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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

FEB 13 1989

NATIONAL REGISTER

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Nicholas County High School  
other names/site number Old Main

2. Location

street & number Main Street  not for publication  
city, town Summersville N/A vicinity  
state WV code 54 county Nicholas code 067 zip code 26651

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u> buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

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

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Signature of certifying official [Signature] Date 2/6/89

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

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

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

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

Patrick Andrews 3/27/89

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

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

education/school

recreation & culture/fair

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

education/school

education/administration

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Renaissance Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls stone

sandstone

roof asphalt

other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     NA A     NA B     NA C     NA D     NA E     NA F     NA G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Community Planning and Development  
Education  
Architecture

1913-1930

1913

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

W.G. Brown

Architect/Builder

H. Rus Warne, Architect  
P.Q. Shrake & Son, Builder

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Brown, W.G. History of Nicholas County, 1954.

History of West Virginia. American Historical Society, 1923.

Nicholas County History. Nicholas County Historical and Genealogical Society, 1985.

The Nicholsean. NCHS Year Book, 1918.

West Virginia Geological Survey Report, 1921.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository:

N/A

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 3 acres

UTM References

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

B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C			
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D			
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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the point of intersection of Main Street and Alderson Avenue, thence with Alderson Avenue S 09 15' E, 250.00 feet to a point at intersection of Alderson Avenue with Whortleberry Avenue, thence leaving Whortleberry Avenue S 82 30' W, 115.00 feet to a point, thence S 56 15' W, 180.00 feet to a point in center of Oak Street, thence with Oak Street for four (4) lines; N 39 30" W, 185.00 feet

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries delineated the immediate environs of the school building. On the North, the steep hill of Main Street is a natural barrier. On the East the campus is composed of more recent non-significant structures. On the South and East, the boundaries are contained by the newer non-significant new gymnasium. On the edges of boundaries are residential structures.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Wilma Richardson, Chair  
organization Nicholas County Historic Landmark Commission date December 4, 1988  
street & number 616 Church Street telephone (304) 872-5726  
city or town Summersville state WV zip code 26651

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

education/schoolrecreation & culture/fair

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

education/schooleducation/administration**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Renaissance Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concretewalls stonesandstoneroof asphalt

other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The original Nicholas County High School (Old Main), is located on a high hill near the west end of Main Street in Summersville, the county seat of Nicholas County. The setting is impressive. The outside appearance of the building is essentially the same as when it was built in 1913. Situated approximately 1,000 feet off Main Street at the crest of the hill, it overlooks the original business section of Summersville and is within prominent view from downtown Main Street.

The building is a two-story stone Renaissance Revival structure with a raised basement. There are flanking projections on the front facade and the recessed entrance has an arched pediment over it. The end projections have triangular pediments. The entrance is a protecting crenelated one-story bay with stepped surrounds. The entrance doors are paired multiple panes with multi-paned transoms over them. Windows are wood, paired two-over-two double hung. The stone is coursed rusticated sandstone and each level is separated by a smooth-beltcourse. The side elevations also have pedimented parapets and the entrances are projecting one-story bays with large pilasters and a narrow simple lintel. The auditorium on the rear has stone buttresses, narrow multiple pane windows and small attic windows in each bay.

The plan of the building is roughly "T" -shaped with the auditorium in the rear and classrooms on a double-loaded corridor on each floor. The building measures approximately 125' x 43'. The interior rooms have plaster walls and ceilings and narrow tongue and groove oak floors. Throughout the building there is beaded board wainscoting on the walls.

An outstanding feature of the building is the auditorium which is entered under the seating balcony. The floor is raked toward the stage which has an arched proscenium with dark purple draperies and a CA 1930 Nicholas County High School logo on the valance. The auditorium with a balcony has seating capacity of 500.

Four noncontributing mobile structures now used for reading labs are located on the three-acre site southeast of the high school building.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     NA A     NA B     NA C     NA D     NA E     NA F     NA G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Community Planning and Development  
Education  
Architecture  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

1913-1930  
 \_\_\_\_\_

1913  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

W.G. Brown

Architect/Builder

H. Rus Warne, Architect  
P.Q. Shrake & Son, Builder

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

Old Main of Nicholas County High School is significant for its association with the social development of the county and region; for its association with the educational system of Nicholas County; for its association with a prominent citizen who assisted with establishment of the school; as an example of a significant architectural style of the period; and as an example of the body of work of one of West Virginia's most notable architects.

Historical Background

Nicholas County History School was established during the so-called high school era of West Virginia which started with the administration of State Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Morris Shawkey, who organized a state division of high school and launched a dynamic movement for high school construction. It was one of the 125 new high schools established in West Virginia during the Shawkey administration from 1909 to 1921. In 1911, the West Virginia Legislature passed a bill providing for state aid to high schools and a bill to establish the Nicholas County High School was enacted February 11, 1911.

Plans for construction were made by a Board of Directors consisting of the county school's superintendent, Harrison Groves, three members of the County Court who were C.D. Backus, W.S. Henderson, and Granville O'Dell, and one chosen at the general election, H.B. Davis. On the day the special county levy election was passed, August 10, 1911, W.G. Brown was elected Secretary of the Board.

The campaign for this election was bitter and hard fought. Passed by 1,271 "For County High School" and 895 "Against County High School," the bitter fight was continued by those against higher taxes for a high school in Summersville. Thirty-nine of these dissenting voters filed a bill of complaint and obtained an injunction against the Sheriff and the High School Board of Directors. After losing in Circuit Court, the plaintiffs appealed to the State Supreme Court. On April 12, 1912, the West Virginia Supreme Court affirmed the actions of Circuit Court Judge McWhorter, and construction of the building began February 25, 1913 with P.Q. Shrake and Son as contractor.

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Section number 8 Page 2 Nicholas County High School, Summersville, WV

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A fifteen-acre site was selected by a special committee on advice of Architect H. Rus Warne, who had been employed for the project. It was purchased from O.K. Sutton, trustee for the Alderson heirs for a sum of \$1,500. This amount was contributed by citizens of Summersville and donated to the Board of Education.

The Cornerstone was laid in a ceremony July 4, 1913 directed by the Masonic Lodge of Summersville. Judge Charles W. Lynch of the State Supreme Court and State Grand Master delivered the address. In September 1913, the school opened with 65 students from Nicholas and surrounding counties enrolled and an instructional staff of four. The staff consisted of: C.E. Myers, Principal; Gayle Threlkeld, Home Economics; Maude Yoak, English; and F.C. Mudd, Agriculture. Mr. Mudd, the county Cooperative Extension Agent, taught at the High School in the mornings and worked with the county farmers in the afternoons. He resigned his position early in the first school term and was replaced by William D. Click who years later became well known as "Farmer Bill" on an early morning Huntington TV program.

In the spring of 1915, two students were graduated. They were Ida Lee Alderson and J.B.F. Yoak, Jr. That same year the High School building was designated by state law as one of the ten State Normal Schools and served as Summer Normals for teachers for a period of fifteen years. Construction was finished in 1917 at a cost of more than \$40,000.00.

The grounds and the 1924 gymnasium served as a focus of community activities, including rallies and festivals, for a period of thirty years. In 1915, the Nicholas County Fair was held there and was continued until 1945 when the Nicholas County Memorial Park became the center of such activities.

The Nicholas County High School (Old Main) is nominated under National Register Criteria A, B and C.

Criterion A

During the period of greatest significances (1913-1930), this building and grounds served as the focal point of community activity. As a high school for Nicholas County and the area, as one of the ten State Summer Normal Schools, as a place for the annual Nicholas County Fair and other rallies, it played a very significant role in the social development of Nicholas County and the region and in the development of the Nicholas County School system.

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## Criterion B

Among many prominent citizens who were associated with Nicholas County High School, William Griffee Brown (1864-1957) stands out for his contribution to the establishment of the school and for his significant service to Nicholas County and West Virginia. His biography appears in Volume II of the American Historical Society's History of West Virginia (1923) and in History of Nicholas County, West Virginia (1954) which he authored.

Mr. Brown, grandson of a local pioneer settler, devoted many years to teaching in the Nicholas County Schools, and in the Summersville Teachers Normal which he established and directed. After serving as principal of the Fayetteville Academy and Public School Superintendent in Day County, Oklahoma, he returned to Summersville, Nicholas County where he practiced law and served as County Prosecuting Attorney. In 1921, he was appointed by Governor Morgan as West Virginia's first director of prohibition. His association with the Nicholas County School began in 1911 when he was elected as secretary to the first Board of Directors. He served on the three-member site selection committee, provided legal assistance and unswerving support to other important educational projects in Nicholas County.

Thus, as an important educator, community leader, political figure and important writer, William Griffee Brown was very significant in state and local history.

## Criterion C

This 1913 Renaissance Revival building is the largest stone building in Nicholas County. It is important as an example of a significant architectural style of the period and is the finest use of the random ashlar method of construction in Nicholas County.

The Nicholas County High School building represents the work of a master architect. Rus Warne (1872-1954) of Charleston was one of West Virginia's best known and most successful architects of the early 20th century. His work includes the Boone County Courthouse, Charleston High School, Kanawha County Courthouse and some the State's largest and finest homes in traditional early 20th century styles. Warne also a leader in the West Virginia A.I.A. during the early 20th century.



**United States Department of the Interior  
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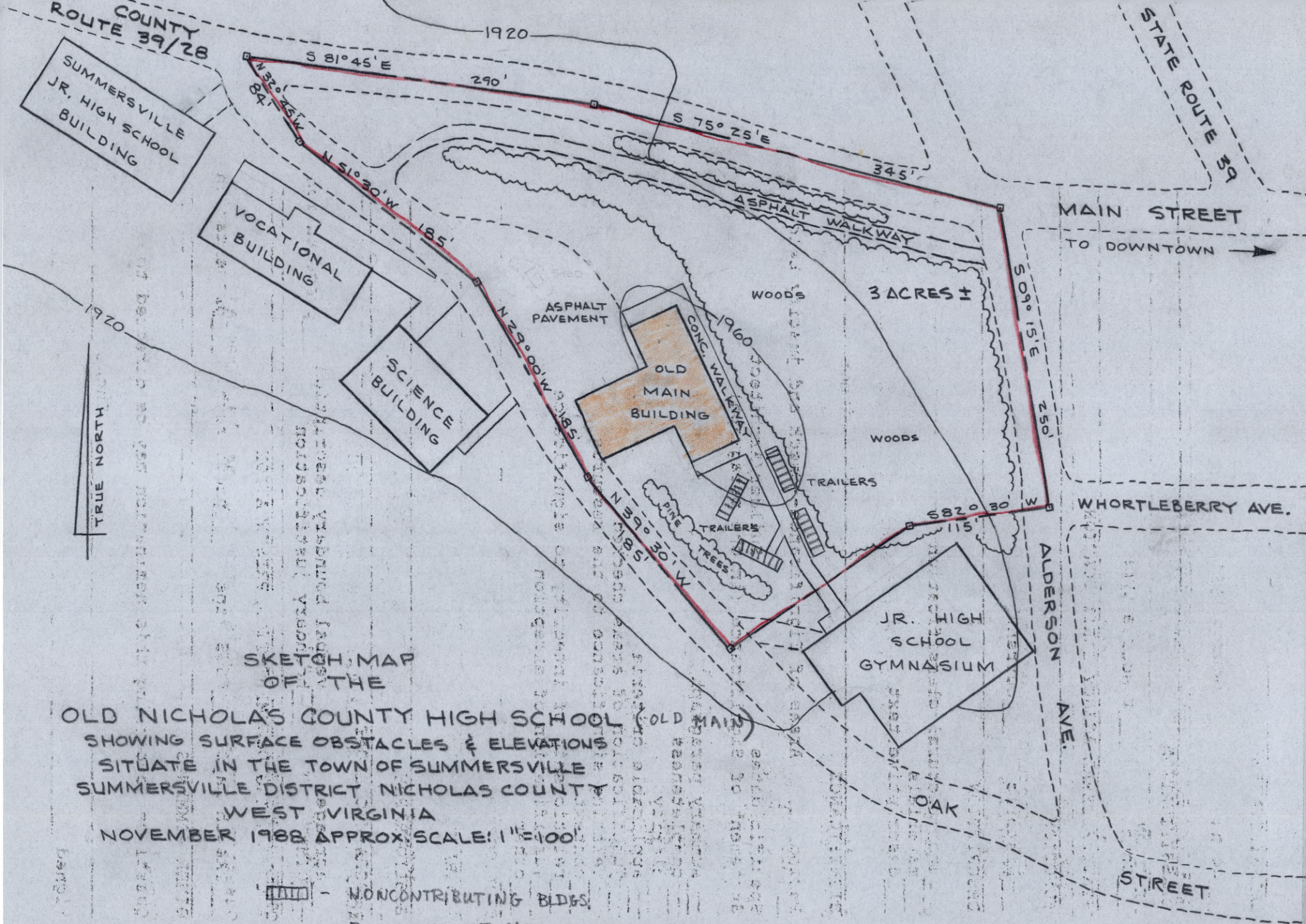
**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

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


#10 Verbal Boundary Description

to a point, thence North 29 W, 185.00 feet to point, thence North 51 30' W, 185 feet to a point, thence North 32 45' W, 84.00 feet to the intersection of Oak Street and Main Street, thence with Main Street for two (2) lines; South 81 45' E, 290.00 feet to a point, thence South 75 25' E, 345.00 feet to the beginning, containing 3 acres more or less.



SKETCH MAP  
OF THE

OLD NICHOLAS COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL  
 SHOWING SURFACE OBSTACLES & ELEVATIONS  
 SITUATE IN THE TOWN OF SUMMERSVILLE  
 SUMMERSVILLE DISTRICT NICHOLAS COUNTY  
 WEST VIRGINIA  
 NOVEMBER 1988 APPROX. SCALE: 1"=100'

-  - NONCONTRIBUTING BLDGS.
-  - BOUNDARY OF NOMINATED PROPERTY
-  - NICHOLAS COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL