

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic St. Mary's Catholic Church

and or common St. Mary's Catholic Church

2. Location

street & number 1101 S. Lafayette Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Fort Wayne N/A vicinity of

state Indiana code 018 county Allen code 003

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Inc.

street & number 1103 South Calhoun Street

city, town Fort Wayne N/A vicinity of state Indiana 46802

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Office of the Recorder of Allen County, Indiana

street & number One Main Street, 2nd Floor, City-County Building

city, town Fort Wayne state Indiana 46802

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1979 federal state county local

depository for survey records Indiana Department of Natural Resources

city, town Indianapolis state Indiana

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

St. Mary's Catholic Church is a Gothic Revival, red brick and sandstone edifice located at the southeast corner of Lafayette and Jefferson Streets near downtown Fort Wayne. The church is positioned close to the property lines of the street sides, with open landscaped grounds to the south, and Rectory (Priest's House) to the east. There is also a separate boiler house south of the church. The location of the structure allows impressive views of the church.

Built in 1886-87, the church is approximately 195 feet long and 68 feet wide, and has a low limestone foundation. It is designed in the traditional cruciform plan. Three projecting towers grace the front of the gabled-roofed nave. A fourth tower is above the transept, and a semi-octagonal apse is to the rear.

Facing west, the front facade (Photo 1) has a dominant central tower flanked by two corner towers. Each tower has a stone entrance which leads to the narthex and is accessed by stone steps. The main portal is located in the central tower which extends 238 feet, terminating in an ornate spire. On the ground level, wood paneled double doors are set between buttresses which support a sandstone gable above the entry. The gable has crockets, a cross-shaped finial, and an oval-framed carving of a lamb in the tympanum. The entry doors are flanked by three narrow engaged columns from which springs a compound gothic arch with a quatrefoil motif in the tympanum.

The central tower has two buttresses at each front edge which extend nearly the height of the tower, and have stone weatherings at each level. Above the entry gable at the second story level there is a large, Gothic-arched, stained glass tracery window with a drip mold; this is the general design of the other tracery windows on the front facade. A large stained glass rose window is positioned above this window at the third story level. Five small, blind Gothic arches with drip molds are spaced across the tower near the crenelated top edge, which is flanked by pinnacles. An octagonal spire with louvered windows rises out of the tower and has a steep cap topped by a cross-shaped finial.

Each corner tower, 128' high, is very similar to the central tower, except it is built on a smaller scale and has different fenestration. Above the entry gable of each corner tower there is a tracery window at the second story level, surmounted by small, paired tracery windows at the third story level.

A single bay is nestled between the central tower and corner tower on each side. On the ground level are small, paired, Gothic-arched windows with drip molds. Directly above the windows there is a tracery window which is topped by paired, blind arches. A decorative frieze, with a quatrefoil pattern which follows the rake of the roof, is above the blind arches.

The north and south side facades are almost identical to one another. Each side facade (Photos 2 and 3) consists of the projecting corner tower's side, a five-bay central nave area, and the transept. The tower's side facade is identical to the front except on the first level, where there is a small, Gothic-arched window with a drip mold. The central area has five bays separated by buttresses, with each bay containing a large, Gothic-arched, stained glass tracery window with dressed limestone voussoirs. The transept has a large, Gothic-arched, stained glass tracery window with three small arched windows positioned below the tracery window, all with stone voussoirs. A parapet, gabled in the center and framed by finials, caps the transept area.

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The rear of the church (Photo 3) consists of a multi-sided apse with tracery windows and Gothic-arched, blind brick openings, separated by brick buttresses.

The structure's gable roof and apse and transept hipped roofs are covered with slate. A short metal railing extends around the exterior above the eaves. An exterior octagonal brick chimney extends from the foundation to well above the eaves on the center of the south facade. There are two more exterior brick chimneys with decorative brickwork which extend from about half way up the exterior to well above the roof ridge—one is positioned at the intersection of the south transept wing, and the other on the north side of the apse.

The present condition of the building's exterior is good, with some maintenance and repair needed, especially in the tower areas and where downspouts have leaked in the past.

The entrances on the main facade lead to the Narthex which has the original encaustic tile floor. The original painted wall decorations in the Narthex have been painted over with plain colors (Photo 4).

The Nave and side aisles are defined by piers with engaged shafts and corbelled responds. The plaster ceiling features classic Gothic vaulting. The vaulting is inspiring in form and accurately reflects the European Gothic antecedents in proportion, if not in scale. (Photos 5, 6 and 11). The painted decoration on the ceiling vaults is in generally good condition with some localized water damage (Photo 6).

The stained glass windows in the Nave, Narthex and Chancel are magnificent, and make a major contribution to the ambiance of St. Mary's (Photos 7 and 8).

The Stations of the Cross are fine oil paintings with elaborately detailed wood frames. The paintings are dark with age and in need of careful cleaning and restoration (Photos 8 and 9).

The oak wood pews, of Germanic Gothic detailing, are in good condition (Photo 10). The steam pipe "foot warmer" heating system under the pews is probably not original because of the crude openings cut in the pew legs for passage of the steam pipes. The aisle floors are covered with diagonally-laid asphalt tile; under the pews, the wood flooring remains exposed.

Over the Narthex and the south end of the Nave the pipe organ and Choir Gallery are located. Little is known about the organ(s) that predated the existing instrument. The present 45 rank organ was built in 1934 by George Kilgen & Sons Organ Company of St. Louis, Missouri (Photo 11). This organ, designed by Dr. Charles Courboin, is reputed to be the largest of its type in a Catholic church in Indiana. After having fallen into disrepair, recent repair efforts have restored the organ to a good, playable condition. Additional work is required to completely restore the organ to its original condition.

Located under the Gallery is a carved granite Holy Water font at the main aisle. Next to the side aisle doors there are marble fonts of stylized shell design built into the wall. Also located between the Northwest side aisle doors inside the Nave is a wood crucifix with the polychromed image of Christ. This crucifix is reputed to be from the preceding church (1858, Photo 12).

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The high altar (Photo 13) in the Chancel is of marble and the side altars (Photo 14) are of wood construction. The main altar is flanked by marble angels on pedestals from the studios of Deprato, Chicago. The marble main altar, raised three steps above the Chancel floor, is decorated by classic columns flanking carved reliefs (Photo 15). The 19th century brass candle holders flanking the main altar are significant examples of the design and workmanship of the ecclesiastical furnishings. Also, the suspended eternal light holder (Photo 16) is one of the finely-crafted metal accessories obtained from the ecclesiastical arts studios of the time. Other furnishings, such as the Bishop's Chair (Photo 17) in the Chancel and the Priedieu and cabinets (Photo 18) in the Sacristy, are examples of intricate and ornate furniture and woodworking in good condition.

The pulpit and communion rail in the Chancel have been removed, but the communion rail is extant. The floor of the Chancel is hexagonal ceramic tile (Photo 17).

The interior of Sancti Mariae Ecclesia (as it was termed on the original drawings) has been little touched since redecoration in the 1920's or 30's (estimated). At that time the original painted wainscot design of variations on the fleur-de-lis (Photo 19), and the decoration above the wainscot of scrolls, crosses, borders and stylized leaf design (Photo 20) was painted over with a simulated coursed stone wainscot design. The original designs can be seen where confessionals have been removed in the transepts. The original designs still exist behind the pew ends, also. If the valuted ceiling was repainted at this time, it was repainted in the original design. Painted decorations in the Chancel and side chapels were added or painted over earlier designs. These new designs are in the Art Deco style and provide an interesting eclectic touch to the interior of St. Mary's. The stylized angel in the Chancel is particularly noteworthy (Photo 21). The designs above the reredoes in the side altars are another example of the Art Deco influence in the redecoration (Photo 14).

The overall feeling of unity and completeness within St. Mary's Church is the result of consistent detailing and design, and at least sympathetic, if not stylistically correct, redecoration when it occurred.

At one time, St. Mary's property contained a highly developed complex of buildings. Presently, there are two additional existing structures on the property (Photos 22-30). A priest's house, located east of the church, was built around 1910. A well-preserved boiler room with a chimney is located at the southeast corner of the church. School buildings to the south of the church and a modest organist's residence are no longer standing.

Rectory (Priest's House)

Located behind the church, the Rectory is a two story, rectangular brick building with a one story brick passageway, located on the west side, connecting the Rectory to the church (Photos 22-24). The building has a hipped roof pierced by a gabled dormer on the front facade. Facing north, the main entrance is framed by a Tudor Gothic stone arch; above and flanking the front door are stained glass windows (Photo 26). Most of the windows on the structure are double-hung sash with one-over-one lights. A number of windows, especially on the front facade, have transoms and stone lintels with blind,

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segmental arches in the rectangular stones. All of the windows have stone sills. Corbeled brick decorates the fascia above the second story windows on each facade. Several tall interior brick chimneys are offset on the roof.

Boiler building

Located on the southeast side of the church, the boiler building (Photo #'s 29 and 30) is a small, one story rectangular brick building, with an asphalt gable roof and a tall brick smokestack on the north side of the building. The building has flat and segmental arched openings, some of which are surmounted by two or three courses of header brick. The smokestack, of glazed block, features a diamond pattern in contrasting colors at the top. The boiler building is thought to have been built at the same time as the church, since the previous church building was destroyed by a boiler explosion.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input 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 type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1886, 1910

Builder Architect Samuel W. Lane, Griffith & Fair

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

St. Mary's Catholic Church is an excellent example of Gothic Revival, ecclesiastical architecture. It is significant as an historical monument to the great German immigration that boosted Fort Wayne's population growth in the second half of the 19th century. In more recent times, it has also been important as a stabilizing force in Fort Wayne's inner city area.

The church manifests many distinctive features of a Gothic ecclesiastical structure. The dominant central tower and corner towers rise majestically and are accentuated by wall buttresses which are prevalent throughout the structure. Stained glass tracery windows and the Gothic-arched windows with stone drip moldings add to the beauty of the church, as does other stone and brick detailing. The interior of the church has much artistic rendering, including stations of the cross painted in oils, marble statues, metal crafted accessories, and the stained glass windows. The church is an imposing structure, 230' x 190', which is larger than its mother church, the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception (National Register, 1980), located three blocks west of St. Mary's. It is also larger than St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church (National Register, 1983), which stands directly across an open block from St. Mary's, as another monument to German immigration.

The site of the present St. Mary's Church, at the southeast corner of Jefferson and Lafayette Streets, has served the German Catholic community since 1848. The origins of this specifically German church lay both in the inadequacy of the only Catholic Church then in town, St. Augustine's (later the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception), and the dissatisfaction that the rapidly-growing, German-speaking Catholic population felt for the French- and Irish-dominated congregation of St. Augustine's. This first German Catholic Church was a small brick structure (64' x 32') ministered by the first German priest, Father Edward Faller. The Bishop of Vincennes, who was Bishop of all Indiana at the time, blessed the church in 1850, and for the next eight years this building served the rapidly-growing, German-speaking Catholic population. In 1858 a much larger church was built and it served the German community until January, 1886, when it was destroyed by a boiler explosion.

The pastor at the time, Rev. John Oechtering, rallied the congregation and led the drive to rebuild the church. The old St. Mary's was completely razed, and the cornerstone of the new building was laid by Bishop Dwenger on July 11, 1886; a year-and-a-half later, on December 11, 1887, the Bishop dedicated the present church.

Father Oechtering was one of the most influential pastors in Fort Wayne between 1880 and 1927. Born in 1845 and raised in Risenbeck, Germany, John Oechtering came to America in 1869, was ordained for the Fort Wayne diocese, and served first as pastor in Elkhart and later in LaPorte, Indiana. On July 14, 1880, he was named by Bishop Dwenger to be pastor of St. Mary's in Fort Wayne.

True to his scholarly training in Germany, Father Oechtering translated many classic works into English and wrote extensively on such topics as socialism, capital, and labor. Extremely active in the diocesan community, Rev. Oechtering was Vicar General of the Diocese, President of the Catholic School Board, and, in 1905, he was named Domestic Prelate of the Holy See by Pope Pius X.

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During Father Oechtering's pastorate the church of St. Mary's grew to a highly developed parish complex. In 1892, the old school house next to the church was torn down and St. Mary's Girl's Academy, staffed by The Sisters of Notre Dame, was erected. In 1903, the large St. Mary's Boy's School (later co-educational) was built across the street from the church (along Lafayette), containing a gym, bowling alleys, library and reading rooms. A new priest's home was also built (still standing) and a modest residence for the organist was erected (now gone).

Due to a major exodus from the inner-city area in later years, the parish's Catholic population declined and the schools were closed (1963). In 1964, the old St. Mary's School was reopened as an experimental inner-city project, which depended heavily upon the intensive participation of parents and teachers in home visitations, tutorials, and extra-curricular activities. In 1968, a Montessori pre-school, the first in Fort Wayne, was opened at St. Mary's to provide special training for inner-city children. Although the Montessori effort eventually had to close at St. Mary's, the programs were carried on in other downtown locations as direct outgrowths of this first enterprise. In 1969, the school was finally demolished, and the old girl's school behind the church was leveled in 1974, with the area being reserved as a memorial park.

Although the formal school programs of the church ended more than a decade ago, under the present priest, Rev. Thomas O'Connor, the church has become a leader in programs designed for the needs of the inner-city, underprivileged neighborhoods that now surround St. Mary's. In 1975 the "Soup Kitchen" was opened, and in 1976 the equally important Matthew 25 Health Clinic and related Dental Clinic added to the vital parish functions of the church.

Throughout the changes and problems which have confronted this Fort Wayne community, St. Mary's has remained a stately presence open to the needs of the community.

St. Mary's church still provides for those in special need, in much the same way it did nearly 140 years ago when a handful of immigrants who did not speak the language of their new country needed a religious home of their own.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approx. one acre

Quadrangle name Fort Wayne West

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	6	6	5	6	8	2	0	4	5	4	8	7	5	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name title Thomas E. Alter, Attorney at Law (See continuation sheet)

organization St. Mary's Catholic Church date April 17, 1984

street & number 622 South Calhoun Street telephone 219/422-3565

city or town Fort Wayne state Indiana 46802

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national 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 National Park Service

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer date 11-8-84

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

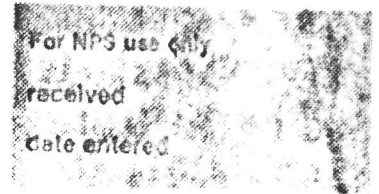
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Item 9

- Alerding, H. J. The Diocese of Fort Wayne. Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1907.
- Ankenbruck, John. Twentieth Century History of Fort Wayne. Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1975.
Fort Wayne Daily Sentinel. (Various issues, 1880-1918)
- Griswold, Bert. The Pictorial History of Fort Wayne. 2 Volumes. Chicago, 1917.
- McAvoy, Thomas. The Catholic Church in Indiana, 1789-1834. New York, 1940.
- Poinsatte, Charles. Fort Wayne During the Canal Era, 1828-1855. Indianapolis, 1969.
- Robertson, Robert S. The Valley of the Upper Maumee River. 2 Volumes. Madison, Wisconsin, 1889.
- Scott, Clifford. "Fort Wayne German-Americans During World War I: A Cultural Flu Epidemic." The Old Fort News, XL (1977), 3-17.
Indiana Catholic, December 8, 1914

Item 10 The West 23 feet of Lot No. 165,
Lot No. 166, the vacated 10 foot alley along the Western boundary of Lot No. 166, and Lots Numbered 167, 168, 169 and 170 in Samuel Hanna's First Addition, an Addition to the Town (now City) of Fort Wayne, Indiana, according to the recorded Plat thereof; located at the Southeast corner of the intersection of Jefferson Boulevard and Lafayette Street, 318.5 feet along the South boundary line of Jefferson Boulevard and 150 feet along the East boundary line of Lafayette Street.

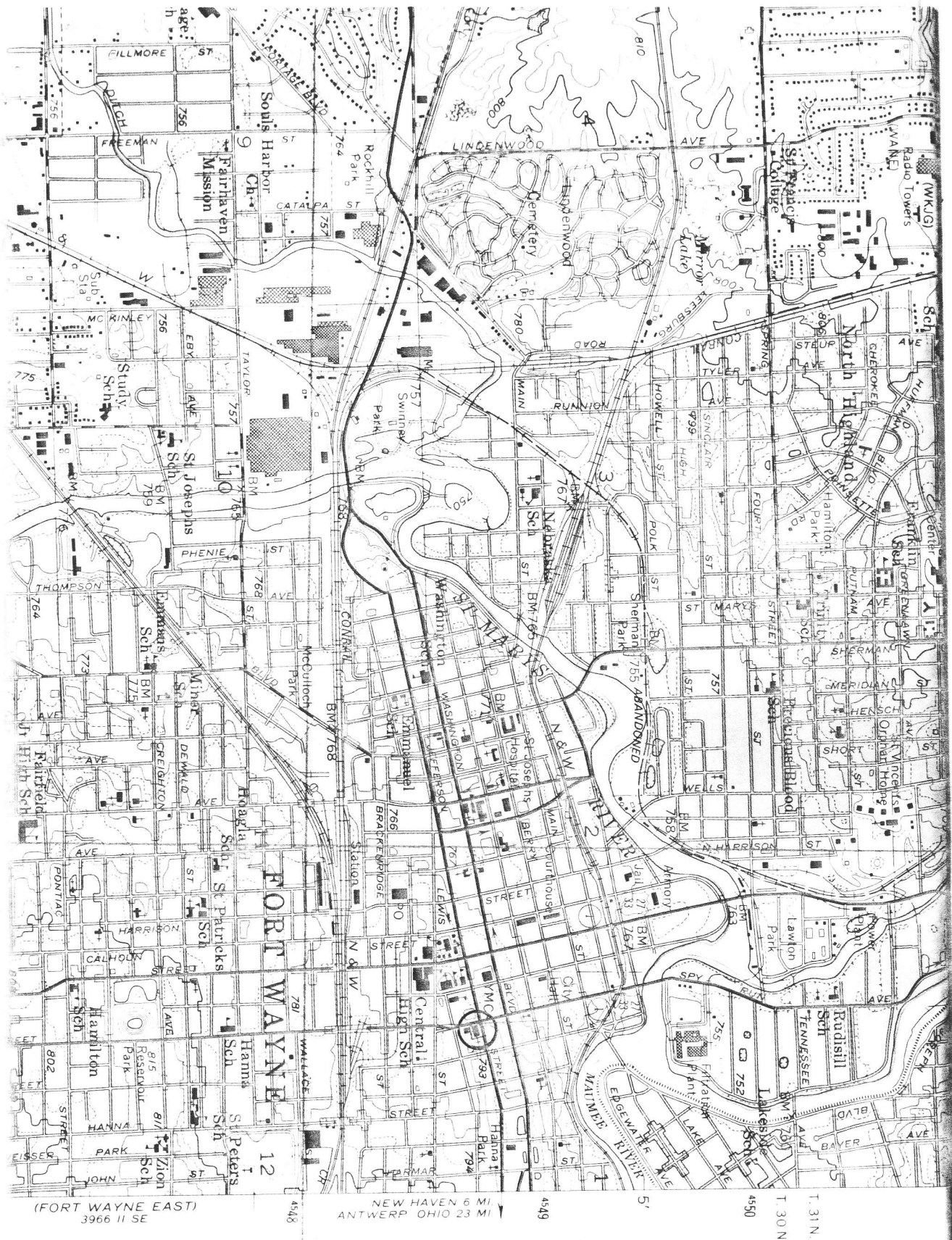
Item 11

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Cole Matott Riley, Architects
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 Fort Wayne, Indiana
 UTM Reference: 16/656820/4548750