

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Lowell Commercial Historic District
other names/site number 089-370-92000

2. Location

street & number 305-519 Commercial Avenue & 108-110 Clark Street N/A not for publication
city or town Lowell N/A vicinity
state Indiana code IN county Lake code 089 zip code 46356

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Signature of certifying official/Title [Signature]
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

Date 1-30-03

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

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper _____

Date of Action _____

Lowell Commercial Historic District
Name of Property

Lake _____ IN _____
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
28	7	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
1	0	objects
30	7	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

_____ N/A _____

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

_____ 0 _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: _____ Single Dwelling _____
COMMERCE/TRADE: _____ Business _____
COMMERCE/TRADE: _____ Specialty Store _____
LANDSCAPE: _____ Park _____
SOCIAL: _____ Meeting Hall _____
EDUCATION: _____ Library _____

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: _____ Single Dwelling _____
COMMERCE/TRADE: _____ Business _____
COMMERCE/TRADE: _____ Specialty Store _____
LANDSCAPE: _____ Park _____
SOCIAL: _____ Meeting Hall _____
EDUCATION: _____ Library _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: _____ Italianate _____
LATE VICTORIAN: _____ Queen Anne _____
LATE VICTORIAN: _____ Romanesque _____
19th & 20th c. AMER.: _____ Bungalow/Craftsma _____
MODERN: _____ Art Deco _____

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation _____ STONE: Limestone _____
walls _____ BRICK _____
_____ STONE: Limestone _____
roof _____ ASPHALT _____
other _____ TERRA COTTA _____
_____ WOOD: Weatherboard _____

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

c. 1870-1952

Significant Dates

1898

1902

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Clark, Perry D. (brickmason)

Webb, Albert (builder)

Wiley, Clifford

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

Lowell Public Library

Lowell Commercial Historic District
Name of Property

Lake _____ IN _____
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 4 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

1	6	4	6	4	6	8	0	4	5	7	1	0	6	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

2

1	6	4	6	4	1	0	0	4	5	7	1	0	5	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

3

1	6	4	6	4	9	9	0	4	5	7	0	9	4	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

4

1	6	4	6	4	6	6	0	4	5	7	0	9	4	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

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

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Shannon L. Hill; Daylene Richmond-Welty

organization Indiana Main Street Program; Lowell Mainstreet Association date 04-01-2002

street & number One North Capitol, Suite 700; 428 E. Commercial Ave telephone 317/232-8912; 219/696-6876

city or town Indianapolis; Lowell state IN zip code 46204; 46356

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

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

Photographs

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

Additional items

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

Property Owner

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

name Various

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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

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

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Section 7 Page 1

Lowell Commercial Historic District
Lake County, Indiana

Section 7: Description

Lowell is a small town located in the northwest section of Cedar Creek Township in Lake County, Indiana. Lowell is twelve miles south of the county seat, Crown Point, and fifty miles south of the grand railroad and trading hub of Chicago. Cedar Creek township is located in the center of the county's three southern townships. The downtown area is mostly level, but the grade does slope down towards Cedar Creek on the west side.

The district is a collection of 28 buildings, a public park and war monument, dating mostly from about 1898 to 1920, located on the main transportation route of the area, Highway 2; locally named Commercial Avenue. The grid-like plat of the town runs north/south and east/west. The buildings along Commercial Avenue face either north or south, and the buildings on Clark Street face west.

Stylistically, most of the buildings are vernacular commercial buildings. They have ground-floor storefronts, second-floor apartments or offices, and flat or shed roofs behind a decorative parapet. While most of the buildings are not high style, the influence of some of the more popular styles, such as Italianate and Romanesque Revival, is evident in the district. A disastrous fire in 1898 destroyed a section of Lowell's business district, and acted as the catalyst for the construction of new *masonry* commercial buildings. Unfortunately, another fire in 1902 claimed much of what had been spared in the 1898 blaze.

The following is an inventory of the contributing and non-contributing items in the district. Non-contributing buildings have either been altered in such a way as to diminish their historic integrity or were built after the period of significance. In several cases, it is possible that a non-contributing building may retain its historic character beneath a later façade treatment. Contributing buildings are part of the historic and architectural development of downtown Lowell; they possess historic design elements and retain the scale, use, and character of the district.

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Numbers refer to building numbers on map. All buildings are contributing unless otherwise noted.

East Commercial Avenue (North side)

1. 307 East Commercial Avenue, Roberts Building, 1948, Photograph 1.

This building always housed Roberts Law and Insurance offices, but is now vacant. The 1976 fire that destroyed the Opera House next door partially damaged the building. The one-story brick building has a limestone façade with little ornamentation. The cornice line is slightly set back from the rest of the façade. Limestone is laid at the corners in a way to give the impression of quoins. There is a large, front-facing window opening to the left of the entrance. The entrance features a plain transom window.

2. 313 East Commercial Avenue, 1900, Photograph 2.

The fire of 1898 destroyed the large frame structure that once stood at this site. After local authorities decided that all new downtown buildings must be of masonry construction, this building was built for State Bank in 1900. It remained a bank until 1930. Today the building houses a restaurant and antique store. It is a two-story brick building occupying the corner lot of the northeast corner of Commercial Avenue and Wall Street. The first-story storefront features an entrance diagonally oriented towards the corner. The entry appears to be original and features a transom of small glass squares (12x10). The large store window is trimmed in limestone, and has a clearstory filled in by two panels of 4x10 glass blocks. Its metal sill extends to the corner of the building terminating with a beetle motif that decorates an alarm. The second story features decorative brickwork that accentuates the bays, making them appear to be recessed. Raised brick corbels create a frieze above and beneath the limestone window sills and lintels. The impression of window hoods are created by yet more decorative brick work. A limestone legend centrally located above the two front-facing bays in the parapet wall reads "Bank 1900" in an Arial style typeface. It is flanked on either side by more decorative brick work.

3. 317-319 East Commercial Avenue, 1899, Photograph 3.

(317) Perry D. Clark built the building that housed and was later purchased by the Grant Brothers for their department store. Throughout its history, the building has housed telephone companies, a photography studio, a beauty parlor, American Legion Post 101, doctor and lawyer offices, and a barbershop. Today it houses Lowell Carpet & Coverings. The storefront has been altered, but does retain its original steel or iron I-beam above and spanning the storefront. There is an entrance to the stairs leading to the second floor that appears to be in its original location. It is topped by a large transom window. The altered storefront has a recessed entrance, and

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signage located in the transom openings.

(319) This was the site of George M. Death's hardware store, destroyed in the fire of 1898. In 1899 Death had this large building built to house his hardware store which was located at this corner of Commercial Avenue and Clark Street for thirty-six years. It later housed other drug stores, including Scritchfield's who was responsible for the sign. The ghost sign (c. 1920) painted by Fred Viant has been restored on the east side of the building. It is an advertisement for Rexall Drug Store (a former 319 tenant) with a hand pointing north with the words "To Chicago." Today it is used for apartment/office space. The building is a large, two-story, brick structure. Two storefronts occupy the first floor. During the 1990s, the building was rehabilitated by removing a 1950s limestone treatment and restoring the brickwork. A flattened arch is created from a brick course over the front-facing window opening. Other decorative brick work creates a cornice-like course separating the storefront from the story above. This half of the building does not have a visible I-beam, instead, bricks were laid vertically over the I-beam during the 1990s rehabilitation. The entrance is recessed at a diagonal. The second-story windows are recessed (with the exception of the westernmost bay) and have limestone sills and rock-faced lintels; the openings have been altered above the east store front, and all windows are replacements. More decorative brickwork adorns the parapet wall, creating a checkerboard look. A limestone legend, centered above the eastern storefront reads "G. M. Death 1899."

4. 401-405 East Commercial Avenue, c. 1900, Photograph 4.

This is a large, two-story brick building with three storefronts. It is located on the NE corner lot at Commercial/Clark. The corner storefront (401) housed the Corner Barbershop from 1917 to 1976. The second story contains a large hall that was also used for the Town Hall in the past. The storefronts have been altered, retaining little of their historic fabric. An original steel or iron I-beam with decorative rosette ties still spans the western and middle storefronts. The second story still exhibits the building's character-defining features. A thin limestone course runs the length of the building and around the side at the elevation of the limestone window sills. All window openings have been altered, but are still capped by their limestone lintels. The parapet wall features a broad band of intricate brickwork laid in varied patterns. In the center of this is a Knights of Pythias limestone legend that says "Lowell Lodge KP No. 300." It now houses a doll shop, convenience store and bakery.

5. 407 East Commercial Avenue, Non-contributing commercial building, Photograph 4.

The original front of this building was altered significantly, however under the wood façade the original face exists.

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6. 409 East Commercial Avenue, c. 1899, Non-contributing commercial building, Photograph 5.
A recent fire destroyed much of the original front of this building. Sufficient alterations to the storefront, windows and brickwork have been made. The original steel decorative beams still flank the edges of the building.

7. 411-413 East Commercial Avenue, 1904, Non-contributing commercial building, Photograph 6.
A 1950's limestone façade on this building was made in Lowell Indiana by a local family business. Unfortunately it does not fall within the period of significance. It currently houses a gift shop and office space.

8. 415 East Commercial Avenue, Colfax Lodge, 1898, Photograph 6.

This building was built in 1898 just after the fire of 1898 destroyed the former building of the Colfax Lodge No. 378 that was located at the corner of Clark Street and Commercial Avenue. The Colfax Lodge occupied the second floor of this building built by George Waters, and has since been purchased by the order. The bottom floor was originally occupied by Davis C. "Doc" Driscoll's drug store. This is a two story light-colored brick building. The first-story storefront has been remodeled, probably in the 1950s or early 1960s, with a light limestone veneer. There is a recessed entrance to the west of the two front-facing windows that have limestone sills. The second story features arched windows with limestone sills, that allude to the Romanesque Revival style. The openings have been altered by partially bricking up the arched area and filling with glass blocks. Two pilaster-like brick elements frame the western window. There are low-relief corbel tables below the cornice, which was probably altered in the 1950s or 1960s. A plaque centered between the middle and eastern bay below the parapet wall says "Colfax Lodge A.F. A.M. No. 378." Another, plaque, centered in the same place below the windows says "G.W. Waters 1898"

9. 417 East Commercial Avenue, c. 1980, Non-contributing office building, Photograph 7.

This location was the site of the Bacon House's barn that was destroyed in the fire of 1898. The current building (c. 1980) is outside the period of significance.

10. 427 East Commercial Avenue, Bacon House, c. 1870, Photograph 8.

This house was built by Dr. E. R. Bacon, a prominent physician and Civil War veteran. It was saved from destruction in the 1898 fire by the water well located just west of the house. The house is still a private residence. Located at the northwest corner of Commercial Avenue and Fremont Street, this two-story frame

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house is an excellent example of the Italianate style. It has a brick foundation. The one-story porch supported by thin wooden columns, has decorative millwork beneath its roof, but is not original. The home has four bays, with the entrance occupying the second. It is an arched double-door opening with a transom light. The tall, narrow, arched windows are four-over-four, double-hung, common to the Italianate style. They are capped with a simple arching hood, and are flanked by shutters. There is a bay window on the eastern side of the house. Above the entrance on the second floor is another doorway accessing the porch. The roof is hipped with overhanging eaves and a widow's walk. A one-story addition has been added to the western side.

11. 501 East Commercial Avenue, c. 1880, Photograph 9.

This one story Queen-Anne cottage sits upon a brick foundation. It is a T-Plan in form. There is a front-facing bay window, surrounded by a wrap-around porch with turned posts. It is located at the northeast corner of Commercial Avenue and Fremont Street and currently houses a dental office.

12. 509 East Commercial Avenue, c. 1880, Photograph 10.

This two-story Italianate brick building originally housed a doctor's office. It features two entrances on the first story, each with transom windows above. A large window is above a kick-plate between the two entrances. Rock-faced limestone 'pilasters' flank each end. A sheet-metal cornice separates the first and second stories, and has decorative brackets on each end. The second story features three tall, narrow windows with limestone sills, and decorative hoods above. The outer bays are recessed. Brick corbel tables adorn the parapet below the projecting, sheet metal cornice. The cornice wall features a steep pediment at its center. It appears that partial finials remain above the brackets. The building now houses apartments.

13. 519 East Commercial Avenue, c. 1880, Photograph 10.

This two-story Italianate brick building, probably built at the same time as 509, features a one-story bay window with iron cresting along its roof above the entablature. Windows are one over one, double hung, with limestone sills. The entrance has a transom window and limestone lintel. The second story has two recessed windows with limestone sills and large, pediment-like caps above. The windows have been replaced. Brick corbel tables matching those at 509 appear below the cornice. The sheet-metal cornice features decorative brackets, with the end brackets capped by finials. The building now houses apartments.

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Commercial Avenue (South side)

14. 308 East Commercial Avenue, c. 1920, Photograph 11.

This one story building is the only example of the use of decorative terra cotta in the Lowell commercial district. The storefront retains most of its historic character. The recessed entrance is on the eastern side of the building. To each side of the doorway, near the top are shields and swags made of colorful terra cotta. This is seen again at the same elevation on the western side of the storefront. In between these areas is the large display window above the kick plate area. It is divided by three panes, each with its own transom. In the upper storefront are several moldings consisting of acanthus leaves. In the area above the storefront, carving imitates molding. On the far sides of this area, there are terra cotta squares with colorful, open flower blooms. The parapet wall culminates in a decorative block of terra cotta with volutes and a colorful swag. The building now houses a dental office.

15. 310 East Commercial Avenue, c.1895, Photograph 11.

This two story brick building retains some historic character in the first floor storefront. There is a recessed entrance on the western side of the storefront, and another on the eastern side leading to the stair hall. A large display window with two panes of glass faces Commercial Ave. The transom area is covered with vertical siding. Above this, there are three flat, rectangular areas of lighter colored brick, beneath the three window openings above. The openings are rectangular and contain one over one, double hung sashes. They each have limestone sills, set within a course of lighter colored brick spanning the width of the building. Above the openings, a course of vertically laid lighter-colored brick also spans the building's width. Above this in the parapet area, three more rectangular areas of lighter colored brick mirror those below. The building now houses an art gallery and café.

16. 312 East Commercial Avenue, c. 1900, Photograph 12.

This building has long been a favorite hang-out for the locals, having housed several drugstores including Hunts, Hunters and Roberts. Today the two story brick building houses a restaurant. The storefront appears to have undergone a rehabilitation, probably intended to allude to its historic appearance. It is set apart by two pilasters on each end, reaching the height of the entire storefront, including the transom area. The entrance is located in the center of the storefront. It has a small transom above the door. On each side of the entrance are large display windows with panes reaching from nearly ground level to the transom area. On the outer sides of these windows are pilasters reaching to the height of the transom area that appear similar to the first couple of

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pilasters. To the side of the eastern pilaster is another large window display. To the side of the western pilaster is another entrance to a stair hall. 312 and 314 share many of the same features on the second story. Above the storefront are three window openings with replacement windows. Just beneath the openings runs a thin course of limestone, spanning the width of the building and in-line with neighboring 314. A thicker course of limestone, also in-line with 314 is located about a foot above the window openings. About a foot above this is a limestone cornice along the parapet wall.

17. 314 East Commercial Avenue, c. 1900, Photograph 12.

Throughout its history, this two-story brick building has housed a tailor shop, music store, and a doctor's office. In 1941, Henry Sickinger moved his jewelry store there and it still remains. The storefront has two entrances; one to a stairwell, and the second to the shop. It has been altered, but retains historic glass block in the transom area above the storefront. Sharing characteristics of 312, above the eastern storefront there are two window openings, and just beneath the openings runs a thin course of limestone, spanning the width of the building. A thicker course of limestone is about a foot above the openings. About a foot above this is a limestone cornice along the parapet wall.

18. 316 East Commercial Avenue, 1903, Photograph 13.

In 1903, the Lowell National Bank purchased this site that formerly had a two-story frame building. The bank remained there until 1958. On May 23, 1933 four bandits of the John Dillinger gang robbed the bank, took a shot at Mr. Harold Love, employee, but missed. The well-planned robbery only lasted a few minutes, but has brought years of story-telling to the attractive one-story, limestone, Romanesque Revival building. Hidden under siding for decades, much of the historic character remains. The storefront is located within a large, flattened arch the width of the building. There is a recessed entrance on the eastern side of the building. Next to this is the display window above a kick-plate area, also of limestone. There are four long panes facing Commercial Ave. Above this, the transom area is divided into three sections, the middle area now displays signage. The arch is capped by a dominating keystone. The cornice line, also made of limestone, has been carved to imitate two bands of dentils. Above this, in the center of the parapet area, the word "BANK" is carved.

19. 318-320 East Commercial Avenue, c. 1890, Photograph 14.

This building was built by J. M. Castle, who moved the neighboring alley from the east to the west side of the building. 318 has housed a barber shop, jewelry store and gift shop. Today it is a salon. 320 has housed barber shops throughout most of its history, including Earle 'Bab' Tanner's for over 55 years. Another long time tenant

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was Victor Roberts who had his law offices there for 19 years. It is now a salon. This two story brick building has two storefronts on the first floor, both have been altered. The western storefront still has its rotating barber shop pole affixed to the corner of the building. The original steel or iron I-Beam with decorative rosette ties remains above the storefronts. The second floor has an oriel window above the eastern part of the eastern storefront. On the western half, and also above the western storefront are four window openings, paired, with shared limestone sills and lintels. These paired openings are recessed due to projecting brickwork. The western part of the parapet wall features a brick corbel table.

20. 322 East Commercial Avenue, c. 1890, Photograph 15.

This building was built by J. M. Castle who operated a general store there for many years. It has also housed a butcher, a men's clothing store, and the National Tea Company occupied the building for nearly three decades, closing in 1950. Today it houses insurance agencies. This two story brick masonry building has been altered on the first floor storefront, but does retain an original steel or iron I-Beam above that has decorative rosette ties. The second floor has three tall, rectangular window openings with one over one, double hung sashes. Each window has a limestone sill and brick flat arches above. Above these openings, there are several courses of darker brick. The building retains its original metal cornice with brackets common in the Italianate style; a late example of such a cornice.

21. 324 East Commercial Avenue, c. 1890, Photograph 15.

This two-story brick building once housed Pixley Jewelry Store, a restaurant/bar, and now an antique store. The storefront has a recessed entrance set at an angle on the west side. There is also an entrance to a stairwell in the same recession. The large display window contains five narrow glass panes that wrap to the diagonal recessed area. Above the storefront is a brick area for signage, then a course of limestone resembling a cornice separating the lower and upper portions of the building. The second story contains two, recessed, rectangular windows. Brick has been cut to produce a zigzag effect above each window in the recessed area. The windows have more detail in the recessed area, with brick corbel tables below the parapets. The windows are six over six, double hung, and have limestone sills and lintels.

22. 402 East Commercial Avenue, c. 1890, Photograph 15.

This two-story, brick building has housed the 120-year-old Davis Store business since it moved from its original location across the street. The storefront has an entrance at the east side, and a large display window with two glass panes and a limestone sill. The second story contains two, recessed, rectangular windows. Brick has been

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cut to produce a zigzag effect above each window in the recessed area. The windows are one over one, double hung and have limestone sills and lintels. The parapet above the eastern half of the building is decorative, having four recessed, long rectangular areas. The building has an addition to the east that is not accessible from the Commercial Avenue sidewalk.

23. 406 East Commercial Avenue, Non-contributing commercial building, Photograph 16.
This building was altered significantly to accommodate storage and office space for the Davis Store.

24. 408 East Commercial Avenue, c. 1915, Photograph 16.

This is the original site of a frame building used as a harness shop run by Jourdain and McGonigal after 1909. Today it houses Lowell Taekwondo. The two story building differs from the other masonry brick buildings on Commercial Avenue in that it has a veneer of polychromatic ceramic tile. The second story is fairly unadorned. There are two window openings, square-like in shape.

25. 410-412 East Commercial Avenue, c. 1895, Photograph 17.

For many years this building housed a furniture store and funeral parlor that had been founded by Martin Schur in 1872. The business was sold to William Sheets, superintendent of Lowell's schools, in 1905. Today the building houses an antique mall. This two-story building had its original brick façade replaced with multi-colored brick in 1929 to accommodate vehicle access to Sheets Funeral Home. The first floor has three window display bays. The easternmost display window contains one large glass pane, with an entrance connected to its western side. The transom area above has been altered and now has a wood-shingle roof treatment in its place. It is separated from the middle display area by a 'pilaster' of bricks. The middle bay contains a large window opening with two glass panes, topped by a transom with three panels containing approximately 10x16 square lights. This opening has a limestone sill. Again, the middle bay is separated from the western bay by a brick 'pilaster.' This bay is larger than the middle, having the same type of window opening, but this time with a recessed entrance connected to the western part. The transom resembling Luxfer lights span not only the window, but also the entrance, containing three panels with approximately 10x16 glass squares and one panel with approximately 10x12 glass squares. The storefront is separated from the 2nd floor by a course of vertically laid brick. The second floor has four square-ish window openings with limestone sills. Above the windows is another course of vertically laid brick separating the parapet wall. The parapet has a crenellation-like pattern. That section features three light colored, horizontally-laid bricks repeating, giving the impression of dentils.

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26. 414 East Commercial Avenue, 1892, Photograph 18.

This two story brick building housed a grocery store several times in its history, and for many years, the egg store of L. Y. Cowl. It was later Pletcher and Spindler Hardware Company. Today it houses a resale shop. The building been altered in conjunction with 416, creating a uniform appearance. An original steel or iron I-beam with decorative rosette ties can be seen just above the storefronts. The second story has two rectangular window openings, the eastern opening being larger than the western opening. Pilasters and corbels are used above the windows. The building is missing its original cornice, and now has just a plain parapet area.

27. 416 East Commercial Avenue, 1892, Photograph 18.

This two story brick building was used as a hardware store for many years, and the Lynch Brothers Department Store. The department store expanded the building by connecting the two neighboring spaces by archway. The department store was sold to Fred Schmal who operated it from 1918 until 1934. It has also housed the Lowell Post Office and the Lowell License Bureau. Today it is Klean Sweep vacuum store. The building been altered in conjunction with 416, creating a uniform appearance. An original steel or iron I-beam with decorative rosette ties can be seen just above the storefronts. The second story has two window openings with segmental arches containing replacement windows. They appear to be recessed due to the projecting brick pilasters framing them; there are corbel tables above the windows. The building is missing its original cornice, and now has just a plain parapet area.

28. 418 East Commercial Avenue, c. 1890, Photographs 18, 19.

This building housed Frank Hunt's drug store and the Lowell Telephone Company used the second-floor rooms. On November 9, 1905 a fire in the building broke out claiming the lives of sisters Edith and Abbie Simpson, both in their early twenties. The building later became part of the Lynch Brothers Department Store. Today it is an office equipment store. The building's storefront has been significantly altered, but the second-story has most of its integrity intact. An original steel or iron I-beam is visible with decorative rosette ties. Three pilasters frame the window openings. There are two large, slightly arched window openings. The windows have been replaced and now contain two one over one, double-hung windows in each opening. Above the windows are segmental arches, and then brick is laid to create a herringbone pattern. Above this, the building retains its original Italianate cornice that features square projecting details in the lower part of the entablature. The upper entablature has dentils beneath the cymatium.

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29. 420 East Commercial Avenue, c.1890, Photograph 20.

This building, similar to the design of 418, served as a department store for many years; in 1905 George Hoevet and Emil Ruge purchased the business, remodeled the store, and added an undertaking department. It was later purchased by the Lynch Brothers. In 1948, owners of the Pletcher and Spindler Co. tore out a brick store front dating from 1896. It has also housed Sears Roebuck and Company, a sporting goods store, and mini mall; today a restaurant occupies the western portion of the building and the rest is vacant. The first story storefront has been altered, however, the second story still retains most of its historic character. An original steel or iron I-beam is visible with decorative rosette ties. There are four windows with slightly arched openings and limestone sills. They have all been filled with glass block. The most important historic feature of this building is its broad Italianate cornice. The lower portion of the entablature features square panels, and numerous brackets on the upper portion supporting the cymatium.

30. 422 East Commercial Avenue, 1891, Photograph 21.

This two-story, brick Italianate bank building was first called Wiggins Bank, then State Bank. In its past it has housed several millinery shops, doctors' offices, and a dentist office. Today it is a gift shop. The first floor storefront retains much of its historic character. The main entrance is recessed on the east side of the storefront; another entrance on the west side accesses the stair hall to the second floor. Between the doors is a large display window, above a kick plate. On each side of the window are pilasters that extend to the transom area above which is now used for signage. The original iron or steel I-beam spans above the storefront, with decorative rosette ties. Three narrow windows are on the second floor. They are one over one, double hung, with limestone sills and segmental arches above. Each window is flanked by shutters. The cornice features three panels; the center panel is decorated with a festoon. It is terminated by two brackets.

31. 428 East Commercial Avenue, Lowell Town Hall, 1922, Photograph 22.

The land that the Town Hall was constructed on was given to the town by Jabez Clark. For many years, the location had a hitching rack for horses and no building was on the site until the Town Hall was constructed in 1922. The lower floor of the building was used for office space, with the rear serving the fire department. The upper floor consisted of one large room used for public gatherings. The building has been remodeled several times and has housed the Lowell Police Department; today it serves as the Lowell Chamber of Commerce. Stylistically, the two-story, brick building is a mixture of the Arts and Crafts and Neo-Classical styles. It is symmetrical, having five bays, with entrances at each outer bay, and three windows in between. The entrances have bold limestone architraves, with Neo-Classical "ears." The glazed doors are topped by large transoms. The

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short windows are situated high, with the limestone sills about at eye level. They contain six over one, double hung windows with limestone flat arches that feature keystones. Beneath each window is a limestone panel. The middle panel contains a plaque that reads "Lowell Town Hall Erected 1922." The Building is divided by two limestone courses separated by several courses of brick. There are three windows situated in the middle bays. They, like the doors, have limestone architraves, and like the windows below are capped with a keystone. There is a metal balustrade spanning beneath the three windows. The front-facing gabled roof has large, overhanging eaves, supported by Craftsman styled brackets.

32. Town Square, Three Creeks Monument, 1905, Photograph 23.

Part of the land for the Town Square was donated by Dr. Jabez Clark, when he platted his addition to Lowell, and the rest was purchased by the town. The park was used for foot races, ice-cream socials, and band concerts. At the turn of the century, a water tower was erected there, and later the fountain was placed on that spot. In 1905, the Three Creeks Monument was dedicated with 4,000 people in attendance, and Governor Frank Hanley gave a thirty-minute address. Newspaper editor H. H. Reagan solicited women to raise money for the monument. The monument is made of Barre Granite by Clark Bros. Monument Co. of Wabash and is over twenty-five feet tall and weighs forty-five tons. The statue of the soldier on top is five foot five inches. The names of 504 soldiers, sailors, and one Navy nurse, veterans of the War of 1812, Civil War, Mexican War, and Spanish American War from Eagle Creek, Cedar Creek, and West Creek townships are inscribed on three sides. The south side lists names of veterans who lived or were buried in the area at the time of the dedication, but did not enter the service from the three townships. In 1972, a plaque was placed on the north face of the monument that reads, "Three Creeks Monument, dedicated 1905 in honor of those who served in the Civil, Mexican and Spanish-American Wars and the War of 1812, by the Women of Tri-Creek, Lowell Women's Club, 1972."

33. 512 East Commercial Avenue, Lowell Carnegie Library, 1920, Photograph 24.

The Lowell Carnegie Library was funded by a donation of over \$12,000 by Andrew Carnegie and \$2,000 contributed by townspeople to serve Lowell, Schneider, Cedar Creek Township and West Creek Township. It replaced an earlier library that had been housed on an upper floor of a downtown commercial building and it served the area until a new library was opened on Fremont Street in 1969. In 1973 it became Lowell's Town Hall and was remodeled at a cost of \$60,000. Today it houses Micic Realty. The brick building is an excellent example of the Arts and Crafts Style, designed by architect Clifford M. Wiley. Its symmetrical design features a central, double entry with stairs leading up to the elevated main store. The basement is half below and half above ground. There is a small roof above the entry supported by large, paired brackets that mimics the building's roof. The doors are decoratively glazed in a sunburst pattern, with small, triangular pieces of glass. Window openings

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on both sides of the entry are accentuated by a lighter colored brick architrave. Two double-hung windows are side by side within the opening, and a transom window spans them both. The transom has mullions diagonally placed creating a diamond-effect. The low-pitched, hipped roof has large, overhanging eaves. A course of brick laid vertically two layers deep beneath the windows span the building. Two other courses of vertically laid brick one layer deep are beneath this; the first course is in-line with the top of the basement windows (also having an architrave of a lighter colored brick), and then again beneath. Lighter colored brick has also been laid at the corners, creating the illusion of quoins. There is a one-story portico on the east side of the building, providing shelter for a side entrance.

Clark Street (East side)

34. 108 Clark Street, c. 1890, Non-contributing commercial building, Photograph 25.

This two-story building has sustained sufficient alterations to its façade and lower level. It is now a residential apartment upstairs and a cabinet shop downstairs.

35. 110 Clark Street, c. 1911, Photograph 25.

This two-story brick building once housed Arnets Furniture Store, a cigar store, a pool hall and a plumbing shop. It retains much of its historic character. The first floor is divided into a garage door opening and a storefront. The garage area is located on the north part of the building and is topped by a transom area with three lights. To the south of the door is a thin wooden column the first floor. The entrance to the storefront is in the center of the façade. The door is flanked by two tall, narrow side-lights. The transom area above the door appears to be intact, though at the present 2/3 of it is covered by a piece of plywood. To the south of the entrance is the display area. There are two large glass panes in the opening that has a limestone sill. Another piece of plywood covers the transom area above. The second story features three slightly arched, recessed window openings. The center bay is larger and contains two one over one, double hung windows. Each of the outer openings contains a single one-over-one double hung window. They all have limestone sills. Above the openings, a course of a white colored brick spans the building, emphasizing the opening arches and acting as hoods. Each recessed area contains decoratively laid white bricks in a checkerboard pattern, and above that mimicking brackets. The parapet wall appears to also have a different colored brick laid to form a course of squares, but it is difficult to tell as it has been painted red. The original cornice appears to have been removed. Appears vacant today.

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Photographs

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Lowell Commercial Historic District
Lowell, Lake County, Indiana
Shannon Hill
January 2002
Indiana Main Street Program, Indiana Department of Commerce

List of Photographs:

- Photograph 1. South and east elevations, 307 East Commercial Avenue, facing northwest.
- Photograph 2. South and west elevations, 313 East Commercial Avenue, facing northeast.
- Photograph 3. South elevations, 317 East Commercial Avenue, 319 East Commercial Avenue, facing north.
- Photograph 4. South and west elevations, 401-405 East Commercial Avenue, 407 East Commercial Avenue, facing northeast.
- Photograph 5. South elevation, 409 East Commercial Avenue, facing northeast.
- Photograph 6. South elevations, 411-413 East Commercial Avenue, 415 E. Commercial Avenue, facing northeast.
- Photograph 7. South elevation, 417 East Commercial Avenue, facing north.
- Photograph 8. South and west elevations, Bacon House, 427 East Commercial Avenue, facing northeast.
- Photograph 9. South elevation, 501 E. Commercial Avenue, facing north.
- Photograph 10. South and west elevations, 509 East Commercial Avenue, 519 East Commercial Avenue, facing northeast.

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- Photograph 11. North elevations, 310 East Commercial Avenue, 308 East Commercial Avenue, facing south.
- Photograph 12. North elevations, 314 East Commercial Avenue, 312 East Commercial Avenue, facing south.
- Photograph 13. North elevation, 316 East Commercial Avenue, facing south.
- Photograph 14. North and west elevations, 318-320 East Commercial Avenue, facing southeast.
- Photograph 15. North elevations, 402 East Commercial Avenue, 324 East Commercial Avenue, 322 East Commercial Avenue, facing southeast.
- Photograph 16. North elevations, 408 East Commercial Avenue, 406 East Commercial Avenue, facing southeast.
- Photograph 17. North elevation, 410-412 East Commercial Avenue, facing southeast.
- Photograph 18. North elevations, 418 East Commercial Avenue, 414-416 East Commercial Avenue, facing southeast.
- Photograph 19. North elevation, 418 East Commercial Avenue, facing south.
- Photograph 20. North elevation, 420 East Commercial Avenue, facing southeast.
- Photograph 21. North elevation, 422 East Commercial Avenue, facing south.
- Photograph 22. North and west elevations, Lowell Town Hall, 428 East Commercial Avenue, facing southeast.
- Photograph 23. Town Square, Three Creeks Monument, facing southwest.
- Photograph 24. North elevation, Lowell Carnegie Library, 512 East Commercial Avenue, facing south.
- Photograph 25. West and south elevations, 110 Clark Street, 108 Clark Street, facing northeast.
- Photograph 26. Commercial Avenue, streetscape facing northeast.

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Photograph 27. Commercial Avenue, streetscape facing southwest.

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Lake County, Indiana**Section 8: Statement of Significance**

The commercial district of downtown Lowell, Indiana along Commercial Avenue and Clark Street exemplifies the growth of small rail communities in Northwestern Indiana. The connection between transportation and commerce is evidenced by Lowell's intact commercial center. The buildings have architectural significance because they demonstrate the personality of typical small town commercial districts of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and they echo the confidence and prosperity brought about by the arrival of the railroad. The Lowell Commercial Historic District meets National Register criteria A and C in the areas of commerce, transportation and architecture for these reasons. Because of the quality and concentration of historic buildings in the downtown, Lowell was the only small town center in southern Lake County recommended for nomination to the National Register in the Lake County Interim Report.

Early settlement in the area pivoted around Cedar Creek, and a mill site was selected as early as 1836. In 1849, Melvin Halsted and O. E. Haskins purchased land along the creek and built a dam and sawmill. The town was planned in 1852 and formally platted in 1853 by Halsted, and Lowell, Massachusetts is said to be the town's namesake. Halsted used the areas rich, clay-based soil to fire bricks that supplied materials for his own house (that still stands) and other buildings. A flouring mill was erected in 1852-1853 and was an important factor in attracting settlers to the area. Circa 1860, the county built a new road that is the present-day Commercial Avenue in Lowell, and is also known as State Road 2 and the Harding Highway (named after President Harding). Most business owners moved their businesses from the mill district on Main Street two blocks south into mostly frame structures on the new county road. The area was known as Halsted's First Addition, platted soon after the original sixteen lots.

During the subsequent decades, the town surfaced as the business, social, and religious center for the area. Halsted, town founder, had persuaded the railroad builders to come through Lowell instead of Crown Point. In 1881, the coming of the Louisville, New Albany and Chicago Railroad (also known as the Monon) through Lowell only boosted the existing businesses, and it also was the catalyst for new endeavors. Sidings were quickly constructed to serve mills, lumber yards, coal yards, an implement shop, a bulk oil plant, a factory and a stockyard. Unfortunately, the original depot at Lowell was destroyed the year of Lowell's centennial when a train wrecked in 1952. A new brick building was dedicated in 1953. Lowell's last passenger train left town in September of 1967.

The first newspaper published in Lowell to serve the business needs and social activities of the area was the *Lowell Star*, a weekly from 1872 to 1877. *The Lowell Enterprise* was another paper of the 1870s. *The Lowell Tribune* was established in 1885, and continues to serve the people of Lowell today. During the 1880s and 1890s, Lowell was a center for commerce and industry. A broom factory produced as many as 1,000 brooms per week, shipping many to Chicago. Lowell boasted a factory that made household items. In 1890, a creamery

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building was built downtown to make butter, and milk from the creamery was shipped to Chicago on the Monon.

By the late 1890s, the downtown was crowded with commercial structures, mostly framed, but some brick commercial blocks along Commercial Avenue and Clark Street. In the fall of 1898, Lowell was not prepared to deal with the volatile mishmash of closely spaced framed buildings, combustible store goods, and risky 19th century heating systems. On the morning of October 4, 1898, fire was first discovered under the hardware store of Haskins and Brannon (west of Wall Street on Commercial Avenue). Local citizens quickly arrived and extinguished the flames, but then saw fire behind the building at 415 East Commercial (the present Colfax Lodge). They tried to no avail to ring the fire bell, and eventually many townspeople turned out with buckets. When all was finished, fire had destroyed three blocks of buildings on the north side of Commercial Avenue, rain apparently spared the south side. Officials decided that all new downtown buildings would be of masonry construction, and business owners soon began to rebuild Lowell's commercial district. The fire is believed to be the result of arson because it began in several places at the same time.

Unfortunately, Lowell would face another terrible blaze on May 12, 1902, claiming much of what had been spared in 1898 fire. Townspeople awoke to the ringing of the fire bell and blowing of the whistle at the water plant on Liberty Street. Flames had been discovered in Charles Schafer's Blacksmith shop and it quickly spread to Sirois Implement shop and Duckworth Paint store. Hayden and Petrie Harness shop at the corner of Commercial Avenue and Mill Street was soon burning. Again, this fire was said to be the work of an arsonist. The installation of a new water system after the fire of 1898 saved at least one building from total destruction; volunteer firemen were able to use three hoses at the same time to fight the flames.

Within three years, businessmen had rebuilt most of the downtown with brick buildings. It is probable that a relatively small set of craftsman and building designers were responsible for the new buildings due to the similarity of brick work on many of the buildings. Perry D. Clark founded a brick yard on the north end of Liberty Street and is responsible for the building of 317 East Commercial in 1899 which is believed to be the last building he built before his 1904 retirement. George M. Death's hardware store was destroyed in the fire of 1898 and he had a new building built by Albert Webb in 1899 at 319 East Commercial Avenue. Whether or not Webb was involved in the construction of other new buildings at the time is unknown. J. Claude Rumsey, a contractor whose firm advertised heavily in turn-of-the-century newspapers may be responsible for at least one downtown commercial building. Other lumber yards around at the time of the fires include Lowell Lumber Company and Wilbur Lumber Company.

Lowell's downtown prospered well into the 20th century. In 1915 John Miller owned a Ford dealership that assembled the "Lowell" truck—a sturdy looking vehicle with hard rubber tires; the same was built in Gary called the "Gary" truck. The Lowell Reduction Company was founded in the early 1920s to make farm fertilizer. Also in the 1920s, the Dearborn Manufacturing Company made brushes similar to those sold by the well know Fuller

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Brush Company. Some long-lived businesses in Lowell include The Davis Store (c.1880-present), Death's Hardware (pre-1898-c.1935), Grants Brothers Department Store (c.1900-1976), Sheets Funeral Home (1905-present), the Corner Barbershop (1917-1976), National Tea Company (c.1920-1950) and Tanner's Barber Shop (1930-1985); their longevity is testament to Lowell's importance as a commercial center.

Lowell's downtown is the best example of a small railroad town commercial center in southern Lake County. The State Bank Building at 422 East Commercial is an excellent study of Italianate Commercial architecture of the Victorian era. Likewise, the Lowell National Bank at 316 East Commercial Avenue is a bold example of the Romanesque Revival style. The building at 308 East Commercial Avenue is a colorful look at the Art Deco style. Lowell boasts two fine examples of the Arts & Crafts style; the Carnegie Library at 512 East Commercial Avenue and the Town Hall at 428 East Commercial Avenue.

Lowell's historic business district is unique in southern Lake County. Similar *historic districts* in Lake County include the larger cities of Crown Point and nearby Valparaiso. Nearby Chesterton in Porter County, recently awarded National Register recognition, has many architectural and transportation similarities. Architectural similarities include Italianate, Romanesque Revival, Commercial Style and Arts and Crafts, styles shared by both small communities. Both Lowell and Chesterton also share the importance of the railroad to their communities in the past. Lowell is unique from Chesterton in that it also has good examples of Art Deco and Queen Anne. Although many of the buildings were constructed in the late 1800's to the early 1900's, the historic commercial district in Lowell has significant examples dating from c. 1870 to 1952.

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Section 9: Bibliography

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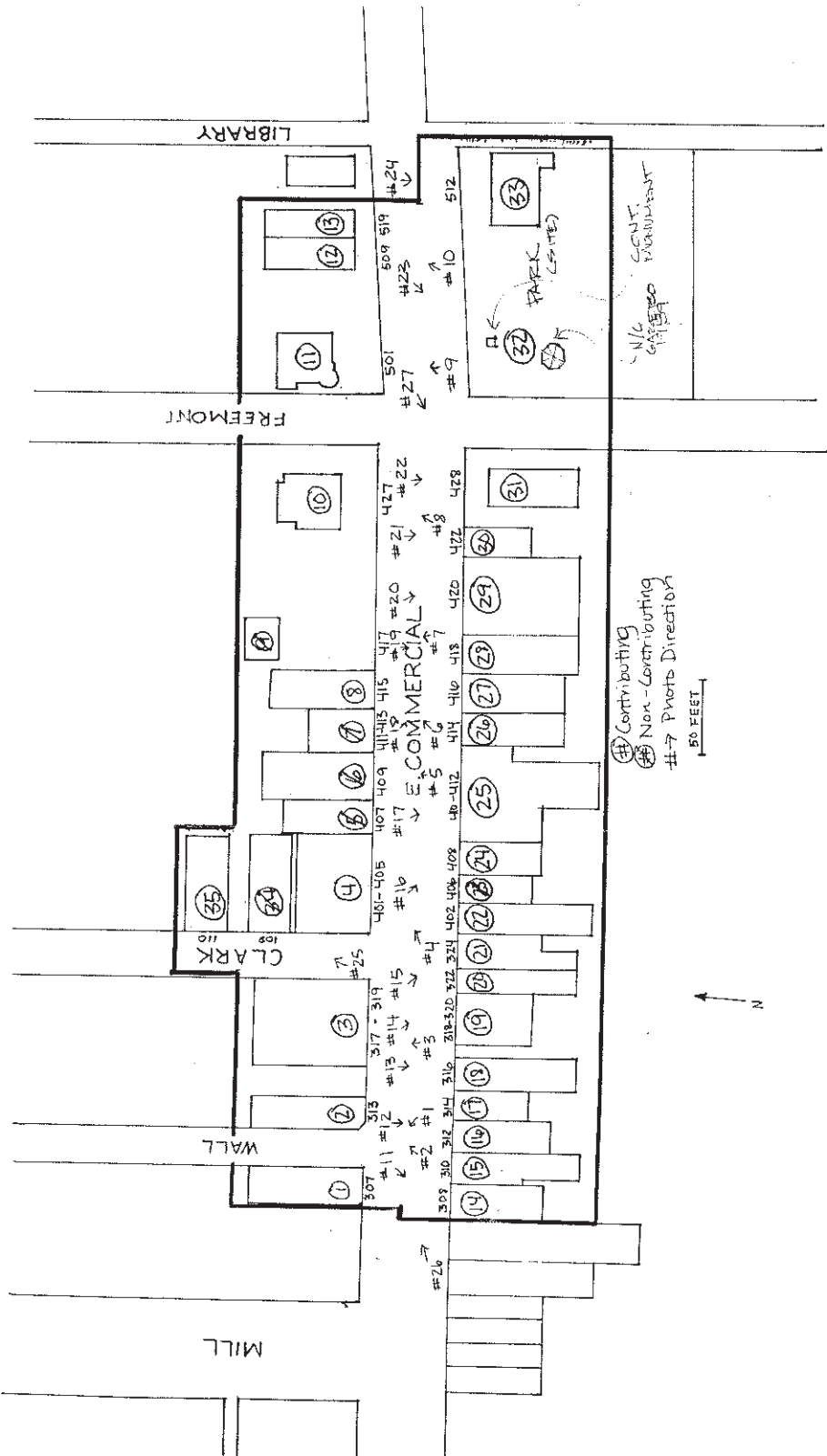
Lowell Commercial Historic District
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Section 10: Verbal Boundary Description

The district boundaries include one commercial building west of Wall Street on the north side of Commercial Avenue stretching past Fremont Street to include a house and two commercial buildings. On the south side of Commercial Avenue, the district begins at 308 East Commercial Avenue and stretches to the alley in between Fremont and Union Streets. Also included in the district are two commercial buildings on the east side of Clark Street just north of Commercial Avenue. The district boundaries encompass 4.04 acres as determined by the Lowell Planning and Zoning Department.

Boundary Justification

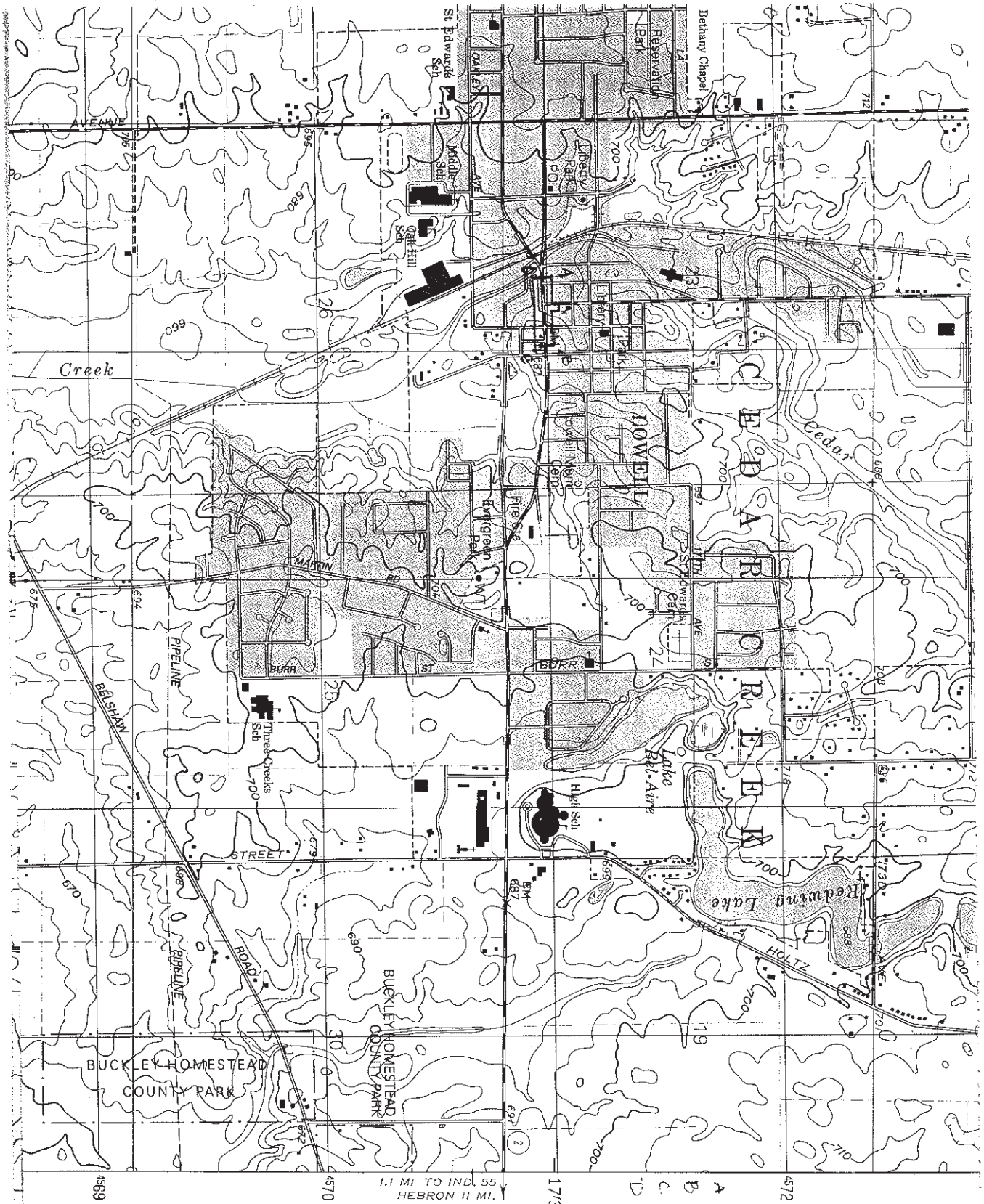
The Lowell Commercial Historic District Boundaries bound a tight area of historic structures without any major intrusions, laps, or gaps. One vacant lot is included in the district, as well as four non-contributing buildings because they are surrounded by contributing buildings. Two residential building types have been included within the district boundaries because they retain much historic integrity and are neighbored by contributing commercial buildings. Beyond the boundaries on the north side of Commercial Avenue, there is a large gap to the west before another historic structure is located west of Halstead; to the east, a residential neighborhood begins that does not keep with the commercial theme of this district. On the south side of Commercial Avenue, to the west of the boundaries are more commercial buildings constructed after the district's period of significance; to the east, there is a historic church, that while may be eligible for individual listing on the National Register, does not keep with the commercial theme of this district. There are no more historic commercial buildings beyond the church.



(H) Contributing
 (N) Non-Contributing
 # → Photo Direction

50 FEET





1.1 MI TO IND. 55
HEBRON 11 MI.

4572
LOWELL COMMERCIAL
HISTORIC DISTRICT
A 16 444600 4571000
B 16 444100 4571050
C 16 444990 4570940
D 16 444600 4570940