

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

MAY 30 1979

DATE ENTERED

JUL 17 1979

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railway Office and Freight House

AND/OR COMMON

Johnston-Backus Building

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

300 S. Third Street

\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Paducah

\_\_ VICINITY OF

1

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Kentucky

021

McCracken

145

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

**OWNERSHIP**

**STATUS**

**PRESENT USE**

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**ACCESSIBLE**

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Johnston-Backus Joint Venture

STREET & NUMBER

300 South Third Street

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Paducah

\_\_ VICINITY OF

Kentucky

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

McCracken County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Six and Washington

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Paducah

Kentucky

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky

DATE

Fall 1978

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Kentucky Heritage Commission

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Frankfort

Kentucky

# 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 type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located on the southwest corner of Third and Washington Streets in Paducah, Kentucky, the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railway Freight office is a fine example of effective reuse of an old structure. The building presently houses the Johnston-Backus Brokerage Co.

This two-story brick freight house, constructed in 1925, is set on a limestone foundation. Parapet end walls and parapeted dormers give the main block of the structure a Tudor look. Palladian-type windows located in the dormers and gable end walls tend to accentuate these members.

The main decorative feature is the use of varied colored brick to set off the openings and details of the structure. On the north facade, regular double-hung sash windows are set in vertical rows, emphasized by vertical bands of brick. Even the dormers are given more attention by the use of different shades of brick.

The east side elevation has more fine brickwork detailing than does the north. Three-bay, each bay is set off by a rectangular panel of darker colored bricks. Diamond-shaped motifs grace the space between the windows. The door has a keystone motif with a multi-paned round arched window above it. Vertical brick patterns on either side of the door give the effect of a columned entranceway.

Presently used as a warehouse, the one-story end section has none of the detailing of the main block. The interior of the structure has been remodeled to accommodate office and warehouse space.

Located in a largely commercial area, the freight house is also in an historic area. Just two blocks away is the Paducah Market House District and the main business district. Only three blocks separate the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis freight house from the Ohio River.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1925

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Located at the confluence of the Ohio and Tennessee Rivers, Paducah, Kentucky was long ago found to be an excellent trade center. The railroads immediately took advantage of the opportunities afforded them and several lines are located here. Because of the many mergers that took place, only three railroads have survived. The Illinois Gulf Central, the Louisville and Nashville (which absorbed the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis), and the Burlington Northern are the three remaining railways in the city. The Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis was the Louisville and Nashville's connection to Paducah.<sup>1</sup> The present structure was built in 1925 for use as the freight house and division headquarters for the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis western Kentucky division.

This portion of the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis, which runs from Bruceton, Tennessee to Paducah, was originally the Paducah, Tennessee, and Alabama Railroad. In 1895, the Paducah, Tennessee & Alabama was acquired by the Louisville & Nashville Railway, and in 1895 was leased by the Louisville & Nashville back to its subsidiary, the Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis.

In 1917 the Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis Railway and the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railway jointly constructed rail line and a double track bridge between Paducah and Metropolis. This bridge (which is listed by the encyclopedia Britannica as the world's longest simple truss bridge) made a gateway connection between the Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis in the south and the Chicago, Burlington, & Quincy or Burlington Route for the north and west. Later, the Illinois Central bought a third interest in the bridge and is now the primary user.

While the freight house was built in 1925, plans were being made to expand this connection to include links with the Big Four, (part of the New York Central System) and other railroads. As a result, the Paducah freight house was constructed to handle a large volume of business and included a Division Superintendent's Office on the second floor in addition to the local freight office & warehouse on the first floor.

For various reasons those other links were never consummated. However, a large amount of freight business was done between the Chicago, Burlington, & Quincy and the Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis. For a number of years, ending in 1936, the Gulf, Mobile and Northern also ran into Paducah over Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis rails. Also until the 1900's Nashville, Chattanooga, & St. Louis passenger trains were operated between Paducah and Hollow Rock Junction (now Bruceton) Tennessee and Hickman, Kentucky.

From the 1930's through the early 1970's thousands of refrigerator car loads of fruits and vegetables from all over the nation were unloaded by brokers on the team track behind the freight house. This occurred because favorable freight rates to Paducah made

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Information received of or supplemented by the owners.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1/4 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Paducah East

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 358240 4105280  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B           
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The nominated property is located on South Third St. between Washington St. and Clark (closed) St. The lot on which it is located measures approx. 150 ft. wide by 350 ft. long. The building is 40 ft. wide by 345½ ft. long. See attached copy of L&N RR property plot plan and original N.C.&ST.L. RR drawing of building.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

K. C. Smith, Coordinator - Jayne C. Henderson, Historian - Kentucky Heritage Comm.  
ORGANIZATION DATE

Johnston-Backus Joint Venture March 1979  
STREET & NUMBER TELEPHONE

300 South Third Street, P. O. Box 1194 (502) 564-3741  
CITY OR TOWN STATE

Paducah Kentucky

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL    STATE    LOCAL   

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE Edred W. Helton

TITLE DATE 5-21-79

**FOR NPS USE ONLY**

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Charles A. Huntington DATE 7-17-79  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: James H. Malone DATE 7/16/79  
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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RECEIVED	MAY 30 1979
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Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railway Office and Freight House

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

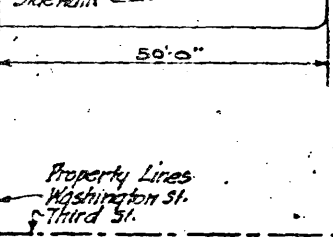
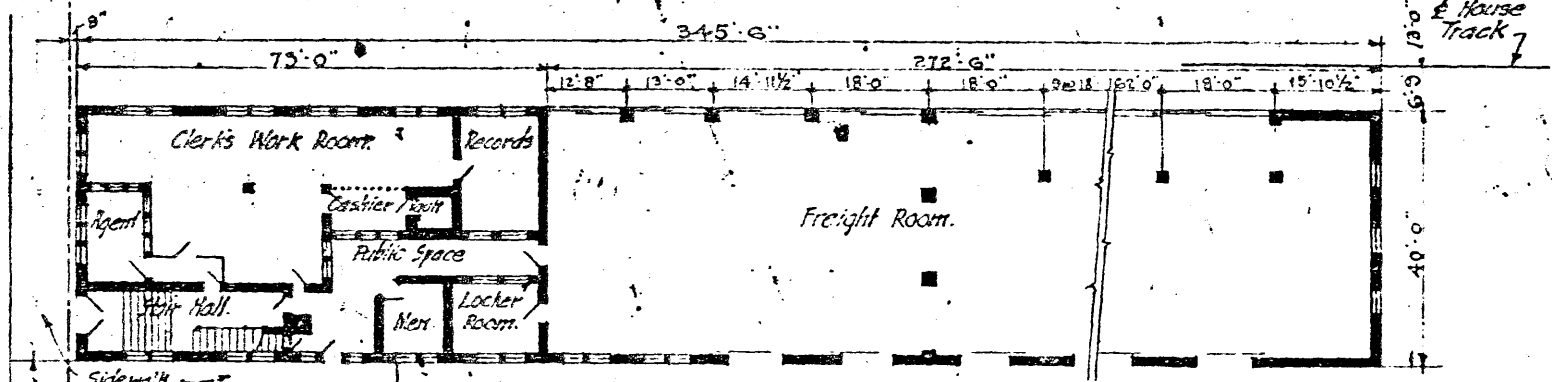
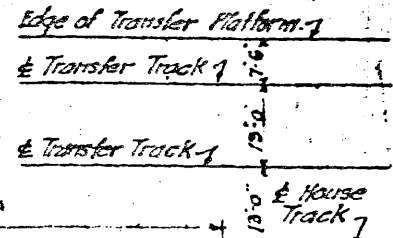
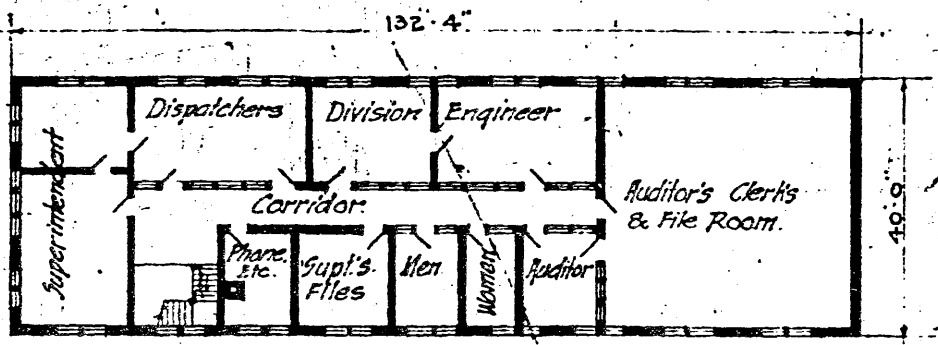
it feasible for produce dealers in the states surrounding Kentucky to haul their merchandise out of Paducah on their own trucks. The advent of the Interstate Highway system and the increase in rail freight rates as compared with long distant trucks has diminished the volume but it still remains significant in 1978.

In 1957 the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis was absorbed into its parent, the Louisville & Nashville, and in 1972 the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy became part of the transcontinental Burlington Northern. In 1956 the Louisville & Nashville, along with other roads dropped its Louisville, Cincinnati, & Lexington business which had been handled through the Paducah freight house and by 1974 the Louisville & Nashville reduced its employee force in Paducah and moved the freight office to the yards at 6th & Norton.

In November 1976 the freight house and adjacent tracks were purchased by W. R. & C. J. Johnston and W. C. Backus who had long operated produce and food brokerage businesses out of the building. The exterior and part of the interior of the building has been renovated. With its construction of double brick walls and heavy beams it remains an example of the diminishing number of such structures over the country.

<sup>1</sup>Union Station, the main passenger depot for all the railways in Paducah, was located in the south side of town.

F-A



N.C. & ST. L. RY.  
 PADUCAH FREIGHT DEPOT & OFFICE BUILDING  
 Office of Chief Engineer  
 Scale - 1" = 30' G.O.P. July 1925.  
 DR 515-22-AB

MAY 30 1929

Nashville, Chattanooga and  
 St. Louis Railway Office and  
 Freight House.  
 McCracken County  
 Kentucky

Louisville & Nashville  
 property plan