United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number Liberty Courthouse Square and adjacent blocks along Union and Market Streets ☐ not for publication

city or town Liberty ☐ vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Union code 161 zip code 47353

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this _X_ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property _X_ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide _X_ local

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Indiana DNR-Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ 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.)

- [X] private
- [X] public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [X] public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

- [ ] building(s)
- [X] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
20	2	buildings
0	0	sites
0	1	structures
2	2	objects
22	5	**Total**

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

NA

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce/Trade: Specialty Store
Commerce/Trade: Department Store
Government: Courthouse (county)
Government: Post Office
Social: Meeting Hall
Recreation and Culture: Music Facility
Recreation and Culture: Monument/Marker

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce/Trade: Specialty Store
Commerce/ Trade: Restaurant
Government: Courthouse (county)
Government: Post Office
Recreation and Culture: Monument/Marker
Vacant/Not in Use: Vacant Lot

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late Victorian: Italianate
Late Victorian: Romanesque
Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Revivals
Neo-Classical Revival
Modern Movement: Art Deco

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Stone, concrete
walls: Brick, stone
roof: Asphalt
other: Cast iron, wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District encompasses the courthouse square and approximately four adjacent blocks in downtown Liberty, the seat of Union County. The district includes twenty-two contributing resources and five non-contributing resources. The centerpiece of the district, the three-story, Richardsonian Romanesque-style, Union County Courthouse, an individually-listed National Register of Historic Places property, is the district's focal point. (See photos 0001 and 0003.) The courthouse occupies a tree-shaded square in the center of downtown, surrounded by commercial buildings one to three stories tall dating from the second half of the nineteenth century through the 1930s on adjacent streets. (See photos 0007 and 0012.)

Narrative Description

The town of Liberty was planned by its founders to be a county seat. It was laid out in the "Shelbyville Plan" with a central courthouse square and streets that intersect at the corners of the square.[1] The streets surrounding the square include Union to the north, Market to the east, Seminary to the south, and Main (State Road 101) the west. The town's commercial area developed primarily along Union and Market streets facing the square, with additional commercial blocks to the east on Union and the north on Market. The business district originally extended an additional block to the west on Union, where it intersected with the railroad. That block is no longer extant.

Located in the center of the square, the three-story Union County Courthouse dominates the district with its imposing height, stone construction, and impressive Richardsonian Romanesque design. (See photos 0001 and 0003.) The courthouse and the surrounding square are shaded by mature hardwood trees. The square serves as the central spot for memorials honoring the past of the town and county. As early as the 1880s, the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) set two cannons on stone bases on the north side of the square to honor the service of the county's Civil War veterans. Later memorials include a log cabin interpreting the county's pioneer past, a millstone, and an historical marker. The square also features a modern, wood gazebo near the northwest corner and storage shed on the south side. (See photo 0004.)

The streets of the district are flanked by sidewalks and lined with one-, two-, and three-story commercial buildings constructed primarily of brick. (See photos 0002, 0006, 0008, 0010, 0011, 0012.) Most of the buildings date from the second half of the nineteenth century, although a few were constructed in the early twentieth century. The oldest building is the Odd Fellows (IOOF) Building, which was built c. 1854, while the most recently constructed building is the Liberty Post Office, constructed in 1937-1938. The majority of the commercial buildings are Italianate in style, with ornate window hoods and cornices, particularly on the upper stories. Some feature original cast-iron details. A few buildings in the district were designed in other architectural modes, most notably the Romanesque Revival. The Union County Courthouse stands as the most prominent example of Romanesque architecture in Liberty, although the J. P. Kennedy/S. W. Creed Building at 15 South Market Street is also noteworthy. (See photos 0001, 0003, and 0006.) A small number of buildings were constructed in other architectural styles, including the Art Deco-style O'Toole Building at 41 West Union Street and the Liberty Post Office, a Neo-Classical Revival structure.

Many of the buildings in the district have sustained some alterations over the years, such as modifications to storefronts or the replacement of windows. With a few exceptions, enough integrity survives to render these buildings contributing to the district. Of the five non-contributing resources in the district, four are located on the courthouse square and include a war memorial added in 1977, and an historical marker (mill stones) from 1980, a gazebo (2001), and a storage shed (2008). (A log cabin moved to the square in 1980 is not included in the resource count for this district, but was identified as a non-contributing resource in the Union County Courthouse National Register Nomination in 1987.) The other non-contributing resource is a commercial building that has been altered to such an extent that it does not retain historic or architectural character. (See photo 0005.)

[1] Union County Historical Society, *History of Union County, Indiana 1821-1988* (Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Company, 1989), 13; Suzanne Stanis, "Courthouse Squares Shape Hoosier Townscapes," *Indiana Preservationist*, Nov. 5, 2006, 10.

Inventory List

C J. A. Bertch & Sons Hardware (IHSSI #161-357-16001), c. 1872, 51 West Union Street, Italianate
(See photo 0002 for a view of 1-51 West Union Street.)

Built c. 1872, this two-story, Italianate-style commercial building is located at the prominent corner of West Union and South Main Street. The brick building, which continues to serve as a hardware store, is topped by a hip roof. The storefront is largely intact with display windows separated by cast-iron pilasters. An awning and sign are modern additions to the building. Round-arched windows with two-over-two, double-hung wooden sashes illuminate the upper front section of the building, topped by arched window hoods marked with a keystone motif. Windows on the Main Street side of the building are four-over-four, double-hung sash topped with a bracketed window hood.

C Fosdick's Building (IHSSI #161-357-16002), c. 1876, 43 West Union Street, Italianate
(See photo 0002 for a view of 1-51 West Union Street.)

Three stories tall, this Italianate-style, brick commercial building was constructed c. 1876. The six-bay building is finished with simple cornice detailing and flat lintels above the windows. The storefront has been altered with a new front door and modern awning.

C O'Toole Building (IHSSI #161-357-16003), c. 1936, 41 West Union Street, Art Deco
(See photo 0002 for a view of 1-51 West Union Street.)

Built c. 1936, this two-story brick commercial building displays a simple Art Deco design. Some windows have been covered on the upper story and the storefront has been altered with an awning and new windows.

C Masonic Hall (IHSSI #161-357-16004), c. 1860, 25-39 West Union Street, Italianate
(See photo 0002 for a view of 1-51 West Union Street.)

This three-part, three-story brick building was constructed c. 1854 and included businesses on the street level and a Masonic hall on the upper floor. One feature ties all three buildings together: the patterned brickwork cornice. Other original features include stone lintels above the upper-floor windows as well as rectangular panels between the upper-story windows and the cornice on the two easternmost sections (including a central panel marking this building as "Masonic Hall"). All three sections have been altered to some extent. The westernmost section has undergone the most changes, with brick veneer, the removal of the storefront, and new front doors. The two easternmost sections also have altered storefronts and new awnings. Windows throughout the building have been replaced.

C Odd Fellows (IOOF) Building (IHSSI #161-357-16005), c. 1854, 23 West Union Street, Italianate
(See photo 0002 for a view of 1-51 West Union Street. This building is also shown in photo 0007.)

Three stories tall, this brick commercial building was built c. 1854 and displays very simple Italianate features including a paneled cornice and flat window lintels. Windows have been replaced and an awning has been added to shelter the storefront.

C Commercial Building (IHSSI #161-357-16006), c. 1870, 17-21 West Union Street, Italianate
(See photo 0005.)

Built c. 1870, this two-story, Italianate-style, brick building features stone lintels over the upper-story windows and cornice modillions. Alterations include the application of a stucco exterior finish over the original bricks and decorative features, the replacement of all windows, and the removal of both storefronts.

C Commercial Building (IHSSI #161-357-16007), c. 1870, 7-9 West Union Street, Italianate
(See photo 0007 for a view of 1-51 West Union Street.)

This two-story, Italianate-style commercial building was constructed c. 1870. It features arched windows with decorative hoods and a bracketed cornice. The storefront has been replaced and an awning has been added.

C Liberty Opera House (IHSSI #161-357-16008), c. 1878, 1 West Union Street, Italianate
(See photo 0007.)

Occupying a prominent location at the intersection of Union and Market, this two-story, brick commercial building was constructed to serve as Liberty's opera house around 1878. It was used for this purpose for several years, but by 1892 was acquired by the local IOOF and used in part as a meeting place for that organization.[2] The building retains impressive Italianate features in its window and cornice trim. Arched and bracketed window hoods adorn the upper story windows on the façade, while simpler flat hoods cap the side elevation. Cornice embellishments include dentils, modillions, finials at the corners, and an off-center arch bracketed by urns that frames the building's name. Many original six-over-six, double-hung sash, wooden windows survive, but the storefront has been altered with a new door, a wood awning and later wood trim. The brick exterior has been covered with stucco.

C Commercial Building (IHSSI #161-357-16009), c. 1875, 1 East Union Street, Italianate
(See photo 0008 for a view of 1-29 East Union Street.)

An excellent example of late nineteenth-century commercial architecture, this two-story, brick building was constructed around 1875. It features a tall, hip roof and elaborate window and cornice trim. Upper-story windows are topped by peaked hoods on the front and side elevations. The cornice is bracketed with rectangular panels below the brackets. The storefront is largely intact, with cast iron pilasters framing the door and windows. Alterations include the enclosure of the front transom lights, the addition of a small awning, and replacement of at least one of the front doors. Small porthole windows on the side elevation provided light to the lower story interior, although these have been enclosed.

C Commercial Building (IHSSI #161-357-16010), c. 1875, 7-11 East Union Street, Italianate
(See photo 0008 for a view of 1-29 East Union Street.)

This three-part, two-story brick commercial building was constructed c. 1875. The building retains a number of original Italianate details including bracketed cornices and decorative window hoods on the second-story windows. The central storefront is intact with cast iron pilasters, although the two flanking storefronts have been altered with enclosed or new windows and awnings.

C Commercial Building (IHSSI #161-357-16011), c. 1875, 21 East Union Street, Italianate
(See photo 0008 for a view of 1-29 East Union Street.)

Built c. 1875, this two-story, brick commercial building displays simple Italianate-style details with its paneled cornice and arched window hoods. The storefront has been modified with an awning.

C Commercial Building (IHSSI #161-357-16012), c. 1880, 23 East Union Street, Italianate
(See photo 0008 for a view of 1-29 East Union Street.)

Two stories tall with a projecting, bracketed cornice, this brick commercial building dates to c. 1880. The building also features flat window hoods, though the storefront has been altered with a modern awning and changes to the fenestration.

C Liberty Post Office (IHSSI #161-357-16013), 1937-1938, 29 East Union Street, Neo-classical Revival
(See photo 0008 for a view of 1-29 East Union Street.)

Constructed in 1937-1938, this one-story, brick, post office exhibits a simple Neo-classical Revival design. The interior features a New Deal-era mural entitled "Autumn Fields" by artist Avery Johnson.[3]

NC Gazebo (IHSSI #161-357-16016), 2001, Courthouse Square
The frame gazebo is a recent addition to the courthouse square and is non-contributing due to age.

[2] Sanborn Map Company, *Liberty, Indiana,* 1887, 1892, IUPUI University Library via ProQuest, Digital Sanborn Maps, 1887-1932.

[3] Nancy Lorance, "New Deal/WPA Art in Indiana," http://www.wpamurals.com/indiana.htm (accessed January 16, 2013). This source notes that this art was funded by the Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts rather than the WPA.

C Cannon (IHSSI #161-357-16017), c. 1880, Courthouse Square.

This iron cannon set in a stone base is one of two that the G.A.R. placed on the Union Street side of the Courthouse Square c. 1880.

Union County Courthouse (IHSSI #161-357-16018), 1890, Courthouse Square, Richardsonian Romanesque
(See photos 0001 and 0003.)

Designed by the architectural firm of G. W. Bunting and Son (which specialized in the design of courthouses and other public buildings), and erected in 1890 by the company of William McKay, contractor, the Union County Courthouse dominates the landscape in downtown Liberty.[4] The edifice stands three stories tall (the first story has the appearance of a raised basement, but is completely above grade) and features such hallmark Richardsonian Romanesque details as rough-faced, cut stone walls, deeply arched window and door openings, ornate carved embellishments, rounded corners that mimic turrets, and transoms (both arched and rectangular) over windows and doors. The main entrance is marked by a four-story, pyramidal-roofed clock tower. The entry is recessed in an arch on the second level, reached by stone steps flanked by solid balustrades. The courthouse remains in use as Union County's primary governmental facility, although some county offices have been moved to other buildings in downtown Liberty. The Union County Courthouse was listed in the National Register on July 21, 1987 and is therefore not included in the register count for this nomination.

NC Memorial (IHSSI #161-357-16019), 1977, Courthouse Square
(See photo 0004.)

This limestone war memorial was added to the Courthouse Square in 1977. It is non-contributing due to age.

C Cannon (IHSSI #161-357-16020), c. 1880, Courthouse Square
(See photo 0004.)

This iron cannon set in a stone base is one of two that were placed on the Union Street side of the Courthouse Square c. 1880.

NC Shed (IHSSI #161-357-16021), 2008, Courthouse Square
The modern shed building is non-contributing due to age.

John Templeton Log House (IHSSI #161-357-16022), 1805/1939/1980, Courthouse Square

Believed to be the oldest house in Union County, this single-pen log house features half-dovetail notching. The building is non-contributing because it was moved to this site on the Courthouse Square in 1980. It was counted as non-contributing in the Union County Courthouse National Register nomination form and is therefore no included in the count of resources for this nomination.

NC Historical Marker (IHSSI #161-357-16023), 1980, Courthouse Square

This millstone monument is non-contributing due to age.

C Commercial Building (IHSSI #161-357-16024), c. 1875, 2-4 East Union Street, Italianate
(See photo 0011 for a view of 2-10 East Union Street.)

Built c. 1875, this story-story, brick, Italianate-style commercial building features tall second-story windows with decorative hoods and a bracketed cornice. The storefront has been removed.

[4] Jacob Piatt Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis: the History, the Industries, the Institutions, and the People of a City of Homes*, vol. 2 (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1910), 1217; Mark Miles, "Union County Courthouse," National Register of Historical Places Registration Form, 1987.

C Collyer Barber Shop (IHSSI #161-357-16025), 1924, 8 East Union Street, 20th-century commercial, iron front
(See photo 0011 for a view of 2-10 East Union Street.)
Tucked between two larger buildings, this one-story, commercial building dates to the early twentieth century. The building features an iron front and simple brick cornice corbelling. The storefront has been altered with new windows.

C Commercial Building (IHSSI #161-357-16026), c. 1880, 10 East Union Street, Italianate
(See photo 0010.)

Built c. 1880, this two-story, tan brick building exhibits features common to many simple, Italianate-style commercial buildings in small towns with its cornice brackets and decorative trim and flat window lintels. The store front has been completely remodeled and topped with an awning.

C Commercial Building (IHSSI#161-357-16035, c. 1915, 8 North Market Street, 20th-century commercial
Parapet front
(See photo 0010.)

Built c. 1915, this simple, one-story, brick commercial building features a parapet roof that is stepped on the sides and decorative brick corbelling along the cornice. Single pane windows flank double entry doors. A metal awning shelters the windows and doors.

C Bias Implement Store (IHSSI#161-357-16036), c. 1915, 10-12 North Market Street, 20th-century commercial, parapet front
(See photo 0010.)

Almost identical to its attached neighbor at 8 Market Street, this c. 1915, one-story, brick commercial building displays a parapet roof and decorative brick cornice corbelling.

C J. P. Kennedy/S. W. Creed Building (IHSSI #161-357-16039), c. 1895, 15 South Market Street, Romanesque Revival
(See photos 0004 and 0006 for views of 1-15 South Market Street.)

This building bears the name of two owners and has the appearance of two separate buildings, but it was constructed at one time between 1892 and 1899.[5] Both sections are dark red brick with contrasting limestone beltcourses and flat window lintels, arched windows, transoms, and irregular rooflines created by parapets and towers, all common Romanesque Revival details. The J. P. Kennedy section of the building, which housed on its lower level a harness and hardware store and a post office in 1899, occupies the south end of the building at the corner of Market Street and an alley. This section stands two-and-one-half-stories tall and is topped by a steeply-pitched hip roof. The storefront has been altered with replacement windows and doors. The S. W. Creed section to the north, which served as the home of a clothing and notions business in 1899, is two stories tall and wider than the Kennedy section. It retains a more intact storefront and features cast iron pilasters. Second-story transom windows have been filled in.[6]

NC Commercial Building (IHSSI #161-357-16040), c. 1900, 3 South Market Street, Parapet-front
(See photos 0004 and 0006 for views of 1-15 South Market Street.)

This small, one-story, brick commercial building was built around 1900. It has been completely remodeled with new windows and doors and is non-contributing due to alterations.

[5] The *Interim Report* gives this building a date of c. 1885, but Sanborn maps show that it was not constructed until after 1892.
[6] Sanborn Map Company, *Liberty, Indiana*, 1892, 1899.

C J.C. Rose & Son Groceries (IHSSI #161-357-16041), c. 1870, 1 South Market Street, Italianate
(See photos 0004 and 0006 for views of 1-15 South Market Street.)

Built c. 1870, this two-story, brick commercial building is marked by impressive, arched, second-story windows with decorative hoods and a bracketed cornice—both typical features of nineteenth-century Italianate-style commercial buildings. The storefront has been removed.

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.)

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

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture
Politics/Government
Commerce

Period of Significance
c. 1854-1938

Significant Dates
c. 1875
1890

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
G. W. Bunting and Son, architects
William McKay, contractor

Period of Significance (justification)
The Period of Significance begins with 1854, the approximate year of construction of the oldest building in the district and ends in 1938, the year the last historic building in the downtown area, the Liberty Post Office, was completed and dedicated.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District encompasses approximately four blocks in downtown Liberty, Indiana, including the courthouse square and two adjacent blocks along Union Street and Market Street (State Road 101). The district is significant on the local level and eligible under Criterion A in the areas of Commerce and Politics/Government for its representation of Liberty's development as Union County's commercial and governmental hub, and under Criterion C for its collection of small town commercial and governmental architecture. The period of significance spans from c. 1854, the approximate date of construction of the oldest building in the district, to 1938, the year the youngest building in the district, the Liberty Post Office, was completed and dedicated. The years 1875 and 1890 are significant in Liberty's history. Around 1875, a fire destroyed a large section of downtown Liberty and most of the town's commercial buildings were constructed after that date. The current Union County Courthouse was constructed in 1890.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Architecture Context

The Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District boasts a significant collection of commercial and government buildings representing a variety of architectural styles dating from c. 1854 to 1938. While the three-story Union County Courthouse dominates the Liberty landscape, the surrounding brick commercial buildings stand one to three stories tall in rows along Union Street and Market Street (State Road 101). Architectural styles found in Liberty's business district are typical of those found in county seats and other small towns across Indiana from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and include Italianate, Romanesque Revival, Art Deco, and Neo-Classical Revival. However, Italianate and Romanesque Revival are the prevalent styles found in this district of mostly late nineteenth-century buildings.

The Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana notes that Italianate commercial architecture was "by far the most dominant style for commercial buildings of Indiana throughout the 19th century."[7] This holds true for Liberty as well. Most of the commercial buildings around the square date from the late nineteenth century, are of brick construction, and are marked by such typical details as arched windows topped by segmental arches and cornice details such as brackets or ornate brick work. Noteworthy examples of this style on the square in Liberty include the J.A. Bertch & Sons Hardware Building at 51 West Union Street, the former Liberty Opera House at 1 West Union Street, and the building at 1 East Union Street, all of which were built in the 1870s and feature elaborate cornices and intricate window hood designs. The building at 1 East Union Street also retains a cast iron façade.

Romanesque architecture was also favored in Liberty, most notably in the Union County Courthouse. (See photos 0001 and 0003.) The courthouse is an outstanding example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture (named for its association with Chicago architect H. H. Richardson).[8] The style typically features a large-scale use of stone and prominent arched openings, details which are indeed found in the three-story courthouse, along with tall towers and chimneys punctuating the roof. Designed by the architectural firm of G. W. Bunting and Son and constructed in 1890, the courthouse is listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places.[9] Bunting was known for his designs of courthouses in Indiana and elsewhere, as well as for buildings he designed on Indiana University's Bloomington campus.[10] A more modest version of commercial Romanesque Revival architecture is found in the J. P. Kennedy/S. W. Creed Building at 15 S. Market Street. (See photo 0006.) Built circa 1895, this building has the appearance of two buildings, although it was apparently built at one time.[11] Both sections are dark red brick with contrasting limestone beltcourses and flat window lintels, arched windows, and irregular rooflines created by parapets and towers, all common Romanesque Revival details.

[7] Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, *Victorian Commercial Architecture in Indiana* (Indianapolis: Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, 1978), 4, 13.

[8] John J. G. Blumenson, *Identifying American Architecture* (Nashville, TN: American Association of State and Local History, Second Edition, 1981), 46-47.

[9] Miles, "Union County Courthouse"; *History of Union County,* 25-26.

[10] Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis,* 1217.

[11] *Union County Interim Report* (Indianapolis: Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, 2010), 65; Sanborn Map Company, *Liberty Indiana,* 1899. While the *Interim Report* gives this building a date of c. 1885, it does not show up on Sanborn maps earlier than 1899.

Politics/Government Context

One of the most important duties of the state's General Assembly in the early years of Indiana's statehood was to establish new counties in the fledgling state as growing population dictated.[12] Union County in east central Indiana was established by the Indiana General Assembly in 1821 out of Wayne, Fayette, and Franklin counties.[13]

Brownsville, one of two towns located in the new county at its establishment, was initially chosen as the county seat.[14] However, within a year, after much politicking and lobbying, the county commissioners moved the county seat in 1823 to the newly founded town of Liberty, which occupied a more central location.[15] Liberty was essentially designed as a county seat; it was laid out in the "Shelbyville Plan" with a central courthouse square and streets that intersect at the corners of the square.[16] The first county buildings, including two jails and the first courthouse, were constructed on the square in its early years.[17] A larger, more stylish courthouse was constructed near the center of the square in 1856 and served as such until 1890, when the current three-story, stone edifice, designed by the architectural firm of G. W. Bunting and Son was constructed.[18]

Liberty has served as the seat of Union County government for nearly two centuries. As is fitting for a town founded to be the center of county government, the impressive stone courthouse is located at the core of the Liberty community in the business district and is, without a doubt, the architectural jewel of the town. As county government has grown in recent years, some government functions, such as the health department, sheriff's department, and plan commission, have moved to other buildings in downtown Liberty. However, the Union County Courthouse on the square continues to house many of the county's vital government services and functions. It remains the location where the county commissioners and county council hold their public meetings and serves as the home of the county circuit court and office of the county judge, as well as the offices of the county assessor, treasurer, auditor, surveyor, and recorder.[19]

Commerce Context

Since its establishment as the county seat of Union County in 1823, Liberty developed into the county's largest town, as well as its commercial hub. This development was enhanced by the construction of roads and a railroad to and through Liberty in the mid-nineteenth century, providing access to the county's governmental services, as well as a means to move goods to and from the town and county.

Throughout their history, the buildings surrounding the courthouse in the Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District housed many of the county's stores and businesses, professional offices, facilities for community and fraternal organizations, and other amenities, such as hotels.[20] In 1849, Liberty supported a market house and nearly thirty shops for drygoods, drugs, and various other businesses.[21] Less than a decade later, the town offered a full range of businesses that included "one hotel, four general stores, one baker and confectioner, three blacksmith shops, four carpenters, three boot and shoe-makers, two brick-makers, one cabinet-maker, four carriage and wagon-makers, two dealers in clothing, one furniture dealer, one printing office, one steam flouring mill, two harness-makers, two groceries, one hardware establishment, one hat and cap store, two hide and leather dealers, two resident farmers, two attorneys, two Justices of the Peace, six physicians, one steam saw mill, two stove and tin shops, one jeweler, four painters, two tan yards, two tailors, three clergymen, four churches, and one school of 100 pupils."[22] The R. L. Polk and Company's *Indiana State Gazetteer and Business Directory* of 1882-1883 describes Liberty as a "lively place of business" and lists a complete

[12] James Madison, *The Indiana Way* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986), 127.
[13] *Atlas of Union County*, (Chicago: J. H. Beers, & Co., 1884), 8.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Union County Historical Society, *History of Union County*, 13; Stanis, "Courthouse Squares Shape Hoosier Townscapes," 10.
[17] *Atlas of Union County,* 8; Union County Historical Society, *History of Union County*, 13-14.
[18] Miles, "Union County Courthouse," section 8, page 1.
[19] Union County, Indiana Government, www.unioncountyin.gov (accessed September 22, 2011).
[20] Sanborn Map Company, *Liberty, Indiana*, 1887, 1892, 1899, 1909, 1919, 1932.
[21] E. Chamberlain, "Union County," *Indiana Gazetteer or Topographical Dictionary of the State of Indiana* (Indianapolis: E. Chamberlain, Publisher, 1849), 290.
[22] *Atlas of Union County,* 29.

offering of goods and services.[23] Sanborn maps from 1887-1932 show the town continued to support a full spectrum of businesses in its commercial district over a span of nearly five decades, including several hotels and inns near the railroad, restaurants and pool halls to serve residents and travelers alike, banks, livery stables, and general and specialty shops.[24] As time and technology advanced, the community also offered such amenities as a store for "moving pictures."[25]

By 1938, the end of the period of significance, Liberty was one of only two incorporated towns in the county. The other town, College Corner, had only 437 residents to Liberty's 1,241. The *Indiana Review* (1938) describes Liberty as "chiefly important as the county's agricultural center, but the stone quarries, foundry work and manufacture of pistons, paint and farm implements are also important."[26]

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

The small town of Liberty, Indiana, is famed for being the home town of Union Major-General Ambrose E. Burnside, Joaquin Miller, the "Poet of the Sierras," and Mary Alice Smith, the niece of writer James Whitcomb Riley, the "Hoosier Poet," and the inspiration for his poem "*Little Orphant Annie.*"[27] However, Liberty is best known locally as being the seat of government of Union County, one of Indiana's smallest counties, and as a market center for the farm families who live in the surrounding county.

Just five years after Indiana gained statehood, Union County was formed in 1821 from the "union" of parts of larger Wayne, Fayette, and Franklin counties and named such, according to the *Indiana Gazetteer*, "to harmonize the difficulties that existed in relation to the county seats in Wayne and Fayette."[28] Early Union County had been settled primarily by families from the Carolinas. Others arrived from Kentucky, Virginia, and Maryland.[29] While Brownsville initially claimed title to the seat of this small county, citizens soon petitioned to have a more centrally located local government. The town of Liberty was founded in 1822 in Center Township, near the geographical heart of the county and was named the county seat the following year.[30]

Liberty was platted on forty acres acquired by Edgehill Burnside, John Hughes, and Josia Bradway for $400 from Thomas Cook.[31] The town originally consisted of sixty-four lots with a courthouse square, laid out in the "Shelbyville Plan," a design for county seats in which streets intersect at the corners of the square.[32] The first public buildings were a courthouse that stood on the northwest corner of the square and two jails on the south side.[33] One local historian notes that in Liberty's earliest years, a row of wooden buildings (likely commercial buildings) was built across from the courthouse, with about fifty residences located nearby.[34] The village was incorporated in 1836 and at that time was the home to fifty-three "legal" residents.[35]

Religion and education were important to early residents of Liberty. The two earliest congregations in the town were the Methodists and the Presbyterians, both of whom established congregations in Liberty prior to 1840.[36] The Union County Seminary was established in the 1820s and relocated in 1841 to a new building constructed that year that still stands on

[23] R. L. Polk and Company, *Indiana Gazetteer and Business Directory*, 1882-1883, http://www.countyhistory.com/union/start.html (accessed September 5, 2011).
[24] Sanborn Map Company, *Liberty, Indiana*, 1887, 1892, 1899, 1909, 1919, 1932.
[25] Sanborn Map Company, *Liberty, Indiana*, 1932.
[26] "1938 Union County Retrospect," based on the *Indiana Review* published by the Indiana State Legislature (Indiana County History Preservation Society, 2006), http://www.countyhistory.com (accessed September 5, 2011).
[27] Union County Historical Society, *History of Union County, Indiana 1821-1988*, 16-17; *Union County Interim Report,* 12.
[28] *Atlas of Union County, Indiana* (Chicago: J. H. Beers, & Co., 1884), 8; Chamberlain, "Union County," 403-404.
[29] *Atlas of Union County*, 6, 8; *Union County Interim Report*, 12-13.
[30] *Atlas of Union County*, 8; Union County Historical Society, *History of Union County*, 16.
[31] *Atlas of Union County*, 8; Union County Historical Society, *History of Union County*, 13.
[32] *Atlas of Union County,* 22; Union County Historical Society, *History of Union County*, 13; *Union County Interim Report*, 63; Stanis, "Courthouse Squares Shape Hoosier Townscapes," 10.
[33] *Atlas of Union County, 8;* Union County Historical Society, *History of Union County*, 13-14.
[34] Union County Historical Society, *History of Union County*, 16.
[35] *Atlas of Union County,* 29.
[36] *Atlas of Union County*, 29-30.

Seminary Street in Liberty. Local children used this building as a school, and it served as such until at least 1851, when the Indiana constitution was changed to allow for a system of public schools.[37] It has been in use as a private residence for many years.[38]

Liberty grew steadily during the 1840s and 1850s. In 1848, the Liberty-College Corner Turnpike was built through Liberty as part of a larger road that connected Fort Wayne to the Oxford Road. This road entered Liberty from the southeast and exited to the northwest, becoming part of the Liberty-Brownsville Turnpike.[39] By 1849, 370 residents populated the town and, in addition to the courthouse, other public buildings, and the county seminary, Liberty boasted 110 houses, a market house, two churches, and nearly thirty shops for drygoods, drugs and various other businesses.[40] Growth was such that the county demolished the old courthouse in 1854 and constructed a new one on the square by 1856.[41] By 1858, the town offered a full range of businesses, community institutions, and amenities that included "one hotel, four general stores, one baker and confectioner, three blacksmith shops, four carpenters, three boot and shoe-makers, two brick-makers, one cabinet-maker, four carriage and wagon-makers, two dealers in clothing, one furniture dealer, one printing office, one steam flouring mill, two harness-makers, two groceries, one hardware establishment, one hat and cap store, two hide and leather dealers, two resident farmers, two attorneys, two Justices of the Peace, six physicians, one steam saw mill, two stove and tin shops, one jeweler, four painters, two tan yards, two tailors, three clergymen, four churches, and one school of 100 pupils."[42] The *Atlas of Union County, Indiana* (1884) reported census figures for the town, noting that 420 residents lived in Liberty in 1850 and 572 people called the town home on the eve of the Civil War.[43]

Despite disruptions caused by the Civil War, the promise for growth in Liberty continued in the 1860s, with the long planned completion of the Indianapolis Division of the Cincinnati, Hamilton, and Dayton Railroad (soon after renamed the Cincinnati, Indianapolis and Western Railroad, and more recently known as the Baltimore and Ohio line). The railroad, which was completed to Liberty in 1860 and to Indianapolis in 1868, runs north-south through the downtown one block west of the courthouse square. This line connected Liberty with the cities of Indianapolis and Cincinnati and points beyond in all directions.[44]

With its rail connections in place and the Civil War ended, Liberty thrived in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. Even as the town recovered and rebuilt from a devastating fire that destroyed or damaged many downtown buildings in the mid-1870s, the population continued to grow steadily.[45] Seven hundred citizens called Liberty home in 1870 and 1096 residents were counted in the 1880 Census.[46] New and expanding manufacturing concerns, such as the Rude Brothers Manufacturing Company, which made agricultural implements, may have spurred this growth.[47] The R. L. Polk and Company's *Indiana State Gazetteer and Business Directory* of 1882-1883 describes Liberty as a "prosperous incorporated town of 1,500 inhabitants" and a "lively place of business" that had many of the community amenities mentioned earlier, plus five churches, two banks, a free public library, and an opera house, in addition to many business

[37] *Union County Interim Report*, 66.
[38] *Atlas of Union County*, 29.
[39] *Atlas of Union County*, map, 23; *Union County Interim Report*, 13.
[40] E. Chamberlain, *Indiana Gazetteer*, 290.
[41] Union County Historical Society, *History of Union County*, 13.
[42] *Atlas of Union County*, 29.
[43] Ibid., 30.
[44] Ibid., 12.
[45] *Union County Interim Report*, 63.
[46] *Atlas of Union County*, 29-30.
[46] *Union County Interim Report*, 66.
[46] *Atlas of Union County*, 29.
[46] *Atlas of Union County*, map, 23; *Union County Interim Report*, 13.
[46] E. Chamberlain, *Indiana Gazetteer*, 290.
[46] Union County Historical Society, *History of Union County*, 13.
[46] *Atlas of Union County*, 29.
[46] Ibid., 30.
[46] Ibid., 12.
[46] Ibid., 30.
[47] Ibid., 30; Union County Historical Society, *History of Union County*, 23.

and manufacturing concerns.[48] The *Atlas of Union County, Indiana* (1884) verifies this description. The map of Liberty in the *Atlas* shows the courthouse square surrounded by key downtown landmarks, such as the Union County Courthouse, the Opera House at the corner of Union and Market streets, the school at the east end of Union Street, and churches along Market and Seminary streets.[49] The *Atlas* describes the downtown commercial buildings as "brick" and presenting a "creditable appearance."[50] The Sanborn Company map dated three years later (1887) shows much the same thing. Businesses were concentrated in buildings along three blocks of Union Street: between the railroad depot and Main Street on both sides of the street (this block is no longer extant), on the north side of the street directly across from the old courthouse, and in the block directly east of the square on both the north and south sides of the street. A Masonic Lodge occupied the upper floors of several of these buildings on the block facing the north side of the courthouse. A few businesses were located among dwellings on the east side of Market Street. By 1892, a new courthouse had been built at the heart of the square, and the Opera House had been moved to a new location on Main Street. The former Opera House at the corner of Union and Market then served as home to the Odd Fellows Lodge.[51]

Both the 1884 *Atlas* and the 1887 and 1892 Sanborn maps show substantial residential lots on streets east of Fairground Street, particularly along Union and Seminary streets.[52] These were populated with many of the town's most prosperous residents with "dwelling houses, principally frame, well built, and many of them would do credit to much larger places."[53] Still, the block of Union Street just east of the commercial district (east of Fairground Street) was mixed in use. The 1892 Sanborn map shows the Presbyterian Church and the county's jail in this block, surrounded by houses. The Methodist Church was located on a prominent corner facing the courthouse at Seminary and Market streets. Other churches were scattered on streets near the town's core. The town's elementary school occupied a large lot in Union Street's residential section—a location it occupied until after World War II.[54] Neighborhoods of smaller houses were located to the west, north, and southeast of the square.[55]

In keeping with the overall prosperity of the town in the late nineteenth century, the Union County Courthouse of the mid-1850s was replaced with the current two-story, stone building in 1890. Designed by the Indianapolis architectural firm of G. W. Bunting and Son in the Richardsonian Romanesque style, the building was constructed by the contracting firm of William McKay. The building, which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1987, continues to serve as the courthouse for Union County.[56]

Liberty remained remarkably stable during the first three decades of the twentieth century. While some of the businesses that occupied the buildings changed, the buildings themselves remained in place. The most visible change to the built environment in these decades was growth in the neighborhoods surrounding downtown as new houses were built.[57] The town's population remained relatively steady through the first four decades of the twentieth century, as well as during two world wars and the Great Depression that separated them. In 1900, 1,449 residents called the town home, a number that dropped slightly in the following two decades, but rose again to 1,496 by 1940.[58] The *Indiana Review* (1938) describes Liberty as "chiefly important as the county's agricultural center, but the stone quarries, foundry work and manufacture of pistons, paint and farm implements are also important . . . Liberty is a progressive, well-built town, with excellent schools and churches."[59] Two important community buildings were added in Liberty in the first half of the twentieth century. A

[48] R. L. Polk and Company, *Indiana Gazetteer and Business Directory.*
[49] *Atlas of Union County,* 23.
[50] Ibid., 30.
[51] Sanborn Map Company, *Liberty Indiana,* 1887 and 1892, IUPUI University Library via ProQuest, Digital Sanborn Maps, 1887-1932.
[52] *Atlas of Union County,* 23; Sanborn Map Company, *Liberty Indiana,* 1887 and 1892.
[53] *Atlas of Union County,* 29.
[54] Union County Historical Society, *History of Union County,* 148.
[55] *Atlas of Union County,* 23.
[56] Miles, "Union County Courthouse"; Union County Historical Society, *History of Union County,* 25-26.
[57] Sanborn Map Company, *Liberty Indiana,* 1899, 1909, 1919, and 1932.
[58] Stats Indiana, Historic Census Data for Liberty, Indiana, Population Figures, 1900-2000, www.stats.indiana.edu (accessed September 7, 2011).
[59] "1938 Union County Retrospect."

Carnegie Library was constructed at the corner of Seminary and Market streets in 1915.[60] The town's current post office was built on Union Street in 1937-1938.[61] Both are still in use.

After World War II, Liberty grew modestly, as soldiers returned home and started families. By 1950, the population of Liberty had grown to 1,730 residents.[62] To keep up with this growth, the town completed a new sewerage system in 1951 and updated its water system in 1962.[63]

Two large-scale public works projects changed the face of Union and adjacent counties in the mid-twentieth century. Brookville Lake was built as part of the federal Flood Control Act of 1938 to help control flooding in the Whitewater River Valley and to reduce flooding of the Ohio River. An earthen dam across the East Fork of the Whitewater River created a 5,260-acre lake.[64] Whitewater Memorial State Park was established in 1949 as Indiana's sixteenth state park to honor the men and women who served during World War II.[65] The recreational and cultural resources of the lake and park are managed together as the Brookville Lake—Whitewater Memorial State Park Complex.[66] A sign on the courthouse square touts Union County as the "Gateway to Brookville Lake and Whitewater Memorial State Park Complex." Liberty continued its slow, but steady pace of growth in the late twentieth, with a high of 2,061 citizens in 2000, although this number fell to 1,841 residents in 2009.[67]

[60] *Union County Interim Report*, 63-64.

[61] The cornerstone for this building is inscribed with the date "1937," although the Union County Historical Society's *History of Union County*, 22, notes that the building was dedicated in 1938.

[62] Stats Indiana, Historic Census Data for Liberty, Indiana, Population Figures, 1900-2000.

[63] Union County Historical Society, *History of Union County*, 24-25.

[64] U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, "Brookville Lake," http://www.lrl.usace.army.mil/bvl/ (accessed September 15, 2011).

[65] Indiana Department of Natural Resources, "Whitewater Memorial," http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/2962.htm (accessed September 15, 2011).

[66] Indiana Department of Natural Resources, "Brookville Lake," http://www.in.gov/dnr/parklake/2961.htm (accessed September 15, 2011).

[67] Stats Indiana, Historic Census Data for Liberty, Indiana, Population Figures, 1900-2000 and Union County, Indiana In Depth Profile, www.stats.indiana.edu (accessed September 7, 2011).

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
____previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark

Primary location of additional data:

__X__State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University

Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District — Union County, Indiana
Name of Property — County and State

___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
___ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

___ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): 161-357-16001 to 161-357-16042

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 4.73 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	16	677647	4389355	3			
2				4			

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)
The boundary for the Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District is marked by the dashed line shown on the accompanying map. The boundary follows the parcel lines of properties included in the district.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)
The boundary of the Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District is drawn to include all surviving historic resources around the courthouse square in the commercial area and to exclude properties in adjacent residential areas and those on the edge of the district that do not retain architectural integrity or fit into the period of significance.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kelly Lally Molloy
organization Weintraut & Associates Date Dec 14, 2011; Jan 18, 2013 (revised)
street & number 4649 Northwestern Drive telephone 317-733-9770
city or town Zionsville state IN zip code 46077
e-mail linda@weintrautinc.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Liberty Courthouse Square Historic District

City or Vicinity: Liberty, Indiana

County: Union State: Indiana

Photographer: Kelly Lally Molloy

Date Photographed: November 18, 2011

The above information is the same for all of the photographs listed below.

Description of Photograph(s) and number(s):

Photo # 1 of 12: (IN_UnionCounty_LibertyCourthouseSquareHistoricDistrict_0001)
Union County Courthouse, northwest elevation, camera facing southeast

Photo # 2 of 12: (IN_UnionCounty_LibertyCourthouseSquareHistoricDistrict_0002)
Commercial Buildings, 1-51 West Union Street, camera facing northeast

Photo # 3 of 12: (IN_UnionCounty_LibertyCourthouseSquareHistoricDistrict_0003)
Union County Courthouse, main entrance, north elevation, camera facing south

Photo # 4 of 12: (IN_UnionCounty_LibertyCourthouseSquareHistoricDistrict_0004)
Courthouse Square Memorials and 1-15 South Market Street, camera facing east

Photo # 5 of 12: (IN_UnionCounty_LibertyCourthouseSquareHistoricDistrict_0005)
Commercial Building, 17-21 West Union Street, south elevation, camera facing north

Photo # 6 of 12: (IN_UnionCounty_LibertyCourthouseSquareHistoricDistrict_0006)
Commercial Buildings, 1-15 South Market Street, camera facing northeast

Photo # 7 of 12: (IN_UnionCounty_LibertyCourthouseSquareHistoricDistrict_0007)
Union County Courthouse, east elevation and view of commercial buildings on West Union Street, camera facing northwest

Photo # 8 of 12: (IN_UnionCounty_LibertyCourthouseSquareHistoricDistrict_0008)
Commercial Buildings, 1-29 East Union Street, camera facing northeast

Photo # 9 of 12: (IN_UnionCounty_LibertyCourthouseSquareHistoricDistrict_0009)
Commercial Building, 1-3 North Market Street, west and south elevations, camera facing northeast

Photo # 10 of 12: (IN_UnionCounty_LibertyCourthouseSquareHistoricDistrict_0010)
Commercial Buildings, 8-12 North Market Street, camera facing northwest

Photo # 11 of 12: (IN_UnionCounty_LibertyCourthouseSquareHistoricDistrict_0011)
Commercial Buildings, 2-10 East Union Street, camera facing southwest

Photo # 12 of 12: (IN_UnionCounty_LibertyCourthouseSquareHistoricDistrict_0012)
Commercial Buildings, East Union Street, camera facing west from Fairground Street

Property Owner:

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

name Jeff Mathews, Area Plan Commission Union County

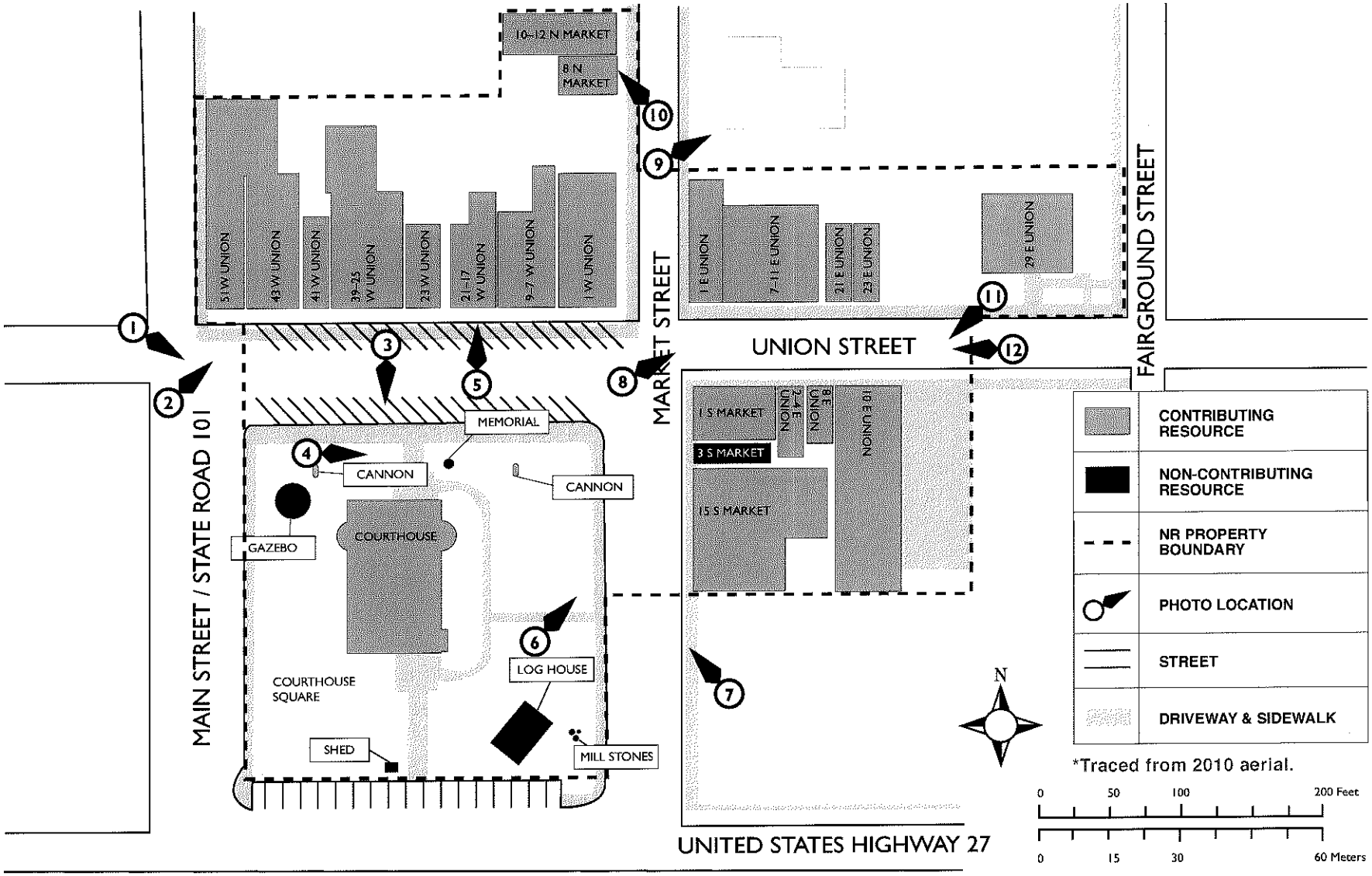
street & number 6 West South Street telephone 765-458-5044

city or town Liberty state Indiana zip code 47353-1366

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.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

LIBERTY COURTHOUSE SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT

TOWN OF LIBERTY, UNION COUNTY, INDIANA



Liberty Courthouse Square H.D., Union Co., IN #0002

Liberty Courthouse Square H.D., Union Co., IN #0006

Liberty Courthouse Square H.D., Union Co., IN #0007

Liberty Courthouse Square H.D., Union Co., IN #0008

Liberty Courthouse Square H.D., Union Co., IN #0010