

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Buxton and Landstreet Company Store

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street & number 571 Douglas Road

city or town Thomas

state West Virginia

code WV

county Tucker

code 093

zip code 26292

☐ not for publication

☐ vicinity

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X 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 X meets    does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

   national    statewide X local

Susan H. Ferice Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

   entered in the National Register

   determined eligible for the National Register

   determined not eligible for the National Register

   removed from the National Register

   other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Buxton and Landstreet Company Store  
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## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

### Category of Property (Check only **one** box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

### Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	<b>Total</b>

### Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

### Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

## 6. Function or Use

### Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/department store

COMMERCE/business

### Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/museum

COMMERCE/business

COMMERCE/specialty store

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS:

Italian Renaissance

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE

walls: BRICK, STONE

roof: ASPHALT

other: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

### Summary Paragraph

The Buxton and Landstreet Company Store, constructed in 1900, is located in Thomas, Tucker County, a mountainous area historically associated with the lumber and coal industries. The property is in the neighborhood of Coketon, a former coal company town established by the Davis Coal and Coke Company approximately ½ mile southwest of the Thomas central business district. The Davis Coal and Coke Company Administration Building (listed in the National Register 10/6/2011, Reference No. 11000733) is located across the street; the surrounding area consists of moderate-density single-family homes, many of which are former company houses. Most of the structures and housing associated with the Davis Coal and Coke Company have been demolished.

The Buxton and Landstreet Company Store is an Italian Renaissance Revival 11 x 9 bay two story brick commercial building with a basement. It has a rectangular plan measuring 81 feet wide and 121 feet long. The front façade is constructed of yellow brick in a running bond pattern and has a symmetrical design consisting of a central two-story recessed arched bay flanked by storefronts on the first story and 5 bays of arched 1-over-1 sash windows on each side at the second story. The central honed cut stone arch is carved with the words "Buxton and Landstreet Co." in all capital letters. The side elevations are common bond red brick and each consist of 9 bays demarcated by vertical brick pilasters. Fenestration consists of one-over-one single-hung windows with brick segmental arch lintels. The rear façade features a two-story central arch that is not recessed, random placement of windows and alterations including a stair tower addition and gunite treatment at the second story. The building has a random coursed cut stone foundation.

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## Narrative Description

**Buxton and Landstreet Company Store**

1900

### *Location and Setting*

The Buxton and Landstreet Company Store is located in Thomas, Tucker County, West Virginia, approximately ½ miles southwest from the town's center. It sits on 1.63 acres of land in a small residential neighborhood consisting of former coal miners' homes, vacant lots, and the Davis Coal & Coke Company's Administration Building. Douglas Road, the main thoroughfare in this industrial section of town, runs in a northwest direction to Coketon, a suburb of Thomas. The road forms a roundabout near the front entrance of the Buxton and Landstreet Company Store. The company store was built on a hillside a short distance from the West Virginia Central & Pittsburg Railway line and south of the North Fork of the Blackwater River. The terrain is steep and mountainous.

The Buxton & Landstreet Company Store main entrance faces the Davis Coal & Coke Company's Administration Building, also known as the Engineering Building. The original front exterior steps (Figures 1 and 3) that led customers from the street level to the main entrance are no longer extant. The area in front of the building has been regraded and the front entrance is now accessed by a level concrete sidewalk and a well-manicured green space filled with flowers, shrubbery, and trees (Photo 1, 2). This green space surrounds a single handicap parking spot on three sides. Below the flower bed, there is an L-shape stone retaining wall that steps down; the wall stretches halfway across the front façade and connects to the northern edge of the company store. The northern side of the company store has a small paved parking lot and a small space with table. A curved sidewalk leads to the rear of the company store. There is also a small, paved parking lot on the southern side of the company store.

### *Exterior*

The Buxton and Landstreet Company Store, constructed in 1900, is an 11-bay, two story, brick building with a basement. This symmetrical building rests on a random coursed stone ashlar foundation. The roof is flat and covered with rolled asphalt.

The front (east) façade (Photo 1, 2) is dominated by the main entrance, which is recessed and centered in a two-story arched central bay. Large, angled four-pane windows flank the main entrance; the double doors are wood with single panes of glass and have a two-pane transom. Large four-pane transoms are located in each bay of the front entrance and a wood cornice extends across them. At the second floor level, there are arched windows surrounding paired sash windows in the center. A smooth arched stone surround with the words "Buxton and Landstreet Co" in all capital letters and two stone circles with "AD" and "1900" are located above the main entrance in the central bay. The barrel-vaulted wood ceiling of the entrance bay is coffered (Photo 6).

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The bays flanking the central bay on the front façade at the first-floor level consist of three sets of four-pane display windows with four-pane transoms on each side. A wood cornice extends across the display windows/transoms on each side. Windows on the second-floor level consist of five arched windows on each side with one-over-one wood sashes, stone sills and arched brick lintels. The front façade and two side elevations have two corbelled brick belt courses near the top of the facade.

The south elevation (Photo 3) of the Buxton and Landstreet Company Store is red brick laid in a common bond pattern and consists of 9 slightly recessed bays demarcated by simple brick pilasters. Fenestration on the first floor consists of one-over-one wood sash windows with brick segmental arch lintels. Second floor windows are arched one-over-one wood sashes with arched brick lintels. All windows have rusticated cut stone sills. There are small vents located along the top of the wall. Each brick pilaster contains two metal star-shaped tie rod anchors.

The north elevation of the building (Photo 5) is similar to the south elevation in bay arrangement and fenestration. Unlike the south elevation, the north elevation features two corbelled brick belt courses that extend around the building from the front façade. There is also corbelled brickwork at the top of each recessed bay. The cut stone foundation at the basement level is fully exposed on the north side of the building. The basement level consists of two sets of double doors and single sash windows with one-over-one wood sashes. The central double door has been replaced with infill and modern doors and two other single doors have been infilled with concrete block. Windows at the basement level have been replaced and/or covered with plywood.

The rear (west) elevation of the Buxton and Landstreet Company Store (Photo 4) generally resembles the front façade with a central two-story arched bay flanked by side bays. The rear wall is yellow brick on the first floor and has been covered with gunite on the second story. The rear central arched bay is not recessed and contains a yellow brick wall with a loading dock/double doors, two one-over-one wood sashes and paired windows infilled with concrete block. The central bay has an arched stone surround with the words "Buxton and Landstreet Co." in all capitalized letters on the second floor level. Above the surround, there is a small circular stone with 1900 on it. The side bays originally consisted of three one-over-one wood sashes on each side with a simple flat wood cornice above the first story. The left (north) bay retains this arrangement. There is a two-story concrete block stair tower addition with a door and mural constructed to the right (south) of the center bay. The recently added mural depicts Carrie Williams, a Black teacher who fought for equal pay and affirmative actions in the late 1890s.

### ***Interior***

The building's interior consists of two floors and a basement. The main space on the main level/first floor (Photo 8) served as the retail space for the company store. The original configuration of the main level consisted of one large showroom space with a wood mezzanine structure at the rear that contained the Coketon post office (Figure 2). A partition wall was constructed after 1999 to create a separate retail gallery space in the front 1/3 of the building and storage/art studio space at the rear. The front gallery remains evocative of a large open space with high ceilings. The interior walls are covered by white glazed tile brick (Photo 10). Interior windows feature glazed tile brick segmental arch lintels and simple decorative wood moldings. There are hardwood floors throughout the main two levels. Metal columns with simple Doric capitals stretch from the original wood floors to the steel support beams. The entire ceiling, including support beams, features the original decorative stamped metal covering (Photo 9). The main stair hall is located along the north side of the building at the rear corner of the current gallery space; space along this side of the first floor has been partitioned into several small offices, restrooms, elevator and mechanical room (See Figure 5, First Floor Plan).

The original oak staircase (Photo 12) features wood railings with spindles, newel posts, hardwood floors, wood paneling, baseboards and tin ceiling on the underside. This staircase leads to the upper level, which contains a large meeting room, fourteen small offices/studios, kitchen and bathrooms. The upper level originally consisted primarily of a large open room, with a few sleeping rooms and bathroom for visiting employees. The second floor has been converted into offices and meeting spaces (Photo 11) and a secondary gallery. The walls for the office space consist of drywall partitions from a previous renovation; floors are currently covered with commercial office carpet. The white glazed tile brick walls and window materials are the same as those on the first floor.

The basement level contains a boiler room and two larger storage spaces, as well as a crawl space along the south side of the building. This space originally served as storage and housed a butcher shop. The north side of the basement opens at grade level and contains various door and window openings, making it accessible to the train depot formerly located a short distance north.

### ***Integrity***

The Buxton & Landstreet Company Store retains its historic integrity as it relates to Criterion A and Criterion C. This structure retains its historic integrity in terms of location, setting, design, workmanship, materials, association and feeling. The company store remains

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in its original location on 1.63 acres of land near the Thomas suburb of Coketon. Although many of the original railroad, coal mining and company town structures have been demolished, the Davis Coal and Coke Company Administration Building, Buxton and Landstreet Company Store and several groups of original company houses remain in their original locations as indicators of this area's history as a company town. The exterior façade of the Buxton and Landstreet Company Store retains almost all of its original materials, design and workmanship, including brick facade, arched stone surround, large display windows and wood sash windows. Exterior alterations are limited to the rear façade, the least visible side of the building. The building retains a large, open retail space on the first floor that evokes the historic company store experience. The original interior materials are also readily visible to visitors. Partition walls on the first and second floors allow the building to function for current purposes but are reversible alterations. The structure continues to convey its original design and significance as a company store.

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## 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.)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our 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.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

### Period of Significance

1900-1950

### Significant Dates

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

### Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Unknown

### Period of Significance (justification)

The Period of Significance is 1900 to 1950, beginning with the construction of the Buxton & Landstreet Company Store and concluding with its permanent closure as a company store.

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**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

N/A

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Buxton and Landstreet Company Store is significant at the local level under Criterion A: Commerce for its association with the coal industry in Thomas, West Virginia and as an example of a coal company store, a building type uniquely associated with the Appalachian coal fields. The building was the first of nine mercantile stores operated by the Buxton and Landstreet Company and served as the flagship and central management location. The Buxton and Landstreet Company Store provided coal miners working for the Davis Coal & Coke Company in Thomas, West Virginia with the necessities including food, tools, furniture, and clothing. It utilized scrip as a payment method. The Criterion A period of significance for the property is 1900-1950, beginning with the building's date of construction concluding with its permanent closure as a company store.

The Buxton and Landstreet Company Store is also significant at the local level under Criterion C: Architecture for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C as an example of early 20th-century Italian Renaissance Revival commercial architecture. The Criterion C period of significance for the property is 1900, the building's date of construction.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

**Criterion A: COMMERCE**

The Buxton and Landstreet Company Store is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A: Commerce for its association with the development of the coal industry in Thomas. The company store was the retail arm of the Davis Coal & Coke Company between 1900 and 1950. It was the first of nine company stores operated by the Davis Coal & Coke Company. Unlike other company stores in West Virginia, the Buxton and Landstreet Company Store was not located in the center of town but rather outside. Coal miners working for the Davis Coal & Coke Company in Thomas purchased necessities including food, clothing, tools, and furniture at the Buxton & Landstreet Company Store. They purchased goods at the company store with scrip, a type of currency produced by coal companies, or charged their purchases to their accounts and had the total deducted from their paychecks. The Davis Coal & Coke Company's scrip consisted of metal coins in different denominations. The building also served as the post office for the company town. The Buxton & Landstreet Company Store closed its doors in 1950 due to a decreased demand for coal.

**Criterion C: ARCHITECTURE**

The Buxton and Landstreet Company Store is also eligible under Criterion C for Architecture. The building was designed in the Italian Renaissance Revival style of architecture. Following the destruction by fire of the original company store in 1899, this structure was constructed in 1900 of brick and attention was given to finish materials, including the yellow brick façade, decorative brickwork, interior metal Doric columns, fine woodwork and stamped metal ceilings. The formal classically influenced exterior with a monumental arched entryway conveyed a sense of steadfastness, prosperity and organization; expansive full-width storefront windows displayed the variety of goods available. The building retains excellent integrity and clearly conveys its original purpose as a company store and prominent role in the surrounding community.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

*History of Henry Gassaway Davis and the Davis Coal and Coke Company*

Industrialist and politician Henry Gassaway Davis (1823-1916) contributed to the development of the coal industry in Thomas, West Virginia. Davis was born in Baltimore, Maryland to Caleb and Louisa Warfield Brown Davis. In 1842, he began his career with the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad (B&O) as a brakeman. Davis later rose to the positions of conductor and station agent. While working as the station agent in Piedmont (Hampshire County), Davis saw opportunities in the development of the timber and coal resources and began surveying thousands of acres of land on horseback and on foot in present-day northern West Virginia.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pepper, Charles M. *The Life and Times of Henry Gassaway Davis*.

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In 1858, Davis resigned from his position as station agent at Piedmont and established H. G. Davis and Company with his younger brother Thomas Davis. Their company's main business was supplying oil and lumber to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. When the Civil War began in 1861, Davis sided with the Union and supplied lumber and railroad ties to the B&O Railroad and the United States government. Davis continued to survey and examine the available timber and coal resources between the 1860s and 1880s. He also purchased thousands of acres of land in Mineral, Grant, Randolph, and Tucker Counties and planned for future railroad and coal mining ventures.

Davis's dream of owning a railroad became a reality in 1880 when the West Virginia Central and Pittsburg Railroad was chartered under the former Potomac & Piedmont Railroad Company by the West Virginia Legislature.<sup>2</sup> Construction of this road began that same year extending from the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad line at Cumberland, Maryland to Elkins, West Virginia. The road traveled through wilderness along the Blackwater River in a southwest direction. In November of 1884, the road was completed to Thomas, West Virginia and coal mines owned by the West Virginia Central and Pittsburg Railroad opened along the road. In 1886, the H. G. Davis and Company purchased the mine and equipment from the railway.<sup>3</sup> The same year, Davis formed a partnership with Stephen B. Elkins for the purpose of mining coal in what became the unincorporated town of Coketon.

Two years later, on January 17, 1889, H. G. Davis and Company was reorganized as the Davis Coal & Coke Company by Henry G. Davis, Thomas B Davis, Stephen B. Elkins, Harry G. Buxton, Fairfax S. Landstreet, and W. J. Armstrong.<sup>4</sup> The company enlarged the colliers, tipples, and coke ovens and constructed an administration office, company homes, club house, a train station, and a company store in the following years. Thomas served as the central hub of the Davis Coal & Coke Company's operation but was somewhat atypical among coal towns in that the lots, homes and businesses in Thomas proper were privately developed by individual owners, not the coal company. Coketon, located just southwest of the Thomas central business district, was the company town for the Davis Coal and Coke Company and included the Buxton & Landstreet Company Store, administration building, rows of standard-design miners' houses, nine coal mines and nearly one thousand coke ovens.<sup>5</sup>

*History of the Buxton and Landstreet Company Store*

The Davis Coal & Coke Company added a retail arm to their company known as the Buxton and Landstreet Company. On August 7, 1889, Fairfax Stuart Landstreet and Harry G. Buxton, both managers in the Davis Coal & Coke Company, incorporated the Buxton and Landstreet Company Store as a general mercantile business.<sup>6</sup> It was the first of nine company stores established by the Davis Coal & Coke Company and can be considered an early example of a chain store.<sup>7</sup> In 1889, the original Buxton & Landstreet Company Store was constructed on 1.63 acres of land approximately one mile south of Thomas. These 1.63 acres were previously wilderness until the West Virginia Central & Pittsburg Railroad was constructed. On October 11, 1899, a fire destroyed the company store.<sup>8</sup>

The present-day Buxton and Landstreet Company Store was constructed the following year on the same site. It is an imposing two-story brick structure measuring 81 feet by 121 feet. A newspaper article noted that the new building was to be of the "skeleton type, 100 x 120 feet, three stories and cost about \$25,000," and that it would be "modern in every particular."<sup>9</sup> The architect of the building is unknown, but it may have been designed by a staff engineer or architect employed by the Davis Coal and Coke Company or Western Maryland Railway. The front façade of the building is covered with yellow brick and features large display windows, two corbelled brick belt courses, and a monumental central arched stone entryway. It sits on a cut stone foundation. The Buxton and Landstreet Company Store's interior has an open floor plan and its walls are lined with white-glazed brick. Its original wood flooring, metal columns, oak staircases, and decorative tin ceilings remain.

The Buxton & Landstreet Company Store, under the management of H. C. Berry, was a large retail store in Thomas. The company store sold the necessities of life including food, clothing, tools, and furniture to the coal miners; it also housed the post office. Miners

<sup>2</sup> L. Wayne Sheets, "West Virginia Central & Pittsburg Railway." *E-WV: The West Virginia Encyclopedia*.

<sup>3</sup> Nutter, T. *Thomas West Virginia: History, Progress and Development*, 29.

<sup>4</sup> Nutter 29.

<sup>5</sup> Joseph W. Dumire, "History & Structure of the Buxton & Landstreet Company Store"

<sup>6</sup> Joseph W. Dumire, "History & Structure of the Buxton & Landstreet Company Store"

<sup>7</sup> N.S. Greensfelder. "Mining Coal in West Virginia." *The Coal Trade Bulletin*. 45:10. October 17, 1921. P 378.

<https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=XB48AQAAMAAJ&pg=GBS.PA42&hl=en>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> "Piedmont and Vicinity." *Cumberland Alleghenian*, June 28, 1900, p 4.

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paid for the goods with scrip, a type of currency produced by the coal company, also known as “trade coins,” or charged their purchases to their personal account. Charges were then deducted from their paychecks along with rent on the company house, medical expenses, utilities, and United Mine Workers Association dues. Branches of the Buxton and Landstreet Company Store were opened in Kempton, Elk Garden, Wabash, Henry, Benbush, Beryl, Weaver and Pierce. The Thomas location served as the central stocking, management and training facility for the other Buxton and Landstreet stores.

The area surrounding the Buxton and Landstreet Company Store was home to Coketon, the Davis Coal and Coke Company town. It included the mine infrastructure, coke ovens, company buildings, rows of standard-design miners’ housing, schools, railroad buildings and other structures. Historic photos show the dense development along Douglas Road in Coketon, including the Central School building located across from the Administration Building, churches and homes, culminating in the Buxton and Landstreet Company Store at the western end of the street.<sup>10</sup> Together with the Administration Building and the train station, the Company Store was the center of commerce for Davis Coal & Coke employees. The building originally had a full-width wooden porch, accessed by stairs, which would have provided both window shopping and informal social gathering space for residents.

According to a highly laudatory profile of the Davis Coal and Coke Company covering two full pages of the *Cumberland Evening Times* in 1902, most company employees lived in company housing and “very generally trade[d] at the company’s really excellent general department stores, which are kept on a scale of modernity commensurate with the ability and opportunity of the company.” The article describes the various features of the interior and exterior:

*An immense arched doorway fills half the front and gives onto a platform extending the full width of the building with steps of the same width reaching the ground. The interior is a close second in style. Each floor is entirely open, the two upper stories walled with Mt. Savage white tile brick, ceilinged with ornamented sheet steel and the ceilings supported by lines of graceful columns. The floors are of oak, laid in cement and the building considered absolutely fire-proof. Forty-five electric arc lights illuminate the building at night, which by day its numerous large windows light it perfectly. It is heated by steam from the railway roundhouse, and with its bath and toilet rooms and sleeping apartments for employees, and post office, might almost be considered a town in itself.*

*In the basement is a fine meat market and here also the surplus stock of the store is carried. The first floor carries full stocks of dry goods, boots, shoes, fancy goods, notions, ladies’ ready to wear hats and gents’ furnishing goods, hardware, groceries, cigars and tobacco, queensware and patent medicines and there is plenty of room to spare. Here is also the post office, auditor’s offices and store office. The second floor has millinery, ready made tailored clothing, furniture, carpets, oil cloths, mattings and trunks, beside bathroom toilet and sleeping apartments... It is a wonderful place and Mr. H.C. Berry, manager for the Buxton Landstreet Co., is not only proud of the store, but of its business, which, under his brainy management, is a splendid success.<sup>11</sup>*

Later the retail space was primarily contained on the main floor while the second floor housed accounting and auditing operations.

The Buxton and Landstreet Company Store operated in Thomas for fifty years. On May 27, 1950, due to the slow decline of the local coal industry, the Buxton and Landstreet Company Store permanently closed its doors. It was the last of the nine company stores to close. The building sat vacant until 1958 when the Tucker County Development Authority purchased the building. They leased the building for one year to the John G. Purrs Manufacturing Company of New York City who built cabinets for sewing machines followed by the Ruben-Curtis Corporation who designed and produced commercial interiors.<sup>12</sup> In 1999, the Vandalia Heritage Foundation purchased the Buxton and Landstreet Company Store and converted it into an art gallery, offices, and meeting space. At this time, the interior main retail space was partitioned into a gallery at the front of the first floor, and studio/storage space at the rear.

*The Company Store, Scrip and the Labor Movement*

The company store and use of scrip have assumed a role in popular imagination as emblematic of corporate greed and economic oppression. The reality is more complicated. The Buxton and Landstreet Company Store did a bustling business providing miners with essentials for work and home, no doubt in part due to the use of scrip. The practice of issuing scrip began as a convenience in isolated

<sup>10</sup> Cynthia Phillips, *Images of America: Tucker County*, p 67.

<sup>11</sup> “The Davis Coal and Coke Co.” *Cumberland Evening Times*, 30 Aug 1902, p27.

<sup>12</sup> Dumire, Joseph W. “History & Structure of the Buxton & Landstreet Company Store”

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mining towns far from banks but offered a number of other advantages to coal companies, including reducing payroll theft, ensuring payment to the company store, and keeping wages within the company micro-economy.<sup>13</sup> At its worst, the practice created a company store monopoly in which inflated prices were imposed upon miners who had no other options for obtaining goods. However, some studies have found that company store prices were in many cases not substantially higher than those of independent stores and were influenced by factors including the union status of the mine and the geographic isolation of the company town.<sup>14</sup> Other sources celebrate the company store and scrip as conveniences offered to miners at the expense of the coal company.<sup>15</sup>

Scrip was certainly a topic of concern in the unionization movement; the preamble to the United Mine Workers of America constitution includes as one of the organization's central objectives "to secure, by legislation, weekly payments in lawful money."<sup>16</sup> An 1887 law passed by the West Virginia legislature required that employees be paid at least every two weeks in "lawful money of the United States" and an 1891 law directly outlawed scrip as payment of wages or as an advance on labor that had not yet occurred. The use of scrip continued after 1891, however, as advances on labor that a miner had already performed; in other words, a miner could take payment in scrip for labor he completed between paydays but could not receive scrip as an advance on anticipated work.<sup>17</sup> This distinction, while protecting miners from going deep into debt with the company, maintained the "closed system" of wages going directly back to the company through its retail arm. Accounts also exist of company operators coercing employees into shopping at the company store under threat of termination, preventing pack peddlers from entering the town and offering an alternative source of goods, and raising company store to offset wage gains negotiated by the unions.<sup>18</sup>

Major nationwide labor strikes led by the UMWA occurred in 1894, 1897, 1900, 1902, 1919 and 1922.<sup>19</sup> The top priority for union leaders in each strike was negotiation of wage scales; consistent and humane working hours, safe mine conditions and fair treatment of workers were also often among the demands of the strikers. Although company store and scrip practices are not often specifically mentioned in primary sources as causes of strikes, exploitative practices by coal operators contributed to miners' frustration and unrest.<sup>20</sup> In Coketon, the 1894 strike was countered by the Davis Coal and Coke Company by hiring non-union miners and armed guards. This strike was ultimately unsuccessful in raising wages.<sup>21</sup> In June 1922, the year following the Southern West Virginia Mine Wars and Battle of Blair Mountain, the National Guard was called in to Coketon to suppress a labor uprising; 90 miners were arrested and transported to Parsons on a train that wrecked, killing one and injuring many others.<sup>22</sup>

The advent of the automobile, mail ordering, availability of credit and less geographic isolation decreased miners' reliance on the company store and scrip.<sup>23</sup> In contrast to more isolated company towns, miners living in Coketon also had additional residential and retail options in the adjacent town of Thomas, which contained a variety of independently owned shops, restaurants and housing. Nevertheless, the Buxton and Landstreet Company Store persisted until 1950, evidence that it continued to play a role in the local retail economy for many decades.

### *Architecture*

The lack of infrastructure located near the coal deposits in West Virginia required coal companies to construct entire towns. The coal companies owned and built structures related to the coal mining industry such as collieries, tipples, railroad stations, and company stores as well as dwellings, churches, and schools. These early structures were often built with local timber; however, as fires destroyed these early wood structures, they were replaced by brick structures.

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<sup>13</sup> Lou Athey, "Scrip," e-WV: The West Virginia Encyclopedia, 2019.

<sup>14</sup> Price V. Fishback, "Did Coal Miners 'Owe Their Souls to the Company Store'? Theory and Evidence from the Early 1900s," 1018-1019.

<sup>15</sup> Phil Conley, *History of the West Virginia Coal Industry*, 77-78

<sup>16</sup> Winthrop D. Lane, *Civil War in West Virginia*, 91.

<sup>17</sup> Lane 27.

<sup>18</sup> Lane 28-30.

<sup>19</sup> Fansler 565.

<sup>20</sup> "Strike Commission Hearing," *New York Times*, 7 Dec 1902, p 3.

<sup>21</sup> "Coal Strike is at an End," *New York Times*, 12 June 1894, p 1.

<sup>22</sup> Phillips 70.

<sup>23</sup> Athey.

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The Buxton and Landstreet Company Store conveys its purpose as a company store in both form and function. The flagship company store was housed in this large rectangular, two-story building with a formal classical façade and monumental arched entrance. The building's commercial/retail function is clearly communicated on the exterior by expansive display windows. Occupying the first-floor level was the retail space, where glass display cases and wood shelves were located along each wall and freestanding within the main retail space. The space was open and well-lit with natural light as well as light fixtures. At the rear of the first floor level was a loading dock which allowed the company to easily unload items including clothing, furniture, and food. In addition to the exterior design and materials, many architectural details found on the interior of the Buxton and Landstreet Company Store set it apart from other company stores. The walls are covered with white glazed Mount Savage tile brick. The original hardwood floors extend the entire length of the building. Round, decorative metal columns with simple capitals stretch from the original wood floors to the steel support beams. The beams and ceiling are covered with the original stamped tin ceiling.

The building is an example of Italian Renaissance Revival architecture and exhibits features of the style including the central monumental arch flanked by symmetrical arched windows and a tripartite façade arrangement delineated by a secondary cornice above the first floor and corbelled brick stringcourses at the top of the façade. According to historian Leland M. Roth, the Italian Renaissance Revival emerged as a popular style in the 1880s as part of the "widespread desire to rationalize and standardize commercial building... to bring visual order to the constructed environment."<sup>24</sup> Styles based on the ordered symmetry of classical architecture were employed as a response to rapid and chaotic growth of cities and suburbs, as well as industry. The Italian Renaissance style, as opposed to the classic Greek temple form, was seen as more flexible for contemporary applications while retaining the restraint and order of classicism.<sup>25</sup> The style was employed in several high-profile buildings designed by the prolific American architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White, including the Villard Apartments, Boston Public Library and various urban residences.

The Buxton and Landstreet Company Store represents the extension of the style to a location and function far outside of the nation's urban centers. The building is constructed of brick rather than more expensive stone and does not feature details such as rusticated ground floor, quoins, ornate cornices and window surrounds that might be included on more high-style buildings. Nevertheless, the Buxton and Landstreet Company Store was one of the largest and most imposing formally-designed buildings in the area and certainly foremost among the company's various store locations. Even compared to the Davis Coal and Coke Company administration building across the street, the Buxton and Landstreet building is much larger, grander and the clear focal point of Coketon. Although the Administration Building housed the most important decision-making, financial, human resources and technical functions for all locations of the Davis Coal and Coke Company, it is a fairly utilitarian 2½ story red brick structure. The two building are similar in their employment of heavy stone bases, symmetrical façade arrangements and 2<sup>nd</sup>-floor arched windows, yet the Buxton and Landstreet represents a more extensive application of the Italian Renaissance aesthetic.

In the era of increasing and more centralized commercial growth, but before modern radio and television advertising, a company's building was one of the most important and visible ways it could communicate its prosperity and values. The late 19th century competition among companies in New York City to build the tallest and/or most ornate skyscraper demonstrates this phenomenon, and resulted in the construction of the Woolworth Building, Tribune, New York Time and New York Post buildings, among others.<sup>26</sup> Construction of impressive buildings told the public "We are established. We can afford the best and latest materials, styles and technology. Trust us with your business." As with architectural style trends, this outlook extended beyond large urban centers to towns and buildings of all sizes and functions. The Buxton and Landstreet Company Store asserts its trustworthiness, capital and constancy through its massive, grounded proportions, formal façade, brick construction and upgraded materials including decorative yellow brick, stone, ornamental tin and substantial metal interior columns. In historic photos, the Buxton and Landstreet Building appears as an immovable institution amongst rows of wooden houses, dirt roads and industrial activity.

<sup>24</sup> Roth, *American Architecture: A History*, 287.

<sup>25</sup> Roth 290.

<sup>26</sup> Marcus Whiffen and Frederick Koeper, *American Architecture V. II*, p 10.

Buxton and Landstreet Company Store

Name of Property

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Roth, Leland. *American Architecture: A History*. Boulder: Westview Press, 2001.

Smith, Mariwyn McClain. "Tucker County" *e-WV: The West Virginia Encyclopedia*. Web. 11 May 2021.

Whiffen, Marcus and Frederick Koeper. *American Architecture, Volume 2: 1860-1976*. 7<sup>th</sup> printing. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001.

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ 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 # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☒ Other  
Name of repository: Vandalia Heritage Foundation

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

Buxton and Landstreet Company Store

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 1.63

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 17N 629034 4333610  
Zone Easting Northing

3 17N    
Zone Easting Northing

2 17N    
Zone Easting Northing

4 17N    
Zone Easting Northing

### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary for the Buxton and Landstreet Company store coincides with the limits of Tucker County Tax Parcel 06-248A-69, which encompasses the building and associated property.

### Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary was selected to include the tax parcel which includes the building and surrounding property owned by the current owners.

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sarah Elswick, Architectural Historian and Courtney Zimmerman, Architectural Historian

organization Aurora Research Associates, LLC

date July 21, 2021

street & number 1436 Graham Road

telephone 304-685-7410

city or town Silver Lake

state Ohio

zip code 44224

e-mail seelswick@gmail.com courtney@aurora-llc.com

### Additional Documentation:

Figure 1: Historic Photo: Exterior, early 20<sup>th</sup> century

(Source: West Virginia and Regional History Center, WVU Libraries, <https://wvhistoryonview.org/catalog/014863>)

Figure 2: Historic Photo: Interior, circa 1905 (Source: Joseph Dumire)

Figure 3: Historic Photo: Environs, circa 1905 (Source: Joseph Dumire)

Figure 4: Buxton and Landstreet Company Store Floor Plan, Basement

Figure 5: Buxton and Landstreet Company Store Floor Plan, First Floor

Figure 6: Buxton and Landstreet Company Store Floor Plan, Second Floor

Buxton and Landstreet Company Store

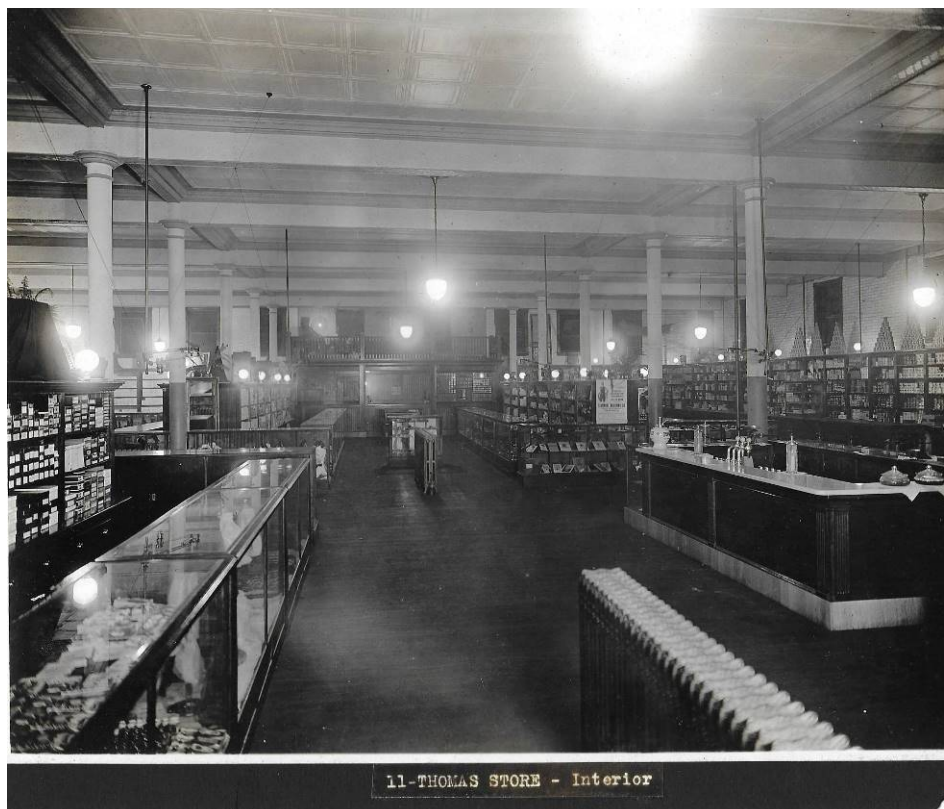
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Figure 1: Historic Photo: Exterior



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Figure 2: Historic Photo: Interior

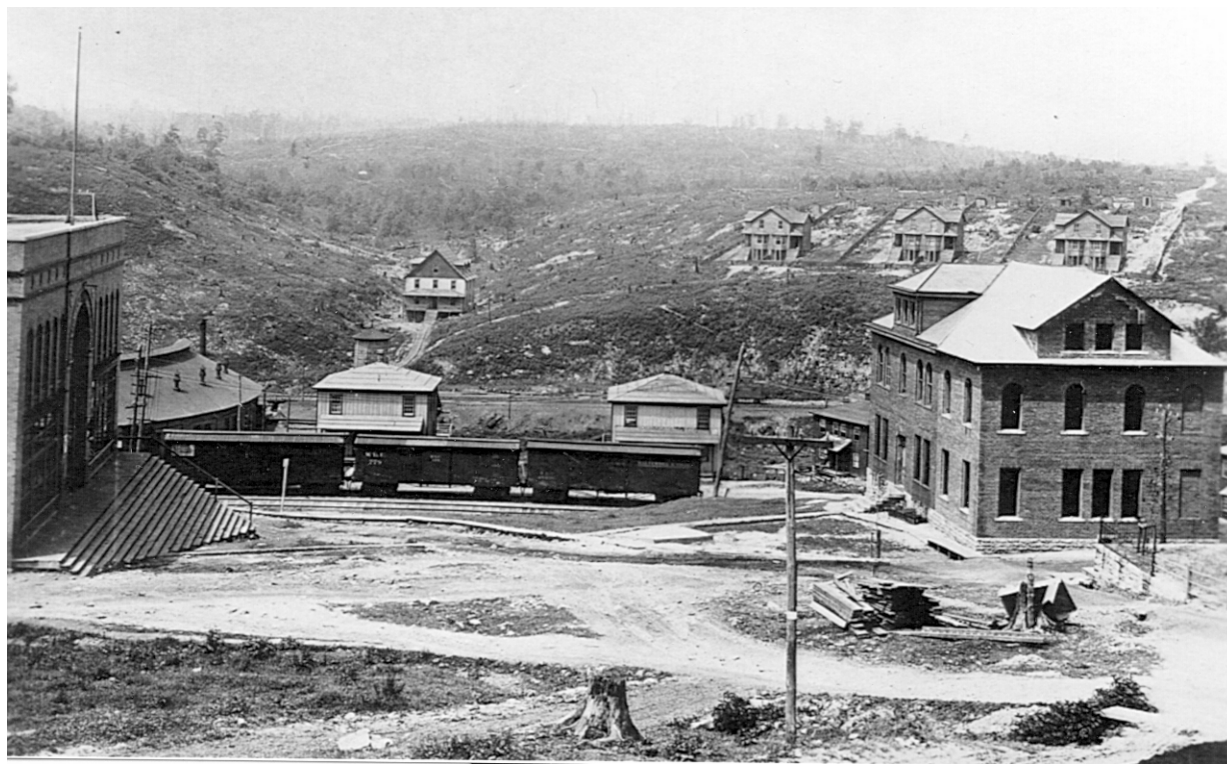


Figure 3: Historic Photo: Environs

Buxton and Landstreet Company Store

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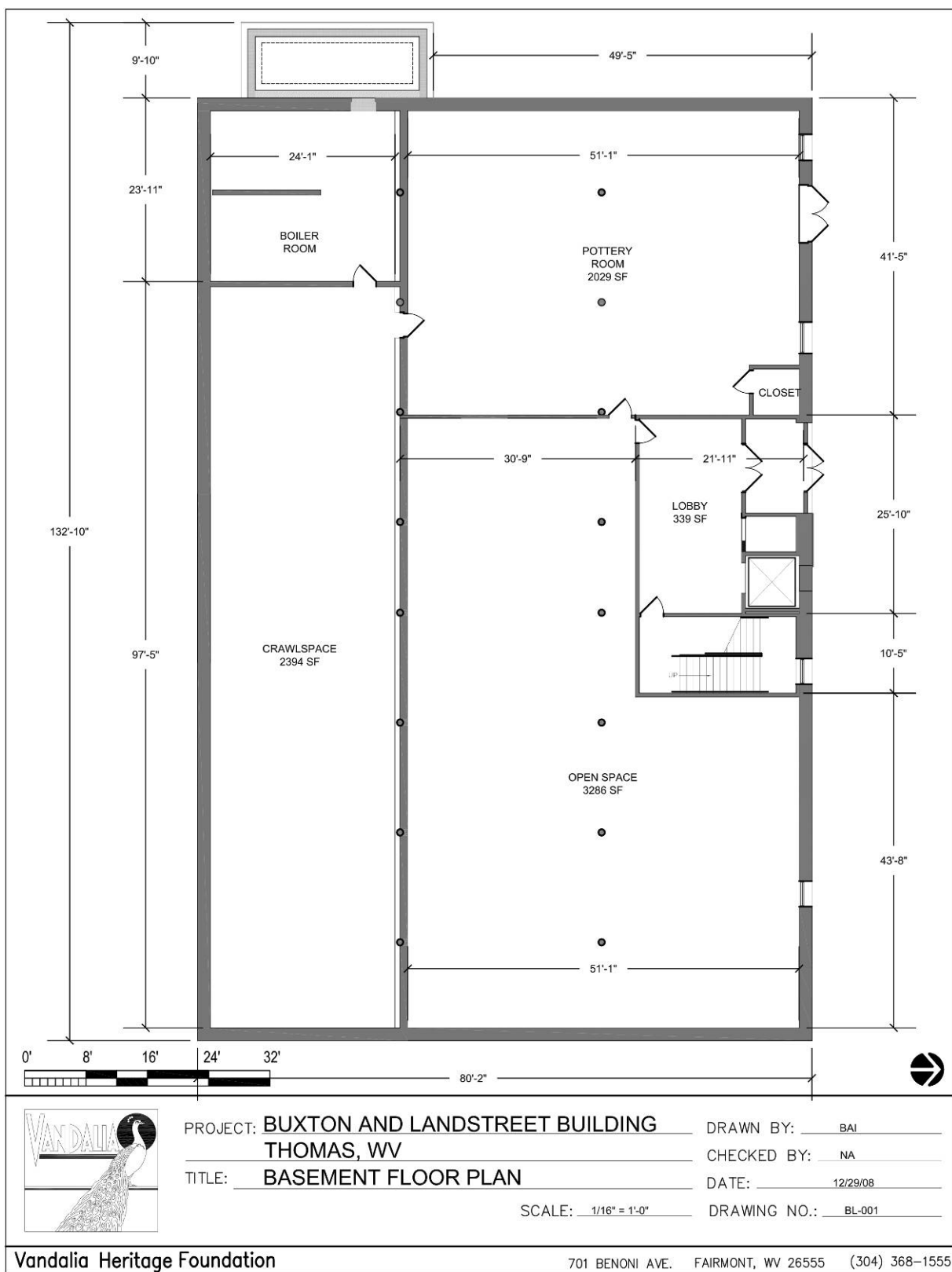


Figure 4: Buxton and Landstreet Company Store Floor Plan, Basement

Buxton and Landstreet Company Store

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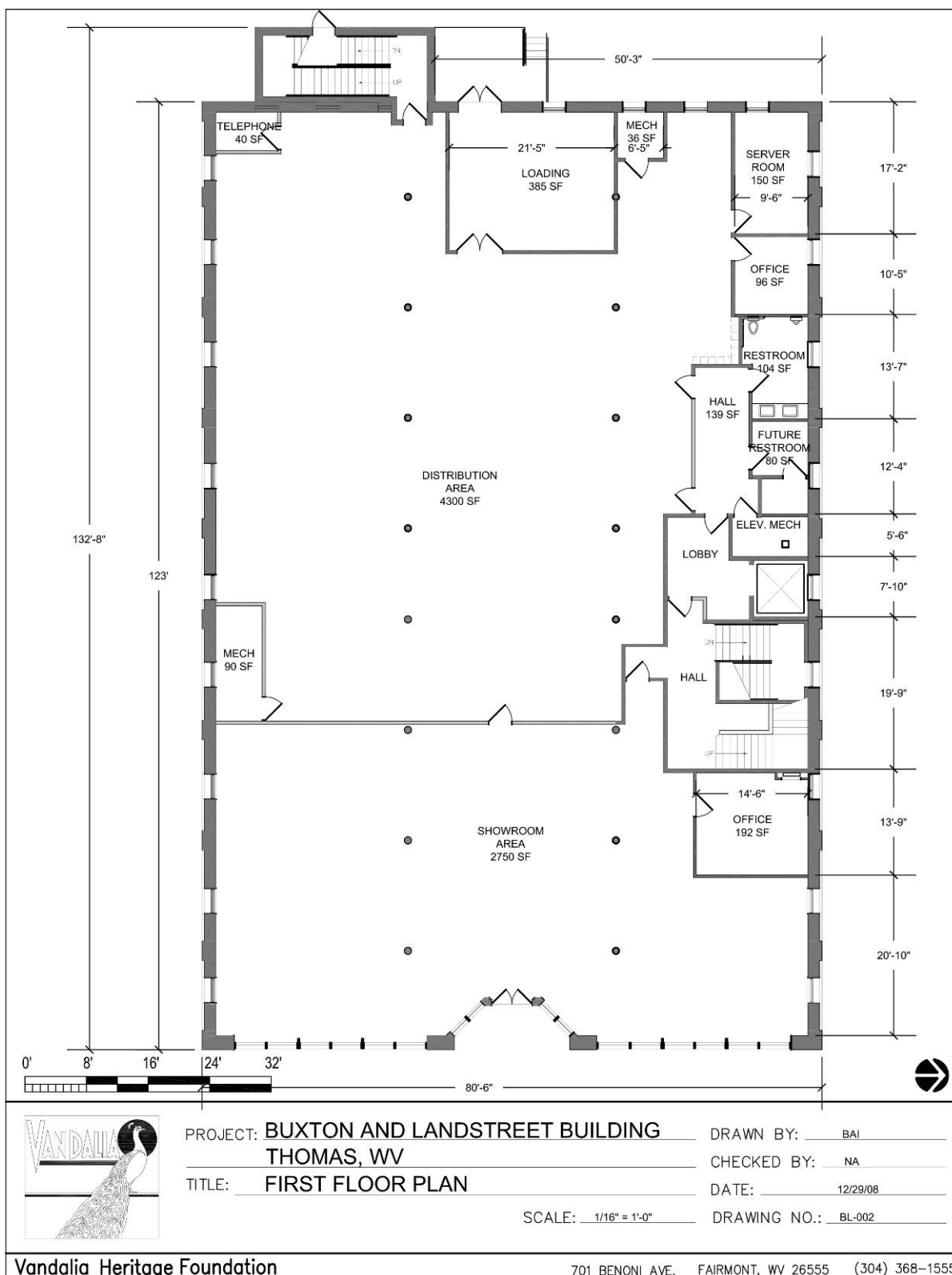


Figure 5: Buxton and Landstreet Company Store Floor Plan, First Floor

Buxton and Landstreet Company Store

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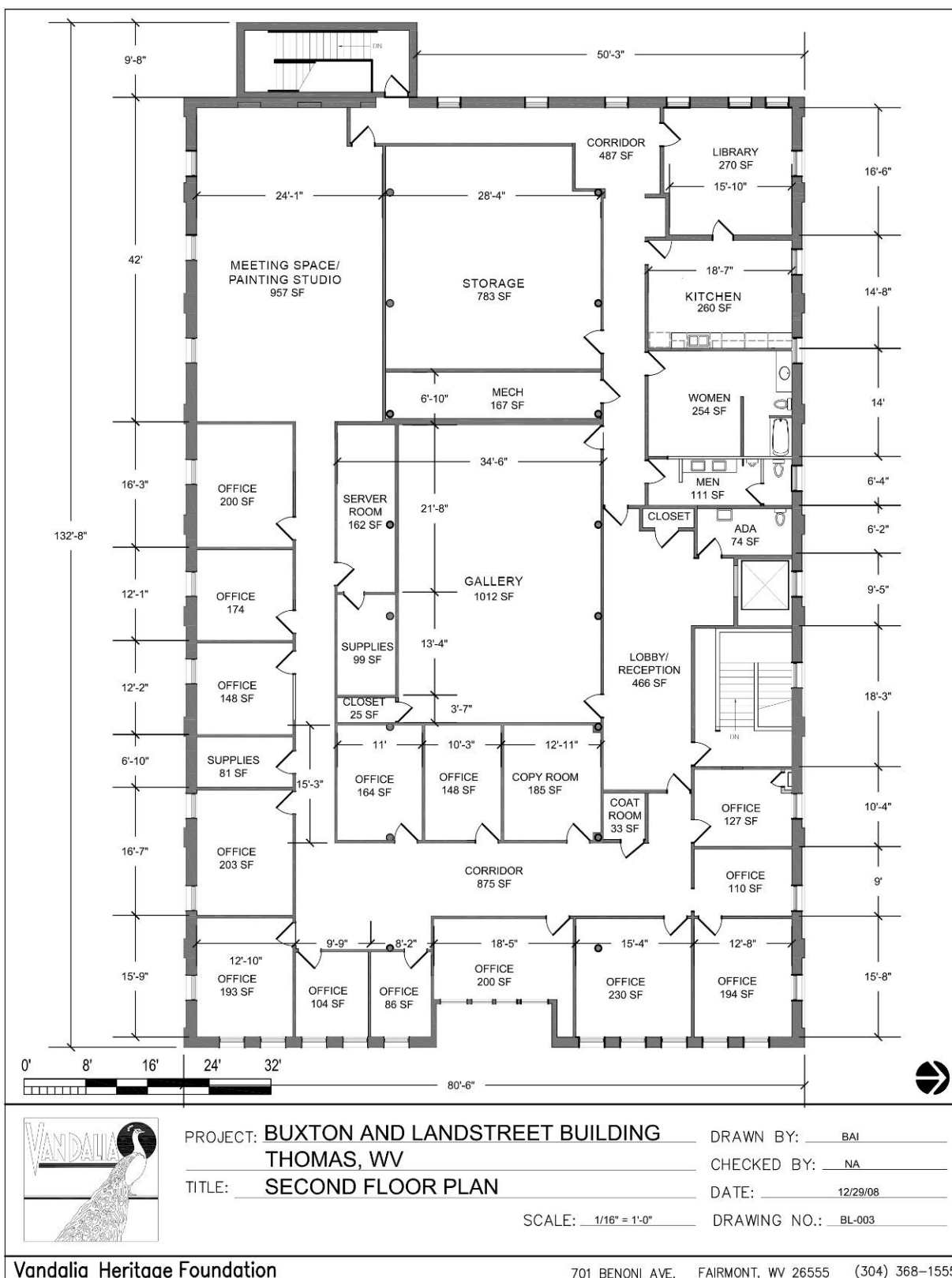


Figure 6: Buxton and Landstreet Company Store Floor Plan, Second Floor

Buxton and Landstreet Company Store

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**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

**Photo Log**

Name of Property:	Buxton and Landstreet Company Store
City or Vicinity:	Thomas
County:	Tucker
State:	West Virginia
Photographer:	Courtney Zimmerman
Date of photographs:	May 31, 2021
Location of Original Digital Files:	1436 Graham Rd Silver Lake, OH 44224
Number of Photos:	12

Photo 1 of 12: Oblique View of Front and South Elevations

Photo 2 of 12: Front (east) façade

Photo 3 of 12: South elevation

Photo 4 of 12: Rear (west) elevation

Photo 5 of 12: North elevation

Photo 6 of 12: Detail: Stone arch, center bay, front façade

Photo 7 of 12: Detail: Arched sash windows and star tie rod anchor on south elevation

Photo 8 of 12: Interior: main retail space, first floor

Photo 9 of 12: Interior: Metal column and stamped metal ceiling in main retail space, first floor

Photo 10 of 12: Interior: glazed tile brick and segmental arch lintel in main retail space, first floor

Photo 11 of 12: Interior: typical second floor office space

Photo 12 of 12: Interior: North staircase

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Photo #1: Oblique View of Front and South Elevations



Photo #2: Front (east) façade.

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Photo #3: South elevation



Photo 4: Rear (west) elevation

Buxton and Landstreet Company Store

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Photo #5: North elevation

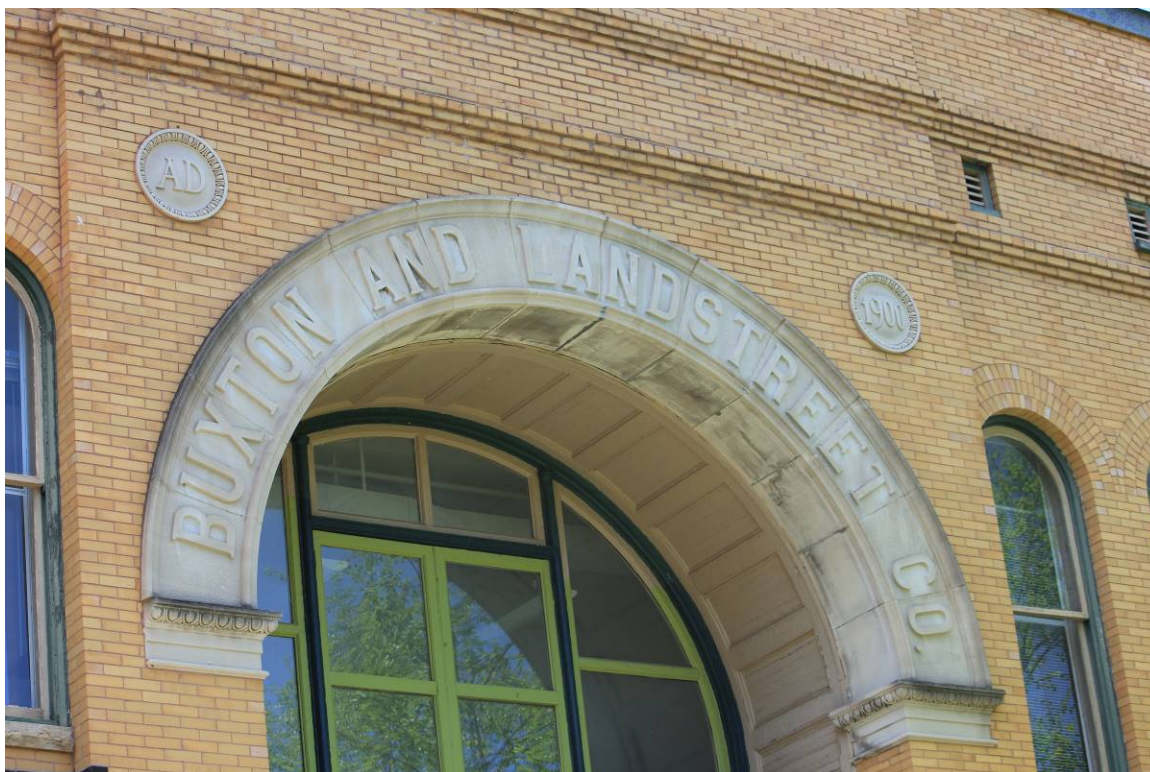


Photo 6: Detail: Stone arch, center bay, front façade

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Photo #7: Detail: Arched sash windows and star tie rod anchor on south elevation



Photo #8: Interior: main retail space, first floor

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Photo #9: Interior: Metal column and stamped metal ceiling in main retail space, first floor

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Photo #10: Interior: glazed tile brick and segmental arch lintel in main retail space, first floor

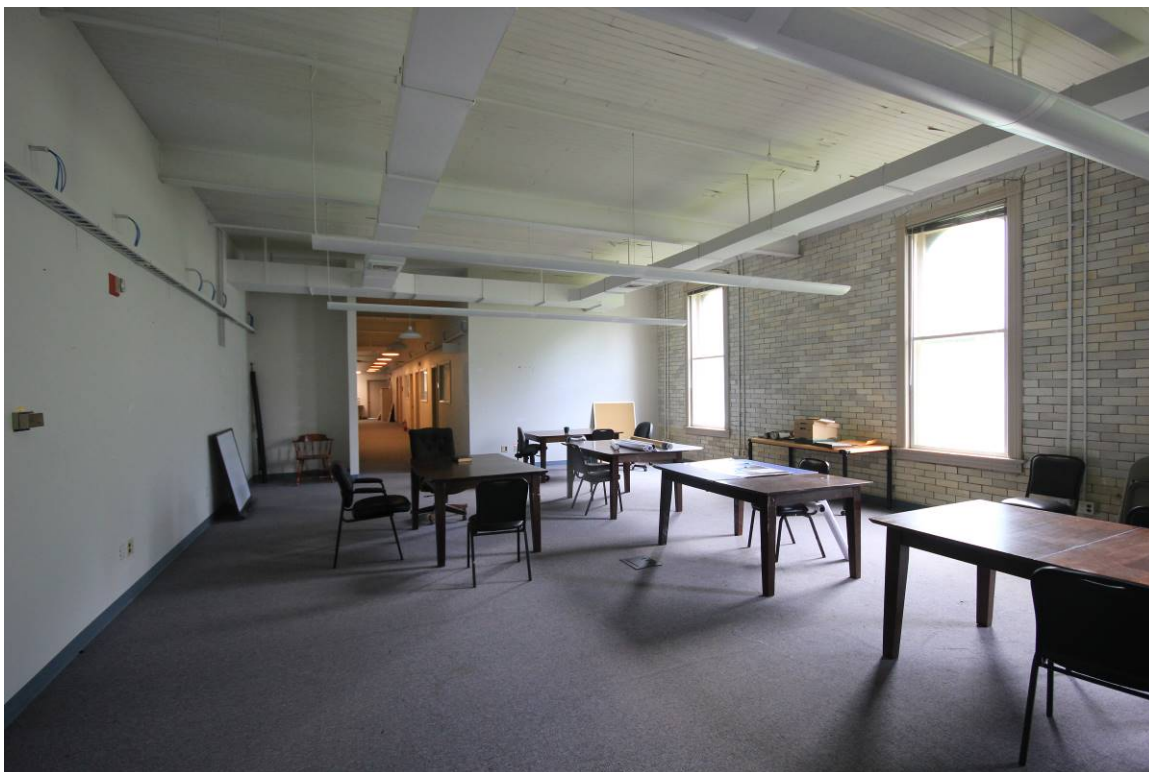


Photo #11: Interior: typical second floor office space

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Photo #12: Interior: North staircase

**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.460 et seq.).

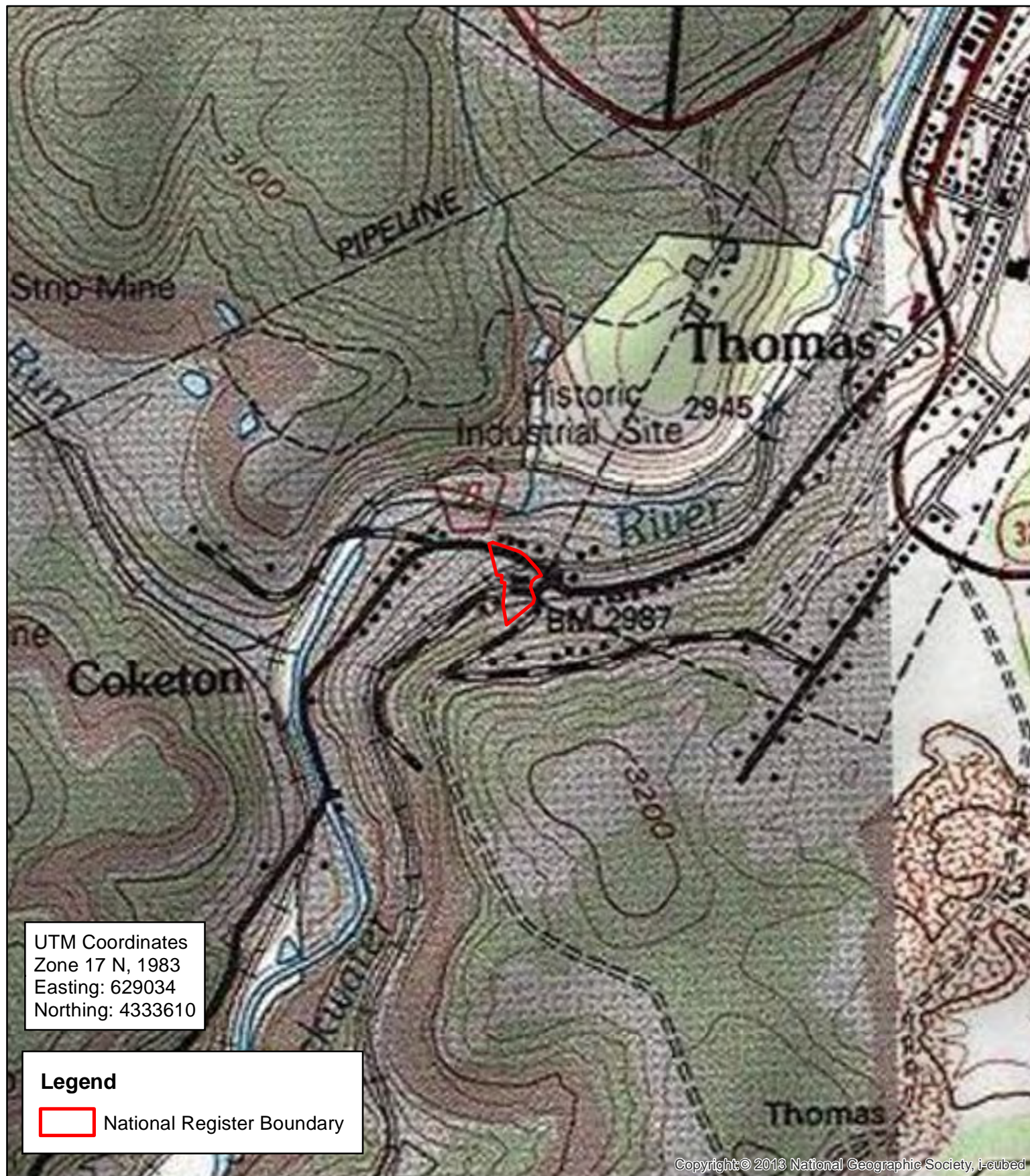
**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

# Buxton and Landstreet Company Store

Thomas, Tucker County

National Register of Historic Places Topographical Map

Lead Mine Quadrangle



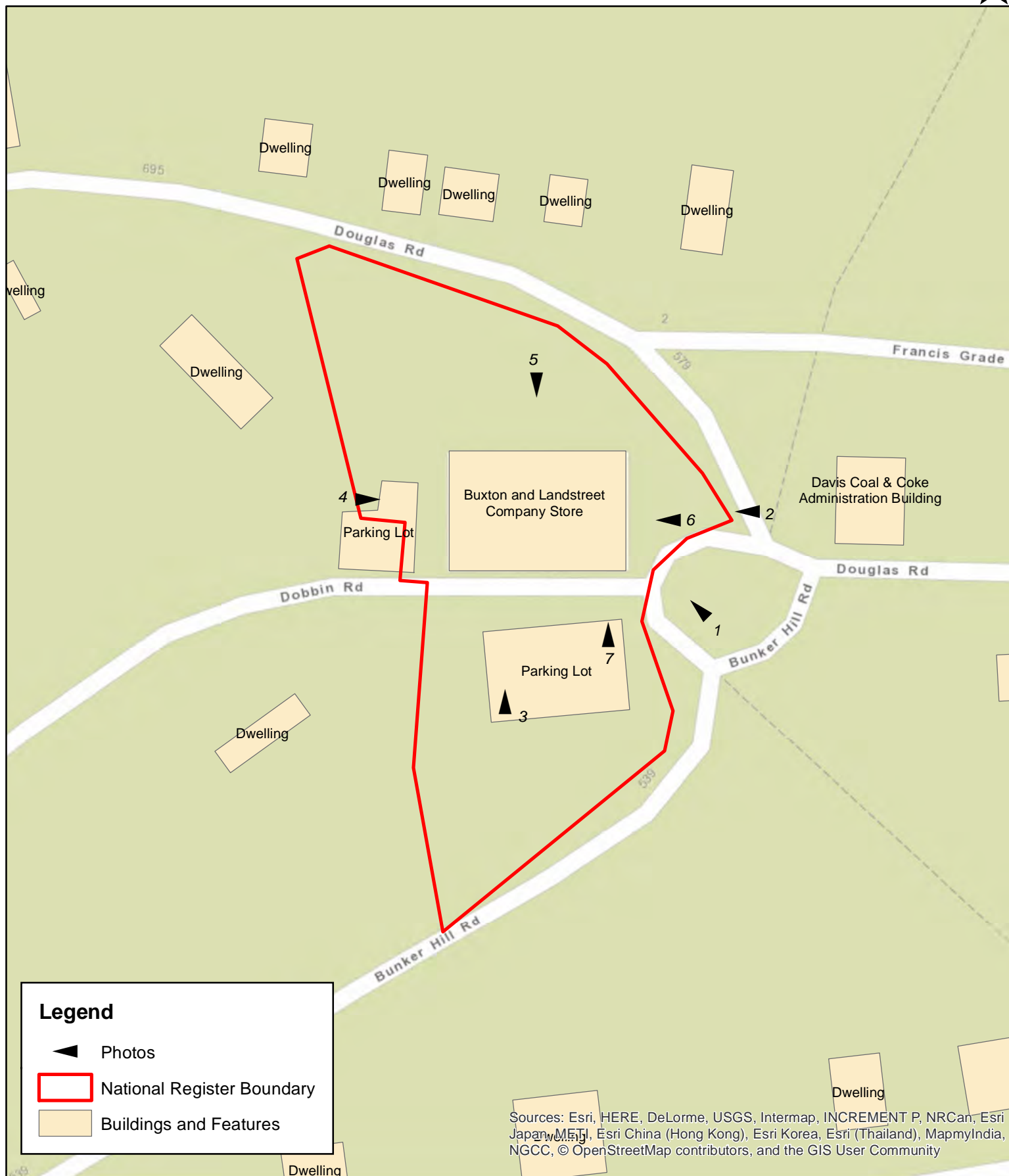
UTM Coordinates  
Zone 17 N, 1983  
Easting: 629034  
Northing: 4333610

## Legend

 National Register Boundary

# Buxton and Landstreet Company Store

Thomas, Tucker County  
National Register of Historic Places Boundary Map



**AURORA**  
Research Associates, LLC



0 25 50 100 150 200  
Feet

Date: 8/13/2021