

**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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Wilson Mail Pouch Barn

Other names/site number: MPB 48-26-02

Name of related multiple property listing:
Mail Pouch Tobacco Barns of West Virginia

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

2. Location

Street & number: 12621 Charleston Road

City or town: Leon State: West Virginia County: Mason

Not For Publication: Vicinity: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

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 X A B X C D

 Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer	Nov 24, 2025
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 <u> </u> meets <u> </u> does not meet the National Register criteria.	
Signature of commenting official:	
Date	
Title :	State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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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

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

AGRICULTURE/agricultural outbuilding

OTHER/billboard

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

AGRICULTURE/agricultural outbuilding

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: gambrel roof barn

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Walls: wood, concrete; Roof: metal; Foundation: concrete

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Wilson Mail Pouch Barn is a large, wood and cinderblock gambrel roof barn located on a rural farm along WV Route 62 in Mason County, West Virginia. Likely dating back to the mid-twentieth century, the barn is constructed with cinderblock walls on the ground floor and wood framing above. The southeast side of the barn features a classic representation of the iconic “Chew Mail Pouch Tobacco” sign. The sign’s size and position allow it to be easily seen by motorists on WV Route 62. Despite some deterioration including bowing wood planks, vine overgrowth, and fading paint, the barn meets the integrity requirements established in the “Mail Pouch Tobacco Barns of West Virginia” Multiple Property Documentation Form. The sign is still legible and recognizable, while the barn retains its original form, massing, materials, and design, with little-to-no non-historic alterations.

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Narrative Description

The Wilson Mail Pouch Barn is located within a large family farm along the north side of the Kanawha River, approximately four miles north of the small town of Leon. The Wilson farm is hundreds of acres in size, divided into multiple parcels. The southern side of the property consists of flat farmland adjoining the river, while the northern side is made up primarily of hills and forestland. The farm is bisected by railroad tracks and WV Route 62, also known as Charleston Road. The core of the farm is situated along this road and includes a farmhouse plus numerous sheds, barns, and other agricultural facilities of various sizes and ages. The Wilson Mail Pouch Barn, sitting directly on the north side of the road, is the largest of these buildings.

The barn is a substantial, gambrel roofed, wood frame and cinderblock building. The ground level is constructed with cinderblock walls, while the upper portion is made of vertical wood plank walls. It is clad with a standing seam metal roof. A hay hood protrudes from the northwestern side. Both the northeast and southwest sides of the cinderblock walls have eight two-over-two windows. Two more windows exist on the southeast side. Both the northwest and southeast sides have sliding doors allowing entry for vehicles and large objects, and the south side also has one standard hinged door. A front gable, cinderblock shed is attached to the barn's southwest side and may be original to its construction. This shed has a porch, hinged door, several small windows, and a standing seam metal roof. A metal grain silo is attached to the barn's northeast side. The cinderblock walls of the barn are painted white, and the wood frame walls are painted red, except for the side with the Mail Pouch sign, which is black. The barn's interior consists of a single large room on the ground level, and a spacious hay loft on the upper floor. The inside is accessible by doors on the northwest and southeast sides.

The Mail Pouch advertisement sign occupies the entirety of the wood portion of the barn's southeast side. It is in clear view of motorists traveling northbound on WV Route 62. The sign meets all the hallmarks of the standard Mail Pouch tobacco advertising sign. The background is painted black and written in large letters is the phrase "Chew Mail Pouch Tobacco, Treat Yourself to the Best." All the text is centered, and the words "Mail Pouch Tobacco" are a larger size than the words "Chew" and "Treat Yourself to the Best." The text "Mail Pouch Tobacco" is painted yellow, while "Chew" and "Treat Yourself to the Best" are painted white.

The barn is experiencing deterioration due to neglect and weather. Many of the wood planks forming the siding are bowed, some of the windows are broken, and vines have engulfed significant portions of the building, especially the silo. The Mail Pouch sign itself is partially obscured by vine growth, but enough is exposed to clearly discern the message. A single plank within the sign's letter "U" has been missing for decades. The sign also suffers from bowing planks and fading paint. Despite these issues, the Mail Pouch sign is still legible and easily recognizable to motorists. The barn has never been moved, has had little if any alterations, and remains situated in a large, rural farm setting. It possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, able to convey its historic significance as a mid-twentieth century roadside barn utilized for advertising Mail Pouch tobacco.

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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.

Criteria Considerations

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

- 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

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Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Commerce _____
Art _____

Period of Significance
1968-1969 _____

Significant Dates

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Wilson Mail Pouch Barn is eligible for the National Register on a local level of significance under *Criterion A: Commerce* and *Criterion C: Art*, in accordance with the requirements laid out in the Multiple Property Documentation Form “Mail Pouch Tobacco Barns of West Virginia.” The barn is significant under Criterion A for its association with Bloch Brothers Tobacco Company’s iconic barn sign advertising campaign. It is also significant under Criterion C as an important example of American folk art. The Period of Significance begins in 1968, the earliest known year that a Mail Pouch advertisement was painted on the barn, and ends in 1969, when Bloch Brothers discontinued their barn sign advertising program.

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

Context for the history of Mail Pouch barns is provided in the “Mail Pouch Barns of West Virginia” Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF). As established in the document, the Bloch Brothers Tobacco Company embarked on a decades-long, multi-state advertising sign painting campaign. Using teams of painters, the company created thousands of signs, primarily on barns, imploring people to “Chew Mail Pouch Tobacco.” Throughout the mid-twentieth century, this was Bloch Brother’s primary marketing strategy for selling Mail Pouch chewing tobacco. The ubiquity of Mail Pouch barn signs across the rural American landscape and their production by a select few skilled painters led to them being regarded by many as a type of folk art. Of the thousands of Mail Pouch barns that once existed nationwide, very few remain. In West Virginia, less than 100 are believed to be extant.

The Wilson farm has been owned by the same family for over 200 years. In 1784, family patriarch and Revolutionary War veteran Leonard Cooper was granted a 4,666-acre tract of land along the Kanawha River in what is now Mason County, West Virginia. Though parts of the property were sold off over the years, the core of the farm is intact and remains in active operation. Cooper’s descendants eventually married into the Wilson family. During the mid-twentieth century, the farm was owned by Pat Wilson, Jr. and his wife Inez Daughtery Wilson. The large, gambrel roof barn was likely constructed during their ownership. Its strategic location directly adjacent to WV Route 62 – a major transportation corridor on the north side of the Kanawha River, connecting parts of rural Mason County to Point Pleasant – made the barn an idea canvas for advertisements.¹

Bloch Brothers Tobacco Company records state that Inez Wilson signed a lease to have a Mail Pouch sign painted on the southeast side of the barn on April 26, 1968. It is unclear if this was a lease renewal to repaint a preexisting sign, or if this was the first time the barn was leased for a Mail Pouch sign. Either way, this lease was notable for coming late in the Mail Pouch

¹ Martha Bryson Hodel, “Mason County family labors the land for six generations.” *Charleston Gazette-Mail*, February 5, 1989.

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advertising campaign. In 1969, Bloch Brothers Tobacco Company (which had reorganized into Helme Tobacco Company) temporarily discontinued its barn painting program in the face of federal regulations on highway advertisements.² Photographic documentation compiled by Mail Pouch Barnstormers indicates that the barn sign was maintained and repainted at least to the 1990s, when barn painter Harley Warrick retired.³

² Mail Pouch Tobacco Barns Lease Records. Helme Tobacco Company. Wheeling, WV.

³ "MPB 48-26-02," Mail Pouch Barnstormers, accessed October 9, 2025, https://mailpouchbarnstormers.org/wp/?wpbdp_listing=mpb-48-26-02.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Hodel, Martha Bryson. "Mascon County family labors the land for six generations." *Charleston Gazette-Mail*. February 5, 1989.

Mail Pouch Tobacco Barns Lease Records. Helme Tobacco Company. Wheeling, WV.

"MPB 48-26-02." Mail Pouch Barnstormers. Accessed July 1, 2025 .
https://mailpouchbarnstormers.org/wp/?wpbdp_listing=mpb-48-26-02.

Straley, Steven Cody. "Mail Pouch Tobacco Barns of West Virginia." National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2025.

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: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property less than one acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 38.78567201 | Longitude: -82.01316712 |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 17N | Easting: 412001 | Northing: 4293483 |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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

The boundary consists of a roughly 9,200 square-foot rectangle encompassing the barn and no other land or resources. The boundary is depicted in Figure 2.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The selected boundary encompasses the barn in its entirety and no other resources.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Steven Cody Straley, National Register and Architectural Survey Coordinator
organization: West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office
street & number: 1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East
city or town: Charleston state: West Virginia zip code: 25305
e-mail Cody.Straley@wv.gov
telephone: 304-558-0240
date: October 16, 2025

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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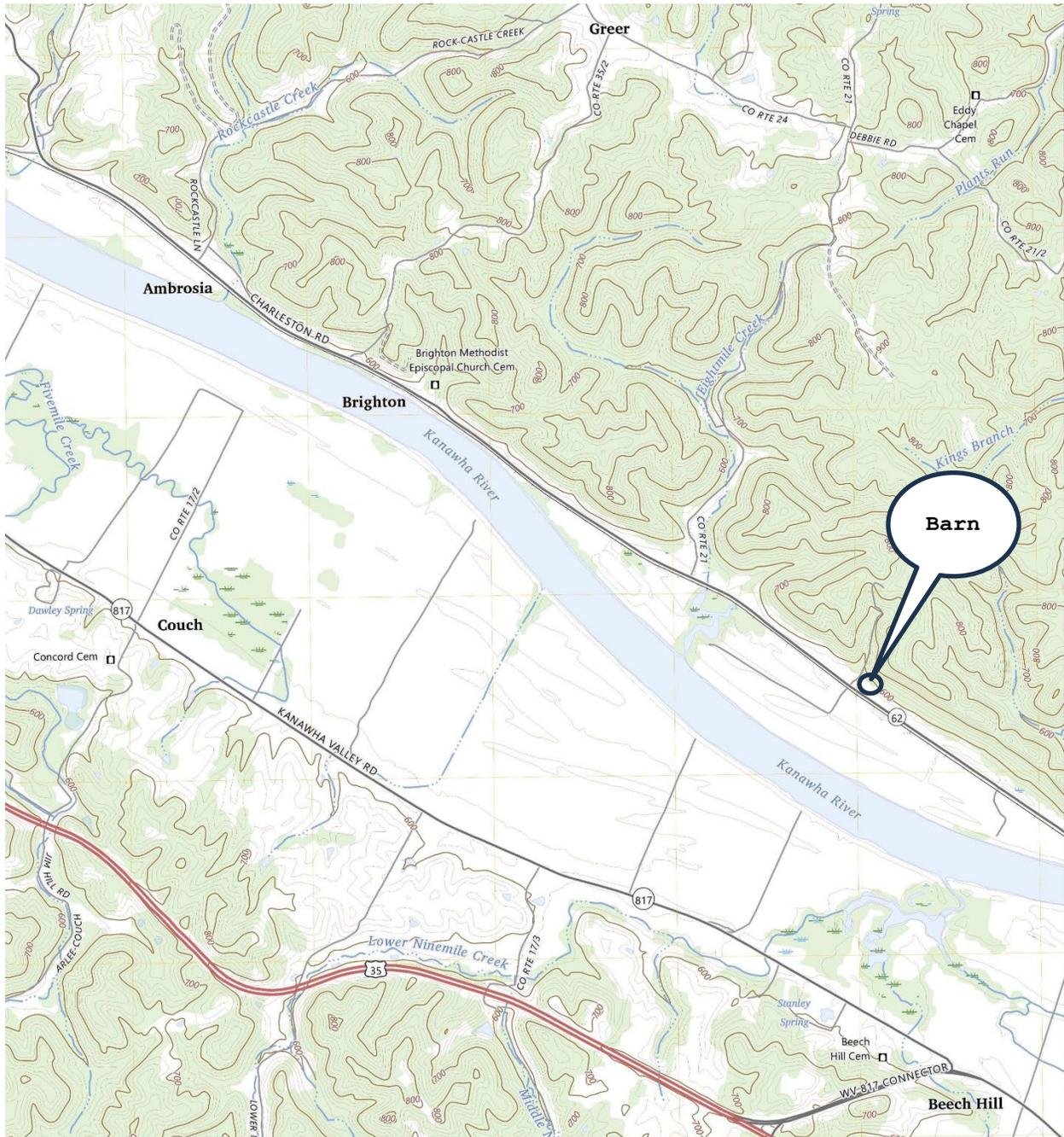


Figure 1 USGS Map - Beech Hill Quadrangle, West Virginia - Mason County - 7.5-Minute Series, 2023

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Figure 2 Boundary Outline and Photo Key

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Figure 3 Barn in 1988. Image obtained from Mail Pouch Barnstormers.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Wilson Mail Pouch Barn

City or Vicinity: Leon

County: Mason

State: WV

Photographer: Cody Straley

Date Photographed: September 10, 2025

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 6. WV_MasonCo_WilsonMailPouchBarn_0001
Southeast side of barn, camera facing northwest
- 2 of 6. WV_MasonCo_WilsonMailPouchBarn_0002
Northeast side of barn, camera facing southwest
- 3 of 6. WV_MasonCo_WilsonMailPouchBarn_0003
Northeast side of barn, camera facing southeast
- 4 of 6. WV_MasonCo_WilsonMailPouchBarn_0004
Northwest side of barn, camera facing southeast
- 5 of 6. WV_MasonCo_WilsonMailPouchBarn_0005
Southwest side of barn, camera facing northeast
- 6 of 6. WV_MasonCo_WilsonMailPouchBarn_0006
Interior of ground floor, camera facing northwest

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Photo 1 Southeast side of barn, camera facing northwest

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Photo 2 Northeast side of barn, camera facing southwest



Photo 3 Northeast side of barn, camera facing southeast

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Photo 4 Northwest side of barn, camera facing southeast

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Photo 5 Southwest side of barn, camera facing northeast



Photo 6 Interior of ground floor, camera facing northwest