other, explain

☐ See continuation sheet.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

SENT TO D.C.

9/29/06

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items. 1. Name of Property historic name Brown Shoe Company Factory other names/site number Big Four Commons Branch of Brown Shoe Co.; Adenca, Inc. 2. Location street & number 212 South State Street [N/A] not for publication [N/A] vicinity city or town Litchfield state Illinois code IL county Montgomery code 135 zip code 62056 3. State/Federal Agency Certification As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets of does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☑ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.) State Historic Preservation Officer Illinois Historic Preservation Agency State or Federal agency and bureau In my opinion, the property \square meets \square does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.) Signature of certifying official/Title Date State or Federal agency and bureau 4. National Park Service Certification I hereby certify that the property is: Signature of the Keeper Date of Action entered in the National Register ☐ See continuation sheet. determined eligible for the National Register ☐ See continuation sheet. determined not eligible for the National Register. ☐ removed from the National Register ☐ See continuation sheet.

Brown Shoe Company Factory Name of Property		Montgomery County, Illinois County/State		
5. Classification				
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	(Do not count previously lis	rces within Proper	ty
[x] private	[x] building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributir	ng
[] public-local [] public-State	[] district [] site	1	1	buildings
[] public-Federal	[] structure [] object	0	0	sites
	·	0	0	structures
		0	0	objects
		1	1	Total
Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a mu	Itiple property listing.)	previously liste		al Register.
	Itiple property listing.)	0 Current Fun	ctions	al Register.
6. Function or Use	ing facility	0	ctions	al Register.
N/A 6. Function or Use Historic Function Enter categories from instructions) INDUSTRY/manufacture	ing facility	Current Fun	ctions	
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N/A 6. Function or Use Historic Function Enter categories from instructions) INDUSTRY/manufactur COMMERCE/warehous 7. Description rehitectural Classifica nter categories from instructions)	ing facility e .	Current Fund (Enter categories from VACANT	ctions instructions)	al Register.
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Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Brown Shoe Company Factory Name of Property	Montgomery County, Illinois County/State		
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.)	Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)		
[x] A Property is associated with events that have	INDUSTRY		
[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.	Davied (C)		
[] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a	Periods of Significance		
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	1917-1956		
individual distinction.	Significant Dates		
[] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information	1922		
important in prehistory or history.	1924-26		
Criteria Considerations (Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)			
Property is:	Significant Person(s)		
	(Complete if Criterion B is marked above). N/A		
[] A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.	IVA		
B removed from its original location.	Cultural Affiliation N/A		
[] C a birthplace or grave.	N/A		
D a cemetery.			
•	Architect/Builder		
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.	Groves, Albert Barleton (architect)		
] F a commemorative property.	Aegerter, A. A. (structural engineer)		
] G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.	Murch Brothers Con. Co. (contractor)		
Narrative Statement of Significance Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)			
9. Major Bibliographical References			
Bibliography ite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more con	itinuation sheets.)		
revious documentation on file (NPS):	Primary location of additional data:		
preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been			
requested previously listed in the National Register	State Historic Preservation Office ☐ Other State Agency		
previously determined eligible by the National Register	☐ Federal Agency ☐ Local Government		
designated a National Historic Landmark recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey	☐ University ☑ Other		
	_		
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record	Name of repository: Brown Shoe Company Archives		
- governing reports	Landmarks Association of St. Louis		

Bro Nam	Brown Shoe Company Factory Name of Property			Montgomery County, Illinois County/State		
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4.	Zone	Eacting	Alame:			
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			ns with the completed			
Maps А рг А	Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location. A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.		Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property. Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)			
Prop	erty Ov	vner				
Complete	e this item at	the request of SHP(O or FPO.)	<u> </u>		
ıame	BSFL, I	LLC (John]	Tenuta, Member)		<u> </u>	
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Brown Shoe Company Factory Litchfield, Montgomery County, Illinois

Section number __7_ Page _1

DESCRIPTION

Summary

The Brown Shoe Company Factory located at 212 South State Street in Litchfield, Montgomery County, Illinois, is a four-story red brick factory and office building with a flat roof and no exposed foundation. The factory building was completed by February of 1917 from a design by St. Louis architect Albert Barleton Groves; A. A. Aegerter was the structural engineer; Murch Brothers Construction Company was the contractor. The building was originally designed in 1917 in a "T" shape with the primary façade located in the north and west-facing building corner of the "T" along State Street. The building received a major historic addition first in 1922 at the end of the primary facade; that addition was expanded to four-stories by the mid-1920s, thus resulting in the present "F" shape building. The building substantially appears much as it was originally constructed in 1917 through the mid-1920s. A separate, one-story red brick powerhouse on the property was constructed to the east of the main building in 1917; this building has been rebuilt into recent times. The factory building has few additions that include a four-story restroom wing, a one-story loading dock and two additional one-story factory/storage spaces. None of the additions detract from the Brown Shoe Company Factory building's ability to convey its historic significance under Criterion A. The building retains integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Site

The Brown Shoe Company Factory measures approximately 200 feet by 120 feet and occupies a larger building site that incorporates a separate powerhouse building, green spaces, previously landscaped grounds, and a large parking lot; the site is adjacent to a local ball field (known as Schalk Field) that was originally the Brown Shoe Company recreation park grounds and earlier a property of the Big Four Railroad. The present property is situated at the northeast corner of South State Street (running north and south) and East Sargent Street (running east and west). Residential and some light commercial buildings are to the south and east of the property, commercial buildings are to the west, and a large vacant expanse and parking lot separates the property from the town center of Litchfield immediately north.

Exterior

The Brown Shoe Company Factory is a four-story red brick factory and office building with few minor additions on secondary and hidden elevations. The primary façade and main entrance are situated in the northwest niche of the building and is set back from South State Street (photos 1 and 2). Verified via an early architectural plan of the building (also see figure 2 in section 8), this primary façade is indeed located at the northwest corner of the building where the main entrance/office bay was set back from the street with the factory wing extending to South State Street; this intact portion includes two four-story building portions and a single one-story building portion as described below. Each window bay is boarded with an inset plexi-glass window set within the board; these recent closures are easily removable and have not damaged any existing historic fabric.

The four-story, fifteen bay factory protrusion extending from the center of the building (from the office portion) and terminating at South State Street has four stories that are completely unadorned. The fifteen window bays per floor have concrete sills that are painted; some paint has chipped away exposing the bare concrete below. Above each bay is an original painted angle iron lintel. The parapet wall is unadorned and spans the width of the wing. Painted in the area above the fourth-story is

¹ Albert B. Groves, architect. "Shoe Factory at Litchfield, Illinois." *American Architect*. February 27, 1918, p. 259-260.

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Brown Shoe Company Factory Litchfield, Montgomery County, Illinois

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"BROWN SHOE COMPANY INC. ST. LOUIS;" above the third-story "ADENCA INC." is painted on the wall (photo 2).

A four-story extension from the original factory space contains the historic stairwell, offices, restrooms and main entrance. This building portion has two bays per floor with a solid brick span in between a third bay nearest the factory wing (photo 1). A one-story extension of the building extends to the north and contains two window bays (photo 1).

Continuing along the north-facing elevation of the building, the original 1917 office/multiple use portion of the building has four bays in the first-story extension; above, and set back from the one-story portion, three bays (similar to the bays described previously) span three stories above (photos 2 and 3). The one-story extension and the four-story portion have subtly shaped parapet walls. Visible on the roof of the four-story portion are the elevator shaft and stairwell access to the roof. The east-facing elevation of this portion has two exposed bays on the second through the fourth stories (photo 3).

The remainder of the original 1917 four-story building portion (facing north) has ten similar window bays from the second through the fourth stories. Along the roofline is painted "PATENT WELTS." Again, the parapet roof is flat (photos 2 and 3). At ground level, two non-contributing, one-story additions are visible (photos 2 and 3). Both of these additions replaced earlier demolished building additions after the later 1950s, using some of the earlier window framing in the newer construction. These additions are noncontributing and were built outside of the period of significance of the Brown Shoe Company Factory.

The four-story section extending from the eastern-most portion of the building was begun in 1922 and completed by 1924; it contains thirteen similar bays on the three upper floors that face west (photo 2). Below, at ground level is the previously mentioned, non-contributing flat roof addition. Inside the non-contributing, one-story addition the original 1922 first-story window bays and exterior brick walls are intact.

The north-facing portion of the previously mentioned wing contains six similar bays per floor; an iron fire escape extends from the upper story towards the ground (photos 3 and 4). At the raised, but flat parapet is painted "LITCHFIELD PLANT." Immediately in front of this entire northern-facing elevation is a concrete-paved parking lot and overgrown plantings. Low-cut grass separates the complex from the adjacent lots to the north.

The east-facing elevation illustrates the original 1917 building and the 1922-1924 addition via a visible building seam just beyond the sixth bay of the southernmost portion of the building (photo 4). The 1917 building portion has a slightly stepped parapet wall while the remaining 1924 four-story addition has a flat roofline. At the northernmost edge of the building elevation, a raised parapet roof is visible. The entire elevation of the 1922-1924 addition contains thirteen similar window bays per floor; the original 1917 building contains six per floor. Some of the openings have been converted for use as a fire escape; these alterations are insignificant because they utilized the original window openings in most cases with few cut-outs for doors.

The south-facing elevation is split by a four-story, non-contributing restroom addition that was constructed in 1957 (photos 5 and 6). The span of the original building contains similar window bays and a flat roofline. Nearest the westernmost extension of the building, an additional raised parapet wall is visible (photo 6). The 1957 four-story, non-contributing restroom addition was constructed over what were originally railroad lines on a secondary elevation along East Sargent Street. The addition is set

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Brown Shoe Company Factory Litchfield, Montgomery County, Illinois

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over a concrete foundation and contains a number of small window bays on three elevations. Along this elevation, at ground level are two original loading dock bays with early wood doors and transoms. A later one-story loading dock building is also located along this elevation. Inside the structure and along the original 1917-building wall are a few original twelve-over-twelve wood windows.

The west-facing elevation along South State Street contains six bays that are divided three per side with a span of brick in between (photo 6). A fire escape extends down from the fourth-story. The roof exhibits a shaped parapet roofline that steps down to the south; "BROWN SHOE CO" is painted above the fourth-story. Also visible along this elevation is an entrance to the newer, one-story loading dock addition along East Sargent Street.

The separate, one-story red brick powerhouse addition to the east of the main building has been rebuilt recently and contains a number of recent additions (photo 7). This condemned building has a flat roof and newer window infill as well as recent brick application on a number of walls. This structure is non-contributing to the Brown Shoe Company Factory building site.

Interior

The Brown Shoe Company Factory interior appears substantially as it was originally constructed between 1917 and 1924 with few newer office partitions constructed on some floors (photos 8-16). There is no basement or crawlspaces in the building. The main "L" shape building portion contains the factory spaces, which are primarily open in plan with a series of heavy wooden columns running down the middle of each of the floors. The first floor of this space contains poured concrete; the upper three floors contain tongue-and-groove wood. Some of the original wood flooring is buckling due to exposure to the elements. Ceilings are all exposed and exhibit floor joists and sub-floors. Interior walls are either exposed brick or painted brick.

An elevator shaft opening into the long portion of the "L" shape (1917 building) is inoperable. Also opening into this same portion is the 1957 restroom addition. This addition is assessed via two original window bays; while the center brick wall pane is intact on each floor, windows were simply cut down to floor level. The restroom addition contains both men's and women's facilities, however each floor has a slightly different design configuration. Each restroom has glazed hollow tile blocks lining the walls and room divisions. Windows are typical of the period; many are broken. A loading dock structure, constructed after the 1960s but replacing an earlier one, is entered via a bay located at the building edge at State and Sargeant streets on the first floor. Of note are at least six original 12-over-12 windows, intact but in poor condition.

Entered as well from the long portion of the "L" shape (1917 building) portion is a post-1960, one-story shop addition with concrete block interior walls and steel and concrete ceiling. The portion is currently hazardous. Nearest the 1922-1924 addition, a second circa-1959 shop addition is nestled within the corner of the "L" shape factory. Intact are the original window bays of the factory building. The later addition has brick walls and steel beams supporting the ceiling.

The interior of the original 1917 main entrance and office portion contains restrooms on the first floor, two offices that were remodeled in the 1970s, and a main stairwell access; an additional exit is inside the stairwell. The remaining three floors of a portion of the 1917 office portion contains some office divisions; most have collapsing walls and are in poor condition. Wood flooring in these portions is also in poor condition.

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Brown Shoe Company Factory Litchfield, Montgomery County, Illinois

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Integrity

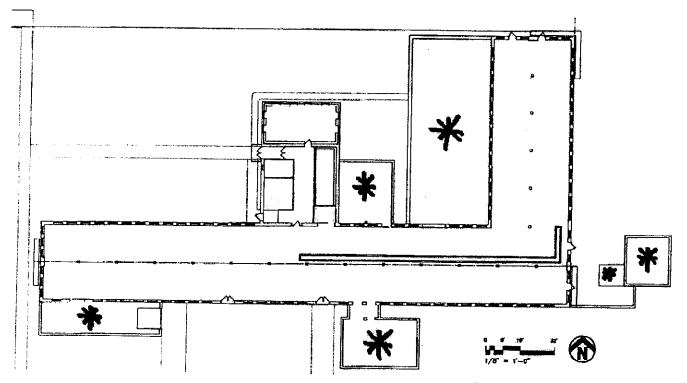
The Brown Shoe Company Factory has sufficient integrity for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The building substantially appears much as it did in the mid 1920s, when the last remaining main historic addition was completed. The building is in good condition overall.

The building has the following insignificant, non-contributing additions located on secondary or hidden elevations: a one-story loading dock structure that replaced an earlier dock on the south elevation; a four-story restroom addition built in 1957, also on the south elevation; a one-story flat roof structure between the original office wing and the 1922 and mid-1920 wing; and an additional one-story shed roof addition in that same general location.

A separate, one-story red brick powerhouse constructed to the east of the main building in 1917 is in a severe state of disrepair and has been condemned by the City of Litchfield. The structure has been rebuilt a number of times until recently and includes a number of newer additions; no historic fabric is intact either on the exterior or interior of the structure. Due to its physical condition and substantial later alterations, the structure does not retain integrity of materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. This small, hidden structure counts as a non-contributing building within the Brown Shoe Company Factory historic boundary.

Except for recent, removable window infill and minor, non-contributing additions, the main factory building substantially appears much as it was originally constructed in 1917 through the mid-1920s. The building retains integrity of location, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. None of the alterations substantially detract from the Brown Shoe Company Factory building's ability to convey its historic significance under Criteria A.

Figure 1: Site Plan of the Brown Shoe Company Factory. Non-contributing additions and buildings are marked with an "*" and are insignificant building portions. Source: EWR, Associates, 2006.



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Brown Shoe Company Factory Litchfield, Montgomery County, Illinois

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SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The Brown Shoe Company Factory at 212 South State Street in Litchfield, Montgomery County, Illinois is locally significant and is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criteria A in the area of INDUSTRY. The potential approval of this building will signify the first Litchfield factory listing on the NRHP. The factory was built with a reported \$70,000 in communityraised funds and built during a record fifty working days; it opened in March of 1917. The building represented at the time the next largest industry in Litchfield after the American Radiator and Standard Sanitary Corporation built earlier in 1904. The prominent St. Louis architect Albert Barleton Groves designed the Brown Shoe Company Factory building and supervised its construction. Incorporated in nearby St. Louis, Missouri, in 1893 under the name Brown Shoe Company by president George Warren Brown, the company expanded into Midwestern cities with additional manufacturing plants, warehouses, and supply centers beginning in the 1910s. Competition for these vital facilities resulted in many communities raising their own construction funds to attract Brown Shoe to town; such was the case in Litchfield, Illinois. The Litchfield Brown Shoe Company Factory was originally designed in 1917 in a "T" shape with the primary façade located in the north and west-facing building corner of a "T" shape along South State Street; the building received a major historic addition first in 1922 (expanded to four-stories by the mid-1920s) that resulted in the present "F" shape building. The Litchfield plant provided a great number of desperately needed jobs for the local and surrounding communities from its inception in 1917 until the early 1950s. The Brown Shoe Company survived the Great Depression, even establishing a vital employee welfare association, a recreation park, a credit union, and other special programs for its Litchfield employees and staff. Towards the end of the 1930s, Brown Shoe developed a soon-to-be nationally known brand of men's shoes known as "Roblee;" the brand was solely manufactured in the Litchfield plant. The period of significance spans from the original building's completion date in 1917 to 1956, the arbitrary 50-year cut off for NRHP eligibility.

Background

The Brown Shoe Company had its beginnings in nearby St. Louis, Missouri. George Warren Brown, a merchant and manufacturer born in 1853 in Granville, Washington County, New York, arrived in St. Louis twenty years later in 1873. Brown was soon offered a position as a shipping clerk with Hamilton & Brown, a wholesale shoe company founded in part by George's older brother Alanson D. Brown. George Brown accepted an opportunity to become a traveling salesman and acquired the entirety of North Missouri as a sales territory before he was twenty-one years old. According to biographers Hyde and Conard, Brown became "impressed with the fact that a line of shoes especially adapted to St. Louis territory should be made in St. Louis and thus endeavored to persuade his employers to establish a company factory for such a purpose;" his employers were not impressed with Brown's idea and did not look at the prospect favorably. Brown immediately resigned his position with Hamilton & Brown, considered at the time a grave mistake by his former employers, and sought to establish his own shoe manufacturing company.

In 1878, George Warren Brown formed a business in St. Louis with A. L. Bryan and J. B. Desnoyers, then known as Bryan-Brown & Company. The business started off slowly with a capital of \$12,000,

William Hyde and Howard L. Conard. Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis, A Compendium of History and Biography for Ready Reference. (New York, Louisville, St. Louis: The Southern History Company, 1899), volume 1, pp. 250-251.

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Brown Shoe Company Factory Litchfield, Montgomery County, Illinois

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mostly already expended on shoe machinery, lasts⁴, and patterns.⁵ By 1885, Bryan's health became an issue and he quickly retired and the company changed its name to Brown-Desnoyers Shoe Company. As fate would have it, in 1893, Desnoyers retired leaving Brown the sole owner of the firm and hence it was named the Brown Shoe Company. Brown was the company president since 1881, and was credited as leading the company to a position of "one of the greatest shoe-manufacturing and jobbing concerns in the United States." In 1899, Hyde and Conard credited the Brown Shoe Company as being the:

Pioneer shoe manufacturing concern doing business in St. Louis at the time... a distinction of which Mr. Brown might feel proud, in view of the fact that he was [the] prime mover in establishing successful shoe manufacturing here which has grown to such colossal proportions and [has] been the great lever in making St. Louis the greatest shoe market selling direct to the retail trade in the world.

Brown Shoe Company contributed to the St. Louis shoe industry as it expanded rapidly after the turn of the 20th century as the city leapt from a position of ninth to third in the country by 1905, challenging New England's hegemony.⁸ A combination of low cost production, an innovative selling plan, and assertive advertising distinguished the young and flexible St. Louis market from its eastern competitors and provided a basis for Brown Shoe Company's future growth.⁹ Brown Shoe Company's highly efficient division of labor enabled the maximization of volume which in turn lowered production costs that led most importantly to the establishment of separate factories for the manufacture of different styles and grades of shoes.¹⁰

By 1919, shoe manufacturing in St. Louis was the largest annual business enterprise. Washington Avenue in downtown St. Louis, home of Brown's central offices and distribution headquarters had gained a reputation as "Shoe Street, U.S.A.," claiming more shoe trading than any street in the world. Outside of the immediate headquarters on Washington Avenue but still located in the City of St. Louis, the Brown Shoe Company acquired the former LaPrelle Williams Shoe Company building on Jefferson Avenue in 1904 (NRHP listed 1/26/2005), constructed the "Homes-Take Factory" on Russell in 1904 (designed by Albert B. Groves and NRHP listed 10/20/1980), and set out to construct a number of known Brown Shoe facilities in small communities throughout the Midwestern region over the next two decades. A 1953 source indicates that these facilities amounted to thirty-nine buildings in six states. One such community, Litchfield, Illinois, was in close proximity to St. Louis and easily accessible via railroad routes.

⁴ A "last" is a solid form around which a shoe is molded.

⁵ William Hyde and Howard L. Conard, volume I, pp. 250-251

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ David Rodnick. *The Economic Development of St. Louis and the Surrounding Area: 1764-1914.* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society, 1944).

⁹ Mimi Stiritz, Stacy Sone, and Susan Sheppard. *Buster Brown Blue Ribbon Shoe Factory*. National Register of Historic Places nomination submitted August 20, 2004. NRHP listed 1/26/2005. Pages 6-7.

¹⁰ Ibid. And also L. H. Sawyer. "How St. Louis Became the Greatest Shoe Center." *Shoe and Leather Gazette*. January 12, 1940, pp. 29-30. What also occurred in St. Louis in particular was the establishment of a central cutting and supply plant and a central shipping plant.

¹¹ St. Louis Chamber of Commerce. Bulletin 1. January, 1919.

¹² Brown Shoe Company archives. Un-named source with caption: "From these sources comes the follow-through after you make the sale." Dated 1953.

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Development of the Town of Litchfield, Illinois

The growth and success of nearby Litchfield, Illinois, can be attributed to the establishment of a railroad link that would connect the town to the county seat of Hillsboro and also to Alton, near St. Louis, Missouri. Ancestor of the "Big Four," this Terre Haute and Alton Railroad was incorporated in 1851 and would extend to Huntsville (soon known as Litchfield) by 1853. Additional rail lines extended over the following decades; the majority of Litchfield's important and largest historic industries located in strategic points along these lines. Additional railroad companies extended lines to Litchfield up into the early decades of the 20th Century.

By 1900, the population of Litchfield stood at 5,918 people. A few years later in 1903, philanthropist Andrew Carnegie gave an endowment to the town for the construction of a library (NRHP listed on 2-12-1999); the library was constructed in the city park and completed by 1904. Also in 1904, the American Radiator and Standard Sanitary Corporation built its factory and by the following year was the largest employer in the community. In 1910 Litchfield's population rose slowly to 5,971. Finally, in 1916, the Brown Shoe Company of St. Louis began considering the town of Litchfield for a new factory building; near the end of the year a commitment was made.

Elaboration

The concept of constructing a Brown Shoe Company Factory in Litchfield, Montgomery County, Illinois, was initially considered in 1916 when at that time it is stated "progressive local citizens of the community and officials of the company met to determine the potential of locating such a plant in Litchfield." This event was so vital to the community of Litchfield that the date 1916 is permanently imprinted in the Litchfield timeline as the day "Brown Shoe was established." According to the Centennial History, the local community agreed to raise \$70,000 for the physical construction of the future plant. Behind the drive to raise the funds were important community leaders (Merchants' Protective Association of Litchfield and later Chamber of Commerce members) such as A. R. Stansifer, R. L. Hurt, and J. C. Strehle.

Albert R. Stansifer was selected to go to the directors of the Big Four Railroad in Cincinnati to secure the lease on the present building site of the Brown Shoe Company, then owned by the railroad; his efforts were instantly successful. Stansifer, the youngest son of James T. and Abigail Barnett Stansifer, was noted as being active in the financial life of the community and was instrumental in bringing not only the Brown Shoe Company to Litchfield, but also the American Radiator Company. R. L. Hurt was chairman of the drive in raising the funding. Joseph C. Strehle, born in Litchfield in 1868 was secretary of the Chamber of Commerce for over thirty years and also instrumental.

The Brown Shoe Company commissioned a prominent St. Louis architect, Albert Barleton Groves, to design the Litchfield plant; Groves was retained to supervise the building construction. Groves had designed other buildings for Brown Shoe Company in nearby St. Louis. As originally designed in 1916-

¹³ The Centennial History of Litchfield, Illinois: One Hundred Years. (Litchfield, Illinois: Litchfield Centennial, Inc., 1953), pp. 15-16.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 32.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 90.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 111.

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 33.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 82.

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Brown Shoe Company Factory
Litchfield, Montgomery County, Illinois

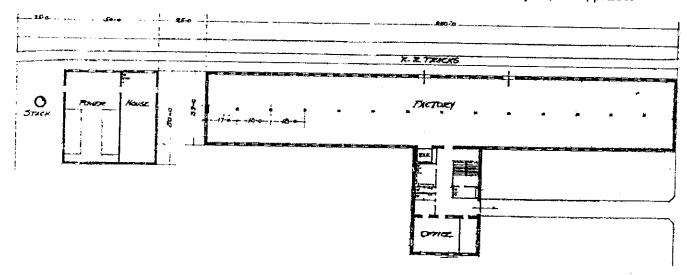
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1917, the Litchfield factory building was considered unique for its time in comparison to the previously constructed St. Louis company factories either by Groves or any other architect. An important article by Albert Groves is contained in a 1918 issue of the *American Architect*;²¹ it quoted that:

The capacity of a factory is measured by the number of the operatives it will house. In the St. Louis district, shoe factories are built 60 ft. wide with two rows of posts. As the machinery and operatives occupy one-half of the width of the outside bays, the number of the operatives is fixed by the total length of the outside walls. In this case the available funds would not permit of the construction of a building of sufficient length and 60 ft. wide. As a certain length was necessary the only logical thing to do was to make it less wide and thus reduce the cost. A study of the existing shops showed that two of the three bays were filled with empty and loaded racks and the area of one bay was occupied with machinery and racks in transit. It was then decided to build a factory 39 ft. wide and change the routine of the work in, through and out of the factory to conform to this plan. The result is a cleaner looking and more efficient factory.

This important article contains an illustration of the 1917 factory design showing a row of support posts down the center of the building (figure 2). Groves reported that the building was constructed with "2 x 14 inch joists with 14 inch centers, 10 x 14 inch girders with column spacing of 18 feet on centers; posts had cast iron caps and foot plates." A forty-foot office extension illustrated in the design is shown as containing the main stairwell, an elevator shaft, and employee restrooms; railroad tracks are situated along the secondary elevation along East Sargent Street (figure 2). The article continues to describe specific elements of the original building design in detail, in particular that: 300 windows were four feet wide with two foot six inch brick piers in between; that the building was equipped with an automatic sprinkler system with a steel tower and tank in the yard (since demolished); a system of wiring for power and light, and a plumbing system of about 125 fixtures. 24

Figure 2: Original plan of Litchfield plant in 1917. Source: American Architect. February 27, 1918, p. 259.



²¹ Albert B. Groves, architect, p. 259-260.

²² Ibid, p. 259.

²³ lbid, p. 259.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 260.

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Grove's report in American Architect also stated that each of the four floors had 10,000 square feet of working space. Interesting enough to mention in this narrative are the following facts: that the building materials were bought from stock and consisted of fourteen (railroad) carloads of lumber, delivered from St. Louis in a reported seven days; 300 window frames also from St. Louis, made and delivered in ten days; twenty-five carloads of brick from Belleville, delivered "as required;" and finally sand and gravel from Alton.25 The building was completed in fifty working days and it is noted in the American Architect that thirty days thereafter, \$75,000 worth of machinery was in place with 400 operatives making shoes.

Albert Barleton Groves and the Brown Shoe Company

Albert Barleton Groves was born in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1868. Groves attended Cornell University and received a degree in architecture in 1888.26 Over the following two years, Groves worked in the City of Denver with local architect F. E. Edbrooke and then studied in Europe. In 1891, Groves went to work as a draftsman in St. Louis with the prominent firm of Grable & Weber; by 1895 he became a partner in the firm and the name was changed to Grable, Weber & Groves. 27 In 1898 Weber and Groves bought out Grabel's interest in the company and the firm remained Weber & Groves until Weber's death in 1905. Groves continued practicing as an architect until his death in 1925. Groves designed at least twelve known factories, warehouses, and offices for the Brown Shoe Company of St. Louis; few are still standing. Groves' 1904 Brown Shoe "Homes-Take Factory" in St. Louis was NRHP listed in 1980. According to Landmarks Association of St. Louis's extensive research, Groves' commissions between 1905 and 1925 represent one of the most diverse and prolific portfolios of any early 20th century St. Louis architect.²⁸

Brown Shoe Company and the Town of Litchfield, Illinois

The 1953 publication, The Centennial History of Litchfield, Illinois, recalled the importance of the construction of the Brown Shoe Company Factory earlier in 1917. It reports that the new factory was opened the week of March 31, 1917, with a formal reception for the public held on the evening of April 13, 1917.29 It is also noted that a band concert by the local Moose Band was held in the adjacent downtown district when at 7:00 in that evening, the first sounding of the new factory whistle interrupted the festivities. The whistle also signified that the entire assemblage of people were to move down to the factory area where the band was established on the roof garden for another concert. 30 Continued into the evening of April 13, 1917, additional music was provided by the Crescendo Orchestra and the Factory Booster Quartet. The publication also states that:

To prove to the world that Litchfield was a live town, the entire business district was kept lighted for the duration of the evening. More than 7,000 visitors trooped through the factory to marvel at the magnitude of the community's accomplishment. 31

The publication also proudly stated "Litchfield has for many years been the stronghold of men's

²⁶ St. Louis Architects: Famous and Not So Famous, Part II. Albert Barleton Groves. Originally published in Landmarks Letter, September/October 1987. (St. Louis: Landmarks Association of St. Louis, 1987). ²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ The Centennial History of Litchfield, Illinois: One Hundred Years, p. 111.

³⁰ lbid.

³¹ Ibid.

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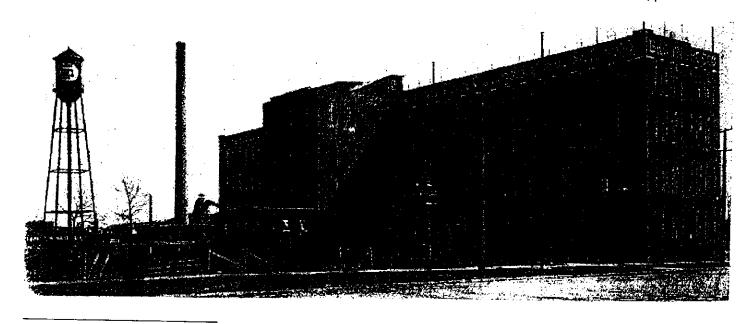
footwear in Brown Shoe Company."³² The *Litchfield News-Herald* dedicated a prominent column in the January 6, 1917, edition of its paper to a report of the proposed Brown Shoe Company plant. An illustration showing the factory building included the following statements:

The people of Litchfield are intensely interested in the new shoe factory building of the Brown Shoe Company...The buildings will be equipped with shoe making machines...The cost of improvements is \$120,000 [included equipment]...The buildings are designed and supervised by A. B. Groves, architect, and are being erected by Murch Brothers Construction Company, both of St. Louis...The mechanical equipment is being designed and erected by the Brown Shoe Company.³³

The 1917 article included building and site dimensions, technical information on the facility, and perhaps most importantly, it gave a brief description of the main entrance and walkway located on the prominent north-facing side visible from the town center along State Street. A portion of this important elevation was also intended to support wagon deliveries. The main shipping facilities were to be situated on the south side (rear) portion of the building adjacent to railroad tracks; these facilities would provide shipping and receiving by means of "steam roads" and "traction companies." A roof garden was to be created by means of a four-foot high "fire wall" (actually a raised parapet) and a similar height wood lattice fence.

As originally designed, the factory (figure 3) did not allow substantial space for all the Brown Shoe Company departments. In fact, the cutting and fitting departments were located in what was known as the Carroll Building (also known as the Doran Building) at the corner of Ryder and Madison Streets (since demolished). By June of 1917 and through 1918, it was reported that there were 323 employees working at the factory producing 5,500 pairs of shoes per week (figures 4-6).

Figure 3: Original building in 1917. Source: Centennial History of Litchfield, Illinois: One Hundred Years, p. 111.



³² Ibio

34 Ibid.

³³ Litchfield News-Herald. Volume 4, number 258. January 6, 1917.

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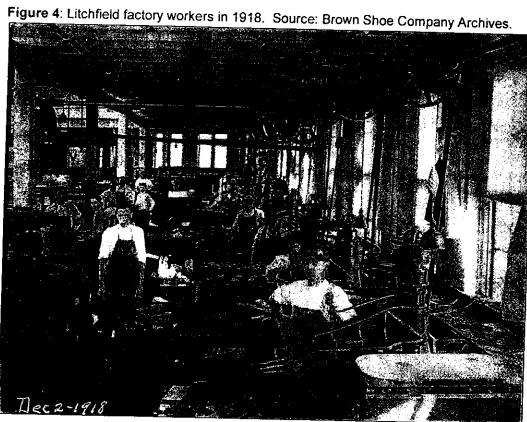


Figure 5: Litchfield factory workers in 1918. Source: Brown Shoe Company Archives.

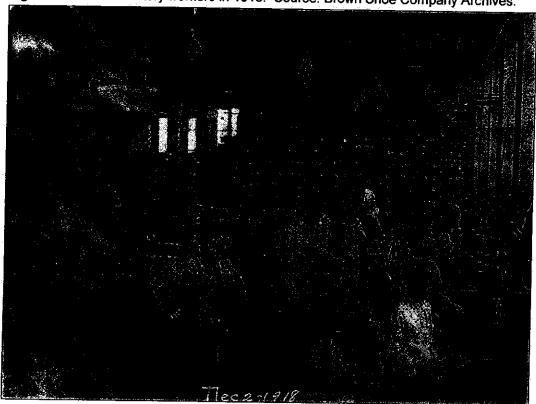


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Figure 6: Litchfield factory workers in 1918. Source: Brown Shoe Company Archives.



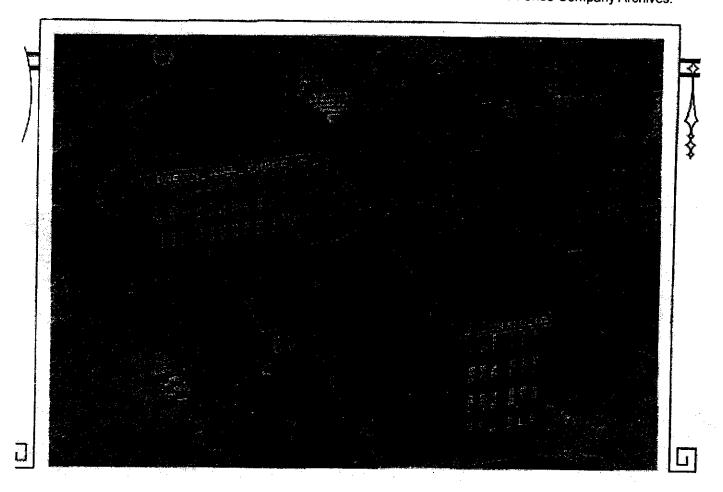
The Misters Stansifer, Hurt, and Strehle of the Merchants' Protective Association of Litchfield (later the Litchfield Chamber of Commerce) organized earlier in 1898, took the lead in raising the initial building funds for the Brown Shoe Company factory in 1917. Due to the great successes of the company in Litchfield and a need for more essential factory space, a one-story addition was constructed parallel to the office wing nearest the east end of the building in 1922. The Merchants' Protective Association raised another \$25,000 for this important addition. Within two years in 1924, three additional stories were to be added to the wing, giving the building its present "F" shape design completed in the mid-1920s (figure 7). As seen in figure 7 below, "BROWN BILT SHOES" is painted on the parapet wall; after the late 1930s that sign read "ROBLEE SHOES FOR MEN."

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Figure 7: Original 1917 building with four-story addition completed by the mid-1920s. Photo is circa late-1920s. Note shed structures (since demolished) between the new addition and the office extension. Also note that there is no four-story restroom addition (added in 1957) nor a loading dock structure along State Street. Also now absent are the railroad tracks that were located on Sargeant Street. Source: Brown Shoe Company Archives.



The 1930s was a period in Litchfield Brown Shoe Company history that signaled a decade of company-wide and civic improvements. For instance, an Employees Welfare Association was organized in 1933 during an important employee meeting at the local Elks Club. Established at this particular meeting was a company provision of insurance payments for all members. A year later, in 1934, a recreation park was established on the company property with provisions for tennis, softball, croquet, basketball, horseshoes, and baseball with sports equipment furnished by the Welfare Association made available to employees and their families. The park, sometimes historically referred to as "Welfare Park," became the home of the "Brown Shoe" baseball team, the girls' "Air Stepper" softball team, the girls' "Red and White" softball team and other department teams. One historic source states that the park site was originally part of the former "Big Four Commons," being a property of the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago, and St. Louis railroads. Story of the park dedication made the local paper and is

³⁵ The Centennial History of Litchfield, Illinois: One Hundred Years, p. 185.

³⁶ Ibid. This park is currently extant just behind the present building.

³⁷ Litchfield Sesquicentennial Committee. *A Pictorial Narrative 150 Year History of Our City and Families: 1853-2003.* (Paducah, KY: Turner Publishing Company, 2002), p. 297.

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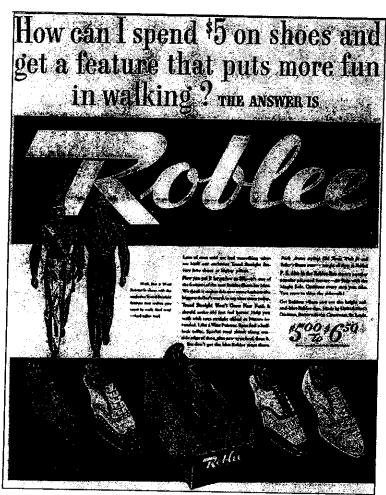
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documented in the local publication of the Litchfield Sesquicentennial Committee. The park was later given to the town of Litchfield and renamed "Community Park;" it is now known as "Schalk Field."

In 1935, a local Brown Shoe Company newspaper was established. Conceived a year earlier in 1934 by employee and future newspaper staff Frank Randle, the paper was named "Shu Horn." A year later, in 1936 a company credit union was organized in Litchfield. In 1937, a public address system was purchased for use in Welfare Park as well as for company entertainment and business meetings. In 1939, the Litchfield Brown Shoe Company Factory began to produce a distinct line of "top grade men's dress shoes," listed under the nationally known advertised name of "Roblee" (figure 8). In just under a twenty-year period the factory was producing 3,000 pairs of these shoes daily, shoes that were shipped to "towns and cities in every state of the union and to many foreign countries." Production of the Roblee men's line expanded over the next decade and included a variety of styles with specialized models for United States Military men (figure 9).

Figure 8: Roblee Shoe advertisement from 1939. Source: Brown Shoe Company Archives.



³⁸ The Centennial History of Litchfield, Illinois: One Hundred Years, p. 185.

³⁹ Ibid, p. 185.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 111.

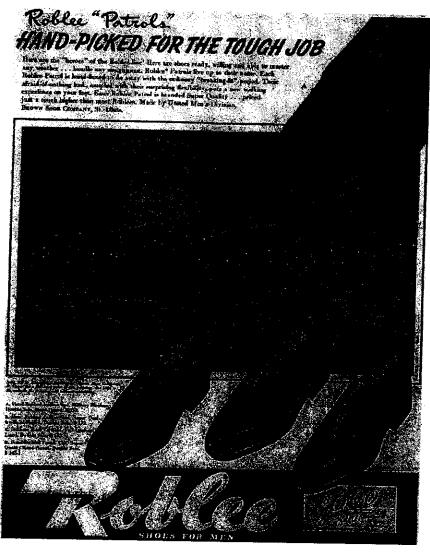
⁴¹ Ibid, p. 111.

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Figure 9: Roblee Shoe advertisement from 1940s. Source: Brown Shoe Company Archives.



Final Days of the Brown Shoe Company

The final days of Brown Shoe Company in Litchfield were signaled in the March 22, 1967, issue of the Litchfield News-Herald where it was reported, "Holy Week to Announce Shoe Closing," the story said:

"Brown Shoe Co. and Litchfield Chamber of Commerce chose the third day of Holy Week to announce the St. Louis based firm was terminating operations here next month after 50 years."42

Over ten years prior, in 1953, it was reported that an average of 450 employees were making 15,000 pairs of shoes per week. 43 According the Litchfield News-Herald, the announcement was posted on the employee bulletin board at the factory during the lunch hour; an actual presentation was given to the group of directors at a separate luncheon the same day. Not much more other than general

⁴² Litchfield News-Herald. "Holy Week to Announce Shoe Closing." Wednesday, March 22, 1967. 43 Ibid.

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company history was included in the report. Issues regarding the fate of the factory building suggested offering the property back to the community for \$71,000— even though earlier in 1916 it was that same community that raised \$70,000 for the building construction. A private buyer was said to have offered the then book value of \$77,000 for the building.

The building received a four-story restroom addition in 1957 (see figure 10 showing building before addition in 1956, the end of the period of significance). Little is known about the history of the factory between the mid-1950s and its closing in 1967.

Figure 10: Arial photograph of building in 1956 without non-contributing restroom wing addition. Source: Litchfield Community Airport archives, 1956.



In 1971, ADENCA, Inc. moved into the then vacant building. Original owner and retired carpet layer Al Osterman earlier teamed with friend Bob Bitner to form a company in nearby Barrington, Illinois. The company manufactured kitchen cabinets as well as window and door frames. Soon, dental cabinetry accounted for 50% of the business and the partners decided to expand production. So in 1971, the partners relocated to the former Brown Shoe Company Factory and by 1972, the company was considered one of Litchfield's largest businesses. Adenca would also leave the building.

The current owner envisions a historic redevelopment that will bring the building back to life with apartment living units. The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA) is currently reviewing the building redevelopment plans; the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the National Park Service (NPS) are currently reviewing a Federal Part 1 Historic Preservation Certification Application for the building.

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The establishment of the Brown Shoe Company Factory at 212 South State Street in Litchfield, Illinois, represents one of the community's greatest historical industrial stories. Not since the establishment of the American Radiator and Standard Sanitary Corporation earlier in 1904, did Litchfield create such an inspiring opportunity to provide the need for skilled jobs both locally and regionally. In fact, Litchfield's aspiration for Brown Shoe to establish a factory marked for the first time in the history of the town such a steadfast drive led not only by community leaders but also by the local residents. As a result, Litchfield successfully beat out the competition from other regional towns raising the dollars essential for the projected construction costs of the factory building. Completed in a record fifty working days, Litchfield's Brown Shoe Company Factory opened in March of 1917. Flourishing through the Great Depression, Brown Shoe remained an active civic and employee booster, establishing a welfare association, a recreation park, a credit union, and other special community programs. The Brown Shoe Company would permanently leave its legacy on the historical development and economic success of Litchfield through the company's final days in the factory in 1967.

The nominated building at 212 South State Street substantially appears much as it was originally constructed in 1917 through the mid-1920s when the last extant historic addition was completed. The potential approval of this building will signify the first Litchfield factory listing on the NRHP.

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

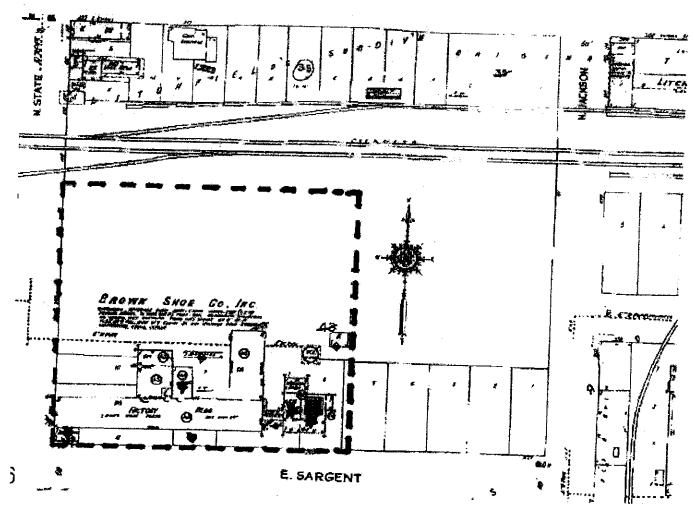
The nominated building at 212 South State Street is part of the northeast quarter of the northwest quarter of Section 4, Township 8, Range 5 West of the 3rd Principal Meridian. The property is situated on City Block Number 43 in Litchfield, Montgomery County, Illinois. The property is legally known by the Chicago Title Insurance Company as Policy Number 72106-928463, and Montgomery County Office File Number MONT 04-168. The property is part of Huggin's Addition to the City of Litchfield. The main, "F" shape four-story building measures approximately 200 feet by 120 feet; the entire land parcel measures approximately 2.542 acres. The nominated building is indicated by a dashed line on the accompanying map entitled "Brown Shoe Company Factory Boundary Map."

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated parcel includes all of the property historically associated with the Brown Shoe Company Factory. A powerhouse to the east of the main building counts as a non-contributing building on the property; a few additions also count as non-contributing and are marked with an "*."

Brown Shoe Company Factory Boundary Map

Source: Sanborn Map Company, Litchfield May 1925-February 1944, Sheet 17.



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PHOTOGRAPH LOG

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1-7 and 8-16 except as noted:

Photographer: John Tenuta, Member BSFL, LLC (1-7)

Date of Photographs: 5/10/2006 (1-7)

Photographer: Matthew S. Bivens (8-16)

Date of Photographs: 7/2006 (8-16)

Negatives: SCI Engineering, Inc.

Photo No.	Photographic Information
1	Primary façade along the northwest-facing elevations; South State Street in foreground.
2	
3	Primary façade along the northwest-facing elevations; parking lot in foreground.
4	Primary façade along the northwest-facing elevations; parking lot in foreground.
5	Secondary East-facing elevation; ball field in foreground.
6	Secondary south-facing elevation; East Sargent Street in foreground.
9	Secondary south-racing elevation and Fast Sargent Street at sight was to
7	Sievation diong Could State Street at left
7	View of north elevation of non-contributing powerhouse building.
8	Interior 5 Females Sunding.
9	Interior
10	Interior
11	Interior
12	Interior
13	Interior
14	Interior
15	
	Interior
16	Interior

WEEKLY LIST OF ACTIONS TAKEN ON PROPERTIES: 11/13/06 THROUGH 11/17/06

KEY: State, County, Property Name, Address/Boundary, City, Vicinity, Reference Number, NHL, Action, Date, Multiple Name

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA STATE EQUIVALENT, Streetcar and Bus Resources of Washington, DC MPS, Washington, 64500948, ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION APPROVED, 11/14/06 (Streetcar and Bus Resources of Washington, DC MPS)

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA STATE EQUIVALENT, Washington and Georgetown Railroad Car House, 770 M St. SE, Washington, 06000516, LISTED, 11/14/06 (Streetcar and Bus Resources of Washington, DC MPS)

ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY,

Austin Town Hall Park Historic District, Roughly bounded by West Lake St., N. Central Ave., N. Parkside Ave., and West Race Ave., Chicago, 06001015, LISTED, 11/15/06

ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY, Goldblatt Bros. Department Store, 4700 S. Ashland Ave., Chicago, 06001016, LISTED, 11/15/06

ILLINOIS, LAKE COUNTY,

Lake Bluff Upton Commercial Historic District, 20, 31-113 E. Scranton, 26-40 (even) E. Center Ave., and 550 N. Sheridan, Lake Bluff, 06001021, LISTED, 11/15/06

ILLINOIS, MCLEAN COUNTY,

Cedar Crest Addition Historic District, Roughly bounded by Constitutional Trail, Division St., Highland Ave. and Fell Ave., Normal, 06001022, LISTED. 11/15/06

ILLINOIS, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, Brown Shoe Company Factory, 212 S. State St., Litchfield, 06001019, LISTED, 11/15/06

IOWA, CLAY COUNTY, Ross, Seymour, Round Barn, Off IA 374, Gillet Grove vicinity, 86001422, REMOVED, 11/15/06 (Iowa Round Barns: The Sixty Year Experiment TR)

MASSACHUSETTS, FRANKLIN COUNTY,

Colrain Center Historic District,

Main, Greenfield, and Jacksonville Rds., Streeter Ln., River and Coburn Sts., Colrain, 06001057, LISTED, 11/15/06

MICHIGAN, DELTA COUNTY,

Minneapolis Shoal Light Station,

In northern Green Bay 6.6 mi. S of Peninsula Point, NW of Lake Michigan, Bay de Noc vicinity, 06001025, LISTED, 11/15/06 (Light Stations of the United States MPS)

MICHIGAN, LIVINGSTON COUNTY,