United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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

1. Name

historic Jackson Memorial Fountain

and or common

2. Location

Corner of Park Avenue &
street & number Parkersburg City Park, 17th Street
not for publication

city, town Parkersburg
vicinity of

state West Virginia code 54 county Wood code 107

3. Classification

Category
-- district
-- building(s)
-- structure
-- site
site object

Ownership
X public
private
both

Public Acquisition
N/A
in process
being considered

N/A

Status
occupied
unoccupied
work in progress

Accessible
yes: restricted
X yes: unrestricted
no

Present Use
agriculture
commercial
educational
entertainment
government
industrial
military

transportation
other:
Public Park

ornament

4. Owner of Property

name City of Parkersburg
street & number #One Government Square

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Wood County Courthouse

city, town Parkersburg

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title City Park Reconnaissance Survey
has this property been determined eligible? yes X no

date Winter 1984 (January)

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Unit, The Cultural Center

city, town Charleston

For NPS use only
received date entered
7. Description

Condition
excellent

X good

fair

X deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

Check one
unaltered

X altered

Check one
original site

moved

date

N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

ORIGINAL PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Jackson Memorial Fountain is located at the entrance of Parkersburg City Park on 17th Street. When it was first installed, the original fountain had three tiers. The upper tier (basin and bowl) was the smallest of the three tiers. It had a diameter of about eight (8) feet. It was this tier that the cast iron statue of Parkersburg's Lady of the Lake was mounted. The second tier or basin which had a diameter of 13 feet held the pedestal on which the upper basin stood. The lowest bowl, which had a diameter of 30 feet, held the pedestal on which the second tier stood. An additional function of this basin was to serve as the foundation for the entire fountain. Beneath it was placed all the necessary plumbings.

The distinctive decorative pattern of the fountain was typical of cast iron fountains manufactured during the Victorian period of American garden design. The basins and pedestals were elaborately sculpted and decorated. The edges of the two upper bowls were intricately carved with curling vines and a detailed winged head of a man. Water spilled out of the mouth of these heads. Of the two pedestals, the lower one was more ornate. Curling sculptures embellished the upper portion of the pedestal up to the point where it connected to the bottom of the upper basin. Unlike the upper pedestal which was rounded in shape, the lower pedestal was hexagonal in shape. On each of two sides of the hexagonal base of this pedestal were two concrete sculpted lions. Water spilled from the mouths of these lions. The lowest basin was symmetrically decorated with twelve (12) classic vases.

Another interesting feature of the fountain was the placement of two sculpted archers at the southwestern corner of the park. These archers stand on the upper level of two concrete staircases and served as the main gateway to the fountain. As is typical of Victorian garden/park ornaments, the Jackson Memorial Fountain is made of cast iron metal with the exception of the lion ornaments. Originally, the fountain was about thirty (30) feet in height. With the top basin off, the fountain is now only approximately 20 feet high.

PRESENT PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

As it stands today, the Jackson Memorial Fountain has only two tiers. Because of aging the uppermost basin or tier was removed and the statue now stands on the second tier. The two lions sitting on the base of the lower pedestal have also been replaced by similar structures. The twelve vases around the lower basin are no longer the original bases. Not only that, four of the twelve are missing as are the two arches leading to the fountain.
Despite alterations that have reduced the dimensions of the cast iron fountain, the object remains much as it appeared in the early 20th century. It remains the largest and most significant known Victorian cast iron object of ornamental design in West Virginia.

Historically, the Jackson Memorial Fountain has a close association with Parkersburg's most prominent nineteenth century family - that of General John Jay Jackson. General John Jay Jackson was considered one of the City's most prominent citizens between 1800 and the out-break of the Civil War, because he was the City's only resident to serve on the staff of the famous Andrew Jackson. Moreover, he was a leader in Virginia's secession from the Union in 1861. Lastly, he was the father of three famous sons, they were: Federal Judge John Jay Jackson Jr.; Governor Jacob Beeson Jackson; and Circuit Judge and Congressman James Monroe Jackson. It was his grandson, James Monroe Jackson, Jr., who bequeathed the $5,000 for the purchase of the fountain. The executor of his estate, William Willard Jackson, purchased the fountain in New York City, while on his honeymoon. At this time, New York was one of the major sources of Victorian fountains.

Boundary Justification

The subject is located in an oval that forms the setting for Jackson Memorial Fountain at the point of convergence of Park Avenue and 17th Street. The fountain possesses its own distinct environment that is apart from the remainder of the city Park. While the plan of the Park has survived, numerous new structures, athletic fields, etc. have been built through the years that obscure the original landscape design. The fountain, therefore, possesses distinction as an impressive surviving feature of a prominent late 19th century public facility, but importantly also as an object of artistic value unique in West Virginia.
COMMUNITY PLANNING - The Jackson Memorial Fountain is a symbol of a commitment to making the City more livable. This phenomenon manifested itself in America near the end of the nineteenth century at the time the fountain was erected. Following the construction of the Artificial City at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, American cities began to emphasize beauty, comfort and convenience in their plans. It was this reason that the City Park was purchased and developed and eventually, why the fountain was installed.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE - From the mid 19th century until World War I, mass produced cast iron supplied decorative beauty to the home and lawn. Cast iron decorations such as the Jackson Memorial Fountain were unusually decorative creations that portrayed in vivid fashion the Victorian Period of Garden Design. Today's remaining cast-iron fountains and decorative objects are considered valuable because there are so few remaining works of art in cast iron. Most of the fine examples of this art have been discarded or sold as scrap iron. As such, the remaining ones are considered priceless works of art.

The fountain remains a focal point at the entrance to Parkersburg's 55-acre City Park. While the landscaping features that once distinguished the park no longer survive in their original condition, the fountain remains as a tangible reminder of the Victorian urban ideal represented in garden design and late 19th century landscaping features. The object's prominent siting at the convergence of two major city streets is another factor setting it apart as an object of landmark quality in Parkersburg.

LOCAL HISTORY - Historically, the Jackson Memorial Fountain has a close association with Parkersburg's most prominent nineteenth century family - that of General John Jay Jackson. General John Jay Jackson was considered one of the City's most prominent citizens between 1800 and the out-break of the Civil War, because he was the City's only resident to serve on the staff of the famous Andrew Jackson. Moreover, he was a leader in Virginia's secession from the Union in 1861. Lastly, he was the father of three famous sons, they were: Federal Judge John Jay Jackson Jr.; Governor Jacob Beeson Jackson; and Circuit Judge and Congressman James Monroe Jackson. It was his grandson, James Monroe Jackson, Jr., who bequeathed the $5,000 for the purchase of the fountain. The executor of his estate, William Willard Jackson, purchased the fountain in New York City, while on his honeymoon. As this time, New York was one of the major sources of Victorian fountains.
9. Major Bibliographical References


(see continuation sheet #9 p. 2)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property: 3.5 acres

Quadrangle name: Parkersburg, WV

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

UTM References

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Verbal boundary description and justification:
The fountain is located at the point of convergence of 17th Street at the South and Park Avenue at the West. The fountain is centered in an oval that is bounded to the northwest by the east edge of Park Avenue at the point immediately opposite the

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

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11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Nimfa H. Simpson, Senior Planner

Organization: Parkersburg Development Dept.

Date: January 13, 1984

Street & number: 1 Government Square

Telephone: 304/424-8558

City or town: Parkersburg

State: West Virginia 26101

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national

X state

local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-269), 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

[Signature]

Date: June 29, 1984

For NPS use only

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

Date:

Register of the National Register

[Signature]

Date:

Register of the National Register
Major Bibliographical References


Tiano, Toni, The History of the City Park, unpublished report; May 1980, Parkersburg Development Department, pp. 4-5.
northeast corner of 18th Street, proceeding 150 feet south along the eastern edge of Park Avenue and around the corner to a point of convergence with 17th Street, thence 200 feet along the north edge of 17th Street, thence in a straight line due north to a point of convergence with the eastern-most apex of the Jackson Fountain oval; thence 175 feet in a straight line east to the point of origin with 12th Street and Park Avenue (see sketch map).