

## MESKER BUILDINGS STORY

The citizens of Louisiana have a treasure right under their noses, and many do not realize it. This treasure is not in pirate's gold, but in a rich and fascinating cultural history. One of the foremost relics of our town's commercial history is in the beautiful and distinctive "Mesker Buildings", located downtown.

In 1864, the Mesker Brothers began producing hollow metal storefront facades. Their 1896 St. Louis manufacturing site was located at 421 S. Sixth Street, a spot that's now inside Busch Stadium, home of Cardinals baseball. By the turn of the century, the Mesker brothers had begun producing fire-resistant exterior windows and doors. Their breakthrough designs were fundamental to improving building standards and safety.



Two separate companies contributed to these Mesker buildings in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries;

George L. Mesker & Co. from Evansville, Indiana, and Mesker Brothers Iron Works, out of St. Louis, Missouri. These companies created cast-iron and galvanized - steel facades for commercial buildings. Three brothers owned these two companies; George Mesker owned his namesake, Frank and Ben Mesker co-owned Mesker Brothers Iron Works.

These two companies sold their products through architectural catalogs issued to potential customers, and reception was terrific. The Mesker brothers offered a beautiful and inexpensive option to entrepreneurs building their own buildings. Mesker creations epitomized the industrialization and ingenuity of American businessmen at the beginning of the twentieth century.

## THE CITY OF LOUISIANA MISSOURI

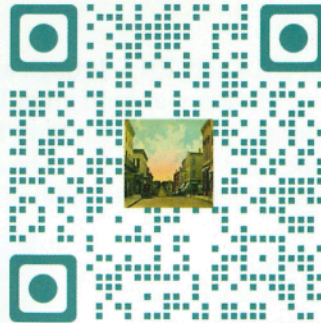
The Louisiana Visitors and Convention Bureau funded these 'walking tours' brochures for Historic Louisiana. One introduces some of the commercial Mesker exteriors located in the Downtown Historic District while the others focus on Main Street and Third Street historic homes and buildings.

[www.visitLouisianaMo.com](http://www.visitLouisianaMo.com)

### For more in-depth information

To find out more about the history of Louisiana please visit us at

[historic-la-mo.com](http://historic-la-mo.com)



**The Louisiana Historic Preservation Association (LHPA)** is made up of businesses and individuals dedicated to the preservation and maintenance of our historic properties, images and materials.

Also visit Preserve Louisiana Images at <http://cdm.sos.mo.gov>  
P. O. Box 447, Louisiana, MO 63353

## CITY OF LOUISIANA WALKING TOUR

### Historic Buildings

# MESKER STOREFRONTS



**Louisiana Historic  
Preservation Association**

## 310 GEORGIA

This Mesker was built around 1891. For many years the “Shirley Shop” provided upscale attire to Louisiana ladies. The façade of this building boasts an ornate projecting bracketed pressed metal cornice.



## 312 GEORGIA

Built between 1891 and 1892, this two-story brick Italianate style commercial building has decorative projecting metal window hoods. When housing the Bray Drug Store, customers enjoyed its soda fountain. In August of 1979 the Teasley Singer Sewing Center opened at this site.



## 314 - 316 GEORGIA

At one time housing Logan’s Restaurant, this Italianate style building was built prior to 1892 as two storefronts with a projecting pressed-metal cornice above a brick corbel pattern. Today the building is under renovation from damages sustained when the building next to it at 318 fell.



## 319 GEORGIA

The building located at 319 Georgia was built circa 1880. Note the wide pressed-metal string course above the storefront and the cast-iron pilasters.

## 403 GEORGIA

“Maxfield’s” was built circa 1880 as a twin to its neighbor to the west. Seen as Big Daddy’s Café in photos on the Preserve Louisiana Images site.

**405 GEORGIA** In 1909-1928 Frank J. Becker opened the Trans-Atlantic Tea & Coffee Shop.

## 407 – 409 GEORGIA

Built circa 1890-1895 the two uneven- sized storefronts once held the commercial venue for appliance sales and service. Note the well executed brick corbeling topped by a projecting bracketed press metal cornice. Next door the “Lewis Building” at 411-415 held Young’s 5 & 10.

## 505 - 511 GEORGIA

Built by J.M. Fritz in 1891. The two - story brick commercial building has four separate storefronts. Originally holding many merchants and professionals this building may have served as Louisiana’s first “mall.”



## 515 - 517 GEORGIA:

Renovated in 2014 and 2015 through an LHPA grant, this two-story Mesker was built circa 1870s. Originally a butcher shop, the MV Lafferty Building now houses antiques and collectables. The cast-iron pilasters add beautiful detail to the building front.

## 519 GEORGIA:

This two-story brick Italianate-style commercial building was constructed in the 1890s. The entire façade is covered with pressed metal topped by an ornate projecting metal-bracketed cornice.



## 521 GEORGIA

Built in 1890 with an Odd Fellows Lodge on the second floor and two commercial spaces on the first story this building boasts pressed metal bracketed cornices and second story window hoods. There is also elaborate brick corbeling above the second story windows.



## ALSO DOWNTOWN

**106 N 3rd** According to the city directories this building was occupied in 1892 by J.D. Bowman as a billiard hall, in 1911 as a wholesale grocer, cigar and tobacco businesses. 1937 shows Murphy – Cash – Martin Co. a wholesale grocery with other retail located on upper floors.

**108 N 3rd** – Est 1879 as the Cements Building formally known as the Alexander Mill building. William Alexander an Indiana cabinet maker built a large stone mill and had millenary business with his brother James. Samuel Reid & Co purchased in 1881, making smoking tobacco. Factory burned in 1883, and later American Express Co. was located at this address, along with Labor Union Lodge Rooms. From 1941 until 2011 it housed a funeral business.

**116 N 4th** – 1890’s Listed in the City directories 1892 R. L. Pettibone – Wood & Coal, 1903 Pollman & Betwars – Blacksmith.