

FINAL

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 Bethany Congregational Church
other names/site number Bethany United Church of Christ 167-628-18013

2. Location

street & number 201 West Miller Avenue P.O. Box 13 N/A not for publication
city or town West Terre Haute N/A vicinity
state Indiana code IN county Vigo code 167 zip code 47885

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.)
J.C. Sullivan 8.8.03
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 _____

Bethany Congregational Church
Name of Property

Vigo IN
County and State

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
- landscape

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: Religious Facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: Religious Facility

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Gothic

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: STONE

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1908

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Padgett, Charles (architect)

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 #

Primary location of additional data:

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

Bethany Congregational Church
Name of Property

Vigo IN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1

16	461640	4368480
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 Camille Fife, Thomas W. Salmon, April Richwalski date 11-11-2002

organization The Westerley Group, Inc. telephone 812/696-2415

street & number 556 W. 1175 N Road state IN zip code 47850

city or town Farmersburg

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 Bethany United Church of Christ telephone _____

street & number P O Box 13 zip code 47885

city or town West Terre Haute state IN

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.

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Bethany Congregational Church
(Bethany United Church of Christ)

7. Narrative Description

Summary

Bethany United Church of Christ, constructed between 1907 and 1909, is an outstanding example of a religious facility in West Terre Haute, Indiana. Set in a mixed commercial and residential neighborhood, it is an excellent example of a brick, Late Victorian Gothic structure of the early twentieth century. Both interior and exterior retain a high degree of integrity, including integrity of location, design, setting, materials and workmanship. The feeling and association of the property are also retained. While a large addition has been constructed on the west side of the property, the physical integrity of the original portion of the building is very high and the church still conveys its architectural significance.

Description

West Terre Haute is located in Vigo County, across the Wabash River from Terre Haute, Indiana, in the low ground only slightly elevated above the bottom lands of the River. The town varies in elevation from 460 to 470 feet. The Bethany United Church of Christ is located on less than one acre on the corner of Miller and Church Streets in West Terre Haute. It was rated "Outstanding" in the Vigo County Survey, prepared in 1987. This rating is reserved for the best architectural examples and/or the historically most significant resources in the Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Program. The surrounding areas are residential with the exception of US 40/150, located to the south, which runs parallel to Miller St. The church is within the boundaries of the town, but slightly north of the main highway and main commercial sector. It is just north of the National Road (U.S. 40 today) and south of the old National Road, or Paris Road which traditionally led west to the town of Paris, Illinois. In addition, it is only a block east of the branch of U. S. 150 which leads north from the center of West Terre Haute up to the entrance to Saint Mary of the Woods, which includes a small village, the college and the mother house of the Sisters of Providence, founded in 1840.

Today the 1908 church building is in fine condition with well preserved leaders, operable down spouts, and a roof which is in good repair. The immediate setting of the church includes, to the west of the church lot, a simple, aluminum sided residence which presently serves as the parsonage. However, this building is outside the confines of the historic property for this nomination. To the south of the church, is a large parking lot, behind the apse and the addition. For the purposes of this nomination, the church property ends with the east-west alley between Miller and U. S. 40. On the Church Street (or east) side, the lot has been landscaped with grass, shrubs and trees. To the west, the addition comprises a portion of the lot, with the parsonage on the property next door.

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The church is designed in the Late Victorian Gothic style, with German and English influences in the detailing. The original plan was a modified rectangle with an octagonal bell tower. The plan has been modified with a modern addition to the west. The combination hipped and pyramidal roof is finished with asphalt shingles. The original roof was probably slate with metal ridge caps, according to an early photograph (See Photo No. 25). Two cross gable ends once had parapets which were capped with limestone. These have been replaced with tile parapet caps. The foundation is of stone, and the exterior walls are constructed of vitrified brick with a five inch wide limestone belting running above the basement windows. A larger limestone belting can be found just above the tower entrances. The window, door heads, and sills are also of limestone. The latter are flat, dressed face. The brick used in the building is unusual, in that much of it is rock faced. The "vitrified" brick was advertised by the manufacturer as being hard and solid enough to use as a waterproof basement brick. Here, this material has been used throughout the building. On the corners of the building, smooth or dressed face solid brick has been used as quoins, (See Photos No. 10, 11 and 12). The same two types were used throughout the rest of the church; the brick below the water table is smooth as are the units in the quoins. At the corners of the octagonal bell tower, the brick has been laid on the diagonal, without infill, thus creating an interesting joint (see Photos No. 4, 5, and 7). All of the bricks, smooth or rock-faced, are oversized at 3 1/4" x 8 1/4".

The windows which make up the building fenestration fall into two basic types: flat head or pointed arch. The flat head types prevail on the basement and second floors, with a few flat headed windows on the sides of the third floor. All windows in the main building have been glazed with a stained or opalescent glass. The flat headed windows contain dressed stone heads and sills, as previously mentioned. In addition, many of the sills, particularly around the main entrance (located in the tower) have been tapered to provide positive wash away from the sash. The pointed, or Gothic-arched windows decorate the main level of the building on all elevations. On the east and north, where cross-gabled bays project slightly, large windows are framed by a triple course of checkerboard brick headers (See Photos No. 4, 8, & 11), with stone inset at the point and the line of the springing arch for emphasis. Within this framework are three quatre-foils and four pointed arched windows, all filled with decorative stained glass. On the north elevation, a one story curved bay with four flat head windows below this detail creates an unusual and decorative element.

The bay on the north or Miller Street facade, is capped by a course of crenelated limestone formed by alternating beveled and flat elements. Within the curved bay, four flat-arched windows containing delicate, stained glass with vertical patterns, provide light into the lower floor of the sanctuary (See photos No.4 and 19). This element continues to the basement level, where four square, wood, double hung windows with limestone heads and sills are located below a limestone belt course.

The bell tower bears the cornerstone, which reads (in incised letters), "Bethany Congregational Church,

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organized 1885, erected 1909." Two sets of double doors on the tower provide access to the foyer and the sanctuary. The doors within the octagonal bell tower are modern, the wooden doors have been painted green with aluminum and plastic awnings suspended above. Above each of the doors is a flat limestone lintel, and above it, a wide, beveled stone belt course which is surmounted by a triangular stone "delta" element set into the brick. A small circular window, with a limestone surround, is incorporated above the "deltas" over the doors. Above this level, is a row of lancet windows with limestone sills and window hoods. Surmounting this is a stone belt course which serves as a unified sill for a row of gothic-arched louvered openings, with limestone heads unified by a stone belt course. The brick parapet of the octagonal tower is crenellated with limestone caps. The brick below the beveled stone course on the tower's lowest floor is smooth finished, that above is rock-faced. The tower contains a bell, purchased in 1887 for the former church building from the Buckeye Bell Foundry in Cincinnati, Ohio (Vanduzen and Taft, agents). This was a bell of the "genuine bell metal" or "Pure Copper and Tin" as described in the original contract with the company. It was said to be superior to a bell of steel.

The modern addition, constructed between 1966 and 1967, is a two story rectangular building, joined to the main structure on its west elevation. The addition maintains the basement floor, with square windows at that level. On the north facade, a gable roofed portico protects visitors and provides handicapped accessibility to an elevator. A second entrance has a similar protective roof on the west side. The addition is of modern brick, of a color similar to the original building. It has been sensitively designed using compatible materials, and with a vertical profile that does not overwhelm the historic building.

The interior of the church building has survived, for the most part, in good condition. The altar is situated in a rectangular chancel in the south west wall, elevated by three risers from the floor of the sanctuary. This painted room was at one time paneled in a dark oak with plastered walls and vaulted ceiling. The chancel has maintained its paneling, which is painted white, and bears what appears to be an early or original painted surface above the altar area. It is likely that the original finish of the woodwork in this area was also dark-stained oak. The balance of the sanctuary has been modified, if temporarily, as the pyramidal ceiling has been covered with a square acoustical tile, and fluorescent lights have been installed as well as four-bladed electrical fans and lights. A "skylight" in the upper peak of the main roof has a centralized floral motif with a radiating circular design that terminates with modified shields at the four corners (Photo No. 18) This element, in the center of the sanctuary ceiling is still in place. When the modern ceiling was installed, the contractors left the portion of the original ceiling which contained the skylight open to the sanctuary.

One of the most interesting parts of the church are the multi-colored glass windows. The window above the altar pictures a Risen Christ set within a Gothic arched window and is a wonderful example of the use of

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this architectural feature (see Photo No. 14). The arched windows in the sanctuary display a successful blending of opalescent panes and true stained glass panes with monochromatic details, such as the face of Christ, painted on frosted natural glass. There are nine hand painted round stained glass sections located in the upper part of each Gothic arch window. One has been damaged through the application of incorrect cleaning methods. Each circular glass contains a different image: Sheaf of lilies, cross, crown, grapes, holy spirit, basin, lamp, and wreath. These painted images, like the Risen Christ above the altar are finely rendered with a high degree of detail.

The Bethany Church is also significant for its interesting interior plan (or pochet) which employs squares, rectangles, octagons and curved surfaces. This plan is related to a tradition of centrally-focused churches in the United States, an auditorium form which evolved through the work of Robert Mills, a native of Charleston, South Carolina, and others. Mills gathered his inspiration from worship spaces that the Huguenots built when they came to America. In 1808 he designed the circular Sansom Street Baptist church in Philadelphia, and others in the east and Virginia. The centrally-focused auditorium form became what was later known as the "Akron" plan, first used in 1867 by Lewis Miller, in the First Methodist Church in Akron, Ohio. The "Akron" plan also allowed Sunday school rooms and musicians spaces to be open to the auditorium. Such plans allowed for a large auditorium with good sight lines and curved pews, angled toward the minister who served as a focal point.¹ Mr. Charles Padgett, the architect of record for the Bethany Church in West Terre Haute used a similar square plan with curvilinear pews and radiating aisles. Attached to it are two rectangular spaces, the organ room with loft above and a large space for the vestry and choir robing area. A smaller, nearly square addition forms the chancel (See Figure 2). Mr. Padgett's plan is particularly evocative of the plan of the Pilgrim Congregational church which was designed by S. R. Badgeley and constructed in Cleveland, Ohio in 1893. Like Badgeley's design, the Bethany Church also tucked the pulpit in one corner.² The octagon used in the Bethany Church, is of course, the bell tower.

The altar is located in the chancel at the west end of the sanctuary. The chancel provides access into the vestry and robing area. Worshipers sitting in any of the pews or loft have excellent sight lines, as the sanctuary floor is raked. The foyer of the bell tower has two openings to the street and the tower contains two flights of stairs. The foyer being street level, one flight goes down to the basement, and another ascends to the vestibule, which contains a pair of double swinging doors leading to the organ room and sanctuary. Hence, access to the

¹Armstrong Foster, 'Centrally focused Churches in the United States', *Cleveland Sacred Landmarks 1830-1930: A Pilgrimage*, on the web at: <http://urban.csuohio.edu/sacredlandmarks/csl/states.html>, 1998.

²Ibid.

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loft is through these doors and up the bell tower stairs to a door which serves the loft. The bell tower was originally open to the floor of the belfry, but has been sealed for energy conservation. The rope still hangs on a landing so that the bells can be sounded by servers. The interior of the bell tower contains the wood stair case, with square railings, and newel posts. All of the windows contain opalescent glass and have simply decorated wide wood surrounds and sills.

Currently the organ room loft is divided by temporary partitions. A photograph taken from the interior of one of the rooms formed by these partitions shows the interior of the upper stained glass window (Photo No. 22) on the north elevation, and the original dark finish on the wood surrounds. Massive posts support the floor of the loft which is protected by a railing of turned balusters. Originally there were wood accordion doors which blocked off the loft and present organ room from the sanctuary. They have been replaced by modern equivalents of lightweight, synthetic material.

The vestry and choir robing room, which are utilitarian, contain a small janitor's closet on the south end and a door which leads out into the sanctuary (Figure 2). A new door was punched through on the west side to the annex. The altar furnishings are chaste. The south wall of the chancel (Photo No. 14) contains a vestigial altar, with a cross, two tapers and the gospel, below the stained glass window of the "Living Christ", which is flanked by two five-taper sconces and two decorative Greek crosses. A framed symbolic depiction of the Holy Spirit as a dove, which is balanced left and right by swagging. The crosses and the Holy Spirit are all painted on the back wall. These elements may survive from an early, if not the original, interior decorative treatment. The two flanking walls have electrically lit sconces. The furniture includes two bishop chairs, two lecterns, and metal planters. It is believed that the wood molding and wainscoting in the chancel which are now painted off-white, were originally stained wood (possibly a dark oak or mahogany).

Interior detailing along the east and south facades of the auditorium includes wood surrounds which possess wood springing line brackets of simple design (Photo No. 15) and combination arched and circular frames for the windows (Photo No. 17) The overall combination is massive and strengthens the Gothic details of the building.

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8. Statement of Significance

Summary

The Bethany Congregational Church is significant under Criterion C on the local level as one of the finest examples of Late Victorian Gothic religious architecture extant in the community of West Terre Haute, in Vigo County, Indiana. The quality of the workmanship evinced in its construction, the unusual and extremely durable type of brick used, as well as the artistic nature of the stained glass works and the intact interior woodwork, contribute substantially to the building's architectural significance.

Statement

The genesis of the Bethany Congregational Church in West Terre Haute can be traced to 1849, when a group of citizens, led by the Reverend William Goodman, broke away from the New Hope Presbyterian Church. The New Hope Church, one of the oldest in Vigo County, had been founded in 1824. One of the issues which divided the congregation was slavery. The break away group organized the first Congregational Society in Sugar Creek Township and built a new church in 1853, on the old Paris Road, not far from present day West Terre Haute.³

In the years prior to the Civil War, the Congregational Church was known in many parts of the country for its association with abolitionist causes. Probably the most famous anti-slavery advocate was the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher, who was pastor of the Plymouth Congregational Church in Brooklyn, New York from 1847 to his death in 1887. The First Congregational Church in nearby Terre Haute, (the present building was constructed in 1902), has several architectural elements in common with the Bethany Church, including the centrally focused plan and a central, stained glass skylight. The Terre Haute church was led for five years, between 1860 and 1865 by a colleague of Henry Ward Beecher, the Reverend Dr. Lyman Abbott. After Henry Ward Beecher died, Reverend Abbott succeeded him as pastor of the famous Brooklyn Congregational Church. According to a local newspaper, Dr. Abbott frequently⁴ kept in touch with his former pastorate in Terre Haute.

By 1885 there were three Congregational Church groups in Vigo County, outside of Terre Haute: West

³Bethany United Church of Christ, Bethany United Church of Christ, 1885 - 1985, p. 1

⁴ Robert D. Heintz, "From Gotham Way", The Terre Haute Spectator, January 4, 1908.

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Vigo (previously mentioned); the South Vigo Congregational Church, founded in 1854; and a third, in the town of Macksville (later known as West Terre Haute). In 1885 the Macksville congregation adopted a constitution and built the town's first Congregational church. The first Trustees, along with the Pastor, the Reverend James Hayes (who served all three congregations), were in charge of the building and the selection of the site. Three lots were purchased in the spring of 1885 for \$90, the same site on which the present edifice stands. The brick structure was completed by the end of the year and given the name, "The Bethany Congregational Church" (see Photo No. 23). Within a few years, the West Vigo Church was consolidated with the Bethany congregation, its frame structure was dismantled and the lumber used to construct a parsonage next to the church (now gone). For some years the church was known, at least informally, as the Macksville Congregational Church. A contemporary historian adds another perspective to the church's beginnings:

"It is a neat little church building costing \$2,000. ... the Congregational church found that Macksville contained about 600 people and yet had no church of any kind, and they determined to supply the want ..." ⁵

The 1885 church was a rectangular structure, with a high gable roof, Gothic arch windows and a square bell tower with an octagonal cupola. No plan of the church has survived, thus we cannot surmise the interior configurations. However, it is clear from the historic photograph of this church (Photo No. 23), that the congregation took pride in the construction of a solid, imposing building. In 1906, Mrs. Louisa McIlroy, an early church member recalled:

"When this church was organized, it was thought by many we could never complete it. ... I have watched its growth ... from a membership of five to one-hundred fifty, ... [now] there is no debt whatever on the church or parsonage." ⁶

The same year, with a clear financial conscience, the leaders of the church contemplated a new building. A local directory told the story: "the oldest church in West Terre Haute is the Bethany Congregational, built in 1885. ... The present outlook is so bright that the members are contemplating erecting a new church at the cost of \$8000." ⁷

The decision to build a new structure had been contemplated earlier than 1906. The minutes of the first meeting of that year reflect previous meetings of a building committee and discussions of the notion of a new

⁵ H. C. Bradsby, History of Vigo County, Indiana, Chicago: S. B. Nelson & Co, 1891, p.601.

⁶ Mrs. Richard (Louisa) McIlroy, in Bethany United Church of Christ, p. 3

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 3,4.

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church as early as October of 1905. Although only twenty years old, the 1885 church was evidently in need of substantial repair, as the building committee reported on November 7, "That it would be cheaper to build a new building instead of rebuilding the old one."⁸ The decision, however, was not made lightly. During the spring of 1906, committee members were charged with securing estimates for a new building, as well as for repairing the old. In addition, in true democratic style, the members were to be canvassed for their opinions on the subject. Finally, by August of 1906, the decision to build a new church was made. Construction would begin the following year.⁹ Sometime during the summer of 1906, the congregation's building committee contacted architects for the project, although their names are not known. Evidence from the ledger's indicates that Mr. Charles Padgett was selected to draw up the plans. The old church building was demolished when the new one was built.

The community which would be home to the new Bethany Congregational Church had begun life as the town of Macksville, named after its founder, Samuel McQuilkin. In 1833, fifteen years after Vigo County was created, separated out from Sullivan County, Samuel recognized the need for a trading post on the west side of the Wabash River. A growing number of settlers had begun to build homes on the plateaus above the rich bottom lands in the area. He erected a house and a store along what would become National Avenue, or U. S. 40, the National Road – a new "highway" to the west which was under construction at the time. Many of his customers and new residents to "Macksville" were workers employed on the massive road building project. The town of McQuilkinsville had been platted November 22, 1832, by Curtis Gilbert, the County Recorder, but the name quickly became shortened.¹⁰ Within a few years other buildings, including a tavern, were built in the area. By 1840, the Sisters of Providence had arrived to begin their academy and found their mother house on the high plateau north of West Terre Haute. Crossing the Wabash River was still a challenge, requiring the swift passage over a ford across the bottom lands and the benefit of a ferry. By the 1870s, a bridge and a railroad connected Terre Haute with West Terre Haute across the river.

The town of Terre Haute was platted in 1816, two years before Vigo County was organized. It was located on the east bank of the Wabash River and would grow to become a "crossroads" of the middle west, with the advent of the Wabash & Erie Canal, several railroads and the National Road, all of which crossed through the center of the town. William Hoggatt was the surveyor who laid out the town, and he also selected the site,

⁸Minutes of the Bethany Congregational Church meetings, Oct. 17, Nov. 7, 1905 and Jan. 3, 1906.

⁹Ibid, April 2, Aug. 6 and Bethany United Church of Christ, p.4

¹⁰Cline, Violet Stogsdill, "West Terre Haute", The Macksville Gazette, May 29, 1982.

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declaring: "... the river runs straight. The land is high, and rises from the river. It is a beautiful place for a town. ... if built where he [Hoggatt] had selected it would some day be a great city." The name had been given to this high ground, adjacent to the river, several hundred years before.¹¹ West Terre Haute would continue to be a suburb of the larger town, depending upon many of its resources for growth and development.

Architecture

The Bethany Congregational Church is significant because of the quality of its architecture. It is the best example of a High Victorian Gothic building in West Terre Haute. It demonstrates the qualities of Victorian Gothic architecture, as they were adapted for American, and especially Midwestern tastes during the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth. The building was designed by a local Terre Haute architect, Charles Padgett. Mr. Padgett was listed in the Terre Haute City Directory in 1906 at 629 ½ Wabash Avenue, the main commercial street. He appears to have stayed at that location until 1910, when he and a partner, William Dickinson are listed as architects at a different address in downtown Terre Haute. The two continue to be listed until 1913. No directory was available for 1914, but by 1914-15, the partnership had either moved or dissolved. Information on Mr. Padgett's location in Terre Haute is no longer available after that date.

The firm designed the Monroe City School, which was built in 1910 and which served grades one through twelve in the Knox County community. This building is presently being adaptively reused as a local community center. Unfortunately little additional information is known about Padgett and his work, but it is obvious from the details and construction of the Bethany Congregational Church, that he understood the elements of the Gothic Revival as they had been used in both the earlier and later forms in America..

The earlier appearance of the style was popular during the first half of the nineteenth century and much simpler in form than the later, or second phase of the revival, sometimes called High Victorian Gothic.¹² The Bethany Church is evocative of the simplicity of the earlier style, with its use of brick, sturdy crenellations, and horizontal elements such as the limestone belt courses. However, details demonstrate the influence of the second period, specifically, the fondness for bichrome or polychrome variegations, produced by the use of

¹¹Bradsby, P. 418.

¹²Marcus Whiffen, American Architecture Since 1780, A Guide to the Styles. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press: (rev. Ed) 1996., P. 53.

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combinations of materials.¹³ On the Bethany Church, this is achieved in a modest fashion by the use of lighter colored brick as surrounds, particularly on the large combination windows on the north and east facades (See Photo No. 3, 4, 8 and 25). In addition, a modified version of this detail can be seen on the secondary Gothic windows (See Photos No. 7 and 11). In addition, some elements of the massing relate to the High Victorian Gothic.

During the period between 1775 and c. 1870, the Gothic Revival style was employed, in one form or another, in the construction of ecclesiastical buildings in England and to a lesser degree in other European countries. When the Gothic Revival reached America from England, the influences of Picturesque Gothic were prominent, especially as espoused by the architect Alexander Jackson Davis. Influential architects in the style included Richard Upjohn who designed Trinity Church in New York (1839 - 1846) and St. Mary's in Burlington, New Jersey (1846 - 1848). It is not known whether the architect of the Bethany Congregational Church studied similar examples of the style, but the building demonstrates similar influences.

Padgett makes use of the quatre-foil in several places throughout the Bethany Church. It is most obvious in the upper, tripartite portion of the two large Gothic arch windows in the north and east gable ends. The quatre-foil was so commonly associated with the Gothic style, that Robert Dale Owen, when discussing the use of this element in Renwick's design for the Smithsonian (in the "Norman" style), felt compelled to point out several instances where it was used in 11th century Norman churches.¹⁴ Mr. Owen's protestations notwithstanding, the element was almost exclusively associated with Gothic and Gothic Revival architecture, and only occasionally with the Norman or Romanesque style.

The Bethany Congregational Church exhibits the combination of a tripartite design in the upper portion of two windows and divides the lower part into four segments. The window on the east facade accomplishes this with four narrow Gothic arched stained glass windows; the one on the north facade implies a similar design, but with foreshortened windows, below which the curved bay contains four flat-headed stained glass windows. (See Photo No. 4). Two other elements were drawn from English Gothic origins: the roundel windows in the octagon tower and the stone triangular or "delta" elements which surmount the main doors on the octagonal tower. Roundel windows, especially in a tower, recall the typical clock of New England churches, but the triangular detail may be evocative of the pointed arches over the entrances which were

¹³ Ibid., P. 89

¹⁴Robert Dale Owen, Hints on Public Architecture, (reprint of 1849 edition), New York: Da Capo Press, 1978.

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present on churches such as the Old South Church (1872) in Boston, the Arch St. Methodist Church in Philadelphia (1873) and St. John's Methodist Episcopal Church in Cincinnati (1871), to name a few. These examples were available in illustrated books of the period. Architect Padgett could have been familiar with at least a few of them.

In addition to the stylistic qualities of the architecture, the building demonstrates an interesting and vibrant plan which employs a variety of elements. The square or centrally-focused plan has precedents in American architecture, however, an interesting church, St. Michael and All angels, in Wythenshawe, Ireland utilizes such a square plan, with the seating area of the nave in the center of the square, the altar and sanctuary at one of the corners and the vestibule and entry at the opposite corner.¹⁵ This plan is similar to the Monumental Church in Richmond, Virginia, designed by Robert Mills. The Bethany Church is more closely related to the Pilgrim Congregational Church, which uses a modified "Akron" plan. It was built in Cleveland in 1893. This structure is an example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style, often associated with centrally-focused church plans in the Midwest.¹⁶ For the Bethany Church, Padgett has added a square wing for the altar and the addition on the north for the organ and second floor loft, as well as an octagonal tower and entry. A local Congregational Church, the First Congregational Church in Terre Haute, constructed in 1902, has a similar sanctuary plan.

While obviously in the Victorian Gothic style, some of the massing, and the bell tower have Richardsonian influences, not surprising for the period in which it was designed. The use of vitrified brick and the other varieties of materials not only strengthens its ties with an important local industry, but adds an element of texture and contrast that is related to the Victorian Gothic style.

The architecture of the Bethany Congregational Church exemplifies the High Victorian Gothic style, as it was adapted for the particular needs of a mid western community. It is significant on a local level for the quality of the design which it embodies and for the way in which it uses interesting materials to evoke a rich variety of typical elements of its style. Thus, it qualifies for the National Register under Criterion C.

The Bethany Congregational Church is also significant for the quality of the workmanship and materials

¹⁵ Peter Anson, Churches, Their Place and Furnishing, Milwaukee, WI: Bruce Publishers, 1926.

¹⁶ Armstrong Foster, 'Centrally focused Churches in the United States', *Cleveland Sacred Landmarks 1830-1930: A Pilgrimage*, on the web at: <http://urban.csuohio.edu/sacredlandmarks/csl/states.html>, 1998.

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used in its construction. The total costs for the structure were \$9,146. This figure was about \$1,000 over the projected costs. Among the items listed in the ledger accounts for the building were 11,000 #2 Medium Hard Blocks at \$8.00 per thousand (\$88) from the Terre Haute Vitrified Brick Company. In addition, they used Rock faced Blocks at \$14, as well as some #1 Top Standard Blocks at \$3.70. The total cost of the brick, in January of 1908, when the building was officially opened appears to be \$405.70. At the rates mentioned, this would have included a great many bricks.¹⁷

The Terre Haute Vitrified Brick Company was located only a few miles from the site of the church. It was one of at least five brick or clay tile companies which benefitted from the easy access to good quality clay in the western bottom lands of the Wabash River at the turn of the century¹⁸. In addition to the Vitrified Brick Company, West Terre Haute was home to the Vigo Clay Company located ½ mile West of the town, with 16 brick arched down draught kilns, steam dryers, and other buildings. The National Drain Tile Company, also had 16 kilns and a large drying building. The Wabash Brick Company utilized rectangular up draught kilns as well as steam drying and was located 1/4 mile NW of W. Terre Haute, along St. Mary's Road. The American Clay Company, located 3/4 miles SW of W. Terre Haute had a long narrow building containing about 30 small brick arched gas heated kilns as well as steam and hot air dryers. It probably produced vitreous clay tile. An electric trolley car ran the entire length of the kiln building.¹⁹

By far the largest number of individual, down draft, round kilns were to be found at the Terre Haute Vitrified Brick Company plant, where each of the large kilns had a companion 35 foot chimney.²⁰ An early twentieth century publication shows the "brick works", with a considerable number of bricks stored and ready to ship. The publication quotes a 1915 advertisement: "No excuse for damp cellars and walls or unattractive buildings for Vitrified Brick will make your own home a health resort."²¹ A road led from the clay shed down and incline to the clay pit and the plant dryers were both hot air. In addition, the location contained a cistern,

¹⁷ Bethany United Church of Christ Archives: General Ledger books for 1900-1920.

¹⁸ Sanborn Map, c. 1900, microfilm in the collection of the Vigo County Public Library.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Dorothy Jerse & Judith Stedman Calvert, Eds. On the Banks of the Wabash, a Photograph Album of Greater Terre Haute, 1900 - 1950. Bloomington, IN: IU Press, 1983., Photo No. 123.

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several fan houses, a lime house, a black smith shop, several engines and a 10 HP dynamo, as well as a machine room, pug mill and screen, on the second and third floor of the main building which was brick on the first floor and probably frame above.²²

The Terre Haute Vitrified Brick Company was founded in 1894 by Mr. William P. Blair, along with other businessmen from Brazil and Terre Haute, Indiana. Mr. Blair had been a resident of nearby Brazil, Indiana, a community well known for its clay industries, including hard fired paving bricks. He had worked in that industry since 1873, before founding the Terre Haute company. In a publication of 1905, Mr. Blair touted the advantages of construction with brick: "... bricks of the vitrified kind when laid right make the most lasting pavement." The same publication reflected that the Terre Haute Vitrified Brick Company was producing sixty thousand bricks daily and shipping them to all parts of the United States. The publication continued: "... the use of the brick has not been confined to paving alone, but they are used extensively in building because of their impervious nature."²³ It is not unlikely that members of the Bethany Congregational Church and/or their architect were extremely familiar with this nearby plant and the quality of the product they produced.

The brick which is the primary construction material used on the Bethany Congregational Church is still in extremely good condition. Much of it appears nearly as it must have when it was laid. Although the company is long gone, the building is a living recollection of a vital industry which was once prevalent in West Terre Haute and western Vigo County. Further, the church has experienced little settling, water damage, calving, flaking or other evidence of material failures. In addition, while some tuck pointing has occurred, the overall quality of the masonry work is high. The building appears much as it did nearly eighty five years ago, when the local workmen proudly posed for the photograph in front of the edifice (See Photo No. 24). Thus, the building gains significance for the quality of its workmanship and for its association with the long history of the brick work industry in West Terre Haute and Vigo County.

²² Sanborn Maps, c. 1900.

²³ E. M. Lucas & B. J. Griswold, Some Terre Haute Phizes, Terre Haute, IN: July 1905, P. 199 .

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Terre Haute City Directories: 1915-16, 1925, 1929, 1940, 1947, 1956, 1960, 1961, 1962, In the collection of the Vigo County Historical Society.

Terre Haute Star, January 17, 1908

Terre Haute Tribune, February 17, 1908

The Terre Haute Spectator, January 4, 1908.

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In the Collection of Bethany United Church of Christ:

Scrapbook, loose bound with various photographs and news items

General Ledger, 1908 - 1920, hand written in several bound volumes

Minutes of Church Meetings, 1900 - 1917, Bound Volumes, hand written, also minutes (occasional) of Building Committee.

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10. Verbal Boundary Description: Beginning at the south west corner of N. Church Street and W. Miller Avenue, go along the south side of W. Miller Avenue to the western boundary of the Bethany United Church of Christ property (201 W. Miller Avenue) turn south along the western boundary to the east-west alley south of W. Miller Avenue and turn east to the corner of the alley and N. Church Street, thence north along the west side of N. Church Street to the place of beginning. See Figure 1.

Boundary Justification: The property boundary, in general has been used as the boundary for this nomination. As shown on Figure 1, W. Miller Avenue is the northern boundary of the property, N. Church Street forms the eastern boundary. On the west, historic property is the line between the church lot and the lot immediately to the west. On the south, the alley forms the logical property line for this nomination. The present Bethany United Church of Christ also owns or controls additional property for parking, but it is not included in the nomination. These property boundaries encompass the approximate area which has been associated with the church from its construction. On contemporary Sanborn Maps, this lot is identified as #201 W. Miller Street (28 N. Second or Church Street). Thus, we have included as much of the property as can be historically associated with the present structure.

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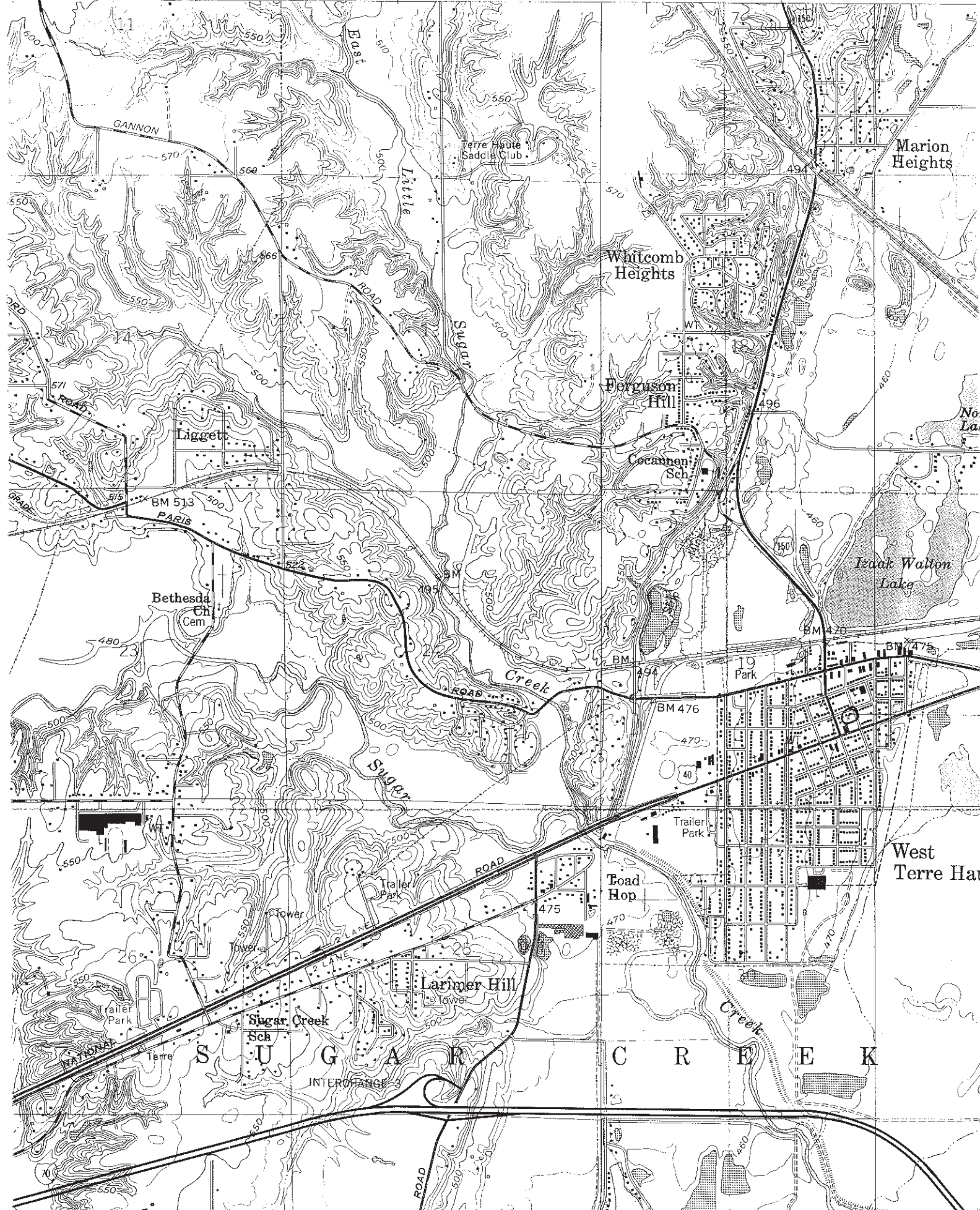
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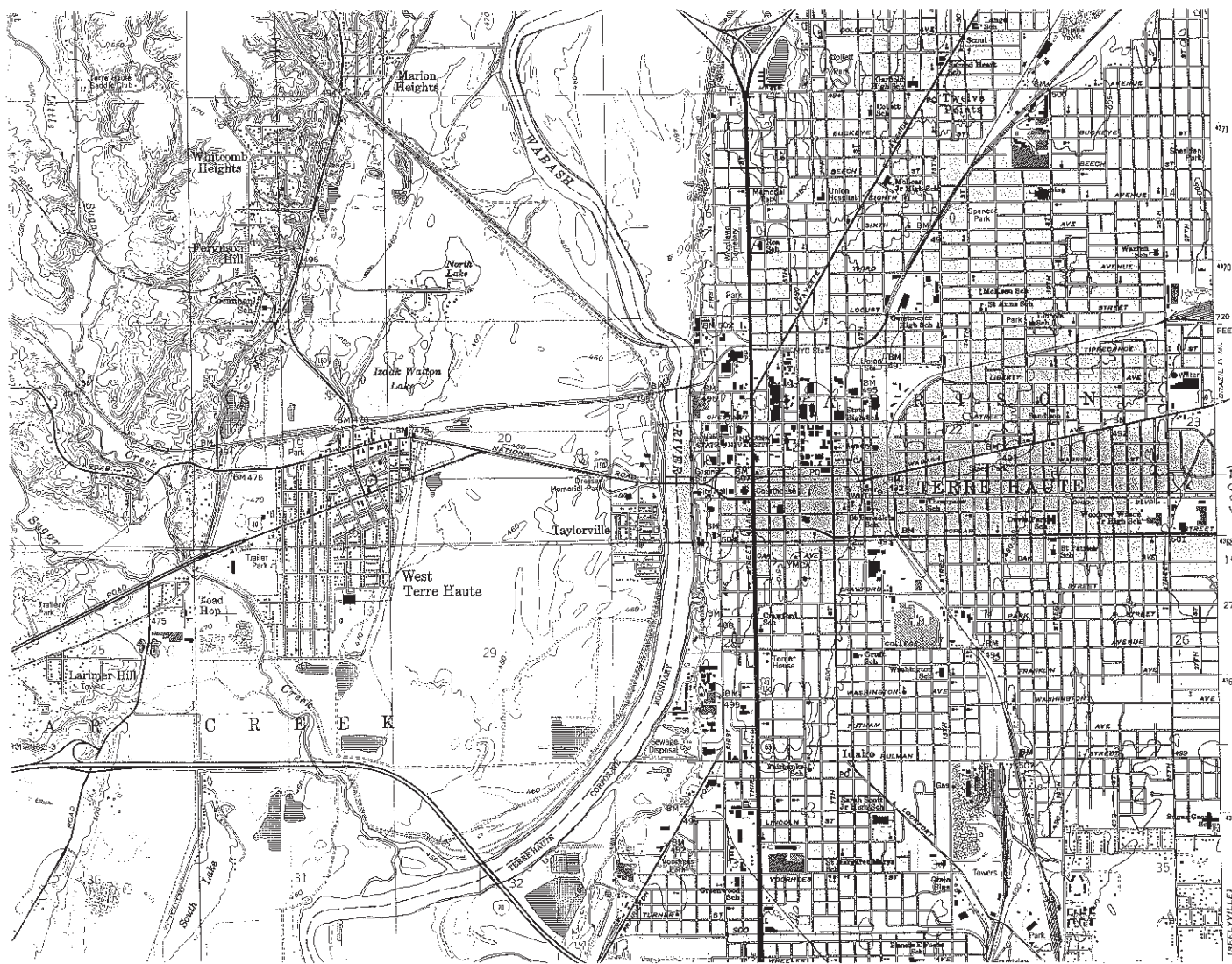
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