

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

1. Name of Property

historic name: Halltown Colored Free School
other name/site number: Halltown African-American Schoolhouse

2. Location

street & number: Halltown Road .5 mi. NE of US 340 not for publication: N/A
city/town: Halltown vicinity: X
state: West Virginia code: WV county: Jefferson code: 037 zip code: 25423

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Susan M. Pierce 7/8/2004
for Susan M. Pierce, Deputy SHPO 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 Date

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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):		

5. Classification

Ownership of Property: (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)
☒ private	☒ building(s)
☐ public-local	☐ district
☐ public-State	☐ site
☐ public-Federal	☐ structure
	☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	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

Current Functions

EDUCATION: School

VACANT / NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Materials

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/
Classical Revival

Foundation - Concrete
Walls – Brick
Roof – Slate
Other – Wood

Narrative Description
(See continuation on sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

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.

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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

EDUCATION

Period of Significance

1870-1929

Significant Dates

1870

1929

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Edwards, Thomas

Narrative Statement of Significance

(See continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

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:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: ~.25

UTM References

Quad Map Name: Charles Town, WV-VA-MD

18 258445 4354978
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description
(See continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(See continuation sheet.)

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11. Form Prepared By

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Name/Title: **Roger L. Boyer, Project Coordinator, and Alan Rowe, Historian, WVSHPO**

Organization: **Potomac Headwaters RC&D** Date: **June 17, 2003**

Street & Number: **151 Aikens Center, Suite 6** Telephone: **304-267-8953 Ext 3314**

City or Town: **Martinsburg** State: **WV** ZIP: **25401-6211**

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Property Owner

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

Name: **Halltown Memorial Chapel Association_c/o Stephen Luckett**

Street & Number: **PO Box 61** Telephone: **304-725-2745**

City or Town: **Halltown** State: **WV** Zip: **25423**

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The Halltown Colored Free School (Hereinafter referred to as the “Schoolhouse”) is located in the Jefferson County unincorporated village of Halltown. Halltown is sparsely settled and rural in character. The school faces northwest toward a gently sloping lawn that abuts old US 340, now down-graded to County Route 340/12. US 340 currently follows a four-lane bypass half a mile to the south of the subject property. The view (looking west) from the main elevation of the Schoolhouse includes the Halltown Memorial Chapel (on the left or south edge of the view, and listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the Halltown Union Colored Sunday School) and a private residence (on the right or north edge of the view). The view from CR 340/12 toward the subject property includes (from south to north) the Halltown Memorial Chapel, the Schoolhouse, and a private residence. A private residence (farm house) is located on land immediately behind the lot the Memorial Chapel.

In general plan, the Schoolhouse is a rectangular, side gable box of only one story. The exterior walls are made of common bond red brick, constructed on a concrete perimeter foundation. The roof and gable pediments are covered with slate shingles. The interior is plastered. Windows and doors plus the frames are made of wood. Most of the window panes have been broken out. The front façade includes two fixed 42 pane windows, identical in size, located on either side of the front door. Each of the windows is dressed with a plain sandstone lintel and sill, with a keystone carved into the lintels. Originally, a centered hip-roof front porch, supported by a brick and wood column at each front corner was present, but has recently fallen down. The porch steps and floor are concrete, and lead to a paneled wooden door with a glass pane. Above the door is a transom window, which is dressed with a lintel with keystone identical to those over the flanking windows.

The southwest side elevation displays a band of three 6/6 double-hung sash wood-frame windows with transoms located above. Each window is dressed with a simple lintel and sill, with the lintels continuing the keystone theme from the main façade. Immediately above the transom windows, a narrow, white wooden cornice marks the beginning of the gable pediment. The gable is sheathed in rectangular slate shingles, and sports a large, circular louvered vent near the rook peak. Cornice returns assist in imparting a mild Classical Revival architectural theme. The northeast elevation lacks windows, but repeats the features and materials present on the south side.

On the southeast elevation, A rear porch is present and its roof is made of tin sheet-metal. It is believed that the rear porch was added some years after the structure was originally built. The floor of the rear porch is concrete. The porch roof shelters one 6/6 double-hung sash wood frame window near the southern corner of the building.

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Directly to the northeast of the window is a wood, four panel door. Continuing to the northeast along the façade are two 6/6 double-hung sash wood windows, closely paired. Each of the three windows in the rear elevation feature transoms and lintels with keystones. A steel pitcher pump is set on the floor of the porch. A tall and narrow brick chimney with a corbelled cap is visible on the southwest side of the rear elevation, near the peak of the roof.

The interior layout of the Schoolhouse was modified after the use of the building as a schoolhouse was discontinued in 1929. The interior was eventually divided into four rooms for use as a dwelling. The surfaces of the wall were plastered. Elaborate molding around the doors and windows was also added. No indoor plumbing has ever existed in the building. The building has been serviced by electricity during its lifetime, but all lines are now cut.

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The Halltown Colored Free School is significant under Criterion A for Education, through the period of 1870 to 1929. After 1929, the building ceased in its original function as a school and became a dwelling. Aside from the historic modification of the interior into four rooms, the Schoolhouse exhibits a high level of integrity, both in its retention of historic materials and in its form. The Schoolhouse remains today as a visible testament to the will of a people to provide an education for their children in a time of great social and economic adversity.

In western Virginia prior to 1860, state-sponsored education for African-Americans did not exist. In 1863, as the West Virginia Constitutional Convention went about its business establishing the form of a new state, education took a central role. Determined to build upon the successes of the Old Dominion but likewise determined not to repeat its mistakes, the convention prevailed to direct the future legislature to “provide, as soon as practicable, for the establishment of a thorough and efficient system of free schools.” High as their intentions may have been, any mention for the schooling of African-American children was conspicuously absent.

Following the precedent established at the Constitutional Convention, the new legislature passed the state’s first school law on December 10, 1863. It established a township centered system of instruction for six months out of the year, with voter-elected commissions empowered to hire and certify teachers, build and maintain buildings, and collect school revenues. The first school law also established a school system segregated by race. Townships that contained at least 30 eligible African-American children were required to supply buildings and teachers separate from the facilities used by white children.

Parkersburg opened the era of segregated schooling in West Virginia, when leaders of the African-American community there established the Sumner school, as a private initiative. By 1866, the Sumner school was under public control, making it the first state-sponsored school under West Virginia’s laws for supporting segregated African-American education. Jefferson County, notable for its attention to the free public school ideal before the Civil War, by 1876 had ten schools and eleven teachers assigned to the task of educating the area’s African-American children. It is during this era that the Halltown Free Colored School came into existence. By the 1890s, popular histories of the area commonly reported the existence of African-American schools in many Jefferson County towns. Charles Town’s 1874 African-American school still stands on Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue (listed in the National Register as a contributing building to the Old Charles Town Historic District), as do many other schools of the same nature throughout the county, albeit without official recognition from the National Register.

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Halltown in the late-19th century was small, consisting of perhaps 100 residents. The chief occupation in the town most likely was provided by the Virginia Paper Mills, a large manufactory established in 1869 in the works of an old flour mill. The land that the Schoolhouse occupies was purchased by Mr. Thomas Edwards from Virginia Lucas prior to 1870. It is known for a fact, thanks to the deed for the adjacent Chapel, that a “little colored free-school” existed on the Edwards lot in 1901. It is unknown where the money for the purchase came from. Mr. Edwards built the schoolhouse in 1870 using his own time and money, plus help (it is unknown if the help was paid or it was volunteered) from local “Black Males”. One of the purposes of the school was to educate Mr. Edward’s large family. Among the community of interest was one Mrs. Olive P. (Shelton) Braxton, a granddaughter of Mr. Edwards. Olive was one of 13 children. In a time of low enrollments, the Edwards/Shelton family could indeed have populated a school on their own. Olive and her siblings were the children of Ada R.(Edwards) Shelton, a daughter of Mr. Edwards. Ada married Benjamin Shelton. Following the closure of the school in 1929, they became the owners of the property which eventually included both the Schoolhouse and the Chapel. In the late 1980s the property was officially transferred to the Halltown Memorial Chapel Association, Inc. The Association plans to rehabilitate and find a new use for the Schoolhouse, much as they did for the adjacent Chapel.

The Schoolhouse is significant under Criterion A for Education as the property was bought, the Schoolhouse was built, and was maintained by Mr. Edwards (an African-American) or his descendents for the educational benefits of his family. The property has been continuously owned by the Edwards-Shelton-Braxton family since it was developed. Thus, the school is an outstanding monument to the achievement of Mr. Thomas Edwards, as he strove to provide educational benefits to his community in a decidedly separate and un-equal environment.

(NPS Form 10-900)

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Bibliography

Ambler, Charles. A History of Education in West Virginia: From Early Colonial Times to 1949. Huntington, W.Va.: Standard Printing and Publishing Company, 1951.

Bushong, Millard. Historic Jefferson County. Boyce, Va.: Carr Publishing Company, 1972.

Caldwell, Georgia. "Religion by the Roadside: The Halltown Memorial Chapel." Goldenseal (Winter 1996): 52-56.

Callahan, James Morton. Semi-Centennial History of West Virginia. Charleston, W.Va.: Semi-Centennial Commission, 1913.

Hardesty's West Virginia Counties. Vol. 8, Wood [and] Jefferson. Richwood, W.Va.: Jim Comstock, 1973.

Norris, J.E. History of the Lower Shenandoah Valley Counties of Frederick, Berkeley, Jefferson, and Clarke. Chicago: A. Warner and Company, 1890.

Personal Interview with Olive P. Braxton on July 1, 2002. By, Roger L. Boyer, Project Coordinator, Potomac Headwaters RC&D, Martinsburg, WV

"The Halltown Memorial Chapel – Mrs. Olive Pauline Braxton: a lady with a vision." Halo Magazine Vol. 1(3):5-6. July 1997.

"Lucas Extension of Halltown." As recorded in the office of the Clerk of the County Commission of Jefferson County, West Virginia in Deed Book H, Page 211.

"Purpose of adjusting the boundary lines of said presently owned land of the Grantees, thus creating a single lot of land." As recorded in 1988 in the office of the Clerk of the County Commission of Jefferson County, West Virginia in Deed Book G20, Page 425.

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Verbal Boundary Description

- Lot # 9: 1 Lot Halltown – Harpers Ferry Map 9A
- Lot # 10: Part of Western ½ of Lot 12 Halltown–Harpers Ferry Map 9A

Boundary Justification

The boundaries used for this application coincide with the legal ownership boundary of the lot that accommodates the Schoolhouse.

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Name of Property: **Halltown Colored Free School**
Address **Halltown Road**
Town **Halltown**
County **Jefferson**

Photographer: **Roger L. Boyer**

Date: **June 4, 2003**

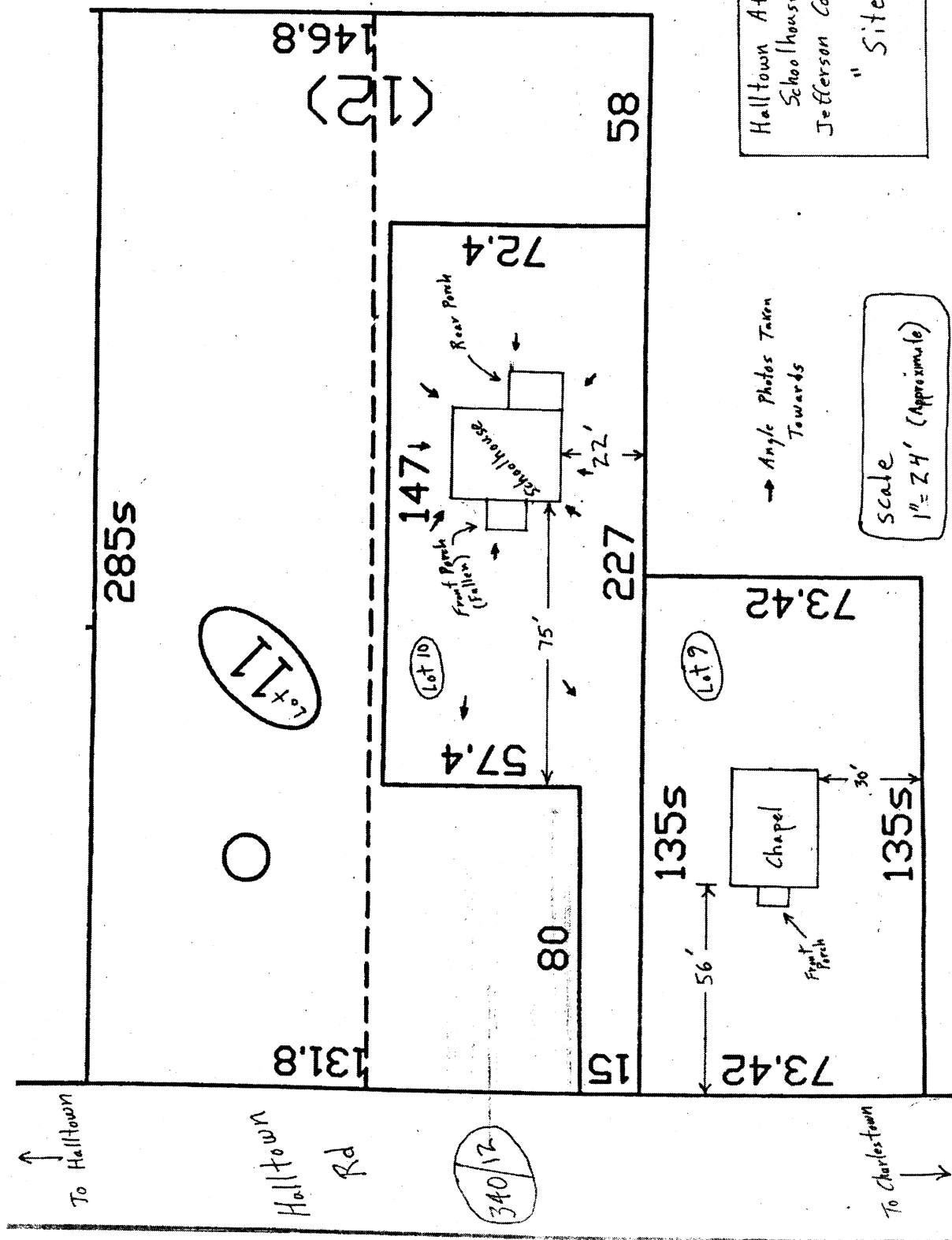
Negatives: **Potomac headwaters RC&D Project Office**
 151 Aikens Center, Suite 6
 Martinsburg, WV 25401

- Photo 1 of 11:** Front Facade or West Elevation
 camera facing East.
- Photo 2 of 11:** Close Up view of Front Porch (which has fallen down) , which is
 located on the Front of the West Façade. The camera was facing
 East.
- Photo 3 of 11:** South-West corner of building. The camera was facing North-East.
- Photo 4 of 11:** South wall of building. The camera was facing North.
- Photo 5 of 11:** South-East corner of building. The camera was facing North-West
- Photo 6 of 11:** Rear or East wall of building. The camera was facing West.
- Photo 7 of 11:** North-East corner of building. The camera was facing South-
 West.
- Photo 8 of 11:** North wall of building. The camera was facing South.

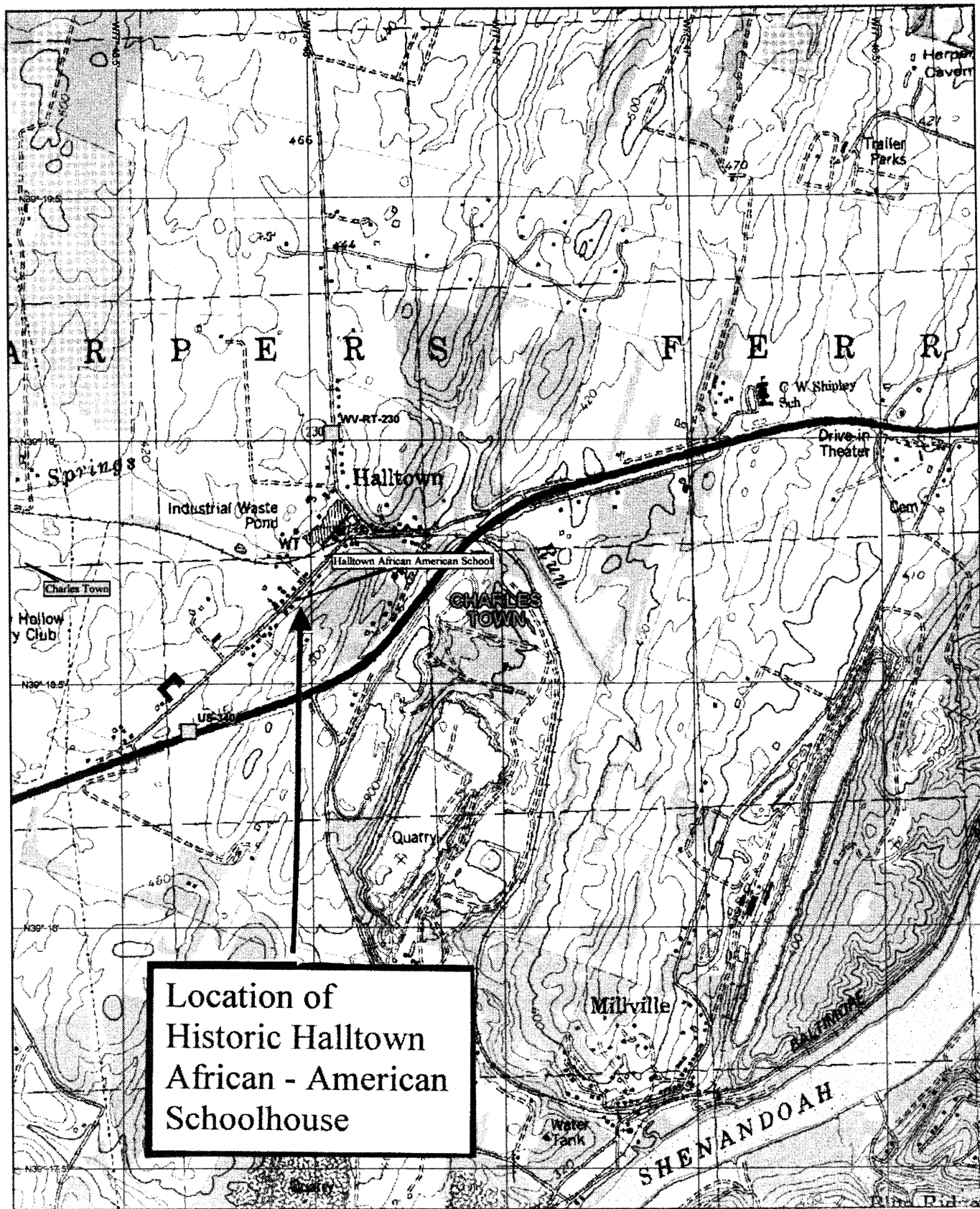
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- Photo 9 of 11:** North-West corner of building. The camera was facing South-East.
- Photo 10 of 11:** Front “Yard” of schoolhouse property. Halltown Road is just past the parked car. The camera is facing West
- Photo 11 of 11:** Looking South-West from the front of the schoolhouse. This view captures the Halltown Memorial Chapel and the Halltown Road. Note the two stumps in this photo are also in Photo 10 of 11.



Halltown African-American
Schoolhouse & Chapel
Jefferson Co., West Virginia
"Site Map"
June 2003



Location of
Historic Halltown
African - American
Schoolhouse

