

# THE INLAND CASKET FACTORY BUILDING

2320 North Atlantic Street  
Spokane, WA 99205

**BUILT IN 1914 and 1927**



*(photo taken in c. 1927)*

# Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination

*Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office, City Hall, Sixth Floor  
808 W. Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, WA 99201*

## 1. Name of Property

Historic Name **INLAND CASKET COMPANY  
FACTORY BUILDING**

## 2. Location

Street & Number 2320 North Atlantic Street  
City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA 99205  
Parcel Number 35071.4903

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both		<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> residential
	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes, restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other

## 4. Owner of Property

Name Chrisline Properties LLC c/o Marshall Clark  
Street & Number 2320 North Atlantic Street Ste. 100  
City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA 99205  
Telephone Number/E-mail 325-3333, clark@clarkpacific.net

## 5. Location of Legal Description

Courthouse, Registry of Deeds Spokane County Courthouse  
Street Number 1116 West Broadway  
City, State, Zip Code Spokane, WA 99260  
County Spokane

## 6. Representation of Existing Surveys

Title City of Spokane Historic Landmarks Survey  
Date Federal\_\_\_\_ State\_\_\_\_ County\_\_\_\_ Local\_\_\_\_  
Location of Survey Records Spokane Historic Preservation Office

*Final nomination reviewed & accepted at 20 Oct 2004 hearing*

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**  
(see nomination, section 8)

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair  
 deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check One**

unaltered  
 altered  
**Check One**  
 original site  
 moved & date \_\_\_\_\_

## 8. Spokane Register Categories and Statement of Significance

**Applicable Spokane Register of Historic Places Categories: Mark "x" on one or more for the categories that qualify the property for the Spokane Register listing:**

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Spokane 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 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 history.

*Narrative statement of significance is found on one or more continuation sheets.*

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

*Bibliography is found on one or more continuation sheets.*

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property	Less than one acre.
Verbal Boundary Description	Central Addition, Blocks 6 through 10, Block 34
Verbal Boundary Justification	Nominated property includes entire parcel and urban legal description.

## 11. Form Prepared By

Name and Title	Linda Yeomans, Consultant
Organization	Historic Preservation Planning
Street, City, State, Zip Code	501 West 27 <sup>th</sup> Avenue, Spokane, WA 99203
Telephone Number	509-456-3828
Email Address	<a href="mailto:lkyeomans1@aol.com">lkyeomans1@aol.com</a>
Date Final Nomination Heard	20 October 2004

## 12. Additional Documentation

Map	City/County of Spokane current plat map.
Photographs and Slides	14 B&W prints, 17 color slides.

13. Signature of Owner(s)

Name Chris Linc Properties LLC  
Michael H. Clark member

Name Shirley A. Clark

14. For Official Use Only

Date Received \_\_\_\_\_ Attest \_\_\_\_\_

Date Heard \_\_\_\_\_ City Clerk \_\_\_\_\_

Commission Decision \_\_\_\_\_ Approved as to Form  
Assistant City Attorney \_\_\_\_\_

Council/Board Action \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**We hereby certify that this property has been listed in the Spokane Register of Historic Places.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
CITY ADMINISTRATOR, City of Spokane  
or

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIR, Spokane County Commissioners

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIR, Spokane City/County Historic Landmarks Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
OFFICER, Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Officer  
Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office  
Sixth Floor, City Hall, W. 808 Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, WA 99201

### **NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

The Inland Casket Company factory building was built in two stages: the north half of the building was constructed in 1913, and the south half of the building was constructed in 1927. Designed as a three-story brick masonry industrial block with symmetrical fenestration patterns, the Inland Casket Company factory building is a good example of vernacular commercial/industrial architecture. The building's originally designed primary and secondary facades face west and north onto the intersection of Carlisle and Atlantic in the North Central neighborhood of Spokane, Washington. The building has undergone some exterior modifications but still retains good architectural and historical integrity which is demonstrated in its original location and original association as a commercial building, and in most of its original design, materials, and workmanship.

### **CURRENT (2004) APPEARANCE & CONDITION**

#### ***Site***

The Inland Casket Company factory building is sited on the southeast corner of the intersection of West Carlisle Avenue and North Atlantic Street, one block west of North Division Street. The parcel on which the building is sited is identified as Lots 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 in Block 34 in the Central Addition of Spokane, Washington. The parcel measures 213 feet wide at its façade which faces Atlantic Street, and 150 feet deep.<sup>1</sup> The building is built on Lots 9 and 10 while the remaining lots in the parcel are almost entirely developed as flat, paved surface parking. The exception is a one-story rectangular brick building with six garage stalls which was built in 2003. It is located along the east boundary of the parking lot in the southeast corner of the property. The parking lot is surrounded by a six-foot-high black wrought iron fence installed on the west and south property lines, and a six-foot-high chain-link metal fence installed along the east boundary of the property. A manicured lawn parallels the west and north facades of the building between the building and the sidewalk, and a parking strip of manicured lawn separates the sidewalk from the street. The property is located in a mixed-use neighborhood which is surrounded by residential homes to the north and west, and by commercial development and contemporary commercial infill to the east and south.

#### ***Exterior***

The Inland Casket Company factory building is a three-story brick masonry vernacular industrial commercial block. It has a rectangular footprint that measures 82 feet wide and 100 feet deep. A one-story garage addition is located on the northeast corner of the building and measures 16 feet deep and 42 feet wide. The three-story factory building and the small garage addition both have flat roofs made of a membrane roof sheeting.

A plain brick parapet with metal coping encircles the flat roof of the three-story factory building and reveals a symmetrical design of raised and inset brick panels on the north, west, and south elevations. The exterior masonry of the building is red brick laid in

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<sup>1</sup> Spokane County Tax Assessor Records and First American Title Metroscan Property Profile, 2004.

common bond. The foundation for the building is made of poured concrete. Vertically oriented windows that produce symmetrical fenestration patterns illuminate the interior of the building on all four elevations.

#### *Primary Facades*

The factory building was originally designed with two primary facades: a *west façade* and a *north façade*. The two facades are nearly identical in design, featuring a uniform placement of vertical multi-paned, double-hung windows that produce symmetrical fenestration patterns. Each window is capped with a round brick arch, radiating brick voussoirs, and a brick lug sill. In contrast to the east and south elevations of the building, the west and north facades are articulated with rhythmic brick belt courses that separate the first floor from the second floor, and the second floor from the third floor. The brick belt courses are located above the arched windows on the first and second floors, producing two continuous undulating horizontal courses that connect the arched tops of the window rows. The windows are contemporary (2002) double-hung vinyl units with multi-paned muntin/mullion bars contained between two panes of glass. The building's original 1913 front door is retained on the west façade. It is a wood-paneled unit with upper-leaf glazing and is capped by a multi-paned transom light. An unusual tripartite window with a gothic arch made of brick is located on the first floor on the north façade, interrupting the symmetrical design pattern produced by the surrounding vertical windows.<sup>2</sup>

#### *East and South Elevations*

The *east elevation* of the building abuts concrete surface parking and landscaping which is located between the building's east elevation and the east boundary of the property. The east elevation reveals symmetrical fenestration patterns on the second and third floors, a large contemporary aluminum-clad display window on the southeast corner on the first floor, and an original metal-paneled sliding warehouse door on the first floor at the level of the parking lot. The east elevation is dominated by a one-story garage addition, which is located on the northeast corner of the building. The addition is constructed of brick masonry, has a flat roof, and contains garage space for three vehicles. The addition measures 16 feet deep and 42 feet wide. The west half of the addition was built in 1927, and the east half of the addition was built in 2003. In contrast to the west 1927 addition, the design for the east 2003 addition has an arched garage door and is constructed of used brick in shades of dark red to light brown.

The *south elevation* was originally designed as the rear of the factory building and looked out onto an industrial yard. Currently the south elevation abuts a paved parking lot which measures approximately 120 feet wide and 142 feet deep. Like the north and west facades, the south elevation of the building has symmetrical fenestration patterns with

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<sup>2</sup> This window appears to have been installed between 1928 and 1945, and illuminated the office of Emil Skone, president and general manager of the Inland Casket Company (source of information: Inland Casket Company archives).

vertical double-hung windows. The south elevation is dominated by a partial-width covered porch on the first floor that measures 60 feet wide. The porch is covered with a metal shed roof and is supported by square brick pillars. Two 20 foot-wide balconies are located one above the other on the second and third floors. They were built above the center section of the porch and are supported by brick porch pillars that extend up to the decks of the balconies. The balconies are protected by balustrades (required by Spokane building codes), and are made of wrought iron. Three double storefront entrances are located below the porch roof.

### *Interior*

According to Spokane County Tax Assessor records, the interior of the Inland Casket Company factory building (minus the attached three-car garage addition on the northeast corner of the building) is equal to approximately 8,200 square feet on the first floor. The second and third floors have the same number of square feet, for an above-ground total of 24,600 square feet of interior space. The interior of the building is mostly unfinished and has exposed brick masonry walls, a combination of poured concrete and wood floors, and exposed wood floor joists, ceiling beams, and support columns. The first floor is equally divided into four suites which are available for commercial/industrial development. In contrast to the other three suites, the suite in the southwest corner of the first floor is finished as an office with a combination of painted sheetrock; wood paneled ceilings; a combination of poured concrete, carpet-covered and hardwood floors; and temporary interior partition walls. The second floor is also divided into four suites, which are located in the southwest, northwest, northeast, and southeast corners of the building. Staircases which are located on the center north wall and the center east wall provide access to the first and third floors in addition to a central elevator. The south half of the third floor is finished as a 4,000 square-foot apartment. It has a living room, dining room, kitchen, den, three bedrooms, three bathrooms, and rooms that provide storage. The north half of the third floor is unfinished.

### **ORIGINAL APPEARANCE**

The original appearance of the Inland Casket Company factory building is revealed in historic photographs taken in c. 1928, the 1940s, and the 1950s. The two photographs taken in 1928 picture the north and west facades and south elevation of the building. Each photograph reveals original brick masonry cladding, paneled parapet detail, undulating brick belt courses above the first and second-story windows on the north and west facades, vertical multi-paned double-hung, wood-sash windows arranged in symmetrical patterns on all three elevations, a small front door on the west façade, and a shed roof made of metal on the south elevation. Suspended by brackets, the metal roof appears to be about 30 feet long and hangs over warehouse doors on the first floor. The south elevation of the building abuts a flat, level parking and industrial yard that surrounds the building to the south and east. One of the photographs pictures the one-story garage addition at the northeast corner of the building (garage built in 1927). Both photographs reveal landscaping, which includes deciduous tree saplings and a manicured

lawn located between the building and sidewalk, and the sidewalk and the street. A rare historic photograph of the interior pictures exposed brick masonry walls and an original multi-paned double-hung window. The floor appears to be a combination of ceramic tile and wood planks.<sup>3</sup>

### **MODIFICATIONS**

The north half of the Inland Casket Company factory building was built in 1913 (Spokane building permit #4693). The first modification was made 14 years later in 1927 when the south half of the building was constructed as an exact duplicate of the north half. At the same time a small, one-story 20-foot by 16-foot garage addition was added to the northeast corner of the building (Spokane building permit #27569). The two buildings were designed, built, and used as one large industrial/commercial block during their period of significance from 1913 to 1954, rendering the 1927 historic modification significant as an integral part of the entire structure.

From the 1970s to 2002, the building was used for storage and was not well maintained. Damage from vandalism, vermin, fire, and weather rendered the building un-inhabitable and derelict. Saving it from threatened condemnation and demolition, the current owner purchased the property in 2002.

In 2002-2003, the property's industrial yard and the interior and exterior of the building were cleaned. Debris was removed, the industrial yard was re-graded, leveled, and paved with asphalt, and was enclosed with wrought-iron fencing. The strips of manicured lawn that originally paralleled the north and west facades of the building were re-graded and restored with an in-ground sprinkler system, new lawn, and a new sidewalk of poured concrete (the original deciduous trees that were planted along the north and west facades of the building died or were destroyed sometime from 1980 to 2000).

In 2002, the exterior brick masonry cladding was washed with *Sure Klean*, using a low-pressure cold water wash under 400 psi. Due to extensive decay and deterioration, the original 1913 and 1927 multi-paned double-hung wood-sash windows were removed and replaced with contemporary multi-paned single-hung vinyl-sash units. A window in the center of the north façade on the first floor was removed and replaced with an exterior metal door (egress building code requirement). A ground-floor window on the south elevation was removed and replaced by double storefront doors made of metal and plate-glass. The original metal shed roof on the south elevation was removed sometime before 2002. In 2003, a metal shed roof was re-installed in the same place as the original roof. Built with a different design than the original industrial metal shed roof, the 2003 roof is longer (and perhaps heavier) than the original shed roof and is therefore supported by brick pillars instead of metal brackets. A center balcony was installed on the second and

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<sup>3</sup> According to Inland Casket Company records, the photograph was taken sometime between 1914 and 1945.

third floor of the building above the shed roof. The center brick pillars that support the shed roof extend up to the second and third floor, supporting the balconies. New doors were installed on the second floor and the third floor at the level of the balconies on the south elevation.

In 2003, contemporary metal garage doors were installed in the 1927 red brick masonry garage addition at the northeast corner of the building. At the same time a small garage (22 feet by 16 feet) clad in used bricks was attached to the east elevation of the 1927 garage. The simple, functional, industrial design of the 2003 addition is similar to the design of the original garage but differs in appearance in the type and color of brick used and the garage door design. While the 1927 garage has two rectangular-shaped doors, the 2003 garage has one arched garage door. A division in the brick bonding pattern occurs between the two structures, helping to further define the two garages from each other.

The interior of the three-story brick masonry factory building was cleaned in 2002. The southwest corner of the first floor and the south half of the third floor were finished in 2003. Wood staircases, which are required by Spokane building codes, were installed on the first, second, and third floors in the center of the north wall and the center of the east wall. The building's electrical and mechanical systems were updated to meet city building and fire code requirements with contemporary wiring, HVAC, and plumbing.

In summary, the Inland Casket Company factory building has been modified but still conveys historical and architectural integrity which is represented at 100% in its original location and association as an early Spokane industrial building, and represented at about 75% in its original design, materials, and workmanship. With good integrity, the building is eligible for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places.

Areas of Significance	Commerce, Industry
Period of Significance	1913 to 1954
Significant Dates	1913, 1927
Architect	Ballard Plannary, 1913 design G. A. Pehrson, 1927 design

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Built in two identical parts in 1913 and 1927, the Inland Casket Company factory building is historically significant as one of the longest-operating and the only surviving casket factory building in Spokane, Washington. Identified as a good example of a funerary building type in the Multiple Property Documentation (MPD), *Funerary Properties in Spokane, Washington, 1888-1978*, the Inland Casket Company factory building meets the registration requirements stated in the MPD for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places. The Inland Casket Company was founded by Emil A. Skone and his two business partners, John Powers and Peter Sether, and manufactured hundreds of thousands of caskets for 65 years from 1913 to 1978 in Spokane. The company designed, built, and finished ready-made and custom-designed caskets in various shapes and sizes, and in a plethora of upholstered fabrics. When it was printed in 1927, a *Spokesman-Review* newspaper article reported the company at that time employed over 20 carpenters, seamstresses, and upholsterers who were responsible for manufacturing 4,000 to 5,000 caskets a year. The company made caskets for all of the funeral homes and cemeteries in Spokane, and shipped caskets to destinations throughout Washington, eastern Oregon, Idaho and Montana. As a dominant industrial and commercial manufacturer of caskets and coffins, the Inland Casket Company was regarded as “one of the largest factories in the [Pacific] Northwest.”<sup>4</sup> The casket company was owned by the Skone family and their extended members for nearly nine decades from 1913 to 2002. The Inland Casket Company factory building achieved significance particularly from 1913 to 1954, in the areas of “commerce” and “industry” for its association with the funerary business and funerary trends in Spokane, Washington. As Spokane’s only surviving example of the funerary type, “casket factory,” as described in the MPD, the Inland Casket Company factory building is historically significant and eligible for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Category A.

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

As documented in the MPD, funerary properties in Spokane, Washington started appearing in the area almost as soon as the town was organized in the 1870s-1880s.<sup>5</sup> The city’s first large, planned cemeteries were developed as early as 1888, and the first funeral homes were listed in city directories the same year. The first casket-making enterprise in Spokane was advertised in 1896 as the Spokane Coffin Factory, and was located in a building on South Post Street in downtown Spokane (now demolished). The

<sup>4</sup> “Inland Casket to Spend \$40,000.” *Spokesman-Review*, 21 Nov 1927.

<sup>5</sup> Yeomans, Linda. *Funerary Properties in Spokane, Washington, 1888-1978*. Multiple Property Documentation, Spokane City/County Office of Historic Preservation, Spokane, WA, 2004.

building was occupied by Smith & Company Funeral Home, who also owned the casket-making operation. Financed by the funeral home, the casket business moved in 1903 to a factory building built specifically for the manufacture of caskets, coffins, and other burial necessities. The factory building was called the Spokane Casket Company and was sited along the banks of the Spokane River in Peaceful Valley, a small almost-forgotten neighborhood where immigrants and working-class men and women lived in narrow houses and wood shacks. The plain, rectangular-shaped, wood-frame casket factory building was designed to be inconspicuous and was hidden behind trees, shrubs, and homes in Peaceful Valley.<sup>6</sup>

### *The Inland Casket Company*

Two years later in 1905, another casket factory appeared in Spokane. It was the Inland Casket Company, which was founded by Emil August Skone, a casket-maker from Minnesota. According to family records, Skone was born in 1872 and worked with his wife, Anna Skone, as a casket finisher and upholsterer for the North Western Casket Company in St. Paul, Minnesota. When he was 30 years of age, he felt he could do better than the company's newly hired foreman, and quit his job. The company owner was friendly to Skone, told him about the Spokane Casket Company in Peaceful Valley, and even helped him financially to relocate to Spokane.

Emil and Anna Skone made their way to Spokane, arriving in 1904. Hired immediately, Emil worked for the Spokane Casket Company in Peaceful Valley from the time he arrived in Spokane to October 1, 1905. Ten days later he opened his own casket company in a one-story building at 21 West Sharp Avenue. Built of wood and susceptible to fire, the building burned to the ground eight years later on April 30, 1913.

Emil Skone, however, proved to be resourceful, undaunted, and unstoppable in his quest to rebuild his casket factory. The very next month, the company purchased Lots 8, 9, and 10, Block 34, in the Central Addition of north Spokane at 2320 North Atlantic Street for \$3,500.<sup>7</sup> On May 26, 1913 the company applied for a building permit from the City of Spokane. They were issued permit #4693 and hired the Ballard Plannary, a noted Spokane architectural firm, to design the building. The cost of construction was reported on the permit at \$13,000.

The site for the casket factory was located on the southeast corner of North Atlantic Street and West Carlisle Avenue, which is located in a transition zone, sandwiched between a residential neighborhood to the west and north, and a commercial strip to the south and east along North Division Street. Unhappy with the prospect of a casket factory being built in their neighborhood, area residents filed a civil suit against the

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<sup>6</sup> Emerson, Stephen. *Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) Documentation of the Spokane Casket Company Factory Buildings, Spokane, WA*. Archisto Enterprises: Spokane, 2001.

<sup>7</sup> Inland Casket Company records, Richard Greenwood Collection.

Inland Casket Company in June-July, 1913. The *Spokane Daily Chronicle* reported the following events on July 9, 1913:

Superior Court Judge E. H. Sullivan yesterday granted an injunction against the Inland Casket Factory, prohibiting it from using a building, being erected at Atlantic and Carlisle, for manufacturing coffins. Residents of the vicinity claimed a factory of any kind would mar an otherwise desirable residence district, and that a coffin factory in particular was odious to the people who would live near it.

The civil suit delayed construction of the building for four months from June through September, but by October the suit was settled for \$2,000. The three-story brick masonry building was completed on October 10, 1913.<sup>8</sup> Two months later the Inland Casket Company filed papers of incorporation on December 19<sup>th</sup>. The company president & general manager was listed as Emil Skone; the secretary & treasurer was John Powers; and the vice president was Peter Sether. Monthly salaries for the principals of the company were set at \$60 and \$65.

The three men worked well together. According to Inland Casket Company records, Powers was a bookkeeper and accountant, Sether was a carpenter, and Emil Skone was an experienced upholsterer, whose finely tuned skills were necessary for finishing the interiors of the caskets. The caskets that were manufactured at the factory were made of cedar, which was brought in from Priest River, Idaho and British Columbia, Canada. The lumber was dried in a kiln located on site. The lumber was then processed and cut, the shell of the casket was made, and the upholsterers finished the interior of each casket with simple linings or fancy frills, whatever the customer desired. A brochure published by the casket company detailed hundreds of choices for casket shapes, sizes, and finishes. In 1907, a casket could be purchased for \$15 which paid for “good black broadcloth” and included “ball molding in [the] base and top.” For \$24, a finer casket could be purchased, which included “fine black broadcloth” and a “massive top and caps, five fold drapery, silk fringe, tassels, cord, and sliders.” By 1925, casket prices started at \$20 and went up to as much as \$100.<sup>9</sup> All of the wood casket shells that were finished by the company were manufactured on site at the factory. Casket shells made of other materials, like metal, were special-ordered from the Midwest where they were manufactured in steel-producing communities and were then finished at the Inland Casket Company factory building. When completed, the caskets—both stock and custom-designed, were delivered to Spokane funeral homes or shipped to cities and towns throughout Washington, eastern Montana, and Idaho and Oregon.

In 1927, the Inland Casket Company factory building was enlarged to include an addition that was built onto the south wall of the 1913 building. Spokane building permit #27569

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<sup>8</sup> Inland Casket Company records, Richard Greenwood Collection.

<sup>9</sup> Personal interview with Richard Greenwood, grandson of Emil Skone.

listed the construction cost at \$20,000, but a *Spokesman-Review* newspaper article reported the construction cost, with equipment, at \$40,000. The newspaper headlines and article applauded the local and regional importance of the new building and the impact it had on the Spokane community:

INLAND CASKET TO SPEND \$40,000

Begins \$30,000 Three-Story Brick on Atlantic  
Equipment Will Cost \$10,000  
Began 21 Years Ago  
Employs 20  
Will More Than Double Size of its Present Plant

The Inland Casket Company is building a three-story brick addition to its plant at N. 2320 Atlantic to cost \$30,000, and the equipment will cost \$10,000 or more. The improved plant will represent an investment of about \$100,000. The owners are E. A. Skone and E. P. Sether, who started at a location 21 years ago in a one-story frame building.

Now they have 20 employees and manufacture 4,000 to 5,000 caskets a year, finding a market in eastern Washington, eastern Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. It is one of the largest casket factories in the [Pacific] Northwest.

The present three-story brick building is 40 by 30 [feet], and when the new section is completed, the whole will be 80 by 100 [feet], so that the floor space will be more than doubled. G. A. Pehrson is the architect.

G. A. Pehrson was a prominent Spokane architect who was known for designing sturdy, structurally sound buildings. Noteworthy examples of his work include the Davenport Hotel (along with Kirtland Cutter), the Spokane Daily Chronicle Building, the Paulsen Medical & Dental Building, and the Spokane & Eastern Bank Building (demolished). For the Inland Casket Company factory building, Pehrson was able to exactly match the grade and level of the two buildings, and designed the addition in a mirror image of the 1913 building. Upon close inspection of the west façade, a vertical joint is evident where the two buildings were joined. Settling was minimal and the solid construction of the structure and the uniform brick masonry design is a tribute to Pehrson's expertise in the field of architecture, design, and architectural engineering.

The three principals of the Inland Casket Company, Powers, Sether, and Skone, died respectively in 1923, 1933, and 1945. The company was then owned and managed by the Skone family which included their son, Virgil, and two sons-in-law, William Miller and

Bill Frender. They continued making caskets until the late 1970s when small independent, locally owned casket factories were unfortunately absorbed or replaced by larger, mega-national corporations. This trend ended casket manufacturing in Spokane. Beginning in 1978, funeral homes and cemeteries in Spokane were forced to order caskets from factories that were mostly located in the Midwest or South Atlantic United States, or from Canada, Indonesia, Taiwan, or other exotic ports.<sup>10</sup>

### **HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

To be eligible for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places, the Inland Casket Company factory building must convey its historic character in both physical and associative ways, and must have documented historical significance when evaluated within the context of funerary properties in Spokane, Washington.

#### ***Associative Significance***

The historical significance of the Inland Casket Company factory building is tied to the areas of significance, “commerce” and “industry” in Spokane. Especially during its period of significance from 1913 to 1954, but also spanning the years up to 1978, the Inland Casket Company factory building embodied trends in Spokane’s funerary business that embraced the manufacture of caskets. Caskets were a necessary part of everyday life in Spokane and the surrounding region, and casket factories evolved to a level of great importance. Caring for the dead in a respectful manner was paramount in Spokane from the time large cemeteries were planned and developed in the area, beginning in 1888. The Inland Casket Company factory building represented society’s notion of “paying their last respects” to the hundreds of thousands of people who purchased caskets for their deceased loved ones. Locally owned, operated, and sited, the Inland Casket Company factory building provided an efficient convenience for customers, cemeteries, and funeral homes who sought the company’s services. As demonstrated in the MPD, *Funerary Properties in Spokane, Washington, 1888-1978*, the Inland Casket Company factory building played a significant role in the development of funerary properties in Spokane from 1888 to 1978.

#### ***Physical Significance***

The Inland Casket Company factory building is a good example of the funerary building type, “casket factory” as described in the MPD and retains required character-defining features. These include the Inland Casket Company factory building’s inconspicuous site which is in a mixed-use transition zone located between the edge of a residential neighborhood and the edge of a commercial strip; the building’s three-story brick masonry industrial/factory form; the building’s lack of decorative embellishment; the building’s symmetrical fenestration patterns; and the building’s evidence of industrial warehouse entrances.

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<sup>10</sup> Personal interview with Richard Greenwood, grandson of Emil Skone.

***Integrity***

National Register Bulletin #15 explains that “all properties change over time.” The Bulletin states that it is “not necessary for a property to retain all of its historic physical features or characteristics. The property must retain, however, the essential physical features that enable it to convey its historic identity.”<sup>11</sup>

The Inland Casket Company factory building contains *three dominant identifying architectural features: form, cladding, and fenestration*. The building’s original three-story brick masonry industrial building *form* and exterior brick masonry *cladding* are currently intact. They retain integrity found in the building’s original location and industrial vernacular design, materials, and workmanship, and easily convey the building’s historic association as an early brick masonry commercial block specifically built for industrial and commercial purposes.

The 2003 porch/balcony construction on the south elevation of the building, however, is architecturally incompatible with the industrial design of the building. With a contemporary design that is completely different than the original 1913-1927 design of the building, the new porch/balcony is an inappropriate modification, but does not diminish the historic integrity of the building. Even with the contemporary porch, the original building is able to convey its historic use as an industrial/factory building and is able to convey most of its original design, materials, and workmanship which illustrate building trends, materials, and designs that were popular during the early 1900s in Spokane.

The third identifying architectural feature of the building is represented in the building’s *fenestration*, and the *fenestration patterns* produced. The original symmetrical fenestration patterns are intact, producing excellent exterior integrity in the original fenestration pattern design. Constituting the other 50% of the third identifying feature of the building, the original windows were badly decayed and deteriorated, and were replaced with contemporary units in 2003. While similar to the building’s original multi-paned double-hung windows, the replacement units are not exact duplicates of the original units. This fact somewhat diminishes the integrity of this third identifying feature of the building. Thankfully this fact does not destroy the building’s ability to convey most of its original design, which is not only found in just the window units, but is also found in the building’s industrial form, brick masonry wall cladding, symmetrical fenestration patterns, and significant associative documented historic use as a casket factory for 65 years.

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<sup>11</sup> National Park Service. *National Register Bulletin #15: “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation.”* Washington DC: NPS, 1995.

***Summary***

In summary, the Inland Casket Company factory building reveals exterior window and south elevation modifications that have reduced the exterior architectural integrity of the building's original design, materials, and workmanship to some degree. Fortunately, two of the three identifying features of the building—the building's industrial brick masonry form and brick masonry wall cladding—are intact, and enable the building to convey most of its original design, materials, workmanship, and all of its original location and association as an early Spokane industrial/commercial structure. Combined with its documented historic significance as the only surviving casket factory building in Spokane, the Inland Casket Company factory building is a tangible demonstration of the building type, "casket factory," as described in the MPD. It further represents cultural trends and patterns in Spokane that led to the establishment of casket factories. The building embodies the manufacturing business in early Spokane and was the source of employment for numerous working-class citizens for over six decades. As noted by Spokane historian, Stephen Emerson, the Inland Casket Company factory building provided a "quality product for the regional community at a time when local business enterprise and resources were cherished, before the economy came to be dominated by corporate chains."<sup>12</sup> Historically significant, the Inland Casket Company factory building is eligible for listing on the Spokane Register of Historic Places under Category A.

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<sup>12</sup> Emerson, Stephen. *Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Documentation of the Spokane Casket Company Factory Buildings, Spokane, WA. Spokane*. Archisto Enterprises, 2001.

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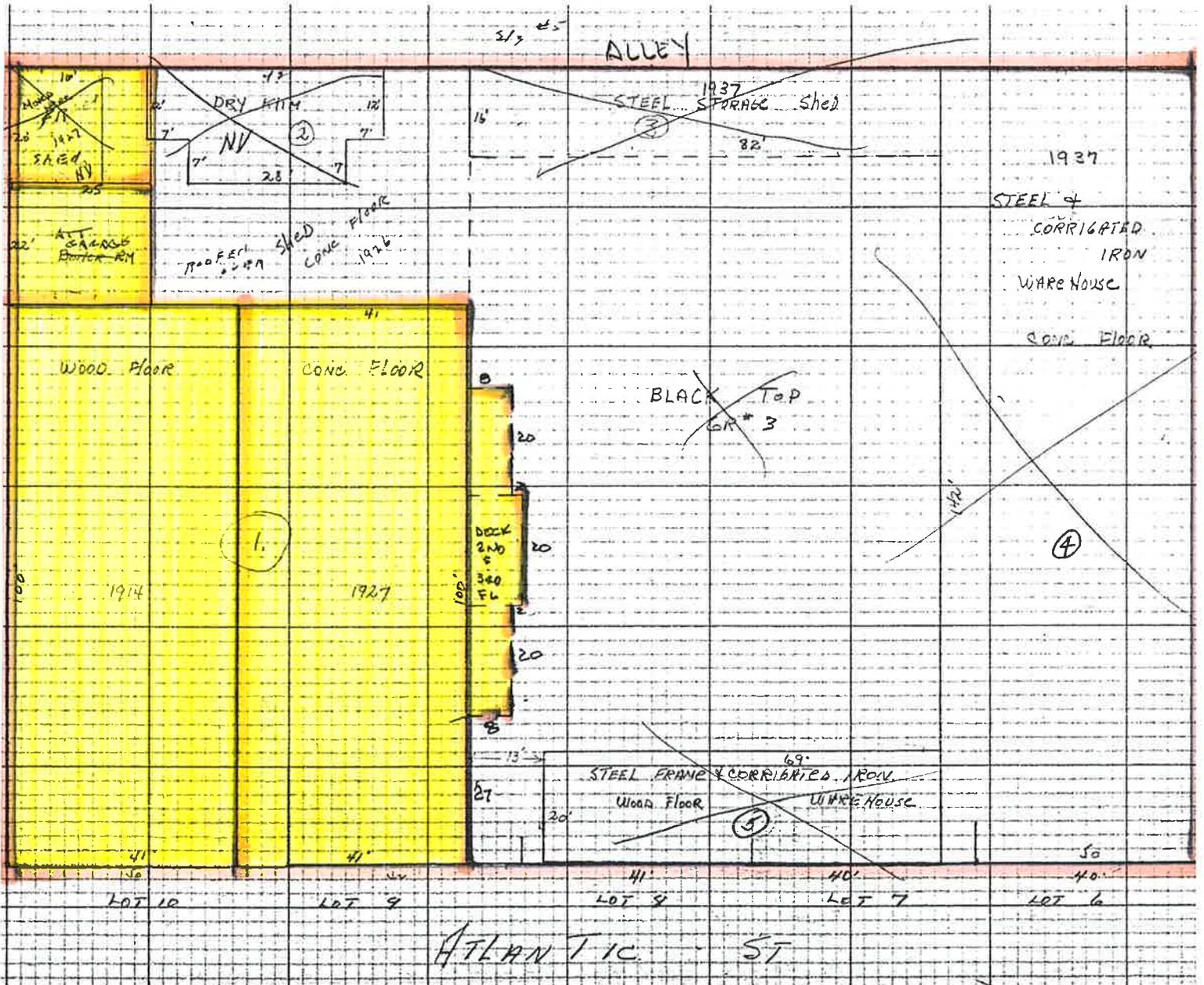
Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet  
**INLAND CASKET COMPANY BUILDING** Section 9

Site Plan

Source: Spokane County Assessor's Records, 2004.

← CARLISLE ST.

← MOUNTAINVIEW AVE



ATLANTIC STREET

← NORTH

Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet  
**INLAND CASKET COMPANY BUILDING** **Section 9**

Photo 1  
Photo 2

Northwest façade of building.  
West façade of building and original front door.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet  
**INLAND CASKET COMPANY BUILDING** **Section 9**

Photos 3 and 4 West façade of building.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet  
**INLAND CASKET COMPANY BUILDING** **Section 9**

Photos 5 and 6 North façade of building.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet  
**INLAND CASKET COMPANY BUILDING** **Section 9**

Photos 7 and 8 North façade of building and east elevation (behind one-story addition)



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet  
**INLAND CASKET COMPANY BUILDING** **Section 9**

Photos 9 and 10 South elevation of building and parking lot.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet  
**INLAND CASKET COMPANY BUILDING** Section 9

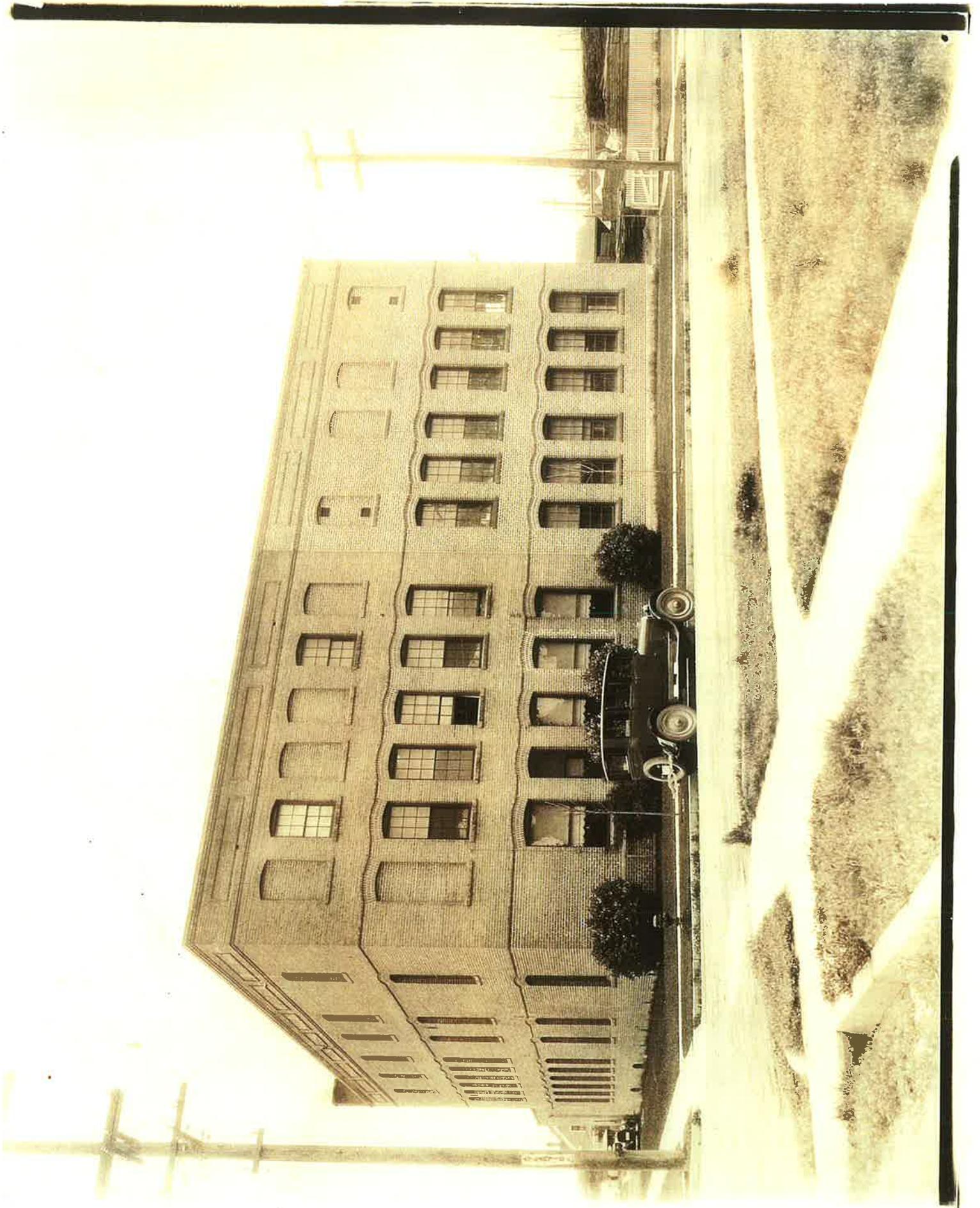
Photos 11 and 12 East elevation of building.



Spokane City/County Register of Historic Places Nomination Continuation Sheet  
**INLAND CASKET COMPANY BUILDING** **Section 9**

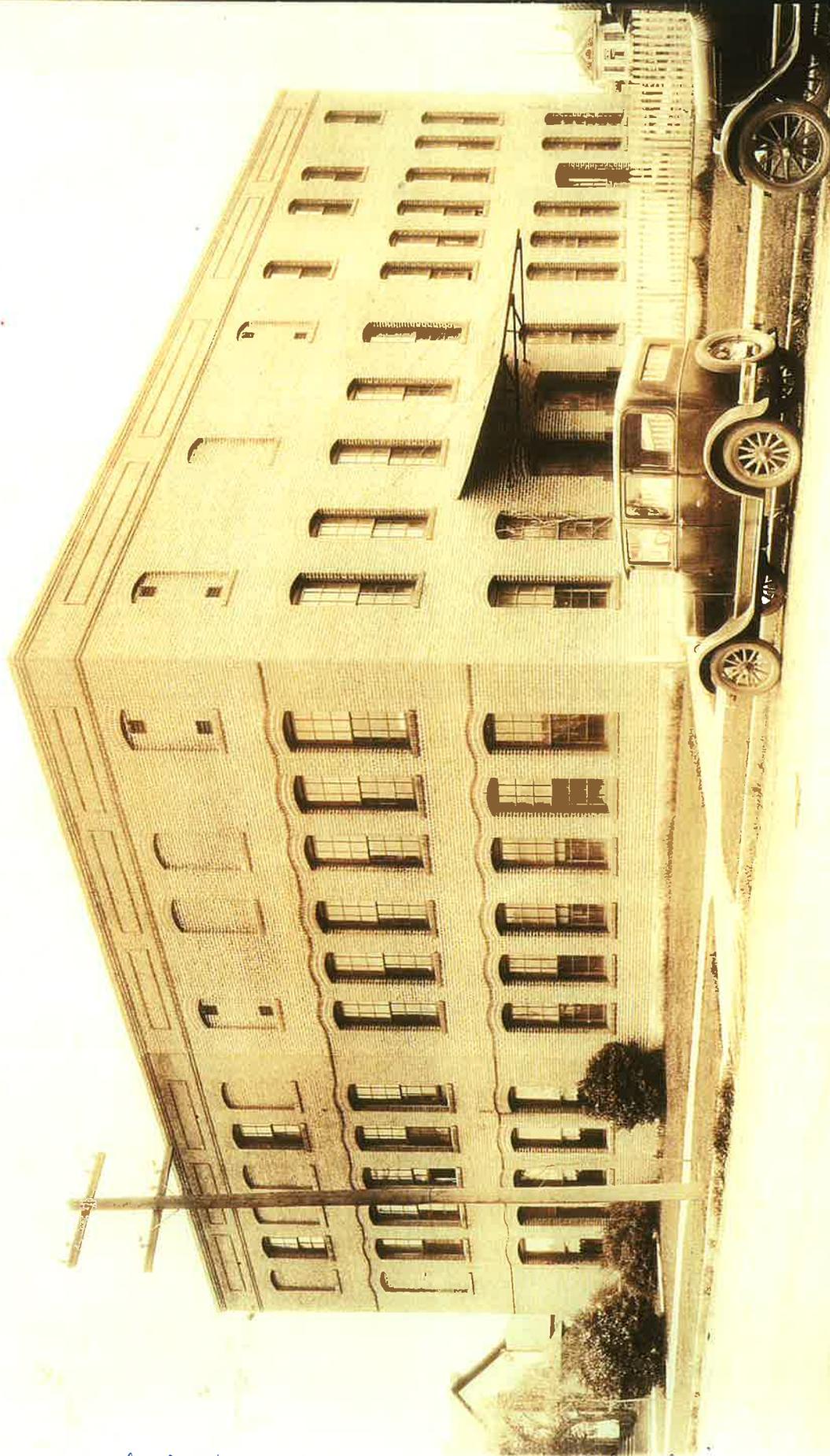
- Photo 13 East elevation of building and attached one-story garage, which faces south.
- Photo 14 New garage which is located on east edge of parking lot behind building (garage faces west).





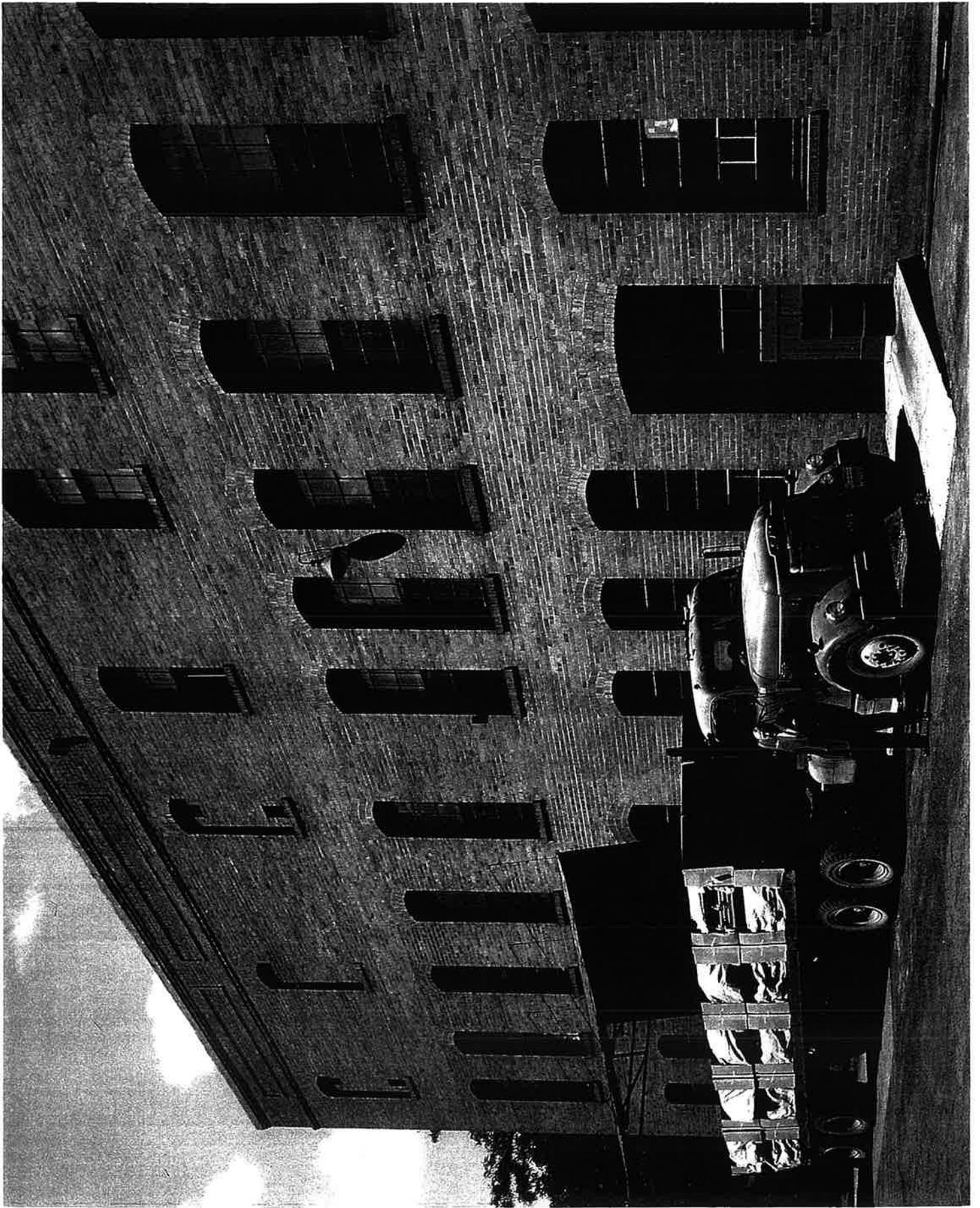
WEST FRONT ON ATLANTIC ST.

C. 1928 - INLAND CASKET CO. - 2320 N. ATLANTIC, SPOKANE, WA.



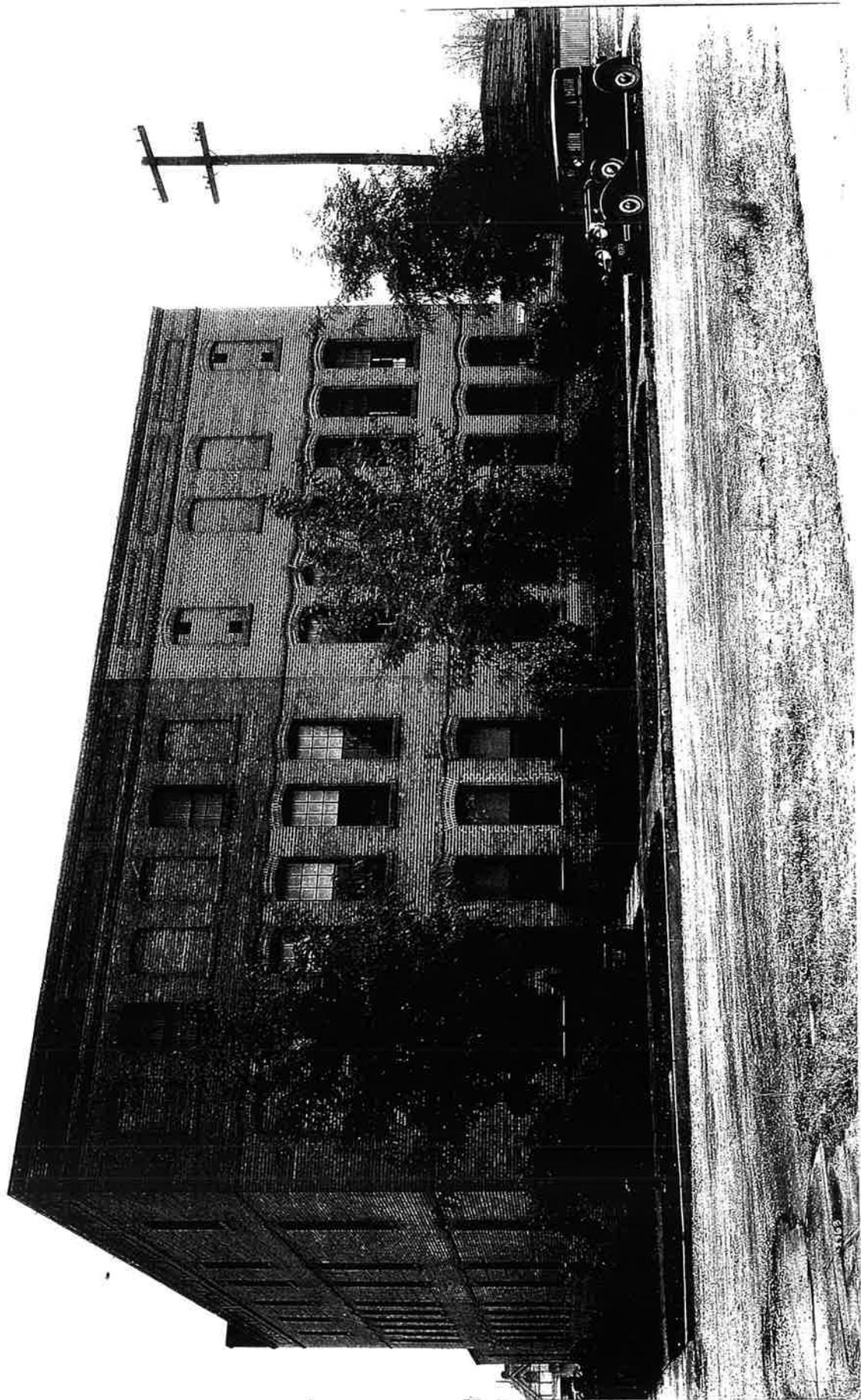
c. 1928 - Inland Casket CO. - 2320 N. Atlantic - Spokane, WA.

most made & with elevation (was parked on Atlantic)



some elevation at some

c. 1940 - Inland Casket CO - 2320 N. Atlantic, Spokane, WA.

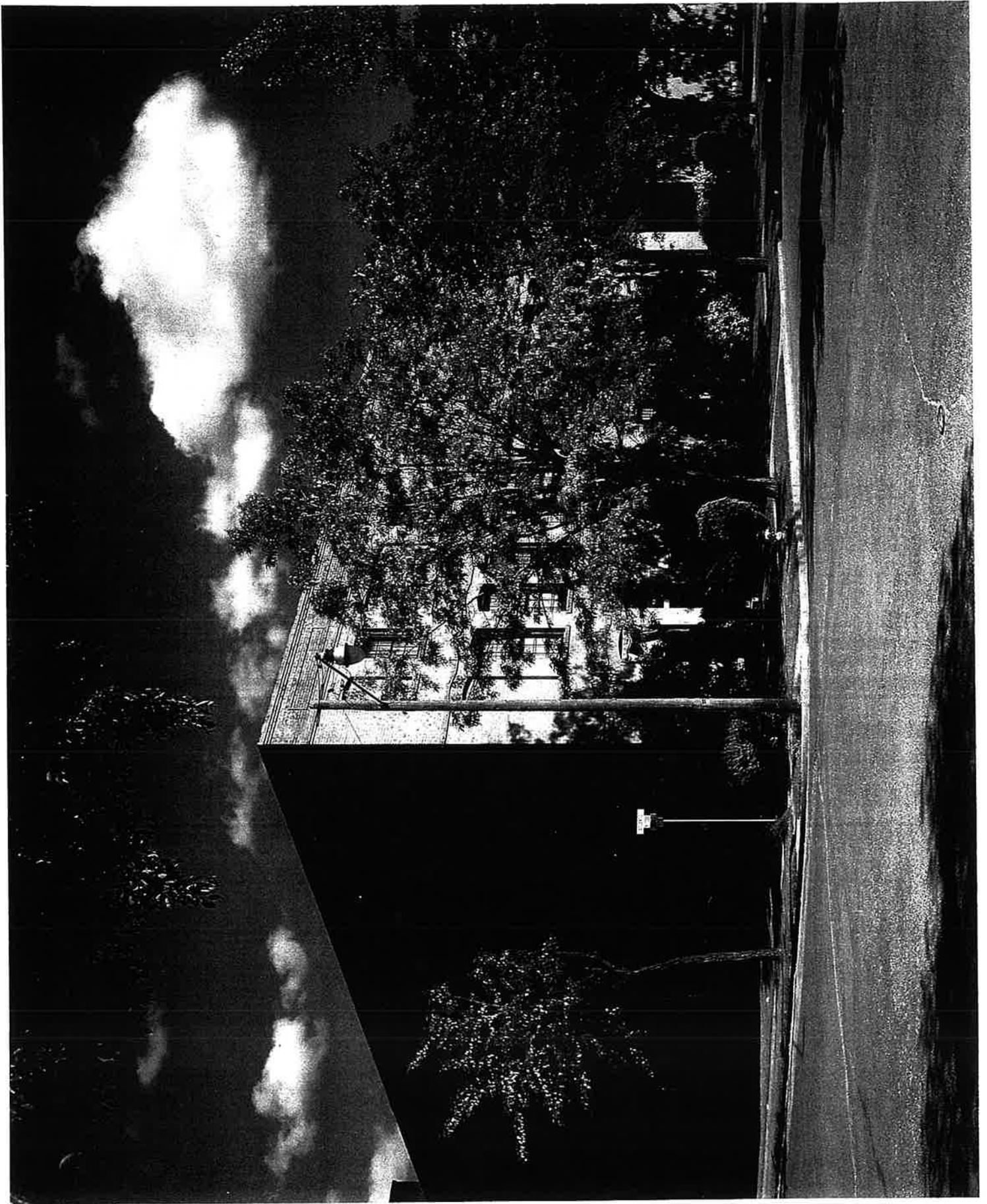


2320 N. Atlantic - West facade

c. 1940 - Inland Casket Co. 2320 N. Atlantic



c. 1914-1945 - Inland Casket Co.



2320 N. ATLANTIC - SPOKANE, WA

c. 1950s - Inland Casket CO. - 2320 N. atlantic - Spokane, wa



C. 1914 - Emil A. Stone, founder / pres / gen. mgr. Inland  
LASKET  
CO.