

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Sperry Office Building

and/or common Sperry Building

2. Location

street & number 146 West Weber Avenue

city, town Stockton vicinity of _____ congressional district 14th

state California code 06 county San Joaquin code 077

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3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: law offices

4. Owner of Property

name John M. Reece, George V. Hartmann et ux, Thomas M. Zuckerman et ux.

street & number 146 West Weber Avenue

city, town Stockton vicinity of _____ state California

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. San Joaquin County Court House

street & number 222 East Weber Avenue

city, town Stockton 95202 state California

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title 1). Stockton City Landmark
2). Stockton Historic Resources Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1). 1971 federal state county local
2). 1979

depository for survey records 1). Stockton Cultural Heritage Board
2). California Office of Historic Preservation

city, town 1). Stockton, California state _____
2). Sacramento, California

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	1917 addition	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Sperry Building is a one and one half story rectangular red brick commercial building embellished with High Victorian Gothic details. The front half of the building was constructed in 1888; the rear half, which is almost identical to the original, was added in 1917. The building occupies the southeast corner of Weber and Madison facing the Stockton Channel. It extends approximately 40 feet along Weber and 100 feet along Madison. The courtyard garden which retains its original palms, orange tree, circular central fountain, and decorative ironwork fence occupies the remainder of the 75 by 100 foot parcel. Although the area surrounding the parcel has suffered demolition and modern intrusions, the Sperry Building and courtyard retain original integrity. The building with tall palms flanking its east and west facades remains a corner focal point in an area otherwise undergoing redevelopment. Although the Sperry warehouse (the Eureka Warehouse) remains intact several blocks west on Weber, the 1882 Sperry Mills directly across the street from the Sperry Building on Madison was demolished in 1970. This site is now a parking lot.

The Sperry Building is surmounted by front and rear corrugated metal hip roofs. Elongated rectangular metal air vents protrude at the roof crests. Small triangular dormers project from the west front and rear roof sections. The dormer in the east roof front section is more pronounced, containing vertical sides and a gable end overhang, and is repeated in the rear roof section of the original building. This gable end dormer serves to balance the small central roof line gables on the front and west facades. The 1888 structure originally contained a shingled roof which carried decorative iron cresting on the roof and gable crest lines. It is possible the metal roofs were added and the iron cresting removed when the 1917 addition was constructed.

The three bay facade is distinguished by brick corbeling and dentil work at the cornice line, decorative brick chimney stacks at the roof corners, and a small central gable which rises above a Gothic drop arch window embellished with a central keystone. This Gothic drop arch and keystone motif is repeated in the two double leaf entrance doors which flank either side of the central window. A small white ceramic plaque containing the California Bear embellishes the central gable, and a decorative white ceramic downspout runs the length of the northwest corner of the building. The ceramic plaque motif is repeated in the two west facade gables. Two brick string courses run the length of the front and west facades, and continue the horizontal lines of the central windows and doorways.

(please see continuation sheet)

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The seven bay west facade which faces Madison Street carries the same decorative motifs and Gothic drop arch windows. A single panel Gothic arch door with transom provides entrance at the rear of the west facade. Grillwork covers the end window. The rear section, added in 1917, contains no chimney stacks. The otherwise plain east facade which faces onto the garden contains several Gothic drop arch windows and round arch glass panel entrance doors. The rear brick facade is plain, without fenestration or doors.

The interior of the original building is distinguished by three Queen Anne style oak and tile corner fireplaces, oak wainscot, and an elaborate, hand-painted iron vault manufactured by Hall Safe and Lock Company, Canton, Ohio. The former mill manager's office which incorporates the letters S P E R R Y in its distinctive wood paneling occupies the northeast corner of the 1917 addition. Plaster has been removed from several of the interior walls. Ceilings have been lowered in some cases. Several doors connect the original building with the 1917 addition. The upper half stories are currently used for storage. Rehabilitation plans for the building's interior include retention of the original architectural features. Ceilings which have been lowered will be returned to their original height.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
1917 addition		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1888; 1917 **Builder/Architect** Charles Beasley (original building)

Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

The Sperry Building is significant for its architectural style and integrity, and its historic association with the Sperry Flour Mills. This commercial style red brick office building embellished and formalized with High Victorian Gothic motifs is notable for its well-executed design, use of materials, and position on the southeast corner of West Weber and Madison. Situated across the street from the Stockton Channel, the building retains its historic integrity and landscaping in an otherwise largely redeveloped area. Considered a "gem of architectural art" at the time of its construction in 1888, the original building and its formal courtyard exemplified Sperry's pride in their expanding business operations. By the end of the century the Sperry Flour Company was the largest flour miller in California. The Sperry Building and its 1917 addition served as the company's Stockton office until 1927.

Designed by Charles Beasley,* the original building together with its almost identical 1917 addition is one of the few 19th century red brick commercial buildings with original facades remaining in Stockton--a city once noted for its brick architecture. The building's interior is also noteworthy for its Queen Anne style fireplaces, its formal wainscot, and large, impressive hand-painted iron vault manufactured by the Hall Safe and Lock Company.

Austin Sperry and George Lyon founded the original milling firm in 1852 on Main near Commerce Street when they established a small barley and graham flour mill to supply horse-drawn freight wagons and pack trains to and from the mines. They were the pioneer grain millers in the San Joaquin Valley. In 1862 the firm, by then known as Sperry, Burkett and Company, bought the old Franklin Mill at the corner of Levee and Beaver streets [now West Weber and Madison] and continued to expand their operations. Fire destroyed the Weber Avenue mill, and a new five story mill was quickly erected in its place in 1882. Incorporated as Sperry and Company in 1884, the firm was operating three large mills in the near vicinity by 1892, and shipping world-wide. In 1892 Sperry and Company merged with five other mills in northern and central California. Incorporated as the Sperry Flour Company, the firm was the largest flour milling operation in California. (See continuation sheet).

* Beasley and Son, an active 19th century Stockton architectural firm, was responsible for numerous commercial buildings in the San Joaquin Valley from circa 1870 to 1906. Notable among them were the Stockton Agricultural Pavillion, built the same year as the Sperry Building, and the Tracy City Hall and Jail, 1899-1900. The Sperry Building in its relation to Charles Beasley is discussed in Karen Weitze's "Charles Beasley, Architect(1827-1913): Issues and Images," Journal for the Society of Architectural Historians, published in the October, 1980 issue.

UTM NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 7,500 square feet (see Assessor's plat map)

Quadrangle name Stockton West

Quadrangle scale 7.5

UMT References

A

1	0	6	4	9	9	7	0	4	2	0	1	7	6	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

Zone				Easting				Northing						

E

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G

Zone				Easting				Northing						

H

Zone				Easting				Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at the southeast corner of Weber and Madison proceed easterly 75 feet, thence southerly 100 feet, thence westerly 75 feet, and thence northerly 100 feet to the point of beginning. (The building and garden occupy this parcel).

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
<u>7/21</u>			

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Pamela McGuire, Historic Resources Consultant

organization _____ date October 13, 1980

street & number 3549 Folsom Boulevard telephone 916-456-2196

city or town Sacramento state California 95816

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature K m ellon

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 10-13-81

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Sharon Byers Entered in the National Register date 2/19/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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The 1888 office building constructed across the street from the new mill replaced an earlier two story brick office structure. Before that a wood frame building had occupied the site. The property upon which the Sperry Building was constructed had been purchased by Austin and S. W. Sperry in 1879.

Title to the Sperry Building was transferred to Roscoe C. Zuckerman in 1927, and since then until 1967 the building was almost continuously occupied as offices by wholesale produce firms. After an extensive local campaign the building was saved from demolition in 1969 when it was leased by one of the current owners, Thomas Zuckerman, as law offices. In 1870 the building received an Award of Excellence for its aesthetic contribution to the Stockton community from the City Planning Commission. Made a Stockton City Landmark in 1971, the building has served as law offices since 1969.

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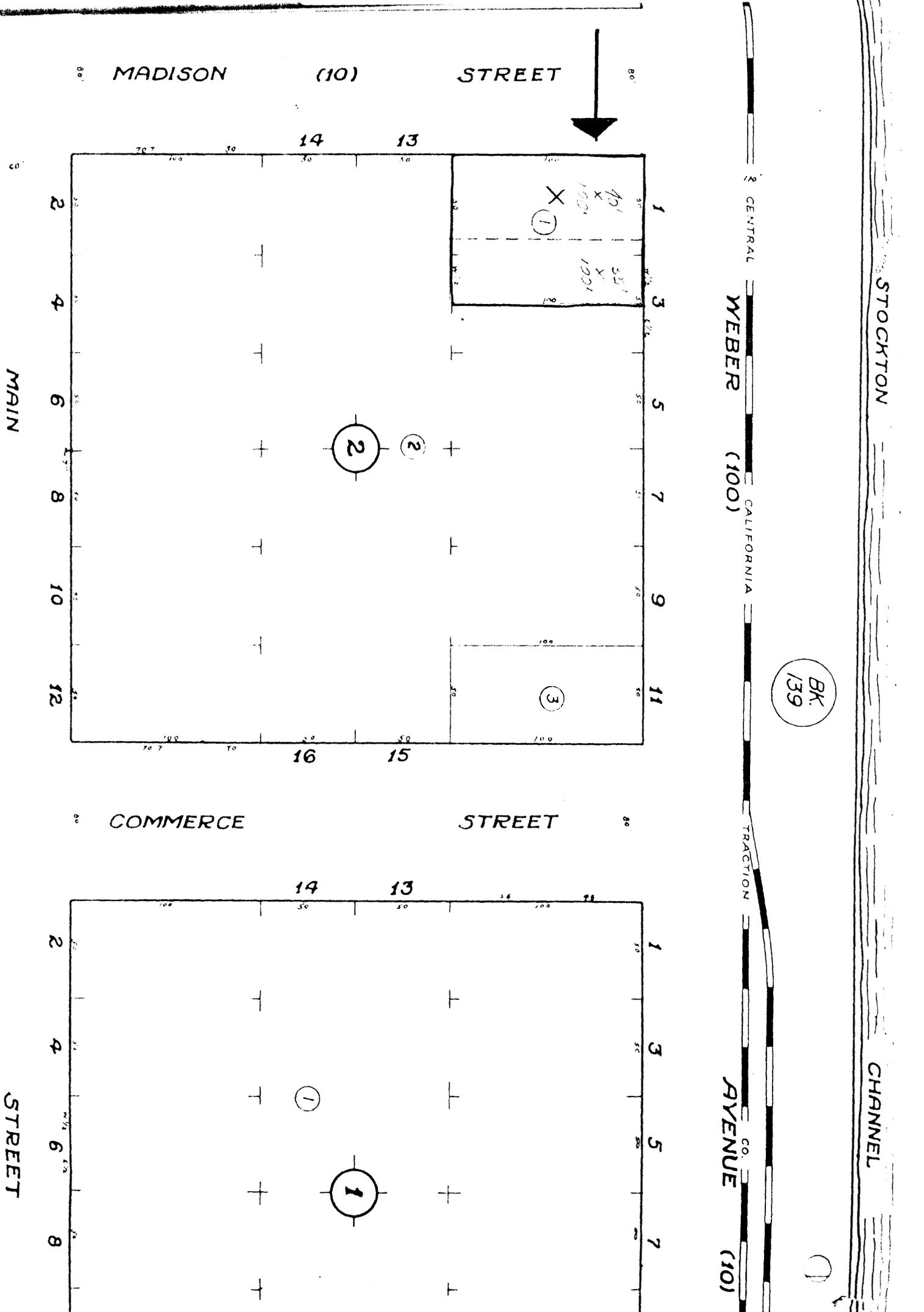
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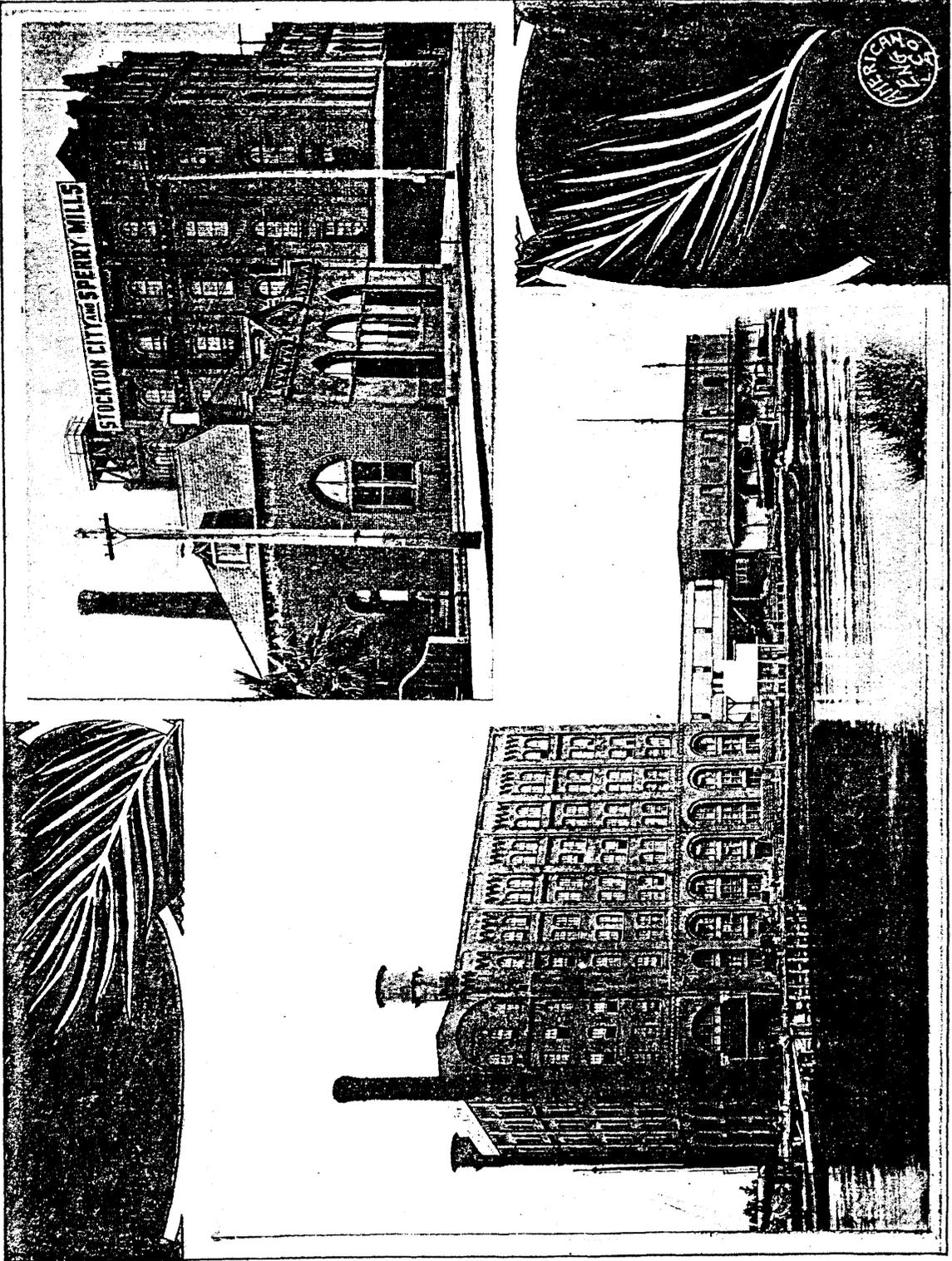
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The Sperry Building
 146 W. Weber Avenue
 Stockton, San Joaquin County,
 California



Original building, circa 1900.
Taken from Stockton Daily
Independent's Souvenir of Stockton.
San Joaquin County, 1900.



Sperry Flour Mills, Stockton...

LOGAN PHOTO

Sperry Building on far left side,
mid-section.

SOME OF THE LEADING INDUSTRIES OF STOCKTON.

