Ferdinand Schulz Blacksmith and Wheelwright Shop
W3222 Highway 32
~~Vicinity of Howard~~ HOWARDS GROVE
Herman Township
Sheboygan County
Wisconsin

HABS No. WI-338

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
National Park Service
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
FERDINAND SCHULZ BLACKSMITH AND WHEELWRIGHT SHOP

HABS No. WI-338

Location: W3222 Highway 32, ~~vicinity of Howard~~ HOWARDS GROVE, Herman Township, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin.

Present Owner: Wisconsin's Ethnic Settlement Trail

Present Use: Vacant (to be relocated)

Significance: The Schulz Blacksmith Shop is a representative example of a blacksmith shop, an important precursor to industrial development in late nineteenth and early twentieth century America. Large-scale metal processing and fabrication industries, important components of eastern Wisconsin's economic development, had their roots in cottage industries such as the local blacksmith shop. The blacksmith served many functions in most communities, including shoeing horses, repairing iron tools, and wagon-making.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: c. 1880

2. Architect/Builder: Unknown

3. Original and subsequent owners: Original owner, Ferdinand Schulz, sold the property for $1,500 in 1887; the shop was sold in 1891 for the sum of $1,500; and again in 1903 for $1,800. In 1927, Paul Wehrmann, the last blacksmith to work in the shop, purchased the property for $4,700 from Louis Schroeder. Wilma Wehrmann, Paul Wehrmann's widow, retained ownership of the structure until 1994.

4. Original plans and construction:

5. Alterations and Additions: A 16'-6" x 35'-6" shed-roofed addition was constructed on the west side of the blacksmith shop around the turn-of-the-century. This portion was used as a wheelwright shop.

B. Historical Context:

Sheboygan County

In 1834, the first settlers in Sheboygan County established a sawmill at the first rapids of the Sheboygan River, about three miles from the river's mouth. The mill's founders were William Paine and a man named Crocker, both from Chicago. There were several large Native American settlements on the river at this time, representing about a half dozen different tribes. Construction of the dam required for the sawmill provoked widespread opposition among the native inhabitants, who said it would prevent the fish from ascending the river. After lengthy negotiations, consent was obtained for the dam, thus also clearing the way for additional settlers.[1]

Sheboygan County was established as a legal entity by the Wisconsin Territorial Legislature on 7 December 1836. Sheboygan, at the mouth of river, was named the county seat. Since Sheboygan was midway between Green Bay and the southern boundary of the territory, land investors believed that this area would outgrow Milwaukee and become the metropolis of Wisconsin. However, the financial panic of 1837 deterred land speculation in the area for several years. Many of the settlers of Sheboygan left the area; some took up residence in Sheboygan Falls where a sawmill provided the nucleus for a community.[2]

Situated on the banks of the Sheboygan River five miles northwest of Lake Michigan, Sheboygan Falls was established at a public land sale in November 1835. Colonel Silas Stedman, the founder of Sheboygan Falls, along with Randolph Marcy, James Doty, Samuel Beall, Albert G. Ellis, and a Mr. Jones, purchased 80 acres for $13.50 an acre.[3] Sheboygan Falls was platted in 1836, but not recorded at this time. Sheboygan Falls was surveyed again on 6 January 1846 and recorded, with additional land recorded on 1 June 1847. Though originally called Rochester, the town was referred to as "the Falls" from an early point.

By 1848, Sheboygan Falls contained two flour mills, a gristmill, three saw mills, an iron foundry, two hotels, professional offices, and various general and hardware stores. In 1850, the name of this community was officially changed to Sheboygan Falls. The village charter was granted by the State Legislature on 1 April 1854. By 1857, Sheboygan Falls had eight sawmills. The furniture industry became an important aspect of the community in the 1860s, with the first furniture factory being built by Silas Crocker and L.E. Minott in 1865. A thriving manufacturing economy based largely upon metal fabrication rose from the county's German

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[1] Snyder, Van Vechten & Co., Illustrated Historical Atlas of Wisconsin (Milwaukee, 1878).

[2] Horace Rublee, "Early Times in Sheboygan County," Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Vol. 9, ed. by Lyman Copeland Draper (Madison, Wisc.: published by the Society, 1906) 335-342.

[3] Gustave William Buchen, Historic Sheboygan County (N.p.: n.p., 1944).

artisan tradition.[4] By the end of the century, Sheboygan Falls was a thriving village containing the largest woolen mill in the state and a sizable tannery.[5] Sheboygan Falls became a city in 1913.

The population of Sheboygan County grew slowly until European immigration began in large numbers in the 1840s and 1850s. In 1842, the population was 227; by 1846, it totaled 4,637 and, in 1850, it stood at 8,836. By 1850, all of the government land had been dispersed, much of it going to German immigrants.[6] As the population increased, local transportation facilities were improved. The Military Road connecting Chicago and Green Bay had been completed in 1839 and by the early 1870s, three railroads served the city of Sheboygan.[7]

The town of Herman, which was originally attached to Sheboygan Falls, was first settled in 1845 by Mr. Mungro. Fred Binder, Christian Schlichting, H. Mahlstedt, and Christian Wiehe were some of the early Germans who settled in the area. The town of Herman's population included a high concentration of German-Americans, especially descendants of the immigrants from the principality of Lippe-Detmold (in modern Westphalia).[8] In July 1847, a group of more than one hundred persons arrived from Germany, settling primarily in Sections 15, 16, and 17 of what was to become the town of Herman. In 1850, the town was separated from Sheboygan Falls and organized under the name of Howard, but the name was changed a year later to Herman. The name change was likely due to the predominant Lipper influence in the town, the great hero, Herman, being the successful leader of Germanic tribes against Roman legions in 9 A.D. at the Battle of Teutoburg, near the modern city of Detmold.[9]

In the township of Herman four small trading places grew, including Howard (later known as Howard's Grove), Franklin, Ada and Edwards. Each small community provided local residents with services and needs. Howard, located at the intersection of Green Bay and Sheboygan and Calumet roads was the site of a gristmill, as early as 1853. The mill, destroyed by fire, was replaced by a saw mill, and the village also housed a cheese and cheese box factory, hotel, two general stores, and a blacksmith shop. Ada, located on Sheboygan and Calumet Road in the northern part of Section 8, was the site of a hotel, cheese factory, store and blacksmith shop. Franklin, located on the Sheboygan River, was home to a saw mill and gristmill as early as 1853, and by 1854 a blacksmith shop, hotel, general store, and two to three other shops. The

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[4] Snyder, Van Vechten & Co.

[5] Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory (Detroit: R.L. Polk & Co., 1895).

[6] Rublee 342.

[7] Malcolm Rosholt, Trains of Wisconsin (Rosholt, Wisc.: Rosholt Press, 1985).

[8] The Lipper presence in the town had its origins in a group of about twelve members of the German Reformed Church under leadership of Reverend H.A. Winter, who arrived in New Orleans in 1845. They intended to settle in Texas, but most of the group eventually travelled upriver, splitting into Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin contingents; see Buchen 304.

[9] Buchen 336.

community of Edwards only had a general store.[10] The Ferdinand Schulz Blacksmith and Wheelwright Shop is situated between the villages of Ada and Howard's Grove on Highway 32.

The Blacksmith Industry

Blacksmith shops joined saw mills and flour mills as early businesses in small crossroad communities across Wisconsin. Able to manufacture and repair a wide range of farm tools, machines, kitchen utensils, and wagons, the smith provided "pioneer necessities" to their local community. The blacksmith was a vital link in the agricultural infrastructure of the state. By the 1840s, Wisconsin was becoming an important source of the nation's grain production. The geography of the state was well adapted to the use of the new agricultural implements such as steel ploughs, mechanical reapers, harvesters, and many other labor-saving tools. Wisconsin was an expanding marketplace for businesses producing farm machinery, and enterprising businessmen and mechanics supplied farmers with equipment for cultivating farmland.

The local blacksmiths were one to two-person operations providing a variety of services and supplies. The 1850 Federal Census Products of Industry schedule listed one blacksmith shop and one wheelwright shop in Sheboygan County. But by the 1860 Federal Census the number of Blacksmith shops listed for the county had increased to fifteen, with sixteen blacksmiths and two apprentices listed by occupation. Minimally, four blacksmith shops were located in the town of Herman in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Ada, Franklin and Howard all supported a shop, in addition to the Ferdinand Schulz shop between Ada and Howard.[11] The amount and variety of work that each blacksmith undertook can be seen in an example from the 1860 census, which reported that John Schneider, a blacksmith in the town of Herman in Sheboygan County operated a shop with one employee that annually produced five hundred horseshoes, thirty yorke ovens, eight two-horse wagons, and twenty sleds.[12]

The early blacksmith shops were the beginning for the larger manufacturing industries during the 1850s and 1860s, specializing in the areas of wagon and carriage making, foundry and machine shop repair, and the manufacture of agricultural tools.[13] Blacksmiths were becoming specialized in these areas and were being classified as wheelwrights, machinists, and foundrymen, rather than as blacksmiths. With specialization and larger manufacturing shops, the average number of blacksmith shops in each county decreased from 3.9 in 1850 to 2.1 per county in 1860.[14]

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[10] Carl Zillier, History of Sheboygan County, Wisconsin: Past and Present (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1912) 258.

[11] Zillier 258.

[12] United States Federal Census Records, 1850 and 1860.

[13] Barbara Wyatt, ed., Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin (Madison, Wisc.: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), Vol. 2, Industry 14-2 and J.H.H. Alexander, "A Short Industrial History of Wisconsin," in The Wisconsin Blue Book, William J. Anderson and William A. Anderson, eds. (Madison, Wisc.: The State Printing Board, 1929) 35.

[14] Margaret Walsh, The Manufacturing Frontier (Madison, Wisc.: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1972) 67, 91.

Most of the early machine shops were simple operations that hired blacksmiths, millwrights, and other mechanics to assemble and repair stock components into assembled machines. By the 1850s progressive firms, such as that of Jerome Case in Racine, were beginning to construct their own foundry and machine shops. Having established a solid base in the 1850s, the industry continued to expand and consolidate while mass, assembly-line operations replaced the skilled work of the individual blacksmith.

The early manufacture of carriages and wagons in Wisconsin played an important role in the industrial development of the state. Developing out of independent blacksmith and wheelwright concerns, carriage and wagon manufacturers marked one of the earliest small-scale industries to expand within the agricultural regions of the state. By 1850, 74 firms were listed as simple wagonmaking and wheelwright establishments in the state. These firms employed a total workforce of 291 and produced $205,000 worth of goods. In the city of Sheboygan, the Jung Carriage Factory began operations and the production of carriages in the 1850s and by 1870 Sheboygan County had nine carriage and wagon shops with a value of production exceeding $20,000.[15]

In addition to the larger machine shops, the remaining small blacksmith shops declined precipitously in the twentieth century, because of the replacement of the horse by the automobile and of iron by steel, leaving the blacksmith trades of the nineteenth century obsolete. Few blacksmith shops survive, because most were demolished after the development of larger machine shops and as they came to the end of their economic usefulness. One shop that has been preserved in an outdoor museum is the De Witt Blacksmith Shop, built in 1897, now at Heritage Hill State Park.

Large-scale metal processing and fabrication industries, important components of eastern Wisconsin's economic development, had their roots in cottage industries, especially the local blacksmith shop. The blacksmith served many functions in most communities. Besides shoeing horses, the blacksmith made and repaired iron tools, utensils, and other objects and frequently was active in the carriage and wagon-making trade. The Schulz Blacksmith Shop continuous period of activity for over fifty years is a testimony to its success and necessity in a rural area of Sheboygan County. The shop is believed to have been operating as early as 1880 and has been confirmed to be operating by 1889, as the business is identified on the 1889 plat map.[16] In 1927, Paul Wehrmann, the last blacksmith to work in the shop, purchased the property for $4,700 from Louis Schroeder. He operated the shop until his death on 25 May 1947. According to Mrs. Wilma Wehrmann, Paul Wehrmann's widow, her husband did general farm equipment repair and wheel rebuilding.[17] Although a majority of the craftsman blacksmith shops throughout the state had been replaced with larger machine shops as early as the late nineteenth

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[15] Wyatt, Vol. 2, Industry 13-2 and 13-7.

[16] C.M. Foote and Co., Plat Book of Sheboygan County, Wisconsin (Minneapolis, Minn., 1889).

[17] Dan Giese, "Sales History of the Ferdinand Schulz Property," compiled from deed records, n.d.

century, the Schulz Blacksmith Shop remained in business well into the twentieth century. The shop was supported by the local agricultural community allowing for its extended period of operation. Blacksmith shops that survive *in situ* today are rare. Consequently, this building provides some meaningful insights into Wisconsin's early industrial history.

Prepared by:
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PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: With many handmade features, the structure exemplifies local craftsmanship of the late nineteenth century. The blacksmith shop is a simple vernacular structure featuring timber frame construction, hand-forged nails, and a suspended attic floor. The principal feature of the attached wheelwright shop is the parapet wall that extends above the roofline on the front facade.

2. Condition of the fabric: The blacksmith shop and attached wheelwright shop are significantly deteriorated. The foundation is collapsing. Portions of the vertical siding are missing, particularly at the northwest corner of the structure. The windows are without lights exposing the interior to weather.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The south wall of the blacksmith shop measures 24'-0", while that of the wheelwright shop measures 16'-6", for an overall length of 40'-0" for the front facade. The structure's west wall measures 35'-6". The entire building forms a rectangle, approximately 35'-6" x 40'-0".

2. Foundations: The smithy has a fieldstone foundation and the wheelwright shop has a concrete foundation.

3. Wall construction: The exterior walls consist of board-and-batten siding.

4. Structural system, framing: The entire structure has a braced timber frame. As viewed from the cellar, the blacksmith shop flooring is supported by hewn beams and posts. Other members are sawn, including floorboards and walls.

5. Chimneys: A cream brick chimney is located toward the rear of the smithy.

6. Openings:
a. Doorways and doors: The front entry to the blacksmith shop consists of large double, batten doors set in a hewn frame. On the upper level, there is a doorway to the attic storage space. A sliding door opens to the front of the wheelwright shop as does a smaller pedestrian door—both of batten construction with iron hardware. The wheelwright shop has a large sliding door on the west wall and two doorways at cellar level at the rear.

b. Windows: Two 2/2 fixed sash windows, which are missing all lights, flank the entrance to the blacksmith shop. The east side of the building has three dilapidated 6/6 double hung windows, which are also missing lights. The west side has two window openings with little of the sashes left at the north end, and two windows with 6/1 fixed

sashes but no lights toward the south end. The north (rear) facade has a 1/1 fixed sash window in the privy, and two window openings in the blacksmith shop.

7. Roof:
a. Shape, covering: The gable roof of the smithy is covered by corrugated metal. The wheelwright shop has a shed roof with a shallow slope. Its covering is also corrugated metal.

b. Cornice: Both sections of the building have simple wood cornices.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:
a. Cellar: The rear of the wheelwright shop addition was partitioned off to create a fruit cellar and a two-hole privy. The floor of the privy is earth. The crawl space beneath the blacksmith shop was once used as a pigsty. A trap door in the floor of the smithy accesses this space.

b. First floor: The east half of the building housed the blacksmith shop, while the west half housed the wheelwright shop. Both shops are large, open rooms. The interior is largely intact, although most portable equipment was removed in 1945. The forge, with a small brick chimney, occupies the left corner at the rear of the blacksmith shop. Next to the forge, there is an iron plate set into the floor. There is a coal door on the east wall. Traces of the former wheelwright shop include small grinding stones, parts of wagon wheels and old harnesses.

c. Second floor: There is a full-height attic above the smithy, which was likely used for storage. This open space has a door at one end and a window at the other.

2. Stairways: A ladder, which is located behind the chimney, provides access to the second floor storage space.

3. Flooring: The floor of the smithy is wood, while that of the wheelwright shop is concrete. The level of the wheelwright shop is below that of the blacksmith shop, necessitating a step between the rooms. The flooring of the attic is suspended from the roof, supported by wrought iron rods hung from the rafters and connected to the floor boards through a looped pin.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls of the blacksmith shop are horizontal boards. These boards add a second layer to the thickness of the wall. There are many built-in shelves and compartments for storage of hardware and other small items. Storage nooks along the front wall are labelled "1/4 x 2" and "5/6 x 2 1/2" indicating sizes of some of the pieces of hardware that were available. The smith's wares are also displayed on the walls and hanging from the beams on the ceiling. The ceiling consists of exposed beams and floor

boards. On the upper floor of the smithy, the ceiling reveals the rough timber rafters and sawn purlins of the roof structure. The roof is constructed without a ridge board.

The wheelwright shop has vertical board walls of only one thickness. Wheel-making equipment—consisting of wood wheels attached to an iron rod—is attached with iron straps to a cross beam on the ceiling. The wood ceiling is supported by a crude truss system and rafters.

5. Doorways and doors: A large, batten sliding door, which is set in an iron track, and a smaller swinging door link the two shops. Both doors are grouped in a single wood frame. Two double hung windows are located on the interior wall between the blacksmith and wheelwright shops.

6. Decorative features: None.

7. Lighting fixtures: Electricity was added to both shops at an unknown date. Light fixtures fit single bulb only.

D. Site:

1. General Setting: The blacksmith shop and attached wheelwright shop and the associated animal building are located on a small quadrilateral-shaped parcel of land adjacent to Highway 32. The property slopes away from the road. A modern house is situated just west of the shop building.

2. Outbuildings: The animal building (HABS No. WI-338-A) is located north of the shop.

3. Landscaping, enclosures: At present, there are no enclosures associated with the buildings. The area to the east is wooded. Heavy vegetation surrounds both buildings. There is a small grass lot between the shops and the house.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation, District 3 Office, Green Bay, contracted with Mead & Hunt, Inc., to complete documentation of this property to satisfy the requirements of the Memorandum of Agreement for Project I.D. 4540-03-00, Highway 32, Sheboygan County. The Schulz buildings have been acquired by Wisconsin's Ethnic Settlement Trail, Inc. This group plans to move the buildings to the village of Franklin, approximately two miles from their original location. These structures will be used as interpretation sites for nineteenth-century German American handcrafts.

This documentation was prepared by Amy Ross and Christina Slattery, Architectural Historians, in February 1995. Archival photographs were taken by Skot Weidemann, Photographer.
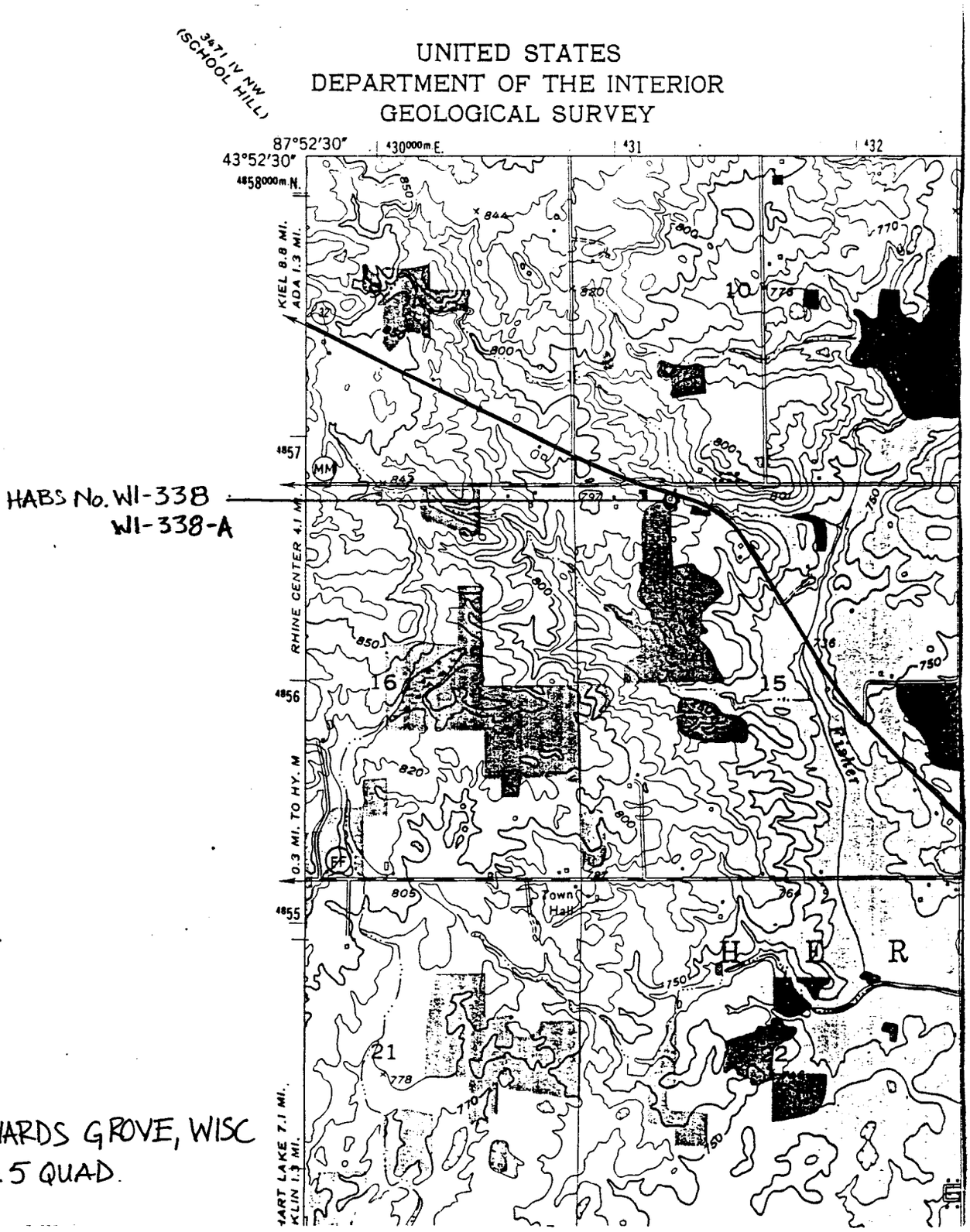
Fig. 1 USGS Quad: Howard's Grove, Wisconsin (7.5 minute series)
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