

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

### 1. Name of Property

historic name First Christian Church of Ashland  
other names/site number Old Church of Christ, Scientist, of Ashland: BO-A-89

### 2. Location

street & number 315 17th Street N/A  not for publication  
city, town Ashland N/A  vicinity  
state Kentucky code KY county Boyd code 019 zip code 41101

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Ashland Multiple Resource Area  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

David L. Morgan 2-12-90  
Signature of certifying official David L. Morgan Date  
State Historic Preservation Officer, Kentucky Heritage Council  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RELIGIOUS STRUCTURE: church

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Limestone

walls Brick

roof

other N/A

### Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The 1890 Old First Christian Church in Ashland, Kentucky (1980 census, 27,064) is situated in the middle of a block -- near the intersection of 17th Street and Ashland's main thoroughfare, Winchester Avenue (US Highways 60 and 23), and well within the heart of the central business district.

This former house of worship faces east, and it is a 1½-story brick building with a 2-story square tower of the same material at the northeast corner. The building's overall dimensions are 44'9" X 60'5"; atop the tower is a soaring, broached spire that reaches a height of approximately 92 feet.

The principal entrance, approached by a flight of low steps, is centered on the east side of the tower. A pointed-arch window pierces the north side of the tower's first level, and an auxiliary entrance is on the main façade, near the southeast corner. However, the main fenestration -- and focal points -- are triple-lancet arrangements centered on the east, north, and south walls.

Centered on the rear (west) elevation is a 1-story, hip-roofed extension that provided space for an office and pastor's study during the building's service as a church. This section contains an entrance at the north and south, and there are three identical pointed-arch windows along the west (rear) wall. There is a full basement, and a brick chimney is near the juncture of the main building and the lower rear extension.

Gabled roof sections are steeply pitched, and there is decorative brick corbelling below the eaves. Also, corbelled brickwork creating fenestral caps serves as embellishment for all major wall openings. There is also a three-part blind arcade below the triple lancet arrangement on the main (east) façade.

The second level of the square tower -- which serves as a visual anchor -- is treated on each side with paired and louvred openings that are set within twin corbelled panels that are long and rectangular in shape.

A paved alley is to the former church's immediate north, and there is a 5-story parking garage to the southwest: the latter's ramp is to the south and is an encroaching element. Some grassy space has been retained to the south and west of the nominated building; centered on a concrete strip between the steps on the east is a pedimented, brick service directory that rests on a brick base -- this object probably dating from about 1913, when the building was sold to another denomination.

## 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)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

ARCHITECTURE

1890

1890

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Laura White

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

The former First Christian Church in Ashland, Kentucky, is significant under National Register Criterion C as an exemplary local product of the Late Gothic Revival mode of architecture. During the late 1800's, Ashland experienced an important economic boom, and the former church is also the sole remnant of a fashionable neighborhood that sprung up in very close proximity to the community's central business district. Also, further interest is rendered by the building's having been designed by a female architect (albeit amateur) in its location -- a small city in the Ohio River Valley -- in the late 1800's.

The first settlers of present-day Ashland, largest city in Kentucky's Eastern Highlands region, were members of the Scotch-Irish Poage family -- who arrived in this northeastern Kentucky area as early as 1786. "The growth of Poage Settlement during the early 19th century is primarily a story of the development of the pig-iron industry in the Ohio Valley" (A History of Ashland, p. 6 ). The Ashland area's availability of rich natural resources, coupled with the ready presence of the Ohio River, quickly established Ashland as an iron ore and coal-shipping center.

The 1880's in Ashland was a period of remarkable growth and development. Railroad expansion in and around Ashland was occurring, several leading financial institutions were commencing or expanding, the important iron industry was on the verge of building a Bessemer steel plant in Ashland, and efforts were being made to provide electrical, telephone, improved newspaper, street car, and other services. Resultingly, religious congregations were organizing, expanding, or gearing up for the future.

A frame building for the First Baptist congregation was erected at the corner of 17th and Winchester in 1888; in 1889, a house of worship was completed for the parish family of Calvary Episcopal Church; the Normal Presbyterian and Second Methodist congregations were organized in 1890; Centenary Methodist acquired its first pastor in 1891 -- the same year that the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, erected a new brick building; the Pollard Baptist congregation was founded in 1892 -- about the same time that informal Reform Jewish services started being held in the community (Ibid., pp. 26-9).

The Christian Church, officially known as the Disciples of Christ, is a denomination indigenous to Kentucky. In a work entitled The Disciples in Kentucky, theologian and

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Ashland Centennial Committee. A History of Ashland, Kentucky: 1786-1954.  
Ashland: Graber Printing Co., 1954.

Chappell, Edward. A Preservation Plan for Ashland, Kentucky, City of Ashland, 1978.

Cole, Doris. From Tipi to Skyscraper: A History of Women in Architecture. Boston:  
i press inc., 1973.

Fortune, Alonzo W. The Disciples in Kentucky. Lexington: The Conference of Christian  
Churches in Kentucky, 1932.

Early Families of Eastern and Southeastern Kentucky. Genealogical Pub. Co., Inc., 1973.  
Place of publication unknown.

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

**Primary location of additional data:**

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

**Specify repository:**

Kentucky Heritage Council  
Frankfort, Kentucky

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property Less than one

**UTM References**

A 17 357065 4259960  
Zone Easting Northing

C \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

D \_\_\_\_\_

Ashland Quadrangle

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Beginning at the corner of an alley between Winchester and Carter Avenues in the City of Ashland and where the same intersects with the westerly line of 17th Street; thence south-westerly to the west line of 17th Street for 52 feet; thence at right angles northwesterly for 92 feet; thence at right angles northeasterly for 92 feet with the line of the alley to the point of beginning.

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

Property described above is the immediate land around the nominated building and that which has been historically with such building since its construction.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Daniel Kidd, Architectural Historian

organization Private Consultant

date November 1989

street & number 4938 Beechwood Rd.

telephone 513/831-9514

city or town Cincinnati

state Ohio zip code 45244

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Exterior walls and decorative brick corbelling of the exterior are of soft, orangish-red brick, and the foundation is of limestone ashlar. Also, the windows are treated with limestone sills. The roof is covered with slate material, and there is a copper finial atop the tall spire.

The former house of worship is located in an area of mixed use and with varying architecture. As previously noted, Winchester Avenue -- Ashland's "Main Street" -- is one-half block to the north, and it is this street that has traditionally -- in recent decades -- been home to major retail operations and financial institutions in Ashland (such status, however, presently being substantially diminished). By nature of its location, the former church has a number of nearby office buildings as neighbors -- some of these in various states of remodeling. Then, the City's main park area -- Central Park -- is one and one-half blocks to the southeast, while the Bath Avenue Historic District (listed in the National Register of Historic Places) begins one and one-half blocks to the south.

The main interior space of the former church is a simple auditorium containing pews in four sections. The pulpit is a non-structural element atop a wooden, stage-like platform that also occupies the space provided by a slightly-recessed area centered along the west. Four pointed-arch doors off the platform lead into the lower extension behind the main building.

The building's three triple-lancet arrangements and the arched openings above the two front entrances contain fine decorative stained glass. This material is polychromatic, and it is of the type inspired by the Aesthetic Movement.

Both the building's interior and exterior are in a good state of preservation. This property is now in private ownership, and a rehabilitation to conform with The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation is intended.

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Kentucky: BO-A-89

historian A.W. Fortune wrote that "religion was very much disorganized in Kentucky at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Pioneer life is never conducive to spiritual religion, and war is always followed by a period of religious decline. The spiritual life (in frontier America) was at a low ebb in the years following the Revolutionary War. In the midst of the unsettled religious conditions in Kentucky during the very early 1800's came a movement known as 'The Great Revival.' And it was this movement that gave birth to the Disciples denomination at Cane Ridge in the Bluegrass region" (pp. 25-6).

The Ashland Disciples of Christ congregation was organized in the summer of 1887, following a tent meeting in the city. For a while, worship services were held in rented quarters. Soon, however -- and with significant help from the Kentucky Mission Board of the Disciples of Christ, funding was secured for the construction of a church edifice. "It was thought that a building costing about \$5,000 should be erected" (An Historical Sketch, p. 2): Ashland's population stood at about 6,000 at that time.

In 1976, the Kentucky Heritage Council conducted a survey of cultural resources in the City of Ashland. This undertaking inventoried a total of 155 buildings -- including eight religious buildings:

The First Presbyterian Church, 1857 and 1888, a brick Gothic Revival building with later Romanesque details. Listed in the National Register.

The United Methodist Church, 1890, a monumental Neo-Gothic building of brown-stone construction. Listed in the National Register.

St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1912, a small-scaled, Neo-Classical building of brick construction with limestone trim. Listed in the National Register.

Phillips Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, late 19th century, a vernacular commercial building converted into a house of worship in 1928.

First Christian Church, 1913, a Classical Revival building of brick construction with stone trim.

Holy Family Roman Catholic Church, 1867, a gable-roofed brick building with a square tower centered on the front. A compromising addition has been appended to the main façade.

Calvary Episcopal Church, 1903, a Late Gothic Revival building of brick construction with stone trim.

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First Christian Church of Ashland, Boyd County,  
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The eighth religious building recorded by surveyor and architectural historian Edward Chappell was the former First Christian Church at 315 17th Street, BO-A-89:

Built as the First Christian Church in what was then a wealthy residential block, this brick Gothic structure was sold to the Church of Christ, Scientist, in 1913. It is now a major landmark in the business district (Chappell, A Historic Preservation Plan for Ashland, Kentucky, p. 110).

In a resultant preservation plan, Chappell listed the First Christian Church among "Potential National Register Properties" (Ibid., p. 194).

In comparison with the other religious buildings included in the Ashland survey, the Old First Christian Church is notable for its picturesque qualities: the tall broached spire is a daring element; the massing is somewhat formal -- yet technically asymmetrical due to the corner tower; and there is an effective exterior textural variation. The other Late Gothic Revival religious building identified by Chappell is the 1903 building of Calvary Episcopal Church. However, this building clearly differs from the First Christian Church as a definable product of the next century -- as well as one not possessing what may be viewed as the First Christian Church's held-over flourishes from the Ecclesiology Movement in church architecture, which spread to America from England in the mid-1800's.

The designer of the Old First Christian Church of Ashland, Laura White, was descended from a family that is recognized as being "among the most enterprising, prominent, and influential families in Southwestern Virginia and Southeastern Kentucky" ("White Family of Clay County," Early Families, p. 831).

Miss White was born near Manchester, Kentucky, daughter of Daugherty and Sarah White, and she was educated at the University of Michigan and at M.I.T. and The Sorbonne. Her life spanned the years 1853-1929. The following is an excerpt from her obituary in the January 26, 1929, issue of the Owensboro Messenger:

A woman of unusual talents, Miss White's earlier life was one of rare usefulness. An educator and a scholar, a worker in women's organizations for many years, in later years her talents found expression in surveying, painting and architecture, which were her recreations. She was one of the first eight women to be graduated in a coeducational class from the University of Michigan ("Miss Laura White Is Heart Victim." p. 1).

Miss White voluntarily taught public school in southeastern Kentucky's Laurel County, where she was to later do land surveying for quick-claim deeds. Extant family members fondly recall how Miss White tutored a younger brother, with such brother going on to earn a bachelor's degree from Kentucky's noted Centre College at the remarkable

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age of 18. The same family members also remember Miss White as claiming that at one point in her life, she had "taught every banker in Lexington (Kentucky) everything they ever knew!" (Interviews with John S. and Augusta B. Hager, November 29, 1989). Of additional interest is that Miss White's older sister, Elizabeth ("Bessie"), was the first licensed female pharmacist in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. "She was a truly remarkable woman; she was adored by everyone; and she was the smartest woman I have ever known," relate the same extant family members (Ibid.).

Elizabeth White -- again, Laura's older sister -- married Judge S.W. Hager, a then-resident of Ashland. Both Judge and Mrs. Hager were leading members in the Ashland Disciples of Christ congregation, with Mrs. Hager serving as the first treasurer. Undoubtedly, Mrs. Hager's office within such congregation was instrumental in securing her sister's -- Laura White's -- service as architect for the 1890 edifice. An 1891 Kentucky Disciples of Christ periodical told of the Ashland church's dedication and of Laura White's being "the faithful architect." And in such periodical, the Ashland pastor stated the following: "The success which has attended my work here is largely due to the substantial aid of Miss White, our architect . . ." (W.H. Hull). Interestingly, there is no record that Miss White received any compensation for her service as architect for the Ashland church group. Pastor Hull also waxed: "By the Christian liberality of the brethren in Kentucky, we now have in Ashland a beautiful little temple which compares favorable with any church property in the city, at a cost of \$6,000" (Ibid.).

"Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century women architects are obscure" (Women in American Architecture, p. 54). Then, "The number of Kentucky architects increased in 1890 to 95 and by 1900 to 118, including 2 female architects" (A History of the Profession of Architecture in Kentucky, p. 20). Although Laura White's field(s) of study at the University of Michigan, M.I.T., and The Sorbonne remain unknown, it may safely be assumed that architecture played a role. Certainly, there are those historians who claim that American women have played an inherent part in this country's architecture: from the Indian women, who were the architects of their communities; to pioneer white women, who often planned their domiciles; through the Shaker women, who were undoubtedly involved in their communal architecture; etc. (Doris Cole, From Tipi to Skyscraper, pp. 2-48).

In any event, the designer of Ashland's old First Christian Church provided the community with a tasteful house of worship that represented an affluent and fashionable neighborhood near the heart of the downtown, and that now serves as an 1890 landmark near the center of the central business district.

The Ashland Disciples of Christ sold their late 1800's edifice to a Christian Science congregation in 1913 -- the Disciples having experienced such growth that a larger facility with increased seating had been completed for them that same year. More lately, the Christian Science group's number has decreased so completely that it is no longer feasible for them to maintain this building. As a result, the property is now in private ownership, and a Tax-Act rehabilitation is planned.



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ADDENDUM:

Neither records nor extant family members of Laura White show that she designed any other building than that which is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. There is, however, a circular stairway that she designed for the ante-bellum house at 1844 Griffith Avenue in Owensboro, Kentucky, that was remodeled after World War I by her brother-in-law, S.W. Hager.

Miss White died in Owensboro in 1929 at the residence of her sister, Elizabeth White Hager -- Miss White's having gone there two years before because of a heart condition that eventually proved fatal.

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Hagin, Joseph W. An Historical Sketch of the First Christian Church of Ashland, Kentucky.  
Ashland: Globe Printing Co., 1937.

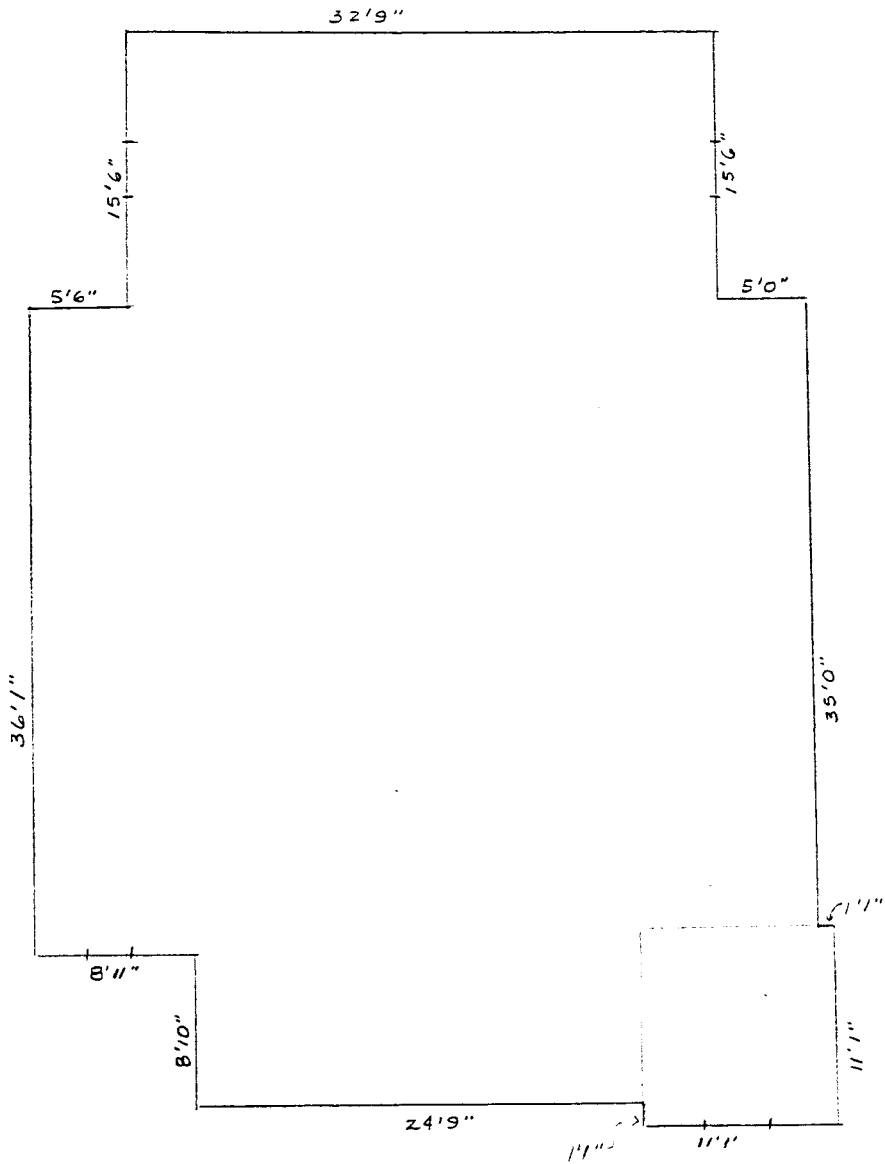
Hull, W.H. "The Ashland, Ky. Mission," The Christian Standard. May 23, 1891, place of  
publication unknown.

Interviews with John S. Hager and Augusta B. Hager, Owensboro, Kentucky, November 29, 1989.

"Miss Laura White Is Heart Victim," Owensboro Messenger, January 26, 1929, p. 1.

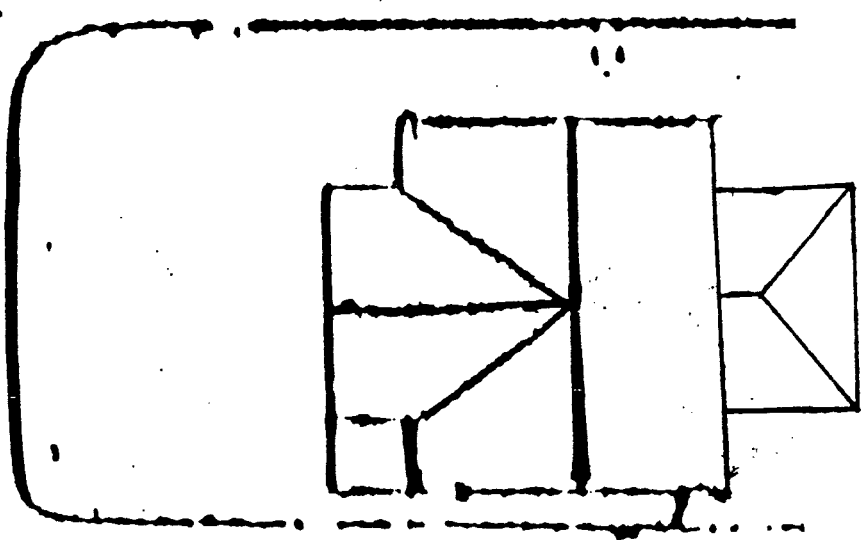
Obervarth, Julian, and Scott, William, B. A History of The Profession of Architecture  
in Kentucky. Louisville: Gateway Press, Inc., 1987.

Torre, Susana, Editor. Women in American Architecture: A Historic and Contemporary  
Perspective. New York: Watson-Guption Publications, 1985.



SCALE : 1"=10'

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH - ASHLAND KY  
EXTERIOR DIMENSIONS

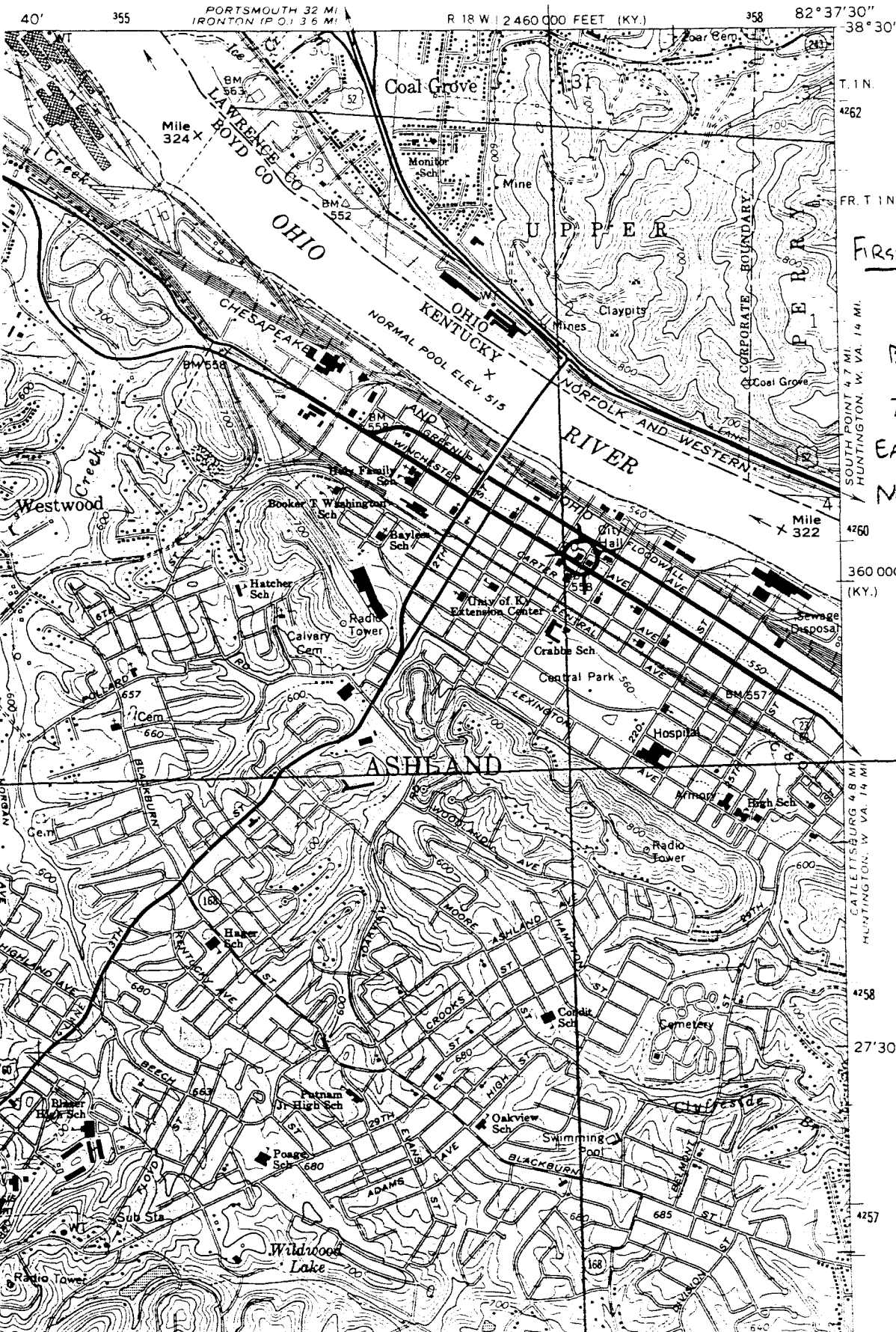


FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
ASHLAND, KY.  
30-A-81

ROOF PLAN: NO SCALE

ASHLAND QUADRANGLE  
KENTUCKY-OHIO  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

466111 SE  
(KITTS HILL)



FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
OF ASHLAND  
Boyd Co., KY  
ZONE 17  
EASTING 357 065  
NORTHING 4259 960

SOUTH POINT 4.7 MI. HUNTINGTON, W. VA. 14 MI.  
CATLETTSBURG 4.8 MI. HUNTINGTON, W. VA. 14 MI.

360 000 FEET (KY.)

27'30"

4257

40' 355 PORTSMOUTH 32 MI. IRONTON 19.0 3.5 MI. R 18 W | 2 460 000 FEET (KY.) 358 82° 37' 30" 38° 30'