

USE TO COPY

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Women's Christian Temperance Union Community Building

and/or common WCTU Building

2. Location

street & number 160 Fayette Street

not for publication

city, town Morgantown

vicinity of

state West Virginia

code 54

county Monongalia

code 061

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Morgantown

street & number 154 Fayette Street

city, town Morgantown

vicinity of

state West Virginia

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Monongalia County Courthouse (County Clerk's Office)

street & number 243 High Street

city, town Morgantown

state West Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date

federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The WCTU Community Building is a detached, brick, four-story plus basement structure which serves as office space, meeting rooms, private apartments, and recreational facilities. It measures 57' by 129' from its property line to its south wall and is built on a rectangular plan.

The first-story north facade (main) is divided into three bays; the second and third stories are not strictly divided but the fenestration balances the bays of the first story. The entrance is capped by a massive stone hood supported by console brackets, and above the hood is a fanlight which is repeated over the windows which flank the doorway. These two large windows are round-arched and have brick voussoirs, stone keystones, imposts, and lintels, and are double-hung 9/1. Each possesses sidelights whose fixed-sash panes are 3/1. The concrete foundation is not visible, but is suggested by a decorative ashlar course of smooth-cut limestone at the base of the first story. A cornerstone at the left side of this course reads "WCTU 1922."

The first and second stories are separated by a stone string course. The six second-story windows are flat-topped, with stone keystones and lintels and are 6/1 double-hung. The third-story windows are round-arched with brick voussoirs and stone lintels and keystones, and are also 6/1 double-hung.

The building is capped with a smooth-cut stone cornice which is topped by a balustrade. Its entablature is ornamented with plain modillions and dentils. The decorative elements are confined to the north facade and are not carried to the sides and rear of the building. Therefore, while the brock of the main facade is Flemish-bond, the rest of the brickwork is common-bond and the elliptical windows are undecorated except for stone sills. There are no porches or attached structures, but there is a metal fire escape on the south wall.

The facade gives the impression that the building only has three floors; actually, it is comprised of four floors and a two-level basement which houses the large gymnasium. The first floor consists of an office suite, meeting rooms, the two-story high auditorium, and a recently-renovated kitchen. The second floor houses the matron's apartment, and office, and the rest room originally intended for the use of rural women while their husbands were conducting business in town. The third and fourth floors provide housing for single women; the third floor has dormitory rooms with communal kitchen, bath, and laundry rooms, and the fourth floor has separate three-room apartments.

The interior retains its original oak woodwork and fixtures and is virtually unchanged from its original state. Throughout the building can be seen much of the original furnishings - cut-glass mirrors, Mission-Style and wicker furniture, and 1920s vintage artwork. The only renovations have been a refurbishing in 1939 (the linoleum appears to date from that era), the kitchen renovation, and the addition of fire doors and walls on each floor to conform with modern building codes. Both the auditorium and the gymnasium are still being used by the community, the former for film showings and the latter for popular exercise classes conducted by a WCTU member. The residential floors continue to provide low-cost housing for single women.

The structure is in excellent condition and a fine representative of the Neoclassical Revival style esteemed for public buildings in the first quarter of this century. In this instance, it is tempered with the familiar forms of small town vernacular architecture, resulting in an unostentatious and sober structure very appropriate for housing an organization dedicated to temperance.

The Morgantown structure is the largest and most sophisticated W.C.TU building in the state of West Virginia. The Neoclassical Revival style is not commonly found in the downtown area and the distinct architectural characteristics stand out among the other buildings on Fayette Street.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
pre-historic	archeology-prehistoric	community planning	landscape architecture	religion
1400-1499	archeology-historic	conservation	law	science
1500-1599	agriculture	economics	literature	sculpture
1600-1699	X architecture	education	military	X social
1700-1799	art	engineering	music	humanitarian
1800-1899	commerce	exploration settlement	philosophy	theater
X 1900-	communications	industry	politics government	transportation
		invention		other (specify)

Specific dates 1922-23

Builder Architect

Carl Reger, architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

From 1923 until 1984, but most particularly in the 1920s, the Morgantown WCTU Community Building was the focal point for the many humanitarian projects which the organization undertook in the areas of women's suffrage, health and education, as well as prohibition of alcohol. The long history of WCTU ownership has left the structure virtually unchanged, unusual for a building in downtown Morgantown, and it remains a fine example of eclectic Neoclassical Revival architecture. It stands as a reminder of the era in which women proved that they could constitute a deciding force in national politics and mores, with or without the power of the vote.

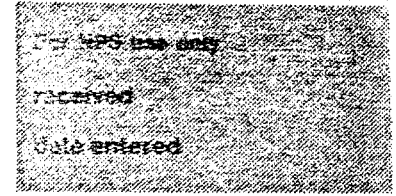
The Morgantown chapter of the WCTU, formed in 1884, began with 19 members. Its president was Elizabeth Moore, founder of Morgantown's Woodburn Female Seminary and the area's leading proponent of women's education. In 1886, the first state meeting of the West Virginia WCTU was held, with national organization founder Frances Willard presiding. The early goals of the organization were to campaign for women's suffrage, for the implementation of statutory rape laws, for the use of female wardens for women prisoners, to fight against child labor, tuberculosis and other diseases, dangerous patent medicines, and, of course, to promote their main cause: prohibition of and abstinence from, all alcoholic beverages.

By the early 1900s, state membership had grown to 3,000 and Morgantown had twice been awarded a banner for the greatest increase in membership. The Morgantown chapter organized a relief fund for the victims of the Monongah mine disaster of 1908, conducted letter-writing campaigns and petition drives for suffrage, and began education projects for the growing immigrant population of Monongalia County. Their efforts met with great success and from 1908 to 1918, Morgantown's Lenna Lowe Yost, later nationally known as head of the women's division of the Republican Party, served as state president of the WCTU. In 1912, the state prohibition amendment was ratified; Morgantown's WCTU chapter invited Billy Sunday to speak at a pre-election rally. The evangelist led a parade of over 1,000 temperance advocates. By 1919 the chapter had 250 members and the state publication, The White Ribbon, was the only West Virginia newspaper published by women.

A tragic occurrence in 1914 gave impetus to the Morgantown WCTU to begin a long hoped-for project. Sarah Serepta BELL Price (better known as "Reppa Bell") was severely injured in a fire. Her dream as chapter president had been to see a community center built that could provide an alternative to saloons for recreation and could alleviate with educational programs the conditions that drove people to drink. In 1913 Mrs. Price had assisted the WCTU to purchase a large lot in the heart of the city. When Mrs. Price died, it was found that she had willed \$20,000 to the organization to begin building.

The club began a five-year struggle to attain fund necessary to build the kind of edifice that could truly benefit the community. Continuous fund drives, benefit plays and concerts, and help from WCTU chapters and other civic organizations filled their treasury bit by bit. The schoolchildren of Monongalia County contributed a dime to pay for a brick. By 1919, the lot was paid for and Carl Reger, architect, and the contractor, E.R. Baker had been engaged and construction began. Plans were on a grand scale; the house organ, The Union Signal, reported that the structure was valued at \$150,000 and would contain a rest room, reading room, children's nursery, auditorium, lunch room, women's apartments, and a gymnasium.

Through the 1920's, the Community Building served as a focal point for the many

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

Continuation sheet

1

Item number

8

Page 2

humanitarian programs of the WCTU. The ratification of both national prohibition and women's suffrage had given the organization an intense feeling of self-confidence, and the large membership of the Morgantown chapter allowed an amazing number of activities to be taken on. More than ever, the WCTU concentrated on bettering living conditions in the community.

The Morgantown WCTU gained national recognition for its Americanization program, designed to reduce the culture shock felt by the large number of immigrants that were flocking to Morgantown's growing industries. English classes were held at the Community Building, and teachers were available for home lessons. Story hours for children provided a painless way to learn English, as well as American customs. Mother's clubs taught modern child care methods in conjunction with baby clinics. Classes in crafts and sewing brought foreign-born and American young people together. The organization also served as a liaison with West Virginia University for promising foreign-born students and often provided room and board for these students.

The WCTU regularly held quilting bees to provide bedding for the poor and clothing drives to dress them. They paid calls on the sick and the county jail prisoners in order to bring them such little comforts as flowers, home-made jelly, fresh fruit and magazines. The impoverished mining community of Scott's Run became the center of their efforts.

Women's issues always occupied the forefront of their concerns. Apart from providing pleasant quarters for working women, they endowed scholarships for female students, assisted unwed mothers, and sponsored venereal disease clinics and lectures. They continued to lobby for female jail wardens. Their surprisingly enlightened attitude is illustrated by the fact that the building's residents were allowed to have male guests "until a reasonable hour."

The organization also assisted the PTA in their vaccination drives and in projects to aid needy children. They provided flowers, trees, and shrubs to the community for planting and distributed artwork to hang in public schools. The auditorium and gymnasium could be rented by local organizations for meetings and parties, and provided recreation for children as well as adults. Interesting to the modern researcher is the fact that the Morgantown WCTU sponsored a conference on peace and disarmament some sixty years ago.

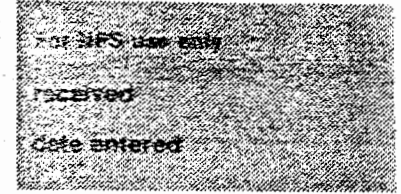
The repeal of prohibition dealt the WCTU a blow from which it never really recovered, and the Depression further lessened its influence. The minutes of the state meetings during the 1930s reveal that many members could no longer even pay their dues. The momentum of projects slowed, and the club focused on providing the basic necessities to the area unemployed and keeping up the residential and recreational facilities that were then even more valuable to the community.

World War II gave new life to the organization. The Community Building became the center of war relief efforts, including Red Cross money and blood drives, bond rallies, and hospital equipment drives. Increased financial prosperity made it possible for the chapter to buy a projector and films that could be checked out by organizations and schools. After the war, the WCTU kept up its hospital benefit work and also began its association with Alcoholics Anonymous, whose first Morgantown chapter was given a meeting room in the building.

The membership loss of the 1930s, however, was never completely replenished. After the momentum supplied by the war ceased, the organization was left with fewer members, less money, a lack of interest in temperance as a cause on the part of the general public, and a social order in which the role of private charities was increasingly taken over by the government. The Community Building still offered residential and recreational facilities, but it was also used more and more by other civic groups and churches.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

2

Item number

8

Page

3

By 1984, ironically the centennial year of the Morgantown WCTU, the upkeep of the building had become a burden for the remaining members, and the Community Building was sold to the adjacent First Federal Savings and Loan Association. The new ownership has not changed the facility; exercise classes meet daily in the gymnasium, meeting rooms and offices are in use, and the dormitory rooms and apartments are occupied.

The WCTU Community Building is a tangible, unchanged monument to the political and social power gained by American women during this century, and to the role of the WCTU in the history of West Virginia Women.

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Callahan, James Morton. The History of the Making of Morgantown. Morgantown, WV: Morgantown Printing and Binding, 1926.
- Core, Earl. The Monongalia Story, Vol 4: Industrialization. Parsons, WV: McLain Publishing Co. 1982.
- Johnson, Mrs. Ned. Mountaineer Memories, n.p. 1983

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .25 acres
Quadrangle name Morgantown North

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A 17 589580 4387130
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

Please see attached sheets from Deed Book 917 pp. 290-291, recorded at the Monongalia County Courthouse, County Clerk's Office. See item #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 A. Markey

organization WVU Public History Program

date July 17, 1985

street & number 520 Arch Street

telephone 304-292-5088

city or town Morgantown

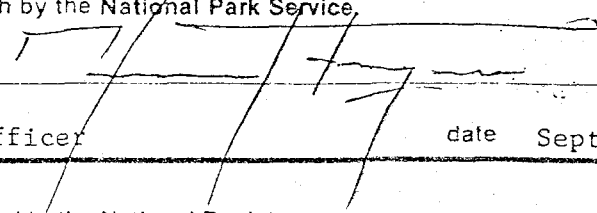
state West Virginia

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 September 11, 1985

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

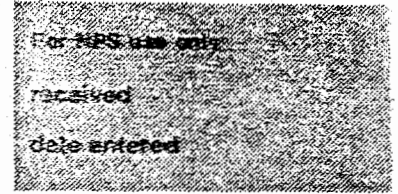
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

1

Item number

9

Page

1

Morgantown WCTU. Minutes, 1886-1927.

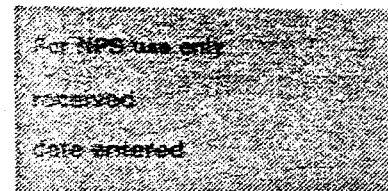
Post. (Morgantown, WV) 1913-1923.

The Union Signal. (Evanston, IL) 1919-1927.

The White Ribbon. (Fairmont/Charleston, WV) 1919-1927.

West Virginia WCTU. Minutes of the Convention. Various publication sites and publishers
in West Virginia. 1886-1982.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

4

Item number

10

Page

2

The description found in Deed Book 917 on page 290-291 is as follows:

Beginning at a 3/8 inch iron pin, found, the common corner between the Women's Christian Temperance Union tract and the First Federal Savings and Loan Company tract; thence with the common boundary line between the Women's Christian Temperance Union tract and the First Federal Savings and Loan Company tract, N 67 degrees 39' 00" E 129.00 feet to a lead plug, set in the sidewalk on the southwest right-of-way limits of Fayette Street, 18.00 feet from the centerline; thence with the limits of Fayette Street, S 22 degrees 21' 00" E 57.00 feet to a lead plug, set in the sidewalk on the southwest right-of-way limits of Fayette Street, 18.00 feet from the centerline; thence leaving the limits of Fayette Street and running partly with the common boundary line between the Women's Christian Temperance Union tract and the Cyrille, Inc. tract, S 67 degrees 39' 00" W at 48.00 feet crossing the common corner between the Women's Christian Temperance Union tract, the Cyrille, Inc. tract and the Comuntzis Theatre Building, Inc. tract and with the common boundary line between the Women's Christian Temperance Union tract and the Comuntzis Theatre Building, Inc. tract in all 123.00 feet to a 1/2 inch rebar, set on the line of the John Angotti tract; thence with the common boundary line between the Women's Christian Temperance Union tract and the John Angotti tract, N 22 degrees 21' 00" W 31.00 feet to a 1/2 inch rebar, set; thence continuing with said common boundary line, S 67 degrees 39' 00" W 6.00 feet to a 1/2 inch rebar, set; thence continuing with said common boundary line, N 22 degrees 21' 00" W 26.00 feet to the point of beginning containing 0.165 Acre or 7,187 square feet, more or less, as surveyed during July, 1984 by Laurel Mining Consultants, Inc. said plat is attached hereto and is made part hereof for all pertinent purposes.

And being a portion of the two tracts conveyed to the Women's Christian Temperance Union of Morgantown, West Virginia, by deed from Mary R.A. Kiger dated the 1st day of March, 1913 and by deed from Sarah Sarepta Price and Albert C. Price, her husband, dated the 12th day of June, 1913, both deed recorded in the Office of the Clerk of the County Commission of Monongalia County, West Virginia, in Deed Book 126, at Page 14 and Deed Book 126, at Page 16, respectively.

There is also conveyed to the GRANTEES an easement through that certain 10 foot alley way along the eastern boundary line of the aforesaid property for the purpose of ingress, egress and regress in and between the property described above and that of Cyrille, Inc. as found in the deed from Women's Christian Temperance Union to Geroge P. Comuntzis and John P. Comuntzis, dated the 20th day of July, 1921 and recorded in the aforesaid County Clerk's Office in Deed Book 183, at Page 314.

The real estate herein described is conveyed subject to building restrictions, reservations, rights-of-way, covenants and conditions set forth and contained in the GRANTORS' chain of title to said real estate.

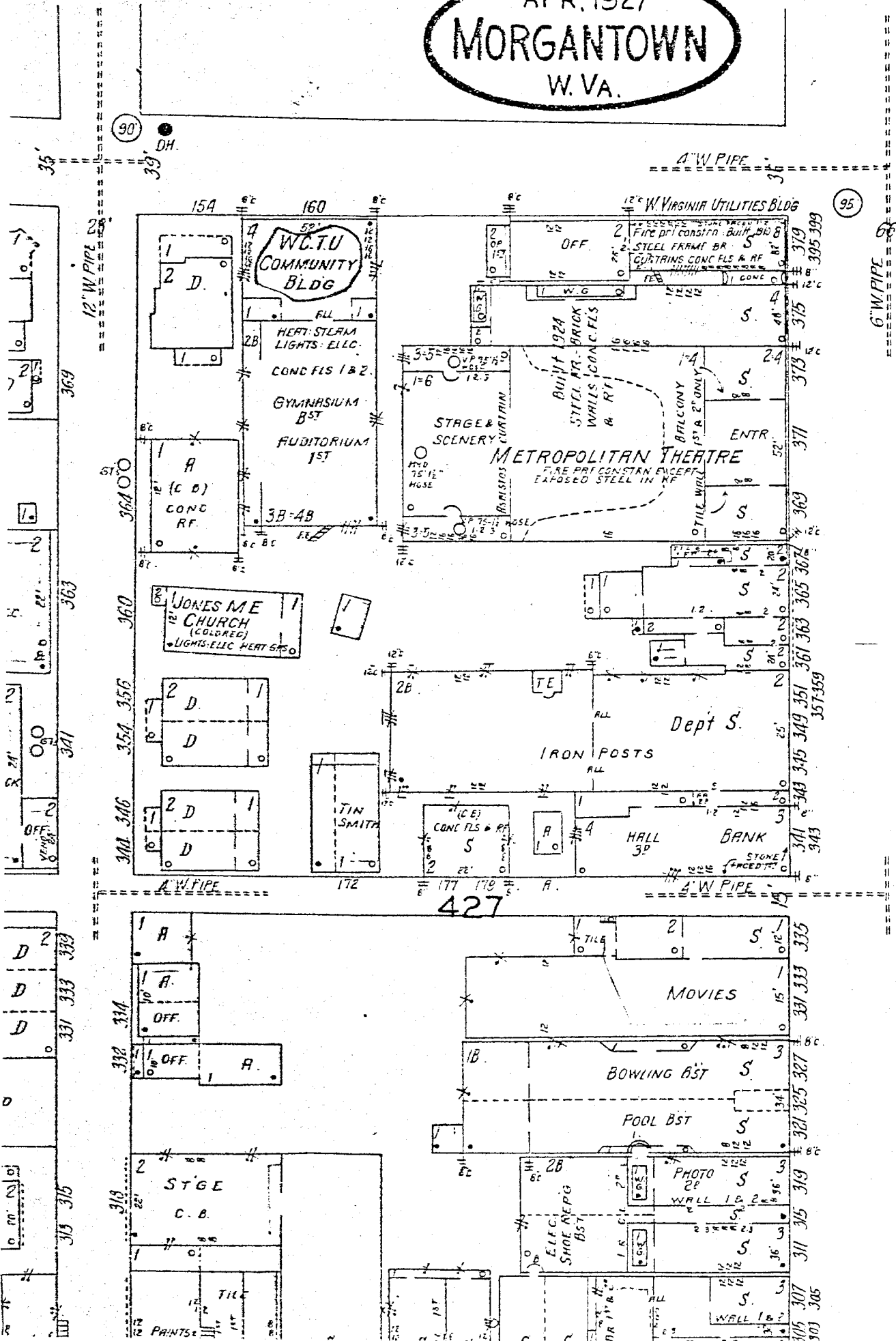
The property hereinabove described and conveyed is entered upon the Land Books of Monongalia County, Third Ward, City of Morgantown, West Virginia for the tax year 1984, as follows:

WCTU Women
Map -, Parcel -
Pt. Lot Fayette Community House

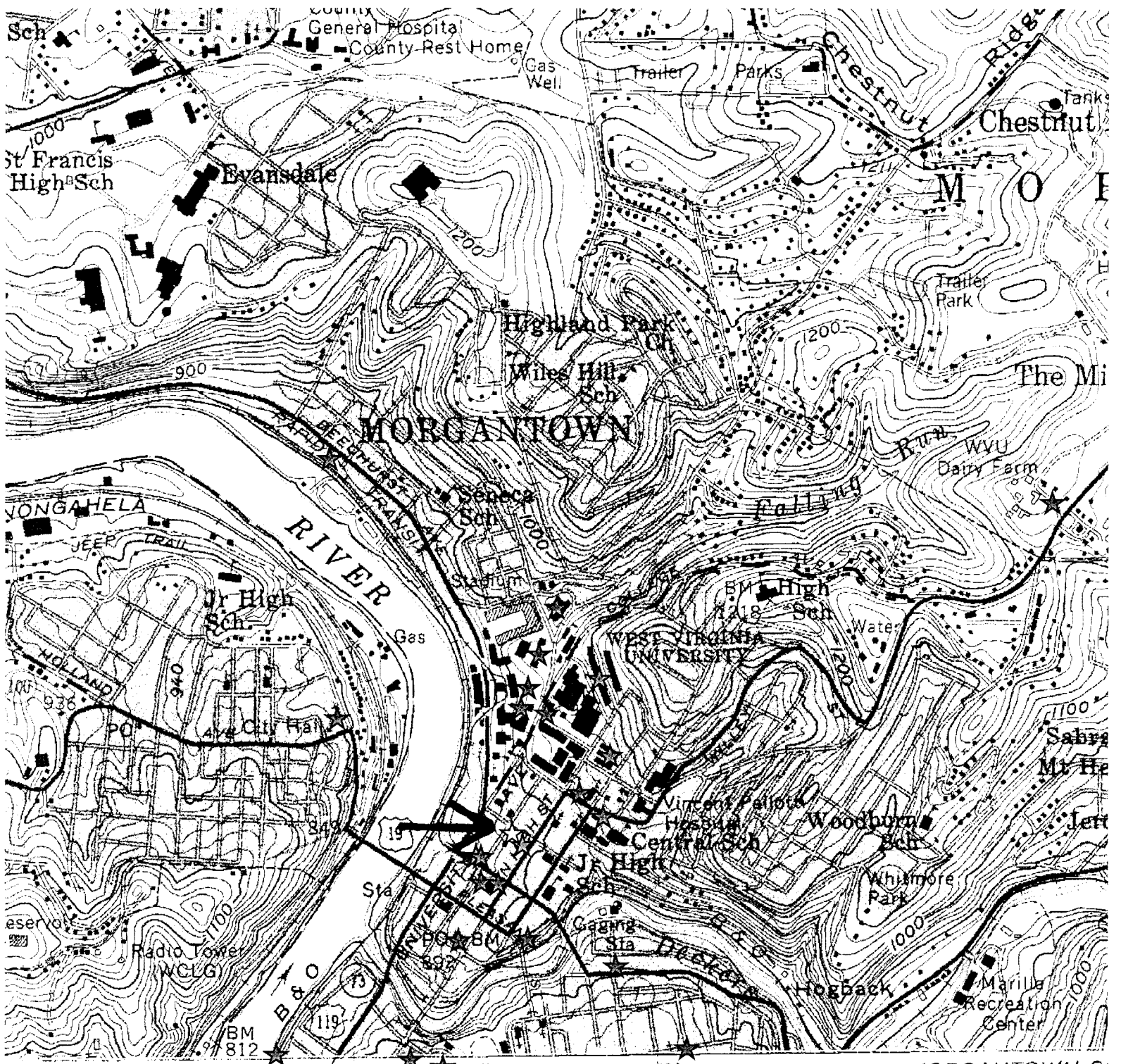
WCTU Women
Map 26A, Parcel 93
Pt. Lot Fayette Street
(Community House)

APR. 1927 MORGANTOWN W. VA.

4



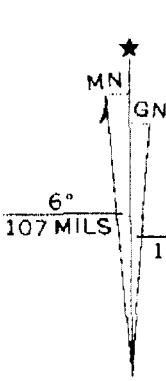
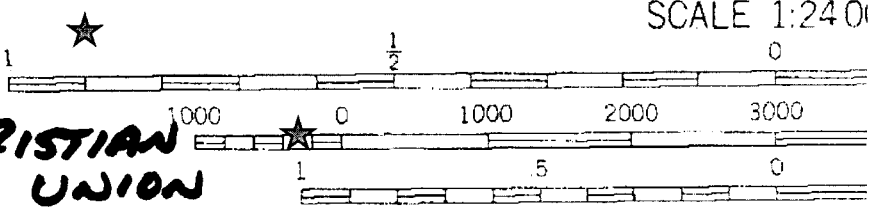
3



RAFTON (JUNC. U.S. 50) 26 MI

(MORGANTOWN S) 5063 III SW

SCALE 1:2400



**WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN
TEMPERANCE UNION
COMMUNITY BUILDING**

CONTOUR INTERVAL
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL

UTM GRID AND 1976 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET