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**United States Department of Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

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

1. Name of Property

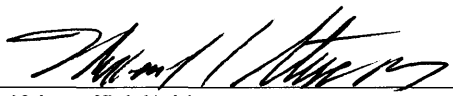

historic name Weinbrenner Shoe Factory
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 305 West Third Street N/A not for publication
city or town Marshfield N/A vicinity
state Wisconsin code WI county Wood code 141 zip code 54449

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 36 CFR 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 of certifying official/Title

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer - Wisconsin

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 commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Weinbrenner Shoe Factory
Name of Property

Wood
County and State

Wisconsin

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

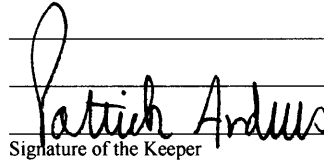
See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)


Signature of the Keeper

8/27/2008
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

building(s)
 district
 structure
 site
 object

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

contributing	noncontributing
1	0 buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
1	0 total

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

None

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/
manufacturing facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/
manufacturing facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

roof ASPHALT

other STONE

Narrative Description

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

Weinbrenner Shoe Factory
Name of Property

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

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)

Industry

Period of Significance

1935-1958

Significant Dates

1935

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Krasin, Gus A.

Marshfield Construction Co.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Weinbrenner Shoe Factory
Name of Property

Wood
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Wisconsin

9. Major Bibliographic References

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

Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- 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:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.5 acres

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

1	<u>15</u>	<u>723700</u>	<u>4949600</u>	3	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____	_____
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

__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	Timothy F. Hegglund /Consultant for the Marshfield Historic Preservation Committee	date	September 17, 2007
organization		telephone	608-795-2650
street & number	6391 Hillsandwoods Rd.	zip code	53560
city or town	Mazomanie	state	WI

Weinbrenner Shoe Factory
Name of Property

Wood
County and State

Wisconsin

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/title	Mayor	date	September 17, 2007
organization	City of Marshfield	telephone	715-384-2919
street & number	630 S. Central Avenue	zip code	54449
city or town	Marshfield	state	Wisconsin

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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Section 7 Page 1

Weinbrenner Shoe Factory
Marshfield, Wood County, Wisconsin

Description

The original portions of the highly intact, brick-clad, Astylistic Utilitarian form Weinbrenner Shoe Factory were built in 1935 by the City of Marshfield as an incentive to get the Milwaukee-based Albert H. Weinbrenner Shoe Company to set up a manufacturing facility in Marshfield. These portions were designed by Marshfield architect Gus A. Krasin; they also display some details that have a slight Art Deco style influence, and they include: a 272-foot-long by 52-foot-wide rectilinear plan three-story industrial loft type factory building; a 54-foot-wide by 32-foot-deep, one-story-tall, rectilinear plan office wing; and a 60-foot-long by 32-foot-wide two-story-tall, rectilinear plan boiler room wing. Two large, additional, one-story, rectilinear plan, brick-clad wings were then added to the original three-story block between 1937 and 1950 as part of the company's expansion program, which created an interconnected G-plan building, and the space between these wings was then partially filled in with another one-story addition built between 1950 and 1956, creating the building that is the subject of this nomination. This factory has been continuously occupied by the Weinbrenner Shoe Co. since it was first built and it provided much needed employment in the city during the Depression years and it has been an important employer in the city ever since. Consequently, the Weinbrenner Shoe Factory is believed to be locally significant and eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criterion A (History) because of its important historic and ongoing associations with the theme of Industry in Marshfield, and this significance is further enhanced by the very intact state of the factory and by the fact that it is now the only significant intact historic manufacturing facility remaining in Marshfield, a city that was once an important regional manufacturing center.

The Weinbrenner Factory occupies a full city block that is bounded by S. Walnut Ave. to the east, W. Third St. to the south, S. Spruce Ave. to the west, and W. Second St. to the north, and this block is located two blocks to the west of the north-south running Central Avenue, which has always been the principal commercial thoroughfare in the city of Marshfield.¹ This flat block was originally occupied by a portion of the Upham Manufacturing Company's factory, which was the most important industrial enterprise in Marshfield in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By 1934, however, the Upham Company had closed, the factory buildings were empty, and both the buildings and the land had been purchased by the City of Marshfield, which had begun to demolish the wooden factory buildings on the site as part of a make-work project for the unemployed, using Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) funding. When the City decided to build a new factory there for the Weinbrenner Shoe Company, the demolition work was stepped up and by the time the new factory was completed in 1935, all traces of the former factory had been erased.

¹ The 2000 population of the city of Marshfield was 18,800.

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Weinbrenner Shoe Factory
Marshfield, Wood County, Wisconsin

The principal building of the new 1935 portion of the Weinbrenner factory is positioned at the far east end of the block and the land between it and W. Walnut Ave. and between it and W. Third St. was planted with a mown lawn that is still intact today. Similar strips of mown lawn were also developed along the W. Second St. and S. Spruce St. sides of the block as well when new additions were added to the original factory and they are still extant today as well. The south corner of the block and the portion of the block that lies adjacent to the interior of the factory, however, are surfaced in gravel and are used primarily for employee parking and other factory purposes. In addition, concrete sidewalks edge the W. Second St., W. Third St., and S. Spruce Ave. sides of the block.

An historic residential neighborhood is located to the east and to the south of the block that is occupied by the Weinbrenner factory and a portion of this neighborhood that includes the NRHP-listed Gov. William H. Upham House is being nominated for listing in the NRHP as the Upham House Historic District. All the land to the west of the factory is part of a large city park while the land to the north of it is occupied by buildings that are used for a mix of commercial, light industrial, and municipal purposes.

Exterior

As noted above, the original 1935 portions of the Weinbrenner factory are essentially astylistic and are of utilitarian design although some details display a slight Art Deco style influence. The factory that exists today was built in three major stages between 1935 and 1958, and while the different elements that make up the whole differ in height, in size, and in certain details, they all share certain basic features. All parts of the factory sit on reinforced concrete pad foundations, the uppermost part of which is visible on the building's exterior, and the exterior walls that rest on them are completely clad in brick that is laid in common bond. The roofs of most of these different portions originally consisted of built-up composition material, but all of the factory's roofs are hidden from view by low parapet walls that edge the various elements of the factory. All of the factory's door and window openings are rectilinear, all the window openings have concrete sills, all of the original windows are still extant, and all but several, located in the office wing, consist of multi-light steel sash, many of which also have incorporated within them a smaller operable top-hinged awning window.

Southeast-facing Elevation

The southeast-facing elevation of the factory is also the southeast-facing elevation of the original 1935 factory and it faces onto S. Walnut Ave. It is 272-feet-long and three-stories-tall and its length is divided into 19 bays. The two end bays are both slightly wider than the seventeen identical-width bays

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Weinbrenner Shoe Factory
Marshfield, Wood County, Wisconsin

in between them and historic photos of this elevation show that each story of these two bays originally contained two twelve-light steel sash windows whose center six lights consist of an operable awning type window. All of these windows are still extant on the left-hand end bay but those on the right side of the right-hand bay have now been bricked shut with brick that is identical to that that was used on the façade originally.² These two end bays are further distinguished from the other seventeen by having a parapet wall whose uppermost edge consists of a slightly stepped pediment that has concrete coping, and just below is a small oblong brick panel that is outlined in header bricks and whose face consists of two courses of brick laid in a chevron pattern and on which is centered a small concrete diamond pattern tile.

Both the end bays and all the other bays on this elevation are separated from one another by three-story-tall pilaster strips that have Art Deco style-influenced concrete capitals and these pilaster strips are faced with a dark brown brick that is different from and somewhat darker than the reddish brown brick that is used elsewhere on the façade. Each of the three stories of this elevation's seventeen inner bays contains a pair of sixteen-light steel sash windows that are separated vertically from one another by wide brick spandrels, and the parapet wall that crowns these bays is continuous and is edged by terra cotta tile coping. Still visible today is the name of the company that was painted at an early date across the spandrels that separate the second from third stories and which reads: "Thorogood Shoes, Albert H. Weinbrenner Co."

The only other feature on this elevation is a one-story, rectilinear plan 60-foot-long by 20-foot-wide enclosed loading dock pavilion that is attached to the elevation and which covers the first story of the elevation's four right-hand bays. This pavilion is believed to have been built in 1956 and its walls are clad in brick laid in common bond and its principal garage door opening faces northeast onto W. Second St. and it is enframed with reinforced concrete.

Northeast-facing Elevation

The northeast-facing elevation of the factory is comprised of two separate but attached components: the three-story-tall northeast-facing end elevation of the rectilinear plan 1935 factory block, and the one-story-tall northeast-facing elevation of the L-plan 1937-41 addition, both of which were designed by Gus A. Krasin.

² Similar brick infill closes some other window openings on this block as well and since it is only found in openings whose windows originally lit an interior staircase, it would seem to have been part of a programmatic change that may have been driven by changes in fire regulations or insurance practices.

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Weinbrenner Shoe Factory
Marshfield, Wood County, Wisconsin

The 52-foot-wide end elevation of the 1935 factory building is five-bays-wide with the two end bays being equal in width and their uppermost portions being treated to the same decorative treatment as the uppermost portions of the end bays on the southeast-facing elevation. Here too, the left-hand bay now contains no openings while each story of the right-hand bay contains a pair of sixteen-light steel sash windows. The middle bay of this elevation's three center bays is wider than the two bays that flank it and the only opening on the first story of any of these bays consists of a small entrance door located in the first story of the left-hand bay. Both the second and third stories of the middle bay, however, contain a pair of sixteen-light steel sash windows while the second and third stories of the flanking bays each contain an eight-light window whose center four lights consist of a top-hinged awning window.³

The one-story-tall, brick-clad, northeast-facing elevation of the 1937-1941 addition is 250-feet-long and its width is divided into ten equal-width bays by pilaster strips that have simple concrete capitals and which are faced in a darker brown brick than the surrounding wall surfaces. Each of these bays contains two pairs of sixteen-light steel sash windows and the entire elevation is crowned by a parapet wall that is edged with concrete coping.

Northwest-facing Elevation

The northwest-facing elevation of the factory is also comprised of two separate but attached components: the one-story-tall northwest-facing elevation of the L-plan 1937-41 addition, and the one-story-tall northwest-facing elevation of the rectilinear plan 1945-48 warehouse addition, both of which were designed by Gus A. Krasin. The entire combined elevation lies in the same plane, both elevations are the same height, and both are crowned by a parapet wall that is edged with concrete coping.

The one-story-tall, brick-clad, northwest-facing elevation of the 1937-1941 addition is 160-feet-long and its width is divided into six equal-width bays by pilaster strips that have simple concrete capitals and which are faced in a darker brown brick than the surrounding wall surfaces. The first and second bays from the right both contain a pair of sixteen-light steel sash windows and the fourth and fifth bays from the right do as well, although the pair in the fifth bay is placed higher on the wall surface than the other three, and the one in the fourth bay has an entrance door placed to its left. In addition, the sixth bay from the right contains an oblong pair of eight-light windows that are placed high up on the wall surface while the third bay from the right contains a loading dock door that has now been closed up.

³ Much of the right-hand portion of this elevation is now obscured by a two-and-one-half-story ventilator stack that is not actually attached directly to the building. Two short sheet metal vents lead from it to the interior through windows on the elevation.

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Marshfield, Wood County, Wisconsin

The one-story-tall, brick-clad, northwest-facing elevation of the 1945-1948 addition is 75-feet-long and it is two-bays-wide. These bays are located at opposite ends of the elevation from one another and they each contain a loading door opening that is no longer in use as such. The outline of the roof of the former loading dock that these doors originally opened out onto is still visible and this roof also accounts for the less weathered appearance of the wall surface that it once sheltered.

Southwest-facing Elevation.

The southwest-facing elevation of the factory is comprised of four separate but attached components: the three-story-tall southwest-facing end elevation of the rectilinear plan 1935 factory block; the one-story-tall southwest-facing elevation of the 1935 office block, both of which were designed by Gus A. Krasin; the one-story southwest-facing elevation of the 1956 infill addition to the factory; and the one-story-tall southwest-facing elevation of the 1945-1948 addition, which was also designed by Krasin.

The one-story-tall, brick-clad, southwest-facing elevation of the 1945-1948 addition is 160-feet-long and it is ten-bays-wide. Each of these ten bays originally contained an oblong window opening that contained a twelve-light steel sash window, and these openings were placed high up on the wall surface. Eight of these ten window openings and their windows are still intact today, but the center two are now covered over by a one-story-tall shed-roofed, concrete block loading dock pavilion that was built in 1956.

The one-story-tall, brick-clad, southwest-facing elevation of the L-plan 1956 addition that fills the northerly portion of the space that originally lay between the southwest-facing elevation of the 1935 three-story block and the northeast-facing elevation of the 1937-1941 addition is 100-feet-long and it is four-bays-wide, with these four bays being located across the left-half of the elevation. The first, third, and fourth bays from the left each contain a fifteen-light steel sash window while the second bay from the left contains a pair of these fifteen light windows.

The one-story-tall, brick-clad, southwest-facing elevation of the 1935 office block is 52-feet-wide and its width is divided into two unequal-width portions. The less wide right-hand portion is three-bays-wide with the center bay consisting of an entrance door that is crowned with a two-light transom, and this door is flanked on either side by a six-light steel sash window. The wider left-hand portion is also three-bays-wide and this portion projects out slightly from the adjacent wall surface and it is symmetrical in design. The center bay contains the main entrance to the office and this bay projects out still further from the adjacent wall surfaces and features an entrance door that is crowned by a

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three-light transom and flanked by sidelights and which is sheltered by a canopy that is supported by wooden angle brackets. A more elaborate version of the decorative brick panel described earlier, that is found on the factory block, is placed above this entrance door, and above it is a date stone that bears the date "1935." The two bays that flank this entrance pavilion both contain a picture window that is crowned by a five-light transom. These windows have wood sash, the only ones on the entire factory, and a further decorative touch is added by the placement of a decorative brick stringcourse that spans the width of the left-hand portion of the office block above the windows and the entrance door. Although the original entrance doors have now been replaced with modern ones, the rest of this elevation is largely intact, the only significant change it has experienced being to the upper portion of the wall surface above the door and windows, which has now been covered over with modern metal sheathing.

The 52-foot-wide southwest-facing end elevation of the 1935 factory building is very similar to the northeast end elevation of the block and it too is five-bays-wide, with the two end bays being equal in width and their uppermost portions being treated to the same decorative treatment as the uppermost portions of the end bays on the southeast-facing elevation that were described earlier. Here too, the left-hand bay now contains no openings, while each of the three stories of the right-hand bay contain a pair of sixteen-light steel sash windows. The middle bay of this elevation's three center bays is wider than the two bays that flank it and all three stories of the middle bay also contains a pair of sixteen-light steel sash windows while the three stories of the flanking bays each contain an eight-light window whose center four lights consist of a top-hinged awning window.

Interior

The interior of the Weinbrenner Shoe Co. factory is just as intact as the exterior and it too is in excellent, well-maintained condition. This may have something to do with the fact that the company has had only a limited incentive to radically alter a building they did not own, but it probably has more to do with the fact that the technical aspects of making mostly leather work shoes has not changed a great deal since the factory first opened. Consequently, what worked well for the company in the beginning still works well for them today and has resulted in only minor changes being made to the factory itself. It is true, of course, that the functions of different parts of the factory have been shifted about over the years, but even this has not resulted in much change to the factory building itself, which continues to look remarkably like it always has.

The head office of the Weinbrenner Shoe Co. was never located in Marshfield. Consequently, the office block of the Marshfield factory was never meant to do more than house the offices of the

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Weinbrenner Shoe Factory
Marshfield, Wood County, Wisconsin

Marshfield division's manager and his staff, and the one large room in this block is used as a combination meeting room and showroom. As a result, the interiors in this block are unexceptional and they have been altered more than once over time. Floors in this block are either carpeted or are covered in vinyl, windows and doors have simple wooden casings, and ceilings are now suspended.

The interior of the rest of the factory is strictly utilitarian. The 1935 block is three-stories-tall and its steel external supporting frame is not visible on the interior. Each story of this block consists of a single 50-foot-wide by 270-foot-long loft type room whose work areas have a wooden floor composed of narrow varnished wooden boards, while a poured concrete pathway along one side acts as a path for heavy work carts. The walls of these lofts are composed of painted cinder block into which large steel sash windows are placed at regular intervals, and the ceilings are made up of diagonal wood boards that acts as the subfloor for the story above. These ceilings are supported by massive wood girders that are themselves supported by two parallel rows of posts made out of steel I-beams, and the floor above is carried on rows of wood joists that intersect with and pass through the girders. Fluorescent lighting fixtures supplement the plentiful available light coming through the windows, and all utilities such as electricity, plumbing, and heating and ventilation, are exposed.

The design of the interior of the one-story-tall L-plan 1937-1941 addition to the factory is essentially the same as that of the 1935 block and consists of a single large loft type L-plan room whose ceiling is supported by timber girders and joists that are themselves supported by two parallel rows of steel I-beam posts. Work stations are arranged in rows in the aisles between the posts and the only difference between this addition and the 1935 block is that in the addition the floor is fashioned entirely of poured concrete. The only significant change that has occurred to this addition's interior since it was originally built has been to its southwest and southeast-facing walls. Originally, these were exterior walls and the openings in them were the filled with multi-light steel sash windows. But, when the last addition was made to the factory in 1956, these walls became interior walls instead. As a result, the original windows were removed from these openings, which were filled instead with grids made out of decorative concrete block that allowed light and air to pass through from one room to another.

The interiors of the other later parts of the factory are also essentially unchanged since they were built and they too feature poured concrete floors and concrete block inner walls.

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Weinbrenner Shoe Factory
Marshfield, Wood County, Wisconsin

Significance

The Art Deco style-influenced Weinbrenner Shoe Factory was built in 1935, it is located two blocks west of the Marshfield Central Avenue Historic District, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1993, and it was identified by the Marshfield Intensive Architectural Survey that was undertaken in 2004-2005 as a resource having local significance under National Register (NR) Criterion A.⁴ Research was undertaken to assess the potential for listing the factory in the National Register (NR) utilizing the NR significance area of Industry, a theme that is also identified in the State of Wisconsin's *Cultural Resource Management Plan* (CRMP). This research centered on evaluating the factory utilizing the Tanning and Leather Processing subsection of the Industry study unit of the CRMP.⁵ The results of this research is detailed below and shows that the Weinbrenner Shoe Company Factory is of local significance under NR Criterion A because of its historic associations with the Weinbrenner Shoe Company, which is now one of Marshfield's largest and oldest industrial enterprises and one whose arrival in Marshfield in 1935 was of considerable historic importance to the city during the difficult times of the Depression. This significance is heightened by the fact that the factory itself is still highly intact and continues to be used for its original purpose by the Weinbrenner Company today, and also by the fact that the factory is now by far the most intact of the few surviving buildings in Marshfield that were historically associated with industry and especially with manufacturing. The period of significance is 1935-1958. It begins with the construction and opening of the factory and runs through the end of the historic period.

The Weinbrenner Shoe Factory is also believed to be of local historic significance under NRHP Criterion A because it is an excellent example of the kind of creative, self-funded relief projects that cities like Marshfield sponsored in the early years of the Great Depression to help their own citizens and it is also a good illustration of the use that such cities made of the various relief programs that the Federal government was sponsoring by this time. The construction of the factory building itself was intended to provide jobs for the unemployed in the city, while the factory it was to house was intended to serve the same purpose. The factory was funded primarily by the City of Marshfield, although the Weinbrenner Co. also contributed to the project as well. The factory was designed by Marshfield architect Gus A. Krasin, its foundation was built by local workers hired through the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), and most of the construction was done by the Marshfield Construction Co. and by other local firms. When completed, a city-wide celebration was held and, by the end of

⁴ Heggland, Timothy F. *City of Marshfield Intensive Survey*. Marshfield: 2005. Copy on file at the Division of Historic Preservation, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI.

⁵ Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*. Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, 1986, Vol. 2. (Industry), pp. 12-1—12-13.

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Weinbrenner Shoe Factory
Marshfield, Wood County, Wisconsin

1935, nearly 200 people were being employed in the new factory, which the City owns and leases to the Weinbrenner Company, and several hundred people are still employed there making shoes today.

History

Industry has played an enormous part in the history of Marshfield and continues to do so to this day. Unquestioning belief in the potential benefits of industrial development was present in the community from the earliest days of its existence and was, in fact, the principal reason for the ultimate success of the Marshfield site. A highly detailed and well-illustrated history of Marshfield's past and present industries is contained in Volumes 1 and 2 of *The Marshfield Story*.⁶ The information that follows borrows heavily from this source.

Like so many other later nineteenth century Wisconsin communities, the city of Marshfield owes its existence to its proximity to transportation routes, which in this case was the Wisconsin Central Railroad. The land that is now Marshfield was originally part of the holdings of the railroad, which was headquartered in the city of Menasha in the Fox River Valley, and which had received an enormous grant of land from the federal government at the end of the Civil War in return for building a rail line across the state from the city of Portage northwest to the city of Ashland on the shore of Lake Superior and on to Superior. The decision to establish a depot in the vicinity of what is now Marshfield was based on the fact that Marshfield is located in almost the exact center of the state and was, in 1871, also located halfway between Steven Point and the village of Colby, which was to be the north end of the first completed leg of this line. This central position favored the creation of a supply depot for the railroad at the Marshfield location and it was made still more attractive by the fact that land in this vicinity was flat and heavily forested, thereby lessening the cost of the construction of the line and also raising the possibility that the railroad could make a profit from both the sale and the shipping of this timber.

In order to establish this supply depot, the railroad contracted with Louis Rivers of Necedah to build and operate a hotel at the Marshfield location on free land provided by the Fox River Lumber Co. Rivers and his family arrived at the site in 1872 and had a small but serviceable log hotel in operation by the time the train tracks arrived later that year.

The first leg of track built in the proposed 250 mile route stretched from Menasha to Stevens Point in 1871. The following year saw another length from Stevens Point to Colby. The

⁶ Schnitzler, Donald H. (ed.). *The Marshfield Story: Vol. 1, Piecing Together Our Past; Vol. 2, Windows to Our Past*. Marshfield: Marshfield History Project: 1997 and 2000.

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importance of this development was twofold. First, it provided traffic for the future Marshfield with the more populated and economically active portion of the state; from Steven Point south and east. The rail links brought migrants and markets within reach of the logging frontier that was Marshfield. If there were to be any reason for consistent activity in the wilderness, then there had to be a supply of labor and demand for the goods produced.

Second, the connections to Lake Superior proceeded slowly after the initial settlement of Marshfield and its transformation into a permanent manufacturing site. This lag coincided with the increasing demand for lumber (at both the local and national level) and provided the transportation route to reach into the north woods and then bring it back to Marshfield for processing. By the time this had happened, Marshfield was not only a regular stop on the Wisconsin Central's Chicago schedule, but had begun to attract the attention of other roads who took advantage of the city's central location and built through the town as well.⁷

Marshfield was one of the first important communities in the northern part of the state that owed its existence entirely to the coming of the railroad. Older communities such as Stevens Point owed their existence to their location on waterways that could be used to transport logs from the state's forests to the mills where they were to be processed. Marshfield had no such natural advantage but the coming of the railroad made such a location unnecessary.

The Marshfield site lacked the natural advantages that drew early industries to other nearby cities such as Stevens Point and Wisconsin Rapids, both of which were located on the Wisconsin River. The damming of the Wisconsin at these locations created waterpower that industry could use to drive machinery and this led to the establishment of industrial enterprises at these locations and helped fuel the success of these cities. Marshfield had no rivers and indeed lacked plentiful water of any kind. What it *did* have was a geographical location that was situated midway between Chicago and Minneapolis and near the seemingly endless forests of northern Wisconsin, and a location on a railroad.

The first to take advantage of these factors was William H. Upham, who had been born in Massachusetts and raised in Wisconsin, and who came to Marshfield in 1878 at the age of 37.

Borrowing money from family, William Upham and his brother, Charles Upham, organized the town [of Marshfield] as a central location for bringing in raw materials and processing them into usable products for the expanding urban markets to the south. In this transformation of

⁷ Schnitzler, Donald H. (ed.). *Op. Cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 3.

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Marshfield from wayside to factory site, the Uphams made sure to look after their employees by building a general store at the same time they built the first sawmill in 1878. In short order Upham moved to expand and refine the processing of raw lumber by adding a planing mill in 1879, a furniture factory in 1882 and most telling of all, a flour and feed mill in 1885.

The Banner Mills indicated that Upham was more than lucky or even shrewd, in his business sense. The rolling mills turned grain into flour and signaled a recognition that the logging frontier had passed and that the farmer's frontier had begun.⁸

By 1887, the population of Marshfield had reached 2500, with almost 1000 of these working at the various Upham mills in the city. Not surprisingly, the Upham factory and the city's other, though much smaller, industrial facilities were all arrayed along the railroad tracks, the route of which corresponded to today's Veteran's Parkway and to the adjacent Depot and Railroad streets. In June of 1887, however, the Upham factory and its adjacent lumberyard caught fire. The ensuing disaster destroyed not only Upham's factory and his mills but almost all of the city's other manufacturing facilities, its entire commercial district, and many of its homes. The day after the fire saw the fate of the city hanging in the balance and it was only Upham's decision to rebuild his factories in Marshfield that prevented the city from disappearing. But rebuild it he did, and the new and improved factory that resulted continued to be Marshfield's biggest employer until the factory finally closed in 1927, three years after the death of its founder.

Upham's decision to rebuild revitalized the city and led others to follow his lead in creating factories that produced wood-related products. Included in this list would be the Hatteburg Veneer Co., the Hafer & Kalshied Saw & Planning Mill, the H. H. Bille Sash and Door Co., and the Marshfield Stave & Heading Co. All of these companies followed Upham's lead in producing products fashioned from the forests that stretched away to the north of the city and all of them met with success for a time by specializing in niche manufacturing related to wood products. The handwriting was on the wall, however, and when the Upham Co. closed its planing mill in 1899 it was a sign that the once endless stream of wood was slowing down as the forests began to be depleted.⁹

⁸Schnitzler, Donald H. (ed.). *Op. Cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 3-4. The brand name of Upham's flour and feed mill was "The Banner Mills."

⁹Capsule histories of these firms are contained in both volumes of *The Marshfield Story*. For the Marshfield Stave & Heading Co., see Vol. 2, pp. 465-466. For the Hafer & Kalscheid Co., see Vol. 2, pp. 455-456. For the Hatteberg Veneer Co., see Vol. 1, pp. 304-305. For the H. H. Bille Co., see Vol. 1, pp. 243-244.

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By 1898, the population of Marshfield had climbed to 5800 and as Marshfield grew, the economic base of the city changed as well. Until 1900, Marshfield's prosperity was based largely on its location near the places where timber was harvested and the city's manufacturing establishments were centered on this industry. As the forests began to recede, however, much of what had once been forestland was converted into farmland and agriculture began to play an ever-increasing role in the local economy. Granaries and feed mills began to be built along the railroad corridor, a brewery was established, and commercial establishments that catered to the needs of the farmer began to appear. So too did manufacturing establishments devoted to the processing of food products such as cheese and eggs, and all of these new establishments needed workers.

The manufacturing of products from wood in Marshfield was far from finished, though, and continues even today. Partly this was due to the development of more sophisticated technology and equipment, which permitted products to be made from lumber byproducts and from wood once thought to be commercially worthless.

Improving industrial skills became more valuable as the Hatteberg factory moved into the realm of veneer manufacturing. Hatteberg invented a process for cutting the thinnest veneer yet from logs while William H. Roddis, in 1903, established a sawmill to use less traditionally valuable woods for lumber. Expansion of the furniture and bedding factories in town signaled the importance of Marshfield as a stable industrial center.¹⁰

The advent of the Roddis name in Marshfield's manufacturing history is especially important because the company that William H. Roddis founded went on to become one of the most important in Marshfield's history. The Roddis Veneer Co. was the original Roddis company and was formed in July of 1897 after A. K. Hatteberg sold his interests in the Hatteberg Veneer Co. to W. H. Roddis following a fire that destroyed a large portion of the factory that Hatteberg had started in 1891. The new company became the Roddis Veneer Co. and later, the Roddis Plywood Co. and its continued growth over the years that followed made it Marshfield's second largest employer while the Upham Co. was still in operation, and the city's largest employer from 1927 until it was purchased by the Weyerhaeuser Co. in 1970, by which time the company had grown to become national in scope.¹¹

But if the manufacture of wood products remained important to the city's economy, new industries in Marshfield also began to reflect the increasing importance of agriculture in the surrounding area at the beginning of the twentieth century. The earliest of these industries was the Marshfield Brewery, which

¹⁰ Schnitzler, Donald H. (ed.). *Op. Cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 11.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 303-306 and 446-448.

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was begun by the firm of Schiebe and Schneider in 1889-1890. This later became a stock company called the Marshfield City Brewing Co., and its large, now demolished, brick brewery was located near the intersection of N. Oak Ave. and W. Doege St.¹² By the end of the nineteenth century other products derived from the produce grown in the area, such as cheese, were being processed in Marshfield as well. New manufacturing concerns were making use of the city work force's expertise in wood product manufacturing to make products for these and other emerging food-related industries.

In 1911, John & Paul Blum began the first regional factory to produce cheese boxes, those large containers for processing the raw milk into curds and whey and ultimately storing and curing the cheese itself. Given that the Roddis Veneer Company had eliminated cheese boxes from its output, Blum Brothers filled a needed void. With the availability of processing goods (cheese boxes) and a centralized facility for collection and storage of perishable freight (Hub City Cold Storage) the proliferation of numerous local cheese processing plants became desirable.¹³

Another company that manufactured products relevant to area farmers was the Felker Bros. Manufacturing Co., which moved to Marshfield from Sparta, Wisconsin in 1908 and is still in operation there today.

The Felker Brothers specialized in a wide range of galvanized steel products, including stock tanks, well casings and other products useful to farm and city.¹⁴

Another agriculture-related Marshfield manufacturing plant was the Marshfield Canning Co., whose plant was built here in 1924 as part of the Oconomowoc Canning Co. group. This plant continued in operation in Marshfield under the direction of the Binzel family until it was sold to Canopy Systems, Inc. in 1982.¹⁵

The last sizable manufacturing concern developed in Marshfield before the end of World War II was the Weinbrenner Shoe Factory, which was built in 1935 in the depth of the Depression on a site on W. Third St. that had once been part the site of the Upham Manufacturing Co. The creation of this factory, which is still operated by the Weinbrenner Shoe Co., was a major coup for the city and it provided much needed employment when it was built and it still does so today.

¹² Schnitzler, Donald H. (ed.). *Op. Cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 277-278 (photo).

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 12. See also pp. 244-248 for a detailed history of the Blum Bros. Box Co. and the related Wisconsin Butter Tub Co. (photos).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 12 and 68 (photo).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 278-279 (photo).

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The Weinbrenner Shoe Company was founded in Milwaukee in 1892, by Albert H. Weinbrenner and Joseph Peffer, whose firm, called "Weinbrenner & Peffer," made work boots for loggers working in the northern Wisconsin forests. Initially just a small shoe-making shop, the company grew steadily and, in 1900, was renamed the Albert H. Weinbrenner Company by the partners, who also purchased the assets of the Knoll Shoe Co., another Milwaukee-based shoe factory. By 1909, Weinbrenner had bought out Peffer's share and his company's lines of work boots and sport related shoes had grown to the point where a new factory was needed. The new four-story factory that Weinbrenner built at 226 E. Juneau St. in Milwaukee served as the company's headquarters and principal place of manufacture until the mid-1930s, when the Depression and the costs of doing business in Milwaukee made a change in the structure of the company necessary.

Shoe manufacturing had long been a major industry in Wisconsin, but by 1935 the industry itself was in the midst of change.

By the end of World War I, production value [of manufactured leather goods in Wisconsin] was more than \$16.6 million. Ranked among the top ten producing states in the Union, Wisconsin maintained a shoe industry that was increasingly characterized by increasing mechanization and the displacement of highly skilled wage earners by less skilled employees. Specialization had also become a feature of many concerns, as efforts were directed towards the production of a particular type, shape, or style of shoe or boot. Increasing centralization was also evident. Of the \$13.6 million worth of goods produced by Wisconsin firms in 1909, \$7 million was from Milwaukee factories, about four million pairs of shoes. The size of many factory complexes had expanded to impressive scales, utilizing brick and masonry construction. The Great Depression signaled the end of large-scale production in the state, however.¹⁶

What was happening was the exact opposite of what had happened before, decentralization replacing centralization, the stated reasons being the high overhead and labor costs prevalent in the larger cities.

Decentralization of manufacturing has progressed rapidly in the shoe industry in Milwaukee which is repeating the experience in St. Louis. Most of the large shoe manufacturing companies in Milwaukee have established plants in the smaller towns of Wisconsin and Michigan. Within the last two years, Edgerton and Waupun were fortunate enough to attract

¹⁶ Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). *Op. Cit.*, Vol. 2. (Industry), p. 12-8.

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plants that were moving out of Milwaukee; Luddington, Michigan attracted a large Milwaukee plant.

The work shoe factory which comes to Marshfield is the first plant the Weinbrenner company has located in its decentralization program. Several other cities, among them, New London, Stoughton, and Baraboo, made strong bids for the plant, which will be opened here in September.¹⁷

That Marshfield finally won out in its bid for the new factory had its origin in a chance conversation.

Late in January of this year [1935], 11 Marshfield business men crowded into the private office of W. G. Hanson, chief executive of the Albert H. Weinbrenner company, Milwaukee, and cordially invited him and his company to consider Marshfield as a location for one of their branch shoe factories. ...

The trip to Milwaukee by the 11 business men was made upon the tip given by H. C. Bartmann, then engaged in the retail shoe business in Marshfield. He learned while visiting the Weinbrenner plant that it was about to be decentralized. He told William Merkel, president of the Marshfield Commercial club, about his discovery and asked if the club was interested. Mr. Bartmann made the engagement with Weinbrenner officials for this first visit. ...

Weinbrenner officials frankly admitted their plans to decentralize. This was necessary, they said, in order that they might compete with other shoe manufacturers which had moved to smaller towns where overhead was less. ...

The first visit was but the beginning of a series of conferences between Marshfield business men, Mayor George S. Ives and city officials and the shoe manufacturers, most of them in Milwaukee at first, but later a few of them in Marshfield. Early in May, the contract under which the factory came to Marshfield was signed.¹⁸

Once the Weinbrenner firm committed itself to the move, a whole other series of events had to take place at the Marshfield end in order to make the new factory a reality.

Before the signing could take place it was necessary to organize the Marshfield Industrial

¹⁷ *Marshfield News-Herald*. "New Shoe Factory Employing 200 to be Ready Sept. 15." May 14, 1935, p. 1.

¹⁸ *Ibid*. "Decentralization of Shoe Industry Brings Large Plant to Marshfield." September 21, 1935, p. 2.

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Foundation, Inc., to handle the transaction on behalf of the people of Marshfield. This corporation was organized with a capital stock of \$5,000 and was promptly authorized by the securities division of the Wisconsin Public Service Commission to issue \$50,000 in first mortgage notes. Mayor George S. Ives and members of the city council as well as all city officials gave their loyal support to the project; as well they authorized the purchase by the city of \$35,000 of the note issue.

At the first meeting of the stockholders of the new corporation, seven directors were elected. ... To this group was added the help of Mayor Ives and Ray Finucane to constitute the building committee, G. A. Krasin was chosen architect.

The work of building the three story structure began late in May. Because it was to be erected on city property and because it was an employment project, it was possible to arrange an FERA program for the building of the foundation.¹⁹

Construction on the factory began from scratch in late May of 1935, and the finished building was ready for occupancy by the end of September. That so much was accomplished in so short a time was a tribute to everyone involved and shows what could be done when all the resources of a city were marshaled to achieve a common goal. It also reflects the fact that most of the work force was from the Marshfield area and most of the materials used were sourced locally, but this, of course, was planned from the start, these being still more ways in which the construction of the new factory was intended to benefit the entire community. Some idea of the variety of local goods and services that the project utilized can be seen from the following account:

The Marshfield Construction company was awarded the building contract, with the [Marshfield Industrial] Foundation purchasing all materials. The Wausau Iron Works erected the steel frame around which brick and haydite were laid. Brick came from the local brickyards; haydite from the Michigan Silo company; lumber, gravel, sand and cement from the local dealers; the Northern Metal Roofing company of Green Bay laid the pitch and gravel roof; the Noll Appliance company [Marshfield] did the glazing; the Viking Automatic Sprinkler company of Chicago installed the system which protects the building against fire; the S. Heller company of Milwaukee installed the elevator; Fred Schreiner & Sons [Marshfield] installed the heating and

¹⁹*Marshfield News-Herald*. "Decentralization of Shoe Industry Brings Large Plant to Marshfield." September 21, 1935, p. 2.

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plumbing; William Merkel [Marshfield] did the wiring; the Felker Bros. Manufacturing company [Marshfield] built and erected the smoke stack; hardware came from the local dealers.²⁰

The construction of the factory's building was only a part of the story, however, because it was also necessary to train the work force that was to use it.

The contract between the Marshfield Industrial Foundation, Inc. and the Weinbrenner company provides that Marshfield labor must be employed before other labor can be brought in. The shoe company will bring not more than five families to the city, although in order to train local people, 25 or 30 instructors will be here for several weeks after the factory is started.

During the summer months [of 1935] training will be offered at the Purdy vocational school for persons who plan to seek employment at the new plant. It is expected that about 45 percent of the employees will be men and 55 percent women. Some operations in shoe making are done more easily by women than men, while on the other hand, men are better able to do other operations. An effort will be made in the vocational school to develop a fair degree of skill in shoe making.²¹

By mid-September, however, all was in readiness and the opening of the factory was accompanied by a city-wide celebration that included, among many other events, the crowning of a Queen of Industry in the factory to the accompaniment of massed choirs and music played by the city's renowned 135th Regiment Band.²²

The arrangement between the City and the Weinbrenner Company that governed the ownership of the new factory building was a mutual one but it was also one that was forged out of the hard-won lessons that they and other communities and businesses had learned from prior experience.

Under the contract between the Albert H. Weinbrenner company and the Marshfield Industrial Foundation, the new factory will not be purchased by the manufacturer but rather will be leased for a period of ten years with the privilege of renewing for two equal periods. The Milwaukee

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ *Marshfield News-Herald*. "New Shoe Factory Employing 200 to be Ready Sept. 15." May 14, 1935, p. 1.

²² Ibid. "City Welcomes Shoe Plant With Ceremony Tuesday." September 21, 1935, pp. 1, 2, & 10.

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firm has indicated its good faith by paying a substantial amount toward the cost of the building.²³

On the one hand, the City needed to produce a contract that was attractive to the Company while at the same time, protecting its substantial investment in the new building. On the other hand, the Company did not want to be financially burdened by the cost of constructing and owning an expensive new building at a time when the economic uncertainties of the day made such an undertaking financially perilous. The resulting agreement satisfied both parties and it has remained in force ever since.

The factory of the new Marshfield division of the Weinbrenner Shoe Company began operating in November of 1935, with almost 200 employees, and its immediate success encouraged the company to continue with its decentralization program. As a result, similar new divisions of the company were started in the cities of Merrill and Antigo, Wisconsin, in 1936. By 1945, the Marshfield division of the company had produced 9,472,375 pairs of shoes and had survived both the Depression years and the boom period of World War II to become an established part of the economic and social life of the city. The headquarters of the Weinbrenner Company continued to be located in Milwaukee during this period, and its three divisions remained in operation under the Weinbrenner name until 1960, when the company was purchased by Textron, Inc. Textron operated the company until 1966, when the company was purchased by the Bata Shoe Organization, the largest manufacturer of footwear in the world, but the company continued to operate under its original name. In 1986, Weinbrenner consolidated its manufacturing operations, resulting in the closing of its Antigo facility, and in 1988, after 22 years as a division of Bata, the company was purchased by WSC, Inc., a group that was comprised of Weinbrenner executives and other local investors. In 2000, the company became completely employee-owned, and its headquarters is now in Merrill.²⁴ The Marshfield factory building is still owned by the City of Marshfield and it continues to be leased by the Weinbrenner Shoe Co., which employs a work force of about 200.

The role that industry has played in the history of Marshfield is central to an understanding of the city's development and also does much to explain the built resources in the city. Consequently, any intact buildings associated with the city's industrial history are of considerable importance and they would be natural candidates for possible listing in the NRHP. Unfortunately, industrial buildings are utilitarian by design and are typically altered or discarded as need dictates and only a single historically significant Marshfield industry is still represented by its most significant building or buildings today, this being the factory of the Weinbrenner Shoe Company. All the other historic buildings associated

²³ Ibid., p. 2.

²⁴ Weinbrenner Shoe Company, Inc. Weinbrenner Shoe Company History. Publicity Broadside, 2001.

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with the city's historic industrial concerns have now either been demolished, have been greatly altered, such as the plant of the Felker Brothers Manufacturing Co. at 22 N. Chestnut St., or they exist only as small fragments of the original factory. By way of illustration, no buildings have survived that were once associated with the Marshfield City Brewing Co., the Hatteberg Veneer Co., the Hafer & Kalshied Saw & Planning Mill, the H. H. Bille Sash and Door Co., or The Marshfield Stave & Heading Co. Other companies, such as the Upham Manufacturing Co., the R. Connor Lumber Co., and the Roddis Plywood Veneer Co., the three largest and most important companies in Marshfield's industrial history, are now each believed to be represented by just a single historic building. It is possible, but not certain, for instance, that the Astylistic Utilitarian form building located at 307 W. Second St. may contain portions of the brick construction machine shop of the Upham Manufacturing Co. within its shell. Historic photos, the 1883 and 1891 Bird's Eye Views of Marshfield, and Sanborn-Perris maps show that all the other original buildings associated with this company were wooden ones and none of these nineteenth century buildings have survived. The Roddis Plywood Co. has fared only a little better. Just a single historic building survives from this company, this being the company's last, still highly intact brick-clad office building, which was built between 1941 and 1942 at ca. 10 N. Palmetto Ave. adjacent to the now completely modernized plywood factory that was once associated with it. The same is true of the R. Connor Co., whose office building, now located at 108 W. Fourth St., which was built in 1903 and moved to its present site ca. 1960, is now the only surviving Marshfield building that was historically associated with this once important company.

Other extant buildings associated with the city's historic industrial concerns now exist only as much altered fragments of once larger factories. The largest concentration of such buildings exists along the 100 block of W. Ninth Street and none of these exists in an intact state. The northernmost of these is the former warehouse of the Blum Brothers Box Co., built between 1925 and 1941, and next door to it is located the factory building of the company, which has also now been significantly altered. Also greatly altered is the nearby factory building located at 113 W. Ninth St. that was originally associated with the Wisconsin Butter Tub Co. This building was built in 1922 after a fire destroyed all of the company's earlier buildings on this site. Still another company that now exists only as a fragment is the Marshfield Canning Co. This factory was built in 1924 at 1616 S. Central Ave. and it was expanded several times in the years that followed, but the plant was finally closed in 1995 and only a small fragment of the original factory building remains today.

These losses only serve to enhance the significance of the Weinbrenner Shoe Factory, which now comprises the only intact historic industrial facility in Marshfield. Consequently, it is believed that the Weinbrenner Shoe Factory is eligible for listing in the NRHP under NR Criterion A (History) because the industry it houses has played a significant role in the history of the economic life of Marshfield.

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The Weinbrenner Shoe Company came to Marshfield in 1935, having been attracted in large part by the City's offer to build a brand new factory building for it. This was to be the last historically significant industry to be established in Marshfield before the end of World War II and the historic significance of this company as an important employer in Marshfield in the years that followed is entirely associated with the factory building that is the subject of this nomination. The significance of the Weinbrenner Shoe Factory is heightened by the fact that it now the only surviving intact historic industrial building that was built in the city prior to World War II. In addition, the factory also represents the efforts that the City of Marshfield made to alleviate the effects that the Depression was having on its citizens. Part of the rationale for building the factory in the depths of the Depression was to provide jobs for men and women in the Marshfield area who were unemployed, and the successful effort the City made to lure the Weinbrenner Shoe Company from Milwaukee to Marshfield had an important positive effect on the city's economic life during those difficult times. The significance of the factory is heightened by its highly intact condition and by the fact that it is still used for its original purpose and still houses one of the principal manufacturing plants of the Weinbrenner Shoe Company.

Architecture

The Weinbrenner Shoe Factory was identified by the Marshfield Intensive Survey as one of the resources in Marshfield that is most worthy of listing in the NRHP. Although it is being nominated to the NRHP under Criterion A for its local historic significance, the factory is also a good, representative, later example of the industrial loft type of factory building and, while its overall design and construction is typical of factory buildings of the period, it also displays discreet Art Deco style decorative touches as well.

In her ground-breaking study of industrial buildings entitled *The Works: The Industrial Architecture of the United States*, Betsy Hunter Bradley defines industrial lofts as follows:

Industrial Loft A multistory building with relatively large, open floor areas—lofts—in which various types of light manufacturing operations are housed. The program of an industrial loft is to provide adequate light, ventilation, and materials handling devices for production areas as unobstructed as possible by columns and auxiliary functions, such as elevators.²⁵

This is an accurate definition of the original three-story-tall main block of the Weinbrenner factory, which was built in 1935 to the design by Marshfield architect Gus A. Krasin. The following contemporary

²⁵ Bradley, Betsy Hunter. *The Works: The Industrial Architecture of the United States*. London & New York: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 264.

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newspaper article gives a basic description of the construction, design, and setting of the factory as construction was about to commence.

The factory will be of brick and steel construction 52x272 and three stories in height, capable of employing 400 people. ... The building will be erected on the east side of Block 70; at the southwest corner of the main building an office building will be erected. The [existing] railroad tracks will be removed and the 20 feet of land in front of the building will be landscaped. Ample parking will be provided at the rear of the building.²⁶

Within a week after this was written, construction on the poured concrete foundation of the factory was well underway and excavations for the concrete footings that would support the walls had begun as well.²⁷ By early July, the work had progressed to the point where the framework and eventual shape of the building was becoming evident.

Rapid progress is being made on the new three-story shoe factory now in the course of construction on the site of the old Upham factory. The steel frame was erected last week by the Wausau Construction company and by Wednesday or Thursday the riveting should be completed.

The Marshfield Construction company which was awarded the general contract began work two weeks ago laying brick on the boiler house section. This is a one story section and the brick work is completed and the building is ready for a concrete roof.

The smoke stack made by the Felker Brothers Manufacturing company was put in place last Saturday. The work of erecting it was simplified because the crane of the Wausau Construction company was used. The stack is 30 inches in diameter by 70 feet and is made of one-quarter inch open hearth steel.

Work of laying brick on the main section of the building is progressing rapidly. Twelve bricklayers are employed and the wall is rapidly nearing the second story. Carpenters are beginning to prepare the second floor. The first floor will not be laid until the building is well along. Considerable fill is necessary before the concrete slab is poured. ...

²⁶ *Marshfield News-Herald*. "New Shoe Factory Employing 200 to be Ready Sept. 15." May 14, 1935, p. 1.

²⁷ *Ibid*. "Rapid Progress is Made on Factory." May 21, 1935, p. 6.

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Weinbrenner Shoe Factory
Marshfield, Wood County, Wisconsin

This week the foundation for the office building attached to the southwest corner of the building will be poured, weather permitting.²⁸

By September, the factory was essentially finished and was ready for the installation of machinery and final finishing of the interior. Not surprisingly, when the time came for the local newspaper to write a wrap-up of the years' building activity in Marshfield, the factory was the lead item in the list.

The shoe factory, constructed late this summer, is one of the largest buildings in the city, measuring 272 feet, or a full city block, in length. The building proper is 52 feet wide, in addition to which it has two wings. One of these is an office addition measuring 54 feet in length and 32 feet in width. The other consists of a 60 by 42 boiler room two stories high.

The building is of mill construction having a steel skeleton with timber joists, with walls of haydite blocks and Marshfield face bricks. Over 34,000 units of haydite blocks were used in its construction, and the windows installed represent a combined width of more than 1700 feet.²⁹

Although the design of the 1935 block is essentially utilitarian and astylistic, Krasin managed to give it some modest Art Deco style ornamentation in the form of the simple stylized concrete capitals that crown all the pilaster strips that divide the building's elevations into bays, and he also provided small panels of decorative brick work that feature bricks laid in chevron patterns, in the wall surfaces of the spandrels that crown the end bays of each corner of the building.

The immediate success of the factory resulted in new one-story additions being added along the W. Second Street side of the block between 1937 and 1941 and along the S. Spruce Street side between 1946 and 50, thereby forming a G-plan building, and both of these additions were also designed by Gus A. Krasin in the same style as the original block.³⁰

²⁸ Ibid. "Push Factory Construction." July 8, 1935, p. 1. This smoke stack has now been demolished.

²⁹ *Marshfield News-Herald*. "Construction Reaches Ten-Year Peak in Marshfield." December 28, 1935, p. 5. Haydite is a lightweight aggregate that is used in making some formulas of concrete. A more common name is cinder block.

³⁰ State of Wisconsin Division of Safety & Buildings. Building Plans Correspondence (e-files), 1914-1918. Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Series 2284, Box 23, Folder 665.

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Weinbrenner Shoe Factory
Marshfield, Wood County, Wisconsin

Architect

Gus A. Krasin (1885-1951) was the only professional architect to practice in Marshfield in the first half of the twentieth century. Krasin was born in Volynia, Russia in 1885, and he came to this country with his family in 1892. The Krasin family settled first in southern Arkansas, then moved to southern Michigan, and finally, to a farm in Tigerton, Wisconsin and Krasin was schooled in Lutheran schools in each of these places. In 1903, Krasin left the family farm to follow the carpenter's trade and, in 1907, he established the contracting firm of Krasin Brothers in Tigerton with his brother, J. F. Krasin. During this period, Krasin also steadily acquired knowledge of the practice of architecture by taking correspondence courses. In 1909, the brothers moved the firm to Marshfield and it continued in operation in this city until 1932, after which time Krasin operated a separate architectural office in the city until his death in 1951.

Krasin practiced as an architect from 1910 until his death while also serving as a member of the Krasin Brothers contracting firm during the period of its existence. During this forty-year period, Krasin was undoubtedly responsible for the design of many buildings that remain unidentified, not only in Marshfield but elsewhere. As his obituary noted: "He was well known throughout Wisconsin and, to a lesser extent, in Illinois, Indiana, and Arkansas for school, church, and commercial structures he designed."³¹

The earliest work that Krasin is known to have produced was not built, this being a design that he created in 1929 for a new Neo-Classical Revival style band shell in Columbia Park in Marshfield. Unfortunately, only a few of the Marshfield buildings that Krasin designed and which were actually built have been identified, but they are buildings that have been of importance to the city. The earliest is the Weinbrenner Shoe Factory, which was built in 1935.³² His next identified building was the International Style house that he built for himself in 1936 at 808 S. Oak Ave., which is still extant but has now been almost totally remodeled.³³ This was followed by the Marshfield Armory and Community Building located at 201 S. Oak Ave., which was built in 1941-42, with WPA funding.³⁴ The last identified building designed by Krasin was the Dairyland Broadcasting Co. building located at 1710 N. Central Ave. and built in 1947.³⁵ In addition to the Marshfield buildings that Krasin designed,

³¹ *Marshfield News-Herald*, December 12, 1951, p. 18. Obituary of Gus A. Krasin.

³² *Ibid.* September 21, 1935, p. 1 and 5. See also: Schnitzler, Donald H. (ed.). *The Marshfield Story: Volume 1*. Amherst, WI.: Palmer Publications., 1997, pp. 57-58 (photos).

³³ *Marshfield News-Herald*, August 12, 1936, p. 9.

³⁴ Schnitzler, Donald H. (ed.). *The Marshfield Story: Volume 2*. Eagle River, WI.: Hahn Printing Co., 2000, p. 37 (photo).

³⁵ Bernstein, Rebecca Sample. *City of Marshfield, Wisconsin Intensive Survey Report*. Marshfield: July, 1991, p. 23

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Weinbrenner Shoe Factory
Marshfield, Wood County, Wisconsin

he also acted as a supervising architect for the work of others, including the Adler Movie Theater at 419 S. Central Ave., built in 1937 to a design by Perry F. Crosier of Minneapolis.³⁶

Acknowledgment

This project has been funded with the assistance of a grant-in-aid from the Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended. Historic Preservation grants-in-aid are administered in Wisconsin in conjunction with the National Register of Historic Places program by the Division of Historic Preservation of the Wisconsin Historical Society. However, the contents and opinions contained in this nomination do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the National Park Service or the Wisconsin Historical Society.

³⁶ *Marshfield News-Herald*. May 15, 1937, p 5 (illustrated).

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Weinbrenner Shoe Factory
Marshfield, Wood County, Wisconsin

Verbal Boundary Description:

All of Block 70. Original Plat of the City of Marshfield.

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries enclose all the land that has historically been associated with the Weinbrenner Shoe Factory.

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Weinbrenner Shoe Factory
Marshfield, Wood County, Wisconsin

Items a-d are the same for photos 1 - 8.

Photo 1

- a) Weinbrenner Shoe Factory
- b) Marshfield, Wood County, WI
- c) Timothy F. Heggland, November 26, 2006
- d) Wisconsin Historical Society
- e) General View, 1935 Block, View looking N
- f) Photo 1 of 8

Photo 8

- e) Interior, 1948 Wing, View looking NW
- f) Photo 8 of 8

Photo 2

- e) 1935 Office Wing, View looking NE
- f) Photo 2 of 8

Photo 3

- e) Rear of Factory, with 1958 Addition in Foreground, View looking E
- f) Photo 3 of 8

Photo 4

- e) 1948 Addition, View looking S
- f) Photo 4 of 8

Photo 5

- e) General View, 1935 Block, View looking W
- f) Photo 5 of 8

Photo 6

- e) Interior of First Story, 1935 Block, View looking NE
- f) Photo 6 of 8

Photo 7

- e) Interior, Detail of Supporting Pillar, First Story, 1935 Block, View looking SW
- f) Photo 7 of 8

W. Second St.

S. Spruce Ave.

S. Walnut Ave.

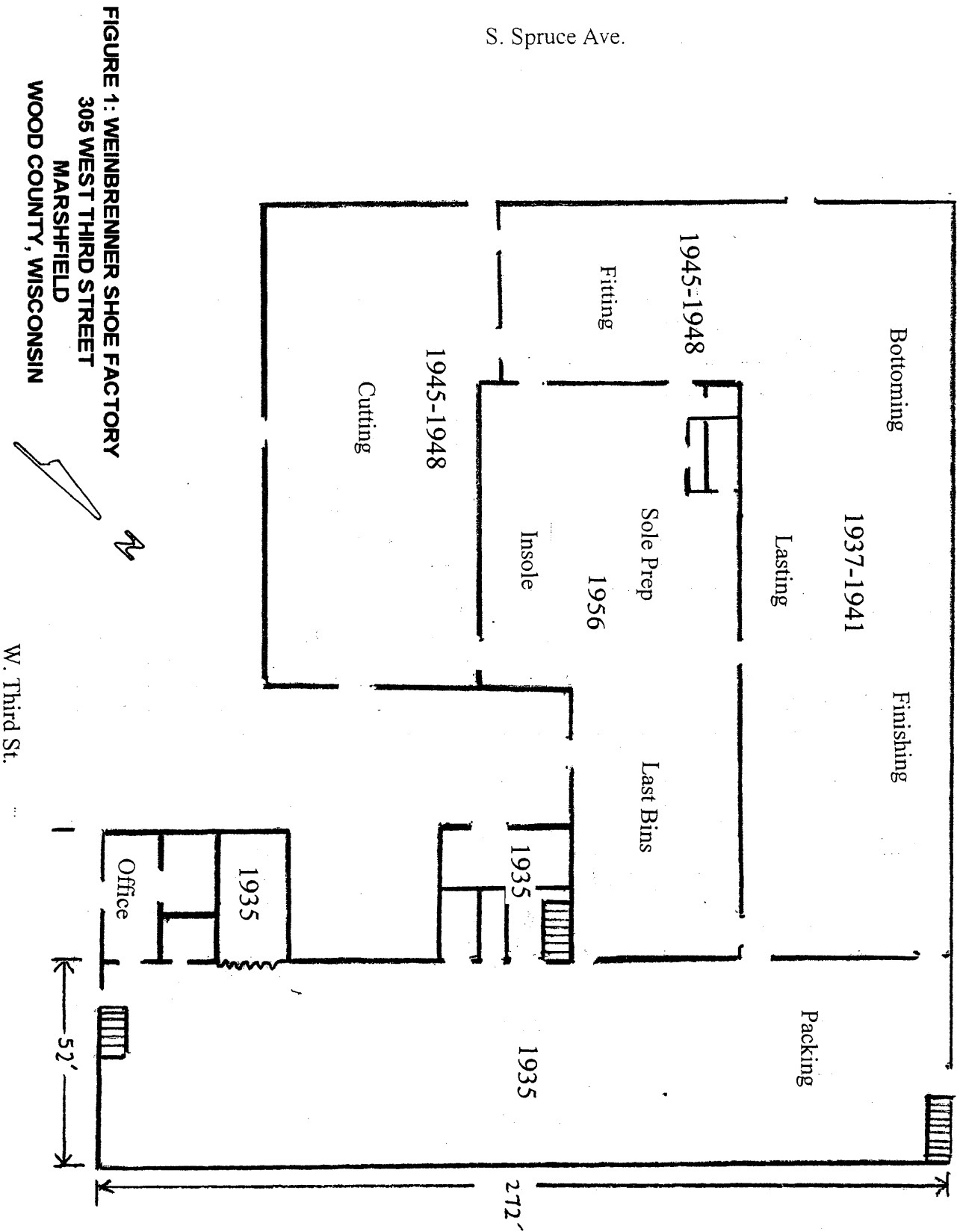


FIGURE 1: WEINBRENNER SHOE FACTORY
305 WEST THIRD STREET
MARSHFIELD
WOOD COUNTY, WISCONSIN

W. Third St.