



United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

NATIONAL REGISTER

1. Name of Property

historic name: Carter Coal Company Store

other name/site number: Consolidation Coal Company Store and Office

2. Location

street & number: county route 2

not for publication: n/a

city/town: Coalwood

vicinity: n/a

state: WV county: McDowell code: 047 zip code: 24824

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: buildings

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related property listing: Coal Company Stores in McDowell County

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6. Function or Use
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Historic: commerce/trade Sub: department store
commerce/trade business
government post office
Current : government Sub: post office
business office building

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7. Description
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Architectural Classification:
late 19th and early 20th century American movements

Other Description: n/a

Materials: foundation brick roof asphalt
walls brick other concrete
stucco

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

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: A,C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : n/a

Areas of Significance: architecture
commerce
industry

Period(s) of Significance: ca. 1912-1941

Significant Dates : 1922 _____

Significant Person(s): n/a

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: unknown

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

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The Carter Coal Company store at Coalwood is the only extant company store in McDowell County that appears to stand as a unit in a row of commercial buildings. The building was constructed by the Carter Coal Company ca. 1912. In 1922, the Consolidation Coal Company bought the property and altered the facade making the store section more pronounced. Most of building has not been altered substantially since its years under Consolidation Coal Company's ownership. It retains its integrity of materials, design, workmanship, location, and association.

The company store is a single building that is currently divided into four sections. The roofline is flat and even but each section is clearly defined. The Coalwood post office occupies the first section. This is the most altered part of the building with its new windows and doors.

The vacant section next to the post office served as the store under Consolidation Coal Company. The store is easily recognizable because of its recessed center entrance and large display windows. Access to the entrance is up a short flight of stairs and through new double doors. Bands of plaster between the windows and below the roofline embellish the facade and adds variety to the row's facade.

The building's next section has not been altered since its ca. 1912 construction date. This eight-bay office section includes an off-center door and double-hung windows. Tall transoms in segmental arched openings sit over each bay. The end section holds six bays that are an addition made to Carter's original store after Consolidation Coal took over. This section's facade is similar to the original one next to it except for the lack of transoms over the windows.

Consolidation Coal Company constructed another building adjacent to the original store to house more offices. Although it is a separate building, its facade and roofline are even with the earlier building. The windows are double hung and the center entrance is recessed. Olga Coal Company's offices currently occupy this building.

The building's appearance changed considerably since its construction date. Originally, what is now the first section was identical to the current third section. The middle section held windows that matched the flanking bays and the building's main entrance. The facade was perfectly symmetrical with a center entrance made prominent only by double doors. The facade was not divided into sections but had an unbroken, uniform arrangement. The building contained offices but was mostly store space.

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When Consolidation Coal bought the property in 1922, it reduced the size of the store to accommodate more office space. It left the store in the center of the building and made that section prominent by adding a crenelated parapet, a recessed entrance, display windows, simple decoration, and an awning. The facade on the two outer sections of the building remained the same. The company added another office onto it and also a separate building. Each section had its own entrance which made the single building look like a row of five different buildings. The only changes that have occurred since Consolidation Coal's ownership are the new doors in the store section and the absence of its parapet, and the recent remodeling of the first section which now has new windows.

The store and office buildings are located in a relatively flat area surrounded by Coalwood's other important buildings that Consolidation Coal Company constructed. Across from the brick row is a magnificent two-story clubhouse and a steepled church. Nearby on a hill stands an imposing multigabled supervisor's house. In the same area near the store are maintenance shops and company-built apartment buildings with half-timber decoration.

Although the store building changed since Carter Coal Company's ownership, it remains substantially unaltered since its years under Consolidation Coal.

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The Carter Coal Company store is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A for its historical association with southern West Virginia's coal mining industry and under criterion C for its architectural significance. Carter Coal Company built the large brick store building ca. 1912 and during the years following, it served as an important commercial, business, and social center in the coal mining community. In 1922, Consolidation Coal Company bought control of the mine then altered the store to clearly divide its functions (for historical information about the Pocahontas Coalfield and the significance of company stores, see sections E and F in "Coal Company Stores in McDowell County", multiple property listing). The building currently stands as part of a commercial row as it did under the latter company's ownership. It has been well-maintained so that it retains its early appearance when it served as a coal company store.

Before the coal industry boomed in southern West Virginia at the end of the nineteenth century, the area consisted of scattered, self-sufficient farms and communities. Because of the absence of railroads and good roads, the southern counties had little interaction with the rest of the nation. After the Civil War, however, the nation's industrial market expanded and outsiders began to turn their attention to West Virginia's vast coal reserve to meet growing demands.

The major railroads extended their lines into southern West Virginia allowing the area to be developed. Without a sufficient labor force, however, coal mining could not be productive. Companies recruited thousands of workers first from the older coalfields in Pennsylvania, and then from Eastern Europe and the American South. To accommodate these new arrivals, coal companies built self-sufficient communities to house and provide for their workers. The construction of company towns was absolutely necessary in southern West Virginia. Unlike the northern coalfields of Pennsylvania, where mining operations began in regions that were already settled, southern mines opened in sparsely settled areas with few organized communities. The company town was the most logical solution because it provided efficient and inexpensive housing for a large labor force.

Central to each of these communities was the company store. The store was usually the town's most prominent building and was typically placed in an easily accessible location. The building often housed not only a store but also the company's business office, a post office, and sometimes, a doctor's office. Because of its location and multiple

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functions, the store provided each community with a center for social gathering.

The company store first served Coalwood residents employed by the Carter Coal Company. Just after the turn of the century, George L. Carter, an iron furnace manager from Virginia, acquired rich McDowell County land and in 1912, organized the Carter Coal Company. He constructed a shaft mine at Coalwood and at nearby Caretta and claimed that his company would be the largest coal producer along the N & W Railroad. The brick company store dates to around the time when Carter organized the company. This single building served the community as the center of commercial, business, and social activity in the industrial community. It offered a wide variety of merchandise in its spacious display area and it also housed the post office, and the company's payroll and accounting office. Miners and their families typically visited the store daily to purchase goods and to receive mail and then handled other business in the office section. Because of its convenient location near the residential areas and the mine, the building was a constant gathering point.

In 1922, Carter sold his mines to the New York-based Consolidation Coal Company. The latter company organized these mines into its Pocahontas-New River Division and based its division headquarters in Coalwood. The company invested several million dollars over the next several years and substantially expanded the entire operation. By 1931, the company operated four modern mines but the shaft operations at Coalwood and nearby Caretta were its leading producers.

The company claimed that it developed Coalwood into a model community with modern houses and plenty of public facilities. It continued to operate its store in the one story brick building that Carter built. It altered the center of the facade making the store section more pronounced than the adjacent sections. When Consolidation Coal completed its additions and remodeling, the original store looked like a commercial row with five distinct sections. The Coalwood store is the only extant store in McDowell County that stands in this arrangement.

Consolidation Coal Company only operated the mines until 1933. The original owner, George Carter, negotiated with Consolidation Coal and bought back the Coalwood and Caretta facilities. Carter reorganized Carter Coal Company with his son as president. In 1948, Carter sold the company to Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company which bought the mines to

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supply their steel mills in Ohio. It operated the mines under the name Olga Coal Company and it continues to own the business buildings in both communities.

The store's importance in the community decreased as automobiles and good roads allowed miners access to other commercial centers. The store closed before mining ceased in Coalwood leaving the building vacant except for the post office in one section. Unlike so many stores that were simply abandoned, the Carter Coal Company store has been maintained, retains its original fabric, and is structurally sound. The store is less ornate than some of those that followed but it remains a good example of an early brick store and how it changed to suit another company's needs.

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

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