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SEP 7 1994

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

United States Department of Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Main Street Historic District

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Main Street, Ann Street, N/A not for publication  
Louisa Street, Wells Street

city or town Darlington N/A vicinity

state Wisconsin code WI county Lafayette code 065 zip code 53530

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination    request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets    does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant    nationally    statewide x locally. (   See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title  
Jeffrey M. Dean  
State Historic Preservation Officer-WI

8/29/94  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register criteria.  
(   See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

State or Federal agency and bureau

Main Street Historic District  
Name of Property

Lafayette County, Wisconsin  
County and State

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:  
 entered in the National Register.  
    \_\_\_ See continuation sheet.  
    \_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register.  
    \_\_\_ See continuation sheet.  
    \_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register.  
    \_\_\_ See continuation sheet.  
    \_\_\_ removed from the National Register.  
    \_\_\_ other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper      Date of Action

Edson H. Beall      10/7/94

Entered in the  
National Register

#### 5. Classification

Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as apply)  
 private  
 public-local  
\_\_\_ public-state  
\_\_\_ public-federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)  
\_\_\_ building(s)  
 district  
\_\_\_ site  
\_\_\_ structure  
\_\_\_ object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
40	11	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
40	11	Total

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

#### 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE: Specialty Store  
COMMERCE: Financial Institution  
COMMERCE: Restaurant  
GOVERNMENT: Post Office  
GOVERNMENT: Fire Station

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE: Specialty Store  
COMMERCE: Financial Institution  
COMMERCE: Restaurant  
GOVERNMENT: Fire Station

#### 7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Italianate  
Commercial Style

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE  
walls STONE  
BRICK  
roof ASPHALT  
other METAL  
CONCRETE

#### Narrative Description

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

Main Street Historic District  
Name of Property

Lafayette County, Wisconsin  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

Applicable National Register Criteria  
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the  
criteria qualifying the property for the  
National Register listing.)

A Property is associated with events  
that have made a significant  
contribution to the broad patterns of  
our history.

B Property is associated with the lives  
of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive  
characteristics of a type, period, or  
method of construction or represents  
the work of a master, or possesses  
high artistic values, or represents a  
significant and distinguishable entity  
whose components lack individual  
distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to  
yield, information important in  
prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations  
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

A owned by a religious institution or  
used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or  
structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age achieved  
significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

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

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

Bibliography

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

Areas of Significance  
(Enter categories from  
instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Period of Significance

1858-ca.1940

1858-ca.1940

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is  
marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Riley (Frank) and Siberz  
(Lewis), architects

Main Street Historic District  
Name of Property

Lafayette County, Wisconsin  
County and State

Previous Documentation on File (NPS):  
 preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested  
 previously listed in the National Register  
 previously determined eligible by the National Register  
 designated a National Historic Landmark  
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:  
 State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State Agency  
 Federal Agency  
 Local government  
 University  
 Other  
Name of repository:  
WI Inventory of Historic Places

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 8 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>1/6</u>	<u>7/3/6/1/1/0</u>	<u>4/7/2/9/1/7/0</u>	3	<u>1/6</u>	<u>7/3/6/2/2/0</u>	<u>4/7/2/8/9/2/0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>1/6</u>	<u>7/3/6/2/1/0</u>	<u>4/7/2/9/1/7/0</u>	4	<u>1/6</u>	<u>7/3/6/1/1/0</u>	<u>4/7/2/8/9/2/0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
					<u>x</u>	see continuation sheet	

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Elizabeth L. Miller, Consultant (608-233-5942) for  
organization State Historical Society of Wisc. date 3-24-1994  
street & number 816 State Street telephone 608-264-6512  
city or town Madison state WI zip code 53706

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Main Street Historic District  
Name of Property

Lafayette County, Wisconsin  
County and State

**Property Owner**

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Various (see list attached)  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Darlington state WI zip code 53530

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

NPS Form 10-900-a  
(Rev. 8-86)  
Wisconsin Word Processing Format  
(Approved 3/87)

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Main Street Historic District  
Darlington, Lafayette County, WI

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INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION

The Main Street Historic District is located in Darlington, Lafayette County, Wisconsin. It encompasses Darlington's downtown commercial district, and includes those properties facing Main Street along the three blocks beginning at the intersection of Main and Alice Streets and running north to just north of Louisa Street. Several commercial and civic buildings just off of Main Street have also been included. The Main Street Historic District consists primarily of two-story brick and stone commercial buildings built between 1858 and ca.1940. Forty percent of the buildings in the district are Italianate or Italianate-influenced. Another 20 percent are Twentieth Century Commercial buildings. There are also several examples showing the influence of either the Queen Anne or the Neo-Classical Revival style. Of the 51 properties in the district, 40 are contributing and 11 are noncontributing.

SETTING

Darlington is located on the banks of the Pecatonica River in southwestern Wisconsin. It is the county seat of Lafayette County. The Main Street Historic District is Darlington's original downtown. Main Street crosses the Pecatonica one block south of the district. Historically, this block flooded frequently, so few buildings were built here. There are now several commercial buildings in this block, most of them built after 1970. From the bottom of Main Street, the Pecatonica sweeps west-northwest. North and east of the river, the land rises to rolling hills with outcroppings of rock. In the one to two-block-wide area west of the Main Street Historic District there are small scale commercial buildings such as taverns and filling stations. There are residential neighborhoods east of the downtown. At the north end of the Main Street Historic District is a half block of severely altered commercial buildings. North of this, there is a Civil War monument, with a block-long park on either side of the street. Civic and institutional buildings, including the library, a school

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Main Street Historic District  
Darlington, Lafayette County, WI

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and the Lafayette County Courthouse, are set back from the street north of the park.

**PRESENT APPEARANCE**

The Main Street Historic District includes 51 properties on six partial blocks. All of these blocks are part of the Original Plat of Darlington, laid out in 1850.<sup>1</sup>

The district is primarily made up of contiguous two-story masonry buildings facing Main Street and forming a continuous commercial streetscape. Main Street itself is quite wide, measuring 100 feet across. A concrete median strip was built down the middle of the street sometime after 1960.<sup>2</sup> Most of the buildings are long and narrow, with minimal frontage (as little as 22 feet) on Main Street. There are also two civic buildings in the district: the Darlington Fire Department (238 Wells Street) and the Odd Fellows Hall (145 East Louisa Street, now the Darlington Community Center). Half (20) of the buildings which contribute to the district predate 1890.<sup>3</sup> Seventeen percent (7) were built between 1891 and 1910. Twenty-seven percent (11) were built between 1911 and 1929. The remaining two contributing buildings were built between 1930 and 1940.

The commercial buildings on Main Street are generally of masonry construction on stone foundations or basements. Although lumber was brought from Galena, Illinois as early as 1850, and a planing mill was established in Darlington by 1856, most of the earliest known surviving buildings are of local limestone. This limestone was of poor quality. Therefore, it was generally employed only on

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<sup>1</sup>Original plat of Darlington, dated June 14, 1850, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

<sup>2</sup>Photos, Sound and Visual Archives, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

<sup>3</sup>Sources for the dates of construction include maps, bird's-eye views, photos, state gazetteers and newspaper articles. These are listed in the bibliography.

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Main Street Historic District  
Darlington, Lafayette County, WI

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the side and rear walls, and another material was used on the front. Eight structures in the Main Street Historic District have coursed rock-faced rubble side and rear walls, and brick fronts. The Tarrell Building at 325 Main Street is of rubble construction, but with a dressed stone front (pre-1871, photo 1). Most of the stone buildings predate 1880. After 1880, brick construction dominated. There are 17 contributing buildings in the district that are of load-bearing brick construction with brick fronts. The Schreiter Building at 347 Main Street is an interesting variation; its side and rear walls are of brick, while its front is stone (photo 2, far left). There are also four late nineteenth century frame buildings with brick veneer exteriors.

Many of the commercial buildings in the Main Street Historic District have cast iron or pressed metal storefronts, and pressed metal cornices and/or window heads. For buildings erected before 1890, the cast iron storefronts are original, but pressed metal elements, such as the cornice and window heads on the Tarrell Building at 325 Main Street (photo 1), were added in the late nineteenth century to "modernize" the structure. Pressed metal features are original on those buildings built between 1890 and 1915. Pressed metal siding, embossed with stylized floral designs, is another element common to turn-of-the-century buildings, and added to some earlier ones, such as 339 (photo 2, third from left) and 414 Main Street.

Most of the buildings in the Main Street Historic District were designed by unidentified builders. Many show the influence of the Italianate style. Of the 40 contributing buildings in the district, 16 are Italianate or Italianate-influenced. Five are Queen Anne-influenced. One combines Queen Anne form with Colonial Revival details. Four are Neo-Classical Revival or Neo-Classical Revival-influenced. One is Art Moderne. Four are nineteenth century vernacular buildings with no stylistic details. Nine are Twentieth Century Commercial in style. The Main Street Historic District retains historic integrity in setting, materials, feeling, association and design, as evidenced by the fact that nearly 80 percent of the buildings in the district are contributing.

All 16 Italianate and Italianate influenced buildings in the district were built prior to 1888. An Italianate commercial



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Main Street Historic District  
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building generally has a cast iron storefront with central double entrance doors surmounted by a classical cornice, upper story windows with cornice window heads or hood moldings, brick corbelling and a bracketed wood or metal cornice.<sup>4</sup> The simplest Italianate-influenced examples in Darlington might also be described as Commercial Vernacular, a label which can be applied to any plain commercial buildings without overt stylistic details. That is, a commercial building with a simple cornice above the storefront and upper stories with simple window openings, surmounted by brick corbelling and a cornice.<sup>5</sup> One such is the Barlow General Store at 401 Main Street (photo 3), which may predate 1865. It is a stone building with a brick front and brick corbelling. The Barlow General Store shows Italianate influence in its stone quoins and second story stone window heads. The storefront has been completely altered, and the second story front has been stuccoed over.

In contrast, the Schreiter Building at 347 Main Street is clearly Italianate, and in fact, is the most ornate commercial example of that style in Darlington (photo 2). This building, erected in 1879 (datestone), has a front of coursed stone, tall segmental-arched second story windows with prominent keystones, a stone belt course and an elaborate bracketed wood cornice. The original storefront was tripartite, with a central recessed entrance with double doors, and four-light display windows. The tall cast iron columns on the storefront are original.<sup>6</sup> The single pane display windows and the

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<sup>4</sup>Virginia and Lee McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), pp. 210-14; and A.J. Bicknell and Company, Bicknell's Victorian Buildings, (New York: Dover Publications, Incorporated, 1979 reprint of 1878 publication), plates 33-35.

<sup>5</sup>Barbara Wyatt, editor, Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), vol. 2, p. 3-10.

<sup>6</sup>Photo, collection of Brian Lund, Darlington Republican Journal.

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canted entrance date from 1890.<sup>7</sup> The cream brick Harvey and Cline Bakery at 342 Main Street (photo 4) was built in 1881. It has segmental arched window openings and hood moldings with a prominent keystone and acanthus leaf corbel stops. Above the windows there is heavy brick corbelling and a bracketed cornice. The outer part of the storefront is pressed metal, with heavy fluted pilasters and a broad cornice, and was probably added around the turn-of-the-century. However, the inner part of the storefront, which features a central pair of doors flanked by narrow, delicate twisting cast iron columns, is probably original.

One of the most unusual buildings in Darlington is the Driver Store and Opera House at 242-46 Main Street (photo 5). Built in 1883, this building combines commercial Italianate form and segmental-arched windows and hood moldings, with polychromatic brickwork. This brickwork consists of raised diamond patterns, an arcaded corbel table, and, in the center of the Main Street facade, an elongated round-arched niche with a Greek cross in it. The building at 121 West Ann Street, built for the Drivers at the same time as the Opera House, carries over a variation of the arcaded corbel table. The double storefront on the Ann Street building appears substantially intact, and consists of brick piers and fluted cast iron posts, paneled brick bases and two-pane display windows. Interesting Italianate details can also be found in the arcaded round-arched hood moldings and bracketed cornice on 343 Main Street (1881, photo 2, second from left); in the elaborate cornices and window heads on 226 (1887, photo 6) and 232 Main Street (pre-1884, photo 7); and in the remains of the arcaded storefront and the decorated round-arched hood moldings on 316 Main Street (1874, photo 8).

Five of the contributing buildings in the Main Street Historic District show the influence of the Queen Anne style. While Queen Anne was very popular for residential designs all over the United

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<sup>7</sup>Joan Rausch, Rebecca Neville, Sharon Devitt and Charles Sulik, "An Intensive Architectural and Historical Survey of Mining Communities in Portions of Lafayette and Grant Counties, Wisconsin," Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, Planning Report No. 54, July 29, 1983, p. 97.

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Darlington, Lafayette County, WI

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Anne was very popular for residential designs all over the United States between 1885 and 1900, it was less commonly used in commercial architecture. Queen Anne commercial buildings combined a variety of textures and materials in the exterior finish, and often featured a corner tower or turret and a richly decorated pressed metal cornice.<sup>8</sup> The form the Queen Anne-influenced commercial building takes in Darlington is less high style. Each of the five examples in Darlington is a narrow mid-block building with a central polygonal bay window at the second story. Each bay window is clad with pressed metal made to look like coursed rock-faced concrete block. All of these buildings also have pressed metal cornices embellished with floral motifs. Pressed metal fluted pilasters divide each storefront into four unequal parts, consisting of an off-center store entrance, two single-pane display windows, and at one end, a narrow door giving access to the second floor. All five of these buildings were built between 1894 and about 1901. The building at 324 Main Street (1894, photo 9) is the earliest and most intact of these. The storefront retains its original pressed metal pilasters and simple cornice, display windows with paneled bases, off-center double glass-and-paneled-wood entrance doors, and narrow single glass-and-paneled wood door to the upstairs. At the second floor, the bottom of the polygonal bay is enriched with a pressed metal egg-and-dart molding. Above the bay is a brick belt course. The building is finished with a pressed metal cornice and pediment. Another relatively intact example is the Miller and Fardy Dry Goods Store at 319 Main Street (1896, photo 10). Except for a wide replacement door and shortened display windows, the storefront of this building is intact. The Miller and Fardy Dry Goods Store retains its pressed metal second story hood moldings, pressed metal pediment, and metal cresting. The Alice Bower Millinery at 335 Main Street (1906), with its second story central polygonal bay, combines Darlington's Queen Anne commercial style with classical ornament, rather than floral motifs. This includes classically inspired pressed metal window heads, a pressed metal cornice with a rope moldings, finials and a

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<sup>8</sup>Carole Rifkind, A Field Guide to American Architecture, (New York: New American Library, 1980), pp. 193-94, and 207.

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classical pediment. All these elements are treated to look like painted white wood, typical of Colonial Revival ornament.<sup>9</sup>

There are three Neo-Classical Revival buildings, and one with some Neo-Classical Revival detail, in the Main Street Historic District. Neo-Classical Revival is primarily based on the Greek architectural orders, using Ionic or Corinthian columns, and was built in Wisconsin between 1895 and 1935. The main facade is usually symmetrical and dominated by a portico that rises the full height of the building.<sup>10</sup> Other details can include an attic story with a parapet, arched openings, and rusticated masonry laid with deep joints to provide strong horizontal lines.<sup>11</sup> The Odd Fellows Hall at 145 East Louisa Street (1911, photo 11) was inspired by one-story Roman temples that were built on a platform or podium.<sup>12</sup> The Odd Fellows Hall is a one-story hip-roofed building whose first floor and one-story pedimented portico are both raised. The portico features fluted Doric columns, a wide frieze, and a closed pediment. The First National Bank at 245 Main Street (1921, photo 12) combines monumental pilasters with a full entablature, attic story and parapet, with a Georgian Revival pedimented entrance. Other elements, such as the use of brick trimmed with concrete or stone, quoining, and dentils, can be found in both styles. Citizens National Bank at 330 Main Street (photo 13), although built in 1885, received a new facade in 1928. The new facade was designed by the Madison, Wisconsin architectural firm of (Frank) Riley and (Lewis) Siberz. With its monumental fluted Doric pilasters, plain entablature, and pediment enriched with a large medallion, it recalls a Greek temple front. The Darlington Fire Department at 238 Wells Street (1935, photo 14) is a utilitarian building, but several courses of brick have been recessed, giving

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<sup>9</sup>McAlester, p. 321; and Rifkind, p. 220.

<sup>10</sup>McAlester, pp. 342-46; and Wyatt, vol. 2, p. 2-18.

<sup>11</sup>Rifkind, p. 220.

<sup>12</sup>John J.-G. Blumenson, Identifying American Architecture, (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1977), pp. 22-23.

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the building a rusticated appearance typical of true Neo-Classical Revival style examples.

There is one Art Moderne building in the Main Street Historic District. The Iowa Oil Company Filling Station at 404 Main Street (photo 15) was built during the 1930s. In Wisconsin, the Art Moderne style was built between 1930 and 1950. Art Moderne was inspired by advances in technology and industrialization. It has a horizontal, stream-lined appearance. This look is achieved through the use of smooth wall finishes, flat roofs, belt courses and horizontal bands of windows.<sup>13</sup> The Iowa Oil Company Filling Station is a long, low building veneered with white glazed brick, enriched with a dark brick belt course and finished with a course of dark soldier course bricks. The front faces the intersection of Main and Louisa Streets, and is anchored by polygonal corners. Originally, these were two-story polygonal towers.

There are four nineteenth century vernacular buildings in the district, three of which are examples of the Commercial Vernacular. All three are of rubble stone construction. The Swift Drug Store at 308-14 Main Street (pre-1881, photo 16) is the most intact of the three. It has a brick front with brick corbelling, plain second story stone lintels and sills, and has retained most of its cast iron storefront. The remaining nine vernacular buildings are Twentieth Century Commercial buildings. All were built between 1916 and 1929; all but one is of load-bearing brick; and most are located in the 200 block of Main Street. The Twentieth Century Commercial style was primarily built between 1910 and 1940. It is characterized by a broad, two-dimensional facade of textured brick, with ornamentation primarily confined to the cornice, where a rectangular panel frames decorative brickwork in herringbone or basket weave patterns. There is often a stepped parapet with a stone or concrete coping. Insets of tile, stone or concrete in simple shapes are common.<sup>14</sup> The Hotel Olson at 227-29 Main Street (1919, photo 17) is typical of this period, with its brick

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<sup>13</sup>Wyatt, vol. 2, p. 2-35.

<sup>14</sup>Draft describing this style available from the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office.

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diamondwork, simple corbelled cornice, and brick label mold uniting all the second story windows. Another good example is the building at 223 Main Street, built between 1924 and 1929. It features a panel above the second story outlined in rowlock and header course bricks, accented with tiny concrete squares, and infilled with brick in a basket weave pattern. A group of three 1922 brick Twentieth Century Commercial buildings stands across the street. These are also simple brick buildings with little ornament beyond decorative brickwork, although 210 and 214 Main Street both have polygonal second-story bay windows that recall earlier buildings that surround it. (photo 18, right).

#### ALTERATIONS

Exterior alterations to individual buildings consist primarily of replacement windows and doors, and storefronts infilled with wood or masonry to reduce display window and door openings. Some second story facades have been covered completely, either with stucco or aluminum (photo 19, 228 Main Street).

#### NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

There are 11 non-contributing buildings in the Main Street Historic District. All of them predate 1913, but have been so severely altered as to become noncontributing. One of these is 228 Main Street (pre-1871, photo 19). This building's storefront has been altered with small display windows set in walls finished with rough stucco, while the second story has been entirely screened with aluminum. The building at 411 Main Street, built sometime between 1896 and 1900, has a completely altered brick front (photo 20, second from right). Originally, this building showed the influence of the Queen Anne style, with a second story polygonal bay. The 11 non-contributing buildings in the Main Street Historic District do not detract from the sense of time and place conveyed overall by the 40 contributing buildings.

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Darlington, Lafayette County, WI

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CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

<u>Address</u>	<u>Site name</u>	<u>Date built</u>
<u>East Ann Street</u> 130	addition	pre-1884 btwn 1915-24
<u>West Ann Street</u> 121		1883
<u>East Louisa Street</u> 145	Odd Fellows Hall	1911
<u>Main Street</u> 200		1895
203	DeMuth Tavern	pre-1881
211	Rodham's Opera House	1917
208		ca.1901
210		1922
213		1918
214	Frank Fiedler Building	1922
218	Orpheum Theater	1922
223		btwn 1924-29
226	F.L. Roy Hardware Store	1887
227-29	Hotel Olson	1919
232		pre-1884
235		btwn 1919-24
238		1883
242-46	Driver's Store & Opera House	1883
245	First National Bank addition	1921 1986
301	Judge-McComish Building	1887
307-11		btwn 1900-08
308-14	Swift Drug Store	pre-1881
316	Lafayette County Bank	1874
319	Miller & Fardy Dry Goods	1896
324		1894
325	Tarrell Building cornice & window heads	pre-1871 ca.1897
328	Citizens National Bank	1885

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Darlington, Lafayette County, WI

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	new facade	1928
335	Alice Bower Millinery	1906
336	Lafayette County Book Store	1879
339		pre-1881
	metal front	btwn 1900-08
340		btwn 1881-84
342	Harvey and Cline Bakery	1881
343	The Fair Store	1881
347	David Schreiter Building	1879
401	Pheris Barlow General Store	pre-1871
	additions	btwn 1908-15
404	Iowa Oil Company Filling Station	C1930s
413		pre-1881
418	Polkinghorn Music Store	1895
419	Wiegel Store	1916

Wells Street

238	Darlington Fire Department addition	1935 ca.1970s
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NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

East Louisa Street

125-27	addition	pre-1871 btwn 1915-24
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Main Street

228		pre-1871
306	Philip Lewie Barber Shop	pre-1871
315	Newcomb & Waddington Store	pre-1880
320		pre-1884
327	Halloran Hardware Store	pre-1881
333	U.S. Post Office	btwn 1908-12
346	Palace Drug Store	1858
410		pre-1881
411		bt 1896-1900
414		pre-1881



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Main Street Historic District  
Darlington, Lafayette County, WI

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SUMMARY

The Main Street Historic District is locally significant under criteria C and A. It is a significant grouping of mid-to-late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial buildings whose size, configuration and use create a cohesive and visually distinct area immediately recognizable as a traditional small city downtown. The district also illustrates the evolution of styles and building materials used in commercial architecture in Darlington from the settlement era of the 1850s up until about 1940. The Italianate and Twentieth Century Commercial styles are particularly well represented. Under criterion A, the Main Street Historic District spans the development of commerce in Darlington from the settlement era up to 1940. The district retains very good integrity.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The discovery of abundant surface deposits brought thousands of miners and prospectors to what would become the Wisconsin Lead Region (Grant, Iowa and Lafayette Counties) following the Winnebago uprising of 1827.<sup>15</sup> By the early 1830s, thriving mining communities had been established in the region, the most important of which was Mineral Point.<sup>16</sup> At that time, eastern Wisconsin was little developed, and goods and settlers traveled into the Lead Region from Galena, in the northwest corner of Illinois. The main road between Galena and Mineral Point, part of the Blue Mounds Territorial Road, crossed the Pecatonica River where present-day Darlington is located. The first to see the potential of siting a town where the road crossed the river was Jameson Hamilton. In 1836, Hamilton claimed all of that section which now encompasses Darlington (T2N, R3E, Section 3).<sup>17</sup> He built a frame cabin on the south side of the Pecatonica with accommodations for travelers, and

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<sup>15</sup>Wyatt, vol. 3, p. 3-1.

<sup>16</sup>Joseph Schafer, The Wisconsin Lead Region, (Madison: State Historical Society, 1932), p. 42.

<sup>17</sup>The Lafayette County Bicentennial Book, (Madison: Straus Printing and Publishing, 1976), p. 85.

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a toll bridge over the river.<sup>18</sup> When Lafayette County was created out of Iowa County in 1846, Hamilton laid out the town of Avon on the south side of the Pecatonica (within the current corporate limits of Darlington) to serve as the county seat. Lengthy legal disputes made Shullsburg the first county seat. Avon was later abandoned.<sup>19</sup>

In 1850, J.B. Lynde and James Keep, acting as agents for a group of New Yorkers, purchased land from Jameson Hamilton on the north side of the Pecatonica in the Town of Center (called Town of Darlington since 1869). Keep platted a village and named it Darlington, in honor of Joshua Darling, the principal financier of the venture. Main Street was sited on the Blue Mounds Territorial Road. The east-west streets were named after the wives of the New Yorkers.<sup>20</sup>

One of the earliest businesses in Darlington was a three-story stone flour mill, built on the Pecatonica in 1851 for Keep and Lynde.<sup>21</sup> This helped Darlington develop as an important agricultural support community. Darlington's location on the Blue Mounds Territorial Road, and the arrival of the Mineral Point Railway in 1856,<sup>22</sup> made Darlington the grain shipping center for Lafayette County.<sup>23</sup>

Darlington was made the county seat in 1861. It was incorporated as a village in 1865, and as a city in 1877.<sup>24</sup> Throughout the

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Rausch et al, pp. 64-65.

<sup>20</sup>C.W. Butterfield, History of Lafayette County, (Chicago: Western Historical Publishing Company, 1881), p. 528.

<sup>21</sup>Butterfield, p. 544-45.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 526.

<sup>23</sup>Rausch et al, p. 66-67.

<sup>24</sup>Butterfield, p. 528.

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Main Street Historic District  
Darlington, Lafayette County, WI

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nineteenth century, in the surrounding mining communities, the population was primarily foreign-born. Immigrants from Britain (including Cornwall and Wales) and Ireland dominated. In contrast, Darlington had relatively few foreign-born residents, accounting for no more than 24 percent of the total population. They were primarily from Britain and Ireland. Germans and German/Prussians were the next largest group. Most of the citizens of Darlington during this time were New Yorkers and native Wisconsinites. The population of the village was 100 in 1865.<sup>25</sup> The period of Darlington's greatest growth occurred over the next 20 years. By 1884 the population had skyrocketed to 1,600.<sup>26</sup> From 1885 to 1900, Darlington grew slowly, but steadily. In 1890, the population was 1,700.<sup>27</sup> By 1900, it had reached 1,900.<sup>28</sup> The population remained at that level until the early 1920s. A growth spurt brought the population to about 2,000 in 1925.<sup>29</sup> The population fluctuated over the next 60 years, peaking at 2,300 in 1980.<sup>30</sup> The 1990 population was just over 2,200.<sup>31</sup>

The prime location for businesses in Darlington has historically been in the 200 and 300 blocks of Main Street. The first buildings erected for commercial use were constructed in the 200-block. These were generally one and two story frame buildings constructed of lumber brought from Galena. Seeking to convey a sense of permanence, businessmen erected stone rubble buildings almost as

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 528.

<sup>26</sup>R. L. Polk and Company, Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory, (Detroit: R.L. Polk Company, 1884), p. 207.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid, (Detroit: R. L. Polk and Company, 1891), p. 240.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid, (Detroit: R.L. Polk and Company, 1903), p. 298.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., (Detroit: R.L. Polk and Company, 1927), p. 227.

<sup>30</sup>"Darlington, Wisconsin: Master Plan Update," prepared for the Darlington City Council and Planning Commission, C1992.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

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early. By 1871, the 200 and 300 blocks were full; there were few buildings in the 100 block, except for a large livery building on each side of the street. Not much had yet been built in the 400 block.<sup>32</sup> The two periods of greatest building activity in Darlington roughly coincide with the community's growth spurts. The first of these took place between the late 1870s and about 1885.

By the late 1870s, Darlington was prospering, and businessmen rushed either to update their existing buildings or to build new brick ones. As a result, some frame buildings were demolished and replaced. Other frame buildings were placed on rollers and moved to the rear of the lot, or to another lot toward the north end of Main Street.<sup>33</sup> For example, before the Schreiter Building (347 Main Street) was erected in 1879, the existing front gabled frame general store was moved to the rear of the lot, and turned to face the side street.<sup>34</sup> It is still standing at 125-27 East Louisa Street. In the case of the Lafayette County Bookstore at 336 Main Street, the original frame structure was simply pushed to the back of the lot and a new front section was built.<sup>35</sup> For masonry buildings, it was more common to simply remodel the facade. After building a new front section on 336 Main Street, Josephus Driver had the facade of the adjacent building at 340, which he also owned, remodeled to match 336, and put a third story on the front end of the structure in brick veneer. When the Harvey and Cline Bakery (342 Main Street) was built in 1881, the Otis Brothers, who owned the neighboring building at 340 Main Street (built by their father in 1858), had their facade updated to match Harvey and Cline's with the same hood moldings and cornice.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>Bird's-eye View of Darlington, (N.p.: H. Brosius, 1871.)

<sup>33</sup>Darlington Republican Journal, (hereafter, DRJ), May 27, 1881.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., March 14, 1878.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., August 8, 1879.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., June 24, 1881; and August 3, 1881.

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Between 1890 and about 1910, a new pattern emerged. Some older buildings were demolished and replaced with Queen Anne-influenced commercial buildings, while others were updated with pressed metal storefront details, hood moldings and cornices.

The second period of accelerated building activity took place between 1916 and 1929. This was partially precipitated by a fire in August, 1917, which destroyed all but one building on the east side of the 200 block of Main Street. Between 1918 and 1929, seven new buildings were erected in this block. During the same period, three new buildings were erected across Main Street. Most of the buildings of this era are brick Twentieth Century Commercial in style. Since 1929, only two new buildings have been erected on Main Street in the district (a few have been built in the 100 block). After World War II, storefronts were generally updated with reduced display windows, and new replacement windows installed on the upper floors at the same time. In some cases, exterior finishes were covered with aluminum, or stuccoed over. Unlike many small town central business districts, Darlington's remains lively, with many businesses.

#### ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Main Street Historic District is architecturally significant at the local level as a cohesive and visually distinct group of mid-to late-nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial buildings. The district encapsulates the full range of styles and building materials used in commercial architecture in Darlington from the settlement era of the 1850s up until ca.1940. There are many fine local examples of Italianate or Italianate-influenced and Twentieth Century Commercial buildings in the district. The Main Street Historic District retains very good integrity.

The Italianate style predominates in the district, as it does in many historic commercial districts in cities and towns across the state.<sup>37</sup> Sixteen of the contributing buildings (40 percent) in the Main Street Historic District are Italianate or Italianate-influenced. Often a two-story masonry or masonry veneer building,

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<sup>37</sup>Wyatt, vol. 2, p. 2-6.

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the Italianate style is most easily identified by upper story details, such as the bracketed cornice, and tall windows with stone, metal or wood hood moldings. The storefront has usually been altered, but would probably have originally consisted of a three-part cast iron storefront with central double door entrance. Italianate commercial buildings were primarily built between 1855 and 1890, although elements of the style lingered into the twentieth century in some areas.<sup>38</sup>

There are 9 examples (just over 20 percent) of the Twentieth Century Commercial style. Built between 1900 and 1940, these are rather utilitarian brick buildings with ornament confined to decorative brickwork. The Twentieth Century Commercial style was the most common style for commercial buildings during its time period, and ranged from one-story single storefronts to two or three-story multi-unit commercial blocks.<sup>39</sup>

In terms of building materials, the first buildings erected for commercial use were frame. They were likely built of lumber brought from Galena, where the closest planing mill was located. The first store was built for J.M. Keep on Main Street in 1850. Josephus Driver erected the second store in 1851.<sup>40</sup> It is unclear exactly what these buildings looked like, but they were probably one story vernacular buildings, perhaps with a false front. In 1881, Keep's building was still in use, but had been moved toward the north end of Main Street.<sup>41</sup> It is uncertain whether any of these early frame buildings survive, but it is possible that 339, 410 and/or 414 Main Street may be early frame buildings moved from lower Main Street. In 1855, J.D. Francis and Dr. Charles Otis

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<sup>38</sup>McAlester, pp. 210-14; and Bicknell, plates 33-35.

<sup>39</sup>Draft available from the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office.

<sup>40</sup>Butterfield, pp. 525 and 718.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

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opened the first lumberyard in Darlington. In 1856, Francis joined with O.G. Dart to erect the first planing mill in Darlington.<sup>42</sup>

The earliest local building material available was limestone, quarried nearby. The location of the first quarry is unknown. It may have been the one located at the foot of Spring Street south of the Pecatonica River, operated by Halstead and Bering in 1866.<sup>43</sup> Stone buildings were erected on Main Street as early as 1851.<sup>44</sup> This locally produced stone was of poor quality. It was generally employed only on the side and rear walls, and another material was used on the front. Nine buildings in the Main Street Historic District have coursed rubble side and rear walls. After 1880, brick construction dominated. Darlington's first and only brick manufacturer was Henry Bates (later Bates and Son), who established his business in Darlington in 1868.<sup>45</sup> Bates and Son produced red brick, and were in operation until at least 1888. Cream brick, used on some fronts, was brought by rail from Milwaukee.<sup>46</sup> There are 17 contributing buildings in the district that are of load bearing brick construction with brick fronts. There are also four late nineteenth century frame buildings with brick veneer exteriors. Load-bearing brick continued to be the building material of choice for commercial buildings built in Darlington through 1930. Cast iron storefronts, used on buildings erected prior to 1890, may have come from the Union Foundry in Rockford, Illinois.<sup>47</sup> The origin of the pressed metal storefronts, cornices and window heads is unknown.

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 718.

<sup>43</sup>Rausch et al, p. 96.

<sup>44</sup>Butterfield, p. 525.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 713.

<sup>46</sup>DRJ, August 16, 1883.

<sup>47</sup>The storefront on the Magoon Building at 447 Main Street (1884, outside the district) bears the stamp of this company.

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The new facade on the Citizens National Bank, designed by the Madison firm of (Frank) Riley and (Lewis) Siberz in 1928, is the only resource in the Main Street Historic District known to have been architect designed. Frank Riley (1875-1949), one of Madison's most talented and active architects of the early twentieth century, is considered a "master" architect.<sup>48</sup> Riley studied civil engineering at the University of Wisconsin, and architecture at MIT. He studied in Boston, London, Italy and Germany before returning to Madison in 1915. Riley is best known for his Georgian and Colonial Revival residential designs, although he was conversant with other styles and also did non-residential work. Lewis Siberz (1899-1984) studied at Notre Dame University, the University of Illinois and the University of Wisconsin. Both an artist and an architect, Siberz worked for Riley beginning in 1923. Siberz became Riley's partner in 1930, and started his own firm in 1937.<sup>49</sup> While the Citizens National Bank facade is not Riley and Siberz's greatest work, it appears to be their only design in Darlington. It seems likely that at least one other building in the district, the First National Bank, was probably architect-designed.

Most of the buildings in the district were designed by local builders, although little information tying builders to particular buildings has been discovered. H.C. Nash, a carpenter-contractor, built the first house in Darlington in 1850, and more buildings in the community and Lafayette County than any other builder up to 1881.<sup>50</sup> No specific buildings have been attributed to him, although in the early 1880s, the Darlington Republican Journal reported that Nash was building an addition on the Lafayette County Courthouse (replaced 1905), and that he was at work on the frames for three

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<sup>48</sup>Wyatt, vol. 2, p. 6-2.

<sup>49</sup>Katherine H. Rankin, Unpublished Report of the Intensive Survey of the Historic Resources of Madison, no date; and obituary for Siberz, Wisconsin State Journal, September 21, 1984.

<sup>50</sup>Butterfield, p. 724.



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new buildings.<sup>51</sup> The Harvey and Cline Bakery at 342 Main Street may have been one of these. Another carpenter, J.E. Keyes, built the Fair Store at 343 Main Street.<sup>52</sup> There is even less information regarding brick layers and masons. Henry Bates and his son Harvey, who operated Darlington's first brick yard, may also have been brick layers. The 1881 History of Lafayette County lists five masons in Darlington at that time. By 1884, only two of these remained: Gilbert Gilbertson and Nathan D. Ingraham. Ingraham settled in Darlington prior to 1865. He may have built Darlington's earliest stone buildings.

The buildings in the Main Street Historic District are still impressive today. The district is an architecturally significant assemblage of late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial buildings whose designs and methods of construction collectively illustrate the evolution of commercial architectural tastes in Darlington. The largely uninterrupted rows of intact historic facades in the district evoke the nineteenth century past of the downtown, a past that has been lost in most other Wisconsin communities of this era.

**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE: COMMERCE**

The Main Street Historic District is also significant at the local level for its associations with the significance area of Commerce. Most of the buildings that have historically been associated with trade and commerce in Darlington are still extant and are located within the district's boundaries. Consequently, these buildings represent the history of commerce in Darlington and illustrate the development of the city's central business district from the settlement era of the 1850s up until ca.1940.

Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin does not speak directly about how downtowns developed in Wisconsin communities. Darlington is probably fairly typical for those towns that became agricultural support communities, although the first business established in the

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<sup>51</sup>DRJ, March 18, 1881.

<sup>52</sup>DRJ, July 28, 1881.

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village was an atypical one. This was Miss Graham's ladies hat shop, housed in Jameson Hamilton's old cabin (north of the Pecatonica and west of Main Street) about 1850. By the spring of 1850, two blacksmiths (Blakely and Wright) had opened a shop in the same building. James Keep erected the first building intended for commercial use (a general store) in the summer or fall of 1850. Another early business in Darlington was the Keep and Lynde flour mill (demolished), built on the Pecatonica in 1851. The first hardware store was opened in 1852 (Willett Bros), and the first drug store in 1853 (Collins and Blair).<sup>53</sup> The arrival of the Mineral Point Railway in 1856 made it much easier to bring settlers to Darlington, as well as improving the community's capability to ship its agricultural products. By 1865, the newly incorporated Village's population of 100 was served by three blacksmiths, three dry goods stores, three grocers, four saloons (one with billiards), three hotels, one agricultural implements dealer, two shoemakers, two harness makers, two drug stores, a stove and tin ware dealer, a livery stable, a tanner, a tailor, a milliner and a miller.<sup>54</sup>

During Darlington's greatest period of growth, between 1865 and 1885, the commercial sector expanded to its current size. The number of products and services available locally multiplied. Two banks were founded, as well as two newspapers. Specialized shops and businesses replaced general stores. Live stock dealers, surveyors, painters and plasterers, stock brokers, butcher shops, cigar manufacturers, jewelers, bakers, lawyers, furniture stores, book stores, bakers, bowling alleys, real estate agents, photographers, barbers and auctioneers appeared in Darlington during this time.<sup>55</sup> By 1885, the diverse character of the downtown, which has carried into the twentieth century, was well established. Changes in the types of businesses in Darlington since that time have primarily been a reflection of changing technology and taste. For example, garages and filling stations replaced liveries, and a

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<sup>53</sup>Butterfield, p. 544-45.

<sup>54</sup>Wisconsin and Minnesota State Gazetteer, (Indianapolis: George W. Hawes, 1865), p. 85.

<sup>55</sup>Polk, (Detroit: R.L. Polk and Company, 1884), pp. 207-09.

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movie theater succeeded the opera house (not in the same building). Although there is no longer a hotel, a movie theater, a grocery or a department store in downtown Darlington, there are restaurants, filling stations, hardware stores, clothing stores, an antique shop, a flower shop, doctors' offices and many other businesses.

The Main Street Historic District is significant under Criterion A because the resources in the district have historically been the locus of trade and commerce in the city of Darlington. The downtown portion of Darlington has traditionally been the economic hub of the city and the resources in the district, which are nearly all small, largely intact nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial buildings, are now and have traditionally been the buildings in the city that have been most closely associated with the history of commerce in the city of Darlington.

**PRESERVATION ACTIVITY**

Darlington does not have a preservation ordinance or organization, or a landmarks commission. A series of devastating floods over the last four years have inundated the 100- and 200-blocks of Main Street, as well as surrounding residential and commercial areas, causing a great deal of damage. In early 1994, the National Park Service and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) made grant monies available for flood mitigation. This National Register nomination was prepared as part of the flood mitigation project. This project also involves repairing the substructures of 11 buildings that contribute to the district.

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL**

No archaeological remains have been discovered to date in the Main Street Historic District. Some prehistoric and late historic remains may be present, as American Indians and, later, European Americans have inhabited the area for hundreds of years. It seems more likely that any remains of pre-European cultures were disturbed if not destroyed by the building activity associated with the development of Darlington's downtown.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Main Street Historic District includes all or part of the following parcels in the Original Plat, in the City of Darlington, Lafayette County, Wisconsin: Lots 6 & 7, Block 11; Lots 5 & 8, Block 12; Lots 1, 4, 5 & 8, Block 15; Lots 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 & 8, Block 16; Lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 & 7, Block 19; and 1, 4, 5 & 6, Block 20.

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary encompasses the core of Darlington's commercial downtown, including all those structures historically associated with each property. It is a cohesive group of commercial buildings built between 1858 and ca.1940, spanning the entire history of Darlington's commercial development.

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Photo 1 of 20  
Main Street Historic District  
Darlington, Lafayette County, WI  
Photo by Elizabeth L. Miller, March 1994  
Negative in State Historical Society of Wisconsin  
325 Main Street, from the west.

The above is the same for the photos listed below, except as noted:

Photo 2 of 20  
300-odd block of Main Street, from the northwest.

Photo 3 of 20  
401 Main Street, from the southwest.

Photo 4 of 20  
342 Main Street, from the east.

Photo 5 of 20  
242-46 Main Street, from the southeast.

Photo 6 of 20  
226 Main Street, from the east-southeast.

Photo 7 of 20  
232 Main Street, from the southeast.

Photo 8 of 20  
316 Main Street, from the east.

Photo 9 of 20  
324 Main Street, from the east.

Photo 10 of 20  
319 Main Street, from the west.

Photo 11 of 20  
145 East Louisa Street, from the northeast.

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Photo 12 of 20  
245 Main Street, from the southwest.

Photo 13 of 20  
330 Main Street, from the southeast.

Photo 14 of 20  
238 Wells Street, from the northeast.

Photo 15 of 20  
404 Main Street, from the southeast.

Photo 16 of 20  
308-14 Main Street, from the east-southeast.

Photo 17 of 20  
227-29 Main Street, from the west.

Photo 18 of 20  
200-even block Main Street, from the southeast.

Photo 19 of 20  
228 Main Street, from the southeast.

Photo 20 of 20  
400-odd block Main Street, from the northwest.





0 10 20 30 40 50  
SCALE IN FEET

**MAIN STREET**  
DARLINGTON

**HISTORIC DISTRICT**  
LAFAYETTE COUNTY

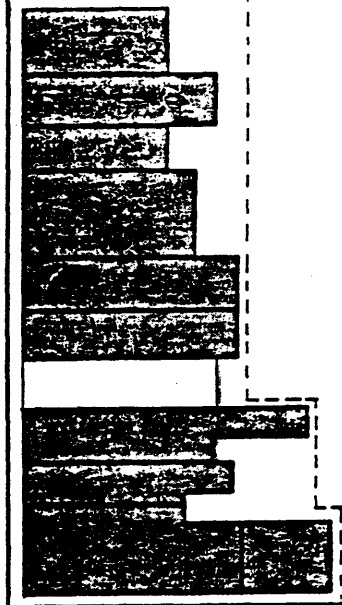
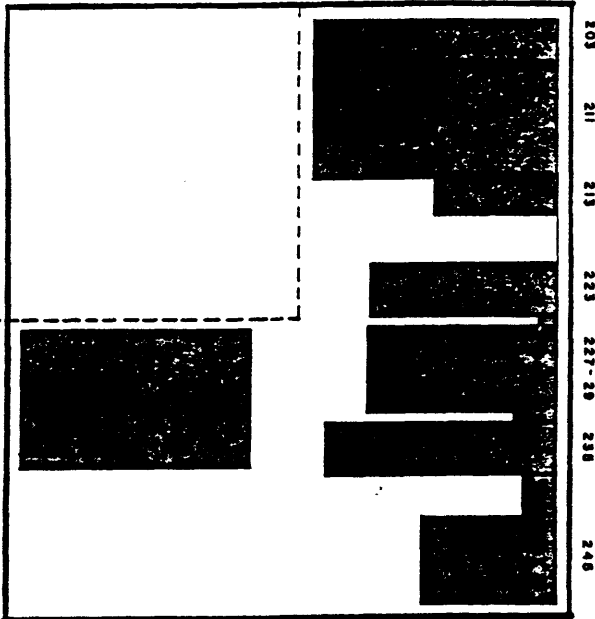
**CONTRIBUTING**  
NONCONTRIBUTING

**DISTRICT BOUNDARY**

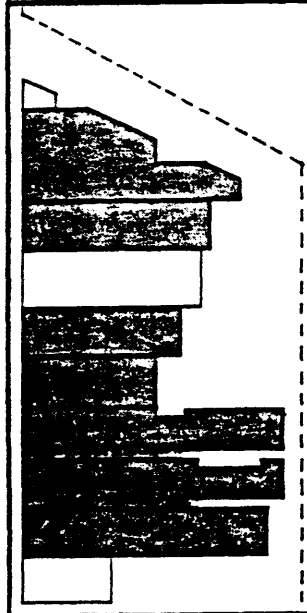
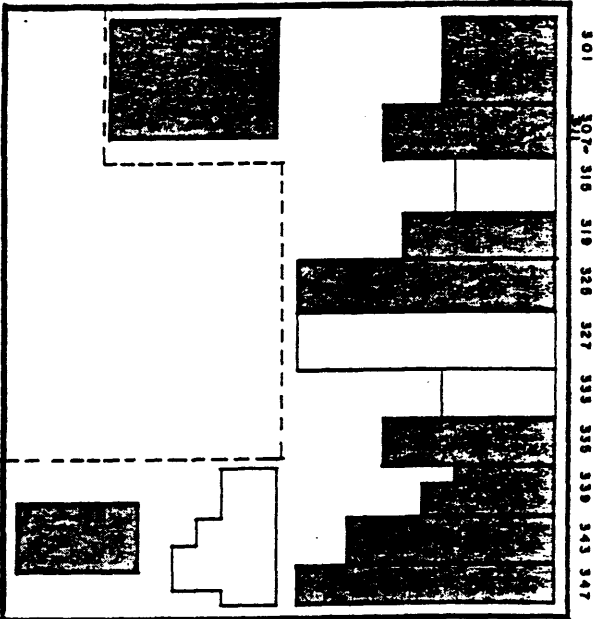
**CONTRIBUTING**  
NONCONTRIBUTING

**DISTRICT BOUNDARY**

ALICE STREET



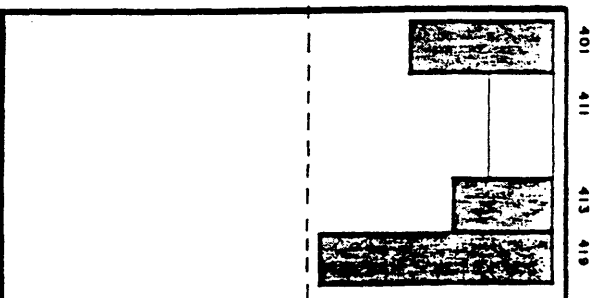
E. ANN STREET



W. ANN ST.

MAIN STREET

E. LOUISA STREET



W. LOUISA ST.

