

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

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

### 1. Name of Property

historic name SINCLAIR, ROONEY & CO. BUILDING  
other names/site number Remington Rand Building; Sperry-Rand Building

### 2. Location

465 Washington Street  not for publication  
city or town Buffalo  vicinity  
state New York code NY county Erie code 029 zip code 14201

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

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

    national     statewide X local

Richard Peypont DBAHPD 12/9/15  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register     determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register     removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

[Signature] 2/2/16  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

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

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

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

- Private
- public – Local
- public – State
- public – Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/Office Building  
INDUSTRY/Manufacturing

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
AMERICAN MOVEMENTS  
Commercial Style

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete  
walls: Brick, Concrete  
roof: Asphalt  
other:

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### **Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### **Summary Paragraph**

The Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building is located at 465 Washington Street, half a mile northeast of City Hall in downtown Buffalo, New York. It is a six-story brick-clad steel and concrete commercial building designed by Esenwein & Johnson and constructed between 1909 and 1911. The L-shaped building consists of a rectangular main block, approximately 60-feet by 164-feet, with an extension of approximately 30-feet by 63-feet from the southeast corner. The front façade of the building faces west and consists of three bays divided by brick pilasters with storefront windows at the ground level. There is an entrance door in the south bay. The secondary elevation extends on Mohawk Street and consists of eight repeating bays; the westernmost is identical to those on the west façade, while the others have a small window aligned to the top instead of a large storefront window on the first floor, and the windows of the façade and secondary elevation are aluminum one-over-one windows with the exception of a handful of original wood one-over-ones. The east and south sides are unornamented, with steel two-over-two windows on the south elevation. The interior of the building consists largely of open floor plans with a structural column grid. Modern drywall partitions divide the space into a combination of office cubicles and enclosed offices, and a drop ceiling extends through the majority of the building. A double elevator shaft is located along the south wall at the juncture of the extension and each floor has two restrooms next to the elevator shaft. The building extends to the sidewalk on the west and north sides and abuts a four-story building to the east. The south side abuts an asphalt parking lot and a two-story concrete block building in the southeast corner.

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### **Narrative Description**

#### Exterior:

The Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building is an L-shaped commercial building that fronts approximately 60 feet on Washington Street and 164 feet on Mohawk Street. The east elevation and west elevation both partially abut or are obscured by neighboring buildings and asphalt parking lots.

The primary west elevation has three bays divided by brick pilasters that extend to the sixth floor, where they are capped by ornamental brick brackets and dentil molding below the roofline, culminating in a simple metal-topped parapet.<sup>1</sup> The two northern bays of the west façade are filled with modern storefront windows, consisting of metal mullions and aluminum siding over transoms, likely dating to the University of Buffalo's tenancy c.1971. Below each storefront window there is a brick spandrel panel with two metal vent covers from the

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<sup>1</sup> Originally the building had a wide projecting cornice, which, like many cornices in the city, was removed in the 1960s when the University of Buffalo Employment Opportunity Center made some updates to the building.

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basement. The southern bay consists of two glass double doors flanking a fixed glass panel below a transom, which is divided into three by metal mullions. On the second through fifth floors, each bay is filled with four aluminum double-hung windows that appear to be in good condition. The second story windows have stone sills and are flush with the pilasters. The windows above the second floor have thin metal sills and the spandrel panels above the second floor are recessed from the pilasters and have simple turned brick headers.

The north elevation on Mohawk Street consists of eight bays that are identical to the bays on the west facade above the first floor. At ground level, due to the slope of the land, the westernmost bay has a storefront window and aluminum transom. The other ground level bays are filled with four one-over-one windows aligned to the spandrel panels, with recessed brick infill below. The historic photograph shows that there were originally small windows at the sidewalk level, consisting of three windows divided by mullions that have been filled in with brick. This brickwork, however, is a near seamless match to the historic masonry of the upper portions of the building. The second floor of the north elevation contains the only bays of original wood one-over-one windows on the primary and secondary elevations, with the rest containing the aluminum one-over-one replacements. The ground floor of the easternmost bay of the north elevation consists of two modern aluminum entry doors that lead to a stairwell and a wheelchair elevator.

The south elevation consists of painted brick with windows on the second through sixth floors. There are four bays of two-over-two windows, which are paired on the third floor, before a blank bay for the elevator shaft, then two more bays of two-over-two windows. The building extends southward at a ninety-degree angle, and on the southern portion of this wing there are six bays of mostly single three-over-three windows, with several one-over-one windows as well.

On the east elevation, only the top three floors are visible above the adjacent four-story building. Standing on the eastern sidewalk of Ellicott Street (nearly a block away), the only visible portion of this elevation consists of unpainted brick and only two nine-light windows are visible on the sixth floor. There are three other window openings on this elevation, with two bays of paired two-over-two windows on the fourth floor, and one bay of paired two-over-two windows on the fifth floor. All of the windows are on the southern-half of the elevation. The flat roof has a small penthouse housing the elevator machinery located about a bay width from the eastern end.

#### Interior:

The interior of the Sinclair, Rooney & Co. building is currently built out to office building specifications, with some medical offices on the first floor related to the University at Buffalo EOC program. The first floor is oriented along a corridor that begins in the third bay and runs past the elevator before crossing north-south to a hallway that goes from the northern elevation to the southern L-wing. Every floor above the first floor has a large open concept, where the elevators open up to a small lobby that connects either to a large open bullpen for cubicles with offices around it, or to wide hallways that go to separate, smaller, open spaces.

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The elevator is located halfway along the building's east-west axis and travels to all floors, and the main staircase, which has wrought iron railings and marble treads, is located at the junction of the main building and the L-wing at the southeast corner of the building. A non-original staircase, likely built in the 1970s, was carved out of the northeastern corner of the building using concrete blocks and has simple metal pipe railings.

On most floors, the original concrete columns remain exposed and are rectangular with chamfered corners and stepped bases that get narrower with each floor, with most ceilings being exposed showing the concrete ceiling beams. There is carpeting throughout the building, with linoleum tiling in the elevator lobbies and in some of the laboratories in the rear L-wing.

The front doors lead into an enclosed modern entryway. The ceiling rises fifteen feet in height above suspended acoustic tile, and non-original partitions create a hallway that runs from the main entry eastward through most of the length of the building. To the north of this hallway, a large front office space occupies the other two bays and leads to several medical offices toward the rear (east) end of the building. The main east-west hallway terminates at a north-south corridor that connects to the aforementioned medical offices to the north and to some smaller offices in the southern L-wing.

The second and third floors are largely the same, with the majority of the interior consisting of open spaces without internal divisions as well as some offices. The second and third floors have long central corridors, with seven non-historic offices (built in the 1970s) on the northern end with full height ceilings. The rest of these floors are built out with half-height wall partitions that create open offices and do not obstruct the columns or ceiling. In the southeastern portion of the building, both have two larger rooms, with exposed columns and twelve-and-a-half-foot ceilings, which is the height of all original ceilings above the first floor.

The fourth floor is built out differently than the rest of the floors, with a large center, and smaller offices around the perimeter. In the middle of the floor are cubicles; columns have been built out with drywall, and there is drop ceiling throughout the floor, including in the offices.

The fifth floor has a layout similar to the second and third floors, but with much larger offices on the northern end, and a bigger central corridor. At the rear of the fifth floor are two laboratories, built out in a similar fashion as the rest of the building, but with sinks and gas valves along the rear wall.

The sixth floor is similar to the fifth floor, with larger offices than on the floors below and a laboratory in the southeastern corner just above the one on the fifth floor, containing full height exposed ceiling and columns, and tile floors. These laboratories have three-over-three double hung windows. The western end of the sixth floor has a large open space with full-height ceiling and exposed columns; this is the closest representation of the building's original configuration of any floor, as this floor was used for manufacturing and would have incorporated an open floor plate.

The unfinished basement is used for storage and includes a combination of wood floors and linoleum tile. There are sidewalk vaults at the northern and western portions of the basement, with a large boiler occupying most of

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the north and northeastern section of the basement. Along the northern wall, where there were previously windows along the sidewalk, it is bricked in, with large venting units occupying much of the vault space. A large room at the eastern end has sanitary tile, drop ceiling, and florescent lighting, quite unlike the rest of the unfinished basement.

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### 8. Statement of Significance

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#### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

#### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location
- C** a birthplace or grave
- D** a cemetery
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

#### Areas of Significance:

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

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#### Period of Significance:

1909-1967

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#### Significant Dates:

1909; 1928; 1966

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#### Significant Person:

N/A

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#### Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

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#### Architect/Builder:

Esenwein & Johnson (1909)

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#### Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance related to these criteria, 1909-1967, encompasses the use and ownership of the building by two major companies. The period of significance begins with the construction of the building in 1909 for the Sinclair, Rooney & Co., a prominent hat manufacturer, and closes in 1967 when the Sperry-Rand Company, a notable typewriter and office products maker, vacated the building. This era corresponds to all major architectural alterations to the building, and encompasses the era when the building was a significant commercial building related to several large and prominent companies in Buffalo.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) N/A**

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Sinclair, Rooney & Co Building is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the area of Commerce for its association with Sinclair, Rooney, & Co., wholesale milliners, and later with the Remington-Rand Corporation, a well-known office technologies company. Constructed in 1909, it was one of several buildings, including other wholesale milliners located nearby, designed to be flexible for the changing needs of light-industrial work in downtown Buffalo. The company vacated the building in 1926 and was replaced in 1928 by Remington Rand, Inc., sellers of office supply and technology. The building is additionally significant at the local level under criterion C in the area of Architecture as an example of Commercial Style architecture in Western New York, exemplifying the evolution of tall building designs at the start of the twentieth century. The architectural firm Esenwein & Johnson designed the building, blending traditional features, like a tripartite façade, with more modern steel and concrete construction. The building's design reflects not only the changing designs in commercial and industrial architecture at the turn of the twentieth century, but its use by a light-industry company like Sinclair, Rooney, & Co. and, later, with its conversion to office space by Remington Rand, Inc. The period of significance related to these criteria is 1909-1967, beginning with the construction of the building and ending with the exit of the Sperry-Rand Company. This period of significance includes 1949, 1964, and 1966, dates of remodeling that did not compromise the integrity of the original design.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building, located at 465 Washington Street in Buffalo, New York, is a good example of an early twentieth century commercial building, with ties to two prominent companies in Buffalo. The building is locally significant under Criterion A in Commerce for its association with the Sinclair, Rooney & Co. wholesale milliner and the Remington-Rand Corporation. Taking full advantage of the large open floor plates available to them due to its steel and concrete frame, Sinclair, Rooney & Co. had four floors of storage and manufacturing space in addition to their company offices and showrooms in the building. The company commissioned the building at 465 Washington Street in 1909, and was one of several wholesale milliners to locate on Washington Street during a period in which this area of downtown developed larger commercial and light industrial interests. The company exited the building in 1926, and Remington Rand, Inc., a nationally known office supply and technology company, moved into the building two years later. Remington Rand (Sperry Rand after 1955) had offices in the building until 1968, during which time the company engaged in a diverse production of wartime supplies, office equipment, small home electronics, and computers. Through its association with these two companies, the Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building represents the patterns of Buffalo's downtown commercial landscape and the changing economy in the twentieth century.

The Sinclair, Rooney, & Co. Building is also locally significant under Criterion C in Architecture as an example of Commercial Style architecture in Western New York. It exemplifies the evolution of tall building design in America at the turn of the century, as downtown districts were increasingly populated with larger commercial buildings. While retaining a traditional tripartite façade design, the Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building (1909-



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1911) is less ornate than some of Buffalo's other taller commercial buildings and constructed with a steel and concrete frame that allowed for large open workspaces, reflecting its initial use as a manufacturing facility. It is additionally significant as a work of Esenwein & Johnson, a prominent architectural firm in Western New York between 1897 and 1942.

The Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building demonstrates the growth of Buffalo's downtown from a small inland port to a large industrial and commercial center at the start of the twentieth century. Prior to the development of rail, many of Buffalo's residential neighborhoods were located around Swan Street, with much of the commercial hubs located near Seneca and Main streets, the harbor, and the Buffalo River. Rail infrastructure rapidly increased the industrialization of Seneca and Swan streets, pushing middle-class residential construction up into the area around West Village and prompting the shift of Buffalo's main commercial stretches north as well.<sup>2</sup>

Washington Street, like Swan and Seneca to the south, increasingly became more commercial, and by 1910 these streets along the periphery of the downtown business district saw the construction of larger buildings similar to those already built along Main, Pearl, and Delaware. On Swan Street, the five-story Sibley & Holmwood Candy Factory (NR 2014), built in 1896, stood just blocks from the five-story Weed Wholesale building, built in 1905, and, like 495 Washington Street, also designed by Esenwein & Johnson. Michigan Avenue, Elm and Oak Streets, and Washington Avenue, already home to smaller commercial and industrial interests (such as the 1878 three-story E.M. Hager & Sons Lumber Planing Mill, listed on the National Register in 2013), saw the construction of larger industrial buildings like the six-story steel and concrete Alling and Cory Company building (NR 2010) built between 1910 and 1911 and the six story brick-clad steel frame Gutman building at 17-21 Elm Street, constructed in 1909 (NRE).

### **Criterion A: Commerce**

The Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building demonstrates the growth of two companies that operated out of the building for the first fifty-years of its use but also shows the development of downtown Buffalo, from small commercial interests to the creation of distinct manufacturing districts, up through the primary use of downtown buildings for finance and office buildings.

### **Sinclair, Rooney & Co. and Buffalo's Wholesale Millinery District**

In 1901, John Sinclair and Edward A. Rooney formed a company for manufacturing and importing millinery and straw goods. They operated from offices at a five-story commercial building located at 34-38 E. Eagle Street and had a factory at 361-365 Washington Street.<sup>3</sup> In 1909, the company commissioned Esenwein & Johnson for the construction of a six-story fireproof building two blocks north of the factory, at 465 Washington

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<sup>2</sup> Mark O'Connor, "The Joseph P. Ellicott Historic District Report," November 8, 1979, Buffalo Landmark and Preservation Board, 2, 5

<sup>3</sup> The building at 36-38 Eagle was constructed between 1889 and 1899.

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Street.<sup>4</sup> The structure cost Sinclair and Rooney \$140,000 and was built by Joseph Metz & Sons Contractors.<sup>5</sup> Sinclair, Rooney & Co. occupied the building until 1926.

The steel frame of the new building provided an open floor plan and allowed for large windows that offered ample natural light to the interior. These features were well suited to the Sinclair, Rooney & Co., as it moved its entire operation to the site. The flexible layout facilitated an array of varying uses related to the business, including office space, workspace, and display areas. Hat manufacturing often consisted of open rooms filled with worktables, which is likely how the company arranged the third through sixth floors during its style workshops. A variance given to the company to operate its upper floors without proper fire escape systems offers an overview of the buildings usage floor by floor. In his report the commissioner stated: “it appears that the building is of fireproof construction, six stories high... occupancy about 45 persons employed above the ground floor, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors – sales rooms, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors – storage, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> floors – workrooms.”<sup>6</sup> This description offers a clear division of space within the building at 495 Washington Street, highlighting the variety of tasks and functions conducted in the building, as well as a general picture of the millinery work that occurred within the premises.

The location of Sinclair, Rooney & Co.’s building at 465 Washington Street was not random; the year after construction on the building started, all of Buffalo’s wholesale milliners operated within a few of blocks, creating a sort of “hat district.” While Buffalo’s city directory listed dozens of independent milliners, larger wholesale millineries were uncommon at the turn of the century. Independent milliners worked in neighborhoods across the city, likely serving a local clientele. In contrast, emerging wholesale milliners operated with a different marketing scheme, positioning themselves as destinations in the city. It is not surprising then, that they located close to the J.N. Adam & Co. and William Hengerer Co. department stores and other Main Street fashion outlets.

Sinclair, Rooney & Co. was one of several wholesale milliners in Buffalo that clustered on Washington Street. In 1907, six wholesale milliners were located on Washington, Mohawk, Eagle and Builders Exchange Streets. Three years later, seven of the city’s eight wholesale milliners were located on Washington Street, on a stretch extending just south of and north of Mohawk Street. The outlier occupied the same address on Mohawk Street that he had in 1907, putting all of these millineries within a distance of approximately 500 feet of one another.<sup>7</sup> In 1919, Buffalo’s wholesale millinery industry consisted of four of the same companies present in 1910 joined by eight others. The vast majority was still located within a tenth of a mile of one another on Washington Street, flanking Mohawk. Only Edward Popper was located a mile away, at 490 Genesee Street (where he and his son remained in business until at least 1935).

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<sup>4</sup> Sinclair retained the firm to design a house for his family the same year.

<sup>5</sup> “What Builders are Doing,” *The Building Age* 32. (1910): 35, <https://books.google.com>.; “New Industrial Plants,” *The Engineering Record: Building Record and Sanitary Engineer* 59 (1909): 528. <https://books.google.com>.

<sup>6</sup> “Meeting of February 20<sup>th</sup>,” *The Bulletin* 2, no. 1-12 (1916-1917): 110. <https://books.google.com>.

<sup>7</sup> *The Buffalo City Directory* (Buffalo: Courier Company, 1910), 1526.

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In fact, the “hat district” was part and parcel of broader land use changes and the early emergence of “downtown” as a commercial center.<sup>8</sup> The turn of the century saw a building boom in downtown Buffalo, as a more commercial focus replaced the historic mixed-use neighborhoods. Over a dozen fireproof buildings were constructed on or near the five-block stretch on Washington Street between South Division and Huron Streets between 1899 and 1914.<sup>9</sup> The density and square footage of the area increased as many new buildings were taller than their predecessors and featured larger footprints. For instance, William Hengerer’s new department store extended the depth of the block from Main Street to Washington Street; the single nine-story building replaced a complex of four and five story buildings that housed the Tift House’s retail stores and hotel. Additionally, the six-story wholesale millinery building at 499 Washington Street replaced a three-story dwelling, and what had been a vacant area of the parcel behind the dwelling was filled by the National Telephone Company in 1904. These and other changes over this first decade and a half of the twentieth century transformed the area into a commercial and light-manufacturing district.<sup>10</sup>

Sinclair, Rooney & Co. was not only located amidst the cluster of wholesale milliners in Buffalo; the company became a lead figure in the rise of wholesale millinery in the region, both through its own business activities and through its promotion of the industry as a whole. Sinclair and Rooney strategically marketed to a middle-ground clientele that valued handmade products but sought a lower price point. Early advertisements boasted the “latest improved technology,” which allowed the company to offer “the best” medium priced, handmade hats.<sup>11</sup> In addition to its niche market, the company boasted ties to Paris, a global fashion epicenter, as it had offices at 21 Rue Del’Echiquier in Paris and reported buying trips in *The Illustrated Milliner*, a national trade publication.<sup>12</sup>

With these selling points, Sinclair and Rooney endeavored to capture a widespread clientele beyond Buffalo. From the start of their enterprise, they promoted the company as a regional hub, citing Buffalo’s central location and easy access from nearby states: “We are in the heart of our territory and milliners can visit the market often at a low cost...Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and Canada. If you are in this territory, you should deal with us.”<sup>13</sup>

Yet, their ambitions did not end with self-promotion. Sinclair, Rooney & Co. took a leading role in efforts to increase the professionalism and national standing of the millinery trade in Buffalo. In November 1908, Sinclair, Rooney & Co. joined Gerber, Nott & Co., another prosperous Buffalo firm, to co-host the sixteenth semi-annual convention of the Millinery Jobbers Association.<sup>14</sup> The conference brought representatives from

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<sup>8</sup> For more about the development of downtown, see Kerry Traynor, *The Calumet Building National Register of Historic Places Nomination*, 2010, and Mark Goldman, *City on the Edge*, (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2007).

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix for list.

<sup>10</sup> There were several other wholesaling operations in the area as well.

<sup>11</sup> George P. Baldwin, “Advertisement,” *The Illustrated Milliner*, Feb 3, Vol. 2 1902, 22. Accessed 1/15/2015 via books.google.com.

<sup>12</sup> *The Illustrated Milliner*, Vol. 3, 1902, 48. Accessed 1/15/2015 via books.google.com.

<sup>13</sup> *The Illustrated Millinery*, Vol. 2, 1902, 22. Accessed 1/15/2015 via books.google.com.

<sup>14</sup> Henry C. Gerber was Vice-President and Dean R. Nott served as Secretary and Treasurer of Sinclair, Rooney & Co. in 1902 (*Illustrated Milliner* 1902-2, and March 1902 p2 ad). By 1907, they had established their own business, Gerber & Nott Co., at 492-

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Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City, Omaha, Cincinnati, Columbus, Denver, Fort Wayne, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, St. Joseph, St. Paul, Louisville, Minneapolis, Des Moines, Lincoln, Buffalo, Boston, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Pittsburg, New York City, Rochester, Utica, Syracuse, and Toledo. During a welcome address, Sinclair commended the organization for “elevating the standards of business,” and he expressed his desires for a similar organization to focus on “the East” and eventually, one of national scope that would “benefit the entire trade of the country.”<sup>15</sup> On behalf of the mayor, Sinclair presented the convention with a golden key to the city, and over three days, conference goers engaged in business meetings, recognized standout members at a formal banquet, and enjoyed a special visit to Niagara Falls. Among the final orders of business during the conference was a motion to authorize a committee to prepare plans for an Eastern organization, a step forward for Sinclair’s visions of strengthening the millinery industry in Buffalo and the surrounding region.<sup>16</sup>

As Sinclair, Rooney, and Co. became more reputable, and further evidencing its drive to make Buffalo a millinery hub, the company hosted biennial style workshops for milliners from across the country. The influx of building occupants during these workshops attracted the attention of building inspectors, who requested in 1920 that Sinclair, Rooney & Co. add additional egresses from the building and the roof to accommodate the increase of people:

*“From January 15<sup>th</sup> to February 15<sup>th</sup> and from July 15<sup>th</sup> to September 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, there is an influx of milliners from different stores throughout the country who come here to learn the styles. During this time, the occupancy of the fourth floor has reached as high as 81. Then it reduced until no employees are on this floor.”<sup>17</sup>*

The company appealed the request, suggesting that, instead, the crowd be dispersed over the fourth and fifth floors. The appeal argued that safety regulations would have forced the company to spend approximately six-hundred dollars on emergency exits on every floor for a workforce that was present oftentimes no more than two weeks out of the year. As a solution the Industrial Board allowed work to continue so long as no more than seventy-one people be working on the upper floors at a time.<sup>18</sup>

In 1927, the Sinclair, Rooney, & Co. coordinated the second annual style show with millinery wholesalers Gerber, Nott & Co. and Siegel Millinery Co. and department stores J.N. Adam & Co., Adam, Meldrum & Anderson, E.W. Edwards & Son, and Hens & Kelly.<sup>19</sup> The event attracted participants from eight states and Ontario and was a huge success, proving that Buffalo’s wholesale territory had “expanded tremendously within the past year,” an encouraging sign that Buffalo was poised to become “the outstanding millinery center between New York and Chicago.”<sup>20</sup>

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496 Washington Street. For a report of the convention, see “The Millinery Jobbers’ Association,” *The Illustrated Milliner* vol. 9 (1908), 51-62.

<sup>15</sup> “The Millinery Jobbers’ Association,” 51.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>17</sup> *Industrial Bulletin* (Albany: New York State Department of Labor, 1921), 92.

<sup>18</sup> “To Provide Legal Means of Exit,” *The Monitor* 8, no 3 (1921): 12. Accessed 1/15/2015 via books.google.com.nash

<sup>19</sup> “Style Show Brings Plans to Make Buffalo Big Millinery Center,” *Buffalo Courier-Express*, February 12, 1927: 8.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

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The success of Sinclair, Rooney, & Co. at organizing such massive trade shows underlies the popularity of millinery work in the early decades of the twentieth century. Millinery work, especially for women, became a popular vocation. From a 1917 study Mary Van Kleeck asserts that “The median actual earnings of both week workers and piece workers amounted to \$9.69.”<sup>21</sup> Millinery work, which could provide a reasonable wage, was nonetheless an irregular and highly seasonal form of employment with fewer than 10 percent of the people (primarily women) finding themselves employed more than forty-eight weeks in a year.<sup>22</sup> Because finding regular employment was often difficult, women would frequently work from home, embroidering their own hats for sale in the neighborhood. Alternately, if a girl was paid by the hat, she might take home a bundle of material and return in the morning with the finished products.<sup>23</sup> In addition to allowing girls to take work home, wholesale milliners such as Sinclair, Rooney, & Co. frequently utilized an assembly line production methodology in order to produce bountiful quantities of the patterned hats that were in style for that season.<sup>24</sup> The irregularity, which became a common feature of a milliner’s life, extended up to the highest echelons of the trade itself. With fashion dictating the production of a firm potentially bi-yearly many millinery establishments were little more than an ill-judged season or two away from bankruptcy, a fate which overtook Sinclair, Rooney, & Co. in the spring of 1927.

Despite the success of Buffalo millinerries as a whole, Sinclair, Rooney & Company was forced into involuntary bankruptcy by a federal judge on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1927, just a month after hosting the style show. The company, which had debts of over nearly \$10,000 to several New York City firms, was ordered to begin liquidation of its nearly \$204,000 in assets immediately.<sup>25</sup> On May 18<sup>th</sup>, an advertisement in the Buffalo Evening News read: “BANKRUPT SALE: Entire Stock of Wholesale Firm of Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Millinery,” noting that the company’s hat stock would be liquidated, as well as the building’s fixtures, counters, typewriters and other office equipment.<sup>26</sup>

### **Remington Rand/ Sperry Rand Company**

The Remington Rand Corporation purchased the Sinclair, Rooney & Co. building on April 10, 1928, just a year after the company was forced into bankruptcy by the courts. The company, headquartered in New York City, planned to remodel the building to house several branches of its sales and advertising departments, with several executive offices on the upper floors, and showrooms on the first.<sup>27</sup> James H. Rand Jr. formed the Rand Kardex Company in 1915, when his father, inventor of the Rand Typewriter, did not have enough faith in his “Kardex”

<sup>21</sup> Mary Van Kleeck, *A Seasonal Industry A Study of the Millinery Trade in New York* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1917), 110.

<sup>22</sup> Van Kleeck, 81.

<sup>23</sup> Van Kleeck, 142.

<sup>24</sup> Styles ranged wildly between 1900 and 1920. Fashionable hats could feature everything from ribbon and bows to stuffed quail and owls depending on the whims of fashionable taste that spring or fall.

<sup>25</sup> “Milliners’ Receiver: Charles B. Smith to Conduct Business to Sinclair-Rooney,” *Buffalo Evening News*, April, 2, 1927, 25. Accessed 6/15/25 via FultonHistory.com.

<sup>26</sup> *Buffalo Evening News*, May 18, 1927, 6. Accessed 6/15/2015 via FultonHistory.com

<sup>27</sup> “Remington-Rand, Inc., Buys Sinclair-Rooney Building,” *Buffalo Courier-Express*, April 10, 1928.

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system of filing records to absorb it as part of his own Rand Ledger Co. of North Tonawanda.<sup>28</sup> In 1927, J.H. Rand Jr. not only bought out his father's company, but also merged with the Dalton Adding Machine company, the Baker-Vawter Company, Kalamazoo Loose Leaf company, and Powers Accounting Machine Company to form the largest manufacturer of office appliances in the world.<sup>29</sup>

Remington Rand had offices in the Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building between 1928 and 1967.<sup>30</sup> Made of the newly conglomerated Remington Typewriter Company and Rand Kardex Corporation, Remington Rand diversified its products in the mid-1930s, breaking into the market of small electrical appliances, including the first hand-held electric razor. Though it struggled during the Great Depression, with profits dropping from \$9.7 million in 1930 to just \$4.9 million in 1940, the company employed eleven thousand people in over 3.8 million square feet of manufacturing space in 1932.<sup>31</sup> The company became involved in war-related production during World War II, with a factory in Elmira, New York from 1942 to 1945 where they manufactured Norden bombsites and M1911A1 .45 caliber semi-automatic pistols.<sup>32</sup> In addition to the Elmira factory, the company operated manufacturing facilities in Lion and Syracuse, as well as a factory in North Tonawanda that was recently converted to loft apartments.

Remington Rand's business model was based on providing comprehensive solutions to suit each customer's needs, offering filing and adding machines, but its largest product was the typewriter. In 1941, it sold 235,755 desktop typewriters, a full third of all typewriters sold in the United States that year.<sup>33</sup> From 1927 through 1950, Remington Rand's typewriter sales set it apart from its two main competitors in office supplies, Burroughs and the International Business Machine Company (IBM), but that success may have created a dependence on typewriter sales that hindered it in the development of more advanced office equipment, most notably, the computer.<sup>34</sup>

In the 1950s, Remington Rand acquired the Eckert-Mauchly Computer Corporation and Engineering Research Associates, "two of the nation's pioneering electronic data processing companies," and built the first commercial computer system.<sup>35</sup> By 1950, the company had 29,209 employees, and in 1955, the Sperry Corporation and Remington Rand merged, forming the Sperry Rand Corporation. At the time, the Sperry Corporation was a major producer of "electro-mechanical and hydraulic devices, electronic instrumentation, and

<sup>28</sup> "J.H. Rand, Co-Founder of Firm, Dies at 81," *Buffalo Courier-Express*, June 5, 1968.

<sup>29</sup> "Building Purchased by Remington-Rand," *Buffalo Evening News*, April 9, 1928.

<sup>30</sup> A merger between Remington Rand and the Sperry Gyroscope Company in 1955 formed the Sperry Rand Corporation.

<sup>31</sup> James W. Cortada, *Before the Computer: IBM, NCR, Burroughs, & Remington Rand & the Industry they Created 1865-1956* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 118.

<sup>32</sup> "Remington Rand Plant," Southside High School Class of 1958, Memories of Southside, 1997-2013. Accessed 1/25/15 via <http://www.shs58.org/burhyte/remington-rand.html>.

<sup>33</sup> Cortada, 217

<sup>34</sup> Cortada, 235.

<sup>35</sup> Michael H. Nash, "Historical Note," *Sperry Rand Corporation, Remington Rand Division Records, Subgroup III. Advertising and Sales Promotion Department*. (Hagley Museum and Library; 1986). Accessed 1/15/2015 via books.google.com.

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gyroscopes.”<sup>36</sup> The new company featured former Remington Rand president James Rand and General Douglas McArthur as vice-chairs of the company’s board, but the diversity of Sperry-Rand’s product line divided its attention from computer development.<sup>37</sup> While the profits for Sperry Rand’s Univac computer plateaued around \$700-800 million near the end of the 1950s, Burroughs and IBM invested further in their computer divisions, and by the end of the 1960s, the Sperry Corporation only captured 10 percent of the computer market.<sup>38</sup>

The Remington Rand Division of the Sperry Rand Corporation continued to run out of offices in the Sinclair, Rooney, & Co. Building until 1967, the same year that the company became engaged in a legal battle with Honeywell over copyright issues concerning early computer development.<sup>39</sup> In 1986, Sperry Rand was acquired by the Burroughs Corporation, who renamed the enterprise Unisys.

While successive mergers and acquisitions spurred a broad reach of offices and production centers across the United States and Europe, the Remington Rand Corporation and Sperry Rand maintained a foothold in Western New York for over seven decades. In 1902, the company erected a seven-story brick building in Syracuse, New York that was acquired by Syracuse University in 1950, and during approximately the same time that it used the Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building for offices in Buffalo, it also ran a manufacturing operation in North Tonawanda.<sup>40</sup>

### **Criterion C: Architecture**

The Sinclair, Rooney, & Co. Building exemplifies the evolution of tall building design in America at the turn of the century, as downtown districts were increasingly populated with larger commercial buildings. In line with other development in and around Buffalo’s downtown, the Sinclair, Rooney & Co. building balances elements of the commercial style (tripartite design, large storefronts, and ornamental brick cladding) with features that suite its light-industrial use, including steel and concrete construction and an open floor plate. It has additional significance for being designed by Esenwein & Johnson, a prominent architectural firm in Western New York between 1897 and 1942.

### **Esenwein & Johnson**

Esenwein & Johnson was one of Buffalo’s premier architectural firms at the turn of the twentieth century. German-born August C. Esenwein and New Yorker James A. Johnson partnered in 1897, and the firm secured

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<sup>36</sup> “Sperry Rand Corporation,” Lehman Brothers Collection, Harvard Business School.

[http://www.library.hbs.edu/hc/lehman/company.html?company=sperry\\_rand\\_corporation](http://www.library.hbs.edu/hc/lehman/company.html?company=sperry_rand_corporation)

<sup>37</sup> Cortada, 235.

<sup>38</sup> Nash, “Historical Note.”

<sup>39</sup> Bruce H. Bruemmer, “Honeywell vs. Sperry Rand Records Finding Aid,” Charles Babbage Institute Center for the History of Information Technology, March 1991. Accessed 1/25/15 via <http://special.lib.umn.edu/findaid/xml/cbi00001.xml>.

<sup>40</sup> Remington Rand, Syracuse University Buildings, [archives.syr.edu/buildings/remington.html](http://archives.syr.edu/buildings/remington.html); Herschell-Spillman Motor Complex National Register Form.

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over one thousand commissions during its existence, showcasing its proficiency in a diverse range of building types and architectural styles.<sup>41</sup>

Esenwein attended the Stuttgart Polytechnic University and worked in a Parisian architect's office before immigrating to Buffalo in 1880. After a brief stint working as a civil engineer for the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad, he left to pursue an architectural career. During his years of independent practice, Esenwein designed the Italian Renaissance style Buffalo Music Hall (1882-1883), the Romanesque German-American Brewery & Hall (1893 and 1895), and the Queen Anne style Alfred Schoellkopf Residence (1895-1896).<sup>42</sup> He also won a competition to design the Temple of Music for Buffalo's 1901 Pan American Exposition.<sup>43</sup>

Prior to joining Esenwein, Johnson worked with several notable New York architectural firms, including McKim, Mead and White, and Richard Morris Hunt, where he gained a strong background in Neoclassical styles. In Buffalo, he worked briefly with James H. Marling (1892-1895) and William H. Boughton (1895-1897), designing Colonial Revival residential buildings, before partnering with Esenwein in 1897.<sup>44</sup>

Over the course of their career together, Esenwein and Johnson became a premier architectural firm in Western New York. Currently, in 2015, the firm has over a dozen buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, a testament to their outstanding skill and the impact that they had on the built environment of the region. Esenwein & Johnson designed a variety of building types—including public buildings, commercial structures, and residences—and drew from a diverse range of stylistic references, creating such notable projects as the Mayer & Well commercial building (1898-1899), the Hotel Touraine (1901-1902), Lafayette High School (1901, NR 1980), the Providence Retreat asylum (1905-1908), the original Hotel Statler (1905-1906), the Calumet Building (1906, NR 2010), the Automobile Club of Buffalo (1910-1911, NR 2012), and the M. Wile & Company Factory Building (1924, NR 2000). Esenwein & Johnson also designed a number of private residences, including a house for John Sinclair, who commissioned the firm for his home at the same time he hired them to design the Sinclair, Rooney, & Co. Building. The house is part of the National Register listed Parkside East Historic District (NR 1986).

As construction technology advanced during their first two decades in business, Esenwein & Johnson embraced new construction methods and experimented with various ornamentation schemes. Steel and concrete structures allowed architects an unprecedented freedom in façade design, and as they embraced these technologies,

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<sup>41</sup> The Calumet Building NR; Upon Esenwein's death, Frank B. Kelly joined Johnson and they continued as Esenwein & Johnson. See "Bios: Esenwein & Johnson," <http://buffaloah.com/a/archs/ej/ej2.html> :

<sup>42</sup> Martin Wachaldo, "Work Completed Prior to Partnership," *Art Nouveau and Other Expressions: Rediscovering the Architecture of Esenwein & Johnson*, Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society, 2007.

[http://www.buffalohistory.org/Explore/Exhibits/virtual\\_exhibits/esenwein\\_johnson/esenwein\\_before.htm](http://www.buffalohistory.org/Explore/Exhibits/virtual_exhibits/esenwein_johnson/esenwein_before.htm)

<sup>43</sup> "The Temple of Music," Pan-American Exposition of 1901, University at Buffalo Libraries, <http://library.buffalo.edu/pan-am/exposition/music/templetex.html>.

<sup>44</sup> Wachaldo, "Work Completed Prior to Partnership," *Art Nouveau and Other Expressions*, [http://www.buffalohistory.org/Explore/Exhibits/virtual\\_exhibits/esenwein\\_johnson/johnson\\_before.htm](http://www.buffalohistory.org/Explore/Exhibits/virtual_exhibits/esenwein_johnson/johnson_before.htm)



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Esenwein & Johnson translated their proficiency in historical styles for modern structures. In commercial buildings such as the Calumet Building (1906, NR 2010), the Ansonia Building (1906), and the Root Building (1912), Esenwein & Johnson composed Art Nouveau designs using terra-cotta facades that expressed the steel skeleton beneath. Their design for the Buffalo Orphan Asylum (later McKinley Vocational School, 1908-1911) expanded beyond the traditional use of Neoclassical forms for public buildings; they “applied the factory aesthetic to a public institution,” featuring an exposed concrete structure, flat roofs and multi-pane windows.<sup>45</sup>

The Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building (1909) expresses a more utilitarian appearance compared to the firm’s more ornate historical ornamentation common to commercial buildings. In their earlier brick-clad, steel-framed Mayer & Weill Building (1898-1899), the “American Renaissance [went] vertical,” with three distinct sections of window fenestration and terra cotta details that stretched traditional ornamentation onto a seven-story frame.<sup>46</sup> Esenwein & Johnson departed from this precedent with the design for Sinclair, Rooney & Company building. Though many commercial buildings were becoming less ornamental as they grew taller, as the ornamentation fought with the verticality of the structure, their choice of a utilitarian design was likely due more to its use as a manufacturing building. While working from a similar baseline for the Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building—a steel-framed, brick-clad building—the architects shed heavy historical details in favor of a simplified, clean—and in retrospect—utilitarian, more industrial, aesthetic. Though more streamlined than other commercial styles, the building did not abandon all ornament, retaining the traditional tripartite commercial style, detailing around the uppermost bay, and originally, a wide projecting flat cornice.

## **Ornamented Steel Construction**

Approaching the turn of the century, as partial steel framing gave way to structures with entirely fireproof steel frames and curtain walls, buildings could be taller than ever before. Another technological advancement, the passenger elevator, solved the practical issue of getting rents beyond the fifth floor.<sup>47</sup> Since steel skeletons lack the inflection of masonry structures, this technology provided a new opportunity for façade design. While façades of masonry buildings are load bearing and necessarily functional, curtain walls are independent of the structure, freed from the restraints embodied in historical building design.

The Chicago Fire of 1871 and its aftermath provided peculiar impetus to builders in Chicago to rebuild the city with fireproof structures. In addition, rising property values added the economic appeal of taller buildings, which offered more square footage and rentable space per parcel, and patrons increasingly demanded larger and more flexible workspaces.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Wachaldo, “Factory Aesthetic,” *Art Nouveau and Other Expressions*, BECHS, 2007, [http://www.buffalohistory.org/Explore/Exhibits/virtual\\_exhibits/esenwein\\_johnson/factory\\_aesthetic.htm](http://www.buffalohistory.org/Explore/Exhibits/virtual_exhibits/esenwein_johnson/factory_aesthetic.htm).

<sup>46</sup> Martin Wachaldo, “Early Buildings,” Buffalo as an Architectural Museum, <http://www.buffaloah.com/a/archs/ej/bechs/1/source/22.html>.

<sup>47</sup> Carter Wiseman, *Twentieth Century American Architecture: The Buildings and Their Makers*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), 51.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

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The Commercial Style is a common term for the aesthetic that characterized much of early skyscraper design with steel and beam construction, large storefront windows, classical detailing, decorative cornices, and flat roofs. Some of the most prominent architects of the era—William Jenney, Sullivan & Adler, and Burnham & Root—worked in Chicago and developed a particular brand of design that became synonymous with that city. In addition to the features of other Commercial Style buildings, the Chicago School was known for its distinctive windows, composed of two narrow casements flanking a larger central pane.

Early experimenters in steel framing continued to rely on historical ornamentation, which stretched uneasily to new proportions. Although they signaled a new era in American architecture, tall buildings also posed an artistic challenge, requiring a new aesthetic mode than their load bearing, shorter predecessors.<sup>49</sup> Chicago based designer William Le Baron Jenney, who was trained as an engineer, is credited with designing the first all metal frame building, the Home Insurance Building (1885), but despite its engineering achievement, the building remains “blocky and ill-proportioned [and] marred by an awkward overlay of ornament.”<sup>50</sup> By contrast, Adler & Sullivan’s Wainwright Building, completed in St. Louis in 1891, represents an early departure from overreliance upon historical detail for tall buildings. The ten-story red brick office building maintained the traditional tripartite vertical organization but relied on restrained ornamentation to achieve an unprecedented communication of the structure on the façade.<sup>51</sup> The unbroken piers of the middle seven floors, which frame recessed spandrels between the windows, highlight the verticality of the building. Similarly, Chicago firm Holabird & Roche’s 325 West Jackson Boulevard Building (1904) was a tall building in which “classicism recedes into minimal inflection and detail.”<sup>52</sup>

Esenwein & Johnson employed a similar stylistic toolkit as these firms while working through structural technological transitions in Western New York. They filed plans for the Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building in May 1909, and while it falls within the same period as some of their more ornate designs, the building departs from the firm’s use of terra cotta and represents a more simplified design.<sup>53</sup> The three-part vertical block has storefronts at the ground level, a middle section of five floors, and originally had an ornamental cornice supported by stylized brackets.<sup>54</sup> This tripartite façade design recalls the Neoclassical design of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts but is decidedly utilitarian in its treatment. The unbroken piers and recessed spandrels of the middle section emphasize the verticality of the building and the simplicity of the piers and spandrels concede to the steel structure. Restrained ornamentation supports but does not obscure the steel skeleton. Large window openings, allowed by the structure and echoing the form of early Chicago skyscrapers that devoted greater than

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 45.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 56.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>52</sup> Marvyn Trachtenberg and Isabelle Hyman, *Architecture: From Prehistory to Postmodernity* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, Inc., 2003), 476.

<sup>53</sup> “Esenwein & Johnson: City of Buffalo Building Permits, 1898-1914,” Preservation Coalition of Erie County, <http://buffaloah.com/a/archs/ej/ejpermits/ejper.html>.

<sup>54</sup> Richard Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street* (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2000), 93; historic photo [http://www.buffalohistory.org/Explore/Exhibits/virtual\\_exhibits/esenwein\\_johnson/epilogue.htm](http://www.buffalohistory.org/Explore/Exhibits/virtual_exhibits/esenwein_johnson/epilogue.htm)

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two-thirds of the façade to windows, provide significant natural light to the interior.<sup>55</sup> The removal of the cornice represents the biggest loss of integrity for the building, as the cornice is a major identifiable feature of Commercial Style buildings. Despite the loss, the building still retains nearly all of its original exterior features. The verticality of the building (six stories), the flat roof, steel and beam construction, masonry wall surfaces, and first floor commercial buildings still clearly identify the building as part of the Commercial Style of architecture. Inside, the steel structure provides a floor plan of unprecedented flexibility. Each floor consists of a neutral grid of structural piers and encased beams are visible on the ceiling.

In part because of its simplified detailing, the Sinclair, Rooney & Co. building does not suffer from the awkward and abrupt transition between the base and middle section common to many of the transitional buildings of this era.<sup>56</sup> The strong cohesion between the piers and fenestration of the first floor and the repeated middle floors above prevent the appearance of stacking parts, a criticism of early skyscrapers and a weakness of Esenwein & Johnson's Mayer & Weill Building (1898-1899). The simplified design may be related to the singular ownership and occupation of the building by Sinclair, Rooney & Company and the integration of manufacturing and sales into the same building (in contrast to retail and office, a more common combination for urban commercial buildings). It could also signal the influence of daylight factories, a burgeoning style of industrial design serving manufacturing companies in Buffalo at the time. While daylight factories were generally more austere than commercial buildings, they parallel the negotiation of style and detail alongside transitions in structural technology. As manufacturing and warehouse construction trended towards reinforced concrete and concrete slab floors, designers developed simplified details that expressed the underlying structure. In fact, Esenwein and Johnson were early designers in the style; their 1906 Forsyth Manufacturing Building in Buffalo is an early daylight factory in the city, and their 1924 M. Wile & Company Factory Building is listed on the National Register as an "outstanding example of early twentieth century 'Daylight Factory,'" which represented a "great advance in workplace fireproofing, lighting, and spaciousness."<sup>57</sup>

### **Other Tenants and Building Changes Over Time**

The University at Buffalo occupied the Sinclair, Rooney, & Co. Building for the longest period of time, from c.1971 until 2013. The building housed the University at Buffalo Foundation's Educational Opportunity Center, one of four locations in the city created by a 1966 initiative to provide occupational and college preparatory services to underserved populations.<sup>58</sup> The foundation obtained a building permit in 1971 to convert the use of the building to a Cooperative College Center and, in 1974, remodeled and repaired the second, fifth, and sixth floors, as well as the removal of the cornice. The current wall partitions and carpeting in the building are likely

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<sup>55</sup> Wiseman, *Twentieth Century American Architecture*, 58; John Poppeliers and S. Allen Chambers Jr., *What Style Is It? A Guide to American Architecture* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2003), 103.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>57</sup> Francis Kowsky, M. Wile & Company National Register Nomination.

<sup>58</sup> John DellaContrada, "UB Announces Agreement to Sell Former EOC Building," UB New Center, September 9, 2014, [www.buffalo.edu/news/releases/2014/09/012.html](http://www.buffalo.edu/news/releases/2014/09/012.html).

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from these and subsequent UB renovations, but they are reversible treatments that do not compromise the integrity of the original building design.

Other tenants of the Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building after the period of significance include the Hessett Realty Company in the late 1960s and, more recently, children's healthcare offices and other services.

## **Summary**

The Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building is a good representative example of an early twentieth century light industrial/commercial building. It retains many of the features that defined its use, first as a light manufacturing interest, and then as offices for a large national firm. The original construction highlights the needs of a large millinery firm like Sinclair, Rooney & Co., featuring storefronts and office space, but containing mostly large open floorplates suited to wholesale manufacturing and storage. The design of the building suits its largely industrial needs, with a steel and concrete frame strong enough to provide open workspaces for, at times, a large number of employees, but architects Esenwein & Johnson avoided a pure utilitarian industrial model by including flourishes that matched the nearby commercial and office buildings, including a traditional tripartite design, yellow brick cladding, and a wide projecting cornice. Today, the building reflects not only the development that occurred throughout Buffalo at the turn of the twentieth century but the needs of Sinclair, Rooney & Co. and common design practices for urban industrial facilities as executed by one of the region's premier architecture firms.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark  
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State agency  
 Federal agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 0.27 acres  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>673734</u> Easting	<u>4750432</u> Northing	3	<u>                    </u> Zone	<u>                    </u> Easting	<u>                    </u> Northing
2	<u>                    </u> Zone	<u>                    </u> Easting	<u>                    </u> Northing	4	<u>                    </u> Zone	<u>                    </u> Easting	<u>                    </u> Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary for the nominated property consists entirely of the tax parcel lot number 111.13-7-7, in the City of Buffalo, Erie County, NY. Refer to the attached maps with scale.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

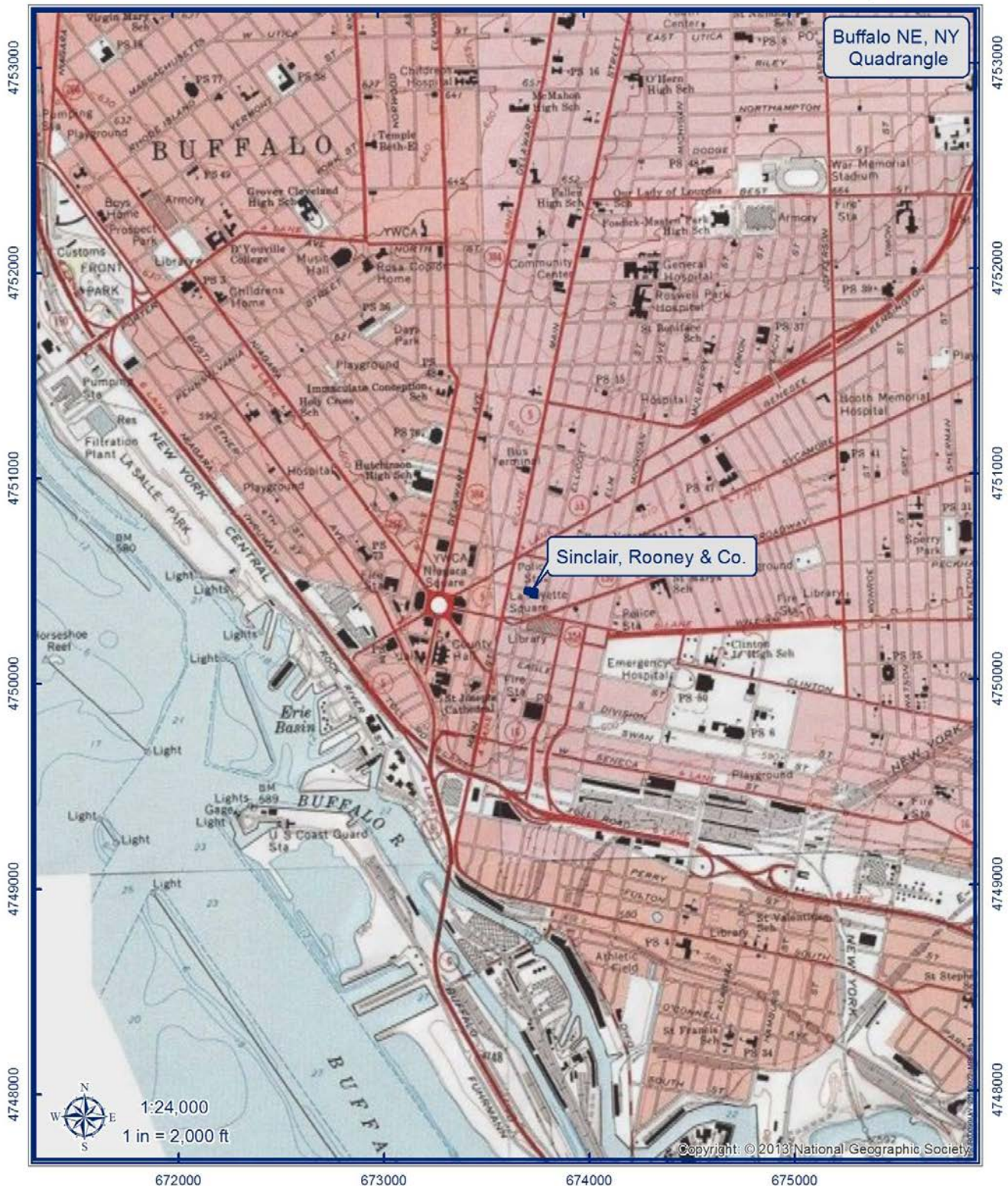
The boundary encompasses all property historically and currently associated with this resource.

Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building  
Name of Property

Erie County, New York  
County and State

Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building  
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY

465 Washington Street  
Buffalo, NY 14203



Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter



Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation

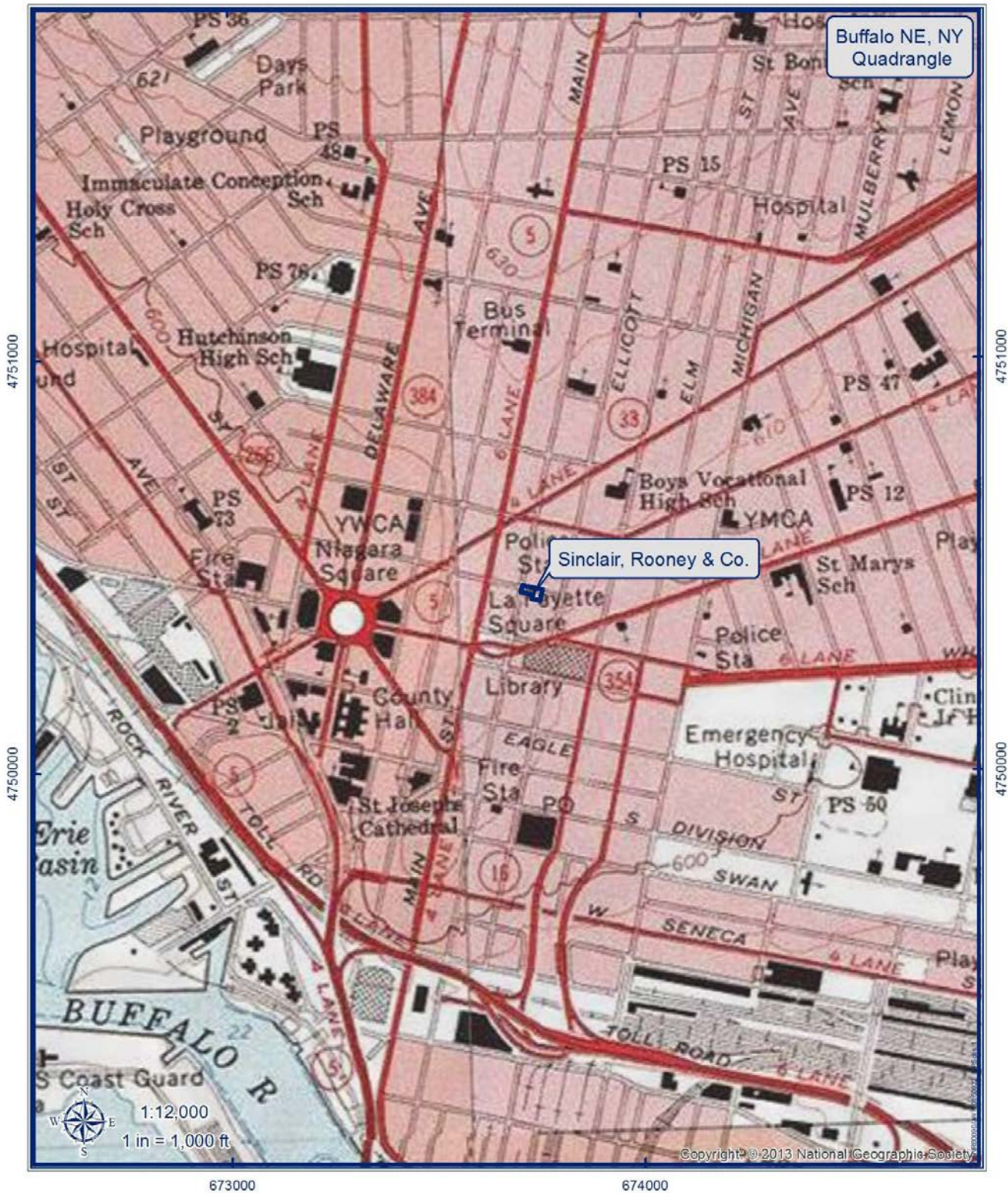


Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building  
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Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter



 Sinclair, Rooney



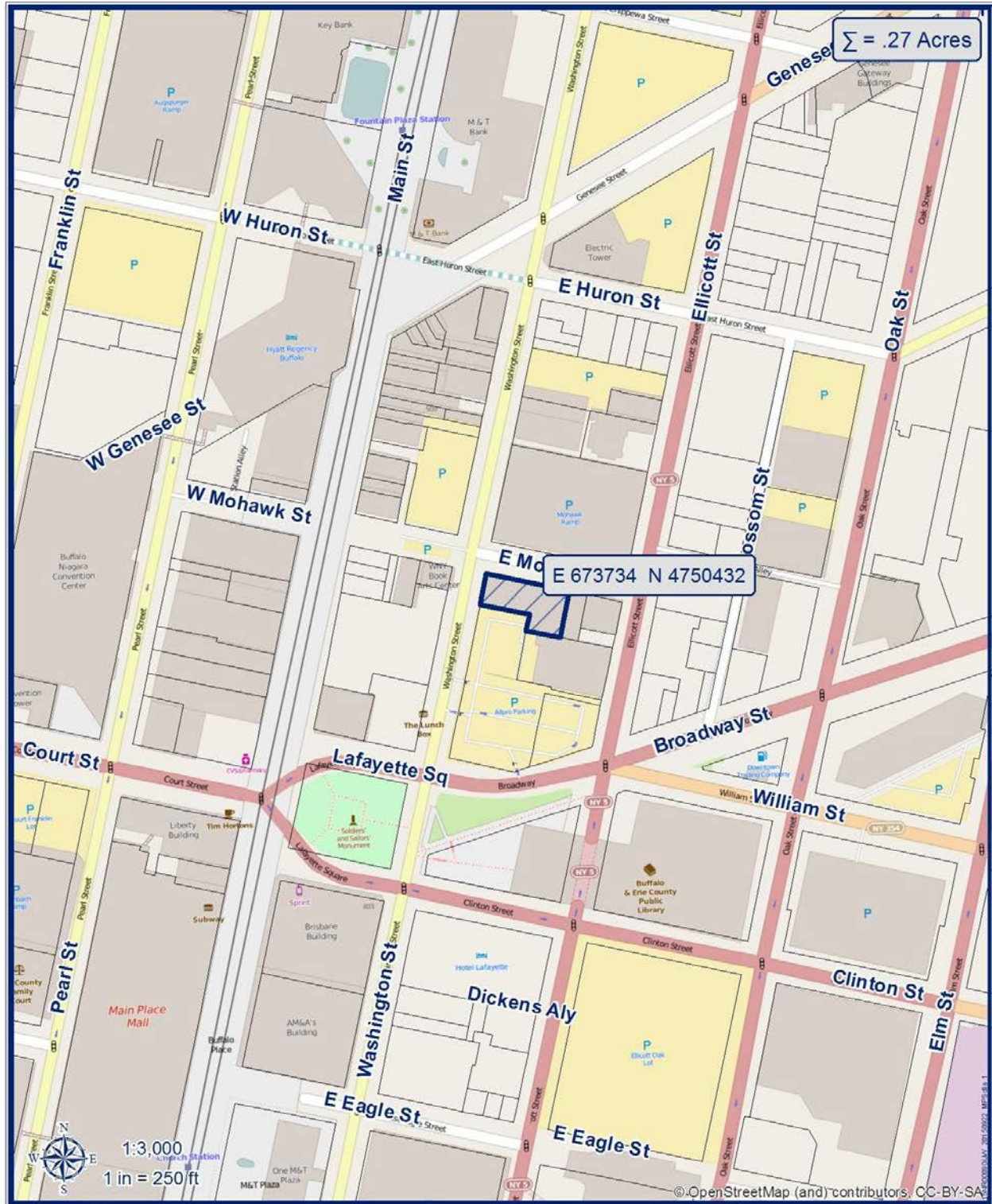
Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building  
Name of Property

Erie County, New York  
County and State

Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building  
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY

465 Washington Street  
Buffalo, NY 14203



674000

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter



 Sinclair, Rooney



**Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation**

Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building  
Name of Property

Erie County, New York  
County and State

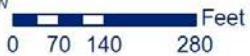
Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building  
City of Buffalo, Erie Co., NY

465 Washington Street  
Buffalo, NY 14203



674000

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter



Sinclair, Rooney



Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation

Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building  
Name of Property

Erie County, New York  
County and State

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Caitlin Moriarty/Historian [Edited by Jennifer Walkowski, NYSHPO]  
organization Preservation Studios, LLC date 7/14/15  
street & number 60 Hedley Place telephone 716-725-6410  
city or town Buffalo state 14208  
e-mail MoriartyCB@gmail.com

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### Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

---

### Photographs:

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Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building  
City or Vicinity: Buffalo  
County: Erie County  
State: New York  
Photographer: Michael J. Puma  
Date Photographed: October 2015  
Description of Photograph(s) and number:

NY\_Erie County\_Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building\_0001:  
Northwest corner showing primary and secondary elevations, camera facing SE

NY\_Erie County\_Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building\_0002:  
South elevation, showing rear "L" and fenestration, camera facing northwest

NY\_Erie County\_Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building\_0003:  
North elevation, camera facing west

NY\_Erie County\_Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building\_0004:  
First floor corridor, from main entry in SW corner, facing NE

NY\_Erie County\_Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building\_0005:  
First floor, main room showing full volume and columns, facing E

Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building  
Name of Property

Erie County, New York  
County and State

NY\_Erie County\_Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building\_0006:  
Second floor, facing west

NY\_Erie County\_Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building\_0007:  
Third floor, showing main staircase, facing south

NY\_Erie County\_Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building\_0008:  
Fourth floor, facing west

NY\_Erie County\_Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building\_0009:  
Fifth floor, facing NW

NY\_Erie County\_Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building\_0010:  
Sixth floor, facing NE

---

**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

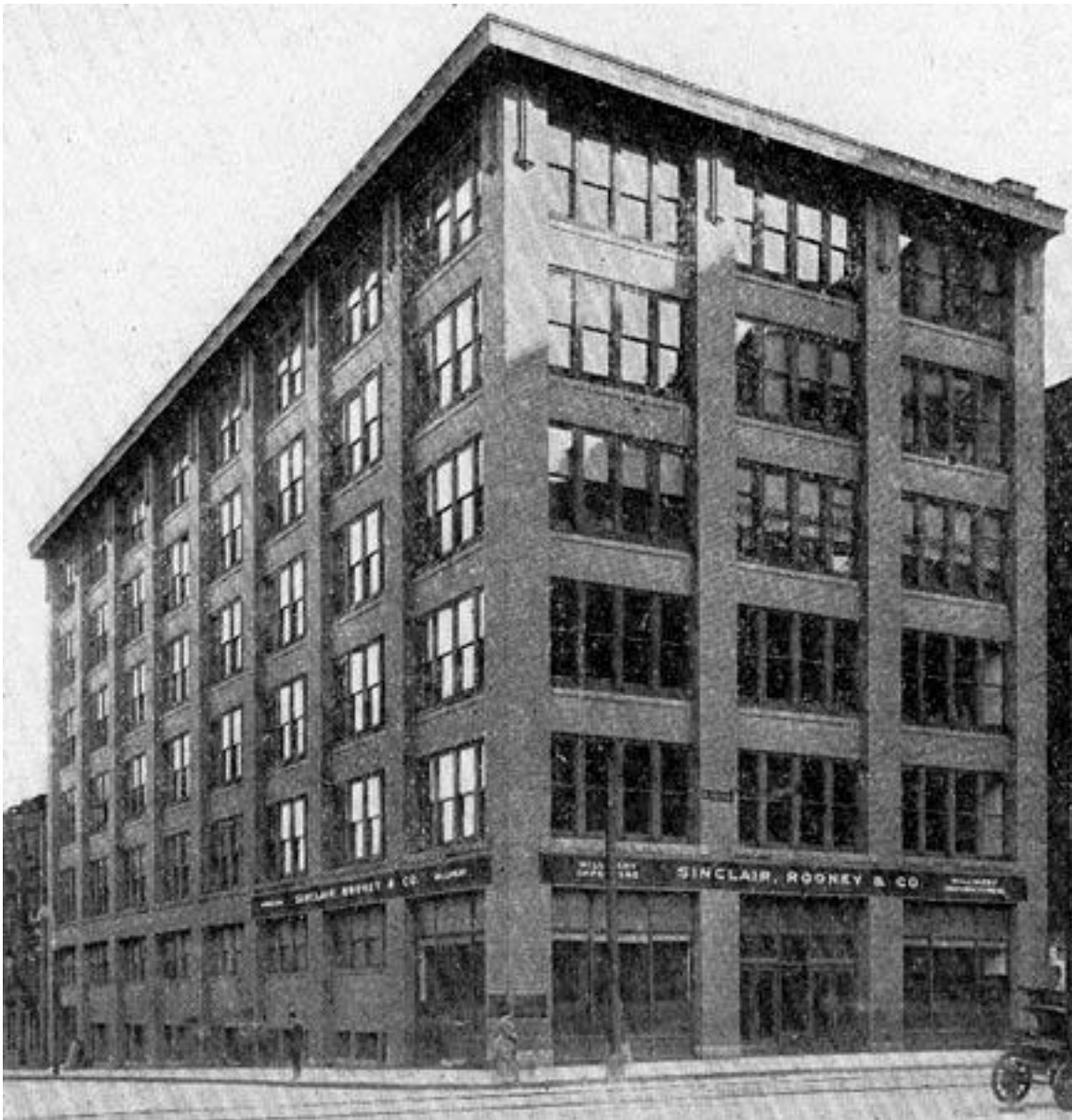
**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building

Name of Property  
Continuation Sheet  
Section 11, Page 1

Erie County, New York  
County and State



**"Sinclair, Rooney & Company Building (1909-1910) 461 Washington Street,"**

*Epilogue, Art Nouveau and Other Expressions*, BECHS, available  
online: [http://www.buffalohistory.org/Explore/Exhibits/virtual\\_exhibits/esenwein\\_johnson/epilogue.htm](http://www.buffalohistory.org/Explore/Exhibits/virtual_exhibits/esenwein_johnson/epilogue.htm)





EOC

ALL VISITORS  
MUST SIGN IN  
AT THE OFFICE  
CALL 978-875-1111

SIDEWALK  
CLOSED

2  
NO PARKING  
EXCEPT FOR  
EMERGENCY  
VEHICLES  
OR VEHICLES  
WITH  
PERMITS





MOHAWK PLACE  
FOOD & MARKET

Belknap Food Store

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HATES



10076

danforth

20 322876

















UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Sinclair, Rooney & Co. Building

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Erie

DATE RECEIVED: 12/18/15      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 1/15/16  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 2/01/16      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 2/02/16  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15001025

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N    DATA PROBLEM: N    LANDSCAPE: N    LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N    PDIL: Y    PERIOD: N    PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N    SAMPLE: N    SLR DRAFT: N    NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT     RETURN     REJECT    2/2/16 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER *Overholser* \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



**Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation**

RECEIVED 2280

DEC 18 2015

ANDREW M. CUOMO  
Governor

ROSE HARVEY  
Commissioner

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

13 November 2015

Alexis Abernathy  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 Eye St. NW, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nomination

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following seven nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Quogue Historic District, Suffolk County  
Fargo Estate Historic District, Erie County  
Conkling-Boardman-Eldridge Farm, Albany County  
Wilbur, Campbell, Stephens Company Collar and Cuff Factory, Rensselaer County  
Old Field Club and Farm, Suffolk County  
F.R. Bain House, Dutchess County  
Sinclair, Rooney and Company, Erie County

Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank  
National Register Coordinator  
New York State Historic Preservation Office