

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 96000987 Date Listed: 09/19/96

West Virginia State Penitentiary Marshall WV
Property Name County State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

for Barry A. Savage
Signature of the Keeper

9/19/96
Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

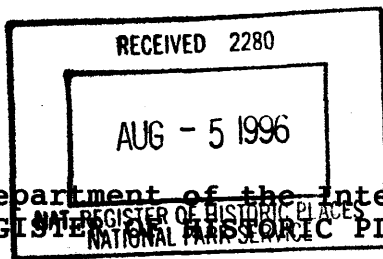
Level of Significance

The appropriate level of significance for this property is "State."

This information was confirmed with Katherine Jourdan, National Register Coordinator, WVSHPO, by telephone.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without attachment)



NPS Form 10-900 (Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: WEST VIRGINIA STATE PENITENTIARY

other name/site number:

2. Location

street & number: 818 JEFFERSON AVENUE

not for publication:

city/town: MOUNDSVILLE

vicinity:

state: WV code: WV county: MARSHALL code: 051 zip code: 26041

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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 X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant:

X nationally statewide locally.

(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of Certifying Official (Handwritten signature)

Date (Handwritten: 8/1/96)

State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of Certifying Official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

WV STATE PENITENTIARY
Name of Property

MARSHALL COUNTY, WV
County and State

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4. National Park Service Certification

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I hereby certify that this property is for _____ Date _____
Signature of Keeper of Action

- 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): _____

Barbara L. Swize 9/19/96

Name of Property

County and State

=====
5. Classification
=====

Ownership of Property:

(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
4	8	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
4	8	TOTAL

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National

Register 0

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT-CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT-CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification:

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOTHIC REVIVAL

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation SANDSTONE

Walls SANDSTONE

Roof RUBBER MEMBRANE

Other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Name of Property

County and State

=====

8. Statement of Significance

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Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1866-1939

WV STATE PENITENTIARY
Name of Property

MARSHALL COUNTY, WV
County and State

Significant Dates
1866, 1939

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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9. Major Bibliographical References
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Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- 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

Name of Repository: _____

WV STATE PENITENTIARY
Name of Property

MARSHALL COUNTY, WV
County and State

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property: 19 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

A	<u>17</u>	<u>522460</u>	<u>4418080</u>	B	<u>17</u>	<u>522270</u>	<u>4418080</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>17</u>	<u>522940</u>	<u>4417170</u>	D	<u>17</u>	<u>521920</u>	<u>4417940</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
E	<u>17</u>	<u>521060</u>	<u>4418940</u>	F	<u>17</u>	<u>521060</u>	<u>4418900</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
G	<u>17</u>	<u>521460</u>	<u>4418925</u>				
	Zone	Easting	Northing				

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
BOUNDARIES INCLUDE THE PROPERTY TRADITIONALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE WEST VIRGINIA STATE PENITENTIARY.

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

Name/Title: KATHERINE JOURDAN/DIRECTOR, NORTHERN REGIONAL OFFICE

Organization: WV SHPO Date: APRIL 22, 1996

Street & Number: 1528 MARKET STREET Telephone: (304) 238-1300

City or Town: WHEELING State: WV ZIP: 26003

=====
Additional Documentation
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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

WV STATE PENITENTIARY
Name of Property

MARSHALL COUNTY, WV
County and State

=====
Property Owner
=====

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

Name: COMMISSIONER NICHOLAS HUN, DIVISION OF CORRECTIONS
Street & Number: BUILDING 4, ROOM 300, 112 CALIFORNIA AVENUE
City or Town: CHARLESTON State: WV Zip: 25305

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

WV STATE PENITENTIARY, JEFFERSON AVENUE, MOUNDSVILLE, WV MARSHALL COUNTY
Section Number 7 Page 2

The West Virginia State Penitentiary was built on the edge of Moundsville in 1866, where it soon became surrounded by the town. The twenty-four foot stone walls created an impression of a stone Gothic fortress with the crenellated facade, and towers. At one time the prison housed over 2,000 inmates, and had both men and women until 1947, when a women's facility was built in Pence Springs, West Virginia. After serving the state for 129 years, the penitentiary was closed in 1995, when a new facility was constructed in Mount Olive, Fayette County.

The multiple buildings of the West Virginia Penitentiary complex occupy a 19 acre site. The focus of the complex is the walled rectangular enclosure of the prison. The two-story wall both encloses the prison yard and forms the outer wall of the main prison building which runs the length of the west facade. The line of this elevation is interrupted by a four story block which steps out from the main wall between small corner towers. Wagon gates within small pavilions punctuate the north and south elevations of the outer wall, and small towers mark the corners and points along the east elevation. Within the wall are the separate noncontributing buildings for the Dining Hall, Chapel, Mail/Laundry, Old Man's Colony and the Prison Industry Building. Outside the wall are the Boiler House, Shed, Central Receiving, and the contributing Garage, Warden's House and the Department of Control Building.

The architectural style chosen for the building was Gothic Revival, with a crenellated edge, heavy stone construction, and battlements. The stone for the construction of the building is said to be quarried from the Cameron and Rosbey's Rock area in Marshall County, as well as 4th Street in Moundsville, Big Grave Creek, and the town of Hundred, in Wetzel County. The south cell building was completed first by 1868. The foundation for the outer wall, the Wardens Residence/Administration Building, and north cell building were begun in 1869, and were completed by 1876. The north cell building was used as a kitchen, dining room and chapel, until cells were added in the 1890s.

The early sandstone outer wall formed a rectangle enclosing the north recreation yard. The original wall along present day Jefferson Avenue is approximately 826 feet and formed the west wall, or formal front entrance, with attached buttresses dividing multilight window areas. The east side has the round Guard Towers #2, 3, 4, and 5, which have access doors on the exterior of the prison walls at ground level. The walls were built on foundations extending six feet below the ground, and six feet wide at the bottom. The walls stand 24 feet high, tapering to 18 inches thick at the top with a 30 inch wide cap. The walls are a dressed stone on the west front outside facade but the three other sides and the interior walls of the recreation yard are a random course ashlar.

Located in the north wall is the North Wagon Gate, a narrow two story building which may have temporarily housed both men and women prisoners at one time. The wooden trap doors on the second floor may also have been the scene of several early hangings. The building has a round arch gate with multilight transom on the street side, and the second floor

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has a gable end and chimney with crenellation. The interior is rusticated dressed stone with three windows inset on each side. Wooden steps lead to the second floor, and the third floor Guard Tower #1. This small room has a gable roof, two 1/1 windows to each side, sink and toilet, and a "crows nest" or balcony overlooking the yard. The second floor has brick interior walls with two 6/6 wide windows and two 1/1 windows on the ends, with dressed stone surrounds. The floor and joists are wooden timbers.

The four story Wardens Residence and Administration Section of the Prison projects from the older section of the west wall with a symmetrical elevation. The entrance was quite formal, and for many years had twin stone fish ponds, to either side of the front walk. These were changed in the 1970s, when the ponds were filled-in with dirt and used as flower beds. Entrance posts straddled the front walk which led to granite steps, and a covered porch with a red tile roof. There are two 18" planters, one to each side of the steps, which have a pebble stone surface. These planters are believed to have been made by the inmates.

The porch, constructed in 1908 by the Wheeling architectural firm of Giesey & Faris, is supported with four piers having octagon posts and capitals with floral patterns forming volutes. On the porch three Tudor arches span the piers and turn to meet the engaged piers on the back wall. The main door is round arched with a pierced window design in top, and double doors. The roof edge of the porch is crenellated, and the second floor center window is a doorway to the porch roof. To each side of the porch are round four story towers with lancet 4/1 windows (with some being altered to 2/1 and metal grills on the first floor). Behind the porch is a four story 3 bay facade with 4-1-4 windows of 6/1 double-hung openings with stone surrounds, the center opening being a triple window of 6/1 with side 2/1 openings. Between the window pattern are pilasters with a stringcourse break at each floor level having a decorative leaf pattern. In the center is a stone pediment with the state seal in color and a pinnacle at the peak. A balustrade runs from a post on each side of the pediment to the end towers.

Just inside the main entrance on the first floor, is the room where prisoners first entered the building and were searched. A small bay opening in the hallway allowed the guard to see to operate the wheel which the prisoner then used to be escorted to his cell. This double circular cage, or wheel, was installed in 1894. There was a single entrance to the center cage, which then spun from the front of the hallway, to the rear hall. Such a wheel operation prevented prisoners from making a dash for freedom down the hall and out the main doors. The operating controls are similar to a trolley with electricity to run the motor and brake.

Also inside the main hall was a visitors room, and offices. The Board of Directors report from 1886 mentions that the wood floor on the first floor was in deplorable condition. The floor was soon altered to tile, much of which still remains. The tile is a beige octagonal pattern, which is joined in the corners by a small square dark brown tile, and is probably Minton. The central hall has a border tile design of red squares. The visitors room also has remnants of a mosaic tile floor, and fireplace mantel. In the rear of the hall is a metal post office window.

The second floor of the main entrance section housed the offices of the warden and others. The third and fourth floor were the warden's home

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with a open wood stairway. The woodwork is exceptional with 12 inch high baseboards, four panel doors with transoms, spandrels under the windows and side moulding. There are also stone and metal mantels in various rooms, and access to the round towers. In the rear overlooking the yard was a crows nest for the warden. The rooms were later used as training rooms once the wardens house was built to the south of the penitentiary.

The penitentiary was enlarged in 1929-39, using the south wall as a beginning point to create a second rectangular yard to the south. On the west facade of the building a new entrance was constructed near this division point of the two recreation yards. The facade then flows to the south approximately 470 feet in a 5-7-7-5 pattern of attached buttresses flanking glass block windows. The South Wagon Gate, built into the south wall, is a two-story stone building with a round arch door with multilight transom, and voussoir with keystone. The metal door has a small door cut into it for access. The second floor has two multilight windows and center door with crows nest overlooking the south recreation yard as Guard Tower 6. There are dressed stone surrounds for the window openings, stepped roof edge, and multilight side windows, with flat stone block voussoirs. The arched doors were originally wood for both wagon gates, but were replaced when they deteriorated with metal doors. The Wagon Gates were the entrances for the wagons and later semi-trucks bringing supplies to the prison. Each gate was long enough for a truck to pull-in, both gates were then closed, the vehicle searched, and the trucks were then allowed access to the yards, and kitchen.

The 1929-39 pedestrian entrance on Jefferson Avenue has seven bays with smaller multilight paired openings, broken by stone spandrel with dentils under the second floor windows. Under the third floor windows are incised lines with the center panel having a star. The towers flanking the entrance are angled on three sides. Steps lead up to the double door entrance, which has multilight transom and sidelights, with low walls beside the steps being the location of the following incised panels which are in a deteriorated condition. On the south wall the inscription reads: "ANNEX/CONSTRUCTION BEGAN 1929/COMPLETED 1939/CECIL H. UNDERWOOD, GOVERNOR/HAROLD E. NEELEY, COMMISSIONER". On the north wall: "D.E. ADAMS, WARDEN/A.V. DODRILL, JR., DEPUTY WARDEN/ W ? DOTY, ASST DEPUTY WARDEN/ ? DIRECTOR, BUSINESS MGR./ ??M DIST SUPT". A small guard house was placed along the walkway in 1982, constructed of brick and wood, with windows and gable asphalt roof. A low roofed covered walkway was constructed in 1987-88, with metal poles supporting a rolled asphalt roof. This walkway also covers the guard house.

The west wall of the prison is where all the inmates resided, as well as offices, and dining facilities. The other three side walls have no buildings as part of the construction except for the guard towers, an "Ammo Room" on the east side held guns etc., and wagon gates. The inmate housing has been altered over the years to try and comply with Federal standards and dates to 1959. The individual cells are 5 feet by 7 feet, with 7 foot ceilings. Each cell has a metal bed suspended from the side wall, a few having double bunks (inmates began having individual cells in the 1960s), a toilet and sink. Some cells were later altered with a one

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piece metal sink and toilet. In the south section were two cell blocks of four tiers with 20 cells each, plus an honor hall with one tier of 20 cells. The tiers are accessible by metal stairs and between the two blocks is a tower which has controls for the cell doors. The tiers are constructed of reinforced steel and concrete. Each block has a shower area with glazed hollow tile blocks and three shower heads. There are some fans but the cell blocks were not air conditioned. The heating units date from 1988, and the fire doors from 1987. On the second floor over the honor hall is a gymnasium, which has hardwood floors marked for basketball.

The maximum security area, is to the north of the main entrance, and has four tiers with 20 cells on the lower two tiers and 10 cells on the upper two tiers. These two upper tiers were constructed to house inmates who by law needed less time outside, if they had bigger cells. This set-up allowed men to eat in their cells, and have all their physical needs met, without leaving the cell. The other inmates might have 23 hours in their cell with one hour for recreation time. The maximum security area has a place on the first floor with picnic style tables surrounded by wire fencing. There are also gun aisles opposite the tiers, which also have wire fencing. The cells on the lower tiers are also 5 by 7 feet, with crutch keys used to lock the doors. The walls are steel with concrete floor on the lower level and steel floors on the upper tiers. The doors are small and narrow with bars covered by mesh.

The original kitchen and dining areas are basically open areas now, and the state shop was converted to a visiting area. The law library was altered with modern shelving and carpet. Outside of the new dining hall, and OMC, or Old Man Colony, the library was the only air conditioned general area for the prisoners to use.

The recreation yards were for the use of the prisoners and contained recreation facilities such as baseball fields, and basketball courts, but also had a formal garden area opposite the administration offices. The maximum security area in the north recreation yard has an enclosed paved area with wire fencing topped by razor barb, with one side having metal walls. The south recreation yard has a Protected Custody yard (PC or "Rat Row") near the south wagon gate. There have also been small concrete block structures added to the inside wall for outside restrooms, snacks, and inmate exchanges. The former Captain's Office was made into a tv repair shop in 1986.

Over the years various buildings have been added to the penitentiary complex, a few being substantial two story brick structures. Some of these buildings subsequently have been removed when their use was discontinued. One such building was the Death House, a separate building used exclusively for the executions by hanging or electrocution. Once located in the north recreation yard near the North Wagon Gate, it was removed c. 1965, when prison inmates asked that it be removed since the death penalty was revoked by state law. Other buildings once located in the north recreation yard were used to produce prison products of tobacco, brooms, horse whips, and clothes. There were two hospital buildings; dining hall with chapel and library; Female Department, and separate

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dining hall, and shirt shop. A water tower also once stood near Tower 4.

In the 1970s and 80s several buildings were constructed within the walls of the recreation yards.

North Recreation Yard:

MAIL/LAUNDRY - c. 1973, noncontributing, concrete block, gable asphalt roof, ribbon of four horizontal windows in high wall. Building divided for two separate uses by center interior wall.

PRISON INDUSTRIES - c. 1975, noncontributing, extremely large building of standing vertical seam metal walls, metal roof.

OLD MAN'S COLONY (OMC) former Visiting Room - c. 1984-85, noncontributing standing seam metal building, used for living quarters for men 55 or older, with good behavior.

DINING HALL - 1986-87, noncontributing, exterior brick walls with concrete foundation. Building angles into yard, has kitchen facilities as well.

South Recreation Yard:

CHAPEL - c. 1975, noncontributing, standing seamed metal building, metal roof, donated by the local pastor's association.

Outside the exterior walls of the penitentiary there are four additional buildings to the east of the walled south recreation yard:

GARAGE - c. 1945, Contributing

1-2 stories, with center two story and side one story wings, 7 bays with 5 garage doors, rusticated stone with voussoirs and keystones, two small doors with transoms. Second floor with three 20 light windows and awning openings. Castellated along roof edge, corner towers similar to prison architecture, 6 bays on sides with multilight windows, roof has rubber membrane.

BOILER HOUSE - 1975, non-contributing 1 story, vertical seamed metal siding, metal roof, garage door, small entrance door.

CENTRAL RECEIVING & GENERAL MAINTENANCE - c. 1970s, noncontributing one story, concrete block, gable metal and asphalt roof, former Industries Warehouse.

SHED - c. 1970s, noncontributing

small shed building for storage, concrete block, shed asphalt roof.

To the southeast side of the penitentiary are two buildings which despite being slightly less than 50 years of age are contributing in architectural style to the complex. The buildings were designed to blend with the Gothic architecture of the penitentiary and are constructed of complimentary sandstone. The West Virginia Penitentiary Control and Administration Building was built c. 1950. This L-shaped building has

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rusticated stone walls with metal casement windows, and a low glass block wall. The building has three varying floor levels.

The southern portion of the penitentiary grounds has the Wardens House, built in 1951. A two story, 3 bay, T-shaped home with side porch on the east with triple wood posts and a side one bay garage on the west facade. The center gable portico entrance has pediment with trim moulding and dentils, and side fluted moulding. The front facade has a projecting angled bay with three windows, and metal sloped roof, and a gable dormer. The second floor has three bays, all the openings in the house are 6/6 double-hung windows with shutters. Gable asphalt roof with end chimney. In the rear, or south facade, of the house is a patio behind the garage. The yard has a stone barbecue, rock garden, and a circular fish pond within the front circular drive. The grounds once had a tennis court with a concrete wall but this has been removed.

The penitentiary, grounds, and outbuildings, provide a complete picture of the administration of the West Virginia Department of Control and the use of the facility from its beginnings in state history to the present day. The buildings are in excellent condition with few alterations from their original construction. While the penitentiary was enlarged, the 1929-39 addition, and the three buildings from 1945-1950, blend with the original architectural scheme.

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The West Virginia State Penitentiary in Moundsville, was the state's first penal institution, serving for 129 years until it closed in 1995. The period of significance for the penitentiary is from 1866, when money was appropriated, until 1939, when the new wall section was completed. The complex, or historic district, is being nominated under Criteria A for Government, and Criteria C for Architecture.

The state of West Virginia was formed during the years of the Civil War, becoming the 35th state in 1863. At that time the county jails were used for incarceration of prisoners. Beginning in 1864, the legislature directed Governor Arthur Boreman to have all persons convicted of felonies confined to the Ohio County jail in Wheeling.

An act of legislation in 1866, directed the Board of Public Works to select a site of not less than 10 acres of land in or near Moundsville and to appoint a board of directors. They appropriated \$50,000 to buy land and to begin construction. The same amount was also appropriated in 1867, and 1868, "to be applied to defraying the expenses that have and may arise from the building of the penitentiary at Moundsville".¹ There is the additional note in 1868 - "provided, that the board of directors shall expend said money, or so much thereof as may be necessary, on the finishing of the cell building now under construction, and in putting up the outer wall, so as to render the convicts secure".²

The site that was chosen in Moundsville is directly across from the Grave Creek Mound, now a National Historic Landmark. This is one of the largest conical type Adena mound structures, dating to roughly 250-150 BC. The mound was excavated in 1838, but the surrounding landscape including the penitentiary grounds have not had detailed archaeological testing.

The Gothic Revival style of architecture was popular in America from 1840-1880, for both domestic dwellings and public buildings. This style was chosen for the penitentiary and culminated in one of the best examples of the high style of Gothic Revival in West Virginia. The facade is fairly symmetrical with attached buttresses dividing the large window areas which were designed to bring light into each cell for a period of time each day. The sandstone facade has multiple battlements with circular or angled turrets and lancet windows. The roof edge has a running crenellation around the exterior walls making the penitentiary appear as a fortress. The facade of the Administration Building is also symmetrical with twin towers and battlements. The center entrance is topped by a false gable end with the state seal flanked by pinnacles. All the windows have stone surrounds and on the porch are wide low pointed arches, details seen in the Gothic Revival style. The result is a formidable facade, slightly intimidating, and stretches for three blocks with the sense of scale being very large.

The design concept of the penitentiary follows the Auburn Plan developed in Auburn, New York. Also called the "silent system", the concept dates to 1818, with a type of cell block where the cells are enclosed within a great containing building with cells back to back, and several tiers in height. This was also designated as the "inside cell" type of construction. Often made of steel, the cell blocks were large, airy, and sanitary, here inmates were able to work together during the day

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and were separated at night. This differed from the Pennsylvania System where prisoners were separated at all times.³

Details as to the original architects, and contractors is sketchy at this time, but reports do indicate that the plans for later building designs" adhered to the original design of the architect".⁴ It is known that some of the stone was quarried from Marshall and Wetzel Counties, and that the walls were built by the labor of convicts and citizens. The early Warden and Board of Directors reports indicate that a wooden structure was used at first to house the prisoners, with a wooden stockade enclosing a yard. By 1868, the south cell building was constructed of stone with a slate roof. A year later the interior cells were completed, and the outer wall and wardens residence foundations were under construction. Over the years other buildings were added, a report from September 1874 states that the penitentiary had its own "blacksmith and wagon shops, carpenter shop, brickyard, stoneyard, paint shop, shoe shop, and tailor shop. Prisoners also worked in the kitchen, stables and wash house."⁵ These buildings as well as later 1890s to 20s structures, such as the wash house, bakery, and hospital, were constructed inside the North Recreation Yard.

The north wing of the penitentiary was constructed by 1876, and used as a kitchen, dining room and chapel, before gradually having additional cells added in the 1890s. The Administration Building was also completed in 1876, and housed the residence of the warden on the fourth floor. For a number of years the female prisoners were housed on the third floor, with the second floor serving as a hospital, especially during a typhoid fever outbreak in 1889. Over time the Administration Building was improved with money for furniture, and carpets for the warden's residence and roof repairs; the wooden floor on the first floor entrance was changed to tile in 1886; stone steps were installed outside in 1888, an elevator was installed in 1894, as well as the revolving cage on the first floor. The current exterior porch to the Administration Building was designed by Wheeling architect's Geisey & Faris in 1908.

Improvements were also made for the health of the prisoners with steam heat recommended by the prison doctor in the mid-1870s, and the small coal oil lamps used for the cells in 1898, being replaced by electricity in 1900. Although gas pipes were fitted in the building, no gas had yet been provided by 1882. When bricks were made for a new mess hall and hospital building in 1888 (that was not completed), the bricks were used instead for brick walks and roads inside the penitentiary yards which was said to help with the health of the prisoners. The absence of the mud, the improved drainage, and increased cleanliness, improved the sanitary condition of the yard.⁶

Some of the best descriptive records of the quality of life inside the prison and its operations, are the reports by the wardens to the governor in the 1920s. A report to Governor Ward M. Gore in 1926,

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describes the reception and later discharge of prisoners: "when a prisoner is received at the penitentiary he is at once enrolled and given a serial number. He is then required to bathe, given a hair cut and shave, and, if it is winter, dressed in prison clothes of cadet grey; if summer, a lighter material is used. After a prisoner has been received as stated above, he is given a thorough examination by the Prison Physicians, who carefully note all defects and keep a complete record of his examination. He is then measured by the Deputy Warden according to the Bertillon system, and a complete record is made showing nativity, color, parentage, religious antecedents, habits, domestic relations and previous prison records, if any. A photograph is also made and filed with the record. If a prisoner is able bodied, he is assigned to one of the factories operated within the prison, and is required to labor nine hours every day, except Saturday afternoons, Sundays and holidays. When a prisoner's term has expired and the day comes for his final discharge, he is given a complete new outfit of citizen's clothes of good material. Transportation is paid him to the county from which he was sent and cash allowance of \$3.00 is given him, providing he does not have any money to his credit in the office. Prisoners are frequently discharged who have several hundred dollars to their credit. This represents the money made by "overtime" work in shops with prisoners being paid for all overtime at the same rate the State is paid for their labor. In this way many prisoners aid materially in supporting dependent families, and they are encouraged to do so."⁷

There are no buildings or structures standing today from the prison farm and coal mine the penitentiary operated about a mile southeast of the prison. Operation of these two facilities made the institution self-supporting. The prison had first farmed 10 acres next to the prison before moving to this larger site. The 200+ acre farm had fresh produce for the kitchen, or the vegetables were canned for later use. The coal mine was begun in 1921, at a cost of \$15,000. This included the cost of a shaft sunk in the mine 80 feet from the Sewickley Mine to connect with the Pittsburgh vein. The prison obtained its entire supply of coal from the mine saving the state thousands of dollars each year. All the prisoners who worked in the mine were "trusties" and stayed at the farm camp, later called Camp Fairchance. They earned seven and a half days a month in "good time allowance". In 1925, two new water wells were drilled that supplied the penitentiary, and in times of need could supply the city of Moundsville too. The site of the former farm and coal mine is the current Regional Jail facility in Moundsville.

The penitentiary housed approximately 80 women prisoners up until 1947, when a new facility was opened at Pence Springs, West Virginia. The Female Department was located by the 1920s in the northeast corner of the North Recreation Yard, and was a two-story building with separate dining room and kitchen. Approximately 50 women were employed in part of the shirt shop making collars and cuffs for the shirts made by the men prisoners. The other women were employed in domestic work within the department. A high wall enclosed this section from the main part of the prison.

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Various educational and enriching programs have been part of the institution. The penitentiary once had its own band which played in a bandstand located in the North Recreation Yard. The band played as the men went to and from lunch, and at evening concerts. A library was available to prisoners with over 5000 volumes. At one time those who could not read were required to attend night school, with other educational classes also being available. The Print Shop for many years published a magazine called WORK AND HOPE, for fellow prisoners. Many of the prison inmates were also interested in sports, especially baseball, and played local teams in Moundsville and the Ohio Valley area.

The local churches and clergy also had an interest in the spiritual life within the penitentiary. There was a large auditorium on the second floor of one building which served as a chapel for services. Photographs from the 1920s show semicircular seating around a stage that held a large pump organ. When this building was removed in the 1970s, the local Pastors Association donated the present chapel building in the South Recreation Yard.

Over the course of years 94 executions took place at the State Penitentiary. Death by hanging was used between 1899 and 1949, with the early hangings possibly taking place in the North Wagon Gate. A 1929, publication states that the Main Hospital Building was the location of the death cells (death row) and execution room. The State Legislature in 1949, decided electrocution was more humane. This method was used until 1965, when the legislature abolished the death penalty. At that time executions took place in a building called the Death House where there were four holding cells on the first floor (This may have been a later name for the Hospital Building.) The second floor housed the Chaplains Office, Library, and the guards dining room. This building was removed by the 1970s.

A strip of ground along the south side of the penitentiary wall, intended for a street, was used as a temporary burial site for prisoners. These early graves had to be moved about 1890, due to drainage problems with the penitentiary. At first five acres was purchased adjoining the prison, but in 1898, an Act of the Legislature made it mandatory for the Board to provide suitable grounds outside the city limits of Moundsville. At that time 10 acres was purchased approximately 3/4 of a mile from the prison on Tom's Run. The burial site is called Whitegate Cemetery today. The cemetery was used when bodies were unclaimed by relations, and there are several plots from men who died by capital punishment, but most of the bodies experienced death by natural causes. In the 1920s and 30s, tuberculosis was a common ailment, in fact one of the prison hospital buildings had a ward with a large sun parlor for tuberculosis patients. From the 1930s - 50s, almost all of the inmates who died in prison were buried outside Moundsville in Whitegate, whether because of the Great Depression, or lack on insurance. A floral fund was maintained in which the inmates each contributed one cent. The flowers accompanied the body to the place of internment. It was the wife of one of the Wardens in the 1950s who took an interest in improving the cemetery, and put up the white gate where the cemetery gets its name.

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By the 1920s, the prison population had grown to over 2,000 with severe overcrowding. A new wing, later called "New Wall", was connected to the south side of the prison and was completed in 1939. This ten year construction project more than doubled the space, especially for housing prisoners. This new sandstone facade reflected the earlier Gothic Revival style chosen in the 19th century, and provided a sense of continuity to the complex. The former south wall of the prison became the dividing wall between the North and South Recreation Yards. The new entrance allowed easy access for visitors to the visitation rooms. On the south side a second wagon gate reflected the architecture of the earlier North Wagon Gate. The cell blocks later underwent a renovation completed in 1959, to bring them up to Federal standards.

The warden and his family lived on the two upper floors of the Administration Building in a spacious apartment, with large rooms for entertaining on the third floor, and private rooms on the fourth floor. The fine woodwork is still evident on the doors and baseboards, and the winding stairway. In 1951, a small house was built for the warden and his family on property just south of the penitentiary. A few years short of 50 years, the house is considered a contributing building to the historic district. The house was designed to compliment the sandstone masonry facade of the penitentiary. The result is a Colonial Revival style home, with center door, and side bay windows. A curved drive to the house features a circular fish pond, while the rest of the yard included a patio, former tennis courts, and gardens.

A second building was built about 1950, as the West Virginia Penitentiary Control and Administration Building. This sandstone facade was also built to the south of the prison, and compliments the masonry construction, and architectural style of the penitentiary. This building would also be considered a contributing structure to the penitentiary's historic district.

The 1960s and 70s, saw the removal of many of the older brick buildings within the North Recreation Yard. The present concrete block and metal buildings inside the walls are noncontributing to the penitentiary's historic district.

Outside the walls along the east side of the property are several service buildings - Boiler House, Central Receiving and Shed, which are also noncontributing due to either age or construction. The stone Garage Building c. 1946, however, is contributing in style with its crenellated facade and corner pinnacles.

The West Virginia State Penitentiary is the oldest state penal institution. The building dates to only a few years after the state was formed during the Civil War, and was in continuous use until 1995. The architectural style is exceptional with the Gothic Revival details, crenellation, battlements and towers making it appear to be a fortress. The penitentiary well represents the State of West Virginia with regards to the Auburn Style of prison architecture and construction.

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FOOTNOTES

¹ACTS OF THE LEGISLATURE OF WV AT ITS 5TH SESSION COMMENCING JANUARY 15TH, 1867. (Wheeling: John Frew, 1867), p. 17.

²ACTS OF THE LEGISLATURE OF WV AT ITS 6TH SESSION COMMENCING JANUARY 21ST, 1868. (Wheeling: John Frew, 1868), p. 125.

³Orlando F. Lewis, THE DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN PRISONS AND PRISON CUSTOMS, 1776-1845, (Montclair, NJ: Patterson Smith, 1967), p. 77.

⁴REPORT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE PENITENTIARY, (Wheeling: W.J. Johnson, 1881), p. 4.

⁵Joseph Platania, "A Tough Joint", GOLDENSEAL, Summer 1995, p. 42.

⁶Report of the Board of Directors of the WV Penitentiary, (Charleston: Moses W. Donnally, 1888), p. 10.

⁷"Prison Life In 1926", THE WEST VIRGINIA HILLBILLY, October 25, 1990, p. 5.

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BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Beginning at a point on the southeast corner of Jefferson Avenue and 8th Street; and running south along the east side of Jefferson Avenue to the south edge of the intersection of 11th Street; thence running east to the point with the rear boundary of the lots facing Jefferson Avenue; thence with the line of the rear boundary lots running south to a point on 12th Street; thence running east with the north side of 12th Street to a point of the rear boundary of the lots facing McConnell Drive; thence running north with the boundary lines of the rear lots facing McConnell Drive to a point on 10th Street; thence west to the west side of Washington Avenue; thence north with the west side of Washington Avenue to 8th Street; thence west along the south side of 8th Street to the beginning point at Jefferson Avenue. The boundaries enclose approximately 29.596 acres.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The boundaries include the property historically associated with the West Virginia State Penitentiary, including the prison and walled recreation yards, the service buildings, and the grounds for the Warden's Home.

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PHOTO INFORMATION

ADDRESS: West Virginia State Penitentiary
818 Jefferson Avenue
Moundsville
Marshall County
West Virginia

PHOTOGRAPHER: Katherine Jourdan

DATE OF PHOTOS: August 1995

NEGATIVE: State Historic Preservation Office

PHOTO 1 OF 12: View of Administration Building, West or Front Facade
Camera looking east

PHOTO 2 OF 12: View of Porch on Administration Building
Camera looking east

PHOTO 3 OF 12: View of West Facade of Penitentiary
Camera looking northeast

PHOTO 4 OF 12: View of North Facade of Penitentiary
Camera looking southeast

PHOTO 5 OF 12: View of North Facade and North Wagon Gate
Camera looking southeast

PHOTO 6 OF 12: View of West Facade and 1939 Entrance and New Wall
Camera looking south

PHOTO 7 OF 12: View of West Facade from Administration Tower
Camera looking south

PHOTO 8 OF 12: View of South Cell Block in New Wall
Camera looking northwest

PHOTO 9 OF 12: View of North Recreation Yard from Tower 2
Camera looking south

PHOTO 10 OF 12: View of Southeast Corner and East Facade
Camera looking north

PHOTO 11 OF 12: View of Garage on east side of Penitentiary
Camera looking southeast

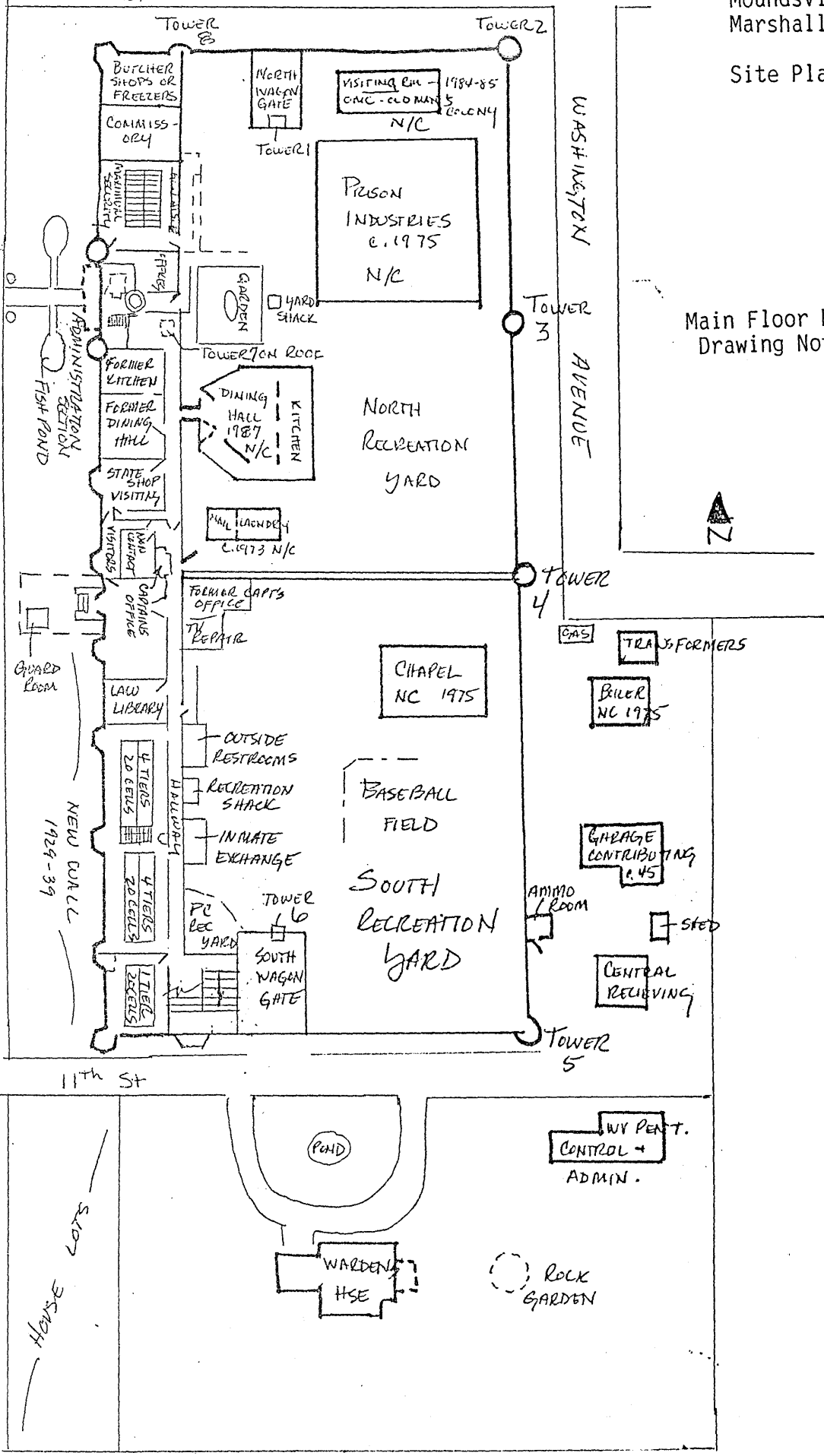
PHOTO 12 OF 12: View of Warden's House, North Facade
Camera looking southwest

WV STATE PENITENTIARY
818 Jefferson Avenue
Moundsville, WV
Marshall County

Site Plan

Main Floor Plan
Drawing Not to Scale

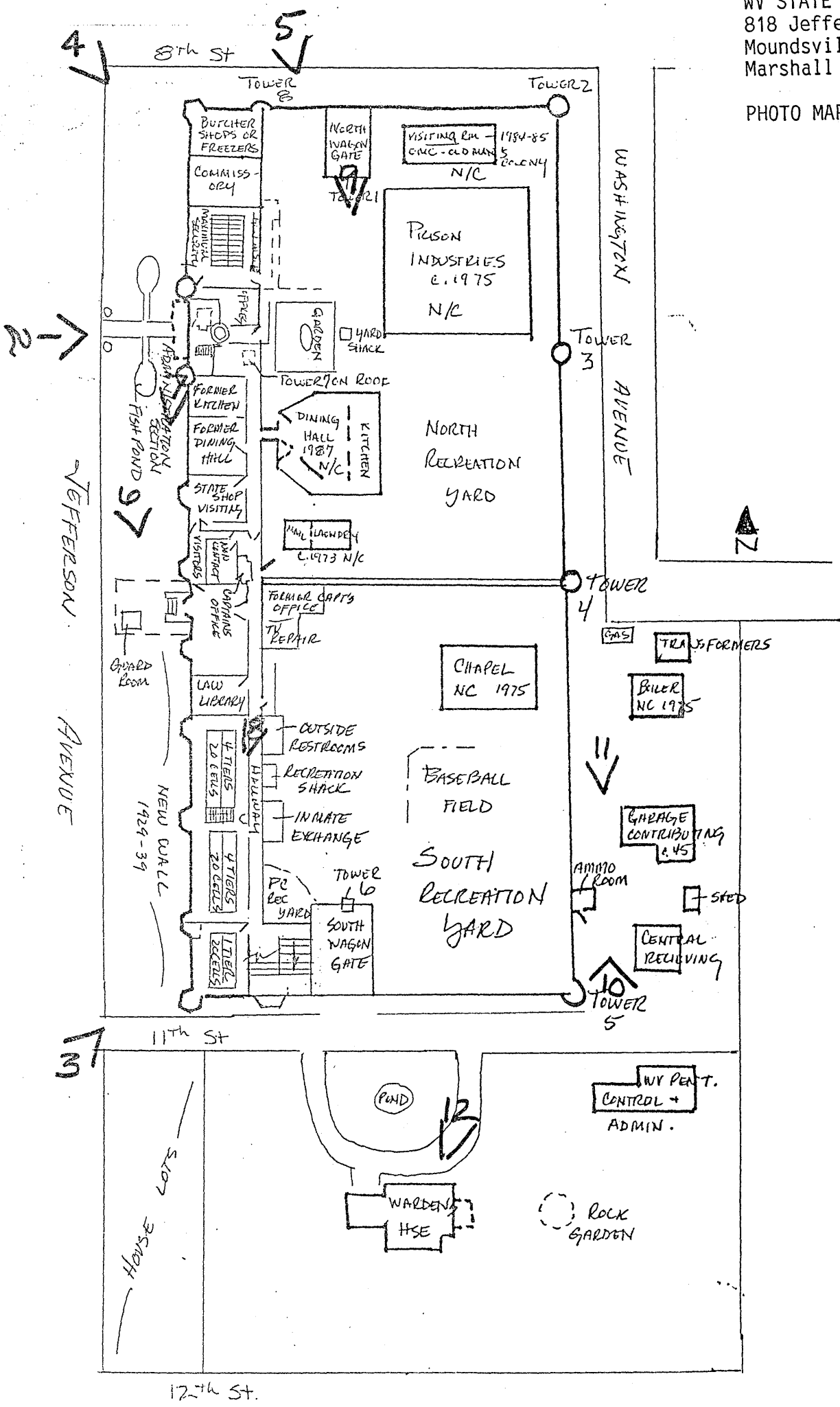
JEFFERSON AVENUE



12th St.

WV STATE PENITENTIARY
818 Jefferson Avenue
Moundsville, WV
Marshall County

PHOTO MAP



WV STATE PENITENTIARY
Moundsville, WV

PLAT MAP

