

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 Victory Noll-St. Felix Friary Historic District  
other names/site number 069-049-23007-23020

2. Location

street & number 1900 W. Park Dr./ 1280 Hitzfield St N/A  not for publication  
city or town Huntington N/A  vicinity  
state Indiana code IN county Huntington code 069 zip code 46750

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.)

[Signature] 10-26-04  
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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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	
10	4	buildings
5	0	sites
4	0	structures
3	0	objects
22	4	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)

RELIGION: Religious Facility

RELIGION: Church-Related

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

RELIGION: Religious Facility

RELIGION: Church-Related Residence

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

19th & 20th c. REVIVALS: Mission/Spanish

19th & 20th c. REVIVALS: Italian Renaissance

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

roof TERRA COTTA

other STONE

**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.)

- Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
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.
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:

- owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
removed from its original location.
a birthplace or grave.
a cemetery.
a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
a commemorative property.
less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1923-1954

Significant Dates

1925

1929

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Steinbach, J. G.

Stevens, Robert W.

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:

Victory Noll Archives

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 181 acres

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

1	16	624380	4527140	3	16	625160	4525800
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	16	625160	4527180	4	16	624340	4525860

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 Glory-June Greiff

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date 02-23-2004

street & number 1753 S. Talbott St. telephone 317/637-6163

city or town Indianapolis state IN zip code 46225

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 Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Victory; Good Shepherd Church of the United Brethren

street & number 1900 W. Park Dr; 1280 Hitzfield St telephone 260/356-0628; 260/

city or town Huntington state IN zip code 46750

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 5.7 Page 1

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**Victory Noll-St. Felix Historic District  
Huntington County, IN**

CLASSIFICATION OF RESOURCES

10 contributing buildings: former St. Felix novitiate; small brick outbuilding; stucco shed; picnic shelter; Our Lady of Victory Building; Sacred Heart Building; St. Joseph's Building; 2 small frame outbuildings; frame garage.

4 non-contributing buildings: concrete block garage; pole barn; Holy Family Building/Bishop Noll Memorial Chapel; the Villa.

4 contributing structures: fence of fieldstone posts along West Park Drive; Victory Noll main entrance; fieldstone wall along Hitzfield Street; fieldstone wall paralleling Flaxmill Road.

3 contributing objects: life-size statue of Our Lady; life-size statue of the Sacred Heart in fieldstone shrine; (former) fieldstone shrine on grounds of St. Felix.

5 contributing sites: Victory Noll Cemetery; Way of the Cross; St. Felix Cemetery; the entire site of St. Felix, containing former playing fields and garden areas, woodlots, the remnant of an orchard, a vineyard. the entire site of Victory Noll, containing cultivated fields, a former orchard, smaller statues, fieldstone retaining walls, steps, and a retention pond.

1 non-contributing site: the large pond or lagoon created in the 1980s.

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Victory Noll-St. Felix Historic District is located on the far west side of Huntington, the seat of Huntington County, about two miles from downtown. Off to the west and north is present US24/SR9 that bypasses the heart of the city; to the south is old US24, today called West Park Drive, which forms the district's south boundary. Beyond West Park Drive to the south is the flood plain of the Little River and the Wabash River. To the east of the district are Mount Hope Cemetery and St. Peter's

First United Church of Christ Cemetery, separated by Thomas Street; east of the cemeteries is Memorial Park. The district contains Victory Noll, the motherhouse and convent of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters. Situated on a knoll above the Wabash River valley, the convent's name is an intentional play on the geography as well as the name of the Roman Catholic bishop, John Francis Noll, who provided the land to the order. The district also includes the adjacent former St. Felix Friary, which, like Victory Noll, was built in the 1920s. Today the property is occupied by the Good Shepherd Church of the United Brethren in Christ.

Cultivated farmland for several decades, the property was purchased in 1920 by a Huntington-based Catholic charitable corporation and over time given in parcels to the convent and friary. The earliest buildings of Victory Noll were designed in the Spanish Mission style, popular in the 1920s but also an intentional reference to the sisters' work among Hispanics

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 2

**Victory Noll-St. Felix Historic District  
Huntington County, IN**

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (Continued)

and native Americans in the southwestern United States. The structures clearly call to mind the eighteenth-century Spanish missions of the Southwest, and feature bell towers, curved parapets, red tiled roofs and round-arched openings, all typical of the style. While stucco may be the preferred material, brick is more practical in a Midwestern climate, and the tan brick used is reminiscent of the hues of the American Southwest. Subsequent buildings generally adhered to this theme until the post-World War II era. The buildings of St. Felix are of similar design and material intended to be complementary, but they exhibit some additional Tuscan influences as well.

As noted, the main building complex of Victory Noll is perched atop a knoll and reached by way of a winding drive heading northwesterly uphill (see photo 4) from its entrance off West Park Drive. The entrance (photo 1) is flanked by a stone gateway and fieldstone wall on either side of the drive, and the southern boundary of the property along West Park is marked by a fence line of fieldstone posts (photo 2). Although thickly wooded now, the entrance area was originally more open and planted with flowers. Off to the north and northeast of the entrance is a ravine where lies a fieldstone-lined pool (photo 3), possibly a sometime retention pond. Stone steps lead down to it from the entrance drive. A little farther up the hill as the drive proceeds northwest is a small two-story brick building with a red tile roof (photo 4) called "the Villa," once a rectory and today a residence for some of the sisters. While clearly a more modern building (constructed 1964), it salutes the older buildings of the convent with its use of similar materials.

Farther still up the hill northwest from the Villa, but east of the main drive through the property, is the Archbishop Noll Memorial Chapel and Holy Family Building, (photo 5) where once many of the original dairy farm buildings had been located.<sup>1</sup> The Holy Family Building (1960) is a two-story, flat-roofed structure with a partly exposed ground floor, constructed of concrete, steel, and glass, resembling a modern motel building of that era. It houses an infirmary and assisted living quarters for elderly sisters. At its south corner is the Archbishop Noll Memorial Chapel, a soaring vaulted structure of concrete.

To the southwest of the Holy Family complex is the oldest and the main building of Victory Noll (photos 6-9). Like all the buildings on the property, it is sited with no concept of an underlying grid, making descriptions complicated in terms of direction. The original building, at first called the Victory Training Institute of the Society of Missionary Catechists of Our Blessed Lady of Victory (inscribed on a plaque outside the courtyard entrance on the south—see photo 7), eventually became known more simply as Our Lady of Victory Building. It is of tan brick and all of its many gabled sections are roofed with red tile, although some parts have flat roofs. Typical of the Spanish Mission style, most of its windows have round-arched openings that now contain one-over-one double hung replacement sashes. Simplicity of form and minimal ornamentation is characteristic of the style, but there is some enrichment in the form of some limestone trim

<sup>1</sup> The barn burned in 1930 and the farm operations then moved north to near Flaxmill Road. The farmhouse itself, where the managers of the farm lived, was also moved there. This part of the Victory Noll property was sold to a commercial dairy about ten years later; it is not part of the historic district. It is now occupied by a large modern dairy plant (Schenkel's), although the old farmhouse still survives there in a very different context.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 3

**Victory Noll-St. Felix Historic District  
Huntington County, IN**

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (Continued)

within the larger recessed arches, even including small columns supporting the three arches of the windows above the entrance on the south and similar windows elsewhere on the building. Virtually symmetrical, the main facade of the original building looks southward (and a little toward the west) down the hill toward West Park Drive. Its entrance, which leads across a cloister or covered walk with round-arched openings into a courtyard, is flanked with dedicatory plaques dated 1925. Over the arched entranceway (photo 7) into the courtyard is a small bell tower topped with a cross, very reminiscent of the eighteenth-century Spanish missions of the Southwest. Opposite this opening toward the north is the part of the building containing the original chapel (named for Our Lady of Victory), two-and-a-half stories high with a curved parapet and gabled roof (photo 8). Its arched entrance is enhanced with patterned brick creating a sunburst effect. Above the second story a niche contains a statue of the Blessed Virgin holding the Christ Child. To the east and setback a little from the facade is a three-and-a-half story bell tower, topped by a pyramidal roof with wide eaves and exposed rafters, and crowned with a cross. At the base of the room containing the bell, which is set in slightly from the rest of the tower beneath, is a decorated limestone band. Flanking this chapel section of the building on either side are two-story wings with flat roofs. The wings are asymmetrical "I"s extending essentially east and west, each with a section extending southward. Extending farther south from each of these and enclosing the courtyard on the west and east are one-story gabled sections (see photo 9). The interior of this sprawling building is generally plain and functional, but the chapel should be noted.

Our Lady of Victory Chapel was modeled on mission churches of the Southwest and features plain walls and beams across the ceiling. In the 1930s, painted saints were added above the windows, which contain stained glass from Munich. There are ten windows, each portraying a saint or a missionary. From the westmost wing of Our Lady of Victory Building a two-story walk--the second story is enclosed, the first story is open--connects to a long, rectangular, two-story gabled building with a ground floor built into the hillside (photo 10). It has rectangular windows that reflect its origins as a barracks building (see page 14). A curved, paved path crosses through an arched entrance on either side of the cloister. The Sacred Heart Building extends almost due westward from the cloister and houses the library and living quarters.

Extending north (more properly, north northeast) from the original building is a covered walkway leading to St. Joseph's Building (at first called St. Joseph's Workshop). This is a two-story, flat-roofed structure with red-tiled parapets and a tile-roofed bell tower that is octagonal at the top and crowned with a cross (photos 6,11), again reminiscent of the Spanish missions of the Southwest. The main facade of St. Joseph's Building looks southeastward and is dominated by the centered bell tower that is set forward and contains the main entrance. The building has round-arched window openings containing replacement one-over-one sashes. A one-story, six-bay garage extends northwest off the northwest corner of the building (photo 12). While the three buildings described above are all connected with covered walks and in function are all inter-related, they were built in three different decades and are considered by the order to be three separate buildings, as indicated by the fact they each have a different name.

As one reaches the top of the hill via the entrance drive, in front of the Our Lady of Victory Building and St. Joseph's Building is a marble statue (1929) of the Blessed Mother, also known as Our Lady of Grace (see photo 6). Down the hill,

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 4

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**Victory Noll-St. Felix Historic District  
Huntington County, IN**

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (Continued)

heading southeasterly, is the Way of the Cross in a wooded ravine, although it was originally planted with thousands of wild flowers. The paved path properly begins at the bottom of the slope not far off the former highway (photo 13). There are fourteen stations in the form of gabled wayside shrines, each constructed of concrete--or possibly a concrete slip over stone--on a fieldstone pedestal. Each has inset an oval medallion with the scene in relief (see photo 14). The stations are in need of attention; some of the medallions are corroding badly and the concrete is spalling and sugaring. The path, lined with a fieldstone gutter, winds up the hill to end at a fieldstone grotto below the convent. The grotto and retaining wall collapsed in the floods of the summer of 2003, but restoration is nearly complete as of May 2004.

West and a little north of the Way of the Cross is a statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus set on a fieldstone pedestal flanked by two low fieldstone walls (photo 15). It stands directly in front of the main facade of Victory Noll, centered in front of the arched opening in the covered walk at the south end of the courtyard. Although partially obscured in summer by trees, the statue is visible from West Park Drive. West of this area it is thickly wooded, which continues west of the Sacred Heart Building and northward to the cemetery.

Returning to the main drive and continuing northwesterly past the St. Joseph Building, to the immediate west is a small landscaped garden area that contains a very small "totem pole," or Peace Pole, dedicated to the Miami Indians native to this area. Beyond that is a parklike greenspace, which includes a shrine to Our Lady of Lourdes. A drive just north of the St. Joseph's Building garage curves back southward to the main buildings. Heading northward on the main drive, to the east is a one-story frame garage building (photo 16) running parallel to the drive with seven open bays on the opposite side. It dates to the 1940s. A parking lot serving it and the Holy Family Building stretches to the east. Northeast of the parking lot is a pond of about two acres created in the 1980s, filling a natural depression in the land.

Returning to the main drive, west opposite the frame garage building is the Missionary Sisters' cemetery, reached by way of a drive heading northwest. A circular drive runs through the cemetery; the graves of the sisters are marked with small stone crosses. At the entrance to the cemetery, and encircled with a drive, are the graves of Archbishop John Francis Noll and Father John Joseph Sigstein, the patron and the founder of the order, respectively (photo 17). The former's grave is marked with a large bronze-and-stone Crucifix, the latter's with an inscribed slab.

Returning to the main drive and continuing northward, on the west are two small frame outbuildings (photo 18) dating to the early twentieth century. Opposite and a little north of the northward building is a former orchard, where some apple trees still survive. North beyond the orchard east of the main drive are two large cultivated fields separated by a strip of woods (see photo 19). West of the drive to the north boundary of the property is all wooded, save for a swath of grass along the roadway. The north boundary is marked with a fence and a line of trees, past which is the Schenkel Dairy property.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7 Page 5

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**Victory Noll-St. Felix Historic District  
Huntington County, IN**

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (Continued)

The former St. Felix Friary (photo 20), today the Good Shepherd Church of the United Brethren in Christ, is sited northeast of Victory Noll. It lies on a little over thirty acres at the southwest corner of Flaxmill Road and Hitzfield Street, facing north toward the former. The properties abut at the far northeast corner of the Victory Noll land. The west boundary of the former St. Felix property is marked by a fence and a thick line of trees; past the trees is the Schenkel Dairy property. The south boundary of the former St. Felix property is marked by a woods. One lonely apple tree in the southwest corner of the property indicates where there once was an orchard. There is a woods and some hilly terrain at the northwest corner of the property; the northeast corner is more parklike. South of the woods is a roughly rectangular grassy area that was used by St. Felix as a playing field. A fieldstone wall (photo 23) runs the length of this field on the south up nearly to the west wall of the friary building, where there is an opening large enough for vehicles to pass through, as a drive runs all the way around the building. Farther to the west there is a smaller opening in the wall, giving access to a walk leading south to an open picnic shelter with a hipped roof supported with fieldstone pillars (photo 23).

A fieldstone shrine (photo 24) with an empty niche that once contained a lifesize marble figure of the Blessed Virgin stands off the southwest corner of the main building. Northwest of the shrine is a concrete block three-bay garage faced with brick on the east. Southwest of this structure is a small gabled shed (photo 25), part of which is stucco and built around the same time as the main part of the monastery. On the south it has a concrete block addition. West of the shed is a pole barn; south of the shed is a small brick building with round-arched windows and two open bays on the east (partly visible in photo 25). West of the pole barn is a small vineyard, once larger, that still yields grapes.

Along the east edge of the property--along Hitzfield Street--is a substantial stone wall that runs from a wall extending eastward from the northeast corner of the main building (photo 26), then southward (photo 25) to just beyond the friary cemetery in the southeast corner of the property. The cemetery, which is surrounded by a chainlink fence, is scarcely noticeable. The 25 metal gravemarkers are flush with the ground (some have become buried over the years) and a large but very simple cross stands at the south edge. (The first burial was in 1933; the last, in 1974.)

The monastery building itself (photo 20) is a large symmetrical tan brick building, three-and-a-half stories high, with a gabled, red-tiled roof. Corbeling provides ornamentation beneath the gable ends (photo 21). The structure is comprised of a center chapel or sanctuary flanked by two larger wings that extend southward to form a courtyard in the rear (south) of the central chapel, enclosed on the south by a cloistered walk (photo 22). From the rear of the chapel a section extends southward into the courtyard. The roof features symmetrically placed gabled dormers: on each of the two wings there are three dormers on each side, facing outward and into the courtyard, respectively; on either side of the chapel on the main north facade there are four. The only thing asymmetrical about the building is the bell tower (photos 20,22), set to the east of center on the chapel. It has a red-tiled pyramidal roof with corbeling beneath, and round-arched openings. Window openings on the building are a mix of round-arched and rectangular. One-over-one metal sashes have replaced the original wood sashes on the lower floors, but some of the original six-over-six and eight-over-eight double hung wood sashes remain on the top floors and in the rear of the building (see photo 21). The sills are limestone. Palladian

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 7.8 Page 6

**Victory Noll-St. Felix Historic District  
Huntington County, IN**

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION (Continued)

windows on the north of each of the wings have been replaced, although the arched openings were retained (see photo 20).

Although the St. Felix monastery harmonizes well with the buildings of nearby Victory Noll, both having similar plans featuring a central chapel and enclosed courtyard and both using tan brick, red tile, and displaying round arches throughout, there nonetheless are stylistic differences. The eaves at St. Felix are not wide as at Victory Noll, and the former is marked by its abundance of corbeling and a somewhat heavier quality, similar to the buildings of Florence and surrounding Tuscany--and therefore true to the Italian origins of the Capuchin order.

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The properties are religious in nature and therefore subject to Criterion Consideration A, but the Victory Noll-St. Felix Historic District is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its architecture. As described above in Section 7, the district contains an especially fine collection of Spanish Mission style buildings built in the 1920s and 1930s. While the style was very popular in the 1920s, there are very few examples of it or the closely related Spanish Colonial Revival in Huntington County, save for a handful of houses (including the Bishop Noll house at 200 Roche Street) and two institutional buildings in downtown Huntington, which, while very attractive structures in their own right, do not compare with the mission-inspired buildings of Victory Noll and St. Felix.<sup>2</sup> The latter, while similar in plan and harmonious in material and overall appearance to Victory Noll, appears to exhibit Italian influences as well. It is an established fact that noted landscape architect Adolph Jaenicke, at the time Fort Wayne's Superintendent of Parks and City Forester, helped with the landscaping of Victory Noll, but presently there is insufficient extant documentation to meet NPS standards in order for the property to be nominated for its landscape architecture. The arrangement was informal (and unpaid), and it is doubtful that anything like a plan map of the property ever existed. No lists of plantings have been unearthed, only scant references in surviving correspondence. Apart from the fieldstone fence posts along West Park Drive, none of Jaenicke's documented work remains, although other landscaping resources consistent with his work survive.

The district lies upon land that had been farmed since the nineteenth century and had been owned by the Roche family, generous donors to St. Mary's, a local Catholic parish founded in the 1890s in Huntington. In 1920, 135 acres were purchased by Father John Francis Noll (1875-1956), then the parish priest, who had founded the Catholic weekly

<sup>2</sup> One of these buildings is the headquarters and former printing plant of the Catholic publication *Our Sunday Visitor* (1925); the other is the 1929 YMCA building, designed by the architect of St. Felix Friary.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 7

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**Victory Noll-St. Felix Historic District  
Huntington County, IN**

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

publication *Our Sunday Visitor* in 1912.<sup>3</sup> The nationally distributed weekly paper had quickly become so successful that Father Noll used its profits to set up a charitable corporation, which provided the funds for the purchase of the property. The land was originally intended to be used to set up a home missions training center for priests. That idea fell through, but a benefactor in California offered to contribute funds for establishing a motherhouse for missionary sisters. Father Noll, now elevated to the title of Monsignor, happened to be acquainted with a new order that had just been founded in Chicago in 1922 by his contemporary, Father John Joseph Sigstein (1875-1963). The women of this new order, the slums. Their visionary founder Father Sigstein believed the challenges and needs inherent in a modern society must be met by modern methods.

Monsignor Noll offered Father Sigstein a new building on about 150 hilly acres if he would relocate to the Huntington area. Since the Missionary Catechists had an urban mission as well as those in several isolated areas of the Southwest, especially among Native Americans and Hispanics, Father Sigstein hesitated to accept at first. But ultimately he saw the advantages of accepting the monsignor's offer, including the fact that the site would be not only an institute to train the sisters and administer their activities but also a place to which they might return and refresh themselves spiritually after service in the field. Father Sigstein chose Chicago architect J.G. Steinbach of Worthmann and Steinbach, who designed many notable churches, Protestant and Orthodox as well as Catholic, in the Chicago area during the 1910s and 1920s.<sup>4</sup> Father Sigstein wanted the architecture to be simple and plain, expressing the lifestyle of the sisters, and he, Steinbach, and Monsignor Noll agreed that the Spanish Mission style would be perfect to reflect visually the work of the order in the Southwest. Ground was broken in 1923 and in December 1924, before the building was completed, the first Catechists, as the sisters were then called, moved in. Father Sigstein came up with the name "Victory Noll" for the new training center, honoring the Blessed Mother, Our Lady of Victory, the patroness of the order, and also Monsignor Noll, who had provided the land and much of the funding. In 1925 the monsignor was named Bishop of Fort Wayne, and five days later, on July 5, Bishop Noll oversaw the dedication of Victory Noll.

The grounds of the new convent were landscaped with the aid of German-born Adolph Jaenicke (1860-1948), who was the Fort Wayne Superintendent of Parks and City Forester for the Park Board from 1917 until his death. Jaenicke was recognized internationally as a seed expert and had spent part of his earlier career working for the Burpee Seed Company. Bishop Noll asked for his help, and Jaenicke apparently came regularly to Victory Noll on Saturdays throughout the late 1920s and into the 1930s to supervise the landscaping and plantings and to offer advice on sources for reasonably priced

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<sup>3</sup>For its first dozen years, the newspaper's offices and plant were housed in the Roche Building on Jefferson Street in Huntington. A new printing plant was dedicated in 1925 at the corner of East Park Drive and Warren Street; it was replaced in 1960 by a new 250,000-square-foot building. The building on Park Drive still houses their offices.

<sup>4</sup>Worthmann and Steinbach designed over thirty churches around Chicago from the early 1900s through the late 1920s in a variety of styles. Among them are St. James Lutheran Church (1917), a magnificent neo-Gothic edifice, and St. Mary of the Angels, built around the same time in the "Polish Renaissance style." The Depression ended the partnership; J.G. Steinbach continued to design buildings into the 1940s.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8 Page 8

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**Victory Noll-St. Felix Historic District  
Huntington County, IN**

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

seeds and plants and, often, to arrange the purchases himself. He planned the fence along the then-highway (now West Park Drive) and a sunken garden west of the main building, which was obliterated when the Sacred Heart Building was added in 1948. One may infer that the fieldstone entrance, retaining wall, and retention pond were Jaenicke's idea, but no documentation has been found. The Way of the Cross in the ravine southeast of the main building was Father Sigstein's idea, and that work was done in 1926 by two brothers of the Society of the Divine Word from a monastery in Illinois. Jaenicke supervised the planting of thousands of these wild flowers and perennial bulbs. These plantings do not survive; the area is now heavily wooded. Jaenicke also laid out the original cemetery, but its most visible feature, the adjacent graves of Archbishop Noll and Father Sigstein, came much later, after Jaenicke's death. Jaenicke was not paid for his work; however, the convent bakery provided him with fresh loaves of bread every week, and he and his wife developed a social relationship with Father Sigstein and often visited.

The land contained a working farm that kept Victory Noll largely self-sufficient; after a fire in 1930 destroyed the barn, the center of operations moved from just northeast of the Victory Noll building northward toward Flaxmill Road, where a new barn was built. The existing farmhouse was moved there, but some small outbuildings remained in place and still stand. By the end of the decade, Bishop Noll elected to sell the portion of land along Flaxmill Road where the farmhouse and barn stood to a locally owned dairy. Some agricultural fields remained with Victory Noll and were rented out, as they still are today.

Membership in the order grew through the 1920s and 1930s, and space was at a premium. Existing bedroom accommodations were doubled up and other rooms had to be converted into sleeping quarters for new Catechists. Father Sigstein decided to build St. Joseph's Workshop to house the print shop, storage rooms, and offices, which was completed in 1937 for a cost of \$61,000. Of similar style (Steinbach was again employed as architect), it was connected to the existing Victory Noll building by a breezeway. A six-bay garage extended from its northern corner, even though at the time, the religious community owned but one car and a small truck. As the missions, particularly those in California and in distant Bolivia, expanded in the 1940s, the building's function was changed into housing dormitories and bedrooms for novices, and the name was altered slightly to St. Joseph's Building. Bishop Noll, aware of the overcrowded conditions at Victory Noll, in 1948 purchased a surplus two-story barracks building from Baer Field in Fort Wayne and had it placed on a concrete foundation at the site of the sunken garden on the west end of the original building. Using the plans of architect A. M. Strauss of Fort Wayne, the frame structure, which contained fifty rooms plus washrooms, was insulated and faced with brick, then christened the Sacred Heart Building. It housed a dining room (today, the library) and living quarters for novices. Like St. Joseph's Building, it was connected to the Victory Noll building with a breezeway, in this case topped with an enclosed second-story passageway as well.

By the 1950s, the need was becoming apparent for an infirmary and facility to house aging sisters. Before his death in 1956, Bishop Noll had set aside funds to construct such a building, which also included a new chapel. Ground was broken in 1958 for a modern structure designed by Fort Wayne architect James J. McCarron; the Holy Family Building

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 9

Victory Noll-St. Felix Historic District  
Huntington County, IN

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

and Archbishop Noll Memorial Chapel was formally dedicated in May 1961.<sup>5</sup> Three years later, the idea of a rectory was discussed and local architect Robert W. Stevens, Jr.<sup>6</sup> drew up plans for the Villa, a small building halfway up the hill that stylistically nods to the older buildings of Victory Noll. Completed the following year, it later served as a house of prayer and currently as a residence for the administrative sisters.

The Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Victory have always adapted their missions to changing times, in keeping with their founder Father Sigstein's motto: "Meet modern needs with modern means." Their ministry to the poor--in the Southwest, in urban areas, and in Bolivia--continues to interweave social services and health care with religious education. Although not so unusual today, the sisters have always worked in tandem with lay people when needs required. They wear ordinary conservative dresses and their vocation is marked only by the Our Lady of Victory medallion they all wear. Some of the oldest sisters in residence, however, retain the modified habit or uniform of an earlier day. At present there are just under a hundred sisters living at Victory Noll; there are over fifty sisters out in the field.

Meanwhile, the newly formed Missionary Catechists were not the only religious order to establish residence on Bishop Noll's acreage. At the time of the dedication of the St. Felix Friary in April 1929, the Capuchins, who had originated in Italy as an offshoot of the Franciscans, had been in existence four hundred years. Individual Capuchin priests came to America as early as the seventeenth century to minister to various outposts, but the first friary in the United States was established at Mount Calvary, Wisconsin, in 1857. Ultimately the Province of St. Joseph of the Capuchin Order grew to include fifteen monasteries,

two colleges, ten parishes, and missions in inner-city Milwaukee and among the Cheyenne in Montana. By the 1920s the order had outgrown its original novitiate and the Capuchin fathers hoped to find a "more congenial and healthy locality" that was not far from Detroit and Chicago. Upon learning of their need, Bishop Noll, who had attended their seminary, in 1926 offered the Capuchins a plot of about thirty acres at the corner of Flaxmill and Hitzfield roads. Local architect Robert W. Stevens, who designed some of the best known buildings in Huntington during this time period, was chosen for the new novitiate.<sup>7</sup> Stevens drew up plans the following year; ground was broken in February 1928, and the building was completed a little over a year later. Although the building is similar in layout and complementary in design and materials to Victory Noll, the style was asserted by some of the brothers to be "Florentine," which would give nod to the Italian roots of the Capuchins. The building, with its bell tower, red tile roof, round-arched openings, and light color, might well feel at home in Florence, but those very characteristics and its form call to mind the missions of the southwestern United States just as Victory Noll does. Indeed, even the Capuchins' official history refers to the building as "Spanish Mission" in style. However, a closer examination of the monastery suggests that the assertion of the

<sup>5</sup> The Vatican had awarded Noll the honorary title of Archbishop in 1953.

<sup>6</sup> Robert W. Stevens, Jr. was the son of the architect of St. Felix Friary.

<sup>7</sup> Stevens was especially prolific in the 1920s. Among his best works still extant in Huntington are the Hotel LaFontaine (1925), the Masonic Temple (1926), and the YMCA (1929), designed in Spanish Colonial Revival style. Both Stevens's father and son were also architects.

United States Department of the Interior  
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 8.9 Page 10

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**Victory Noll-St. Felix Historic District  
Huntington County, IN**

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Continued)

mentioned brothers is closer to the truth. The massing of St. Felix is heavier than that of Victory Noll's buildings, largely owing to the extensive use of corbeling, which is more suggestive of the architecture of Tuscany.

The layout of the monastery building was completely functional to its purpose. Novices lived in the west wing; the priests and brothers who instructed them lived in the east wing. Numerous rooms as well as small outbuildings served a myriad of support activities: kitchen, bakery, tailor shop, laundry, barber shop, print shop, wood and metal crafting shops. The novitiate, like many of the time but especially among contemplative orders such as the Capuchins, was largely self-

sufficient. An orchard, vegetable gardens, and a vineyard eventually filled much of the south and southwest of the property. There were also playing fields and a picnic shelter; life was not all work and study. Each class of novices worked to transform the grounds of the friary until it became the lovely parklike setting still apparent today.

With a capacity to handle fifty novices at any one time, St. Felix served as a novitiate that trained future Capuchin brothers for 23 years. At that point, the Province of St. Joseph had grown so large that it was divided in two. The novitiate was then moved elsewhere and St. Felix became a seminary, a four-year college affiliated with the Catholic University of America, in which avowed Capuchins could receive a bachelor's degree in philosophy as part of training toward priesthood. At its peak in the 1950s about eighty students attended, and roughly twenty brothers and priests were in residence as well. But the next two decades saw a continuing decline in enrollment, and the Capuchins sought to consolidate some of their farflung holdings.

In 1980 the Capuchins sold St. Felix Friary to the Grayston Avenue United Brethren Church, which had outgrown its facilities. Besides the beautiful chapel for its church services, the congregation uses much of the building and also the spacious grounds for its many outreach programs that serve the community.

Although comprised of properties owned by religious organizations, the Victory Noll-St. Felix Historic District is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C for its architecture: Victory Noll, a fine collection of Spanish Mission Revival buildings on beautifully landscaped grounds, and the former St. Felix Monastery, with its Tuscan influences. While it is known that noted landscape architect Adolph Jaenicke supervised by informal agreement the landscaping of Victory Noll, much of his work is no longer evident. There is insufficient documentation on what remains to meet Park Service standards in order for the property to be nominated for its landscape architecture.

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section number 9.10 Page 11

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**Victory Noll-St. Felix Historic District  
Huntington County, IN**

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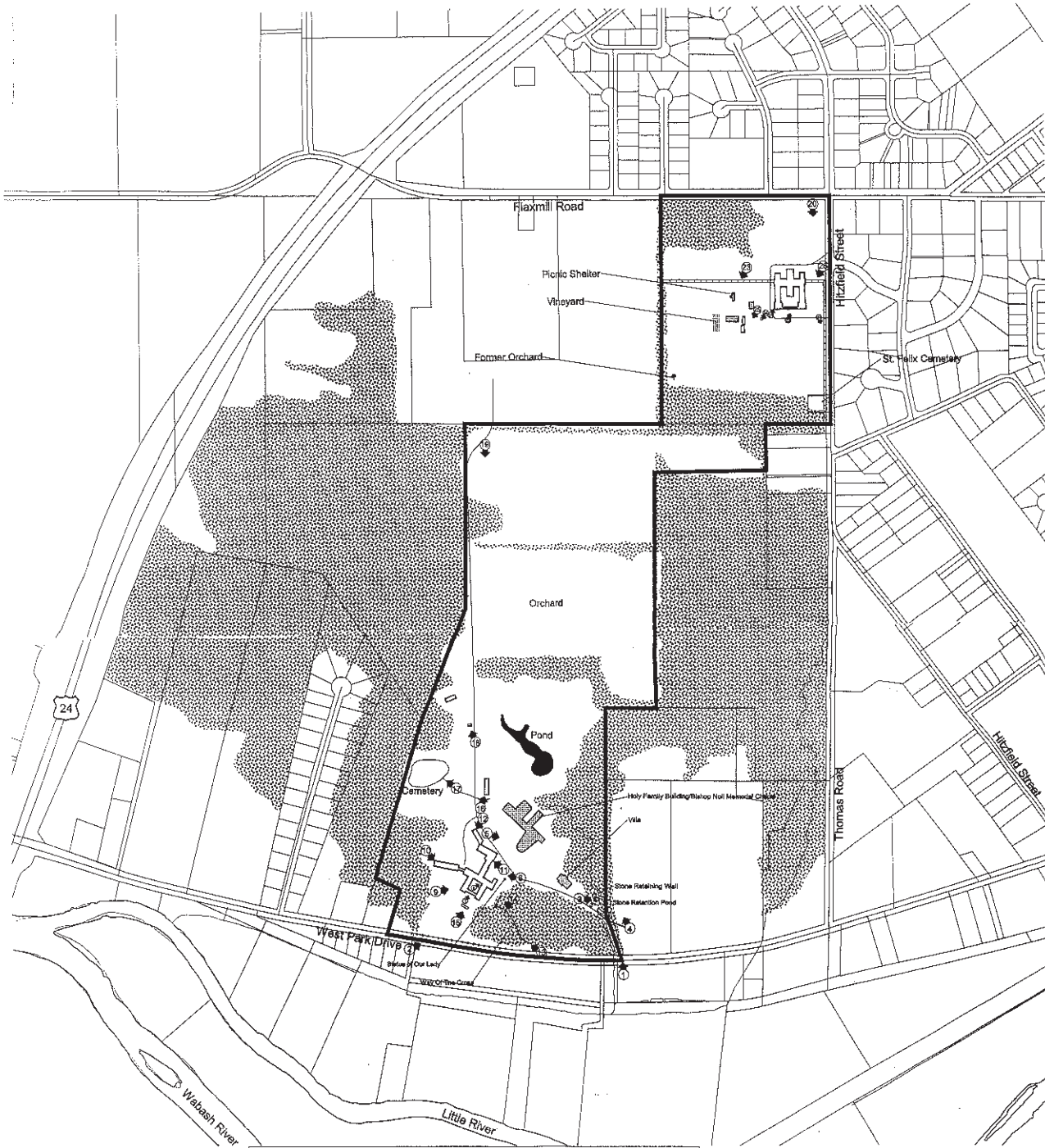
VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The district is comprised of two adjacent properties, Victory Noll and Good Shepherd Church. Beginning at the southwest corner of the Victory Noll property in the centerline of West Park Drive, go northeast 270 feet; then west 160 feet; then northeast 1681 feet; then north 1086 feet; then east 1155 feet; then north 1324 feet to the centerline of Flaxmill Road; then east 985 feet along the centerline of Flaxmill Road to the centerline of Hitzfield Street; then south along the centerline of Hitzfield Street 1320 feet; then west 380 feet; then south 270 feet; then west 653 feet, then south 1380 feet; then west 297 feet; then south 1215 feet to the north line of the entrance road; then southeast 280 feet along the north line of the entrance road to the centerline of West Park Drive; then westerly along the centerline of West Park Drive 1390 feet to the point of beginning, containing approximately 118.4 acres.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Incorporates all of the former St. Felix Friary and the developed portions of the current Victory Noll property.

# Victory Noll/ St. Felix Friary Historic District



**Legend**

Victory Noll Boundary	Contributing Resources
Wooded Area	Non-Contributing Resources
Picture Point-Of-View	

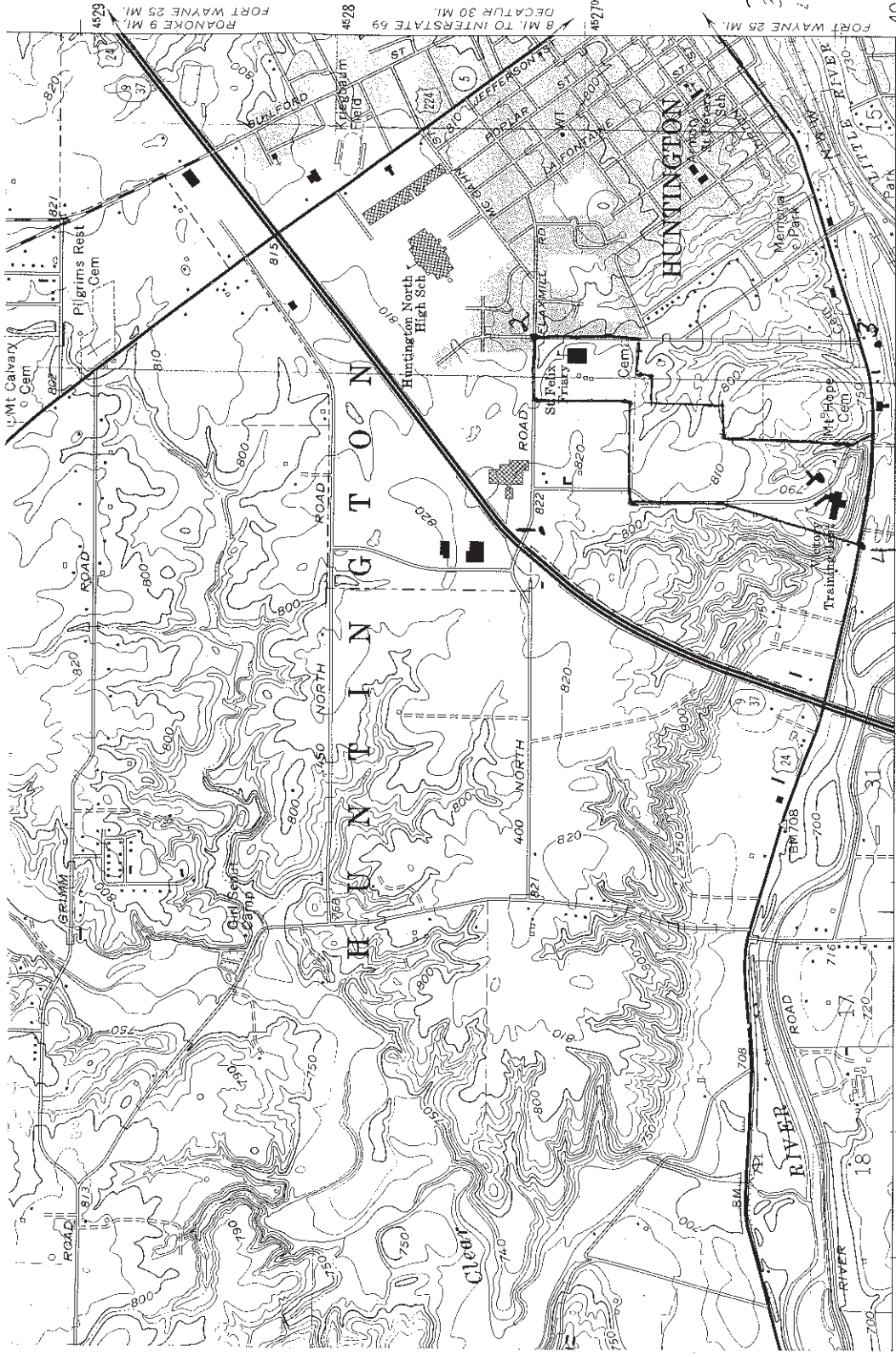


Scale: 1 Inch = 400 feet



Map created 08/05/04  
Huntington County GIS





4927000m N. Victory Noll -  
 SAINT PETERS  
 HUNTINGTON COUNTY,  
 INDIANA

1. 16 624280 4152450  
 2. 16 624310 4152450  
 3. 16 624340 4152450  
 4. 16 624370 4152450

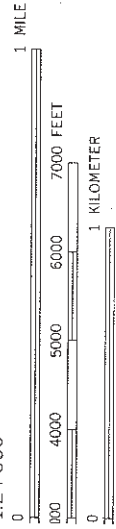
40° 52' 30"  
 85° 30'  
 (MAJENICA)  
 3965 IV SW

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Primary highway, hard surface
- Secondary highway, hard surface
- Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
- Unimproved road
- Interstate Route
- U. S. Route
- State Route



QUADRANGLE LOCATION



NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
 SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242  
 RESOURCES, INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204  
 DATA AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

**BIPPUS, IND.**  
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