

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Prince Brothers General Store; Berry Store

and/or common Prince Store

2. Location

street & number WV 41 _____ not for publication

city, town Prince _____ vicinity of ~~Congressional District~~

state WV code 54 county Fayette code 019

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
☐ district	☒ public	☐ occupied	☐ agriculture
☒ building(s)	☐ private	☒ unoccupied	☐ commercial
☐ structure	☐ both	☐ work in progress	☐ educational
☐ site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	☐ entertainment
☐ object	☒ in process	☐ yes: restricted	☐ government
	☐ being considered	☒ yes: unrestricted	☐ industrial
		☐ no	☐ military
			☒ other:

4. Owner of Property

name United States National Park Service Post Office

street & number New River Gorge National River (P.O. Box 1189)

city, town Oak Hill _____ vicinity of state WV 25901

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Fayette County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Fayetteville state WV

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? _____ yes ☒ no

date _____ federal _____ state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☒ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date N / A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Prince Brothers General Store is located on West Virginia State Route 41, at Prince, Fayette County, in the New River Gorge National River. The building occupies a narrow flood plain with the state highway and line of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad; it faces south in view of the New River (North America's oldest river).

The general store building is a well preserved, turn-of-the-century, 2-story frame commercial structure that housed a grocery and dry goods business throughout much of its history. A portion of the building was also used as the Prince Post Office for many decades.¹ As a focal point of community needs for several generations, the Prince General Store has achieved landmark importance as the only surviving example of a once-common building type in this section of West Virginia.

Though deteriorating, the store building is sound enough to warrant restoration. Importantly, the major features such as the front elevation store windows, are largely intact. At the first story two of the facade's three bays are filled with large plate glass windows. The bay containing the old post office entrance was enclosed, or closed down, as part of past post office remodelings. Other important front elevation architectural details are a bracketed cornice separating the lower and upper stories, and a bold overhanging eaves, bracketed and embellished with a cornice, containing a wide frieze with a running pattern of diamond-shaped wooden applique.

The bracketed wood cornices at the front and side elevations are affixed to parapets that hide a flat roof which slopes gradually from front to rear. The particular carpentry features of the roofline were relatively common among later Victorian rural "boomtown"-style frame buildings of West Virginia. Numerous buildings of this type, however, have disappeared or have been radically altered in the state.

Rooms of the building are provided light through 19th-century style tall windows with two vertical panes over two vertical panes. Interior finish boards are of the horizontal tongue and groove variety, contrasting with exterior 5-inch wide weatherboard siding.

The Prince Brothers General Store is owned by the New River Gorge National River, National Park Service, which plans to restore and interpret the building for the visiting public.

¹ A part of the building is currently used as a post office.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources

Contributing	-	1 (store building)
Noncontributing	-	0

8. Significance

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

Regional History

Specific dates	c. 1900	Builder/Architect	Unknown
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Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Prince Store derives its significance from being the last surviving building of the New River coal field commercial businesses that prospered in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and as being associated with the prominent Prince family of Fayette and Raleigh counties.

The name Prince is practically synonymous with the development of Fayette and Raleigh Counties. The Princes migrated to Fayette County (now Raleigh), Virginia in 1835. They began as farmers and over the years they became involved in politics and business.

The Prince Store represents entrepreneurial investment by a private individual during the pioneer phase of the New River coal field. The Quinnimont Iron Furnace would "blow out" and the coal would be worked out, but the store would remain. The record indicates William Prince purchased land in the Quinnimont/Prince vicinity in 1873 and had opened a store by June 1875. The 1891–92 West Virginia Gazetteer listed at Prince "William Prince, General Store". In 1895 the listing was "Prince Brothers General Store". The recognition of the importance of the Prince Brothers Store was carried in a 1937 headline which read "Prince Store Changes Hands, was once most important one in the County". Interestingly enough, the county referred to was Raleigh, but the store was located in Fayette County. This was because the Prince depot and store in the early days served the greater part of Raleigh County.

Prince was strategically located. Railroad freight arrived here regularly for communities on both sides of the river including the nearby and fast growing town of Beckley. The "new" road in 1874 from Raleigh Courthouse across New River created quite a bit of traffic (enough so, that in 1889, William opened a thirty-two room hotel nearby) and the coal mining towns downstream were providing business. Prince, however, was not a mining community. For this reason, when William Prince established his general store here, it probably was unique. It was not the typical company store of song and legend being operated by a coal company and it outlasted all the coal company stores along the river. Closing in 1984, the store is the last surviving building of the New River coal field commercial businesses located along the New River. It is a very good example of the surviving architecture of the region and, as far as it is known, is the last of its kind.

BACKGROUND

During the years of construction between 1870 and 1873, the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad (C&O) played an important role as a force of change in southern West Virginia. It opened the region to settlement and economic development. The development of the West Virginia coal industry was a direct result of railroad construction in the mountains. Numerous coal mines and coal towns sprang up along the New River specifically from Quinnimont downriver.

9. Major Bibliographical References

(See Continuation Sheet)

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1/2 acre

Quadrangle name Prince, WV

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

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4	1	8	9	6	4	0
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Verbal boundary description and justification

(See Continuation Sheet)

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

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	William E. Cox	Rodney S. Collins	
organization	National Park Service	WV Dept. of Culture & History	date January 29, 1986
street & number	New River Gorge National River	Cultural Center	telephone (304) 348-0240
city or town	137½ Main St. Oak Hill	Charleston	state West Virginia

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date February 27, 1986

For NPS use only

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

Patrick Andrews
Keeper of the National Register

date 4/17/86

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Prince Brothers General

Continuation sheet Store, Berry Store

Item number 8

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received

date entered

In the early 1870s, the mammoth construction job of excavating the Stretchers Neck Tunnel was undertaken by the C&O. At nearby Quinnimont, which is also adjacent to present day Prince, an iron furnace was being constructed. It is significant that the first coal from the New River coal field was shipped from Quinnimont in 1873. Quinnimont was the developing community during this decade.

As early as May 1874, William Prince operated a store at McKendree. McKendree is across Stretchers Neck from Prince about one and one-half miles downstream on the New River and C&O Railway. In February 1874, the "Batoff Road" from the Raleigh Courthouse was being constructed to McKendree depot. This road may have stayed on the west side of the New River with a spur road to Prince/Quinnimont. The "Table of tracts of land for the year 1872" in the Fayette County Courthouse shows John Gwinn owned property and an 1878 deed indicated he was operating a ferry, at least by that time, here on the New River. William Prince would purchase the ferry in December 1886.

The construction of the new road down Batoff Mountain (possibly present West Virginia Route 41), completion of the C&O Railway, industrial, railroading and mining activity at Quinnimont at this time probably suggested to the Princes that they should be near this center of activity.

The Mountain Herald of Hinton, West Virginia, carried a tantalizing piece on June 10, 1875, stating that "Prince and Bro. of McKendree open new store at Kettle Run near Quinnimont." Kettle Run is about one mile upstream on the New River from where the present Prince store is located. Previous to this, John Beckley, as trustee for Alfred and Jane Beckley, sold 400 acres on January 6, 1873, at this location on the New River to William Prince, Jr., for \$2800.00. Records do not indicate if the Princes were specifically at Kettle Run and later moved to their present location, or if they initially built where the store is now located.

The origin of the Prince community is vague. Although the evidence is not conclusive, an 1880 map of the New River coal fields shows Quinnimont but not Prince. Prince is not listed on an 1881 C&O Railway timetable. A map by Jed Hotchkiss in 1882 does list Prince. The postal records in the National Archives indicates that James F. Prince was appointed postmaster at McGinnis, Fayette County, on August 14, 1889. The name of the post office at McGinnis was changed to Prince and James F. Prince was appointed postmaster at Prince on August 18, 1889. In February 1889, Prince is listed on the C&O Railway timetable as a flag station. Often towns were named after the leading citizen, the postmaster or post office, or the railroad stop. The above sequence of events suggests that the railway people were referring to the site as Prince possibly because the brothers had a store there. McGinnis was a prominent family name in nearby Raleigh County and, probably, to simplify matters, James Prince no doubt used his name for the post office to match what the railway officials were already calling the site.

From the evidence available, including recently located historical photographs, William Prince in 1875 established a store between Quinnimont and Prince at Kettle Run. He may have been at Kettle Run for a few years before moving to what would become Prince. A Prince descendant believes the Princes were always at their present location; and, this probably is accurate. One historical photograph shows an early store that was different from the others. Another is a longer building and may have been enlarged

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from this earlier store. The possibility remains that there were three stores and the longer building was the second store. This elongated building, on the west side of the present store, was torn down in about 1973. Preliminary investigation suggests that the present store played a role in the coal communities. Orders were placed by people in these downstream communities and carried by the train to the store. Once filled, the groceries were delivered by train to the families.

Without further historical documentation, which at present does not seem to be available, the present store cannot be precisely dated. The best estimate is that it is a turn-of-the-century structure. Very little alteration has been done to the building. Research and structural analysis will continue by the National Park Service.

James F., the brother of William, ran the post office here until about 1922. Then, James Prince, the son of William, became the second postmaster. Prince's successor, William L. Kellam was appointed on August 31, 1937. The location of the early post office was in the building adjacent to the present store, but eventually it was moved to the store where it continues today in active operation.

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Major Bibliographical References

Fayette County Courthouse, Fayetteville

Fayette County Map Book 4, page 94; Map Book 6, page 85.
C&O Railway Map, Number 5076 dated January 30, 1920.
Prince Land Deed, Book 117, page 556. September 19, 1946.
Prince Land Deed, Book 319, page 560. September 26, 1973.
John Gwinn Ferry, Deed Book 2, page 134. April 1, 1878.

Books/Journals

Memoirs of Raleigh County. Compiled by Charles B. Hedrick.
Wood Printing Company: 1932.
History of Summers County. James H. Miller. Hinton. 1908.
The Virginias. Jed Hotchkis. Number 6. January 1885.
The Virginias. Jed Hotchkis. Number 7. July 1880.

Newspapers

The Mountain Herald. Hinton. Volume 1, Number 9. February 19, 1874.
The Mountain Herald. Hinton. Volume 2, Number 25. June 10, 1875.
The Fayette Journal. Fayetteville. Volume 24, Number 25.
The Fayette Journal. Fayetteville. Volume 25, Number 52.
The Raleigh Register. Beckley. Page 12. June 24, 1937.

Interviews

Mr. Herman Monk, Beckley, West Virginia. December 17, 1985. January 10, 1986.
Mrs. Nell Prince Harris. Charleston, West Virginia. January 6, 1986.
Mrs. Edna Berry, Prince, West Virginia. January 8, 1986.

National Archives; Judicial, Fiscal and Social Branch, Washington, D.C.

Correspondence with William E. Cox. December 19, 1985.
Site location report for post office by James F. Prince. August 3, 1889.

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Continuation sheet Prince Brothers General
Store, Berry Story

Item number 10

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Verbal Boundary Description

The store stands on lot #12, section I, measuring 190 ft. (S.), 104 ft. (W.), 178 ft. (N.), 123 ft. (E.); Map Book 6, p. 85, Fayette County Courthouse, Fayetteville, W.Va., Map of the Estate of William Prince.

Prince Lane
N 70° 29' E 279.92'

Map of the Estate of William Prince,
Former Site James F. Prince Residence

1.695 acres
Map Book 6, page 85
Oct. 22, 1985

Prince, Fayette County
(NPS Tract 155-30)



cyclone fence
N 21° 41' W 135.67'

222.25'

S 16° 21' E
cyclone fence

N 71° 07' E
40.74'
DIRT Road

123.27'

N 13° 25' W

S 73° 39' W

123.68'

S 68° 21' W 58.95'

S 53° 41' W

139.89'

No Scale

Stone Wall

State Road
Route 41

cyclone fence

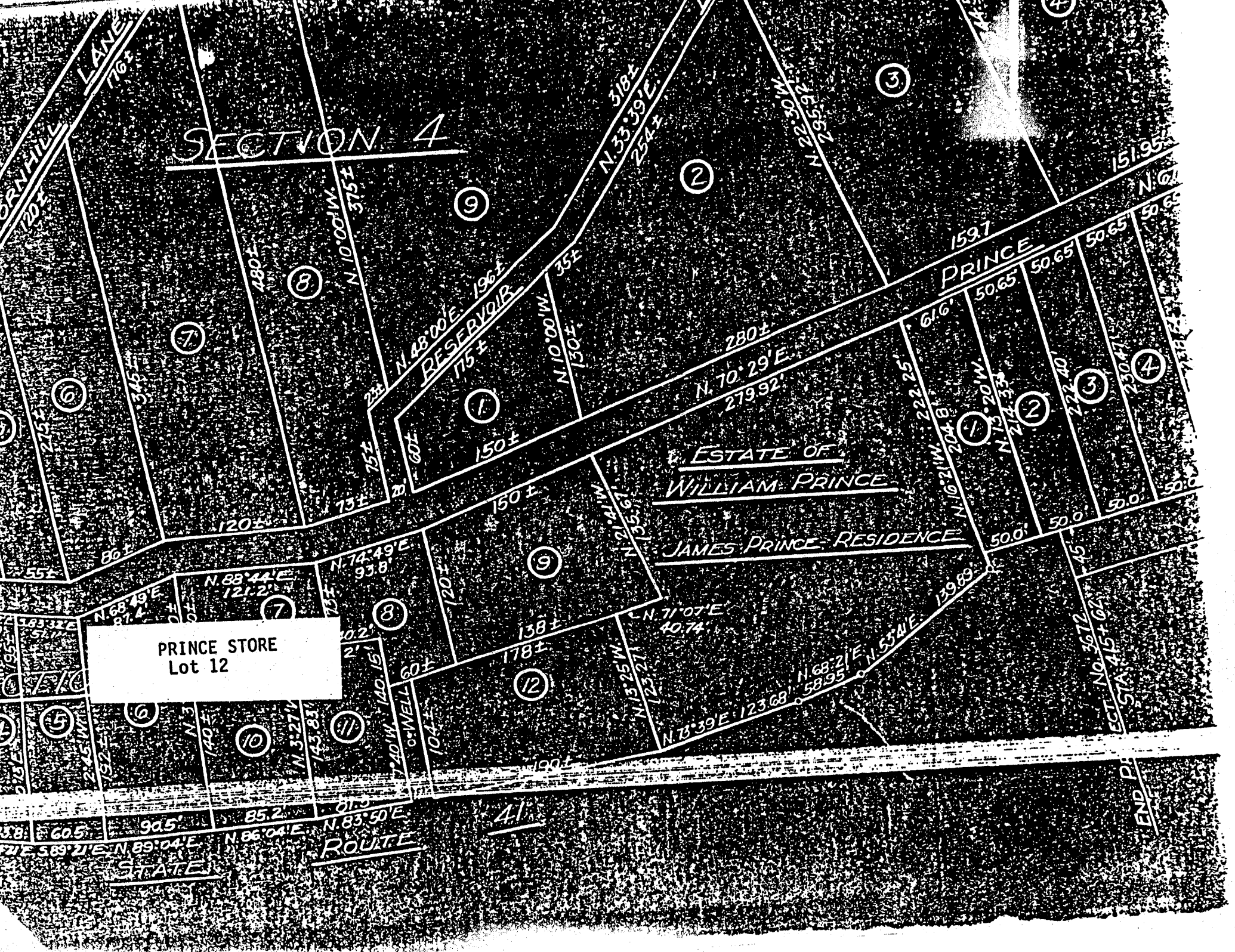
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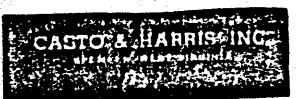
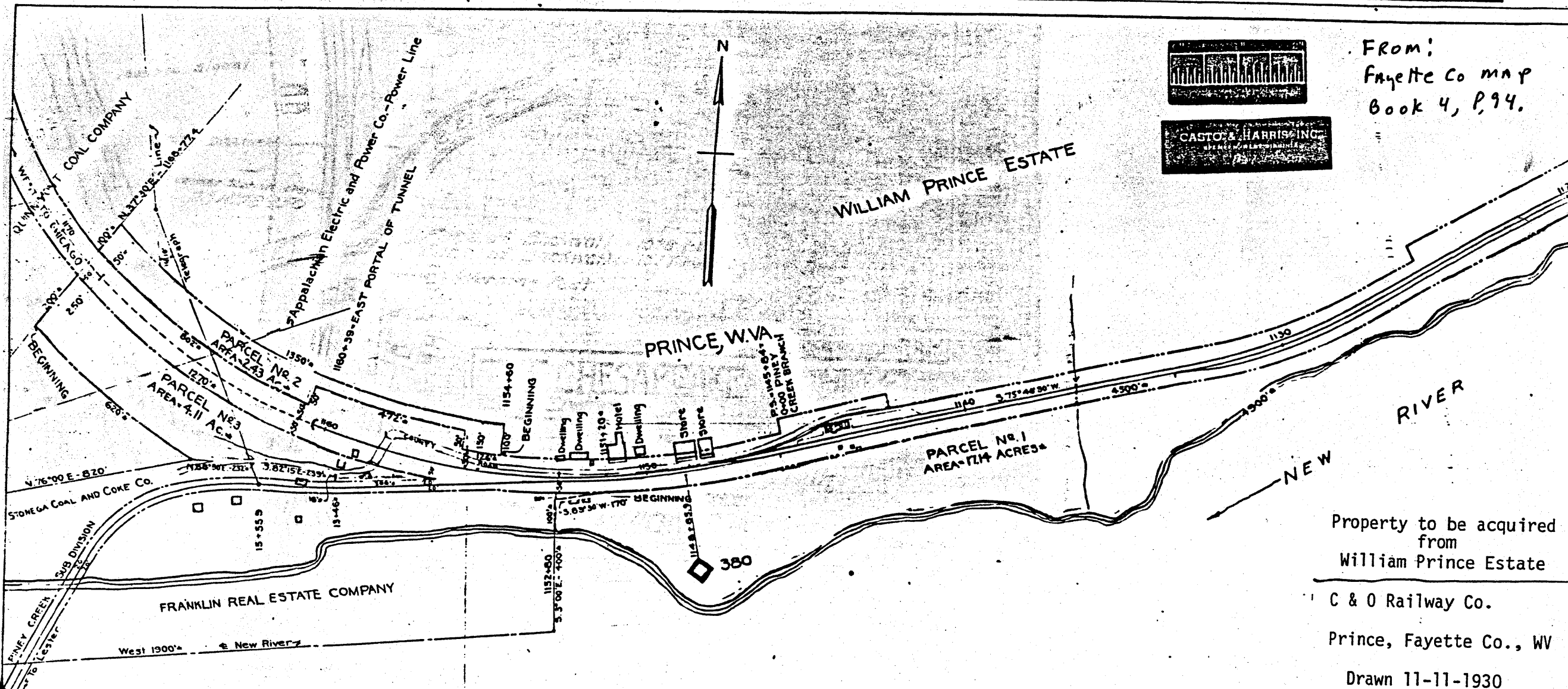
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SECTION 4





From:
Fayette Co map
Book 4, P. 94.

Property to be acquired
from
William Prince Estate

C & O Railway Co.

Prince, Fayette Co., WV

Drawn 11-11-1930
Drawing No. 9279-H-1
Val. Sec. V-11
Chief Engineers Office
Richmond, VA



PROPERTY NAME: Prince Brothers General Store
LOCATION WV 41, Prince, Fayette County

PHOTO CREDIT: William E. Cox

DATE OF PHOTO: January, 1986

NEGATIVE FILED AT: DEPT. OF CULTURE & HISTORY, HISTORIC PRESERVATION UNIT,
THE CULTURAL CENTER, CAPITOL COMPLEX, CHARLESTON, WV 25305

DESCRIPTION OF PHOTO:

DIRECTION OF PHOTO:

Front elevation facing North

1 of 5



PROPERTY NAME:
LOCATION:

Prince Brothers General Store
WV 41, Prince, Fayette County

PHOTO CREDIT:
DATE OF PHOTO:

William E. Cox
January 1986

NEGATIVE FILED AT: DEPT. OF CULTURE & HISTORY, HISTORIC PRESERVATION UNIT,
THE CULTURAL CENTER, CAPITOL COMPLEX, CHARLESTON, WV 25305

DESCRIPTION OF PHOTO:

DIRECTION OF PHOTO:

Oblique Facing northeast

2 OF 5



PROPERTY NAME: Prince Brothers General Store
LOCATION: WV 41, Prince, Fayette County

PHOTO CREDIT: William E. Cox
DATE OF PHOTO: January, 1986
NEGATIVE FILED AT: DEPT. OF CULTURE & HISTORY, HISTORIC PRESERVATION UNIT,
THE CULTURAL CENTER, CAPITOL COMPLEX, CHARLESTON, WV 25305
DESCRIPTION OF PHOTO:

DIRECTION OF PHOTO:

Facing east



PROPERTY NAME: Prince Brothers General Store
LOCATION: State Route 41, Prince,
Fayette County

PHOTO CREDIT: William Cox
DATE OF PHOTO: January 1986
NEGATIVE FILED AT: DEPT. OF CULTURE & HISTORY, HISTORIC PRESERVATION UNIT,
THE CULTURAL CENTER, CAPITOL COMPLEX, CHARLESTON, WV 25305
DESCRIPTION OF PHOTO:

Interior, Prince Store

DIRECTION OF PHOTO:

Photo 4 of 5



PROPERTY NAME: Prince Brothers General Store
LOCATION: State Route 41, Prince,
Fayette County

PHOTO CREDIT: Unknown
DATE OF PHOTO: August 7, 1916
NEGATIVE FILED AT: DEPT. OF CULTURE & HISTORY, HISTORIC PRESERVATION UNIT,
THE CULTURAL CENTER, CAPITOL COMPLEX, CHARLESTON, WV 25305
DESCRIPTION OF PHOTO:

Interior of store, 1916; copy of
historical photo.
DIRECTION OF PHOTO:

Photo 5 of 5