

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received OCT 17 1984  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name** Lake Erie & Western Steam Locomotive No. 5541 /

historic New York Chicago & St. Louis Railway Co.  
Class H-60 steam locomotive No. 587

and/or common ✓ Nickel Plate Road steam locomotive No. 587

**2. Location** *plg 1st Ave.*

street & number Conrail Maintenance Facility (temporary leased restoration site) N/A not for publication

city, town Beech Grove N/A vicinity of

state Indiana code 018 county Marion code 097

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Not in use

**4. Owner of Property**

name City of Indianapolis

street & number City-County Building

city, town Indianapolis N/A vicinity of state Indiana

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Marion County Recorder's Office

street & number City-County Building

city, town Indianapolis state Indiana

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town state

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>N/A</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		N/A

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Nickel Plate Road No. 587 is a coal-burning steam locomotive built in September, 1918, by the Baldwin Locomotive Works of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. One of 15 identical locomotives built for the former Lake Erie & Western Railroad, No. 587 powered freight and passenger trains of the LE&W and its successor, the New York Chicago & St. Louis Railway (popularly known as the Nickel Plate Road), for 37 years.<sup>1</sup> Retired in 1955 and donated to the City of Indianapolis for public exhibition in a city park, No. 587 was leased from the City during 1983 by the Indiana Transportation Museum, Inc., a not-for-profit educational institution. The locomotive has since been removed from its 28-year display site at Indianapolis' Broad Ripple Park, and full restoration for passenger excursion train service is in progress at a railroad shop facility in the Indianapolis metropolitan area. The restored locomotive will be based at the Indianapolis Union Station (an 1888 Romanesque Revival landmark presently being refurbished for adaptive reuse) and will be accessible for public interpretation when not in use in excursion service. The Indiana Transportation Museum plans to dispatch the restored locomotive on excursion trains throughout Indiana for the education and enjoyment of citizens in all regions of the state.

Principal dimensions of the locomotive are as follows:<sup>2</sup>

Overall length	90'-6 7/8"
Wheelbase	81'-8 1/4"
Height	14'-11"
Engine weight in working order (including coal and water)	300,900 pounds
Driving wheel diameter	63"
Pilot wheel diameter	33"
Trailing wheel diameter	44"
Tender capacity (Class 22RA; see text below)	20 tons of coal 22,000 gallons of water

No. 587 is a fine example of the famous group of steam locomotives known in the railroad industry as USRA light Mikados (see Section 8). Built as the second engine of Lake Erie & Western number series 5540-5554, this locomotive and its 14 sisters were the LE&W's most modern motive power and were entrusted with that carrier's fastest merchandise freight trains between Sandusky, Ohio, and Peoria, Illinois. The large initials "U.S." dominated their tender flanks at the time of delivery, reflecting Federal control of the nation's common carrier railroads during the years 1918-1920. Because the LE&W was then a corporate stepchild of the New York Central system, the initials "U.S." were replaced after Federal operation ceased with the words "New York Central Lines" in Railroad Roman lettering approximately 12" high. The initials "L.E.&W." were placed in approximately 4" high extended Railroad Roman letters on the tender collar.<sup>3</sup>

During 1922 the Lake Erie & Western and the Toledo, St. Louis & Western Railroad (collectively known as the Clover Leaf Route) were acquired by the Nickel Plate Road. Operations of the three railroads were consolidated during the next two years and a systemwide renumbering program was adopted for locomotives and rolling stock. In 1924, Lake Erie & Western engines 5540-5554 became Nickel Plate Nos. 586-600; the second engine of this group, LE&W No. 5541, thus became Nickel Plate No. 587. All engines in this group were classified Nickel Plate Class H-60 and subsequently repainted and relettered.<sup>4</sup>

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** Built 1918  
Operated 1918–1955

**Builder/Architect** Baldwin Locomotive Works, Philadelphia

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Nickel Plate Road No. 587 is perhaps the best remaining example of a United States Railroad Administration (USRA) light Mikado steam locomotive, an outstanding design developed during World War I rearmament. This versatile and universally successful locomotive design was utilized in both freight and passenger service on railroads throughout the United States, and its design elements ultimately served as the basis of larger, more powerful locomotives built during the final three decades of steam locomotive construction in this country. Nickel Plate No. 587 escaped major modification during its 37 years of active service and thus represents the essential USRA light Mikado design in virtually original form. Of the 625 USRA light Mikados constructed between 1918 and 1920, No. 587 is one of only six known to exist in 1984, and of its original group of 15 it is the sole survivor.<sup>1</sup>

No. 587 is known as a Mikado locomotive because its wheel arrangement (two pilot wheels, eight driving wheels and two trailing wheels, or 2-8-2 type) was first used in an order of locomotives for the Japanese National Railways built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works during 1897.<sup>2</sup> However, an order for 2-8-2 locomotives built by the American Locomotive Company for the Northern Pacific Railway in 1905 represented the initial development of the Mikado design in its most familiar form. . . a medium-sized freight locomotive of American lineage and dimensions. Considered an outstanding locomotive in its time, the Northern Pacific design quickly eclipsed its predecessors and opened a new era of contemporary locomotive development. Hand-fired, these locomotives had a firebox grate area of 43.5 square feet, said to be about the maximum area that a fireman could handle continuously.<sup>3</sup>

The provident arrival of mechanical coal stokers, lubricators, power reverse mechanisms and other labor-saving locomotive appliances during the first two decades of the twentieth century hastened the development of the 2-8-2 and other designs, but domestic locomotive production came to an abrupt halt following the United States' entry in World War I. As an emergency measure, operations of the nation's major railroads were assumed in 1918 by a new Federal agency, the United States Railroad Administration. A special USRA engineering committee, composed of representatives of the railroads and major locomotive builders, was formed to establish standard designs for equipment to be used on all carriers under government control. During 1918 and 1919 this committee approved 12 major locomotive designs in eight wheel arrangements, including light (292,000 pounds) and heavy (320,000 pounds) 2-8-2 designs. Between 1918 and 1920 a total of 1,856 locomotives were built to USRA designs and allocated to 72 railroads. Of these, 625 were USRA light Mikados and 233 USRA heavy Mikados. The completed locomotives were well received, and many orders for similar designs followed.<sup>4</sup>

The success of the Mikado design concept could be attributed to the development and application of the two-wheel trailing truck, which permitted construction of larger fireboxes and longer boilers and a subsequent enhancement of steaming capacity and power output. The 2-8-2 was evenly balanced for weight distribution with two pairs of driving wheels equalized with (continued)

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name Beech Grove, Ind.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	6	5	7	9	0	8	0	4	3	9	6	9	7	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

### Verbal boundary description and justification

The listed property includes the steam locomotive, and the ground directly beneath it, located in the Beech Grove Conrail Maintenance Shop.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title William B. Stewart, Co-Chairman, Friends of 587 Committee

organization Indiana Transportation Museum, Inc. date March 26, 1984

street & number 1 Indiana Square, Suite 540  
P.O. Box 587 telephone 317/266-5802

city or town Indianapolis state Indiana 46266

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature James M. Pideron

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer date 10-1-84

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Patrick Andrews date 11/28/84  
for Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

Throughout its Nickel Plate career No. 587 was painted in that railroad's standard engine black with imitation gold lettering, white wheel striping and white trim. The Nickel Plate's memorable monogram dominated the flanks of the tender while the corporate initials, "N.Y.C. & St. L.", appeared in 4" high extended Railroad Roman letters on the tender collar. The locomotive's number, executed in the same distinctive style, appeared in various heights beneath the cab windows, on the rear of the tender, and on a number bracket beneath the headlight. Coal and water capacities were lettered in 4" high Railroad Roman above the engine number on the back of the tender. As part of its present restoration, No. 587's Nickel Plate lettering of 1955 will be faithfully renewed.

Unlike most USRA light Mikados elsewhere, Nickel Plate Nos. 586-600 were largely unmodified during their many years of active service. Between June, 1927, and June, 1929, No. 587 was outfitted with an Automatic Train Stop safety device for operation between Chicago, Illinois and Fort Wayne, Indiana, one of six members of Class H-60 so equipped. Other minor mechanical modifications made over the years, such as the addition of steam heat connectors and signal lines for passenger service, did little to alter the basic appearance of these engines. During the late 1940's the Nickel Plate modernized many of its older locomotives to match the appearance of its most recent steam power. Most members of Class H-60 missed this cosmetic opportunity, having been sold to Mexico during 1945 and 1946 in largely original condition. No. 587, an exception, received illuminated number boards and a new horizontal bar pilot in 1947. Company records indicate that a second, oscillating headlight was added in 1953. This headlight and its accompanying bracket were removed before the engine was placed in Broad Ripple Park in September, 1955.<sup>5</sup>

The Nickel Plate's modernization program also brought larger tenders to many of the railroad's Mikado locomotives, increasing their coal and water capacity and reducing the number of fuel stops required in the course of a long trip. Ironically, No. 587, the longest-lived member of Class H-60, received one of the newer tenders only at retirement. For reasons lost to history, crews refurbishing the engine at the Nickel Plate's Frankfort (Indiana) Shops during 1955 elected to replace No. 587's original tender with a newer Class 22RA model from one of the many retired steam locomotives stored on the property in the wake of dieselization.

Soon after No. 587 was placed in Broad Ripple Park the elements began dulling the glossy paint of its 1955 refurbishing, and within three years a newspaper columnist was calling for local volunteers to repaint the engine. During 1968 a fundraising campaign supported by a suburban Indianapolis newspaper generated sufficient funds to construct a shelter over the locomotive, slowing but not halting the corrosive effects of rain and snow. Vandalism was a greater concern. Windows, number boards and headlight lenses quickly vanished, and over the years other parts were stolen or damaged.

During 1982 an amateur effort was made by an individual to repaint the locomotive, leading some to speculate that its condition, given 28 years of outdoor display, was very good. In truth, all boiler lagging will require replacement and other external features must be renewed following internal mechanical overhaul for the engine to be returned to its 1955 appearance. At this writing, however, the prognosis for full restoration and operation within two years is excellent.

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- 1 Rehor, John A., The Nickel Plate Story, pp. 114-116.
- 2 Nickel Plate Road Mechanical Department diagram, circa 1950  
(Indiana Transportation Museum collection)
- 3 Rehor, The Nickel Plate Story, p. 430.
- 4 Ibid., pp. 402-404.
- 5 Ibid., pp. 411-412.

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the pilot and trailing trucks. It had very good riding stability and became known as one of the most dependable of all locomotives. As a consequence, many 2-8-2's outlived newer steam locomotive designs and remained in service until the full dieselization of American railroads during the 1950's.<sup>5</sup>

The USRA light Mikado was considered the agency's outstanding locomotive design. It improved on the primary 2-8-2 concept with a 66.7-square foot firebox grate, ample for a longer boiler which was said to be large enough to produce nearly as much steam as the engine's cylinders could transform into pulling power without excessive exhaust. Sufficient weight was placed over the driving wheels to give the locomotive excellent adhesion, and the combination of 63-inch driving wheels with a 30-inch piston stroke was well suited to fast running. In the USRA light Mikado the Nickel Plate and other railroads found one of the first truly dual-purpose modern steam locomotive designs, an engine equally at home on heavy coal trains, fast merchandise freight trains, and many passenger runs.<sup>6</sup>

A review of No. 587's career demonstrates the Nickel Plate's utilization of the engine's mechanical capabilities. Following the assumption of the Lake Erie & Western, the fifteen members of Class H-60 were given new assignments throughout the Nickel Plate system, and No. 587 was among those assigned to the main line between Chicago and Buffalo, New York. Equipped with steam heat connectors, No. 587 handled passenger trains as well as freights from the Nickel Plate's Conneaut (Ohio) engine terminal during the Thirties. The locomotive was later based at Frankfort (Indiana) and for many years powered a fast St. Louis-Toledo freight train between Frankfort and Delphos, Ohio, returning to Frankfort with another freight train on alternating days.<sup>7</sup> Later, No. 587 operated from Frankfort to Peoria and to St. Louis, and it was also known to visit the Nickel Plate route connecting Indianapolis with Michigan City, Indiana. Prior to its 1955 donation to the City of Indianapolis, its grandest moment had been its assignment to a campaign train of then-Vice Presidential candidate Richard M. Nixon. No. 587 pulled the candidate and future President from Lafayette to Frankfort, Indiana, on October 14, 1952.<sup>8</sup>

No. 587 was well-liked by Nickel Plate engine crews for its good steaming capacity and riding qualities, and its mechanical reputation ultimately made it the last surviving member of its class and a candidate for preservation. Over the years it survived at least one grade crossing accident and an unscheduled trip into the Frankfort turntable pit caused by a leaking throttle valve.<sup>9</sup> Known for its engineering pedigree and contributions to the commerce of the lower Great Lakes basin, No. 587 also deserves to be remembered for its role in railroad folklore as part of the Nickel Plate Road . . . one of America's most respected and well-remembered major railroads.

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<sup>1</sup> The first USRA light Mikado, Baltimore & Ohio Railroad No. 4500, is preserved at the B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore, Maryland. Former Grand Trunk Western Railway No. 4070 operates in excursion service between Cleveland and Akron, Ohio, for the Cuyahoga Valley Railroad. St. Louis-San Francisco (Frisco) Railroad Nos. 4003 and 4018 are displayed in parks at Fort Smith, Arkansas, and Birmingham, Alabama, respectively. Union Pacific Railroad No. 2537 is similarly displayed at Walla Walla, Washington. Nickel Plate Road Nos. 586, 588-589, 591-598 and 600 were sold to the National Railways of Mexico during 1945 and 1946 and subsequently dismantled at various times during the mid-1950's. No. 590 was wrecked in 1943 at Brocton, New York, and dismantled at Canneaut, Ohio, during 1944. No. 599 was

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retired in 1953 and dismantled that year. (Date from Nickel Plate Road Historical and Technical Society and Rehor, *op. cit.*, p. 404.)

- 2 Bruce, Alfred W., The Steam Locomotive in America, pp. 296 and 46-50.  
In 1831 Philadelphia jeweler, Mathias W. Baldwin, formed the company which would dominate American steam locomotive design and construction. Between 1831 and 1950 Baldwin factories produced some 50,000 locomotives, almost double the number of the nearest competitor.
- 3 Ibid., pp. 296-297.
- 4 Ibid., p. 87.
- 5 Ibid., p. 297.
- 6 Rehor, op. cit., p. 229.
- 7 Ibid., p. 247.
- 8 Nickel Plate Road Historical & Technical Society Magazine, May, 1968.
- 9 From interviews with retired Nickel Plate employees at Frankfort, Indiana, February, 1984.



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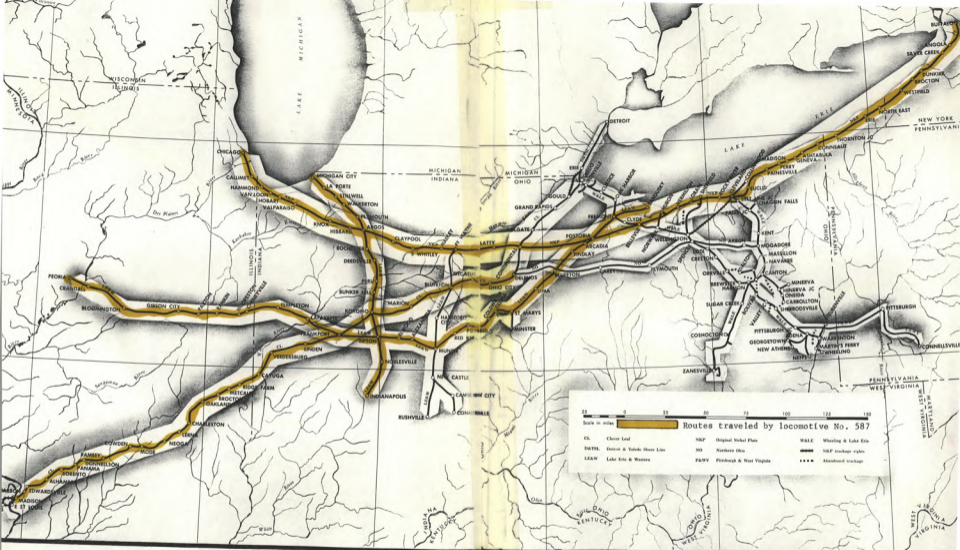
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Bruce, Alfred W., The Steam Locomotive in America (New York: W. W. Norton Co., 1952)

Nickel Plate Road Historical & Technical Society Magazine, various issues (Nickel Plate Road Historical & Technical Society, Inc., 31529 Lincoln Road, Westlake, Ohio 44145)

Rehor, John A., The Nickel Plate Story (Milwaukee: Kalmbach Publishing Co., 1965)

Rehor, John A., and Horning, Philip T., The Berkshire Era: A Pictorial Review of The Nickel Plate Road (Published by the authors, 1967)



# THE NICKEL PLATE ROAD

