

A. HISTORIC NAME Pearl Steam Laundry B. COUNTY Vanderburgh C. NUMBER 82-196-00207  
 D. ADDRESS 428 Market Street E. TWP/CITY Pigeon F. QUAD NAME Evansville South  
 RATING  Outstanding  Significant/Notable  Contributing/Reference  Non-Contributing UTM REFERENCES 16 449500 4203020

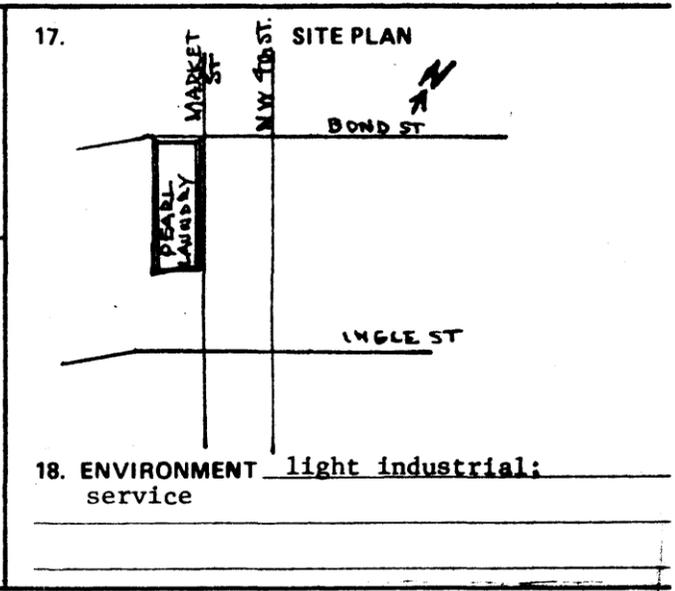
STATE OF INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES INDIANA HISTORIC SITES AND STRUCTURES INVENTORY REVISED 1981

MOUNT CONTACT PRINTS HERE

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 1. COMMON NAME <u>Pearl Laundry</u>         | 4. PROPERTY'S MAILING ADDRESS<br><u>Pearl Laundry</u><br><u>428 Market Street</u><br><u>Evansville, IN 47708</u> | 5. LOCATION NOTES<br><u>Stockwells Enlargement Block 2.</u><br><u>lots 1-10; Tax Code: 29-25-1</u> |
| 2. OWNERSHIP <u>Public</u> * <u>Private</u> |  |  |
| 3. VISIBLE * <u>Yes</u> <u>No</u>           |  |  |

|   |                                       |   |  |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| 6. USE PRESENT PAST PRESENT PAST  | 7. ENDANGERED                         | 8. CATEGORY                                       | 9a. LOCAL LEGAL PROTECTIONS                |
| Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/> Vacant       | <input type="checkbox"/> District                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Historic District |
| Govt./Pol. <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/>        | <input type="checkbox"/> Neglected    | * <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Landmark          |
| Commerce <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific <input type="checkbox"/>             | <input type="checkbox"/> Encroachment | <input type="checkbox"/> Structure                | <input type="checkbox"/> Deed Restriction  |
| Industrial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____  | <input type="checkbox"/> Site                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____       |
| Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/>                |                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Object                   |  |
| Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Museum <input type="checkbox"/>           |                                       |   |  |
| Organization <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/>        |                                       |   |  |
| Other <input type="checkbox"/>  |                                       |   |  |
|   | 9b. SURVEYS                           |   |  |
|   | SR _____ NHL _____                    |   |  |
|   |                                       | HABS _____  | HAER _____                                 |

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 10. CONDITION<br><input type="checkbox"/> Excellent<br>* <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good<br><input type="checkbox"/> Fair<br><input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated<br><input type="checkbox"/> Ruins | 11. BUILDING INTEGRITY<br><input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered<br>* <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered<br><input type="checkbox"/> Moved<br>Date <u>ca. 1923</u> | 11a. Specify Alterations<br>Removals _____<br>Structural _____<br>Replacement <u>office/plant</u><br>Additions _____ |
| 12. DATE <u>1912</u>  | 13. STYLE <u>Industrial</u>   | 14. ARCHITECT/BUILDER <u>James I. Wills, Arch.</u><br><u>M.J. Hoffman, Const.</u>                                    |
| 15. DESCRIPTION <u>See below.</u>   |   |  |
| Inscriptions <u>STABLE -- PEARL STEAM LAUNDRY--OFFICE</u>   | Facade Material <u>brick</u>  |  |
| 16. OUTBUILDINGS <u>NONE</u>  |   |  |



19. AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Specify the significance for each area checked

|  |     |  |
|--|-----|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal                | 15: |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts                      |     |  |
| * <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture |     | Facing east onto Market Street, the Pearl Steam Laundry building has a                         |
| * <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce     |     | frontage of about 200 feet and a depth at its widest point, the south end, of                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications            |     | about 122 feet. The depth gradually narrows down to about 47 feet at the north                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Planning        |     | end in conformance with the irregular shape of the platted block on which the structure is     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education                 |     | situated. Walls, rising two stories in height, are of common red brick and are pierced at      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering               |     | close, regular intervals by two banks of large, multi-pane, steel sash windows. A stone        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environs/Neighborhoods    |     | course separates the two levels of windows. The original plan of the Market Street elevation   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exploration/Settlement    |     | was principally one of symmetry and featured a six-bay-wide central section surmounted by a    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humanities                |     | one-step high parapet bearing the name "PEARL STEAM LAUNDRY" executed in large block letters   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indian                    |     | formed with stone. Flanking this main part on the south and north, respectively, were the      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture    |     | stable and the office with their intended use denoted in block letters above the second        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Military                  |     | story windows. In 1923, the building was extended on the north by the erection of a two-story, |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Politics/Government       |     | three-bay-wide addition. In materials and general plan it was a sympathetic expansion. Other   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Religion                  |     | features of the 1912 construction still present include the brick smokestack which towers      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Science/Technology        |     | above the building at the rear and, also visible from the rear, the saw-tooth and flat-decked  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Ethnicity          |     | roof monitors. Except for the 1923 addition and the more recent bricking in of the stable      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation            |     | windows, the exterior plan of the building remains unchanged since its completion seventy-one  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vernacular/Construction   |     | years ago. The utilitarian arrangement of the interior--the stable, the two-story high open    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other                     |     | spaces of the plant, and the office--likewise remain virtually unaltered. The site comprises   |
|  |     | approximately five-tenths (.5) acre.   |

19: See Additional Architectural Information form.

20. INFORMATION SOURCES Public records: deeds, leases, mortgages, census, birth, death, marriage, township and recorded  
plats; City Directories; Interview: Daniel Korb (III); 1880 Atlas of Vanderburgh County; 1899 Plat Book of Vanderburgh  
and Warrick Counties; 1912 City Directory (depicting the four Pearl Laundry locations); (continued)

21. SURVEYOR Joan C. Marchand & Douglas L. Stern 22. DATE 14 February 1983 (Amended)

**STATE OF INDIANA  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
INDIANA HISTORIC SITES AND STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

Additional Architectural Information

A. NAME Pearl Steam Laundry C. NUMBER 82-196-00207

B. ADDRESS 428 Market Street Evansville, IN

D. UTM References [1,6] [4|4|9|5|0|0] [4|2|0|3|0|2|0]

E. 19: SIGNIFICANCE

The Pearl Steam Laundry building occupies a unique place in the cultural history of Evansville. As a work of architecture, this unspoiled industrial building reflects concern for various modern issues—technology, labor saving, worker's welfare, future planning, and the like—as no other local building does. The business operation represented by the building—under continuous family ownership and management since its founding in 1896—also furnishes a vivid image of the complex nature of commerce at the turn of the century, the city's hard-nosed yet innovative business character, the effect of religious belief on secular affairs, and the imprint of ethnicity.

The Pearl laundry building was erected in 1912 by Jacob Rust and Daniel Korb, partners in a domestic laundry business. Since its founding in 1896, the business had already outgrown three previous facilities. In the design of their new Market Street plant, Korb and Rust sought to produce a modern and functional operation which would not only improve their means for handling their present volume but would be adequate for an "ever increasing business." (Their plan was perhaps more viable than they realized, for the building is still in use today for its intended purpose and, even with increased business through the years, it has remained relatively unaltered.)

Daniel Korb (1865-1948) spent his early years on the family's large farm in the southeast corner of Scott Township, about eight miles northeast of Evansville. His introduction to city life was in 1877 when, at age 11, he moved to the city with his recently widowed mother and his sister. At 18, he entered the work world where he spent the next decade as a bookkeeper for various local concerns. In a 1921 newspaper article on "Self-Made Men of Evansville," he characterized this period of his life as one of "'cramming' in business principles and practices." Korb's partner, Jacob Rust (1868- ? ), was brought up on his parent's truck farm just beyond the city's eastern limits. Part of a large family, he sought employment in the city when he came of age as a (wagon) driver, contributing his wages to his parent's support. When Rust and Korb actually linked up is not known, but in 1889 they both had

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F. INFORMATION SOURCES COURIER, 11 July 1911, 28 August, 6 October, and 15 October 1912  
JOURNAL, 25 August, 6 October 1912; 14 February 1914; PRESS, 15 October 1912.  
COURIER, 18 September 1921.

G. PREPARED BY Joan Marchand & Douglas L Stern H. DATE 14 February 1983(amended)

FEB 23 1984

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19: Significance (continued)  
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jobs with the Evansville Ice & Cold Storage Company. In 1894, their association was firm 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 than 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 comfort 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."

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19: Significance (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 than 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 presence 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.

1913 CD

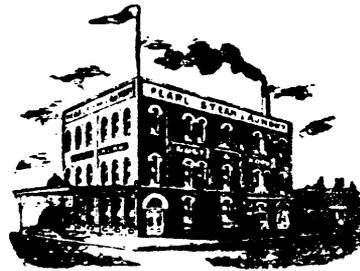
# PEARL STEAM LAUNDRY



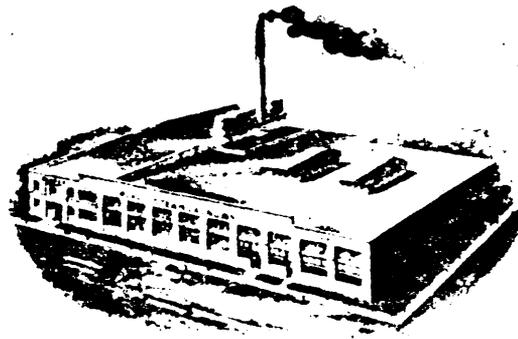
1896



1897 -- 1902



1903 -- 1912



1912

FOR GOOD SERVICE  
TELEPHONE 622

## Pearl Steam Laundry

114 - 128 SECOND AVENUE

428 MARKET STREET --- Pearl Steam Laundry