

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

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historic name:     Ford House    

other name/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Location

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street & number:     310 Ford Street    

city/town:     Morgantown     not for publication:     n/a      
vicinity: \_\_\_\_\_

state:     WV     county:     Monongalia     code:     061     zip code:     26505    

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property:     private      
Category of Property:     building    

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>    1    </u>	<u>    1    </u> buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
_____	_____ Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:     0    

Name of related multiple property listing:                     n/a

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4. State/Federal Agency Certification  
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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  X  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  X  meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. \_\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

*William G. [Signature]*

9/30/93

Signature of certifying official

Date

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

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5. National Park Service Certification  
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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 Keeper Date  
of Action

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6. Function or Use  
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Historic:  domestic, single dwelling  Sub: \_\_\_\_\_

Current :  domestic, single dwelling  Sub: \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Description
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Architectural Classification:

\_Gothic Revival\_

Other Description: \_\_\_\_\_ n/a

Materials: foundation sandstone\_ roof shingle
walls weatherboard\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance. \_X\_ See continuation sheet.

The Ford House is a Gothic Revival cottage style building built around 1870 in what was then South Morgantown (now First Ward). Although the house does not have all the bargeboard ordinarily associated with this style, it does have several significant features, including the steeply pitched gable roof with center gable, the gothic arched window in that center gable, and lattice work in lieu of bargeboard on the front porch. The interior of the house also retains a high degree of its original integrity in the front part of the house, upstairs and downstairs, and in the dining room, with original woodwork, flooring, and fireplaces in place.

The house was originally located on a ten-acre tract of land 1/2 mile south of Deckers Creek, then the southern boundary of Morgantown, and was oriented toward the Kingwood Pike (now Dorsey Avenue) instead of the town. The house now sits on three lots (numbers 3, 4, and 5 in the Riverview Plat) totalling less than an acre. The house is located on the third lot back from Dorsey Avenue (lot 3), and lots 4 and 5 form the front yard. It faces Oak Grove Cemetery across Dorsey Street with Ford Street on the northeast.

The outside of the 1 1/2-story house has not been significantly altered since it was built. The house has an L-shaped plan, with the front part of the house (hereafter called the horizontal part) parallel to Dorsey Street and the back section, hereafter called the vertical part, at right angles to it. There is a cut stone basement under the front, horizontal, part of the house but not under the vertical section, where there is a cut stone foundation.

Although it looks like the horizontal and vertical parts of the house may have been built in two sections, there is no break on the exterior siding. The earliest illustration of the plan of the house, found in the 1886 county atlas, shows the horizontal part of the house and a small vertical section, which may just be the dining room now; that would explain the placement of the dining room chimney on what is now an interior wall. However, if the kitchen was added later, the siding does not show that break.

The original siding, still on the house, was clapboard with endboards instead of the board and batten more often associated with Gothic Revival cottages. The horizontal section of the house has a gable shingle roof with a return on the gable that is flush with the wall and wide plain eaves. There seem to be some patches on the eaves that might indicate there had been brackets earlier, but there is no other evidence for this and no historic photographs. There is also a gable shingle

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roof with wide plain eaves on the vertical section of the house.

The southwest (front) facade faces Dorsey Avenue and has five vertical bays. The center bay is composed of a panelled door with 3-lite sidelights and a transom with 5 vertical lites flanked by hinged sidelights and a gothic arched window on the second story beneath a center gable on the gable roof. The other four bays, only on the first floor, are 4/4 double-hung windows with original shutters. The front porch has a flat roof, and there may have been a balustrade around the roof originally, but that was gone in 1979. The second-floor window provides access to the roof of the porch. The porch was rebuilt in the summer of 1979 but retains the original curved pieces under the railings and the original arches under the lattice work. While there is no bargeboard on the roof of the house, there is wood lattice work between the porch pillars. There are brick chimneys at either end of this section.

Inside this front section, there are two rooms and a center hall with stairway on the first floor and two rooms with center hall and alcove leading to the gable window on the second floor. As one enters the front door of the house, the room to the right is the parlor, while the room to the left is the library. The parlor has a wood fireplace with stone sill set into the floor and resting on the joists below. There are interior shutters, which are not original, on the front and back windows of this room. The panelled door to the hallway has a transom with 4 vertical lites. The original fluted woodwork surrounds the windows and door, and the original lath and horsehair and sand plaster is on the wall. Except for a few small patches, the tongue and groove flooring in this room is original. The patching was necessary near the entry hall because the house had deteriorated to the point where water was leaking from the roof of the center gable window down through the house to the floor.

The curved stairway to the second floor is on the library side of the hallway and is original to the house. Most of the flooring and trim wood here and throughout the house is poplar.

The library, to the left of the entry hall, has original built-in floor-to-ceiling cupboards flanking the fireplace. The original woodwork around these windows and hallway door is less ornate than that in the parlor, but there is an identical 4-lite transom over the hallway door. The interior shutters in this room are also new. The original plaster and lath is on these walls.

W.D. Guseman, the first owner of the house, built and patented the identical iron fireplaces in the library and dining room. Cast into the fireplace just under the mantel is "W.D. Guseman, April 1874." The patent may refer to a system of two knobs, one on either side of the arched opening to the fireplace, that connect to chains that operate the

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dampers to the fireplaces. The fireplaces also have stone sills that are set on the joists below the level of the floor. This fireplace was bricked in by 1979; this was rebricked when the house was restored so that the chimney flue could run up behind it to heat the second floor. The original surface on both fireplaces was japanned and nickel plated, but the fireplaces have been painted black and silver.

The vertical section of the house includes the dining room, kitchen, enclosed porch and pantry/laundry area. The oldest part of this section is the dining room, which adjoins the library. Here, the interior woodwork consists of plain wood surrounds for the windows and doors and a plain wood chairrail. The fireplace centered on the northeast wall matches the fireplace in the library, except that this one was never bricked in and retains its original grate and stone back; in 1980, the current owner removed the chimney for this fireplace to just below the roof. There is an original built-in cupboard to the left of the fireplace that backs onto a similar cupboard in the kitchen. This room also has the original plaster and lath walls. There is a double-hung 4/4 window and exterior door on the southwest wall of the dining room. A porch that was not original to this house was removed in 1980. On the northwest side of this room, there is a double-hung 4/4 window and a door to the enclosed porch. There is original clapboard siding on the outside of this wall, which now forms the interior wall of the enclosed porch.

The enclosed porch was built on the house before 1979. There are two windows on the outside wall that are 6-lite casement windows. These flank a panelled door with a 9-lite window and 4-lite transom. The exterior wall of the porch and the door have been rebuilt. The brick floor of the enclosed porch is new. At the southwest end of the porch, there is an entrance to the center hall of the horizontal part of the house. At the northeast end of the porch, there is a stairway to the back of the second floor; these steep steps were rebuilt in 1979-80.

In back of the dining room, there is a kitchen which has been heavily remodelled. There is an original cupboard and panelled door with transom on the southwest side. The original window on the northeast side was shortened to install the sink, but the wooden outside panel could be removed and the window restored. There are no interior shutters on the kitchen windows. The ceiling in the kitchen has been lowered. Northeast of the enclosed porch is a pantry with laundry room and commode. This had been a bathroom, but the area had suffered extensive damage from rot.

The second floor of the horizontal section includes two bedrooms and the center hallway. There are small square 6-lite windows flanking the chimneys in each room. These windows are hinged to open from the side. The ceilings of these rooms look like gambrel roofs, and the space between the ceiling and the roof of the house is storage space or empty

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space above and to the side.

Above the dining room, under the gable roof, is a windowless dressing room that is reached through a door from the bedroom. On the northwest side, there is storage space under the eaves. Above the enclosed porch is a small hallway with a door to the dressing room, a door on the southwest side into the storage space under the eaves of the horizontal section, and the stairway from the enclosed porch. Over the kitchen, there is a sewing room/office that has two 6-lite windows identical to those in the bedrooms on the northeast side. There is additional storage space under the eaves on the northwest side. Over the pantry, there is a bathroom with a skylight on the northeast slope of the roof.

The house fell into severe disrepair during the 1960s and 1970s, as Louise Ford could not keep it up. After Ms. Ford moved out of the house, vandals stripped it of hardware. The current owner, Dr. Joan Gibson, purchased the house in June 1979 and has restored it.

There was originally a well outside the porch entrance; it has been capped with a concrete lid but not filled in.

The only outbuilding is a 1-car wood frame garage with a gable roof, particle-board siding, one side door, and one window with shutters. The garage was built in 1980 and sits at the northeast corner of the property.

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8. Statement of Significance  
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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Local.

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : n/a

Areas of Significance: architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period(s) of Significance: ca. 1868-1870

Significant Dates : 1901 1902 \_\_\_\_\_

Years of Alterations: 1979-1980

Significant Person(s): n/a  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: n/a  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder: Not known  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

The Ford House is important for criteria C (architecture and design) because it is one of just two examples of Gothic Revival cottage architecture in Morgantown; the other is a house on Kingwood Street that is included in the South Park Historic District and which probably has fewer original features.<sup>1</sup> The Ford House has well-preserved and unaltered details of this style of architecture, including the steeply pitched roof, gothic arched window over the front porch, and sections of the front porch. The removal of a later porch, in 1980, took the house back to an appearance much closer to its original construction in ca. 1868-70, although a porch was added on the southeast side. There are so few remaining examples of this style in the immediate Morgantown area, and there is no record that there were more that have been destroyed, because this was a small community (South Morgantown had only 405 people by 1900) that did not begin to grow significantly until the 1890s, well after the Gothic Revival cottage style had faded from popularity. The house is not being nominated for historical significance because the history of neither Guseman nor the Ford family is well documented locally.

William D. Guseman, who owned a foundry near the house, bought a ten-acre tract of land in what was then South Morgantown in 1863 and had the house built later that decade. While there is no documentation of an

<sup>1</sup> Comparative information on the two houses comes from Morgantown historian Dolores Fleming, who is familiar with both houses and prepared the South Park National Register historic district nomination.

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actual construction date, Morgantown historian Dr. Earl L. Core informed the owner that the date was 1868-1870, which would have been rather late for this style of architecture. Two metal fireplaces, with a patent date of 1874 and the name "Guseman," were probably added shortly after the house was built. Nothing is known about Guseman's business, but he may have inherited a business simply referred to as W.A. Guseman & Co. in an 1883 county history; that company began in 1850.<sup>2</sup> The 1886 county atlas shows W.D. Guseman as the owner.

In 1896, the house was sold to Samuel McGara, a real estate agent, who divided the land into residential-sized lots in 1901, the same time that South Morgantown was incorporated into the City of Morgantown as First Ward. Morgantown's 1901 city directory simply lists McGara with the identification of "real estate" and no residence listed. This was a period of rapid growth in Morgantown's history, and ten acres of land that close to the city would have been an attractive real estate package.

John Wesley Ford purchased the house in 1902, and his family lived there until 1979. Throughout the time that the Fords lived here, the address was officially given as 419 Dorsey or, by 1925, 163 Dorsey. Although the Fords were not prominent, the house became known as the Ford House because the family lived there for such a long period of time. Ford, usually listed as Wesley in the city directories, was variously identified in city directories with no occupation (1906, 1909-10), a laborer (1914, 1915-16, 1925), a carpenter (1918-19), a miner (1920, 1922). Ford was listed with no occupation in 1929-30, but his wife Mary was a widow by 1935. She was no longer listed by 1941.

The Fords had two daughters, Louise and Lillie. Lillie first appeared in the city directories in 1914, when she was a clerk. By 1918-19, she was a milliner at the New York Millinery in downtown Morgantown. In 1922, she was a milliner for Mrs. Henry Spitz in Morgantown. By 1925, she was co-owner of the Bonnie Bonnet Shop in downtown Morgantown and co-owned the shop with her sister Louise in 1929-30, although Louise also worked as a clerk for the Morgantown Post newspaper. By 1941, Lillie was no longer listed with an occupation in the city directories, but she was not listed as retired until 1965; she was no longer listed by 1970. Louise, the younger sister, was a clerk by 1920, when she was first listed in the city directories. In addition to her stint as co-owner of her sister's shop, she worked as a phone operator, clerk, or bookkeeper for the Morgantown Post or the West Virginia Newspaper Publishing Co., which published the Morgantown Post and the Morgantown Dominion News. Louise was retired by 1970 and was last listed in the city directory in 1976.

Dr. Joan Gibson, the current owner, purchased the property in 1979 from

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<sup>2</sup> Samuel T. Wiley, History of Monongalia County, West Virginia (Kingwood, W.Va.: Preston Publishing Co., 1883), 583.



NPS Form 10-900-a  
1024-0018  
(8-86)

OMB Approval No.

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Louise Ford, who died in 1981.

The Ford House, then, has local significance in the architectural history of Morgantown and its immediate surrounding area as one of two examples of Gothic Revival cottage style architecture; that style reflected a rural lifestyle that was destroyed by the rapid growth of the city in the late 1890s and first few years of the twentieth century. Fortunately, because the house was under the ownership of one family for almost the first 80 years of the twentieth century, few changes were made and those that were made, like the addition of a porch to the back of the house, were easily reversible.

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9. Major Bibliographical References
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Interviews with Dr. Joan Gibson, owner, 20 April 1991; 9 July 1993.
Monongalia County Court Records (Deed Books 2 N.S., p. 611; 63, p. 312;
76, p. 22; 220, p. 214; 823, p. 660)
Morgantown City Directories, 1901-1979.
Callahan, James Morton. History of the Making of Morgantown.
Morgantown, W.Va.: Morgantown Publishing and Binding Co., 1926.
Lake, D.J. An Atlas of Marion and Monongalia Counties, West Virginia.
1886.
Wiley, Samuel T. History of Monongalia County, W.Va. Kingwood, W.Va.:
Preston Publishing Co., 1883.

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
x Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property: less than one

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

Table with 4 columns: A, B, C, D. Values include 17, 589040, 4386070 and blank lines.

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: n/a See continuation sheet.

Beginning at a point on Dorsey Avenue (formerly Maple Avenue), thence along Ford Street (formerly First Avenue) 242.9 feet, thence along lot numbered 2, 101.2 feet to a point in Goodwin Street (formerly Kingwood Avenue); thence along said Goodwin Street 223.2 feet to a point in said Dorsey Avenue; thence along said Dorsey Avenue 82 feet to a point in Ford Street, the place of beginning, being lots Nos. 3, 4, and 5 in Block B, as laid down and designated on the plat of the plan of lots of Riverview (see attached map).

Boundary Justification: n/a See continuation sheet.

Boundary includes lots currently associated with the house, as set forth in Deed Book 823/660.

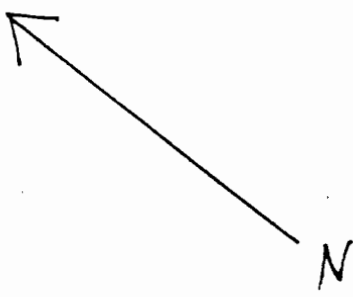
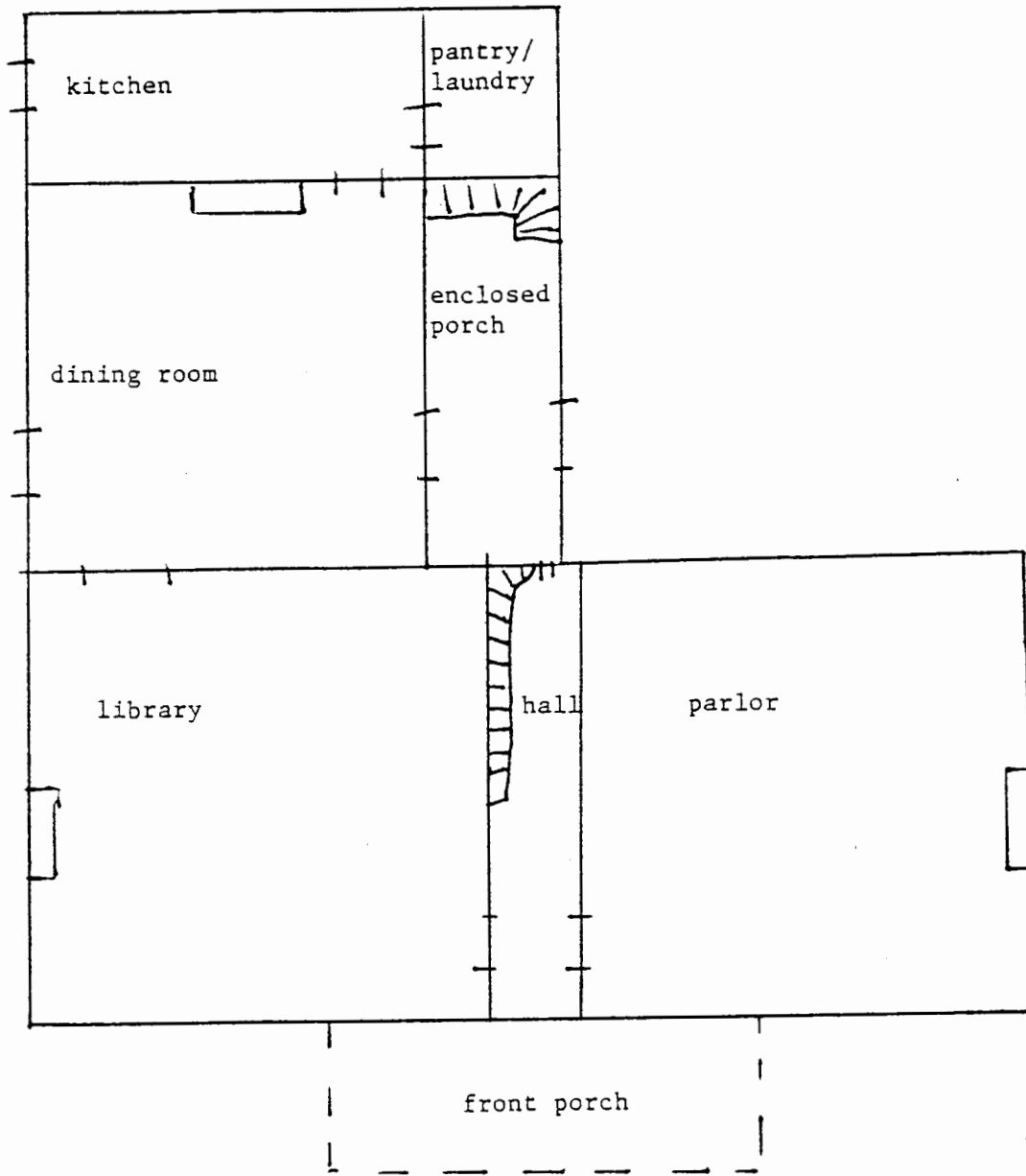
Ford House, Momongalia Co., WV

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11. Form Prepared By  
=====

Name/Title: Gillian Berman/student; and Barbara J. Howe  
Organization West Virginia Univ. History Department Date July 1993  
Street & Number P.O. Box 6303 Telephone 304-293-2421  
City or Town Morgantown State WV ZIP 26506

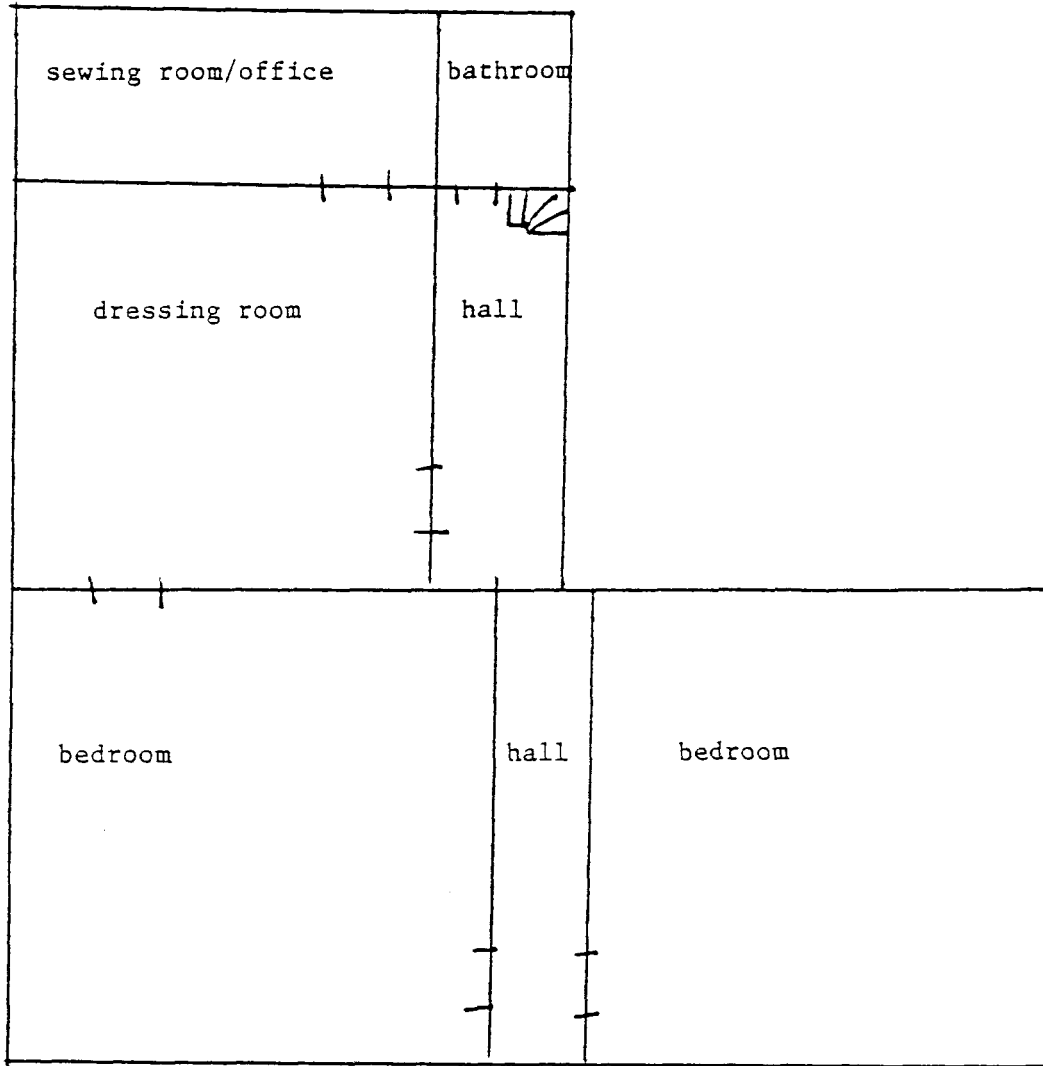
Ford House, Monongalia Co., WV

Floor Plan: Ford House - first floor



Ford House, Monongalia Co., WV

Floor Plan: Ford House - second floor

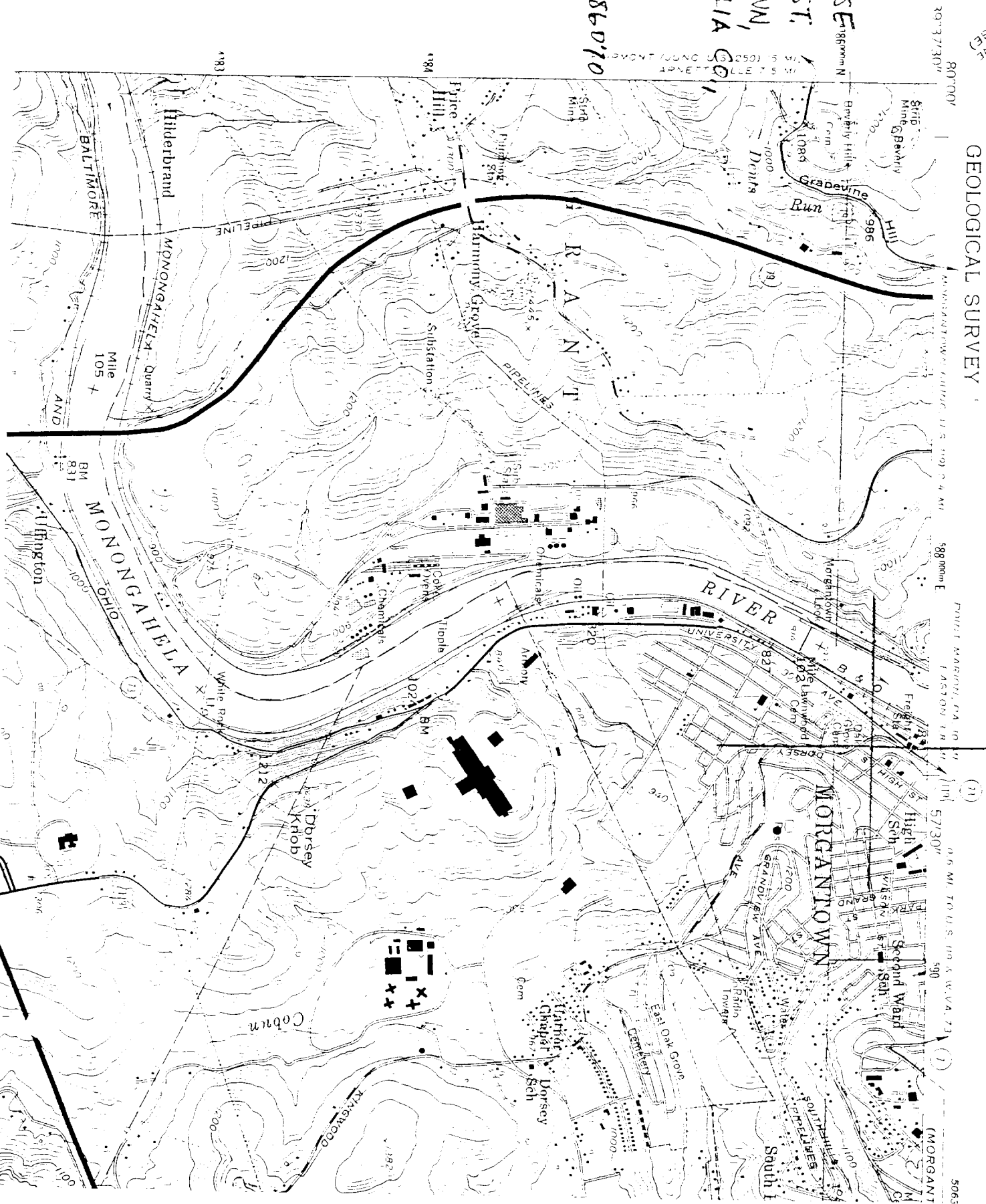


1963 U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY (OSAGE)

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

FORD HOUSE  
310 FORD ST.  
MORGANTOWN,  
MONONGALIA  
CO.,  
W. VA.

UTM:  
17/589010/4386070



80°00' 20°37'30" 80°00' 1963 U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY (OSAGE) 588 000m E 57'30" 0.6 MI. TO U.S. RD. 5 W. VA. 73 (MORGANTOWN) 5063