

B-991

American Can Company

Statement of Significance

The American Can Company buildings are some of the last remaining structures associated with the once-major canning and can making industry in Baltimore. The Company was instrumental in the universal adoption of the sanitary can in the early 20th Century and the early use of automation for their production. This site is also the location of one of the earliest reinforced concrete buildings in Baltimore, constructed in 1902.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

American Can Company

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Boston and Hudson Streets

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Baltimore

— VICINITY OF

STATE

COUNTY

Maryland 21231

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

**OWNERSHIP**

**STATUS**

**PRESENT USE**

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**ACCESSIBLE**

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

American Can Company

Telephone #: 301-675-1296

STREET & NUMBER

Boston and Hudson Streets

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

— VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21231

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Baltimore City Courthouse

Liber #: SLC 5581

Folio #: 605

STREET & NUMBER

Fayette and Calvert Streets

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore, Maryland 21202

STATE

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

None

DATE

—FEDERAL —STATE —COUNTY —LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

**7 DESCRIPTION**

B-991

<b>CONDITION</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>	<b>CHECK ONE</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

The oldest building in the American Can Company complex on Boston and Hudson was built for the Norton Tin Plate and Can Company in 1895. It is red brick, two stories high with a wide central monitor. All of the facades but one are covered by adjoining buildings. The remaining facade is approximately nine bays wide, with 11 recessed sections with corbelled tops. Two of the bays are without windows, and the windows closest to Boston Street are bricked in. The first floor contains a loading dock and awning, and the second floor 12/12 sash windows. The gabled roof terminates in a stepped parapet wall whose central section is three bays wide and contains three arched windows.

Internally the floor is carried on posts and beams. The posts on the second floor are of particular interest. They are composed of riveted open latticework of a type that would soon be replaced by a rolled section. The raised central portion of the second floor is supported by a light metal truss which provides unobstructed floor space and light from the clerestory windows.

The second building to be built in the complex was completed in 1902. It is triangular in shape to fit the irregularities of the site. It shares one wall with the original 1895 building, while the remaining two facades front on Boston and Lakewood streets.

The building is red brick, two stories high. On the Boston Street facade, there are three recessed sections with three rows of corbelled brick at the top. All of the windows are bricked in. There is a loading door in the center of the first floor. The plain cornice is of terra cotta capping with one step. The Boston Street facade has 18 recessed sections with corbelled tops; two windows to each section. At sidewalk level, there are loading docks at every two sections. The far right dock is bricked in. On the second level there are two additional loading docks. A brick string course follows the graduated roof line.

A new manufacturing building was added in 1913. It also shares a wall with the 1895 building. It is three stories high, with red and white banding. The Hudson Street facade is 11 bays long. The first and second floors contain varied irregular sized industrial windows and vents, and the first floor has a loading dock. The third floor has 2-10 bays of continuous windows. There is a projection above the second bay. The Boston Street facade is three bays wide with a tall cement tower in the

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

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 checked="" 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 1902 - present

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The American Can Company buildings are some of the last remaining structures associated with the once-major canning and can making industry in Baltimore. The Company was instrumental in the universal adoption of the sanitary can in the early 20th century and the early use of automation for their production. This site is also the location of one of the earliest reinforced concrete buildings in Baltimore, constructed in 1902.

### Historical Significance

Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries Baltimore was the center of the American canning industry. Early canners seized upon the plentiful Chesapeake Bay oyster and on the vegetable produce of area farms to build a flourishing industry by the eve of the Civil War. A mild climate, excellent harbor, large immigrant labor supply, and extensive transportation network encouraged early developments in canning and made the southeast section of the city into a "Cannery Row." Firms specializing in can making, can making machinery and related activities also became important industrial in the same area.

In 1895, the Norton Tin Plate and Can Company, a Chicago firm, built a factory at Boston and Hudson Streets in "Cannery Row", to produce hole and cap cans. Norton became part of the giant American Can Company when it was formed in 1901 as the conglomeration of 123 companies nationwide. In 1902 an additional building was constructed at the Baltimore site, one of the first reinforced concrete buildings in the city.

The Baltimore factory produced only hole and cap cans until 1910, when equipment was installed to make the new sanitary cans - a one piece body with continuous solder and with a rubber-based interior coating which prevented discoloration of the canned foods. A new building was added in 1913 and by 1916 sanitary cans were the sole product of the plant, completely by automation. Another building was added in 1924.

The American Can Company's facility in Baltimore, one of its many nationwide plants, produced only cans and can making machinery.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

cont'd.....

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

- 1) Information provided by American Can Company.
- 2) Query files, Enoch Pratt Free Library.
- 3) Interview with Brian Lacey, Boston Street plant manager.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Linda Daur, Liza Reich, Kathleen Stacey

ORGANIZATION

Baltimore Industrial Museum

DATE

December 1980

STREET &amp; NUMBER

217 N. Charles Street

TELEPHONE

301-396-1931

CITY OR TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

Maryland 21201

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 267-1438

## American Can Company

## 7-1. DESCRIPTION

Continued, Page 2

left corner.

The final building added to American Can was built in 1924 as a closing machine station. It is an irregularly shaped four story building made of brick. The western facade that fits into the triangle of Boston and Hudson Streets has about seven bays. The sign for American Can Company is on this corner. There is a stringcourse near the top of the building. The industrial windows are large paned. On two sides of the building there is an elevated projection that starts on the second floor. Underneath this projection, on the first floor, is a loading dock. The windows on each story are separated by brick, and red painted horizontal brick ends in four stripes on the top of the building.

The Hudson Street facade is nine bays long with the ninth bay divided into three sections with three windows each. There is also a small half story above this ninth bay, with two small windows, concrete sills, and cement cornices. In the fifth, sixth, and seventh bays on the first floor are wooden garage doors.

Connecting the 1913 and the 1924 buildings is a smaller two story structure. It is six bays long with red and white banding. The windows on the first floor are small, and there are clerestory windows near the roof. There are two doors, with stoops.

Its products were sent all over the Eastern United States as well as to parts of Europe and the Pacific Islands. As the market for seamless aluminum cans for soft drinks and beer continues to grow, the Baltimore plant is adjusting its production to meet the new demand. This type of can is shipped without tops, which are packaged separately and attached by the user after the can has been sterilized and filled.

Once employing hundreds of immigrants living in the adjacent neighborhoods, in 1979 American Can employed about 400 local residents with payroll and benefits totalling between \$7 and \$8 million per annum. The American Can Company is the largest can producer in the world.

# NAER INVENTORY

U.S. Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

1. SITE I.D. NO. **B 9 9 1**

2. INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION

3. PRIORITY

4. DANGER OF DEMOLITION? (SPECIFY THREAT)  YES  NO  UNKNOWN

5. DATE

6. GOVT SOURCE OF THREAT  OWNER  ADMIN

7. OWNER/ADMIN  
**American Can**

8. NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE  
**American Can**

9. OWNER'S ADDRESS  
**Boston & Hudson Streets**

10. STATE COUNTY **M D** COUNTY NAME CITY/VICINITY **Baltimore** CONG. DIST. **3** STATE COUNTY **M D** COUNTY NAME CITY/VICINITY **Baltimore** CONG. DIST. **3**

11. SITE ADDRESS (STREET & NO.)  
**Boston & Hudson Streets**

12. EXISTING SURVEYS  NR  NHL  HABS  HAER-I  HAER  NPS  CLB  
 CONF  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL  OTHER

13. SPECIAL FEATURES (DESCRIBE BELOW)  
 INTERIOR INTACT  EXTERIOR INTACT  ENVIRONS INTACT

14. UTM ZONE EASTING NORTHING SIGN SCALE  1:24  1:62.5  OTHER QUAD NAME

15. CONDITION 70  EXCELLENT 71  GOOD 72  FAIR 73  DETERIORATED 74  RUINS 75  UNEXPOSED 76  ALTERED 77  DESTROYED 85  DEMOLISHED

16. INVENTORIED BY **Linda Daur, Liza Reich, Kathleen Stacey** AFFILIATION **Baltimore Industrial Museum** DATE **December 1980**

17. DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND HISTORY, INCLUDING CONSTRUCTION DATE(S), HISTORICAL DATE(S), PHYSICAL DIMENSIONS, MATERIALS, EXTANT EQUIPMENT, AND IMPORTANT BUILDERS, ENGINEERS, ETC.

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(CONT OVER)

18. ORIGINAL USE **Industrial (Can Factory)** PRESENT USE **Industrial (Can Factory)** ADAPTIVE USE

19. REFERENCES—HISTORICAL REFERENCES, PERSONAL CONTACTS, AND/OR OTHER  
**Information provided by American Can Company  
Query files, Md. room, Enoch Pratt Central Library  
Interview with Brian Lacey, Boston Street plant manager**

(CONT OVER)

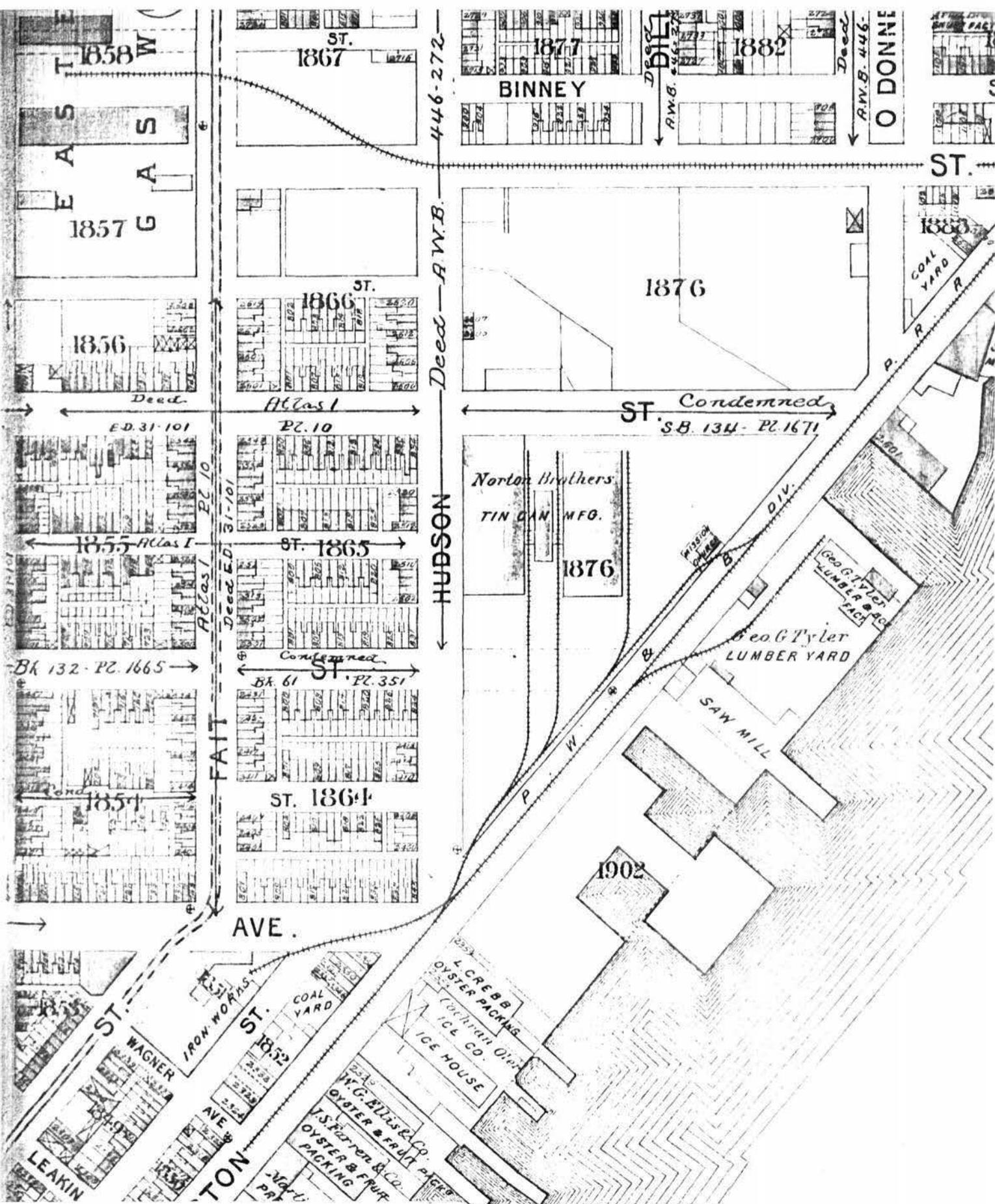
20. URBAN AREA 50,000 POP. OR MORE?  YES  NO

21.

22. PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY  YES, LIMITED  YES, UNLIMITED  NO  UNKNOWN

23. EDITOR INDEXER

24. LOCATED IN AN HISTORIC DISTRICT?  YES  NO NAME DISTRICT I.D. NO



AMERICAN CAN CO. B-991  
 BALTIMORE CITY, MD  
 MAP FROM: 1896 BROMLEY ATLAS

1896 Bromley Atlas



AMERICAN CAN CO.  
U.S.G.S. 7.5#Balto.E.Quad,MD  
183637204349970

B991

AMERICAN CAN CO.  
18363720 4349970  
FED. POINT  
NORTHWEST

HARBOR

Light  
Fort McHenry  
Light



AMERICAN CAN CO. #  
BALTIMORE CITY, MD B-991  
PHOTO: LINDA DAIR  
NEG. LOC: MD HISTORIC TRUST  
DEC. 1980

Boston Street Facades  
left to right → 1924 Building,  
1913 Building, 1895 Building  
and 1902 Building)

AMERICAN CAN COMPANY



AMERICAN CAN CO  
BALTIMORE City, MD  
PHOTO: LINDA DAUR  
NEG. LOC: MD HISTORIC TRUST  
DEC 1980 Boston St. Facade  
1924 Building

#  
B-991



AMERICAN CAN CO. B-991

BALTIMORE CITY, MD.

PHOTO: LINDA DAUR

NEG. LOC.: MD. HISTORIC TRUST

DEC. 1980

Hudson St. Facade: 1924 Bldg.



AMERICAN CAN CO. # B-991  
BALTIMORE CITY, MD  
PHOTO: LINDA DAUR  
NEG. LOC: MD HISTORIC TRUST  
DEC. 1980

Boston Street Facades:

left to right →

1913 Building, 1895 Building



American Can Co.

B-991

Baltimore City, MD

Photo: Linda Davr

Neg. location: MD Historic Trust

12/80 looking West, Boston St. Facade,  
1902 Bldg.



American Can Co.

B-991

Baltimore City, MD

Photo: Linda Daur

Neg. location: MD Historic Trust

12/80 20th C Additions to 1902 Bldg.



AMERICAN CAN CO.

~~NEG. #~~

B-991

BALTIMORE CITY, MD

PHOTO: LINDA DAUR

NEG. LOC. MD HISTORIC TRUST

DEC. 1980 20<sup>th</sup> C Addition to 1902 Bld.

Boston St. Facade



AMERICAN CAN CO. B-991

BALTIMORE CITY, MD.

PHOTO: LINDA DAUR

~~NEG. LOC. BALTIMORE INDUSTRIAL~~

~~MUSEUM~~ DEC. 1980

NEG. LOC. MD HISTORIC TRUST

Boston Street Facade

20th C Addition to

1902 Building



AMERICAN CAN CO. B-991

BALTIMORE CITY, MD.

PHOTO: LINDADAUR

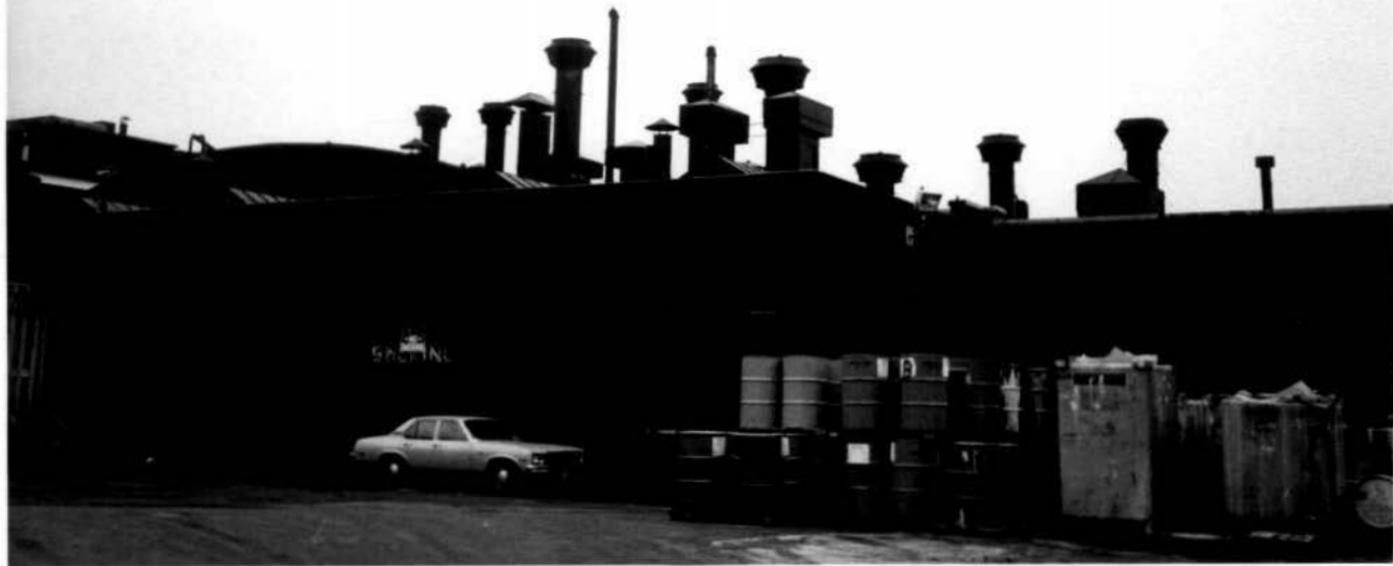
NEG. LOC.: MD. HISTORIC TRUST

DEC. 1980

*Hudson St. Facade: 1913 Building*



AMERICAN CAN CO. MAGI #  
BALTIMORE CITY, MD B-991  
PHOTO: LINDA DAUR  
NEG. LOC. MD HISTORIC TRUST  
DEC. 1980 Looking North: Rear View  
of 2 story Addition



AMERICAN CAN CO.

~~###~~ #

BALTIMORE CITY, MD

B-991

PHOTO: LINDA DAUR

NEG. LOC. MD HISTORIC TRUST

DEC. 1980

Root Line Detail - Rear  
of 2 Story Addition