

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: 87002526      Date Listed: 2/1/88

Starks, Samuel House	Kanawha	WV
Property Name	County	State

Multiple Name

-----  
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*  
for Signature of the Keeper

*2/1/88*  
Date of Action

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

Nomination form did not provide an acreage figure (square footage was provided). A check with Rodney Collins of the West Virginia SHPO on 2/1/88 confirms that the acreage figure is less than one.

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DISTRIBUTION:

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

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National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received **DEC 23 1987**  
date entered

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

**1. Name**

historic Starks, Samuel, House

and or common Sojourners on Shrewsbury

**2. Location**

street & number 413 Shrewsbury Street not for publication

city, town Charleston vicinity of

state West Virginia code 54 county Kanawha code 039.

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: <u>homeless shelter</u>

**4. Owner of Property**

name City of Charleston

street & number P.O. Box 2749

city, town Charleston vicinity of state West Virginia

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Kanawha County Court House

street & number Corner of Court and Virginia Streets

city, town Charleston state West Virginia

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Shrewsbury St. Reconnaissance Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1981 and 1984  federal  state  county  local

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

city, town Charleston state West Virginia

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" 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**

Exterior:

The building is an American Four Square with a hipped roof and hipped dormers on four (4) sides of roof. It is constructed with blonde brick on a raised basement. The structure has a generally symmetrical plan with porches at the front and rear. The front porch is single story with a hipped roof and paired, hollow wood, columns of Doric style. A balustrade of turned balusters surrounds the front porch. The north side of the house contains a painted, square wooden oriel and the design of the south side of the building contains a two-story, three-sided bay. Windows in the structure are the double hung type.

The building is approached by a flight of concrete steps which are attached to solid concrete wing walls and low concrete terraced walls along the sidewalk.

Notable structural components are: prominent, deep or overhanging eaves; high, corbel capped chimneys; and tooled stone trim. The water table, lintels and sills are stone and the foundation has been veneered with concrete and scored in order to resemble ashlar.

Interior:

A spacious foyer fronts a multiple flight hardwood stairway with a landing leading to the second floor. Throughout the house is hardwood trim. The building is a double parlor style structure which contains 16 rooms and 4 baths. Hidden casement oak doors lead into each of the two parlors.

Hardwood mantels and exposed original hardwood floors are in each of the first level rooms. An arched opening is present in the hall leading from the foyer to the dining area where there is decorative hardwood cove molding throughout.

The second level consists of a wide hallway with rooms leading from it.

Alterations:

As a result of a Fall 1981 fire in the north west part of the building the structure has been repaired and renovated in order to permit habitability. It should be stressed that during construction activities the original profile and materials were maintained and, where applicable, the replacement fabric approximates the style of the original structure in materials, size and appearance.

The 1981 fire caused extensive damage to the roof and attic level. Reconstruction of the roof, roof dormers, and replacement of the roofing materials was necessary. Construction of these features was undertaken to duplicate the style, profile and dimensions of the original roof. The building otherwise retains much of its original fabric and structural integrity.

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The rear porch, originally two stories high, was replaced with a three-story wood structure which provides a fire exit meeting local safety standards. The original porch suffered extensive fire damage.

The construction of these improvements was undertaken by the City of Charleston.

Contributing resources: 1 building

# 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 type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
				Black History

**Specific dates** C. 1906 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)** Meets National Register Criterion B

The Home located at 413 Shrewsbury Street is a historically significant site because it was the residence of Samuel W. Starks, a nationally prominent black community leader. The dwelling itself is one of only a few free-standing houses which survives in the east end of Charleston which over the years has become predominantly non-residential. The neighborhood has had historically strong black associations since the time the building was constructed and the structure is one of the most notable black landmarks remaining not only in the State of West Virginia but nationally as well.

Samuel W. Starks reached prominence through his work with the Knights of Pythias, a black fraternal order where, through his influence, the organization acquired properties throughout the U.S. thereby initiating a substantial emergence of the black population in this country's business arena. The Samuel W. Starks house itself properly represents the man's efforts of land ownership since it is a home of substantial size and structural character located within downtown Charleston.

The following is a memorandum compiled by Dr. Ancella Radford Bickley. Dr. Bickley is retired from West Virginia State College where she was vice president of academic affairs. This information clearly illustrates the achievements of Sam Starks and explains why the house at 413 Shrewsbury Street is significant in the spheres of American, political, social, and black history.

**"IN REMEMBRANCE: SAMUEL W. STARKS, 1866-1908"**

Handsome and intelligent, with a dashing moustache and upright posture. Samuel W. Starks was a black man who achieved great prominence in the local and national black communities in the early years of this century. Born in Charleston on March 10, 1866, he rose from initial employment as a janitor to a position of property and influence. A few years before his death, he and his wife built and occupied the house at 413 Shrewsbury Street now operated by the Charleston YWCA as "Sojourners on Shrewsbury." In addition to his service to and love for the black community, Starks also evinced great commitment to his church and to his family: His wife, Lillian; his mother, Mary Starks; and his sister, Lillie Brooks. All three are buried near him in Springhill Cemetery, as is his friend, J.M. Hazelwood.

A member of the First Baptist Church, Mr. Starks was ordained as a Deacon there in 1884 when he was 18 years old. He served the church throughout his life and is reported to have provided strong financial support for it at critical times in its development.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Ancella R. Bickley sources declared supporting "In Remembrance: Samuel W. Starks, 1866-1908": Charleston Daily Mail, February 27, 1987.

The Charleston Advocate, July 11, 1907, Vol. 6, No. 45; February 14, 1907, Vol. 6, No. 25; April 7, 1908, Vol. 7, No. 28; January 27, 1910, Vol. 9, No. 23;

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1 City lot 34 5/12' x 100' or 3,442 sf.

Quadrangle name Charleston West, WV

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UTM References

A 

1	7	4	4	4	9	0	0	4	2	4	4	6	9	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

B 

Zone	Easting			Northing										

C 

Zone	Easting			Northing										

D 

Zone	Easting			Northing										

E 

Zone	Easting			Northing										

F 

Zone	Easting			Northing										

G 

Zone	Easting			Northing										

H 

Zone	Easting			Northing										

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Part of Quarrier lot #14 Deed Book 1703 Page 115

Hanging Surface File Map #259-A Charleston, "East District" (Class 4 Property)

See Continuation Sheet Item No. 10, p.2

### 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 Mary M. Hunt, Assistant Director

organization City of Charleston  
Mayor's Office of Economic & Community  
Development

date 8/17/87

street & number P.O. Box 2749

telephone (304) 348-8035

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 December 11, 1987

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

Patrick Andrews

date 2/1/88

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Mr. Starks attended the fledgling schools just getting underway for blacks in the Kanawha Valley during his youth. Although as a boy he had been apprenticed as a cooper, he took a job in Charleston as a janitor in the office of the Kanawha and Michigan Railroad. While working there, he came in touch with telegraphy and became fascinated by it. He and a friend purchased the minimal equipment needed to send messages and he taught himself how to use it, seeking the aid of the off duty telegraph operator when he needed special instruction. Once he felt that his learning had reached a satisfactory level, he sought employment as a telegraph operator himself, and for a time worked in the office in Charleston. When job advancement did not come to him in quite the way that he felt it should, Starks felt discriminated against, resigned his job and left Charleston for Chicago where he entered training for stenography and bookkeeping. Upon the completion of his course, he lived and worked in Denver for a time and then returned to West Virginia and engaged in several businesses, among them a grocery store, a newspaper, and the Majestic Theater which presented moving pictures and vaudeville to black audiences at #14 Summers Street in Charleston. His partner in many of these business enterprises was J.M. Hazelwood who along with Starks and J. McHenry Jones, the president of the West Virginia Colored Institute, formed an important and influential triumvirate in the black community.

Mr. Starks was also active with the Republican Party and served as Committeeman. In 1901, he was appointed State Librarian by the Republican Governor, A.B. White, thus becoming one of the earliest of black men to hold such an office. He was reappointed by White's successor, Governor Dawson, also a Republican, and was still in office at the time of his death in 1908.

Although his involvement with politics and his determination to achieve by his own standards were noteworthy aims, it was for his work with the Knights of Pythias, one of the most prestigious of the secret black fraternal orders in the early years of the century, that Starks became known outside of his home area. Organized in a hierarchical system beginning with the Subordinate Lodges as a foundation, progressing to regionally based Grant Lodges, then to a Supreme Lodge at the top, the Knights of Pythias attracted thousands of members all across the country. It and other secret orders enhanced the sense of community and national connection among blacks, providing them with opportunities to share in business, social, and civic activities under the lodge's aegis. Blacks played in lodge bands, attended local lodge meetings and traveled to state and national conventions, turned out en masse for funerals, for the laying of corner stones and other civic activities, took part in parades and in spirited drill competitions at local and national levels, and, through participation in lodge benefit programs, assured some financial aid for their families at the time of their deaths. Samuel Starks was a charter member of Charleston's Capitol City Lodge #1 and served for sixteen consecutive years as the state's Grand Chancellor. In 1897, he was elected as the Supreme Chancellor, the organization's highest national office. He was lovingly and unanimously re-elected to

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this office term after term and was still holding it at the time of his death.

When Starks began his service as the Supreme Chancellor, the order had less than 9,000 members. By 1907, under his leadership, it had grown to 146,869 members, 108,869 in the Knights of Pythias proper and 38,000 in the Order of Calanthe, the women's department. He presided over twenty six Grand Lodges, all with numerous Subordinate Lodges beneath them. The West Virginia Grand Lodge alone had seventy two Subordinate Lodges and 2,773 members within its jurisdiction. Other Subordinate lodges were located across the United States as well as in Hawaii, Cuba, the Phillipines, the West Indies, Africa, Central America and Australia.

Starks saw the acquisition of real estate as a way for blacks to establish themselves firmly within communities. Therefore, as Supreme Chancellor of the K of P, his encouragement resulted in the Lodge's achieving land holdings in such cities as Jacksonville, Florida; New Orleans, Louisiana, Columbus, Ohio, Nashville, Tennessee; Richmond, Virginia; and Winston-Salem, North Carolina. In Hot Springs, Arkansas, through the efforts of a special Temple and Sanitarium Committee over which Starks presided, the Order purchased the Crystal Bathhouse which billed itself as the only establishment of its kind. It offered recuperative mineral baths to sick blacks (\$4 for a 21 bath treatment; \$2 for 10 baths; 25 cents per single). The concept of entrepreneurial unity was further illustrated by this Committee through the purchase of the Lodge's Grant Temple in Chicago, funded through a 20 cents tax on every male member and a 10 cents tax on each female member. Within West Virginia, Starks, to illustrate what could be accomplished through unity, organized the Pythian Mutual Investment Association, incorporated in February, 1902. The incorporation papers of the organization state that its purpose was that of "...carrying on mercantile and mutual insurance business, and encouraging industry, frugality and saving among its members, to procure, hold and deal in real estate, and to have, hold, enjoy and exercise all the powers, privileges and rights of such corporation under the laws of the State of West Virginia..." It was the intent of the Association to encourage the purchase of real estate in prime business areas in all locales with a black population large enough to support it.

By 1905, the sale of stock to Pythians and Calantheans permitted the accumulation of enough capital for the Association to purchase a lot in Charleston on the corner of Washington and Dickinson Streets and to erect a structure, styled the Knights of Pythias Building, on the lot in 1906. Its first floor was the site of a barber shop, a grocery store, and the Gem Pharmacy; offices were on the second floor and lodge rooms were on the third floor. Providing office and meeting space for blacks for many years, the K of P Building was eventually razed; the land is now the site of a parking lot.



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The Association also became the owner of a three story brick building, now also razed, in downtown Huntington. At the time of purchase, the first floor of the building was occupied by the Huntington Herald, a leading newspaper in the city; the second floor was to be utilized for offices and the third floor was intended as an assembly hall. The cost of the building was \$12,000.

So great was Starks' achievement that George Atkinson, the governor of West Virginia from 1897-1901, could say of him in 1907, "Out of nothing, save empty dignity and a few faint, faint promises, he has builded the greatest, advisedly, greatest organization among his people in this day."

On April 3, 1908, Samuel Starks died of peritonitis on the operating table of a Charleston hospital. He was forty two years old. On the day of the funeral, his body lay in state at the First Baptist Church from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Hundreds of persons came to Charleston for the service filling the church to capacity and crowding the streets near it until they were impassable. Condolences poured in from all over the country. Floral tributes were so numerous that they nearly reached the ceiling in the space in the church reserved for them. Governor W.O. Dawson gave remarks at the funeral and the oration was delivered by the Reverend G.B. Howard. J. McHenry Jones, the president of the West Virginia Colored Institute, presided. The funeral procession moved along Washington Street to Morris to Piedmont and on to Springhill Cemetery passing mourners two and three deep along the way. Pythian rites were pronounced at the gravesite. Pall bearers were R.L. Jones, C.W. Boyd, J.F.J. Clark, C.H. James, T.G. Nutter, F.C. Brown, George Wanzer, and J.H. Taylor.

On November 23, 1911, the Pythians returned to Charleston to honor Samuel Starks by the dedication of a 32 foot granite monument erected at the gravesite. Purchased by \$2,700 donated by Pythians and friends, the monument remains as one of the few obelisks in Spring Hill Cemetery and was cited as an example of Charleston funerary architecture when the cemetery was placed on the historic register. At the ceremonies at the time of the dedication, of the monument, Governor William E. Glasscock and former Governor W.O. Dawson along with Pythian dignitaries were among those speaking. T.G. Nutter presided.

Starks has no children, but his wife Lillian, his mother Mary, and his sister Lillie Brooks were left to mourn him. His home at 413 Shrewsbury Street continued as a family residence for a time and then was occupied by a succession of other people. Eventually it came into the possession of Mrs. Della Brown Taylor who hoped to develop it as a black cultural center. It is unfortunate that Mrs. Taylor's dream could not be realized, but it is good that the building was not destroyed and that it is being used in a positive way.

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November 23, 1911, Vol. 10.

The Charleston Gazette, April 3, 1908, Vol. 22, No. 122; April 7, 1908, Vol. 22, No. 125.

The Charleston Mail, April 3, 1908, Vol. 24, No. 80.

Inventory file materials, Historic Preservation Unit, WV  
Dept. of Culture and History, Charleston, WV

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Legal Description of property:

Beginning on Shrewsbury Street at the corner of Quarrier Lot No. 14 nearest the river; thence with the sideline of said Lot No. 14 towards Dickinson Street a distance of 100 feet; thence in a line parallel to Shrewsbury Street and in a direction toward the hill  $34-7/12$  feet to a stake; thence in a line parallel to the first line herein mentioned a distance of 100 feet to Shrewsbury Street; and thence with Shrewsbury Street  $34-7/12$  feet to the place of beginning, and being a part of Quarrier Lot No. 14, and also being the same property conveyed unto A. H. Brown by William H. Hogan and Hattie N. Hogan, his wife, by deed bearing date the 18th day of September, 1953, which said deed is of record in the office of the Clerk of the County Court of Kanawha County, West Virginia, in Deed Book No. 1071 at Page No. 74, reference to which said deed is here made for a more particular description of the real estate hereby conveyed.

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Starks, Samuel, House

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION APPROVAL

Antoinette Alue 12/24/92

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Samuel Starks House, Charleston,  
Kanawha County, West Virginia

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Samuel W. Starks achieved a firm niche in the history of the nation and, especially, in the history of African-Americans, by being appointed, in 1901, the first black state librarian in the United States. Not only did Starks achieve this singular honor, but he brought into his office and "groomed" J. Arthur Jackson who, in 1921, became the second black to hold the position of state librarian in the country. For these achievements alone, Starks is a national figure who meets National Register Criterion B.

Starks also played an important role in the politics of the period, and was a recognized leader of blacks at the time of his death.

Samuel W. Starks (1866-1908), was the first African-American to achieve the distinction of being appointed a state librarian in the United States. In 1901, West Virginia Republican governor, Albert B. White, appointed Starks to fill the position. To put this appointment into perspective, it was not until 1896 that G.W. Forbes was appointed assistant librarian of the West End Branch of the Boston Public Library and in 1900 Edward C. Williams became the first African-American to be graduated from an institute of higher learning (New York State Library School) as a librarian. In 1903, the city of Charlotte, North Carolina, established a separate library for Negroes and not until 1904 did an African-American join the library staff of a college-level institution (Edward C. Williams at Western Reserve University). In light of these historical facts, Starks' appointment seems extraordinary. In March 1905, he was reappointed State Librarian of West Virginia by the new governor, William M.O. Dawson. He continued to serve as State Librarian until his untimely death on April 3, 1908.

One of the significant acts of Samuel Starks while State Librarian of West Virginia was to take into his office as a "messenger boy" a young African-American, J. Arthur Jackson. Starks quickly engineered Jackson's rise to prominence in the library. Nine years after Starks' death, Jackson was appointed First Assistant State Librarian and, in 1921, J. Arthur Jackson became the second African-American to be appointed a state librarian, also in West Virginia. The same year, the American Library Association appointed its first Work With Negroes Round Table.

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Kanawha County, West Virginia

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Samuel W. Starks was also involved in state and national politics during the latter part of his life. Beginning in 1902, he served on the State Republican Executive Committee and was briefly, in 1906, its chairman. He became something of a spokesperson for black Republicans in the state and, as the 1908 Republican National Convention approached he was courted by both the administration forces backing War Secretary William H. Taft and by those backing the candidacy of Ohio U.S. Senator Joseph H. Foraker. Senator Foraker was popular with black Republicans for his defense of the African-American soldiers involved in the "Brownsville Riots" of 1906. It appears that Starks was leaning toward the Foraker forces, but his untimely death two months before the National Convention must leave to speculation as to what position Starks might eventually have taken.

9. Bibliography

Josey, E.L. and Ann A. Shockley. Handbook of Black Librarianship. Littleton, Colorado, ALA, 1977.

Smith, Douglas C. "In Quest of Equality: The West Virginia Experience," West Virginia History. Charleston, West Virginia, Department of Archives and History, Vol. XXXVII, No. 3, April, 1976.

Haney, James E. "Blacks and the Republican Nomination of 1908," Ohio History, Columbus, O., LXXXIV, Autumn, 1975.

Randall, James D. and Anna F. Gilmer. Black Past. Charleston, W.V., 1989.

Prepared by: Michael J. Pauley, Historian  
West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office