

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name: **Tri State Iron Works**

Other names/site number: **Globe Oil and Fertilizer Company; Tennessee Cotton Oil Co.; Gayoso Oil Works; Memphis Ginning & Cotton Huller Company.**

2. Location

street & number: **61 Keel Avenue**

not for publication: **N/A**

city or town: **Memphis** vicinity: **N/A** state: **Tennessee** code: **TN**

county: **Shelby** code: **157** zip code: **38107**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Herbert L. Hays
Signature of certifying official

3/3/97
Date

Deputy SHPO, Tennessee Historical Commission

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.

___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other(explain): _____

Paul R. Ferguson
Signature of Keeper

4/17/97
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u> 1 </u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u> 1 </u>	<u> </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: **INDUSTRY/PROCESSING** Sub: **manufacturing facility**

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: **INDUSTRY/PROCESSING** Sub: **manufacturing facility**

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Industrial

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: **Poured concrete**

roof: **Asphalt shingle**

walls: **Brick, weatherboard**
other: **Brick lintels**

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

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

- X** **A** Property is 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.
- X** **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or 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 the boxes that apply.)

N/A

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a 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);

Agriculture, Industry, Architecture

Period of Significance: 1883-1946

Significant Dates: NA

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above); N/A

Cultural Affiliation; N/A

Architect/Builder: **unknown**

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: Div. Of Housing & Community Dev.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: **approximately 1 acre**

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet) NW Memphis 404NE

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
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1	<u>16-769020-3894970</u>		3	_____	_____
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2	_____		4	_____	_____
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See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: **Judith Johnson, Historic Preservation Analyst**
organization: **Division of Housing and Community Development**
date: **September 22, 1996**
street & number: **701 N. Main Street** telephone: **(901) 576-7310**
city or town: **Memphis** state: **TN** zip code: **38107**

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section 7 Page 1
Name of Property **Tri State Iron Works**
county and State **Shelby, Tennessee**

VII Architectural Description

Note on Historic name:

The historic name "Tri State Iron Works" has been utilized to avoid an unwieldy title, even though five different companies operated in the building in the period of significance from 1883 to 1946. The last historic business located there was the Tri State Iron Works, located in the building at 61 Keel Avenue from 1927 until 1975 during which time the building accommodated iron and steel manufacturing. Before Tri State took over, the building had operated as a cotton seed oil press, first as the Globe Oil and Fertilizer Company, then the Tennessee Cotton Oil company, and finally as the Gayoso Oil Works. Between 1899 and the 1924 it operated as the Memphis Ginning and Cotton Huller Company. After standing vacant until 1927, it was purchased for a manufacturing facility by the Tri State Iron Works.

The two-story brick structure located in the northwest facade of the building is referred to as the Administration building. On the west elevation, the brick structure is the former engine room of the oil works. Due to a fire around 1907, the 1883 oil press, which once stood alone, no longer retains its integrity. However, the brick shell of the oil press was gutted and incorporated into the Tri State Iron Works building in 1927 and is an important part of the current structure.

The Tri State Iron Works is located in Memphis, Tennessee at 61 Keel Avenue between Front and Main Streets, in a downtown industrial area between the Wolf River on the west and two blocks from the Greenlaw Historic District (NR, 1984) on the east. The building is a commercial block composed of three older buildings historically incorporated into the current structure. The building began life as a cotton seed oil press, evolved into a cotton gin and then an iron works. Later it was a concrete forms business. The complex was purchased by the Meloni family in 1986. It is currently being utilized for chemical manufacturing by its current owner, Gary Meloni, Jr.

The Tri State building displays the effects of its industrial evolution in four architectural components. The three oldest sections were erected as the Globe Oil Works in 1883. According to the 1888 Sanborn Fire Map, the two-story administration building is located on the front of the

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Section 7 Page 2

Name of Property **Tri State Iron Works**
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lot. The brick construction oil mill and press room is located on the center of the lot and a brick seed room is located on the rear of the lot. The 1897 Sanborn indicates the business is still the Globe Oil Works. It also notes the mill is not in operation and the machinery has been partially removed. In 1907, the business is the Memphis Ginning and Cotton Huller Company. The Sanborn Fire Map indicates only the office building is intact, the rest of the site is labeled ruins of fire. Some portion of it was rebuilt as a cotton gin which it remained until 1925.

The facility became Tri State Iron in 1927. The current one story weatherboard structure that encloses the other building was added by the Tri State Iron Works. The 1927 Sanborn Map indicates what is still the current footprint. One story wood frame construction additions have incorporated the administration building into the current facade and the two story brick construction oil press building now serves as a clerestory with casement windows. At the rear of the west elevation, the brick seed room has been incorporated into the building on the west side with the one story frame additions. A rear one story circa 1927 brick addition used for a loading dock has been added.

Built in 1883, the Administration Building segment is an example of late nineteenth commercial block design. The two story building is brick construction with a flat roof. All elevations have double hung wood sash 2:2 windows with raised hood molds. It is flanked on the west by a one-story weatherboard addition with a flat roof, and paired 2:1 double hung windows on the facade and side elevation.

The circa 1927 eastern shop addition is frame construction, with weatherboard wall cladding, a flat roof and metal sliding doors on the facade. A shed porch runs the length of the rear and makes a right angle to extend the along the side of the circa 1927 brick addition in the rear on the west elevation. The second story windows of the oil press were historically altered and now contain metal casement windows.

The pedestrian entrance on the facade of the Administration Building is a single bay with an original half light door and two part glass transom framed with a raised hood mold lintel. The interior areas of the office retain the character of a cotton related office building. First and second story historic paired replacement windows are topped with a two light arched transom.

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Name of Property **Tri State Iron Works**
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The interior wooden floors are pine. The interior doors are wood paneled or vertical board. Along the west side of the building glass and wood doors lead into wood paneled offices located in the west addition. The original safe, cotton scales and chute remain in place.

To the east of the entry a wooden staircase against the wall leads to the second floor where historic office furnishings such as a walk in safe and wooden bookcases remain. A metal ladder on a door leads up to a small glassed in room about three feet from the ceiling. This room was possibly used to humidify the cotton before classing it and dropping the samples down.

A hall bisects the rear of the office area and leads back to the shop area. The shop is dominated by the rectangular shell of the two story brick cotton mill remaining in the center of the building. with clerestory windows that illuminate the interior space. The first floor bays of the brick shell are gutted but the radiating voissiors remain. The building is supported by massive steel beams salvaged from the old Gayoso Oil Works for use by the Tri-State Iron Works. A historic drill press from the Tri State Iron Works era remains in place also. On the west side of the shop, the old brick seed room is now incorporated into the building. The shop has poured concrete floors. Use over time is reflected in the floor near the front door where inoperable train track rails remain from an earlier era when this area was outside of the building. There are no outbuildings or landscaping since the structure now covers most of the site.

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Name of Property **Tri State Iron Works**
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Statement of Significance

Tri State Iron Works is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion "A" for its local significance because of its contributions to the industrial history of Memphis from 1883 to 1946. The building represents an evolution in industrial use that reflected the changing economic climate of Memphis. From its origins as a cotton oil press in 1883 through its adaptation and alteration as iron works from 1927 until 1975, the design of the structure shows that utilitarian industrial buildings were constructed to adapt to changing technological and economic climate. Therefore, the Tri State Iron Works is also eligible under Criterion "C" - as a good example of changing industrial design. The building represents the influence of the post-Civil War "New South Movement," an effort on the part of many prominent southerners to develop industry in the region more along Northern lines. Both cotton by-products and the iron and steel works were important Southern industries. Although the Tri State Iron Works building has experienced alterations through additions, reconstruction and the connecting of interior and exterior spaces over its history since 1883, these changes are all historic and have not destroyed the building's integrity.

Cottonseed crushing became an integral part of the cotton South after Reconstruction. As oil mills expanded throughout the cotton-growing states during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, more and more farmers found a market for their cottonseed. The sale of cottonseed paid for ginning the cotton and baling the lint and pumped money into the economy at the end of the long growing season. Because it was a by-product and generally exempt from the crop liens or mortgages that covered lint sales in the postbellum South, cottonseed brought many small growers the only cash they saw from one year to the next (Wrenn, Cinderella of the New South, Knoxville: UT Press, 1995, xvi).

Between 1880 and 1920 cottonseed-oil mills dominated the economic life of hundreds of market towns in the Cotton Belt. The rapid growth of many Southern towns including Memphis during those years was in part a result of the cottonseed-processing industry. More money available for investment, increased railroad mileage, greater cotton cultivation, and growing demand for cottonseed products created the conditions for rapid expansion after 1880 (ibid., 15).

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Because venturing into cottonseed processing on a small scale required relatively little money, oil mills were attractive investments. In 1883 the Globe Oil and Fertilizer Company was formed by two entrepreneurs, G. C. Venable and R. J. Rawlings, brothers-in-law and residents of Chelsea, a small unincorporated town just north of Memphis. Prior to the cottonseed mill venture, Venable and Rawlings had owned a coal and lumber yard and Rawlings had also been secretary of the Gayoso Oil Works, a large cottonseed processing mill on the west side of North Front Street (Chickasaw). Richard J. Rawlings was a Civil War veteran (Goodspeed, History of West Tennessee, Nashville: 1972, 1029). Only two years later, in 1885, Rawlings is no longer shown as an officer in the mill (Memphis City Directory 1885, 130).

The entrepreneurs choose to locate their mill on a rail spur of the old L&N (M & O) line on Keel Avenue and the east side of Front Street across from the much larger Gayoso Oil Works. Although the first cottonseed processors depended on steamboat companies for transportation, as railway freight cars supplanted boats as the main carriers of cottonseed and cottonseed products (Wrenn 1995, 15). The 1888 Sanborn Fire Map shows the mill complex consisted of an office building, seed storage houses built around the brick, two story mill.

The mill contained five linters to remove lint, a gin, a screen for sieving, a huller to remove the tough husks from the seed and a cake mill. The cake mill produced high protein cakes of seed from which the oil had been expressed. The Globe Oil and Fertilizer Company had only had one press to actually extract the oil. The press was possibly constructed by the Columbian Iron Works of Brooklyn, N. Y, the major supplier of press room equipment in the United States until the mid-1880s. There were only three storage tanks to hold the crude oil since it was highly perishable.

The crushing season began in July and lasted until March or April. The seed arrived and was unloaded into the wooden seed houses. Damp or dirty seed held the danger of spontaneous combustion. The seed was moved through processing by bucket elevators or conveyor belts powered by a steam engine. First the seed had to be cleaned of sand, bolls, trash and metals. Then it was ginned again to remove the remaining cotton fibers clinging to the hulls, a dusty, dangerous process known as delinting. Then the hulls were separated from the seed, and the seed was crushed into fine kernels in preparation for cooking. The cooking took place in a large

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steam heated cooking pan to facilitate the oil removing process. The cooking required great care and judgement in the early days of the cottonseed industry. Once the meal had been heated to the proper temperature, it was formed into rectangular shaped, enveloped in porous materials and pressed by a hydraulic press to remove the red, smelly cottonseed oil. Later refining would turn this liquid into a pale gold, odorless liquid (Wrenn 1995, 48).

The 1888 Sanborn map also indicates housing for African Americans located right next to the mill. The Memphis City Directory lists the occupations of these residents as laborers. According to Wrenn, African American males provided most of the labor in cottonseed-oil mills, as they did in southern saw mills, and other dangerous, unpleasant manufacturing jobs. Black men dominated the oil-mill labor force to a greater extent than any other industry in southern states. These mill workers had little prospect of bettering their economic position because the South had an abundance of low-wage, unskilled workers. Cottonseed oil mills paid lower hourly wages than most other southern manufacturing enterprises. The cooks and pressroom workers earned \$2.50 a day, more than their unskilled co-workers whose going rate was \$1 to 1.25 a day (Wrenn 1995, 67).

By 1895 the property became the Tennessee Cotton Oil Company. In 1897, it was purchased by the Gayoso Oil Works located across the street to the west. At that time, the Gayoso Oil Works was owned by D. T. Porter, a former mayor of Memphis as well as Robert Boyd and James H. Pope. The 1897 Sanborn fire map indicates that the mill was not in operation and the machinery was partially removed. It would appear the new owners did not want any competition in the cottonseed oil business because the 1899 City Directory indicates the facility became Boyd's Huller and Cotton Cleaner Company. The owner was Robert Boyd, formerly manager of the competing Gayoso Oil Works.

The Memphis City Directory listed the building as vacant in 1902. In 1903 it has become the Memphis Ginning and Cotton Huller Company with James Pope listed as president. The 1907 Sanborn map reveals that a fire has caused considerable damage to the facility. Mr. Pope ran into financial difficulties in 1924, possibly because cotton had declined in price from \$17 a pound in 1917 to \$9.46 by 1924, the same year his business was repossessed by Union Planters National Bank.

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In addition to the manufacturing of cotton related by-products, Memphis was also known for its iron and steel processing industries. After the Bessemer process was introduced in the United States in 1857, the Southern iron industry grew. The antebellum iron and steel industry in Memphis was small but thriving and grew with the "New South." Although the ore processing industry was primarily located on the Tennessee River in the hills of Alabama and southeast Tennessee, Memphis became a major distribution point for iron and steel. After World War I, the southern iron and steel business began to boom.

The 1907 Sanborn map shows a new business located half a block east on the northeast corner of Keel Avenue and N. Main Street. It is the Union Iron Works, owned by Perry H. Williams, who specialized in gas engines and general iron work. By 1919 the Union Iron Works had become the Tri State Iron Works listed at 649 N. Main Street. The Tri State Iron Works had E. T. Lesley as president and R. E. Herring, as secretary-treasurer. It specialized in architectural iron and all kinds of iron works for building.

Although the native Southern iron ore was not the same high quality as high quality imported Northern iron ore, the low tensile strength "pig iron" was perfect for ornamental iron such as cast iron store fronts manufactured by Tri State. By 1925, the Keel Avenue building is listed as vacant in the City Directory. A 1927 Sanborn Fire Map shows the property is now occupied by the Tri State Iron Works.

In 1930, a Commercial Appeal article named Memphis as the top steel distributing center in the country as more than 300,000 tons of steel came down via canal from Pittsburgh to the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to be distributed south and west here in Memphis. Branches of five national steel distributors were located here including Jones and Laughlin, Pittsburgh Steel, Wheeling Steel of Tennessee, Youngstown Steel and Spang, Chalfant & Company. Although the railroad had diverted passenger traffic away from the passenger steamboats, water was still the best way to transport heavy freight. Four barge tow lines for river transport were located here including the enormous Jones & Laughlin Union Barge tow line.

The vitality of industrial growth in Memphis at this time necessitated that some of the unprocessed iron and steel be fabricated into structural steel. These fabricators ranged from a

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modest half acre business like Tri State to the enormous Pidgeon-Thomas Iron Company with a 240,000 square foot manufacturing plant and five acres of storage. Even in 1935 at the height of the Depression more than 150,000 tons were shipped from Memphis.

The competition from cheaper foreign steel eventually ruined the national and the Memphis iron and steel industry. By 1957, one hundred years after the introduction of the Bessemer process, only 150,000 tons of steel were produced in the entire country. The once thriving iron and steel industry in Tennessee produced a mere 38,000 tons. The Tri State property on Keel was sold in 1975 to a new owner and converted to other uses.

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Name of Property **Tri State Iron Works**
county and State **Shelby, Tennessee**

Bibliography

Commercial Appeal Newspaper. "Seven Mills Stock." December 22, 1935.

Goodspeed. History of West Tennessee. Nashville: Charles and Randy Booksellers, reprinted edition 1972.

Memphis City Directory, St. Louis: R. L. Polk & Company, 1890-1995.

Memphis Chamber of Commerce. "Two and one half years of Progress in Memphis." Memphis, 1930.

Memphis Press Scimitar. "Steel Industry Centennial." May 24, 1957.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. Pelham, New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1888, 1897, 1927, 1928, 1950.

Wrenn, Lynette. Cinderella of the New South: A History of the Cottonseed Industry, 1855-1955. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995.

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Section 10 Page 10

Name of Property **Tri State Iron Works**
county and State **Shelby, Tennessee**

Verbal Boundary Description

The west half of Lot 52, an area of approximately 1 acre, bounded by Keel Avenue to the north, the alley to the south, the property line to the east, and North Main Street to the west.

Boundary Justification

These are the physical boundaries of the parcel when the building was constructed. These boundaries have not changed since that time.

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Name of Property **Tri State Iron Works**
county and State **Shelby, Tennessee**

Photographs

Tri State Iron Works
Sixty-one North Keel Avenue
Memphis, Shelby County, Tennessee
Photos by: Judith Johnson
Date: September 1996
Negatives: THC

Oblique view of facade, facing southeast, 1 of 25

Facade, facing southeast, 2 of 25

Shed, facing southeast, 3 of 25

Rear view of Shed, facing northwest, 4 of 25

Rear Shed - Close up, 5 of 25

Interior Stairwell - Second floor, 6 of 25

Interior Cotton Chute - Second floor, 7 of 25

Interior Detail of wall - First floor, 8 of 25

Interior Detail - Office First floor, 9 of 25

Interior Hallway - First floor, 10 of 25

Interior Hallway - First floor, 11 of 25

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Name of Property **Tri State Iron Works**
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Detail - Door - First floor, 12 of 25

Office lobby - First floor, 13 of 25

Detail - Scale - First floor, 14 of 25

Wall view - Second floor, 15 of 25

Detail - Second floor, 16 of 25

Interior- Laboratory, 17 of 25

Interior - Mill, 18 and 19 of 25

Interior - Mill - Detail, 20 of 25

Interior - Mill - Floor, 21 of 25

Interior - Mill - Closeup of detail, 22 of 25

Clerestory window, 23 of 25

Clerestory window - detail, 24 of 25

Interior-Shop-Clerestory window, 25 of 25

TRI STATE IRONWORKS
SHELBY CO. TN

1929 SANBORN

24

KEEL AV.

(ST.)

GRAVELED

TRI STATE IRON WORKS

NO MATCHING, HERT-SPYR, LIGHTS
ELEC., POWER, ETC.

W. HO.

STGE

DRIVE

N FRONT

SINCLAIR REFINING CO

AUTOS.

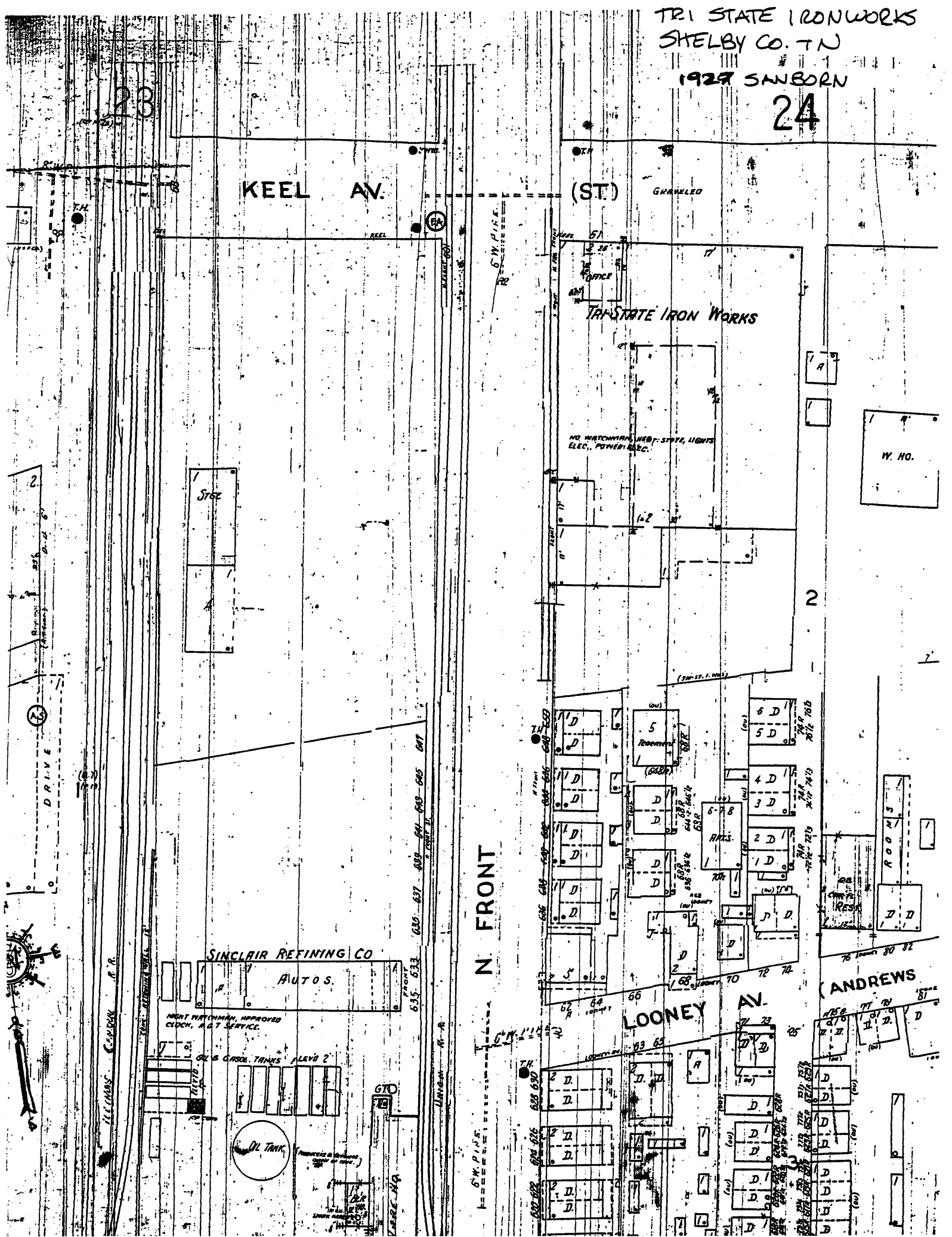
NEXT MATCHMAN, APPROVED
CLOCK, A.L.T. SERVICE.

OIL & GAS. TANKS FLEV 2

OIL TANK

LOONEY AV.

(ANDREWS



TRI STATE IRON WORKS
SHELBY CO. TN

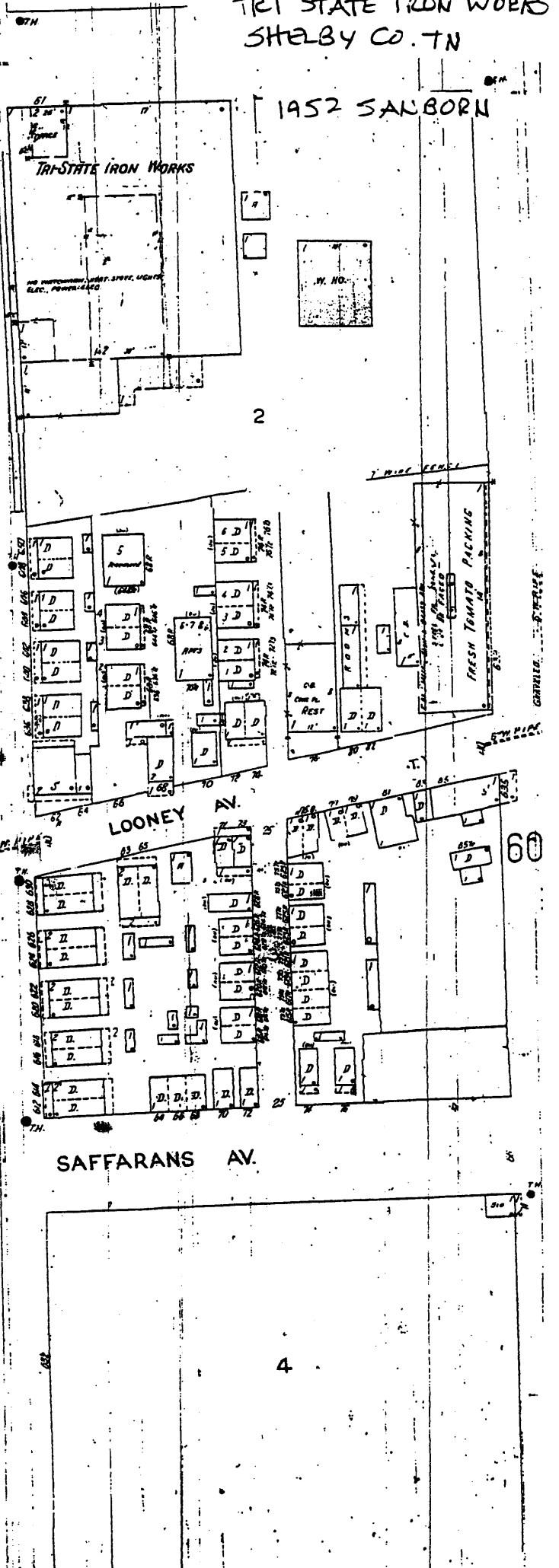
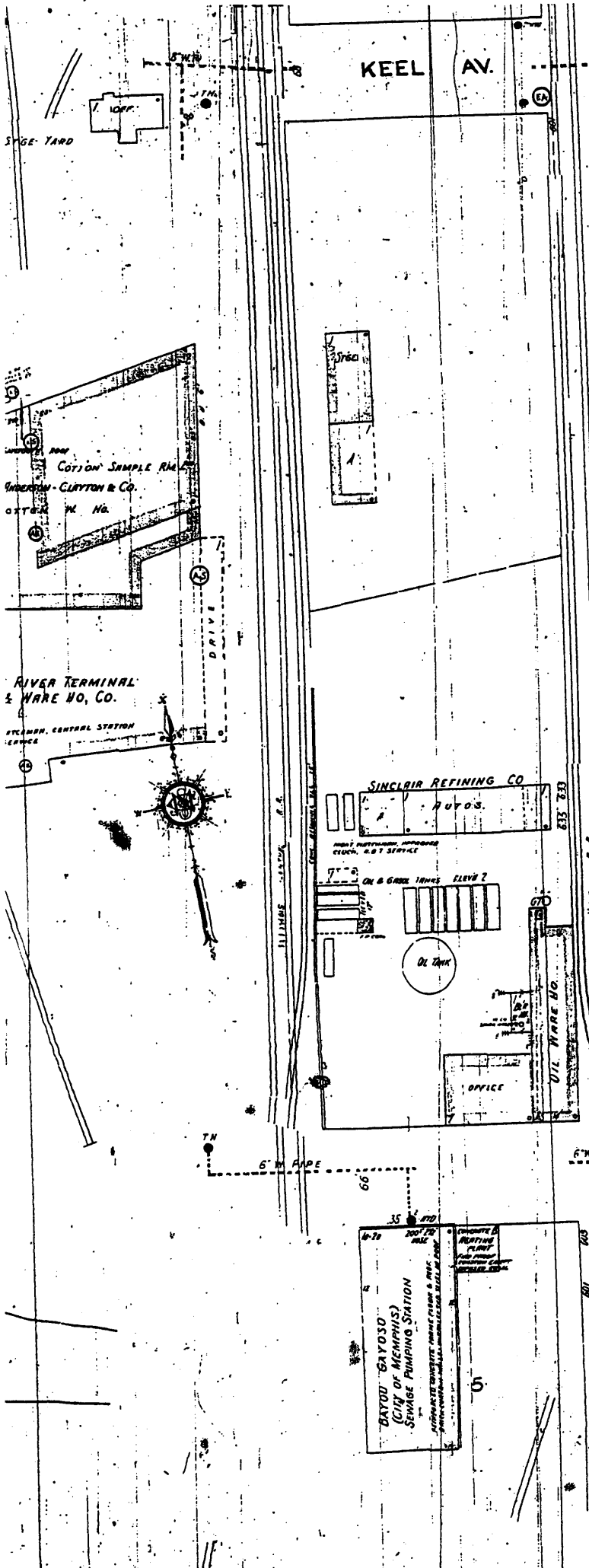
1952 SANBORN

KEEL AV.

N. FRONT

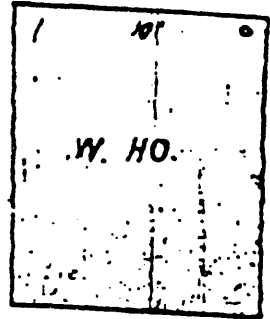
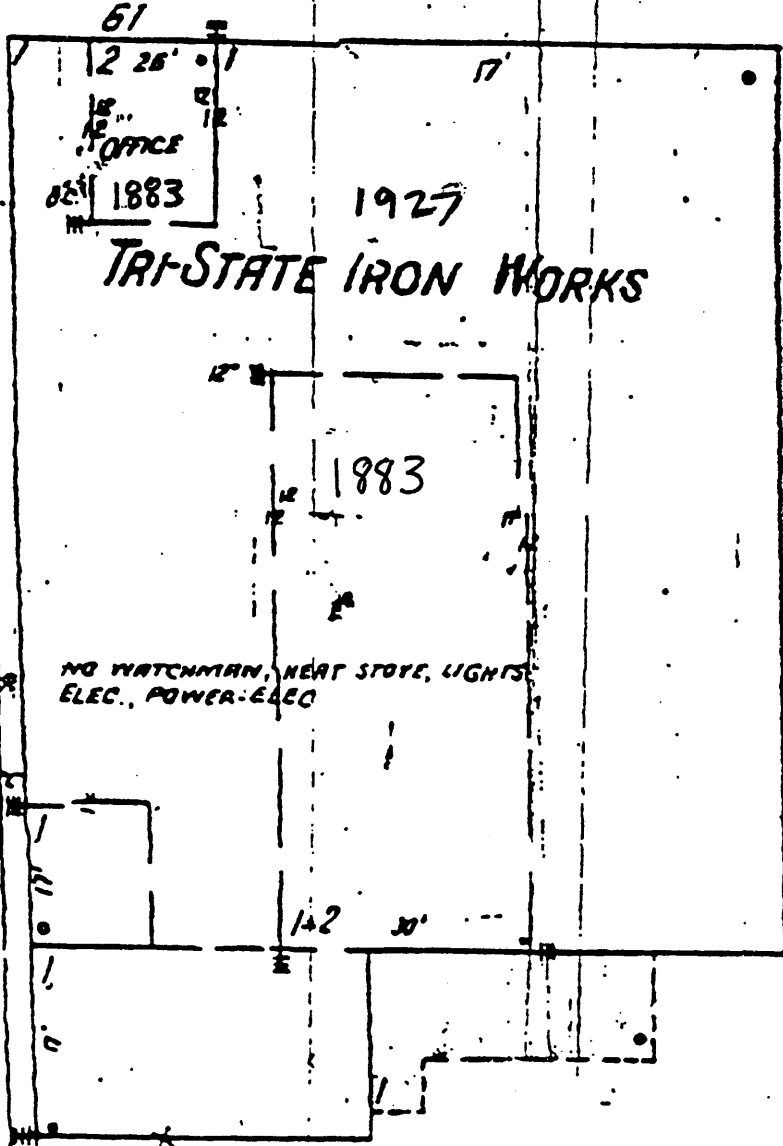
LOONEY AV.

SAFFARANS AV.



Tri State Iron Works
Shelby Co. TN

T.H.



2

7 WIRE

1 inch = 150-ft.

TRI STATE IRON WORKS SHELBY CO. TN

WARD 22
WARD 1.

