

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received APR 25 1988

date entered SEP 23 1988

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

1. Name

historic New Martinsville Downtown Historic District

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Main, Washington Streets & Monroe Alley

N/A not for publication

city, town New Martinsville

N/A vicinity of

state West Virginia

code 54

county Wetzel

code 103

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership

street & number

city, town

vicinity of

state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Wetzel County Courthouse

street & number Main & Washington Streets

city, town New Martinsville

state West Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Historic Resource Survey of New Martinsville

title M. Pauley & M. Gioulis

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date Spring, 1987

federal state county local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Unit, Dept. of Culture & History

city, town Cultural Center, Charleston

state West Virginia

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The New Martinsville Downtown Historic District consists of the older, historic, central business district of New Martinsville. It lies on a flat plain to the east of the Ohio River. It is located in the northeast portion of Wetzel County, West Virginia and contains the seat of government for the county. The district boundaries consist of the following:

On the south, Washington Street forms the boundary; on the north, lot lines 22 and 40 (west and east) forms the boundary; on the west, the Ohio River is the natural boundary; and on the east, Market Lane, which is also a functional boundary between the commercial and residential portions of the downtown.

The commercial area consists of predominantly two and three story masonry commercial structures from the late 19th to early 20th century. These represent a number of the typical styles of the era, including Romanesque Revival, Colonial Revival, and Italianate. There are some one and two story residential structures, mostly in the north portion of the survey area and in the northeast. There is also a small pocket of older residential structures on the west, facing the river. The center of the area contains the Wetzel County Courthouse and Jail, and the New Martinsville City Hall Building, a converted bank.

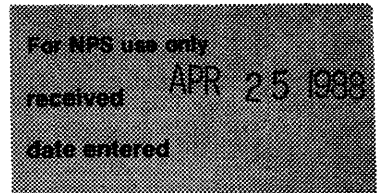
The small residential area along the River, behind the Courthouse, is older than most of the other portions of the historic district. This is adjacent to the River Landing and was the original portion of settlement in the downtown. The houses are two story frame buildings in Federal or Revival Styles.

Throughout the historic district there are open or vacant sites. Some of these are a result of demolition activities or of true open space. A number of the structures in the district have also been modified, causing some of them to lose some historic significance. Mostly this occurred to the commercial buildings, though a few of the residential structures have been covered with aluminum or vinyl siding. The New Martinsville Downtown Historic District contains the following properties:

1. The New Martinsville City Building, Main and Washington Streets, 1895, is located in a former bank building and is, therefore, a good example of the adoptive re-use of a historic building. The structure is a nice example of the Victorian Romanesque style of architecture and is two stories tall, made of brick. Historically, it is significant for its association with the banking interests of the community. (Contributing)
2. First National Bank, 207 Main Street, 1964. A two story masonry building of the Brutalism school of architecture. The institution itself dates to 1900 in New Martinsville. (Non-contributing)
3. The McCaskey Building, 213 Main Street, 1898, is one of the older brick structures in the district. It is a three story Federal Style structure. It is also significant for its association with the prominent McCaskey family. John McCaskey was a prominent Union officer who fought in many

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



New Martinsville Downtown

Continuation sheet Historic District

Item number 7

Page 2

important engagements in the Eastern Theater and was present in the McLean House at Appomattox as witness to General Lee's surrender on April 9, 1865. He later served several terms as a justice of the peace and as mayor of the city. His son, Ambrose McCaskey, was a prominent state engineer, head of Marshall University's Engineering Department. (Contributing)

4. The Court Restaurant, 215 Main Street, c. 1905. A two story masonry commercial building in the Colonial Revival style; it is divided into three recessed panels by brick pilasters. There is interesting corbeling in the panels, and the pilasters have corbeled capitols. There is a bracketed metal cornice with two arched pediments with garlands. There are ball finials on the cornice. "The Court" is a prominent local landmark, which has been the focal point of much of New Martinsville's social history. It was visited in the 1920's by heavyweight boxing immortal Jack Dempsey, which is attested to by a large portrait of the champion. The walls also contain the photographs of many West Virginia governors, senators, and other notables who have visited here, and one room is kept as a shrine and repository of memorabilia associated with an early Wetzel County aviator. (Contributing)
5. Commercial Building, 221 Main Street, 1920, a two story masonry commercial building with three windows on the second level, the center of which is arched. (Contributing)
6. Loehr Building, 225 Main Street, c. 1920. A two story older commercial building that has been rendered non-contributing by a complete (1977) remodeling of vinyl. (Non-contributing)
7. Winer's Department Store, 221 Main Street, 1908. A two story blond brick commercial structure, in the Chicago style, with large second story windows with stone jack arches above. Metal paneled cornice with brackets and dentils are along the roof line, while there is a first story dentilated cornice. The building was a clothing store from 1911 until 1966, and has been owned by the prominent Shiben, Robinson, and Winer families. The second floor presently houses law offices. (Contributing)
8. Ober Building, 233 Main Street, c. 1901. A two story, four bay brick commercial structure. Windows are 1/1 with stone jack arches and raised keystones. There is a paneled pressed metal cornice with dentils and brick corbeled brackets on the second story. The storefront has been somewhat altered. (Contributing)
9. Fitzwater-Fraze Building, 241 Main Street, c. 1911. This is a three story commercial building with four bays and 1/1 windows. There is a pressed metal cornice and first floor cornice. The pilasters separating the bays have stone capitols. This building originally housed the Fitzwater Hardware

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

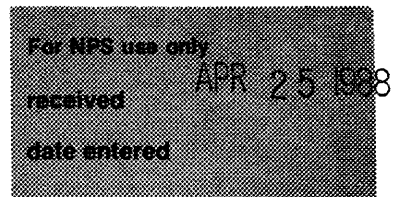
**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

New Martinsville Downtown

Continuation sheet Historic District

Item number 7

Page 3



and Furniture Store, and also served as the Thompson & Muhleman Funeral Parlor. The inquest for the Cox-Lowther Duel, a famous local historical incident, was held here. (Contributing)

10. Ruttenberg's Building, 247 Main Street, c. 1904. A three story brick commercial building with 1/1 windows with round headed arches on the third floor. Romanesque in style, it has a stepped parapet on the roofline that is pawled. The facade is divided into sections with corbeled brackets at the top of each. Restricted stone pilasters with decorative capitols separate the first floor bay. (Contributing)
11. Doolin Federal Savings & Loan, 251 Main Street, 1956. Two story commercial building of modern design. (Non-contributing)
12. Shiben Building-Davis Jewelers, 255 Main Street, 1923, a two story commercial structure with modillioned cornice and parapet with swaled ends at the roof line. The windows are novelty 3/1 and have stone above and below. Originally a meat market (Beck & Ench), it now houses Davis Jewelers. (Contributing)
13. Shiben Brothers Building, 257 Main Street, 1936. This is a three story blond brick commercial building with paired 1/1 windows and paired pilasters. There is a simple stone medallion in the top of the building. It was constructed by the Shiben Brothers, one of the city's most prominent business families. (Contributing)
14. McCrory's, 269 Main Street, c. 1905. A four story Romanesque rusticated ashlar stone commercial building. There are smooth stone pilasters with simple stone capitols on the front facade, and a bracketed cornice. The windows, 1/1, have smooth stone jack arches with keystones. (Contributing)
15. The Masonic Temple, 301 Main Street, 1913. Home of the Wetzel Lodge #39 of the Masonic Order, this is a three story Romanesque Revival brick structure, five bays wide. It was designed by architect James P. Chaplin of Wheeling. The front facade is divided into three units with an entrance in the central bay. Third story has arched windows with stone surrounds, while second floor windows are flat headed with stone lentils. There is a large overhanging cornice. This location was previously known as "Burnt Corner". The Cox-Lowther Duel took place here. (Contributing)
16. Haight's Furniture Building, 307 Main Street, c. 1960. Also known locally as "Bill Witschey's Building", this is a two story brick clad commercial structure of relatively modern construction. (Non-contributing)
17. Department of Human Services Headquarters, 309 Main Street, c. 1960. Two story modern building. (Non-contributing)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

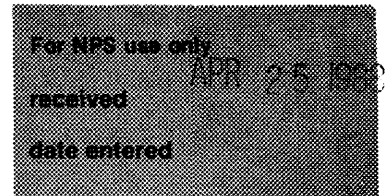
**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

New Martinsville Downtown

Continuation sheet Historic District

Item number 7

Page 4



18. Vocational Rehabilitation Building, 311 Main Street, c. 1960. Two story modern flat roof masonry building. (Non-contributing)
19. Alexander-Pyles Building, 317 Main Street, 1906. A three story, four bay blond brick structure. There are corbeled brackets at the roof line. The pilasters that separate the bays are topped with decorative Moorish caps. This building, which is Romanesque in style, was built by W. J. Alexander, a very prominent early businessman, and was later owned by civic leader James W. Pyles, Wetzel County's delegate to the West Virginia Legislature in 1937-39. (Contributing)
20. Harman's Drug Store, 329 Main Street, c. 1903, a three story, seven bay blond brick Moorish Revival commercial building. It is divided into pairs of bays with a central bay. In the center there are two panels on the second floor and a recessed balcony with arches that have wrought-iron tympanum and balustrades. There are corbeled brick brackets between the second floor and third floors and on the third floor. There is a small rear warehouse dependency that also contributes. (Contributing)
21. Residence, 326 Main Street, 1920, an American Four Square, two story residence with central hipped dormer, full front porch and hipped roof. (Contributing)
22. Myers Studio of Photography, 310 Main Street, c. 1880, a two story front gable building, a converted residence, with full front porch. Vernacular in design. Windows are 2/2. Five bays deep. (Contributing)
23. Theater/Palmer's Drug Store, 306 Main Street, 1911. A two story molded block building with stucco front facade and central arched leaded glass windows on the second floor. The first floor has cream and black carara glass in a Moderne stepped pattern and a metal awning. Art Nouveau in design, the building was originally a theater. (Contributing)
24. Wetzel Valley Agencies Building, 300 Main Street, c. 1970. Located on the original (1900) site of the First National Bank, this is a one story modern structure. (Non-contributing)
25. Whorton & Ellis Funeral Home Site-Norris Tires, 270 Main Street, a 1963 Exxon Service Station, tire sales one story surrounding a molded block two story commercial building that was originally a funeral home. (Non-contributing)
26. Beck Market-Bee Electric, 248 Main Street, c. 1890, a two story frame building of Italianate design, with German siding on the second level and vinyl on the front. The windows on the second floor have shouldered surrounds and Italianate hoods. The roof is hipped. This was originally

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

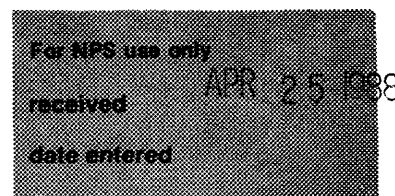
**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

New Martinsville Downtown

Continuation sheet Historic District

Item number 7

Page 5

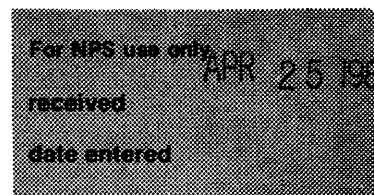


the Beck Meat Market. It is not felt that the first floor vinyling is enough to destory its integrity, it is, therefore, (Contributing).

27. Lincoln Theatre, 242 Main Street, 1920. A two story Classical Revival theater building with corbeled brackets and brick pilesters. The entrances are recessed in the central four bays. A wide cornice and plain frieze separate the first floor. The windows have wood shutters. One of the city's most important landmarks. The theater was opened in 1920 and the first film shown was "Fair and Warmer", a silent film with Mae Allison. In 1926 Gloria Swanson and company came to New Martinsville by special train to make a film for Paramount entitled "Stage Struck". The World Premiere of "Stage Struck" was at the Lincoln Theatre and this gala affair was attended by Miss Swanson, the Marquis de la Coudraye, and West Virginia Governor Howard M. Gore (1925-29). The "Jazz Singer" played here in 1927, the beginning of "the talkies". The theater operated until 1967. It was taken over by the city in 1983 and now operates as a community theater. (Contributing)
28. United States Post Office, Main Street, 1931. Built on the former site of the city park and bandstand, the post office is a one story masonry Colonial Revival government building, constructed in 1931 under the control of supervising architect James A. Wetmere. It has a central entrance portico with a pediment upheld by columns. Windows have stone pedimented hoods. The roof is a recessed mansard with arched dormers. (Contributing)
29. Wetzel County Sheriff's residence, 220 Main Street, 1897-1901. A two and a half story stone and masonry structure built adjacent to the county courthouse to serve as the official residence of the county sheriff. It has a front gable, full porch, and high corbeled chimney. It is said to have been constructed during the administration of Sheriff J. A. Pyles (1897-1901) and that he was its first occupant. (Contributing)
30. Wetzel County Courthouse, Main and Washington Streets, 1902. The city, indeed, the county's, most significant architectural landmark. The county courthouse was constructed between 1900 and 1902 at a cost of \$100,000, replacing the earlier (1852) courthouse on the same site. It was designed by W. E. Chamberlain & Co. The Courthouse is a two story rusticated stone structure with corner towers and a tall, stately central bell clock tower. The roofs of the towers are steeply pitched hipped roofs with red clay tile, which is also on the main roof. The clock tower has an open bell section and corbeled turrets. there are modillions with carved decorations over each tower window. there is a frieze panel with diagonal dogtooth detailing. The entrance bay, with a store balustrade, projects outward and the first floor is raised above ground level. There are flanking bays on the entrance with pedimented tops. The second floor windows are round headed with carved tympanae. The towers of the courthouse soar above the

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet New Martinsville Downtown Item number 7 Page 6
Historic District

city and are visible for many miles up and down the Ohio River. A life-size statue of 18th century frontiersman Levi Morgan stands atop a high granite shaft on the front lawn of the Wetzel County Courthouse. (Contributing)

31. Residence, 221 Monroe Alley, c. 1860, the first of a row of older residences that face the Ohio River, running immediately north of the historic Wharf area. This frame building is a two and a half story vernacular interpretation of the Greek Revival and is one of the city's oldest extant buildings. It is five bays wide and has a full front porch. (Contributing)
32. Residence, 225 Monroe Alley, c. 1870, a two story frame residence with a hip roof. Done in clapboard siding in the Shingle style, its most prominent features are a rectangular tower on the second floor level and a projecting pseudo-gable on the front elevation. Full one story front porch with spindle balustrade at the roof line. (Contributing).
33. Residence, 229 Monroe Alley, c. 1890, a Queen Anne style masonry residence of two and a half stories, with a rounded Queen Anne tower, or turret at the south front elevation. Paired squared columns uphold the full front porch. (Contributing)
34. Residence, 233 Monroe Alley, c. 1900, a classic American Four Square, early for the style, with a hip roof, projecting pseudo-gable, and full front porch, over a raised basement. (Contributing)
35. Residence, 233a Monroe Alley, c. 1950, a relatively recent one story vinyl-sided front gable residential structure. (Non-contributing)
36. Residence, 239 Monroe Alley, 1910, Shingle style two story clapboard rectangular residence, three bays across, with pseudo-gable peak over central bay. Full front porch with dentilated cornice. Raised basement. (Contributing)
37. RMS House, 245 Monroe Alley, c. 1970, one story rectangular metal-clad residential building of recent construction. (Non-contributing)
38. Residence, 265 Monroe Alley, c. 1880. Greek Revival gable roof residence with central chimney. Clothed in early 1930's asbestos siding, it none-the-less retains enough of its original features to be considered (Contributing).
39. The Wharf, end of Washington Street at the Ohio River, 1840. This may be the most historically significant site in New Martinsville. It is, of course, associated with the river transportation, economic as well as social and political development, and was, until after the coming of railroads, the focal point of nearly all significant activity in the city. It is a sloped

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 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 checked="" 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/	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)	

Specific dates 1880–1937

Builder/Architect W. E. Chamberlain, James P. Chaplin,

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

James A. Wetmerek, et. al.

The New Martinsville Downtown Historic District is significant as the focal point of the economic, social, and political development of the city of New Martinsville, an important Ohio River port community and the seat of government of Wetzel County, West Virginia since its inception. It is also significant for containing the highest concentration of intact historic architectural styles in the city, all of which relate to its continuing role as an economic and political center. The district meets National Register Criteria A, B, and C.

Explanatory and Historical Notes

New Martinsville, the county seat and principal municipality of Wetzel County, West Virginia, came into being around 1780, when the area was a wilderness and part of Ohio County on the Virginia frontier. The first settler was Edward Doolin, who settled at what is now New Martinsville during the American Revolution and patented 800 acres of land on what is now New Martinsville. Doolin's tenure of the land was not to last long, as he was killed by Indians on September 20, 1782, at approximately the same time as famed General George Rogers Clark fought a small skirmish with Indians near what is now New Martinsville. Doolin's family retained ownership of the land, however, and kept it until 1810, when it was sold to Presley Martin, who later laid out the town and also served as the first clerk of Wetzel County's court decades later. Presley Martin built a house at the mouth of Big Fishing Creek in 1813 and this homestead served as the first real settlement at New Martinsville.

In 1818 the area became part of the newly created Tyler County, Virginia. In 1837–38 Presley Martin took the monumental step of actually laying out streets for a town, naming them, and applying to the Virginia Assembly in Richmond for an act to officially establish the community. The Assembly so acted and passed, on March 28, 1838, a law establishing the town of "Martinsville". By the decade's turn (1840) there were approximately 100 persons living in Martinsville. The boundaries of the town were enlarged by another act of the Virginia Assembly in 1848, which also provided for the selection of trustees for the community, which had, two years earlier, become the seat of the new county of Wetzel.

Wetzel County was formed on April 6, 1846 in the home of Sampson Thistle, which stood at the corner of Jefferson and Main Streets. Ground for the courthouse was donated by Thistle and Presley Martin in 1848. About this time the name of the community was changed to New Martinsville to avoid postal confusion with Martinsville, Virginia, in the Allegheny Mountains of what is now western Virginia. The first Wetzel County Courthouse, on the same site as the present one, was completed in 1852. Both the Methodist and the Presbyterian churches constructed edifices in the 1850's, and the same decade saw the founding of the first school in New Martinsville, the New Martinsville Academy.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Callahan, James M., Semi-Centennial History of West Virginia, Charleston, W. Va.,
Semi-Centennial Commission of West Virginia, 1913

(see attached)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 10.5 acres

Quadrangle name New Martinsville, W. Va.-Ohio

Quadrangle scale 1":25,000'

UTM References

A

1	7	5	1	2	5	8	0	4	3	8	7	6	2	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

B

1	7	5	1	2	5	8	0	4	3	8	7	7	8	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

C

1	7	5	1	2	5	2	0	4	3	8	7	7	8	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

D

1	7	5	1	2	5	0	0	4	3	8	7	8	6	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

E

1	7	5	1	2	4	0	0	4	3	8	7	8	6	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

F

1	7	5	1	2	4	2	0	4	3	8	7	6	0	0
Zone	Easting				Northing									

G

Zone	Easting				Northing									

H

Zone	Easting				Northing									

Verbal boundary description and justification

Beginning at the point where the south side of Washington Street terminates at the Ohio River at the historic New Martinsville Wharf; thence north for 550 feet along the eastern shore of the Ohio River to where the south side of Jefferson Street terminates

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
-------	-----	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael J. Pauley, Historian & Michael Gioulis, Preservation Planner

organization Pauley & Gioulis date November 25, 1987

street & number 4651 Victoria Road telephone 304-744-9342

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 local

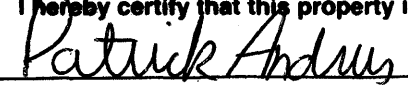
As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 4/21/88

For NPS use only

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

 date 9/23/88
for Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only	
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New Martinsville Downtown

Continuation sheet

Historic District

Item number 8

Page 2

With the crisis of secession in 1861, Wetzel County was decidedly pro-Unionist in sympathy, although there were, to be sure, many Wetzel Countians who felt the tug of loyalty to old Virginia and who cast their lot with the Confederacy. However, in the May 1861 election on the question of Virginia's secession from the Union, Wetzel County, with New Martinsville taking the lead, voted strongly against secession and sent delegates to the First and all succeeding Wheeling conventions. Wetzel County overwhelmingly supported the "restored" government of Pierpont at Wheeling and, in 1863, the formation of the new state of West Virginia. S. I. Robinson (later owner of a large flour mill) was Wetzel County's first delegate to the new legislature of West Virginia. With the exception of some isolated skirmishes related to raiding, there was no organized fighting in Wetzel County during the Civil War.

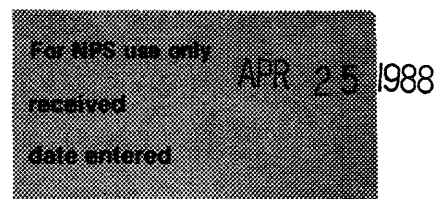
New Martinsville became, in the post-Civil War period, an important river port on the Ohio. The Wharf became a busy place, and hotels sprang up in close proximity to accommodate the ever-growing number of merchants, rivermen, and other businessmen who arrived at New Martinsville. The railroad, in the form of the Ohio River Railroad (previously the Wheeling, Parkersburg and Charleston Railroad Company) reached New Martinsville in 1884. It began at Benwood and terminated at Parkersburg, providing rail passage along the Ohio River. Around 1890 the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad acquired the Ohio River Railroad, adding it as a branch to its already large labyrinth of lines. About the same time, prosperity was manifesting itself in other ways in the New Martinsville community. Charles and W. S. Barrick constructed and installed the first telephone lines in New Martinsville in 1889. This line extended only to Burton, but within the next few years the lines had been built to other Wetzel County communities. This telephone company was first formed as the New Martinsville and Mannington Telephone Company, but was soon incorporated into the Bell Telephone Company and linked up with the national telephone system. This same period also witnessed the foundation of the first newspaper, The Wetzel Independent, established in 1870 under the editorship of Daniel Long. It lasted (as the Labor Vindicator from 1872) until 1876. The following year (1877) saw the first issue of The Wetzel Democrat. Long was the publisher, with W. S. Wiley and Robert McEldowney as editors.

Manufacturing became an important element in New Martinsville's economic life during the last half of the 19th century. The Pittsburgh Stave Company established a yard at New Martinsville in 1873 and, within a decade, was producing over two million staves; barrels being a very important component of the river trade. H. H. Hardesty's 1883 history records that in that year the town of New Martinsville could boast of:

"Six dry goods stores, seven groceries, two drug stores, four millinery stores, two hardware stores, three butcher shops, three boot and shoe shops, and one merchant tailor, one harness and saddler's shop, two wagon and three blacksmith shops, one sewing machine agency, three real estate agencies, three hotels, two weekly newspapers, three ministers, five practicing physicians, and eight lawyers."

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet New Martinsville Downtown
 Historic District

Item number 8

Page 3

At this time, New Martinsville had a population of between 800 and 1000 souls. The town continued to grow as a county seat, Ohio River transportation port and manufacturing center as the 19th grew into the 20th century. It also took on an ever increasing role as the merchandizing focus for the rest of rural Wetzel County as well as for portions of southern Marshall County and for a small part of eastern Ohio, linked to the town by ferry.

The oldest extant merchantile business in New Martinsville dates from the establishment of the F. C. Wells Hardware and Furniture Company in 1892, while the oldest building within the district, the Myers Building, dates to 1880. Other early businesses that flourished into the 20th century were J. R. Loehr & Son merchandizing (1899), the New Martinsville Bank (1897), the Wetzel County Bank (1899; closed 1933), First National Bank (1900), and the New Martinsville Glass Company, founded in 1900.

At the turn-of-the-century Wetzel County undertook to construct a monument to its longevity and prosperity by the construction of a new county courthouse in New Martinsville. Two years under construction, the towering Romanesque style structure was completed in 1902 and still stands, a landmark visible for miles down the Ohio River, as a symbol of Wetzel County solidity. A life-size statue of famed frontiersman Levi Morgan, atop a large granite monument, towers above the courthouse lawn and Main Street.

By 1910 the population of New Martinsville had grown to 2,176. The population continued to grow apace until, by 1980, it stood at over 7,000. This, despite the fact that New Martinsville has always been terribly prone to flooding from the Ohio River and has received numerous and, some would say, frequent inundations. The first "great" flood since civilized habitation, occurred in 1852. The last of the really "great" floods occurred in 1937, though there have been lesser inundations since that time. New Martinsvillians have also used the river as a source of entertainment and pagentry, however. The New Martinsville Regatta, first began in 1925, has become an event of national significance, attracting visitors and participants from far and wide, annually putting New Martinsville "on the map", and frequently breaking world speed records for hydroboat racing on a fresh water course. The presentation of The West Virginia Governor's Cup is a part of the Regatta.

As the second half of the 20th century proceeded, New Martinsville continued to grow and prosper. The Viking Glass Company, taking over the functions of New Martinsville Glass, grew to achieve first state-wide, then national recognition for the high quality of its many glass products, including hand-blown art objects. New Martinsville has developed, in this time period, an excellent park system that is the envy of many other larger communities. However, the growth changed direction from the traditional "downtown" or Main Street, and began to develop in a highly concentrated manner along State Route 2, the major north-south highway route, in an area that had hithertofore been primarily residential. This development has continued apace, bringing new business into the community while leaving the historic "heart" of the community along Main Street. Both county and city government,

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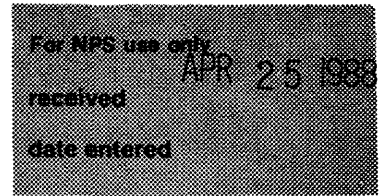
**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

New Martinsville Downtown

Continuation sheet Historic District

Item number 8

Page 4



however, remain in the traditional heart of the community, giving emphasis to the need to maintain that part of the city which, by its architectural heritage and historic ambiance, render it especially significant as the focal point of New Martinsville and, indeed, Wetzel County, history.

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Continuation sheet New Martinsville Downtown
Historic District Item number 9 Page 2

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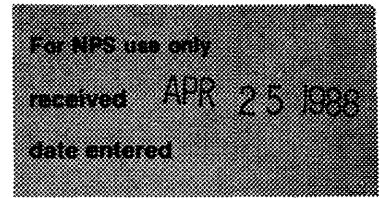
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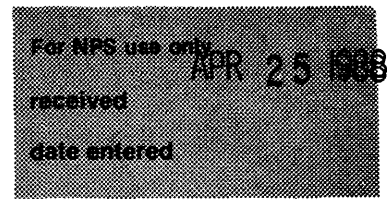


Continuation sheet	New Martinsville Downtown Historic District	Item number 10	Page 2
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at the Ohio River; thence in a line east approximately 200 feet to the southeast corner of Monroe Alley (or River Lane, as it is also known); thence in a line north 350 feet along the west side of Monroe Alley to the southwest corner of City Lot No. 22 at Monroe Alley; thence in a line east 300 feet to the west side of Market Lane; thence in a line south 960 feet along the west side of Market Lane to its intersection with the south side of Washington Street; thence west 500 feet along the south side of Washington Street to the Ohio River and point of beginning; encompassing the historic commercial downtown of New Martinsville and excluding adjacent non-contributing structures and vacant open spaces.

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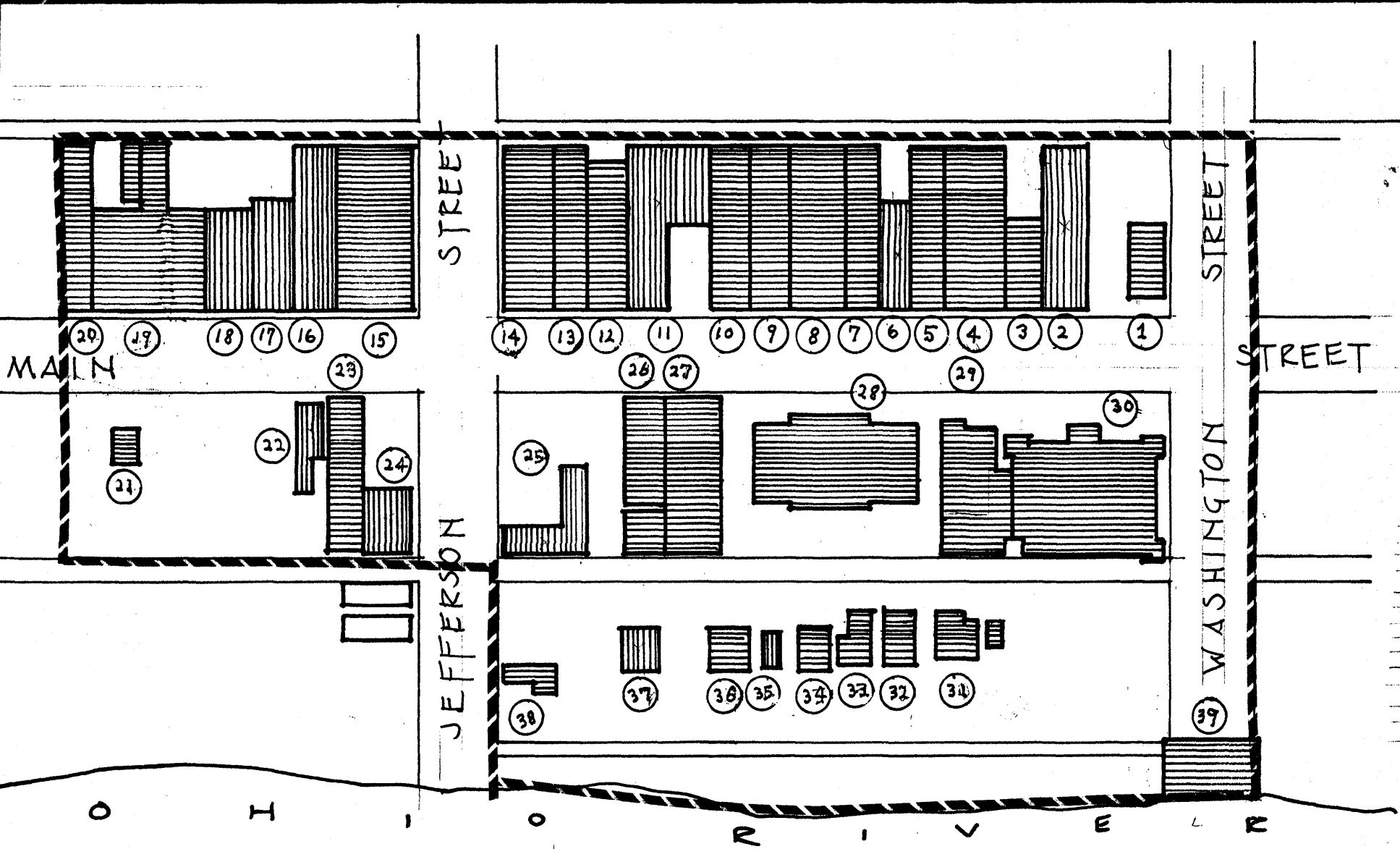
Continuation sheet

New Martinsville Downtown Historic District
Item number





10

Page 3

The New Martinsville Downtown Historic District is bordered along its western boundary by the Ohio River, which forms a natural boundary; along the northern edges of the historic district boundaries the historic building stock gives way to both open spaces and newer, non-historic building stock; along its eastern boundary the district is bordered by a long narrow alley way (Market Alley on some maps) that not only breaks the continuity of the building stock but is followed, on its eastern side, by the large open spaces of continuous parking lots; along its southern end the historic district boundary is Washington Street, a man-made thoroughfare, on the opposite side of which are a high concentration of intrusive elements.



SCALE: 1" = 100'

- KEY:**
-  CONTRIBUTING SITE
 -  NON CONTRIBUTING SITE
 -  SITE NUMBER
 -  BOUNDARIES

NEW MARTINSVILLE DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT
NEW MARTINSVILLE, WEST VIRGINIA

DECEMBER, 1987
MICHAEL GIOLIS CONSULTANT