NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 from the instructions.

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Akron Soap Company

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing: **N/A**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing

2. Location

Street & number: 237-243 Furnace Street

City or town: Akron State: Ohio County: Summit

Not For Publication: n/a Vicinity: n/a

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___**national** ___**statewide** X **local**

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X **A** ___**B** X **C** ___**D**

Barbara Pewer **DSHPO for Inventory & Registration** August 4, 2014

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**

State Historic Preservation Office, Ohio History Connections

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: **Date**

Title : **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Patrick Andrus 9/29/2014

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private: [X]

Public – Local [ ]

Public – State [ ]

Public – Federal [ ]

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s) [X]

District [ ]

Site [ ]

Structure [ ]

Object [ ]

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use
Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Industry/Processing/Extraction: Manufacturing Facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN/Romanesque Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: _Brick_

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph
The Akron Soap Company building consists of two remaining portions of the original Akron Soap Company manufacturing complex. It is rectangular in plan, roughly 119 feet long and 42 feet wide. The taller portion is a three story, red brick, bearing wall structure with a heavy timber wood frame interior. Its side gabled roof is supported by heavy timber and iron rod trusses. The lower portion is two stories tall with the same style and type of construction. The two sections are separated by a brick masonry bearing wall. Both portions are constructed on a stone foundation with a basement. Missing is a one story shed roofed boiler room that added 20 feet to the length of the building originally. The building is a simple expression of the Romanesque Revival Style, popular at the end of the 19th century.

The building is located on a sloped site, north of the downtown area. The basement levels of the building open to the north. The Akron Soap Company building sits on an east-west axis, between a rail line immediately to the south and the Little Cuyahoga River downhill and to the north. The building was constructed adjacent to the Valley Railway with a spur for service to the structure.

Also on the site is a six story, concrete frame, warehouse structure built sometime between 1922 and 1939. It was constructed as a zero setback building from the Akron Soap Company Building, and shares a portion of the east wall of the building as a party wall. It has a flat roof with a large elevator penthouse. The Furnace Street façade is vertical texture brick which has been painted on the first two floors. The other façades of the warehouse are clay tile and were coated with Gunite in the 1980s. The warehouse does not have a functional relationship to the original Akron Soap Company factory and was constructed outside the period of significance and at a time when the property was divided into separate parcels with unrelated ownership. It is a non-contributing feature of the site.

There is also a concrete retaining wall running parallel to the road at the east end of the site. It is the remaining foundation wall of a frame warehouse that was destroyed by fire in 1922.

Narrative Description

The base of the Akron Soap Company building is a sandstone foundation of large block two feet thick. The upper floors are constructed of red hydraulic press brick with smooth faces. The brick is laid in a running bond pattern with rowlocks every fifth or sixth course.

The three story portion is four bays wide and three bays deep; the two story portion is six bays wide and three bays deep. The bays are articulated on the exterior by plain brick pilasters expressing the structural column line on the exterior. The base of the building is corbelled between the pilasters to a thinner number of brick wythes, with the top of each section corbelled outward to form a cornice. The walls between the pilasters typically have a single arched opening, either a door or window, at each floor. The windows have projecting stone sills.

On the south façade, which once faced the railroad spur and featured a long platform, there are a number of wide arched door openings. Working west to east, in the three story section the doors were in the second and fourth bays. In the two story section they were in the second and fifth bays. Both doorways in the three story wing on this façade have been filled in with brick. The two story wing has a sliding door in one opening and a pair of wood doors in the easternmost opening. The pair of doors is a wood style and rail with four lights in the upper panel and tongue and groove boards in the lower panel.

The west elevation has a single arched door opening in the center bay of the first floor, and a single window in the center bay of the second floor. The third floor has a single window in each bay. The north façade has door openings on the first floor in the three story portion in the second bay, and in two story portion in the second and fourth bays. Because of the sloping site, there was originally an arched doorway from the basement in the fourth bay of the three story wing. A newer opening has been cut through the foundation wall in the fifth bay of the two story wing.

A few early windows as well as some frames remain. All of the remaining windows are wood double hung with rectangular sash in a brick arch opening. Some are four over four lights, and one is twelve over twelve lights. The four light sash have unusually wide muntins with

chamfered edges. Seven of the forty-three windows have been bricked in, but the outline, arch head and projecting sills are still visible.

The building interior has exposed brick walls and exposed wood framing. Major beams run north-south supported at the third points on 12-inch wood columns, with wood bolsters. The beams support floor joists running east-west. The floors are wood tongue and groove boards. The interior is open space, with few partitions. Most of the partitions appear to be later alterations, and are not particularly good examples of craftsmanship. Along the south wall of the two story portion is a wood stair with a tongue and groove board surround.

In the northeast corner of the east wing are the remnants of a rough staircase. The north stair lacks any enclosure. The south east corner of the west wing was the site of the original freight elevator. Portions of the track and some of the machinery are still in place. The penthouse of the elevator is expressed on the south elevation of the building by a single blind dormer.

The upper floors were originally column-free beneath Double Howe Trusses of large timbers and iron rods. The trusses span north-south and bear on the masonry walls at the pilasters. While the two story wing remains column-free, columns were added to the top floor of the three story wing. The three story wing has a mezzanine level and once had a clerestory monitor along its ridge. The monitor may have been added when the building was expanded by the Pioneer Cereal Company; it was removed sometime after 1939.

There is a shed roofed structure on the north side of the building, added after 1930. It appears to have been constructed from pieces of other structures and is not a good example of craftsmanship. It is in extremely poor condition.

Although the building has had changes in its 120 year history, it retains the key portions of its original purpose-built structure. It retains the original massing of the original two story and three story wings, the original stone and brick masonry features, as well as the timber framing and truss systems. The setting, adjacent to the railway line, is retained, as well as the open plan and simple interior, characteristic of its industrial purpose. Except for the boiler room, all of the Akron Soap Company building remains.

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.)

- [x] 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.
- [x] 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.

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

- [ ] 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
Industry
Architecture

Period of Significance
1893-1904

Significant Dates
1893, 1904

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
William Windsor & Sons (Masonry Contractor)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Akron Soap Company building represents the development of manufacturing in Akron from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It illustrates changes from a craft-based family business, to an industrial corporation. (Criterion A) It is representative of the late 19th century industrial building type, in both its construction methods and its location near an important railway. (Criterion C)

The building was constructed in 1893 by Adam Duncan for his enterprise, The Akron Soap Company. The Akron Soap Company used the building as a manufacturing facility to make "Grand and Electric Grip Soap" used for laundry, as well as some toilet soaps. The third floor housed four large vats, with capacities ranging from 30,000 to 60,000 pounds. The products were sold throughout Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and New York. The facility produced about 1,125,000 pounds of soap per week. (Beacon 01/06/1894)

The Duncan family would be associated with several successful enterprises in Akron, and were among the leading entrepreneurs of the early 20th century. They eventually expanded into feed binders, and meat processing with the Akron Abattoir Company. (Grismer) They also diversified into the oil and gas business with Duncan Oil Company, and tire manufacturing with The American Tire and Rubber Company.

The Soap Company was forced to move by complaints from neighboring residents about the smells from the rendering process in 1904.

The proposed period significance, 1893-1904, is related to the period in which the facility was used for manufacturing by the first owner, the Akron Soap Company. It begins with the construction of the Akron Soap Company factory in 1893, and ends when the company is forced to move in 1904. The property only had one other single function, from 1908 to 1915; it was purchased and significantly expanded by the Pioneer Cereal Company. Pioneer declared bankruptcy in 1915. After 1915, the property was sold off in sections to a variety of owners with unrelated uses. By 1940, nearly all of the expansions made by the Pioneer Cereal Company were lost or removed. The remaining contributing structure is essentially that which was purpose built by the Akron Soap Company.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Introduction

The Akron Soap Company Factory, constructed in 1893, is a significant example of broad patterns of history (Criterion A) related to industrialization and manufacturing in Akron. It is particularly related to the industrialization of household products. It is one of the last remaining examples in Akron of the type of purpose built industrial buildings of the 19th century post-civil war era. The structure embodies the distinct characteristics of the type of building constructed in the 19th century for industry. (Criterion C) These structures, derived from the English and New England textile mill form, were adapted throughout the 19th century for a number of industries. In the United States, the most common characteristics of the type were heavy timber frame and exterior masonry bearing walls with deep pilasters at the timber bearing points. The long, narrow form was intended to provide natural light and ventilation to the work areas.

The Founding of Akron, the Canal Era and Early Industry

The City of Akron was founded in 1825, as a result of the routing of the Ohio and Erie Canal, linking the Ohio River to the Great Lakes. The Canal was a critical milestone in western expansion of the United States. The canal made it possible for landholders to get agricultural goods to markets and moved Ohio from a state of subsistence farmers to one of greater production and prosperity.

In 1831, Dr. Elkiam Crosby, taking advantage of Akron's hilly topography, built a mill race from the Little Cuyahoga River, down to his mill alongside the canal at lock 5. The hydraulic power from "Crosby's Ditch" would lead to an immediate growth in the number of industries in Akron. The source of power provided by the race would soon drive several industries, a textile machinery plant, a furniture factory, several grist mills, and a distillery. With ample power for mills and easy access to markets via the canal, Akron soon became the processing center for wheat, barley, and corn. From 1832 to 1859 seven new mills would be constructed in Akron. Entrepreneurs like Ferdinand Schumacher, the "Oatmeal King," would make milling a multi-million dollar industry in Akron by the end of the century.

By 1852 the first railroad came to Akron, beginning the decline of the Canal Era. While the canal remained in service until the flood of 1913, its use as a means of transportation began to decline at an increasing rate after the Civil War.

Increased Industrialization and the Railroad Era

Akron's growth during the canal and subsequent railroad era was the result of increased industrialization, beginning with milling and processing of grain that would be shipped from Akron, and eventually to other products such as, agricultural implements, matches, and clay pipe.

In 1871, the Valley Railway was chartered and construction began on a line from the coal fields, south of Canton, to the burgeoning steel industry in Cleveland. Coal fired power plants drove the growing industrialization that followed the Civil War. Rail transportation of coal was a key

to success in the region. The line passed through Akron between the Ohio & Erie Canal and the Little Cuyahoga River. It continued northward through the Cuyahoga River Valley and into Cleveland. It supplied industry along its entire route. In 1890, the Baltimore and Ohio acquired controlling interest in the Valley Railway. In 1915, Baltimore and Ohio purchased the entire assets, and the line was renamed.

In the post-Civil War era, newer industries located near the rail lines. These included Ball, Aultman & Company (later Aultman, Miller and Company) and the Empire Mower and Reaper Company; both companies were major manufacturers of agricultural implements, and had large factories east of Broadway. Akron became a national leader in the production of mowers and reapers.

Other industries developed as well, The Barber Match Company was founded by George Barber in 1865, and eventually merged with twenty-eight other companies to form the Diamond Match Company in 1881. Clay products were also a big industry in Akron. Excellent area clay deposits were readily tapped as early as 1847 by Edwin Merrill and David Hill. Although the industry began primarily making pottery and stoneware, the production of roofing tile, sewer pipe, brick, and building tile spurred the growth of the industry. Production became more industrialized with these products. New machinery made better products in greater quantities. An advertisement listed in the 1871 City Directory by the H.P. Chapman Brick Company boasted the virtues of steam power pressed brick, "We claim that our Hotchkiss & Buss brick and tile machine will make better brick than can be made by hand or by any other machine. It makes the brick more compact, with a smoother face and ends, and sharper corners and edges, than brick made by machines using molds." (Burch 1871) In 1871 the Akron Sewer Pipe Company was established, and in 1879 the Robinson Clay Products Company was founded. The Robinson Company, in particular, grew exponentially, eventually branching out from making sewer pipe to include brick and other clay products. The Robinson's would use the capitol from their success to invest in other industries, such as The Akron Soap Company.

The last major industry of this period in Akron was printing and publishing. The Werner Company began in 1875, as the publishers of *Akron Germania*, a German language newspaper. However, by 1887, the company had branched out into other printing and publishing ventures. They built a new factory at the intersection of Union and Perkins. By 1906 it would become one of the largest printing houses in the country, with a colossal multi-building facility, producing more than 18 million volumes annually.

In 1860, Akron's population was 3,520, by 1870 it was 10,006, in 1880 it was 16,492, and in 1890 it was 27,601. These post-Civil War decades would see the city businesses change from small family productions to corporate industries with large regional and national distribution.

In 1870, Dr. Benjamin Franklin Goodrich built the first rubber factory west of the Alleghenies in Akron. With the help of George Crouse, secretary-treasurer of Buckeye Mower and Reaper, an appeal for investment was made to the Akron Board of Trade. The enterprise was supported by investments from many of the leaders of the existing industries, including John Seiberling (Empire Mower & Reaper) and Lewis Miller (Aultman Miller). Seiberling, one of the first to buy

stock, stated, "There are many public-spirited men in Akron who are willing to back new ventures, that is, if they are as promising as yours." (Grismer) Seiberling's statement illustrates how investment from leading industrialists in the city helped to foster growth in all industries. Successful and established businesses invested in newer ventures. Each success spurred new growth and greater prosperity for the community. The new rubber factory was located near the Ohio and Erie Canal on South Main Street. He produced rubber belting for industry, rubber hoses, and packing. Much would change as a result of his move to Akron.

The Rubber Industry Era

By the middle of the 1890s, the match industry had moved from Akron to nearby Barberton, the coal industry had died, and the rubber industry was also decreasing. The panic of 1893 left many factories closed and hundreds unemployed. However, in 1896, an important event turned the rubber industry back around. Bicycle manufacturer Alexander Winston wrote to Benjamin Franklin Goodrich, asking him to make extra strong bicycle tires for a "horseless carriage." By 1898, the first car was made and sold in the United States and the rubber industry was about to experience a major boom. Also in 1898, F. A. Seiberling (son of John Seiberling) began the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company. By the turn of the century, Firestone Rubber Company and Diamond Rubber Company had also been established in Akron. In 1905, Harvey Firestone was commissioned to supply tires for cars produced by Henry Ford. General Tire then came to Akron in 1915.

Between 1910 and 1920, Akron's population had tripled in size, increasing from 69,067 to 208,435. It was the fastest growing industrialized city in the nation. The city known as "the Tip-Top City" in the 1890s became "the City of Opportunity" and "the Rubber Capital of the World" in the 1920s.

History of the Akron Soap Company & Building

In the Akron City Directory of 1859, two soap and candlemakers are listed, John J. Grether and Andrew Quinn. Their supply of tallow probably came from the four meat stores located in town, as well as the local sausage maker, Rentschler. By 1883, only John Grether is still listed, at 717 South Broadway. Adam Duncan, soapboiler, arrived in Akron in 1884.

Akron Soap 1893 -1904

In 1848 Alexander B. Duncan started a soap manufacturing company in Cleveland. He continued the business in Cleveland until the early 1880s. His son Adam had worked in the family soap making business. In 1884, Adam Duncan brought his wife and two young sons to Akron and established a soap making business in an old two story stone building (later demolished) adjacent to the Little Cuyahoga River on Case Avenue (then East Water Street) near Bank Street. Like his father, Adam Duncan collected meat scraps from local butchers and rendered them in the factory. In 1891, the company incorporated; partners included Adam Duncan, Linus H. Williams, Revel E. Abbott, Hannah Abbot and Sarah Williams. Hannah Abbot is Adam Duncan's sister. The company continued to grow and Sanborn insurance maps indicate that by 1892, the company had raised the roof of the old stone building in order to add a third floor. The factory was located in the Middlebury area of the City, near a number of the clay

production companies and the homes of Akron's successful Robinson family, of Robinson Clay Products.

In the fall of 1892, with capitol of $100,000, construction began on the new building, the subject of this nomination, at the intersection of Furnace and North Streets. The Akron Beacon Journal, on December 7, 1892, described the growth of the company and the commencement of construction of the new facility. The Akron Soap Company had re-incorporated in November 1892, with investment from a number of local businessmen. "The men connected with this company are some of the city's best business men and for energy, capital and enterprise the company lacks nothing." The article goes on to describe the election of officers, Henry A. Robinson, Park T. Robinson, John T. Donahue, and E. M. Buel. The contractor was identified as Windsor Brothers. "The building will contain only pressed brick, and will be one of the finest and most substantial factory buildings in the city." William Windsor and Sons are advertised in the 1892 City Directory as "Contractors and Builders in Brick and Stone, Pressed Brick and Fire Brick Work a Specialty."

The three acre site had been previously owned by the Standard Oil Company and was adjacent to the Valley Rail Line. The Little Cuyahoga River is located to the north of the building, and the Pennsylvania and Ohio Canal was to the south of the site. The new building was completed in the spring of 1893, and the operations began on July 1st.

The new structure consisted of 3 parts, a one story boiler (engine) plant to the west, a three story section, and a two story section. Typical of the type of industrial building built during the last quarter of the 19th century, it had brick masonry walls, a truss supported gable roof, and large timber framing members supporting multiple floor levels. The rendering of fats took place on the third floor where four enormous vats were located. According to a newspaper account in the Akron Beacon Journal on January 6, 1894, describing the new facility, three of the vats had a capacity of 30,000 pounds, and the fourth held 60,000 pounds. The first and second floors were used for cooling, processing, and packaging.

The Akron Soap Company's new factory could process the contents of the largest kettle in about 4 days, and produce about 1,500 boxes of soap (75 bars) in a week. This was the equivalent of about 1,125,000 pounds of soap per week. That same news article lists Henry A. Robinson as the company president, John T. Windsor (the contractor) as vice-president, Park T. Robinson as secretary and treasurer, and Adam Duncan as superintendant. The Akron Soap Company produced "Calla," "Grand," and "Electric Grip" Soaps, for bathing and laundry. A Sanborn insurance map of 1904 shows the building as having steam generated power and heat with a coal fired boiler, and city water as well as rainwater cisterns in the roof and underground. An office is located in the northeast corner and an elevator is indicated in the southeast corner of the three story wing. Lanterns provide the lighting, and a small steam pump is listed as part of the facility's equipment.

Henry A. and Park T. Robinson were third generation entrepreneurs of the Robinson Clay Products Company. Their grandfather, William Robinson, was born in Staffordshire England. He was a potter by trade and after immigrating to the United States, established a pottery

manufacturing company in Akron. Three of his sons, William, Thomas and Henry, as well as two of his sons-in-law, would lead the second generation of growth for the company, expanding into sewer pipe, brick, and tile manufacture. Henry A. and Park T. were Thomas's sons and the third generation of the family in the clay products business. Their involvement in the expansion of the Akron Soap Company is one of diversification and investment. They likely had much in common with Adam Duncan and his sons. The Robinson Clay Products company was founded as a craft-based business, started by a previous generation, and they, like Duncan, had the vision and drive to expand it into a modern industry. In illustration of the change within a single generation, the 1880 census lists Thomas Robinson's occupation as "potter," and the 1900 census lists his son Henry A. Robinson's occupation as "capitalist."

In 1892-1893 the Akron Soap Company is the only soap manufacturing concern in Akron. Advertisements from these years advertise the brands of "Grand" and "Electric Grip" soaps for laundry and "Calla" bath soap advertised as a "fine, white floater." Calla is clearly designed and intended to compete with the Cincinnati soap manufacturer Procter and Gamble's "Ivory." Ivory, introduced in 1879, was the catalyst of the prosperity of the Procter and Gamble Company. Ivory's popularity took the company value from its original assets of $7,000 to over $3,000,000 in 1890. (Lief) For the Akron Soap Company, local advertisements state that Akron consumers should buy Akron made soap. Several include testimonials in praise of the laundry soap from local grocers, "We...find it very easy to sell in preference to brands made by old and long established soap firms." The Akron Soap Company competed at this time with the other large firms, distribution of the company products extended beyond Ohio to New York, Michigan, Indiana, and Pennsylvania.

Within a short period of time, neighboring residents began to complain about the smells from the rendering process. In June of 1899, a suit was filed against the company in Akron Mayor's Court, citing that the business was offensive to the neighborhood. A year later, it is still unresolved, "Sanitary Policeman, M.W.Hoye has filed a affidavit in Mayor's Court against Adam Duncan, proprietor of the Akron Soap Company's plant, accusing him of permitting the plant to become offensive in odor to the community in which it is located." (Akron Democrat, June 1900) In September 1900, Adam Duncan issues a plea in the Akron Democrat, "Don't knock against enterprises that help Akron." The article argues that the enterprise is creating jobs, and that efforts are made to control the odors. Duncan states that he is doing all he can to remedy the alleged nuisance and that any incidental escape of unpleasant odors is due to employee carelessness. Eventually enough pressure was put on the company by the City officials and by 1902 they began looking for a new site outside the city limits. While the new plant is being constructed, threats of an injunction to halt all production at the plant are made by the neighbors. The city prosecutor, T.E. Wells, is called upon to begin legal proceedings. (Akron Democrat)

In 1904, the company re-incorporated, now with Adam Duncan's two oldest sons, Alexander and Archibald as partners, along with E. E. Otis, W.M. Graham, and J.S. Berner. That same year a new factory was built on Cuyahoga Street, outside the city limits.

Later on the Cuyahoga Street site, a separate company, The Akron Abattoir, was built by the Duncan family and they embarked on the business of providing slaughtering and wholesale meat processing. The Akron Abattoir Company provided "Rentschlerizing," a new process of tenderizing that also killed bacteria by exposing the meat to ultra violet light. They also built a second plant in Youngstown. By the end of the 1930s they would cease manufacturing most soap products. Instead they provided rendered fats to larger soap companies and to manufacturers of feed products for binder. Adam Duncan also founded the Duncan Oil Company in 1919 and the American Tire Company in 1910. By the 1920s, the Duncan Oil Company boasted 55 stations in the Akron Area and 125 stations in the Youngstown area. At the time of his death in 1924, Adam Duncan was regarded as one of the leading figures in the City. Of his major enterprises, only the American Tire Company Building, (Cascade Locks Historic District NR 92001627) and the 1893 Akron Soap Company Factory still stands.

The issues that drove the Akron Soap Company to construct a new facility outside the City limits are illustrative of the national trend to develop zoning laws. Zoning laws did not begin appearing in the United States until about 1916, and did not become commonplace until after the landmark case of Euclid vs. Ambler Realty, in 1926. Increased industrialization after the Civil War, spurred exponential growth in American cities. A lack of planning for that growth led to continued conflicts between residential and industrial uses. (Wolf) Prior to zoning laws, residential developments would include deed restrictions to prevent non-residential uses from building in residential areas. In Cleveland, the burgeoning suburb of Shaker Heights was an example. In Akron, a prime example was the 1901 Portage Park Allotment development constructed on the west side of the city by Will Christy and Gus Kasch. Christy and Kasch placed strict restrictions on the development and advertised it as "West of the Smoke" of Akron's factories. The Portage Park advertisements coincide with the years (1899-1902) that the battle between the City, the residents, and Duncan is publicly debated in the newspaper. Adam Duncan was pursued by complaints from nearby residents about the smells from his new factory, until finally a threat of a city injunction forced him to move the factory to the outskirts. The approach to using deed restrictions were frequently challenged in the courts and cities of the Progressive Era began to look for wider reaching government based solutions to the problems of city planning. (Wolf) Cases such as the Akron Soap Company helped to spur public acceptance of zoning laws. Once Ohio passed legislation in 1915, allowing municipalities to create local Planning Commissions, Akron acted quickly hiring City Planner John Nolen to help create a plan and the first Planning Commission. Among the first members of that Planning Commission was Will Christy. (Kenfield)

Historic Context – Soap-making Industry

In pre-industrialized America, soap-making was either a household craft, or where available, produced by the local soapboiler. In soap-making, the waste fats from slaughtering and butchering cows (tallow) and pigs (lard) would be collected and rendered. In a typical rendering process, an equal amount of water was added, and the contents boiled. After boiling, the mixture was allowed to cool. The waste solids settled to the bottom of the vat, while the fats floated to the top and solidified as they cooled. The rendered fat was then scraped off. To the rendered fat, lye, made from potash or pearl ash, was added. Homemade soaps were typically soft and kept in jars.

Once wholesale meat processing began in American cities, a ready supply of waste fat was available in large quantities. This material was collected by chandlers for the manufacture of tallow candles and by soapboilers for soapmaking. Eventually, other alkali was substituted for the harsh lye and salts were added to the process to make the soap into hard cakes. For bath soaps, glycerine was often added. Early manufactured soaps were often shipped in boxes, and cut to order as bars by the merchant.

In large meat processing and packing cities, like Chicago and Cincinnati, the readily available waste fats created a surplus of supply for candlemakers and soapboilers. In 1806 William Colgate founded a soapmaking company in New York. In 1864, B.J. Johnson established what eventually became the Palmolive Company in Milwaukee. In 1837, William Procter, a candlemaker, joined forces with his brother-in-law, James Gamble, a soapmaker, to establish the Procter & Gamble Company in Cincinnati. The technology of the industry improved rapidly, by the 1840s a steam heating process of rendering replaced the kettle boiling method. (Gordon) Eventually, fats from palm, olive, and laurel plants replaced the tallow and lard for bath soaps. The chemistry of soapmaking became increasingly sophisticated, trade references with processes and formulas were readily available. Examples such as William T. Brannt's " A Practical Treatise on the Manufacture of Soap and Candles, (1888) and Alexander Watt's, "The Art of Soap Making," (1896) both speak of the growth of soap manufacturing in the late 19th century. The steam-heated batch process of rendering remained the industry standard until 1939, when it was replaced by a continuous manufacturing process. (Procter & Gamble, Second Century)

Post-Civil War industrialization would affect numerous trades in cities throughout the country. Improved farm machinery like the McCormick Reaper improved agricultural production, which in turn spurred a need to improve processing and distribution. Coal and steam power replaced hydraulic power, and railways usurped canals. Successful industrialists invested in newer ventures. Ferdinand Schumacher divested from grain milling and invested in a paper mill near Chicago. In Akron, the cross investment touched every industry

The Akron Soap Company Building is a purpose-built structure that represents the changes that occurred in manufacturing from the end of the Civil War until the 20th century. The company grew from a "trade business" passed from father to son, into a corporation with diversified interests. As a corporation, it issued stock to raise money to build the plant and grow the business. As was common in Akron, the most likely investors came from other successful businesses. The Robinson officers of the company when the plant was built in 1893 were investors from the successful clay products manufacturing family. A similar example of speculation is related to the Schumacher Family's efforts to build up the Pioneer Cereal Company on the site. They too, sold stock to raise capital to expand the facility, and were supported by successful Akron Industries.

Building Type and Construction Significance

Throughout the 19th century, industrial buildings developed from the forms first used by the textile mills of England and New England. In the United States, the preferred structural frame was heavy timber, while in England the "fireproof" system of iron girders and shallow brick

arches was the most common. (Wermiel) Industrial buildings were constructed for functionality and fire resistance. The typical form was a gabled roof structure, with trusses that could provide large column free areas for production. The majority of the manufacturing production took place on the upper floors under the trussed roofs. The processed goods were then sent to a lower level for packaging, and then to the warehousing area for distribution. Heavy timber framing supported the floors. On the exterior bearing walls, masonry pilasters provided more support at the ends of the beams, thereby subdividing the facade into structural bays. The large timbers burned slowly, and were considered fire resistant. (Bergeron / Maiullari-Pontois) Masonry exterior walls and masonry separation walls between sections of the buildings helped control the spread of fire both to neighboring structures and between sections. Fire shutters were installed to protect openings in the separation walls. In many cases the separation walls extended past the roof line to prevent fires from crossing over wood roofs. Metal and slate roofs, which were fire resistant, were common. Interior walls were without furring and plaster to avoid concealed air spaces where fire could spread. The overall form was long and narrow; most every bay had a window. The combination provided natural lighting and ventilation to the work areas. Both were considered important to worker safety. (Bergeron / Maiullari-Pontois) These industries had independent power supply plants, with large brick chimneys belching smoke from their coal fired boilers. Locations near railways were important not only for distribution, but for coal supply. The Akron Soap Company is a prime example of the type, constructed in this manner. It is one of the last industrial buildings in Akron to be built with a timber frame structure. It was constructed of high quality materials, including hard pressed brick. Although painted now, a few areas, where the unpainted original brick was protected, show the hard hydraulic press process brick typical of the late 19th century. Eventually, the mill form, with its slow burning timber frame, was replaced with steel frame structures, as seen in the Swinehart Tire Company (1916) building (part of NR 92001627) or reinforced concrete frames of the "daylight factory" type, such as those at the Firestone Plant #1 (1910).

Examples of this type of gable roofed, timber frame, exposed brick, masonry bearing wall, industrial buildings in Akron are as follows:

The Akron Selle Gear Building Number 1 (1887) – **NR, 2005 (05001213)**
Quaker Oats (Schumacher Mills) (1886-1894)
Klages Ice & Coal (1891)
The Akron Silver Plate Company / Faultless Rubber & Tire (1891)
Werner Company Publishing (1906) – **demolished except for offices**
Excelsior Mower & Reaper (1865) - **demolished**
Akron Knife Works (1868) - **demolished**
Schumacher's German Mills (1872) - **demolished**
Goodrich Rubber Company Building 1 (1871) – **demolished**
Diamond Match Company (1871) - **demolished**

All of these structures have or had a similar architectural expression of masonry pilasters defining the structural bays. Of these, the Buckeye Mower & Reaper Works, Excelsior Mower & Reaper Works, and the Werner Printing and Publishing Plants were the largest. Similar in size

to the Akron Soap Company are the Selle Gear Building Number 1, and the Akron Silver Plate Company.

A comparison of the remaining structures to the Akron Soap Company is as follows:
Quaker Oats (Schumacher Mills) – The oldest two buildings in the complex are 4 & 5 stories tall, they are brick with similar pilaster details and a corbelled brick cornice. The roof forms are very low slope with parapets. They do not have any original windows; however the openings are arched, like those of the Akron Soap Company. Both buildings have a stone foundation and one has stone window sills. The interior framing is 12" timbers. Beams and columns are joined by iron post caps. The roof forms may have been altered at some point. The overall form is not long and narrow as typically found in the mill type.

The Akron Selle Company – the long narrow building is divided into two sections by a masonry wall that extends through the gabled roof form. It has a basement story / foundation stone masonry and the upper three stories are brick. The upper stories of the facades are divided by brick pilasters and have corbelled brick cornices. Windows are not original, but have arched openings with stone sills. The structural frame is 12" square wood timbers, supported on wood columns with wood bolsters. The cross framing is 6"-8" square timbers on 2'-4' centers supporting plank floors. The Selle Company Building still has its square masonry chimney. The property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Klages Ice and Coal Company – This structure, typical for its function, has a few small, square windows at the top floor only. It has brick pilasters dividing its facades and a corbelled cornice. The roof is a very low slope concealed by a parapet. The roof form may have been altered at some point.

The Akron Silver Plate Company / Faultless Rubber & Tire – This structure is more ornate than the others, it has a three story, gabled roof form with a four story, corner tower. It has had several additions. It has a stone foundation and mix of flat headed and round headed windows with heavy stone trim. The brick corbelled cornice is more elaborate by comparison to the others. It lacks the long, narrow industrial form, and the regular brick pilasters at the structural bays.

Of these, only the Akron Soap Company has the smooth, dry pressed brick. The interior framing of 12" columns and beams are joined by wood bolsters. The floor framing is 12" x 3" joists on 12" centers supporting wood flooring. Only the Selle Building and the Akron Soap Company are long and narrow buildings, typical of the form derived from the New England textile mill type. The Akron Soap Company has all of the characteristics of the type, including the form, the masonry details, and the slow burning, heavy timber frame.

Later history of the site -- Pioneer Cereal Company 1908-1916
Pioneer Cereal Company was an enterprise started by members of Akron's famous Schumacher milling family, whose patriarch, Ferdinand Schumacher, was known as "the Oatmeal King." In 1902, Hugo and Max Schumacher, along with other investors, purchased the existing Heinrich Miller & Son mill in the town of Canal Fulton, south of Akron. The venture experienced a

unexpected death of Hugo Schumacher. In December of 1907, a fire destroyed the Canal Fulton Mill. The company began immediately looking for a new location and in February of 1908 announced the purchase and plans for expansion of the former Akron Soap Company at Furnace and North streets. The expansion plans included new machinery, excavating a basement under the building and the construction of a larger power plant. In 1909, the company issued stock to raise capital for expansion of the facility. An engraved illustration, undated, shows an additional two story wing to the east and a "100,000 bushel capacity" grain elevator, as well as a separate office building. The office building is shown as a small two story structure, with the appearance of a foursquare style house. In 1913 a permit was issued for the construction of a frame warehouse. In January of 1915, Pioneer Cereal declared bankruptcy, and the assets, including the buildings, were sold. The announcement in the paper lists the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company as its largest creditor. At a time when Akron experienced unprecedented growth due to the rubber industry, the Pioneer Cereal Mill failed. In eight short years, Pioneer expanded the facility at least three times, only to fail financially.

The Sanborn Insurance Map of 1916 shows that the facility is "not in operation," but indicates that the addition is concrete block, and that the grain elevator has a concrete base rising 40 ' and an additional 70 ' of frame construction above that. The office, visible in the engraving is not indicated on the map, but a frame warehouse is located to the east of the grain elevator, and 2 story dwelling is indicated to the east of the warehouse. An "earth floor" storage shed is located behind the building. All of the features added to the property by the Pioneer Cereal Company are no longer extant. Only the foundations of the grain elevator and the frame warehouse remain.

Post Bankruptcy 1916 - present

From 1916 to 1919 the receivers partitioned and sold the bankrupt property. The Akron Store Fixture Company, manufacturers of fixtures, hardwood floors, sash, doors, and cabinets purchased the two story portion. The Akron Store Fixture Company was headed by J. Bert Jackson, and J.B. Binns. Carl H. Pockrandt purchased the three story portion, for the Pockrandt Paint Company. He used his portion of the former soap factory to manufacture his own brand of paint for sale at retail store. The frame warehouse was purchased by the Leo Meyer Scrap Rubber Company. They were salvage and scrap rubber dealers, a business that was known as "one of the largest in the country." (Akron Beacon) In September of 1922, the warehouse was completely destroyed by fire. The company then relocated to another building elsewhere in Akron.

City Directories begin listing the Federal Warehouse and Storage Company at 241-257 Furnace Street in 1920. J.B. Jackson, and Alfred Herberich are the officers of the company. Jackson, also connected with the Akron Store Fixture Company serves as president. On the 1921 City of Akron Plat map, The Pioneer Company's concrete block addition and grain elevator are missing. Sometime between 1922 and 1939 a six story, concrete frame, warehouse is built on the site. The southeast corner of the new building is constructed over the concrete foundation of the former grain elevator. In 1939 the warehouse is listed in city directories as Mayflower terminal.

Charles Rivitz, a plumbing supply company, occupied the two story portion beginning in 1929. That same year they took out a building permit to construct a freight elevator against the east wall. They leased the 3 story portion after Pockrandt suspended operations in 1957. By 1960, they are no longer listed in the directories at this address.

Mohawk Tire and Rubber Company purchased the six story concrete warehouse in 1953 and renovated it for use as a warehouse. In 1970 it is occupied by the Jetson Tire and Rubber Company.

From 1975 to 1994 the Rayan Quality Plastics Company is listed at 241 Furnace Street, and Valley Plastics is listed at 246. From 1994 to 2009 the entire property is occupied by ABTEC, a dealer in used store fixtures and equipment. It is owned by Bruce Taylor. In 2009 the entire property is purchased from Taylor by Salem Logistics, LLC. The property is then sold at auction in 2012 to Furnace Street, LLC. In 2013, it was sold to White Hot Properties, LLC.

Summary

The Akron Soap Company Building is significant for its association with the transformative years of post-Civil War industrialization in the City of Akron and with the Akron Soap Company. Its location illuminates both the importance of railway access, and the coming development of zoning laws. Although the length of time that the Akron Soap Company spent in the building was brief, the business was tremendously successful and continued to grow and diversify. When Karl Grismer's history of Akron and Summit County was compiled in 1951, it contained a profile of the Akron Soap Company. At that time, the younger generation of the Duncan Family was still operating the business at the later location on Cuyahoga Street, with additional operations in Youngstown. The Cuyahoga Street Plant is still listed in city directories as late as 1969. Today that site is vacant, the buildings demolished, and the property owned and maintained by the City of Akron. The 1893 building is the only structure associated with the Akron Soap Company remaining in Akron.

The Akron Soap Company Building is a representative example of a type of structure associated with late 19th century industry. Its bearing walls with expressed masonry piers, define rhythmical structural bays. The truss-supported gable roof is also a key feature of the type. After 1910, steel and concrete frame structural systems would replace the heavy timber frame construction, and today, few of the type remain.

After the bankruptcy of The Pioneer Cereal Company, the building and property were subdivided and sold to unrelated businesses. It wasn't until the second half of the twentieth century that the original three acre property was returned to single ownership.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

__X__ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
____ previously listed in the National 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 # _____
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

__X__ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property ___2.74_____

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84:_____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: Longitude:
2. Latitude: Longitude:
3. Latitude: Longitude:
4. Latitude: Longitude:

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

[X] NAD 1927 or [ ] NAD 1983

1. Zone: 17	Easting: 457377	Northing: 4548538
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Beginning at the intersection of Furnace Street and North Street, going west along the right-of-way of Furnace Street 624.18 feet, then turning north and extending 225.18 feet along the property line of Parcel 6822527, then turning west for 66.93 feet along the property line of Parcel 6748982, then turning northeast for 135.64 feet along the property line of Parcel 6748982, then turning southeast for 712.50 feet along the right-of-way of North Street and returning to the starting point at the intersection of North and Furnace Street.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries selected represent the property limits at the end of the period of significance in 1904.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Lauren A. Pinney Burge, AIA
organization: Chambers, Murphy & Burge Restoration Architects
street & number: 43 East Market Street, Suite 201
city or town: Akron state: Ohio zip code: 44308
e-mail lburge@cmbarchitects.com
telephone: 330-434-9300
date: January 9, 2014

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Akron Soap Company

City or Vicinity: Akron

County: Summit State: Ohio

Photographer: Lauren Burge, Chambers, Murphy & Burge Restoration Architects

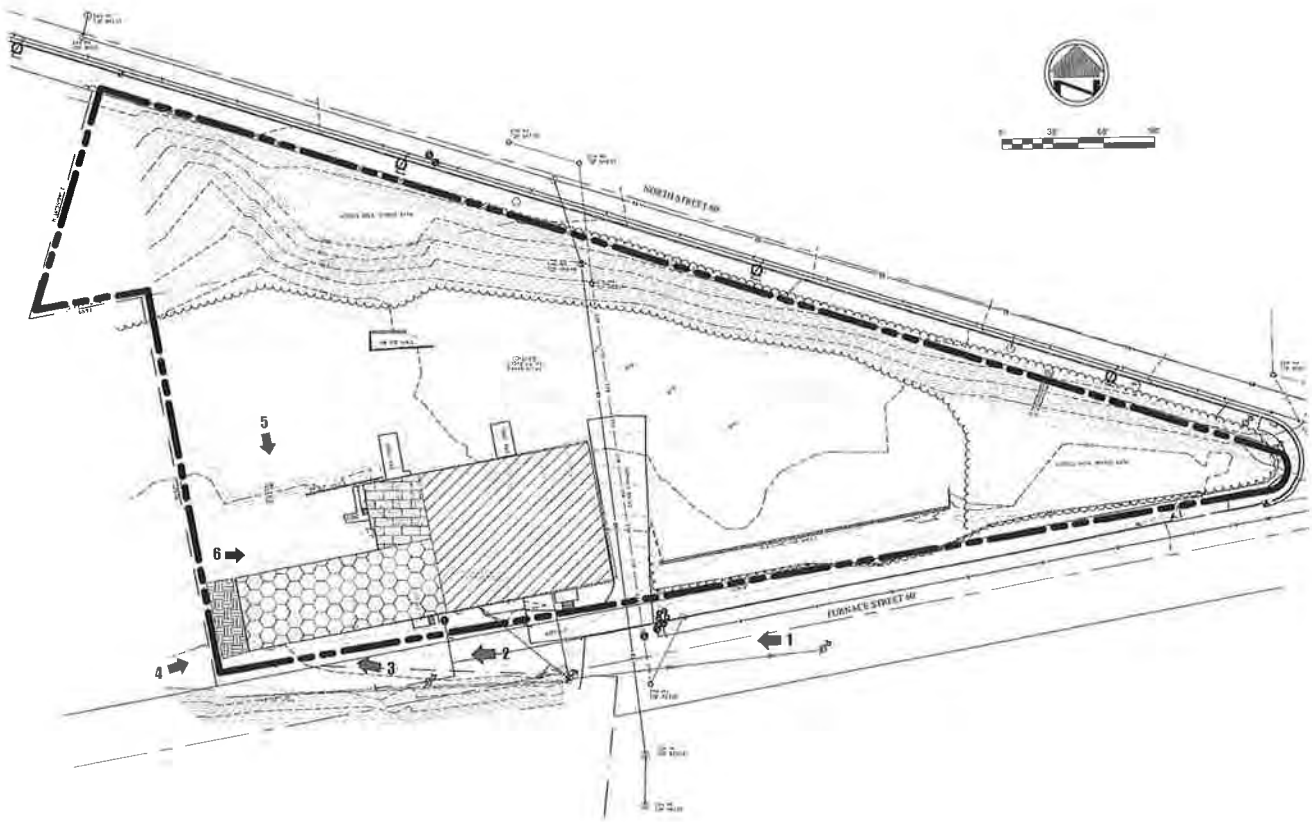
Date Photographed: April 9, 2013

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 10: Overall view looking west, showing the south elevation, with the railway line to the left in the view.
2 of 10: View looking west, showing the south elevation.
3 of 10: View looking west, showing the south elevation of the 3 story wing.
4 of 10: View looking east, showing the south and west elevations.
5 of 10: View looking south, showing the north elevation.
6 of 10: View looking east, showing the north elevation, and the non-contributing shed.
7 of 10: Interior view of the east wing, first floor looking west, showing the timber framing.
8 of 10: Interior view of the east wing, second floor looking west, showing the timber roof trusses.
9 of 10: Interior view of the west wing, second floor looking east, showing the timber framing.
10 of 10: Interior view of the west wing, third floor looking west, showing the later mezzanine construction and the supporting posts.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Photograph Key –Site Plan



Non-Contributing building 1930's Warehouse

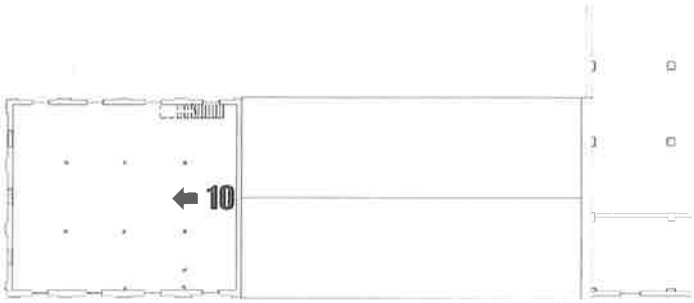
Missing Boiler Room Demolished 1970

Contributing Building 1893 Soap Factory

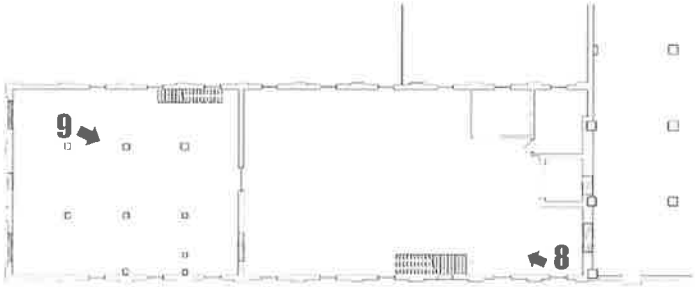
Non Contributing Addition

Nomination Boundary

Photograph Key-Floor Plans (Floors 1 through 3)



1 THIRD FLOOR PLAN KEY PLAN
SCALE: N.T.S.



1 SECOND FLOOR PLAN KEY PLAN
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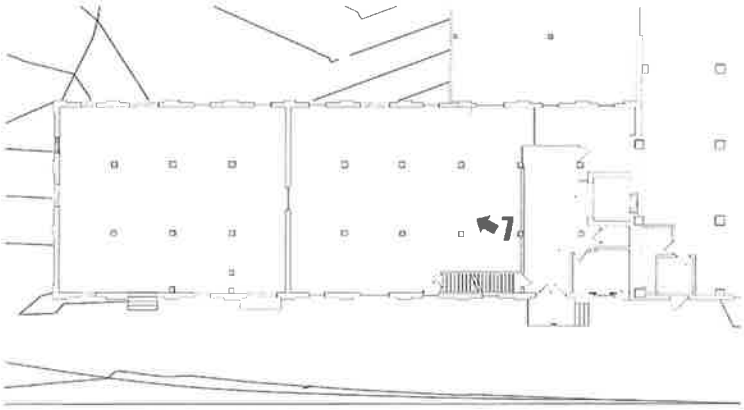

1 FIRST FLOOR PLAN KEY PLAN
SCALE: N.T.S.

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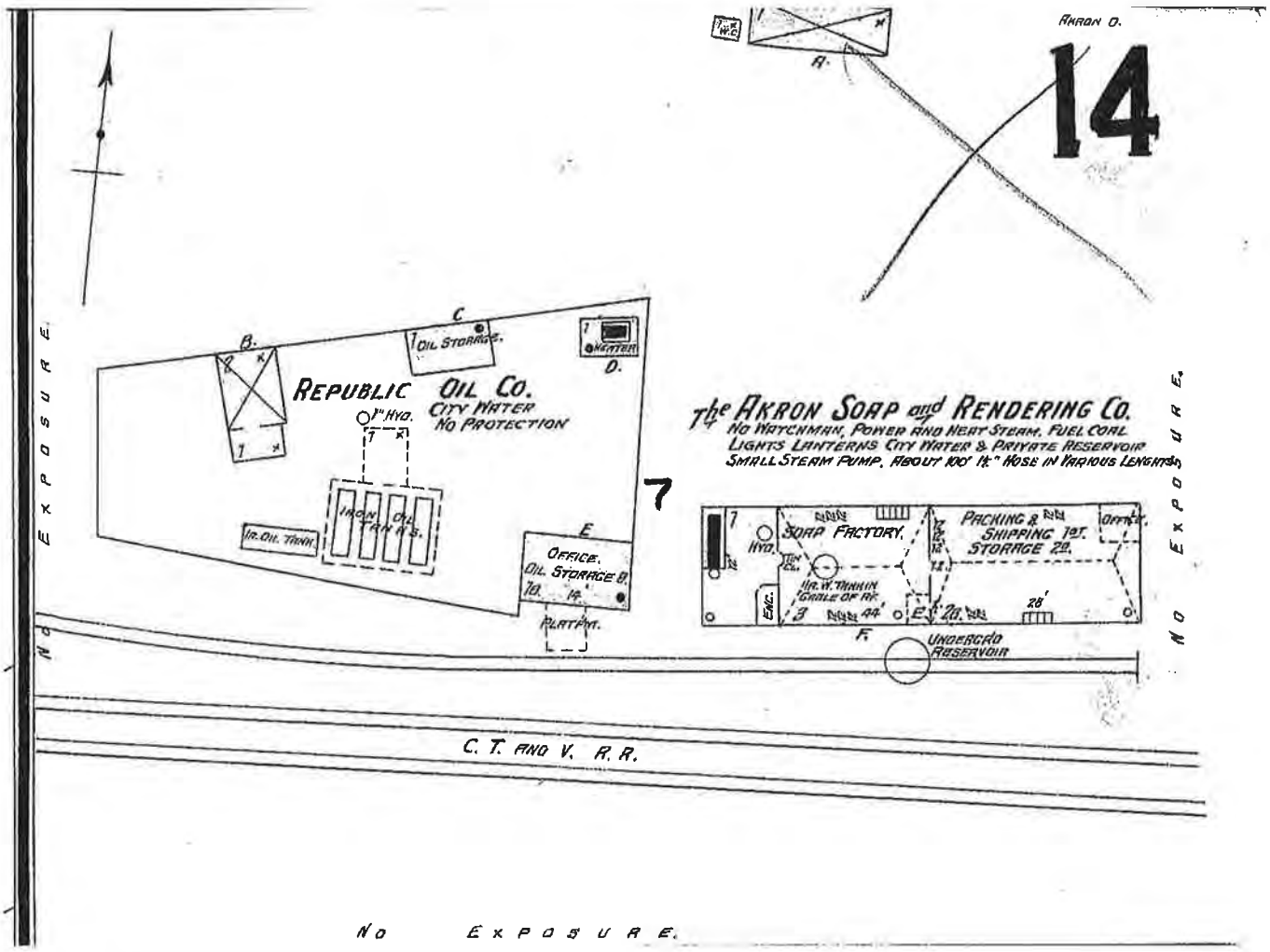


Figure 1- Sanborn Insurance Map -1904

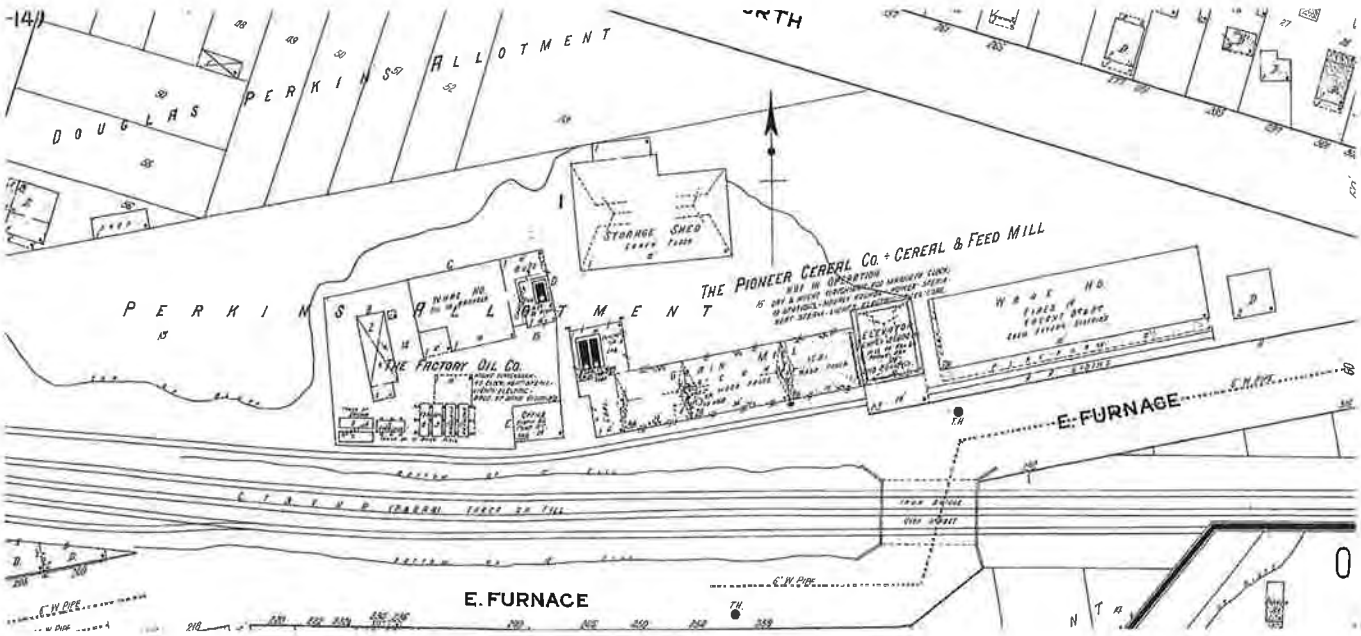


Figure 2 - Sanborn Insurance Map 1916

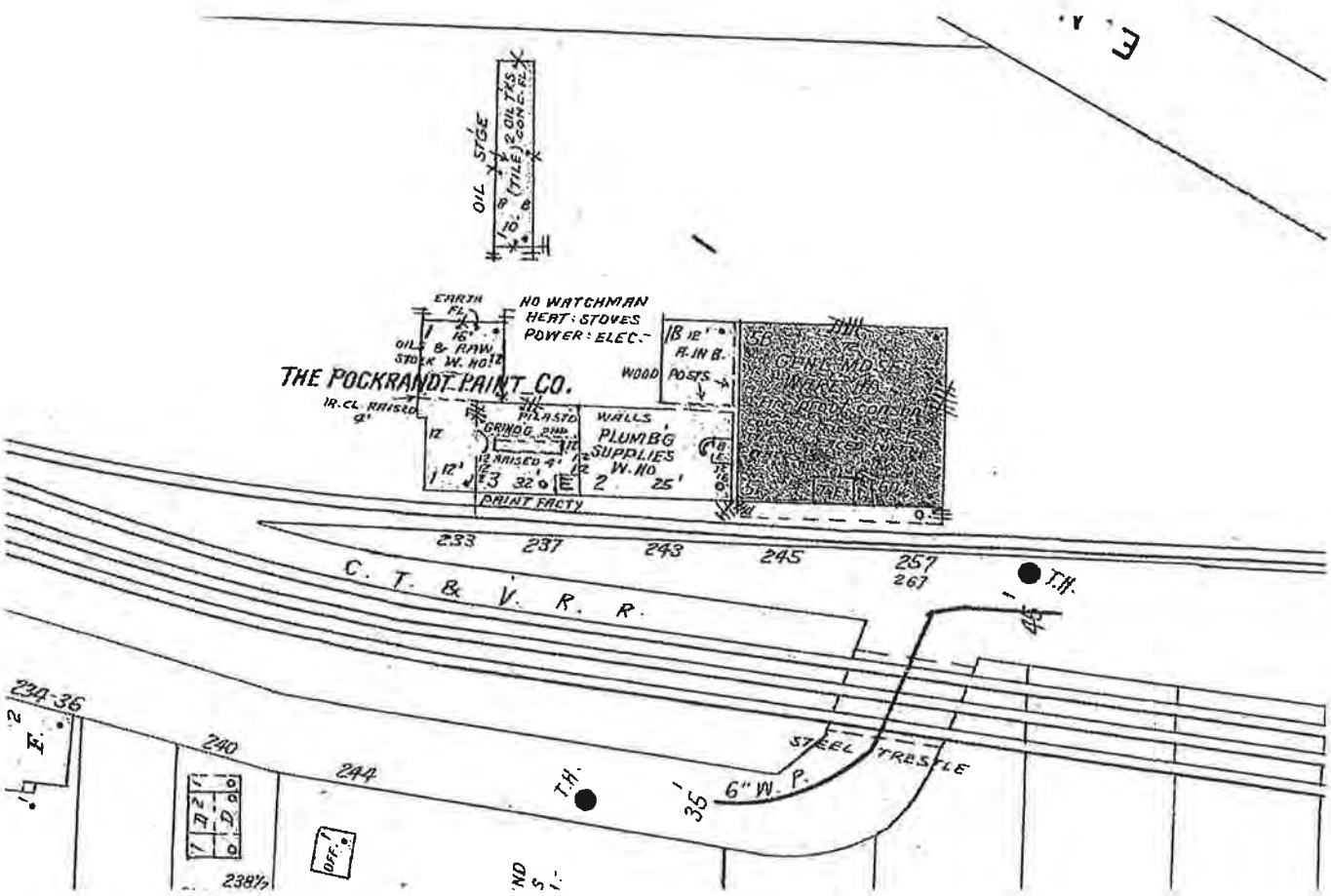


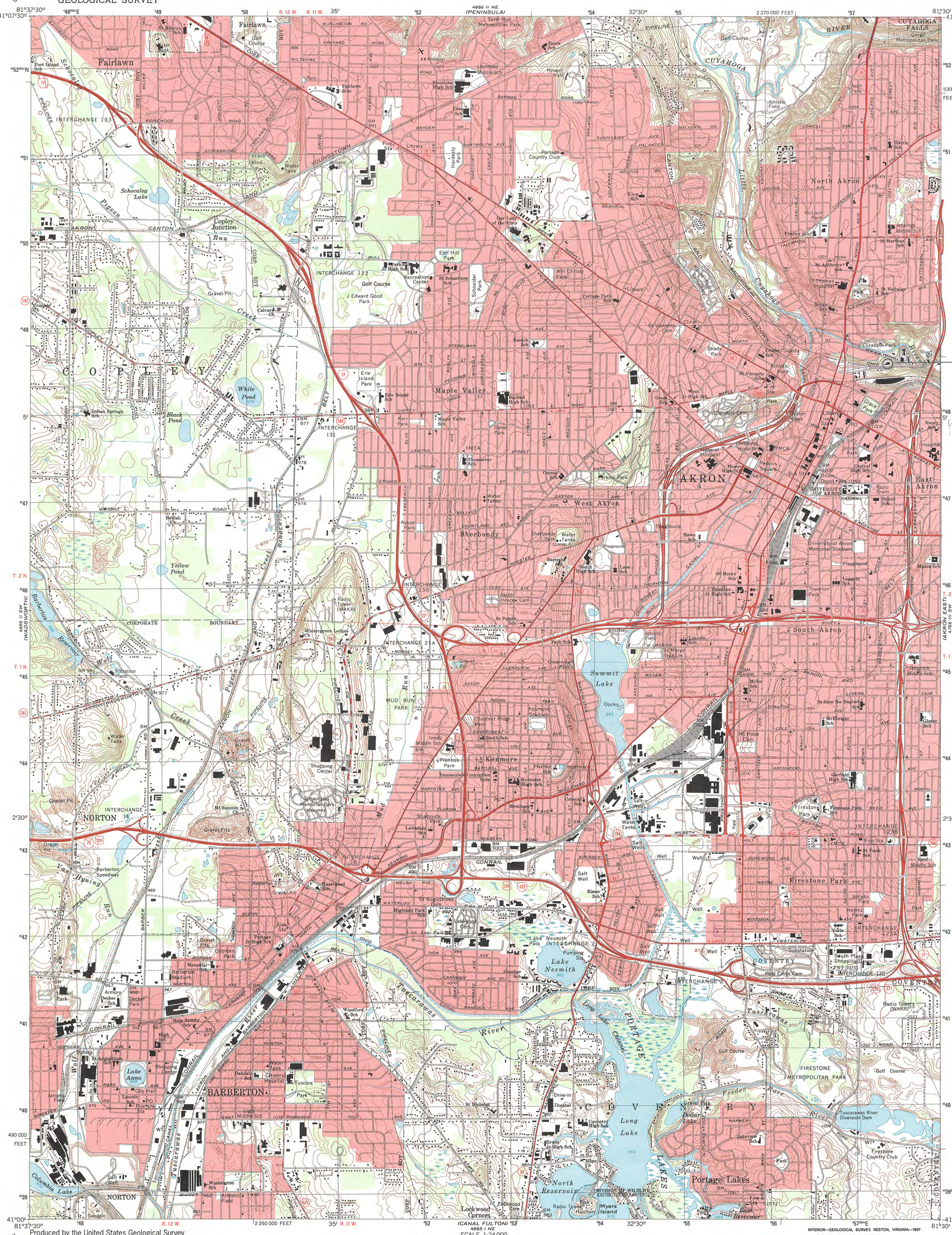
Figure 3- Sanborn Insurance Map 1930-1940

Figure 4 - Pioneer Cereal Company c.1910-1913

The S. & O. Engraving Company
Source: The Pockrandt Collection
Summit County Historical Society - Used with Permission

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

AKRON WEST QUADRANGLE
OHIO–SUMMIT CO.
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



Produced by the United States Geological Survey
Topography compiled 1957. Planimetry derived from imagery taken 1988. Photoinspected using imagery dated 1994; no major culture or drainage changes observed. Survey control current as of 1967
Boundaries, other than corporate, revised 1997
North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27). Projection and 10 000-foot ticks: Ohio coordinate system, north zone (Lambert conformal conic)
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid, zone 17
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks. The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are obtainable from National Geodetic Survey NADCON software
Entire area lies within the Connecticut Western Reserve. Land lines established by private subdivision of the Connecticut Western Reserve
There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map

UTM GRID AND 1997 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929
TO CONVERT FROM FEET TO METERS, MULTIPLY BY 0.3048

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, P.O. BOX 25286, DENVER, COLORADO 80225
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA—1997

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, all weather, hard surface
Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface
Secondary highway, all weather, hard surface
Unimproved road, fair or dry weather
Interstate Route
U. S. Route
State Route

AKRON WEST, OHIO

1994

DMA 4666 II SE–SERIES V852

ISBN 0-607-87326-4

MASTER
MIND