THE CASE FOR COALWOOD, WV: HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN APPALACHIAN COAL MINING TOWNS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis looks at the role historic preservation can play in the economic development of the former coal mining company town of Coalwood in rural McDowell County, West Virginia primarily through a series of interviews with members of varying levels and agencies of government, non-profit organizations working on the state, county and local levels and long-time residents of Coalwood and other McDowell County towns as well as field visits.

This thesis presents the history and significance of Coalwood and the issues presently hindering its preservation and economic development. It assesses how historic preservation can enhance current plans for economic development. From this information, a historic preservation proposal is presented that addresses all of the major issues in an attempt to bring a viable alternative economic base and a long-term solution.