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OCT 24 1994

INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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. ~~Use the instructions on the back of the form 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 Gary Public Schools Memorial Auditorium

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 700-734 Massachusetts Street N/A not for publication

city or town Gary N/A vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Lake code 089 zip code 46402

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 36 CFR 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.)

Patrick R. Roberts 10-20-94
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
State of 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 Edson H. Beall Entered in the National Register 11-25-94 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(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

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.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: education-related

RECREATION AND CULTURE: auditorium, sports facility, music facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/ not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th and EARLY 20th CENTURY REVIVALS:
Italian Renaissance, Spanish Colonial
Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls BRICK

TERRA COTTA

roof TERRA COTTA

other STONE: limestone

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1927-1944

Significant Dates

1927

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Wildermuth, Joseph

Largura, John

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical 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:

NR files

Gary Public Schools Mem. Auditorium
Name of Property

Lake County, IN
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre.

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 6	4 7 1 9 8 0	4 6 0 4 9 9 0
	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 Georgia Ward

organization Evergreen, Inc. date September 12, 1994

street & number 366 Taft Place telephone (219) 882-7720

city or town Gary state IN zip code 46404

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 Evergreen, Inc.

street & number 366 Taft Place telephone _____

city or town Gary state IN zip code 46404

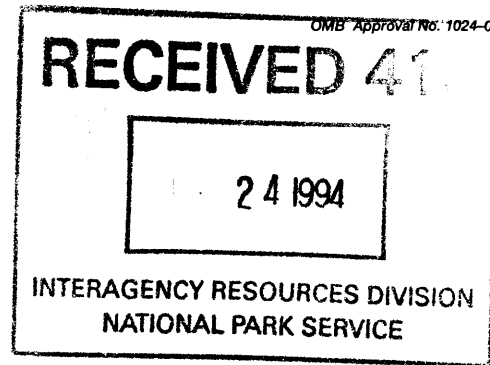
Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain 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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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1



Gary Public Schools Memorial Auditorium, Lake County, Indiana

Memorial Auditorium is located at 700-734 Massachusetts Avenue in a commercial district of Gary, Lake County, Indiana. The auditorium stands flush with the sidewalks at the intersection of Massachusetts and Seventh Avenue. The Venetian style building, constructed for use as a gymnasium, art center, and public auditorium still retains most of its original architectural integrity. The building possesses architectural unity and also blends architecturally with the adjacent City Hall and Fire and Police Departments. The building is made of brownish red brick and terra cotta. The building comprises three sections, a 55 foot height central block facing Seventh Avenue, a 55 foot height central block housing the auditorium with its huge balcony, and a 65 foot rear block containing the stage.

The main roof is flat with a decorative pent roof supported by five sets of paired brackets on all four sides of the building. A belt course wraps around the entire building excluding the front entrance portion and the entire back facade.

The front section of the Auditorium facing Massachusetts Avenue has double-terraced stone steps leading up to five arched entrances with large grilled transoms, above which are insets of patterned bricks reaching almost to the cornice of the middle roof. Spaced between the sets of bracket supports are the words "Gary Public Schools Memorial Auditorium". On both sides of the entrance block are elaborately designed wings, with the engraved words: "Athletics", "Drama", "Art", and "Music". Each wing has a small terrace. Below the right terrace is another entrance where people would enter into the main auditorium. Iron rails are in front of the door facing perpendicular to the door. These rails would have provided lines for those waiting to purchase tickets. Under the left terrace are three tall narrow windows.

The facade facing Seventh Avenue (left) is a contiguous surface flanked on both sides by wings, which are taller than the rest of the building. Several sporadically spaced windows break the surface of the wall. Two doors, placed evenly in the center of the solid wall also break the surface. The rear facade is solid with the exception of a rear exit and the few windows in the rear wings attached to the left facade. The right wall is solid except for one door located in the center of the wall.

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Gary Public Schools Memorial Auditorium, Lake County, Indiana

The entrance lobby block contains the main lobby which housed a ticket office and also served as exhibit space. It has tile floors, decorative face brick walls, and ornately plastered beamed ceiling.

Through the entrance are two ceremonial staircases, one on either side, with marble treads and elaborately carved balustrades which ascend to an upper lobby complex serving the auditorium balcony. The upper lobby is comprised of a large central space with elevated extensions at each end. These raised areas were used as stages for presentations. Five skylights lit the entire upper lobby complex.

The building design allowed the main floor to function as a gymnasium and an auditorium, seating 5,000 people. The parquet floor seats were removable, making the floor available for basketball tournays and other athletic events. The stage, located at the south end of the building was one of the largest in the vicinity when built; the stage measured 50 feet deep by 125 feet wide by 65 feet high. The asbestos curtain, measuring 90 feet by 30 feet, at the time of installation, was the largest ever manufactured. The interior of the auditorium is finished in faced brick with celotex panels and ceilings.

Classrooms and six dressing rooms with showers were located in the basement underneath the stage. Restrooms were located on the first floor.

All important original features of the auditorium are intact. While the exterior of the building maintains much of its original integrity, there has been some damage to the exterior brickwork because of freezing and then thawing of water in some built-in downspouts which have become blocked. The only change in the building has been the internal reconfiguration of the upper block of the stage area.

Certain organic materials in the interior of the building have been badly damaged because of exposure to the elements. The removal of the glazing in the skylights above the upper lobby has contributed to the problem.

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Gary Public Schools Memorial Auditorium, Lake County, Indiana

The Memorial Auditorium building is eligible for the National Register under Criteria A as a significant example of an entertainment/recreation center and under Criteria C as an excellent example of the early 20th century eclectic design in Gary. The building was designed by local Gary architect Joseph Henry Wildermuth. It is a distinguished product of the widespread movement which arose after the first World War which sought to commemorate the efforts and sacrifices of the entire American nation, not simply by erecting monuments but by building significant and public utility. This movement resulted in a long series of auditoriums, bridges, highways, and park structures across America. The Auditorium is also an excellent example of the multi-use public assembly buildings which formed the focal point for the varied civic life of the community.

The Carnegie-Illinois Steel Corporation began producing steel on the shores of Lake Michigan's southernmost tip on 1905; by 1906 Gary was incorporated into a city. During the 1920s, the city experienced a significant growth in population and in the number of buildings. City officials began promoting Gary as a convention center with hopes of attracting the large crowds earlier turned away because of the lack of proper facilities.

City officials decided in 1919 that a memorial was needed to commemorate former Gary Students who had lost their lives fighting in World War I. The project was completed despite little city planning or finances for support of a cultural program. Over the years, Gary never created a class of wealth that would or could reinvest into the community; steel executives moved to company headquarters in Pittsburgh to advance their careers, hence there was no "old money" in Gary. The Gary Land Company had donated the seven lots to the Gary School Corporation for the community center, but offered no financial assistance in the building of the structure. The people of Gary were able to raise enough monies to complete the building through a public campaign just two years after receiving the land grant.

Joseph H. Wildermuth was chosen as the architect for the Memorial Auditorium. Son of Elias and Olive Wildermuth, he was born near Star City, Pulaski County, Indiana, July 6, 1897. He attended the University of Illinois where he received a bachelors of science in architecture in 1920. He taught school in Gary, Indiana for six

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Gary Public Schools Memorial Auditorium, Lake County, Indiana

months at which time he was employed by the Gary School Board to draw up plans for new school buildings. Wildermuth was an architect in Gary for the remainder of his life; he designed and supervised the erection of many prominent buildings throughout the state including Memorial Auditorium (1927), the Indiana State Board of Health (1923), US Post Office, Plymouth, Indiana (1931), and the State Hospital and Dormitory, Knightstown, Indiana (1952). Memorial Auditorium is an important example of his work.

Two diverse time periods are reflected in the architecture of the commercial district which surrounds Memorial Auditorium. The first, 1906-1914, was the time of original settlement. The second, 1924-1929, the time in which Memorial Auditorium was built, was a time of new development of more ostentatious and larger scale structures. Stone and architectural terra cotta were more common materials. Period revivals, especially variants of Tudor Revival, became dominant over the simple Neo-Classical Revival buildings of the earlier phase. Memorial Auditorium is a prominent and important example of the style of buildings built during this second phase.

In 1927 Memorial Auditorium was completed and began a tradition of school graduations, basketball games, boxing events, and city music festivals. While each school had its own auditoriums and performing arts programs, city-wide events and competitions were held at Memorial Auditorium. Events held in Memorial Auditorium included high school basketball games, the annual Golden Gloves Boxing Tournaments (1939-1959), the annual city-wide Music Festival (1943-1952), and a series of city-wide talent contents held in the late 1960s, which included the Jackson Five and its lead singer Michael Jackson. By the 1930s and 1940s the function of the auditorium took a turn towards more civic events, parallel to the city's plan of expanding the convention theme. Events such as conventions, rallies, trade shows, and concerts drew in personalities such as President Harry S. Truman, opera star Marian Anderson, pianist Van Cliburn, Martin Luther King Jr., and Frank Sinatra.

The social structure of Gary increased in its fragmentation as the population grew. Railroad tracks, main arteries to the mill, and the lake shore across the northern boundary physically divided the city. The community was also divided culturally by the 36

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Gary Public Schools Memorial Auditorium, Lake County, Indiana

different ethnic heritages which flourished into subcommunities across the city. Memorial Auditorium brought diverse groups together. The city-wide competitions forced interaction amongst groups. It was the only place, besides the mill, where people of different backgrounds came together.

In the 1960s the city's loss of population, loss of steel mill jobs, and other social events all directly affected the decline of Memorial Auditorium as well as the decline of the city.

Of special relevance and significance to Memorial Auditorium is the unique educational plan initiated by Gary's first school superintendent, William Wirt. The William Wirt Work/Study/Play system drew national and international acclaim. Wirt was superintendent of schools when the auditorium was built. A cornice, which bands the building, features the elements of Wirt's educational concepts with the words: Drama, Art, Music, and Athletics.

This structure remains of cultural and historical significance, reflecting the vision of one center of the working people of Gary to call their own. A Sports Hall of Fame, a museum exhibit for local history, and a performing arts center are planned for the rehabilitated auditorium.

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Memorial Auditorium, Lake County, Indiana

American Architects Directory, 1956; 1962; 1970.

Cannon, Thomas H. History of the Lake and Calumet Region
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Laporte. Indianapolis, Indiana, 1927.

Citizens Historical Association, Indianapolis, In, May 22, 1943.

Federal Writers' Project, Indiana. Calumet Region Historical
Guide. N.P.: Garman Printing Co.

Gary Post Tribune, 1930-1945.

Lane, James B. City of the Century: A History of Gary, Indiana.
Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978.

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Section number 10 Page 1

MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM, Lake County, Indiana

Verbal Boundary Description

Lots Forty-one (41), Forty-two (42), Lots Thirty-six (36), Thirty-seven (37), Thirty-eight (38), Thirty-nine (39), Forty (40), Forty-Three (43), and Forty-four (44), all in Block Thirty-six (36), in the Gary Land Company's First subdivision, being a subdivision of parts of Sections Three (3) and four (4), in Township Thirty-six (36) North, Range Eight (8) West of the Second Principal Meridian, in the County of Lake, and State of Indiana also known as Memorial Auditorium Located at 34 East 7th Avenue, Gary, Indiana.

Memorial Auditorium is bound by 7th Avenue on the North, a parking lot on the South, Massachusetts Street on the East, Broadway (alley one (1)) on the West.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary of the Historic property.

Gary Land Co. Lots 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44
Block 36

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Items 1-5 apply to all photos #1-36

1. The Memorial Auditorium 700-34 Massachusetts St., Gary, IN
2. District 1; Lake County, IN
3. James Henley
4. May 27, 1993
5. Georgia Ward, 366 Taft Place, Gary, IN 46404

- photo #1 - NORTH EAST corner (looking south)
- photo #2 - NORTH front (looking south)
- photo #3 - NORTH front (looking south)
- photo #4 - NORTH WEST corner (looking south)
- photo #5 - NORTH WEST corner (looking south)
- photo #6 - NORTH WEST side (looking east)
- photo #7 - NORTH EAST corner (looking south)
- photo #8 - NORTH EAST cornerstone (looking south)
- photo #9 - NORTH EAST terrace (looking south)
- photo #10 - NORTH EAST terrace (looking south)
- photo #11 - SOUTH EAST side (looking north)
- photo #12 - SOUTH EAST side (looking north)
- photo #13 - SOUTH EAST side (looking south)
- photo #14 - SOUTH WEST rear (looking north)
- photo #15 - SOUTH WEST rear parking lot stand (looking west)
- photo #16 - SOUTH WEST rear (looking west)
- photo #17 - SOUTH parking lot (looking north)

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-- continued --

- photo #18 - SOUTH parking lot (looking east)
- photo #19 - WEST alley (looking north)
- photo #20 - SOUTH EAST (looking south east)
- photo #21 - NORTH WEST balcony (looking west)
- photo #22 - NORTH WEST (looking west)
- photo #23 - NORTH EAST end of balcony (looking north)
- photo #24 - NORTH center balcony (looking north)
- photo #25 - NORTH upper rear balcony (looking north)
- photo #26 - WEST center wall (looking west)
- photo #27 - SOUTH center stage area (looking south)
- photo #28 - NORTH doors exiting auditorium (looking north)
- photo #29 - NORTH staircase (looking west)
- photo #30 - NORTH EAST lobby staircase to balcony
- photo #31 - WEST lobby staircase
- photo #32 - EAST end 2nd floor women's washroom, below balcony
- photo #33 - EAST side alcove with skylights
- photo #34 - NORTH end toward lobby, next to alcove
- photo #35 - EAST side - first floor side stairs in auditorium to lobby
- photo #36 - SOUTH wall