

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

FINAL
For HCERS use only

received

date entered

1. Name

historic Martinsville High School Gymnasium

and/or common Curtis, Glenn M. Memorial Gymnasium

2. Location

street & number 759 South Main Street _____ not for publication

city, town Martinsville _____ vicinity of congressional district 6th

state Indiana code 018 county Morgan code 109

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
____ district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	____ agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	____ private	____ unoccupied	____ commercial
____ structure	____ both	____ work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
____ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	____ entertainment
____ object	____ in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	____ government
	____ being considered	____ yes: unrestricted	____ industrial
		____ no	____ military
			____ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Metropolitan School District of Martinsville

street & number 190 South Jefferson

city, town Martinsville _____ vicinity of state Indiana 46151

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder's Office, Court House Morgan County

street & number Morgan and Main Streets

city, town Martinsville _____ state Indiana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title NONE has this property been determined eligible? ____ yes: ☒ no

date _____ federal _____ state _____ county _____ local

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Martinsville High School Gymnasium, now the Glenn M. Curtis Memorial Gymnasium, is located on the campus of the Martinsville West Middle School and faces west on South Main Street. The building has an overall outside measurement of 180 feet by 210 feet. The two-story building is constructed of brick of Martinsville manufacture, with limestone trim, and an interior steel frame. Basically a rectangle, the building features angled corners with entrances in each. The main entrance facade centered on the west side projects twenty feet from the body of the building.

The foundation is of limestone, about two feet high, and somewhat higher on the projecting main entrance. All windows on the building are of the small-paned, industrial awning type. Second story windows provide light and ventilation for the playing floor and bleacher area, whereas the lower windows open into the dressing room areas under the bleachers. Window surrounds are of brick, with slightly projecting header courses forming the sills. A recessed soldier course forms a belt around the entire building, just below the second story sill level. Windows are separated into groups of two or three by two-story brick pilasters. The pilasters are outlined by vertical bands of headers along their edges, and each is further accented by one-brick wide "buttresses" set into the corners where the pilasters meet the walls. The "buttresses" are capped by stone.

The roof of the building is highest over the gymnasium floor, surrounded by what might be termed a mansard roof. The pitched portion of the roof visible from the ground is sheathed in asphalt shingles.

Each angled corner of the building features a three-bay ensemble that projects above the roof line of the rest of the building. This ensemble contains a central, angled entrance bay, flanked by single bays. The three bays are separated by brick pilasters, and the ensemble is finished off by a gabled parapet over the entrance bay, and flat parapets over the other two bays, all with stone coping. Directly above double doors are 3 windows separated by brick piers, under a segmental arch also formed by a soldier course. A soldier course runs across the angled bay at the level of the window heads on the rest of the building, and above this is the belt course mentioned earlier. A window is at the second story level above the entrance, followed by the gabled parapet. The flanking bays feature narrow windows at each level.

Doors at the second story level open onto fire escapes on the north and south sides of the building. These were added in 1975, in order to partially restore the seating capacity of the gymnasium, following a State Fire Marshall order limiting the seating capacity of all public buildings based upon the width of their exits.

The main entrance facade of the building is centered on the west side, and measures 54 feet across, projecting 20 feet from the rest of the building. This entrance ensemble can be divided into three sections. The central section features three double doors, each set into a rounded arch. The piers of the arches are of brick, with stone imposts, and the brick arches are composed of a row of stretchers, with a projecting row of headers as the archivolt. The spandrels are accented by triangular panels of stone. Above the three arches is a stone parapet with the words "High School Gymnasium." Above the sign, the second story of this central section is set back a few feet, and has three windows corre-

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The two flanking sections of the entrance facade have a single small doublehung window at each level on the front and side. These sections resemble square towers, with heavy pilasters stepped back just slightly at each level, and capped by parapets with stone coping. Behind the parapets, on the back wall of the upper level, are forms resembling buttresses, with flat stone "finials," immediately adjacent to the central section.

The gymnasium was designed to seat 5,382 persons, and provide for 16 team dressing rooms. As the number of teams participating in basketball sectionals diminished, areas under the bleachers were converted to a machine shop, woodshop, and a band room.

The gymnasium floor is made of hardwood. In 1958 the playing floor was lengthened and the entrances onto the gym floor were paneled.

The building is heated by cast iron steam radiators with steam supplied by the oil-fired boilers at the high school building. Restrooms open off the two front corner entrances.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) SPORTS

Specific dates	1923-24	Builder/Architect	Naugel Bros./D.A. Bohlen & Son
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Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Martinsville High School Gymnasium is historically significant because of its contribution to high school basketball--an important cultural phenomenon in twentieth century Indiana. Architecturally, the gymnasium is significant as the prototype for many gyms built throughout Indiana during the 1920s and 1930s.

The significance of the Martinsville High School Gymnasium can only be understood within the context of a cultural phenomenon peculiar to Indiana called "Hoosier Hysteria." Indiana basketball frenzy is probably unexplainable, but several factors in its early popularity and growth are obvious. The game's chief attributes were that it could be played indoors during the long winters, and its season coincided with the least busy time of the year for Indiana's farm communities. Additionally, little money was required for equipment, and five-man starting line-ups meant that smaller high schools could easily field a team. The form of the state tournament is peculiar to Indiana and has also contributed to deep interest in the game over the years. Since all teams, no matter what their season record, automatically entered the tournament, literally any team could win the state championship. Additionally, especially in the early days, small-town teams consistently won the title, thus conferring recognition and prestige upon their communities. Teams for small towns are still competitive today and the Final Four rarely consists solely of teams from major urban areas.

While the above explains the popularity of basketball in Indiana in part, it fails to elucidate Hoosier fascination with the game. This fascination may be unfathomable; its effects, however, are not. "Hoosier Hysteria" hit its stride in the 1920's and was characterized, especially in small towns, by a frenzy bordering on the paranoid.

High School teams became symbols of the community, and basketball during its season became the focus of local interest. Teams consistently drew crowds far in excess of local population. Inter-city rivalries developed, too often leading to ill feelings between towns that went far beyond the basketball court. Local high school teams at times took the place of all other forms of entertainment, and team stars became long-remembered community heroes. The Martinsville High School Gymnasium is both a result of and contributor to this important cultural phenomenon.

Nothing contributed to the growth of "Hoosier Hysteria" on the local level more than a successful season, and starting in 1916 Martinsville High School began turning out a series of powerful teams. By 1922 the city needed a gymnasium large enough to hold the thousands of local fans who had to stand for games or were turned away. A local tradition holds also that some civic leaders wanted the gym to house the state championship finals, held at that time in the Indiana University field house. The finals by 1922 had outgrown the field house and the sponsors wanted a larger gym in a more central location than Bloomington. Ultimately, Indianapolis, not Martinsville (if indeed the tradition is true) provided the state finals with a permanent location.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Minutes: Board of Education, School City of Martinsville
Minutes: Board of Education, Metropolitan School District of Martinsville
Martinsville Daily Reporter (Newspaper)
Martinsville Recorder, 1922-24

"SEE CONTINUATION SHEET"

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Approx. 1.2 acres

Quadrangle name Martinsville, IN

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	6
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5	4	9	2	6	0
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4	3	6	3	2	5	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Beginning at a point 612 feet south of the corner of Main and Garfield Streets; thence east 283 feet; thence north 181 feet; thence west 283 feet; thence south 181 feet to the place of beginning.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cyrus L. Gunn, Assistant Superintendent

organization Metropolitan School District of Martinsville

street & number 190 South Jefferson Street telephone 317/342-6641

city or town Martinsville state Indiana

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national X state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date June 8, 1981

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

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tectural firm. The Bohlen firm, founded in 1853, is the oldest existing architectural firm in the state, and has been responsible for numerous buildings that are now listed in the National Register.

The gymnasium they designed served as a prototype for a large number of Indiana gymnasiums built in the 1920's when "Hoosier Hysteria" first took hold of the state. First, the gym was designed to hold 5,382 people--far more than the population of the city. It is believed to be the first high school gymnasium in Indiana designed as a free-standing structure separate from the main school buildings. The building was designed specifically for basketball and featured arena-style seating--permanent seats arranged around all four sides of the court. The building also had a lobby running the length of the front, and entrances on the diagonals of the cut-off corners. Other high schools followed suit and gyms designed to seat more viewers than the local population became a normal feature of Indiana high school gymnasiums. Rushville and Greencastle constructed almost carbon copies of the Martinsville gym, although they were smaller. Jasper's gym was modified somewhat, and Marion and Huntington carried the concept to its furthest extreme by building their gyms downtown, completely away from the school grounds, thus pointing out graphically the centrality of basketball to the community proper. The building of this type of gyms--stimulated by construction of the one at Martinsville--increased the growth of "Hoosier Hysteria" by providing excellent facilities throughout the state with plenty of room for spectators.

The Martinsville High School Gymnasium further made an impact on "Hoosier Hysteria" because of the success of its teams. Between 1916 and 1933 the Martinsville Artesians reached the "Sweet Sixteen" sixteen times, advanced to the final four seven times, were runners up twice, and captured the state championship three times--in 1924, 1927, and 1933. All of the championships were achieved while Glenn Curtis--one of the greatest coaches in Indiana high school basketball--coached at Martinsville. The gymnasium was renamed in his honor in 1959.

The 1927 state championship team featured John Wooden as guard. Wooden was a high school and college star who later became known as "The Wizard of Westwood" at U.C.L.A. He is possibly the greatest coach in college basketball history.

The history of the Martinsville High School Gymnasium is a long and rich one. While numerous similar gyms still exist, it was the prototype and is thus the most significant of them all. For these reasons and its contributions to "Hoosier Hysteria," the Martinsville High School Gymnasium deserves a place on the National Register.

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Interviews with:

S.L. Burpo, Martinsville Recorder, August 7, 1980, Martinsville
Tony Hinkle, Butler University, August 8, 1980, Indianapolis
Herb Schwomeyer, Butler University, August 11, 1980, Indianapolis
Tom Whitaker, Architect, August 5, 1980, Martinsville

Cox, Thomas, A. Jack Schiffli, and Billy Lee Walker, New and Old, Silver and Gold, Indiana High School Basketball. Indianapolis: Winner One Enterprises, 1977.

Schwomeyer, Herb, Hoosier Hysteria. Greenfield, Indiana: Mitchell Flemming, 1975.

