

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

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

1. Name

historic Wells, William, House

and or common The Stone House or "Stonehurst"

2. Location

street & number State Route #18 not for publication

city, town Tyler City vicinity of

state West Virginia code 54 county Tyler code 095

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name William Brown

street & number Star Route #65A

city, town Middlebourne vicinity of state West Virginia

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Tyler County Courthouse

street & number Main and Dodd Streets

city, town Middlebourne state West Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date N/A
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Wells House stands on a promontory on State Route #18 at the edge of the village of Tyler City above Middle Island Creek. The site is part of locally rolling lands which were attractive to settlers who preferred the abundant timber, rich soil, and clear water of central Tyler County.

Built in the first years of the 19th century, the farmhouse was for many years the principal edifice in a locally prosperous farmstead. The substantial sandstone rubblework and coursed rubble walls, measuring approximately 18 inches in thickness, provide an enduring impression and solidity that has enabled the modest 2-story residence to survive nearly two centuries of wear and continuous habitation in relatively sound condition. It is the masonry work upon which the builder seems to have focused special energy and particular skills. The stone of the front, 3-bay elevation is squared in the manner of ashlar; the coursing is regular. At the side elevations less care was given to decorative effect, as the builder was satisfied to place the stone rubble in random or irregular patterns. The mason also chose prominent, large squared stones to strengthen the corners of the house in a vernacular quoining treatment which, next to the character of the chimney construction, is the most interesting detail of design.

The nearly square house was served by an unusually large interior chimney at the west end wall. Two fireplaces were thus provided on both the first and second floors to heat four rooms (2 rooms up, 2 rooms down). The flues of the chimney were constructed so as to curve upward from each fireplace and meet in the great central chimney stack. The basement also contains two fireplaces with the same chimney flue arrangement. Entrance to the rooms of the house is gained through a sidehall within which, at the ground floor, a stair rises to the second floor. A cellar door, below grade, at the east end of the house, provides entry to the basement. The original structural features beneath the house, such as the 12" x 12" x 28' summer beam of white oak, are well preserved and possess a fresh appearance.

About 1895 several renovations were undertaken that slightly altered the house in several areas. A Victorian frame addition was erected and attached c.1895 at the rear of the house, although this 2-story unit was placed in such a manner that it hides only part of the original wall. The architectural features include wooden window cornice heads, imbricated gable wood shingles, and double-hung windows with 2 over 2 sashes. Other alterations of this period include placement of millwork finish in the stairway, e.g., newel posts and railing, and installation of millwork doorway casing and mantelpieces in the downstairs rooms. The frame addition and front porch, and later woodwork do not impair the basic historic integrity of the house. The roof, also slightly altered, was given a standing seam metal surface at some point in the 19th century.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

William Wells House, "Stonehurst", Tyler County

Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page

2

There are no surviving original outbuildings or dependencies. The cement block garage, frame barn, and utility shed are buildings of late construction that do not contribute to the significance of the nominated resource.

The graves of William Wells and family members are part of a family cemetery just fifty feet, or so, to the rear of the house. The cemetery site is not visible; the only extant gravestone is that of William Wells.

Historic archaeology potential within the nominated area may be considered good because several early outbuildings and ancillary structures once stood at this early point of settlement.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources

Contributing Building	- 1 (house)
Contributing Site	- 1 (cemetery)
Total Contributing Resources	- 2

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
..... prehistoric	..... archeology-prehistoric	..... community planning	..... landscape architecture	..... religion	
..... 1400-1499	..... archeology-historic	..... conservation	..... law	..... science	
..... 1500-1599	..... agriculture	..... economics	..... literature	..... sculpture	
..... 1600-1699	..... X architecture	..... education	..... military	..... social	
..... 1700-1799	..... art	..... engineering	..... music	..... humanitarian	
..... X 1800-1899	..... commerce	..... X exploration settlement	..... philosophy	..... theater	
..... 1900-	..... communications	..... industry	..... X politics government	..... transportation	
		..... invention		..... other (specify)	

Specific dates c.1801-04 ; c.1895 **Builder Architect** William Wells, his sons & slaves

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The William Wells House, also called "Stonehurst", was built c.1801-04 for a prominent pioneer, William Wells, who took part in the organization and settlement of Tyler County, West Virginia. The Wells House is significant also as an example of settlement period construction which survives in a excellent state of preservation. The building's importance as the oldest house in Tyler County is widely recognized in the region.

In The History of the Upper Ohio Valley, printed in 1891, it is noted that William Wells came to the southern part of Ohio County, now Tyler County, in about 1800, "took up his abode on Middle Island Creek at the mouth of McElroy where he built the first and only stone house in Tyler County, cleared out a good farm and remained there till his death. He was connected with the building of the first mill of the county - the Jug Handle". (History of the Upper Ohio Valley, Vol. 2, Madison Wis.: Brant and Fuller, 1891, pp. 69-70.)

Not long after the American Revolution William Wells with his brothers and father, Benjamin Wells, moved from Baltimore to western Pennsylvania and then to the Brooke County area of the northern panhandle of Virginia; William Wells moved his wife, Catron Selmon, and family to the southern part of Ohio County, now Tyler County, about 1800. They lived in a log house until the stone house was completed circa 1804. William's brother, Charles, was a founder of neighboring Sistersville, and achieved widespread fame as a farmer and politician.

William Wells owned hundreds of acres of land surrounding, and in the vicinity of, the stone house. He served in the American Revolution and the War of 1812. In recognition of his faithful service to his county, Governor James Barbour of Virginia appointed him a Justice of the Court of the newly formed County of Tyler on January 9, 1815. In 1820 William Wells donated land to the Methodist Episcopal Society, and then built a log church, which was the first neighborhood school and community meeting house. On this land also Beechwood Cemetery was established. William Wells, however, is not buried in Beechwood but in the family burial ground behind the Stone House, where a marker of his grave stands. The site has been recorded by the Daughters of the American Revolution. Wells also served as sheriff of Tyler County in 1828.

The house called "Stonehurst" was constructed of locally quarried sandstone and handhewn timbers by William Wells and his slaves. It is a modest edifice but exhibits excellent stone masonry features at the front elevation where stones are squared and coursing is regular. Corner stones were placed by the builders from the foundation to the eaves, in the manner of quoins, to strengthen the building and to provide an element of distinctive design. Stone houses were rarely built in this region of West Virginia; its value to local history is therefore considerable, and its recognition as the county's oldest house is widely accepted.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

William Wells House, "Stonehurst", Tyler County

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 2

#9 Major Bibliographical References

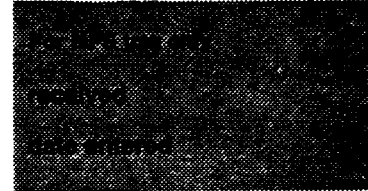
History of the Upper Ohio Valley. (2 vols.) Madison, Wis.: Brant and Fuller, 1891, pp. 69-70.

Newton, Nichols and Sprankle, History of the Panhandle. Wheeling, WV.: J.A. Caldwell, 1879, pp. 306, 310, 356.

Powell, Joseph F. "Old Stone House in Tyler County Scene of Many Strange Events". Wheeling Intelligencer, July 3, 1963.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 10

Page 2

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated resources stand approximately 200⁰ feet northeast of the point of intersection of State Route #18 with McElroy Creek. Beginning approximately 200 feet southwest of the house on the east edge of State Route #18, proceed eastward in a straight line approximately 260 feet, thence due north in a straight line approximately 420 feet to a point of intersection with Route 18, thence along the east edge of Route 18 southward to the point of beginning (see sketch map).

Justification

The boundaries, enclosing approximately 3½ acres, have been selected to protect acreage adjacent to the Wells House, including the grave of William Wells, that may contain subsurface features relating to the quarters of slaves who once resided on the Wells farm. Other settlement period resources also may exist beneath the surface of the site.

9. Major Bibliographical References

"Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine", November, 1952, p. 1231.
Hardesty's West Virginia Counties, Richwood, WV, 1973., p. 184; 186.
History of Tyler County West Virginia to 1984. Tyler County Heritage and Historical Society,
Marceline, Mo.: Walsworth Publishing Co., 1984, pp. 22; 498.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 3½ acres

Quadrangle name Shirley, WV

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	7
---	---

5	1	5
---	---	---

1	0	0
---	---	---

4	3	6	4	8	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--

--	--	--

--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--

--	--	--

--	--	--	--

D

--	--

--	--	--

--	--	--	--

E

--	--

--	--	--

--	--	--	--

F

--	--

--	--	--

--	--	--	--

G

--	--

--	--	--

--	--	--	--

H

--	--

--	--	--

--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

(see attached continuation sheet)

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rodney Collins, Karen Stover; Peggy Wells Dobbins, N.Y.C.

organization Department of Culture and History date December 12, 1986

street & number The Cultural Center telephone 304/348-0240

city or town Charleston state West Virginia

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☒ state ☐ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Jayne Allen

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 6-5-87

For NPS use only

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

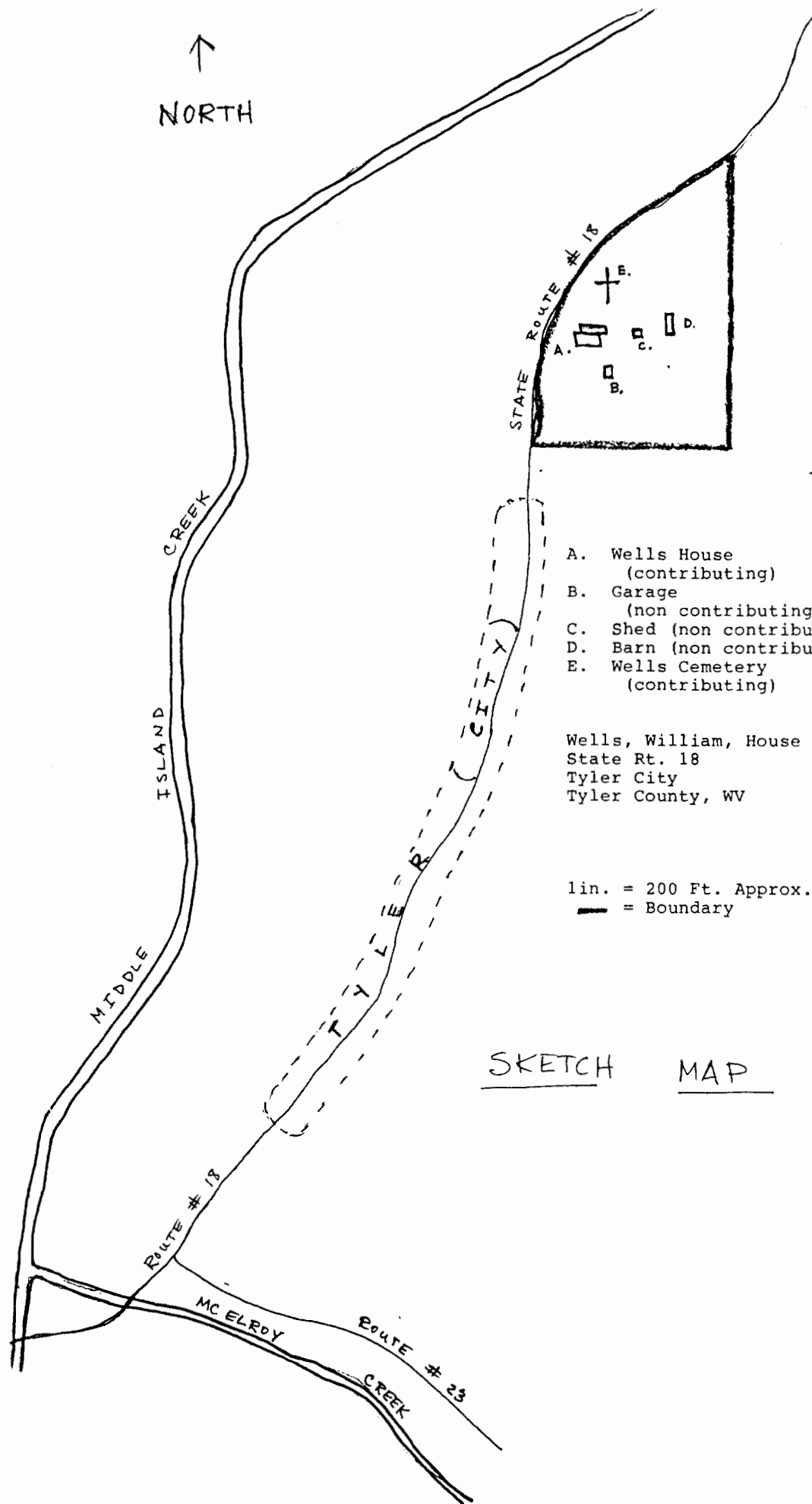
date

Keeper of the National Register

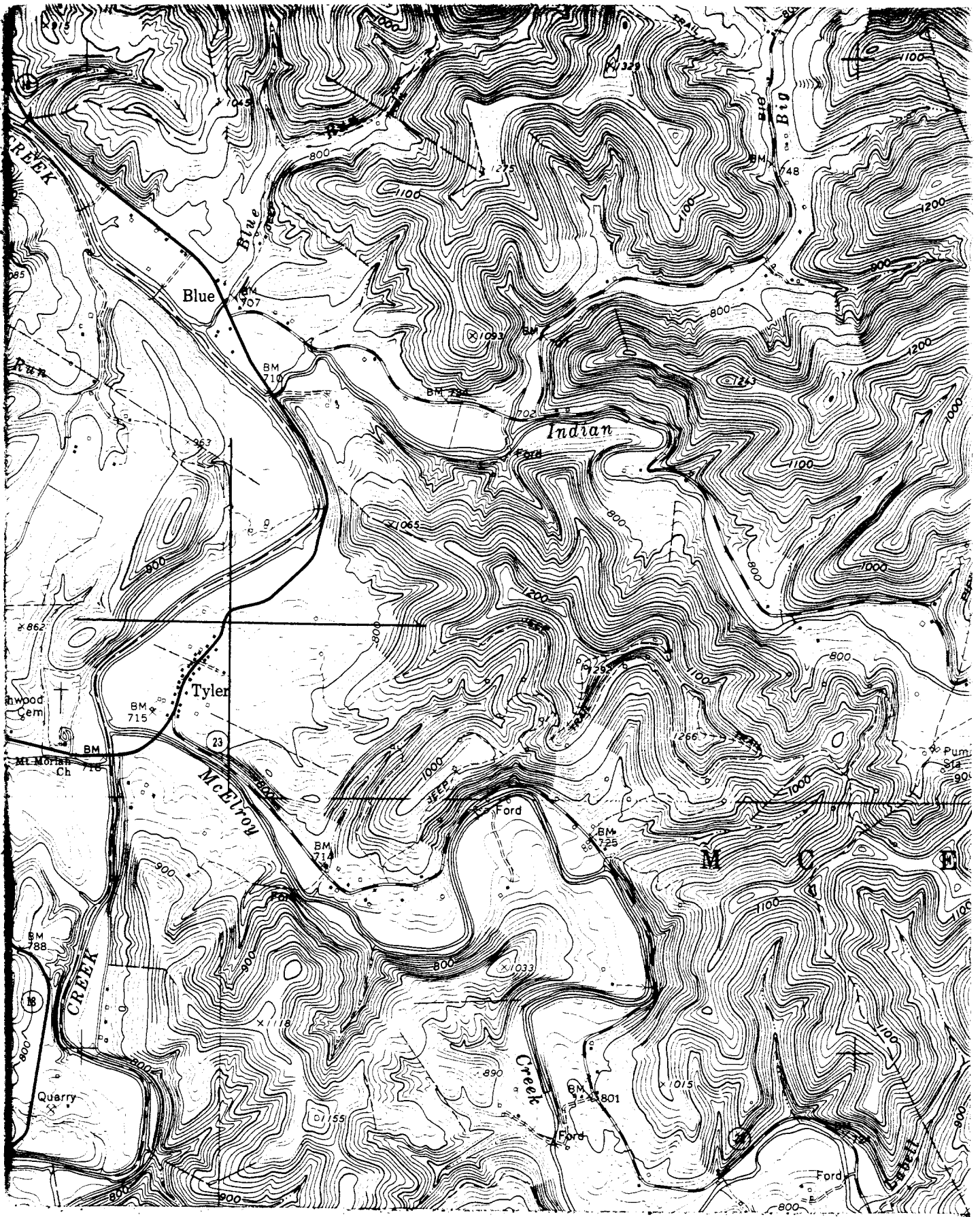
Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



SKETCH MAP



27'30"

WELLS, WILLIAM, House
STATE RT. # 18
TYLER CITY
TYLER COUNTY
WEST VIRGINIA

UTM:

17/515100/4364820

SHIRLEY QUAD.
7.5 MIN.

