

Form 100-10
July 1965

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: North Carolina	
COUNTY: Watauga	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME	
COMMON: Mast General Store	
AND/OR HISTORIC: 	

2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: On S.R. 1112, 0.5 mile northwest from junction of S.R. 1112 and S.R. 1116			
CITY OR TOWN: Valle Crucis (Tenth Congressional District, The Hon. James Broyhill)			
STATE: North Carolina	CODE: 37	COUNTY: Watauga	CODE: 189

3. CLASSIFICATION			
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
☐ District ☒ Building ☐ Site ☐ Structure ☐ Object	☐ Public ☒ Private ☐ Both	Public Acquisition: ☐ In Process ☐ Being Considered	☒ Occupied ☐ Unoccupied ☐ Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
☐ Agricultural ☒ Commercial ☐ Educational ☐ Entertainment	☐ Government ☐ Industrial ☐ Military ☐ Museum	☐ Park ☐ Private Residence ☐ Religious ☐ Scientific	☐ Transportation ☐ Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY	
OWNER'S NAME: Howard W. Mast, Jr.	
STREET AND NUMBER: Postmaster	
CITY OR TOWN: Valle Crucis	STATE: North Carolina
	CODE: 37

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION	
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Watauga County Courthouse	
STREET AND NUMBER: 	
CITY OR TOWN: Boone	STATE: North Carolina
	CODE: 37

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS	
TITLE OF SURVEY: 	
DATE OF SURVEY: ☐ Federal ☐ State ☐ County ☐ Local	
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: 	
STREET AND NUMBER: 	
CITY OR TOWN: 	STATE:
	CODE:

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	☐ Excellent	☒ Good	☐ Fair	☐ Deteriorated	☐ Ruined	☐ Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	☒ Altered	☐ Unaltered	☐ Moved	☒ Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The business district of the unincorporated mountain village of Valle Crucis consists of the Howard Mast's general store. Separated from the road by a narrow strip of sidewalk that runs just the length of the store, the building is made up of three sections. There is a large two-story central block with a gable roof running perpendicular to the road; flanking it are a one-story wing to the left and a narrower two-story wing to the right, both of which have shed roofs behind false fronts. The three sections present a common facade. The central section, which has a slightly raised gable, is three bays wide with a central entrance. The double door is surmounted by a three-light transom beneath a decorative band forming a segmental arch springing from plain, elongated corner blocks. In the flanking bays are large six-pane display windows. At the second level are windows containing six-over-six sash and featuring segmental-arched heads like the one over the door. A single window of the same type appears in the gable. The right section, apparently constructed at the same time as the central section, is two stories high, and reaches to the height of the eaves of the main block. Two openings occur in the first story: a tall window in the left bay and a double door with two long panels on each leaf in the right. A single central window appears in the gable. All openings are treated with segmental-arched heads like those of the main block. Above a plain frieze, a vertically boarded segmental-arched central parapet gives the facade added height. To the right of this section is a small one-story addition with a false front and a large loading entrance with board-and-batten double doors.

The one-story left wing, perhaps a later addition, is three bays wide, with the entrance set in widely splayed reveals. The door has panels like that in the center section, but is surmounted by a plain two-light transom. In the reveals and in the flanking bays there are large display windows containing two-over-two sash beneath similar transoms. The false front of this section, which rises several feet above the shed roof, to the eave level of the central section, features at each end of the facade a raised round-arched parapet. A tiny open gable-roof structure abuts this wing on the left, with a standing-seam tin roof sheltering two gasoline pumps.

The interior of the store is dominated by a breathtaking array of merchandise: washboards, apples, dog food, saddles, saws, crockery, laundry tubs, coal scuttles, clothing, groceries, electrical equipment, medicine, power saws, baskets, tricycles, glassware, furniture. The whole gamut of supplies that might be needed in a small, remote village--from wild herbs and roots to "Pampers" disposable diapers--crowd the shelves, stack the aisles, and hang from the ceiling. The walls are lined with old advertising posters and calendars. A pot-bellied stove surrounded by well-worn chairs heats the left section. The middle section has a stair rising from the middle of the large room to the second floor; a molded rail is supported by balusters square in section. Most of the display counters are of wood, with vertical flat panels. A number of early glass display cases exist as well.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Pre-Columbian☐ 16th Century☐ 18th Century☐ 20th Century☐ 15th Century☐ 17th Century☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Aboriginal

☐ Prehistoric☐ Historic☐ Agriculture☐ Architecture☐ Art☒ Commerce☐ Communications☐ Conservation☐ Education☐ Engineering☐ Industry☐ Invention☐ Landscape☐ Architecture☐ Literature☐ Military☐ Music☐ Political☐ Religion/Phi-

losophy

☐ Science☐ Sculpture☐ Social/Human-

itarian

☐ Theater☐ Transportation☐ Urban Planning☐ Other (Specify)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

During the nineteenth century and a good part of the twentieth, when most of North Carolina--and America--was essentially rural, the general store was an important commercial and social institution, serving not only as the only local source of manufactured goods, but also as meeting place, post office, and community center. In the last half of the twentieth century, however, as population patterns change, this once-vital element of rural life is becoming an anachronism. Still operating in the isolated mountain village of Valle Crucis is Howard W. Mast, Inc., a shabbily picturesque but thriving general store, a vividly typical and complete survivor of a rapidly vanishing breed. The store with its extraordinary wealth of all sorts of merchandise, its durable association with the Mast family, and its unmistakable air of being the genuine article rather than a quaint fabrication, is a remarkable example of an important vernacular institution.

According to local tradition, the store was operating as early as the last half of the nineteenth century but the oldest portion of the present structure was reportedly built in 1898. The store was called Taylor and Mast until W. W. Mast bought "one store house and lot" from C. D. Taylor in 1913. Living across the road in a rambling farmhouse built about 1903, Mast ran his business prudently, expanding several times during his ownership. Keeping abreast of the changing times, Mast contracted with Standard Oil of New Jersey in 1930 for the "exclusive right to store and sell gasoline, motor fuels, kerosene, etc."

Mast died in 1959, but his business remained in his family. The store, which was incorporated in 1951, has been operated continuously by a member of the Mast family throughout the twentieth century. W. W. Mast's son, Howard, who lives across the road in his father's house, recently retired and his son Howard is the present owner and postmaster. (This store has served as the post office for the area, off and on, for most of its existence.)

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Research by Charles G. Suttlemyre, Jr. and Catherine Cockshutt, survey specialists; architectural description by Catherine Cockshutt.
 Carson, Gerald. The Old Country Store. New York: Oxford University Press, 1954.
 Suttlemyre, Charles Greer, Jr. Interview with Howard W. Mast, June, 1971 (notes on interview in survey files, Department of Archives and History).
 Watauga County Records, Watauga County Courthouse, Boone, North Carolina. Office of the Register of Deeds (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).
 Watauga County Records, State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina (Subgroups: Deeds, Wills).

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES			
CORNER	LATITUDE			LONGITUDE			
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	
NW	0	'	"	0	'	"	
NE	0	'	"	0	'	"	
SE	0	'	"	0	'	"	
SW	0	'	"	0	'	"	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than 1 acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Survey and Planning Unit Staff	
ORGANIZATION State Department of Archives and History	DATE 9 October 1972
STREET AND NUMBER: 109 East Jones Street	
CITY OR TOWN: Raleigh	STATE North Carolina
	CODE 37

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

Name H. G. Jones, Administrator,
Office of Archives and History

Title _____

Date 9 October 1972

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

 Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



