

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

FINAL

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Washington Commercial Historic District
other names/site number 027-663-31000

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by Meridian, Chessie System n/a not for publication
city, town Washington n/a vicinity
state IN code IN county Davies code 027 zip code 47501

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>88</u>	<u>29</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>1</u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>89</u>	<u>29</u> objects
			<u> </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official John T. Costello Date 7-23-90
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: business
COMMERCE/TRADE: professional
COMMERCE/TRADE: financial institu-
tion

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: business
COMMERCE/TRADE: professional
COMMERCE/TRADE: financial institu-
tion

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

FEDERAL
ITALIANATE
NEO-CLASSICAL

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK
walls BRICK
STONE
roof ASPHALT
other METAL:cast iron
CONCRETE

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

b. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
TRANSPORTATION
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1815-1940

Significant Dates

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Significant Person

n/a

Architect/Builder

Bayard, John B.

English Brothers

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approximately 22

UTM References

A

1	6
4	8
4	7
4	0

4	2	7	8	8	0	0
Northing						

C

1	6
4	8
5	2
0	0

4	2	7	8	3	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

B

1	6
4	8
5	1
9	0

4	2	7	8	7	9	0
Northing						

D

1	6
4	8
4	7
3	0

4	2	7	8	3	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

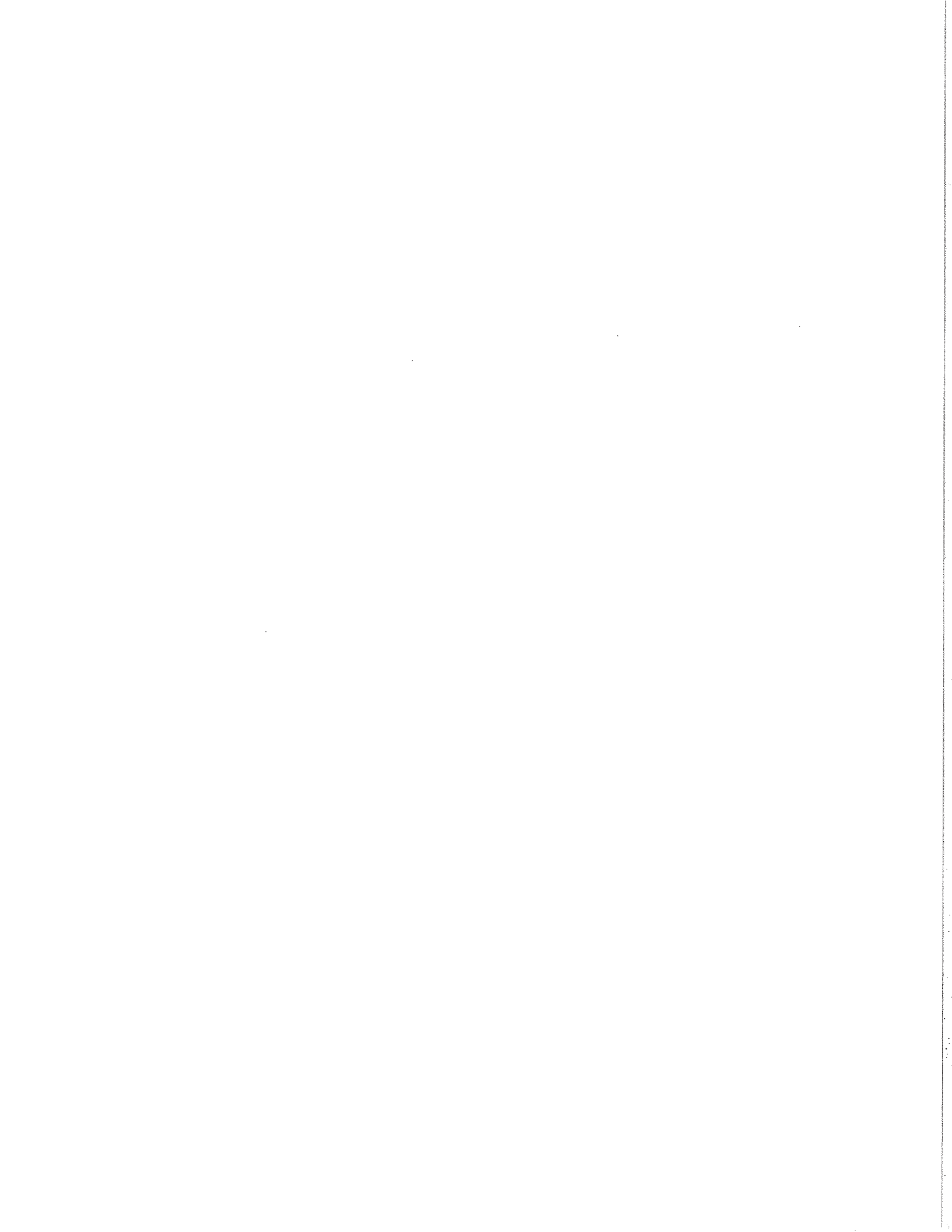
name/title Laura Thayer, Historic Preservation Consultant
organization Daviess County Historic Landmarks, Inc date February 9, 1990
street & number 3905 N. 500 West Road telephone 812/372-6806
city or town Columbus state IN zip code 47201

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 2 Page 1 Washington Commercial Historic District

Street and Number

E. Fifth, and E. Hebron Streets.



National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 6 Page 1 Washington Commercial Historic District

Historic Functions

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store
COMMERCE/TRADE: department store
GOVERNMENT: courthouse, city hall, post office
TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

Current Functions

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store
GOVERNMENT: courthouse, city hall

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1 Washington Commercial Historic District

The Washington Commercial Historic District is located in Washington, Daviess County, Indiana. Washington is situated a few miles northeast of the forks of the White River. The district, which comprises the historic commercial area of the Daviess County seat, is roughly bounded on the south by the Chessie System Railroad, on the east by State Road 57, on the north by Hefron Street, and on the west by Meridian Street. The district is a grid composed of blocks approximately 240 feet square and streets approximately 60 feet wide. For the most part, the buildings are brick, and vary from one to three stories in height. Most of the buildings are arranged in a conventional manner, with uniform setbacks. Buildings generally extend from one end of a block to the other, alleys being almost nonexistent. Sidewalks and curbs are concrete, and streets are asphalt.

The district was originally part of the plat of the village of Liverpool, the first settlement in Daviess County, laid out in 1815. The settlement was replatted as Washington in 1817 when it was named the seat of county government. The block bounded by E. Hefron, N.E. Third, E. Walnut, and N.E. Second was designated as the courthouse square. The street on the north side of the courthouse square, now Hefron, was "Main" originally. The name was later bestowed upon the street three blocks south. This was the street on which the Vincennes and New Albany Turnpike, an early and important state road, passed through the village. It undoubtedly was in better condition than other streets. And, since it was the street most travelers would use through Washington, it was the logical route on which to set up a commercial establishment. This is the reason the courthouse is removed from the main commercial street, an unusual situation in the typical Indiana county seat.

The district is in the shape of an inverted "T." The courthouse (photo 1), a Neo-classical structure which replaced an earlier courthouse in 1928, is located at the northern tip of the district. City Hall (photo 16), another Neo-classical building, constructed in 1916, is located in the next block south.

The next street south is Main, the street where most of the stores and offices have been located since the beginning of the settlement. Main Street has also been the location of hotels, theaters, social organizations, and residences. Here, there are a large number of Italianate style buildings. In the district as a whole, this style is seen in 25% of the buildings. Most of the Italianate buildings retain elaborate

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 2 Washington Commercial Historic District

cast iron or pressed metal work. Temple Court (right in photo 3), a large commercial block located on the southeast corner of S.E. First and E. Main Streets, is particularly notable in this regard. Although the first story exterior of this building has been altered, and some of the second story windows covered over, much of the extensive and highly decorative pressed metal work remains. Among other Italianate style buildings, all brick buildings with intact metal ornamentation, are 1 East Main (right in photo 2), c. 1890; 206 E. Main (partially visible on right in photo 6), c. 1880; 207 E. Main (fourth from left in photo 8), c. 1880; 208 E. Main (fourth from right in photo 7), c. 1880; 209 E. Main (fifth from left in photo 8), c. 1880; 311 E. Main, c. 1880; 400-406 E. Main, c. 1880; 408-410 E. Main, c. 1890; and 422 E. Main, c. 1880.

Main Street also boasts of a number of distinguished 20th century buildings. The most visible of these is the Tudor Revival Peoples National Bank (photo 19), located on the southeast corner of S.E. Second and E. Main Streets. Across the street is the Washington National Bank (photo 6), designed in the contrasting Neo-classical Style. At 215 E. Main (second from left in photo 8), there is a small but elegant brick building with terra cotta ornamentation, influenced by the Chicago Style. Also worthy of note are the Mission Revival Indiana Theater (photo 9), located at 411 E. Main, and an Arts and Crafts commercial building, located at 421 E. Main.

There are two vacant areas on Main Street. These are the northeast corner of Meridian and E. Main, and the southeast corner of E. Main and Third. There were on the first corner four small commercial buildings as late as 1909. By 1921, three of these had been torn down. A filling station was built in its place. Sometime after 1930, this filling station, as well as the fourth commercial building, were removed. Buildings on the second corner were demolished in recent years for a new development which has failed to materialize.

The street is composed of a collection of buildings that relate well in scale and design and convey a strong sense of continuity. Among the main streets of Indiana county seats, Washington's has a high degree of integrity.

South of Main Street, there is a downhill slope towards South Street, a street with a strong association with the early days of the automobile era. At one time, nearly every

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 3 Washington Commercial Historic District

building on this street between Meridian and Fifth was in some way related to automobile sales and service. Today, most of these buildings remain; only the uses have changed. For example, the Williams Garage (photo 10), located on the southeast corner of S.E. First and E. South Streets, is a Sears store. Other buildings of this type continue to function as automobile repair businesses (photo 11).

Before automobiles came on the scene, the activities on this street were dramatically different. There were liveries, warehouses, lumber yards, mills and elevators, which would have been typical along a street paralleling a railroad line. There were two hotels from the late 19th century to the early 20th. One of these, now gone, was located on the south side of South, east of Meridian. The other, the Washington Hotel (three story building in center of photo 11), is extant on the southwest corner of S.E. Third and E. South Streets.

There are a number of vacant areas on this street, which has been the case throughout its history. Given the nature of the enterprises located here - mills, lumber yards, automobile service, etc. - vacant areas are to be expected, and contribute to the historic character of the street.

There are a few buildings which face on the side streets of the district. Among these are another automobile sales and service company building, located at 11 S.E. First Street; a block of Italianate buildings, constructed between about 1880 and 1890, and located at 11-15 S.E. Third Street (center of photo 15), and the American Steam Laundry Building, c. 1930, at 10 S.E. Fourth Street (photo 16).

Anchoring the district at its southwest corner is the Arts and Crafts B & O Depot, which retains a high degree of integrity. At the southeast corner is an outstanding, Neo-classical U.S. Post Office. Outside the boundaries of the district, the character quickly changes to residential on the north, east and west, and to a combination of industrial and residential on the south.

Most of the buildings in the district were constructed between about 1860 and 1930, with a small number from the periods prior to 1860 and after 1930. There are 89 contributing buildings, and one contributing object, the War Memorial. There are 29 buildings, either extensively altered, or less than 50 years old, which do not contribute to the character of the district. A selection of pivotal and representative structures are described below.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 4 Washington Commercial Historic District

Daviess County Courthouse, 200 E. Walnut Street. Neo-classical, 1928 (photo 1). The building, which faces south, and is rectangular in plan, is a two story limestone structure with a raised basement and a flat roof. Monumental in scale, the building has a central, nine bay pavilion with seven bays recessed. Projecting from the recessed section are six massive Ionic columns which support a wide entablature. There are three metal entry doors alternating with the four central columns. A set of steps, which extends the width of the six columns, lead up to the building. East and west extensions are each two bays wide. Windows are metal casement windows. There are cast iron light posts, one each on pedestals flanking the steps to the building. Located on a large plaza in front of the building is a Civil War memorial of Barre Granite, which depicts three soldiers.

The first building to be used as a courthouse was the home of Alexander Bruce. The first courthouse constructed at the present location was a two story brick structure, completed in 1824. Later courthouses were completed in 1841 and 1879 -- as the population grew and the building became inadequate. The 1879 courthouse was damaged by fire in 1891. Repairs cost the county \$5,000. In 1927, the 1879 building was destroyed by fire. In 1929, the present courthouse was completed to take its place. Architects for the project were Sutton and Routt of Vincennes. The contractor was English Brothers of Champaign, Illinois. A 1985 fire, caused by arson, resulted in \$570,000 of damage to the building. Repairs were completed in 1986. The building is significant as the most visible representation of county government. This function is closely related to commerce in Washington, being one of the chief reasons for commercial development and prosperity.

Commercial Building, 1 E. Main. Italianate, c. 1890 (right in photo 2). This building is a two story brick structure with a four bay facade, and a flat roof. Windows are double hung wood windows with one light in each sash. The easternmost window on the facade is boarded up. The windows have stone sills and lintels. In addition, there are three horizontal bands, one each at the top, center, and bottom of the windows, which extend across the facade and wrap around the sides of the building. The cast iron store front is nearly intact. There is also a wide, cast iron cornice. The building faces north.

The building has been a tavern or restaurant throughout its history. As the center of government, business, industry, and shipping in Daviess County, Washington has always had numerous taverns and restaurants. This one is particularly significant, having been in continuous use as such since it

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 5 Washington Commercial Historic District

was constructed. It was built at the peak of Washington's economic prosperity, when the coal industry, shipping, and the railroad shops were booming. The building is also significant as an excellent example of Italianate commercial architecture and for its high degree of integrity.

Temple Court, 101-107 E. Main Street, Italianate, 1894. The building, which faces north, and whose facade is half a block wide, is a two story brick with a flat roof. It has an elaborate, pressed metal facade. Incorporated in the design of the facade are pediments, pilasters, lunettes, brackets, dentils, and decorative banding. The facade is asymmetrical with three parapets. The center parapet has the date of construction. Below this, on a frieze at the top of the building are the words, "Temple Court." Windows are both large, elliptical arched windows and flat arched. The store fronts have been altered. The building has a rear addition, of brick, constructed about 1900, which extends to South Street.

The building has been used for a variety of purposes over the years, including stores, offices, a theater, storage, and light industrial uses. The building reflects the growth and prosperity of Washington in the 1890s. It is significant for its exceptional pressed metal facade.

Hastings-Williams Agency, 117 E. Main Street, c. 1890/1961 (left in photo 4). This one story brick building with stone trim was originally a two story building. In 1961, the second story was removed and the interior was gutted. The building is on the site of David Flora's fort, built in 1812. Because of extensive alterations, the building does not contribute to the district.

Meredith House, 119-122 E. Main Street, c. 1880. This is a three story brick building with a nine bay facade. Windows are double hung wood windows with one light in each sash. At the top of the building is a cornice created by a band of decorative brickwork, topped by a metal parapet. The store fronts have been altered. The building is important as a 19th century hotel.

Peoples National Bank, 201 E. Main Street, Tudor Revival, 1928 (center of photo 3). The building is a steel frame structure. The skin is stone at the base, and brick upper stories with stone trim. The east half of the building is a two story, 19th century section and was remodeled to match the west half, five stories in height at the time the latter

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 6 Washington Commercial Historic District

was constructed in 1928. The first story of the building is has large, Tudor arched openings. Openings on the upper floors are flat-arched. Windows in these openings are new metal windows. Battlements along the roof line give the building a fortress-like appearance.

The bank, organized in 1888, has been one of the largest and most active banks in the county. That the present large and elaborate building could be constructed in 1928 illustrates the economic well-being of the community despite the decline of the coal industry. Architects for the building were Sutton and Routt of Vincennes.

Washington National Bank, 202-204 E. Main Street, Neo-classical, 1924 (photo 6). The building is a two story limestone building with a three bay facade. Defining the central entry are engaged Corinthian columns. The entry doors are topped with a bracketed pediment. On the ends of the building are pilasters with carved lions' heads at the top. Above the columns is a wide entablature surmounted by a parapet roof. Window and door openings are unaltered, but the windows and door themselves have been replaced. Inside the building is a stained glass skylight. Ornamental plaster work is also extant. The section on the west side of the building is an addition to the bank which is actually a 1979 remodeling of an earlier building. The architect for the 1924 section was John B. Bayard of Vincennes. John H. Kretz, of Washington, was the contractor.

Masonic Building, 210-214 E. Main Street, Romanesque Revival, 1868/1888 (left in photo 7). This is a three story brick building with a flat roof. The third story was added in 1888. The building faces south. The upper floors have large round-arched openings. The openings have been partially closed up and new windows have been installed. There is decorative brickwork between the second and third floors and at the top of the building, and metal pilasters on the ends. The store front has been altered to some degree, but retains its terra cotta pilasters and cornice.

This building, first constructed in 1868, and extensively remodeled in 1888, was built by the Masens, whose hall is on the third floor. The other floors have been used for stores, offices, and for other social organizations. The Masonic lodge, established in 1826, is the oldest in Daviess County. The building is significant as the home of an important social organization, and as one of the few representations of the Romanesque Revival style in the county.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 7 Washington Commercial Historic District

United Southwest Bank, 211-213 E. Main, 19th c./1954 (third from left in photo 8). This is a two story masonry building with a stone face and a six bay facade. It was originally two Italianate commercial buildings which were remodeled by the bank. Before the buildings were consolidated by the bank, 213 was Hoosier Gas. 211 was Citizens Loan and Trust. The building is compatible with the character and scale of the district; however, having undergone a major remodeling which is less than 50 years old, it is not contributing.

Commercial Building, 215 E. Main, c. 1925 (second from left in photo 8). This is a two story brick building with a six bay facade and a flat roof. The building, which faces north, has Neo-classical style terra cotta trim. The facade has two identical halves. Each half has a terra cotta band between the two floors, and a group of three window on the second level with decorative terra cotta panels above. Windows are wood, double hung with one light in each sash. The group of three windows has a terra cotta surround that includes a pediment-like window head. Alternating with the groups of windows are brick pilasters topped with terra cotta capitals. Above each group of windows is a round terra cotta medallion. The roof has a parapet that reflects the pediment shape of the window heads. There is terra cotta coping on the top of the parapet. The first story of the building has been altered and has large glass windows with metal divisions. This building has been the home of a department store and drugstore. The building is significant for its outstanding terra cotta work. The exterior of the second floor retains a high degree of integrity.

Indiana Theater, 411-419 E. Main Street, Mission Revival, c. 1925 (photo 9). A three story brick building with stone accents, the Indiana Theater is virtually unaltered on the exterior. Under the marquee are two sets of four doors, separated by a ticket booth. On the second story are three round arched openings with stone keystones and impost stones. The arch is filled in with a recessed, decorative brick pattern. Other windows on the second story are flat-arched. On the third story, there are two sets of three small windows, one each on each end of the building. These small windows are narrow, round-arched windows with keystones. The arches have been filled in with a recessed brick panel. Windows in the building have been covered up. In the center of the building at the roof line, is a pent roof covered with pantiles, and supported by large stone brackets. Between the brackets are recessed panels with decorative brickwork.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 8 Washington Commercial Historic District

By the 1920s, the movie theater was a standard item in most American cities. Washington had at least three. One was located in a building on the north side of E. Main, east of Meridian, now demolished. Another was established in the Temple Court Buildings. The Indiana Theater was the largest, and, with its Mission Revival face, was the most suggestive of exotic Hollywood architecture. The building is significant as the only building of this style in the district, and for its high degree of integrity.

Commercial Building, 424 E. Main Street, 1925. This is a two story brick building with a three bay facade and a flat roof. Details of the building, which is virtually unaltered, include a luxfer glass transom above the store front, decorative brick banding, and stone coping. The building was originally a grocery store, and was owned by the J.P. Smith family until the 1970s.

Williams Garage, 101 E. South Street, Arts and Crafts, c. 1920 (photo 10). This is a two story brick building with stone accents. The building, which faces north, has a four bay facade and a flat roof. On the first story are large, transomed display windows. A double door glass entry with sidelights and transom, located in the second bay from the west, gives access to the showroom. There is a secondary entry with a wood door in the fourth bay from the west. On the second story are large, square, multi-light windows with stone sills. Above each of these windows is a recessed panel with decorative brickwork and stone accents. The roof has a triangular parapet and stone battlements on the ends of the building.

The building is the most architecturally distinguished of those constructed in the 1920s and 30s for the purpose of selling and services automobiles. It is representative of the increasing importance of the automobile to local residents, as well as being an outstanding example of the Arts and Crafts style.

Sears Building, 107 E. South Street, c. 1900/1973 (second from right in photo 10). This one story brick building was constructed around the turn of the century and modernized in recent years. Earlier, it was a feed mill, a lumber company, a farm implement company, an automobile sales and service business, and the home of a taxi service. It is presently a Sears repair office. The building does not contribute to the district.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 9 Washington Commercial Historic District

U.S. Post Office, 301 E. Main Street, Neo-classical, 1916 (photo 12). The former U.S. Post Office, now used by the school corporation, is a one story brick structure with a raised basement, and a hip roof. The building is seven bays wide, with the five central bays recessed. In the recessed area are six massive Ionic columns. These alternate with openings. In the center is a glass transomed door, with steps leading up to it. The other openings, which have stone sills, contain windows, each one of which is a single sheet of fixed glass. Above each window is a marble panel. On each of the end bays is a like window with a like marble panel. The windows are new ones, which replaced earlier wood windows. Directly above the columns is a stone band that extends the width of the facade. Near the roof line is a stone, dentiled cornice. Supervising Federal architect was James A. Wetmore

B & O Passenger Depot, North side of Chesapeake System Railroad, east of Meridian, Arts and Crafts, 1906 (photo 13). The depot, which is a one story brick structure, has a pantile covered hip roof. The building, essentially rectangular in plan, has several small projections, reflected in plan and on the roof. Windows are double hung with multi-light upper sashes, and single-light lower sashes. Under the windows is a stone band that wraps around the building. A similar band is found at the base of the building. The building has a variety of doors, including two sets of large wooden freight doors. Doors for people are wooden panel doors with multi-light sidelights and transoms. Among other features are stuccoed dormers with large wooden brackets under the eaves.

Of the six remaining depots on the B & O Southwest built prior to World War II, the Washington depot has the most architectural interest. A combination depot and hotel in Vincennes (1870/1912), a freight depot in Brownstown (1908), a passenger depot in North Vernon (1888), a passenger depot in Aurora (1915), and a passenger depot in Lawrenceburg (1883) are the other remaining depots on the line. The Aurora depot is also Arts and Crafts in style, but less detailed than the Washington depot. The B & O Depot in Washington is a significant representation of rail transportation, which was closely linked to commercial growth. The depot is currently undergoing a restoration.

Westminster Presbyterian Church, Southeast corner of S.E. Second and E. Walnut Streets, Neo-classical, 1911 (photo 14). This is a two story Bedford stone building with a raised basement. The detailing of this exquisite building is based

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 10 Washington Commercial Historic District

on a Doric temple. Features include paired columns which support a frieze decorated with triglyphs. The frieze is surmounted by a pediment. Atop the roof is a hemispherical dome with round windows. The building represents the oldest Presbyterian congregation, established in 1814, in Daviess County.

City Hall, Northwest corner of S.E. Second and E. Walnut Streets. Neo-classical, 1916. Like the Presbyterian Church, this building also has some characteristics of a Doric temple, including tall fluted columns, and a frieze with triglyphs. Monumental in scale, the building is constructed of smooth Bedford stone. The building is unaltered on the exterior except for the addition of new windows and doors. The architect was J.W. Gaddis of Vincennes.

First Christian Church, 117 N.E. Third Street. Romanesque Revival, 1912 (center of photo 17). This large brick building is irregular in plan, and has a square tower with battlements on the corner. Many of the windows are round arched with stained glass. The foundation is rough faced stone. Other features include stone banding and decorative brickwork. This building is a reconstruction of an earlier one, constructed in 1897 at this location, which burned in 1911. The architect was Warren Routt, a member of the congregation. The congregation was established in 1864.

American Steam Laundry, 10 S.E. Fourth Street, Art Deco, ca. 1930 (photo 18). This is a one story brick building with stone trim. Simple in design, ornamentation is achieved through decorative brickwork, in a contrasting color, surrounding the entry, and a brick band which extends across the facade near the top of the building. The building, which houses a commercial laundry, appears to be unaltered. It is one of two Art Deco buildings in the district, the other being the former J.C. Penney Store on the southwest corner of E. Main and S.E. Third Streets (left in photo 8).

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 1 Washington Commercial Historic District

Architect/Builder

Gaddis, J.W.
Kretz, John H.
Routt, Warren
Sutton and Routt
Wetmore, James A.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 2 Washington Commercial Historic District

The Washington Commercial Historic District is significant as the market place of the most important settlement in Daviess County. Washington, platted in 1817, achieved prosperity, because of its designation as a county seat, through agriculture and coal mining, and for its position on important transportation routes. The commercial district reflects these influences, and illustrates the importance of Washington as the commercial center of Daviess County. The significance of the district is enhanced by its fine collection of 19th and early 20th century commercial architecture.

Daviess County was initially settled in 1806. The early settlement period extended to about 1850. The first pioneers in southwestern Indiana, in which Daviess County is located, came from the south through Kentucky, by way of the Wabash and the White Rivers. (Terre Haute and Vincennes are exceptions in the region, both having originated as 18th century French settlements on the Wabash.)

The settlement which became Washington was located near the forks of the White River. In 1812, a fort was built on what is now the southwest corner of N.E. Second and E. Main Streets by David Flora for protection from Indians. Washington was originally platted as the village of Liverpool in 1815. The name was changed to Washington in 1817 when it became the seat of newly established Daviess County. The block bounded by N.E. Second, Hebron, N.E. Third, and Walnut was designated at the location of the courthouse. By 1817, the village was reported to have a population of about 300.

In many Indiana Counties, different settlements competed fiercely to be the county seat. It was clear that a settlement which became the center of government in a county would have a advantage in many ways. There would be new jobs in government. Hotels, restaurants, and stores would be necessary to serve visitors. Transportation routes would be established to bring people to the county seat. A growing population and access to transportation would attract industry. In Daviess County, Washington (or Liverpool as it was known at the time) was the clear choice for the location of the county seat. Not only was it the largest settlement, but it was located along an early trail between Vincennes and New Albany.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheets

Section 8 Page 3 Washington Commercial Historic District

The first stage coach route in Indiana, established in 1820, on the path of the old trail from Vincennes to New Albany passed through Washington, and contributed to early growth and development. Washington, and Paoli, in Orange County, were among the few settlements on the route. Until Indianapolis was established as the state capital in 1825, the road was used by people in the southwestern region who had business in the territorial capital, later the state capital, Corydon. In 1836, the state of Indiana designated this route the Vincennes and New Albany Turnpike, and allocated funds for its improvement through the Mammoth Internal Improvement Bill. The turnpike went through Washington two blocks south of the courthouse square. Merchants abandoned the street originally designated as Main, on the north side of the courthouse square, in favor of the more traveled route to the south. Eventually, the original Main was renamed Hefron, and the name, Main, was given to the street three blocks to the south, reflecting its status as the primary commercial street. For this reason, the courthouse is located at the edge of the commercial district, rather than near the center, as in most Indiana county seats.

The state road gave Washington an advantage over many other early settlements. Most Indiana settlements relied on rivers and creeks for shipping or traveling. Other than the Wabash and the Ohio, most of these were navigable only by flatboat, and only under favorable conditions. There were but a handful of decent roads that had been cleared through dense forests, graded, and perhaps surfaced to some degree. In addition to the Vincennes and New Albany Turnpike, important Indiana roads included the Lafayette and Jeffersonville Turnpike and the Michigan Road, both north-south roads constructed by the state in the 1830s; and the National Road, a project of the federal government, which was surveyed from the eastern border of Indiana near Richmond, through Indianapolis and Terre Haute, in 1827. The settlements that were lucky enough to be located on one of these roads had easier access to agricultural markets.

The Mammoth Internal Improvement Bill, the state bill that established the Vincennes and New Albany Turnpike, also authorized funds for construction of the Wabash and Erie Canal, which extended from Lake Erie at Toledo, Ohio, across the eastern boundary of Indiana through Allen County, along the Wabash River to Terre Haute, along the White River to Petersburg, and south to the Ohio River at Evansville. The canal went through Daviess County four miles southwest of Washington. Land grants from the federal government helped finance construction of the canal. The Daviess County acreage sold for this purpose was administered through the Canal Land Office at Washington.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 4 Washington Commercial Historic District

The Wabash and Erie Canal was an ambitious project. It was the longest canal, with 458 miles, ever dug in the United States. The canal was never really a success as a transportation route. Its failure can be attributed to the fact that the young state of Indiana lacked adequate resources to build and maintain it, the lack of competent engineers in the state, and the advent of the railroads, which would quickly come to dominate shipping in Indiana. In Daviess County, the canal was not completed until the early 1850s, and would enjoy only a brief illusion of importance until the first railroad was constructed in 1857. The canal managed to hang on as a transportation route until the 1870s, when the right-of-way in Daviess County was sold to the Evansville and Indianapolis Railroad.

Although the canal was not successful as a transportation route, it had an enormous impact on the state, including Daviess County. The canal was planned as a transportation route that would facilitate shipping of agricultural products and lead to industrial growth. The Erie Canal had been a great success in New York, and it was perceived that the Wabash and Erie would do wonderful things for Indiana. All along the proposed route, land was purchased, towns were developed, people moved in, and factories and warehouses were built. All this activity represented the beginnings for many Indiana towns, which would later be serviced by railroads located on canal tow paths. Although Washington was not located directly on the canal, it was only four miles away, and the canal still had an effect on the development of the town, by providing a means of shipping for agricultural and manufactured products, and by bringing in new settlers.

During this era of early transportation development in Indiana, Washington was one of the fastest growing of the settlements in the southwest region. The economy of the region, like that of Washington, was largely based on agriculture. Growth was aided by the fact that Washington was a county seat, and, in that capacity, catered to visitors from around the county who came to town to pay their taxes, ship farm products, or purchase goods for their own consumption. In 1850, Washington had a population of 1,400, making it the fourth largest settlement in the region bounded by Vigo, Parke, Clay, Owen, Greene, Lawrence, Orange, and Crawford Counties, and the Ohio and Wabash Rivers. The counties of this region share a similar early history, having been settled about the same time, by people from southern states, and having similar topographies and natural

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 5 Washington Commercial Historic District

resources. Only Terre Haute, with 3,500, Vincennes, with 2,000, and Evansville, with 5,000, were larger than Washington in 1850. Of the other settlements in the region with populations over 500, Jasper had 532, Rockport and Cannelton had 600, Bedford had 700, and Mt. Vernon had 1,000.

Few structures built prior to about 1860 remain. One of the earliest extant buildings is a c. 1850 Federal style house, located behind a later store front, at 113 E. Main Street (photo 4). The commercial building on the southwest corner of S.E. First and E. Main Streets (two story building with hip roof in center of photo 2), Federal in form, also appears to date from the early period. And the western third of the building on the northwest corner of N.E. Third and E. Main Streets (photo 7) is an early commercial building that was integrated with a building of later construction. Few other resources which reflect the settlement period remain, although it should be pointed out that the street configuration remains as it was originally laid out, and that the court house (located in the block bounded by N.E. Third, E. Hefron, N.E. Second, and E. Walnut) is in the location originally designated for that purpose.

Indiana had abundant coal deposits in the southern and western parts of the state. Coal mining began as early as the 1830s, but was not particularly profitable until railroad lines were established in the 1850s. Workers constructing the grade for the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad in 1857 found coal at Washington. The combination of the discovery of coal and the establishment of a railroad line had an important economic impact on Washington, insuring its continued prosperity into the early years of the 20th century. In 1867, Washington was incorporated as a town, and, in 1871, as a city.

The Indiana coal region comprised 17 counties: Vermillion, Fountain, Parke, Vigo, Clay; Sullivan, Greene, Knox, Daviess, Martin, Gibson, Pike, Dubois, Vanderburg, Warrick, Spencer, and Perry Counties. Indiana coal was important to the railroads during the Civil War, when the industry first experienced significant growth. There was a slow down in production between 1873 and 1879, the period of a nationwide economic depression, but, by 1880, the industry was going full force with the expansion of the railroads in the state. The federal census for that year showed Daviess County to be third in production among the 17 principle coal-producing counties.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 6 Washington Commercial Historic District

The population of Washington grew rapidly, and was recorded as 4,900 by the Sanborn Map Company in 1887. Production of coal in Daviess County continued to increase; however, after about 1900, the county's importance in this industry in relationship to some of the other counties in the region began to decline. Mechanization of the mining industry began in the late 19th and early 20th century in most of the counties. The mining companies of Daviess County continued to rely mainly on slow and labor intensive hand picking methods. After about 1920, strip mining was preferred over the traditional method of mining underground. The companies in Daviess County did not readily adopt the new method. By the mid-1920s, there was little coal mining activity in the county. Although mining does continue in the county to this day, it has never again been as important in Daviess County as it was from about 1880 to 1900. Mining was an industry plagued with problems. Lack of safe conditions, low wages and lack of steady employment led to labor disputes. State regulation of the industry, development of alternate fuels, and the decline of the railroads eventually caused the general decline of the industry in Indiana.

Mining did leave its impact on Washington. It is known, for example, that some of the late 19th century banks were directly involved in mining operations. Even the banks that were not directly involved were involved in financing operations. Mining companies and labor organizations had offices in the city. In addition to these connections, mining provided employment for Washington residents, and generated business activities in the historic district.

Another major impact on the town of Washington was the establishment of the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad Shops, the largest railroad shops in Indiana at the time, in 1889. Earlier O & M shops had been located at Vincennes, Cochran, and Seymour. When the railroad decided to build its larger, consolidated shops, Washington offered a financial incentive, and the shops were located there. In 1899 the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad acquired the O & M line and continued to operate the shops at Washington.

Because of Indiana's central location, a great deal of rail shipping took place in the state, and railroad car construction and repair was an important industry, one that employed a large number of workers. By 1917, 1000 workers were employed at the shops in Washington. These shops are extant a few blocks west of the historic district and are identified in the Indiana Historic Sites and Structures

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 7 Washington Commercial Historic District

Inventory as the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad Washington
Repair Shops Historic District.

In addition to the Ohio and Mississippi, which was an east-west line, the Cleveland, Chicago, Cincinnati, and St. Louis Railroad (later part of the Big Four, then the New York Central system) was a north-south line, built through Washington in the 1880s. The two railroads gave Washington easy access to most major Eastern and Midwest markets.

Between 1887 and 1900, largely because of the impact of the railroads and the railroad shops, the population of the city increased from 4,900 to 8,551. Of the 17 county seats in the coal region, only four others had populations above 5,000 in 1900: Terre Haute in Vigo County, Brazil in Clay County, Vincennes in Knox County, and Princeton in Gibson County.

The combination of the coal industry, the additional railroad line, and the O & M Shops created an economic boom. During this period, from 1857 to about 1900, Washington developed rapidly, and nearly half of the buildings in the commercial district were constructed. Among these were the Meredith House (photo 5), located on the northwest corner of N.E. Second and E. Main Streets, a hotel with stores on the first level; the Washington Hotel, located on the southwest corner of S.E. Third and E. South Streets; a group of Italianate commercial buildings at 11 through 15 S.E. Third Street (photo 15); and the Temple Court Building (right in photo 3), constructed around 1890, a large and elaborate commercial block that housed offices, stores, and a theater. Also surviving from this era is the O & M/B & O Railroad line (now part of the Chessie System), which, as well as representing an important transportation route, effectively defined the southern boundary of the commercial district.

In the years after the turn of the century and before the nationwide economic depression of the 1930s, Washington's population continued to increase, although at a lower rate. Agricultural production was at a high during the first two decades of the 20th century. Farming was continually being improved by new methods and equipment. Agriculture and agriculture-related industries, such as food processing, and production of agricultural implements, became increasingly important to the local economy during this period. The Spink Milling Company, which had been located on the southwest corner of S.E. Second and E. South Street since the late 19th century, was expanded. Part of the complex of buildings that comprised the company became the Daviess County Farm Bureau

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 8 Washington Commercial Historic District

in the 1920s and is extant.

The period from about 1920 to 1939 was a transitional period in agriculture in Daviess County, as it was in Indiana and the Nation. New methods and equipment were available, with the potential to improve farm size and increase production per acre. On the other hand, farm prices were down, and it was difficult for many farmers to acquire the new equipment. Farmers in southern Indiana counties had to operate on land that was generally inferior to that in Northern Indiana.

Daviess County managed to fare relatively well during this period. The large amount of river bottom land was favorable for agricultural use. Corn was the principal crop, but more important were the livestock farms. Daviess County gradually became, and continues to be, one of Indiana's chief producers of cattle, hogs, and poultry.

The WPA guide to Indiana, published in 1941, mentions in particular the Graham Farm, a large scale farm, the products of which included cattle, hogs, chickens, and corn. Also part of the farm were a cheese factory and a privately owned grain elevator. Successful farming operations such as this contributed to growth of the commercial district, evidenced by construction of buildings like the People's National Bank (201 E. Main; Tudor Revival building in photo 19), a Graham family enterprise, in 1928. The five story building was constructed with a banking floor on the first level, and offices on the upper levels, including the offices for the Graham Brothers Farm.

The rise of the automobile also had an effect on the character of Washington's commercial district. In the 1880s, South Street was lined with houses, stores, livery stables, and grain storage facilities. By 1909, an auto repair shop had been established at 117 E. South. Gradually, as automobiles became more popular, auto-related businesses dominated the stretch of South Street between Meridian and S.E. Third Streets. By 1921, there were garages, which both sold and serviced automobiles, at 15, 101, 201, 203, 212,, and 304 E. South. The Standard Oil Company filling station was located on the northwest corner of E. South and S.E. Fourth. There was also a small auto repair shop at 102 E. South. Many of the buildings which housed these auto-related businesses continue to define the character of the street today. The Williams Garage (right in photo 19), located at 101 E. South and unaltered on the exterior, is an example of a c. 1920 garage. Garages located at 201 and 207 E. South

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 9 Washington Commercial Historic District

(right, and second from right in photo 11) also survive from this era.

The major public buildings in Washington were constructed in the early part of the 20th century. City Hall (photo 16) was constructed in 1912; the U.S. Post Office (photo 12) was constructed in 1916; and the Daviess County Courthouse (photo 1) was constructed in 1928. One of the most significant buildings erected during this period is the B & O Passenger Depot (photo 13), constructed in 1906, which represented the continuing importance of the railroad in the 20th century.

Other notable 20th buildings include a commercial building at 215-17 E. Main (second from the left in photo 8); and the Indiana Theater (photo 9), located at 411-419 E. Main.

Daviess County has always been a rural county, with Washington as the commercial and manufacturing center, the governmental center, and the largest settlement, throughout its history. Because of this, the city's main street has the finest collection of historic commercial architecture in the county. The Italianate style, seen in approximately 25% of the buildings, is well represented. Among buildings which exhibit this style are the building at 1 E. Main (right in photo 2), Temple Court, and buildings at 207 and 209 E. Main.

The Neo-classical style was a popular style of the 20th century. Buildings constructed in this mode include the Courthouse, City Hall, the U.S. Post Office, Washington National Bank (photo 6), located at 200-204 E. Main, and Westminster Presbyterian Church (photo 14), located on the southeast corner of E. Walnut and N.E. Second Streets. Other styles represented in the district include Queen Anne (115 N. E. Third Street, left in photo 17); Romanesque Revival (210-214 E. Main Street, left in photo 7); Arts and Crafts (B & O Passenger Depot); and Art Deco (American Steam Laundry, 10 S.E. Fourth Street, photo 18).

The Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory identified only one other commercial historic district in Daviess County. It is comprised of 14 buildings in Oden, located in the northeast corner of the county. Of the buildings in this district which exhibit details of a particular architectural style, one is Colonial Revival, one Art Deco, and one Italianate.

The Washington Commercial Historic District retains its historic character. However, economic pressures have already

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 10 Washington Commercial Historic District

led to changes in the district. In the last couple of years, a new bank building which contrasts with the character of the district was constructed on the northeast corner of E. Vantrees and N. E. Second Streets. A number of buildings on Main Street including 110 and 416-420 E. Main Street, are historic buildings whose facades have been dramatically altered. Daviess County Historic Landmarks, Inc., is aware of the importance of retaining its historic commercial district. The group, which is currently engaged in renovating the E & O Depot for use by the Chamber of Commerce, has initiated this application as a first step in gaining recognition for the district.

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 1 Washington Commercial Historic District

Bibliography

Bingham, Thelma. Daviess County Court House, 1986.
Unpublished brochure.

Chamberlain, E. The Indiana Gazetteer or Topographical
Dictionary of The State of Indiana. Indianapolis: E.
Chamberlain, 1850.

Fulkerson, A.O., Editor. History of Daviess County, Indiana.
Indianapolis: E.F. Bowen and Company, 1915.

History of Knox and Daviess County, Indiana. Chicago: The
Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1886.

"History, Washington, Indiana, Sesquicentennial," 1816-1966.

Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Indiana.
Chicago: Baskin, Forster, and Company, 1876.

Myers, L. Rex. Daviess County, Indiana, History. Paducah,
Kentucky: Turner Publishing Company.

Polk, R.L and Company. Indiana Gazetteer. Indianapolis:
R.L Polk and Company, 1928.

Sanborn Map Company. Washington, Daviess County, Indiana
Maps. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1887, 1896, 1909,
1921, 1930.

Visher, Stephen Sargent. Economic Geography of Indiana. New
York: D. Appleton and Company, 1923.

Writers' Program of the Works Projects Administration.
Indiana. A Guide to the Hoosier State. New York: Oxford
University Press, 1941