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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

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 Wilbur School

other names/site number Wilbur Community Center

2. Location

street & number Wilbur Road na  not for publication

city or town Wilbur na  vicinity

state Indiana code IN county Morgan code 109 zip code 46151

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 R. Robb*

4-19-93

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

*Patrick Andrews*

5/27/93

Wilbur School  
Name of Property

Morgan County, Indiana  
County and State

**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
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
1	0	objects
3	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)

SOCIAL: meeting hall, clubhouse, civic

**7. Description**

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

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls BRICK

STONE

roof ASPHALT

other CONCRETE

**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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

Period of Significance

c. 1876-1943

Significant Dates

c. 1876

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

na

Cultural Affiliation

na

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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 #

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

Wilbur School  
Name of Property

Morgan County, Indiana  
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	5   4   3   9   6   0	4   3   7   3   7   2   0
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2			

3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4			

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 Loretta Allison

organization Wilbur Community Club date July 27, 1992

street & number P.O. Box 405 telephone 317-996-3169

city or town Monrovia state IN zip code 46157

### 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 Wilbur Community Center

street & number c/o Marguerite Miley, R.R. 2, Box 189 telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Monrovia state IN zip code 46157

**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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Wilbur School  
Morgan County, Indiana

Wilbur School is located in the rural small village of Wilbur, Gregg Township, Morgan County, Indiana. Gregg Township, as most of Morgan County, has gently rolling terrain punctuated by relatively deep wooded ravines. The schoolhouse site is level, however, the land drops sharply away from the site at the front of the school (about ten feet) down to narrow, winding Wilbur Road as it descends. This gives the impression that the school rests on a hilltop. Grassy yards extend to the north and west of the schoolhouse; during the 1800s and early 1900s, this was the playground for the school and is counted as a contributing site. The maple tree in the front yard was planted by students at the turn of the century. Near the front entrance is an iron water pump which is counted as a contributing object.

Wilbur Schoolhouse is a one story, brick, gable-fronted building having a rectangular plan. The foundation is of brick. Walls are of a variation of common bond brick, the row normally composed of headers in this case being of alternating stretchers and headers. Overall, the building has no particular architectural style, however, the double coursed segmental arched window and door lintels and the gable oculus are generally Italianate in inspiration. In 1950, a twelve by forty-one foot concrete block addition was added to accommodate a kitchen and restrooms for the building, which then became the Wilbur Community Center. The addition is most significant alteration to the building.

The main elevation faces south (photos 1 and 2). There are concrete steps which lead to the entrance. The central door is a replacement. Over the door is a sign which covers the transom, however, the segmental arch is visible. Near the apex of the gable is an oculus vent which once had a tree motif painted on a wood panel inside the opening. At the top of the gabled roof rests a square wooden louvered belfry. A portion of the concrete block addition is visible on the south elevation. Its low half gabled roof is finished with vertical board siding. The roof extends, creating a open porch which is nearly flush with the original south wall of the school. A post supports the corner. The addition has an entrance on this elevation and a pair of double hung windows.

The east elevation is mostly obscured by the concrete block addition (photos 3 and 4). Just above the roof line of the

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Wilbur School  
Morgan County, Indiana

addition, the segmental arches of the original schoolhouse windows are visible. The addition itself has (left to right) paired windows, a single window, and a solid door. A large chimney punctuates the roof; it was added in 1950. When viewed from the side, the chimney does not contact the original schoolhouse wall. The side of the gable roof of the school is seen on this elevation. Originally, it had wood shingles, asphalt shingles were added some time ago. In 1970, new asphalt shingles were installed.

The west elevation has seven symmetrically placed window openings (photo 7). All windows are four-over-four double hung sash, the lintels having the characteristic rowlock headers with the upper course projecting slightly.

The north elevation is a blank gable end with no openings (photo 5). There is a small concrete block addition with a shed roof to the left (east). The half gable end of the larger addition is visible to the left as well. It has two windows.

The interior of the Wilbur School consists of a single twenty-seven by forty-one foot room, with the addition adding a separate room for the kitchen. Originally, the school could be divided into two rooms by use of a folding wall screen covered with blackboards. During the 1930s, the folding partition was replaced by a studded wall. This wall was removed when the building became a community center in 1950. The schoolroom has fourteen foot ceilings finished with corrugated metal (photo 13). Pendant lamps (c.1920) provide lighting. Walls are plastered and have a low car sided wainscot on all walls. Openings have simple woodwork consisting of chamfered boards which have overlapping verticals. The south wall has the main entrance. The north wall has an original blackboard, but no openings. The west wall has seven windows with surrounds and wainscoting intact. The east wall originally had (left to right) a window, a door, and two windows. With the construction of the 1950 addition, all windows were removed, along with all surrounds, and openings were infilled and plastered. The wainscot remains intact. A door from the addition to the kitchen is placed where the side exterior door was located. The floor is of unfinished oak planks. Several antique school benches and desks which were original to the building remain in the classroom.

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Wilbur School  
Morgan County, Indiana

The addition houses a kitchen and has little interior features of interest, however, the original east exterior wall offers some indications of the school's original design. Although plastered smooth, recessed rectangles indicate where windows were located.

Wilbur School retains a reasonable degree of integrity. The addition detracts from the school's architectural significance, however, its interior integrity has been maintained. The classroom, in particular, retains its characteristic plan and most details, with the exception of the east wall. The school still has the main features which characterize a typical Indiana rural one room school.

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Wilbur School  
Morgan County, Indiana

Wilbur School is significant within the context of public education in Morgan County, Indiana (c.1824-1940). Wilbur School is the only example left of a one room district school in Gregg Township of Morgan County. Wilbur School meets Criterion A for its association with the development of a significant educational trend, the district school system, and is a good example of the most typical property type illustrative of that trend, a one room rural school.

The history of public education in Morgan 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 reflects 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 surveyed township which could be used for educational purposes, or sold and the funds used for education. 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 1851-52 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 schoolhouses...but prohibited from using local funds and with meager revenues, with a meddlesome Legislature and a querulous Judiciary, the



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Wilbur School  
Morgan 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 was 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 the history of public education in Indiana.

According to the State Superintendent's report of 1882, the period of 1866-1882 was a time of school rebuilding statewide. The 1882 report 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 per 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 with brick structures later.

Between 1860-1880, the state legislation was used to replace existing schools. Gregg Township had six schools in 1861, including a school at Wilbur. The Eleventh Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction (1861) indicated that school legislation was revised by the General Assembly that year. Section 35 of the law encouraged schools in remote districts. In 1872,

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Wilbur School  
Morgan County, Indiana

Gregg Township had nine schools, eight of which were frame construction. The 1872 report called for schools in poor condition to be replaced with brick or stone buildings. Within about four years, a new brick schoolhouse was erected at Wilbur.

The site on which Wilbur School stands has been associated with education in Gregg Township since 1852. In that year, a log school was erected. The village of Wilbur developed around the school, according to Blanchard's History of Morgan County, Indiana. By 1884, Blanchard indicates that Gregg Township had three such villages, including Wilbur. At that time, Wilbur had several stores, several blacksmiths, a carpenter, a saw mill, a post office, and six to fifteen families. The village had been named after a postal official named Wilber (different spelling).

By 1864, the log school had been replaced by a frame building. In about 1876, the present Wilbur School was erected. Wilbur School was always selected for improvement because of its reputation. Also, its village location probably placed a constant demand for new and better facilities on the school.

Another educational event associated with Wilbur School is the teacher's institute. "Institutes" were part of the 1873 state school law. Teachers in each township were to attend these lectures and presentations to increase their own knowledge. Presenters were critiqued by the audience. One such institute was held in the Wilbur School on January 27, 1877. Subjects discussed included "Moods and Tenses of Grammar", "Clothing, Diet, and Ventilation" for pupils, and a penmanship demonstration.

Classes were held in Wilbur School until the mid 1940s. As early as 1900, the State encouraged county superintendents to consolidate rural schools. Centralization allowed the creation of graded schools. Improved transportation and declining rural enrollment aided consolidation. Yet, a number of one room schools (especially in southern Indiana) remained in use until the 1940s.

A survey of one-room schools in Morgan County was recently completed. Out of the nearly 100 which once stood, only about 35 district schools now stand in Morgan County. The county has more surviving schools than most Indiana counties. However, most have been altered by conversion to residential

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Wilbur School  
Morgan County, Indiana

or commercial uses, usually resulting in interior modifications. One other school, Cross School, located south of Martinsville, is listed on the National Register (6-16-83). In Gregg Township, no other schoolhouses exist, leaving Wilbur School as the best example of a one room district school in the township.

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 Morgan County. Rural schools of one classroom 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 Johonnot's School-Houses. To summarize, educators recommended symmetrical plans, stone or brick construction, large double hung windows, and simple detailing. Generally, the best examples should not have additions or structural opening enlargements, since these alterations would change the simple plan and elevations of the structure. Perhaps more importantly, interiors should not have recent partitions or significantly lowered ceilings which would alter the volume of the classroom. Schoolhouses which have been moved recently are generally not eligible, since placement of the school was a key factor to the district system.

Wilbur School embodies most of the required characteristics and associations needed to consider it eligible for the National Register. While the addition does detract from the school's design, the basic structure remains intact. Its significant interior classroom is still a single volume which successfully conveys its original function. Also, the historical importance of Wilbur School as the best example of a district school in Gregg Township should outweigh the impact of the alterations. The school retains enough integrity to qualify for the National Register for its significance in the history of education.

After being vacant for about five years, Gregg Township trustees deeded the school to a private non-profit group, Wilbur

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Wilbur School  
Morgan County, Indiana

Community Center, Inc. on June 5, 1950. The school was converted to a community center and has remained so ever since. The school houses events such as public meetings, reunions, and auctions.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Freed, Patsy H. "Morgan County Articles of Historic Interest," Martinsville Daily Reporter, 1950, p. 35.

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Wilbur School  
Morgan County, Indiana

"Minutes of Special Meeting of the Advisory Board of Gregg Township, Morgan County, Indiana." Recorder's Office, Morgan County, October 21, 1952, Misc. Record No. 27, page 28.

Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Indianapolis: various printers, 1852-1920.

Stuttgen, Joanne. Letter to Paul Diebold, 3-17-93. Stuttgen is a graduate student at I.U., her thesis topic will be about one-room schools in Morgan County, Indiana.

"Their Golden Wedding," The Martinsville Republican, August 22, 1905.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

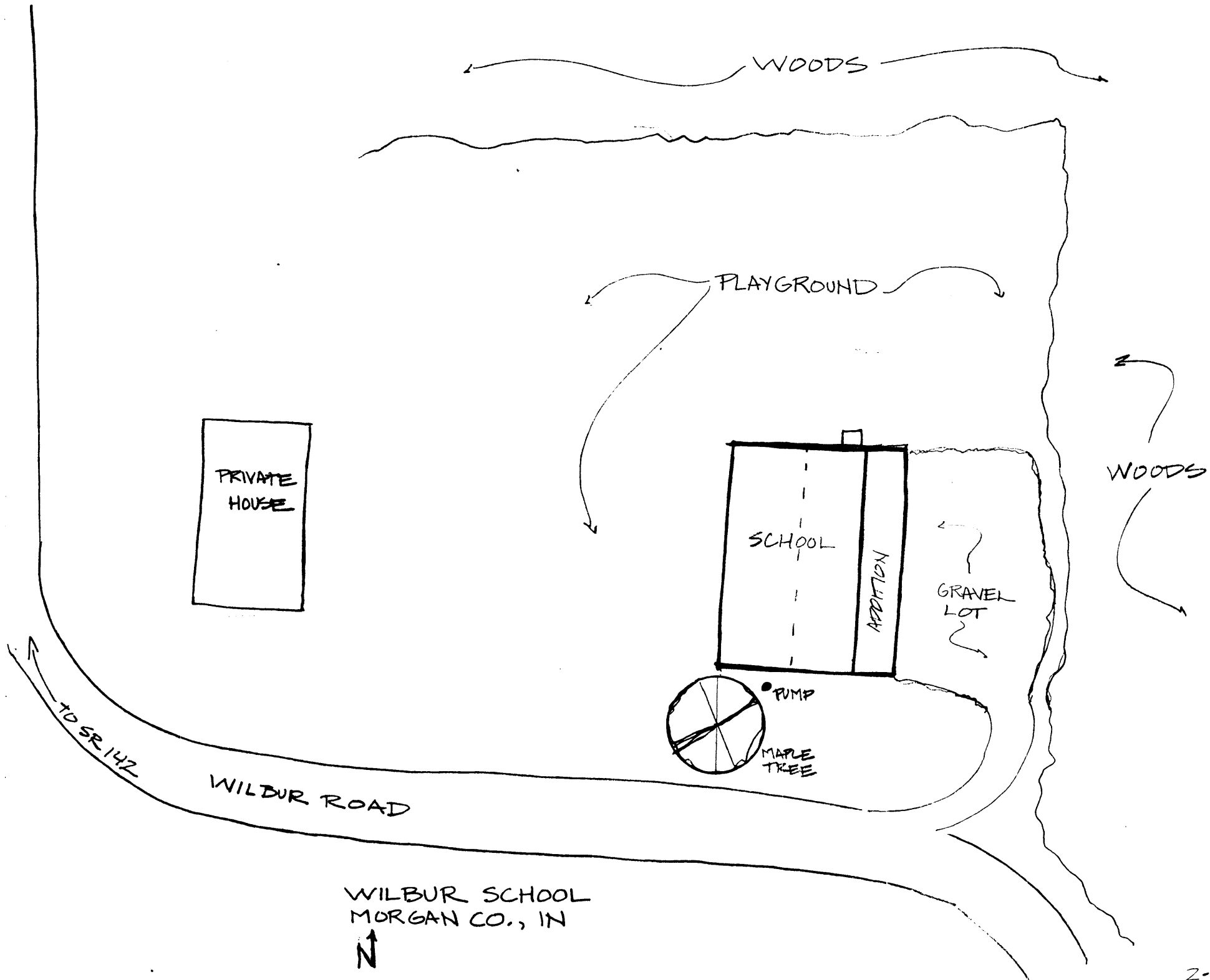
Beginning at the southwest corner of a lot of land deeded to the Methodist Episcopal Church, then proceed south 5 rods, thence east 16 rods, thence north 5 rods, thence west 16 rods to the place of beginning, this land being located in the east half of the southeast quarter of section 35, township 13 north range 1 east, in Morgan County, Indiana.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This is the historic property boundary and the legal property description on file in the Morgan County Courthouse.



Wilbur School, c.1930



WILBUR SCHOOL  
MORGAN CO., IN  
↑  
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