

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received APR 19 1984  
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Selig's Dry Goods Company Building  
and/or common Morrissons/Em-Roe Sporting Goods Company

2. Location

street & number 20 West Washington St, N/A not for publication  
city, town Indianapolis N/A vicinity of  
state Indiana code 018 county Marion code 097

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input 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 type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input 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 Em-Roe Sporting Goods Company  
street & number 20 West Washington Street  
city, town Indianapolis N/A vicinity of state Indiana 46204

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Marion County Recorder  
street & number City-County Building, Rm. 721  
200 E. Washington Street  
city, town Indianapolis state Indiana 46204

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Survey Report for  
title Indianapolis/Marion County has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
date 1977  federal  state  county  local  
depository for survey records Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission  
City-County Building, Room 1821, 200 East Washington Street  
city, town Indianapolis state Indiana 46204

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<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

The Selig Dry Goods Company Building is a seven story architectural terra cotta and extruded aluminum commercial structure designed in 1924 by the Indianapolis firm of Kurt Vonnegut, Arthur Bohn, and Otto N. Mueller, and later remodeled in 1933 for House of Morrisons by the New York City firm of Elias, Rothschild & Company. The style is Beaux-Arts. The principal street facade (Photo 3) of 35' faces south on West Washington Street, abutting the H. P. Wasson Building to the east and the H. Lieber Company to the west (both have been remodeled by later owners). The building is 120' deep extending to Court Street at the rear.

The first floor entrance level has been altered (1970) from its original 1924 green vert antique marble and plate glass facade by the addition of precast concrete panels. Historic photographs 1 and 2 show subtle classical detailing. A narrow strip of marble survives about the concrete panels. The second through seventh floors of white glazed terra cotta and extruded aluminum window framing are unaltered. The five bay fenestration is divided into a 1-3-1 rhythm by two continuous terra cotta shafts which terminate in stylized flower urns. The second story is marked by a recessed terra cotta spandrel decorated with rosettes and small scroll cartouches. The sixth floor is divided from the seventh by a horizontal spandrel band of classical roundels. The east and west corner edge pilasters rise the full seven stories to support the smooth frieze and deep dentil modillion cornice. The pedestal shaped attic is decorated with palmette antefixes (Photo 4).

Especially distinctive are the center, swivel, tinted plate glass windows with Selig's stenciled coat of arms (later removed). Each movable window has a small grill panel below and a three light transom above. Every window had an interior cloth pull shade. Also an unusual feature is the seventh story terra cotta Roman thermal window-like screen across the entire facade opening.

The west and north facades are common bond pressed brick and are undistinguished. The east wall is now completely hidden.

The original 1924 and later 1933 remodeled interiors were described in the Indianapolis Star as especially fine ornamental plaster ceilings and carpeted floor with black Formica borders. Much of this detailing is intact but covered over by later alterations. The 3500 fur coat storage vault had one of the newest and best refrigeration systems in the midwest. There is a basement below street level. The building is structurally sound.

## 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/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1924, 1933

**Builder/Architect** Vonnegut, Bohn and Mueller/Elias,

Rothschild & Co.

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Selig Dry Goods Company Building (later Morrisons) at 20 West Washington Street, is historically significant in the areas of architecture and commerce which reflects the economic development of downtown Indianapolis. The Selig Building was determined eligible for the National Register as part of the Union Station Historic District on December 31, 1979.

Architecture. The prominent Indianapolis architectural firm of Vonnegut, Bohn and Mueller was chosen by Moses Selig, President of Selig Dry Goods, and Samuel L. Hahn, Vice President, Treasurer, and General Manager, to design a new, more competitive and imposing seven story commercial structure to replace an older four story, Italianate style limestone store which Selig's had occupied since about 1904. The use of architectural terra cotta was inspired by the already existing Indianapolis News Building and the Taylor Carpet Company Building to the west. Beaux-Arts classicism was adapted to the Chicago School high rise structure here in Indianapolis, and represents one of the few terra cotta buildings remaining in the center city area. Only minor remodeling was carried out in 1933 when Morrisons moved from 26 West Washington (Taylor Carpet) to the Selig Building. Elias, Rothschild & Company of New York City was described in the Indianapolis News of March 17, 1933, as having designed some of the most elaborate retail stores in the United States. Historic William H. Bass Photo Company early photographs of this building (Photos 1 and 2) show how impressive this Neo-grec style facade was in 1924 compared to the Romanesque Revival brick and limestone four and one-half story elevation of H. P. Wasson and the four story Classical Revival H. Lieber Company. Today this facade is critical to the historic continuity of this block of West Washington Street, and is one of the least altered in the downtown.

Commerce. Considered one of the best known and successful dry goods companies in the city (Indianapolis Star, July 27, 1924), the Selig Dry Goods Company was historically significant in the commercial and economic development of downtown Indianapolis for nearly 40 years, from 1895 to 1933. Moses Selig, later President of this company, operated one of the early dry goods businesses in Indianapolis at 109 South Illinois Street. The name, Selig Dry Goods Company, is first listed in Polk's City Directory in 1905 at 211-213 S. Illinois, and then in 1909 at 20 West Washington. Emil Selig, (relationship not determined), of Philadelphia, was President and Moses Selig was Secretary.

Moses Selig was born in Rochbach in Alsace, France, on March 29, 1837. He immigrated with his family to Philadelphia in 1855 and finally settled himself in Indianapolis in 1892. He and his dry goods business became an active and important participant in the city's commercial life (Indianapolis Star, September 20, 1919). At the time of his death in September, 1919, he had been or was a member of the Indianapolis Merchants Association, The Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, The Indianapolis Club, Monument Lodge No. 657 of the Free and Accepted Masons, and Grand Lodge No. 3 of the Indianapolis Order of B'nai B'rith, Free Sons of Israel. Selig had been an active member and one time president of the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation at 10th Street and North Delaware.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Indianapolis West

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 

1	6	5	7	2	0	8	0	4	4	0	2	0	4	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** The West Half of the East Half of Lot 8 in Square 55 of the Donation Lands of the City of Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana, and the East Half of the West Half of Lot 8 in Square 55 of the Donation Lands of the City of Indianapolis, Marion County, Indiana

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Samuel A. Roberson & Associates for

organization Goodman Jewelers, Inc. date February 10, 1984

street & number 4611 North Pennsylvania Street telephone 317/283-1979

city or town Indianapolis state Indiana 46205

# 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 J. M. Redman

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer date 4-13-84

For NPS use only

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

J. Clarence Byers  
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the National Register date 5/17/84

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY—NOMINATION FORM

Continuation Sheet Selig's Dry Goods Co. Building

Item No. 8

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Two sons, Sidney (born in Philadelphia in 1883) and Herbert (born in Philadelphia in 1889) joined their father's business. At the time of Sidney's death in 1918 at the age of 35, he was Secretary and Manager, had been prominent in war activities, and a member of many Indianapolis civic groups, also the Indianapolis Hebrew Congregation. Sidney's brother, Herbert, succeeded as Secretary of the dry goods company. In 1919 Herbert lived at the Haugh Hotel (still standing) at 11 East Michigan Street. Herbert was educated in the city's public schools, was graduated from Emmerich Manual Training High School, and entered the dry goods business about 1908 at age 18 or 19. Herbert was also a member of Monument Lodge, B'Nai B'rith and other civic and social organizations in Indianapolis. The Seligs are buried in the old Hebrew Cemetery on the south side. The Selig Dry Goods Company went into receivership in 1933.

Prominent Indianapolis businessman Lewis E. Morrison (born in Wolfeboro, New Hampshire) founder and head of the House of Morrisons (later L. E. Morrison & Company) came to Indianapolis from Boston in 1877 to establish a rubber goods firm, later adding shoes and leather products. Morrisons was located at 27 West Washington Street for 30 years prior to moving into 20 West Washington in 1933. He was active in Indianapolis civic affairs, a member of the Indianapolis Board of Trade and the Merchants Association, and held presiding offices in the Mystic Tie and Scottish Rite. He died in 1939 (Indianapolis Times, April 29, 1939). Em-Roe Sporting Goods purchased the building in 1968.

Baist, George William. Baist's Property Atlas of Marion County, Indiana. Philadelphia: G.W.Baist, 1901.

. Baist's Property Atlas of the City of Indianapolis and Suburbs, Indiana. Philadelphia: G.W.Baist, 1899.

. Baist's Real Estate Atlas of Surveys of Indianapolis and Vicinity, Indiana. Philadelphia: G.W.Baist, 1908, 1916, 1927, 1941.

Cottman, George S. Indiana Biographical Scrapbook. 9 Volumes. Indianapolis, 1880-1935.

Dunn, Jacob P. Greater Indianapolis. 2 Volumes. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1922.

Hyman, Max, editor. Hyman's Handbook of Indianapolis. Indianapolis: M.R.Hyman Company, 1909.

Indianapolis Architecture. Indianapolis Architectural Foundation, 1975.

Indianapolis Building Permit Ledger and Index: 1890-1935. Microfilm. City-County Building: Indianapolis, 1983.

"Morrison Gets Long Selig Building Lease." Indianapolis News (March 17, 1933).

"19 Large Buildings in 3 Years." Indianapolis News (March 16, 1925).

Indiana Construction Record (July 12, 1924). Volume VI, Number 15.

"Herbert Selig." Indianapolis Star (July 27, 1924).

"Moses Selig." Indianapolis Star (September 20, 1919).

"Sidney Selig." Indianapolis Star (November 26, 1918).

"Morrison Company Celebrates Golden Anniversary in City." Indianapolis Star (October 16, 1927).

"Lewis E. Morrison." Indianapolis Times (April 19, 1939).

Polk's Indianapolis City Directory: 1890-1940.

Phillips, Clifton J. Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth: 1880-1920. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau & Indiana Historical Society, 1968.

Wilson, William R. Indiana, A History. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966.