

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

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

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Krenn School  
other names/site number St. Clara Community Building

## 2. Location

street & number County Route 66 - Little Buck Run Road ☐ not for publication  
city, town New Milton ☒ vicinity St. Clara  
state WV code WV county Doddridge code 017 zip code 26411

## 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register -0-

## 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Date 2/6/89

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

## 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register.  
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.
- ☐ removed from the National Register.
- ☐ other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education - Schoolhouse

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Social - Meeting Hall

**Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Sandstone

walls Wood: Weatherboard

roof Metal: Corrugated

other

Other: Gabled 1-room plan

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Krenn School, located at the intersections of County Route 29 and 66 in the village of St. Clara (present address, New Milton, West Virginia), is typical of the one-room country schools in Doddridge County and other rural areas of West Virginia around the turn of the century. Krenn School was built with local labor and materials in the year 1897. It is a one-story rectangular structure 35 feet long, 24 feet wide, and approximately 19 feet high from wooden foundation beam to the ridge row. The frame structure of native oak, sided with yellow popular weatherboarding in lap style, sits on a solid foundation of two tiers of cut sandstone. The foundation stones, cut by local stone masons, are from 4 to 8 feet long and thirteen inches high respectively. The low pitched roof is of corrugated metal. The school, as built in 1897, had four windows measuring 32 inches by six feet with two-over-two lights evenly spaced on the east side, matching four windows on the opposite (west) side and a single entrance door with transom facing the road, presently marked County Route 66.

In 1922 the building was upgraded to "modern standards" for rural elementary schools of the time. These were the only major changes in the building's ninety-one year existence. At this time the four windows on the east wall were moved to the back or southern exposure to provide better lighting. A fifth window was added to this grouping. During the 1922 renovation, the length of the building was extended by five and one half feet, cloak rooms (6' x 8') were partitioned off on each side of the entrance door leaving a (4' x 6') hallway giving access to the cloak rooms on right and left and to the main room directly in line with the entrance door. Two windows flanking the original entrance door were added at that time. It was during the 1922 renovation that the stone foundation (described above) replaced the original open foundation of low stone piers and a sloping roofed porch (6' x 24') was added replacing a small unroofed platform entrance. The present porch is supported by four cut sandstone piers across the front. The corrugated metal roof is supported by four eight-inch square pillars at the base tapering to six inches at the top. Sturdy wooden steps with side railings lead to the slightly sloping ground. To the right of the ascending steps on a concrete slab (5' x 5') stands the original long handled water pump - intact but inoperable. Above the porch roof centered in the gable is a handpainted sign which reads ST. CLARA in approximately six-inch black letters with the word COMMUNITY centered directly below in matching smaller

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letters. The sign was painted by June Bee Barnes and placed there around 1956. The building is unadorned except for a 13-inch frieze board sealed with a two-inch trim strip following the roof line under the eaves of the overhanging roof. Early pictures show the frieze board and corner strips painted a dark trim against white. The exterior building is now painted white.

The building sits on a lopsided diamond shaped plot containing 39.6 poles (approximately one-fourth acre). The building sits to the right of center of the plot some ten feet above Buck Run Creek. Sloping to the left in the far southeast corner of the plot are two late private privies placed side by side. These structures are not considered architecturally or historically significant.

The plot boundary is marked by large maple trees planted around the turn of the century. Two large maple trees of approximately the same size stand on either side of the building.

The interior of Krenn School is like a turn-of-the-century museum. The floors, ceiling, and walls of tongue and groove oak are original except for changes noted in the 1922 renovation. The original gaslights are intact down to the glass globes, although electric lights have been installed - probably in the late thirties. The building was first heated with a central coal-burning stove with a stove pipe extending through a hand-cut stone flue in the ceiling. The ceiling flue and three additional cut stone flues extending in the attic to the roof top lead one to believe the building once had a stone chimney through the roof. With the discovery of natural gas in the St. Clara area around 1920, gas heating stoves were installed and there was no need for the chimney. The exterior evidence of the chimney was probably removed when the building was re-roofed some forty years ago. The original gas stoves are still in use. Twenty-one student desks are in place - some original, including three double desks and five "adjustable" desks. The slates with chalk rail (4' x 20') is in place on the east wall. The four primitive benches used for "reciting" and removing boots add to the uniqueness of the museum. Some wall maps and old pictures remain as mementos of early school days. The walls and ceiling need a coat of paint in keeping with traditional colors. The building is in remarkably good condition.

ifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties.

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

licable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

ria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

is of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Education

Architecture

Period of Significance

1897-1938

Significant Dates

1897

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

ificant Person

I/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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

The Krenn School is significant because it is the only well-preserved one-room schoolhouse remaining in Doddridge County. Its sound condition and integrity invest the modest structure with additional significance as a locally important example of late 19th-century rural frame vernacular architecture. Krenn School's significance is also measured by the substantial role the building has played in the educational history of the town of St. Clara and Cove District.

The school was built in the spring and summer of 1897 on about one-fourth acre of land purchased by the Cove District Board of Education, Doddridge County, West Virginia, from John and Adeline Krenn, St. Clara (Cove District, Doddridge County, West Virginia). The deed recorded in the Doddridge County Court House is dated December 22, 1896. The purchase price was \$25.00. The first term of school opened in the fall of 1897 and continued as a one-room elementary school until the spring of 1942. At the closing of the school due to low enrollment for several years in the late 1930's, the Doddridge County Board of Education (former District Board of Education) granted the St. Clara Organized Community the use of the building for its regular monthly meetings.

The legendary "ole one-room schoolhouse," often portrayed in literature and popular art, remains a significant and beloved part of the success story of America's public education history. The primary education received by thousands of citizens in these facilities provided a sound footing for those who continued their training in advanced institutions, and gave the many who remained in the rural areas - often engaged in agricultural pursuits - sound, life-long training in rudimentary but necessary educational skills. Jesse Stuart, the noted writer on rural Americana themes, has often alluded to the importance of the rural, primary educational system.

The Krenn School is a very well-preserved example of the now-rare 19th century rural frame schoolhouse. Built in 1897, the functional qualities of its simple gabled one-room plan have invested the tiny building with significance. A

☒ See continuation sheet

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substantial example of local carpentry, the rectangular structure features a transom-lighted front door, a large single room for classes, and plumb side walls each containing four large doublehung 2-over-2 windows. Of special interest is the well preserved interior featuring original plain trim, wainscot, and tilt-lid desks with iron legs.

The St. Clara Community is unique in many ways, chief of which lies in its origin as one of the few deliberate attempts to colonize western Virginia, and its promotion by, as well as the homeplace of, Joseph H. Diss Debar, the state's first Commissioner of Immigration and the designer of the West Virginia State Seal. St. Clara, due to the efforts of Joseph H. Diss Debar, was settled by Lutheran and Catholic immigrants from Germany and Austria during the mid-eighteen hundreds. Due to the discovery of oil and gas in the region and its industrious inhabitants, St. Clara became a booming little village during the first decade of this century. Little is left to mark the passing of St. Clara's historic beginning except the Krenn School, and several churches.

The Krenn School is in imminent danger of being lost. On January 2, 1988, at a regular Doddridge County Board of Education meeting, the superintendent recommended that the Krenn School property be sold at public auction because of the danger of liability suits and the cost of liability insurance. Cooperating with the Doddridge County Historical Society's efforts to preserve the last remaining turn of the century one-room school building in the county, the school board has temporarily put this recommendation on hold. It is very important to save the Krenn School building from public auction where it is likely to go as a hunting lodge, hay barn or be demolished completely. Saving the Krenn School has the support of the local community, the Doddridge County Historical Society, the Doddridge County Court, the present school board members and many other citizens. The Krenn School should be preserved because it is the last of its kind, is in remarkably good condition and has served the St. Clara community in an educational and civic function for more than ninety-one years.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Doddridge County Clerk's Office, Deed Book 29, P. 71-72.  
Doddridge County Board of Education, Raymond F. Frazier, Superintendent.  
Maurer, Beryl B., "123rd Anniversary, St. Johannes Evangelical Lutheran Church",  
St. Clara, West Virginia, October 28, 1984 (booklet).  
Recollections of Alma Gamsjager Gallien, attended Krenn School 1897-1905.  
Interviews with (1) Glenn Rastle, local resident and Krenn School student 1915-1923;  
(2) Matthew Schulte, local resident and Krenn School student;  
(3) Glenn Schmidt, adjoining property owner and student 1920-1928;  
(4) Herbert Schmidt, local resident and Krenn School student 1919-1928.  
Public School Souvenir, (commemorative) 1914.  
Old photographs from local citizens.  
Survey map, J.N. Wolverton, Surveyor, 1903.

☐ See continuation sheet

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

### Primary location of additional data:

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

### Specify repository:

Doddridge County Historic Landmark  
Commission, Inc.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 39.6 poles (approximately 1/4 Acre) less than one acre

### UTM References

A 17 526760 4330330  
Zone Easting Northing  
C         

B           
Zone Easting Northing  
D         

☐ See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

As delineated in Deed Book 29, Page 71, Doddridge County Court House, West Union, West Virginia - Krenn School Property: "...Laying on Buck Run of the Sand Fork of Finks Creek and bounded by the following, to wit: Beginning at a stone set in the ground near west end of a foot log cross said Buck Run near the forks of said Run thence N. 89 W. 8 poles to a stone set near county road

☒ See continuation sheet

### Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the entire plot (39.6 poles) of land purchased by the Cove District, Doddridge County, West Virginia, School Board from John and Adeline Krenn, St. Clara, West Virginia on December 22, 1896, and has historically been associated with the property.

☐ See continuation sheet

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Hazel G. Wysong / Dr. Alton Childers  
organization Doddridge County Historical Society date December 5, 1988  
street & number Box 156A telephone (304) 873-2830/873-1874  
city or town New Milton state WV zip code 26411

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#10 Verbal Boundary Description

North 89 West 8 poles to a stone set near county road (County Road 66) South 40-  
1/2 East 8 2/5 poles to a sugar sprout South 81 East 4 3/5 poles to a stone set  
in ground, North 16-1/2 West 7 1/5 poles to the beginning containing 39 6/10  
poles..."

# Krenn School Property

Rural Rt. 1 - Little Buck Run Road  
New Milton, WV 26411

Scale: Approx. 1" = 24'

Photo Key:

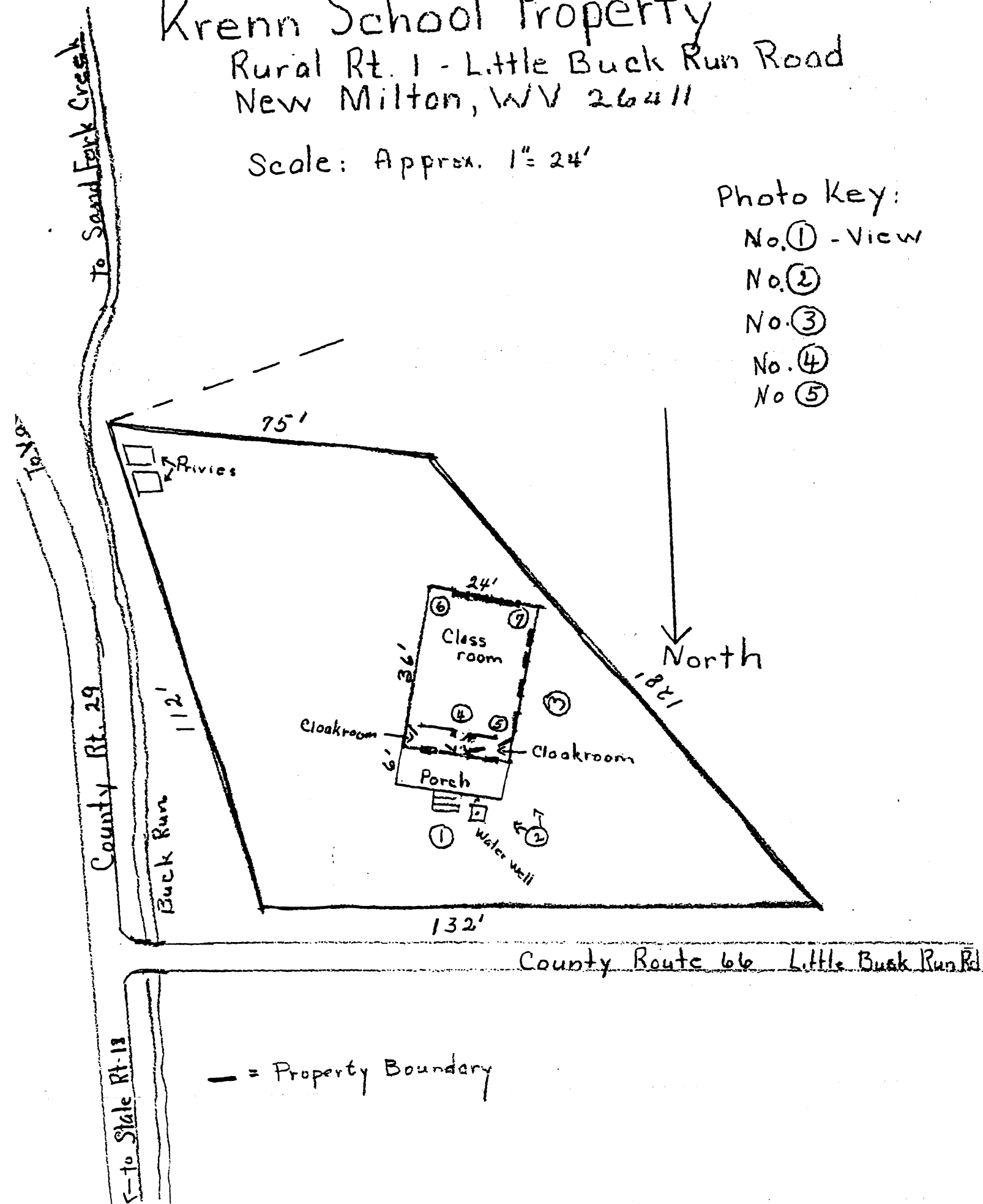
No. ① - View

No. ②

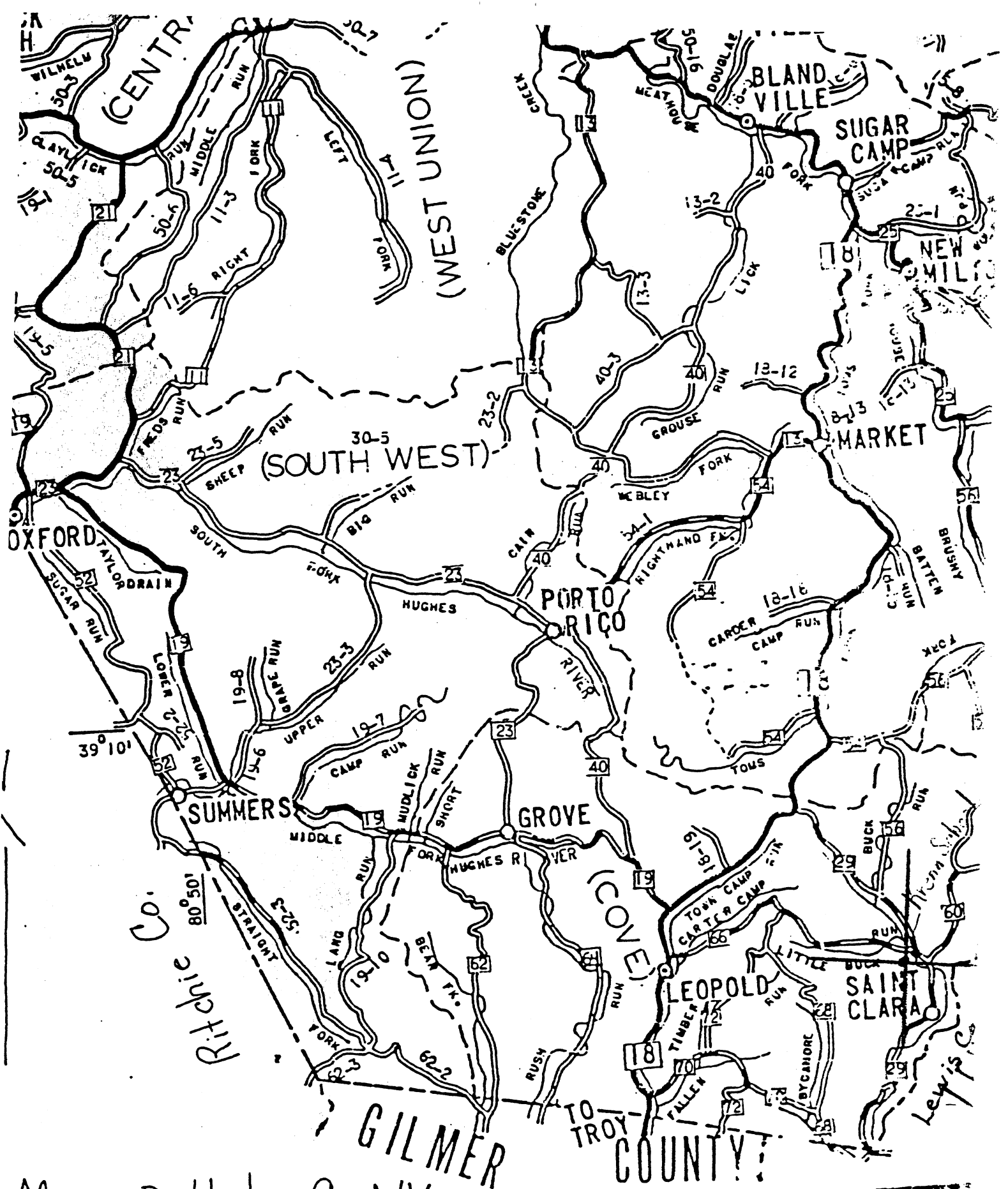
No. ③

No. ④

No. ⑤

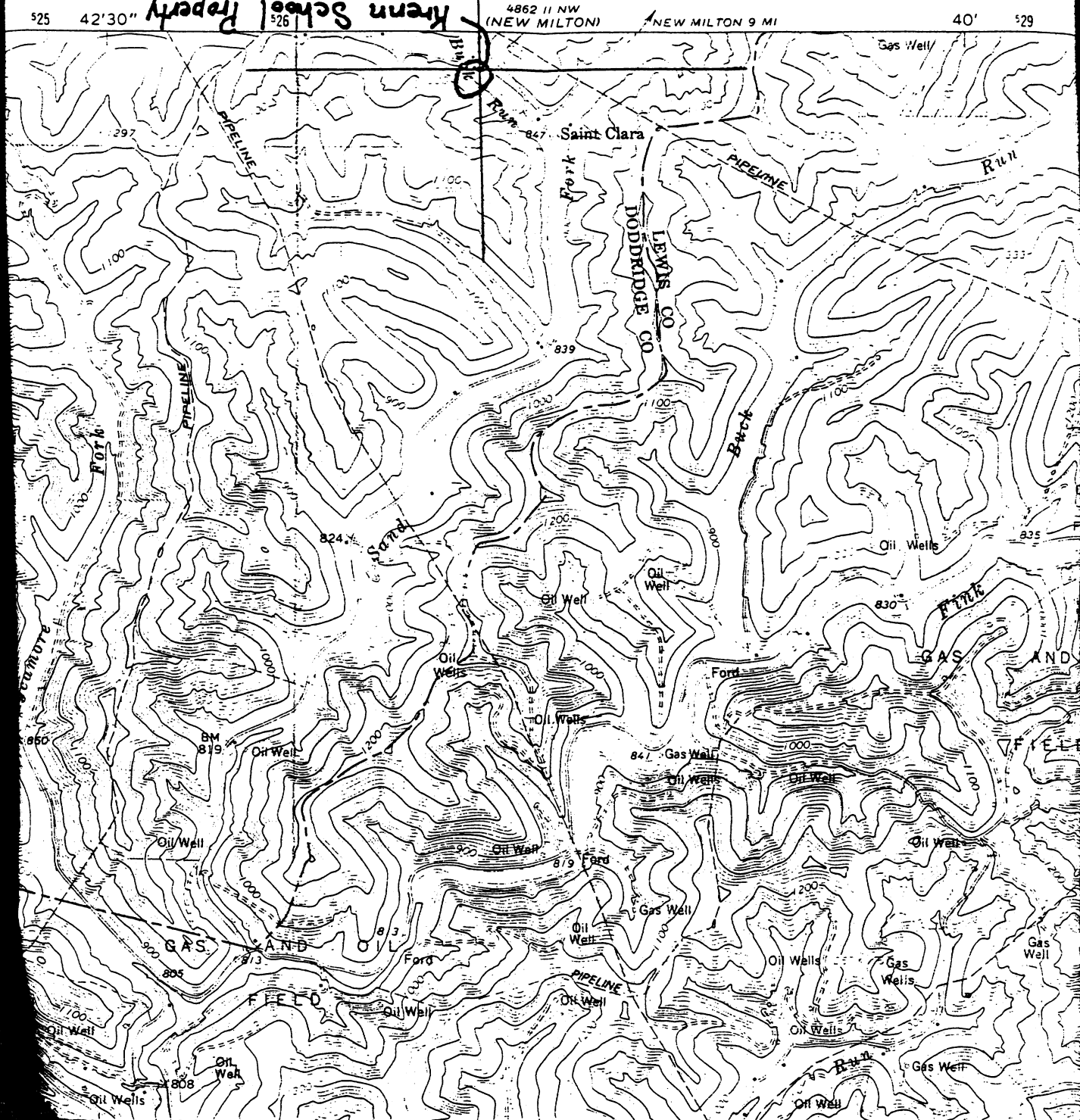






Map - Doddridge Co., WV  
 Southern Section  
 Scale .45 inch per mile

525 42'30" 526 4862 II NW (NEW MILTON) NEW MILTON 9 MI 40' 529





ST. CLARA  
COMMUNITY