

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Chafin House

other name/site number: Women's Club of Logan Library

2. Location

street & number: 581 Main Street

not for publication:       

city/town: Logan

vicinity:       

state: W. Va. code: WV county: Logan code: 045 zip code: 25601

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☒ nationally        statewide        locally. (       See continuation sheet.)

William C. Laman  
Signature of Certifying Official

2.4.94  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

In my opinion, the property        meets        does not meet the National Register criteria. (       See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of Certifying Official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of Keeper      Date  
of Action

       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):

Chafin House  
Name of Property

Logan County, WV  
County and State

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5. Classification

=====

Ownership of Property:

(Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

☒ building(s)      ☐ object  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	TOTAL

Name of related multiple property listing N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

=====

6. Function or Use

=====

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: Library

SOCIAL: Clubhouse

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification:

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Shingle Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation STONE

Walls BRICK - 1st story

WOOD SHINGLES

Roof ASPHALT SHINGLES

Other BRICK - chimney

WOOD - trim

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Chafin House  
Name of Property

Logan County, WV  
County and State

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☒ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

**Property is:**

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

MILITARY

SOCIAL HISTORY - Labor History

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1920-1924

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Chafin House  
Name of Property

Logan County, WV  
County and State

**Significant Dates**

1920 - Don Chafin elected for 2nd term as sheriff  
1921 - Battle of Blair Mountain

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Don Chafin

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Frank Hurst, builder

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Chafin House  
Name of Property

Logan County, WV  
County and State

=====

10. Geographical Data

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Acreeage of Property: less than one (1) acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>17</u>	<u>413240</u>	<u>4188820</u>	2	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
3	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	4	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
<u>      </u> see continuation sheet							

Verbal Boundary Description  
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification  
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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11. Form Prepared By

=====

Name/Title: Carl F. Agsten, Jr., Architectural Historian

Organization: WV Div. of Culture & History      Date: January 10, 1994

Street & Number: Cultural Center      Telephone: (304) 558-0220

City or Town: Charleston      State: WV ZIP: 25305

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Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items  
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Chafin House  
Name of Property

Logan County, WV  
County and State

=====  
Property Owner  
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(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

Name: Women's Club of Logan Library Corporation

Street & Number: 581 Main Street Telephone: (304) 752-6508

City or Town: Logan State: WV Zip: 25601  
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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Page 1

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Chafin House  
Logan County, WV

Description

The Chafin House is located on the edge of downtown Logan, bordered on three sides by city streets. The lot is elevated three to four feet above the sidewalks, and bordered by a wall of cut stone with a concrete cap and steel pipe handrail. The lawn is generous enough to be used on occasion for outdoor socials, and is complemented by mature dogwoods, rhododendrons and evergreen trees. The house faces Main Street, which parallels the Guyandotte River along the south edge of Logan. The owners of this residence historically owned a lot directly across Main Street, which was the bank of the Guyandotte, making the residence in effect a riverside property. (The lot south of Main Street is now part of the city's floodwall.)

The house was built around 1900, but research of deed and tax records have not revealed its exact construction date. Local residents believe that Frank Hurst, Don Chafin's brother-in-law, was the builder. According to George Swain, Hurst owned a mercantile firm on Island Creek, and Don Chafin worked there with his brother-in-law following his return from college studies in Parkersburg (Swain, The Incomparable Don Chafin).

Dr. S.A. Draper, a prominent physician in Logan, was an early resident of this house. But in the late 1910s Hurst himself resided there. Deeds show that in 1920 Don Chafin bought the property from Frank Hurst for the sum of \$27,500.

The house's appearance has changed little since its original construction. It is a two-story structure on a generous raised foundation of rock-faced ashlar. The foundation's height accommodates a basement of full height, accessible by stairs from inside and outside. The first-story walls are constructed of brick masonry, painted white. Above, the second story is sheathed with wood shingles, which are also painted white. There appear to have been many coats of paint applied to the exterior walls of the house over the years, perhaps to hide the pervasive effects of coal dust.

The house has a cross-gabled roof with a gambrel front and large dormers on the east and west sides, creating a roofline with complexity and interest. A single stone chimney rises behind the intersection of the gables. Large bay windows are centered below the projecting ends of the gabled wings. The windows of the house are original throughout, most with their original rolled-glass panes. The majority of windows are double-hung, with a twelve-over-twelve or twelve-over-one pattern.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Page 2

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Chafin House  
Logan County, WV

Description (continued)

The style of the house is typical of the area and the time in that it is a transition between the Victorian period and the simpler, functional houses of mining towns in the early twentieth century. The upper window in the front gable, with its shingled walls curving into the recessed window, is style-defining as a Shingle style element. The stone foundation and porch walls, along with the classical columns of the large wrapping porch, are not uncommon in Shingle houses, nor is the gambrel roof and cross-gabled roofline. The arrangement of the gabled end projecting over bay windows is characteristic of the Shingle style as well.

The house was deeded to the Women's Club of Logan in 1946, and since that time has served as Logan's public library and as a meeting place for civic groups. The site and the exterior appearance are very little changed from the time of Chafin's residence, and therefore retain a commendable level of integrity under the stewardship of the Women's Club. To serve the house's present functions, a library occupies the first story, and a meeting hall for the Women's Club is on the second. For these uses, at least one wall has been removed on each floor, and structural beams have replaced the walls to carry the load. Because of this, the original arrangement of rooms is now vague but discernible upon close examination.

The interior alterations are not irreversible, however. In some areas the oak floors have been covered with carpet, and a drop ceiling has been installed in the meeting room. Again, these alterations could be easily removed and the original materials restored. The house is in excellent conditional structurally. The original floors and walls are intact, as are the impressive crown mouldings which illustrate the house's late-Victorian origins.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 1

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Chafin House  
Logan County, WV

Statement of Significance

The Chafin House is historically significant for its association with Sheriff Don Chafin, the infamous "Czar of Logan" and the leader of defending forces in the Battle of Blair Mountain (1921). The nominated property served as Chafin's residence from 1920, when he began his second term as Logan's sheriff, until he moved to Huntington in 1933. It is therefore the primary building associated with Don Chafin in the context of his significant role in the Battle of Blair Mountain. The period of significance for the building is 1920-24, which is the duration of Chafin's second term as sheriff of Logan County.

Historical background:

Don Chafin was born on Marrowbone Creek in Logan County on June 26, 1887. He was one of eleven children born to Francis Marion Chafin and Esther Brewer Chafin. His father, Francis, served as sheriff of Logan County from 1894 to 1898, thereby setting the political stage for his son in later years. After attending courses at Marshall College and at the Mountain State Business College in Parkersburg, Don Chafin returned to Logan and successfully ran as the Democratic candidate for the office of Assessor in 1908.

Four years later he took on the sheriff's race and won. At that time he became the undisputed force in Logan's Democratic party, which has traditionally been the dominant party in Logan County. State law prevented him from running a second consecutive term as sheriff, so in 1916 Chafin succeeded at putting Frank Hurst, his friend and brother-in-law, into the sheriff's position, while Chafin himself served as county clerk. In 1920 Chafin again won the office of sheriff by overwhelming majority, thereby continuing his reign of Logan County for four more years.

Chafin's powerful hold on the politics and law enforcement of Logan coincided with a period of phenomenal change and growth for the area. The Coal industry came late to Logan County; the rush for coal leases did not occur until the 1890s, and the Guyandotte Valley Railroad Company's train took until 1904 to complete. But by 1912 the coal scene was booming. Emigrant workers were recruited in large numbers to satisfy the labor requirements. To exercise control over the ethnically diverse and rapidly organizing miners, coal operators in other counties had relied heavily on the services of Baldwin-Felts mine guards, but in Logan County they turned to the services of Don Chafin and his army of deputies. Around 1919 the Logan County Coal Operators' Association was paying \$32,700 annually to Don Chafin for police protection--this during his official tenure as clerk, not sheriff.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 2

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Chafin House  
Logan County, WV

Statement of Significance (continued)

Under the guise of maintaining law and order, Chafin's mandate was to immunize the Logan coal field from the organizing efforts of the United Mine Workers of America. Chafin stationed his force of over 50 deputies at the mine sites and on trains coming in and out of Logan. Invested with such power, Don Chafin ruled Logan as a "mountain feudal lord to whom every coal operator in the county paid tribute, and of whom every miner within its borders stood in abject fear." (Lee, Bloodletting in Appalachia, p. 87) Facts as well as rumors of Chafin's brutal tactics spread throughout the coal fields of West Virginia.

To the U.M.W.A. in the late 1910s, the coal fields of southern West Virginia were vital interests. They were the fastest growing coal fields by far, and the coal operators spared no expense in keeping the unions out. Chafin's setup was most onerous to the U.M.W.A. because the mine guards were not only as ruthless as the Baldwin-Felts agents, but carried added authority as public law enforcement. Reporting on the situation in Logan County in a story called "Private Ownership of Public Officials" in 1920, Arthur Gleason wrote that "The fight in Mingo [The Matewan Massacre] is mild compared with that about to explode in Logan . . . . This section of the state is now a powder mine, ripe for blowing up." He reported that Mother Jones, the celebrated union spokeswoman, told him "I shall not die till Logan County is organized" (Corbin, The West Virginia Mine Wars, pp. 96-101).

When thousands of organized miners gathered in Marmet, near Charleston, in August 1921, they were armed and prepared to liberate the miners of the southern coal fields by force. Don Chafin had prepared for this invasion since a similar armed march had been attempted but aborted in 1919. This time he boldly stated that "No armed mob will cross Logan County." Chafin armed a force of special constables and called for reinforcements from neighboring counties. His deputies coerced local citizens and miners into the ranks of the defending force, while Chafin set up the defenders' headquarters at the Aracoma Hotel. The miners heard of Chafin's preparations and this inflamed their desires to fight. Their rallying cry was "We'll hang Don Chafin from a sour apple tree!", which they sang out to the tune of "John Brown's Body."

Don Chafin positioned his ranks at strategic positions along the twin peaks of Blair Mountain, armed with machine guns and other weaponry, as the armed miners, around 7,000 in number, marched south from Lens Creek near Marmet. Funded by wealthy coal operators, Chafin had three aircraft at his disposal as well, which he used for surveillance and later to drop makeshift bombs on the gathering miners.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 3

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Chafin House  
Logan County, WV

Statement of Significance (continued)

The clash was nearly avoided when U.M.W.A. District 17 President Frank Keeney, under threats of treason charges from Governor Morgan and Brigadier General Harry H. Bandholz, made an impassioned speech at the ballpark in Madison. The miners appeared to disband, but many remained in the area to see what might develop.

Many miners blamed Don Chafin and the West Virginia State Troopers for resparking the conflict when, on the following day, they raided miners' camps at Beech Creek with about 70 troopers and 200 men from Chafin's force, for the purpose of making arrests. A gun battle broke out, several men and reportedly one woman were killed, and word spread through the miners' ranks that "The thugs are coming!" Armed miners quickly reassembled and proceeded with plans to break through to Logan.

Don Chafin's defending forces successfully held the ridges of Blair Mountain, pinning the larger attacking forces down with machine gun fire, though the miners nearly broke through at Crooked Creek Gap. They held them for four days until Federal Troops arrived to enforce President Harding's orders for the miners to disarm themselves and return home. No clashes occurred between Federal forces and the miners, who quickly demobilized under the new threat, thus ending the conflict.

Don Chafin became a hero to some, a notorious villain to others for his key role in the Battle of Blair Mountain. As a result of his reputation for stopping the unions in their greatest effort, he was able to charge much larger fees to the coal operators for his guarantee of protection from the unions. During this period he amassed a great deal of personal wealth. His reign ended abruptly late in 1924 when he was charged and convicted for his role as silent partner with Tennis Hatfield, who illegally sold liquor at his establishment in Omar, the Blue Goose. Chafin served 10 months of his 2-year sentence before returning to Logan, still a wealthy and powerful man in the county. In 1933 he moved to Huntington, where he resided until his death on August 9, 1954.

Historical contexts and significance:

The story of the Battle of Blair Mountain has been well documented in recent histories (in particular, Thunder in the Mountains by Lon Savage). From the viewpoint of locations and resources, "The Battle of Blair Mountain: Cultural Resource Survey and Recording Project," published by the Institute for the History of Technology and Industrial Archaeology in 1992, thoroughly outlines the battle's details, resources, and significance.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 4

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Chafin House  
Logan County, WV

Statement of Significance (continued)

The Battle of Blair Mountain can be considered a subcontext of several areas of historical significance. In the Blair Mountain survey of 1992, the authors identified contexts on both national and statewide levels. The battle was nationally significant in the area of military history as America's largest armed insurrection since the Civil War. Additionally, the battle was significant nationally and statewide in the area of labor history, marking the point of greatest frustration and desperation for members in the United Mine Workers of America. On statewide and local levels, the event was significant in political history, where state and local political forces joined to resist the miners' efforts. The Battle of Blair Mountain dominated local and state papers for its duration, and made headlines in Washington and New York as well.

Don Chafin's home is one of 18 resources identified and documented in the Blair Mountain survey. Most of the resources have been altered drastically or demolished. Of the resources, the Chafin House is the site primarily associated with the life and role of Don Chafin. Among Blair Mountain resources, it has the greatest level of integrity.

This resource is significant within the recently developed context of Coal Mining Heritage for Southern West Virginia. Planning for this context has been undertaken by both the West Virginia SHPO and the National Park Service from the late 1980s until the present (National Park Service, Coal Fields, Communities & Change). The Chafin House is centrally located geographically, and represents one of the most dramatic events within this coal heritage context.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 9 Page 1

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Chafin House  
Logan County, WV

Bibliography

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Reprinted: New York: Arno Press, 1969.

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Four Major Mine Wars and Other Thrilling Incidents of Its Coal Fields.  
Parsons, WV: McClain Printing Company, 1969.

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Detroit, Mich.: Harlo Press, 1976.

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Charleston, WV: Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, 1991.

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Logan's Dauntless and Indomitable Sheriff who Prevented the Invasion of  
Logan County on Two Occasions by Armed Miners from the Kanawha Coal  
Fields. Charleston, WV: Ace Enterprises, 1962.

Thurmond, Walter R. The Logan Coal Field of West Virginia. Parsons,  
WV: McClain Printing Company (for West Virginia University Library,  
Morgantown), 1964.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 9 Page 2

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Chafin House  
Logan County, WV

Bibliography: Survey & Planning

Dobson, Cindy, Stacy Sone and Kim Valente. "Coal Heritage Survey: Southern West Virginia Reconnaissance Study of Sites Important to an Understanding of Coal Mining History." Charleston, WV: West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office, 1991.

National Park Service, Division of Park & Resource Planning, Mid-Atlantic Regional Office. Coal Fields, Communities & Change - Status of Planning: Study of Coal Mining Heritage and Related Resources in Southern West Virginia. Philadelphia, 1991.

Peyton, Billy Joe, Michael E. Workman, Michael W. Caplinger, and Jeffrey A. Drobney. "The Battle of Blair Mountain (West Virginia): Cultural Resource Survey & Recording Project." Submitted to the West Virginia Humanities Council, Charleston, WV. Morgantown, WV: The Institute for the History of Technology and Industrial Archaeology, 1992.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 10 Page 1

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Chafin House  
Logan County, WV

Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the northwest corner of the intersection of Main Street and Walnut Street, the property extends 97.80 feet west to a point on the north line of Main Street, then 118.70 feet north to a point on the south line of Stratton Street, then east following the line of Stratton Street to a point at the southwest corner of the intersection of Stratton Street and Walnut Street, then returns 112.40 feet to the original point.

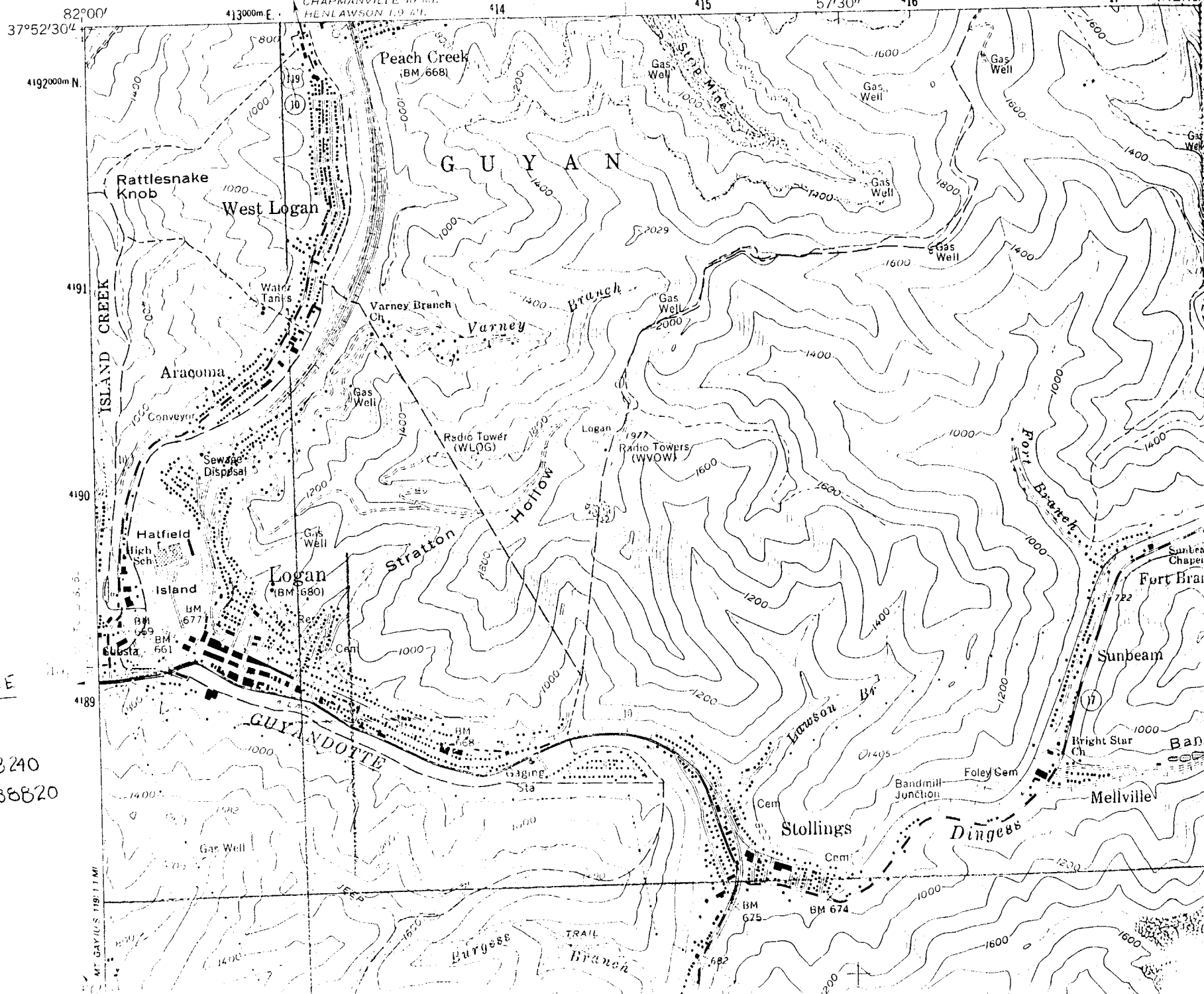
Verbal Boundary Justification

The property is the full extent of land historically associated with the nominated building.

NE  
ANVILLE

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA  
AND OTHER STATES  
46591  
(HENL)



CHAFIN HOUSE

UTM:

Zone 17

Easting 413240

Northing 4188820



