

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: Woodvale Historic District

other name/site number: N/A

2. Location

street & number: Roughly bounded by Ash, High, North, Fulton, and  
Broad Streets. (N/A) not for publication

city, town: Woodvale (Wood, Wells, Broad Top Twps.) vicinity: N/A

state: Pennsylvania code: PA county: Huntingdon, Fulton, Bedford  
code: 061,057,009 zip code: 16694

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private; Public-Federal

Category of Property: District

Number of Resources within Property:

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	
<u>79</u>	<u>13</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>—</u>	sites
<u>2</u>	<u>—</u>	structures
<u>82</u>	<u>13</u>	objects
		TOTAL

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 1

Name of related multiple property listing: The Industrial Resources of Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania, between 1780 and 1939

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

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 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 certifying official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

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

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions

Domestic

Extraction

Government

Religion

Current functions

Domestic

Government

Religion

Subfunctions

Multiple dwellings

Extractive facility

Post Office

Religious structures

Subfunctions

Multiple dwellings

Post Office

Religious structures

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Other: vernacular workers' housing; company town

other: \_\_\_\_\_

Materials

foundation	Stone	roof	asphalt
walls	Wood, concrete	other	

Describe present and historic appearance:

X see continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

\_ Nationally    X Statewide    \_ Locally

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C.

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of Significance: Industry  
Community planning  
Architecture  
Ethnic Heritage

Period(s) of Significance: 1890-1942

Significant Dates: 1890

Years of Alterations: \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

X See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other - Specify Repository: HABS

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property: 96

UTM References:

	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>		<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
A	17	743330	4449920	C	17	744150	4450210
B	17	743600	4450390	D	17	743700	4449580

see continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

see continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

see continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title R. Ann Safley

organization PHMC/BHP

date 1992

street & number 319 Washington St., Ste. 370 telephone 814/539-2016

city or town Johnstown state PA zip 15901

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Woodvale: Section 7; Description.

The town of Wood is a coal patch town located on the east side of Broad Top Mountain in the Allegheny Mountains. A large percentage of Wood is located in the southwest corner of Wood Township, Huntingdon County but portions also extend into Wells Township, Fulton County and Broad Top Township, Bedford County. The Woodvale Historic District consists of industrial buildings, institutional buildings, and miners' housing constructed c. 1890-1940. The village is primarily residential and vernacular in style. The non-residential buildings consist of two churches, a social hall, a mule barn, power house (now a furniture factory), a railroad machine shop, and a post office. The village retains a high degree of integrity.

Most of the village lies to the west of the mine site along State Route 3006 (North and High Streets), running east-west, with streets extending south forming a grid. The extant structures associated with the mining operations are situated on either side of SR 3006 between the East Broad Top Railroad and the Great Trough Creek, each running in a north/south direction. Fulton Street runs along the east side of the creek through Huntingdon, Bedford, and Fulton Counties. The district boundaries run along the back property lines of Fulton, Broad, Ash, and North Streets.

The railroad machine shop stands at the intersection of SR 3006 and the EBT tracks, parallel to the tracks. Built around 1918, this two story, front gabled, rectangular brick structure contains several large openings on the east side including one that extends into a wall dormer. A large beam, possibly a part of a hoist system, projects from the top of this dormer. The south gable end wall has a wood frame, one bay wide, two story tower.

The power house, located across the road from the machine shop, now houses a furniture factory. The structure consists of two steel frame gabled blocks connected by a small one story

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section. Both gabled elements consist of concrete block walls with brick cornices. One section is two bays wide and the section closest to the road is only one bay wide. Extending to the south is a large new addition constructed in the 1970s. Immediately to the east of the power house lies the remains of a "hot water dam" the company constructed on Great Trough Creek to supply water for the steam boilers. To the south of the power house, along the tracks, is a mule barn erected in the 1930s. This is a simple rectangular concrete block structure. The machine shop and mule barn are currently abandoned and in disrepair.

In addition to these buildings, other industrial structures also existed during the period of significance but are now gone. These included a tipple, head frame, mine office, sheds, and engine house. These were all located in the immediate vicinity of the power house. The Rockhill Iron and Coal Company constructed a company store in Woodvale in 1917 but it was destroyed by fire in 1937 and was never replaced. This large structure was wood-frame with a gable roof located at the corner of Bedford and Railroad Streets.

There have been two schools in Woodvale. A two story wood frame grade school was constructed on School Lane around 1900 and was torn down in the 1980s. The other grade school was erected around 1936 at the corner of School Lane and Bedford Street. This building was torn down in the 1970s. The one institutional building left in Woodvale is the Post Office. Located on the north side of Main Street, the 1919 structure is one story, wood frame, two bays wide with a hip roof. The Post Office uses the name Wood so as not to be confused with Woodvale in Cambria County.

The two churches in Woodvale, a Methodist and a Greek Orthodox are located on the north side of High Street. The Methodist Church is L-shaped with the entrance tower located at the juncture. Constructed in 1911, the original church consisted of the front facing gable section with a side tower. The long addition was erected in the 1920s. St. Michael's Greek Orthodox

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Church was originally constructed in 1917 with an entrance tower at one end topped by an onion-dome. The gothic windows mimicked the gothic door at the base of the tower. This structure burned in the 1930s but was immediately replaced with a structure of similar design. The new church differs only in two ways, the apse end is semi-circular and the entrance is a small one story vestibule.

Most of the workers' houses are semi-detached balloon frame structures with end gable or hip roofs. Because of the topography of the area and the loss of some buildings, Woodvale has more open space than the typical company towns, therefore some dwellings sit at the front of larger lots. Houses built around 1891, such as those along Main Street, were of plank construction. Fulton Street, developed around 1913, exhibits the best examples of worker housing. Located on the east side of the creek, it contains a dense row of 19 identical, semi-detached, two-story, hipped roof dwellings and seven small detached clipped-gable roof cottages set at the front of long narrow lots. Fulton Street runs through three counties: Bedford, Fulton, and Huntingdon Counties. The cohesive, well maintained appearance of the street and dwellings make it an ideal example of company housing.

Along North Street stands a group of four, two story detached dwellings with front facing gable roofs, plastered walls, and one story shed roof side additions. Three examples exist of cross-gable semi-detached dwellings. These three are located at 2-4 Ash Street, 2-4 Elm, and 1-3 Pine Street. When company owned, the workers houses were identical; similar siding, fenestration, and construction. When the company started selling the houses in 1948, new owners individualized there homes. Modifications, such as rear additions and new siding, varied the appearance of the dwellings without changing the overall massing, setback, and spacial relationships. Semi-detached dwellings often became two distinct elements, having experienced different treatment from different owners.

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Huntingdon Square has traditionally been set aside for recreational purposes. It lies at the center of the village and currently contains a baseball field. Initially it was the Woodvale Picnic Park where excursion trains brought picnickers from all along the East Broad Top Railroad line.

Woodvale preserves the aura of a company town although it has experienced some modern intrusions and the loss of significant structures. Out of a total of 94 extant resources there are 13 non-contributing structures. These include several mobile homes and some modern construction. One house along Bedford Street was cut in half horizontally, retaining the stone foundation and first floor. With the application of new vinyl siding, this house has assumed the appearance of a ranch style dwelling. Typical alterations experienced by many of the houses in Woodvale include new siding and windows. These changes do not alter the overall massing or character of the housing stock. In addition, earlier maps indicate the loss of several houses as well as the two schools and the company store. In spite of these changes, Woodvale retains a high degree of integrity and is a good example of a company town representing the local coal mining industry.



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Woodvale: Section 8; Statement of Significance.

The Woodvale Historic District is significant in the areas of industry, architecture, community development, and ethnic heritage. It was built by the Rockhill Iron and Coal Company which was established to exploit the semi-bituminous coal fields in the East Broad Top region. The company was the most productive of all the Broad Top mining operations between 1873 and the 1920s and Woodvale and Robertsdale, two miles northeast, were the center of the mining activities. The Rockhill Iron and Coal Company eventually operated nine coal mines in the Robertsdale-Woodvale area. As a typical example of a southwestern Pennsylvania coal patch town Woodvale contains a concentration of company-built dwellings making it significant in the area of architecture. Woodvale also retains some tangible resources reflecting its ethnic heritage.

The coal fields on Broad Top Mountain were first documented in the 1830s by the First Geographic Survey of Pennsylvania. The area at that time was occupied by a few pioneers, some of whom mined the coal. William Houck, for example, settled in the Robertsdale area in the 1830s and opened a mine that later became the first Rockhill Iron and Coal Company Mine. Mining did not prove profitable in the isolated region for lack of an efficient way to transport the product to market. This changed by the 1850s when the Pennsylvania Railroad was constructed and a spur line, the Huntingdon and Broad Top Railroad, began hauling coal from the fields on the west side of the mountain.

The east side of the mountain was unaffected by the successful operations on the west side. The East Broad Top Railroad and Coal Company was chartered in 1856 but funding to build the line that would connect the fields on the east side of the mountain to the Pennsylvania Railroad at Mt. Union was not secured until 1872. By this time several Philadelphia businessmen, Edward and Algernon Roberts, Richard D. Wood, Ario Pardee, and Gillingham Fell, had purchased about 11,000 acres of the coal rich land on the east side of Broad Top Mountain

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including that which is now Woodvale. In partnership with Percival Dewees, owner of an iron furnace at Rockhill, they formed the Rockhill Iron and Coal Company. It was incorporated in 1872 and immediately bought a controlling interest in the East Broad Top Railroad and Coal Company. The railroad was completed from Mt. Union to Broad Top Mountain in 1874 where the first mine was located and the town of Robertsdale was developed.

By 1890, the Rockhill Iron and Coal Company was rapidly expanding their operations and opened Rockhill No. 6 (Woodvale shaft mine) two miles south of Robertsdale. In November of 1890, the company completed the extension of the East Broad Top tracks to the new mine. With the opening of this mine came the necessity of housing more miners, thus the creation of the town of Woodvale, named after the Wood family who occupied several positions at various times with the East Broad Top and Rockhill Iron and Coal. By 1913, Woodvale boasted 42 semi-detached and five detached dwellings. The company experienced its most productive years between 1915 - 1917, in response to World War I and the increased demand for coal, which prompted the opening of Rockhill mines numbers 7, 8, and 9 near Woodvale.

This boom period prompted the construction of the machine shop and the power house. The machine shop/warehouse was constructed in the late 1910s and used by both the railroad and the coal company. The power house, constructed in 1913, contained a steam engine, generator, hoist motors, and a pump, serving the mine's needs as well as supplying electricity to the villages of Robertsdale and Woodvale. When mine 6 closed in 1925, the power house continued to provide power to the other mines in the area. In the 1930s, Penelec started providing electric power to the area and the company shut down the power house. In 1958, a shoe factory operated in the old power house and, since 1978, a furniture factory has occupied the space. This company constructed the addition which extends south from the original power house.

Until the 1920s, mine 5, in Robertsdale, was the most productive mine for the company. In 1926, Rockhill mine no. 9,

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near Woodvale replaced mine 5 as the company's largest operation. By the 1930s, a sharp decline in the demand for coal resulted in a decrease in activity at the Rockhill mines. Short revivals in the 40s and 50s kept the mines operating on a limited scale until they closed in 1956. In the 1960s, strip mining operations opened in the area and continue today, providing a few jobs for some local residents.

As in many company towns, such as Robertsdale, the company store in Woodvale was a major focal point in the community. Before its construction in 1917, residents relied on the company store in Robertsdale for all their needs. While the presence of the company store in Woodvale symbolized the growth of the community, it also represented the pervasive control of the company not only in the mines but in community life as well. As the major or only landowner, the company prevented the establishment of any other business in the area, leaving the miners little choice but to use the company store. When the store burned in 1937, operations at the mines were slow and the company did not find it worth while rebuilding the store for the community. Woodvale residents again relied on the company store in Robertsdale.

In, A Legacy of Coal, Margaret Mulrooney studied many company towns in southwestern Pennsylvania and surveyed three in depth: Star Junction, Windber, and Colver. She discusses the common characteristics of southwestern Pennsylvania coal company towns as being financed, built, owned, and operated by a single company. The control the company asserted from this position of power, referred to as "paternalism," began with the concept that employers were obligated by their moral and social superiority to establish rules and regulations that would improve the morals of the workers. This was quickly distorted by the companies' desires for profit.

A southwestern Pennsylvania company town, as described by Mulrooney, contained workers' houses which were usually two stories, semi-detached, wood frame with four to six rooms per

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unit with no indoor plumbing until after World War II (Mulrooney: 33). Houses were always of similar style and materials with similar spatial arrangement, set at the front of deep housing lots with individual gardens. The typical coal town also had a company store, usually at the center of a town which was laid out in a grid or linear plan with wide unpaved streets (Mulrooney: 1).

Most of the characteristics observed by Mulrooney in her survey occur in Woodvale; the streets, unpaved until recently, generally run in grid form with rows of similar houses set at the front of long narrow lots with gardens. Some variations in the houses are evident and different types tend to be grouped together. In her study of Robertsdale and Woodvale, Bennett found ten dwelling types (Bennett: 49). Differences are slight, such as door and window placement or hip roof as apposed to side gabled but the similar dwelling types are grouped together.

The Rockhill Iron and Coal Company owned most of the land and buildings in Woodvale. Initially, they threw up plank housing cheaply and quickly with no amenities such as indoor plumbing. By providing housing, the company not only hoped to attract a stable work force but also make a profit; and with ownership came the power to direct most aspects of life in the town. As landlord, the Rockhill Iron and Coal Company could dictate through restrictive covenants in deeds and leases who could or could not live where and what events and meetings could or could not take place on their property. In this way they tried to prevent known union organizers or sympathizers from settling in the town and discouraged dissension in the labor force. Similar restrictions occurred in Robertsdale and many other coal towns such as Star Junction, Windber, and Colver, studied by Mulrooney.

The company supported social activities and donated to religious groups. The summer train excursions to the picnic grounds in Woodvale were enjoyed by many all along the railroad line. These became so popular that the East Broad Top Railroad resorted to the use of cattle cars to transport passengers on

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these excursions because they were unable to purchase more passenger cars (Daily News, 25 Sept. 1991). The picnic grounds, now Huntingdon Square, remain a recreation spot for the community.

The coal company leased land to religious groups, retaining below ground mining rights. The Methodist congregation erected their church on High Street in 1911 on land leased by the Rockhill Iron and Coal Company. Immigrants from the Galacian and Carpathian Mountain region of Eastern Europe, hired to work at the mines, constructed a wood frame Greek Orthodox church (1917), St. Michael's, next to the Methodist Church. Across the street from St. Michael's, the parishioners constructed the Russian Social Hall around 1918.

The Greek Orthodox church and the social hall are physical reminders of the ethnic heritage in Woodvale. The Pennsylvania mining industry developed so rapidly between 1870 and 1910 that the local labor force was no longer adequate. Companies recruited from the increasing pool of immigrants. At the turn of the century, many of these immigrants came from Eastern Europe. "The Slovaks were the first arrivals and immigrated in considerable numbers. The great bulk of all the immigration from southern and eastern Europe, however, has occurred within the past eight or nine years" (Bennett: 17). These trends are reflected in Woodvale, illustrated by the Greek Orthodox Church and Russian Social Hall. Although members of the various ethnic groups lived throughout the community, there is one section which is specifically identified as being predominantly Eastern European. The neighborhood along Elm and Ash was known as "Hunky Hill," a pejorative term which illustrates some of the local feeling toward the mostly Catholic immigrants. In the 1920's, the Klu Klux Klan demonstrated the ill feeling toward non-protestant groups with cross burnings near St. Michael's. This also occurred in Mt. Union which has an Eastern European community and Orthodox Church.

Ethnic segregation in company towns was not unusual. The Pittsburgh Coal Company town of Cecil, Poland Mines in Green

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County, and the Carnegie Coal Company town of Cedar Grove experienced the settlement of Eastern European immigrants into ethnic neighborhoods as did Woodvale. Robertsdale, two miles north of Woodvale, had ethnic neighborhoods such as "Little Italy" but little is left to identify it beyond the company houses. Woodvale also had a large Italian population. Most were evicted from both Wood and Robertsdale after an Italian murdered a Woodvale resident in the late 1920's.

The Rockhill Iron and Coal Company started to sell its houses to their employees in 1948 and today most of the houses in Woodvale are owner occupied. The once identical houses, through additions, new siding, and other modifications, have become personalized and modernized yet the basic massing of the company house remains. The house at 1-3 Bedford Street has been drastically altered, totally changing its original character through the removal of the second story and application of vinyl siding. In spite of modern intrusions and the loss of some buildings within the historic district, the overall continuity and integrity is still distinct in the remaining houses and streetscapes.

The closing of the mines in 1956 threw Woodvale into an immediate economic decline leaving most unemployed. Besides the strip mining operations in the area, today Woodvale supports only the furniture factory which employs around fifteen people. Woodvale survives as an intact example of a company town representing the local mining industry and community development in the area. The historic district retains much of the physical manifestations of the coal era and offers an ideal glimpse of a typical southwestern Pennsylvania coal patch town.

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Woodvale Historic District: Bibliography.

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Grenard, Ross and Frederick Kramer. East Broad Top: To the Mines and Back. Newton, N.J.: Carstens Publications, Inc., 1980.

Kyper, Frank. A Ramble Into the Past on the East Broad Top Railroad. Rockhill Furnace, Pa.: The East Broad Top Railroad and Coal Company, 1971.

Mulrooney, Margaret M. A Legacy of Coal: The Coal Company Towns of Southwestern Pennsylvania. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1989.

Rainey, Lee and Frank Kyper. East Broad Top. San Marino, Ca.: Golden West Books, 1982.

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Shedd, Nancy S. and Jean P. Harshbarger. 1887-1987 Second Century: A Huntingdon County Bicentennial Album. Huntingdon, Pa.: Huntingdon County Historical Society, 1987.

Interviews with Carmen DiCiccio, 4-5 March 1992.

Interview with Kitty Orestuk, 2 March 1992.

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### Woodvale Boundary Description:

Beginning at a point at the northwest corner of 20 Ash Street, proceed generally northeast along the back property lines of 2-20 Ash Street. Turn southeast along the east property line of 2 Ash Street to a point on the south side of Ash Street, turn northeast following Ash Street to a point on the south side of High Street. Turn generally south, proceed along the south side of High Street to a point across from the southwest corner of St. Michael's Church property, turn north to the northeast corner of the church property; turn east and proceed to a point at the northeast corner of that property. Turning generally southeast, follow the back property lines from St. Michael's to a point at the southeast corner of 1 High Street, continuing along the back property lines of 1-5 North Street to the northeast corner of 5 North Street. Turn south to the south side of North Street; then proceed east along the south side of North Street (Route 3006) to a point 60 feet west of the East Broad Top Railroad bed. Follow the railroad bed generally north 100 feet, then east to the northeast corner of the Machine shop property line, then south to the south side of Route 3006.

Turn east following Route 3006 to the intersection with East Fulton Street. Proceed generally south along the west side of East Fulton Street to the northeast corner of 79 East Fulton Street, thence south along the east property line to the southeast corner of same property. Proceed southwest along the back property lines of 79-1 East Fulton Street and continuing along the back property lines of 1-13 West Fulton Street to the southwest corner of 13 West Fulton Street. Turn north following the west property line of said property to a point at its northwest corner.

Proceed from this point generally northeast to the foot bridge crossing Great Trough Creek. Cross the bridge continuing to the southwest corner of 2 Broad Street. Proceed along the back property lines of 2-12 Broad Street to the northwest corner of 12 Broad Street, thence along the northwest property line and crossing Broad Street to the north side of Broad Street. Proceed along the north side of Broad Street; turn south to the southeast corner of 34 Broad Street, thence along the east property line to the



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southeast corner, turning generally northwest following the back property lines of 34-60 Broad Street to the southwest corner of 60 Broad Street. Proceed generally northeast to the southwest corner of 15 Elm Street, then generally north to the southwest corner of 20 Ash Street, thence north to the northwest corner of same property and the point of beginning.

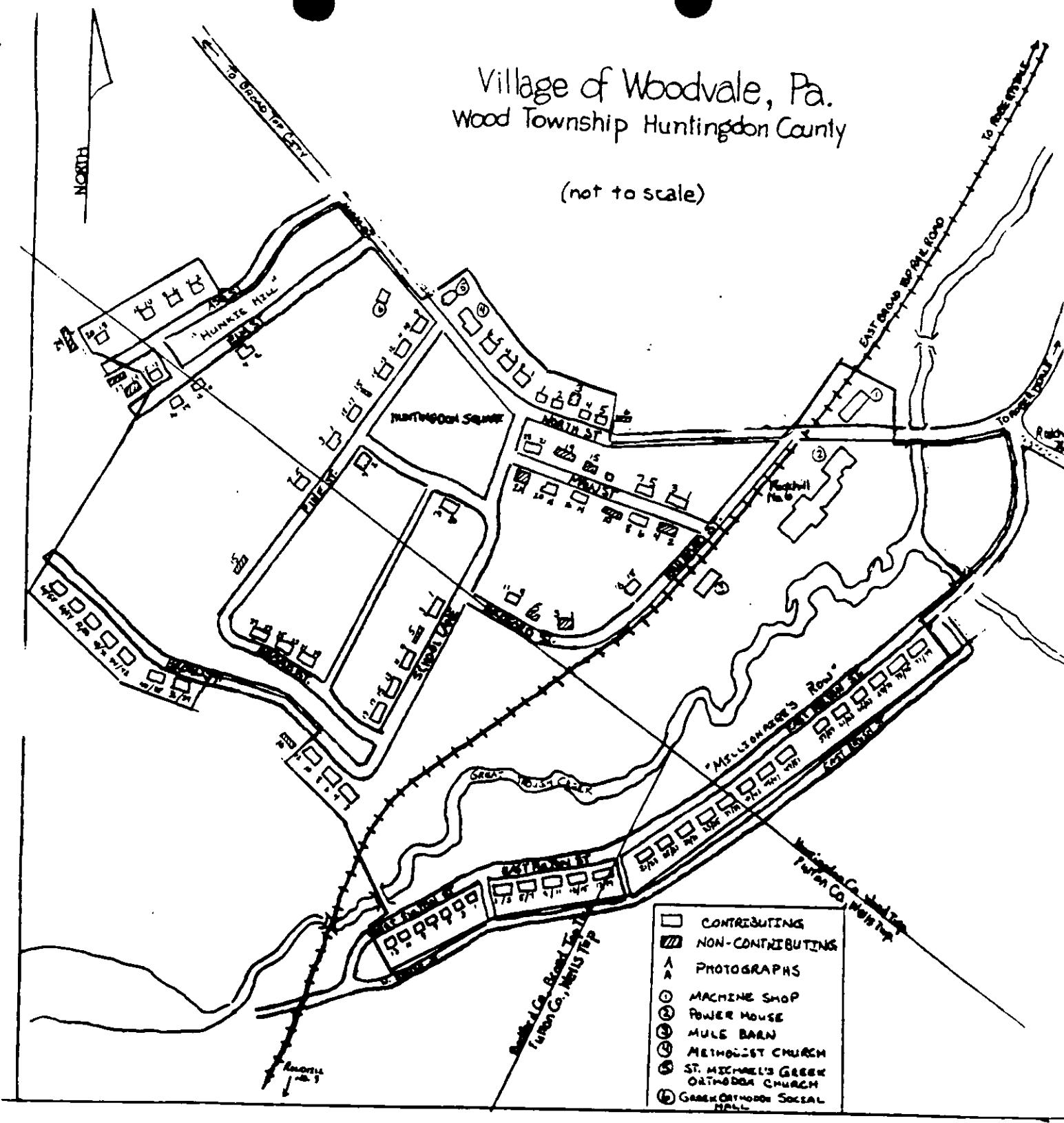
**Boundary Justification:**

The boundary includes the mining buildings, company housing, churches, and social hall that have historically been a part of the village of Woodvale and that maintain historic integrity. The boundary excludes resources that do not contribute to the district's historical or architectural significance such as new construction and mobile homes.

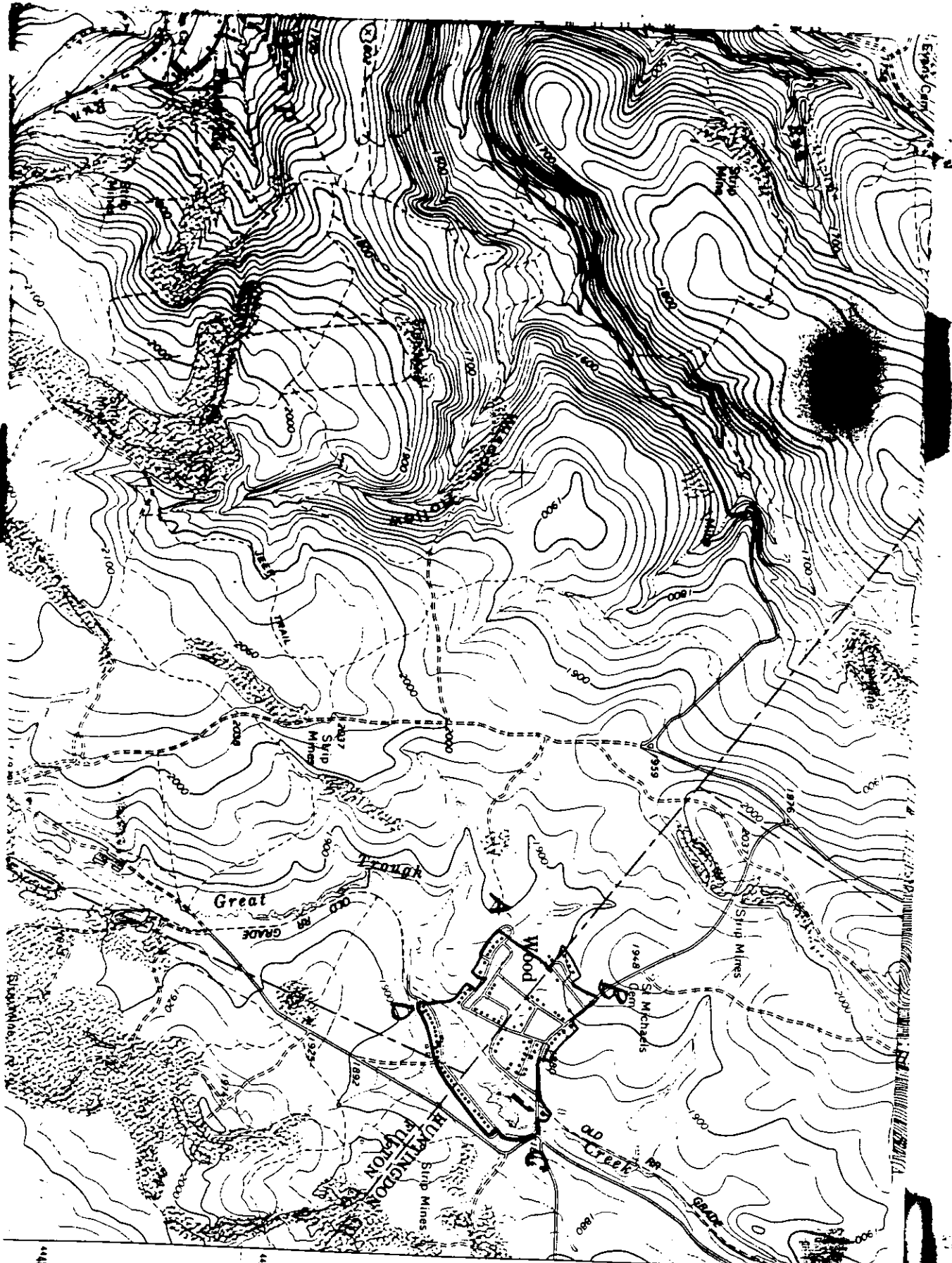
# Village of Woodvale, Pa.

## Wood Township Huntingdon County

(not to scale)



- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
|  | CONTRIBUTING                        |
|  | NON-CONTRIBUTING                    |
|  | PHOTOGRAPHS                         |
|  | MACHINE SHOP                        |
|  | POWER HOUSE                         |
|  | MULE BARN                           |
|  | METHODIST CHURCH                    |
|  | ST. MICHAEL'S GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH |
|  | GARDEN ORTHODOX SOCIAL HALL         |



Woodstock Historic District  
 Huntingdon, Bedford Co. VA.  
 Zone 10 - Section 24  
 A E 74330 N14449920 D274150 N45020  
 B E 74360 N14450380 D574370 N44950