

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received MAR 29 1983

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Bracken Baptist Church

and/or common Old Minerva Church

2. Location

street & number County ^{CR} Road 1235 not for publication

city, town Minerva vicinity of

state Kentucky code 021 county Mason code

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Storage

4. Owner of Property

name Bracken Association of Baptists

street & number Route #5, Box 375, Hinton Drive

city, town Maysville vicinity of state Kentucky 41056

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Mason County Courthouse

street & number West Third Street

city, town Maysville state Kentucky 41056

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title KY Historic Resources Inventory (MS-14) has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date July 1970 federal state county local

depository for survey records Kentucky Heritage Council

city, town Frankfort state Kentucky 40601

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Bracken Baptist Church is located in the small rural community of Minerva, five miles from the Ohio River and nine miles from Maysville, the county seat of Mason County. The church occupies a prominent site in an open field on the west side of Kentucky Route 1235. The historic core of Minerva is less than 500 feet to the south and contains many important early nineteenth century historic resources.

The church, a 50' X 36' masonry structure of prostyle Greek Revival design, was built circa 1840-1842.¹ The portico consists of four, 24" Tuscan columns constructed of brick with a concrete and plaster facing. At the top of the columns are abacus and echinus capitals, both of which are milled from wooden blocks. Surmounting the columns is a plain weather-boarded pediment. The pediment sill plate is pinned to the rafter plate, clearly indicating it is an original feature.

To the rear of the portico is a symmetrical two-bay front facade that is distinguished by double entrances and original paneled doors. Both entrances feature paneled soffits and mitered joinery. The cast-iron butt hinges were manufactured by the Greenwood Foundry in Cincinnati. Directly above the entrances are two window bays with the original paneled shutters.

The exterior walls are constructed of hand-made brick laid in common bond. Tooled limestone blocks are employed on the front portion of the rubble foundation. All of the exterior walls have symmetrical fenestration, the rear or west wall being almost a mirror image of the front facade. The side elevations exhibit four evenly spaced window bays, but unfortunately many of the original twelve-over-twelve lights have been removed. At present the bays are covered with protective metal sheeting.

The interior space can simply be described as a large single cell absent of columns or load bearing walls. A balcony situated at the rear of the congregation is reached by a pair of steep corner staircases (see floor plan). In order to provide a clear space four king posts were constructed as center members of the triangular trusses. At the ridge, the king posts are mortised, tenoned, and pinned to the principal rafters. It appears that all of the walls and ceiling were plastered; however, only a few sections of the plaster work remain. Most of the woodwork, including the chairrail, stairs, and flooring, are intact, and have been yellow grained. Although the original choir and congregational pews have been removed, the elevated pulpit and pew benches remain. Ghosts from the pews provide sufficient evidence for an accurate reconstruction.

After its discontinuance as a community center in 1923, the church was used for the next forty years as a tobacco barn. Consequently, considerable deterioration has occurred. Plaster has fallen from the Tuscan columns while lintel collapse is apparent above the window bays. Most of the sash is irretrievable, and little of the interior plaster remains. In an effort to prevent further weathering, tar paper has been applied over the pediment and plywood underneath the soffit.

¹Church records and a preliminary fabric analysis suggest this date of construction. It is consistent with the period of the Greek Revival style in Mason County.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates circa 1840-1842 **Builder/Architect** _____

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Bracken Baptist Church, built circa 1840-1842, is significant as a rare example of prostyle Greek Revival church architecture in Kentucky and for its historical association with Baptist worship in Mason and Bracken Counties. Established in 1793 by the Reverend Lewis Craig (1737-1825), the Bracken County Church is the oldest constituted Baptist church in northeastern Kentucky and one of six churches included in the Bracken Association. Craig was among the most important religious figures of the pioneer period, having organized Kentucky's first church on South Elkhorn Creek in 1783. As pastor of the Bracken Church, Craig played an instrumental role in establishing the Bracken Association, the fifth Baptist Association constituted in Kentucky. The present Greek Revival church is one of Kentucky's most significant expression of the style; very few churches in the state are known to have built in the prostyle design.

In 1792 the Baptist preacher Lewis Craig moved from South Elkhorn Association and organized the Bracken Baptist Church at Minerva. By 1799 the influx of settlers was so great that Craig partitioned six churches from the Elkhorn Association and constituted the Bracken Association. The Bracken Church became the focal point of worship for the Association. At its height in 1805 the Bracken Association included 19 churches and 1,865 members.¹

During the period from 1805 to 1830 the Bracken Baptist Church experienced a turbulent history. Around 1805 the congregation split over the issue of slavery, with both congregations still sharing the same log church. Despite the schism, a period of steady growth followed, culminating in the Great Awakening of the late 1820s. The stability of the church was again shaken, however, by the rapid acceptance of Campbellism in 1829-1830. Under the pastorship of Reverend James Holton, over 200 of the 251 members of the Bracken Church followed the reform movement. Nevertheless, both the Campbellites and non-reformed Baptists continued to worship in the Minerva Church on alternate Sundays.

After 1850 the church experienced a period of decline; and by 1886 it had only 60 members. Subsequently, from 1900 to 1923, the church was used as a community center and baccalaureate services for Minerva High School were held there. In 1928 the church was sold for \$280.00, with the proceeds being used to fence the grave of Lewis Craig. The church was subsequently used for the next forty years as a tobacco barn.

In 1981, through the leadership of Reverend Ken Forman and his congregation, the Bracken Association re-acquired the deteriorating church. The Association plans on restoring the church and developing the property into a regional center for Baptist worship and recreation.

¹J.H. Spencer, A History of Kentucky Baptists From 1769-1885. (By the author, 1886) II:105.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Attached

10. Geographical Data

Acree of nominated property 1 acre

Quadrangle name Germantown

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	6	2	4	6	1	8	0	4	2	8	8	0	2	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at a point, northeast corner Dover-Minerva Road and Elmer Gibbs, proceed south approximately 210 feet along the west side of said road to corner of land owned by Mrs. Eugene O'Neil, then proceed west approximately 210 feet along north boundary of Neil property, then proceed north approximately 210 feet along O'Neil

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Stephen C. Gordon, Senior Historian

organization Kentucky Heritage Council date January, 1983

street & number 9th Floor, Capital Plaza Tower telephone 564-7005

city or town Frankfort state Kentucky

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Mary Curran Appel*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date March 23, 1983

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the National Register

Melore Byers
for Keeper of the National Register

date 4/28/83

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
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BRACKEN BAPTIST CHURCH
Continuation sheet Mason County, Kentucky

Item number

7

Page

2

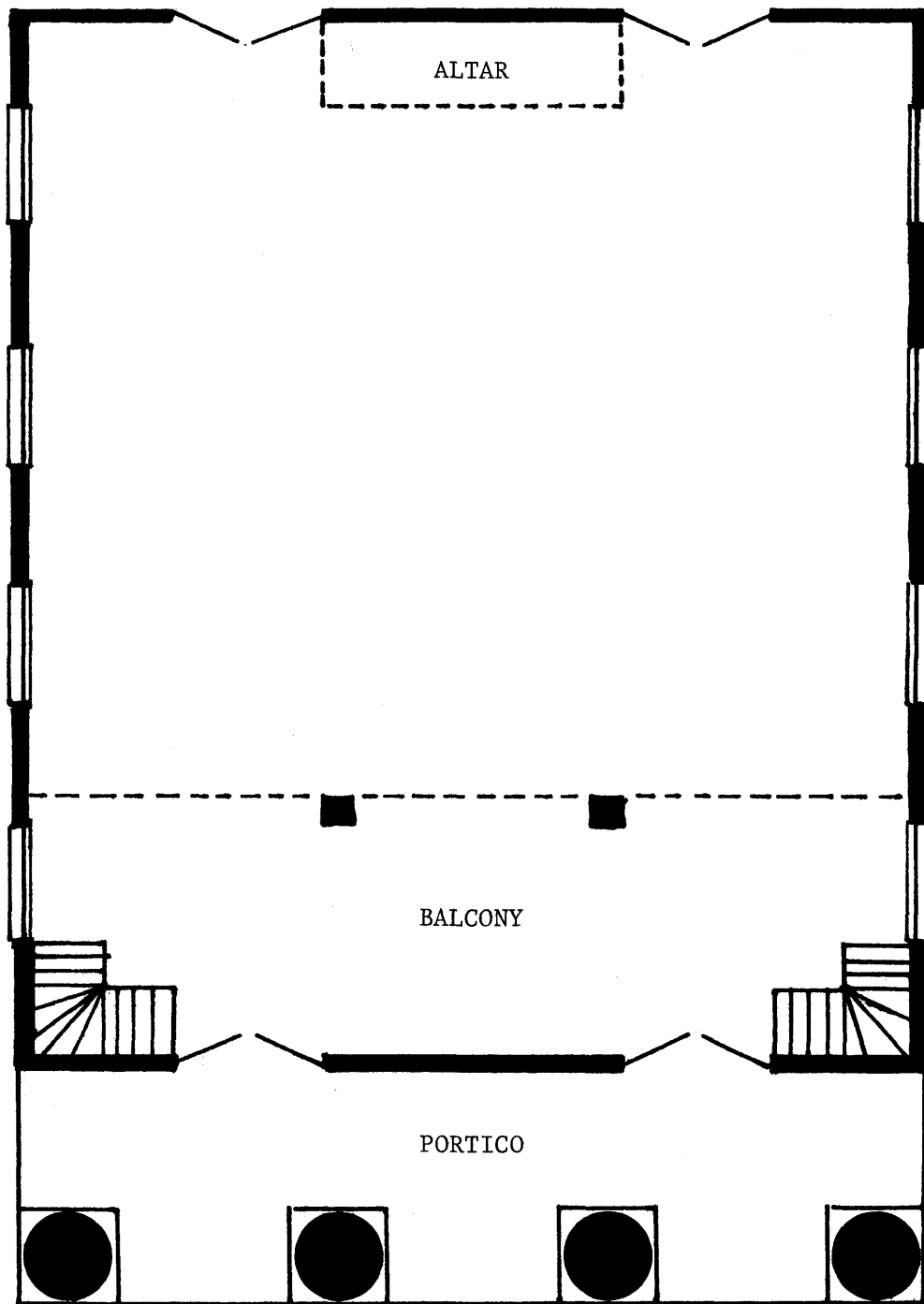
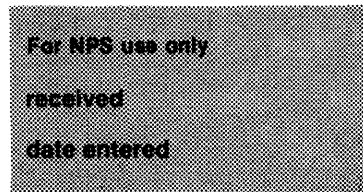


FIG. 1. FLOOR PLAN OF BRACKEN BAPTIST CHURCH
(NOT TO SCALE)

**United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation sheet Bracken Baptist Church
Mason County, Kentucky Item number 9 Page 1

Goins, E.C. "History of Bracken Baptist Church." The Kentucky Baptist Heritage
Vol. 8 (July 1981).

Griffing, B.N., Comp. An Illustrated Atlas of Mason County, Ky. Philadelphia: Lake,
Griffing and Stevenson, 1876.

Lexington Herald, 26 October 1982.

Minutes of the Bracken Association of Baptists.

Spencer, John H., A History of Kentucky Baptists, From 1769 - 1885. 2 Vols. Cincinnati,
1886.

Thompson, Lewis N. Lewis Craig, the Pioneer Baptist Preacher, His Life, Labors, and
Character. Louisville: Baptist World Publishing Co., 1910.

Continuation Sheet Item Number 10 Page 1

Geographical Data

property until reaching property owned by Elmer Gibbs, then proceed east approximately
210' to the point of origin.

Nomination includes the entire one acre tract owned by the Bracken Association of Baptists.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

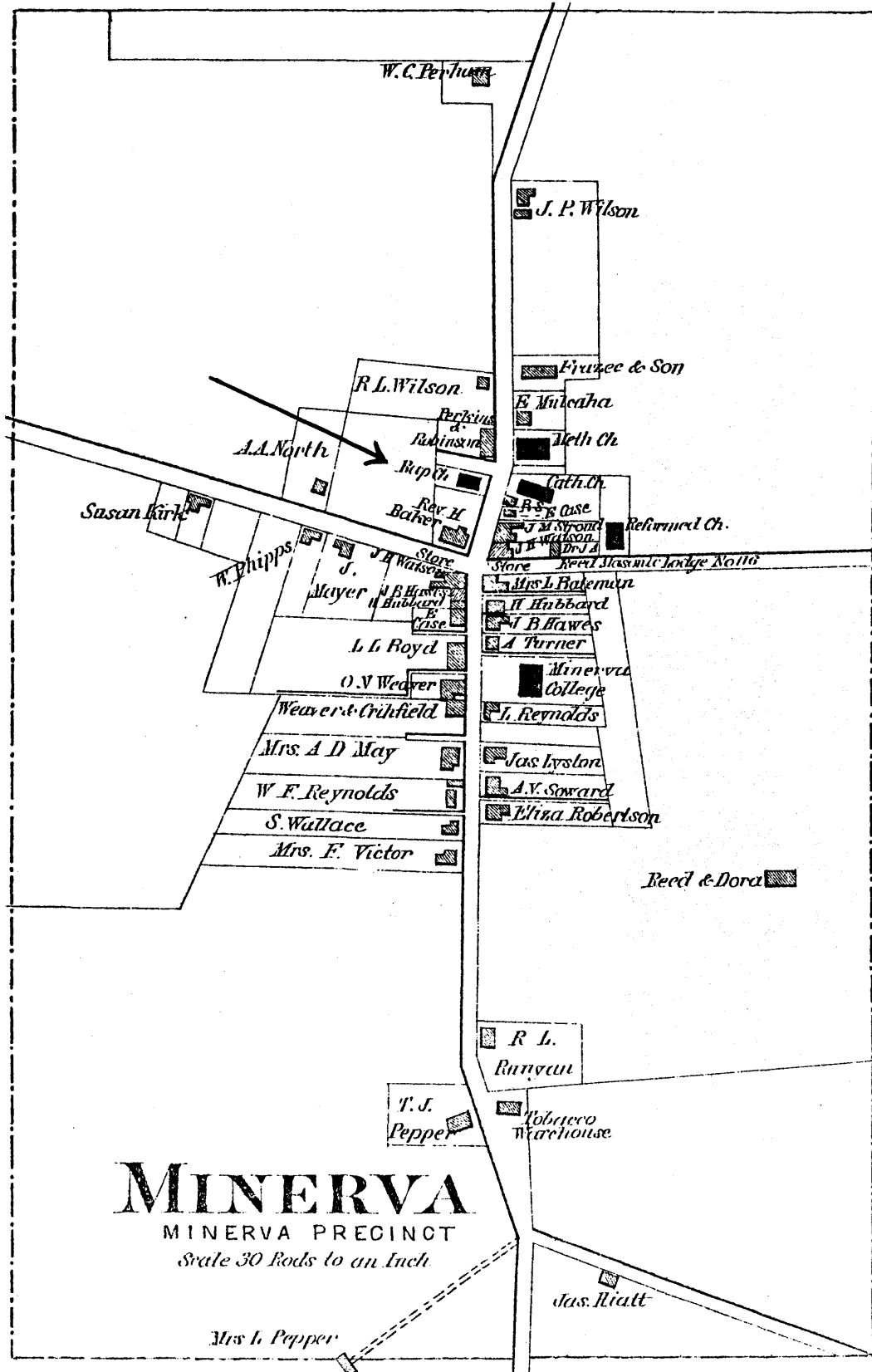
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Continuation sheet BRACKEN BAPTIST CHURCH

Item number 10

Page 2



Source: Illustrated Atlas of Mason County, 1876.

KENTUCKY HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY SUPPLEMENT
BOUNDARY AND LOCATION INFORMATION

Historic Property Name Bracken Baptist Church Site # MS-14

Multiple Resource/Thematic Nomination Title _____

U.T.M. Coordinates - List multiple UTMs if property is ten or more acres.

A. 16 246180 4288020 D. _____

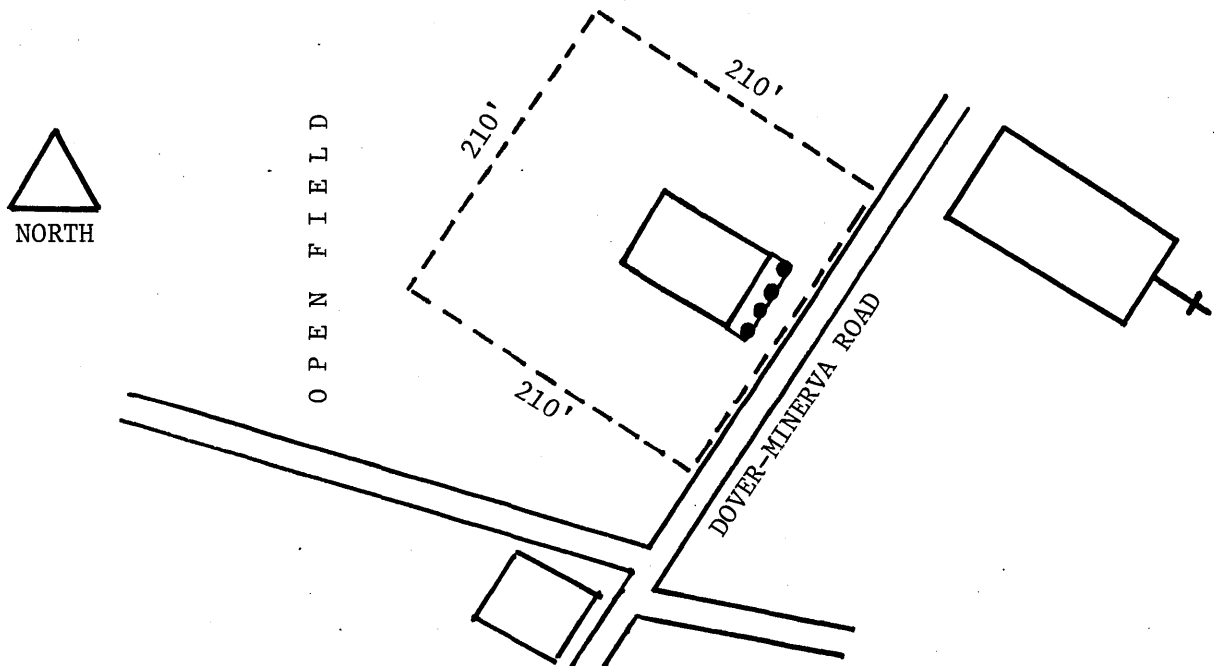
B. _____ E. _____

C. _____ F. _____

Verbal Boundary Description Acreage 1 Acre

Beginning at a point, northeast corner Dover-Minerva Road and Elmer Gibbs, proceed south approximately 210 feet along the west side of said road to corner of land owned by Mrs. Eugene O'Neil, then proceed west approximately 210 feet along north boundary of Neil property, then proceed north approximately 210 feet along O'Neil property until reaching property owned by Elmer Gibbs, then proceed east approximately 210' to the point of origin.

Sketch of Site Plan (Showing outbuildings, structures, landscape features and the site boundary as described above.)



Official Courthouse Property Reference: