

The Industrial Heritage of Lamasco



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L & N R.R. PASSENGER STATION, EVANSVILLE, IND.



Holly Conover, Clark's Park, Evansville, Ind.



The Industrial Heritage of **Lamasco**

prepared by



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on behalf of



February 2019

The Industrial Heritage of Lamasco

February 2019

prepared for

Indiana Department of Transportation

Cultural Resources Office

Environmental Services

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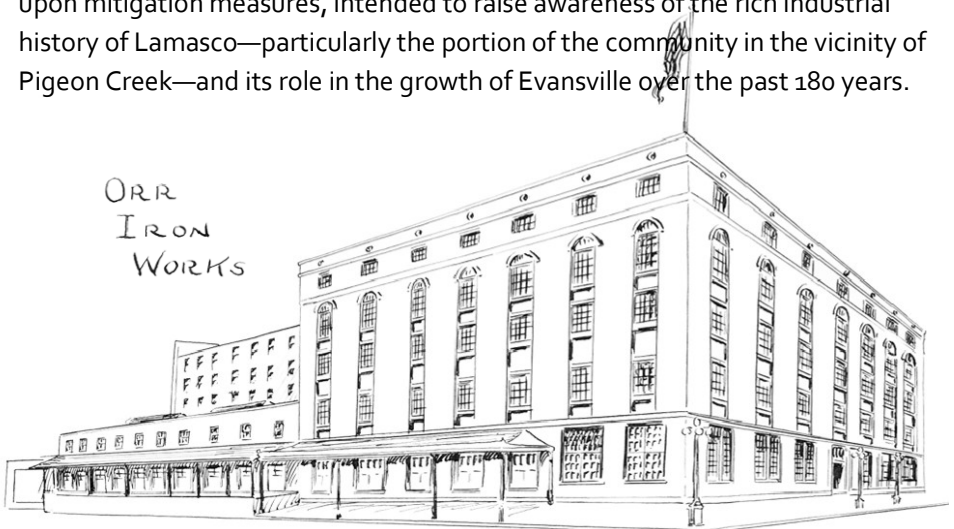
1949 Orr Iron Company employee photograph.
Courtesy of Willard Library Archives.

The roots of the Orr Iron Company date to 1836 when Irish immigrant Samuel Orr established a blacksmith shop on Main Street soon after arriving in Evansville. After Samuel Orr's death in 1882, the company was run by his son, James L. Orr; grandson, Samuel L. Orr; and Edward H. Mann. The business was reorganized as the Orr Iron Company in 1900. In 1912, the company completed a new headquarters at the intersection of Pennsylvania and Walker Streets, located in the portion of Evansville historically known as Lamasco. Designed by the firm of Brubaker, Stern, and Boyle, the building housed offices and warehouse space. The building was demolished in 2008 as part of SR 62 (Lloyd Expressway) improvements.

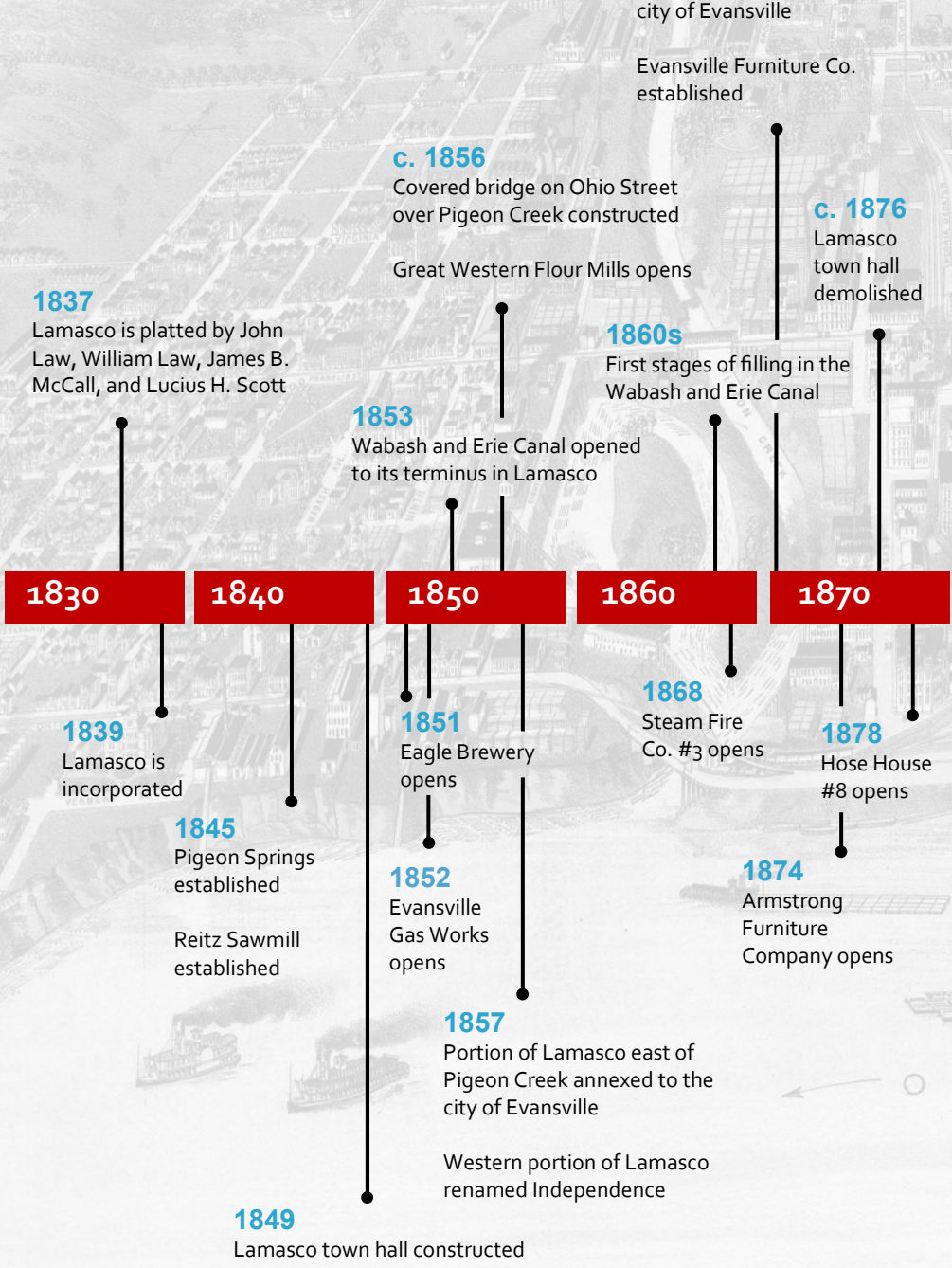
Introduction

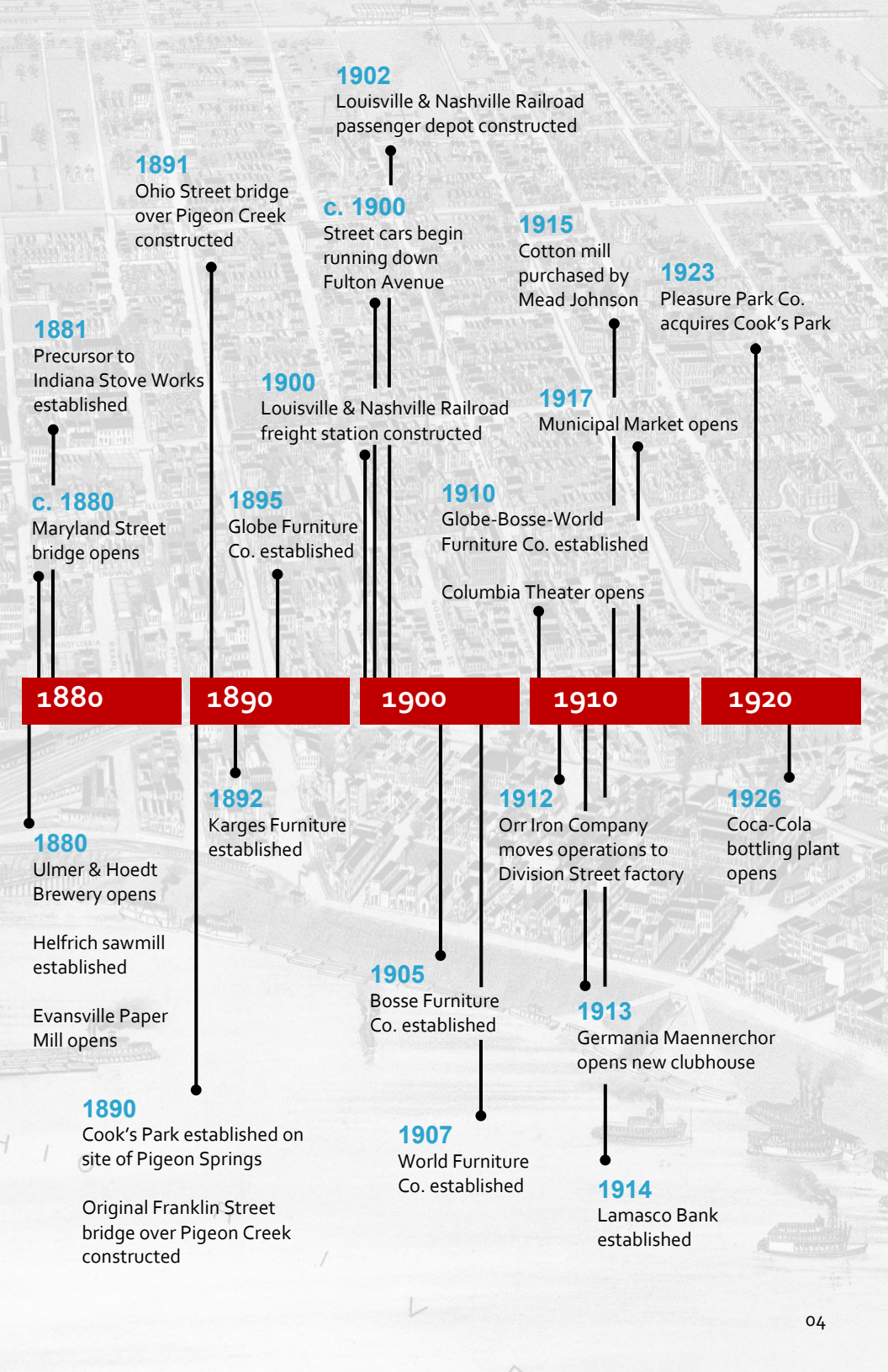
This booklet is the result of interagency coordination regarding improvements to SR 62 (Lloyd Expressway) in Evansville, Indiana from Eickhoff Road to 1st Avenue, completed in 2008 by the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). As an undertaking by the federal government, the project was subject to compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which requires that the potential effects of federally-funded, licensed, or permitted actions on properties listed in or determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places be considered during project planning and that efforts be made to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects on such properties.

Unfortunately, the implemented project resulted in the demolition of the Orr Iron Company Building, formerly located at 1100 Pennsylvania Street, which was constructed in 1912 and listed in the National Register. As a result of consultation under Section 106, FHWA, INDOT, the State Historic Preservation Office, and the City of Evansville agreed to mitigate the building's demolition through a series of specific actions related to the industrial heritage of the area. These actions included, among other tasks, a geophysical survey of a portion of the Wabash and Erie Canal and the preparation of interpretive signage describing the industrial heritage of Lamasco, which was annexed to the city of Evansville in 1857. The development of this booklet also was one of the agreed-upon mitigation measures, intended to raise awareness of the rich industrial history of Lamasco—particularly the portion of the community in the vicinity of Pigeon Creek—and its role in the growth of Evansville over the past 180 years.



A Timeline of Lamasco Development





1881

Precursor to Indiana Stove Works established

c. 1880

Maryland Street bridge opens

1880

1880

Ulmer & Hoedt Brewery opens

Helfrich sawmill established

Evansville Paper Mill opens

1890

Cook's Park established on site of Pigeon Springs

Original Franklin Street bridge over Pigeon Creek constructed

1891

Ohio Street bridge over Pigeon Creek constructed

1895

Globe Furniture Co. established

1890

1892

Karges Furniture established

1902

Louisville & Nashville Railroad passenger depot constructed

c. 1900

Street cars begin running down Fulton Avenue

1900

Louisville & Nashville Railroad freight station constructed

1900

1905

Bosse Furniture Co. established

1907

World Furniture Co. established

1915

Cotton mill purchased by Mead Johnson

1917

Municipal Market opens

1910

1910

Globe-Bosse-World Furniture Co. established

Columbia Theater opens

1912

Orr Iron Company moves operations to Division Street factory

1913

Germania Maennerchor opens new clubhouse

1914

Lamasco Bank established

1923

Pleasure Park Co. acquires Cook's Park

1920

1926

Coca-Cola bottling plant opens

A Timeline of Iamasco Development

1939

Crescent Furniture Co. closes and building is used as the Works Progress Administration (WPA) headquarters

Columbia Theater modernized as "New Columbia Theater"

1932

Current Franklin Street bridge over Pigeon Creek dedicated

1956

Columbia-Delaware Street bridge opens

Dedication and opening of the West Side Expressway

1974

Columbia Theater becomes Evansville Civic Theater

1973

Lewis Bakery expands for development of new headquarters

1964

Rastetter Bakery purchased by Lewis Bakery

1949

Mead Johnson complex expansion

1930

c. 1930s

Southern Stove Works Foundry demolished

1940

1940s

Pleasure Park converted for use as ballfields

1950

1955

Municipal Market converted for use as a hose house

1960

c. 1962

Reitz Sawmill demolished for expressway

1970

1970s

Belt Railroad bridge abandoned

1936

Craddock Furniture moves into Indiana Stove Works factory

1975

Louisville and Nashville Railroad freight depot demolished

1937

Great Flood of 1937 consumes 500 blocks of Evansville

c. 1950s

Chero-Cola plant retooled as Double Cola plant

1979

New firehouse constructed near Fulton Park

1988

Evansville Brewing Co. opens on the site of the old Sterling Brewery

1983

West Side Expressway continues east from Fulton Avenue and eventually renamed Lloyd Expressway

2004

Pigeon Creek Greenway Passage designated a National Recreational Trail

2016

Sterling Square development opens on the grounds of the old Sterling Brewery

2010

Fulton Street interchange opens to traffic

2008

Work begins on the Fulton Avenue interchange

2015

Haier America Evansville Tech Center opens facility on West Indiana Street

2000

Municipal Market rehabilitated for office space

Orr Iron Building demolished

1980

1990

2000

2010

1984

Maryland Street bridge is replaced

1997-8

Evansville Brewing Company closes and the majority of the Sterling Brewery buildings are demolished

2012

Franklin Street House rehabilitated as Tin Man Brewing Co.

Franklin Street Events Association established

Pigeon Creek Greenway Industrial Corridor opens

Future

Lamasco's former industrial and business corridors continue to be the focus of redevelopment opportunities

1985

Louisville and Nashville Railroad passenger depot demolished

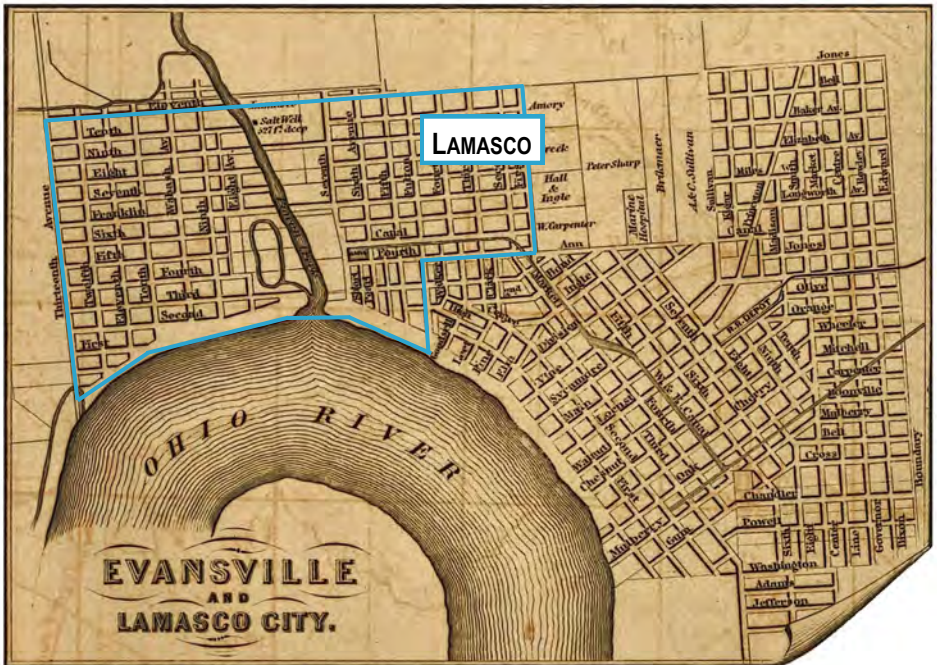
2009

Ohio Street bridge rehabilitated and opened as part of the Pigeon Creek Greenway Industrial Corridor

Historical Background

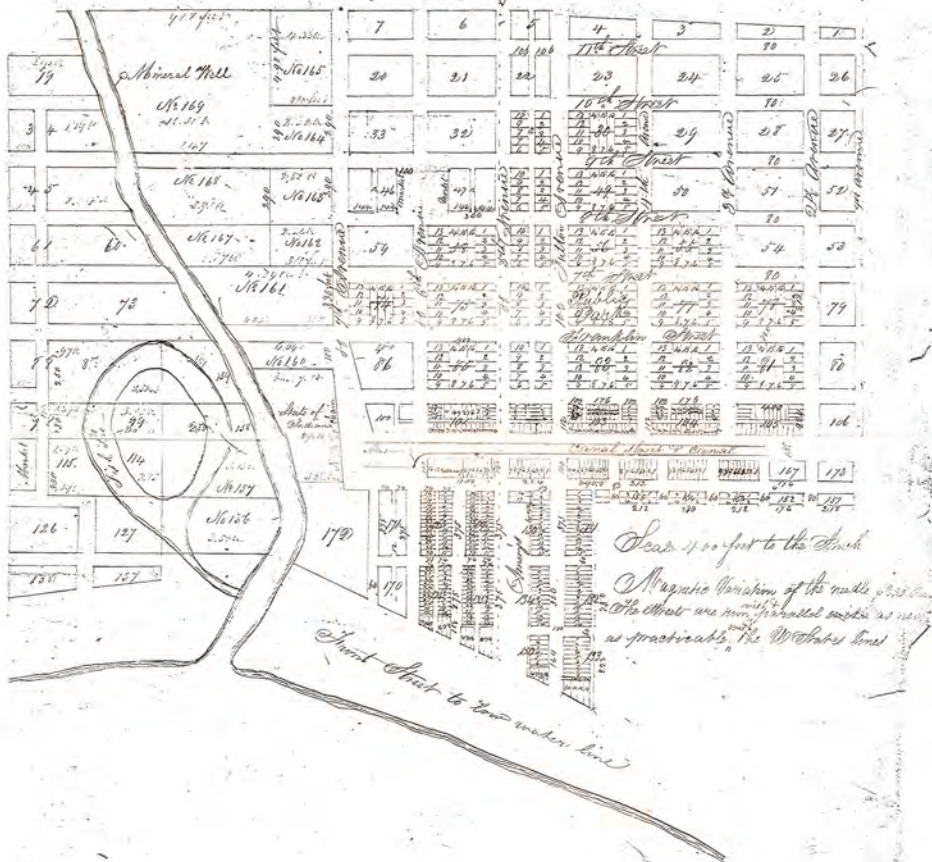
The roots of the area locally known simply as “the west side” date to 1837, when a 480-acre tract of land northwest of Evansville was platted as Lamasco, which derived its name from the surnames of its founders: John and William **Law**, James B. **MacCall** (McCall), and Lucius H. **Scott**. Encompassing the area from the Ohio River north to Maryland Street and from First Avenue on the east to St. Joseph Avenue on the west, Lamasco became an area marked by distinction, both geographically and culturally. Unlike Evansville, which was oriented to the Ohio River, Lamasco was laid out in an efficient grid set on cardinal directions. East-west streets originally were named sequentially (e.g., First Street and Second Street) but later renamed after states. North-south streets also were named sequentially (e.g., First Avenue and Second Avenue) but retain the original names. Franklin Street and Fulton Avenue emerged as the principal thoroughfares, each featuring a 100-ft wide carriageway flanked by dwellings, businesses, and industry. Lamasco’s landscape was further defined by the Wabash and Erie Canal, for which the town founders had set

1852 map of Evansville and Lamasco. Note the orientation of streets in Lamasco compared to those in Evansville, along the northeastern bank of the Ohio River.



September 15th 1837

West Quarter of Section 19 - and ten acres in fractional Section No. 32
and the South East and South West Quarter of Section 24 Town 6 South Range 11 West



County do certify that James B. Call came before me this day and acknowledged the within and also the explanatory thereto attached to be his voluntary act and deed for the uses and purposes therein given under my hand and seal at Erie, Pa. this 15th day of September 1837
 Transcribed from Deeds Record & Page 372, 375 & 377
 April 27th 1859 James Fulton depy. C. C.

Original 1837 plat for Lamasco.

Historical Background



aside 6.5 acres of land for donation to the State of Indiana in return for a commitment to extend the canal into Lamasco, with a turning basin situated along Pigeon Creek. Such an effort was seen as critical to the industrial development of Lamasco in its formative years.

As the community grew up alongside Evansville, it matured in both population and development. A town hall was constructed at John Law Park at the intersection of Franklin Street and Fulton Avenue, serving a growing, culturally-diverse citizenry. As was the case in many of Indiana's urbanized communities, the area attracted a large number of immigrants during the mid 19th century, with Irish, German, and other populations settling in the burgeoning community and establishing churches, schools, businesses, and social societies. The German influence was particularly notable, with Lamasco retaining a predominately German, working-class character into the 20th century. A notable reminder of the area's German ethnic roots is the Germania Maennerchor, which remains on Fulton Avenue and hosts an annual Volksfest, celebrating German culture and traditions.

In 1857, following two decades of substantial growth, the portion of Lamasco east of Pigeon Creek was annexed to the city of Evansville. The portion of the community west of the creek, which was not as densely developed, remained a



(left) 1880 Panoramic View of Evansville, Ind. Courtesy of the Library of Congress. (right) 1888 Perspective Map of the City of Evansville, Ind. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

As illustrated by the comparison of maps from 1880 and 1888, Lamasco developed rapidly during the late 19th century following its annexation to the city of Evansville. This is particularly true of the land along both sides of Pigeon Creek, a natural barrier that had historically cut off much of the development west of the creek from the core of Evansville and promoted the growth and expansion of Lamasco as an independent community with its own resources. Following the annexation to Evansville, though, industrial buildout was rampant and residences, businesses, and community goods popped up along the edges, filling in previously undeveloped parcels as the area matured during the last decades of the 19th century.

separate entity. Thus, it became known as Independence. It would, however, also be annexed to the city of Evansville, in 1870, as populations continued to settle away from the core of the community.

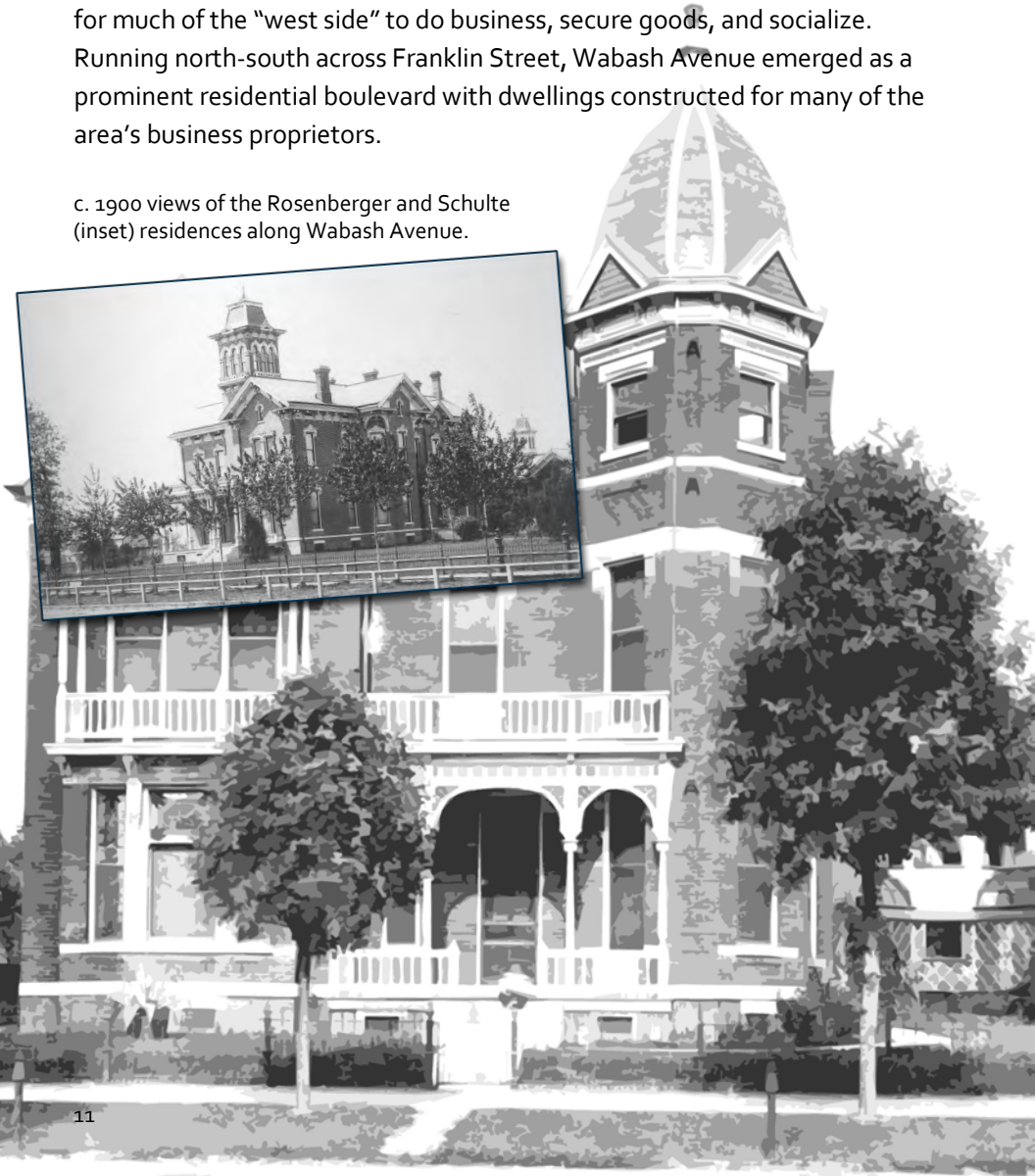
Regional growth was accompanied by diversification of populations in Lamasco and surrounding areas. This is particularly true in consideration of the growth of Evansville's African American community. Starting in the 1870s, coal mines to the north of Lamasco attracted incoming laborers, including many African Americans, and supported the development of areas such as Blankenburg. Likewise, the expansion of coal mines to the west of Lamasco in Independence and employment opportunities in nearby sawmills and factories sustained populations along the western periphery of Lamasco and into Independence. Population growth in this area led to the establishment of institutions such as Independence Baptist Church and Independence School, which served the local African American community. To the southeast of Lamasco, Clark Street School was established to serve African American populations near the downtown core of Evansville.

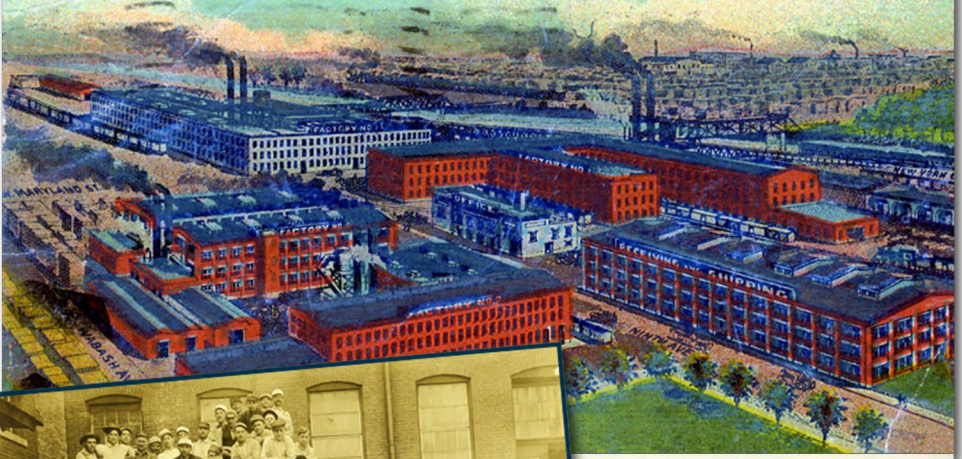
While annexed, the area that comprised Lamasco and Independence continued to retain its own identity – even to present day – with the area known simply as the “west side” to locals, distinct with its own community character and

Historical Background

landmarks. This was particularly true of Fulton Avenue and Franklin Street, which continued to develop as the primary thoroughfares for the community. Streetcars were established along Franklin Street in 1882 and were running along Fulton Avenue by 1900. While Fulton Avenue remained a mixed-use corridor lined with dwellings, businesses, industries, theaters, parks, churches, and schools, Franklin Street west of Pigeon Creek developed as a primarily commercial corridor that rivaled Evansville's Main Street and provided a venue for much of the "west side" to do business, secure goods, and socialize. Running north-south across Franklin Street, Wabash Avenue emerged as a prominent residential boulevard with dwellings constructed for many of the area's business proprietors.

c. 1900 views of the Rosenberger and Schulte (inset) residences along Wabash Avenue.





(above and right) Globe-Bosse-World Furniture Company, c. 1915. (left) Employees at Crescent Furniture Factory, 1914. Courtesy of Willard Library Archives.

The area along Pigeon Creek remained an industrial powerhouse into the late 19th and early 20th centuries, with the establishment of companies such as the Crescent Furniture Factory in 1889 and the Globe-Bosse-World Furniture Company in 1910, which consolidated the Globe Furniture Company (1899), Bosse Furniture Company (1905), and World Furniture Company (1907) into what was touted as the world's largest furniture manufacturer.

Peaking during the first decades of the 20th century, the area formerly known as Lamasco—much like many historic communities throughout the country—began to undergo a period of transition at midcentury. Many homes and commercial structures were demolished, particularly along Fulton Avenue. While some were cleared to make way for new buildings, transportation infrastructure, or community improvements, others were left as empty lots, leaving only a fragmented image of the once lively thoroughfare. The area along Pigeon Creek remained industrial throughout the 20th century, although numerous factory complexes were demolished as businesses failed or were

Historical Background



(left) Globe-Bosse-World Furniture Company buildings converted for modern industrial use.
(center) Sterling Square development completed at the former Sterling Brewery Co. site in 2016.
(right) A thriving Franklin Street has become a popular retail and entertainment destination.

bought out by other companies. Other factories were retooled to make way for new industrial tenants, continuing the rich legacy of manufacturing in this area.

The last decades of the 20th century and the first years of the 21st century have brought additional change to the community. Pigeon Creek has once again been engaged as a community asset but in a different capacity. Recognizing its potential as a recreational resource, the city of Evansville worked to establish the Pigeon Creek Greenway, which was designated as a National Recreational Trail in 2004. The Industrial Corridor section passing through Lamasco was dedicated in 2012, and the Shirley James Gateway Plaza was built out on the original site of the John A. Reitz Sawmill and Lumber Yard near the Ohio River. Franklin Avenue has emerged as a focus of redevelopment opportunities, with complexes such as that of the former Sterling Brewing Co. renovated as modern office space for a variety of tenants. Franklin Street has witnessed a resurgence during the 21st century—largely through the efforts of the Franklin Street Events Association—and has become a popular retail destination. It also continues to host the annual Fall Festival, touted as the nation’s second largest street festival. With such a renewed energy in place, Lamasco is poised to enjoy a new generation of investment and growth.



Shirley James Gateway Plaza for the Pigeon Creek Greenway, situated at Ohio Street.

Wabash and Erie Canal

In the aftermath of the War of 1812, many throughout the United States looked to connect markets in the south, northeast, and west through an improved transportation network, including roads, canals, railroads, and riverboat lines. In Indiana, politicians and financial backers found merit in similar projects of the East and particularly those in New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, which had demonstrated the viability of large-scale infrastructure projects. Of particular interest was the Erie Canal, completed in 1825 and passing through New York to connect the Hudson River with the Great Lakes, a major distribution point.

In March 1827, a land grant was approved for the construction of the Wabash and Erie Canal to link the navigable Maumee River in Toledo, Ohio with the Wabash River in Lafayette, Indiana through a portage in Fort Wayne. Seeing the canal as an opportunity to promote the growth of their burgeoning communities, business and political interests in southern Indiana—particularly in Terre Haute and Evansville—began lobbying to extend the canal south, connecting the entire state to northern and eastern markets. The plan was well received and, in 1834, the announcement was made that the Central Canal would be established to connect the Wabash River to the Ohio River, terminating in Evansville. In 1836, construction began. That same year, work began on the Cross-Cut Canal, connecting the Wabash River to the White River in Worthington.

In Evansville, anticipation of the canal was rampant. Two passenger boats—the *Rowley* and the *Evansville*—were constructed in 1837, even though no water would reach the city for years. That same year, Lamasco was platted, with its founders promising to donate 6.5 acres to the State of Indiana in exchange for a commitment to extend the canal through Evansville and into Lamasco, which was seen as a critical link for expanding industries. With an agreement reached, the canal was laid out through the eastern portion of Lamasco, terminating at a turning basin just 300 ft from Pigeon Creek. Yet, despite progress on the canal, the State of Indiana found itself with a tremendous financial burden, which limited the state's ability to develop the entire line. By 1839, only a portion of the canal was completed, with the Central Canal ending 20 miles north of Evansville, terminating at a feeder dam on Pigeon Creek in Gibson County.



JAMES LAUGHLIN, JR.,
RECEIVING,
Forwarding and Commission Merchant,
AND DEALER IN PRODUCE,
Warehouse and Office 140 cor. Main street and the Canal.
EVANSVILLE, IND.

1856 Birds Eye View of Evansville.

CANAL CONSTRUCTION

The Wabash and Erie Canal through Evansville and Lamasco averaged 50 ft in width and, based on engineering reports for the canal path throughout the state, likely ranged from 4 to 5 ft in depth. In Lamasco, the canal historically ran parallel to Indiana Street, terminating at a basin just west of 7th Avenue that measured approximately 340 ft long by 160 ft wide. A stretch of land approximately 90 ft wide to the north of the canal was set aside for the tow path and associated road (Canal Street). At the basin, excess water overflowed through a gate, emptying into Pigeon Creek and ultimately flowing into the Ohio River. The completed canal prompted the industrial growth of Lamasco and provided business opportunities for persons such as forwarding merchants, who would transport an owner's goods for a fee.

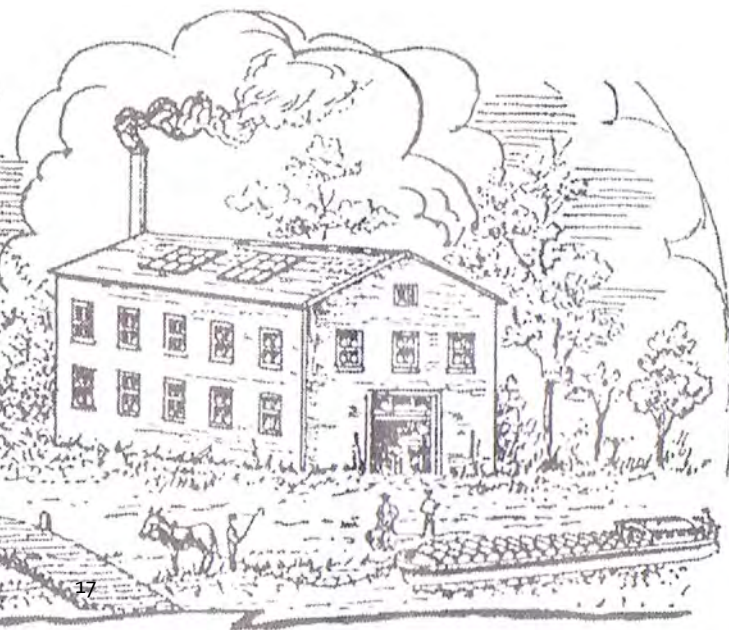


Three bridges were constructed across the Wabash and Erie Canal in Lamasco, providing a readily-accessible carriageway for persons traveling north-south to and from the Ohio River: No. 170 along Second Avenue, No. 171 along Third Avenue, and No. 172 along Fulton Avenue.

Wabash and Erie Canal



With the State of Indiana bankrupt, the statewide canal project was officially abandoned until a new plan could be formulated. In 1841, the project was opened to private financing and, in 1846, the state's interest was purchased by private bondholders under the leadership of Charles Butler. With a new land grant issued, construction resumed on the canal project, with all segments—the Wabash and Erie Canal, the Cross-Cut Canal, and the Central Canal—consolidated into a single project as the Wabash and Erie Canal. With news of the renewed project reaching Evansville, hopes were again high for growth. Evansville received its charter in 1847, and a wharf was built to facilitate traffic between the canal, Pigeon Creek, and the Ohio River.



Sketch of the Igleheart Bros. Mill, constructed c. 1856. While located along the Wabash and Erie Canal in downtown Evansville, not Lamasco, the sketch prominently displays the importance of the canal to industry, with the canal boat loaded with goods at the forefront.



With private financing, the project resumed at a rapid pace. The canal was completed from Toledo to Terre Haute in 1849 , and the portion between Terre Haute and Worthington was opened in 1850. The last stretch of the canal—from Worthington to Evansville—was finished in 1853, connecting Evansville (and Lamasco) on the Ohio River to Toledo, approximately 468 miles to the northeast. The completed Wabash and Erie Canal was the longest such project in the country.

Unfortunately, despite the large investment, the canal witnessed limited use and was an economic disappointment, although it provided an additional source of water power (for a fee) for industry along its route. In the first year, Evansville collected only \$410 in tolls and rent over three months of traffic. Unable to compete with rapidly expanding rail networks that offered a more reliable transportation solution, by 1860, most of the southern portion of the canal was no longer in use; by 1861, the entire line extending southward from Terre Haute was abandoned. In 1862, canal bridges in Evansville were replaced and work began on filling in the canal path. By 1870, the entire canal bed was filled in, leaving little evidence of the massive but short-lived infrastructure project. Land along the route was returned to private investment following sale of the Wabash and Erie Canal assets. In Lamasco, land was largely given over to industry, which continued to establish itself along Pigeon Creek, spurred, in part, by the community’s annexation to the city of Evansville in 1857. Today, nearly all physical evidence of the canal’s history in Lamasco is gone, its history buried beneath the modern streets of Evansville.

Wabash and Erie Canal



The only remaining above-ground structure associated with the Wabash and Erie Canal in Evansville is the Canal House, located on Indiana Street just east of Fulton Avenue in the area formerly comprising Lamasco. Constructed c. 1840-1850, the house is thought to have served as the home of a canal employee, such as a toll collector.

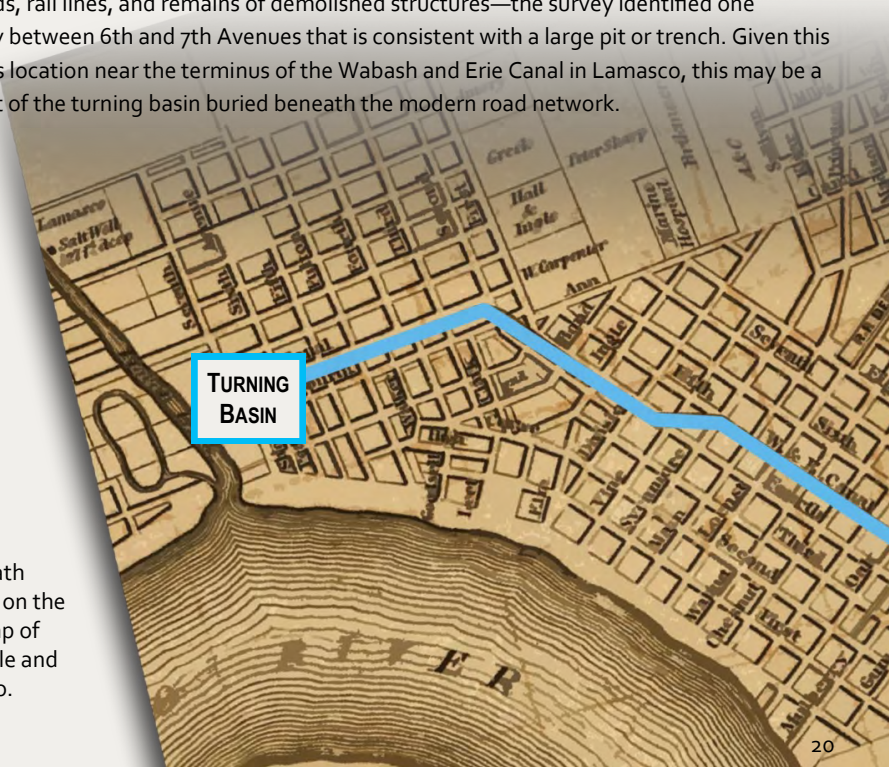
HUNTING FOR THE CANAL

In 2016, as part of the mitigation activities completed in response to the demolition of the Orr Iron Company Building, archaeologists conducted a ground-penetrating radar (GPR) survey to determine if remains of the Wabash and Erie Canal could be identified beneath modern development along Indiana Street. A nondestructive method used to provide images of buried objects and features, GPR works by sending a pulse of energy into the ground and recording the time required for the signal reflected by any subsurface material to return to the equipment; materials that are farther down take a longer time to return. The strength of the return signal also is measured. Following data collection, it is processed via specialized software that removes background interference and rationalizes the collected data. The software also is used to create maps depicting the presence and depth of identified subsurface materials.



The former pathway of the canal is now buried beneath the modern streets of Evansville north of the Lloyd Expressway to the east of Pigeon Creek.

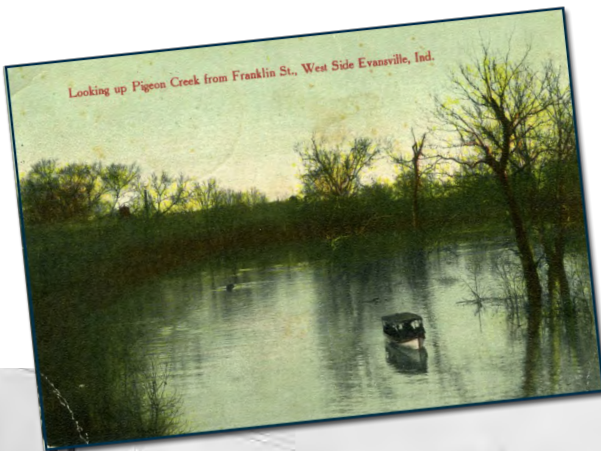
In addition to evidence of development of the corridor over time—including utilities, original road beds, rail lines, and remains of demolished structures—the survey identified one anomaly between 6th and 7th Avenues that is consistent with a large pit or trench. Given this feature’s location near the terminus of the Wabash and Erie Canal in Lamasco, this may be a remnant of the turning basin buried beneath the modern road network.



Canal path overlaid on the 1852 map of Evansville and Lamasco.

Pigeon Creek Corridor

The area along Pigeon Creek developed rapidly after Lamasco was platted in 1837. This development was facilitated by the community's founders, who had donated land along Pigeon Creek to the State of Indiana for the extension of the Wabash and Erie Canal into Lamasco, which was viewed by locals as a critical transportation route for industry. When the canal was ultimately abandoned in the 1860s and its pathway filled in, the land returned to private development. Because Pigeon Creek was a navigable waterway that led to the Ohio River and the widespread commercial opportunities along the river and beyond, much of the development that followed was industrial in nature.

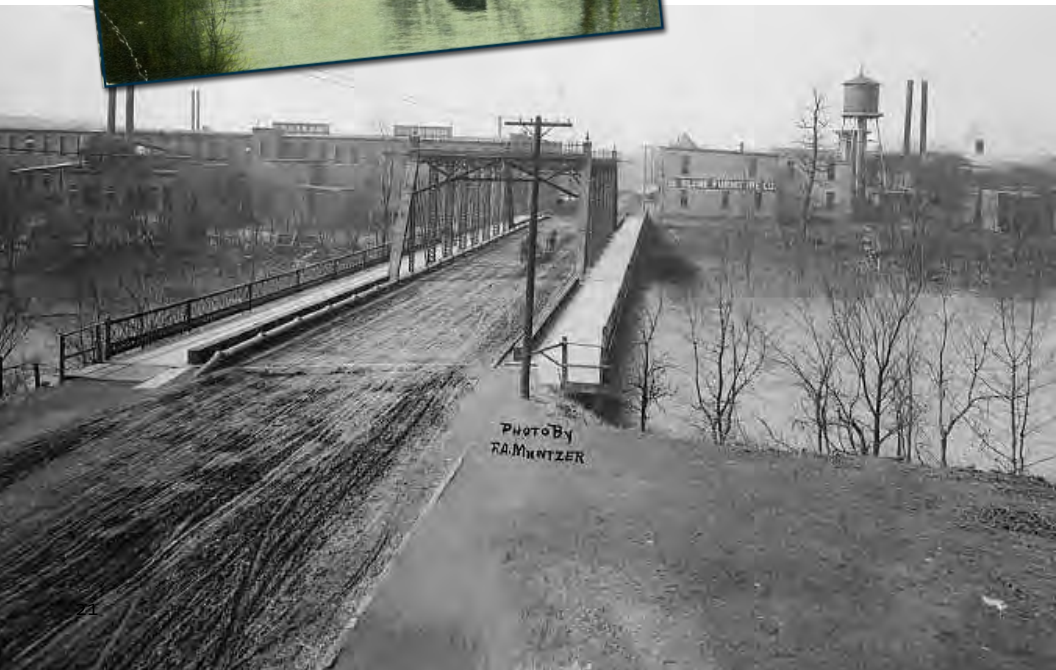


Pigeon Creek has historically been both a recreational area and a key source of activity for the dozens of industries along its banks.

(left) c. 1905 postcard of Pigeon Creek at Franklin Street.

(below) 1901 view of Pigeon Creek at Maryland Street.

Courtesy of Willard Library Archives.





c. 1880 illustration of the Armstrong Furniture Company located at Franklin Street. Note the riverboat on Pigeon Creek, a navigable waterway that was critical to the success of businesses. Courtesy of HistoricEvansville.com.

Lumber yards and sawmills, furniture companies, and other manufactories sprang up along the creek—extending from the mouth of the Ohio River to Maryland Street—as Evansville was transformed into an industrial powerhouse.

Development along Pigeon Creek particularly boomed during the late 19th century, following Lamasco’s annexation to the city of Evansville, which brought improvements to transportation and utility infrastructure in the area. By 1895, an ice factory, three flour/corn mills, three stove works, five furniture companies, and nine sawmills and lumber yards were located along both sides of the creek. Shipping of goods was by both Pigeon Creek on route to the Ohio River and the railroad that ran parallel to both sides of the creek, giving Evansville access to markets throughout the region. In the 20th century, Sweezer’s Pond along the west side of Pigeon Creek between Ohio and Franklin Streets was filled in, and industry along the waterway reached its peak by the 1920s.

By the early 1960s, much of the industry along Pigeon Creek was gone, with many factories closed and others bought out and consolidated under different names. Of the 19 industrial complexes along the creek in 1910, only 9 remained at midcentury. Presently, the area along Pigeon Creek remains predominately industrial in character, but none of the original businesses are still active. The area’s heritage is recognized as the Industrial Corridor along the Pigeon Creek Greenway, which runs north-south along the eastern bank of the creek.

Pigeon Creek Corridor



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**REPRESENTATIVE INDUSTRIES ALONG THE
PIGEON CREEK CORRIDOR, c. 1888**

1. SCHULTE LOHOFF AND CO. TOOL WORKS
2. COTTAGE BUILDING CO.
3. SOUTHWESTERN BROOM MANUFACTURING CO.
4. HELFRICH SAW PLANING MILL
5. A.M. BRITT AND CO. TANNERY
6. ROSE AND ARNOLD FLOUR MILL
7. GEORGE SCHULTZ LUMBER CO.
8. EUGENE ICE CO.
9. BECKER BROS. WAGON FACTORY
10. SUNNYSIDE FLOUR MILL
11. S.W. LITTLE SAWMILL
12. EVANSVILLE ELEVATOR
13. MELROSE MILLING CO.
14. SCHULTZE WALTMAN AND CO. SAWMILL
15. REITMAN AND SCHULTE SAWMILL
16. ARMSTRONG FURNITURE CO.
17. JOHN A. REITZ AND SONS LUMBER YARD
18. CLEMENS REITZ LUMBER YARD
19. EVANSVILLE STOVE WORKS
20. INDIANA STOVE WORKS
21. CLEMENS REITZ SAWMILL
22. SOUTHERN STOVE WORKS FOUNDRY
23. JOHN A. REITZ AND SONS SAWMILL
24. EVANSVILLE FURNITURE CO.
25. EVANSVILLE PAPER MILL
26. GEORGE HEILMAN AND CO. HOMINY MILLS

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Fulton Avenue

The principal north–south thoroughfare in Lamasco, Fulton Avenue was the primary commercial corridor east of Pigeon Creek. Dozens of businesses and industries lined the street, which also featured a bank, movie theater, and social and cultural clubs. Residences for all classes also were located along the street, from the small cottages that supported workers employed in the nearby industries to the mansions of the Cook family—Frederick and his sons, Henry and Charles—who operated the F.W. Cook Brewery and F.W. Cook Investments.

Streetcar tracks were installed at the turn of the 20th century, and the corridor reached its peak into the 1910s and 1920s. Even though many of the businesses changed names and ownership, the corridor remained relatively intact throughout the mid-20th century. However, as the commercial areas of the city moved to the outskirts, the area fell into decline, and many houses and commercial blocks were demolished. While some were replaced by new structures, many were left for empty lots, leaving little evidence of the once-thriving thoroughfare.



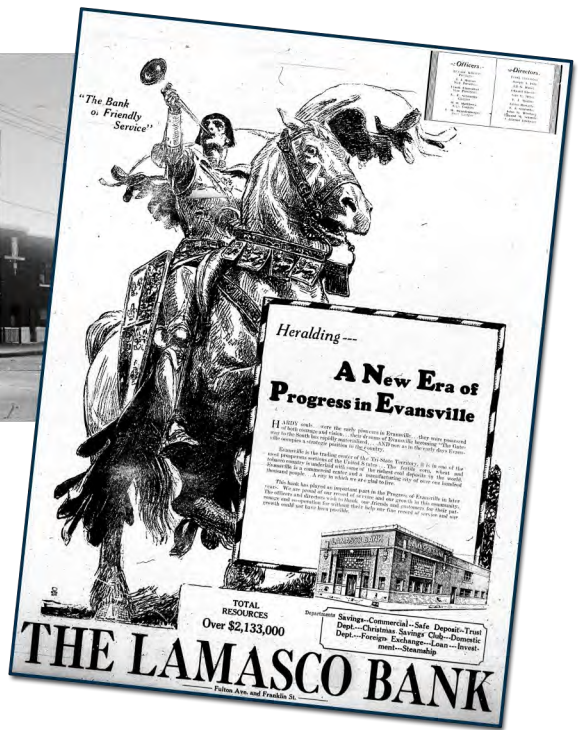
The Cook mansions were historically architectural highlights of Fulton Avenue. The only remaining Cook mansion (left) — that of Henry Cook — is but a shell of its former self. Historic image source: *Book of Evansville*



Lamasco Bank, c. 1920.
 Courtesy of Willard Library Archives.

LAMASCO BANK

A mainstay of Fulton Avenue, Lamasco Bank was established in 1914 and operated continuously out of this building until 1962, except for a short period of time in 1931 when it closed during the Great Depression. In 1962, a new bank building was completed on the east side of Fulton Avenue, and the bank moved across the street. The bank building has since been used for a variety of other businesses. Lamasco Bank remained one of the only independent banks in Evansville through the mid-20th century. It merged with Citizens Bank in 1976, which later merged with Fifth Third Bank.



STERLING BREWERY

Sterling Brewery began as the Ulmer & Hoedt Brewery in 1880. Renamed as the Fulton Avenue Brewery in 1884, the company merged with the Evansville Brewery and the Hartmetz & Son Brewery in 1893 to form the Evansville Brewing Association in an effort to protect local brewers. During Prohibition, the business was changed to Sterling Products Co. and made soft drinks, near beer, and malt extract. With the repeal of Prohibition, the company once again produced beer and became the Sterling Brewing Company. While many of the company's buildings have been demolished, a few have been adapted as office space, including for the Sterling Square redevelopment, completed in 2016.



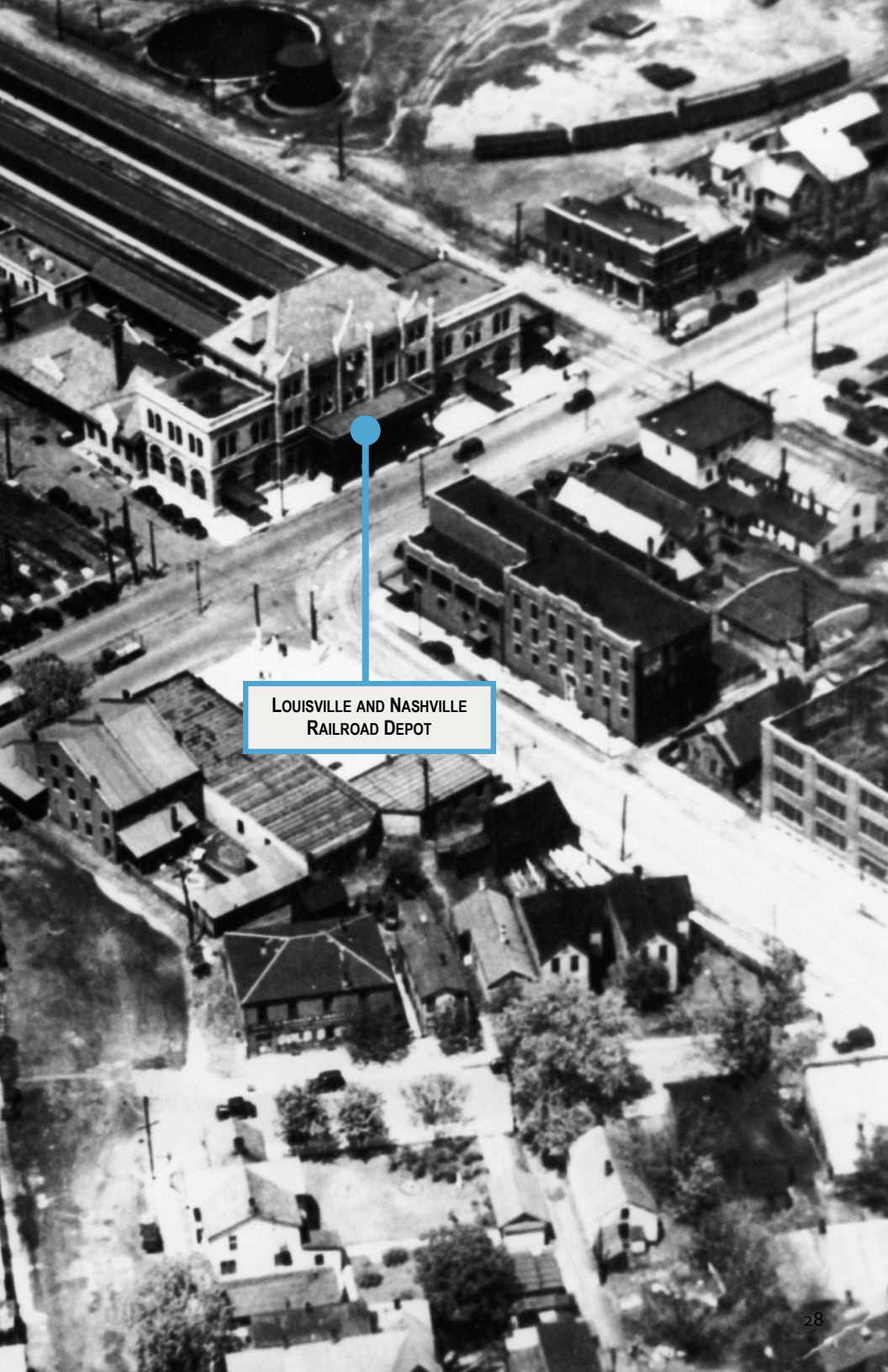
c. 1920 view of Sterling Brewing Company as the Evansville Brewing Association.
 Courtesy of Willard Library Archives.

Fulton Avenue

LOUISVILLE AND NASHVILLE RAILROAD

The Louisville and Nashville Railroad Depot was constructed in 1902 and locally known as Union Station. Located on the west side of Fulton Avenue between what is now Ohio Street and the Lloyd Expressway, the depot was on the Chicago to Florida route and became a busy station. By the 1950s, more than 30 passenger and freight trains were passing through the area. However, as the railroad fell out of favor as the way to travel, passenger traffic steadily declined and, on April 30, 1971, the last Louisville and Nashville passenger train arrived in Evansville.





LOUISVILLE AND NASHVILLE
RAILROAD DEPOT

Recreation and Leisure

From bowling alleys and theaters to parks and recreational areas, the Lamasco area has historically provided plentiful leisure opportunities. Among the earliest of such venues was Pigeon Springs, established in 1845 and located along the east side of Pigeon Creek in the area presently occupied by Lamasco Park. Originally a salt well, this area became a popular health resort, particularly following the efforts of proprietor William Bates, who developed lodging along the banks of Pigeon Creek to attract patrons to the mineral waters. This area would later be developed as Cook's Park and, subsequently, Exposition Park and Pleasure Park.



Sketch of the Pigeon Springs resort. Source: *One Hundred Years of Evansville, Indiana, 1812-1912*.

To the south, near the mouth of Pigeon Creek, Sweezer's Pond provided fishing opportunities and wintertime skating. On the east side of Lamasco, John Law Park, now known as Fulton Park, served as the town square until the eastern portion of the town was annexed to the city of Evansville. The town hall briefly functioned as the Park School before being demolished; the land has remained in recreational use since the building's removal. Located in Independence and bounded by Franklin and Illinois Streets between 10th and Wabash Avenues, Franklin Park provided community green space as early as the 1880s and, in 1912, became home to the West Branch Library, built with funds dedicated by Andrew Carnegie. Today, the park serves as the backdrop for the popular Franklin Street Bazaar and annual West Side Nut Club Fall Festival.



(left) Early 20th century scenes of Cook's Park. (background) Relocated carousel at Mesker Park, 1948. Courtesy of Willard Library Archives.

COOK'S PARK

Established in 1890 by businessman Frederick W. Cook—owner of the F.W. Cook Brewery—Cook's Park was located on the east side of Pigeon Creek at Maryland Street. An elaborate venture featuring a club house, beer garden, casino, roller coaster, theater, and swimming pool, among other amenities, the park was a popular attraction for adults and children alike. When the park, subsequently purchased by Pleasure Park Company, closed in the 1930s, the amusement rides were relocated to Mesker Park, including the beloved carousel, which remained at Mesker Park until 1973, when it was sold to a venture in North Carolina.

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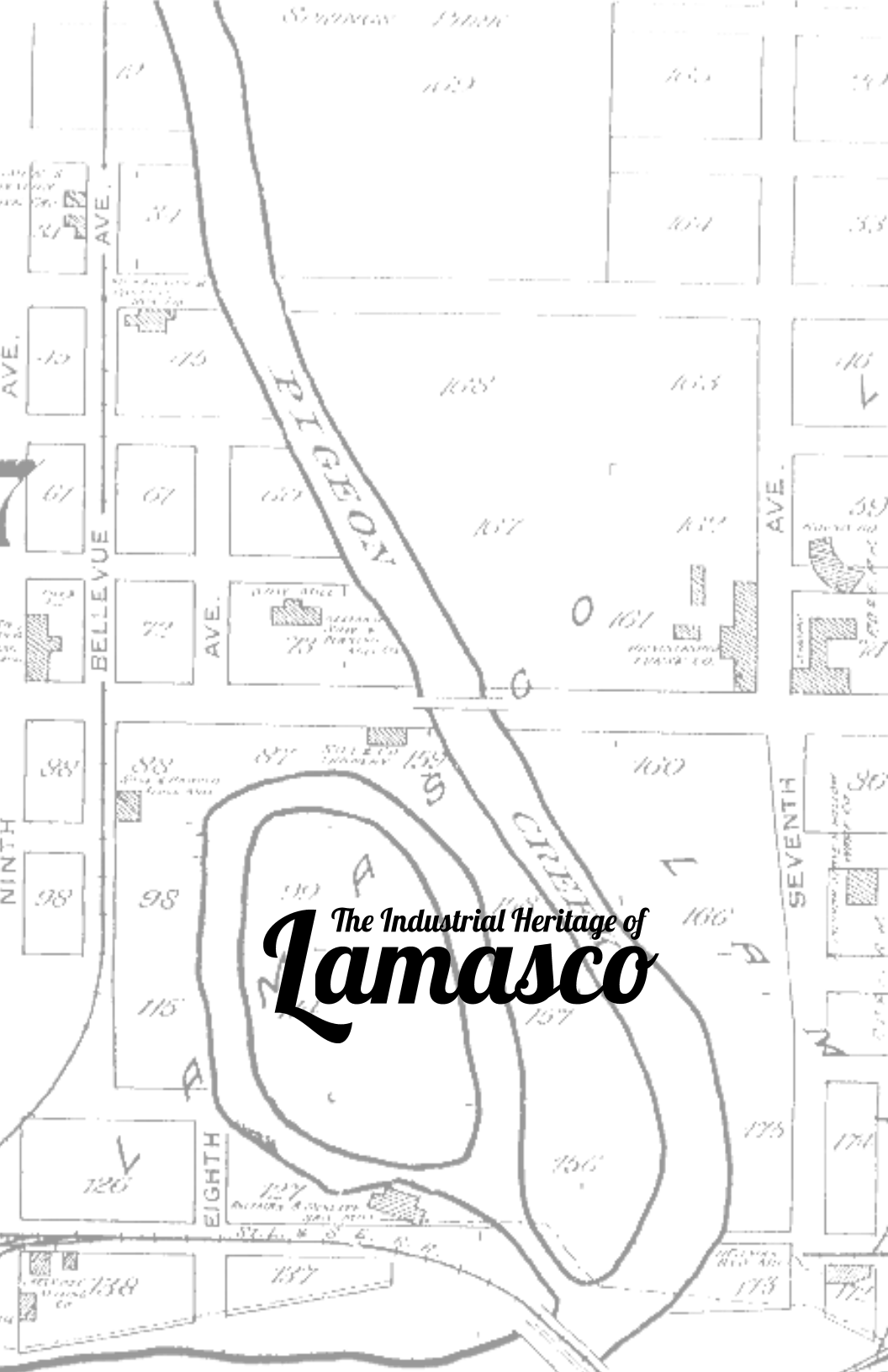
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