

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received MAY 30 1986

date entered 6-26-86

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic N/A

and/or common Paine Lumber Company Historic District

2. Location

street & number See Inventory not for publication

city, town Oshkosh vicinity of

state Wisconsin code 55 county Winnebago code 139

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name See inventory - various owners

street & number N/A

city, town N/A vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Winnebago County Courthouse

street & number 415 Jackson Avenue

city, town Oshkosh state Wisconsin 54902

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1981  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin

city, town Madison state WI 53706

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Paine Lumber Company District is a small district located along the east bank of the Fox River in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. The District itself is comprised of 13 buildings and one structure, which were all originally built, owned or used by the Paine Lumber Company of Oshkosh. (Of the properties there are 9 major contributing buildings, 4 minor non-contributing garage structures and one structure-the concrete dock wall.)

The southern boundary of the district is the Northern edge of New York Ave. as if extended to the Fox River. The northern boundary is drawn approximately ten feet from the north wall of the Paine Lumber Company barn (Map No. 1). The western boundary of the District is the Fox River itself, drawn to include what remains of the retaining wall along the Fox River (Map No. 2) (built by the Paine's as a beautification project in the 1920s to the north and south of Congress Avenue). The completion of the western boundary is along the right of way of the Paine Co. access road to the west of the Paine barn. The eastern boundary of the District is a line approximately ten feet from the eastern wall of the Paine Barn extended to Congress Avenue and then along the northern property line of the Paine Thrift Bank (Map No. 4) to meet and then follow the rear property line of the row houses along Summit Street (Map Nos. 5-10). All the structures in the district, with the sole exception of the City Fire Station on Congress Avenue (Map No. 3) were originally owned by the Paine Lumber Company.

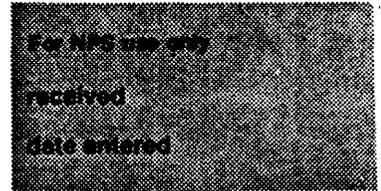
The remaining building connected directly to the factory itself is the Paine Horse Barn which now houses two small industrial concerns (Map No.1). The second element of the District which is directly connected to the original plant is the retaining wall along the Fox River, which served to delineate the extent of the former Paine holdings on both sides of Congress Avenue.

Several other Paine-associated buildings are also part of the District. The first is the Oshkosh City Fire Station No. 2 located at 1717 Congress Avenue (Map No. 3), which was built by the City on land donated by the Paine Lumber Company under the condition that the fire company would be available to fight fires in the Paine complex. Also included is the Paine Thrift Bank at 1621 Congress Avenue (Map No. 4), built in 1925 to serve Paine workers; and the Paine row houses at 1202-1318 Summit Street (Map Nos. 5-10), built in 1925, to replace an earlier housing development on the same site for Paine Lumber Company workers.

These buildings and structures make up the area connected to the Paine Lumber Company at the height of its success from the end of World War I until the onset of the Great Depression.

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Historic District

It should be noted here that a portion of the Paine Lumber Company plant still exists to the immediate north of the District boundaries cited above. It has not been included within the District boundaries due to a severe loss of architectural integrity. Over the past year, the Paine plant complex has been sold to a developer who has systematically demolished, or is demolishing, all the buildings on the site with the exception of one and part of another. The remaining building is a four-story loft industrial structure which, due to its height, was the most prominent building on the site. This building will be rehabilitated into housing units. Although the rehabilitation will retain the basic form of the building, changes will be made to the windows and other details. During the preparation of this nomination, the owner also indicated his preference to not be included in the District in order to preserve his use of the 20 percent investment tax credit.

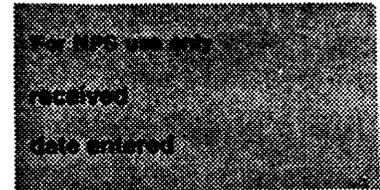
The District, as nominated, holds together well, visually. The barn is partially obscured by trees; however, when standing on Congress Avenue, one can see all the elements of the District together. Particularly interesting is the juxtaposition of styles and uses as evidenced by the housing complex and the bank building which are immediately adjacent. From the intersection of Summit and New York Avenues at the south end of the District, one can see all the elements of the District, except the barn (which is blocked by the bank) and see the four-story loft building from the old plant (not nominated) looking down on the remains of Nathan Paine's empire.

INVENTORY

<u>Map No.</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Historic Name/Use</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Classification</u>
1	1706 Congress Ave.	Paine Barn	1925	C
2	Fox River	Retaining Wall	1928	C
3	1717 Congress Ave.	Oshkosh City Fire Station No. 2	1927	C
4	1621 Congress Ave.	Paine Thrift Bank	1925	C
5	1202-1208 Summit Ave.	Paine Row House	1925	C
6	1214-1220 Summit Ave.	Paine Row House	1925	C
7	1224-1230 Summit Ave.	Paine Row House	1925	C
8	1236-1240 Summit Ave.	Paine Row House	1925	C
9	1302-1306 Summit Ave.	Paine Row House	1925	C
10	1312-1318 Summit Ave.	Paine Row House	1925	C
11-14	-	Garages structures	-	NC

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DESCRIPTION OF SELECTED CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

<u>Map No.</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Historic Name</u>	<u>Date of Construction</u>
1	1706 Congress Ave.	Paine Barn	1925

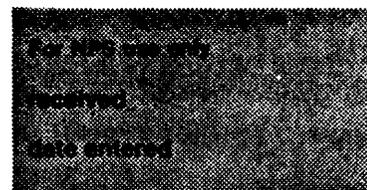
The Paine horse barn was built in 1925 by Fluor Bros. of Oshkosh. The barn is constructed of frame on a stone foundation and is approximately 2-1/2 stories in height. The building is L-shaped and measures approximately 80 feet by 25 feet on its east-west axis and 66 by 25 feet on the north-south axis. It features a gambrel roof with shed-roofed dormers. The barn was constructed at a cost of some \$35,000 to house 40 horses, which were used by the Paine plant. The barn remains intact and retains a great deal of its exterior physical integrity. It is currently used for warehousing and light manufacturing. The interior is now divided into a sail manufacturing operation on the ground floor of the east-west wing and storage for a construction company throughout the remainder of the building. A small one-story brick garage stands near the southwest corner of the barn. This building was once used to store Nathan Paine's automobile and, later, for other company vehicles. It is now vacant, in a state of decay, and, due to overgrowth, inaccessible.

2	Fox River	Retaining Wall	1928
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On returning from a trip to Europe, Nathan Paine, decided to add a touch of European beauty to his plant and, in 1928, built a concrete retaining wall along the entire length of his lumber mill property on the Fox River.<sup>2</sup> It runs the approximately 400 feet on both sides of Congress Avenue. The wall extends about 15 feet above the water line and some four to five feet above ground on the shore side. It is interspersed at regular intervals with concrete light poles topped by rounded light fixtures. The wall was used not only for decorative purposes, but also for erosion control. Today, the dock wall is in poor repair; most of the light fixtures have been smashed, some of the wall itself is crumbling into the River, and its future is somewhat shaky; however, it remains as a reminder of the greatest era in the company's history.

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<u>Map No.</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Historic Name</u>	<u>Date of Construction</u>
3	1717 Congress Ave.	Oshkosh City Fire Station No. 2	1927

Oshkosh City Fire Station No. 2 was built in 1927 by the Fluor Bros. Construction Company of Oshkosh on land leased to the City of Oshkosh by the Paine Lumber Company. The lease agreement indicated that as long as the City operated and maintained a fire station on that site, the land could be used by the City. The understanding was, of course, that the fire station would be available to fight fires on the Paine property.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the Paine Company was providing for its own fire protection through this donation to the City of Oshkosh. The brick fire station is an example of a simplified Renaissance Revival design. The second story central windows are richly ornamented with round arches springing from pilasters. This is the only fire station in the City which is still in service and has not had its exterior drastically remodeled in recent years. Its interior has been remodeled to some extent with modernizations over its life, but the major interior spaces remain. It retains more of its original architectural integrity than others in the City.

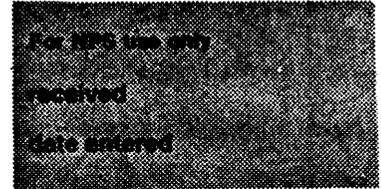
4	1621 Congress Ave.	Paine Thrift Bank	1925
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The Paine Thrift Bank building at 1621 Congress Avenue is the most formal architectural statement in the District. The building was designed by Auler and Jensen of Oshkosh and constructed by local builder C.R. Meyer.<sup>4</sup> It is an example of Neo-Classicism as applied to a relatively small scale building. The central pavilion of this one-story building consists of four Ionic columns which flank the full height rounded windows and the classical entrance. This rounded window appears on the side elevations as well. Windows having shallow reveals preserve the broad surface plane. A classical cornice encircles the structure. This is one of the best examples of this style in Oshkosh in a small building and is most unusual because of its association with the Paine Lumber Company and its consequent location at some distance from the commercial district.

The bank was built by the company in 1925 in an attempt to handle all its own financial needs thereby keeping its banking costs within the company. The bank was also supposed to serve Paine employees and aggressive efforts were made to attract their savings accounts. The bank failed in 1929. Nathan Paine repurchased the building in 1933 and from that year to 1970, it served as the Paine Company offices.<sup>5</sup> In 1970, the building was sold to the Hughes and Matthewson law firm for their offices. Through the careful remodeling of the present owners, many of the original interior features, including the safe and chandelier, remain.

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<u>Map No.</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Historic Name</u>	<u>Date of Construction</u>
5-10	1202-1318 Summit St.	Paine Row Houses	1925

This series of six buildings was constructed in 1925 of concrete block with a stucco finish. The design is simple with gable ends and porches containing exposed beam ends for a half timbered effect. Each block of buildings had six apartments. Four gables and three porches break up the facade of each block. When built, this complex was seen locally as a model community for factory workers. This particular design was not reproduced in the City, although detached worker's cottages appear on 7th Avenue. The row houses were constructed by the Paine Company in 1925 to replace older company housing built in the 1890's. The row houses and the neighboring Paine Bank are a rare remaining example of industrial paternalism in Oshkosh.

In addition to the properties numbered above, the District includes a large empty lot between Summit Avenue and the Fox River dockwall. This lot was also once part of the Paine Lumber Company complex and was filled with Paine Lumber buildings from the 1890's until the 1970's when their state of decay caused the City to order their demolition. The land is included for its past connection with Paine Lumber, as a reminder of the size of this industrial concern and, finally, to provide continuity in the District boundaries and physical connection with the dockwall.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Because much of the Paine District is built upon sawdust and other landfill created by the lumber mills along the Fox River and due to heavy construction activity in the area, it is likely that any archaeological remnants within the boundaries of the Paine Lumber Company Historic District are deeply buried. No systematic archaeological survey has been conducted here.

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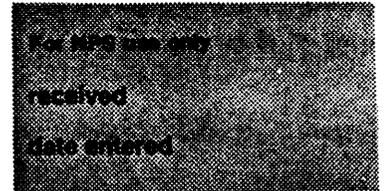
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NOTES

- 1 Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, January 3, 1925, p. 14.
- 2 Paine Lumber Co., Ltd., 100 Years; Company account books owned by Terry Eisch.
- 3 Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, July 13, 1927, p. 1.
- 4 Date on Building; Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, February 26, 1925, p. 10.
- 5 Karstaedt, Clinton F., Ed., Oshkosh One Hundred Years a City - 1853-1953, Oshkosh, Oshkosh Centennial, Inc., 1953; Interview with Terry Eisch.
- 6 Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, October 3, 1925, p. 5.
- 7 Lautenschlager, Peggy A., "The West Siders: The Development and Disintegration of the Volga-German Community in Oshkosh, Wisconsin," unpublished honors thesis, Lake Forest College, 1977.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1925–1928      **Builder/Architect** Various - see text

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**      Period of significance: 1925–1928

The Paine Lumber Company Historic District is being nominated on the basis of its architectural and industrial significance: as an example of an early 20th century industrial community-within-a-community, and as a remnant of one of the giants in the sash and door industry in the United States in the early 20th century. The era is one in which Oshkosh was known as "Sawdust City". The Paine Lumber Company District includes an example of company housing for employees, a bank which took care of the financial needs of both the company and its employees, a city fire station, which provided fire protection for the area, and the barn used for draft horses at the plant. The District is also bounded along the Fox River by the dockwall built by Nathan Paine in 1928. This line delineates the historic extent of the Paine holdings along the riverfront. The Paine District contains several different property types all originally under one ownership and associated with the continued operation and development of a single firm which was acknowledged as a major industrial force in the city and the entire region. Two of the buildings in the District are also being nominated on the basis of their architectural significance and the row houses and bank are considered historically significant as an example of social/ humanitarian activities conducted by the firm as well.

Due to demolition and redevelopment activities which are ongoing at the time this nomination was being prepared, the remaining portions of the Paine plant to the northwest of the nominated area are NOT being included in the current District. Demolition crews are in the process of removing all of the plant buildings with the exception of one four-story manufacturing building and a portion of a one-story storage building. The 4 story structure is being converted to condominium units and as part of that project, changes are planned which will greatly diminish the historical integrity of the property. Based upon these changes, the remains of the plant complex are excluded from the District, leaving the properties within the District as the remaining facilities associated with the Paine firm in the area.

## Historical Background

The history of the Paine Lumber Company and the history of lumbering in the Fox River Valley, are directly related to the development of Oshkosh as a city in the mid-19th century. The first settler in what became Oshkosh arrived in 1831 when George Johnston built a tavern and started a ferry system across the Fox River. His buildings were located in what would now be the southern portion of Riverside Cemetery, just to the north and west of the Paine Lumber Company site.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 10.45

Quadrangle name Oshkosh, WI

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A	<u>16</u>	<u>374810</u>	<u>4876750</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<u>16</u>	<u>375040</u>	<u>4876780</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<u>16</u>	<u>373880</u>	<u>4876480</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

D	<u>16</u>	<u>375080</u>	<u>4876420</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

E	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

F	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

G	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

H	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>	<u>  </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

### Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation sheet 8

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
-------	-----	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Charles Causier, Senior Planner

organization Howard Needles Tammen & Bergendoff

date August 12, 1985

street & number One Park Plaze-Suite 600  
11270 West Park Place

telephone (414) 359-2300

city or town Milwaukee,

state Wisconsin

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national     state     local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title

date MAY 12, 1986

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 6-26-86

for Keeper of the National Register

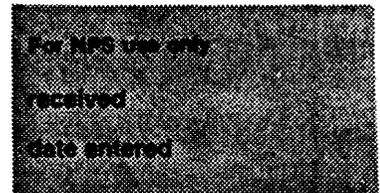
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
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Within a year or two, Johnston sold out to Robert Grignon, who in turn sold the business to one James Knaggs in 1835. It is Knaggs with whom this first river crossing settlement is particularly identified and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin has erected a marker in Rainbow Park on the opposite side of the river to commemorate his ferry operation. In 1832, at the time he purchased the ferry operation, Robert Grignon and a partner named William Howell opened a trading post on the south side of the river at a spot which became known as Algoma. In 1834, when a Federal survey party visited the small settlement in Algoma, several buildings existed. In 1836, by treaty with the Menomonee Indians, the area around Oshkosh was opened to settlement south of the Fox River. By 1837, the first farmers were arriving in the Algoma area and, within ten years, Algoma had become a thriving village.

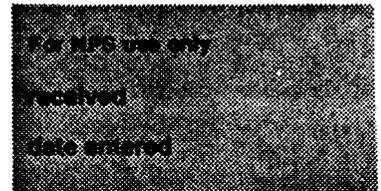
In October of 1836, the Menomonee Indians ceded the remainder of their lands north of the Fox River. Settlers immediately moved to the mouth of the River and layed claim to all of the land from the present-day Main Street to Lake Winnebago and from Washington Avenue to the Fox River. These early settlers quickly began selling off portions of their lands and developing a small settlement in what is now downtown Oshkosh. By 1839, enough families had settled in the area for Oshkosh to be considered a community. The first name used by most of the Yankees north of the River was Athens. Athens and Algoma were two distinct settlements for a number of years. In 1839, the name Oshkosh was<sup>2</sup> formally adopted for that portion of the settlement north of the Fox River.

In 1840, the settlement began to grow more quickly as the government officially opened up the land north of the Fox River for sale. The Village of Oshkosh had a population of 135 in 1842. By 1846, that number had jumped to 2,787, as settlers began to arrive daily. By 1850, Oshkosh had become the County Seat of Winnebago County with a population of 3,392. It was incorporated as a city in 1853. Algoma became part of Oshkosh in 1896.<sup>3</sup>

In 1847, the first steam saw mill in the Fox River Valley was opened by D.W. Forman and Coles Bashford. Bashford later became Governor of the State of Wisconsin. The Forman and Bashford Mill was not a success, but it did mark the forerunner of what became Oshkosh's greatest growth industry, that of lumbering and milling.<sup>4</sup>

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The history and growth of the City of Oshkosh is also the history of the rise of the lumber industry in that area. To look at Oshkosh today, it is difficult to imagine a time when the banks of the Fox River were lined with smoke stacks of saw mills, sash and door companies, and furniture factories. The Oshkosh lumber industry grew from the late 1840's to the early 20th Century.

The first lumber mills were erected to simply supply local services and materials as the first settlers of the Villages of Oshkosh and Algoma built their homes and stores. Except for the unique geographic location of the City, this might have been the limit of this industry as it was in so many other communities. However, following the 1855 Federal improvements to the lower Fox River, large scale water transport was permitted eastward to the Great Lakes and west to the Mississippi River. This opened up new markets for the products of the pine forests which began just to the north and west of Oshkosh along the tributaries of the Wolf, Rat and other rivers.<sup>5</sup> The growth of the mills in Oshkosh to take advantage of that market played a major factor in the quick growth and eventual economic importance of the City in the State of Wisconsin.

By 1849, a total of seven saw mills were operating. In December of that year, Philetus Sawyer, who later in life became United States Senator for the State of Wisconsin, arrived in Algoma. He managed and, in 1853, purchased the Forman and Bashford mill, changing its name to Brand and Sawyer. That same year, Edward L. Paine, founder of what became the giant Paine Lumber Company, arrived and set up his business across the River in Oshkosh. Lumber output grew, but remained comparatively small through the 1850's. The industry boomed shortly after it started, but overbuilding caught up with several of the smaller, under-capitalized firms and put them out of business by the mid-1850's.<sup>6</sup>

What changed the foundering lumber industry in Oshkosh was the arrival of the railroad in 1859. The advent of rail service opened an entirely new national market for the City's mills and factories. Prior to that year, the mills produced as much as could be used locally or could profitably be shipped out on river barges or lake schooners. The arrival of the railroad revolutionized the distribution of Oshkosh products and led to its leadership in the lumbering industry in the State of Wisconsin and nationally. In addition to the arrival of rail, 1861 brought the Civil War, which was responsible for even larger orders to the mills and factories.<sup>7</sup> These two factors caused explosive growth in the community in that decade.

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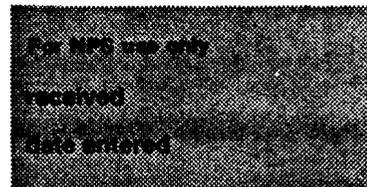
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In 1860, Oshkosh boasted 11 mills, by 1866 there were 30. The 1870 census indicated that the amount of capital invested in the industry and the County in the decade 1860 to 1870 had increased by a factor of 5 and that the number of people working in the industry had increased by a factor of 6. In 1860, the 11 saw mills produced 27 million board feet of pine lumber. By 1866, 30 mills produced 85 million board feet. The increases in shingles, sashes and doors were greater, even though the years 1868-70 were somewhat recessionary nationally. By 1869, the City's mills were still turning out over 85 million feet of lumber and over 141 million shingles per year.

The peak year of productivity for the saw mills and what became known as "Saw Dust City" was 1874. In that year, there were 47 mills, 15 shingle mills, and eight sash and door factories in the City. The census of 1880 reported 193,768,000 feet of lumber and 126,680,000 shingles were produced that year.

Following the peak of the saw mill era in 1874, the sash and door factories continued to grow, particularly the Paine Lumber Company. Paine Lumber grew until it became the largest sash and door company in the world, employing over 2,200 people at its peak of productivity in 1929. The Paine District encompasses a number of buildings that were directly part of the Paine Lumber Company operation.

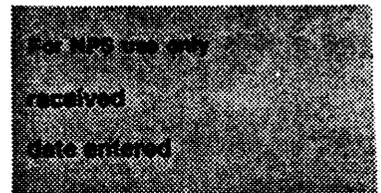
Area of Significance - Industry

The Paine Lumber Company Historic District is considered significant in the area of industry for its association with the Paine Lumber Company and as representative of the industrial aspects of the lumbering and woodworking industries which, at one point, dominated the economy of the City of Oshkosh. The Paine Lumber Company was formed in 1853 and operated until 1982 in its original location and until 1984 elsewhere.

As stated earlier, the lumbering industry in Oshkosh was responsible for the major growth of the community. At one point in time, the City of Oshkosh was the second largest city in the State of Wisconsin. The Paine Lumber Company was one of several early lumber companies which prospered and continued to grow into the late 19th Century. However, only Paine, Morgan Brothers, the Buckstaff Company, and Radford Bros. survived and prospered into the 20th Century. Of these, the Paine was the largest and the only one which included these ancillary economic and social functions which are represented here.

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By the early 20th Century, the Paine Lumber Company had become the most successful of the many lumber companies founded in Oshkosh. It was originally formed by Edward L. Paine and his two sons Charles and George in 1853. Edward Paine had been the proprietor of a lumber mill in upstate New York. He dismantled his machinery and brought it with him to Oshkosh in 1853 where he chose a site on the banks of the Fox River as the location for his new mill which remained a part of the Paine plant site until its closing in 1982.

In 1870, he retired and turned the firm over to his sons who renamed the firm C.N. Paine & Co. By 1880, the decision had been made to diversify the operation with a sash and door factory which opened next to the mill in the Fall of 1884. In 1883, the firm incorporated under the name Paine Lumber Company Ltd.

The entire plant was destroyed by fire and quickly rebuilt in 1895. In 1904, a newer mill for hardwood was opened on the west side of the River on what is now the site of Rainbow Park. By 1908, the Paine complex was described, as stated earlier, as the largest of its kind in the world. Branch offices and plants were opened in several cities around the country. The company continued to expand and grow during the boom building years following World War I and employed 2,200 employees in Oshkosh at its peak in 1929.

Unfortunately, like so many other firms, the Paine Lumber Company was caught in the 1929 Stock Market Crash, which heralded the Great Depression. Production at the Oshkosh plant slowed to a halt. The new hardwood plant across the River was sold, some assets liquidated and the main plant slowly restored to operation over several years. By 1937, the plant had specialized in the new field of hollow core doors and continued in that specialty until it closed. In 1982, the plant moved out of this site into another plant in Oshkosh; however, its doors were permanently closed in 1984. The Paine Barn (Map No. 1) and one plant building being renovated for housing (not nominated) are all that remain of the plant complex.

The Paine Lumber Company, more than any of the other similar companies in Oshkosh, was run with an iron hand and managed under a philosophy of industrial paternalism. Nathan Paine, the last Paine to operate the plant from the 1920's through the 1940's, believed as had his father and uncles before him, that labor was a commodity which should be paid for with the least amount of capital. The physical manifestation of their approach can be found in the development of the bank and the housing for employees in the

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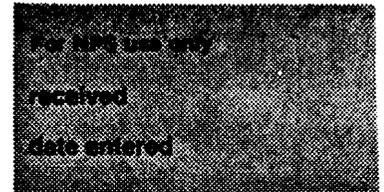
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immediate vicinity of the plant. This philosophy guided the management of Paine Lumber even as it guided other companies in the period, most notably the Pullman Company in Illinois and the Kohler Company in Wisconsin, and is also considered to be an important part of the historical significance of this District.

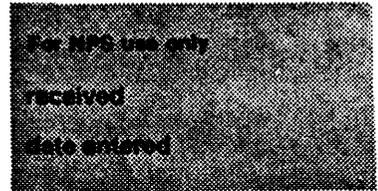
Despite its approach towards its workforce (or, perhaps, because of it), the Paine Lumber Company, as most of the other lumber companies in Oshkosh, had a number of labor disturbances over time. Perhaps the most famous was in 1898 when labor violence hit all the mills, but most notably the Paine plant. As part of their effort to break that strike, the Paine Lumber Company imported a group of Volga-Germans to Oshkosh from Russia. The first group to arrive worked at the Paine Lumber Company during and after the 1898 woodworking strike. The Company housed these first immigrants in Company-owned apartments and encouraged them to send for more family members and friends. By 1914, when the World War stopped the immigration, several hundred of their countrymen had arrived and settled on the west side of Oshkosh. This group formed one of the key components of Paine Lumber Company labor in the early 20th Century.

The row houses along Summit Avenue (Map Nos. 5-10) are a later replacement of some of that original worker housing which was built by the company on the same site. The existing row houses are an improved and modernized version of the 1898 structures which were originally built to house strike breakers. The units were all rented out and occupants were selected from employee applications by the Company. The apartments were generally reserved for new arrivals to the area who stayed there until they had the means to purchase or rent a larger home. The programmed construction and use of this housing by employees is considered socially significant. It was the only far-reaching program of this type among Oshkosh industries.

In addition, to capture those funds paid to the workers, Nathan Paine created the Paine Thrift Bank as a private bank in 1925. This building is also part of the District (Map No. 4). It was the financial institution which handled some of the Paine transactions, but was also incorporated with the idea of capitalizing on the savings and banking needs of the workers at the Paine Lumber Company; similar to a credit union in modern times, but privately owned by Nathan Paine. Another building in the District is City Fire Station No. 2 (Map No. 3), which was built on land leased by the Paine Lumber Company to the City of Oshkosh in return for an

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agreement that a fire station would be constructed and manned on that site. It was principally built to protect the Paine holdings, although also available to protect other properties in the vicinity. As far as can be determined, this arrangement was unique in the City's history.

The dockwall, built by Nathan Paine to commemorate a trip to Europe, still remains in somewhat ruined condition and has also been included in the Paine District to delineate the land which was once part of the main Paine plant.

These several buildings indicate the degree to which the Paine Company had manifest its interests in its employees in the Oshkosh area. The Paine family contributed greatly to the development and growth of the City and was very successful in its business operations. The Paine Lumber Company remained on its original site from 1853 to 1982, at which point it was moved to another site in the City before the final closing in 1984. As stated in discussions with local historians, there were many lumber mills and factories in Oshkosh but, in terms of social and economic impacts on the community, there was only one, Paine Lumber. It stands unique in the history of the Oshkosh lumbering industry.

Area of Significance - Architecture

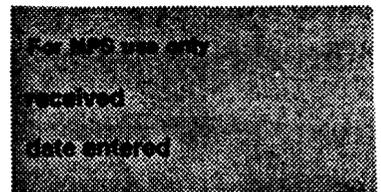
Although the Paine Lumber Company District is being nominated principally for its part in the commercial and industrial history of the City of Oshkosh, two buildings in the District should also be recognized for their architectural merit. The Paine Thrift Bank was built by Nathan Paine in 1925 as were the Paine row houses. Their history has been described elsewhere in this nomination.

The bank building was designed by the local architectural firm of Auler and Jensen which was the premier firm in Oshkosh during this period as the successor to the William Waters firm. The Paine Thrift Bank is a remaining example of the firm's work in the Neo-Classic style and represents an important remnant of that firm's work in Oshkosh. The C.R. Meyer Construction Company had the construction contract for the bank. The C.R. Meyer Company is a prominent local contractor which has been responsible for many of the major buildings in the City from the 1890's to the present.

The building itself is significant as an example of Neo-Classicism as applied to a relatively small-scale building. The main facade of the building is of matched granite providing the appearance of a solid, safe building. The central pavilion is inset and the entablature supported by four Ionic columns. Large round-arched windows almost entirely fill the plane between the columns with the central window pierced by the extruding

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main doorway, a pattern which is repeated (without the doorway) on the east and west facades. The doorway is topped by an ornamental floral cartouche which includes the Paine crest and is surrounded by low-relief panels of leaf carvings. The name "Paine Thrift Bank" remains carved in the entablature with the date 1925 in Roman numerals and a "P" in the iron grillwork on both of the double front doors.

This is one of the better examples of the this style in Oshkosh and is unusual in that it was built in connection with an industrial concern. Its location is also unusual in what, at the time, was both a residential and industrial area. During its brief life as a bank, it was the only such institution to be located outside the downtown commercial district.

The integrity of the building has been preserved by the original owners and the current owners. No apparent changes have been made to the exterior and many interior features such as the vault, chandelier, etc., remain from the original banking period.

The Paine row houses (Map Nos. 5-10) were built in 1925 by the Paine Lumber Company to replace an earlier group of apartment structures. They are considered significant as a type of housing which is unique to the City of Oshkosh. The complex consists of six identical buildings, each housing six apartments. The buildings evidence elements of the Craftsman/Tudor style. The front facades are characterized by three gables over three front porches. Each building consisted of three first floor and three second floor units. These were rented out to Paine employees; often foreign or out-of-town employees that had not yet been able to obtain their own homes. Although some of the interior spaces have changed in the last 60 years, the exteriors have retained a high degree of their integrity.

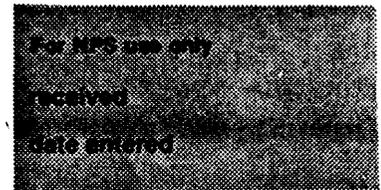
Boundary Justification

The boundaries selected for the Paine Historic District correspond with those buildings remaining which can be considered a part of or had once been a part of the Paine Lumber Company holdings surrounding the main plant. The riverside boundary corresponds with what remains of the dock-wall built by Nathan Paine to indicate the original boundaries of the Paine holdings. To the north and east, the Paine barn, which will survive the new redevelopment efforts, is included. To the east/northeast, the boundary crosses Congress and includes the Paine Thrift Bank and the row houses along Summit Street. Although the site of a part of the Paine plant until the 1970's, the empty field between the row houses and the River has not been included in the District. This District, though covering a relatively

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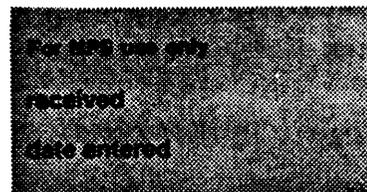
large amount of acreage, includes just a few buildings, all of which were built by the Paine Lumber Company or were directly connected with it at the peak of its success in the late 1920's.

Boundary Description

The boundary for the Paine Lumber Company Historic District is drawn as follows: Proceeding northwesterly from the southeast corner of the Paine Lumber Company barn (Map No. 1) along the eastern wall of the barn and following the walls of the barn to its northwest corner. The boundary then proceeds westerly to the eastern edge of the access road into the Paine Lumber tract; it then follows the edge of that road southwesterly to its intersection with Congress Avenue, crosses Congress, and proceeds westerly along the southern edge of Congress to the dock wall on the bank of the Fox River. The boundary follows the inside (landside) edge of the dock wall to its northern terminus, extends around the northern end of the dockwall and then follows its outside (riverside) edge to its southern end, extends around the end and continues along the inside edge to a point opposite the rear (south) wall of Fire Station No. 2 at 1717 Congress Avenue (Map No. 3). The boundary then proceeds eastwardly along the line of the rear of the fire station to its eastern property line and then north to the south side of Congress Avenue. It then proceeds east along Congress Avenue to the east side of Summit Avenue and south along that line to its intersection with New York Avenue. It then proceeds southeasterly along the northern edge of New York Avenue extended to the rear property line of 1202-1318 Summit Avenue (Map Nos. 5-10) and then northerly along that property line to the northern property line of that group of buildings. The boundary then follows that boundary to the east until it intersects with the southeast boundary of the Paine Thrift Bank property (Map No. 4) at 1621 Congress Avenue. The boundary then proceeds along the eastern property line of the Bank building extended until it meets the southeast corner of the Paine barn (Map No. 1).

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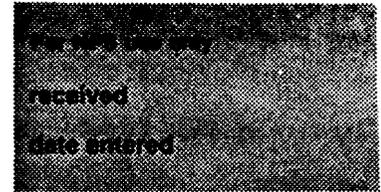
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- 1 Goff, Dr. Charles D., "Oshkosh, the Real Beginning," Chapter XVII in Metz, James I., ed., Prairie, Pines and People: Winnebago County in a New Perspective, Oshkosh, pp. 131-137.
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_, "A Yankee Athens Becomes Oshkosh," Chapter XVIII in Metz, op. cit., p. 143.
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_, "Governing, Politicking in Early Oshkosh," Chapter XXI in Metz, op. cit., p. 161.
- 4 Kuony, John, "Lusty Days of Lumber," Chapter XXVII in Metz, op. cit., p. 302.
- 5 Ibid., p. 303.
- 6 Karstedt, Clinton F., ed; Oshkosh: One Hundred Years a City, 1853-1953, Oshkosh, pp. 137-140; 100 Years of Paine Lumber Company, Ltd., Centennial Booklet, 1953.
- 7 Op. cit., pp. 315-316.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Op. cit., 100 Years of Paine Lumber Company, Ltd., Centennial Booklet, 1953.
- 11 Ibid., op. cit., Karstedt, pp. 137-140.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Op. cit., 100 Years of Paine Lumber Company, Ltd., Centennial Booklet, 1953.
- 14 Op. cit., 100 Years of Paine Lumber Company, Ltd.; Oshkosh City Planning Department.
- 15 Lautenschlager, Peggy A., "The West Siders: The Development and Disintegration of the Volga-German Community in Oshkosh, Wisconsin," unpublished honors thesis.

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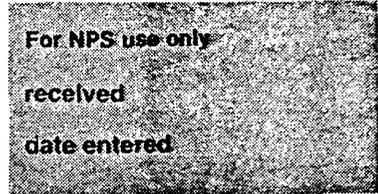
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- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Telephone interview with Ed Zwiefel, Wisconsin State Bank Commissioner's Office, March 10, 1986; Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, February 26, 1925; Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, July 13, 1927.
- 18 Op. cit., 100 Years of Paine Lumber Company, Ltd., Centennial Booklet, 1953.

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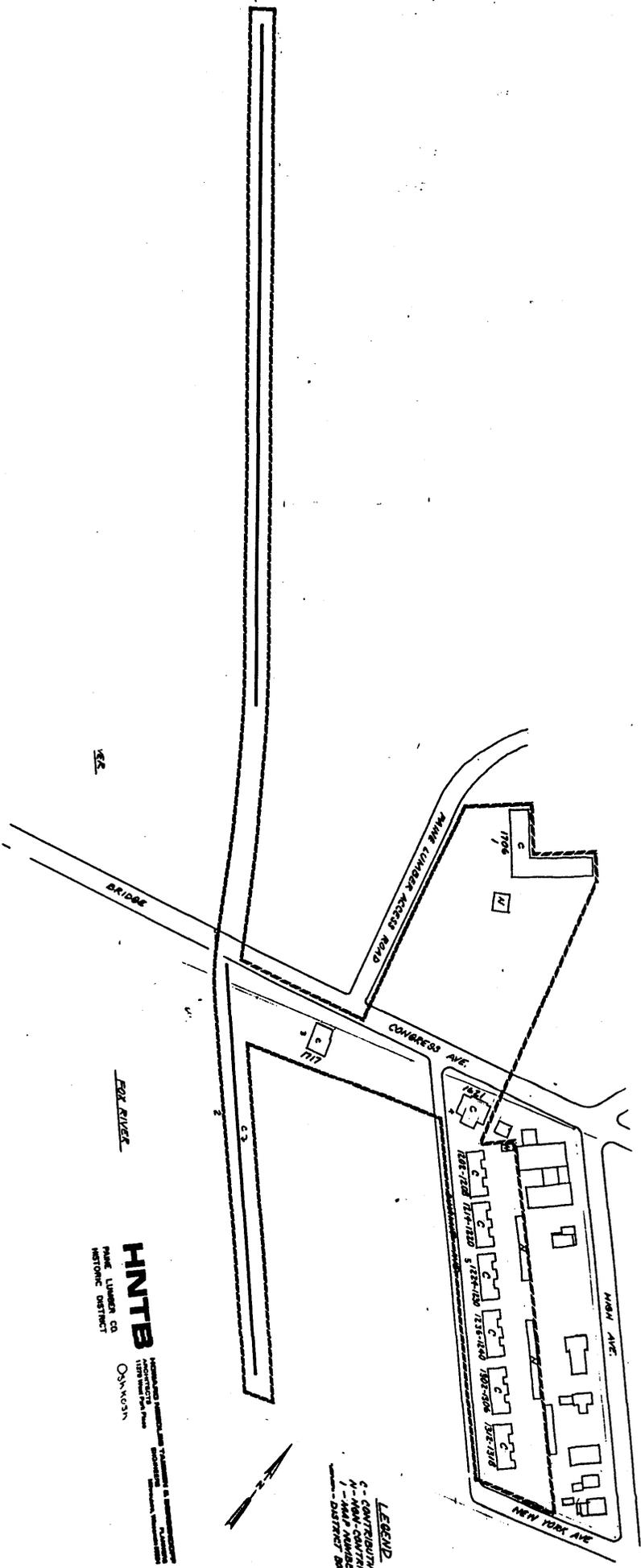
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Daily Northwestern



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 OMAHA, NE

**LEGEND**  
 C - CONSTRUCTION  
 N - NEW CONSTRUCTION  
 F - HISTORIC FOOTPRINT  
 S - DISTRICT BOUNDARY