

**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

For HCRS use only

received 12/10/79

date entered

**1. Name**

historic Indianapolis Wholesale District

and/or common Indianapolis Wholesale District

**2. Location** Roughly bounded by Capital Ave., Maryland,  
Delaware and South Sts.

street & number Bounded roughly by Maryland and Pearl Streets (north);  
(see continuation sheet)  N/A not for publication

city, town Indianapolis  N/A vicinity of congressional district Eleventh (Tenth District  
after May 1982)

state Indiana code 018 county Marion code 097

**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 type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>		<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered (Union Station only)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Various private owners and the City of Indianapolis (see continuation sheet)

street & number

city, town  N/A vicinity of state

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Center Township Assessor's Office (Plat Room)

street & number Room 1321, City-County Building

city, town Indianapolis state Indiana

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

1979 Determination of Eligibility Request (see continuation sheet)  
title for Impact Area Associated with Union has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
district  
Station Redevelopment Project

date December 31, 1979  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records National Park Service

city, town Washington, state D.C.

## 7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>N/A</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Indianapolis Wholesale District is one of the most densely developed sections of the city. There is no remaining evidence of the original natural features of the land nor are there any prominent geographical elements or topographical variations. The gridiron street plan imparted by the 1821 Ralston Plan for the new town of Indianapolis has survived in large measure to the present day in this section of the city.

The district contains the single largest concentration of 19th-century commercial buildings in Indianapolis, with brick buildings three-to-four stories in height predominating. The majority of these buildings reflect the original platting of the land as done in 1821. The square blocks formed by the intersection of the major streets were quadrisected by narrow alleys in a cross pattern. The quadrants were then subdivided into long lots with narrow street frontages.

Along South Meridian Street, intended to be a major street, lots were divided by east/west parallel lines resulting in a uniform row of parcels that extended from the north/south alleys to the street. This land was first developed residentially. With the rapid transition to commercial development which began in the early 1860's, the new wholesale buildings took full advantage of the lots. In many cases, the building footprint corresponded to the lot lines, resulting in structures that were at least three times as long as their narrow facades, and often four to five times as long following later subdivision of the lots. This full use of the lot and the sharing of the party walls between structures contributed to the continuous facade lines that existed along the streets in the 19th century. As commercial buildings grew in size and took on more architectural refinement, the most prominent structures were sited at the corners to afford two principal facades rather than one.

The district's urban density has been eroded in the last 30 to 40 years through demolition of structures. Numerous parking lots now exist where structures formerly stood; disrupting the former pattern of continuous facade lines. Many wholesale buildings are now only used for warehousing and storage or support marginal uses. Of the 64 buildings within the boundaries of the district, 54 can be considered as contributing to the overall historic and architectural character of the area. (Note: Item 4, Owner of Property, includes complete identification of those buildings considered to be contributing and those listed as intrusions. This information is keyed to the map, which graphically indicates those parcels now used as parking lots.)

A review of historical photographs of the wholesale district in its heyday (late 1800's, early 1900's) reveals that the look and character of the area at that time was very different than it is today. Gone is the busy activity of prosperous trade which crowded the sidewalks with goods in the process of being transported or warehoused. The lively painted advertisements of the 19th century, which vied with one another for attention, are also gone. These signs were often an integral part of the design of the facades, since the wholesale merchant's need to identify his business as well as to advertise was so important. The popular arcading of Italianate facades was once far more prevalent than it is today and extended continuously along blocks. The energetic lines of this arcading can be interpreted as an expression of the vitality of the wholesale district.

(see Continuation Sheet)

## **8. Significance**

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

**Specific dates** 1863-c. 1930

**Builder/Architect**

Various major Indianapolis architectural firms, noted in Statement of Significance

### **Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The Indianapolis Wholesale District possesses a high degree of historical and architectural significance for the city of Indianapolis and central Indiana. The pre-World War II history of transportation in the area is represented in the district by one of its largest surviving artifacts — the immense Union Railway Station, Concourse, and Train Shed. Together with the surviving freight depots of the downtown area, the Station symbolizes the railroad's contribution in developing Indianapolis into an important Midwestern metropolis. Within the Wholesale District, the Station and the railroad gave birth to and sustained the large and vigorous Indianapolis wholesale trade, most of the city's principal hotels, and several small industrial enterprises.

The district draws its name from the wholesale businesses that lined its streets at the turn of the century. Indianapolis became an important regional center of wholesale activity by 1900; its balance of agricultural and industrial production helped to create a varied array of wholesale firms. Today a majority of the surviving buildings in the district date their construction to the pre-World War I era, when large numbers of successful wholesale merchants operated there.

With respect to its architecture, the Wholesale District is of major significance to Indianapolis because it contains the city's largest remaining collection of 19th-century and turn-of-the-century commercial buildings. For several 19th-century Indianapolis architects, it is probable that their only extant commercial designs are found in the Wholesale District. The Wholesale District also possesses architectural significance because it illustrates the evolution locally of wholesale house and warehouse design from the 1860's to the 1920's.

Following are statements explaining in detail each of the district's six categories of significance. Note that "commerce" has been broken into four specific types of commercial activity.

**EDITORIAL NOTE:** Every building cited in the Statement of Significance is identified on the attached sketch map by a number. Most buildings cited also are shown in individual building photographs, each of which is numbered using the same numbering sequence found in the map. Map/photograph numbers appear in the left margin of the text beside the first mention of each building. For construction data regarding most buildings (date of construction, architect, etc.), see the Description Section of the nomination.

### **A. TRANSPORTATION AND ENGINEERING**

The single most important building and structure in the Wholesale District is undoubtedly the Indianapolis Union Railway Station, Concourse, and Train Shed (see photographs 1a, 1b, 23a, 23b, and 23c). This importance has been already recognized by the United States Interior Department in three ways. First, Union Station and its Concourse and Train Shed have been recorded in detail by the Historic American Buildings

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

UTM NOT VERIFIED  
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

See Continuation Sheet

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approximately 30 acres

Quadrangle name Indianapolis West, Indiana

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	1 6	5 7 2 2 5 0	4 4 0 2 0 5 0
Zone	Easting	Northing	
C	1 6	5 7 2 4 2 0	4 4 0 1 7 6 0
E	1 6	5 7 2 0 2 0	4 4 0 1 4 1 0
G	1 6	5 7 1 8 0 0	4 4 0 1 7 1 0

B	1 6	5 7 2 4 2 0	4 4 0 1 8 6 0
Zone	Easting	Northing	
D	1 6	5 7 2 1 0 0	4 4 0 1 4 1 0
F	1 6	5 7 1 8 0 0	4 4 0 1 4 7 0
H			

**Verbal boundary description and justification** Beginning at the northwest corner of Morrison's Block (#35 on map), continuing east along north wall of Morrison's Block to alley east of Meridian Street, thence north along the alley to Pearl Street (another alley), then east on Pearl Street to Pennsylvania Street, thence south along the west side of (see continuation sheet)

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
-------	-----	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

James A. Glass, historian, and Mary Ellen Gadski, architectural historian,  
name/title Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission

sponsoring Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana and  
organization's Indianapolis Historic Preservation date January 18, 1982

Commission

street & number Room 1821, City-County Building telephone 317/236-4406

city or town Indianapolis state Indiana 46204

## 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 5-21-82

For HCRS use only

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

date

7/14/82

Keeper of the National Register

date

7/12/82

Attest:

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service****National Register of Historic Places  
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**Continuation sheet : Location****Item number 2****Page 1**

Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Meridian Streets (east); Georgia, Louisiana, and South Streets and the retaining wall south of the Union Station freight tracks (south); and Capitol Avenue, Illinois Street, and Meridian Street (west).

Street numbers and streets included in the district are as follows:

Capitol Avenue, 231-35 South  
Delaware Street, 102-130 South  
Georgia Street, 30 East  
Georgia Street, 43-141 West  
Illinois Street, 117-300 South  
Jackson Place, 39  
Louisiana Street, 6-14 West  
Maryland Street, 29 East  
Maryland Street, 13-25 West  
Meridian Street, 47-372 South  
Pennsylvania Street, 36-230 South  
South Street, 18-22 West

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Continuation sheet Owner of Property

Item number 4

Page 1

Owner

AMAX COAL COMPANY  
105 South Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

LOU ELLA ARFORD & STANLEY A. WHITE  
c/o Casa Bonita  
1620 East Chapman Street  
Fullerton, CA 92631

ASH REALTY COMPANY  
One Merchants Plaza  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

B & P REALTY CORPORATION  
111 South Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

BRAND PRINTING AND PHOTO LITHO COMPANY, INC.  
120 South Delaware Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

JOSEPH F. & LEONARD R. BRAND  
120 South Delaware Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

SAMUEL D. BRILL  
300 Maritime Avenue  
White Plains, NY 10601

RAYMOND T. BROCKER  
6340 Woburn Drive  
Indianapolis, IN 46250

JAMES E. BROWNING, RICHARD POLLAK, DANIEL A. DAY  
124 South Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

BUDIG REALTY COMPANY  
210 South Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Property Address

Former Big Four Building  
(owners of building only)  
105 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #34 on map

237-39 South Meridian  
parking lot

202-28 South Illinois Street  
parking lot

107-13 South Meridian Street  
parking lots and intrusion

Former R. S. Foster and Company Building  
118-20 Delaware Street  
Contributing; #47 on map

Former Shideler Building  
128-30 South Delaware Street  
Contributing; #48 on map

31-41 East Maryland Street  
parking lots

Former Kothe, Wells and Bauer  
Company Building  
102-06 South Delaware Street  
Contributing; #46 on map

Former House of Crane Building  
124 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #14 on map

216-26 South Meridian Street  
parking lot and intrusion

CAMPBELL'S CIRCULAR ADVERTISING COMPANY, INC.  
c/o Baker and Daniels  
810 Fletcher Trust Building  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Schnull's Block  
102-08 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #10 on map

Former Levey Brothers and Company  
Building  
13-19 West Maryland Street  
Contributing; #9 on map

Former Levey Brothers and Company Annex  
21-23 West Maryland Street  
Contributing; #8 on map

Former J. F. Darmody Company Building  
25 West Maryland Street  
Contributing; #7 on map

CENTRAL INDIANA DISTRIBUTORS COMPANY  
225 South Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Former Hide, Leather and Belting  
Company Building  
225-27 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #27 on map

CENTRAL RUBBER AND SUPPLY COMPANY  
30 East Georgia Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Former John W. Murphy Building  
30 East Georgia Street  
Contributing; #39 on map

Former Holliday and Wyon Building  
134-40 South Pennsylvania Street  
Contributing; #38 on map

120-32 South Pennsylvania Street  
parking lot and intrusions

CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS  
c/o David E. Carley  
Division of Economic and Housing Development  
148 East Market Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Union Railway Station  
39 Jackson Place  
Contributing; #1 on map

CHARLETTE SAYLES CLARK & MELISSA SAYLES LUBERMANN  
c/o Merchants National Bank, trustees  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Former Geddes-Brown Shoe Company  
Building  
211-17 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #29 on map

LEON R. & NORMAN I. COHEN  
5921 North Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46208

Former Mayhew and Branham Building  
235 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #26 on map

229-30 South Meridian Street  
intrusion

31-41 East Maryland Street  
parking lots

CONSOLIDATED RAIL CORPORATION  
Room 507, 700 Walnut Street  
Cincinnati, OH 45202  
(owners of land & concourse-train shed)

and

NATIONAL RAILROAD PASSENGER CORPORATION  
(Amtrak)  
Real Estate Department  
400 North Capitol Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20001  
(holds development rights for concourse-  
train shed)

FREDERICK E. COONEY  
1075 South Pennsylvania Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

DAVIDSON ENTERPRISES, INC.  
c/o Nick Smyrnis  
2710 East 62nd Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46220

ROBERT E. DELL, GEORGE A. DELL, JOHN A. DELL  
SUSAN MOFFETT, PAUL DELL MOFFETT  
(no mailing address available)

JACK M. & FAYE ANN DORFMAN  
30 West Laverock Road  
Indianapolis, IN 46208

GEORGE GINGER  
c/o Ginger and Associates  
1321 North Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46202

SAMUEL C. GOLDBERG  
3710 North Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46208

GORDON M. GRAHAM, DORIS LYONS, BRIAN S. MCCOY,  
ERIN M. MCCOY  
133 South Pennsylvania Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

ANNA MARIE GRUNDEN  
3327 Robson Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46201

Union Station Concourse  
300 Block of South Illinois Street  
Contributing; #23 on map

Union Station Concourse  
300 Block of South Illinois Street  
Contributing; #23 on map

Former Nutz and Grosskopf Building  
107-09 South Pennsylvania Street  
Contributing; #43 on map

Rusch Building  
243-47 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #25 on map

Former Indiana Terminal Warehouse  
230 South Pennsylvania Street  
Contributing; #40 on map

Former Reinhardt Building  
133 South Illinois Street  
Contributing; #4 on map

Former Hotel Lockerbie  
117-25 South Illinois Street  
Contributing; #6 on map

Former Brunswick-Balke-Collender  
Company Building  
118 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #13 on map

Former Parrott and Taggart Building  
135-41 South Pennsylvania Street  
Contributing; #41 on map

125-31 South Pennsylvania Street  
parking lot

Former Byram, Cornelius and  
Company Building  
201 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #31 on map

Tom C. Huston  
c/o Barnes and Thornburg  
1313 Merchants Bank Building  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Former Morrison's Block  
47-49 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #35 on map

INDIANAPOLIS PAINTERS UNION  
Local No. 47  
245 South Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Rusch Building  
243-47 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #25 on map

WILLIAM & MARIE IVERSON  
c/o James Iverson  
Citizens Bank  
Jamestown, IN

125 West Georgia Street  
parking lot

237-39 South Meridian Street  
parking lot

JACKSON PLACE ASSOCIATES  
233 McCrea Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46225

124 South Delaware Street  
intrusion

JEFFERSON NATIONAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY  
1 Virginia Avenue  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Former Hotel Spink  
(now Jackson Apartments for the Elderly)  
233-35 McCrea Street  
Contributing; #18 on map

KIPP BROTHERS, INC.  
240 South Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

113-25 East Maryland Street  
intrusion

Former Fahnley and McCrea Building  
240-42 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #19 on map

MORTON B. KOOR  
122 South Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Former Union Station Hotel  
6 West Louisiana Street  
Contributing; #21 on map

JOSEPH V. & LOUIS W. KRIEG  
119 South Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Former Fahnley and McCrea Shipping  
Building  
8-14 West Louisiana Street  
Contributing; #20 on map

LANDWERLEN LEATHER COMPANY, INC.  
358 South Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46225

Former George W. Stout Building  
207-09 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #30 on map

Former Wiles, Coffin and Company  
Building  
117-19 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #33 on map

358-60 South Meridian Street  
intrusion

MERIDIAN INVESTORS COMPANY  
2425 North Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46208

230-54 South Illinois Street,  
parking lot and intrusion

NORLE INVESTMENTS &  
SAM & LILLIAN SALATKIN  
141 South Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Former Hibben, Hollweg and Company  
Building  
141-43 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #32 on map

JOHN & BETTY OBER  
101 South Pennsylvania Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

111-19 South Pennsylvania Street  
parking lot

MARY E. OBER (trustees of)  
38 North Pennsylvania Street  
Room 200  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Former C. A. Schrader Company Building  
101-05 South Pennsylvania Street  
Contributing; #44 on map

PETER PAGE & SANTA MARIE PITTMAN (1/3 interest each)  
MERCHANTS NATIONAL BANK (1/3 interest)  
135 South Illinois Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Former Louis G. Deschler Company  
Building  
135 South Illinois Street  
Contributing; #3 on map

ROBERT L. & ROSE PALLMAN  
c/o Roberts Distributors  
255 South Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Former American Express Company Building  
255-57 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #24 on map

MRS. SANTA MARIE PITTMAN  
514 East Merrill Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46203

Former Schnull and Company Building  
110 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #11 on map

R.B.M. REALTY COMPANY, INC.  
121 South Pennsylvania Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Former Knight and Jillson Building  
121 South Pennsylvania Street  
Contributing; #42 on map

RIVIERE REALTY TRUST  
1832 M Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036

Former Hotel Severin  
(now Atkinson Hotel)  
43 West Georgia Street  
Contributing; #2 on map

Former Kiefer-Stewart Company Building  
135-45 West Georgia Street  
Contributing; #53 on map

Former Salvation Army Social Center  
Building (west section only)  
131 West Georgia Street  
Contributing; #54 on map

217-20 South Capitol Avenue  
intrusion

RIVIERE REALTY TRUST (cont.)

HARRY & BEATRICE ROTH & ISADORE ROSEN  
127-29 South Illinois Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46225

SANFORD ROTHSCHILD  
122 South Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

WARREN T. RUDDELL  
500 Pine Drive  
Indianapolis, IN 46260

SAM & LILLIAN SALATKIN  
141 South Meridian Street, Suite 1  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

SALVATION ARMY  
234 East Michigan Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

ROBERT E. SCHLOSS  
29 East Maryland Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

SCOTT-CAREY REALTY, INC.  
128-32 South Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

BEN L. SELIG & ANNE SELIG MARCH MERRICK  
368 South Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46225

KEITH R. SKINNER  
1035 South Keystone Avenue  
Indianapolis, IN 46203

211-25 South Illinois Street  
intrusion and parking lot

139-53 South Illinois Street  
parking lot

Former Braden's Block  
129-31 South Illinois Street  
Contributing; #5 on map

Former A. Jones and Company Building  
122 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #13 on map

120 South Meridian Street  
parking lot

31-41 East Maryland Street  
parking lots

Former Salvation Army Social Center  
Building (east portion only)  
127 West Georgia Street  
Contributing; #54 on map

Former Citizen's Street Railway Company  
Streetcar Powerhouse and Barns  
231-35 South Capitol Avenue  
Contributing; #52 on map

127 West Mobile Street and 126 West  
Louisiana Street  
intrusion and parking lot

113-21 West Georgia Street  
parking lot

Former Holland and Ostermeyer Building  
29 East Maryland Street  
Contributing; #36 on map

128-42 South Meridian Street  
parking lots

Centennial Block  
364-68 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #49 on map

16-20 West Louisiana Street  
parking lot

SOUTH MERIDIAN ASSOCIATES  
25 Beachway Drive  
Indianapolis, IN 46224

McKee Building  
202-04 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #15 on map

CHARLES H. SPURGEON & CECELIA S. KARDEN  
Indiana National Bank, trustees  
One Indiana Square #722  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Former D. P. Erwin and Company Building  
206-14 South Meridian and 17-25 West  
Georgia Streets  
Contributing; #16 on map

STATE LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY  
141 East Washington Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Former Pearson and Wetzel Building  
219-21 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #28 on map

NORMA M. STONE, ZULEME K. MUELLER, MARJOREE  
J. MUELLER, HORACE G. MUELLER  
(owners of land only)  
5250 North Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46208

Former Big Four Building  
105 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #34 on map

TBR ENTERPRISES  
P.O. Box 80243  
Indianapolis, IN 46208

121-29 South Meridian Street  
parking lot

FREDERICK W. TAYLOR & ELEANOR TAYLOR HUME  
(no address available)

31-41 East Maryland Street  
parking lots

TEMPLE REALTY CORPORATION  
238 South Meridian Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

32-36 West Georgia Street  
parking lot

GAYLE E. TIPTON & MRS. M. M. HAY  
Tipton Equipment Company  
36 South Pennsylvania Street  
Contributing; #37 on map

Ratti Building  
234-38 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #17 on map

MAUDE E. TITUS  
736 Middle Drive, Woodruff Place  
Indianapolis, IN 46201

The Century Building  
36 South Pennsylvania Street  
Contributing; #37 on map

DAVID R. WILLIAMS, III & KATHARINE WILLIAMS  
(Wells Fargo Bank, Trustees)  
L.S. Ayres and Company  
One West Washington Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Former Meridian Hotel  
(now Station Hotel)  
244-50 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #22 on map

26-30 West Georgia Street  
parking lot

EVANS WOOLLEN  
47 South Pennsylvania Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

LOREAN M. YEAGY (MRS. HAL, Sr.)  
710 Guaranty Building  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

2 The Majestic Building  
47 South Pennsylvania Street  
Contributing; #45 on map

Former Concordia House  
(now Slippery Noodle Inn)  
372 South Meridian Street  
Contributing; #50 on map

Former Nesom and Wenz Company Building  
18-22 West South Street  
Contributing; #51 on map

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

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

Representation in  
Continuation sheet Existing Surveys

Item number 6

Page 1

The Secretary of the Interior, in December, 1979, declared eligible for the National Register as a district the area bounded roughly by the first alley north of Washington Street (north); Pennsylvania Street (east); Louisiana Street (south); and Illinois Street (west).

Buildings within the district listed individually on the National Register include the Union Railway Station (1974); Morrison's Block (1979); and the Majestic Building (1980). The 1970 Historic American Buildings Survey team in Indiana recorded both the 1888 Union Railway Station and the Union Station Concourse and Train Shed. The Historic American Engineering Record has noted the Union Station Train Shed in its inventory of significant Midwestern engineering structures.

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

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

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Continuation sheet: Description

Item number 7

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Following this paragraph are descriptions of 22 individual buildings that constitute a sampling of the building types and architectural styles represented in the district. The examples range in date from 1863 to 1930 and represent all major architectural developments. For these pivotal buildings, the descriptions address scale, plan, proportions, materials, design, style, and structure. The buildings are organized numerically by map number for the convenience of viewing the accompanying photographs while reading the description. Each heading includes the historic name (with current name in parentheses if appropriate), building address, date of construction, and name of architect and/or contractor if known (all from Indianapolis unless otherwise stated).

Union Railway Station  
39 Jackson Place  
1887-1888 Thomas Rodd of Pittsburgh, architect and engineer

Photo 1a, 1b

As an outstanding example of the Romanesque Revival, Union Station exhibits many characteristic features of the style including its predominant exterior materials: red pressed brick over an exposed foundation of rock-faced red granite. The three-story building is basically square in plan, the most notable variations being the corner pavilions and the apsidal projections of the east-west axis. The 175-foot-tall clock tower at the northwest corner, with its slate-covered, spire-like roof, skews the symmetry while being an important compositional element. In the gabled central pavilion of the main facade, the immense, barrel-vaulted space of the interior is expressed on the exterior by the stone archivolt of the three-story Roman arch. Into this arch are set the tripartite entrance doors and the exquisite rose window of stained glass. The variation in fenestration by floor is typical of the style: the first floor features windows recessed into large semicircular arches; the second, rectangular openings with transoms; and the third, couplings of round arches supported by slender colonettes. Other Romanesque details of the station include its upper-story tourelles with conical caps; the continuous hood moldings of round arches; and the use of medieval motifs of decoration such as the entwining, foliar patterns. The only major addition to the original facade occurs in the main entrance's copper-sheathed marquee, which dates to the 1930's or 1940's.

Hotel Severin (now Atkinson Hotel)  
43 West Georgia Street  
1912-13 Vonnegut and Bohn, architects  
Bedford Stone and Construction Company, contractors

Photo 2

This 12-story hotel is constructed of a reinforced concrete frame with 12-inch red brick curtain walls. Rectangular in plan, it is 11 bays wide along West Georgia Street and five bays along South Illinois. The first two floors are organized into a Renaissance scheme of monumental Roman arch windows (now blocked) set into a rusticated stone enframement. From the third to 12th floors, rectangular windows follow a uniform grid pattern and are paired in alternating bays. Broken banding of stone distinguishes the third floor; stone quoins accent the fourth through 11th floors; and the 12th floor is set off by a festooned stringcourse, carved lions' heads, and a dentilled cornice with copper cresting of acanthus leaves. The roof structure (also considered the 13th floor) was originally designed to accommodate a banquet hall, while the two-story penthouse serves mechanical equipment.

Louis G. Deschler Company Building  
135 South Illinois Street  
1906-07

Photo 3

The upper facade of this three-story commercial building bears the strong imprint of the Jacobethan Revival. The triple windows of the second and third floors are grouped in a central composition detailed in stone, its contrast against the brown brick wall further accented by quoin work. Between the two floors, an elaborately festooned panel proclaims the wares of the original business: "cigars & tobaccos." A steep, stepped gable outlined in stone rises above the parapet and in front of a tiled roof penthouse. Interesting details include the gable's carved tablet, the "brackets" at the parapet line, and the gargoyles perched at the first floor stringcourse, below which nothing appears to remain of the building's original storefront.

Braden's Block No. 2 (Now St. Elmo's Steakhouse)  
129-31 South Illinois Street  
1874-75

Photo 5

This three-story, brick building at the intersection of South Illinois and West Chesapeake Streets is noteworthy for the diagonal cut in its plan at this corner. The first floor storefronts have been repeatedly remodeled over the years, most recently with vertical siding and a shake overhang. The second and third floors exhibit pairs of rectangular windows recessed between brick piers and under brick, segmental relieving arches. The third floor is further enriched by compound segmental arches, accented by a molding; carved, foliar pier capitals; and quatrefoil details in the stone trim at the juncture of the arches. A distinctive cornice caps the building's parapet along the Illinois facade and three bays of the Chesapeake side; at the diagonal face, the letters BRADEN proudly appear between projecting corner markers.

J. F. Darmody Company Building  
25 West Maryland Street  
1904-13 Rubush and Hunter, architects  
Jones Brothers, contractors

Photo 7

The facade of this candy manufacturing building was designed when the original three-story building, constructed in 1904-05, was expanded to its current six stories sometime before 1913. Only the metal enframement, which is ornamented by intertwining patterns, survives from the original first floor storefronts. The five upper stories are enframed by a sheaf molding of terra cotta, and the three bays of paired, rectangular windows are divided by continuous pilasters. The terra cotta material of these accenting elements contrasts against the brown brick of the facade. Some minor Art Nouveau influence may be detected in the capitals of these pilasters and the curved form of the sixth floor windows. The curious configuration of the roof overhang and cornice is original.

Schnull's Block  
102-108 South Meridian Street  
1863

Photo 10

As originally constructed, this large, four-story brick commercial building contained four ground floor storefronts along Meridian Street corresponding to its four structural

divisions of interior brick bearing walls. (Enamelled metal panels now efface the first floor.) The attic story with its interesting portholes was constructed at the turn of the century subsequent to a fire. Prior to this, the building had sported a dentilled metal cornice, parapet, and a false-front "fan" inscribed with "Schnull's Block." The facade's organization by demarcating quoins, and the second floor's arcade (formed by the round-arched windows' hood molds connected by an impost course), are perhaps the building's most distinguishing features. Both were formerly highlighted by the 19th-century paint scheme of contrasting colors that accented the stone trim.

Schnull and Company Building (now La Scala Restaurant)  
110-116 South Meridian Street  
1896-97 Vonnegut and Bohn, architects

Photo 11

This five-story building features an eight-bay-wide facade of brown brick, which is divided vertically into two symmetrical design units. The first floor storefronts, which featured expansive plate-glass windows, have been lost through successive remodelings — the most recent resulting in the current stuccoed form. The upper floors exhibit plain, regularly spaced, rectangular window openings. The fifth floor windows are distinguished by a terra-cotta enframement and projecting sills and are separated by unusual columns of molded brick. The building retains its original, detailed cornice and high parapet.

House of Crane Building  
124 South Meridian Street  
1866-67

Photo 14

Because so much of its architectural fabric has survived intact to the present day, The House of Crane is an excellent representative of a commercial/wholesale building of the 1860's. Three stories in height and six bays wide, the brick building features elements of the Italianate style, namely: the dressed stone quoins; the incised, horseshoe hood molds of the tall, round-arch windows; and the bracketed wood cornice with wide roof overhang. The plain frieze under the cornice was designed to receive the residing business' painted advertising, formerly an integral part of late-19th-century facade enrichment. The storefront, with its transoms of Luxfer glass blocks, is an early 1900's remodeling of the ground floor; tall, Corinthian cast-iron columns once graced the original design.

McKee Building  
202-204 South Meridian Street  
1888-89 R. P. Daggett and Company, architects

Photo 15

The galvanized iron facade of the five-story McKee Building stylistically represents a break with the cast-iron facade design of the previous generation. The uniform post-and-lintel grid of the four bays of the upper stories received minor differentiation through applied, geometric detailing, much of which has been lost from deterioration. The Meridian Street elevation contrasts strongly with the eight-bay Georgia Street elevation of brick with stone detail, which relies upon traditional materials, composition, and forms. The storefronts have recently been revealed during the building's restoration, but the original "false front," sheet-metal adornment of its parapet is missing.

D. P. Erwin and Company Building  
206-14 South Meridian Street  
and 17-25 West Georgia Street  
1889-90; 1890; 1900; c. 1915

Photo 16

Currently undergoing renovation, this five-story building, of pressed brick with rock-faced stone trim, exhibits a strongly articulated facade. The deeply recessed fenestration accentuates the compositional elements of the Romanesque Revival style, which vary at each floor level. The first floor storefronts recently have been uncovered, and the upper stories retain their original design with the exception of a lowered parapet wall. The trabeated fourth floor serves as an effective foil to the two-story-high arcade of the second and third floors and the arcading of the fifth floor. Of note is the fine terra-cotta detailing, especially at the spandrels between the second and third floors.

Rusch Building  
243-47 South Meridian Street  
1867-68

Photo 25

The choice of a stone facade for a brick wholesale building was unusual in Indianapolis in the 1860's; its survival to the present day renders the Rusch Building a rarity. The structure is a typical three stories high, six bays wide, with a brick load-bearing wall dividing the building into a "double." The degree of refinement in its facade, however, is not typical of the district. Finely tooled blocks of smooth-faced ashlar are laid in regular courses with pronounced joints. Rusticated stone quoins and round-arched window lintels accent this stonework, as does the building's cornice with its small brackets. The first floor retains the original Renaissance style arcade with cast-iron columns, a feature that contributes much elegance to the facade's design.

Pearson and Wetzel Building  
219-21 South Meridian Street  
1887-88 Iron storefront: Hetherington and Berner, Indianapolis

Photo 28

The facade of this late 1880's commercial building is extremely well preserved, the loss of its metal cornice being one of the few minor changes it has undergone. The building exhibits the typical proportions of the late-19th-century wholesale district's structures: four and a half stories in height, four bays wide, and a depth of over five times the building's width. The polychromatic effect of the stone-detailed brick of the upper floors contrasts with the now-monochromatic iron storefront. All window openings of the facade are rectangular, a fact masked at the second and third floors by the splayed, gauged brick lintels of segmental arch form.

George W. Stout Building  
207-09 South Meridian Street  
1888 John H. Stem, architect

Photo 30

While only the frame of the tall, first-floor iron front of this building has survived modernization, the upper four floors of pressed brick retain all the elements that richly articulate the facade. The four bays are strongly divided by brick piers; those at third floor level are ornamented with brick corbels terminating in richly carved bosses, while the truncated piers of the fifth floor exhibit Corinthian-like, stone capitals. One of the most distinguishing details of the facade is the carved, foliar panel set into the aprons of the third and fourth floor windows.

Byram, Cornelius, and Company Building  
201-205 South Meridian Street  
1871-72

Photo 31

The oldest remaining facade entirely of cast iron in the city, this building exemplifies the full development of cast-iron design. Although it has lost much of its enriching detail, the strong vertical division of the five bays and horizontal articulation of its four floors plus attic are still striking. At the facade's first floor level, the tall cast-iron columns allowed for an open (glazed) storefront, now filled by a stone veneer. The second and third floors feature round-arched windows between columns, the capitals of which (now gone) varied by floor — Ionic at the second and Corinthian at the third. The fourth floor features pairs of narrow, rectangular windows recessed between pilasters, which also exhibited capitals. The former wide overhang of the roof was supported by heavy Italianate brackets, paired at the Meridian Street elevation between elliptical attic windows and regularly spaced along the long Georgia Street facade.

Big Four Building (now Amax Coal Company)  
105 South Meridian Street  
1929-30 D. A. Bohlen and Son, architects  
Alexander Sangernebo, architectural sculptor

Photo 34

The nine-story Big Four Building is built of a concrete frame, floors, and ceilings with 12-inch brick curtain walls. Rectangular in plan, it is 11 bays wide along East Maryland Street and three bays wide on South Meridian. Except for the central bay of the Meridian elevation and the ground floor storefronts, each bay consists of two rectangular windows separated by vertical strips. In contrast to the brown brick, the first two floors are clad in stone with stylized, low relief ornamentation at the second floor. The greatest concentration of ornamentation occurs above the ninth floor with terra-cotta detailing that features fluted and reeded motifs. In placement, texture, and spirit, this decoration exhibits the influence of the Art Deco style.

Morrison's Block  
43-49 South Meridian Street  
1871

Photo 35

Morrison's Block is an example of a double commercial building with an interior, load-bearing wall dividing the brick structure in two longitudinally. The eight bays of the three upper stories of the facade are united by the typical arcade motif, in which the semicircular hood molds of the windows are connected by an impost course. During recent restoration, an Italianate cornice, with its heavy brackets corresponding to the bay divisions, was reproduced based on the original (removed after World War II). A new storefront of period character was also added at this time along both the Meridian Street and part of the Maryland Street facades. Documentary photographs reveal two generations of 19th-century storefronts along Meridian; by the turn of the century, the two halves of the building were distinguished by different ground floor designs.

Century Building  
36 South Pennsylvania Street  
1901 Samuel H. Brubaker and Company, architects and engineers  
J. A. Schumaker Company, contractor

Photo 37

This seven-story building of orange/brown brick was designed for the printing industry.

Rectangular in plan, it stretches 11 bays wide along its principal facade on South Pennsylvania Street and seven bays along East Maryland. The ground floor features a stone entranceway arch of Romanesque form originally flanked by eight trapezoidal storefronts of plate glass between alternating brick piers and iron columns with Corinthian capitals. Except for the projecting corner bays, the upper floors are divided vertically into repetitive bays of Chicago style windows. The building formerly terminated in a projecting metal overhang at cornice level, which constitutes the only major exterior alteration.

C. A. Schrader Building (now Business Furniture)  
101-105 South Pennsylvania Street  
1901 D. A. Bohlen and Son, architects  
William P. Jungclaus Company, contractor

Photo 44

This six-story wholesale building features two principal facades; that on South Pennsylvania Street is four bays wide while that on East Maryland Street is seven bays wide. Two-story piers of rusticated stone blocks divide the window walls of the first two floors, while all upper floors are of tan-color brick. At the third, fourth, and fifth floors, rectangular windows with stone lintels and sills are paired to correspond to the division of bays. At the arcaded sixth floor, the grouping of windows in threes is accentuated by gauged brick archivolts. The most distinguishing feature of the Schrader Building is the pyramidal roof (once tile covered) that rises from each of the three corner pavilions, which display square windows at attic level.

Majestic Building  
47 South Pennsylvania Street  
1894-95 D. A. Bohlen and Son, architects

Photo 45

This 10-story office building of steel frame structure is basically square in plan with an east/west lightwell from second to tenth floor levels cut from the east elevation. The two principal facades are of Bedford limestone, the west facade on South Pennsylvania Street being symmetrical in design while the south one on East Maryland is asymmetrical; the two other elevations are of common brick. The horizontal division of floors into design units and the three-part rhythm of composition mask the verticality of the building. The style relies upon an eclectic interpretation of classical elements. The carved ornamentation of the entrances, spandrels, and attic frieze features delicate garlands, festoons, and a fluttering ribbon motif. All window openings are rectangular, except for the round arches of the entranceways, the three central bays of the seventh floor, and the arcaded corner bays of the ninth floor. The building formerly exhibited a wide roof overhang supported by brackets (the removal of which now reveals the classical roof balustrade to the street-level viewer) and iron work balconies at the ninth floor's arcaded bays.

KO-WE-BA Building  
102-106 South Delaware Street  
1908-09 Rubush and Hunter, architects  
John A. Schumaker, contractor

Photo 46

The KO-WE-BA is a four-story-tall building of brown, salt-glazed brick. It is rectangular in plan, seven bays wide along East Maryland Street, and three bays wide along its original entrance facade on South Delaware Street. The ground floor along

Maryland formerly accommodated loading docks, which were protected from the elements by a functional canopy that extended to the curb. Above the first floor stringcourse of stone, each bay of the upper floors is composed of double rectangular windows of six-over-six lights with a simple rectangular outline of recessed brick at each spandrel. The most ornamental aspect of the building is its metal cornice, which features paired "brackets" of a type popular for early-20th-century commercial buildings.

Centennial Block  
364-68 South Meridian Street  
1876 Cast-iron storefront: Hatch and Company, manufacturers

Photo 49

Only the three southern units of the original six-unit Centennial Block survive today, a fact that is recalled by the asymmetrical location of the remaining metal parapet fan. The facade of the block was originally organized into three compositional units, with a central pediment rising above the parapet flanked by two fans. All other design features of the 18-bay original facade were identical with the exception of the location of the doors in the proportionally tall, cast-iron storefronts. The fenestration of the second and third floors is uniform with regularly spaced windows of stilted, segmental arch form. Stone detailing of the brick facade occurs in the form of the windows' hood molds and sills. Also of note are circular attic vents that are incorporated as an important decorative element of the building's cornice.

Kiefer-Stewart Company Building  
141 West Georgia Street  
1906-07 D. A. Bohlen and Son, architects  
William P. Jungclaus Company, contractors

Photo 53

Nearly square in plan, this building of brown, glazed brick is four stories in height and its principal facade along Georgia Street is nine bays wide. The five slightly recessed center bays are divided by pilasters that rise from the first floor window sills. Terra-cotta archivolts of the semicircular fourth floor arches spring from impost level at the pilasters' capitals, creating an elegant arcade over what once was a central window wall. The same arch form occurs at the entrance, which retains its elaborately carved spandrels. All first floor windows have been blocked and their original design camouflaged by off-white paint. New, smaller windows have been set into the original fenestration of the upper floors with vertical board infill. The capping element of the building — a detailed cornice overhang — has also been removed.

Survey (1970 Indianapolis inventory). Second, the 1888, Union Railway Station has been listed individually in the National Register. Third, the Station's train shed has been noted in the Historic American Engineering Record's inventory of significant Midwestern engineering structures.

In the history of transportation, Union Station symbolizes the emergence of Indianapolis as a "railroad city," the hub of a radiating rail network that extended throughout Indiana and the Midwest. The railroad and Union Station formed the link with the outside world that attracted commerce and industry and brought a large population to the city. Within the Wholesale District, the railroad provided the impetus for the development of the wholesale trade and inspired the building of many of the city's hotels.

The first railroad completed to Indianapolis arrived in 1847. A union track was laid in 1850, followed in 1852-53 by construction of the original Union Depot at Louisiana and Illinois Streets. Indianapolis enjoyed the distinction of hosting the first union passenger depot in the United States, an idea that quickly spread to other cities.

The swift growth of trade and of the city's population soon made the Union Depot inadequate. By 1881 it was accommodating over 85 trains per day, but as J. E. Land noted in his 1881 Industries of Indianapolis, "...the accommodation is very indifferent..."<sup>1</sup> Agitation for a new depot began in the early 1880's. In 1883 the Indianapolis Union Railway Company, representing the six local railroads, was incorporated for the purpose of seeking a new building.

In 1887 the new company began construction of the present Union Railway Station on a site to the north of the 1853 Depot. Built at a cost of over \$1 million, the new station was considered a great civic monument and suitable symbol of Indianapolis' recently won status as a major Midwestern city. An open train shed adjoining the Station was built at-grade in 1888 on the site of the old Depot. A new public square, Jackson Place, was created at the north main entrance to the Station.

The 1890's brought further economic growth to Indianapolis. The debt to the railroad was underscored in the 1896 publication, Indianapolis To-Day: "the railroads in fact have made Indianapolis, and she is justly styled the 'Railway City.'"<sup>2</sup> By 1902 sixteen rail lines to Indianapolis had been completed, extending in all directions from the City. Max R. Hyman in the Journal Handbook of Indianapolis published that year estimated that over 184 passenger trains were passing through Union Station daily.<sup>3</sup>

The continued growth of Indianapolis in the early 20th century made even the 1888 Station and shed inadequate. A 1913 "Special Report of the Track Elevation Commission," published by the Chamber of Commerce, judged the 1888 Station "outgrown long ago." Further, the report asserted that "...nothing but a complete reconstruction and enlargement can make it adequate for the demands of the next 20 years."<sup>4</sup> The Union Railway Company gained a little more space in 1913 when it remodeled Union Station, removing boilers and generators from the basement and replacing them with a barbershop, restrooms, and an "Immigrant Waiting Room". Nevertheless, it was soon apparent to everyone that the remodeling could only provide temporarily for the space needed at the station.

In 1915 a joint effort of the City of Indianapolis and the Pennsylvania and New York Central Railroads (which now owned the Union Railway Company) began an ambitious program to elevate the Union tracks between Senate Avenue and Washington Street. The track elevation project sought to eliminate a long-standing conflict between the wagon, automobile, and pedestrian traffic on north-south streets on one hand, and the freight and passenger trains of the Union Railway Company on the other. The Railway Company laid the footings for an elevated train shed in 1916; in 1918 the elevated track system and a temporary, elevated platform for passengers at Union Station were completed. After World War I, a concourse under the tracks and a train shed above them were constructed, with completion occurring in 1922. The new Concourse and Train Shed removed a second grievous complaint regarding the former tracks-at-grade: previously, the passengers had had to walk over dirty tracks and sometimes through parked trains to arrive at their boarding point. With the elevated tracks, six passenger stairways from the concourse gave prompt access to each platform in the train shed. The new train shed covered seven acres and included twelve passenger and two freight tracks.

Ironically, the high point of passenger traffic through Union Station, 200 trains per day, was probably reached about the time the Concourse and Train Shed were under construction. An almost imperceptible decline in traffic began in the 1920's, accelerating during the 1930's. The passenger train was competing against potent rivals: the new automobile, motorbus, and airplane. A brief reprieve occurred during World War II and its fuel shortages. After the war, the slide renewed in earnest. By the time the parent railroad of the Union Railway Company, Penn Central, fell into bankruptcy in 1970, passenger train traffic at Union Station had almost ceased.

Also related to transportation in the Wholesale District is the former Citizens' Street Railway Company Streetcar Powerhouse and Barns (built circa 1892, with additions between 1899 and 1908; architect(s) unknown), erected by the holder of the Indianapolis streetcar franchise from the 1860's through the 1890's. The Citizen's Street Railway Company built the original, northernmost section of the present buildings as a powerhouse for the downtown segments of the company's street railroad. The construction coincided with the conversion in the early 1890's from mule-pulled to electric-powered streetcars. The later additions to the south of the powerhouse were built by the Indianapolis Street Railway Company, successor in the franchise to Citizen's Street Railway. These later structures served as "barns" for the new electric streetcars. Today, the powerhouse-barns complex is the only known, well-preserved streetcar building left in the city.

#### B. COMMERCE — THE WHOLESALE TRADE

The Indianapolis Wholesale District is remembered historically primarily as the place of business of most of Indianapolis' wholesale merchants. Some "wholesalers" gained regional or even national clienteles; all played a part in transforming Indianapolis from a small town into the state's largest city.

Before the first railroad line reached Indianapolis in 1847, the town's merchants were exclusively retail. Nearly every finished good was ordered from wholesale houses in Louisville or Cincinnati; the tiny retail market in a town of just over 5,000 people

in 1850 would certainly not support the purchase of large quantities of goods and distribution to retailers for resale.

Nonetheless, when the railroads connected Indianapolis with the outside region, wholesale merchants began to open their doors. For example, the first city directory, published in 1855, showed eight wholesale grocers and two wholesale dry goods merchants, while the 1859-60 Indianapolis Business Directory listed 13 wholesale grocers, although no wholesale dry goods merchants.

The prosperity brought about by the Civil War and the subsequent business boom expanded the wholesale trade into a major sector of the Indianapolis economy. By 1881, a promotional publication, Industries of Indianapolis, was estimating that 10 major wholesale grocer firms were in operation, serving about 300 retail groceries in the city alone. Four major wholesale dry goods merchants, plus 32 retail and wholesale dry goods firms, could be found in the city, as well as 14 wholesale hardware firms.<sup>5</sup>

The wholesale district itself began in 1863. In that year, two brothers, #10 August and Henry Schnull, built the first wholesale house on South Meridian Street, which had been theretofore a residential street lined with fine homes. Schnull's Block housed the brothers' wholesale grocer business, which previously they had operated on Washington Street with the other early wholesale merchants. After only two years in the new building, the Schnulls had made their fortune due to the tremendous volume of business flowing through the state capital during the Civil War. August Schnull retired and returned to live in Germany, the brothers' native country.

Henry Schnull, a man with unusual business vision, remained in Indianapolis and devoted his energies to developing a wholesale district for his adopted city. Schnull saw the residential area between the retail merchants on Washington Street and the Union Passenger Depot and freight depots on South Street as an ideal site for the wholesale trade. During the late 1860's, he pursued his ambitious vision of a wholesale district by purchasing lots, razing houses, erecting speculative wholesale houses, and persuading other businessmen to do the same. By the early 1870's, Schnull had succeeded: wholesaling was firmly established in the region between South and Washington Streets.

Most of the wholesale buildings built until about 1880 were "blocks," i.e., buildings composed of multiple units. The units within a block were usually owned or rented by different individuals; sometimes construction of a block was a collaborative effort of several owners. For speculative builders during the 1860's and 1870's, units within a block were less expensive to erect than detached buildings.

A well-preserved survivor of the beginnings of the wholesale district is the former House of Crane Building, built by Edward Beck under an agreement with Henry Schnull. Beck's building originally shared the design of its facade with the building to the north (map location #13), which was built by Schnull (has been remodeled substantially since). During the 1860's and 1870's, Beck's building housed several wholesale firms dealing in hats and caps and several wholesale liquor merchants. Later, Hanson, VanCamp and Company, a major wholesale hardware and iron firm occupied the building, followed by wholesale grocers — the Kothe, Wells, and Bauer Company. Ultimately, the House of Crane, a wholesale cigar firm, took over the building for a 65-year period.

#36 A remnant of a long block of 1860's wholesale houses stands on East Maryland Street, the former Holland and Ostermeyer Building (1867-68; architect unknown). John W. Holland and Frederick Ostermeyer purchased the site for their wholesale grocer business from Henry Schnull and then built the present unit as part of a larger block.

#47 Another building in the district to mention from the 1860's stands on South Delaware Street. The former R. S. Foster and Company Building (1867; architect unknown) was erected by a Civil War general, Robert S. Foster, for his commission merchant business. South Delaware Street was known as "Commission Row" in the post-Civil War era. Here farmers brought their produce and grain to "commission merchants", who sold the food-stuffs to wholesale or retail grocers in return for a commission. Coincidental with Henry Schnull's efforts to the west, General Foster and others were expanding "Commission Row" south of Maryland Street during the 1860's.

#35 The 1870's saw other speculative builders take over the task from Henry Schnull of developing the wholesale district. A prime example is Morrison's Block, built by a leading capitalist of the city, William H. Morrison. Listed individually in the National Register, Morrison's Block originally consisted of two units. During the late 19th century, wholesale grocer firms and a furniture dealer shared the block.

#31 An exception to the general practice in the early years of erecting wholesale blocks is found at Georgia and Meridian Streets, the former Byram, Cornelius and Company Building. Norman S. Byram, Edward G. Cornelius, and Oliver Tousey erected this cast-iron-fronted building exclusively for their business, one of the early wholesale dry goods firms of any size in Indianapolis. During the 1890's, the A. Kiefer Drug Company, a major wholesale concern, occupied the building.

#49 A last, wholesale "block" to note stands just south of Union Station. The Centennial Block was one of the largest "blocks" erected in the wholesale district. A row of six wholesale houses built collaboratively by four owners, the Centennial Block housed a cross-section of the smaller wholesale firms that operated in the district: wholesale and retail furniture; wholesale liquors; wholesale bakery; wholesale paint and wholesale seeds. Originally, the Block's location just south of the offices and restaurant of the original Union Depot proved choice for wholesale concerns. This advantage dissipated in the early 20th century when the new Union Station concourse and train shed channeled all passenger traffic to the north (and necessitated the razing of the northernmost section of the Centennial Block).

A business slump beginning in the late 1870's slowed the expansion of the Indianapolis economy through the mid-1880's. Building in the wholesale district fell off. At length, a boom in commerce and industry erupted in the late 1880's, with the discovery and exploitation of natural gas and petroleum fields in central Indiana.

The wholesale district benefited from the development of new markets in the boom towns of the region. By 1893, Ernest P. Bicknell, a local journalist, was boasting in his book Indianapolis Illustrated that Indianapolis was home to over 300 wholesale and jobbing houses, employing 1,000 traveling salesmen. Bicknell estimated gross sales enjoyed by the wholesale concerns at \$40 million per year.<sup>6</sup>

Beginning in the 1890's, the Indianapolis wholesale merchants reached beyond central Indiana for new markets in the South and Midwest at large. In competing with other Midwestern metropolises, Indianapolis wholesalers had to their advantage the city's central geographic location, its position at the center of a railroad system

that enjoyed connections with the national rail network, and, within Indiana, direct rail access by the 1880's to all of the state's 92 counties but three.<sup>7</sup>

During the long period of Indianapolis' commercial growth from the 1880's to World War I, the wholesale district prospered. Recessions, such as the Panics of 1893 and 1907, stunned the wholesale trade briefly but did not impair its general state of good health. Some wholesale enterprises perhaps did not survive, if Max R. Hyman's estimate in the 1902 Journal Handbook of Indianapolis of "over 200" Indianapolis wholesale houses is accurate (down from Bicknell's "over 300" in 1893).<sup>8</sup> Wholesale firms, many of them now incorporated as stock companies, continued to expand their territories and sales volumes until the entrance of the United States into World War I (1917). Nevertheless, no major wholesale houses were built in the district after about 1913.

The buildings remaining in the district from its "golden age" — 1880's to 1917 — reflect a mature, prosperous wholesale trade, one which had outgrown the tentative beginnings of the 1860's. Gone were the speculative "blocks," designed for leasing to a series of small wholesale merchants. The buildings constructed after 1887 were erected almost entirely for the needs of single, rapidly expanding wholesale companies. The new boom era saw the discarding of some of the small speculative blocks erected during the 1860's and 1870's and their replacement by a new generation of imposing, single-concern buildings.

Ernest Bicknell in Indianapolis Illustrated (1893) observed that the Indianapolis wholesale trade was "especially strong" in grocers, poultry, confectioners, dry goods, drugs, hardware, queensware, and millinery.<sup>9</sup> As has already been noted in connection with the buildings of the 1860's, wholesale grocers were important merchants in the district, as was only natural considering the large volume of the agricultural products pouring into the city from central Indiana. Some of the surviving buildings dating after 1887 illustrate the continued prominence of wholesale grocers. Others show the growing importance of the rest of the wholesale lines that Bicknell mentioned, underscoring the point that the wholesale trade had diversified beyond its agricultural origins.

One of the first buildings to be erected after the oil and natural gas boom

- #28 struck was the former Pearson and Wetzel Building, built in 1887 as an investment by Lewis T. Morris, but leased wholly to a wholesale firm dealing in "china, glass, and queensware." The next year, only a couple doors to the north, the wholesale grocer firm of George W. Stout erected a large headquarters on the site of the 1870's building they had rented #30 for 12 years. The Stout Building was later occupied by a wholesale drug firm, Ward Brothers.

Across Meridian Street from the Pearson and Wetzel and George W. Stout Buildings,

- #15 two other major wholesale houses rose. The McKee Building was erected by Robert S. McKee to house his profitable wholesale boot and shoe partnership, McKee and Branham. #16 Adjoining the McKee Building to the south and west is the former D. P. Erwin and Company Building. The Berkshire Life Insurance Company erected the original portion fronting on Meridian Street for the wholesale dry goods firm headed by Daniel P. Erwin. D. P. Erwin and Company was succeeded in 1899 by the Havens and Geddes Company, also wholesale dry goods merchants, who built additions to the Erwin building as their dry goods business expanded. It is probable that all four of these late 1880's buildings were erected in the 200 block of South Meridian in order to be close to the new Union Railway Station, completed in 1888.

#41 A different sort of wholesale enterprise erected a headquarters building in 1888-89 on the corner of Georgia and Pennsylvania Streets. The Parrott and Taggart Building (architect unknown) housed a large bakery operation that both manufactured large quantities of baked goods and distributed them on a regional basis. In 1897 the firm became the Indianapolis branch of the National Biscuit Company ("Nabisco").

#11 One new wholesale building appeared in the district due to a major fire. In 1897, the former Schnull and Company Building replaced an 1860's "block" erected by Henry Schnull. The latter gentleman, who by the 1890's was being called "the Father of the Wholesale District," promptly gave the order to rebuild, erecting the present "slow-burning" building for his wholesale grocer firm.

#44 At the beginning of the new century, a number of wholesale firms outgrew rented quarters and built large, imposing headquarters. One example, the former C. A. Schrader Building stands at Maryland and Pennsylvania Streets, erected by Christian A. Schrader for his wholesale grocer company. Another such building, also built for wholesale #46 grocers, rose in 1908-09: The Kothe, Wells and Bauer Company Building. The firm, also known by its tradename, "KO-WE-BA," moved from the House of Crane Building (#14) to the corner of Maryland and Delaware Streets.

#19 #20 Fire also shaped the destiny of the 200 block of South Meridian Street. A \$1 million fire there in 1905 destroyed over a quarter-city block opposite Union Station. Major wholesale houses, which had located on South Meridian and McCrea Streets to benefit from the flow of customers and salesmen passing through the Station, now found themselves homeless. One of the largest of the victims, Fahnley and McCrea, chose to rebuild on the same site. Their buildings (1905-06; architect unknown) boasted two principal entrances: one on McCrea Street, opposite the Union Station front door, and the other on Meridian Street. A "T" was formed by a warehouse section fronting on Louisiana Street (to the south).

#53 Another major loser from the 1905 fire, the A. Kiefer Drug Company, was one of the city's most prominent wholesale drug firms. The firm rented quarters for several years until August Kiefer, its founder and president, completed a spacious headquarters building to the west at Georgia Street and Capitol Avenue. The new building became the Kiefer-Stewart Company Building in 1915, when the Kiefer firm merged with one of its prime competitors, the Daniel Stewart Company.

#32 The largest wholesale house ever built in the wholesale district stands at Georgia and Meridian Streets. The former Hibben, Hollweg and Company Building (1911-12; Vonnegut and Bohn of Indianapolis, architects) represents the Wholesale District at its height. Erected by what eventually became the city's largest wholesale dry goods firm, the new building replaced a post-Civil War, Second Empire-styled building on the same site.

Following World War I, the wholesale district began a gradual but unmistakable decline. Ironically the reasons at first lay in the need for prosperous firms to expand. For example, in 1924-25 both Schnull and Company and the Kothe, Wells, and Bauer Company left their buildings in the Wholesale District for larger, new headquarters located on larger sites outside the district.

Of even greater importance than expansion in precipitating the weakening of the district was the advent of automobiles and trucks. During the Inter-War period, these two modes of transport revolutionized the methods of wholesale firms. Large tracts were now sought to provide ample parking for trucks and automobiles and to allow

space for a rail siding. As a consequence, many wholesale firms forsook the narrow alleys and the densely-built character of the Wholesale District.

The Depression hastened the decline of the district. Several major wholesale firms closed their doors. Hibben, Hollweg and Company, once a giant in the district, went into receivership for a time.

Eventually fleets of trucks began to replace the railroad as the avenue chosen for shipping wholesale goods. The link between the wholesale trade and the railroad, which had given the district life nearly a century before, disappeared.

#### C. COMMERCE — HOTELS

Six current or former hotel buildings remain in the Wholesale District. In the early 20th century, a majority of the city's hotels could be found south of Washington Street. The hotel owners valued the Wholesale District's proximity to the Union Railway Station.

From the beginnings of the railroad, hotels had taken advantage of the steady flow of travelers passing through the Union Depot. Early in the railroad era, Illinois Street became the gateway to Indianapolis for visitors arriving in the city. The best hostelries vied for patronage along the three blocks of Illinois from Union Station to the retail and office district adjoining Monument Circle. The well-remembered hotels in Indianapolis history all boasted Illinois Street locations: the Spencer House, Oneida Hotel, Hotel Edward, Grand Hotel, Occidental House, Bates House (replaced later by the Claypool Hotel), and ultimately, Hotel Lincoln. All these have vanished, having departed along with the passenger traffic that nurtured them.

The surviving hotel buildings do not all stand on Illinois Street, although they do share a common historical bond to Union Station. The oldest survivor is also the oldest hotel left in Indianapolis. Originally named the Concordia House by its first proprietor, Ferdinand Motter, the building standing at South and Meridian Street later became known in turn as the Tremont House and then as the Germania House (built 1863-64; architect/builder unknown). The Concordia House is the last remaining of the first generation of hotel "houses" built in the city after the opening of the 1853 Union Depot. Like its departed neighbors to the west, the California House and National Hotel, the Concordia House was erected south of the old depot to be close to the "eating house" and railroad offices located in the southern portion of the depot. Hotel guests probably grew fewer after the new railway station in 1888 turned the attention of arriving passengers to the north of the union tracks. In the 20th century, the Germania House was operated primarily as a rooming house and bar/restaurant for neighborhood patrons. The bar, now called "the Slippery Noodle Inn," was cited in 1977 by Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana as the oldest continuously operating bar/restaurant in the state.

At the summit of hotel quality in the Wholesale District after 1913 was the former Hotel Severin. Located just one-half block north of Jackson Place, Hotel Severin was ideally situated to capture the favor of affluent visitors to Indianapolis. Built as a first-class hotel, the Severin competed with the other hostelries of the premier rank: the Claypool, the English, and the Lincoln. Its investors included prominent entrepreneurs of the city: Henry Severin, heir to the Severin wholesale grocer fortune; and Carl G. Fisher and James A. Allison, automobile pioneers and founders of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. The 13-story Severin occupied an imposing position in the Wholesale District skyline, overlooking the Station and most of the neighboring

#50

#2

hotels. For more than 40 years, Indianapolis businessman William A. Atkins operated the Severin (1915-1958). After his death, the hotel suffered financial loss and closed in 1966, about the time that the fortunes of Union Station also reached low ebb. In 1968 Indianapolis businessman Warren M. Atkinson rebuilt much of the interior of the hotel, reopening it as a first-class hotel, the Atkinson.

#22 At the other end of the hotel price range since 1914 has been the former Meridian (now Station) Hotel (1913-14; architect unknown). Built to accommodate those travelers visiting the city on a restricted budget, the Meridian stood just east of the Louisiana Street entrance to the new Union Station Concourse and Train Shed. In later years the Station Hotel has served as a transient hotel.

#18 Occupying a median position in price and quality of accommodation between the Severin and the Meridian was Hotel Spink (1924; E. G. Spink Company, architects and contractors). The Spink was a late arrival in the Wholesale District but occupied a choice location on Jackson Place, opposite the still-bustling Union Station. The entrepreneur responsible for the hotel, Edgar G. Spink, headed a construction and management company that erected some 60 apartment buildings in Indianapolis between 1900 and 1930. Hotel Spink during the 1930's became the Barnes Hotel. In the early 1970's, it was rehabilitated and adapted to apartments for elderly tenants.

#6 The last hotel built on Illinois Street before the Depression was the Warren Hotel (1928-29; Bennett Kay of Indianapolis, architect). Built by Samuel and Julius Falender, two junk dealers, and Otto Meyer, a banker, the hotel originally carried the name Hotel Lockerbie, for reasons unknown. In the 1930's, Glenn F. Warren, a successful hotel operator of the city, took over the ailing Lockerbie and reopened it carrying his name. As the passenger trains decreased in number, the clientele of the Warren likewise decreased, forcing the hotel to close in the mid-1970's.

#### D. COMMERCE — OFFICE BUILDINGS

Office buildings in Indianapolis during the post-Civil War period and first third of the 20th century as a general rule were erected along Washington Street or to the north of it. Nevertheless, a few speculative builders and companies with ties to the Wholesale District chose locations between Washington and South Streets. Although only three such buildings currently exist in the district, each is significant in the history of the Wholesale District.

#45 The most architecturally splendid of the group, the Majestic Building, is already listed individually in the National Register. Built both as a headquarters for the Indianapolis Gas Company and as a speculative office building, the Majestic Building through much of its history had more in common with the other first-class office buildings on the streets to the north than with the warehouse buildings of the wholesale district. Nevertheless, the Gas Company chose Maryland Street, a wholesale street, for their headquarters, possibly in part because of its proximity to the company's large gas yards at South and Pennsylvania Streets. Despite its southern location, the Majestic Building was among the most prestigious offices in the city during the 1890's. Its 13 stories made it the first "skyscraper" in Indianapolis. In addition, municipal government leased most of their offices in the Majestic making it a temporary "city hall." The Indianapolis Gas Company and its successor, Citizens Gas and Coke Utility, left the building in the 1930's. The Farm Bureau Cooperative Association then occupied the Majestic as their headquarters for 40 years.

#39 On the north side of Georgia Street east of Meridian stands the former John W. Murphy Building (1911; architect unknown). Named in honor of one of the district's leading wholesale dry goods merchants, the Murphy Building was unique in that it housed small wholesale and manufacturing operations in office suites on the pattern of a regular office building. The tenants included in the early years printers, dealers in "corks," skirt merchants, nut bowl dealers, and railroad offices.

#34 The third office building to mention, the former Big Four Building, belongs to the conventional class of office edifice. The Big Four Building was erected in the Wholesale District to be close to the Big Four Railroad's freight and passenger operations to the south. Ironically the Big Four Railroad erected the headquarters, one of the last office buildings completed before the Depression, because of the industrial growth Indianapolis had experienced since World War I. When completed, railroad employees occupied seven floors of the nine-story building. That proportion decreased as the New York Central system, the parent company of the Big Four, declined.

#### E. INDUSTRY

Industrial activity in the Indianapolis Wholesale District generally remained subordinate to the wholesale trade. Some small manufacturing firms located in the Wholesale District either because of close associations with the surrounding wholesale merchants or with the retail stores to the north.

Several of the industrial concerns that operated in the district practiced both the manufacturing and wholesale functions. Into this category readily fell wholesale bakers such as Parrott and Taggart (see COMMERCE — WHOLESALE TRADE) and confectioners, or candy-makers. Confectioners, with their use of raw food stuffs supplied by farmers and wholesale grocers, found the Wholesale District particularly hospitable. In the first decade of the 20th century, several confectioners operated there. The National Candy Company took over the former Byram, Cornelius and Company Building. The firm of Nicols and Krull operated a confectioners operation in an 1870's wholesale building on South Pennsylvania Street (razed). A third concern, the J. F. Darmody Company, #31 #7 erected its own building on West Maryland Street, beginning with three stories in 1904-05 and later adding three as their business grew.

Harness-making also found ready markets among wholesale and retail merchants alike. Representing this line of manufacture in the district is the former Holliday and Wyon Building (1889; architect unknown) at the corner of Georgia and Pennsylvania Streets. With the passing of the horse-drawn era, the Holliday and Wyon Building was taken over by another small manufacturing concern, the Standard Metal Company. In the late 1920's, the building became home for manufacturing chemists, Boncilla Laboratories, Incorporated.

A third type of manufacturing activity that coexisted in the district with the wholesale trade was printing, which is represented by one immense building in particular: the Century Building. It grew out of the idea of a group of speculative investors that a large building especially designed to support the heavy loads of printing presses could attract many of the city's printing firms as tenants. The investors organized as the Century Building Corporation and erected the \$400,000 "powerhouse" at the corner of Maryland and Pennsylvania Streets. The term "powerhouse" apparently referred to the special "DC" electrical wiring the building supplied to the printers. The Century Building proved successful in luring printing firms, remaining one of the city's printing headquarters until taken over by the Veterans Administration for offices in 1946.

#9 Two other buildings within the Wholesale District illustrate the construction  
#8 of a headquarters building for one particular printing company. The oldest such  
buildings today, the Levey Brothers and Company Buildings (architects unknown) were  
erected in two sections, 1889-90 and 1900-01 to house the printing, stationer, and  
"blank-book" manufacturing functions of the firm. The Levey Brothers found customers  
among retail stationers, other businesses with office operations, and state government.  
#17 A second printing entrepreneur desirous of operating in his own building was Joseph  
Ratti. The Ratti Building (1911; architect unknown) occupied one of the voids left by  
the great wholesale fire of 1905 (see above).

#5 A final illustration of the manufacturing function in the Wholesale District  
will also demonstrate that wholesale buildings often housed more than one concern.  
#5 Braden's Block #2 during the late 19th century hosted in succession a manufacturer and  
dealer in machinery, a "surgical applicance" manufacturer, and a "surgical instruments"  
manufacturer. In addition, Hotel Braden could be found in the upper stories at various  
points in time, and after 1906 Joseph Stahr's steak and chops restaurant could be  
frequented on the street level.

#### F. ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The city's largest collection of commercial buildings surviving from the 19th  
century and early 20th century is found within the boundaries of the Indianapolis  
Wholesale District. For several important 19th-century architects of the city, the  
only extant product of their commercial design work is located here. One example of a  
#30 large architectural oeuvre now represented by a single building is the George W. Stout  
Building designed by John H. Stem, an architect active in Indianapolis from 1874 to  
1908. Research has not revealed the names of architects for any of the 1860's and  
1870's wholesale buildings in the district. However, these buildings' survival to  
the present day contributes to their significance as a building type of historical  
importance to the city.

Although the overall character has been somewhat eroded over time, the buildings  
of the district do convey a degree of architectural cohesiveness. Many factors  
contributed to the dense development, typical building form, and continuous facade lines  
along the streets, including the gridiron street plan, the original platting, and the  
economic incentives for intensity of land use and the sharing of party walls. There  
exists a certain cohesiveness of proportions among the 19th-century buildings. The  
uniformity of height of the buildings (averaging three to four stories) and the narrow  
widths resulted in large measure from the limitations of the structural systems of the  
time. The early subdivision of lots led to buildings that were from three to five times  
as deep as their width. With few exceptions, the major building material of the district  
is brick, which was chosen for its load-bearing properties, its relative resistance to  
fire (as compared to wood), and its economy and availability. Even in those examples  
#31 with facades not of brick — the cast-iron-fronted Byram, Cornelius, and Company Building  
#25 or the stone-faced Rusch Building being the two most notable examples — the other walls  
of the building are of brick.

The buildings of the district illustrate the evolution of wholesale house and  
warehouse design from the 1860's to the 1920's as it occurred locally. In general, they  
are reflective of the developments in American architectural history during this period.  
The commercial building is a building type that developed during the 19th century from  
the special requirements of commerce. The need for the unobstructed distribution and  
handling of goods on a larger scale than ever before led to the development of open

interiors and the avoidance of interior bearing partitions. During the late 18th century, the English textile mills had led the way toward the development of a repetitive post-and-beam structural system that could be multiplied without change for any size structure. American commercial and industrial buildings of the mid 19th century capitalized on this innovation for the creation of open lofts. This represented a significant break away from the heavy braced frame of Colonial building, which influenced residential construction until the revolutionary balloon frame of the mid 1800's. The structural systems worked out for the stores and warehouses of the mid 19th century represent a direct link in the chain of construction advances that led from the English mills to the iron frames and curtain walls of the late-19th-century "skyscraper" office buildings.

The typical four-story wholesale building in Indianapolis followed a typical pattern of floor usage. The ground floor served as the wholesale concern's main office with an important corollary function as the storefront for the display of goods. The second floor often was devoted to stock and packing. If any manufacturing or assembly was involved in the individual commercial trade, it took place on the intermediate floors. The upper floors were always used for the warehousing or storage of goods. The multistory functioning of the business was made possible by the invention of the mechanical, steam-driven hoist, which was in general use by the 1850's.

The distribution and handling of goods within the building was further facilitated by freeing the interior from partitions or large masonry piers through the use of structural iron columns and posts. This was especially useful at the ground floor level and was utilized early in at least three extant wholesale buildings of the late 1860's and early 1870's: the House of Crane, Morrison's Block, and the Byram, Cornelius and Company Building. The need for light brought about the opening up of the facade, especially at the ground floor storefront. The early buildings' long side walls had comparatively few windows if adjacent to an alley or if sited on a corner along a street; shared party walls, of course, had no openings. This resulted in little natural light penetrating to the interior. Since the facade's windows were often the only source of natural light, there was an incentive to provide as many and as large windows as structurally feasible. Later in the 19th century, the large, roof skylights over a central court lightwell became common as a solution to illuminating wholesale and office buildings.

As the first major wholesale building in Indianapolis, Schnull's Block of 1863 established many of the architectural themes that became prevalent in commercial buildings in the city during the second half of the 19th century. The building is important for its sheer size (four stories high and 12 bays wide), which was in strong contrast to the individual dwellings that lined South Meridian Street at the time it was built. The building footprint followed the lot lines, taking full advantage of its corner site. Four interior brick bearing walls divided the large structure into four long and narrow sections. Although the building does not represent any structural advancement for its time, its primary architectural significance derives from its role as a forerunner for the district. Schnull's Block introduced the arcade motif, in which round-arched windows' hood molds are connected by an impost course (at the second floor only).

Morrison's Block of 1871 took the arcade motif to its full conclusion with three upper stories of identical arcading and former cast-iron storefronts that also employed

an arcade. This type of Italianate facade design was once commonplace in the wholesale district, and on some streets, multistory arcades extended continuously for blocks. The busy lines of arcades added a certain energy to the buildings of this part of the city and served as an expression of the vitality of the trade. Morrison's Block is now the only surviving building in the wholesale district to exhibit three floors of the arcade motif.

- #49      The Centennial Block of 1876 is an excellent example of a building type that was very important to the development of the wholesale district. The construction of a "block" was often a speculative venture on the part of an enterprising businessman who saw the opportunity to lease or sell individual units to various wholesalers. Just as often, the construction of a block was undertaken jointly by a group of individual wholesalers who wished to share the economic advantages of building one large structure while retaining individual ownership of their own land and unit. The idea of combined modular units — as contrasted with individual detached buildings — resulted in considerable savings in construction with sharing of: the major building components (structural, load-bearing walls, roof, foundation, etc.); one unified, exterior design (and thus one architectural fee); and the concomitant lessened costs of materials and labor. Much of the inspiration for this type of commercial building was probably derived from domestic terraces. The four-story Centennial Block was one of the city's larger blocks, having originally been comprised of six equal units unified by a symmetrical exterior design. The fact that the individual units could stand alone as individual buildings is evidenced not only by the three remaining units of the  
#26      Centennial Block, but by the Mayhew and Branham Building of 1865-66 and the Holland and  
#36      Ostermeyer Building of 1867-68, both lone survivors of multi-unit blocks.

The proportionally tall, cast-iron first floor of the Centennial Block, which was produced in an Indianapolis foundry, illustrates the important role that cast iron played in the design of storefronts. American technological advances of the 1840's had made cast iron's use as a building material possible. The need for natural light had brought about the exterior walls being opened up to the maximum extent feasible, and no where was light needed more than to illuminate the stock displays and ground floor office operations. The compressive strength of cast iron made the large openings possible. A high percentage of Indianapolis' wholesale buildings once featured iron storefronts with large, glazed openings. Other extant, intact examples include the  
#25  
#28      Rusch Building of 1867-68 and the Pearson and Wetzel Building of 1887-88.

- #31      The Byram, Cornelius and Company Building of 1871-72 demonstrates the full exploitation of cast-iron technology at a time when the material was at the height of its popularity. It exhibits the oldest remaining cast-iron facade in Indianapolis and is one of the few surviving structures of its kind in the city. The cast-iron front allowed for a maximum of light to enter on all four floors and resulted in an exterior that was remarkably open for its time (although within the mainstream of cast-iron technology). The second and third floors exhibit a standard design formula of arched windows set between columns, a Renaissance motif that became ubiquitous throughout the country in cast-iron buildings of the 1860's. Those who designed and produced cast-iron fronts had capitalized upon the Renaissance style as a basis for form and ornament, since it seemed a suitable solution to the problem of design with repetitive elements. It is interesting that a style that was too intricate or expensive to be produced in masonry or carved in stone could be recreated with comparative ease, speed, and economy through casting. Thus, this facade was elaborately decorated with detailed columns and

pilasters, capitals and keystones — all prefabricated in repetitive, modular units. The self-supporting iron front was quite an architectural novelty, yet the structure behind it was usually quite conventional. In the case of the Byram Building, the factory-made facade (the larger sections of which were assembled at the construction site) was attached to load-bearing brick walls. Of note, however, is the fact that the interior structure contained iron columns and girders rather than the traditional wooden posts and beams.

#15        The galvanized iron facade of the McKee Building of 1888-89 stylistically represents a break with the cast-iron facade design of the previous generation. During the 1880's, the full cast-iron facade had lost its popularity nationally due to a variety of factors, one of the most important being the discredit of their supposed fire-resistant qualities after the fires of the 1870's in Boston and Chicago. Local architect Robert P. Daggett successfully answered the challenge of finding a new design for an iron front that did not imitate masonry and gave due respect to the unique qualities of the material iron. Breaking with the Italianate and Renaissance design idioms, the McKee Building expressed the post-and-lintel grid of its structure. The galvanization of the iron was a technological advancement to counter the problems of oxidation and rust.

#45        The Majestic Building of 1894-95 was Indianapolis' first "skyscraper" and remained the tallest building in the city for over 15 years until the completion of the Merchant's National Bank Building in 1913. Its height of 10 stories was made possible by the tremendous construction advances in tall buildings that were developed in the United States — largely in Chicago and New York — in the decades of the 1880's and 90's. Constructed of one of the first steel, skeletal frames in Indianapolis, the Majestic Building represented the height of sophistication in the early development of a new building typology: the office building. The elegant facade, which relies upon classical themes, has been considered the finest commercial design of D. A. Bohlen, one of the most prominent architects in the history of Indianapolis.

#11        Selected examples of the later generation of wholesale buildings (at the turn of the century) are architecturally significant for a variety of reasons. The Schnull and Company Building of 1896-97 represents a definite break with the 19th century. Its straightforward design, regularity of windows, large expanses of plate glass, and constrained use of ornament all give it a decidedly "modern" look for its date. However, for all its exterior modernity, the building is of ordinary mill construction and represents no structural advancement for its time. Structural conservatism is true of other #32 contemporary wholesale buildings; even the Hibben, Hollweg, and Company Building of 1911-12, the largest wholesale building ever built in Indianapolis, was based on mill construction. The degree of architectural refinement given to a warehouse building is surprising in the #44 C. A. Schrader Building of 1901. With the growth in the size of commercial buildings, siting at a corner became important as a way of providing two principal facades rather than one.

With respect to architectural styles, several buildings in the district bear out the premise that commercial patrons demanded and received the best architecture of their day. The merchant princes of the 1860's and 70's found the elements of the Renaissance palazzo particularly suitable to their needs. Since the body of literature on the early architectural history of American commercial buildings is so small, the stylistic labels derived for residential buildings have tended to be applied to commercial buildings without respect for the vast difference in building types. This situation leaves much to be desired in the way of authoritative categorization of commercial styles.

#3 The Deschler Company Building of 1906-07 is faithful in its stylistic detail to the Jacobethan Revival. Since the greatest impact of this style nationally was upon residential and collegiate buildings, this building may represent an unusual example of the style in a commercial building.

#1 The most architecturally significant building in the district for its representation of an architectural style is Union Station of 1887-88, one of the finest Romanesque Revival buildings in the Midwest. In plan, materials, proportions, composition, and detail, this building is an outstanding example of the style. It contains one of the finest public spaces in the state of Indiana — a three-story-high, barrel-vaulted waiting room lit by a tremendous skylight and two rose windows. In its conception and organization of space, Union Station's interior ranks it among the best American railway stations of the 19th century. The elevated tracks, train shed, and pedestrian concourse date to a 1916-1922 expansion project. Recognized for its major achievements in traffic engineering, the 7-acre train shed complex is among only 11 such works that survive in the United States today.

#23 #53 Although many buildings in the Indianapolis Wholesale District have suffered considerable alterations over the years, a number of them retain a large measure of their original materials and design and therefore the possibility for restoration remains strong. A good case in point would be the Kiefer-Stewart Building of 1906-07. Its original elegant design is still discernable, and much of its later, unsympathetic remodeling is reversible. With renewed interest in the rehabilitation, adaptive use, and in certain cases, restoration of buildings in the district, it is hoped that the architectural significance of these buildings that remain to us from past generations will be increasingly recognized.

#### G. CURRENT AND RECENT REHABILITATION PROJECTS IN THE WHOLESALE DISTRICT

Rehabilitation projects are very much a part of the Wholesale District's recent past, its present, and undoubtedly, its future. As noted above in COMMERCE—HOTELS, the "refitting" in 1968 of the former Hotel Severin as a first-class hotel (now the Atkinson) was the first movement toward rehabilitation and adaptive use in the district.

#11 A six-year lull followed the reopening of the Atkinson Hotel. Finally, in 1976, the owners of LaScala Restaurant, well-known for its Italian cuisine on South Illinois Street, purchased the vacant, former Schnull and Company Building at 110 South Meridian Street. The restaurateurs adapted the two-story, marble-finished, interior court of the former wholesale grocery to use for the LaScala Restaurant. The restaurant has continued successfully ever since at its new location. Upper floors are used as banquet rooms.

#35 Two years later, in 1978, a group of investors, led by Tom Charles Huston of the Brenwick Development Company, bought Morrison's Block and rehabilitated the interior for offices and retail use. Completed in 1980 and named Morrison Opera Place, the building rehabilitation and facade restoration were supervised by Archonics Corporation, architects of Indianapolis, with Herbert McLaughlin, AIA, of the San Francisco firm Kaplan/McLaughlin/Dias, serving as consultant.

#14 In 1979 the Indianapolis architectural firm of Browning Day Pollak Mullins purchased the former House of Crane Building for adaptation to their offices. In 1980-81 the firm repainted the well-preserved building's facade and now occupies two of the three floors.

#45 Rehabilitation of a major downtown office building, the Majestic, is also occurring in the Wholesale District. In 1980 a group of investors led by Evans Woollen, AIA, and the Indianapolis architectural firm Woollen Associates, purchased the Majestic, recently vacated by the Farm Bureau Cooperative Association. Since then Woollen Associates have remodeled the offices for new tenants and embarked on a restoration program for the first floor lobby and adjoining rooms originally used by the Indianapolis Gas Company (see COMMERCE—OFFICE BUILDINGS).

Another major private rehabilitation project began in the spring of 1981 when the South Meridian Associates, a group of investors headed by Indianapolis apartment developer Robert Borns, acquired the two vacant buildings standing at the corner of Georgia and Meridian Streets. The McKee Building and the former D. P. Erwin and Company Building had been used as a single building during the last 20 years. The Associates and their architects, Browning Day Pollak Mullins of Indianapolis, are conducting a restoration of the facades and a rehabilitation of the interiors for a restaurant on the ground floor and offices elsewhere.

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The most recent rehabilitation effort in the district occurred during 1981 at the former Holland and Ostermeyer Building. Robert E. Schloss adapted the interior for use by his firm, Omega Communications, Incorporated. Architects for the rehabilitation were the Archonics Corporation of Indianapolis.

Most of the owners of the rehabilitation projects occurring since 1978 have chosen to take advantage of the tax incentives for rehabilitation as provided in the Tax Reform Act of 1976. The owners of current renovation projects have all expressed support for the National Register district nomination and the accompanying investment tax credits of the new Economic Recovery Tax Act. Moreover, several more buildings in the district are being eyed by investors for rehabilitation in the near future. Listing of the district in the National Register will enhance the incentives for undertaking these additional renovations.

A word should be directed before closing to the prospects for rehabilitation of the largest building in the Wholesale District: Union Station. Since 1971 a series of efforts aimed at restoring and adaptively using the 1888 Union Railway Station have been mounted. Union Station Associates, a private, for-profit group, purchased the 1888 station in 1972 from the Indianapolis Union Railway Company, with the intention of developing a mixture of retail uses and restaurants there. The Associates were unsuccessful during the remainder of the 1970's in realizing their concept.

When it became evident that the Station was rapidly deteriorating and might be demolished if a development plan were not carried out, the City of Indianapolis in 1978-79 began application for a series of planning and capital improvement grants from the Urban Mass Transit Administration of the United States Department of Transportation. The grant effort has been rewarded with a series of grants aimed at creating an "intermodal" transportation center" at the Station.

Under this concept, a variety of forms of transit would be anchored at the Station, including intercity trains, intercity bus lines, "METRO" intracity buses, taxi stands, and a possible "People-Mover" monorail system. During 1980 a master plan for the Union Station development and the adjacent area was undertaken by Woollen Associates of Indianapolis, with Anderson Notter Finegold of Boston serving as consultants.

Meanwhile, the City of Indianapolis purchased the 1888 Station in the spring of 1980 and began emergency repairs to its badly-leaking roofs. Pending further grants from the Urban Mass Transit Administration, the City has taken no further steps in the capital improvements phase of the project. The eventual plan is for the City to purchase the Station's Concourse and Train Shed from the Consolidated Rail Corporation ("Conrail") and to interview developers to carry out the private investment aspects of the Woollen Associates' plan.

The combination of the private rehabilitations already under way in the Wholesale District and the anticipated retail/transportation complex at Union Station should create again the crowds of people and varied activities that characterized the district in its heyday as the center of wholesale trade.

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<sup>1</sup>J. E. Land, Industries of Indianapolis—Trade Commerce and Manufacturers. Historical and Descriptive Review (Indianapolis: J. E. Land, 1881), p. 19.

<sup>2</sup>Consolidated Illustrating (compilers), Indianapolis To-Day (Indianapolis: Consolidated Illustrating Co., 1896), p. 60.

<sup>3</sup>Max R. Hyman (ed.), Journal Handbook of Indianapolis (Indianapolis: The Indianapolis Journal, 1902), p. 146.

<sup>4</sup>Track Elevation Commission, Chamber of Commerce, "Track Elevation in Indianapolis" (pamphlet) (Indianapolis: Chamber of Commerce, 1913), p. 12.

<sup>5</sup>Land, pp. 37-38.

<sup>6</sup>Ernest P. Bicknell (writer) and Edgar H. Evans (editor), Indianapolis Illustrated (Indianapolis: Baker-Randolph Lith. and Eng. Co., 1893), p. 133.

<sup>7</sup>Manufacturing and Mercantile Resources of Indianapolis (Part IV of Resources and Industries of Indiana) (Cincinnati (?): Historical and Statistical Publishing Co., 1883), p. 400.

<sup>8</sup>Hyman, p. 338.

<sup>9</sup>Bicknell, p. 135.

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Pennsylvania Street to a point across from the northwest corner of the Majestic Building (#45 on map), then east across Pennsylvania Street and along the north wall of the Majestic Building and south along its east wall, and across Maryland Street. From there, continue east along the south side of Maryland Street to Delaware Street, thence south along the west side of Delaware to the southeast corner of the former Shideler Building (#48 on map). From there, go west along the south side of the Shideler Building to South Talbott Street (an alley), then south on Talbott Street to Georgia Street, thence along the north side of Georgia to the northwest corner of Georgia and Pennsylvania Streets. From there, continue south along the west side of Pennsylvania Street to the southeast corner of the former Indiana Terminal Warehouse (#40 on map), thence west along the south side of the Terminal Building to the alley west of Pennsylvania Street, and then south to the southeast corner of the former American Express Company Building (#24 on map). From this point, go west along the south side of the American Express Building to the northwest corner of Louisiana and Meridian Streets, then south along the west side of Meridian Street to South Street. From there, continue along the north side of South Street to the southwest corner of the former Nesom and Wenz Building (#51 on map), then north to the wall south of the Union Station freight tracks, thence west along that wall to Capitol Avenue. From that point, go north along the east side of Capitol Avenue to Georgia Street, then east along the south side of Georgia to the southeast corner of Georgia and Illinois Streets. From there, go north along the east side of Illinois to the northwest corner of the Hotel Warren (#6 on map), thence east along the north wall and south along the east wall of the hotel to Chesapeake Street (an alley), then east to the southwest corner of the former J. F. Darmody Company Building (#7). From this point, continue north along the west wall of the Darmody Building to Maryland Street, thence east along the south side of Maryland to the southeast corner of Maryland and Meridian Streets, and finally north to the point of origin.

**EXPLANATION OF DISTRICT BOUNDARIES**

As pointed out above, the Indianapolis Wholesale District is primarily notable as the former home for the city's wholesale trade. The National Register district boundary (see map) was drawn to include as much as possible of the historic wholesale district. To a major extent, this has been accomplished.

The cohesiveness of the district's character, or its "sense of time and place," is considerable by Indianapolis standards. On every one of the streets included in the Wholesale District, at least three to four wholesale houses, hotels, or associated buildings remain. Realizing that demolition has removed most of the 19th-century commercial buildings in the downtown area, such a survival rate in the Wholesale District appears impressive and the character of the area relatively strong.

With respect to the boundaries of the district, the north boundary includes both sides of Maryland Street, historically associated with the wholesale trade. The Century and Majestic Buildings (#37 and #45), although not wholesale buildings, have become integral parts of the Maryland streetscape over time and so were included.

The east boundary needs little elaboration. Delaware Street marks the eastern limit of surviving wholesale buildings. The south boundary reaches south of the Union Station to South Street in order to include the Centennial Block (#49), former Concordia House (#50), and the former Nesom and Wenz Company Building (built 1904; #51). As already pointed out in the Statement of Significance, the Centennial Block is important to the

Wholesale District because of its design and its wholesale uses. The Concordia House was built at its location because of close ties with the old Union Depot. The Nesom and Wenz Building, although industrial in its origins, has been nestled within the reversed "L" formed by the Centennial Block and the former Concordia House for some 75 years. In that time, it has become closely associated with its neighbors. Since it also contributes to the historic streetscape of South Street, the building has been included in the Wholesale District boundary.

To the west, two buildings of considerable historical significance survive on the east side of Capitol Avenue. One, the former Kiefer-Stewart Company Building (#53), has had considerable importance as a wholesale house; the other, the former Citizens' Street Railways Powerhouse and Barns (#52), is significant in the transportation history of the city. Therefore, the district boundary was extended west to Capitol Avenue to include them.

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State Marion County, INDIANA

Nomination/Type of Review

Name change approval

Date/Signature

*for/* Keeper

*Patrick Andrus 6/27/86*

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