OMB No. 10024-0018

NPS Form 10-900 (Oct. 1990) USETOCOPY

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

	perty					
historic name	Masonic	Temple/Watt	s, Ritter	r Wholesale Dr	ygoods Company	Buildirg
other names/site	number			<del></del>		
2. Location						
atract 2 number	1100 11	00 7	•			not for publication
			rd Avenue	<del>)</del>		I not for publication
city or town	Hunting	ton				□ vicinity
state West Vi	rginia	code WV	county_	Cabell	code <u>011</u>	zip code25701
3. State/Federa	I Agency Ce	rtification				
naybeally Signature of c	statewide 🗵	Y locally. ( See of See	continuation sh	eet for additional common to the second seco	perty be considered signents.)	
In my opinion comments.)	, the property	] meets 🗌 does r	not meet the N	ational Register criteria	i. ( See continuation	sheet for additional
comments.)	the property		not meet the N	ational Register criteria  Date	i. ( See continuation	sheet for additional
Signature of o		Title	not meet the N	-	i. ( See continuation	sheet for additional
Signature of o	certifying official/ eral agency and	Title bureau	not meet the N	-	i. ( See continuation	sheet for additional

Masonic	Temple/	Watts,	Ritter	Co.	Bldg
Name of Prope	erty		•		•

Cabell, Co., W. Virginia County and State

5. Classification				
Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)	Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Rese (Do not include prev	ources within Property iously listed resources in the co	ount.)
₽ private public-local public-State public-Federal	x⊠ building(s) ☐ district ☐ site ☐ structure ☐ object		Noncontributing 0	_ sites
			0	
Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)			ributing resources previ	
N/A		0		
6. Function or Use				
Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)		Current Functions (Enter categories from i		
COMMERCE/warehouse		COMMERCE/of	fice building	
SOCIAL/meeting hall		SOCIAL/meeti	ing hall	
7. Description				
Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)		Materials (Enter categories from i	nstructions)	
EARLY 20TH CENTURY/	commercial style	foundationcond	rete	
		wallsbric		
		-	er	
		otherterr	a cotta	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Cabell	Co.,	West	Virginia
County an	d State		

8. Statement of Significance	
Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)	'Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)  COMMERCE
A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.	SOCIAL 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.	Period of Significance 1914-1930
□ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.	
Criteria Considerations (Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)	Significant Dates  1914, 1922, 1926
Property is:	
☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.	Circlificant Daniel
☐ B removed from its original location.	Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
☐ <b>C</b> a birthplace or grave.	
☐ D a cemetery.	Cultural Affiliation
☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.	
☐ <b>F</b> a commemorative property.	
☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.	Architect/Builder Wilbur T. Mills, architect
	Moore Construction Co., builder
Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets	)
9. Major Bibliographical References	
<b>Bibilography</b> (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on o	ne or more continuation sheets.)
Previous documentation on file (NPS):	Primary location of additional data:
preliminary determination of individual listing (36	☐ State Historic Preservation Office
CFR 67) has been requested  ☐ previously listed in the National Register	<ul><li>☐ Other State agency</li><li>☐ Federal agency</li></ul>
previously determined eligible by the National	☐ Local government
Register	☐ University
<ul> <li>designated a National Historic Landmark</li> <li>recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey</li> </ul>	☐ Other Name of repository:
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #	

Masonic Temple/Watts, Ritter Co. Bldg. Name of Property	Cabell Co., West Virginia County and State
10. Geographical Data	
Acreage of Property less than one acre	
UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)	
1 1 7 3 7 4 2 1 0 42 5 3 5 1 0  Zone Easting Northing 2	3
Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)	
Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)	
11. Form Prepared By	
name/titleNancy Recchie/ Historic Preservation	Consultant
organization Benjamin D. Rickey & Co.	date3/93
street & number 391 Library Park South	telephone (614) 221-0358
city or townColumbus	state Ohio zip code 43215
Additional Documentation	
Submit the following items with the completed form:	
Continuation Sheets	
Maps	
A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the	property's location.
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties have	ring large acreage or numerous resources.
Photographs	
Representative black and white photographs of the	property.
Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)	
Property Owner	
(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)	
name Ferguson Land Co.	
street & number 1108 Third Ave.	telephone
city or town Huntington,	stateW.V zip code25701

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 listings. 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 Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Masonic Temple/Watts, Ritter Wholesale Dry Goods Co. Cabell County, West Virginia

## Description

The Masonic Temple/Watts-Ritter Wholesale Dry Goods Company Building is a large early twentieth century seven-story commercial building located on the northeast corner of Third Avenue and Eleventh Street in downtown Huntington, West Virginia. The building was constructed to house a large wholesale business and Huntington Lodge #53 of the Masons.

The building, which was built in three sections, is constructed of steel-reinforced concrete with yellow and orange brick facing and white terra cotta trim. The first section of the building, the western portion, was completed in early 1914. It measures five by 10 bays and is constructed in a tri-partite design consisting of a base, shaft, and terminating cornice that is typical of multi-story commercial buildings of the period. The base, or first floor, consists of storefronts and a heavily decorated main entrance on the Third Avenue elevation, and a row of high windows with brickwork laid in a horizontal design along the Eleventh Street elevation. The main entrance consists of a double-width entry with a segmental-arched stained glass transom. The entire entrance is framed in a glazed terra cotta surround consisting of semi-engaged columns, topped with banded spheres; an enlarged keystone and an oval stained glass window depicting the Masonic emblem; and a wide terra cotta frame. A terra cotta intermediate cornice, with a diamond-patterned design on the frieze, separates the first floor from the plainer four-story shaft of the building. Those upper floors have both paired and single double-hung one- over-one windows. The wall surface is visually varied at the corners through the use of a lighter-colored brick, laid in a design that accentuates the horizontal lines forming the quoins. A simple terra cotta beltcourse separates this section of the building from the top two floors. These floors, which were designed for and are still occupied by the Masonic Lodge, feature paired Ionic columns separating bays containing two levels of decorative windows located within a recess. The lower level windows have elaborate terra cotta window surrounds and entablatures, while the upper level windows are taller with fixed transoms and indicate the location of the dining room. Plainer versions of these taller windows are used on all of the seventh floor. A restrained terra cotta cornice completes the design of the original building. The rear elevation features simple double-hung windows, a few large industrial-type windows on the first floor, and an unadorned brick wall surface.

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Masonic Temple/Watts, Ritter Wholesale Dry Goods Co. Cabell County, West Virginia

Description (continued)

An annex, consisting of five stories, was constructed on the east side of the original building in 1922. It was built of reinforced concrete with the same color of brick facing as the original building. The storefronts were located on the first floor, separated from the upper stories by a simple terra cotta cornice matching that on the original building. The paired window rhythm of the original building was duplicated, as was a simplified version of the brick quoins in a contrasting color. Four years after construction of the addition, in 1926, two more stories were added to the building. These, too, echo but do not duplicate exactly the design of the original building. A terra cotta beltcourse separates the top two floors from the shaft of the building. Simple paired pilasters separate the bays of the upper stories. The rear and east elevations consisted originally of the exposed concrete structure and brick infill panels. These were modified recently to accommodate new window openings.

The only other exterior alterations have been to the storefront openings along Third Avenue. The original storefronts had prism glass transoms and large storefront windows. These were changed to a more contemporary look in the 1960s, including blank upper and lower panels that created a narrow band of windows across the entire first floor. These in turn were later changed to aluminum-and-glass full-height display windows. These later windows remain in place in the western portion of the building; wooden storefronts were recently reintroduced as part of the rehabilitation project in the eastern half of the building.

The interior of the building, with the exception of the Masonic lodge rooms on the top two floors of the original building, consisted of large open spaces with concrete structural columns, typical of space used as a warehouse by a wholesale firm. The main entrance, in the south elevation of the western half of the building, leads into a very small elevator lobby and staircase serving the lodge; doors to the left and right of the lobby door serve the first floor and were the primary access to the warehouse firm and its offices. The elevator and stairs open only onto the sixth and seventh floors; the second through fifth floors are served by a different set of stairs and elevators, near the rear of the building, that do not extend to the top two floors, thus completely separating the building's original two occupants. At various locations on the first through the fifth floors, the masonry wall between the two halves of the

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## **Description** (continued)

main entrance, decorative terra cotta, and storefront openings remain intact, giving the building integrity of design and materials. The building is located on its original site and continues to dominate the corner where it is located. The building also maintains integrity of association, as the Masonic Lodge has continuously occupied this building since its completion in 1914 and plans to remain here after rehabilitation of the rest of the building is completed.

Although the building was constructed over a period of nearly 15 years, it is architecturally cohesive -- its three separate components were skilfully blended into a single composition -- and retains an important visual presence in this area of downtown Huntington.

### Statement of Signficance

The Masonic Temple/Watts, Ritter Wholesale Drygoods Company Building is eligible for the National Register under criterion A for its long association with one of the largest and most successful wholesale enterprises in Huntington's history and for its long association with the Masonic lodge and the social and cultural life of the community. The building was constructed in 1914 to house the Watts, Ritter Wholesale Drygoods Company on the lower five floors and the Masonic Lodge on the upper two floors. The rapidly growing wholesale business necessitated the need for expansion, and in 1922 a five-story annex was built to the east on adjacent land. Four years later, in 1926, two additional stories were added completing the seven-story block. The Watts, Ritter Company occupied the building until the firm's closing in 1959. The Masonic Temple has been in constant use since its construction and remains an active and heavily used social and cultural facility today.

## Historical Background and Significance

Although the history of Huntington, West Virginia predates the late 19th century, the city as we know it today developed largely as a result of several concurrent events in the late 19th century -- the development of an excellent transporation system; the selection of Huntington as the location of the important locomotive and car shops for the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway; and the development of the timber, coal and gas fields in the surrounding tri-state area.

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## Statement of Significance (continued)

The development of an excellent transporation network was critical to the success and development of communities during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Huntington, West Virginia was fortunate to be able to take advantage of Ohio River transporation, but it was the rapid development of a complex network of railroads that made the city a thriving manufacturing and jobbing center. Construction of the main lines of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway through Huntington in the 1870s and of the Norfolk and Western Railway a few miles to the west in the 1880s created the trunk lines connecting the industrial midwest and its raw materials with east coast manufacturers and shipping ports. In the middle sat Hungtington, at the north end of West Virginia's huge coalfields. With the trunk lines in place, branches into the mountainous coal regions could be built, unlocking the interior's mineral wealth. Soon coal was flowing in endless streams to both east and west, and the state's interior grew rapidly in population. All these people had to be clothed and fed, and Huntington was in the perfect position to meet that need.

The growth of Huntington was explosive during the period from 1890 to 1930. The population was only 10,000 in 1890 (Wheeling, by comparison, had over 34,000 at the time) but grew to 31,161 by 1910. By 1920 the population was over 50,000 (nearly the same size as Wheeling). By 1930, Huntington had become the largest city in the state with 75,572 people (over 14, 000 more than Wheeling had during the same census). This growth in population reflected growth in local industry and commerce, particularly the immense trading area of the coalfields and other areas of extractive industry. A 1912 publication by the Huntington Chamber of Commerce boasted a large number of factories producing freight cars, glassware, tools, furniture, china, shoes, bricks, clay materials, beer, tipples and boats, boxes, windows and doors, shirts and overalls, ice cream and dairy products, and stoves, among other products.

This same publication noted that Huntington was also a major jobbing center. In 1902 there were eight jobbing houses, but by 1912 there were over 40. This was attributed to Huntington's "splendid railroad and river service. . .granting a location better than any other point to ship to West Virginia, Southern Ohio and Eastern Kentucky and. . .to the phenomenal industrial development in coal, timber, oil and gas that put so many jobbers in the field in

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## Statement of Significance (continued)

recent years. . . . " The same publication noted that the thousands of men in the fields served by the railroads were served by the wholesale houses of the city. "Hundreds of thousands have been spent in oil and gas development within a few miles of us in a half dozen counties. This has been the store house for these sections. . . . The development of the treasure houses in the mountains south of us has hardly begun. . . ."

A few years later, in 1921, another Chamber of Commerce publication aggressively promoted the city as the ideal place to locate furniture and woodworking industries, glass plants, steel mills, iron furnaces, and brick and tile plants. It also noted, "It is estimated that more than a million persons were clothed and fed thru Huntington in 1920, and our jobbing houses during that year sold more than \$50,000,000 worth of goods, a large part of this business being from the rich coalfields that surround the city. . . ."

It was during this period that the Watts-Ritter Wholesale Drygoods Company was founded and thrived. The predecessor company, The Barlow-Henderson Company, which was one of the first jobbing houses in the city, was founded in 1892. B.F. Barlow served as president and manager, and Charles W. Watts as secretary and treasurer. By 1895 they had built a sevenstory block and had representatives covering areas in four states. In 1898, G.N. Biggs became involved in the business and the name was changed to Biggs-Watts & Company. A 1902 issue of the Huntington Herald stated, "Huntington enjoys the distinction of being the best and largest jobbing center on the Ohio River between Cincinnati and Wheeling. . . . Of the numerous larger houses here, that of Biggs, Watts & Co. is among the foremost. . . . " It further stated that the firm owned and operated a factory which produced overalls, work shirts and pants under the "Peerless" brand. When Mr. Biggs retired in 1906, C. Lloyd Ritter entered the business and the name was changed to Watts, Ritter & Company with Watts as president. It moved again in 1914 to occupy approximately 67,000 rented square feet in the just-completed Masonic Temple building at Third and Eleventh. The company purchased adjacent land for expansion and constructed the 42,000-square-foot addition (owned by Watts-Ritter)in 1922 and another 14,000 square feet (the top two floors) in 1926, bringing the total square footage to over 123,000 square feet. The company passed from local ownership in 1930 when it was sold to Ely & Walker of St. Lewis (although it retained the Watts, Ritter

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## Statement of Significance (continued)

& Co. name). The business occupied this space until it 1959 when it was consolodiated with operations in other cities. By the time it closed, Watts, Ritter & Co.'s parent company had become a wholly owned subsidiary of Burlington Industries Inc. of Greensboro, N.C.

The Huntington Lodge No. 53 of the Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons was founded in 1872 and occupied a number of locations before deciding to build its own building in 1912. During this 40-year period, there were a number of committees charged with the responsibility of finding quarters for lodge activities. The Masons occupied at least six different locations before The Masonic Temple Association was authorized to purchase a lot on the northeast corner of Eleventh Street and Third Avenue, 80 x 140 feet, for \$15,000 on April 8, 1909.

Wilbur T. Mills, of Columbus, Ohio was selected as the architect of the building. Mills served as supervising architect of the Carnegie Library in Columbus and had also worked as supervising architect of other public buildings such as Oxley Hall at The Ohio State University. According to a local historian for the Masonic Lodge, the Masons advertised for bids from architects and selected Mills from a number of interested firms. Mills worked with an associate architect from Huntington, Mr. C.O. Gilbert. The cornerstone of the building was laid in a ceremony on October 2, 1912. Preceding the ceremony was a grand parade downtown. The original contractor for the project, the Iback Construction Co., was dismissed nearly one year after beginning work on the project over a dispute regarding the type of steel being used. Notes from the period indicate the dispute was over "round steel" versus the "Kahn system of reinforcement steel." The Moore Construction Company, of Parkersburg, West Virginia, completed the project. The total cost of the building was \$200,000, making it one of the biggest buildings constructed in Huntington during the early 'Teens. The dedication of the building took place during three days of activities in November, 1914. Included were a public open house, banquet, speakers, and dedication ceremony. According to the local newspaper, "the Temple rooms here are said to be the most beautiful in the state," and over 100 out-of-town visitors of the order participated in the dedication ceremony.

The Masonic Temple has occupied the building since its completion. The meeting and dining facilities have been in active use for over 75 years. During this period it has been the scene of

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## Statement of Significance (continued)

many social and cultural events for the hundreds of members of the Huntington Lodge, as well as for outside organizations.

The Masonic Temple/Watts, Ritter Building is representative of the period of greatest growth and expansion in Huntington's history. Its restrained yet beautifully detailed design reflects its use as both a functional business house and as a ceremonial lodge hall for an important local organization. This building has retained its integrity of design, location, setting and association and it continues to occupy an important location visually in downtown Huntington.

## **Bibliography**

Casto, James. <u>Huntington, an Illustrated History.</u> Northridge, Ca.: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1985.

History of Huntington Lodge No. 53. Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons, 1954.

Huntington City Directories.

Huntington Advertiser, November 3, 1914 and November 5, 1914.

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Huntington, West Virginia, A Book of Remembrance, Huntington Chamber of Commerce, 1921.

Huntington, West Virginia, The Progressive City. no publisher or date given.

"Huntington, West Virginia, Sights and Scenes Along the C&O Route. <u>Headlight</u>. Published by the C&O Railroad, October, 1897.

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Johnson, Mary McKendree. Representative Men & Women of Cabell Co., West Virginia. Parkersburg, W. Va.: 1929.

Miller, Doris C. <u>Centennial History of Huntington</u>, W.Va., 1871-1971. Huntington: Franklin Printing Co., 1971.

U.S. Census records.

Wallace, George Selden. Huntington Through Seventy-Five Years. Huntington: 1947.

Wallace, George Selden. <u>Cabell County Annals & Families</u>. Richmond, Va.: Garrett & Massie, Publishers, 1935.

Miscellaneous primary documents courtesy of Huntington Lodge #53.

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Masonic Temple/Watts, Ritter Wholesale Dry Goods Co. Cabell County, West Virginia

## **Photographs**

Masonic Temple/Watts, Ritter Wholesale Dry Goods Co. 1100-1108 East Third Avenue Huntington, W. Virginia (Cabell County) Jeffrey Darbee 3/93

#### Photo Views

- 1. West Third Avenue (south) elevation
- 2. Eleventh Street (west) elevation
- 3. East elevation
- 4. Historic photograph of the building as it appeared when completed in 1914
- 5.
- 6. Interior of main meeting hall in Masonic Temple showing original stage, backdrops, furniture etc..
- 7. Interior of main meeting hall of Masonic Temple, opposite stage
- Interior of one of the smaller meeting rooms in the Masonic Temple 8.
- 9.
- 10. Interior of lounge in Masonic Temple showing woodwork
- 11.
- 12. Interior of dining hall in Masonic Temple
- 13. Typical interior showing structural framing system visible on lower floors

14.

#### Verbal Boundary Description

Masonic Temple is located on Block 144, Lots 21 and 22, Third Ave. in the City of Huntings Watts, Ritter Wholesale Drygoods Co. is located on Block 144, part of lots 19 and 20 Third Ave., in the City of Huntington

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Masonic Temple/Watts, Cabell County, WV	Ritter	Wholesale	Dry	Goods	Co.	<del> </del>	

Verbal Boundary Description

The Masonic Temple is located on Block 144, Lots 21 and 22, Third Ave., City of Huntington. The measurement of this parcel is 80' along Third Ave. and 140 ft. along the side. Contiguous with the east wall of the Masonic Temple Building the boundary of the nominated property extends 50' along Third Ave. and thence northward along the east wall of the Watts Building 140'. The nominated resource at the corner of 11th and Third Ave. thus forms a rectangle measuring 130' along Third Ave. by 140' along 11th St.

The nominated property constitutes the entire lot arrangement historically associated with the Masonic Temple/Watts, Ritter Wholesale Dry Goods Co.

Fig. 1

Masonic Temple/Watts Ritter Wholesale Drygoods Co. 1100-1108 East Third Avenue Huntington, West Virginia (Cabell Co.)

There are two property owners:

## **Masonic Temple**

Masonic Temple Association 1102 East Third Ave. Huntington, W. Va. 25701

## Watts, Ritter Wholesale Dry goods Co. Building

Ferguson Land Co. 1108 East Third Ave. Huntington, W.Va. 25701 (304) 522-0150





