

HISTORIC EVANSVILLE

A Self-guided Tour of Downtown Evansville, Indiana



This guide has been published by the City of Evansville, Department of Metropolitan Development, R. Michael Robling, Executive Director. Preservation Alliance of Evansville was responsible for the first edition of this guide—printed in 1980 and 1981. The Department of Metropolitan Development then sponsored the 1986, 1988, and 1991 printings of the second edition.

Third Edition – March 1998

Funding for this publication was made available from Community Development Block Grant funds from the City of Evansville.

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We thank Sybil Foster, Anne Gryczon, Jane Reel, R. Michael Robling, and Mary Wildeman for their attentive review of this edition of our booklet.

IN MEMORIAM

A pillar of historic preservation in Evansville, Joan C. Marchand (c. 1934) was integrally involved in the development and production of Historic Evansville from its initial publication in 1980 to this third edition, printed a year after her death. Historic Evansville, Historic West Franklin Street, A Stroll Through the Bayard Park Neighborhood, and a forthcoming booklet she authored on the Culver Historic District will continue as testaments to “Miss Joan’s” commitment to educating current and future generations about Evansville’s historic architecture.



Welcome to Evansville!

It is with pleasure that I welcome you to historic Evansville, Indiana. This guidebook will provide information on some prime examples of historic architecture in Downtown Evansville.

Our Downtown is an exciting place that highlights our heritage. The community just finished renovating our historic riverfront "Pagoda," a structure that had suffered greatly from neglect. Now a place of pride, the "Pagoda" is our tourist and information center. Restoration of the Victory Theater and Sonntag Hotel at the north end of the Main Street walkway is nearly complete. Here the Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra will perform in the opulent splendor of this remnant of the "Roaring Twenties." I see that the excitement of these restorations and the Casino Aztar development on the river is contagious. Shops, restaurants, and night spots are opening in the Downtown that highlight the architecture and heritage. To keep the Downtown a vital place, we have plans to rejuvenate and expand the Riverfront Esplanade.

We invite both our citizens and visitors to utilize this pamphlet as a guide to explore Evansville's irreplaceable historic resources in the downtown area.

Frank F. McDonald II



**Frank F. McDonald II,
Mayor**

Introduction

Center city and neighborhood revitalization is the key to the future of our older cities and towns. What is happening today in Evansville is not unique. Reinvestment in once-blighted neighborhoods and recycling historic commercial buildings is a world-wide phenomenon. This walking/driving tour guide is an introduction to some of the more interesting examples of historic preservation in downtown Evansville.

Trolley Rides

The Metropolitan Evansville Transit System (METS) operates two reproduction Trolleys in the Downtown area. The Trolleys travel down the historic section of the Main Street Walkway (otherwise closed to vehicular traffic) and a section of S.E. First Street. By taking a ride on the Trolleys you can view many of the 63 historic sites in this guidebook. You can park your car and catch the Trolleys in the parking lot behind the Civic Center Complex or at designated Trolley Stops on the Main Street Walkway.

History

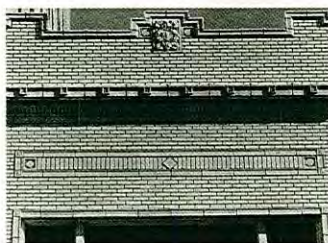
Evansville is a river city. Its plan and architecture reflect the role played by commerce and industry brought first by the Ohio River and later cemented by Midwestern railroads. A small, languid village when incorporated in 1819, Evansville grew slowly, relying on the completion of rail connections in 1860 for its sustained growth. The original town, laid out on a grid angled to meet the widely bending river, contained the seat of county government, a state bank, residences, and several large merchant houses by mid-century. An independent town—Lamasco—was annexed in 1857. By the turn of the century, Evansville was the state's principal commercial city and second in population.

Architecture—like history itself—was not exclusively a record of wealth and power, but rather the cumulative expression of all lifestyles. Historic buildings and districts left today comprise the best evidence of our past, the influence of other places in taste and fashion, the geographic pattern of settlement—all can be traced by the careful examination of our physical past.

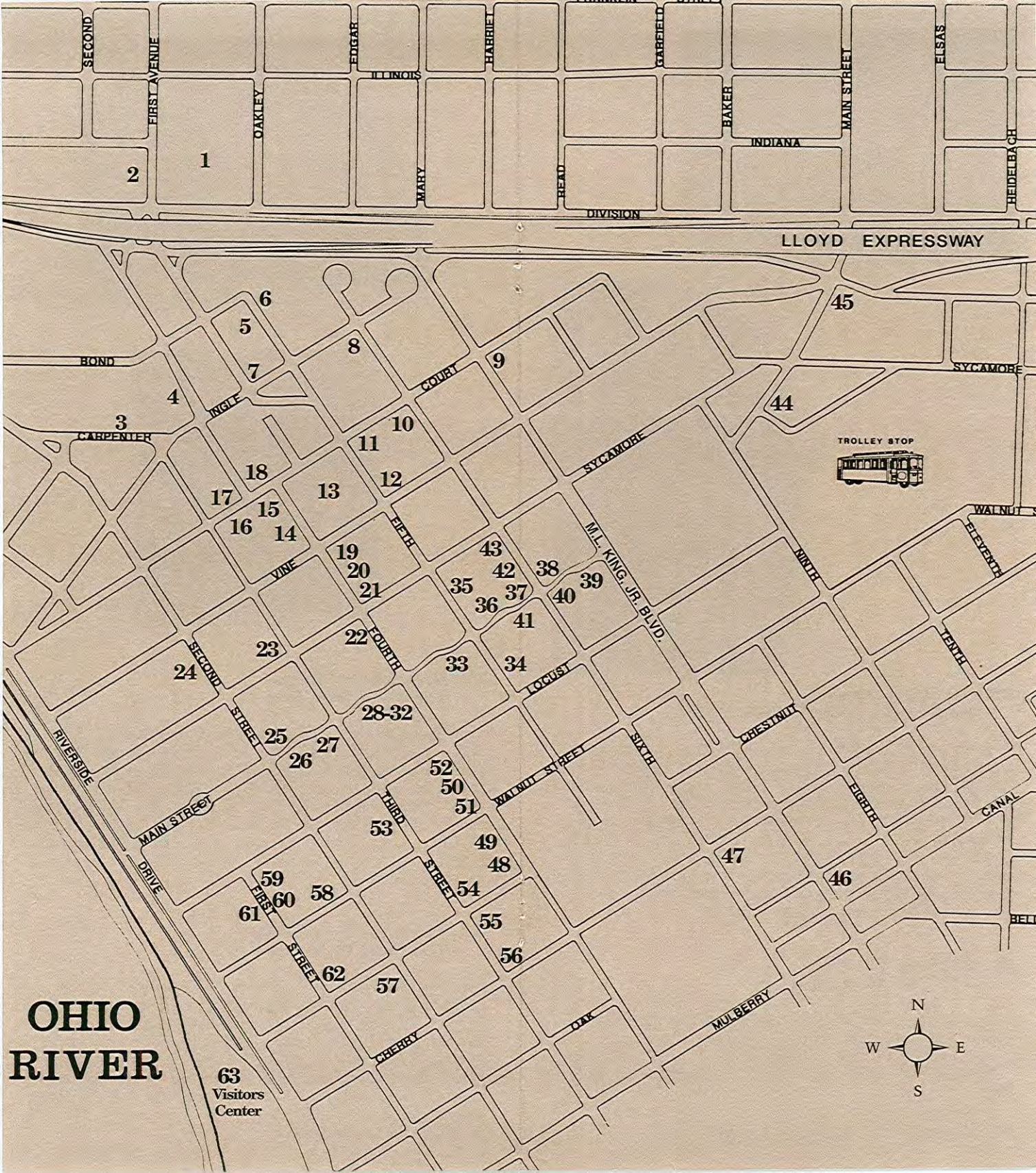
Notes

An important tool in historic preservation is the National Register of Historic Places. Listing a building on the National Register provides eligibility for tax incentives and a measure of protection against any adverse effects from federally funded projects. Buildings in this guide with the notation "NR" are listed on the National Register.

The privacy of non-public buildings should be observed. Many of the buildings on this tour, however, can be opened to the public. Arrangements for possible tours of individual buildings may be made by contacting the Evansville Convention and Visitors Bureau at 812-425-5402.



Cover photo from Artwork of Evansville, Indiana. A birdseye view from the Old Courthouse looking toward the Ohio River.



SECOND
FIRST AVENUE

2

1

OAKLEY

EDGAR

ILLINOIS

MARY

HARRIET

HEAD

GARFIELD

BAKER

INDIANA

MAIN STREET

ELSAS

HEIDELBERG

DIVISION

LLOYD EXPRESSWAY

BOND

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5

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4

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COURT

CARPENTER

3

18

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44



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13

12

SYCAMORE

16

14

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43

42

38

39

WALNUT

VINE

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22

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36

37

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M.L. KING, JR. BLVD

24

23

FOURTH

33

34

LOCUST

ELEVENTH

RIVERSIDE

MAIN STREET

25

27

28-32

52

50

51

WALNUT STREET

SIXTH

CHESTNUT

26

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49

48

SEVENTH

CANAL

59

60

58

THIRD STREET

54

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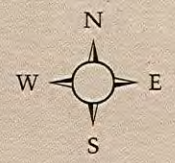
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46

BELL

OHIO RIVER

63
Visitors
Center





1.



2.

1. Willard Library
First Avenue and the Lloyd Expressway (NR)

This 1876–84 Library was designed by the noted Reid Brothers, architects of the Hotel del Coronado in San Diego. It is a prime example of High Victorian Gothic architecture. A gift to the people of Evansville by Willard Carpenter (1803–83), this privately chartered, free public library remains a strong neighborhood anchor. Willard has outstanding resources for local and regional genealogical and historical research. It has been maintained and restored through the efforts of its Trustees and Friends society and generous community support.

2. Municipal Market
First Avenue and the Lloyd Expressway (NR)

This Prairie School building was one of the legacies of Evansville's progressive Mayor Benjamin Bosse (1914–22). Designed by the firm of Clifford Shopbell & Company and completed in 1918 on the site of the former open-air Willard Market Square, the all-weather market was partially converted to house Fire Station #3 in 1954. It served that purpose until 1980. From this time until 1988 the market building housed the Metropolitan Evansville Transit System (METS). After a lengthy search for a new use, in 1997 the City deeded it to Wynkoop Brewing Company of Denver, Colorado. Wynkoop has plans to spend \$1.5 million to renovate the old building and turn it into a restaurant and micro-brewery.



**3. Willard Carpenter House
405 Carpenter Street**

(NR)

In 1848, Vermont-born Carpenter began the construction of his house on the outskirts of town. Visitors flocked to see the Greek Revival house when it was completed a year later. Members of the Carpenter family lived in the house up into the 1930s. During more recent times, it has served as an American Legion Post, as the home of television station WTVW-Channel 7 (which moved to a very modern facility next door), and as the corporate offices of Medco, Inc., which in 1974 undertook a complete renovation of the old landmark. In 1985 the property became the home of WNIN-Channel 9 and FM-88, our local public broadcasting television and radio stations.

**4. Pearl Steam Laundry
428 Market Street**

(NR)

Built in 1912 by Jacob Rust and Daniel Korb, partners in a domestic laundry business, this plant replaced a succession of three outgrown facilities. Rust and Korb sought to produce a modern, functional design that would be suitable for their "ever increasing business." With the exception of a 1923 office addition and the bricking in of the stable windows for a cold storage area, the basic plan of the building remains virtually unchanged. Rust and Korb's design was indeed more viable than they realized, since the building is still in use today for its originally intended purpose. The third and fourth generation of Korbs still operate the business.



5.



6.

5. Charles Leich & Company
420 NW Fifth Street

(NR)

The Charles Leich & Company building is the only remaining component of what was originally the Evansville Woolen Mill factory complex. A depressed market in 1911 precipitated the closing of many of the country's mills, and the Evansville mill was one of its casualties. The Leich Company, forced to relocate after a fire destroyed its downtown pharmaceutical store-rooms, purchased the mill building in 1914 and engaged local architect Harry E. Boyle to remodel it to accommodate its wholesale operations. In the early 1980s, the company acquired land in a suburban industrial park. Spurred by the federal tax credits for the rehabilitation of historic buildings, the company decided to retain its downtown location and hired architect Edmund L. Hafer to prepare plans for the company's current multi-faceted operations. His design included an architecturally compatible two story addition to the rear of the building which can be seen from NW Fourth Street.

6. Zion Evangelical United Church of Christ
415 NW Fifth Street

(NR)

A wave of German immigration at mid-century gave Evansville a handful of new congregations. The Zion Kirche was established in 1849 with thirty-five members. Just six years later, this handsome Gothic Revival sanctuary was erected. The church is still actively used by the Zion congregation.



7.



8.

**7. Brucken Company
NW Fourth and Ingle Streets**

(NR)

Now the home of a restaurant supply company, the buildings in this complex were constructed as one of the city's breweries. The Evansville Brewing Association began construction in 1891 of several buildings in this complex at the corner of Fourth and Ingle Streets. At one time, Evansville boasted twenty breweries. The Sterling Brewery, at the corner of the Lloyd Expressway and Fulton Avenues, was the last of the major breweries here.

**8. L. Puster & Company
NW Sixth and Ingle Streets**

(NR)

Evansville developed a reputation in the 19th century as a furniture manufacturing center of large proportions. Louis Puster and three associates built this block (originally one-half of a pair) in 1887 to house their furniture concern. Puster & Company—along with the majority of the Evansville furniture industry—vanished in the 1930s. After the demise of the furniture concern, the Puster building saw service as a clothing factory and a night club. United Caring Shelters, a private relief agency for the needy and homeless, now owns the structure.



9.



10.

**9. Rose and Albion Terraces
M.L. King, Jr. Boulevard
and Court Street**

(NR)

A movement to reform crowded living conditions for the working class swept the country just after the turn of the century. One of the leading national figures in tenement reform efforts was Albion Fellows Bacon of Evansville. These terraced blocks of flats were designed by Shopbell & Company in 1910 and captured that reform-minded spirit.

**10. Central High School Gymnasium
NW Sixth and Court Streets**

The old Central High School stood across Sixth Street from this building from 1868 to 1973, when the school board tore it down. This structure served as the school's gymnasium. Designed by Frank Schlotter, the school board erected it in 1927. The YMCA incorporated this facility into its plans for a new complex in 1979. The brick piers and stone battlements make this building stand out as special.



11.



12.

**11. Eagles Home
221 NW Fifth Street**

(NR)

Evansville architect Harry Boyle drafted the plans for the Eagles Home. Built in 1912, this facility served the Eagles until Lockyear Business College took it over in 1968. The college went bankrupt in 1992. In 1994, this building underwent extensive renovation to convert it into an office building.

**12. YMCA
203 NW Fifth Street**

(NR)

Evansville's second YMCA building was designed by the local architectural firm of Shopbell & Company. Completed in 1913, this Beaux Arts box featured residential, meeting and recreational facilities. The "Y" left this structure after building a new facility behind this one in 1981. Several people attempted adaptive reuses of the old "Y" building. In 1997, the "Y" returned to their former home, seeing the inherent advantages the facility offered their expanding program.



13.



**13. Old Vanderburgh County Courthouse
201 NW Fourth Street**

(NR)

The county's third courthouse has dominated Evansville's skyline since its completion in 1890. Louisville's Henry Wolters designed this Beaux Arts monument. Franz Englesmann, a student of the noted St. Gaudens, sculpted the elaborated figures and festoons encrusting the façade. The county left this facility in 1969 and it is now managed by the Old Courthouse Preservation Society. Preservation of this landmark has depended upon adapting the building to commercial and office use—and the generous support of friends. Community theater groups, small businesses, civic and arts organizations, and, since 1994, some county offices, rent space here. Visitors can view the restored Courtroom, Wedgwood Hall and the Governor's Parlor on the second floor. The rotunda area on the Lower Level features "Vulcan," a nine foot tall metal sculpture of a blacksmith, which was once perched on the side of a local factory, the Vulcan Plow Works.

A historical marker on the Courthouse lawn near the intersection of Fifth and Vine Streets, relates the block's history prior to the Courthouse's construction. Evansville was the southern terminus for the Wabash and Erie Canal, and this site was the canal's terminal basin. Here they unloaded the canal boats and hauled the cargo over land to the Ohio River for transshipment.

Located on the Courthouse lawn are memorials to veterans of World War I (intersection of NW Fourth and Vine Streets) and World War II (intersection of NW Fourth and Court Streets).



14.



15.

**14. Old Vanderburgh County Sheriff's
Residence and Jail
208 NW Fourth Street**

(NR)

The appearance of prisons was meant to evoke fear and Louisville architect Henry Wolters is believed to have been successful by all accounts. According to tradition, Wolters modeled this 1890 landmark after a castle familiar to Evansville's German-born citizens. Upon completion of the Civic Center Complex at M.L. King, Jr. Boulevard and Main Street in 1969, the County vacated this structure. This residence and lock-up stood vacant until a developer completed an imaginative adaptive reuse project in 1997.

**15. Fellwock Auto Company
214 NW Fourth Street**

(NR)

In 1922, Shopbell & Company designed this building for one of Evansville's early automobile dealers. It boasts an automobile elevator that can carry vehicles from the basement to the second floor. This facility was the home of a Buick dealership until the 1960s. Note the white enameled bricks, green terra cotta ornamentation, and the second floor horizontal windows, all hallmarks of the Prairie School style.



16.



17.

**16. Fellwock Auto Garage
315 Court Street**

(NR)

Constructed in 1908, this building with a dark glazed brick façade and limestone trimmings was the first in Evansville expressly built for the purpose of servicing motor-powered vehicles. The Fellwocks were seeking a new and modern image for the auto company to distinguish themselves from the buggy makers and tinkerers of the community, who also dabbled with the new-fangled motor cars. Just around the corner from the Fellwock Auto Company building on NW Fourth, the rear of this garage connects to the side of the Auto Company structure.

**17. Liederkranz Maennerchor
302 Market Street**

(NR)

Male singing societies were an important social and recreational outlet for Evansville's German community. Several halls were built around the turn of the century, including this one in 1911. The architect for this Liederkranz building was local designer Frank Schlotter. (Schlotter also designed the Germania Maennerchor at 916 N. Fulton Avenue in 1913. Germania still uses its hall and every August opens its doors to the public for its popular *Volksfest bierstube*).



18.



18. Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Coliseum
NW Fourth and Court Streets

(NR)

This building was erected in 1916–17 as a tribute to the men of Vanderburgh County who fought in the Civil and Spanish-American Wars. This neo-classical coliseum was designed by Shopbell & Company and provided the community with its first modern facility for conventions and other public gatherings. The ceremonial aspect of the building was heightened by placing the structure directly on axis with Fourth Street. The bronze sculptures flanking the entrance, entitled "Spirit of 1861," representing war, and "Spirit of 1916," representing peace, were created by George H. Honig. The Council of Veterans Organizations of Vanderburgh County manages the Coliseum. They rent it out for dances, concerts, and Rotary meetings, and sponsor bingo and wrestling to pay for maintenance and utilities. This is still very much a veterans gathering place—at least five veteran's organizations regularly meet here.



19.



20.

**19. Court Building
Fourth and Vine Streets**

(NR)

When completed in 1909 as the Furniture Building, the idea was that this up-to-date office and display space would help maintain the city's leadership in the nation's furniture business. The designers, Harris & Shopbell, selected yellow buff brick to provide a light appearance less expensively than using strictly limestone. The association responsible for the furniture exchange's construction included future mayor and furniture manufacturer Benjamin Bosse. A series of renovations over the years has kept the building viable as modern office space.

**20. Landmark Building
105 NW Fourth Street**

(NR)

Colonel William H. McCurdy constructed this two story limestone-fronted structure in 1915. (McCurdy also had the adjacent McCurdy-Sears Building erected five years later). It was designed by Shopbell & Company to accommodate commercial tenants on the first floor and offices on the second floor. In 1944, it became part of the Sears, Roebuck & Company store and was so occupied until Sears closed its downtown store in 1975.



21.



22.

21. McCurdy-Sears Building
NW Fourth and Sycamore Streets

(NR)

Built in 1920 for a hardware concern, in 1925 this building became Sears, Roebuck & Company's first full-line retail outlet independent of a catalog operation. The reinforced concrete, fire-proof structure was designed by W.E. Russ of Indianapolis with Gilbert Karges of Evansville as associate. In 1992-93 Old National Bancorp renovated this building, bringing back the charm that had been lost through many insensitive modifications.

22. Hulman Building
NW Fourth and Sycamore Streets

(NR)

The Hulman Building of 1929 is noteworthy for its fine Art Deco ornamentation and elegant soaring quality. Evansville's first tall building of the modern movement, it was designed by the Indianapolis firm of McGuire and Shook for the Central Union Bank. The bank operated out of the building for a few years before becoming a statistic of the Great Depression. Southern Indiana Gas and Electric Company moved into this facility in 1938. In 1978 they carried out a program of sensitive rehabilitation and restoration that brought back the first floor lobby and banking room to the splendor of the days when it was a bank. It is worth a trip inside to view this tour de force of Art Deco ornamentation.



23.



24.

**23. Greyhound Bus Terminal
Third and Sycamore Streets**

(NR)

Another of downtown Evansville's fine Art Deco buildings, this terminal was designed by architect William Arrasmith of Louisville in 1938. Its sleek forms and cool detail place it alongside other monuments of the Jazz Age. Of particular interest is the neon "running dog" located at the top of the corner tower. When Greyhound decided to renovate this station in the late 1980s, they saw value in the old design and in the traditional presentation of the "running dog" symbol of their business.

**24. Old Post Office and Customhouse
NW Second Street
between Sycamore and Vine**

(NR)

Built in 1875-79, this Ruskinian Gothic structure was designed by Architect of the Treasury William Appleton Potter to house the U.S. Post Office, Federal Court, Custom's Office and other Federal institutions. It was enlarged in 1918 by the very sensitive addition of the rear wings on either side. Vacated by the Federal government in 1969, it was deeded to the City with the understanding they would find someone to restore this historic monument. The City spent over \$1.3 million to stabilize the structure until a feasible reuse could be found. After several unsuccessful development proposals, it was leased to Foster International in 1985. They were responsible for its renovation. The old landmark now houses offices, a shop, and a popular restaurant. Ironically, one of its tenants is the U.S. Postal Service which operates a Self-Service Postal Center in the old lobby.



25.



26.

25. Bitterman Buildings
200 and 202 Main Street

(NR)

For nearly eighty years, these adjacent buildings housed one of Evansville's most prominent jewelry businesses. In 1885, the Bitterman Brothers established their store in the red brick and tile Italianate structure on the corner. They moved next door in 1906 to their new building, redesigned by Shopbell & Company and featuring large Chicago School windows.

26. Haller T. Chute & William Capelle Buildings
221 & 223 Main Street

(NR)

On the left—Architect Frank J. Schlotter designed the limestone Art Nouveau façade which was added to this 1860s building about 1910. Its unusual wavy window mullions on the third floor make it unique. To the right—Fred W. Ruff and Wm. Hahn ran the "Bee Hive Cash Store"—staple and fancy goods—in 1888, the year so boldly displayed on the cornice. This brick and quarry-faced stone three bay façade with central pavilion and iron cornice is one of the most exciting store fronts to recently reappear when a false façade was removed.



27.



28.

**27. National City Bank
Third and Main Streets**

(NR)

This institution started business as the Canal Bank in 1850. A name change occurred in 1863 as it became the First National Bank, the first bank in Evansville to apply for a national charter. Name changes came again in 1902 and 1922. In January 1914, the Renaissance Revival palazzo that the bank occupies was completed after the design of Jennie and Mundie of Chicago. Glance at the new nine story building National City built in the rear—the influence of the old bank's arched entry is repeated in this new structure.

**28. German National Bank
Third and Main Streets**

(NR)

The corner tower is gone and windows have been bricked up, but this structure remains one of downtown's more interesting 19th century buildings. Erected on part of the "Public Square" (an 1857 courthouse once stood across Main Street), the Crescent City Bank began operations on this site in about 1858. The building was modernized in the early 1880's for the German National Bank. Similarities with the Willard Library and the old Bitterman Building suggest that perhaps the Reid Brothers were the architects.



29.



30.

**29. Old Horse Fountain
Main Street near SE Third Street**

This red granite fountain for horses was presented to the city in 1910 by the National Humane Alliance. Originally located in a triangle where NW Fourth Street, Pennsylvania Avenue and First Avenue intersect opposite the old Municipal Market, it was relocated to Main Street when the Walkway was constructed in the late 1960s. With the reconstruction of the Main Street Walkway in 1985–86, the fountain was set in a new pool and the presentation plaque removed from the side of the fountain, opening up the fourth water spout. The plaque now is in the sidewalk adjacent to the fountain.

**30. Ridgway Building
313–315 Main Street**

(NR)

The richly decorated façade of this building was the result of an 1895 renovation, according to building permit records. The round arched windows recall the former L & N Railroad Depot, built a few years later. In 1990 the owners, the law firm of Berger and Berger, removed the unsympathetic twentieth century "modernizations" on the first floor façade and restored the front of this architectural gem to its former glory.



31.



32.

31. Artes Building
327 Main Street

(NR)

This small building was erected for a prominent jewelry merchant, Charles Artes. Shopbell & Company, the architects, used white enameled brick and terra cotta for their 1915 design. Notice the similarities between this building, the Fellwock Auto Company and the new Bitterman Building, all Shopbell's design from this time.

32. Old Citizens Bank Building
Fourth and Main Streets

(NR)

This skyscraper was built for Citizens National Bank (established 1873) in 1916, after the designs of William Lee Stoddart of New York. It was Evansville's first tall steel frame structure. Citizens Bank moved to a new building at 19 NW Fourth Street in 1959. Since then, this skyscraper has served as a multi-tenant office building and has had several names. Following the trend of the times, in 1997 the basement was attractively renovated as a brew-pub with an English theme.



33.



34.

**33. Britz Building
415 Main Street**

Evidence indicates that in the 1870s, tannery proprietor and leather dealer Jacob Britz remodeled an existing store-front into what is now one of the best extant Italianate façades. When Tony and Pam Carroll created this unique restaurant in 1995, they spared no expense and put countless hours into restoring the striking window hoods and cornice and renovating the rest of the building.

**34. Central Library
Fifth and Locust Streets**

(NR)

This 1931 Art Deco building was designed by the Cleveland architectural firm of Walker and Weeks. (The World War Memorial Hall in Indianapolis was also their work.) The library replaced an 1879 temperance hall on the same site. (Note the commemorative plaque on the Locust Street side of the building.) Headquarters for the City-County library system, the front lobby's Art Deco design is still well worth seeing.



35.



36.

**35. Journal-News Building
7-11 NW Fifth Street**

(NR)

The central and left-side of this building were constructed in 1910 on plans by Evansville architect F. Manson Gilbert as a state-of-the-art newspaper plant. The right side of the building, though it carries the same façade treatment, has different windows on the second floor, and the limestone facing is of a slightly different shade. It was built as an annex to the Hughes Department Store, which was located around the corner on Main Street. This building served as the Central Library from 1924 until 1932 and housed Union Federal Savings and Loan Association from 1938 until 1966 when it moved to a new building at Fifth and Main. Lics Ice Cream and Sandwich Shoppes did a substantial sympathetic renovation of this building in 1993.

**36. Dailey's Style Shop - John M. Geupel
Commercial Block
516 and 518-520 Main St.**

(NR)

The striking color of the Pompeiian brick and the pattern masonry make the façade of the old Dailey's Style Shop stand out. The façade, if not the entire building, dates to about 1910. Documents indicate that Geupel erected the handsome brick and quarry faced stone building next door in the early 1890s. Still identified by many as an old music store, Harding and Miller Music moved in here in 1929 followed by ABC Music Center in 1973.



37.



38.

37. American Trust and Savings Bank Building (NR)
Sixth and Main Streets

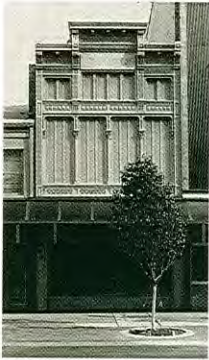
This savings bank was constructed in 1904 and enlarged to its present size in 1913 by the addition of the top two floors. It was designed by Shopbell & Company and not a single classical element went unnoticed in this Beaux Arts interpretation. Much of the early interior is still preserved.

38. Victory Theatre/Sonntag Hotel (NR)
Sixth and Main Streets

This is the last of Evansville's great movie palaces to remain standing. Hotel-theatre combinations like this were common in the Roaring Twenties. No doubt inspired by the grand theaters in the town where he worked, Chicago architect J.E.O. Pridemore drew up plans for this Evansville complex in 1921. The Victory Theatre operated as part of the Loews chain for many years. The last movie was shown here in 1979. Remodeled, it served as a popular disco and then teen club for a few years. The Sonntag Hotel, later called the Civic Plaza Hotel, operated as a residential hotel until October 1985, when it was vacated after the demise of its boiler. Private donations and municipal bonds funded a nineteen million dollar renovation of the Victory in 1997-98. The theatre has been enlarged and lovingly restored, and the hotel transformed into a "Signature Learning Center." Planned as the new home of the Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra, this has all the promise of again becoming a jeweled anchor of the downtown.



39.



40.



41.

**39. Conner's Bookstore
611-613 Main Street**

(NR)

This circa 1865 double brick building is Evansville's oldest commercial façade. At the turn of the century the Seiffer family operated a restaurant in one half. For nearly half of the twentieth century, William Conner sold sewing machines and then books from the other half.

**40. Wittmer Building
609 Main Street**

(NR)

Built in 1892 by boot and shoe manufacturer and retailer Fred J. Wittmer, this two story brick building sports a galvanized and cast iron treatment on its upper stories. The arcaded plan consists of four window bays separated by slender cast iron columns.

**41. Montgomery Ward Building
517 Main Street**

(NR)

It was not unusual for national corporations to use stock plans for their buildings when Montgomery Ward came to downtown Evansville in 1933. The distinct similarities between the Evansville store and a branch in Vincennes shows that is what they did here. After standing vacant for several years, a law firm purchased it in 1981 and remodeled the first floor and mezzanine as offices. This firm was the first in Evansville to take advantage of federal tax credits for rehabilitating historic structures.



42.



43.

**42. O'Donnell Building
22 NW Sixth Street**

(NR)

John O'Donnell, proprietor of the Sanitary Plumbing Company, moved to this address in 1905. A "specialist" in steam and hot water heating, O'Donnell made substantial improvements to the building in 1911 using the services of architect Harry E. Boyle. The remodeling entailed adding the second story for apartments and installing a plate glass storefront. Little or no change has occurred to the front elevation. Still present are the prism glass transom and the George L. Mesker & Co. label on the iron frame. (The Mesker Company was an Evansville manufacturer of storefronts at the turn-of-the-century, with nationwide sales.)

**43. John H. Roelker House
Sixth and Sycamore Streets**

(NR)

When Roelker built this house in about 1858, it was virtually on the outskirts of town. The foundry in which he was part owner was at the rear of this house. The Wabash and Erie Canal bordered the foundry as it made its way to the Terminal Basin on the site of the future Courthouse. Used now for law offices, the Roelker House is a rare reminder that downtown Evansville once had a residential population.



44.



45.

**44. Parsons-Scoville (PASCO) Building
915-921 Main Street**

(NR)

At the turn of the century, rail connections through Evansville expanded. The attractiveness of the city as a regional market is seen in the construction of this block for wholesale grocers Parsons & Scoville. According to reports, 10,000 visitors came to the grand opening on New Year's Day 1908, "and coffee, sandwiches and cigars were served in abundance." No longer useful as a warehouse, in 1995 it underwent a creative renovation. Now called the Curtis Building, it houses offices and shops.

**45. Hartmann Bakery Building
Main Street south of the Lloyd Expressway** (NR)

Built in 1891 by Fred Becker as a confectionery, this building was purchased by Frederick Hartmann in 1912. Hartmann converted the building into a bakery and constructed additional bakery space and a stable at the rear. Hartmann, whose family lived on the second floor, operated a bakery at this location until his death in 1936. The building supports a unique architectural feature—a "Bartizan" topped by a metal-clad onion dome, situated above the corner entrance.



46.



47.

**46. Liberty Baptist Church
M.L. King, Jr. Boulevard
and Oak Street**

(NR)

This Gothic Revival building serves the oldest African-American congregation in the city. Liberty Baptist, established on this site in 1865, erected a substantial sanctuary here in 1882. A cyclone destroyed it in May 1887. Seven months later the present church building rose from the rubble. Though now substantially leveled, this area was Baptisttown, the largest of Evansville's historic Black neighborhoods.

**47. St. Mary's Catholic Church
Cherry Street between SE Sixth Street &
M.L. King, Jr. Boulevard**

(NR)

Ludwick Reidinger of Lawrenceburg, Indiana, was the architect of this German Catholic institution. Constructed in 1867, St. Mary's has been the center of downtown parish life for over a century. The façade was covered with concrete simulated-stone ("Sham-Rock") about 1910, and the highly decorated interior was rebuilt after a 1936 fire. Starting in 1989, the congregation spent several years renovating the buildings in this complex.



48.



49.

**48. Huber Motor Sales
215-219 SE Fourth Street**

(NR)

As a speculative venture, William Gray erected this Shopbell and Company designed building in 1916. From 1920 to 1937 Eli Huber ran Evansville's Hupmobile dealership here. The grocery chain, A & P, then Kenny Kent Body Shop followed as occupants. The white enameled brick and multi-paned steel sash windows give it an early twentieth century feeling. In 1996 a health insurance consultant sympathetically renovated it for his office.

**49. H.G. Newman Plumbing Co.
211-213 SE Fourth Street**

(NR)

Built at the turn-of-the-century, this building housed the H.G. Newman Plumbing Company for over seventy years. It has wonderfully detailed iron pilasters dividing the bays on the first floor—probably the work of Evansville's famous George L. Mesker & Co. Architectural Iron Works. The second story remains virtually unchanged. Its round arched windows, parapet and corbeled brickwork make it an outstanding example of late Victorian commercial architecture.



50.

**Fourth Street "Hay Market" Area
SE Fourth Street between Walnut and Locust
Streets**

The width of Fourth Street between Chestnut and Locust reflects its use as an open-air market area from 1849 until 1966. Farmers and other vendors pulled their wagons up to this area and sold their produce and wares from the back. There were once two other market areas downtown – Central Market on Market Street adjacent to the Pearl Steam Laundry and Little Market on the site of the former indoor Municipal Market.

This 1880s photograph shows the market activity as well as the Fischer Hotel and Waldschmitt Grocery (buildings on the right), which are also shown in the current photograph of this block.

**50. Waldschmitt Grocery
113 SE Fourth Street**

Purchased by grocer Henry Waldschmitt in 1864, this building underwent substantial improvements in 1874, including its current façade with the galvanized iron cornice and window moldings.

**50. Albert Fischer Hotel
115-117 SE Fourth Street**

This building dates from 1874 and served as Fischer's Hotel until 1891. Afterward, a variety of concerns occupied the premises.

**50. Schreeder Building
119 SE Fourth Street**

Entrepreneur C.C. Schreeder erected the edifice on the left in 1895. This building has been leased to a succession of businesses including clothiers (new and second hand), furniture retailers, a saloon, and a pawn shop.



51.



52.



53.

**51. Isaac Berman Building
125 SE Fourth Street**

Remembered as the home of F's Steak House, this building was built in 1912 after Frank J. Schlotter's designs. (Note the owner's name and year of construction on the parapet.) From that date to recent times, restaurants have been the principal occupants.

**52. Siegel's
SE Fourth and Locust Street**

(NR)

This building recalls the era when Fourth Street was the location for some of Evansville's most popular stores. The Siegel's building dates to about 1900 and for most of its life housed clothiers and haberdashers. The lively round-arched façade visually anchors the block of Victorian commercial buildings to the southeast.

**53. Auto Hotel Building
111 SE Third Street**

(NR)

Now the home of Citizens Insurance Company, this building was originally constructed as a parking garage. Harry Boyle was the architect in 1929. It currently serves as an office building that boasts indoor parking.



54.



55.

**54. Trinity United Methodist Church
SE Third and Chestnut Streets**

(NR)

Trinity's sanctuary, designed by Henry Mursinna and built in 1866, is an architectural gem both inside and out. The Tudor style parish house attached to the church dates to 1926. This is one of the best preserved historical institutions downtown. The congregation and its leadership rightly regard their care of the buildings as a trust.

**55. Masonic Temple
SE Third and Chestnut Streets**

(NR)

Designed by Shopbell & Company in 1912, the Masonic Temple bears some resemblance to the YMCA, which the firm designed a year later. The matte-faced grey brick (which has since turned to beige) was meant to look like stone from a distance. The Shopbell firm designed a number of Masonic buildings in the region during this period. The Masonic Temple still grandly serves its original purpose.



56.



57.

56. Buckingham Apartments
SE Third and Cherry Streets

(NR)

An apartment building boom occurred in 1910–14 near downtown. This complex designed for Messrs. Hartmetz and Mann by Shopbell & Company in 1911 features a brown glazed-brick exterior and two story porches with red tile shed roofs.

57. Owen Block
SE Second and Chestnut Streets

Constructed by Dr. Abraham Owen in 1882, these Second Empire style townhouses provided a practical solution to residential living when sites convenient to the business district were scarce. Built on one lot, this complex contained four separate residences with common party walls. Dr. Owen occupied one unit and rented the other three. The Owen Block is located in the Riverside Historic District, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



58.



59.

58. Old Greek Shears Mortuary
120 Walnut Street

(NR)

In 1930, the Robert Smith Mortuary moved into a new building at 120 Walnut. The designer, Fritz Anderson, created one of Evansville's few examples of the Spanish Colonial Revival, a style more popular in California and Florida at the time. The old mortuary was imaginatively converted to apartments during the late 1970s.

59. Cadick Apartments
118 SE First Street

(NR)

These elegant flats, designed by architect W.E. Russ, went up at the same time as the McCurdy across the street. The broad eaves with tile roof, frieze of pattern brickwork and ceramic tile, mosaics in the blind arches over the second story windows, and balustrades are all traits that make this an outstanding example of Italian Renaissance Revival architecture.



60.



61.

**60. Busse Building
120 SE First Street**

(NR)

For almost a century, this site has been associated with health care pursuits. This building was completed in about 1901 for Drs. Edward and Katherine Busse, a husband and wife medical practice. It was occupied by the Visiting Nurses Association from the late 1920s until 1980, when VNA moved into a new building at SE Sixth and Mulberry Streets.

**61. McCurdy Hotel
SE First and Locust Streets**

(NR)

The completion of the McCurdy in 1917 was an event linked to the dedication of the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Coliseum in the same year. Called "convention headquarters in Evansville," the Colonial Revival-style hotel was designed by St. Louis architect H. Ziegler Dietz. Though the hotel closed in 1969, the senior residence center that took its place the following year has maintained the building's magnificent splendor.



62.



63.

**62. John Augustus Reitz Home
SE First and Chestnut Streets**

(NR)

This is one of Evansville's most elegant Victorian houses (and only house museum). The Reitz Home was built in 1871 for one of the city's most prominent families after the design of architect Henry Mursinna. However, much of what the visitor sees today is the result of successive redecorations around the turn of the century. In later years, this Second Empire gem was the residence of the Bishop of the Evansville Archdiocese. The Home is now operated by the nonprofit Reitz Home Preservation Society, Inc. Call 812-423-1871 for information concerning tours.

**63. Sunset Park Pavilion—The Pagoda
Veteran's Parkway—at the foot
of Cherry Street**

(NR)

The Evansville Parks Board erected this grand structure in 1912. Built in the Japanese style in the popular Sunset Park, it served as a venue for bands, a refreshment stand, and a river outlook. Its reinforced concrete construction was novel for its time. Architect Harry E. Boyle was responsible for this beautiful and innovative shelter. After the 1937 flood, the shelter fell into disuse and disrepair. The Evansville Museum eventually enclosed it for their storage needs. A building with great potential, the community funded its renovation in 1995-96. It is now our tourist center and headquarters for the Evansville Convention and Visitor's Bureau.