

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Dawson Historic District

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by Howell Street, Middle Alley  not for publication  
Youghiogheny River, River Road, & Spring & Locust Alleys

city or town Dawson N/A  vicinity

state Pennsylvania code PA county Fayette code 051 zip code 15428

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Dr. B. Glass, Exec. Dir. 9/11/97  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

PA Historical and Museum Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official/Title Date

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

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other. (explain:)	_____	_____

Dawson Historic District

Fayette County, PA

Name of Property

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property  
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
107	12	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
107	12	Total

Name of related multiple property listing  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Single dwelling

Domestic/Secondary structure

Religion/Religious structure

Transportation/Rail-related

Commerce/Trade

Social/Meeting hall

Domestic/Single dwelling

Domestic/Secondary structure

Religion/Religious structure

Vacant/not in use

Commerce/Trade

Social/Meeting hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Queen Anne

Classical Revival

Bungalow

foundation stone

walls brick

frame

roof asphalt shingles

other slate

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Industry

Architecture

Period of Significance

1870-1947

Significant Dates

1872

1927

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Pringle, Thomas

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property roughly 35.5 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 1 7 6 1 4 8 6 0 4 4 3 3 5 4 0
Zone Easting Northing
2 1 7 6 1 4 8 0 0 4 4 3 3 4 0 0

3 1 7 6 1 4 1 1 0 4 4 3 3 7 2 0
Zone Easting Northing
4 1 7 6 1 4 4 1 5 4 4 3 3 7 3 0

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Clinton E. Piper, Preservationist

organization date May 1997

street & number RD #4, Box 89A telephone 412.537.2738

city or town Latrobe state PA zip code 15650

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name

street & number telephone

city or town state zip code

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of...

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*Dawson Historic District  
Fayette County, Pennsylvania*

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The Dawson Historic District, in Fayette County, Pennsylvania stands on a narrow flood plain of the Youghiogheny River five miles west of Connellsville. The boundaries of the district are: Howell Street, Middle Alley, the Youghiogheny River, River Road, Spring, and Locust Alleys. Within these boundaries are 120 buildings including 97 residences, 6 commercial/office buildings, and 17 miscellaneous buildings. The buildings in the district date from the bituminous era of the late nineteenth century through the twentieth century including numerous frame versions of Queen Anne, Classical Revival, and Bungalow styles, as well as a large number of simple vernacular working class houses. Most of the outbuildings present in the district are small and are not included in the resource count, except for four large carriage houses counted under miscellaneous buildings. Also present in the district is the Phillip G. Cochran United Methodist Church built in 1927 which was individually listed on the National Register in June of 1984. *(Photo #10)* Twelve of the 120 buildings in the district are non-contributing. Despite minor physical changes to the buildings, the district retains an intact stock of buildings reflecting the lives and social patterns of the people residing in the town during Pennsylvania's bituminous coal and coke boom.

The Dawson Historic District is concentrated around the two primary streets of the borough, Main and Railroad, which meet at a "T" intersection next to a small square. Railroad Street, which parallels the river and the B & O Railroad tracks, is the wider of the two streets. *(Photo #1)* Until the 1960s, Railroad Street between Main and Cochran Streets constituted the primary commercial area of Dawson which extended outward along Main Street to the north and Railroad Street to the west. The residential streets of the district flank the commercial core and include Griscom, Galley, Laughlin, and Strickler Streets to the west of Main Street, and Cochran Street to the east. Houses are also located on Howell, Railroad, and the northern portion of Main Street. High style houses on the town's largest lots are located near the Cochran United Methodist church. Smaller, more densely-spaced houses and lots exist toward the edges of the district with a dense concentration of houses on southern Griscom and Galley Streets, as well as Laughlin and Strickler Streets. *(Photos #26-31)*

The oldest house erected in the district predates the establishment of Dawson Borough in 1872. The circa 1820 one-story Cochran House at 101 Griscom Street is believed to be of log construction. This house has seen considerable change with numerous additions and new cladding materials making it non-contributing. *(Resource #39)* Following the purportedly log Cochran house was a series of houses built at the beginning of the bituminous era. One house was built by

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Sam Cochran and located at 214 Main Street.(Resource #28) This circa 1870s house is a simple two story frame dwelling with four window openings across the facade. At 110 Railroad Street (Resource # 15) is a 2 ½ story circa 1870s five-bay Greek Revival brick house with a wraparound porch, Italianate-influenced brackets at the eaves, and elaborate window hoods. The house has not had any major alterations to its form.(*Photo =4*) The Dawson Baptist Church (Resource #70) at 208 Galley Street, a circa 1870s simple wood frame building with new exterior cladding, was also built at this time.(*Photo =11*)

The 1880s saw the construction of a number of both residential and commercial buildings, examples of which can be found throughout the district. At 203 Railroad Street is (Resource #24), a two story frame building with a flat roof and carved brackets at the eaves. A simple 2 ½ story vernacular frame building with intact storefront windows and a sloping flat roof stands at 200 Railroad Street.(Resource #17) A two story frame building with a gable roof and two storefronts with separate entrances is located at 112 Railroad Street.(Resource #16) It was used as a store/meat market.(*Photos =3 and =4*) These buildings all have asbestos and asphalt siding applied to the exteriors. At 201 Howell Street (Resource # 30) is a two story frame building formerly used as a store which subsequently has been converted to apartments.(*Photo =8*) It has a hipped roof and intact two-over-two double hung windows. At 100 Railroad Street (Resource #13) is a two story frame row building with a flat roof, intact one-over-one double hung sash windows and is clad in asphalt shingles.(*Photo =6*)

A number of larger more stylistically sophisticated houses were built as coal and coke wealth increased in the town, including the W. H. Cochran House (Resource #38) at number 206 Railroad Street and the Snyder House (Resource #56) at number 307 Railroad Street. Both of these houses were built in the 1880s. The W. H. Cochran house is a 2 ½ story five-bay frame Queen Anne style dwelling with a large wraparound porch, two-over-two double hung sash windows, shutters, and small fishscale shingles. Some of the exterior cladding has been replaced; but, much of the house is intact.(*Photo =13*) The Snyder house is a 1 ½ story frame Queen Anne dwelling with a hipped roof, tower, gable ends with fishscale shingles, and spindle work. It is covered with clapboards and wood shingles and has a wraparound porch. The house has only had minor alterations.(*Photo =14*) The Rist House (Resource # 37) at number 201 Griscom Street is a 2 ½ story circa 1880s five bay frame dwelling with Italianate brackets, hipped roof, and door with leaded glass sidelights and transom. Many of the original exterior cladding materials have been

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replaced. *(Photo #15)* At 202 Howell Street is the Methodist Church's caretaker's house (Resource #33) It is a circa 1880s two story, frame, five bay dwelling with original clapboards and window trim. *(Photo #21)*

The 1890s were characterized by the erection of some of the most distinctive buildings still standing in Dawson. The 1897 Queen Anne style brick bank building (Resource #25) at 200-206 Main Street, defined by a turret with a conical roof, is the most prominent of the commercial/office buildings in the district. *(Photo #2)* This building originally housed the First National Bank and several offices for coal and coke companies on the first floor and offices and residences on the upper floors. It is a 2 ½ story building with a rusticated stone foundation, stone sills, painted brick walls, a steeply pitched faux mansard roof of slate and several dormers with arched windows. At the southwest corner of the building is the former entrance to the bank which is emphasized by a turret at the second and third floors of the building and topped with a conical roof. The building has had minimal alterations.

At 112 Laughlin Street, is the former opera house which is now used as a Masonic Hall. (Resource #97) The circa 1890 2 ½ story frame building has had numerous exterior changes, including changes to the windows and new aluminum siding on the exterior. It retains an elaborate painted canvas ceiling inside. Along the B & O tracks at 102 Railroad Street is the former B & O station (Resource #14) for Dawson. *(Photo #5)* This circa 1890s small, flat roofed, utilitarian frame building has intact six-over-six double hung sash windows, original wood freight doors, original board and batten siding and has seen little change. Next to the First National Bank Building at 208 Main Street (Resource #26) is a circa 1890s 2 ½ story frame stable/warehouse with a standing seam metal roof and cupola. *(Photo #7)* It has intact clapboard siding, original two-over-two double hung sash windows, and some original doors.

The most elaborate house in Dawson was built by Cochran. The James Cochran House (Resource #19) at 201 Main Street, across the street from the First National Bank, is a 2 ½ story, irregularly-shaped, high style Queen Anne style frame dwelling. It has a hipped roof of slate, brick-corbeled chimneys, several turrets with conical roofs, wood shingles both square and shaped, clapboard siding, and a wraparound porch with columns. *(Photo #12)* The facade of the James Cochran House has a second story recessed porch. The house retains nearly all its original features.

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Another large, less elaborate house across town is located at 108 Strickler Street. (Resource #118) This circa 1890 large frame Queen Anne style house with wraparound porch and original wood siding has a contributing frame carriage house (Resource # 117) to the rear. (Photo 30) Another of the contributing carriage houses (Resource #105) in the district is located behind the simple Queen Anne house at 112 Laughlin Street. It dates to the 1890s.

Late nineteenth century vernacular buildings characterize a large portion of the district. These contributing residential buildings are concentrated on Galley, Laughlin, Strickler, and Cochran Streets with some houses on portions of Main and Griscom Streets. (Photos #21 and #22) They are simpler frame versions of late nineteenth and early twentieth century styles. The houses are typically two stories, three to five windows wide, each with a front porch. Many of the houses have intact details such as two-over-two windows, clapboard siding, and simple chamfered porch posts. (Photo #28) Some of the houses, especially along Galley, Laughlin, and Strickler Streets, appear to be company-built houses, each with four window openings, gable roof, full length front porch with chamfered porch posts and two-over-two windows. (Photos #24 and #25) Some of the houses are duplexes. They contributing to the district both with their uniform set-backs from the street and repeated house forms.

Despite the beginning of a decline in the coal and coke industry buildings continued to be constructed in Dawson during the early twentieth century. At 202 Griscom Street (Resource #46) is the former parsonage to the United Methodist Church. (Photo #16) This is the only brick house in the district. It is a 2 ½ story circa 1904 three-bay Classical Revival style dwelling. It has a hipped roof, pedimented dormers, and one large central dormer with a broken pediment and scrolls. The house was moved to this site in the 1920s to make room for the present United Methodist Church. Other than being moved, the house has had few alterations. To the rear of the property is a contributing brick carriage house. (Resource #47) Another house from this period is a Cochran-owned house at 110 Griscom Street. (Resource #45) (Photo #20) This 2 ½ story circa 1910 frame Colonial Revival style house with gambrel roof has a gable end Palladian window. While the form and windows are intact, the exterior cladding has been replaced. The current Methodist Church parsonage (Resource #35) is located at 205 Griscom Street. (Photos #18 and #19) This circa 1920 2 ½ story eclectic craftsman style dwelling has a first floor clad in brick veneer. Behind the house is a similarly styled 1½ story contributing carriage house. (Resource #36) Both of these buildings retain their original materials and detailing.



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Commercial buildings were also erected in Dawson between the 1920s and the 1940s including an intact 1920s concrete block two story brick market at 413 Railroad Street (Resource #86), and the unaltered circa 1940s Art Moderne style brick clad gas station/garage at 213 Main Street.(Resource #23)(Photo #9) At 100 Laughlin Street is Calhoun's Garage an intact circa 1940s concrete block garage. (Resource #92)

Only twelve of the 120 buildings in the district are non-contributing since they were either built outside of the period of significance or have altered materials and/or openings to the degree that they no longer reflect the period of significance. Presence of these scattered non-contributing buildings in the district is minimal since the buildings are of a similar scale to the surrounding buildings. These buildings include the circa 1968 Post Office at 101 Railroad Street (Resource #12), the concrete block building at 202 Railroad Street (Resource #18), and three houses: 209 Main Street (Resource #21), 216 Main Street (Resource #29), and 101 Griscom Street.(Resource #39) Two non-contributing trailers are located at 211 Main Street (Resource #22) and 219 Laughlin Street.(Resource #104) At 211 Galley Street is the non-contributing fire hall (Resource #53), and the Bell Telephone Building stands at 108 Laughlin Street. (Resource #95) A non-contributing garage stands at 114 Laughlin Street.(Resource #99) Two concrete block buildings are located at 507 River Road. (Resources #107 & 108)

To a large degree, Dawson's architectural fabric and small town character has remained intact since its rise to prominence during the bituminous area. Subsequent years have seen few new buildings constructed, however some of the original commercial buildings, especially along the southeastern side of Railroad Street, were torn down in the 1960s. Despite this loss, the district still presents a cohesive statement of bituminous era, Dawson's period of greatest prosperity.

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The Dawson Historic District is significant for industry under criterion "A" of the National Register in the area of Industry as Dawson played an important role as a residential community for management, workers, and the prominent Cochran family during the bituminous era. Hickman Run, just east of Dawson, was the site of some of the first beehive coke ovens in western Pennsylvania. In addition Dawson served as a commercial and transportation center for the surrounding coal and coke region. Dawson is also significant for Architecture under criterion "C" of the National Register as an example of a vital Youghiogheny River community whose variety of architecture, constructed between 1870 and 1947, corresponds to its associated coal and coke driven prosperity. Despite economic hardships of recent decades which caused other similar towns to lose significant historic fabric, a large number of buildings survive from Dawson's period of historical significance, the bituminous coal and coke era.

**Dawson's Development**

The flat, fertile land on which Dawson was eventually built was originally part of a 368 acre tract of land called Prospect, settled in the late 1780s by John Smilie. Smilie was a prominent political figure who helped frame state and national constitutions and served in the United States Congress. The Smilies operated a sawmill west of the present borough line near Smilie Run. They established a noted boat building center where flatboats were made for conveying sand, stone, iron, and cinders from this part of Fayette County down the Youghiogheny River to markets at Pittsburgh and beyond. John Smilie died in 1812 and passed the property to his son, Robert.

In 1852, James P. Smilie, son of Robert, sold 61 acres, in which the majority of the present district lies, to George Dawson of Brownsville. Alfred Howell, son-in-law of George Dawson subsequently became the owner of the land on which Dawson stands by marrying Dawson's daughter. Howell surveyed the land and laid out 28 lots in 1866. In 1871 eighty additional lots were planned for a total of 108. Most of these 108 lots are included in the present historic district boundaries. By 1872, the 108 lots were incorporated as Dawson Borough. As the town continued to grow, additional houses, stores, and a hotel were built.

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By the 1880s the coke industry was thriving, with Fayette County dominating the industry in the national market. According to Sarah Heald, editor of *Fayette County: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites*, during this period Fayette County was home to 14 coke works and 4,188 coke ovens. The Cochran family's Washington Coal and Coke Company opened three mines and a coke works, as well as establishing the patch town of Star Junction about six miles from Dawson. The effects of coal and coke in conjunction with the expansion of the rail yards at nearby Dickerson Run to transport the products lead the population of Dawson to increase from 453 in 1880 to 668 by 1890.

... Dawson soon emerged as a local center for middle and managerial class industrial workers associated with coal, coke, and related industries. Several firms operated nearby mines and had homes offices in Dawson at the National Bank Building including Washington Coal and Coke Company, Juniata Coke Company, J. R. Laughery and Sons, Brown and Cochran, and James Cochran and Sons. A number of miners and other members of the working class also lived in Dawson. The Cochran family, with farming origins in nearby Upper Tyrone Township prior to the development of Dawson, were among the most prominent families in the area. (Various members of the Cochran family played roles in the development of Dawson rather than one individual, therefore, Criterion B was not appropriate for this nomination.) Although the Cochran family alone did not create Dawson, and although they were not its only enterprising citizens, the subsequent wealth they amassed, in developing the Washington Coal and Coke Company, was responsible for a number of buildings in town. The Cochrans were a very civic-minded family and became the benefactors of the town.

Dawson reached its pinnacle of coal and coke prominence between the years of 1890-1910. In Fowler's the turn-of-the-century Bird's Eye view, Dawson is depicted as a densely settled community of five churches, a school, an opera house, three hotels, a doctor, dentist, as well as a fruit store, general store, meat market, and bakery. By 1910 the population of Dawson peaked at 1,800 people. Many of these people were drawn to the area by the employment opportunities in the mines and coke works surrounding Dawson as well as management level jobs in coal and coke companies.

After this period prosperity, some of the surrounding local mines and adjacent coke ovens begin to close since their coal supplies were depleted. By 1920, Dawson's population dropped to

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956. Employment remained high in the area through the 1920s despite continued advances in technology and less need for manual labor. According Heald, by the close of the First World War, 60% of the coke in the United States was made in by-product ovens. Heald also reveals that the number of beehive ovens fell from 93,901 in 1906 to 63,957 in 1922. A national coal strike in 1922 also foreshadowed the industry's demise. Locally, the early 1930s saw to sale of the Cochran-owned Washington Coal and Coke Company to H.C. Frick.

The gradual shift from beehive ovens to rectangular ovens and finally by-product ovens built on the site of the steel mills in Pittsburgh was the primary reason for the end of the coal and coke era. Heald's work states that the advantage of rectangular ovens over the beehive ovens was that rectangular ovens allowed for recovery of coal gases during the coking process. The H.C. Frick Company, the largest owner of ovens and part of the larger steel-oriented United States Steel, was not building rectangular ovens in Fayette County since it had already built a bank of by-product ovens adjacent to the United States Steel Plant in Clairton in 1916. Eventually, the by-product oven superseded both the beehive and rectangular oven. The change from coking the coal on-site to shipping it to by-product ovens near plants in Pittsburgh was the final blow to the industry. The coal mines in Fayette County typically remained open until the coal was depleted, regardless of conversion to rectangular or by-product ovens.

Following this, Dawson slowly became an insular village, one of many small, isolated communities in the Youghiogheny Valley. The community's workforce began commuting to jobs farther away. Workers found employment in the Pittsburgh area steel mills, large by-product coke works near Pittsburgh, and in retail and service establishments in the larger surrounding towns. Most of the Connellsville Coke region had been exhausted by 1950. By the 1980s, Dawson experienced its portion of regional economic trauma as many large industries shut down in the Pittsburgh area. Younger workers left the area in search of employment, while others accepted lower paying jobs in service industries. According to census records, Dawson's population has since fallen to 536, less than one third of its early twentieth century peak. In the same period, much of Dawson's population fell below the poverty line.

**Architectural Significance**

Dawson is similar to larger Fayette County coal centers such as Connellsville and Uniontown, with a combination of higher style, vernacular, and commercial architecture. In these

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towns central development and planning did not exist to the degree it did in company-owned patch towns. Connellsville and Uniontown developed as a result of their locations near transportation and railroad lines, and in the case of Connellsville, proximity to the Youghiogheny River. Patches were typically in isolated areas built adjacent to the coke works they served. Patch towns close to Dawson such as Star Junction in Perry Township, Fayette County were geographically divided by distinct areas of larger vernacular houses for the owners and managers with separate vernacular duplexes for the workers. Commercial buildings, other than the company-owned store, did not exist in patches. Patches often were erected quickly with little thought of their long-term durability. They were built to meet the demands of a growing workforce employed by the coal and coke industry. In contrast to this, Dawson not only offered a place to live, but also included commercial buildings in a vital business district. Dawson emerged as a compact town where coal and coke operators built a variety of large houses adjacent to the equally diverse houses of their working class employees with little distinction in hierarchy, as was typical in coal patch towns. For a town of its small size, Dawson's uniqueness is still reflected in high style houses, commercial buildings, and vernacular working class houses. Similar to the larger towns of Fayette County, Dawson was built along the Youghiogheny River close to the railroad and was noted for its steam-powered sawmill, building of flat boats, manufacturing of firebrick and iron casings prior to the rise of a single dominant industry focused on the extraction of coal and coke.

The earliest known house in the district is located at 101 Griscom Street (Resource #39). Following this, growth began in earnest in circa 1870 with buildings such as the Greek Revival Wurtz House with Italianate details at 110 Railroad Street (Resource #15). This house was subsequently followed by various groups of houses, the bank building, (Resource #25) and the James Cochran House (Resource #19) both on Main Street. More vernacular worker houses were also built in the 1880s and 1890s along Galley, Laughlin, Strickler, and Cochran Streets. It was also during this time that many large-scale management-owned houses of the Cochrans and others were built in addition to the 1897 Cochran Bank Building.

In 1900, as a testament to the wealth amassed by one of the prominent Dawson families combined with continued hope in the coal and coke industry and the town of Dawson, Sarah Cochran financed the construction of a more substantial brick Methodist Church building on the site of the original Methodist Church on Griscom Street. In 1904, a lot adjoining the church was purchased for construction of a brick parsonage. As a result of coal and coke prosperity in the

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early twentieth century, the membership of the church grew to roughly 400, and Sarah Cochran, influenced by a recent European tour, erected a third, larger Gothic style building in the place of the second reflect the stability of the family's fortune and its benevolence to the community. The architect for the church was Thomas Pringle. Building the new church required more land and moving the brick parsonage across Griscom Street to the corner of Griscom and Railroad Street (Resource #46), the site of the then recently razed Newmyer mansion. The demise of the Newmyer mansion was not related to relocation of the parsonage. Another frame house was also moved from the corner of Griscom and Howell Streets to a lot at the northeast corner of the church property (Resource #33), on Howell Street. This house was subsequently used to house the church caretaker. Once the property was cleared in 1923, construction started on the auditorium portion building, followed by a Sunday School, and finally the sanctuary, which was complete in 1927. In later years the Moore House next to the church on Griscom Street (Resource #35) was given to the church for use as a parsonage while the other parsonage was sold.

Few substantial buildings other than a gas station, a store and some other small garages were built in Dawson between the decline of the coal and coke industry and the late 1940s. The lack of major industry and money resulted in a largely unaltered building stock. The significant surviving architecture of Dawson is a direct product of the town's association with the bituminous coal and coke industry.

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*Dawson Historic District  
Fayette County, Pennsylvania*

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***BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES***

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National Park Service**

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*Dawson Historic District  
Fayette County, Pennsylvania*

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Please refer to attached Dawson Historic District Map.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary includes buildings historically associated with development of Dawson during its period of significance. Sections of Dawson to the east and west were excluded from the boundaries due to a significant loss of architectural integrity.



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National Park Service

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 97001252 Date Listed: 11/5/97

Dawson Historic District Fayette PA  
Property Name: County: State:

Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Patricia Anderson  
Signature of the Keeper

12/17/97  
Date of Action

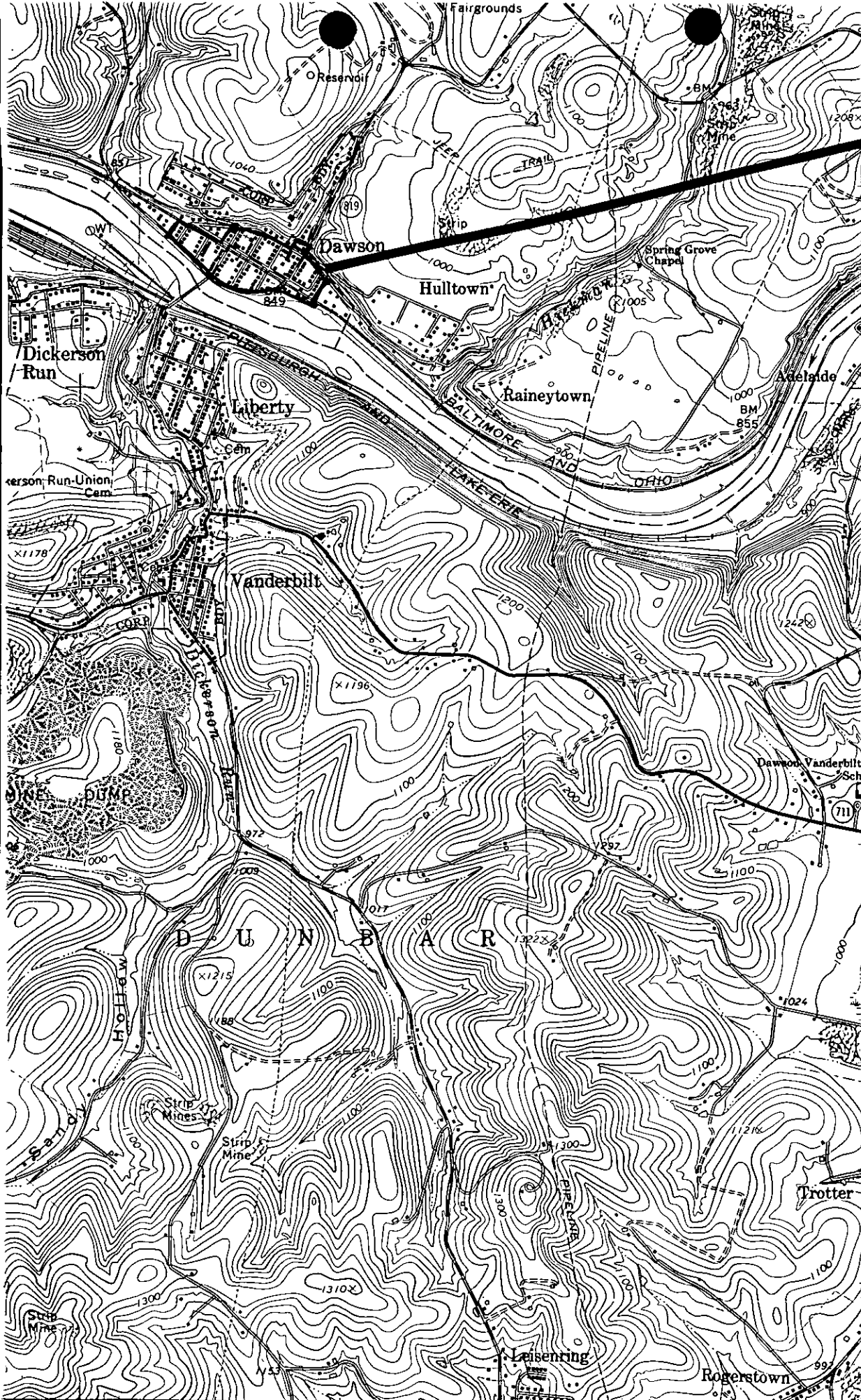
=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

This SLR makes a technical correction to the form. The UTMs provided on the registration form are different from the UTMs recorded on the USGS map. The SHPO has informed us that the UTMs on the USGS map are the correct set. These will be entered in the database.

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DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)





Dawson Historic District  
 Fayette County,  
 Dawson Quad  
 Zone 17

1. 614860  
 4433540
2. 614800  
 4433400
3. 614110  
 4433120
4. 614415  
 4433130

CONNELLSVILLE 1.7 MI.  
 NORMALVILLE 10 MI.