### 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 nameGunter Building   |   |
| other names/site number  |   |
| 2. Location  |   |
|  | ·   |
|  | NDAnot for publication  |
| city or townSpruce Pine  | NZAvicinity   |
| state North Carolina code NC   | county <u>Mitchell</u> code <u>121</u> zip code <u>28777</u>                |
| 3. State/Federal Agency Certification  |   |
|  |   |
| request for determination of eligibility meets the d<br>Historic Places and meets the procedural and profess | HPO 2/5/02-   |
| State of Federal agency and bureau   | artarar nesources   |
| Citato en rodorar agonto, ana baroas   |   |
| In my opinion, the property  meets does not m comments.)   | eet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional |
| Signature of certifying official/Title   | Date  |
| State or Federal agency and bureau   | ·   |
|  |   |
| 4. National Park Service Certification   | Control of the Kanada   |
| I hereby certify that the property is:  entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.           | Signature of the Keeper Date of Action                                      |
| determined eligible for the  National Register  See continuation sheet.                                      |   |
| determined not eligible for the National Register.   |   |
| removed from the National Register.  |   |
| other, (explain:)  |   |
|  |   |

| Gunter       | Bui   | ldi | ng |  |
|--------------|-------|-----|----|--|
| Name of Prop | perty |     |    |  |

| Mitchell,        | North | Carol | ina |
|------------------|-------|-------|-----|
| County and State |       |       |     |

| 5. Classification   |   |   |   |                       |
|---|---|---|---|-----------------------|
| Ownership of Property<br>(Check as many boxes as apply)               | Category of Property (Check only one box)           | Number of Res<br>(Do not include pre        | sources within Propert eviously listed resources in the | <b>y</b><br>e count.) |
| ∑xprivate   | xx building(s)                                      | Contributing                                | Noncontributing   |                       |
| <ul><li>□ public-local</li><li>□ public-State</li></ul>               | ☐ district<br>☐ site                                | 1   | 0   | buildings             |
| ☐ public-State  | structure   | 0   | ^   | sites                 |
|   | □ object  | 0   | 0   | structures            |
|   |   | 0   | 0   | objects               |
|   |   | 1   | 0   | Total                 |
| Name of related multiple portion (Enter "N/A" if property is not part | roperty listing<br>of a multiple property listing.) | Number of cor in the National               | ntributing resources pro<br>Register                    | eviously listed       |
| N/A .   |   | N/A   |   |                       |
| 6. Function or Use  |   |   |   |                       |
| Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)               |   | Current Functions<br>(Enter categories from |   |                       |
| Commerce/Trade: Department Store                                      |   | ,   | ,   |                       |
|   | oparomeno buone                                     | WOLK IN PLO                                 | ogress  |                       |
|   |   |   |   |                       |
|   |   |   |   |                       |
|   |   |   |   |                       |
| 1   |   | ·   |   |                       |
|   |   |   |   |                       |
|   |   | wanta 100 mm                                |   |                       |
|   |   |   |   |                       |
| 7. Description  |   |   |   |                       |
| Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)     |   | Materials<br>(Enter categories from         | instructions)   |                       |
| Other: stone comme  | ercial  | foundationstc                               | ne  |                       |
|   |   | wallssto                                    | one   |                       |
|   |   |   | 7 7 7   |                       |
|   |   | roofasp                                     | onalt   |                       |
|   |   | otherwoc                                    | d   |                       |
|   |   |   |   |                       |

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

Name of Property

County and State

| 8. Si              | atement of Significance  |   |
|--------------------|--|---|
| (Mark              | cable National Register Criteria  "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property tional Register listing.)  | Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)  Architecture  |
| □ <u>,</u> A       | Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.   | ATCHITECTULE  |
| □в                 | Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.  | ·   |
| xx 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. | Period of Significance ca. 1941   |
| □ <b>D</b>         | Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.   |   |
|                    | ia Considerations 'x" in all the boxes that apply.)  | Significant Dates ca. 1941  |
| Prope              | orty is:   |   |
| □ <b>A</b>         | owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.   |   |
| □в                 | removed from its original location.  | Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  N/A   |
| □с                 | a birthplace or grave.   |   |
| □ D                | a cemetery.  | Cultural Affiliation N/A  |
|                    | a reconstructed building, object, or structure.  |   |
| □F                 | a commemorative property.  |   |
| □G                 | less than 50 years of age or achieved significance   | Architect/Builder   |
|                    | within the past 50 years.  | Greene, Dave  |
|                    |  | Mitchell, Charlie   |
|                    | tive Statement of Significance In the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)  |   |
|                    |  |   |
| Bibilo<br>(Cite th | <b>graphy</b><br>e books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one   | or more continuation sheets.)   |
| Previo             | ous documentation on file (NPS):   | Primary location of additional data:  |
| r                  |  | XX State Historic Preservation Office  Other State agency Federal agency Local government University Other  Name of repository:  Western Office, Archives & History |
|                    | ecorded by Historic American Engineering Record #  |   |

| Gunter Building  | Mitchell, North Carolina                         |
|--|--|
| Name of Property   | County and State                                 |
| 10. Geographical Data  |  |
| Tot designation base   |  |
| Acreage of Property <u>approx</u> 10 acre  |  |
| UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)                      |  |
| 1 117 4 013 6 0 10 319 7 14 9 11 10 Northing   | 3 Zone Easting Northing 4 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/titleSybil Argintar Bowers, Preservat:  | ion Consultant                                   |
| organization <u>Bowers Southeastern Preservatio</u> n  | date August 10, 2001                             |
| street & number  | telephone (828) 253-1392                         |
| city or town Asheville   | state NC zip code 28801                          |
| Additional Documentation   |  |
| Submit the following items with the completed form:  |  |
| Continuation Sheets  |  |
| Maps   |  |
| A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the prop                                       | perty's location.                                |
| A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having                                      | large acreage or numerous resources.             |
| Photographs  |  |
| Representative black and white photographs of the prop   | perty.   |
| 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 <u>Jon Beatty</u>   |  |
| street & number <u>286 Oak Avenue</u>  | telephone <u>(828)</u> 765-4052                  |
| city or town <u>Spruce Pine</u>  | state NC zip code 28777                          |
|  |  |

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 Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

| Section | 7 | Page | 1 |
|---------|---|------|---|

Gunter Building, Mitchell County, North Carolina

The Gunter Building, built ca. 1941, is located in downtown Spruce Pine, North Carolina, facing north on Oak Avenue, at the southwest corner of the intersection of Oak Avenue and Topaz Street. Set high on a hill above the North Toe River and railroad tracks, it is part of a contiguous row of buildings lining the south side of the street. This unusual two-story-plus-basement building, constructed by highly skilled local stonemasons, is built of river-tumbled micaceous biotite and appears to be one of only two buildings in the town which utilized this distinctive material. Massive in form, the building occupies a sloping lot which runs south from Oak Avenue along Topaz Street to an alley at the rear of the building.

### 1. Gunter Building. Contributing. ca. 1941.

A typical commercial building in overall form, the facade of the building is three bays wide. The building serves as an excellent example of the use of locally available materials for construction. The interior framing, floors, and trim are all constructed of oak and hickory, readily available in the local lumber yards. The river-tumbled micaceous biotite stone walls form a solid masonry frame to the interior, with a field stone foundation and concrete slab basement floors. Stone on all exterior walls is set within a hard, deeply recessed mortar bed which helps to accentuate the round face of the unusual rock. Small stones are laid horizontally for the most part with vertical courses forming the lintels and sills of the windows. Vertical courses also divide the first and second floors and form the cornice and the parapet coping above. The larger boulders are laid in a seemingly random pattern among these courses, yet with intentional location of the largest stones which contributes to the overall massive appearance of the building.

The storefront and display windows are nearly intact, with the only changes being the modernizing of the original wood storefront and window framing to aluminum, and the addition of a modern aluminum-frame door. It is interesting to note that the front entrance into the building is off-center, with no pilaster above. Transom windows are covered by aluminum panels. Stone pilasters wrap the building at all corners and also divide the front and the east elevations into bays. Windows are one-over-one; single, double, or triple. The window at the northeast corner wraps around the side of the building.

On the east elevation, facing Topaz Street, the basement level is delineated from the first floor by a course of vertical stones. The original double leaf door is located at the southeast corner. Smaller single-pane windows break up the otherwise continuous stone surface of the first floor level, with double hung windows above. The rear, or south elevation of the building is also three bays wide, with detailing much like the remainder

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 2

Gunter Building, Mitchell County, North Carolina

of the exterior. Original three-vertical-over-panel doors are located on this elevation, at the southwest corner, next to an original coal chute.

Inside, the building features a typical commercial floor plan, with a single large open space on the first and second floor, supported by rows of columns. Stairs to the second floor are located along the west wall, and those to the basement are located at the southeast corner. Floors are tongue and groove oak and most walls are plaster, with some new partition walls and modern paneling added. Ceilings throughout are acoustical tiles applied directly to the structural framing, and are possibly the original material. These tiles are in poor condition on the second floor due to some water damage. Location of the original coal-burning stoves are evident along the west wall of the second floor, by the existence of the flue holes. The wooden roof structure on the second floor indicates the roof slopes from front to rear, with the ceiling dropping in height from the north to the south of the building, shadowing this roof slope above. Stairs to the second floor and to the basement are typical Craftsman style, with simple square newel posts and 2 x 2 balusters. The basement has been divided by 1960s partition walls into two distinct storage areas. Floors are concrete, and the foundation is field stone.

OMB No. 1024-0018

NPS Form 10-900-a (8-86)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

| Section | 8 | Page | 1 |
|---------|---|------|---|
|         |   |      |   |

Gunter Building, Mitchell County, North Carolina

#### Summary

Nominated to the National Register under Criterion C for architecture, the Gunter Building was built ca. 1941, as a commercial store building for the Belk-Broome Company. It is significant as a representative example of this twentieth-century building type, noteworthy for its distinctive building material, locally-mined, river-tumbled micaceous biotite. Local stonemasons Charlie Mitchell and Dave Greene, who built many other stone buildings in Spruce Pine, constructed the building for its original owner Charles Smith Gunter, a local mica industrialist and civic leader. The building was constructed during the successful mining industry era in Spruce Pine and Mitchell County, that experienced its greatest period of growth in the first half of the twentieth century.

#### **Historic Background**

Settlement in what would later become Mitchell County began as early as 1778. Most of this settlement was located along creeks, where there were small pieces of arable land available within an area of steep hillsides and mountains. Small subsistence farms were a way of life. Mitchell County was created in 1861 from portions of Yancey, McDowell, Burke, and Watauga counties. Bakersville became the county seat in 1868.¹ The area was rugged, and until the arrival of the railroad in 1903, remained cut off from much of the rest of the state of North Carolina. Early discovery of the minerals available in the area began in 1870, but this industry, too, did not expand until the railroad was extended into Mitchell County. Spruce Pine became the railroad, furniture, hosiery, textile, and mineral processing center of the county, seeing its period of largest growth from 1903 to the late 1920s, and again in the 1940s when the mining industry flourished during World War II. Spruce Pine was incorporated in 1907, and by 1923 was known as the "... mining capital of the state. ...".² It became a central shipping area for minerals and the timber industry. The commercial and residential construction in town boomed.³

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>"Historical Sketch of Mitchell County", Archives & History files, western office.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Warren Pritchard. "History and Happenings of Mitchell County". Unpublished essay in Archives & History files, Western Office.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ted Alexander. Mitchell County essay, survey files, Archives & History, Western Office.

NPS Form 10-900-a (8-86)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 2

Gunter Building, Mitchell County, North Carolina

The Sprucepine Land Company was the major developer of downtown Spruce Pine, creating a plat of the town on September 15, 1916.<sup>4</sup> Lots 13 and 14 of Block 49 of this plat, located at the corner of Oak Avenue and Topaz Street, is the location of the Gunter Building. Thomas R. and Kitty Byrd sold several lots, including 13 and 14, to W. G. Vance on September 28, 1916.<sup>5</sup> The Byrds were among many who bought up lots from the Sprucepine Land Company for purposes of investment. W. G. Vance sold lots 13 and 14 to Dewey G. Buchanan on August 13, 1919 for \$500.<sup>6</sup> D. G. and Anna May Buchanan then sold these same lots to M. A. Thompson on July 15, 1920 for \$750, and Thompson then sold them to R. E. Burton on March 18, 1921 for \$700.<sup>7</sup> These particular lots continued to be bought and sold through the 1920s, until the Town of Spruce Pine bought them on February 16, 1928.<sup>8</sup>

Charles Smith Gunter bought the lots on September 16, 1941 for \$4001.9 This deed, for all of Lot 13 and the eastern part of Lot 14, clearly indicates that the building was not constructed before this time, stating that

"...the party of the first part [Town of Spruce Pine] for itself and its successors and assigns also conveys to the party of the second part [Charles Smith Gunter] and his heirs and assigns a one-half interest in the eastern wall of its municipal building and the right and privilege of attaching the walls of any building which the party of the second part or his heirs or assigns may desire to construct on the herein conveyed premises to the eastern sidewall of its office building now being constructed on Lot #15 and the western part of Lot #14...".

According to the minutes of the Town of Spruce Pine from 1941, Charles Gunter was the high bidder on a town lot for sale as of September 2, 1941. It was sold to Gunter by

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Mitchell County plat records, Book 1, p. 34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Mitchell County Deed Book 69, p. 77.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Ibid, Book 72, p. 516.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Ibid, Books 75, p. 509 and 77, p. 192.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>R. E. Burton sold them to Lenora Wilson and Clara Garland on September 9, 1921 for \$1000 (Deed book 77, p. 334); Garland sold them to James A. Mayberry on June 22, 1922 for \$1000 (Deed book 70, p. 63); Mayberry sold them to R. L. Greenlee on April 8, 1926 for \$2500 (Deed book 81, p. 525); Greenlee sold them to Carl and Cordie Loven on February 9, 1928 for \$3500 (Deed book 84, p. 584); and Loven sold to the Town of Spruce Pine on February 16, 1928 for \$3500 (Deed book 84, p. 583).

<sup>9</sup>Ibid, Deed book 99, p. 619.

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

| Section | 8 | Page | 3 |
|---------|---|------|---|

Gunter Building, Mitchell County, North Carolina

unanimous vote of the Board of Aldermen.<sup>10</sup> Half of the sale price of the lot (\$2000) was used to pay a note held by the Bank of Spruce Pine. On September 16, 1941, Mayor Ed Boone, and the town clerk signed the deed to Gunter for "lots sold him."<sup>11</sup> In 1945, additional town minutes note an agreement between the town and Gunter for construction of a sidewalk in front of the Gunter Building, which was occupied by the Belk-Broome Company.<sup>12</sup>

Charles Smith Gunter (1882-1961) was one of the six children of Mary Jane Sullins Gunter and William Henry Gunter. 13 He was born in Young Cove near Bakersville, Mitchell County, and attended schools in Mitchell County and at nearby Mars Hill in Madison County. Charles Gunter married Minnie Johnson on December 3, 1904, and had eight children. <sup>14</sup> Gunter spent most of his life in Spruce Pine, and became active in the local mining industry at the turn of the century. He began by mining clay, feldspar, and mica, and acquired a sixty-three-acre tract near Spruce Pine. This particular piece of land was filled with mica deposits, and he began experimenting with grinding it into powder. Gunter soon became president and founder of the English Mica Company in Spruce Pine in 1908, which began as C. S. Gunter and Associates. Gunter was the first, in 1910, to develop an economical process for utilizing scrap mica, specifically micaceous biotite, for industrial use. This particular type of mica is found only in the belt running south from Big Bald to Altapass in Mitchell County.<sup>15</sup> Mica sheets were a coveted mineral mined in Mitchell County, but large quantities of mica mixed with other minerals from the sheet mica industry were often discarded as scrap. Gunter continued his earlier experiments with a dry and later wet grinding process for this scrap mica, which ended up having numerous industrial uses, specifically in rubber, paper, roofing,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>Minutes of the Town of Spruce Pine, dated September 2, 1941.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>This is yet another indicator the building was not constructed until ca. 1941. Minutes of the Town of Spruce Pine, dated September 16, 1941.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>Minutes of the Town of Spruce Pine, dated September 13, 1945. This agreement notes that the removal of the existing broken concrete was to be at no cost to Gunter, and that Belk-Broome would pay \$100 towards the removal. Broken concrete was to be stored in the storage area of the building. Mr. Gunter paid for the construction of the new sidewalk "...to make a smooth and sightly entrance to the building...".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Bailey, Lloyd Richard. <u>The Heritage of the Toe River Valley, Volume 1.</u> Marceline, Missouri: Walsworth Publishing Company, Inc., p. 422.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>"Charles S. Gunter, Mica Industrialist, Passes Away at 79." <u>Tri-County News</u>, Spruce Pine, 28 September 1961.

Children were Pearl, Hazel, Ruth, Gertrude, Patsy, Roy, Donald, and Carl.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>Presnell, Lowell. <u>Mines, Miners, and Minerals.</u> Alexander, North Carolina: WorldComm, 1999, p. 102. Gunter figured out a process for separating the mica from the surrounding minerals.

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8 Page 4

Gunter Building, Mitchell County, North Carolina

and paint products. There was so much demand for the ground mica product that the scrap material from sheet mica mining often was not enough, and it soon became necessary to open additional mines for the raw materials for ground mica processing. There were two mica processing plants owned and managed by Gunter, the original one in Spruce Pine and a later one built in King's Mountain. Most of the mica ground at the Spruce Pine plant came from Mitchell, Avery, and Yancey counties. The English Mica Company shipped the ground mica powder in fifty-pound bags by rail and truck all over the United States, becoming one of the largest producers in the country. <sup>16</sup>

In addition to his work as a mica processing industrialist, Gunter was extremely active in civic affairs in Spruce Pine, serving as either an alderman or as mayor of the town from 1923 until 1961. During his time in office Spruce Pine grew from a small village to a thriving industrial town. Civic improvements orchestrated by Gunter included the Beaver Creek water supply system, new reservoirs, modern pipe and sewer systems, sale of the old and purchase of a new town hall, grading and paving of streets, addition of parking meters, and maintenance of a municipal cemetery. Gunter was also active in the school system and local business, building numerous commercial buildings in the town, of which the Gunter Building was one. Other commercial enterprises he was involved with included a store building for the Clinchfield Railroad, a knitting mill, a cannery, a bottling works, candy and ice cream manufacturing, and an ice house. In addition to the commercial structures he built, Gunter also built many homes "... in lower price brackets. . . ", all over town. He was a member of Central Baptist Church, an active mason, a member of the Board of Education, and served on the Board of Directors of Mitchell County Building and Loan Association. Gunter worked up until his death at age 79, when he was hit by a train outside his processing plant in Spruce Pine, and was killed instantly.17

The Gunter Building remained in the family through December 2000, when it was purchased by the current owners. The building is currently being renovated for use as a restaurant, meeting space, and offices.

#### **Architecture Context**

Early building in Mitchell County, as elsewhere in western North Carolina, consisted mostly of simple log structures. Due to the often remote locations of the western counties before the railroad arrived, log building often continued into the late nineteenth

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>"Charles S. Gunter, Mica Industrialist, Passes Away at 79".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>Ibid.

### NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

|         | _ |      |     |
|---------|---|------|-----|
| Castian | 8 | Dogo | - 5 |
| Section | U | Page | )   |

Gunter Building, Mitchell County, North Carolina

and early twentieth centuries. A small village until the arrival of the Clinchfield Railroad in 1903, building traditions in Spruce Pine did not fully incorporate nationally popular styles until the early decades of the twentieth century. Many local carpenters and craftsmen interpreted these styles, and, especially in Spruce Pine, utilized the abundance of mined stone as a major building material from the 1920s to the 1950s.

While there are several examples in Spruce Pine of buildings constructed of the biotite mica stone, the Gunter Building (ca. 1941, 288 Oak Avenue) and Gunter's own home (Charles S. Gunter House, 1928, Elm Street) are the only examples of a river tumbled micaceous biotite. These particular stones came from a separate location in Avery County. The Gunter House is an excellent example of a vernacular interpretation of a one and one-half story bungalow, with a full facade arched porch, gable dormer and second story balcony, and an arched porte cochere. The placement of the stones on this house and on the Gunter Building, while forming the basis of the structure of the buildings, are also meticulously, intentionally set to create patterns and textures which only highly skilled stonemasons could visualize. The Gunter Building, while similar in size and basic form to the approximately thirty one and two-story commercial buildings in downtown stands out as the only building constructed of this unusual stone. It is one of a handful of commercial buildings built in the 1940s.

In contrast to the river tumbled stone of the Gunter House and Gunter Building, other stone buildings in town were built of cut biotite mica, with a flat face. These include the First Baptist Church (1956, Summit Avenue), Central Baptist Church (ca. 1935, Oak Avenue), a bungalow (ca. 1925, Walnut Avenue), the Crystal Palace (ca. 1921, 108 Crystal Street), Lantz Jewelry (late 1930s, former town hall, adjacent to the Gunter Building on Oak Avenue), Burleson Plumbing and Heating Building (ca. 1950, Summit Avenue), and a two-story commercial building on Greenwood Avenue (ca. 1940). First Baptist Church is a simple front gable structure with an entry portico supported by square stone columns, six-over-six windows, and striking placement of large flat pieces of the biotite stone on all elevations. An interesting feature on the rear wall is the stone image of a man wearing a derby hat, obviously intentionally created by the stonemasons. Central Baptist Church is similar in design, but with more pronounced arches at the front entry porch. The bungalow on Walnut Street is another good interpretation of the style, with multiple gable roof, arched porch walls, and dormers. The Crystal Palace, in contrast, is a three and one-half story commercial building in downtown with a central arched entry framed by storefronts on the ground level, and double one-over-one windows on the upper floors. The Lantz Jewelry building (former town hall) is a simple one-story building with a modern storefront.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

| Section | 0 | Page  | 6 |
|---------|---|-------|---|
| 360000  | Ω | 1 auc | n |

Gunter Building, Mitchell County, North Carolina

Of these buildings, local stonemasons Charlie Mitchell and Dave Greene built the Gunter Building, Lantz Jewelry (former town hall), the Charles S. Gunter House, the Crystal Palace, Central Baptist Church, First Baptist Church, and probably the bungalow on Walnut Street. While not a great deal is known about these two skilled craftsmen, their expertise and extremely high level of craftsmanship is evident in each of these buildings. These two stonemasons worked in Spruce Pine from the early 1920s through at least the 1950s. Dave Greene lived in Spruce Pine, and it is likely that Charlie Mitchell also lived there. A third person, Bascom Hoyle, also worked in Spruce Pine as a stonemason, and lived in Penland, at the Penland School. Hoyle and Greene were the masons who constructed the rock walls at Richmond Inn in Spruce Pine. While it is now known where these stonemasons were trained, it is possible that some of this training happened at the Penland School. (See working file for photos of some of these buildings and of the stonemasons working on the Central Baptist Church).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>Census records from 1920 were checked, but these two names were not listed. They may have come to Spruce Pine after 1920.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup>Burleson, Lloyd. Long-time resident of Spruce Pine. Interview by Sybil A. Bowers, 30 July 2001. Also, "Local Buildings Solid as a Rock", <u>Mitchell News-Journal</u>, Spruce Pine, 11 April 2001.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>Burleson, Lloyd. Interview 30 July 2001.

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

| Section | 9 | Page | 1 |
|---------|---|------|---|

Gunter Building, Mitchell County, North Carolina

#### Major Bibliographical References

- Bailey, Lloyd Richard. <u>The Heritage of the Toe River Valley, Volume 1.</u> Marceline, Missouri: Walsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1994.
- "Charles S. Gunter, Mica Industrialist, Passes Away at 79". <u>Tri-County News.</u> 28 September 1961.
- "C. S. Gunter, Spruce Pine Leader, Dies". Asheville Citizen. 13 September 1961.
- "Local Buildings Solid as a Rock". Mitchell News-Journal. 11 April 2001.
- Mitchell County Deed Records, Mitchell County court house, Bakersville, North Carolina.
- Mitchell County files at Archives & History, Western Office, Asheville, North Carolina.
- "Mr. and Mrs. C. S. Gunter Have Golden Wedding Anniversary". <u>Tri-County News.</u> 16 December 1954.
- Presnell, Lowell. Mines, Miners, and Minerals. Alexander, North Carolina: Worldcomm, 1999.
- Sheppard, Muriel Earley. <u>Cabins in the Laurel</u>. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1935.

Town of Spruce Pine, Minutes of Board of Aldermen, 1941.

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 10 Page 1

Gunter Building, Mitchell County, North Carolina

#### Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of this nomination is indicated on the accompanying county tax map, parcel #089017-12-5119.

### **Boundary Justification**

All of the property currently associated with the Gunter Building is the same property, lots 13 and 14 from the original town plat, historically associated with the property.

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section photos Page 1

Gunter Building, Mitchell County, North Carolina

#### **Gunter Building Photographs**

The following information applies to all of the photographs, except where noted.

Name of Property:

Gunter Building 288 Oak Avenue Spruce Pine Mitchell County North Carolina

Photographer:

Sybil Argintar Bowers

Date of photos:

February 2001

Location of

Division of Archives and History

original negatives:

One Village Lane

Asheville, North Carolina 28803

- 1. Exterior, view southwest.
- 2. Exterior, view northwest.
- 3. Detail of stonework.
- 4. Typical window.
- 5. First floor, view northeast.
- 6. Second floor, stair and view northeast.
- 7. Roof structure.





