

WASHINGTON

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For HCERS use only

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Peoria Cordage Company

and/or common Tri-City Machine Products, Inc.

2. Location

street & number 1506 S.W. Washington Street

not for publication

city, town Peoria

N/A vicinity of

congressional district

18th

state Illinois

code 012

county

Peoria

code 143

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<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
	<i>N/A</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Tri-City Machine, Inc.

street & number 1506 S.W. Washington Street

city, town Peoria

N/A vicinity of

state

Illinois

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Peoria County Courthouse, Room 11, Recorder's Office

street & number 324 Main

city, town Peoria

state

Illinois

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Inventory of Architecture Before W.W.II
title in Peoria has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date October 1974 federal state county local

depository for survey records Il. Dept. of Conservation-Lands and Historic Sites

city, town Springfield

state IL

7. Description

Condition	Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	date _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	
	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Peoria Cordage Company buildings are located in a commercial/industrial area of one to two story buildings constructed between 1890 and 1920. This area was originally the industrial sector of the City due to its proximity to the railroads and the Illinois River. This function has declined as newer industrial parks were developed to the north of the City, closer to the main highways and allowing one story operations. The nearest large industrial complex is Hiram Walker and Sons Distillery, which is locating out of state and vacating its facilities. Several vacant properties are located nearby the site along Washington Street.

The site is located on the southwest side of Washington Street (See Photograph #1), at the intersection with McArthur Highway (Cedar Street Bridge), bounded on the rear by Water Street and the railroad tracks. (See Photograph #2)

The site is irregular in shape and has approximately 386 ft. of frontage on Washington St. and extends toward the River approximately 341 ft. The Washington Street entrance is one floor above that of Water Street. The original plans indicated a three story Washington Street facade.

The following list of structures on the site should be used in conjunction with the Site Plan and photographs:

Building #1: This structure, built in 1888, has two levels along Washington Street and three levels at the rear due to the sloping site. It measures approximately 86' x 151' per floor or 38,958 sq. ft. total floor area. The roof is of the built-up type. Floors are wood and the area is sprinkled. A small office area is located at the rear. The construction is that of brick bearing walls combined with wood timber (or mill) construction (See Photograph #3) This building served as the original warehouse for the operations of the Cordage Company. (See Photographs #1, #4, and #5)

Building #2: This structure is located directly behind Building #1 and was built in 1915. It is a one level brick structure measuring 86' x 112' with monitor lighting along the center which is original construction according to the plans in the Owner's file. This building served as a rope mill. (See Photographs #6 and #7)

Building #3: Built in 1888, this three level brick structure served as the original mill. It measures 86' x 127' plus a 24' x 48' section, for a total area of 35,790 sq. ft. The roof is a built-up type and floors and structure are of wood. Construction of this building matches that of Building #1 though the facade on Washington is a different composition. (See Photographs #1 and #8)

Building #4: This structure served as additional mill space and was built in 1895. Its three levels have a total area of 40,788 sq. ft. The exterior is brick with a flat felt bitumen roof and wood floors. (See Photographs #2, #10, #9, and #7)

Building #5: This is a one-story brick building measuring 40' x 57' plus an area of 8' x 32' built approximately in 1888. This building served as the card house for processing of the raw fibers (See Photograph #11)

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Building #6: This building, built in approximately 1888 and added to in 1916, served as the machine shop for the Cordage. It has brick exterior bearing walls with a saw-toothed monitor type of roof. Its size is 64' x 84' or approximately 5,376 sq. ft. of floor space. (See Photographs # 2, #12, and #13)

Building #7: This one story wood frame building was built in approximately 1890 and was the employee's cafeteria. Its size is 26' x 63' or approximately 1,638 sq. ft. It has a dirt basement and the first floor is wood. It has a pitched roof with asphalt shingles. (See Photograph #11)

Building #8: This small wood-frame structure served as a garage.

Buildings #9 and #10: These two wood frame houses served to house employees, Building #9 being a duplex, one story dwelling and Building #10 being a two story single family dwelling. The employees parking was located behind these two buildings. (See Photograph #14)

The multi-level mills and warehouses are constructed typically with the brick exterior bearing walls and wood post and beam construction of "Mill Factory Construction". Drawings indicate the use of oak column and bolsters and maple flooring in the old mill. Roofs are typically flat wood deck with built-up felt/bitumen.

The old mill and warehouse have the more elaborate brick detailing, especially on the Washington Street elevation where corbelling of the parapet and brick pilasters break the facade into smaller-scaled bays.

These buildings have been appraised as recently as 1980, at which time the highest and best use of the buildings was for an owner who needed a large quantity of inexpensive dead storage since the ceiling heights, existing freight elevators, and structural capacity of the buildings were unsuitable for modern industrial operations using lift trucks and modern warehousing methods.

The present Owners, Tri City Machine Products, occupy several portions of the main buildings and have a manufacturing and machine shop located in the lowest floor of the warehouse buildings. (Buildings #1 and #2) An employee, James Reeder, who previously was a maintenance man for Peoria Cordage, still lives in one of the houses on Washington and has verified that these houses were used for employees who tended the boilers during the 24 hour work period. The remainder of the buildings are used as light warehouse rental and office rental. Most of the original machinery from the cordage operation has been sold although original equipment remains in the machine shop (Building #6) and the Ground Floor of the mill (Building #3)

The Owner has no plans beyond the present use for the buildings.

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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates * **Builder/Architect** ******

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- * Old Mill (Building #3) - 1888 ** Paul S. Lietz, Architect
- New Mill (Building #4) - 1895 Unknown
- Rope Mill (Building #2) - 1915. Hewitt and Emerson, Architects

One of Peoria's oldest and most far reaching industrial plants, Peoria Cordage Company, was closely tied to the growth and expansion of American agriculture and had business dealings around the world.

Edward C. Heidrich of Miamisburg, Ohio, and Martin Kingman of Peoria, combined their successful businesses in 1888 to form the Peoria Cordage Company in response to the tremendous demand for binder twine sought for agricultural use in grain harvesting. The experience of both men (Heidrich already had a successful binder twine operation in Ohio, and Kingman ran a major agricultural implement manufacturing concern in Peoria) and the centralized location in their primary market area combined into a very successful business.

The highly profitable agricultural development in the West and general business conditions gave rise to many monopolies or trusts. The Peoria Cordage Company was "forced" into the ill-fated National Cordage Trust which later collapsed shortly before the Panic of 1893. The Company suffered in the general collapse of business during this period but rebuilt to surpass its previous level of success with eventually 350 people on its payroll, a 24-hour work schedule, and a second mill (Building #4) constructed to handle the increasing demand.

The Company remained in the control of the Heidrich family, leadership being passed on to E. C. Heidrich's sons, A. G. Heidrich and E. C. Heidrich, Jr., and eventually to the third generation represented by William S. Miles, Jr. and Theodore H. Page, Jr., who had both worked in many positions in the operation including production. The latter were witnesses in 1956 in the Office of Defense Mobilization in Washington, D. C. appealing for the institution of import tariffs to protect national security and their commercial interests from foreign competitors having the advantage of cheaper labor rates.

Nationally, the Peoria Cordage Company was one of 24 companies during 1949 in the rope and twine industry including eight prison workshops and a U. S. Navy factory. Eighty percent of its production was used in the Midwest for agriculture and in 1952 the sales of baler and binder twine amounted to 4,400,000 lbs. of product. This was a drop from the highest production of quantity some 15 years before of 250 million lbs.

The materials used in the production of twine and rope had come from as far away as Yucatan, the Philippines, and Java. During the War, sources of supply were cut off with replacement of supplies from Haiti and Cuba, though at much higher cost. Orders for the products of the Peoria Cordage came not only from its primary Midwest agricultural customers but also from as far away as England, when Buffalo Bill ordered an emergency supply of lariat rope for his Wild West Show. Also of key importance and, therefore, the reason for the discussion of national security, was the use of rope and twine in maritime industry and armed forces which continued throughout the period of the plant's operation and into World War II.

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Decline in the production of twine and similar products was caused by not only foreign labor cost competition but also from the introduction of new farm machinery such as the combination harvester and threshing machines. These machines resulted in economic advantages to the farmer due to faster harvest and eliminated the step of binding the stalks for later threshing. In response to this change in the market, Peoria Cordage Company modified its operation, producing different products to meet the demands in other agricultural areas. Several products were produced in the plant including binder twine, rope, baler twine, and wrapping twine, all of which required specialized techniques and fibers unique to each product. In the period between 1965 through 1975, the Company had begun using synthetics but the eventual end of the Company was caused by the widening gap between domestic and foreign labor rates and the eventual cost of bulk and finished materials.

The present owners, Tri City Machine Products, occupy most of the building area though the original construction has been undisturbed for the most part and several areas of the plant contain original equipment, fittings, or remnants of the cordage industry. (See Photograph #13) This Complex of buildings has remained standing in its original condition, unlike its contemporaries that have seen substantial modification or demolition.

Of the seven major buildings and several minor structures, the original old mill is known to have been built in 1888 from the designs of Paul S. Lietz, which is documented by the original drawings. (See Photographs #1, #13, #8, and #3)

The Rope Mill (See Photograph #6), built in 1915, was designed by the office of Hewitt and Emerson, a prominent local architectural firm more noted for its private residences and commercial office structures throughout the Midwest. Drawings of their designs are also on file. The new mill (See Photographs #2, #9, and #10) was built in 1895 by designs from an unknown architect. Two small structures of note are located off Washington Street and were intended to be used to house employees on the site of the plant. (See Photograph #14)

The operation of the Peoria Cordage Company was one of major importance within not only the Midwest and the immediate Peoria area, but also represents important world wide industry involving global sources of supply of raw materials as well as shipment of its finished products to nearly all areas of the globe.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 3.17 acres

Quadrangle name Peoria East

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	6	2	7	9	8	6	0	4	5	0	6	2	8	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

Zone				Easting				Northing						

E

Zone				Easting				Northing						

F

Zone				Easting				Northing						

G

Zone				Easting				Northing						

H

Zone				Easting				Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Leslie H. Kenyon/Larry D. Davis - Architects

organization Kenyon and Associates, Architects date April 14, 1981

street & number 735 N. Knoxville Avenue telephone (309) 674-7121

city or town Peoria state Illinois 61602

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature [Signature]

title Director, Ill. Dept. of Conservation date 8/5/81

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Major Bibliographical References

Appraisal of: Peoria Cordage Company, 1506 S.W. Washington Street, Peoria, Illinois 61602; For: Peoria Cordage Company; By: J. Gary Bontjes, SRPA, R.M.; Date: July 24, 1973

Appraisal of the Industrial Property Located at 1506 S.W. Washington Street, Peoria, Illinois -- Peoria Cordage Building; Appraisers: Harold D. Turley, SREA/MAI and J. Michael Fortune, SRA/RM; January 25, 1980

Peoria Journal-Transcript, 1/14/40

Peoria Journal Star, PM, 12/12/49

Peoria Journal Star, PM, 9/12/56

Peoria Journal Star, PM, 2/8/61

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The property under consideration comprises the real estate located at 1506 S. W. Washington, Peoria, Illinois, and legally described as follows (in brief):

TRACT II

All of Lots 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, and 35, including approximately 168 feet on S. W. Washington Street by a depth to the railroad tracks adjoining Lots 30 and 31 in Rouse's Addition; and the northeasterly 19 feet of Lot 8 and northeasterly 19 feet of Lot 11, together with all of Lots 9 & 12 in Gregg's Addition, all being a Part of the Northeast Quarter of Section 17, Township 8 North, Range 8 East of the Fourth Principal Meridian; situate, lying and being in the City of Peoria, County of Peoria, and State of Illinois.

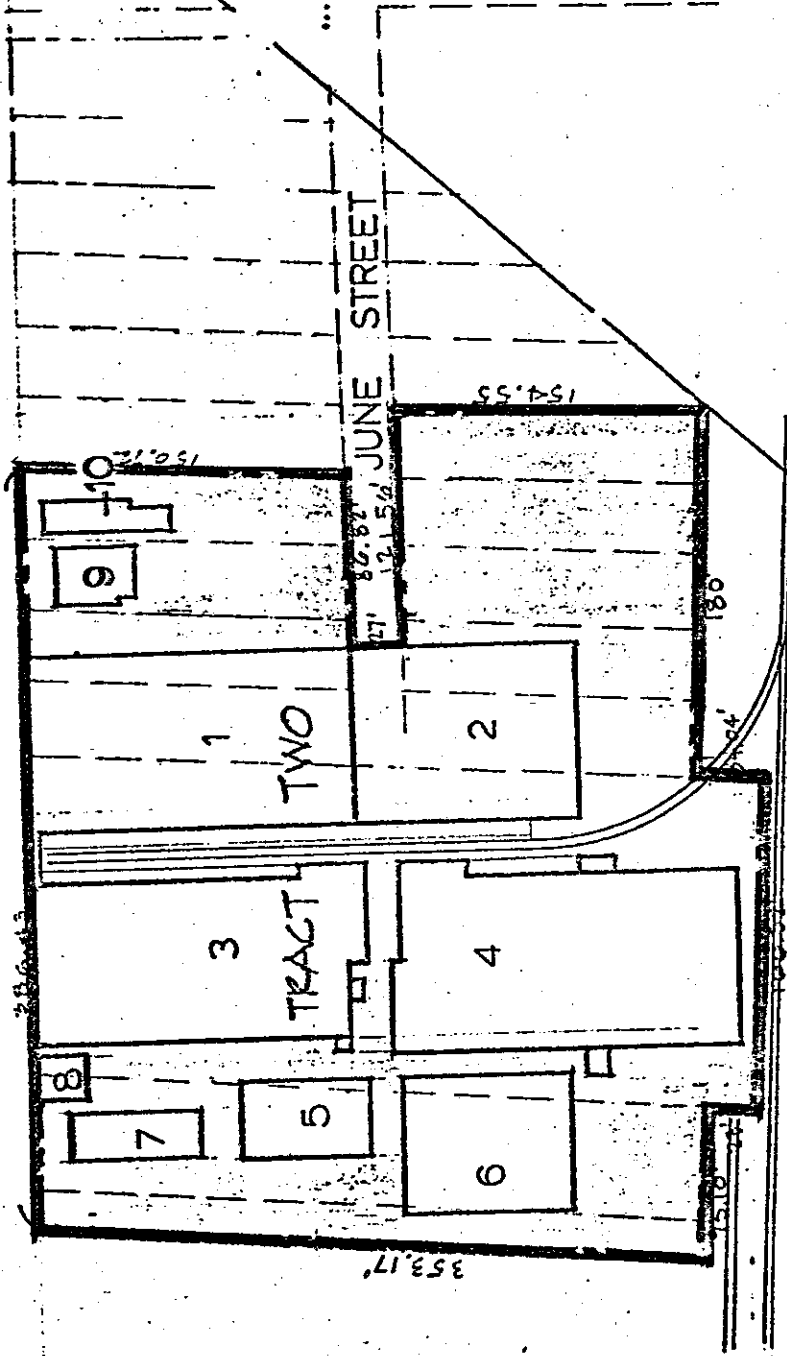
WASHINGTON STREET

STREET

STREET

CEDAR

JUNE STREET



- 1 OLD WAREHOUSE
- 2 ROPE MILL
- 3 OLD MILL
- 4 NEW MILL
- 5 CARD HOUSE
- 6 MACHINE SHOP
- 7 LUNCH HOUSE
- 8 GARAGE
- 9 HOUSE
- 10 HOUSE

SITE MAP FOR
PEORIA CORDAGE COMPANY

scale: 1" = 100'-0"



north

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

STATE ILLINOIS

Date Entered MARCH 19, 1982

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Stearns-Wadsworth House	Batavia vicinity Kane County
First Methodist Church of Batavia	Batavia Kane County
Svea Music Hall	Rockford Winnebago
Rathje, H. A. Mill	Peotone Will County
Gale, Judge Jacob, House	Peoria Peoria County
Peoria Cordage Company	Peoria County

Notified

Honorable Charles H. Percy
Honorable Alan Dixon
Honorable Tom Corcoran
Honorable Lynn Martin
Honorable George M. O'Brien
Honorable Robert H. Michel

✓ State Historic Preservation Officer
Dr. David Kenney
Director, Department of Conservation
State Office Building
400 South Spring Street
Springfield, Illinois 62706

Midwest Regional Office, NPS