

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

AND/OR COMMON

Cass Historic District

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Intersection of County Routes 1 and 7

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Cass

VICINITY OF

Second

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

West Virginia

54

Pocahontas

075

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

☒ DISTRICT

☐ PUBLIC

☒ OCCUPIED

☐ AGRICULTURE

☒ MUSEUM

☐ BUILDING(S)

☐ PRIVATE

☐ UNOCCUPIED

☒ COMMERCIAL

☒ PARK

☐ STRUCTURE

☒ BOTH

☒ WORK IN PROGRESS

☒ EDUCATIONAL

☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

☐ SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

☒ ENTERTAINMENT

☒ RELIGIOUS

☐ OBJECT

☐ IN PROCESS

☐ YES, RESTRICTED

☒ GOVERNMENT

☐ SCIENTIFIC

☐ BEING CONSIDERED

☒ YES UNRESTRICTED

☒ INDUSTRIAL

☒ TRANSPORTATION

☐ NO

☐ MILITARY

☐ OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Multiple Ownership

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

STATE

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Pocahontas County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Ninth Street

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Marlinton

West Virginia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The first men who worked for the lumber company on Leatherbark Run in Pocahontas County were housed in all sorts of crude shelters. It is quite probable that those construction workers built their own pole lean-tos, brush shelters, or some type of dug-outs. Before Cass was incorporated and named in 1902, it could be that the men with families who came early to work for the company built small rough-lumber cottages off company property. Several of the privately owned dwellings on the outskirts of Cass today have the look of such houses.

The residential area of the town of Cass was planned to have parallel streets and alleys laying north and south on the slope of Back Mountain on the west side of the Greenbrier River. The street at the lowest level followed the curve of the railroad which was close below it and was named Front Street. The next street above was named Main, and the upper one was Spruce (High or Church) Street. These streets were only two blocks long. Emory was a bisecting thoroughfare across Main and the two alleys, and the alleys were equidistant between the streets.

Street blocks were platted with lots of fifty foot fronts and depths of one hundred feet. The streets were fifty feet wide and the alleys twenty feet. Each block had eight lots which faced north-south thoroughfares, but Front Street lots faced only the west side. Indications are that, mainly, the day-laborers of the mill lived in these houses, while other dwellings were provided for workers in Slabtown, Old Spruce, Deer Creek, and two other company towns beyond Cheat Mountain.

In Cass there were (and are) three classes of housing based upon style, size, and location. They were for use of the employees as classed by the importance of their occupation in the company, with class three houses for day-laborers, class two dwellings for section foremen and office personnel, and class one buildings for persons in management positions.

Class Three Houses

Houses built in Cass by the company for its "day-laborers" are very stout, rectangular, two-story, six-room frames with front and rear porches. They have fronts of two-bays and foundations of large timbers on blocks. Gable ends are front and rear, and the roof slope is medium. Porches are one-story, eight feet deep, and they have shed-roofs. Every company-owned building in Cass, except one, was, and is now, weatherboarded with "German" siding (a narrow beveled type introduced in the early 1900s). These thirty by twenty foot houses have central chimneys to serve wood or coal burning stoves in any or all rooms. The foundations are covered by vertical boards or they are hidden behind lattice work, and on this sloping land this provides a protected storage space. Roofs are now covered with roll

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roofing and perhaps always have been so covered. Windows are plain, 2/2 double-hung sash. On the stairway side of the house the windows are not evenly placed, but on the opposite side most houses have two-bays or five windows.

All class three houses have interior plans as standardized as are the exteriors. The entrance door opens into a hall which contains a single-flight stairway. To the left of the hall is a 17 by 17 foot living room, and behind it is a 13 by 12 foot dining room. Ceilings are eight feet high, wall coverings are plaster with plain trim. There is nothing ornamental about these houses, inside or out. On the rear porch is a pantry with a door from the kitchen. An upstairs hall gives access to three bedrooms. Sometime, about 1918 according to some persons, bathrooms were built in the front of the upstairs hall. Originally, every one of these houses had a white picket fence which enclosed their yards which were dotted with old-time flowers. At the rear of each lot, on the alley, a small storage building was built for a supply of wood and coal. In later times, small garages were built here and along each side of each street were board walks.

Today in Cass there is one home which represents a complete picture of what these class three houses were like in the early 1900s. House #320 on the east side of Spruce (High) Street is the home of Mr. and Mrs. G. L. Dahmer. It has all the characteristics of the typical "laborer's house," though the fence needs painting. In this house eight children were born and raised. Mr. Dahmer worked half a century for "the company", and he still keeps his home in good repair, including the board walk between his house and his church next door.

There are forty-seven of these "Class Three" houses in Cass. The seventeen which are occupied are in good or fair condition. Of the thirty which are unoccupied about ten are in fair condition, while the other twenty are in various stages of deterioration. On the neatly kept lawns of the "lived-in" houses as well as on the unkept lawns of the empty houses there are bright flowers.

Class Two Houses

Office workers and some division foremen of the company lived in dwellings which are somewhat larger than the class three houses. Some of these are two-bays wide with a two-story side wing to make them L-shaped with three gabled ends. Others have a three-bay facade

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with hip roof, a center hall and stairway, and at least four windows on each side of the house (Nos. 214 and 219 Main Street). Three in this group are class-three style with greater length for more rooms. Houses in this class have larger front porches and some also have side porches; all have a greater number of windows. Two-story porches are seen at the rear of a few of these, and a touch of decoration, such as rounded balusters or columns and fancy railings at porches and a round ventilator at the gable. In some cases these houses have larger lots, corner lots, or sites away from other houses.

House #245, on an extension of Main Street, is typical of the class-two dwellings. This dwelling sits high above Luke Street on a sloping corner lot which gives it much visibility. Viewed from the north it is very like the better class-three houses, but exterior differences include a deeper porch on the front (east) side which extends around part of the south side. The porch has turned posts with braces and attractive railings. Windows are double-hung sash with single-pane glass. In the front gable is a round ventilator close under the eaves. At the rear is a one-story ell above a small basement, and a small porch is in the angle of the ell. A "German" siding was used on the house and its dependencies, and wood stairs and a board walk lead from Luke Street to the porch. The interior plan is like the class-three house except that the slightly larger size gives space for larger rooms. Other class two dwellings are at 131 and 139 Front Street, 219, 243, 251 and 253 Main and 344 Spruce. Four of these are unoccupied and three are in bad physical condition.

Class One Houses

The company-owned houses in class one were built at company expense, but the officials who were to occupy them could, and did, select and change the plans. Of the six houses of this type, four were close together in a row facing east on what would have been Main Street if it had been extended north from Luke Street. A board walk from Luke Street was built across the front lot lines of these houses, while rear lot lines border on the Mountain Road. The handsome facades of two of these, the only two which are occupied, are seldom seen and their front entrances are almost never used.

A part of each of these dwellings may have been the basic class-three rectangle as is quite evident in the southern most one of the row. The front (east) and stairway side have like window arrangements, and the roof lines are clearly like those of the "class-threes". This house was built a third longer and has an

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added two rooms with entrance hall space. A deep veranda with heavy square posts forms a three-bay front and it is extended two-bays on the north side. The house seems very tall because of its steep site, and its visibility is heightened by its color, for in a town of white houses it is an attractive "earth-color".

The two unoccupied houses in this row appear to be in bad physical condition but are quite sound. The need for a coat of paint and work on the unkept lawns detract very much from their appearances.

The last of these four dwellings is the second largest house in Cass. Additions have been made to it several times at dates not known. It is now an L-shaped, two-story house with a gable facing each side and with verandas at the front (east) and north side and a porch in the angle of the ell. Part of the three-bay facade above the veranda has the look of a "class-three" front gable. A through-the-house hall contains the stairway, has two rooms to either side, and a kitchen and pantry to the rear. The upper floor has bedrooms and baths. Windows are double-hung sashes with large single panes. The slope of the expansive lawn makes possible a large storage space under the house, and at the rear of the lot is a sizable utility building.

Among buildings in class one is #345 on a lot at the corner of Spruce and Luke Streets. It is the only residence that faces Luke and is a short distance west of the clubhouse. This was the home of superintendents of the lumber companies and at present is occupied by the superintendent of Cass Scenic Railroad. The house has a three-bay front (north) with a four-bay veranda which has large Ionic columns and a very handsome set of steps. The veranda continues to the east side with three-bays. The railing is very attractive. At the east gable is a tall outside chimney, and there is no other one like it in Cass. This house, set high above the street junction, has a very regal stance.

The last of these "official's homes" is the one which is best architecturally. It was the home of the company doctors through all the years and was built close to the building which served a short time as the company hospital, just down hill a short distance from the clubhouse. This building on the hill above Back Mountain Road overlooks the Greenbrier River at the highway bridge. The house is not occupied now, but it is well cared for. It is a large, square, two-story structure with halls through-the-house on each level. The front (northeast) is a standard two-bay facade but has an off-center entrance

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doorway. The front also has a cross-gable with a round ventilator and lovely vergeboards. A deep, columned veranda extends across the front and half of the north elevation, and each side has a two-story bay projection with three windows at each level. The center chimney has a drip course. The house contains about ten rooms.

Private Homes

Privately built and owned homes in "west" Cass are in two groups: the made-over company houses and those which were built on chosen plans (one of the latter is high up the hill on a grand site and is the home of the mayor of Cass). East of the river and south of the bridge are two intrusive trailers, one housing the Cass Post Office and the other a dwelling. On a small street between the road and the east side of the river are five small, four-room, cottage-size buildings that were used as very early housing by mill workers and later as houses of "entertainment". Lastly, along the roadside is an old empty country store building.

Public and Commercial Buildings, Structures, and Objects

The unused former hospital that was later a rooming and boarding house for train crewmen is a large two-story, square building with gables on all sides. The front (south) facade has a cross gable and a round ventilator like the doctor's house. A one-story curved and columned veranda circles the south, east, and west sides, and at each end of the veranda is a glassed-in room. There are outside doors on four sides.

On the hill above the doctor's house and the hospital is the large rectangular, two-story clubhouse. It has a cross gable on the main part and many windows on all sides. The club was used by the owners and officials of the lumber companies as a place for conferences, housing guests and visitors and special parties. It is reported, however, that the clubhouse never was used very much. It is in good condition and is well cared for.

One of two buildings which face Luke Street is the town building. It was constructed to hold the mayor's office, a council meeting room and, in a brick-walled basement (above ground), a jail. The small, square, shed-roofed frame structure has an entrance at the top of a steep set of steps. The front of the basement is for storage of supplies, while a small rear room is a one-cell jail with barred windows and a thick wooden door.

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The lodge hall which faces east on Front Street is a narrow, sixty foot long, two-story building. It has a flat roof with eave brackets and a bracketed brim cover above the large display-type windows. The building is used by the Riverside Lodge AF & AM and Cass Chapter O.E.S. and is neat and well kept.

The Methodist (now interdenominational) Church, at the corner of Spruce and "A" Streets, is a well-proportioned, L-shaped frame building with concrete foundation. It has a portico with a pedimented gable, a round ventilator at the gabled end, and a small bell shelter at the peak of the roof. The fanlight above the entrance and the windows with triangular lintels and double-hung sashes are touches which relieve the look of plainness. The building is in excellent condition.

The youth center by the lodge hall on Front Street was for many years the Cass Presbyterian Church. The building is Gothic in many ways such as its windows, hood fan over the entrance, and the bell tower. To each side of the sanctuary is a small wing. The building is in fair condition and is now under repair.

Across Luke Street from the lodge hall and facing Front Street is a large two-story structure with a double porch which was half of an old hotel. This building sat about a yard from another like it, and they were joined by the double porch which crossed their front.

Facing west on Front Street opposite the lodge is a long, low building which was constructed to house autos and trucks. It now contains the Back Mountain Crafts Center, fire station, area ambulance service and Lyle Meeks' Barber Shop.

The Pocahontas Supply Company, a "Company Store" that "supplied all of a family's needs", is now the center for tourists who come to Cass for the train ride. It is a very large three-story building which at the upper levels has a front of eighteen bays. At the south end is a two-story building which used to be the post office, and just north is the main store that supplies all of a tourist's needs, including a cafeteria, and houses two museums. This building is in good condition.

Another store is Kane's on Main Street. This is a typical, small-town country store in a long one-story building with a large one-story storage area on its left. Gasoline is sold here.

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At the highway bridge, on the east side of the river, is the two-story, flat-roofed State A.B.C. store and two one-story taverns. There, too, is an old church building, long unused, that sits where "Dirty Street" joins County Route 7. The Post Office trailer is located at this same junction facing west.

The old town school building is near the west end of Main Street at the corporation boundary. It is a very large double building separated by a twelve foot open area with a porch between units. During its use, it contained all departments of twelve grades. Each building section is nine-bays wide with cross gables and bell tower. A concrete block addition at the right rear is fairly recent and houses a gymnasium.

All that remains of the former lumber mill is the boiler building with its two great high stacks. This was the power center of the entire complex, and it is probable that this could be preserved for its attraction to visitors. The park associated with Cass Scenic Railroad contains ticket office, rest rooms, passenger coaches from the C & O Railway, water tower and large metal shop building. A large part of the former lumber yard is used for a parking yard.

Nothing remains on the east side of the river opposite the mill, an area once called Hell's Acre. This was the destination of some of the men of the logging crews when they sought relaxation on payday from a long stay in the mountains. Across the bridge was "Dirty Street", a path to quickly lead them to those who waited to get their week's pay.

Because of the nature of the timber industry with changing technology and equipment, much of the town, especially the former lumber mill site, presents an opportunity for historical archeology studies.

The last firm to hold title to much of the lands in and around Cass (Mower Lumber Company) negotiated a sale with the State of West Virginia. Lands purchased at that time encompassed significant stretches of wooded hillside, the sections called Slabtown and Deer Creek, and the site of the former mill surrounding the town. Because of the association of all of this with the evolution and development of the timber and lumber industry in the Cass vicinity, the entire area (see district boundary on the enclosed maps) is placed in nomination to the National Register.

(11/78)

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District buildings are primarily two-story frame dwellings with gable ends facing street lines. A number of "special" former company structures (store, churches, hospital, club house, etc.) do not follow the standard pattern of houses, but they are simple extensions of that style. Much the same can be said of the comparatively few privately-owned buildings that evolved on edges of the town to house a variety of associated timber and service personnel and their families. The eight structures that may now be considered nonconforming intrusions either were converted from former company (or "sympathetic" private) stock into units quite distinct today or were constructed in a manner different from other buildings and now detract in overall lines or uses. The following list (keyed to the enclosed sketch map) notes these exceptions individually:

1. This is a formerly sympathetic house that has undergone enlargement to an extent that it is no longer similar to basic housing stock. Changes include use of non-wood building materials, different window sizes and locations, lower-pitch roof slope, and installation of aluminum siding.

2. Application of a rough stuccoed exterior finish to this residence has altered its character considerably from that of neighbors throughout the community.

3. This is a modern sectional dwelling assembled on a privately-owned lot.

4. This two-story (plus basement) brick building with frame appendage is located within a group of three somewhat similar structures (all nonconforming intrusions) that have been part of the town for forty years or so, but their character is distinct. They are distracting from the community's architectural heritage, and their usage (restaurants, apartments, incompatible commercial outlets, etc.) is out of place with present village standards and, to a large extent, with former town functioning.

5. This is among the group described above. It is a two-story, cinder-block building that is rather nondescript.

6. As with structures #4 and 5, this is a two-story commercial and apartment unit incompatible with the community as a whole.

7. This is a house trailer being used as a post office.

8. Although this frame building formerly served as a church, it has deteriorated and is now used as a "pool hall."

The basic affect of these nonconforming intrusions on the sense of time and place in Cass is twofold: (1) they do not follow architectural styles and construction patterns generally evidenced through-

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out the remainder of the town, and (2) several (#4, 5, 6 and 8) also are detracting from historical standards in terms of present usage attuned not to former importance as a logging town but solely to commercial activity relating to a new status as tourist attraction.

SIGNIFICANCE

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

15. CHRONIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1902

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The existing town of Cass and the Cass Scenic Railroad (presently listed on the National Register of Historic Places) afford unique recreational and educational possibilities for persons who are and will increasingly continue to be traveling through this part of the Appalachian Region. They are located in the central portion of the Monongahela National Forest within forty miles of Spruce Knob National Recreation Area. In this logging town of the first half of the twentieth century are to be found the ingredients that mark an experience that places the "company-owned town" (which was so much a part of all Appalachian industries) before the touring public. The following are three of these ingredients: the use of three architectural styles of company houses, a picture of people engaged in a rough industry that in some cases demanded harsh living for survival, and a story of the unusual transportation which one can both hear and see.

In the trackless forests of the region west of the Alleghenies were stands of virgin hard and soft woods that, from the 1880s to the late 1950s, gave rise to and supported the timbering and lumber manufacturing interests which kept the state of West Virginia in the foremost rank of lumber producing areas. The earliest timbering and logging development on a great scale came to the Greenbrier River Valley in 1882, when the St. Lawrence Boom and Manufacturing Company opened the largest softwood manufacturing plant in the United States at Ronceverte. It operated until about 1908. During those years the Greenbrier River was harnessed with dams, cribs, booms, pockets, and, at Ronceverte, with equipment to receive and hold the millions of logs which were cut and skidded from the mountains of the upper Greenbrier and Pocahontas sections and floated down to feed the whirling saws. Colonel Cecil C. Clay brought the first log drive from Pocahontas County to the Greenbrier County mill. The spur-line of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad which was built along the Greenbrier River to Durbin in the first three years of the 1900s ended both the log drives and the period of timbering, in West Virginia, which produced the famed logging rivermen.

Construction of the Greenbrier Division of the C & O proved to be the very event that Sam Slaymaker needed to bring to fruition his scheme to remove the stands of magnificent red spruce and northern

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hardwoods from the headwaters of West Virginia's western flowing water. For several years before 1900 Mr. Slaymaker had been involved in timbering projects along the Greenbrier River and its tributaries. When he could spare the time from his operations, he did much exploring in the forests west of Greenbrier Valley. His search on Shaver's Fork of Cheat River discovered for him the abundant supply of red spruce, yellow birch, and hard maple growing there. However, no nearby streams had flow enough for floating logs; therefore, the trees could not be harvested.

When the news of the coming of the C & O Railway to the Greenbrier reached Sam Slaymaker, he could see the possibility of building a spur-line up Leatherbark Creek (Run) to an elevation of 4635 feet, and then north, on a reasonable grade, into the forests at the headwaters of the Cheat and Elk Rivers. He formed a group named S.E. Slaymaker and Company, secured a tract of about 173,000 acres, built a construction camp just north of what became the site of Cass, and began to lay track toward the top of Cheat Mountain for his railway: the Greenbrier, Cheat and Elk.

The magnitude of this timbering, logging, and sawing project was, for the time, almost unbelievable, and even today it would be a notable undertaking. The more than eighty-five miles of standard-gauge track onto and over mountains at elevations near 5000 feet, the Shay-g geared engines with hauls from four to thirteen carloads, a mill that cut 35 million feet of lumber each year, and employees in number above 2500 are among astounding statistics of that lumber manufacturing operation. Of secondary importance were the multitude of necessities required for the people involved in the mammoth endeavor: food, clothing, shelter, hand tools, health care, and education to name a few.

Need for shelter began with the arrival of great numbers of men to build the construction camps along the route of the tracks; others to haul the supplies before the rails were laid, and yet others to build the mill and the machine shop. This early need was met by use of pole lean-tos, tents, and brush shelters.

In 1901 the C & O Greenbrier line fulfilled the needs for materials, and the company began to build houses for employees. Large bachelors' dormitories were constructed in a style very like large country stores, some two stories and three stories tall. Housing for married workers and their families had compact two-story, six-room houses of the same architectural style as seen in the men's houses. They were rectangular in shape, gable ends front and rear, steep roofs, shed-roofed porches at each end, and encompassed by a

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picket fence. Workers in blue-collar jobs had houses similarly styled but larger, with front, side and rear porches with round posts and some little decoration. Usually, administrative personnel had homes built to their specifications and on sites away from all other housing. Along the alleys, at the back edge of each lot, small dependencies were built for storage of wood, coal, etc. These were constructed and sided with "German" weatherboarding, as were all other buildings erected by the company. White picket fences and board walks indicate the abundance and cheapness of lumber in those days.

This same plan of housing was likely carried out in most of the lumber towns throughout the nation and certainly was a common plan in West Virginia as seen in photographs of the towns of Watoga, Ronceverte, Raywood, and Ivyton, and visible today along U.S. Route 60 in Rainelle. In Cass there are houses still occupied that show styles of the homes of the three ranks of employees. In those that have been kept in good repair, one is able to see why this mill town was described as neat and attractive.

The construction camp on the Greenbrier had grown, by 1902, to town size. It was laid off with streets and alleys, incorporated, and named Cass for Joseph K. Cass, board chairman of the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company of New York. In this same year, West Virginia Spruce Lumber Company began sawing with their large double-band mill at the north edge of town.

Company-owned houses for workers were built on lots that were platted to form streets and alleys on the hillside to the west side of the Greenbrier River. It is reported that between 1908 and 1920 there were "over 400 company-owned dwellings in the region and a number of privately owned homes". Panoramas of the vicinity taken in 1917 and 1920 show a town with three principal streets and two alleys on each side of the river; however, the number of buildings can only be estimated.

Not long after 1908 Cass contained the following public buildings: a very large company store, two hotels, numerous other stores, and several restaurants. Also, there were two schools, three churches, a hospital, a clubhouse, and a baseball playing field. All of these buildings were constructed of choice lumber from the local mill. At present within the corporation limits of Cass, there are eighty-one single family dwellings; forty-two are occupied. Twelve of these were not company built and owned; four of which are on the west side of the

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river and eight on the east. Also in the town boundary are two stores--one the very large "old company store" on Front Street, the other a small-town general store and gas station on Main Street. There are two restaurants, one of which is seasonal, an arts and crafts shop and a barber shop in a building on Front Street that also houses the fire station and local ambulance service. Across the bridge is the state A.B.C. store and the post office. Four church buildings are in the town's limits, but only that on Spruce (High or Church) Street is in use for worship--it is interdenominational. A church building on Front Street is now a youth center. The school house is unused, as children are transported to consolidated schools. Cass Inn (motel) is on First Street east of the river, and three temporary buildings now substitute for the C.S.R.R. depot which burned.

As the supply of timber became scarce, work was cut back until the population of Cass had fallen to 417 in 1950. By 1960, when the mill closed, there were only 327 people living there. Mr. Russell Baum of Pennsylvania, in 1961 led interested citizens and newspapers in a successful drive to save the logging railroad at Cass; it is now a growing tourist attraction. Now there is a very active project to preserve much of what remains of Cass as a living museum to the early lumber industry and as a varied recreation and tourist area.

Many of the employees of the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company lived in company camps and towns along the tracks on the mountains. Each logging camp had 60 to 100 men, and the railway section crews and pulpwood clean-up crews kept many other workers "in the timber". The town of Spruce was built at the junction of the Bald Knob and Shavers Fork tracks at an elevation of 3853 feet, and a pulp peeling mill was established there. On payday the men from Spruce and the line camps came into Cass for pay, supplies, and fun--which was described as "drinking, fighting, and carousing". Across the bridge to the east side of the river the logger could participate in the "splurging" that was a part of his working life. North of the bridge and opposite the mill along "Dirty Street" in "Hell's Acre" were numerous saloons, the infamous Riverview Hotel, and "houses of entertainment".

A good proportion of the few people who now live in Cass are employed in some manner in the service of tourists who come from far and wide to visit a mill town and to ride into Back and Cheat Mountains. Among these few are to be found a dozen, more or less, who lived much, or all, of their lives in Cass. They have watched

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with sadness the fall and slow decay of the town, but they respond with pleasing friendliness to all who ask for their story of the days when the operation was in full swing. As these oldsters talk, they often glance north across the site of the lumber yard to the remains of the old mill's powerhouse which, against a backdrop of two grand mountains, raises its two tall smokeless stacks as a sort of memorial--or beacon.

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Demand for timber and wood products from virgin forests in the Appalachians reached significant levels by the late nineteenth century, and construction of transportation systems (railroads) where natural highways did not exist allowed exploitation of vast acreages by the turn of the century. Opening of mountainous regions along the Greenbrier River in Pocahontas County was greatly facilitated by completion of a Chesapeake and Ohio branch line early in the twentieth century. Technological improvements in geared logging locomotives soon enabled the conquering of forests leading from river bottom lands to the heights of Bald Knob, and hillsides were soon being cleared of timber to be sent to the new company town of Cass where workers congregated near a mill. The large wooded tracts on nearby mountainsides were the raison d'etre for creation of the community, and this singular, comparatively large timbering center survived on the wealth of these mountains into the 1960s. Their trees provided a livelihood for nearly sixty years; without them there would be no Cass, both figuratively and literally, for the houses, stores, schools and churches were all products of bountiful lumber from these mountainsides. The large tracts of nearby forests kept mill and town operating, and the history and development of one is inextricably intertwined with that of the other.

Cass stands out, too, as a good representative of timber development, both in its architecture and history. Its more-or-less isolated location points to a time when industry moved with its resources, when length of transportation of the raw product was shortened in favor of longer shipment of processed goods, when log rafts on the rivers were significantly replaced by railroad lines to timberlands. And although Cass remained (remains) rather isolated, its viability as a timbering and processing center outlasted that of most such towns. What is more, its continued association with the industry meant little change in its housing stock, construction methods, architectural "styles," and building interrelationships. What one sees today at Cass is basically what one would have seen in 1910 or 1950: a grading of simple, company-town frame houses with class orientation (the managerial class housed in larger dwellings on higher elevations with smaller laborers' quarters near the railroad and river).

By way of summary, then, it may be said that Cass is a reflection of timbering culture in West Virginia's mountainous interior that was spawned late in the nineteenth century and continued into recent decades of the twentieth century. This reflection is represented by the timber on surrounding mountainsides that provided sustenance, the railroad and its gear-driven locomotives that brought the resource to the town for processing, and the existing buildings in the community that bear witness to the evolution of sixty years of company-town association with that industry in this area.

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10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 750 (approximate)

QUADRANGLE NAME Cass, W.Va.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 17 595460 4251080

B 17 595490 4251050

ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C 17 595220 4250710

ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D 17 595180 4250540

E 17 594870 4250160

F 17 594970 4250180

G 17 595180 4250080

H 17 594770 4249730

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION As outlined in red on the enclosed map (this
includes the Cass Corporation and all lands owned by the State of West
Virginia at the time of this nomination).

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

C. E. Turley, Field Research Assistant

ORGANIZATION

Historic Preservation Unit,
W.Va. Department of Culture and History

DATE

August 7, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

The Cultural Center
Capitol Complex

TELEPHONE

(304) 348-0244

CITY OR TOWN

Charleston

STATE

West Virginia

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

LOCAL X

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

Clarence Illorson

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

TEST:

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

(11/78)

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

AMENDED

Cass Historic District is representative of the timber industry that developed in West Virginia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As such it includes not only buildings of the company town, but also the logging railroad that carried the product off the high mountains and those mountains themselves, for they were the reason for community and industry here. In fact, these hillsides --commercially productive into the 1960s--remain as much a monument to human interfacing with this environment as does the village.

From the time of early operations by the West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company through closing of operations of the Mower Lumber Company and to comparatively recent sale of Mower lands to the State of West Virginia, there has been a basic and continuing association of town buildings with their surrounding mountains. State ownership and development (conservation) of this rather large acreage serves as a tribute to, and interpretation of, timber history; in this history the grand tracts of wooded hillsides are integral to a proper perspective and understanding. It is for this reason, as well as to assist in planning and management of state-owned resources, that a considerable land area is included within the nominated district.

Because the district is in a ruggedly mountainous terrain it might appear that boundaries are overly irregular or "gerrymandered." This is not the case; the boundaries represent state-ownership both inside and outside of Cass Corporation and the entirety of that community, including privately-owned parcels. What is owned by the State of West Virginia represents land formerly in the hands of Mower Lumber Company and West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company, owners and operators of the mill. Although boundary lines meander, they generally follow natural and man-made features, and they define evolution of Cass and its environs over its entire existence.

The following information is also of importance: (1) Deer Creek village--a grouping of less than ten buildings along railroad tracks west of Cass--is included within district boundaries, (2) the boundary line identified as "H-I" on the topographic map cuts through a housing section south of the Greenbrier River because corporate limits cut through this housing section (additional justification is provided by the fact that housing types change rather significantly at about this point, the two-story, gable-roofed company dwelling is replaced by one-story, hip-roofed houses with center chimneys), and (3) Cass Scenic Railroad, as presently listed on the National Register of Historic Places, includes approximately twelve feet of land to either

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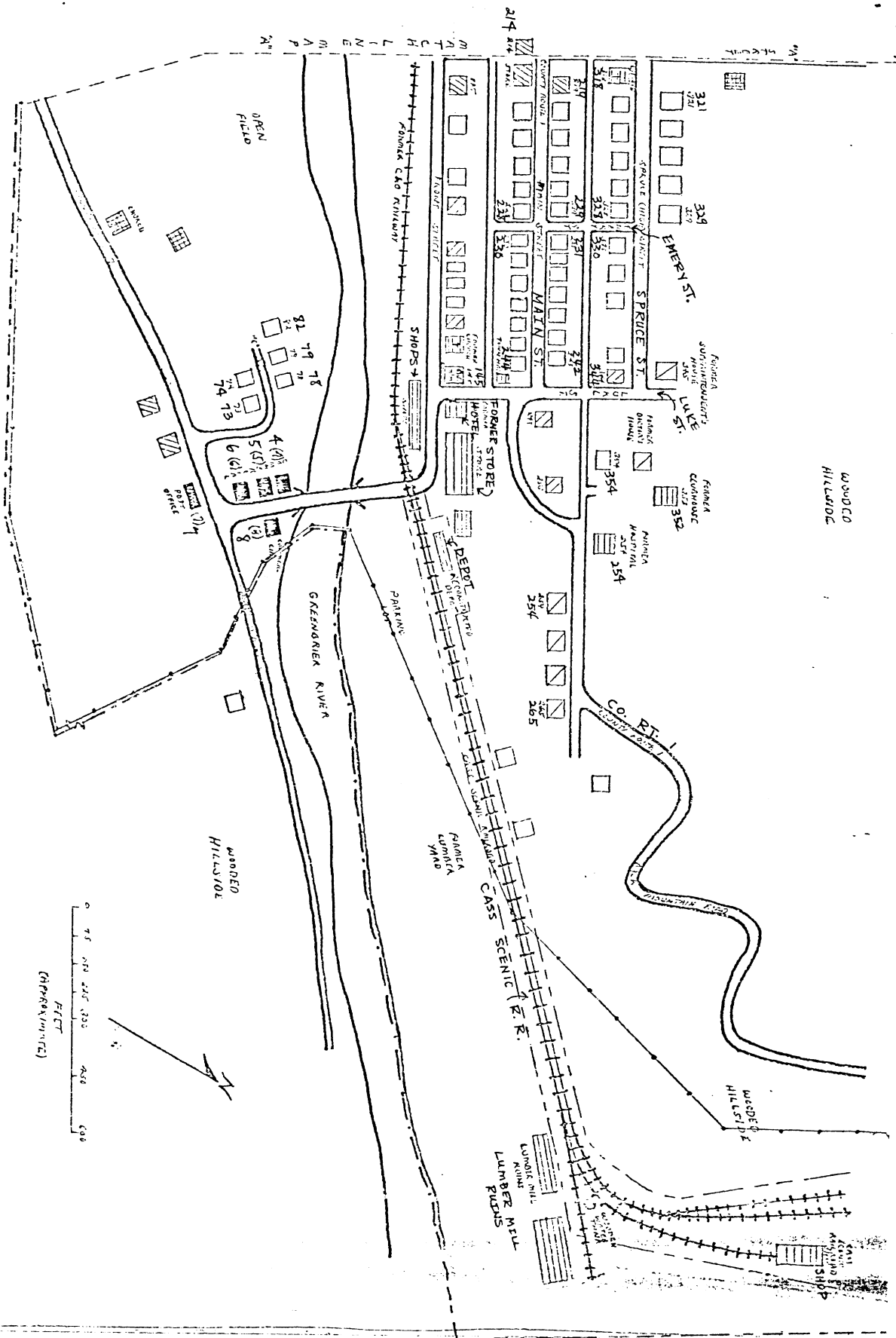
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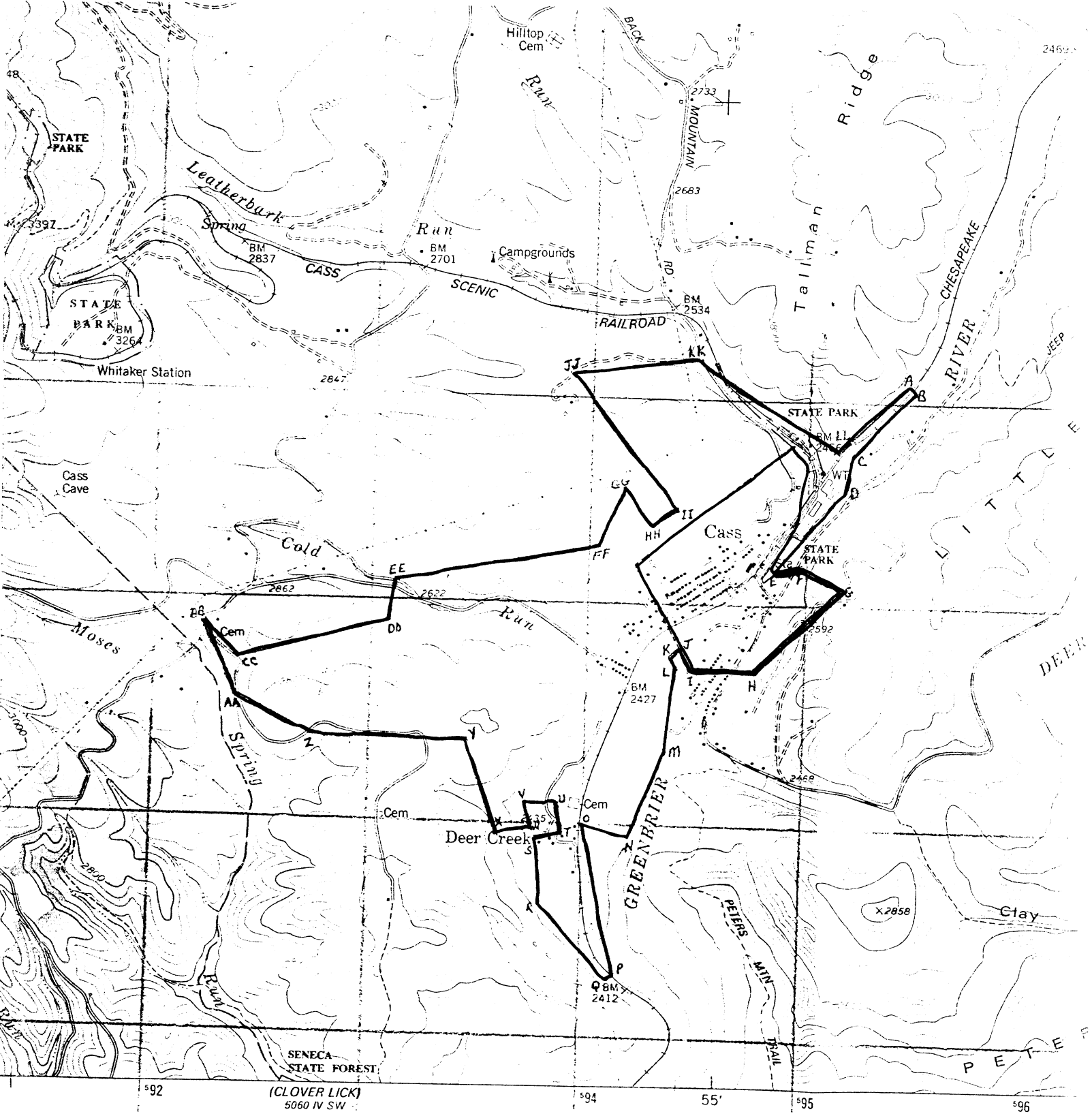
side of tracks that run from the area of the reconstructed railroad depot to the top of Bald Knob (that nomination also takes in the old wooden water tower and the area of the repair shops as noted on the enclosed sketch map).

NTAS COUNTY,
IRGINIA

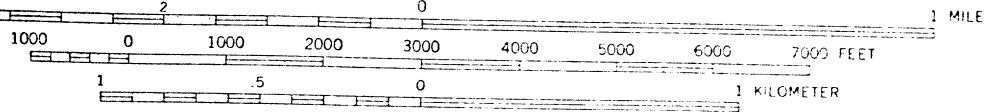
NDED
DARY
-80

HONTAS CO.
- VIRGINIA





(CLOVER LICK)
5060 IV SW
SCALE 1:24 000



CONTOUR INTERVAL 40 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929



THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
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A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST











ST. JAMES
CHURCH
1000 E. 10th St.
S.W. corner
of 10th and
Hill St.