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**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 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. 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 Oesterlein Machine Company-Fashion Frocks, Inc. Complex

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 3301 Colerain Avenue/ 1326 Monmouth Avenue not for publication N/A
city or town Cincinnati vicinity N/A
state Ohio code OH county Hamilton code 061 Zip 45225

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 36 CFR 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.)

Barbara Owen Department Head
Signature of certifying official Inventory & Registration Date September 8, 2005

Ohio Historic Preservation Office, Ohio Historical Society

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 Edson H. Beall Date of Action _____

The Oesterlein Machine Company-Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex
Name of Property

Hamilton County, Ohio
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>3</u>		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/Manufacturing facility
INDUSTRY/Warehouse

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival
Commercial

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls BRICK
roof SYNTHETICS/Rubber
other _____

Narrative Description

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

See continuation sheets.

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7. Summary Description:

Streetscape

The Oesterlein Machine Company-Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex is located at the northwest corner of Colerain Avenue and Monmouth Avenue, in the urban neighborhood of Camp Washington in Cincinnati, Ohio (Figure 1, Location Map). The terrain is generally flat. The area northeast of the complex was significantly altered by construction of the (now-defunct) Miami and Erie Canal during the 1820s and Interstate 75 during the 1960s. Deep ditches and dense undergrowth separate the buildings in Camp Washington from these two transportation corridors. Hemming the west side of Camp Washington are the Mill Creek and the former Baltimore & Ohio railroad yards.

This section of the city was heavily industrialized from the late 1890s through the 1960s. Since the 1940s, the residential population has steadily dwindled as people relocated to fast-growing suburbs. Numerous businesses and industries either relocated to outlying areas or closed down as part of the deindustrialization and corporate downsizing that occurred in many parts of Ohio from the 1960s through the 1990s. Presently, many of the heavy industrial complexes in Camp Washington are only partially occupied or have been converted for alternative uses such as storage, light industry, and office space. The housing stock in the neighborhood includes detached single-family dwellings (many of which have been converted to multiple-family use) and a small number of apartment buildings, all of which generally date from the 1880s through the 1950s. A disparate collection of small-scale commercial storefronts is located along Colerain Avenue. Reconstruction of the Colerain Avenue/Hopple Street intersection off I-75 has transformed the commercial core of Camp Washington, with further changes expected to result from the nearby planned Hopple Street Crossing strip commercial center development. The historic Cincinnati Workhouse at 3208 Colerain Avenue (NR 1980) once occupied a large tract opposite the Oesterlein Machine Company-Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex. Demolition of the massive building in 1990 removed a major landmark from the neighborhood's built environment. The historic edifice was replaced with a new minimum security county correctional facility, which is separated from Colerain Avenue by a park with a World War I doughboy memorial. Also across the street from the subject property, the historic House of Refuge at 3300 Colerain Avenue was removed by the late 1960s, and a city-owned highway maintenance facility was built on its site. The American Products Company building, a six-story reinforced concrete light industrial building built in 1925, is located immediately south of the property.

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Summary

The subject property occupies all or parts of lots 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 of the Ethan Bates Estate Subdivision, an area that comprises approximately 2.18 acres. The complex consists of three buildings arranged in a generally U-shaped configuration (Figure 2, Site Plan). The buildings are referred to as Buildings 1-3. Buildings 1, 2, and 3 were constructed in 1918. Building 1 has a 1-story rear wing that was added in circa 1935, and by 1956, a driveway between Buildings 1 and 2 was enclosed by a two-story structure. Building 1 is a large 5-story brick building located at the northwest corner of Colerain and Monmouth avenues. Attached to the north end of the west (rear) elevation, a long 1-story warehouse is oriented on an east-west axis, and is located directly north of Buildings 2 and 3. Located west of Building 1, Building 2 is a long, 1-story brick building oriented on an east-west axis along Monmouth Avenue. Connecting Buildings 1 and 2 is a two-story building that was added to create contiguous access between the two buildings. Building 3, the historic power house, is located in the center of the warehouse complex, directly west of Building 1.

The complex has been in almost continual use throughout its history, but it has only a few minor modifications to the buildings. A series of small-scale concrete block and brick veneered additions were built onto Building 2 during the 1930s, and a loading bay was added to Building 1's east façade sometime after 1981. Some of the window openings on Building 1's west (rear) elevation were infilled with concrete block and brick veneer but the original fenestration pattern can easily be discerned on this side because of the variations in brick color. The windows on the south and part of the west side of Building 1 have circa 1985 replacement metal-framed fixed sash, but the size of the window openings was not altered. A second entrance was added to Building 1's east façade, immediately north of the original entrance, and based on its appearance it probably dates from the same period as the replacement windows. On Building 2, most of the original windows have been covered with opaque storm sash, but the original sash are intact beneath. Also in this section, the clerestory windows are covered with corrugated plastic on the exterior, but are intact on the interior. All of the buildings appear to be structurally sound and well maintained.

Although associated with the complex for much of its history, since the 1960s, the north, rear wing of Building 1 has been separately deeded and interior passages from this structure to

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Building 1 have been closed off. This warehouse wing will be included with the National Register nomination for this complex, but it is under separate ownership by Funtown Playgrounds. Interior access to this building was not permitted for the purpose of the National Register nomination for the complex. Buildings 1, 2, and 3 are owned by Middle Earth Developers, Inc.

Description

Building 1

Building 1 was built in 1918 and was the first building constructed in the complex. Oriented on a north-south axis, its façade faces east, along Colerain Avenue (Photos 1 and 3). It is of stretcher bond, load bearing brick construction and sits on a poured concrete foundation. At grade level, the foundation appears to be faced with a higher quality concrete that is scored to resemble stone. Windows to the basement are visible only on the south elevation and the southern end of the east façade, as the building is constructed on slightly sloping land.

The east façade has 15 bays, each separated by a section of raised brick, which gives the appearance of a column (Photos 2 and 4). Decorative brick buttresses capped with concrete project from the “columns” and rise from the basement level to the top of the second story. Each bay contains four window openings (one on each story of the building). Windows on this façade have paired 15-over-15 wooden double-hung sash with concrete sills. The window openings typically measure 12’ 6” W x 9’ 11” H, and each sash measures 6’ 3” W x 9’ 11” H. The windows on the first floor have been covered with metal mesh. A decorative cornice finishes the top of this facade. It is composed of a row of sectioned corbelled bricks with a row of dentils above. The roof is flat and slopes gradually from east to west. Piercing the roof are two clerestory sections, each of which is rectangular with a flat roof. Each section is sheathed with metal siding that is showing signs of rust and wear. All of the windows except one are covered with corrugated metal, but the 12-light fixed sash appear to be almost entirely intact.

The original, primary entrance to the building is in the third bay from the south corner of the east façade (Photo 5). The entry features a classically inspired cast concrete entablature with a simple cornice, dentil molding, and engaged Doric columns. The door surround is composed of sandstone and is painted white to resemble plaster or terra cotta. The entry itself consists of a pair of wood, single-light double doors flanked by single-light sidelights and topped with a single-

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light transom that has been painted. The stairs leading to the entrance are made of stone, most likely sandstone. A circa 1985 entry was installed in the next bay immediately north of the original entrance. It is a typical modern commercial entrance with metal framed transom windows and doors. The only other alteration on the east façade of this building is a circa 1985 loading dock. Veneered with light brown brick, the loading dock spans four bays in the middle of the east façade (Photo 2). Two of the bays are intact behind the dock; the paired sash have been removed from two of the bays, and the masonry below the windows was removed to create ramps into dock. The remainder of the east façade's bays are occupied almost entirely by large windows. Basement windows on the east façade appear historic and are fixed paned with a concrete sill and covered with a protective metal mesh.

The north side of Building 1 is the least architecturally complex. Unlike the other elevations, it is not embellished with brick pilasters and a brick corbel table. There are 6 visible windows, each of which has a small 3-over-3 double-hung sash with a concrete sill. The bottom portion of this façade is obscured by an addition that ends only a few inches from the brick wall; this addition is associated with the property immediately to the north of the subject property.

The south elevation of Building 1 resembles the east façade in proportion but has only 3 bays (Photo 4). More of the basement level is visible on the south side than on the east façade because of the slope on which the building was constructed. The basement level of the south elevation has 5 windows with original 2-over-2 wood sash, all of which are covered with metal mesh. Windows on the first through fourth stories have circa 1985 replacement, metal, 3-light fixed sash that entirely occupy the original window openings. Although the sash have been replaced, the historic fenestration pattern was retained as the new windows fit in the historic window openings. Just as on the east façade, each bay is separated by a section of raised brick, resembling a column. On this façade, the shallow buttresses reach only from the basement level to the top of the first story. The same corbelled brick and dentil cornice that is present on the east façade is found here. An entry at the west corner of the basement story consists of a wood door with two panels in the lower half and four square fixed lights in the upper half.

Extending between Buildings 1 and 2 is a 2-story structure, constructed sometime between 1950 and 1956. It is located in an area that was once a driveway between Buildings 1 and 2. A poured concrete foundation and concrete block walls faced with mustard-colored brick were constructed in order to enclose the former driveway and to connect Building 1 and 2. The flat roof is covered with rubber membrane.

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Typical of its period and utilitarian purpose, the south façade of this connector structure displays minimal architectural detail (Photo 4). Three symmetrically arranged bays divide the façade. The westernmost has a recessed entry on the first story alongside a single window with a 4-light sash, and a band of three metal-framed, 3-light sash on the second story. The recessed entry has two doors, each of which consists of a circa 1985 aluminum-framed, plate glass door. The central bay has a single, four-light sash on each story. The easternmost bay has a band of three metal-framed, 3-light sash on each story.

The north (rear) elevation of the building is composed of two bays (Photo 6). The easternmost bay has an entry with a circa 1995 Masonite door on the first story and a pair of 4-light, metal-framed sash on the second story. The westernmost bay features a large, circa 1985 entry with a pair of aluminum-framed, plate glass doors on the first story and a pair of 4-light sash on the second story.

The west, or rear, elevation of Building 1 is less regular and more complex than the building's other principal elevations (Photos 7 and 8). More than any other, this elevation reveals the functional nature of this building. Although defined bays are still visible, they are interrupted by large projecting towers in the building's envelop. These towers house a stairwell, a series of washrooms, and two freight elevator shafts; south of the elevator shafts, the I-beam supports for a water tank are still extant on the roof but the tank itself is not extant. A grid of large steel I-beams, running horizontally and vertically on the northern one-third of the west elevation, are exposed. A variety of window sizes are found on this elevation. The bay furthest north mimics the design of the building's north elevation as the windows are small, 3-over-3 double-hung windows. The bay furthest south mimics the design of the building's south elevation, as the windows have been replaced with circa 1985, fixed pane windows with metal casings. Many of the windows on the west elevation have been infilled with brick; however, the historic fenestration pattern is still clearly visible, due to changes in brick color. The remaining windows on this façade are not as uniform as windows on the other facades. Besides the 15-over-15 double-hung sash there are also 1-over-1, 2-over-2, 3-over-3, and 10-over-10 double-hung sash. The 10-over-10 sash typically measure 6' 3" W x 6' 10" H, and the entire window opening typically is 12' 6" W x 6' 10" H. A large tower containing the stairwell projects above the roofline of Building 1. Fire escapes are attached to the building in the fifth bay from the north (Photo 8). Decorative detailing present on the east and south elevations was not applied on the west side. There are a few buttresses under the roof to the loading area, which has large concrete

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platforms and ramps used for loading and unloading. Wide metal doors on this level allowed large items to be transported in and out of the basement level.

At the north end of the west (rear) elevation of Building 1 is a warehouse wing with a large 1-story and smaller 2-story rear section. Constructed circa 1935, it is oriented on an east-west axis, parallel to Building 2 and perpendicular to Building 1 (Photo 9). It has a concrete foundation and the south elevation is laid in Common-Flemish bond, a pattern where every sixth row of stretchers is separated by a row of alternating headers and stretchers. Raised brick sections are between each window opening (Photo 10). The west elevation exhibits concrete block wall treatment (Photos 11 and 12). All of the window and door openings in the 1-story section of this building have been infilled with concrete block. The weathered appearance of the concrete block suggests that this alteration took place twenty to forty years ago. Many of the infilled window openings have two rows of glass block to allow light to enter the warehouse. The roof of the 1-story section is a slightly rounded hangar type metal roof with 5 projections for sky lights. The 2-story section of this building retains its original steel sash. They are fixed pane sash with one hopper section. This portion of the building has a flat roof. This wing is currently under separate ownership from the rest of the complex and access to its interior was not permitted for purposes of preparing the Part 1 application and National Register nomination. Sanborn maps show that the interior space historically included a cafeteria at the east end, a cutting room that occupied the middle section of the building, and an unlabeled open space in the two-story west section. The interior walls are labeled as exposed concrete block, and a series of 5 wired-glass skylights punctuated the hanger type roof. The skylights were positioned above the cutting room. From the exterior, it appears that the skylights are extant, although they are boarded over. The roof was supported by a wood truss system, and the interior was equipped with automatic sprinklers. The interior square footage of the building was noted as approximately 17,580 square feet in a 1946 prospectus (Van Alatyne et al., 1946: 6).

The interior of Building 1 encompasses approximately 86,234 square feet. The basement of Building 1 is a large open space with riveted steel columns (2 rows of 14 columns each) supporting the floors above it. It has a concrete floor and exposed wood and metal beams supporting the unfinished wood ceiling. Several circa 1985 office spaces have been erected at the southern end of the basement. Walls for these offices are constructed of drywall and do not meet the ceiling. Some windows on this level have been infilled with concrete block. On the ceiling and perimeter walls, the building's mechanical infrastructure is almost entirely exposed, including ducts, pipes, electrical conduit, and sprinklers. The west wall contains a 5' W x 7' H

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door opening to the early 1950s connector building; a large vault with a 4' W x 6' 4" H original vault door; a 5' W x 6' 2" H opening that leads to the staircase to the upper floors of Building 1; a 5' W x 8' H paneled overhead door that opens to the center of the complex; two washrooms, each with a 3' W x 6' 11" H door opening; a 8' x 8' freight elevator; a 8' x 8' unused elevator shaft; and an 11' 10 1/2" W x 9' 11" H loading bay with paneled wood doors that open out onto the center of the complex. At the north corner of this wall, a 4' 8" W x 7' 4" H sliding metal fire door once opened into the adjacent warehouse wing, but the opening has been infilled with concrete block and the door has been fixed in place. The interior height of the basement level is 11 feet, 5 inches.

The first floor of Building 1 is an almost entirely open space with wooden floors and high ceilings supported by two rows of metal columns running the length of the building (Photo 13). The columns towards the southern end of the building are more decorative than the others (Photo 14). These are cased in wooden molding and have a decorative plaster scroll at the top; these elements appear to date from the building's construction, or perhaps from a remodeling undertaken in 1935. The less decorative columns appear to be made of metal that has been covered in metal lath then plastered over. Large exposed wood beams in the ceiling run north-south and a grid of steel beams runs east-west to support the floors above. At the southwest corner of this floor, an office with full-height sheetrock walls and a replacement entry door is situated. The east wall of this floor contains the original vestibule for the entrance to the building. The interior of the vestibule retains historic wood paneling and decorative trim, as well as asbestos flooring. The wood trim displays signs of dry rot, possibly due to prolonged exposure to sunlight and temperature variations. A pair of wood-framed, single-light doors leads from the vestibule to the interior of the first floor. These doors do not retain any hardware. An original three-light transom with simple wood trim tops the doors. A large concrete ramp, part of the circa 1985 loading dock addition, is also located along the east wall. At the north corner of the west wall, a metal fire door once provided access to the main level of Building 4. This opening has been infilled with concrete block and the door has been fixed in place. Windows on the east wall of this floor are 15-over-15 double-hung wooden sash (Photo 15). Windows on the south side are the aforementioned circa 1985 replacement windows. A large opening was cut into the west wall at the south corner to permit access to the second floor of the early 1950s connector building. The stairwell, washrooms, and freight elevator shafts are all located along the west wall. The stair tower retains the original wooden staircase and railings. One rectangular 3-over-3 double-hung wood sash is located on the landing of each floor. The interior height of the first floor is 13 feet, 9 inches.

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The second and third floors of Building 1 are very similar, consisting of a single, large open space with hardwood floors and ceilings that are supported by two rows of riveted steel columns stretching the length of the building (Photos 16 and 19). These columns contain no decorative details, unlike the columns on the first floor (Photo 18). Just as below, the ceiling beams running north-south are wooden while the beams running east-west are steel. Again, the stair tower, a vault, washrooms, and freight elevator shafts are located along the west wall. South of the stair tower, the second floor has a built-in historic safe manufactured by the Victor Safe & Lock Company of Cincinnati, Ohio (Photo 17). Some of the windows on the west wall of both of these floors have been infilled with brick. Those windows on the west side of these floors that are not filled in have 10-over-10 double-hung sash, while those on the east wall have 15-over-15 sash. The window openings on the south wall have circa 1985 replacement sash. The north wall is pierced by two regularly spaced 3-over-3 double-hung wood sash. A staircase and a chute are located on the east side of the second floor, leading to the third floor. The interior height of the second floor is 13 feet, 7 inches, and the third floor is 13 feet, 4 inches.

The fourth floor of Building 1 also is a large, open space supported by two rows of columns (Photos 20-22). Columns on this floor are wood timber 8" x 8" posts and smaller in circumference than those below. Wood corbels are employed between the posts and sleepers. The ceiling on the fourth floor has a wood deck supported by a grid of wood joists and sleepers, with two parallel 24" thick main support beams running the length of the building. The joining method of the joists to the support beams is via pockets. The joists are 19' 1" in length, and are spaced 8' apart. The hardwood flooring on this level is similar to what is found on the lower floors. The windows on the east wall have 15-over-15 double-hung sash. The south wall windows have circa 1985 replacement sash, while those on the north wall are 3-over-3 double-hung sash. Many of the windows on the west wall have been filled in with concrete block. Those that have not been filled in have either 15-over-15 or 10-over-10 double-hung sash. Two large clerestory sections are above the fourth floor. The south clerestory section is open to the fourth floor, while the north clerestory has been enclosed with a new floor deck and is accessed via a staircase (Photo 23). The windows of each clerestory section are visible and the tilt-in sash appear to be almost entirely intact. Because the roof has a slight pitch, the interior height of the fourth floor is 14 feet at each perimeter wall and 15 feet beneath the clerestory section.

The first floor of the circa 1950-1956 connector structure consists primarily of contemporary office space. It has exposed concrete block and brick perimeter walls, carpeted floors, interior partition walls built of drywall, and dropped ceilings. Finish materials such as

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drywall and paneling were applied directly to the brick and concrete block walls. On the north side, a large loading area with a concrete floor, concrete block walls, and an unfinished ceiling opens onto the interior of the complex (Photos 24 and 25). East of this room is a hallway leading to the basement level of Building 1 and a stairwell leading to the upper stories in Building 1.

The second floor of the connector structure has a large open storage space in the center with offices radiating from this space (Photo 26). The east wall opens into the first floor of Building 1. The floor in the center of the connector building appears to be covered with particle board. It was likely once covered with linoleum similar to that in the office on the south side of the building. Interior partition walls are constructed of drywall, with many parts covered in wood paneling. Fluorescent lighting is suspended from the dropped ceilings.

Building 2

Building 2, also constructed in 1918, is located along the north side of Monmouth Avenue just west of Building 1 (Photo 27). Of load bearing masonry and steel frame construction, it has a foundation that appears to be similar to that of Building 1, consisting of poured concrete faced with a higher quality concrete that has been scored to give the appearance of stone. The roof of Building 2 is flat except for the clerestory that runs down the center of the building (Photo 33). Also, a projecting stair tower that provides access to the clerestory extends above the roofline on the north side of the building.

The south façade of Building 2 is composed of brick in a stretcher bond (Photo 28). There are 14 bays, each with 3 windows. As on the east and south facades of Building 1, each bay is separated by a section of raised brick, giving the appearance of a column. Circa 1985 metal storm sash with opaque glass cover the original window sash, which are 6-over-6 double-hung sash topped with a 6-light transom. The original sash are visible from the interior and appear to be in good condition. The cornice on this building is very similar to that on Building 1. Separated corbelled bricks line the area immediately above the windows, with a row of dentils just above the corbelled bricks.

The west side of Building 2 has multiple brick-veneered and concrete block additions (Photo 29). Two of the additions were constructed circa 1935, while the westernmost third addition was built circa 1985. Visible from the south façade, the largest circa 1935 addition is

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built on a raised concrete foundation and is concrete block faced with brick veneer. It has three rectangular windows with metal framed hopper sash on the south wall, and three smaller, square windows on the west wall. The flat roof is hidden behind a low parapet. At the northwest corner of this structure, a circa 1985 shed-roofed addition with corrugated metal siding serves as a loading dock. It has two large overhead doors that occupy almost all of its north and south walls. Directly north is another circa 1935 addition, also consisting of concrete block veneered with brick. A pair of two-light sash is at the north corner of the west wall and a single Masonite door is at the south corner, while a door and a single two-light sash occupy the north wall. The west wall of the clerestory section originally had four windows with segmental arches. Three of these are infilled with brick, while the fourth was converted to a fire door. A metal fire escape leads from this fire door down to the roof of the circa 1935 addition.

The north elevation of Building 2 appears quite different from the south façade (Photos 30 and 31). The foundation is not visible on this façade. The windows have 6-over-6 double-hung wood sash topped with 6-light transoms. These windows line the length of the building and are not covered with storm sash as on the south façade. The symmetrically ordered bays are still visible, each containing 3 windows and separated by a section of raised brick, resembling a column (Photo 32). There is no decorative cornice on this façade. A circa 1935 addition spans much of the western half of the north elevation. Rising from a concrete slab foundation, the 1-story structure is built of concrete block faced with brick. An overhead door and three regularly spaced rectangular window openings punctuate the north wall. The flat roof is augmented by a stepped parapet. Directly east of this is another smaller circa 1935 addition of similar construction. Windows on both these additions have 5-over-5 hopper sash, and large overhead doors provide access for loading and unloading materials. Between the two additions, the projecting stair tower rises two stories above the flat roof. It has 3 windows on each story of its east, north, and west walls. Centered beneath the roofline on the north wall is a smaller, 6-light sash.

The east elevation of Building 2 is no longer visible from the street. While a driveway once separated Buildings 1 and 2, the open area is now occupied by the connector building, which was constructed between 1950 and 1956.

The first floor of Building 2 contains two very different kinds of space. A small section in the southeast portion of the building has a shell constructed of drywall and metal studs, which houses a series of contemporary office spaces. The wall heights are well below the original

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ceiling height in Building 2. Inside the shell, the offices are finished with dropped ceilings, carpet, florescent lights, painted drywall partitions, and new aluminum doors. There are no windows to the outside in this office space. The remainder of the first floor of Building 2 is accessed via a door on the west side of the office shell.

The remainder of the first floor of Building 2 consists of several large open spaces with hardwood floors and exposed brick walls. North of the contemporary office space, a wide passage separates the offices from a large manufacturing area that is completely open (Photo 34). The roof is supported by an exposed metal truss system and the north wall is occupied almost entirely by large, 6-over-6 double-hung sash topped with 6-light transoms. The west half of the building has a series of regularly spaced metal columns running on an east/west axis down the middle of the building. An exposed riveted, Pratt roof metal truss system allows the remainder of the roof to be supported without the use of columns, thereby allowing the use of large pieces of manufacturing equipment (Photos 35 and 36).

Four additions open off the first floor of Building 2. On the west end, the two circa 1935 additions are constructed of concrete block faced with brick. The larger of the two is a single open space with exposed brick and concrete block walls and metal columns that hold up a concrete roof (Photo 37). Two large overhead garage doors lead to the circa 1985 addition. A standard door opens to the northern circa 1935 addition. This is a small square room finished with drywall and a dropped ceiling, while the floor is exposed concrete. On the north side of Building 2, two portions of the wall were removed to provide access to the 1935 additions, but the original sash were left in place. The west addition is an unfinished space with a concrete floor, exposed brick and concrete block walls, and exposed ceiling joists. A large conveyer belt starts in this addition and leads up to the clerestory level. The east addition on the north wall of Building 2 consists of a bathroom and a kitchen/break area. This area has concrete floors with some brick walls, some walls made of drywall, and some concrete block walls. Elements of contemporary bathroom and kitchen fixtures remain.

The clerestory is accessed by a stairwell located in between the two additions on the north wall of Building 2. It consists of a vast open space which projects up above the roofline of the building (Photo 38). It has a wooden ceiling supported by metal beams and a Pratt roof truss system, eliminating the need for columns (Photo 39). A conveyer belt runs the length of this story leading down into the circa 1935 addition on the north wall of Building 2. Six-over-six tilt windows line both sides of the clerestory, once allowing light to stream in. Although now

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covered with corrugated metal, the sash appear to be intact. A series of skylights is located in the center of the clerestory's flat roof.

Building 3

Building 3 was constructed in 1918 along with Buildings 1 and 2, and was used as the power house. It is located directly west of Building 1, in the center of the warehouse complex. It is a 1-story square building of common bond, load-bearing masonry construction. The foundation of Building 3 is not visible. It is likely the same poured concrete as found in Buildings 1 and 2. A tall brick smokestack anchors the east façade. A circa 1935 addition spans the north two-thirds of the west (rear) elevation. The flat roof is topped with a large clerestory and encircled by a brick parapet with cast concrete coping.

The brick smokestack spans almost a third of the east façade (Photo 40 and 42). An infilled window opening occupies the façade's northernmost bay, while an entry with a replacement door is in the southernmost bay. Brick piers punctuate each corner of the façade, and the cornice is decorated with the same style of corbelled brick and dentil designs found on Buildings 1 and 2. The smokestack appears to have been a later addition, installed sometime between 1930 and 1941.

On the south elevation, a large round-arched door opening at the east corner has been infilled with brick and a series of fixed pane sash has been installed (Photos 40 and 41). Based on the appearance of the sash, this alteration appears to have occurred circa 1950-1956. The remainder of the south wall features three round-arched window openings, with brick infill occupying the lower third of the original openings. The plywood boards cover two of the three fanlights. Based on the windows on the north façade of this building, the remaining sash on this elevation appear to be only the upper portion of the 9-over-9 double-hung sash that were once there. This wall exhibits the same decorative cornice found on the east façade.

The west (rear) elevation of Building 3 shows evidence of change over the years. At the south corner, a large door opening on this wall appears to have been bricked-in based on the variation in brick color (Photo 41). A smaller overhead garage door has been installed. An addition that spans the north two-thirds of this elevation was constructed sometime between 1930 and 1941. It is a 1-story concrete block building faced with brick. A door and casement sash

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punctuate the north side, a large overhead garage door is on the south, and three large glass block windows are spaced along the west wall.

The north wall of Building 3 is composed of common bond brick. It has one small entrance on the eastern portion of the façade, with three windows on the western portion (Photo 42). These windows have their original 9-over-9 double-hung sash topped with a fan light. This façade exhibits the same cornice found elsewhere, although it does not have the dentil course, only the corbelled brick course.

The interior of Building 3 has exposed brick walls and a concrete floor. It has a wooden ceiling with steel supports. A large boiler (no longer operable) in the main room is set on a raised concrete platform (Photo 43). It, along with multiple electrical boxes and the remnants of other former machinery, confirm this building's function as a power house (Photo 44). The clerestory of Building 3 has 6-over-6 tilt windows and a large sliding fire door. Although corrugated metal covers most of the windows, the sash appear to be intact and in good condition (Photo 45). The circa 1935 west addition is currently used for vehicular storage.

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.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a 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.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

(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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- INDUSTRY
- COMMERCE
- MILITARY
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Period of Significance

1918-1956

Significant Dates

1918
1935
1956

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: _____

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8. Statement of Significance

Summary

The Oesterlein Machine Company-Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex is significant under Criterion A for its historical associations with two of Cincinnati's leading twentieth century manufacturing sectors: machine tools and ready-made clothing. Located in the heart of the city's industrial Mill Creek Valley, the four-story Oesterlein Machine Company was built in 1918 to accommodate the company's expanding production of machine tools. By 1929, Cincinnati's machine tool factories employed 14,000 workers, making it the largest production center of machine tools in the nation. Fashion Frocks, occupant of the complex from 1935-1957, ranked among Cincinnati's foremost twentieth century dress manufacturers and was a national leader in the direct sales and marketing of women's apparel. The plant also played a significant role during World War II and the Korean War as an important producer of parachutes, with output reaching 20,000 parachutes weekly at its peak. By 1950, nearly 1,300 workers were employed by Fashion Frocks with gross sales approaching \$16 million annually. Fashion Frocks operated the subject property as its headquarters from 1935 until 1957.

Background History:

Industrial Development in Camp Washington

The history of industrial development in Camp Washington is mirrored in many ways by the history of the subject property. Its occupants over the years have included a machine works, lithography company, shoe manufacturer, and dress factory. Each company's development has generally been in keeping with trends of industrial growth in the city. The transition in use from a heavy manufacturing facility such as a machine works to the lighter dress-making industry also is typical of larger trends in national manufacturing activities.

The neighborhood of Camp Washington historically has been delineated by the Miami & Erie Canal on the east, the Mill Creek on the west, Alfred Street on the south, and the intersection of Spring Grove Avenue and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad tracks on the north. Although close to Cincinnati's urban core, transportation corridors have served to separate Camp Washington from other inner-ring neighborhoods in Cincinnati. Construction of Interstate 75 during the 1950s continued this pattern. Transportation, however, has been among the most

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critical forces shaping development in Camp Washington. As early as the 1790s, the Mill Creek Valley acted as an important transportation corridor for Cincinnati. Goods were shipped on the waterway from regions north and east of Cincinnati.

Construction of the Miami & Erie Canal in 1825-1827 on the east side of the Mill Creek Valley made the area even more accessible (Gigliero 1988: 246; Cauffield et al. 1981: 183-184). Inland canals opened up trade opportunities to land-locked regions that otherwise had limited access to major commerce centers. The Miami & Erie Canal started on Lake Erie in Toledo and terminated at the Ohio River in Cincinnati. Trade goods from across Ohio could be shipped to Cincinnati, making the city a critical hub for commerce (Engelhardt 1901: 88-89). By the 1840s, speculators and settlers had begun subdividing land in the Camp Washington vicinity, but many large tracts remained available. Consequently, during the Mexican War, an army camp was set up and it is from this that the neighborhood derives its name. Camp Washington ceased to function as a military post in 1848, but the name remained in use (Gigliero 1988: 246).

During the mid-nineteenth century, truck farming predominated in the Mill Creek Valley and the landscape was noted for its agricultural bounty that provided foodstuffs to much of Cincinnati and northern Kentucky. Further transportation developments soon began to transform the valley (Cincinnati Historical Society 1996: 84). Beginning in the 1850s, construction of railroad corridors through the Mill Creek Valley attracted industrial development to the area, such as the Bruckman Brewery in 1856 (Department of City Planning 1984: 16). This transition was further assisted by construction of the city-owned Cincinnati House of Refuge in 1850 and Cincinnati Workhouse in 1866, both of which were sprawling facilities. The railroads, combined with numerous undeveloped tracts of land, soon prompted several livestock and packing businesses to move to the area. Up until this time, stock-handling, slaughterhouses, meat packing, and by-product concerns such as tanners and candle-making facilities had been scattered throughout Cincinnati and along the Ohio Riverfront. In 1871, the Union Stockyard Company was established to centralize operations in Camp Washington at 3119 Spring Grove Avenue. Within a decade, most of the city's slaughterhouses, packing, and processing companies had relocated near the stockyards (Gigliero 1988: 246). Kahn's & Company at 3241 Spring Grove Avenue ranks among the longest lived and most prominent meat packing plants in Camp Washington. The company was established in 1882 by Elias Kahn as a small butcher shop. It grew to a capacity for processing 5,000 cattle, hogs, and sheep by the 1930s. The present facility has been occupied since 1928 (Federal Writers Project 1943: 429; Cincinnati Historical Society 1996: 219; Gigliero 1988: 260).

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Manufacturing firms likewise were drawn to the neighborhood to build larger and more modern facilities than were possible in the original manufacturing districts on Cincinnati's geographically constrained riverfront and West End. Among these were foundries, metalworking shops, machine tool factories, and engine parts manufacturers, of which more than 30 operated in Cincinnati by 1900 (Engelhardt 1901: 197, 199). Machine tool manufacturers were among the leaders in heavy industrial growth in Camp Washington. The Cincinnati Milling Machine Company and Lodge & Shipley Company (3055 Colerain Avenue) ranked among the local leaders in this industrial sector (Giglierano 1988: 246, 260; Department of City Planning 1984: 16-17). Products manufactured included lathes, radial drills, upright drills, planers, and milling machines. Another extremely long-lived industrial concern in Camp Washington was the William Powell Company. Manufacturers of valves and machine parts, the company was begun in 1846 by William Powell and continues to operate to the present day. In 1893, the company relocated from downtown to a plant on Spring Grove Avenue. A second plant, in the 3200 block of Colerain Avenue, was added in 1926 (Cincinnati Historical Society 1996: 237; Giglierano 1988: 253).

The mushrooming growth of industrial activity soon drew an increasing number of working-class residents, many of them from Eastern Europe, and by 1910, Camp Washington had a population of approximately 11,000. As early as the mid-1890s, upwards of seventy-five stores lined Colerain Avenue, providing to the neighborhood residents needed services such as butchers, grocers, bakers, barbers, doctors, and clothiers. The number of commercial concerns grew to more than 100 by the 1920s. The range of enterprises included a theater, jeweler, hardware and paint stores, savings and loan associations, pharmacies, and a bank (Giglierano 1988: 246, 254-255).

The neighborhood thrived until the Great Depression of the 1930s, which placed a damper on industrial activity nationwide. The 1937 flood of the Ohio River caused considerable damage to industrial and housing stock in the neighborhood. The river began to overflow its banks on January 18, ultimately crested at 80 feet above flood stage on January 26, and finally receded to its banks on February 5. Rebuilding efforts began with the assistance of New Deal federal agencies and relief organizations such as the Red Cross (Cincinnati Historical Society 1996: 124-125).

Defense work during World War II and the Korean War temporarily revived some of

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Camp Washington's industries, but larger patterns of industrial development began to transform the neighborhood. Many of the meat packing and animal byproducts operations closed or reduced their operations as agriculture receded in importance and alternative manufacturing processes were created. In a repeat of the relocation of industry from downtown Cincinnati during the nineteenth century, other plants moved to outlying areas in search of larger, more modern facilities. Increased economic activities permitted many of Camp Washington's 11,800 residents to move to the suburbs as well, particularly the Western Hills area. Concomitant to the loss of industry, the number and scope of commercial activities in the neighborhood decreased by 25% by the mid-1950s (Giglierno 1988: 247, 255).

Although construction of I-75 did not result in wholesale demolition of historic buildings in Camp Washington, commercial enterprises in the neighborhood suffered from increased competition of new shopping centers, lack of parking, and restricted access. Two of the major highway thoroughfares passing through the neighborhood, Spring Grove Avenue and Hopple Street, were acknowledged to be more akin to external circulation routes, as much of their traffic was en route to other portions of the city (Department of City Planning, 34). Camp Washington also continued to lose its residential population at an alarming rate, dwindling to 3,147 residents in 1970 and to 2,198 in 1980 (Giglierno 1988: 247-248). The built environment similarly declined, with many of the commercial, residential, and industrial buildings in the neighborhood noted as being either abandoned or deteriorated (Department of City Planning 1984: 34).

Notwithstanding its decline, by the early 1980s, Camp Washington remained one of Cincinnati's largest employment areas. Approximately 200 firms employed 7,900 workers. The William Powell and Lodge & Shipley companies both ranked among the largest firms in the neighborhood, along with CSX Corporation, Reliable Castings Corporation, Jergens Company, and Consolidated Foods Corporation (formerly Kahn's & Company and now known as Sara Lee Corporation). The types of industrial operations still under way included food processing; wholesale trades; machine works; chemical plants; printing and publishing companies; and fabricated metals (Department of City Planning 1984: 20-22). In more recent years, the neighborhood has experienced limited revitalization. A not insignificant number of the single-family homes in the area have been rehabilitated, as have some multiple-family buildings. The neighborhood's community council is actively seeking additional opportunities to increase the quality of the housing stock, primarily through renovation and rehabilitation of existing structures. New commercial development is taking place around the Colerain Avenue/Hopple Street intersection. Camp Washington retains its industrial character, although some concerns are

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only partially occupied, with upper stories of many older industrial facilities either vacant or used for storage. Some former stores and dwellings have been converted for small-scale light and medium industrial uses by sheet metal, printing and typesetting, catering, and slaughtering firms (Giglierno 1988: 255).

The Oesterlein Machine Company

The original occupant of the subject property was the Oesterlein Machine Company, which William Oesterlein founded for the purpose of manufacturing machine tools. Machine tools include drills, chucks, lathes, planers, shapers, grinders, and millers. These are required to make much of the equipment that is used in the full spectrum of manufacturing processes. Indeed, the modern industrial age was not possible until the first machine tools were invented in the late eighteenth century. These included the boring machine in 1775, the circular saw in 1777, the screw-cutting lathe in 1800, the automatic planer in 1817, and the milling machine in 1818 (Cincinnati Milacron 1984: 10).

Prior to establishing his own company, Oesterlein served as Superintendent of the Cincinnati Workhouse in Camp Washington during the 1880s. In 1886, Oesterlein went into business for himself, renting a floor of the Globe foundry in downtown Cincinnati. He was an industrial designer and inventor of some note. Among his accomplishments reportedly were an original design for a mechanical clutch and building Cincinnati's first milling machine. Flushed with this success, in 1899, Oesterlein purchased a 4-story factory building at 2850 Spring Grove Avenue in Camp Washington (*Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, 5/11/1920, 3:4).

Oesterlein's early career in many ways paralleled the development of Cincinnati's machine tool industry. During the late nineteenth century, much of the city's large scale commercial capital remained invested in agricultural industries such as meat packing and whiskey production. Small machine shops were located throughout the city, but did not match the scale of the more traditional, long-established concerns. Yet again, Cincinnati's geographical location, its preeminence as a center for shipping, and its proximity to major iron and steel producing regions in eastern Ohio and Pennsylvania contributed to the city's ability to expand its industrial base (*Cincinnati Post* 1938: 177-179). Beginning in the 1880s, local plants gained increasing recognition for innovations in machine tool quality and design. In 1890, Cincinnati had five concerns engaged in machine tool production. A decade later, the number had grown to

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twenty-nine. These comprised a capital investment of \$1.805 million and employed 2,900 workers, ranking Cincinnati among the nation's leading producers of machine tools. The city held one-eighth of the machine tool market. Another factor in Cincinnati's success was the low cost of living and, hence, lower wages paid to workers. Typical pay rates for Cincinnati machine workers were 7 percent less than in Philadelphia and 16 percent less than in Boston (Clark 1927: 495; Cincinnati Milacron 1984: 19).

The next significant impetus in the growth of Cincinnati's machine tool industry came in the dual demands for war materiel during World War I and for the burgeoning automotive industry. Dozens of domestic plants were converted to make wartime ordnance, and most of these required new equipment specifically for this purpose. Cincinnati's machine tool works, including the Cincinnati Milling Company, Oesterlein Machine Company, and the R.K. LeBlond Machine Tool Company, were well positioned to take advantage of the new markets. Wartime profits generated sufficient capital to expand and improve the city's industrial facilities, thus impelling the continued relocation of industrial activities from Cincinnati's cramped river basin to outlying neighborhoods such as Camp Washington. During and after the war, the rapidly expanding automobile industry created a much more enduring demand for new machine tools. The radical changes in car designs from year to year required new machine tools specifically made to suit the industry's purposes (Cincinnati Post 1938: 178-180; Cincinnati Milacron 1984: 29).

A catalog published by the Oesterlein Machine Company in 1914 illustrates the range of products that were available. The company especially emphasized its newly patented Ohio Miller and Ohio Grinder machine tools. The milling machines featured a quick-change belt shifting device making it "safe to permit the most unskilled operator to make change of speed rapidly without fear of bodily injury." In addition to increasing safety, the belt allowed the machines to operate more efficiently by removing the encumbrance of shifting a heavy belt by hand and readjusting the table after making a cut. The company also boasted that its factory featured a complete set of jigs on site to duplicate all parts of the machine (Oesterlein Machine Company 1914: n.p.). Aside from depicting the company's product offerings, the catalog highlights two major trends in early twentieth century manufacturing. The first is the continuing shift from skilled to unskilled labor that marked American industry from the mid-nineteenth century onward, with automated processes and machines designed to operate with a minimum of input from their operators. The second is the ongoing emphasis on standardization of parts, materials, and quality in manufacturing processes to ensure predictability in manufacturing output and to

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increase productivity through more efficient methods.

The Oesterlein Machine Company's product line included the following trademarked major lines: the Nos. 20 and 24 Plain Ohio Regular and Wide Range Milling Machines; Nos. 24 Heavy, 28, and 34 Plain Oesterlein Milling Machines; Nos. 34 Heavy and 42 Plain Ohio Milling Machines; Nos. 20 and 24 Universal Ohio Regular and Wide Range Milling Machines; Nos. 25 Heavy, 29, and 35 Universal Ohio Milling Machines; and Nos. 34 Heavy and 42 Universal Ohio Milling Machines. Additionally, the company offered variable speed and constant speed motor driven milling machines; tilting tables; swivel vises; plain vises; toolmaker's vises; chucks; spindle milling attachments; slotting attachments; arbors; collets; face milling cutters; countershafts and clutch pullers for countershafts; and tool grinders.

In 1918, Oesterlein's company had achieved a level of success sufficient to warrant construction of a new facility. He purchased a vacant parcel at the northwest corner of Colerain Avenue and Monmouth Avenue and personally supervised the design and construction of the new plant. Oesterlein also designed many of the fixtures for the building (*Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, 5/11/1920, 3:4; 1890-1918 Cincinnati City Directories). The new factory building was dedicated in May 1918. The event included entertainment, with dancing, "moving pictures," and a vaudeville show among the highlights of the day (*Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, 5/24/1918, 9:4). A 1922 Sanborn map (Figure 3) shows that the building was generally L-shaped, with the main block paralleling Colerain Avenue and rear wing extending along Monmouth Avenue. The raised clerestory sections of the roof of both sections is denoted by dashed lines. A separate small structure is not labeled, but bears the same footprint and is in the same location as the extant power house.

At the time of his death in May 1920, Oesterlein was the oldest machine tool builder in the city. He was a member of the National Machine Tool Builders and Business Men's Club. Oesterlein was survived by his wife, two sons, and four daughters. One of his sons, Charles D. Oesterlein, carried on in his stead at Vice President and Secretary of the machine company (*Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, 5/11/1920, 3:4). The Oesterlein Machine Company remained at the subject property through the early 1930s. According to city directories, beginning in 1927-1928, additional tenants also occupied the factory, including the Aurora Tool Works, Miller Shoe Company, Revere Clock Company, Doering Brothers printing company, and Ohio Auto Parts Company (1927-1928 Cincinnati City Directory). A 1930 Sanborn map (Figure 4) lists the building occupants as the Auto Vehicle Parts Company in Building 1 and Ideal Concrete

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Machinery Company in Building 2. Oesterlein Machine Company continued to be listed as the owner of the building.

By this time, the Cincinnati Milling Machine Company in Oakley ranked as one of the largest machine tool plants in the nation. Other large producers in Cincinnati included the Carlton Machine Tool Company (2994 Spring Grove Avenue); National Machine Tool Company (2270 Spring Grove Avenue); Lodge & Shipley Machine Tool Company (3055 Colerain Avenue); and Hisey-Wolf Machine Company (2745 Colerain Avenue) (*Cincinnati Post* 1938: 183-186). The city's machine tool industry peaked in 1929, when 14,000 Cincinnatians were employed at local plants and annual production reached \$60 million. During the throes of the Great Depression, employment levels tumbled to 4,000 and production value sank to \$20 million (*Cincinnati Post* 1938: 183-185). As late as 1937, employment figures had rebounded to only 4,500, and production had increased another \$5 million annually (*Cincinnati Post* 1938: 183-185). It appears that the Oesterlein Machine Company may have been a victim of the Great Depression, as the company no longer was listed in city directories after 1934. In 1935, a new company, Fashion Frocks, Inc., acquired the machine company's complex at 3301 Colerain Avenue (*Cincinnati Post*, 5/3/1935, 10:1).

Fashion Frocks, Inc.

With origins extending back to 1911, Fashion Frocks, Inc., was the longest lived and most prominent occupant of the subject property. Fashion Frocks acquired the complex in 1935 and maintained its headquarters of operations here until 1957. The groundbreaking company was historically significant for its direct sales approach, utilizing tens of thousands of housewives to sell its products door-to-door from the mid-1920s through the late 1950s.

The Cincinnati Garment Manufacturing Industry

From the early nineteenth century, Cincinnati had a rich tradition in clothes manufacturing. Men's ready-made garments were manufactured here by the mid-nineteenth century. Women's clothing, particularly dresses, was more elaborate in design and style, and so continued to be custom-made by hand for much of the nineteenth century. A number of talented and entrepreneurial female dressmakers worked in Cincinnati (Amneus 2003: 43-44).

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Additionally, women constituted a substantial proportion of the garment manufacturing workforce, as it dovetailed nicely with nineteenth-century concepts of what was appropriate for “women’s work.” Custom clothing orders and measurements were sorted according to size, material, and pattern, then machines were used to cut the cloth sections. Women workers assembled these sections at home as piece-work (Amneus 2003: 41). The process for making ready-to-wear clothing was largely similar, except that multiple versions of the same garment were produced in great quantities and then distributed to retail stores for resale (*Cincinnati Post* 1938: 169-176).

The garment industry in Cincinnati matured during the 1870s as numerous machine methods were adopted in the manufacture of both custom-made and ready-to-wear clothes. Cincinnati especially was a leading producer of men’s clothing from the mid-nineteenth century until shortly after World War I. Advances in mechanization meant that as the twentieth century began, sewing, as well as linings, holes, and buttons all were completed by mechanical means (*Cincinnati Post* 1938: 169-176). Women garment workers followed the trend from home-based to factory work in strikingly high numbers. From 1860 to 1900, as Cincinnati’s economy transitioned from a commercial to an industrial focus, the number of women in paid employment in the city was approximately 50 percent greater than the average throughout the country. Cincinnati also surpassed other Midwestern cities, such as Chicago and Cleveland, in the gross percentage of female industrial workers. Believed to contribute to this phenomenon was the scope of the city’s clothing industry (Amneus 2003: 42).

Rapid advances in manufacturing and textile technologies, combined with the much simpler clothing fashions of the early twentieth century, virtually revolutionized the women’s garment industry. In 1897, only 10 percent of women’s clothing made in the United States was ready-made, but less than 15 years later, virtually every article of women’s dress was machine-made (Amneus 2003: 137-138). The advent of a consumer culture helped spur the transformation in the way clothes were marketed to the public. Department stores that offered enormous variety in all types of wares soon overshadowed small, independently owned shops of all types, including those of dressmakers, milliners, and other specialties. The greater advertising and purchasing power of department stores further undercut small shops’ ability to compete. Interestingly, the phenomenon led women’s dressmaking, which traditionally had been a female-dominated endeavor, to become increasingly controlled by men. Although women still comprised much of the actual workforce that created the clothing, men assumed leadership roles as shop and factory owners and managers (Amneus 2003: 140-148). John Shillito, Henry and Samuel Pogue,

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brothers Jacob, Benjamin, Nathaniel, and Joseph Giddings, George McAlpin, and Joseph Carew were just a few of the men who came to own successful Cincinnati department stores that offered locally produced women's garments.

Through at least the 1930s, the garment industry was concentrated in downtown Cincinnati, particularly along Fourth Street, but like other local industries, growing companies often sought more expansive quarters in outlying neighborhoods. These concerns were dedicated to many aspects of the garment industry, including men's and women's custom and ready-to-wear clothing, undergarments, socks, overalls, and uniforms. By the mid-1930s, approximately 8,250 Cincinnatians were employed in 91 local establishments, and the value of goods produced totaled more than \$31.5 million (*Cincinnati Post* 1938: 169-176).

Founding of Fashion Frocks, Inc.

Fashion Frocks, Inc., adhered to many of the trends that played out in Cincinnati's early twentieth century garment manufacturing industry. Its origins lay in a small downtown dress shop founded in 1911 by Mitchell Meyers. The company's factory workforce was predominately female, while management was male-dominated. As the company grew and engaged in an increasingly mechanized approach to dressmaking, it relocated from cramped downtown quarters to the much larger factory complex at 3301 Colerain Avenue.

Noted as "the foremost dress manufacturer" in Cincinnati, the origins of Fashion Frocks lay in a small downtown dress shop originally known as the Princess Garment Company. Mitchell Meyers founded the concern in 1911 (*Cincinnati Post* 1938: 175; Van Alstyne, et al., 1946: 3). His son, Philip M. Meyers, joined the company in 1922 as credit manager. Philip already had made a name for himself locally as a football star at the University of Cincinnati. Although his liberal arts degree had not trained him for the garment industry, Philip soon developed a new business model for women's ready-to-wear clothing that was based on direct sales to the consumer. With his father's financial support, Philip established a separate company, Fashion Frocks, in 1925. For its first year of operation, Philip's company relied on the credit line and designers of Princess Garment Company to manufacture its first line of clothing. Within two years, however, Fashion Frocks had grown so successful that Philip bought out his father's company and Mitchell assumed the largely honorary role of chairman of the board of Fashion Frocks (Conner 1950: 58; *Cincinnati Times-Star*, 3/2/1950, 9:4).

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Philip Meyers ranked as one of Cincinnati's most successful garment factory owners during the mid-twentieth century. Married with three children, he and his family owned two farms, one in Wyoming (a suburb of Cincinnati), and another near Chillicothe, Ohio. Among his other pursuits, Philip dabbled in breeding prize-winning Hereford cattle at both farms. Socially and professionally active, Philip completed three terms as president of the National Association of Direct Selling Companies during the 1930s and served on the boards of Cincinnati's First National Bank, the Cincinnati Zoological Society, Cincinnati Industrial Institute, Farmer's Club, Citizens' School Committee, the Better Business Bureau, and he was a trustee of the Cincinnati College of Pharmacy. He also was a co-chair of the Cincinnati office of the National Conference of Christians and Jews (Conner 1950: 58).

Fashion Frocks purchased the 106,000 square foot subject property in Camp Washington in 1935, and planned to expand operations capacity considerably. After remodeling the complex, the company moved its manufacturing operations from a factory at 421 W. Fifth Street (*Cincinnati Post*, 5/3/1935, 10:1). Sanborn map research indicates that the rear warehouse wing on Building 1 was constructed during this remodeling project; this space included an employee cafeteria and the cutting department (Figures 4-8). The principal executive and general offices, stock rooms, and receiving and shipping departments were located in Building 1, while Building 2 housed the dress shop (Van Alstyne et al., 1946: 6). As previously noted, the move from downtown Cincinnati to an inner-ring neighborhood was not atypical in Cincinnati, as many industrial firms removed from downtown and the riverfront to more spacious concerns. A case in point is the Weisbaum Brothers, Brower Company, a men's clothing manufacturer, that relocated in 1936 from its downtown Cincinnati factory to a hilltop setting in Walnut Hills (Procter & Collier/Beau Brummell Building, NR 1984). Ready access to rail-based shipping also played a role in the dress company's decision to locate in Camp Washington. Sanborn maps indicate that Baltimore & Ohio rail spurs accessed the subject complex as well as many neighboring properties, which would have provided a convenient means of receiving materials. A 1946 prospectus for the company described both the rail facilities and availability of truck transport for shipping needs (Van Alstyne et al., 1946: 6).

Direct Sales and Marketing Approach

Fashion Frocks based its operations on housewives acting as door to door sales representatives, a first of its kind for women's dress sales. Philip reportedly was inspired by the same practice in brush sales, and saw no reason that dress sales could not also be accomplished

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in this fashion. In 1925, he placed small newspaper ads offering women a chance to earn “pin money” by selling dresses to their friends and neighbors. Only 100 respondents requested further information and of these, only 50 answered Philip’s follow-up request for two references. These women received a portfolio of swatched style cards, order blanks, and sales instructions. Despite the relatively anemic early response, within 12 months, almost 1,000 women had joined the sales force and Fashion Frocks had sold \$165,000 worth of dresses (*Tide*, 1952: 41).

From its modest beginnings, the direct sales force eventually expanded to 50,000 women. The company became the largest U.S. dress manufacturer selling exclusively direct to consumers (Van Alstyne et al., 1946: 4). In 1952, *Tide Newsmagazine of Sales and Advertising* published a lengthy cover story about the sales and marketing techniques used at Fashion Frocks. The company kept to its original recruiting technique for sales women by advertising in newspapers and magazines. Interested women would send in a couponed ad and two references. Once accepted, the novice saleswoman would receive approximately 200 style cards for the dresses currently being offered for sale; an order book with sales instructions; a tape measure for taking measurements; and return envelopes. The style cards included fabric swatches and full color illustrations of each dress. The sales kit also included calling cards, pre-printed postcards that could be sent to prospective buyers to help set up sales appointments, and scripts for telephone sales calls. Upon making a sale, the saleswoman would complete an order form for the dress and send this to the company headquarters, along with the deposit paid by the customer. By the 1950s, each saleswoman earned a 17% commission on each dress sold, and the price range was from \$4 to \$16 apiece (with the bulk of the business in the \$7 to \$10 range). The best markets for Fashion Frocks were towns of 25,000 to 100,000 population, where local stores were not as likely to carry a dress selection as extensive as the direct sales line (*Tide* 1952; Conner 1950: 58; Van Alstyne et al., 1946: 3).

Fashion Frocks successfully weathered the Great Depression in no small part because thousands of women worked tirelessly at direct sales in order to contribute to their families’ budgets as even a small cash income could be of critical importance (Conner 1950: 58). Dire economic straits remained an incentive for at least some saleswomen in later years as well. In 1944, one woman wrote to the company, “things became worse and worse until there was only five cents on the farm. I bought five penny post cards to answer five ads for saleswomen. My husband said, ‘I know you can’t sell’; and I said, ‘I can.’ I took up one line and then another. I was a rolling stone. Then I saw Fashion Frocks and you got me started. I was so encouraged I borrowed \$1,000 from my uncle to fix up our home and I could soon pay it back. I’ll never forget

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it” (Conner 1950: 58). Economic necessity perhaps similar motivated other saleswomen, such as one representative who traveled by horseback through the Ozark Mountains to reach customers, and another who used a fishing launch to travel to island communities off the New England coast (*Cincinnati Times-Star*, 8/15/1949, 28:7).

By the early 1950s, the typical Fashion Frocks saleswoman was about 38 years of age, married, and the mother of two children. She was a high school graduate and owned a car. Her husband was the primary breadwinner. Many of the sales representatives worked only seasonally or for truncated periods with a specific goal in mind, such as earning money for a new appliance. A small percentage of the sales representatives worked year round for much longer periods. Fashion Frocks sales representatives were in all 48 states, Puerto Rico, Alaska (then a territory), some Latin American countries such as Venezuela, and even some foreign consulates. Fully 50 percent of sales were made in rural communities and small towns (*Tide* 1952: 41, 44; Conner 1950: 57-58; Van Alstyne et al., 1946: 4). The flexibility in scheduling and perhaps the autonomy of direct selling likely appealed to these women. Direct sales also was an area in which a woman could have at least some control over the level of her success and income. The female-oriented nature of the endeavor also was acceptable to adherents of more traditional or conservative values. Fashion Frocks further encouraged their sales representatives to achieve by offering bonus dresses, premiums, and gifts for meeting sales goals (Conner 1950: 58).

Fashion Frocks specialized in manufacturing dresses that would appeal to budget-conscious women who also sought quality fabrics and a variety of styles (Figures 9-10). Up to eight designers were employed full time to create new dress styles each season, although Philip Meyers acted as the final arbiter of which styles would be chosen for mass production. Sales representatives received a new style card every two weeks, which allowed for a continuously updated line of offerings to show to new and repeat customers (*Tide* 1952: 41, 44; Conner 1950: 58; *Cincinnati Post*, 9/27/1955, 35:7).

Tide took special note of several techniques used by Fashion Frocks to track the effectiveness of its sales and marketing techniques. Each mailing to sales representatives was keyed and tallied to assess the response rate to a particular promotion; color coded cards went to inactive saleswomen to see if they were prompted to return to selling by a particular offering. A monthly, glossy four-page flyer entitled “Voice of Fashion” advertised upcoming promotions and short feature articles about successful saleswomen. Fashion Frocks spent a half-million dollars annually on recruit advertising, with about half spent on national magazine advertisements and

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half on direct mailings. These were timed to go out just before the peak-selling months of January for the spring line of dresses and August for the fall line. The company also advertised in African American publications with a "Fashion of the Week" that pictured an African American woman modeling a new dress style. Lastly, Fashion Frocks created a "Junior Style Council" composed of young women in the fields of design, textiles, retailing, and home economics from four universities (Kentucky, Indiana, Cincinnati, and Ohio State). These students reviewed upcoming styles and offered suggestions on what would sell on campuses (*Tide* 1952: 45).

Company Growth and Performance

From the time Fashion Frocks relocated to the subject property until the early 1950s, the company enjoyed a consistent rate of growth and increases in sales, except for a not atypical downturn during the Great Depression. Specific figures are available for the period 1935-1946, and were as follows:

	<i>Net Annual Sales</i>	<i>Net Annual Income</i>	<i>Net Income, less depreciation, amortization, and taxes</i>
1936	\$2,692,104.86	\$52,830.43	\$23,342.73
1937	\$2,155,700.78	\$39,621.34	\$18,270.80
1938	\$2,480,261.92	\$99,741.92	\$70,795.31
1939	\$3,328,786.76	\$287,436.22	\$223,211.10
1940	\$3,608,091.48	\$180,648.53	\$125,497.66
1941	\$3,636,001.96	\$236,731.90	\$157,366.83
1942	\$4,996,507.89	\$510,974.45	\$257,638.07
1943	\$8,158,351.12	\$880,911.10	\$232,427.03
1944	\$8,422,261.45	\$1,482,305.80	\$310,770.38
1945	\$8,110,643.28	\$1,428,285.04	\$323,621.67

Government contracts accounted for a significant portion of the growth that Fashion Frocks experienced during the early 1940s. In 1942, sales through government contracts totaled only \$941,117.00, but skyrocketed to \$3,372,117.00 the following year. Levels tapered off in the two following years, at \$2,004,527.00 in 1943 and \$1,090,219.00 in 1944. At the same time, the revival of the domestic economy allowed Fashion Frocks to increase its civilian sales as well, from \$4,055,390.00 in 1942 to \$7,020,424.00 in 1945. The increased civilian sales reflected both

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increased demand and higher unit prices. As of May 31, 1946, the company's inventory stood at \$1,368,944.15, of which \$488,803.26 was raw materials, \$177,807.65 was work in progress, and \$707,353.24 was finished stock and merchandise. The company's assets totaled \$3,648,141.87 at this time (Van Alstyne et al., 1946: 4, 7, 26).

Fashion Frocks distributed its products under its own brand name as well as Harford Frocks. From the late 1930s through the mid-1940s, the company undertook an expansion program that encompassed a number of endeavors that were intended to complement its core business. For example, in 1937, Fashion Frocks created Cincinnati Sampling Company, which compiled its sales catalogs and allowed the company to keep its considerable printing costs in house. Fashion Frocks purchased a plant in Hamilton, Ohio, at 321 S. Third Street. This latter factory employed 115 people. In August 1944, Fashion Frocks organized a Tennessee corporation, Southern Garment Corporation, to increase its production capacity. The company expended \$43,000 to remodel a plant in Greeneville, Tennessee. This plant's income through December 1945 was exclusively from government contracts. Through May 1946, sales for this plant amounted to \$157,917.04. In October 1945, Fashion Frocks bought Goldsmiths, Inc., which operated six retail stores in and around Cincinnati, one in Aurora, Indiana, and one in Newcastle, Indiana. The purchase was considered an investment to increase the company's overall assets, as well as to provide a sales outlet for surplus merchandise. In 1946, Fashion Frocks had district sales offices in 30 U.S. cities, each directed by a district representative. The same year, Fashion Frocks bought land on Fairgrove Avenue in Hamilton for the purpose of building a new 163,000 square foot plant. The average number of employees at the Cincinnati and Hamilton plants was a combined total of 625 in 1945. By October 1946, the average increased to 735 (Van Alstyne et al., 1946: 3-9).

Output topped 2 million garments by 1950 and 2.5 million by 1955, including the production of the subsidiary plants in Hamilton, Ohio, and Greenville, Tennessee. Annual sales reached \$22 million by 1952. New dresses were constantly added to the dress line, and slow-moving styles were discontinued, but the bulk of changes occurred each spring and fall. At these times, as many as 15,000 garments were manufactured daily in the three plants, and some spillover work was handled by subcontractors. Fashion Frocks also manufactured an array of other items, including blouses, housecoats, women's suits, lingerie, children's and men's wear, hosiery, and some incidentals, but these accounted for only a fraction of total annual direct sales (Conner 1950: 58; *Tide* 1952: 45).

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Plant Operations

Fashion Frocks factory employees were organized by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) Local No. 207 in 1939. Approximately 350 employees initially were represented by the union (Van Alstyne et al., 1946: 9). One brief strike occurred in August 1941. At question were the results of a National Labor Relations Board-sanction election, in which the ILGWU claimed victory but company management argued that workers instead had chosen membership in an "independent" union, the "United Employees of Princess Garment Workers Union." Consequently, management refused to recognize ILGWU as the bargaining agent for plant employees. The ILGWU sought to negotiate an increase in employees' minimum wage scales for piecework. Operations were shut down for half of a day when approximately 200 employees walked off the floor, and the following day approximately 25 percent of the plant's 400 factory employees continued to picket while the remainder of the workers returned to their jobs (*Cincinnati Times-Star*, 8/13/1941, 4:2; *Cincinnati Post*, 8/13/1941, 1:4).

Ultimately, the ILGWU was recognized as the bargaining agent for factory employees at Fashion Frocks, and it appears that relations between labor and management thereafter were amicable. The company introduced a pension plan in 1939. After four years of employment, workers were entitled to participate at no cost to themselves. They could retire at either age 65 or after 25 years of service, but not before age 55. The maximum annual benefit was fixed at \$12,000. By 1945, disbursements from the plan totaled \$45,984.99 (Van Alstyne et al., 1946: 10). Upgrades and modernization of the plant were undertaken to increase worker comfort and productivity. Fluorescent lighting replaced incandescent lighting in an effort to reduce eye strain. A cafeteria offering hot lunches for 20 to 30 cents was added to the rear warehouse wing on Building 1. Popular and semi-classical music was piped in as background music for employees to listen to while they worked. In 1947, union officers applauded management's decision to install air conditioning on the plant floor. David Solomon, manager of the joint board of the ILGWU, said of Fashion Frocks, "It is one of the most modern shops in the country. The layout is the roomiest and the working equipment the best. The company has established a system of industrial democracy and our relationships are the most friendly" (*Cincinnati Post*, 4/14/1947, 13:4). Along the same lines, the Hamilton, Ohio, plant was unionized in December 1944 by ILGWU Local No. 412 and represented approximately 100 workers (Van Alstyne et al., 1946: 9).

During World War II, the company's export activities ceased. Shortages of raw materials,

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especially rayon, cotton, and wool fabrics, inhibited production as well (Van Alstyne et al., 1946: 4). However, Fashion Frocks, like many other American factories, took part in the defense effort by retooling its operations to manufacture parachutes. As a dress-making facility, Fashion Frocks was well-suited to the task, which required the proper mechanical equipment as well as skilled workers accustomed to precision work. Each parachute required 66 yards of nylon, an amount equivalent to the material needed for 20 dresses or 60 pairs of women's hosiery. The company produced 2,000 parachutes per week at the height of the wartime effort. The critical importance of the parachutes to saving troops' lives required a performance rate of 100 percent. Under the auspices of the Army Air Force, the parachutes were tested by the local Civil Air Patrol, with courier service planes at Lunken Airport being used to take the parachutes to a designated altitude and subjecting them to drop tests (*Cincinnati Times-Star*, 7/5/1943, 8:4; 4/6/1943, 4:3). After World War II drew to a close, parachute production ended at Fashion Frocks, but when the Korean War broke out just 6 years later, the company was the first in the Cincinnati area to receive a new defense contract. The parachutes themselves were sewn at the Hamilton, Ohio, plant, while the harnesses and packs were stitched together at the facility at 3301 Colerain Avenue. The \$2 million contract provided an additional boost to already booming dress sales, helping to propel Fashion Frocks to gross sales of \$16 million during the early 1950s (*Cincinnati Enquirer*, 5/13/1951, 28; Conner 1950: 21).

Between 1,200 and 1,300 workers were employed at Fashion Frocks by 1950, with the majority at the main plant in Cincinnati (Figure 7). Approximately 95 percent of the workforce at Fashion Frocks was female, although upper management positions appear to have been the exclusive domain of men. All designing was done here, and all sales orders were processed and shipped from this location. The Greeneville and Hamilton plants handled production of lines that were in constant and steady demand. Both were used for assembly-line production, whereas the smaller and more difficult work, including time consuming manual labor, was handled at the Cincinnati location. Philip Meyers' practice was to purchase bulk quantities of fabric in advance to keep his prices low and allow for continuous introduction of new lines. Approximately 100,000 dresses were in some stage of production at all times on the factory floors (Van Alstyne et al., 1946: 12-13; Conner 1950: 58; *Cincinnati Post*, 2/29/1952, 32:1). Between its direct mail advertisements and filling orders for dresses, mailing operations by Fashion Frocks were of such a scale that it was Cincinnati's biggest post office customer (*Tide* 1952: 45).

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Postwar transitions

In the aftermath of the Korean War, Fashion Frocks began to experience financial difficulties. Loss of the defense contract for manufacturing parachutes cut into the company's bottom line. Shifting demographics, growing competition from shopping center development in rapidly expanding suburbs, an increasingly mobile society, and changing tastes in fashions all combined to whittle away at Fashion Frocks' traditional customer base. In 1954, the company failed to earn a profit and Philip Meyers stated the year had been "the most difficult one in our business history" (*Cincinnati Post*, 9/27/1955, 35:7). The following year also showed no profits, although in 1956, the company posted a gain of \$100,756. In an effort to cut expenses, the Greenville, Tennessee, plant was sold in 1955, and operations at the Hamilton, Ohio, plant ceased in May 1957. The same year, Fashion Frocks announced that its plant at 3301 Colerain Avenue would close and the firm would move its corporate headquarters to a downtown office location. Fashion Frocks intended to continue dress manufacturing operations by subcontracting the work. Approximately 230 unionized factory employees lost their jobs as a result (*Cincinnati Post*, 4/26/1957, 1:4).

The subject property was leased to Philco Corporation, which planned to utilize the facility as a distribution center for its Crosley and Bendix appliances. Occupying the plant allowed Philco to consolidate an electronic parts center in Norwood and a washer parts center and a Crosley appliance parts facility, both of which were on Spring Grove Avenue. Philco projected employing approximately 150 persons at the distribution center (*Cincinnati Post*, 4/26/1957, 1:4).

Deed research was undertaken to determine the ownership history of the subject property since the late 1950s. In 1959, Fashion Frocks sold the complex to Meyer Enterprises, Inc., another corporate entity owned by Phillip Meyers (Hamilton County Deed Book 3056, p. 459). Meyer Enterprises sold all of the property to Leon Cohen in October 1964 (Hamilton County Deed Book 3375, p. 965). As previously noted, the subject property occupies lots 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 of the Ethan Bates' Subdivision in Camp Washington. These lots remained one property under common ownership from the time land was subdivided in the late 1890s until 1965. In January 1965, Cohen sold parts of lots 2, 3, 4, 5, and 9 to the neighboring Oberhelm and Ritter Foundry Company (Deed Book 3395, p. 858). The building described as the rear warehouse wing on Building 1 in this nomination occupies this parcel (Parcel ID 190-0028-0045-00). The current owner of this property is Funtown Playgrounds, Inc. (Hamilton County Auditor's Website,

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<http://www.hamiltoncountyauditor.org/realestate/>).

Cohen continued to own the remainder of the Oesterlein Machine Company Complex until 1985, when it was sold to Bromar (Hamilton County Deed Book 4322, p. 406). The buildings known as Buildings 1, 2, and 3 are situated on this portion of the property (Parcel ID 190-028-0015-00). Bromar utilized the facility for manufacturing kitchen and bathroom cabinets and countertops. The company relocated its operations to a new factory in mid-2004. In late 2004, Bromar sold this parcel to Middle Earth Developers, Inc.

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Hamilton County Deed Book. Grantor Leon Cohen (Trustee). Grantee Bromar. Recorded in Deed

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Verbal Boundary Description

The Oesterlein Machine Company-Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex is located at the northwest corner of the intersection of Colerain and Monmouth avenues. The complex faces east toward Colerain Avenue. The boundary begins at the northwest corner, and proceeding north along Colerain Avenue a distance of 275 feet, then proceeds west a distance of 505 feet to the northwest corner of the property, then proceeds south a distance of 275 feet to the edge of Monmouth Avenue, then proceeds 505 feet east to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

This boundary encompasses the entire land area historically associated with the complex, as well as the current lot boundaries.

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List of Photographs

Photographer: Brandon McCuin

Date of Photograph: 15 November 2004

Original Negatives: Lena Sweeten, Middle Earth Developers, Inc.

Building 1

1. Streetscape view of Colerain Avenue from north of Monmouth Avenue toward Building 1, facing southwest.
2. View of east façade, facing southwest.
3. Streetscape view of along Monmouth Avenue from east of Colerain Avenue toward Building 1, facing west.
4. View of east façade and south elevation, facing northwest.
5. Detail view of original entry on east façade, facing west.
6. View of west (rear) elevation of 1950-1956 connector building, facing south.
7. Partial view of west (rear) elevation of Building 1, facing southeast.
8. Partial view of west (rear) elevation of Building 1 and south elevation of warehouse wing, facing northeast.
9. Partial view of south elevation of warehouse wing, facing northeast.
10. Partial view of south elevation of warehouse wing, facing northwest.
11. View of two-story section west and south elevations of warehouse wing, facing northeast.
12. View of west elevation of warehouse wing, facing southeast.

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13. View of first floor of Building 1, facing north.
14. Detail view of original columns and exposed ceiling beams on first floor of Building 1, facing southwest.
15. Detail view of original multiple-pane factory sash in Building 1, facing southeast.
16. View of second floor of Building 1, facing north.
17. View of original safe door on west side of second floor of Building 1, facing southwest.
18. Detail view of original support columns and exposed ceiling beams on third floor of Building 1, facing northwest.
19. View of east side of third floor of Building 1, facing south.
20. View of fourth floor of Building 1, facing north.
21. View of fourth floor of Building 1, facing northwest.
22. View toward clerestory on fourth floor of Building 1, facing northwest.
23. View of interior of clerestory on fourth floor, facing south.
24. View of loading area on north side of first floor of 1950-1956 connector building off Building 1, facing northeast.
25. View of employee break room on north side of first floor of 1950-1956 connector building off Building 1, facing west.
26. View of storage area in middle of second floor of 1950-1956 connector building off Building 1, facing northeast.

Building 2

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27. Streetscape view from southwest end of complex, facing east.
28. Partial view of south elevation of Building 2, and south elevation of Building 1, facing northeast.
29. View of west elevation, facing east.
30. View of west and north elevations, facing southeast.
31. Partial view of north elevation, facing southeast.
32. Partial view of north elevation, facing southwest.
33. View of roofs of Building 2 (left background) and warehouse wing off Building 1 (right background), facing northwest.
34. View of north side of light industrial space on first floor, facing west.
35. Representative view of first floor light industrial space, facing northwest.
36. Representative view of first floor light industrial space, facing southeast.
37. View of c. 1935 addition on west side of first floor, facing north.
38. View of clerestory section, facing west.
39. Detail view of truss brace and original multiple-pane factory sash for clerestory, facing northwest.

Building 3

40. View of south and east elevations, facing northwest.
41. View of west and south elevations, facing northeast.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

The Fashion Frocks, Inc., Oesterlein Machine Company Complex
Hamilton County, Ohio

Section Photographs Page 5

42. View of east and north elevations, facing southwest.
43. View of boiler room, facing northwest.
44. View of mechanical room, facing northeast.
45. View of clerestory level, facing north.

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National Park Service

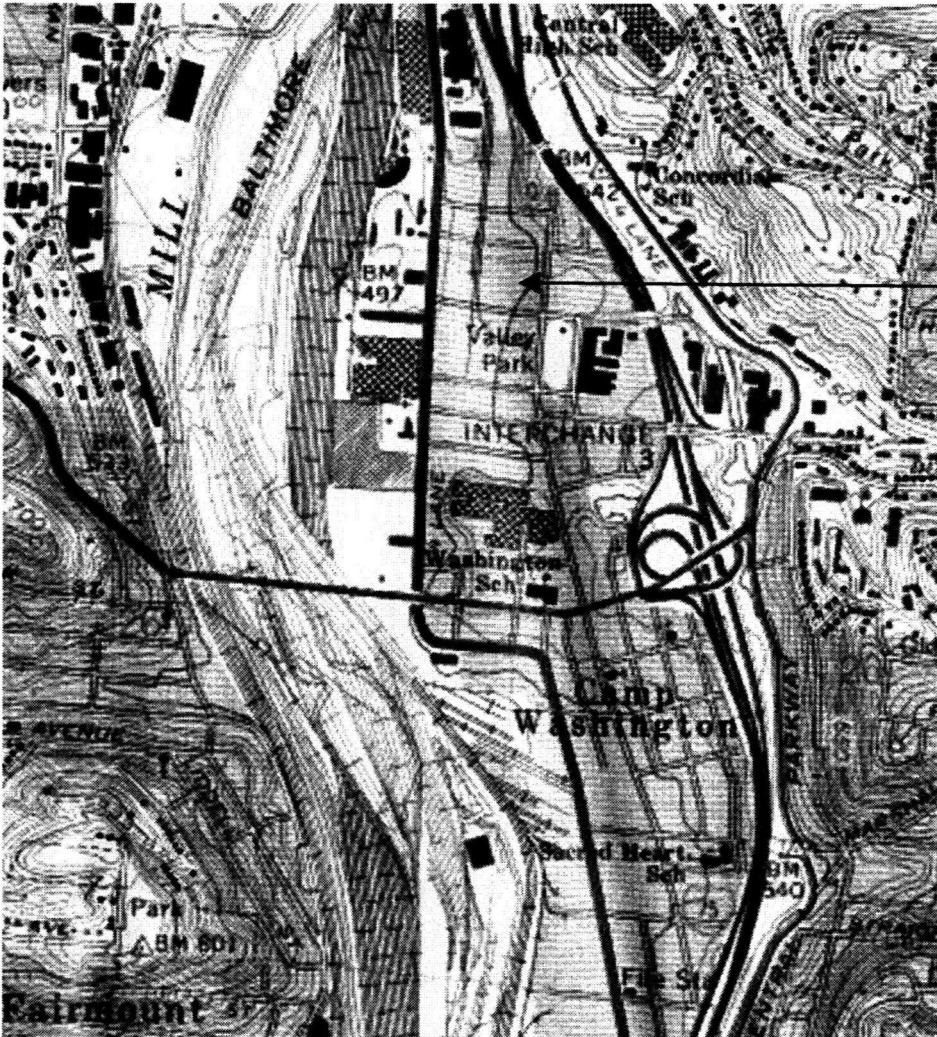
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

The Oesterlein Machine Company-Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex
Hamilton County, Ohio

Section Maps and Figures Page 2

Figure 1. Location Map.

(USGS 7.5 Minute Series Map: CINCINNATI WEST QUADRANGLE
Reduced in size, do not scale)



The Oesterlein Machine
Company-Fashion Frocks,
Inc., Complex
3301 Colerain Avenue,
Cincinnati, Hamilton County,
Ohio
UTM Reference:
16/712704.44/4335370

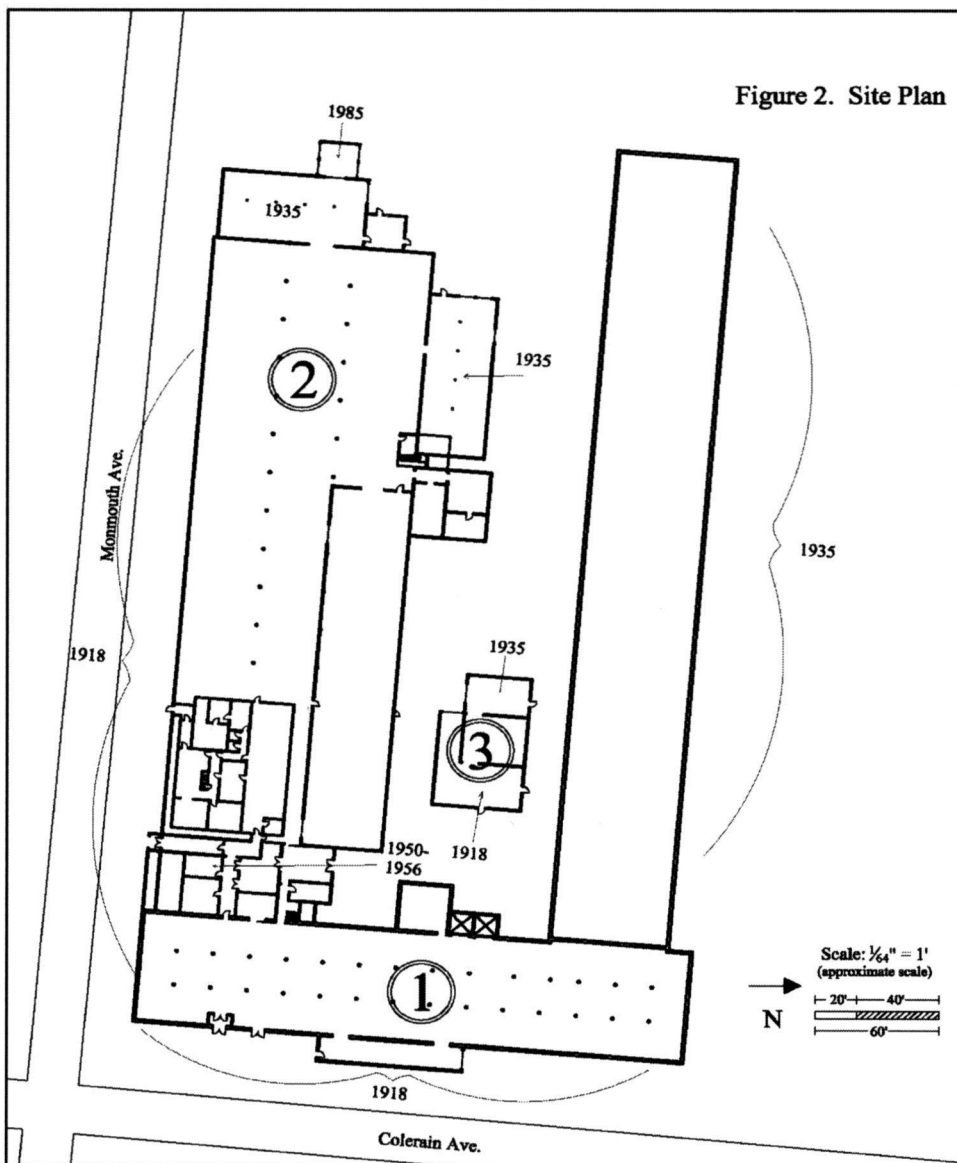
United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation Sheet

The Oesterlein Machine Company-Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex
Hamilton County, Ohio

Section Maps and Figures Page 3

Figure 2. Site Plan.



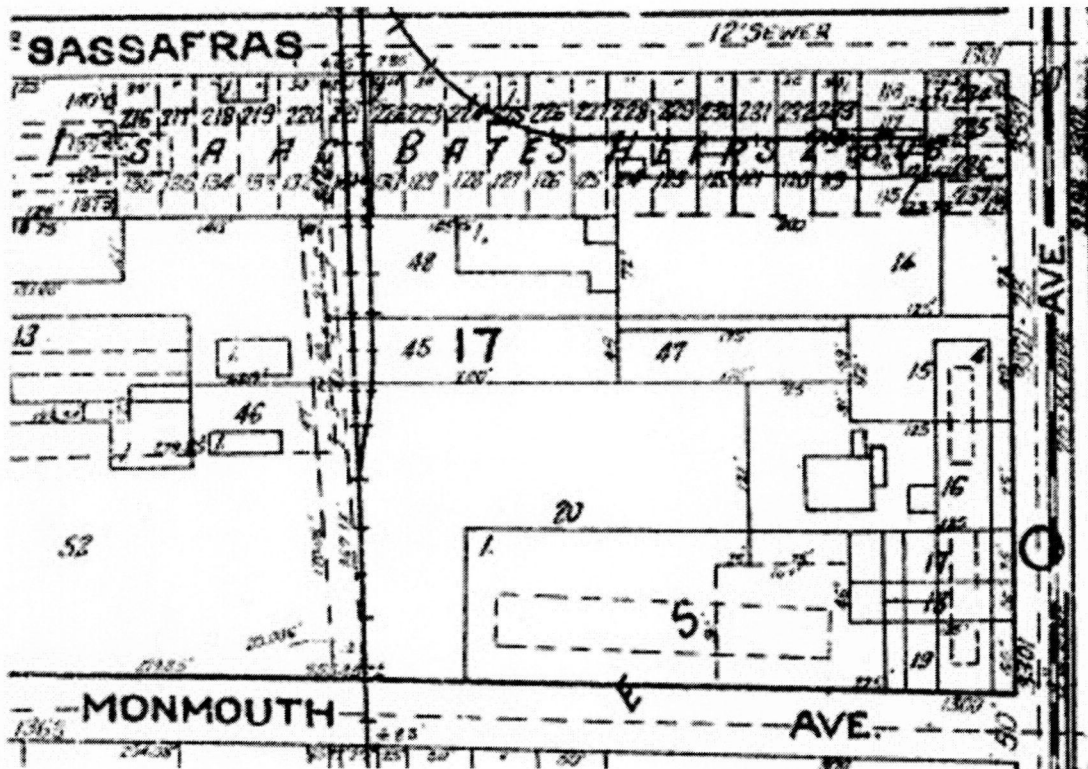
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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

The Oesterlein Machine Company-Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex
Hamilton County, Ohio

Section Maps and Figures Page 4

Figure 3. *Index of Property Owners: Real Estate Atlas of Cincinnati, Ohio*. Volume 1.
New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1922.



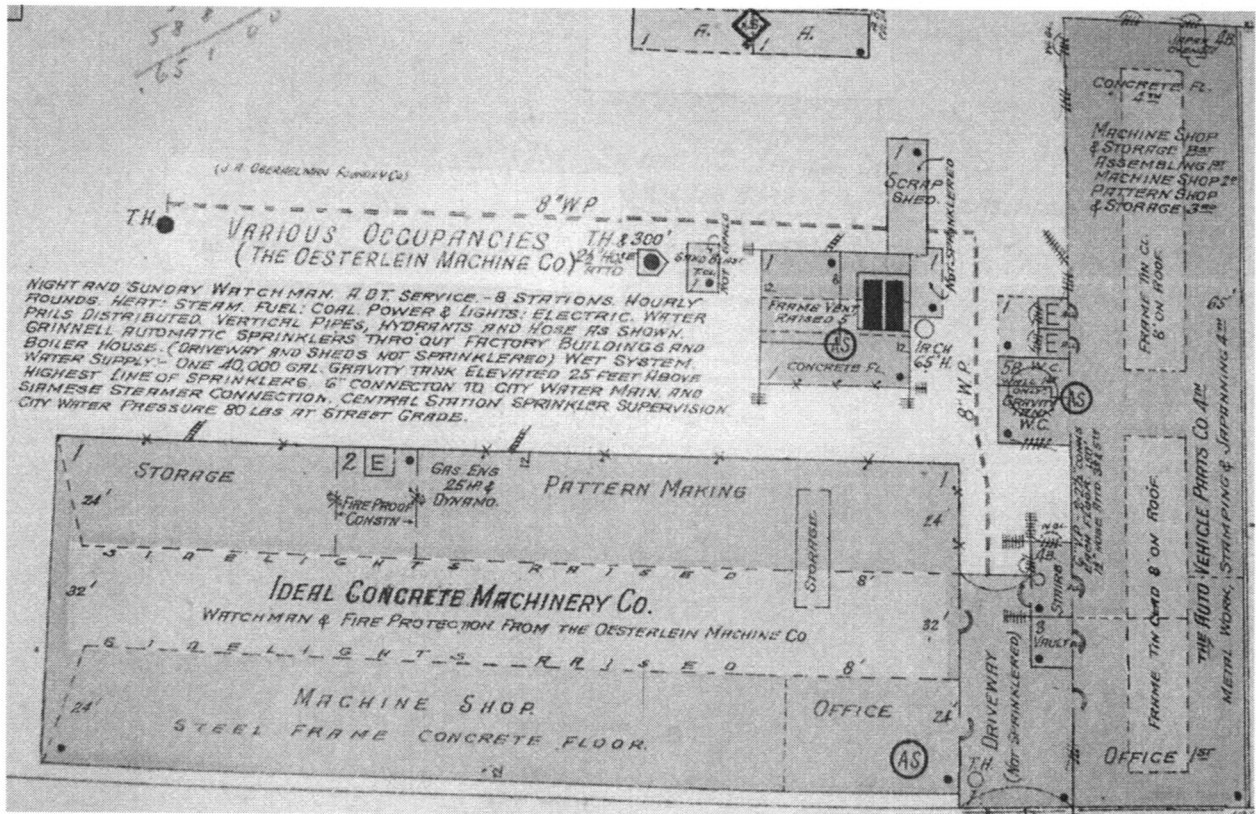
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Continuation Sheet

The Oesterlein Machine Company-Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex
Hamilton County, Ohio

Section Maps and Figures Page 5

Figure 4. Insurance Maps of Cincinnati, Ohio. Volume 3, p. 293. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1904 corrected to 1930.



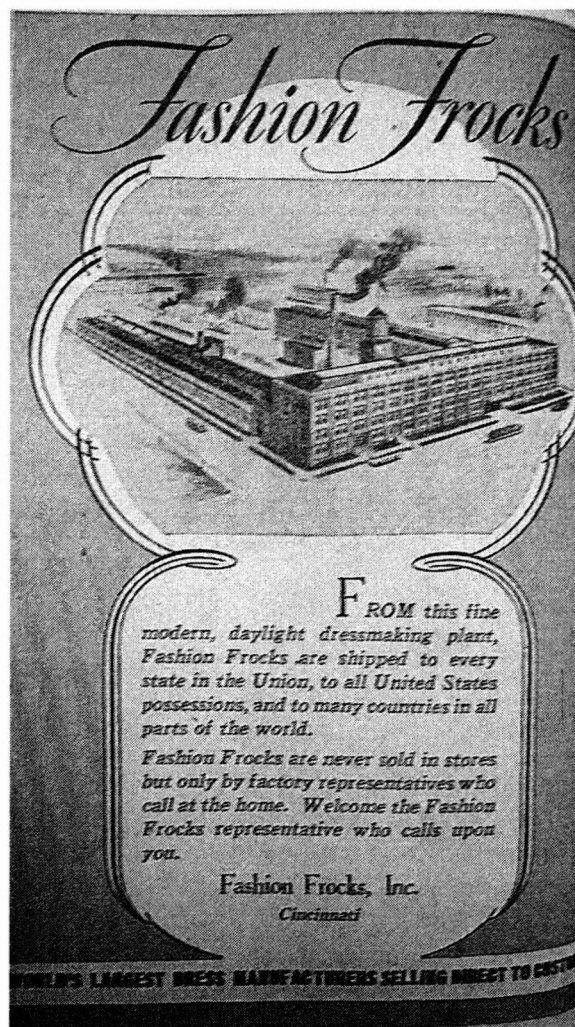
United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

The Oesterlein Machine Company-Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex
Hamilton County, Ohio

Section Maps and Figures Page 7

Figure 6. Advertisement depicting Fashion Frocks complex at 3301 Colerain Avenue, published in "100th Anniversary Issue" (*Cincinnati Times-Star*, 1940, 8:6).



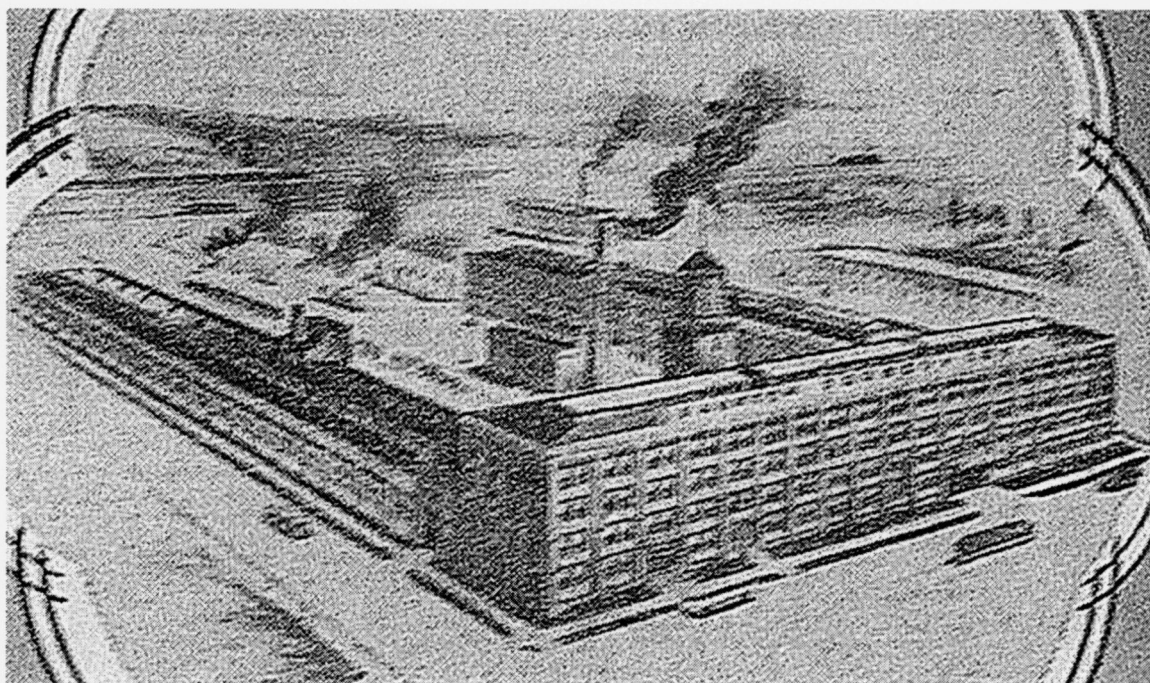
**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**The Oesterlein Machine Company-Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex
Hamilton County, Ohio**

Section Maps and Figures **Page** 8

Figure 7. Enlarged exterior view of the Fashion Frocks complex at 3301 Colerain Avenue, published in "100th Anniversary Issue" (*Cincinnati Times-Star*, 1940, 8:6).



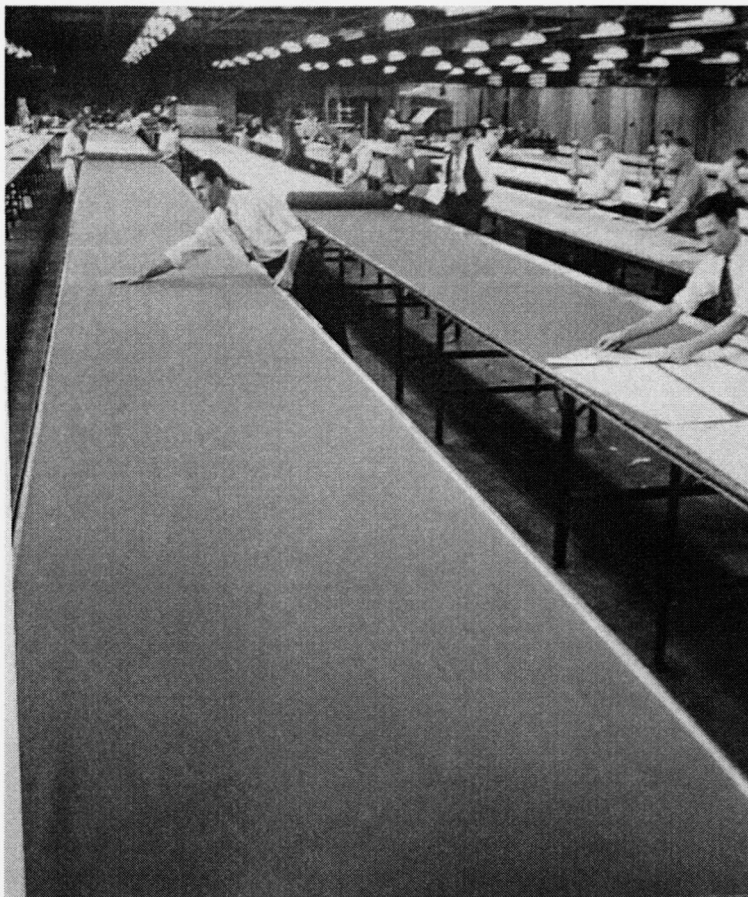
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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**The Oesterlein Machine Company-Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex
Hamilton County, Ohio**

Section Maps and Figures Page 9

Figure 8. Photograph depicting interior of Building 1 (John Conner, "Who's That at the Door?" *Collier's Weekly Magazine*, 11 March 1950: 21.)



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Continuation Sheet

The Oesterlein Machine Company-Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex
Hamilton County, Ohio

Section Maps and Figures Page 10

Figure 9. Philip Meyers observes as three Fashion Frocks employees model new dresses (Conner 1950: 21).



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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**The Oesterlein Machine Company-Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex
Hamilton County, Ohio**

Section Maps and Figures **Page** 11

Figure 10. Typical dress by Fashion Frocks (Conner 1950: 20.)

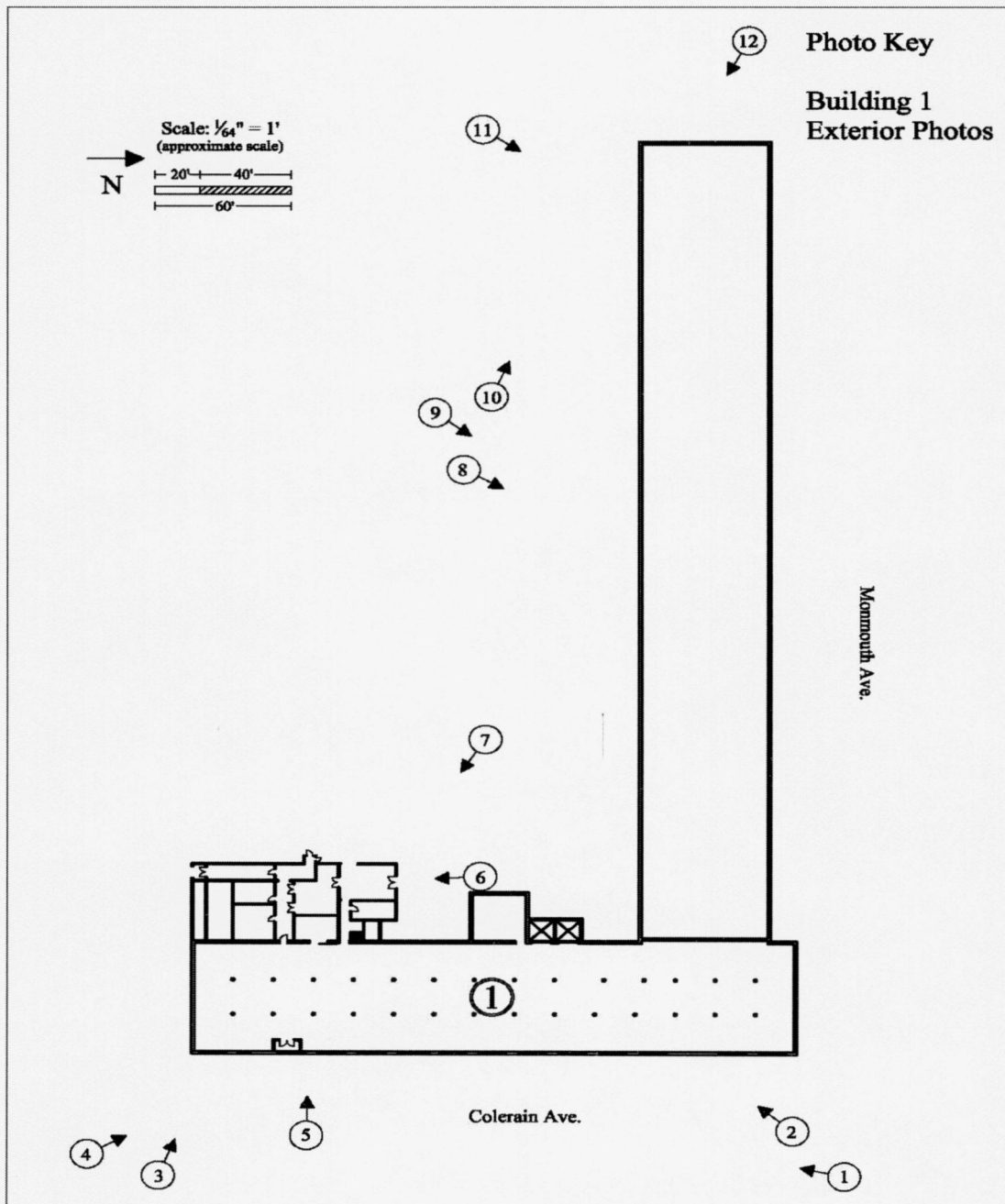


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National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

The Oesterlein Machine Company-Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex
Hamilton County, Ohio

Section Photo Keys Page 2

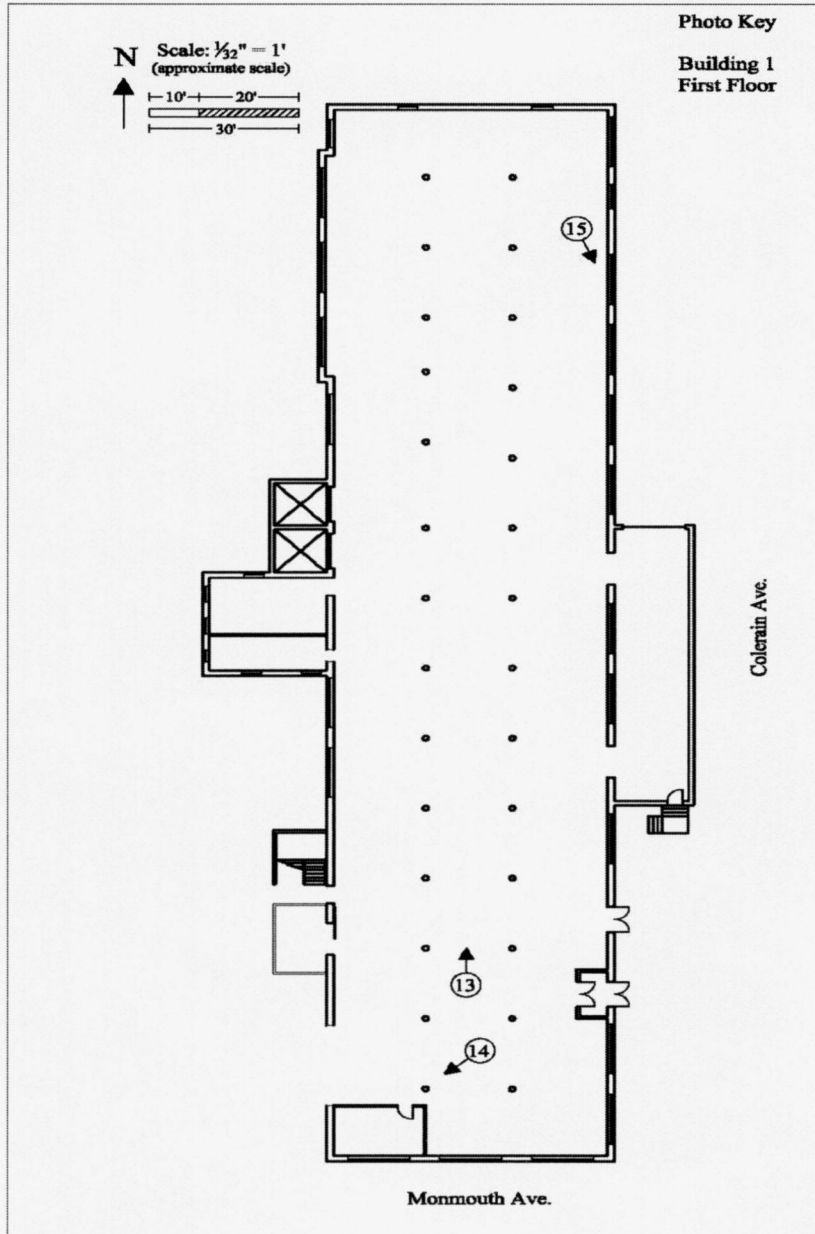


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The Oesterlein Machine Company-Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex
Hamilton County, Ohio

Section Photo Keys Page 3

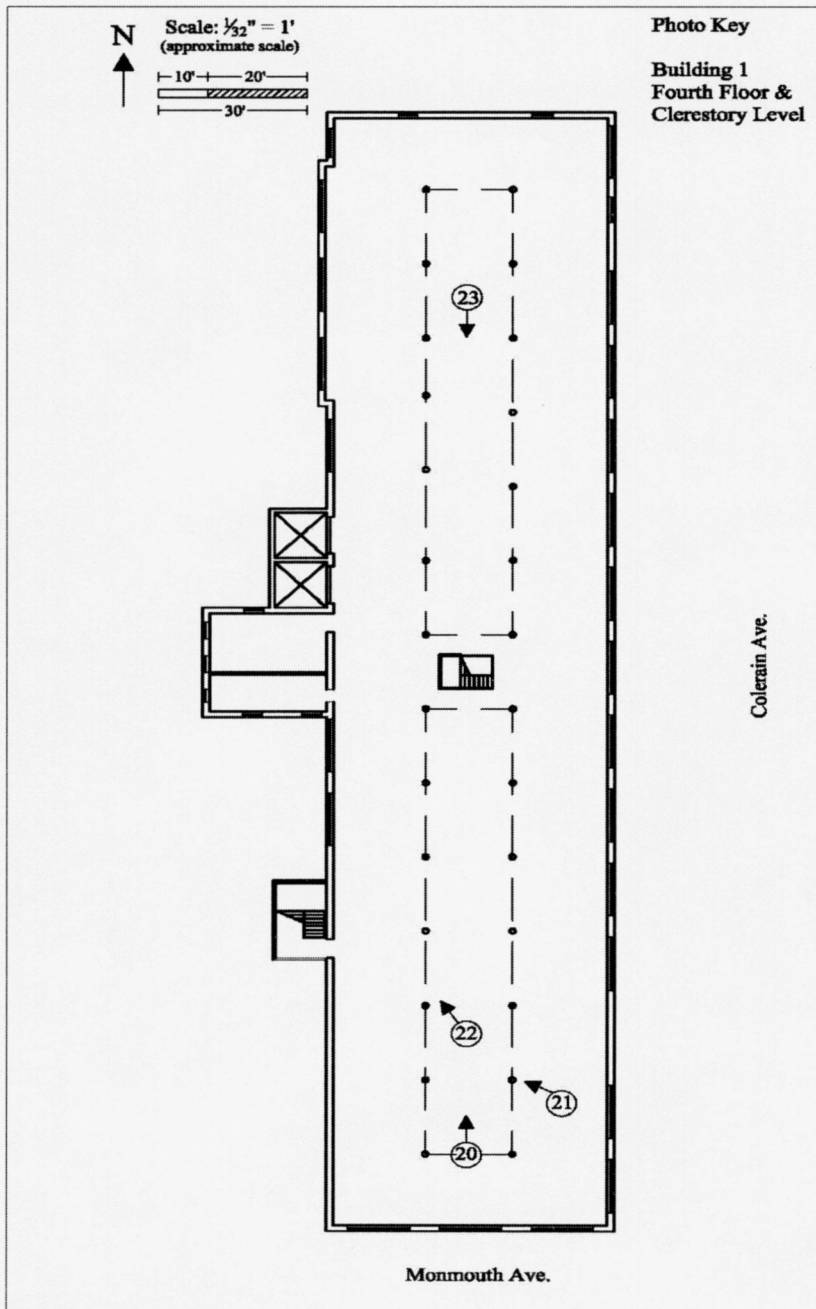


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National Park Service

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The Oesterlein Machine Company-Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex
Hamilton County, Ohio

Section Photo Keys Page 6

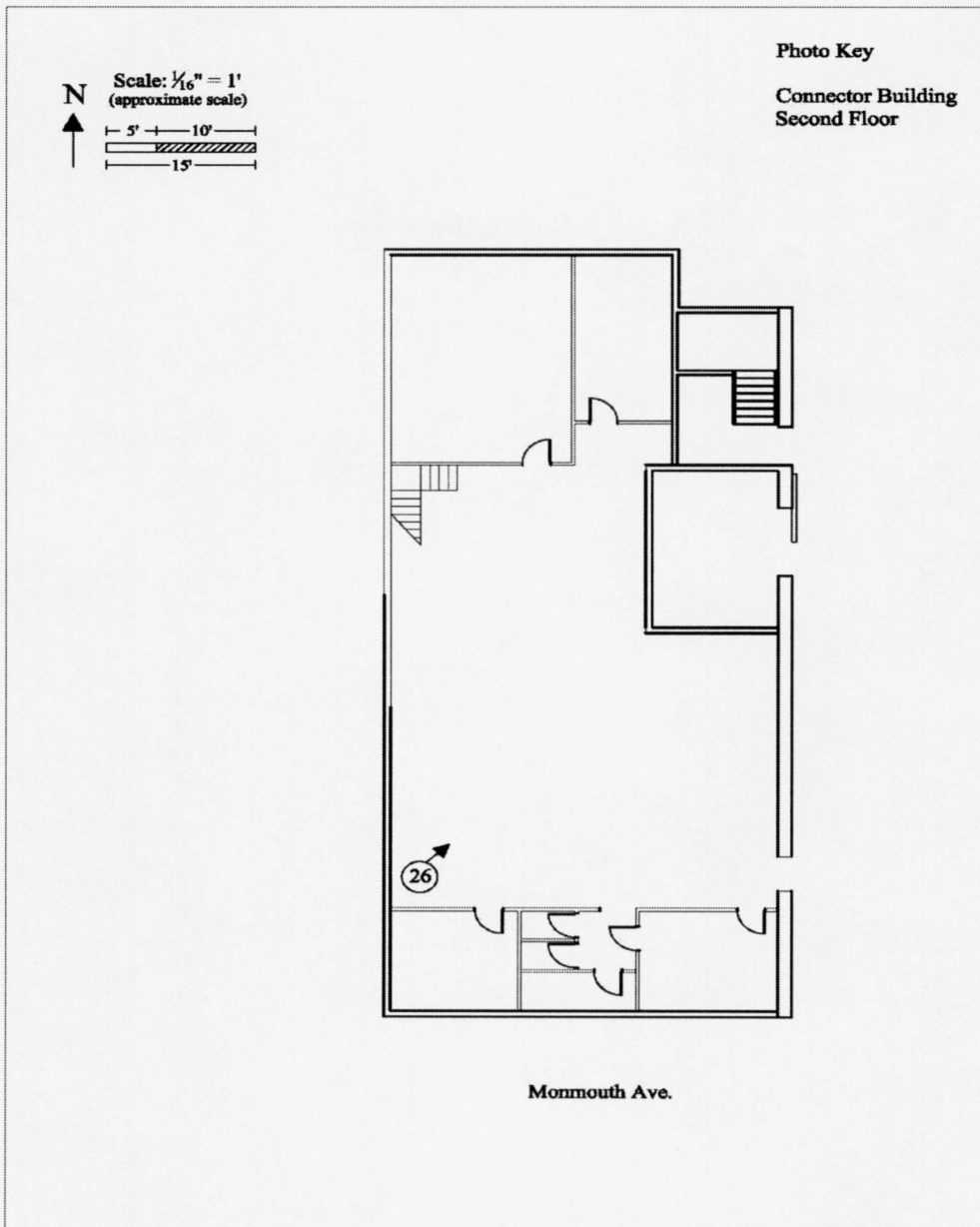


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The Oesterlein Machine Company-Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex
Hamilton County, Ohio

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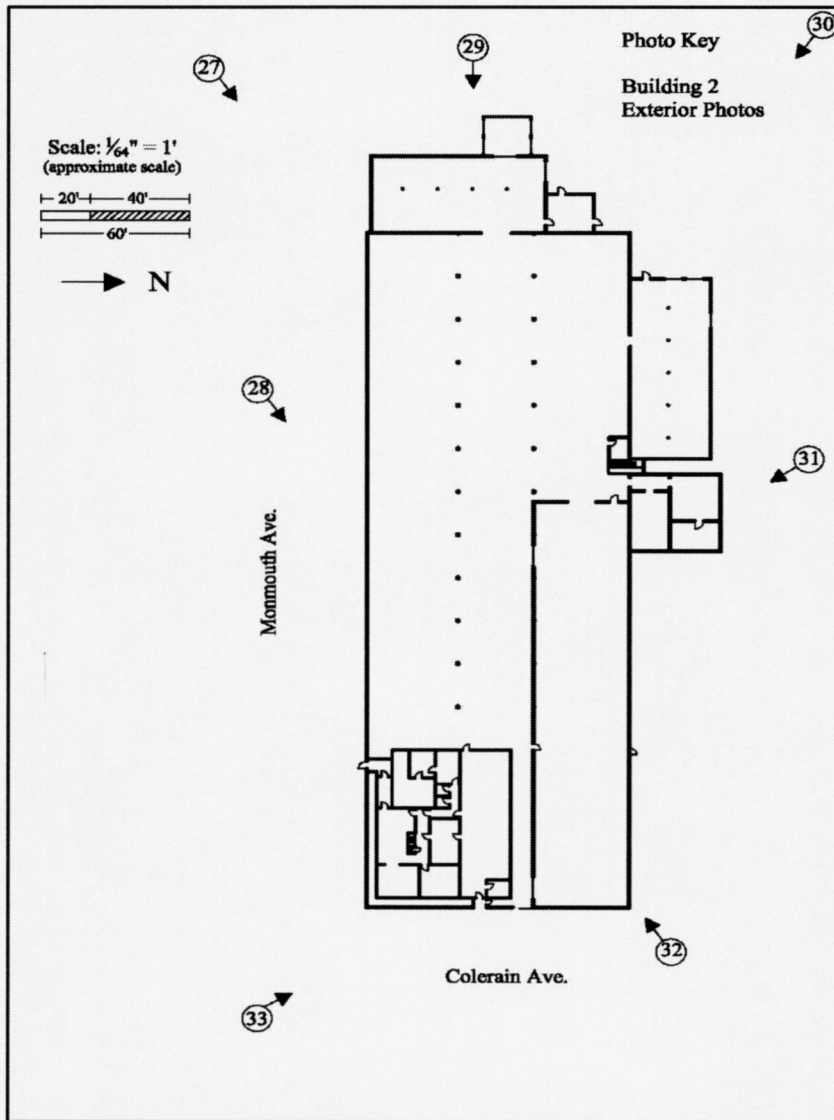


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The Oesterlein Machine Company-Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex
Hamilton County, Ohio

Section Photo Keys Page 9

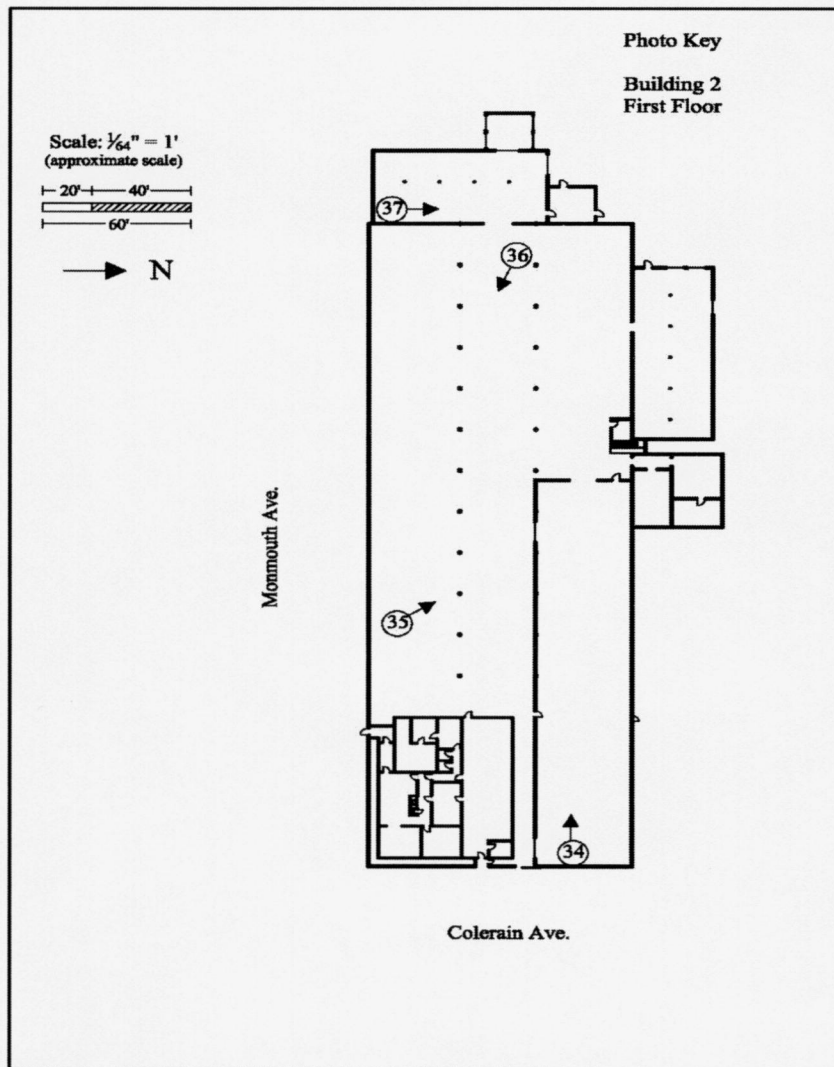


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The Oesterlein Machine Company-Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex
Hamilton County, Ohio

Section Photo Keys Page 10

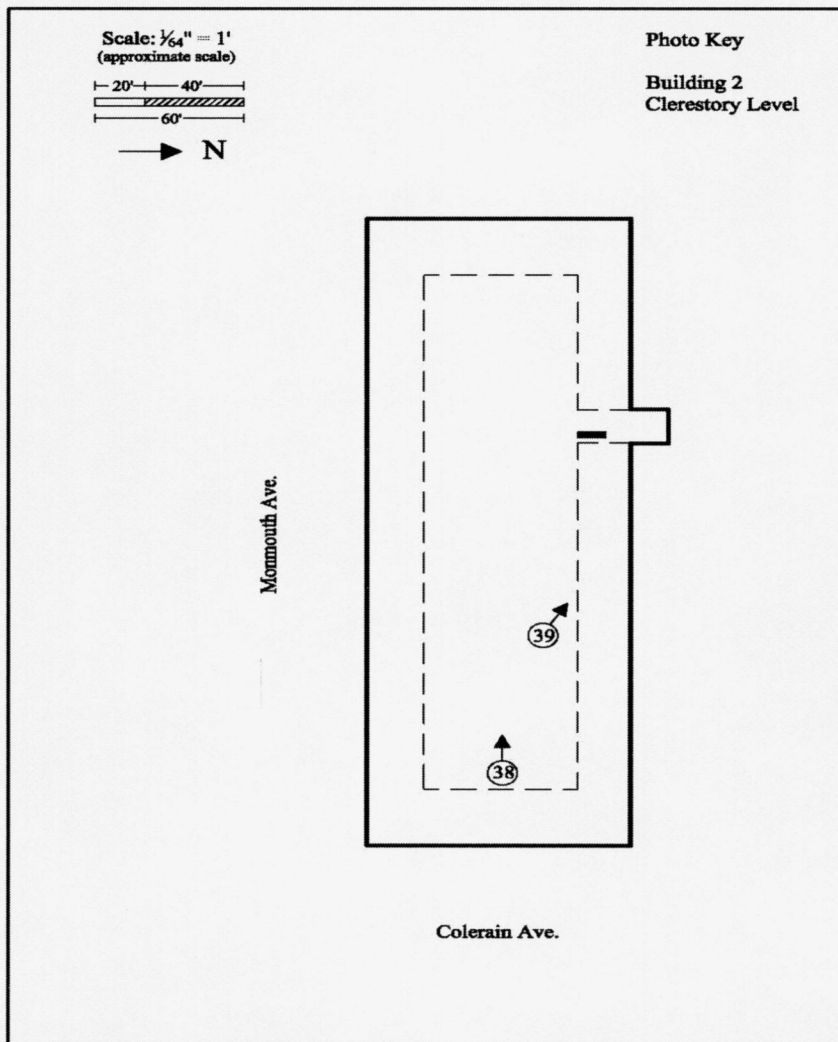


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The Oesterlein Machine Company-Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex
Hamilton County, Ohio

Section Photo Keys Page 11

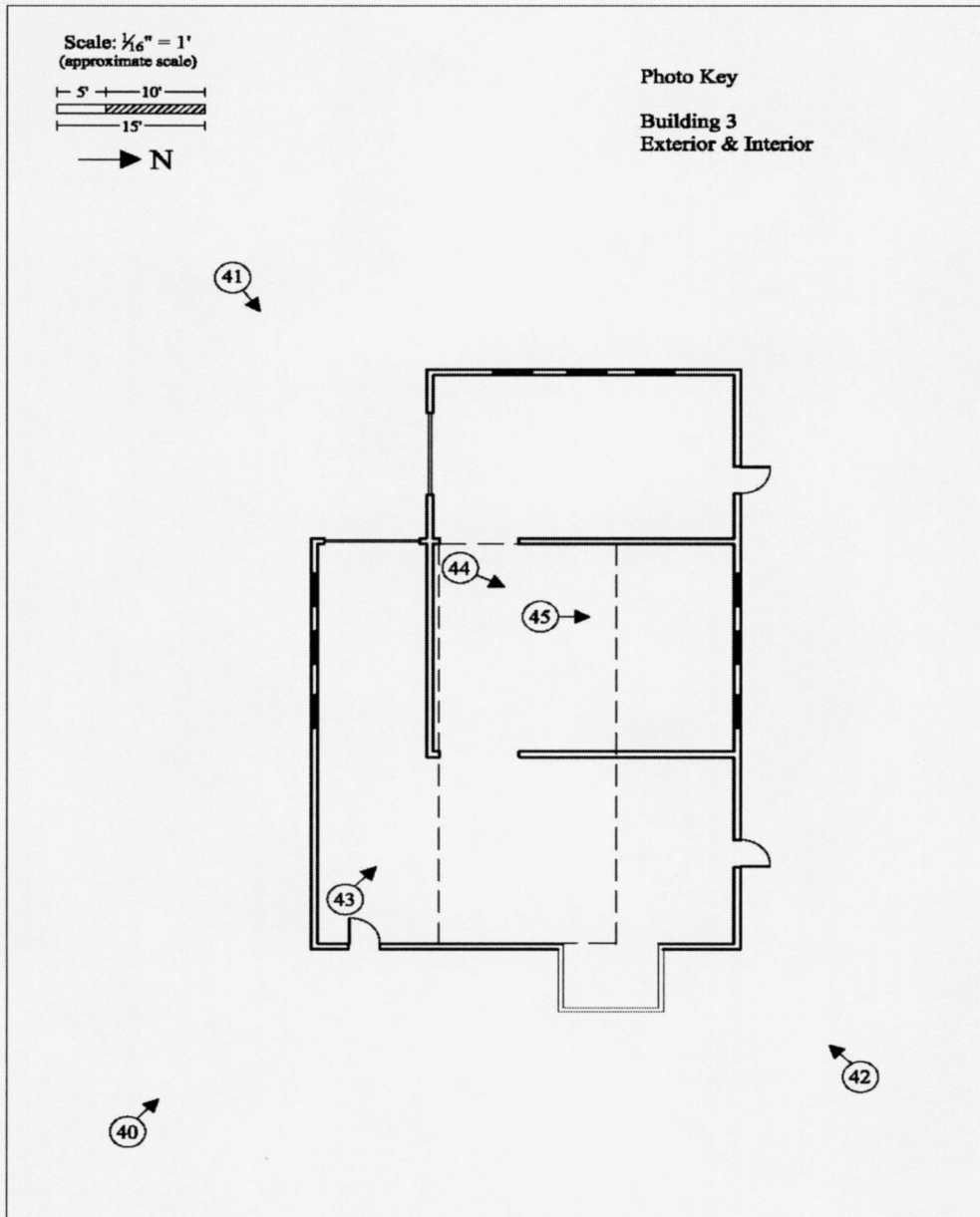


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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The Oesterlein Machine Company-Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex
Hamilton County, Ohio

Section Photo Keys Page 12



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Oesterlein Machine Company--Fashion Frocks, Inc. Complex
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: OHIO, Hamilton

DATE RECEIVED: 9/13/05 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/30/05
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 10/15/05 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/27/05
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 05001186

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: Y NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 10.27.05 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



Fashion Frocks, Inc., COMPLEX - Oesterlein Mach. Co.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.

Photo # 1



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex - Desterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co., OH

Photo #2



FASHION FROCKS, INC., COMPLEX-Oesterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.

PHOTO #3



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex - Oesterlein Mach
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.

Photo # 4



FASHION FROCKS, INC., COMPLEX
CINCINNATI, OHIO Hamilton Co.
PHOTO #5 Oesterlein Mach. Co.



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.

Photo #6

Oesterlein Mach. Co.



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex-Oesterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.
Photo #7



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex - Oesterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.

Photo # 8



Fashion Frocks, Inc., COMPLEX-Oestertein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.

photo #9



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex - Oesterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.
Photo # 10



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex - Oesterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.

Photo # 11



Fashion Frocks Inc., Complex - Oesterline Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.
Photo #12



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex - Oesterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.
Photo #13



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex
Cincinnati, Ohio, Hamilton Co.

Photo # 14

Oesterlein Mach. Co.



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex - Oesterlein Mach. Co.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.
Photo #15



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex-Desterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.
Photo #16



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.
Photo # 17

Oesterlein Mach. Co.



Fashion Fracks, Inc., Complex
Annunati, Ohio Hamilton Co.
Photo #18

Oesterlein Mach. Co.



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex-Oesterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.

Photo #19



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex-Oesterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.
Photo # 20



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex-Oesterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.

Photo # 21



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex-Oesterlein Mach
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.
Photo # 22



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex - Oesterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.

Photo # 23

EXIT



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex-Oesterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.
Photo # 24



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex - Oesterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, OHIO Hamilton Co.

Photo #25



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex - Oesterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.

Photo # 26



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex-Oesterlein Mach.
Unnhati, Ohio Hamilton Co.
Photo # 27



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex - Oesterlein Mach. Co.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.
Photo # 28



Fashion Frocks, Inc., COMPLEX - Desterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, OHIO Hamilton Co.
Photo #29



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex - Oesterlein Mach. Co.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.
Photo #30



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex - Oesterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, OHIO Hamilton Co.
Photo #31



FASHION FROCKS, INC., COMPLEX-Oesterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, OHIO Hamilton Co.
Photo #32



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex - Desterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.
Photo #33



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex-Oesterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co,
Photo #34



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex-Oesterlein Mach
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.
Photo#35



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex-Oesterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.

Photo # 36



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex-Desterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.
Photo #37



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex-Oesterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.
Photo #38



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex-Oesterlein Mach
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.
Photo #39



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton
Photo # 40 Co.

Oesterlein Mach. Co.



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex-Oesterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.
Photo #41



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex-Oesterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.
Photo # 42



Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex-Oesterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.

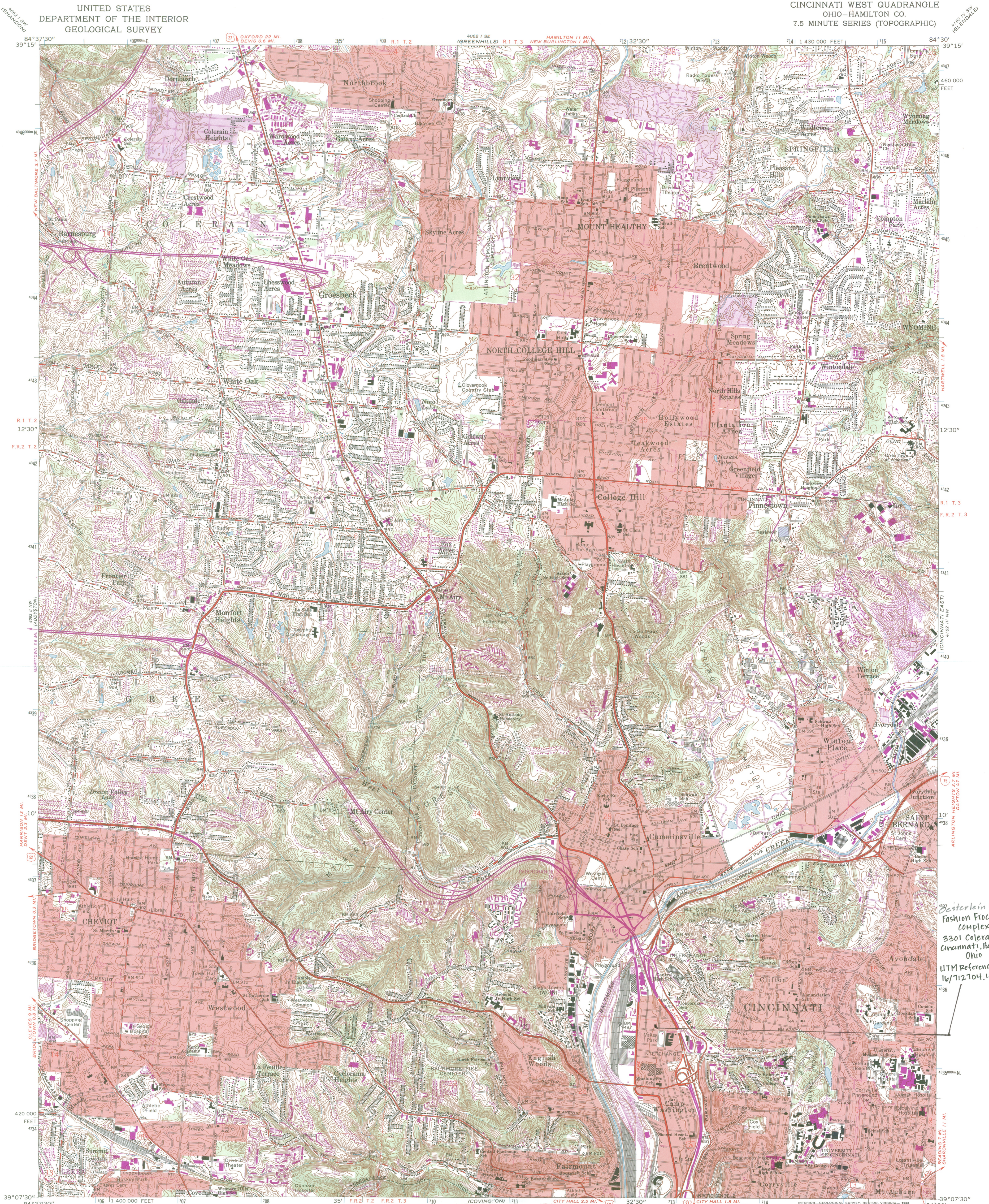
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Fashion Frocks, Inc., Complex-Oesterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.
Photo #44



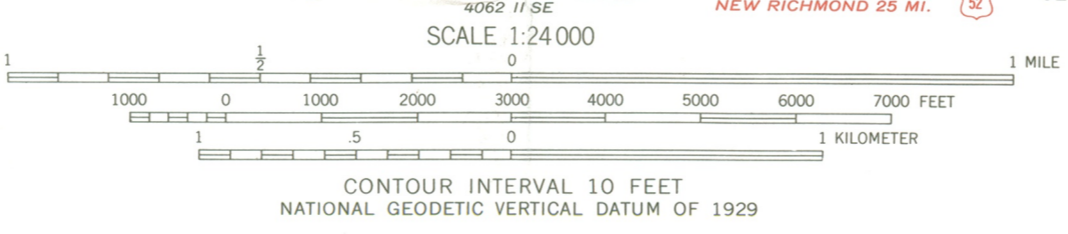
Fashion Frocks, Inc. Complex-Oesterlein Mach.
Cincinnati, Ohio Hamilton Co.
Photo #45



Besterlein Machine Co.,
Fashion Frocks, Inc.
Complex
3301 Colerain Avenue,
Cincinnati, Hamilton County,
Ohio
UTM Reference:
16/112104.44/4335370

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and City of Cincinnati
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1949 and in part by City of Cincinnati. Field checked
1953. Revised 1961.
Polyconic projection. 10,000-foot grid ticks based on Ohio coordinate
system, south zone. 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator
grid ticks, zone 16, shown in blue. 1927 North American Datum
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983 move
the projection lines 3 meters south and 5 meters west as shown
by dashed corner ticks.
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown
Entire area lies within the Great Miami River Basin
Land lines based on the Great Miami River Base
Dotted land lines established by private subdivision of the Symmes Purchase
Revisions shown in purple and woodland compiled in
cooperation with State of Ohio agencies from
aerial photographs taken 1979 and other sources.
This information not field checked. Map edited 1981.
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas.

UTM GRID AND 1981 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET
Map photinspected 1986
No major culture or drainage changes observed



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———
Interstate Route U.S. Route State Route

CINCINNATI WEST, OHIO

39084-B5-TF-024
PHOTOINSPECTED 1986
1961
PHOTOREVISED 1981
DMA 4062 II NE—SERIES 1982



City of Cincinnati



Department of Community Development and Planning

August 1, 2005

Rachel M. Tooker
 State Historic Preservation Officer
 Deputy Director, Ohio Historical Society
 Ohio Historic Preservation Office
 567 East Hudson Street
 Columbus, Ohio 43211-2037

Two Centennial Plaza
 Suite 700
 805 Central Avenue
 Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
 Phone (513) 352-6146
 Fax (513) 352-6113

Michael L. Cervay
 Director

RE: National Register Nomination; Fashion Frocks, Inc. Complex at 3301 Colerain Avenue/1326 Monmouth Avenue; Cincinnati, Hamilton County, Ohio.

Dear Ms. Tooker,

The Cincinnati Historic Conservation Board unanimously supports the nomination of the Fashion Frocks, Inc. Complex, located at 3301 Colerain Avenue/1326 Monmouth Avenue in Camp Washington, to the National Register of Historic Places. The Board reviewed the nomination at a special meeting held on August 1, 2005 and found that the complex met the requirements of Criterion C for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

While the Board was very supportive of the nomination, its support was conditional on a revision to the Statement of Significance summary under Section 8. Specifically, the Board indicated the summary should include a clear, succinct reference to the importance of the company's utilization of tens of thousands of housewives to sell its products door-to-door, particularly in rural areas. This important subject, although discussed in the Section 8 narrative, is not included in the summary statement.

I have included the staff report to the Historic Conservation Board for your files. The meeting minutes have not yet been approved, but a copy can be forwarded to you should you require it. Thank you for the opportunity to review this nomination, and if you have any questions please call me at (513) 352-4843.

Sincerely,

William L. Forwood
 Urban Conservator
 Historic Conservation Office

Enclosure

cc: Lena Sweeten, Middle Earth Properties
 Steve Gordon, Ohio Historic Preservation Office