

NR 1-21-04

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations 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 Mt. Olive Rosenwald School

other names/site number Site #BR0004

2. Location

street & number Bradley Road 45

not for publication

city or town Mt. Olive

vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Bradley code 011 zip code 71647

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 for 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.)

Catherine Matthews  
Signature of certifying official/Title

11/20/03  
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

State or 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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property  
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of Contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> AND 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial  
Revival

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls WOOD

roof ASPHALT

other

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.)

- Criteria A, B, C, and D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

LOCAL

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

ETHNIC HERITAGE/Black

Period of Significance

1927-1954

Significant Dates

1927

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

Architect/Builder

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):

- Documentation checkboxes: preliminary determination, previously listed, National Register, National Historic Landmark, Historic American Buildings Survey, Historic American Engineering Record.

Primary location of additional data:

- Location checkboxes: State Historic Preservation Office, Other State Agency, Federal Agency, Local Government, University, Other.

Name of repository:

Mt. Olive Rosenwald School

Name of Property

Bradley County, Arkansas

County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acres of Property** 3.25 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 587456 3698951  
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** Ralph S. Wilcox, National Register & Survey Coordinator

**organization** Arkansas Historic Preservation Program **date** August 11, 2003

**street & number** 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street **telephone** (501) 324-9787

**city or town** Little Rock **state** AR **zip code** 72201

**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** Mt. Olive School Community Center c/o Ms. Georgia Jones

**street & number** 842 Bradley 45 **telephone** \_\_\_\_\_

**city or town** Hermitage **state** AR **zip code** 71647

**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 listing. 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 20303.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### SUMMARY

The Mt. Olive Rosenwald School is a one-story, T-shaped building located in the small community of Mt. Olive in Bradley County, Arkansas. It was built in 1927 in the Colonial Revival style, and was partially funded through a grant from the Julius Rosenwald Fund. The school rests on a continuous cast concrete foundation, and is crowned by a gable roof covered mainly with asphalt shingles. The walls are currently covered with weatherboard.

### ELABORATION

The Mt. Olive Rosenwald School is a one-story, T-shaped, frame building located in the small community of Mt. Olive in Bradley County, Arkansas. It was built in 1927 on the west side of Bradley Road 45 across from the Mt. Olive Church, and was partially funded through a grant from the Julius Rosenwald Fund. It was one of five buildings built in Bradley County between 1922 and 1927 that were partially funded through the Rosenwald Fund.

The building rests on a continuous cast concrete foundation, and is of frame construction. The walls are covered with weatherboard. The gable roof is mainly covered with asphalt shingles, although a portion on the auditorium wing is covered with a standing seam metal roof. A recessed porch with front facing gable is located at the main entrance to the building.

The interior of the building was built with two classrooms, a small library, and an auditorium. Each classroom occupies one side of the side gable section, while the auditorium is located in the rear wing. In addition to the main entrance, entrances are also located on the north and south sides of the auditorium wing.

### Front/East Façade

The front façade of the building is symmetrical in design and is focused around the main entrance and the recessed front porch. The front entrance contains a pair of wood panel doors, and is flanked on each side by a pair of wood-framed, double-hung, six-over-six windows, which appear to be original to the building. Benches also flank the main entrance. Above the front porch is a front facing gable covered in vertical wood siding with cornice returns at the ends of the roof slopes. An octagonal attic vent is located in the center of the gable. The gable is supported by two square, wood posts evenly spaced across the recessed porch.

On either side of the recessed porch, the façade contains two two-over-two windows. The current windows are replacements that are the same width, but shorter in height, than the original windows. In addition, a wall mounted air-conditioning unit is located between the two windows in the northern third of the façade.

### Side/North Façade

The north side of the classroom portion of the building originally had two groups of three large windows, located slightly left of center. The original windows have been replaced, and some of the openings currently

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have two-over-two windows, which are much shorter than the original windows. Part of one window also has a stovepipe coming out of it. Even though the windows have been replaced, the outline of the original windows is very evident. A rectangular louvered vent is located in the gable peak, and provides ventilation to the attic space. In addition, cornice returns exist at the ends of the roof slopes.

The north side of the auditorium wing is fenestrated by three groups of three large windows. As with the windows on the north side of the classroom wing, the original windows have been replaced, and two-over-two windows currently occupy some of the openings. Again, even though the windows have been replaced, the outline of the original windows is very evident. To the west of the groups of windows is an entrance into the auditorium wing. A flight of steps leads up to the door, and a shed-roofed awning with wood knee braces on each side shelters the entrance. At the west corner of the auditorium wing is the location of a single window, which is currently boarded up. Part of the north slope of the auditorium wing roof is covered in standing-seam metal.

### Rear/West Façade

The rear façade of the building has no fenestration, although a rectangular louvered vent is located in the gable peak of the auditorium wing, providing ventilation to the attic space. As with the other gables on the building, cornice returns exist at the ends of the roof slopes.

### Side/South Façade

The south side of the classroom portion of the building originally had two groups of three large windows, located slightly right of center. The original windows have been replaced, and the openings currently have two two-over-two windows, which are much shorter than the original windows. Even though the windows have been replaced, the outline of the original windows is very evident. A rectangular louvered vent is located in the gable peak, and provides ventilation to the attic space. Again, cornice returns are present at the ends of the roof slopes.

The north side of the auditorium wing is fenestrated by three groups of three large windows. As with the windows on the north side of the classroom wing, the original windows have been replaced, and two-over-two windows currently occupy some of the openings. Again, even though the windows have been replaced, the outline of the original windows is very evident. To the west of the groups of windows is an entrance into the auditorium wing. A flight of steps leads up to the door, and a shed-roofed awning with wood knee braces on each side shelters the entrance. At the west corner of the auditorium wing is the location of a single window, which is currently boarded up.

### Integrity

The Mt. Olive Rosenwald School has reasonably good integrity. The major change to the exterior of the building since it was constructed is the replacement of the windows with windows that do not match the

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original size. However, it is still possible to see the size of the original windows. Even though the windows have been replaced, it is still easy to recognize the building as a school. In addition, there have been no additions to the building that have obscured the two classroom and auditorium plan of the building. The fact that Mt. Olive has always been in a rural part of Bradley County, and remains so today, also allows the setting around the Mt. Olive Rosenwald School to reflect its period of significance.

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### SUMMARY

The Mt. Olive Rosenwald School is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance under Criterion A** for its association with education in Mt. Olive and Bradley County. Additionally, it is significant as a part of Julius Rosenwald's legacy as the foremost benefactor to Negro education in the South.

### ELABORATION

Contrary to common belief, the education of many southern black Americans took place on southern plantations while many were slaves. Some masters allowed a few of their slaves to become skilled workers or artisans by permitting them to be apprentices or employees of craftsmen outside the plantation. In fact, it was quite profitable for the plantation to have a number of skilled slaves in order to avoid having to hire expensive mechanics, craftsmen, machinists, seamstresses, etc. Education was also taking place among the children, often without the master's knowledge. Many of the children of the masters thought it quite amusing to play "school" and teach the slave children how to read and do math. To the children it was a game, but in actuality it was part of the beginning of the black education movement in the South after the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. In fact, many slaves were able to use their talents and skills to gain their manumission, or to do enough work outside the plantation to buy their way out of slavery.

After the Emancipation Proclamation and the flight of the blacks to northern cities, many religious organizations and education-oriented groups realized the need for education among the black refugees. Plantation life had left many blacks unable to cope with life in the city or with finding jobs. Benevolent societies sprang up in cities such as Boston, Chicago, New York, Cincinnati, and Philadelphia in 1862-1863. Together with church organizations, they provided food, clothing, religious leaders, money, and teachers for the newcomers. Church organizations were the leaders in the freedman's school system in its beginning stages. At the forefront of the religious groups was the American Missionary Association, organized in 1849 to operate Christian missions and educational institutions at home and abroad. Other religious groups included The Baptist Church, North (or Home Mission Society), the Freedman's Aid Society, and the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church; a great deal of the money and supplies these groups provided were dispensed through the Union Army. In March 1862, the New England Freedman's Society, along with General Edward L. Pierce and numerous other educators, initiated the Port Royal Experiment. The Experiment involved developing the economy, directing blacks to economic independence, and organizing schools.

In 1863 the Freedman's Inquiry Commission suggested the creation of a government agency to deal specifically with the care of the freedmen. In 1865 Congress passed an act creating the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, otherwise known as the Freedmen's Bureau. The Bureau was useful because it committed the United States to the task of caring for the freedmen, and because it made that care a part of the official structure by which the South was being controlled. Even though the Freedmen's Bureau



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was able to remedy many of the flaws of the relief programs for the freedmen, it was the strongly motivated individuals of the religious groups and benevolent organizations that were mainly responsible for the education of the blacks. These individuals were for the most part devout Christians and well-trained teachers from New England.

One of the zealous individuals that became one of the most significant figures in southern black education was Julius Rosenwald. Rosenwald was quite successful as a businessman, but his philanthropic work has always overshadowed his financial success. He entered the clothing business in New York in 1878. In 1895 he invested \$35,000 in the stock of Sears, Roebuck, and Company, and in less than thirty years it grew into \$150,000,000. He became president of the mail-order firm in 1910 and then chairman in 1925. During the years Rosenwald was most active as a philanthropist, Sears and Roebuck expanded into the retail chain-store business, and he was actually absent from the company from 1916 to 1919. As early as 1910, Rosenwald was a trustee of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama and made gifts on behalf of the rural school movement to the Institute, primarily through close contact with Booker T. Washington. His funds made possible the erection of sixteen YMCA buildings and one YMCA building for blacks. This stimulated gifts from others for similar projects in many cities in both the North and South, including the financial support for a large black housing project in Chicago. Rosenwald was active in a number of Jewish organizations and granted substantial financial support to the National Urban League. Also, he was appointed a member of the Council on National Defense and served as chairman of its committee on supplies.

In 1917 Rosenwald established the Julius Rosenwald Fund. This fund was destined to attract more money to the benefit of black education than any other philanthropic undertaking to this date. The fund's broad purpose was for the betterment of mankind irrespective of race, but it was aimed more specifically at creating more equitable opportunities for black Americans. Unlike many charity organizations, the Rosenwald Fund was to only help a school if the community, blacks and whites alike, had raised some of the money themselves; however, the black community usually provided the labor. Rosenwald and the directors of his trust first directed their attention toward building rural schools, later toward high schools and colleges, and finally toward the providing of grants and fellowships to enable outstanding blacks and whites to advance their careers. Not only did the Rosenwald Fund help to build rural schools, it was also responsible for a number of buildings and libraries on college campuses. The directors of the trust were also involved to a certain extent in the direction of the curriculum at all levels of education. Their emphasis was on the educational needs of country children. They maintained that some vocational skills were necessary, as were the ability to do some math, to read and write clearly, to have some understanding of biological processes and farming, and to understand the fundamentals of sanitation and health.

State records indicate that when the fund ceased activity in 1948, it had aided in the building of 389 school buildings (schools, shops, and teachers' homes) in 45 counties in Arkansas. The total amount contributed by the fund was \$1,952,441. The state or counties owned and maintained all of the schools, and the land was

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usually donated by a white landowner. In Arkansas, R. C. Childress of Little Rock was the Rosenwald Building Agent. Childress was the first degree graduate of Philander Smith College and was the second black person to work for the state Education Department. He dedicated his life to education and, consequently, the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff has named Childress Hall for him, and the high schools in Wynne and Nashville were named for him.

The Mt. Olive School is one of five Rosenwald-funded buildings that were constructed in Bradley County between 1922 and 1927, and it is the only two-classroom school built in the county. With two classrooms, it was also the largest school built in rural Bradley County. (Only the West End School in Warren, the county seat, was larger, with four classrooms.) The Rosenwald budget allotment for Arkansas reached its peak during the 1926-1927 cycle with a total of \$37,200, which included a grant of \$700 for Mt. Olive.

The plan of the Mt. Olive School does not appear to have used a standard plan offered by the Rosenwald Fund. However, buildings constructed using Rosenwald funds were not required to use the standard plans. The only requirement was that whatever plan was used had to be approved by the Fund. Even though the Mt. Olive School does not use a standard plan, certain elements of the design do resemble characteristics found on designs offered by the Fund. For example, the recessed front porch and auditorium wing on the rear of the building were features found on designs for four, five, seven, and ten-room schools. Standard plans offered by the Rosenwald Fund that featured these design elements were specified to face east or west only, which enabled direct sunlight to flood the classrooms and provide bright learning environments. Like those plans, the Mt. Olive School faces east in order to take advantage of the morning sun.

The total cost of construction for the Mt. Olive School was \$3,100. Of that cost, \$500 came from Negro contributions, \$1,900 came from public contributions, and \$700 came from the Rosenwald Fund. Unlike many buildings built, there were no white contributions. At \$3,100, the Mt. Olive School was one of the more expensive two-room school buildings funded in the 1926-1927 budget. (The cheapest two-room school built that budget cycle cost \$1,950 and the most expensive cost \$4,000.)

The Mt. Olive Rosenwald School was actually the second building erected on the site. It supplemented an earlier building that contained additional classrooms, and used to stand behind it. According to a former student of the school, the 3.25 acres of land around the school was originally cleared, but did not have any other site features (i.e., baseball field) that were sometimes found at other Rosenwald schools. However, a spring was located on the property behind the building, which provided drinking water for the students.

The Mt. Olive Rosenwald School provided classes for students up through the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, after which students went to Warren, approximately thirteen miles to the north, to finish high school. In addition to the two classrooms and auditorium, the building also had a small library for the students. Although it is not presently known when the building was last used as a school, it was still a school as late as 1949.

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After the school closed, the building became a community center for the surrounding area in subsequent years. Among other activities the building hosted quilting parties, and the women of the area would often bring baked goods for functions and events at the center. In recent years, though, the building has not been used, and has started to fall into disrepair. However, it is the desire of people in the area to try and restore the building, and have it serve once again as a meeting place and center for the surrounding community.

Schools, especially Rosenwald Schools, along with churches were often the centerpieces of a community, and it was no exception in Mt. Olive. Located across the road from the community's church, the Mt. Olive Rosenwald School was the center of life in this rural Bradley County settlement not only while it was a school, but for several years after. Although it is currently not used, it is still hoped that it will again be able to serve as the community center for the area. Even in its present condition, as the last known remaining Rosenwald building in Bradley County, the Mt. Olive Rosenwald School is a rare and tangible reminder of the philanthropic legacy of Julius Rosenwald.

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Mt. Olive Rosenwald School is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A** for its association with education in Mt. Olive and Bradley County. Additionally, it is significant as a part of Julius Rosenwald's legacy as the foremost benefactor to Negro education in the South.

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### BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Hoffschwelle, Mary. Address. National Trust for Historic Preservation National Conference. Cleveland, OH, October 9, 2002.

Jones, Georgia. Interviews with the author. 9 July 2003 and 18 July 2003.

Mansell, Jeff, and Trina Brinkley. "The Rosenwald School Building Fund and Associated Buildings (1913-1937)." National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form. From the files of the Alabama Historical Commission, 1997.

Porter, David. W. "A Brief History of the Julius Rosenwald Fund Building Program with Special Reference to Arkansas." Unpublished Master's thesis, Fisk University, Nashville, TN, 1951.

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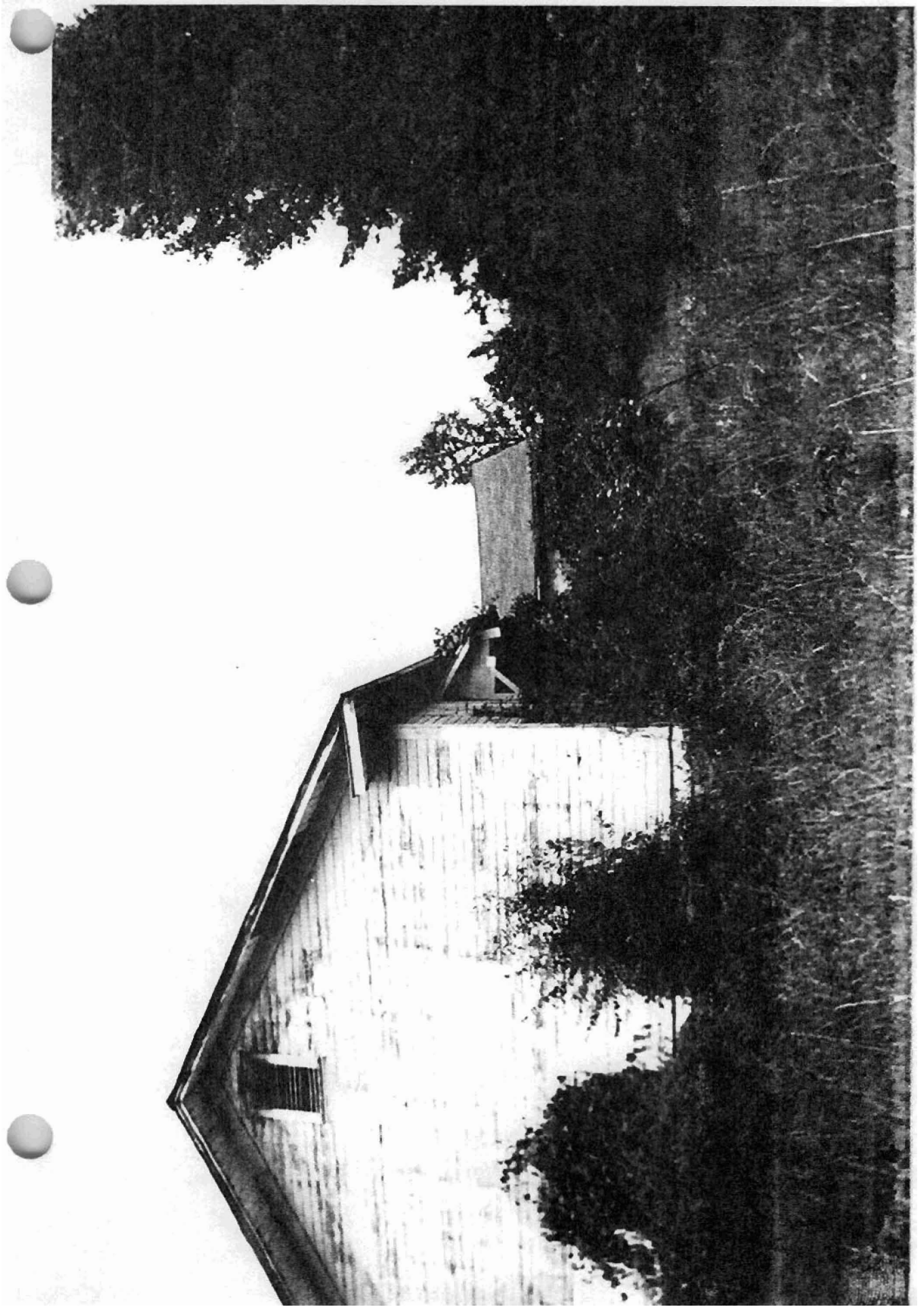
### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

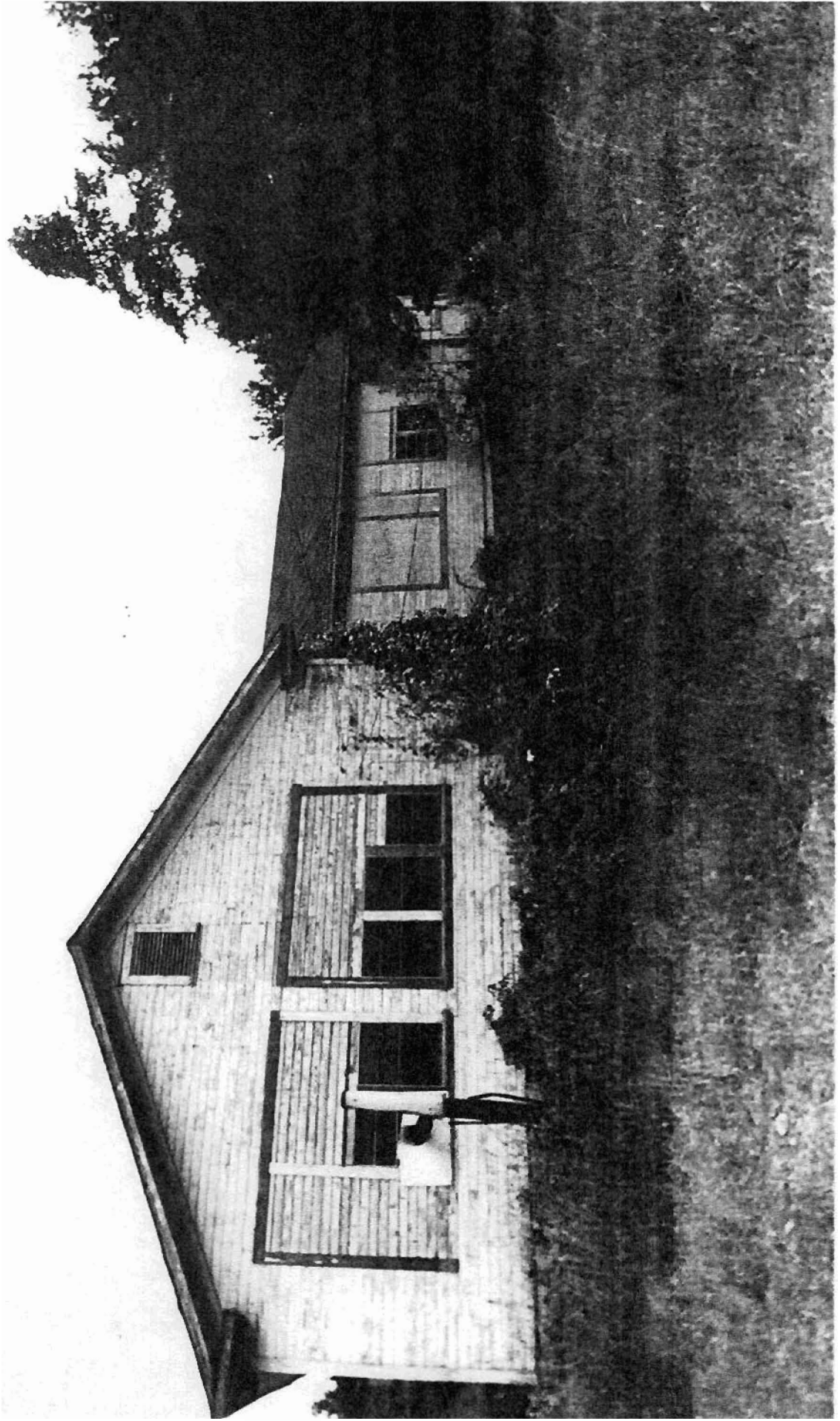
The Mt. Olive Rosenwald School is located in the north part of the NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 8, Township 15 South, Range 9 West.

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

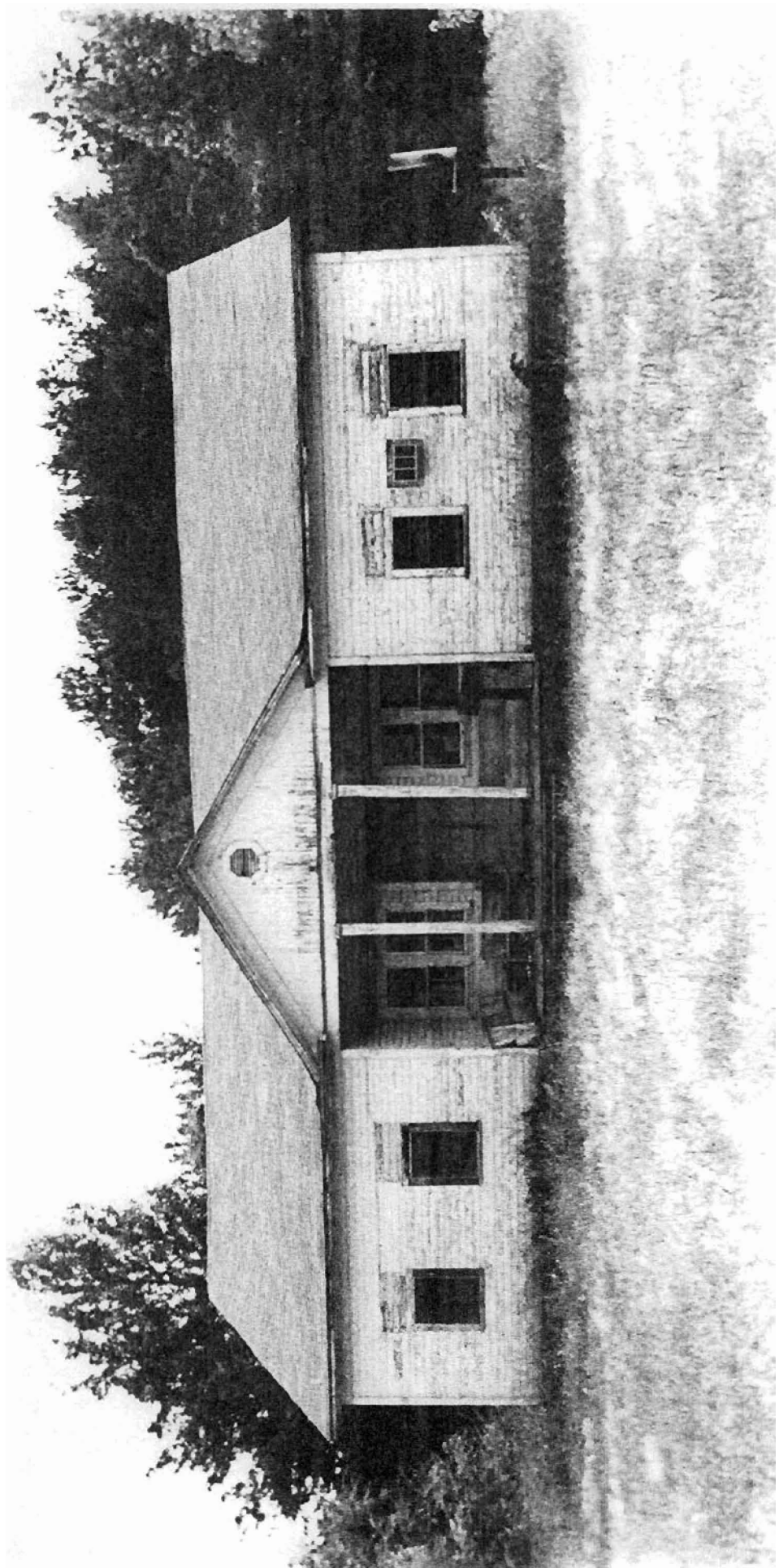
The boundary contains the land that is historically associated with the Mt. Olive Rosenwald School.













UNITED STATES

3701  
T. 14 S.  
T. 15 S.

(LONGVIEW)  
7650 1V NW

MT. OLIVE ROSENWALD  
SCHOOL  
MT. OLIVE, BRADLEY  
COUNTY, AR

UTM:  
15/587456/3698951

3698  
25'  
3697

BRADLEY CO  
DREW CO

Creek

Snake

Mt Olive

Gravel Pit

Gravel Pits

