HATING LI VIGINGIN	g 🖄 Significant/N	Notable 🗆 Contributing	Reference Non-Co		E. TWP/CITY Pigeon g UTM REFERENCES 116		D NAME <u>Evansville</u> : 1,2 0,3 0,2,0			
TATE OF INDIANA		RTMENT OF NA			INDIANA HISTORIC SI			REVISED		
MOUNT CONT.								1961		
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COMMON NAME	Pearl Lua	ndry	4. PROPERTY'S	MAILIN	G ADDRESS	5. LOCATION NO	OTES			
CONNERSHIP Public* Private X VISIBLE* Yes No			Pearl La	undry		Stockwells Enlargement Block 2.				
			428 Mark	et Str	eet	lots 1-10;	lots 1-10; Tax Code: 29-25-1			
			Evansvil	le, IN	N 47708			· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		
USE PRESEN	T PAST		PRESENT	PAST	7. ENDANGERED	8. CATEGORY	9s. LOCAL LEGAL PRO	TECTIO		
sidence 🗆		Military			Vacant	District	Historic Distric	t		
vt./Pol.		Entertainment Scientific			Neglected Encroachment	Building(s)	Landmark Deed Restrictio	. n		
mmerce □ fustrial	<u> 1</u> 28	Scientific Religious			Encroachment Other	Structure Site	Deed Restrictio			
riculture 🗆		Park				Object		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		
insportation		Museum								
ganization 🗆		Educational			9b. SURVEYS		IASD.			
her					SR NR NHL	HABS H	IAER			
CONDITION	11. BUILDIN	NG INTEGRITY	11a. Specify Al	lterations	i	17. ني	SITE PLAN			
Excellent	Unalto		Removals			- 17.	A Rooth ST			
Good Fair	Altere		Structural			-	BOND ST			
Pair Deteriorated		ca. 1923	Replacement			_				
Ruins			Additions	ce/pla		144				
	Indu	et mi al			James L. Wills, Arch. M.J. Hoffman, Const.					
DATE 1912_13.	STYLE	301181	14. ARCHITECT/E	BUILDEI	R His. Horrman, const.					
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		oelow.								
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STATE OF INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES INDIANA HISTORIC SITES AND STRUCTURES INVENTORY

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19: Significance (continued)
Page 2

jobs with the Evansville Ice & Cold Storage Company. In 1894, their association was firmed by Korb's marriage to Rust's sister Margaret. Two years later, they made the shift from wage earners to proprietors by investing savings of \$550 in a small, debt= plagued laundry on the city's west side. (They had shortly before turned down the purchase of a larger, \$3,800 laundry operation because "that was far more capital then we possessed," and neither believed in mortgaging unnecessarily.) The early years spent in establishing their business were ones of "hard grinding work and deprivation," a period for which the two men were clearly qualified by a common working-class background and culture. In spite of the meager beginnings, the conscientiousness and industriousness typical of their German ethnic spirit, garnered them an increasing portion of the domestic laundry trade. Their growing enterprise forced Rust and Korb to seek larger, leased quarters in 1897 and then again in 1902. In 1911, after fifteen years in business, Rust and Korb were laying plans for their own permanent facility, one of the region's most modern laundry facilities. This \$25,000, mortgage-free investment was realized a year later in the completion of the Pearl Steam Laundry plant, stable and office complex on Market Street. When Rust retired in 1928, and Korb bought his half-interest, the tangible worth of the business was placed a \$150,000. The Pearl firm managed to stay buoyant despite changes in the laundry industry, and today it has the corner on the local domestic laundry business and, uniquely, still provides home pick-up and delivery service.

As conservative as they may have been in running their business, Rust and Korb were receptive to innovation. The Market Street plant easily absorbed and adapted to a changing industry and increased volume. (This is in contrast to the equally old White Swan Laundry—survey #00182—which still operates out of a two-story facility marked by a succession of additions.) When Rust and Korb decided to build their own plant after years of leasing, they visited laundries in different cities for ideas in plant design and new methods in handling the operation. With certain features in mind, they commissioned local architect James L. Wills to prepare the plans.

The result was a one-story building comprising about 18,000 square feet of floor space. As one journalist remarked about the Pearl's design, "It seems rather odd to build a one story building of this magnitude, but it has been found that a laundry can be more conveniently arranged on one floor than on several." The lay-out comprised a one-floor-line plan whereby laundry progressed systematically through the various departments (such as sorting, marking, weighing, washing, drying, pressing, bundling, and routing) before being deposited into waiting wagons stationed in the stable at the south end of the building. (While the equipment has been periodically up-dated, the general processing format remains essentially the same.

The design of the facility incorporated other modern elements promoting not only efficiency, but also the health and confort of the employees. Equipment was steam powered (up until 1954), and electric lighting was used throughout. Ventilation was provided by roof monitors and expansive sashes with operable windows. "Sanitary drinking fountains" were placed conveniently throughout the plant for the employee's refreshment and safety and the proprietors emphasized the provision of modern, commodious restrooms and dressing rooms. Rust put his attitude succinctly: "Take care of plant and horses. But human element worthy more attention."

(continued)

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By the late 19th century, an urbanized Evansville was rapidly acquiring a rising demand for consumer services. When Rust and Korb entered the laundry business in 1896, their competition numbered a dozen. The operations typically were small, housed generally on the ground floor of buildings not any different in form or appearance then any other commercial building. In some cases, the business was run out of a home. The repeated need for increased space by the Pearl between 1896 and 1911 indicated an increasing demand for this type of service. However, although some of the companies, including the Pearl, advanced into commercial—scale operations based upon improved cleaning technologies, many operators couldn't make the shift and ceased to exist. By the time Korb and Rust completed their new plant in 1912, the field of competition had narrowed to six competitors. Pearl's high volume/low cost capability, abetted by modern steam—powered machinery, offered even the early 1900's budget—minded housewife freedom from the laborious and time—consuming task of doing the weekly family wash.

In short, the Pearl Steam Laundry was modern: a modern building erected in a modern architectural expression; a company doing business on a larger, modern scale; employer's concerned for the efficiency of employees' efforts; and a combination of enlightened labor practices and worker safety. Pearl Laundry was a distinct departure in every sense from 19th century ways. Its physical prestence and its stable management/ownership also provide unusual documentation for studying not only the growth and development of a local concern in its temporal context but helps to interpret the evolution of Evansville's economic life.

PEARL STEAM LAUNDRY



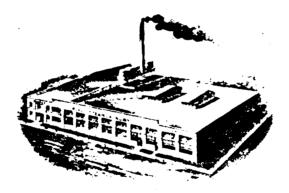




1897 -- 1902



1903 -- 1912



1912

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Pearl Steam Laundry

114 - 128 SECOND AVENUE