

41095



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Vandalia Methodist Episcopal Church and Vandalia School
Other names/site number: Vandalia Historical Chapel and Vandalia Schoolhouse

Name of related multiple property listing:
Indiana's Public Common and High Schools
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 5434 and 5465 Vandalia Road
City or town: Vandalia State: Indiana County: Owen
Not For Publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets
the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic
Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property 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
Applicable National Register Criteria:
 x A B x C D

[Signature] ASSISTANT DIR. OF PRES. SERVICES 4-25-19
Signature of certifying official/Title: _____ Date
Indiana DNR-Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

Vandalia Methodist Episcopal Church and
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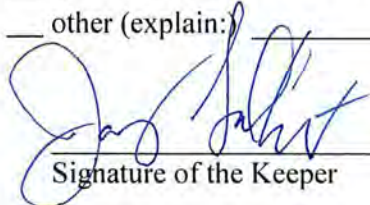
County and State

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:)


Signature of the Keeper

6-3-2019
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
-

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Site

Structure

Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION/Religious Facility
EDUCATION/School

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION & CULTURE: museum

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MID-19TH CENTURY/Gothic Revival

OTHER/Gable Front

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: stone, concrete

walls: wood

roof: metal

other: _____

Narrative Description

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

Summary Paragraph

The Vandalia Methodist Episcopal Church (5465 Vandalia Road) and Vandalia School (5434 Vandalia Road) are located in Lafayette Township, Owen County, Indiana. The properties are the only remaining structures from the unincorporated village of Vandalia, located west of State Road 46 and north of State Road 246. The contributing site includes extensive lawns extending to the south of the buildings. The church was constructed in 1895 in the Gothic Revival style, and the school circa 1864 in the Gable Front style. Each of the structures maintain a high degree of historic integrity.

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Narrative Description

The village of Vandalia is located northwest of the intersection of State Roads 46 and 246 in Lafayette Township, Owen County, Indiana. The Vandalia Methodist Episcopal Church and Vandalia School are the most significant surviving buildings in the unincorporated village.

The Vandalia resources include three contributing: the site, the Vandalia Methodist Episcopal Church building (5465 Vandalia Road), and the Vandalia School (5434 Vandalia Road). The site is considered contributing because of its integral nature to the functions of the church, school, and community, as discussed further in the statement of significance. The church and school buildings retain a high level of historic integrity, the church receiving an outstanding rating and the school a notable rating in the Indiana Historic Sites and Structure's Inventory.¹ The four small outbuildings on the site, three privies and a storage shed, are non-contributing; The privies have been recently rebuilt and the storage shed is of unknown vintage, however, they are small, ancillary structures and do not detract from the historic value of the site. Nomination of the church and school together reflects the role the structures played in the community life of the town, discussed further in the statement of significance.

Site, Contributing

The lots that make up the church and school property flank Vandalia Road, the school property to the northwest and the church property to the southeast (see Property Detail Map). Both properties are largely lawn to the south, with the relatively small buildings to the north. The church property has been at its current dimensions since 1895. The southern portion of the school property was added in 1931. The site was used extensively by the community as described in the Statement of Significance.

Vandalia Methodist Episcopal Church 1895, Gothic Revival, Contributing

The church property includes a portion of lot 7 and lots 8, 9, and 10 of the original plot of Vandalia (Photo 1). The church building sits on lot 8 and the southern portion of lot 7 provides a small buffer lawn with the neighboring property (Photo 2). To the south, lots 9 and 10 consist of a lawn and a gravel parking area (Photo 3). The property extents are marked by corner sections of white picket fence. Entrance to the property is gained by a half-circle gravel drive at the front of the church. A circa 1997 sign is located in the grassy area within the drive (Photo 4). A privy sits behind the church (Photo 5).

The gable-front church is clad in original lap siding with a metal roof, installed circa 1995. A bell tower emerges from the southeast corner of the church and serves as the entry. The main

¹ Indiana Department of Natural Resources State Historic Architectural and Archaeological Research (SHAARD) Database. Available online at <http://www.in.gov/dnr/historic/4505.htm>.

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building has a dry-stack stone foundation and the bell tower has semi-circular concrete steps wrapping the structure, leading to the entrances. There are two entries on the bell tower; The south entry has a tall narrow, six-panel wood door with a gothic-arch transom above. The east entry has similarly configured paired doors and a gothic-arch transom extending over both doors. All transom windows, above the doors and windows, have wood tracery and are glazed with textured glass; the outer panels tinted rose and the inner tinted blue. Circular vents with decorative pierced openings sit near the top of the bell tower. Above, the bell-level is enclosed with wood-paneled knee-walls and a series of gothic-arched openings with decorative pendentives hanging from the center of the arch. The bell wheel is visible from the east. The bell tower is covered by a pyramidal roof with flared eaves.

On the main building, simple linear brackets support the eaves. A circular vent, pierced with 1895, sits in the gable. A set of three wood double-hung windows with transoms, sits at the center of the façade. Four similar, single windows are evenly spaced across the south and north elevations. The west elevation lacks fenestration, but has a round vent opening and roof brackets similar to the façade (Photo 6).

On the interior, the bell tower forms a vestibule, with wood plank floors, wallpaper covered plaster walls, and a painted wood plank ceiling. Simply milled wood accents on the interior include door surrounds, shoe-mold and crown mold with pendentives at the corners. An electric light with milk glass pendant hangs in the center of the ceiling. The bell pull is located at the northeast corner of the vestibule. Two sets of wood panel doors lead to the sanctuary: paired double doors with transoms on the west wall and a narrower single door on the north side (Photos 7 and 8).

The sanctuary is oriented with the chancel at the west (Photos 9 and 10). At the far east end, the wood plank floor is level forming a narthex. In the nave, the floor slopes gently to the chancel. The chancel is raised 20" above floor level. A single step between the two levels also serves as a kneeling point at the communion rail. Carpet runners line the narthex and center and front aisles and the chancel step. The chancel has a low railing of turned posts and a wood plank floor. The west wall of the church, at the chancel, has gothic-arch wood trim, mirroring the triple windows on the east wall. The wood pews in the nave came from another church in the area.

The lower portion of the church walls are clad in original wood wainscoting and the upper portion is covered with 4x8 vinyl-faced Masonite sheets with matching joint trim. A fiber-sound drop ceiling with metal rails sits below the original wood plank vaulted ceiling. Historic light fixtures hang below the drop ceiling from escutcheons and chains attached to the original ceiling. The plaster wall area above the drop ceiling has remnants of wallpaper.

A privy (non-contributing) sits behind the church on a concrete foundation (Photo 5). The privy is sheathed in clapboard siding and has a corrugated aluminum roof. The simple board door is hung by strap-style hinges. The date of construction is unknown, but appears to be within the last 50 years.

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Portions of an earlier church on the property have been integrated into the current structure. Hand-hewn poplar timbers provide corner posts for the tower. Trusses on the current structure came from split boards of the earlier church.²

Vandalia School circa 1864, Gable Front, Contributing

The Vandalia School lot is located on the east side of Vandalia Road, with its rear lot-line at State Road 46 (Photo 11). The school building sits at the northwest edge of the lot with a gently rolling lawn to the south (Photo 12). Two reconstructed privies (non-contributing, Photo 13) sit behind the school at the northeast corner of the property, and a shed (non-contributing, Photo 14) sits to the north of the school.

The Vandalia School was built circa 1864. The building consists of the gable-front main school structure with an attached gable-front vestibule in front topped by a cupola. A green standing seam metal, installed circa 1995, sheathes the roof. The building is clad in white lap siding original to the school, with few replacement boards. A deep frieze board below the eaves returns at the gable ends. Wide corner boards are finished with moldings, making them pilaster-like. The main portion of the building sits on a stone foundation and the vestibule portion sits on concrete blocks. Four double-hung wood windows are evenly spaced along the north and south elevations (Photo 15). Windows and the door have plain surrounds, with moldings on the header boards, implying an entablature. The wood window sashes date to the period of the school's active use, and possibly to the date of the early 1900s vestibule addition. The vestibule on the façade has a central entry with a half-light wood panel door and transom. Two wood double-hung windows flank the entry. The cupola has wood vents on all four sides and contains a school bell.

The interior of the vestibule has painted beadboard wainscoting to chair-rail height (Photos 16 and 17). The remaining portion of the walls and the ceiling are composed of fiber insulating board held in place by wood battens. The ceiling height is just over 9'. The floor is composed of 3" wide wood planks, running east to west. The door leading to the school room is a wood three-panel, half-light door. The three vertical panels are repeated in the divided-light sash.

The interior of the main school house (Photos 18 and 19) is clad in the fiber insulating board and wood battens similar to the vestibule. Blackboards line the east and west walls placed approximately 24" from the floor level and extending 36" tall. On the east wall the center portion of the blackboard extends to approximately the height of the windows. Nail and siding patterns on the east elevation indicate a former window opening. The ceiling height is approximately 11'6". A hatch located near the east elevation provides access to the attic. The wide plank flooring runs north to south. A cast-iron heating stove sitting on a metal plate occupies the center of the room. The wood stove, desks and tables in the school are not original to the building.

² "Methodist Church, Vandalia, Indiana," Memoir of R.A. Gillis, Vandalia Church History Records, Vandalia Community Preservation Association, Spencer, Indiana.

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Evidence of two eras of construction exist on the schoolhouse. The difference in foundation materials on the main portion of the school and the vestibule (visible when zooming in on Photo 15), stone and concrete block, indicates that the vestibule was built sometime after the school. Several elements of mid-nineteenth-century construction techniques were found when a restoration project was undertaken in 1976, including hand-hewn joists connected to the floor plate by wooden pegs and square nails (Photo 20).³

Ancillary structures on the school property include two privies, located behind the school, and a storage shed, located to the north of the school. Privies served the students while the school operated, however, the two currently on the property were rebuilt circa 2015. The date of construction of the storage shed is unknown.

In 1976, the surrounding community joined efforts to restore the school. The restoration included repairs to the foundation and windows, new paint, and a new roof.⁴

³ Vandalia School History Collection, displayed on the school wall, Spencer, Indiana.

⁴ Spencer Evening World, "Restored Vandalia School Open House Set October 7," 9/28/1976, page 1.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture
Education

Period of Significance

1864-1951

Significant Dates

Significant Person (last name, first name)
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder (last name, first name)

Gillis, R.A.

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Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance for the Vandalia Methodist Episcopal church and Vandalia School begins with the construction of the oldest structure, the school circa 1864, and ends with the close of the school for educational purposes in 1951, although the building continued to be used as a community center and polling place into the 1990s. The period also encompasses the significant era for the Vandalia Methodist Episcopal Church. The congregation ceased meeting in the church in 1995.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

The Vandalia Methodist Episcopal Church was used as a religious institution during the period of significance. The church contributes significantly to the story of the community of Vandalia, illustrating the development of Methodism in Indiana and the history of its related women's organization. The church building is an excellent example of Gothic-Revival architecture and is the physical embodiment of a typical rural community church.

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

The Vandalia Methodist Episcopal Church and Vandalia School reflect broad patterns of the history of small towns that existed throughout the Midwest during the 1800s, but fell to obscurity through the vagaries of railroad and highway construction and population settlement. The church and school buildings and site served the residents for religious and educational purposes and as community gathering spaces. The resources are significant under Criterion A and C, in the areas of Education and Architecture. The Vandalia Methodist Episcopal congregation occupied the church building from 1895-1995, after having originally settled on the property in 1859. Land for the Vandalia School was acquired in 1863 and the school built shortly after. The school remained open through the 1950/1951 school year, and for several years after served as the site for voting and public gatherings. The church was designed in the Gothic Revival style by R. A. Gillis, an architect born and raised in the Vandalia area. The schoolhouse meets the registration requirements established in the multiple property document Indiana's Public Common and High Schools. In 1995, Vandalia Community Preservation Association took over maintenance of both buildings, and is the owner of the chapel. The group hosts public and private events at both buildings.

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

The town of Vandalia was laid out in 1839 by Joseph Cochran and Jacob Hicks on either side of Bowling Green Street (now Vandalia Road) and Spencer Street (now State Road 246).⁵ Although described as “quite a town” in the early days; with four general stores, one hotel, two blacksmith shops, a wagon maker, a cabinet maker and two churches; by 1915 the only remaining structures from the early days were the old hotel building and the home of Rueben Cassida. One general store, run by Mr. Kay the postmaster, and two churches serving less than 100 citizens remained.⁶

Education

The school meets the registration requirements for a “one-room schoolhouse” under the multiple property form Indiana’s Public Common and High Schools. It was a publicly funded school, its exterior is intact, and the interior vestibule and classroom are largely unchanged. The vestibule addition was made during the building’s period as a schoolhouse. The Vandalia School serves as the physical reminder of the evolution of education in the township. The history of the school system in Lafayette Township follows that of the Indiana district school system created under the 1852 Indiana School Code, as described in the *Indiana’s Public Common and High Schools* multiple property documentation form. At least three log school buildings had been constructed Lafayette Township between 1839 and 1847. The township was divided into districts in 1855. In 1863, James Davis and his wife Ellen sold lot 34 in Vandalia for \$25 to Samuel Taylor, Trustee of Lafayette Township and the Vandalia School was built soon after. By 1884 there was a school house in each district.⁷ Vandalia was the only organized town in Lafayette Township, near the center of the township, making it the ideal location for a school to serve the most number of students.

Children were educated in the Vandalia School building for nearly 90 years. The range of subjects and all classes were taught by a single teacher. As state requirements for teachers licensure changed, the teachers at Vandalia complied with the mandate. Lot 34, where the school was located, was a narrow town lot and didn’t leave room for recess. In 1931, Nellie Powell, a former and future teacher, sold lots 35 and 36 for \$1.00 to the Trustees of Lafayette Township, creating a play yard for the students. Trustees updated the school when possible, installing electric lights and a new floor in 1942. The State Department of Education school inspection report in February, 1942 cited the community interest in the school. The State

⁵ Blanchard, page 820. Field Notes of Town of Vandalia (church records at DePauw).

⁶ Owen County Democrat, “Vandalia,” 7/8/1915, page 3.

⁷ Charles Blanchard, *Counties of Clay and Owen, Indiana: Historical and Biographical*, Chicago: F.A. Battey & Company, 1884, page 822. Paul C. Diebold, “Indiana’s Public Common and High Schools.” National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, page E-4. Nancy Wilkinson Evans, “History of the Vandalia School,” Master’s Thesis, Indiana State University, 1978, appendices.

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Superintendent of Schools called for the closing of one-room schools in 1898, and the 1947 Inspection Report noted that the school should be considered for elimination. The Vandalia School remained open through the 1950/1951 school year. The school desks, books and supplies were removed to the Patricksburg schools.⁸

The school house served as a community gathering place during its tenure as a school and after it closed. Political speaker, Mr. Byrd, held a grand and demonstrative meeting with martial and glee club music in 1888. In 1918 Homer Hendershot, the teacher, produced a program of readings and music at the end of the school year. The audience gathered at noon and had brought dinner baskets to serve the noon meal. After lunch there were closing exercises featuring music by a string orchestra of "patrons of the school," and songs by the pupils. A county health meeting was held on August 21, 1923, to give instructions to mothers and weigh and measure the children. In 1922, the Vandalia community held the play, "A Poor Married Man," featuring Carrie Johnson, the teacher at the school. During the 1908 election, Democrat Hon. W.A. Cullop spoke at the Vandalia school house on October 14.⁹

Architecture

The Vandalia ME Church and Vandalia School are excellent examples of late-nineteenth-century rural architecture. The church was designed by R.A. Gillis.

R. A. (1872-1960) Gillis was born in Lafayette Township. He spent some time in Terre Haute, Indiana in the late 1890s and moved to Fairmont, West Virginia between 1898 and 1900. In Fairmont, his work was prolific, especially during the period 1904-1914.¹⁰ Gillis' designed the Mount Vernon Dining Hall at the Jackson's Mill State 4-H Camp in Weston, WV.¹¹

The Vandalia ME Church is designed in the Gothic Revival style, typical of the rural interpretation. The Gothic arch windows which adorn the structure identify it with the Gothic Revival style. The Gothic Revival style became popular in the United States during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, as a resurgence of appreciation for the Christian Gothic architecture of the medieval period.¹² High Victorian Gothic was a later phase, and was an open interpretation of Medieval architecture. The belfry tower is the clearest example of the building's High Victorian Gothic influence. The church, however, also reflects the simple rural vernacular with the gable front massing grounded by the offset bell tower. The architect's use of

⁸ Diebold, page E-10. Evans, appendices.

⁹ Spencer Democrat, 10/4/1888, page 5. Spencer Owen Leader, "Vandalia School Closes," 3/27/1918, page 1. Spencer Owen Leader, "Health Notes," 8/15/1923, page 1. Spencer Owen Leader, "Vandalia Home Talent," 3/8/1922, page 5. Owen County Democrat, "Democratic Speakings," 10/1/1908, page 1.

¹⁰ Fairmont West Virginian, "R. A. Gillis," 10/22/1914, page 4.

¹¹ Courtney Flint, "Jackson's Mill State 4-H Camp Historic District," National Register Nomination, page 29.

¹² John C. Poppeliers and S. Allen Chambers Jr., *What Style Is It: A Guide to American Architecture*, Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2003, page 46.

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a raked floor and the diagonally-placed entries to the sanctuary could be interpreted as influences of the Akron Plan, a popular Protestant church trend in the 1890s.

The vernacular, gable-front architecture of the Vandalia School is typical of other one-room schools throughout Indiana. The gable-end returns visible on the Vandalia School add a classical detail, heavy Greek Revival cornice moldings. The evenly spaced windows along the north and south walls provided optimal light for the students. Addition of the vestibule reflects the ideas of S.E. Hewes, allowing for storage and outerwear.¹³

The Vandalia ME Church and Vandalia School are the best example of rural structures of their types and eras in Owen County. Two rural churches in Owen County are comparable to the Vandalia ME Church. The circa 1910 Saint Peter's German Reformed Church in Marion Township (119-113-45018) is a cross-gable wood structure with a bell tower and triangular transoms above the windows. The circa 1874 Mount Calvary Methodist Episcopal Church in Marion Township (119-500-46032) is a gable-front wood structure with gothic-arch transom windows. The central, octagonal bell tower and entry reflect a Romanesque Revival tradition. These churches reflect different eras of design, whereas the Vandalia ME Church is the best example of its type in Owen County.

The Vandalia schoolhouse is the oldest and most historically intact school building in the county. Two schools from the district school era remain in Owen County: the Santa Fe School in Montgomery Township (119-101-25008) and the Crisp School in Clay Township (119-677-60017). Both gable-front buildings, constructed circa 1880, have evenly spaced double-hung windows on the sides, but lack the classical gable end returns of the Vandalia schoolhouse. The Santa Fe school is now a private residence and the Crisp school is used for the township office of Clay Township. The later constructed Splinter Ridge School (circa 1927) in Lafayette Township, is oriented as a side gable structure with an attached vestibule portion on the front with two side-by-side entrances and a row of five windows across the back. The building sits next to a residential trailer and is in a deteriorated condition.

The Vandalia ME Church and Vandalia School are the only remaining physical resources from the Town of Vandalia. These buildings as well as the site give reference to the only town that incorporated in Lafayette Township, Owen County, Indiana.

Developmental History/Additional historic context information

The Vandalia Methodist Episcopal Church began in 1852 at the home of Elijah Powell, in Washington Township, east of Lafayette Township. The first trustees appointed were: William Thrasher, Henry Hayman, David Phipps, Elijah Powell and James Ward. The projected lot for the church was cited as, "a lot of land lying near the road running from Spencer to Bowling

¹³ Diebold, F-15, 16.

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Green.”¹⁴ However, on May 28, 1853, Elijah Powell and his wife Mariah sold a portion of their land in Washington Township, in Section 14 of Township 10 for \$5.00 to the ME Church. A log church was erected on the property and later became known as the Mt. Moriah church, in honor of Elijah Powell’s wife Mariah. The property was later deeded to Mt. Moriah Methodist Church.¹⁵

Although the church began on the Powell Farm, on October 1, 1859, Jeremiah and Mary Hall sold lot 8 in the town of Vandalia to the Trustees of the ME Church of Vandalia, fulfilling the anticipated location of the church in Vandalia. The original church constructed on the lot was described as having a “single hand-made door in the center of the front.” The exterior was clad in weatherboard with wide, yellow poplar, 1 ½” board sheathing, joined by wood ½” thick splines all on hand-hewn poplar frame work.¹⁶

In 1895, members of the VanDyke family sold lots 9, 10, 19, and 20, to the church for \$50.00. The same year, R. A. Gillis designed a new church. Gillis’s father George, a local stone mason, laid the foundation and other local men, including R.A. Gillis (the architect), Ed Ward and Ben Staley, provided the labor for erecting the church. Ed Joslin, a tinsmith from Spencer, applied the tinwork in the tower.¹⁷ The new structure was larger and grander, comparatively, to the original church.

The additional lots purchased from the VanDyke family provided a lawn space for revivals and picnics, and later for auto parking. In 1936 Ernest and Tilitha Rundell sold the south portion of lot 7 to the church for \$1.00, adding a buffer lawn on the north side of the church, as the building was constructed on the north edge of lot 8.¹⁸

The growth and change in the Vandalia ME church reflects the pattern of Methodism throughout the Midwest. Methodism began in England with John Wesley during the eighteenth century. The American colonies drew some of Wesley’s followers and the Methodist Episcopal Church in America organized in 1784. In Indiana, the faith was expressed among small groups of pioneers. As the church organized in the state, rotating, or itinerant clergy served the small congregations. These circuit riders met with local leaders occasionally to reinforce their faith. Their meetings and services were initially held in people’s homes or log churches, as at the Powell farm. During the mid-nineteenth century towns grew rapidly in Indiana. Ordained clergymen were assigned to a church when the congregation grew large enough. New frame and brick church buildings were

¹⁴ Deed Book 12, page 113.

¹⁵ Copy of deed dated April 13, 1852, Vandalia Church History Records, Vandalia Community Preservation Association, Spencer, Indiana. Deed Book 13, page 132, Owen County Deed Records, Spencer, Indiana. The Owen Leader, “Elizabeth Powell,” 12/19/1928, page 6.

¹⁶ Copy of Deed, Vandalia United Methodist Church Records, Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, Greencastle Indiana. “Methodist Church, Vandalia, Indiana,” Memoir of R.A. Gillis, Vandalia Church History Records, Vandalia Community Preservation Association, Spencer, Indiana.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

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built with the sole purpose of holding religious services. Although, in the late 1800s, larger more attractive churches were built in towns and cities and rural churches stagnated, the Vandalia congregation followed the later and built a larger church. The Great Depression brought a decrease in church membership and finances and rural churches faced great losses in numbers.¹⁹ The Vandalia ME Church, however, did not close until 1995.²⁰

Ladies Aid Societies organized within Methodist Churches as early as the 1850s. The initial focus of the societies was to raise money to establish the physical needs of the local churches: buildings, furnishings, repairs, and parsonages. The societies expanded their support internationally after the organization of the National Woman's Foreign Missionary Society in 1869. With the rapid growth of cities in the late nineteenth century, the mission field became the immigrants and factory workers closer to home.²¹

The Woman's Society of Christian Service (WSCS) of the Vandalia ME Church was active into the 1950s. Their purpose:

"...shall be to unite all women of the church in Christian living and service; to help develop and support Christian work among women and children around the world; to develop the spiritual life; to study the needs of the world; to take part in such service activities as will strengthen the local church, improve civic, community and world conditions."²²

The women met monthly at members' homes or the school after 1951. The all-day or afternoon meetings opened with devotions and prayer, often followed by a lesson, such as "Our Spanish Speaking Neighbors in the Southwest," or "Scientific Knowledge and Ways of Work in Different Parts of the World." After a community lunch, the women held a business meeting. At some meetings the morning was spent in fellowship over quilting, which raised funds for their charitable activities. The women supported needs locally, nationally and globally; at one meeting setting aside funds to repair the local parsonage, collecting clothing to send to Chicago, and donating funds to the tuberculosis hospital in Korea.²³

The church building and property provided the site for communal activities. For example, a basket meeting was held at the church on July 3, 1921. On January 14, 1923, the district

¹⁹ John J. Baughman, "United in Methodism in Indiana," presented at the South Indiana Conference United Methodist Historical Society, Depauw University, 4/27/1996, pages 3-6, 11, 15, 19. Available on line at www.depauw.edu/libraries/about/librarylocations/archives/methodism.

²⁰ Buckley to Whom it May Concern, March 14, 1995, Vandalia United Methodist Church Records, Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, Greencastle Indiana.

²¹ Baughman, page 13.

²² Minutes of the WSCS, page 1, Vandalia United Methodist Church Records, Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, Greencastle Indiana.

²³ Minutes of the WSCS, page 29, 11/1/1953; page 37, 3/10/1954; page 43, 11/9/1954, Vandalia United Methodist Church Records, Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, Greencastle Indiana.

Vandalia Methodist Episcopal Church and
Vandalia School

Owen County, Indiana

Name of Property

County and State

superintendent preached at the quarterly meeting and conference held in Vandalia. The 1920 all-day meeting at the church featured district superintendent W.H. Wylie preaching in the afternoon, as well as a "big dinner." An ice cream social held on July 4, 1918 benefitting the Red Cross. Another ice cream social was held at the church in 1923.²⁴ Prayer, food and fellowship fostered the congregation.

By 1995, attendance had dwindled to the point that few remaining active members voted to discontinue services and close the church. The Vandalia Community Preservation Association acquired the church, renamed "Vandalia Historical Chapel." Additionally, Vandalia Community Preservation Association maintains the schoolhouse, which continues to be owned by the township trustee. The group opens both buildings for various community events, meetings, and fundraisers, such as their Vandalia Strawberry Festival in June. The chapel is available for private rental use.

²⁴ Owen County Democrat, "Vandalia M.E. Church," 6/23/1921, page 11. Owen County Democrat, "Vandalia M.E. Church," 1/11/1923, page 1. Owen Leader, "All Day Meeting," 4/14/1920, page 1. Spencer Owen County Democrat, "Notice," 7/4/1918, page 4. Spencer Owen Leader, "Ice Cream Social," 7/18/1923, page 4.

Vandalia Methodist Episcopal Church and
Vandalia School
Name of Property

Owen County, Indiana
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Baughman, John J. "United in Methodism in Indiana." Presented at the South Indiana Conference United Methodist Historical Society, Depauw University, 4/27/1996. Available on line at www.depauw.edu/libraries/about/librarylocations/archives/methodism.

Blanchard, Charles. *Counties of Clay and Owen, Indiana: Historical and Biographical*, Chicago: F.A. Battey & Company, 1884.

Diebold, Paul C. "Indiana's Public Common and High Schools." National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form.

Evans, Nancy Wilkinson. "History of the Vandalia School." Master's Thesis, Indiana State University, 1978.

Flint, Courtney. "Jackson's Mill State 4-H Camp Historic District." National Register Nomination.

Indiana Department of Natural Resources State Historic Architectural and Archaeological Research (SHAARD) Database. Available online at <http://www.in.gov/dnr/historic/4505.htm>.

Owen County Deed Records, Spencer, Indiana.

Poppeliers John C. and S. Allen Chambers Jr. *What Style Is It: A Guide to American Architecture*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2003.

Vandalia Church History Records, Vandalia Community Preservation Association, Spencer, Indiana

Vandalia United Methodist Church Records. Archives of DePauw University and Indiana United Methodism, Greencastle Indiana.

Vandalia School History Collection, displayed on the school wall, Spencer, Indiana.

Vandalia Methodist Episcopal Church and
Vandalia School

Name of Property

Owen County, Indiana

County and State

Newspapers:

Fairmont West Virginian

“R. A. Gillis,” 10/22/1914, page 4.

Owen County Democrat

2/17/1921, page 8.

1/23/1919, page 1.

“Democratic Speakings,” 10/1/1908, page 1.

“Vandalia,” 7/8/1915, page 3.

3/14/1915, page 8.

“Vandalia Home Talent,” 3/8/1922, page 5.

“Vandalia M.E. Church,” 6/23/1921, page 11.

“Vandalia M.E. Church,” 1/11/1923, page 1.

“Notice,” 7/4/1918, page 4.

2/25/1915, page 4.

The Owen Leader

“Elizabeth Powell,” 12/19/1928, page 6.

Spencer Evening World

“Restored Vandalia School Open House Set October 7,” 9/28/1976, page 1.

Spencer Owen Leader

“Vandalia School Closes,” 3/27/1918, page 1.

“Health Notes,” 8/15/1923, page 1.

“The Anniversary Number,” 11/28/1923, page 1.

“All Day Meeting,” 4/14/1920, page 1.

“Ice Cream Social,” 7/18/1923, page 4.

“Pie Supper,” 11/17/1920, page 5.

Spencer Democrat,

10/4/1888, page 5.

“Democratic Speakings.” 10/4/1888, page 5.

Vandalia Methodist Episcopal Church and
Vandalia School
Name of Property

Owen County, Indiana
County and State

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): 119-605-40014-15

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property approx. 1.1 acres

Use the UTM system

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 16 | Easting: 511338 | Northing: 4351642 |
| 2. Zone: 16 | Easting: 511430 | Northing: 4351646 |
| 3. Zone: 16 | Easting: 511438 | Northing: 4351565 |
| 4. Zone: 16 | Easting: 511331 | Northing: 4351564 |

Vandalia Methodist Episcopal Church and
Vandalia School

Owen County, Indiana

Name of Property

County and State

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

Beginning at the southeast corner of lot 10 of the Town Plot of Vandalia, proceed in a southwesterly direction along the lot line of said lot to the southwest corner of said lot. Turn northwest and proceed along the rear edges of the lot lines for lots 10, 9, and 8. Upon reaching the northwest corner of lot 8, continue approximately 28 feet along the rear edge of the lot line for lot 7. Turn northeast and proceed to a point on the east lot line of lot 7, approximately 28 feet north of the southeast corner of said lot. Continue in a northeasterly direction to Vandalia Road. Cross Vandalia Road, turn northwest and proceed along the lot line of lot 34 to the northwest corner of said lot. Turn northeast and proceed along the north edge of lot 34 to a point along said line approximately 8.5 feet west of the northeast corner of said lot. Turn southeast and proceed 97.5 feet along a line 8.5 feet west of the lot lines of lots 34 and 35. Turn east-south-east and proceed 13 feet, reaching a point on the rear edge of the lot line of lot 35. Turn southeast and proceed along the lot lines of lots 35 and 36, reaching the southeast corner of lot 36. Turn southwest and proceed along the south lot line of lot 36 to Vandalia Road. Cross Vandalia Road, reaching the southeast corner of lot 8. Turn southeast and proceed along the east lot lines of lots 8, 9, and 10, reaching the point of origin.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary described above encompasses the remaining resources of the Town of Vandalia, the Vandalia ME Church and the Vandalia School. The built resources and the property they sit on represent the religious, educational and community history of the town. Residential areas around the perimeter of the boundary do not reflect the former town, rather appear as merely rural residences.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Rose Wernicke
organization: Consultant/Indiana Landmarks Partners In Preservation Program
street & number: 447 West 91st Street
city or town: Indianapolis state: IN zip code: 46260
e-mail: rdwernicke@yahoo.com
telephone: 317-372-3625
date: December 12, 2017

Vandalia Methodist Episcopal Church and
Vandalia School

Name of Property

Owen County, Indiana

County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

Photographs

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

Photo Log

Name of Property: Vandalia Historic District

City or Vicinity: Spencer

County: Owen

State: Indiana

Photographer: Rose Wernicke

Date Photographed: August 7, 2017

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

1 of 20 Looking northwest at 5465 Vandalia Road.

IN_OWEN_VANDALIAMETHODISTEPISCOPALCHURCHANDVANDALIASCHOOL
0001.

2 of 20 Looking southwest at 5465 Vandalia Road.

IN_OWEN_VANDALIAMETHODISTEPISCOPALCHURCHANDVANDALIASCHOOL
0002.

Vandalia Methodist Episcopal Church and
Vandalia School

Owen County, Indiana

Name of Property

County and State

3 of 20 Looking west at 5465 Vandalia Road.

IN_OWEN_VANDALIAMETHODISTEPISCOPALCHURCHANDVANDALIASCHOOL
0003.

4 of 20 Looking west at sign at 5465 Vandalia Road.

IN_OWEN_VANDALIAMETHODISTEPISCOPALCHURCHANDVANDALIASCHOOL
0004.

5 of 20 Looking southwest at the privy behind 5465 Vandalia Road.

IN_OWEN_VANDALIAMETHODISTEPISCOPALCHURCHANDVANDALIASCHOOL
0005.

6 of 20 Looking southeast at the north and west walls of 5465 Vandalia Road.

IN_OWEN_VANDALIAMETHODISTEPISCOPALCHURCHANDVANDALIASCHOOL
0006.

7 of 20 Looking south at the interior of the vestibule, 5465 Vandalia Road.

IN_OWEN_VANDALIAMETHODISTEPISCOPALCHURCHANDVANDALIASCHOOL
0007.

8 of 20 Looking southeast at the interior of the vestibule, 5465 Vandalia Road.

IN_OWEN_VANDALIAMETHODISTEPISCOPALCHURCHANDVANDALIASCHOOL
0008.

9 of 20 Looking northwest at the nave and chancel, 5465 Vandalia Road.

IN_OWEN_VANDALIAMETHODISTEPISCOPALCHURCHANDVANDALIASCHOOL
0009.

10 of 20 Looking east at the nave, narthex and vestibule, 5465 Vandalia Road.

IN_OWEN_VANDALIAMETHODISTEPISCOPALCHURCHANDVANDALIASCHOOL
0010.

11 of 20 Looking northeast at 5434 Vandalia Road.

IN_OWEN_VANDALIAMETHODISTEPISCOPALCHURCHANDVANDALIASCHOOL
0011.

12 of 20 Looking northwest at 5434 Vandalia Road.

IN_OWEN_VANDALIAMETHODISTEPISCOPALCHURCHANDVANDALIASCHOOL
0012.

13 of 20 Looking north at privies behind 5434 Vandalia Road.

IN_OWEN_VANDALIAMETHODISTEPISCOPALCHURCHANDVANDALIASCHOOL
0013.

Vandalia Methodist Episcopal Church and
Vandalia School

Owen County, Indiana

Name of Property

County and State

14 of 20 Looking east at storage shed north of 5434 Vandalia Road.

IN_OWEN_VANDALIAMETHODISTEPISCOPALCHURCHANDVANDALIASCHOOL
0014.

15 of 20 Looking southeast at 5434 Vandalia Road.

IN_OWEN_VANDALIAMETHODISTEPISCOPALCHURCHANDVANDALIASCHOOL
0015.

16 of 20 Looking northwest at the interior of the vestibule, 5434 Vandalia Road.

IN_OWEN_VANDALIAMETHODISTEPISCOPALCHURCHANDVANDALIASCHOOL
0016.

17 of 20 Looking southeast at the interior of the vestibule, 5434 Vandalia Road.

IN_OWEN_VANDALIAMETHODISTEPISCOPALCHURCHANDVANDALIASCHOOL
0017.

18 of 20 Looking east at the school room, 5434 Vandalia Road.

IN_OWEN_VANDALIAMETHODISTEPISCOPALCHURCHANDVANDALIASCHOOL
0018.

19 of 20 Looking southwest at the interior of the school room, 5434 Vandalia Road.

IN_OWEN_VANDALIAMETHODISTEPISCOPALCHURCHANDVANDALIASCHOOL
0019.

20 of 20 Looking north at the collection of artifacts found during the 1976 restoration of the
school, 5434 Vandalia Road.

IN_OWEN_VANDALIAMETHODISTEPISCOPALCHURCHANDVANDALIASCHOOL
0020.

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.).

Vandalia Methodist Episcopal Church and
Vandalia School

Owen County, Indiana

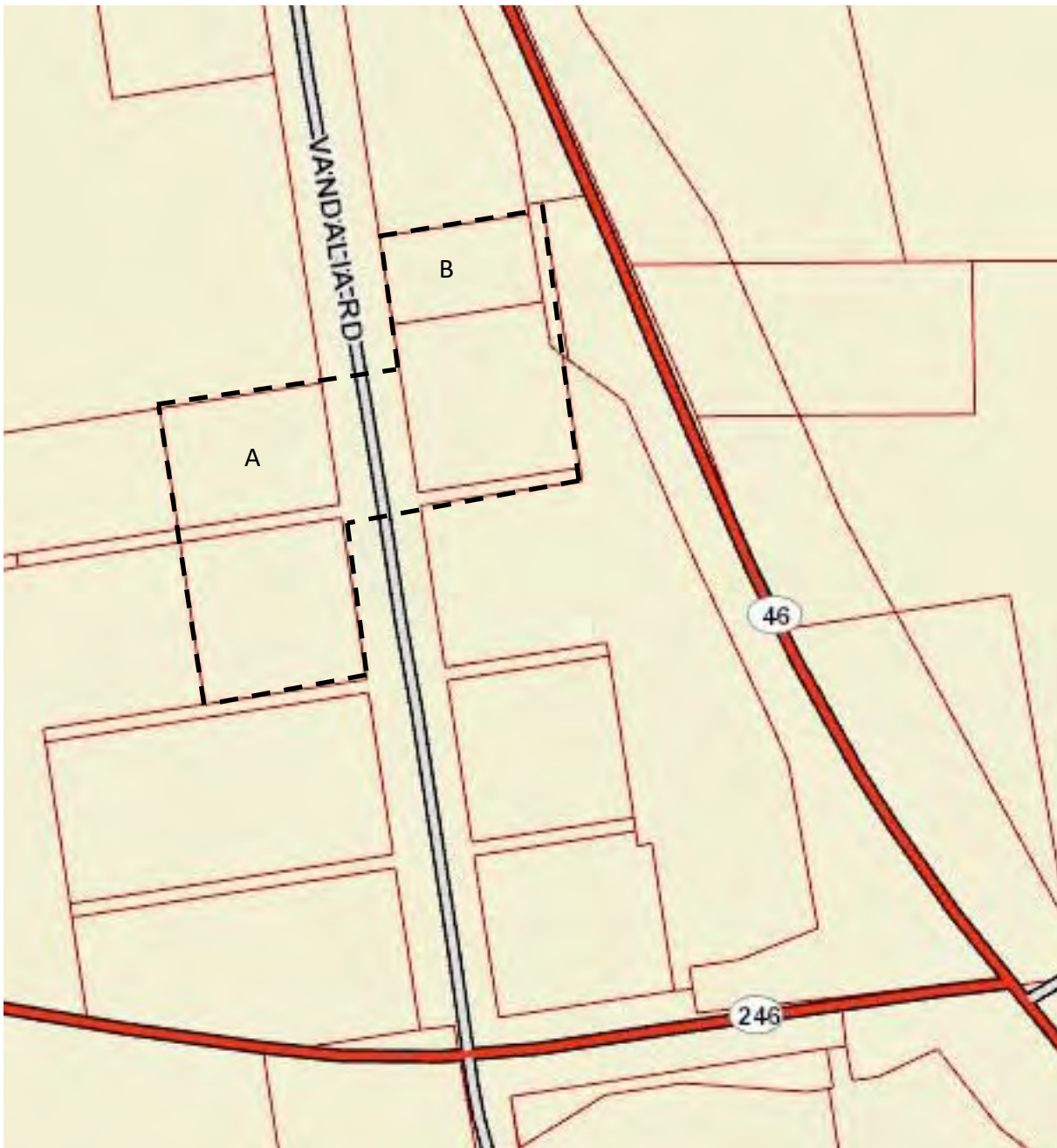
Name of Property

County and State

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

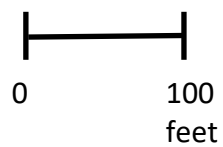
Vandalia Historic District
Lafayette Township, Owen County, Indiana

Location Map



Map from Owen County GIS <https://owenin.elevatemaps.io/>

Scale



Vandalia Historic District

A—5465 Vandalia Road—Vandalia Methodist Episcopal Church

B—5434 Vandalia Road—Vandalia School

See Property Detail Map for further information.

North

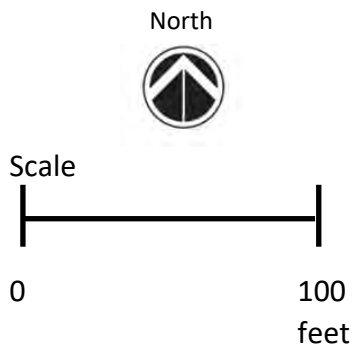



Vandalia Historic District
 Lafayette Township, Owen County, Indiana
 Property Detail Map and Exterior Photo Key



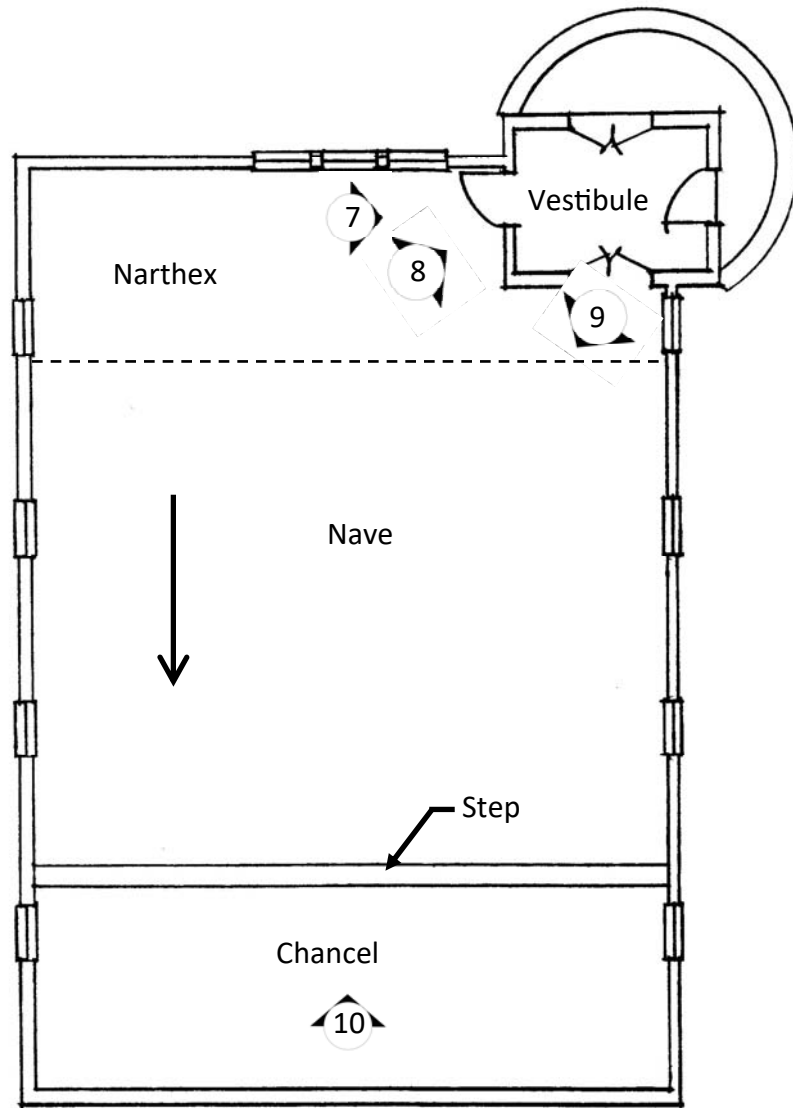
Map from Owen County GIS <https://owenin.elevatemaps.io/>

Legend





A—Vandalia ME Church	Contributing
B—Vandalia School	Contributing
G—Gravel Drive & Parking	N/A
M—Sign	N/A
P—Privy	N/A
S—Shed	N/A
 Photo number and shot direction.	

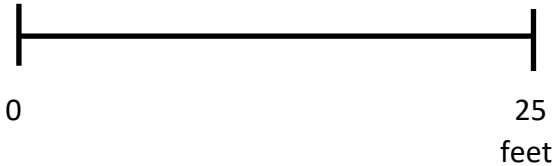
Vandalia Historic District
Lafayette Township, Owen County, Indiana
Vandalia ME Church Floor Plan and Photo Key



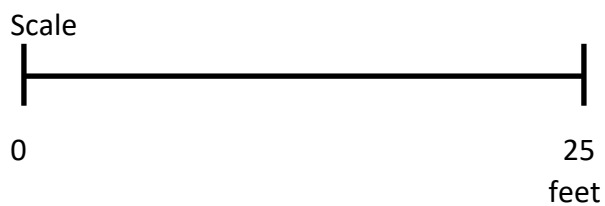
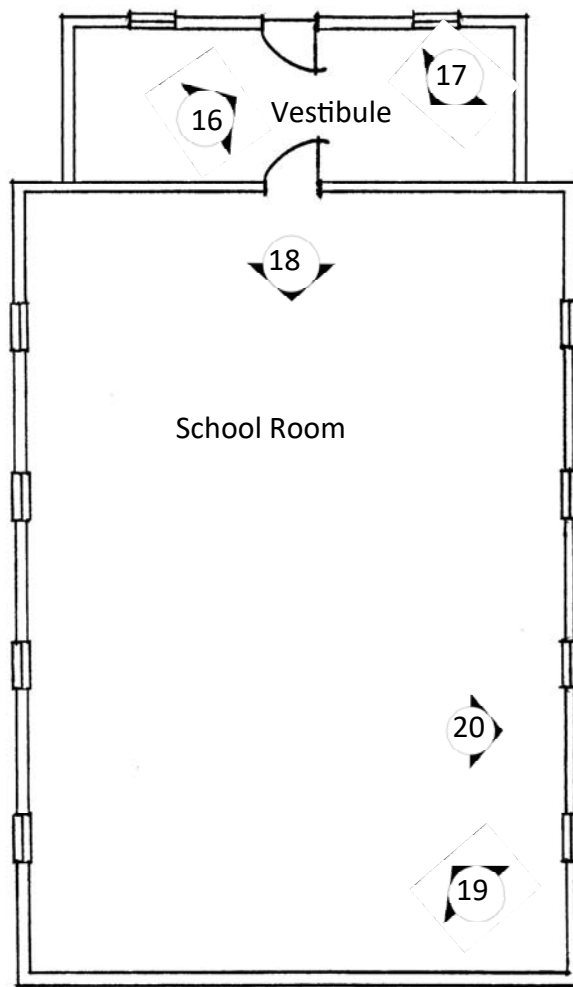
Legend

-  Floor Slope
-  Photo number and shot direction.

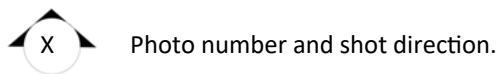
Scale



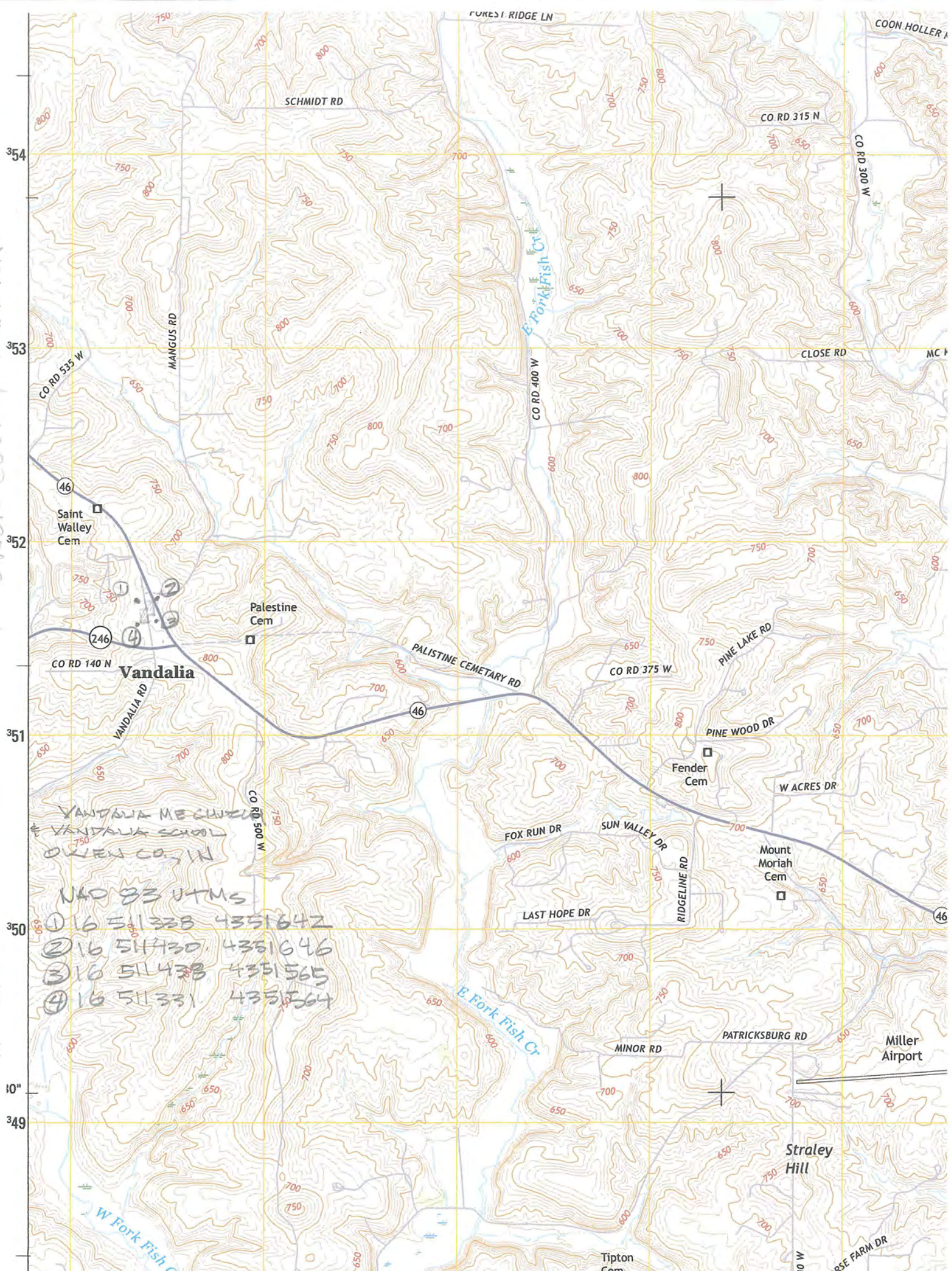
Vandalia Historic District
Lafayette Township, Owen County, Indiana
Vandalia School Floor Plan and Photo Key



Legend



OWEN COUNTY INDIANA



VANDALIA MEADOWS
VANDALIA SCHOOL
OWEN CO, IN

NAD 83 UTM S

- ① 16 511338 4351642
- ② 16 511430 4351646
- ③ 16 511433 4351565
- ④ 16 511331 4351564

10"
349







Vandalia
Historical Center



Vandalia
Historical Chapel

Restored & maintained by -
Vandalia Community
Preservation Association



















GIRLS















Small, rectangular label with illegible text.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Nomination

Property Name: Vandalia Methodist Episcopal Church and Vandalia School

Multiple Name: Indiana's Public Common and High Schools MPS

State & County: INDIANA, Owen

Date Received: 5/1/2019 Date of Pending List: 5/16/2019 Date of 16th Day: 5/31/2019 Date of 45th Day: 6/17/2019 Date of Weekly List:

Reference number: MP100004045

Nominator: SHPO

Reason For Review:

X Accept Return Reject 6/3/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: The school meets the registration requirements of the MPS. The school and church have long been associated in the area surrounding the village of Vandalia. Both are excellent examples of their respective periods, the 1860s school having latent Greek Revival details and the 1880 church being a good example of Carpenter Gothic.

Recommendation/ Criteria Accept / A & C

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology • 402 W. Washington Street, W274 • Indianapolis, IN 46204-2739
Phone 317-232-1646 • Fax 317-232-0693 • dhpa@dnr.IN.gov • www.IN.gov/dnr/historic



April 25, 2019

Ms. Joy Beasley
Keeper of the National Register
National Register of Historic Places
Mail Stop 7228
1849 C St, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240



Re: Vandalia ME Church and Vandalia School, Owen County, Indiana

Dear Ms. Beasley,

Enclosed is a National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Vandalia ME Church and Vandalia School, Owen County, Indiana. The Indiana Historic Preservation Review Board reviewed the application and voted to recommend its approval to the National Register of Historic Places.

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Vandalia ME Church and Vandalia School, Owen County, Indiana to the National Register of Historic Places.

Please address any questions you or your staff may have about this nomination to my National Register staff members, Paul Diebold or Holly Tate.

Sincerely,

Cameron F. Clark
State Historic Preservation Officer

CFC:PCD:pcd

enclosure: nomination package