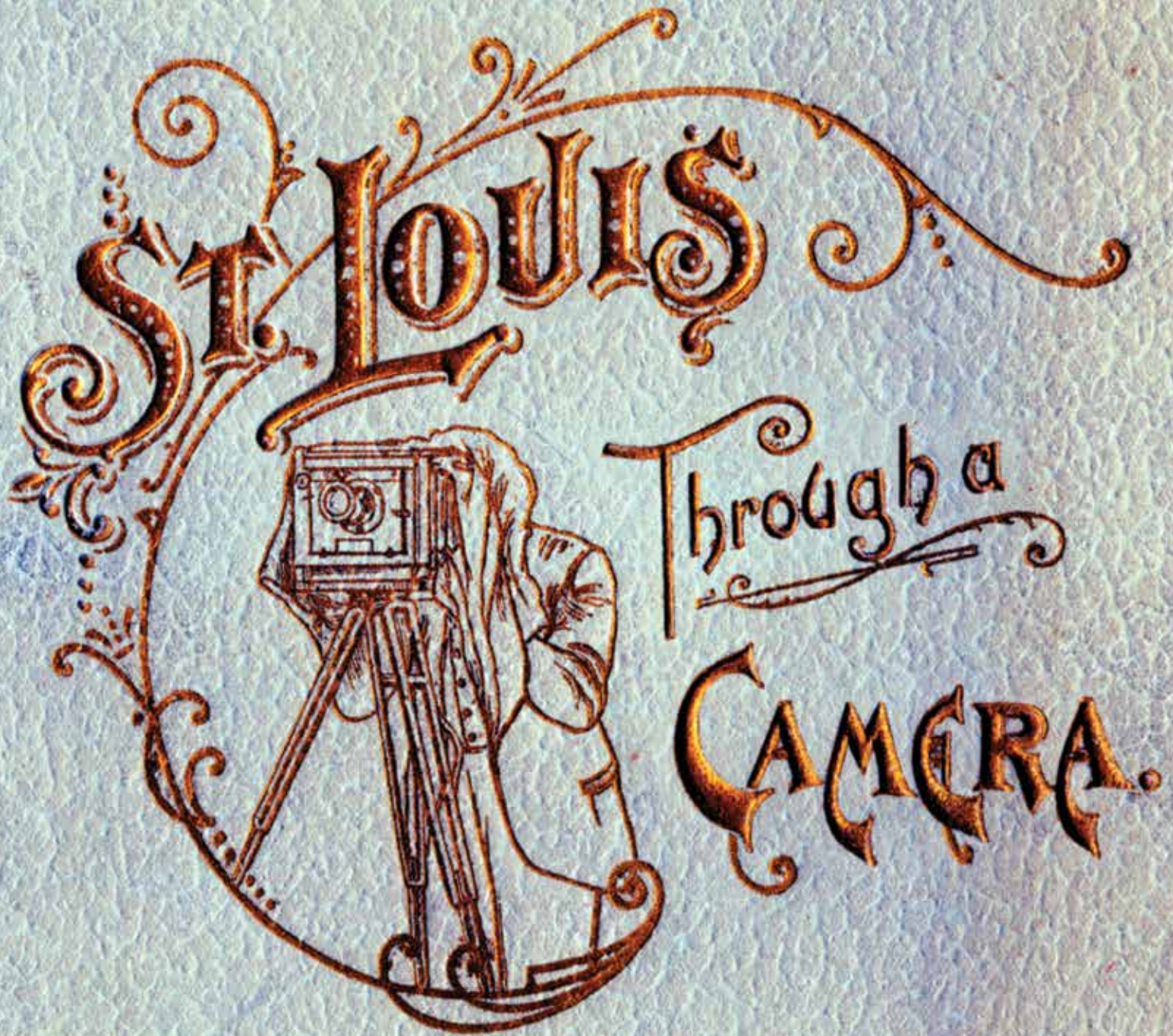
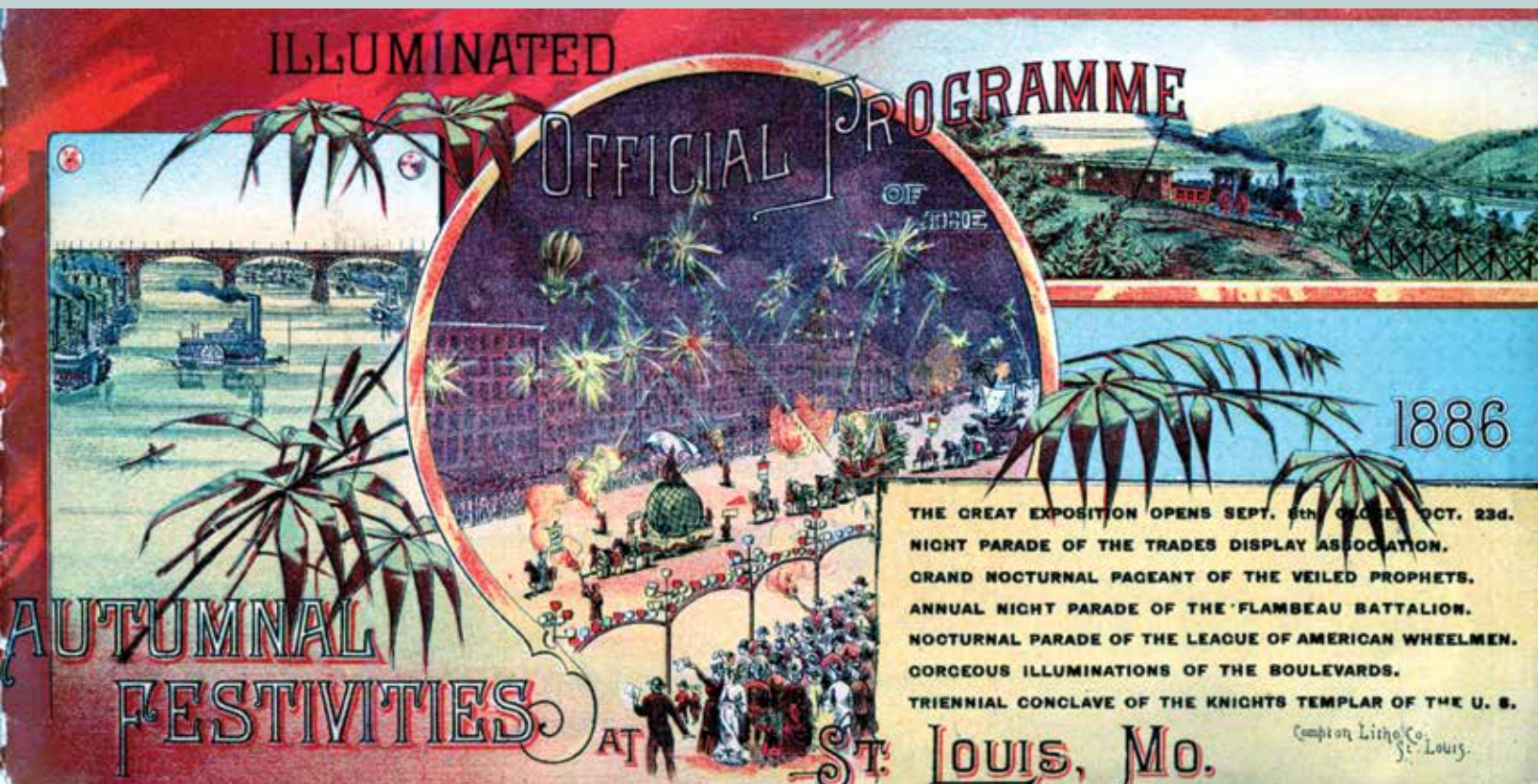


ST LOUIS
Through a
CAMERA.

A decorative illustration in a golden-brown color, set against a light blue textured background. The illustration depicts a person from the back, wearing a long coat, operating a large, boxy camera mounted on a tripod. The person's hands are on the camera, and they appear to be adjusting it. The camera is a classic bellows-style camera. The entire scene is framed by ornate, swirling flourishes that form the letter 'L' in the word 'LOUIS'.

BY MIRANDA RECHTENWALD

In 1892, the St. Louis Autumnal Festivities Association published *St. Louis Through a Camera*, “designed as an introduction to modern St. Louis.” Through this slim volume, the introduction explains, “the reader can see in the engravings, made from photographs, how we live; he can see the kind of buildings in which we do business; our recreation and pleasure grounds, and he may form some sort of an opinion of the people of the most hospitable city in the country. He may be induced to pay us a visit — say during our forty days’ fall festivities — and see more of the not ‘future,’ but present, great city of the West.”



St. Louis Through the Camera, published by the Bureau of Information of the St. Louis Autumnal Festivities Association, boasted, “It is safe to say, that no city of the world has made greater strides in municipal improvement than St. Louis. ... This little brochure is designed as an introduction to modern St. Louis, and is presented by its citizens.” (Image: Washington University Library Special Collections)

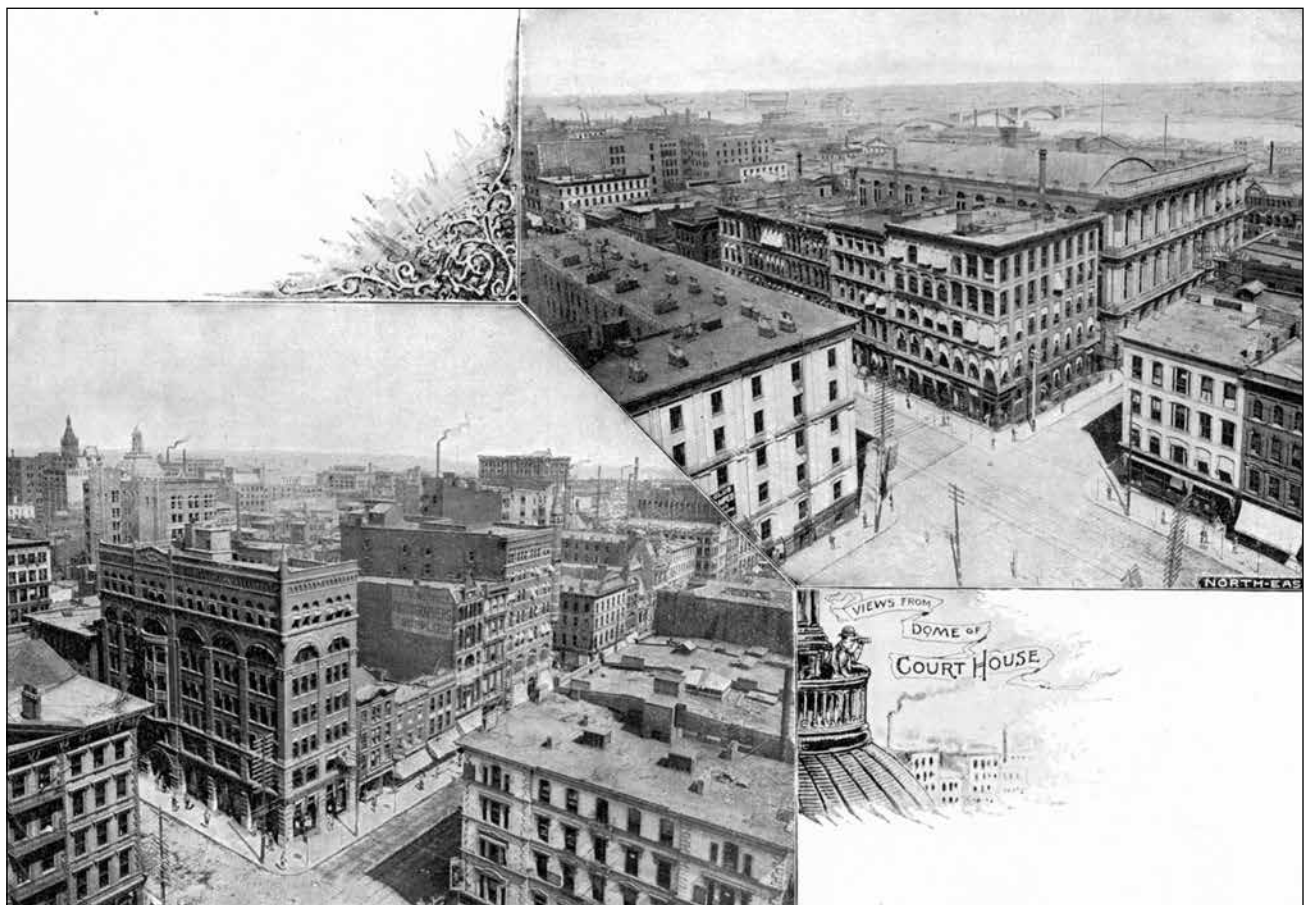
Determined not to lose business and customers to Chicago's World's Fair of 1892-93 (a competition St. Louis bitterly lost), the Autumnal Festivities Association heavily marketed St. Louis' finest points. The authors boasted, "*St. Louis Through a Camera* ... does not contain a line of advertising, nor has any consideration actuated the compilers other than a desire to present to the world the city as it is. In order to confine the work to convenient size for mailing, it has been necessary to limit both the number of illustrations and the amount of space devoted to explanatory reading matter, and hence only the most striking features of St. Louis, its greatness, and its elegance, have been described and illustrated." Of course, while it did not contain any outside advertisements, the booklet's chief goal to advertise the city and her glory is a less than subtle message woven through each page.

St. Louisans were long accustomed to planning and attending grand fairs and expositions. The first St. Louis Agricultural and Mechanical Fair, organized in

1856, included popular livestock and farm product competitions, parades, refreshment booths, and art displays. These events were held at Fairgrounds Park, just north of downtown, nearly every year. Even during the Civil War, St. Louis held fairs. The 1864 "Grand Mississippi Valley Sanitary Fair" provided not only entertainment and distraction, but also raised funds for the Western Sanitary Commission's aid to war refugees and wounded soldiers. The annual parade and ball from the secret Veiled Prophet Association, organized by St. Louis elite in 1878, was soon expanded into a longer "festival season." In 1886 a small pamphlet enticed potential visitors with vividly colored images of the parades, floats, and shows they could expect to view during their visit – including elaborate illuminated night exhibits.

The following is a selection of images from *St. Louis Through the Camera* with excerpts from this chapter on St. Louis boosterism.

One mark of progress was this series of panoramic views showing a complete 360-degree view from the top of the Old Courthouse (bound by Broadway, Chestnut, Fourth, and Market streets in downtown St. Louis). This would have been a rare view for most people, since the dome of the Courthouse remained one of the tallest structures in the city at the time. (Image: *Washington University Library Special Collections*)



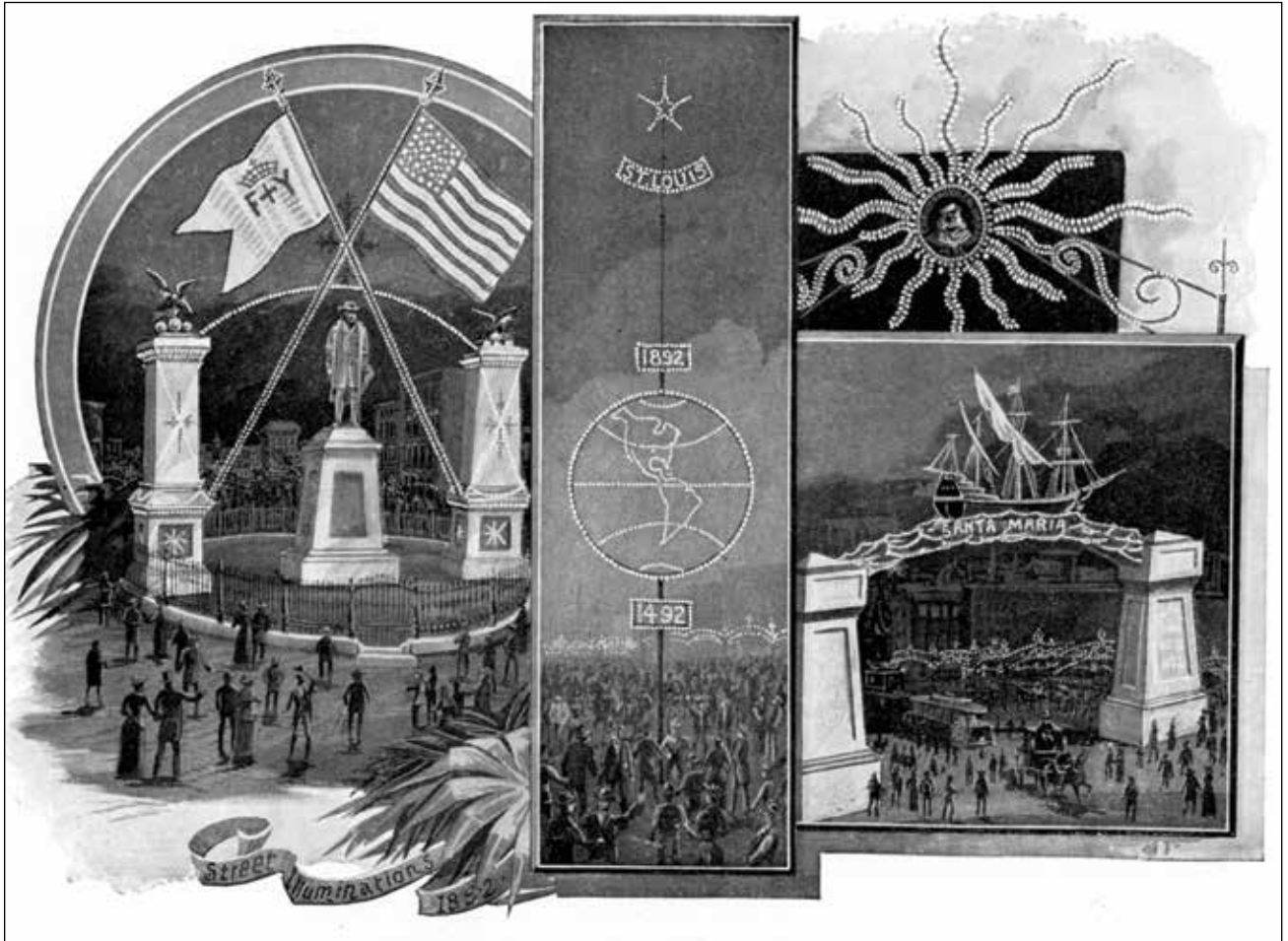


The parade route in 1886 passed the Post Office (now the Old Post Office, bound by Olive, Locust, Eighth, and Ninth streets) in downtown St. Louis, which is visible in the background of the "St. Louis Flambeau Battalion" of the Knights Templar. (Images: Washington University Library Special Collections)





St. Louis may have lost to Chicago its bid to host the Columbian Exposition commemorating the 400th anniversary of Columbus' voyage, but it wasn't going to be completely outdone, as these scenes from the parade show. (Images: Washington University Library Special Collections)





"It is true," said *St. Louis Through the Camera*, that the city's attractions "have earned for St. Louis the title of 'The Carnival City of America'; but at the same time, its work does not end with attracting visitors to the city, and entertaining them while they are in it. Its more important object is to direct the energies of the people into the right channel, and to speed the day on which St. Louis will be acknowledged as the greatest city in America, west of New York." (Images: Washington University Library Special Collections)

