

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018
APR 15 1991

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL REGISTER

1. Name of Property

historic name: Whipple Company Store

other name/site number: _____

2. Location

street & number: intersection of county roads 15 and 21/20

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Whipple

vicinity: N/A

state: WV County: Fayette code: 019 zip code: N/A

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related property listing: N/A

=====
4. State/Federal Agency Certification
=====

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. _____ See continuation sheet.

William J. ...
Signature of Certifying Official Date 3/5/91

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

=====
5. National Park Service Certification
=====

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): _____

Patrick Andrus 4/26/91

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic: Commerce Sub: Department Store
Government Post Office

Current : Domestic Sub: Single Dwelling

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification:

other: cross plan

Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation sandstone roof asphalt shingle
walls weatherboard other metal

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

=====
8. Statement of Significance
=====

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. 1900-1940

Significant Dates : N/A _____

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Whipple Colliery Company

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.
x See continuation sheet.

=====

9. Major Bibliographical References

=====

x See continuation sheet.

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: N/A

=====

10. Geographical Data

=====

Acreege of Property: less than one acre

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>17</u>	<u>485420</u>	<u>4201040</u>	B	___	___	___
C	___	___	___	D	___	___	___

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

Beginning at the northeast corner of the intersection of county roads 15 and 21/20, proceed east 175'. Proceed 200' to the north then 175' to the west. Turning to the south, proceed 200' south reaching the beginning point at the county road intersection.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

The nominated property constitutes the entire lot historically associated with the Whipple Company Store.

=====

11. Form Prepared By

=====

Name/Title: Stacy Sone, surveyor

Organization: SHPO Date: 2/5/91

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

The wood frame Whipple Company Store building sits on a high cut stone foundation. Although its plan is symmetrical, the building's massing appears to be irregular because the first and second stories do not have the same plan. The first floor appears to be an octagon when viewed from the front but it actually has a six-sided plan. A shed roof covers the part of the first floor that is not directly under the second floor (photo 1).

The core of the second story is octagonally planned and sits off-center towards the facade of the first floor. On four alternating sides of the octagon are projections that extend almost as far as the lower story roof (see roof plan). The extension in the rear is longer and almost equals the length of the lower story. The hipped roofs over these projections intersect with the main eight-sided pyramidal roof. The builder added a decorative finial to the apex of each roof (photos 2 and 3).

The Whipple Store's foundation is one of its most impressive features (photo 4). The coursed stone-faced foundation stands approximately eight feet high on the building's west side. The stones are carefully placed and there are raised joints between each. The company clearly hired an experienced mason to lay the foundation. The stone is exposed on each side of the building except the east side where the first floor sits at ground level.

There is an even arrangement of double-hung windows throughout most of the building. On the lower story, the windows are spaced evenly and are at the same height along the facade walls that flank the arched opening, and along the store's east side. Only on the west side is there a slight break in the fenestration pattern. This is the more utilitarian side of the building and the windows are arranged in accordance with the interior space's requirements rather than exterior appearance. On this side, there are fewer windows and one of them is smaller and is placed higher on the wall to light an interior stairway. The second story windows are located in each of the three sides of the projections and in the bays between.

At least one door is located on each side of the building. There are three door openings in the foundation. One is located on the rear and the other two open on the west side. Of the doors on the west side, one is a double-door that opens into the elevator shaft.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2

Probably the Whipple Store's most notable characteristic is its prominent arched opening that leads to the building's main entrance on the facade. The broad arch stands at the top of a wide stairway and under a gabled roof. Behind the arch is a spacious vestibule with the recessed, double-door entrance in the center. A transom window rises from the top of the doors to the ceiling. Flanking the main door are large display windows and on the two outer edges of the vestibule are single doors that open into the store's secondary spaces.

Certain aspects of the Whipple Store's interior are as impressive as the exterior. The doors at the main entrance lead into a vast circular room centered under the second floor octagon. Six foot high display shelves line the sides of this room. Surrounding the central space are secondary rooms that meet the outside walls. Access to these rooms is either through the outside doors that flank the main entrance or through doors off the circular space. At the rear of the circle is a counter that was once used for mail service. The stairway that leads to the second floor occupies the space in the rear. Directly off the first flight of stairs, at the landing level, is a room that functioned as the coal company's main office.

The building's main stairway leads into the second story's octagonal space. Opening off the main room are the smaller spaces that are located on alternating sides of the octagon. This large, well-lit room served as the store's furniture showroom.

The Whipple Store's basement is also notable. Access to the basement is by a narrow, single flight stairway that descends from the first floor's outer room on the west side. The basement's interesting characteristics are its rubble stone foundation and its massive brick piers. The piers are located so that they support the outer edge of the circular space above.

Common to all three levels of the building is a manually operated freight elevator. The elevator shaft is located on the west side and extends from the basement to one of the smaller rooms that open off the second floor octagon. The double doors in the foundation open directly into the elevator so that when goods were delivered, they could easily be distributed to any level of the building (photo 5).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 3

Very few alterations have hardly changed the Whipple Store's turn-of-the-century appearance. Inside and out, the original material and spaces have been left intact. The most noticeable alterations are the windows that flank the main entrance. One of the windows and the door next to it that opens into the secondary space have been boarded over. The display window space on the other side of the main door has also been boarded over and now accommodates a smaller new window. In addition to these windows, there are also several others that have been partially or completely boarded. Other than this, the building only suffers slightly from disrepair which is more attributed to its age than from lack of maintenance.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

The Whipple Company Store is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A for its historical association with West Virginia coal mining and under criterion C in the area of architecture. The Whipple Store, like other company stores in southern West Virginia, played an extremely important role in a mining community. The coal company with which it was associated the longest, the New River Company, was one of the largest and owned some of the richest resources in West Virginia. The Whipple Store served as an important mercantile center within this region and is one of few company stores that remain in the area that once belonged to the New River Company. The building is architecturally significant not only for its impressive appearance but also because it is the only one of four identical company stores that stood in the region.

Before the coal industry boomed in southern West Virginia at the end of the 19th 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 demands¹.

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. The construction of company towns was absolutely necessary for mining to be profitable. Unlike the northern coalfields of Pennsylvania, where mining operations began in regions that were already settled, southern operations opened in sparsely settled areas with few organized communities. Because good roads were scarce and the rugged terrain made the daily transportation of employees impossible, coal operators had to establish their own communities to house their workers. The company town was the most logical solution because it provided efficient and inexpensive housing for a large labor force².

Central to each of these communities was the company store. The store was usually the most prominent building in the town and was typically placed in a central location. Most housed not only a store but also a post office, doctor's office, and the company's business office. Because of its distance from other commercial centers, the coal company store offered a wide variety of merchandise from food to furniture³.

The Whipple Company Store served this important function for two different coal companies. A successful coal operator, Justus Collins, built the store ca. 1900 for his Whipple Colliery Company. In 1905, during a massive consolidation effort, the New River Company acquired the Whipple Colliery Company and other surrounding mines.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Like other company stores, the Whipple Store was the center of social activity in the busy mining community of Whipple. Miners and their families could purchase a wide variety of merchandise in this single building. Its spacious rooms contained food and day-to-day supplies on the tall shelves that surround the first floor circular space. The floor above served as a furniture showroom. The elevator allowed the store manager to efficiently transport furniture and other supplies from the basement delivery doors to the upper floors. Whipple residents could also take care of other business at the post office or company offices. It is likely that a doctor had an office in the building also. Because of its various functions, the company store was the busiest place in town aside from the mine itself.

The Whipple Store served in this capacity until the mine closed in August, 1957. Although roads improved with the introduction of the automobile, it was still more practical to do business at the company store than to travel elsewhere. The store's location at the junction of two county roads must have been in demand because after the New River Company closed the store, the building was purchased and continued to operate as a trading post until the late 1980's⁵.

The Whipple Store's significance lies not only in its important function but also in its architectural merit. According to a 1976 New River Company historical publication, there were four identical stores built in the New River area. In 1893 the Philip Snyder Construction Company built the earliest one in Glen Jean for Collins Colliery Company. This store burned in 1900 and was replaced by another one of identical design. Shortly after the second Glen Jean store was built another store with the same design opened in Prudence. The Whipple Company Store was probably the last of the four to be built. It is likely that the same contractor built all of the stores⁶.

The Whipple Store is the only one of these four stores that is still standing. It may also be the only early 20th century company store that remains in the area. Most of the early stores either burned or were torn down and replaced by brick buildings. The fact that the Whipple Store continued to serve in its original function after the mines closed is quite an achievement. Unlike the other store buildings that changed or were razed or abandoned, the Whipple Store offered merchandise from ca. 1900 until the late 1980's.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

Although there were other buildings like it, the Whipple Store design is undeniably impressive. Its size, distinguished roofline, and prominent arch indicate that the original owner, Justus Collins, wanted an impressive building to serve his mining operation.

The Whipple Store has been cared for through its long history. It retains nearly all of its original fabric and is structurally sound. The store stands as an outstanding and representative example of a coal company store and its importance to the mining industry.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Notes

1. Eller, 6, 4
2. Eller, 163, 162
3. Eller, 187
4. Craigo, 78
5. site visit, interview with Harold Martin
6. Craigo, 10, 76, 84

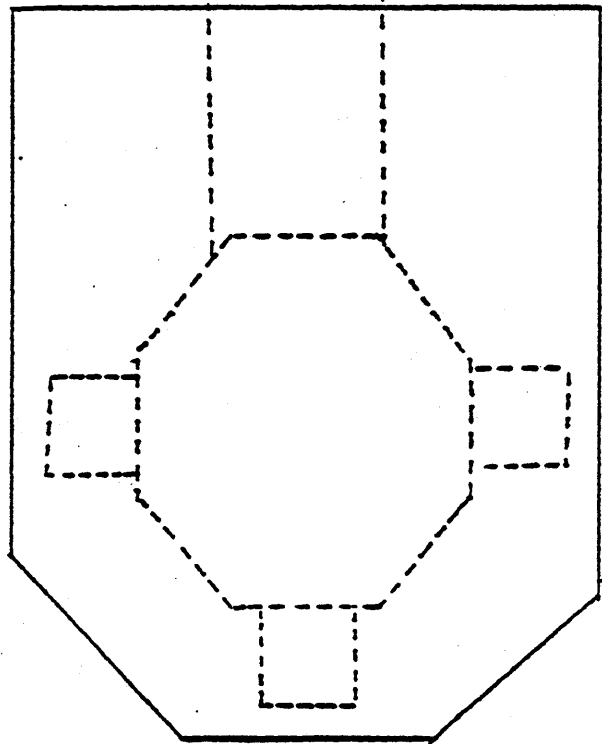
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Bibliography

- Craig, Robert. The New River Company: Seventy Years of West Virginia Coal History. privately printed, 1976.
- Eller, Ronald D. Miners, Millhands and Mountaineers. Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930. Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1982.
- Martin, Harold. Resident of Whipple, site visit, Dec. 11, 1990.
- Sullivan, Charles Kenneth. Coal Men and Coal Towns. Development of the Smokeless Coalfields of Southern West Virginia, 1873-1923. New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1989.



ROOF PLAN SKETCH (not to scale)
WHIPPLE COMPANY STORE
WHIPPLE, FAYETTE COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA