

9-6-16

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Middle Avenue Historic District

Other names/site number: Alley Job

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

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

2. Location

Street & number: Bounded by S. Lake, Cross, S. River and Gale Streets

City or town: Aurora State: Illinois County: Kane

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

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

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

___ national ___ statewide x local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

x A ___ B ___ C ___ D



9-1-16

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State

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

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ entered in the National Register
- ___ determined eligible for the National Register
- ___ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ___ removed from the National Register
- ___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

Public – Local

Public – State

Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

Building(s)

District

Middle Avenue Historic District
 Name of Property

Kane, IL
 County and State

Site

Building

Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>8</u>	<u>3</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>8</u>	<u>3</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: Manufacturing Facility

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: Industrial Storage

COMMERCE/TRADE: Warehouse

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION: Manufacturing Facility

COMMERCE/TRADE: Warehouse

COMMERCE/TRADE: Specialty Store

VACANT/NOT IN USE

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: Industrial

OTHER: Commercial

OTHER: Dutch Colonial Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

BRICK

CONCRETE

LIMESTONE

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Middle Avenue Historic District is an industrial district in Aurora, Illinois that included coal and lithography businesses, as well as warehouses and an automobile service station at the end of the 19th and the early 20th century. Building construction within the district dates from c. 1891 to c.1950. Eleven buildings are within the district, with eight of them contributing to the significance of the district. The three non-contributing buildings date to the period of significance but have been altered either by modern façades or additions to or demolition of portions of the original building. The buildings are generally constructed of brick or concrete, with one building being of limestone. The Middle Avenue Historic District sits in the center of the modern-day City of Aurora, and toward the southern border. Ten buildings sit north of Gale St. and fall within the boundaries of the neighborhood of the Boulevard District Neighbors. One building sits south of Gale St. and falls within the boundaries of the Southwest Neighbors.

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State

Narrative Description

Early industry in Aurora was located along the banks of the Fox River, benefiting from the use of water to power their mills. In 1849, the Burlington Railroad was born in Aurora when the Aurora Branch was created by citizens of Aurora and Batavia to ensure they were not passed over in extending the rail lines from Chicago westward to Galena.¹ Aurora sat as the hub of the Burlington, with the shops and repair facilities occupying 70 acres at its peak on the northeast banks of the Fox River.

Up until the start of the 20th century, the Middle Avenue Historic District area was primarily a residential neighborhood on the west side of the Fox River, unconnected to the 19th century industry and manufacturing that was occurring primarily on Stolp Island and on the east banks of the Fox River. With the large rail operations in the city and the addition of a CB&Q rail line along Middle Ave., factories and industries began to converge on this spot southwest of Stolp Island, the center of town then and the center of downtown now. From this location they had the capacity to ship their goods all over the country.

The Middle Avenue Historic District is primarily bounded by Cross St. to the north, Gale St. to the south, S. River St. to the east, and S. Lake St./Route 31 to the west. The boundaries are presently surrounded by commercial, residential and civic areas. The character seen within the bounds of the above-mentioned streets shifts quickly. On the north side of Cross St., buildings including the Aurora Beacon-News and single-family residences have been demolished to accommodate the recently built Aurora Public Library and its parking facilities. The rail line that ran along Middle Ave. to the north of Cross St. has been covered by pavement and acts as a non-continuous auto route that is rarely traveled. In some cases, including the library to the north of Cross St., Middle Ave. intersects the library parcels that now serve as parking lots and is incorporated into the lot itself. To the south of Gale St., Middle Ave. comes to a dead end, the former rail line parcels are grassed over and the parcels are city-owned. To the east of River St., one-story shop buildings of sheet metal with notable additions from various eras abut the river. These buildings are absent of the immediate rail service offered to the district buildings. To the west of Lake St./Route 31, single-family residences predominate and mark a clear shift in building function and form.

The Middle Avenue Historic District is situated on the southwest fringe of the Central Business District as it was located in both the 20th century and present day, and just one block off the banks of the River. Similarly, it lies southwest of the Stolp Island National Register Historic District. The district is 1/2 mile southwest along the CB&Q from the LaSalle Street Auto Row Historic District, located on the east side of the River.

The street patterns of the early city are predominantly grid-like and based off the form of the Fox River. North-south streets run parallel to the river, while east-west streets run perpendicular to those. Notable are the connecting points of three bridged streets, now known as New York St., Galena Blvd., Downer Place, and Benton St. These streets connect the west bank of the river to

¹ *Aurora Beacon-News*, 1941.

Middle Avenue Historic District
 Name of Property

Kane, IL
 County and State

Stolp Island and then Stolp Island to the east bank. This pattern encompasses the majority of Aurora’s early development, while sections that are at a distance of approximately 2 miles east or west represent later - subdivision-like street forms with cul-de-sacs and winding streets rather than the grid pattern of earlier development.

Some sections of the inner city conform to the line of the CB&Q rail line, predominantly along LaSalle St. to the east of the river. The CB&Q also cut through Clark and Washington Streets on the east side, creating triangled parcels. On the west side of the river, in the area of the Middle Avenue Historic District, the grid system stays true with the CB&Q line along Middle Ave. running north-south, parallel to the River. The CB&Q did not interrupt the street form in the same way on this side of the river. At the “Y” of the CB&Q, as it shifted to go north along Middle Ave., one triangled parcel was formed, that being the southernmost part of the Middle Avenue Historic District where 301 S. River St. sits.

The Middle Avenue Historic District contains ten properties, most of brick construction ranging from a large, block-long factory to a small filling station. The most notable buildings consist of three to four brick stories and are a notable difference from their surroundings of one-story shop buildings, two-story residences or modern construction. The buildings are remarkably intact; most retain their original footprints with some additions. The building at 227 S. River St., formerly the Miller-Bryant-Pierce Company, is the most noticeably altered with additions added in the 1970s. To the north of this building, two small buildings have been demolished since the 1958 Sanborn map.

Eight buildings are contributing to the district, while the two buildings at 234-236 S. Lake St. and the one building at 227 S. River St. are non-contributing. The eight buildings that contribute were built during the period of significance and played a vital role in establishing the identity of this unique neighborhood. The Middle Avenue Historic District also incorporates three parcels that do not have buildings upon them: 1.) a paved and fenced lot just west of 127 Gale St., 2.) a paved parking lot to the north of 260 S. Lake St., and 3.) a grass lot incorporated within the fenced bounds just south of 232 S. Lake St.

List of Properties:

1	301 S. River St.	Industrial	1911	Contributing
2	251 S. River St.	Industrial	1912	Contributing
3	227 S. River St.	Industrial	1921	Non-contributing
4	213 S. River St.	Commercial/Industrial	c. 1950	Contributing
5	110 Cross St.	Industrial	1925	Contributing
6	232 S. Lake St.	Commercial/Industrial	1903	Contributing
7	234-6 S. Lake St.	Commercial/Industrial	c. 1925	Non-contributing
8	234-6 S. Lake St.	Commercial/Industrial	1950	Non-contributing
9	260 S. Lake St.	Dutch Colonial Revival	c. 1939	Contributing
10	127 Gale St.	Commercial/Industrial	c. 1948	Contributing
11	119 Gale St.	Commercial/Industrial	c. 1925	Contributing

Middle Avenue Historic District

Kane, IL

Name of Property

County and State

The Middle Avenue Historic District has sufficient integrity for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. It has contributed to the strength of Aurora's reputation as an industrial city. The 1958 Sanborn map (Fig. 20), reveals that minimal changes have occurred along this section of Middle Ave. with some minor exceptions: 1.) 227 S. River St. (non-contributing) has experienced demolition of northern portions of the building, an addition dating to the 1970s to the south that included the demolition of a small building, and the refacing of the brick on the east façade at that time; 2.) both buildings at 234-236 S. Lake St. have modified exteriors; 3.) demolition of residential properties unrelated to the industrial history and outside the boundaries of the Middle Avenue Historic District.

1: 301 S. River Street - McCredie Building

Date: 1891, 1911

Architectural Classification: Industrial
Contributing

A small limestone building is present on the NW corner of the lot in all maps of the area from 1891 on. It appears consistent with the limestone building of coursed rubble and gable roof currently at that location. The building is load-bearing limestone masonry with wood/heavy timber framing. Two original openings with stone lintels and sills are located in the west elevation facing Middle Ave.: a gable window infilled with cement block and a lower window that has been boarded up. The east elevation also contains a gable window with cement block infill. At the 1st floor of the east elevation is a cement and brick partition, connecting the small stone building to the larger factory dated 1911 at the NE corner of the lot.

This two-and-a-half-story brick building fronts S. River St. at the east and Gale St. at the north. The building is masonry bearing with wood/heavy timber framing. The front (east) facade along River St. consists of three central bays with three large openings on each floor - bricked in at the basement level, containing three 15-light windows each at the 1st floor and infilled with rough-faced cement block (save one opening in the center) at the 2nd floor. Two smaller bays, one on either side, feature openings at the ground level capped by large stone lintels (post-historic door at the south, brick half wall with boarded over opening at the north) and slender brick pilasters capped with stone blocks extending up from the lintels to the cornice. Within these pilasters are two small windows at the 1st floor and a multi-light window at the 2nd floor, (boarded over at the north). This elevation also features a decorative stone plaque reading "19-McCREDIE-11" located in the center of the facade, between the 1st and 2nd floors.

The north elevation matches the east, but with four large central bays as opposed to three. The openings are boarded over at the basement level but retain the multiple 15-light windows on the 1st and 2nd floors. An early addition (c. 1913) extends west along Gale St., containing three more bays with windows at each level: boarded over at the basement level and featuring sets of double-hung, multi-light sash windows in five of the six upper openings. The west elevation retains many of its original openings, about half of which are boarded over. Most of the openings in the south elevation have been bricked in, with those at the basement level boarded over. The south elevation also features an early one-story brick addition (already present on the 1914

Middle Avenue Historic District

Kane, IL

Name of Property

County and State

Sanborn Maps) extending out from the western end and the remnants of a similar addition at the east.

2: 251 S. River Street - International Harvester

Date: 1912

Architectural Classification: Industrial
Contributing

International Harvester built a warehouse here in 1912; a four-story brick building totaling 60,000 square feet sits on this site in the southeast portion of the Middle Avenue Historic District. The building is load-bearing masonry with heavy timber structure and floor decks. The east elevation fronting S. River St. contains five bays of vitrified brick, three larger bays in the center with double sets of windows and two smaller bays on either side with single windows. The ground level features a cast concrete course and another cast concrete course level with the sills of the 1st floor windows, interrupted by the main entrance to the building located in the first large bay to the south. The entrance is comprised of a concrete entablature atop brick pilasters with decorative concrete brackets flanking three deeply-set transom windows. The opening, currently containing post-historic double doors, is surrounded by a concrete architrave and lintel. The two smaller bays contain recessed spandrel panels between the 1st/2nd and 2nd/3rd floors. Two concrete string courses are located at the 4th floor, level with the top and bottom of the windows therein. The lower sill course contains four sets of decorative concrete brackets that flank the two outer bays. The brick between the windows on this level features protruding courses, creating a subtle striped pattern and further defining the decorative "band" of the 4th story. The south facade facing Gale St., also of vitrified brick, features the same elements as the east side, but with seven larger bays in the center as opposed to three, and no door. This side also features openings at ground level for basement windows, now bricked in.

The west elevation fronting Middle Ave. contains four bays of regular brick. A covered platform, torn down in 2013,² was located along the 1st floor of this side and wrapped around the NW corner of the building, evidence of which can be seen in the clear demarcation between the 1st/2nd floors of "clean" and "dirty" brick. The openings at this level appear to have been altered, with large freight doors now bricked in and new windows set within the three southern bays. The window openings on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th floors all features concrete sills and arched brick lintels, with those in the north bay bricked in. Remnants of a painted advertisement for International Harvester are present on this side of the building, with bands of block text located above the 2nd, 3rd and 4th floor windows and running the entire length. An elevator shaft at the NW corner, extending above the 4th floor, also features a mural of the International Harvester logo - the letters IH within banded circles. Evidence of the same logo is also seen on the north and south sides of the elevator shaft.

The north elevation is made up of eight bays, the first of which (at the east) is an extension of the vitrified brick facade from the River St. side. The profile of an attached garage, (constructed in

² Building permit issued to Heartland Real Estate Holdings, 11/19/13.

Middle Avenue Historic District

Kane, IL

Name of Property

County and State

1912 along with the main building, no longer extant), can be seen above the 1st floor at this corner. The window openings in the western most bay have been bricked in and now contain smaller windows. Remnants of another International Harvester advertisement can be found on this elevation, with faint bands of text visible above the 3rd and 4th floor windows and additional text in the brick bays between some of the windows. All windows in the building have been replaced or boarded over. While some interior demo work was done in 2006, the building still retains many of the original rows of wooden beams and posts throughout the space, (Fig. 10).

3: 227 S. River Street - Miller-Bryant-Pierce

Date: 1921, enlarged 1927

Architectural Classification: Industrial

Non-contributing

Miller-Bryant-Pierce built this as a three-story building of reinforced concrete, measuring 60'x160' with a two-story wing. This original building was clad in rough-faced grey stone with terra cotta trimmings (Fig. 11).³ The building was enlarged in 1927 and an adjacent manufacturing plant at the north (no longer extant) was also added to the factory shortly thereafter.⁴ The building is reinforced concrete frame with concrete pan joists with masonry non-bearing walls.

Numerous other additions and expansions were made to the factory over the years and its appearance has been drastically altered, most notably in the 1970s, according to City of Aurora building permits.⁵ The south elevation and front (east) facade on S. River St. are now clad in yellow and red brick, and the arrangement of the window openings does not match up with historic photos. The north elevation currently features corrugated siding along most of its length, though the western end and the rear elevation facing Middle Ave. do still retain many elements of the original building, (Fig. 11 and 12). The original terra cotta cornice had likely been removed when the brick veneer was added in the 1970s. A cast concrete or Indiana limestone cap at the corner façade parapet has been added, likely atop the chiseled off terra cotta cornice. A note on the 1972 plans for the addition states, "Existing face brick recessed 4 ½" which indicates a likelihood that original brick materials lie beneath the yellow and red brick veneer. If non-historic materials were removed without damaging or destroying the original material beneath it and the terra cornice found to be intact or with ability to replicate, the property could become contributing.

Original, multi-light windows are visible on the 3rd and (part of the) 2nd floors on the west end of the north elevation. The west elevation still exhibits the original grid of reinforced concrete, and while most of the windows are boarded over, their arrangement matches that of the historic photo: one solid brick bay at the north followed by two bays with two windows on each floor and one bay with single windows on each floor. Further south is the addition of 1927, again

³ "Miller-Bryant-Pierce Build New Factory," *Office Appliances*, Vol. 43 (1921) 48.

⁴ "The House that Merit Built," *Centennial Biographical and Historical Record of Aurora*, 91.

⁵ Building permits issued to Shorr Paper Products, 1972, 1975 and 1983.

Middle Avenue Historic District

Kane, IL

Name of Property

County and State

displaying the same concrete grid and window arrangement. Later additions made in the 1970s are also present: infill between the two original buildings featuring a large brick smokestack, and a two-story addition with raised loading dock extending to the north (Figures 13 & 14).

4: 213 S. River Street

Date: c. 1950

Architectural Classification: Commercial/Industrial

Contributing

A brick building, labeled only as a warehouse with wood trusses and concrete floor, appears on the 1958 Sanborn Maps. This brief description is consistent with the current building at this location which appears to be of load-bearing masonry with wood frame and steel beam construction.

The east elevation fronting S. River St. features a painted brick facade with a simple, decorative parapet capped by long coping stones. It contains a central bay with three windows flanked by openings on either side that have been bricked in and a door at the northern end. The rear elevation echoes the front, with a simplified parapet along the top. It features an opening with steel doors in the center, a small cement block addition south of the doors and a loading dock platform extending across the entire length. The north and south elevations contain numerous bricked in openings, at least four on the north and two on the south.

5: 110 Cross Street - Valentine's Transfer and Storage Company

Date: 1925

Architectural Classification: Industrial

Contributing

This four-story building consists of a reinforced concrete frame with concrete panned joists and brick infill on the exterior walls. Each side contains four bays. The NE and SE corners of the building are open, with raised entrances opening onto Middle Ave. The north facade, facing Cross St., features openings in the two east bays, with a door and window and a set of double windows on the 1st floor and small windows on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th floors. As the "front" of the building, this elevation features some simple decorative elements as well, with soldier and stacked bond courses framing each area of brick infill within the concrete grid, and contrasting coping stones atop the brick cornice.

The west elevation features large, raised openings in the two center bays at the 1st floor, currently filled with corrugated metal, and small windows on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th floors. The south elevation features a loading dock along the entire length, with two rolling steel doors at the east and concrete brackets projecting out below each intersection of the grid. The first bay contains brick infill, while the three bays to the east are filled with larger combed blocks. Also visible on this side of the building is an elevator shaft extending above the second bay. Remnants of two murals are located on the east elevation. The first, at the top of the building and spanning the entire width, reads: "Valentine's Fireproof Warehouse" and the second, located just below on

Middle Avenue Historic District

Kane, IL

Name of Property

County and State

the northern half of the building, reads: "Allied Van Lines" and depicts an image of a moving truck.

6: 232 S. Lake Street - Pictorial Printing Company
Date: 1903, 2nd story c. 1920, north section 1953
Architectural Classification: Commercial/Industrial
Contributing

The building is of load-bearing masonry with steel frame structure and wood framed decks. A promotional brochure for the Pictorial Printing Company, the company who built the building, described the resulting factory as such:

This plant has approximately one hundred thousand square feet of floor space in the factory and warehouse, is pleasantly situated in the residence district, with side track facilities...It is T-shape and light and airy throughout. This building was erected for our own uses and we have added to it from time to time.⁶

Fig. 15 and 16 reflect some of these changes. Another substantial addition was completed in 1953, adding more factory space and doubling the facade along S. Lake St.

The front facade of the building along S. Lake St. is made up of three parts: the original building from 1903, a second floor addition from c. 1920 and the two-story addition from 1953 to the north. The south half of the building consists of three bays divided by brick pilasters, with each bay containing three windows. The first floor, faced with long, slender bricks, features a stone plinth course and contains a door in the central bay flanked by windows. The 2nd story is constructed of a more common brick and features a simple stepped brick parapet with contrasting coping stones. Each set of windows have connecting sills and lintels, with simple brick spandrel/frieze panels above the lintels and additional brick detailing above those on the 2nd floor.

The northern half of the building from 1953 closely mirrors the original. Both stories are faced with long, slender brick and it does not feature the brick spandrel panels or brick detailing above. The central bay is completely open at the 1st floor (for auto access) and the north bay contains a door flanked by windows. On the 2nd floor, the two outer bays each contain a large, multi-light window as opposed to three smaller. All windows and doors of the facade, in both the north and south portions, are replacements.

Beyond Lake St., the building extends back to Middle Ave. in a T-shape and is three stories high. All elevations are composed of bays divided by brick pilasters, with corbeled brick above the 3rd floor windows. Those along Middle Ave. (forming the cross of the T), contain two window openings in each bay at each floor, with connecting stone sills and arched brick lintels. The north and south elevations (forming the body of the T), contain single, large openings within each bay, also with stone sills. The vast majority of the openings on the north, south and east sides of the

⁶ Pictorial Packages: First Aid to More and Better Business. Aurora: Pictorial Paper Package Corporation, 1925.

Middle Avenue Historic District

Kane, IL

Name of Property

County and State

building are infilled with corrugated metal. Some are bricked in or filled with cement block, while a few on the 3rd floor along Middle Ave. contain non-historic sash windows. The elevation along Middle Ave. also features raised concrete platforms at the north and center for freight access.

7. 234-236 S. Lake St. (15-21-476-021)

Date: c. 1925, 1996

Architectural Classification: Commercial/Industrial

Non-contributing

This is a one-story gable roofed building of cinder block construction and is approximately 6,800 square feet in size. This building appears in a rendering from 1925 (Fig. 16) and on a 1958 Sanborn map (Fig. 20). The Aurora Township Assessor lists the building as constructed in 1996; though if any new construction occurred during that time, it followed the same footprint as shown on the 1958 Sanborn map. The appearance of the block that the building is constructed of today is modern looking and could have been placed atop the former building. The 1925 rendering depicts three pairs of wood, double-hung windows on the western facade; two pairs at the level of the first floor and one pair at the apex of the gable. This western façade now has a large overhead or sliding utility door and the windows are absent. Should the modern block be removed and reveal the original building materials beneath, this building may be considered contributing.

8. 234-236 S. Lake St. (15-21-476-009)

Date: 1950

Architectural Classification: Commercial/Industrial

Non-contributing

The footprint of this building is marked on the 1958 Sanborn map (Fig. 20) and labeled as "Recreation Building", likely serving the Pictorial Printing Company, given its proximity. It is a one-story gable roofed building with aluminum siding and is approximately 2,100 square feet in size. Should the modern aluminum siding be removed to reveal original building materials, this building may be considered contributing.

232 S. Lake St., the former Pictorial Printing Company, and the two accessory buildings (Buildings 7 and 8 in the list above) are all separate parcels. A Trustee's Deed lists both Buildings 7 and 8 as "commonly known as 234-236 S. Lake St." All three buildings have same ownership at present and are within the same fenced area. The three buildings likely functioned in tandem at the time of Pictorial Printing Company's use of the buildings as well.

9: 260 S. Lake Street - Filling Station

Date: c. 1939, addition 1960

Architectural Classification: Tudor Revival

Middle Avenue Historic District

Name of Property

Contributing

Kane, IL

County and State

This building is of load-bearing masonry and wood frame construction, built c. 1939 and a substantial addition built in 1960. The original building, facing S. Lake St. on the west, is a small brick building. The main portion features a steeply-gabled roof with chimneys at either end. The brick, currently painted white, is set in pattern with protruding bricks every few feet. An arched doorway and small arched window are located in the north half of the facade, with a cant bay window to the south. Extending to the north is an attached two-bay garage with an asymmetrical cross gable over the northernmost bay with corbeling beneath the lower, flared end. Ornamental details in this original building include brick lintels, copper gutters and bay windows above the door and bay window and sconces flanking both garage doors and south of the main entrance.

The north elevation shows the original building on the right (west), containing two large and one small multi-light windows. The gable roof at the front of the building transitions to a flat roof to the east. Beyond the original building, situated on the east side, is a single-story concrete block addition, also with a flat roof and numerous multi-light windows. This L-shaped addition wraps along the east and south sides of the building, with garage doors fronting S. Lake and Gale Streets.

10: 127 Gale St.

Date: c. 1948

Architectural Classification: Commercial/Industrial

Contributing

The commercial building built around 1948 is a single-story brick building with a flat roof. The building is load-bearing masonry with steel bow string trusses and wood joists. The front facade is composed of three large window bays in the center with glass block infill and a single door and large garage door to the east. It features a concrete string course extending out from the tops of the windows, concrete sills and foundation.

11: 119 Gale St.

Date: c. 1925

Architectural Classification: Commercial/Industrial

Contributing

The building is a single-story brick building with a shallow barrel roof. The building is load-bearing masonry with steel bow string trusses and wood joists. The front facade on Gale St. features five garage bays situated at ground level, framed by soldier course brick with contrasting square stones inset at the corners. Above the central bay is a simple geometric design formed by slightly protruding header bricks with stone detailing. The roofline features a pedimented brick parapet with stone coping set above a soldier course of brick.

On the east elevation along Middle Ave., a single door at the south end is set within a larger opening, with two windows to the north. Continuing on from there is a garage door, three large

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State

window bays and another garage door. All openings feature brick lintels and all windows have concrete sills. The roofline is mostly flat, with a simple stepped detail mimicking the front parapet located in the center. Additional alterations include re-roofing in 1973 and 2014.

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and 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.)

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

Criteria Considerations

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

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or building
-

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State

F. A commemorative property

G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
INDUSTRY

Period of Significance
1891-1966

Significant Dates
N/A

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

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

This district meets Criterion A for Industry for its role in the industrial history of Aurora. Following its charter in 1857, two major elements contributed greatly to the success of Aurora, IL: railroad and industry. The Middle Avenue Historic District represents a unique confluence of the two. It is a small, industrial neighborhood that developed around a specific railroad route known as the "Alley Job", significant for the transportation of material and products that enabled industries to flourish. The period of significance is from 1891, the date of the oldest property, to 1966, the fifty year cutoff for significance for the National Register.

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

History of Aurora

The city of Aurora began when two brothers, Joseph and Samuel McCarty, came to Illinois from New York in search of a location for their milling business in 1834. Stolp Island, located at a strategic point in the middle of the Fox River, provided an ideal spot with abundant waterpower. The brothers constructed their mill, along with log cabins and a dam across the east branch of the river. They laid out a plat of land in late 1835 on the east side of the river. Known as McCarty's Mills, it was bounded roughly by Benton, Plum and Flagg Streets and the Fox River.⁷

As the area developed, a settlement was also formed on the west side of the river. The larger East Aurora incorporated in 1845, while West Aurora did not come together until 1854. Though a charter in 1857 united the municipalities, natural rivalries existed between the two. Efforts to ease these tensions saw the majority of civic offices located on the "neutral" Stolp Island,⁸ including the city hall and post office, the Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Hall and eventually, the Carnegie Library.

⁷ City of Aurora Community Development Dept, Stolp Island Historic District, Nomination Form 10-900.

⁸ Catherine Bruck, "Aurora, IL", *Chicago Neighborhoods and Suburbs*, (2008) 97-98.

Middle Avenue Historic District

Kane, IL

Name of Property

County and State

The earliest industries in the city of Aurora were the saw and flour mills located along the Fox River. The Woolen Mills on Stolp Island and the Aurora Cotton Mills served local residents, eventually growing to provide for larger markets beyond the city. Only a few buildings remain to represent Aurora's earliest industrial history on Stolp Island: the Stolp Woolen Mill Dye House, the Stolp Woolen Mill Store and the Silver Plate Manufacturing Company which came just slightly after the mills. While Aurora continued to be prominent in textile manufacturing with three large corset companies and R&M Kaufman (dresses) in the 20th century, the city really became known for its metal works industries: the manufacturing of heavy construction equipment by Austin Western, Stephens Adamson and Barber-Greene, metal office equipment by Lyon Metal and AllSteel and hardware by Richard Wilcox. The railroad - specifically the Aurora Branch, which later became the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad - was the main catalyst for this.

History of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad

The earliest traces of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad can be found in a small line known as the Aurora Branch Railroad.

The process of bringing a railroad to Aurora began in the middle of the nineteenth century, as the city itself was still being formed. A charter for the Aurora Branch passed the state legislature on 9 February 1849, three potential routes were surveyed and eventually construction began in March of 1850 from East Aurora (by way of Batavia) to Turner Junction (West Chicago). From there, the line would then continue east on tracks of the Galena & Chicago Union Railroad and become the second railroad to serve the city of Chicago. Work on the new tracks was completed in September 1850, with the first train reaching Batavia from Turner Junction on September 2nd and the first to Aurora on September 21, 1850.⁹

In 1852, the Aurora Branch was purchased by a group of investors from Boston, MA. The two most prominent figures of the group were John Murray Forbes and Charles E. Perkins. Under their administration, the line was merged with numerous other railway branches and renamed the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad in 1855. By 1864, the CB&Q encompassed about 400 miles of track stretching from Burlington, IA to Quincy, IL - including its own line from Aurora to Chicago.

It continued expanding over the next two decades, eventually incorporating more than 200 other affiliates. Notable among these were the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad (H&St.J) and the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad (B&MR). The H&St.J extended across the state of Missouri, establishing Kansas City as a major rail center and providing a gateway to the Southwest part of the country. Alternately, the B&MR was located across Iowa with a portion eventually extending into Nebraska. By 1882, the line went as far west as Denver, CO.

As it moved west, the Burlington (as the CB&Q commonly became known) also increased its network of rails throughout the Midwest. By 1886, the railroad connected to St. Louis, Rock Island and as far north as the Twin Cities in Minnesota. According to the company history, all of this expansion "put Burlington in a position to carry grain and lumber south, while moving coal

⁹ Centennial, 172.

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State

and manufactured products to the north.” In 1901, the CB&Q was purchased by railroad magnate James J. Hill, owner of the Great Northern and Northern Pacific Railroads. During this time, the company spread even further, extending into Kansas, Wyoming, Montana and the Dakotas.

The CB&Q also expanded beyond just railway operations. As it grew, the Burlington became known as a “granger road”, a railroad used mainly for transporting the produce of farmers. The company was heavily invested in the promotion of agricultural innovation, with representatives aiding farmers and ranchers in areas such as crop selection, irrigation technique and soil conservation. The company was also granted tracts of land from Congress to promote settlement along its route. From 1870 to 1880, Burlington sold over two million acres of land in Missouri, Iowa and Nebraska.¹⁰ While fostering development and boosting local economies, the railroad also encouraged travel and promoted tourism to scenic sites across the country. The Zephyr, a stainless steel, diesel-powered passenger train, was introduced by the Burlington in 1934. These lightweight, speedy trains were immensely popular with the public and continued to be so even though train travel in general declined as the 20th Century progressed.

In 1970, the CB&Q merged with the Great Northern, Spokane, Portland & Seattle and Northern Pacific Railroads to become the Burlington Northern. A merger with the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe line in 1995 created the current Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad. Though all American passenger trains were nationalized through Amtrak in the 1970s, the BNSF continues to move freight all across the country and many of the Burlington’s main lines are still in operation today.

Aurora and the CB&Q Railroad Shops

In 1855, the decision was made to construct the Burlington’s permanent car shops outside Chicago and Aurora was chosen as the location. The shops, which produced and repaired all of the railway’s vehicles, were constructed on the east side of the city in 1855-56 for a cost of \$150,000. The original complex was made up of seven buildings and employed about 350 men. A large limestone roundhouse was at the center of the shops, with 22 stalls forming a semi-circle around a large turntable. The roundhouse was eventually expanded, with 40 stalls completing the circle by 1866.

As the Burlington Railroad expanded, so too did their car shops. The site had expanded to cover more than 70 acres by 1900, occupying the land along north Broadway all the way from Spring to Pierce Streets. The shops employed anywhere from 1,000 to 2,000 machinists, blacksmiths, carpenters and painters, producing and repairing the majority of the railroad’s locomotives, freight and passenger cars. These shops are credited with bringing abundant raw materials and a skilled labor force to Aurora, helping to serve their other industries, market and reputation. The railroad also provided easy transport of finished goods to a wider market.

For much of the late 19th and early 20th century, the CB&Q Railroad was the largest industry in the city, with its employees (2400 at its peak) comprising the foundation of the city’s population. Wanting to avoid being only a one-industry town, and wanting to take advantage of all the material and labor provided by the railroad, city planners in Aurora made a concerted effort to

¹⁰ The History of BNSF: A Legacy for the 21st Century, 11.

Middle Avenue Historic District

Kane, IL

Name of Property

County and State

attract new industry beginning around 1880. A committee consisting of local citizens C.L. Hoyt, T.N. Holden and J.B. Arnold developed a unique strategy, the "Aurora Plan", to entice industries to locate¹¹.

One of these negotiations was with Rathbone, Sard & Co. Stove Works of Albany, NY that was looking to expand to a westward location. The strategy the committee used was to secure options on 150 acres along the CB&Q of which "fifteen acres were given to the stove works, ten were reserved for other possible manufacturers, ten more were to be appropriated for sidetracks, and the remainder to be cut up into 500 city lots."¹² With lots selling off at \$200 to \$600 depending on location, the sale of the 500 lots resulted in \$100,000 which covered the land costs and infrastructure improvements required to lure the companies.¹³ Aurora was successful in drawing in Rathbone, Sard & Co. Stove Works (no longer extant), which located its company about .8 miles from the Middle Avenue Historic District. Though this building's location was south along the rail line from the subject district, its story is important to the manner in which the city's industry was built. By gifting empty lots and offering other incentives, the Aurora Chamber of Commerce was able to bring a large number of industries to the city.¹⁴

Another such company enticed with this technique was the Pictorial Printing Company of Chicago, the large factory between Lake St. and Middle Ave. that anchors the Middle Avenue Historic District. An article from February 2, 1941 in the Aurora Beacon-News recounted the story of how the industry came to locate in Aurora, citing that the owner became frustrated with the location of their business on S. State Street in Chicago because of the multiple rail cars running by everyday and the grime that overwhelmed the Chicago location. The Aurora Chamber of Commerce, with the help of banks and local Aurora citizens, donated three lots on Middle Ave. and one on Lake St. to Pictorial Printing and by 1903, the original building was constructed. This offer brought about the employment of 300 people, with their business serving 130 million people throughout 60,000 drug stores in the United States.¹⁵

This technique of offering incentives in the manner that Aurora did was known throughout the country as the "Aurora Plan"¹⁶, though an official plan never did materialize in the traditional sense of the word; rather it was a strategy of luring businesses through funds collected by various partners. While this type of boosterism began in Aurora's history in the late 1800s, the city's practice of it continued into the 20th century, with many other companies benefiting from the Chamber of Commerce's efforts and incentives. For example, in 1936 the Buckwalter Wallpaper Company occupied a building which was owned by the Aurora Chamber of Commerce. Additionally, the W.P. York Company, which produced advertising displays and demonstration pieces, benefited from a building managed by the Chamber on the east side of the River.¹⁷

¹¹ Edwards & Edwards, 60.

¹² Edwards & Edwards, 60.

¹³ Kane County History, 587.

¹⁴ Charles Pierce Burton, *Aurora: From Covered Wagon to Stream-lined Zephyr*, (1937) 34-35.

¹⁵ *Aurora Beacon-News*, February 2, 1941.

¹⁶ Edwards & Edwards, 60.

¹⁷ Carlson, 36-37.

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State

The "Alley Job" and the development of Middle Avenue

In 1882, the CB&Q was granted right of way for the length of Middle Ave. by the city of Aurora. A daily run - known as the "Alley Job" - was set up to serve the industries of the city, running along Middle Ave. on the west side, and between S. Broadway and the river, then up LaSalle St. on the east side. Up until the construction of the Eola Yard in 1916, the Alley Job originated out of the Aurora freight yards. The tracks left the main line just south of Gale St., continued up past New York St. and eventually connected to the Chicago and Northwestern line at the north.

The Alley Job was a very sought-after job within the railroad, generally run by senior switchmen. It offered lucrative pay and operated without direct supervision from the yardmasters. It ran seven days a week, 10-14 hour days, up until 1952 when it was reduced to 6 days a week. Some of the industries along the route were: the Aurora Cotton Mills, the Aurora Beacon News, Standard Oil, McCredie Oil, Western United Gas & Electric, Miller Packing, Magill Beverage and Crane Plumbing Supply. The Alley Job continued to run well into the 1980s, by which time most of the industries on the line were shuttered or relocated.¹⁸

This particular job served three main types of industry - manufacturers, distributors and warehouses. Located right in the center of the old Alley Job, the Middle Avenue Historic District contains all three types: Pictorial Printing and Miller-Bryant-Pierce (manufacturing), International Harvester and Dietz Industrial Supply (distributing) and Valentine's Storage (warehouse). Anecdotal evidence of this area includes shipments of coal for the industries' boilers in open hopper cars (pre-WWII), card stock and paper in box cars for the Pictorial Printing Co, large crates of carbon black for the Miller-Bryant-Pierce Co. and all manner of things for the Valentine Storage warehouse - including carloads of flour at one point.¹⁹

Located on the west side of the Fox River, the Middle Avenue Historic District was primarily a residential neighborhood until the beginning of the 20th century. Up to that point, the majority of industry and manufacturing in Aurora was located either on Stolp Island or the east side of the river. With its close vicinity to downtown and the addition of the CB&Q rail line along Middle Ave. though, this location was bolstered by the city's continued economic growth and began to draw various factories and industries of its own in the early 1900s.

The Pictorial Printing Company at 232 S. Lake St. was the first large factory to be built in the district, constructed in 1903, with a major addition in 1920. The Miller-Bryant-Pierce Company was the second to move in, first occupying 301 S. River St. from 1911 and then building their own factory at 227 S. River St. in 1921. In 1912, International Harvester constructed a large office/repair shop/warehouse at the corner of S. River and Gale Streets. The erection of a fireproof warehouse by Valentine's Transfer and Storage Company in 1925 at Cross St. completed the construction of the district's major, dominant buildings.

¹⁸ Leo Phillipp, "The Alley Job," *Burlington Route Historical Society Bulletin*, No. 51 (2015).

¹⁹ Correspondence with Leo Phillipp of Yorkville, IL, whose grandfather worked the Alley Job.

Middle Avenue Historic District

Kane, IL

Name of Property

County and State

A distinctive filling station was constructed at the corner of Gale and S. Lake Streets in 1939. The rest of the area gradually filled in with smaller warehouses and retail spaces on Gale and S. River Streets. Both Miller-Bryant-Pierce and Pictorial Printing Company continued to expand over the years, adding substantial additions to their respective factories. International Harvester gave way to All Steel Equipment Manufacturing at 251 S. River St., though they did stay in the district with a truck sales and service location at 119 Gale St. from 1926-1969.

1: 301 S. River Street - McCredie Building

This property was originally occupied by Mix & Plum, two prominent figures in Aurora's early history who established their merchant and coal business "away back when Aurora was an infant city."²⁰ Though the business was run by various other figures from 1879-1909, it appears the deed for the coal yards was still held by Mix and Plum, for that is whom James McCredie purchased the property from in 1909.²¹

McCredie operated his coal yards in the southern portion of the lot. In 1911, a factory was built on the NE corner for the Miller-Bryant-Pierce Company, (Fig. 3).²² The west elevation features a decorative stone plaque reading "19-McCREDIE-11" commemorating the owner and operator of the coal yards and the year in which the factory was built. M-B-P outgrew the space within ten years (building a new facility at 227 S. River St. in 1921), and the building housed a variety of industrial occupants for most of the 20th century. Various coal sheds and other storage buildings were also erected and torn down throughout the years, (Fig. 5).

2: 251 S. River Street - International Harvester

The International Harvester Company was born in Chicago, IL out of the coming together of Charles McCormick's family reaper business and a competitor, William Deering, and his harvester factory. The companies merged along with the Plano Manufacturing Co. and two smaller agricultural equipment manufacturers to form International Harvester in the late 1890s. The 20th century proved very profitable for International Harvester and they were one of the premier industrial corporations in the United States; the bulk of operation being conducted in Chicago and its suburbs, Aurora being one of them.²³

A postcard dated 1909 reveals the International Harvester Company located in a smaller three-story brick building in Aurora at its earlier location on N. River St., showing it had an earlier, smaller presence before its construction of a brick warehouse in 1912 at 251 S. River St. (Fig. 6 & 7). The parcel on which the warehouse was built had been residential with the dwelling demolished to accommodate the International Harvester's warehouse.

²⁰ "Profile on Case & Zimmer, Leading Coal Merchants," *Holland's City Directory of Aurora*, 1890.

²¹ Deed issued to James McCredie and his wife for all lots 1, 2, and 3 in block three of Hall's addition to West Aurora, 1909.

²² Centennial, 91.

²³ Wilson, Mark R., Stephen R. Porter, and Janice L. Reiff. "International Harvester Co." *Dictionary of Leading Chicago Businesses (1820-2000)*. Encyclopedia of Chicago, n.d. Web. 12 April 2016.

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State

In 1912, a company publication for International Harvester contained a write-up about the opening of a new warehouse in Aurora, IL. The building was described as “four stories high, with a deep basement, built of vitrified brick and embellished with Bedford stone.” Containing 60,000 square feet of space, it had offices on the 2nd floor and a repair department on the 3rd floor - reportedly the largest and most complete IH [International Harvester] repair shop in the country, (Fig. 8).²⁴

3: 227 S. River Street - Miller-Bryant-Pierce

The property located at 227 S. River St. was a residence and tin shop during the early part of the 20th century. In 1921, the Miller-Bryant-Pierce typewriter ribbon/carbon paper factory began construction of a new factory at this location, having outgrown their space of the previous several years at 301 S. River St. According to an article in a trade journal from the time, the new Miller-Bryant-Pierce factory was a three-story building of reinforced concrete, measuring 60'x160' and featuring a two-story wing for housing boilers, furnaces and other equipment. Per the article, the building was clad in rough-faced grey stone with terra cotta trimmings, (Fig. 11).²⁵ The building was enlarged in 1927 and an adjacent manufacturing plant at the north (no longer extant) was also added to the factory shortly thereafter.²⁶

4: 213 S. River Street

According to early city maps, this property was residential at the turn of the century. Around 1920, the dwelling appears to have been torn down and the lot was empty for some time. A brick building, labeled only as a warehouse with wood trusses and concrete floor, appears on the 1958 Sanborn Maps. This brief description is consistent with the current building at this location.

5: 110 Cross Street - Valentine's Transfer and Storage Company

This property appears to have been residential until at least 1921, before being acquired by the Valentine Transfer and Storage Company. The company, founded by Lewis H. Valentine in August of 1911, was originally located on Downer Place in Aurora. In 1925, Valentine constructed the fireproof warehouse at Cross St. Billed as “the only one of its kind in the Fox River Valley”, the warehouse stored a variety of household items and assorted merchandise.²⁷

6: 232 S. Lake Street - Pictorial Printing Company

The Pictorial Printing Company was founded in Chicago and was known as the world's largest manufacturer of prescription labels and boxes. In 1902, O.P. Bassett, the owner of the Pictorial Printing Company of Chicago, was looking to relocate his paper box manufacturing business to

²⁴ “Warehouse Dedication at Aurora,” *Harvester World*, Vol. 3-4, (1912).

²⁵ “Miller-Bryant-Pierce Build New Factory,” *Office Appliances*, Vol. 43 (1921) 48.

²⁶ Centennial, 91.

²⁷ Centennial, 65.

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State

Aurora. The Aurora Chamber of Commerce donated three lots on Middle Ave. and one lot on S. Lake St. to Pictorial. Their successful business employed 300 Aurorans and their demand for prescriptions served 130 million people throughout 60 drug stores within the United States.²⁸ A promotional brochure for the company described their Aurora factory as such:

This plant has approximately one hundred thousand square feet of floor space in the factory and warehouse, is pleasantly situated in the residence district, with side track facilities...It is T-shape and light and airy throughout. This building was erected for our own uses and we have added to it from time to time.²⁹

Fig. 15 and 16 reflect some of these changes. Another substantial addition was completed in 1953, adding more factory space and doubling the facade along S. Lake St.

7. 234-236 S. Lake St. (15-21-476-021)

This building likely served as a warehouse building for storage of materials to the Pictorial Printing Company.

8. 234-236 S. Lake St. (15-21-476-009)

The footprint of this building is marked on the 1958 Sanborn map (Fig. 20) and labeled as "Recreation Building", likely serving the Pictorial Printing Company, given its proximity.

232 S. Lake St., the former Pictorial Printing Company, and the two accessory buildings (Buildings 10 and 11 in the list above) are all separate parcels. A Trustee's Deed lists both Buildings 10 and 11 as "commonly known as 234-236 S. Lake St." All three buildings have same ownership at present and are within the same fenced area. The three buildings likely functioned in tandem at the time of Pictorial Printing Company's use of the buildings as well.

9: 260 S. Lake Street - Filling Station

According to city directories, this property was residential through 1937. The first record for the current building appears in 1939 for the Clark Bros. Service Station. Various gas stations and auto service businesses occupied the space over the years, with the longest being Dutch, Don & Rich's Pure Oil Service Gas Station (later Rich's Oil Station) from 1943 to 1978. A substantial addition was built in 1960.³⁰

While this building was not necessarily serviced by the railroad, it does represent another interesting aspect of the Alley Job. Throughout its history, the building has always been associated with automobiles: as the service station for the first forty years and then as an auto repair shop, a used car lot and currently, a cab company. As some workers of the Alley Job recall, cars played an important, albeit counterproductive, roll in their job: "One thing stayed

²⁸ "Pictorial Paper Package World Leader In Line," *Aurora Beacon-News*, February 2, 1941.

²⁹ Pictorial Packages: First Aid to More and Better Business. *Aurora: Pictorial Paper Package Corporation*, 1925.

³⁰ Building permit issued to Rich's Oil, 10/6/60.

Middle Avenue Historic District

Kane, IL

Name of Property

County and State

constant right up until the end...conflicts between autos and trains...Bones Mathers (a former switchman) often told of how many cars had to be towed in the north end of the alley."³¹ The trains of the Alley Job crossed every street in downtown Aurora for much of the twentieth century. As automobiles became more and more prevalent, one can imagine the daily clashes between the cars and the trains.

10: 127 Gale St.

The commercial building at this property appears to have been built around 1948, with various trucking and industrial supply companies occupying the space for the next twenty years.

11: 119 Gale St.

This property appears to have been residential up through the first quarter of the 20th century. In 1926, it is listed as a retail and service store for International Harvester, business which continued there until the 1960s.

Throughout the 20th century, the Middle Avenue Historic District remained an industrial and retail area. While a couple of smaller structures were torn down, the majority of the district is remarkably intact. The same cannot be said for the other areas along the Alley Job route.

Some of the original buildings do still populate the route on the east side of the river, including the CB&Q roundhouse (which has been repurposed) and shops along S. Broadway and S. LaSalle St. such as barbers, grocers, and drugstores. These buildings and uses were focused on the service industry and providing everyday retail goods to consumers and served a different role in the community than the manufacturers and warehouses that populated the Middle Avenue Historic District.

Other manufacturers were scattered along the Alley Job route. A 1914 Sanborn map indicates that two larger manufacturers were located on the east side of the river along the route: Love Brothers Foundry and the Wilcox Manufacturing Company (Fig. 21). These buildings are no longer standing. A 1958 Sanborn map shows the former Aurora Cotton Mills that used to operate at the northern tip of the Alley Job on the west side of the River; this building has since been demolished and a parking lot to serve Hollywood Casino has replaced it (Fig. 22). One large manufacturer, Richards-Wilcox Company, a company that combined the aforementioned Wilcox Manufacturing Company and the Richards Manufacturing Company, built a factory at 600 S. Lake St. in 1903 and produces sliding hangers for parlor doors, door hangers, elevator gates, and hardware.³² This building is still standing; it has experienced numerous additions and modernizations and sits separated from the Middle Avenue Historic District approximately 1300 feet south of the point of the "V" shape of the Alley Job of the CB&Q.

³¹ Correspondence with Leo Phillipp.

³² Edwards & Edwards, 66.

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State

The route of the Alley Job served manufacturers, distributors, and warehouses in the Middle Avenue Historic District; with the majority of these having footprints that have remained largely intact. This compact district, while connected to other industrial operations via the route is distinct in the manner in which the buildings that comprise it were constructed and remain until present – with close proximity to each other. The most notable of changes have occurred at 227 S. River St., the former Miller-Bryant-Pierce building with notable changes to the façade, a warehouse addition, and minor demolition to the north; however, the bulk of the original footprint remains intact and represents the industrial history that this building contributed to the Middle Avenue Historic District. With most of the buildings served by the railroad still extant on either side of the street, the Middle Avenue Historic District still retains the industrial feel the neighborhood would have had in the Alley Job’s heyday.

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State

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Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 7 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 41°45'23"N | Longitude: 88°19'22"W |
| 2. Latitude: 41°45'19"N | Longitude: 88°19'17"W |
| 3. Latitude: 41°45'14"N | Longitude: 88°19'25"W |
| 4. Latitude: 41°45'18"N | Longitude: 88°19'29"W |

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State

**Or
UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Roughly bounded by S Lake Street to the north, Cross Street to the east, S River Street to the south and Gale Street to the west, excluding the northern half of the block btw. S Lake St. /Cross St. /Middle Ave. and including 301 S. River St.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

These boundaries were selected because the area within contributed to the industrial history of Aurora. The production and operations that happened within the walls of the buildings of the district point are snapshots of Aurora's industry. The influence of the CB&Q's Alley Job contributed to the transport of goods to aid in these businesses' operations along the route. All of the major buildings are largely intact, despite façade changes to the three non-contributing buildings, and these buildings appear along the old rail route much as they did in the first half of the 20th century.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Nicole Seguin and Ashley Sarver (Gary W. Anderson Architects)

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State

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Additional Documentation

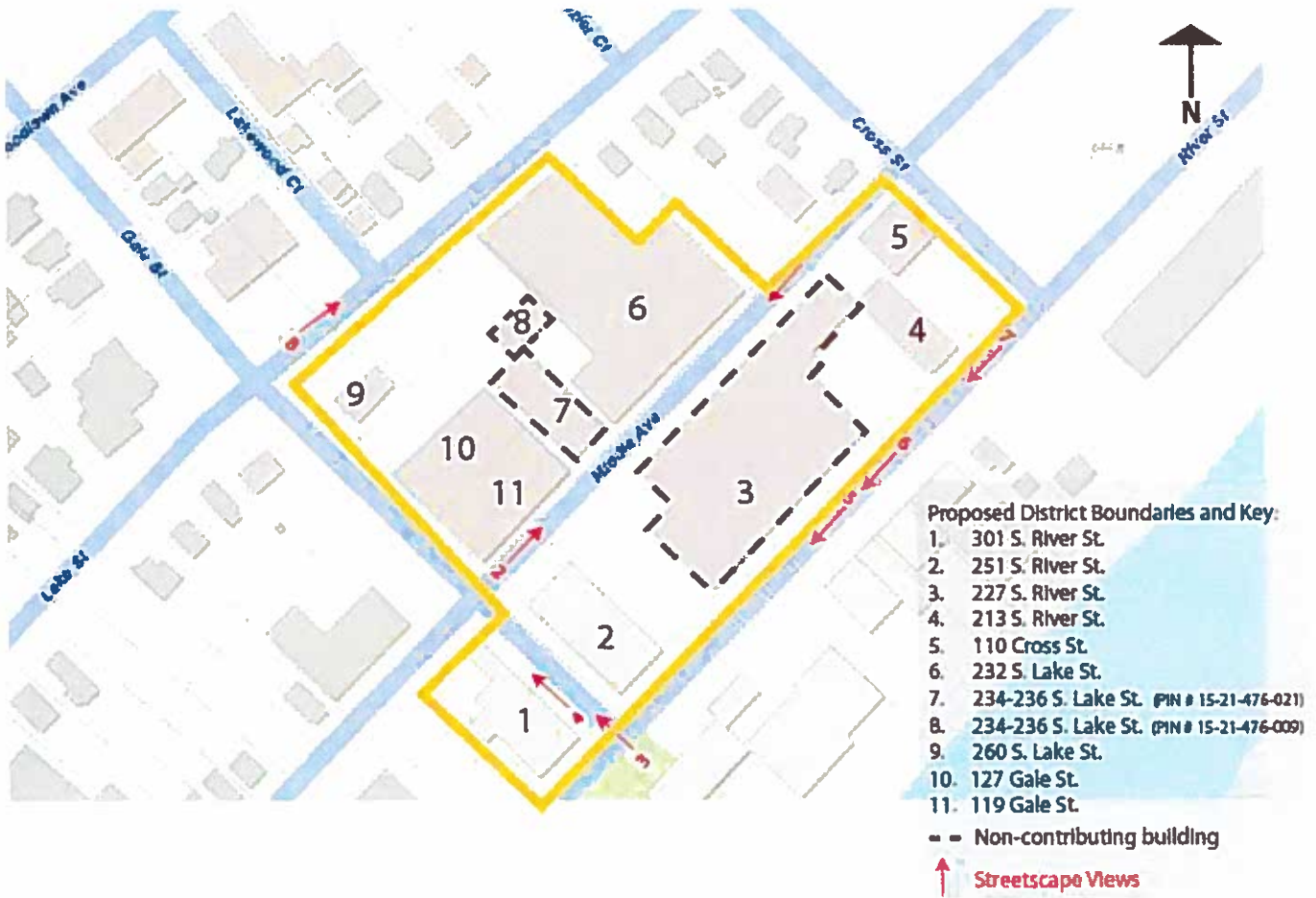
Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Middle Avenue Historic District
 Name of Property

Kane, IL
 County and State

8 buildings contribute to the Middle Avenue Historic District
Middle Avenue Historic District
 Aurora, IL



3 buildings are non-contributing to the Middle Avenue Historic District

Latitude: 41°45'23"N

Longitude: 88°19'22"W

Latitude: 41°45'19"N

Longitude: 88°19'17"W

Latitude: 41°45'14"N

Longitude: 88°19'25"W

Latitude: 41°45'18"N

Longitude: 88°19'29"W

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State

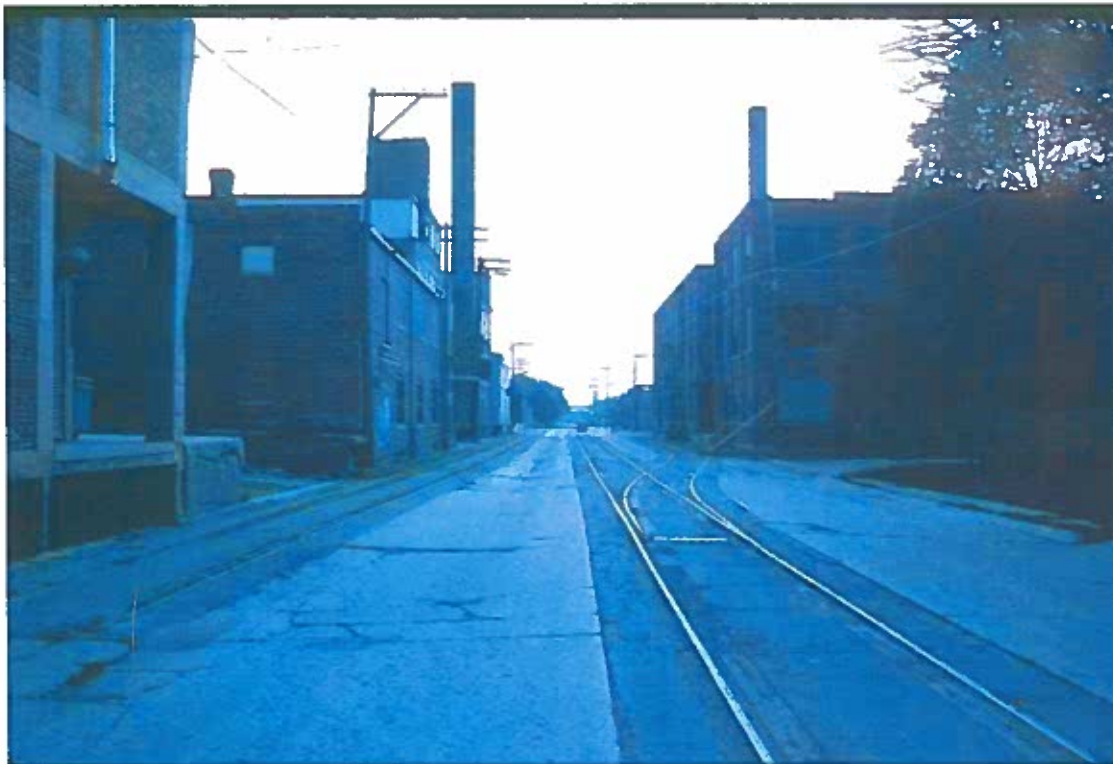


Fig. 1 – Historic photo looking south down Middle Ave. from Cross St.



Fig. 2 – Current view

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State



Fig. 3 – Rendering of Miller-Bryant-Pierce factory at S. River and Gale Streets
Miller Line Typing Tips, Spring 1927



Fig. 4 – Current view of 301 S. River St. – East and North elevations

Middle Avenue Historic District

Kane, IL
County and State

Name of Property

coal chauffeurs in the city. We handle our coal more economically than from ground storage, release our cars faster, saving all demurrage, and deliver coal in better condition to the consumer." The concern figuring on a record of four months, has worked out a unique system of pay for its drivers, which nets the drivers a bonus of from \$8 to \$10 a week, and insures prompt delivery of coal when it is demanded in a hurry. A "delivery week" of seventy-five tons has been established, each driver who delivers seventy-five tons in a week receiving the union scale. For each ton over seventy-five delivered in a week, the chauffeur is paid twenty-five cents. This has resulted in drivers delivering from 100 to 115 tons a week and in a satisfied group of men. "We get more coal out than otherwise the men



Fig. 5 – McCredie Coal Pocket (erected 1916, not extant) with the International Harvester building at 251 S. River St. visible in the background.

The Black Diamond, Vol. 63, 1919



Fig. 6 – Postcard from 1909 showing International Harvester's original location on N. River St.

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State



Fig. 7 – Close up of postcard from 1909 indicating International Harvester’s original location on N. River St.
Accessed via web. Ebay seller johnm9732



Fig. 8 – Photo of the new International Harvester building at S. River and Gale Streets.
Harvester World, Vol. 3-4, 1912

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State



Fig. 9 – Current view of 251 S. River St. – South and East elevations



Fig. 10 – Current view of interior of 251 S. River St.

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State

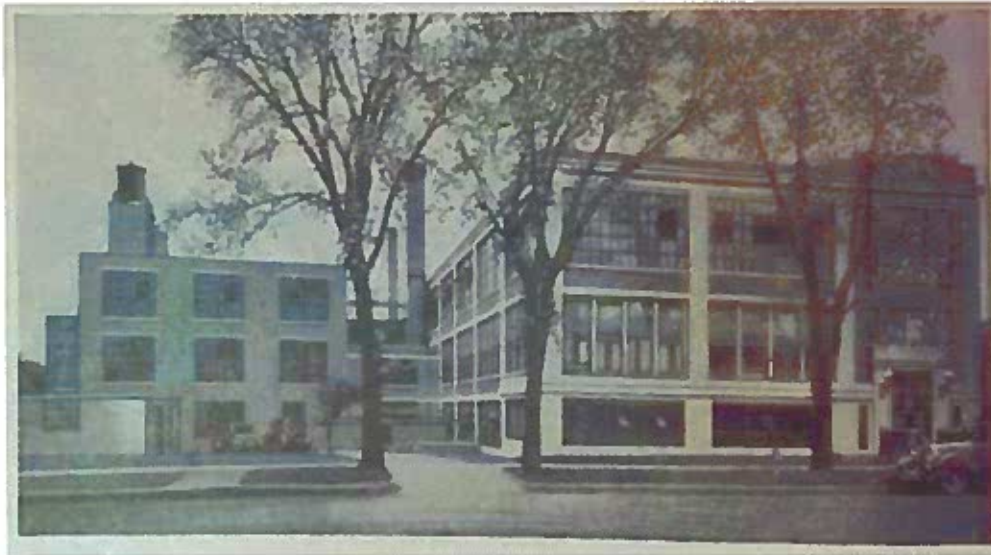


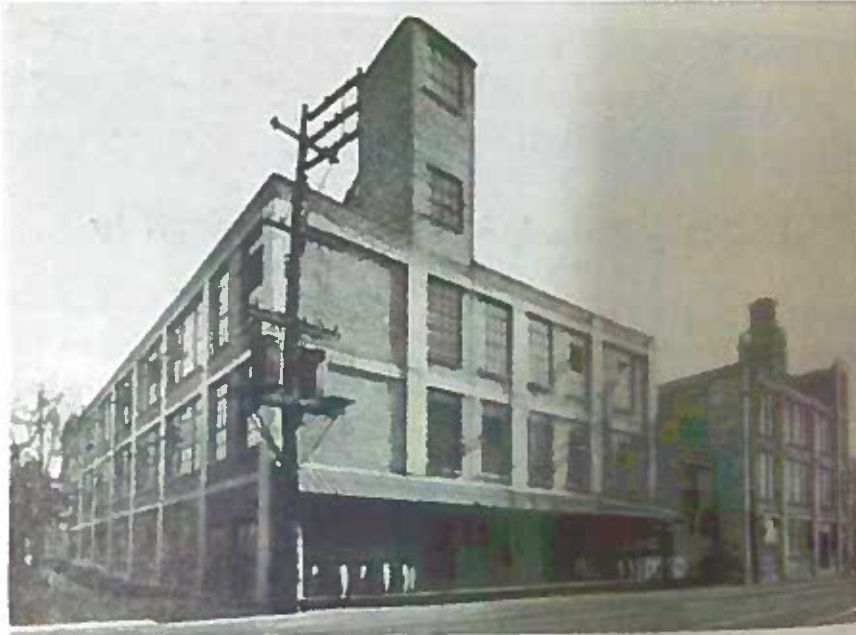
Fig. 11 – Photo of the Miller-Bryant-Pierce factory on S. River St.
Centennial Biographical and Historical Record of Aurora, 1937



Fig. 12 – Current view of 227 S. River St. – East elevation

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State



**REAR VIEW OF ENLARGED PLANT
NEW ADDITION AT RIGHT**

Fig. 13 – Photo of Miller-Bryant-Pierce factory from Middle Ave.
Miller Line Typing Tips, Spring 1927



Fig. 14 – Current view from Middle Ave.

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State



Fig. 15 – Rendering of the Pictorial Printing factory on S. Lake St.
A Sturdy Oak, 1906



Fig. 16 – Rendering of the Pictorial Printing factory illustrating 2nd floor addition and warehouse
Pictorial Packages: First Aid to More and Better Business, 1925

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State



Fig. 17 – Current view of 232 S. Lake St. – West elevation

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State

Historic Maps

Fig. 18



Sanborn Map of Aurora, IL
1897

-  "Alley Job"
-  Proposed District

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State

Fig. 19



Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State

Fig. 20



Sanborn Map of Aurora, IL
1958

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State

Fig. 21



Sanborn map of Aurora, IL (Love Brothers & Wilcox Mfg Co.)
1914

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State

Fig. 22



Sanborn map of Aurora, IL (Aurora Cotton Mills)
1958

Middle Avenue Historic District
Name of Property

Kane, IL
County and State

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Middle Avenue Historic District

City or Vicinity: Aurora

County: Kane

State: IL

Photographer: Ashley Sarver, Nicole Seguin

Date Photographed: 9 June 2015

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 37. View south down Middle Ave. from Cross St.
- 2 of 37. View north down Middle Ave. from Gale St.
- 3 of 37. View west down Gale St. from S. River St.
- 4 of 37. View east down Gale St. from S. River St.
- 5 of 37. View southwest down River St. towards Gale St.
- 6 of 37. View south down River St. towards Gale St.
- 7 of 37. View south down River St. towards Gale St.
- 8 of 37. View north down Lake St. towards Cross St.
- 9 of 37. 301 S. River St. - east elevation
- 10 of 37. 301 S. River St. - NE corner
- 11 of 37. 301 S. River St. - north elevation
- 12 of 37. 301 S. River St. - stone building at NW corner
- 13 of 37. 301 S. River St. - south elevation
- 14 of 37. 251 S. River St. - east elevation
- 15 of 37. 251 S. River St. - NE corner
- 16 of 37. 227 S. River St. - east elevation
- 17 of 37. 227 S. River St. - southeast corner
- 18 of 37. 227 S. River St. - NW corner
- 19 of 37. 227 S. River St. - west elevation
- 20 of 37. 213 S. River St. - east elevation

Middle Avenue Historic District

Kane, IL
County and State

Name of Property

- 21 of 37. 213 S. River St. - SE corner
- 22 of 37. 110 Cross St. - north elevation
- 23 of 37. 110 Cross St. - west elevation
- 24 of 37. 110 Cross St. - south elevation
- 25 of 37. 110 Cross St. - east elevation
- 26 of 37. 232 S. Lake St. - west elevation
- 27 of 37. 232 S. Lake St. - S end of west elevation
- 28 of 37. 232 S. Lake St. - N end of west elevation
- 29 of 37. 232 S. Lake St. - east elevation
- 30 of 37. 232 S. Lake St. - SE corner
- 31 of 37. 260 S. Lake St. - west elevation
- 32 of 37. 260 S. Lake St. - NW corner
- 33 of 37. 127 Gale St. - south elevation
- 34 of 37. 119 Gale St. - south elevation
- 35 of 37. 119 Gale St. - east elevation
- 36 of 37. 234-236 S. Lake St. (15-21-476-021) – east elevation
- 37 of 37. 234-236 S. Lake St. (15-21-476-009) – east elevation

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.