

FINAL

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 of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name District School #3  
other names/site number Rock Creek Township School #3; Election School; Martin School;  
015-084-00067

### 2. Location

street & number County Roads 750 North and 100 West, SE corner  N/A not for publication  
city, town Rockfield  vicinity  
state Indiana code IN county Carroll code 015 zip code 46923

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.

*Richard H. ...* 2-4-88  
Signature of certifying official Date

Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

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

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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

## 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: school

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls BRICK

STONE: limestone

roof ASPHALT

other WOOD

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The District #3 School of Liberty Township, Carroll County, Indiana stands at the southeast corner of two county roads, 750N and 100 W. The school was built in 1874. The level terrain of the immediate area is largely devoted to agriculture. The building is aligned to the cardinal points of the compass; its north and west facades are parallel to the intersecting roads, with a gravel road to the west, and a paved road to the north. The schoolhouse is a one story gabled brick structure in a simple rectangular plan, with the entrance located in the north gable end. Although not directly attributed to one particular style in overall design, the exterior details do recall several nineteenth century architectural styles. The plain frieze and low-pitched gable of the exterior, for example, recall the Greek Revival style, while the segmental arches, blind oculus, and interior window and door surrounds are somewhat reminiscent of Italianate architecture. The result is a simple and well proportioned example of typical late nineteenth century schoolhouse architecture.

The main facade faces north. (See photos 1 and 2). The schoolhouse is of load-bearing red brick construction, with a foundation of rough-cut random coursed fieldstone. The three bay, symmetrical north facade has walls of red brick laid in American common bond. The central bay is the main entry. The structural opening consists of a segmental arch with three courses of header voussoirs, the top course being of a darker brick, with the bottom course recessed. A limestone sill and single step lead to the entry. The step was placed there by the current owner and is not original. The doorway has a deep reveal and is filled by a door and a single-light transom. The door is divided into four beveled panels; longer panels are placed above shorter panels, separated by a wide rail. The transom and door are original. Two windows flank the main entry, one on each side. The window openings have a triple coursed segmental arch matching the main entry aperture, and plain limestone sills. Four-over-four doublehung sash windows are used in the window apertures. The top rail of the sash is flat and a wood infill matches the curve of the arch. All window frames are original, but the sash are not. The window sash had been destroyed by vandals before the current owner acquired the building. A 1900 photo indicated four-over-four sash. The owner has replaced the windows using wood doublehung sash with an interior grid giving a "four-over-four" appearance. The flat arch infill is original. Centered over the main entry in the gable area, one finds a blind oculus formed by a round course of header bricks with a stone roundel. The roundel bears the inscription "District Number 3 1874." A low pitched front facing gable roof spans the schoolhouse. The roof trim consists of a simple raking cornice with a wide plain frieze. The roofing consists of modern asphalt shingles laid to resemble wood shingles. The original wood shingles were severely deteriorated and had to be replaced.

See continuation sheet

## 8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1874-1900

Significant Dates

1874

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Rock Creek Township School #3 is a well-preserved example of a typical rural schoolhouse of the late nineteenth century. The school is one of many built as a result of State legislation passed in 1867 and 1873, yet today is one of only four remaining schools of the 1800s which received outstanding ratings in the Carroll County survey. Historically, School #3 is significant to Carroll County as a representative of the rural district school period, which was the basis of most public education in the state from 1824-c.1900. Rock Creek School #3 is also important architecturally as a relatively unaltered typical school design of the late 1800s.

The history of education in Carroll 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 first 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.<sup>1</sup> This law was important for establishing the basic district system, yet it provided no funds. The "subscription" method of funding, where 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 of free public education in the State. 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.<sup>2</sup> 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 schoolhouses...but, prohibited from using local funds and with meager revenues, with a meddlesome Legislature and a querulous Judiciary, the 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.<sup>3</sup>

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Trees: Eastern Region. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980, pp. 310-311.

Barhart, John D., Ph.D. and Carmony, Donald F., Ph.D. INDIANA, From Frontier to Industrial Commonwealth. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1954. Vol. II, Chapter on "Establishment of the Common-School System."

Boone, Richard G. A History of Education in Indiana. New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1892.

Cook, Locke. "109 Schools-1883-84." Manuscript in possession of Lewis N. Mullin.

"The County Board of Education," The Delphi Journal, April 30, 1873, page 3.

Esarey, Logan. History of Indiana. Indianapolis: Hoosier Heritage Press, Inc., 1970. (Reprint of 1918 original.)

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property Less Than One Acre

UTM References

A 

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

C 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

A Rectangular Tract of Land in the northwest quarter of the southwest quarter of Section 33, Township 26 north, range 1 west, commencing at the northwest corner of said quarter section, and running thence east eight (8) rods; thence south fifteen (15) rods; thence west eight (8) rods; thence north fifteen rods to the place of beginning; containing three-fourths of an acre.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The above boundary was drawn to include any possible resources associated with the schoolhouse including the school and cedar trees, without including surrounding farm fields.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title	Lewis N. Mullin, Attorney	date	March 5, 1987
organization	NA	telephone	317-564-3224/219-652-2663
street & number	R.R. #3, Box 164	state	Indiana
city or town	Delphi	zip code	46923

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 District School #3

The east elevation of the Number 3 schoolhouse has many of the same features as the north facade. The east side is symmetrical and has three bays with window apertures only. The window openings consist of a segmental arch with a double course of header brick. The bottom header course is inset slightly. Plain limestone sills complete the window opening. The sash are identical to the front windows. A plain iron tie-rod key is located in the upper right corner of the east facade. The side face of the gable is presented on this facade, with the same simple cornice and frieze as found around the entire structure.

The south (rear) facade has no apertures of any kind. A raking cornice with plain frieze fills the gable end. A single low chimney stack of brick is centered on this facade.

The west facade of Schoolhouse Number 3 is virtually identical to the east facade but with a plain, flat, iron tie-rod key located at the upper left corner.

The interior of Schoolhouse Number 3 relies on simple features for its decorative elements, as does the exterior. A frame wall divides the rectangular school into one narrow cloakroom at the north end of the building where the entrance is, and one larger open room with six windows.

The narrow cloakroom runs the entire width of the building and features the main entry and two windows on the exterior wall, and three doors on the interior wall (Photo 3). Walls are finished in plaster, and the floor is of oak tongue and groove boards. The plaster is original with some drywall patching. The trim in the cloakroom exemplifies the interior woodwork of Schoolhouse Number 3. The opening surround is formed of simple flat boards and can be described as a shouldered surround with a similar treatment at the bottom end. The upper shoulders have curved corners. The windows have a simple wood sill with a rounded stool and a narrow apron board. The baseboard consists of a flat wood piece with a quarter round molding at the base. Three doors lead to the main school room. The central opening is aligned with the front door and is lower. The doors are panelled and have cast iron latch hardware. The east and west doors are original and have four panels. The upper panels are longer than the lower panels with a wide center rail. The panels are beveled. The central cloakroom door is from the current owner's 1865 residence and has two vertical beveled panels.

The main room of the schoolhouse is rectangular in plan and has six windows. The woodwork of the classroom matches the cloakroom trim, including the design of the window surround: the same shouldered surround and baseboard are used consistently throughout the building. One of the most striking features of the main classroom is its segmental-arched, vaulted ceiling. The vault is covered in drywall nailed to the original arched ceiling ribs. The original finish was lath and plaster. Several ribs were replaced during restoration. The flooring is of oak tongue and groove boards on the east half of the room, and replacement pine flooring on the west half. The schoolhouse is heated by a centrally located cast iron stove with a stovepipe flue, which has been replaced as part of the restoration done by the current owner. The stovepipe enters the south wall where a single stack vents it to the outside.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2 District School #3

---

The grounds of the schoolhouse, as described previously, are of level terrain with agricultural uses closely abutting the yard. Two items of interest can be found on the grounds. A row of eleven eastern red cedar trees located along 100W at the west side of the school are an original landscaping feature of the grounds, possibly planted as a windbreak. An outhouse, water pump and orchard were once part of the school property but have since been removed. A small shed-roof structure housing a 1934 toilet stands about sixteen feet south of the schoolhouse. This structure was part of the current owner's renovation of the building.

The current owner, Lewis Mullin, acquired the building in 1985 and has restored it as a typical late nineteenth century rural school. He has added antique desks, the cast iron stove, and chalkboards to complete the restoration. The chalkboards have been restored using liquid slate, which was the original material.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1 District School #3

To combat these problems, the State Legislatures 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. The cornerstone of the school system under these laws was the district school, according to historian Logan Esarey.<sup>4</sup> From uncertain beginnings in the early 1800s, the school system progressed in a rapid manner in the late decades of the nineteenth century. As William Lynch states, public attention focused on education in the state and vast strides allowed a complete educational system to be established in the brief span of 1870-1890.<sup>5</sup> Lynch called the period "The Great Awakening" in Hoosier educational policy.

The laws of 1867 and 1873 appear to have brought about a building boom in replacement and new schools in Carroll County. According to the State Superintendent's report of 1882, the period of 1866-1882 was a time of school rebuilding statewide.<sup>6</sup> The report of 1882 indicates that more schools were built in 1874 than in any year since 1862.<sup>7</sup> Together with county histories already cited, data in the Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory substantiate this theory. The survey indicates a total of 25 pre-1940 schools still standing in the county. Of these 25, 17 were built before 1901, yet only one extant school was built before 1867. This would suggest that most of the schools of Carroll County may have been built between 1867 and 1900, including Rock Creek Township School #3. In 1872, Carroll County examiner L.E. Reynolds reported that "The trustees in nearly every township are turning their attention to the erection of new school houses..."<sup>8</sup> Reynolds noted in his 1874 report that "many new houses are being erected, nearly all of brick, and are convenient and substantial."<sup>9</sup> One local paper cited the building of new schools as one of the top priorities to be solved by the 1873 law.<sup>10</sup>

According to pattern books and survey data, one to two story public schools with four rooms or less, built from 1867 to c.1900, would best represent the period of rapid expansion of the public school system in Carroll County. Rural schools of one room (or one room with antechamber) 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 towards 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 school house, without modern partitions, and with most or all of its original detailing intact.

Rock Creek Township School #3 embodies all of the above characteristics and associations needed to consider the building eligible under the defined context. The building was built in 1874 during the school replacement period, as a one room, simple masonry building that appears to conform to recommended standards, and today exhibits a very high degree of integrity.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2 District School #3

The history of the school is well documented. Atlas maps from 1863 and 1874 show an earlier School #3 on the northwest corner of 750N and 100W, diagonally opposite the current building. Lewis Mullin, an ancestor of the current owner, was the trustee of Rock Creek Township during the 1870s. His account books indicate that in October of 1874, he spent two days "Superintending School house Building No. 3," which could refer to actual supervision of the work on the new school. Entries in November mention the procuring of stone for the school's construction, and another line records the sale of old schoolhouse #3. (Old school #3 is not extant.) Mullin's accounts back the theory that the new laws previously discussed resulted in many new schools in the area, since two other schools under construction are also mentioned. (The others are not extant.)

The school was known locally as the "Martin School," presumably after the donor of the school's site, and also as "The Election School," possibly after the building's temporary use as a voting poll. The function of "Voting Place" is mentioned on several maps.

Classes were held in the school until 1900. By this time, the State was encouraging a new policy of centralizing rural schools, so that graded institutions could be created. As with many rural schools of one room, Rock Creek School #3 was deemed obsolete and closed. The school now stands within Liberty Township due to the division of Rock Creek Township into Rock Creek and Liberty Townships in 1938.

Data found in the Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory of 1982 help to confirm the historic and architectural significance of the schoolhouse. At one time, 109 district schools existed in the county.<sup>11</sup> Today, only 17 pre-1901 schools have been located. Of these 17, all but two have been abandoned and are vacant; one has been adapted to residential use; and Rock Creek School has been restored as an 1800s schoolhouse. The Rock Creek School is the third oldest extant school in the county, and it is one of four pre-1901 schools noted as "Outstanding." The other three are vacant and deteriorated.

The architectural significance of the school is found in its typical design, details and plan. Elements such as the segmental arches and plain frieze of the exterior are typical schoolhouse details. Although the school generally resembles nineteenth century pattern books, the building's plan is quite similar to a specific plan published in the School Review<sup>12</sup> (later published as The American Journal of Education).

School #3 is also noteworthy for its architectural integrity. The interior and the exterior remain relatively unchanged. Most of the other extant schools in Carroll County built prior to 1901 have been either structurally altered by the enlargement of openings, or have lost their original doors and windows. The interior of School #3 remains as an undivided volume with original woodwork.

After the closing of District School #3 in 1900, the building was used for grain storage for many years. In recent times, the building was vacant and in a vandalized state. The current owner, Lewis N. Mullin, acquired the schoolhouse in 1985 and has since completed rehabilitation of the entire structure.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3 District School #3

1. Dora Thomas Mayhill, Postal and Allied History of Carroll County, Indiana (Knightstown, Indiana: Banner Publishing Company, 1954), page 101. See also Thomas B. Helm, History of Carroll County, Indiana (Chicago: Kingman Bros., 1882), page 142, and Logan Esarey, History of Indiana (Indianapolis: Hoosier Heritage Press, Inc., 1970 [reprint of 1918 original]), page 290.  
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.
2. Helm, pp. 143 and 329.
3. Richard Boone, A History of Education in Indiana (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1892), page 219.
4. Esarey, page 713.
5. William O. Lynch, "The Great Awakening," Indiana Magazine of History, XLI, 1945, pp. 109-130.
6. Thirtieth Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. (Indianapolis: William Burford, 1882), page 11.
7. Ibid. It should be noted that although the average number of schools built per year during the 1860s was over 600 and only 499 were built in 1874, the average cost of a school in the 1860s was \$500, as compared to \$1,500 in 1875. Thus, it seems that districts built more schools by spending less effort per school, full expecting many to be replaced later.
8. Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (Indianapolis: State printing, 1872.), page 163.
9. Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (Indianapolis: State printing, 1874 ), page 34.
10. "The County Board of Education," The Delphi Journal, April 30, 1873, page 3.
11. "109 Schools - 1883-4," compiled by Locke Cook.
12. Andrew Gulliford, America's Country Schools (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1984), page 188. The plan mentioned is included in the text, but no specific reference is given as to the exact issue and page number. The date given in the text is 1873.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1 District School #3

---

Gulliford, Andrew. America's Country Schools. Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1984.

Helm, Thomas B. History of Carroll County, Indiana. Chicago: Kingman Bros., 1882.

An Illustrated Historical Atlas of Carroll County, Indiana. Chicago: O. L. Baskin and Company, 1874, page 20.

Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory, Carroll County Interim Report. Indianapolis: Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, 1980.

Johonnot, James. School Houses. New York: J.W. Schermerhorn, 1871.

Lynch, William O. "The Great Awakening," Indiana Magazine of History. XLI, 1945, pp. 109-130.

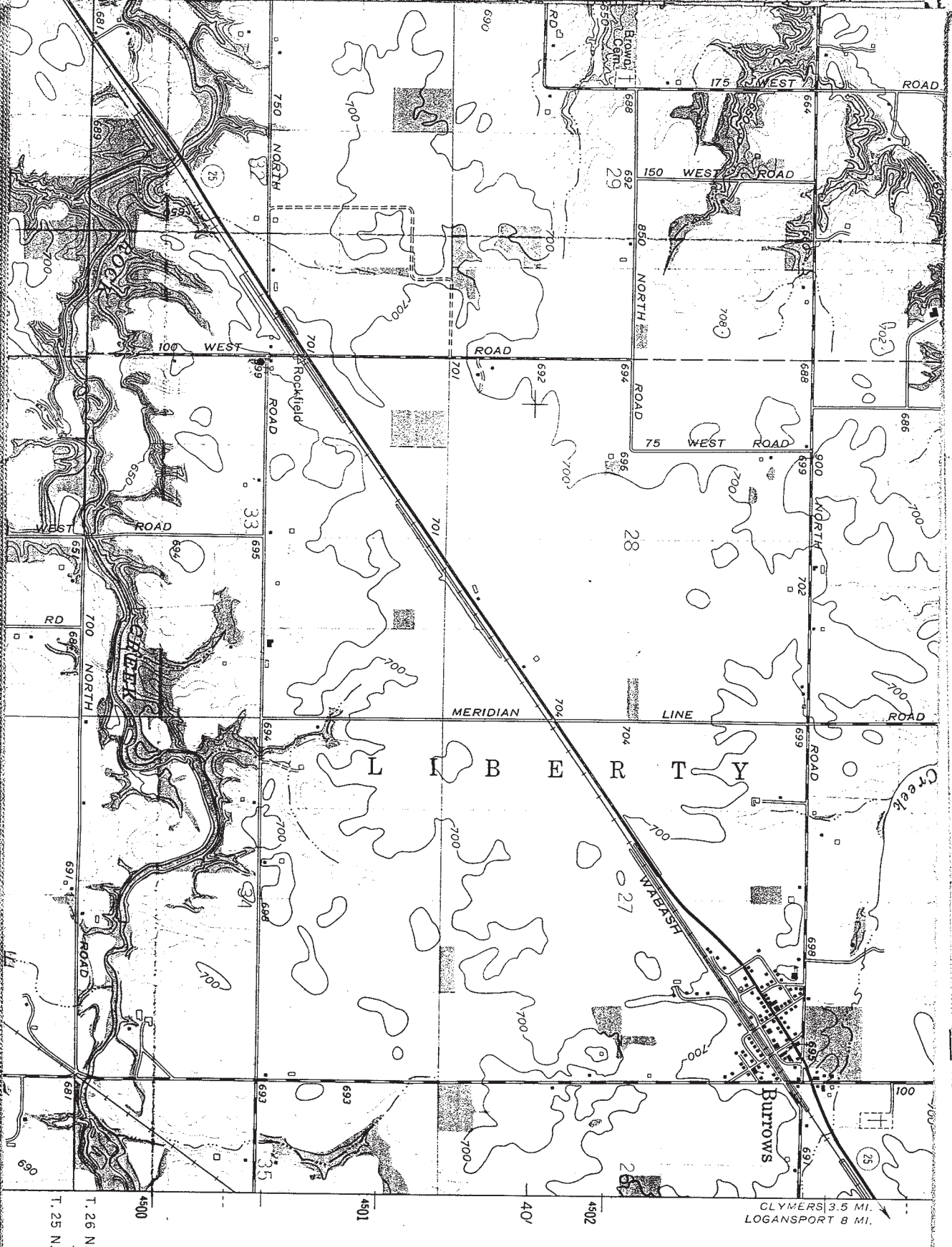
Madison, James H. The Indiana Way. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986.

Mayhill, Dora Thomas. Postal and Allied History of Carroll County, Indiana. Knightstown, IN: Banner Publishing Co., 1954.

Mullin, Lewis. Account books, 1874. Unpublished manuscript, collection of Lewis N. Mullin.

"The Recent School Legislation," The Delphi Journal, April 16, 1873, page 2.

Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Indianapolis: State Printing, 1872, 1874, 1882, 1908, 1917.



DISTRICT SCHOOL #3  
 VIC. OF ROCKFIELD, INDIANA  
 16/538570/4500440

