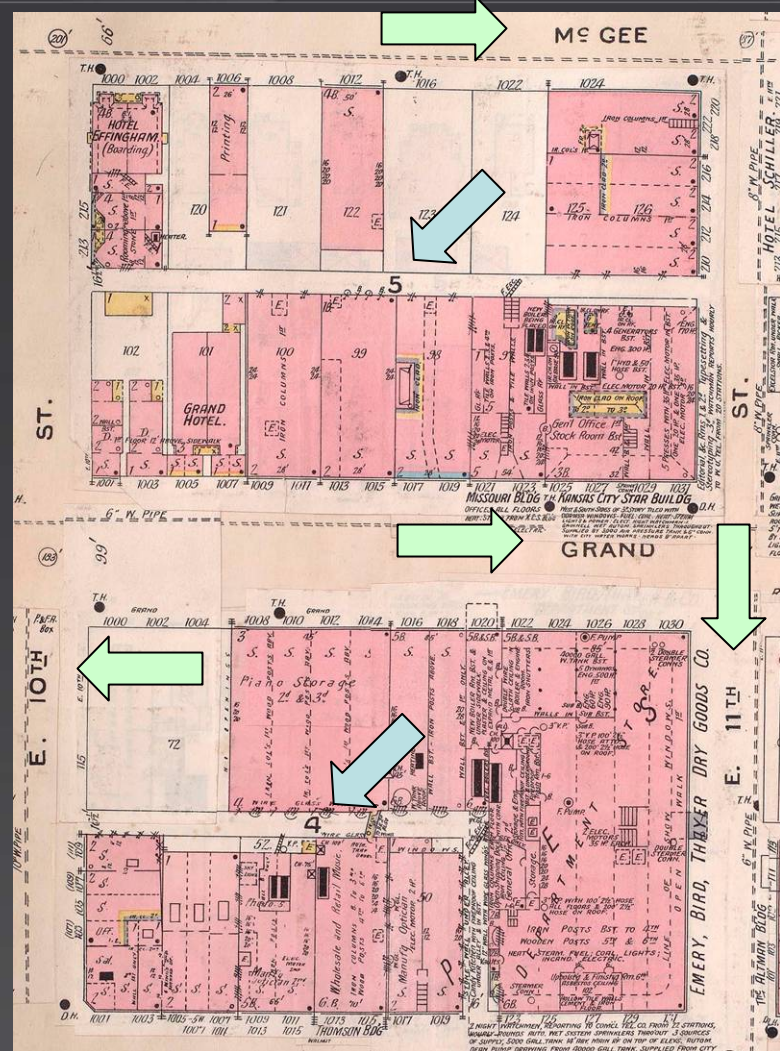
As corrections are made, new indexes are pasted over the old.



MISSOURI VALLEY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

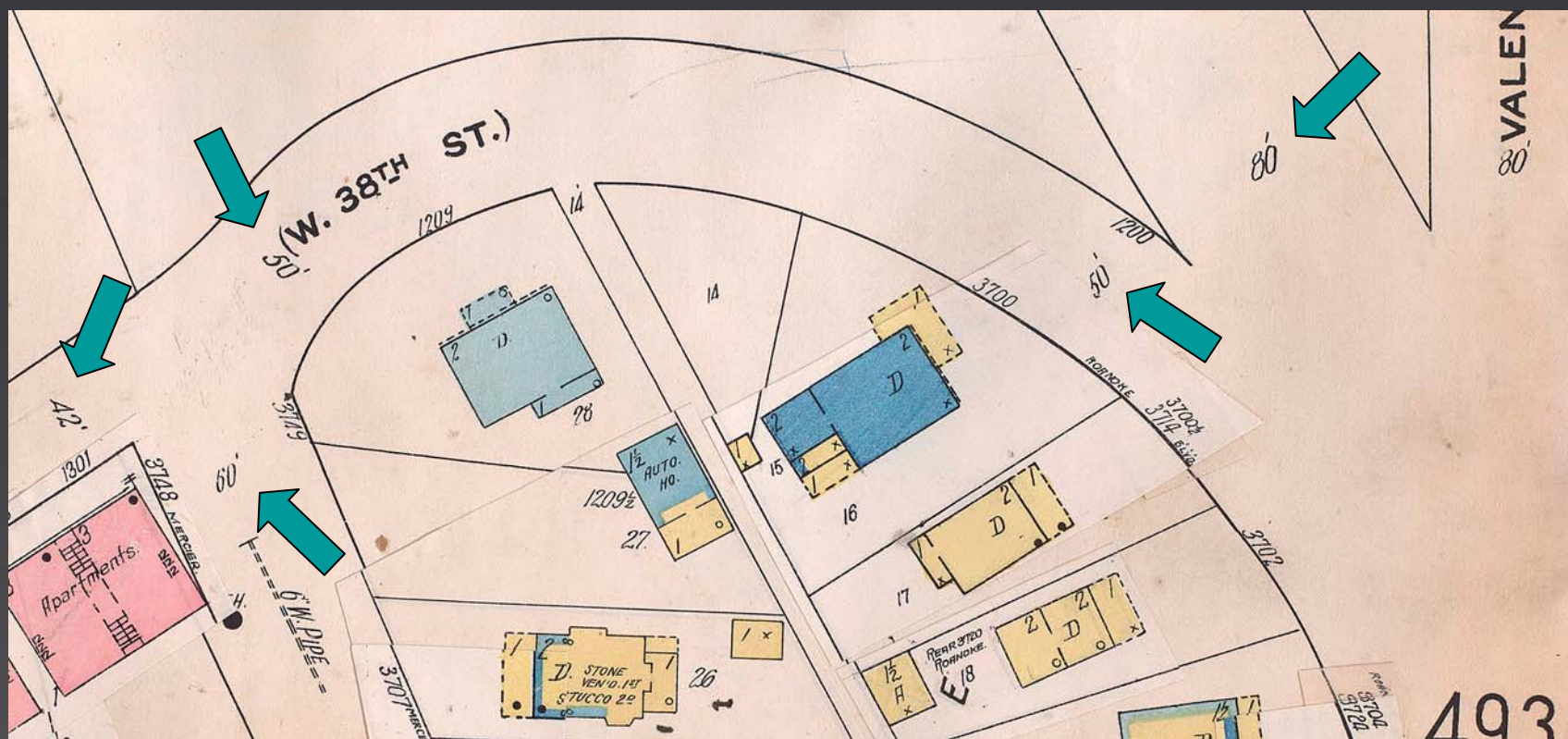
The maps include block numbers and street names.

- Kansas City Blocks 4 and 5, 1907
- Street Names



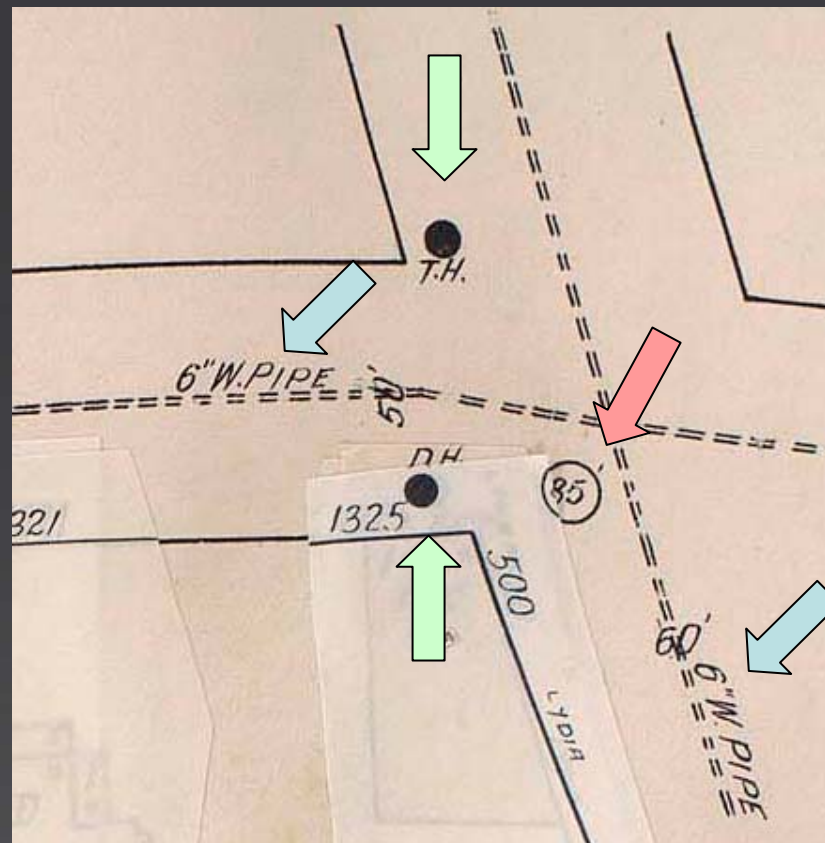
MISSOURI VALLEY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

- Width of streets



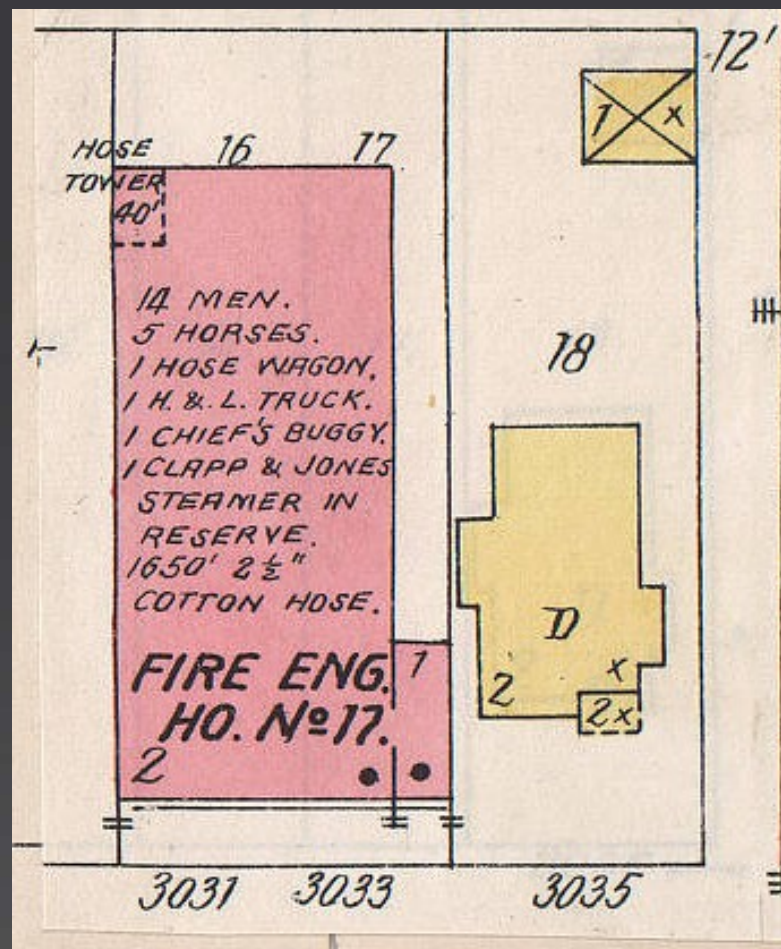
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- Street elevation
- Location and size of water pipes
- Location of hydrants, whether single, double, or triple



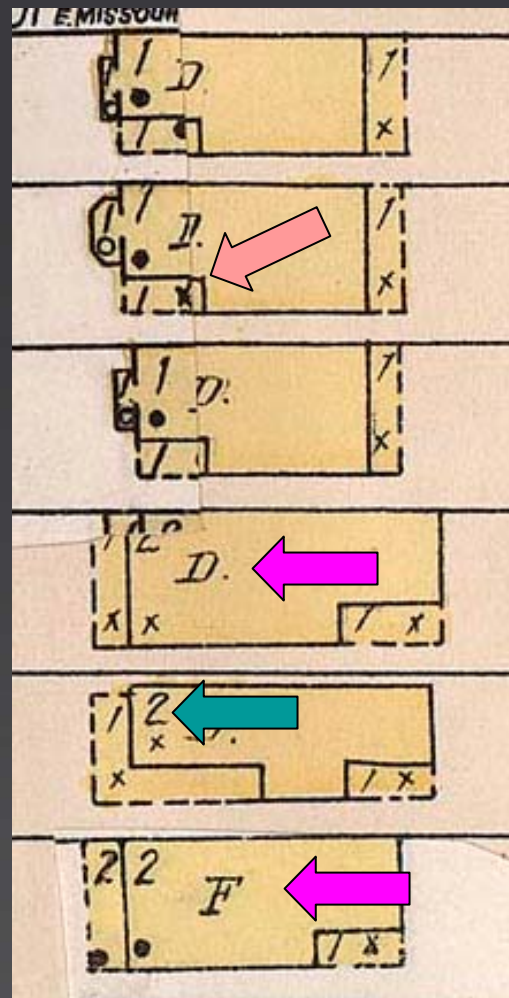
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- Detailed information about each fire station including number of vehicles and firefighters.



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- X=Shingle Roof
- "D"= Dwelling
- "F"=Flat
- #2=Number of Stories

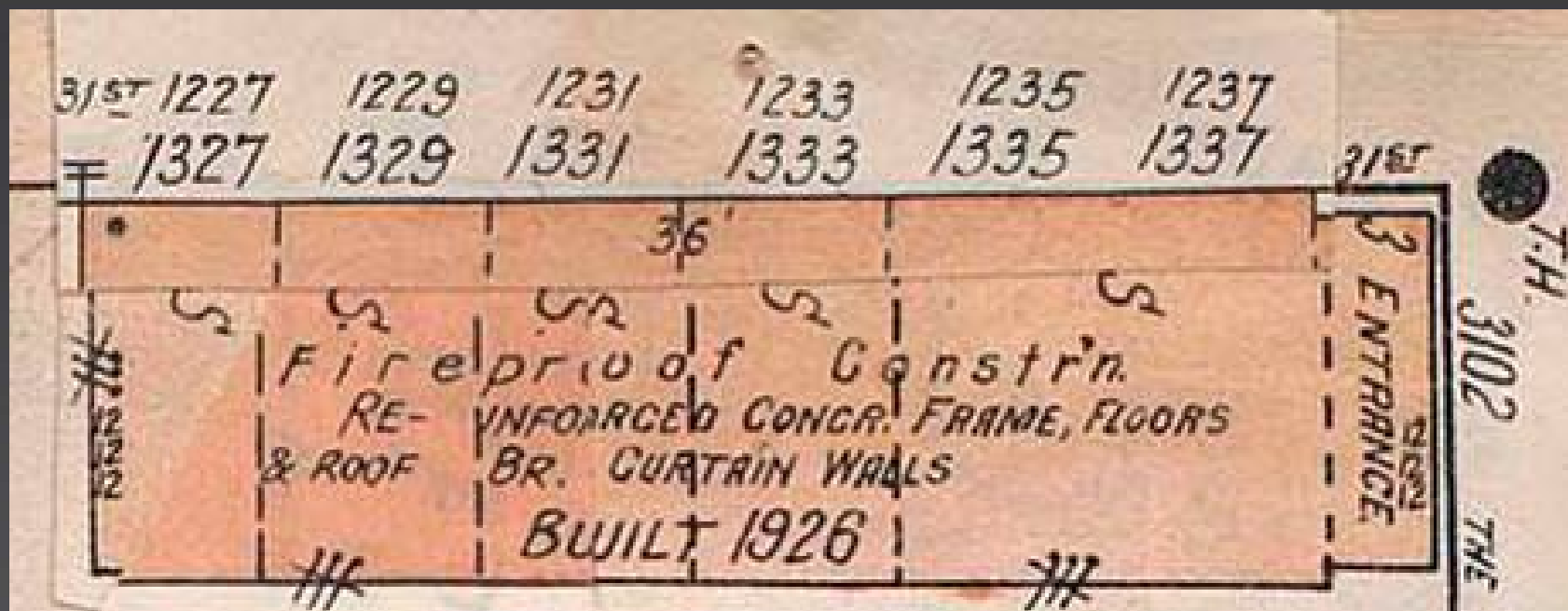


MISSOURI VALLEY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

2
D
0

4/6
56

House numbers shown nearest to buildings are official or actually up on buildings.
Old house numbers shown furthest from buildings.



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4. How to make the most of the images in the MVSC Digital Gallery

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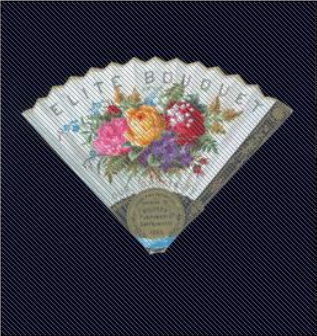
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- Culture & Society
- Kansas City
- Maps
- People
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You have several options from the home page. You can click on the Browse/Search link on the navigation bar and scroll down to the Sanborn Maps. Or you can click on the Maps category in the middle of the page.

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MISSOURI VALLEY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Sanborn Maps



The Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, as their name implies, were created for fire insurance companies to assist fire insurance companies to assess the risk of insuring a particular property. The first three volumes of the Kansas City Sanborn maps, 1895 and 1896 updated to 1907, have been added to the Digital Gallery. See our [Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps](#) Web page for more information and links to other Sanborn maps online.

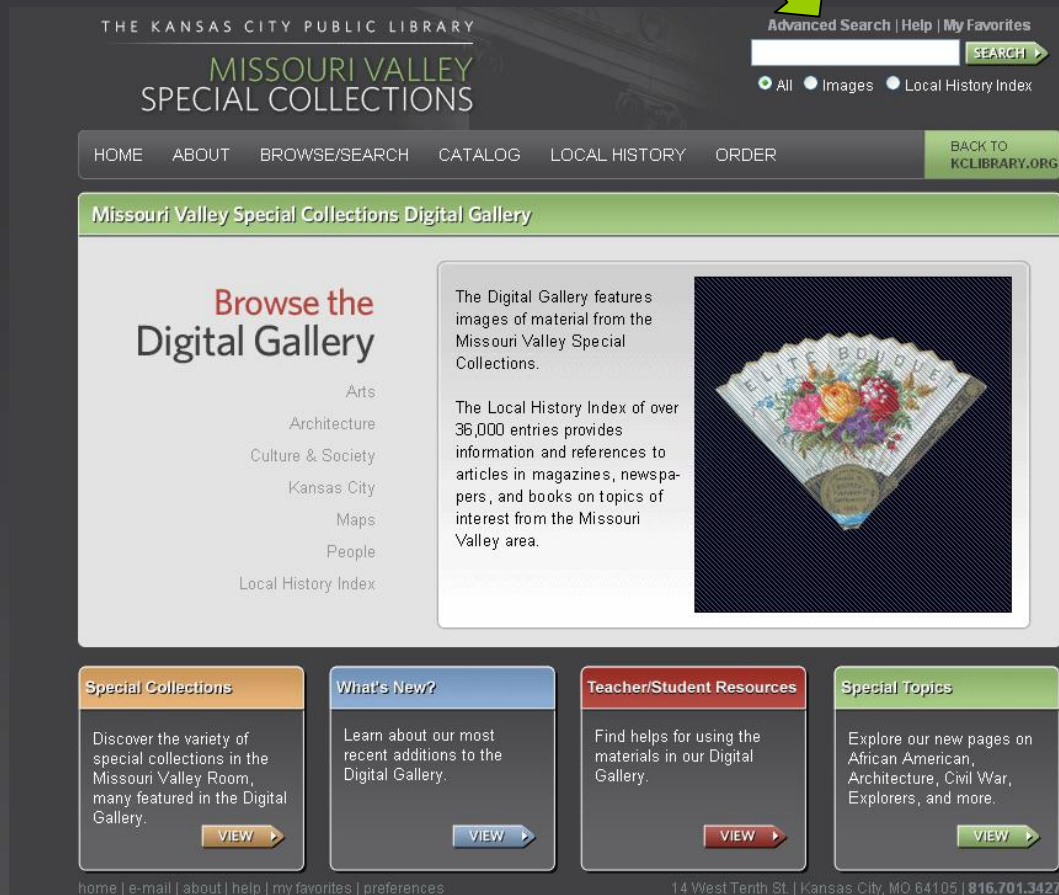
[Browse Collection](#) | [Browse Subjects](#) | [Search Collection](#)



Addresses are not searchable, but you can narrow the results by entering two street names. For example, if you are searching for 3714 Roanoke, you would put Roanoke and 38th in the search box.

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Another option
is to go directly
to the Advanced
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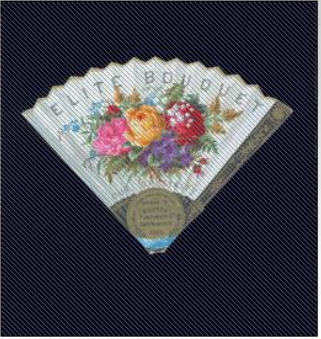
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MISSOURI VALLEY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Select Sanborn Maps from the list of collections on the left and then “add.” Enter exact phrase for more targeted search results.

Search: [Across all fields](#) | [Selected fields](#) | [By proximity](#) | [By date](#)

Find results with:

All of the words	<input type="text"/>
The exact phrase	<input type="text" value="Candy and Ice Cream Factory"/>
Any of the words	<input type="text"/>
None of the words	<input type="text"/>

Search all collections or
Select specific collections:

<input type="checkbox"/> Native American & Western Photograph Collection
<input type="checkbox"/> Nelly Don Photographs
<input type="checkbox"/> 1951 Kansas City Flood
<input type="checkbox"/> Nineteenth-Century Kansas
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sanborn Maps
<input type="checkbox"/> South Central Business Association
<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Willis Castle Memorial Photographs

Selected collections:

<input type="button" value="add >>"/>
<input type="button" value="remove <<"/>

Press Shift or Ctrl and click to select multiple items.

MISSOURI VALLEY SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

The collection has eight searchable subject fields:

- ◆ Subjects (Library of Congress Thesaurus for Graphic Materials)
- ◆ Local Subjects
- ◆ Buildings or Structures
- ◆ Businesses
- ◆ Street Names
- ◆ Districts
- ◆ Additions or Subdivisions
- ◆ Neighborhoods











Subject(s)	Maps Apartment hotels Lodging houses
Buildings or Structures	Andover Flats The Eleanore St. John Flats St. Theresa Convent
Businesses	Hotel Cardova Imperial Boarding Mondamin Hotel Virginia Hotel
Street Names	W. 10th Street W. 11th Street W. 12th Street Jefferson Street Pennsylvania Avenue Summit Street Washington Street
Additions or Subdivisions	Coate's Addition Convent Place Lykins Place Addition
Neighborhood(s)	Quality Hill

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Once you've located the right map, click on the image to open it. When you have the full record along with the image, you will want to enlarge the image for better viewing. Click on the Zoomify icon on the tool bar. The map opens in a new window and is easily enlarged and navigable.

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Sanborn Map, Kansas City, Vol. 4, 1909-1957, Page p492



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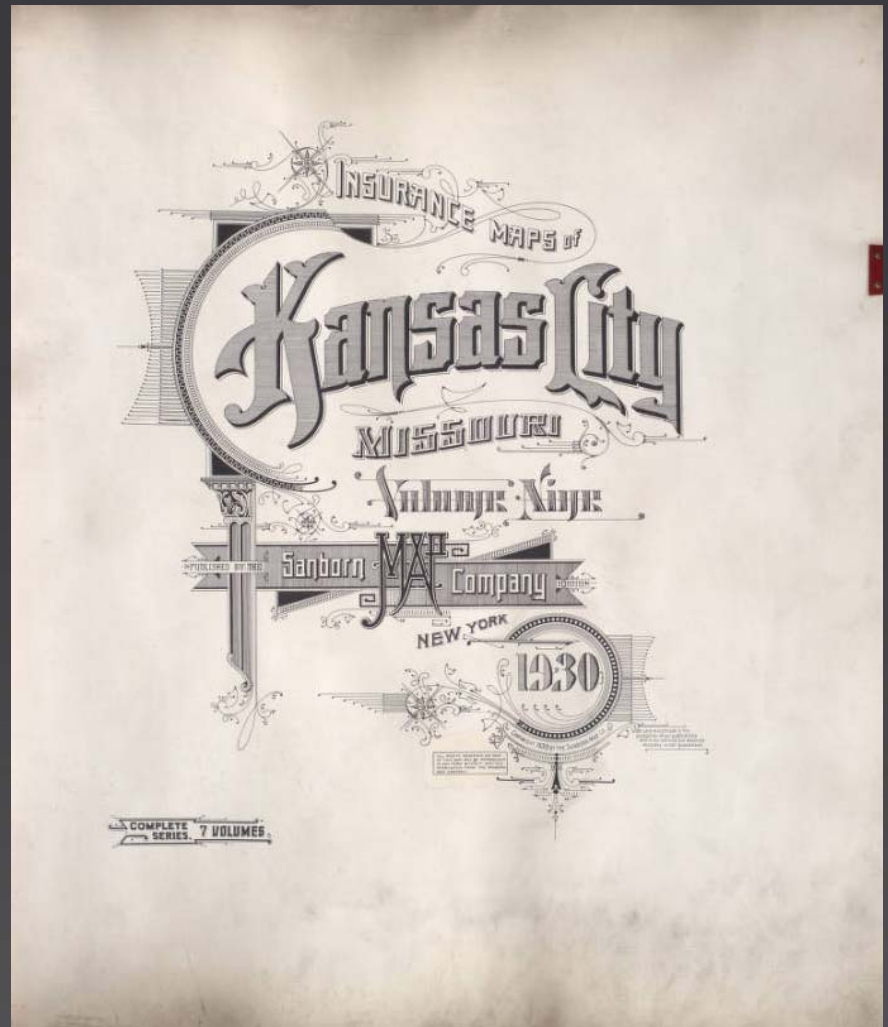
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Note:

Two volumes, Vol. 9, 1930-1941 and Vol. 9, 1930-1957 may only be viewed within the library. You may still access each record.



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For more information see

Kansas City Public Library

kclibrary.org/kchistory/maps

Missouri Valley Special Collections

Home Page

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