

VLR-8/15/89 NRHP-11/2/89

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** of eligibility for **individual properties** or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Marion Male Academy  
other names/site number Marion High School; DHL-119-6

### 2. Location

street & number 343 College Street N/A not for publication  
city, town Marion XX vicinity  
state Virginia code VA county Smyth coda 173 zip code 24354

### 3. Classification

|   |   |                                     |                     |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Ownership of Property                       | Category of Property                            | Number of Resources within Property |                     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | Contributing                        | Noncontributing     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-local       | <input type="checkbox"/> district               | <u>2</u>                            | <u>0</u> buildings  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-State       | <input type="checkbox"/> site                   | <u>0</u>                            | <u>0</u> sites      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal     | <input type="checkbox"/> structure              | <u>0</u>                            | <u>0</u> structures |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> object                 | <u>0</u>                            | <u>0</u> objects    |
|   |   | <u>2</u>                            | <u>0</u> Total      |

Name of <sup>related</sup> multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official  
VA Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

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

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register,

other, (explain:)

## 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: School

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN: Italianate

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE: Limestone

walls BRICK

roof STONE: Slate

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

### SUMMARY

The Marion Male Academy is a large, two-story, hip-roofed brick structure on the north side of College Street. The school is located on a conventional dwelling lot in the well-preserved mid-nineteenth-century residential district near the site of Marion College (now the Blue Ridge Job Training Corps) west of downtown Marion. The building incorporates a centerpassage plan and details dating from its use both as a school and as a dwelling in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

### ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

The two-story, five-bay building is built of brick, laid in eight-course American bond, and features two-over-two double-hung sash windows with early twentieth-century louvered blinds. The deep cornice incorporates a high wooden frieze and paired sawn brackets. The central entry is located in an advanced pavilion with a wide pediment above. The pediment features slate wall covering and a semi-circular arched window with ornamental leaded glass. Seams in the cornice soffit and the roof sheathing visible inside the attic indicate that the pediment was enlarged when the slate roofing was added and was both narrower and shorter in its original form.

A slender internal chimney rises in the center of each end wall. The hipped roof is covered with slate. An early twentieth-century one-story hip-roofed porch extends across the central three bays of the principal (south) facade. The porch incorporates turned posts and balusters, a spindle frieze, and an advanced center section reached by poured concrete steps. The central section of the porch roof features an inset balcony surrounded by a mid-twentieth-century wrought iron railing and reached by a double door above the main entry door. A two-story, enclosed porch of similar date extends across the rear of the building, the first floor of which was apparently enclosed more recently than the second. There is a stair on the porch reaching from the basement to the second floor. All enclosures except the breakfast room at the east end of the rear porch date from before the mid-twentieth century. The breakfast room dates from recent years. A second-quarter twentieth-century bathroom is located on the porch just west of the breakfast room.

On the interior the house is divided into five principal rooms on each floor. The central passage extends from front to back and rectangular spaces to either side are separated from it by thick brick partitions. The spaces on each side are divided by early twentieth-century stud partitions into a large south room and a slightly smaller north room. Corner fireplaces are provided in the south room at the juncture of the exterior walls and the center partitions, while flues are  See continuation sheet

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

ARCHITECTURE

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A

Period of Significance

1876-c. 1910

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1876

1901

\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

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

SUMMARY

The Marion Male Academy is eligible for the National Register under criteria A and C. It is eligible under criterion A as a rare example of an academy to survive from any period in Southwest Virginia, and as an unusually well-preserved educational structure representing education in Smyth County during the late nineteenth century. It is eligible under criterion C as a rare and unusually substantial academy building from the period, carefully adapted as a dwelling after a public high school was built, and illustrating the way in which such changes were made in the early twentieth century. The unusual kingpost roof was used only in sizable institutional buildings during this period as a rule, and very rarely in domestic structures.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The town of Marion undoubtedly relied upon ministers and privately-hired teachers to supplement what elementary education was received by their children in the mid-nineteenth century. At least one academy provided secondary education before 1870, when the Rev. J.J. Schere established a coeducational high school. After two years he assumed the presidency of a new school for women at Marion operated by the Lutheran Church, known as Marion Female College. Citizens of the town, left without a school for boys, persuaded D.C. Miller, who had founded an academy in nearby Chilhowie, to come to Marion and operate a male high school. Miller had come to Smyth County as a refugee from a Union sympathizing area of East Tennessee. Miller alternated his educational pursuits with a career as a lawyer, county judge, and local booster.<sup>1</sup> Female academies had been the principal means of secondary education for both sexes in Western Virginia. By 1869, when the Underwood Constitution mandated free public schools and county school superintendents were appointed, public schools began to appear, but academies continued to supply secondary education for several decades in many areas.

D.C. Miller had been appointed school superintendent for Smyth County, and he was involved in the development of public education in the county during the entire late nineteenth century. The first session of the academy opened in September 1873 and the school, with a list of seven locally prominent men as trustees, was incorporated in 1874. The stated objective of the founders was to "afford training that would prepare for entrance to universities and colleges and also fit for  See continuation sheet

**9, Major Bibliographical References**

Bunch, Barbara Jo. "Condensed History of the Marion Male Academy/Bell/Mitchell/Copenhaver House", typescript, 1982.

Mauck, J, Leonard. "Secondary Education in Smyth County, 1832-1940". Master Thesis, University of Virginia, 1940.

Photographs in possession of the owner.

Wilson, Goodrich. Centennial Celebration of Smyth County, Virginia, Marion, Va., 1932,

Wise County Deed and Will Books.

See continuation sheet

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

**Specify repository:**

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 1.72

**UTM References**

A 17 433060 4076070  
 Zone Easting Northing

C \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zone Easting Northing

D \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Beginning at pint A on the north side of **College Street** directly opposite and north of the intersection of **the west side** of Academy Street and College Street, thence northwest 375 feet north to pint B, thence northeast 192 feet to point C, thence southeast 446 feet to pint D on the northwest side of College Street, thence **southwest** 182 feet to the point of origin with the northwest side of **College Street**.

See continuation sneer

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries were selected to conform to the original property lines as they survive today, enclosing the house, lawn, and gardens.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Gibson Worsham, principal

organization Gibson Worsham, Architect date March 15, 1989

street & number Yellow Sulphur Springs, Route 2 telephone (703) 552-4730

city & town Christiansburg state VA zip code 24073

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provided for stoves in the north rooms. The chimney breasts are placed diagonally in the south rooms and the northwest room.

Woodwork throughout incorporates molded baseblocks, molded trim, and bull's eye corner blocks, much of it dating from the c. 1901 remodeling, but some elements, including the window trim, appear to date from the original construction date in the mid-1870s. The stair in the passage may incorporate a stair from that date, but the closed stringer detail, the turned balusters, and the paneled newels date from the early twentieth-century and may conceal traces in the treads of a simpler railing dating from the building's use as a school. At the same time the area beneath the stair landing was enclosed to create a secondary passage from the kitchen (northeast room) to the dining room (northwest room). A wide opening with double doors gives access from the dining room to the southwest room (probably a Parlor in 1901).

In the early 1960s the owners made alterations to the house, including the transformation of the north windows of the dining room into shelving alcoves, and the addition of crown molding and chair railing throughout the house, except in the passage, where earlier picture rail survives. At the same time the mantel in the southeast room was replaced and that in the southwest room reworked and lowered using the columns from the c. 1901 mantel. In the 1980s alterations included opening the kitchen window and door to improve access to a new breakfast room replacing the kitchen porch and the installation of a wide opening between the kitchen and the southeast room. Most c. 1901 detailing remains intact however, including wood trim, narrow floorboards, and five-panel doors.

The second floor has seen fewer changes since c. 1901. The same floor plan applies, but no mantel pieces ever seem to have existed in the south rooms, and closets were added at an early date between each room and the passage. Several early electric light fixtures survive. The space over the kitchen was subdivided early in the twentieth century to contain a small bedroom and a bathroom, the bedroom having access to a small sleeping porch at the east end of the rear porch. The bathroom features high, white tile wainscoting and a pedestal sink. A second bathroom on the floor was added at the west end of the rear porch in this decade.

The basement was apparently excavated in 1907, judging from a date written on the poured concrete footing added below the original stone foundation. The basement is located below the west side of the house and the passage and is entered at the west end of the rear (north) wall. The attic is unfinished and can only be reached through an access panel. The attic space contains three massive kingpost trusses which span from front to rear, one in the

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center and the others over the east and west spaces, supporting ceiling joists running east-west. The bottom chord of each truss is bound to the post by a wrought iron strap. The roof is supported on common rafters nailed to a ridge board at the apex. At the time the slate roofing was added in the early twentieth century, a purlin was nailed along the center point of the rafters and the roof assembly braced by 2x4s angled from the base of each kingpost to support the added weight. The sheathing was replaced at the same time, as is evidenced at the center front pavilion where the old sheathing and the ghost of the shallower, narrower gable which originally crowned the pavilion is visible in the area below the new pediment. The original valley flashing and sections of wood shingle roofing survive in that area.

The floor structure in the second floor was uncovered in this decade during rehabilitation work and it was found that the joists run east-west there. However, the first floor joists run north-south and were supported on beams running east-west. A rectangular chimney base at the west end of the house in the basement (the east end is not accessible) suggests an original projecting rectangular chimney breast above on each floor, but no other evidence is immediately available.

The building is in an excellent state of maintenance and preserves many features dating from both its use as a school and as a dwelling. To the rear stand remains of boxwood and flower gardens on the steeply descending site, and a driveway to the east leads to a two-story brick garage. The mid-1930s garage has two car stalls and a door giving access to a second floor apartment. A chimney is located at the west end and the six-over-six double-hung sash windows project into the slate roof as wall dormers. A late nineteenth-century cast iron ornamental fence extends along the front property line.

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the active pursuits of life."<sup>1</sup> For the first three years classes were held in locations around the town, including the Masonic Lodge and a previous academy building.<sup>2</sup> According to one source, the first teacher was William E. Evans.<sup>3</sup> In 1874 academy trustees D.D. Hull, J.W. Fell, J.P. Sheffey, F. Alexander, V.S. Morgan, C.F. Lincoln, and W.C. Sexton purchased a lot west of town from N.L. Look and C.F. Lincoln.

In 1876, enough subscriptions were received to allow the construction of a new brick building on the school's lot. The new building could accommodate 125 pupils divided into two departments "Preparatory" and "Academic". Elementary training was included in the preparatory department, while the academic provided four years of high school work including Latin, Greek, English, Mathematics, and Science. Tuition was charged at a base rate of three dollars a month in this department, with Latin and Greek carrying a \$.50 extra charge. Students boarded with families in the town. Debating was a popular aid in instruction, and a Nestorian Literary Society was formed to organize debate. Graduates included later Lieutenant-Governor of Virginia, B.F. Buchanan. Miller remained as principal until 1878 when he was replaced by George E. Cassell.<sup>4</sup>

In 1882-83 the Rev. F.M. Grace was hired as principal with the understanding that he would be paid \$900 with an option of taking any profit made by the school. Grace, a former professor at the University of Tennessee, instituted a department offering two years of college-level course work. Grace left after one year and was replaced by Phipps Miller, D.C. Miller's son, who served for two years, followed by Thomas D. Walthall, and Dr. J.J. Scherer, founder of Marion College, who each served one year. In 1887 D.C. Miller again was hired as principal of the school, replacing the college department with a business course, and adding military discipline as a "feature", including uniforms and regular drilling.<sup>5</sup>

In 1891 Miller announced that enrollment would be limited to 75 students ("no bad boys wanted"), and in the following year he added evening classes in Commercial Arithmetic and bookkeeping for young men unable to attend during the day. In 1893 a new Marion Public High School was opened with Professor Miller in charge and the academy was closed.<sup>6</sup>

The building is said to have stood vacant for several years.<sup>7</sup> In 1900 the property was ordered sold by the Hustings Court of Bristol, Virginia, and an auction was held in early 1901. The purchaser was local attorney Hayden Bell for a cost of \$800. Bell is said to have converted the school into a residence soon after. The studs in the partition between the parlor and kitchen on the

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east side of the house during recent repairs were discovered to bear a lumber tag, made out to H.N. Bell, confirming that he did in fact add partitions subdividing the two schoolrooms into two rooms each. Stylistic evidence suggests he added the corner fireplaces replacing a single shallow chimney breast at each end. A partition was added across the rear of the passage to conceal movement between the new kitchen and dining rooms and the staircase rebuilt in an elaborate style. The existing porches appear to have been added at that time, and it is likely that a new slate roof and pediment were also added then.

In 1906 Bell sold the house to D.H. Mitchell on leaving the community for Chicago. The Mitchell family retained ownership until 1980. Bess and Louise Mitchell, daughters of D.H. Mitchell, made some alterations to the house in the late 1960s, including reworking the early 20th-century coal fireplaces and mantels in the parlors and adding crown molding, and chair railing. Between the early and mid-twentieth-century the rear porch was enclosed in several stages. In the 1980s recent owners have modernized the kitchen and added a breakfast room in the place of the kitchen porch, opening a window and door in the kitchen. The opening between the kitchen and adjacent room was widened, but few other changes were made.

The garden was extensively developed by the Mitchell Sisters. In 1933 a two-story brick garage with an apartment above was built behind the house. A smaller frame wood house stood just in front of the garage, but has since been removed.

1. Acts of Assembly, 1874, p. 481.
2. J. Leonard Mauck. "Secondary Education in Smyth County, 1832-1940" Master's Thesis, University of Virginia 1940, p. 71.
3. Goodrich Wilson. Centennial Celebration of Smyth County, Virginia. Marion, Virginia. 1932, p. 157.
4. Mauck, p. 72.
5. Mauck, p. 74.
6. Mauck, p. 75.
7. Bunch, p. 1.

Exhibit "MAP"  
 of 24  
 1933  
 7 1/2 inch  
 11 1/2 inch 192

FENCE  
 164 FE

END OF FENCE

Pendleton

Richardson

Birchfield  
 HAWKINS Lot

GARAGE

EMERALD  
 Pond

Mitchell and all Lot

WOOD HOUSE

MICHELL RESIDENCE

HAWKINS  
 RESIDENCE



Scale 50' = 1 inch  
 or  
 1/500

Map of Hawkins Mitchell  
 Controversy  
 Surveyed and fixed by  
 W.L. Collier

N 1/2 Sec 24 T 24 N R 12 E

75 Feet

75

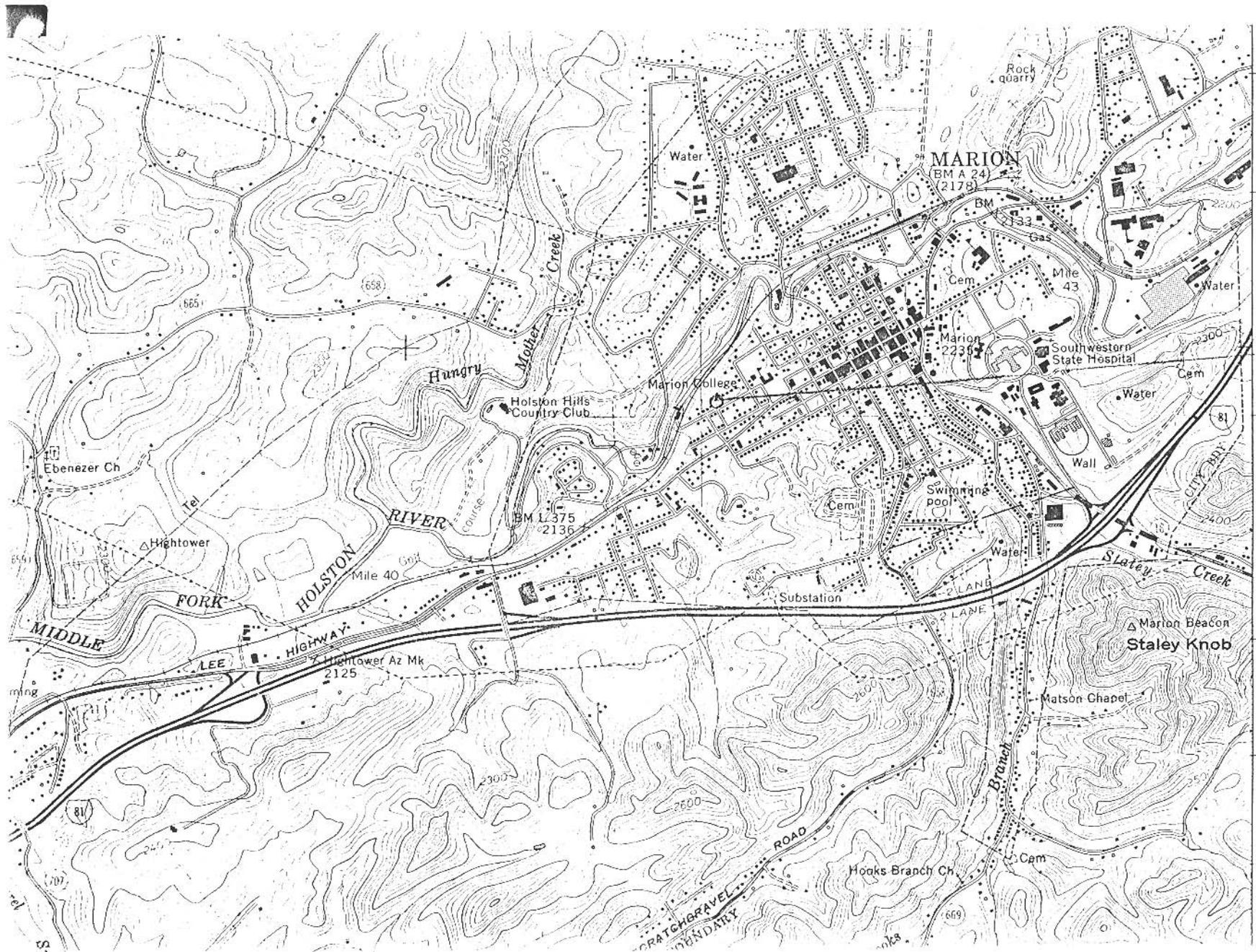
40' STREET

20' ALLEY

PARSONAGE LOT

PARSONAGE LOT

SMITH  
 100' 1/2 LINDSAY  
 LINE



4077  
WYTHEVILLE 24 M  
50'  
4076  
ATKINS 223-SW  
24 MI. TO U.S. CB  
4757 IV SW

MARION MALE  
ACADEM  
MARION, VA.  
UTM'S  
17/433060/476760