

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received NOV 21 1985

date entered MAR 27 1986

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

1. Name

historic BRANDENBURG COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Main Street _____ not for publication

city, town Brandenburg _____ vicinity of

state Kentucky code _____ county Meade code _____

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	NA in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	NA being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple (See Continuation Sheet)

street & number

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Meade County Courthouse

street & number Kentucky Highway 1692

city, town Brandenburg _____ state Kentucky

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky has this property been determined eligible? _____ yes no

date October 1983 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records Kentucky Heritage Council

city, town Frankfort _____ state Kentucky

7. Description

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

Brandenburg, situated on the Ohio River in the northwestern section of the state, is the seat of government for Meade County which is comprised of a land area of 305 square miles. Meade County is located in the Pennyrile Section of Kentucky, and is part of the Mississippian geological formation characterized by the Ohio River Valleys and the "barrens," rugged hilly and broken land. The county is bounded for 58 miles by the Ohio River. Other major waterways are Doe, Otter, Spring, and Wolf Creeks. The town of Brandenburg is located on two hills known as East and West Hills and the valley between the hills. Historically, Brandenburg, the largest town in the county with a population of 1,831 in 1980, has been the commercial, cultural and major riverport in Meade County.

On April 3, 1974, Brandenburg was devastated by a tornado. Destruction occurred throughout the town, and thirty-one people died as a result of the tornado. Over half of the dwellings and buildings in the town were destroyed or heavily damaged by the tornado. Main Street was especially devastated including the Meade County Courthouse, an impressive two-story building of brick construction built in 1878, and several commercial buildings. The seven surviving commercial buildings suffered extensive damage, but have been repaired and rebuilt to their original scale.

The Brandenburg Commercial District comprises seven buildings, and includes the F. W. Casperke Building, the former Hotel Meade, the former Ace Theatre, the Dr. Blair Building, the Brandenburg Moose Lodge, formerly the Applegate Ford Motor Company, the Meade County Messenger Building, and the former Farmers' Deposit Bank Building. These buildings represent the best commercial architectural resources in the community.

All of the buildings are defined as vernacular architectural resources. Four are of concrete block construction, two of brick construction, and one of frame construction. The majority of the commercial buildings were constructed in the early twentieth century. The oldest structure in the district is the former Hotel Meade, constructed ca. 1835-1850.

The east side of the commercial district consists of three two-story buildings of frame and concrete block construction. Although heavily damaged in 1974 by the tornado, the Hotel Meade is the most significant architectural resource in the district. Prior to the tornado, the handsome frame building exhibited six pedimented dormers on the facade and rear elevations, and three of the dormers remain on the rear facade. The structure was re-sided during the rebuilding phase, but retains original facade fenestration including the handsome storefronts. Completing the building is a denticulated cornice with returns. Adjacent to the former hotel is the Ace Theatre Building, a large two-story structure of molded concrete block construction.

The west side of the district is comprised of three one-story buildings and one two-story building. The Farmers' Deposit Bank, a two-story brick structure with one-story brick wing is representative of late nineteenth and early twentieth century vernacular commercial architecture. Although heavily damaged by the 1974 tornado, the building retains several original architectural features. Pilaster strips delineate the upper level facade bays which are enhanced by stone lintels and sills. Brick corbel tables further accentuate the second-floor bays, and a handsome parapet completes the structure. The one-story wing is completed by a corbelled cornice. Adjacent

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 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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates ca.1835 - 1910 **Builder/Architect** **Unknown**

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Brandenburg Commercial District is significant for its unique community plan, for its involvement in local and river commerce, and for the periods of architecture the buildings represent in small towns in Kentucky.

Brandenburg, situated on the Ohio River in the northwestern section of the State, was laid off on sixty-one acres of land owned by Solomon Brandenburg in accordance with the provisions of legislation enacted by the Kentucky General Assembly in 1823. Records show that four commissioners appointed by the county court of Meade County, in March 1825, undertook to "lay the . . . bounded tract off into convenient lots, streets, and alleys." While no mention is made of the process undertaken to develop the town plan, the commissioners had to create Brandenburg around two large hills with a deep valley which ran perpendicular to the Ohio River. Working with this topography, the commissioners ran Main Street down the center of the valley, and designated lots and alleys rising up along the hill sides. To assist in better utilization of the space, they had constructed staircases which ran up the sides of East Hill and West Hill. The staircases, still extent, are actually referred to, and designated on historic maps, as "alleys," each referred to by a name.

The topographic features of Brandenburg's location presented issues to the commissioners in charge of the city's planning, who offered a unique solution to the problem. Brandenburg is the only Kentucky town on the Ohio River centered around a Main Street which literally runs into the river. The Brandenburg Commercial District is a separate entity from the remainder of the community which is located on the hills above. The commercial district has a unique relation to the river because of this plan. The river was historically the focal point of activity for this once thriving riverport, and it remains a focal point today because of the early planning of its layout.

Brandenburg was an important center of river trade in its founding days. By 1814 Solomon Brandenburg, who had acquired the land where the town of Brandenburg later would be laid off in 1825, had established Brandenburg's Landing and Ferry. From 1814 to 1830 Brandenburg was the most active shipping point on the Ohio River between Louisville and Owensboro. Unfortunately, Brandenburg's early success as a shipping center was dealt a severe blow due to lengthy and bitter land litigations between several local citizens and the former owner. Despite a favorable court ruling for the local citizens, the town never achieved its early prominence and prosperity as an important shipping center on the Ohio. However, Brandenburg was an early center for river trade which helped in establishing successful river commerce by providing a stopping place mid-point between Louisville and Owensboro. It has also served as the county seat and center for trade for Meade County since its founding.

In April, 1974, the town of Brandenburg was devastated by a tornado. Extensive damage and destruction occurred throughout the town. Over half of the buildings were severely damaged or destroyed in the catastrophe. Despite the tremendous loss of architectural resources, some buildings have survived in the commercial area which represent the two periods of greatest building activity--1825-1860, and 1870-1910.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 3.5

Quadrangle name Mauckport

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	6	5	7	2	9	6	0	4	2	0	6	3	2	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

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

C

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

D

1	6	5	7	2	9	0	0	4	2	0	6	3	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at the southeast corner of the Dr. Blair Building, proceed 610 feet in a northward direction along the rear boundaries of the Dr. Blair Bldg., Meade Co. Messenger & Farmer's Deposit Bank Bldg., thence 220 feet in a westward direction to the northwest corner of the former Ace Theatre Bldg.; thence 610 feet in a southward direction along the rear boundaries of the Ace Theater, Hotel Meade & F.W.Casperke Bldgs.; thence 220 feet in an eastward direction to the southeast corner of the Dr. Blair Building. **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 William Gus Johnson, Senior Historian, & Nancy Alexander, Preservation Specialist

organization Kentucky Heritage Council date May 9, 1985

street & number 12th Floor, Capital Plaza Tower telephone 502/564-7005

city or town Frankfort state Kentucky

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature David L. Meyer

title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER date November 13, 1985

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

Jaime M. McPherson date 3/27/86
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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National Park Service**

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<u>Building</u>	<u>Owner & Address</u>
Dr. Blair Building	c/oVera Willet Main Street, Brandenburg, KY
Brandenburg Moose Lodge (formerly Applegate Ford Motor Company)	c/oLodge No. 1177 Robbie Dowell, President Main Street, Brandenburg, KY
<u>Meade County Messenger Building</u>	c/oGene Smith, President 235 Main Street, Brandenburg, KY
Farmers' Deposit Bank Building	c/oJerry Canndy Main Street, Brandenburg, KY
F. W. Casperke Building	c/oJerry Canndy Main Street, Brandenburg, KY
Hotel Meade	c/oJerry Canndy Main Street, Brandenburg, KY
Ace Theatre	c/oBuck Aebersold Main Street, Brandenburg, KY

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to the bank building is the Meade County Messenger Building, a one-story brick structure. Also severely damaged by the tornado, the diminutive structure features a projecting bracketted castiron cornice, and segmental-arched side bays. Completing the east side are two one-story buildings of concrete-block construction. Both exhibit molded concrete blocks which resemble rusticated stone on the facade elevations.

The historic sites survey of Brandenburg, Meade County, Kentucky, was conducted during the Fall of 1983 by William G. Johnson, Senior Historian. The survey is part of a ten-year project of the Kentucky Heritage Commission to survey the state's historical and archaeological resources on a county-by-county basis.

National Register criteria were applied to all structures documented in Brandenburg. The survey process involved examining every standing structure in the town. To supplement the field survey of Brandenburg published histories of the area were consulted, historical research was conducted in local and state depositories, and local historians and owners of properties were interviewed to identify properties possessing local significance. City and U.S.G.S. maps were used for the town of Brandenburg. Individual structures that met minimum standards of architectural or historical significance were described, documented, mapped, photographed, site plans drawn and given a site identification number consisting of the Smithsonian designation for Meade County, MD, B for Brandenburg, and a number. All of this information was recorded on Kentucky Historic Resources Inventory Forms. Following the completion of the field survey, interviews and historical research, each site was evaluated and placed in one of three categories: National Register (those sites meeting National Register criteria individually), Kentucky Survey, and Inventory. The Brandenburg Commercial District includes seven buildings and represents a cohesive collection of the town's commercial buildings.

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While these buildings may not represent the height of architectural design in Kentucky for these two periods of construction, they remain as records of the significant growth periods in the history of Brandenburg and Meade County. They also catalogue typical construction techniques for river towns faced with fluctuating use of river transportation.

The first construction period, 1825-1870, is represented by the Hotel Meade. This large structure, which suffered the loss of its roof and six front facade dormers (two rear facade dormers remain intact) is a good example of hotel construction. Built c. 1835-50, this frame structure is built into the hillside. It originally contained storefronts and hotel rooms to provide multiple services to early river travelers. Today it has shops on the first floor, and apartments on the second.

The Farmers' Deposit Bank displays some outstanding masonry on the parapet which suggests some of the exciting designs the town had prior to the 1974 tornado. This is the only remaining Victorian masonry building which displays a high quality of intricate brick work.

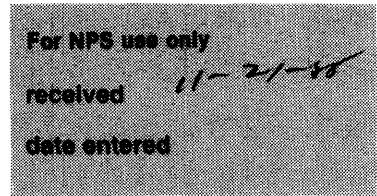
The remaining buildings represent the latter construction period, 1870-1910. The majority of these buildings are of rusticated concrete block, a construction technique which was becoming increasingly popular during this time period. The Ace Theatre, the Applegate Ford, the Doctor Blair Office, and the F. W. Casperke buildings all show conservative growth trends in the community, reflecting social mores for a town faced with declining river trade, yet seeking to expand and grow at the turn of the century.

In 1983, residents of Brandenburg began to consider the possibilities of renovating and protecting the remaining historic buildings of their community. The Main Street Association was formed with the support of the city and county governments. This group organizes a successful Riverfront 4th of July Festival (in 1984 approximately 7,000 people attended) as a major fund raiser. They have recently completed the preparations for a preservation ordinance to be passed which will not only protect the historic buildings in this proposed district, but will also provide guidelines for new construction. The final reading for the ordinance will be in June 1985.

The community is extremely proud of the historic resources which survived the tornado and are, totally through community support and commitment, working to insure the preservation of its existing fabric, and protect the future growth of downtown Brandenburg. The members of the Main Street Association have undertaken all of these efforts on their own initiative and they represent one of the most outstanding preservation/Main Street groups in Kentucky.

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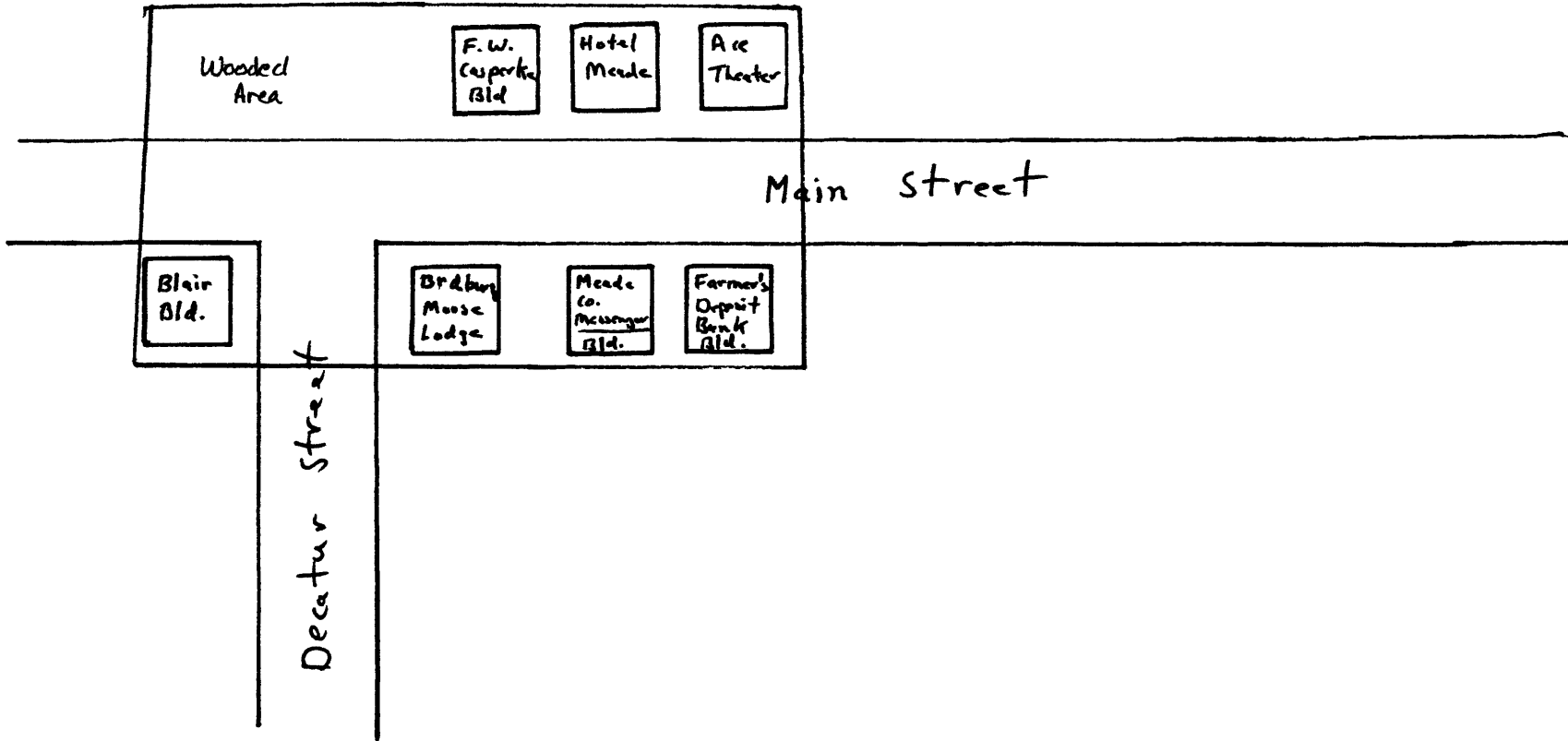
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description & Justification (Continued)

direction to the point of origin.

Sketch Map of Brandenburg
Commercial District, Meade County
Kentucky

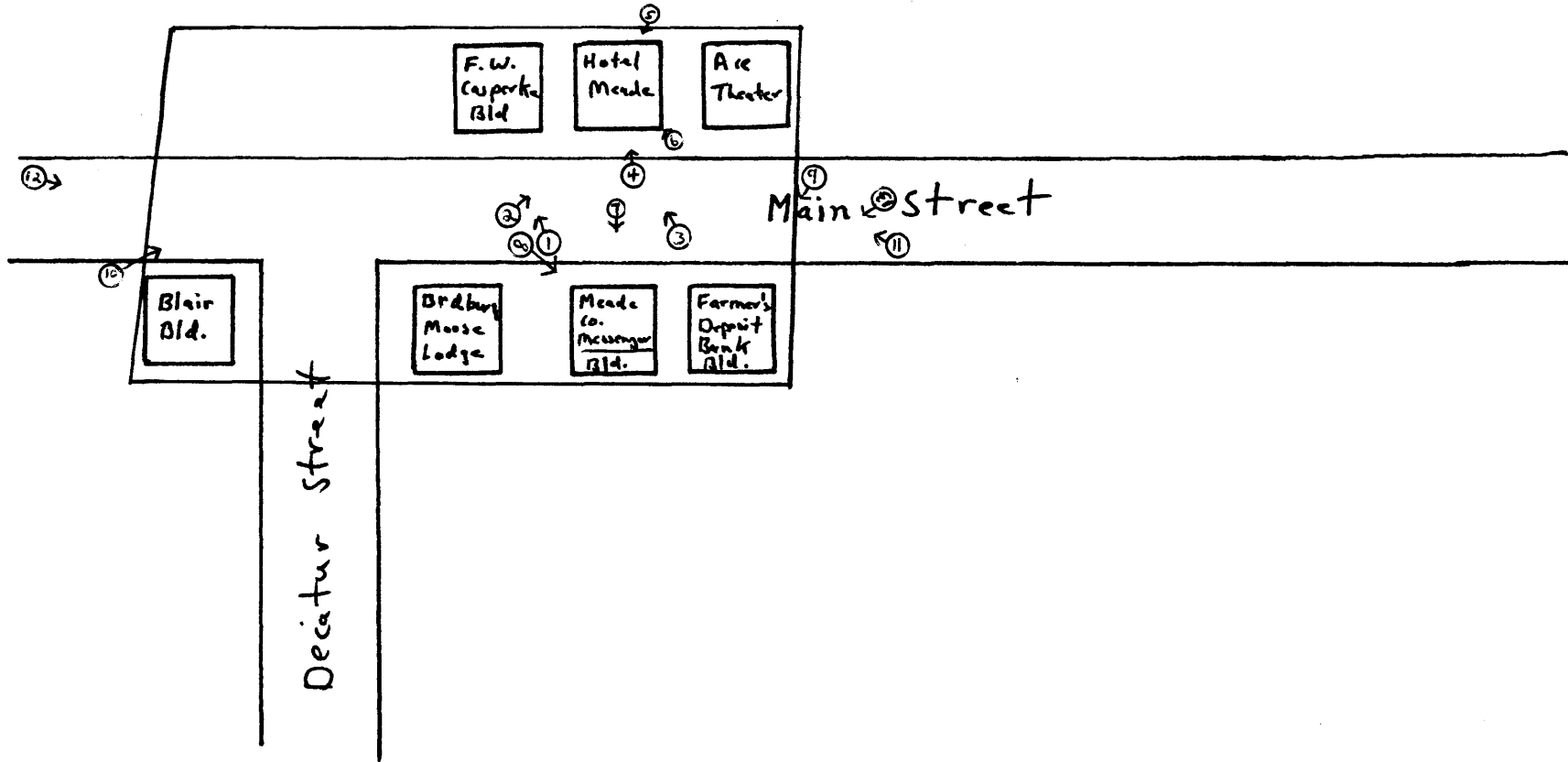
Not to Scale Map 2



- Contributing
- Non-contributing
- District boundary

Sketch Map of Brandenburg
Commercial District, Meade County
Kentucky

Key to Photographs Map 3



- Contributing
- Non-contributing
- District boundary