

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Carter Coal Company Store

other name/site number: Consolidation Coal Company Store

2. Location

street & number: intersection of state route 16 and county route 12/8

not for publication: n/a

city/town: Caretta

vicinity: n/a

state: WV county: McDowell code: 047 zip code: 24871

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:

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>0</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of relate property listing: Coal Company Stores in McDowell County

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4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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

2/10/92  
Date

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

Date

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5. National Park Service Certification

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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):

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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6. Function or Use
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Historic:	<u>commerce/trade</u>	Sub:	<u>department store</u>
	<u>commerce/trade</u>		<u>business</u>
	<u>government</u>		<u>post office</u>
Current :	<u>government</u>	Sub:	<u>post office</u>

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7. Description
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Architectural Classification:  
other/L plan

Other Description: n/a

Materials: foundation stone roof asphalt  
walls brick other wood/weatherboard

Describe present and historic physical appearance.   x   See continuation sheet.

===== 8. Statement of Significance =====

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 Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in  
 relation to other properties: statewide.  
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Applicable National Register Criteria: A,C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : n/a

Areas of Significance: architecture  
commerce  
industry  
                      
                      
                    

Period(s) of Significance: ca.1912- 1941

Significant Dates : 1922 \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person(s): n/a

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: unknown

tate significance of property, and justify criteria,  
considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.  
x See continuation sheet.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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See continuation sheet.   x  

Previous documentation on file (NPS):   n/a  

- ☐ 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: Eastern Regional Coal Archives,  
Bluefield, WV

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreeage of Property: less than one acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>17</u>	<u>440240</u>	<u>4131900</u>	B	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>
C	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	D	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>

Verbal Boundary Description:      See continuation sheet.

From the intersection of highway 16 and Barrenshe Creek road, the boundary extends south 200', east 150', north 200' and west 150'

Boundary Justification:      See continuation sheet.

The boundary includes all of the property historically associated with the Carter Coal Company store.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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Name/Title: Stacy Sone, surveyor

Organization: WV SHPO Date: 12/16/91

Street & Number: Cultural Center Telephone: 304-348-0240

City or Town: Charleston State: WV ZIP: 25305

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Page 1 Carter Coal Company store, Caretta

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The Carter Coal Company built the store at Caretta soon after the company was established in 1912. Although this store is only one story, its size is comparable to some of the monumental two-story buildings. It is larger now than it was at its construction date but its additions date to a period when the building still served as a store. It has undergone little change since its years serving Consolidation and Carter Coal Company employees and it retains the characteristics that are most illustrative of company construction.

This store stands at the intersection of state route 16 and county route 12/8 in the center of Caretta. Traditionally, company stores were sited in a location accessible to the entire community. The Carter Coal Company, seeing the advantages of this placement, built the store, a church, and the school between most of the residential community and the mine.

The original brick store stood on an uneven T-planned stone foundation under an intersecting gabled roof. Wooden-frame shed wings added to the sides of the facade spread the plan into an L. The wing on the building's west side extends from the facade until it meets the rear section of the T. The east wing is only about half of that length. The gabled roof over the front section extends smoothly over the wings to unify the facade.

Another change to the building is the brick applied to the facade at an unknown date. A 1923 photograph shows a recessed center entry with display windows across the facade. Thin wooden frames separated the large glass panes from the transoms. The brick work narrowed the transoms and gave this facade a bolder appearance. The building's only embellishment is a geometric design in the front gable which is reminiscent of half-timber decoration.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 1 Carter Coal Company store, Caretta

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The Carter Coal Company store in Caretta is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A for its historical association with southern West Virginia's coal mining industry, and under criterion C for its architectural significance. Carter Coal Company built the large brick store building ca. 1912 and during the years following, it served as an important commercial, business, and social center in the isolated coal mining community. In 1922, Consolidation Coal Company bought control of the Caretta mine and altered the store to accommodate more office space (for historical information about the Pocahontas Coalfield and the significance of company stores, see sections E and F in "Coal Company Stores in McDowell County", multiple property listing). The Caretta store shares the characteristics of other company stores with its size, location, and multiple functions. What makes this store unique is its gabled roof and shed wings. The building continues to operate as a post office and has been well-maintained so that it retains its early appearance when it served as a coal company store.

Before the coal industry boomed in southern West Virginia at the end of the nineteenth century, the area consisted of scattered, self-sufficient farms and communities. Because of the absence of railroads and good roads, the southern counties had little interaction with the rest of the nation. After the Civil War, however, the nation's industrial market expanded and outsiders began to turn their attention to West Virginia's vast coal reserve to meet growing demands.

The major railroads extended their lines into southern West Virginia allowing the area to be developed. Without a sufficient labor force, however, coal mining could not be productive. Companies recruited thousands of workers first from the older coalfields in Pennsylvania, and then from Eastern Europe and the American South. To accommodate these new arrivals, coal companies built self-sufficient communities to house and provide for their workers. The construction of company towns was absolutely necessary in southern West Virginia. Unlike the northern coalfields of Pennsylvania, where mining operations began in regions that were already settled, southern mines opened in sparsely settled areas with few organized communities. The company town was the most logical solution because it provided efficient and inexpensive housing for a large labor force.

Central to each of these communities was the company store. The store was usually the town's most prominent building and was typically placed in an easily accessible location. The building often housed not only a

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 2 Carter Coal Company store, Caretta

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store but also the company's business office, a post office, and sometimes, a doctor's office. Because of its location and multiple functions, the store provided each community with a center for social gathering.

The company store first served Caretta residents employed by the Carter Coal Company. Just after the turn of the century, George L. Carter, an iron furnace manager from Virginia, acquired rich McDowell County land and in 1912, organized the Carter Coal Company. He constructed a shaft mine at Caretta and at nearby Coalwood and claimed that his company would be the largest coal producer along the N & W Railroad. The brick company store dates to around the time when Carter organized the company. This single building served the community as the center of commercial, business, and social activity in the industrial community. It offered a wide variety of merchandise in its spacious display area and it also housed the post office and the company's payroll office. Miners and their families typically visited the store daily to purchase goods and to receive mail. Because of its convenient location near the residential areas and the mine, the building was a constant gathering point.

In 1922, Carter sold his mines to the New York-based Consolidation Coal Company. The latter company organized these mines into its Pocahontas-New River Division and based its division headquarters in Coalwood. The company invested several million dollars over the years and substantially expanded the entire operation. By 1931, the company operated four modern mines but the shaft operations at Caretta and Coalwood were its leading producers. The company was most proud of its Caretta complex which it claimed was southern West Virginia's largest mine and a marvel of the industrial world.

Carter's brick store building proved to be perfectly adequate for the enormous coal company. Although it is not a two-story monumental building like some built a few years later, it is still large and impressive and it includes the characteristics that indicate its importance in the community. Because of the terrain, Caretta residences were spread out in three different areas. More than one store made goods accessible to all residents since the center of Caretta was not perfectly convenient to each residential area. The center store was the largest and is the only one remaining. Other stores would have provided goods but the extant store, being located in the center of the community along with the church and the school, would still have been the center of commercial, business, and social center in the company town.

(NPS Form 10-900)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 8 Page 3 Carter Coal Company store, Caretta

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Consolidation Coal Company only operated the mines until 1933. The original owner, George Carter, negotiated with Consolidation Coal and bought back the two facilities. Carter reorganized Carter Coal Company with his son as president. In 1948, Carter sold the company to Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company which bought the mines to supply their steel mills in Ohio. It operated the mines under the name Olga Coal Company and it continues to own the public buildings at both Caretta and Coalwood.

The store's importance in the community decreased as automobiles and good roads allowed miners access to other commercial centers. The store closed before mining ceased in Caretta leaving the building vacant except for the post office in one wing. Unlike so many stores that were simply abandoned, the Carter Coal Company store has been maintained, retains its original fabric and is structurally sound. The store is less ornate than some of those that followed but it remains a good example and a unique addition to the collection of company stores in McDowell County.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 9 Page 1 Carter Coal Company store, Caretta

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Caretta, photograph file, Eastern Regional Coal Archives, Bluefield, WV.

Carroll County Historical Society, Hillsville, Va. "George L. Carter - Capitalist". unpublished information on file, Eastern Regional Coal Archives, Bluefield, WV.

Coalwood/Caretta, file, Eastern Regional Coal Archives, Bluefield, WV.

"Coalwood: Carter's Legacy". Bluefield Daily Telegraph (Dec. 31, 1989).

Company Stores, file, Eastern Regional Coal Archives, Bluefield, WV.

Conley, Phil, ed. "The Consolidation Coal Company--An Industrial Giant". The West Virginia Review 9(Oct. 1931), 74-76.

Eller, Ronald D. Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers. Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1982.

"New Shaft Mine To Be Big Producer". Bluefield Daily Telegraph (March 22, 1914).

4658 1 N  
(WE)

440

40'

442

1 810 000 FEET (W. VA.)

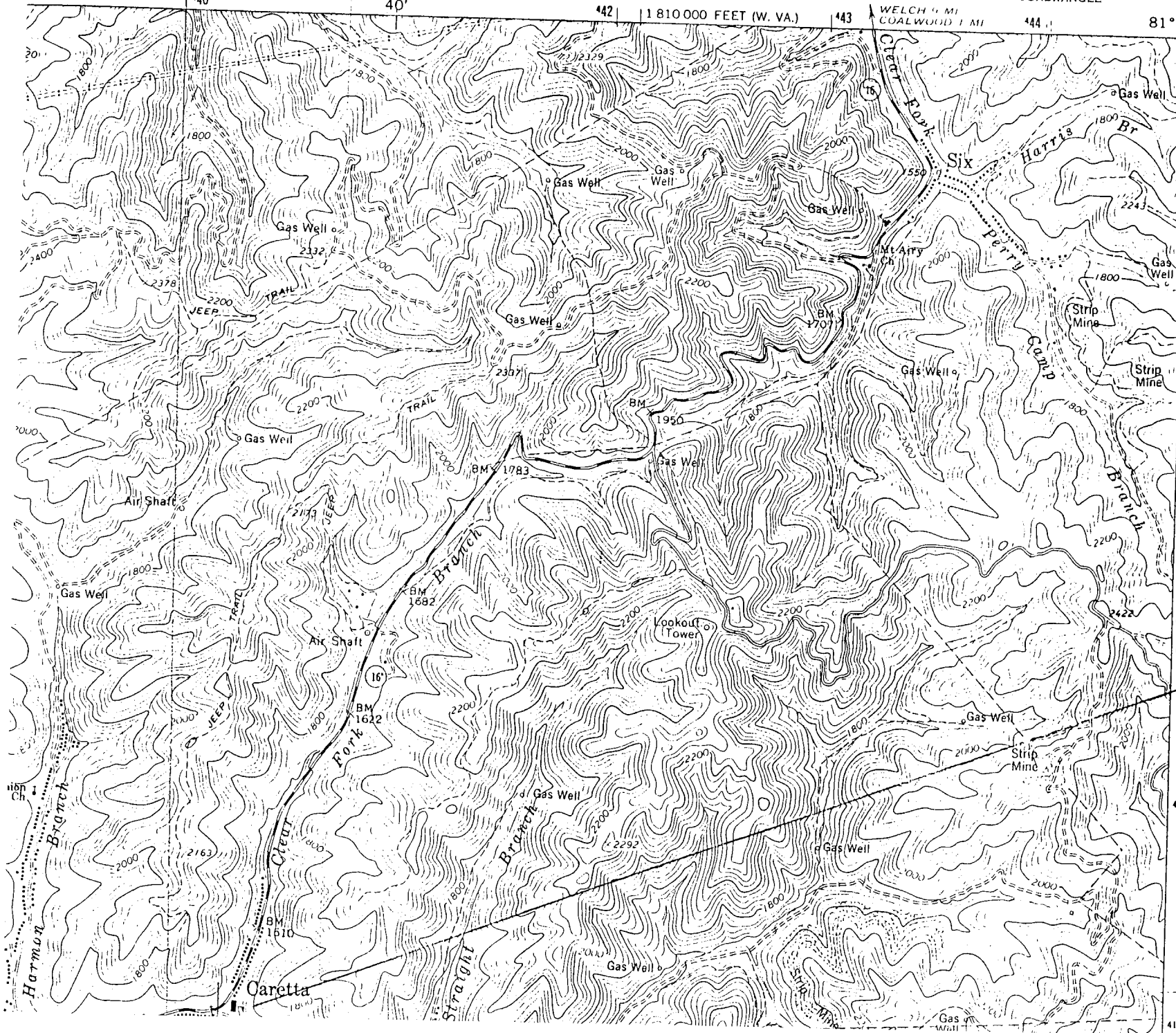
443

WELCH 6 MI  
COALWOOD 1 MI

444

81° 37' 30"

37° 22' 30"



Carter Coal Co. Store  
Caretta, McDowell  
Co., W. Va.  
17/440240/4131900  
War quad.

130 000 FEET  
(W. VA.)

4132

