

*Final*

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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Haw Creek Leather Company  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_ 005-130-0606

2. Location

street & number Washington and First Streets N/A  not for publication  
city or town Columbus N/A  vicinity  
state Indiana code IN county Bartholomew code 003 zip code 47201

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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 36CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*[Signature]* 10/25/95  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, (explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

- building, district, site, structure, object

Table with 3 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing, and Resource Type (buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total). Values: 1, 0, 0, 0, 1.

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

INDUST/PROC/EXTR: Manufacturing Facility

COMMERCE/TRADE: Business

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

19th & 20th c. AMER.:

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

roof OTHER: composition

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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.)

- 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.
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.)

Property is:

- 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

INDUSTRY

Period of Significance

1914-1947

Significant Dates

1914

1916

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- 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 #

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

Haw Creek Leather Company  
Name of Property

Bartholomew IN  
County and State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than one acre

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	6	5	9	3	1	5	0	4	3	3	9	2	4	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

3 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

2 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

4 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

See continuation sheet

#### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

#### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Laura Thayer, Historic Preservation Consultant  
organization \_\_\_\_\_ date 9-23-97  
street & number 3905 N 500 W telephone 812-375-2318  
city or town Columbus state IN zip code 47201

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

##### Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

##### Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Vision Enterprises  
street & number 522 Seventh St. telephone 812-372-9391  
city or town Columbus state IN zip code 47201

**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. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Haw Creek Leather Company

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The Haw Creek Leather Company building is located at the southwest corner of First and Washington Streets in Columbus (photos 3, 5). It is located just north of the old Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago, and St. Louis Railroad. Historically, this was an industrial and working class residential area one block south of the courthouse square. Today, there is a contemporary newspaper plant in the block to the north, and a contemporary city hall building in the block kitty-corner to the northeast. The parking lot for City Hall is in the block to the east. In the same block as Haw Creek Leather, to the west, is a one-story, brick, industrial building.

The building is a two-story, brick structure with a raised basement (photos 1, 3, 5, 6). The foundation is concrete. The building is square in plan and has a flat roof. The west half was built in 1914, and the east half was built in 1916. The north facade (photo 3) is eight bays wide. There are two doors on this side of the building, one in the center of each half. Each opening contains a set of original, double, paneled wood doors. These doors are no longer operable, and have been covered over on the interior. Windows on this facade, and throughout the building, are double hung, wood, with six lights in each sash. Window openings are segmental-arched, and sills are concrete. Basement windows are single sash, wood windows with six lights. Openings for these are also segmental-arched, and sills are concrete. There is a corbeled brick cornice at the top of this facade and extending around the east and west sides of the building..

The east and west facades are very similar to the north facade. The east (photo 3) and west (photo 1) facades are each ten bays wide. On the east facade, in the third bay from the north, there is a door opening (photo 4) which is positioned lower than adjacent window openings. Prior to a recent rehabilitation of the building, this opening had been partially bricked up, and filled with glass block. It has been re-opened and a new metal and glass door installed. The metal stair and awning at this entrance are new.

Extending from the south end of the west facade is a one-story high brick wall with three window openings (photo 1). This wall is a remnant of the tannery's vat house. Another section of wall which extends from the center of the rear facade (photo 6) defines the original east wall of the vat house.

The rear facade (photo 6) is similar to the other facades in detailing. The basement is at ground level at this side of the building. A new glass and stucco, three-story stair tower has been added on the east half of the west half of this facade. On the roof, above the east side of this facade, is a wood penthouse for a former elevator.

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Inside, the building has exposed brick walls, and exposed wood ceilings (photos 7, 8, 9). Floors are concrete on the basement level and wood on the first level. On both of these levels, the original floors have been carpeted, except in bathrooms, where tile has been installed, and in the main entry (photo 8), which has new wood flooring. On the third floor, the original wood floor has a concrete finish. The building's original sprinkler system is intact.

Historically, the interior was generally open. A row of wood columns extends down the center of each half of the building on each floor (photo 7). Some walls have been added to facilitate the building's new use as offices. For the most part, these are partial height walls with glass above (photo 9).

There is a stairway in the northwest corner of the east half of the building which runs between the first and second floors. This is a new stair, but is in the approximate location of the original stairway. There was originally an elevator in the southeast corner of the building. A new elevator has been installed in this corner. Wood workings for the old elevator have been retained and displayed in a small room next to the new elevator.

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Haw Creek Leather Company

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The Haw Creek Leather Company building is significant under Criterion A in the area of Industry, and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture. The company operated at this location between the years 1914 and 1955. The structure is a good example of an early twentieth century factory building. It represents the tanning industry in the early twentieth century. The period of significance is 1914 to 1947. The building was rated "outstanding" in the Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory.

### *History*

In the early twentieth century, leather was an important material with a variety of uses. It was used to make harnesses, shoes, upholstery, luggage, belts, and many other products. The First World War contributed to the growth of the industry, as military demand for leather products increased. Leather continued to be in demand during the prosperous years of the 1920s. Markets for leather decreased during the Great Depression of the 1930s, but increased again in the late 1930s, with the beginning of the war in Europe.

After World War II, the use of leather steadily declined. Increased use of automobiles and tractors resulted in decreased use of horses. This meant that less leather was needed for saddles, harnesses, and bridles. Vinyl, a less expensive material to produce, came to be used more frequently than leather for automobile and furniture upholstery. The use of rubber was also increasing, and many shoe soles were made of that material instead of leather. The 1950s and 60s saw widespread closing of tanneries.

The Haw Creek Leather Company was started in 1910 by Ernest D. Snider and Ed L. Voelz. Since 1902, Snider had worked at the Mooney tannery, where he was secretary and treasurer. Voelz had started as an office boy at Mooney in 1904. Haw Creek Leather was first located in an old slaughterhouse on Sixth Street. This is now gone. In 1914, the east half of the present building on First Street was constructed. The west half was built in 1916.

Haw Creek Leather produced a variety of leather products during the years it was in business, including harnesses, straps, collar leather, tanning robes, skins, and pelts. During World War I, the company made artillery harnesses for military use. A 1937 study of local industry noted that the company had seven employees and produced pump leather and belt leather.

About 1927, Snider and Voelz started the Star Metal Manufacturing Company to produce metal furniture. This company was also located in the First Street Building. The venture

appears to have been abandoned about 1936, but the tannery was continued. In 1955, the building was sold to Harold Brandenburger, who manufactured and sold metal office furniture here. This business closed in 1992. Over the last two years, the building has been rehabilitated for office use.

### *Industrial Significance*

The Haw Creek Leather Company building is one of a small number of historic industrial buildings remaining in Columbus. It is the one remaining representation of the tannery industry.

Columbus began as the seat and market center of an agricultural county. Early industries were limited to small grist and lumber mills, and black smith shops. As railroads were built through the town in the 1840s and 50s, a number of larger factories were built. One of the earliest of these was the W.W. Mooney tannery, which originated elsewhere in the county in 1837, and moved to Columbus in 1863.

Among other principal industries of the nineteenth century were B. Busch and Son Foundry and Machine Works (1865), Fehring Carriage Company (1869), Gent Flour Mill (1875), Reeves and Company, a manufacturer of agricultural implements (1875), Dunlap and Coats planing mill, (1878), Columbus Machine Works, (1880); the American Starch Company (1880), the Cerealine Manufacturing Company, maker of the first ready-to-eat cold cereal (1884); Reeves Pulley Company (1888), Orinoco Furniture Company (1890), Glanton Furniture Company (1891), and Columbus Handle and Tool (1891). Also present in nineteenth century Columbus were smaller manufacturers of a number of products: carriages, harnesses, springs, doors and sash, staves and heading, brooms, leather, and shoes.

In addition to Haw Creek Leather Company, important twentieth century industries included Lincoln Chair, Reliance Manufacturing, Arvin Industries, and Cummins Engine Company, all established in 1919; Golden Foundry (1924); Stadler Packing Company (1929); Vernco, a plastic components manufacturer (1932); Cosco, a furniture manufacturer (1935); Como Plastics (1946); and Sap's Foods (1946).

Of the industries named which originated in the nineteenth century, all are out of business with the exception of Reeves Pulley Company, which merged with Reliance Manufacturing in 1955. Some of the companies met their demise when their factories were destroyed by fire. For example, the American Starch Company building burned in 1890 and was never rebuilt. A similar fate befell Reeves and Company in 1926.



Economic hard times signaled the end of several of the companies. Cerealine Manufacturing closed during the Panic of 1893, and the Orinoco and Glanton furniture companies were victims of the Depression of the 1930s. All of the twentieth century companies named are still operating, with the exception of Lincoln Chair, which also went out of business in the 1930s.

Though Columbus has a long history as a center of industry in south-central Indiana, few historic buildings associated with manufacturing remain. Only four historic industrial buildings were identified in the Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory. Haw Creek Leather Company was given a rating of "outstanding" in the inventory. Other industrial buildings identified the Cerealine Mill (c.1875), rated "outstanding;" Reliance Manufacturing Company (c. 1900), rated "reference;" and the Gent Mill (1875), rated "outstanding."

One building identified in the inventory that has been demolished is the Newcomb Coal and Feed Store/Wadley Company Factory (1913). Extant industrial buildings excluded from the inventory include the Glanton Furniture Factory, the Orinoco Furniture Company, and the Reeves Pulley Company. These three buildings may have been excluded from the inventory because of alterations.

As noted above, the largest tannery in Columbus was W.W. Mooney and Sons. The Mooney tannery, which grew to be one of the largest in the country, finally closed in 1962 and was demolished soon after. The Haw Creek Leather Company was the only other tannery of significance. Over the years, there were other tanneries, but none appeared to have been very large, or in business long. Among these were the Columbus Fur Dressing and Tanning Company, and the Orinoco Tanning Company. The buildings which were occupied by these companies are now gone.

Interestingly, the Columbus tanneries - Mooney and Haw Creek - comprised two of the only eleven tanneries listed in *Polk's Indiana State Gazetteer* of 1928.<sup>1</sup> The other companies listed were in Indianapolis, Kendallville, Logansport, Michigan City, Milford, and Richmond (one each); and in New Albany (three).

### ***Architectural Significance***

The Haw Creek Leather Company building is a significant representation of an early twentieth century factory building. Typical of industrial buildings of the pre-World War I

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<sup>1</sup> *Polk's Indiana State Gazetteer and Business Directory*. Indianapolis: R.L. Polk and Company, 1928.

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era, it is brick with wood windows, wood floors, and wood interior columns. The building has good integrity. It is one of a relatively small number of structures remaining in Columbus which represent the town's historic industrial architecture.

As previously discussed, several factories were built in Columbus in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Of the few industrial buildings which remain, only the Gent Mill and the Cerealine Mill, both built around 1875, are comparable to the Haw Creek Leather Company building. The two mills are simple brick buildings, similar in character to Haw Creek Leather.

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Haw Creek Leather Company

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*A Book of Indiana.* James O. Jones Company, 1929.

Baker, Conrad, "An Industrial Survey of Columbus, Indiana," Masters of Science thesis, Purdue University, 1937.

Columbus, Indiana City Directories, 1915-1960.

Fish, Henry R., "Illustrated Columbus, Indiana," The Commercial Club and Retail Merchants Association 1915.

Hansen, Robert D, "This is Columbus," *Indiana Business and Industry*, Culver, Indiana, February 1965.

Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana. *Bartholomew County Interim Report.* Indianapolis: Indiana Department of Natural Resources, 1980.

*History of Bartholomew County - 1888.* Reissued and annotated by the Bartholomew County Historical Society, Columbus, Indiana, 1976.

Marsh, William E. *I Discover Columbus.* Oklahoma City: Semco Color Press, 1956.

*Polk's Indiana State Gazetteer and Business Directory.* Indianapolis: R.L. Polk and Company, 1928.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for Columbus, Indiana, 1927.

"Souvenir Program of the Grand Army of the Republic," Columbus, Indiana, 1898.

Taylor, Robert M., Jr., et al. *Indiana: A New Historical Guide.* Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1989.

"W.W. Mooney and Sons Tannery . . . Picture from the Past," *The Republic*, Columbus, Indiana, 30 January 1971.

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

East halves of Lots 55 and 56, Original Plat of Columbus, Indiana

**Boundary Justification**

This is the historic boundary for the property.