NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018 (Expires 5/31/2012)

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1074

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. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Roberts Park

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number Park Road at 30th Street N/A not for publication

city or town Connersville N/A vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Fayette code 041 zip code 49948

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 _x_ 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**

Mark Zoll Deputy SHPO 11/5/2013
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Indiana DNR – Div. of Historic Preservation & 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

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:)

Joan Edson M. Beall 1·15·14
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Roberts Park
Name of Property

Fayette, Co., IN
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- [ ] private
- [X] public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [ ] public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

- [ ] building(s)
- [X] district
- [ ] site
- [ ] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
15	11	buildings
0	0	sites
7	8	structures
26	3	objects
48	22	**Total**

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling
GOVERNMENT/correctional facility
RECREATION AND CULTURE/sports facility
RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation
RECREATION AND CULTURE/fair
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/animal facility
LANDSCAPE/park

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

SOCIAL/clubhouse
RECREATION AND CULTURE/sports facility
RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation
RECREATION AND CULTURE/fair
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/animal facility
LANDSCAPE/park

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/Prairie School
LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Classical Revival
OTHER/Parks Rustic

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: CONCRETE
walls: BRICK
STONE
roof: ASPHALT
other: WOOD, BRICK, METAL, CONCRETE

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Roberts Park Historic District is located in Connersville, Fayette County, Indiana. The park is located on generally level land, covering approximately eighty acres. Rectangular in shape, it is located in an urban area. The west boundary of the park, Park Road, is residential. The north boundary, 30th Street, is residential to the west with an Indiana National Guard Armory to the east. To the east of the park is a heavily wooded wellfield and drinking water protection area. The southern boundary includes land and buildings owned by the Fayette County Free Fair Association to the west and farmland to the east. Roberts Park contains fifteen contributing buildings, seven contributing structures, and twenty-six contributing objects. Contributing features include stone wall lined drives, the Pavilion, Amphitheatre, and the Roberts Park Pool. Roberts Park also contains twenty-two non-contributing resources of which eleven are buildings, eight are structures, and three are objects. The bulk of the park resources were constructed between the first property improvements in 1903 and the end of Works Progress Administration (WPA) funding in Connersville, approximately 1940.

Narrative Description

When the eighty-acres of land that is now Roberts Park was donated to the city of Connersville by Colonel James E. Roberts in 1902, the district felt more like a tract of land than a county fairgrounds or public park. One immediate improvement included the construction of drives, which remain intact today.[1] A series of linear drives from the park entrances lead to a circular circulation pattern. This central circle creates a large central expanse of parkland that is largely void of trees and other plantings (photograph #56). The layout of the park drives have changed little over time, though a few additional short drives have been added to provide additional access to park buildings and recreational areas. Parking areas have been added by widening portions of existing drives with the exception of one large parking lot located north of the John H. Miller Center.

Most of the large trees and other plantings can be found outside of the circular drive (photographs #8, 10). The planting of trees was part of the park improvements that occurred within the first few years of Roberts Park's existence.[2] Smaller plantings such as evergreens, and other ornamental flowers and shrubs can be found in several of the drive intersections, and at the entrances to several buildings including the Roberts Park Pool, the James E. Roberts Memorial Building, Amphitheatre, Pavilion and in the garden at the John H. Miller Center.

Initial developments at Roberts Park occurred from 1902 to approximately 1910. This included the Pavilion, Grandstand, Horse Track, Judges Stand, and Horse Barns as well as park drives, brick pillars with lamps, and the planting of trees. The 1930s brought Works Progress Administration funding for additional park improvements. The James E. Roberts Memorial Building, Police Building, Roberts Park Pool, stone lined drives, and stone pillars with lamps were all constructed during this time period. Later improvements began

[1] H. Max Walters, "Generous Citizen Gave Roberts Park to City," *Connersville News-Examiner*, 1982.
[2] "To Beautify Roberts Park," *The Evening News* (Connersville), March 27, 1905.

in the 1970s and include several park shelters, the Gazebo, the moving of the Longwood Covered Bridge, and the John H. Miller Center. While most of the buildings, structures, and objects at the park were not built in a particular architectural style, a few buildings were constructed in the Prairie Style, and one with neo-classical details.

It is evident that Roberts Park retains a high level of historic integrity. Changes over time have included a considerable amount of restoration of park buildings and structures. Some of the restored buildings and structures have included the Amphitheatre, Pavilion, and the stone pillars with lamps. Newer construction, such as several park shelters and the John H. Miller Center, have only enhanced the public's ability to fully utilize Roberts Park. Very few demolitions have occurred, with the park having lost a bandstand, a shelter, and a baseball field.

Roberts Park Resource Count Matrix

Resource	C Object	NC Object	C Struct.	NC Struct.	C Site	NC Site	C Bldg.	NC Bldg.
Brick Pillars With Lamps	6							
John H. Miller Center and Garden								1
Lambert Shelter								1
Playground #2				1				
Roberts Park Entrance Arch	1							
Longwood Covered Bridge				1				
Stone Pillars With Lamps	12							
27th Street Entrance Sign		1						
27th Street Entrance Sculpture		1						
Stone Fountains	2							
Park Drives			2					
Jaycee's Shelter								1
Jaycee's Shelter #3								1
Sundial	1							
Caretaker's Home							1	1
Tennis Courts #1				1				
Tennis Courts #2				1				
American Legion Shelter								1
Tennis Court Restrooms								1
Connersville Horseshoe Club Building								1
Horseshoe Courts				1				
Kiwanis Club Gazebo								1
Millstones			1					
Playground #1				1				
Basketball Court				1				
James E. Roberts Memorial Building							1	
Playground Restrooms							1	
Concrete Markers	3							
Commemorative Boulder	1							
Amphitheater			1					

Horse Track			1					
Judge's Stand							1	
Amphitheater Restrooms								1
Brick Swales			1					
Stone House							1	
Horse Barns							4	
Stone Sidewalk			1					
Administrative Building							1	
Liberty Building							1	
Pavilion							1	
Red Cross Building								1
Police Building							1	
Roberts Park Pool		1		1			2	
Resource Totals	**26**	**3**	**7**	**8**	**0**	**0**	**15**	**11**

1. Brick Pillars With Lamps
Photographs #1, 9, 29
6 Contributing Objects

Constructed circa 1903, there are brick pillars with lamps, two each, located at the 30th Street and Park Road entrance, the 27th Street entrance, and at the 30th Street entrance. The two square pillars at 30th Street and Park Road flank the park drive. They have concrete bases and rectangular concrete caps with a second sweeping pyramidal tier. Each cap is topped with an iron spindle lamp post and an onion dome lamp. Iron scrolls ornament two sides of each lamp post. The southeast pillar has a centered rectangular stone plaque that reads, "ROBERTS PARK, IN MEMORIAM, JAMES E. ROBERTS, JUNE 28, 1902." The northwest pillar also has a stone plaque that reads, "ROBERTS PARK, IN MEMORIAM, MARY C. ROBERTS, JUNE 28, 1902."[3] The pillars at the 27th Street entrance flank the park drive and are similar to those at the 30th Street and Park Road entrance, though they do not have stone plaques. The north and south elevations of each pillar retain a historic hitching ring. Each pillar face, except those with stone plaques, has a recessed panel. At the 30th Street entrance, the pillars flank the park drive, have concrete bases, and have two-tier sweeping pyramidal caps. Like the other pillars, an iron spindle lamp post and onion dome lamp top each pillar with a decorative iron scroll on two sides.

2. John H. Miller Center and Garden
Photograph #2
1 Non-Contributing Building

The John H. Miller Center was constructed in 2001 as a gift from Patricia Kehl Miller in memory of her husband. The John H. Miller Center is a brick two story, three-bay, cross plan building, with Post Modern details and a cross-gabled asphalt shingle roof. The building has a main elevation facing northeast. Brick quoining, of the same brick as the exterior walls, can be found at each convex exterior wall intersection. A single story protrusion from the cross plan is located off-center, dividing the main elevation into fourths and located closer to the northeast elevation. Centered on the protrusion are three pairs of three-over-six lighted doors, with each set flanked by pilasters. An entablature extends across all three sets of doors. Fanlights with keystones are located above each set of doors and are separated by an entablature. The center fanlight is elongated. Above the fanlights, a triangular pediment with dentils decorates the gabled end of the roof. An enclosed brick porch is inset in the northeast L along the main

[3] Mary C. Roberts was James E. Roberts' first wife. Though Colonel Roberts remarried after her death, her name is inscribed on the plaque due to their joint philanthropic efforts in Connersville.

elevation. The porch has the same quoining found on the other exterior walls. There are three evenly spaced pairs of three-over-six lighted doors, with each flanked by pilasters. Each set of doors has an individual entablature. A roof-line balustrade with turned spindles extends all three sides of the flat porch roof.

A garden, located to the east, accompanies the John H. Miller Center (photograph #3). The garden includes a centrally placed stone fountain and a rectangular wooden gazebo to the south. A second smaller fountain is located on the north end. Most of the plantings are located along the perimeter of the planting bed and differ from the plantings found throughout the remainder of the park. The garden is considered part of the John H. Miller Center and is not counted separately.

3. Lambert Shelter
Photograph #4
1 Non-Contributing Building

The Lambert Shelter was constructed circa 2001 and is rectangular in plan. The foundation of the shelter, also serving as the floor, is concrete. Five evenly spaced wooden posts with diagonal braces create the northeast wall and are repeated on the southwest wall. A brick knee wall surrounds the shelter with openings located on the northeast, southeast, and southwest walls. A front-gabled asphalt shingle roof with a wide eave overhang covers the shelter. The gabled ends of the roof are covered in flush wooden board siding that is laid horizontally. A brick fireplace and chimney is centrally located on the northwest gable wall.

4. Playground #2
Photograph #5
1 Non-Contributing Structure

A playground with wood and metal equipment is located south of the John H. Miller Center. It was established circa 1970-1985.

5. Roberts Park Entrance Arch
Photograph #5
1 Contributing Object

Constructed circa 1903, the Roberts Park Entrance Arch is a symmetrical object comprised of two brick pillars with an iron scrollwork arch. The brick pillars have concrete bases and caps. A single hitching ring is located on the north elevation of the north pillar and on the south elevation of the south pillar. The words "ROBERTS PARK" are centered and incorporated into the iron scrollwork arch that joins the two pillars. A single disconnected concrete step is centered in the grass directly underneath the arch.

6. Longwood Covered Bridge
Photograph #7
1 Non-Contributing Structure

The Longwood Covered Bridge was constructed in 1884 by Emmett and Charles Kennedy of Rush County, Indiana. The Longwood Covered Bridge was listed on the National Register in 1981 but was removed from the register in 1988 after it was moved to Roberts Park in 1984. The wooden bridge is of burr arch truss construction with a single-span of ninety-one feet. An additional three feet of overhang at each end bring the total length of the structure to ninety-seven feet. The wooden deck is fourteen and a half feet wide and the vertical clearance over the deck is approximately thirteen feet. Horizontally laid wooden board

siding covers the bridge as well as a gabled tin roof. According to the National Register nomination:

> The Longwood Covered Bridge has an unusual truss design because it uses 2 kingposts placed 10 feet apart (as in the queenpost arrangement), instead of the multiple kingpost arrangement most often used with the Burr arch. The Longwood Bridge has five panels on each side of the center, and the Burr arch. The bridge is supported by stone abutments at both ends.[4]

Knee bracing supports round-arched openings which provide access through the bridge. Carved wood scrollwork on the vertical board and batten gabled ends extends to the cornice above. Five evenly spaced pairs of brackets are located along the cornice. Centered above the rounded-arch, below the cornice on both gabled ends, reads, "1884, BUILT BY, KENNEDY BROS."

7. Stone Pillars With Lamps
Photographs #12, 43, 48
10 Contributing Objects

Constructed circa 1936, there are uncut stone pillars with lamps located at the Roberts Park Pool entrance, as well as at the 27th Street entrance and nearby drive intersections for a total of ten pillars. They are square stone pillars with concrete bases and sweeping pyramidal concrete caps. The pillars are topped with a single iron columnar, vase-like lamp post and a spherical lamp. There are stone pillars with lamps that are connected by stone walls along both of the drives that lead to the horse barns. Located east of the Administration Building, the first of these has a stone base, square stone pillars, and a stone wall connection that sweeps upward toward the pillars (photograph #43). The north pillar has a stepped pyramidal cap that alternates stone and concrete. The south pillar has a single rectangular concrete cap. Both pillars are topped with an iron spindle lamp post and a spherical lamp. The second and other of these, located at the connection between Roberts Park and the Fayette Free Fair Association property (photograph #48), has a rough cut stone base, square pillars, and connecting wall with a pitched stone cap that sweeps toward the pillars. Each pillar is topped with a rectangular concrete cap, iron spindle lamp post, and spherical lamp. All of the historic park lighting was restored in 1991, with sponsorship from the Connersville Chapter of Lions International.

8. 27th Street Entrance Sign
Photograph #12
1 Non-Contributing Object

The 27th Street entrance sign was installed in July 1991 with funding from the J.E. Roberts Trust Fund.[5] It is a round stone sign that reads "ROBERTS PARK, CONNERSVILLE, INDIANA, DEDICATED TO THE PEOPLE OF CONNERSVILLE, BY COLONEL JAMES E. ROBERTS, JUNE 28TH 1902." Shrubbery is located at the base and along the top of the sign.

9. 27th Street Entrance Sculpture
Photograph #13
1 Non-Contributing Object

An abstract metal sculpture of a house is located in the 27th Street entrance drive intersection. It was created circa 1990.

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[4] National Register of Historic Places, "Longwood Covered Bridge," National Register Nomination, November 16, 1981, Longwood Bridge Vertical File, Fayette County Public Library, Connersville.
[5] Kimball Hendrix, "New Signs," *Connersville News-Examiner*, August 1, 1991.

10. Stone Fountains
Photograph #14
2. Contributing Objects

There are two identical stone fountains. Constructed circa 1935, one is located southwest of Jaycee's Shelter and the other is located in the planting bed directly west of the Police Building. The fountains are approximately forty-two inches tall and are constructed as round urns using glacial boulder stones placed without courses. A round pedestal tapers at approximately one-fourth of the fountain's height. A round container sits atop the pedestal and is approximately the same circumference as the pedestal at the widest point. The container tapers slightly just before the top of the fountain before widening again to form a rim. At its widest point, the circumference of the fountain is approximately thirty-four inches. A metal pipe is still visible in the center of the fountain basin near Jaycee's Shelter. The fountain located west of the Police Building is currently being used as a large flowerpot.[6]

Park Drives

11. Park Drives
12. Stone Walls At Drive Intersections
Photographs #11, 15
2. Contributing Structures

The original system of drives at Roberts Park is a series of linear drives leading from the park entrances to a central circular circulation pattern. The drives constitute one system and are counted as one contributing structure. The central circular drive surrounds a large expanse of parkland that is largely void of trees or other plantings. Over half of these original park drives are unornamented (photographs #6, 10). Though the original circulation system has been modified to allow access to new park amenities, the historic nature of the original system has not been compromised.

In the 1930s, as part of FERA park improvements, some of the drives were ornamented in various ways. Boulders were added to some of the park drives from 1934-1935. The boulders were recycled from the East Connersville Bridge, which was being replaced with concrete (photograph #11).[7] Glacial boulder stone walls were constructed during this same time period, lining existing shrubbery beds at several drive intersections (photographs #15, 16). The stone wall project was directed by park board member Anthony Locke.[8] The stone walls constitute one system, counted as one contributing structure. See the accompanying sketch map denoting the locations of each type of park drive.

13. Jaycee's Shelter
Photograph #17
1 Non-Contributing Building

Jaycee's Shelter was constructed in 1971 and is rectangular in plan. The foundation of the shelter, also serving as the floor, is concrete. Four evenly spaced unornamented steel columns create the north wall and are repeated on the south wall. The east and west walls are open. A front-gabled asphalt shingle roof with a wide eave overhang covers the

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[6] It is unclear whether these were historically decorative fountains, drinking fountains, or another use. A Connersville News-Examiner newspaper article from December 1934 describes the construction of a similar object once located between the Administration and Liberty Buildings, to function as a birdbath.

[7] John W. Shaver, ed. *The Book of The 150th Year of Connersville, Indiana* (Shelbyville: Tippecanoe Press, Inc., 1963), 203.

[8] "FERA Work At Park Is Well Under Way," *Connersville News-Examiner*, January 28, 1935.

shelter. The gabled ends of the roof are covered in wooden clapboard siding that is laid horizontally.

14. Jaycee's Shelter #3
Photograph #18
1 Non-Contributing Building

Jaycee's Shelter #3 was constructed in 1981 and is rectangular in plan. The foundation of the shelter, also serving as the floor, is concrete. Five evenly spaced wooden posts with diagonal braces create the west wall and are repeated on the east wall. The north and south walls each have a centrally placed wooden post with diagonal braces. A front-gabled asphalt shingle roof with a wide eave overhang covers the shelter. The gabled ends of the roof are covered in flush wooden board siding that is laid vertically.

15. Sundial
Photograph #21
1 Contributing Object

The sundial, constructed circa 1935, is located in the stone drive intersection east of the Caretaker's Home. It is thirty-seven inches tall with a pedestal constructed of small boulder stone without courses. A large limestone disk, thirty-nine inches in diameter, sits atop the pedestal. Roman numerals, painted on the top of the disk, serve as the clock. The sundial shadow is cast from a copper triangle onto the limestone disk.

16. Caretaker's Home
Photograph #22, #23
1 Contributing Building (House)
1 Non-Contributing Building (Garage)

Constructed in 1921 with funding from the Fayette County Free Fair Association, the Caretaker's Home is a brick single story residence with Prairie School details.[9] The residence has a U-shaped symmetrical plan with a cross-hipped roof and a west-facing main elevation. The building sits on a level-grade and has a prominent rough-faced stone foundation. Centered on the main elevation is a modern four-panel door with a fanlight, serving as the main entrance to the home. An original one-over-one double-hung wood window flanks each side of the door. The windows have brick sills, blank panes on the lower sashes and geometric Prairie School style patterned panes on the upper sashes. The two protrusions from the U-shaped plan flank the main entrance and windows creating a void that is filled by an uncovered concrete pad porch. Centered on each protrusion are original paired one-over-one double-hung windows. Like the windows surrounding the entry, these windows have brick sills, blank panes on the lower sashes and geometric Prairie School style patterned panes on the upper sashes. All of the windows and the main door are placed close to the roofline, emphasizing the top half of the residence, another Prairie School detail. The asphalt shingle low-pitch cross-hipped roof has a brick chimney placed on the north end of the east slope.

Hedges line the protrusions along the main elevation and extend just above the windowsills. Several large, mature trees are scattered directly to the east of the residence. A concrete sidewalk extends south from the driveway and serves the main entrance to the residence, which is centered on the main elevation. A modern chain link fence extends from the west elevation of the residence creating a rectilinear front yard

[9] A stone plaque is centrally located below the windows on the south elevation and lists a dedication date of 1921. The plaque also lists the members of the Fayette County Free Fair Association at the time of dedication.

that ends at the park drive to the west. A wooden vertical board fence extends from the southwest corner of the chain link fence, continuing along the south side of the residence and extending along the east side of the home to the garage. A driveway extends along the north side of the residence, also leading to the non-contributing garage. The garage, constructed in about 1970, is a single bay building, with wooden vertical board exterior walls and an asphalt shingle low-pitch front gable roof (photograph #23). Like the Caretaker's Home, the main elevation faces west. A wood overhead door is placed centrally between the center of the main elevation and the northwest edge of the building. Two modern double-hung one-over-one vinyl windows are evenly spaced between the center of the main elevation and the southwest edge of the building. A small modern gambrel roof shed is located to the south of the Caretaker's Home. It is of insufficient scale to be counted.

17. Tennis Courts #1
Photograph #24
1 Non-Contributing Structure

Four modern painted asphalt tennis courts are located northeast of the John H. Miller Center. A chain link fence surrounds the courts.

18. Tennis Courts #2
Photograph #24
1 Non-Contributing Structure

Constructed circa 2009, there are two tennis courts located directly east of the American Legion Shelter. A short chain link fence surrounds these painted asphalt courts.

19. American Legion Shelter
Photograph #25
1 Non-Contributing Building

The American Legion Shelter was constructed circa 1970-1985 and is rectangular in plan. The foundation of the shelter, also serving as the floor, is concrete. Four evenly spaced steel columns create the north wall and are repeated on the south wall. The east and west walls each have a centrally placed steel column. A front-gabled asphalt shingle roof covers the shelter. Flush wooden board siding laid vertically on the gabled ends and in a wide band of trim below the eave overhang, overlap the steel columns to create shallow arched openings to the shelter.

20. Tennis Court Restrooms
Photograph #26
1 Non-Contributing Building

The modern Tennis Court Restrooms is a rectangular single-bay building with a concrete foundation, concrete block walls, and a front gabled asphalt shingle roof. Devoid of windows, the building has flush steel doors with simple wood trim and concrete lintels placed asymmetrically to the south on the east and west elevations. The gabled ends are covered in wooden vertical channel boards. A wooden vertical board fence provides privacy for both of the entrances.

21. Connersville Horseshoe Club Building
Photograph #27
1 Non-Contributing Building

The modern Connersville Horseshoe Club Building, constructed circa 1965, is a rectangular single bay building with a concrete foundation, concrete block walls, and an asphalt shingle hipped roof. A flush steel door with simple wood trim is asymmetrically placed to the north on the west elevation. There is a one-over-one double hung window with a wood sill asymmetrically placed to the south on the east elevation.

22. Horseshoe Courts
Photograph #28
1 Non-Contributing Structure

Eight horseshoe courts are located immediately east of the Connersville Horseshoe Club Building. The courts are oriented north/south with a grassy center and a concrete pad and block at the ends of each court. A short chain link fence lines the courts to the north and south. The courts were installed circa 1965.

23. Kiwanis Club Gazebo
Photograph #30
1 Non-Contributing Building

Constructed in 1991 by the local Kiwanis Club, the gazebo replaced the deteriorated well house that had served the northeast region of the park when it was used as a campground. It is a decagonal building with a concrete foundation and floor and an asphalt shingle roof. There are ten evenly spaced square wooden columns and a rectangular balusters surround the gazebo. Entrances to the gazebo are on the north and south elevations. The roofline is ornamented with square wood spandrels. A wooden Kiwanis Club logo is centered in the trim on each side of the decagon.

24. Millstones
Photograph #33
1 Contributing Structure

The playground located in the northeast region of the park is lined with stone grinding wheels from the former Anstead Spring and Axle Company, which later became Connersville Steel Products Company. In 1943, Stant Manufacturing purchased the plant and donated the grinding wheels to the park.[10] Each grinding wheel has been halved resulting in twenty-three large stones on the west side of the playground, nineteen large stones to the south, and ten large stones and twenty-five small stones to the east. Three grinding stones create a marker west of the playground.

25. Playground #1
Photograph #33
1 Non-Contributing Structure

The playground located inside the millstone border was first established circa 1935, though all of the equipment has since been updated. The current playground equipment includes plastic, metal, and wood elements, which renders it non-contributing.

[10] H. Max Walters, "Grinding Wheels Have Colorful Background," *Connersville News-Examiner*, November 8, 1973.

Playgrounds are located inside the millstone border on the north side of the park as well as south of the John H. Miller Center. The equipment includes wood, metal, and plastic elements.

26. Basketball Court
Photograph #32
1 Non-Contributing Structure

A modern basketball court is located just west of the James E. Roberts Memorial Building. A chain link fence surrounds the court.

27. James E. Roberts Memorial Building
Photograph #34
1 Contributing Building

Constructed by the Works Progress Administration as the 4-H building for the Fayette County Free Fair in 1936, the James E. Roberts Memorial Building is a rectangular five bay split-level tan brick building with a brick foundation and a dual-pitched asphalt shingle hipped roof.[11] A belt-course divides the basement from the main floor. Built with Prairie School details, the symmetrical façade faces north and is approached from the park drive by a central concrete sidewalk. Two concrete steps lead to inset boarded double doors with boarded sidelights and a boarded transom. Rectangular brick piers flank the entry. The brick course extends along the lower portion of each column, while two bands of protruded brick as well as a concrete cap are located at the top. A historic metal lantern sconce light fixture hangs from each column. A brick lintel extends between the tops of the two piers. Above the lintel, an inset metal plaque reads, "1936, JAMES E. ROBERTS, MEMORIAL BUILDING." This central section has a cross gable asphalt shingle roof with wood trim. On each side of the entry, there are two windows on the basement level and two on the main level. The main level windows extend to the roof line, and were historically six over six wood windows.[12] They are evenly spaced with a slight orientation toward the center section. All of the windows are boarded, though it is clear that the outermost windows on the main level are two times the width of the others. The eave of the roof has a slight overhang with a wide band of brick trim below. There is a slight change in the low-pitch of the roof at approximately one-third of the total height. Decorative shrubs line the main façade and a small tree is located northwest of the entrance. Short, square, brick posts with concrete caps and topped with historic metal light posts are symmetrically placed at the park drive where the concrete entry sidewalk widens.

28. Playground Restrooms
Photograph #35
1 Contributing Building

The Federal Emergency Relief Administration constructed the Playground Restrooms from 1934 to 1935.[13] It is a rectangular single story three-bay, brick building with a concrete foundation and an asphalt shingle, flared eave, hipped roof. The north and south elevations have three evenly spaced one-by-one sliding wood windows placed near the roofline for privacy. A single flush wooden door is centered on the east and west elevations providing entry to the men's and women's facilities. The doors are framed in simple wood trim. Rectangular wood columns are located in the four corners of the eave

[11] "FERA Work At Park Is Well Under Way."
[12] "10 Most Endangered - Roberts Memorial Building," Indiana Landmarks, last modified 2010, http://www.indianalandmarks.org/NewsPhotos/10most/Pages/RobertsMemorialBuilding.aspx.
[13] "FERA Work At Park Is Well Under Way."

overhang. One additional column is located where the eave begins to flare in the northeast and northwest corners.

29. Concrete Markers
Photograph #36
3 Contributing Objects (Due to scattered placement)

There are three identical concrete markers located throughout the park. One is located in the planting bed east of the James E. Roberts Memorial Building, one north of the Administration Building, and one southeast of the Pavilion. Each marker, approximately fifty-six inches tall has a double disc base, with a long cone shaped body. An orb tops each marker. Markings on each orb appearing to be the result of hitching rings suggest that these may have been used as hitching posts.

30. Commemorative Boulder
Photograph #37
1 Contributing Object

A boulder located in the drive intersection south of the playground restrooms and east of the James E. Roberts Memorial Building was erected on June 18,1935 to commemorate the establishment of the free county fair at Roberts Park. The stone plaque on the boulder reads, "BOULDER ERECTED BY THE COMMUNITY OF EVERTON, IND. JUNE 18, 1935, TO COMMEMORATE THE BIRTH OF THE WORLDS FIRST FREE COUNTY FAIR, HELD IN ROBERTS PARK, CONNERSVILLE, FAYETTE CO..IND..SEPT. 9, 1903."

31. Amphitheater
Photograph #38
1 Contributing Structure

The amphitheatre is a five unit, seventeen-bay structure with a concrete foundation, an uncut glacial boulder stone wall, and a flat sheet metal roof. The concrete terrace and steel grandstand of the amphitheatre, constructed in 1907 and 1909 respectively, is built into the side of a hill (photograph #40). According to Barrows' History of Fayette County, "In 1907 the city council built a cement seating terrace and in 1909, a number of public-spirited citizens of city and community erected a magnificent amphitheatre building, built of steel over this concrete work built by the city."[14] Modern, simple benches constructed of wood and metal create rows of seating and are situated on terraced concrete with three evenly placed interior aisles. There are five evenly spaced steel columns on the north and south ends of the structure as well as in the center of the center aisle supporting the five evenly spaced exposed steel roof beams and the corrugated sheet metal roof. Originally, a wooden structure provided the roof. It was replaced with the current metal posts and roof in the late 1980s. In 1940, an uncut stone wall was constructed without courses as a WPA project (Photograph #38). The five unit, seventeen-bay wall is located on the west elevation of the amphitheatre, creating an entrance to the grandstand. All of the windows and doors have segmental arches. The northernmost unit has a boarded window and door, placed asymmetrically to the south. A grindstone is centrally embedded above the window and door. The second unit, in the center, is symmetrical. There is a simple iron gated entry with a spherical wall sconce on each side. Two windows with louver shutters are located on each side of the entry. The central unit is also symmetrical and has the same entry with sconces, though narrower. A grindstone is embedded in the stone above the doorway. A single window vertical slider

[14] "Big Roberts Park Grand Stand Is Now Assured," *The Evening News*, June 29, 1909; Frederic Irving Barrows, ed., *History of Fayette County Indiana: Her People, Industries, and Institutions* (Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen & Company, Inc., 1917), 297.

window is located on each side, accommodating the ticket booths. Units four and five mirror units two and one. Boulders line the top of the entire wall to create a castellated effect, though over time some of the boulders have been lost. In 1988, the amphitheatre was rehabilitated including repairs to the roof and new seating.

32. Horse Track
Photograph #39
1 Contributing Structure

Built in 1903, the oval-shaped earthen horse track is located east of, and adjacent to the Amphitheater.[15] The track has a grassy center that includes the Judges Stand, metal bleachers, and concrete railroad ties along the western straightaway. The Judges Stand is counted as a separate resource (see below), but the bleachers and ties are counted along with the track as one resource. A small wooden storage shed with an asphalt shingle roof is located south of the northernmost turn. The shed is not counted due to its scale and temporary nature. In 1991, the track was refurbished. This included a slight altering of the length to meet regulations, and a widening of the turns and a change in the degree of their bank to prevent standing water.[16]

33. Judge's Stand
Photograph #41
1 Contributing Building

Constructed in 1903, the Judges Stand is a wood platform supported by columns, with a pyramidal asphalt shingle roof. Metal cross bracing extends from the bottom of each column to the simple rectangular metal trim along the bottom edge of the wood platform. Metal scrollwork brackets ornament all of the corner connections between the columns and this trim. A metal ladder on the south end of the east elevation accesses the platform. Tongue and groove wooden boards create the floor of the platform, which is surrounded by two simple horizontal metal railings with a single central support on each elevation. Metal scrollwork brackets like underneath the platform ornament the connection between the columns and the exposed rafter system of the pyramidal roof.

34. Amphitheater Restrooms
Photograph #42
1 Non-Contributing Building

The Amphitheater Restrooms were constructed in 2010. The building is a north facing rectangular single story two-bay concrete block building with a concrete foundation and an asphalt shingle hipped roof. Two openings placed symmetrically on the north elevation, and one each on the north end of the east and west elevations, lead to a covered open area. Beyond the open area, there are two symmetrically placed metal doors.

35. Brick Swales
Photograph #44
1 Contributing Structure

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[15] "Dedicatory Program," *The Evening News*, September 3, 1903; *Terraced Amphitheater and Race Course at Roberts' Park*, in *Pen and Camera of the Pretty and Progressive City of Connersville, Indiana*, by Julius F Schwarz (Connersville: Commercial Club, 1906), 103. Newspaper article explains that races are to begin at 3pm, following the dedication of Roberts Park. Historic photograph c.1906 shows the track in its current location.

[16] Kimball Hendrix, "Roberts Park Track Being Upgraded," *Connersville News-Examiner*, June 20, 1991.

Brick swales, constructed circa 1905, can be found lining both sides of the drive to the north and east of the Administration Building as well as along the north side of the drive directly west of the Horse Barns. Several of the bricks are stamped with the words "METROPOLITAN BLOCK, CANTON O." The swales are considered to be one water control system that has several components, and is counted as one resource.

36. Stone House
Photograph #45
1 Contributing Building

The Stone House, constructed circa 1939 into the side of a hill, is a rectangular single bay building with a concrete foundation, concrete block walls, and a sheet metal cross-hipped roof. The concrete blocks have several small boulder stones embedded in each one. Quoining is located on the northeast and southeast corners of the building. An off-center one-over-one double hung wood window is located on both the north and south elevations. The building is accessed by centered sliding doors on the east elevation. The track is hidden in a lintel that extends the full length of the elevation. The metal cross-hipped roof is without eaves, instead wrapping the edge of the roofline to create a band of trim below. Concrete steps along the north elevation lead to the stone sidewalk that stretches between the Stone House and the Administration Building. These steps also connect to additional concrete steps that span the length of, and lead directly to, the west elevation of the Stone House.

Horse Barns
37. Horse Barn #1
38. Horse Barn #2
39. Whitmer Horse Barn
40. Horse Barn #4
Photographs #46, 47
4 Contributing Buildings

There are four horse barns, constructed circa 1910, located south of the horse track. The eastern-most barn is a rectangular six-bay building with a concrete foundation, flush wooden vertical board siding, and an asphalt shingle front gabled roof (photograph #47, left). Six evenly spaced wood windows are located on the north elevation. These were historically two-over-two fixed windows. Today, beginning at the east end, the first four windows are simply openings, and the fifth is a wooden fixed one-by-one window. The westernmost window remains a two-over-two fixed wooden window, though the upper right pane is boarded. The barn is accessed on the east and west elevations through a pair of sliding wooden vertical board doors that open from the center. The doors slide on a metal track hidden by the lintel. Each door on the west elevation has a small window located at the center of the elevation. The north door has a one-by-one fixed wood window and the south door has a one-over-one fixed wood window. The east elevation includes a second pair of sliding wooden vertical board doors. Each door has a single fixed window. The gabled ends of the asphalt shingle roof are flush vertical wooden board siding.

Immediately west, there is a second barn that is also a rectangular six-bay building with a concrete foundation, flush wooden vertical board siding, and an asphalt shingle front gabled roof (photograph #47, right). On the north elevation, there are six evenly spaced wood windows that were historically two-over-two fixed windows. Beginning at the east end of the north elevation, the first two windows are currently boarded. The third window remains a two-over-two fixed wooden window, and is missing the lower left pane. The fourth window is a single fixed window, the fifth is boarded, and the westernmost window

is simply an opening. Like the horse barn to the east, the barn is accessed on the east and west elevations. Each elevation includes a pair of solid vertical board doors that slide open from the center along a metal track hidden by the lintel. The gabled ends of the asphalt shingle roof are flush vertical wooden board siding.

Continuing west, the Whitmer Horse Barn is a rectangular ten-bay building with a concrete foundation, vertical metal siding, and a sheet metal front gabled roof (photograph #46, left). The barn is accessed on the north elevation through a pair of sliding metal doors that open from the center. The doors slide on a metal track hidden by the metal lintel. A sign above the lintel reads, "Ralph Whitmer." Ten evenly spaced windowless openings with metal awnings are located on the west elevation. On the east elevation, a three-bay modern addition takes the place of three of the original ten openings. The addition has vertical metal siding and a sheet metal shed roof. Each bay has horizontal flush wooden board siding with a window opening at the top and a doorway opening to the north. Vertical metal siding covers the gabled ends of the sheet metal roof.

The westernmost horse barn is a rectangular twelve-bay building with a concrete foundation, flush vertical wooden board siding, and an asphalt shingle front gabled roof (photograph #46, right). On the west elevation, the fifth bay has a sliding wooden vertical board door. The remaining eleven bays have window openings with simple wood trim. The barn is accessed on the north elevation by two sliding wooden vertical board doors opening from the east and west ends of the elevation. The gabled ends of the asphalt shingle roof are also covered in wooden vertical board siding.

All of the horse barns were repaired in 1935 as part of city park improvements completed by the Works Progress Administration.[17]

41. Stone Sidewalk
Photographs #49, 50
1 Contributing Structure

The remains of a stone sidewalk are located along the west elevation of the Administration Building. The linear sidewalk extends south from the park drive, to the concrete steps at the Stone Garage. Based on this connection, the sidewalk likely dates from the late 1930s.

42. Administration Building
Photograph #51
1 Contributing Building

Constructed in 1934 by the Works Progress Administration, the Administration Building is a north facing rectangular single-story three-bay brick and stucco building with a concrete foundation and a shed roof with asphalt shingles. Brick removed from East Fifth Street in Connersville, between Eastern and Central Avenues, was used create the brick portions of the exterior.[18] The exterior wall material is divided approximately into thirds with the upper and lower bands being brick and the center band being stucco. A stepped pattern is created where the stucco meets the upper band of brick. A concrete sidewalk leads from the park drive to a centrally located inset porch with a concrete floor and brick lintel. The porch leads to a centrally placed nine pane lighted paneled door, which also includes a brick lintel. The west wall of the porch contains a centrally placed stone plaque within a brick frame that reads, "In Appreciation of Fayette Co.

[17] Shaver, 206.
[18] Dick Konstanzer, "Park Features More WPA Projects," *Connersville News-Examiner*, March 31, 2006.

Organizations."[19] A flush door with a brick lintel dominates the east porch wall. Paired one-over-one aluminum windows are centered on bays one and three. These window pairs have both brick sills and brick lintels. Each window has an exterior aluminum storm window. To the east of the third bay of windows, a second stone plaque with a brick frame reads, "Park Board of Trustees." The remainder of the inscription is quite worn and illegible. Two plaques are inscribed with the date of construction. One is centered above the porch lintel and is a third stone plaque with a brick frame reads, "1934, Administration Building." The other is located on the northeast corner of the building just above the foundation and reads, "A.D. 1934." The building is no longer used as the administration building.

43. Liberty Building
Photograph #52
1 Contributing Building

Moved to Roberts Park from Liberty, Indiana in 1932, the Liberty Building is a fourteen bay structure with a concrete foundation, a steel structural frame, and a front gabled corrugated sheet metal roof. Evenly spaced steel verticals on the east and west elevations create the fourteen bays. These same verticals also extend from north to south through the center of the structure. Four verticals are placed asymmetrically on the south elevation. Each vertical member is composed of steel L-channels, bolted together and linked at the center by gusset plates. Two evenly spaced rows of horizontal brace framing connect the verticals, leaving the north elevation open. Steel brackets connect the verticals to the exposed system of W-trusses. The gabled ends of the roof are covered with vertical pieces of metal, appearing similar to wooden boards. Centrally placed at the bottom of the north gabled end, a plaque reads, "LIBERTY BUILDING."

44. Pavilion
Photograph #53
1 Contributing Building

Built in 1903 to serve as exhibit space for the newly established Fayette County Free Fair, the Pavilion is a single story cross plan building. The building has both a concrete foundation and floor. A knee wall of uncut stone boulders without courses and a concrete sill surrounds the Pavilion with entrances centrally placed on the north, south, east, and west elevations. In 2009, as part of the Pavilion restoration, concrete ramps replaced steps at each of these entrances to provide handicap accessibility. Steel columns are evenly spaced along all elevations, with eight columns on the north and south elevations and ten columns on the east and west elevations. A thick band of vinyl trim surrounds the pavilion underneath each eave, with a round arch spanning between each column. Added during the 2009 restoration, the trim has the look of flush thin vertical boards to maintain the historic appearance. A cross gable-on-hip asphalt shingle roof covers the Pavilion. Vinyl trim embossed in a fish-scale pattern decorates the gable ends. The Pavilion received a new roof in 1935 as a Works Progress Administration project and again in 2009 as part of the restoration project.[20]

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[19] The organizations listed on the plaque are as follows: Free Fair Association, Farm Federation, Fox Hunters Association, Federation of Women's Clubs, Garden Club, Conservation Club, Kiwanis Club, Business and Professional Women's Club, Lions Club, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Rotary Club, Horseshoe Club, Tennis Club, Connersville Band, Park Board of Trustees
[20] Shaver, 206.

45. Red Cross Building
Photograph #54
1 Non-Contributing Building

Constructed in 2001, the Red Cross building is a north facing rectangular single story two-bay vinyl clad building with a concrete foundation and an asphalt shingle cross gable roof. A concrete sidewalk leads to a porch that is created by the protruding gable. Square wood columns decorate the northeast and northwest corners of the porch. The main entry to the building is asymmetrically placed on the west end of this bay. The entry is a vinyl paneled door with a two light metal door. A square, six-over-six double hung vinyl window is asymmetrically in the east bay near the center of the façade. The gable end of the roof, overhanging the porch, is covered in vinyl siding.

46. Police Building
Photograph #55
1 Contributing Building

The Police Building, constructed circa 1940, is a north facing rectangular single story three-bay stone building with an asphalt shingle deck roof.[21] The building sits on a raised concrete foundation. A band of concrete protrudes slightly from the foundation delineating a concrete porch. Six centrally placed concrete stairs provide access to both the porch and building. Steel handrails are located on both sides of the stairs and wrap around the porch, connecting to the building at the northeast and northwest corners. Rock-faced stone placed in irregular courses create the exterior walls. A centered modern vinyl panel door provides entrance to the building. Muntins create a diamond pattern on the single upper light and the panels below form a cross-buck pattern. Unornamented wood trim frames the door. A four-over-two historic wood window with a stone sill and lintel is located on each side of the entry. The bottom two panes of both windows are boarded. A single historic metal lantern sconce light fixture is located between each window and the entry.

47. Roberts Park Pool
Photographs #57, 58, 59, 60
2 Contributing Buildings (Poolhouse Buildings)
1 Non-Contributing Structure (Pool)
1 Non-Contributing Object (Sculpture of Children)

Constructed in 1936 as a WPA project, the Roberts Park Pool has a central swimming pool flanked by buildings to the east and west. The eastern building is a rectangular five bay irregular coursed stone building, with a concrete foundation and an asphalt shingle hipped roof (photograph #60). Stone flanks each bay, with two evenly spaced vertical sliding windows surrounded by vinyl siding from the concrete sill to the roofline. The stone wall is inset below each sill. The northernmost bay is open and is flanked by the stone wall on the south end and a square stone column on the north end, creating a walkthrough.

The central pool area was renovated in 2006, replacing the original pool. Today the pool area has a concrete deck, a main swimming pool, and a second pool with water slides. The second smaller pool sits just south of the main pool, serving two water slides that are placed at the east end.

Like the eastern building, the western building is a rectangular five bay irregular coursed stone building with a concrete foundation and an asphalt shingle hipped roof

[21] Shaver, 213. The City of Connersville annexed Roberts Park under Ordinance 1157 in June 1938 to allow city police to patrol the park.

(photograph #59). The southern bay has five closely and evenly spaced fixed windows with concrete sills located at the roofline. The center three bays are segmental arched doorways. The center double doors are wooden vertical channel board while the other two doorways have been filled in with stone. The northern bay has the same window configuration as the southern bay, though instead of the innermost window, there is a large concession window with an awning. All of the northern bay windows are covered with single flush shutters. The western building also serves as the entrance to the pool area from Roberts Park. Approached from the west by a concrete sidewalk, the western elevation, or entrance side of the building, is nearly identical to the elevation facing the pool area (photograph #57). However, the northern elevation includes all five windows in lieu of a concession window. A single stone plaque, centered below the windows to the south, reads "WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION, A.D. 1936, PROJECT NUMBER_4235."[22] A concrete sidewalk extends the entire western elevation and is lined with four evenly spaced square uncut stone pillars with concrete bases and sweeping pyramidal concrete caps. The pillars are topped with a single iron turned spindle lamp post and a spherical lamp. Northwest of the entry doors sits a sculpture of children playing in a swim area, installed circa 2006 (photograph #58). Decorative shrubs surround the sculpture.

[22] The plaque also lists the members of the Board of Public Works and Safety: Mayor William F. Dentlinger - Chairman, Leroy C. Hanby - Member, Russell Crouse - Member, Frank C. Sherry - Treasurer, as well as members of the Common Council: Fred F. Fultz, Philip S. Larue, Clyde C. Jerrell, Curtis Evans, Philip J. McCarty, Charles C. Baker, John Ringloff, Louis H. Clawson - Construction Supt.

Roberts Park
Name of Property

Fayette, Co., IN
County and State

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.)

[X] 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.

[X] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

[ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

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

Property is:

[ ] A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

[ ] B removed from its original location.

[ ] C a birthplace or grave.

[ ] D a cemetery.

[ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

[ ] F a commemorative property.

[ ] G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE
SOCIAL HISTORY
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance
1902-1961

Significant Dates

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
Unknown

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance begins the year the Roberts Park land was donated and improvements first undertaken. Since the park has continually hosted the Fayette County Free Fair, and continues to offer outdoor recreation, the period of significance ends in 1961.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)
Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

Roberts Park, donated to the city of Connersville in 1902 and dedicated in 1903, is the site of Indiana's first free county fair. The district continues to host the Fayette County Free Fair, recently celebrating its 107th year. In an effort to enhance the use of the district as both a county fairgrounds and a public park, the Works Progress Administration completed several projects during the Great Depression. Projects included buildings, structures, and objects that remain intact today. The scale and breadth of the WPA improvements at Roberts Park rival those of the best examples of WPA-assisted town parks in Indiana. For these reasons, Roberts Park meets National Register Criterion A in the areas of social history and entertainment/recreation, and Criterion C in the area of architecture, both at a local level of significance. The park continues to offer free recreational opportunities to Connersville's citizens.

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

Agricultural Societies and the History of the Fayette County Fair

Agricultural fairs have a long history, beginning with the English agricultural societies of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. These societies met several times per year to discuss agricultural questions, read papers, and enjoy social amenities. Larger societies held agricultural shows. Modeled after the English, the first American agricultural societies began appearing in the late 18th century. Merchants, professional men, and large landowners participated, though premiums were often too great for a typical working farmer. The first American agricultural fairs were held to facilitate commerce through the exchange of livestock and other goods. It was also an opportunity for fairgoers to purchase land or pay debts. These fairs also included amusements such as horse racing, "homemade sports," traveling performers, and livestock competitions.[23] They became a significant social event in the lives of towns, small and large.

Credited with establishing agricultural fairs "as a distinctive institution" in the United States, Elkanah Watson of Albany, New York held the Berkshire Cattle Show in the fall of 1810.[24] The next year, Watson formed the Berkshire Agricultural Society to generate public support and establish a cohesive program of events for what would become an annual show.[25] Watson's influence quickly spread, leading to the formation of many agricultural societies. After a decline in the 1820s and 1830s, groups began appearing in Maine, Ohio, Massachusetts, and New York around 1840 due to a federal interest in the promotion of agriculture. In 1841, New York hosted the country's first state fair through the reorganization of the New York Agricultural Society.[26]

During the 1850s and 1860s, there was a surge in the establishment of state, county, and township societies across the country despite being engaged in the Civil War. As of 1857, Indiana had formed a State Board of Agriculture. By the following year, there were

[23] Wayne Caldwell Neely, *The Agricultural Fair* (Morningside Heights: Columbia University, 1935), 37-38, 43-46.
[24] "Berkshire Cattle Show" was not a literal description of the event, though there was a livestock show.
[25] Neely, 51, 61-63.
[26] Neely, 72, 76-78.

seventy-seven societies throughout the state, becoming part of a long tradition of agricultural societies in the "Middle West."[27] Most of the societies in Indiana and the nation held fairs as annual celebrations of the farming community, cementing the county fair as one of the "traditional holidays of rural America."[28]

The formation of an agricultural society in Fayette County was first attempted in 1834, but was unsuccessful. An agricultural meeting was held on July 4, 1841, though this did not result in the formation of a society. In 1851, a series of seven meetings were held in an attempt to establish a society, this time with success. On October 18, 1851, an agricultural society in Fayette County was permanently organized.[29] The first Fayette County Fair was held on leased property in September 1852.[30] County fairs such as this one were typically a small-scale version of a state fair, though with less variety and number of exhibitions. Very few societies and fair associations could be self supporting, relying largely on gate receipts in addition to revenue from concessionaires fees, refreshment stands, entry fees, and stall rent. Private sector assistance was not uncommon to supplement the cost of holding a fair.[31] Fayette County was no exception.

In the fall of 1853, a second fair was held as the Fayette County Agricultural Fair. On December 21, 1861, the society dissolved, transferring their interests to the Fayette County Joint Stock Agricultural and Mechanical Society. In 1865, A.J. Claypool purchased twenty-six acres of land, one mile north of the Fayette County Courthouse, to provide a permanent location for the fair and necessary buildings. Annual fairs were held at this location until 1884. On February 12 of that year, the stockholders surrendered their charter and offered the fairgrounds for sale.[32] Most local accounts suggest that fairs were not held from 1884 to 1903, though one local historian in the late 1990s suggested that fairs were held sporadically during that time.[33]

James E. Roberts and Connersville, Indiana

A.C. Cooley and Warren Wanee founded the first furniture manufacturing company in Connersville in May 1865. Despite the dissolution of their business in October 1866, furniture manufacturing quickly became an important industry in Connersville. Just one month later, A.C. Cooley formed a second furniture manufacturing company with George W. Gregg and William Newkirk. When the company dissolved in 1869, Newkirk acquired the manufacturing building and machinery, partnering with Herman Munk to form the Valley Furniture Association. In 1874, Newkirk sold his share of the company to James E. Roberts, forming Munk and Roberts Furniture Company, one of four large furniture manufacturers in Connersville at that time.[34]

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[27] Neely, 82-87. As of 1858, 48.5% of the nation's agricultural societies were located in the "Middle West," which included Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and Missouri. By 1868, 55.3% of these societies were located in this region.
[28] Neely, 89.
[29] *History of Fayette County, Indiana: Containing a History of the County; its Townships, Towns, Villages, Schools, Churches, Industries, Etc; Portraits of Early Settlers and Prominent Men; Biographies; Etc. Etc.* (Chicago: Warner, Beers, & Co., 1885), 84-85.
[30] Barrows, 295.
[31] Neely, 158.
[32] Barrows, 295-297.
[33] Barrows, 297; Bob Powers, "Fair History Account Disputed by Historian," *Connersville News-Examiner*, September 1, 1998.
[34] *History of Fayette County, Indiana*, 153.

Colonel James E. Roberts was born October 27, 1849 in Brookville, Franklin County, Indiana.[35] Prior to the Civil War, Roberts moved to Connersville, where he was employed in the retail hardware business.[36] In 1874, Roberts became the secretary and treasurer of Munk and Roberts Furniture Company after purchasing William Newkirk's share of the Valley Furniture Association. Herman Munk served as president. Munk and Roberts Furniture Company employed one hundred fifty people and manufactured suites, wash-stands, and bureaus.[37] After retiring as an active partner in Munk and Roberts in 1893, Colonel Roberts moved to Indianapolis.[38] Five years later Munk and Roberts Furniture Company was sold to the Rex Buggy Company of Connersville.[39] Despite the sale of Munk and Roberts and his Indianapolis residency, Colonel Roberts remained dedicated to the city of Connersville. On June 28, 1902, Colonel Roberts donated eighty acres of land located at what is now the southwest corner of Thirtieth Street and Park Road to the city of Connersville, with the condition that the land be utilized as a public park.[40]

Roberts Park was established by a unanimous vote of the Connersville city council on June 30, 1902. The ordinance included the park name, legal property description and the terms and conditions as given by Colonel Roberts. During the first two years, the city was to provide $2,000 for improvements, spending $1,000 within the first year. Colonel Roberts left an additional $15,000 in a trust fund to be invested for improvements such as the construction of drives, fences, flowerbeds, and other beautification efforts. A special committee of the Common Council was established to plan the improvements and oversee their construction.[41]

In addition to park improvements, the residents of Connersville engaged in discussions regarding how best to utilize the park within the conditions set forth by Colonel Roberts. Local folklore explains that local businessman, and special committee member Mart Myers off-handedly suggested having a free fair. Though free fairs were unheard of, special committee member F.T. Roots agreed with the suggestion and Roberts Park would be dedicated with a free fair, the first in the State of Indiana.[42]

Organization for the free fair began in June 1903. Officials for the fair were chosen and the Free Fayette County Fair Association was formed. F.T. Roots served as president, Mart Meyer served as marshal, and local businessman W.F. Downs served as secretary. Immediate improvements to the grounds included the construction of the Horse Track and Judges Stand. The groundbreaking for the Pavilion, which served as exhibit space for each Fayette County Township, occurred on August 28, 1903.[43] Roberts Park was dedicated on September 9, 1903, with Colonel James E. Roberts and U.S. Senator Charles W. Fairbanks present.[44] In his dedication speech, F.T. Roots remarked on the rarity of a free fair:

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[35] "Donor of Local Park Expires," *Connersville News-Examiner*, May 16, 1922.
[36] Fayette County Free Fair Association, "Connersville Free Fair and Dedication of Roberts Park," booklet, 1903, Fayette County Public Library, Connersville.
[37] *History of Fayette County, Indiana*, 153, 554.
[38] "Donor of Local Park Expires."
[39] Harry M. Smith, *Connersville: A Pictorial History*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: G. Bradley Publishing, Inc., 1993), 61-62.
[40] "Roberts Park," *The Evening News* (Connersville), July 1, 1902.
[41] "Roberts Park."
[42] Kate Heron, "Early Fayette County History," *The Evening News*, June 1912. Mart Myers is also credited as the originator of the free fair concept at Roberts Park on the cover of the 1907 Fayette County Fair Premium Booklet.
[43] Barrows, 297.
[44] Free Fayette County Fair Association, Fayette County Free Fair Brochure, September 1903, Free Fair Vertical File, Fayette County Public Library, Connersville.

> Nowhere in this State, or any other State in the Union, except in Fayette County, is there a county giving a "free fair;" where the banner of freedom waves; the bars thrown down, the ticket office removed, and the invitation extended to all the world, to come and enjoy the festivities, without money and without price.[45]

The first Fayette County Free Fair enjoyed a successful two days of exhibits, horse races, and other competitions and amusements, cementing the fair as an annual event. By the third annual free fair, major newspapers in Indianapolis and Cincinnati were recognizing the event as a "radical departure from the time honored rule," marveling at its success despite the lack of gate receipts or even illegal concessions.[46]

During the first decade of the fair's existence, improvements at Roberts Park further enhanced the experience of fairgoers. A concrete seating terrace was constructed on the hill overlooking the race track in 1907. Two years later, the steel structure of the grandstand was added.[47] Horse barns were constructed south of the track circa 1910, allowing for the boarding of horses year round. Recently hosting the 107th annual fair, Roberts Park continues to be the site of the Fayette County Free Fair.[48]

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

During the Great Depression, Roberts Park benefitted from the addition of several Works Progress Administration recreational projects. Projects such as those taking place at

[45] Heron, "Early Fayette County History."
[46] Fayette County Free Fair Association, "The 89th Fayette County Free Fair Premium Booklet & Program," 1991, Fayette County Public Library, Connersville.
[47] Barrows, 297.
[48] Land immediately south of the park, owned by the Fayette County Free Fair Association and purchased circa 1970, is utilized in addition to Roberts Park.

Roberts Park utilized both skilled and unskilled labor to repair, improve, or newly construct parks, playgrounds, swimming pools, or other public recreational facilities. Because WPA Administrators required that ninety percent of their funds be spent on labor, local projects took on the flavor of each community. In Connersville, this meant recycling street brick and using grinding stones from idle industries. The recreation program was implemented across more than half of the United States, employing 34,000 men and women.[49] During this time, Roberts Park gained buildings such as the James E. Roberts Memorial Building, the Administration Building, the Police Building, and the Roberts Park Pool, as well as stonework and additional lighting. These projects enhanced the use of the park as both a county fairgrounds and as a public park during the remainder of year. From 1935 to 1940, the Works Progress Administration improved 5,679 parks nationwide and the Roberts Park Pool is one of just 676 swimming pools constructed by the WPA during this time.[50] Today, Roberts Park continues to host this extensive collection of Works Progress Administration recreational projects. The various projects at Roberts Park constituted the largest WPA project in Fayette County. Hundreds of Indiana communities and neighborhoods benefitted from WPA and related New Deal programs. The scope of projects includes a wide range: several county courthouses, parks, ball fields, gyms, sidewalks, and flood control are only a few examples. Projects that provided free public recreation were typical. In Michigan City, WPA funds built an eighty-foot high observation tower and an extensive zoo and rock garden. Drinking fountains, shelters, and picnic tables constructed from limestone slabs can be found at Cascades Park in Bloomington. In Mishawka, Battell Park was the focus of many WPA improvements, including hundreds of lineal feet of stone-work in the form of rock gardens, fountains, loveseats, and urns.[51] Roberts Park compares well to these prominent WPA projects.

[49] Works Progress Administration, article on "Planning Our Leisure" June 1, 1938.
[50] Works Progress Administration, "Report of Work Completed, 1935-1940," 1941.
[51] "Planning Our Leisure."

9. Major Bibliographical References

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——. "Report of Work Completed, 1935-1940." 1941.

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): 041-131-30003

10. Geographical Data

Roberts Park
Name of Property

Fayette, Co., IN
County and State

Acreage of Property 80.00 Acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	16	660477	4392990	3	16	661250	4392576
2	16	661255	4393010	4	16	660480	4392578

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

Roberts Park is 80.00 acres located in Fayette County, Indiana in the north half of the northwest quarter of Section 18, in Township 14, north of Range 13 east.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The above boundary corresponds to the legal description on the deed for Roberts Park. The deed is located in Deed Book 12, pages 302-303, and is on file with the Fayette County, Indiana Recorder.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Melissa Wortman
organization Partners in Preservation, Inc. date November 16, 2011
street & number 9024 Kirkham Court telephone
city or town Indianapolis state IN zip code 46260
e-mail melissa.f.wortman@gmail.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

  A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Roberts Park

City or Vicinity: Connersville

County: Fayette State: IN

Photographer: Melissa Wortman

Date Photographed: July, August 2011

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of 60: 30th Street and Park Road Entrance
Camera facing southeast

2 of 60: John H. Miller Center, northeast (main) elevation
Camera facing southeast

3 of 60: John H. Miller Center and Garden
Camera facing northwest

4 of 60: Lambert Shelter
Camera facing north

5 of 60: Roberts Park Entrance Arch and Playground #2
Camera facing east

6 of 60: 28th Street Entrance and Park Drive
Camera facing east

7 of 60: Longwood Bridge
Camera facing north

8 of 60: View of park from 28th Street park drive
Camera facing north

9 of 60: 27th Street Entrance
Camera facing east

10 of 60: View of park from 27th Street park drive
Camera facing northeast

11 of 60: View of Boulder Lined park drive
Camera facing northeast

12 of 60: 27th Street Entrance Sign, Stone Pillar with Lamp
Camera facing east

13 of 60: 27th Street Entrance Sculpture
Camera facing northeast

14 of 60: Stone Fountain
Camera facing west

15 of 60: View of park drive with Stone Walls and Stone Pillars with Lamps
Camera facing northeast

16 of 60: View of park drive with Stone Walls
Camera facing north

17 of 60: Jaycee's Shelter
Camera facing southwest

18 of 60: Jaycee's Shelter #3
Camera facing southeast

19 of 60: Stone Fountain and Jaycee's Shelter #3
Camera facing east

20 of 60: View of park drive with Stone Walls
Camera facing southwest

21 of 60: Sundial
Camera facing east

22 of 60: Caretaker's Home
Camera facing east

23 of 60: Caretaker's Home Garage
Camera facing southeast

24 of 60: Tennis Courts
Camera facing southwest

25 of 60: American Legion Shelter
Camera facing southeast

26 of 60: Tennis Court Restrooms
Camera facing southwest

27 of 60: Connersville Horseshoe Club Building
Camera facing northwest

28 of 60: Horseshoe Courts
Camera facing southeast

29 of 60: 30th Street Entrance
Camera facing south

30 of 60: Kiwanis Club Gazebo
Camera facing northeast

31 of 60: View of park from 30th Street entrance
Camera facing southwest

32 of 60: View of park and basketball court from 30th Street entrance

Camera facing southeast

33 of 60: Millstones and Playground #1
Camera facing northeast

34 of 60: James E. Roberts Memorial Building
Camera facing south

35 of 60: Playground Restrooms
Camera facing east

36 of 60: Concrete Markers
Camera facing southeast

37 of 60: Commemorative Boulder
Camera facing north

38 of 60: Amphitheater
Camera facing northeast

39 of 60: View of Horse Track, Amphitheater, and Judges Stand
Camera facing northwest

40 of 60: View of Amphitheater grandstand
Camera facing southwest

41 of 60: Judges Stand
Camera facing southeast

42 of 60: Amphitheater Restrooms
Camera facing southeast

43 of 60: View toward Horse Barns, Stone Pillars with Lamps
Camera facing south

44 of 60: Brick Swales
Camera facing south

45 of 60: Stone House
Camera facing southwest

46 of 60: Horse Barn #4 and Whitmer Horse Barn
Camera facing southeast

47 of 60: Horse Barn #1 and Horse Barn #2
Camera facing southeast

48 of 60: View of park drive between Roberts Park and Fayette Free Fair Association property
Camera facing southwest

49 of 60: Stone Sidewalk
Camera facing south

50 of 60: Stone Sidewalk
Camera facing south

51 of 60: Administration Building
Camera facing southeast

52 of 60: Liberty Building
Camera facing southeast

53 of 60: Pavilion
Camera facing northeast

54 of 60: Red Cross Building
Camera facing south

55 of 60: Police Building
Camera facing south

56 of 60: View of Roberts Park interior
Camera facing northeast

57 of 60: Roberts Park Pool, west building, west elevation
Camera facing east

58 of 60: Roberts Park Pool Sculpture
Camera facing north

59 of 60: Roberts Park Pool, west building, east elevation
Camera facing northwest

60 of 60: Roberts Park Pool, east building, west elevation
Camera facing northeast

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

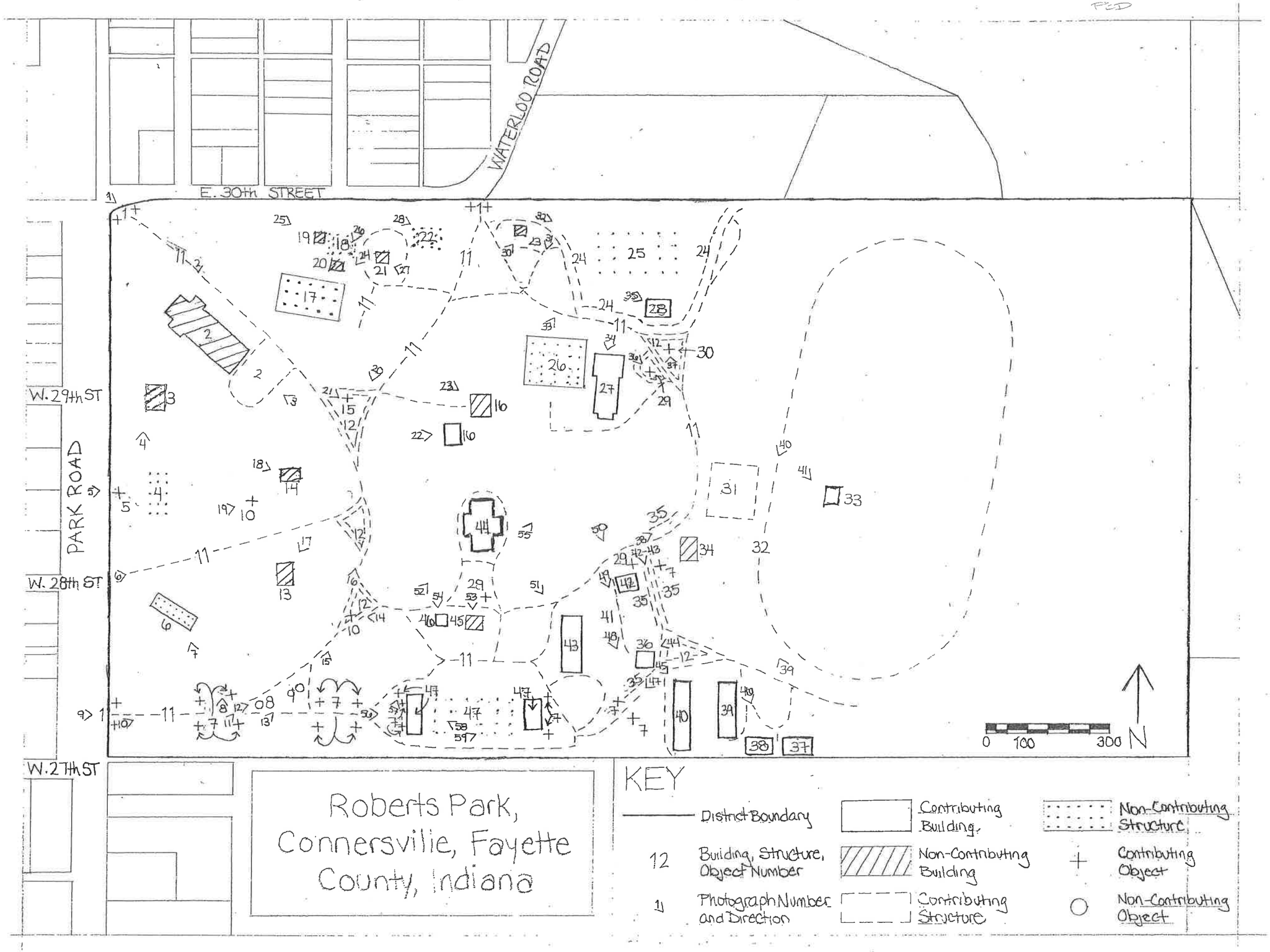
name City of Connersville – Roberts Park

street & number 500 CENTRAL AVE telephone

city or town Connersville state IN zip code 47331

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 18 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.

FINAL 6/2013
FCD



Roberts Park, Connersville, Fayette County, Indiana

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

The National Map
US Topo

CONNERSVILLE QUADRANGLE
INDIANA
7.5-MINUTE SERIES

ROBERTS PARK
FAYETTE COUNTY,
INDIANA

NAD 83
UTM's:
(1) 16660477 4392990
(2) 16661255 4392010
(3) 16661250 4392576
(4) 16660480 4392578

(POINTS 2 & 3
ARE ON
BROWNSVILLE
QUAD)

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)
World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84). Projection and
1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 16S
10 000-foot ticks: Indiana Coordinate System of 1983
(east zone)

Imagery.....NAIP, August 2008
Roads.....US Census Bureau TIGER data
with limited USGS updates, 2006 - 2008
Names.....GNIS, 2008
Hydrography.....National Hydrography Dataset, 2008
Contours.....National Elevation Dataset, 2007

MN
GN
4° 58′
88 MILS
1° 9′
21 MILS

UTM GRID AND 2010 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

U.S. National Grid
100,000-m Square ID
FK / FJ 44 00
Grid Zone Designation 16S

SCALE 1:24 000

KILOMETERS: 1 0.5 0 1 2
METERS: 1000 500 0 1000 2000
MILES: 1 0.5 0 1
FEET: 1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 8000 9000 10000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET

This map was produced to conform with version 0.5.10 of the
draft USGS Standards for 7.5-Minute Quadrangle Maps.
A metadata file associated with this product is also draft version 0.5.10

INDIANA

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

Lewisville	Cambridge City	Jacksonburg
Falmouth	Connersville	Brownsville
New Salem	Alpine	Everton

ADJOINING 7.5′ QUADRANGLES

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Interstate Route
US Route
Ramp
State Route
Local Road
4WD

Interstate Route
US Route
State Route

CONNERSVILLE, IN
2010

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

The National Map
US Topo

BROWNSVILLE QUADRANGLE
INDIANA
7.5-MINUTE SERIES

Produced by the United States Geological Survey
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)
World Geodetic System of 1984 (WGS84). Projection and 1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 16S
10 000-foot ticks: Indiana Coordinate System of 1983 (east zone)

Imagery.....NAIP, August 2008
Roads.....US Census Bureau TIGER data with limited USGS updates, 2006 - 2008
Names.....GNIS, 2008
Hydrography.....National Hydrography Dataset, 2008
Contours.....National Elevation Dataset, 2007

MN
5° 4′ 90 MILS
GN
1° 14′ 22 MILS

UTM GRID AND 2010 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

U.S. National Grid
100,000-m Square ID
FK / FJ — 44 00
Grid Zone Designation 16S

SCALE 1:24 000

KILOMETERS: 1 0.5 0 1 2
METERS: 1000 500 0 1000 2000
MILES: 1 0.5 0 1
FEET: 1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 8000 9000 10000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET
NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM OF 1988

This map was produced to conform with version 0.5.10 of the draft USGS Standards for 7.5-Minute Quadrangle Maps.
A metadata file associated with this product is also draft version 0.5.10

INDIANA

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

Cambridge City	Jacksonburg	Richmond
Connersville	Brownsville	Liberty
Alpine	Everton	New Fairfield

ADJOINING 7.5′ QUADRANGLES

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Interstate Route
US Route
Ramp
State Route
Local Road
4WD

Interstate Route
US Route
State Route

BROWNSVILLE, IN
2010

(3)
ROBERTS PARK
FAYETTE COUNTY, INDIANA
NAD 83 UTMS
(1) 16660477 4392990
(2) 16661255 4393010
(3) 16661250 4392576
(4) 16660480 4392578
(POINTS 1 & 4 ARE ON CONNERSVILLE QUAD)

ROBERTS PARK

1884
BUILT BY
KENNEDY-BRO

STOP
NO VEHICLES
ALLOWED IN
PARK
8PM-5A.M.
NO
ALCOHOL
ALLOWED

15

BY COLONEL JAMES E. ROBERTS
JUNE 26th 1902

ROBERTS PAR
CONNERSVILLE. INDIANA
DONATED TO THE PEOPLE OF CONNERS
BY COLONEL
JUNE 28th 1902
CONNERSVILLE PARKS
& RECREATION DEPT.
CONNERSVILLE
RESTORATION OF
ROBERTS PARK LIGHTING
1991

STOP

STOP

STOP

STOP

0703

15

STOP
STOP

BOULDER ERECTED BY
THE COMMUNITY OF
BVERION, IND.
JUNE 15, 1935
TO COMMEMORATE THE
BIRTH OF THE WORLDS
FIRST COUNTY FREE FAIR
HELD IN ROBERTS PARK
CONNERSVILLE,
FAYETTE CO., IND.
SEPT. 9, 1903

PARK DEPT.

LIBERTY BUILDING

PARK POLICE