

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: U.S. Coal and Coke Company Store

other name/site number: _____

2. Location

street & number: county route 13/2

not for publication: n/a

city/town: Ream

vicinity: n/a

state: WV county: McDowell

code: 047

zip code: 24836

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing
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<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 related 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>other</u>	Sub:	<u>maintenance garage</u>

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification:
other:box plan

Other Description: n/a

Materials: foundation	<u>stone</u>	roof	<u>asphalt</u>
walls	<u>brick</u>	other	<u>concrete</u>

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

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8. Statement of Significance

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: statewide.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A,C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : n/a

Areas of Significance: architecture

commerce

industry

Period(s) of Significance: ca. 1910-1941

Significant Dates : n/a

Significant Person(s): n/a

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: unknown

State 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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Acreage of Property: less than one acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>17</u>	<u>451520</u>	<u>4133800</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.

South from the intersection of Right Fork road and the railroad tracks in Ream, the boundary forms a square 100' on each side around the store.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

The boundaries include all of the property historically associated with the U.S. Coal and Coke 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 U.S. Coal & Coke Company store

The U.S. Coal and Coke Company store at Ream was built around 1910 to serve the residents employed in the company's #6 operation called Ream. The store is an impressive example of the only remaining company store built by the U.S. Coal and Coke Company. Its most significant characteristics are its size, its segmental arched windows, and its simple decoration. It has undergone only minimal alterations and it retains those characteristics that define the company store property type..

The Ream store has a basic square plan with a flat roof. A second square that is nearly the size of the main building is attached to the rear. Its materials and style of construction are identical to the front portion indicating that it was built at the same time as the front.

The store's facade faces east towards the railroad tracks and county route 13. The building now serves as a maintenance garage and its facade has been altered to accommodate vehicles. Its original configuration probably included a double door entrance with flanking display windows and a transom window above the entire space. Concrete blocks surround a garage door and now cover the facade's center section. A metal awning with chain suspensions hangs over the entrance and may be original to the store building. The seven bays of windows on the second floor and all other windows and doors sit in segmental arched openings. The store's second floor windows are double-hung while those on the lower story are shorter, fixed sash windows. The first floor windows on the rear are tall with fixed panes.

The Ream store's only decoration is the simple brick stringcourse at the roofline. The roofline in the center is taller and adds definition to the facade. A tile parapet finishes the entire roofline.

The company store stands on a level space at the mouth of a hollow. Only the store, a couple of maintenance buildings, a few houses, and two mine openings are all that remain in Ream as evidence of a once-thriving coal mining community.

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Section number 8 Page 1 U.S. Coal & Coke Company store

The U.S. Coal and Coke Company store at Ream 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. The building was constructed ca. 1910 and during the years following, it provided a commercial, business, and social center for Ream, a community built by the massive U.S. Coal and Coke Company (for detailed 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). It displays the typical characteristics of company store construction with its size, location, and simple decoration. It has been maintained so that it retains its integrity of design and association with the coal mining industry.

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 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.

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Section number 8 Page 2 U.S. Coal & Coke Company store

The store building served as the most important building in Ream, one of twelve communities built by the U.S. Coal and Coke Company, a subsidiary of the giant U.S. Steel Corporation. The company established itself in McDowell County in 1902 and, within seven years, it constructed twelve mine operations in a vast region called Gary hollow. The company's McDowell County headquarters was located in Gary, one of southern West Virginia's largest company towns. Surrounding Gary were eleven additional mines. Each of these operations had its own self-sufficient community complete with churches, schools, and stores but they were all connected with roads.

short distance south
Mine site number six known as Ream was named after Norman B. Ream, a U.S. Steel Corporation comptroller. Even though the community was located just a few miles north of Gary, it included all necessary community buildings. The brick company store was built during the 1910's and probably replaced an earlier, temporary store. 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 two-story 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 and then handled other business in the office section. Because of its multiple functions and convenient location at the mouth of the hollow near the residential area, the building was a constant gathering point.

Architecturally, the building is significant for its monumental size that perfectly represented its massive company. Gary was the company's model community and was packed with beautifully constructed buildings. The Ream store with its segmental arched windows, the center parapet, and the brick string course at the roofline indicate the company's interest in providing quality buildings for each of its communities. The Ream store is the U.S. Coal and Coke Company's only remaining company store.

The store's importance in the community decreased as automobiles and good roads allowed miners access to other commercial centers. Some mining continued in Gary hollow until recently but the store at Ream closed after mining ceased there leaving the building vacant for many years. Unlike so many stores that were simply abandoned, the Ream store has since turned into private hands and has been maintained so that it retains its impressive coal company store appearance.

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Archer, William. "Gary, West Virginia: U.S. Steel's Experiment in the Coalfields". The Observer (Jan. 13, 1988).

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

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

Gary, file. Eastern Regional Coal Archives, Bluefield, WV.

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

Hornick, Mike. "Gary Celebrates 100 Years of Mining". Welch Daily News (June 3, 1983).

McGehee, Stuart. "Gary. A First Class Operation". Goldenseal (Fall 1988), 28-32.

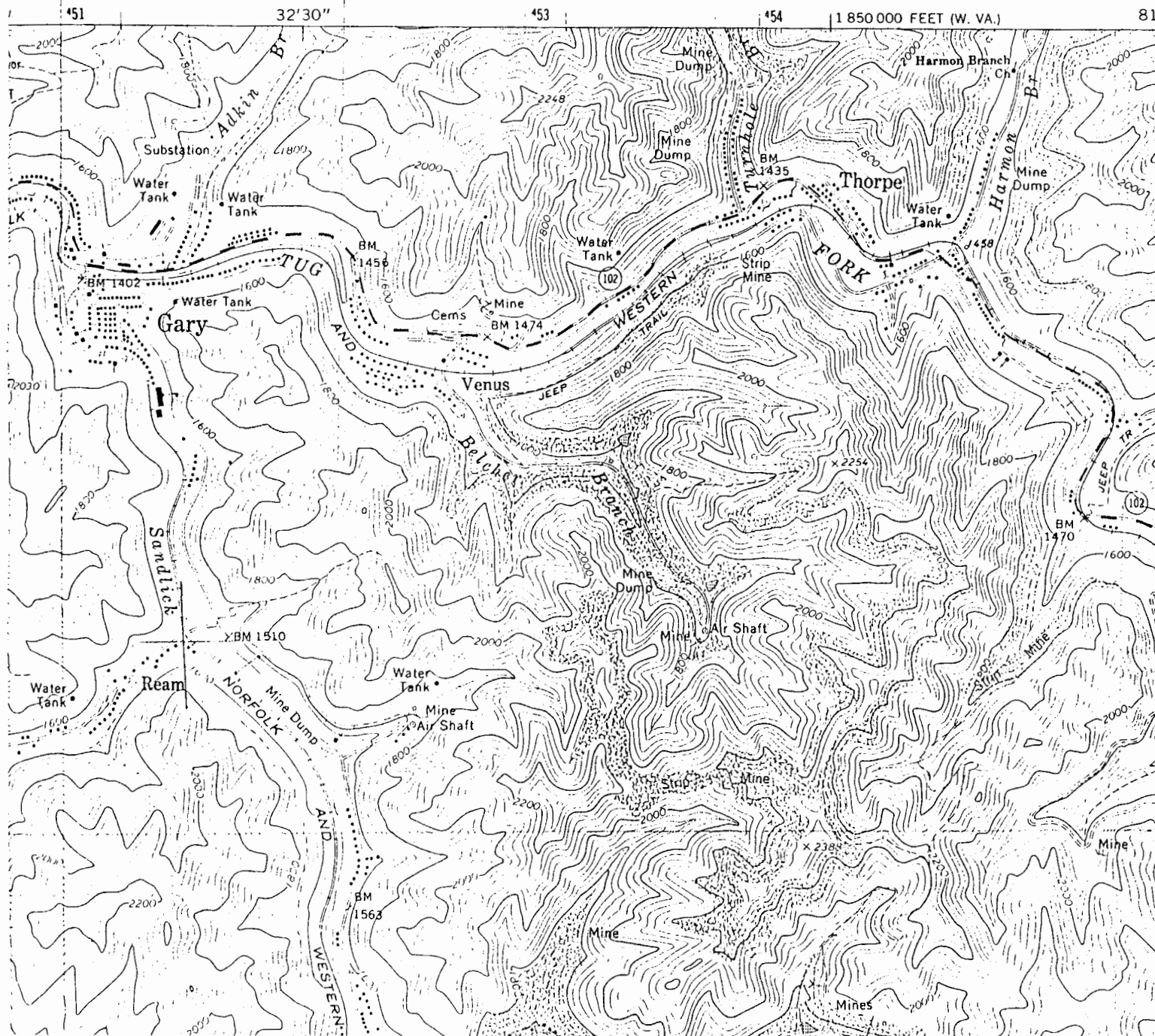
"Where Coal is King and the Mountains are Home". U.S. Steel News 43 (Dec. 1978).

NIA

CAL SURVEY
IES

GARY QUADRANGLE
WEST VIRGINIA-VIRGINIA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
SE/4 WELCH 15' QUADRANGLE

4758 IV NW
(KEYSTONE)



U.S. COAL AND
COKE CO. STORE
REAM, McDOWELL
CO.

W.VA.

UTM:

17451520/4133800

130 000 FEET
(W. VA.)

PAGETON 3.4 MI.

