

PH 068 4104

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED SEP 11 1978  
DATE ENTERED NOV 27 1979

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Wellsburg Wharf

AND/OR COMMON Wellsburg Wharf

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 6th and Main Streets

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
First

CITY, TOWN Wellsburg VICINITY OF

STATE West Virginia CODE 54 COUNTY Brooke CODE 009

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME City of Wellsburg

STREET & NUMBER City Building/7th Street

CITY, TOWN Wellsburg VICINITY OF STATE West Virginia

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Brooke County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER 7th and Main Streets

CITY, TOWN Wellsburg STATE West Virginia

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

## CHECK ONE

## CHECK ONE

EXCELLENT

DETERIORATED

UNALTERED

ORIGINAL SITE

GOOD

RUINS

ALTERED

MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

FAIR

UNEXPOSED

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Wellsburg wharf is located on the banks of the Ohio River at 6th and Main Streets in Wellsburg, Brooke County, West Virginia. Cobblestones forming the pavement of the wharf are clearly discernible, despite the natural cover of vegetation and alluvial deposits. The wharf extended in former days below the present pool level of the river that has raised in the 20th century due to the lock and dam and roller dam system.

Extending several hundred feet along Main Street, the wharf is devoid of above ground structures. Foundations of early 19th century warehouses exist at both the northern and southern boundaries of the site. A giant sycamore tree, planted by a local notable before the Civil War, stands on the wharf at its northeast corner. The wharf runs in a north-south direction along the bank facing the small community of Brilliant, Ohio, across the river.

A very large percentage of the buildings in the vicinity of the wharf are of pre-Civil War construction, dependent to a great extent, in terms of their original use and design, upon the commercial needs of a 19th century river town.

The wharf has undergone no radical changes during the long years of its existence, despite the annual presence of high water that has on several occasions inundated the entirety of downtown Wellsburg.

Restoration of much of the wharf area was completed in 1968. Some movement of earth was necessary to restore the contour of the wharf's incline. The original cobblestones are intact. The wharf serves the community of Wellsburg as a historic site and community park and vista. Pleasure craft and occasional excursion boats periodically moor at the wharf during the summer months.

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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7

WELLSBURG WHARF, WELLSBURG, BROOKE COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

Known underwater resources at the Wellsburg Wharf comprise wharf cobblestones extending approximately 20 feet beyond the present shoreline.

Restoration activity at the Wellsburg Wharf in 1968 consisted of removal of silt deposits and vegetation covering the wharf paving stones. A natural vegetation cover has reappeared necessitating summer maintenance (mowing) by the City of Wellsburg, owner of the wharf.

# 6 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 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" 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 c. 1795, 1836

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Wellsburg wharf of the 1970s is a pleasant open area, rather like a park, a place where occasional pleasure boats tie up. Though the piercing wail of steamboat whistles and the rough, loud voices of draymen and rivermen no longer stir the air, the Wellsburg wharf survives as a focal point of much of the history of this Ohio River community that rivaled Wheeling in the early 19th century for commercial supremacy in the upper Ohio Valley. Over the cobblestones gently sloping to the river passed adventurers, settlers, merchants, and commerce bound for Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and New Orleans. As a shipbuilding center, Wellsburg witnessed the departure in the 1820s and 30s of flatboats, keelboats, and schooners loaded with local cargos for Southern markets.

Early 20th century Wheeling area historian, Charles A. Wingerter, writes of Wellsburg's prominence in his History of Greater Wheeling and Vicinity:

"This was quite an important point in early days, not only in river shipping but in the building of river craft which was an extensive industry here. Its importance in this line may be noted by the fact that it was considered only second to Pittsburgh on the whole river. The town retained this commanding position for long years, and the launching of river craft was quite interesting and picturesque feature of local life."

Wellsburg and Wheeling were early commercial centers on very nearly equal levels of importance. When Wheeling secured, however, its prominent place on the National Road, its ascendancy was thereafter assured.

The Wellsburg wharf was firmly established by the early 19th century although its existence was certainly a fact as early as the 1790s. The early wharf was probably little more than an unimproved river bank at a strategic location in the commercial sector of Wellsburg (until 1816 called Charlestown). J. H. Newton, in his History of the Pan-Handle, records the first known effort to upgrade the riverfront at Wellsburg: "On the 16th day of June, 1836, Jacob Decamp sold to William Maybell, Peter Curran, Robert Moore, Samuel Herdman and A.P. Wheeler, who with others associated to subscribe funds to build a public wharf, the surplus lots opposite numbers 15 and 16, in the town of

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Brooke County Historical Society Museum brochure, n.d.

Caldwell, Nancy. "River Traffic, Flatboats, and Boat Yards". Wellsburg W. V.: Brooke County Historical Society (mimeographed paper), 1970, n.p.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Steubenville East, W.V., Pa., Ohio QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24,000

UTM REFERENCES

A	<u>1,7</u>	<u>5,3,2,7,8,0</u>	<u>4,4,5,7,4,8,0</u>	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Rodney S. Collins, Research Assistant

ORGANIZATION West Virginia Department of Culture and History

DATE July 17, 1978

STREET & NUMBER The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex

TELEPHONE 304-348-0244

CITY OR TOWN Charleston

STATE West Virginia

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL    STATE X LOCAL X

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

*Clarence M. ...*

September 6, 1978

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Clarence M. ...*  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 11-27-79

ATTEST: *Annafane ...*  
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION  
*Regional Coordinator*

DATE 11-27-79

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

Wellsburg." It is interesting to note here the famous Miller's Tavern and inn, that played such an interesting part in the riverfront history of Wellsburg, was located on lot number 17.

In addition to Miller's Tavern at 6th and Main Streets (Main Street was once called Water Street), other important nearby buildings included the Brooke County Courthouse at 7th and Main and the old Wellsburg Market House (demolished, built 1828) at the rear of the Courthouse on 7th street.

Two warehouses, also called "Check Houses", were built near the Wellsburg wharf. In 1790, John Henderson built a warehouse on the river bank just north of the wharf. It is believed that the building occupying this site and built in the 1820s or 30s by merchants William and Campbell Tarr, was built on the foundation of this early warehouse. A later warehouse, built by Danforth Brown, was erected south of the wharf. Such warehouses were equipped with heavy walls next to the river and with projecting trusses or cranes equipped with blocks and tackle to assist in loading and unloading. The foundations of the two warehouses survive at the Wellsburg wharf.

Early warehouses were built of logs and were rather large. As commercial traffic increased they were constructed with shore foundations of massive hewn timbers enclosed and floored with lumber. Some of the larger ones, 60 x 100 feet, were large enough to permit the passage of wagons onto the main floor. Other warehouses were equipped with adjacent tracks along which cargo was moved to or from the water's edge on cars pulled by a horsepowered windlass. Thus goods could be "checked" down the incline to the waiting boat by the aid of a brace, and then transferred to the deck of a vessel.

The Wellsburg wharf was the site of much flatboat, keelboat, and steamboat traffic during the 19th century. Both flatboats and keelboats, also called storeboats, were built and equipped at Wellsburg. Boatbuilding at Wellsburg occurred at points other than the wharf, though numerous locally manufactured vessels used the wharf.

A log, actually a ledger, owned by the Brooke County Historical Society, contains significant information regarding flat and keelboat traffic between Wellsburg and New Orleans in the period 1834-36.

The Wellsburg flatboats were built at a cost of between \$150 and \$180. They ranged from 70 to 90 feet in length with widths of up to 18 feet. A fully equipped and insured boat, including a skiff costing

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

\$10.00 to \$12.00, might be outfitted for approximately \$300.00. Major Wellsburg products included the two local staples of flour and whiskey, and numerous local agricultural products, among these, butter, lard, cheese, bacon, molasses, potatoes, onions, wheat, barley, and oats. Manufactured products appearing on the ledger were tinware, nails, window glass, candles and stoneware. Products were stored on the flatboats and keelboats in kegs, casks, barrels and boxes.

Wellsburg riverman, Captain W. Lattimore, was the owner of the keelboat "Crusader". She boasted a 95 foot keel and an 18 foot beam. Other rivermen active at Wellsburg were: James Gillesthorp, the Fetters, the Jacobs, the DeCamps, Lewis Applegate, Joseph Linton, Peter Curran, John Ervin, William and Campbell Tarr, David Cole, John and William Parsons, James Palmer, John Brady, John Logue, David and Jefferson Markley, G.W. Rine, and the Oakes.

Both North and South Water (Main) Street and other streets close to the wharf were, by 1879, the sites of numerous mercantile and manufacturing concerns handling products ranging from dry goods, groceries, lumber, marble, grain, coal and leather, to boots and shoes, carriages and wagons, and paper sacks and manilla paper. Misses Magee operated their millinery and notion goods shop on North Water Street; R. Helsey and Brothers made cigars for sale on South Water Street; H.E. Magee ran his copper, tin, and sheet iron business on North Water Street, while Mrs. Sallie Lewis attracted the fancy of the sweet tooth gang with her "confectionery and ice cream saloon" on North Water Street.

A giant sycamore tree standing at the top of the Wellsburg wharf was planted in the early years of the 19th century by Dr. Albert Wheeler who practiced medicine in Wellsburg until his death in 1864. It was under this tree that militiamen gathered in 1863 when Confederate General Morgan led his cavalrymen on a sweep into the state of Ohio.

The partial restoration of the Wellsburg wharf was undertaken in 1968 by the Brooke County Historical Society, the City of Wellsburg, and the Laurel Leaf Garden Club. On July 13, 1968, the wharf was dedicated by the Brooke County Historical Society and the board and executive committee of the West Virginia Historical Society.

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7 1979

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 4

Discussion of archeological significance of the Wellsburg Wharf, a historical site, was not addressed nor marked in the nomination form as a category of significance. It is assumed that many sites, whether historic or archeological, or associative terrain of structures or buildings of considerable antiquity, merit potential historic archeological investigation pending local resources and priorities. Recognition of the site, however, is paramount if such studies are to be considered at a future date. The formal discussion of an archeological element in the Wellsburg Wharf nomination cannot therefore be addressed by reason of the absence of available data.

Two above-ground rubblestone foundations, one at the northern boundary and one at the southern boundary of the wharf, are remnants of wharf warehouses. Underwater and below-ground features elsewhere may exist, though sub-surface disturbances over a period of nearly two centuries are possible considering the heavy historical commercial and pedestrian use of the area. The age of the present stone wharf paving is not known, though it is almost certainly of 19th century origin.

The Department of Culture and History does not anticipate nomination of a separate Wellsburg waterfront historic district.

### SUMMATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

Of the important early West Virginia Ohio River towns, Wellsburg possesses one of the few remaining and best preserved examples of the 19th century river wharf. Wheeling has lost its wharf to a colossal concrete parking garage, while a flood wall at Parkersburg has obscured that city's riverfront.

The Wellsburg Wharf possesses additional significance as the focal point of transportation, commercial, and industrial activity - both associative and direct - that prompted the growth of Wellsburg, an early rival city of Wheeling, and as a debarkation point of early 19th century immigrants heading west.



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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

- \_\_\_\_\_. "Restoration of the Wharf in Wellsburg, W. Va."  
Wellsburg, W.V.: Brooke County Historical Society (mimeographed  
paper), 1968, n.d.
- Historical Society Holds Meeting. "Wheeling News-Register. July 14,  
1968, p.8
- Newton, J.H. et. al. History of the Pan-Handle. Wheeling, W. Va.:  
J. A. Caldwell, 1879, p. 306, 332, 225-36.
- River Log (ledger), 1834-36, Brooke County Historical Society, Wellsburg,  
W.V.
- Wellsburg Daily Harold, July 11, 1968, p.1
- Wingerter, Charles A. History of Greater Wheeling and Vicinity. (2 vols.)  
Chicago and New York: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1912, vol. 1, pp.  
115, 317.

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CONTINUATION SHEET




ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

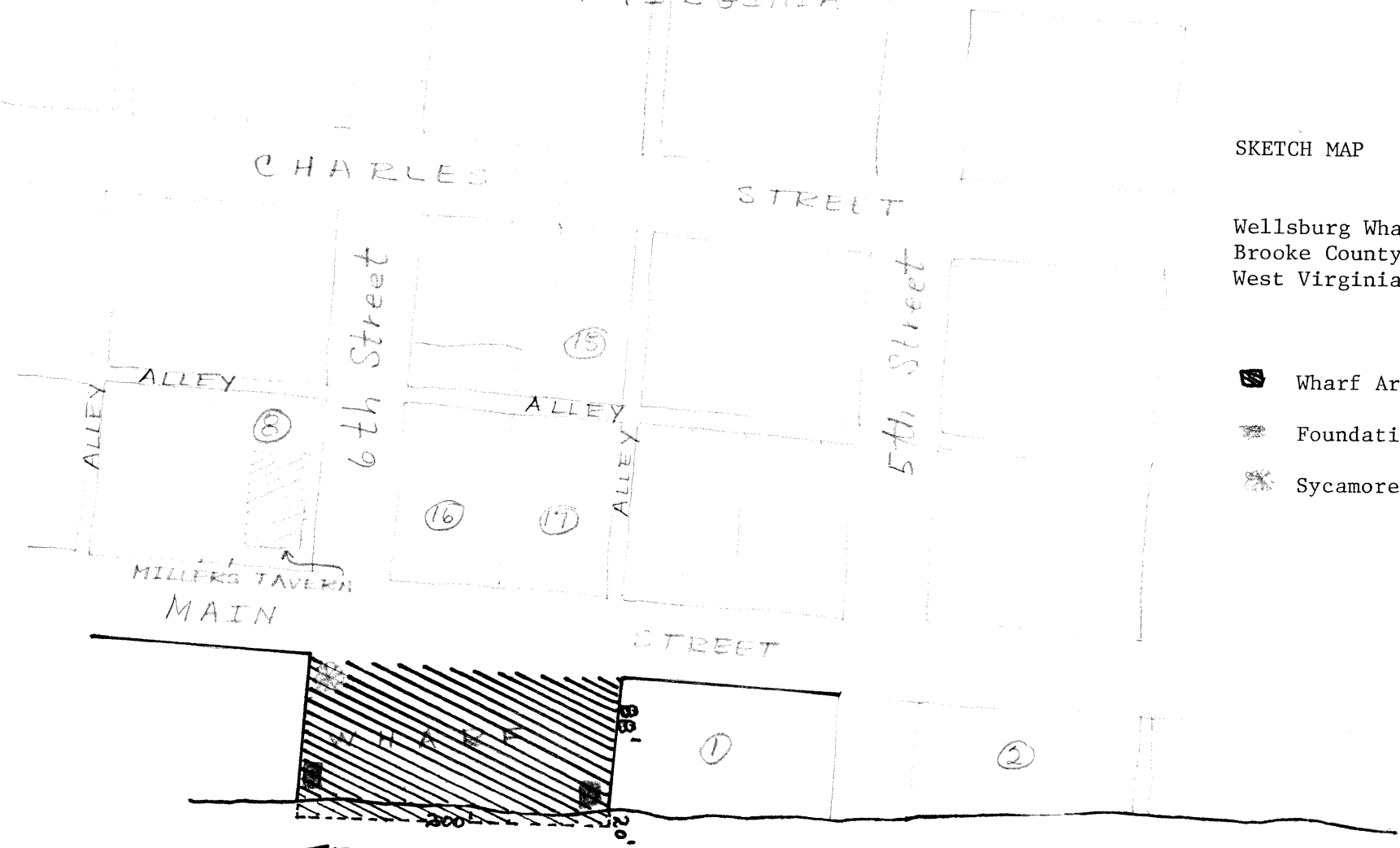
The Wellsburg Wharf is a rectangle measuring 200 feet from north to south and 88 feet from east to west (from Main Street to the waterline). An additional 20 feet extending westward from the 200-foot shoreline is included. The wharf boundaries are formed by the western side of Main Street which includes the land (the wharf) opposite the southern lot line of lot#18 (the intersection of 6th and Main Streets), and the land west of Main Street opposite lots # 16, 17, and the intersecting point of the alley with Main Street between 6th and 5th Streets. (Tax Map, City of Wellsburg, Brooke County Office of the Assessor, Map CW13, July 1959, revised February 21, 1974.)

— WELLSBURG —  
WEST VIRGINIA

SKETCH MAP

Wellsburg Wharf  
Brooke County  
West Virginia

-  Wharf Area
-  Foundations
-  Sycamore Tree



O H I O R I V E R

NOV 27 1979

