NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

1. NAME

COMMON:
Carnifex Ferry State Park

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Carnifex Ferry Battlefield

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
About 2 miles south of Kesslers Cross Lanes off State Route #129

CITY OR TOWN:
Kesslers Cross Lanes

STATE:
West Virginia

CODE:
54

COUNTY:
Nicholas

CODE:
067

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)

☐ District
☐ Building
☐ Site
☐ Structure
☐ Object

☐ Public
☐ Private
☐ Both

OWNERSHIP

Public Acquisition:
☐ In Process
☐ Being Considered

STATUS

☐ Occupied
☐ Unoccupied
☐ Preservation work in progress

ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC

☐ Yes:
☐ Restricted
☐ Unrestricted
☐ No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Agricultural
☐ Government
☐ Educational
☐ Military
☐ Entertainmen
☐ Park

☐ Transportation
☐ Comments

☐ Industrial
☐ Private Residence
☐ Religious

☐ Museum
☐ Scientific

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
State of West Virginia

STREET AND NUMBER:
1800 Washington Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Charleston

STATE:
West Virginia

54

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Nicholas County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Summersville

STATE:
West Virginia

54

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:

☐ Federal
☐ State
☐ County
☐ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

CODE:

ENTRY DATE:

FOR NPS USE ONLY

REPUBLIC OF THE UNITED STATES

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

STATE:
West Virginia

COUNTY:
Nicholas

ENTRY DATE:

FOR NPS USE ONLY
Carnifex Ferry Battlefield consists of more than 150 acres of farmland and wooded area north of the confluence of Meadow and Gauley rivers in Nicholas County, West Virginia. During the battle of September 1861, Confederate and Union forces were camped about the entirety of what is now the park, the former to the south and latter to the north of the grounds. Near the present entrance to the battlefield are evidences of trenches and the road leading to the ferry over which Confederate General John B. Floyd retreated. No less than 150 rifle pits are plainly visible to the left of the entrance in a wooded area.

One of the striking aspects of physical appearance is the abundance of native shrubbery, including rhododendron, little laurel, mountain laurel, service, wild plum, wild crabapple, holly, hemlock, white pine and various hardwoods. The view of the Gauley River from the site of General Floyd's commissary is of rugged cliffs creating a great gorge.

Since 1950 the open farmland has been developed for tourists. A house was erected for the park superintendent, and the old, battle-scarred Patterson house was restored for use as a museum of Civil War relics. This building stood between Union and Confederate lines and was struck by numerous stray shots; after the final engagement it was used as a Federal hospital. Little changed since the time of its Yankee occupation, the farm house is today a white, two-story building with thatched gabled roof, shiplap wooden siding, a porch with sloping thatched roof to the front and a lean-to addition to the rear.
### 8. SIGNIFICANCE

**PERIOD** (Check One or More as Appropriate)
- [ ] Pre-Columbian
- [X] 19th Century
- [ ] 16th Century
- [ ] 18th Century
- [ ] 20th Century

**SPECIFIC DATE(S)! (If Applicable and Known)**
August–September 1861

**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE** (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- [ ] Aboriginal
- [ ] Prehistoric
- [ ] Historic
- [ ] Agriculture
- [ ] Architecture
- [ ] Art
- [ ] Commerce
- [ ] Communications
- [X] Conservation
- [ ] Education
- [ ] Engineering
- [ ] Industry
- [ ] Invention
- [ ] Landscape
- [ ] Architecture
- [ ] Literature
- [ ] Military
- [ ] Music
- [ ] Political
- [ ] Religion/Philosophy
- [ ] Science
- [ ] Sculpture
- [ ] Social/Humanitarian
- [ ] Theater
- [ ] Transportation
- [ ] Urban Planning
- [ ] Other (Specify)

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

As a result of the Battle of Carnifex Ferry, the threat of Confederate General John B. Floyd to the Union positions in the Kanawha Valley was forever diminished. Of still greater importance was the fact that failure of his campaign at the Ferry freed a large part of the Valley to participate in West Virginia's statehood movement through a referendum, scheduled for October 24, 1861, on the question of the division of Virginia.

In August 1861, Confederate troops moved into the Valley; they were commanded by General John B. Floyd, the controversial Secretary of War in President Buchanan's Cabinet and former governor of Virginia. As soon as Union General George B. McClellan learned of Floyd's advance, he sent his subordinate, Brigadier General William S. Rosecrans, into the area to prevent Confederate domination. Rosecrans then established a defensive perimeter from Gauley Bridge to Cheat Mountain, placing the southernmost section under the command of Brigadier General J.D. Cox. Even though this and other precautions were taken, Southern forces succeeded in crossing the Gauley River barrier at Carnifex Ferry and defeating Union troops under Colonel E. B. Tyler at Cross Lanes (now Kesslers Cross Lanes) to the north. Then they fortified at Camp Gauley and waited Northern retaliation.

Floyd did not have to wait long, for as soon as Rosecrans learned of the Confederate menace he departed from his headquarters at Clarksburg and headed for Carnifex Ferry, gathering about 7,000 troops on the way. When news came of this advancement, Floyd asked for reinforcements, but General Henry A. Wise, another ex-governor of Virginia, was jealous of Floyd's authority and used his own discretion in sending what proved to be too small a number to strengthen Floyd's troops sufficiently.

At Carnifex Ferry on September 10, 1861, Rosecrans ordered Brigadier General Henry W. Benham to reconnoiter the Confederate line. Floyd's troops engaged Benham's party in the afternoon and a battle ensued. By midnight Floyd realized his opponent's superior strength and withdrew his command from the Ferry. His escape was a remarkable feat considering the odds he faced at Camp Gauley and the narrow roads over which he was forced to retreat. This withdrawal, however, was a shattering blow to Confederates in the Valley and took pressure off residents participation in the coming referendum.
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES
Shaffer, Dallas B. "The Battle at Carnifex Ferry." Charleston, W.Va.: West Virginia Dept. of Natural Resources, Division of Parks & Recreation, n.d. (Pamphlet)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>38° 11. 56.7'</td>
<td>80° 56. 44.7'</td>
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APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 156.37 Acres

11. FORM PREPARED BY
NAME AND TITLE: Ted McGee, Field Agent
ORGANIZATION West Virginia Antiquities Commission
STREET AND NUMBER: Old Mountainlair, West Virginia University
CITY OR TOWN: Morgantown

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION
As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

<table>
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<th>Local</th>
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Name: Leonard M. Davis
Title: State Historic Preservation Officer
Date: February 22, 1974

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**PROPERTY MAP FORM**

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

1. **NAME**

   COMMON: Carnifex Ferry State Park
   
   AND/OR HISTORIC: Carnifex Ferry Battlefield

2. **LOCATION**

   STREET AND NUMBER:

   CITY OR TOWN: Kessler's Cross Lanes

3. **MAP REFERENCE**

   SOURCE: U.S. Geological Survey
   
   SCALE: 1:24000
   
   DATE: 1969

4. **REQUIREMENTS**

   TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS:
   
   1. Property boundaries where required.
   2. North arrow.
   3. Latitude and longitude reference.

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**SEE INSTRUCTIONS**

**STATE**

West Virginia

**COUNTY**

Nicholas

**FOR NPS USE ONLY**

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

**CODE**

54

**COUNTY CODE**

Nicholas

067