

Esskay  
Baltimore City, Maryland  
B-1096

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The William F. Schluderberg-T.J. Kurdle Company or "Esskay" as it is more commonly known, is the oldest and last of Baltimore's major meat-packing plants. The oldest sections of the company's large complex of brick industrial buildings in Highlantown date back to 1920, and represent one of the area's finest and last remaining major urban industrial complexes.

Survey No. B-1096

Magi No. 0410965714

DOE  yes  no

(see vertical file)

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Esskay

and/or common W.F. Schluderber-T.J. Kurdle Company

## 2. Location

street & number 3800-4000 East Baltimore Street  not for publication

city, town Baltimore  vicinity of  congressional district

state Maryland  county

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Schluderberg-Kurdle Company

street & number 3800-4000 East Baltimore Street telephone no.:

city, town Baltimore state and zip code Maryland

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Court House liber SCL #3663

street & number Calvert & Fayette Streets folio 113

city, town Baltimore state Maryland

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

None

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

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### Condition

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

### Check one

unaltered  
 altered

### Check one

original site  
 moved      date of move \_\_\_\_\_

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Although meat packing was done by an assembly-line method in large plants as early as the 1870s, numerous small slaughterhouses in Baltimore survived until well into the 20th century. In 1919 when Schluderberg and Kurdle combined they had the resources and the markets to exploit the economies of large scale production.

The Esskay plant built in 1920 was one of the most modern in the region when it opened. The new firm moved into a major new complex of buildings they had built on a large lot owned by the Schluderbergs. At this time the plant consisted of a large two story brick office structure with a three-story brick plant attached on the north side. Structurally, the entire plant is reinforced concrete construction with brick infill and steel casement windows. Large areas were refrigerated to prevent spoilage of the products. A large set of wooden stockyards were built behind the plant. At that time livestock was driven from Union Stockyards in West Baltimore down Baltimore Street, then a dirt road). The pens were near a large wooden ramp leading from the yards up to the top floor of the plant. The cattle and pigs were herded up to this top floor for slaughtering, and then a "gravity system" of sorts was utilized as the meat moved from the cutting rooms to smoking, processing, packing and shipping areas on the lower floors. For example, internal organs removed on the top floor were sent down chutes to a lower floor where they were cleaned and processed further.

Over the past sixty-three years a number of additions have been made to the plant, including a major new structure which was constructed to the east of the original plant in 1936 and other new buildings which were added in 1937, 39, 41, 44, 45, 51, 55, 56 and 57. The south facade of the original plant was raised to three stories in the 1950s. The large cattle stockyards were razed in the 1960s when the company discontinued its beef slaughtering operation.'

The basic process has changed only slightly over the last fifty years. The economies of scale achieved in 1920 were extended to a larger volume over the years but few technological changes have occurred. Butchers now use mechanized knives and powered methods of material handling, but much hand labor still exists because of the organic nature of the material being processed. Differences in the size and shape of each hog determine the movements of the cutter's hand, preventing, at least so far, a more complete automation.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. B-1096

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

Specific dates 1920

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
and/or

Applicable Exception:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Level of Significance:  national  state  local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Willaim F. Schluderberg-T.J. Kurdle Company, or "Esskay" as it is more commonly known, is the oldest and last of Baltimore's major meat-packing plants. The oldest sections of company's large complex of brick industrial buildings in Highlantown date back to 1920, and represent one of the area's finest and last remaining major urban industrial complexes.

The William Schluderberg-T.J. Kurdle Company, commonly known as "Esskay," began business in 1920 when two of Baltimore's leading butchering families decide to combine operations. The enterprise which resulted became Baltimore's largest and most enduring meat-packing firms. The Schluderberg and Kurdle families had been butchers in Baltimore since the early 19th century. In 1858 William Schluderberg opened a butcher shop on Baltimore Street and Patterson Park, where he slaughtered, prepared and sold fresh meats. In 1867 he moved into larger quarters with major slaughtering facilities on Third Avenue now Conkling and Bank Street in Highlandtown, Maryland, (then outside of the city limits). In 1880 Thomas J. Kurdle opened a retail meat shop on Bond and Ashland Avenue, and by the turn of the century had expanded into a five-store chain of retail stores. In 1901 he also built a complete meat-packing plant in Highlandtown, on Lombard and Haven Streets, one which by 1908 needed many additions. The owners of these plants and their two sons developed a friendly relationship and in 1919 they decided to combine Schluderberg's superior facilities with Kurdeles large customer network and open a more efficient and modern meat packing plant. Two grandsons of William Schluderberg and the two sons of Thomas Kurdle became the officers of the new company, the William F. Schluderberg and J.J. Kurdle Company. In practical use shortened to Schluderberg-Kurdle, the initials of the firms name, "S" & "K", or "Esskay" became its copyrighted common name.

Over the years the Esskay company has produced a popular and

(con't.)



Esskay  
Baltimore City, Maryland  
B-1096

8. Significance - (continued)

varied line of meat products, including "Esskay Ballpark" franks, "Silver Label" hams and steaks, and "White Rose" lard. Today the firm specializes in a variety of pork products, and also serves as a wholeseller and supplier of a range of groceries to cafeterias and other food services. At one time Baltimore was home to a number of major meat-packing plants, including, Goetz, Armour and others. Today, Esskay survives as the last major establishment in the city.

1. SITE NO B-7096

## HAER INVENTORY

Historic American Engineering Record  
Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240

2 INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION Manufacture				3 PRIORITY	4 DANGER OF DEMOLITION? (SPECIFY THREAT) <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN			
				5 DATE 1920	6 GOVT SOURCE OF THREAT OWNER ADMIN			
					7 OWNER ADMIN Esskay (Shludenberg - Kurdle Co.)			
8 NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE Esskay				9 OWNER'S ADDRESS 3800 E. Baltimore St				

10 STATE COUNTY	COUNTY NAME	CITY/VICINITY Baltimore	CONG DIST	STATE COUNTY	COUNTY NAME	CITY/VICINITY Baltimore	CONG DIST
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11 SITE ADDRESS (STREET & NO.) 3800 E. Baltimore St				12 EXISTING SURVEYS <input type="checkbox"/> NR <input type="checkbox"/> NHL <input type="checkbox"/> HABS <input type="checkbox"/> HAER-I <input type="checkbox"/> HAER <input type="checkbox"/> NPS <input type="checkbox"/> CL6 <input type="checkbox"/> CONF <input type="checkbox"/> STATE <input type="checkbox"/> COUNTY <input type="checkbox"/> LOCAL <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER			
				13 SPECIAL FEATURES (DESCRIBE BELOW) <input type="checkbox"/> INTERIOR INTACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXTERIOR INTACT <input type="checkbox"/> ENVIRONS INTACT			

14 UTM ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	SIGN	SCALE	QUAD NAME
18	365060	4351760		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1:24 <input type="checkbox"/> 1:62.5 <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER	Balto. East
UTM ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	SIGN	SCALE	QUAD NAME
				<input type="checkbox"/> 1:24 <input type="checkbox"/> 1:62.5 <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER	

15 CONDITION	70 <input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	71 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	72 <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	73 <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	74 <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	75 <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED	76 <input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	82 <input type="checkbox"/> DESTROYED	85 <input type="checkbox"/> DEMOLISHED
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16 INVENTORIED BY Ann Steele	AFFILIATION Baltimore Museum of Industry	DATE May 1983
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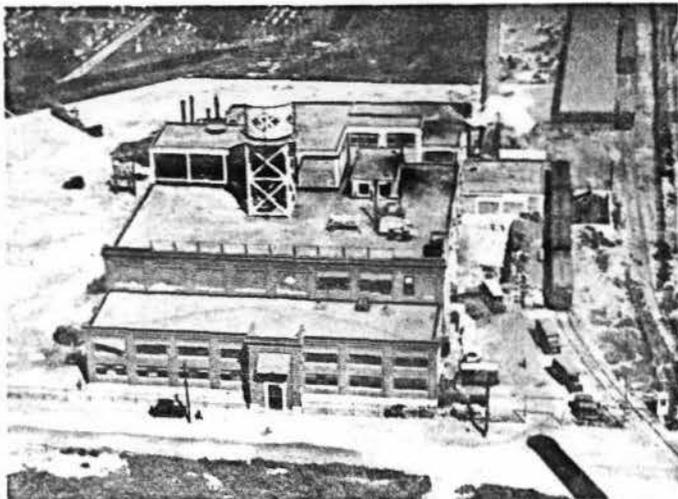
17 DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND HISTORY INCLUDING CONSTRUCTION DATE(S), HISTORICAL DATE(S), PHYSICAL DIMENSIONS, MATERIALS, EXTANT EQUIPMENT, AND IMPORTANT BUILDERS, ENGINEERS, ETC.

see attached

18 ORIGINAL USE manufacture	PRESENT USE manufacture	ADAPTIVE USE
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19 REFERENCES—HISTORICAL REFERENCES, PERSONAL CONTACTS, AND/OR OTHER  
Esskay company history

20 URBAN AREA 50,000 POP. OR MORE? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	21 NPS REGION	22 PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES, LIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> YES, UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN	23 EDITOR INDEXER
24 LOCATED IN AN HISTORIC DISTRICT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	NAME	DISTRICT I D NO	



*Original Esskay Plant—1920*

which the Company enjoys declared to be merely a reflection of its integrity. The good will which the Company believes it has, it feels it must continuously inspire among its own employees, its trade, and in each consumer.

A rich background of high ideals and a high sense of responsibility toward employees and all others with whom it deals are no guarantee of satisfactory

10 .

employee and public relationship in the present. That requires continuing policies that inspire appreciation and confidence inside the plant and outside. Let's see what is going on at ESSKAY now so that you can judge for yourself.



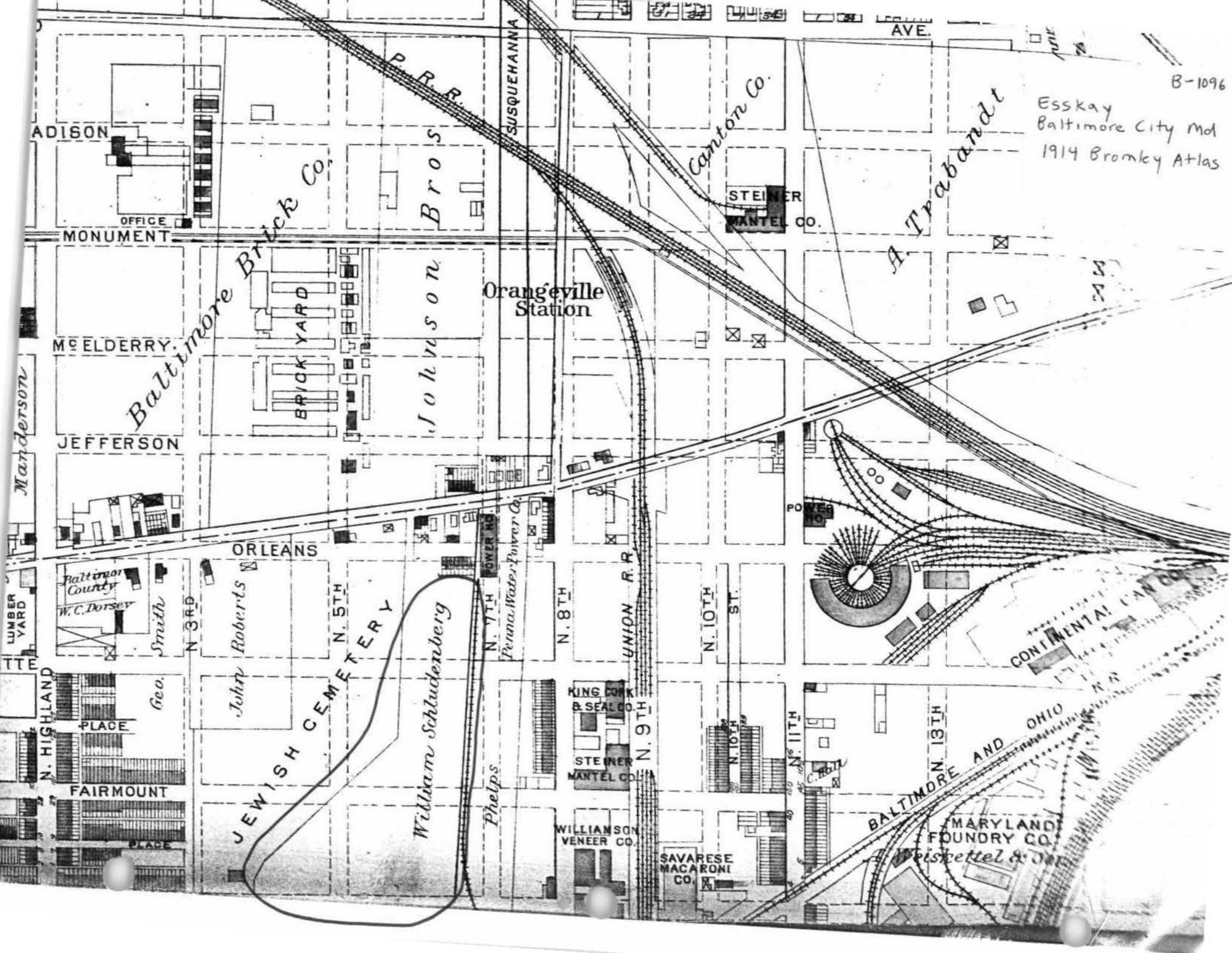
*Esskay Plant—1930*

*Esskay Plant—1936*



Esskay B-1096  
Baltimore City, MD.

Historic views of site  
(From A Century of Progress,  
(Esskay, printed privately, 1958))



B-1096

Esskay  
Baltimore City Md  
1914 Bromley Atlas

ADISON  
OFFICE  
MONUMENT

*Baltimore Brick Co.*

*Johnson Bros*

Orangeville  
Station

*Canton Co.*

STEINER  
MANTEL CO.

*A. Trabandt*

*Manderson*

MC ELDERRY

BRICK YARD

JEFFERSON

ORLEANS

Baltimore  
County  
W.C. Dorsey

*Smith*

N. 3RD

*John Roberts*

N. 5TH

JEWISH CEMETERY

*William Schludenberg*

*Phelps*

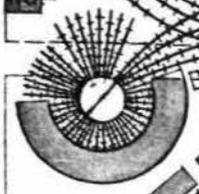
POWER CO.  
*Penna. Water Power Co.*

N. 8TH

UNION R. R.

N. 10TH

ST.



PO

CONTINENTAL CAN CO.

LUMBER YARD

N. HIGHLAND

PLACE

*Geo.*

FAIRMOUNT

PLACE

KING DORK  
B. SEAL CO.

STEINER  
MANTEL CO.

WILLIAMSON  
VENEER CO.

SAVARESE  
MACARONI  
CO.

N. 10TH

N. 11TH

N. 13TH

BALTIMORE AND OHIO

MARYLAND  
FOUNDRY CO.

*Wissel & J...*

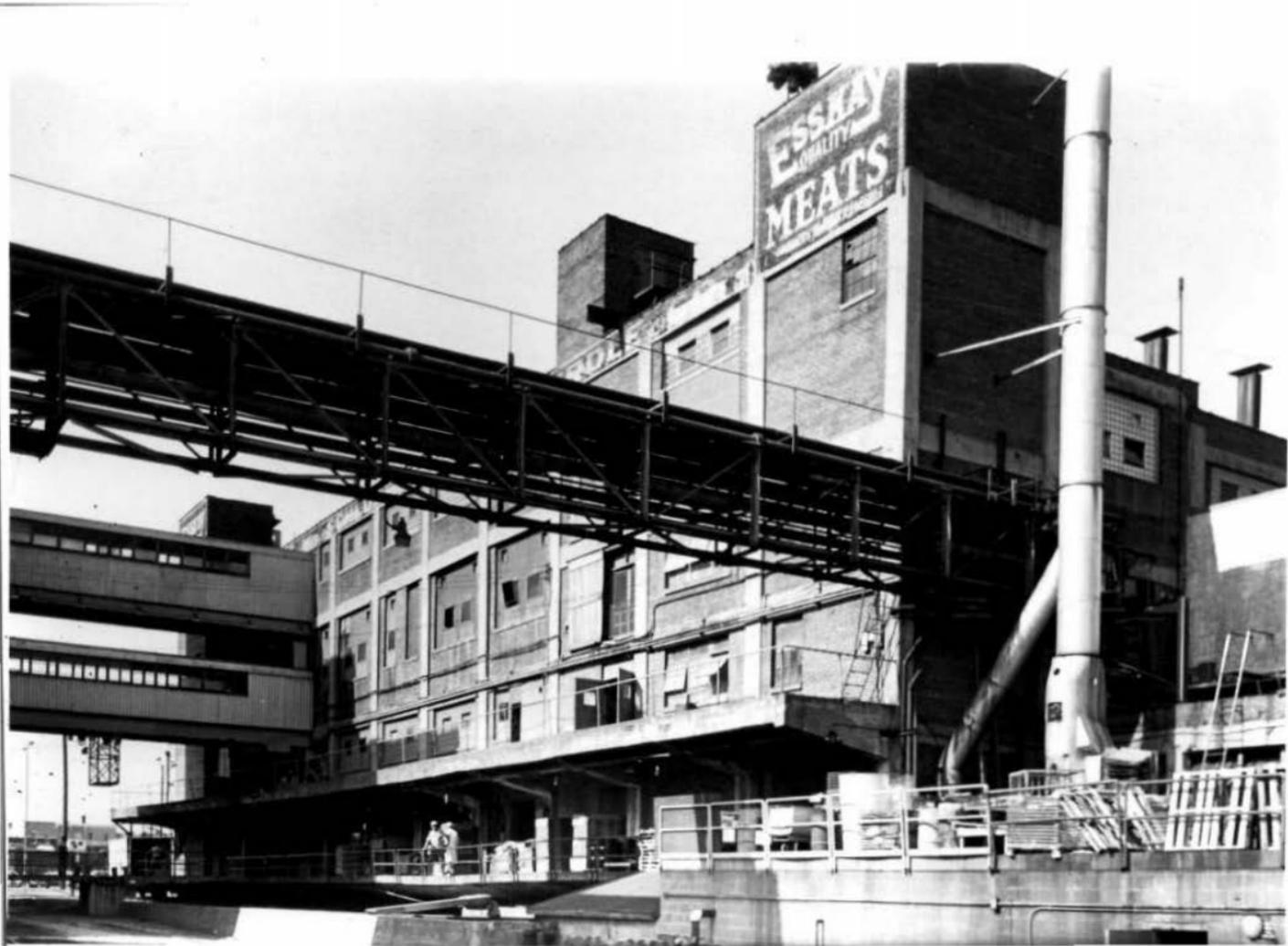
B-1096

EsSkay  
Baltimore City Md

SGS 7.5 Balto East

183 65060 43 51760





Esskay

B-1096

Baltimore City, MD

Peter Liebhold 7/03

Looking S.W. at old building

7/03

Building



EsSkay

B-1096

Baltimore City, MD

Peter Liebhold 7/83

Looking S.W.



Esskay

B-1096

Baltimore City, MD

Peter Liebhold 7/83

Baltimore Street facade,  
looking North/West



EssKay B-1096  
Baltimore City, MD  
Peter Liebhold 7/83  
Looking South at Land House



B-1096  
Esskay  
Baltimore City, MD  
Peter Liebhold 7/83

Looking East



EsSkay B-1096  
Baltimore City, MD  
Peter Liebhold 7/83

Looking East

THIS PAPER  
MANUFACTURED  
BY SODAK



MACHINE SHOP

1000

B-1096

Essey

Baltimore City, MD

Peter Liebhold 7/83

Looking north at Machine Shop



Esskay

B-1096

Baltimore City MD

Peter Liebhold 7/83

Interior Stock Pens



Esskay B-1096  
Baltimore C. ty, MD  
Peter Liebhold 7/83

Refrigeration Coils Basement of  
Building.



EsSkay B-1096  
Baltimore City, MD  
Peter Liebhold 7/83  
Typical Column Capital -  
Old Building