

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Lincoln School  
other names/site number McN-P-184

2. Location

street & number South Eighth Street, between Ohio and Tennessee Streets  not for publication  
city, town Paducah  vicinity  
state Kentucky code KY county McCracken code 145 zip code 42001

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>3</u>	<u>          </u> buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u> sites
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u> structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u> objects
<u>3</u>	<u>          </u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

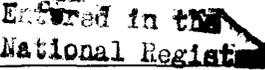
As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
David C. Morgan May 18, 1988  
Signature of certifying official Date  
State Historic Preservation Officer, Commonwealth of Kentucky  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

Albany  6-23-88  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education: School

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not in Use

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Classical Revival

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Italianate

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

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walls Brick

---

roof Asphalt

---

other Wood-columns

---

Entrance Surrounds

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Lincoln School complex is located in the midst of an urban neighborhood that has traditionally served the black population of Paducah. The school complex is comprised of three buildings constructed for educational purposes in 1894, 1921, and 1938, respectively. The earliest building possesses detailing typical of the late Italianate period. The 1921 and 1938 buildings possess detailing typical of institutional buildings constructed in the Classical Revival style.

The Lincoln School complex takes up half of the city block bordered by Ohio Street on the north, Tennessee Street on the south, South Eighth Street on the east, and South Ninth Street on the west. The other lots on the block are vacant or occupied by single-family residences. The block immediately to the east of the site is covered by Lincoln Court, a 1960s public housing project. Many of the buildings in the area are heavily altered frame residences or brick commercial buildings. Many of the lots in the surrounding area were cleared during urban renewal projects and are now vacant or have been redeveloped with modern single-family residences. Within a two-block area of the Lincoln School complex are the Burks Chapel A.M.E. Church (eligible for National Register listing) and the black Masonic Lodge building (ineligible due to loss of integrity), which with the Lincoln School complex survive as the only significant landmarks in the neighborhood. The western boundary of the Paducah Downtown Commercial District (National Register, April 1982; expanded May 1985) is six blocks from Lincoln School. Of Paducah's three other districts and ten individual properties listed in the National Register, only Artelia Anderson Hall (1400 H.C. Mathis Drive, entered May 1983), part of Western Kentucky's first college for blacks, is associated with Paducah's black heritage.

Arranged in a row along South Eighth Street, the three buildings in the Lincoln School complex form a U-shaped configuration by virtue of the individual building depths, with the 1921 high school building at the center and the 1894 and 1938 buildings at the two ends. The buildings sit about twenty feet from the sidewalk, except for the 1938 gymnasium building, where the front steps and entrance block start at the sidewalk. While much of the school complex is hidden by wild vegetation, some of the early plantings of forsythia bushes in front of the high school remain. The rear portion of the complex is covered with an asphalt parking area that also served as a basketball court.

The buildings in the Lincoln School complex reflect the development of this educational institution. The oldest structure in the complex is the 1894 brick building at the corner of South Eighth Street and Ohio Street that was constructed for an elementary school for the black children in the southern portion of the city. While continuing to serve as an elementary school, this building began to accommodate a high school department in 1895. When constructed, this was a two-story brick building with simple Italianate detailing. The South Eighth and Ohio Streets facades each had a central projecting entrance portico. The South Eighth Street facade had two windows

See continuation sheet

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Education  
Ethnic Heritage  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1894-1938  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1894, 1921, 1938  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

1921 Building, Nevin Henry Wischmeyer  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Lincoln School is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places because of its important role in Paducah, Kentucky's educational history and black heritage. The school is the most significant building in Paducah constructed for the public education of the city's black youth. Consisting of three buildings erected in 1894, 1921, and 1938, respectively, Lincoln School was developed to meet the demand for high quality educational facilities for blacks, for whom it represented for over 65 years the means to a better life. Today, the school retains strong emotional attachments for its more than 1400 graduates. As demonstrated by recent concerns over the preservation and restoration of this significant structure, Lincoln School is recognized as one of the most significant landmarks in the history of the black community in Paducah. It also includes Paducah's only remaining nineteenth-century public school building.\*

The first educational institution in Paducah was established in 1829. This was a private school conducted in the home of a local minister. Early private schools included the Paducah Male University and the Paducah Female Academy. These schools were funded by a special lottery authorized by the Kentucky State Legislature. The town's first public schools were established in 1864 when two school were opened to white students. By 1881, there existed four schools for whites: Jefferson School, Paducah High School, Fourth District School, and Lee School. By 1893, the enrollment in the public schools totalled 2,187.

In 1882, the Paducah Public School system began to provide educational facilities for black youths in grades one to eight. In the 1880s, blacks students in grades one to three went to either the First District School in the northern section of the town or to the Second District School in the southern section. Students in grades four to eight attended the Third District school. (None of these schools remains standing.) No classes above the eighth grade were conducted. By 1889, 544 black students were enrolled in the public schools.

\*The only other nineteenth-century educational building in Paducah is the St. Mary Academy complex, a private institution.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Paducah Board of Education. Minute Books. 1894, 1895, 1921, 1937.

Reports of the Paducah Public School System. Published by the Paducah Board of Education. 1881, 1893, 1901, 1919, 1921.

Whiteside, E. W., "A History of Lincoln School." Report to the Paducah Board of Education.

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Growth, Inc., Paducah, KY

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreege of property Two Acres

UTM References

A 

1	6
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3	5	7	8	5	0
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4	1	0	4	4	8	0
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 Zone Easting Northing

C 

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 Zone Easting Northing

D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Starting at the northwest corner of South Eighth Street and Tennessee Street, the boundary runs west 129.41 feet, then turns north and runs 116 feet, then it turns west for 35.59 feet, then north for 231 feet, then it turns east for 165 feet to the corner of South Eighth Street and Ohio Street, then it runs south along South Eighth Street 337 feet to the point of beginning.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

This is the legal parcel for the Lincoln School parcel as recorded in the McCracken County Deed Book. Property beyond the boundary does not contribute to the significance for which the school is being nominated.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Richard Holland  
 organization Paducah-McCracken Co. Growth, Inc. date December, 1987  
 street & number 500 Clark telephone 502/443-9284  
 city or town Paducah state KY zip code 42001

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Lincoln School, Paducah (McCracken Co.), Kentucky

Section number 7 Page 2

on each side of the central portico. The Ohio Street facade had four windows on each side of its entrance. All of these windows had four-over-four, double-hung sash. The dominant architectural feature of the building was the use of brick corbelling as decoration. Projecting brickwork created a watercourse and a beltcourse around the building. The brickwork dropped down from the beltcourse and the cornice to create hooded crowns above each of the windows and doorways.

The 1894 building has been severely altered. The entire second floor was removed around 1920 and all of the original doors and windows have been replaced with modern steel and glass components. The South Eighth Street entrance has been filled in with brick and a modern window and the original brickwork repointed with a cement mixture. An aluminum guttering system has been installed around the top of the building. The brickwork that once acted as a beltcourse around the building now appears to be a cornice. While the alterations are regretful, on the remaining level all of the fenestration (except for the South Eighth Street entrance) and decorative brickwork survive to identify this as a Victorian school building. A planned restoration of the doors and windows to their original appearance will greatly enhance the building.

The dominant building in the complex is the two-story brick high school structure that was erected in 1921. This impressive example of Classical Revival architecture has a symmetrical front with a monumental tetrastyle Corinthian entrance portico flanked by four bays of double windows on each side. Each of the windows has twelve-over-twelve frame sashes. The broken pedimented main doorway is decorated with urns and swags and the original front door is topped by a granite keystone. Regularly placed granite panels mark the area between the first and second floors. A flat band of stone runs across the top of the building's main and side facades, creating a cornice effect. The building is capped with a flat parapet wall with stone coping that is stepped up several inches at the entrance bay.

The two end facades have entranceways comprised of double doors surrounded by sidelights and a three-part transom window. Directly above each entrance is a second-story window that provides light to the second-story hallway. These three-part windows have a central unit with twelve-over-twelve sash and side units with six-over-six sash. The sides of the building also have decorative brickwork that form large rectangles, with each corner of the shape highlighted by stone inserts. A granite panel matching those on the front of the building rest in each of these rectangles.

A cornerstone at the northeast corner of the building reads LINCOLN SCHOOL 1921 and lists the members of the board of education, the school superintendent, and the principal. The entire building rests on a concrete foundation. The rear of the building repeats the general window pattern of the front. The rear also has an entrance to a basement-furnace room area and a large chimney accommodating the furnace.

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Lincoln School, Paducah (McCracken Co.), Kentucky

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The interior of the building has a central hallway with classrooms opening off of it, plus administrative offices and a library. The main staircase and the floors of the first floor hallway and classrooms are made of aggregate concrete. The upper level floors are hardwood. The basement also has a large central hallway that served as a gymnasium before the newer gym was built in 1938. The 1921 building is connected to the 1894 building by a modern one-story steel, glass, and brick addition. This creates the appearance that the 1894 building serves as a wing to the larger high school building.

The third building in the complex, erected in 1938, has a primary block with recessed front corners that contains the main auditorium/gymnasium. A central entrance block projects from the main block, to the rear of which is a two-story wing containing additional classrooms and locker rooms. The entire building rests on a concrete foundation. The decorative elements of the auditorium/gymnasium building are concentrated on the central entrance block where Classical Revival detailing recalls the 1921 building, with both featuring symmetrical fronts embellished in stone and wood. Concrete steps lead up to a recessed doorway that is topped by a broken pediment supported by consoles. This doorway contains a double paneled door topped by a six-paned transom window. The entrance block is divided into three sections by framed, paired pilasters, and immediately above these a stone band runs around the three sides of the block. To each side of the entrance there is a multi-paned window topped with a flat wooden hood supported by consoles. The main block of the building contains the auditorium/gymnasium marked by large windows with double-hung, multi-paned sashes, splayed lintels and keystones. (All of the windows now are covered with protective plywood.) The north side also has a central entrance for access from the high school building. A stone band runs along the upper part of the main block and continues on the shorter entrance block as parapet coping. A stone panel centered at the top of the entrance block reads AUDITORIUM. The interior has hardwood floors and yellow glazed brick and concrete block walls. The rear two-story wing has locker rooms on the lower level and classrooms and offices on the second. Details from the main block of the building, such as double-hung, wood sash windows and keystones, are repeated on this wing.

The buildings in the Lincoln School complex have been largely vacant for several years and show such signs of neglect as broken windows and overgrown grounds. The buildings remain structurally sound, however, and possess great potential for restoration.

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Lincoln School, Paducah (McCracken Co.), Kentucky

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By 1894, the black elementary students were divided between the First District, which covered the area of the city north of Broadway, and the Second District, which covered the remainder of the city south of Broadway. In 1894, the Paducah Board of Education constructed a two-story brick building at the southwest corner of South Eighth and Ohio Streets for a new elementary school for the black students in the Second District. The school was located in the midst of the town's dominant black neighborhood. The institution was named Lincoln School in honor of former President Abraham Lincoln. Another school, Garfield (destroyed) was constructed in that same year for the black students in the First District. The minutes of the Paducah Board of Education during this period indicate a concern for providing high quality educational opportunities for the black children of Paducah. This concern is best reflected by the effort to build a handsome, substantial school building like Lincoln for the black elementary students. The board also promoted efforts to make school attendance compulsory for children of all races.

In 1895, several interested citizens approached the board of education about the need for a higher course of study for the black youths of Paducah. The board immediately established a high school department with a three-year course of study at Lincoln School. The high school department was to share quarters with the elementary school until 1921. The first class of eight girls and two boys graduated from the high school in June, 1898.

The series of distinguished educators who served as principals of Lincoln School during its seventy-year history chart the institution's growth. During the school's existence, the principal supervised both the elementary and high schools. For many years, the principal also taught all high school courses. The first principal at Lincoln School was E. W. Benton, a graduate of Roger Williams University in Bristol, Rhode Island, who served from 1894 to 1906. From 1906 to 1915, G. W. Jackson, a graduate of Wilberforce University in Wilberforce, Ohio, served as principal. During his tenure, the board of education added another year to the course of study, providing Lincoln with a full four-year high school department. Jackson's successor was J. G. G. Prather, who was there until 1917.

In 1917, the board of education added an industrial course to the school which consisted of cooking and sewing for the girls and manual training for the boys. The enrollment in the high school department increased from 58 students in 1917 to 98 in 1921. The increase in the enrollment caused the board of education to purchase four adjacent buildings, including three houses and the former site of the Second Baptist Church, which were converted to classrooms.

The board of education recognized the need for new high school facilities for both the white and black students. A survey of the Paducah Public School system in 1919 recommended several major construction projects, including the expansion of Lincoln School. The recommendation stated that the new Lincoln School would accommodate both a junior and senior high school and be well equipped for both industrial and commercial course work. The survey further stated that the present "negro buildings" were a disgrace to the city.<sup>1</sup> A \$250,000 bond issue was passed in 1919 by the voters of Paducah for the construction of two new high school buildings. Both of the new high schools were designed by Louisville architect Nevin Henry Wischmeyer and completed in 1921. The cost of the white high school building was \$165,000 and the cost for

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Lincoln School, Paducah (McCracken Co.), Kentucky

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the black high school was \$85,000. The new school building for the black youths was sited on the lots adjacent to the original 1894 building of Lincoln School and contained fifteen classrooms, a library, a principal's office, and two restrooms. The 1894 building continued to hold the Lincoln Elementary School. The 1921-1922 report of the Paducah Public School system noted that "the new high school buildings are complete and furnished. They represent the very best type of building found, and sound in construction. They will be monuments to the progressiveness of the city of Paducah."<sup>2</sup> The construction of the Lincoln High School building was an important step in the effort to provide high quality educational facilities for Paducah's black youth. Designed to be equal in quality to the new white high school building, the modern black high school was a tribute to the commitment to educational excellence by the board of education and the community at large.

In 1927, the most important educator connected to Lincoln School, E. W. Whiteside, became principal. Whiteside, who served as principal for thirty-six years, constantly strove to expand and improve the school. His commitment to the school and the community was reflected by the new school motto: "Enter to Learn, Depart to Serve." Several important advances were made at the school during Whiteside's tenure. Lincoln was the first school in Paducah to conduct government-sponsored adult education classes during the Depression. The Lincoln High School Band was created in 1930, led by Professor L. A. Milligan. In 1937, the high school became a member of the Southern Association for the Accrediting of High Schools and Colleges. The high school had sixteen teachers and full-time librarian by 1938, the year the auditorium/gymnasium building was added at a cost of \$30,000. The construction of this building reflected the growing emphasis given by the school to extracurricular activities, such as basketball, vocal music, and dramatics. The facility also became an important social and cultural center for activities for the entire black population of Paducah.

The school continued to grow in the 1940s and 1950s. During the 1940-41 school year, Lincoln won the First District football and basketball championships. A school newspaper, The Hornet, was published under the direction of Mr. H. W. Sledd and Mrs. M. M. Johnson. In the 1950s, a business department and a driver education program were added to the curriculum.

Whiteside's guidance of the school ended in 1965 when he became the Assistant Director of Curriculum and Guidance for the Paducah Board of Education. B. W. Browne served as principal until 1965 when the Lincoln High School was consolidated with Paducah Tilghman High School, the white high school for the community. This creation of one public high school for all races was the result of desegregation efforts in Paducah in the 1960s.

After the high school was moved, the elementary school continued to operate until 1970 when the entire Lincoln School complex became the site for Paducah's Head Start Program. The school buildings have been vacant since the Head Start Program was moved to a new site in 1980. Despite some problems due to the neglect, the Lincoln School complex survives as an important local example of black achievement and heritage. Its preservation will perpetuate a landmark that has been central to the history of Paducah's black population.

<sup>1</sup>Report of the Paducah School System. Paducah Board of Education. 1919.

<sup>2</sup>Report of the Paducah School System. Paducah Board of Education. 1921.

South Ninth Street

Site plan and photo key

Lincoln School, Paducah KY

N ↓

Tennessee Street

Ohio Street

1938  
Auditorium  
Gymnasium  
Building

1921  
High School Building

1894  
Elementary  
School

① ↗

④ ↗

⑤ ↗

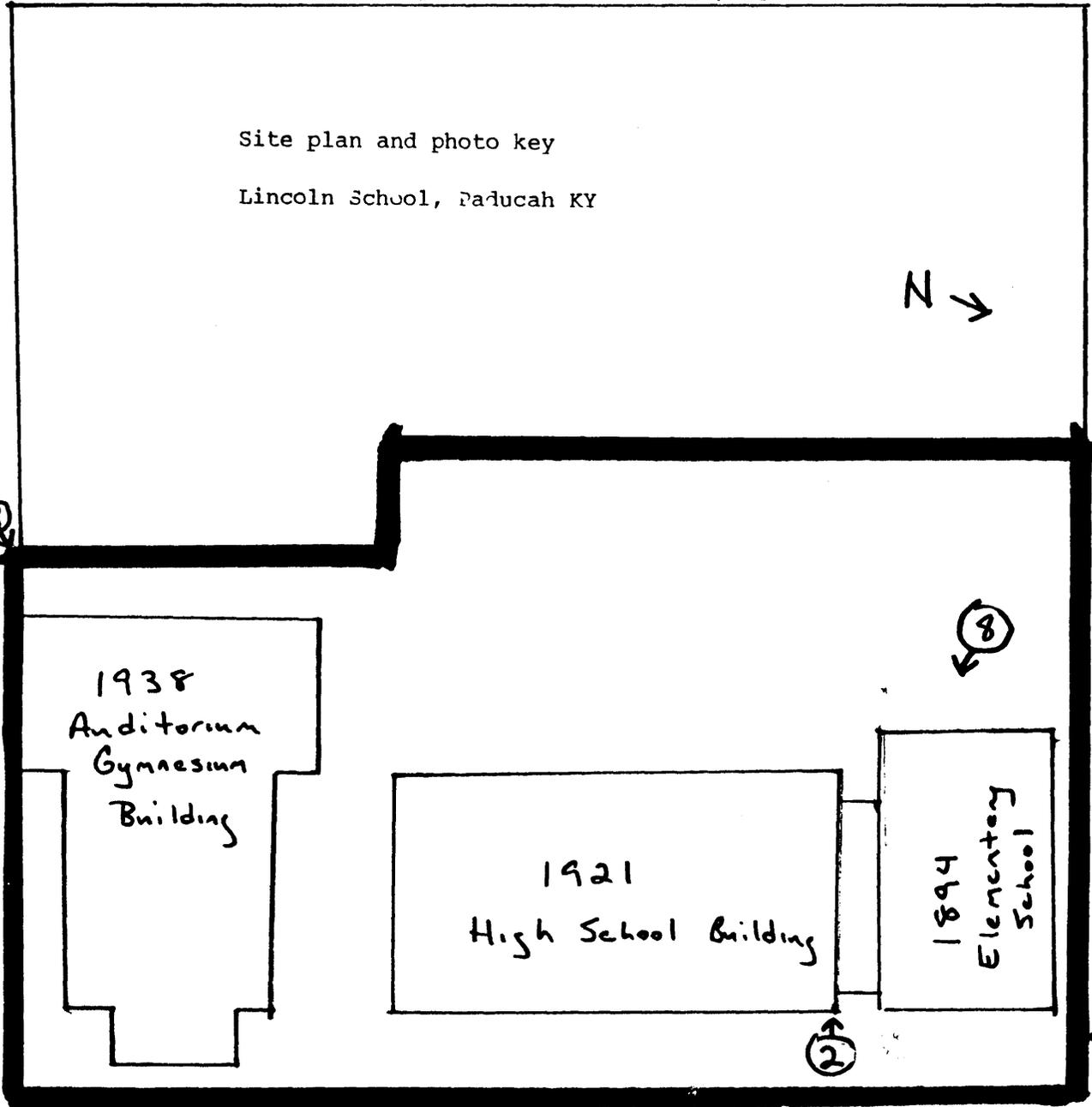
South Eighth Street

② ↗

⑥ ↗

⑦ ↗

⑧ ↗



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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Lincoln School, Paducah, McCracken County, Kentucky

Section number Photos Page 1

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PHOTOGRAPHY KEY

Information the same for all photos:

Historic Name: Lincoln School  
Address: South Eighth Street, between Ohio and Tennessee Streets, Paducah, KY  
Photographer: Richard Holland  
Negative Location: Paducah Growth, Inc., Paducah, KY  
Date Taken: November 1987

<u>Photo No.</u>	<u>View or Elevation</u>
1	1938 building to left, 1921 building to right, looking northwest.
2	Modern connection between 1921 building and 1894 building.
3	Rear section of 1938 building, looking northeast.
4	Front and north elevations of 1938 building, looking southwest.
5	Front and south elevations of 1921 high school building, looking northwest.
6	Front elevations of 1921 building (left) and 1894 building (right), looking southwest.
7	Front of 1894 building, looking west.
8	Rear elevations of 1894 building (left) and 1921 building (center), with 1938 building to right, looking southeast.