

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

FINAL

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations 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 North Vernon Downtown Historic District

other names/site number 079-087-472-21000

2. Location

street & number Bound by Sixth and Chestnut Streets on the East and South, Keller Street on the North, Fourth and Main Streets on the West and Jennings on the South. N/A not for publication
city or town North Vernon N/A vicinity
state Indiana code IN county Jennings code 079 zip code 47265

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

1-30-06
Date

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 _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

- building
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
80	17	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
81	17	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: Specialty Store
 COMMERCE/TRADE: Department Store
 SOCIAL: Meeting Hall
 RELIGION: Religious Facility
 RECREATION/CULTURE: Theater
 EDUCATION: Library

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling
 COMMERCE/TRADE: Specialty Store
 COMMERCE/TRADE: Restaurant
 SOCIAL: Meeting Hall
 RELIGION: Religious Facility
 RECREATION/CULTURE: Theater
 EDUCATION: Library

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

EARLY REPUBLIC: Federal
 LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate
 19th & 20th c. REVIVALS: Classical Revival
 19th & 20th c. AMER.: Bungalow/Craftsma

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK
 walls BRICK
 METAL: Iron
 roof ASPHALT
 other METAL
 STONE

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.)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
COMMERCE
TRANSPORTATION

Period of Significance

1852-1955

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Mesker, George L. & Company

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

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):

- Criteria for preliminary determination, previously listed, designated, recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey, recorded by Historic American Engineering Record.

Primary location of additional data:

- Criteria for primary location of additional data: State Historic Preservation Office, Other State agency, Federal agency, Local government, University, Other.

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 14 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	16	618995	4318895	3	16	619395	4318270
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	16	619380	4318150	4	16	619380	4318257

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 Camille Fife
organization The Westerly Group, Inc date 08-01-2005
street & number 556 West CR 1175 North telephone 812/ 696-2415
city or town Farmersburg state IN zip code 47850

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 Steve Mobley
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.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District, Jennings County, Indiana

6. Function or Use (Continued)

Historic Functions

RELIGION: church
RECREATION AND CULTURE: theater
TRANSPORTATION: rail-related

Current Functions

N/A

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Continued)

LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Commercial Style:
Bungalow

Narrative Description

The North Vernon Downtown Historic District is unique in a number of ways. Located on slightly rolling terrain but with influences from the many railroad rights-of-way, North Vernon's streets are platted differently from other small Indiana towns. The normally accepted practice of laying out streets in an east-west and north-south grid does not apply. No doubt governed by rail tracks in its formative years, the district has two separate distinguishable axes in East Walnut and Fifth Streets, joined at a central hub defined by the extant CSX depot and the historical locations of the other two depots that once served the community. Commercial development was concentrated along these thoroughfares and around this hub; Sanborn Fire Insurance maps from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century reinforce the reality of the importance of railroads in the development of the town. Based on research and the dominant architectural style in the district (Italianate), the peak period of development of the town and the district occurred during the last two decades of the nineteenth century; buildings of other styles are primarily from the 1910s or contemporary and appear to be infill replacements. A number of the buildings in the district possess some elements of design from the George L. Mesker Company, the Evansville, Indiana, that produced pressed metal architectural items such as elaborate cornices, embossed panels for building facades, and cast iron pilasters that traditionally framed the entrances of many late nineteenth and early twentieth century storefronts. While a few of these Mesker-style design elements may have been produced by a competitor or the firm's other factory in St. Louis, the majority demonstrate distinctive characteristics – such as the use of colonettes, floral designs, garlands, and wreathes – found in the firm's sales catalogs. The presence of these architectural elements is noted in the description of those buildings to which they pertain.

The district includes 80 contributing buildings and 17 non-contributing buildings. Non-contributing buildings post-date the period of significance or were greatly altered after the period of significance. The brick paving around the depot counts as a contributing structure.

1) 62 East Walnut Street
1941 Twentieth Century Functional

Contributing, Photo no. 01

This one-story rough-faced block building is characterized by a three-bay façade with large commercial type display windows, single-glazed, flanking a plain central entry way which is recessed from the front plane of the building. Segmented transom lights are visible immediately below the upper edge of the wooden overhanging canopy supported by "log" carved limestone that provides weather protection from the elements. Above the roof is a parapetted cornice with two inscribed legends "H. Couchman" and

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District, Jennings County, Indiana

Page 2

“1941”. The walls of the entry consist of glazed windows above rough-faced stone sills and single-glazed double doors.

2) First Christian Church
108 East Walnut Street
c. 1890/1940

Contributing, Photo no. 02

This two-story, limestone veneer clad building has been altered from its original size and materials. Historical Sanborn maps (1893-1937) depict the building as a much smaller brick building in the same location. There is evidence of the original building in some of the exterior walls at the rear of the building. A two-story bell tower, situated at the southwest corner of the building, has a single window and a small belt course of limestone above the roofline. Louvered openings appear below the crenellated cornice of the tower. A similar architectural detail on the south elevation of the façade gives the appearance of another tower with a crenellated cornice. The main entries to the interior of the church are located at the base of each tower and are recessed with Gothic arches and molds above the point of each arch. Some of the windows on the west elevation have been replaced with single-glazed units but the original limestone sills have been retained. The south elevation contains a tripartite stained glass ribbon window with smaller stained glass lights flanking each side. A number of round stained glass windows are distributed unevenly about this elevation. A large one-story addition extends eastward from the east elevation. Many of the window units in this elevation are modern replacements.

3) 138 East Walnut Street
c. 1920 Twentieth Century Functional

Non-Contributing, Photo No. 33

This painted brick building combines two separate buildings from the same period. There is a distinct difference in the height and roof angle which reinforces this visual image. The building on the left is one story; the one on the right is a story and a half. The left building has two bays in the façade. The left bay contains two modern glass and metal entry doors with single-glazed transoms above. Windows in the left bay are modern. Above both doors is a painted dentil extending across the width of the façade, accentuated by painted cast iron pilasters that remain from the building on the right. Bricks at each limit of the building are painted to give the visual impression of quoins. The same dentil is visible across the flat cornice of the combined buildings. In the right bay, a tall, fan-shaped architectural detail accentuates a modern single-glazed pair of windows (likely the original entry to this portion of the building).

4) 148 East Walnut Street
c. 1920 Twentieth Century Functional

Contributing

This two-story yellow brick commercial building demonstrates a typical combined commercial and residential use of space. The street level space was dedicated to commercial enterprise and the second floor served as residential space in the center of town. The first floor of the façade has an entry for the apartments upstairs at the left limit of the building and two large single-glazed display windows flanking the two modern doors that provide entry to the interior. These doors are of modern metal and glass construction. A limestone belt course visually divides the street level portion from the upper story which contains six, evenly distributed, double-hung windows, glazed six-over-six, extending across the entire width of the building. The belt course forms the window sill for each opening and limestone lintels appear

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District,
Jennings County, Indiana**

Page 3

below a flat cornice accentuated by dentil detailing and a course of green-colored glazed brick. The cornice is capped with flat limestone.

5) 156 East Walnut Street

c. 1900 Twentieth Century Functional

Contributing

This two-story brick building has a simple façade typical of the single storefront of the period. The recessed central entry door is flanked on both sides by large single-glazed display windows across the front and along the sides of the entrance. The plain wooden surrounds of the windows highlight the simplicity of the overall image of the building. Immediately above the windows is an unadorned red brick wall capped by a belt course of limestone and dentil course that extends across the width of the façade. A false front of metal siding rises above the dentil to a flat cornice.

6) 158 East Walnut Street

c. 1890 Italianate

Contributing

This two-story brick building demonstrates a typical change over time that occurs in many buildings of the period in this district. The street level portion of the façade has been modernized by the installation of modern doors, a single-glazed display window, and modern brick veneer; it no longer reflects the original image of that portion of the façade. However, the second story retains all of its original architectural significance. The limits of the building are defined by two cast iron pilasters at street level and pressed metal pilasters to the top of the flat cornice. The pilasters are detailed with a series of garland, fleur-de-lis, and scallop designs. The façade, from the intermediate cornice above the doors to the top cornice, is sheathed with pressed metal sheets giving the appearance of rough-faced stone blocks. Centered in the second story of the façade is a Palladian-inspired window. The original one-over-one units are covered with modern storm windows. Above the central window and extending across the width of the facade is a Mesker-style ornate entablature of pressed metal embossed with wreaths, flowers, and garlands.

7) 160 East Walnut Street

c. 1890 Italianate

Contributing

This three-story brick building is similar in size to its neighbor at 158 East Walnut Street but retains significantly different architectural details. Like its neighbor, the building limits are defined by cast iron pilasters extended to the top cornice with pressed metal pilaster detail. The street level portion of the façade appears to retain much of its original spatial arrangement and scale and contains two display windows, transom lights, and a single entry door recessed between the large windows. The second story retains its original design and demonstrates a number of unique details peculiar to the style. In particular, above the intermediate cornice are three double-hung window units whose surrounds include Mesker-style shortened colonettes with square bases, spiral shafts, and cushion capitals. Above these three window units are three fixed-sash units. Portions of the facade are sheathed in pressed metal with embossed designs but time and layers of paint have obscured the detail. The cornice is constructed in the same manner as that next door and reflects the same motif in the pressed metal sheathing.

8) M.T. Lindley Building

202-216 East Walnut Street

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District, Jennings County, Indiana

Page 4

1891 Italianate

Contributing (4), Photos no. 03, 04

This two-story, brick building has a façade whose conspicuous architectural detailing relies on Mesker's pressed metal sheathing over the brick exterior wall. The building is configured with four separate ground floor storefronts. The two leftmost ground floor storefronts retain their original glazing and spatial arrangements; they both have single-glazed display windows, with transom lights, flanking a central entry door. The two rightmost ground floor storefronts have been altered with modern glazing, modern entry doors, a modern awning, glass block replacement of display windows, and finally siding covering the transom lights. A bay in the southwest corner of the second story extends over the sidewalk. The bay window is five sided and has narrow double-hung windows and an intricate checkerboard-inspired design on the exterior wall surface between the window openings and the projecting cornice. At street level are two entries for access to the upper floor of the interior. Above the ground floor, original double-hung windows (three per bay of the building façade) extend across the width of the facade of the building. Window surrounds include typical Mesker design elements such as short colonettes with Ionic capitals; the colonette bases are accentuated by two embossed, square flower blossom pressed metal elements. Above the windows, a string course of bull's-eyes extends across the width of the building. Shared by all the individual storefronts, the ornate frieze has brackets which support a massive projecting cornice embellished with modillions and flower blossom details that extends across the entire width of the facade.

9) 220 East Walnut Street

c. 1875 Nineteenth Century Functional

Non-contributing, Photo No. 35

This is a two-story red brick building whose street level exterior wall surface is modern brick veneer. The single-glazed display windows appear to reflect their original scale and spatial arrangement. The modern central entry door of glass and metal and a non-period metal canopy are replacements. A transom light is visible over the door. The second story contains three tall, narrow, double-hung window units with plain board surrounds and no drip caps. The façade above the first story is sheathed with vinyl siding and small brackets, that support a simple projecting cornice.

10) 226 East Walnut Street

c. 1875/1910 Nineteenth/Twentieth Century Functional

Contributing

This two-story brick building is clad in red brick veneer at street level and yellow glazed brick (probably original) in the second story of the façade. The storefront is modified with small display windows and modern glazing. The entry door for the space upstairs is at the left limit of the building. A non-period wooden canopy and metal siding above the display windows are later alterations to the original façade. The three evenly distributed double-hung windows in the second story have wooden surrounds with stone lintels and six-over-six glazing. String courses of green-colored bricks accentuate the simple glazed tile cap of the cornice.

11) 230 East Walnut Street

c. 1910 Indeterminate

Non-Contributing

While this one-story building once may have demonstrated some architectural characteristics from the period, significant changes to the exterior and the interior degrades its architectural association with other buildings in the neighborhood.

12) 238 - 240 East Walnut Street

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District, Jennings County, Indiana

Page 5

c. 1910 Twentieth Century Functional

Contributing

The façade of this three-story, multi-colored brick building has two bays. An entry door for the upstairs space is at the right limit. The street level of the façade appears to be unchanged from its original materials, spatial arrangement of the entry doors, and display windows. There are two separate storefronts with pilasters marking the limits of each. A non-period overhanging canopy projects from the exterior wall above the display windows. The second story of the façade contains six windows, double-hung, distributed evenly over their respective storefronts. Limestone sills and lintels mark the upper and lower limits of the openings. The third story contains two fixed-sash windows in each bay, boarded up with plywood, with a plain square brick recessed panel between each pair. The cornice is capped with flat limestone.

13) Euler Building

246 East Walnut Street

1905 Neo-Classical

Contributing, Photo no. 05

This three-story brick building has a high degree of architectural integrity. The two bays of the storefront level of the façade appear original in glazing materials, spatial arrangement of the display window units flanking the recessed entry door to the main space, the transom lights, and the upstairs space entry door at the right limit. The portion of façade at the right limit is unusual. Two brick pilasters with limestone capitals delineate the stairwell. The entry door surround consists of limestone columns on each side and a limestone lintel. A recessed fixed-sash window above the door surround provides light for the interior. The second story is divided into two bays defined by three-sided oriels, each supported by scroll brackets. The double-hung window units, with limestone sills, are replacements. Each bay has a prominent projecting cornice. The third story of the façade has two original double-hung window units in each bay. The exterior wall surface above the windows contains recessed panels. The projecting cornice, positioned below the front main parapet, is embellished with modillions. A raised portion of the parapet is centered above the cornice and inscribed with "19 EULER 05".

14) N.C. Bank

200 East Walnut Street

c. 1910 Neo-Classical

Contributing, Photo no. 06

The street level portion of this two-story building is characterized by modern glazing materials and spatial arrangement. Vertically striated aluminum pilasters separate each large single-glazed window unit. The second story façade is of limestone veneer with the appearance of rough-faced stone blocks. The second story arched window openings have label molds, embellished with acanthus leaf detail, at the right and left limits of the façade that seem Richardsonian-inspired. Between the arched windows is a line of three, paired, double-hung window units flanked by single units of the same type. Decorative courses of brackets extend across the façade above the line of windows and below the projecting cornice. A stone parapet, stepped at the building limits, caps the building. There is a modern addition to the building facing Madison Avenue.

15) 263 East Walnut Street

c. 1880 Italianate

Contributing

The façade of this three-story painted brick building has modern window glazing and a modern metal and glass door at street level. The wooden overhanging canopy across the storefront and the modern signage

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District, Jennings County, Indiana

Page 6

only slightly detract from the visual image of the building. The original arched shape and outline of the six, tall, narrow windows of the second and third stories have not been compromised but four of the six have modern window units inserted about midway in the opening and the rest of the space is either bricked in or boarded up. The Mesker-style broad frieze has three braided, loop details embossed in the pressed metal between each bracket of the frieze. The large brackets and projecting cornice dominate the roof line.

16) 259 East Walnut Street
c. 1880 Italianate

Contributing

The street level portion of this two-story building's façade has been altered with modern display window glazing and modern entry door. The door for the upstairs space is at the right limit. The second story exterior wall has three tall, narrow, window openings, each likely containing a double-hung and single-glazed window unit. Like its neighbor, a portion of each is bricked over and modern units have been installed. The sills are decorated with small brackets and Mesker-style pressed metal full-hooded crowns grace the top of each opening. The projecting pressed metal cornice is supported by brackets with dentils visible between each bracket. The cast iron pilasters associated with this typical Mesker-style façade have been removed.

17) Masonic Lodge
253 East Walnut Street
1899 Nineteenth Century Functional

Contributing, Photo no. 07

This three-story red brick building has two storefronts under a modern metal canopy at street level. The door of one storefront dates to c. 1920, but the other is more modern in materials and fabrication. The limits of the street level storefront are defined by cast iron pilasters that extend vertically to the intermediate cornice. Masonic signage appears above the first story. In the second story are four double-hung windows with rough-faced stone sills; a wide limestone belt course above the windows forms their lintels. A decorative course of yellow brick is visible between the limestone belt course and the sills of the third story windows. The third story windows, the same type as described previously, have transom lights. A limestone belt course forms their lintels. Yellow brick pilasters at the corners of the building extend from the second story upward above the cornice. Two shortened pilasters of the same material sub-divide the façade above the third story belt course into three asymmetrical bays. The center bay contains a limestone plaque with the Masonic symbol inscribed and a frieze of corbelled yellow brick between the shortened pilasters. The flanking bays have panels of decorative yellow brick and the same corbelled brick detail. The flat limestone capped cornice has a parapet between the shortened pilasters with the date "1899" in raised numerals on a limestone plaque.

18) 247-251 East Walnut Street
c. 1950 Contemporary

Non-Contributing

A low, wide one-story building with large display windows, cream colored glazed tile, modern metal and glass entry doors, and a large metal canopy. Vertical wooden siding covers the exterior wall surface above the overhanging canopy.

19) Red Man Lodge #99
227 East Walnut Street

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District, Jennings County, Indiana

Page 7

c. 1880 Italianate

Contributing

With the exception of the non-period display windows, glazing materials and metal doors in the two street level storefronts, this three-story brick building with a second and third story façade of pressed metal sheathing retains many of its characteristic architectural details. The second story has six tall double-hung windows defined by typical Mesker-style colonettes as part of the window surround. The colonettes have square flower blossom details in the base, plain shafts, and Ionic capitals. An intermediate cornice of pressed metal, embossed with an egg and dart design, separates the second and third story. The six double-hung windows are shorter than those in the second story; although the Mesker-style colonettes are the same. There is string course of bull's eye detail across the width of façade above the third story windows. The massive projecting cornice of pressed metal is supported by brackets and adorned with modillions. A raised parapet centered above the cornice is embossed with the legend: "RED MEN no. 99".

20) 223 East Walnut Street

c. 1875 Italianate

Contributing

This small two-story red brick building, with arched entry door and street level windows, retains much of its architectural integrity. The shafts of the brick pilasters are parged and painted yellow; they create three bays: a central entry bay and flanking bays with very tall arched windows. The lower portions of the windows are single glazed and the upper contain divided lights. The central bay has a non-period door and the awnings over the door and windows are modern in design and materials. The brick arches have painted keystones with the raised letter "R" on them. The second story has three arched windows with double-hung units and painted stone sills. The pressed metal cornice has diamond shaped detailing in the frieze; brackets support the projecting overhang.

21) 221 East Walnut Street

c. 1905 Twentieth Century Functional

Contributing

This two-story brick building, sheathed with limestone veneer, shares its façade with its neighbor at 211 East Walnut Street but is a totally separate building. The street level exterior wall is surfaced with white glazed brick; large display windows flank a central entry door (all appear to be original). There is a non-period, full-width canopy overhang with a red barrel tile roof. The second story limestone veneer cladding has three double-hung windows evenly distributed across the width of the storefront. A Mesker-style pressed metal entablature, painted green, cream, and dark red differentiates itself from its neighbor through its color scheme. The frieze has rectangular and diamond shaped details, and brackets that support the projecting cornice.

22) 211 East Walnut Street

c. 1905 Twentieth Century Functional

Contributing, Photo No. 34

The street level storefront of this two-story building has two large display windows flanking a recessed entry with two modern glass and metal doors. A non-period wooden overhanging canopy with two decorative dormers on a shingle clad roof provides weather protection for local shoppers. The second story of this original limestone veneer clad building has seven windows with double-hung units distributed as follows: three left of the centerline of the façade and four right of centerline. A Mesker-style full entablature of pressed metal, painted dark brown, with rectangular and diamond shaped detail along the frieze caps the building. Brackets support a projecting cornice.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District,
Jennings County, Indiana**

Page 8

23) 203-209 East Walnut Street
1895 Neo-Classical

Contributing

The storefront of this two-story building, with original limestone veneer over brick, appears to be nearly original in spatial arrangement and scale. Cast iron pilasters define the limits of each storefront and the entry door for the upstairs space. Narrow pilasters on the entry to number 203 have wooden turned posts. A wide metal structural beam visually separates the two stories. Two large arched windows, double-hung and original, flank a tall central window with a double-hung unit. The round arched window openings appear Richardsonian in their scale and construction. The Mesker-style entablature of pressed metal has a plain, unadorned frieze and brackets, interspersed with modillions that support the projecting cornice.

24) 163 East Walnut Street
c. 1880 Italianate

Contributing

The street level of this two-story brick building contains a storefront with modern glazing and entry door. Brick pilasters mark the lateral limits of the building; they are connected by an intermediate cornice of pressed metal. A blue material covers the original transom lights across the top of the display windows. In the second story, three tall, narrow window openings with elaborate pressed metal hooded crowns dominate the façade. The window units, probably double-hung; are now fully or partially in-filled with vinyl siding. The center opening has a modern unit installed midway with vinyl infill above and below. A massive Mesker-style pressed metal entablature caps the building; brackets and dentil detailing embellish the relatively plain cornice.

25) 159 East Walnut Street
c. 1920 Twentieth Century Functional

Contributing

This one-story multi-colored brick building has a tall false front. Brick pilasters mark the margins of the building. The entry door and the surround are modern replacements. A shadow line above the door lintel announces the one-time presence of a broken pediment. Two small double-hung single-glazed window units flank the entry.

26) Library Annex
151 East Walnut Street
1979 Contemporary

Non-Contributing

The one-story multi-hued red brick building, separate from the main library building, has an arched entry and is flanked by small arched windows on both sides. The window units are modern as is the entry door and the sidelights of the surround. Constructed in 1979, the building does not contribute to the district.

27) Jennings County Carnegie Library
143 East Walnut Street
1920 Neo-Classical

Contributing, Photo no. 08

The library is a single-story building of red brick with tall limestone foundation walls that define the basement exterior; a limestone water table visually separates the foundation from the main story. Window

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District, Jennings County, Indiana

Page 9

units in the basement wall are hinged and glazed three-by-two in each half. Access to the main story is gained up a flight of limestone steps with sidewalls. The main story has three bays, a central entry and flanking bays with two large windows in each. The entry has an elaborate gable supported by a pair of large brick pilasters and limestone columns on each side of the door surround. The surround is comprised of an arched limestone architrave with a large stone plaque above inscribed "Jennings County Public Library". The door has an arched fan light above a door and sidelights. Four large double-hung arched windows, glazed six-over-six, with limestone sills are distributed across the façade. A belt course of soldiered brick extends around the building and connects limestone block details below arched portion of windows. Limestone scrolled keystones decorate each window arch. The hipped roof is of red tile.

28) 2 Fifth Street

c. 1880 Italianate

Contributing

The street level portion of this three-story building's façade has been altered. The exterior wall is stuccoed and partially covered with field stone; the windows are replacements. The entry door for access to the upstairs space is on the left. The second story façade is architecturally detailed with Mesker-style pressed metal sheathing and is painted a number of different colors. The second story contains four double-hung single-glazed windows with colonettes, typical of many of Mesker's full façade treatments, accentuating the placement of the window openings. The colonettes have square bases, spiral shafts and cushion capitals. The third story has four fixed-sash single-glazed windows immediately below a pressed metal frieze containing brackets that support a projecting cornice.

29) 6 Fifth Street

C.1880 Italianate

Contributing

This three-story building has pressed metal architectural details in the second and third story of the façade. The street level storefront has modern glazing. Modern materials partially cover the Mesker cast iron pilasters that define the limits of the building; vinyl siding covers the transom lights of the original storefront above the windows extending to the intermediate cornice of pressed metal. The second and third stories have two distinct bays, the right has a three-sided bay and the left has two window openings with double-hung units. Colonettes, common in Mesker-style full façade treatments, appear between each window and flank the bay. The pressed metal sheathing is embossed with scrolled, and wreath elements throughout. The three smaller windows in the bay are double-hung but do not have column detailing in their surrounds. The upper floor contains four square fixed-sash windows immediately below a metal frieze with brackets supporting a projecting cornice. A fan light detail is visible above the small windows in the third story bay.

30) 12 Fifth Street Bantz Building

c. 1880 Italianate

Contributing

This three-story building has pressed metal architectural details in the second and third story of the façade. The street level of the storefront has modern glazing. Modern materials partially cover the cast iron pilasters that define the limits of the building; a sidewalk canopy constructed of metal framing and shake shingle siding covers the transom lights of the original storefront above the windows extending to the intermediate cornice of pressed metal. The second story has two distinct parts, the left has a three-sided bay window and the right has two window openings with double-hung units. Mesker-style colonettes appear between each window and flank the bay. The pressed metal sheathing is embossed with

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District,
Jennings County, Indiana**

Page 10

scroll and wreath detailing throughout. The three smaller windows in the bay are double-hung but do not have columns in their surrounds. In the third floor are four square fixed-sash windows immediately below a metal frieze. The projecting cornice is supported by brackets and has a raised parapet on the cornice inscribed "G. W. Bantz".

31) 16 Fifth Street
c. 1910 Neo-Classical

Contributing, Photo no. 09

The street-level display windows and entry door of this two-story red brick building are of modern glass and metal. A modern aluminum canopy covers the wall surface above the canopy and extends to the intermediate cornice of limestone. Limestone quoins accentuate the lateral limits of the building. Two large tripartite ribbon windows dominate the second story of the façade. The windows have plain limestone surrounds and an ornate broken pediment lintel. The pediment incorporates a centered oval window embellished with acanthus leaf detailing at the bottom of the window frame. Two small columns with Ionic capitals form the sides of the center double-hung window surround; smaller double-hung windows flank the center unit. The plain cornice is capped with glazed tile coping.

32) 24 Fifth Street
c. 1885 Italianate

Contributing

The façade of the three-story building has architectural details of pressed metal although some portions of the facade have been covered by vinyl siding. The street level storefront is modernized with replacement glazing and materials used in the display windows and the glass and metal entry doors. The intermediate cornice of pressed metal is embossed with a pattern similar to egg and dart. The second story's six double-hung windows are defined with colonette surrounds; the Mesker-style colonettes have Ionic capitals, square flower blossom details in the base, and plain shafts. Between each set of paired square windows with fixed sashes visible below the frieze are panels with embossed fleur-de-lis details. Large paired brackets support a projecting cornice.

The next three buildings were at one time separate in ownership and address but in the recent past they have been incorporated into one interior space under the same address and ownership.

33) 28 Fifth Street
c. 1885 Italianate

Contributing

The paint scheme and tall front façade of this three-story brick building dominates the streetscape of the block. The street level original storefront contains modern windows and doors, an awning, and white glazed brick veneer on the exterior wall. The remainder of the pressed metal façade on the second and third stories is original and identical. Each story has four double-hung windows with Mesker-style colonette surrounds and the same details of flower blossom in the base, plain shafts and Ionic capitals. Architrave detailing includes red panels with fleur-de-lis design which extend across the entire width of the building below the frieze. The cornice is supported by paired brackets, decorated with modillions and the front of the cornice is embossed with garland detailing.

34) 34 Fifth Street Ades Building
1913 Twentieth Century Functional

Contributing, Photo No. 32

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District, Jennings County, Indiana

Page 11

The façade of this two-story building has been altered significantly by adding brick veneer, modern glazing in the street level storefront, and by replacement of the two double-hung windows in the second story with modern units; limestone sills and lintels still define the window openings. A modern awning dominates the narrow façade at street level and a limestone plaque inscribed "19 ADES 13" is centered in the façade above the windows. A small pressed metal frieze with brackets supports a projecting cornice.

35) 38 Fifth Street

c. 1910 Twentieth Century Functional

Non-Contributing

This one-story building's street level façade has been modified to include new glazing and elimination of an entry. Dentil detailing is visible below the flat cornice. The property has lost its architectural and historical character.

36) 40 Fifth Street

c. 1910 Twentieth Century Functional

Contributing

This building is two-story and constructed of dark reddish-brown brick. The street level has two storefronts whose spatial arrangement and scale are probably original. Large display windows, with front and angled sides, are flanked by two separate entry doors, also original. Brick pilasters, with Corinthian capitals, mark the left and right limits of the building on the first story. Three tall double-hung windows, with hooded crowns, are evenly distributed across the façade's second story; limestone sills and lintels mark the lower and upper limits of the window openings. A corbelled brick belt course spans the width of the façade directly below a plain projecting cornice.

37) 106 Fifth Street

c. 1880 Italianate

Contributing

The façade of this two-story brick building appears to be original in spatial arrangement, materials, and scale. The left half of the street level storefront contains a large display window and the right half contains entry doors to the first story interior space and the upstairs. Both doors appear original. The entry for the building is framed by narrow cast iron pilasters on each side. The second story has two double-hung windows with limestone sills and lintels. The relatively simple Mesker-style pressed metal frieze has panels embossed with a flower blossom design between each bracket that supports the projecting cornice.

38) 108 Fifth Street

c. 1890 Nineteenth Century Functional

Contributing, Photo no. 10

The street level portion of this façade, an excellent example of a Mesker-style full treatment, appears original in spatial arrangement and scale. Similar to number 106 next door, the storefront contains a large display window, with a transom light in the left half, and entry doors to the first floor interior space and the upstairs in the right. Cast iron pilasters frame the large display window. In the second story, above an intermediate cornice of pressed metal, the entire upper façade is sheathed in pressed metal. Between four painted pressed metal pilasters that extend upward to the cornice are three double-hung windows with painted stone sills and lintels. A projecting cornice of pressed metal is supported by primary and intermediate brackets.

39) 120 Fifth Street Perry-Verbiage Building

c. 1885 Italianate

Contributing, Photo no. 11

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District,
Jennings County, Indiana**

Page 12

Painted a pale olive color, that sets it off from its neighbors, this two-story brick building has notable detailing in its Mesker-style pressed metal façade treatment. The street level portion of the façade has been modified but glazing, doors, and general spatial arrangement appear to be original. The entry for access to the upstairs is in the right half of the façade. The upper portion of the façade is sheathed in pressed metal and embossed with swag, ribbons, fleur-de-lis, and an egg and dart-type detailing. Across the width of the second story portion of the façade are three double-hung windows with plain wooden surrounds. Flanking each window are metal sheets embossed with an ornate design containing stylized fish, blossoms, and scroll sconces that are clustered around a spiral shaft. Above the line of windows are pressed metal sheets embossed to resemble rough-faced stone. The painted metal entablature contains dentil and painted bracket details and a course of embossed balusters across the front of the projecting cornice.

40) 126 Fifth Street Perry-Verbiage Building
c. 1885 Italianate

Contributing

Except for different modifications to the street level storefront and a different painting scheme, this half of the Perry-Verbiage building mirrors the details of the Mesker-style embossed pressed metal sheathing of number 120 Fifth Street. However, the modern entry door, the glazing and its spatial arrangement reflects the original appearance of the storefront. The upper portion of the façade is sheathed in pressed metal and embossed with swag, ribbon, fleur-de-lis, and detailing similar to egg and dart. Across the width of the second story portion of the façade are three double-hung windows with plain wooden surrounds. Flanking each window are metal sheets embossed with an ornate design containing stylized fish, blossoms, and scroll sconces that are clustered around a spiral shaft. Above the line of windows are pressed metal sheets embossed to resemble rough-faced stone. The painted metal entablature contains dentil and bracket details as well as a course of embossed balusters across the front of the projecting cornice.

41) 130 Fifth Street
c. 1880 Italianate

Contributing

Painted red, white and blue, this two-story brick building, including the street level storefront, appears original except for the use of concrete pilasters in lieu of cast iron. The central entry is flanked by small display windows. Above the display windows are two courses of transom lights extending across the width of the façade. The entry for the upstairs interior space is at the right limit of the building. The pilasters that form the various bays are of concrete. The four arched double-hung windows in the second floor have decorative keystones in their segmental arch lintels. A pressed metal entablature, likely a Mesker product but without any distinctive detail, contains massive support brackets, a plain frieze, and dentil details.

42) 146 Fifth Street
c. 1870 Hall and Parlor House

Non-Contributing

This small residence has been altered to such an extent it no longer demonstrates architectural details and stylistic characteristics of a specific period nor possesses adequate historical significance.

43) 160 Fifth Street
c. 1880 Italianate

Contributing

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District,
Jennings County, Indiana**

Page 13

The right two-thirds of the street level façade of this two-story red brick building has been altered with a coat of stucco over the underlying structure (possible a bank of display windows). The left one-third contains one entry door and a small display window. The door for access to the upstairs space is at the left limit of the building. The overall spatial arrangement of this portion of the façade appears to be original in all aspects. Above a Mesker-style intermediate cornice of embossed pressed metal are six double-hung windows with limestone sills, and limestone drip caps supported by small brackets. An elaborate metal entablature embossed with a scallop shell design and projecting cornice caps the building façade.

44) 162 Fifth Street
c. 1880 Italianate

Contributing

The street level portion of this two-story red brick building's façade appears to be original in all respects and provides another example of a typical Mesker-style treatment on brick façade. Cast iron pilasters define the limits of the building and the location of the entry doors. The storefront has two large display windows flanking a central bay with a set of glass and wood double doors. Large fixed sash transom lights extend across the width of the façade above the display windows. A pressed metal intermediate cornice visually separates the first and second stories. The second floor contains three tall double-hung windows with stone sills and elaborate hooded crowns. The pressed metal frieze is decorated with acanthus leaves, fan shaped devices with scroll work, and brackets supporting the projecting cornice.

45) 200 Fifth Street (mailing address – 502 Hoosier Street)
c. 1860 Federal

Contributing, Photo no. 12

Simpler than the many Italianate structures in the district, this two-story red brick building possesses an elegance that is demonstrated in the clean lines of the building and the simplicity of the detail in the window and door surrounds. The two large single-glazed windows flanking the central entry are likely original in positioning and scale but the entry door is a modern replacement. A wide limestone belt course above the large windows extends across the façade and wraps around the corners. Three second story windows are double-hung and the sills and lintels are limestone. Decorative lintels, and a limestone belt course run across the width of the building. A plain frieze decorates the building directly under the minimal cornice.

46) 206 Fifth Street
c. 1852 House Central Passage

Contributing

This simple single-story residence retains the form of a vernacular, central passage house. The side gable, medium pitch roof is also indicative of the early era in North Vernon, although siding, windows and porch roof have changed, the form and extreme age of this building add to its significance and its ability to contribute to the district.

47) 208-210 Fifth Street
c. 1870 House Double Pen

Contributing

This one-story residence appears to be a double-pen house but according to Sanborn maps from the late nineteenth century and later, it probably was two separate structures with two entrances. In spite of the obvious non-period alterations, the one-story building with asbestos shingle wall covering retains sufficient integrity to contribute to the district.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District,
Jennings County, Indiana**

Page 14

48) 214 Fifth Street
c. 1915 Bungalow

Contributing

This one-story vernacular bungalow has an asbestos shingle exterior wall covering, a 1920s-style porch with brick columns, and double-hung windows glazed six-over-six.

49) 7 Fifth Street
c. 1980 Contemporary Bank

Non-Contributing

This one-story buff colored brick building is completely modern in design and materials and therefore does not contribute to the fabric of the district.

50) 9 Fifth Street
c. 1880 Italianate

Contributing, Photo no. 13

The street level storefront of this two-story red brick building retains much of its original integrity. The entry door and surround are non-period but the other elements of the façade such as the display windows, the presence of transom lights, and the intermediate pressed metal cornice all evoke an image of the period. A single cast iron pilaster, an example of Mesker's model #304, with Ionic capital defines the left limit of the entry. The art glass in the transom lights is likely not original. The three window units in the second floor are double-hung with typical limestone sills and lintels. The massive pressed metal entablature dominates the upper portion of the façade; it is embellished with brackets and modillions that accentuate the projecting cornice.

The next two buildings are associated through ownership and interior space with 462 East O&M Avenue.

51) Fifth Street (462 E. O & M Avenue) between E. O & M and the alley south of Hoosier Street.
c. 1880 Italianate

Contributing, Photo no. 14

The original two storefronts at street level of this two-story red brick building neatly divide the façade into symmetrical bays. Cast iron pilasters, one of Mesker's stock designs that appear in sales catalogs, define the limits of each display window, transom light, and recessed entry door and visually support a pressed metal intermediate cornice that extends across the entire facade. The glazing of the display windows, the transom and the glazed doors appear original. The second story contains six double-hung windows with limestone sills and segmental-arch brick lintels. A course of corbelled bricks accentuates the arches of the windows across the width of the building. The pressed metal frieze displays small decorative panels with a raised pyramid detail between each bracket that supports the projecting cornice.

52) Fifth Street (462 E. O & M Avenue) and alley south of Hoosier Street.
c. 1880 Italianate

Contributing

The building, also adorned with Mesker cast iron pilasters and cornice, is the same as # 51 except that the second story has five double-hung windows with limestone sills and segmental-arch brick lintels. Some brackets in the cornice are missing.

53) 137 Fifth Street
c. 1880 Italianate

Contributing

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District,
Jennings County, Indiana**

Page 15

Brick veneer has been added to the exterior wall of the street level portion of the façade of this two-story red brick building and there are some replacement windows. The window openings appear original but the top (lintels) are obscured by a wood-shingled canopy across the façade where an intermediate cornice once was affixed to the front of the building. The second story has three window openings, capped with limestone hooded crowns with prominent keystones, but the window units are covered with plywood inserts. A massive Mesker-style pressed metal entablature, with a small architrave and a frieze with square and oval embossed panels between each bracket supports the projecting cornice which dominates the upper level of this building.

54) 139 Fifth Street
c. 1880 Italianate

Contributing

The door and window openings in the storefront of this two-story red brick building retain their arched appearance but the doors and window units are replacements. The exterior wall of this portion of the façade is covered with brick veneer. A wood-shingled canopy spans the façade directly below the intermediate pressed metal cornice. The second story arched window openings are in filled with plywood inserts; limestone sills mark the lower extreme of the openings. A course of corbelled bricks accentuates the arches of the windows across the width the building. The Mesker-style pressed metal frieze has small decorative panels with a stylistic design between each bracket that supports the projecting cornice.

55) 149 Fifth Street
c. 1852 I-house/Federal/Greek Revival

Contributing, Photo no. 15

There are five bays in this two-story, white-painted, brick residence. The central bay contains the main entry to the interior of the house. A columned portico with a flat roof and a decorative railing around its perimeter dominate the first story of the façade; a door in the second story of the bay provides access to the flat roof from the interior. The main entry door opening has a wide limestone lintel; the door and the sidelights appear to be original or at least of the same period. The flanking bays are identical; they have two double-hung windows in each story that are glazed one-over-one. Some of the limestone sills are badly deteriorated but the limestone lintels are in excellent condition. A narrow frieze board spans the façade below the minimal cornice obscured by the gutter system. A non-period round chimney extends above the roof gable on the west elevation.

56) 155 Fifth Street
c. 1880 Italianate

Contributing, Photo no. 16

This two-story red brick building contains an unusual window treatment in the second story. The street level, single storefront has a large single-glazed display window with a divided transom light; all the components appear original. A slender Mesker cast iron pilaster defines the limits of the recessed door way. Two large, single-story pilasters mark the margins of the building. The second story contains a Palladian-inspired window unit centered in the upper half of the façade. A large center light and flanking smaller lights provide interior illumination to the upstairs space. The center pane is fixed in its sash and the smaller sashes are double-hung and glazed three-over-one. A band of small individual panes spans the window frame above the major lights. The entire window unit is capped with an elaborate gabled window cap, Mesker model #534, of pressed metal. The vertical elements at the ends of the crown are decorated with the same embossed flower blossom design that appears throughout the district on many of the 1880s

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District,
Jennings County, Indiana**

Page 16

buildings with pressed metal facades. The relatively simple pressed metal entablature has an architrave, a frieze with brackets and dentils, as well as a projecting cornice.

57) 161 Fifth Street

c. 1880 Italianate

Contributing

Original cast iron pilasters define the margins of the building and the limits of the recessed entry door on the northeast corner of the building; a Mesker cast iron post supports the cantilevered corner of the second story. The street level storefront of this two story red brick building appears original in spatial arrangement and scale with the large display windows and transom lights intact. A metal structural beam, Mesker model # 197, connects the capitals of the pilasters, at the first and second story junction, on both angles of the corner. The second story has three tall, narrow, double-hung windows with limestone sills and Mesker-style pressed metal window caps. The relatively simple pressed metal entablature has an architrave, a frieze with brackets and dentils, and a simple projecting cornice.

58) 211 Fifth Street

c. 1910 Indeterminate

Non-Contributing

From the limited evidence of the cement block foundation this nondescript building appears to have been built in the early part of the twentieth century. The only defining features are a modern entry door, a three-unit ribbon window and a small gabled dormer with paired double-hung windows, all of which contribute nothing to determining a style or age of the building.

59) 213 Fifth Street

c. 1930 Pyramid Roof Garage

Non-Contributing

This garage has no direct association with any other resource in the district and possesses no architectural or historical significance.

60) 215 Fifth Street

c. 1852/1880 Greek

Contributing, Photo no. 17

This large two-story building has a parge coat on two elevations covering the exterior walls of rough dressed, coursed stone that has been scribed to give the visual appearance of individual stone blocks. A water table is visible above a stone foundation. The façade has five bays: the center bay contains a door for access to the upstairs space and a double-hung wall above the door opening. The flanking bays have a door and a window on the first story and two windows in the second. All of the windows are double-hung and glazed six-over-six; the sills and lintels are painted. The entry doors appear to be replacements. Each bay has a stoop of its own of various size and materials; two of them may be original. The frieze board is Greek Revival in the returns and there is a wide rake in the gable ends of the building. Italianate influence can be seen in the brackets and dentil band below the cornice. Two quarter circle lights flank the interior chimneys in the gable ends of the building.

61) 404 East O&M Street

c. 1880 Nineteenth Century Functional

Contributing

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District, Jennings County, Indiana

Page 17

This three-story building appears to have had a pressed metal entablature that was removed, because of damage from a tornado at some time in the past. The street level portion of the façade is altered. The large display window, the divided transom over it, and the double entry doors all appear original. The glass block that is now part of the door surround and transom light has replaced the original glass in the storefront. Mesker pilasters frame the margins of the façade and the limits of the entry. A Mesker-style pressed metal intermediate cornice visually separates the first and second stories of the façade. There are three double-hung windows in the second story exterior wall; the center unit is larger than the two that flank it on both sides. The sills and lintels are limestone. In the third story are three equal sized fixed-sash windows with limestone sill and lintels. The remainder of the third story of the façade is unfinished.

62) 408 East O&M Street

c. 1880 Nineteenth Century Functional

Contributing

A three-story building that appears to have had a pressed metal entablature that was removed at some time in the past. The street level portion of the façade appears original; it contains a large display window, a divided transom (painted over), and double entry doors. Mesker pilasters frame the margins of the façade and the limits of the entry. A Mesker-style pressed metal intermediate cornice visually separates the first and second stories of the façade. There are three double-hung windows in the second story exterior wall; the center unit is larger than the two that flank it on both sides. The sills and lintels are limestone. In the third story are three equal-sized fixed-sash windows with limestone sill and lintels.

63) 412 East O&M Street

c. 1870 Italianate

Contributing, Photo no. 18

This two-story building is red brick, painted gray. The spatial arrangement of the five display windows and the entry point for the street level portion of the façade appear original; no apparent alterations are readily visible. A canvas awning provides shade to the interior and spans the entire façade at this level. The entry doors are modern metal. Above the awning is a limestone belt course across the entire width of the building. Modern replacement double-hung window units fill the six window openings in the second story. The openings have limestone sills and lintels. The Mesker-style frieze board is detailed with rectangular panels, between each bracket, embossed with a floral design and a dentil band.

64) 422 East O&M Street

c. 1895 Italianate

Contributing

A two-story red brick building, painted pink and gray. The storefront at street level is original in all respects; the two display windows flanking the double door entry and the divided transom lights evoke a visual image of the past. The entry door and stairs for the second story space are at the left limit of the building. Above the limestone belt course are four double-hung windows with limestone sills and lintels. The Mesker-style frieze is detailed with rectangular panels, between each bracket, embossed with a floral design and a dentil band.

65) Stein Block

424-428 East O&M Street

c. 1895 Italianate

Contributing

Little remains of the original facade of the Victorian commercial building. Still visible are a few Mesker cast iron pilasters in the street level store front, a pressed metal intermediate cornice, and the pressed

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District,
Jennings County, Indiana**

Page 18

metal entablature at the top of the façade; all appear to be Mesker produced. Also the plaque designating this as the “Stein Block” still remains centered below the entablature.

66) Couchman Building

448 East O&M Street

c. 1870/1910 Nineteenth/Twentieth Century Functional

Contributing (2)

A two-story brick building with a multi-colored brick veneer covering some of the original façade. The street level storefront retains a high degree of integrity with its original single-glazed display windows, its divided glass transom lights and its entry door. The entry for access upstairs is on the left limit of the building. A decorative course of soldiered, buff-colored brick visually separates the two stories. The four tall, narrow double-hung windows in the second floor are glazed four-over-four. Decorative buff-colored bricks are used to accentuate the arches in the frieze and create a belt course spanning the façade with pendants at each end. The pressed metal cornice, likely a Mesker product, has a frieze board detailed with raised triangular shapes, paired brackets, and a projecting edge. Attached at the back is a rusticated block section with barred windows that extend the original building to the edge of the alley.

67) 454 East O&M Street

c. 1880 Nineteenth Century Functional

Contributing

The street level storefront of this two-story building retains a high degree of integrity in both materials and spatial arrangement. The large display windows flanking the recessed entry door have divided transom lights above each one. The entry for the upstairs space is at the left limit of the building. Three tall, narrow, double-hung windows, with wooden surrounds, span the second story façade; the second story of the facade is sheathed with modern siding. The Mesker-style pressed metal entablature, embossed with a flower blossom design, includes an architrave, and a frieze board with decorative panels between the brackets that support the projecting cornice, graces the top of the building.

68) 460 East O&M Street

c. 1890 Italianate

Contributing, Photo no. 19

This two-story brick building retains the integrity of its storefront with original single-glazed display windows, recessed entry door, and divided transom lights. Mesker cast iron pilasters define the entry. A pressed metal intermediate cornice separates the two stories. The second story of the façade contains five tall, narrow, double-hung windows with limestone sills and segmental arch brick lintels. A course of corbelled brick across the width of the building accentuates the arches in the window openings. A Mesker-style massive pressed metal cornice, embellished with clusters of raised pyramid details between each bracket supporting the projecting cornice, dominates the upper limit of the facade. A faded metal sign, age unknown, with the inscription “J.R. Greathouse Hardware” spans part of the upper façade directly below the cornice.

69) 462 East O&M Street

c. 1890 Italianate

Contributing, Photo no. 20

The street level storefront of this two-story brick building on the corner appears original with large display windows, divided transom lights, Mesker cast iron pilasters that frame the recessed entry double

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District,
Jennings County, Indiana**

Page 19

doors, and a cast iron column supporting the cantilevered corner of the second story. A pressed metal intermediate cornice visually separates the two stories. Three original arched, double-hung windows with limestone sills, span the upper portion of the facade. A Mesker-style pressed metal frieze, with Gothic arch details between each bracket supporting the projecting cornice, crowns the top of the building.

70) 504 East O&M Street

C. 1860 Greek Revival/Italianate

Contributing Photo no. 21

According to a number of Sanborn maps, this three-story massive brick building was at various times a general store, a hotel, and a mission hall. The façade and the main entry door for the building are on East O&M Street although a major elevation with large display windows faces East Fifth Street. The windows are boarded over with plywood but the limestone sills and lintels remain in all three stories. The street level transom light window openings are now in filled with glass block. The entry door surround and its transom light are now glass blocks rather than glass; the limits of the door surround and display windows are defined by broad pilasters and a narrow intermediate cornice. The original frieze board and projecting cornice are replaced with modern metal material. An early ornamental iron work fire escape survives on the O&M street side.

71) 506 East O&M Street

c. 1880 19th Century Functional

Contributing

Missed on the initial survey, this is a narrow, two-story brick (parge-coated) building adjacent to the building at 504 East O&M Street which was a shoe repair at one time in its life. The simple facade contains a window and entry door at the street level and two window openings in the second story. The window units have been replaced with either glass block or have been permanently in filled with cement block. The entry door surround has glass block in lieu of the original single glazing in the transom and side lights.

72) Located at the intersection of Short Street, E. Main, E. Poplar and Fourth Street

Railroad Passenger Depot

c. 1910 Twentieth Century Functional/Prairie

Contributing, Photo no. 22

This rectangular one-story brick building occupies the very center of the once dynamic heart of the railroad service through North Vernon and distant points around the country. Generally, the window openings are flat topped with limestone sills. Some of the double-hung windows are glazed six-over-six while others are replacements; some of the original fixed-sash, glazed two by three, windows remain. Some of the personnel entry doors are replacements for the originals and the cargo loading doors are replacements. The roof is hipped and sheathed with asphalt shingles. An apron of original brick paving surrounds the perimeter of the building.

73) 508 Hoosier Street

c. 1920 Twentieth Century Functional

Contributing

This is a one-story rectangular building constructed of concrete block with limestone veneer across the façade. Period metal industrial-type sash windows flank each side of a roll-up equipment door that now is a modern metal replacement. The façade has a stepped parapet at the cornice. A small annex is attached to

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District,
Jennings County, Indiana**

Page 20

the southwest corner of the building and has a small personnel door for access into the interior space. The façade is a continuation of the limestone veneer on the main block.

74) 416 Hoosier Street Gottwalles Grocery
1893 Italianate

Contributing, Photo no. 23

A two-story yellow painted brick building whose façade retains all the major elements of the original design. The facade reflects a true example of the street level storefront of the period. Wide Mesker cast iron pilasters mark the limits of the building and narrow pilasters frame two doors, the main entry door flanked by large display windows and the small door on the right limit for access to the upstairs space. Single and divided transom lights directly below the pressed metal intermediate cornice define the separation of the two stories. The second story of the façade has paired double-hung windows centered in the facade and single window units flanking it on both sides. Elaborate window caps, the center with a decorative gable (Mesker model # 565) and the others flat topped, accentuate the lintels of each window opening. The building contains a very ornate pressed metal architrave, frieze, and cornice. The Mesker-style entablature incorporates a central Gothic-arch pediment that extends above the line of the projecting cornice, brackets with decorative panels between each, and a quilt-like embossed design in the center of the Gothic-arch.

75) 418 Hoosier Street
c. 1860-1880 Nineteenth Century Functional

Non-contributing

The false front of the badly deteriorated two-story brick building demonstrates an early building practice to add stature to a very simple building. Although some of the original materials remain in the form of a brick wall surface and pressed metal across the upper one-half of the facade, the solid cement block in fill and the non-period door compromise the integrity of the storefront. The building no longer possesses sufficient architectural integrity to contribute to the district.

76) 420 Hoosier Street
Indeterminate, Indeterminate

Non-contributing

So many changes have been made to this façade that it no longer reflects any period of possible significance, either architectural or historical. The vinyl siding, the non-period wooden shingle-clad canopy, modern glazing and entry door mask any possible contribution to the district.

77) 422 Hoosier Street
c. 1890 House, Central Passage

Non-contributing

Modern materials such as vinyl siding, non-period awnings, a non-period entry door compromise the architectural integrity of this house.

78) 424 Hoosier Street
c. 1880 Italianate

Contributing

Painted a flat red color, this two-story brick building, whose street level storefront is altered to some extent, likely retains its original spatial arrangement and scale despite replacement glazing around the door at the left limit of the building (glass block) and replacement of the original doors on the right with

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District,
Jennings County, Indiana**

Page 21

modern metal items. A large sign probably covers the original set of transom lights that would be found below the pressed metal intermediate cornice. The second story has three tall, narrow, window openings covered with plywood inserts. Limestone sills and elaborate Mesker pressed metal window caps mark the lower and upper limits of the openings. A Mesker-style pressed metal entablature with embossed scroll and flower blossom designs caps the façade.

79) 426 Hoosier Street
c. 1860 Federal

Contributing

Like its neighbor, this two-story brick building is painted a flat red color. The street level large display windows are probably not original but may be period. The sill and the lintel of these windows are wooden. The side and transom lights around the replacement entry door are in filled with glass block replacements. A limestone water table spans the façade below the sills of the three window openings in the second story. The window openings have plywood inserts in lieu of window units. A broad fascia board, below a plain cornice, accentuates the simple décor of the façade.

80) Hoosier Street, immediately west of 161 Fifth Street
c. 1900 Indeterminate

Non-contributing

Constructed of sheet metal and vertical board siding, this pyramid roof garage does not contribute to the district.

81) Hoosier Street, the second building west of 161 Fifth Street
c. 1910 Indeterminate

Contributing

Rectangular and one-story, this building was possibly used as a small workshop or a small warehouse for some local business. The exterior walls are rough-faced block and the gable ends are of board and batten siding. A large door opening occupies most of the right half of the wall; the door surround is defined by projecting blocks of rough-faced stone.

82) 21 Madison Avenue
c. 1920 Twentieth Century Functional

Contributing

The street level storefront of this two-story multi-colored brick building has been altered in its spatial arrangement and its glazing pattern. The entry door is of modern glass and metal. The door for access to the upstairs is at the left limit of the building and appears to be original. A modern awning extends across the façade just above the display windows. A shallow three-sided bay is centered in the second story of the façade. The window units are double-hung and glazed four or six-over-one. Two small brick decorative brackets support the bay. Two belt courses of soldiered brick extend across the façade at the upper and lower limits of the bay. A limestone capped, stepped parapet tops the cornice.

83) 23 Madison Avenue
c. 1920 Indeterminate

Contributing

This extremely narrow one-story building is all original in the street level portion of the façade. A small display window is in the left half and the narrow entry door is in the right half. A portion of the façade is obscured by the modern awning from the neighboring building. The upper portion of the facade is

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District, Jennings County, Indiana

Page 22

constructed of buff-colored brick with a limestone cap at the cornice. A single window opening is centered in the exterior wall but is covered with plywood. A decorative brick detail is visible between the window and the cornice.

84) Park Theater

25-31 Madison Avenue

1916 Twentieth Century Functional

Contributing, Photo No. 24

The theater building is two-story and constructed of red brick. The street level of the façade includes a theater entrance and two storefronts. Full height brick pilasters divide the façade into three bays; the central bay for the theater entrance and the flanking bays for the storefronts. The spatial arrangement appears to be original. The glazing and fabrication of the theater entrance are modern but the marquee, with the name of the theater, "Park", is sensitive in arrangement and scale. The store fronts have large divided display windows and single entry doors. The second story in each bay has three-unit ribbon windows which appear to be replacements for the originals; limestone sills remain. Above the window openings, below the stepped parapet cornice, are three decorative rectangular panels formed with brick headers. A corbelled brick detail connects the tops of the pilasters across the width of the building. Courses of soldiered brick accentuate the tops of the flank bays; a limestone plaque inscribed with "19 Jennings 16" is visible between the raised portion of the parapet and the corbelling detail in the center bay.

85) 35 Madison Avenue

c. 1880 Italianate

Contributing

This two-story brick building is painted cream and blue. The street level storefront has been altered somewhat but retains its spatial arrangement and scale. The transom lights above the two display windows are covered with wooden siding material. The original Mesker cast iron pilasters remain. The umbrella awning and the entry door are replacements for original components of the façade. A pressed metal intermediate cornice, probably Mesker, visually separates the two stories. The second story has three double-hung windows with limestone sills and lintels painted blue. The large projecting cornice is fabricated from wooden materials and is obviously not original.

86) 41 North Madison Avenue

c. 1880 Italianate

Contributing

The street level storefront, of this yellow painted two-story brick building has been altered. The spatial arrangement of the display windows may be original. Mesker cast iron pilasters mark the limits of the façade at ground level. The door for access to the upstairs space is at the left limit of the building. A non-period metal canopy obscures a portion of the façade below a pressed metal intermediate cornice. The second story contains six tall, narrow window openings with double-hung window units and limestone sills. The upper limit of the façade is covered with metal siding material in lieu of the traditional pressed metal architectural features.

87) 45 North Madison Avenue

c. 1870 Italianate

Contributing

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District,
Jennings County, Indiana**

Page 23

The street level storefront of this building has been modified. Glass block has been introduced in lieu of standard glazing in the transom lights, and the exterior walls have been covered with black Vitrolite glass veneer, probably in the 1920s, somewhat compromises the integrity of this portion of the façade. The spatial arrangement of the display windows and entry appears original. The door for access to the upstairs is at the right limit of the building. The second story has three tall, narrow, double-hung windows with original wooden framing, limestone sills, and lintels. The original wooden frieze and cornice are in disrepair but the integrity of the brackets and dentil detail is very good.

88) 47 North Madison Avenue

c. 1870 Italianate

Contributing

This two-story brick building is painted blue-gray. The street level storefront has been altered with non-period glazing and wooden wall surface coverings. The transom lights are covered with plywood and so is the transom for the door for upstairs access on the left of the façade. A metal canopy extends out from the façade just above the display windows. The second story of the façade contains three double-hung windows, original wooden surrounds, limestone sills, and lintels. The Mesker-style pressed metal frieze has the standard brackets, dentil band, and a projecting cornice.

89) 4 Short Street

c. 1890 Italianate

Contributing

The street level storefront of this building has been slightly altered by replacing original glazing, covering transom lights with wooden siding, installing a modern entry door, and hanging a modern awning over the display windows. The second story of the three-story brick building is sheathed in Mesker-style pressed metal which provides the architectural detail to the facade. A pressed metal intermediate cornice separates the two stories. A three sided bay window dominates the second story portion of the facade. A single double-hung window, flanked by two colonettes on each side occupies the right half of this portion of the façade. The colonettes, typically Mesker in design, have a decorated base, a spiral shaft, and a cushion capital. The bay has single double-hung window units in each side and paired windows in the front. The third story of the façade has paired double-hung windows located directly above the bay. The pressed metal frieze has large brackets with embossed flower blossom detail that support the projecting cornice.

90) 10 Short Street

c. 1890 Italianate

Contributing, Photo no. 25

The street level storefront of this building has been altered by covering the transom lights with wooden siding, and installing a modern entry door. The second story of the three-story brick building is sheathed in pressed metal, of Mesker design, which provides the architectural detail. A pressed metal intermediate cornice separates the two stories. A band of four double-hung windows, flanked by two colonettes on each side occupies this portion of the façade. The colonettes have a decorated base, a spiral shaft, and a cushion capital. The windows that are likely in the third floor are covered. The pressed metal frieze has large brackets with embossed flower blossom detail that support the projecting cornice. The replacement door for upstairs access is situated on left limit of the building is surrounded by wooden siding.

91) Auerswald Building

7-9 Jackson Street

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District,
Jennings County, Indiana**

Page 24

1959 Contemporary

Non-contributing

This simple one-story brick has two modern metal and glass entry doors, recessed from the front plane of the building façade. Display windows on either side of the entry relieve the monotony of the otherwise blank wall.

92) Located on Madison Avenue in the median across from 44 Short Street
Bank Drive-up Building

Non-contributing

c. 1970 Contemporary

The modern one-story brick building has two drive-through lanes; a large canopy on the southwest elevation protects customers from the elements while using the facility. Teller windows function from both sides of the building.

93) 44 Short Street

Contributing

c. 1900 Commercial

The façade of this one-story red brick contains a modern entry door, two original window openings with limestone sills and lintels but with modern glazing. Red vinyl awnings extend outward above each window. A belt course of panels fabricated from corbelled brick span the width of the building. Glazed tiles provide coping for the parapet cornice.

94) 50 Short Street

Contributing

c. 1890 Commercial

This one-story red brick building has a recessed arched doorway and an angled entry door of modern materials. The three tall, narrow, window openings in the façade have the original limestone sills and segmental arch brick lintels but are single-glazed with modern materials. A course of panels across the width of the building is fabricated with corbelled brick. A limestone cap covers the parapet cornice.

Section 8 – Statement of Significance

Summary

The North Vernon Downtown Historic District is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A because of its association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history, to wit: The district contains a significant collection of period commercial buildings that reflect the impact of railroad growth in the area and the direct economic stimulus this event imparted to the community.

The district is also eligible under Criterion C because it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method of construction or represents the work of a master, to wit: a comprehensive inventory of unique architectural resources demonstrating the use of galvanized iron sheeting (pressed metal) produced by the firm of Geo. L. Mesker & Co., Evansville, Indiana, to embellish otherwise simple brick and frame storefronts constructed in the late-nineteenth century. This core of the downtown contains a cohesive assemblage of buildings in the Italianate and other styles that reflect the Victorian tastes of the times for ornate and elaborate trappings on and in their homes and places of business. The majority of downtown North Vernon's commercial buildings are two- and three-story brick structures. The district's period of

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District,
Jennings County, Indiana**

Page 25

significance, 1852 – 1955, was determined by several important events. The span of years includes the arrival of the Ohio & Mississippi Railroad, the growth of the railroad infrastructure in the state and the nation, and the high water mark of the use of pressed metal architectural detailing in commercial storefronts, both locally and nationally. The period of significance also witnessed the expansion of the manufacturing sector of the economy in Jennings County and North Vernon, spurred by burgeoning railroad systems that greatly expanded the availability of markets at greater distances. The closing date of the period of significance was set at the present 50-year mark to encompass the wide range of styles present in the district.

Statement

The history and significance of North Vernon cannot be understood and appreciated without first considering the history of Jennings County and its county seat, Vernon, located only a few miles south of North Vernon. Organized in 1816, Jennings County has been described by a contemporary geographer as “uplands [that] are mostly level to gently undulating plains dissected by steep-sided, moderately deep valleys, where streams have cut their way down through the bedrock and underlying soils.” The topography of the county would later play a significant role in the siting of both the Ohio & Mississippi Railroad (O&M) and subsequently North Vernon. Named for Jonathan Jennings (a lawyer, state delegate to Congress, and the first governor of Indiana), the county was settled mostly by southerners from the Carolinas, Virginia, and Kentucky.¹

A few years before the county was organized, a surveyor named John Vawter, in the employ of the territorial government, conducted an extensive survey of the region as part of the efforts to develop these mid-western lands. Subsequent to completing his survey, Vawter invested in considerable acreage with an eye to future settlement. Vawter and a business associate, William McClure, offered a tract of land for the county seat. Lots in town went on sale February 1, 1815. Ten percent of the value accrued from the sale of these town lots was used to support a free library system in the county. The first courthouse in the county, built of brick for the sum of \$3,000, was completed in Vernon in 1818.²

As states were carved out of the Northwest Territory in the early decades of the nineteenth century, the leadership of Indiana and its large land holders sought ways to expand their economic influence. Southeastern Indiana was no exception. As early as 1832, an act to incorporate the Madison, Indianapolis & Lafayette Railroad was approved in the legislature; J.F.D. Lanier of Madison, Indiana was one of the directors. Collectively, the state embarked on an infrastructure improvement plan in 1836 that encompassed canals, roads, and railroads backed by loans used as collateral for bonds. Just as importantly, the good name and credit of the state was also mortgaged to this massive improvement venture. The “Act to Provide for a General System of Internal Improvements” called for a single rail line from Madison, on the Ohio River, through Indianapolis, the recently occupied state capitol, and on to

¹ Marion T. Jackson, ed., *The Natural History of Indiana* (Bloomington: IU Press, 1997), 164; Alice Ann Bundy, *A Glimpse of Pioneer Life in Jennings County* (North Vernon: Jennings County Preservation Association, 1992), 9.

² Jennings County Public Library, Clipping Files, Box 52, Folder 1; Bundy, *A Glimpse*, 11.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District, Jennings County, Indiana

Page 26

Lafayette on the Wabash River. Therefore, a transportation/commercial network would be established linking two major waterways, three developing commercial centers, and the agricultural bounty of Indiana's central plain.³

State support for a rail line between Madison & Indianapolis (the M&I) energized the planning process, but work did not begin on the Madison and Indianapolis Railroad until 1837. Faced with nearly insurmountable difficulties in making the 100-foot cut through the Madison Hill, work on the line progressed slowly. By 1838, rails were laid to Graham's Bridge, a distance of 15 miles. Celebrations followed and Vernon was reached in 1839. Hampered by the Panic of 1837, which affected the entire country and Indiana's ability to fund the Improvement Plan, construction slowed to the point that Indianapolis was not reached until 1847. In the interim, Indiana defaulted on some of its loans and many of the improvements sought were completed by private funding. Nonetheless by the mid-nineteenth century, a total distance of 86 miles of track now connected the Ohio River with Indianapolis. In 1866, the M&I merged with the Jeffersonville Railroad to become the Jeffersonville, Madison and Indianapolis Railroad (JM&I).⁴

While the railroad was forging ahead to Indianapolis, the local transportation system of the region was limited to mostly dirt roads stumped low enough to allow the passage of wagons or stage coaches. Vernon prospered during its first three decades even under these limiting conditions. After being herded along muddy trails and roads, pigs and other livestock were collected at Vernon for the trip south to Madison and onwards to markets up and down river. As soon as it was possible, local quarries around Vernon began to ship limestone to Madison. The concept of a viable railroad serving the region was a reality by the late 1840s. Its success inspired the enthusiasm of local people for more of the same. One of those interested was Hagerman Tripp. One source credits Tripp and a Dr. Peabody with influencing one of the eastern railroads in 1851 to survey a route through Jennings County but the Ohio & Mississippi Railroad was already one step ahead.⁵

By the late 1840s, railroad companies were actively petitioning state legislatures in the mid-west for charters to gain rights-of-way and surveying potential routes for their tracks. The charter granted to the Ohio & Mississippi Railroad (O&M) to operate in Indiana read, "the Company is authorized to survey, locate, etc. a railroad on the most direct and practicable route between Lawrenceburg, on the Ohio River, and Vincennes, on the Wabash." To this end, the Baltimore & Ohio organization hired O.M. Mitchell to survey a route for an east/west line to connect Cincinnati and St. Louis. The line surveyed traversed part of Jennings County, "From Otter Creek to the Muscatatuck [river], about 8 miles, ... the line will pass between the heads of the ravines falling to the left and right, over level ground, affording a very cheap route." Mitchell's survey, reported in December 1848, no doubt influenced the O&M to site its route

³ James A. Madison, *The Indiana Way* (Bloomington: IU Press, 1986), 83-86; Indiana Historical Society, Pamphlet "An Act to Incorporate the Madison, Indianapolis & Lafayette Railroad Company", 1832.

⁴ Madison, *The Indiana Way*, 154; Richard S. Simons and Francis H. Parker, *Railroads of Indiana* (Bloomington: IU Press, 1997), 115.

⁵ Bundy, *A Glimpse*, 65-66; Helen Leland, Diana Goldberg, Rosemary Calli, and Ruth Besel, compilers, *History of Jennings County, Indiana* (Evansville: Unigraphics, 1956), 118.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District, Jennings County, Indiana

Page 27

approximately two miles north of Vernon. By late 1851 or early 1852, local entrepreneurs like Hagerman Tripp, Hiram Prather, Langston Johnson, and Ezra Peabody purchased large parcels of land that bracketed the proposed intersection of the yet-to-be-determined route of the O&M and the already operational Madison and Indianapolis Railroad.⁶

1852 was the beginning of the next chapter in settlement and railroading in Jennings County. It would have a profound effect on the location and plan of North Vernon. In that year, the directors of the O&M decided to begin work on the east/west line at the intersection of the two railroads. Hagerman Tripp platted a new town called "Tripton" (or Tripton). Tripp was the trustee for the sale of lots by himself and Prather, and the first lots were sold quickly and the first house was erected southeast of the railroad intersection. Track for the new railroad was laid simultaneously in both directions from its intersection with the M&I. Detractors in Vernon, who probably saw the handwriting on the wall, had derided the new settlement by calling it "Licksillet" or just "the crossing" in attempts to downplay the future importance of an obvious rival.⁷

Tripton grew slowly in the period before the Civil War. Most of the first full time residents were workers and supervisors involved in pushing the tracks east toward Cincinnati and west to St. Louis. Manufacturing efforts were limited to local needs such as saw mills, flouring and grist mills along the Muscatatuck River. An immediate economic boost came to the town in the form of a high demand for cross ties and transportation of equipment for the new railroad. One firm, John L. Bundy Company, made quick work of both demands and prospered for a number of years. One hardy soul built a hotel in 1853 which probably served the needs of the railroad builders more than a host of transient businessmen. In 1854 work began on another new rail line, the Fort Wayne & Southern, between Tripton and Jeffersonville but financial problems plagued the effort and construction stopped. Eventually, in 1868, the right-of-way was obtained by the O&M line and service was opened between Louisville and North Vernon. In the latter part of the decade, signs of real permanence began to be visible. Besides the growth of the few local businesses, a school was started, churches were in the offing, and a newspaper, the *Jennings Independent*, began publication. The O&M completed its track from the Ohio River to the Wabash River Division in 1855; the full length of the line was finished between Cincinnati and St. Louis in 1857.⁸

The decade of the 1860s witnessed many changes in the landscape and in the infrastructure of Indiana. Sacrifices made by Hoosier soldiers in the Civil War included men from Jennings County from the onset

⁶ O. M. Mitchell, *Report of Preliminary Reconnaissance of the Country Between Cincinnati and St. Louis In Order for a Railroad to be Constructed Over the Same* (Cincinnati: Wright, Ferris and Company, 1850), 1; Jennings County Public Library, Clipping File, Box 2, Folder 1.

⁷ Leland, et al., *History of Jennings County*, 118; Indiana Historic Sites & Structures Inventory, *Jennings County Interim Report* (Indianapolis: Indiana Department of Natural Resources, 1984), 31-35.

⁸ Daniel L. McCauley, "History of North Vernon" (unpublished manuscript, n.d.), 11; Bundy, *A Glimpse*, 72; Edward Hungerford, *The Story of the B&O Railroad 1827-1927* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1928), 301-302.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District, Jennings County, Indiana

Page 28

of hostilities to the bitter end in 1865. Railroad construction, other than for military uses virtually ceased during the war. During the war years, only 54 miles of new track were built in Indiana. Material for ties, tracks, and equipment were in short supply. The men who would have built and operated new rail lines were embroiled in the war.⁹

Jennings County did its part for the Civil War effort. Hagermen Tripp formed a regiment of volunteers and it became the 37th Indiana Regiment. Other communities in the county provided manpower to the struggle in various Indiana units such as the Sixth Indiana Volunteer Infantry that saw service in a number of major battles south of the Mason-Dixon Line. However, Jennings County's most famous Civil War experience occurred when Morgan's Raiders arrived south of Vernon in 1863. Many local townspeople thought Morgan and his raiders were focused on seizing the rail center. To forestall this calamity, railroaders hid the telegraph equipment. In fact, Morgan's men never entered Tripton and only spent several days south of Vernon foraging for horses and supplies. Morgan moved on when federal troops arrived in the area and he headed toward eastern Indiana and Ohio where he and his men were eventually captured.¹⁰

The years following the Civil War were filled with change. The *Plain Dealer*, a local newspaper started in 1864 became the property of John C. Cope in 1866; Cope would become North Vernon's first mayor in July 1876. Tripton was incorporated and was officially renamed North Vernon in 1867. Commercial interests in North Vernon began to grow after the war as new folks entered the community. Wolf Gumble, a German-born retailer, arrived in North Vernon in 1868 to open his general store near the present location of the B&O depot. Business prospered and Gumble moved across the tracks. After the Civil War, railroad construction increased rapidly as manpower and materials became available. The impact of the railroads had not quite been realized in the 1860s but that would change in the next decade.¹¹

A critical and monumental railroad experience in Indiana and Jennings County in the 1870s was the Ohio & Mississippi's change of gauge in July 1876. The O&M chose to use the broad gauge of 6' between rails when it constructed its first track in the 1850s. However, because there was no standardization of track gauge anywhere at this point, the O&M (and others) were required to transship people and products at various state lines or at railroad intersections where the gauges did not match. On 13 July 1876, the O&M stopped all traffic, unfastened its rails, and narrowed all 340 miles of its main line (and all its sidings, etc.) to the standard gauge of 4' 9".¹²

A significant measure of the impact of railroads on local commerce is the effect they had on the businesses in one Jennings County town. In 1858, Vernon had 100 businesses actively engaged in commerce; by 1876, this number had been reduced to 10. Needless to say, many of these businesses likely moved north to North Vernon to take advantage of access to distant markets and/or ceased to exist

⁹ McCauley, "History of North Vernon", 7; Simons and Parker, *Railroads of Indiana*, 22.

¹⁰ McCauley, "History of North Vernon", 7.

¹¹ Leland, et al., *History of Jennings County*, 221; McCauley, "History of North Vernon", 2; Bureau of the Census, Decennial Census 1870, *Indiana-Jennings County and North Vernon*.

¹² Simons and Parker, *Railroads of Indiana*, 24 and 28.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District,
Jennings County, Indiana**

Page 29

because of a diminished customer base. While detrimental to some, the railroads fostered others such as the J.M. Jones Company of North Vernon, started in 1879, that produced spokes and hubs for wagon and carriage wheels which were shipped in “carload lots” to jobbers in eastern and mid-western states.¹³

The last two decades of the nineteenth century proved to be high points in North Vernon’s history through the influence of three events; the consolidation of railroad systems, the expansion of the local commercial sector and the city’s infrastructure, and finally, the accumulation of an inventory of Italianate-style, galvanized iron storefronts manufactured by the George L. Mesker Brothers Company of Evansville, Indiana. During this time a total of three railroad lines ran through the city of North Vernon.¹⁴

According to one source, the period 1880 to 1900 in U.S. railroad history can best be described as “bewildering”. Besides the construction of new rail lines such as the Vernon, Greensburg & Rushville Railroad (VG&R) in the early 1880s, many of the smaller local lines were consolidated by merger, sale, or lease into an ever-growing network of longer rail lines that brought the markets of Chicago, St. Louis, Pittsburgh and a plethora of other cities within reach of the manufacturers in North Vernon.¹⁵

The consolidations not only changed the names of the various lines running through North Vernon but also brought local changes such as the construction of three separate depots, a maintenance facility, increased numbers of railroad employees in North Vernon, and a boost to the economy that no doubt supported many infrastructure improvements during the period. The O&M became the Baltimore & Ohio Southwestern (B&OSW) in 1893 when it was sold to the parent Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. Although it has undergone many structural changes over time, the B&OSW depot, located between Madison Street and O&M Avenue is still present and now serves the CSX line. Sanborn maps from the late 1890s verify the footprint of the depot and the presence of a lunch room (gone now), probably located in the turreted space on the east end of the platform. Remnants of the original brick apron around the depot are still visible. The B&OSW also had a large engine dispersing yard and other maintenance buildings (outside the district) west of the depot near what is now the intersection of SR 7 and US 50 (no longer present). The JM&I merged with the Pittsburg, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railroad (PCC & St. Louis) in 1890 to eventually become a part of the Pennsylvania Railroad System (PRR). The PRR passenger depot (demolished) was located southwest of the present CSX depot, where the drive-through teller for a local bank now services customers.¹⁶

The VG&R merged with the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railroad (CCC & St. Louis) in 1889. Known colloquially as the Big Four, the CCC & St. Louis became part of the New York Central Railroad through a lease in 1930. The Big Four depot (demolished) was west of the present CSX depot on the site of the local city government and police building. By the close of the nineteenth century, North Vernon had three full time, active rail lines defining its busy downtown; estimates from the time mention as many as 75 to 90 trains passing through each day. Daily trains from the Kentucky coal fields passed

¹³ Jennings County Public Library, Clipping Files, Box 2, Folder 1; McCauley, “History of North Vernon”, 14.

¹⁴ Information supplied by Lillian Carmer, North Vernon.

¹⁵ Simons and Parker, *Railroads of Indiana*, 22.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 135-136; Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, North Vernon, 1893, 1899, and 1911.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District,
Jennings County, Indiana**

Page 30

through North Vernon on the B & O's Louisville Branch, carrying coal to the steel-making centers of the Midwest. Other trains moved regularly through the region carrying limestone quarried from nearby deposits and lumber and wood products manufactured from the hardwoods in the forests of southern Indiana.¹⁷

All of this railroad activity spurred commercial growth in and around North Vernon. According to a historical atlas, by 1884, North Vernon had acquired a panoply of business concerns including the Tripp Brothers hardware and stove manufactory, J.B. Miller's furniture, casket, and coffin firm, C. Gautier's bakery and confectionery, three general stores, six lawyers, one dentist and the Euler Brother's store for shoes and boots. The brothers, originally from Prussia, came to North Vernon via Indianapolis in the late 1860s and in 1872, established their shoe business. One brother, George, later went into farming. Their store, the Euler Building, occupies its original location at 246 East Walnut Street.¹⁸

Another native Hoosier set up business as a pharmacist during this period. George Washington Bantz had a varied career. At different times, he was a deputy sheriff, a general store clerk, and finally around 1890, he married and settled into his chosen profession as a pharmacist. Known locally for his knowledge of medicinal herbs and roots, Bantz also collected Native American artifacts and dabbled in entrepreneurial pursuits. His "G.W. Bantz" building remains relatively intact on Fifth Street today.¹⁹

M.T. Lindley was born in Jennings County in 1843. Although from a family of farmers, Lindley developed a reputation for his excellence in painting buildings. He spent a number of years before opening his business on East Walnut Street as a painting contractor, working locally and as far away as Cincinnati. He built the "Iron Block" on the corner of East Walnut and Jackson Streets in 1891 where he rented out space to others and conducted his own paint and wallpaper business from one of the storefronts. The "Iron Block" remains a visible dominant image of architecture from that period, enhanced through the use of galvanized iron detailing.²⁰

In 1889, the three Tech brothers – William, Frank, and Edward – arrived in North Vernon from Cincinnati, Ohio, to start up their department store. The original location for their business was the fourth building east of the corner of Fourth Street and O&M Avenue. As business improved, a need for more space evolved and they moved their operation to a large two-story brick building at the corner of Fifth Street and O&M Avenue, the present location of Greathouse Hardware. (Greathouse was originally across

¹⁷ Simons and Parker, *Railroads of Indiana*, 102-103; Interview with Bob Clark, former B&O employee, by John Warner, 24 March 2005 at the Vernon Historical Society.

¹⁸ Jennings County Public Library, Clipping Files, Boxes 48 and 52; *An Atlas of Jennings County, Indiana* (Philadelphia: D.J. Lake and Company, 1884), n.p.

¹⁹ Jennings County Public Library, Clipping Files, Box 43.

²⁰ Jennings County Public Library, Clipping Files, Boxes 30 and 52.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District,
Jennings County, Indiana**

Page 31

the street in a large three-story brick building that also housed, at various times, a well-known bakery run by the Schierling family and a hotel in its upper floors.)²¹

As the commercial sector of North Vernon developed so did the need for an infrastructure to support further growth. A giant step in town-building came in 1876 when the first set of city officers was elected. Prior to this time, establishment of such public service activities as the post office in 1853, the first public school in 1854, and the local volunteer fire department were initiated by private citizens as a matter of necessity or, from 1868 to 1876, dealt with by officers of the town board. The city-wide improvements undertaken during this period included the building of the first city high school in 1877; the construction of two cisterns and the purchase of additional fire fighting equipment in 1885; gas lights appeared along a number of local streets in 1890 and construction of the city's first electric power generating plant occurred in 1897 (the first light illuminated was at Tech's corner). The construction of the city waterworks in 1892/3; and the purchase of a new pump for the fire department in 1900 increased the ongoing infrastructure improvements.²²

Both the number of persons employed in North Vernon's railroad industry and the variety of jobs available increased during the last two decades of the century. An evaluation of census forms for North Vernon for this period reveals the following: Of the 421 families in the city of North Vernon reporting employment in the 1880 census only 21 families specified railroads as their primary means of support; in other words, about five per cent of the total population. Most families in the township still maintained farming as their primary vocation. There were seven different job descriptions ranging from conductor and engineer to brakemen. By the census of 1900, the true impact of the railroads on the economy of North Vernon is evident: Of the 670 families enumerated, 152 families reported railroad employment as the primary means of support to the family; in other words, nearly 23% of the families in North Vernon directly depended on railroads for their livelihood. The range of job descriptions grew to 21 in all. New job descriptions included supervisors, civil engineers, detectives, laborers, carpenters, baggage handlers, brakemen, round house foremen, switchmen, and the crossing watchmen. The railroads and their employees were no doubt a major source of cash flow in the community. Taxes paid by the railroads and the relatively high wages paid to many of these workers created a fertile economic environment for the birth and growth of many local businesses. Although the economic impact was positive, there was also a negative aspect: Accidents that killed and/or maimed local people, while not commonplace, were a constant concern. In 1899, with rail traffic passing through the city reaching a dangerous level, local government enacted a city ordinance requiring crossing guards at main street and rail intersections.²³

Not surprisingly, North Vernon experienced its historical building boom during this same period of railroad growth. Nearly two-thirds of the buildings in the district were constructed between 1880 and

²¹ Leland et al., *History of Jennings County*, 222.

²² McCauley, "History of North Vernon", passim.

²³ US Decennial Census, *Indiana-Jennings County and North Vernon*, 1880 and 1900; "Last of the Watchmen", *Indianapolis News*, 22 November 1982.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District,
Jennings County, Indiana**

Page 32

1900. The remaining one-third are a mix of early twentieth century, modern, vernacular, and hybridized styles demonstrating change over time. The most interesting and important aspect of the architectural history of this collection of buildings has to do with the method and material used to impart character to the storefront facades of the majority of the district's commercial buildings.

The George L. Mesker & Company, (George Mesker and his two brothers), manufacturers of architectural iron for storefronts, opened its Evansville, Indiana works in 1879. Founded by the three Mesker Brothers, originally from Cincinnati, the company provided cast and galvanized iron products ranging from pilasters to sills, and galvanized items such as cornices, moldings, and imitation brick and rusticated stone block. In 1881, two of the brothers moved to St. Louis and set up their own architectural iron foundry. Crafted in the commercial Italianate style favored in the period, these two firms set the standard and became the leading producers of cast and galvanized iron storefronts in the U.S. during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Products from the Evansville factory can sometimes be identified by the "morning glory" motif impressed onto their wares while the St. Louis foundry used the "fleur-de-lis" motif as their signature floral design. The "morning glory" is very visible in the cornices of 108 Fifth Street and, its neighbor, 106 Fifth Street.²⁴

Although the two foundries no doubt competed for some markets, the Evansville works clearly sold its products all across the country. A map contained in the 1907 catalogue depicts the United States with the number of storefronts sold superimposed within the state boundaries: Indiana led at the time with 1351, but 21 had been sold in Maine, 23 in Oregon, and 114 in Texas, with all of the remaining 45 states represented to some extent. There are examples of Mesker company cast and galvanized iron architectural work extant in the district that run the gamut from individual items such as window caps (hoods) and cornices to pediments and pilasters installed on brick front buildings to full facades on frame-front buildings. The individual items are visible on the Gottwalles Grocery at 416 East Hoosier Street, 155 Fifth Street, and the two storefronts on Fifth Street behind 462 O&M Avenue. Full façade examples are extant on the M.T. Lindley building at 212-216 East Walnut and the G. W. Bantz building at 12 Fifth Street. A storefront similar to Gottwalles' would have cost the owner, based on the width of the frontage, from \$255.40 to \$275.50. A full-façade example similar to the G.W. Bantz building would have cost from \$194.40 to \$214.50. Owners could mix and match elements to come up with their own designs.²⁵

During the early decades of the twentieth century, North Vernon continued to prosper economically and improve its infrastructure. One such enterprise was the Cooperative Enterprise Glass Factory that started at the turn of the century to take advantage of the ready access to the railroads for shipping its products. It burned down in 1905 but was rebuilt in 1908 and at one time offered employment to as many as 250 workers. A second fire in 1925 destroyed the plant and, possibly taking this catastrophe as a message, the company moved to Corydon, Indiana. An unusual business undertaking started in 1911 was the furrier establishment of Howard Couchman. Initially a childhood endeavor of Couchman and his friends who trapped muskrats, Couchman eventually built his business to employ 13 women involved in cutting and

²⁴ George L. Mesker, *1905 Catalogue of Storefronts* (Evansville, IN: Geo. L. Mesker Company, 1905), passim.

²⁵ Indiana Historic Sites & Structures Inventory, *Jennings County Interim Report*, 31-35; Mesker, *Catalogue*, 8 and 17.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District, Jennings County, Indiana

Page 33

sewing furs to make coats, scarves, and other items. The Howard Couchman Fur Company imported some furs and Couchman, with agents in Kentucky made use of regional resources for raw furs. The fad for raccoon coats in the 1920s was a real boon to his business. Although his primary business address was on O&M Avenue, a building bearing his name and the date "1941" is located at 62 East Walnut Street in the district. The exact function is unknown.²⁶ The Jennings Theater opened in 1916 with a seating capacity of 560 by 1938 it had become known as the Park Theatre. Remodeled and updated in recent years, the building now once again serves the community as a venue for live theatre, events and movies as the Park Theatre, a dominant façade on the west side of Madison Street. In 1921, the Pittsburg, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railroad, (merged with the old JM&I in 1890), came under the operational control of the Pennsylvania Railroad, later CSX. A study is currently underway to rehabilitate the building as a cultural center.²⁷

North Vernon installed its first sewers in 1903, a sure sign of progress, and its first paved streets appeared in 1916/17, immediately before World War I. The city's electricity generating plant, built in the late 1890s, reached maximum capacity in the mid-1920s and required replacement to meet the demands of modern homes and businesses in North Vernon. The city sold its plant to a private company that built a new plant and sold its electricity for the unheard of price of twenty-five cents per light per month. The demand for water from the city water works, started in 1892, also outgrew capacity in the mid-1920s. A larger dam was built in 1914 and steam power originally used to operate the pumps to maintain pressure was replaced by electrical pumps in 1917. Vernon tapped into North Vernon's water lines around 1925. Telephone service became a standard means of communication during the same time. Started in 1903 and franchised by one of the Prather family, the new service added to the everyday life of the local housewife and eased the burden of many businesses including the railroads. The 1910 census acknowledges telephone operators and linemen as some of the new vocations now active in the working community.²⁸

In 1917, a group of concerned citizens met to establish the Jennings County Library Board. Financed by a \$20,000 grant from the Carnegie Foundation, the library building on East Walnut Street was constructed on Bedford limestone and red brick with a red tile roof. Designed to house 15,000 volumes, the Neo-Classical building was completed and dedicated in 1920. The Carnegie Library remains a permanent fixture on East Walnut Street but in order to serve a rapidly growing population, the county library and all its resources are now housed in a modern building north of downtown.²⁹

North Vernon has had its share of natural disasters that impacted on the town's streetscapes. The first tornado hit North Vernon south of the main section of town in 1882. In 1917, another tornado destroyed

²⁶ Jennings County Public Library, Clipping Files, Box 2; Leland et al., *History of Jennings County*, 226-227.

²⁷ Simons and Parker, *Railroads of Indiana*, 112-113.

²⁸ McCauley, *History of North Vernon*, 3-4; Bureau of the Census, US Decennial Census 1910, *Indiana-Jennings County and North Vernon*.

²⁹ Jennings County Public Library, Pamphlet, "Our Heritage", 1978.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District,
Jennings County, Indiana**

Page 34

buildings on the west side of town. The First Christian Church, located in the historic district on East Walnut Street, was destroyed and a new church was built in the same location in 1925. The present church was enlarged in 1954.³⁰

North Vernon weathered the Depression years as well as any community in Indiana. Some businesses failed and others survived, railroads continued to be the primary means of moving bulk cargo, and not much changed in the downtown district. In 1930, the Big Four was leased to the New York Central Railroad. The advent of World War II greatly increased rail traffic; according to a local retired railroad employee, trains were running nose to tail as fast as safety would allow. One source mentioned a figure of well over 150 trains per day through North Vernon during the war years.³¹

The interstate road system that began construction in the late 1950s and 1960s was a harbinger of dark days ahead for the large railroad systems in the United States. Although not the only reasons for a clearly defined reduction in railroad traffic in the 1950s, improved local roads, the growth of the trucking industry, the low price of gasoline and diesel, and the increased availability of air and private automobile travel combined to make the efficient and profitable operation of many rail connections impossible to achieve. As service was reduced or eliminated between many smaller cities, travelers and shippers were forced to use other methods to meet their needs. Even North Vernon, at the intersection of three major rail lines, experienced the reduction in traffic and by the late 1950s only five passenger trains passed through the city each day. Improved methods of maintenance, the consolidation of operations along each line, and a general shrinking of personnel needs reduced the number of railroad employees adding their wages to many local economies including North Vernon.

The North Vernon Downtown Historic District represents and exemplifies a period of great changes in transportation and architectural design and detail in Indiana, and in some respects, nationwide. The coming of the railroads was the very reason for North Vernon's existence. The city became a true "railroad town" in physical appearance, in economic terms, and demographically. Without the railroads North Vernon would not have existed nor survived. The inventory of remaining Geo. L. Mesker & Company-produced cast and galvanized iron storefronts is one of the highest concentrations extant in southern Indiana and possibly the state. Over one-half of the contributing resources in the district have some Mesker architectural iron components gracing their facades.

Section 9 – Bibliography

An Atlas of Jennings County, Indiana. Philadelphia, PA: D.J. Lake & Company, 1884.

³⁰ McCauley, "History of North Vernon," 10.

³¹ Clark Interview, 24 March 2005.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District,
Jennings County, Indiana**

Page 35

Bundy, Alice Ann. *A Glimpse of Pioneer Life in Jennings County*. North Vernon, IN: Jennings County Preservation Association, Inc., 1992.

Bureau of the Census, US Decennial Census, 1870, 1880, 1900, and 1910.

Harris, Cyril M. *Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1977.

Hungerford, Edward. *The Story of the B&O Railroad, 1827-1927*. New York: G.P. Putnam, 1928.

Indiana Historical Society. Clipping Files "Railroads."

Indiana Historic Sites & Structures Inventory. *Jennings County Interim Report*. Indianapolis: Indiana Department of Natural Resources, 1984.

Interview – John Warner with Bob Clark, Retired B&O Employee, 24 March 2005 at the Vernon Historical Society.

Jackson, Marion T. *The Natural Heritage of Indiana*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997.

Jennings County Public Library. Clipping Files. Boxes 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 12, 22, 23, 30, 43, 48, 52, and 54.

Leland, Helen, et al. *History of Jennings County, Indiana*. Evansville, IN: Unigraphics, 1956.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989

McCauley, Daniel L. "History of North Vernon" (unpublished manuscript, n.d.)

Mesker, George L. *1905 Catalogue of Storefronts. Store Fronts*. Evansville IN: No publication data, 1905.

Sanborn Map Company. *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of North Vernon, Indiana*. 1893, 1899, 1911, and 1937.

Sexton, Naomi K. *Hoosier Journal of Ancestry-Jennings County, Indiana*. Little York, IN: Self-Published, 1992

Simons, Richard S. and Francis H. Parker. *Railroads of Indiana*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1997.

Smith, William Prescott. *The Book of Great Railway Celebrations of 1857*. New York: Appleton, 1858.

United States Decennial Census 1880, 1900, and 1910.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District,
Jennings County, Indiana**

Page 36

Section 10 – Geographical Data

UTM References

1. 16.618995/4318895
2. 16.619380/4318150
3. 16.619395/4318270
4. 16.619380/4318257
5. 16.619953/4318039
6. 16.619953/4318039

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at a point at the southeast corner of the intersection of Madison and East Walnut Streets proceed northeast across Madison Avenue and U.S. 50 to the intersection of the south and west property lines of 10 S. Short Street. Follow the south property line of 10 Short Street east to the east property line of 10 Short Street. Turn north and proceed along the east property lines of 10 and 4 Short St. to the south property line of 2 Fifth Street. Turn east and follow that line to the east property line of 2 Fifth Street. Turn north and follow that line to the south property line of 6 Fifth Street. Turn east and proceed to the west side of the alley between Buckeye Street (U.S. 50) and Railroad Avenue. Turn north and proceed along that line across Railroad Avenue, E. O & M Avenue and continue across the alley between E. O & M and Hoosier Street; cross Hoosier Street and continue to the to the south side of the alley between East Hoosier and Kellar Streets.

Turn west and proceed along the alley's south right of way. Cross Fifth Street to the intersection of the south side of the alley between Kellar and East Hoosier Street and the west side of Fifth Street; turn north and proceed along the east property line of 215 Fifth to the north property line of that same property; turn west and proceed to the west property line of that property, turn south and proceed on this property line, then in the same direction, crossing the alley between Hoosier and Kellar Streets to the south right of way of said alley and turn west to the west property line of 416 Hoosier Street. Turn south and follow that line to the north side of Hoosier Street. Cross Hoosier Street to the southeast to the west property line of NKA #2 (Hoosier Street) and follow that line south to the south side of the alley between Hoosier Street and E. O&M Avenue. Turn west and proceed along the alley, crossing Fourth Street, to the west side of Fourth Street. Turn south and follow the west side of Fourth Street across E. O&M Avenue and Madison Avenue to the southeast corner of Poplar and Madison. Proceed southeast along the southern right of way of Madison Avenue to the west property line of 47 Madison Avenue. Turn southwest and follow that line to the north side of the alley between Madison Avenue and Jackson Street; turn southeast and proceed along the alley to the rear property line of 230 East Walnut Street; turn southwest and proceed along the rear property lines of building addresses 230 through 202 E. Walnut Street, cross Jackson Street and proceed along the west property lines of building addresses 160 through 138 East Walnut. Continue in that same direction across the alley between Jackson and Jennings Streets and along the west property lines of 108 E. Walnut and 62 E. Walnut to the south property line of 62 E. Walnut. Turn south to the west side of E. Walnut Street and proceed northeast on that right of way to its intersection at the north side of the alley between Jennings and Jackson Streets. Turn southeast, crossing East Walnut Street and proceed along the

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet – North Vernon Downtown Historic District,
Jennings County, Indiana**

Page 37

north side of the alley to its intersection with the south property line of 143 E. Walnut Street; turn northeast and proceed along the east property line of the building addresses 143-163 East Walnut; continue northeast, crossing Jackson St. and following the east property lines of 203-227 E. Walnut Street; cross the alley between Jackson Street and Madison Avenue and proceed north along the east property lines of 247-263 E. Walnut Street to the south side of Madison Avenue at the North property line of 263 E. Walnut Street. Turn northwest, following the north property line of 263 E. Walnut Street to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The North Vernon Downtown Historic District encompasses all of the most significant nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial architecture, with a sprinkling of residential buildings, which is at the core of the city. While there are occasional contemporary infill properties within the boundary, most of the district displays the rhythm of closely spaced commercial fronts in Italianate, Renaissance Revival, Classical Revival, and other typical styles of the period. Because of the unique nature of North Vernon's town plan, the boundary is somewhat irregular. State Street, (Indiana Highways 3 and 7), a modern roadway with its attendant retail establishments clearly delineates the southwestern edge of the district. The western boundary includes the Walnut Street commercial area and the railroad track intersection and depot. To the north, northwest, some contemporary buildings have intruded and are thus excluded from the district. Directly north, the district includes the commercial buildings on Fifth Street and an early and very significant residential building, now used as rental housing. In the north east section of the district, the boundary encompasses the important buildings on Fifth Street. South of this point, the boundary returns to Walnut Street and the building facades which create a nearly unbroken streetscape of important pressed metal and cast iron architectural design elements. The south west leg of the boundary also encompasses the Carnegie Library, a significant element of the town's early twentieth-century history, the Couchman Building and the First Christian Church. As drawn, the boundary for the North Vernon Downtown Historic District includes all of the town's significant commercial architecture as well as a few key buildings which are related to its commercial and cultural life.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: Camille B. Fife, President
John P. Warner, Bernadette Wickersham,
The Westerly Group, Inc.

Address: 556 W. 1175 N. Road 225 East Main Street
Farmersburg, IN 47850 Madison IN, 47250

Telephone: (812) 696 2415

Date: August, 2005

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

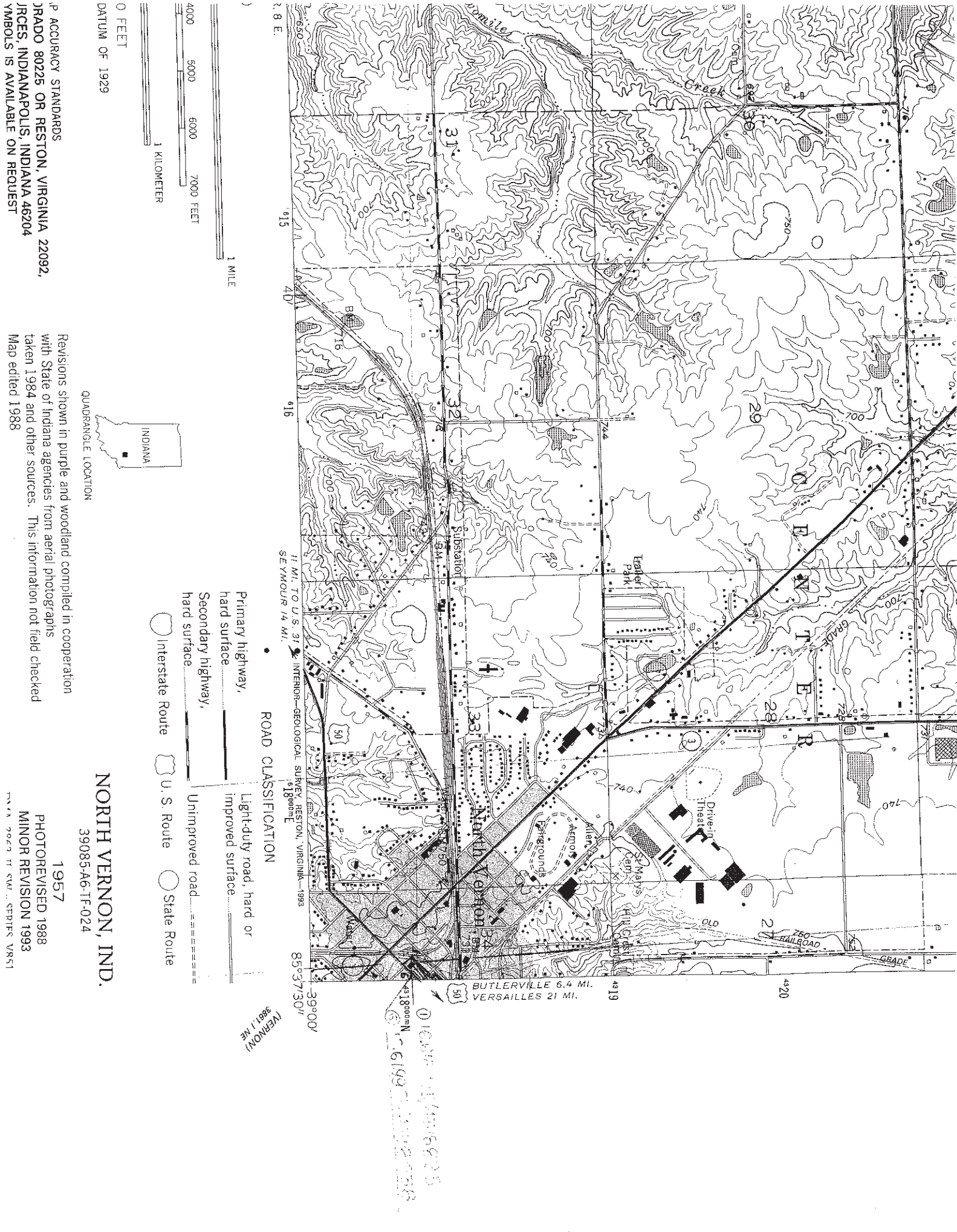
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page *North Vernon Downtown Historic District, Jennings County, IN*

Section 10 – Geographical Data

Additional UTM's

- 5) 16 619953 4318039
- 6) 16 619953 4318038



0 FEET
 DATUM OF 1929

4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET
 1 MILE

1 KILOMETER

REVISIONS SHOWN IN PURPLE AND WOODLAND COMPILED IN COOPERATION WITH STATE OF INDIANA AGENCIES FROM AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN 1984 AND OTHER SOURCES. THIS INFORMATION NOT FIELD CHECKED. MAP EDITED 1988.

NORTH VERNON, IND.
 39085-A6-TF-024

1957
 PHOTO REVISIONED 1988
 MINOR REVISION 1993

ACCURACY STANDARDS
 BRADDO 80225 OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092,
 JRCES, INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204
 SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

INDIANA

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Primary highway, hard surface
- Secondary highway, hard surface
- Unimproved road
- Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
- Interstate Route
- U. S. Route
- State Route

11 MI. TO U.S. 31
 SEYMOUR 14 MI.

INTERIOR-GEOLOGICAL SURVEY RESTON, VIRGINIA-1993

BUTLERVILLE 6.4 MI.
 VERSAILLES 21 MI.

39°00'
 85°37'30"

VERNON
 3801 NE

1007-14506925
 16199

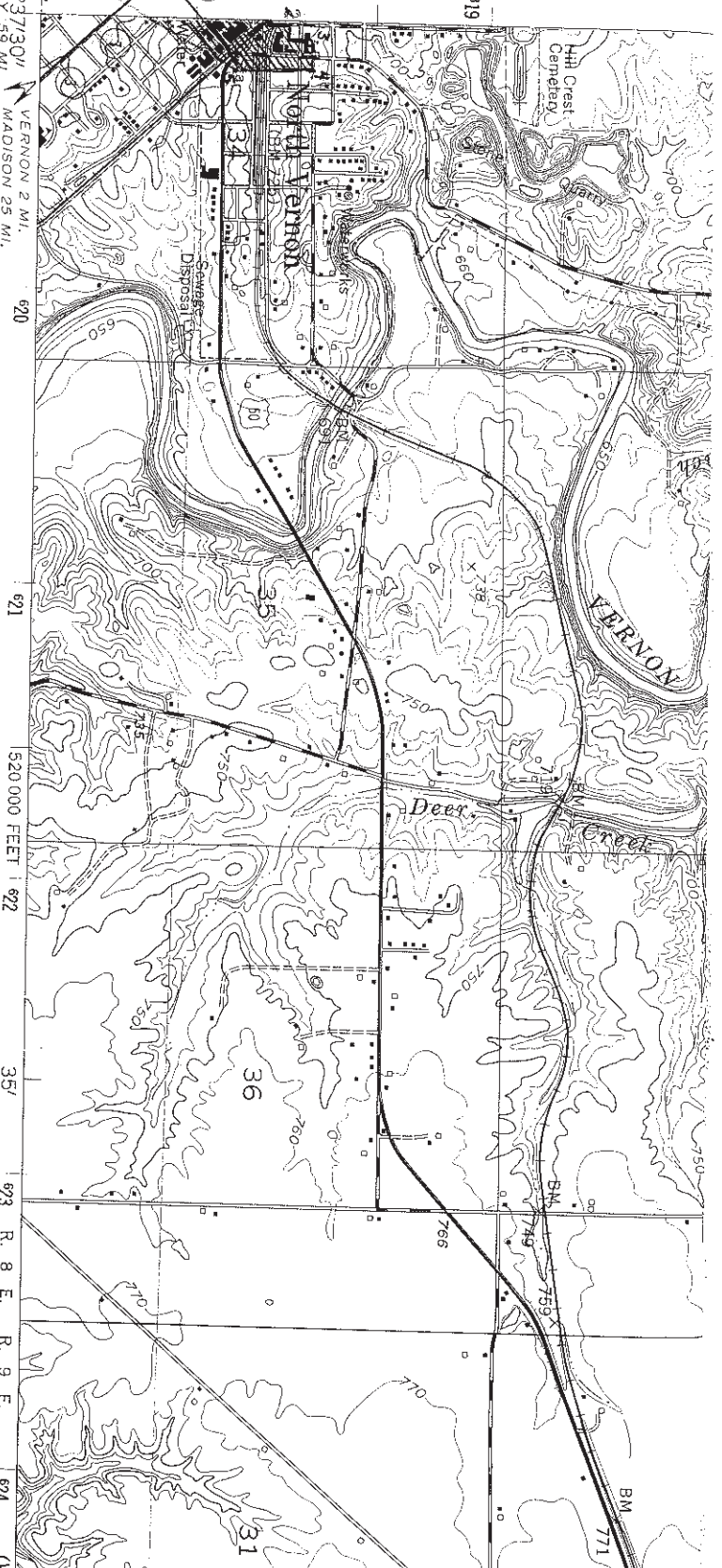
4:16,619,380 / 43 15' 51" N
 2:16,619,305 / 43 18' 27" W
 ② 16,619,380 / 43 18 15 0

⑤ 16,619,953 / 43 18 03 9

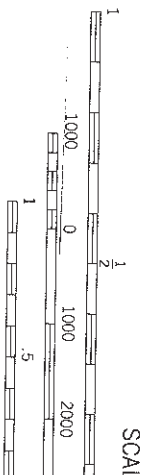
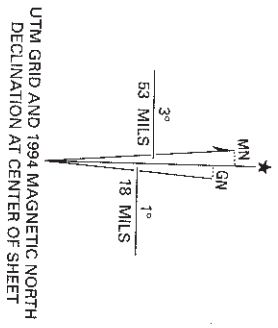
(HAYDEN)
 3861 / NW

LOUISVILLE, KY 59 MI.
 MADISON 25 MI.
 VERNON 2 MI.
 85°37'30" W
 39°00' N

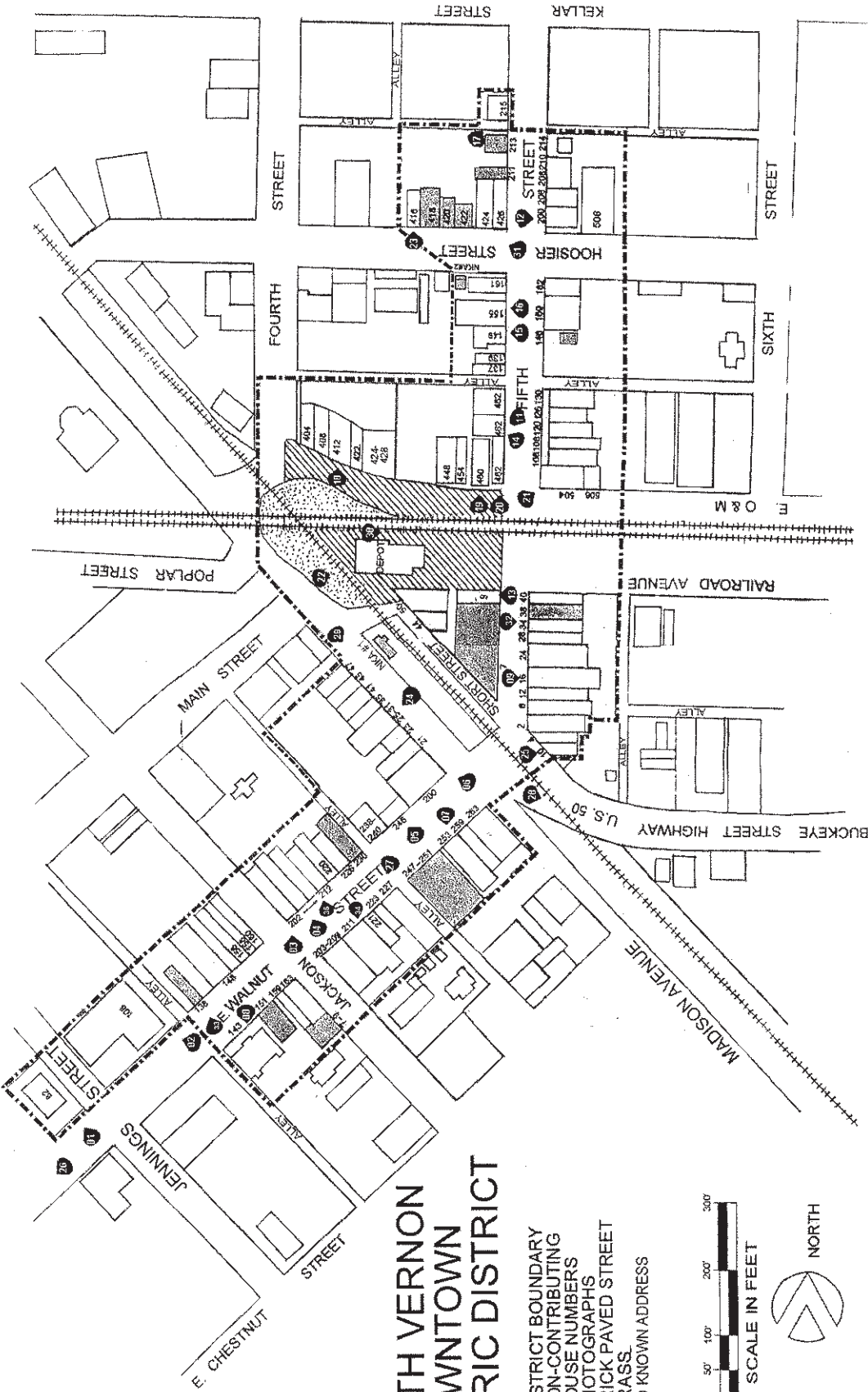
SEYMOUR 15 MI.
 COLUMBUS 21 MI.
 GREENSBURG 29 MI.



Produced by the U. S. Geological Survey
 Control by USGS, NOS/NOAA, and Indiana Flood Control and Water Resources Commission
 Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1956. Field checked 1957
 North American Datum of 1927 (NAD 27). Projection and 10 000-foot ticks: Indiana coordinate system, east zone (transverse Mercator)
 Blue 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 16
 North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83) is shown by dashed corner ticks
 The values of the shift between NAD 27 and NAD 83 for 7.5-minute intersections are given in USGS Bulletin 1875
 There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of the National or State reservations shown on this map
 Red tint indicates area in which only landmark buildings are shown
 Plan: Inspected from 1992 source; no major culture or drainage changes observed. Boundaries and names revised 1994



THIS MAP COMPLES WITH NA
 FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVI
 AND INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURA
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC M.



NORTH VERNON DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

- DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- NON-CONTRIBUTING
- HOUSE NUMBERS
- PHOTOGRAPHS
- ▨ BRICK PAVED STREET
- ▩ GRASS
- NO KNOWN ADDRESS

