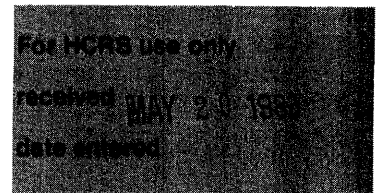


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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



1. Name *Downtown Evansville Multiple Resource Area*

historic *Historic Resources of Downtown Evansville, Indiana* (Partial Inventory, Historical and Architectural properties)
and/or common

2. Location

street & number *The Central Business District* Roughly bounded by State Rd. 66, the Ohio River, *N/A* not for publication
city, town *Heidelberg Avenue, Chestnut Street and Oak Street*
Evansville *N/A* vicinity of congressional district *8th*
state *Indiana* code *18* county *Vanderburgh* code *163*

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name *Multiple Ownership*

street & number

city, town *N/A* *N/A* vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. *Vanderburgh County Recorder*

street & number *City-County Administration Building*

city, town *Evansville* state *Indiana*

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title *See continuation sheet.* has this property been determined eligible? ☒ yes ☒ no

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records *N/A*

city, town state

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 6 PAGE 1

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

The Downtown resources included have all been surveyed, some in multiple forms. All of the resources listed in the attached roster were surveyed in 1977 as part of the city-wide Evansville Cultural Resources Inventory, a city-managed survey project performed with the assistance of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. These inventory forms have been up-dated as new information became available through primary research.

A number of the resources are already listed on the Register or have been determined eligible for listing. The 12 National Register properties are indicated on the attached roster (***), and the Skora Building (7) was determined eligible for the Register in November 1980. One building, the Willard Carpenter House (60), was recorded by HABS, as well as having been listed on the Register.

7. Description

Condition

☒ excellent

☒ good

☒ fair

☐ deteriorated

☐ ruins

☐ unexposed

Check one

☒ unaltered

☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site

☐ moved

date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

This National Register Multiple Resources Area comprises 117 historic buildings and sites in the Downtown of Evansville, Indiana. It is an urban district, one which is completely built-up and man-made. There are twelve National Register buildings already listed within the district, and one building has been determined eligible for the Register. The remainder of the buildings in the district have been identified through a comprehensive survey conducted by the City of Evansville as part of the Indiana Sites and Structures Inventory.

Evansville's Downtown is roughly 110 blocks in area and represents the principal retail and commercial center for a tri-state region. The Downtown occupies relatively flat flood plain land on the northern shore of the Ohio River. Its system of streets and alleys is asphalt paved. Recent beautification programs have resulted in the creation of an auto-free walkway on Main Street and the planting of assorted flowering trees along Downtown streets. There are a handful of vest-pocket parks in the area, two of which are historic resources. The most current inventory of commercial and residential buildings in the district indicates that there are approximately 900 total structures in the Multiple Resources Area. The most prominent type of historic resources in the district is commercial architecture. There are a few significant industrial buildings within the district and even fewer residential structures. Regrettably, a significant portion of the district is vacant as a result of the failures of Urban Renewal or the demands of the automobile.

The historic resources of Downtown Evansville depict the growth and development of a late-19th century Midwestern commercial city. It is Downtown Evansville where the original city was founded and grew. Scant physical evidence remains of the settlement and early stages of the city's history. The village which became Evansville was founded by settlers of Scots-Irish stock in about 1815 as part of the western migration following the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. The site of Downtown Evansville had probably never been permanently settled before this date, although some eight miles upriver a Mississippian culture flourished in the 15th century at what is now Angel Site (National Historic Landmark, 1966), and the nearby upriver village of Newburgh was founded in about 1803. The advantages of Evansville's particular site seemed to be two-fold: The Ohio River and a tributary waterway--Pigeon Creek--had their confluence just downriver of the village site which became Downtown, and a slight hill existed in the floodplain at about the present day intersection of Second and Main streets. It was in this setting that the original town planners platted Evansville in 1814. This town plan, replatted in 1817 and later expanded through annexations and deliberate urban design measures, is the sole reminder of the town's beginnings. The widely bending river and the mouth of the creek at the downstream apogee of the bend constrained the planners, and the system of streets of the original plat and of today's Downtown are clearly oriented to the orthogonal river bank and not to cardinal points as was the case with the town's later additions. The arrangement of lots in the 1817 plan along fairly uniform streets and the street grid is another conscious design feature which remains with us today; that is, buildings largely face numbered streets with the exception of Main Street. The regularity of the Downtown's 1817 plan diminished with platted lands to the upriver and downriver sides (above present-day Court Street or below Chestnut Street) where less coordination seemed to be present. A pair of open squares were platted in 1837 for market purposes and these remain today as parks.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

The nascent village of Evansville languished well into mid-century, and the Downtown district reflects the fledgling nature of this early period. By 1820, the population of the village numbered 100, and only shrewd political manuevering secured the seat of the new Vanderburgh County for Evansville. The arrival of the steamboat in 1811 would have a lasting effect on the growth of the town, and Evansville's strategic position within the cynosure of three major river systems (Ohio, Green and Wabash) spelled longterm success.

It was at the end of the 1840s that the picture began to brighten. German immigration, spurred by the Revolution of 1848, brought to Evansville a cohort of industrious citizens who soon left their mark on the town's economy, politics and culture. Several buildings remain today within the district which illustrate this important ethnic legacy. A major public work, the Wabash-Erie Canal, was completed in 1853 and had Evansville as its southern terminus.

The Civil War had a brief retarding effect on the city, but was followed by successive periods of growth and development which can be witnessed today in the historic buildings of the Downtown. Rail connections with northern cities and southern markets were expanded in the 1860s, and Evansville's Downtown warehouses and commercial blocks rose to serve the city's extensive new commerce. The waterfront was alive with the riverboats of various packet lines, and the Downtown was girdled with regional rail rights-of-way and with local beltlines.

The mid-1870s through the mid-1890s became a period of explosive growth for the city and change for its Downtown. A second major wave of German immigration began in the latter part of the 1880s, supplying local industries with skilled and not-so-skilled labor. It was in this period that the city and Downtown were aggrandized by the addition of elaborate government buildings for municipal, county and federal offices. Several other institutions meant to govern or enhance business and commercial activities found their roots in this phase of the Downtown's development, for example the Businessmen's Association, various banks, and the like. The cyclical national financial depressions of the last quarter of the 19th Century seemed to have little effect on the city and its commercial core. It is from this period that the morphology of the modern city can be ascertained. Main Street and nearby side and cross streets became exclusively commercial in the 1880s with a few very large blocks among two and three story business buildings. A scattering of residences and business houses could be found flanking the commercial core to the northwest and southeast. Evansville's large office building had its genesis at this time. On the waterfront, land use was largely river-oriented, with massive warehouse blocks, taverns, hotels, and so on. At the edge of the present day Downtown were assorted industries and manufactories less dependent on proximity to the river or Pigeon Creek and a handful of residential enclaves inhabited by laborers employed by Downtown concerns.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 3

The pattern of Downtown land use established for Evansville in the last quarter of the 19th Century remained intact until the contemporary era. Although a great deal of building activity followed the turn of the century, the Downtown was treated as if it were a palimpsest, with larger commercial buildings replacing smaller commercial buildings, and so on. Residential growth and new industry tended to occur well outside the orbit of Downtown, a phenomenon abetted by the establishment and elaboration of street railways and city services in the last quarter of the 19th century. A commercial/industrial boom and rise in population visited Evansville between 1900 and the First World War, and Downtown merchants and professionals rode the wave by enlarging or replacing their facilities with bigger and better buildings. By the turn of the century, Evansville had secured regional hegemony as a place of commerce and industry and was second among Indiana cities in its population. By the 1920s, Evansville had fully matured and accurately illustrated the passage of the nation from rural to urban.

The Depression and Second World War became a watershed for the Downtown. Very little building activity occurred in the area during the long pause of the 1930s and 1940s. With the end of the war Evansville found itself to be a city composed largely of relics at least a half-century in age. The destruction of this record began falteringly in the 1950s, delayed only by a local economic crisis at the end of that decade. The injection of Federal Urban Renewal money in the early 1960s and the stabilization of the local political scene allowed the eradication of a good deal of the riverfront and of buildings elsewhere which did not fit into the image of a New Evansville. Sadly, many of these mistakes are still with us in the form of vacant, paved or weed-filled blocks, a condition which two generations of leaders have tried to reverse with only mixed success.

The architectural composition of the historic district includes buildings of nearly every type. There are a number of small-scale commercial buildings of two to four stories with frontages of thirty feet or so. Of this building type, examples are: Turley-Harmon Building (13), 523 Main Street (95) and Long Building (52). (Numbers in parenthesis refer to the Multiple Resources Area Map and photographs.) Larger, and somewhat grander, commercial buildings are also present. This category includes the following examples: Old Sears Building (32), National City Bank (82), and Old Montgomery Ward Building (93). The district possesses several prominent examples of tall buildings: Hulman Building (31), Court Building (33) and Southern Securities Building (87). A number of substantial institutional buildings can be found in Downtown Evansville: Old YMCA (45), Masonic Temple (63), YWCA (113) and the old Eagle's Home (48). A pair of major hotel buildings remain in the district: McCurdy Hotel (1) and Old Hotel Sonntag (98). The district includes a handful of ecclesiastical buildings: Zion Church (49), St. Mary's Catholic Church (62) and Salem Church (70). Several early 20th-century flats remain: The Buckingham (12), Albion Apartments (68) and Rose Terrace (57). There are a few extant historic

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 4

private residences: Richardt-Patrick House (47), Carpenter House (60) and Roelker House (112). The district contains a number of major public buildings. Examples of this type include: Old Vanderburgh County Courthouse (66), Old U. S. Post Office, Courthouse and Custom House (6) and Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Coliseum (65). Several industrial warehouse and manufacturing buildings remain: Brucken's (36), Charles Leich Company (50) and Old Puster Furniture Building (54). Smaller industrial buildings include: Glass Specialty Company (64), Shekell's (109) and Old Krieger-Ragsdale Building (5). There are several buildings related to transportation: Old L & N Railroad Passenger Depot (71), Greyhound Terminal (14) and Kronenberger and Barnett Livery Stable (42).

The architectural styles represented within the Multiple Resources Area are varied. A great many of the buildings, particularly the smaller residences and industrial buildings, possess an appearance which can only be called vernacular or simply functional; for example, 203 NW 7th Street (56), Indiana Bell (44) and 611-13 Main Street (100). At least one bone fide example of the Greek Revival remains: Carpenter House (60). The Italianate began to achieve some popularity in Evansville at mid-century and remained in vogue well in the 1870s. Downtown examples include: Turley-Harmon Building (13), 127 SE 4th Street (27) and Old Bitterman Building (79). Ruskinian Gothic can be found in the Old U. S. Post Office (6). The Gothic Revival was expressed in the design of the Old Vanderburgh County Jail and Sheriff's Residence (34), Zion Church (49) and St. Mary's Catholic Church (62). Examples of the Romanesque Revival--something rarely seen in Evansville--are the Old L & N Depot (71) and Ridgway Building (84). There are a good many buildings which were designed in the Classical Revival mode; for example, Indiana Bank Building (96), Masonic Temple (63) and Memorial Coliseum (65). The Chicago School found some adherents in the design of Downtown commercial architecture: New Bitterman Building (80) and Old Sears Building (32). A few Downtown buildings were designed in the manner of the Prairie School: Fellwock Auto (35), Walnut Street School (117) and 206-08 SE 8th Street (58). The Downtown has a number of fine examples of the Art Deco: Greyhound Bus Terminal (14), Central Library (41) and Hulman Building (31). The Colonial and Georgian Revivals are represented, for example, by Lockyear College (46), McCurdy Hotel (1) and Old Montgomery Ward Building (93). A handful of eclectic buildings can also be found Downtown: Old Greek-Shears Mortuary (116), Hadi Shrine (114) and Old Hotel Sonntag (98).

Downtown Evansville's Multiple Resources present a fairly complete record of the city's growth and development. The largest gap, of course, is the episode connected to the city's founding and first fifty years. The crude log buildings and later, more substantial Federal period structures are all gone. The only tangible record of this chapter are the street systems of the 1817 Original Plan and the 1837 Eastern Enlargement. (The portion of the district above Court Street was platted in the early 1850s and annexed by Evansville in 1857.) The two open spaces noted

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 5

previously--the small parks on SE 4th Street (30) and SE 7th Street (55)--are the only other features which survive this period (they were platted in the Eastern Enlargement).

At least two resources date from the period of the city's first ascendancy when commercial linkages were strengthened. The Carpenter House (60) was erected by one of the town's foremost entrepreneurs in 1848, and the Roelker House (112) was constructed in about 1858 by a foundry owner on a site adjacent to the Wabash-Erie Canal.

The city began to awaken architecturally at about mid-century with cast-iron buildings and the work of local architects. The earliest extant commercial buildings, however, tend to be plain affairs, executed in a simple and functional style which might be called American commercial vernacular. An example of this later type from this period would be the double building at 611-13 Main Street (100) dating from about 1865.

The district can claim a few high-style buildings from this period beginning in about 1870. The two major government buildings in the district--Old U. S. Post Office (6) from 1874-79 and the Old Vanderburgh County Courthouse (66) of 1888-90--reflect the economic period following the Civil War. Slightly earlier, but illustrative of the urbanism of the Downtown, is the Crescent Fire Company House (76) of 1859-60.

Closely allied to the urbanism of the post-war era was the wave of German immigration which began at mid-century and continued unabated for the rest of the 1800s. The best evidence of this important cultural event are the various ethnic institutions founded in this period in the Downtown. The district contains three religious buildings associated with the first wave of German immigration: Zion Church (49) of 1855, Salem Evangelical Church (70) of 1854 (rebuilt 1873) and St. Mary's Catholic Church (62) of 1867.

Not a great deal more remains from the period of the 1870s. The Turley-Harmon Building (13) may have been constructed as part of the extensive remodeling being performed on the adjacent building in 1877. A livery stable (42) was built by the firm of Kronenberger and Barnett in 1874 and it remains today. The building boom of the Seventies continued into the 1880s and the 1890s with the results much the same. A few commercial structures of two to four stories remain from this period--German Bank (83) of about 1880, Old Bitterman Building (79) of about 1885 and Ridgway Building (84) of 1895--although the Downtown was the scene of several major projects involving the erection of very large business and warehouse blocks in this period, almost all now gone. A handful of smaller and medium-sized industrial buildings survive from the close of the 19th Century, including 420 N.W. 5th

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 6

Street (50) of about 1885, Geiger Moving (9) of 1894-95 and Evansville Brewing Company/Brucken's Company (36) of 1891-93.

It was immediately following the turn of the century that Evansville and the Downtown experienced what might rightly be characterized as its Golden Age. It was then that an aggressive and powerful coterie of local businessmen--buoyed by available land, inexpensive labor and steady political leadership--began to remake the face of the city. Improved rail connections, pushed through by this group, enhanced Evansville's position in the economy of the Midwest and caused a higher demand for modern commercial, office and industrial space. The bulk of the district's historic resources can be traced to this prosperous period. For example, the city's first skyscraper--Southern Securities Building (87) of 1916--was erected in answer to the need for modern offices in the context of increasingly costly urban land. The Furniture Building (33) of 1908 was a proto-skyscraper of sorts, with the use of structural steel and concrete in a building of only seven stories. A major commercial building from this period which characterizes the growth and elaboration of the local banks in the National City Bank (82) of 1913.

The turn-of-the-century market for retail goods was also strong in the Downtown, and several store buildings and department stores were promoted. Among the survivors is the William Hughes Building (92) of 1911.

Downtown living took on a slightly more fashionable cast after 1900, too. The Rose Terrace (57) of 1911 and Cadick Apartments (2) of 1916-17 sprang from the demand for convenience and substantial construction in residential building.

Public buildings also answered the post-1900 call for a bigger, better and busier Evansville. The Progressive mayor which saw the city through this period--Benjamin Bosse--promoted a genuine City Beautiful project, the 1915-16 Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Coliseum (65), and built one Downtown public school which remains today, the Walnut Street School (117) of 1913. The Coliseum was ostensibly a memorial to war dead and wounded, but also furnished Evansville with its first large-scale facility for conventions and public gatherings. Another architectural event connected with the construction of the Coliseum and the furtherance of the Downtown as a site for conventions and business meetings was the building of the McCurdy Hotel (1) in 1916-17. This hotel-building trend was continued by the construction in 1921 of the Hotel Sonntag/Victory Theater complex (98).

A number of smaller commercial buildings which catered to a more discriminating post-1900 consumer can also be found still today in the Downtown district; for instance, Artes Building (86) of 1915, Gottman Building (101) of 1911 and New Bitterman Building (80) of 1923. The construction of a major rail facility, the 1902 L & N Railroad Passenger Depot (71), also heralded the arrival of Evansville and the

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 7

Downtown as a place to be reckoned with. So, too, with the addition of several institutional or fraternal buildings in this turn-of-the-century period: YMCA (45) of 1913, Masonic Temple (67) of 1912, the Old Eagle's Home (48) of 1912,

The Great Depression naturally had a dampening effect on building activities, but at least two resources remain from this era: Old Montgomery Ward Building (93) of 1933 and the Greyhound Bus Terminal (14) of 1938-39. Not a great amount of building occurred during the 1940s and afterwards in the Downtown which would fall within the scope of the National Register. An exception to this is the Landmark Building (32) of about 1943, a handsome building associated with the expansion of the Sears, Roebuck Company operation locally.

The prevailing architectural impact of the district is one of coherence and relative integrity. A major factor contributing to this sense is the low-rise scale of the Downtown and the narrow proportions of its buildings. The majority of the buildings listed in the Multiple Resources inventory are two to four stories in height and occupy the standard 30-foot lot or some similar module. The few "tall" buildings in the Downtown--none higher than 18 stories and most in the ten story range--seem to be that much taller for this reason. This phenomenon is clearly supported by the extreme impact of the Old Vanderburgh County Courthouse (66), a massively scaled edifice which spreads over the courthouse square, looms over lesser neighbors, and dominates the Downtown cityscape, this in spite of being nominally just three stories in height. Because of the congested nature of this urban environment, the prevailing building material is masonry. This includes a variety of masonry types, including brick (with numerous sub-categories), Indiana limestone (see Indiana Bank Building, (96), sandstone (see Old Post Office, 6) and terra cotta (see Fellwock Auto, 35.) An exotic exception to this masonry predominance is the blue porcelain enamel metal panels of the Greyhound Bus Terminal (14). Occasionally decorative applications can also be found in materials like encaustic tile (see Old Bitterman Building, 79, or German Bank, 83) or iron (see National City Bank, 82). A noteworthy, and regrettably rare, example of non-masonry construction is the cast iron and galvanized metal to be found on the facade of the Nienaber-Damron Building (59) of 1884.

The design and workmanship of the Downtown historic resources tend to be of a very high quality. Evansville's trademen and artisans were skilled builders, and several examples of their craftsmanship can be counted among the Downtown historic resources. Fine stone carving can be found in buildings such as the Hulman Building (31), German Bank (83) and Old U. S. Post Office (6). The bas relief sculpture of the Central Library (41) is also noteworthy. The encaustic tiles found on the Old

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 8

Bitterman Building (79) and German Bank (83) are examples of fine workmanship in another medium. A number of buildings such as the Old County Courthouse (66) and Old Post Office (6) are tours de force of the building arts. Most of the resources identified exhibit outstanding design qualities. The Downtown resources were, by and large, produced by a group of skilled architects and designers, and to single out a few examples would be superfluous.

The physical relationships of the Downtown resources to each other and to the environment is totally urban. Downtown Evansville, in spite of the gaps left by Urban Renewal and other forms of speculative demolition, still possesses a dense and compact character. The resources tend to follow the customary practice Downtown of being constructed without setback or large amounts of open space on the site. The pattern of distribution for the resources is dispersed, with sites and structures found in every part of the Multiple Resources Area. However, strong concentrations of resources do exist along the Main Street and Fourth Street axes. As previously mentioned, recent city beautification programs have left the Downtown with an auto-free Main Street Walkway and other plantings along streets in the form of flowering trees. The parks present in the Downtown--two of which are historic resources--are not particularly integrated into the city plan. That plan-- a regularized street grid angled orthogonally to meet the Ohio River's northward bend--is the only constant factor from the founding of Evansville to the present day. The density and overwhelming commercial and monumental character of the district can be traced to the urbanism of the last half of the 19th Century when the Downtown passed from a place of mixed use with fairly equal parts of residential and commercial buildings. The trend from original Evansville to modern Central Business District was accelerated by the extensive building activity of the period between the turn of the century and the First World War.

The approximate percentages of the original building uses present in the Multiple Resources Area underscores the prevailing character of the district as commercial. Of the 125 resources identified, 57 (47%) were erected for purposes of commerce. Residential buildings comprise 12% of the total, and combination commercial/residential comprise 8%. Public buildings are 7% of the total, educational is 5%, religious is 5% and institutional buildings are 3%. Industrial buildings used for warehouse and manufacturing purposes originally are 13% of the total.

A subsurface archaeological test was not feasible because of the density of the buildings in the district and the large amounts of paved surfaces. It would seem unlikely that any such testing could be performed. The nomination should be considered complete without such testing. Furthermore, the likelihood of finding any archaeological evidence is appreciably lessened by the grading and filling that occurred throughout much of the 19th Century in the Downtown along with the extreme impact on any resources of numerous successive building episodes.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 9

✓ The Downtown district has been the subject of several survey projects over the past four years. In 1977, the area was part of the local and State-sponsored city-wide cultural resources inventory. This inventory was directed by Laurie Robin Hammel, City Historic Preservation Officer with the Evansville Department of Metropolitan Development (DMD). A windshield survey was performed at this time by Nancy J. Long, Historic Preservation Specialist with DMD and later Architectural Historian with the Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archeology. The entire area (roughly corresponding to Census Tract 18) was surveyed for any resource meeting the basic 50-year criterion for eligibility to the National Register. In 1978-79, this windshield survey was refined by further winnowing and additional research. The total number of structures surveyed by Ms. Long--almost 300--was reduced to under 200 by the application of the complete eligibility criteria. This process was directed by Douglas L. Stern, an architectural historian and City Historic Preservation Officer with DMD, and assisted by Ms. Long. Additional research was performed and the number of potentially eligible sites and structures was again refined in 1980. In this year, primary research was done by Joan Marchand and Patricia Sides, Historic Preservation Specialists with DMD, as part of a project to write a guidebook to significant historic sites in Downtown Evansville to be published by local and state preservation and tourism organizations. The final selection for the nomination under consideration was prepared by Mr. Stern with the assistance of Ms. Marchand. The resources were selected for their merit as individual National Register sites and not especially for their contextual value.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) ethnicity

Specific dates 1817 - 1943 **Builder/Architect** various

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

With relative completeness, the historic resources of Downtown Evansville depict the entire history of the city from its earliest settlement to the contemporary era. The passage of the Downtown from crude river settlement to civic locale fairly represents the phenomenon of urbanism common to 19th-century America. The various actors involved in Evansville's physical and cultural character--trade, immigration, industry and natural resources--are all sharply illustrated by the resources extant in the Downtown today.

The founding of Evansville and its first growth was inexorably linked to the trans-montane migration of the post-Revolutionary War era. The region of Southwestern Indiana in the immediate vicinity of Evansville was sparsely settled before 1800. A vigorous pre-historic conurbation may have existed in the 15th Century or earlier, according to recent archaeological evidence, but there seemed to be little pre- and post-European interface in the Evansville area. The Scots-Irish pioneers who settled the site which became Downtown Evansville arrived in about 1814, and quickly joined other western communities in acquiring the trappings of civilization. The 1814 Plan of Evansville--replatted in 1817--called for easily developed blocks laid out on a regularized grid system of commodious streets oriented to the widely bending Ohio River.

The village of Evansville languished for several decades following its establishment. In spite of growing river trade--spurred by the arrival of the steamboat on Ohio waters in 1811--Evansville remained a very small village until close to mid-century. The construction and completion of the Wabash-Erie Canal in 1853 with Evansville as its southern terminus gave the local economy a boost and provided the town's first major link with lands to the north. Although the canal never lived up to anyone's expectations, railroads connecting Evansville with cities to the north soon followed. Traffic on the Ohio River continued to flourish, and inroads were made into the Green and Wabash river systems to the south and north.

Coincidental with the completion of the first major trade network was the arrival of the city's first major wave of immigration. These German Forty-Eighters formed an industrious cohort which left its mark on Evansville in the form of several institutions and buildings which survive today. In ensuing waves came black immigrants after the end of the Civil War and a second cohort of Germans in the late 1880s.

Aside from an enviable site and strategic situation with respect to other cities, Evansville boasted plentiful natural resources and an aggressive industrial element which exploited them. The Evansville region was rich in various minerals--particular coal--and records of an industry designed to extract and process them go back far into the city's history. In addition, hardwood timber resources were plentiful closeby Evansville in the period of its industrial expansion, and several extant historic resources can be traced to some aspect of this industry.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

By far, the major period of the city's development, and the one most evident today by the resources present in the Downtown Multiple Resources Area, followed the turn of the century. The architectural history of Evansville was the history of rebuilding, with several successive episodes of construction erasing what came before. The number of resources which date from the time of the city's greatest period of growth--a time marked by rapid rises in population and commerce--skew one's impression of the Downtown. It was after 1900 that Evansville's economy and urban demands remade the face of the Downtown, leaving a handful of pre-1900 survivors in the midst of a vast amount of new construction. Nearly 61% of the resources in the Downtown date from the period of 1900 to 1929.

The areas of significance present in the Downtown Multiple Resources Area follow with examples from the list of resources cited:

Architecture

Evansville's Downtown began to awaken architecturally in the late-1840s. Cast iron front buildings were constructed, and the city's first architect started a practice. Before this time, vernacular building prevailed, with a few crude wooden or brick structures. The prime example of this period is the Willard Carpenter House (60), a chaste Greek Revival building completed in 1849.

The post-Civil War era saw the arrival of several major public buildings meant to aggrandize their sponsors and announce the arrival of Evansville as master of its region. The older of the two government buildings surviving from this period is the Old U. S. Post Office, Courthouse and Custom House (6) of 1874-79. Conceived in the electric atmosphere of post-war national growth and spending, the Old Post Office was a symbol of the federal government's omniscient presence and the hegemony of Evansville in matters of trade and commerce (this in spite of being formally declared a Port of Entry twenty years earlier in 1856). Its designer was the Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department at the time, William Appleton Potter. Potter was cutting a wide swath architecturally, looking to put distance between himself and his predecessor, Alfred Bult Mullet. The men's personal differences carried over into stylistic preferences, and the Potter federal building--unlike Mullett's popular stock in trade--was executed in the daring Ruskinian Gothic.

The second of the government buildings created in Evansville's post-war climate of growth was the Vanderburgh County Courthouse (66) of 1888-90.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

The third of the county's government buildings, the Old Courthouse was the culmination of at least a decade's planning and discussion. The ebullient edifice was designed by Louisville's Henry Wolters, a German native whose specialty clearly was grand public architectural gestures. The courthouse and nearby jail (34) form a significant ensemble, and the courthouse alone has been termed by Henry-Russell Hitchcock to be one of "the greatest urban piles" of 19th-century America.

Local architects also left their mark throughout the course of the Downtown's development. Probably the most prominent--or at least the most active--was the firm of Clifford Shopbell and Company. The firm's Downtown public buildings include the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Coliseum (65) of 1916-17, YMCA (45) of 1913 and Walnut Street School (117) of 1913. These show a clear understanding of program and ceremonial demands. Shopbell & Company also touched upon the Prairie School, leaving the Downtown with one creditable Sullivanesque essay, the Fellwock Auto Company Building (35) of 1922, along with one or two Chicago School buildings.

Out-of-town architects seemed to have been preferred for larger projects. Citizens National Bank looked to Lee Stoddart of New York for their skyscraper (87) of 1916. The prominent Indianapolis firm of McGuire and Shook was responsible for the design of another major tall building, the Hulman Building (31) of 1929. Ziegler Dietz of St. Louis designed the McCurdy Hotel (1) of 1916-17, and J. E. O. Pridmore of Chicago designed the Hotel Sonntag (98) of 1921.

The Downtown Multiple Resources Area possesses a number of fine Art Deco buildings. Aside from the previously mentioned Hulman Building, with its glittering lobby and soaring exterior, the list can include the Greyhound Depot (14) of 1938-39. This blue porcelain enamel gem was the work of Louisville architect William Arrasmith, a designer who developed bus station design into a specialty in the 1930s and 1940s and gained a national reputation. A third Art Deco specimen, the Central Library (41), was designed by Walker and Weeks of Cleveland in 1931.

Only two clearcut examples of Richardsonian Romanesque survive today in the Downtown. The robust and lithic L & N Passenger Depot (71) of 1902 was the product of an in-house designer, Richard Montfort. Its partner is the Ridgway Building (84), a richly detailed Main Street building whose facade was remodeled in the Richardsonian manner in 1895.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 4

Because of the turn of the century boom and its effect on building activities, the Downtown can claim a number of fine buildings designed in the Beaux Arts and other examples of 20th-century traditionalism. Shopbell & Company were responsible for the Indiana Bank Building (96) of 1903 (enlarged 1914), Memorial Coliseum, YMCA, Furniture Building (33) of 1908 and Masonic Temple (63) of 1912. The Citizens Bank Building has already been mentioned. The post-1900 era also saw the erection of several buildings in eclectic modes: the Colonial Revival Lockyear College Building (46) of 1911 by local architect F. Manson Gilbert, the Spanish Mission Revival Greek-Shears Mortuary (116) of 1930 by local architect Fritz Anderson, and the Georgian Revival Montgomery Ward Building (93) of 1933.

Commerce

After the Civil War, the rise of the Evansville economy destined its Downtown to become a center for commerce and trade. This commercial transformation was furthered by the post-1900 boom and the reconstruction of major portions of the Multiple Resources Area by the city's coterie of aggressive industrialists and merchants. Only a few Civil War-era commercial structures have survived the rebuildings of the past century. An example is 611-13 Main Street (100), a building which housed a tobacco store and a drug store for a period in its early history.

Although the building activity immediately following the war was largely commercial, it was located along the bustling riverfront, an area laid waste during the 1960s. Only a handful of the commercial legacy of the 1870s and 1880s remains. An example is the German Bank (83) of the early 1880s.

Closer to the turn of the century, the survival rate improved for commercial buildings. A number of modest commercial structures saw their beginnings in this year. These include: H. G. Newman Building (28), a wholesale grocery and farmers' supply built in about 1900; the Siegel Buildings (21 and 78), built in about 1903 to house a haberdashery; and the Gottman Building (101), a commercial concern built in 1911 according to the designs of local architect Harry Boyle. Larger commercial efforts from this period include: William Hughes Department Store (92), designed and built in 1911 according to the plans of Manson Gilbert; the Parsons & Scoville Warehouse (103), a wholesale grocery which opened in 1908; the

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 5

Ridgway Building (84) of about 1895; and the McCurdy-Sears Building (32) of 1920, designed by W. R. Russ of Indianapolis and often noted as Sears' first retail outlet ever. It was also in this era that two major bank buildings had their genesis: The Citizens National Bank (87) of 1916 and the National City Bank (82) of 1913, the latter erected according to the designs of Chicago's Jenney and Mundie. The post-1900 office building phenomenon is well represented by the Furniture Building (33), a product of Shopbell & Company dating from 1908.

The last chapter of commercial architecture in the Downtown was cut short by the Great Depression. A major hotel/theater complex, the Hotel Sonntag (98) was built in 1921. A few smaller retail stores were erected in the Twenties: New Bitterman Building (80) of 1923 is an example. The only major Depression-era retail building in the Downtown is the Old Montgomery Ward Building (93) of 1933.

Community Planning

The planners of original Evansville were conscious of the need for open spaces. Aside from the demand for sites for future buildings, planned open space would allow for market activities and passive recreation. Market streets were platted in two of the early-19th century enlargements to the 1817 plan. These streets--SE 4th Street between Locust and Chestnut streets and Market Street between Ingle and Bond--depart from the typical 60-foot street right-of-way width in the Downtown (Main Street was platted as 76 feet wide). The two market streets were wider to allow for stalls to be set up in mid-street and to allow wagons to maneuver. The two small parks in the district (30 and 55) were platted in 1837 and may have been regarded as possible market sites, something that apparently never materialized.

Education

Evansville's Downtown was the community's seat of education at every level. Until demolished in the 1960s, NW 7th Street between Vine and Court was the site of the city's first high school. Evansville College occupied several Downtown buildings before it moved to its present site in 1922. Very early school buildings do not survive. However, a number of turn-of-the-century educational institutions are extant today in the downtown. H. M. Lockyear's Business College (46) was erected according to the plans of F. Manson Gilbert and opened for classes in the summer of 1911.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 6

A public grade school, the Walnut Street School (117), was built in 1913 after plans by Shopbell & Company.

Exploration/Settlement

The downtown has prima facie significance simply by virtue of its status as the locus of the founding and the 1817 plan which it still occupies. The phenomenon of western river settlement at the close of the 18th Century and the beginning of the 19th Century is clearly expressed in the establishment of the city.

Industry

indigenous The natural resources closeby in the Evansville region gave rise to a number of indigenous industries, many of which have left evidence of their Downtown location. The hardwood lumber industry boomed in Evansville in the last quarter of the 19th Century, and a half-dozen or so furniture factories were built along with countless lumberyards and common mills. Of the former type, the Old Puster Furniture Factory (54) of 1887 is a major example located Downtown. Allied to the hardwood industry was the organization of a manufacturers' association in about 1900. The construction of the Furniture Exchange Building (33) in 1908 was intended to allow for office and display space for companies in the furniture field.

Another industry which did well in Evansville for reasons not exclusive of abundant natural resources was the brewing industry. Only one brewery building survives today Downtown, however. The Evansville Brewing Company Building (36) was constructed in 1891-93.

Evansville's fabled reputation as a manufacturer of architectural metalwork is owed to the existence of another Downtown industry whose building survives today. The George Mesker name could be found on buildings nearly everywhere in North America during the 19th Century, and his factory stands today Downtown at First and Ingle streets (73).

Politics/Government

Downtown Evansville is the locus for several important political phenomena and events. The courthouse of the county seat--an achievement which was crucial in the scheme of western settlement--has always been Downtown. The third Vanderburgh County Courthouse survives today as a testimony to the perseverance of the community's founders but also as a celebration of the wealth and civic pride characteristic of Evansville in the post-Civil

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 7

War era.

The national government also saw fit to confer its highest recognition on Evansville with the construction of the Old Post Office in 1874-79. The post office, courthouse and custom house was the most complete federal facility possible at the time, an improvement Evansville was suited for by virtue of its position in regional trade, population and other affairs.

The Progressive Era also visited the Downtown in the form of at least one public building project. The mayor from 1912 to 1923 was Benjamin Bosse, a vigorous self-made man who pushed forward a number of civic projects with equal parts of altruism and common business sense. The Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Coliseum (65) of 1916-17 serves as an outstanding example of this Progressive matrix: a combination memorial to fallen servicemen and a convention center for Evansville's business community.

Social/Humanitarian

Significance accrued to the Downtown district for its role in bettering human conditions in Evansville. Although the establishment locally of a Young Men's Christian Association predates the facility at Fifth and Vine streets (45) by a generation, the Old YMCA marked an important plateau in the city's development with its completion in 1913. Built according to the designs of architect Shopbell & Company, the Old YMCA served young men for over sixty years within its recreational, residential and religious mission. Despite being somewhat later, the YWCA (113) of 1924 can make much the same claim.

Concerning the aspect of housing improvement, the Downtown can boast several extant resources which exhibit early-20th century efforts in this regard. The tenement reform movement which swept the country after the turn of the century saw expression in the construction of model flats in 1910-11 at Rose Terrace (57) and Albion Apartments (68). Both buildings were erected according to the designs of Shopbell & Company.

The portion of the district bordering the Riverside Historic District (National Register, 1978) in the vicinity of First and Walnut was long associated with health care pursuits. The 1864 Archer House (115) and the 1901 Busse House (3) were both connected with prominent physicians

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 8

for many years. Nearby are two other resources allied to the field of health care, the latter perhaps somewhat remotely: Gilbert Sanitarium (114) of 1911 and the Old Greek-Shears Mortuary (116) of 1930.

Transportation

The establishment and constant nurturing and expansion of Evansville's transportation systems was an indispensable factor in promoting the growth of the community. The role of rail and river traffic has already been discussed elsewhere in this nomination, and buildings such as the Old L & N Railroad Passenger Depot (71) speak eloquently of the burgeoning economy and trade of the city around the turn of the century. All other Downtown rail facilities have vanished over the years.

Another significant event in the elaboration of the city's and region's transportation network was the use of buses in the early 20th Century. No better reflection of this chapter in the development of transportation and its technology can be found than Downtown Evansville's Greyhound Bus Terminal of 1938-39.

In addition to longer-range rail and highway systems, intra-urban modes were important features of the late-19th and early-20th century cityscape. A handful of resources remain which help to interpret the operation or support of street railway or horse-driven transportation. Livery stables can be found in two Downtown locations: Kronenberger and Barnett's 1874 Stable (42) at 5th and Locust streets and Heimann and Heimann's 1889 Stable (38) at 416 NW 4th Street. Nearby the Heimann concern could be found a convenient blacksmith: Christian Wunderlich's blacksmith shop (109) at 431 Market Street.

Finally, the emergence of the private automobile in the early 20th Century is a phenomenon which can be told through the historic resources of Downtown Evansville. Surviving automobile dealerships number four: Wabash Valley Motors (58) of 1919-20; Fellwock Automobile Company (35) of 1922; Huber Motor Sales (29) of 1916; and the Lincoln Motor Company Building (107) of about 1928.

Ethnicity

Like many other Midwestern industrial river cities of the 19th Century, Evansville depended upon immigration to spell long-term growth and

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 9

development. Of all the diverse ethnic groups present in 19th-century Evansville, blacks and Germans stand out. The German immigration occurred in two waves--one at mid-century and the other in the late 1880s. Blacks formed a significant Evansville presence practically overnight, during the summer of 1865. Extant resources left by blacks Downtown are unfortunately sparse: the Liberty Baptist Church (National Register, 1979) is a black church bordering the Downtown and the principal black enclave, historically called Baptistown.

Sites and structures connected to German history, however, are relatively common. Most of the historic Downtown churches can trace their genesis to German 19th-century immigration: for example, St. Mary's (62), Salem (70) or Zion (49). The list of German surnames represented by Downtown sites is too long to recount here, but a cursory examination of the inventory forms will reveal that Germans were involved in nearly every aspect of the city's affairs.

There are not any recorded archaeological resources in the district, and not any resources are thought to be present. Subsurface testing is not practical and was not a part of the inventory process. Furthermore, it is unlikely that such testing would yield results, owing to the disturbances caused by successive building episodes and major grading and filling programs.

The Downtown has been the scene of several major preservation projects in the last few years. The rescue and preservation of the two large public buildings found in the district--the Old U. S. Post Office and the Old Vanderburgh County Courthouse--have gained national attention. The leadership of city government has also been noted for its aggressive and ambitious approach to Downtown preservation, and has been recognized with the Public Service Award of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. A recent event linked to the promotion of Downtown preservation has been the publication of a guidebook to selected historic sites in the district. (This guidebook and a report detailing the preservation projects mentioned above have been enclosed.)

No districts are included in the nomination. It is arguable that sufficient architectural or environmental cohesiveness exists among numerous small groups of sites in various parts of the Multiple Resources Area, for instance, the "Courthouse Square District" or the "SE Fourth Street Commercial District."

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 10

Also, these scattered "districts" do not possess historical continuity or cohesion. Therefore, it was decided to pursue a district designation which embodied the overarching and transcendental importance of the "Downtown" theme.

A relative few of the Downtown district's resources fall into the category of sites normally exempted from listing on the Register. The individual inventory forms pertaining to these resources address the justification for inclusion. Briefly, buildings less than 50 years old, such as the Greyhound Bus Terminal of 1938-39, have achieved some significance and merit inclusion because of their architectural excellence. Religious buildings, such as St. Mary's, Salem or Zion churches, merit inclusion because of their strong connection with the significant theme of German ethnicity, an area of significance which would not be fully interpreted without these ecclesiastical buildings. With rare exceptions, buildings which had lost even a small degree of integrity were not selected for inclusion in the Multiple Resources Area. Those few buildings which have been altered but have nevertheless been included were treated in this manner by reason of their singular reflection of an important theme or other rare expression of significance; for example, the German Bank (83).

The results of the Evansville Cultural Resources Inventory are being integrated into the local and state planning processes. The proposed revision of the 1968 comprehensive plan for the Downtown will feature problem analysis and proposals supporting the reuse of worthy historic sites and structures.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED FEB 23 1984
DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 11

The following discussion is submitted in amendment to the National Register nomination form for the Downtown Evansville Multiple Resources Area. The information to follow is supplementary to the statement establishing a context for the automobile in the city's commerce and industry (see 8.4-5) and its transportation history (8.8). The statement relates to a number of tabled MRA nominations: See numbers 29, 35, 58, 107, 64, 109, 10, and 102.

While certainly not a Detroit in terms of its automobile industry, Evansville did have a share of very early contributions to the national scene in the form of inventors and manufacturers. More important, however, was the speed and vigor with which the car and truck entered into the Evansville economy, making the auto industry a significant force in the commerce and industry of the city in the early 20th Century and illustrating the city's change from a horse-driven pedestrian society to one dependent on the automobile.

There are three names which stand out in recounting Evansville's place in the national scene. The first is William McCurdy. McCurdy arrived in Evansville from Cincinnati in 1902 and quickly assumed leadership of the local business community. His various enterprises included the Hercules Buggy Works, which at the turn of the century was the manufacturer of a line of buggies for Sears, Roebuck, and Company. That relationship with Sears continued into the auto age, as McCurdy's Hercules works manufactured a component for the short-lived Sears car.

The second name is Willis M. Copeland. Copeland was an inventor and manufacturer whose knack for mechanical tinkering was typical of those associated with the birth and early development of the power-driven vehicle. Copeland began as a smalltime buggy manufacturer. His Single Center Spring Company was formed in about 1887. While still engaged in the carriage business, however, Copeland entered into a ten year period during which he dabbled in the development and manufacture of power-driven carriages. Newspapers declared in September 1897 that Copeland had invented a "Horseless Vehicle," a gas-powered conveyance expected to cost less than \$1000. In 1898, the Evansville City Directory listed Copeland as a purveyor of horseless carriages. Copeland recruited Schuyler Zent from Ohio in 1902 and produced the Zentmobile for a couple of years. Copeland later associated himself with several other investors and inventors through the beginning of the 1910's, manufacturing and distributing various long-forgotten cars with national marques: for instance, the Simplicity, the Traveler, the Windsor, and the Worth.

Evansville's true claim to fame as an auto center is owed to the third name, the Graham Brothers. Natives of nearby Washington, Indiana, the Grahams--Bob, Ray, and Joe--entered the business world as glass bottle manufacturers in association with their father. The jump to their truck and car manufacturing was in many ways a carry over of their natural mechanical and organizational bent. In 1919, the Grahams began a truck manufacturing company in Evansville which evolved into one of the country's most potent industrial forces. The Grahams later became associated with Dodge Brothers and Walter Chrysler, later independently producing the fabled Graham-Paige touring car. Not only did the

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

FEB 23 1984

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE 12

Graham brothers make their mark on the national scene, but the business which they started in Evansville grew into the city's largest employer at one time and became a major element in the country's war effort during the Second World War (for tank reconditioning, ordnance, and the like) before closing their doors forever in the late 1950's.

The three personages associated with putting Evansville in the national auto scene--McCurdy, Copeland, and Graham--represent only a part of the total meaning which the car had in the city's history of commerce and transportation. The vast impact which the use of the auto has had on American cities like Evansville should be obvious enough to obviate treatment here. Nevertheless, the evolution of the car from a cottage industry at the end of the 19th Century, adapting practices developed for carriages and the like, to a force in the 1930's which ran through the deepest cultural currents, affecting nearly every aspect of urban life, is clearly reflected every step of the way by resources in the Downtown MRA.

The genesis of the automobile in Evansville as elsewhere was in the hands of a few entrepreneurs who saw applications in allied fields to the technology of power-driven vehicles. Copeland was one example. Another was E. K. Ashby, a bicycle store proprietor who saw the horseless carriage as a complement to his stock in trade. In 1898, Ashby began marketing a Thomas touring car, named for E. R. Thomas of Buffalo, New York, an Evansville native who also happened to be the uncle of Ashby's wife. The MRA contains another transitional example depicting the effect that the introduction of the car had on the local economy. A blacksmith by the name of Christian Wunderlich opened a shop in 1911 at Market and Bond Streets. ^(#109) The German Wunderlich was located proximate to a number of other businesses engaged in the care and storage of horses and carriages (see, for example, #38, #39, and #40 in the MRA). By 1911, however, Evansville's City Directory listed sixteen auto-related businesses, and only seven years after opening his blacksmith shop, Wunderlich entered the mainstream as "Exclusive Distributor for U. S. Motor Trucks."

The car sales nationally of 1900, 4,192, reached 181,000 in 1910. Beginning in the 1920's, the car was not any longer a curiosity handled by an assortment of ex-blacksmiths, furniture makers, or bicycle distributors. The national government passed the Federal Aid Road Act in 1916, appropriating \$75 million to the states for public roads, and the Federal Highway Act of 1921 implemented the well-known system of interstate roads. By this time, nearly every state in the Union was licensing cars and trucks. Evansville's progressive mayor of the early 20th Century, Benjamin Bosse, pushed through the construction of a segment (Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky) of a road project known as the Dixie Bee Line meant to link Chicago with points south, especially Florida. The Evansville Directory contained roughly sixty listings for the auto by 1922, including three MRA resources erected expressly for the car: Fellwock Auto Company, 1908 (expanded 1923), #64 (and 35); Huber Motors Sales, 1917, #29; and Wabash Valley Motors Company, 1919, #58.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

FEB 23 1980

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 13

The next generation of auto-related resources in the Downtown MRA provided a portend of the car's coming indispensability and its powerful image making. Hoover's promise of a car in every garage was coming close to being the truth by the end of the Twenties. Evansville, for example, was experiencing its first troubles with auto congestion in the Downtown. Partly in answer to the physical problems occasioned by greater auto use, the City Plan Commission conducted three studies in the mid and late 1920's to address street systems, transportation, and the city's appearance. The building boom underway in the Downtown (see 7.3; 7.6; and 8.2) in the 1910's and 1920's was making land too valuable for surface parking, and the studies all contained recommendations for public works or private sector initiatives designed to alleviate parking problems. It took until 1930, but the construction of the Auto Hotel Building (#10) hit the mark. Not only did the 400 car garage relieve auto congestion, but it also accommodated new office space, retail stores, and a bowling alley/billiard parlor. Talk of its convenience to existing hotels, businesses, and other Downtown concerns was the motor age equivalent of establishment of the Kronenberger & Barnett's 1874 livery stable (#42) within easy range of the Main Street business houses. And if the car could assume its own machine aesthetic, buildings constructed to house it or serve its users could assume carlike imagery: for instance, the Audubon Tire Company of 1929-30 (#102) or the Greyhound Bus Terminal of 1938-39, #14.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED
UTM NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approximately 300

Quadrangle name Evansville IN-KY

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	6
---	---

4	4	8	6	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	2	0	3	3	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

B

1	6
---	---

4	5	0	7	5	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	2	0	3	2	9	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

C

1	6
---	---

4	5	0	7	3	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	2	0	2	0	7	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

D

1	6
---	---

4	4	8	6	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	2	0	2	1	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

E

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Downtown Evansville Multiple Resources Area is roughly bounded by State Road 66, the Ohio River, Heidelberg Avenue, Chestnut Street and Oak Street.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Douglas L. Stern, City Historic Preservation Officer/Joan Marchand, Historic Preservation Specialist

organization Dept. of Metropolitan Development

date 19 October 1981

street & number 216 Washington Avenue

telephone 812/426-5487

city or town Evansville

state Indiana

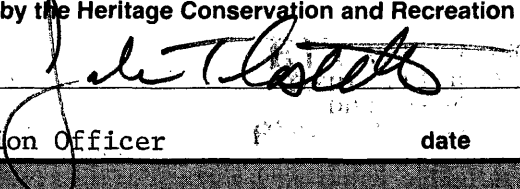
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer

date 4-22-82

For HCRS use only

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


Keeper of the National Register

date

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

PUBLIC RECORDS

Articles of Association, 1913-1969
Assessment Records, 1860-1903
Birth and Death Index, 1882+
Building Permit Index, 1887-1897 and 1912
Deeds and Deed Indexes, 1816-1942
Lease Records, 1859+
Miscellaneous Records of the Vanderburgh County Recorder's Office, 1858+
Mortgage Records, 1856+
Plat Maps

PRIMARY SOURCES

Abstracts of Deeds
Architectural Records of H. Gilbert Karges and Clifford Shopbell and Company
Atlas of 1880
Atlas of 1899
City Directories, 1858+
Evansville Courier, 1875+
Evansville Journal, 1840-1936

ILLUSTRATED SOURCES

Album of Evansville, Indiana, c. 1890
Art Souvenir of Representative Men, Public Buildings, Private Residences and Business Houses, 1894
Art Work of Evansville, Indiana, 1901
The Book of Evansville--Illustrated, c. 1895
Central Library Picture File

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

ILLUSTRATED SOURCES (continued)

Evansville Illustrated, 1889

Panoramic View of Evansville, 1856

Panoramic View of Evansville and Lamasco, 1888

GENERAL HISTORIES

Elliott, Joseph P. A History of Evansville and Vanderburgh County, Indiana.
Evansville: Keller Printing Company, 1897.

Esarey, Logan. History of Indiana from Its Exploration to 1922. 3 vols.
Dayton, Ohio: Dayton Historical Publishing Co., 1922-23. Vol. 3: An Account
of Vanderburgh County from Its Organization, edited by John E. Igleheart.

Gilbert, Frank M. History of the City of Evansville and Vanderburgh County,
Indiana. 2 vols. Chicago: Pioneer Publishing Co., 1910.

History of Vanderburgh County, Indiana...Madison, Wisconsin: Brant & Fuller, 1889.

Reece, Clyde Lee. Who's Who -- In Evansville. Evansville: The author, c. 1932.

Remy, Richard. Who's Who & Why. Evansville: the author, c. 1907.

Robert, Charles E. Evansville: Her Commerce and Manufactures. Evansville:
Courier Company, 1874.

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

Additional information regarding Boundary Description:

The National Register nomination forms for the Downtown Evansville (Indiana) Multiple Resources nomination show two means for designating boundaries for nominated properties: a tax code number and, in some cases, a legal description also.

- . The Tax Code Numbering system forms the basis for collecting taxes in Vanderburgh County. Tax numbers comprise three sets of digits and refer to a unique, legally definable Vanderburgh County property.
- . Where ownership of a property includes both a building and an adjacent unimproved piece of land, or an improved one with a non-nominated property, a legal description of the land on which the nominated building is situated is given in addition to the tax code number.

O.P. = Original Plan