

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received T 12 198
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Lackawanna Avenue Commercial Historic District

and/or common Scranton Commercial Historic District

2. Location *Roughly founded by Adams, Frank, Bogart, and ...*

street & number 200, 300, 400, 500, blocks of Lackawanna Ave., 100 blocks of not for publication

city, town Scranton N/Avicinity of Wyoming & Washington Ave.
400 block of Spruce

state Pennsylvania code 042 county Lackawanna code 069

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A being considered	<input checked="" 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 Owners (see continuation sheet)

street & number

city, town N/Avicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder of Deeds, Lackawanna County Courthouse

street & number 200 N. Washington Ave.

city, town Scranton state Pennsylvania

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Lackawanna Co. Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1978-79 federal state county local

depository for survey records Lackawanna County Planning Commission, Lackawanna County

city, town Scranton state Pennsylvania

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Lackawanna Avenue Commercial Historic District is comprised of a three-and-one-half block section of Lackawanna Avenue and one square block which adjoins the Avenue on the northeast. Lackawanna Avenue runs northwest to southeast and is intersected at right angles by northeast to southwest streets. Railroad tracks are adjacent to the district on the north, west and south; and, there are government and commercial buildings to the east. The district itself is almost exclusively commercial.

The buildings along Lackawanna Avenue are generally three or four stories in height, and three to five bays in width. A rich variety of materials including brick, stone, tile and stucco were used in the construction of the buildings. Aside from a few holes created by arson and demolition, the structures are contiguous. Most of the buildings along the Avenue date from the late nineteenth century. Many of the first floor storefronts have relatively recent alterations made for commercial purposes. However, the ground floor usually do not relate to the architecture on upper floors. Instead, upper floors are generally intact and reflect vernacular Renaissance Revival, Romanesque Revival and Commercial styles. Vernacular Italianate and Gothic Revival styles characterize the older and smaller structures. Projecting cornices, some which include brackets, parapets that are pedimented and have dates and initials, and corbelled blind arcading in the cornices are among the most prominent architectural features on Lackawanna Ave.

The most substantial buildings in the Lackawanna Avenue Commercial Historic District are located along Wyoming and North Washington Streets. Built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these structures reflect a greater adherence to distinct architectural styles than their counterparts on Lackawanna. The most common styles are Renaissance Revival, Richardson Romanesque, Neo Classicism and an early example of Art Deco. Four to eight stories in height and as many as eight bays wide, the newer buildings have also retained better integrity than the Lackawanna structures. First floor storefront alterations have been made, but are not as intrusive as on the Avenue; and, upper stories remain almost completely intact. As on Lackawanna a variety of materials was used in the construction of the buildings. Originally constructed for banking institutions, corporate offices and large retail operations, the present use of the buildings remains consistent with the historic use.

8. Significance

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

Specific dates 1860-1920 Builder Architect N/A

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

In the late nineteenth century Scranton became the heart of the anthracite coal mining industry in Pennsylvania as well as a manufacturing center. With a population of almost 150,000 in 1930, Scranton's growth between 1860 and 1930 was remarkable. During those years of growth Lackawanna Avenue served as the commercial core of Scranton. Featuring a number of fine examples of late nineteenth century architecture, the Avenue characterized the prosperity and hopes of the city. Though many of the expectations were never realized, Lackawanna Avenue still reflects the prosperity that was once Scranton.

During the first half of the nineteenth century the land that would become Scranton was little more than a backwoods settlement, corn fields and a forest. However, during the 1850's technological developments involving iron production, an abundant supply of anthracite coal and railroads brought industry to the area. To facilitate growth the town of Scranton was laid out in a grid pattern common to many Pennsylvania towns. One of the primary streets in the new town was Lackawanna Avenue. A wide street located near the railroads that already served Scranton, Lackawanna Avenue seemed to be a natural center for commercial activities in the town.

Scranton's early decades were years of rapid expansion. This growth was reflected in the commercial development of Lackawanna Avenue. In 1856, when the state incorporated Scranton as a borough, there were few buildings along Lackawanna. As the town grew in the late 1850's and 1860's, commercial buildings began to dot the Avenue. First a few small structures, including two bank buildings, a hotel and a couple of shops were built. Larger more prominent structures followed in the late 1860's establishing Lackawanna Avenue as the commercial heart of a town that by 1865 had become a boom town.

Quadrupling in little more than a decade, Scranton's population had grown to over 35,000 by 1870. Designated as a city in 1867, Scranton emerged as the center of commercial activity throughout the region. Industry, trade and transportation in the ever expanding city continued unabated throughout the seventies. New businesses, new homes and new opportunities became integral parts of the city. Many western European immigrants added to the city work force and joined the 20,000 miners, many of them Scrantonians, who worked in the local mines. Four railroads made daily shipments of approximately 30,000 tons of anthracite coal from Scranton to mills throughout Pennsylvania and the eastern United States. To administer railroad and coal business new bank buildings, office buildings and hotels were constructed in the city. Adding to the city's prominence were new governmental responsibilities that came in 1878 when Scranton was made the seat for the newly created Lackawanna county.

At the center of the growth and expansion was Lackawanna Avenue. During the last two decades of the century many new buildings were constructed along the Avenue to facilitate the burgeoning business demands being made on Scranton. Two and three story retail structures lined Lackawanna while taller, more substantial bank buildings and office buildings dotted the Avenue. Romanesque Revival, Renaissance Revival and Commercial style structures became common. America's first all electric street car system, with numerous stops on Lackawanna, added to the ambience. During the 1890's these buildings and conveniences gave Scranton the look of a vibrant, progressive city.

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Continuation sheet Lackawanna Ave. Comm. Historic District, Item number 8 Page 2

By the twentieth century the business district had expanded beyond Lackawanna Avenue to include a one block section of Wyoming and North Washington Streets. The extension of the district was enhanced by the recently constructed county government facilities situated two blocks east of Lackawanna. Financial institutions, including the Dime Bank Building (National Register 7-14-78) as well as additional retail establishments, located between the new county facilities and Lackawanna Avenue. Meanwhile, new retail establishments and a large hotel, the Hotel Casey, opened along the Avenue. The new buildings were commonly Richardson Romanesque, Neo-Classical and Renaissance Revival in style. Some Art Deco architecture was also introduced in the extension during the early 1920's. In many cases more massive than the earlier structures, the newer buildings reflected the prosperity and confidence that became a part of Scranton.

While commercial activities in Scranton slowed in the 1920's, the city's "Golden Years" ended in 1929 with the onset of the Depression. As local businesses failed, unemployment soared and hard times gripped the city, the Lackawanna commercial district suffered. Some of the once prominent businesses along the Avenue closed or moved elsewhere. While new tenants usually replaced those who left, the newcomers often made unsympathetic alterations especially in the form of store fronts, and rarely displayed the appreciation for Lackawanna Avenue structures as had their predecessors. Using only first stories, many of the later occupants allowed upper stories to go unused, and consequently deteriorate. By the 1940's the once handsome, bustling Avenue had become a somewhat rundown section of Scranton. The advent of suburban shopping malls in the 1950's and 1960's, as well as continuing local economic problems, accelerated the decline of the area.

Despite half a century of disuse, decay and some unsympathetic alterations, Lackawanna Avenue still reflects the prominence that was a part of Scranton in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Today the structures along the Avenue, as well as their counterparts on Wyoming and North Washington Streets, remind observers of the days when Lackawanna Avenue was the commercial heart of a prosperous, progressive city.

9. Major Bibliographical References

H. Hollister, History of the Lackawanna Valley (J.B. Lippincott Co.)
 Philadelphia, PA 1885, 211-268
 David Croft, et. al., History of Scranton, (United Brethern Publishing House,
 Dayton, Ohio, 1891), 88-104. (see continuation sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 18.5
 Quadrangle name Scranton, PA

Quadrangle scale: 24,000

UTM References

A

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

 C

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

 E

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

 G

1	8	4	4	4	9	8	0	4	5	8	3	9	4	0
Zone			Easting					Northing						

B

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

 D

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

 F

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

 H

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

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet

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

state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A
state	N/A	code	N/A	county	N/A	code	N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Nancy Bisignani/Paul Doutrich
 organization Architectural Heritage Association/
 Bureau for Historic Preservation date August 31, 1983
 street & number 232 Wyoming Ave./Box 1026 telephone (717) 347-6076 - (717) 783-9922
 city or town Scranton/Harrisburg state PA

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 [Signature]
 title Larry E. Tise, State Historic Preservation Officer date 90/3/83

For NPS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register
 Entered in the National Register date 11/10/83
 [Signature] Keeper of the National Register
 Attest: _____ date _____
 Chief of Registration

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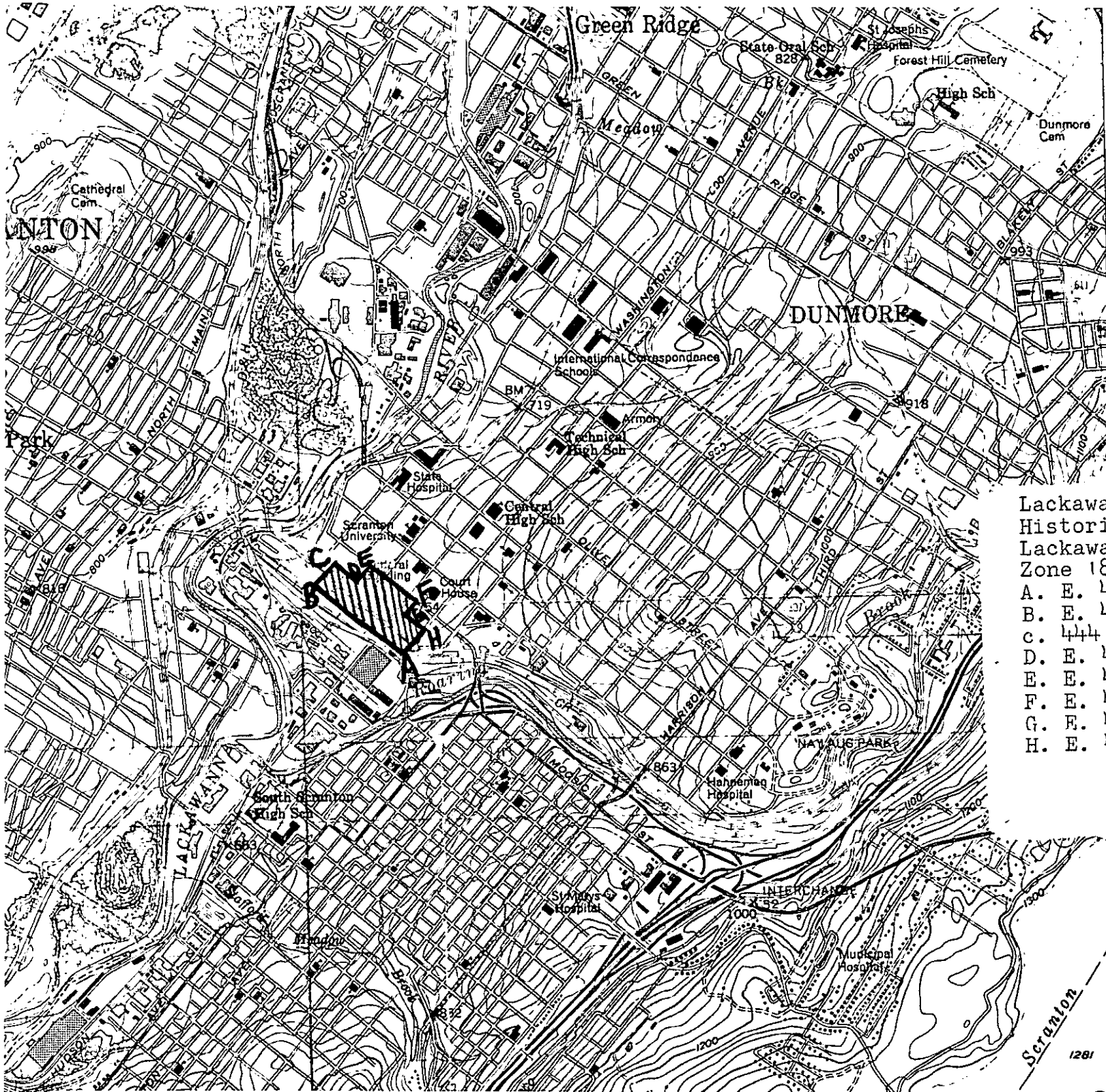
Lackawanna Ave. Commercial

Continuation sheet Historic District, Lackawanna ~~item~~ number 9. 10,

Page 2

- #9. Raymond E. & Marion, Pennsylvania: A Regional Geography,
(Pennsylvania Book Sercice, Harrisburg, PA, 1937) 344-349.
History of Luzerne, Lackawanna, and Wyoming Counties,
(W.W. Munsell & Co., New York City, N.Y., 1880), 381-438
Lackawanna County Records, Lackawanna County Courthouse, Scranton, PA

- #10. Beginning at the northwest corner at the intersection of Bogart Place and Adams Avenue, then, going northwest along the northeast side of Bogart Place across Penn Street approximately 150 feet to the northwest side of the fifth lot northwest of Penn Street; then, northeast to the northeast side of Lackawanna Avenue; then, northwest along the northeast side of Lackawanna Avenue to the intersection with Franklin Street; then, northeast along the northeast side of Franklin Avenue to intersection with Center Street; then along the northwest side of Center Street to the rear property lines of those structures fronting Wyoming Avenue; then northeast to Spruce Street; then along the northwest side of Spruce Street to the intersection with Dix Court; then, southwest along the northwest side of Dix Court to the intersection with Center Street; then southeast along the northwest side of Center Street to the intersection with Adams Avenue; then southwest along the northwest side of Adams Avenue to the starting point.



4586
 6.3 MI
 9.5 MI
 25'

Lackawanna Ave. Commercial
 Historic District
 Lackawanna Co., PA.
 Zone 18; Scranton Quad

A. E.	444 480	N.	4583 780
B. E.	444 060	N.	4584 100
c.	444 160	N.	4584 200
D. E.	444 260	N.	4584 100
E. E.	444 320	N.	4584 180
F. E.	444 520	N.	4584 000
G. E.	444 980	N.	4583 940
H. E.	444 560	N.	4583 880

1281
 9.9 MI. TO U.S. 611
 LANG CORNERS (JUNC. PA. 690) 5.9 MI.