

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

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

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

1. Name

historic Garvin Park

and/or common

2. Location

street & number North Main ^{St.} and Morgan Avenue ___ not for publication

city, town Evansville ___ vicinity of congressional district Eighth

state Indiana code 18 county Vanderburgh code 163

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name City of Evansville

street & number 302 City-County Building

city, town Evansville ___ vicinity of state Indiana

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Vanderburgh County Recorder

street & number City-County Building

city, town Evansville state Indiana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title National Register has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 29 March 1979 * federal state county local

depository for survey records Department of the Interior

city, town Washington, DC 20240 state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> * original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> * good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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

Garvin Park marked the genesis of Evansville's park and recreation system. Planned and laid out in 1915, the park was a naturalistic landscape associated with the period's picturesque impulse. The ninety acres contained a variety of indigenous trees and shrubs arrayed along low hills and outlining grassy meadows. (See Photo 1.) Located hard on the edge of Pigeon Creek, the park capitalized on former tributary ravines and washes to create curving drives, umbrageous groves, vistas, and a pond, 'Evansmere,' the park's centralizing element.

For decades before the city's acquisition of the land, Garvin Park served the northside as a privately owned pleasure grounds. Known then as Garvin's Grove, the tract was "budding with possibilities as a recreation and fresh air spot, but littered with decaying timber and in large part not only uninviting to picnickers but inaccessible as well."

The challenge was met by city officials and their architects, American Park Builders. Fill for the gullies which traversed the grounds came from winding roads graded along the ridges of several hills. A concrete reinforced dam was built along the flood-prone, polluted creek. A five acre artificial lake, stocked by the federal government, was created within the largest ravine. (See Photo 2.)

The nature of the park's surroundings also determined the selection of plantings and the placement of designed features. Garvin's Grove was situated at the terminus of Main Street, several miles from the center of town and unincorporated until 1915. The principal entrance had been laid out as a five hundred foot extension of Main Street, planted with a double row of trees and terminated with a fountain. (See Photo 3.) The entrance road was then divided into two separate drives, looping the park and crossing the new lake dam on the west side of the park. A ten foot grassy sward was cut to flank the roads.

Industry bordered the park on all sides, and a belt line railroad separated the park from the town to the south. (See Photo 4.) News reports described the designers' approach to the problem:

The giant oaks on the west border of the park will serve as a complete screen to the factory district to the west of the park and the trees along the north and east borders will have the same effect.

The pleasure seeker in the park will at all times be confronted with only natural scenes as the artificialities of the city will be screened from view on all sides.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> * community planning	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> * politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1915 **Builder/Architect** Myron H. West

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Evansville's Garvin Park was a significant resource for both political and architectural reasons. The city joined the park and boulevard movement well after Olmsted's demise, but Garvin Park and its attendant pleasure drives nevertheless fell firmly within the circle of his influence. Yet even more important was the park's association with the city's energetic Progressive mayor, Benjamin Bossee.

Bossee's park plan for the city began with Garvin Park and furnished free recreation and breathing-space for working class northsiders, but eventually embraced all sections of the metropolitan area. In his annual report for 1915, Bossee had praise for his park board and declared the following: the board

will leave a record in park extension and improvements to be envied and will leave to incoming administrations a comprehensive plan, which will assure Evansville the kind of park system that she is entitled to have.

As much as Bossee believed, however, in the good that park space could provide for the poor or laboring classes, the mayor's reasons for pushing the work forward were not altogether altruistic. Bossee realized that the city was lagging in park improvements and that adding park acreage would be increasingly expensive as the city deferred action. Bossee correctly perceived the trend in other cities where park land purchased cheaply on the outskirts of developed areas would usher in a series of private improvements such as fashionable houses, churches, shops and the like. The benefit to the city was not only in caring for those living and working in crowded conditions, but also in attracting investments and widening its tax base. Bossee felt so strongly, in fact, about the success and future of Garvin Park and the nearby stadium named for him, that he contributed over \$10,000 of his own money to the total park cost of \$100,000.

The role of American Park Builders in this Progressive enterprise is unfortunately sketchy. The Chicago firm was apparently nationwide in scope. It produced designs for parks in Chicago, St. Louis, and Cleveland in addition to Garvin Park.

The architect for the Evansville project was Myron Howard West (b. 1880). West appeared before the park board in February 1915 to discuss his plans for Garvin's Grove. "The designs were prepared with a view of retaining all the natural beauty of the park," reported the Evansville Courier. West, an accomplished designer and administrator, gave substance to Bossee's forward-looking spirit.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 87 **ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**
 Quadrangle name Evansville North Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

UTM NOT VERIFIED

A	1 1 6	4 5 1 0	7 1 7 1 0	4 1 2	0 1 5	6 1 0 1 0	B	1 1 6	4 5 1 0	7 1 5 1 5	4 1 2	0 1 4	8 1 7 1 0
	Zone	Easting		Northing			Zone	Easting		Northing			
C	1 6	4 5 0	1 4 0	4 2 0	4 8 9 0		D	1 6	4 5 0	2 6 0	4 2 0	5 6 1 0	
E							F						
G							H						

Verbal boundary description and justification

See attached continuation sheet.

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

state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Joan Marchand and Douglas Stern
 organization Department of Metropolitan Development date 4 May 1979
 street & number 308 City-County Building telephone (812) 426-5487
 city or town Evansville state Indiana

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

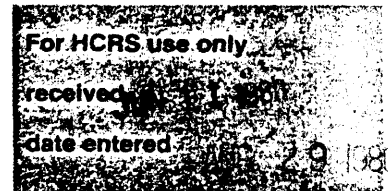
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature [Signature]
 title State Historic Preservation Officer date 4-21-80

For HCRS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
 Keeper of the National Register [Signature] date 8/29/80
 Attest: W. Ray Luce date 8/26/80
 Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet

Item number 7

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The immediate environment of the park changed slightly in the 1920's however, as modest but neat bungalows were constructed with a park view. (See Photo 5.)

Few original built features--bridges, walks and the like--have survived. Rustic timber foot bridges ("untouched by saw or plane") crossed the narrower parts of the pond and have been replaced with bridges of the concrete and stone variety. (See Photo 6.) A greenhouse, shelter, and wading pond have also been demolished or replaced. (See Photo 7.) A WPA-era bandstand supplanted the one which first occupied the music grove near the entrance. (See Photo 8.)

Though some encroachment has occurred and only a few architectural features have survived intact, the park clearly has maintained the spirit and detail of its early-twentieth century origins. Garvin Park remains an important and vivid historic landscape. (See Photo 9.)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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DATE ENTERED AUG 29 1980

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Bibliography:

Newspapers:

- "Benjamin Bosse." Evansville Courier, 2 January 1916
- "Big Things Done by the Mayor for Moral Betterment of the City." Evansville Courier, 4 November 1917.
- "Gift to Evansville." Evansville Courier, 8 June 1915
- "Mayor Gives \$6,000 to Park." Evansville Courier, 8 June 1915
- "Movable Band Stand for Garvin Park." Evansville Courier, 28 April 1916.
- "Musical Retreat of Garvin." Evansville Courier, (?) March 1915.
- "New Water Slide in the Southwest Part of Garvin Park Gift of Mayor Bosse." Evansville Courier, 7 July 1916
- "Park Board Acts to Obtain Tract Close to Garvin." Evansville Courier, 7 September 1951.
- "\$30,000 to be Spent to Beautify Garvin." Evansville Courier, 3 February 1915.
- "To Build Tennis Courts at Park." Evansville Courier, 15 April 1921.
- "To Finish Garvin Park and Buy New Land on West Side Proposed." Evansville Courier, 2 January 1916.
- "WPA to Revamp Garvin Park in \$78,000 Project." Evansville Courier, 28 March 1940.

Government Documents:

- City Plan Commission (Harland Bartholomew and Associates). A System of Recreation Facilities: Evansville, Indiana. 1927.
- Evansville, Indiana. Annual Reports, 1913-1918.
- Vanderburgh County, Indiana, Recorder. Deed Indexes and Records.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

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An Illustrated Plat Book of Vanderburgh and Warrick Counties, Indiana.

Evansville: Tillman & Fuller Publishing Company, 1899; reprinted,

Evansville: Unigraphic, Inc., and Friends of Willard Library, 1975.

Gilbert, Frank. History of the City of Evansville and Vanderburgh County.

2 vols. Chicago: The Pioneer Publishing Company, 1910.

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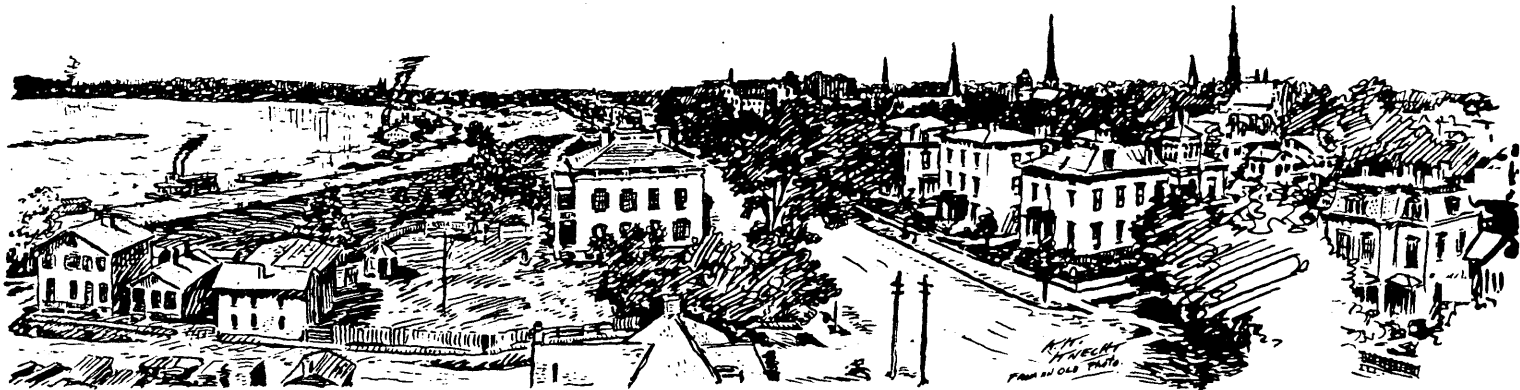
CONTINUATION SHEET

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Commencing at a point on the north line of Morgan Avenue 9 feet east of the east line of North Main Street; thence from said place of beginning in a westerly direction along upon the north line of Morgan Avenue to a point where said line intersects with the east property line of Whirlpool Plant #1; thence in a northerly direction along upon the east property line of Whirlpool Plant #1 to a point where said line intersects with the north property line of said plant; thence in a northwesterly direction along upon the north property line of said plant to its northern most point; thence in a northerly direction along upon a line to a point where said line intersects with the west line of an unnamed park road; thence in a northeasterly direction along upon the west line of said unnamed park road to a point where said line intersects with the east line of Herndon Drive; thence in a southerly direction along upon the east line of Herndon Drive and continuing in an easterly direction along upon the north line of Herndon Drive to a point where said line intersects with the east line of North Heidelberg Avenue; thence in a southerly direction along upon the east line of North Heidelberg Avenue to a point where said line intersects with the south line of Maxwell Avenue; thence in a northwesterly direction along upon the south line of Maxwell Avenue and continuing along upon the south line of Maxwell Avenue extended to a point 9 feet east of the east line of North Main Street; thence in a southerly direction to the place of beginning.

...Manners and modes of life

Riverside Drive about 1880. Lower left, the Ahlcring sawmill, then the Barnes-Armstrong residence, which became the first Museum. To the right of the street, the fine old mansions, most of them still looking the same. Pen drawing by Karl Kae Kuecht from a panoramic photograph in the Museum.



The Casselberry-Runcie house at 206 S.E. First St., torn down within the past year. Isaac Casselberry built it about 1846. It was classed as a "double town house," a style of which very few are left in Evansville.

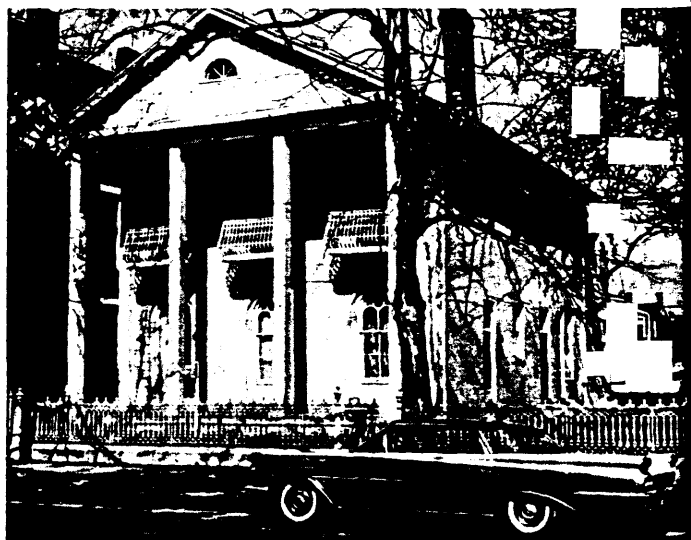


The former home of Francis Joseph Reitz at First and Chestnut Streets. Built about 1871 in the French Imperial style and entirely unchanged in appearance. After his death it became the property of the Daughters of Isabella, and is now the official residence of Bishop Henry J. Grimmelman.



The fine old house at First Avenue and Iowa Street, built in 1869 by William Heilman, president of the Heilman Machine Works. Was long occupied by Mayor Charles F. Heilman, whose term was 1910-14. Now the property of St. Vincent's Day Nursery.

The former home of Thomas E. Garvin at 214 S.E. First St. Built between 1858 and 1860 in the Greek Temple style, and the only genuine example left in Evansville.



Sponsored by
RIVERSIDE SUPPLY CO., INC.

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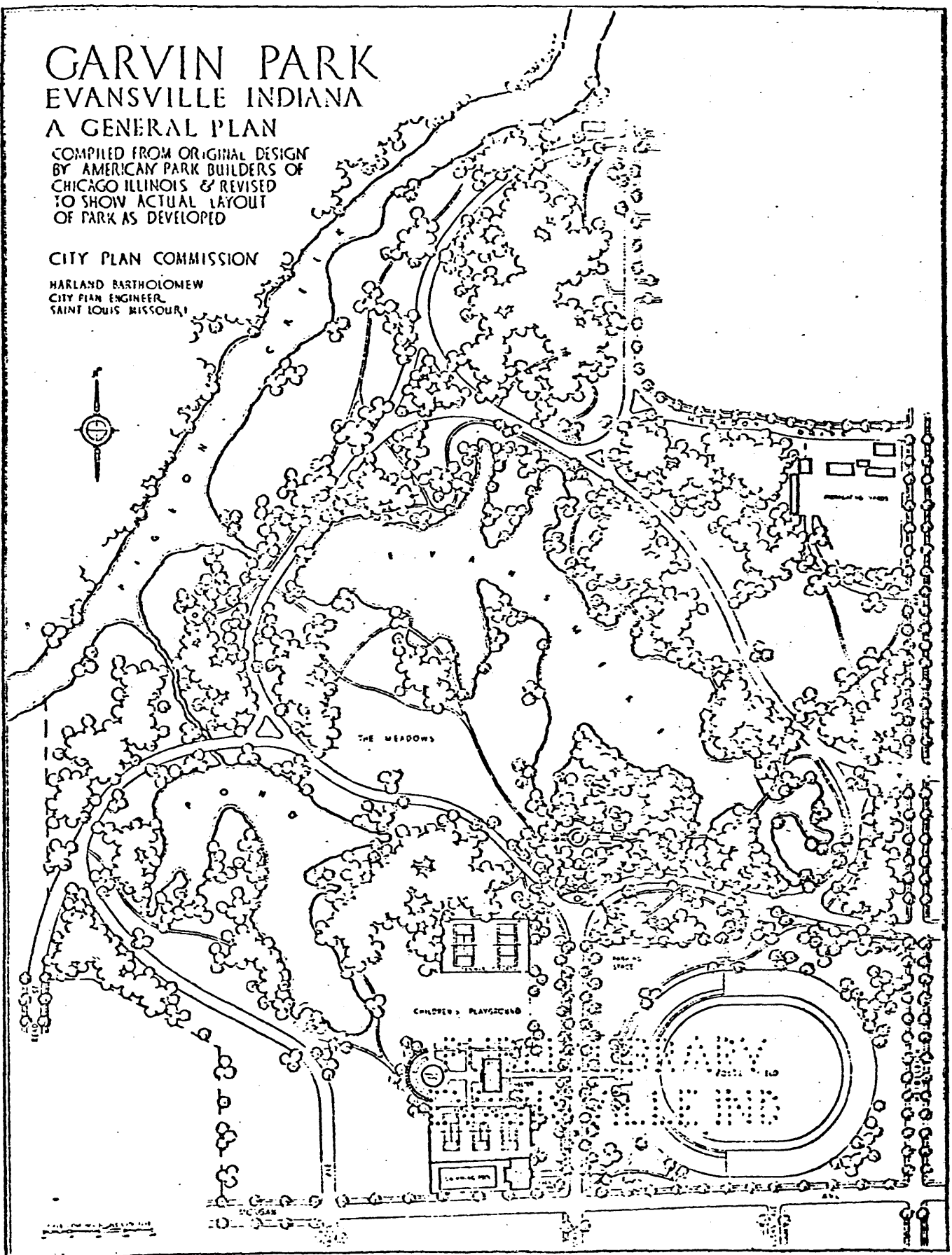
GARVIN PARK EVANSVILLE INDIANA

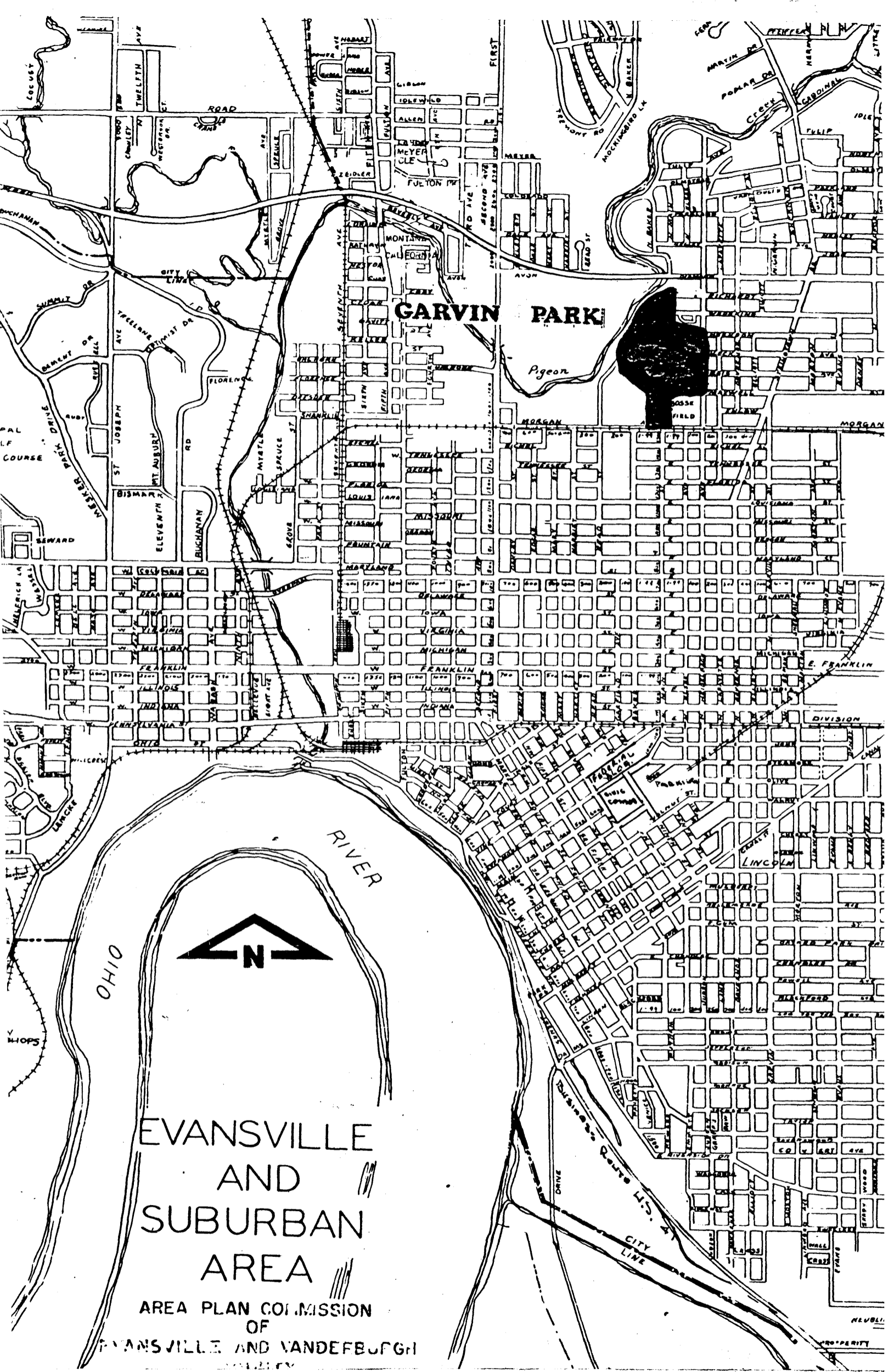
A GENERAL PLAN

COMPILED FROM ORIGINAL DESIGN
BY AMERICAN PARK BUILDERS OF
CHICAGO ILLINOIS & REVISED
TO SHOW ACTUAL LAYOUT
OF PARK AS DEVELOPED

CITY PLAN COMMISSION

HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW
CITY PLAN ENGINEER,
SAINT LOUIS MISSOURI





GARVIN PARK

Pigeon

OHIO

RIVER



EVANSVILLE
AND
SUBURBAN
AREA

AREA PLAN COMMISSION
OF

EVANSVILLE AND VANDEBURG COUNTY

History of Vanderburgh Co
Brant & Fuller 1889
Central Library
BIOGRAPHICAL. 977.233
H67v

IN LAW, an eminent jurist, whose life made him a conspicuous figure in the history of Indiana, was a native of New Britain, Conn., born October 28, 1796. His father was no less notable, his grandfather being a member of the first continental congress, and his father, Lyman, as a lawyer and as a congressman, a prominent man in Connecticut. He was careful in the education of his son John, and the latter received his earlier training at the school of Jonathan Pomeroy, an enterprising man in an educational way, who devoted his culture shaped at Yale college to the instruction of students for that institute. John entered Yale at the age of fourteen and graduated in usual time, distinguishing himself especially as a classical student. He then read law in his father's office, and was admitted to the bar in 1817. At the fall of the next year he opened an office at Evansville, and within a year after his arrival in Indiana, stood prominent as a successful practitioner. As a criminal lawyer he was especially famous, and his fame spread rapidly throughout a wide region. For several years he was prosecuting attorney in nearly all the courts of the old first congressional district, and he served for a considerable period as circuit judge. His powers of analysis and his mental inspection rendered him an able lawyer. The gravity and dignity that he assumed in his official capacities gave him in social life to a bright animation that drew about him an interested circle, and aided no little in his advancement. During the administration of President Jackson he was register of the land office, and previously having served as receiver of the public money. In 1851 he removed to Evansville, and at this time was engaged in several land-title controversies, by the conduct of which he won renown. In 1861 he was elected by this district as representative

in congress, for which he was the democratic candidate, and was re-elected in 1863. He was an able congressman, though in the minority exerted a powerful influence, and numbered among his friends the "great commoner" Thaddeus Stevens.

THOMAS EDGAR GARVIN, attorney at law, Evansville, Ind., was born at Gettysburg, Adams county, Penn., September 15, 1826. He is a son of John and Providence Garvin, of Presbyterian faith, and of Scotch-Irish extraction. At the age of fourteen he entered Mount Saint Mary's College, at Emmetsburg, Md., where he completed the course of study, after four years' diligent application, and graduated June, 1844. In the autumn of the same year Mr. Garvin removed to Evansville, Ind., where he has ever since resided. He has seen the city of his adoption gradually grow and increase in commercial importance till it ranks among the great industrial places of the country, and second in population to none, except the capital, in the state of Indiana. Soon after Mr. Garvin came to Evansville he began the study of law in the office of Hon. Conrad Baker, ex-governor of the state of Indiana, and one of the leading lawyers of the country. Destitute of patronage it became necessary for Mr. Garvin to make his own way, and raise funds by his own efforts to pursue the study of law. This he did by accepting a position as teacher in the public schools. Here he realized all the experiences of the early schools of Indiana made so famous by Edward Eggleston in his "Hoosier School Master." Mr. Garvin has a vivid recollection of the pioneer times, which he now considers as forming an interesting epoch in his career. March 27, 1846, after an examination, he was licensed by Judge James Lockhart and John Law, of the fourth and seventh judicial circuits, respectively, and

entered regularly upon the practice of law. Immediately after this event Mr. Garvin formed a partnership with ex-Gov. Baker, before mentioned, under the firm name of Baker & Garvin. This partnership was pleasantly and profitably continued for eleven years, and while it lasted these gentlemen were employed as counsel in some of the most important cases ever adjudicated in the state. Mr. Garvin has always been esteemed as a careful and vigilant attorney, in whose hands it was safe to trust the most intricate and complicated litigations, and in consequence his clients have been among the most prominent and influential citizens of Evansville and contiguous country. November 11, 1849, he was married to Miss Cornelia M. Morris, at Penn Yan, Yates county, New York. Mrs. Garvin is a direct descendant of the Morris family of Morristown, New Jersey, and of revolutionary fame. In 1862 Mr. Garvin was elected to represent Vanderburgh county in the state legislature, where he served his constituents with credit to himself and the community which had elected him. Mr. Garvin was among the first stockholders of the First National Bank of Evansville, and for many years one of its directors, a position he still holds. In 1876 his *alma mater*, Mount St. Mary's college, conferred upon him the degree of LL. D., a distinction rarely granted, and of which Mr. Garvin should feel justly proud. The later years of his life have been mainly spent as a real estate attorney and in speculation. He is a man of much application and greatly devoted to the interests of those who intrust their business to him. It is not alone in the legal profession that Mr. Garvin has distinguished himself. In the department of polite literature and natural history he takes high rank. He was one of the original trustees of the Willard library, and one of

the board to whom the property was deeded. He has always taken a lively interest in the welfare of this institution, and has been for many years one of its chief executive officers. He is well known in Indiana, and has many warm personal friends. As an example of self-made men Mr. Garvin furnishes us a rare type. All in all his career has been one of uniform success and there are few citizens in the state more entitled to a place in American biography than Thomas Edgar Garvin.

JOHN J. CHANDLER, who in his prime stood among the foremost lawyers of Indiana, was born in New York city, November 17, 1815, and died at Evansville, April 15, 1872. The less than thirty-six years of manhood within those limits were crowded with achievements in his profession which won for him a wide renown and made him one of the most prominent men of Evansville. He was the son of Asaph Chandler, a native of Vermont, who moved to New York at an early day, and obtained command and ownership of a ship in the New York and Liverpool and New York and Havre lines, and was also at one time a merchant in the city. The son soon distinguished himself by a great interest in books and study, and when the family removed to Nashville, Tenn., in 1834, he was ready to enter the university there. This institution was then under the presidency of the late Dr. Philip Lindsey. Here the young student soon attracted notice as an essayist on political economy and mental philosophy, and as a skillful debater. He graduated in 1836 at the head of his class, and as the Seminole war was then the most prominent thing to attract the energy of a young man he raised a company and went to the scene of action. He participated in several important engagements, and was distinguished for bravery and ability as a