

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Theodore Roosevelt High School

other names/site number Gary-Roosevelt High School

### 2. Location

street & number 730 West 25<sup>th</sup> Street  N/A not for publication

city or town Gary  N/A vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Lake code 089 zip code 46407-3596

### 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  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

*Deputy S.H.P.O.*  
Signature of certifying official  
Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer  
Title

10/26/2012  
Date  
IN-DNR  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

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

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	district
1	1	site
0	2	structure
0	0	object
2	3	<b>Total</b>

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

Indiana's Public Common and High Schools

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: school

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**Current Functions**  
 (Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: school

RECREATION AND CULTURE: sports facility

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
 (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS:  
 Colonial Revival

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**Materials**  
 (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: CONCRETE

walls: BRICK

STONE: Limestone

roof: ASPHALT

other: METAL: Copper

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### **Narrative Description**

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

#### **Summary Paragraph**

Theodore Roosevelt High School is a large school complex built in three construction campaigns: 1930, 1946, and 1968-71. It is located in a four-block park setting in the heart of one of Gary Indiana's residential neighborhoods. The two earlier building campaigns which followed the plans of school architect, William Butts Ittner, produced a Colonial Revival style building centered around a Classical entrance pavilion that terminated in a tall cupola taking its inspiration from Independence Hall in Philadelphia. The final construction phase added to and encased the earlier building with wings that, though simplified, respected the earlier parts of the building. The building contains an auditorium that is largely intact from its 1930 construction date and a gymnasium that is substantially original. It also contains a newer gym and the substantially altered cafeteria. Hallways and classrooms in the older sections retain their terrazzo floors, original room sizes, ceramic building block and woodwork. Materials and surfaces in the most recent parts of the building reflect its later construction.

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### **Narrative Description**

#### Exterior

Theodore Roosevelt High School is a large, three/four story building situated near the southern end of an eighteen acre park-stadium complex in a residential section of central Gary, Indiana. The area is bordered by 21<sup>st</sup> Street on the north, 25<sup>th</sup> Street on the south, Jackson Street on the east, and Harrison Street on the west. The school complex occupies the southern two-thirds of this four block site and Roosevelt City Park occupies the northern third. The school faces south towards 25<sup>th</sup> Street and sits approximately two hundred fifty feet from the street on a flat lawn with scattered evergreen trees. The building's initial phase of construction was in 1929-30 with subsequent significant additions/changes carried out in 1946 and 1968-70.

The plan for the building was intended to be U-shaped according to the architect's blueprints with north-south classroom wings intended to run perpendicular to the primary elevation.<sup>1</sup> The 1930 and 1946 sections of the building are sited parallel to 25<sup>th</sup> Street and organized around the pedimented entrance pavilion that was part of the 1930 building campaign. The school, however, was constructed in phases with the entrance pavilion, east wing and its associated north-south wing constructed in 1930. That gave the classroom part of the building an L configuration. An auditorium, gymnasium, locker rooms, power plant, and special purpose classrooms, also constructed in 1930, produced an overall, rectangular footprint. In 1946 the classroom wing was added west of the entrance providing balance to the 25<sup>th</sup> Street elevation. A separate shop building was also constructed at that time. In the final phase of construction, 1968-71, a substantial addition was constructed east of the existing school and connected so as to form courtyards for light. That same building campaign encased the entire north side of the existing school and extended a wing northward that contained a band room, natatorium and new gymnasium. A connector to the separate shop building was also added at that time.

The school was constructed with a reinforced concrete foundation and steel superstructure. The outer walls are clad in red brick laid in Flemish bond with limestone accents. The building's historic wood, double hung, nine-over-nine windows were replaced circa 1970 with aluminum frame awning windows that fit the original openings. The roof of the entrance pavilion and the school's 25<sup>th</sup> Street elevation roof are gabled and clad in asphalt shingle. A tall, multi-stage lantern rises from a square brick base located on the main roof behind the entrance pavilion pediment. The roofs of the pavilions at the east and west ends of the main elevation are flat and surfaced in asphalt. Parts of the 1946 construction and the 1968-71 additions are also flat roofed.

In the original design the entrance pavilion received the greatest amount of stylistic enrichment in order to clearly distinguish it as the focus of the 25<sup>th</sup> Street elevation. This gabled projecting section is treated as a temple front that is raised on a one-story podium. Four monumental Doric pilasters rise through the second and third floors of the pavilion to support the pedimented gable. The central bay of the pavilion, twice as wide as the end bays, on the ground floor is comprised of a limestone entrance feature with paired Doric columns that support a full entablature. Limestone quoins enrich the junction of the brick wall with the entrance. A flight of seven limestone steps provides access to the entrance whose original wood paneled doors and transom recessed behind the columns have been replaced by steel doors. The

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<sup>1</sup>Ittner Architects of St. Louis, 611 10<sup>th</sup> Street, has a set of the original plans for the building

columned entry in turn supports a tall Venetian window motif that serves as a screen in front of a recessed three part window. The distance between the window and its Venetian screen reads as a balcony. The story-high base of the pavilion on which the four pilasters rest has bands of brickwork under each pilaster that simulate quoined corners. The pilasters themselves have limestone bases and capitals but brick shafts. They support an entablature of brick architrave/frieze and limestone cornice that defines the bottom of the pediment. Window openings occur on each floor of the pavilion. On the ground floor wide windows fill the space between the brickwork quoining. At the second floor, the windows rest on a limestone stringcourse that also supports the pilasters and wraps around the entire elevation. The second floor windows are crowned by stepped lintels that contain a swag motif in relief. The third floor windows have limestone sills and soldier arches with limestone keystones. The pediment contains an oval opening framed in limestone that is set between limestone festoons.

The three story wings extending east and west from the entrance pavilion have regular bays on each floor with an a-b-a grouping of windows in each bay. All window openings are topped by soldier arches. The wings are terminated by projecting end pavilions that rise the full three-story height of the building. The ground floors of these pavilions have simulated quoin treatment at the outer corners and inset semi-octagonal bays. Window openings in the bays are crowned by semicircular limestone panels that create the impression that the openings are arched. The rooflines of these bays are finished with limestone parapets that are accented by urns. On the upper two floors of the pavilions, window openings are flat arched with the exception of the middle third floor opening which also has a semicircular limestone panel.

Portions of the north elevation of the 1930 phase of construction are still visible, though attached to and partially surrounded by the 1968-71 additions. A four story, flat roof section corresponding in location to the entrance pavilion on the south elevation is five bays wide. Its vertical ranks of window openings are recessed slightly from the rest of the wall plane and all but the center bay are surmounted by blind arches. The center bay is narrower than all others giving a sense of symmetry to this part of the elevation. Window bays in the 1930 east wing are similarly recessed and surmounted by blind arches. The original window sash, as on the rest of the building, has been replaced with aluminum frame awning windows or, in some cases the openings have been infilled with red brick laid in Flemish bond.

The newest sections of the school, though simpler in massing and detail, are sheathed in red brick that is distinguishable from the brick in the older building but compatible. It is also laid in Flemish bond which provides continuity with the earlier parts of the building. Sections visible from 25<sup>th</sup> Street also continue the limestone stringcourse above the ground floor. Windows, where they occur, are shallower in height than those in the earlier construction having four light (2 x 2) metal frames. The 1968-71 construction is connected to the earlier building using connector hallways at those locations where exterior doors were located. On the west elevation, a large limestone Roosevelt High School shield is set in bas relief. Other features, such as the unadorned limestone wall plane above a south-facing entrance on the 25<sup>th</sup> Street elevation indicate its more recent construction

### Interior

Throughout the 1930 and 1946 sections of the school the architect specified glazed ceramic building block and concrete block covered by plaster for the walls and terrazzo floor surfaces. Wood is used for doors, door surrounds, cabinetry, and decorative applications. Plastered ceilings in all rooms, unless otherwise noted, have been covered using acoustic tile.

The entrance foyer has served as the main entry to the school since 1930. Its wall surfaces are glazed ceramic tile and its focus is the terrazzo surfaced stair. Its east and west walls contain small decorative recessed blind windows molded of a pewter-like alloy and divided into twelve lights. The foyer's recessed ceiling is trimmed with gilded crown molding. Its original bronze and glass lantern hangs from the ceiling by a chain. Its floor is speckled mixed gray terrazzo. The central stairwell leads to the second floor while side or wing stairs lead down to the first floor. The stairs leading down to the first floor are half the width of the center stair and each has a round bronze hand rail attached to the outer wall. The same stair arrangement is repeated leading to the third floor landing with side stairs leading to a landing between the second and third floor levels and turning into the central staircase that accesses the third floor landing. The three part window that is framed by the Venetian window motif on the south elevation is centered in the wall of this landing.

The school's auditorium is accessed from entrances on the second floor on either side of a wood and glass trophy case. The auditorium rises from the second to the fourth story and is ornately finished. It has a large orchestra section and a balcony over the rear quarter of the room both retaining the original steel frame and molded plywood seating. The upper halves of the walls in the auditorium have been plastered and painted; the lower halves of the walls are tan glazed ceramic block. Four large windows are evenly spaced along the side (east and west) walls at the ceiling level. The ceiling is divided into twelve sections each with a centered gilded trimmed roundel framing a suspended brass light fixture. The proscenium fills the entire stage opening and has two small dressing rooms back stage to the north side. The school's heating plant is located in a large room below the stage while the student cafeteria/lunch room is located on the first floor beneath the auditorium. It has been entirely remodeled and retains none of its original features.

The school's original gymnasium is located in the northeast corner of the 1930 construction. It is three stories high with walls surfaced in glazed ceramic block and plaster. Its floor is surfaced in varnished, narrow width hardwood flooring. A suspended indoor track and visitor's gallery wraps the interior at the second story level. The gym can be accessed at both the first and second floor levels and is lit by four evenly spaced windows.

Halls and classrooms in the 1930 and 1946 sections of the school are finished in glazed ceramic building block and plastered or painted concrete block. On the first and second floors the block covers approximately two thirds of the wall height while on the third floor the block only covers the lower quarter of the wall. These interiors also employ terrazzo floors and wood doors with transoms and door surrounds. Original plastered ceilings have been covered with acoustical tile. Classrooms are well lighted by natural light from the banks of windows in each room supplemented by fluorescent lighting. Interiors in the 1968-70 sections of the building are similarly treated although floors are surfaced in vinyl tile rather than terrazzo and unpainted red brick appears in place of glazed block and plastered walls in places.

### Grounds

The school is sited in an eighteen acre open space approximately two hundred fifty feet north of 25<sup>th</sup> Street. A park-like portion of the front lawn is characterized by mature trees, shrubbery, and concrete sidewalks that radiate from the entrance pavilion. A section of the site in front of the newest section of the school east of the entrance pavilion is paved for faculty parking. A World War II-Vietnam memorial to African American service men and women is located on the southwest corner of the site. The school's sports complex is located north of the building. Originally, the area between the school and the complex was also landscaped but has been paved for student and visitor parking. The concrete and brick grandstand seating was added as part of the 1968-71 phase of construction and today is known as the John B. Smith Athletic Complex or Leonard Douglas Stadium.

**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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Education

Ethnic Heritage - Black

**Period of Significance**

1930-1961

**Significant Dates**

1930, 1946,

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Ittner, William Butts

Wildermuth, Joseph E.

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

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

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance is based on the date of completion of the first phase of construction, 1930, and the school's service to the Black community as a segregated school until fifty years from the present.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

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

Theodore Roosevelt High School in Gary, Indiana, commonly called Gary-Roosevelt High School, is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A for its role in the development of William A. Wirt's nationally recognized Platoon, or Gary System of education. The Gary System was a Progressive Era educational concept that played a part in the development of modern education. The school also qualifies under Criterion A for its role in developing civic pride in the African American community of Gary during the era of forced segregation and Jim Crow laws in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century. Gary-Roosevelt High School meets National Register Criterion C as the work of nationally renowned school architect, William Butts Ittner. Ittner developed a new approach to school design over his thirty plus year career that supported Wirt's ideas on education and that is reflected in the Gary-Roosevelt plan. Ittner designed seven schools for the City of Gary between 1907-1931, only two of which remain in active service.<sup>2</sup> Finally, the school meets the registration requirements established for two or more room consolidated rural and urban schools established in the multiple property listing document, "Indiana's Public Common and High Schools".

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

Gary Indiana

The city of Gary sits at the south end of Lake Michigan in Lake County, Indiana. The landscape throughout this area, called the Calumet Region, historically contained sand dunes and wetlands that made it difficult for large settlements to take root. After the Indian removal in the 1830s the Calumet Region was opened to settlement.<sup>3</sup> Pioneer settlement was sparse and slow to develop.

The modern City of Gary owes its origins to industry, the United States Steel Company, who in 1904 was looking for a place to build a new plant in the Lake Michigan area. They initially thought of locating in the Waukegan, Illinois vicinity and sent Judge Elbert Gary, attorney for the corporation, to investigate the location. Gary found the Waukegan location too congested and after looking at other sites recommended the unoccupied lands at the south end of Lake Michigan. This suggestion led to the establishment of the city of Gary, named in honor of the judge, in 1906. The Gary Land Company, a subsidiary of U.S. Steel, was organized the same year and began surveying and laying out the streets and lots for the new city. The steel mill opened in 1908 and Gary was on its way to becoming the largest city in the Calumet Region. By 1910 the city had a population of 16,802 and by 1930 the population exceeded 100,000.

The new industrial city attracted many white Americans, Europeans, and African Americans all seeking a way to make a living off the steel mill. The African American population was a small part of this migration in the first decade of Gary's existence; in 1910 only a few hundred blacks lived in the city.<sup>4</sup> This changed in the next decade due to the great migration of African Americans who left the south for employment in the northern industrial areas taking advantage of the labor shortages created by the U. S. involvement in World War I.<sup>5</sup> These opportunities further increased with the suspension of European immigration into the United States during the 1920s. Many African Americans ended up in Gary and their population numbers by 1930 reached 17,922 or nearly 18% of the total population.

Eastern European immigrants experienced problems with assimilation into American society but these problems were not permanent for them. Because they were white, once they learned the language and American customs, they were assimilated.<sup>6</sup> African Americans, however, had to deal with racism, then openly rampant across the nation. Gary quickly became a segregated city with Jim Crow concepts such as separate but equal taking root. It was in this racial climate that Theodore Roosevelt High School was planned and constructed. Theodore Roosevelt High School was planned by the City of Gary as a segregated school and operated as such until the 1960s.

Jim Crow, the Emerson School Strike and the creation of Theodore Roosevelt High School

According to social historians Mohl and Betten in their study of Gary's ethnic patterns, racism in Gary did not come about as a result of a conflict over jobs or housing as it had in other cities across the nation, but was nurtured by the city's white

<sup>2</sup>From the list provided by Ittner Architects, 611 North 10<sup>th</sup> Street, St. Louis, Missouri

<sup>3</sup>Kenneth J. Schoon, Calumet Beginnings, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), p. 58.

<sup>4</sup>Raymond A. Mohl and Neil Betten, Steel City: urban and ethnic patterns in Gary, Indiana, 1906-1950, (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986), p. 49.

<sup>5</sup>George Brown Tindall and David E. Shi, America: A Narrative History, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996), p. 1065.

<sup>6</sup>Mohl and Betten, p. 49.

elite.<sup>7</sup> When William Wirt came to Gary in 1907 as its first Superintendent of Schools, he quickly supported the Jim Crow concept of separate but equal. Though unacceptable today, the notion that the races could not be mixed without social chaos was common in the early twentieth century. In December 1908 an issue of the *Northern Indianian* newspaper reported that "the Gary Board of Education has decided to segregate the public schools of the town."<sup>8</sup> Superintendent Wirt rationalized this decision as justice to the Negro children due to natural feelings between the races.<sup>9</sup> Wirt wished to avoid controversy because he had been hired by those that supported it. Although a renowned progressive educator, his acceptance of a separate but equal school system helped place the African American citizens of Gary into its lowest social strata. Prior to the building of Roosevelt a few of the segregated schools in Gary were opened to the African American children in Gary where they were kept separate but not treated as the equal of white children within the same school. Froebel High School, as an example, was one of these. It was built in the section of the city that was heavily populated by European immigrants. Though it was technically integrated the African American students who attended there were treated as second class citizens and were excluded from taking part in school's extracurricular activities.<sup>10</sup>

One of the key concepts of the progressive education movement that was incorporated by William Wirt into his plans for the Gary school system, was the idea of offering both vocational training and college preparatory classes to its students. Many of the African American students in Gary wished to take advantage of the college preparatory option. However, courses required to complete the college prep option were not offered at the segregated schools available to the African American students. Wirt addressed this inequality for many years by transferring African American students to Froebel School where the courses were part of the curriculum.<sup>11</sup> At the start of the school year in 1927, and because of the crowded student population at Froebel, Wirt, who was determined that his education system would work, transferred eighteen African American students from the all-black Virginia Street School to the all white Emerson High School to complete their senior year where the courses they needed were offered.<sup>12</sup> This action was not well received by the white student body at Emerson and on September 26, 1927 six hundred white students walked out of the school declaring that they "will not go back to Emerson 'til it's white."<sup>13</sup> The strike lasted four days with segregation as its only demand. To settle this strike the Gary School Board, after much serious and heated debate, insisted that Wirt remove the transferred students from Emerson. The Board then allotted \$600,000 to build a new high school for the African American students of the city.<sup>14</sup> Wirt followed the directions of the school board without further contesting their decision. The Jim Crow standard of "separate but equal" would govern Gary's educational path for the next several decades.

Gary's African American citizens were divided about this decision.<sup>15</sup> Should the school be segregated, as the all white Emerson School was, or should it be integrated as Froebel School was? The segregation faction among the Black population associated with the concepts of Black Nationalist leader, Marcus Garvey, and his Universal Negro Improvement Association (U.N.I.A.). The U.N.I.A. argued that the race consciousness of their children would be destroyed in a mixed school, an argument similar to the white segregationists.<sup>16</sup> The integrationists followed the concepts of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P.). They felt that segregation embraced the concept of separate but equal and therefore did not provide the full measure of equality they sought within American society and that it would keep the Black race in a disadvantaged position.<sup>17</sup> The ensuing debate within the African American community about how Roosevelt should be organized centered around these two approaches, with the two opposing philosophies each represented by the school's first two administrators, Frederick C. McFarlane, principal 1930-1933, a strong segregationist influenced by the U.N.I.A. and H. Theodore Tatum, a firm advocate of integration as promoted by the N.A.A.C.P.<sup>18</sup> Both gentlemen would have a great impact upon Roosevelt's future. The majority of the African American population of Gary supported the concepts of McFarlane, but after his resignation in 1933, the policies of Tatum steered the course of the school in the other direction. Principal Tatum would administer the school from 1933 until his retirement in 1961.

<sup>7</sup> "Gary Schools for the Future" *Gary Tribune*, 15 November 1907, p. 7, col. 1

<sup>8</sup> Copy of the newspaper article, Roosevelt High School vertical file, Indiana Room, Gary Public Library.

<sup>9</sup> Mohl and Betten, p. 55.

<sup>10</sup> Mohl and Betten, p. 57.

<sup>11</sup> James B. Lane, *City of the Century: a History of Gary, Indiana*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1978), p. 142.

<sup>12</sup> Darathula (Dolly) Millender, *Images of Gary's Central Business Community*, (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2003), pp. 37-38.

<sup>13</sup> "Protest Walkout Grows" *Gary Post Tribune*, 27 September 1927, p. 1, col. 6.

<sup>14</sup> James B. Lane, "Officials capitulated on race issue", *Gary Post Tribune*, 27 December 1974. Copy found in "Gary School" file in Indiana Room at Lake County Indiana Public Library, Merrillville, IN

<sup>15</sup> Dolly Millender, *Yesterday in Gary: A Brief History of the Negro in Gary, 1906-1967*, (Gary, IN: Published by Dolly Millender, 1967), p. 61 (copy in the Indiana Room, Gary Public Library) also "Segregation in Gary Schools Proves Prophecy Made in '25", *The Gary Colored American*, 10 November 1927, p. 2, col. 3.

<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth Balanoff, "A History of the Black Community of Gary, Indiana 1906-1940" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1974, p. 298 (hereafter referred to as Balanoff)

<sup>17</sup> Ronald D. Cohen, *Children of the Mill: Schooling and Society in Gary, Indiana 1906-1960*, (New York: Routledge Falmer, 2002), p. 148-150 (hereafter referred to as Children of the Mill)

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*



Even though their schools were separate the African American community strove to make their schools, especially Roosevelt, equal in every way as to what they provided for their children. Calumet area historian and author, James B. Lane, wrote that "With the institution of segregation in the public schools [established], Gary's black people were forced to make the best of a bad situation. They took pride in Roosevelt High School."<sup>19</sup> Roosevelt became a key center for the African American citizens of Gary. They embraced Roosevelt and worked to make it the equal to any white school within the city, state, or nation. The *Gary American*, though it did not support integration, praised the school as "the equal of any school building or educational center supported by public taxation in this section of the country."<sup>20</sup> Many Roosevelt students excelled in their academic pursuits. This was partially because of the attitude of the students, but in a greater part this was due to the highly educated and trained African American teachers and administrators the school employed.<sup>21</sup> Roosevelt excelled in sports and extracurricular activities, winning the city football championships in 1947 and 1948. The school's team went on to win the National Negro Basketball Championships in 1932, 1933, 1934, 1936, and 1939.<sup>22</sup> It provided a stage for a litany of significant guest speakers from all over the world and of all races and creeds to bring their ideas and experiences to the community. This civic and community pride is still highly evident within the school today.

### The Gary System

Gary's fast population growth created many problems and one of the more serious was the development of an education system for the new city. To solve the problem the city hired educator Dr. William A. Wirt (1874-1938) in 1907 as its first Superintendent of Schools. Wirt's ideas on education embraced many of the concepts of the Progressive Movement, a reform movement of the early twentieth century (1900-1917) that promoted the idea that the ills and tensions created by the urban industrial environment could only be solved by expanding the involvement of local, state, and national government's authority.<sup>23</sup> To the Progressive, education was a key concept in the achievement of their movement's goals. Although there are numerous differences of opinion among progressive educators on how this could be done, they shared the mutual conviction that democracy means active participation by all citizens in the social, political and economic decisions that will affect their lives. According to this perspective, the education needed to create socially active and engaged citizens involves two essential elements: 1) Respect for diversity by recognizing each individual for his or her own abilities, interests, ideas, needs, and cultural identity, and 2) the development of a critical and socially engaged, intelligent individuals who, in a collaborative effort to achieve a common good, are capable of understanding and participating effectively in the affairs of their community.<sup>24</sup> Educators like John Dewey embraced these concepts. He saw that American society had been experiencing a decline in its local community life and along with it went the opportunity for small scale enterprise. Through these observations he felt that the younger generations were losing their opportunities to learn about participation in the democratic process. He believed that this loss put American democracy at risk and that this loss could be corrected through the education process. Dewey spent his career seeking ways to make the schools a more effective agency of a democratic society.<sup>25</sup> Many educators followed this philosophy, William Wirt being one of them.

Doctor Wirt was educated at DePauw University where he earned his Ph.D. He later did post-graduate work at the University of Chicago.<sup>26</sup> It was during this post graduate work, while studying under John Dewey, that his concepts about education developed.<sup>27</sup> During his tenure as superintendent of the Gary schools he would bring his theories into practice and bring national recognition to himself and to the City of Gary for his efforts and accomplishments. Theodore Roosevelt High School was one of the schools developed during his tenure. Wirt had experienced much of what Dewey had observed concerning the loss of democracy in the urban/industrial complex and sought to use the school to recreate the environment of the old time home and shop.<sup>28</sup> To achieve this Wirt combined two of his concepts, the Platoon system and Work-Study-Play system, into what commonly became known as the Gary System. The Gary System provided the student with vocational and academic education along with student athletic activity.<sup>29</sup> These were very democratic concepts in a time when the alternative train of educational thought was only to teach the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic to the majority and that higher education beyond this was only for the few.

<sup>19</sup> City of the Century, p. 146.

<sup>20</sup> Children of the Mill, p. 148.

<sup>21</sup> Balanoff, p. 303.

<sup>22</sup> "25 Years of Growth and Achievement-Roosevelt School" From newspaper clipping, newspaper unknown, dated 17 June 1950. Found in Gary School File in the Indiana Room, Lake County Public Library, Merrillville, Indiana.

<sup>23</sup> Tindal, p. 1004.

<sup>24</sup> University of Vermont, The John Dewey Project on Progressive Education, "A Brief Overview of Progressive Education" available at <http://www.uvm.edu/~dewey/articles/proged.html>, accessed 11 March 2010.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> W.P.A. Writers' Program. *The Calumet Region Historical Guide*. Place of publication unknown: Garman Printing Co., 1939, p. 178.

<sup>27</sup> Balanoff, p. 83

<sup>28</sup> Ronald D. Cohen, *The Paradox of Progressive Education*, (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press Corp., 1979), p. 12 (hereafter referred to as Paradox)

<sup>29</sup> Paradox, p. 10.

Wirt began immediately to put his concepts to work. To support his programs, Wirt needed specially designed school buildings that would allow for maximum use along with efficiency and low cost.<sup>30</sup> By December of 1907 he announced that Gary would use the St. Louis schools as its construction model. William B. Ittner, the building commissioner of the School Board of St. Louis and a renowned architect, had been using a new design concept for its school construction.<sup>31</sup> Key elements of this design were classrooms on only one side of the interior halls, central auditoriums and gymnasiums, all educational space above ground, large school sites that allowed expansion, maximum safety, correct lighting and efficient ventilation.<sup>32</sup> Wirt's Platoon System divided the student body into two groups, or platoons, and utilized departmentalized teaching and student rotation from classroom to classroom to maximize the use of the school plant.<sup>33</sup> This concept fit well with Ittner's open plan which was totally different from earlier school models. Instead of grouping schoolrooms around a large central hall, Ittner utilized long halls with the classrooms located along each hall's outer wall. This configuration aided in the student's classroom change by creating a linear traffic flow that made switching classrooms less chaotic than in older schools. This simple design concept aided in the optimization of the school plant which was a key part of Wirt's system. Wirt saw in Ittner's ideas about school construction a layout that was easily adaptable to his own ideas on education.

The initial success of the Gary System brought Wirt and the new city into the spotlight of national educational recognition. Wirt's educational concepts were adopted by more than two hundred schools across the nation, including schools in Detroit, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Dallas, Birmingham, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Memphis, Kansas City, Portland and Seattle.<sup>34</sup> Wirt procured the services of Ittner to design the new schools for Gary where they eventually built seven schools together.

### Architecture

Many of the design concepts used in modern school architecture today owes much to architect William Butts Ittner, F.A.I.A. of St. Louis, Missouri. The typical late nineteenth century school was a dull red brick building, dank, dark typically having three floors with four classrooms per floor plus a dark central corridor. Interior restrooms, when they existed, were in the basement in this building type referred to as the "block plan."<sup>35</sup> During the first three decades of the twentieth century Ittner helped transform what he described as a "prison-like box" into an efficient building that was highly functional, economically built and pleasing to the eye.<sup>36</sup> Ittner applied many concepts used in urban planning, such as efficiency of use and flow to create his designs. Use became the measuring rod and criterion by which Ittner based his designs.<sup>37</sup>

In Germany at the turn of the century, the consolidation and organization of schools and industrial firms was mapped out by efficiency experts. Education, they believed, produced an end product and quality education could be consistently and economically reproduced if the same concepts applied to industrial manufacturing were applied to education. Progressive educators used the German model to devise a new system of schools that would be organized and run by professional educators. Elementary schools in this system focused on the basics and high schools became mandatory institutions designed to prepare the youth to enter society on competitive terms. High schools were no longer just college preparatory institutions. They became places where each student would have an equal opportunity to assume their proper position in society, determined not by class or ethnic origin, but by the natural abilities of the student and need of the economy and society. The new type of high school provided separate, academic, commercial, and vocational educational tracks designed to prepare each student for their productive entry into society. Educational historians call these comprehensive high schools.<sup>38</sup> During the development of the comprehensive high school extra-curricular activities also were first advocated which created a need for specially designed rooms to accommodate these activities.

Ittner developed what became known as the "Ittner" or "Open Plan" of school design. Key elements of this plan were classrooms on only one side of the interior halls, central auditoriums and gymnasiums, all educational space above ground, large school sites that allowed for expansion, maximum safety, correct lighting and efficient ventilation.<sup>39</sup> The Ittner open plan used alphabet shaped (H, U, E) structures that took advantage of natural light by lining up the classrooms along a windowed corridor. Damp smells were drawn outside of the structure with ventilation devices. Modern plumbing

<sup>30</sup> W.P.A. Writers' Guide, p. 179.

<sup>31</sup> "St. Louis Schools Models for Gary", Gary Post Tribune, 6 December 1907, p. 1, column 3, also: "Secures Sites for School Houses", 3 January 1908.

<sup>32</sup> 1936 Ittner Introductory booklet, p. 9. Found in the files at Ittner Architects, 611 N. 11<sup>th</sup> Street, St. Louis, MO. (hereafter referred to as Booklet)

<sup>33</sup> James B. Lane, Gary's First Hundred Years: A Centennial History of Gary, Indiana, (Publisher unknown, 2006), p. 43

<sup>34</sup> "Gary Schools Were Imitated", Gary Post Tribune, 16 December 1979, Sec. C, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> Marie Anderson Ittner, "William B. Ittner: His Service to American School Architecture", School Board Journal, January 1941, p. 30 (hereafter referred to as School Board Journal)

<sup>36</sup> Robert W. Duffy, "William B. Ittner: Architect's Buildings Stand for his Vision of Education", St. Louis Post Dispatch, Newswatch section, 30 November 2003.

<sup>37</sup> School Board Journal, p. 30.

<sup>38</sup> Camilla Deiber and Peggy Beedle, City Schools of Iowa, (Hiawatha, IA: J & A Printing, 2002), p. 5.

<sup>39</sup> Booklet, p. 9.

brought the restrooms up out of the basement. Construction applied modern fireproofing methods. Ittner was the son of a brick mason and he had worked as a brick mason before college and drew on his knowledge of brickwork to turn school exteriors into finely textured works of art, blending varieties of brick colors, textures, and patterns to capture the light throughout the day. Roosevelt High School displays all of these innovations and treatments.

A review of the Lake County Interim Report produces many fine examples of high school architecture such as East Chicago's Roosevelt and Hammond's Central High School. Gary, however, was the only city in Lake County to engage William Ittner to design its schools. Gary used Ittner's services between 1908 and 1931 to create five of its schools. All of these, except for Ittner's last two schools - Roosevelt, and Lew Wallace, are no longer in use. Unlike his earlier schools in Gary, where he designed in the Neoclassical and Collegiate Gothic styles, Ittner designed Roosevelt High School in a Colonial Revival style.

The era of the Colonial Revival style according to Virginia and Lee McAlester, spanned the years 1880-1955.<sup>40</sup> The United States centennial held in Philadelphia in 1876 is often credited with awakening an interest in American colonial architecture. School design, however, during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was more influenced by Gothic styling used in the old established European colleges such as Oxford and Cambridge. That trend was strongly promoted by such architects as Ralph Adams Cram and Ittner himself employed Collegiate Gothic styling in his earlier designs. It may have been John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s sponsorship of the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg in the late 1920s which reawakened American interest in the historic Colonial style that encouraged Ittner to use the Colonial Revival in his design for Roosevelt High School.

Wirt had watched Ittner initiate and develop the open plan in St. Louis and called upon Ittner to design Gary's first work-study-play school, Emerson High School. In Gary, the Ittner criterion of use was tested more stringently than it had been in St. Louis. Ittner's challenge in Gary was not only to provide safe and healthful classrooms, workshops, auditoriums, and gymnasiums, but to design facilities of appropriate size and character. Furthermore, the educational units had to be located so that rotation of classes, a Wirt priority to optimize the school's usage, could take place conveniently.<sup>41</sup>

During Ittner's career he designed over five hundred schools in twenty-eight states and one hundred and six cities and towns.<sup>42</sup> Five of those schools were designed for the City of Gary while Wirt was superintendent. Gary Roosevelt is one of the last two schools to be designed for the Gary School Board by Ittner and is one of only two of the schools he designed still in use today.<sup>43</sup> Unlike his previous designs in Gary that used Collegiate Tudor and Gothic styling in their design, Ittner used Colonial Revival influence on Roosevelt. His designs went beyond the utilitarian and provided structures that represented grace and style.

### Conclusion

Theodore Roosevelt High School has earned a special place in the history of Gary, Indiana. It is a school where the determination of an isolated portion of Gary citizenry created an institution that provided their community hope through education. The high school also demonstrates the changes in educational philosophy that were born during the Progressive Era. Architecturally, Roosevelt High is one of a decreasing number of examples in Gary of William Ittner's skill in accommodating Progressive Era educational philosophy in a proud, monumental edifice. For all of these reasons the school deserves to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

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### **Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)**

<sup>40</sup> Virginia and Lee McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), p. 321.

<sup>41</sup> School Board Journal, p. 31.

<sup>42</sup> Booklet, p. 5.

<sup>43</sup> Lew Wallace High School on 45<sup>th</sup> Street is the other in both circumstances.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form)

### Published

- Cohen, Ronald D. The Paradox of Progressive Education. Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press Corp., 1979.
- Cohen, Ronald D. Children of the Mill: Schooling and Society in Gary, Indiana 1906-1960. New York: Routledge Falmer, 2002.
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- Millender, Dolly. Yesterday in Gary: a Brief History of the Negro in Gary, 1906-1967. Gary, IN: published by Dolly Millender, 1967.
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- Schoon, Kenneth J. Calumet Beginnings. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003.
- Tindall, George Brown and David E. Shi. American: A Narrative History. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996.
- W.P.A Writers Program. The Calumet Region Historical Guide. Unknown: Garman Printing Co., 1939

### Journals

- Ittner, Marie Anderson. "William B. Ittner: His Service to American School Architecture", School Board Journal, January 1941.

### Unpublished

- Balanoff, Elizabeth. "A History of the Black Community of Gary, Indiana 1906-1940". Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1974.

### Newspapers

- "Gary Schools for the Future" Gary Tribune, 15 November 1907.
- "St. Louis Schools Models for Gary", Gary Post Tribune, 6 December 1907.
- "Secures Sites for School Houses", Gary Post Tribune, 3 January 1908.
- "Protest Walkout Grows" Gary Post Tribune, 27 September 1927.
- "Gary Schools Were Imitated", Gary Post Tribune, 16 December 1979.
- Robert W. Duffy, "William B. Ittner: Architect's Buildings Stand for his Vision of Education", St. Louis Post Dispatch, 30 November 2003.

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University of Vermont, The John Dewey Project on Progressive Education, "A Brief Overview of Progressive Education" available at <http://www.uvm.edu/~dewey/articles/proged.html>, accessed 11 March 2010.

Elizabeth Armstrong Hall, "Schools of Thought" St. Louis Magazine, May. 2005. Available online at <http://www.stlmag.com/media/St-Louis-Magazine/May-2005/Schools-of-Thought/>, accessed 13 March 2010

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**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): 089-232-20660 \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 18  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>16</u>	<u>471133</u>	<u>4603245</u>	3	<u>16</u>	<u>471314</u>	<u>4602469</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>16</u>	<u>471308</u>	<u>4603245</u>	4	<u>16</u>	<u>471128</u>	<u>4602479</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (describe the boundaries of the property)

The boundary of the nominated property starts at the inside corner of the public sidewalk at the corner of 25<sup>th</sup> Street and Harrison Street and runs east along the north side of the sidewalk until it reaches the alley that separates the schoolyard from the residential structures facing Jackson Street. At that point it turns north and proceeds along the west side of the alley until it reaches the south side of the public sidewalk along 21<sup>st</sup> Street. The boundary turns west and follows the south side of the sidewalk until it intersects the sidewalk running along the east side of Harrison Street. The boundary turns south and follows the east side of the sidewalk to the starting point.

**Boundary Justification** (explain why the boundaries were selected)

This boundary includes all of the eighteen acres originally set aside by the City of Gary for the construction of Gary-Roosevelt High School.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Gregg Abell  
organization Partners in Preservation, Inc. date March 15, 2010  
street & number 8167 Patterson Rd. telephone 813-312-3483  
city or town Dyer state IN zip code 46311  
e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

---

**Photographs:**

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

**Name of Property:** Theodore Roosevelt High School

**City or Vicinity:** Gary

**County:** Lake                      **State:** Indiana

**Photographer:** Gregg Abell

**Date Photographed:** March 12, 2010 (photo1); October 29, 2010 (photos 2-7, 16, 17, 19, 20); April 2012 (photos 8-15, 18)

- 1 of 20. Description of Photograph(s) and number:** Main façade, camera facing north
- 2 of 20. Description of Photograph(s) and number:** Main façade, central entrance pavilion. Camera facing north
- 3 of 20. Description of Photograph(s) and number:** Main façade from southeast. Camera facing northwest.
- 4 of 20. Description of Photograph(s) and number:** West room extension on façade, 1946 section. Camera facing north.
- 5 of 20. Description of Photograph(s) and number:** North elevation, 1930 section(center); 1968 addition at right. Camera facing southeast.
- 6 of 20. Description of Photograph(s) and number:** West elevation of 1946 shop building. Camera facing east.
- 7 of 20. Description of Photograph(s) and number:** West elevation of 1946/1968 additions. Camera facing southeast.

- 8 of 20. Description of Photograph(s) and number:** Central stairwell and entry from second floor landing. Camera facing south.
- 9 of 20. Description of Photograph(s) and number:** Venetian window in entrance pavilion from third floor landing. Camera facing south.
- 10 of 20. Description of Photograph(s) and number:** Trophy case, second floor hallway. Camera facing north.
- 11 of 20. Description of Photograph(s) and number:** 1930 gymnasium from second floor walkway. Camera facing southwest.
- 12 of 20. Description of Photograph(s) and number:** First floor hallway, 1930 section. Camera facing southwest.
- 13 of 20. Description of Photograph(s) and number:** Third floor hallway and stairway. Camera facing southeast.
- 14 of 20. Description of Photograph(s) and number:** Classroom door with transom, 1930 section. Camera facing south.
- 15 of 20. Description of Photograph(s) and number:** Classroom interior, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor 1930 section. Camera facing south.
- 16 of 20. Description of Photograph(s) and number:** Hallway and stair, 1968 section. Camera facing east.
- 17 of 20. Description of Photograph(s) and number:** Second floor hallway, 1968 section. Camera facing north.
- 18 of 20. Description of Photograph(s) and number:** Second floor classroom, 1968 section. Camera facing southwest.
- 19 of 20. Description of Photograph(s) and number:** World War II-Vietnam Memorial, southwest corner of grounds. Camera facing northeast.
- 20 of 20. Description of Photograph(s) and number:** West football stadium grandstand north of school building. Camera facing northeast.

---

**Property Owner:**

(complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Gary School Corporation, Dr. Myrtle Campbell, Superintendent  
street & number 620 E. 10<sup>th</sup> Place telephone 219-886-0307  
city or town Gary state Indiana zip code 46402-2731

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

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

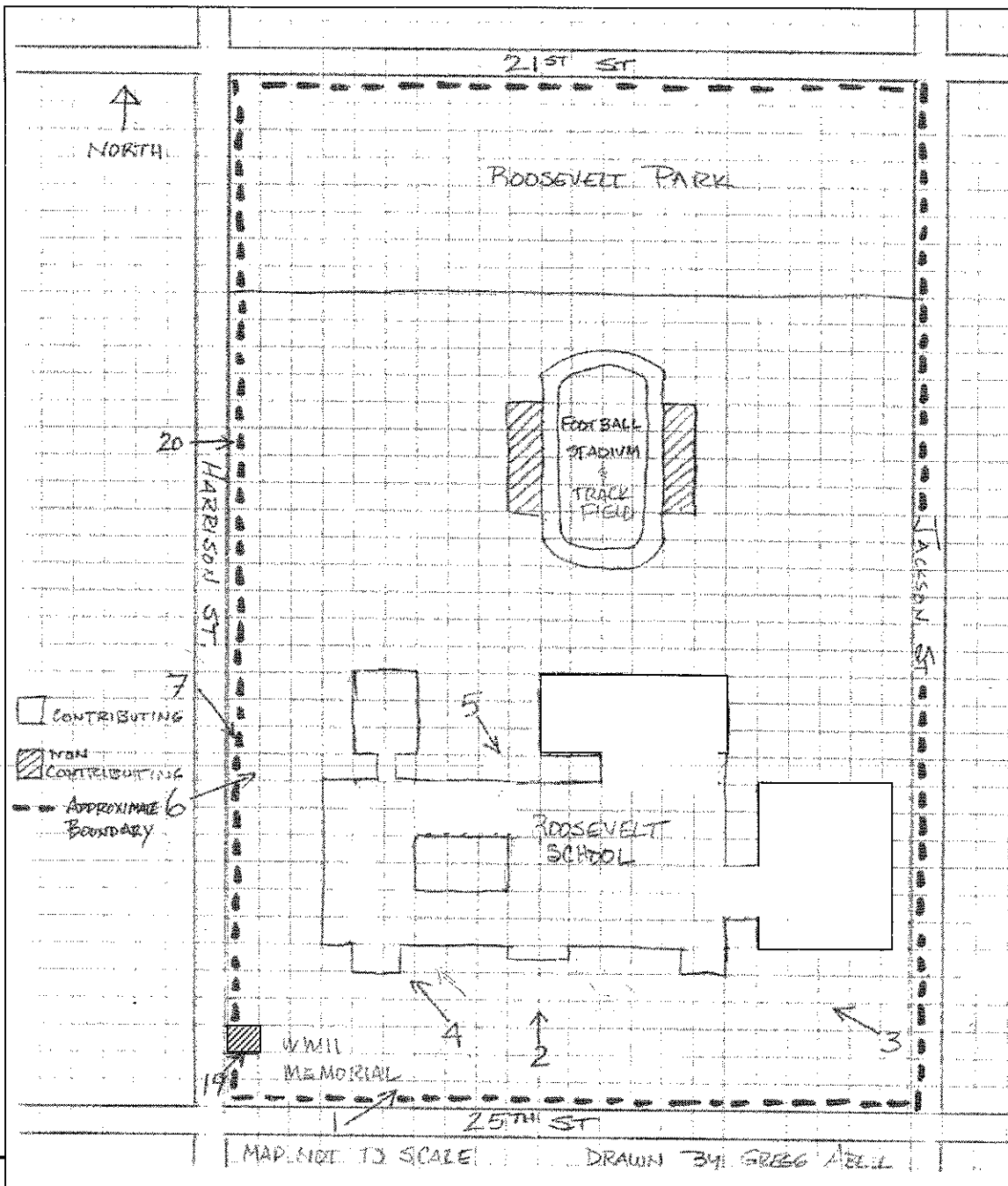
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Photo Location  
Section number Map Page 26 16

Theodore Roosevelt High School, Lake County, IN

Exterior Photo Location



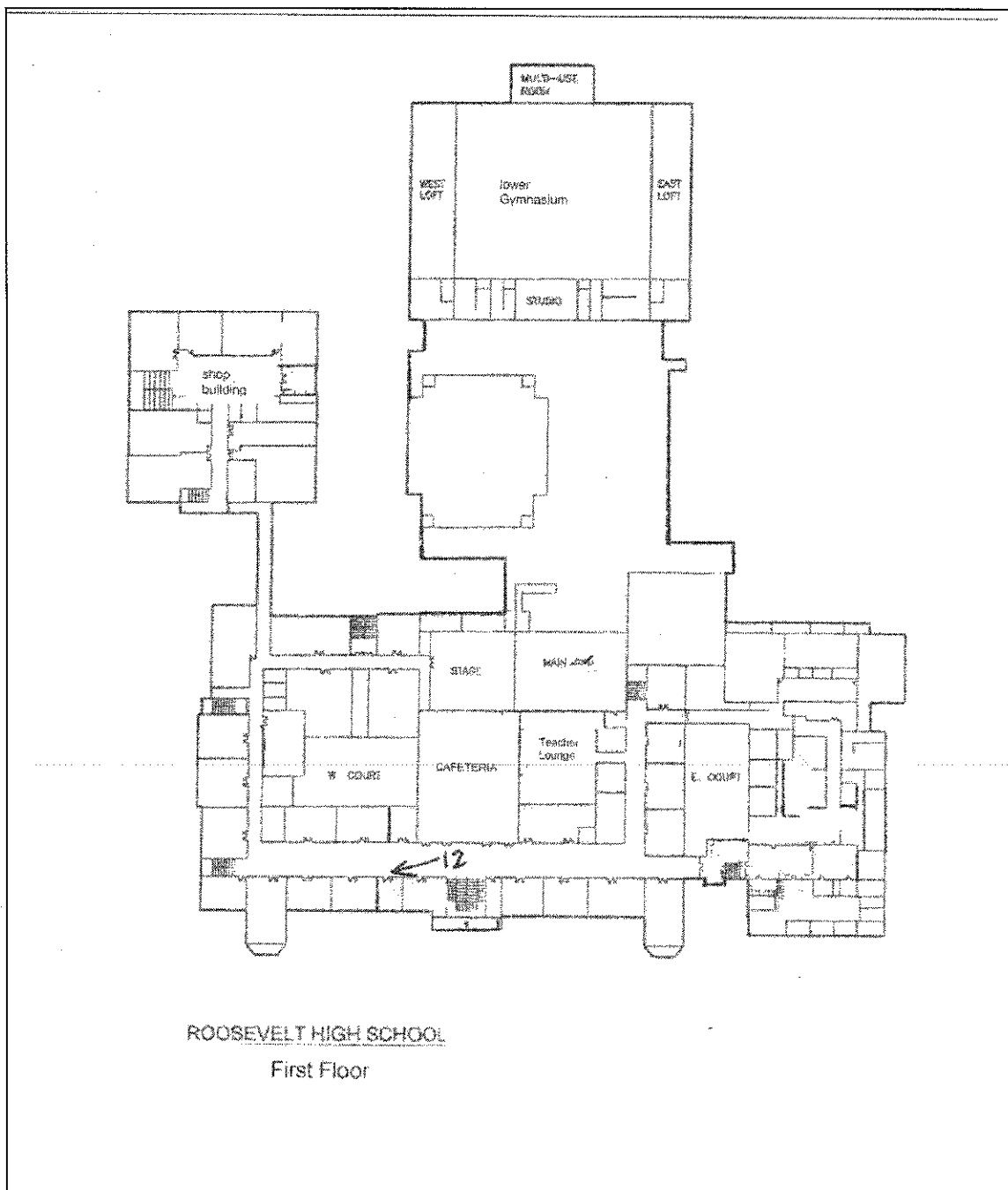


**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Photo location  
Section number Map Page 27 of 27

*Theodore Roosevelt High School, Lake County, IN*

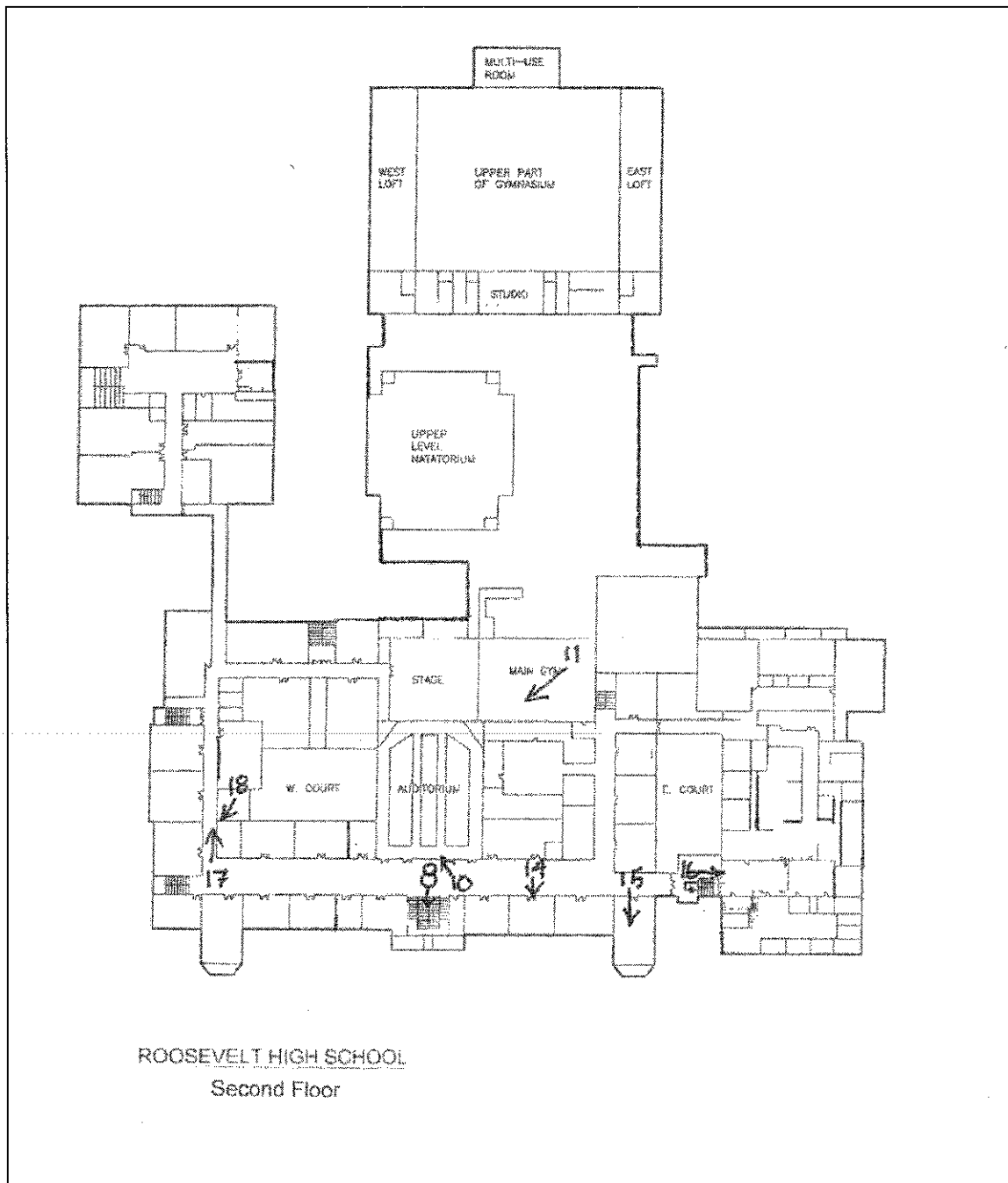


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**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Photo Location  
Section number Map Page 28 18

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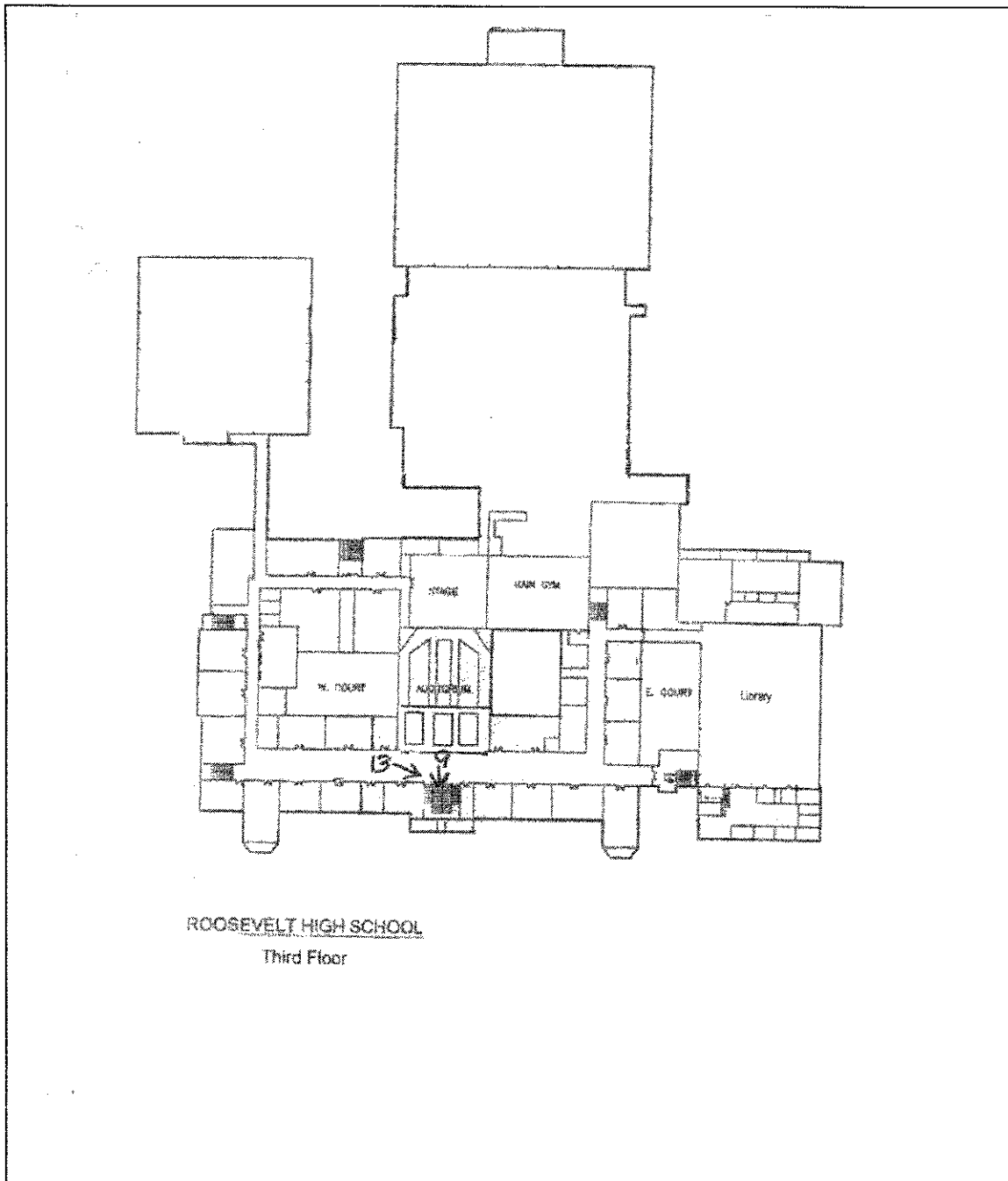


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**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Photo Location  
Section number Map Page 20 ~~21~~ 19

*Theodore Roosevelt High School, Lake County, IN*



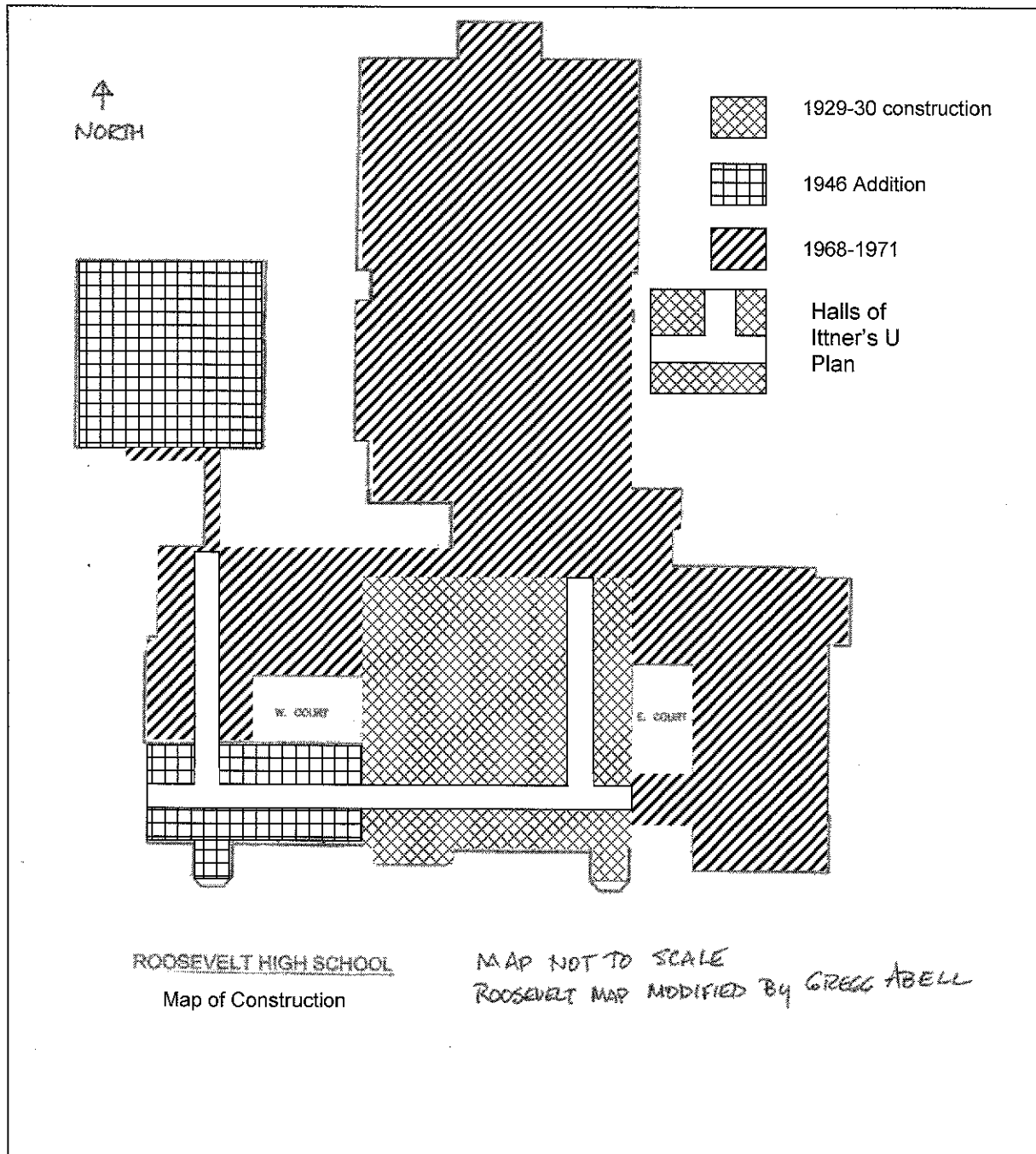
**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

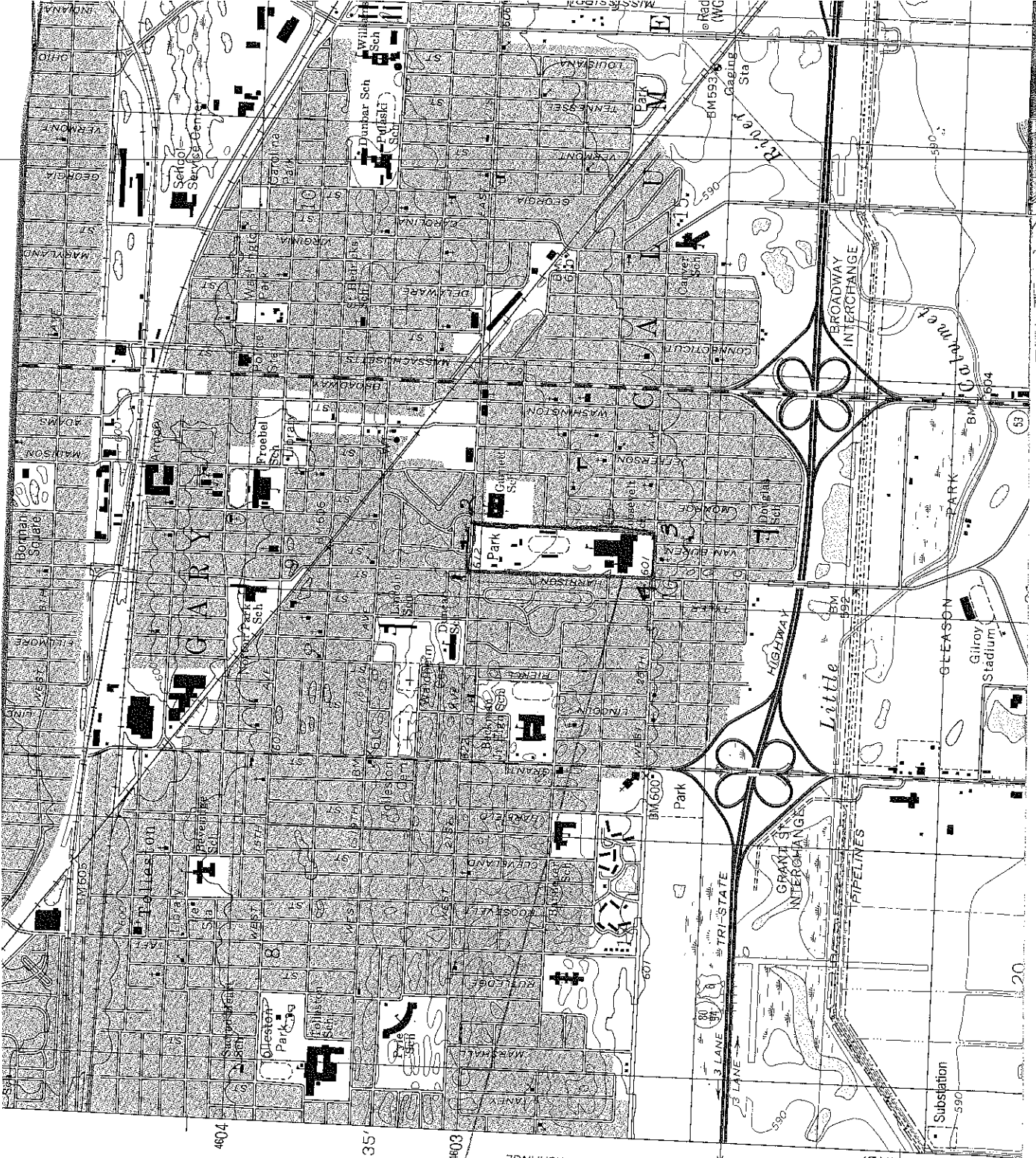
**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Appendix  
Section number A Page 30 ~~20~~

*Theodore Roosevelt High School, Lake County, IN*

Construction date map.





3 MI. TO CLINE AVE. INTERCHANGE  
 3 MI. TO (HAMMOND) INDIANAPOLIS BLVD. INTERCHANGE

THEODORE ROOSEVELT HWY  
 LAKE COUNTY IN  
 1. 16 471133 4603245  
 2. 16 471308 4603245  
 3. 16 471314 4603409  
 4. 16 471128 4608479  
 NAD 83  
 UTM S  
 COMBAY QUAD

3567 III SW  
 (HIGHLAND)

4804

35'

4803

20