

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form**

This form is used for documenting property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (formerly 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information.

  X   New Submission            Amended Submission

**A. Name of Multiple Property Listing**

New Deal Stone Walls in Morgantown, Monongalia County, WV, 1933-1943

**B. Associated Historic Contexts**

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

New Deal Era programs in Monongalia County, 1933-1943

Stone Wall Design and Construction Techniques in Monongalia County Associated with the New Deal, 1933-1943

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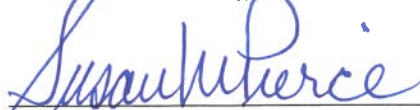
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**D. Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.



Signature of certifying official

Deputy SHPO

Title

3-14-25

Date

WV State Historic Preservation Office, Department of Arts, Culture and History

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

New Deal Stone Walls in Morgantown, WV

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I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

Table of Contents for Written Narrative

Create a Table of Contents and list the page numbers for each of these sections in the space below.

Provide narrative explanations for each of these sections on continuation sheets. In the header of each section, cite the letter, page number, and name of the multiple property listing. Refer to *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* for additional guidance.

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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.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1: 60-100 hours (generally existing multiple property submissions by paid consultants and by Maine State Historic Preservation staff for in-house, individual nomination preparation)

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Tier 2: 120 hours (generally individual nominations by paid consultants)  
Tier 3: 230 hours (generally new district nominations by paid consultants)  
Tier 4: 280 hours (generally newly proposed MPS cover documents by paid consultants).

## E. Statement of Historic Context

### Introduction

This Multiple Property Documentation addresses New Deal Stone Walls in Morgantown, Monongalia County, WV that were planned and constructed between 1933 and 1943 using various programs of the federal recovery agencies of the New Deal.

The resources within the geographic area were identified in two Historic Resource Surveys conducted in 2016 and 2017 for the Morgantown Historic Landmarks Commission, by Mike Gioulis, Preservation Consultant.

The Resources are all thematically associated. They are all within Morgantown. They were all constructed by New Deal Era Programs, and they are all stone walls.

The initial survey area encompassed approximately eight hundred and eighty-three thousand (883,000) acres in the city of Morgantown and surrounding Morgan District. The survey identified sixty-three (63) stone resources, fifty-seven (57) of which were walls. Due to the rural and undeveloped nature of much of Monongalia County during the New Deal, almost all of the resources identified in phase one are located within the city limits of Morgantown. A comparison of County Road maps from 1933 to 1937 shows few paved roads during the period, which translated into limited construction projects on roads and retaining walls in the county. The second phase of the survey consisted of six thousand and eighty (6,780) acres. The survey area was located entirely within the Morgantown City limits. Fifty (51) sites were recorded on West Virginia Historic Property Inventory forms during the phase two survey. Most sites recorded during the two surveys were documented to have been constructed by New Deal Era Programs. Others not specifically documented were believed to have been constructed by the programs due to their construction techniques, location, setting and period of construction.

### New Deal Era Programs in Monongalia County 1933-1943

When the stock market crashed in October of 1929, the whole county entered a recession that would come to be known as "The Great Depression". The value of shares, wages, and money decreased dramatically in a short time, and by 1932, thirteen million people were unemployed.<sup>1</sup> In response to the growing crisis, newly elected President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) proposed a new program to get the economy back on track, calling it the "New Deal."

New Deal Era public works programs created a collection of stone walls and other stone projects in the Morgan District of Monongalia County and Morgantown, West Virginia. New Deal Programs that contribute to these works include: the Works Progress Administration, the Public Works Administration, the Civil Works Administration, National Youth Administration and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. A brief timeline and description of the federal New Deal programs is as follows<sup>2</sup>:

*March 31, 1933:*

<sup>1</sup> Hardman, "The Great Depression and the New Deal," 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas, "An Appalachian New Deal"

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The **Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)** is created by the Emergency Conservation Act, putting unemployed young men to work in the nation's forests and parks.

*May 12, 1933*

The **Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA)** was created, via the Federal Emergency Relief Act of 1933, to provide work and cash relief for Americans struggling to get through the Great Depression.

*June 16, 1933*

President Roosevelt signs the National Industrial Recovery Act into law. Title I regulates certain business activities (and will ultimately be ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court). Title II creates the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, which eventually becomes known as the **Public Works Administration (PWA)**. During the next 10 years, the PWA contributes billions of dollars towards tens of thousands of infrastructure projects across the nation.

*November 9, 1933*

The **Civil Works Administration (CWA)** was created with Executive Order No. 6420B.

*December 8, 1933*

The **Public Works of Art Project (PWAP)** is created by an allocation of funds from the Civil Works Administration.

*July 14, 1934*

The last lingering employment in the **Civil Works Administration (CWA)** ends (the vast bulk had ended by March 31).

*May 6, 1935*

President Roosevelt created the **Works Progress Administration (WPA)** on May 6, 1935, with Executive Order No. 7034, under authority of the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935. The program is created to provide jobs for unemployed Americans and to improve the nation's infrastructure. The WPA employs over 8.5 million jobless Americans during its eight years of operations.

*June 26, 1935*

President Roosevelt created the **National Youth Administration (NYA)** with Executive Order No. 7086, under authority of the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935. The program is designed to provide work, education, and job training for unemployed men and women.

*September 1, 1936*

In its annual report, the **Bureau of Public Roads** reports thousands of miles of road work underway or completed with funding from the **Public Works Administration (PWA)** and labor from the **Works Program Administration (WPA)**.

*April 3, 1939*

President Roosevelt signed into law the Reorganization Act of 1939. The reorganization ultimately creates a few new agencies and consolidates others. For example, the **Public Works Administration (PWA)** and the **Works Progress Administration (WPA)** are both put under the newly created **Federal Works Agency**.

*July 1, 1939*

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The **Federal Works Agency (FWA)** programs begin their work across the nation.

*June 30, 1942*

With its funding terminated, and money set aside for its liquidation, the **Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)** ends. The men of the CCC had planted three billion trees and created, developed, or improved 800 state parks. Many go onto leadership roles in the armed forces.

*June 30, 1943*

The **Works Progress Administration (WPA)** ends. During its existence (1935-1943) the WPA employed 8.5 million different Americans and greatly modernized and expanded America's infrastructure.

*June 30, 1943:*

The **Public Works Administration (PWA)** was terminated by President Roosevelt with Executive Order No. 9357. All functions, powers, duties, etc. are transferred to the Federal Works Administrator. The PWA had spent about \$4 billion helping federal agencies, state governments, and local communities modernize their infrastructure.

*January 1, 1944:*

The **National Youth Administration (NYA)** program ends. During its 8-year existence, the NYA had employed over 4.7 million young men and women who were in need of assistance. It helped them complete high school and college, offered job training, gave a small paycheck and, through it all, improved the nation – trees planted, buildings constructed, scientific studies performed, etc.

### **Historic Resources Survey**

The following outlined history is sourced from a historic resource survey of New Deal Stone resources in Morgantown, West Virginia:<sup>3</sup>

On July 8, 1932 the Dow Jones Industrials hit an all-time low since the pre-depression peak and four months later on November 8, 1932, Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) defeated Herbert Hoover for the presidency. By March of 1933, unemployment reached a new high of 24.9%. The county was in the midst of a depression. FDR was inaugurated on March 4, 1933 and the first "Hundred Days" of his presidency began.

The Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) was established by an act of Congress on January 22, 1932 during the administration of President Herbert Hoover. RFC's function was to provide financial support to state and local governments and loans to banks and other businesses. After the Great Depression, it was used to help the banking industry by aiding in financing agriculture, commerce, and industry and boosting the country's confidence. It operated through the New Deal Era and was disbanded in 1957.

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was created by the Emergency Conservation Work Act. It put young men to work in forests and parks. It eventually employed up to three million men.

New Deal legislation passed in 1933 and by May of that year the Federal Emergency Relief Act (FERA) was passed by Congress to aid the unemployed. \$500 million was set aside for the program.

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<sup>3</sup>Gioulis, "New Deal Era Stone Resources, Vol. I"

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In June of 1933, as part of the National Industrial Recovery Act, \$3.3 billion was provided for larger scale projects such as bridges and dams to projects under the Public Works Administration (PWA).

The Civil Works Administration (CWA) was created in November of 1933 and provided four million jobs over the winter of 1933-4. By April 1935, FDR and Congress enlarged the work programs and \$4.8 billion for work relief was authorized.

In May of the same year, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) was created and within a month the National Youth Administration (NYA) a division of the WPA was also created. The Federal Project Number One was announced in August of 1935 and covered federal art, theater, music and writing projects. The first performance of the WPA Circus debuted in Brooklyn, New York, under the Federal Theatre Project in the fall of 1935. Projects all over the country were approved such as: a ski lodge in Mount Hood, Oregon; rescue, recovery and cleanup efforts for floods in New England and the Ohio River Valley; the first Living Newspaper theater production in New York; rescue and cleanup from tornadoes in Mississippi and Georgia; fighting forest fires in the upper Midwest; construction of the Triborough Bridge in Queens, New York; construction of Louisiana State University, and many more. Stock prices plunged in October of 1937 and recession began under Roosevelt's presidency. As of November 1938, WPA employment reached its highest point employing more than three million people. Major changes took place in the WPA with the passage of the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1939. In November of 1940 FDR was elected to a third term in office. WPA workers were trained in military production and construction of military bases, housing, roads and airports. WPA employment dropped in the summer of 1941 to about one million workers. On December 7, 1941 Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese and by January of 1942 all WPA workers were working on defense-related projects. By the end of 1942 FDR declared that the WPA was no longer necessary and in June of 1943 the WPA returned \$105 million in unspent funds to the United States Treasury.

West Virginia and Monongalia County reflected the situation in the United States. West Virginia was one of the states hit hardest during the Great Depression, with unemployment exceeding 80% in some counties<sup>4</sup>. Both the coal and agriculture industries suffered, as people lost their jobs or moved from their farms to find jobs in other states. In 1932, prosperity in Morgantown came to a halt as it did in the rest of the world. The Depression affected the area's businesses and population. Coal mines closed, as did the American Sheet and Tin Plate Company. Workers found themselves jobless.

Morgantown took advantage of relief programs that were benefiting the state. The Unemployment Committee of the City of Morgantown first met in February of 1932 and recommended the hire of unemployed persons to repair the city streets. In the same month, the Unemployment and Poor Relief Proposition appropriated \$7,500 to be used to provide employment. In November of 1932, the city manager of Morgantown reported that 770 applications for work had been approved and 577 men were assigned to work with a payroll for the week covering 14,126 hours and \$4,237.80 in wages. The previous week's payroll covered 33,189 hours with wages of \$9,956.70. By March of 1933, 1,187 men were assigned work. In December of 1933 the RFC was discontinued and the CWA got approval from the city. Before long in 1934 the CWA was discontinued and replaced by the Federal Emergency Relief Act (FERA). Mileground tracts were purchased for the airport from 1934 to 1936 and the entrance of the airport had a stone wall built around it by skilled masons. Stone was quarried and hauled from Suncrest Park and Eighth Street in 1934. The FERA program in Morgantown ended in October of 1934.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas, "The Great Depression"

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Applications for WPA money for the following projects in 1935 were approved: sanitary sewer, paving of Richwood Avenue, municipal airport, incinerator, and swimming pool. The city manager reported to the council that applications were being made for 44 projects. The airport and Richwood Avenue project applications were filed in July of 1935. It was recorded that WPA stone masons in Morgantown made \$1.00 per hour. This was below what WPA bricklayers made by ten cents per hour. \$1.10 per hour was the maximum wage recorded at the time.

Though some industries had reopened in 1933 because of federal programs, and some businesses increased employment throughout the War, employment was not at the same levels as it previously was. Between 1940 and 1945 the Morgantown Ordnance Works employed up to 1,400.

The federal government published a report by the Government Printing Office in 1939, enumerating the expenditures to date: \$3,355,775,000.00 for all PWA projects in the nation. By 1938 there were 110,808 street and highway projects and 8,259 building projects.

The report goes on to advocate the social benefits of the programs' construction. These include better transportation and communication; efficiency of national defense through improved airfields; increased perfection of air transportation; increased opportunity for outdoor recreation; flood protection, electric power and increased agriculture due to dam construction; replacement of outdated buildings in government use; advances in school system and education through libraries, museums etc.

A final report on the WPA was published in 1943. This included general information and charts and statistics on employment, construction types, construction funds expended etc. relating to WPA and other programs from 1935 to 1943. The information is presented for national figures as well as divided by state. The category of "Highways roads and streets" within the construction division is associated with the resources studied under this project. Some national statistics and information from that report include:

- National cumulative through 1942: hours in highways roads and streets (HRS) 7,251,201,000; expenditures \$3,184,167,000; labor rate .43/hr.
- There was a spike in employment in 1936 (Jan/Feb) with peak employment in 1938 (Sept). There is a steady decline thereafter to 1943, with small spikes in Jan/Feb of each year.
- For HRS, percentages of employment range from 35 to 44, 1936 through 1940, then drop to 29 in 1941 and 21 in 1942.
- Road projects were more numerous than other types of projects. A large percentage was on rural farm to market roads, much of which were gravel or crushed stone. The use of native materials was encouraged. These stone walls often fell under the HRS category, including the Deckers Creek Wall which, while a retaining wall for the creek, was used to stabilize creek bank and create infrastructure above.
  - This relates to the use of local quarries and stone for retaining walls. Mention of Morgantown stone quarries is made in The Morgantown City Clerk Council Journal Books. It appears that a quarry existed at Suncrest Park and Eighth Street in 1934. Ira J. Baer had an agreement with the city for a stone quarry on Richwood Avenue near the city limits between November 1937 and January 1939. Mr. Baer asked for twenty five cents per perch for all stone quarried. The WPA project #3551 Stone Quarry was accepted by the city in November of 1938. Consequently, all work was suspended at the Richwood Avenue quarry until the city could obtain a new site. The quarry at Suncrest Park was opened in April of 1939 but it was soon determined that the rock was too hard and work would be unable to be done in an economical way. Booth Creek quarry was used for the Deckers Creek project until a quarry site could be found. By January of 1940

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the city made a motion, which carried, to use a stone quarry at Dellslow Hill. Frank P. Corbin agreed to sell the city un-quarried building stone at five cents per cubic yard.

- 572,000 miles of rural roads constructed in 8 years. 57,000 was paved concrete macadam or bitumen.
- Grand total federal expenditure: 1938-1943 \$10,750,500,969. Peak 1938 Sponsor's funds amounted to approximately 21.9% for a total project expenditure of \$12,974,456,687.

West Virginia data in the report includes:

- Men employed through 1943 in West Virginia was 246,033, which correlates to 1.8 percent of the national totals. West Virginia's 1940 population of 1,907,974 was 1.4 percent of the national total population. Therefore, WV received a slightly disproportionate larger percentage of employment than the national average based on population statistics.
- In the engineering and construction division totals for West Virginia are 4,515 with 3,082 being HRS 382 buildings, 345 airports and runways.
- West Virginia miles of HRS is 20,514. The number of bridges and viaducts was 1,693; the number of culverts was 29,814.

Morgantown's and Monongalia County statistics reflect those of the state and nation. They show a significant investment in Morgantown's infrastructure that endures and is still in use today. The *Dominion News* in July 17, 1941; "Know Morgantown" edition summed it up:

- "More than a million dollars had been spent since 1933.
- A park study to acquire lands.
- City airport is 315 acres. Construction started 1936 and ended 1942.
- All or nearly all of the improvements in the last seven years paid by the US government: Civilian Works Administration, Federal Emergency Relief Administration, Works Progress Administration, and Public Works Administration.
- Various projects under WPA were started in 1935 and are still being continued with the allocation of additional funds from time-to-time.
- In all since 1933... 9,420 cubic yards of stone and concrete walls at \$169,560; 3,460 feet of stone curbing at \$4,844 ... 400 feet of curbing and gutters at \$500, 19,605 stone gutters at \$17,644 ...
- Total expenditure on sidewalks, streets, sewers, the airport etc. is \$1,820,122."

Earl L. Core, WVU professor, historian, and author of Monongalia County histories: *The Monongalia Story: A Bicentennial History, Vol. I-V<sup>5</sup>*, written between 1934 and 1936, states over two million dollars were spent in Monongalia County for streets, roads, sewers, recreation, mines and on the airport. The discrepancy with the newspaper report can be explained by Mr. Core's inclusion of buildings and other facilities in his statistics.

The conclusion is apparent: West Virginia was greatly aided by the programs of the New Deal, as were all states. The benefits listed, and the types and amounts of expenditures, projects, employment, and labor correspond with national figures and trends. It can be stated that New Deal programs were beneficial to West Virginia during this time period. Not only did they provide employment and funds, they resulted in significant public works and improvements throughout the state.

Monongalia County and Morgantown are no exceptions. From the research studied, and the extant resources surveyed, it is apparent that the New Deal Era programs contributed to, if not actually formed, most of Morgantown's extant road and transportation built environment. With West Virginia's hilly terrain, fully

<sup>5</sup> Core, "Monongalia County Histories"



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exhibited in Morgantown's street system, it has always been imperative that road construction include significant retaining walls and structures. The contribution of New Deal Era stone walls to the development of the transportation system and infrastructure of Morgantown and Monongalia County is immeasurable.

### **Stone Wall Design and Construction Techniques in Monongalia County Associated with the New Deal 1933-1943**

Stone walls existed in West Virginia, and particularly Morgantown and Monongalia County long before the Great Depression and New Deal Era Programs. West Virginia's terrain dictates the use of retaining walls, bridge and railroad abutments, viaducts, and industrial structures. These were often constructed using locally sourced stones within the region. Much of West Virginia University's Campus includes stone walls and structures. So, the existence of stone resources from the New Deal Era is not an anomaly.

Much of West Virginia's heritage of stone structures is attributable to the work of Italian immigrants versed in stone construction. By 1910, Italians made up 30% of West Virginia's immigrant population, with Monongalia County being one of six areas of concentration. Many of these men were employed in the state's coal industry.<sup>6</sup> There were also many stone cutters from the village of Valle Cervo in Piedmont, Italy. Many of them settled in stone quarries and carving locales throughout the country. When the Depression hit, many of the Italian immigrants returned to Italy, due to the lack of employment opportunities in the United States.<sup>7</sup> Others, such as Thoney Pietro and his family, remained and continued to find work thanks to their skills and reputation. The Pietros became highly influential in Morgantown's New Deal construction projects.

The Pietros immigrated to the United States in 1896, where they initially settled in Pittsburgh. Several Pietros had been accomplished masons in Italy and honed their skills as they worked in the United States. Thoney and James Pietro, plus some of their extended family, came to Morgantown in 1911, and embarked on a career paving streets and sidewalks. They also constructed walls and buildings in and around Morgantown. The Pietro Paving and Construction Company, incorporated in 1912 with Thoney's brothers, James<sup>8</sup>, became a substantial general contractor in the region, and worked throughout the area in Pennsylvania and West Virginia. The physical characteristics of many of the MPD walls can be seen in Pietro's buildings and wall construction prior to the New Deal. These include the use of wall caps, or coping stones, raised mortar joints, ashlar coursing, and the use of weep holes which were both used by pre-depression Pietro work, and also common characteristics to New Deal work.. An example of this work is the house at 106 Wilson Street in Morgantown, though here Thoney employed a random coursing.<sup>9</sup>

Records from the period indicate heavy involvement from all members of the Pietro family in WPA projects, but particularly James Pietro, the aforementioned Thoney Pietro's brother. All of his correspondence with other foreman, regional offices and the Army Corps of Engineers is well recorded in his collection at the West Virginia and Regional History Center. One such example is letters to Pittsburgh, P.A. Army Corps of Engineers office, and the Safety Director at the WPA Fairmont, W.V. regional office. The collection also contains his work logs, showing a dedicated man who often worked overtime and on weekends. He was the designer and foreman for the Deckers Creek project, submitting the design plan himself to the Pittsburgh Army Corps of Engineers office. It was stated by local newspapers that his plan for Deckers Creek would "eliminate flooding of the creek, eliminate the sewage and mosquito problem, furnish a good road out of the business districts, and make possible

<sup>6</sup>Gillespie, Unpublished.

<sup>7</sup>Gillespie, Unpublished.

<sup>8</sup> Herron, "Researching Historic Buildings"

<sup>9</sup> Morgantown Magazine, "Who Built Morgantown"

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the use of grounds along the creek for playgrounds and parks.” This project became one of the biggest in the area, along with the Richwood Avenue wall. From this project, we can see that the Pietros were often hired as foremen when their business was not receiving work. As experienced foremen, the Pietros taught WPA’s unemployed laborers masonry techniques and oversaw work.

James Pietro also worked on the Richwood Avenue wall, as prior stated, which the newspapers reported at the time would be, “The greatest single civic improvement in the history of Morgantown... We refer to the construction of Richwood Avenue where 50-foot walls, subzero temperature, freaks of geological formations, red tape, unsolvable engineering problems combined to present such obstacles that more than one Government engineer, after inspecting the job, shook his head and said: ‘It can’t be done.’” The article continues by listing the men who were able to accomplish finishing the wall after all and states, “and James Pietro, considered one of the best stone men in the state...” We can see the reverence for the Pietro’s, particularly James in these two projects. On one occasion, the Pittsburgh Army Corps of Engineers even reached out to James Pietro on behalf of Jennings Randolph, Congressman at that time, to be sure he was present for a hearing being held regarding another project.<sup>10</sup>

There are many similarities between the work that James was involved in while he worked with the WPA, and the work that Thoney Pietro did in the area as the President and General Manager of the Pietro Paving and Construction Company. Occasionally, the city of Morgantown would contract out to the Pietro company to supplement the work being done by the WPA. There are several instances of them working on projects together or in close proximity, as there is documentation of James working on the Richwood wall as a stone mason and pictorial evidence of Thoney’s paving crew working on Richwood Avenue at the same time. The two brothers were prolific and the echoes of their work are still felt throughout North Central West Virginia and beyond.

The overall character of Morgantown’s landscape is shaped by the abundance of stone walls throughout the city. Though many of these walls existed prior to the New Deal Programs, a large percentage of the extant environment is attributable to construction during the New Deal time period, as borne out by reports of projects’ progress in Morgantown city council minutes of the period. The impact of these walls is attributable to the style characteristics, such as the use of rough faced ashlar which produces a highly textured surface and appearance and the use of ashlar coursing, which provides a more regular uniform appearance to the walls. In comparison with other New Deal resources in West Virginia, particularly CCC construction in state parks, where the predominant coursing is rubble or random coursed ashlar, the ashlar walls of Morgantown impart a more urban character to the landscape than the pastoral rusticism of the parks system.

### **Comparisons with other New Deal resources in West Virginia**

Other New Deal Era Stone Resources were studied during the course of this MPD preparation<sup>11</sup>. The characteristics of these resources outside of Morgantown were documented to provide a comparative analysis with the resources within Morgantown. Morgantown’s stone resources generally incorporate the following characteristics:

- Ashlar stones.
- Cap or coping stones.
- Mostly no weep holes, though some appear occasionally.
- Coursing is generally a modified Flemish bond.
- Raised rectangular mortar joints.

<sup>10</sup> James Pietro paper ephemera 1933-1943

<sup>11</sup> Gioulis, Michael, “Exhibit of Selected Walls”

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- Mortar:
  - rough texture.
  - gray/tan color.
  - aggregate, sand, contains white, clear, tan/brown, and black sand.
  - aggregate edges are rounded, indicating river sand, not crushed.
- The use of buttresses for larger or taller walls.
- The use of battering.
- Often include a stone cartouche or plaque.

Other stone resources identified statewide during the investigation include:

- Mount Hope Athletic Field, and Stadium Terrace Apartments retaining walls (since demolished), Mt. Hope WV, 1938/1939. The walls at the center entrance of the stadium are coursed ashlar stone in varying sizes. The joints are slightly concave raked and mortar consists of tan with red, white and darker color sand. As you move away from the center of the wall the stones get more irregular and are triangular and trapezoidal in shape.
- Oak Hill High School retaining wall, Oak Hill WV, 1937. Stones are randomly sized and coursed with raised trapezoidal mortar joints. They are rough faced and have no labels or margins.
- Plateau Medical Center Retaining and Landscape walls, Oak Hill, WV, 1937. The joints on this wall are raised rectangular and there are weep holes at the base of the wall. It has a random coursed ashlar. Portions of the wall have a cap composed of header stones.
- Town of Anstead, WV, miscellaneous walls and retaining walls, 1936. The rough faced stone walls have raised joints and coursed ashlar with irregular random coursed sections.
- Slab Fork Stream Wall and walls on Moran Avenue, Mullens, WV, 1935. Here a random, almost rubble coursing with flush joints is used in the stream wall, while ashlar coursing with flush joints is used on the residential retaining wall sites.
- East West Stadium, Fairmont, WV, 1937/1940. This is an extremely long wall, approximately two thousand three hundred feet, surrounding a football playing field and recreation site, including a swimming pool. It is tall and forms the support for the bleacher seating. Stones are rubble, or fieldstone patterns. Mortar joints are raised.
- Old Industrial Home for Girls and City Park wall, Salem, WV. The retaining walls surrounding the Industrial Home are random coursed ashlar with flush joints. The wall surrounding the recreation park has an interesting unique coursing pattern consisting of headers that extend the height of two courses, alternating which courses are connected. Mortar joints are flush and there is a large cap. The site includes sixty one acres and the wall is approximately one thousand two hundred feet in length.
- The Spruce Street Retaining Wall and Steps, Thomas WV, 1938. This huge retaining wall runs the length of Spruce Street between First and Third Streets along a north-south axis. There is a monumental stairway with access between Second Street and East Avenue. There are stones which may be considered headers and occasionally there are two or three stones forming a course though generally the wall is considered random coursed ashlar. The joints are smooth and flush with a very rough texture in the mortar and the mortar has large sand aggregates which are a tan color. The size of the stones decreases from the base to the top. The entire wall is buttressed and there are weep pipes.

## Technology of development of style, type, and method of construction<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Tracy, "New Deal Era Stone Walls in Units of the National Park Service"

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Though there is not a definitive manual distributed by the WPA outlining how walls should be constructed either in or outside NPS units, Guy B. Arthur of Great Smoky Mountains National Park did write several manuals to serve as a “general guide to good practices and procedures.”<sup>13</sup>

Arthur’s “General Rules for Stone Setting” include these, which apply to Morgantown’s resources:

1. Vertical joint lines should be broken at every course....
2. When the wall is too thick for long bond stones, headers should be used at frequent intervals....
  - a. This is true of most of the walls in the MPD area. They contain header stones set at varying intervals.
3. When stratified stones are used, they should lie on the natural bed — the bed on which they lay in the quarry
  - a. This applies as a general rule of thumb in all stone masonry work. It is called a bedding plane. The stones in the MPD area are set thus. When the stone is set with the natural strata on a vertical plane, called face bedding, it is prone to delamination and deterioration from moisture infiltration.
4. Joints should be thin and completely filled with mortar...
5. Large stones should be used in the bottom courses, the thickness of the course decreasing towards the top of the wall.
  - a. This is exhibited in the Deckers Creek wall.
6. The rougher the stones are, the thicker the mortar joints will be.<sup>14</sup>

After detailing optimal width, color, type, and texture of joints and explaining bonds in the context of making an exposed wall visually appealing, Arthur included a chart of types. He also discussed the three “Classes of Masonry.” The stone walls in Morgantown are generally either rubble or ashlar. Rubble walls lack uniform joints, while ashlar is stone dressed to allow uniform joints. Arthur had no particular preference for which type should be used but included definitions and advice for both. As a practical guide, the manual concludes with a glossary of key terms as well as a chart helping to indicate the amount of supplies and mortar necessary to build walls of varying length.

Though not intended as a specification or construction manual, the general guidelines enumerated in Arthur’s book can be seen in the work in Morgantown during the New Deal Era. The resources in the MPD follow these guidelines. They provide a method of construction common to all the resources within the MPD.

## F. Associated Property Types

### Retaining, Freestanding, and Other Stone Walls

Property types associated with the New Deal Stone Walls MPD are associated with the category of “Highways, roads, and streets” of the construction division which saw to the construction of both retaining walls and other stone walls included within the multiple property documentation. These are civil engineering projects as opposed to other public works of the period, such as Schools, Municipal buildings, Government buildings, etc. The property types imperative to this document are retaining walls and other walls, including free standing, such as at property lines, surrounding gardens, landscape walls, etc. This includes elements located within the

<sup>13</sup> Flint-McClelland, “A New Deal for State Parks”

<sup>14</sup> Arthur, “Brick and Stone work”

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walls such as garages, stairs, including cheek walls, storage or other rooms and spaces within the wall or beneath stairs and landings.

**Description of property type:**

The characteristics of eligible resources include:

- Ashlar stone, approximately 8-12 inches tall made of:
  - sandstone.
- Cap or coping stones:
  - Most, but not all resources contain cap stones, or a cap of concrete slurry. The caps were both flush and projecting slightly from the walls. There does not appear to be a consistent or predominant technique.
- There are generally no weep holes in the face of the wall, although some do appear occasionally.
- Coursing is generally a modified Flemish bond having two or three stretcher stones separated by a header in every course. Occasionally the spacing is greater, 4 or 5 stretchers per header, but 2 or 3 is more prevalent.
- Raised rectangular mortar joints:
  - These were used almost exclusively, although there are some instances of flush or concave joints.
- Mortar:
  - rough texture.
  - gray/tan color.
  - aggregate, sand, contains white, clear, tan/brown, and black sand.
  - aggregate edges are rounded, indicating river sand, not crushed.
- The use of buttresses for larger or taller walls.
- The use of battering, where the base of the wall is wider than the upper portion, for taller or longer walls.
- Stone cartouches or plaques with dates and/or New Deal Program acronyms.

In addition to the specific construction techniques and details described above, setting, environment and landscapes design characteristics that classify eligibility include:

- Lawn area behind wall as front yard of subject property.
- Walls support sidewalks and streets. This applies to longer, taller walls, such as Richwood Avenue.
- Directly on sidewalks or roads at lot lines, not recessed.
- Stairs within walls are all recessed with cheek walls, rather than projecting from the wall.
  - They are mostly perpendicular to the wall.
- Garages are often built into the wall, recessed into the residential front yards.

The Richwood Avenue walls are a good example. They conform to many of the conventions, but not all; many of the individual stones used in the wall are much larger than other walls encountered and the joints are concave rather than raised. The size difference is likely related to the increased height of the wall and its function to support an entire road, rather than only a lawn area.

**Associative Characteristics:**

Resources in the MPD must be associated with the New Deal Era Programs. They must have been constructed using New Deal Era Programs, such as the WPA, PWA, CCC, and FERA.

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They must have been constructed in the period between 1933 and 1942. They may have been built by Italian masons, particularly the Pietro Paving and Construction Company, or have been constructed by unskilled laborers participating in New Deal Programs.

They may be associated with larger New Deal projects, such as an airport, recreational park, and transportation systems like bridges, roads, and culverts.

They may be associated with residential development during the period 1933-1943.

**Geography:**

Resources eligible with the MPD are:

- Located on steep or hilly terrain that necessitates retaining walls.
- Taller walls located adjacent to, defining edges, or within pastoral park settings (Richwood Wall and park).
- In creek settings, such as the wall at the curve in Deckers Creek.
- Located within an urban setting or within city boundaries.

**Property Type Significance:**

All eligible stone walls are related to the historic contexts enumerated. The important aspects of the historic contexts that the property type relates to include:

The properties were all constructed during the period of significance for the MPD, 1933-1943. Dates are confirmed using the extant inscribed panels or through research. Research includes reports provided to Morgantown City Council meetings by the public works official on progress of construction for each project, or identified by street or address. All were constructed using funds provided by various agencies of the New Deal. All were constructed and exhibited characteristics of stone wall construction enumerated in the guidelines in use at the time for New Deal Programs. They all follow stylistic and methods and types of construction prevalent in stone wall construction related to New Deal Era stonework. Though some of these construction techniques were common prior to the New Deal Era, they were continued and used during the period of significance. They also relate to the masons and workers active in the Morgantown area in the period, such as Thoney and James Pietro. In fact some of the properties were actually constructed by Pietro or his construction company.

The characteristics that are exhibited include, scale of the stone walls and their elements; coursing of the stones; mortar types and profiles; the use of weeps and buttresses for some of the larger walls; the existence of plaques or cartouches inscribed with program acronyms and dates; and the use of caps on the walls.

In terms of landscape features, all the resources are associated with changes in grade of elevation of properties and roads. They were necessitated by the changes in grade and the need for retaining walls in an urban environment. The properties all define the street wall and continuous property line necessary to create outdoor spaces in the urban environment. They define the property line, edge of sidewalk, edge of road and the space between these elements and their interrelationships.

The properties also exhibit visual characteristics that provide an ambience to the historic setting. This includes the rhythm and patterns of the stones in a wall, the texture provided by a rough faced stone; the colors provided by the types of stones used; and the fact that the stones were locally quarried and are part of the environment of Morgantown. The stone walls also blend in with the extant architecture and landscape of Morgantown at the time, having the same characteristics of materials, texture, color, appearance, and methods of construction.

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**Areas of Significance and criteria for listing:**

The Property types will be significant locally under Criterion C for their association with the types and methods of construction, materials and elements of stone wall construction associated with the New Deal Era Programs in Morgantown, Monongalia County, West Virginia. These walls are important examples of construction techniques employed by New Deal Programs which have become a prominent part of the landscape of West Virginia's infrastructure in the time since they were made.

These walls are also significant under Criterion A as they speak to the social history and greater governmental and political landscape of the time they were created in. How these walls were created speaks to three things: What citizens were asking for, what Morgantown's city government was prioritizing, and what these New Deal programs were willing to approve. In that we get a better understanding of prioritizations during a significant time period in the city, state, and the nation's history. They also provided jobs to out or work laborers when they were desperately needed which ended up improving the lives of many within the city, by providing both jobs, but also the creation of infrastructure.

**Property Type Registration Requirements:**

To be eligible, resources in the MPD should be recognizable through the construction techniques, joints, stone characteristics, etc. common to those recorded. These property types are listed under *description of property type*, page 13.

Since all of these walls should be assessed for eligibility under Criteria A and C, a key component of an individual wall's eligibility should be its integrity of construction and location. As such, walls should meet the following requirements:

1. The wall must have been constructed between 1933 and 1943 by a New Deal Program.
2. The height of the wall, as a key characteristic, should not be altered from the original height as it was built.
3. Walls of any length should maintain over fifty percent of the original length of the wall as it was built.
4. There should be no significant mortar replacement, and on a case by case basis it should be considered whether the mortar was replaced with a mortar with a similar texture, color and sand composition, as opposed to replaced with a dissimilar or inappropriate mortar replacement.

**Integrity:**

Properties should have integrity as discussed within each aspect noted below.

**Location:** All of the resources are in their original locations. They must be so to be eligible.

**Setting:** The properties are associated with the landscape features that, for the most part, necessitate their existence. The terrain Morgantown dictates that often there is a grade differential between the building site and the road or sidewalk adjacent to the property. It is therefore necessary to have retaining walls to take full advantage of the lot's usable space.

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When the property type is not a retaining wall, it delineates the relationship of public space, streets and sidewalks, from private space, the building lot. This applies when the property type is a wall at the property edge or surrounding a lot.

**Design:** The property type design relates to the masonry techniques and characteristics identified for New Deal Era resources. These include the coursing, size, configuration of the stones, as well as the texture composition, structural characteristics and appearance of the mortar joints. The use of buttresses and battering for the taller walls is also a design characteristic. Eligible properties must retain these characteristics.

**Materials:** Materials representative of the property types are stone, concrete and mortar. These must be present for the property to be eligible.

**Workmanship:** Craftsmanship is evident in the masonry construction, as in the coursing, joint techniques, and buttress construction. Eligible property types will exhibit this workmanship of skilled masons. Also, the ashlar configuration of the stones, with their rectilinear shapes and well defined lines are workmanship traits.

**Feeling:** The feeling of the property types is clearly the expression of the New Deal Era construction techniques. The stone construction is readily identifiable as a New Deal Era structure. Almost all resources constructed by the New Deal Era Programs, those within this MPD and throughout the state and nation, were of stone with recognizable textures, coursing, patterns and construction techniques. Looking at these resources within the MPD evokes the period of significance of the MPD.

**Association:** The resources in the MPD all are associated with the New Deal Era and constructed with funds provided by these programs. It is clear from their appearance and fabric that the resources are the original New Deal Era elements. Not only do they exhibit the construction characteristics of the programs, some also contain specific elements to identify them with the program. Some walls documented in the survey include cartouches or plaques that were inscribed with the acronyms of the programs that funded their construction. When these elements are present, there is an obvious direct link to the significance of the MPD.

## G. Geographic Data

The MPD encompasses the corporate limits of the City of Morgantown, Monongalia County, West Virginia as is shown in their 2024 zoning map.<sup>15</sup>

## H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods:

The New Deal Stone Resources, Morgantown Monongalia County, WV MPD is based upon two historic resources surveys conducted by Michael Gioulis, Historic Preservation Consultant in 2015 and 2017. The New Deal Era Architecture and History Survey of Morgan District and Morgantown, West Virginia was an effort by the Morgantown Historic Commission (HLC) to identify and document the architectural and historical resources located in Monongalia County. The survey identified and recorded sites associated with New Deal Era Programs in four quadrangles of Morgan District in Monongalia County: Morgantown North, Morgantown South, Masontown, and Lake Lynn. The survey was funded by the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office and focused on identifying stone retaining walls and stone resources. The first phase survey area encompassed approximately eight hundred and eighty three thousand (883,000) acres and yielded sixty three

<sup>15</sup> "Morgantown Zoning Map"



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(63) identifying stone resources. Due to the rural and undeveloped nature of much of Monongalia County during the New Deal, almost all of the resources identified are located within the city limits of Morgantown. Comparison of county road maps from 1933 to 1937 shows few paved roads during the time period, which translated into limited construction projects on roads and retaining walls in the county.

As a result of this finding, the second phase survey concentrated on sites within the city of Morgantown's neighborhoods, including: downtown, Evansdale, Greenment, Wiles Hill, Woodburn, Sabraton, and Seneca. Stone culverts and curbs were included in Phase 1 but not Phase 2. The Phase 2 survey encompassed approximately six thousand seven hundred and eighty (6,780) acres. The survey documented seventy two (72) stone resources.

The projects were a joint venture between the firm of Michael Gioulis Historic Preservation Consultant, who acted as the main consultant, and West Virginia University Public History Program's Historic Preservation classes, under two professors, Jenny Boulware and Jennifer Thornton. Class students provided field and research time to the project. The consultant met with the class volunteers to train them on resources and survey methods.

Boundary maps provided by the Historic Landmark Commission were used for initial survey purposes. County road maps and topographic maps were then consulted and boundaries delineated on these. A city map provided by the Morgantown Development Department proved to be adequate to cover the entire survey area where resources were located. The city map was used for final report purposes.

The first step in the survey process was to meet with the Morgantown Historic Landmarks Commission and West Virginia University professors to review the survey process, agree on the boundaries and methodology, and gather any pertinent materials to the project.

Historic maps, tax maps, City of Morgantown Development Department maps, County Road maps and USGS topographic maps were utilized to set the boundaries for the survey area.

In all phases of the project, student volunteers were assigned field work areas in town which were close to campus. The outlying areas and more rural boundaries were covered by the consultant. Survey teams either walked or drove the survey area looking for and recording stone walls, curbs and culverts which were considered to be built by the New Deal programs.

USGS maps and city maps were annotated with all documented and undocumented stone resources identified in the research and field work. Any resource identified in the research was noted as well as those observed in the field which may have been from the New Deal Era.

Research at first did not reveal the locations of the stone structures. Many resources were examined including but not limited to: Thoney Pietro Papers, 1911 to 1954 and 1899 to 1950; WVU Institutes for History of Technology, and Industrial Archeology Records, Boxes 3,4,5,9,55 and 67; West Virginia Archives and History, New Deal Archives, New Deal Archive and Manuscript Resources; the West Virginia Blue Book, various years; and the Annual Report of the States Road Commission (1932-1941), West Virginia Department of Highways, West Virginia Archives, Charleston, West Virginia. These did not prove very fruitful in identifying sites. In addition, national sources were consulted such as The Living New Deal website, the New Deal in West Virginia website, and the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum website. It was not until the

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Morgantown City Clerk Council Journal, Books 18-25 were examined that possible New Deal program locations were identified. A complete list of resources examined was attached to the survey reports.

Survey numbers were added to the field and study maps and correspond to the field notes. Stone resources that have lost integrity through modifications were noted as not eligible but were still documented on the West Virginia Historic Property Inventory form. Sites that could definitely be identified with New Deal Era Programs through research were evaluated as to their eligibility within a potential Multiple Property Documentation of New Deal Era stone work. Sites that were observed in the field as possible New Deal Era stonework but could not be verified as such in the research were noted for additional research to confirm the association. Sites were also evaluated as to their integrity of historic fabric and significance in order to determine their eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places. Photographs were taken of all resources within the survey area.

The field and research information was transferred to the West Virginia Historic Property Inventory (WVHPI) forms.

The consultant evaluated the resources to determine the significance of the resources. Evaluation was conducted following the National Register of Historic Places Criteria for Evaluation.

UTM references were noted for each resource in the report and on the inventory forms. The West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office Interactive GIS Map was used for the USGS topographic UTM references and individual WVHPI form maps.

## Historic Contexts

The New Deal Stone Resources, Morgantown, Monongalia County, WV 1933-1943 historic contexts are, by definition, a relatively narrow selection. The purpose of the surveys on which this MPD is based was to identify resources associated with New Deal Programs. As such, the derived contexts for the MPD focus on New Deal programs, New Deal resources, and New Deal period of significance. The geographic area was determined, again, by the focus of the survey work, the Morgantown WV vicinity and Monongalia County. Once the initial survey was complete it was decided that the work and subsequent MPD should concentrate in the Morgantown City limits, due to the preponderance of resources researched and identified within the city. Outside of the city only a few resources were identified. Therefore, the MPD focuses on Morgantown City.

Other sections of West Virginia also contain New Deal Program resources, including walls, but comparative study of these resources shows that the form, property types definition etc. for those locations are somewhat different than in Morgantown. This is considered to be related to the existence of a significant mason in Morgantown, Thoney Pietro, who was active before the New Deal and continued through the program and beyond.

## Significant Property Types

As in determining the historic contexts, the significant property types of the New Deal Stone Resources, Morgantown, Monongalia County, WV MPD are also limited in definition and association. The survey projects focused on stone resources, limited to walls and street features. Therefore, having the body of research material and field work documentation derived from the surveys, selection of property types was straightforward. The

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selection is based on the stylistic characteristics of the construction methods during the New Deal Era time period.

The resources identified in the surveys were all walls or street fixtures of some kind. They all were related in function to landscape features and the terrain of the geographic area. Morgantown's terrain dictates the necessity for retaining walls, and these are the preponderant property types identified and included in the MPD.

The research phase identified methods of the stone construction and, particularly, methods promoted by the National Park Service for projects, including CCC work. Types of mortar, mortar joints, stone species, stone shapes, coursing and configurations, physical characteristics and dimensions of walls are presented in those documents. The field work further refined the identification of property types by providing a body of research examples of the types and details of property types to be included. These include characteristics such as stone size and shape, mortar joint shape, wall configuration, and location that differentiate the resources in Morgantown from others in West Virginia.

They all are of stone construction with similar detail characteristics, as defined in section F. Though there are stone resources from time periods outside the MPD period of significance, these do not relate to New Deal Programs, therefore they cannot be considered eligible.

**Integrity:**

Integrity requirements for listing eligible properties within the MPD are based on the knowledge of the condition of extant properties. This was derived through field study of the resources documented in the survey work. In addition to the resources documented on West Virginia Historic Property Inventory forms, many resources were observed and recorded in the reports for future study. The result is a large database on which to form a predictive model. The integrity requirement is based on the knowledge of the condition of the properties documented and observed.

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**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

New Deal Stone Walls in Morgantown, WV

Name of Multiple Property Listing

West Virginia

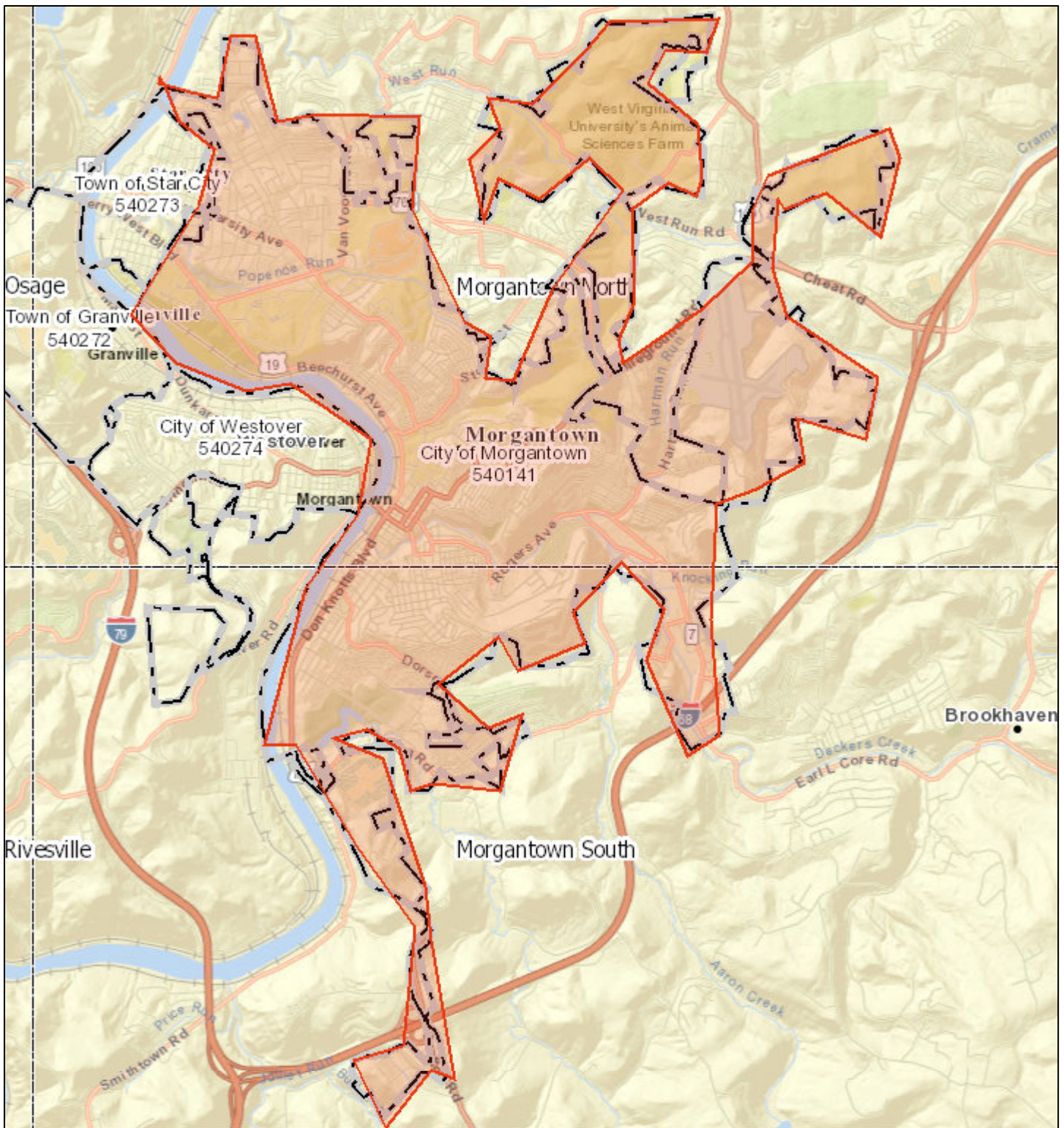
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# MPD Boundaries - Morgantown City limits



December 30, 2021

1:72,224 0 0.5 1 2 mi

## Notes:

New Deal Stone Walls in Morgantown, Monongalia County, WV 1933-1943