

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 any 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 Downtown Aurora Historic District

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number: Bounded by Importing, Water, Market, Fifth, and Exporting Streets

not for publication: N/A

city or town Aurora vicinity _____

state Indiana code IN county Dearborn code 029

zip code 47001

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide X locally. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

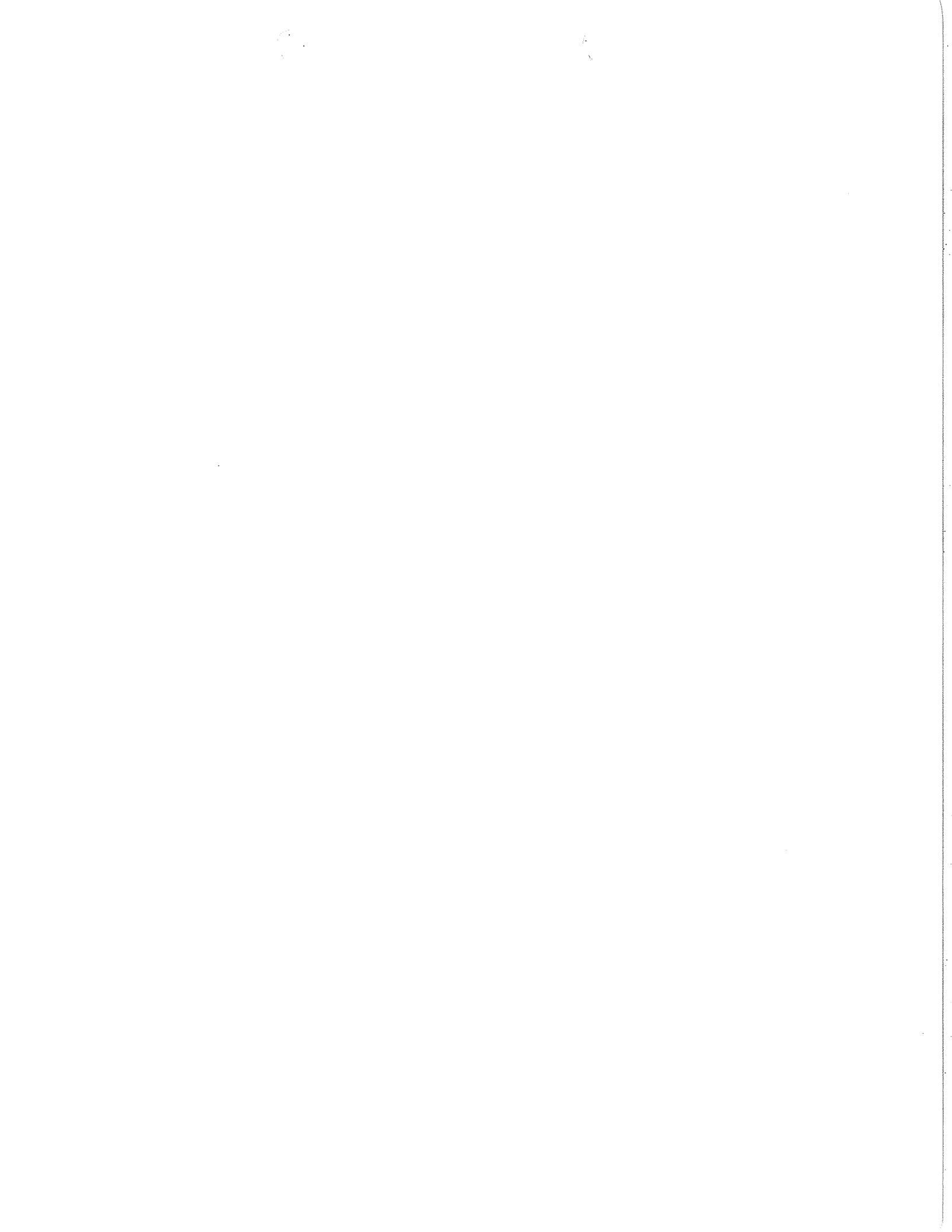
Patrick R. Roberts 8/5/94
Signature of certifying official Date

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 for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau



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6. Function or Use
=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE/TRADE Sub: specialty store
business
department store
DOMESTIC single dwelling
hotel
RELIGION religious facility
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACT. manufacturing facility
TRANSPORTATION rail-related, road-related

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE/TRADE Sub: specialty store
business
department store
DOMESTIC single dwelling
RELIGION religious facility
TRANSPORTATION rail-related, road-related

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7. Description
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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Federal
Greek Revival
Gothic Revival
Italianate
Second Empire
Romanesque Revival
Queen Anne
Renaissance Revival
Classical Revival
Bungalow/Craftsman
Other: American Four Square

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone
Concrete
roof metal
Asphalt
walls WOOD:Weatherboard
Brick
other METAL: aluminum, tin, cast iron
STONE: slate

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) - See Continuation Sheets, Pages #7-42

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8. Statement of Significance
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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.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a 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
 TRANSPORTATION
 INDUSTRY

Period of Significance c.1830-1944

Significant Dates _____

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation _____

Architect/Builder Rogers, Isaiah
Hamilton, John R.
Garber, Frederick & Woodward, Clifford

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets. - See Continuation Sheets, Pages #43-50)

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9. Major Bibliographical References
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History of Dearborn and Ohio Counties, Indiana, F. E. Weakley & Co., Chicago, 1885
Shaw, Archibald, History of Dearborn County, Indiana, B. F. Bowen & Co., 1915
Deed Record books, Recorder's Office, Dearborn County Courthouse, Lawrenceburg, Indiana
Sanborn Map and Publishing Co., Sanborn Map of Aurora, Indiana, New York, 1887, 1892, 1897,
1906, 1911, 1917, 1917 (corrected to 1935)
Wiggins & Weaver's Ohio River Directory for 1871-72, Wiggins & Weaver, Cleveland, 1871
Telephone Directory, August 1930, The Southern Indiana Telephone Company
McElvoy's Lawrenceburg, Aurora, and Rising Sun Directory, 1859-1860
Boland's Location Map of the Business Center of Aurora, Indiana (n.d. - c.1890)
Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, Dearborn County Interim Report: Indiana Historic
Sites and Structures Inventory, 1983

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

- _x_ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
x Other

Name of repository: Hillforest, 213 Fifth Street, Aurora, Indiana 47001

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreeage of Property _approx. 100 acres_

UTM References

Table with 6 columns: Zone, Easting, Northing, Zone, Easting, Northing. Rows A-D.

Verbal Boundary Description

(See enclosed maps which note the district boundaries)

Boundary Justification

Downtown

The boundaries of the Aurora Historic District generally follow those outlined in the Dearborn County Interim Report conducted in 1983 by Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana. These boundaries acknowledge the mainly geographical features which frame the district. These are Hogan Creek to the north next to Importing Street, the hill to the south above Fifth Street, the railroad tracks and Rt. 50 to the west, and the river on the east. (See Continuation Sheet, Page #51)

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11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Rita Walsh/ Principal Investigator, Historic Preservation
organization Gray & Pape, Inc. date February 15, 1994
street & number 1318 Main Street telephone (513) 287-7700
city or town Cincinnati state OH zip code 45210

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Additional Documentation
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Continuation Sheets, Pages 7 through 51

Maps

Aurora, Indiana - Kentucky 7.5 minute U.S.G.S. 1981 quadrangle map.
Sketch map showing building footprints, addresses, non-contributing status, and
photograph directions

Photographs

43 5" x 7" black and white photographs of the district.

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Property Owners
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name See Continuation Sheets #
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.
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Downtown Aurora Historic District
Dearborn County, Indiana

The Downtown Aurora Historic District is located in southeastern Indiana in the southeastern corner of Dearborn County along the Ohio River. The district is located within the present incorporation limits of the City of Aurora and is loosely defined by the geographical features of Hogan Creek on the north, the Ohio River on the east, a steep hill overlooking the district to the south, and the five-lane Route 50 to the west. The city is located approximately 26 miles southwest of Cincinnati and three miles south of the county seat of Lawrenceburg, which also borders the Ohio River. The district, which is roughly square-shaped with a leg on the southeast corner along Market Street, encompasses about 25 blocks constituting approximately 100 acres. The total number of resources in the district is 344, with 276 contributing and 68 non-contributing. Ancillary buildings included in the count include nineteenth century frame stables and sheds, early twentieth century concrete block and frame garages, and c. 1950s concrete block garages. There are 58 examples of this type of building in the district. The Mary A. Stratton Park on Fifth Street is a contributing site. The remaining stone foundation wall and beer storage cellars of the c. 1871 Crescent Brewery on the east side of Market Street and the stone-lined gutters are the three contributing structures. The Thomas Gaff Residence/Hillforest Museum, was listed in the National Register in 1971 and recognized as a National Historic Landmark in 1992. The 1887 Pratt Truss George Street bridge was listed in the National Register in 1984. The latest building to be included in the Register is the Aurora Public Library, listed in 1993.

More specifically, the district's boundaries are the lots along the south bank of Hogan Creek on the north side, the east side of Judiciary Street and Water Streets as the eastern border, the southern end of lots fronting on Fifth Street and roughly the northern 1340 feet of Market Street on the south, and the west side of Exporting Street, along the Baltimore & Ohio railroad tracks, on the west. The north and east sides of the district lie in a floodplain adjacent to Hogan Creek and the Ohio River. The topography rises both to the south and west around Third Street and Main Street to a level terrace area. South of Fourth Street, a wide steep hill prevents the continuation of east-west streets further south than Fifth. Market Street leads south up a hill from Fifth and Water Streets, bordered on both sides by hillsides which gently slope upward from the street.

The original plat's gridded street pattern is typical of nineteenth century towns, but a few of its street names are unusual and quite categorical regarding their intended future functions. Importing and Exporting Streets on the north and west sides fulfilled their designation as the main industrial areas, although Judiciary Street on the district's east side became the venue for livery and industrial concerns as well as a few residences. Literary or Library Street, now known as Fifth Street, has always been predominantly residential, although lots had been set aside for churches, a library, and a seminary on the street. Bridge or Bridgeway Street was obviously named for this intended purpose, but the bridge over Hogan Creek was constructed to connect with Main Street to reach the community to the north. Both Bridgeway and Mechanic Streets, the next street parallel to the east, contained businesses, industries and numerous laborers' homes. At the entrance to Market Street, the road's broader width was reserved for a market space, but was not employed extensively for this use. The above-mentioned streets were accompanied by the more common names of Second through

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Fifth Streets and Main Street. Interestingly, the historical and present activities on the streets each possess a distinct and generally single-function character. The east-west streets portray this trait more so, while the north-south streets generally followed the pattern of the intersecting street. The blocks north of Third between Water and Exporting are larger and contain public squares in the center of each, which were historically used for ancillary industrial purposes, such as storage and small industry, but are now mainly used for parking. The steep inclines of some of the north-south streets between Fourth and Fifth Streets are bordered by wide stone-lined gutters, which remain in very good condition.

The buildings within the district range in age from c. 1830 (201 Fifth Street) to c. 1980 (225 Mechanic Street), but most date from the mid- to late nineteenth century and display an extensive variety of building types and functions - commercial, residential, industrial, institutional (religious, educational, governmental and fraternal), and transportation. Most of the commercial, educational, transportation, industrial and institutional structures are of brick construction, while residences are almost equally constructed of frame and brick. The architectural styles represented are those most prevalent during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, particularly the Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Colonial and Classical Revivals, and American Four Square and Bungalow house types. One bungalow (157 Market Street, Photo #42) has been identified as a Sears, Roebuck & Co. mail-order house. Several of the institutional buildings are architect-designed, virtually all from Cincinnati, while most of the residences and commercial structures were the product of local builders and contractors.

The buildings maintain an impressive state of preservation overall and are generally well-maintained. The district displays few large gaps of vacant lots or a preponderance of recently-constructed buildings. Alterations to the older structures include remodeling of storefront windows, the application of aluminum or vinyl siding or cosmetic front facade screens, and additions on the rear and sides of buildings.

The physical appearance of the streets within the district are summarized below, beginning with the east-west streets from north to south, followed by the north-south streets from west to east. A brief physical depiction of each street is followed by descriptions of representative buildings. The list of contributing and non-contributing structures (see Continuation Sheets, Pages #21-37) also provides a more detailed accounting of each structure with an estimated or documented date of construction and functional type.

Importing Street (Photograph #1)

Importing Street, adjacent to the south bank of Hogan Creek, was the principal industrial corridor in downtown Aurora during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Remnants of a railroad siding along the south side of the street and the two- and three-story brick industrial buildings recall the historical function of the area. These buildings are located on both sides of one block between Mechanic and Main Streets. Most of the brick nineteenth century buildings which remain on the street were originally part of the T. and

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Downtown Aurora Historic District
Dearborn County, Indiana

J. W. Gaff & Co. Distillery founded in 1843, one of the earliest industries in the community. The distillery was subsequently named the Aurora Distillery and then as the Sunnyside Distillery. Later in the nineteenth century, the buildings were taken over by chair manufacturing companies - the Indianapolis Chair Company on the south side and the H. W. Smith Company on the north side. The operations of the Aurora Gas and Coke Company, also backed by the Gaff brothers, and its various successors were located on the south side of the street between the distillery buildings and Main Street.

West of Mechanic Street, outside of the district boundaries, lie vacant lots and two newer structures, a bank and a store, on each side of the street. Not surprisingly, the scenic route designation for State Route 156, which runs beside the Ohio River, commences just east of these lots at the intersection with Mechanic Street. To the east, a newer building on the north side next to the 1887 iron Pratt Truss George Street Bridge (NR 1984) is the only structure which fronts on Importing Street east of Main Street, but is not included within the district boundaries.

322-304 Importing Street, T. and J. W. Gaff & Co. Distillery/Aurora Distillery Co./Sunnyside Distillery Buildings (Photograph #1) - These two connected structures on the north side of the street between Mechanic and Main were originally built for the T. and J. W. Gaff & Co. Distillery around 1843. The westernmost structure is a relatively intact two-story brick building with a shed roof. The eastern building is a one-story concrete block structure, which appears to date from the mid-twentieth century, that rests on the original high stone foundation of an earlier structure. The 1887 Sanborn map indicated that the structures were used as a mill and corn house in a vast operation which filled the entire south side of Importing Street from the Baltimore & Ohio railroad tracks on the west to the Ohio River on the east.

Second Street (Photographs #2-9)

Second Street presents the appearance of the quintessential small-town Midwestern business district, characterized by the two- and three-story brick buildings, many topped by metal cornices, which are closely lined together next to the sidewalk. All of the blocks display a lively diversity of styles from different periods, which are unified by their similar scales and setbacks. The nineteenth century styles represented are mainly Greek Revival, Italianate, and Queen Anne, while twentieth century styles include renditions of wire-cut brick, one-story commercial and brick and concrete classical revivals.

The historic and present transportation systems have shaped the dissimilar architectural aspects of the east and west termini of the street. The west end, adjacent to the railroad tracks and the heavily-used, multi-lane Route 50, includes a mid-nineteenth century brick hotel building and early twentieth century brick train station, as well as several one-story, mid-twentieth century structures which serve the heavier traffic flow at the west end (Photos #2 and 3). The lack of traffic at the east end, due to the routing of State Route 156 away from this block and its one-way designation, has resulted in its quieter demeanor. A railroad line siding constructed at the east end along Judiciary and Water Streets in the 1880s to connect with the Crescent Brewery on Market Street

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had little effect on its architectural development. The block at the east end contains uniformly-sized, smaller scale brick buildings from c. 1850-1870, characteristic of many Ohio River town's early business blocks (Photos #7 and 8). The river town appearance is reinforced by these small brick buildings with their steeply-pitched side gable roofs which have bridged chimneys and front dormers. Ornate cast-iron balconies are still intact on two buildings.

The buildings which housed many of Aurora's old and well-known businesses remain on the street, including the brick Italianate Ullrich's Drugstore, presently the Steamboat Clinton Restaurant, at 301 Second Street (Photo #6), the 1924 classical revival (over the original Second Empire structure) First National Bank (now Star Bank) at 340 Second Street, and the Queen Anne building of the dry goods firm of Chambers, Stevens & Company remodeled in 1900 at 222 Main Street (Photos #8 and 34).

Although predominantly commercial, the street also contains several community buildings, including the 1878 Leive, Parks and Stapp Opera House, (321-325 Second, Photo #5, fifth building on left), a restrained First Renaissance Revival executed in brick with pressed tin trim emulating stone quoins; the 1887 Romanesque Revival I.O.O.F. Hall, its three-story presence on the street heightened by an elaborate observation tower, and the 1913 Aurora Public Library (NR 1993), which is a small brick Second Renaissance Revival structure designed by Cincinnati architects, Garber & Woodward (414 Second Street, Photo #4). The building's singular character is enhanced by its sloping grassy front lawn and mature trees.

The major type of building alteration has been the replacement of original storefront elements and the installation of cosmetic or more permanently-applied screens, which may have required the removal of historic architectural elements. An example of the former is seen at 216-218 Second Street, a c. 1845 side gable brick structure with bridged chimneys; its front facade is completely hidden by a vertical siding screen and windows have been installed only on the first floor (Photo #8, third building from left). The latter instance is exhibited at 318 Second, a former c. 1910 commercial building with a two-story bay; replacement 1/1 sash, the application of permastone to the storefront, and a smooth stucco coating over the entire front of the building cause it be classified now as a non-contributing structure (Photograph #5, third building from right). A more recent remodeling on two connected structures, 406 Second and 116-120 Bridgeway, subjected the two c. 1950s buildings to half-timbered fronts and false steeply-pitched roofs, which has no reference to the community's history (Photo #4, fourth building on left).

The c. 1930 concrete block garage at the east end of Second Street, at 204 Second Street, reflects the early twentieth century concentration of automobile-related businesses in the northeast corner of the district. Buildings constructed on the street since 1944 include the VFW hall (220 Second Street, Photo #8, second building on left) on the east end and the c. 1974 one-story, flat-roofed addition to the 1887 I.O.O.F. Hall (419 Second Street) close to the west end.

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510 Second Street, Baltimore and Ohio Southwest Railroad Passenger Station (Photo #2) - The B & O Railroad Station was constructed between 1911 and 1917 to replace a similarly-shaped frame station which had been built for the Ohio & Mississippi line. The station is the only railroad-related building left in the district; the other buildings were a freight station across the tracks north of the Aylor & Meyer Mill (240 Exporting Street) and a telegraph office located next to the earlier passenger station. A depot was also situated across town at Water and Second Streets adjacent to the Ohio River for the Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati & St. Louis (CCC & ST L) Railroad.

The one-story, rectangular plan brick structure has a saddle-back hip roof which is covered in red pan tiles. The station's characteristic wide eaves are ornamented by simple rounded rafters. Both the east and west sides of the roof contain long shed roof dormers.

414 Second Street, Aurora Public Library (Photo # 4) - This one-story Italian Renaissance Revival library was built in 1913 after the designs of the Cincinnati architectural firm of Garber and Woodward. The symmetrical front facade features a central round-arched entrance with a tall set of steps leading up to it. Above the entrance is a bronze plaque which reads, "ERECTED BY GEORGIANA SUTTON IN MEMORY OF HER FATHER AND MOTHER 1913". The flanking round-arched windows alternate with round Rookwood terra cotta medallions in the spandrel area. The saddle-back hip roof has extended eaves which are decorated with exposed rafters.

The building was erected with funds donated by Georgiana Sutton, a community leader in the early twentieth century, and member of a prominent family which settled in Aurora in the 1830s. The architectural firm of Frederick Garber and Clifford Woodward was in existence from 1904-1933. The firm worked with a number of nationally-known architects including Cass Gilbert and John Russell Pope. The building was listed in the National Register in 1993.

415 Second Street, I.O.O.F. Building - The three-story brick Romanesque Revival building is crowned by a pyramidal-roofed tower, causing it to be one of the most visually prominent buildings on the street. The building's rich decorative appearance is obscured, however, on the first two stories by a metal covering and storefront awning.

The International Order of Odd Fellows built this hall in 1887 to replace their 1848 brick structure on Judiciary Street (213 Judiciary). The second story contained the Lyric Theater, the first major competitor to the community's opera house, known as the Leive, Parks and Stapp Opera House or the Grand Opera House (321-325 Second Street).

319-317 Second Street, John Neff Building (Photo #6, fourth building on left) - Still in business today, the Neff Shoe Store has been at this location for nearly 110 years. John Neff was originally in partnership with Frank Schipper, an association which lasted from 1885 until 1893. After that date, the two carried on separate, successful establishments on Second Street.

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The wide, two-story brick building features an elaborate pressed-tin entablature, pressed brick front, and an early twentieth century hanging sign in the shape of a man's ankle-high shoe which advises, "Wear Neff Shoes". Concrete beltcourses on the upper story add to its horizontality. Its three storefronts exhibit varying degrees of alteration, but all still retain the original iron columns.

222 Second Street, Chamber, Stevens & Co. Dry Goods Store (Photographs #8 and 34) - Chambers, Stevens & Co. was founded in 1840 in Aurora by Josiah Chambers and Levi A. Stevens. Both Chambers and Stevens resided on Fifth Street. In addition to their dry goods business, they sold queensware, hats and caps, and operated a retail grocery.

The two-story brick building appears to be the original mid-nineteenth century, seen in its simple west facade along Main Street, which was remodeled with an oriel corner tower and deep entablature of decorative pressed metal. A free-standing sign on the top of the Main Street facade displays two dates, 1840 and 1900, the latter presumably the date of the remodeling. Sanborn maps, however, indicate that the oriel tower was added between 1906 and 1911.

Third Street (Photographs #9-17)

This street has always functioned as a transitional zone between the commercial and industrial areas on Importing and Second Streets and the residential district on Fourth and Fifth Streets, containing a mix of all such uses. Historically, the street was a venue for small-scale industrial uses, such as lumber yards, a chair manufacturing company, and flour mill, all concentrated at the west end. An anomaly on the street is the south side between Mechanic and Bridgeway Streets which displays a uniform streetscape of modestly-sized residences from the 1850s to the 1920s.

511 Third Street, United States Post Office (Photograph #10) - The one-story, brown brick Georgian Revival post office was built in 1935 on the former site of a nineteenth century chair factory and a tobacco warehouse. Louis Simon was the supervising architect and Neal Melick was the supervising engineer. The flat-roofed building features a symmetrical five-bay front with a slightly recessed central entrance section. The round-arched entrance is flanked by a large round-arched window on each side, all of which have keystones. The end windows on the front facade and the windows on the other elevations are narrow and rectangular glazed with a four-pane column of glass. Quoins, executed in brick, accent the corners. The intact interior is notable for its wall mural, "Down to the Ferry" installed in 1938. Funded through the Section of Fine Arts, a small New Deal Agency, the mural was painted by Indianapolis artist, Henrik Martin Mayer.

315 Third Street, Dr. George Sutton Office (Photograph #14) - This small brick Second Empire structure was built for Dr. George Sutton, a local physician prominent in state medical circles for his research endeavors, particularly on the cause of cholera. The building was built around 1870 to replace his earlier office on the street and was occupied by Dr. Sutton and his sons until around 1921. The property remains today in the possession of the Sutton family.

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The 1-1/2 story Sutton office building is a charming version of the Second Empire style, seen on a limited number of commercial structures and residences in the district. The small building has a long rectangular plan and mansard roof with dormers on the front and sides. Its ornamented metal cornice encircles the front and east sides.

306 Third Street, First United Methodist Church - Though this structure has been added and remodeled a number of times, its essential Greek Revival shape and elements remain prominent. Originally known as the Aurora Methodist Episcopal Church, it was the congregation's third building in the community. The Methodists were the earliest religious group in Aurora, settling in the area a few years before the town was platted.

The symmetrical gable front church features a closed pediment with pressed tin brackets and egg-and-dart molding and three large round-arched windows in the second story with multi-pane sash and stone lintels with keystones. The central entrance is contained within a raised cut limestone foundation which was added in 1903. The steeple has a four-sided base sided in tin, with a wooden belfry above which has wooden corner pilasters on the corners. The eight-sided, copper-covered spire was added in 1950, replacing the original wood base and octagonal spire on top of the belfry which were removed in 1938.

209 Third Street, Tandy's Grocery Store (Photograph #15) - This concrete block one-story commercial building was erected in 1969, occupying over half of the south side of Third Street between Judiciary and Main Streets. The brick building has a mansard roof and large glass storefront windows. The parking lot on the east side slopes with the rise in topography from Third to Fourth Streets. A sign approximately 20' high, its top in the shape of a gable-roofed building, is located at the northeast corner of the parking lot at the intersection of Judiciary and Third Streets.

202-204 Third Street, Washington/Union/St. Clair Hotel (Photograph #16) - John Nees built this two-story brick hotel with Italianate detailing in 1877. Known originally as the Washington, it provided short-term boarding facilities for workers and visitors, like many of the hotels in town. Nees also dealt in groceries and produce at this location, which was also typical of hotel operations in Aurora.

The building's square plan is complemented by its steep hip roof which contains two narrow wood dormers in the front and rear and a single dormer on the east side. A narrow cornice with paired brackets and alternating panels is located on the front and east sides. The tall, narrow windows on the upper story contain 4/4 sash, including the two longer windows in the center of the front facade. The enlarged storefront windows on the first floor are a later alteration. Behind the hotel, to the north, at 220 Judiciary Street is the hotel's livery. The brick structure has a symmetrical front with a large entry in the center, flanked by round-arched windows framed by brick piers. The upper story contains a small round-arched central window with an oculus on either side. The top of the wall forms a stepped parapet which is devoid of ornament.

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Fourth Street (Photographs #18-21)

Fourth Street, a primarily residential street, is located on the edge of a noticeable rise in topography which begins at Third Street. The houses are mainly of frame construction, though there are some mid-nineteenth century and early twentieth century brick residences, and date from c. 1860-1950. Most of the properties have relatively wide frontages on the street, with retaining walls on the south side where the topography continues to rise to the south. The street contains the highest number of church-related structures in the district; three churches, a school building, and a rectory. The western end of the street intersects with Conwell Street, the entrance to the former industrial community of Cochran which was annexed to Aurora in 1907. Several newer buildings, two concrete block residences at 108 and 106 Fourth Street and the concrete block Moose Hall at 104 Fourth Street lie at the east end.

306 Fourth Street, David and Jennie Stapp Residence (Photograph #19) - This 2-1/2 story frame Italianate house was built around 1883 for David and Jennie Stapp. Although a house was already on the lot, the Stapps built a new frame structure with Italianate and Moorish Revival elements, the latter displayed in the front entrance's ogee arch. The Stapps sold the house in 1891 for \$7556.00 to William F. Stevens, who sold it three years later.

The simple hip-roof cap on the front tower replaced the original, more elaborate, crown destroyed by fire. The pedimented window surrounds feature routed floral decorations. The beautiful iron fence in front and along the east side of the property is the most elaborate of only a small number on the street.

211 Fourth Street, First Presbyterian Church (Photograph #20) - The First Presbyterian Church is the second oldest of the five remaining nineteenth century churches in the district. Although a Presbyterian seminary existed in Aurora for two years in the 1820s, the congregation was not formed until 1844. The church was designed by J. R. Hamilton, an English architect who was practicing in Cincinnati in the mid-nineteenth century. Construction was begun in 1850 on the brick Greek Revival building, which was completed in December 1855 when the town clock was installed in its wooden tower.

The relatively unaltered church exhibits a three-bay gable front with a closed pediment. The large multi-pane windows are set within recessed panels framed by pilasters. The wooden tower, which doubles the height of the building, is a handsome four-part structure with a base, belfry, clock, and eight-sided steeple similar to neoclassical churches from the eighteenth century.

209-203 Fourth Street, St. Mary's Catholic Church and School (Photograph #20) - Originally known as Immaculate Conception Catholic Church when the parish was founded in 1864, the brick Gothic Revival building dates from the same year while its steeple was added in 1876. The county's 1885 history attributes the design of the building to Rev. Ignatius Klein, the first pastor, who also supervised the construction.

St. Mary's Catholic Church complex consists of the brick Gothic Revival Church (203 Fourth), c. 1948 brick rectory in an adaptation of the American Four Square

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(201 Fourth), the 1959 flat-roofed brick school building (209 Fourth), and the community building (206 Fifth) and Immaculate Conception convent (210 Fifth) which is on Fifth Street, which connect with the Fourth Street buildings via a steep set of stairs.

Fifth Street (Photographs #22-28)

Originally named Library or Literary Street, this street contains some of the most elegant houses in the community, accompanied by dramatic settings and beautiful views of the town below, the Ohio River, and the undeveloped hillsides to the northwest. Civic and business leaders favored this street throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with all of the historic periods well represented by Federal, Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, Four Square, Dutch and Colonial Revival, and even two fairly recent ranch houses. A nineteenth century church, the oldest existing church building in the district, and a small public park are located towards the eastern end of the street.

505 Fifth Street, James N. Walton/Dr. James F. Treon Residence (Photograph #22) - This frame house, with a commanding position at the west end of Fifth Street, is a wonderful example of Gothic Revival. The house was built for James N. Walton, a photographer whose studio was located on Main Street, around 1874. Walton had acquired the lot in 1873 from Joseph and Elizabeth Trester. Although the property changed hands a number of times at the turn of the century, the house was owned for most of the twentieth century by Dr. James F. and Margaret Treon. The 2-1/2 story front gable house features a dramatic hood with an attenuated roof above the second story central window and drip molds around the second story front windows. Elaborate brackets ornament the wide roof eaves on the front facade. The wooden wraparound porch has slender Tuscan porch columns and a concrete block base; although most of these elements date from the turn-of-the-century, a similarly-configured porch is shown on the 1887 Sanborn map.

410 Fifth Street (Photograph #23, second house on left) - The sprawling rectangular plan of this light gray brick ranch house includes an attached carport and two-story deck on the rear (north) facade. The house was built in 1976 on the site of an elaborate Second Empire residence.

213 Fifth Street, Thomas Gaff Residence/Forest Hill/HillForest (Photographs #26 and 37) - Designated a National Historic Landmark in 1992, the Thomas Gaff Residence/Hillforest Museum is the most intact example of the works of famous nineteenth century architect, Isaiah Rogers. The frame three-story house, designed in the Italian Renaissance Revival style, features a central rounded pavilion crowned by a circular tower and wood porches on both the first and second stories on its front facade. The building's prominent situation on the hill above Main Street on a ten-acre landscaped slope affords a spectacular view of the town and the Ohio River and provides a impressive focal point up Main Street for the viewer.

The house was constructed between 1853-1855 for Thomas Gaff, a Scottish native, who played a leading role in Aurora's commercial, industrial, and institutional growth in the nineteenth century. Gaff and his brother, James, whose house was formerly located just north at Fourth and Main Streets, were associated with most

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of the early business ventures in Aurora, including the establishment of the T. and J. W. Gaff & Co. Distillery, the Stedman Foundry, the dry goods firm of Gaff, Lozier & Co, and the Crescent Brewery.

204 Fifth Street, Charles Hisey Residence - This brick American Four Square was built around 1918 soon after Charles Hisey purchased the property from Emmaline Rees. Hisey replaced the existing nineteenth century house (the former home of Mary A. Stratton) on the lot with a similarly-sized house set slightly further back on the lot. In 1934, Hisey sold the property to Sol Vigran, a local businessman who operated two dry goods stores on Second Street.

The house is constructed of iron-filled brick, an expensive process which gives the brick a distinctive purple tone. Its hip roof has wide eaves and dormers with small multi-pane windows. The remainder of the windows have 1/1 sash. A one-story bay on a high stone foundation is on the east side. A hip-roofed garage in the same material is on the southeast corner of the lot.

113 Fifth Street, First Evangelical United Church of Christ (Photograph #28) - Built in 1847 for the Baptist congregation, one of the earliest religious group in the community, the brick structure has been the place of worship for a parish which was formed in 1874 as the German Reformed Church. Most of its original founders were German immigrants who worked in the Crescent Brewery at the foot of Market Street just east of the church. The original gable front Greek Revival architecture was extensively remodeled in 1911, including the replacement of the bell tower with a steeple and the alteration of windows and doors. Large additions on the rear of the building date from prior to 1900 and c. 1932.

Exporting Street (Photographs #29, 30 and 9)

This street lies just east of the railroad tracks on the western edge of the district. Three massive late nineteenth century industrial buildings front the west side of the street near Third Street. Several small houses of mid-nineteenth century vintage are located opposite them on the east side of the street, undoubtedly built to house laborers at the Stedman foundry and railroad car shops. At the northern end of the street, where the railroad tracks cross Exporting at its intersection with Second Street, are two one-story brick commercial/industrial buildings which date from c. 1880-1890.

240 Exporting Street, Acme Milling Company/Aylor & Meyer Company (Photograph #9) - This structure was built in 1897 for the Acme Milling Company, the second milling concern founded by Henry A. Rullman in the district. Rullman had worked at several local mills before he first established the Star Milling Company in 1891 at 106 Bridgeway Street. Acme Milling was the last of the many mills built within the district. The earlier mills included Aurora Mills, Siementhal, Droge and Donselman, and Langtree and McGuire all at the same Third and Bridgeway site. This building is the only operating mill left in the district.

The four-story brick complex is actually composed of two connected gable-roofed structures. The building is unpainted, except for the numerous lively black and white signs which ornament the facades. These signs were recently faithfully repainted to match the originals.

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Bridgeway Street (Photograph #31)

Bridgeway Street, like many of the north-south streets in the district, exhibits a variety of building types and architecture which follow the functions characteristic of the intersecting east-west street. Only a small number of buildings front upon the street, including two late nineteenth century residences to the south (408 and 218 Bridgeway), a former brick livery (211 Bridgeway), and the 1950s American Legion hall (119 Bridgeway).

106 Bridgeway Street, Star Milling Co./Dearborn Mill - The three-story brick structure was built in 1891 for the Star Milling Company, founded by Henry A. Rullman in that year. The building exhibits Romanesque Revival detailing, seen in the segmental-arched windows set within piers and stepped brick corbelling which crowns the elevations. The structure served a grain storage function until February 1994, when it was heavily damaged by fire.

204 Bridgeway Street, Peoples Federal Savings Bank (Photograph #3) - The People's Federal Savings Bank was originally known as the People's Building and Loan. Formed in the 1880s in the small community of Cochran southwest of the district, the organization maintained a Second Street office in the early twentieth century on Thursdays to accommodate its loan customers. In 1951, the bank moved its operations to the corner of Second and Bridgeway on the site of the Aurora Creamery.

This two-story brick structure was built in 1964, partially enclosing a 1951 building, now no longer visible from the street. The simple box is enlivened by a metal screen with an Oriental appearance on the north and east sides in a style similar to the buildings of internationally-known architect, Edward Durrell Stone. Two late 1970s additions flank the 1964 section on both Second and Bridgeway Streets.

Mechanic Street

Mechanic Street's greatest concentration of building is located in the block between Second and Third Streets, which is dominated by the Gothic Revival St. John's Lutheran Church on the west side of the street. Several mid-nineteenth century residences are found on this street as well as a c. 1980 civic building (225 Mechanic) and c. 1956 school building.

214 and 218 Mechanic Street, St. John's Lutheran Church and School - Built in 1874 for a mostly German Lutheran congregation, the building has experienced little change from its original appearance. Several schools were built on adjacent lots and were finally replaced with the 1956 brick, flat-roofed building to the south at 218 Mechanic Street.

William Barker, an Aurora contractor, was responsible for the construction of the brick building which displays a striking Gothic Revival design. Its dominant central tower projects from the main body of the church, its verticality emphasized through its elongated louvered section flanked by unadorned buttresses. The simple spire rises from a cross-gabled crown which contains circular tracery executed in wood in the gable peaks.

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Main Street (Photographs #32-37)

Main Street is the major historical entry into the southern part of Aurora via the 1887 Pratt Truss iron bridge, known as the George Street bridge. The bridge, individually listed in the National Register in 1984, is included within the district boundaries. The street exhibits an inviting view of two-story brick Italianate blocks typical of midwestern business districts which leads up the hill to the stately First Presbyterian church steeple and the majestic setting of Hillforest on Fifth Street.

Its northern end at the George Street bridge was dominated by liveries, blacksmiths, and related occupations in the late nineteenth century, mainly housed in two-story brick buildings. The functions in this area hardly changed by the early twentieth century, though the businesses now served the horse's successor in the form of automobile sales, repair, and parts. Many of the same buildings were converted to service the new transportation mode, while two gas stations were built in the 1930s and the 1950s in the northern two blocks of Main Street, both exemplary examples of the building type.

107 Main Street, Standard Oil Products Station (Photograph #33, first building on right) - This was the first building in the district built specifically for the purpose of filling gas. It appears to have been built between 1930 and 1935 for the Standard Oil Company. The one-story brick box has a single garage door opening with multiple panes of glass and large windows with awning-type sash. The simple design is enlivened by horizontal banding with the Standard name integrated into this banding at the top with a free-standing letters which spell out its name.

216-218 Main Street, John H. Wilke Grocery Store and Residence (Photograph #35, fourth building on left) - One of several Italianate commercial buildings in the vicinity of Main and Second Streets, it displays the bridged chimneys seen on many of the mid-nineteenth century buildings in the district and appears to be two connected structures built in separate periods. The two sections are joined by a side gable roof with a standing seam metal covering. The front facades have slightly different storefront designs.

Listed in the community directories as early as 1858-59, John H. Wilke purchased the property in 1862 and set up his grocery and dry goods business here. By the time the 1871-72 directory was published, eight dry goods establishments were listed in the vicinity of Second and Main. The late nineteenth century building owner, Oliver T. Canfield, also operated a dry goods store at this location.

Judiciary Street (Photographs #38, 39 and 17)

Judiciary Street forms the eastern border of the district on its north end, due to its intact grouping of historic architecture. The street's northern end contains several brick nineteenth and early twentieth century industrial and commercial buildings, including two former liveries at 216 and 220 Judiciary (Photographs #16 and 38). The original two-story brick Oddfellows Hall from 1848 is located across the street from the livery buildings. The 1862 frame residence built for Will Stevens of the Chamber, Stevens & Company dry goods store, which

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has notable, later nineteenth century alterations, is located further up the hill to the south (403 Judiciary Street, Photo #39).

216 Judiciary Street, York Livery//York & Briddell Livery/Fred Mauntel Eclipse Livery/Ed Holthouse Livery (Photograph # 38) - Continuously employed as a livery, and then as a garage up to the present time, this two-story brick building displays a nearly symmetrical front with two large round-arched entries and other window and door openings with segmental-arched and trabeated tops. The plain brick front is relieved by piers connected with stepped brick detailing at the eave.

A 2-1/2 story brick Italianate building next to it at 214 Judiciary features a paneled wood door in the second story which leads out onto a decorative iron balcony. Owned at various times by the livery operators, it is not known if the house served as the residence of any of these men or their employees.

The livery building was constructed in 1878 by Frederick York, replacing an earlier building with the same function. York, a New York native, formed a partnership with Francis Briddell in the 1880s. By 1885, York was the superintendent of the Aurora gas works on Importing Street near Main. Fred Mauntel operated the Eclipse livery here in the 1890s, as well as an undertaking establishment around the corner at 227-229 Main Street. The early twentieth century owner, Ed Holthouse, continued these dual businesses in the same buildings.

Water Street (Photograph #40)

Only three buildings are found on Water Street, or Front Street, as it was known in the nineteenth century. One is the former brick residence of Abram Lozier, partner with Thomas Gaff in Gaff, Lozier & Co, a dry goods concern. Now the home of the Eagles, its Italianate architecture is compromised by the many additions and removals. The other nineteenth century house, a small frame c. 1880 residence, is tucked away on an alley behind 110 Fifth Street. A relatively new residence is located at the south end at 414 Water Street. The northern end is undeveloped, though a number of buildings used to stand there. The east side of Water Street contains a small undeveloped frontage adjacent to the Ohio River.

Market Street (Photographs #41-43)

Winding upward to the county's interior to the south, the steep street is lined with mostly modest one- and two-story residences dating from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1950s. The street was home for many of the German immigrants who settled in Aurora in the 1860s and 1870s. The most elegant house on the street is the Pfisterer House at 165 Market Street, a frame Queen Anne with a wraparound porch. Stone retaining walls are a common element on the west side. The east side sidewalk is composed of long slabs of smooth limestone which lie on top of the storm water drainage tunnel. At the foot of Market Street, on the east side, is a remaining stone wall of the c. 1871 Crescent Brewery built by the Gaff brothers. A mobile home rests on top of the wall presently, though it only obscures a small portion of the wall. The immense stone beer storage cellars lie to the south and east of the stone wall and actually extend quite a

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distance along State Route 156. The gently sloping hillsides on either side of the street contain some outbuildings and wooded areas. A small number of houses are located on the side streets east of Market Street.

157 Market Street, Gus and Margaret Beckemeyer Residence (Photo #42) - Built around 1926, the house is the "Vallonia" model of the Sears, Roebuck & Company mail-order houses popular in the early twentieth century. The "Vallonia" was available in the company's catalogues from 1921 until 1939.

The bungalow's square plan is covered by a side gable roof which extends over the full-width front porch. A large gable-roofed dormer is centrally located in the roof's front slope. The front porch has wide brick corner piers with battered sides which support the short wooden posts which exhibit the characteristic geometric decorations seen on many Sears, Roebuck bungalows. The wooden porch railing features cut-out designs in the wide, flat balusters. Exposed wooden rafters ornament the soffits of the main roof and the dormer. The original clapboard siding is now covered by aluminum siding.

124 Market Street, Gregory Kieffer Residence (Photo #41) - This house appears to have been built by Gregory Kieffer, who owned the property from 1871 until 1889. Kieffer purchased the lot from John Wehe in 1871, which had been noted as "unimproved and unproductive" in the 1863 deed from the Elias Conwell Estate to Adam Wehe.

In the 1871-72 directory, Gregory Kieffer was listed as a tailor on Third near Mechanic Streets. John A. Wehe, the former owner of the property, lived and worked nearby as a manufacturer and dealer in saddles, harnesses, bridles on Third Street opposite the Methodist Episcopal Church (306 Third Street).

The four-bay wide house is similar to several others on the street which are two-story side gable frame structure built into the hillside with its stone foundation visible on the side elevations; and two-story wood balcony on the front facade. The side gable roof is covered with standing seam metal and has two brick end chimneys. The windows contain 6/6 and 6/1 sash and are framed by drip molds on both the front and sides.

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CONTRIBUTING AND NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

The **C** or **NC** in boldface type after the address indicates its status in the district.

Importing Street

North side:

332-304 - **C** and **NC**) two connected c. 1843 buildings, but the easternmost one is a one-story remnant of an older structure with a stone foundation with concrete block upper story (T. and James W. Gaff & Co. Distillery/Aurora Distillery/Sunnyside Distillery/H. W. Smith Furniture Company)

South side:

335-331 - **C**, c. 1860 industrial building

325 - **C**, c. 1855 industrial building

309 - **C**, c. 1890 industrial building

305 - **C**, c. 1900 industrial building

3-- - **NC**, c. 1980 gable-roofed garage behind and west of 110 Main Street

Second Street

North side:

510 - **C**, c. 1911-1917 railroad building (former Baltimore & Ohio Railroad passenger station)

506 - **C**, c. 1855 hotel, French (1875), Kirsch (1887-1917), Neaman (c. 1930)

502 - **C**, c. 1930 commercial building

422 - **C**, c. 1850 commercial building

418 - **C**, 1920 Palace Theater

410 - **C**, c. 1850/c.1920 commercial building

408 - **C**, c. 1840 commercial building

406 - **NC**, c. 1920 building which has new gable peak with fake half-timbering treatment and large storefront windows.

402 - **C**, 1903 commercial building

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Second Street (continued)

- 340 - C, 1924 cladding on c. 1870 commercial bldg. (First National Bank of Aurora/Star Bank)
- 332 - C, c. 1875 commercial building
- 328-322 - C, c. 1880 Second Empire commercial building
- 320 - C, c. 1910 Classical Revival commercial building
- 318 - NC, c. 1910 commercial building, new stucco covering, windows, storefront
- 316 - C, c. 1870 Second Empire commercial building
- 314 - C, c. 1920 commercial building
- 222 - C, 1840/1900 commercial building (former Chambers, Stevens and Co. store)
- 220 - NC, c. 1950 VFW hall
- 218-216 - NC, c. 1845 Federal commercial building, vertical siding covers front facade
- 214 - C, c. 1910 commercial building
- 208-206 - C, c. 1860 commercial building
- 204 - C, c. 1930 concrete block garage
- South side:**
- 509 - NC, c. 1960 commercial building (M & N Bootery)
- 507 - C, c. 1880 commercial building with c. 1965 alterations
- 505 - NC, c. 1970 commercial building (People's Federal Savings Bank)
- 437 - C, c. 1880 Italianate building
- 435-435-1/2 - C, c. 1900 commercial/residential building
- NC, c. 1950 concrete block garage
- 431 - C, c. 1890 commercial building with 1924 alterations
- 419 - NC, c. 1974 commercial building (Gamble's)
- 415 - C, 1887 I.O.O.F. Hall
- 413 - C, c. 1880 Masonic Hall
- 409 - C, c. 1910 commercial building

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Second Street (continued)

- 401 - C, c. 1850 commercial building
- 337-335 - C, 1879 Italianate commercial building with early 20th century storefront
- 331-329 - C, c. 1880 Italianate commercial building
- 325-321 - C, 1878 Leive Parks and Stapp Opera House (Thomas Lindsay, builder)
- 319-317 - C, c. 1903 commercial building (John Neff Shoe Store)
- 311 - C, c. 1890 commercial building
- 305 - C, c. 1850 commercial building
- 301 - C, c. 1860 commercial building (former Ullrich's Drug Store/German Drug Store)
- 239-237 - C, c. 1910 commercial building
- 235-231 - C, c. 1910 commercial building
- 229-225 - C, c. 1860 commercial building
- 221-219 - C, c. 1880 commercial building
- 213-211 - C, c. 1865 commercial building
- 209-207 - C, c. 1860 commercial building
- 201 - C, c. 1860 commercial/residential building

Third Street

North side:

- 522-520 - C, c. 1840 commercial/residential building
- 518-516 - C, c. 1840 residential building
- 514-512 - C, c. 1870 residential building
- 510 - C, c. 1860 residential building
- 508 - C, c. 1870 residential building
- 506 - C, c. 1870 residential building
- 422 - C, c. 1920 commercial building

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Third Street (continued)

420 - C, c. 1935 commercial building

NC - Vacant Lot

414-408 - C, c. 1850 commercial building

316-314 - C, c. 1880 commercial building

312 - NC, c. 1950 commercial building

310 - C, c. 1870 residential building

308 - C, c. 1855 commercial building

306 - C, 1855-1862 First United Methodist Church (Morris Allen, builder/architect)

216 - C, 1887 Aurora City Hall and concrete block jail behind, (Louis Kreite, Aurora builder);
connected in the interior with 233-235 Main Street.

NC - Vacant Lot

212 - C, c. 1890 residential building

NC, c. 1960 concrete block garage

210 - NC, c. 1970 garage

208-206 - NC, c. 1880 commercial building (livery) with covering over entire front facade

204-202 - C, 1877 commercial building (former Washington/Union/St. Clair Hotel)

110 - NC, c. 1950 service station

106 - NC, c. 1970 service station

South side:

521 - NC, c. 1950-60 commercial building

511 - C, 1935 United States Post Office Building (Louis Simon, architect)

427 - C, c. 1880 residential building

423-419 - C, c. 1850 residential building

415-413 - C, c. 1850 residential building

411 - C, c. 1860 residential building

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Third Street (continued)

- 409 - **C**, c. 1860 residential building
 - NC**, c. 1950 concrete block garage
- 407 - **C**, c. 1870 residential building
- 405 - **C**, c. 1890 residential building
- 403 - **C**, c. 1870 residential building
- 401 - **C**, c. 1900 American Foursquare residential building
- 317 - **C**, c. 1850 residential building
- 315 - **C**, c. 1870 commercial/residential building (former Dr. George Sutton office)
 - C**, c. 1920 garage
 - C**, 19th century livery stable converted to residence c. 1920
- 313 - **C**, c. 1890 residential building
 - C**, 19th century frame outbuilding
- NC** - Vacant Lot
- 309-305 - **C**, c. 1845/1876 commercial/residential building
 - C**, 19th century frame outbuilding
- 303 - **C**, c. 1920 bungalow residential building
- 301 - **C**, c. 1915 American Foursquare residential building
- 227 - **C**, c. 1870 commercial/residential building (former Aurora House Hotel)
- 221-219 - **C**, c. 1870 commercial building
- 209 - **NC**, 1969 commercial building (Tandy IGA grocery store)
- NC** - Vacant Lot
- 121 - **C**, c. 1845 commercial/residential building (former Mueller House Hotel)

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Fourth Street

North side:

- 514 - C, c. 1890 residential building
- NC - Vacant Lot
- 512 - C, c. 1886 residential building
 NC, c. 1950 concrete block garage
- 508 - C, c. 1920 residential building
- 502 - NC, c. 1965 utility building
- 428 - C, c. 1870 commercial/residential building (former Indiana House Hotel)
 C, c. 1870 brick livery building
- 424 - C, c. 1850 residential building
 C, c. 1920 frame garage
- 422 - C, c. 1880 residential building
 C, c. 1920 frame garage
- 420-418 - C, c. 1940 residential building
- 416 - C, c. 1910 residential building
- 414-412 - C, c. 1840 residential building
- NC - Vacant Lot
- 404 - C, c. 1870 residential building with recent side addition
- 312 - C, c. 1915 American Foursquare residential building with Prairie style elements
 C, c. 1915 hip roofed garage
- 310 - C, c. 1870 residential building
- 308 - C, c. 1940 residential building
- 306 - C, c. 1883 residential building (former David and Jennie Stapp Residence)
 C, c. 1930 concrete block garage

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Fourth Street (continued)

304 - **C**, 1938 First Baptist Church

NC - Vacant Lot with c. 1950 garage

220 - **C**, c. 1900 residential building

C, c. 1920 frame garage

218 - **C**, c. 1910 American Foursquare residential building

216 - **C**, c. 1875 residential building

214 - **C**, c. 1910 residential building

C, c. 1920 frame garage

212 - **C**, c. 1940 residential building

NC - Vacant Lot

208-206 - **C**, c. 1880 residential building

204-202 - **C**, c. 1855 residential building

NC - Vacant Lot

110 - **C**, c. 1880 residential building

C, c. 1920 frame garage

108 - **NC**, c. 1950 residential building

106 - **NC**, c. 1950 residential building

104 - **NC**, c. 1950 Moose Hall

South side:

603 - **C**, c. 1880 residential building

C, c. 1920 frame shed

601 - **C**, c. 1890 residential building

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Fourth Street (continued)

- 511 - **C**, c. 1920 residential building
- 509 - **C**, c. 1890 residential building
- 507 - **C**, c. 1920 residential building
- 505 - **C**, c. 1860 residential/commercial building
- 421 - **NC**, c. 1960 residential building
- 419-419-1/2 - **C**, c. 1880 residential building
 - NC**, c. 1950 garage
- 417 - **C**, c. 1875 residential building
 - C**, frame garage
- 415 - **C**, c. 1920 residential building
 - C**, frame garage
- 405 - **C**, c. 1850 residential building
 - C**, frame outbuilding
- 403 - **C**, c. 1845 residential building
- 401 - **C**, c. 1880 residential building
- 313 - **C**, c. 1850 residential building (former Thomas Folbre Residence)
- NC** - Vacant Lot (monument sales) nineteenth century retaining wall and iron fence
- 307 - **C**, c. 1880 residential building
- 305 - **C**, c. 1860 residential building
 - C**, frame outbuilding
- 301 - **NC**, 1947 residential building (Colonial Revival)
- 211 - **C**, 1850-1855 First Presbyterian Church with 1959 concrete block addition on east side at rear (J. R. Hamilton, architect)
- 209 - **NC**, 1959 St. Mary's School
- 203 - **C**, 1863-64/1876 Immaculate Conception/St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church (Rev. Ignatius Klein, architect)

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Fourth Street (continued)

201 - NC, c, 1948 St. Mary's Rectory

NC - Vacant Lot

109 - C, c. 1910 residential building

C, frame garage

105 - C, c. 1900 residential building

C, concrete block outbuilding

Fifth Street

North side:

510 - C, c. 1870 residential building

NC - Vacant Lot

506 - C, c. 1890 residential building

502 - C, c. 1890 residential building

412 - C, c. 1840 residential building (former Lewis G. Hurlburt House)

NC, outbuilding

C, frame stable

410 - NC, c. 1970 residential building (ranch)

404 - C, c. 1880 residential building

C, frame shed and attached privy

402 - C, c. 1865 residential building

314 - C, c. 1940 residential building

312 - C, c. 1880 residential building

310 - C, c. 1870 residential building

NC, garage

306 - C, c. 1910 residential building

302 - NC, c. 1950 residential building and attached garage

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Downtown Aurora Historic District
Dearborn County, Indiana

Fifth Street (continued)

- 212 - C, c. 1890 residential building
- 210 - C, c. 1940 Immaculate Conception Convent
- 206 - NC, c. 1980 St. Mary's Community Building
- 204 - C, c. 1918 residential building (former Charles Hisey/Sol Vigran Residence)
C, c. 1918 garage
- 122 - C, c. 1849 residential building (former Levi A. Stevens House/Abraham Epstein House)
- 120 - C, c. 1870 residential building
- 118 - C, c. 1890 residential building
C, frame outbuilding
C, frame outbuilding
- NC - Vacant Lot
- 114 - C, c. 1860 residential building
- 112 - C, c. 1890 residential building
C, frame outbuilding
- 108 - C, c. 1880 residential building

South side:

- 505 - C, c. 1874 residential building (former James N. Walton/Dr. James Treon House)
- 411 - C, c. 1910 residential building
- 409 - C, c. 1870 residential building
- 405 - C, c. 1870 residential building
C, frame outbuilding
- 401 - C, c. 1870 residential building
NC, c. 1950 garage in front to east
C, frame outbuilding

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Downtown Aurora Historic District
Dearborn County, Indiana

Fifth Street (continued)

- 313 - **C**, c. 1920 residential building
- 311 - **C**, c. 1890 residential building
- 309 - **NC**, c. 1955 residential building
- 307 - **C**, c. 1850 residential building
- 207 - **C**, c. 1875 residential building
 - C**, frame outbuilding
 - C**, frame outbuilding
- 205 - **C**, c. 1840 residential building
 - C**, frame outbuilding
- 203 - **C**, c. 1850 residential building
- 201 - **C**, c. 1830, 1870 residential building
- 131 - **C**, c. 1911 Mary A. Stratton Park
 - NC**, c. 1970 wood gazebo
- 121-119 - **NC**, c. 1975 residential building
- 115 - **C**, c. 1845 residential building (former Thompson Dean/Josiah Chambers Residence)
- 111 - **C**, 1874 Aurora Baptist Church/First Evangelical United Church of Christ
- 109 - **C**, c. 1890 residential building
 - C**, frame outbuilding

Water Street

West side:

- 414 - **NC**, c. 1985 residential building
- 410 - **C**, c. 1870 residential building
- 302 - **C**, c. 1855 residential building (former Abram Lozier Residence)

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Downtown Aurora Historic District
Dearborn County, Indiana

Market Street

East side:

176 - C, c. 1870 residential building (former Bernard Schipper Residence, original owner)

174 - C, c. 1920 residential building

NC, c. 1950 garage

NC, frame shed

NC, frame shed

NC - Vacant lot

NC - Vacant lot

164 - C, c. 1850 residential building

160 - C, c. 1870 residential building

156 - C, c. 1880 residential building

NC, frame shed

NC - Vacant lot

152 - NC, c. 1953 residential building

150 - C, c. 1880 residential building

146 - C, c. 1920 residential building

142 - C, c. 1930 residential building

NC - Vacant lot

136 - C, c. 1850 residential building with c. 1920 alterations

132 - C, c. 1880 residential building

130 - NC, c. 1950 residential building

NC, c. 1950 garage

128 - C, c. 1860 residential building

120 - C, c. 1880 residential building (former Beinkamp/Thomas/Neff Residence)

C, frame outbuilding

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Downtown Aurora Historic District
Dearborn County, Indiana

Market Street (continued)

East side:

- 173 - C, c. 1850 residential building
- 169 - C, c. 1860 residential building
 - NC, frame shed
- NC - Vacant Lot
- 165 - C, c. 1895 residential building (former Pfisterer Residence, still in family)
 - C, frame stable
- 159 - C, c. 1870 residential building
- 157 - C, c. 1926 residential building (Gus and Margaret Beckemeyer Residence; Sears, Roebuck mail-order bungalow - The Vallonia model)
 - C, c. 1930 garage
- 153 - C, c. 1915 American Four Square residential building
 - C, frame garage
- 149 - C, c. 1875 residential building
 - C, frame shed
- 147 - C, c. 1880 residential building (former Frank Schipper Residence)
- 145 - NC, c. 1950 residential building
- 143 - C, c. 1910 residential building
 - NC, c. 1950 garage
- NC - Vacant Lot
- 135 - C, c. 1890 residential building
 - NC, frame shed
- 131 - C, c. 1920 residential building
- 129 - C, ruins of Crescent Brewery (stone foundation walls, stone beer storage cellars)
- 129 - NC, mobile house on ruins of brewery wall

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Downtown Aurora Historic District
Dearborn County, Indiana

Judiciary Street

East side:

- 403 - C, c. 1862 residential building (former Will Stevens Residence)
- 303 - C, c. 1880 commercial building
- 215-203 - C, 1848 I.O.O.F. Hall with newer two-story brick addition

West side:

- 310 - C, c. 1870 residential building
 - NC, c. 1950 concrete block garage
- 220 - C, c. 1877 commercial building (former Washington/Union/St. Clair Hotel livery)
- 216 - C, 1877 commercial building (York Livery/York & Briddell Livery/Fred Mauntel Eclipse Livery/Ed Holthouse Livery)
- 214 - C, c. 1877 residential building (Patrick Garrity, first owner)
- NC - Vacant Lot
 - NC, small frame shed
- NC - Vacant Lot
- 114 - NC, c. 1920 commercial building with recent alterations
- 110-106 - C, c. 1880 commercial building
- 104 - C, c. 1890 commercial building

Main Street

East side:

- 403 - C, c. 1865 residential building
- 305 - C, c. 1910 residential building
- 235-233 - C, c. 1870 commercial building (Aurora Fire Station); connected on the interior with Aurora City Hall, 216 Third Street.
- 229-227 - C, c. 1870 commercial building
- 225 - C, c. 1950 service station (Gulf Oil Co./Runner's Gas Station)
- 107 - C, c. 1930-35 Standard Oil Products station

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Downtown Aurora Historic District
Dearborn County, Indiana

Main Street (continued)

105 - **C**, c. 1880 commercial building

103 - **C**, c. 1880 commercial building

West side:

304 - **C**, c. 1870 residential building

236 - **C**, c. 1880 commercial building

234 - **C**, c. 1880 commercial building

224 - **C**, c. 1880 commercial building

218-216 - **C**, c. 1863 commercial building (John H. Wilke Grocery Store & Residence/Oliver T.
Canfield Dry Goods Store)

NC - Vacant Lot

210 - **C**, c. 1870 commercial building

200 - **C**, c. 1870 commercial building

118 - **C**, c. 1900 commercial building

116 - **NC**, c. 1960 commercial building

114 - **C**, c. 1920 commercial building

110 - **NC**, c. 1950 utility building

Mechanic Street

East side:

307 - **C**, c. 1860 residential building

225 - **NC**, c. 1980 Aurora Emergency Services

223-221 - **C**, c. 1860 residential/commercial building

219 - **C**, c. 1860 residential building

215 - **C**, c. 1900 residential building

209-207 - **C**, c. 1865 commercial building

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Section 7 Page 31

Downtown Aurora Historic District
Dearborn County, Indiana

Mechanic Street (continued)

West side:

- 306 - C, c. 1925 garage
- 218 - NC, 1956 St. John Lutheran School
- 214 - C, 1874 St. John Lutheran Church (William Barker, Aurora contractor)
- NC - Vacant Lot
- 120-116 - NC, c. 1950 commercial building altered c. 1993 with half-timbering stucco treatment
- 114-112 - C, c. 1840 residential building

Bridgeway Street

East side:

- 211 - C, c. 1890 commercial building
- 119 - NC, c. 1959 American Legion Building

West side:

- 408 - C, c. 1902 residential building
- 218 - C, c. 1880 residential building
- 202-200 - NC, c. 1977 addition to People's Federal Savings Bank which is connected to 200 Bridgeway, a 1964 commercial building.
- 106 - C, 1891 industrial building (Star Mill/Dearborn Mill)

Exporting Street

East side:

- 311 - C, c. 1920 residential building
 - NC, frame shed
- 307 - C, c. 1860 house with stucco covering
- 305 - C, c. 1880 residential building

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Downtown Aurora Historic District
Dearborn County, Indiana

Exporting Street (continued)

- 303 - C, c. 1880 residential building
 - NC, concrete block outbuilding
 - NC, frame outbuilding
- 301 - C, c. 1930 commercial building with permastone covering
- 223 - C, c. 1840 residential building
- 221 - C, c. 1850 residential building
- 219-217 - C, c. 1840 commercial building with 1960s alterations
 - C, c. 1920s apartment/garage in rear
- 215 - C, c. 1920 commercial building
- 213 - C, c. 1880 commercial building

West side:

- 408 - C, c. 1900 residential building
- 310 - NC, c. 1960 commercial building
- 308-304 - C, c. 1897 industrial building (Aurora Tool Works)
- 302-300 - C, c. 1900 industrial building (Aurora Tool Works)
- 240 - C, c. 1897 industrial building (Acme Milling Co./Aylor & Meyer Mill)

Dewers Street

North side:

- 104-106 - C, c. 1890/1910 residential building
- 108 - C, c. 1930 residential building

South side:

- 109 - NC, c. 1975 apartment building
- 111 - NC, c. 1975 apartment building

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Downtown Aurora Historic District
Dearborn County, Indiana

PHOTOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The following information is the same for all photographs:

1. Downtown Aurora Historic District
2. Dearborn County, Indiana
3. Rita Walsh/Gray & Pape, Inc.
4. 1/94
5. Hillforest Historical Foundation, Inc., 213 Fifth Street, Aurora, Indiana

Additional Information for Individual Photographs:

Photo #1

1. Importing Street
6. Photographer facing east from just west of the intersection at Mechanic Street

Photo #2

1. North side of Second Street between the railroad tracks and Bridgeway Street
6. Photographer facing northeast from the railroad tracks just south of Second Street

Photo #3

1. South side of Second Street between Bridgeway Street (on left) and the railroad tracks
6. Photographer facing southwest from the north side of Second Street, just east of Bridgeway Street

Photo #4

1. North side of Second Street showing the Aurora Public Library, 414 Second Street, and the buildings to the east
6. Photographer facing northeast

Photo #5

1. North side of Second Street between Main (on right) and Mechanic Streets
6. Photographer facing northwest

Photo #6

1. South side of Second Street between Main (on left) and Mechanic Streets
6. Photographer facing southwest

Photo #7

1. South side of Second Street between Main (on right) and Judiciary Streets
6. Photographer facing southeast from the intersection of Main and Second Streets

Photo #8

1. North side of Second Street between Main (on left) and Judiciary Streets
6. Photographer facing northeast from the intersection of Main and Second Streets

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Downtown Aurora Historic District
Dearborn County, Indiana

Photo #9

1. North side of Third Street (on right in photo) and its intersection with Exporting Street
6. Photographer facing northwest from the south side of Third Street

Photo #10

1. South side of Third Street near the intersection with Bridgeway Street
6. Photographer facing southeast from the north side of Third Street

Photo #11

1. North side of Third Street between Exporting and Bridgeway Streets
6. Photographer facing northeast from the south side of Third Street

Photo #12

1. North side of Third Street between Bridgeway (on left) and Mechanic Streets
6. Photographer facing northeast from the intersection of Third and Bridgeway Streets

Photo #13

1. South side of Third Street between Bridgeway (on right) and Mechanic Streets
6. Photographer facing southeast from the intersection of Third and Bridgeway Streets

Photo #14

1. South side of Third Street between Mechanic and Main Streets
6. Photographer facing southwest from the north side of Third Street

Photo #15

1. Third Street from the intersection with Judiciary Street
6. Photographer facing west from the intersection of Third and Judiciary Streets

Photo #16

1. 202-204 Third Street (Washington/Union/St. Clair Hotel) and its livery at 220 Judiciary Street
6. Photographer facing northwest from the intersection of Third and Judiciary Streets

Photo #17

1. East side of Judiciary Street between Second and Third Streets (on left) and gas station at 110 Third Street
6. Photographer facing northeast from the intersection of Third and Judiciary Streets

Photo #18

1. North side of Fourth Street between Bridgeway (on left) and Mechanic Streets
6. Photographer facing northeast from the intersection of Fourth and Bridgeway Streets

Photo #19

1. North side of Fourth Street between Mechanic (on left) and Main Streets
6. Photographer facing northeast from the south side of Fourth Street

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Downtown Aurora Historic District
Dearborn County, Indiana

Photo #20

1. South side of Fourth Street near the intersection with Main Street; the First Presbyterian Church, 211 Fourth Street, is on the right and Immaculate Conception/St. Mary's Catholic Church, 209 Fourth Street, is on the left
6. Photographer facing southeast from the north side of Fourth Street

Photo #21

1. North side of Fourth Street between Main (on left) and Judiciary Streets
6. Photographer facing northeast from the intersection of Main and Fourth Streets

Photo #22

1. James N. Walton/Dr. James F. Treon Residence, 505 Fifth Street
6. Photographer facing southeast

Photo #23

1. North side of Fifth Street close to the intersection with Bridgeway Street; the residence on the left is the Lewis G. Hurlburt House, 412 Fifth Street
6. Photographer facing northeast from the intersection of Fifth and Bridgeway Streets

Photo #24

1. South side of Fifth Street between Bridgeway and Mechanic Streets
6. Photographer facing southwest from the north side of the Street

Photo #25

1. View of Aurora and its location on the Ohio River from the front yard of Hillforest/Thomas Gaff Residence, 213 Fifth Street
6. Photographer facing northeast

Photo #26

1. Hillforest/Thomas Gaff Residence, 213 Fifth Street
6. Photographer facing southwest

Photo #27

1. North side of Fifth Street between Judiciary (on left) and Water Streets
6. Photographer facing northeast

Photo #28

1. South side of Fifth Street; photo taken from its intersection with Water Street
6. Photographer facing southwest

Photo #29

1. East side of Exporting Street between the railroad tracks (on the left) and Third Street
6. Photographer facing northeast from the west side of Exporting Street

Photo #30

1. Exporting Street; photo taken from the intersection with Fourth Street
6. Photographer facing north

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section 7 Page 36

Downtown Aurora Historic District
Dearborn County, Indiana

Photo #31

1. Bridgeway Street, photo taken from the intersection with Fifth Street
6. Photographer facing north

Photo #32

1. West side of Main Street between Importing and Second Streets; the George Street Bridge is on the right
6. Photographer facing northwest from the east side of Main Street

Photo #33

1. East side of Main Street between Importing and Second Streets; the George Street Bridge is on the extreme left
6. Photographer facing northeast from the west side of Main Street

Photo #34

1. Main Street; photo taken from just north of the intersection of Main with Second Street
6. Photographer facing south

Photo #35

1. West side of Main Street between Third (on left) and Second Streets
6. Photographer facing northwest from the intersection of Third and Main Streets

Photo #36

1. East side of Main Street; photo taken from the intersection of Main and Fourth Streets
6. Photographer facing northeast

Photo #37

1. View of Hillforest/Thomas Gaff Residence, 213 Fifth Street, from the intersection of Fourth and Main Streets
6. Photographer facing south

Photo #38

1. West side of Judiciary Street; photo taken from the intersection of Judiciary and Third Streets
6. Photographer facing northwest

Photo #39

1. East side of Judiciary Street; photo taken from the intersection of Judiciary and Third Streets
6. Photographer facing southeast

Photo #40

1. View of Water Street and the Ohio River from the intersection of Water and Fifth Streets
6. Photographer facing north

Photo #41

1. West side of Market Street from Dewers Street
6. Photographer facing south

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Section 7 Page 37

Downtown Aurora Historic District
Dearborn County, Indiana

Photo #42

1. East side of Market Street, from the west side of Market Street: 157 Market is on the left
6. Photographer facing southeast

Photo #43

1. East side of Market Street, 169 Market Street is on the left
6. Photographer facing southeast

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Section 8 Page 2

Downtown Aurora Historic District
Dearborn County, Indiana

The Downtown Aurora Historic District's nineteenth and twentieth century buildings represent the prosperity and self-sufficiency of an important manufacturing and transportation center, by both river and rail, in southeastern Indiana. The diversity and architectural quality of the industrial, commercial, institutional and residential architecture aptly depict all but the very earliest period of Aurora's settlement in the first decade from 1819 to c. 1830. The district meets National Register Criteria A and C.

The district comprises the original portion of Aurora which was platted in 1819 by Jesse Holman and other prominent gentlemen from Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. Community leaders and prosperous businessmen throughout the Ohio Valley established a number of towns along the river in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. They hoped and believed that their town would become the metropolis of the new west and their planning schemes reflected those sentiments. The ambitious plans of the members of the "Aurora Association for Internal Improvements" included the platting of a town, building an ox-driven saw and grist mill, and erecting a bridge across Hogan Creek. As in many nineteenth century communities, the founders set aside several lots for educational and religious purposes. The remainder of the 206 lots in the town were quickly sold or pledged, but many were soon forfeited due to the worsening financial times of the 1820s which resulted in a national bank crisis. Despite the founders' optimism, the community grew slowly in the 1820s and 1830s.

But Aurora's proximity to a deep and well-placed harbor on the Ohio River ensured its future once commercial steamboat travel was accepted in the 1820s. The designation of the county seat had been conferred to Lawrenceburg, three miles upstream on the Ohio River, in 1803 when the county was organized. The county seat was briefly moved to Wilmington, near Aurora, but was later regained by Lawrenceburg. The natural hegemony granted to the county seat was lost to Aurora, but the two cities soon became rivals for the agricultural markets of the interior farmland.

Aurora's efforts to become a trading center, though, were hampered in its early decades of existence through its inaccessibility to the area north and west because of the barriers of Hogan Creek. Ferries were the earliest and only means of crossing the creek and the Ohio River until a bridge was finally constructed over the creek in 1836. Built as a toll-bridge by George Lane seventeen years after it was envisioned by the original founders, this first bridge connected Main Street to the areas north where Lane's additions to the town were soon located. Several wooden bridges were subsequently built at this location, succeeded by the present iron bridge in 1887 (Photos #32 and 33). In 1824, a steamboat called the *Clinton* was built in the town on the Ohio River bank, which signalled the commencement of Aurora's successful and long-lived Ohio River trade. By the 1840s, Aurora's port was a regular stopping place for most river travelers and a daily packet with Cincinnati was established. While the river road which connected Aurora with Rising Sun and Lawrenceburg was constructed around 1823, roads which led into the county's interior from Aurora were not a reality until the 1840s, due in great measure to George Lane during his tenure in the State Legislature.

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Section 8 Page 3

Downtown Aurora Historic District
Dearborn County, Indiana

The bridge and roads opened up the town to the numerous farms in the county's interior and to Cincinnati and other markets. One of the earliest thriving agricultural industries in Aurora was pork packing, an activity also carried on by other communities along the Ohio River, particularly Cincinnati, prior to the Civil War. The community's first large industry, established in 1843 on Importing Street, also relied on the agricultural bounty of the interior (332-304 Importing Street, Photo #1). Founded by Thomas and James W. Gaff of Aurora, the T. & J. W. Gaff & Co. Distillery Co., manufacturers of rye and Bourbon whiskies, utilized the grain and cattle from surrounding farms. In 1849, the Gaff brothers purchased a partial interest in the Stedman Foundry in Rising Sun, another Ohio River town to the south in Ohio County, and moved the concern to Aurora. The foundry produced engines and car wheels and general machinery for southern markets as well as local industrial concerns and is still in operation today. Other signs of progress evident in the 1840s included the commencement of the dry goods business of Josiah Chambers and Levi A. Stevens in 1840. The Baptist congregation, which originally settled in Aurora one year after it was platted, built a church in 1847 on the east end of Fifth Street, now the oldest existing church structure in the community (113 Fifth Street, Photo #28). The fraternal order of the Oddfellows constructed their first building in the community, a two-story brick building close to the river on Judiciary Street, in 1848 (203 Judiciary Street, Photo #17). A large saw mill and lumber yard operation was established at Third and Mechanic Streets by Lewis G. Hurlburt in the 1840s. William E. Gibson judiciously located his cooperage company, which produced whiskey barrels, next to the Gaff distillery in this decade. Samuel Wymond joined Gibson in the 1850s and later expanded the operation on its site along Importing Street between Mechanic Street and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad tracks. The firm continued production into the twentieth century, but no structures remain on its site which lies just outside of the district boundaries. By 1848, the burgeoning commercial and industrial activity and attendant residential growth warranted Aurora's incorporation as a city and the erection of a ward and council government.

Between 1840 and 1850, Aurora's population had grown from 499 to 2,051 inhabitants. In 1850 alone, 123 buildings were erected, including 100 dwellings, 10 warehouses and four blacksmith shops. Growth accelerated later in the decade after the opening of the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad in 1852 on the west side of the district. The railroad car shops erected further west of the railroad line a few years later caused hundreds of families to move into Aurora and the newly-established community of Cochran on its west side. Several very fine residences of prosperous businessmen were built during this decade as well, including the Thomas Gaff Residence at 213 Fifth Street, known as Hillforest (NR 1971, NHL 1992, Photo #26 and 37) at the summit of Main Street. This Italian Renaissance Revival frame structure, with its distinctive rounded central pavilion and two-story balconies, was designed by Isaiah Rogers. Noted especially for his hotel designs, Hillforest is the most pristine surviving example of Roger's work in the country. Gaff invited the architect to Aurora during Rogers' stay in Cincinnati where he designed the hotel known as the Burnet House. Thomas Gaff was active in other local business affairs, including his partnership in the dry goods company of Gaff, Lozier & Co., serving as the president of the First National Bank of Aurora founded in 1864, and as one of the backers of the Aurora Gas and Coke Company.

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Section 8 Page 4

Downtown Aurora Historic District
Dearborn County, Indiana

Construction was started in 1850 on the First Presbyterian Church a block north of the Gaff House (211 Fourth Street, photograph #20). The charter members of the congregation, founded in 1844, included Mrs. Margaret Gaff, the mother of Thomas Gaff, and one of his sisters. The brick Greek Revival edifice was designed by John R. Hamilton, an English native who was practicing in Cincinnati in the mid-nineteenth century. After its completion in 1855, the town clock was installed in the church's steeple due to its "central and elevated position". Construction of the Aurora Methodist Episcopal Church, now the First United Methodist Church, was begun in 1855 on Third Street (306 Third Street). Completed in 1862, the Greek Revival building appears to have been built by local architect and builder, William Allen. It was the third church structure for this congregation, the earliest religious group to locate in the community.

Early business establishments also included the ubiquitous hotels and saloons on Second and Third Streets to serve river, rail, and turnpike travelers at both the east and west ends of the town. The French/Kirsch/Neaman House at 506 Second Street (Photo #2) is a mid-nineteenth century brick hotel which continued its original function into the early decades of the twentieth century. Several of the nineteenth century hotel operations also included retail groceries. Many of the saloons were managed by German natives in the nineteenth century; by the 1860s the immigrants had established themselves in the community with their own German School, lodge, and benevolent society.

Although the Civil War caused a cessation in Aurora's growth, several important institutions were founded during the period. The first mill in the district was located in the community just prior to the war's commencement. Successively called the Siementel, Aurora, Droge & Donselman, and Langtree & McGuire Mills, a mill was profitably operated on the northeast corner of Third and Bridgeway Streets until the 1890s. The four-story brick mill, used at the turn of the century as the Aurora Chair Company, was replaced in the 1920s by the Sutton Hatchery Building (422 Third Street, Photo #12). The town's first public school was built in 1863 above Fifth Street adjacent to Market Street, which served the entire community until 1880. Located on Dewers Street, the school stood for about 100 years before it was demolished and replaced with two apartment buildings which are included within the district boundaries. The community's first bank was founded in 1864 soon after Congress passed the National Banking Act which authorized the establishment of national banks. The original Second Empire building of the First National Bank of Aurora was re-clad in 1924 with a classical revival veneer (340 Second Street) and is now occupied by Star Bank. A Roman Catholic Church, originally known as Immaculate Conception, was begun in 1864 on Fourth Street (203 Fourth Street, Photo #20) to house its parish which grew rapidly in the late nineteenth century. The Stedman Foundry, which produced equipment in great volume for Southern plantations, diverted their output to munitions during the war. Soon after the Civil War's end, the earliest of the numerous furniture and chair factories in the community was established in 1868. Originally known as the John Cobb Chair Company, it stood at the southwest corner of Third and Bridgeway where the post office is now located (511 Third Street). The dry goods and grocery business of John H. Wilke was located on Second Street near Main by 1862 (216-218 Main, photo #35, fourth building on left). By the time the 1871-72 Aurora directory was published, eight dry goods stores were clustered near the intersection of Second and Main Street.

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Section 8 Page 5

Downtown Aurora Historic District
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The 1870s proved to be a decade of tremendous physical growth for the community. Around 1871, the Crescent Brewery was established at the east end of Fifth Street at Market Street near the river. The brewery was another local venture of the Gaff brothers, which operated for about 40 years. Demolished in the 1920s, the ruins of one of the structure's walls and the magnificent stone beer cellars are all that remain. The brewery employed large numbers of immigrants from Bavaria, many of whom built their homes nearby on Market Street. A large rolling iron works was lured to the town in 1873 through the offer of land and cash by the town's citizens to the Aurora Iron Company, which located north of Hogan Creek and downtown Aurora near the Ohio River. The company became the nail and iron works of O.P. Cobb and Company. In 1878 alone, many buildings were erected within the district. The brick livery stable of Frederick York was built in that year (216 Judiciary Street, Photo #38) as was one of Aurora's most notable buildings, the Leive, Parks and Stapp Opera House (321-325 Second Street). The Opera House was a development venture by three young men, Charles Leive, John Parks, and David Stapp, who were involved in the construction of other buildings in town as well. The Opera House was the first large building to serve the entertainment and social needs of the community. The increase in new businesses in this period enabled the community to be more independent of its larger neighbors and made it "...just as cheap, and certainly much more convenient, for farmers, mechanics, and laboring men to buy their supplies right here, as to go to Cincinnati for them, as many formerly did...", according to an article dated December 19, 1878 in *The Dearborn Independent*.

During the 1870s the Baptist congregation erected another house of worship, an elaborate Gothic Revival structure on the east side of Main Street, now occupied by a c. 1950 Moderne gas station (225 Main Street). Newly-arrived German immigrants, many of them employed at the Crescent Brewery, purchased the Baptist congregations' former structure on Fifth Street in 1874 where they have remained to the present day (113 Fifth Street, Photo #28). A Gothic Revival Lutheran Church was erected on Mechanic Street in 1874 (216 Mechanic Street) which still serves a dedicated congregation. Four years later, a small Episcopal congregation, which had split from the Presbyterian Church, built their frame church on Third Street nearly opposite the Methodist Episcopal Church. Named St. Mark's Church, the structure is no longer standing. On that same block, Dr. George Sutton, a prominent and influential citizen and physician, built a new Second Empire office building on the south side (315 Third Street, Photo #14) to replace an earlier office building. Sutton's residence was south of the business district, which afforded beautiful views of the river and the town. Like Sutton and many other business and professional men in town, James N. Walton, a successful photographer in Aurora, chose to build his frame Gothic Revival house at Fifth and Bridgeway Streets in 1874 overlooking the city (505 Fifth Street, Photo #22).

The occurrence of severe floods annually between 1882 and 1884 apparently did not deter the city's growth, though some residents moved to higher elevations to live. Residential construction in this decade included the frame Italianate house at 306 Fourth Street built for David and Jennie Stapp in place of an earlier structure. Stapp was one of the young men responsible for the

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construction of the Opera House on Second Street in 1878, as well as several other buildings in the city. A second bank, the Aurora National Bank, was established in 1883 and was located across the street from the First National Bank on Second Street in a c. 1879 building with early twentieth century terra cotta on storefront (335-337 Second Street). City functions, including a jail, were housed in a new brick Romanesque Revival building constructed at 216 Third Street in 1886 by local builder, Louis Kreite. In 1887, the Oddfellows erected a new four-story Romanesque Revival building in the middle of the Second Street business district (415 Second Street) which contained a rival theater to the Opera House in the next block east. A siding was constructed in the late 1880s along Water Street to connect the Crescent Brewery with the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis line (later part of the Big Four Railroad). The line's depot formerly stood at the southeast corner of Second and Judiciary Streets just north of the 1848 I.O.O.F. Hall on Judiciary Street; the present vacant lot is not included within the district boundaries.

During the 1890s, the city added three important businesses to its industrial base, all within the district boundaries. In 1891, the Star Milling Company was founded by Henry A. Rullman, a former employee of the older mills in the city at Third and Bridgeway Street. Rullman erected a large brick Romanesque Revival structure on Bridgeway (106 Bridgeway) which was heavily damaged by fire in February 1994. The Aurora Tool Works began construction on one of their two large monitor-roofed structures on Exporting Street (302 Exporting Street, Photo #30) in 1897 and completed the second by 1900 (304 Exporting, Photo #30). Directly north of the tool works, the Acme Milling Company's four-story brick structure was built in 1898 (240 Exporting Street, Photo #9). The Acme Milling Company was also established by the Star Milling Company's founder, Henry Rullman. Aylor & Meyer Milling Company, the present occupants of the mill, purchased the operation in 1940.

The early decades of the twentieth century were still witness to a thriving, self-sufficient community. At the turn of the century, Aurora still possessed a number of manufacturing interests within its borders, and had gained new businesses and modern residences both within the district boundaries and to the west in the community of Cochran annexed in 1907. The Cincinnati, Lawrenceburgh and Aurora interurban railroad, which operated between 1899 and 1931, strengthened daily ties with Cincinnati. By the turn of the century, the Aurora Distillery, re-named the Sunnyside Distillery, had ceased operations followed soon after by the other Gaff enterprise, the Crescent Brewery. Although the brewery remained vacant until it was torn down, the distillery buildings on the north side were re-used for the H. W. Smith Chair Company operations. H. W. Smith, Jr., a nephew of Thomas and James Gaff, lived in Aurora at Fourth and Main Streets. The south side buildings were in turn occupied by the Ohio Valley Buggy Company and the Indianapolis Chair Company. The Wymond Cooperage Works, most of the flouring mills, the chair factory at Third and Bridgeway, and several lumber yards and planing mills within South Aurora continued for varying years into the early twentieth century. The Stedman foundry was moved to Cochran around 1912 and remains in business today. Between 1911 and 1917, a new brick passenger station replaced the earlier frame structure, a few years after the Baltimore & Ohio Southwest Railroad took over the lines of the Ohio & Mississippi Railroad

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(510 Second Street). During the first thirty years of the century, many new residences were built on Third, Fourth, and Fifth Streets. Several fine examples of Bungalow and American Four Square are found in the district, including the brick American Four Square residence at 204 Fifth Street, built for Charles Hisey in 1918 and 312 Fourth Street, another American Four Square, built c. 1915 with dramatic Prairie style elements.

The City Beautiful movement bestowed its improving influence on the district during the early years of the twentieth century. Begun in the 1890s after the Chicago World Exposition in 1893, the movement spawned improvement associations in the early twentieth century which were originally devoted to landscaping and good design. The legacies of the movement in Aurora were largely the result of resourceful and prominent women in the community. Just prior to World War I, the Women's Research Club was responsible for the conversion of the public square on Fifth Street at the south end of Judiciary Street from a "wasteland" to an attractive park with a small bandstand. The park was named to honor Mrs. Mary A. Stratton, the first president of the club. The original bandstand has since been replaced with a more recent gazebo. The club's second president, Georgiana Sutton, donated the funds to build the first structure to specifically house a library. The 1913 Italian Renaissance Revival structure was designed by the Cincinnati firm of Frederick Garber and Clifford Woodward (414 Second Street, Photo #4).

A number of new one-story commercial blocks with a veneer of wire-cut brick and parapets in front with simple Prairie style and classical ornament executed in concrete, are seen mainly on Second and Third Streets. The c. 1920 Sutton Hatchery Building is one of the most sophisticated examples (422 Third Street, Photo #12, first building on left). The 1917 Sanborn map indicated that several livery stables were still in use, but by 1935, the date of the last Sanborn map published for the community, most had been converted to serve its successor, the automobile, for parts, sales, and repairs. The area adjacent to the George Street bridge across Hogan Creek teemed with automobile-related businesses by the 1930s; the former quarters for several blacksmiths shops and liveries were replaced by a Chevrolet dealership, bus station, and several garages on Second and Judiciary Streets. The district's first gas station was built around 1935 by the Standard Oil Company at 107 Main Street, and still stands in fairly intact condition (Photo #33). A second station was built in the next block at 225 Main Street around 1950, replacing the Baptist Church on that site which had burned in 1937. The station was operated for the Gulf Oil Company, whose characteristic Moderne model from the 1950s is evident on this structure.

During the Depression in the 1930s, the most notable building project was construction of the new U. S. Post Office on the southwest corner of Third and Bridgeway Streets (511 Third Street, Photo #10). The one-story Georgian Revival brick building was designed by Louis Simon, supervising architect. The building is graced with an interior mural by Indianapolis artist, Henrik Martin Mayer, which was installed in 1938. Christened "Down to the Ferry" the 12' by 6' mural features a dynamically composed scene with Aurora's beautiful location in a bend of the Ohio River. Aurora's post office building was one of 36 locations in Indiana which received such murals through the Section of Fine Arts, a small New Deal agency created to employ artists to embellish federal buildings. In the

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same year, a year after their 1870s building had been destroyed by fire, the Baptist congregation erected their present church building on the corner of Fourth and Main at 304 Fourth Street.

A number of the 1950-1970s buildings in the district were built for fraternal organizations, many with nineteenth century roots in Aurora. Fraternities and benevolent groups were common throughout Aurora's history; Aurora's founders had reserved a lot on Fifth Street for the Masons. The oldest fraternal building which remains is the 1848 I.O.O.F. building at 203 Judiciary Street (Photo #17). In 1887, the Oddfellows built their new, more elaborate structure on Second Street (417 Second Street) next to the c. 1880 Masonic Hall at 413 Second Street. The building known as Schulze's Hall in the nineteenth century, located at 225-229 Second Street (Photo # 7, fifth building on right), was occupied by the Red Men's Lodge of Aurora, the Haymaker's Lodge, and the Pocahontas Lodge. From the late 1940s until 1955, the Thomas Gaff Residence/Hillforest Museum (213 Fifth Street, Photos #26 and 37) was the meeting hall of the newly-established Veterans of Foreign Wars (V.F.W.). The V.F.W. built their present hall at 220 Second Street after Hillforest was purchased by the Hillforest Historical Foundation in the 1956 (Photo #8, second building on left). The Eagles now occupy the former Abram Lozier Residence (Thomas Gaff's former business partner) at 302 Water Street, a brick Italianate building with mid-twentieth century additions and alterations. Just around the corner, the Moose Lodge is a c. 1950s concrete block structure at the east end of Fourth Street at 104 Fourth Street. The American Legion meets at a similar building at 119 Bridgeway Street in the northwest corner of the district.

Industrial enterprises within the district slowed or shut down throughout the twentieth century; at the present time the only industrial operation in the district is the Aylor & Meyer Milling Company at 240 Exporting Street (Photo #9). Tri-State Welding in the old Gaff distillery buildings on Importing Street. Both the Lutheran and the Catholic parishes built new schools in the late 1950s, both to accommodate the growing number of students and to replace their outmoded nineteenth century buildings. Several houses from the 1940s and 1950s attest to the continued desirability of the district as a residential area. In 1951, the Peoples Federal Savings Bank moved their building and loan operation from Cochran on the district's southwest side in the former community of Cochran to the west end of Second Street at Bridgeway Street. Between 1951 and 1977, their operations were expanded three times on this corner.

The efforts at Hillforest Museum, the former residence of Thomas Gaff, exemplify the community's efforts to appreciate the past and its notable architecture. In the Gaff family until 1926, the house was occupied by the Veterans of Foreign Wars from the late 1940s until it was purchased by the Hillforest Historic Foundation in 1956 and opened as a house museum in that year. The building, which survived in miraculously intact condition during its first 100 years, has undergone authentic restoration in gradual stages. The foundation's board and Executive Director are involved in education and awareness programs characterized by the grassroots activism that have helped preservation become more meaningful to the general public.

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Presently, many of Indiana's Ohio River towns are weighing the potential benefits and liabilities of off-shore riverboat gambling activities contiguous to their nineteenth century business districts. The consequences of this enterprise for future development and preservation in Aurora are not known, but the community wishes to protect their precious and important architectural heritage. This National Register nomination and a newly-established local historic district commission ordinance for the same area are considered positive steps in this effort.

Historic Context

Aurora is one of several picturesque Ohio River towns in southeastern Indiana which contain remarkably well-preserved commercial and residential areas. All of the towns prospered during the nineteenth century because of the extensive river trade and were, in varying degrees, rivals with each other. Madison in Jefferson County possesses an extensive historic district, with a Main Street recognized nationally for its high-style architecture and intact streetscapes. Switzerland County's Ohio River town of Vevay has a lovely residential area which has not yet been listed in the National Register. In the small town of Rising Sun in Ohio County, fragments remain of its nineteenth century architecture next to the river, but no districts or individual buildings have been listed in Ohio County. In Dearborn County, the county seat of Lawrenceburg contains an admirable concentration of nineteenth and early twentieth century architecture in its business districts on Walnut and Front Streets and adjacent residential area which were listed in the National Register in 1984.

The Downtown Aurora Historic District compares favorably with these other Ohio River towns in its variety of high style and vernacular nineteenth century and early twentieth century architecture. The integrity of its compact nature and its historical and present character as a self-sufficient and diverse community is particularly significant. The period of significance includes the earliest known resource (c. 1830) and extends to the 50-year mark of 1944.

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The 1983 boundaries, as well as those presently proposed, are basically aligned with the original plat of the town of Aurora, which was bounded by Bridgeway on the west, Importing on the north, Water Street on the east, Fifth Street on the south, and the west side of Market Street.

The proposed boundaries in this nomination are drawn more tightly than the survey boundaries to encompass only lots which contain standing structures that contribute to the district's historical and architectural character. This is particularly noticeable in the northwest corner of the district. The proposed boundaries are contracted east to Mechanic Street at Importing Street because the area west only contains two newer structures which are surrounded by parking lots. In the southeast corner of the district the boundaries have been extended to the south to the city's incorporation limit due to the large undeveloped parcels connected to Hillforest, 213 Fifth Street, and the house at 201 Fifth Street. /

In the southwest corner of the district, the west end of Fourth Street intersects with Conwell Street which leads around a hill in a southwesterly direction. Conwell Street contains more modest mid-to-late nineteenth century residences which were part of the original community of Cochran which was annexed to Aurora in 1907. Cochran was formed in the 1850s as the residential area for the numerous laborers at the railroad car shops located nearby. Other large industries moved to Cochran by the late nineteenth century, providing continued employment after the railroad car shops were moved to Washington, Indiana in 1885. Always regarded as a separate community from downtown Aurora, the area retains its historical feeling of a company town, now dominated by the Aurora Coffin Company structures and the adjacent workers' housing. The 1983 survey identified Cochran as a separate potential historic district.

The streetscape along Market Street maintains a consistent line of nineteenth and early twentieth century houses, broken only by a small number of vacant lots, north of 176 and 173 Market Streets. To the south of these houses are mid-twentieth century residences and contiguous vacant lots which present a clear boundary demarcation for the historic district.

The western edge of the district is firmly established through the presence of the railroad tracks and the five-lane Rt. 50 which parallels it to the west. No buildings are located west of the district along Rt. 50; a small number of mid to late twentieth century buildings are located at the intersection of Importing Street and Rt. 50. Older residential areas which are within Aurora's incorporation limits lie to the northwest of the Downtown Aurora Historic District and were designated as separate historic districts in the 1983 Interim Report.

The area just north of Hogan Creek, on the other side of the George Street bridge, is dominated by a barge loading dock and ancillary grain silos which are surrounded by mostly cleared land. The remnants of a residential area, decimated by twentieth century floods, lies to the north of the dock.

DOWNTOWN AURORA HISTORIC DISTRICT
AURORA, DEARBORN COUNTY, INDIANA

UTM REFERENCES:

- A - 161681720 / 4325060
- B - 161681640 / 4325150
- C - 161681780 / 4325110
- D - 161681850 / 4324750
- E - 161681750 / 4324170
- F - 161681690 / 4324530
- G - 161681280 / 4324720



