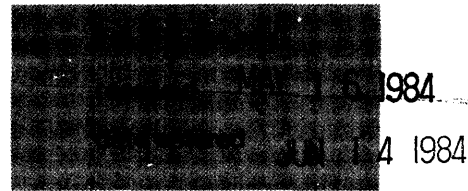


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 Labor ~~(National)~~ Bank *C. ...*

and/or common 26 Journal Square

2. Location

street & number 26 Journal Square N/A not for publication

city, town Jersey City vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~

state New Jersey code 34 county Hudson code 017

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Journal Square Associates

street & number 26 Journal Square

city, town Jersey City vicinity of state New Jersey 07306

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hudson County Administration Building

street & number 595 Newark Avenue

city, town Jersey City vicinity of state New Jersey

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Jersey City Cultural
title Resource Survey SHPO Opinion
has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1980-81 federal state county local

depository for survey records Office of New Jersey Heritage, CN 402,

city, town Trenton vicinity of state New Jersey 08625

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		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

DESCRIPTION

At the time of its construction in 1927-28 to designs by Jersey City architect John T. Rowland, the Labor Bank Building was the tallest building in the city. Still the tallest structure in Journal Square, the city's central business district, the Labor Bank Building is constructed in the Neo-classical style. It rises 15 stories and is 6 bays wide by five bays deep. It contains office, banking, and commercial spaces.

The Enos Place and Sip Avenue facades have a coursed white marble base rising three stories. The first floor of these elevations have large commercial shop windows crowned by metal cornices containing dentil, rope, and bead moldings, and roundel bands. Above the cornices are three-part transoms whose bars are decorated with miniature urns. Flanking the shop windows are slender metal pilasters containing stylized capitals with egg and dart moldings. The Sip Avenue facade has first floor shop windows with attached doors. Flanking the entries are fluted pilasters with one inch high numerals "26" at the frieze level. The main entrance to the structure is identical in detail to the flanking bays. An added sheet metal panel, however, now obscures the upper portion of this entry. Between each bay on both elevations are three story Ionic pilasters. The stone pilasters are topped by a heavy molded band with roundels and applied urns decorated with flame finials and garland. The ends of the three story sections are terminated by stone quoins. The second floor openings of the main facades are Roman-arched and contain tripartite windows surrounded by exaggerated stone voussoirs. Below each panel are three Formosa marble panels framed by egg and dart moldings. Singular one/one double hung sash windows are found at the end bays of the third story, and paired one/one windows appear elsewhere on the floor. A continuous fretwork band, running between the pilasters, is located at the third floor sill level.

The upper twelve stories of the structure are faced with semi-glazed white brick laid in a stretcher bond. Like the third story openings, simple steel-framed one/one windows pierce each floor. Brick pilasters and quoins are employed, rather than the stone ones on the lower floors. Ornamentation on the upper floors is limited to molded white terra cotta cornices which top the windows of the eleventh and twelfth floors. The fourteenth floor is capped by a similar cornice which is, however, interrupted by the brick pilasters extending upward from the fourth floor level. The fifteenth floor has three corner terraces, on the northwest, northeast, and southeast corners; each corner is graced with an over-scaled ornamental urn on a pedestal, with acorn finials and garland. Each terrace has brick retaining walls with stone coping; the terraces are entered by French doors with transoms. The Sip Avenue facade is crowned by a stepped parapet roof and a large white terra cotta cornice.

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DESCRIPTION

The exterior elevations of the southern (rear) and west facades have few decorative elements. These facades are faced with semi-glazed white brick and have one/one windows with steel frames. A one story wing, part of the original plan, is found on the rear facade. This wing houses the banking room, and has a corrugated metal facade on the Enos Place elevation dating probably from the 1950s. This facade is pierced by a modern glass and metal frame door.

The interior is designed with rich materials and sophisticated detailing. The first floor of the structure, used for retail and banking purposes, is divided by a wide central corridor running parallel to Enos Place. Centered against the west wall of the lobby corridor are three elevators which lead to the upper floors. Two staircases enter this hall, one behind the elevator housing, and one across the hall from the elevator bank.

The lobby corridor is lined with five shop fronts containing large windows, attached metal doors with transoms, and surrounds with molded bands. The walls of the corridor are faced with Formosa marble and contain large marble pilasters with recessed panels. These panels are topped with floral leaf capitals, reminiscent of Byzantine architecture. Also found are a cornice with egg and dart moldings. A model floral leaf band outlining the ceiling, is divided into five decorative panels; each panel contains a centered octagonal medallion with floral motifs.

The banking room, reached through double doors at the rear of the public corridor on the first floor (as well as by separate entry from Enos Place) is the most elaborate part of the structure. The room is divided into three principal areas: (1) the foyer, sitting area, and staircase to the lower vault area, (2) the officers' work space, and (3) the public banking area. Structurally, the first two areas are located within the principal high-rise structure, while the public banking area is located in the one-story rear wing.

The public banking area is the most embellished section of the room, and is decorated with Formosa marble pilasters, marble wainscoting, and (modern) marble-front cashier counters. Three squared columns of marble separate the banking area from the foyer; the columns have recessed panels and Byzantine-like capitals. Above the columns is a molded and dentilled wood frieze running along the walls of the main banking area. As originally designed, this area contains a high barrel-vaulted ceiling with glazed skylights separated by ornamental plaster ribs. The ceiling and ribs contain egg and dart moldings and floral leaf motifs, and carry through the design of the lobby ceiling. This detail, however, is

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DESCRIPTION

obscured by a dropped acoustical tile ceiling.

The walls of the foyer and officers' work space are also wainscotted with marble. The original polished brass entry door has been replaced by a modern glass and stainless steel door. To the west of this door is a staircase with heavy marble balusters and bannister leading downstairs to the vault area and back office areas. The officers' work area, located west of the staircase, originally contained a low marble railing separating it from the general public area. The rear room of this section is enclosed and lined with wood paneling. This room was also lighted by a large glazed skylight.

The basement level holds the vault, corporation rooms, and coupon booths. The vault, located in the center of the floor, was designed by the Remington and Sherman Company, and is equipped with several hundred steel safety deposit boxes. A narrow corridor, running parallel to the staircase, connects the large corporation room and coupon booths. A steel grillage is found at the entrance to the corridor, whose walls are crowned by a decorative plastered cornice. Modern ceiling tiles and lighting were installed in later years.

The design of the upper floors was unusual for the period of construction in that open floor plans were employed. Each of the thirteen principal office floors was left more or less undivided so that office and work space delineation could be designed to fit the needs of the individual tenant. The same was true of the penthouse floor with its three terraces. There is no significant interior ornamentation of any of the office floors.

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 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 type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
				Labor Unionism

Specific dates 1927-28 **Builder/Architect** T. M. Brandle (bldr.): J. T. Rowland, Arch.

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the Labor Bank Building comes from three major areas: architecture, commerce (banking), and labor unionism. As architecture, it represents, along with his buildings for the Dickinson High School and the Jersey City Medical Center, the full development of urban form for noted Jersey City architect, John T. Rowland. Its significance in commerce and labor unionism are inter-related: the Labor Bank was one of the few banks in the country which was owned and operated by labor unions. Established and built largely through the efforts of Theodore Brandle of the New Jersey Ironworkers Union, the Labor Bank Building, which went bankrupt during the depression of 1929-33, is associated with an important effort on the part of organized labor to provide a financial facility which would understand workers problems and provide unbiased advice.

ARCHITECTURE The architect for the Labor Bank Building was John T. Rowland (1872-1945). Born in Rockland County, New York, Rowland was raised in Jersey City, and graduated from the Hasbrouck Institute in 1889. He studied architecture at Cornell and at the University of Pennsylvania, and opened his practice in Jersey City in 1900. Shortly thereafter, he was named official architect for the Jersey City Board of Education, and retained that position well into the era of Mayor Frank Hague.

Among his earliest works was the Jersey City High School (later known as Dickinson High School: NR 1982). He went on to design the city's three other high schools, twenty five grammar schools, and seven parochial schools, all in Jersey City. Significant private commissions of Rowland included the Duncan Arms apartments, a ten-story luxury building where Mayor Hague retained a twenty room duplex apartment, the office building at 75 Montgomery Street, and in the Journal Square area, the present Jersey Journal Building, which abuts the Labor Bank at 40 Journal Square, the Public Service administration building on Sip Avenue, the twelve story Bergen Avenue addition to the Trust Company of New Jersey headquarters, as well as the original Jersey Journal Building and printing plant, which were demolished to create the actual square. Perhaps his most distinguished achievement was as the supervising architect for

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 0.25

Quadrangle name Jersey City NJ-NY

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	8	5	7	9	0	4	0	4	5	0	9	0	2	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

Jersey City Tax Block 1868 1/2, Lot 7B

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

N/A

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Charles E. Wyatt

organization Charles Wyatt Associates

date 3/83, revised 7/83

street & number 706-A Jersey Avenue

telephone (201) 659-1878

city or town Jersey City

state New Jersey 07302

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Russell W. Myer

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

date May 1, 1984

For NPS use only

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

date 6-14-84

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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the multi-building complex of the Jersey City Medical Center, erected over the period of the late 1920's to the mid-1930's. This understated Art-Deco complex (DOE: 1979) was, at the time of its completion, the largest hospital/medical complex in the world.

With the exception of elements for the Jersey City Medical Center, little of Rowland's architecture was innovative or particularly distinguished. In nearly all cases, the buildings reflected the conventional, for the period, use of brick (usually yellow/orange) and white terra cotta trim. What is significant, however, is his prodigiousness; by sheer volume of commissions he set the tone and pattern of civic architecture throughout all Jersey City, and because the majority of his works are extant, his influence on the cityscape remains. In addition, his four major works in the Journal Square area, which is the city's central core, established the urban character of that neighborhood.

COMMERCE/LABOR UNIONISM Jersey City's emergence as a service center (railroads, warehousing, shipping, and manufacturing) for the metropolis of New York created a vast population of tradesmen and specialized workers. Therefore it is not surprising that the labor union movement arose early in Jersey City and Hudson County.

The early decades of the current century saw a widening disparity between the laboring and managerial classes. As Hudson County continued to grow (reaching its peak population in 1930), the building trades became increasingly more organized and influential, both in terms of politics and of the economic community.

In 1923 the American Federation of Labor came out for the establishment of banks owned and operated by labor unions. In New Jersey, the first bank of this type, the Labor Cooperative National Bank, was chartered in 1924 by a group of Paterson silk weaver locals. The next year saw the creation of Newark's Union National Bank, and on June 28, 1926, the doors opened for the Labor National Bank in Jersey City on the ground floor of the Universal Building, located on Journal Square at the southern end of the new Boulevard Bridge. The President of the bank was Theodore M. Brandle.

The name of Theodore M. Brandle (1884-1949) was synonymous with organized labor during the early years of the Hague political machine. A native of Jersey City, he started his working life as an iron worker, and went into union politics at an early age. As chief of Iron Worker Local 45 of Jersey City, he joined forces with the locals at Newark and Perth Amboy, thence rose to become that union's leader in New Jersey. Brandle

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repeatedly espoused Hague's causes, proclaiming frequently that organized labor had no better friend than Frank Hague. His greatest favor for Hague occurred in 1924, when he steered the State Federation of Labor away from endorsing Robert LaFollette as Democratic Presidential candidate, and instead endorsed John W. David, the candidate of Hague. In 1925 Brandle, with Hague's support, was elected president of the State Building Trades Council. Shortly thereafter, Brandle and a Hague-controlled assemblyman, Joseph Hurléy, founded the Branleygran Bonding company, and the Hague-dominated governors of the State began floating all state bond issues through the company. In addition, Brandle started his own construction company, to which most important local construction contracts were awarded.

Much of the considerable wealth that Brandle amassed thus went into the Brandle-controlled Union Labor Investment Corporation, which was the nominal founder of the Labor National Bank. Brandle, the principal stockholder of the bank, was elected its president. The bank's first office was on the ground floor of the Universal Building on Journal Square, but from the outset it had been the bank's intention to erect its own headquarters building on Sip Avenue, on the site of four vacant lots known as 91-97 Sip Avenue. Work commenced on June 9, 1927, and the cornerstone was laid on December 29 of that year. By May 1, 1928, the first commercial tenants, including Brandle's Union Labor Investment Corporation, moved in while work continued on the banking and retail spaces. The bank officially opened its new headquarters on August 1, 1928, with Governor A. Harry Moore, Mayor Hague, and prominent labor and political leaders in attendance.

As the depression set in, many of the banks which had been organized in the prosperity of the 1920s found themselves in serious trouble. The Labor National Bank folded in August 1931, when its assets were absorbed by the Title Guarantee and Trust Company; the latter maintained the branch at Journal Square until it too folded in the early 1940s. The space was then leased to the Bergen Trust Company, which was absorbed by subsequent mergers. The most recent banking tenant was the First Jersey National Bank, which closed the branch in the mid 1970's for a newer and more compact space in the PATH Transportation Center.

After the collapse of the Labor Bank, Brandle directed his efforts toward rebuilding his position in the labor movement. But after violent union versus open-shop strife during the construction of the Jersey City Medical Center and the Pulaski Skyway, Hague and Brandle found themselves on opposite sides, and Hague prevailed. Brandle never again regained his former political and economic influence.

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OTHER AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE As Jersey City developed through the annexation and absorption of a number of communities - Hudson City, Greenville, the original Jersey City (downtown)- there was no central core of the city. As planning began for construction of the Holland Tunnel, the first Hudson River crossing to New York, the city officials foresaw a period of great economic growth, and they commissioned a master plan which would create a center city at Journal Square, then still a predominantly residential and neighborhood commercial district, but which was the location of the crossing of the major county thoroughfare, the Hudson County Boulevard, and the Hudson and Manhattan Railroad. The plan called for office skyscrapers, hotels, and theaters, and the dominant structure was to be the 19 story Carteret Biltmore Hotel, while the major entertainment attraction was to be the mammoth movie/vaudeville palace of Jacob Fabian, the Stanley Theater. The old Jersey Journal Building (a Rowland design) was demolished to create a central square, and the newspaper moved into its new headquarters on Sip Avenue (also a Rowland design). Among the office skyscrapers planned to distinguish the new business center was the 15 story Labor Bank Building.

The optimism for the development of Journal Square was shattered by the coming of the depression, and the Labor National Bank Building was the last major commercial office building of significant size and height to be erected. The Carteret-Biltmore hotel was never begun, and the era of construction came to an end with the opening in 1930 of the Stanley Theater.

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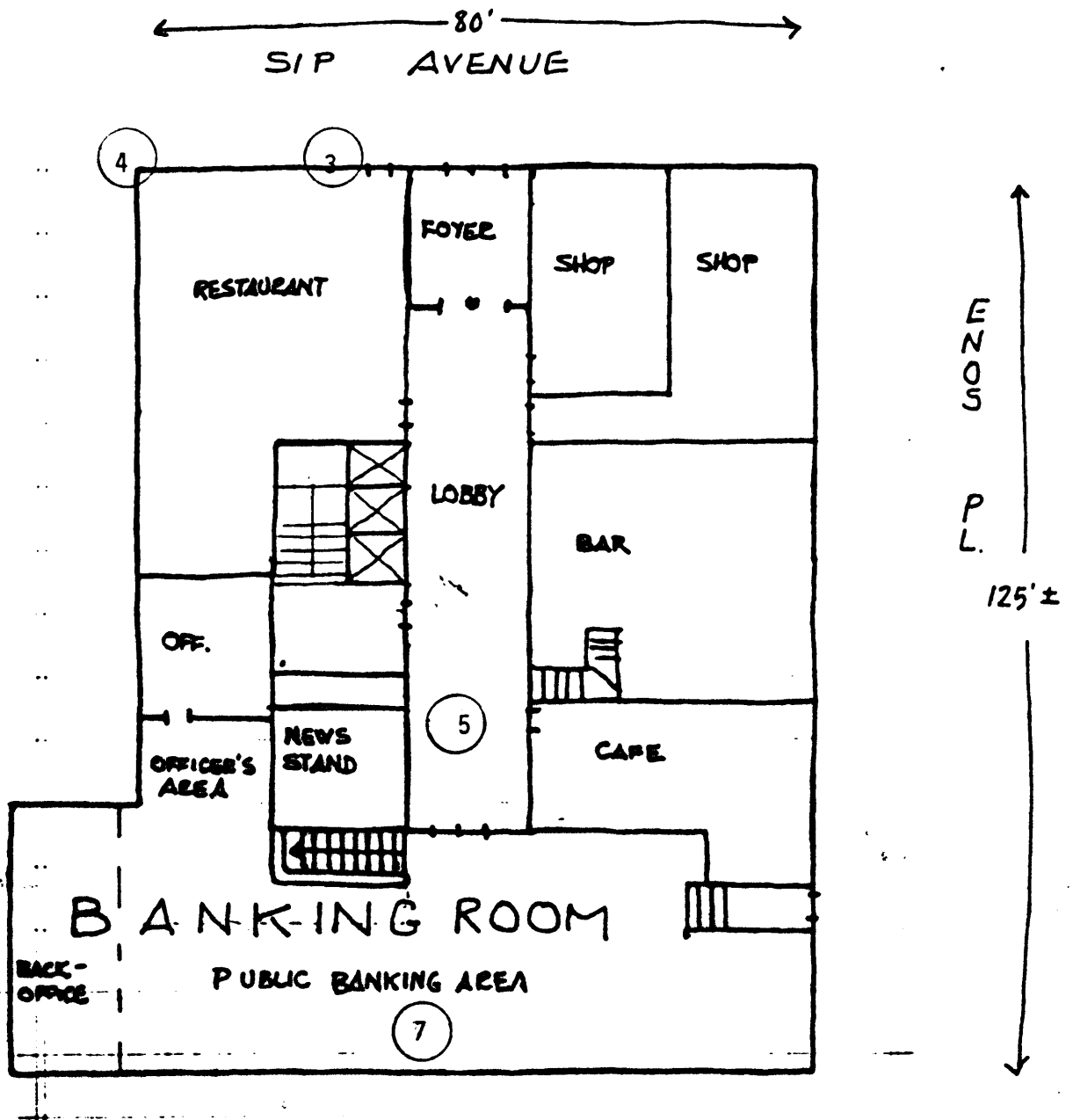
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SCHEMATIC PLAN: FIRST FLOOR, 26 JOURNAL SQUARE, JERSEY CITY, N.J.

1

2



(NOT TO SCALE)

○ - Photographs

LABOR BANK BUILDING
26 JOURNAL SQUARE
JERSEY CITY
HUDSON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



LABOR BANK BUILDING
26 JOURNAL SQUARE
JERSEY CITY
HUDSON COUNTY, NJ

Hopkins, Plat Map of
Jersey City, 1928.

