



# 7. Description

## Condition

- excellent
- good
- fair

- deteriorated
- ruins
- unexposed

## Check one

- unaltered
- altered

## Check one

- original site
- moved

date N/A

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Marianna is a coal mining town situated on a hillside which rises 240 feet above the banks of Ten Mile Creek. The natural and manmade features surrounding the district, including a sharp bend in the creek bed, a slate dump, and vegetation covered hillsides, serve to isolate this already remote plant even further. Beginning at the bridge spanning the creek, Beeson Avenue, the main street, defines the western boundary for much of its length while it climbs up the hill. Rows of regularly spaced single and semi-detached houses with small to moderately sized yards branch off Beeson Avenue like ribs from a spine. The rows generally face south except where the terrain, most notable around the knoll crowned by the schoolhouse, imposes a curvilinear system. The significant and contributing structures of the district were built between 1906 and 1912. Built in a short time to meet the industrial requirement of economy, the buildings are vernacular in the sense that they are neither high style nor an adaptation of a high style. The primarily brick buildings are quickly and cheaply, though not necessarily shoddily, built boxes. The district has an unusually good integrity because the brick construction has resisted the wholesale re-siding that most mining towns have undergone. Of the 255 buildings in the district, 250 are residential, and the remaining 5 are commercial and semi-public institutions. Five are classified as significant, 218 as contributing, and 32 as intrusions. One large tax parcel at the southern edge of the district contains all the mine buildings and coke ovens.

Eighty percent of the houses are yellow brick. Of these, the most common type is a four over four, two bay, two and one-half story, twelve by thirty foot, four room house with a gable roof, a side door protected by a wood canopy, and a front, if not also a back, porch with turned posts. Like all brick houses in the district, this type has segmental arches over the doors and windows, and ogee scroll work on the roof and porch rafters. The gables frequently have decorative brickwork. A three story version with two front porches and half-timbered gables is also common. Other brick types include a three bay, two and one-half story four room house as well as an "L"-shaped version. The remaining houses are the four bay, semi-detached, frame dwellings with two and one-half or three stories and a front porch, the style typical of many bituminous mining towns. Despite these variations, the houses convey a sense of conformity.

The manner in which the district's three general building types - housing, mine building, and semi-public institutions - are laid out reflects the impact that an efficient mining operation had on the district. In order to permit optimal placement, the mine buildings occupy the flat bottom lands. Sharing this land are the railroad tracks which carry coal to market and once brought in supplies to sustain the plant. The company store and the miners' housing are on the edge of the yard, the former to

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receive goods by rail and the latter to enable the mine employees to walk to work. The first three rows consist of frame houses built to shelter the workers excavating the mine shafts or constructing the mine buildings. The first house in the remaining brick rows, once the Superintendent's house, is one of five larger-scale houses fronting on Beeson Avenue known as Bosses' Row. Just beyond Bosses' Row is a three story dwelling that was a dormitory or hotel for single men and married men who were away from their families. There are three other sections of the district with names. The Fulton Street Row, where strikebreakers were housed in 1925, is called the "Bull Pen." The eastern extension of Third and Fourth Streets is "Oklahoma." Ash, Hill, and the western end of Oak Street is known as "Texas." The schoolhouse, the Arcade, and the Roman Catholic Church were not essential to the operation of the mine, and consequently were finished last. (The parishioners built the Roman Catholic Church.) These three buildings, as well as the former company store, the dormitory, and the former Superintendent's house, are classified as significant, not only because they are major building types central to a company town, but also because they are visual, social, and architectural focal points of the district.

The integrity of the district is very good when compared to that of other mining towns in the region, largely the result of the extensive use of brick. Nevertheless, almost every building has been altered to some degree. Those with the highest integrity are almost inevitably in the poorest condition. Typical alterations include the replacement of original windows and roofs, the encasing of eaves and porch posts, and the enclosure of porches. The 32 intrusions are instances of excessive alteration of the building's profile, fabric, or detailing, extensive use of aluminum siding, or entirely new construction.

The rows of almost uniform yellow brick houses, the central role of the mine in the planning of the complex, and the physical compactness of the district convey the unmistakable feel of an early twentieth century Western Pennsylvania mining town.

# 8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1906-1912 Builder/Architect Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Marianna Historic District is part of an extensive commercial coal plant constructed between 1906 and 1912. It is significant in the areas of community planning, industry, and social/humanitarianism. Marianna is the best preserved example in Washington County of a company-built coal mining town, a phenomenon found throughout the Appalachian coal fields, and is an artifact of a movement among coal operators to improve living conditions.

Throughout the bituminous coal fields literally thousands of towns were built along plans that were designed to maximize productivity and reduce surface development costs to a minimum. Prior to the appearance of paved roads and widespread automobile ownership, company housing was a necessary part of any remote industrial plant. A minimum requirement to attract labor, housing was also a way to control labor unrest through threat of eviction, and to recapture costs via rents and sales at the company store. Immigrants were hired because they worked for lower wages and presented a language barrier that hindered unionization. Conditions in mining towns were notoriously bad. In 1921, 90% of all company houses in the United States were frame structure, less than 30% had indoor toilets, and only 20% had gas or electricity. Ethnological studies of nearby coal mining towns indicate that despite the oppressive circumstances, mining towns developed a vibrant, family-centered culture.

The establishment of the Marianna Mine is directly related to the coal mine consolidation movement along the Monongahela River. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the number of small, individually owned mines along the Monongahela (where the coal outcropped and where river and railroad transportation were readily accessible) multiplied and competition between coal operators became fierce. Overproduction of coal, increased shipping costs, the advent of natural gas and oil as fuels, and a series of economic depressions made coal mining a tumultuous and often unprofitable business. In 1890, about 85 mines and related industries along the Monongahela River banded together under the leadership of Monongahela City banker John Barclay Finley and formed the M.R.C.C. & C. Co., (commonly known as River Coal, the River Combine, or R.C.). This was the first large scale mining corporation in Western Pennsylvania, perhaps in bituminous mining history.

James Jones, a Welsh immigrant, was one of the more successful small mine operators in the region before the consolidation. He had owned the ... Mine in Monongahela City at least since the early 1890s. The

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coming of River Coal eliminated the role of the small operator in the Monongahela Valley and forced many operators out of the valley. Jones sold 2 mining companies to the Combine. In 1901, the Jones family organized the Pittsburg & Buffalo Company, opening 2 new mines away from the valley, one in Canonsburg and one in an Armstrong County town named Johnetta (in honor of Johnetta Jones, one of James Jones' granddaughters). Branch offices for the new Pittsburgh based company were opened in Buffalo, Cleveland, and Chicago, probably to escape the close competition of the Pittsburgh market. The choice of the name Pittsburg & Buffalo Co. probably reflects the same concern for widening the marketing base of the family concern. Johnetta was located on the Buffalo & Allegheny Valley Division of the Pennsylvania R.R., thus giving equal access to the Buffalo and Pittsburgh areas from this mine. In 1903, the company was developing 3 new mines in Western Pennsylvania. At Johnetta, Pittsburg & Buffalo Co. also operated a sawmill, a machine shop, coke ovens, and a brick, terra cotta, and sewer pipe manufacturing company. The subsequent establishment of the Marianna mine, in a vast coal field and at a considerable distance from the river valley, was a further attempt of the Jones family to escape the conditions in the Monongahela Valley, and yet meet the challenges presented by a new era of coal mining.

The Jones family developed the Marianna mines with the intention of building the largest, safest, most up-to-date plant in the world. In 1908, John H. Jones, president of the company, was instrumental in arranging a conference of governors to discuss state legislation for mine safety and miners' disability insurance - as fate would have it, just days before an explosion at Marianna killed 154 people. At the same time, a model of the town, including drawings and photographs, was part of an exhibition on civic reform at Carnegie Art Galleries, Pittsburgh. A 1911 company publication reports that Marianna mines had a daily production of 5,000 tons, that they had a capacity of 10,000 tons per day, and that on occasion the mine had produced as much coal in twenty-four minutes as most mines produced in an eight hour day.

The industry's consolidation also provided the capital that allowed operators to act on a growing perception of a need to provide more than the basic necessities to miners living in remote areas. Most operators who became involved in "sociological work," as it was called, did so out of the belief that it was good business to have a contented labor force. Some of the first efforts of this type in Washington County were at neighboring Ellsworth. Built in 1900 by an independent coal merchant who was

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aware that the Connellsville region was being mined out, Ellsworth included several rows of one story brick houses "of marked English type" (Hall, p. 37), as well as other amenities. The presence of Ellsworth on the same railroad extension may have had an effect on the plans that the Jones brothers had for Marianna. Their desire for the world's most up-to-date coal plant also required the most modern housing program. In addition to being built of brick, many of the houses had running water, which, while not considered fit to drink by the miners, was used for toilets, tubs, and hot water heaters. The schoolhouse, the Arcade, and the bathhouse were also a result of their humanitarian concern.

Marianna's houses are nearly all two story yellow brick structures built on about four simple models. The vast majority of these houses were built within a very short period of time, and are more a reflection of economics and sensible town planning than of the town's history. There was some breakdown of the town into ethnic neighborhoods and names of states (Texas, Alabama, see Description) were used to distinguish one section from another. However, this was not directly reflected in the architecture of these company-built houses. Nearly all the buildings within the district were built by the company and they simultaneously reflect company town repetition and progressive humanitarianism; cheapness and concern for improved conditions. Although the houses are all based on only a few models, variations in siting help somewhat to break up the monotony. Although the houses are all built of a crude quality of brick, various brick patterns (sawtooth rows, diapers, etc.) are used (albeit futilely) to break up the repetition of the simple building forms. They are, simply put, the most vernacular of mass-produced vernacular architecture. Nearly all are simple brick boxes with gable roofs. Some have half-timber ornaments in the gable ends. Most have porches with turned posts. The windows have segmentally arched tops, probably for structural reasons. The only other architectural features are the flourishes added by the masons.

The Borough of Marianna was incorporated in 1910. Bethlehem Mines purchased Marianna in 1923 and the town was opened to the public and the houses sold in 1945-46.

The repetition of a few architectural forms, the extensive use of a single color of brick, and the physical separation of the town from other developments give the Marianna Historic District a very strong visual unity. Because of efforts to provide better living conditions, Marianna is today one of the best preserved examples of the Western Pennsylvania mining town.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached listing.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 128.6 acres

Quadrangle name Ellsworth

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A	1 17	5 76	8 170	4 42	19 5 7 10
	Zone	Easting		Northing	

B	1 17	5 7 16	6 6 10	4 14	3 10 9 1 7 10
	Zone	Easting		Northing	

C	1 7	5 7 6	8 4 0	4 43	1 0 2 0
	Zone	Easting		Northing	

D	1 7	5 7 7	4 0 0	4 4	3 0 6 8 0
	Zone	Easting		Northing	

E					
	Zone	Easting		Northing	

F					
	Zone	Easting		Northing	

G					
	Zone	Easting		Northing	

H					
	Zone	Easting		Northing	

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet.

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

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Terry Necciai, Mark M. Brown, Research Consultant

organization Washington County History and Landmarks Foundation

date 1984

street & number P.O. Box 274

telephone (412) 222-3140

city or town Washington

state Pennsylvania

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer

title

date

7/30/84

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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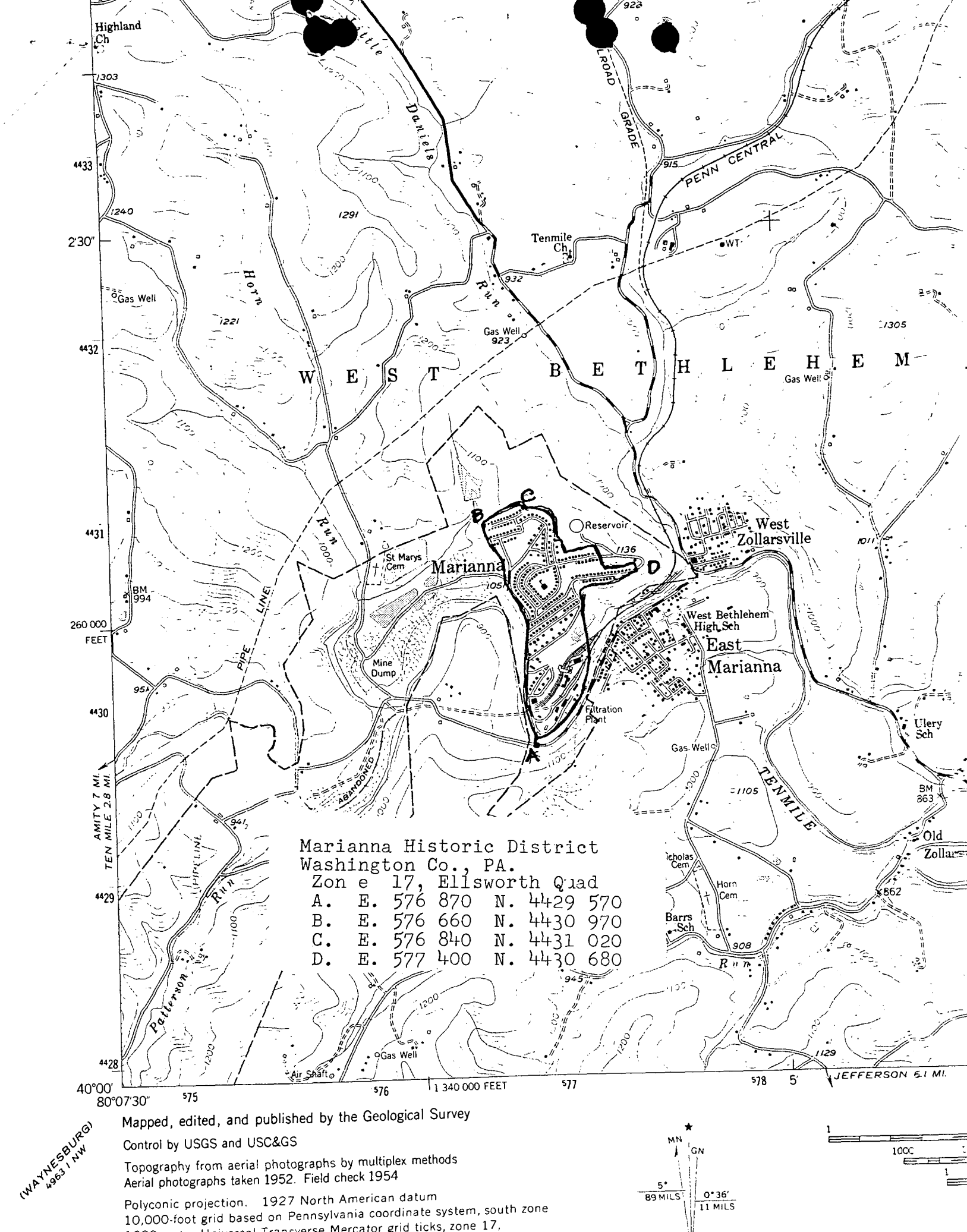
date entered

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Marianna Historic District  
Washington Co., PA.

Zone 17, Ellsworth Quad			
A.	E. 576	870	N. 4429 570
B.	E. 576	660	N. 4430 970
C.	E. 576	840	N. 4431 020
D.	E. 577	400	N. 4430 680

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography from aerial photographs by multiplex methods  
Aerial photographs taken 1952. Field check 1954

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Pennsylvania coordinate system, south zone

(WAYNESBURG)  
4963 NW

