

**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:** 87002525

**Date Listed:** 2/3/88

St. Mary's Orthodox Church  
**Property Name**

Monongalia  
**County**

WV  
**State**

Multiple Name

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This property is listed 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.

Patrick Andrews  
**Signature of the Keeper**

2/3/88  
**Date of Action**

=====  
**Amended Items in Nomination:**

It was necessary to clarify the period of significance for the areas of significance of Religion and Ethnic Heritage - European. A check with Rod Collins of the WV SHPO on 2/3/88 established that the period of significance for this two areas begins in 1923 (with construction of the church building) as indicated on the form and ends at the fifty year point (1988) due to their being no obvious end of the historic era for these activities other than the arbitrary 50 year period.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)



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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
Religious structure

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Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
Religious structure

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

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Exotic Revival (Byzantine) (20th c.)

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Materials (enter categories from instructions)

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foundation concrete (textured) block  
walls yellow brick

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roof asphalt shingle w/ 2 gold domes

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other 

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The church and its setting have changed very little since the time of the church's construction in 1923. Unfortunately, however, we have no record of the architect's name in the church files or local history sources.

The yellow brick church sits on a high foundation of textured concrete block and has a limestone water table. Buttresses of yellow brick with stone caps separate the bays on the north and south sides. Each of these sides has three windows with round brick arches and stone sills and keystones. The east (main) facade is marked by two windows with round brick arches, limestone sills and keystones, and partial stone surrounds. The parapet on this side has a limestone cap and corbelling in limestone. The center bay on this facade is a projecting square tower. Double wood doors on the north and south sides of the tower have round limestone arches and are topped by crosses. These eastern crosses, and identical ones found throughout the interior of the church, are one of the signs that this is an eastern church. According to Whittemore, "the upper horizontal arm represents the place of the inscription over the head of the crucified Jesus. The lower slanting arm represents his footrest, since the Eastern Church believes Jesus was crucified with his feet side by side and not crossed one over the other as usually pictured by the Western Church" (p. 11). All windows in the tower (a pair on the first floor east side and one on each of the three sides at the balcony level) have partial stone surrounds, brick arches, and limestone keystones. Above all these windows is limestone corbelling matching that on the parapet. At the top of the tower there is a louvered opening in each of the four sides; each opening has a round brick arch, partial stone surrounds, and limestone keystone. This tower and the small brick one at the west end of the church are topped with bulbous (onion-shaped) domes covered with gold leaf; each supports a cross. The east tower contains a bell, which is unnamed. The gable roof over the chancel was originally slate and is now asphalt shingles; the semi-conical roof over the apse (sanctuary) was also originally slate and is now shingled. Double-hung 1/1 basement windows provide light to the fellowship hall in the basement. The doors on the ground level of the east facade lead to this hall.

The interior of the church is highlighted by the iconostasis, or altar screen. This screen is divided into three doors. The two end doors have icons and are opened to provide access to the sanctuary when the bishop comes and at Easter. The center door (the Holy Door) is decorated with eastern crosses and is the door normally used to the sanctuary. Only the priest and altar boys are allowed behind the iconostasis. The altar (the Holy Table or Throne) stands free in the center of the sanctuary. Usually it would be at the east wall, but here it is at the west end of the church. On the altar is the tabernacle where the communion elements are kept. To the left of the altar is a storage area for the chalices for communion. To the right is the incense burner.

On the walls of the church are two-dimensional icons, typical of eastern churches.

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Icons "serve as a point of meeting between heaven and earth" (Ware, 277). According to Ware, "as each local congregation prays Sunday by Sunday, surrounded by the figures of Christ, the angels, and the saints, these visible images remind the faithful increasingly of the invisible presence of the whole company of heaven at the Liturgy. The faithful can feel that the walls of the church open out upon eternity, and they are helped to realize that their Liturgy on earth is one and the same with the great Liturgy of heaven. The multitudinous icons express visibly the sense of 'heaven on earth'" (Ware, 277-78). St. Mary's icons were painted in the 1940s, in the period around 1970 by WVU students Charles Matala and Paul McLean, and in the 1970s by the wife of Father Stephen Krivonak, III. Aside from the icons, the walls are painted in a cream color shade with ornamental bands as shown in the photographs. The barrel vault ceiling is painted white, and the smoke from candles and incense used in the services has "stained" the ceiling. In the rounded apse of the church a dove is painted on the ceiling. Religious banners adorn the pews and are used in church processions. In the rear of the church, in the southeast corner, is a shrine with candles and an icon of Mary and Jesus; that icon was painted by Mrs. Krivonak. Next to it is a large free-standing crucifix. The stairs to the small balcony are in the southeast corner of the church, and there is a storage closet under the stairs. Double doors with a transom separate the chancel from the entry hall. The interior of the church, like the exterior, is in excellent condition.

Number of contributing resources: 1 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)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Ethnic Heritage -- European

Architecture

Religion

Period of Significance

1923

Significant Dates

1923

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

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

Built in 1923, St. Michael the Archangel Church is significant in three of the National Register's categories: Ethnic Heritage (European), Architecture, and Religion. These categories are discussed individually below.

### ETHNIC HERITAGE (EUROPEAN)

This church reflects the heritage of immigrants from eastern Europe who settled in northern West Virginia around 1900. Many of these immigrants moved near the factories where they worked. In Morgantown (just across the river from Westover), eastern Europeans living in the city's Sabraton section worked at the American Sheet and Tin Plate Company after it opened in 1906. Immigration from southern and eastern Europe peaked in the late 19th and early 20th centuries at the same time that West Virginia's extractive industries were booming. By 1920, the Monongalia County census recorded 246 residents born in Poland, 106 in Czechoslovakia, 168 in Yugoslavia, 10 in Rumania, 406 in Hungary, 384 in Austria, and 211 in Rumania (Core, Panorama).

In 1919, some of the Orthodox Catholic Christians in Sabraton decided to withdraw from the existing Orthodox church and form their own congregation. "The split was political in origin, rather than religious, chiefly in reaction to political conditions in Europe following the World War" (Core, 525) since the original congregation and those that split were all uniates (see below). Those who left were largely from the Carpathian mountains area between Czechoslovakia and Poland and from Ruthenia in the western Ukraine. They rented a small church in Sabraton and named it St. Michael the Archangel.

On July 7, 1922, they bought the land in Westover from Columbus and Lema Long and built the present church in 1923. The present church was also originally called St. Michael the Archangel. The church members struggled to keep the church going through the 1920s, but the Great Depression strained their resources too much. In 1933, the church closed; the members had actually lost title to the church in 1930 when it went bankrupt and Commercial Bank turned the title over to John L. Hatfield, a local attorney. Hatfield allowed the members to use the church until 1933.

In 1937, Protopriest Alexander Kilb-Kelly came to St. Michael's to reopen the church. Mr Hatfield still held title to the property and allowed two congregations to use the building. On May 19, 1940, the church's minutes recorded that the congregation had repurchased the

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

- Core, Earl L. "Slavonic Muster Courage To Come to New Homeland," Dominion Post Panorama, 8 Mach 1980, p. 7.
- Core, Earl L. The Monongalia Story. vol. 4. Parsons, W.Va.: McClain Publishing, 1982.
- Callahan, James Morton. History of the Making of Morgantown. Morgantown: Morgantown Publishing and Bindery, 1926.
- Morgantown. West Virginia and Regional History Collection, West Virginia University. The Churches of Monongalia County (Dodds and Dodds).
- Luchok, John. "History of St. Mary's." Unpublished typescript in possession of church. 1983. Sanborn insurance maps for Westover.
- Ware, Timothy. The Orthodox Church. Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin Books, 1983 (rev. ed.)
- Whittemore, Carroll E. Symbols of the Church. Needham Heights, Mass.: Whittemore Assoc., 1959.

Interviews with Fr. James Donnelly, priest for St. Mary's, and John Luchok, president of church board, September 1987.

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### 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:

West Virginia University Dept. of History

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than 1 acre

### UTM References

A 

17	5	8	19	0	7	1	4	3	8	1	7	4	5	1	2
Zone	Easting			Northing											

B 

Zone	Easting			Northing											

C 

Zone	Easting			Northing											

D 

Zone	Easting			Northing											

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**Verbal Boundary Description** The property nominated is that land owned by St. Mary's at the church site. This is lots 3, 4, and 5 in the Long and Johnson Addition. The lots are all 40' wide along West Park and 100' deep. The church is on lots 3 and 4, as recorded in Monongalia County deed book 346/34 (12/31/1943), while lot 5 is part of the lawn to the north of the church (368/419 purchased 9/21/45).

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**Boundary Justification** These are the lots that the church is on and the immediate surrounding lawn on the north. The rectory is several houses away at 19 West Park and is a very modest bungalow purchased by the church about 1946 so there is no reason to include it with the nomination.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mark Kemp/student and Barbara J. Howe/Associate Professor of History

organization Department of History, W.Va. University date 23 September 1987

street & number 202 Woodburn Hall telephone 304-293-2421

city or town Morgantown state WV zip code 26506

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property from Hatfield for \$6000. The congregation got full title to the church on December 31, 1943. Between 1937 and 1943, the name of the church was changed from St. Michael the Archangel to "Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary" or "St. Mary's." The 1950s and 1960s were hard years for the congregation, as the state's economic problems forced young people to leave to find work. Since the early 1970s, however, the congregation has been more stable, and even grown, so that there are now 35 families as members. Some of the families are descendants of eastern and southern European immigrants. St. Mary's is one of the few West Virginia sites nominated to the National Register to represent ethnic heritage.

## ARCHITECTURE

Very few Orthodox churches have been identified to date in West Virginia. The SHPO office staff knows only of this church, one in Sabraton (Morgantown) from which St. Mary's congregation split, one in Gary, one in Charleston, and possibly one in Weirton. St. Mary's seems to be the only one with a gold-leaf bulbous dome, and this is one reason why it is being nominated for its architectural significance even though we do not know the name of the architect. Built in a Byzantine Revival style common for such churches, St. Mary's has several unique features: the gold domes, round arches with keystones, corbels, and interior decoration featuring icons on the walls and iconostasis. The two-dimensional icons are done in the traditional Orthodox style and are an important way that the church teaches its faith to its members. According to Ware, "he who lacks learning or leisure to study works of theology has only to enter a church to see unfolded before him on the walls all the mysteries of the Christian religion" (41). While the church is small (approximately 62' x 31') it has very fine proportions.

## RELIGION

St. Mary's represents several major trends in the history of the Orthodox church. The term "Orthodox" in the title means "true believing," while the term "Catholic" means "universal." Originally, the members of St. Michael's and the Sabraton church were uniates, meaning that, as part of the Orthodox church, they separated from Rome in 1054 but were reunited with the Roman Catholic Church in 1596 at the Council of Brest-Litovsk. Uniates "recognized the Supremacy of the Pope, but were allowed to keep their traditional practices (such as married clergy) and they continued to use the Slavonic liturgy" (Ware, 104). Outward differences with the Orthodox church were few. St. Michael's had split from the Greek Catholic Church (a branch of the Orthodox) before 1935, and, while keeping "Greek Catholic" in their name, as did other churches, it allied with the Russian Orthodox church because of the Russian background of its members.

In 1935, a large delegation from the uniate churches visited the patriarch in Constantinople. They petitioned to return to the Orthodox church because the Roman church had violated the Council of Brest-Litovsk by not allowing the uniates to retain married clergy, their own bishops and traditions, communion in both species, and services in the vernacular. The patriarch, one of several in the Orthodox church, accepted them back, and this led to the creation of the Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic diocese under the patriarch of Constantinople. There are seventy parishes in the United States in this diocese. Diocesan

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headquarters and the cathedral are in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, because there are many churches in that area to serve the congregants who came to work in the steel mills and mines there. This diocese coordinates its work with all other orthodox churches in America through the Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops in America (SCOBA).

Members of this diocese do not recognize the primacy of the pope, although some Orthodox congregations do see him as the "first among equals" of the patriarchs. Liturgy at St. Mary's is that of St. John Chryostom, dating from the 16th century. Services are in English because the church recognizes the use of the vernacular for worship.



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For photographs 1-5:

- 1) St. Michael the Archangel Church
- 2) Westover, W.Va.
- 3) Elizabeth Nolin
- 4) April 1987
- 5) West Virginia University Department of History, Morgantown, W.Va.

- 6) east and north sides of church, camera pointing southwest
- 7) photo 1

- 6) tower on east facade, camera pointing southwest
- 7) photo 2

- 6) detail of north window on east facade, camera pointing west
- 7) photo 3

- 6) cornerstone on southeast corner of church, camera pointing northwest
- 7) photo 4

- 6) roof and tower details, camera pointing northeast
- 7) photo 5

For photographs 6-15:

- 1) St. Michael the Archangel Church
- 2) Westover, W.Va.
- 3) Barbara Howe
- 4) September 1987
- 5) West Virginia University Department of History, Morgantown, W.Va.

- 6) north wall showing icons, interior decoration, banner, camera pointing northwest
- 7) photo 6

- 6) part of west wall and north wall showing icons and banners, camera pointing northwest
- 7) photo 7

- 6) looking down on cancel and iconostasis from balcony, camera pointing west
- 7) photo 8

- 6) west end of church showing iconostasis, camera facing west, camera pointing west
- 7) photo 9

- 6) iconostasis with Holy Door open to see altar, camera pointing west
- 7) photo 10

- 6) detail of iconostasis, camera pointing northwest
- 7) photo 11

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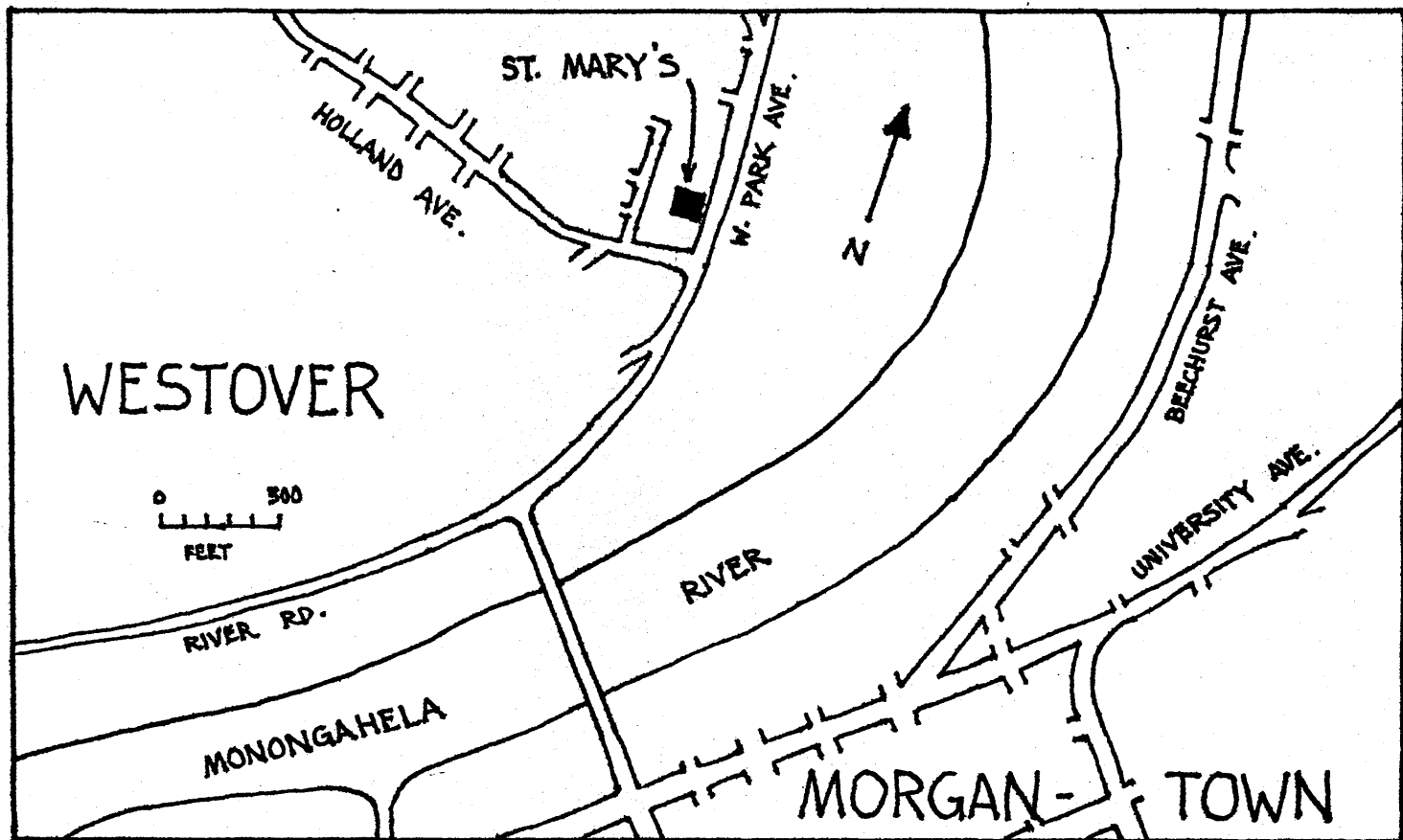
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PHOTOGRAPHS

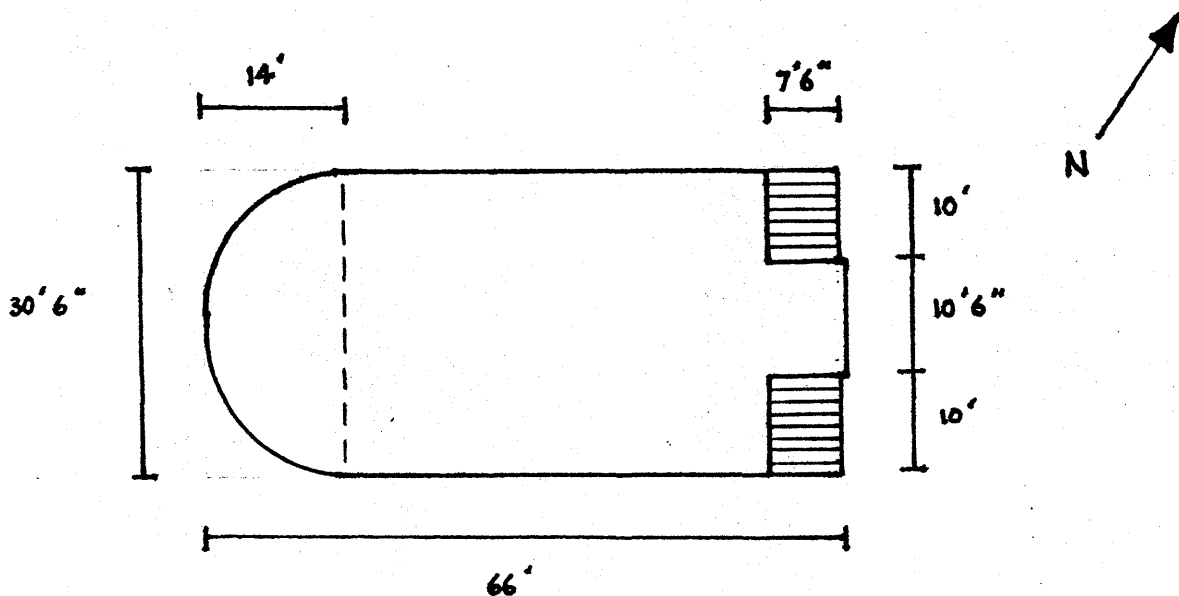
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- 6) detail of northwest part of sanctuary, showing incense burner, camera pointing northwest
- 7) photo 12
  
- 6) detail of southwest part of sanctuary, showing storage area for chalices, camera pointing southwest
- 7) photo 13
  
- 6) east end of chancel, showing shrine, crucifix, stairs to balcony, camera pointing east
- 7) photo 14
  
- 6) balcony on east end of church, camera pointing east
- 7) photo 15

# LOCATION MAP



# FLOOR PLAN



SCALE: 1" = 20'