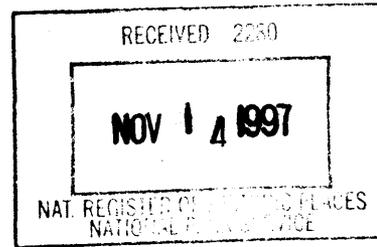


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



1542

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 John Brown Stone Warehouse  
other names/site number The Canal House 003-215-27005

2. Location

street & number 114 East Superior St. N/A  not for publication  
city or town Fort Wayne N/A  vicinity  
state Indiana code IN county Allen code 003 zip code 46802

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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 36CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 11-5-97  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
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.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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
- removed from the National Register
- other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] 12/15/97  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action  
Edson H. Beall

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
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	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/TRADE: Warehouse

DOMESTIC: Multiple Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL: Civic

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

MID-19th c.:

OTHER: gable front

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls STONE

WOOD: Plywood/particle board

roof WOOD: Shingle

other BRICK

WOOD

Narrative Description

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

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for 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.)

Property is:

- 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 or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE \_\_\_\_\_  
 COMMERCE \_\_\_\_\_  
 TRANSPORTATION \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1852-c.1881 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1852 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Brown, John \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**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.)

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:

\_\_\_\_\_

John Brown Stone Warehouse  
Name of Property

Allen IN  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property <1

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	656260	4549350	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			

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 Creager Smith, Assistant Historic Preservation Planner  
organization City of Fort Wayne, Indiana date 6-30-97  
street & number 1 Main Street, Room 800 telephone 219-427-1140  
city or town Fort Wayne state IN zip code 46802

## 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)

## Property Owner

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

name Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne, Inc.  
street & number 114 E. Superior St. telephone 219-424-0646  
city or town Fort Wayne state IN zip code 46802

**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.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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John Brown Stone Warehouse  
Allen County, IN

Architectural Description

The John Brown Stone Warehouse, also known as the Canal House, is a two-story, gable front, stone commercial building built in 1852. It is rectangular in shape, with the narrow gable end facing E. Superior Street (which was originally Water Street). Its three-bay stone facade (photo 1) is topped by a wood friezeboard and eaves with decorative, exposed rafter ends. It has a wood shingle roof with three brick chimneys. Both the stone walls and the variety of interior lintels suggest that the builder, John Brown, a stone merchant and mason, used salvaged and "waste" materials from his business to build the structure. After years of warehouse and railroad use, the interior of the building has been rehabilitated as offices for Arts United, the local fine arts foundation. Although several interior walls (and a portion of the second floor) have been inserted, the interior retains features such as the stone walls around the perimeter, original windows, and structural features. The building has been designated as a Fort Wayne local historic district since 1976. It is the city's oldest surviving commercial building, and it is located at the heart of Fort Wayne's downtown business and government sector. Within a few blocks are important municipal buildings such as the Allen County Courthouse, the City-County Building, and the Allen County Jail. Also, scattered within a two block radius, are buildings used for both government and private offices, warehousing, and industry, with parking lots mixed among them (photo 2). The property is in good condition, and although the interior has seen a series of modifications, the exterior of the building has had very little alteration since its construction.

The immediate environment of the John Brown Stone Warehouse is dominated by a Fort Wayne Public Transportation Corporation bus transfer station (photo 3). A concrete drive behind the building (to the south) leads buses to individual concrete bus stop stands placed diagonally on the lot to the east of the stone warehouse. A semi-open waiting shelter is placed parallel to E. Superior Street and two rows of open-air benches are located between the shelter and the John Brown Stone Warehouse. A number of small trees are planted in this area and across the rear of the stone warehouse. A small garden area is located on the west side of the stone warehouse (photo 4). A privacy fence shields the garden area from a concrete parking lot at the southeast corner of Superior and Calhoun Street.

The John Brown Stone Warehouse sits directly on the four-lane E. Superior Street, separated from traffic only by a concrete sidewalk. To the rear (or south) of the building, behind the concrete drive for buses, rises the Nickel Plate (now

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John Brown Stone Warehouse  
Allen County, IN

Architectural Description

Norfolk Southern) railroad elevation (photo 4), which was completed in 1955. This concrete and steel elevation stands on the former right-of-way of the Wabash and Erie canal, which was first converted to rail use by the New York, Chicago & St. Louis Railway in 1881. The conversion of the former canal bed to railroad use greatly altered the relationship between the rear of the warehouse and the canal bed. When built in 1852, the rear of the building faced the canal bed, with perhaps the space between used as either an open work yard or for storage of large stones. The elevation of the canal itself was likely level with the rear of the stone warehouse or slightly higher. The height of the canal right-of-way was increased for the construction of the railroad in 1881, and it remains at an increased height today, relative to the building. The area surrounding the stone warehouse has a gentle slope to the northeast, toward the St. Marys River. Because of the contemporary character of the building's immediate surroundings, only the John Brown Stone Warehouse and its lot have been included within the boundaries of this nomination.

The building is, however, located near The Landing Historic District, but separated from it by the railroad elevation. Located to the southwest, The Landing represents one of Fort Wayne's few remaining clusters of 19th and early 20th century commercial buildings which still retain much of their integrity. Some of the city's oldest remaining commercial buildings are located in this district. They are primarily two part commercial blocks, of brick construction, with decorative details of limestone, iron, and wood. Architectural styles include a blend of Italianate, Romanesque Revival, and early twentieth century commercial styles. Buildings date from c.1865 to 1987. The Landing, which was named for a nearby canal boat docking and maneuvering basin, is both a local historic district and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The John Brown Stone Warehouse, built 1852, has a simple, rectangular plan. The building measures 50 feet deep and 22 feet wide. A low gable roof (photo 1) suggests the Greek Revival style, but the gable front building has no other Greek Revival features. Its two-story walls (and foundation) are built with rough-cut rubblestone; mostly a mixture of limestone and sandstone, with a small amount of granite fieldstone and brick used on the interior. Much of the stone material was likely waste material from John Brown's business as a stone cutter, carver, and masonry contractor. The ashlar blocks of varying heights and widths are laid in irregular courses. The west wall shows the use of very small, thin stones to a point between the first and second floors (photo 5). Above this clearly NPS

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John Brown Stone Warehouse  
Allen County, IN

Architectural Description

visible line the stones become larger, but not more uniform in their coursing. The south and east walls, however, maintain a relatively uniform appearance in the sizes of the stone and the coursing. The stones were chosen more carefully for size and decorative effect on the facade, where larger, irregularly-sized quoins are used at the corners. Stones which define the door and window openings produce a less pronounced effect of quoins. The stones used as quoins display a smoother finish than the other stones used in the walls. The stone walls continue upward to complete the gable on both the front and the rear of the building. Centered in the front gable is a smooth, square block of limestone with "1852" carved into its face (photo 1).

Although today the exterior of the building is little altered from its original appearance, the building once had additions on its east and west sides. These additions were built at different times by the Nickel Plate Railroad while the building was in the railroad's ownership. The stone wall on a portion of the east side of the building was removed in order to join the interior of the building with the interior of the addition. A portion of the south wall was removed to enlarge the rear door. During a 1976 rehabilitation these altered east and south (rear) openings were covered by wood-frame wall panels, which were covered with now-weathered cedar plywood siding. These wood frames project slightly from the exterior surface of the stone walls. On the interior, these voids in the walls have been put to use for housing mechanical, heating and ventilation equipment. On the facade, two steel reinforcement bar termination plates have been added between floors. A bracket-mounted sign has been added at the northwest corner, and a bronze plaque commemorates the 1976 rehabilitation of the property.

The three-bay facade of the building has a double door opening centered on the first floor, flanked by a single door on the west and a window to the east. Earlier, non-functional, double doors were replaced in a 1987 rehabilitation by a single door with a fixed panel to the side. Both existing doors and the fixed panel are glazed in their upper half, with similar wood storm doors. The second floor has three equally-spaced windows. The west side of the building has two short windows on the first floor, placed toward the rear. The second floor of the west side also has two full-height windows, with one placed closer to the front of the building. The east side of the building has two short, original windows on the first floor, and one original window on the second floor toward the rear. One fixed window replaced an original window on each floor within the

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John Brown Stone Warehouse  
Allen County, IN

Architectural Description

section of cedar plywood siding. The rear of the stone warehouse has one original window on the second floor. A section of cedar plywood siding on the rear contains a single, steel security door on the first floor with a fixed window on the second floor which is also placed in an original window opening. (Because of the slope of the site, the rear door is several feet higher in elevation than the front doors.) All the original windows in the building are two-over-two double-hung sash with centered, vertical muntins. The openings on the facade are finished by limestone lintels and sills with a smooth-cut finish. The remaining windows have limestone sills, but they are topped by wood lintels covered with a stucco finish. The limestone lintel over the double doors on the facade retains a faint image (photo 6) which reads "J. BROWN."

The eaves of the stone warehouse have a moderate overhang, and are supported on all sides of the building by wood rafters with decorative, scroll-cut ends. Both gable ends have a decorative fascia molding which stretches across the ends of the rafters. It is likely that the east and west sides of the building also originally had this fascia molding, however it has been removed. A simple wood friezeboard surrounds the structure. It has one narrow molding located just below the rafter ends. The gable roof of the building is covered with wood shingles and has one interior wall chimney on the west side. The east side of the roof has two interior wall chimneys. All three chimneys are brick, and were reconstructed in the 1976 rehabilitation.

Evidence suggests that, as originally constructed, the interior of the John Brown Stone Warehouse had two floors of open, unrestricted space. The first floor may have had a flagstone floor. The second floor was likely finished with a heavy wood floor. An office or small apartment space may have originally been located on the second floor at the front of the building (where there remains an interior brick chimney with a flue), but the majority of the building would have been reserved for work space and storage of material. By the 1860s, however, the second floor was used as living space for canal boat men and their families. The second floor likely continued its residential use until the building was acquired by the railroad in 1885.

During ownership of the building by the railroad, which continued until 1970, it was occupied in the early twentieth century by a freight agency. The building was also used by the railroad at various times as shop and storage space. Likely early in railroad ownership, the interior of the building was re-arranged in NPS

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John Brown Stone Warehouse  
Allen County, IN

Architectural Description

order to provide more convenient access to the building from the railroad right-of-way. When the building was donated to the city of Fort Wayne in 1970, the second floor structure had been removed from the south half of the building. (The structure of the west wall and the evidence of voids in the wall for the placement of floor joists were the strongest evidence that the second floor had once extended to the rear of the building.) The level of the first floor had been raised approximately 3 to 4 feet in the south half of the building; roughly below the area where the second floor structure was removed. This change increased the floor level in the south half of the building to make it approximately the same as the ground level outside, which would have considerably eased access to the railroad. The floor height was increased by a platform of heavy timber floor joists covered with thick planks. The ceiling height in this area was much increased, as the original second floor ceiling became the only ceiling in the rear of the building. A short stair was provided to the original first floor level at the front of the building, which remained unaltered. The original stairs to the second floor, on the west wall near the front of the building, also remained intact.

After five years of ownership by the City of Fort Wayne, the "Canal House," as it had become known, was adopted as a U.S. Bicentennial project in 1975 by the Fort Wayne National Bicentennial Commission's Committee on Historic and Architectural Restoration and Preservation. The building was rehabilitated for office use in 1975-1976 using labor and materials donated by the community. (This project was the impetus for organized historic preservation activity in Fort Wayne, and led to the formation of ARCH, Inc., the city's not-for-profit historic preservation organization.) The arrangement of the building as described above was retained. The first floor remained at street level at the front, with new steps and a railing installed for access to the raised portion at the rear. The second floor was also utilized for office space as an open loft. This second floor loft was extended along the east wall, over a kitchenette and restroom added below. An oak balustrade and railing was placed on the open edge for safety.

After its rehabilitation, the building was occupied by the Fort Wayne Fine Arts Foundation (later Arts United), but by 1987 the organization had outgrown the building's available space. As a result, the interior of the building was again re-arranged. It now more closely resembles the original interior arrangement of two full stories, but with several walls inserted within the structure to provide private offices. The raised floor structure on the south half of the first floor

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John Brown Stone Warehouse  
Allen County, IN

Architectural Description

(which was likely added by the railroad) was removed, and a new concrete slab was poured to match the height of the concrete slab floor at the front of the building. (A portion of the raised floor structure remains as a platform for the water heater in the first floor mechanical room.) A short stairs was added to reach the rear door, which remains unchanged at the height of the rear lawn. The second floor was once again extended to the rear of the building; only a small area of balcony was retained in the southeast corner for access to a steel circular stair.

Though the John Brown Stone Warehouse has undergone numerous interior changes since its construction, the interior does retain its historic character and many historic features. All the stone exterior walls have remained exposed on the interior, only covered where interior partitions meet the stone walls at a right-angle. Two of the three brick interior chimneys remain. The two which survive are located on the east wall of the building; a flush brick wall surface remains on the west wall, second floor, where a chimney was removed (photo 7). A second floor support beam (photo 8) which runs parallel with the original stairway displays a series of mortise joints where the floor joists meet the beam.

The original exterior door and window openings remain throughout the interior, however there was likely a double door on the rear originally, where the single steel door is located today. The windows are finished at their base with wide wood sills. The window and door openings are topped by a variety of rough-hewn wood beams used as lintels. The variety in the sizes of the lintels, and even the crudeness of the preparation of the materials, is so obvious that it suggests that the builder was proud of his ability to utilize scrap material. For example, the three second floor windows at the front of the building (photo 9). These three windows display smooth limestone lintels on the exterior, however on the interior the east and west windows are each topped by two thick, sawn boards which are sandwiched together to form a heavy lintel. (It is possible that these boards were scrap lumber cut-offs from construction of the second floor structure.) The wood lintel over the center window is a large rough-hewn beam. The west end of this beam is square-cut, but the east end extends farther into the stone wall and is rough, jagged, even splintered in appearance. The numerous and deep adze marks on the face of the center lintel, which also appear on the edges of the four sawn boards of the east and west lintels, suggest that these surfaces were originally prepared for plaster. This evidence of plaster, along with the chimney and flue which remain nearby on the east wall, strongly suggests

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John Brown Stone Warehouse  
Allen County, IN

Architectural Description

that John Brown's business office was located at the front of the building on the second floor.

As previously mentioned, both floors of the John Brown Stone Warehouse were once relatively open space. The 1987 rehabilitation inserted a number of partitions to create both private offices and open work areas. Upon entering the building through the double doors from E. Superior Street, one enters a large, full width room (photo 10) which fills the front one-third of the structure. An open stairway (photo 8) on the west wall of this room aligns with the west door on the facade. On the east wall a brick chimney rests on a wooden chimney cupboard. This cupboard is a replacement of an earlier unit. A modular reception counter is placed in the southwest quarter of the room, wrapping around from the stairway. A hallway extends south from the front room. It is slightly offset to the east side of the building, allowing for offices on the west side of the first floor and a kitchenette, restroom, and mechanical room on the east side. At the south end of the hallway is an open stairs of five steps for access to the rear door of the building (photo 11). In the southeast corner is a steel circular stair which rises to the second floor. Two offices are located on the west side of the hall. The smaller office (photo 12) is in the southwest corner, at the rear of the building. The larger office doubles as a conference room, and has a full width closet across its south wall. The corbeled stone base of the former west chimney can be seen in the northwest corner of the room, near the ceiling (photo 13).

On the second floor of the building, an office (photo 9) takes the full width at the front. The enclosed upper stairwell, however, intrudes into the southwest corner of this office. The stairway lands on the west wall (photo 7), outside the door to the large office, and a small office which is located directly behind the large office (on the east wall). The remainder of the second floor is an open office area, with work areas separated only by low modular partitions (photo 14). The southeast corner of this large room has an open balcony which overlooks a small area of the first floor. The circular stair from the first floor lands on the north side of the balcony.

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John Brown Stone Warehouse  
Allen County, IN

Statement of Significance

The John Brown Stone Warehouse, or the Canal House, is significant under National Register **Criterion A** for its association with the history of canal **transportation** in Fort Wayne. The building is the only remaining (intact) structure in Fort Wayne and Allen County associated with the Wabash and Erie Canal, a canal which made a significant contribution to the development of the city. The John Brown Stone Warehouse was built during the era in which the transportation of passengers and freight was dominated by the canal, just prior to the completion of the first railroad to Fort Wayne. The building is also significant in the history of **commerce** in Fort Wayne. It reflects the commercial activity which was encouraged by, and depended upon, the Wabash and Erie Canal and the transportation options it provided. In addition, the John Brown Stone Warehouse, built in 1852, is the oldest surviving commercial building in Fort Wayne. The building is also significant under **Criterion C** as a unique vernacular expression, in stone, of a Gable-front commercial building. The builder, John Brown (a stone cutter, mason, and merchant), showcased the goods and services which he offered for sale in the design and construction of the building itself. Stone construction is rare in Fort Wayne, it expresses the likely use of "waste" stone from Brown's business. The building also highlights the importance of the canal through its use of the canal-imported stone material.

The John Brown Stone Warehouse was built on Fort Wayne's East Water Street (now E. Superior St.) in 1852. The rear of the building was located on the north bank of the Wabash and Erie Canal. John Brown took advantage of the shipping opportunities of the canal for his business as a stone mason and merchant. The building functioned as a stone warehouse and workshop, and for shipping and receiving stone, lime, and other materials on the canal, until c.1862. After the property was sold to Henry Drover in 1862, it continued to be used for receiving stone and lime shipments on the canal. The building may have also been used later as a warehouse or distribution point for wood products which Drover manufactured in nearby Huntington, Indiana, and likely shipped to Fort Wayne on the canal. The building continued to be associated with the adjacent canal as a home for canal boat men and their families until the waterway ceased to operate about 1881, ending the period of significance for the John Brown Stone Warehouse. The New York, Chicago & St. Louis Railway (or the "Nickel Plate") purchased the canal right-of-way in 1882 and quickly built its main line to Chicago through Fort Wayne. By 1885 the Nickel Plate had purchased the warehouse building, and the railroad converted it for use as a railroad freight shipping and storage facility. The railroad continued to use the building until it was donated to the

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John Brown Stone Warehouse  
Allen County, IN

Statement of Significance

City of Fort Wayne in 1970. As a United States Bicentennial project, the "Canal House" was rehabilitated for office use. It was completed in 1976, and the Canal House was designated a Fort Wayne historic preservation district. Today the building continues its use as offices for Arts United, the Fort Wayne fine arts foundation.

Fort Wayne has an important place in the history of transportation in the Great Lakes and Midwest regions. Its location at the confluence of three rivers, the St. Joseph, St. Marys, and Maumee, made it a central point for travel on the rivers by both Native Americans and European traders and settlers. The site was a gathering place for Native American tribes for centuries, and was a traditional trade center for the Miami, Potowatomi, Wea, and other tribes which inhabited the Great Lakes region. The three rivers provided access to the Great Lakes and much of Ohio, as well as northern and central Indiana. In addition, a short, swampy 7-8 mile portage over a continental divide, between the St. Marys River and the Little Wabash River to the west, gave access to the Illinois lands and to southern Indiana, as well as to the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. This portage was the only place where travelers by boat had to go overland when making their way from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. The extensive natural transportation network gave the site of Fort Wayne distinct advantages for commerce and settlement. The Miami village of Kekionga flourished at the site, as the French moved into the area from Canada in the early eighteenth century. French traders inhabited the area, and the French established a succession of frontier outposts. The American fort from which the community derived its name was built in 1794.

As Americans moved into the Fort Wayne area, it was inevitable that plans would be made to improve this natural transportation route. The former land surveyor George Washington, a promoter of canals in his home state of Virginia (Shaw, 7), was among the first to suggest the exploration of the portage route. In 1784 he recommended that Congress begin studying rivers "as far westwardly as the Miamies, running into the Ohio and Lake Erie...to see how the waters of these communicate with the river St. Joseph...and with the Wabash" (Fatout, 23). Hearing of the potential of a canal route from Lake Erie to the Ohio River in 1817, the enthusiastic promoter of the Erie Canal, De Witt Clinton of New York, wrote to Fort Wayne Indian agent Major Benjamin F. Stickney. He wrote, "I have found the way to get into Lake Erie and you have shown me how to get out of it....You have extended my project" (Shaw, 135).

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John Brown Stone Warehouse  
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The portage which connected the Maumee with the Wabash River was first surveyed in 1819 by Captain James Riley. He was a civil engineer sent to Fort Wayne to survey the lands ceded by an 1818 treaty with the Miami Indians (Poinsatte, 4). He forwarded his survey, along with his favorable opinion of a channel to connect the rivers, to Edward Tiffin, surveyor general of the United States. However, it is not likely that Riley shared his findings with the government of the state of Indiana, which was only established three years earlier. Also in 1819, the same year Riley made his survey, a group petitioned the Indiana state legislature to appoint engineers to survey a canal route between the St. Marys River and the Wabash. A state senate committee dismissed the request as "premature" (Fatout, 25). Accounts of Fort Wayne at this time support the decision of the committee. Located in a thinly settled, vast wilderness, the population of the village was likely no more than a few hundred people. Thomas Scattergood Teas, a traveler who visited Fort Wayne in 1821, wrote; "The settlement at this place consisted of about 30 log cabins and two tolerably decent frame houses....The inhabitants are nearly all French Canadians" (Poinsatte, 4). The majority of the residents of Fort Wayne were drawn to the place by the Indian trade, which thrived before the Indian populations ceded the majority of their land.

Through the 1820s an ever-increasing number of American traders and pioneers settled in Fort Wayne. In 1823 Allen County was formed by the Indiana legislature, and in 1824 the town of Fort Wayne was platted by John T. Barr and John McCorkle. Barr, a Baltimore, Maryland merchant, and McCorkle, of Piqua, Ohio and also a merchant, traveled to Fort Wayne in 1823 to visit the newly established U.S. Land Office. The men purchased the land on which the settlement of Fort Wayne had already been established. They quickly platted this area, just west of the old fort buildings, and began to offer the lots for sale (Griswold, 263). The attention of these two businessmen may have been directed toward Fort Wayne by speculation that a canal would be built. In their original plat, the two primary north-south streets were named after nationally-known canal promoters De Witt Clinton and John C. Calhoun. Clinton was Governor of New York, and the chief promoter of the Erie Canal. John C. Calhoun, while Secretary of War under President Monroe, had proposed a national system of canals to be built by army engineers (Shaw, 200). Calhoun's comprehensive proposal likely would have required a canal through Fort Wayne, linking Lake Erie with the Ohio River. The lots of the original plat sold well, and in 1829 Fort Wayne was incorporated as a town.

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As the settlement quickly grew, it gained the attention of politicians and the state government. Much of that attention was gained due to the efforts of Samuel Hanna. Hanna was a frontier-born fur trader who settled in Fort Wayne in 1819 at the age of 22. With the formation of Allen County, Hanna was named the first postmaster, and soon after that he was elected associate judge of the Circuit Court. He was successful in numerous business and land ventures, and soon saw the need to provide better transportation routes to Fort Wayne. He was elected to the state legislature, and began to tirelessly promote the construction of a canal. He introduced the necessary legislation and worked to see that it was passed. Hanna also lobbied the U.S. Congress, urging support for Indiana canals (On the Heritage Trail, 223). Ironically, when the canal was at its peak of traffic in the 1850s, it was Samuel Hanna who recognized that railroads would become the dominant form of transportation. He was responsible for bringing the first railroad to Fort Wayne in 1854 (Griswold, 411).

In 1823 Indiana Governor William Hendricks, speaking to the Indiana assembly, recommended that the state consider a Wabash-Maumee canal (Fatout, 28). In 1824, the Indiana legislature approved the first surveys to be conducted. In 1827 the federal government stepped in to assist the state by granting five sections of land (in alternate sections on both sides of the canal), totaling 3200 acres, for each mile of canal constructed. Indiana was to receive the proceeds from the sale of these lands to benefit canal construction (Castaldi, 2), with the requirement that construction begin within five years and be completed within twenty years. A group of Canal Commissioners was created in 1828, with Samuel Hanna of Fort Wayne chosen to serve, along with two others (Fatout, 41).

What followed were several frustrating years of political compromises, regional rivalries, and delays. The state of Indiana failed to commit sufficient funds to begin construction, and it became clear to canal boosters that the state would not meet the requirement to begin construction within five years. In 1831 the state's leaders recognized that Indiana would have to begin construction of the Wabash and Erie canal or forfeit the land grant from the federal government, which expired March 2, 1832. Finally, on January 9, 1832, a comprehensive act was passed allowing the canal commissioners to borrow money to begin construction (50-52). A hastily organized ground-breaking ceremony was held in Fort Wayne February 22, 1832. Though construction was not ready to begin, the ceremony met the deadline imposed by the federal government.

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With the funding assured, the canal commissioners could now move forward with the business of planning construction. They hired a young engineer with experience working on the Ohio canals, Jesse Lynch Williams. He moved to Fort Wayne in 1832 and began to plan the work and prepare for the hiring of workers. Williams was the first chief engineer of the Wabash and Erie Canal, and two years later was put in charge of all Indiana canal projects. In 1837 he was named chief engineer of all public improvement projects in the state (On the Heritage Trail, 85). Work began on the canal with the construction of a feeder canal to supply water from the St. Joseph River to the main channel at its highest point, just west of Fort Wayne. Hundreds (and often thousands) of men were employed to dig the main channel, which averaged fifty feet wide and six feet deep. Structures such as locks, culverts, and aqueducts were also required. The work drew Irish workers from the east, many of whom had prior experience building eastern canals. On July 4, 1835, the first 32 miles of the canal were opened for navigation from Fort Wayne west to Huntington, Indiana.

The canal was already a boon to Fort Wayne, and the completion of the first leg of the Wabash and Erie was heralded around the state. Soon each region of the state wanted a canal to ensure economic progress. Indiana's Mammoth Internal Improvements Act of 1836, which authorized an appropriation of \$10,000,000 to be borrowed at five percent, allowed several of the state's regions to jump on the public improvement bandwagon. It funded extension of the Wabash and Erie canal from Lafayette to Terre Haute; it also funded two other major canal projects. Road and river improvements and construction of a railroad were also provided with funding. The huge undertaking was financed by the sale of bonds in the money markets of New York (Madison, 83). The public expressed approval of the plan, and for the next three years Jesse Williams directed worked in earnest on several major projects (Fatout, 74). A financial panic and severe depression which began in 1839 caused all work to stop in the late summer (98) on all projects except the Wabash and Erie canal. By 1841 the state was bankrupt (Madison, 82-84), and it defaulted on its bond payments for the next five years (Fatout, 104).

The Hoosier state's enthusiasm for canal building reflects a broader national theme--part of a "spirit of improvement" which was underway during the first decades of the 19th century. Canals were promoted as the ultimate public works projects to spur economic growth and development of new towns and cities. Canal technology provided a transportation network that was vital in linking developing

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areas of the nation. Canals lowered transportation costs, quickly carrying large amounts of grain from western farms to eastern ports. They also carried thousands of passengers (many of whom were settlers) west at what seemed like effortless speed. Newspapers across the country routinely reported the progress of the construction of the Erie Canal across New York from 1817 to its completion in 1825. Between 1815 and 1840, 3,326 canal miles were built in the United States, and another one thousand would be completed during the following decade (Shaw, 228). Though Indiana's enthusiasm (which some have called lunacy) for canals led to financial failure, it contributed greatly to the development of vast areas of Indiana wilderness. Because of its central, strategic location, Fort Wayne became a thriving boom town dependent on the canal for its growth and prosperity. In Canals For A Nation Ronald Shaw wrote, "More than any other canal settlement in Indiana, Fort Wayne was transformed from an Indian trading center at a portage place into a canal town" (153).

The full economic impact of the Wabash and Erie canal would not begin to be felt until the Ohio portion of the canal was completed to link Indiana with Lake Erie and Ohio's Miami and Erie Canal. Because of fear of potential competition from the Indiana canals (Shaw, 137), Ohio stalled completion of its 88-mile portion of the canal until 1843. Only after Indiana leaders pressured the state of Ohio was Fort Wayne able to hold a celebration of the completion of the canal from Lake Erie to Lafayette, Indiana. That celebration, held July 4, 1843, had all the trappings of a modern festival, with a parade, music, and a barbecue. General Lewis Cass was the primary speaker, among many who spoke and sent their regards (Griswold, 362-364). The completion of the canal through Ohio was worthy of the celebration. Now Fort Wayne was linked by an interstate canal highway to Toledo and eastern markets. It was also linked, via the Miami and Erie canal, to Cincinnati and the Ohio River. During the next fifteen years Fort Wayne would thrive. With heavy traffic on the canal, and the economic benefit which resulted from it, the city became the major distribution and shipping point for agricultural products in northeast Indiana. It also began to attract artisans and small industry which produced items for shipment on the canal, or received raw materials on the canal to be sold in Fort Wayne.

With the increase in business and industry, and the increased ease of travel to Fort Wayne, the population of the city soared. In 1840, three years before the canal was opened to Lake Erie, the population of Fort Wayne is estimated at 1,500. Ten years later the population was 4,282, an increase of 166 percent.

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By 1853 it had risen to 6,500, approximately four times the population of 1840 (Poinsatte, 220-221). As the canal boats shipped agricultural and manufactured goods east, they often returned from Lake Erie with loads of European immigrants. The vast majority of these immigrants were German, but Ireland, England, Scotland, and France were also represented. By 1848 approximately one-third of Fort Wayne's population was foreign-born. Many of these new settlers were either skilled craftsmen or merchants, who began to contribute to the community almost immediately.

Among these immigrants who settled in Fort Wayne was a 25 year old stone cutter from Glasgow, Scotland named John Brown. He was the son of James Brown, one of the leading contractors of Glasgow. It is probable that he came to the United States, as did many sons of prominent families, because of the law of primogeniture. This established the right of the eldest son to inherit the father's estate, leaving younger brothers out on their own (Loveland, 6). He and his wife Mary E. Brown arrived in Fort Wayne by canal prior to 1847. They were accompanied by John's younger sister Elizabeth, and five-year-old Jane Brown, who was either John's daughter, niece, or perhaps sister. By February, 1847 Brown had formed a partnership with James Humphrey. Humphrey was also a Scottish immigrant. He had been in the stone business in Fort Wayne as early as 1834. The pair advertised in 1847 that customers could shop on the canal for marble tombstones, as well as stone for building purposes. Humphrey was awarded the contract to supervise construction of the new Allen County jail in 1849, and likely was involved in many other construction projects. In his early years in Fort Wayne, it appears that John Brown worked as Humphrey's junior partner, and was prepared for making it on his own.

The building trades boomed for several years in the 1840s and 1850s as traffic on the canal increased. As an example of the activity of Fort Wayne's construction industry, over two hundred new buildings were begun in the spring of 1843 (Poinsatte, 222). In the 1850 census of Allen County, John Brown was included among over a dozen stone cutters and masons. The building trades in general accounted for over 200 skilled workers (Loveland, 10). Building materials were a major resource shipped on the canal. Lumber and stone consistently accounted for the largest tonnages of freight material on the canal. In 1848 3,206 two-ton perches of stone were shipped through Fort Wayne, for a total of 6,412 tons (Poinsatte, 237). Durable, good quality building stone had been difficult to obtain just a few years earlier. Because of the lack of sufficient stone, many

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Wabash and Erie canal structures had been constructed of wood. Jesse Williams, however, in his 1847 report to the Board of Trustees of the canal, wrote that durable stone was at last obtainable from the "quarry west of Logansport at Georgetown" (Castaldi, 4).

It was in this booming economic environment that John Brown was prepared to strike out on his own in business. It was April 4, 1852 when he purchased the undeveloped lot 22 of the original plat of Fort Wayne from merchants Robert and Elizabeth Townley. Though the lot was adjacent to the canal, it was located on the north side, and most of the city's development had been on the south side of the canal. It was a good location, however, for a dealer in stone and lime, and Brown quickly built a stone commercial building which was not only serviceable and sturdy, but showcased his products and services. In July, 1852 this notice first appeared in the local papers:

JOHN BROWN Dealer in Stone and Lime. NEW YORK AND LOUISVILLE CEMENT AND PLASTER OF PARIS!

The above articles kept constantly on hand and for sale at his new stone building North of the Canal and near City Mills.

This advertisement continued to be placed in Fort Wayne newspapers, with few lapses, for several years. Its last appearance can be found in the Fort Wayne Sentinel, February 6, 1858.

Little is known about John Brown's business activities other than what can be inferred from the ad, and the general business climate of Fort Wayne in the 1850s. Undoubtedly Brown was dependant upon shipments of stone received on the canal, which was directly behind his building. Considering that 1852 and 1853 were peak years for freight and travel on the canal, Brown had chosen a busy location for his business which would have been surrounded by constant activity. His business was just one of a number of concerns which were dependent upon the canal for receiving raw material and shipping finished product. Brown briefly advertised other products available at his building, such as Blacksmith's Stone Coal. He also continued to be involved in contracting, at times in partnership with James Humphrey. Brown and Humphrey were contracted to build a market house and they likely worked as contractors for construction and maintenance of stone structures on the canal.

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Though the canal was finally completed to Evansville and the Ohio River in 1853, it had little or no impact on the northern stretches east of Lafayette. Canal traffic remained heavy in 1854, but it did not increase as it did when the canal was opened to Lake Erie. This would be the last year for the canal's monopoly in the shipping of freight and passengers. The first railroad reached Fort Wayne from Pittsburgh in November of 1854, which was soon followed by a railroad which linked Fort Wayne and Toledo in 1856. The effect on the Wabash and Erie canal was disastrous. As the competition was strongly felt by 1857, clearances at Fort Wayne amounted to only one-fourth of those issued in 1854. Boats which still carried bulk products to Toledo now returned empty (Poinsatte, 256). Passenger packet lines disappeared from the canal within a year when forced to compete with the railroads. Yet for some the situation remained hopeful; a contract for private maintenance of the canal from the state line west to Terre Haute was signed in 1859 by several Fort Wayne businessmen. Pliny Hoagland and Alfred P. Edgerton, both of Fort Wayne, served as trustees of this public-spirited venture, known as the Wabash and Erie Canal Company.

As John Brown's business activities serve as an example of the opportunities brought by the canal, they also reflect how quickly canal transportation lost favor as railroads and steam power appeared in Fort Wayne. Brown was clearly very successful by taking advantage of the trade present on the canal, and likely remained in business at the canal house until at least February, 1858. On March 11, 1858, however, a suspicious new advertisement appeared in the Fort Wayne Weekly Times, it reads:

John Lillie

Jas. Lillie

Lillie & Bro.

Dealers in Stone and Lime, Sandusky and Louisville Cement, Plaster of Paris, Land Plaster, and Coal.

The above articles kept constantly on hand and for sale at the new stone building north side of the canal near the City Mills.

Though Brown retained ownership of the building until 1862, it appears likely that he sold (or perhaps leased) the stone business to the Lillie brothers in 1858. On October 7, 1858, a notice in the Fort Wayne Weekly Times announced that "John Brown (Stone man) opened a grocery store." It described him as a "Scotch-American" who spoke with a brogue. Brown continued to be active as a contractor

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in the years afterward. He purchased the contract for construction of the Allen County courthouse in 1860. John Brown had certainly become successful enough to diversify his business interests. In 1859 he bought the first steam flouring and grist mill in Fort Wayne from Wm. Pratt & Co. The 1860 census lists his occupation as a miller; he operated the mill until selling out in 1867. Brown was also involved in the Fort Wayne Gas Light Company and the First & Hamilton National Bank before he left for Nashville, Tennessee about 1869.

Little is known of Brown's canal house in the years between 1858 and 1862, but it is likely that the Lillie's continued the stone and lime business in these years. The advertisement which announced their presence, however, only ran until September 16, 1858. Shipping did continue on the canal (at a slower pace) in these years, so it is likely that the building remained a component of the canal trade. In 1862 the building was purchased from John Brown by Henry Drover of Huntington County. Under his ownership the building would be linked to the canal until the last days of its use as a waterway. Drover, much like Brown, was an immigrant drawn to the Fort Wayne area by the Wabash and Erie canal. He sailed from Bremen, Germany in 1840 at the age of 25. He arrived in Fort Wayne in 1841, and farmed near the town for five years. About 1846 Drover moved to Fort Wayne and became a carpenter and a boat captain on the canal. He was active in the German volunteer fire department and the city council before moving to Huntington, where he was elected mayor. In 1859 Drover opened a quarry and built a lime kiln in Huntington County, and undoubtedly began to ship these bulk products on the canal. He probably purchased the canal house in Fort Wayne as a warehouse and distribution point for his products. Later, in 1868, he opened a spoke and bentwood factory near the canal in Huntington with William Drover. The placement of the factory near the canal suggests that he intended to make bulk shipments, via the canal, to Fort Wayne for distribution from the Canal House (Loveland, 14-15).

As the John Brown Stone Warehouse was used as a shipping terminal between Fort Wayne and Huntington by Henry Drover, a succession of German canal boatmen and their families lived in the structure into the 1870s. They lived on the second floor of the building, to be closer to their work and to oversee Drover's operations. In response to a May 20, 1951 Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette article about the mystery of the old canal house, the 91 year old Mrs. Minnie Homeyer Stemmler recalled living on the upper floor structure at the age of five or six in 1866. Her father, William Homeyer (who was shown in the 1860 census as a lime

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burner), worked as a crewman on a boat captained by his uncle Fred Brase. Brase was apparently under contract with Henry Drover (Loveland, 16-17). At times the first floor was also used as living quarters by families of canal boatmen.

As railroads became more efficient in the competition they were able to provide, and as maintenance continued to decline on the Wabash and Erie, the canal met a slow death in the years from 1860 to 1874. Piece by piece, segments of the canal closed, generally moving from the south toward Fort Wayne. Only completed in 1853, the southern section of the canal between Terre Haute and Evansville closed in 1861 (Fatout, 168). Northern sections, such as the stretch from Huntington to Fort Wayne, continued to function when conditions were favorable for the transport of bulk commodities. At times the canal was still a busy highway, and many businessmen encouraged support for the canal as a competitor to the railroads, hoping to prevent the railroads from gaining a monopoly on shipping (171). In the decade of the 1870s, however, time had clearly taken its toll. Newspapers made accounts of "lasts" on the canal as nature reclaimed "the ditch." The faltering Wabash Canal Company surrendered its lease on January 1, 1874, ending any supervision of the canal. Short sections remained in use through the 1870s; the last canal boat was seen in Fort Wayne about 1881. Henry Drover died in 1881; that same year the canal right-of-way was purchased by the New York, Chicago & St. Louis Railway. In 1882 the "Nickel Plate" railroad was able to build through the center of Fort Wayne within two blocks of the courthouse without demolition of a single building (Griswold, 509), however the canal itself was obliterated. By 1885 the Nickel Plate purchased the John Brown Stone Warehouse and ironically converted it for their own use as a freight shipping and storage facility. The Nickel Plate passenger depot was located just south of the Canal House, between the railroad tracks and the building.

The Wabash and Erie canal, in the end, was a monumental financial failure. The canal was key, however, in the development of Fort Wayne and northern Indiana. At the demise of the canal northern Indiana's population was five times that of 1830 (Fatout, 175). The canal had provided the means to transform Fort Wayne from a humble trading village to a regional center of commerce and industry. Northern Indiana was transformed from a deep wilderness into a region of excellent farms which shipped their products to far-away markets. Without the transportation of people and goods made possible by the canal, swamp-bound Fort Wayne might well have never enjoyed the industrial growth that was its hallmark in the later nineteenth century (On the Heritage Trail, 82).

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Although the John Brown Stone Warehouse is not linked to the earliest years of the Wabash and Erie canal in Fort Wayne, it is certainly tied to the greatest period of influence which the canal exerted on the city. The early 1850s represented the peak of the canal's contribution to Fort Wayne; this period represents the brief moment when the promise of the canal was realized to its full potential. The significance of the Canal House is greatly magnified because it is the only intact structure in Allen County with a direct link to the Wabash and Erie canal. Different from most canals (and even other sections of the Wabash and Erie), which used stone structures as locks, aqueducts, and culverts, the canal almost exclusively used wooden structures as it passed through Allen County. Proper stone was not available in the area, but timber was readily available. The engineers adapted to the materials at hand and constructed all the canal's structures from timber, occasionally supplemented with field stone. This extensive use of wood, coupled with the destruction of large sections of the canal bed for conversion to rail use, has nearly removed all traces of the canal from the landscape of Fort Wayne and Allen County.

Short portions of the feeder canal bed are visible in northern Fort Wayne (Castaldi, 8), and the cut stone western abutment of the St. Marys River aqueduct remains in place (20) just west of downtown Fort Wayne. These features are typical for Allen County as well. Where it was not covered by railroad, much of the canal route was later appropriated for use as U.S. Highway 24. Sections of canal bed and towpath are visible throughout the county, but none retain the appearance of a waterway. Ruins of a few culverts are visible, and the abutments of the Aboite River aqueduct are visible in southwest Allen County (30). The condition of the canal ruins across the county is unfortunately typical statewide. Only a very short section of the Wabash and Erie canal in Indiana is recognizable as a waterway. This water-filled section of canal bed is located in Delphi, Carroll County. Other examples of cultural resources which are not readily identifiable, yet are associated with the canal are archaeological sites of structures, such as locks and aqueducts, and the sites of the camps of canal laborers. One such archaeological resource, discovered in 1991 during highway construction, is the Gronauer Lock (or Lock No. 2) east of New Haven in Allen County. This rare wood timber lock has been unearthed, preserved, and will be displayed at the Indiana State Museum in Indianapolis.

The John Brown Stone Warehouse is unique within the area because of many factors; urban renewal, neglect, economic changes, and simply progress have removed all

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other early support structures, commercial buildings, and warehouses formerly associated with the canal from the scene. The fact that the building has survived has also made it unique as the oldest remaining commercial building of any kind in Fort Wayne (Fort Wayne Interim Report). Five commercial buildings in the nearby Landing Historic District are the only other buildings which could have played a small part in the canal trade of the 1860s. The earliest, the Keystone block, was built c.1865 but it was not located on the canal. Four buildings on the north side of W. Columbia Street date between c.1870 and c.1875 (Fort Wayne Interim Report, 137-138). Although the rear of each of these buildings faces Dock Street and the canal right-of-way, the canal was in a severe state of decline by the time of their construction. They would have played a greater role in commerce during the railroad era.

The John Brown Stone Warehouse is also significant under **Criterion C** as a unique vernacular expression, in stone, of a Gable-front commercial building. The builder, John Brown (a stone cutter, mason, and merchant), showcased the goods and services which he offered for sale in the design and construction of the building itself. Stone construction is rare in Fort Wayne, it expresses the likely use of "waste" stone from Brown's business, and the building highlights the importance of the canal through its use of the imported stone material.

The gable-front commercial building is a building type closely linked to the gable-front house, a "folk" house which was common in Fort Wayne and across northern Indiana. The gable-front house was created by two factors, stylistic and economic, which combined to cause a shift of emphasis from the sides of buildings to the gable-end. The popular Greek Revival style placed emphasis on the gable ends of buildings because the triangular shape resembled the pediments of Greek and Roman temples. Greek Revival buildings often had a gable-end entrance in order to simulate a temple front. Simultaneous with the popularity of the Greek Revival style, urban areas in the United States grew tremendously. Urban land became more valuable, and city lots became smaller and more narrow. The narrower gable-front house or commercial building allowed the largest structure possible on these small urban lots. Whereas the origins of the gable-front house are not purely folk, nevertheless the gable-front house became an American folk house type. It was built nationwide for generations and was adapted to many different building materials and styles.

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The factors which made the gable-front type a popular housing option also had merit for functional commercial buildings in the nineteenth century. The gable-front suggested the popular Greek Revival style without the need for unnecessary expense in architectural ornamentation. The spatial needs of crowded urban lots were definitely a concern, and these needs were well-addressed by the gable-front commercial building. Both of these factors are present in the John Brown Stone Warehouse. The roof line of the building suggests the Greek Revival style enough to at least seem stylish. As a contractor John Brown would have wanted to portray an up-to-date image. As the building's long, narrow lot was located adjacent to a busy water highway, land was at a premium. The gable-front plan of the building made effective and economical use of the available land.

Vernacular gable-front commercial buildings were undoubtedly a common building type in Fort Wayne for much of the nineteenth century. Historic photos of Fort Wayne show a multitude of commercial buildings with exposed gable ends, and others with parapeted end walls which disguised the gable end. The vast majority of these buildings, however, were wood frame and have not survived in the downtown area. A small number of frame gable-front commercial buildings, all from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, can be found scattered among Fort Wayne's residential neighborhoods (Fort Wayne Interim Report). These buildings were primarily neighborhood shops and groceries and date to periods much later than the canal era. While the John Brown Stone Warehouse represents the earliest generation of buildings which took the gable-front form, other buildings in the city represent the continued popularity of the building type. Despite relatively recent alterations to the interior plan of the building, it retains excellent integrity.

Although the building is significant as a gable-front commercial building, it is most significant in Fort Wayne architectural history for its rubble-stone construction. John Brown used the materials which were readily available to him in his business as a stone cutter, mason, and merchant to create not only a sturdy, functional structure, but a three-dimensional business card for himself and his business. Construction of the building was likely quite economical for Brown as well. The east, south, and west walls are constructed of small, irregular stones of various colors. Clearly visible bands in the coloring of the material suggest that the stone was obtained from more than one source or location. The variety of materials used in both the exterior stone and the lintels on the interior of the building suggest that John Brown took pride in his

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thriftiness and ability to salvage what otherwise might have been waste material. The north facade, however, which faces Superior Street, reflects Brown's sensibility that the building needed a public facade which displayed his talents in stone cutting and finishing. It is clear that Brown did take pride in the building, as every one of his newspaper advertisements mentioned that his products and services could be obtained at "his new stone building north of the canal."

The John Brown Stone Warehouse is one of only two buildings of rubble stone construction which remain in Fort Wayne. The other building is the Trinity Episcopal Church, built in 1865 at 611 W. Berry Street. It is located within the West End Historic District, which was listed on the National Register in 1984. This Gothic Revival church uses rubble stone walls with cut stone trim, and it is clearly a more refined building than the Warehouse. But, although the church is more refined, the stone used in both buildings is similar. The stone in each building was likely obtained from quarries to the west of Fort Wayne, in either Huntington or Wabash County. The stone walls of each structure are significant. Through the use of this clearly imported building material, they illustrate the importance of the Wabash and Erie canal to the building industry of Fort Wayne in the mid nineteenth century. Builders in the area, such as John Brown when building his warehouse in 1852, were able to exploit non-local building materials prior to the arrival of the railroad.

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John Brown Stone Warehouse  
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Verbal Boundary Description

The east 20 feet of the north 52.3 feet, fractionally, of lot 21, and the west 26.1 feet of the north 52.3 feet of lot 22, original plat of the city of Fort Wayne.

Boundary Justification

This small parcel of land is historically associated with the John Brown Stone Warehouse, and it remains in common ownership with the building. Though the land directly behind the building (reaching to the former canal right-of-way) was once associated with the building, it was later the site of the Nickel Plate passenger depot. It has been greatly disturbed and is unlikely to contain archaeological information relevant to the John Brown Stone Warehouse or the canal era. It has also been altered to such a degree by its use as a drive for city buses that it no longer retains visual integrity and association with the building.

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John Brown Stone Warehouse  
Allen County, IN

Photographs

All photographs used in this nomination were taken in March, 1997 by Creager Smith. The location of the negatives is as follows:

Community & Economic Development-Planning Department  
Historic Preservation Office  
City of Fort Wayne  
One Main Street, Room 800  
Fort Wayne, Indiana 46802

Photographs

1. View, looking south across E. Superior Street, of the front of the John Brown Stone Warehouse. View shows the stone in the front gable inscribed "1852."
2. General view, looking southwest across E. Superior Street, of the John Brown Stone Warehouse.
3. General view, looking northwest across the adjacent bus transfer station, to the south (rear) and east walls of the John Brown Stone Warehouse. View is from the approximate edge of the former right-of-way of the Wabash & Erie Canal.
4. General view, looking southeast across E. Superior Street, of the John Brown Stone Warehouse.
5. View, looking northeast, of the west wall of the John Brown Stone Warehouse. View shows the distinct change in the layers of stone between the first and second floors.
6. Detail view, looking southeast, of the stone lintel over the double doors on the front of the building. The lintel bears the name "J. BROWN."
7. View, looking west, of the second floor interior wall at the top of the front stairs. View shows the vertical section of brick which marks the former location of the west chimney stack.
8. View, looking south, of the front stairs from the first floor. View shows the mortise-and-tenon joints which support the second floor joists.
9. General view, looking northwest, in the second floor front room. View shows the western second floor window lintel (left), made with a pair of sandwiched, rough-sawn boards with rough-hewn edges. The center second floor window lintel (right), is a single, rough-hewn beam with irregular ends.

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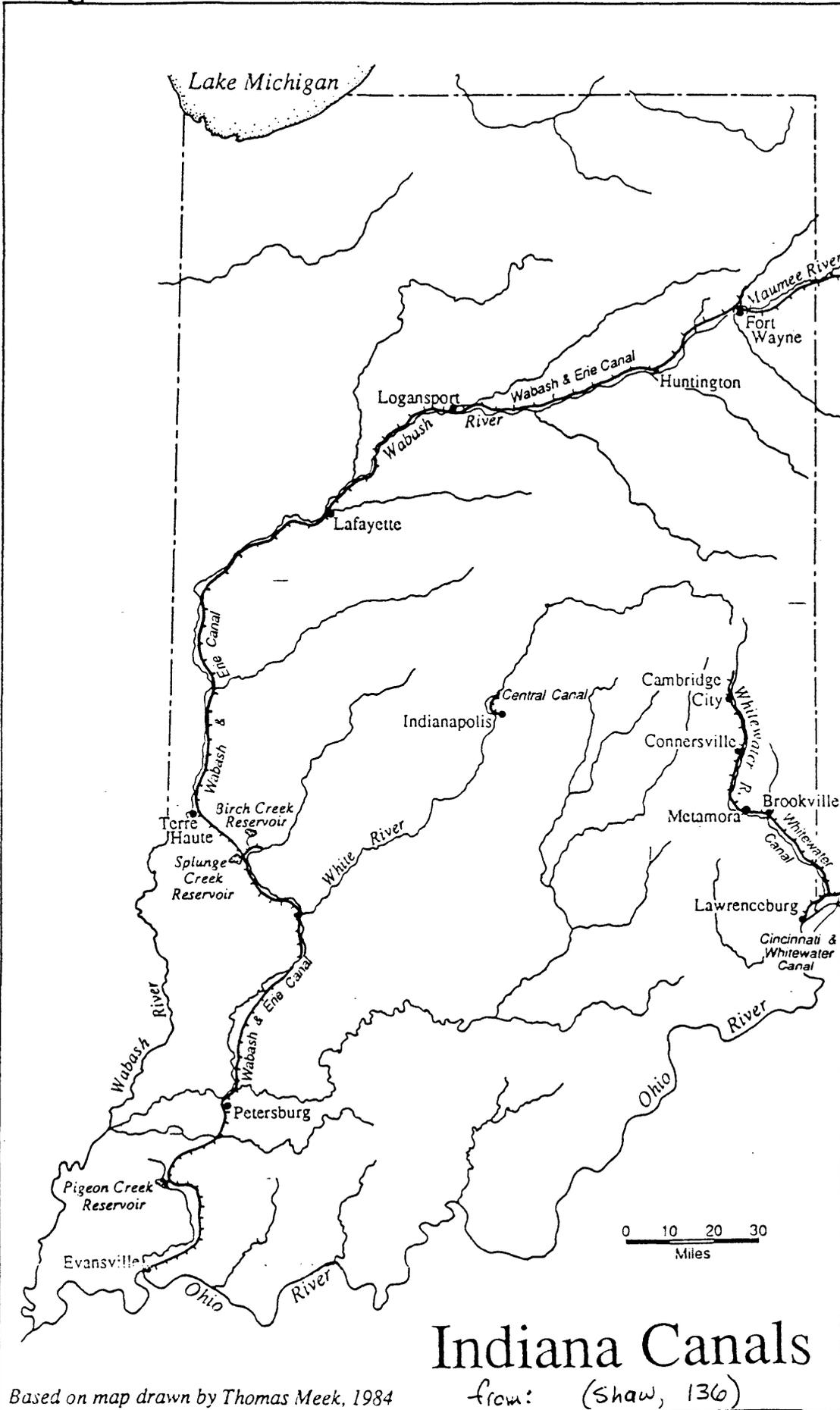
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John Brown Stone Warehouse  
Allen County, IN

Photographs

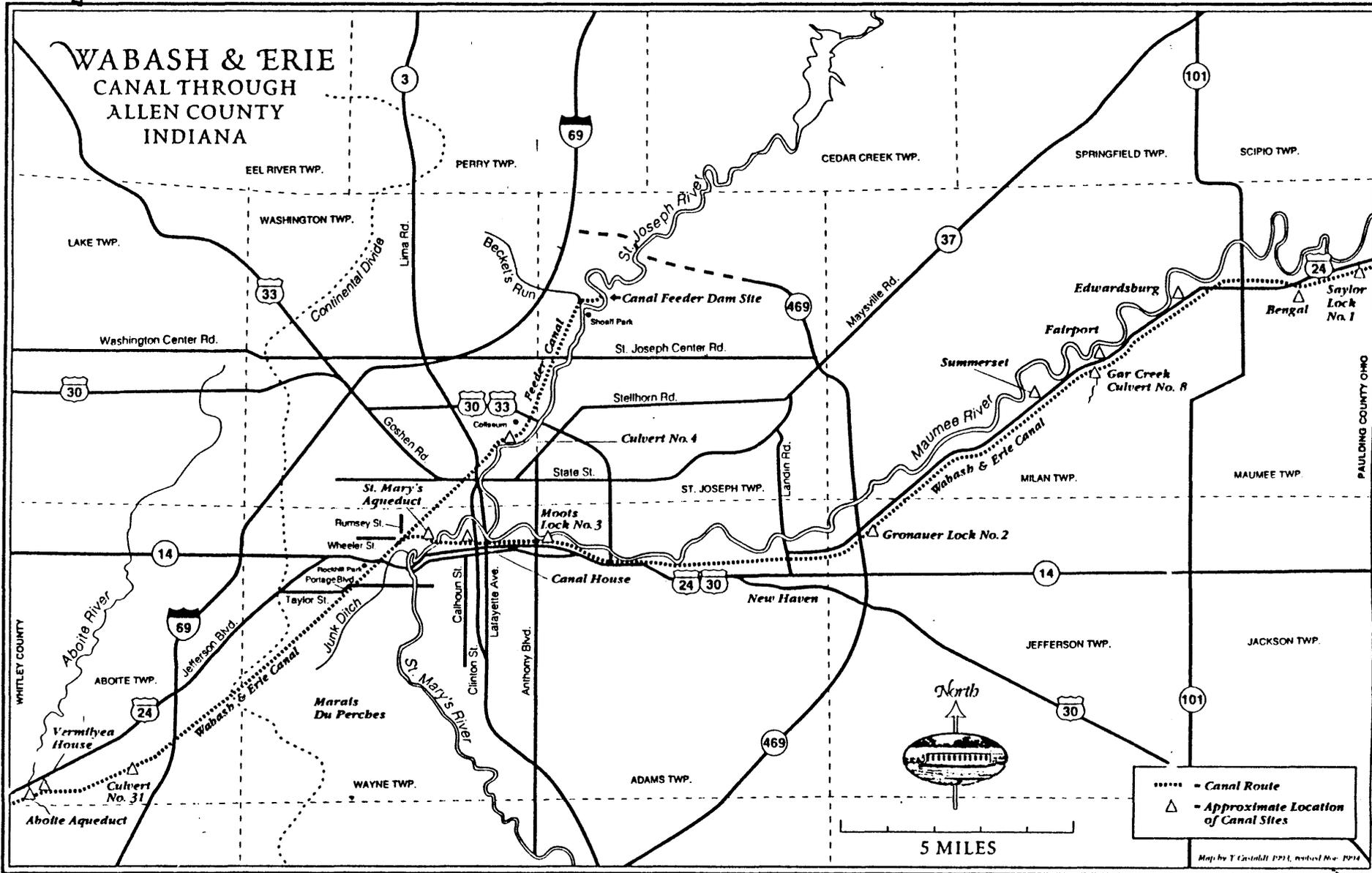
10. General view, looking northwest, in the first floor front room (now the reception area) of the warehouse.
11. General view, looking south, from the first floor hall toward the southeast corner of the building. View shows the south door, which reflects the change in exterior elevation from the front of the building to the rear.
12. General view, looking southwest, in the southwest room of the first floor.
13. General view, looking northwest, in the center room on the west side of the first floor.
14. General view, looking southeast, in the large second floor room of the John Brown Stone Warehouse.

Figure 1



Based on map drawn by Thomas Meek, 1984

Figure 2



from: (Castaldi, 33)