

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Redkey Historic District

other names/site number 075-528-56000

2. Location

street & number See continuation sheet

N/A not for publication

city or town Redkey

N/A vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Jay

code 075 zip code 47373

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Patrick R. Rebstm

7-20-92

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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): _____

Redkey H.D.
Name of Property

Jay County, IN
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
25	5	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
25	5	Total

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

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: Specialty store

COMMERCE/TRADE: department store

COMMERCE/TRADE: restaurant

GOVERNMENT: city hall

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

COMMERCE/TRADE: restaurant

GOVERNMENT: city hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

Romanesque Revival

Classical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls BRICK

STONE

roof ASPHALT

other GLASS

METAL: Cast iron

Narrative Description

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

Redkey H.D.
Name of Property

Jay County, IN
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1888 - c.1935

Significant Dates

NA

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Sanders, Charles; Taylor and
Company

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

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 # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Indiana Historic Sites and
Structures Inventory

Redkey H.D.
Name of Property

Jay County, IN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 7.5

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	656810	4468070
Zone	Easting	Northing	
2	16	657200	4468080

3	16	657200	4468080
Zone	Easting	Northing	
4	16	656830	4467900

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Laura Thayer, Historic Preservation Consultant for
organization Historic Redkey, Ind. date February 28, 1992
street & number 3905 N. 500 W. telephone 812/372-6806
city or town Columbus state IN zip code 47201

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Roughly, High Street between Oak and Meridian Streets

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Section No. 7 Page 1 Redkey Historic District

The Redkey Historic District is located in Redkey, Indiana, in southwestern Jay County, in Richland Township. The terrain of the township is generally flat. There are two small towns in the township: Redkey, which in 1980 had a population of 1,537, and Dunkirk, which had a population of 3,180. The county is in an agriculturally rich area of Indiana. State Road 67 runs through Redkey north of the historic district. State Road 1 runs through the district on Meridian Street. There are two railroad tracks through Redkey. These intersect just south of the district.

The Redkey Historic District comprises most of the historic commercial area of the town. It runs along High Street, roughly between Oak and Meridian Streets. There are a total of 30 buildings in the district. Three of these were built after the period of significance and do not contribute to the district's character. These are the Masonic Building, built in 1986 and located on the northeast corner of High and Oak Streets (left in photo 13); the GTE Building, built about 1960 and located at 120 W. High Street; and the U.S. Post Office, built in 1959 and located on the southeast corner of High and Oak Streets (right in photo 14). Two historic buildings have been altered to the extent that they do not contribute to the district's character. These are the Jones Mortuary Buildings located at 105 and 109 S. Meridian (right in photo 3).

All but one of the historic buildings were built for commercial uses. The exception is the City Building, built in 1905, and located on the northwest corner of High and Oak Streets. Historically, most of the commercial buildings were stores, such as grocery stores, clothing stores, meat markets, drug stores, jewelry stores, cigar stores, and hardware stores. Two longtime store were Appenzeller's Department Store, which occupied the building at 101 W. High Street (photo 8) from 1906 to 1977; and Williamson Brothers Hardware Store, located in the building at 119-123 W. High Street (photo 12) from about 1905 to about 1930.

There are two buildings which housed banks: the K of P Building (photo 4), built in 1911 and located at 102-104 S. Meridian Street, which housed the Union State Bank in

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Section No. 7 Page 2 Redkey Historic District

the northeast corner; and the Farmers and Merchants First National Bank Building (right in photo 10), built about 1910 and located at 102 W. High Street. At least two buildings were hotels: the building located at 120-122 W. High Street (fourth from left in photo 13), which housed the Rees Hotel, built about 1890 and remodeled in 1910 for use by the Masonic lodge; and the Gray Hotel (photo 5), built in 1912 and located at 2-10 W. High Street. Several commercial buildings had lodge halls on the second floors. Among these were the I.O.O.F. Building (left in photo 9), built about 1895 and located at 24-26 W. High Street; and the K of P Building (photo 4). There were also restaurants, such as one in the building, built about 1900 and located at 15-17 W. High Street (photo 6); and garages, such as one, built about 1920, located at 110 W. High Street. Many of the buildings had second story offices for insurance companies, doctors, dentists, and attorneys.

The buildings in the district are one to two stories high. Most are brick. A few are concrete block. Although many of the buildings are modest in character, there are number of good examples of architectural styles. Among these are several structures designed in the Romanesque Revival style: the City Building (photo 15); the I.O.O.F. Building (left in photo 9), and a commercial building, built in 1892, and located at 101 S. Meridian Street (left in photo 3). Examples of the Italianate style include the Cultice-Mann Block, built in 1891, and located at 106-108 W. High Street (left in photo 10); and the Brown and Ellis Block, built in 1888 and located at 45 S. Meridian Street (photo 2). Among other styles represented in the district are Neoclassical, in the Farmers and Merchants First National Bank (right in photo 10); and Arts and Crafts, in the Gray Hotel (photo 5).

The buildings were constructed between 1888, when the Brown-Ellis Block (photo 2) was built, and about 1935, when the Red Keychen Cafe was built (right in photo 12). It is possible that some buildings may date from an earlier time, but were remodeled. There are few buildings in the district which date from before 1890. The town was developed prior to that date, but several fires destroyed most of the early commercial buildings.

The district generally has a high degree of integrity.

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with few alterations to the existing historic buildings. A distinctive feature of the district is the large number of store fronts which retain their original appearance. Examples include the storefronts of the Gray Hotel (photo 5), Appenzeller's Department Store (photo 8), and the Theime Block at 130 W. High Street (second from left in photo 13).

Following are descriptions of representative buildings.

City Building, northwest corner of Oak and High Streets, 1905 (photo 15). The City Building is an outstanding local example of the Romanesque Revival style. It is a two story brick building, trimmed in Bedford limestone, with a four story, square corner tower. The main facade, which faces High Street, has two large garage doors on the first level. Originally at this level, there were round arched door openings similar to the windows on the second floor. On the second level of this facade, and on the two street sides of the tower, are round arched window openings with stepped, stone window heads and stone sills. Windows are double hung with one light in each sash, with round arched transoms. Above the windows of the facade, and wrapping around the tower, is a band of decorative brick work with a stone band above. There are brick pilasters at the corners of the main facade and at the corners of the tower. There is a rounded parapet in the center of the main facade, and stone coping at the top of the facade. At the third level of the tower is a vented, round-arched opening with a head like those on the second level. Above this are two bands of decorative brickwork separated by a stone band. There is a large clock, the original Seth-Thomas clock which was installed in 1909, in the fourth level of the tower. The tower has a pyramidal roof and modillions under the eaves. The east facade of the building is comparatively plain, with flat-arched openings and plain stone sills and lintels. There is a dentiled cornice on this facade. The building has one-story brick additions on the rear and on the west side. It is in good condition.

This building has continuously been used for town government purposes since it was completed in 1905. The contractor was Charles L. Sanders, who built the structure for a cost of \$3,287. The tower was originally shorter.

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It was rebuilt in 1909 to accommodate the clock.

Cultice-Mann Block, 106-108 W. High Street, 1891 (left in photo 10). The Cultice-Mann Block is a two story, Italianate style, brick building with a flat roof. It has a four-bay main facade, separated into two stores, each two bays wide. The east cast-iron storefront is nearly intact, with an entry in the center and display windows on each side. Transoms above the door and windows have been covered. The west storefront retains some of its cast-iron elements, but the doors and window openings have been altered. A cast-iron cornice extends the width of the facade above the two storefronts. On the second story, a brick pier divides the two stores. There is also a brick pier at each end of the building. Windows are wood, double hung with one light in each sash. There are cast-iron window heads. A cast-iron cornice extends across the top of the building. The building is in fair condition.

Cultice was a merchant for many years on High Street. An earlier Cultice Building was located on this site but burned in an 1890 fire.

Farmers and Merchants First National Bank, 102 W. High Street, c. 1910 (right in photo 10). The bank is a one-story, Neoclassical style, brick building with a raised basement. It originally had a flat roof. A gabled structure has been built over the building as a temporary roof. The main facade is three bays wide. The entry is in the center. It is reached by a set of stone steps, and has wooden double doors with a multi-light transom. There is a brick portico on the entry bay, supported by stone columns. On each side of the entry is a double hung, wood window with a multi-light transom. The openings have stone sills. The building has stone elements, including the base, water table, column capitals, banding, and coping. The building is in poor condition.

This building was built to house Redkey's second bank.

I.O.O.F. Building, 24-28 W. High Street, c. 1895 (left in photo 9). This is a two-story brick building with a flat roof. The main facade is four bays wide. The building is divided into two parts. The storefronts have been

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altered, but retain cast iron columns and cornice. The building is located on the northeast corner of Union and High. On the west half, elements of the facade wrap around to the side of the building. The entry for this half of the building is located in a 45 degree tangent. The second story has large, round arched windows, which have been boarded up. The upper half of the facade has decorative brickwork and battlements which suggest a castle. A Mail Pouch sign on the east side of the building was restored in the 1980s. The building is in fair condition.

This building had stores on the ground floor and lodge rooms on the second floor.

Gray Hotel, northwest corner of High and Meridian Streets, 1912 (photo 5). The Gray Hotel is a two-story, Arts and Crafts style, brick building with a flat roof. The building has several wood storefronts, five facing on High Street, and two on Meridian Street. The entrance to the corner room is in a 45 degree tangent at the southeast of the building. On the second story are paired and single, wood, double hung windows with one light in each sash. The windows have stone sills and lintels. The building has stone banding and accents, a decorative brick cornice, and battlements at the roof line. The building is in good condition and is virtually unaltered on the exterior.

An earlier hotel was located on this site, but burned. Gray's hotel was built in 1912. The hotel rooms were on the second floor. There were several commercial establishments located on the first floor.

Williamson Brothers Hardware Store, 123 W. High Street, c. 1905 (photo 12). This is a two-story brick building. It is divided into two storefronts. The east store front is four bays wide. The west storefront is two bays wide. Between the two storefronts is a door which accesses a stairway to the second floor. This is a wood and glass, transomed door. The east storefront has a corner entrance on the alley side. There is a cast-iron column at the corner. There are large display windows, with transoms which have been covered, in the other three bays. The west storefront is in its original condition. It has a recessed wood and glass door, large display windows, and prism glass transoms. On the second story, windows are double hung, with wood sashes. Upper sashes are

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multi-light. The window openings have segmental-arched openings and stone sills. The building has a decorative brick cornice. There is a brick pier between the stairway door and the west storefront, which extends the length of the building. There is a like brick pier at the west end of the building. On the east end, are the letters "WILLIAMSON," painted vertically.

Williamson Brothers Hardware Store was located in this building from about 1905 to about 1930.

Appenzeller's Dry Goods Store, 101 W. High Street, 1906 (photo 8). This building, located on the southwest corner of High and Union Streets, is a two-story brick structure with a four-bay facade. There is an unaltered, wood storefront with large display windows, prism glass transoms, and a central entrance. Second story windows are wood, double hung, with one light in each sash. There are stone bands above and below the windows which extend the width of the building. There is brick and stone pier at each end of the building. There is a decorative brick cornice, and battlements at the top of the building.

William Appenzeller came from Findlay, Ohio, during the gas boom era to establish a store in Redkey. After having his store for a few years at two other locations, he became the first renter of this building. In a short time, Appenzeller purchased and remodeled the structure. Appenzeller's son, Harry, took over the operation of the store in the 1930s. Harry Appenzeller sold the building in 1977.

Commercial Building, south side of High Street, east of Union Street, c. 1900 (photo 6). This is a one-story brick building with two storefronts. There are brick piers at each end of the building, and one which divides the two storefronts. The storefronts have been altered. There is a stepped brick cornice at the top of the building. On the east side, a painted Gold Medal Flour sign has been restored.

This building housed Shambarger's Restaurant until 1983. The restaurant, famous throughout Indiana, was a descendent of a French cafe and bakery, operated on this site by the same family since 1885.

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K of P Building, 102 S. Meridian Street, 1911 (photo 4).
The K of P Building is a two-story brick building with stucco scored to resemble stone. The main facade is nine bays wide. There are two storefronts. The south storefront four bays wide. It is wood and glass, with large, transomed display windows. The transoms have been covered over. To the north of this storefront is a recessed area, which has an angled entry to the south store, and a staircase which accesses the second story. The floor of this recessed area is white tile, with black tile spelling out "PIERCE 1911" by the entry to the store, and "K of P" in front of the stairway. The ceiling of the recessed area is pressed metal. The north storefront was altered in 1956. It has a limestone, glass, and aluminum face. On the second story are wood, double hung windows with one light in each sash. There are "quoins" at the corners of this facade. There is also a row of "quoins" between fourth and fifth bays from the south, and between the sixth and seventh bays from the south, dividing the facade into three parts: the south storefront, the section which contains the recessed area on the first story, and the north storefront. Around the top of the building are a row of stuccoed panels, and battlements.

This building contained the Pierce Drugstore in the south part, the Union State Bank in the northeast corner, and the Knights of Pythias hall above. The drugstore and the bank faced Meridian Street. There were also two small stores on High Street, at the rear of the building. Union State Bank was the successor of Redkey's first bank, the Bank of Redkey, formerly located in a smaller brick building on this site. The contractor for the building was Taylor and Company of Muncie.

Brown and Ellis Block, 101 N. Meridian Street, 1888 (photo 2). The Brown and Ellis Block is a two-story building with a three-bay main facade. The storefront has been covered over. On the second story are wood, double hung windows with one light in each sash. There are curved, cast-iron window hoods, and stone window sills. There are cast-iron "quoins" at each end of this facade, and a cast-iron, stepped, curved, parapet.

The ground floor of this building housed the U.S. Post Office from 1893 to 1959.

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Section No. 8 Page 1 Redkey Historic District

The Redkey Historic District is significant under Criterion A in the area of Commerce, and under Criterion C, in the area of Architecture. The district represents commercial development in Redkey from 1888 to about 1935. It is associated with industrial development starting with the discovery of natural gas in 1886. There are few intrusions and alterations in the district, making it an excellent representation of commercial development within this context.

Redkey was originally a small village called Halfway which may have been settled as early as 1836, soon after Jay County was organized. The settlement was first platted as Mt. Vernon in 1854 by William Harrison Wade. This plat consisted of two blocks and was bounded by present-day Main Street, Meridian Street, Union Street, and an alley on the south. When James Redkey first came to Redkey, in 1856, there were four dwellings, a sawmill, and a store. The village was isolated because of the dense forests of Jay County, and the lack of roads and railroads. Most settlers in the area were farmers.

James Redkey owned land west of the plat of Mt. Vernon. In the late 1860s, when the Columbus, Chicago, and Indiana Railroad was surveyed south of the plat, Redkey platted the area bounded by present-day Union Street, High Street, and the railroad right-of-way. When the railroad came through, the station was called Redkey. Soon after, the name of the town was changed to Redkey to avoid confusion with Mt. Vernon in Posey County. The railroad established Redkey as a market town and shipping point. Lots in the new addition sold quickly, and new industries were built. In the 1870s, three new additions were platted.

The town was given a further boost in 1879 when the Lake Erie and Western Railroad came through, intersecting the earlier railroad - now the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and St. Louis - just south of the Redkey plat. One local historian reported that the town's population was about 200 before the second railroad arrived. In 1880, the U.S. Census recorded it as 386. By 1881, Redkey had a saw mill, a tile mill, and a stave factory. There were also twenty stores, two hotels, three warehouses, and a livery stable. In 1883, the Brown Handle Factory was founded. The Jay and Company Grain Elevator was built in 1884.

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In 1886, natural gas was discovered in Jay County. This was an event which was to have an impact on a 19-county region in east-central Indiana, often called the "gas belt." The gas boom was a key factor in accelerating industrialization in this part of Indiana. In the ten years following the discovery of natural gas, three thousand wells were drilled in Jay County alone. Approximately \$3,000,000 was spent on drilling in the county, a tremendous economic investment for the time. New factories were built in the region. In 1893 it was estimated that at least 300 factories had been built in Indiana as a result of the gas boom. The population of the gas belt soared. The population of Redkey, for example, grew from 386 in 1880 to 2,206 in 1900. The nearby Delaware County seat of Muncie grew from 5,219 to 20,942 in the same period.

By 1896, the main period of drilling was over. The gas belt had become the largest natural gas field in the world. Unfortunately, much of the gas was wasted. Laws were passed in the 1890s to encourage conservation of the resource, but these were largely ignored. By about 1906, the supply of natural gas was depleted. As a result, many of the new industries moved out of the gas belt, closer to other fuel sources. The population of many of the region's cities and towns decreased, or at least showed a slower rate of growth.

The gas boom had a tremendous effect on Redkey. There were a number of wells located in the vicinity of the town. Several industries located there to take advantage of the abundant supply of the inexpensive fuel. The Redkey Gas, Oil, and Mining Company was organized in March 1887. Soon afterward, the company was acquired by the Ohio and Indiana Pipe Line Company, which controlled it until the gas was depleted, in 1906. Natural gas was particularly suited to the manufacture of glass. Among new industries which located in Redkey in the 1880s and 1890s were four glass factories. Other industries were attracted to the town as well. By 1887, the McKennett Flax Mill and the Ayers Lumber Company were located in Redkey. The same year, the New York Spoke Factory started construction. By 1893, there were 12 industries employing 155 people.

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Industrial growth led to commercial development. Redkey's oldest existing business, the Jones Mortuary at 105-109 S. Meridian, was started as a furniture store and funeral home in 1886. The first bank, the Bank of Redkey, located on the southwest corner of High and Meridian Streets, opened in 1886. In 1887, there were approximately 30 stores, two hotels, two liveries, and two restaurants. Commercial growth resulted in a building boom on High Street. Prior to the discovery of natural gas, there were only a few commercial buildings. Many of these were wood. After 1886, many new brick buildings were constructed. A series of fires wiped out a large number of buildings between about 1890 and about 1905. As a result of these fires there are no known commercial buildings in the district which pre-date the natural gas era. The town was prosperous, and after the fires, the buildings were rebuilt to be larger and grander than before.

One of the oldest buildings in the district is the Italianate style Cultice-Mann Block (left in photo 10), located at 106-108 W. High Street, built in 1891 after an earlier Cultice building was destroyed by fire in 1890. Cultice was the postmaster for many years and also had a cigar and stationary store. Another Italianate style building, the Brown and Ellis Block (photo 2), constructed in 1893, is located at 101 N. Meridian Street. This building was the post office from 1893 to 1959. Other buildings constructed in the 1890s include the Theime Block at 130 W. High (second from left in photo 13), the Rees Restaurant at 126 W. High (third from left in photo 13), the Masonic Hall at 124 W. High (fourth from left in photo 13), the I.O.O.F. Building at 24-28 W. High (left in photo 9), and a commercial building at 101 S. Meridian Street (left in photo 3).

Prosperity continued into the 20th century, and a new town hall was completed in 1905. This is a Romanesque Revival style building located on the northwest corner of Oak and High Streets (photo 15). A large new store, Appenzeller's Department Store, was built in 1906 at 101 W. High Street (left in photo 8). The Muncie and Portland Traction Company completed an interurban line through Redkey in 1906. This line went through town on Main Street, one block north of High.

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Section No. 8 Page 4 Redkey Historic District

By about 1906, the natural gas was depleted. Many of Redkey's industries closed or were relocated, including all of the glass factories. The population dropped from a high of 2,206 in 1900 to 1,386 in 1920. Despite this economic decline, however, Redkey's commercial district remained vital. On the Sanborn map of 1909, only three stores on High Street are noted as vacant. City directories of 1910, 1927, and 1937 show continuation of existing businesses, and steady increases in the number of new ones. There was still enough confidence in the town for a large commercial building, which housed three stores, a bank and the Knights of Pythias hall, to be constructed. This was the K of P Building, located on the southwest corner of Meridian and High Streets (photo 4). An attractive new hotel, which contained several retail spaces and a restaurant, was built in 1912. This was Gray's Hotel, located on the northwest corner of High and Meridian Streets (photo 5).

Factors which contributed to the stability of the commercial district included Redkey's position on two railroad lines; the increase in the value of agricultural products during the first 20 years of the 20th century; the growth of the canning industry which started in Redkey in 1916, when Caar Canning Company was established; and the development of the state highway system, which would result in the establishment of two state highways, S.R. 1 and S.R. 67, through Redkey. Industries which remained in Redkey after the gas boom era were related to agriculture or lumber. Among these were a tile factory, saw mills, elevator, feed mills, and a spoke factory.

The most noticeable change in the commercial district in the early 20th century was the establishment of new businesses related to the automobile. In the 1927 city directory, there are eight businesses listed under the headings of "Auto Accessories," "Auto Sales," or "Filling Stations." One of these was Steed's Tire and Battery Shop, which was located in the building at 110 W. High Street, built about 1920. This building is operated as a service station today. The last building to be constructed within the period of significance was the Red Keychen Cafe, a tiny brick building abutting the Williamson Brothers Hardware Store (photo 12).

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The Redkey Historic District has a high degree of integrity, because of few intrusions, alterations, and demolitions. Only three buildings in the district were constructed after the period of significance. These are the Masonic Building (left in photo 13), located on the northeast corner of Oak and High Streets, constructed in 1986; the U.S. Post Office (right in photo 14), located on the southeast corner of Oak and High Streets, constructed in 1959; and the GTE Building, located on the north side of High Street, west of Union, constructed about 1960. Only about four buildings in the district which are recorded on the Sanborn map of 1924 are not extant. These were all one-story, small-scale buildings. The district is also distinctive for the large number of buildings which retain their original storefronts.

Because of its high degree of integrity, the Redkey Historic District is an excellent representation of commercial development in Jay County during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It contains most of the historic buildings associated with commerce in Redkey. Buildings related to commerce outside the district include the Merchants Hotel located on the southeast corner of Main and Meridian Streets. This building was located on the interurban line. There are several commercial buildings on Meridian Street, in the block south of High Street. These were not included in the district because of extensive alterations. The depots associated with the two railroad lines are gone. The factories and warehouses associated with industries of Redkey are either gone, are dilapidated, or have been extensively altered.

The Redkey Historic District is one of only three commercial districts identified in the Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory in Jay County. The Dunkirk Commercial Historic District is another of these. It is also located in Richland Township, and has a history which is similar to that of Redkey's. Dunkirk was first settled in the 1830s, but had no significant growth until the 1850s. The railroad, which came through town in the late 1860s, resulted in establishment of Dunkirk as a market town and shipping point, and a rapid increase in the population. The gas boom brought new industry to Dunkirk, whose population grew from 662 in 1880 to 3,187 in 1900. The failure of natural gas resulted in the decline of

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industry and a drop in the population - which had fallen to 2,532 by 1920 - but did not affect Dunkirk as severely as it did Redkey. Dunkirk retained two natural gas era glass factories, which remain important employers in Dunkirk today. Dunkirk's commercial district is similar in size and appearance to the one in Redkey. A large number of the buildings date from the last decade of the 19th and the first of the 20th centuries. Possibly because it was larger and somewhat more prosperous than Redkey after the gas boom, there are a comparatively larger number of intrusions and alterations to buildings in the Dunkirk historic district.

The third commercial district in Jay County is the Portland Commercial Historic District, located in the county seat. As the center of county government, Portland has historically had a larger and grander commercial district than either Redkey or Dunkirk. Portland was laid out in 1837 as the county seat. Located on the Salamonie River, it has always been the county's most important commercial and industrial center. The first railroad came through Portland in 1871, resulting in increased industrial development and economic growth. Portland was affected in a positive way by the gas boom. Although not located in the gas fields, as were Redkey and Dunkirk, it had access to the fuel by pipeline. Industrial development continued through the early part of the 20th century, resulting in expansion of the commercial area. The Portland Commercial Historic District has approximately 65 historic structures, dating from about 1880 to 1940. A wide range of commercial uses and architectural styles are represented in the district. The district retains a fairly high degree of integrity, but has a comparatively larger number of intrusions and alterations than the Redkey district.

Eight other commercial buildings in Portland were identified in the Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory. Two were given ratings of outstanding: the Haynes Milling Company, built c. 1876/c. 1896, on E. Votaw Street; and the Coca Cola Bottling Company Building, built in 1938, on E. Arch Street.

Eight historic commercial buildings remain in other parts of Jay County. None of these was given a rating of

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outstanding in the Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory.

The Redkey Historic District is significant for its architecture. It contains the finest collection of late 19th century and early 20th century architecture in Redkey. Many of the district's buildings are unusually elaborate for a town the size of Redkey, reflecting the town's wealth at the turn of the 20th century. Among fine examples of academic styles are the Romanesque Revival City Building (photo 15), and the Italianate Brown and Ellis Block (photo 2). The architecture of the district is discussed more fully in Section 7. Elsewhere in town, there are only nine examples of academic styles. Two are churches; seven are houses. Of these, only two were given ratings of outstanding in the Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory: the Romanesque Revival Methodist Church, built in 1896, and located on Main Street; and the Free Classic Current House, built in 1901 and located at 32 North Union Street.

In the 1960s, the population of Redkey began to decline. Factors such as the decline of the railroads, the development of the interstate highway system, and the sale of Caar Canning Company had a negative effect. Today, the town has no industry. Its residents commute to jobs in Portland and Muncie. Many of the buildings in the district are vacant. Historic Redkey, Inc. is working to revitalize Redkey. Seeking National Register status for the commercial district is a step in this process.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the northwest corner of lot 32 of the Original Plat of Redkey; thence east, along the south side of the east-west alley north of High Street, to the west side of Union Street; thence south to a point on the axis of the rear property line of the building on the northeast corner of Union and High Streets; thence east, across a north-south alley east of Union Street; to the southeast side of the right-of-way of the old L. E. and W. Railroad; thence northeast along said right of way to the west side of Meridian Street; thence south, along the west side of Meridian to a point on the axis of the north property line of the building on the northeast corner of Meridian and High Streets; thence east along said property line to the west side of a north-south alley east of Meridian Street; thence south along the west side of said alley, across High Street, to the south boundary of the property located at 109 S. Meridian Street; thence west along said boundary to the east side of Meridian Street; thence north along the east side of Meridian Street to a point on the axis of lot 1 of the plat of Mt. Vernon; thence west, across Meridian Street, along the south boundary of said lot to the west side of the north-south alley west of Meridian Street; thence south along the west side of said alley to the southeast corner of lot 11 of the plat of Mt. Vernon; thence west 16 feet; thence north to the south boundary of lot 12 of said plat; thence west, across Union Street, to the west side of Union Street; thence south, along the west side of Union Street to the north side of the east-west alley south of High Street; thence west, along the north side of said alley, to the west side of the north-south alley east of Oak Street; thence south 12 feet; thence west to axis of the west boundary of lot 41 of the Original Plat of Redkey; thence north to the south boundary of lot 42 of said addition; thence west along said boundary to the east side of Oak Street; thence north, along the east side of Oak Street to the northeast corner of Oak and High Streets; thence west along the north side of High Street to the west boundary of the building on the northwest corner of High and Oak Streets; thence north along said boundary to the south side of the north-south alley north of High Street; thence east, across High Street, to the point of beginning.

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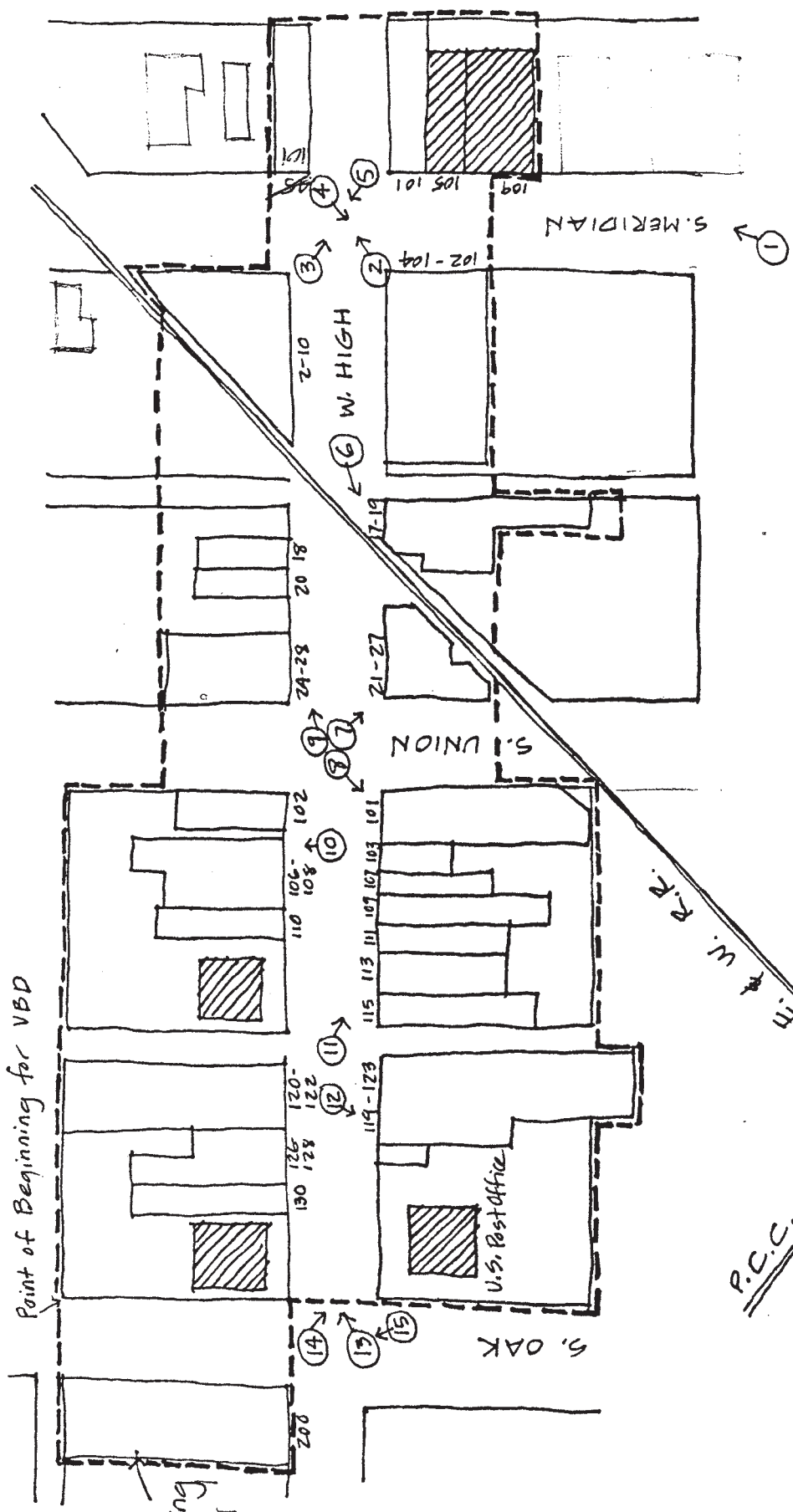
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Boundary Justification


The commercial area of Redkey has historically included the two-and-a-half blocks west of Meridian Street; the block of Meridian south of High Street; and the block of Meridian north of High Street. The boundaries have been drawn to include this area, except for the exclusion of non-contributing properties along the edges.

Point of Beginning for VBD

City Building



REDKEY HISTORIC DISTRICT
Jay County

- ↑ north
- boundary
- ⊙ photo view
-  noncontributing

REDKEY QUADRANGLE

INDIANA

7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

31641 NE
(BLAINE)

