

## United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

**1. Name of Property**Historic name: Henrietta Dismukes Hospital Nurses Home

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**2. Location**Street & number: 21 Lavana StreetCity or town: Kimball State: WV County: McDowell CountyNot For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐**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 at the following level(s) of significance:

    national     statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A     B     C     D

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property     meets     does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ☐ removed from the National Register
- ☐ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☒
- Public – Local ☐
- Public – State ☐
- Public – Federal ☐

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**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
District	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site	<input type="checkbox"/>
Structure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Object	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: None

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

DOMESTIC/institutional housing

**Current Functions**

In progress

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

### Materials:

Foundation: Concrete; Walls: Stucco; Roof: Asphalt shingles

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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#### Summary Paragraph

The Henrietta Dismukes Hospital Nurses Home is a modest, multi-unit residential building located on its original site at 21 Lavana Street in the small Town of Kimball, West Virginia. The 1 ½ story, rectangular Nurses Home building is 25 feet wide and 55 feet long. The building's foundation is concrete, its exterior walls are made of stucco, and its roof is asphalt shingle. The interior walls are made of lath and plaster. The building is situated on a 0.11-acre lot and is adjacent to the former site of the Henrietta Dismukes Hospital. The hospital burned down in 2013 and is now a vacant lot. The Henrietta Dismukes Hospital was reported to be one of the largest privately Black owned hospitals during its time of operation. Despite alterations to some of the building materials, the property still retains historic integrity.

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#### Narrative Description

**Location:** Henrietta Dismukes Hospital Nurses Home is located on its original site at 21 Lavana Street in the Town of Kimball, West Virginia. It is situated on lot number 99 in tax parcel maps for the Town of Kimball. It is located off Route 52. The Henrietta Dismukes Nurses Home is adjacent to the former site of the Henrietta Dismukes Hospital that occupied lots 100 and PT 101. The hospital burned down in 2013 and is now a vacant, grass and gravel lot.

**Setting:** Kimball, West Virginia is a small, rural town located in McDowell County, West Virginia. It has a population of 145, according to the United States census records. There are 77

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recorded housing units within town limits, and the median age of the residents is 63.6.<sup>1</sup> The town of Kimball is approximately 0.25 square miles in size.<sup>2</sup>

The town of Kimball is on the Norfolk Southern Railway (formerly Norfolk and Western) network. "Kimball" was named for Frederick Kimball, who was president of the Norfolk & Western Railway. In the early 1900s, Kimball was a small commercial, residential, and railroading community that served the surrounding coal mines and coal camps. The town featured a bank, general stores, pharmacy, a movie theater, small hotels, and an African American hospital known as the Harrison Memorial Hospital. Today Kimball remains a small, isolated town, primarily residential in nature, with several churches and little economic activity.

**Exterior:** The Henrietta Dismukes Nurses Home does not seem to adhere strongly to any particular architectural style. It is a 1 ½ story, rectangular building with a moderate pitch, slightly overhanging, jerkinhead (hip-on-gable) roof. It is 25 feet wide and 55 feet long. The exterior is clad in white stucco siding and a black asphalt shingle roof. A single hipped dormer protrudes from the south side of the roof.

An arched corner porch is located on the building's southwest corner. A second porch projects from the south side closer to the southeast corner. This porch has a brick base with five non-historic vinyl and aluminum square columns, with railings, supporting an original jerkinhead roof. Between the columns and the porch roof is a band of dentils, which appears to be original. The porches were located with the Henrietta Dismukes Hospital in mind; it stood to the Nurses Home's immediate south. There are five concrete steps leading up to the corner porch; and two concrete steps leading up to the front porch.

Windows are abundant on every side of the exterior. On the west side, there is a pair of one-over-one windows, a one-over-one window on the corner porch, and four small single pane attic windows grouped together. The south side has five one-over-one windows on the ground level; a single pane basement window; and a single pane window on the dormer. The east side has three single pane basement windows; three single pane attic windows; two one-over-one windows on the ground level; and a narrow, vertical center window with four panes of stained glass. The north side has six one-over-one windows on the ground floor and four single pane basement windows. Except for the stained glass one, all the windows in the building are non-historic replacements. Originally, they were all wood sash, and most were six-over-one; the dormer window had four panes.

A cast iron sign saying "Nurses Home" once hung on the west side gable. It was rediscovered in the building's attic and may be rehung in its original location if possible.

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<sup>1</sup> Kimball Town, West Virginia, United States Census Bureau, 2025,  
[https://data.census.gov/profile/Kimball\\_town,\\_West\\_Virginia?g=160XX00US5443780](https://data.census.gov/profile/Kimball_town,_West_Virginia?g=160XX00US5443780)

<sup>2</sup> "Census.Gov Gazetteer," Internet Archive: Wayback Machine, 2012,  
[https://web.archive.org/web/20120702145235/http://www.census.gov/geo/www/gazetteer/files/Gaz\\_places\\_national.txt](https://web.archive.org/web/20120702145235/http://www.census.gov/geo/www/gazetteer/files/Gaz_places_national.txt).

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**Interior:** The Nurses Home has eleven rooms, an attic, and a basement, which is true to its original layout. The interior contains lath and plaster walls, wood flooring (some of which is covered in linoleum), and non-historic drop ceilings. The interior is also divided in the middle with a partition wall, making it appear as two separate living quarters. It is probable that this division was original to the design due to the building housing both male and female hospital staff.

The corner porch door opens into a reception room. The reception room is 14'6" x 11'6" area that contains a double replacement modern one-over-one window on the westerly side, and a single replacement modern one-over-one window on the northerly side. The walls are plaster with no insulation, and the ceiling is a modern drop ceiling. The plaster is crumbling and may need to be replaced. The room contains the original trim, which can possibly be rehabilitated. There is modern linoleum on top of the original wood flooring. This has the possibility of being rehabilitated and there are no soft spots on the flooring of this room.

The reception room then opens to three-doorways leading to a walkthrough closet, bedroom #1 and a large open room that appears to have once been the kitchen and dining area. Off the large open room is bedroom #2 with a closet, and next to it a bathroom. There is a partition wall that separates the house into two sections. It appears that the nurses home quartered males and females during its operation, and the partition wall is evidence of the separate quarters. Bedroom #1 is 8' x 11'6" and contains a single replacement one-over-one window on the westerly side and the southerly side. The large open room is 16' x 11'6" with two single replacement one-over-one windows on the southerly side. The window and floor trim are original and have the potential to be kept and repaired. The plaster is crumbling and may not have the possibility of being kept and repaired. There is a small closet between the windows that possibly could have served as food storage. Bedroom #2 is 11' x 8' area with a closet. The room has one single replacement modern one-over-one window on the northerly side. The bathroom is an 8' x 5' room with one single replacement modern one-over-one window on the northerly side. There are five horizontal panel interior doors still intact on bedroom #2 and the bathroom, which appear to be original doors.

Entering from the front (south) porch, the door opens to a 13' x 3' hallway. At the entrance of the hallway is a pulley system that pulls down wooden stairs leading to the attic. The pulley system consists of window weights located in the walls that are tied with rope to lift and lower the attic staircase. It is believed that these are also original to the building. New rope had been tied to these weights to make them usable. They are still able to be utilized to lower the staircase to this day. The attic is floored and is the length of the building. There are small windows on the two opposite sides of the attic. These windows have been replaced with modern one panel windows.

The hallway then connects to a 14' x 3' hallway that has multiple rooms connecting to it. The first room off the hallway is a 10' x 5' bathroom. The bathroom contains an olive-green porcelain sink and a matching green bathtub. The sink appears to be the original and can be repairable. There is a replacement modern one-over-one window on the northerly side. The next room along the hallway is bedroom #3. The bedroom is 7' x 10' and contains a single replacement modern one-over-one window on the northerly side. The room has linoleum flooring on top of what appears to be another type of tile flooring on top of the original wood

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flooring. This linoleum and second tile flooring can be taken off and the original wood flooring can possibly be kept and repaired. The trim and ceiling have been replaced, and the walls have been painted over with white paint.

There is a 10' x 9' kitchen across from bedroom #3 that contains a double-bowl with double drainboard cast iron sink. The sink appears to be the original and is repairable. There is a food storage closet in the kitchen, and a single replacement modern one-over-one window on the southerly side. The window trim and floor trim are original and can be repaired. There is linoleum on top of the original wood flooring. There is a soft spot on the flooring in the front right corner of the room and this wood will need to be replaced.

Bedroom #4 is a 10' x 9' room with two replacement one-over-one windows on the easterly and northerly side. The room has linoleum flooring on top of the original wood flooring and it appears that the original wood flooring can be repaired. The walls have been covered with faux wood paneling and the original trim has been replaced. The dining room is 10' x 9' room with two single replacement windows on the southerly and easterly side. There is a stained-glass window in the dining room that appears to be original. There is also some original window and floor trim in the room that has the potential to be kept and repaired.

The basement of the building stretches the entire length of the building. It has a dirt floor with floor to ceiling structural pillars throughout it. It can only be accessed from an outdoor staircase on the southern side of the building. There is a door at the bottom of the staircase that allows access directly to the basement. A modern door has been installed to prevent further decay from pests and weather entering the basement. The basement also has seven total windows. There are three on the southerly side and four on the easterly side of the building. All windows are single pane modern windows that have been installed to prevent further decay from pests and weather entering the basement.

**Recent Alterations:** The property's current owner, the Mennonite Central Committee, conducted a series of repairs and renovations to the building in 2024-2025 to address years of neglect and deterioration. Some changes were sympathetic to the historic integrity, and some were not. In 2024, a new asphalt shingle roof was installed; the interior attic rafters were stabilized; the deteriorating rear (east side) chimney was removed; original windows were replaced with dual glazed Reliabilt Energy Star Certified one-over-one windows; new entry doors were installed; the exterior stucco was repaired and repainted; and the soffit was repaired. In 2025, new gutters were installed; the columns on the south side porch were replaced, and railing was added to the porch and its steps.

**Integrity:** The Nurses Home has experienced many changes that challenge its historic integrity. All the surviving six-over-one wood sash windows have been replaced with vinyl one-over-one windows, and the building's sole chimney (located on the east side) has been removed. The classical porch columns on the south porch (although it is unclear if they were original) have been replaced with square vinyl and aluminum columns. Vinyl and aluminum railing were also added to both the porch and its steps. All the building's entry doors are also non-historic. These changes negatively affect the integrity of Materials, Design, and Workmanship. The interior of

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the building, meanwhile, is significantly deteriorated and will require extensive rehabilitation of the walls, ceilings, flooring, plumbing, electrical and other interior repairs. Specific problems include water damage, wood rot, and crumbling plaster. There are also multiple soft spots in the flooring that will need to be addressed. Some of the original wood flooring, baseboard molding and window trim have the potential to be kept and rehabilitated. Perhaps the greatest impact on integrity has been the loss of the Henrietta Dismukes Hospital building. Its destruction in 2013 adversely impacts the integrity of Setting for the Nurses Home.

Despite these alterations, the Nurses Home still retains integrity and conveys its historic significance. The general form, massing, and interior layout of the building remain intact. Original materials such as the stucco, stained glass window, and some interior wood elements remain. Though the modern doors and windows do not resemble the original, the size and location of the openings remain the same. While the loss of the hospital building somewhat diminishes the Nurses Home's conspicuous association with medical history, its design is visually distinct from the surrounding residential, commercial, and religious properties, helping it to retain the look and feel of early twentieth century staff housing. Furthermore, aside from the lost hospital, the rest of the surrounding environment remains much as it was during the Period of Significance: a small, mixed-use residential and commercial neighborhood. Overall, the property still retains integrity of Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, and Association sufficient to meet National Register standards.



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## 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.

### Criteria Considerations

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

- ☒ 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Ethnic Heritage: Black

Health/Medicine

**Period of Significance**

1929-1932

**Significant Dates**

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

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

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

**Cultural Affiliation**

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

**Architect/Builder**

Architect: Hassel T. Hicks

Building Contractor: Lee J. Smith

Head Carpenter: James W. Snively

Heating/Plumbing: I. Lazarus

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Henrietta Dismukes Hospital Nurses Home is eligible for the National Register on the local level under *Criterion A: Health/Medicine* and *Ethnic Heritage: Black* for its important role in facilitating healthcare opportunities for the African American community in Kimball, McDowell County, and the Southern West Virginia coalfields. At the time of its opening, the Henrietta Dismukes Hospital was the largest privately-owned Black hospital in the United States. The adjacent Nurses Home provided living quarters for the hospital's staff; thus, it was important in sustaining the hospital's operations. The Home meets *Criteria Consideration A: Religious Properties* because, while currently owned by a religious organization (Mennonite Central Committee), it is significant under a non-religious historical theme that occurred prior to its present ownership. The Period of Significance begins in 1929 when the hospital opened and ends in 1932 when the hospital closed.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

*African American Communities, Segregation, and Healthcare in Southern West Virginia*

McDowell County, West Virginia was one of the leading coal producers in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century. Once a rural, isolated region, the construction of the Norfolk & Western Railroad through McDowell in the 1890s opened the county's vast coal deposits for outside markets. The coal mining boom that followed created an extensive number of jobs and in turn, brought tens of thousands of people into the county. African Americans made up a large portion of these new migrant workers. Within a few decades, McDowell County went from having virtually no Black population to one of the largest Black populations in the state.<sup>3</sup>

Thousands of African Americans migrated from Southern states to West Virginia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They came both to escape racial oppression and violence and in search of better economic opportunities. Most settled in the coalfields of Southern West Virginia. This was partially due to coal company agents who traveled to the southern United States to recruit Black labor. These agents promised immediate work, housing,

<sup>3</sup> Mark S. Myers, "McDowell County," e-WV: The West Virginia Encyclopedia, February 28, 2025, accessed August 5, 2025, <https://www.wvencyclopedia.org/entries/1577>; Joe Trotter, Jr., "African American Heritage," e-WV: The West Virginia Encyclopedia, September 23, 2024, accessed August 5, 2025, <https://www.wvencyclopedia.org/entries/18>.

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and better wages.<sup>4</sup> By 1910, the Black population in West Virginia had grown to 115,000.<sup>5</sup> In McDowell County specifically, African Americans made up 30% of the county's population and approximately one-third of the coal miners employed.<sup>6</sup>

The Town of Kimball was established in 1911, one of many coal and railroad communities to spring up in McDowell County during this period. It was named after Frederick Kimball who was Norfolk and Western Railway's (now Norfolk Southern Corporation) second president. The town became a melting pot of different ethnicities and cultures thanks to the various migrants and immigrants who located here. African Americans formed one of its largest demographics. After the First World War, residents of Kimball constructed a war memorial building to honor African American veterans of the conflict. McDowell County alone sent 1,500 Black soldiers to this war. The Kimball World War Memorial was the first African American-specific World War I memorial in the United States and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This building commemorates the contributions that African Americans in the area gave to American society both in the mines and abroad in the war.<sup>7</sup>

Racial segregation and discrimination were practiced to varying degrees in West Virginia. Many public and private facilities within the state, such as hospitals, schools, restaurants, and entertainment spaces, were segregated. Black communities responded by developing their own businesses, churches, newspapers, and organizations to meet their needs. Black physicians, lawyers, morticians, and other professionals opened practices to serve their communities. Black residents also successfully petitioned the state to create public Black institutions in the absence of integrated ones. By the 1920s, West Virginia had three Black colleges (two public, one private), several high schools, children's and nursing homes, and a sanitarium.<sup>8</sup>

Healthcare was an especially important concern for the state's African Americans. In coal communities, sick or injured Black coal miners and their families were forced to receive care in a separate wing of white majority hospitals. This care was almost always less adequate than what white individuals received. Because of this inadequate care, Black physicians opened and operated their own private hospitals to care for Black patients. Their numbers were small, however. In 1922, there were only 47 licensed Black physicians in all of West Virginia, and just four Black hospitals – Barnett Hospital in Huntington, Lomax Hospital and Mercer Sanitarium in

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<sup>4</sup> Trish Kahle, "Overview: Coal Mining and Labor Conflict," *Energy History Online*, Yale University, 2023, Coal Mining and Labor Conflict – Energy History (yale.edu); Tim Konhaus, "I Thought Things Would Be Different There": Lynching and the Black Community in Southern West Virginia, 1880-1933," *West Virginia History* 1, No. 2 (2007).

<sup>5</sup> "Migration of African Americans to West Virginia: Hinton Depot; Hinton, WV," National Park Service, January 2022, accessed August 5, 2025, <https://www.nps.gov/neri/planyourvisit/migration-of-african-americans-to-west-virginia-hinton-depot-hinton-wv.htm#:~:text=For%20nearly%20sixty%20years%2C%201870,denied%20them%20in%20other%20states.>

<sup>6</sup> "The McDowell Times and Black Education in McDowell County, West Virginia," Eastern Kentucky University Student Research, 2024.

<sup>7</sup> Margo Stafford, "Kimball War Memorial," e-WV: The West Virginia Encyclopedia, February 8, 2024, <https://www.wvencyclopedia.org/entries/1162>.

<sup>8</sup> Trotter, "African American Heritage."

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Bluefield, and Harrison Memorial Hospital in Kimball. They met an important need in West Virginia's Black communities, but in a segregated society the demand remained great.<sup>9</sup>

Dr. Roscoe Conklin Harrison was among the Black professionals that migrated to McDowell County and established his own private practice. He was born in Raleigh, North Carolina in 1880 and relocated to West Virginia around 1900. In 1915, he opened Harrison Memorial Hospital on Main Street (now US 52) in Kimball.<sup>10</sup> It was reported to be a twenty-bed facility. Harrison operated this hospital until his unexpected death in 1923. Left without its head physician, the hospital issued a national call for an applicant to take over Dr. Harrison's position. Dr. Henry Dodford Dismukes of Washington, D.C. answered this call and took up the position. He moved to Kimball in 1924 and started his work in Harrison Memorial Hospital.

*Dr. Henry Dismukes and the Henrietta Dismukes Hospital*

Dr. Henry Dodford Dismukes was born on August 11, 1889, in Troy, Alabama to Henrietta Dismukes. His father is unknown. Dr. Dismukes attended Selma University and graduated with a scientific degree in 1915.<sup>11</sup> He obtained his medical degree at Howard University and graduated on June 10, 1921.<sup>12</sup> He was involved with the university's monthly journal and published an article titled "Don'ts" addressing the freshman class of the "dos" and "don'ts" as a Howard student.<sup>13</sup> After his graduation, he was appointed assistant surgeon to Willard M. Lane at the Freedmen's Hospital (now Howard University Hospital) in Washington, D.C. He worked there for four years.<sup>14</sup> He met and married his wife, Grace, of Virginia, while in Washington, D.C.

One accomplishment by Dr. Dismukes that showcased his medical expertise was that he presented his paper about "Case Reports" in the hospital at the West Virginia Medical Society's (now known as West Virginia State Medical Association) twenty-second annual meeting. This meeting was recorded to have taken place in Bluefield, West Virginia on June 20-22, 1928. This society consisted of medical professionals in the state including doctors, dentists, and pharmacists. The Flat Top Medical Association also stated in this newspaper announcement that "this meeting will be the biggest meeting in the history of the Society. Prominent medical and dental clinicians have been invited." This further demonstrated that Dr. Dismukes was among highly regarded medical professionals in the field, not only by his local community, but by multiple different medical societies in the state. Dr. Dismukes presented his paper on June 21, 1928.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Dave Tabler, "Barnett Hospital: A Glimpse of Healthcare Racial Segregation," *Appalachian History*, December 9, 2022, <https://www.appalachianhistory.net/2022/12/barnett-hospital-a-glimpse-of-healthcare-racial-segregation.html>; T. Edward Hill, *Report of Bureau of Negro Welfare and Statistics 1921-22* (Charleston, WV: Tribune Printing Co., 1922), 21.

<sup>10</sup> "Colored Hospital for Charity Patients to be Started at Kimball," *Bluefield Daily Telegraph*, September 1926.

<sup>11</sup> "Selma University News," *The Selma Advocate*, May 29, 1915.

<sup>12</sup> "Howard University Graduates," *The Evening Star*, June 11, 1921.

<sup>13</sup> *The Howard University Journal*, 1917, page 8.

<sup>14</sup> "Jersey City, N.J." *The New York Age*, October 21, 1921, page 3.

<sup>15</sup> "West Virginia Medical Society to Meet," *Hinton Daily News*, June 18, 1928. Page 8.

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In 1928, while still serving as head physician of Harrison Memorial Hospital, Dr. Dismukes was approached by Dr. W. B. Stevens of Bluefield Sanitarium. The Sanitarium was a majority white hospital in Bluefield, West Virginia. The Sanitarium had signed contracts with multiple coal companies to treat miners and their families but decided that it did not want to serve Black people within their hospital. This decision forced the institution to search for a local Black physician to treat Black miners. Dr. Stevens proposed a business proposition for Dr. Dismukes to handle the treatment of Black patients from the Kimball and Northfork areas.

Under the terms of their agreement, Dr. Dismukes was to be paid \$3.50 per patient directly by Bluefield Sanitarium. However, to proceed with this arrangement, a larger hospital would need to be built. Dr. Stevens believed that Harrison Memorial Hospital was of inadequate size to accommodate the patients Dr. Dismukes would receive. To help persuade Dr. Dismukes into accepting this offer, Dr. Stevens stated that he would personally help him obtain financing to construct this hospital.

Dr. Dismukes verbally agreed to this contract with Bluefield Sanitarium and began building the new hospital. He purchased a piece of property previously known as the "Old Totten Estate" from the Bralley family on September 1, 1928. The property ownership was recorded under Grace Dismukes' name.<sup>16</sup> Dr. Dismukes and Grace Dismukes put all their money towards buying this property and borrowed money from Grace's parents and from the local bank.

The original plan for this new hospital was to remodel a large home that was already on this property. However, Dr. Stevens said that this home would still not be large enough for what Bluefield Sanitarium had planned for this hospital. Dr. Dismukes proceeded to construct an entirely new building for this new hospital. He hired a well-known local architect, Hassel T. Hicks, to design the hospital.<sup>17</sup> Construction began on this new hospital on April 12, 1929.

The *Pittsburgh Courier*, a prominent Black owned national newspaper at the time, reported that the total cost of Dr. Dismukes' hospital was \$75,000.<sup>18</sup> This total included the purchased land, the materials used, the brand-new medical equipment installed, and labor used to build the hospital. The hospital officially opened on August 16, 1929, and Dr. Dismukes celebrated with a large gala.

Dr. Dismukes named this new institution the "Henrietta Dismukes Hospital," after his mother who passed a month prior to its opening. The *Pittsburgh Courier* reported that this brand-new hospital was the largest privately owned African American hospital in the United States. Dr. Dismukes stated himself that his hospital was the "largest privately owned, ultra-modern, 50 bed Negro hospital in the world."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Nellie Bralley to Grace Dismukes, 1 September 1928, McDowell County, WV, Deed Book 112: 27, McDowell County Recorder of Deeds.

<sup>17</sup> Dismukes vs Bluefield Sanitarium, No. 48, L.D. Wilmore (2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit, 1931).

<sup>18</sup> "Dismukes Tells of His \$75,000 Hospital," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, 1929. Page 11.

<sup>19</sup> "Dr. Dismukes Sues White Hospital for \$150,000," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, February 21, 1931. Page 11.

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The Nurses Home, constructed directly next to the hospital at its north side, housed the staff that worked with Dr. Dismukes. It was designed to have room for five nurses, plus a janitor and laborer. Nurses known to have worked at the Dismukes Hospital were Blanche Wilson, Yvonne McClanahan, Annie Jackson, Clara Payton, and Cecil Young. Wilson was the hospital's head nurse and superintendent. Joseph E. Brown was the assistant surgeon to Dr. Dismukes. Grace Dismukes was the secretary of the hospital. Dr. Dismukes also hired Thomas Hood and Charlie Reeves as the laborer and janitor for the hospital and Nurses Home. These individuals were listed on the 1930 census and stated that they were employed at Henrietta Dismukes Hospital.<sup>20</sup>

Dr. Dismukes built and opened Henrietta Dismukes Hospital under the verbal agreement he entered with Bluefield Sanitarium. Afterwards, he created a written version of the contract on September 9, 1929, that he and Dr. Stevens both signed, solidifying the arrangement made previously.<sup>21</sup>

Dr. Stevens' actions began to indicate that Bluefield Sanitarium did not plan to keep its promise within the contract. First, one month prior to the opening of Henrietta Dismukes Hospital, Dr. Stevens announced that he would be opening his own hospital in Welch, West Virginia as an extension of Bluefield Sanitarium. It would be named Stevens Clinic and would be located six miles west of Henrietta Dismukes Hospital. The announcement, published by the *Welch Daily* newspaper, disclosed that this hospital would care for both Black and white patients from the area.<sup>22</sup>

Second, Stevens Clinic signed a contract with Kopper's Coal Company, which operated in Kimball. This company employed most, if not all, miners in the Kimball and Northfork area of McDowell County. This contract stated that miners employed by Kopper's must receive medical care at Stevens Clinic and payment for treatment was taken directly out of their paychecks. If they preferred to receive medical care at other hospitals, such as Henrietta Dismukes Hospital, they would have to pay out of pocket along with the amount taken from their paychecks. This contract forced many miners to receive medical treatment from Stevens Clinic due to their inability to afford both the amount taken from and the out-of-pocket pay to receive medical care elsewhere. This caused a decline in the number of patients that Dr. Dismukes received. The patients that he received were the most expensive and most challenging cases, such as amputations.

Third, in 1930, Dismukes received his routine paperwork from Bluefield Sanitarium that he used to admit patients into his hospital. Since the opening of his hospital, the paperwork stated that "all colored patients were to receive care at Henrietta Dismukes Hospital." However, when Stevens Clinic was in its last stages of being built, the paperwork read "all colored patients to receive care at Stevens Clinic or Henrietta Dismukes Hospital."<sup>23</sup> This was a direct breach of the

<sup>20</sup> 1930 United States Census. McDowell County, WV.

<sup>21</sup> Dismukes vs Bluefield Sanitarium, No. 48, L.D. Wilmore (2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit, 1931).

<sup>22</sup> "Stevens Clinic Hospital Will be Built in Welch this Year; Unit of Bluefield Sanitarium," *The Welch Daily*, July 11, 1929.

<sup>23</sup> Dismukes vs Bluefield Sanitarium, No. 48, L.D. Wilmore (2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit, 1931).

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contract between Dr. Dismukes and Bluefield Sanitarium that stated he would receive all the Black coal miners in the area. By October 1930, Dr. Dismukes stopped receiving patients from the Bluefield Sanitarium entirely.<sup>24</sup>

Lastly, Dr. Dismukes had not been adequately paid his \$3.50 per patient as promised by Bluefield Sanitarium for his work at Henrietta Dismukes Hospital and this was the case for over a year. He routinely confronted Dr. Stevens with this, and Dr. Stevens promised him that he would get his pay eventually. This was a cycle that repeated itself until Stevens Clinic was finished being built. Once this hospital opened, Dr. Stevens offered Dr. Dismukes a reduced payment of \$2.50 instead of the promised original amount. Dr. Dismukes accepted this reduced pay. However, because he was in so much debt from the construction of Henrietta Dismukes Hospital and not being adequately paid, he offered to sell his hospital to Bluefield Sanitarium.<sup>25</sup> He believed that he could not escape this debt and concluded he may have been able to save himself financially by selling his hospital. The Sanitarium ultimately declined his offer, claiming financial hardships caused by the Great Depression.

Because Dr. Dismukes stopped receiving the patients that he was promised in his contract with Bluefield Sanitarium, he decided to sue the entity. He filed a lawsuit based on the fact the Sanitarium, as a corporation, breached their contract with him. As reported by the *Pittsburgh Courier*, this action made Dr. Dismukes the first Black man to take a white-owned corporation to court for a breach of contract in United States history.<sup>26</sup>

The trial took place in Princeton, Mercer County, West Virginia between March 30 and April 2, 1931. Mercer County was the home county of Bluefield Sanitarium. This trial was held before Hon. Howell M. Tanner and a jury of twelve citizens. Russell S. Ritz and John R. Pendleton were the attorneys for Dr. Dismukes and Crocket, Fox & Sanders, and Easley & French were the attorneys for Bluefield Sanitarium.<sup>27</sup>

More than 178 witnesses were summoned to testify on behalf of Dr. Dismukes, and 44 were summoned for the defense.<sup>28</sup> However, only 25 were cleared to testify. This is because the attorneys of Dr. Dismukes wanted witnesses to document the care that they received from Henrietta Dismukes Hospital. Bluefield Sanitarium's attorneys objected to this on the grounds that "no testimony had been introduced by the defense reflecting on the ability of the plaintiff [Dr. Dismukes] or his nurses, or on the condition of his hospital and was irrelevant to the case."<sup>29</sup> This objection was sustained.

The witness list for Dr. Dismukes consisted of mostly African American miners and families that spoke of their accessibility to receive care from Henrietta Dismukes Hospital. These witnesses

<sup>24</sup> Dismukes vs Bluefield Sanitarium, No. 48, L.D. Wilmore (2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit, 1931).

<sup>25</sup> Dismukes vs Bluefield Sanitarium, No. 48, L.D. Wilmore (2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit, 1931).

<sup>26</sup> "Dr. Dismukes Sues White Hospital for \$150,000," *The Pittsburgh Courier*, February 21, 1931. Page 11.

<sup>27</sup> Dismukes v Bluefield Sanitarium, No. 48, L.D. Wilmore (2<sup>nd</sup> Cir. 1931).

<sup>28</sup> "Big Damage Suit Trial Starts in Circuit Court," *Bluefield Daily Telegraph*, March 1931.

<sup>29</sup> "Testimony Completed in \$150,000 Damage Suit," *Bluefield Daily Telegraph*, April 1931.



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described their desire to receive care from Dr. Dismukes but were forced to receive it from Stevens Clinic due to the contract between it and Kopper's Coal Co. The witness list of Bluefield Sanitarium consisted of Dr. Stevens and other head physicians from the Sanitarium, other esteemed, white men from McDowell and Mercer Counties, as well as people who received care from the Sanitarium. This list also included Hassel T. Hicks, the architect who built Henrietta Dismukes Hospital.

After four days of testimony, the jury deliberated for an hour and then returned to the court room unable to agree. Judge Tanner sent the jury back to reconsider as he stated that "enough time had been spent on the case."<sup>30</sup> Dr. Dismukes filed to receive \$150,000 in the court case against Bluefield Sanitarium. This equated to the cost to build Henrietta Dismukes Hospital and the \$3.50 per patient that he was promised in the contract between him and Bluefield Sanitarium. Dr. Stevens, who acted as an agent on behalf of Bluefield Sanitarium for the contract, denied that he and his institution requested Henrietta Dismukes Hospital to be built.

The final verdict was that the Bluefield Sanitarium was to pay Dr. Dismukes \$4,070. The jury found that the contract signed by Dr. Dismukes and Dr. Stevens was not viable and believed the denials of Dr. Stevens. This \$4,070 was the exact amount that Bluefield Sanitarium had recorded in their payment books to pay Dr. Dismukes based upon the reduced payment of \$2.50 per patient. Dr. Dismukes decided to take this case to the West Virginia's Supreme Court to be reviewed; however, his case was denied a hearing.<sup>31</sup>

Dr. Dismukes was bankrupted from the lawsuit's legal expenses and the costs incurred building and operating Henrietta Dismukes Hospital. He officially closed the hospital in August 1932.<sup>32</sup> He gave the hospital building and land back to the Bralley family and sold his home in Kimball as well.

Dr. Dismukes and Grace moved to Charleston, West Virginia where they lived at 627 1-2 Kanawha Street. It was reported that he conducted research at the University of Chicago and spent six months abroad in Europe.<sup>33</sup> It was also reported that he and his wife were struck by a train while he drove across the tracks. Grace did not sustain any injuries. However, Dr. Dismukes suffered a chest injury and was hospitalized at McMillan Hospital. He recovered a few weeks after the incident.<sup>34</sup>

After their time in Charleston, Dr. Dismukes and Grace moved to Washington, D.C., where they both lived throughout the remainder of their lives. Dr. Dismukes passed away on October 29,

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<sup>30</sup> "Jury Deliberates in \$150,000 suit," *Bluefield Daily Telegraph*, April 3, 1931. Page 7.

<sup>31</sup> "Reviews Denied in Three Cases," *Bluefield Daily Telegraph*, December 4, 1931, page 12.

<sup>32</sup> "Dr. Dismukes Announces," *Charleston Daily Mail*, August 7, 1932, page 4.

<sup>33</sup> "Announcement," *Charleston Daily Mail*, May 4, 1934, page 10.

<sup>34</sup> "Doctor is Injured," *Charleston Daily Mail*, September 30, 1933.

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1955.<sup>35</sup> His funeral service was held at Pilgrim African Methodist Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C. It is unknown where Dr. Dismukes or Grace Dismukes are laid to rest.

After the hospital and Nurses Home buildings were given to the Bralley family, they converted them into the Bralley Apartments. These apartment units were used for decades and subsequently sat vacant for many years. In 2013, the former hospital building burnt down, and its debris is buried under the ground where it once stood. Only the adjacent Nurses Home building was left standing. In 2020, the Mennonite Central Committee purchased the entire property, with plans to rehabilitate the Nurses Home.

*Criterion A: Health/Medicine and Ethnic Heritage: Black*

Though its existence was short-lived, the Henrietta Dismukes Hospital played an important role in addressing the limited healthcare options African Americans experienced in West Virginia during the early twentieth century. Dr. Dismukes opened the largest privately-owned Black hospital in the country at that time to provide McDowell County's Black community with a high quality, professional service in a place and era where such services were lacking for Black people. The Henrietta Dismukes Hospital Nurses Home supported this endeavor by providing qualified health professionals with a convenient place to live in close proximity to the hospital. Because of its association with the hospital, the Nurses Home is significant to both local Black history and healthcare history.

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<sup>35</sup> "Dismukes, Henry Dodford," United States Deceased Physician File, American Medical Association, 1864-1968 Database, March 31, 1956.

Henrietta Dismukes Hospital Nurses Home  
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**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 # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

Henrietta Dismukes Hospital Nurses Home  
Name of Property

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## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.11

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

- |              |                 |                   |
|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 17N | Easting: 455249 | Northing: 4142472 |
| 2. Zone:     | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 3. Zone:     | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 4. Zone:     | Easting :       | Northing:         |

### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is a rectangle, 0.11 square acres in size, designated as "Lot 99 KIMBALL" and described in McDowell County Deed Book 617, Page 620. Tax Parcel ID: 27-10-0002-0034-0000. Also identified as Lot 34 in Kimball Corporation Tax Map 2 (attached).

Beginning at the sidewalk steps at the corner of Lavanaia Street and running in a south easterly direction parallel with Lavanaia Street for approximately 40 feet, then proceeding northeast for approximately 100 feet, then continuing northwest for approximately 40 feet and then continuing back southwest approximately 100 feet to starting point.

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**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary fully encompasses the nominated resource and no additional resources.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Kristin Overstreet and Tylah Cline; edited by Cody Straley, WVSHPO  
organization: Mennonite Central Committee  
street & number: 1013 Division St.  
city or town: Goshen state: IN zip code: 46528 email: appalachiapd@mcc.org  
telephone: 606-634-4418  
date: 2-10-25

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)



Henrietta Dismukes Hospital Nurses Home  
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## Figures

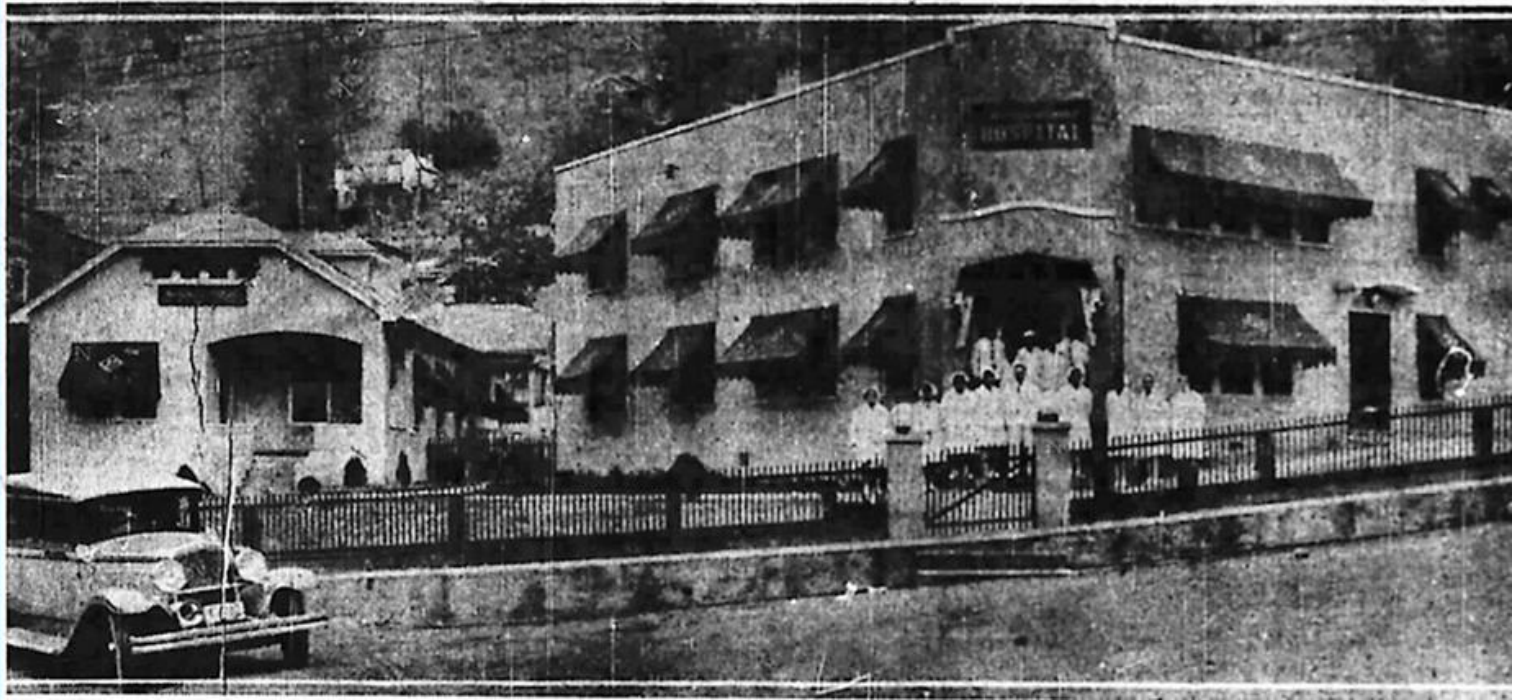


Figure 1 Henrietta Dismukes Hospital and Nurses Home, from 1929 newspaper article.



Figure 2 Cast iron nurses home sign, found in the attic of the building



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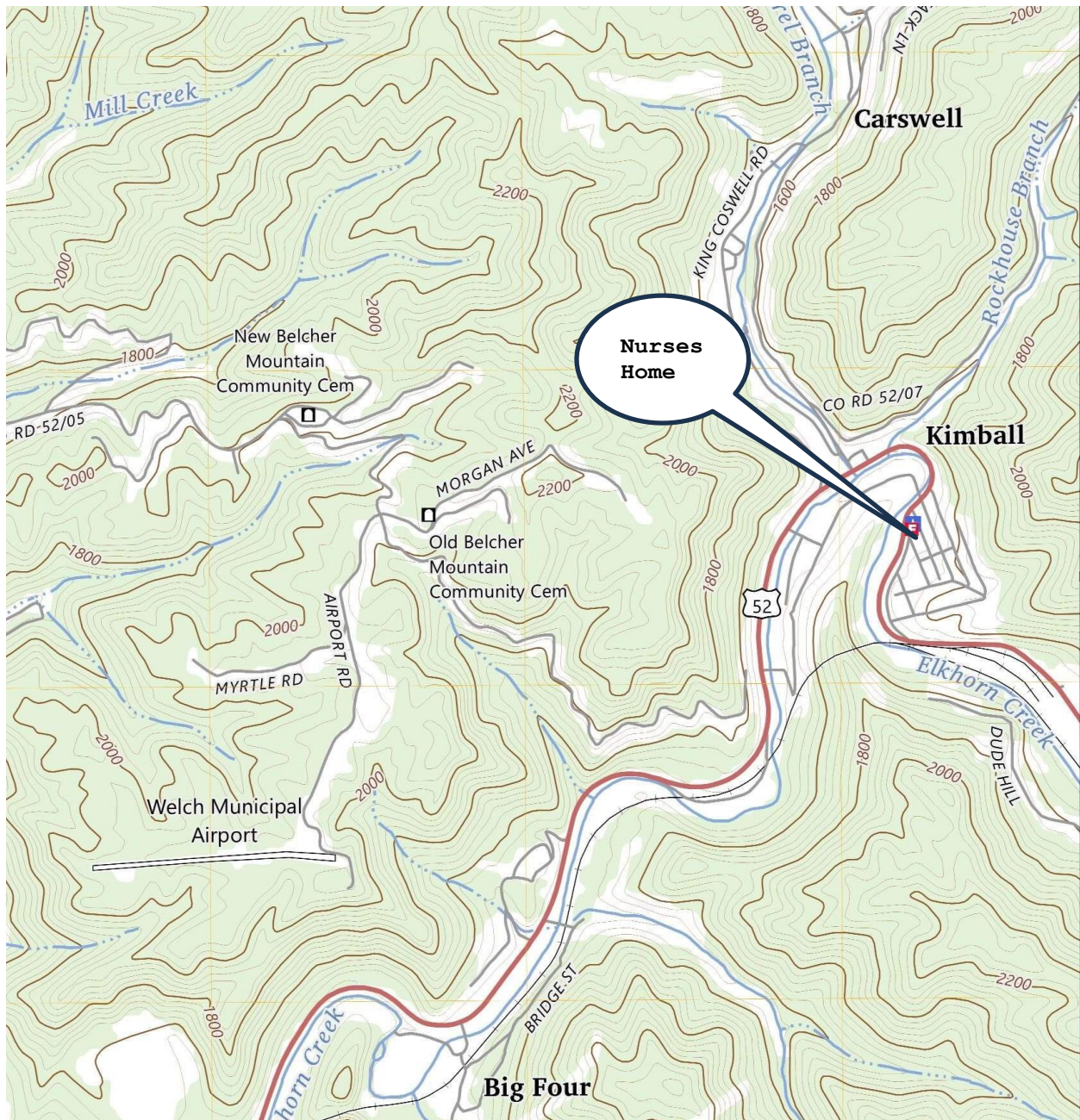


Figure 3 USGS Map, Welch Quadrangle, West Virginia 7.5-Minute Series, 2023

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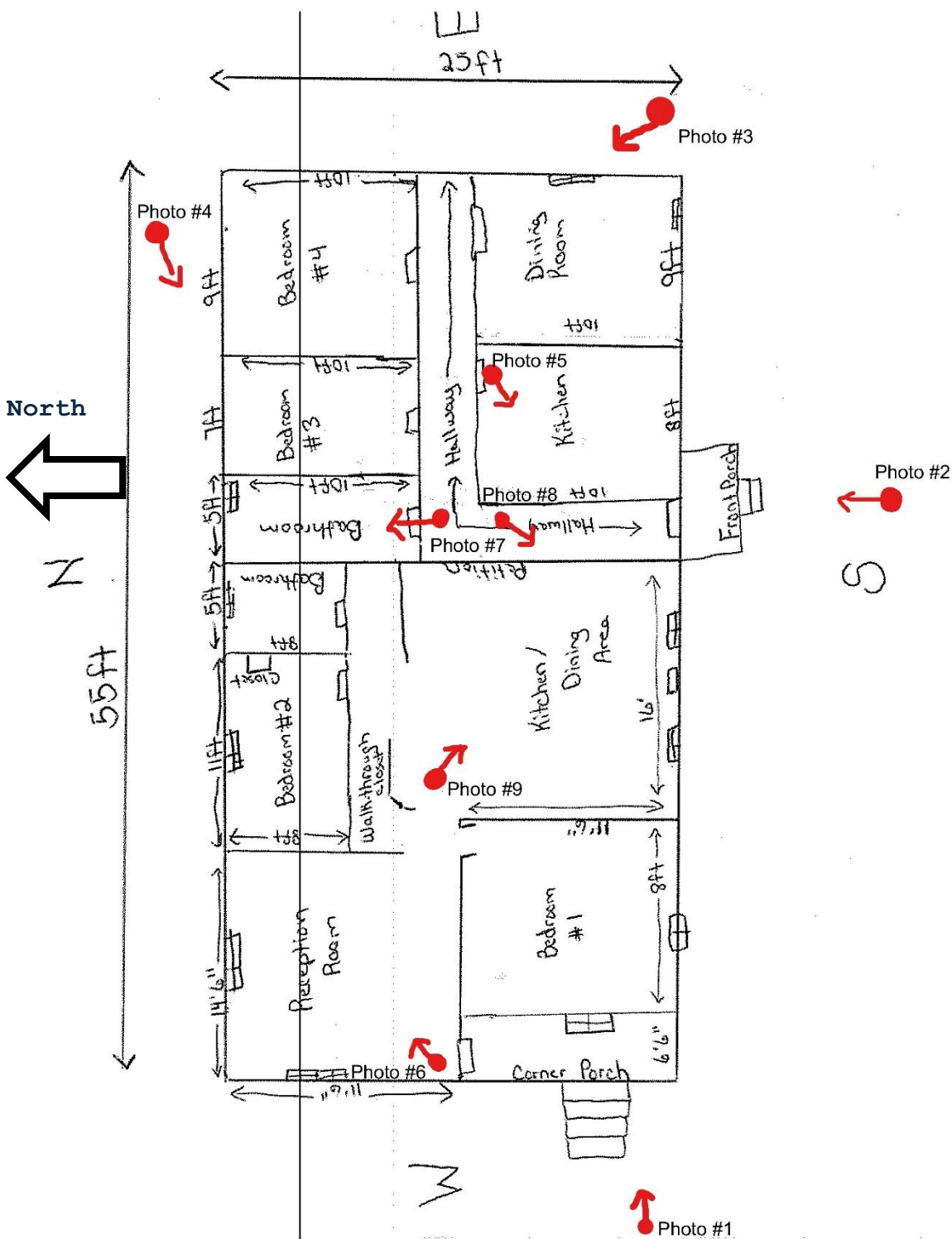


Figure 4 Site Plan with Photo Key

Henrietta Dismukes Hospital Nurses Home  
Name of Property

McDowell County, WV  
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## Photographs

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Henrietta Dismukes Nurses Home

City or Vicinity: Kimball

County: McDowell County

State: WV

Photographer: Brianna Coleman

Date Photographed: August 16, 2025

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

Photo 1 of 9:	Southwest side of building, showing corner porch, east elevation
Photo 2 of 9:	South side of Nurses Home, north elevation
Photo 3 of 9:	East side of Nurses Home, northwest elevation
Photo 4 of 9:	North side of Nurses Home, south elevation
Photo 5 of 9:	Nurses Home kitchen, southwest elevation
Photo 6 of 9:	Reception room, northeast elevation
Photo 7 of 9:	Bathroom, north elevation
Photo 8 of 9:	Pulley system used to life and lower attic staircase, southwest elevation
Photo 9 of 9:	Kitchen and dining space, southeast elevation

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations 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  
Tier 2 – 120 hours  
Tier 3 – 230 hours  
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.



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*Photo 1 Southwest side of building, showing corner porch, east elevation*



*Photo 2 South side of Nurses Home, north elevation*

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*Photo 3 East side of Nurses Home, northwest elevation*



Henrietta Dismukes Hospital Nurses Home  
Name of Property

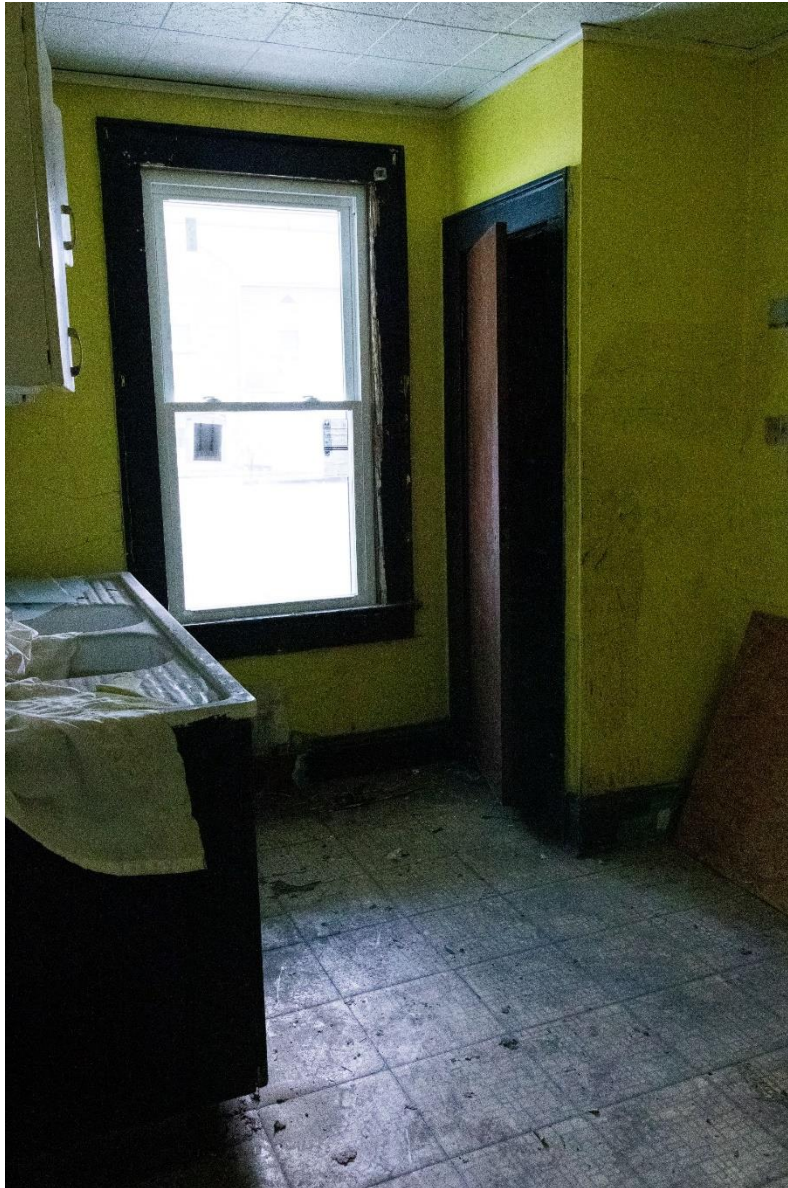
McDowell County, WV  
County and State



*Photo 4 North side of Nurses Home, south elevation*

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*Photo 5 Nurses Home kitchen, southwest elevation*



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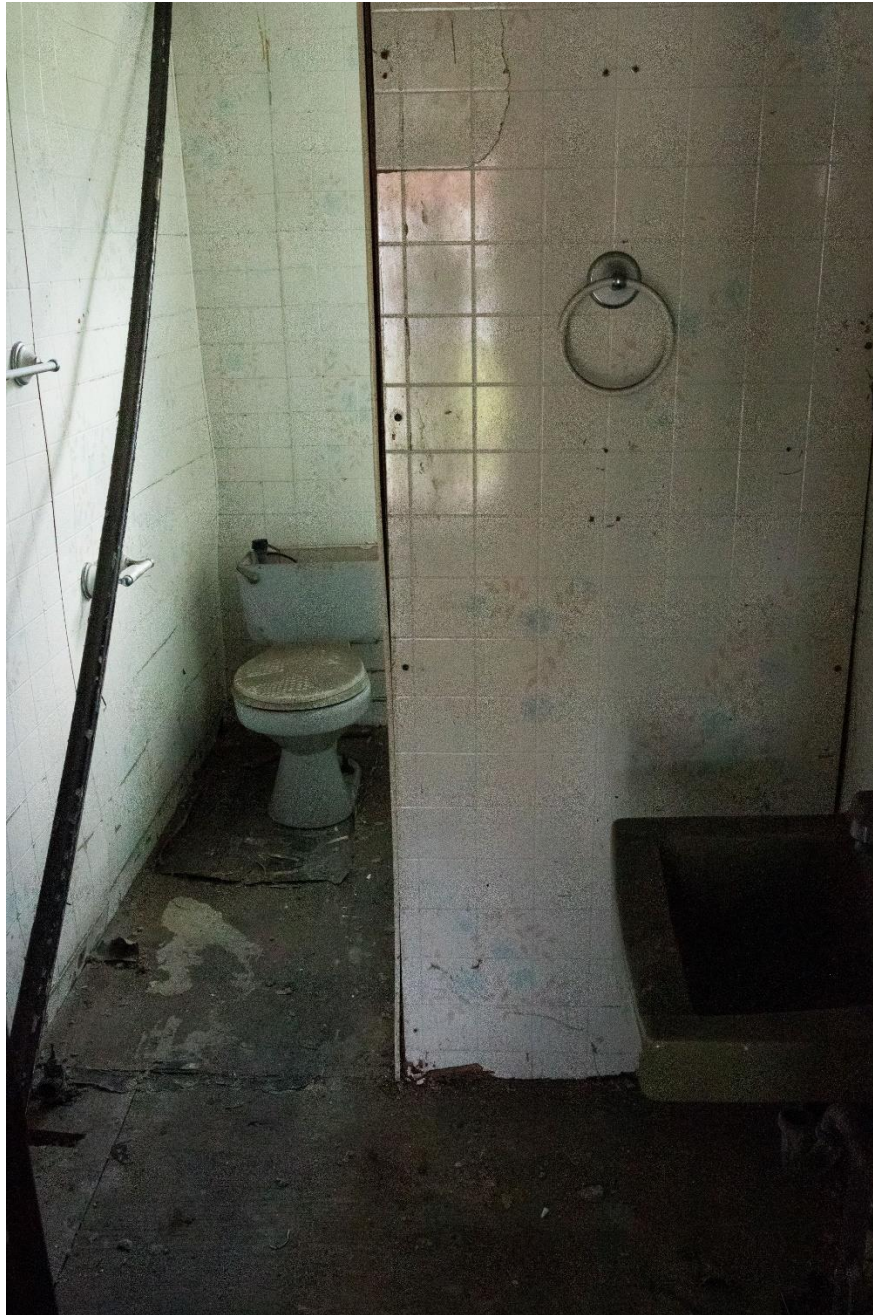


*Photo 6 Reception room, northeast elevation*



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*Photo 7 Bathroom, north elevation*

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Name of Property

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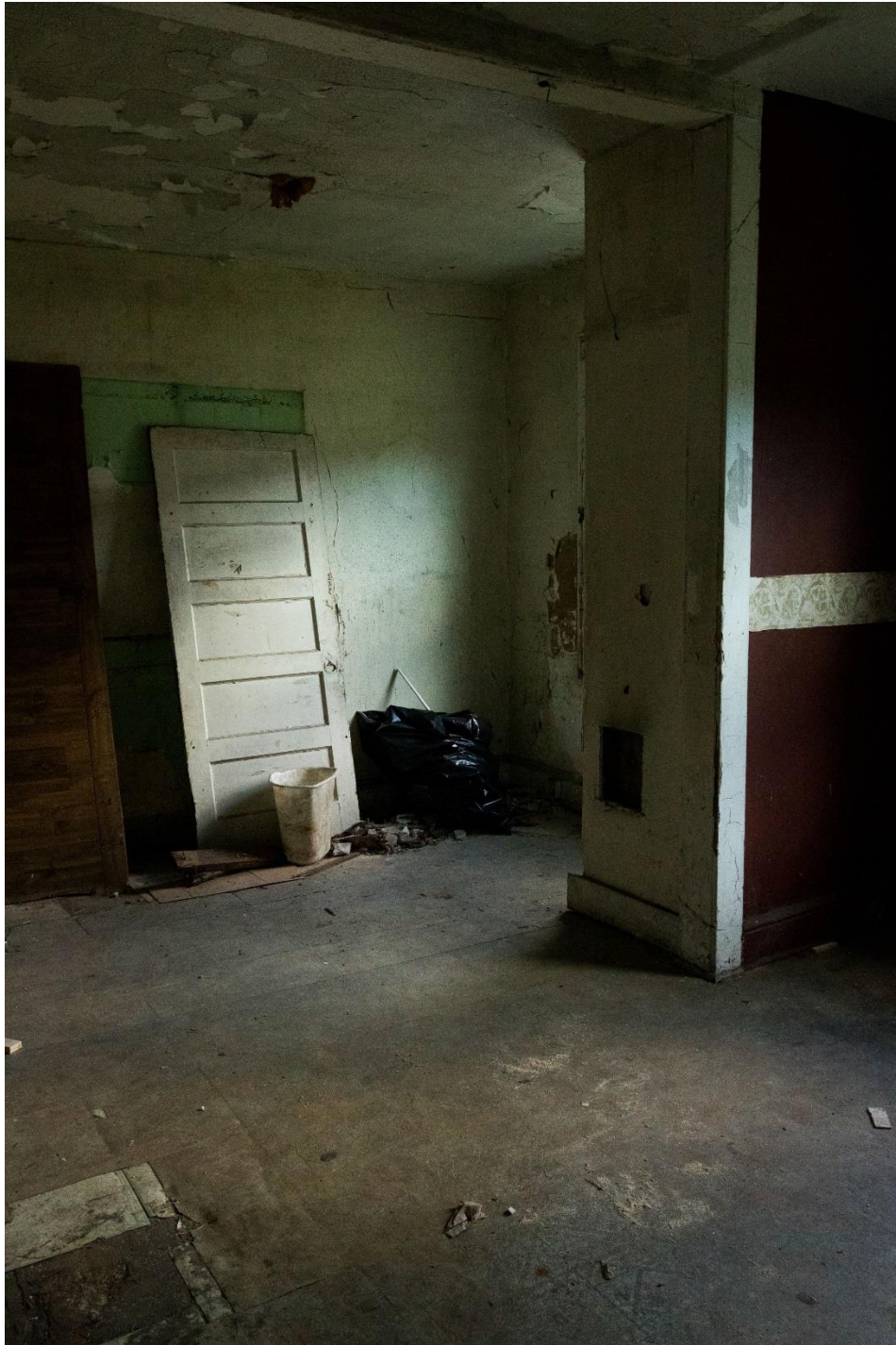


*Photo 8 Pulley system used to lift and lower attic staircase, southwest elevation*



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*Photo 9 Kitchen and dining space, southeast elevation*

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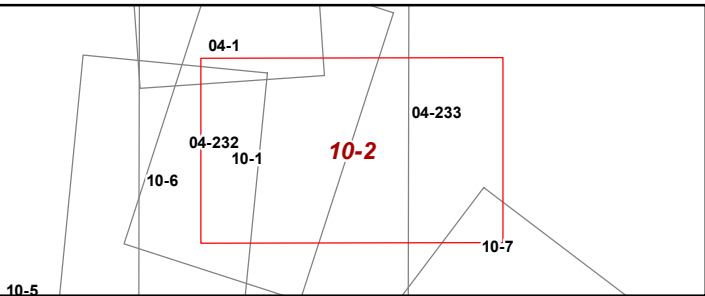
Tier 1 – 60-100 hours  
Tier 2 – 120 hours  
Tier 3 – 230 hours  
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.



Henrietta Dismukes  
Nurses Home and  
Hospital Site

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA  
COUNTY OF McDOWELL  
Office of Assessor



KIMBALL CORPORATION  
Map: 2  
Date, Aerial Photography: 2019  
Date, Map: 3/15/2024  
Scale: 1 inch = 100 feet

FOR TAX PURPOSES ONLY  
Prepared By:  
Avery Ray Bailey  
McDowell County Assessor

Property Line  
Road Right of Way  
Corporation Line  
District Line  
County Line

Legend  
Original Lot Line  
Lot Number  
Parcel Number  
Water  
Railroad

1	Revised 2/11/2021	9		17
2	Revised 1/27/2023	10		18
3	Revised 9/18/2023	11		19
4		12		20
5		13		21
6		14		22
7		15		23
8		16		24