

Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating individual properties and districts. Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented enter "N/A" for "not applicable." Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name United States Carriage Company

Other name Kropp Shoe Company/DeVore Mfg. Co.

2. Location

Address 309-319 South Fourth Street

Zip Code 43215

3. Historic Preservation Officer Certification

As the designated authority under the Columbus City Code Chapter 3116 and 3117, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the Columbus Register of Historic Properties and meets the procedural requirements set forth in Columbus City Code Chapter 3117. In my opinion, the property or properties meet(s) does not meet the Columbus Register criteria. I recommend that this property or properties be considered significant locally nationally statewide.

Historic Preservation Officer

Date

In our opinion, the property or properties meet(s) does not meet the Columbus Register criteria.

Historic Resources Commission Chair

Date

4. Columbus City Council Certification

I hereby certify that this property or properties is/are:
 entered in the Columbus Register.
 determined not eligible for the Columbus Register.
 removed from the Columbus Register
 other, (explain) _____

Signature of the City Clerk

Date

I hereby certify that the Franklin County Recorder has been notified that this property or properties has/have been entered into the Columbus Register.

Historic Preservation Officer

Date

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check all boxes that apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

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

Contributing	Non-contributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the Columbus Register

none

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
Manufacturing

Current Functions
Office/partially vacant

7. Description

Architectural Classification
Early 20th Century commercial

Materials
foundation rough hewn limestone

walls brick bearing

roof flat/built up

other heavy timber interior frame

Narrative Description

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

See Continuation Sheets

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable Columbus Register Criteria

A. The design or style of the property's exterior and/or interior is of significance to the historical, architectural or cultural development of the city, state or nation.

B. The property is closely and publicly identified with a person who has significantly contributed to the historical, architectural or cultural development of the city, state, or nation.

C. The property is identified as a significant work of an architect, artisan, engineer, landscape architect or builder whose individual work has influenced the historical, architectural, or cultural development of the city, state, or nation.

D. The property demonstrates significant craftsmanship in architectural design, detail, or use of materials.

E. The property is closely and publicly identified with an event, or series of events, which has influenced the historical, architectural, or cultural development of the city, state, or nation.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in the box if applicable.)

Property is:

less than 40 years of age or achieved significance within past 40 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

See Continuation Sheets

Period or Periods of Significance

1902 - 1935

Significant Date or Dates

1902 – original construction

Significant Person or Persons

(Complete if Criterion 2 is marked)

Architect/Builder

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

See Continuation Sheets

Primary location of additional data

Columbus Historic Preservation Office
 State Historic Preservation Office

University
 Other

Name of repository

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property Less than 1 acre

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property, or properties or district on a continuation sheet.)

The nominated property encompasses Parcels # 010-044614-80 and 010-044614-90 as recorded by the Franklin County Auditor's office.

Boundary Justification

The property boundary encompasses the entire property upon which the building is located.

See Continuation Sheets

11. Form Prepared By:

Nancy Recchie/Historic Preservation Consultant

Name/Title

Benjamin D. Rickey & Co.

Organization

382 East Town Street

Street Address

614/221/0358 or 614/582/8268

Telephone

Columbus

City

OH

State

43215

Zip Code

12. Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Map (A to scale sketch map for individually listed property, or properties or historic district.)

Photographs (Representative black and white photographs of the property, or properties or historic district.)

Additional items (check with the Columbus Historic Preservation Officer for any additional items.)

13. Property Owner

(Use Continuation Sheets to list additional property owners.)

Mercantile Condominiums LLC Eli Adahan, Contact Person

Name/Title

P.O. Box 15397

Street Address

917-484-2676

Telephone

Columbus

City

OH

State

43215

Zip Code

City of Columbus, Department of Development
Planning Division, Historic Preservation Office

Columbus Register of Historic Properties Registration Form

Section Number 7 & 8

Zip Code 43215

7. Narrative Description

The property located at 309-319 South Fourth Street (at Noble Street) in downtown Columbus was built in 1902 for use by the United States Carriage Company (referred to on Sanborn Maps as U.S. Carriage Works). The five-story building is L-shaped in design with the larger portion located along Noble Street and measuring 67 feet by 146 feet; the northernmost third of the building measures 28 feet x 62 feet. The building is located along the sidewalk on both the east and south elevations. A small surface parking area is located behind the building.

The façade, which faces South Fourth Street has a unified design for the entire 95-foot width of the building. The building is of brick bearing wall construction on a stone foundation with a roofline that slopes from front to back. The building utilizes three colors of brick that provide subtle contrast and visual interest. The main body of the building is ironspot brick in a light orange color, while the first two floors of the façade are also ironspot brick in a light beige color, and the detailing around windows on the upper floors of the façade and the south elevation is red brick. The free-standing building measures 12 by 15 bays along the west and south elevations.

The façade (east elevation) has a symmetrical and highly-ordered fenestration pattern, and differentiated detailing on the first two and the upper three floor levels. The brickwork on the first two floors is a slightly lighter color of brick that provides a subtle contrast with the remainder of the building. This area is further distinguished with brick quoins at the corners and on the pilasters that separate the four storefront bays. A stone beltcourse separates the first and second floors of the building, while a slightly more detailed brick and stone horizontal beltcourse separates the second and third floors. The first floor level has three large storefront openings with contemporary but compatible infill consisting of a red sandstone bulkhead, anodized aluminum window framing and decorative painted metal in the transom areas. A recessed entrance is located in the fourth opening, with anodized aluminum framing and the same decorative transom. Contemporary light fixtures flank the entrance. The window openings on the upper four floors are arranged in groups of three. The center six bays project slightly from the building façade, providing further visual separation of the window groupings. The center six bays have smooth sandstone lintels on the third and fourth floors, while the end groupings of windows have brick jackarches with sandstone keystones. The fifth floor windows feature round-arched openings accentuated with hoodmoulds formed with one row of smooth bricks, four rows of rubbed red bricks and outlined with smooth stone surrounds. Corbelled brickwork, also utilizing red bricks and stone to provide contrast, is located below the cornice line and just turns the corner at the north and south end. A plaque with the date "1902" incised in the stone is embedded in the wall below the corbelled brickwork in the center of the building. The windows are one-over-one replacement windows.

The south elevation faces an alley and is much simpler in design. The segmental-arched window openings have flush brick jackarches constructed in a contrasting light red brick. Two

large round-arched openings on the first floor have been infilled with contemporary glass and metal sash. The metal cornice turns the corner and continues for the first half of the building before turning into a simple parapet design. Windows have replacement sash.

The rear elevation (west) measures eight bays. All the windows are rectangular, with simple stone sills and lintels and replacement one-over-one sash.

The north elevation is not very visible, as it is located next to a three-story brick building with a narrow passageway between. The window openings are segmental arched with details matching the south elevation. Some have been blocked in, the others have one-over-one replacement sash.

The interior of the building has been updated and converted into offices. The lobby area is of recent construction and designed to be compatible with the period of the building, with marble flooring and wall surfaces immediately inside the entrance, coffered ceilings in the lobby and double doors with transoms leading into individual office spaces. The metal stairs of a recent date are located in the southeast corner of the building, next to the elevator lobby. Even with the updating of the interior, the original design of the space is discernable. For example, the stone walls and stone piers in the basement are still visible, as is the brick vaulting in the ceiling of the first floor in one of the office areas. The upper floors consisted of exposed brick walls, wood floors, and heavy timber posts with chamfering and heavy wooden timber joists. These elements are visible in many areas throughout the building.

At one time there were commercial structures on both sides of South Fourth Street. Today, there is a surface parking lot on the south side of Noble Street and a one-story commercial building with large parking lot in front across South Fourth Street. This building is an important element in the historic streetscape that continues north and includes a late 19th century commercial building at the southwest corner and the former Hartman Hotel on the northwest corner of South Fourth and East Main Street.

8. Statement of Significance

The United States Carriage Company building located at 309-319 South Fourth Street is eligible for listing in the Columbus Register of Historic Properties under Criteria D and E. The building is a handsome early 20th century industrial building, designed with attention to detail and a high level of craftsmanship. It was built for one of the city's buggy makers that became nationally known in the early 20th century for its production of hearses and ambulances, especially the Great Eagle hearse, which made the first cross-country funeral trip from New York to San Francisco in 1913.

The building, dating from 1902, was designed for industrial use, yet its façade exhibits an unusually high level of detail and craftsmanship. Noteworthy elements include the subtle use of contrasting ironspot brick to highlight details; the craftsmanship of decorative brickwork found in the quoins on the first two levels, around the round arched windows on the fifth floor, and the corbelled area beneath the cornice; extensive use of carved sandstone trim; and the ordered and symmetrical arrangement of the façade. The storefronts and entrance have been updated, but they are located within the original openings and are designed to be contemporary but compatible with the character of the building. This five-story building is constructed with brick bearing walls on a stone foundation. The interior brick-arch ceiling on the first floor and the heavy wooden timber construction on upper floors is indicative of the open spaces and load-bearing capacity required of multi-level industrial manufacturing. The building retains a very high degree of architectural integrity and contributes significantly to the streetscape on South Fourth Street. Research did not yield the name of the architect, although it was clearly designed by someone with expertise in design and construction.

The United States Carriage Company building is associated with the industrial history of Columbus. From its construction in 1902 by the United States Carriage Company to 1935, when it was sold by the

DeVore Manufacturing Company, a chemical firm. Until that year it had always been in industrial use; after 1935 a series of commercial enterprises occupied it.

The United States Carriage Company was founded by Charles F. Myers, a German immigrant, who arrived in Columbus in 1869. After an apprenticeship with one or more of the city's many buggy makers, he formed his own company in the late 1870s. The company expanded in the mid-1890s, but a fire in 1896 destroyed the original manufacturing facility at this address. By the turn of the century, Myers had a disagreement with one of his partners and purchased all of the company's shares and brought his son Frederick Christopher into the firm. The nominated property was built in 1902 and served as the company's headquarters and manufacturing facility until its demise and sale of all of its assets on March 2, 1917.

Little has been written about Charles F. Myers in publications about the city's business leaders in the late 19th and early 20th century. However, one of his greatest legacies is the house he built for himself on Bryden Road in 1896. It is, without question, one of the finest residential buildings in the City of Columbus. Unfortunately, he died a few years after its completion, while on an extended trip to Germany.

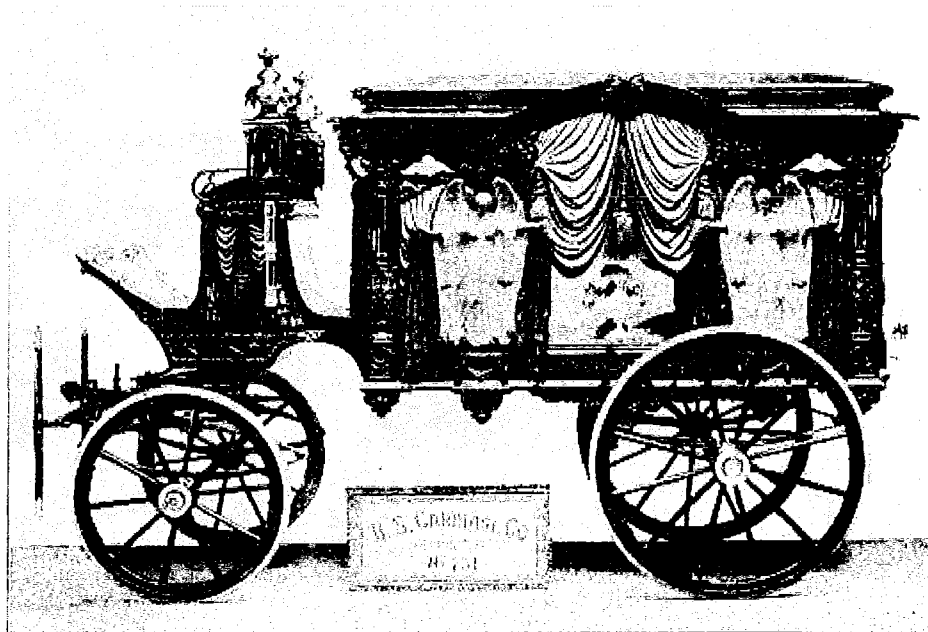


The Charles F. Myers House at 1330 Bryden Road, in the
Bryden Road Historic District
(Source: Jeffrey Darbee)

The company was small compared to the Columbus Buggy Works, which was one of the largest buggy makers in the world in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but it found its success in specialization. The company began building service vehicles – especially ambulances and hearses. A newspaper article in the Sandusky (Ohio) Star on March 16, 1901, described one of the vehicles in detail:

Charles J. Krupp this morning received from Columbus one of the finest funeral cars ever manufactured. It is from the shops of the United States Carriage Company, of Columbus, and it was made for exhibition purposes, the finest of workmanship and material is found in every detail. The car is mounted on rubber tired, silver-trimmed wheels, and the body is of the most exquisitely hand-carved Venetian ebony. Upon each side are three lights of heavy French beveled and bent glass, made in Europe, and the panels are of the Gothic style. The driver's seat is trimmed in black hammer cloth, marked with the initial K. The interior is of solid mahogany, with unobtrusively rich silver and gold trimmings. The whole is surmounted by a mosque roof and the general effect is one of elegance and simplicity.¹

¹ Theobald, Mark. www.coachbuilt.com , 2004.



This is an example of one model of horse-drawn hearse produced by the U.S. Carriage Company.
(Source: pinterest)

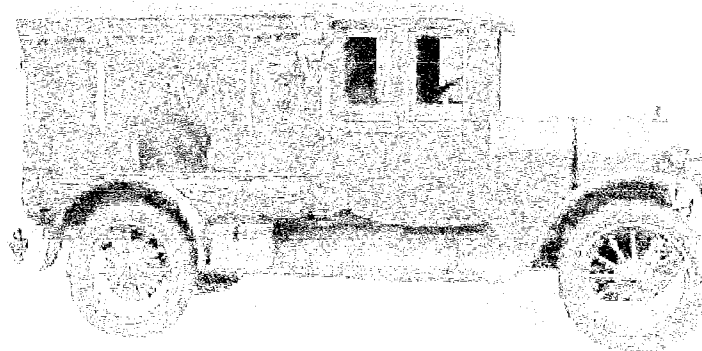
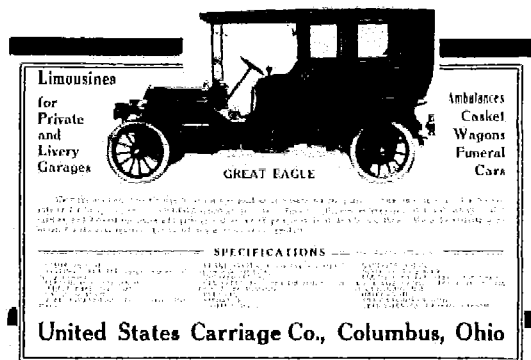


This eight-column design was also produced by the United States Carriage Company.
(Source: www.hearse.com)

The vehicle described and the photos above were horse-drawn, as was typical of the period. The construction of carriages involved skills and laborers that could be easily accommodated in a multi-story facility. Vehicles were hand-built one-by-one. By the early 20th century, however, horse-drawn buggies and carriages were giving way to motorized vehicles. Many small buggy manufacturers attempted to make the transition; the United States Carriage Company was one of them. The company became known nationally for its Great Eagle line, which was produced beginning in 1910. One of these vehicles achieved fame during the first cross-country funeral trip in 1913. A book titled *American Funeral Cars and Ambulances Since 1900* stated,

This was the year that the new auto hearse began to prove its reliability to the skeptics. In August, 1913, a new Great Eagle funeral coach began the first cross-country funeral trip. Beginning in New York City, the coach traveled the paths and muddy lanes that served as roads to San Francisco in the course of the month. Weighing 6,500 pounds during the trip, the coach made the journey without difficulty or mechanical problems, thus reinforcing the fact that the motor age had truly dawned for the funeral service.²

² McPherson, Thomas A. *American Funeral Cars & Ambulances Since 1900*. Glen Ellyn, IL: Crestline Publishing, 1973



Examples of Great Eagle vehicles produced by United States Carriage Company. The advertisement on the left was from 1910.

(Source: www.earlyamericanautomobiles.com)

By 1913, the company produced other service cars, including limousines, taxis, and police patrol wagons. Although the United States Carriage Company had an excellent reputation in Ohio and the Midwest, it proved difficult to produce motorized vehicles in quantity – a dilemma shared by many other automobile manufacturers during the early 20th century. Even the Columbus Buggy Co., one of the largest in the world in the late 19th century, did not survive more than a few years after making the transition to mechanized vehicles. This was probably due to a number of factors – a different manufacturing process, the need for a wider variety of types of parts, and increasing competition from well-established manufacturers. There was significant consolidation in the automobile industry in the first two decades of the 20th century. The United States Carriage Company was placed in receivership in 1915 and all of its assets were sold in 1917.

In addition to buggy making, Columbus was known as a shoe-manufacturing center in the early 20th century. While the transition to mechanized vehicles permanently diminished the buggy making industry, the shoe manufacturing industry was growing. The H.C. Godman Shoe Company was founded in the 1880s and built a large factory on West Broad Street in 1901. Robert F. and Harry Wolfe worked for Godman before establishing the Wolfe Brothers Shoe Company in 1890. They went on to purchase two newspapers and became the influential Columbus media family with newspapers, radio and television stations. It is said that WBNS call letters for their television and radio station stand for Wolf Brothers News and Shoes. In 1914, William Kropp, who had worked for the C & E Shoe Company, started the Kropp Shoe Company with \$150,000 in stock and a location at 111-117 East Long Street. In 1920, the company purchased the former United States Carriage Company building at 309-319 South Fourth Street. By the time Kropp began his business, there were at least eight shoe manufacturing companies in the city, with Godman being the largest. The Kropp Company was mentioned briefly in several trade publications through the early 1920s. On February 3, 1926, a front page newspaper article in *The Evening News* announced, "Shoe Company Manager a Suicide in Columbus." Kropp committed suicide at his home. "No motive for Kropp's act has been advanced." It appears that the company closed its doors soon thereafter and the building was sold to the DeVore Manufacturing Company in 1927.

The DeVore Manufacturing Company produced chemical products and pharmaceuticals. The company was established in 1917 with \$60,000 in stock, and P. R. DeVore as its president. *The Advertising Age and Mail Order Journal* of 1917 had an advertisement stating "Let us manufacture your chemical toilet, medical, household, and automobile specialties for you, putting them up under your name and address complete. . . ." The company was fined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1932 for claiming false curative and therapeutic effects on labeling."³ Three years later, the building was sold.

The building had a variety of owners after 1935 and had commercial, retail and office uses. It is worthy of recognition as an excellent and well-preserved example of early 20th century industrial architecture in

³ www.archive.nem.nih.gov

downtown Columbus, with its close historical associations major industries – especially buggy making and automobiles – that helped shape the city of today.

9. Bibliography

Baist's Property Atlas of Columbus. 1899, 1910, 1920.

Columbus Fashion Story – A Historical Retrospective Celebrating the City's Bicentennial, 1812-2012.
The Ohio State University.

Columbus City Directories.

Hunter, Bob. *A Historical Guidebook to Old Columbus: Finding the Past in the Present in Ohio's Capital City.* Athens, OH: Ohio University Press. 2012.

Industrial Shippers Guide – Norfolk & Western Railway Company, Agricultural and Industrial Department. 1916.

McPherson, Thomas A. *American Funeral Cars & Ambulances Since 1900.* Glen Ellyn, IL: Crestline Publishing, 1973.

Shoe and Leather Facts. Vol. 24, 1922.

Shoe and Leather Reporter Annual 1919.

Shoe and Leather Reporter, December 24, 1914.

The Evening News. February 3, 1926.

Theobald, Mark. "Great Eagle 1910-1915, United States Carriage Company, 1870s-1917, Columbus, Ohio," www.coachbuilt.com

www.archive.nem/nih.gov

Photo Key

1. Overall view of the façade (east) and south elevations of the building.
2. View of the south elevation, looking east toward South Fourth Street.
3. View of the west (rear) elevation.
4. View of the west elevation of the L-shaped portion of building.
5. View of storefronts.
6. View of main entrance.
7. Detail of brickwork forming quoins on lower two levels of building.
8. Detail of sandstone lintels over windows on second floor and center six bays of third and fourth floors of building.
9. Detail of red brick jackarch with sandstone keystone on three bays at either end of the third and fourth floors of building.
10. Detail of round arched hoodmoulds on fifth floor windows.
11. Detail of corbelled brickwork.
12. Detail of date stone.
13. View of basement with stone foundation and piers.
14. View of main entrance from entrance lobby.
15. View of main lobby from entrance.
16. View of ceiling in lobby.
17. View of marble ceiling and floor in entrance area of lobby.

18. View looking toward elevator lobby.
19. Brick-arch ceiling on first floor.
20. View of metal staircase in southeast corner of building.
21. View of exposed brick walls.
22. View of office space showing original heavy timber construction.
23. Detail of wood post and beam structure.