

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Wyco Church

other names/site number Wyco Community Church; Wyco Independent Church; Wyco Freewill Baptist Church; Wyco Independent Baptist Church

2. Location

street & number CR 12/1 apx. 1 mile n. of CR 16 ☐ not for publication

city or town Mullens ☒ vicinity

state West Virginia code WV county Wyoming code 109 zip code 25943

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐  
does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  
☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See Continuation sheet for additional  
comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

☐ entered in the National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet

☐ determined eligible for the  
National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet

☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register.

☐ removed from the National  
Register.

☐ other, (explain:)

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

Wyco Church  
Name of Property

Wyoming County, West Virginia  
County and State

## 5. 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	1	2	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site			sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure			structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object			objects
		1	2	Total
Name of related multiple property listing		Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register		
N/A		N/A		

## 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions	Current Functions
RELIGION: religious facility	VACANT: not in use

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification	Materials
LATE 19 <sup>th</sup> and 20 <sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS: Late Gothic Revival	foundation STONE: sandstone
	walls WOOD
	roof ASPHALT
	other WOOD

**Narrative Description**  
See Continuation Sheets

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

- ☐ **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

Property is:

- ☒ **A.** religious property.
- ☐ **B.** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C.** birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
- ☐ **D.** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E.** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F.** a commemorative property
- ☐ **G.** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

### Areas of Significance

Architecture

### Period of Significance

c.1917

### Significant Dates

c.1917

### Significant Person

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Unknown

### Narrative Statement of Significance

See Continuation sheets

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

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

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

#### Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Wyco Church  
Name of Property

Wyoming County, West Virginia  
County and State

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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property** Less than one acre

### UTM References

<u>17</u>	<u>469675</u>	<u>4161326</u>
Zone	Easting	Northing

### Verbal Boundary Description

See Continuation Sheets

### Boundary Justification

See Continuation Sheets

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title	Wyco Church Restoration Team: Shirley Weaver, Catherine Bell, and Dewey Houck (with Lynn Stasick, PAWV, Rebekah Karelis, and Erin Riebe, WVSHPO)				
organization	<u>Rural Appalachian improvement League, Inc.</u>	date	<u>January 8, 2010</u>		
street & number	<u>300 Front Street, P O Box 171</u>	telephone	<u>304 294 6188</u>		
city or town	<u>Mullens</u>	state	<u>WV</u>	zip code	<u>25882</u>

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### Property Owner

name	<u>Rural Appalachian Improvement League, Inc.</u>				
street & number	<u>300 Front Street, PO Box 171</u>	telephone	<u>304.294.6188</u>		
city or town	<u>Mullens</u>	state	<u>WV</u>	zip code	<u>25882</u>

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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 listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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## LOCATION and SETTING

The Wyco Church, located near Mullens, Wyoming County, is situated on a hillside in the former Wyco coal camp. The church is located on a square lot comprised of 0.16 acres of land near the center of the community having been constructed for use by coal miners and their families. The church building is 34' x 47' and has a sanctuary and full-size basement. Wyco Church was constructed in 1917 by Coal Baron Major W.T. Tam's carpenters. The two privies are noncontributing.

### Wyco Church

The Wyco Church was constructed c.1917 in the Late Gothic Revival style. The rectangular building has a front gable-roof with cornice returns and is supported by a cut sandstone foundation. It is clad in wood clapboard and features lancet windows and a prominent, recessed entrance.

The main elevation, facing south, has a large staircase with steps approaching from each side. The staircase has a sandstone foundation, concrete steps and a large concrete rail. Faintly painted on the inside of the railing, facing the entrance, are the words "Wyco Independent Baptist Church." The steps lead to a central, arched and recessed entryway. In the entryway are paneled double entry doors with a lancet transom with wooden tracery. Symmetrically placed to each side of the entrance is a lancet window including a six-over-six, double-hung window and transom with wooden tracery. A decorative vent is situated above the entrance in the gable.

The east elevation includes a basement entrance and a square coal chute, both covered with plywood, towards the south corner. The north end of this elevation is built into the hillside. This façade has a gable wall dormer with cornice returns and a brick, exterior chimney. Two six-over-six, double-hung sash lancet windows with wooden tracery are situated to either side of the chimney.

The basement level of the west elevation, has three six-over-six, double-hung sash windows. An entrance with paneled door is situated at the south corner. Four lancet windows are situated directly above. A decorative, diamond-shape window is located above in the gable wall dormer.

The rear, or north, elevation has two six-over-six, double-hung sash windows at the basement level. The eastern half of this elevation is built into the hillside. Just above the ground level is a rectangular-shaped window opening covered with plywood. Three lancet windows are situated above. A decorative window with triangular windows is situated in the gable.

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National Park Service

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The interior of the church has an open floor plan with two sections of wooden pews separated by a center aisle. The pews face the pulpit at the rear (or north) end of the building. The walls in the church area have been stripped of their plaster to the bare lath. Wainscot covers the lower wall section approximately forty-two inches from the floor. There is a cathedral ceiling. The steps leading to the basement are located in the southwest corner of the room.

The basement includes a small furnace room with coal bin in the southeast corner. The original kitchen runs the remainder of the east elevation and includes a sink in the northeast corner. The majority of the basement, along the west side is a large open room. A staircase leads upstairs from the southwest corner.

### Privies

Two noncontributing privies are situated directly behind the church to the north. The original was constructed c.1917 and has horizontal wood planks and a shed roof. It does not have a front wall. A second outhouse was constructed in 2009 of vertical boards and a shed roof.

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National Park Service

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### STATEMENT of SIGNIFICANCE

The Wyco Church is eligible for listing in the National Register under *Criterion C: Architecture* and *Criterion Consideration A: Religious Properties* (as it derives its primary significance from its architecture). The church is an excellent example of the Late Gothic Revival architectural style. The building survives as an excellent example of a small-town church in rural West Virginia. Some of the Gothic elements exhibited by the church include the lancet windows and belcast eaves. The period of significance, c.1917, reflects the date of construction.

### History

The end of the Civil War found the United States gearing up for the industrial revolution. Speculators recognized that coal would be a key component in supporting the newly burgeoning industries. By 1900 virtually all of Wyoming County was in the hands of coal companies. By 1906 the Virginia Railway had built a railroad into Mullens to haul coal to the east coast for shipment abroad. In the early days of mining, the coal was both dug and loaded by hand. This demanded a larger workforce than the sparsely populated region could provide, prompting operators to recruit miners worldwide. The area's isolated nature also made transportation to and from the mines difficult. These problems gave rise to the birth of the coal camp culture whereby coal operators constructed company towns complete with houses, company stores, theatres, recreational facilities, doctor's offices, churches, and other amenities. The intent was twofold; to satisfy the needs of the miner and his family, and to keep them tightly in the operator's economic grasp.

The mines and coal camp at Wyco were built c.1917 by the Wyoming Coal Company. Wyco coal camp was built by John Wilson. During the time Wyco was under construction, Wilson's partner, Major W. T. Tams was serving in Europe in the First World War. Major Tams had built the Tams coal camp just across the mountains prior to founding Wyco.

Like in many company towns, two churches were constructed; one for white families and one for African-American families in Wyco. During that same time, the (Virginian) Norfolk and Western Railway was completed in Wyoming County to transport coal. In addition, a passenger train ran between Wyco and Mullens. The Wyco Coal Camp proved prosperous and boasted a company store, boarding house, sandwich shop, movie theater, and approximately 150-200 houses. The coal camp flourished in the early 1900s with the operation of the Jack Pot mine working the Pocahontas No. 4 seam which was very productive. The

# National Register of Historic Places

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mines were eventually sold to Amigo Smokeless Coal and later changed to the Blackburn Patterson Land Company.

The Wyco Church was built c.1917. For many years it had enjoyed a very active congregation. However, as attendance dropped in the late 1950s, the church stopped offering services but still conducted occasional weddings. It reopened in 1964 as a non-denominational facility and was renamed the Wyco Independent Church. It became the Wyco Freewill Baptist Church in 1972 and the Wyco Independent Baptist Church on February 1, 1977. The Pittston Coal Company was the last operator of the mines, and by the 1970s with the coal boom all but over, the company ceased operations for good. Due to the resulting economic decline, the church was abandoned in 1990. Since that time, the roof and parts of the structure have deteriorated. On May 13, 2003, the church was transferred to the Rural Appalachian Improvement League (RAIL). Today, the only extant structures of the Wyco coal camp are the owner's residence, the superintendent's residence, the school, and Mount Grove, the African American church.

### Criterion C: Architecture

The Wyco Church is eligible for listing for its local architectural significance. The building is an excellent local example of the Late Gothic Revival style of architecture. The style was popular during the first three decades of the twentieth century and is a successor to the earlier Gothic Revival and High Victorian Gothic styles popular in the nineteenth century United States. It developed out of the ecclesiastical work of Boston architect Ralph Adams Cram.

Churches built of this style were generally built of masonry and tracery was of stone. Other common elements include lancet windows, steeply pitched gable roofs (sometimes with cross gables), simple smooth surfaces, large towers with lancet arch belfry openings, battlements and pinnacles.

While the Wyco Church does not exhibit all of these architectural characteristics, it is significant nonetheless as it represents the local, rural adaptation of a style popular at the time. Despite damage to the roof, the building retains excellent historic architectural integrity.



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### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bowman, Mary Keller. *Reference Book of Wyoming County History*. Parsons, W.Va.: McClain Printing Company, 1965.

Coleman, Lacoma. Interview by Shirley M. Weaver 24 November 2009.

Pugh, Margaret and Geneva Pugh. Interview by Catherine Bell 25 November 2009.

Rhodes, Gene R. Interview by Shirley M. Weaver 26 November 2009.

Riffe, Judith. Interview by Shirley M. Weaver 22 November 2009.

Thomas, John E. Interview by Shirley M. Weaver 25 November 2009.

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### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

BEING all that certain lot or parcel of surface land, together with the improvements thereon, known and designated as Lot Number Thirty-four (34), situate in the community of Wyco, Wyoming County, West Virginia, as shown on a map or plan of said community of record in the Office of the County Court of said Wyoming County in File Number 1315; and being the same property conveyed to the parties of the first part herein from Wyco "by the remaining" Trustees of Wyco Freewill Baptist Church by deed dated the first day of February, 1977, of record in said Office in Deed book 305, at page 611.

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The National Register boundary is the same as the original historic parcel when the church was originally constructed.

Wyco Church  
Name of Property

Wyoming County, West Virginia  
County and State

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Photographer: Erin Riebe (WV SHPO)  
Date: November 13, 2009

Photo 1 of 6    South (main) and east elevations. Camera facing northwest.

Photo 2 of 6    North (rear) elevation. Camera facing southwest.

Photo 3 of 6    Main entryway on south elevation. Camera facing north.

Photo 4 of 6    Interior staircase in southwest corner of building. Camera facing southwest.

Photo 5 of 6    Basement interior. Camera facing northwest.

Photo 6 of 6    Wyco Church and surroundings. Camera facing northeast.

4739 III NW  
(MC GRAWS)

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

81°22'30"  
37°37'30"

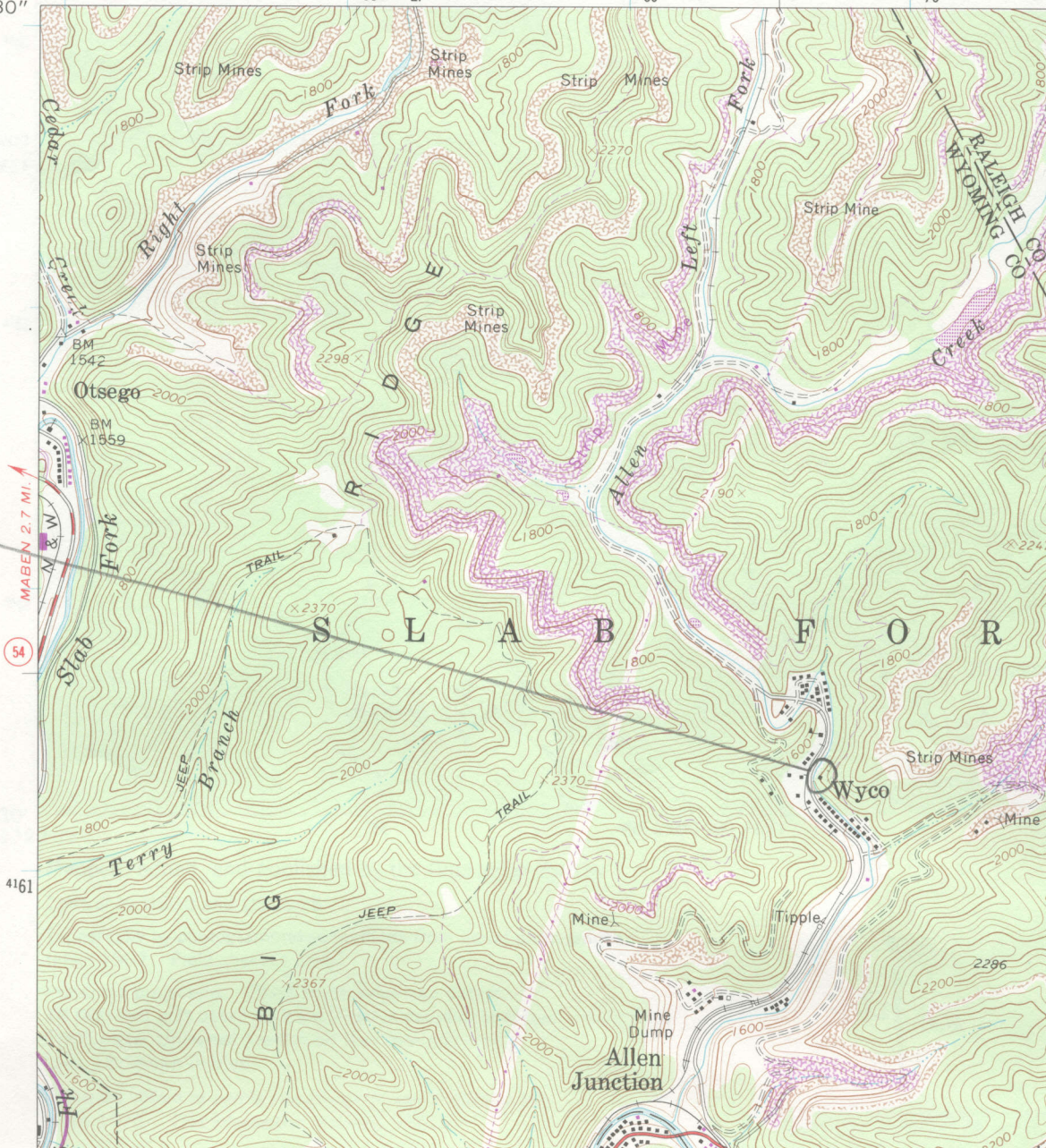
468000m.E.

469

470

Wyco Church  
Wyoming County,  
West Virginia  
17

469075  
41161 3210



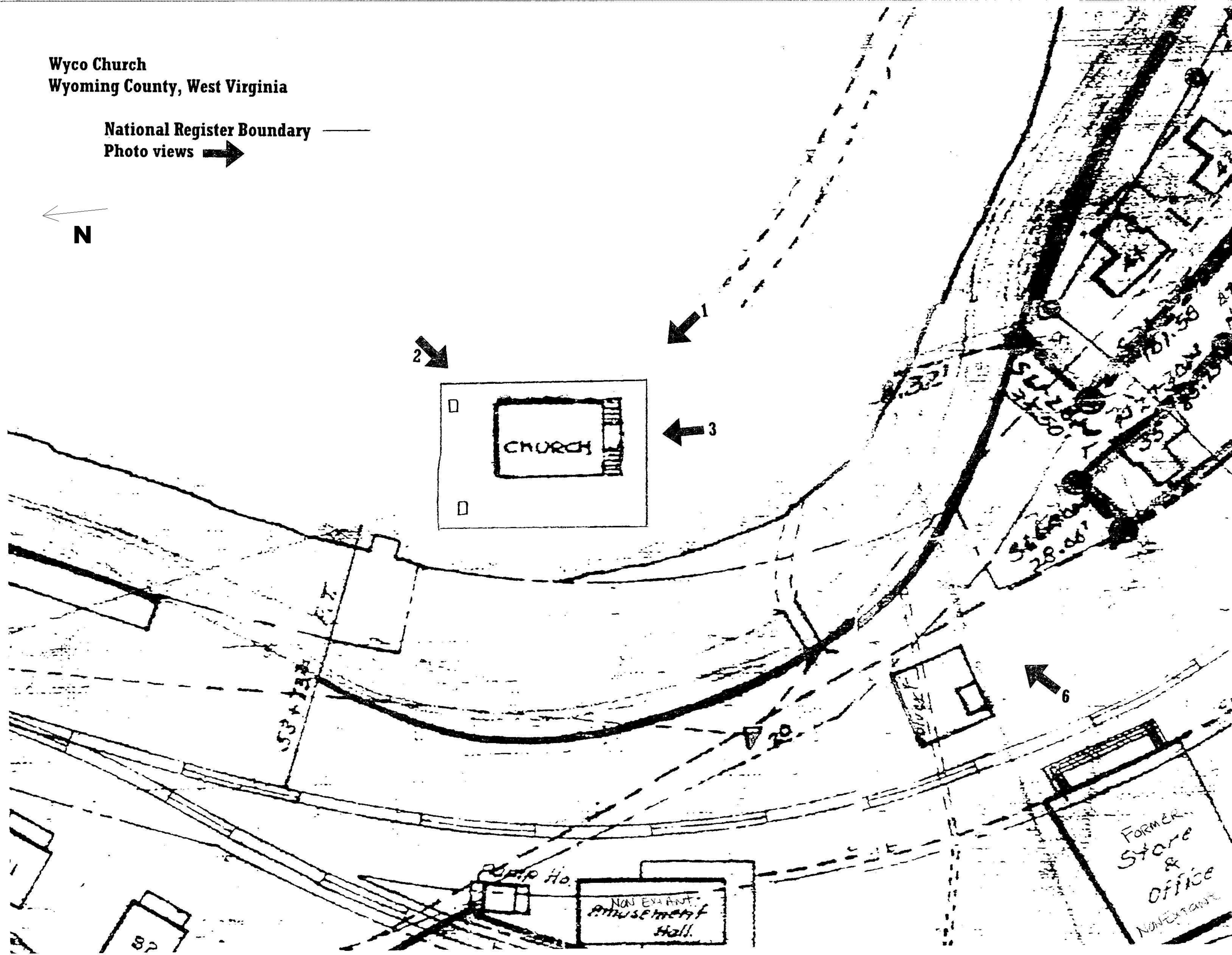


Wyco Church  
Wyoming County, West Virginia

National Register Boundary ———

Photo views ➡

←  
N























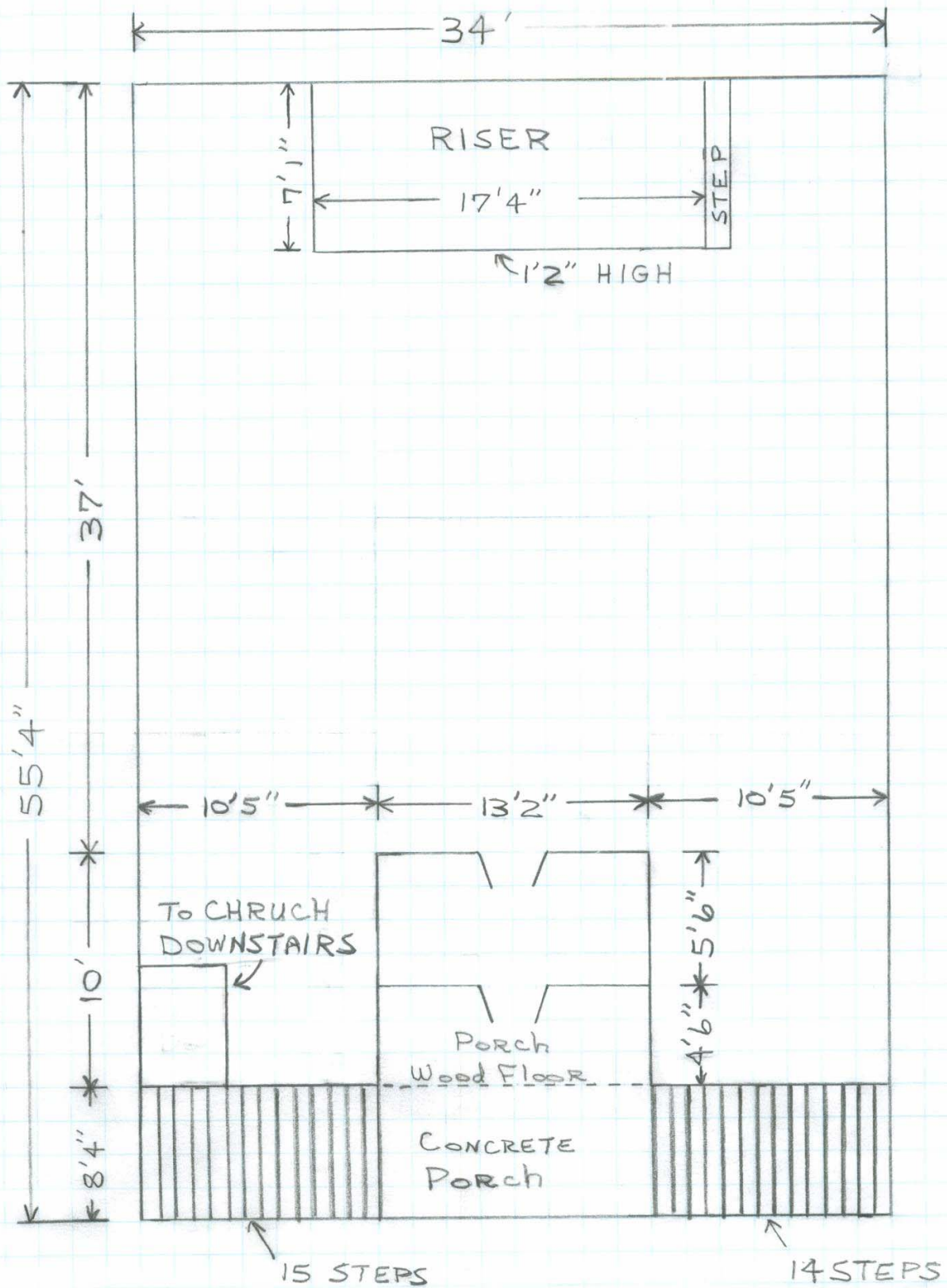






# CHRUCH FLOOR PLAN

(NOT TO SCALE)



DOWNSTAIRS  
CHRUCH FLOOR PLAN  
(NOT TO SCALE)

