

A. HISTORIC NAME John H. Roelker House B. COUNTY Vanderburgh C. NUMBER 82-196-00254 #112
 D. ADDRESS 555 Sycamore Street E. TWP/CITY Pigeon F. QUAD NAME Evansville-South
 RATING Outstanding Significant/Notable Contributing/Reference Non-Contributing UTM REFERENCES 16 44919710 42028010

STATE OF INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES INDIANA HISTORIC SITES AND STRUCTURES INVENTORY REVISED 1981

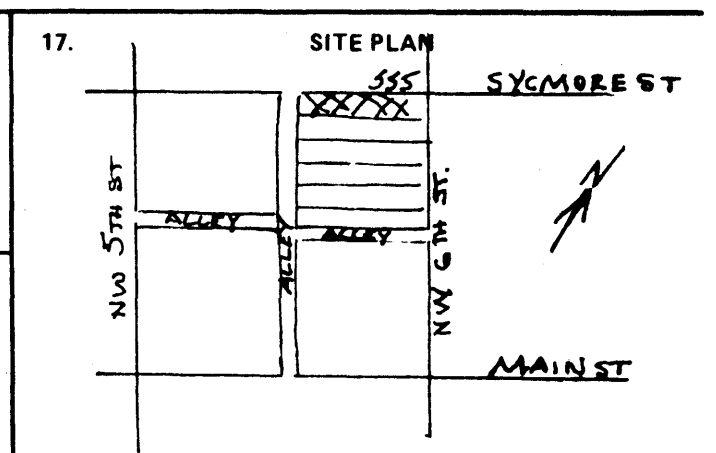
MOUNT CONTACT PRINTS HERE

1. COMMON NAME (Attorneys offices)
 2. OWNERSHIP Public Private
 3. VISIBLE Yes No
 4. PROPERTY'S MAILING ADDRESS Theodore Lockyear/Doran Purdue
555 Sycamore Street
Evansville, Indiana 47708
 5. LOCATION NOTES Eastern Enlargement Blk. 31
lot 16

6. USE	PRESENT	PAST	PRESENT	PAST	7. ENDANGERED	8. CATEGORY	9a. LOCAL LEGAL PROTECTIONS
Residence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Military	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> District	<input type="checkbox"/> Historic District
Govt./Pol.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Landmark
Commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Deed Restriction
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religious	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Site	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Park	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Object	
Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Museum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Educational	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

9b. SURVEYS SR NR NHL HABS HAER

10. CONDITION Good
 11. BUILDING INTEGRITY Altered
 11a. Specify Alterations
 Removals _____
 Structural _____
 Replacement _____
 Additions limestone watertable



12. DATE 1858 13. STYLE Vernacular 14. ARCHITECT/BUILDER Not known.
 15. DESCRIPTION See below.
 Inscriptions _____ Facade Material Brick
 16. OUTBUILDINGS none

18. ENVIRONMENT commercial

19. AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Specify the significance for each area checked

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> 15:	ATTACH NEGATIVE ENVELOPE HERE
<input type="checkbox"/> Arts	<input type="checkbox"/> The Roelker House is essentially L-planned with a partially enclosed side gallery. It is brick constructed and stands two stories in height. A saddleback roof forms side gables. The modified side hall plan is denoted on the four bay facade, with three double-hung, 6/6 windows on the first floor with an entrance on the NW side and with four corresponding openings above. An interior end chimney is apparent on the Sycamore Street elevation. The common bond brick is white-painted. The only significant exterior alteration has been the fairly recent application of a rustic-looking limestone watertable. The windows have simple stone trim. The approximate acreage of the site is .09 acre.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce		
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications		
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Planning		
<input type="checkbox"/> Education		
<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering		
<input type="checkbox"/> Environs/Neighborhoods		
<input type="checkbox"/> Exploration/Settlement		
<input type="checkbox"/> Humanities		
<input type="checkbox"/> Indian		
<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture		
<input type="checkbox"/> Military		
<input type="checkbox"/> Politics/Government		
<input type="checkbox"/> Religion		
<input type="checkbox"/> Science/Technology		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Ethnicity		
<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation		
<input type="checkbox"/> Vernacular/Construction		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		

19: See Additional Architectural Information form.

20. INFORMATION SOURCES Deed records; Assessment records; city directories; Pigeon Township plats; 1880 Atlas of Vanderburgh County; Census rolls; Industries of Evansville, 1880; Evansville and Its Men of Mark, 1974; History of (cont'd)

21. SURVEYOR Douglas L. Stern 22. DATE 07 December 1982 (Amended)

**STATE OF INDIANA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
INDIANA HISTORIC SITES AND STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

Additional Architectural Information

A. NAME John H. Roelker House C. NUMBER 82-196-00254

B. ADDRESS 555 Sycamore Street

D. UTM References 116 4499710 4202810

E. 19:

The John Henry Roelker House is significant for three reasons. First, the small dwelling is one of only two ante-bellum residences left in the Downtown. It is a solitary reminder of the manner of construction prevalent locally in the late-1850s before the advent of more pretentious architectural styles. Second, the dwelling had associations with an industry important to understanding the commerce of the city--namely iron work. Moreover, the foundry established by the property's builder behind his dwelling illustrated the evolution of the Downtown area from a locus containing varied land uses to one far more specialized and less industrial. The third basis of significance is the property's association with John Roelker, a successful early businessman and prominent local politician.

John Henry Roelker (b. 1816; Osnabruck, Hanover) was one of the smaller number of Germans to arrive in America before the first substantial wave of immigration in the late 1840s. Roelker landed in Maryland in 1835, making his way westward to Pittsburgh, Louisville and then St. Louis. By 1840, Roelker was living in Cincinnati's substantial German-born community and working for the first time in the stove business. His rise through the ranks of the foundry was gradual, but by 1854 he had accumulated enough capital "with savings as a result of his thrift and economy" to go out on his own. In that year he traveled to Evansville, where he had already begun assembling land in 1852. Roelker went through an early partnership and in 1858 became the senior partner of the Eagle Foundry, soon to be one of the city's most prosperous producers of stoves, hollow-ware, store and house fronts, and the like. The proprietorship of Eagle Foundry included one Henry Blount from 1860 to 1869, the same Henry Blount who retired from his successful iron plow business in about 1885 to live at his Washington, DC, residence, Dunbarton Oaks. Roelker's Eagle Foundry found success early in the history of the city's commerce as it tapped Evansville's growing markets in the South and West (principally, for Roelker, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, Arkansas, and Kansas). The city's selection as a Port of Entry in 1856 coincided with Roelker's ascendancy and illustrated Evansville's hegemony in the

(CONTINUED)

F. INFORMATION SOURCES History of Evansville, J P Elliott, 1897; 1888 Panoramic View of Evansville; A Biographical Directory of the Indiana General Assembly. Vol. I, 1816-1899. Courier and Evansville Daily Journal, 10 June 1892; Sunday Courier and Press, 19 March 1972.

G. PREPARED BY Douglas L Stern

H. DATE 07 December 1982 (Amended)

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trade of the region.

The year that Roelker assumed senior partnership at Eagle Foundry was very likely the year in which he constructed his dwelling at the corner of Sycamore and Sixth streets. In February of 1858, Roelker purchased the land at the corner for \$600 from one of the men who may have recruited him to Evansville in the first place, Fred W. Brinkmeier, an early business partner. By 1860 (the next recorded assessment) the value assigned to land remained \$600 while the value of the improvement was listed as \$1500, the cost of a substantial dwelling in pre-war Evansville. The house has all of the physical characteristics indicative of mid-century construction: Gabled roof (instead of the later flat roof preferred for urban building lots); small scale; the arrangement of the facade into four bays; corbelling beneath the eaves; 6/6 windows; an open rear gallery; and old brick. An 1875 construction date for the dwelling rumored recently cannot be supported by any assessment or mortgage records, by the occupation of the person credited with the 1875 building date (a coachman), or by the probability of retardataire building practices.

The Roelker House is the last intact vestige of Downtown buildings connected with the Wabash-Erie Canal, an enormous public project which rose and fell rapidly in the first half of the 19th century. A few industries such as the Eagle Foundry located on the canal route as it made its way down Fifth Street toward a terminal basin on the site of what would later become the Vanderburgh County Courthouse (1888-91). The canal never managed to make much difference in the success of Roelker's business, however, for it effectively closed in the 1860s. Nevertheless, the canal project presents a significant social and economic event in the history of the city and state, and Roelker's house is virtually the last intact evidence of its existence in the Downtown.

Roelker himself was a significant personage in the history of the city, and his dwelling at Sixth and Sycamore is the only physical association left. His political contributions to the city and, to a lesser extent, the state, were considerable. True to the profile of early German immigrants, Roelker was a Republican. He served seven terms beginning in 1858--the year of his dwelling's construction--through 1872 as a member of the Evansville City Council. His involvement in local politics came at a time when city-wide seats were still being filled by non-Germans (a series of German mayors came to office beginning with the second wave of immigration in the 1880s) while ward representation was more closely allied with ethnic groups. In 1881, Roelker was elected to the State Legislature as a representative from Vanderburgh County for one term. "He was an earnest republican," noted Roelker's obituary, "and might have been the recipient of higher honors from his party but preferred to give his whole time and attention to the development of his business in which he so magnificently succeeded."

**STATE OF INDIANA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
INDIANA HISTORIC SITES AND STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

Additional Architectural Information

A. NAME John Roelker House **C. NUMBER** 82-196-0254

B. ADDRESS 555 Sycamore Street

D. UTM References

1	6	4	4	9	9	7	0	4	2	0	2	8	0	0
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E.

When Roelker built this house in about 1858, he was virtually on the outskirts of the town. The foundry in which he was part owner was at the rear of the house on Fifth southeast to Main. The Wabash and Erie Canal bordered the foundry as it made its way to a terminal basin on the site of what eventually became the Vanderburgh County Courthouse (1888-90).

F. INFORMATION SOURCES Reflections.

G. PREPARED BY Douglas L. Stern **H. DATE** 29 Jan 82

STATE OF INDIANA
 DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
 INDIANA HISTORIC SITES AND STRUCTURES INVENTORY

1. HISTORIC NAME JOHN H. ROELKER (?)
 2. OWNERSHIP: PUBLIC PRIVATE
 NAME Theo. Lodgeur / Doran Pendue
 ADDRESS _____
 3. LOCATION NOTES Eastern Enlg. h16, Block 31
 4. VISIBLE FROM PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY: X YES _____ NO
 5. USE PRESENT PAST 6. CATEGORY 8. ENDANGERED
 Residential (sing.) DISTRICT
 Residential (mult.) X BUILDING(S)
 Commerce STRUCTURE
 Industrial SITE
 Agriculture OBJECT
 Transportation
 Organization
 Military
 Political
 Unknown 7. ACCESSIBLE 9. DATE c. 1850-60?
 Vacant X YES/RESTRICTED 10. ARCHITECT/BUILDER
 Other/LAW OFFICES YES/UNRESTRICTED
 _____ NO _____
 11. PERIODS: PREHISTORIC _____ 17TH/18TH GEN. _____ 1800-1860 X 1861-1899 _____ 1900-PRESENT
 12. AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE
 Archeology-Prehistoric _____ Conservation _____ Law _____ Sculpture _____
 Archeology-Historic _____ Economics _____ Literature _____ Social/Humanitarian _____
 Agriculture _____ Education _____ Military _____ Theater _____
 X Architecture _____ Engineering _____ Music _____ Transportation _____
 Art _____ Exploration/Settlement _____ Philosophy _____ Other (Specify) _____
 Commerce _____ X Industry _____ Politics/Government _____
 Communications _____ Invention _____ Religion _____
 Community Planning _____ Landscape Architecture _____ Science _____
 13. STYLE 14. CONDITION 16. SITE INTEGRITY
 Federal _____ EXCELLENT _____ X ORIGINAL SITE
 Greek Revival _____ X GOOD _____ MOVED DATE _____
 Gothic Revival _____ FAIR _____
 Italianate _____ DETERIORATED _____
 Second Empire _____ RUINS _____
 Stick Style/Eastlake _____ UNEXPOSED _____ YES _____
 Queen Anne _____
 Romanesque Revival _____
 Colonial Revival _____
 Neo-Classical _____
 Bungalow _____
 Vernacular _____
 X Other (Specify) NA X MAJOR
 15. ALTERATIONS 18. IN ESTABLISHED HISTORIC DISTRICT
 UNALTERED _____ X NO
 MINOR _____ YES/NAME _____
 19. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT (NATURAL AND MAN-MADE) DOWNTOWN ROELKER'S EAGLE
FOUNDRY WAS BEHIND IT, ON THE CANAL.
 20. INFORMATION SOURCES TOWNSHIP ASSESSOR: REFLECTIONS UPON A CENTURY
OF ARCHITECTURE.
 21. PREPARED BY NANCY J. LONG 22. DATE 9/7/77



IDENTIFICATION

CLASSIFICATION/DATE

SIGNIFICANCE

DESCRIPTION

Architectural Information

1. D "L" SHAPE
2. C 2 STORIES
3. D 4 BAYS
4. C-S COMMON BOND BRICK, PAINTED. STONE AROUND BOTTOM IS RECENT.
5. B
6. C NONE
7. A FRONT STEPS
8. I ROLLED ROOFING
9. K GABLE W/ HALF GABLE AT REAR
10. A-3 FLUSH GABLE CHIMNEY
11. B BRICK
12. I ALTERED-COMpletely COVERED W/ ROOFING MATERIAL
13. A CLOSE EAVES
14. _____
15. N PLAIN PARAPET GABLE, IRREGULAR
16. E TILE TRIM
17. C-A NONE
18. A FLAT WINDOWS
19. B-1 PLAIN LINTELS ADDITIONS HAVE BEEN MADE
20. A PLAIN SIDES TO THE REAR
21. H STONE LINTELS, BRICK SIDES
22. A STONE SILLS (2ND STORY)
23. B DOUBLEHUNG WINDOWS
24. A-6, B-6
25. B-7 2ND FLOOR WINDOWS SHORTER
26. B-2 RIGHT ENTRANCE
27. A FLAT DOOR OPENING
28. B-1 STONE LINTEL
29. _____
30. _____
- 31.
32. _____
33. _____
34. _____
35. C UNKNOWN