

**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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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.

**1. Name of Property**Historic name: Jasper High School GymnasiumOther names/site number: Cabby O'Neill Gymnasium

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

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

**2. Location**Street & number: 340 West 6<sup>th</sup> StreetCity or town: Jasper State: Indiana County: DuboisNot For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A X B X C \_\_\_ D**Signature of certifying official/Title:****Date**Indiana DNR-Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology**State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

**Signature of commenting official:****Date****Title :****State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government**

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register  
☐ determined eligible for the National Register  
☐ 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(s) ☒  
District ☐  
Site ☐  
Structure ☐  
Object ☐

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Recreation and Culture/Sports Facility/Gymnasium

Recreation and Culture/Auditorium

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**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Recreation and Culture/Auditorium

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals/Stripped Classical

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Brick and Stone

roof: Rubber

other:

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

#### Summary Paragraph

The Jasper High School Gymnasium is located on Sixth and Seymour Streets, two blocks west of the courthouse square in Jasper, Indiana. The gymnasium was built during the Great Depression in 1938-1939 in conjunction with the national Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, Works Progress Administration Program.

The building measures 162 feet x 120 feet. The gymnasium was the center of most of Jasper's major community and sports events through the 1940's, 1950's, 1960's into the early 1970's and is still active today.

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## Narrative Description

### INTRODUCTION

The Jasper High School Gymnasium, now known as the Cabby O'Neill Gymnasium, served the high school from 1939 to 1977 and as the Jasper Middle School Gymnasium from 1979 to 2003. It is situated on a prominent lot two blocks west of the downtown public square. From 1870 until 1935, the site was the location of a red brick public school which housed elementary through high school grades. This building was replaced in 1935 by a more modern buff brick structure immediately to the west. Soon after construction of this new school building was completed, the 1870 school building was torn down, leaving the lot available for a new and larger gymnasium. Construction of the gymnasium began in 1938.

### THE SITE

The last remaining vestige of the previous red brick school that occupied the site is the stone retaining wall which abuts the public sidewalk along west Sixth Street/U.S. Highway 231 to the south of the building. This low stone wall is buttressed by a reinforced concrete wall that was put in place when the gymnasium was constructed in 1939. Two sets of steps, one at each end of the building, lead northward up from the sidewalk along 6<sup>th</sup> Street. Walkways from the steps lead to a walkway that runs parallel to the building and accesses the main entrance. In front of the entrance, a brick-faced ground sign was added in recent years to identify the building. Landscape beds flank the entrance.

Proceeding to the right (east) of the building, a wide set of concrete steps leads down to a sidewalk that runs along the east side of the building, adjacent to Seymour Street. The east facade of the gymnasium sits approximately two feet behind a concrete retaining wall that borders the sidewalk along the one-block-long city street. The retaining wall diminishes in height as the sidewalk rises in elevation to the 45 degree-angled northeast entrance. This entrance is the designated accessible entrance, the threshold of which is approximately one foot below the elevation of the basketball court inside the gymnasium. Turning left, along the rear or north side of the building, the concrete sidewalk becomes wider, which provides space for the outdoor mechanical equipment.

The northwest entrance to the gymnasium, also turned at a 45-degree angle to the building's primary axis, is approximately five to six feet higher than the gym's finished floor elevation. Turning south, a set of steps leads down to a concrete walk that borders a landscape bed along the west face of the building. For 46 years, an addition to the former high school building abutted the west face of the gymnasium. In 2010 the entire school complex was demolished, except the gymnasium. The gymnasium was once again a freestanding structure. The adjoining lot on which the demolished high school building once stood has since been converted to a city park.

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## **EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION**

### **THE SOUTH-FACING FRONT ELEVATION**

The Jasper High School Gymnasium is representative of the minimalist nature of public architectural design during the Great Depression. The building can be classified as an example of the Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals / Stripped Classical Style, of which Jasper has only one other example: the 1937 U.S. Post Office building at 6<sup>th</sup> and Jackson Streets.

The three primary exterior building materials of the gym are exposed reinforced concrete cast in place on site, buff brick that was manufactured in neighboring Huntingburg, Indiana, and Indiana limestone from the Bedford-Bloomington region.

In keeping with its classical roots, the front elevation (Photo 1) is both symmetrical and hierarchical in composition. The previously mentioned exposed cast concrete foundation wall serves as the base for the structure. The foundation projects approximately one inch from the primary face of the brick veneer and is chamfered along its top edge, where it abuts the brick above. The foundation rises to a height of 24 inches above the finish floor to the west of the main entrance and only eight inches to the east. Centered in this elevation is a glazed aluminum storefront system with two pairs of entry doors with a narrow sidelight in between and a row of transom glass above. At some point in the gym's history, the aluminum entry doors with clear anodized finish replaced the original painted wood doors, which historic photos indicate had glass in the upper half of the doors.

Directly above the entry doors and storefront system is an aluminum canopy with horizontal ribs and a beaded soffit that provides five to six feet of cover over the doors. The canopy is held in place by chains attached to escutcheon-covered bolts sunk into the brick masonry above each end of the canopy.

Above the canopy is a large limestone tablet, 13 feet in length and 30 inches in height, emblazoned with the word GYMNASIUM in raised Roman letters.

Above the sign are three original, steel-framed casement windows. Each window is approximately 36 inches wide by 54 inches tall. The muntin pattern for these windows is 3 by 3 with an operable, pivot unit encompassing the six lites of the top two rows. These windows, as all the windows in the gym, are operable. Directly above the windows is a 14-inch-tall limestone belt course that runs continuously between two stepped brick pilasters that flank the front entry. Above the limestone belt course, the buff brick masonry wall rises to its highest elevation, a parapet capped with a limestone coping 34'-6" above grade, which steps down twice to each end of the building.

Whereas the three windows over the front entrance are typical punched openings in a flat plane of brick, the eight remaining 36-inch by 54-inch windows in the upper story of the south

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elevation sit snug between protruding stepped brick pilasters. The belt course continues to each side of the entry bay over these windows. The lower-level windows have no expressed lintel. Instead, the buff brick continues in running bond over a loose steel angle lintel. Between the top of each ground level window and the limestone sill of the upper window is a ½-inch recess, 28 inches in width, offset 4 inches at the sides and 8 inches at the top and bottom.

The pilasters provide the most architectural articulation on the front façade. The four pilasters, two on each side of the main entrance, are each 40 inches wide at the face of the front wall. The brickwork then steps forward four inches and inward on each side by eight inches. The four-inch forward offset on each side is then repeated, leaving a pilaster face that is 24 inches wide. In addition to the two four-inch forward offsets at the pilasters, the individual windows are also set back four inches from the face of the wall. This combination results in a twelve-inch offset on the front elevation.

Vertically, the buff brick of the four pilasters rises from the top of the concrete foundation wall to the bottom of the continuous limestone belt course spanning over the upper-level windows. Above this line each of the brick pilasters is capped with a stylized limestone capital, consisting of a rectangular-faced slab with a sloped indent in the center flanked by two smaller limestone slabs.

The thin offsets of the pilasters and the stacking of windows within narrow niches create a nice sense of rhythm and a much-needed element of verticality to offset the horizontal mass of the building.

On the east and west ends of the front elevation are wide, lesser-detailed bays that project eight inches from the south face of the building, aligning with the face of the pilasters. These bays serve as symmetrical “bookends” for the composition of the front elevation. The only detailed element is a very thin recessed niche with a narrower, single, steel window, 24 inches in width, on each floor in the center of the bay. The muntin pattern for each window is 2 by 3 with an operable, pivot unit encompassing the four lites of the top two rows. The windows feature a simple four-inch limestone sill and no expressed lintel. Between the two windows is a shallow half inch brick recess like that found between the main level and upper-level windows.

## **THE EAST-FACING SIDE ELEVATION**

The massing and detailing of the east elevation (Photos 2 and 3) are understandably more subdued than the south-facing front elevation. The grade slopes up from south to north, which causes the exposed concrete foundation wall to diminish in height from front to rear. The limestone capped parapet above maintains a consistent elevation. Window lintels on this elevation are cast-in-place concrete on the lower level and limestone on the upper level.

Beginning at the southeast corner of the building and working northward are two narrow, recessed niches, the first being 36 inches in width. The windows are equal in height and align

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with those around the corner of the east bay of the front elevation. Each window in this niche is 3 by 3. The six lites of the top two rows make up the operable pivot unit at each window. The second niche is 60 inches wide. The upper-level window increases in overall height to 80 inches, which continues for the remaining windows on this elevation. The upper-level window is 5 by 4 with a 6-lite central pivot section. The lower-level window is 5 by 3, with the pivot section comprised of the three central lites of the top two rows.

The next six recessed niches are all approximately 12'-4" in width. The upper-level windows are ganged units comprised of three individual 36-inch-wide casement windows, separated by two-inch wide mullions. The ganged units span from edge to edge of the niche. The pattern for the upper units is 4 by 4, with an operable pivot unit in the center eight lites. At the lower level, two individual windows, 36 inches in width, sit snug in the corners of each recessed bay in alignment with the first and third windows of the ganged unit above. The muntin pattern for the lower-level windows is 4 by 3, with an operable pivot unit occupying the top two rows.

Four gray painted, galvanized scupper/leader head/downspout assemblies are equally spaced between every other window bay. Six louvered mechanical grilles of varying sizes are randomly spaced above the lower-level windows.

### **THE NORTHEAST ENTRY ELEVATION**

The northeast corner of the building is a 45-degree angled entry (Photo 3) facing the intersection of the adjacent streets. An aluminum entrance canopy, with original horizontal ribs and a beaded soffit, shelters the entrance below. Aluminum storefront doors have replaced the original wood doors. An infilled ticket window recess is located in the perpendicular wall to the right of the entry doors. The window units above the canopy match the ganged upper windows of the east elevation. Limestone-capped pilasters are situated on each side of the entrance canopy. The entrance threshold is approximately one foot below the interior basketball floor.

### **THE NORTH-FACING REAR ELEVATION**

The north-facing rear elevation (Photos 3 and 4) is the most utilitarian of the four elevations. The façade mimics the stepped parapet of the front elevation, but the face of the wall is flat with no recesses or projections. A brick chimney is slightly offset to the west from the center line of the façade which causes the window placement to be asymmetrical. The progression of windows at the upper level from east to west is as follows: two 3 by 4 units; two 5 by 4 units; two 5 by 4 units; chimney; two 5 by 4 units; two 3 by 4 units; and two 3 by 4 units. Each window unit contains a central 6-lite pivot section. The grade rises several feet from east to west, which creates an asymmetrical spacing of the windows on the lower level, most of which are obscured by the mechanical and electrical equipment sitting on the slab or mounted on the wall inside a chain-link fence cage.

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## **THE NORTHWEST ENTRY ELEVATION**

The northwest entrance (Photo 5) is also situated at a 45-degree angle to the west and north elevations. Like the northeast entrance, the northwest entrance has an aluminum-clad canopy providing cover over the aluminum entrance doors. The ticket window recess in the perpendicular wall to the right of the entrance has been filled in with matching brick. An original wood door in the perpendicular wall to the left of the entrance opens to a stair that leads to the boiler room in the basement.

## **THE WEST-FACING SIDE ELEVATION**

As one turns the corner and descends a set of newer concrete steps to review the west elevation (Photos 5 and 6), one would probably expect to see a mirrored version of the east elevation, with its six recessed niches and wide expanses of glass on the upper level. However, that is not the case. Perhaps due to the late afternoon and evening sun, which could easily heat up such a large interior, the windows are kept to single units spaced at regular intervals.

Proceeding down the stairs and continuing south on a paved walkway, one passes two small, casement windows on the lower level (2 by 2 and 3 by 2) and a 4 by 4 window with an 8-lite pivot section in the center on the upper level. The exposed foundation of the building ends at the first of eleven recessed niches with single windows on each of the two floors at the same heights as those on the east wall. The upper-level windows are casements with a muntin pattern of 4 by 4 with a central eight-lite operable pivot section. Aligning with the casements above, the lower-level casements have a 4 by 3 pattern with a pivot unit taking up the eight lites of the top two rows. Four new galvanized scupper/leader head/downspout assemblies are spaced equally on the wall with four recessed niches between. Similar to the east wall, four louvered mechanical grilles are randomly spaced above the lower windows. Continuing south, there is a secondary double-door entrance near the southwest corner of the building. This entry previously connected the gym to the school from 1964 to 2010. The awning over the southwest door is not original. A 5 by 4 window with a central 3 by 2 pivot section is located above the door. South of the entrance are a 2 by 3 window on the lower level and a 3 by 3 window on the upper level, each with a pivot section comprised of the upper two rows of lites.

## **INTERIOR DESCRIPTION**

### **ENTRY VESTIBULE AND CORRIDOR**

Through the main entrance, a vestibule (Photo 7) leads to a second set of paired aluminum doors. Two dedication plaques (Photo 8) are located on the west wall of the entry vestibule. One notes that the gymnasium was a Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works project, and the other lists the names of the members of the Board of School Trustees, the architect, the superintendent, and the contractor. A ticket window (Photos 7 and 9) is located on the east side of the entry vestibule. The floor is cast concrete with a concrete sealer finish.

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The vestibule doors lead to an eight-foot-wide corridor with a glazed brick base which runs east to west. The corridor has a plaster ceiling with beams that sit on pilasters at random intervals. West of the vestibule on the south side of the corridor (Photo 10) is a recessed concession area, the exterior wall of which was reconstructed after having the aluminum storefront assembly removed. To the west of the concession area are a janitor's room and a men's restroom, both with original doors. The doors have steel frames, original hardware, and are half-glazed with a 9-lite glass panel upper section and a recessed two panel lower section.

The double-door entry located on the south end of the west façade is located at the west end of the corridor (Photo 10). The south entrance to the girls' locker room is located on the north side of the west end of the corridor.

At the east end of the corridor (Photo 11), beyond a women's restroom, a set of stairs leads to a switchback ramp which accesses the boys' locker room on the lower level. Along the ramp are a storage room and at the south end the entrance to the former office of Cabby O'Neill (Photo 12), former state championship coach and athletic director, for whom the gym was named in 1983. The office has a storage area and a built-in shower, as this was originally also the officials' changing room. The office door window features wire glass in a stippled pattern.

At the base of the ramp, a corridor continues northward through the boys' locker room (Photo 13). On the right one passes an office and bench/locker/cage area, constructed when the middle school took occupancy in 1977. Next are the remodeled group shower with ceramic mosaic floor tiles and a remodeled restroom.

Portions of the poured-in-place reinforced concrete structure support the tiered concrete bleachers overhead and are visible throughout the locker area. Continuing north, a set of angled concrete steps leads up to the northeast entrance vestibule. To the south of the vestibule is an accessible restroom, formerly used as an equipment room and later as the office of the athletic director.

On the other side of the northeast entrance vestibule is a set of steps leading down to the visitor's locker room (Photo 14), a small, square room with cage lockers, one shower, one toilet, and one sink. This is where NBA legend Larry Bird dressed for a game as a visiting high school player in 1972.

Inside the northeast entrance, there is a ramp up to the basketball court, and a set of steps on each side of the ramp leads to the seating areas. There's an original restroom to the west of the northeast entrance.

## **GIRLS' LOCKER ROOM**

The girls' locker room (Photo 15) under the bleachers on the west side of the gymnasium is accessible via stairs leading down from the northwest and southwest entrances. This locker room was remodeled and reconfigured from a previous smaller girls' locker area and a

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baseball/wrestling locker room. Adjacent to the locker room is a storage room to the north and an office to the south. The goal of the reconfiguration and remodeling was to provide equal accommodations for both the boys and girls.

## **BOILER ROOM**

As mentioned earlier, a lower-level boiler room (Photo 16) is accessed through a door and steps next to the northwest entrance. Mechanical equipment sits on a concrete pad. There are recesses underneath the exterior sidewalk. A coal-burning power plant once functioned in the boiler room. Boilers, pumps for the steam system, and wall-mounted electrical panels and conduit are located in the room.

## **GYMNASIUM**

Three sets of original doors lead from the corridor into the gymnasium (Photos 10, 11, and 18). Like the other original doors, they are half-glazed with a 9-lite wire glass upper panel, two-panel lower section, and feature steel frames and original hardware.

The basketball court (Photos 17, 18, and 19) still features the original tongue-and-groove maple wood strips installed in 1939. The walls are finished in unglazed brick. The original guard rail assemblies are made of one-and-a-half-inch steel pipe and are 33 inches high.

The six basketball backboards are hung from the ceiling by the original retractable pulley systems. Telescoping bleachers, which were located on each of the four sides of the basketball court, have been removed. In each corner concrete steps in different configurations lead up to the main tiered seating area, the first few rows of which originally had fold-out chair back seats (Photos 17, 18, and 20). All of these chair-backs were removed during the transition from high school to middle school usage, although some original ones were salvaged from a baseball field forty miles away, restored, and returned to the original location on the west side of the gym.

Inside the northeast entrance, a short ramp leads up to the basketball court, and a set of steps on each side of the ramp provides access to the upper-level seating areas. A small restroom lies to the west of the entrance vestibule. The restroom features a large sink, a vintage standup urinal, a toilet with a high, wall-mounted flush tank, and a flush valve toilet that matches the style of the period.

Inside the northwest entrance, the floor is four feet, eight inches above the court. Hence, there is approximately a six-foot grade change on the north side of the building from the northeast entrance to the northwest entrance. The press box (Photo 17) sits on a platform above the northwest entrance.

There are eight rows of seating on the east and west sides, and additional seating on the north and south ends. The south end has a higher set of bleachers than the north end, and the north end

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seating goes lower than the south end. The original wood seats have been replaced by aluminum (Photo 19).

The ceiling is made up of a series of steel-bowstring trusses (Photos 17, 18, 19, and 21) that support the barrel roof. The trusses are made of steel channel members, steel plate gussets and bolted connections. The original suspended ceiling that hung below the trusses was removed during the remodeling of the late 1970s. High bay lighting was added. The bottom of the deck was faced in Tectum panels for acoustic reasons. There are three ceiling-hung mechanical HVAC units (Photo 22).

## **ROOF**

Access to the barrel-shaped, rubber membrane roof (Photo 23) is via a ceiling-hung ladder-cage assembly suspended over the press box and a manually-operated roof hatch. The barrel roof forms a trough as it intersects with the raised parapets on the east and west walls. These troughs are drained by the scupper/leader head/downspout assemblies described previously. The roofing membrane runs up the parapet wall to a termination bar that runs continuously along the bottom edge of the limestone coping stones. Unlike so many other commercial roofs, the gymnasium roof is not cluttered with so much mechanical equipment. Only three small package HVAC units and a small communication dish are visible. In years past the name "JASPER" was written on the roof surface in gigantic letters, spanning the full length of the roof. In recent years, however, a much smaller version of the name replaced the earlier version.

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## 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.)

- ☐ 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Entertainment and Recreation

Architecture

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

**Period of Significance**

1939-1977

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

**Significant Dates**

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

**Significant Person (last name, first name)**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

O'Neill, Leo C. "Cabby"

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

**Cultural Affiliation**

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

**Architect/Builder (last name, first name)**

Works Progress Administration

Sutton and Routt

Armstrong, W.A.-General Contractor

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### Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins in 1939 when the gymnasium was constructed near the old Jasper High School building. The period of significance ends in 1977, which marks the year the building ceased serving as the high school gymnasium.

### Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Jasper High School Gymnasium is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B, and C. The building is eligible under Criterion A because it has significance in the area of entertainment and recreation. The building was constructed for use by the community's public school for recreation and education and was partially funded by the city because it served as a gathering spot for community entertainment. The building is eligible under Criterion B as the home gymnasium of Coach Cabby O'Neill, an Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame member and coach of the 1949 state basketball champions, the area's most significant sports accomplishment. The building qualifies under Criterion C as a representative of the minimalist nature of public architectural design during the Great Depression. The building can be classified as an example of the "Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals / Stripped Classical" style.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATION SIGNIFICANT PERSON-Leo C. "Cabby" O'Neill

The historical significance of the Jasper High School Gymnasium stems from when and why it was built, how it was funded, its use as the prime recreation and entertainment facility for Jasper for decades, and for being the home of the basketball state champions in 1949, an era when basketball was king in Indiana and its riveting single-class tournament drew nationwide attention.

The calls to build a new basketball gymnasium in Jasper began in 1938. It was fueled by the exploding popularity of basketball throughout the state, particularly driven by the success of the season-ending state-wide tournament to determine Indiana's best team. Nearby schools Vincennes and Washington won titles in 1923 and 1930, respectively, and Jasper had come agonizingly close in 1934, losing a heartbreaker Final Four game in the final minute. When county rival Huntingburg finished runner-up in 1937, it was clear that area teams had the talent

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to compete against all of Indiana's larger metropolitan schools. But Jasper sorely needed a larger gym to allow more fans to enjoy the games. The city also needed a larger venue to host community events. But the nation was still battling the Great Depression, so funding to build a new gym was a concern.

As the Jasper Herald stated in its March 11, 1938, editorial headlined "Our Antiquated Gym":

There is now a demand, indeed a necessity, if Jasper high school is to maintain its position of pre-eminence in Indiana basketball circles, for a gymnasium seating three times the number of people the present building can accommodate, a gym with a capacity of at least 3,500. Unless this is done, the Jasper team must forego competition with outstanding teams, and thus revert to the role of a second-rater. . . The universal appeal of the game is the very thing that makes the building of a larger gym a necessity. . . The sectional tourney last Saturday emphasized the need of a larger gym. It proved that practically every man, woman, and child in the community is an enthusiast – not to say a fanatic. It showed that if we expect to accommodate a sectional in the future we must adequately prepare for it with ample seating capacity.

Helping to solve the funding puzzle was the financial assistance of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), an ambitious employment and infrastructure program created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1935 to help lift the nation out of the Great Depression. The WPA would cover nearly half the cost of the labor and materials for the new gym. A plaque honoring this assistance that was installed in the gym lobby in 1939 is still displayed there today. It states, "Gymnasium, Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, Project No. Ind. 1566-F."

So the gym proposal gathered momentum quickly, as evidenced by the Jasper Herald article of March 25, 1938, headlined "The New Gym a Popular Project":

Few improvements that have ever been undertaken in Jasper met with as hearty approval by the public as will be accorded the proposed new gymnasium. The prime reason, of course, is that Jasper is basketball-conscious. There are few, if any, families here who do not have at least one enthusiastic follower of the Hoosier high school pastime. . . The second reason is that under the present arrangement, it is not only the few outstanding players who get the use of the gym. With the various class leagues, and other physical training features, any pupil who shows aptitude or inclination for sport, has the opportunity to exercise same. Jasper loves its children and will go to any expense and trouble to provide the best obtainable for them. . . Never again may we have such favorable terms to secure these improvements. For every dollar the local taxpayer spends, the federal government will provide \$1.30. The building project will provide work for 85 men for one year, each man working 110 hours a month, and earning money to buy the necessities of life that otherwise would have to be furnished him out of

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the public funds raised by taxation. These men will earn and spend . . . \$50,000, which would not be available were it not for this federal aid project. It means that men, who would otherwise be unemployed and forced to call for help, will be able to earn a respectable living during the coming year. . . By signing promptly (a petition required to make public funds available) you will be doing your civic duty in providing a public building of which the city may well be proud: you will provide a popular pastime for the great mass of our people; you will be furnishing the opportunity for healthful recreation for your children . . . you will be providing work for men who would otherwise be forced to go hungry or else look to the public funds . . .

On August 1, 1938, Jasper's Common Council passed an ordinance "to issue bonds of the city of Jasper in the amount of \$25,000 for . . . a new gymnasium and community building . . ." Another Common Council resolution that day was passed that "authorized (the) transfer of \$16,639 from the Municipal Light and Power Fund . . . to complete the erection of a new gymnasium and community building . . ."

The new gym was formally dedicated in a November 2, 1939, ceremony. The next day's Jasper Herald stated,

The new Jasper High School gym (is) a \$100,000 structure that is undoubtedly one of the finest and most modern buildings in Indiana dedicated to athletics . . . the new gym is one of the outstanding civic improvements made in Jasper in recent years and is regarded by building authorities as one of the finest gyms in the state. It affords excellent facilities for interschool competition and physical education. . . no obstructions mar the view of the fans from any part of the bleachers. There are 2,400 permanent seats, 700 of which are of the chair variety. An additional 1,000 fans can be accommodated by temporary bleacher seats. . . Of the slightly more than \$100,000 spent on the gym, the city of Jasper put up \$54,000 as its share of the cost, the federal government furnishing the rest.

Jasper's new gym was part of a wave of incredibly large new basketball facilities being built throughout Indiana, all in response to the popularity of the sport that was unmatched in any other state. In March of 2019, the Indianapolis Star reported that the Indiana High School Basketball Historical Society researched to confirm that 12 of the 13 largest high school gyms in the United States were in Indiana, ranging from a 7,071 capacity gym in Columbus to Seymour's capacity of 8,228. The only non-Indiana gym on the list was number six, in Dallas. The timeline for the largest gym started with Martinsville, Indiana, with its 5,200-seater in 1924, followed quickly by ever-larger gyms throughout the state.

Basketball's popularity in Indiana, evidenced by the large gyms and huge crowds at the four-week state tournament, caught the eye of James Naismith, who invented the game in Massachusetts in 1891. According to the article "Perfect Match: Indiana and Basketball," in the Fall, 2016, issue of the magazine Traces, Naismith attended Indiana's state tourney final in 1925.

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The story stated that Naismith declared that basketball, while invented in Massachusetts, “Really had its origin in Indiana, which remains today the center of the sport.” The quote is attributed to a speech Naismith gave at a return visit to Indiana for a YMCA banquet in 1936.

All of these developments demonstrate the lasting impact that high school basketball has had on Indiana’s culture. As stated in the 2017 Indianapolis Star book, “History of Our Hysteria: Indiana High School Basketball”:

The game took hold of Hoosiers like nothing before and thrived in Indiana like nowhere else. . . ‘It was a sport for the lonely,’ journalist David Halberstam would later write. ‘There was nothing else to do, and because this was Indiana, there was nothing else anyone even wanted to do.’ It also served as a haven to combat the unbearable winter. There was no television and, early on, no radio. But there was basketball. Rivalries were hatched of one small town battling its neighbor. High school games on Friday nights became the social event of the week. Indiana had found its pastime. ‘In a dark and lonely winter, the gym was a warm, noisy, and well-lit place,’ Halberstam wrote. ‘For Indiana, basketball was a godsend.’ . . . The gospel of Indiana high school hoops filled the sports pages. Teenagers with a jump shot became legends; teams that won a sectional lived forever. ‘In many communities, the athletic teams and most times the basketball team – were the source of pride,’ Terry Spradlin, the associate director of education policy at Indiana University’s Center for Evaluation & Education, told the Indianapolis Star in 2012. ‘It was the way to rally around a common cause.’

Angelo Pizzo, screenwriter and producer of the popular movie “Hoosiers,” wrote in the forward to the book “Historic Hoosier Gyms”:

. . . a statewide tradition, high school basketball, got into our blood and took on the shape of a thing larger than mere games. There’s just nothing as uniquely Indiana as high school basketball . . . It’s who we are . . . we’re devoted to it . . . in the era this book revisits, that meant something a little different . . . townspeople would arrive and cheer and rally around their team . . .

Jasper’s new gym quickly became the centerpiece of local entertainment, recreation, and pride for the community, and has developed into a most nostalgic building of great memories for the city today. That nostalgia was explained in the March-April, 2010, issue of Indiana Preservationist, a publication of Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana (now Indiana Landmarks, Inc.):

Taking one step into the Cabby O’Neill Gymnasium in Jasper, opened in 1939, is like walking into the hit basketball movie “Hoosiers.

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The first look ignites fond memories of when high school basketball was king in Indiana, when hoops was a way of life – the only show in town on Friday and Saturday night.

Making the varsity was every Jasper boy's dream. Getting a ticket was every fan's dream. And getting out alive was every opponent's dream.

Varsity players there from 1939 – 1977 remember the spot of their first game bucket. Opposing coaches remember how tough it was to win there, with the band blaring and fans howling.

Referees' whistles couldn't be heard, so their arms waved wildly to halt the frenzy.

As in most gyms of that era, bleachers were right next to the playing floor, close enough that opponents' leg hairs were yanked on out-of-bounds plays.

Everybody wanted a piece of Jasper, and that's what made it great.

Jasper's landmark hoops cathedral is named after legendary coach Cabby O'Neill, who arrived when the gym opened and steered the Wildcats to eight straight sectional titles there, crowned by a magical state championship in 1949. Definitely a place worth preserving.

Threatened with demolition, the landmark was saved in 2009 when the Friends of Cabby O'Neill Gymnasium raised \$150,000 to return it to use as a gym for the Greater Jasper School Corporation.

Ironically and fittingly, the first game that Leo C. "Cabby" O'Neill coached the Jasper Wildcats, November 3, 1939, was also the first game played in the new Jasper gym that would eventually be named after him to honor his accomplishments.

In the 1940s O'Neill continually had Jasper among the state's best-ranked teams, and the squad was ranked number one in Indiana at the end of the regular season in 1945. One 1945 mid-season game in Jasper, when Jasper was ranked number one and its opponent, Evansville Bosse, was ranked number two, drew incredible interest across the state. As told in the book "82 Years of JHS Wildcats (1913-1995)," "Newspapers from Indianapolis, Louisville and Evansville sent reporters to cover the game. Four radio stations, one from as far away as Kokomo (180 miles), broadcast the game live. Jasper didn't have a radio station then, but a play-by-play description of the game was broadcast over loudspeakers installed around the public square and in a downtown tavern. Sixteen other Southern Indiana high schools requested tickets for the game."

In O'Neill's 13 years as coach, from 1939 to 1952, his teams won 247 games and lost 76, for a winning percentage of .765. In Jasper's gym, his record was 148-32, an .82 winning percentage.

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His teams won nine sectional titles, including eight in a row from 1942 through 1949, five regional crowns, and a semi-state and state championships in 1949. At a time when there were upwards of 750 boys high school basketball teams in the state, the 1949 single-class tournament started with 16 teams, some with enrollments of about 2,000. Jasper, with an enrollment of 400, outplayed Bedford High School (41-33) and Bloomington High School (50-49) in the first two rounds and beat Auburn High School (53-48) in the semi-final. They faced Madison High School in the final, winning 62-61 at Butler University Field House. The stunning achievement of that Jasper team, after posting just an 11-9 regular season record, is Jasper's version of the 1986 hit movie "Hoosiers," still considered one of the greatest sports movies ever.

In his 2010 book "Historic Hoosier Gyms: Discovering Bygone Basketball Landmarks," Indianapolis Star sportswriter Kyle Neddenriep wrote, "Jasper's unlikely state championship in 1949 ranks right near the top of underdog stories in Indiana's high school basketball history. . . (Their) coach was the legendary and colorful Leo "Cabby" O'Neill, who was in his tenth season and well on his way to establishing his legacy."

In the Spring, 2009, issue of Indiana Basketball History Magazine, a publication of the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame, there was a story on Jasper's 1949 champs headlined "Celebration lasts 60 years." It stated, "Even 60 years later this city's most extraordinary sports' moment ever . . . was cheered one more time. . . In 1987, Indianapolis Star sportswriter John Shaughnessy said he couldn't understand 'Hoosier Hysteria' when he came to Indiana. 'I read about Bobby Plump and the Miracle of Milan, about Oscar Robertson. But the best story was about the Jasper High team (of 1949) . . .'"

After his coaching career, O'Neill served as Jasper High School Athletic Director until his retirement in 1971. A member of the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame, O'Neill served on the Board of Directors of the hall and on the Indiana High School Athletic Association Board of Control. He was a recipient of the Joe Boland Award from the Indiana Sports Writers and Sportscasters Association for his contribution to youth sports in Indiana.

Jasper opened a new high school gymnasium in 1977, with the prior gym operating as a middle school gym through 2003. In 1983, to honor O'Neill's many accomplishments, the old gym was dedicated to him and named the Cabby O'Neill Gymnasium. In a November 28, 1983, article covering the dedication ceremonies, the Jasper Herald reported that Jasper Mayor Jerome Alles said about O'Neill, "I know that through your efforts and your teams, Jasper gained a lot of recognition. You put our city on the map, and we're certainly appreciative of it. A letter sent by former player Bob White, the leading scorer in Jasper's 1949 state title win, stated, "Almost any boy who made his starting five could get a college scholarship. The city, the school board, and all the players will never be able to properly repay him for all he has done."

When O'Neill died in 1994, the Jasper Herald published a full-page story on him headlined

Caring coach remembered as Jasper's 'sports giant.'" It stated O'Neill "was a person of extraordinary renown whose name was virtually synonymous with the

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city for more than a half-century. . . his fame transcended competitive results and honors. He was one of Indiana's best known and most respected sports figures, mainly because he championed all positive aspects of athletics. His public esteem was further enhanced by a friendly, engaging manner that helped make him Jasper's foremost exporter of goodwill.

From 1939 to 1977, the Jasper gym hosted games against teams from the entire length of Indiana – from East Chicago to New Albany. Nearly every game was sold out. Fifty-nine high school players played in the gym who later became members of the Indiana All-Star team that played the Kentucky All-Stars in an annual series. Among the notable players who played in the gym were Larry Bird of nearby Springs Valley High School and Marques Haynes of the Harlem Globetrotters.

As a new gym was being readied in 1977, the Jasper Herald ran an article on February 24, 1977, looking back on the gym's well-earned reputation. One part stated "It was during this eight-year Jasper reign on the sectional (1942-1949) that the 'Jasper Gym Legend' grew up. Knowledge of the Jasper gym spread throughout the state and coming to Jasper for a game was compared to going to Lexington (Kentucky) to play a guy named (Adolph) Rupp." Two Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame coaches were quoted about playing in the gym's raucous atmosphere. Terre Haute North's Howard Sharpe, who coached in high school for 47 years, said, "I'll never forget the experience of bringing a team to the Jasper gym. You may miss the old gym in Jasper, but I'm not going to miss it a bit. There is so darn much noise that I couldn't even talk to my players in the huddle." Joe Todrank, who both coached and played against Jasper in the Jasper gym, said, "Two things create the great atmosphere in the Jasper gym. The closeness of the fans helps considerably and that darn band is something else! I've never been in a gym where the hometown atmosphere has been so devastating. They thunder right at you. When the Wildcats quit playing there it will take quite a bit of tradition away from the game."

But the gym was much more than a hotbed of basketball action. The building was also planned to be, and became, the largest venue in Jasper for public gatherings that went far beyond basketball games. Such community events started quickly, in the gym's second month, as reported in the Jasper Herald on December 29, 1939, in a front page story headlined "Big Christmas Party in Gym Enjoyed by Tots":

About 1,500 children of Jasper and surrounding communities were made happy on Christmas Eve by the personal appearance of Santa Claus at the annual American Legion Auxiliary Community Christmas celebration in the spacious new high school gymnasium. In addition to the children over a thousand adults were present to witness the fun and to enjoy the music of the band and the singing of the Christmas carols around the beautifully decorated Christmas tree which graced the center of the gymnasium.

This annual Christmas party filled the gym every year through 2003.

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In researching through 32 years (1939-1971) of Jasper School Board meeting minutes and Jasper Herald archives, the following non-basketball uses of the gym were discovered: American Legion presented a motion picture show; Dubois County Farm Bureau's Swedish Bell Ringers Program; Jaycees' 4-day exhibit of industrial products made in Jasper; Rural Electrification directors' and users' meeting; Jasper Lions Club benefit wrestling match; Merchants Association's Christmas Raffle; 16-county district meeting of Physical Fitness Division of the Indiana State Defense Council; Indiana State Fire Marshall speech; Barn Dance & Radio Show; Fourth War Loan Victory Exposition; Community Mother – Daughter Party (dancing exhibition); Boys Town Choir concert (from Nebraska); United States Marine Corps band; Jasper Music Festival; Premiere of new band uniforms; Jasper High School Band community program; Little Theatre of Jasper production; Valentines Day concert; Music recital for public; Dubois County Home Economics Chorus meeting; Evansville College Symphonic Band; South Central Indiana Officials Association meeting; Jasper Manufactured Products Show; Lions Club Annual Indoor Circus; Boy Scouts' Merit Badge Show; Stage Show: comedian, radio stars, color movies; Football Fans Clinic; Geo. Wagner Co. annual family party and new equipment show; Local election candidates public meeting; Notre Dame concert band; "Laff-O-Rama" talent show; Magic Show to benefit underprivileged; Violin/piano concert; County school reorganization hearing; County civil defense meeting; Purduettes singing group; Little League Baseball reorganization meeting; Centennial Belles contest; Combined Thanksgiving worship service of Jasper churches; "Up With People" presentation; Miss Jasper Pageant; Paul Harvey program; and the Finnish Festival.

Other reported uses of the gymnasium: physical education classes for boys and girls; annual public celebrations on Memorial Day and Veterans Day; Democrat Party rallies; high school graduation ceremonies; high school proms; and birthday parties for children.

After retiring as a coach in 1952, Cabby O'Neill continued to pile up accomplishments as athletic director from 1952 to 1971. He created the athletic director position in 1952. O'Neill then expanded the athletic program into football, tennis, and wrestling. He started two football fields, two track facilities, and helped in upgrading the city's baseball field. He was chosen to be the first city athletic director for summer recreation programs. O'Neill was elected president of the 20-team Southern Indiana Athletic Conference, and was one of five members elected to the Indiana Basketball Board of Control. He was elected into the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame in 1969, and was later named a director emeritus of the hall.

While O'Neill was athletic director, Jasper basketball teams won six sectionals, four regionals, and two conference championships; Jasper baseball teams won two semi-states, four regionals and four sectionals in the first four years of the tournament from 1967 to 1970; and Jasper football teams won three conference championships.

Many students who participated in athletic programs led by O'Neill went on to achieve bigger things. Among them are:

- Omer Sturm (1940 graduate), founded Jasper Table Co. and Acme Metal
- George T. Lukemeyer (1942), Executive Associate Dean, IU and Riley Hospitals

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- Edwin Rumbach (1942), Chairman of the Board, The Herald
- Paul Hoffman (1943), NBA Rookie of the Year, later general manager of the NBA Baltimore Bullets
- Jack Newton (1944), Jasper Mayor
- Jerome Alles (1944), Jasper Mayor
- Tom Habig (1946), President, Chairman of the Board, Kimball International, a Fortune 500 company
- Dr. J. P. Salb (1946), Chairman, Medical Section, American Association of Railroads
- Jack Heldman (1948), founded Heldman Brokerage Co., Inc.
- Marvin Hackman (1952), senior partner of an Indianapolis law firm
- John Hoffman (1957), at age 28 became the youngest partner in history of the oldest (1876) patent law firm in Chicago, eventually became Chairman of the Executive Committee
- Dr. William Bohnert (1958), urology specialist
- Norbert Krapf (1961), Indiana Poet Laureate, Professor of English, Long Island University
- Dave Eckerle (1961), Chairman, CEO, Old National Bank, Jasper
- James Thyen (1961), President, CEO, Kimball International
- B. Edward Ewing (1962), CEO, Carlyle Group, and founder, Ewing Properties
- William Weikert (1963), Circuit Court Judge
- John Sturm (1965), Assistant to the Chairman, Federal Communications Commission; admitted to the Bar of the United States Supreme Court; President and CEO of Newspaper Association of America
- Terry L. Schwinghammer (1968), Chair of Department of Clinical Pharmacy at West Virginia University School of Pharmacy
- Charles Stenftenagel (1969), founded five businesses
- Dr. Gregory P. Gramelspacher (1971), founded Program in Medical Ethics at IU School of Medicine
- Greg Vogler (1971), co-founder of an intellectual property law firm in Chicago
- Mike Bonifer (1971), co-founder of bigSTORY, an organizational storytelling firm, and a founding producer of The Disney Channel
- Dean Vonderheide (1971), Jasper Mayor
- Kenneth Sendelweck (1972), President, CEO, German American Bank
- Mark Schroeder (1972), retired Chairman, CEO, German American Bancorp
- Mike Braun (1972), created Meyer Distributing & Logistics; a United States Senator, and elected Indiana Governor in 2024.
- Doug Bawel (1973), President, CEO, Jasper Engines & Transmissions

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## ARCHITECTURE

The Jasper High School Gymnasium, constructed in 1939, is representative of the style of architecture that has become known as Stripped Classical. This style was prevalent during the Great Depression of the 1930s when it was adopted as the style of choice for a vast number of federally-funded, municipal building projects constructed during this period.

The classical style of architecture became popular for use in public buildings in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century after the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. This practice continued into the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century with the classical elements becoming more understated in the 1910s. The lack of ornamentation and more straight forward design may be attributed to higher building costs and diminishing availability of public funds during the Great Depression and World War II.

The Stripped Classical style is not only known for its rejection of extraneous decoration and frivolous ornamentation, but also for its reliance on such rational principles as symmetry, balance, and hierarchy. The style was commonly used for public buildings from the 1920s through the 1940s and embodies the combination of the limited use of classical details on streamlined, unadorned buildings.

The gymnasium's design embodies these principles well. The intact architectural features on the exterior of the gym, symmetrical façade, pilasters with streamlined capitals, hierarchy of elevations, and multi-lite window patterns, enhance the architectural significance of the building.

The gymnasium is one of only two buildings in Jasper constructed under the auspices of the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works. The other building project was the United States Post Office located just east of the downtown square.

## ADDITIONAL HISTORIC CONTEXT INFORMATION

More recent events add to the legend and historic status of this gymnasium. After a new middle school was opened in 2004 to replace the old school building connected to the gym, the entire facility fell into disrepair. Yet the gym was structurally sound, with its brick exterior and interior walls all planted into a sturdy concrete foundation. An Indianapolis architect said at a school board meeting in 2009 that the gym was "built like a tank, and if there was ever a tornado in Jasper, that is where I would want to be." The adjacent school building was demolished in 2010. But that year a group called "The Friends of Cabby O'Neill Gymnasium" raised over \$150,000 in donations to renovate the old gym, convincing the local school board not to raze the remaining structure. The group used volunteer labor, some donated material, and an eventual \$255,000 in community donations to return the gym to useable condition in about 18 months. On November 27, 2010, the gym, for highly nostalgic purposes, was once again used for a Jasper High School varsity basketball game, for the first time since 1977. Then, in a supreme irony, heavy spring rains in 2011 caused the roof of the regular high school gym to collapse, necessitating the move of varsity games back into the newly-renovated Cabby O'Neill Gymnasium for two seasons while a new high school gym was built.

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The Evansville (Indiana) Courier wrote in a September 10, 2011, editorial,

Cheers for the old Jasper High School Gymnasium in downtown Jasper. The gym, which dates back to 1939, was closed and headed for a wrecking ball before supporters succeeded in saving it, even though it sat idle for years. Now, with the Jasper High School gym requiring reconstruction – the result of damage from heavy rains – the renovated Cabby O’Neill Gym has been pressed back into service for high school sports.

The October, 2011, issue of Dubois County Boomer magazine told the story of “The Friends of Cabby O’Neill” in an article headlined “Saving the Gym: Volunteers, community breathe new life into Cabby O’Neill Gymnasium.” The story closed by saying,

Truth be told, the legacy of the core group of six (of the “Friends” group) and all the donors could run parallel to the vaunted 1949 state champs. They both were as competitive as could be. Both refused to lose. Neither was going to give up in the face of adversity. One gave Jasper a coveted state title that will live forever. The other gave Jasper its landmark gym back.

The story about the saving of the gym even warranted the front-page lead story in the Kokomo Tribune on September 29, 2023. Under the headline "Cabby's Cave: Jasper historic gym now a community centerpiece," CNHI state reporter Carson Gerber wrote:

The Jasper High School gym still had that new gym smell . . . in 1939 . . . (their) first win launched one of the most storied coaching careers in Indiana's early days of basketball.

Today, the freestanding facility near downtown Jasper is named after Leo "Cabby" O'Neill, who took the coaching reins the year the gym opened and steered the Wildcats to a state champion title in 1949. . . .

Visiting teams always sat beside Jasper's pep band. That, combined with the deafening cheers from the 3,200-capacity bleachers, sometimes forced the opposition into the middle of the court during timeouts just to hear the coach. Those tactics, and O'Neill's growing reputation as a hard-to-beat coach, led other schools to resentfully call the gym 'Cabby's Cave.' . . .

The gym held its legendary status until 1977, when the high school moved to a new location and the facility became part of the middle school. During that time, the large windows that once steamed up during packed Friday night games were covered. . . .

But all the history nearly came crashing down in 2009, when the school board voted to demolish the middle school and considered also tearing down the gym.

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That led to an all-out effort by (a group) to save the storied building from the wrecking ball. . .

Today, after a \$300,000 renovation, the facility is still owned by the school district and often used as a practice space. It also houses YMCA and parks programs, youth tournaments and community events. . .

Today, the Cabby O'Neill Gymnasium is used nearly every school day by the Jasper School Corporation for a wide variety of team practices, varsity and middle school games, and on many weekends and in the summer for recreation by various local groups. The gym's unique history is told in photos and memorabilia displayed throughout the facility.

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### **Developmental History/Additional historic context information**

Developmental history of the Jasper Indiana Community as described by Ron Flick, Jasper historian, began in 1817 when Andrew and Mary Pigman Evans, "squatters" from Kentucky, erected a dam and the foundation of a Grist Mill on the banks of the Patoka River in southern Indiana. Three years later the Joseph and Eleanor Enlow Family, also from Kentucky, purchased the land and incomplete structure and began operations of the Mill. Interestingly, during the next few years Thomas Lincoln and his young son Abraham would journey from their home in adjacent Spencer County to the Enlow Mill to have their wheat and corn ground into flour and corn meal.

As more and more Scotch-Irish pioneer families settled along the Patoka near the Mill, the settlement became known as Enlow's Hill. In 1830 the village was chosen to be the county seat. According to legend, Eleanor Enlow was given the honor to name the new town. "Jasper" may have been selected from the Bible (Revelations 21:19): ". . . and the first foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones . . . the first foundation was of Jasper."

In 1836 the first twelve German-Catholic families purchased land in and around Jasper. Two years later, the French-speaking bishop of Vincennes, Simon Brute, assigned a German speaking Croatian missionary, Father Joseph Kundek, to minister to the immigrants' needs. Kundek established St. Joseph Parish and built a log church in the town. Fr. Kundek realized the only way the small community could survive and thrive was to encourage as many German Catholics as possible to settle in the area. He advertised in German language newspapers in the eastern U.S. and in Europe and began to purchase large tracts of land in Jasper.

Many of the first immigrant families were from the German duchy of Baden, specifically from Wagshurst and its neighboring villages. Later a large group of families from the village of Pfaffenweiler settled in Jasper. Still later a small number of families from Reute, Baden, made Jasper their home. Other immigrants hailed from Bavaria, Switzerland, Alsace, and the central and northern German states of Hanover, Westphalia, Oldenburg, and Hesse.

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Father Kundek worked and ministered diligently for twenty years. Not only was he a religious leader, he was a civic leader as well. In 1840 he supervised the construction of a brick church, and a few years later he served as contractor for the brick courthouse which stood on the public square until 1910. He founded the neighboring towns of Ferdinand, Celestine, and Fulda. He encouraged the Benedictines of Einsiedeln, Switzerland, to establish St. Meinrad Monastery and Seminary and asked Mother Theodore Guerin and the Sisters of Providence to teach in the local schools.

Father Kundek died in 1857. The pioneer era of Jasper's history was coming to a close. Hundreds of German families had accepted Kundek's invitation to settle in Jasper and the surrounding communities. In 1866, following the Civil War, Jasper was incorporated as a town. Jasper's public school system was established in 1870.

Further advancements in technology and transportation soon reached Jasper. Sawmills and other grist mills were being built or enlarged. The hard-working ethnic, craftsmanship, woodworking skills and heritage of the residents moved the town forward. The first furniture and desk factory was organized and expanded. In 1879 the railroad was extended to Jasper and the first train depot was built. A telegraph system was established, and later came the telephone. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Jasper had a municipal water works system and an electric utility.

Educational and religious opportunities continued to expand and improve. More and more students began to seek studies beyond 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The St. Meinrad Benedictines established a private academy for high school aged boys, named Jasper College, in 1889, and Jasper High School was formally accredited in 1898. St. Joseph Parish began erecting its massive stone church in 1867 and continued building until the steeple was finished forty years later. Other denominations built churches, including the Methodist Church and Trinity Church. A new St. Joseph Parish Grade School was erected in 1927. By 1949 enrollment was 850 students. Religion, education, and sports were primary concerns of families in the community.

In the early decades of the twentieth century many more woodworking companies were organized, nearly all of which combined the names "Jasper", "Indiana", or "Hoosier" with "Desk", "Chair", "Cabinet", "Furniture", "Seating", or similar product name to create a comprehensive list of manufacturers, dedicated to producing quality wood office products. By the end of the 1930s Jasper was billed as the "Wood Office Furniture Capital of the World." The success of these enterprises helped Jasper endure the difficult years of the Great Depression and the Second World War.

After the closing of Jasper Academy in 1933, Jasper High School continued to grow. A large WPA funded gymnasium in 1939 became the "Heart of the City," for the family-oriented heritage of sports and entertainment through the next 38 years.

Jasper continued to grow after the war. Memorial Hospital was built, Jasper Library moved to a larger building, two new Catholic parishes were established. Jasper gained national attention by

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being the first city to require garbage disposals. Perhaps the greatest achievement was the Jasper High School boys' basketball team capturing the 1949 State Championship.

Jasper's population when it was incorporated into a town in 1866 was recorded as 507. Mainly because of the influx of German families it continued to grow. U.S. Census reported Jasper's population in 1910 at 2,196, in 1920 as 2,539, in 1930 as 3,903, in 1940 as 5,041, in 1950 as 5,215, in 1960 as 6,737, and in 1970 as 8,641.

In the 1950s and 1960s new industries were established and gained national recognition, including Jasper Rubber Products, Jasper Engine and Transmissions, the Jasper Corporation, now known as Kimball International, and Masterbrand Cabinets. During this time new suburbs were established and new homegrown shopping districts were developed.

Beginning in the 1970s Jasper began to re-embrace its German heritage. Jasper held its first Strassenfest celebration in 1979 and it has continued to grow each year. The Jasper Deutsherverein / German Club was organized in 1980, and the Sister Cities Partnership with the ancestral village of Pfaffenweiler was established in 1985. These organizations and events have done much in preserving and promoting Jasper's German heritage and re-establishing family ties and friendships with the old country.

Jasper High School Gymnasium  
Name of Property

Dubois County, Indiana  
County and State

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Boomhower, Ray. A Perfect Match: Indiana and Basketball. Ray Boomhower, Editor.  
*Traces, Indiana Historical Society Press*: [Indianapolis, Indiana:] Fall 2016 Issue.

East, Paul and Bedford, John R. Editors. 82 Years of Jasper High School Wildcats (1913-1995) Book. [Jasper, Indiana:] 1998

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Eckerle, Greg. Article. Saving the Gym. Greg Eckerle Writer: Jasper, Indiana: *Dubois County Boomer Magazine*. October, 2011 Issue.

Eckerle, Greg. Walking into the Cabby O'Neill Gymnasium is Like Walking into the Hit Movie "Hoosiers". Greg Eckerle Article. *Indiana Preservationist, A Publication of Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana*. [Indianapolis, Indiana:] March – April, 2010 Issue.

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*Kokomo Tribune*. [Kokomo, Indiana:] 29 Sept. 2023

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Indianapolis, Indiana: *History Press (SC)*, 2010

Rumbach, A.T. Article. Big Christmas Party in Gym Enjoyed by Tots. A.T. Rumbach Editor and Publisher. *The Jasper Herald*. [Jasper, Indiana:] 29 Dec. 1939.

Rumbach, A.T. New Gymnasium Dedicated with Music, Speeches. A.T. Rumbach Editor and Publisher, *The Jasper Herald*, [Jasper, Indiana:] 3 Nov. 1939.

Rumbach, A.T. Editorial. Our Antiquated Gym. A.T. Rumbach Editor and Publisher, *The Jasper Herald*, [Jasper, Indiana:] 11 Mar. 1938.

Jasper High School Gymnasium  
Name of Property

Dubois County, Indiana  
County and State

Rumbach, A.T. Editorial. The New Gym a Popular Project. A.T. Rumbach Editor and  
Publisher, *The Jasper Herald*, [Jasper, Indiana:] 25 Mar. 1938.

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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** 037-304-23128

Jasper High School Gymnasium  
Name of Property

Dubois County, Indiana  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreeage of Property** Less than one acre

Use the UTM system

### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

1. Zone: 16	Easting: 505766	Northing: 4249297
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

A part of Lot Three (3) in Bohnert's Addition to the City of Jasper in Dubois County, Indiana and being further described as:

Beginning at the Southeast corner of Lot Three (3) in Bohnert's Addition to the City of Jasper; thence South 89 degrees 58 minutes 26 seconds West 147.00 feet along the south line of said Lot Three; thence North 00 degrees 08 minutes 18 seconds West 208.43 feet to the north line of Lot Three; thence South 89 degrees 55 minutes 04 seconds Est 147.00 feet along said north line to the Northeast corner of Lot Three; thence South 00 degrees 08 minutes 18 seconds East 208.15 feet along the east line of Lot Three to the Point of Beginning and containing 0.703 acre.

### Excepting therefrom:

A part of Lot 3 in Bohnert's Addition to the city of Jasper, as recorded in the Office of the Recorder of Dubois County, Indiana, and being that part of the grantor's land described in Instrument Number 2005004233, and lying within the right of way lines depicted on the Right of Way Parcel Plat, marked EXHIBIT "B" recorded in Instrument Number 2018004860, more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at the southeast corner of said lot and the grantor's land designated "651" on said plat; thence on and along the south line of the grantor's land and the north line of 6<sup>th</sup> Street North 89 degrees 33 minutes 41 seconds West 7.13 feet to a point designated "652" on said plat; thence

Jasper High School Gymnasium  
Name of Property

Dubois County, Indiana  
County and State

North 00 degrees 20 minutes 34 seconds East 13.31 feet to point designated "653" on said plat; thence South 89 degrees 40 minutes 27 seconds East 7.13 feet to east line of said lot and the grantor's land at point designated "654" on said plat; thence on and along said east line and west line of Seymour Street South 00 degrees 19 minutes 33 seconds West 13.33 feet to the point of beginning, containing 0.002 acres, more or less.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary description contained herein is the entire part of Lot Three (3) of Bohnert's Addition to the City of Jasper, Dubois County, Indiana, owned by the Greater Jasper School Corporation at this time of nomination. The actual gymnasium structure is situated upon the majority of the subject property. The only area of the subject property not contained within the gymnasium structure are concrete sidewalks on the north, east, south, and west sides thereof.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Bernie Vogler-President  
organization: Friends of Cabby O'Neill Gymnasium  
street & number: 1514 West Andrew Lane  
city or town: Jasper state: Indiana zip code: 47546  
e-mail: Bernard.vogler@gmail.com  
telephone: 812-482-2996  
date: December, 2024

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Jasper High School Gymnasium  
Name of Property

Dubois County, Indiana  
County and State

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 3000x2000 at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Jasper High School Gymnasium

City or Vicinity: Jasper

County: Dubois

State: Indiana

Photographer: Jay Hamlin

Date Photographed: September 2021 and August 2024

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 23

IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium0001

South facing front view, camera facing north.

2 of 23

IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium0002

East facing side view, camera facing west.

3 of 23

IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium0003

Northeast entrance view, camera facing southwest.

4 of 23

IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium0004

North facing south view, camera facing south.

5 of 23

IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium0005

Northwest entrance view, camera facing southeast.

Jasper High School Gymnasium  
Name of Property

Dubois County, Indiana  
County and State

6 of 23

IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium0006  
West facing side view, camera facing east.

7 of 23

IN\_DuboisCounty\_JapserHighSchoolGymnasium0007  
Vestibule entrance view, camera facing east.

8 of 23

IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium0008  
Work Progress Administration Program Plaque, camera facing west.

9 of 23

IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium0009  
Vestibule ticket window opened, camera facing east.

10 of 23

IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium0010  
West side of front interior corridor, camera facing west.

11 of 23

IN\_DuboisCounty\_JapserHighSchoolGymnasium0011  
East side of front interior corridor, camera facing east.

12 of 23

IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium0012  
Leo C. "Cabby" O'Neill coaching office, camera facing east.

13 of 23

IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium0013  
Southeast entrance of lower level boys' locker room, camera facing north.

14 of 23

IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium0014  
Lower level visitors dressing room, camera facing north.

15 of 23

IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium0015  
Southwest entrance of lower level girls' locker room, camera facing north.

16 of 23

IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium0016  
Lower level boiler room, camera facing southeast.

Jasper High School Gymnasium  
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17 of 23

IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium0017  
Northside of the interior gymnasium, camera facing north.

18 of 23

IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium0018  
Southside of interior gymnasium, camera facing south.

19 of 23

IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium0019  
Full interior gymnasium, camera facing northeast.

20 of 23

IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium0020  
One row of original wood chair-back seats, camera facing southwest.

21 of 23

IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium0021  
Ceiling steel bowstring trusses, camera facing northeast.

22 of 23

IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium0022  
Ceiling hung mechanical HVAC unit, camera facing southwest.

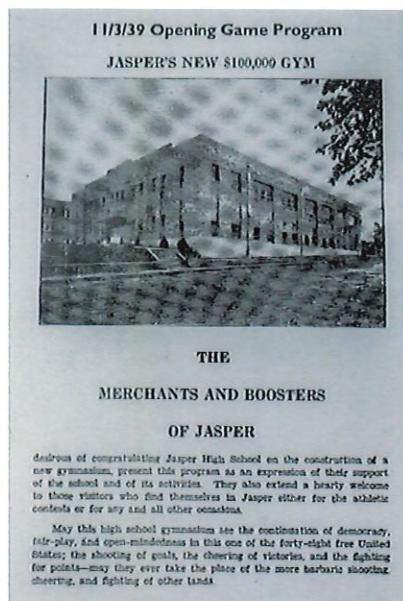
23 of 23

IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium0023  
Aerial view of roof from front of building, camera facing northwest.

**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. 460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Appendix  
Historic Photos  
Jasper High School Gymnasium  
Dubois County Indiana



Southeast Facing View Photo Taken in 1939 1 of 8  
Photo Taken by Jasper IN Merchants Camera Facing Northwest



Southeast Facing View Photo Taken in 2021 2 of 8  
Photo Taken by Jay Hamlin Camera Facing Northwest



Photo of Interior of Gymnasium Taken in 1939 3 of 8  
Photo Taken by Jasper High School Camera Facing Southeast

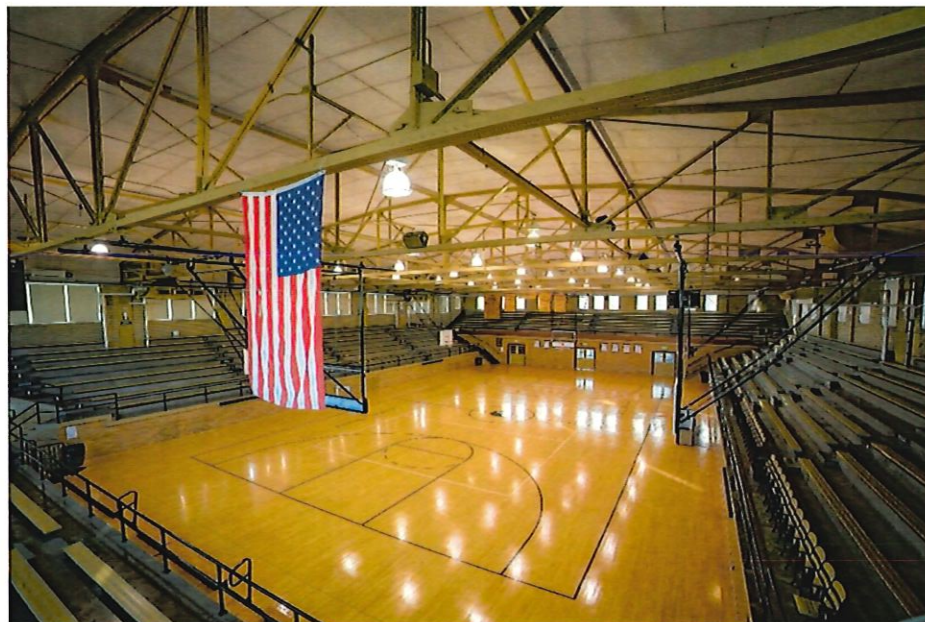


Photo of Interior of Gymnasium Taken in 2021 4 of 8  
Photo Take by Jay Hamlin Camera Facing Southeast



Photo of Jasper High School Basketball Game Taken in 1947 5 of 8  
 Photo Taken by Century Studio Camera Facing Northeast



Photo of Jasper Winning the Sectional Title Taken in the 1940s 6 of 8  
 Photo Taken by Century Studio Camera Facing Northwest



Santa at gym 1948

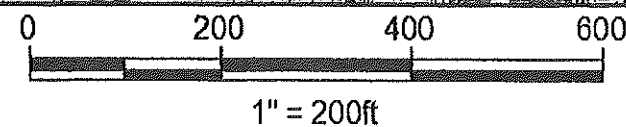
Photo of Annual Visit of Santa Claus to Gymnasium Taken in 1948 7 of 8  
Photo Taken by Century Studio Camera Facing Northeast



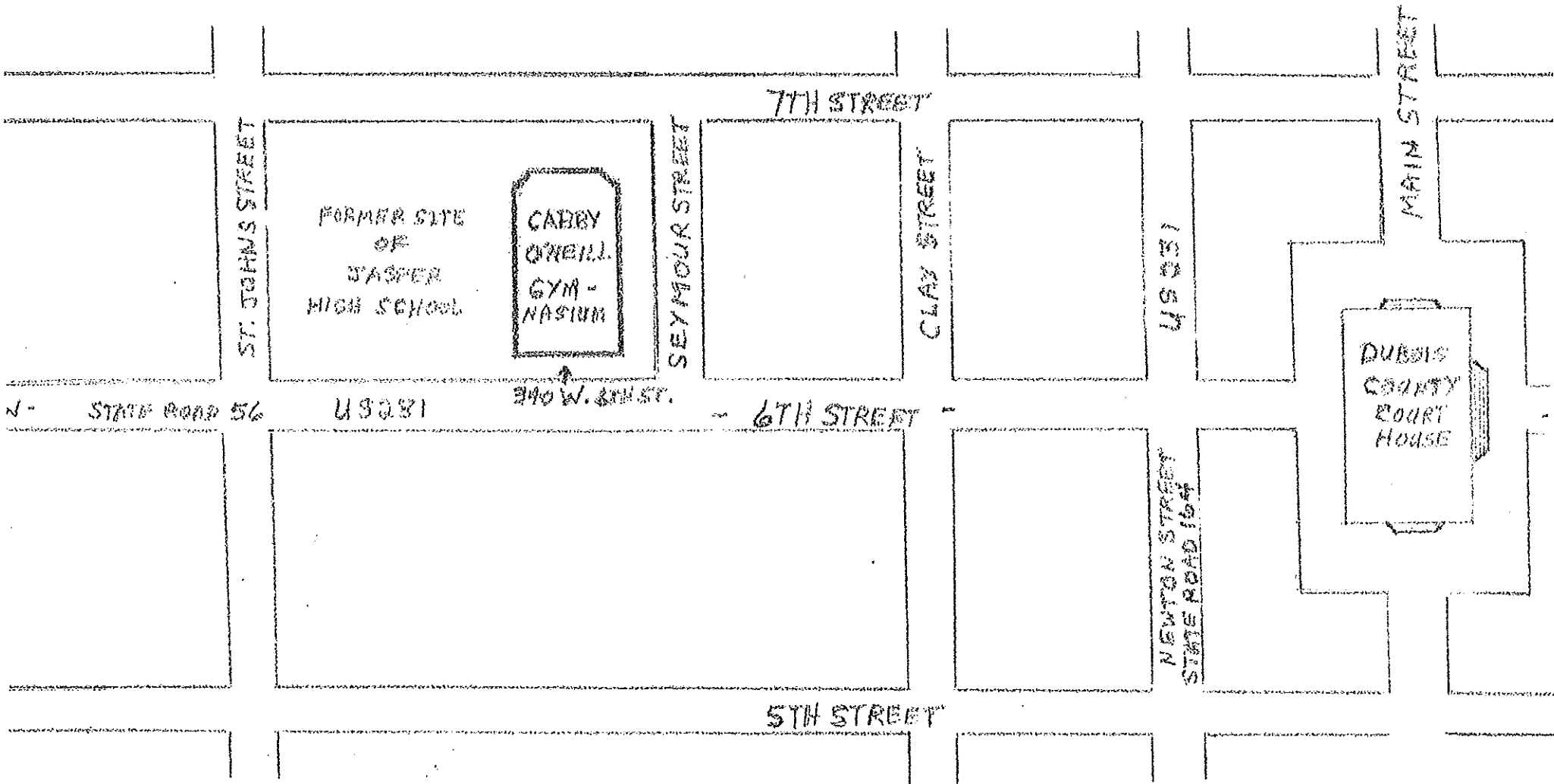
Photo of Jasper High School Basketball Game Taken in 2010 8 of 8  
Photo Taken by Jasper High School Camera Facing Southwest



Cabby O'Neill Gymnasium Jasper, Dubois County, Indiana  
 White Outline designates boundary of Gymnasium Site  
 Dubois County Surveyors plat map showing boundaries  
 Also, showing the former site of Jasper High School



N



CABBY O'NEILL GYMNASIUM  
JASPER, DUBOIS COUNTY INDIANA

SKETCH MAP

-N-

BOILER ROOM

0016

0014  
VISITORS  
DRESSING ROOM

GIRLS  
LOCKER ROOM

0015

BOYS  
LOCKER ROOM

0013

-S-

JASPER HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM  
JASPER, DURHAM COUNTY INDIANA  
LOWER LEVEL

FLOOR PLAN PHOTO LOG LOCATIONS

JASPER HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM  
340 WEST SIXTH STREET  
JASPER, INDIANA 47546  
36,800 +/- SQ. FT. 2 STORY

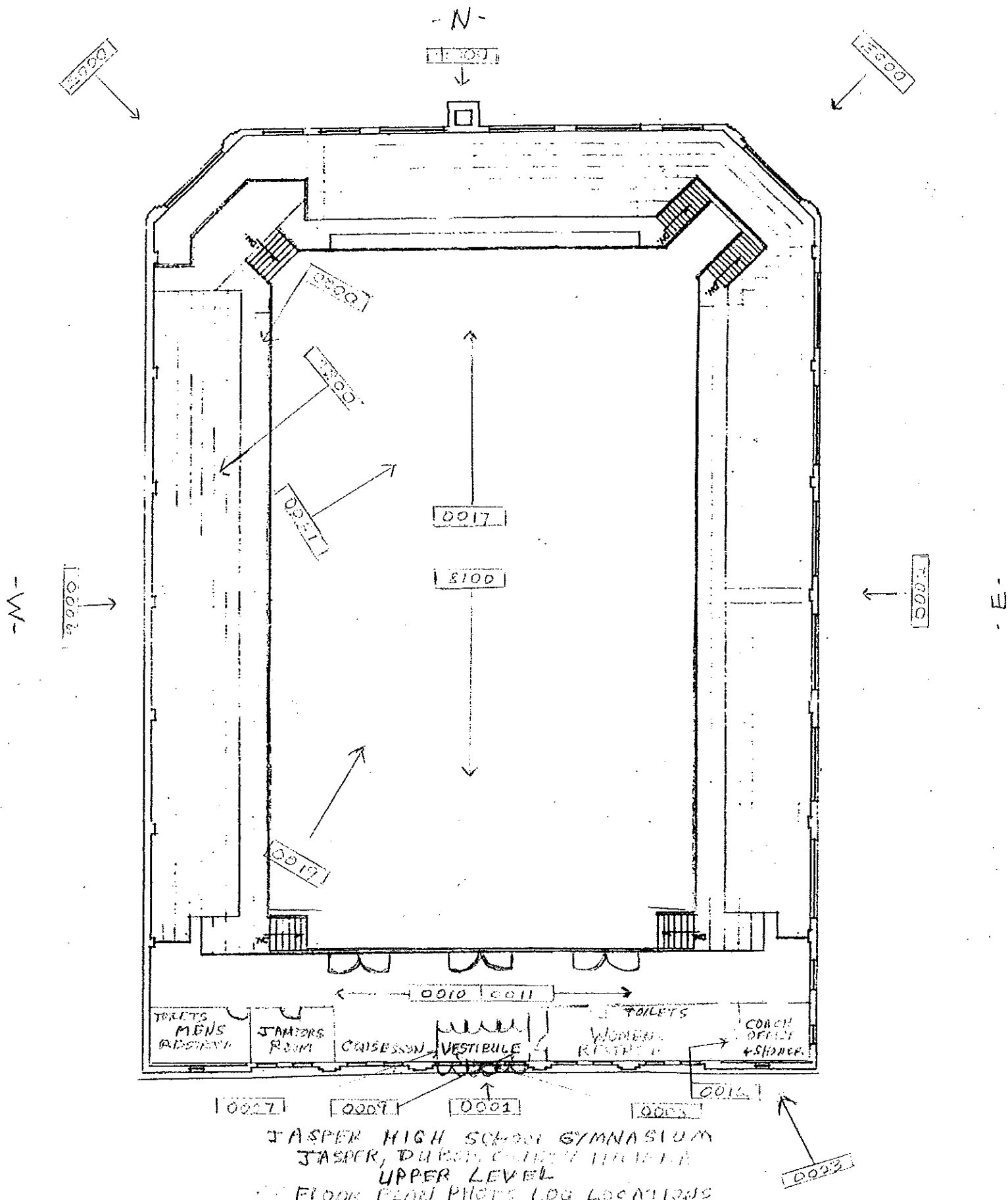


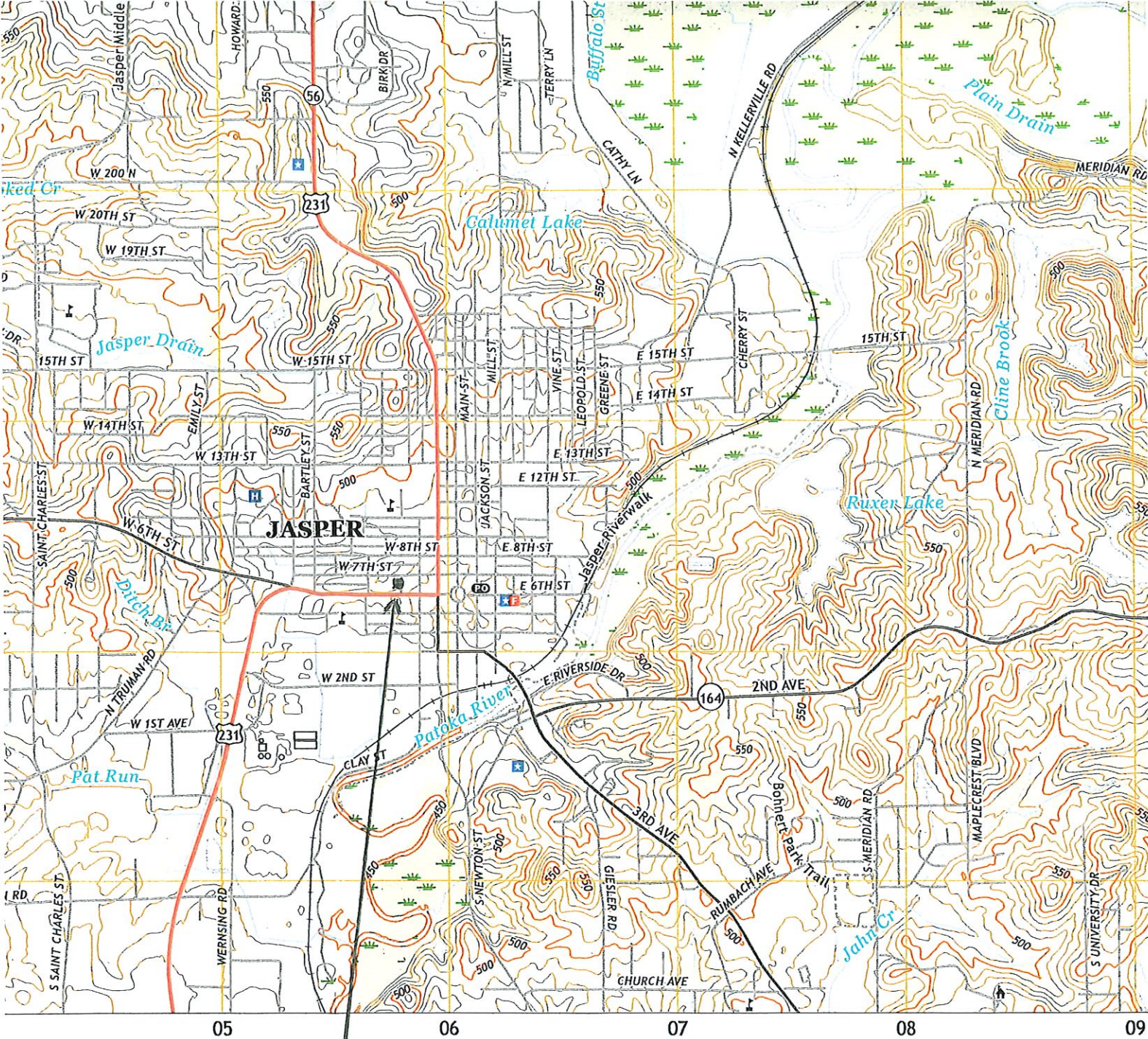
Jay Wells

DATE: 7-10-78  
BY: JAW



James Associates - Architects - Engineers  
2828 East 40th St. - Indianapolis, Indiana 46205  
(317) 647-8441





# CABBY O'NEILL GYMNASIUM

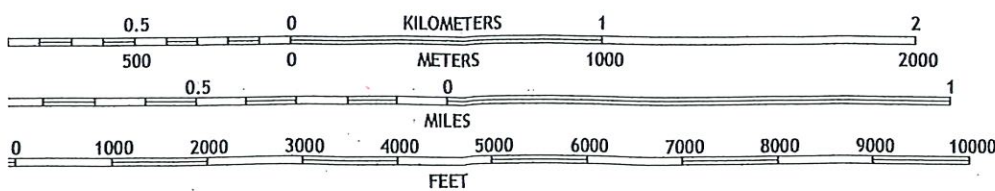
340 WEST 6TH STREET

JASPER, INDIANA

SCALE 1:24 000 DUBOIS CO.

NAD 83 UTM

16 505766 4249297



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM OF 1988

This map was produced to conform with the  
National Geospatial Program US Topo Product Standard, 2011.  
A metadata file associated with this product is draft version 0.6.18

1	2	3
4		5
6	7	8

- 1 Glendale
- 2 Alfordville
- 3 Rusk
- 4 Otwell
- 5 Dubois
- 6 Velpen
- 7 Huntingburg
- 8 Saint Anthony

ADJOINING QUADRANGLES



IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium\_0001



IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium\_0002



IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium\_0003



IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium\_0010



IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium\_0012



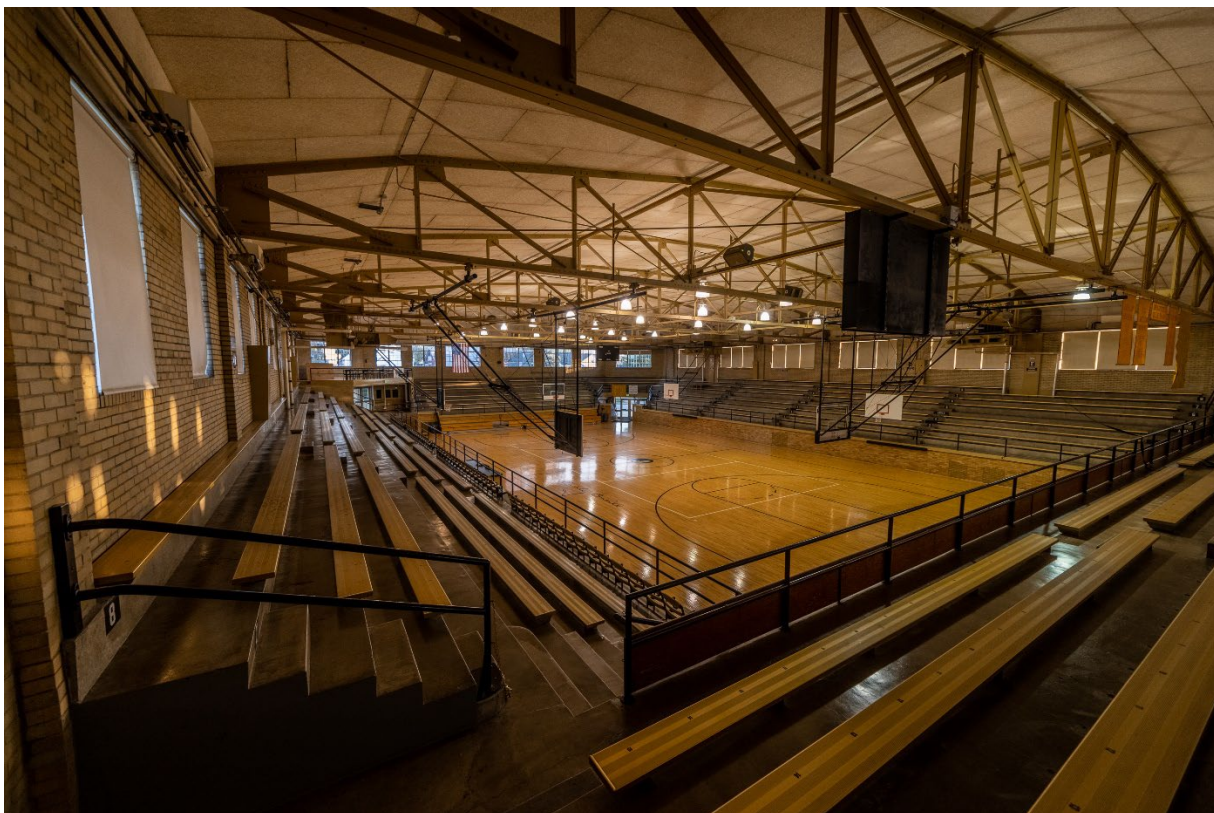
IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium\_0015



IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium\_0017



IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium\_0018



IN\_DuboisCounty\_JasperHighSchoolGymnasium\_0019