

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Pocahontas Fuel Company Store and Office Buildings

other name/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number: county route 8

not for publication: n/a

city/town: Jenkinjones

vicinity: n/a

state: WV county: McDowell

code: 047

zip code: 24848

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: buildings

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>2</u>	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ 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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4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this

☒ 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

☒ meets

☐ does not meet

the National Register Criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certifying Official

2/10/92  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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5. National Park Service Certification

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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): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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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 : vacant/not in use Sub: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification:  
late 19th and 20th century revivals/ Classical revival  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other Description: n/a

Materials: foundation stone roof asphalt  
walls brick other concrete  
\_\_\_\_\_

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: 1917-1941

Significant Dates : n/a \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person(s): n/a \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: Mahood, A.B.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

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office, Jenkinjones

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The Pocahontas Fuel Company store and office buildings stand impressively across from one another near the end of county route 8 in Jenkinjones. The buildings were constructed in 1917 and during the years following, they were the center of activity in the busy but very isolated company-owned community. The buildings are similar in that they both have two stories, flat roofs, metal frame windows, and simple classical detail. Their differences, however, are obvious and help to identify their specific property type. Although the Jenkinjones buildings have suffered from abandonment, their exteriors are structurally sound. Even in their deteriorated and vandalized condition, they retain their integrity of materials, design, workmanship, location, and association.

The two-story brick company store stands on a sturdy stone foundation. Two wide sets of concrete steps over a stone base lead to the building's main entrance. A concrete platform sits between the stairs. The facade's fixtures are gone but it appears that there were two entrances with large flanking display windows. Five bays of metal framed, multipaned industrial windows are located on the facade's second floor. The building's sides consist of seven bays of windows with brick pilasters between.

A brick cornice with a concrete parapet extends across three sides of the roofline. The cornice is taller on the facade where the company's name is inscribed prominently in concrete. A concrete entablature with dentils adds subtle classical decoration to the store.

The building's east facade sits next to the railroad tracks and holds a delivery entrance in its center bay. At one time, the door opened directly into an elevator so that goods could be transported and displayed on the second floor immediately after their arrival. A one-story brick building with a simplified classical brick cornice sits behind the main part of the store and is attached by a walkway. This building probably provided additional storage space.

The Pocahontas Fuel Company's Jenkinjones offices were located in a separate building directly across the road from the store. This building was constructed during the same year and, like the store, it is brick and stands two stories under a flat roof. The building's decoration includes the company's name and date inscribed in concrete at the roofline. A bold concrete cornice with dentils extends across the facade beneath the inscription and continues around the sides of the building more simply. Brick quoins define all four of its corners. Three arched entrances that once contained double doors open into the office building. The transoms over each door originally held multipaned, metal framed windows. The interior of the offices also displays refined classical detail. Plaster moldings on the ceilings and decorative panels on every surface indicate the company's wish to make its building outstanding inside and out.

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The Pocahontas Fuel Company store and office buildings are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A for their association with West Virginia's coal mining industry and under criterion C for their architectural merit. The wealthy company commissioned the well-known Bluefield architect, A. B. Mahood, to design both buildings in 1917. The store and office were central to the life of the isolated coal mining industry and to the lives of company town residents (for detailed 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 buildings continue to be a source of pride for those who still live in Jenkinjones. Although the store and office have deteriorated, the buildings are still magnificent reflections of the coal company's power and its wish to provide impressive buildings for the community.

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 buildings often housed not only a store but also the company's business office, a post office, and sometimes, a

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doctor's office. Because of its location and multiple functions, the store provided each community with a center for social gathering.

The existing store and office are not the company's original buildings. The Pocahontas Fuel Company had established itself in Jenkinjones soon after the turn of the century. It would have immediately constructed houses for miners and probably a simple wooden company store. The operation soon proved successful and wealthy enough to construct its permanent buildings. At Jenkinjones, the company divided the typical company store functions into two different buildings. The larger building housed the store and a post office. The company's business office was located in the other building. The store and office were the center of activity in the busy industrial community. The massive company store offered a wide variety of merchandise on its two levels. Miners and their families typically visited the store daily to purchase goods and to receive mail and then handled other business in the office across the road. Because of their convenient location near the residential areas and the enormous mine operation, the buildings were a constant gathering point.

The company's Jenkinjones mine was one of its most successful and innovative operations. At this complex, the company constructed a drainage tunnel that allowed it to mine millions of tons of coal under 12,000 acres without the enormous expense of pumping water out of the mines. The project proved to be one of the most progressive engineering feats of the industry's early years.

It is no wonder that this tremendously successful company built two monumental buildings to reflect its wealth and power. The company commissioned the best architect and used the best materials to construct the splendid store and office. Each one sits on a perfect stone foundation so common throughout McDowell County. The size of the buildings and their metal frame windows gives the store and office somewhat of an industrial appearance. Their simple classical detail, however, adds refinement to the industry-oriented community.

The architect that the company hired to design its most important buildings, was A.B. Mahood (1888-1970), a native of Bluefield, West Virginia. Mahood studied architecture in the United States and then at the famed Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, France. The trend during his tenure in Paris was in reviving earlier styles. When he returned home, Mahood was quick to seize upon the opportunity to design buildings in the

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wealthy coalfields. Although he proved adept in a variety of styles and property types, he is best known for his magnificent classical revival houses and commercial buildings. Welch, Bluefield and a number of other southern West Virginia communities credit Mahood with their most impressive buildings.

Mahood and the Pocahontas Fuel Company no doubt intended for the store and office to be permanent fixtures in the prosperous community. Although the mine continued to operate under Consolidation Coal Company until the 1980's, the company's and the residents' dependence on the buildings diminished during the 1930's as automobiles and good roads made access to other commercial and business centers easier. The buildings have been abandoned for years leaving them open to vandalism and deterioration. The walls and the supporting stone foundations, however, seem indestructible. The rugged southern West Virginia mountains may seem an unlikely place to find two monumental buildings. Their classical detail and quality of construction would rival some city's finest early twentieth century buildings. The company store and office buildings at Jenkinjones would be architectural landmarks anywhere but their location in such an isolated area makes them even more outstanding. Despite their condition, they stand impressively as reminders of the massive industrial operation that sustained Jenkinjones until a few years ago.

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FRANK

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DUCK

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