

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received JAN 16 1986
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Bluefield Downtown Commercial Historic District

and/or common

2. Location

street & number _____ not for publication _____

city, town Bluefield N/A vicinity of _____

state West Virginia code 54 county Mercer code 055

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership

street & number _____

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state _____

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Mercer County Courthouse

street & number _____

city, town Princeton state West Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Bluefield Historic Resource Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date August, 1985 federal state county local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Unit
W. Va. Dept. of Culture & History

city, town Charleston state W. Va., 25305

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u> N/A </u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Bluefield Downtown Commercial Historic District is located in the center of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia. The historic district encompasses what is essentially the core of the central business district, beginning, at the north with Princeton Avenue which is the site of the first of Bluefield's commercial buildings, dating from the city's first period of growth in the 1890's. The district is bounded on the north by the property (tracks and railroad related structures) of the Norfolk and Western (N&W) Railroad Company, that is separated from Princeton Avenue by a sandstone wall approximately five feet high. In fact, the boundaries of the historic district are nearly all encompassed by stone walls which are prominent architectural features of the historic district as well as necessary as retaining walls in this very hilly terrain. The historic district is bounded on the east by Scott Street and Edward Terrace, on the south by large open spaces north of Clifford and Jones Streets, and on the west by Russell Street, which runs north into Princeton Avenue. To both the east and west of the historic district are residential areas, while to the south there is a deteriorated and incohesive area of small businesses.

The Bluefield Downtown Commercial Historic District consists primarily of three to four story masonry commercial structures. There are a few taller buildings, including the eight story Bluefield Sanitarium (#47) and the twelve story West Virginia Hotel (#62). Sidewalks are relatively narrow and the streets are mostly one-way. The principal thoroughfares are Federal Street (north), Bland Street (south), and Princeton Street (east-west). The Old Municipal Building (#46), already listed in the National Register, and the Federal Courthouse and Post Office (#52), previously determined eligible for the National Register, are also within the historic district boundaries.

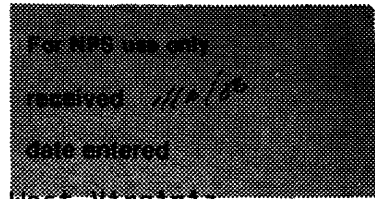
The commercial district developed along Princeton Avenue during the initial phase of growth, fronting on the N&W Railroad whose location at Bluefield was the primary reason for calling the city into existence (see Part 8). The buildings in this part of the district date from the mid 1890's to the 1940's, as one moves to the south and up the principal streets. This is a standard urban development pattern; older concentrations of buildings adjacent to transportation routes (i.e., the railroad) and subsequent development, first residential then commercial, along one or two main roads leading to the transportation center.

Most of the major architectural styles of the late 19 and early 20 Century are represented in the Bluefield Downtown Commercial Historic District. These include Italianate Commercial, Victorian Commercial, Renaissance Revival, Beaux Arts, Victorian Romanesque, Art Deco as well as others. Building descriptions, in fact, read as an architectural history primer and some of the more noteworthy are mentioned below.

The Old City Hall, 1927 (#46), is a good example of the Classical Revival Style with its pedimented entrance porticoes and rusticated lower level. It is relatively intact and is undergoing rehabilitation and restoration to convert it to a community arts facility.

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The Shamrock Restaurant, 1895 (#3), is an example of the Italianate Commercial Style with its projecting metal cornice and rounded window hoods. It is also one of the oldest buildings in the district and its rock cut limestone ashlar facades are particularly interesting.

The Peoples Bank, 1895 (#6), is one of, if not the best, example of Victorian Romanesque buildings in the state. Its multicolored stone facades, Gabled dormers, corner turret, and arched openings make it probably the most significant piece of architecture in the district.

The Art Deco and Art Moderne architecture of the 1930's and 1940's is represented in the Colonial Theater, 1916, (#13), with its neon marquee and detailed lobby, and the auditorium and lobby of the Appalachian Power Co. building, 1923, (#54). The Elks Building, 1902-27, (#29) and the Law and Commerce Building, 1915-18, (#23) both do justice to the classical revival styles of their period. A unique representative, for West Virginia, is the Coal and Coke Building, 1906, (#66) with its hint of Chicago School Architecture not normally found in this region. In a more contemporary vein, the Norfolk and Western Railroad Offices display the characteristic ribbon windows and smooth facades of the International Style.

Within the Bluefield Downtown Commercial Historic District there are 83 buildings. Of these, 60 are considered to be Contributing structures, while 23 buildings are of an Intrusive, or Non-Contributing nature. Of the 62 Contributing buildings, 13 are considered to be of Pivotal significance.

There follows a building-by-building description of all structures found within the Bluefield Downtown Commercial Historic District:

1. Ewald Building, Princeton Avenue, (Contributing), 1901, a three bay two story red brick Victorian Commercial building. Front elevation consists of recessed corbeled panel with three second floor windows. Two side windows have arched carved wood tympanae. The central window has an unusual round motif of dogtooth soldier courses and pressed molded brick. Pressed metal cornice with brackets. Corbeling is in the form of modillions. The first floor central recessed entrance and flanking windows have been boarded up.

2. "Divine Shop", Princeton Avenue, (Contributing), 1901, two story pressed brick Victorian Commercial building, four bays across, that has Italianate elements. Windows are one over one with semi-circular tympanae. Pressed metal Italianate cornice contains brackets and a central gable pediment with the date ("1901") in tympanam and finial. The first floor contains carara glass, added c. 1940, and windows at this level are boarded up.

3. Shamrock Restaurant, Princeton Avenue, (Pivotal), 1895, a two story five bay Italianate Commercial structure that is Bluefield's oldest surviving building.

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BLDGS. = 73
OTHERS (NON CONTRIBUTING) = 13
OTHER RESOURCES =

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Corner pilasters form a central entrance bay, and the building is surmounted by a pressed metal bracketed cornice, with a projecting gabled parapet containing the building's date of construction. Though the storefronts have been altered somewhat, the age and architectural integrity of this building render it pivotal to the significance of the historic district.

4. Bond's Clothing Building, Princeton Avenue, (Contributing), c. 1900, a two story four bay Italianate Commercial building. Arches over the windows contain wood tympanae. Stone hoods outline the arches. Building is surmounted by a bracketed metal cornice. This building has housed Bond's Clothing for half a century.

5. Weinberg Building, Princeton Avenue (Contributing), c. 1900, two story Victorian Commercial Building, four bays wide at front facade and extending for nine bays back along Bland Street. Arched wood tympanae over one over one windows with stone surrounds over the arches on the front facade and brick headers over the window arches on the side elevation. Metal cornice with central modillion and stepped parapets at the sides. The first floor front entrance is an Art Deco store front with segmented arches that was added c. 1940.

6. People's Bank of Bluefield Building, 400 Princeton Avenue, (Pivotal), 1895. One of the finest Victorian Romanesque structures in West Virginia, this two story, seven bay long, two bays wide rock-faced ashlar sandstone building was constructed in 1895. Ash M. Prince (for whom the town of Prince in Fayette County is named) was its first president. It was later purchased by the First National Bank and was its headquarters until 1922. Known in the 1920's as the Pedigo Building, it has since served a variety of commercial uses.

The first floor has one large double bay shallow arch opening on the north corner, four arches and a side door entrance on the south end of the west elevation with a red sandstone balcony and balustrade supported by paired short Doric columns with foliated capitals. Sandstone is heavily rusticated with large voussoir in all arches. All are separated with contrasting color stone. Second floor consists of a corner projecting octagonal roofed turret, three gabled dormers with paired windows and three flat head windows. All windows have flat transoms separated by red stone are 1/1 DH. The dormers have paired arched windows with color over them and contrasting color caps. The gables are framed by projecting engaged circular buttressed corbeled at the second floor belt course and capped with stone cones. The turret (one-half octagonal) is supported by scroll brackets and has a cornice with modillions. The attic of the tower has oval windows. Each gable end has a raised raked parapet and central chimney. A brick chimney projects between the first and second dormer on the west elevation. All arches have been filled with wood or imitation veneer and windows. A central storefront is located within the two bay wide arch in the north elevation.

7. Southern Office Supply Building, No. 1, Princeton Avenue, (Contributing), c. 1900. A two story masonry building with a cornice containing egg and dart

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molding. Although rather severely altered at the first level, it remains a contributing building, having housed the same business for over sixty years.

8. Southern Office Supply Building, No. 2, 406 Princeton Avenue, (Contributing), c. 1910. A four story, four bay wide masonry Victorian Commercial building. The structure has brick quoins on the sides and front windows have Jack arches with keystones. The roof line contains corbeling, a stepped parapet, and egg and dart molding.

9. Blank Building, Federal Street and Princeton Avenue, (Intrusive), c. 1970, an aptly named two story, windowless contemporary structure, housing the Social Security office. Absolutely undistinguished. This was originally the site of the historic Lerner Building.

10. First National Bank Building, Federal Street and Princeton Avenue, (Contributing), c. 1905, 1923. A three story ashlar stone Renaissance Revival style building, it was remodeled in 1923 at a cost of \$300,000 to house the First National Bank of Bluefield (chartered in 1891) under the presidency of Major Samuel Walton. Originally the Thornton Building, the bank building (now a jewelry store and offices) has large display windows on the first level, separated by stone pilasters. The flat parapet above the cornice gives the impression of a ballustrade.

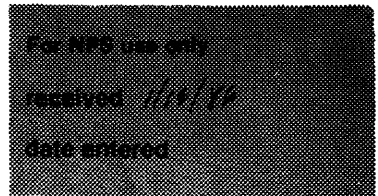
11. Wanda's Ceramic World, Princeton Avenue, (Contributing), c. 1895, one of Bluefield's oldest buildings, housing an early dress and apparel shop. It is three stories high and four bays wide, Victorian Commercial in style. Windows are round headed and have stone keystones, impost blocks, and sills. Side facades have brick quoins, and the central panel of the front facade is recessed by corbeling at the top. A metal cornice with scross modillions is surmounted by a plain masonry parapet. A corrugated metal front at the first level is a recent alteration.

12. Hotel Matz/Hotel Milner, 600 Princeton Avenue, (Pivotal), 1911, Built as the Hotel Matz by Samuel L. Matz. His son, Max Matz, the second owner, was a prominent merchant and Republican politician who was a delegate to the 1932 Republican National Convention that re-nominated Herbert Hoover, who, coincidentally, was a guest here in 1928. A seven story high, six bay wide masonry Italianate Commercial structure, the hotel is surmounted by a metal cornice with scroll modillions and egg and dart molding. It became the Hotel Milner in 1925, at which time the exterior, still marvelously intact from that period, was re-modeled. It continues to serve Bluefield as a hotel.

13. Colonial Theater, 602 Princeton Avenue, (Pivotal), 1916, c. 1945, a two story brick theater, constructed in 1916 by the Matz family (see #12) as a silent movie theater. It passed later to the Kessling family, then to the Milner family. Its most outstanding features are its intact Art Deco marquee and entrance way. The marquee has neon lights and carara glass veneer. The interior is also fine Art

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Deco with columns and casework and has a panel reproduction of an Imperssonianistic painting of a ballerina. The Art Deco motifs are part of a c. 1945 remodeling. It has been known as the Colonial Theater since its opening in 1916.

14. Princeton Avenue Parking Garage, Princeton Avenue (Intrusive), c. 1970. A four story contemporary parking garage built on the site of the old Realto Theater.

15. Norfolk & Western Railroad Building, 800 Princeton Avenue, (Contributing), 1948. Built on the site of the old N&W Hotel, this large brick veneered building with a sandstone base, though less than fifty years old, contributes to the district because of its overwhelming symbolic meaning to the history of Bluefield, and as a fine example of the International style of architecture. This building is headquarters in Bluefield of the Norfolk & Western Railroad Company, to which Bluefield owes, in large part, its very existence. The building, one of the city's most massive, consists of two five story, eight bay wings flanking a six story central tower. Windows are metal, one over one arrangement. The brick veneer is a blond stretcher course with tight joints. The grounds of the building are surrounded by a stone wall (from the old hotel period) that was built by Major Samuel Welton, a prominent early Bluefield engineer.

16. Warlick Furniture Store, Scott & Raleigh Streets, (Contributing), c. 1905, a three story Mixed Commercial masonry warehouse building, built in three sections. The first section being built about 1905, a major addition was made in 1916 when the building was opened as the Mercer Garage. It had previously been the Bluefield Dry Goods and Notions Company. A further addition was made by Mercer Garage in 1920. It was for long the city's Hudson automobile dealership. The building has tripled windows in each section. A recessed corbeled spandrel panel is at the top of the building on the front elevation.

17. Bluefield Recreation Center, 702 Raleigh Street, (Contributing), c. 1900. One of the oldest buildings in this part of Bluefield, this is a two story, four bay Italianate Commercial building of masonry construction. Windows are two over two with shallow arches filled with wood. A heavy cornice with modillions is at the roof line.

18. Hatmaker's Grocery, 624 Raleigh Street, (Contributing), c. 1895. Another of Bluefield's older buildings, this building has always been a grocery store, being previously the home of Saurer's Grocery. It is a two story, five bay masonry Italianate Commercial building, with arched one over one windows. A corbeled top panel is under a broad bracketed cornice that also contains decorative modillions. The first floor store front has undergone some alterations, though not of a serious nature.

19. Commercial Printing Company Building, 620 Raleigh Street, (Contributing), c. 1929. A four story, six bay masonry Mixed Commercial building that was apparently the first home of WHIS Radio, Bluefield's first radio station. The

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building has one over one windows with stone sills, and three large openings on the first floor are separated by cast iron columns.

20. Gas Service Building, 600-602 Raleigh Street, (Contributing), c. 1930. A four story, seven bay Moderne building of glazed brick. There is corbeling in evidence above each vertical metal veneer on the first floor.

21. Bluefield Business School Building, 530-532 Raleigh Street, (Contributing), 1923. A four story three bay International style building of pressed brick with multi-pane metal windows. There is a limestone veneer at the first floor and around second floor windows. Originally the home of the Business School, it is presently vacant.

22. Blank's Paint and Wallpaper Building, 510 Raleigh Street, (Intrusive), 1966. Two story Modern Curtain type building, covered in alternating metal colored panels and aluminum windows.

23. Law and Commerce Building, Federal Street and Raleigh Street, (Pivotal), 1913, 1918. A six story Neo-Classical brick building erected in 1913 and remodeled in 1918. It originally contained businesses such as the Western Union office, Thurnton's Department Store, and Waters Jewelers. The first floor is ashlar with stone pilasters and a frieze with open store fronts between. The entrance way has a projecting balcony supported by Doric columns. Nine bays wide, it has two flanking projecting bays with brick quions on the corners. A broad cornice with a flat frieze with raised circular triglyphs and flat modillions surmount the building.

24. Flat Top Bank Drive-In Facility, Raleigh Street, (Intrusive), c. 1970. Modern one story drive-through banking facility.

25. Flat Top National Bank, Raleigh and Federal Streets, (Intrusive), c. 1970. Although this two story modern bank building is certainly a statement of modern architecture, with classical interpretations similar to the Lincoln Center, it cannot be said to contribute to the historic nature of the district. It houses one of Bluefield's oldest commercial businesses, the bank being organized in 1903.

26. Gem Jewelers Building, 118 Federal Street, (Contributing), c. 1928. A three story Neo-Classical brick building that is three bays wide and contains paired one over one windows. Has a small, flat cornice. Has always housed a jewelery store.

27. Kresges/Tomchin Building, Federal Street, (Intrusive), 1937, 1960. Originally the site of S. S. Kresges', the first store building burned to the ground on November 28, 1936. Kresges' re-built the following year. It is now Tomchin's, a two story brick building whose front is completely encased in enameled, 1960 era veneer.

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28. A. W. Cox Building, 216 Federal Street, (Contributing), 1902, 1927. Originally constructed as the Elk's Opera House in 1902, it became a motion picture theater in 1915 and was purchased in 1927 by A. W. Cox Department Stores, who remodeled it to its present Renaissance Revival appearance. It is a three story masonry structure with banded brick pilasters. The first floor side elevation is banded. A metal cornice with dentilation separates the first and second story. A Carara glass spandrel runs the full length of the front elevation with full size glass display windows and two recessed glass entrances. A flat parapet over the shallow cornice indicates decorative motifs removed during the 1927 remodeling. The building is presently vacant.

29. Benevolent Protective Order of Elks Building, Raleigh Street, (Pivotal), 1902, 1927. A three story brick Neo-Classical building, six bays by seven bays, that is one of the most important architectural and historic landmarks in Bluefield. Constructed in 1902 for the B.P.O.E. No. 269, it was extensively remodeled in 1927. It has a grandiose overscale two story entrance that is three bays wide, framed in limestone with a flat frieze entablature and stepped pediment. Stone columns with stylized Corinthian capitols support the entrance and rest on large plinth blocks. The first floor is a limestone ashlar veneer with large display windows, flat headed, and a flat pediment over the side entrance with pilasters. The second floor has four over four flat headed windows with soldier course lintels and stone corner caps. The third floor windows are headed with a two panel glass round tympanum above. The arches have scroll keystone brackets. The cornice has large bracketed modillions. The side elevation has a stone panel from which projects a large elk head in bronze. For long one of the most important social centers in the city, the interior features a back-lit stained glass "Roll of Honor" that contains the names and death dates of all members who died between 1893 and 1979. The "Roll of Honor" reads like a "Who's Who" of the history of Bluefield.

30. La Casa Arts and Crafts Building, 112 Bland Street, (Contributing), c. 1900. A two story two bay pressed red brick Italianate Commercial building immediately to the rear of Bond's Clothings (see #5). Windows are flat with large round carved wood tympanae above. A dogtooth and ogee pressed brick belt course runs horizontally and surrounds the arches. Windows are two over two with stone sills. Store front was once covered in carara glass, most of which is now missing.

31. Fretwoods/Johnnie's Used Furniture, Bland Street, (Pivotal), c. 1898. Originally the McCullough Building, said by the Daily Telegraph in 1939 to be the second "building of modern construction" in Bluefield, it later became Fretwell's Dry Goods and Notions, this is a three story six bay painted brick Victorian Commercial building. Each bay is recessed with dogtooth corbeling at the cornice level. Windows are shallow arched. A soldier course is heavily bracketed Italianate style metal with two gables in the second and fourth bays. The tympanae are composed of pressed metal in a giagnol raised dot pattern. The store front has been altered with a modern shingle mansard, brick infill and glass displays. The interior first floor contains a pressed metal ceiling.

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32. Communication Workers of America, Local 2276 Building, Bland Street, (Intrusive), c. 1910, c. 1980. An old two story brick structure that has been completely altered with brick veneer and metal siding.

33. General Telephone Phonemart Building, Bland Street, (Intrusive), c. 1945. The telephone company has been on this lot since 1904, although this building dates only from c. 1945. It is four story building that is a good example of the International style of architecture. The veneer skin is tight on the second, third and fourth store is and black on the first. Fixed pane windows, that are in a glass block in vertical pattern. There is a spandrel over the north retail display.

34. General Telephone Building, Bland Street, (Intrusive), c. 1965. A very interesting four story modern brick building with a central tower and flanking wings, built in the International/Modern style. It is, however, too much out of sympathy with the historic architectural characteristics of the district to be said to contribute.

35. Kammer's Building, Bland Street, (Intrusive), c. 1928. A 1920's era commercial building that has housed a variety of businesses. It is completely covered in modern stucco, and therefore intrudes on this historic district.

36. Mademoiselle Shop, Bland Street, (Intrusive), 1920. An older commercial brick building completely covered in blank industrial metal ribbed siding.

37. Eureka Hardware/Karate Academy, Bland Street, (Contributing), c. 1935. A three story, three bay red brick commercial building that was originally the Eureka Hardware Store. A recessed panel, which has something of an Art Deco style, contains three window bays and is stepped and corbeled. Windows at the second level are 12 over 12, and at the third level are 8 over 12. There is a narrow stone sill belt course. The first floor has been altered with metal enclosure of the spandrels, aluminum and glass displays.

38. Armed Forces Recruiting Center, 401-405 Bland Street, (Intrusive), c. 1945. A two story commercial brick building. Three bays wide, the two southern bays have fixed and casement picture windows. The first floor is two recessed storefronts with fluted Art Deco aluminum siding and a flat projecting awning.

39. Bluefield Fire Station, Bland Street, (Contributing), c. 1930. a three story brick building with stylized quoins which is a good example of the International style of architecture. The southside has a "penthouse" or tower and continues the quoining. Fenestration is in four vertical strip areas. Large openings at the first level are garage door entrances.

40. A. J. Hearn Building, Bland Street, (Contributing), c. 1900. A three story brick Victorian Commercial building constructed by prominent early Bluefield

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merchant A. J. Hearn. A heavy metal Victorian cornice with finials and brackets surmounting the third level is its principal feature. A metal grill or screen has been put over much of the front facade, but the small arched side windows are still in evidence and the building, one of Bluefield's oldest, must be said to contribute.

41. Bluefield Telegraph Office Annex, Bland Street, (Contributing), c. 1920. Originally Frampton's Photography Shop, the principal feature of this two story four bay building is the heavy Italianate metal cornice above the second level. It is faced in permastone.

42. J. C. Penney Building, 418 Federal Street, (Intrusive), 1959. A four story non-descript brick building with yellow veneer. Built in 1959 by the J. C. Penney Company on the former site of the Bluefield Bus Depot.

43. Bluefield Daily Telegraph Building, Bland Street, (Pivotal), 1916. This two story Neo-Classical building has been home to the Bluefield Daily Telegraph, Bluefield's most important (and for long, only) newspaper, since 1916. The Daily Telegraph was published and edited for nearly sixty years by Hugh I. Shott, Sr. (1866-1953), one of Bluefield's most prominent citizens, who held seats in both the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate. The Telegraph building is separated into three bays by rectangular brick pilasters with Terra Cotta Corinthian capitals supporting an entablature that has modillions and dentilation. A metal balustrade crowns the structure. The entrance is recessed behind a keystoned arch in the central bay. The entrance itself is of wood and glass with dentilated pediment. The ceiling of the entrance foyer is pressed metal. Torch globes flank the entrance. In every respect, this is one of Bluefield's most significant structures.

44. General Insurance Building, Bland Street, (Contributing), c. 1930. A two story four bay Mixed Commercial brick building, built on what was originally the property of H. I. Shott. The building has paired fixed windows, a flat beltcourse, and transom/spandrels filled with corrugated metal. The side elevation has a Romanesque brick projecting balcony.

45. First National Bank of Bluefield, 500 Federal Street, (Intrusive), c. 1970. A two story modern building, built on the former site of Mrs. Parker's boarding house. The building has marble veneer and aluminum and glass infill panes.

46. Bluefield City Hall, Bland and Ramsey Streets, (Pivotal), 1924. Already listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this beautiful example of Beaux Art Classicism was designed by architect Wilbur T. Mills and constructed in 1924.

47. Bluefield Sanitarium Clinic, Federal Street, (Pivotal), 1914, 1921, 1928. An eight story Classical Revival glazed brick commercial building whose first section was erected in 1914 to house an institution that had been established in 1902. Dr. J. Francke Fox supervised the 1914 construction. An addition was built in 1921 and a major remodeling occurred in 1928. Raised pilasters run from the

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first to the seventh floor with a cornice separating the eight level. A dentilated cornice surmounts the building. The first floor has a limestone veneer with a central entrance that is flanked by rectilinear pilasters with Corinthian capitols supporting a flat lintel with a garland motiff in the frieze area and an egg and dart cornice. An Art Deco grill is in the transom over the entrance way.

48. First Christian Church, Federal Street, (Pivotal) 1920. This very interesting building is a three story brick and stone Italian Renaissance Revival structure with Romanesque details at the first level. Five bays wide, the central three projecting, it has an entrance with pointed arch deepset and battered. The first floor is rock faced coursed rusticated ashlar. Second and third levels are of red brick with corner pilasters. The three masses of the building are capped with a crenelated pedimented parapet. End bays have stone rectangular carving blocks. The Bland Street, or secondary, elevation, is similar but is only two stories with an entrance portico upheld by Doric columns.

49. Bluefield Chamber of Commerce Building, Bland and Federal Streets, (Intrusive) c. 1965. Modern, triangular glazed brick one story building located at Bluefield's principal intersection. Small triangular garden contains 1976 Bicentennial time capsule.

50. Gary's/Gospel Music Center, Federal Street, (Contributing), c. 1930. Three story Mixed Commercial building, four bays wide. Windows are one over one with stepped parapet at top of building.

51. Le Shen's Boutique, Federal Street, (Contributing), c. 1935. Two story red brick Mixed Commercial building. Three bays across, the building has metal hopper windows.

52. Elizabeth Kee Federal Building and Post Office, Federal Street, (Pivotal), 1911. Previously determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, this three story blond brick Second Renaissance Revival building was constructed in 1911. It is seven bays wide and three deep, on a raised ashlar limestone base. The first floor has horizontal brick banding with brick voussoirs and keystone over 12 over 12 windows. The central entrance has a projecting balcony/cornice supported by brackets and surround stones. Two story arched openings with keystones in the central bays have been filled in with marble. These openings are separated by rick pilasters with Doric capitols. A Terra Cota architrave sits below a frieze with triglyphs and bracketed corona. It was renamed in the 1960's for Elizabeth Kee, West Virginia's first woman U. S. Representative (1953-65), and member of the powerful Kee family.

53. Hawley Building, Bland Street, (Contributing), c. 1922. A two story brick, four bay commercial building with elements of Beaux Art Classicism. It was constructed c. 1922 by W. P. Hawley, a prominent Bluefielder who served as superintendent of Mercer schools, City Recorder, City Councilman, and as a member

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of both the West Virginia House of Delegates and Senate. The building is of blond brick with Terra Cota window surrounds. A stepped parapet with corner crenelation is at the roof line, and there is a Terra Cota cornice, inscribed with the name Hawley.

54. Appalachian Power Company Building, 704 Bland Street, ^{NON CONTRIBUTING}~~(Contributing)~~, 1923, 1939. A six story blond brick Classical Revival building with many Art Deco elements, the results of the 1939 remodeling. Originally constructed in 1923 as the Bailey Building, it was taken over by the Appalachian power Company in 1938-39 and remodeled at a cost of over \$800,000. The building has horizontal brick bands along the front elevation. Windows are tripled and one over one. There is a stone parapet with a central uncarved cartouche. The first floor is a made up of large display windows with aluminum Art Deco lintel hoods separated by ashlar stone pilasters supporting a stone cornice. A neon sign that hangs vertically over four stories is a prominent feature of the 1939 period. Interior lobbies have exquisite Art Deco detailing, with metal and wood railings, metal clad elevator doors, stainless steel mailboxes, terrazo and brass strip floor. The Auditorium has unique aluminum and glass hanging strip fluorescent fixtures radiating from the elevated stage.

55. Citizen's Insurance Agency Building, Federal Street, (Intrusive), c. 1970. Two story brick building with corner stone chimney. Non-descript.

56. Colonial Properties Building, Federal Street, (Intrusive), c. 1980. Originally the site of a Piece Goods Store, it is now the site of non-descript contemporary "non-statement."

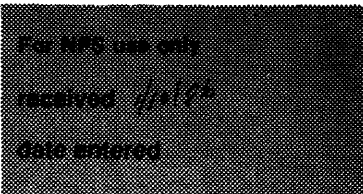
57. Florsheim Shoes Building, Federal Street, (Intrusive), 1924, c. 1975. Built in 1924 by Jess Franklin and for many years a dry goods store, this two story building has been completely altered by contemporary alterations of an unsympathetic nature.

58. Fashion Florist Building, 513 Federal Street (Contributing), c. 1920, a three story brick, five bay Mixed Commercial Building that once housed the Pinnacle Cafe. The central three bays are close with flanking one over one windows. A small cornice separates the first floor. The building has a recessed storefront with aluminum and glass windows and laminated spandrels.

59. H & R Block Building, Federal Street, (Contributing), c. 1905, C. 1935. This is a rather unusual building, or buildings. A one story storefront with aluminum and glass windows and doors is covering, or hiding, a two story Italianate residence of masonry construction. The Italianate residence has a second story projecting gable and bracketed cornice and corbeled pilaster caps flanking carbed wood fan panel. Windows on the recessed portion have heavy hoods. The roof line cornice is dentilated and contains stylized metopes and triglyphs. The Italianate residence is visible behind the one story block, that was added about 1935, and in

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good condition. The one story addition was added when the building changed from being a private residence to a Shoe Shop.

60. "The Restaurant", Federal Street, (Contributing), c. 1935. A two story brick veneered addition in the Art Moderne style, covering an original masonry building. It has a dogtooth cornice with an Art Moderne lettered sign reading "Restaurant". There are two tripartite metal picture windows on the second level.

61. First Federal Savings & Loan, 501 Federal Street, (Intrusive), c. 1970. A two story modern commercial building on the corner of Federal and Scott Streets.

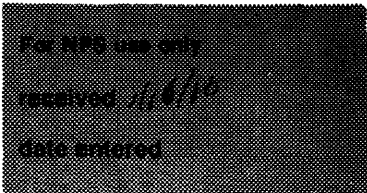
62. The West Virginia Hotel, Federal and Scott Streets, (Pivotal), 1923. A 12 story Second Renaissance Revival building that is the tallest building in Bluefield. Constructed in 1923 during a period of high prosperity, the West Virginia Hotel is built of ashlar limestone in the form of a classical column. The first and mezzanine facades are capped by a dentilated cornice. Windows are multi-paned tripartite with arched heads. The central entrance has arched windows over an awning and glass and metal doors. The north elevation has two story arched windows leading to the ballroom and a second story projecting balcony with a ballustrade. The shaft of the building consists of nine stories with paired one over one windows. The tenth floor has projecting ballustrades over every other paired window. The twelfth level is ashlar stone with one over one windows separated by carved rectangular cartouches with garlands. A bracketed and dentilated cornice caps the building. The West Virginia Hotel was, throughout its life, considered one of the state's finest and most elegant grand hotels and was the scene of many social, political and business meetings of significance to both Bluefield and the state. It is now a home of the elderly.

63. Wheat First Securities Building, 401 Federal Street, (Contributing), c. 1922. A seven story brick building constructed in the Second Renaissance Revival style, directly adjacent to the West Virginia Hotel. The front elevation is three bays wide with recessed arch entrance with a shield over the metal door. Windows have stone hoods. The cornice is of flat stone. Windows in the shaft and attic are one over one. The side elevation has paired windows. A cornice separates the shaft from the attic. A flat cap surmounts the building. This was originally constructed in 1922 as the Commercial Bank Building. Prominent West Virginia architect Alex B. Mahood was at one time president of the bank.

64. Russell S. Ritz Building, Federal Street (Contributing), c. 1925. A four story brick building constructed by prominent Bluefield attorney Russell Ritz, who was City Attorney for Bluefield during the 1920's. Built of blond brick, it has full height paired limestone pilasters glanking the building from second floor to the top of the fourth floor windows. These pilasters have Corinthian capitols. A flat stone architrave has the name "Russell S. Ritz" engraved beneath the cornice, which is surmounted by a flat parapet with corner urns. Raised portion above the pilasters contains a base relief with Swedish crosses. The pilasters rest on stone

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bases over a stone stylobate. The first floor is ocered in a striated aluminum panel system.

65. Deaton's Music World, Federal Street, (Contributing), c. 1930. A five story glazed brick Classical Revival building that has a central five bay arrangement, recessed, and framed by stone trim. Brick pilasters with stone composite caps separate the windows, which are three over three metal. The panel trim flares at the first floor level. The limestone veneer is later alteration. This building has been home to a number of businesses, including Sherry's Drug Store and Steckler's Men Shop.

66. Coal and Coke Building, 218 Federal Street, (Contributing), 1906. An eight story Chicago Commercial building, constructed in 1906 by Patrick J. Kelly, founder of Bluefield Brewing Co. and the president of the National Armature Co. It was originally known as the Kelly & Moyer Building and later housed Montgomery Ward's department store. It is eight stories high and seven bays wide. A masonry structure with metal internal system, the right entrance bay has paired one over one windows and an arched opening with a stone keystone. Flat stone lintels separate the doors from the arched window and flat stone pilasters with scrolled brackets. There is a flat parapet with an uncarved cartouche in the center. There have been some insensitive alterations, but the building's essential character remains.

67. Leona W. Jones Building, Raleigh Street, (Intrusive), c. 1970. A two story plain block building with second floor siding.

68. Bluefield Public Library, Commerce Street, (Intrusive), c. 1970. A one story modern brick veneered library building.

69. Granada Theater, 535 Commerce Street, (Contributing), 1927. Originally built at the height of the silent film era as a "Theme Theater", in pseudo-Moorish style, a form very popular in that period. It is basically a Renaissance Revival building with Art Deco embellishments that date to the late 1930's era. It is a two story flat brick building. Paired arches flank the large central marquee. The arches are limestone veneer, embellished with carvings common to theater buildings of the time. The Marquee is an Art Deco feature. The three windows over the marquee are multi-paned metal with half columns with Corinthian caps and banded fluting.

70. Mutual Insurance Building, 608 Commerce Street, (Contributing), c. 1938. A one and a half story painted brick Commercial building with a stepped parapet. Three bays wide over a garage entrance. The building also has two large display windows.

71. Office Outfitters Building, 621 Commerce Street, (Contributing), c. 1935. A two story limestone ashlar veneered building in the Moderne style. It has a

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broad stepped parapet and scrolled volutes along the sides. Multi-paned metal windows on the second floor are almost full width with the building and are framed by stone scrollwork. There is a cartouche over the entrance bay.

72. WKOY Radio Building. 623-625 Commerce Street, (Contributing), c. 1935. A two story masonry building, Mixed Commercial, with brick veneer on the second floor. It was originally the Firestone Tire Shop, and contained recording studios for one of Bluefield's first radio station. The building has a stepped parapet. Two bands of black at the top of the first floor from a stylized cornice.

73. American Automobile Association Building, 622 Commerce Street, (Intrusive), c. 1975. Two story modern brick building.

74. H. B. Thompson Building, Commerce and Stewart Streets, (Contributing), 1924. A two story Mixed Commercial building. It is three bays wide with paired central one over one windows. The cornice over the second story parapet has a stone carved panel with the name and date of the building. The first floor has a large full width opening with wood and glass infill. The stone cap has header coursing. A faded commercial sign painted on the side of the building reads "Thompson's Radio Service."

75. Roma club, Raleigh Street, (Intrusive) c.1965. A one story plain brick building without windows, of recent construction.

76. Scott Street Baptist Church, Scott Street and Edward Terrace, (Contributing), c. 1910. A two story Gothic Revival religious ediface, stone at the first level and brick at the second. The corner towers have projecting eaves with brackets. The central triple pointed arch windows have a trefoil above them. Side paired pointed arch windows are in evidence. The entrance level is rough faced coursed ashlar and has a pointed entrance arch and two side windows. This building replaced an 1890 church on the same site which, though of wood, had the same basic configuration.

✓ 77. Municipal Parking Garage, Scott Street, (Intrusive), 1947. A four story parking garage with Art Moderne detailing. This is an early example of Flat Plate Concrete construction with "mushroom" capitols. It is the second oldest municipal parking garage in West Virginia. An addition done in 1964 is non-descript.

78. Ramsey School, Ramsey Street, (Pivotal), 1925. A large brick Romanesque Revival school building, constructed as a result of Bluefield's first school board levy election. It is separated into three massings that climb the hill. A four story building on the east side, it has a five story central tower and four story west wing. The east wing has two buttresses in the central portion that divide the elevation into three parts. Windows are 9 over 9 on the second floor, six over six on the third floor, and four ganged 9 over 9 on the fourth. The tower has a large

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shallow arch for the recessed entrance, which has two double doors with slightly pointed arched transoms. The parapet is arched and crenelated with a stone cap and a stone shield in the center. A stone carved panel over the entrance arch says "Ramsey School". The corners have flying stone spouts. The first floor of the west wing has brick bands of rustication.

79. Bluefield Telegraph, Ramsey Street Annex, (Intrusive), c. 1972. A two story brick building with alternating brick and metal screen walls of recent construction.

80. Diamond Residence #1, 107 Russell Street, (Contributing), c. 1900. A two story three bay brick Italianate Rowhouse. A full front porch has a dentilated cornice, flat roof and paneled columns. Windows are one over one. There is a metal cornice at the roof line, embellished with end scrolled brackets and garlands. There is a rear projecting oriel and a rear porch. Windows have stone lintels and seals.

81. Diamond Residence #2, 107 Russell street, (Contributing), c. 1900. Identical to #80.

82. Poland Printing Building, McCulloch Street, (Contributing), c. 1910. A three story red brick warehouse in the Italianate Commercial style. Its three bays are separated into panels by pilasters. The building has arched window openings. There is brick dentilation in the cornice. A faded commercial sign on the front of the building proclaims its original use, though it is presently vacant.

83. Commercial Garage, 317 McCulloch Street, (Contributing), c. 1925. A three bay one story masonry block garage building with wooden doors.

Bluefield, thus, can be seen to contain a significant collection of historic commercial architecture that, taken together and relating to each other as well as to Bluefield's history, constitutes an eligible National Register Historic District.

With only several exceptions, the contributing buildings of the Bluefield Downtown Commercial Historic District were built before 1935. The presence of a very small number of locally outstanding examples of late 1930s Art Moderne and Art Deco-style buildings, however, necessitated their inclusion as contributing resources in the historic district inventory. These several significant buildings are individually addressed above.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
				Local History

Specific dates 1889-1935

Builder/Architect Alex B. Mahood, Wilbur T. Mills, et. al.

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Bluefield Downtown Commercial Historic District, located at the commercial heart of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia, is significant for being the economic, political and social center of one of the leading cities of southern West Virginia. It is also significant for having played a pivotal role in the opening of the vast Pocahontas Coal Field and the related rise of the Norfolk and Western Railroad in this region, simultaneous events whose overwhelming significance to West Virginia, Virginia, and the entire central Appalachian region cannot be denied.¹ Its period of significance stretches from its founding in 1889 through 1935, by which time Bluefield has acquired, with some few exceptions, its historical architectural context.²

EXPLANATORY NOTES

¹What is now the thriving community of Bluefield, Mercer County, West Virginia was, a century ago, little more than a small village, a crossroads settlement in what was known as Wright's Valley.

For most of the 19th century the site of Bluefield was the location of two large farms, the Davidson Farm, and the Higginbotham Farm. The nearby settlement was known as Graham. Then, in 1881, construction began on the Norfolk and Western Railroad line, whose primary purpose was to ship coal from the newly discovered Pocahontas Coalfields, one of the richest coal deposits ever discovered. The Norfolk and Western line was able to begin coal shipping in June of 1883, and a small station was established on the Higginbotham Farm, called "Higginbotham Summit" shortened in 1884 to just "Summit". The first railroad depot was a discarded railroad car. In anticipation of continuing growth, the contents of an old cemetery on what is now the N&W general division office were removed to the Davidson Farm in 1885.

In 1886-87, a post office was established, and the name changed from "Summit" to "Bluefield", the latter being chosen, reportedly, by Mrs. Hattie Hannah, for the luxurious growth of chicory and bluegrass in the region. A telegraph office was established in 1887 and Bluefield was a Norfolk and Western Division Point. An option on land on the John Higginbotham Farm that had been acquired several years prior was exercised and much of what is now the downtown area was secured by the Bluefield Investment Company. In 1888 the Norfolk and Western Railroad Company moved into Bluefield in a big way, constructing a passenger station, round house and shops. Where there had been about 50 people living only five years before, there now were nearly a thousand. Clearly, Bluefield was on its way to being an established community.

The following year, 1889, was a momentous one for Bluefield. The first railroad freight house was constructed by the N&W, but more importantly, the movement

9. Major Bibliographical References

"Bluefield", West Virginia Review, Vol. 1, No. 8, May 1924.

Bluefield Chamber of Commerce, "Bluefield, West Virginia; The Gateway to the Nation's Storehouse of Great Wealth", Lynchburg, Va., J. P. Bell, 1911.

10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property 28 acres

Quadrangle name Bluefield, W. Va.-Va.

Quadrangle scale 1';24,000

UTM References

A

1	7	4	8	0	1	0	0	4	1	2	4	5	6	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B

1	7	4	8	0	5	4	0	4	1	2	4	7	0	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

C

1	7	4	8	0	5	8	0	4	1	2	4	6	2	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

D

1	7	4	8	0	5	3	0	4	1	2	4	6	2	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

E

1	7	4	8	0	5	2	0	4	1	2	4	5	0	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

F

1	7	4	8	0	4	6	0	4	1	2	4	4	6	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

G

1	7	4	8	0	4	6	0	4	1	2	4	4	3	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

H

1	7	4	8	0	4	3	0	4	1	2	4	4	1	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

Beginning at the point where the line of the east side of Russell Street joins the stone wall at the north side of Princeton Avenue, thence, 1600 feet due east along the north side of said stone wall, paralleling the north side of Princeton.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael J. Pauley, Historian; Michael Gioulis, Historical Architect

organization Gioulis and Pauley

date September, 1985

street & number 4651 Victoria Road

telephone (304) 744-9342

city or town Charleston

state West Virginia

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

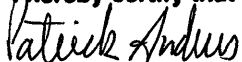
State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date November 15, 1985

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register



date 3/18/87

for Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior
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for incorporation came to fruition. An election was held on November 16, 1889 on the question with H. G. White, W. L. Thomas, and J. M. Honaker serving as election commissioners. These commissioners reported the results: "177 votes were cast for incorporation - a majority of the votes cast". Curiously no talk of opposing votes was announced. On November 20, 1889 V. C. Jenkins, George A. Shirley, Joseph M. Sanders, W. W. McClagherty, and T. B. Drinkard appeared before the Mercer County Circuit Court in Princeton and formally petitioned the Court for a certificate of Certification for the City of Bluefield. With Judge R. C. McClagherty presiding, the Certificate of Incorporation was granted and issued by the Circuit Court Clerk R. C. Christie. Judge McClagherty appointed H. G. White, N. H. McClagherty, and B. S. Higginbotham as the commissioners for the first Bluefield City elections. The elections were held on January 2, 1890, and, out of 192 votes cast, John K. Peck received 158 and thus became the first Mayor. Mayor Peck called the first meeting of the Bluefield City Council on January 10, 1890. At the time of incorporation Bluefield had a population of 1,775. Mayor Peck was succeeded in 1891 by Joseph M. Sanders, who was re-elected in 1892.

In 1893 The Bluefield Daily Telegraph was founded by C. C. Bowsfield and Adrian Aulick. In 1894 it became something of an "official organ" for the city, publishing minutes of City Council meetings free of charge. In 1896 the Telegraph was taken over by Hugh I. Shott, Sr. (1886-1953), a man who was to become a veritable "giant" in the history of Bluefield. Editor and publisher of Bluefield's principal newspaper for nearly 60 years, Shott had his hand on the pulse of Bluefield all his life and was always prominent in Bluefield affairs, a tireless promoter of the city. From his first public office as postmaster in 1903, Shott rose to a seat in the U. S. House of Representatives and the United States Senate.

The first of Bluefield's building booms began in 1895, at which time the City Council prohibited "hogs from running loose" - a certain sign that civilization had arrived. The Elks Opera House, one of Bluefield's most magnificent edifices, was constructed the same year, while the People's Bank of Bluefield had been organized the previous year. Bluefield State College had its beginnings in 1896, when Bluefield College (colored) was formed. The first street lighting program began in 1897.

A second City Charter was adopted in 1905 along with an expansion of the corporation limits. This led directly to Bluefield's strong but futile attempt to replace Princeton as the County Seat of Mercer County. The Coal and Coke building was constructed that same year, followed in 1907 by the erection of the Law and Commerce building. 1907 saw the appearance of the first automobile in Bluefield. The Pocahontas Consolidated Coal Company was established in 1908 and the profits of the Norfolk and Western Railroad continued to climb. Bluefield was in the midst of a "boom" economy and business continued to grow. By the time of the 1910 census, Bluefield had acquired a population of 11,188, almost tripling in only ten years.

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The second decade of the twentieth century saw continued growth, although at a somewhat less furtive rate and the city began to take on a more "established" appearance, as betokened its place as the leading railroad and coal company city of southern West Virginia. The U. S. Courthouse and Post Office was constructed in 1911, as was the Hotel Matz. Bluefield became the headquarters, during this period of increased labor strife, of the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency, employers of the infamous "Baldwin Thugs", or company guards who battled the attempts of labor to organize the coal mines. Prohibition came to Bluefield in 1914 (and was to remain until 1933). The City acquired a new charter in 1915, resulting in the rather odd occurrence of there being two mayors for a brief time that year. The following year saw the opening of the Colonial Theater, the organization of the Commercial Bank, and the erection of the old Flat Top Bank Building.

Probably the most striking representation of the prosperity of Bluefield during the 1920's was the building of the West Virginia Hotel in 1923. Its twelve stories of Renaissance Revival architecture rose majestically above Bluefield, making it, at the time, one of the tallest buildings in West Virginia and certainly one of the State's grandest hotels. The following year saw the dedication of Bluefield's new City Hall, a monumental piece of Classical Revival architecture designed by prominent architect Wilbur T. Mills and constructed as part of an \$850,000 bond issue passed in 1923. In 1929 WHIS Radio, Bluefield's first broadcasting station, went on the air. Parks and recreation also received attention for the first time during the 1920's, beginning in 1925 with the purchase of land that eventually saw the location of the Municipal Stadium. By 1930, the population of Bluefield had reached 19,339, greater than its present population.

The Depression years were hard on Bluefield, though her banking institutions weathered the crises of 1933. Bluefield managed to hold its own through these years, despite the general economic slump and such disasters as the burning of WHIS' radio station in 1935 and the robbing of the Granada Theater (opened in 1927 at the height of the silent film era) in 1938. By the closing years of the decade, Bluefield was definitely on the comeback trail, having begun an ambitious street improvement program in 1938 and witnessing the opening of the magnificent Appalachian Power Company Building in 1939. This era in Bluefield closed in 1941.

Bluefield boomed again during World War II and the post war ear, sharing in the general economic revival and its accompanying boom in the coal fields, as well as contributing many of her native sons to the war effort. By 1950 Bluefield had an all time high population of 21,560.

It can thus be seen that Bluefield has grown, in slightly less than a century, to become the most significant municipality of the region. The downtown commercial historic district, with its many architectural landmarks and its many reminders of the economic, political and social history of that growth, is at the heart of that significance.

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The period of significance for the Bluefield Downtown Commercial Historic District extends from its founding in 1889 until 1935, which is inclusive of most of the contributing buildings representing historic building styles within the district. Several buildings within the district (see Part 7, Numbers 27, 51, 59, 60, 71, and 72) bear this date, while many more date from the immediately preceding period of 1920-1930, Bluefield having sustained one of its major periods of growth and prosperity during the post-World War I era.

There are three buildings, however, that are counted as contributing structures within the historic district that are less than (or have references that are partially less than) 50 years old, all being integral components of the historic district. The Appalachian Power Company Building (#54) is, in fact, over 50 years old, having been constructed in 1923 as a Classical Revival commercial structure. Its exterior facade still reflects its original 1923 architectural ambiance. It does, however, have a 1939 reference, in that its interior underwent a major Art-Deco remodeling that is discussed in Part 7, page 11. The Colonial Theater (#13) is also over 50 years old, having been constructed in 1916, but has a similar less-than-fifty years old reference that also refers to interior Art-Deco era alterations (as well as an exterior marque). It was, and remains as in 1916, one of the larger buildings in its part of Bluefield. Both of these buildings have an exterior historic architectural context which is associated with the period of significance in a district in which the majority of buildings are over 50 years old.

The Norfolk and Western Railroad Building (#15 in Item 7), built in 1948, it is of exceptional significance as one of West Virginia's finest examples of the International style in architecture, but even more so as headquarters of the company to which Bluefield owes its very existence. In fact, not only Bluefield, but an entire array of West Virginia municipalities; Williamson, Welch, Kimball, Iaeger, etc., would not exist but for the N&W Railroad. The N&W existed to open up and take advantage of the vast Pocahontas Coal Field, the development of which, in the late 19th and early 20th century, contributed substantially to America's rise as an industrial giant and world power. The building is exceptionally significant as the West Virginia headquarters of this company and is representative of the unique role played by this company in West Virginia's emergence as one of the nation's leading coal producers. Built in 1948 during the "last hurrah" of the railroad era and in the midst of West Virginia's last great coal boom, it is one of southern West Virginia's most significant "skyscraper" structures.

Although there were limited periods of growth in Bluefield and the southern coal fields during and immediately after World War II, Bluefield had, by the mid-1930's reached its highest point of substantive growth and its downtown business district had taken on the architectural ambiance and historical context that is seen today.

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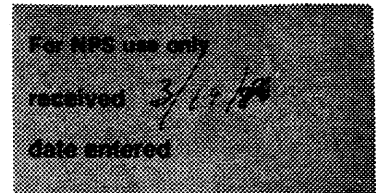
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² The period of significance of the Bluefield Downtown Commercial Historic District has been extended beyond the fifty year National Register age criterion so as to include four buildings, and one in particular, that date from the 1940s but lend exceptional significance to the district and relate to that period of significance. The first, and foremost, of these is the Norfolk and Western Railroad Building (#15 in Item 7). Built in 1948, it is of exceptional significance as one of West Virginia's finest examples of the International style in architecture, but even more so as headquarters of the company to which Bluefield owes its very existence. In fact, not only Bluefield, but an entire array of West Virginia municipalities; Williamson, Welch, Kimball, Iaeger, etc. would not exist but for the N&W Railroad. The N&W existed to open up and take advantage of the vast Pocahontas Coal Field, the development of which, in the late 19th and early 20th century, contributed substantially to America's rise as an industrial giant and world power. The building is exceptionally significant as the West Virginia headquarters of this company and is representative of the unique role played by this company in West Virginia's emergence as one of the nation's leading coal producers. Built in 1948 during the "last hurrah" of the railroad era and in the midst of West Virginia's last great coal boom, it is one of southern West Virginia's most significant "skyscraper" structures.

The late 1940s, the period immediately following World War II, is a period of significance to Bluefield and the region of the Southern West Virginia coalfields that she serves. This brief period saw the last surge of prosperity in the coal fields, when the railroads were still America's major means of transportation, and the demand for West Virginia coal was at its peak. This is illustrated by the fact that West Virginia's population (as did Bluefields), peaked in 1950 at 2,005,552. An illustrative event of this period was the planning and construction in the late 1940s and early 1950s of the West Virginia Turnpike, beginning in Charleston and terminating near Bluefield, in anticipation of ever greater prosperity in southern West Virginia. With the mechanization of the coal mines in the early 1950s and the decline of the railroads, West Virginia experienced a period of depression and mass exodus, the effects of which have not yet been fully overcome. Thus, the late 1940s are historically significant to West Virginia, and especially to a railroad-coal fields oriented city such as Bluefield, as the last major boom in building and related commercial activities before its sudden descent into a long decline.

The Appalachian Power Company Building (#54 in Item 7), though constructed in 1923, has a less-than-fifty year date, as it underwent a major remodeling in 1938-39. It is the results of this re-modeling that gives the building its exceptional significance. As described in Item 7, this building is one of the state's finest examples of the Art Deco movement in architecture. In fact, historical architect M. Gioulis has declared its interior Art Deco features to be the finest such in the entire state of West Virginia.

The Municipal Parking Garage (#77 in Item 7), built in 1947, is exceptional in that it was only the third such building to be erected in West Virginia and, therefore, of historic significance. It also has unusually fine architectural appointments, in Art Moderne style, such as "mushroom" capitals, that render it significant for this type of building.

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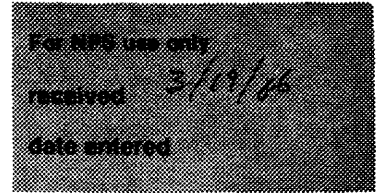
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There is also a less-than-fifty year day attached to the Colonial Theater (#13 in Item 7), that of c. 1945, although the building itself dates from 1916. This later date is a reference to the magnificent Art Deco marquee and Art Deco interior that contains Impressionistic-style murals and panels, one of the few, if not the only such intact theater interiors in the state.

Due to these few exceptions, it seems reasonably justifiable to extend the date of significance for the district beyond the fifty year time period so as to include such exceptionally significant buildings that contribute in such obvious manner to the historic and architectural legacy of Bluefield.

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Avenue, to a point due north of the eastern end of the Norfolk and Western Building; thence due south in a line 300 feet to the north side of Raleigh street; thence in a line 200 feet due west to northwest intersection of Raleigh and Scott Street; thence in a line 400 feet southwest along the western side of Scott Street to the intersection point at which Scott Street turns due west; thence in a line due west 250 feet along the north side of Scott Street; thence in a line 125 feet due south to the north side of Yardkin Street (so as to include the Scott Street Baptist Church and exclude large vacant land to the east; thence in a line 100 feet due west to the west side of Edward Terrace; thence 150 feet due south along the west side of Edward Terrace to the northwest intersection of Edward Terrace and Red Street; thence 175 feet due west along the north side of Red Street to the northwest corner of Red Street and Federal Place; thence in a line 300 feet due south along the west side of Federal Place to southeast property line of the Hawley Building, (so as to stop at the beginning of a large parking area); thence in a line 350 feet due west to the southwest corner of the Appalachian Power Building (so as to exclude a large parking area); thence in a line 350 feet due north to the northwest intersection of Russell Terrace and Bland Street; thence in a line 300 feet due west along the north side of Russell Terrace to its southeast intersection with Russell Street; thence in a line 850 feet due north along the east side of Russell Street to the point of beginning; so as to include the commercial downtown business district and to exclude large vacant areas and neighboring non-commercial districts.

Boundary Justification

See Item Number 7, p. 1, paragraph 1

- I 17/480430/4124380
- J 17/480390/4124370
- K 17/480410/4124260
- L 17/480300/4124240
- M 17/480280/4124340
- N 17/480180/4124320