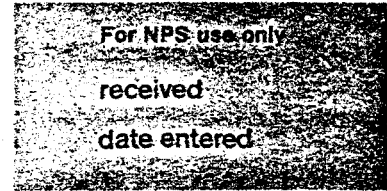


*without map*

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form



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

1. Name

historic Bramwell Historic District

and/or common

2. Location

street & number N/A not for publication

city, town Bramwell N/A vicinity of congressional district

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

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership

street & number

city, town Bramwell N/A vicinity of state West Virginia

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Mercer County Courthouse

street & number Courthouse Road

city, town Princeton state West Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

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

date Summer 1982  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Historic Preservation Unit, Department of Culture and History

city, town Charleston

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The architecture of Bramwell truly reflects the large fortunes which the Pocahontas coal operators were able to accumulate. The styles within the district range from Queen Anne to American homestead to craftsmanstyle. The romantic Tudor Revival house built by coal operator W.H. Thomas between 1909 and 1912 reportedly had timber and tiles sent specially from England for its construction. In contrast, the Hewitt house built only two years later emphasizes native local bluestone and Indiana white oak interior paneling. The Edward Cooper house (1910), which also had its orange brick shipped from England, is of the Queen Anne style with its Ionic articulated tower and decorative copper roof, while next door the Coopers built an American craftsmanstyle brick bungalow (ca.1920) for their son and his new wife. It seems that the wealthy operators spared nothing to construct these buildings with the finest materials and craftsmanship available. Several structures exhibit elaborate carvings inside, most notably expressed on staircases. Stained and beveled glass is found in several of the homes. Decorative wrought iron fences border the majority of lots in Bramwell.

Also found with several homes is the presence of the garage with servants' quarters on the second floor. Some servants lived outside of Bramwell's main section, but many maids, butlers, and gardeners lived on the premises of the operators' home properties. This must have created an interesting interaction between different social groups and also a separate culture within the limits of the historic district. Servants in Bramwell were predominantly black Americans.

Building within the Bramwell historic district basically halted in the mid-1920's with only a few intrusions constructed since that time. The older homes and mansions have been remarkably well preserved which serves to make the Bramwell historic district an extremely attractive area today. The following are descriptions of Bramwell's most significant structures:

North side of Main Street

1. BRAMWELL TOWN HALL--ca. 1889 (Pivotal) two-story gabled rectangular frame structure, with double-hung sash windows, one of Bramwell's oldest surviving buildings. Lot No. 6.
2. PENCE BUILDING--ca. 1911 (Contributing) three-story red brick commercial building rebuilt after town fire of 1910. Unornamented heavy projecting cornice tops third floor; flat roof. Lot No. 99.
3. OLD THEATRE BUILDING--ca. 1923 (Contributing) deep red brick with two stories - roof slopes downward toward rear. Second story facade is characterized by four round arches, two of which frame windows with the other two serving as openings to a porch. Lot No. 101.
4. ABRAHAMSON BUILDING--ca. 1914 (Contributing) two-story light brick commercial structure with tall windows articulating second story facade. Ornamental cornice contributes to an Italianate quality. Lot No. 102.

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5. COLLINS BUILDING--ca. 1922 (Contributing) deep red brick two-story brick with a plain flat facade. Slender vertical engaged brick piers visually separate the building into four sections. The west end of the building comprised of about ten feet, is one-story high and was added to the original building between 1922 and 1930. Second story windows have stone window lintels. Collins' name appears in stone on second story facade. Lot No. 103.
6. DUDLEY BUILDING--ca. 1926 (Contributing) light brick two-story with flat facade and second story windows with stone window heads. Lot No. 104.
7. BRYANT BUILDING--ca. 1910 (Contributing) two-story red brick with heavy projecting cornices on top of second story and between first and second story. A pharmacy was contained in the right side section of the building and some decorative cherry woodwork and marble is still inside. Stone window heads and sashes also are present on the second story facade windows. Lot No. 105.
8. MASONIC HALL--ca. 1893-94 (Pivotal) large two-story brick (now painted white) rectangular structure with rounded arched entryways. Double windows with transoms on first floor with shorter windows on second floor placed in blind arches. Tin roof, hipped. Originally built with an auditorium to seat three hundred. Lot No. 106.
9. POCAHONTAS COAL AND COKE OFFICE--ca. 1892 (Contributing) now converted to a residence, two-story building; gable roof with small gabled projection in center of the roof facing street. Pilasters framing front entry were removed from Bank of Bramwell's interior sometime after the 1930's. Rear extension added during World War II for the Red Cross. Originally the office of the coal land company which planned Bramwell, it still contains three vaults, which have been converted to storage or bath areas, and the original mahogany woodwork on the first floor interior; aluminum siding. Lot No. 107.
10. McELRATH HOUSE--ca. 1898 (Contributing) two-story red brick dwelling with steep roof and cross gable, asymmetrical plan; small porch to entry topped by a pediment supported by decorative wooden posts. Brick three-sided bay next to porch. Decorative iron fence borders property. Lot No. 108.
11. COLLINS HOUSE--ca. 1903 (Contributing) modified ell-shaped two-story dwelling with tree rear gabled extensions. Front porch supported by tall slender Tuscan columns; balustrade on flat roof of porch; small tower with steep gables and diamond-shaped windows at jointure of ell; tiny balcony attached to tower; aluminum siding. Iron fence. Lot No. 109.
12. KIRK HOUSE--ca. 1892 (Contributing) unadorned two-story ell. Front porch runs along entire front of house. Iron gate opens on to sidewalk; aluminum siding. Lot 110.
13. McGUFFIN HOUSE--ca. 1888 (Contributing) two-story modified ell dwelling; porch across front with sloping roof and decorative "gingerbread" fans on posts; second story windows contain small panes of multi-colored glass; large bay at rear

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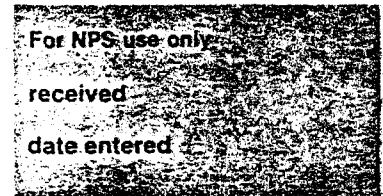
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of house and also at end of ell. Decorative metal finials run along the crest of the gables on the roof. Slightly remodeled many years ago, it may be Bramwell's oldest surviving dwelling. Aluminum siding; stone fence with iron gate borders front of property. Lot No. 111.

14. McNEER HOUSE--ca. 1890 (Contributing) modified two-story gabled frame dwelling with a two-story bay on front and porch with three slender posts and spindles along the porch frieze; small triangular projection on roof on front. Lot No. 112.

15. PACK HOUSE--ca. 1897 (Contributing) large three-story four square gabled dwelling with a cross gable in center resulting in bays on either side of the house. A bay also projects from the first floor on to the front porch which stretches across the entire front of the house and turns the right corner to meet the bay on the right side. A small modified Palladian window appears on the third floor in the front gable. An iron fence borders the property. Lot No. 113.

North River Street

16. PILGRIM/HOLINESS/WESLEYAN CHURCH--(Contributing) constructed between 1906 and 1930--Square one-story building with large steep gable and thin square tower. Entrance is at southwest corner; aluminum siding. Lot No. 86.

17. HOUSE--between 1906 and 1930 (Contributing) small one-story dwelling, frame. Sloping roof, filled in porch with multiple windows. Lot No. 87.

18. "KITCHEN BUILDERS"--before 1930 (Contributing) long two-story frame business building with three distinct sections. Flat facade, continuous porch across front. Lot No. 88.

19. SMALL BUILDING--before 1930 (Contributing) very small frame gabled square structure with long sash windows facing Bloch Street. Lot No. 89.1.

20. BRICK GARAGE--before 1930 (Contributing) two car, one-story garage with stepped roof. Window heads (stone) appear above windows and garage doors. Lot No. 90.

21. GARAGE--before 1930 (Contributing) two-story frame garage for four vehicles. Second story may have been servants' quarters. Lot No. 96.

22. HOUSE AND GARAGE--before 1930 (Contributing) small frame one-story gabled house and one car garage. Lot No. 97.

23. COOPER BUNGALOW--ca. 1920 (Contributing) craftsmanstyle one-story brick dwelling; stone foundation; exposed rafter ends, low roof and broad porch across front of house; shingles in front gable. Lot Nos. 115 and 116.

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24. COOPER HOUSE--1910 (Pivotal) asymmetrical Queen Anne dwelling with a copper roof, stone foundation, and orange brick which was specially sent from England for the construction of this house. Two large bays on either side of this three-story structure are topped by a conical towered turret and a gable. The third floor section of the turret is articulated by paired pilasters between the windows. A hipped dormer appears between the tower and the gable and below it on the second floor a Palladian window is centered between the bays. A massive front porch encircles the bays on the first floor. A classical influence is present in the monumental entryway to the front porch which is crowned by a heavy entablature and a low pediment. Dentils decorate all of the exterior moldings. A small Palladian porch and accompanying window is found on the third floor on the west side of the house, and several dormers also project from the west side of the house, and several dormers also project from the roof on the third floor. Stained glass is present in some of the smaller windows, and at the second floor landing of the ornately carved oak gratings are found at the top of several of the interior doorways and also leading to one of the bays. The large front door has sidelights with beveled glass tracery and transoms with the same. Lot No. 117.

25. COOPER INDOOR POOL--1910 (Pivotal) rectangular one-story structure enclosing a swimming pool and dressing rooms. Has same English orange brick as main house; gabled dormers; sash windows. Lot No. 117 (sub-lot 10).

26. COOPER GARAGE APARTMENT--1910 (Pivotal) originally servants' quarters on second floor; garage on first floor. Rectangular gabled structure with English orange brick facade, red brick on sides and rear; cinderblock room projecting from first floor on west side added later. A double gabled dormer projects from roof--initials EC (Edward Cooper) above one window and date 1910 above the other window; brackets support eaves. Lot No. 121.

27. BANK OF BRAMWELL--ca. 1893 (Pivotal) rectangular two-story stone gabled structure with round arched doorway and transoms on front first floor windows. Gable serves as a pediment with a lunette window; brackets support the entablature. Inside the front room is carved oak paneling, pilasters, and a classical frieze that were installed in 1901. The floor has decorative patterns of white Italian marble and colored marble tiles, also installed in 1901. The former board of directors' room at the rear of the building is wainscotted in mahogany and has small carvings of gargoyle faces and animals heads at points around the doorways. The name of the bank's first cashier and most influential president, Isaac T. Mann, is still present in brass letters on one of the doors to his former office, adjacent to the directors' room. The bank vault is also intact in the front room. Lot No. 124.

28. PERRY HOUSE--ca. 1901-04 (Pivotal) three-story red brick square dwelling with large cross gables. Porch stretches across entire front of house with an open gabled entryway in center; double doorway. Revival Tudor decoration in large gables with triple window in each. An oak staircase with a large windowseat on a landing leads from the first to the finished third floor. Lot No. 125.

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29. HICKMAN HOUSE, two down from Bank, next to Perry House -- before 1930 - (Contributing) greatly enlarged after 1930, this frame dwelling has been remodeled to appear Italianate with a cupola, symmetrical plan, small central porch, wide eaves, and a low-pitched hip roof. Lot No. 126.

30. GARAGE (Contributing) one and a half-story two-car frame gabled garage. Lot 126 (sub-lot 28).

31. MEYERS HOUSE--ca. 1892 (Contributing) long, narrow two-story dwelling crossed by two gables, one a clipped gable; porches symmetrically placed either side; aluminum siding. Lot No. 127.

South River Street

32. HEWITT HOUSE-- 1914-1915 (Pivotal) architectural firm; DeArmond, Ashmead & Bickley, 618 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia- two-story dwelling which reflects the transitional period in American architecture of the Prairie style with its symmetrical plan, native bluestone, large comparatively low-hipped tile roof of "dark matt green akron", wide projecting eaves, and low ceilings. Plan of house is a wide "T" shape. Wide porches with stone posts and English quarry tile floors flank either side of the central gabled projecting pavillion which serves as the entryway and focal point. The front door is framed by two columns which support partial entablatures and a small projecting arched roof. A secondary gable with a casement window appears to the right of the pavillion on the second floor and a triple casement window next to that. Inside all floors are of Indiana white oak with a two-line border of cherry. Living room has a large stone fireplace and wainscots, cornices, mantles, ceiling beams and trim bookcases all of white oak. A "glazed operating metal skylight" is present over the staircase in the foyer. Lot No. 128.

33. HEWITT GARAGE APARTMENT--1914-1915 (Pivotal) native bluestone gabled two-story garage and three-room servants' quarters above. Garage contains an early car wash. Lot 128 (sub-lot 42).

34. MANN HOUSE (Pivotal) remodeled from an earlier structure in 1909 - Large, yet long and narrow, three-story gabled dwelling. A sectagonal turret topped by a metal finial is attached to the third floor on one corner of the house, and bays result underneath on the first and second floors. A rounded porch encircles this corner and leads to the front entry. The flat roof of the porch is trimmed by an entablature supported by tall, slender, rounded columns. The recessed rear section was used as servants' quarters, and the third floor of the house was considered a children's area as it was scaled smaller in proportions (miniature doors, closets, and coat racks are found there). A glass conservatory is attached to the first floor adjacent to the dining room. The den in the first floor bay has walls covered in leather. Lot No. 129.

35. FORMER PRESBYTERIAN MANSE--ca. 1892 (Contributing) narrow gabled two-story dwelling; porch encircles right corner of first floor. Shingles, aluminum siding, and metal railing have been added. Lot No. 130.

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36. COLLINS HOUSE--ca. 1909-10 (Contributing) narrow two and a half-story frame dwelling with two gables with catslide or saltbox sloped roofs. One gable tops the third floor and the other protrudes to the right of it from the second floor. The second story gable is pierced by a double window, a semicircular lunette, and a triangular lunette. Groups of three tall stained glass windows are found on the front and two sides of the house. Enclosed porch at front left corner with overhanging roof on left side; stone foundation; diamond shaped slate tile roof; large stone chimney; some stick decoration on rear extension of house. Lot No. 131.

37. COLLINS GARAGE--1909-10 (Contributing) two-story brick garage with servants' quarters above; catslide, diamond shaped tiled roof to match main house, stone window heads. Lot No. 131.

38. INTRUSION--ca. 1955 - brick ranch style one-story ell dwelling. Lot.133.

Bloch Street

39. BRAMWELL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - 1902 (Pivotal) native bluestone Revival English gothic-style structure with square tower and miniature buttresses projecting between arched windows and at corners of tower. Three sides of the tower have three arched openings each near the top. The center front of the tower has a large window with tracery. A bracketed, gabled overdjor protects the front entry. The main church building is said to have been modeled after a small Welsh cathedral. Circa 1942 an education building was added to the main structure creating an ell shape. This is also of bluestone; it is two stories with dormers and sash windows, a gable and an arched window to match the main building. Lot No. 119.

Pocahontas Avenue

40. GOODWILL HOUSE - built ca. 1894, remodeled 1905 (Pivotal) architect for remodeling: W.J. Smith of Bramwell - Originally an unadorned two-story frame structure, this house was embellished in 1905 by the addition of a third story ballroom and guest rooms, a finial topped conical turret, and bays on the first and second floors, a long encircling front porch, and cut glass windows. Carved oak screens and Ionic columns were also added in the foyer and to separate a sitting room from the master bedroom on the second floor. Dining room on first floor has heavy oak ceiling beams and also oak sliding doors which are pulled from the walls flanking the doorway. House is gabled with a steep sloping roof; smaller gables with two-story bays extend from middle of the sides of the house. In the small gable of the right side a round window with spider web tracery appears. Gables have been shingled in recent years. Evidence of the addition of the third floor seen in the presence of a skylight in the second floor ceiling now covered by the third floor. There are Masonic symbols painted directly on the wall in the first floor den and in a third floor game room. Lot No. 7.

41. GOODWILL GARAGE--ca. 1895 (Contributing) originally a one-story outbuilding for servants' quarters, now a garage and car port; frame. Lot No. 7.

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42. THOMAS HOUSE--ca. 1909-12 (Pivotal) Tudor Revival eighteen-room three-story dwelling; red tile roof; wood for "half-timbering," and interior paneling reportedly transported from England; stonework executed by Italian masons brought from Europe for the project; casement windows with multiple panes; several prominent gables--most notably on the front --two projecting gabled pavillions, one completely of stone; front porch on first floor between pavillions has tile designs on floor; several chimneys. A central staircase leading from the first floor to the second, parts at a landing into two different stairs. At the landing is a colossal stained glass window divided into six sections by massive wooden partitions. The glass pictures six different symbols, five in roundels and the central one in a rectangle. The ceilings of the living room and adjacent den are ornately sculpted in plaster. A ballroom, now partitioned into several rooms, is on the third floor and has a barrel vault in the ceiling. A long dormer with five small windows projects from the center of the roof on the third floor. Lot No. 8.

43. THOMAS SHED--ca. 1909-12 (Contributing) small one-story clipped gable frame structure with stone foundation and porch. Lot No. 8.

44. THOMAS SERVANTS' QUARTERS- 1909-12 (Contributing) one and a half-story frame structure multiple clipped gables. Lot No. 8.

Duhring Avenue

45. THOMAS GARAGE/APARTMENT--ca. 1909-12 (Pivotal) matches main house in Revival Tudor style with red tile roof, "half-timbering," and stonework. Two-story gabled structure; three-car garage on first floor; apartment on second with large stone fireplace, heavy oak rafters, and a cork floor. Dormers project from roof. Lot No. 8.1.

46. PILGRIM HOLINESS/WESLEYAN CHURCH PARSONNAGE--ca. 1900 (Contributing) two-story dwelling with several cross gables; triangular small gable appears porch supported by very tall, thin round columns. Aluminum siding. Lot No. 10.

47. GODFREY/JONES HOUSE--ca. 1900 (Contributing) two and a half-story square dwelling with four wide crossing gables. Bay window from first floor to second on left front' porch stretches from bay to right corner. A single story with a large exterior chimney has been added to the front right corner. Aluminum siding. Lot No. 11.

48. HOUSE, Duhring Avenue--ca. 1900 (Contributing) one and a half-story rectangular gabled dwelling; a large and a small dormer project from roof on front. Small beveled glass windows to the basement are present in the stone foundation. House was reportedly moved from original site on Pocahontas Avenue at front of Thomas property 1909. Aluminum siding. Lot No. 13.

49. SCHOEW HOUSE--ca. 1895 (Contributing) two and a half-story frame gabled foursquare dwelling. Porch stretches across entire front; balustrade and decorative posts support porch roof; aluminum siding. Lot No. 15.

50. INTRUSION--HOUSE Duhring Avenue--ca. 1940's- one-story shallow gabled stucco dwelling. Lot No. 16.

51. HOUSE, Duhring Avenue - before 1930 - (Contributing)



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51. (Cont'd) one and a half-story dwelling with Swedish gabrel roof; dormers; porch on front; aluminum siding. Lot No. 17.

52. BAKER HOUSE--ca. 1895 (Contributing) two and a half-story frame dwelling characterized by a low hipped roof and several dormers; irregular assymmetrical plan; two separate porches - one with paired columns, the other missing its columns and temporarily supported by other means. Several large windows appear in three parts - a large window in the center with sidelights. The upper sashes of these windows are divided by diamond shaped lights. Lot No. 18.

53. MORTON HOUSE--ca. 1900 (Contributing) two-story square frame dwelling with low hipped roof and small center front dormer. Porch extends across front with thin fanned posts and balustrades. Lot No. 21.

54. FRANK HEWITT HOUSE--ca. 1900 (Contributing) two and a half-story clipped gable dwelling with side dormers. Porch which stretches across front has been filled in. Aluminum siding. Lot No. 22.

Wyatt Street

55. BUCK/BOWEN--ca. 1900 (Pivotal) large two-story frame dwelling; gabled and hipped roof; gabled projecting pavillion at front center, bay on first floor center. Large porch extends across entire front and projects a curve to correspond iwth the bay and pavillion. Tall slender columns support porch. Square window appears in gable of a corresponding gabled pavillion at rear of house. Many windows have diamond-shaped lights in upper sashes. The den has walls covered in leather. House greatly embellished in the 1950's. Lot No. 23.

56. MANN PLAYHOUSE--ca. 1910 (Pivotal) a frame one and a half-story structure with clipped gable, triple, sash windows in gable, long front porch with massive stone round posts. Main room has large stone fireplace. First used as a playhouse, then remodeled in 1940's to a regular dwelling by addition of several rooms behind the A-frame, resulting in an irregular plan. (Duhring Street) Lot No. 19.

57. PLAYHOUSE GARAGE--(Contributing) one-story frame gabled garage. Lot No. 24.

Wyatt Street

58. INTRUSION--ca. 1962 - Brick two-story gabled cottage with extension and garage. Lot No. 29.

59. INTRUSION--ca. 1965 - one-story brick ranch style dwelling.

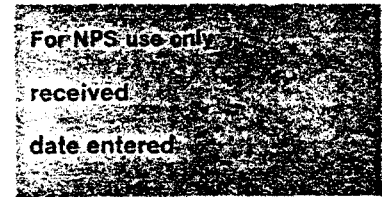
60. PRESBYTERIAN MANSE--ca. 1911 (Contributing) square two-story cross gabled dwelling. Small diamond-shaped windows on sides on second floor near eaves of gable. Porch across front of house; aluminum siding. Lot No. 26.

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Duhring Avenue

61. INTRUSION--mobile home. Lot No. 27.
62. INTRUSION--mobile home. Lot No. 27.
63. INTRUSION--mobile home. Lot No. 27.
64. HOUSE- before 1930 (Contributing) probably a service building converted to a dwelling; small, rectangular with hipped roof with flared eaves; aluminum siding. Lot No. 28
65. MANN GARDENER HOUSE--ca. 1915 (Contributing) two-story frame dwelling with gable facing street and roof with a sloping concave profile. Stone foundation; porch extends across front with square posts and a balustrade. A one-story extension has been added to the right side.
66. INTRUSION--Rectangular one-story frame; greatly remodeled; dwelling.
67. INTRUSION--Small gabled frame dwelling; front porch filled in.
68. HOUSE- before 1930 (Contributing) two-story gabled dwelling; stone foundation; partial porch, rest of porch filled in; aluminum siding.
69. SHED/GARAGE - before 1930 (Contributing) one-story with catslide roof; front gable and a rear extension; aluminum siding.
70. DWELLING- before 1930 (Contributing) two-story small gabled building, probably formerly used as servants' quarters for Freeman house. Original siding; second story porch with posts and balustrade. Lot No. 145.
71. FREEMAN HOUSE--began ca. 1893 (Pivotal) very large rambling three-story frame dwelling with a complicated roofline of hips and gables. Only half of the house existed approximately between 1893 and 1906 when the large addition of the right or south side of the house was probably made, according to comparisons of old photographs. A two-story projecting pavillion appears near the front center and is topped by a balcony and balustrade. A front porch extends the entire width and encircles the right side. Over the porch on the right corner is a hipped projecting pavillion which has a casement window. There are several tall slender chimneys, and on the north side of the house is a large patio and fence of stone. Two one-story extensions which may have been service areas are attached to the right and rear of the house. The house has been sectioned into apartments in recent years. Lot No. 145.
72. KELLER/PRITCHARD HOUSE--ca. 1893-96 (Contributing) two and a half-story four square gabled dwelling. A two-story extension has been added toward the rear of the building on the right side, and it has a hipped roof. A porch extends across entire front supported by decorative posts with gingerbread brackets and balustrades. Shingles appear in the gables; the house has been aluminum sided. Decorative wrought iron fence borders property. Lot No. 146.



# 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
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) local history
<input type="checkbox"/> invention				

Specific dates 1885 - 1930 Builder/Architect N/A

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Bramwell is extremely significant to the history of West Virginia and to the nation because it represents the opulence of the era at the turn of the century when an individual, often an immigrant to the U.S., could obtain large fortunes through his own wit and the long hours of the laboring class. As a town planned by coal land investors and coal mining operators, the Bramwell historic district was the only location specifically designed to be a residential area inhabited by the elite populace of the Pocahontas Coalfield. Whereas nearby Bluefield, West Virginia, basically began as a supply center for the mining operations of the coalfield, the Bramwell historic district became a place where coal operators could be near their mining operations without actually living in the mining camps they originated. The operators chose the finest materials to build grand homes, which combined with the beautiful trees and surrounding hills make the Bramwell historic district a very striking location even today.

The story of the Pocahontas Coalfield, renowned nation-wide for its ten-foot seams and high quality coal, began in 1883 when the first carload of coal was shipped by the Norfolk and Western Railroad from Pocahontas, Virginia (located a few miles southwest of Bramwell) to Norfolk, Virginia. In 1884 a group of Philadelphia financiers began buying great quantities of coal lands along the Bluestone River in Mercer County under the name of the Bluestone Coal Company. This organization under its local manager O.H. Duhring, planned the town of Bramwell and established its headquarters there in 1885. Duhring, in fact, built the first house there, which no longer stands. Many of the company's engineers and draftsmen soon moved into Bramwell, directing the company's leases to coal operators. The Bluestone Coal became part of the Flat Top Coal Land Association, the largest holder of coal lands in the Pocahontas Coalfield. The Land Association maintained its office in Bramwell for many years even after it was reorganized and changed its name to the Pocahontas Coal and Coke Company.

Bramwell was named for another coal land investor, J.H. Bramwell, probably because he was the town's first postmaster. The town grew quickly and was incorporated in 1889. By 1896 it reached its peak in population with over 4,000 residents. After the mining towns of Coopers and Freeman were incorporated into Bramwell, it had the distinction of having three separate post offices within its corporate limits, unusual for a town of its size. Bramwell was a "spur" stop on the railroad; trains had to make special trips to it because it was not on the main line of the railroad. Even so, there are reports of up to fourteen trains a day going in and out of Bramwell during its heyday.

In addition to the Land offices, several other coal companies maintained offices in Bramwell, including the Pocahontas Company, the marketing organization for Pocahontas coal, located in the Masonic Hall. Dry good and grocery stores also appeared

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in the business block on Main Street, and the Bryant and Newbold Pharmacy at the corner of Main and Bloch Streets carried the distinction of being the third drugstore in the U.S. to sell the exotic perfume Channel No. 5, probably prompted by its wealthy clientele. By 1906 the town had four churches, two of which are within the historic district and a grade school which sat on a hill above the historic district to the northeast. This building burned in the early 1940's.

The Bank of Bramwell, famous because it supposedly was at one time the richest bank of its size in the United States, was chartered in 1889. Located a block from the railroad station, several Bramwell residents recall that the black janitor of the bank used to roll money in a wheelbarrow down the street with an armed guard by his side, to board it on a train. The bank also reportedly financed the building of the Burning Tree Country Club of Washington, D.C., and did purchase the site of the West Virginia Capitol building in downtown Charleston after that capitol burned in 1921.

Several of the earlier notable buildings were built by doctors, coal mine proprietors, and the Land Company's officers, but these were modest when compared to the mansions built by coal operators between 1900 and 1915. These homes and the men who built them represent a second phase of prosperity in the Pocahontas Coalfield. The actual opening of the mines in the coalfield at the beginning of the early 1880's was the first phase, but actually managing them and creating fortunes was another. The great houses in Bramwell signify the latter phase. They were owned by men who had not only begun enterprises but had maintained them very successfully. The homes they built are evidence of their incredibly large incomes. It is said that at least thirteen millionaires were living in Bramwell in 1915.

Edward Cooper one of Bramwell's most prominent citizens, was the son of John Cooper, the first man to open a mine on the Pocahontas Coalfield, at Mill Creek in 1884. John Cooper had been an immigrant from England whose father had been killed while mining there. John Cooper worked as a miner in Pennsylvania and opened mining operations in Fayette County, West Virginia, before staking all his funds on the Mill Creek opening. The mine was successful and son Edward became general manager of his father's mines around the turn of the century, moving his own family to Bramwell around 1900. Edward was an influential town councilman for several years and he served two terms as a U.S. Congressman from West Virginia's 5th congressional district, 1915-1919. He built the grand copper roofed Queen Anne-style house in 1910 and the bungalow next to it for his son, Edward Jr., around 1920.

John Davis Hewitt was another immigrant from England who worked his way up in the mines in America. He became a mining engineer and arrived in the Pocahontas Coalfield in 1886. He discovered the seam which became the Buckeye mines. By 1896 he had become the vice-president and general manager of Buckeye Coal and Coke.

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John Hewitt brought his family to live about a mile from Bramwell near the Buckeye mines. Around 1890 they moved to Bramwell as other operators did when they, too, began to prosper. John Hewitt was very active in Bramwell's civic affairs in addition to his mine operating duties. He was the first mayor of Bramwell and was one of the founding members of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church of Bramwell. He seems to have played a key role in the building of Bramwell Masonic Temple in 1893. By the time of his death, in 1903, he had become a director of the Pocahontas Company.

Ten years after her husband's death, Mrs. Katherine Hewitt decided to build a new house which is the charming transitional cottage so familiar in Bramwell today. She bought the house next door to the right of her own frame house on the corner of Main and South River Streets and had them both torn down to make room for the new house. She then hired the Philadelphia architectural firm of DeArmond, Ashmead, and Bickley to design the house in 1914. Mrs. Hewitt was from Pennsylvania, and the fact that she hired a Philadelphia firm to do the planning illustrates an important point of Bramwell's social life. Many coal operators' wives were from Pennsylvania, particularly of the Philadelphia area. There almost seems to have been an attempt on the part of the operators to overcompensate for the lack of "society" in southern West Virginia at the time by building large homes with the finest materials available and the most modern conveniences. Women in Bramwell in effect attempted to recreate Philadelphia's social life by hosting many elaborate parties. It was almost essential to have a town such as Bramwell with a controlled social atmosphere amid luxury in order to satisfy a transplanted managerial class.

Philip Goodwill, general manager and son of the immigrant who started the Goodwill Coal and Coke Company, built a house in Bramwell in 1894 which was a basic American homestead style structure. When the Goodwill family sold their mines and Philip became president of the Pocahontas Company in 1905, he enlarged his house by adding a third floor ballroom and a Queen Anne turret. Philip's wife Phoebe was the prime example of a former Pennsylvanian who adored parties and an active social life. She was one of several hostesses in Bramwell who often imported special foods and caterers from cities as far away as Cincinnati by train.

William H. Thomas' life sounds like the typical turn-of-the-century "rags to riches" story. He was born in Wales and immigrated to Pennsylvania with his family when he was six years old. As a teenager he worked several odd jobs, including that of a newspaper carrier, clerk, and mechanic before coming to the Pocahontas Company. In 1887 he married Annie Cooper, daughter of Mill Creek Coal and Coke Company founder John Cooper. In 1889 he was appointed manager of John Cooper's Company stores and in 1890 he became the general manager of Algoma Coal and Coke Company, an interest he had helped organize. Thomas became the owner of several other coal companies and by 1909 he had amassed such a fortune that he was able to spend approximately \$95,000 on the large Tudor Revival house which sits on a hill overlooking downtown Bramwell. It has been reported by a resident of Bramwell that Mrs. Thomas imported Italian masons expressly for the purpose of constructing the fine stonework of the house and property retaining wall, excellent examples of the fine masonry executed by Italian immigrants throughout the coalfield.

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Many stories have been told about happenings in Bramwell and collectively these form a sort of Bramwell folklore. One story, which may be entirely true, states that when one of the Thomas daughters were married, a rose trellis was stretched from the house all the way to the wedding at the Presbyterian church, and a red carpet was rolled from the church around the corner and down the block to the train station.

Stories have also circulated about Isaac T. Mann, another Bramwell millionaire. A native of Greenbrier County, West Virginia, Mann was an extremely powerful figure in the Pocahontas Coalfield, having been the chief organizer of the Pocahontas Fuel Company and the president of the Bank of Bramwell. He is responsible for the rise of that bank to a quite formidable institution. Mann and his family lived in Bramwell for more than twenty years, dividing their time between Bramwell, a summer home in Massachusetts, and a five-story house (later converted into an embassy) in Washington, D.C. The Mann home in Bramwell was remodeled from a previous structure in 1909 to include a polygonal sided turret. Mann also built his children a playhouse across the river from the main house. This is no ordinary playhouse as it was later remodeled and made into a regular residence by E.L. Keesling, who also planted many beautiful flower gardens on the playhouse grounds and then charged admission for the public to view them in the 1950's.

Mann also gave the handsome bluestone church building to the Presbyterian congregation in 1902. According to a survivor of Mann's, he regretted it later when he heard people refer to the building as "Mr. Mann's church". He is still strongly identified with that church.

The 1930's depression which was hard felt in the coalfield was particularly painful to Mann. He had invested in properties in other locations and lost heavily after 1929. One source says that he was worth 78 million dollars one day and owed 81 million dollars the next. Regardless of the hard times which befell Isaac T. Mann, he seems to be the only person identified with the Pocahontas Coalfield in the early years who was listed in an edition of Who Was Who in America. He was a leading candidate for the U.S. Senatorship in 1913, but failed of election. The town of Itmann in Wyoming County was named for him.

The nationwide depression and subsequent closing of the Bank of Bramwell in the early 1930's signalled the end of an era in Bramwell. This was followed by the demolition of the Bluestone Inn. The railroad station was abandoned and torn down sometime in the 1950's. Several operators lost control of their large sums, like Isaac T. Mann, or were forced to sell their mines. Many families and proprietors moved away from Bramwell.

One life-long resident states that "Bramwell is certainly not the town it once was". Even so, Bramwell has stayed remarkably well-preserved, today mainly serving as a residential town for retired persons and people who work in nearby

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Bluefield or Princeton. A renewed interest in the history and architecture of Bramwell has brought new residents who are working to restore structures to their original grandeur. Long-time residents have made a successful effort to maintain their homes. The result is very satisfying and rewarding. Bramwell may not experience the traffic and "bustle" it once did, but the fine buildings remain as monuments to a time when an immigrant miner's family could turn a small amount of capital into a veritable fortune, keeping in mind the countless hours of drudgery that were spent by many laborers contributing to that fortune. Bramwell's elegance survives as a generous remnant of West Virginia's version of the "gilded age".



## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 55 acres

Quadrangle name Bramwell, W.Va.-Va.

Quadrangle scale 1: 24,000'

### UMT References

A 

1	17
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4	7	12	2	16	10
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4	11	3	10	8	16	10
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

1	17
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4	7	12	6	16	10
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4	1	3	10	3	12	10
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D 

1	17
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4	7	12	2	18	10
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4	1	3	10	5	13	10
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E 

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4	7	12	3	14	10
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4	1	3	10	6	14	10
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F 

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4	7	12	2	15	10
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4	1	3	10	7	0	10
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G 

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H 

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** Inclusive of Lot No. 6 at the Northwest corner of Main Street and the Norfolk and Western Railroad Line (City Hall) and proceeding along the railroad right-of-way to the south bank of the Bluestone River; proceeding east along the south bank of the Bluestone River in a straight line to a point intersecting with the

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

state	N/A	code	county	code
state		code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Beth Hager, Preservation Consultant  
Historic Preservation Unit  
organization W.Va. Dept. of Culture & History date October 30, 1982  
The Cultural Center  
street & number Capitol Complex telephone (304) 348-0240  
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 Commissioner, W.Va. Department of Culture and History date December 21, 1982

For NPS use only  
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
date

Keeper of the National Register  
Attest: date  
Chief of Registration

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

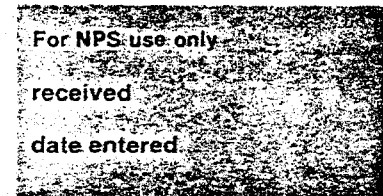
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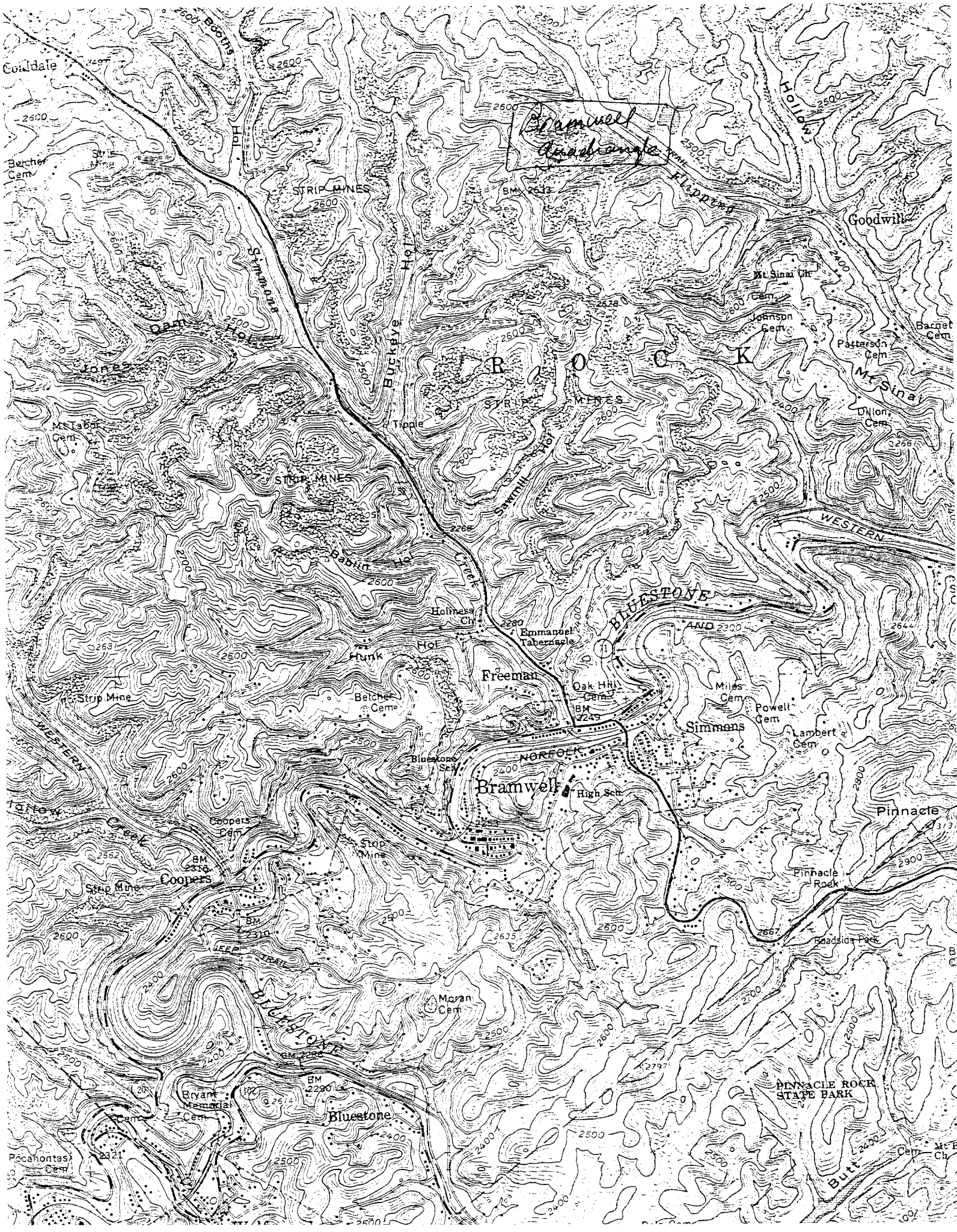
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Verbal boundary description and justification (Continued)

corporate boundary of the Town of Bramwell, inclusive of Lots No. 147 and No. 148 belonging to the Holy Trinity Episcopal Church; proceeding southwest in a straight line 2000 feet to a point intersecting with Mercer County Route 20/17; thence northwest in a straight line 1500 feet to the extreme southwest end of Bloch Street; and thence in a line approximately 500 feet along the northwest of Bloch Street to the Bluestone River; thence along the southern bank of the Bluestone River approximately 500 feet; thence due north in a straight line approximately 700 feet to the point of origin (City Hall, Lot No. 6).









PAINT STORE

NO PARKING  
LOADING ZONE

COLO

COLO

ICE  
ICE  
ICE

COLO

HALLS  
TV  
SHOP  
TV  
SHOP

