

*F. K. A. L.*

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

#### 1. Name of Property

historic name Liberty Township Schoolhouse #2

other names/site number 145-657-35019

#### 2. Location

street & number State Route 244 at County Road 600 East N/A not for publication

city or town Waldron  vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Shelby code 145 zip code 46176

#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Patrick L. Ralston* 7/16/92  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the  
National Register  
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the  
National Register.

removed from the National  
Register.

other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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

**5. Classification**

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

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

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

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
1	0	objects
2	0	Total

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

NA

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Italianate  
OTHER: Gable-front

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: limestone  
walls BRICK  
STONE: limestone  
roof METAL: steel  
other METAL: iron

**Narrative Description**

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

- EDUCATION
- ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1875 - c.1919

Significant Dates

1875

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

NA

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

Meltzer Brothers

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory

Liberty Twp. Schoolhouse #2  
Name of Property

Shelby County, IN  
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

1	6	6	1	4	5	8	0	4	3	7	2	6	2	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

3 

Zone	Easting				Northing									

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Tony Armstrong

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date November 3, 1990

street & number R. R. 6, Box 296 telephone 317/525-6257

city or town Shelbyville state IN zip code 46176

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name Philip & Charlene Meltzer

street & number 543 Fourth Street telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Shelbyville state IN zip code 46176

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1Liberty Township Schoolhouse #2  
Shelby County, Indiana

Liberty Township Schoolhouse #2 stands at the northeast corner of County Road 600 East and State Route 244 in rural Shelby County, Indiana. Its surroundings consist of nearly level terrain occupied by rich farmland. Another major man-made landscape element is I-74, located about one mile west/southwest of the site.

Also located on this corner is a water pump, a U.S.G.S. benchmark, and a one story board and batten sided sawmill. The boundary is drawn to exclude the mill, which was moved to the site in c.1920. The water pump served the school; it is counted as a contributing object. The benchmark is small in scale and is therefore not counted. Large, mature trees, mostly various types of Maples, shade the lot.

The schoolhouse is a one story, brick, gable-fronted building which faces south to State Route 244. The foundation is of bush-hammered coursed ashlar limestone topped by a similarly finished water table with beveled upper edge. Larger stone slabs appear to have been used across the front foundation to create a monolithic appearance. All exterior walls are of common bond brick.

The main elevation faces south and has four symmetrically placed bays: two doors flanking two windows (photo 1). The separate entrances for boys and girls are reached by limestone steps, have stone sills, and are set within two coursed segmental arched openings. The tall, wood paneled doors are topped by nearly square two-light transoms. Between the the doors are two rectangular four-over-four wood double hung windows set within a segmental arched opening with stone sills. This is the usual window type.

Centered in the wall above the two windows is an oval tablet defined by a surrounding course of headers. The limestone tablet bears the inscription: SCHOOL HOUSE No 2/BUILT BY JASPER HECK/TRUSTEE OF LIBERTY/TOWNSHIP 1875. (photo 2). Toward the apex of the gable is a larger oculus vent. Hexagonal vents are found in the gable area, roughly centered over the doors.

A handsome raking entablature of wood crowns the south elevation. The frieze is plain but scallops to outline brackets, describes a round arch at the gable apex, and curves to an impost ending toward either end (photos 1 and 7). Heavy scroll brackets are



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Liberty Township Schoolhouse 2  
Shelby County, Indiana

found over the hexagonal vents and two frame the large oculus. The brackets support finished soffits with cyma moldings and a bargeboard which is treated as a cornice.

The east and west elevations are virtually identical (photos 3, 4, 5, and 6). Each has three of the usual windows. An entablature like that of the front is used across both east and west elevations. Each side has four heavy scroll brackets.

The north elevation has no openings, save a single hexagonal vent to the upper left (east). The entablature is carried over to this side of the school. Electrical service was added to this wall at some point.

The steep gable roof of Schoolhouse #2 was originally slate. After a hail storm damaged the roof in 1970, corrugated sheet metal was installed.

The interior of Liberty Township Schoolhouse #2 consists of a single 25' x 35' room with two cloak rooms and entry foyers along the south wall. The cloak rooms were separate for boys and girls. Three transomed doors lead from the entry/cloak room section to the classroom (photo 13). Ceilings are 14' tall in the classroom, which is oriented so that students faced north. The plaster ceiling had deteriorated and was recently replaced with drywall. Upper walls retain plaster and floors are of hardwood.

Interior finishes are simple yet well-proportioned. There is a three foot car sided wainscot with chair rail around the entire classroom. A large chalkboard fills the north wall above the wainscot. Traces of chalkboard areas can be found on other walls. All openings are cased by plain boards and a pedimented lintel or header.

Although somewhat deteriorated after 117 years of exposure to the elements, Schoolhouse #2 retains a surprising degree of integrity.

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Liberty Township Schoolhouse 2  
Shelby County, Indiana

Liberty Township Schoolhouse #2 is significant within the context of public education in Shelby County, Indiana, 1824-c.1920, as the best preserved example of a typical district schoolhouse in the county. For its close association with the development of a significant educational trend (the district school system) and as fine example of a gable-front vernacular building with exceptional Italianate detailing, Schoolhouse #2 meets Criteria A and C.

The history of public education in Shelby County is largely tied to the development of the state educational system. The early history of education in Indiana was characterized by a series of acts and challenging lawsuits which reflected the concerns of educational reformers and, in opposition, the highly conservative values of many Hoosiers.

The Land Ordinance of 1785 and Northwest Ordinance of 1787 had set aside one section (#16) in each congressional township, the sale of which was to support schools. Use of these funds however remained in debate until 1852. The first public schools in Indiana were established under an 1824 act. The act provided for school districts, the right to establish schools, and the election of township trustees (Esarey, p. 290). The act established the basic district school system, yet it provided no funding. The "subscription" method of funding, whereby parents of students payed a yearly fee of about \$1.25 per pupil, was the only technique to fund schools until 1852.

The redrafting of the Indiana Constitution in 1851-2 provided an opportunity for educational reformers to assert their ideas on free public education. Following an 1849 state referendum that had overwhelmingly favored free schools, the 1852 Constitution mandated a state and local tax-supported educational system for Indiana. Richard Boone notes that a number of schools were built soon after 1852, but during the 1850s, several Indiana Supreme Court cases severely damaged the 1852 system:

Within the first five years of the new law (1852-57) there were built throughout the State more than 2,700 schoolhouse...but prohibited from using local funds and with meager revenues, with a meddling Legislature and a querulous Judiciary, the

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Liberty Township Schoolhouse 2  
Shelby County, Indiana

course of education, when not turbulent was obstructed. Schools were closed houses begun were left unfinished, contracts were broken, teachers left the State...The State had but an apology for a system. (Boone, p. 219)

To combat these problems, the State Legislature of 1867 and 1873 passed acts which reinstated the authority to collect local taxes for the purposes of building and maintaining schools. The 1873 law broadened the scope of local officials to collect taxes for old debts and doubled funding for schools. Districts were administered by trustees for each civil township, who in turn reported to a county superintendent. Each county superintendent reported to the state superintendent of public instruction. Teachers and superintendents were required to pass periodic examinations. The cornerstone of the system was the district school, which created a decentralized network of schools.

From uncertain beginnings in the early 1800s, the school system progressed rapidly in the late decades of the nineteenth century. As William Lynch states, public attention focused on education in Indiana and vast strides allowed a complete educational system to be established in the brief span of 1870-1890 (Lynch, pp. 109-130). Lynch called the period "The Great Awakening" in Hoosier educational policy.

The laws of 1867 and 1873 appear to have resulted in the replacement of many wood frame schools, as well as the construction of new schools in Shelby County. According to the State Superintendent's report of 1882, the period of 1866-1882 was a time of school rebuilding statewide. The report of 1882 indicates that more schools were built in 1874 than in any year since 1862 (Report, 1882, p. 11). The average number of schools built per year during the 1860s was over 600 and only 499 were built in 1874, however, the average cost of a building in the 1860s was \$500, as compared to \$1,500 in 1875. Thus, townships built more schools by spending less per school, fully expecting them to be replaced later.



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Liberty Township Schoolhouse 2  
Shelby County, Indiana

In Shelby County the new legislation was used effectively to replace existing schools. The Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory for Shelby County (1992, not yet published) found 23 extant district schools, none of which predate 1870. The number of schools remained somewhat constant in Shelby County. For example, there were 7 brick, 98 frame, and 6 log schoolhouses in 1863. By 1880, there were 58 brick, 64 frame, and no log schools. While the total number increased slowly, the proportion of brick schools to frame schools increased dramatically. This trend would continue in Shelby County throughout the 1800s. By 1879, the Shelby County superintendent could boast that

There is a schoolhouse on every three and one-third square miles, nearly, in Shelby County...The old half-rotted log and frame school-houses are being rapidly replaced by large handsome brick structures, conveniently arranged and comfortably seated. (Report, 1879, p. 266)

According to pattern books and survey data, one to two story public schools with four rooms or less, built from 1824 to c.1920, would best represent the period of the district school system in Shelby County. Rural schools of one classroom are especially helpful in documenting the county's educational history, since they vividly portray the highly decentralized nature of the 19th century district school system, in contrast to today's trend toward consolidation. Since the late 19th century was also an era of important educational reforms, a representative building should reflect the ideas of educational reformers as seen for example in America's Country Schools and School-Houses. To summarize, these authors recommended symmetrical plans, stone or brick construction, large double hung windows, and simple detailing. Finally, in order to qualify for the Register, a school should not have major additions or structural opening enlargements, since these alterations would change the simple plan and elevations of the structure. In addition, the interior should still convey the concept of a one room schoolhouse, without modern, tall partitions. Schoolhouses which have been moved recently will usually not be eligible, since placement of the school was a key factor in the establishment of district schools.

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Shelby County, Indiana

Liberty Township Schoolhouse #2 embodies all of the above characteristics and associations needed to consider the building eligible under the defined context. School #2 was built in 1875 during the school replacement/building era. It is a one room, simple masonry building that reflects recommended 19th century standards. Of the 28 district schools located by the Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory for Shelby County, School #2 appears to have the best integrity. Of special interest are the separate sex entrances and cloak rooms, often recommended by 19th century authorities, yet only occasionally seen on Hoosier schoolhouses.

Schoolhouse #2 was one of six schools built in the county in 1875. #2 seems to have been a "new" school, that is, prior to its construction, no school existed at that intersection. Township trustee Jasper Heck (a local farmer who served several terms as a trustee) commissioned the Meltzer Brothers to erect the schoolhouse. The Meltzer family emigrated to America from Germany in 1857, settling in Shelby County. The family established the village of Meltzer in Liberty Township, several miles due north of the schoolhouse site. Several family members soon became known as builders, and they are credited with completing a number of buildings in Shelby County. Land was obtained from John J. Haehl for the site.

Classes were held in School #2 until c.1919. As early as 1900, the State was encouraging county superintendents to consolidate rural schools. Centralization allowed the creation of graded schools. Improved transportation and declining rural enrollment also contributed to consolidation. Yet, a number of one room schools (especially in Southern Indiana) remained in use until the 1920s, 30s, or even 40s. Shelby County schools seem to have been consolidated by about 1920.

Liberty Township Schoolhouse #2 has architectural significance as well. #2 is a fine example of the gable-front vernacular, a once common building type in rural Indiana. The level and quality of detail seen on #2 is unusual for most Central Indiana schoolhouses. Specifically, the use of heavy scroll brackets,

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scalloped frieze, and oculus vent make Schoolhouse #2 a good example of Italianate architecture. Several other schools in the county from this period feature similar bracket work and details; one could speculate that the same builder designed them. Schoolhouse #2 is very similar to "design 3" in James Jhonnot's School-Houses of 1871 (see copy). It is unknown if this pattern directly inspired Schoolhouse #2, however.

After #2 closed in c.1919, the Meltzer family purchased the site and moved an older sawmill from Meltzer to its current location behind the school. Presumably, this was to take advantage of site's location on a State Route. A wagon repair shop was operated in the school. A lathe and other equipment were installed in the school. More recently, the school was used for storage. Within the past few years, the old woodworking equipment has been removed along with storage materials. The damaged ceiling has been replaced with drywall. Plans call for some type of commercial establishment to be opened in the school.

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Bibliography

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Shelby County, Indiana

Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.  
Indianapolis: State Printing, 1852-1920.



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Liberty Township Schoolhouse 2  
Shelby County, Indiana

### 10. Geographical Data-continued

#### Verbal Boundary Description

A parcel of land in Shelby County, Liberty Township, Indiana, described as follows: Starting at the intersection of State Route 244 and County Road 600 East, at the northeast corner of said intersection where the right-of-ways of said roads meet, proceed east along the north right-of-way of State Route 244 to a point on a north-south line in line with the U.S.G.S. benchmark, then proceed north along a north-south line which passes through said benchmark to a point in line with an east-west line parallel to, yet 5' south of the south wall of the sawmill, then proceed west along said line until the east right-of-way of County Road 600 East is encountered, then proceed south along said right-of-way to the point of origin. Refer also to sketch map.

#### Boundary Justification

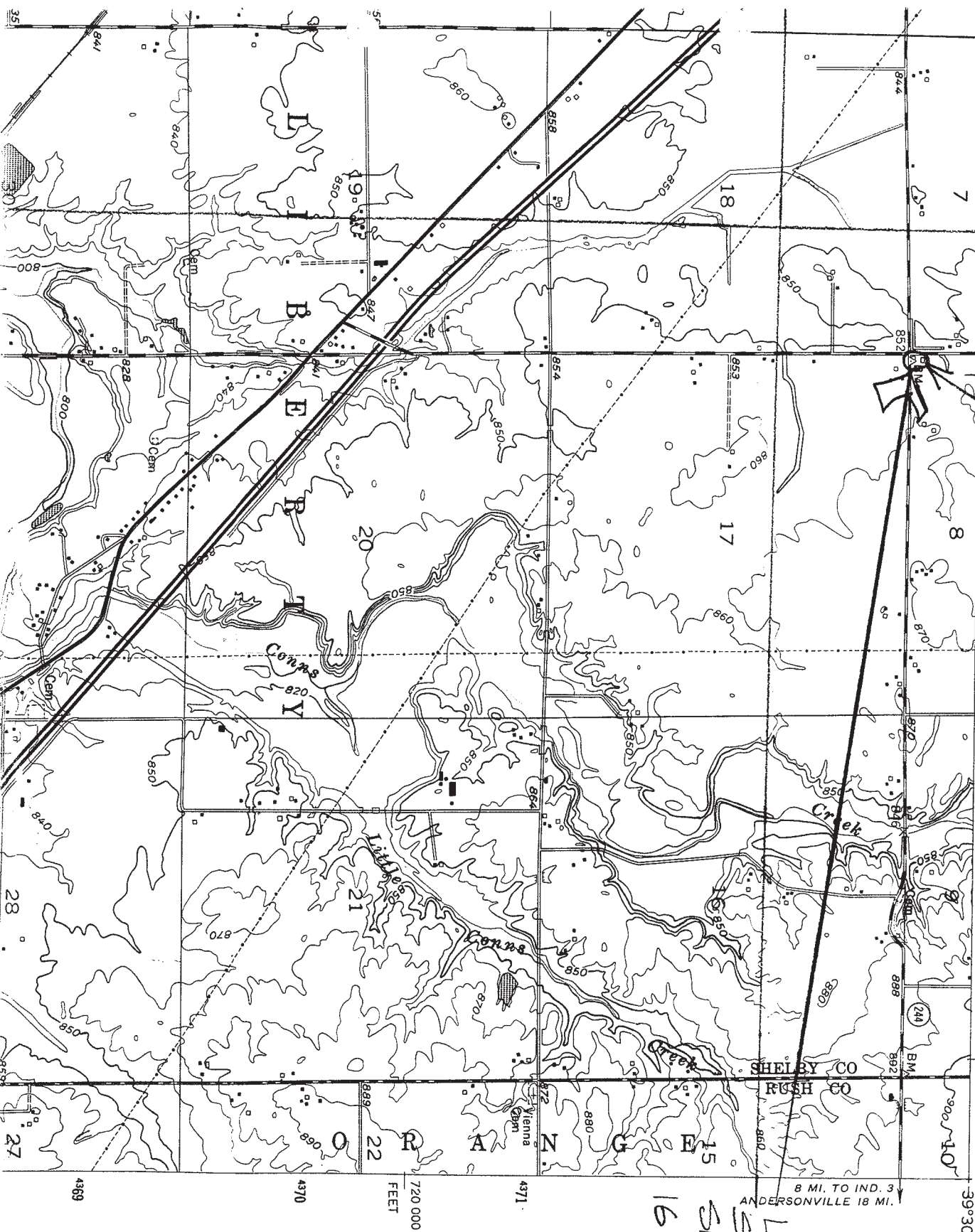
The boundary includes all the resources associated with the historic schoolhouse. A small open area just east of the school still has the water pump and well and likely served as a playground. Trees which may have been planted to shade the school during its active years (granted their apparent age) are also included by this boundary. An old sawmill which is not significant under the theme of education is not included.

INDIANA  
OF CONSERVATION  
INDIANA  
E. R. 8 E.

OLD MC COLLEY  
SCHOOL HOUSE NO. 2

WALDRON QUADRANGLE  
INDIANA  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

510 000 FEET  
85°37'30"  
39°30'



LIBERTY TWP  
SCHOOL HOUSE #2  
SHELBY CO., IN  
16445804372620

3883 11 SE  
(MANILLA)