

FINAL - COMPLETE

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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Woodrow Wilson Junior High School
other names/site number Woodrow Wilson Middle School 167-628-20297

2. Location

street & number 301 South 25th Street N/A not for publication
city or town Terre Haute N/A vicinity
state Indiana code IN county Vigo code 167 zip code 47803

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 36CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Pat R. Ralst 1-30-98
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments?)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register
 other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Name of Property

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1 | 0 | buildings |
| 0 | 2 | sites |
| 1 | 0 | structures |
| 0 | 0 | objects |
| 2 | 2 | Total |

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th & 20th c. Tudor Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

STONE: Limestone

roof ASPHALT

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

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

Criteria Considerations

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

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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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 # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ART _____
 EDUCATION _____
 ARCHITECTURE _____

Period of Significance

1927-1945 _____

Significant Dates

1927 _____
 1935 _____

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Miller, Miller, Johnson, & Yeager _____
 Wilson, Gilbert Brown _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Vigo County Public Library _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.76

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

| | | | |
|---|------|---------|----------|
| 1 | 16 | 467320 | 4368120 |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing |
| 2 | | | |

| | | | |
|---|------|---------|----------|
| 3 | | | |
| | Zone | Easting | Northing |
| 4 | | | |

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sarah Marchino, Intern

organization Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana date 10-3-95

street & number 643 Wabash Avenue telephone 812/232-4534

city or town Terre Haute state IN zip code 47807

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white** photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Vigo County School Corporation

street & number 961 Lafayette Avenue telephone 812/462-4479

city or town Terre Haute state IN zip code 47807

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. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1

Woodrow Wilson Junior High School
Vigo, Indiana

Section 7 – Architectural Description

Woodrow Wilson Junior High School is located on the east side of the city of Terre Haute. The property consists of two contributing buildings: the school itself and a small powerplant with attached smokestack; and two non-contributing sites: a tennis court and an asphalt track. The school and its grounds occupy three blocks bounded by Poplar Street on the south, 25th Street on the east, an alley on the north, and Barton Street on the west. The main entrance is located on 25th Street. The school is surrounded by well-landscaped grounds with several varieties of plant life.

The school is a three-story brick building with Jacobethan Revival details, built in 1926. An east-west central axis bisects the building, reflected in the near-perfect symmetry of the floor plan and facades. This axis is accentuated by the centered main entry tower which projects from the wall mass of the main facade. The tower is flanked by wings three stories in height. The overall floor plan of the building is a "T" plan (photo 1).

The central tower is five stories tall and dominates the rest of the building. The tower is constructed entirely of smooth-faced limestone with two buttresses on the front facade corners from the foundation to the fifth floor (photo 2). The main entryway, at the base of the tower, consists of a compound pointed arch that is articulated by a hood molding with splayed reveals and paired metal doors. These paired metal doors are divided down the middle by a stone support. Within the stone support there is a small niche with a quatrefoil carved into the top. In the transom above the doors there is a band of tracery with a leaf and acorn design. Approximately every six inches along the hood molding there are sprigs of foliage carved out of limestone.

At the base of the hood molding there are two mascarons caricatured after medieval persons (photo 3). Flanking the entryway are two wrought iron lanterns. At the northeast corner, there is a cornerstone carved with the date 1926. The entryway takes up the first and second floor areas of the tower's front facade.

Between the second and third floors are raised shields in a checkerboard pattern. These help to blend the second and third floors visually. The third floor has five windows flanked by niches, each with a limestone canopy and tracery. The windows are separated by vertical limestone lanciforms. Below this row of windows is a limestone sill decorated with a grapevine foliated detail.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2Woodrow Wilson Junior High School
Vigo, Indiana

The fourth floor elevation is visible from all four directions. This floor houses three windows per side with hood moldings and label stops. Below the center window is a balconette with paired limestone panels. These panels have detailed stone tracery that mimics Gothic-arched windows. Dividing the fourth floor in half is a row of bas-relief foliated banding that is present on the north, south, and east facades.

Flanking the windows above this central banding are bas-relief elves. Two per side, each elf represents an aspect of the learning process. The elves for reading and arithmetic are located on the east facade, writing and geography are located on the north facade, and music and technology are on the south facade.

The elves for writing and arithmetic are of particular interest. The tablet held by the writing elf is inscribed with the initials E.H.M. for the architect Ewing H. Miller, Sr. The arithmetic elf is solving the problem $19 + 27 = 46$. The numbers 19 and 27 represent the year 1927 when the school was completed.

Between the fourth and fifth floor on the main facade, the words "Woodrow Wilson Junior High School" are carved in Lombardic capitals on a limestone nameplate. The fifth floor houses four clocks, one for each facade of the tower. The clocks are framed in a limestone square. Carved in the corners of each square are quatrefoils. Each clock is flanked by two sets of paired Gothic arched windows with splayed openings. The central tower features a limestone parapet roof with tablets. Each tablet has a raised shield, nine on each facade. The shields are grouped in threes. Four domed hanging corner buttresses complete the roof line. On all four corners are crocket-ornamented domes (photo 4).

Between the main building mass and the central tower is a step of building mass the width of one bay. The walls are brick laid in common bond with a limestone water table. Between the second and third floors are two limestone panels with panel tracery. Along the roof line parapet are six tablets with raised shields. The corners have staggered limestone quoins (photo 5).

Each wing on the main elevation is symmetrically divided into four bays by three vertical limestone posts in the roof line parapet. Each of these limestone divisions has a raised shield in the center. Approximately six feet above the foundation is a limestone water table running along the facade. Within each bay is a set of four anodized aluminum windows with thermal pane glass. One set per floor, these windows are separated from the brick walls by staggered stone quoins and limestone sills and headers.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 3Woodrow Wilson Junior High School
Vigo, Indiana

limestone canopy of tracery. Running along the balconette and extending to the edges of the limestone panels is a band of carved foliage and grapes. On either side of the niche are trefoil-arched windows. Below the windows are paired panels containing quatrefoils. Lanciforms run the height of the entry bay and have lanterns at their bases. The third section of the facade has sets of four windows on each floor.

The west facade of the main building (north side of the gymnasium wing) is divided into five bays. There are no windows on the lower two levels. Along the third floor elevation is a brick design that resembles a window opening in the first bay. In the second bay is a single window containing three horizontal panes and a limestone sill and brick header. The remaining three bays have sets of four anodized aluminum windows with limestone sills and brick headers.

The north facade of the gymnasium wing is divided into fourteen bays by wall buttresses (photo 10). The buttresses are brick with limestone copings. The water table runs along the top of the first floor. Below the water table, within each bay, the windows are bricked in. The first two bays are empty. The remaining bays have the original large aluminum nine-paned windows. At the roof line are vertical limestone panels that continue the line of the buttresses. Each panel contains a raised shield. Between the panels is diamond-patterned brickwork. The south facade is identical except for the addition of a two-story wing built into the inside corner of the building.

The rear of the gymnasium is divided into three bays (photo 11). The outer bays are brick with two large windows that are bricked in within the second and third floor regions. The rear entry is an ogee arch with splayed reveals and a hood molding. The top of the molding culminates in an elaborate finial. Two metal doors are divided by a limestone support with a niche at its top. The top of the niche contains a carved quatrefoil. Between the doors and molding is a panel of blind tracery. Above the entryway is a limestone band with the word "gymnasium" carved in Lombardic capitals and flanked by rosettes. This band forms the sill for a ribbon window of five sections. Two niches flank the windows and have limestone canopies with tracery. Above the windows is a stepped panel with tracery (photo 12).

The west facade of the main building is divided into five bays. A water table runs along the last two bays. The first bay has been covered by a brick elevator shaft. The second and third bays have sets of four anodized aluminum windows with three horizontal panes of glass. The fifth bay has a false window built of brick. The third and fourth bays have the same style of windows in all three floors. The first and second floors of the fifth bay are divided by the water table but the floors do not have windows.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Woodrow Wilson Junior High School
Vigo, Indiana

The south facade is symmetrical with the north (photo 14). This facade has the same ascending step design. The first step is a single bay with a water table and a set of four windows per floor. The second step has the detailed entryway with compound pointed arch doorway and trefoil-arched windows (photo 15). The third step has four bays with a water table and a set of four windows per floor. None of the windows on this facade have been bricked in or removed.

Several alterations were made to the building in 1981. During this renovation, all of the wooden 6/6 double hung windows were replaced with anodized aluminum windows. In addition, all of the wooden six pane doors were replaced with metal doors. Two additions were also made at this time. The addition to the south side of the gymnasium wing fits into the intersection of the two main wings (photo 16). This addition is two stories in height and stretches the length of the gymnasium. The south facade of this addition has eleven bays with stylized buttresses and limestone copings. Every other bay on this facade has a set of three windows. Each window has a set of three horizontal panes. This addition has staggered stone quoins. The brick is laid in stretcher bond.

The addition on the north side of the building also fits into the intersection of the main and gymnasium wings (photo 17). This addition consists of four sections. The first section projects forward from the gymnasium wing and matches up with the north facade of the main building mass. The north facade of this section has a water table running approximately four feet below the roof line. The west facade has four bays separated by three vertical gutters. Within each bay is one set of four anodized aluminum windows.

The next section of this addition projects only slightly from the gymnasium wing. Its north facade is functional in design. It is divided down the center to create two loading bays. The third section is flush with the gymnasium wall. Its north facade houses two metal doors with a blind transom. These doors provide access to the maintenance section of the building. The final section's north facade contains a recessed square entryway. Below this entry are two sets of metal doors with a stone post between them. Along the roof line of this section is a band of limestone designed to mimic a parapet roof line.

The main entrance to the interior of the building leads into a two-story entry hall. The walls have smooth-faced limestone four feet in height from the floor and the remaining wall space is covered in pastel murals. This entry hall houses a stairway with three steps down to the north and a handicap-accessible ramp to the south. The stairway has a wooden handrail with wooden

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 5

Woodrow Wilson Junior High School
Vigo, Indiana

newel posts. Each newel post has a raised shield on each of its four sides. The main (second) floor is visible through four Tudor-arched bays. The central two bays form the entrance to the main lobby, while the outer two bays allow one to look out at the main entryway and the murals. There is a metal baluster across these bays. The ceilings are coffered with an octagonal, Tudor-style chandelier in the center. The chandelier has plate tracery with cusped arches. There are nine open light bulbs hanging from the underside of the chandelier. One is in the center and the remaining eight are at each point of the octagon (photo 18).

The murals are the dominant feature of the main entry hall (photo 19). These murals were created by Terre Haute artist Gilbert Wilson. Flanking the stairway and the doors, these murals concentrate on the social, industrial, and individual factors that affected society in 1934. Wilson portrays several prominent individuals from the area at the time in the murals. For instance, Professor Turman, an art professor at Indiana State University, is the central figure in the south mural (photo 20). The mural also includes portrayals of Gilbert's sister as a scientist. A janitor at Woodrow Wilson who collected chalk for the artist is portrayed as a farmer surveying his land. The murals were restored in 1982 by Donald Hadley, head of the art department at Woodrow Wilson.

The main lobby at the top of the stairs remains intact (photo 21). The floor in the lobby is tile and the west wall of the lobby is painted white. Along the west wall are four double doors. When closed, these doors are in the shape of a Tudor arch. Directly above each door is a lantern light fixture. Spaced symmetrically between the first and second doors and the third and fourth doors are original operating drinking fountains and two stone ticket booths (no longer in use) with tracery. The ceilings are coffered with two small light fixtures resembling the chandelier in the main entrance.

The two central doors lead into the auditorium vestibule (photo 23). The two outer doors, set further apart, lead directly into the rear auditorium. The auditorium vestibule has a ribbed, vaulted ceiling and an original lantern-style light fixture hanging in the center. To either side of the vestibule are paired Tudor arches. The arches to the west on either side lead to a stairway that leads to the third floor or the former balcony. The arches to the east lead into the auditorium.

The auditorium has five section of seating fanned out from a central stage. The stage is elliptical in shape and is the focal point of the auditorium. The main proscenium of the stage has a large square opening. There are three plaster bands of decoration around each opening. Starting from

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 6

Woodrow Wilson Junior High School
Vigo, Indiana

the interior, the first band has three panels on each side (photo 24). The center of each panel is a light green in color. The border separating the panels is maize colored.

The central band has a raised grapevine design. This design is created in 5' repeating panels that are marked by a small bird at the beginning of each section. This band is created in shades of violet, blue, and green on a pale ivory background. A light wash of paint was used to create the effect. The third band forms the top and outer edge of the stage. The outer band is a tall niche with a small lighting stand in the base. Each niche has two latticework criss-crosses (photo 25) dividing it into three sections. At the top of these niches are two decorative canopies that mimic Gothic designs.

Two more of these canopies divide the top of the proscenium into three sections. Each section is divided by Tudor arch detailing with raised shields. Each shield has its own individual design with detailed heraldry. The walls have been covered by carpeted insulation. Two original windows have been closed to make room for exterior additions. The balcony has been enclosed to house lighting equipment. The ceiling is coffered, as is the border along the base of the balcony (photo 26). Four chandeliers, identical to the one in the main entryway, hang from the main ceiling in the auditorium. The areas beside the entry vestibule and below the balcony house three chandeliers of smaller proportion and similar style. Restrooms flank the auditorium on either side.

The remaining spaces of the interior (besides the auditorium and gymnasium) are hallways and classrooms. The main hallway lies along the cross-axis (north/south) and the central hall (east/west) lies to the south of the auditorium and gymnasium. The central hallway terminates at its intersection with the main hallway and at the end of the building with a stairway and entry doors to the west. The main hallway terminates in the landing for the stairways at either end of the building (photo 27). One staircase leads to the lower level or to doors at the north and south ends of the building. The other staircase leads to the third floor. The walls are covered with 1" by 2" tiles in grey, white, and red. The tiles create designs that mimic the heraldry throughout the building. The stairways were redesigned in 1981.

The hallways are approximately 10' wide with carpeted floors. The walls are covered from the floor to 4' with the same tiles. Wallpaper covers the remaining wall area. Lockers approximately 6' tall line the walls. Where there is the occasional water fountain, the tile and wallpaper are interrupted by insets covered in 1' x 1' terrazzo tile. Classrooms are located on the east and west sides of the cross axis hallway, and to the south side of the central hallway (photo 28). The

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 7

Woodrow Wilson Junior High School
Vigo, Indiana

classrooms have new wooden doors with vertical lights in them. Classroom walls are painted and have chalkboards lining them.

The lower level of the building is identical to the main floor with the exception of the cafeteria, which replaces the auditorium. The cafeteria and gymnasium are the main spaces on the lower level, as well as classrooms mirroring those on the main level. The cafeteria is designed in two levels (photo 29). The entry level has landings lined with original brass railings and overlooks the seating area below. The entire cafeteria is lined with brass railings to direct the students through the serving lines. Restrooms flank the cafeteria on the lower level.

The gymnasium, which takes up space on the lower and main levels, was renovated in 1981 (photo 30). The interior of the gym was renovated as were the boys' and girls' locker rooms. The gym is two stories in height. The gym can be accessed by two small staircases in the rear of the auditorium. By the central hallway on the lower level, and by two outside entrances.

The third floor's major space is composed of hallways and classrooms. Unlike the lower and main levels, the third floor does not have a central hallway. The library is the main space on the third floor. It was originally three separate classrooms, but partition walls were removed to increase the space available for the library. Restrooms were added to this floor in 1981, directly above those on the lower levels.

In addition to the main building, there is a small powerplant with attached smokestack to the northwest of the school building (photo 31). The building is utilitarian in style and has brick laid in common bond with staggered stone quoins like those on the main building. There is an underground access tunnel between this powerplant and the main building. The powerplant was built in 1926 to serve as the energy source for the school and is still used for this purpose. The powerplant is considered a contributing building.

The east facade of the powerplant has evidence of two large windows. They were bricked in at a later date. There is a metal door to the right of this facade that has a limestone hood molding with label stops. The north facade has one 2/2 window in the center of the wall. There is also a small window in the foundation of the facade that has been bricked in. The west facade of the building has a three-story smokestack. The stack has four hanging buttresses with stone coping between the first and second stories. The south facade is plain brick.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Woodrow Wilson Junior High School
Vigo, Indiana

Section 8 – Statement of Significance

Woodrow Wilson Junior High School is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A in the areas of art and education and Criterion C for its outstanding Jacobethan architectural detailing. It was rated “outstanding” in the Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory, Vigo County Interim Report (June 1984). In the area of education, the school is the result of an important period of change in public education in Indiana. In the area of art, the murals in the lobby are nationally significant as a rare example of this type of art in a public school and also as the first public work of an important Indiana artist.

The school is located on the east side of the city of Terre Haute, Indiana. Established as the county seat of Vigo County in 1816, the plat for the city was filed in Vincennes by Joseph Kitchell in the same year. It was incorporated as a town in 1832, and as a city in 1853. The city is located on the Wabash River, at the point where the river becomes the border between Indiana and Illinois.

In the three decades from 1820-1850, the population of Terre Haute grew from 3,390 to 15,289. Terre Haute’s early growth came as a result of commercial flatboat traffic that was already established on the Wabash River. Steamboats from the Ohio River began using Terre Haute as a port in 1823. This provided a more dependable and faster means of transportation to the area. The National Road reached the city in 1838, providing an additional entryway for settlers. The Wabash and Erie Canal was completed to Terre Haute in 1849, and with it came more settlers and an increase in the transportation rate from two to eight miles per hour. These improvements helped to increase the population of Terre Haute over the three decades. In 1852, railroads reached Terre Haute. This new form of transportation marked a significant increase in the population of the city. The railroad made it easier to mine and transport the abundant amounts of coal in the area. As mining and other industries were established in Terre Haute, the city became a significant member of the industrial revolution. By 1920, Terre Haute was home to six major railroads, including the Big four, the Pennsylvania, and the Chicago & Eastern Illinois. With the influx of workers and other permanent settlers, Terre Haute’s population had grown to over 27,000. The city had established itself as the “Crossroads of America.”

Terre Haute’s growth was proportional to the growth of Indiana itself. In 1865, a law was passed that created a legal school corporation out of each town or civil city. This corporation was placed under control of trustees, who were elected by a town board. In addition, the guidelines

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

Woodrow Wilson Junior High School
Vigo, Indiana

for a core curriculum were developed. This curriculum included orthography, writing, reading, arithmetic, English grammar, and good behavior.

It was not until the Law of 1873 was passed that the actual foundation of the state educational system was established. Township trustees were given the power to elect superintendents and county boards of education were formed. The Law of 1875 placed the responsibility for the county boards in the hands of county commissioners. In 1895, scientific temperance was added to the core curriculum. At this time, German and music classes were also an option for the curriculum. By the Law of 1907, grades one through eight were established as the elementary grades. Grades nine through twelve were designated high school grades. In 1908, however, superintendents discarded this division and created the junior high schools at the seventh, eighth, and ninth grade levels. The passage of these laws in 1907 and 1908 resulted in a construction boom in public educational buildings in Indiana. The Law of 1913 made provisions for the state to supplement local revenues in the school corporation. In addition, vocational and domestic sciences were added to the curriculum and night classes were made available to students who worked during the day. These changes inevitably led to the need for modern, efficient schools. Terre Haute's educational leaders recognized the need for a junior high school on the east side of town.

In 1921, the east side of Terre Haute was dominated by the construction of Ohio Boulevard. This post-World War I development extends for six blocks between 19th Street and 25th Street. The tract of land along Ohio Boulevard was developed as the Deming Subdivision. The subdivision was reserved almost exclusively for the wealthy business and civic leaders of Terre Haute. Demas Deming, Jr. was responsible for the development of the Ohio Boulevard neighborhood, now a National Register Historic District. Deming was the president of First National Bank, builder of the Deming Hotel, and a patron of Rose Polytechnic Institute. Deming was also the owner of the Deming Land Company, which sold 23 acres of land to the Vigo County School Corporation on April 1, 1921. Residents of the new development felt that a school would solidify community spirit as well as provide a quality educational environment for students. On the contrary, due to its remote location on the city's eastern fringe, the junior high school was often referred to as "Eastside High" in its early years of construction.

The architectural firm of Miller, Miller, and Johnson was hired to design and build the school in 1922. This firm was one of the leading architectural firms in Terre Haute at the time. Other projects that were undertaken by Miller, Miller, and Johnson and its successors included the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 10 Woodrow Wilson Junior High School
Vigo, Indiana

Terre Haute Federal Building, Rea Park Club house, First National Bank, and about thirty high schools throughout the area.

Plans for the school were completed by Ewing Miller, Sr. in 1923. Two days after completion of the plans, Ewing Miller died during surgery. The remaining members of the firm were Warren D. Miller (Ewing's brother) and MacMillan Johnson. Three months after the death of Ewing Miller, "Mack" Johnson died suddenly of a heart attack. Left to carry out the Woodrow Wilson project on his own, Warren Miller brought Ralph Yeager into the firm. It was the firm of Miller and Yeager that completed the Woodrow Wilson Junior High School in 1927. The total cost for the building was \$715,000.

The building was built in the Jacobethan Revival style, a popular style in the 1920s. There are two other outstanding examples of Jacobethan Revival junior high schools in Vigo County. Sarah Scott Junior High School, located at 2000 South Ninth Street, was completed in 1919. William E. McLean Junior High School, located at 961 Lafayette Avenue, was completed in 1917. However, Woodrow Wilson stands as the most detailed example of the style.

Woodrow Wilson opened for the fall semester in 1927. The original building consisted of forty classrooms, a library, an auditorium that seated fifteen hundred people, a cafeteria that seated three hundred, and a gymnasium that seated one thousand. The school was highlighted in a 1927 issue of *Modern School House Magazine* as one of the most impressive new schools of its time. The school received its formal certification, rating it as a first-class commissioned junior high school in 1929. The basis for this rating was the course of study available, activity programs, facilities, the buildings and grounds, and teaching staff.

The school's primary significance is in the area of art and comes from the huge murals that decorate the lobby. Gilbert Wilson, one of the premier muralists of his day, painted them in 1934 and 1935. Although these murals are stylistically similar to those WPA works found in Post Offices, Wilson's murals are generally larger than those in Post Offices, and his social commentary was much more radical and probably would not have passed the necessary reviews by public officials.

Wilson, a native of Terre Haute, studied at the Chicago Art Institute in 1929. He did not find the academic style of painting to his taste and spent most of his time sketching in the Field Museum of Natural History. He entered some paintings in the Chicago Hoosier Salon in 1932, and won a \$200 prize. This recognition also brought him an introduction to another Indiana muralist,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 11Woodrow Wilson Junior High School
Vigo, Indiana

Eugene Savage, who was impressed enough with Wilson's work to accept him as an apprentice at his Ossining, New York studio. Wilson spent a brief time studying art at Yale, then returned to New York. While in New York, Savage introduced Wilson to the paintings of Mexican artists Rivera and Orozco. Wilson became inspired by their use of color and vibrant figures, and soon left New York to study in Mexico, hoping to study with Rivera. Although Wilson had spoken to Rivera and showed him his work, Rivera never took him on as a student. Upon his return to the US, Wilson had planned to work as an apprentice with Rivera on a major mural project. Unfortunately, the project was postponed, so Wilson worked in San Francisco for a year with the noted sculptor Soleri. At the end of his time in California, he prepared a sketch for a mural and took it to the school board in his home town of Terre Haute. After nine months of waiting, the board offered him a chance to paint the murals at Woodrow Wilson Junior High School at his own expense.

The paintings are a social commentary on the machine age; anti-war and anti-fascist imagery is mingled with a message of hope in the form of young people. Wilson painted in the style known as "social realism," a monumental style that we usually associate with WPA art. Wilson used inexpensive chalk and pastels on the walls because the school would not pay him for materials or labor. He got one of the janitors to scrounge bits of chalk from the school's classrooms so that he could save money on materials.

When the murals were completed, local politicians and businessmen were outraged at their appearance. A local newspaper said that the artwork had a "pinkish" (socialist) tinge. School officials had taken offense at the quotations from Abraham Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson that had been painted into the murals. They thought that the words had come from Terre Haute socialist Eugene V. Debs. The school board boycotted the dedication, which was hosted by a curator from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Wilson was asked to change details; some opponents even threatened to destroy his work. The teachers and students, for whom the murals were intended, supported the artist. They took up a collection and raised \$28.45 in change -- Wilson's only payment. Two national magazines of the time (*Scribner's* and the *New Republic*) featured articles about Wilson's murals and deplored the narrow-mindedness of the city of Terre Haute toward this great artist.

Wilson's next project was to paint a corridor in the State Teachers' Laboratory School (now Indiana State University). His theme for this mural was "waste," both of land and of human life. A dust storm symbolizes the earth's revolt at the mismanagement of its resources. Some of the same imagery appears in this and the Woodrow Wilson murals, such as gas masks, young, dead

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 12 Woodrow Wilson Junior High School
Vigo, Indiana

soldiers, and a stream. Wilson himself destroyed a first draft of this second set of murals in a fit of depression over his work. He did finish them eventually, but portions of them have since been covered up during subsequent remodeling. The rest of the work is still visible today.

During the late 1930s and early 1940s, Wilson painted murals in several other public buildings, including the Spink Hotel and Convention Center at Lake Wawasee, Indiana; the Community Theater in Terre Haute; and the Antioch College gymnasium in Yellow Springs, Ohio. In the mid-1940s, he became interested in the novel *Moby Dick*, and created over 300 paintings and drawings illustrating the story and its characters. He made a film of his artwork, including a narration and musical score, which toured nationwide and was sponsored by Pearl S. Buck and Walter Huston. When Huston's son, John, made a feature film of *Moby Dick* in 1956, he asked Wilson to be the technical advisor. Wilson made another coast-to-coast tour showing his paintings and speaking about the film and its stars. *American Artist* magazine featured an article about the *Moby Dick* paintings in 1957, bringing further national recognition to the artist. Currently, six of these paintings are touring in an exhibit about the art of *Moby Dick*.

Little is known of Wilson's work since the 1960s. He experimented for a time with the effects of classical music on plant growth, but newspapers and magazines make no mention of any art projects during that time. He lived in New York between 1948-1961, then bought a studio near Frankfort, Kentucky. He maintained another studio in Terre Haute, on the Blumberg estate where he had lived (with the financial support of Fanny Blumberg) while painting the Woodrow Wilson murals. When these murals were restored in 1982, Wilson returned to Terre Haute to re-sign them, showing his approval of artist Donald Hadley's work.

Gilbert Wilson died in 1991, leaving his papers and remaining artwork to the Swope Art Museum in Terre Haute. His murals are still visible at the Terre Haute Community Theater, Indiana State University, Antioch College, and Woodrow Wilson Junior High School. Of these, the Woodrow Wilson paintings -- his first public work -- are in the best condition due to the 1982 restoration, and are probably the most extensive. As the best example of Wilson's surviving murals, Woodrow Wilson Junior High School is nationally significant in the area of art.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 13

Woodrow Wilson Junior High School
Vigo, Indiana

Section 9 – Bibliography

“Art and Terre Haute.” *New Republic* 84 (4 September 1935): 91.

Blumeson, John. *Identifying American Architecture*. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1982.

Brown, Everett I. *Physical Study of Existing Woodrow Wilson Junior High School: 301 South 25th Street, Terre Haute, Indiana*. Indianapolis: Brown Publishing, 1976.

Carley, Richard. *The Visual Dictionary of American Architecture*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1994.

Clark, Dorothy J. *Terre Haute and Her People of Progress*. Indianapolis: Biographers, Inc., 1970.

Clark, Dorothy J. *Terre Haute: Wabash River City*. Windsor Publications, 1983.

Fleming, John. Hugh Honor. Nikolaus Pevsner. *Penguin Dictionary of Architecture*. New York: Penguin Books, 1984.

Harris, Cyril M. *Historic Architecture Source Book*. New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1977.

Hazeldine, Jane. *An Interview with Ewing H. Miller*. Terre Haute: Vigo County Oral History Program, 1981.

Hill, Linda. Personal interview, May 25, 1995.

Jordan, Furneaux. *A Concise History of Western Architecture*. London: Thames & Hudson, Ltd., 1978.

Labine, Clem. “Romantic English Revival.” *Old House Journal* (May 1983): 81-83.

Lynch, Bruce. “The Popular English Revival Style.” *Old House Journal* (July 1983): 117-120.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 14

Woodrow Wilson Junior High School
Vigo, Indiana

McAlester, Lee and Virginia. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984.

Pitz, Henry C. "Gil Wilson: A Painter of Themes." *American Artist* (April 1957): 30-35.

Polk, R.L. & Company. *Terre Haute City Directory*. Indianapolis: R.L. Polk & Company, 1918.

Ringel, Fred J. "Gilbert Wilson: Mural Painter." *Scribner's Magazine* 101 (May 1937): 45-51.

Newspapers:

Indianapolis *Star*, 1930-1965
Terre Haute *Tribune*, 1937-82

Personal Interviews:

Hill, Linda. Art teacher at Woodrow Wilson Junior High.
Reid, Graeme. Curator of Gilbert Wilson collection at the Swope Art Museum, Terre Haute.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 15

Woodrow Wilson Junior High School
Vigo, Indiana

Section 10 – Geographical Information

Verbal Boundary Description

All that part of the Southwest quarter of Section 23, Township 12 North, Range 9 West described as follows:

Beginning at the point of intersection of the North line of Poplar Street with the West line of 25th Street, running thence North along the West line of 25th Street 650 feet; thence West to the East line of Barton Avenue, thence South along the East line of Barton Avenue 650 feet to the North line of Poplar Street; thence East along the North line of Poplar Street to the place of beginning, except that part of the above described premises, dedicated and established as Twenty-third (23rd) Street and Twenty-fourth (24th) Street in the recorded Plat of Deming in Plat Record No. 12 Page 27 of the Records of the Recorder's Office of Vigo County, Indiana.

Boundary Justification

This is the historic boundary of the property according to the original deed.

