

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

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This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instruction 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 an 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 for 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 The Home Laundry Company

other names/site number The New Home Laundry Company, 309 S. Lincoln St.

**2. Location**

street & number 300 East 3rd Street N/A  not for publication

city or town Bloomington N/A  vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Monroe code 105 zip code 47401

**3. State / Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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 36CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  
 meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  
 nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 1/29/00  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
State or 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 certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

- I hereby certify that the 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:)

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

[Signature] 3/15/00

**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**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

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

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/specialty store  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/specialty store  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th and EARLY 20th CENTURY  
AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/ Commercial  
Style and Moderne

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE/ Limestone  
walls BRICK  
roof ASPHALT  
other aluminum, concrete

**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.)

- 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.
- 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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL HISTORY

**Period of Significance**

1922

1947-48

**Significant Dates**

1922

1947

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

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

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

1947 - Cecil Harlos

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

**Bibliography**

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

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the Natinal 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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of Repository:

Monroe County Public Library

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreege of Property less than one

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 116 54105160 431949201

2 Zone Easting Northing  
        

3         

4 Zone Easting Northing  
        

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boudaries 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 Kristen Brennan

organization PRESERVATION DEVELOPMENT Inc. date June 4, 1999

street & number 400 West 7th Street, Suite 110 telephone (812) 336-2065

city or town Bloomington state Indiana zip code 47404

**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 **back and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

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

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Barbara Leonard

street & number 300 East 3rd Street, PO Box 146 telephone (812) 336-6344

city or town Bloomington state Indiana zip code 47402

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for application to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determining eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit I accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as emended (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 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 Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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#### *Physical Description*

##### *Exterior:*

The structure consists of a two-story principal building nearly square in plan with a one-story addition attached to the north side of the building. Built to the sidewalk, the addition wraps the corner of Lincoln and Third Streets. The original structure was built in 1922, two small owner-built additions were added c.1941, and a design-built, Moderne addition was constructed in 1947-48. The 1948 addition created an alcove on the east side of the building that is covered with a metal roof and serves as a loading and unloading area.

The original Home Laundry Company facade (1922) is composed of variegated, red, grooved brick with raked mortar joints and has a stepped parapet wall with dressed limestone coping. The building has brick bearing walls with steel sash 12-pane ventilator windows and double-hung wood sash windows in the location of the business office on the northwest side of the building. An entrance at this location features two individual wooden doors enclosed by brick and limestone pilasters. The doors indicate separate entrances for the administrative offices and the industrial facilities and were covered with a metal canopy. A 1922 photo also shows a garage door entrance with a three part folding wooden door with 6 lights and two panels each. The triple garage door was quickly changed, however, as a c.1925 photo reveals that only the southern most panel of the original three was retained, while the northern portion of the opening had been bricked in. The second floor of the original facade contains eight windows, asymmetrically arranged with two above the call-office to the north, a blank wall above the paired doors, and six more windows spaced evenly on the southern portion of the building. Windows on the original 1922 Lincoln Street facade feature concrete sills colored to resemble the popular, but more expensive, local limestone. Each lintel is topped with a single brick soldier course bracketed by concrete squares or quoins, also colored to resemble limestone. At an unknown date between 1930 and 1947, two more windows were added to the second floor (without matching lintels) to create a symmetrical fenestration. Centered below the parapet, the original facade featured a painted wood sign that read "New Home Laundry Company" and was surrounded by a miniature version of the imitation limestone corner block and soldier courses of brick.

Other changes made to the original facade between 1948 and 1970 include: replacing each of the original entrance doors with a 4-pane steel window, replacing the wood double-hung windows with steel windows also containing four horizontal panes, removing the iron lintel which spanned the original three part garage door, and the permanent removal of the original cloth window awnings.

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The south side of the original building along the alley featured a garage door and a ten-bay fenestration. The first floor windows are 9-panel steel ventilator windows, and the second floor windows are 12-panel central pivot steel ventilator windows. All openings on the south facade, with the exception of the garage door, have been filled with concrete blocks.

The north side of the building mirrored the fenestration of the south elevation, with the exception of the garage door and two double-hung wood windows which opened into the call office at the northwestern corner of the building. The second floor window openings on the north elevation were retained but shortened from the 12-pane to a 9-pane version when the one story addition was added below. These windows are extant and functioning.

### *Historic Additions:*

A 1947 photo taken prior to the construction of the main addition shows a one-story addition approximately 30' square to the north of the original building. Featuring a matching brick facade and lintel treatment with a flat roof and tile coping, this addition had a recessed door flanked by two large display windows. The display windows were removed during the construction of the 1948 addition, and the doorway was filled with concrete block. But the entryway which consists of two fluted engaged limestone columns on either side of the glass block door surround remains. With the exception of the Lincoln Street facade, the addition was built of concrete block, and the north side also featured a large single panel display window.

The large, one story corner addition, built in 1948, reflects a Moderne influence. On the street elevations, it echoes the 1922 facade, and the lintel treatments match the design of the original building. The earlier small addition was incorporated into the larger addition, moving the door and display windows further north on Lincoln Street. The 1948 entrances are surrounded by glass prism blocks, and the long bays of metal frame commercial windows are also topped by glass block transoms. Windows are awning style and open from the bottom. Aluminum awnings with the curved corners characteristic of the streamlined Moderne style cover both the Lincoln Street entrance and wrap around the northwest corner of the building, shading the public call-office area. The parapet of the one-story addition is flat and capped with limestone coping on which once sat individual red metal letters with white neon spelling out "Dry Cleaners HOME Launderers."

The 1948 addition is a brick bearing wall structure with steel I-beams supporting a flat asphalt roof. Coming at the end of a 25 year period of constant expansion, the 1948 section was designed to accommodate a future second floor.

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A third addition was added to the rear (east) of the original structure. Built around a new boiler by the owner and a maintenance man around 1941, this portion of the building is one story, stepping up a half story at the rear (east). It is composed of concrete block walls and a wood framed roof. The eastern wall roofline is stepped and capped with limestone coping. The roof is asphalt.

Between the c.1941 rear addition to the original structure and an L-shaped portion of the 1948 addition that extends east on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, a bi-level steel truss roof structure has been added to create a covered pick-up and delivery area. The steel trusses rest on the knee wall of the 1948 roof to the west and are supported by steel posts to the east. The roofing material is the original corrugated steel. This roof structure was built immediately after the 1948 addition.

### *Interior:*

Upon entering the Home Laundry Company, the viewer is struck by the overwhelming complexity of the suspended pipes serving the water, steam, gas, and ventilation systems from several eras of laundering equipment. Laundering machinery, representing the various eras of laundering technology over the past 84 years, is still extant in several parts of the plant.

The interior of the original 1922 Home Laundry Building is undivided space with wood framing on the second floor and roof. Ten inch square posts support both the second story principle joists and, in the roof, a system of wood trusses that fall away from the peak (oriented east-west) at a slope of approximately 2/12. The posts are shouldered at the top with a tapered intermediary beam to support the first floor summer beams and the second floor trusses. The trusses are large principal trusses that support a system of wood purlins that are in turn covered by wood roof decking.

The interior walls are painted brick throughout, and the floors are the original poured concrete. The only areas of the plant that feature a decorative floor are the original call-office (public commercial area) where an orange and green mosaic tile floor remains.

The 1948 addition was divided into five areas: three small offices whose windows lined Lincoln Street, the public walk-in area, and a large undivided work space. These spaces are partitioned by 2x4 stud walls that are covered with a narrow, vertical board paneling in the work areas and a 6" wide vertical paneling in the offices.

According to oral histories, the original call office had a slide down which clean laundry was sent when its owner came to retrieve it. Goods were brought to the second story via a staircase or with the aid of a large crane that swung out over the rear entrance of the plant so that dirty

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laundry from the pick-up and delivery trucks could be transported immediately upstairs. An elevator was installed during the 1940s to expedite movement of laundry between the two floors.

No known changes other than the routine painting, window pane replacement, and carpet changes have been made to the interior since the 1948 addition was constructed. The most significant changes have been the constant evolution of machinery and its supporting mechanical systems.



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### *Statement of Significance*

The Home Laundry Company is located to the southeast of the Bloomington courthouse square in an area of town developed for light industry between 1910 and 1930. During the 1910s and 1920s, twenty-one businesses operated in seventeen different buildings within a two block area bordered by 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, Walnut, and Grant Streets.

The Home Laundry Company is significant under criteria A and C, and is locally significant as the oldest continuously operated laundry facility in Bloomington, IN. The Home Laundry building houses the only original business still operating in an area developed for light industry during the Progressive Era, between 1910-1930. Of the five extant buildings from this era, the original 1922 building is one of only three buildings that retain architectural integrity from the 1920s, and is an example of two significant commercial styles, a vernacular 1920s style (1922) and the Art Moderne style of the post WWII era (1948 addition).

The Progressive Era was distinguished by the onset of diverse social and political reform movements throughout the United States. The push for reform manifested as a significant response to the social inequities of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, brought on, in part, by the rapid and unregulated growth of industrialism in urban centers. The simultaneous migration of rural working populations and mass emigration from Europe and Asia into American cities further aggravated urban social conditions. These conditions were characterized by overcrowded and unsafe housing, poor sanitation and public health, inadequate educational opportunities, as well as dangerous working conditions and low wages, all of which contributed to an increasing economic and social disparity among classes.

The Progressive Era was a response to these adverse urban, and to some extent, rural conditions, and their effects, particularly as it sought to promote better living and working environments as vehicles for the improvement of public health and welfare. The push for reform addressed a wide range of social problems, the solutions for which were equally diverse. Architecture and planning issues were considered crucial to an improved living and working environment in the belief that the quality of one's surroundings actively influenced health and well-being. Urban planning measures sought to zone industrial, residential, and commercial uses, regulating the availability of light and air to promote public health. Tenement reform relieved overcrowding, and sought to insure clean, safe, and well ventilated housing. New parks provided trees, green space, light and air, and recreational opportunities in the search for improved public health. Cities built new sanitation infrastructure, and many adopted the tenets of the City Beautiful Movement, clearing slums and renewing civic spaces. Factories and commercial workplaces were improved, specialized with new technologies, and adapted to the new diversity of workers.

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Whole new industries provided services previously reserved to the private home as a response to changes in the workforce as well as on the domestic front. And an array of new public services arose in response to Progressive ideals. Progressive education, under the tutelage of John Dewey, reformed public education standards. Child welfare laws were passed. Women's suffrage was won. Public housing was constructed. The National Parks system and the U. S. Forest Service were established.

Areas of significance for the Home Laundry Company under Criteria A include: Commerce - exemplifying the rise of a new service industry linked to the ideals of the Progressive Era; Social History - representing Progressive Era ideals and reforms in response to changes in the nature of the nuclear family, the workplace, public health, commerce, and industrialization; Transportation - as a reflection of the evolution in transportation technology which permitted and encouraged the development of this commercial area, and by offering home delivery service as a major marketing tool first with horse drawn wagons, and then delivery trucks; and Industry - responding to new technologies in the clothing industry, new machine technologies and cleaning processes, and by the adoption of women into the labor force and as primary consumers.

The success of the Home Laundry Company paralleled a national interest in public health issues and domesticity which soared in the early 1900s. The business's success was also impacted by technological advances, clothing styles and fabrics, the rise of service industries, and the increasing entry of women into the workplace. The increasing mechanization of home production processes, such as food production and preservation, as well as laundering, created an explosion of small industrial operations in a district to the southeast of the courthouse square in Bloomington, IN. Between 1900 and 1930, the area encompassed by 3<sup>rd</sup> Street on the north, 2<sup>nd</sup> Street on the south, Walnut Street on the West, and Grant Street on the east hosted the following businesses:

Martin and Son Creamery and Ice Cream Factory	407 S. Washington Street (1907)
Quality Ice Cream Co.	401 S. Washington Street (1927)
Sunlight Dairy Company	401 S. Washington Street (1927)
Bloomington Creamery Company	401 S. Washington Street (1927)
Bakery	204 E. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street (1907-1913)
Bakery	202 E. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Street (1927)
Coca-Cola Bottling Works	405 S. Washington Street (1915-1924)
Coca-Cola Bottling Works	318 S. Washington Street (1924)
Bloomington Bottling Works	427 S. Washington Street (1913)
Reed's Steam Laundry	311 S. Lincoln Street (1913)
Yelch's Cleaning Company	401 S. Washington Street (1913)

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Reed's Steam Laundry	309 S. Lincoln Street	(1913)
New Home Laundry Company	401 S. Washington Street	(1915-1922)
	309 S. Lincoln Street	(1922)
Dry Cleaning Company	423 S. Washington Street	(1927)
Auto Repair Shop	300 Alley between S. Lincoln and Grant Sts	
Garages	316 S. Washington Street	(1927)
	309 S. Walnut Street	(1927)
	308 S. Walnut Street	(1927)
	314 S. Walnut Street	(1927)
	324 S. Walnut Street	(1927)
	326 S. Walnut Street	(1927)*

\*from Bloomington Sanborn Maps and City Business Directories

The four types of businesses represented above, milk processing, bottling, laundering, and automobile repair shops, were among the new services available to men and women in the Progressive Era. With the exception of individual automobiles, the new technologies of refrigeration and machine laundering were at their peak of commercial importance between the two world wars, before the technologies were affordable to individual families as personal refrigerators and washing machines. Automobiles aided these early enterprises in reaching out to families so that, although the processes may have moved out of the home and into a factory, the women of the household could manage them from the home by using the pick-up and delivery services. Advertising from the Home Laundry Company illustrates the importance of the housewife as a consumer of these new services.

*Who'll do the Washing? Will you do it, Mrs. Housewife, and have red hands and a backache? Or will you send it to the Home Laundry? The "family washing" department is now the big thing in our laundry. The family washing service of our laundry is as good as the most particular woman can demand. (HT 2/17/19)*

While early ads appealed to women to give up the arduous physical work of hand laundering, businesses also capitalized on the role of women as cost-conscious consumers of certain domestic goods and services. The Home Laundry ad below illustrates that businesses recognized women's desire to make economic and efficient use of family resources. A 1927 ad reads:

*Laundry Satisfaction with Economy! Isn't it the sensible thing to send your wash where efficient machinery and effective chemicals transform soiled fabrics into, clean clothes? We have the latest improved method in dry cleaning.*

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Another from 1919 reads:

*The cost is low- so low that no woman can afford to do her own washing if she counts her time of any value. Almost any woman who has tried modern laundry service will tell you this fact.*

The history of laundering establishments in the United States began in Troy, New York circa 1835 with a laundry that cleaned removable shirt collars and cuffs. The first dry cleaning process, which developed late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, has been attributed to the French, who recognized the cleaning power of the lamp fuel camphene after it accidentally spilled on a dirty cloth. "With the introduction of flammable solvents such as benzole, kerosene, and gasoline dry cleaning was a hazardous business. In 1926, however, the petroleum-based "Stoddard solvent" was produced specifically for dry cleaning. Today, most dry cleaners use perchloroethylene, or "perc" which came into use in the 1930s following brief trials of carbon tetracholoride and trichloroehylene." (International Fabricare Institute web-site). According to oral histories taken from early employees at the Home Laundry Company, B. Frank Leonard was constantly updating his processes with new machinery and chemicals which he learned of from both the numerous industry conferences he attended each year and from traveling salespeople who came to Bloomington.

The growth of the laundry business in Bloomington parallels the national growth and decline of the commercial laundries between 1870 and 1945. Steam power allowed laundries to move away from labor intensive hand washing to a more profitable mechanized processes by 1880, and this technology prevailed until WWI. (#10, p126.) In Bloomington, the first documented laundry appeared prior to 1898 and was located one block from the train station at the northeast corner of S. Morton and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets. By 1900, two other laundries are recorded in the city business directory; by 1916 there were nine companies calling themselves "cleaners" or "laundries" serving a population of slightly less than 15,000 people (#1). As one of these nine companies, B.F. Leonard's Home Laundry Company was taking advantage of the concurrent social and technological changes that replaced home production and self-sufficiency with mechanized production and consumerism.

The increase in demand for commercial laundries during this era was also fueled by the proliferation of washable linens available for purchase as ready made clothing, and by an increase in the use of cotton undergarments, nightshirts, petticoats, and chemises (#10, p.134). The Home Laundry Company operated as a steam laundry until 1927 when it added dry cleaning to its services.

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Social reforms of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are intimately tied to the plight of families attempting to negotiate the difficulties of work, home, and health. Fundamental to the Progressive Era, the public health movement, which peaked between 1890 and 1910, connected the ideals of morality and cleanliness. White became a visible symbol of “sanitary awareness” and was popular in personal clothing and public uniforms (#10, p123). At Leonard’s Home Laundry Company, photographs show female employees at the original 1915 laundry wearing white smocks and white paper hats. Employees continue to appear all in white until a 1951 photograph.

A dramatic decrease in the national birthrate between 1860-1910 produced changes in the family structure which enabled more women to work outside the home. The average births per woman decreased by thirty percent (25% for foreign-born women) during these four decades, nearly halving the number of a woman’s childbearing years (#7, p110). And, because people increasingly lived in nuclear rather than extended families, duties that had been previously shared among the women of the household fell entirely to one woman. Hand laundering was an arduous and time consuming process. Catherine Beecher, an early advocate of domestic efficiency, while encouraging control and minute management over most household chores, encouraged women to hire out the laundering as early as 1841 (#7, p110). The laundry industry as a whole can be evaluated in the context of women’s history. Traditionally considered women’s work, laundering established itself early on as one of the few industrial jobs where women could obtain respectable employment. The Home Laundry Company in Bloomington employed women exclusively in their work rooms from 1915 through the 1950s. Supporting photographs prove the homogeneity of the wash room labor force.

Alice Kessler-Harris, in her book Out to Work, documents a meteoric rise in the number of commercial laundries between 1870 and 1910. “The number of women employed in these establishments multiplied by fifty to one hundred percent in each decade of those forty years, far outstripping population growth and providing one laundry worker for every 152 people in the population of 1910” (#7, p112).

The Home Laundry Company represents the explosion of small manufacturing and service industries in the early twentieth century under criterion A. A look at the history of the business and its founding family is telling. Benjamin Franklin Leonard was born on a farm in Owensburg, Greene County, in 1879. In 1911, he and his brother Boone Leonard purchased from W. N. Urmay the largest laundry in Bedford, IN, located at 807-809 E.15<sup>th</sup> Street, and named it the Home Laundry Company. When B. Frank Leonard moved his family to Bloomington in 1915, he purchased Frank Yelch’s New Method Cleaning Company at 401 S. Washington St., opening his own business under the name The New Home Laundry Company.

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In 1922, with investments of \$3,000 from his nephew Leonard George and \$3,000 from Irvin Matthews of Matthews Stone Company (the largest limestone company in Bedford, IN), B. Frank Leonard purchased Reed's Steam Laundry one block away at 309 S. Lincoln Street. Because the building was in poor repair, B.F. Leonard tore down the Reed's laundry building and constructed the current building with the name of the business, "New Home Laundry Company" displayed on the facade.

The Home Laundry Company held contracts with large institutions in Bloomington, including Indiana University. The Home Laundry Company was awarded the Indiana University contract for all laundry from the University Commons and Halls of Residence beginning in 1928 (#6). According to oral histories taken from an early employee, the Home Laundry Co. continued to hold this contract until the university installed its own laundry in 1941. (Robert Nellis, #6). Between 1922 and 1947, a one-story addition was made to the north side of the building to accommodate the ever-expanding business. Robert Leonard joined his father's business in 1940 for one year before joining the Navy during WWII. Having grown up in a laundry family, Robert ran a naval laundry facility at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. He returned from the Navy in 1945 with many new ideas for the family business. In 1947-48, the family added a streamlined one-story addition designed by builder Cecil Harlos (L. Leonard). B.F. Leonard's other son, Lee, joined the business in 1945. During its greatest level of employment during the 1940-50s, the Home Laundry Company employed 90 people (Nellis). The business has passed through the Leonard family, from the two sons of B. F. Leonard, Robert and Lee, to its current owner Barbara Leonard, Robert's daughter.

Although Benjamin Franklin Leonard's formal education ended at the eighth grade, he went to work dressed in a full suit and tie and was known as "Mr. Leonard" among his workers. This kind of decorous behavior was encouraged at the Home Laundry company, and in retaining some of the Reed's Laundry's former employees, Mr. Leonard was obliged to quell some of the rough and crude behavior. During the first few years of operations, B.F. Leonard established horse drawn wagon pick-up and delivery routes, and, by 1931, each delivery man was outfitted with a uniform and personalized laundry truck. The Home Laundry Company handled all laundry accounts for Indiana University until 1941, an account which helped Mr. Leonard to continue to operate at a profit during the depression years. B. Frank Leonard rose to a position of leadership in the business community during a time when energetic and influential business groups like the Kiwanis and Bloomington Chamber of Commerce were forming.

As defined by criterion C, the Home Laundry Company is architecturally significant as an industrial building type. It is, as well, the only continuously operating business and one of only 5 extant early commercial buildings in an area developed for industry during the first three decades

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of the twentieth century. Of the five extant buildings from this era, the original 1922 building is one of only three buildings that retain architectural integrity from the 1920s, still reflecting the essential form of its long term utility as a laundry. The original 1922 building, together with the 1948 addition, is an example of two significant commercial styles, a vernacular 1920s style and the Art Moderne style of the post WWII era. There are a number of architectural characteristics and methods of construction common to these industrial buildings that distinguish them as a vernacular commercial type prevalent in the early twentieth century.

Early twentieth century domestic industries had in common a need for large open spaces to provide flexible work space, as well as to house machinery, inventory, vehicles, and product. Many also had a small storefront and retail call area for customer service. In southern Indiana, these buildings were typically brick masonry construction with concrete ground level floors and wood floor systems above. The earliest examples, most often pre-1920, are bearing wall with wood and/or steel post and beam interior structures and wood trusses. Steel truss systems, borne on bearing walls and steel interior structures come somewhat later in this geographic area. The increasing use of steel systems often provided greater interior spans and was generally adopted as materials became more available and cost effective. It is common to see a combination of both types of structure within a single building of this period (or its addition), a fact that reflects the transitional nature of construction methods and the demand for more open interior plans. Bearing wall construction coupled with post and beam systems not only provided large unobstructed interior bays, but made possible the use of large window systems, typically steel sash in the work areas, that provided much needed light and ventilation for the work space.

By the late 1910s and early 1920s, all of the prerequisite technologies necessary to construct a small factory were readily available and affordable to small business owners – poured concrete floors to hold heavy machinery, steam driven heating systems for uniform heating of the building, and affordable electricity. In addition, by the mid-1920s, steel trusses were widely used, increasing overhead space, load-bearing capacity for overhead machinery, and fire safety, while decreasing cost, construction time, and maintenance needs. The 1922 Home Laundry Company building was one of the last to use a wooden truss system in Bloomington, IN.

As a type, these early factories represent a transition. On the one hand they often utilize exterior fenestration to present a street facade similar to an office building or other civic form, in part to shield the pedestrian from interior functions, but also to lend an air of commercial importance normally not attributed to blue collar functions. Thus the ornamental brick and concrete quoins, limestone or concrete detailing, smaller window openings (often double hung units), and more ornamental pedestrian entries. On its facade, the Home Laundry Company employs a decorative brickwork pattern common in Bloomington – a pattern that uses a limestone quoin or plinth

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block connected by a soldier course of bricks to frame windows and doors, and to decorate blank sections of a wall.

In work areas it is common for the same building to have larger bays of windows for light and ventilation, as well as garage openings for vehicles and transportation requirements, reflecting the role of the automobile in the location and functional construction of the building. Here, form more closely follows function. In the 1922 Home Laundry Company building the first and second floors are distinguished in this manner, with the exception of one garage bay on the main facade, which was closed early in the building's history.

It was the functional aspect of early factory architecture—large bays, continuous or banded window fenestration, low rise elevations, open floor plans—that served as one of the models for the Modern Movement. However, with the onset of Modernism, most of the architectural play between office building and factory building is lost. There is little or no attempt to have factories look like any thing other than factories. More often, office buildings and residences are built to look like factories. As seen in the 1948 Moderne addition, factories come to be stylistically distinctive, but they have foregone attempts to camouflage their function.

Thus, the Moderne addition displays few of the transitional elements of the original factory building and its 1947 addition. It incorporates a new set of architectural components—steel truss, plate glass and aluminum storefront, glass block, continuous horizontal awning windows, and an aluminum marquee awning to convey a modern, streamlined establishment. Other than the functional similarity, wall height, brick masonry, and flat roof, which make it compatible in massing with the previous 1947 addition, it represents a distinct, but equally significant, architectural type.

Having both the commercial vernacular type of the 1920's and the Moderne addition together as one building is significant of the movement from one industrial typology to another during this period. This is particularly notable in light of the transitional nature of the 1922 factory itself.

### *Builders:*

The architect or builder of the original 1922 building is unknown, although oral histories reveal that it was the same person or firm who designed the Graham Auto Garage at 300 S. College Street.

Cecil Harlos was the designer and builder of the 1948 Moderne addition. Cecil Harlos was born in Lebanon, IN on February 13, 1895. Upon graduating from Indiana University in 1923 after a four year hiatus to serve in the Army during WWI, Harlos went to work for the Fulwider Lumber



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Co. in Bloomington. Subsequently, he worked for Hughes Brothers Lumber Co. until the spring of 1937, when he resigned to establish his own contracting business. In 1943, he purchased the Hughes Brothers business and real estate, renaming the firm "Building Service." Located on W. 4<sup>th</sup> St. on the east side of the Monon Railroad tracks, Cecil Harlos's business services consisted of all stages of project management, from drafting to contracting. He built many of the homes in the University Courts Historic District and is best known for his colonial revival apartment building at 605 S. Fess Street.

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## Oral Histories

Audio tapes held by Preservation Development  
400 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Bloomington, IN 47401

Sally Fulkerson. Interviewed 4/17/99 by Barbara Leonard.

Lee Leonard. Interviewed 4/17/99 by Barbara Leonard.

Robert Nellis. Interviewed 4/13/99 by Kristen Brennan and Barbara Leonard.

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## Verbal Boundary Description

The Home Laundry Company property occupies the southeast corner of E. 3<sup>rd</sup> and S. Lincoln Streets. The property boundaries are: the south side of E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, the east side of S. Lincoln Street, the alley to the south of the building, and the alley to the east of the building and parking lot. The property encompasses Lots 5 and 6 of the Orchard's Addition Plat.

## Boundary Justification

The boundary described above are the current property boundaries, encompasses the original property at 309 S. Lincoln, and represents the boundaries of the Home Laundry Company after the completion of the 1948 streamline Moderne addition.

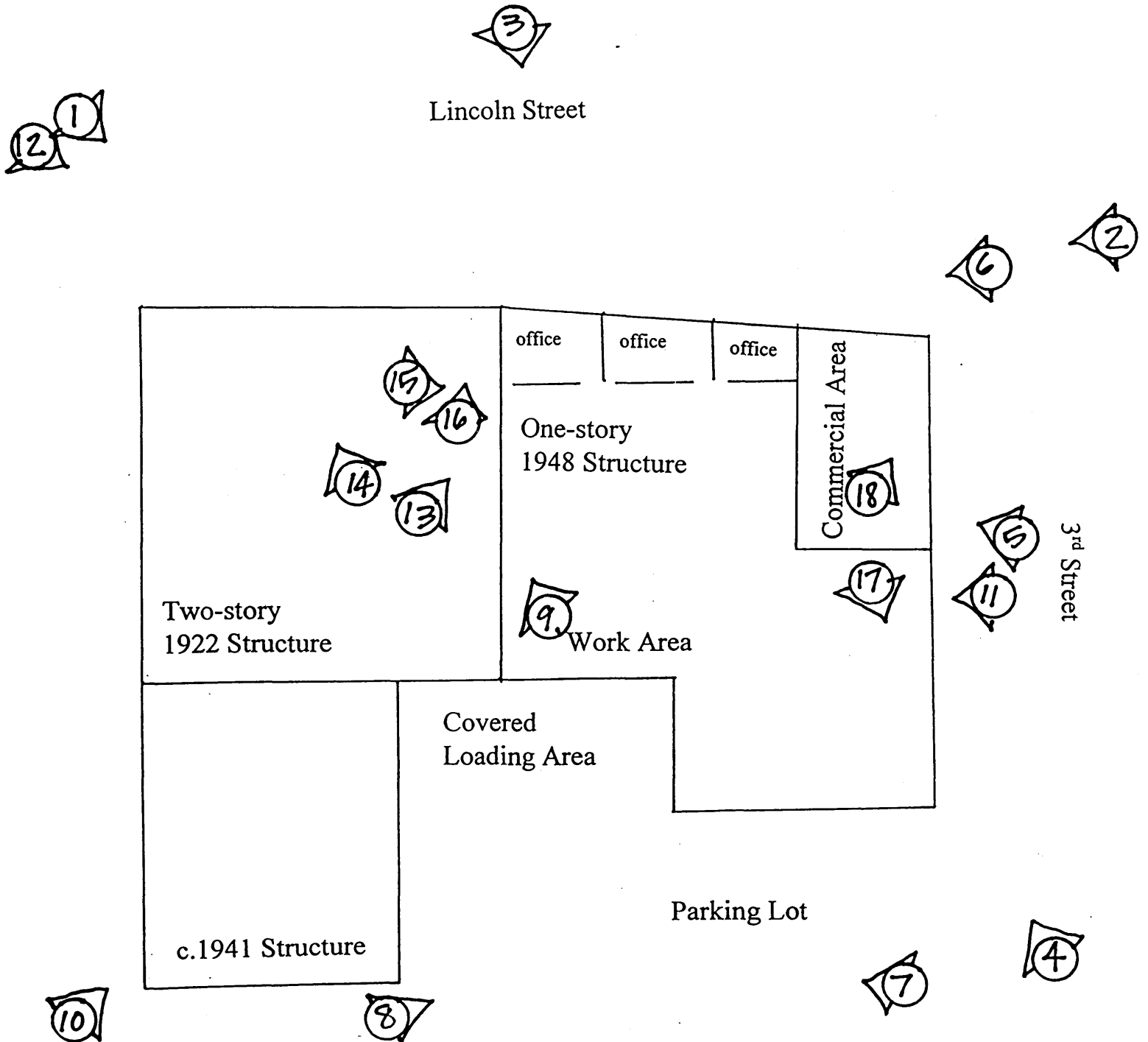
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## *Photographic Description:*

All photographs were taken by:

PRESERVATION DEVELOPMENT Inc.  
400 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Bloomington, IN 47404  
(812) 336-2065

PRESERVATION DEVELOPMENT Inc. holds the negatives to all photographs.

- 1.) 5/99. Photographer facing northeast.
- 2.) 5/99. Photographer facing south.
- 3.) 5/99. Photographer facing east.
- 4.) 5/99. Photographer facing west.
- 5.) 5/99. Photographer facing southwest.
- 6.) 5/99. Photographer facing south.
- 7.) 5/99. Photographer facing southwest.
- 8.) 5/99. Photographer facing northwest.
- 9.) 12/98. Photographer facing southwest.
- 10.) 5/99. Photographer facing northwest.
- 11.) 5/99. Photographer facing south.
- 12.) 5/99. Photographer facing northeast (detail of photo #1)
- 13.) 12/98. Photographer facing west. 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of 1922 section.
- 14.) 12/98. Photographer facing southwest. 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of 1922 section.
- 15.) 12/98. Photographer facing north. 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of 1922 section.
- 16.) 12/98. Photographer facing west. 1<sup>st</sup> floor of 1922 section.
- 17.) 12/98. Photographer facing northeast. 1948 addition.
- 18.) 12/98. Photographer facing northwest. 1948 addition.