

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT OF MERCER COUNTY,
WEST VIRGINIA

by
Howard E. Warren

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UNIVERSITY MICROFILMS
SERIALS ACQUISITION
300 N ZEEB RD
ANN ARBOR MI 48106

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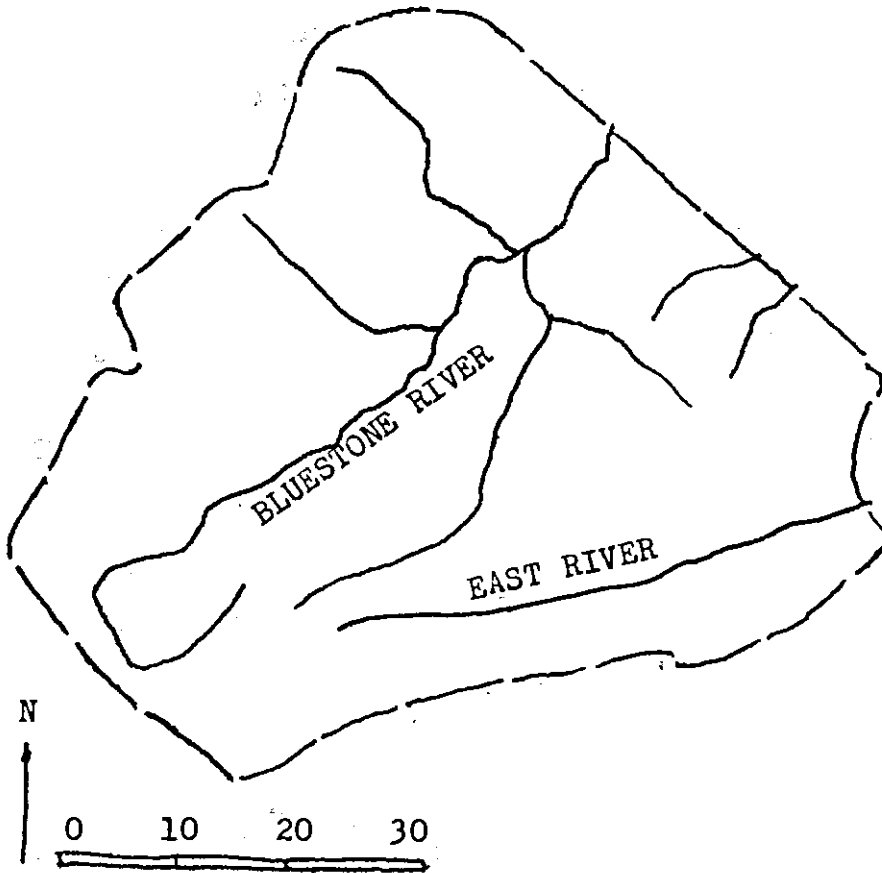
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INTRODUCTION

Mercer County is located in the extreme southern tip of West Virginia. It is bordered by Tazewell, Bland, and Giles Counties, Virginia, and by McDowell, Wyoming, Summers, Raleigh, and Monroe Counties, West Virginia. The topography of the county is mountainous and hilly, with very little level land. Elevations in the county vary from over 4,000 feet on East River Mountain to less than 1,500 feet on New River. The average elevation is about 2,400 feet. The county is drained to the northeast by East River, Bluestone River, and several creeks. They empty into New River (Map 1, page 10).

In 1837 Mercer County was established by Virginia because the distance to Pearisburg was too great for people to travel on county business. The county then had less than 3,000 inhabitants. West Virginia was formed in 1863, and Mercer County was included. The northern part of the state objected to the county's inclusion because ninety per cent of its population favored the Confederacy. The county retained a subsistence type of economy until 1882, shipping some tobacco through Dublin, Virginia, and a very small amount of products on New River.¹ In 1882 the

¹Kyle McCormick, The Story of Mercer County (Charleston: Charleston Printing Company, 1957), pp. 16-35.



Map 1.---Drainage of Mercer County

Source: West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey, Paul H. Price, Director.

Norfolk and Western Railroad, failing to obtain control of what is now the Southern Railway, extended its line into Mercer County to obtain coal.² Mercer County grew rapidly after the railroad, having built through to the Ohio River, established a marshalling yard and shops in Bluefield. The Virginian Railway commenced regular operation in 1909. This was primarily a coal railroad, but it helped to develop Princeton and other parts of the county. Mercer County increased in population steadily. In 1950 it had a population of over 75,000.

TABLE 1.--Mercer County population, by decades, 1900 to 1960*

Year	Population
1900	23,023
1910	38,371
1920	49,558
1930	61,323
1940	68,289
1950	75,013
1960	68,206

*U.S., Bureau of the Census, Census of the United States: 1920, 1950, and 1960. Population, p. 143, pp. 5-10, p. 23.

²Joseph T. Lambie, From Mine to Market (New York: New York University Press, 1954), pp. 6-34.

Between 1950 and 1960 the population of Mercer County decreased by almost 7,000 (-9.1%). This loss was due mainly to automation and other efficiency measures in the coal fields and on the railroads.³ Mercer County, along with the rest of West Virginia, received much national publicity early in 1960, as a depressed area. The publicity was due, mainly to the Democratic primary. The county was visited by Senators John Kennedy and Hubert Humphrey, and by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt.

Mercer County is now apparently at the crossroads.⁴ Will it be able to recover from this major setback and continue its regular growth, or will it gradually decline to another subsistence economy? Of course, the answer may lie somewhere between these two alternatives.

The purpose of this paper is to examine as much evidence as possible and to arrive at a logical conclusion as to the steps necessary to bring about the revitalization of the economy of Mercer County.

³City of Bluefield, An Overall Economic Development Plan and Analysis for Bluefield and Mercer County, West Virginia (Preliminary Report), City Government, August, 1961, p. 6. Cited hereafter as An Overall Economic Development Plan.

⁴Ibid.

CHAPTER I

A DEPRESSED AREA

On May 1, 1961, the Area Development Act (Public Law 87-27) was signed into law by the President of the United States. According to the Handbook of Federal Aids to Communities, this law would aid depressed areas by providing:

1. Loans for industrial and commercial projects.
2. Loans and grants for public facilities.
3. Technical assistance.
4. Occupational training.
5. Retraining subsistence payments.¹

Shortly after the passage of the law, Mercer County was declared to be an area of chronic labor surplus because its unemployment rate was at least 50% above the national rate for an extended period.² Although the county was considered a depressed area because of an unemployment problem, there were other indicators which, as discussed below, show the area to be distressed.

¹U.S., Department of Commerce, Area Development Administration, Handbook of Federal Aids to Communities, June, 1961, p. 1.

²Committee for Economic Development, Distressed Areas in a Growing Economy, June, 1961, p. 44.

Population

As was shown in Table 1, page 11, Mercer County decreased in population between 1950 and 1960. Almost all of this loss is directly attributable to the effects of a depressed economy. Of the total out-migration of 5,000 people from Bluefield, it is estimated that 3,000 to 3,500 moved entirely out of the region.³ The changes in population varied in different parts of the county. The coal-mining district lost 33% of its population, while the county seat district gained 7%. The district in which Bluefield is located lost 2%.⁴

The 1960 census shows the fertility ratio (the number of children under five years of age for each thousand women between fourteen and forty-six years of age) of Mercer County to be 411. This compares to a national ratio of 488. A low fertility ratio generally points to a depressed economy.

³City of Bluefield, People, Jobs, Business, and Industry, City Planning Commission, 1961, p. 4. Cited hereafter as People, Jobs, Business, and Industry.

⁴U.S., Bureau of the Census, Eighteenth Census of the United States: 1960. Population, I, 50-12.

Labor Force and Unemployment

Table 2 shows the decline in the size of the labor force and the increase in the per cent of the labor market unemployed between 1956 and 1960, in Mercer County. As can be seen, unemployment remained above 17% since 1958. This compares to a national rate of about 6% for the same period.

TABLE 2.--Size of Labor Market and Rate of Unemployment in Mercer County, 1956 to 1960*

Year	Size of Labor Force	Per Cent of Labor Market Unemployed
1956	24,940	6.0
1958	23,440	22.2
1959	22,160	22.3
1960	20,950	17.8

*Source: Robert Davenport, Bluefield Urban Renewal Project, December, 1960, p. 3.

Total employment of employees covered by unemployment insurance has shown a decline since 1951. Total pay of employees covered by unemployment insurance has declined since 1953. Table 3, page 16, displays the figures for the above observations. As can be seen, pay failed to drop as rapidly as employment. Employment dropped almost 28% while pay dropped less than 17%.

TABLE 3.--Total Employment and Payrolls,
Mercer County, 1951 to 1959*

Year	Employment	Payrolls (dollars)
1951	14,479	9,989,000
1953	14,347	10,437,000
1956	12,849	10,008,000
1959	10,464	8,318,000

*Sources: U.S., Department of Commerce and Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, County Business Patterns, Part 6, pp. 200-201, pp. 239-240, pp. 402-403, and pp. 160-161. Cited hereafter as County Business Patterns.

The relationship between employment and pay varied in different types of employment. The greatest loss in employment in Mercer County has been in coal mining. Table 4, page 17, shows this loss and also the loss in pay. The loss in pay would have been much greater had not the average pay per miner increased from \$16.35 per day to \$24.25 per day during the same period. The increase in pay during this period was probably due to the policy of the United Mine Workers. The union considered an increased pay rate more important than the number of jobs. "Average production per man-day

increased from 5.32 tons in 1951 to 10.4 tons in 1959 through the use of new mining machines, and this may well increase to 20 tons by 1980 since the most efficient deep mines in the area are already producing at this rate."⁵

TABLE 4.--Employment and Payrolls from Mining, Mercer County, 1951 to 1959*

Year	Employment	Payrolls (dollars)
1951	3,885	3,503,000
1953	3,264	3,130,000
1956	2,205	2,411,000
1959	715	766,000

*Sources: County Business Patterns.

As shown in Table 5, page 18, employment in construction decreased rapidly in Mercer County between 1951 and 1953. Between 1953 and 1959 it continued to decrease, but less rapidly. Employees' pay in construction decreased between 1953 and 1956. Between 1951 and 1959 employment dropped by over 48%, but pay dropped by only 37%. The reduced employment was due to

⁵An Overall Economic Development Plan, p. 22, quoting a recent address by Mr. Albert S. Kemper, Jr., a coal executive, of Bluefield, West Virginia, July, 1961.

the decline in residential and industrial construction.⁶ Pay failed to drop as much as employment because of increased wage rates, following the national trend.

TABLE 5.--Employment and Payrolls from Construction, Mercer County, 1951 to 1959*

Year	Employment	Payrolls (dollars)
1951	729	408,000
1953	582	337,000
1956	490	335,000
1959	376	257,000

*Sources: County Business Patterns.

As of June, 1960, manufacturing employment in Mercer County amounted to 1,880 or 13.4% of the total employed labor force.⁷ Since 1951, there has been a slight (1%) decrease in employment, but there has been an increase in pay of almost 31% (Table 6, page 19).

⁶Ibid., p. 42.

⁷Ibid., p. 27.

TABLE 6.--Employment and Payrolls from Manufacturing,
Mercer County, 1951 and 1959*

Year	Employment	Payrolls (dollars)
1951	1,683	1,046,000
1959	1,666	1,368,000

*Sources: County Business Patterns.

Employment in public utilities decreased by 455 (-36%) between 1951 and 1959. Pay to employees of public utilities decreased by \$100,000 (-11%). The decrease in employment was due to more efficient methods of operation. Since pay failed to decrease as much as employment, it can be assumed that the pay rate increased during the period.

TABLE 7.--Employment and Payrolls from Public Utilities,
Mercer County, 1951 and 1959*

Year	Employment	Payrolls (dollars)
1951	1,254	913,000
1959	799	813,000

*Sources: County Business Patterns.

Employment in the wholesale trade decreased by 268 (-17%) between 1951 and 1959. Pay to employees decreased by only \$14,000 (-1%). The reduced employment reflects the depressed economy and also increased competition from other areas. The above data also reflects an increased pay rate. This data is derived from Table 8.

TABLE 8.--Employment and Payrolls from the Wholesale Trade, Mercer County, 1951 and 1959*

Year	Employment	Payrolls (dollars)
1951	1,574	1,350,000
1959	1,306	1,336,000

*Sources: County Business Patterns.

Employment in the retail trade decreased slightly (-2%) between 1951 and 1959. Pay to employees in retailing increased by 22% during the same period (Table 9, page 21). This reflects a depressed economy and also an increase in the pay scale.

TABLE 9.--Employment and Payrolls from the Retail Trade, Mercer County, 1951 and 1959*

Year	Employment	Payrolls (dollars)
1951	2,761	1,321,000
1959	2,698	1,612,000

*Sources: County Business Patterns.

Employment in finance increased by 16% between 1951 and 1959. Pay to employees in finance increased by 49% during the same period (Table 10). This probably reflects an increase in competition between financial institutions of the area. It also reflects a higher pay scale.

TABLE 10.--Employment and Payrolls from Finance, Mercer County, 1951 and 1959*

Year	Employment	Payrolls (dollars)
1951	571	685,000
1959	796	851,000

*Sources: County Business Patterns.

Employment in service occupations increased by 10% between 1951 and 1959. Pay to employees in service occupations increased by 50% during the same period (Table 11). This reflects a marked increase in the number of Mercer County motels and tourist courts.⁸ It also reflects the rise in the pay scale during this period.

TABLE 11.--Employment and Payrolls from Service, Mercer County, 1951 and 1959*

Year	Employment	Payrolls (dollars)
1951	1,839	838,000
1959	2,019	1,257,000

*Sources: County Business Patterns.

The Norfolk and Western Railway is the most important single employer in Mercer County. Employment on the railway held up strongly until 1957, when the decline in coal production and the start of a two-year complete change-over from steam to diesel locomotives began to cut heavily into the number of jobs. Between 1956 and 1960 railroad employment declined by nearly 35%. Employment in 1960 was 1,041.⁹

⁸Ibid., pp. 39-41.

⁹Ibid., p. 24.

Mining

The economy of Mercer County revolves around coal. At present the true economic base of the region is identified with the great Pocahontas Coalfields which begin in the western part of the county. The railroad is essentially dependent upon the coal it hauls. A major portion of local manufacturing and repair work involves mining equipment. Retail and wholesale trade, hospitals and other service type institutions, even local colleges, have their very existence interwoven with the coal industry.¹⁰

The economy of coal is now passing through the final stages of a major transition, leaving the local economy in distress. The decline in coal production came in 1958, when the combined effect of the 1958-1959 recession, a prolonged steel strike, and a cutback in foreign export markets dropped production in the Pocahontas Coalfields from 50 million tons in 1957 to 35 million tons in 1959. During the same period, production in Mercer County dropped from 1,408,000 tons to 801,000 tons.¹¹

¹⁰Ibid., p. 9.

¹¹An Overall Economic Development Plan, pp. 9-12, quoting Smokeless Operators Association.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing (value added) is an outstanding exception in the generally depressed condition of the Mercer County economy. Between 1954 and 1958 manufacturing increased by 74%. This favorable indication must be used with care since manufacturing is such a small part of the Mercer County economy.¹²

TABLE 12.--Manufacturing (Value Added),
Mercer County, 1954 and 1958*

Year	Value Added (dollars)
1954	6,642,000
1958	11,558,000

*U.S., Census of Manufacturers,
1958, p. 47-5.

Commercial Activity

Mercer County's retail stores have long served as a strong attraction for the residents of southern West Virginia and the western tip of Virginia.¹³ As shown in Table 13, page 25, retail sales increased by only 5%

¹²Robert Davenport, Bluefield Avenue Urban Renewal Project (Washington, D.C.: Robert Davenport Associates, 1961), p. 6.

¹³People, Jobs, Business, and Industry, p. 27.

between 1954 and 1958. This small increase certainly points to a depressed economy.

TABLE 13.--Commercial Activity, Mercer County, 1954 and 1958*

Year	Retail (dollars)	Wholesale (dollars)	Services (dollars)
1954	59,858,000	79,676,000	7,411,000
1958	62,884,000	93,197,000	7,349,000

*U.S., Census of Business, 1954 and 1958, pp. 48, 7-27.

Wholesale trade has long been and still is one of the most important economic functions of Bluefield.¹⁴ Between 1954 and 1958 wholesale trade increased by 17%. This does not point to a depressed economy, but would be considered normal growth.

Service trades and facilities, defined by the U.S. Census of Business as "personal, business, and repair services, amusements, hotels, and motels," have an important place in Bluefield's economy as a regional center.¹⁵ Between 1954 and 1958 income from service trades decreased by 1% (Table 13). This points to a depressed economy.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 30.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 31.

It has been shown in the above that Mercer County is a depressed area. This has been substantiated with data concerning the reduced size of the population, reduced labor force and increased unemployment, reduced mining activity, and unsatisfactory growth in the service trades. The growth of manufacturing was shown to be satisfactory. The following facts, as set forth in "An Overall Economic Development Plan," dramatize Mercer County's problem, as of August, 1961:

1. Unemployment in Mercer County has averaged 19.5% of the labor force during the last three years.
2. In June, 1961, there were 17,463 persons in the county receiving surplus commodities.
3. In June, 1961, there were 2,539 persons on relief, excluding those receiving unemployment or workmen's compensation.
4. During the fiscal year 1960-1961 over \$2,190,000 was paid out in Public Assistance funds.
5. The size of the total county work force has declined from 23,440 in June, 1958, to 20,540 in June, 1960 -- almost one thousand workers per year.

6. The average income per capita in Mercer County for 1960 was \$1,513. This was \$173 below the West Virginia average of \$1,686 and \$729 below the national average of \$2,242.¹⁶

¹⁶An Overall Economic Development Plan, pp. 6-7.

CHAPTER II

INDUSTRIAL POTENTIAL

Mercer County is located in the Appalachian Mountains, far from the principal markets. The climate is unpleasant, December through March.¹ In spite of these liabilities, Mercer County has an industrial potential. Some of the factors that influence the area's economy will now be examined.

Labor Force

According to the 1960 Census, Mercer County had a labor force of 20,886 in April, 1960. Of this labor force, 1,955 (9.3%) were unemployed. Of the 1,955 unemployed, 1,837 were experienced. The unemployment rate in Bluefield was 5.4%; that in Princeton was 6.8% (Table 14, page 29).

The measurement of an unemployment rate starts from a base comprised of those who consider themselves to be part of the labor force, that is, they are either working or are in the market for jobs. Some workers move in and out of the labor force, and research indicates that this fluctuation in labor force participation is at least partly related to the

¹Ibid., p. 2.

demand for labor. It is probable that the size of the labor force in many chronic labor surplus areas rises rapidly with even small increases in the local demand for labor, and decreases markedly at other times. To the extent that this is true, the statistics on unemployment rates may not reveal the decline in the participation rate in these areas.²

TABLE 14.--Labor Force and Unemployed in Bluefield, Princeton, and Mercer County, 1960*

Item	Bluefield	Princeton	Mercer County
Labor Force, Civilian, Male	4,504	1,925	14,544
Labor Force, Female	2,540	1,147	6,322
Labor Force, Total	7,044	3,072	20,866
Unemployed, Male	270	165	1,658
Unemployed, Female	111	45	297
Unemployed, Total	381	210	1,955

*Source: U.S., Bureau of the Census, Eighteenth Census of the United States: 1960. General Social and Economic Characteristics, p. 50-132.

The job of measuring the labor force is done each month for the Department of Labor by the Bureau of the Census. A survey is made of a sample of households. Similar questions are asked of all households in the

²Committee for Economic Development, Distressed Areas in a Growing Economy, June, 1961, p. 21.

U.S. Census every ten years. For estimates of state and local unemployment other methods are used.³

According to the 1960 Census, Mercer County had 3,068 males and 9,504 females who had failed to join the labor force. If some of these had joined the labor force, there would have been more than the apparent 1,955 available to expanding industry. Another source of labor is workers who, having emigrated, would return if opportunity presented itself. Another source would be students who now leave the county immediately after completing high school or college.⁴

"Project Decision"⁵ gave Bluefield and Princeton, each, a 'B' (good) rating on "labor potential." Probably the reason these cities failed to receive an 'A' rating was the quality of the labor force rather than its quantity. Many of the unemployed, especially former miners, are not qualified for most industrial jobs.

³U.S. Department of Labor, The American Workers' Fact Book, 1960, pp. 3-70.

⁴An Overall Economic Development Plan, p. 62.

⁵"Project Decision" is being carried out by Appalachian Power Company. The company decides which community has the best industrial potential, based on a series of questionnaires and investigations. The company helps the selected community build a "shell" type building. For more detail, see Appendix B.

To help correct this situation, three classes of about 25 each have started at the Mercer County Vocational School at Glenwood Park. Unemployed workers are given top priority for admission to these classes.⁶ Another project to improve the labor potential of the county is the training of school drop-outs.

Courses in automotive servicing, basic building construction, welding, and basic electricity will be taught this summer in a Mercer County job preparation program for male school drop-outs.

The 1961 Legislature provided for a one-county, pilot program during June, July, and August which will be compulsory for all jobless male school drop-outs 16 and 17 years of age... about 150 boys will be enrolled in the job preparation training.⁷

The world of industry views Southern West Virginia as an area with a bad reputation in labor relations. The labor supply is abundant and capable of skilled work. The bad reputation, however, exists and must be considered and listed as a problem although this viewpoint is not deserved. The City of Bluefield is analyzing the actual work stoppages in order factually to overcome this reputation.⁸

⁶An Overall Economic Development Plan, pp. 59-60.

⁷Bluefield Daily Telegraph, May 8, 1962, p. 10.

⁸An Overall Economic Development Plan, p. 72.

Natural Resources

Mercer County has little natural gas and no oil. Whatever gas and oil that might have been held below ground was released millions of years ago when the great St. Clair Fault pushed up East River Mountain.⁹ Mercer County lies to the east of the great salt brine area of West Virginia, but there is a plentiful supply of salt brine in the two neighboring counties to the west. There are deposits of clay, dolomite, gravel, sand, manganese, and iron ore in the county.¹⁰

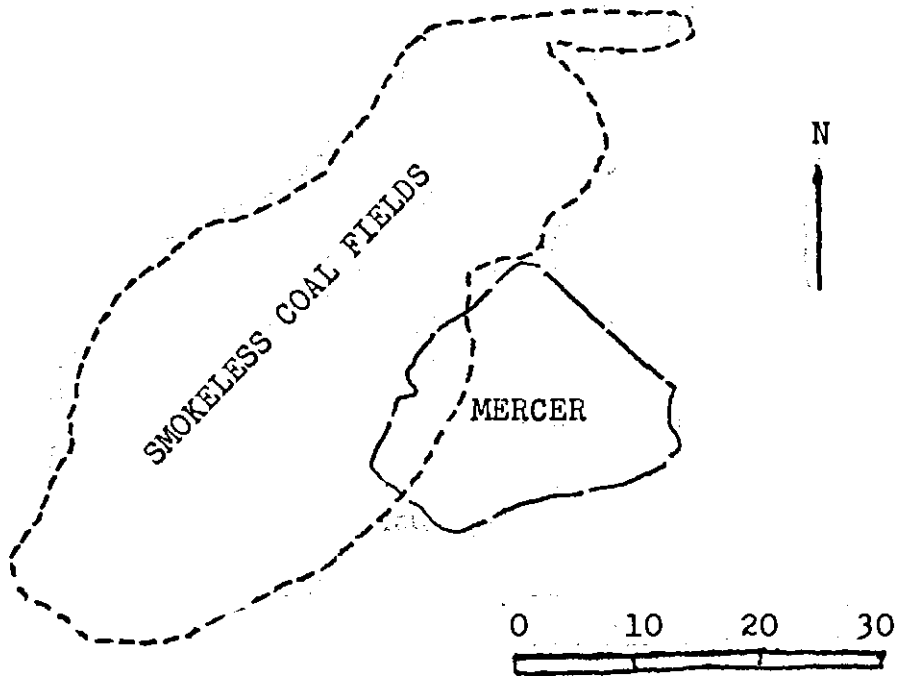
Coal

There is such a staggering abundance and variety of coal in Southern West Virginia that any catalogue of assets is meaningless. In seams of mineable thickness, there are adequate reserves for hundreds of years.¹¹ The western part of Mercer County is in the Smokeless or Pocahontas District (Map 2, page 33).

⁹West Virginia Geological Survey, Gas and Oil in Southern West Virginia, quoted in An Overall Economic Development Plan, p. 58.

¹⁰Appalachian Power Company, Area Development Department, Community Information for Princeton and Bluefield, Group IV. Cited hereafter as Community Information.

¹¹An Overall Economic Development Plan, p. 65.



Map 2.--Smokeless Coal Fields and Mercer County

Source: City Planning Commission and Urban
Renewal Authority, Bluefield,
West Virginia, 1960.

The Pocahontas District produces a particularly low volatile, high quality grade of bituminous metallurgical coal. It has the special quality of producing a coke with high tensile strength which can withstand the heavy layering pressures of the blast furnaces used in steelmaking. Smokeless coal also has the valuable property of producing useful by-products in the process of coke making. It is therefore sought after by the steel industry, not only in this country but overseas. Virtually all American and much overseas steel manufacturing uses some Pocahontas coal, usually blended in a ratio of 20 to 30 percent with higher volatile coal. No satisfactory method has been found to avoid the use of at least some smokeless type coal, although efforts are constantly being made to reduce the proportion used in the coke blends. Some use has also been made of medium volatile coals without smokeless blending.¹²

Pocahontas coal delivers 14,200 to 14,800 Btu per pound while Eastern Kentucky coal delivers from 14,000 to 14,200 Btu. Southern Illinois coal produces only 13,000 to 13,100 Btu. The prices per million Btu at the mine in Illinois, Kentucky, and the Pocahontas Field are 20 cents to 23 cents, 18 cents to 23 cents, and 20 cents to 25 cents, respectively. For this reason Pocahontas coal is little used by electric utilities or other industrial users. The Japanese have begun to import large quantities of local coal and seem quite satisfied with the product despite the long haul from

¹²Ibid., p. 15.

Norfolk. There is some chance that Canadian and Alaskan coal will soon compete with Pocahontas coal in the Far East.¹³

TABLE 15.--Coal Production, Mercer County, 1950-1960*

Year	Gross Tons
1950	2,634,000
1952	2,262,000
1954	1,339,000
1956	1,623,000
1958	799,000
1960	677,000

*Source: An Overall Economic Development Plan, p. 13, quoting West Virginia Department of Mines and Smokeless Operators Association.

As can be seen by the above table, coal production in Mercer County decreased by almost 75% between 1950 and 1960. Production may not decrease much further, but there is little chance for it to increase. Coal remains the major prop for the Mercer County economy, but coal is dependent upon the fluctuating steel economy and overseas markets. Local operators will have serious difficulty competing with other regions in the markets of the

¹³Ibid., p. 18.

future.¹⁴ Apparently the Princeton Chamber of Commerce feels that that city's future lies more with the railroad than with the coal mines. In January, 1962, it passed a resolution opposing the right of eminent domain for construction of a coal pipeline.¹⁵ Bluefield, also, seems to have little confidence in the coal industry.

Over the longer run, at least, it is apparent that full recovery and new growth for Bluefield must come from outside the mining industry.¹⁶

Limestone

There are large deposits of limestone in Mercer County (Map 3, page 37). These consist of Mississippian (Greenbrier) Limestones and Cambrian (Ordovician) Limestones. At present there are only four quarries in the county, producing for local consumption.¹⁷ The stone products industry appears to have limited possibilities for expansion.¹⁸

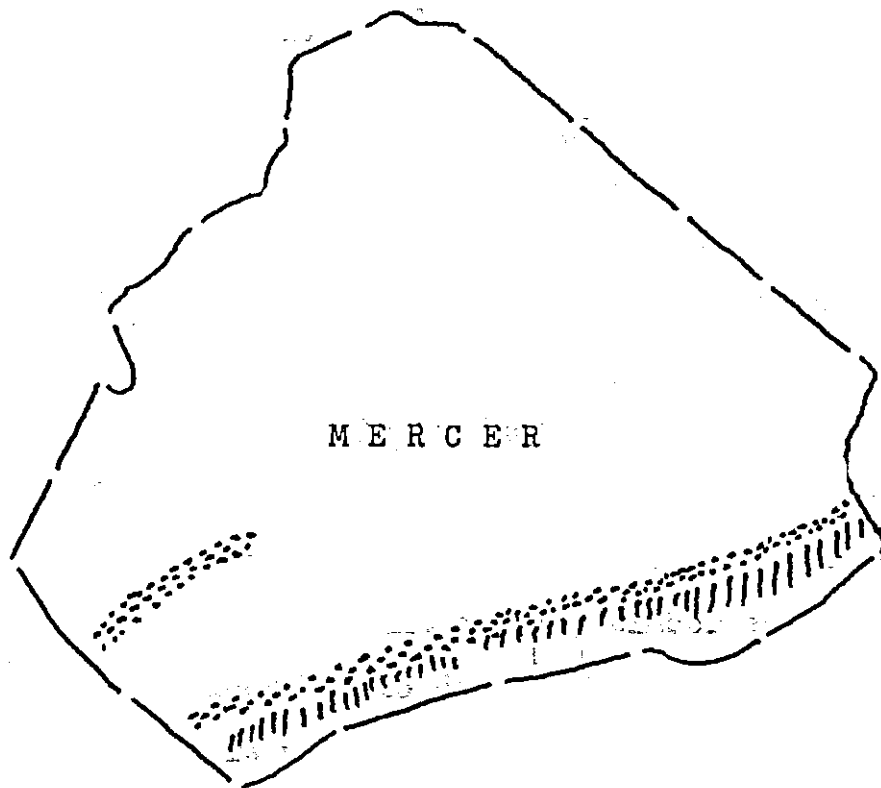
¹⁴Ibid., p. 23.



¹⁵Bluefield Daily Telegraph, January 11, 1962, p. 2.

¹⁶People, Jobs, Business, and Industry, p. 21.

¹⁷The West Virginia Economic Development Agency, An Economic Atlas for West Virginia, p. 15. Cited hereafter as Economic Atlas.

¹⁸People, Jobs, Business, and Industry, p. 24.



-  Cambrian (Ordovician) Limestone
-  Mississippian (Greenbrier) Limestone

Map 3.--Limestones of Mercer County

Source: West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey, Paul H. Price, Director.

Timber

In 1960, 60% or 159,000 of Mercer County's 266,900 acres was in forests, all of which are classified as "Commercial" timber. The sawtimber growth exceeds the cutting by two to one each year and the total growth is almost four times the cutting. The following facts summarize the timber picture in Mercer County, and pose a major economic problem:

1. There is an abundance of timber in the area.
2. There is a ready market for any and all good quality timber which may be and is economically produced locally.
3. The vast majority of the area's timber is of low quality which crowds out and prevents the growth of high quality timber and is more vulnerable to disease and fire.
4. It is not economically feasible to harvest the low quality growth. This is increasingly true since roof bolts and metal supports continue to replace mine timber requirements.
5. These facts mean that inferior timber is on the increase; superior timber on the decline both relatively and absolutely especially with the

ratio of growth to harvest in such a poor state of balance.

6. The vast majority of the timber is contained in small holdings owned by many separate individuals who lack the resources, training, and interest in sound forestry management.¹⁹

Mercer County produced over twelve million board feet of lumber in 1957, mostly hardwood.²⁰ The Federal Government is erecting a \$300,000 Wood Products Research Center in Mercer County. It is expected that it will be completed late in 1963. It will be used for research and development of uses for Appalachian hardwoods.²¹

Dr. Paul G. Phillips of the Area Redevelopment Administration's program evaluation division has said that utilization of its timber is very important to the development of the area.²²

¹⁹An Overall Economic Development Plan, pp. 65-67, quoting: "The Timber Resources of West Virginia" prepared by the U.S. Forest Service; Senate Document Number 33, 1961.

²⁰Economic Atlas, p. 19.

²¹Bluefield Daily Telegraph, January 9, 1962, p. 2.

²²Bluefield Daily Telegraph, June 6, 1962, p. 9.

Industrial Water

Mercer County lacks large supplies of dependable industrial water:

The Bluefield public system pumps roughly 1,750,000 gallons per day supplied from two impounding dams which are fed by twenty two mountain springs. The water system is owned and operated by the West Virginia Water Company, a division of the Southern Gas and Water Company, which is absentee owned with no local roots. The company is neither capable of nor interested in creating a surplus raw water or treatment capacity. The policies of the West Virginia Public Service Commission are quite conservative and are not designed to encourage local water systems providing water facilities with capacities in considerable excess of current or projected water usage as an inducement to industrial growth.²³

Efforts have been made for the city to acquire and operate the water-works system. The laws of the state, however, are not favorable in this regard. The water company estimates that it could supply an additional 300,000 gallons per day to new industrial customers. An additional supply of water could be obtained from the Bluestone River, and, also, water could be obtained from a series of undeveloped springs east of the city. The local water is of uncommonly good quality both for drinking and industrial purposes; the treatment,

²³An Overall Economic Development Plan, p. 70.

storage, distribution, and pumping facilities are old and are facing obsolescence.²⁴

The Princeton water supply comes from wells. The system, likewise, is owned by the West Virginia Water Company. Efforts are being made to integrate the city's supply with a soil-conservation dam under consideration. The absence of a large water surplus is Princeton's most significant problem in industrial development.²⁵ The president of the company says that the system has a capacity of one million gallons a day with 650,000 being produced. At the present rate of growth the supply would take care of Maiden Form, North American, and a half dozen more plants. If more water is needed the company will increase the supply. The possible purchase price of the plant by the city would be \$1,600,000.²⁶

²⁴Ibid., pp. 70-71.

²⁵Ibid., p. 71

²⁶Bluefield Daily Telegraph, June 6, 1962, p. 8.

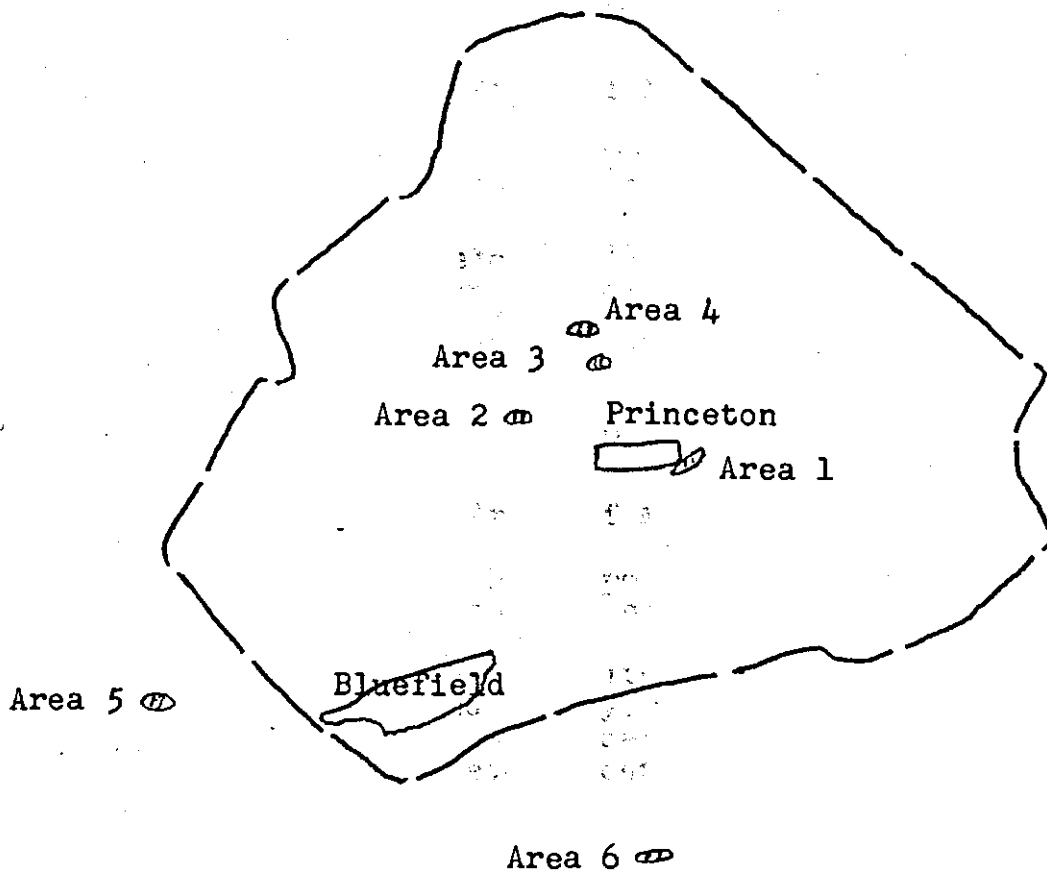
Industrial Land

Bluefield's Urban Renewal Project will give it ample room for expansion of commercial enterprises and some light industry. Princeton has room for expansion, now. But heavy industry requires ample acreage for modern one-story factory construction and employee parking with landscaped grounds, as well as a prestige location.²⁷

Mercer County has rough terrain. There are a few good, level industrial sites, though (Map 4, page 43). The best location, by far, is the one bordering Princeton (Industrial Site Area 1). This area contains 250 acres, including the Princeton Airport. The sites vary in size from 3 acres to 87 acres. Immediate steps should be taken to obtain control of this tract which was made usable by the Brush Creek flood control project.²⁸ The North American Aviation Corporation has recently built a plant in the area. A county development corporation is trying to obtain control of all the land, but it is hampered by lack

²⁷Robert Davenport, p. 9.

²⁸People, Jobs, Business, and Industry, p. 34.



Map 4.--Industrial Site Areas of Mercer County

Source: An Overall Development Plan for Bluefield and Mercer County.

Industrial Sites and Economic Data, Bland County, Virginia, Department of Conservation and Economic Development, State of Virginia.

of funds.²⁹ All industrial facilities, available in Princeton, are either at the sites or can be extended to them.

Industrial Site Areas 2, 3, and 4 are located on the Bluestone River. They are undeveloped, but have highway and electric facilities. Water could be taken from the river, but treatment equipment would have to be installed. Area 2 consists of 315 acres, sites varying in size from 30 acres to 100 acres. Area 3 consists of 380 acres, sites varying in size from 10 acres to 110 acres. Area 4 consists of 321 acres, sites varying in size from 6 acres to 85 acres. In some cases two or more sites could be formed into one larger site.³⁰

Industrial Site Area 5 is located in Tazewell County, Virginia, near Bluefield, Virginia. Like the Princeton area most facilities for industry are available. The area consists of 1,469 acres, sites varying in size from 16 acres to 700 acres.

²⁹Interview with Mr. Samuel Laufer, President of Mercer County Planning Commission, March 23, 1962.

³⁰Interview with Mr. R. G. Whittle, City Manager of Bluefield, West Virginia, and Mr. George McCulloch, Executive Director of Bluefield Urban Renewal Authority, March 23, 1962.

Industrial Site Area 6 is located in Bland County, Virginia, south of Bluefield, West Virginia. The sites are undeveloped, but have highway and electric power facilities. Water could be taken from Wolf Creek, but some development would be required. This area will not be easily accessible until after the completion of Interstate Highway Route 77.³¹ The area consists of 265 acres, sites varying in size from 7 acres to 100 acres.

These sites are not protected against improper land use. Ideally, the land itself should be owned by local development corporations or it should be available through options or the ownership of development rights. It is felt that the local program to attract and promote industry suffers from the community's not having concrete, specific land proposals to offer to an industrial prospect. Worst of all, it is feared that the good land available may be dissipated on unproductive development, due to there being no land use controls.³²

³¹Ibid.

³²An Overall Economic Development Plan. p. 70.

Only the county can exercise zoning and subdivision controls and provide street maintenance and other facilities. It is vitally important that the county act to provide these controls and facilities, not only to preserve industrial sites, but also to assure attractive residential areas and sound commercial development.³³

Geographic Location

Mercer County's location in the heart of the Appalachian Mountains has some advantages. It has an exceptionally pleasant summer climate, the thermometer seldom exceeding 90°. Bluefield is known as the "air-conditioned city"³⁴ (Table 16, page 47). The area, being mountainous, receives less damage from hurricanes and tornadoes than flat areas receive.³⁵

Mercer County is far from any large market, but many of the eastern, midwestern, and southern markets are within a 500 mile radius of the county (Map 5, page 48). Few other areas are situated in such close proximity to large population centers of the East and Midwest.³⁶

³³People, Jobs, Business, and Industry, pp. 36-37.

³⁴An Overall Economic Development Plan, p. 2.

³⁵West Virginia Economic Development Agency, A Site Selection Security Study, p. 12.

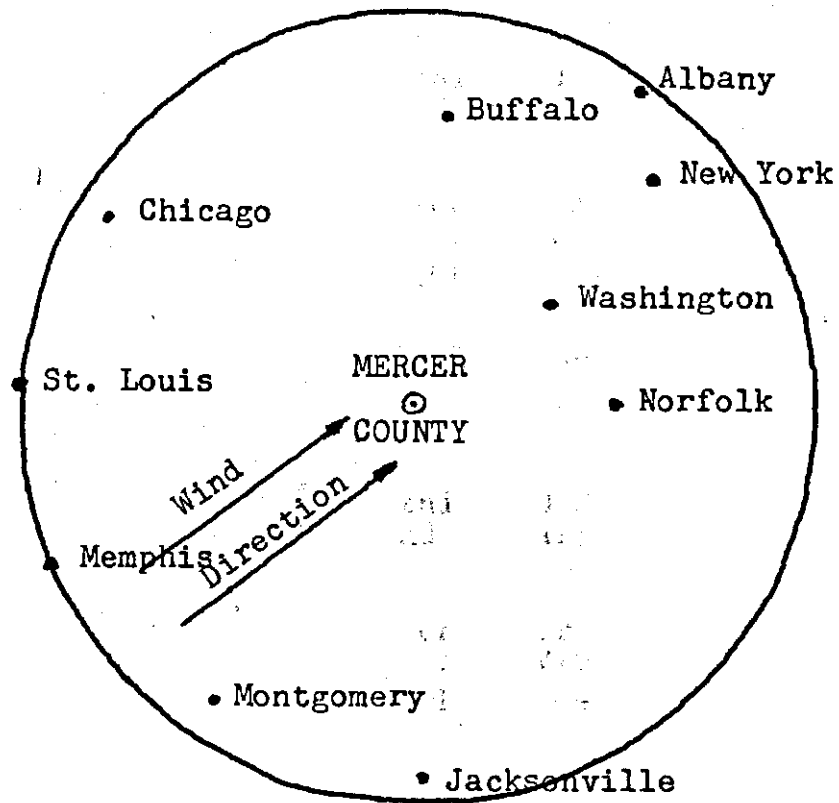
³⁶Ibid., p. 11.

TABLE 16.--Data on Climate of Mercer County*

Item	Temperature Ave. (deg.)	Precipitation (inches)	Snowfall (inches)
January	37.1	3.4	10.1
February	37.3	3.32	8.8
March	43.8	4.23	7.3
April	53.5	3.08	1.2
May	62.3	3.91	.1
June	69.6	3.96	
July	72.2	4.72	
August	71.0	4.27	
September	65.6	2.63	
October	55.8	2.38	.2
November	44.5	2.59	2.1
December	36.8	2.93	6.1
Annual	53.6	41.42	36.1

*Source: U.S., Department of Commerce, West Virginia Climatic Summary, dated 1952, quoted in An Overall Economic Development Plan, Appendix A.

This area has gained some attention because of its advantages pertaining to defense against atomic attack. An industry located here would be at least two hundred miles from the closest major target and about one hundred miles from the nearest secondary target. The



Map 5.--Principal Cities Within 500 Mile Radius of Mercer County, and Prevailing Wind Direction

Source: A Site Selection Security Study for West Virginia, West Virginia Economic Development Agency.

mountains would tend to minimize danger and the air draining and prevailing winds would keep fall-out danger low³⁷ (Map 5, page 48). A favorable mountain location could be important for defense-oriented industry as well as installations, such as missile-launching stations and atomic test plants for the Department of Defense and the Atomic Energy Commission.³⁸

Industrial Power

Mercer County has excellent fuels available for industry. Its water power is of negligible importance, being used for small grist mills.³⁹ It has no atomic power.

Coal

As discussed above (page 34), Mercer County has a plentiful supply of coal, but it is expensive. "Project Decision" gives Princeton a 'B' rating and Bluefield a 'C' rating. The price of industrial boiler coal, delivered at a rail siding in the county, is about \$9.00 per ton.⁴⁰

³⁷Ibid., p. 13.

³⁸People, Jobs, Business, and Industry, p. 35.

³⁹Kyle McCormick, p. 113.

⁴⁰Community Information, Group IV.

Oil

All of Mercer County's fuel oil is brought in by truck or rail. Princeton is given an 'A' rating by "Project Decision"; Bluefield is given a 'B' rating. Fuel oil was delivered in the county in 1961 at a price of 13 cents and 16.4 cents for #3 and #2 grades, respectively.⁴¹

Gas

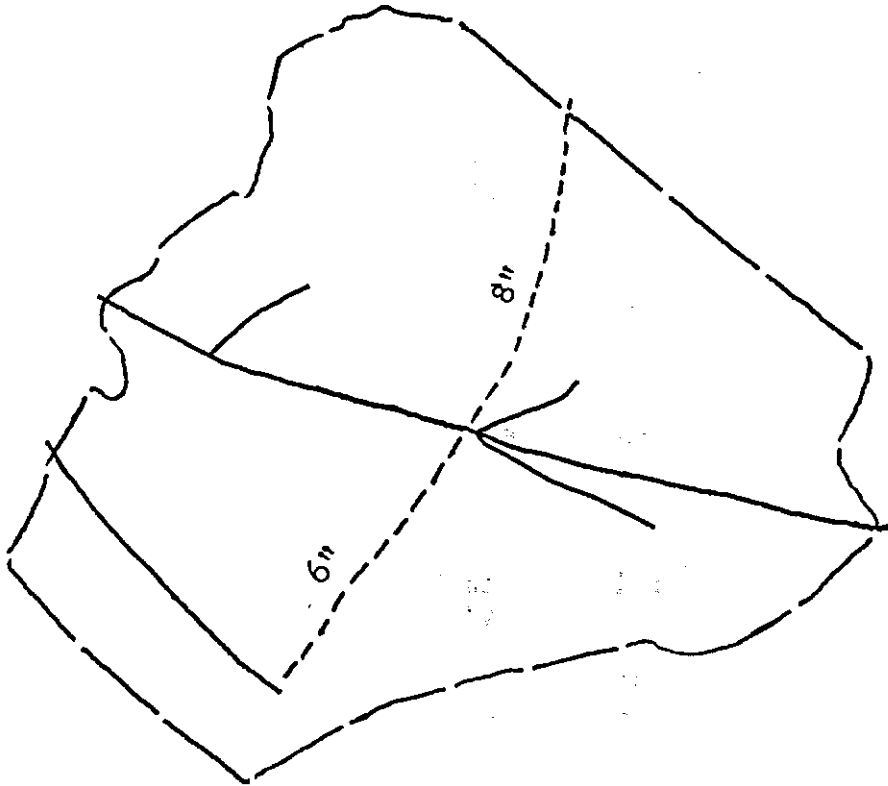
There is a plentiful supply of natural gas available in Mercer County. It comes from one of the large interstate gas lines, which passes near the northern boundary of the county (Map 6, page 51). Princeton and Bluefield, each, received an 'A' rating by "Project Decision" in this category. The price, in 1961, was about 70 cents per 1,000 cubic feet.⁴²

Electricity

No electricity is generated in Mercer County. There is an unlimited quantity available, supplied by Appalachian Power Company. The main line from Glen Lyn, Virginia, passes through the county. Very little

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.



———— High Voltage Transmission Lines
----- Main Gas Lines

Map 6.--High Voltage Transmission Lines and Main Gas Lines, Mercer County

Source: West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey, Paul H. Price, Director.

interruption of service occurs because of the tie-in with other plants in Virginia and West Virginia (Map 6, page 51). Primary service is delivered over an 88,000-volt transmission line and is then reduced to 12,000 volts for distribution in the community. Further reduction to the customer's requirements is made at the premises of the customer. A detailed explanation of the tariff applicable to any requirements will be furnished by the Appalachian Power Company upon request.⁴³

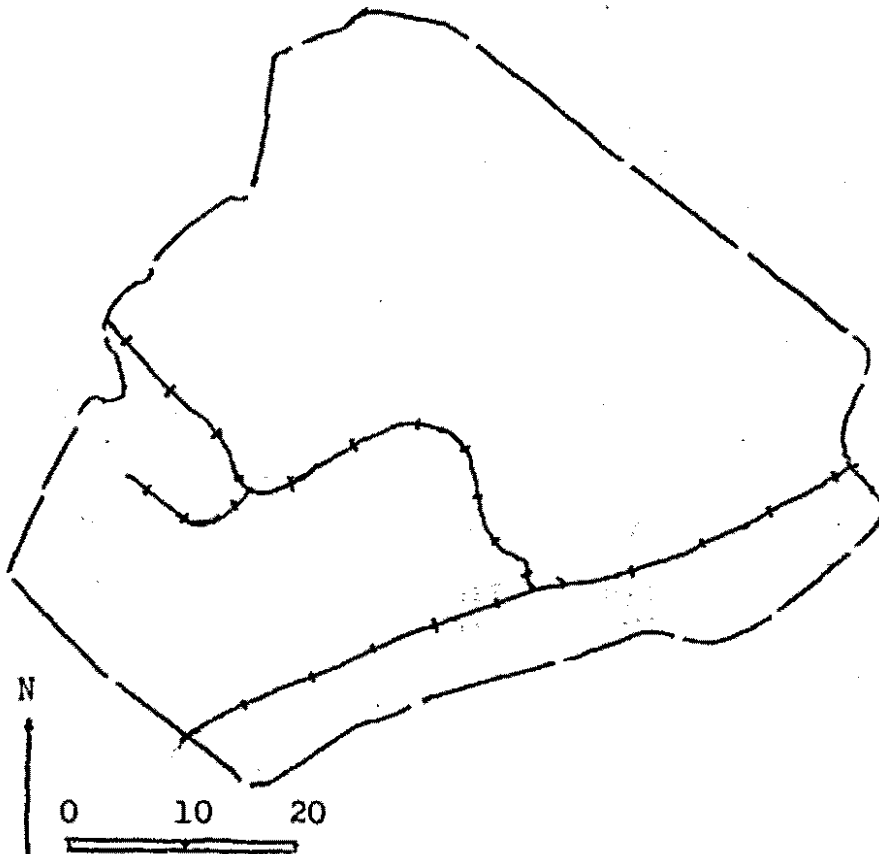
Transportation Facilities

Mercer County has excellent transportation facilities.

Rail

Mercer County is served by the Norfolk and Western Railway (Map 7, page 53). The main line of the railroad, from Norfolk, Virginia, to Columbus, Ohio, passes through Bluefield. Princeton is on the line running north to the Kanawha River. The railroad, including Railway Express

⁴³Community Information, Group IV.



Map 7.--Railroads of Mercer County

Source: West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey, Paul H. Price, Director.

Company, was the largest single employer in the county in 1960.⁴⁴ It employed 1,587 persons.⁴⁵

Between 1956 and 1960 railroad employment in the Bluefield area declined by nearly 35 percent... Railroad officials indicate that local employment has reached stability although there is a natural reluctance to give news of future layoffs.

A potential favorable development is a proposed merger with the Nickel Plate Railway which would place the main track through the county on route to the Great Lakes.⁴⁶

There is also the possibility that more facilities may be eliminated or consolidated with units elsewhere. The trend of railroad automation continues. Speculation exists in railroad circles that even the diesel faces obsolence when contrasted with newer electric locomotives in the design stage.⁴⁷

The present management has launched a bold program of mergers, automation, and a concentration of effort and planning on industrial growth. The traditional railroad industrial development emphasis upon effort geared solely toward promoting only those industries

⁴⁴An Overall Economic Development Plan, p. 24.

⁴⁵U.S., Census of Population, 1960, p. 50-167.

⁴⁶An Overall Economic Development Plan, pp. 24-25.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 25.

which will generate heavy freight business seems to have been put aside. Co-operation by the railroad with Bluefield's Urban Renewal Program is indicative of a concern for those community facilities needed for development.⁴⁸

The Norfolk and Western faces many problems of a long range nature, chiefly those brought about by its enslavement to coal hauling. Radical changes in steel manufacture might injure the metallurgical coal trade. Increased concentration of gigantic steam generator plants in the coalfields and "shipment" over great distances of "power by high-tension wires" might make serious inroads on the growing coal shipments for electric utilities. The development of coal pipelines may produce complications. There are indications that much coke manufacture may return to the coalfields, rather than be done near the steel plants, leaving the rail industry the task of moving coke rather than coal. The powerful trucker-teamster block may destroy a good beginning in the piggy-back concept. The recently announced I.C.C. policy of wedding a strong railroad with a weaker one could upset the Nickel Plate merger

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 25-26.

plans and foster a combination of an unhealthy sort inasmuch as both the Norfolk and Western and Nickel Plate are in excellent financial condition. In the long run, development of Alaskan-Canadian metallurgical coal deposits might destroy a growing Far Eastern market which receives local coal shipped from Hampton Roads after rail transport from the Appalachian coalfields.⁴⁹

Bluefield's location at the highest point on the Norfolk and Western's main line, with its ability to assemble trains by gravity toward the east or toward the west, is its main selling point for retention of railroad facilities at their present location.⁵⁰ The next two decades will see radical changes in railroading and in the Norfolk and Western's organization and practices. At present it appears that little future expansion in the labor force will take place.⁵¹

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 26-27.

⁵⁰McCormick, p. 71.

⁵¹An Overall Economic Development Plan, p. 27.

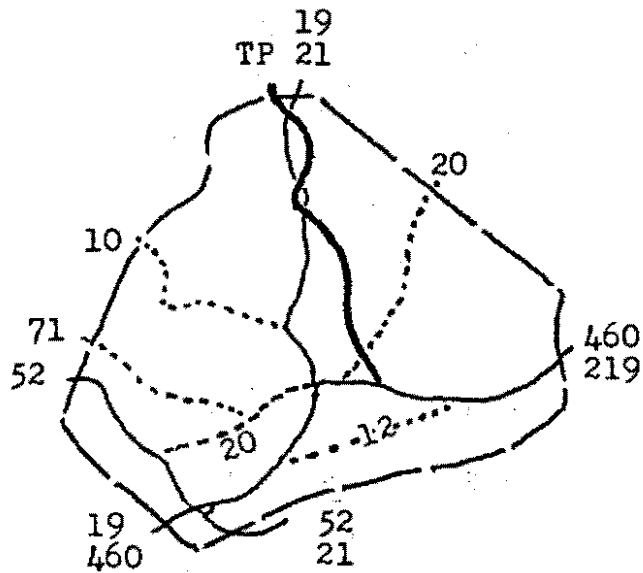
Highway

Mercer County is served by five national highways (Map 8, page 58). U.S. Route 460 connects with Pikeville, Kentucky, to the west and with Roanoke, Virginia, to the east. U.S. Route 19 connects with Bristol, Virginia-Tennessee, to the southwest and with Clarksburg, West Virginia, to the northeast. U.S. Route 21 connects with Wytheville, Virginia, to the south and with Charleston, West Virginia, to the north. U.S. Route 52 connects with Wytheville, Virginia, to the south and with Huntington, West Virginia, to the northwest. U.S. Route 219 connects with Ronceverte, West Virginia, to the northeast.⁵²

The southern terminus of the West Virginia Turnpike is at Princeton. This turnpike extends to Charleston, West Virginia, 88 miles northwest of Princeton. The proposed Interstate Route 77 will connect with the West Virginia Turnpike at Princeton and from there travel south through Virginia.⁵³ Bluefield will require a four-lane access road from the center of the city to the highway. Modern industry makes extensive use of

⁵²Community Information, Group III.

⁵³Ibid.



- Turnpike
- U.S. Highways
- - - - - State Highways

Map. 8.--Highways of Mercer County

Source: 1959 Official Highway Map issued
by the State Road Commission of
West Virginia.

truck transportation, and location close to this major north-south industrial highway will be an important factor in attracting new plants.⁵⁴

Mercer County has excellent bus service.

Atlantic Greyhound, Consolidated Trailways, Reynolds Transportation Company, Tennessee Coach Lines, and Tri-City Traction Company operate in the county.

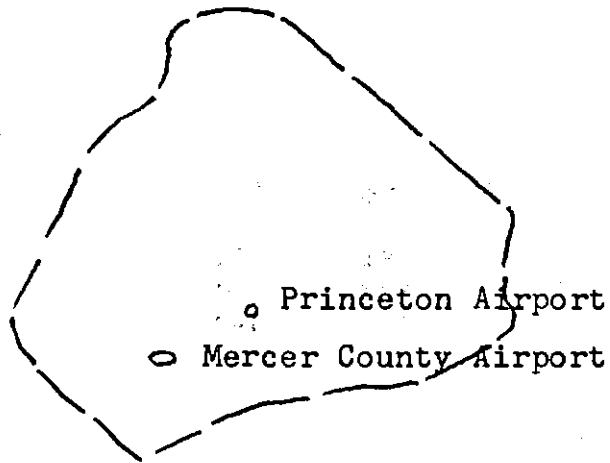
Trucking lines serving the county are Falwall Fast Freight, Bell Lines, Consolidated Freightways, Point Express, Rutherford Freight Lines, Pinson Transportation, Intermont Express, and Service Storage and Transfer Company. Most of these companies have terminals in the county. Princeton and Bluefield were each given an 'A' rating by "Project Decision" in the above.⁵⁵

Air

Mercer County Airport is located between Bluefield and Princeton (Map 9, page 60). It is served by Piedmont Airlines with approximately eight flights per day. All flights are either to Charleston, West

⁵⁴People, Jobs, Business, and Industry, p. 35

⁵⁵Community Information, Group III.



Map 9.--Airports of Mercer County

Source: 1959 Official Highway Map
issued by the State Road
Commission of West Virginia.

Virginia, via Beckley, or to Roanoke, Virginia, via New River Airport at Dublin, Virginia. Air cargo is available. There is also a small airport at Princeton. Both airports have private service available.⁵⁶ "Project Decision" gave an 'A' to both Princeton and Bluefield. The Mercer County Airport needs a cross-runway and lengthening of the main runway to accommodate prop-jet service.⁵⁷

Communication Facilities

Mercer County is served by General Telephone Company of the Southeast, with direct dialing to most of the United States. Western Union Telegraph Company has facilities in the county.⁵⁸

Newspapers

The county has three daily newspapers. The only morning paper, The Bluefield Daily Telegraph, is published seven days a week. The Sunset News-Observer is published in Bluefield and also in Princeton. The

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷An Overall Economic Development Plan, p. 73.

⁵⁸Community Information, Group V.

Princeton Times was recently added to the county's newspapers.⁵⁹

Radio and Television Stations

Mercer County has one powerful television station, WHIS-TV, and three radio stations. Television is received from six channels -- WSAZ-TV, WHIS-TV, WCHS-TV, WSLs-TV, WDBJ-TV, and WOAY-TV.⁶⁰ "Project Decision" gave Bluefield an 'A' rating in news media; Princeton received a 'B' rating.

Supporting Industries

Mercer County has excellent support for industry. There are zoning laws in effect in Bluefield and Princeton. The county has taken the initial steps in establishing zoning laws.⁶¹

Public Services

Mercer County cannot be rated highly on public services, but many of the shortcomings are being corrected. Bluefield is rated 'B' in water supply and treatment by "Project Decision"; Princeton is

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Bluefield Daily Telegraph, December 2, 1961, p. 2.

rated 'C'. They were both rated down because the privately-owned utilities are failing to provide for future needs.⁶² The rest of the county would rate much lower because of failure to protect springs and wells from pollution. Both Bluefield and Princeton were given an 'A' rating in sewage disposal. Again, the rest of the county would be rated extremely low because of failure to provide adequate sewage disposal. Bluefield and Princeton were found to be satisfactory in garbage and trash disposal. Steps have been taken to provide adequate trash disposal throughout the county.⁶³ Bluefield was given a rating of 'C' in law enforcement; Princeton was given a 'B'. The outlying parts of the county would be considered satisfactory only because of the aid given by the state police, working from a station near Princeton. Both Bluefield and Princeton were found to be satisfactory in fire protection. The remainder of the county has very little fire protection.

⁶²An Overall Economic Development Plan, p. 70.

⁶³A county bond issue has been voted which provides for trash disposal facilities and the lengthening of the airport runway.

Financial Institutions

Mercer County has six banks with combined resources of over seventy-eight million dollars.

TABLE 17.--Capitalization of Financial Institutions,
Mercer County

Institution	Total Assets (\$1,000)	Capital Surplus Undivided Profits (\$1,000)	Loss Reserves (\$1,000)
First National Bank of Bluefield	33,494 ^a	3,019 ^b	255 ^b
Flat Top National Bank	16,763 ^a	1,177 ^b	464 ^b
Commercial Bank	7,444 ^a	1,087 ^b	-
Princeton Bank and Trust Company	15,101 ^a	920 ^b	141 ^b
Mercer County Bank	3,856 ^a	317 ^b	6 ^b
Bank of Athens	1,849 ^c	190 ^c	14 ^c
Community Savings and Loan	775 ^b		
First Federal Savings and Loan	1,556 ^b		
Industrial Savings and Loan	192 ^b		

^aCommunity Information.

^bAn Overall Development Plan.

^cTelephone interview with Mr. Fred Cooper, Bank of Athens.

The county has nineteen credit agencies, other than banks. Bluefield and Princeton were each given a 'B' rating by "Project Decision." Since the facilities of these financial institutions are available to the county, the county would be considered satisfactory in this category.

Existing Industry

The amount of industry already established in a community is very important to a firm moving to that area. "Project Decision" gave Bluefield an 'A' rating but Princeton received only a 'C' rating.

Manufacturing.--As was shown in Chapter I, manufacturing has been expanding in Mercer County, but it is still a small factor in the economy. In 1960, there were 2,390 persons employed in manufacturing in Mercer County.⁶⁴ Products now manufactured in Mercer County, including Bluefield, Virginia, are hardwood products, electric coils, mining machinery, mattresses, furniture, machine parts, dairy products, caskets, brick, cinder blocks,

⁶⁴U.S., Census of Population, 1960, p. 50-167.

concrete blocks, brassieres, sand dryers, and brass fittings.⁶⁵

Table 18 gives data on the leading manufacturing concerns of Mercer County.

TABLE 18.--Data on Present Manufacturing Concerns, Mercer County, including Bluefield, Virginia, 1961

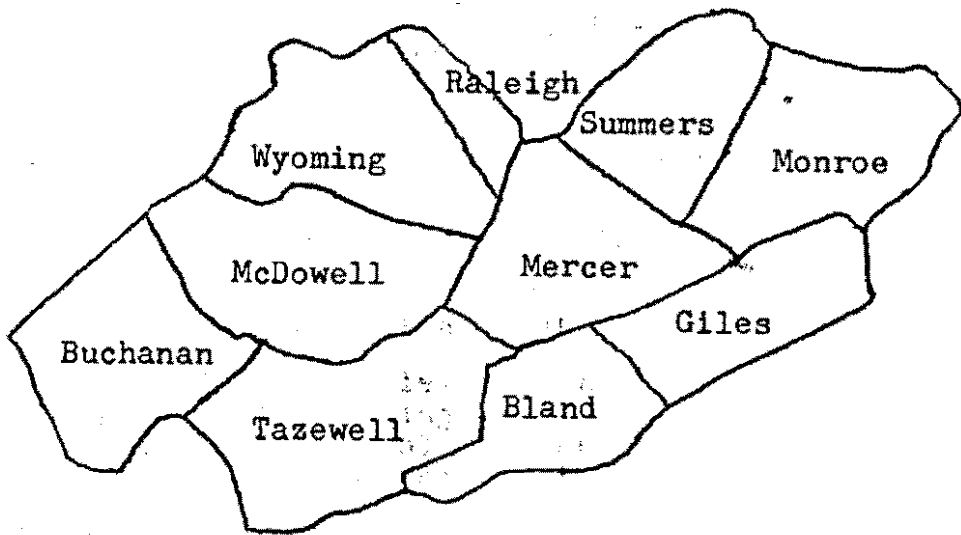
Firm	Union	Employment	Date Established
Norfolk and Western Railway Company .	No	1,508	1881
West Virginia Armature Company .	UCW	168	1915
National Electric Coil Company . . .	UCW	210	1917
United Piece Dye Works	-	250 (ult.)	1959
Maiden Form Brassiere Company . .	UMW	525	1943
American Block Company	-	11	1953
Princeton Machinery Service, Inc. . .	-	18	1947
North American Aviation	-	300	1962

Source: Community Information, Group V.

⁶⁵Community Information, Group V.

Wholesaling and Retailing.--The county's retail stores have long served as a strong attraction for the residents of southern West Virginia and the western tip of Virginia. The Audit Bureau of Circulation (which verifies the extent of newspaper circulation in all cities of the nation) has defined Bluefield's retail trading zone as including the nine counties shown on the accompanying map plus the southwestern portion of Raleigh County below Beckley (Map 10, page 68). This is verified by the primary coverage area of the Bluefield radio and television stations, the residential locations of hospital patients at the Bluefield Sanitarium, and statements by leading merchants.⁶⁶

⁶⁶An Overall Economic Development Plan. p. 32.



Map 10.--Retail Trade Area of Mercer County

Source: Bluefield, W. Va., City
Planning Commission and Urban
Renewal Authority, Ebasco
Services Inc., Consultants.

TABLE 19.--Retail Trade in Mercer County, 1958

Item	Retailers	Sales
Total	719	\$62,884,000
Lumber, Bldg. Mat., H'dware, Farm Equip. Dealers	29	1,963,000
Gen. Mdse. Stores	60	9,342,000
Food Stores	186	14,536,000
Auto. Dealers	46	11,592,000
Gas. Serv. Stations	93	5,471,000
Apparel, Accessory Stores . .	53	4,612,000
Furniture, Home Furnishing, Equipment Stores	29	3,506,000
Eating, Drinking Places . . .	109	2,960,000
Drug, Proprietary Stores . .	18	2,208,000
Other Store and Non-store Retailers	96	6,694,000

Source: U.S., Census of Business, Vol. II,
Retail Trade, Department of Commerce, 1958, p. 48-27-8.

Wholesale trade has long been and still is one of the most important economic functions of Bluefield. Bluefield's wholesale sales per capita are extremely

high (\$4,037 in 1958), which is a reflection of the wide area served by its wholesalers.⁶⁷

TABLE 20.--Wholesale Trade in Mercer County, Bluefield, and Princeton, 1958

Area	Wholesalers	Sales
Mercer County	98	\$93,197,000
Bluefield	67	77,221,000
Princeton	14	7,608,000

Source: U.S., Census of Business, Vol. IV, Wholesale Trade, 1958, p. 48-7.

In shopping facilities, both Bluefield and Princeton were given an 'A' rating by "Project Decision."

Services

Service trades and facilities have an important place in Mercer County's economy as a regional center. The use of computer-type automation forecasts the elimination of personnel who do repetitive clerical-type work. The past decade has witnessed a marked increase in the number of Mercer County motels and

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 36.

tourist courts with a correspondingly small rise in business activity. This reflects the national trend toward motels at the fringes of the cities, but in the case of Mercer County to the harm of already established in-town hotels.⁶⁸

TABLE 21.--Service Trade in Mercer County, 1958

Item	Service Units	Sales
Hotels, Motels, Tourist Courts, Camps	26	\$1,096,000
Personal Services (Laundries, Barber and Beauty Shops) . .	127	1,943,000
Misc. Bus. Services	22	922,000
Auto. Repair, Parking	25	513,000
Misc. Repair Serv. (Elect. and Other)	46	1,942,000
Motion Pictures	10	602,000
Amusement, Recreation (Except Motion Pictures)	20	331,000
Total	276	7,349,000

Source: U.S., Census of Business, Vol. VI, Selected Services, Department of Commerce, 1958, p. 48-9.

⁶⁸Ibid., pp. 38-39.

"Project Decision" gave Bluefield and Princeton 'A' ratings in this category. Public employment service, architects, general contractors, machine shops, job printers, certified public accountants, attorneys, realtors, blueprint service, and air-conditioning repair service are all available in the county.

Education.--"Project Decision" rated Bluefield and Princeton 'A' in education. This is surprising since the State of West Virginia spends only 68% of the national average on schools and pay teachers only 78% of the national average. Although the state lost population, school enrollment has increased.⁶⁹ Mercer County has two four-year colleges, both of which are members of the North Central Association. They are both state supported. Concord College, at Athens, has about 1,600 students. Concord College offers programs for bachelor of science degrees in education, home economics, music education, business education, business administration, medical technology, and advertising design; bachelor of arts degrees with majors in English, Spanish, French, speech, library science, music, and

⁶⁹Rex M. Smith, State Superintendent of Schools, as reported in the Bluefield Daily Telegraph, April 5, 1962, p. 2.

social sciences; and bachelor of science degrees with majors in biology, chemistry, mathematics, physics, and psychology. In addition to its campus offerings, Concord College offers off-campus services to the people of the area. Classes for extension credit and adult-education courses are offered by regular members of the faculty at Princeton and other centers which include Bluefield, Beckley, Welch, War, Pineville, Iaeger, Anawalt, and Lewisburg.⁷⁰

Bluefield State College was originally a Negro teachers' college, but is now a full four-year general college with both Negro and white students. The present enrollment, made up of resident students and commuters, is about 650, a substantial increase over the 1958 level of 400. Further expansion is anticipated, and a special non-academic program for the retraining of unemployed workers is being initiated.⁷¹

Bluefield College, located over the state line in Bluefield, Virginia, is a well-established Baptist

⁷⁰West Virginia Department of Employment Security, Employment Industrial Review, January, 1960, pp. 12-13.

⁷¹An Overall Economic Development Plan, p. 40.

institution with a present enrollment of about 450 students.⁷²

The county has ten high schools, five junior high schools, forty-seven elementary schools, one school for exceptional children, and one vocational school. There are only four one-room schools in the county.⁷³

There are two privately-owned business colleges in the county.⁷⁴

On June 11, 1962, the compulsory job training program for school dropouts opened for the summer at four locations in Mercer County. Three-month courses are being offered in welding, auto mechanics, building trades, radio and electricity, newspaper printing, and furniture repair.⁷⁵

Apparently, educators in Mercer County are well aware of the problems they must meet. Whether the schools should concentrate on a general education, a

⁷²Ibid., pp. 40-41.

⁷³Directory and General Policies, Public Schools of Mercer County, p. 13.

⁷⁴Community Information, Group V.

⁷⁵Bluefield Daily Telegraph, June 12, 1962, p. 12.

job-preparation education, or a happy medium, consisting of a part of each, is a major problem.⁷⁶

Health and Medical Services.--"Project Decision" gave Bluefield and Princeton each a 'C' rating in health and medical facilities. This was probably due to a lack of quantity of personnel and facilities, rather than the quality of what they do have.

Bluefield's two general hospitals, the Bluefield Sanitarium and St. Luke's, serve a wide regional area with a concentration of medical services normally found only in much larger cities. A children's clinic and several private offices also attract patients from a broad area. As a result, Bluefield has a level of medical facilities and talents uncommon for a city twice its size. For example, there are three Board Certified pediatricians, one psychiatrist, three neurosurgeons, and one ophthalmologist. The two hospitals have a total of 290 beds. The Bluefield Sanitarium is one of the largest completely privately supported hospitals in the nation.⁷⁷

⁷⁶"Man to Man," TV Program, WHIS-TV, Dr. Frank Stein, Moderator, March, 1962.

⁷⁷People, Jobs, Business, and Industry, p. 33.

Princeton has one hospital with 58 beds and 12 bassinets. It also has a Medical Arts Building.⁷⁸

Culture and Recreation.--As would be expected, "Project Decision" gave Bluefield an 'A' rating in this category. It received this rating because it has a public library, ample parks and playgrounds, golf courses, tennis courts, a country club, a civic auditorium, bowling lanes, roller skating rink, football stadium, baseball park, boating and fishing facilities, a Y.M.C.A., a Y.W.C.A., Boy Scouts, F.F.A., 4-H, a Music Association, and a Fine Arts Program. It has a full-time recreation director.

Princeton was given a 'C' rating, possibly because it depends on the larger city, Bluefield, to furnish some of the programs mentioned above.

Besides the above, the county has access to the cultural programs sponsored by the colleges. Spectator sports are provided by the colleges and by Bluefield organizations. Trout fishing is provided by a local anglers club. Pinnacle Rock State Park, which is being

⁷⁸Employment Industrial Review, January, 1960, p. 8.

enlarged,⁷⁹ and Camp Creek State Forest are located in the county. Bluestone Lake and Park, Claytor Lake, and Cherokee Lake are all within reasonable driving distances. Two national forests, Monongahela and Jefferson, are easily accessible.

Mercer County has a generous supply of service and fraternal clubs. There are many protestant churches, two Catholic churches, and one Jewish Synagogue located in Mercer County.⁸⁰

⁷⁹Bluefield Daily Telegraph, April 4, 1962, p. 2.

⁸⁰Community Information, Group V.

CHAPTER III

RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

High and stable employment is an essential goal of American life. Federal policies for many years have been directed towards that end. The past decade has demonstrated that policies which bring the nation to a satisfactory over-all employment level still leave pockets of high unemployment which persist year after year. In fact, this problem has worsened during the last decade.¹

Little is known about what makes for local economic growth in the United States. Area development, as a field of research, has been neglected. Economic knowledge in this field is still primitive, inexact, and unorganized. The concentration of economic thinking and policy recommendations on national economic problems has left almost unnoticed those matters which affect economic growth at the local, state and regional levels.²

Problems confined to a single community, region, or industry are often neglected until they become very

¹Committee for Economic Development, Distressed Areas in a Growing Economy, p. 7.

²Donald R. Gilmore, Developing the "Little" Economies, Committee for Economic Development, pp. 7-8.

difficult to solve, it is not surprising that a problem such as subnational economic development, which cuts across all industries and all regions, should have been largely ignored until very recently. Even now there is a serious lack of data on many of its important aspects.³

In many ways a local community has limited control over its economic development. It has very little control over transportation, utilities, taxation, and tariffs, any one of which may have a great bearing on the well-being of the community. It should be understood that the future growth of the nation as a whole will be determined in large part by a more nearly optimum utilization of resources at the local and regional level.⁴

The field of local economic development is changing rapidly. Practically all types of economic development programs are in an evolutionary stage. Some local and regional economic data have been assembled, but such yardsticks as local gross product, local income, and regional balance of payments data

³Ibid., p. 8.

⁴Ibid.

are either not available, or are collected or calculated only infrequently for ad hoc purposes. A large number of local and regional economic studies are being made, but they lack the clarity of studies which might be possible if agreed-upon regional and local economic concepts and better regional and local economic data-accumulating systems were available.⁵

"Since the problem has long-run origins, the solutions must be found largely in long-run measures," says the Committee for Economic Development.⁶

In earlier chapters it has been shown that Mercer County has an economic problem, but that it has a potential with which the problem can be overcome. An attempt will now be made to discuss recommendations and proposed solutions to the problem.

Nature's Course

Throughout the history of the United States, communities have developed, prospered, become depressed, and disappeared. This is a direct result of living in a dynamic society. Canals have been replaced by

⁵Ibid., pp. 9-10.

⁶CED, Distressed Areas, p. 8.

railroads, railroads replaced by highways or pipelines, lumbering interests have moved from one area to another and yet another, the textile industry has moved from New England to be near raw materials and cheaper labor, automobiles have replaced buggies, and automobile firms have moved to avoid high taxes. Metals have been discovered, mined until depleted; the miners have moved on, leaving ghost towns of value only for sight-seeing.

One of the basic economic concepts is the mobility of labor. If work is not available in one community, the worker is expected to move to where work is available. The same concept applies to the other factors of production. Charles E. Wilson stressed this point when he spoke of why he liked bird dogs, "One who'll get out and hunt for food, rather than sit on his fanny and yell."⁷

Mercer County's problem started in about 1952 with the laying-off of miners, due to lack of demand for coal and mechanization of the mines. The unemployed miners were slow to leave for better pastures. There

⁷Life, 37: 36, Oct. 25, 1954.

were several reasons for this slowness. The miners liked the hills of West Virginia and hated to leave friends and neighbors. The only job they were familiar with was coal mining and no one knew of any place that coal miners were in short supply. They received unemployment benefits which enabled them to exist, and they were accustomed to long lay-offs as one of the hazards of coal mining. By 1958 many had left, but some were forced to return because of the recession. Between 1950 and 1960 the coal mining district of Mercer County lost 33% of its population.⁸

This is a fair example of allowing nature to take its course. Of course, nature was interfered with by the payment of millions of dollars in state and federal funds. How rapid the emigration would have been and how much the loss of population would have been without the funds is anybody's guess. Since the loss of each mining job would probably cause the loss of .7 of one service job,⁹ the population loss in the county would have been much greater than the actual loss of 9.1%. The

⁸ U.S., Census of the Population: 1960, p. 50-23.

⁹ Business Week, April 21, 1962, p. 85.

situation was also aggravated by railroad automation and the merger of the Norfolk and Western Railway with the Virginian Railway. How low will the population go if nothing is done to retard the decrease? Probably not down to the 23,000 population that the county had in 1900 but, if the county finally sustains the same per cent of loss as the coal mining district, the population would drop to 50,000. If this loss is permitted to take place, the decrease in value of capital assets such as buildings, land, and schools would be astronomical.

From the above it would seem that "nature's course" is not a good answer to Mercer County's problem. Some other answer must be forthcoming.

Tourist Trade

Tourism is a large industry in many areas and the increased income generated by expanded tourist business may exceed by many times the promotional expenditures. Benefits and increased income from expanded tourism flow into many sectors of the economy.¹⁰

Although Mercer County is located in an ideal summer climate belt and has mountain scenery

¹⁰Gilmore, p. 47.

unsurpassed in most areas of the country, tourism is now a negligible factor in the local economy.¹¹ The West Virginia Turnpike has increased the number of tourists from the Middle West, particularly from Ohio.¹²

Southern West Virginia has an excellent tourist-recreation potential. The problem is one of getting started on several inter-dependent fronts. Motels and similar facilities are needed to attract tourists and make parks, landmarks, and similar attractions worthwhile. The motels cannot be built until the attractions are developed which in turn will not be done until facilities are available for servicing visitors. Regional planning is needed with a definite program for moving ahead. Tourism has been classed as West Virginia's third leading industry, yet comparatively few funds, public or private, are spent on its development.¹³

Mercer County is unique in that Bluefield is the highest city east of Denver and Princeton is the second

¹¹People, Jobs, Business, and Industry, p. 35.

¹²McCormick, p. 104.

¹³An Overall Economic Development Plan, pp. 72-73.

highest. Princeton is the highest county seat in West Virginia and the county is higher in elevation than any other county in the state. There are nine waterfalls, varying in height from 10 to 200 feet.¹⁴ Most of the attractions in the county will require developing.

Fishing, hunting, and boating can easily be developed. But the development of the area atop East River Mountain will be expensive and time-consuming.

In July, 1961, a group of civic-minded Bluefielders raised through a stock sale fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) to begin a resort motel on the top of scenic East River Mountain.

This enabled the purchase of a tract of land 227 acres in size on top of the mountain at U.S. Highway 21-52. The land straddles Mercer County, West Virginia, and Bland County, Virginia.

This venture is technically for profit although the stock sale was inspired by a civic desire to promote tourism in the region.

Loans from local banks and from the Area Development Administration are expected to be asked to finance the construction of the resort. An architect has already been retained to do the plans.¹⁵

Atkins, Currie, and Payne of Blacksburg, Virginia, have been retained as architects for Skyland, Inc. Plans are in the process of being drawn for a resort atop East River Mountain. The resort will have a motel

¹⁴McCormick, p. 4.

¹⁵An Overall Economic Development Plan, p. 77.

and convention center, a restaurant with terrace for dancing and ice skating, a swimming pool, a chair lift, an amphitheater, a coal mining exhibition, a par three golf course, and also shuffleboard, tennis, badminton, bowling on the green, croquet, archery, trap shooting, and hiking and riding trails. The East River Mountain development is a part of plans the federal government has for making a tourist mecca out of the New River gorge country in parts of Raleigh, Summers, Fayette, and Mercer Counties.¹⁶

The completion of Interstate Highway Route 77, in a few years, should bring more tourists through the county. But all is not rosy for tourism. Pollution of streams is one of the biggest problems.

Conservation officers charge the Pocahontas Fuel Co. with operating Mine 6 at McComas without a sludge pond and thus causing the worst state of pollution of Bluestone Reservoir in six years.¹⁷

Frank Burns, superintendent of the Pocahontas Fuel Company's Crane Creek Mine, was found guilty on charges of operation of a disposal system in violation of the Code of West Virginia Friday night [16th] in Bluefield and was fined \$300.¹⁸

¹⁶Bluefield Daily Telegraph, May 30, 1962, p. 3.

¹⁷Bluefield Daily Telegraph, March 16, 1962, p. 2.

¹⁸Bluefield Daily Telegraph, March 17, 1962, p. 2.

The above is not an isolated case. Therefore, Mercer County should not depend entirely on the tourist trade. Other sources of income must be found if Mercer County is to become a prosperous community.

Industrialization

In Chapter II it was shown that Mercer County has an industrial potential. There are several industrial programs that show possibilities.

The largest single type of manufacturing industry is mining equipment and service. The Bluefield area has particular advantages for this type of industry because of the mining experience and skills in the area and proximity to the mine fields for the servicing of mine equipment. This is a promising field for the use of local capital and initiative as the trend toward mechanization in the mines continues.¹⁹ This will follow the national trend in which industrial firms are tending to hire specialists to handle their maintenance and repair.

As indicated under "Timber" in Chapter II, there is an abundance of inferior pulp-type growth in the

¹⁹People, Jobs, Business, and Industry, p. 24.

area which is crowding out the growth of high quality timber for which there is a market. The nearest high volume user of pulp or chip lumber is Covington, Virginia, seventy-five mountainous miles away. Transportation costs limit large scale harvesting of this low grade growth. A chipboard manufacturing plant appears feasible in the area, based on a preliminary evaluation of the facts.²⁰

The Wood Projects Research Center should be instrumental in finding other uses for timber in the county and surrounding area. Mercer Projects Committee took action to set up a non-profit corporation to act as "cooperator" with the Wood Research Center at Gardner. The corporation would buy timber and dispose of it after processing by the Center. A county-wide Business Development Corporation might result.²¹

Raw or semi-manufactured or finished products can be brought into the area from any direction, semi-manufactured or finished, and sent out in any

²⁰An Overall Economic Development Plan, p. 80.

²¹Bluefield Daily Telegraph, April 6, 1962, p. 2.

direction. The garment factory at Princeton has demonstrated for about twenty years that it is profitable to ship in semi-manufactured items from New Jersey, complete the manufacture, and return them to New Jersey for final distribution. Although there seems to be little chance for expansion in this area, there are many possibilities of a similar nature. The new North American Aviation plant in Princeton will further test this concept.

Norfolk and Western's "Fantus Report" recommends the production of fire resistor safe construction, ball and roller bearings, TBX board, teletypewriters, panel boards, and certain types of furniture associated with the hardwood in the area.²²

²²Bluefield Daily Telegraph, January 17, 1962, p. 2.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this paper the discussion has been limited, for the most part, to Mercer County. But, the solving of the problem of a depressed economy should not be limited to the county. Not only does the well-being of the county depend upon the prosperity of the nation and state, but also, it depends upon the well-being of the surrounding area and all the minor divisions of that area.

Some 14,000 economic development programs were in existence in 1957-1958.¹ Mercer County and the surrounding counties have a number of these programs. The West Virginia organizations work through Charleston; the Virginia organizations work through Richmond. Since the Bluefield area lies in both Virginia and West Virginia, an organization is needed which will coordinate the programs in both states.

To accomplish this objective, a grant should be obtained from the Federal Government in order to permit an economist from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and

¹Gilmore, p. 13.

one from West Virginia University or Marshall University to study the area. The economists could obtain assistance from Concord College. The studies should be done in unison with the county planning programs and Norfolk and Western Railway studies done by consultants from the Fantus Area Research Corporation.²

These studies are needed because local leadership cannot fairly and reasonably recommend investment of the limited resources available in the county without a high order of information upon which to pursue new economic activity. Likewise the community does not wish to request aid from the Area Redevelopment Administration for a project the planning of which is based upon superficial knowledge and information which may in turn not be economically feasible and which would not solve regional economic problems.³

Expert evaluation of the markets, resources, forecasts, problems, and possibilities of expanding existing local industries should be made. The industrial sites in Mercer County and in Bland and Tazewell Counties, Virginia, need to be studied in depth to ascertain how they should be developed. This is beyond the capabilities of the citizenry

²An Overall Economic Development Plan, p. 79.

³Ibid., p. 80.

of the area and there are no funds available for this work. The studies should include:

1. Expert analysis of site to determine if development, and hence further study, is warranted.
2. Depth study of markets, transportation, raw materials, labor resources, and wage rates, to ascertain the type of activity best suited to each site.
3. Problems, feasibility, preliminary plans and costs of providing sewers, water, rail spurs, and highways to the sites.
4. Preparation of site plans and cost estimates for either industrial parks or shell-type buildings.⁴

Financing is the greatest drawback to the success of development efforts.⁵ The study should investigate the practicability of inducing the West Virginia and Virginia legislatures to authorize local areas to issue revenue bonds for construction of industrial plants. Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama,

⁴Ibid., p. 79.

⁵Gilmore, p. 20.

Illinois, and New Mexico permit the issuance of such bonds. The bonds do not constitute indebtedness of the political subdivision and must be paid off from income from the property involved. The practice is viewed with considerable misgivings by such groups as the Investment Bankers Association, Municipal Finance Officers Association, the Southeastern States Tax Officials Association, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the American Federation of Labor.⁶

But, a more controversial method of financing should be considered. At present, many projects depend on the good will of a few community-minded individuals and firms. Some of these have much to gain from the addition of more industry to the area, but others have little to gain. Some people who have the most to gain merely sit back and let others bear the expense.

John E. Moes believes that the community should bear the expense of encouraging the expansion of industry. Political subdivisions of the state should be permitted to issue bonds and obtain property for sale or lease to industrial firms. Mr. Moes proves that, even if the bonds had to be repaid by general

⁶Ibid., pp. 59-61.

taxation, the community would be ahead. Today, because of unions and better knowledge by workers of what is being paid elsewhere, it is extremely hard for a community to cut wages in order to encourage industry. The selling or leasing of industrial property at below cost will have the same effect as a lower wage rate.⁷

Railroads and utilities have a real stake in the economic health and growth of their territories.⁸ Norfolk and Western Railway has always been very cooperative in aiding industrial growth. Appalachian Power Company has been very helpful, but they might be convinced that the next "shell" type building should be constructed in the Bluefield area. The gas company, telephone company, and water companies might be induced to give greater aid to industrial development.

The study should ascertain the adequacy of the present vocational training program in the Bluefield area, making certain that the program is preparing people for jobs in the regional or national labor market, as well as for openings in the local labor

⁷John E. Moes, "Local Subsidies for Industry-- Theoretical Justification of Subsidies," Southern Economics Journal, October, 1961, pp. 187-193.

⁸Gilmore, pp. 91-107.

market. If the study reveals that the Bluefield area will continue to have an oversupply of laborers, steps should be taken to obtain more aid from the state and federal governments in order to pay for the vocational training of the workers who will be forced to emigrate from the area.⁹

⁹CED, Distressed Areas, p. 11.

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APPENDIX A

SELECTED HOURLY WAGE RATES

Bluefield Region Only

Survey, July, August, 1961

Occupation	Low	Average	High
Secretaries	1.15	1.78	3.20
Bookkeepers	1.10	1.92	3.05
Stenographers	1.15	1.68	2.48
Truckers (light and heavy)	1.25	2.01	4.50
General Office Clerks	1.15	1.85	3.15
Senior Office Clerks	1.27	2.60	4.21
Welders (1st class)	1.44	2.21	2.45
Welders (2nd class)	1.40	2.15	2.35
Maintenance Mechanics	1.11	2.05	3.50
Electricians	1.21	2.13	3.11
Carpenters and Woodworkers	1.00	1.55	1.85
Machinists	2.11	2.32	2.45
Janitors	1.00	1.33	1.74
Unskilled Males	1.00	1.24	1.43
Highest Skilled Males	1.95	2.15	3.50

Source: An Overall Economic Development Plan,
Appendix F.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
SERIALS ACQUISITION
SERVICES DIVISION

APPENDIX B

"Project Decision" Scoring Procedure

The statistical evaluation for community scoring and selection consists of a two-step questionnaire and on-the-spot observation approach.

The initial questionnaire is sent to almost all of the communities within the Appalachian Power Company service area in order to determine the availability of a site with a certain minimum size which is or can be served by rail, highway, water, and sewage, and which can be purchased for a reasonable price. (On the basis of the first mailout, which consisted of 11 questions, 75 communities received this inquiry but only 34 could provide even the small minimum site requirement.)

The qualifying communities, as a result of the initial site questionnaire, are sent a more lengthy questionnaire which requires precise, exact figures and Yes-No answers concerning those aspects of community and business life important to a manufacturer in selecting a new plant site within a typical community. Such a questionnaire, periodically revised according to content, is generally made up of 150-200 questions as included within 30-35 sections.

These sections usually cover such essential requirements as: Planning and Zoning, Education, Law Enforcement, Fire Protection, Churches, Housing, Recreational Facilities, News Media, Transportation, Union Activity, Labor Costs, Labor Supply, as well as a great many other topics related to industrial development.

Each question and each section is assigned a predetermined point value ranging from 1 to 10, as based on the relative importance of such a question and section to the manufacturer looking for a new plant within a typical community.

The statistical answer from each community to each question is added to all other answers for the same question from each competing community in order to determine a norm or "average" answer.* An individual community answer is then applied as a per cent to such norm or "average"; this per cent being further applied to the predetermined point value for a particular question in order to determine the community's score for that question. (Yes-No type answers can receive only one value. A statistical answer cannot receive a value of more than 1-1/2 times the basic value assigned to that question.)

The aforementioned scoring method applies to all questions within a section, whereupon a total section numerical score is related as a per cent to the total possible score for that particular section. This per cent is then applied to the predetermined point value for the question. (Section scores cannot receive a value of more than 1-1/2 times the basic value assigned to that section.)

It is important to note that the total score for each question and for each section is not reflective of national averages or objective "ideal" standards, as each community is judged against each other according to area norms.

The last phase for scoring and second questionnaire consists of a final tabulation of the points determined under each section for a community. This final score will determine the relative position of one community in relation to other competing communities.

Each of the highest scoring and closely grouped communities are, in the final analysis, visited by a board of authoritative judges who have been selected from outside the competitive area. These judges, through visual observations and informal conversations

with the townspeople, will confirm or disprove the scoring results of the previously completed questionnaires.

*Almost all answers to questions of a statistical nature are reduced per 1,000 population, or in accordance to other relationships, prior to determining a norm or "average" for all communities.

"Project Decision"

Community Evaluation of _____, _____

<u>Category</u>	<u>Rating</u>
Building Financing	
Union Activity	
Education	
Health - Medical	
Highway Facilities	
Housing	
Labor Costs	
Labor Potential	
Motor Trucking	
Planning and Zoning	
Fire Protection	
Law Enforcement	
Rail Transportation	
Sewage Disposal	
Water and Treatment	
Aircraft Facilities	
Churches	
Culture and Recreation	
Existing Industries	

<u>Category</u>	<u>Rating</u>
Local Taxation	
Shopping Facilities	
Streets and Traffic	
Coal	
Financial Institutions	
Fuel Oil	
Gas	
Travel - Meeting Facilities	
Community Organizations	
Garbage - Trash Disposal	
Materials and Services	
Miscellaneous Transportation	
News Media	
Water Transportation	

FINAL RATING

STEP 1APPALACHIAN POWER COMPANY

The following questions are applicable only to those sites with a minimum of 10 acres in size and a length to width ratio of approximately 1-1/2 to 1.

1. Do you have a desirable industrial site available of at least 10 acres in or near your community? _____
 (a) Total acreage of site. (Acres) _____
2. Can it be purchased at a reasonable price? _____
 (b) Approximate cost per acre. \$ _____
3. Approximate dimensions of site in width _____ ft. and in length _____ ft.
4. Is topography level _____; if not, can it be made level at a reasonable cost? _____
5. Is it zoned for heavy _____, medium _____, light _____ industry, or not zoned?
 (a) Is it protected against residential and commercial encroachment? _____
6. Is the site adjacent to a major highway _____; if not, how far to a major highway? _____ Mi.
7. Is rail siding feasible at site location? _____
 (a) Distance from site to nearest rail track. _____ ft.
8. Are the following utilities available at the site?
 (a) Water - Size of Main _____ in.
 (b) Sanitary Sewers - Size of Line _____ in.
 (c) Storm Drains - Size of Line _____ in.
 (d) Gas - Size of Line _____ in. and Pressure _____ lbs.
9. If large capacity water and sewer lines are not now at the site, will the community extend these facilities at the community's expense? _____
10. Is site subject to flooding? _____
11. Total number of other sites available which are comparable to the above described site _____.
12. Comments:

Name of Community: _____ Compiled by: _____ Date: _____

"Project Decision"

Step 2

1. POPULATION

Give the 1960 population in your community _____
 Give the estimated population - 20 miles radius _____
 Give the population of the county in which your _____
 community is located _____

2. PLANNING AND ZONING

- a. Does your community have what is popularly called a "comprehensive plan" with a zoning map and ordinance? _____
- b. Was this plan prepared with professional aid? _____
- c. Is the plan actively administered by a planning commission? _____
- d. Is there a budget program for financing the plan? _____
- e. Does your community have an ordinance which has restrictive provisions concerning industrial noise, odor, smoke, etc.? _____
- f. Does your community have subdivision regulations? _____
- g. Does your community have an enforced local or national building code in effect? _____

3. EDUCATION

Answers should be based on the past school year.

- a. Average number of students per classroom _____
- b. Average number of pupils per teacher _____
- c. Percentage of teachers having college degrees _____
- d. Percentage of drop-outs to total school enrollment _____
- e. Percentage of graduates entering college _____

- f. Annual cost of education per pupil _____
- g. Investment in structures per pupil _____
- h. Does your community have a vocational trade school for high school students? _____
- i. Does your community have a 4-year accredited college or university? _____
- j. Does your community have an accredited junior college?
If no, distance to nearest one, miles _____
- k. Does your community have an accredited business college?
If no, distance to nearest one, miles _____
- l. Does your community have a technical school?
If no, distance to nearest one, miles _____
- m. Are college extension courses offered in the community? _____

4. HEALTH AND MEDICAL

- a. Total number of hospital beds in community _____
- b. Total number of beds in clinics _____
- c. Number of physicians in community _____
- d. Number of registered nurses in community _____
- e. Number of dentists in community _____
- f. Number of registered pharmacists in community _____
- g. Do you have health and sanitation laws or regulations which are strictly enforced? _____
- h. Do you have a health commissioner? _____
- i. Is there a chartered life saving or first aid crew located in the community? _____

5. CHURCHES

- a. Total number of all church and synagogue memberships: Prot. _____ Cath. _____ Jewish _____
- b. Total number of churches and synagogues _____

6. FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

- a. Asset/Loan ratio of largest commercial bank in your community is _____ to 1.
- b. Asset/Loan ratio of second largest commercial bank is _____ to 1.
- c. Asset/Loan ratio of largest savings and loan institution in your community is _____ to 1.
- d. Asset/Loan ratio of second largest savings and loan institution is _____ to 1.
- e. Total assets of commercial banks in your community _____

7. LAW ENFORCEMENT

- a. Number of local policemen _____
- b. Number of county law enforcement officers in your county _____
- c. Are law enforcement efforts coordinated between local and county forces? _____
- d. Number of local police vehicles _____
- e. Number of police vehicles having two-way radio equipment _____
- f. Number of all convictions past year _____
- g. Number of minors arrested during past year _____
- h. Are automatic burglar alarm systems available for industrial plants? _____

8. FIRE PROTECTION

- a. Number of regular firemen _____
- b. Number of volunteer firemen _____
- c. Is there a training program for regular and/or volunteer firemen? _____
- d. Number of pieces of fire fighting vehicular equipment _____
- e. Number of fire stations _____
- f. National Board of Fire Underwriters Rating _____
- g. Does community have mobile equipment suitable for handling industrial fires such as chemical, gasoline, etc.? _____
- h. Are local facilities available and adequate to provide sprinkler protection for an industrial plant? _____
- i. Are automatic fire alarm systems available for individual industrial buildings? _____

9. HOUSING

- a. Total number of single dwelling units in your community _____
- b. Number of occupied single dwelling units _____
- c. Number of single dwelling units constructed in past five years _____
- d. Number of multiple dwelling units constructed in past five years _____

10. SHOPPING FACILITIES

- a. Total number of retail establishments _____
- b. How many new retail establishments have opened in past five years? _____

- c. How many retail establishments have closed in past five years? _____
- d. Number of national retail outlets in your community _____
- e. Retail sales per capita in 1960 _____

11. STREETS AND TRAFFIC

- a. Has your community ever had a traffic survey taken by a professional engineering consulting firm? _____
- b. Is inter-city through traffic routed around major traffic areas? _____
- c. Total mileage of dedicated streets _____
- d. Total mileage of dedicated streets paved _____
- e. Number of public off-street parking spaces serving downtown business area _____
- f. Is snow removal equipment available and adequate? _____

12. CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

- a. Does your community have a public library? _____
- b. If it does not have a library does it have regular bookmobile service? _____
- c. Total number of library or bookmobile volumes available _____
- d. Total acreage of all community parks and playgrounds _____
- e. Number of golf courses within five mile radius of community _____
- f. Total number of public tennis courts in your community _____
- g. Is there a private country club within a five mile radius of your community? _____

h. Are the following facilities found in your community?

(1) Civic Auditorium _____

(2) Bowling Lanes _____

(3) Roller Skating Rink _____

(4) Football Stadium _____

(5) Baseball Park _____

(6) Nearby boating and fishing facilities _____

i. Does your community have the following locally sponsored youth activity groups:

(1) Y.M.C.A. _____

(2) Y.W.C.A. _____

(3) Boy Scouts _____

(4) Girl Scouts _____

(5) F.F.A. _____

(6) 4-H _____

(7) Junior Achievement _____

j. Do you have the following locally sponsored cultural activities?

(1) Amateur theater group _____

(2) Music association _____

(3) Public forum _____

(4) Lecture series _____

(5) Fine Arts program _____

k. Does your community employ a full-time recreation director? _____

13. TRAVEL AND MEETING FACILITIES

- a. Total number of hotel rooms in community _____
- b. Total number of hotel rooms in hotels recommended by accredited travel guides _____
- c. Total number of motel rooms within five miles of community _____
- d. Total number of motel rooms in motels recommended by accredited travel guides _____
- e. Do you have facilities to provide meeting places for civic organizations? _____

14. NEWS MEDIA

- a. Is a daily or weekly newspaper published in your community? _____
- b. Is there a commercial radio station located in your community? _____
- c. Is there a local television station in your community? _____
- d. How many local and/or regional television channels can be received clearly in your community? _____

15. COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

- a. Total number of service clubs in your community _____
- b. Does your community have an active Chamber of Commerce? _____
- c. Does it have a full-time managing director? _____

16. AIRCRAFT FACILITIES

- a. Is there a commercial airport within a five mile radius of your community? _____
- b. If not, distance in miles to nearest facility _____

- c. Is private charter service available at the nearest commercial airport? _____
- d. Is air cargo service available at the nearest commercial airport? _____
- e. Total number of flights daily arriving at or leaving airport _____

17. RAIL TRANSPORTATION

- a. Does your community have daily passenger train service? _____
- b. Does your community have daily freight train service? _____

18. MOTOR TRUCKING

- a. Are intrastate motor freight carriers franchised to serve your community? _____
- b. Are interstate motor freight carriers franchised to serve your community? _____
- c. Is daily motor freight service available? _____
- d. Number of truck terminals in your community _____
- e. Do major motor freight carriers have pick-up service for small parcels? _____

19. WATER TRANSPORTATION

- a. Are there commercial barge lines serving your community? _____
- b. Are there local barge terminals? _____

20. MISCELLANEOUS TRANSPORTATION

- a. Does your community have interstate bus service? _____
- b. Does your community have intra-city bus service? _____

- c. Total number of local taxicabs available _____
- d. Is car rental service available? _____

21. HIGHWAY FACILITIES

- a. Is there a U.S. east-west highway passing through your community? _____
- b. Is there a U.S. north-south highway passing through your community? _____
- c. Nearest interchange to the projected federal interstate highway system _____

22. EXISTING INDUSTRIES

- a. Number of new job opportunities created within past five years in your community as a result of new industrial locations and expansions of industry _____
- b. Are local industrial executives represented in such groups as town or city council, school board, planning commission, etc.? _____
- c. Total industrial employment within a five mile radius in manufacturing _____; in non-manufacturing _____

23. UNION ACTIVITY

- a. Total union membership in industries located within five mile radius of your community _____
- b. Have there been any union representation elections during the past two years in your community in which the union has been defeated? _____
- c. Have there been any such elections which the union won? _____
- d. Have there been any unions which have been voted out by employees of industry during the past two years? _____

- e. State the total number of man-days lost during the last year due to work stoppages which were union inspired _____
- f. Have secondary boycott practices by local unions hindered business in any manner in the past two years? _____
- g. Is there good cooperation among employers in your community in regard to exchange of union contracts, wage rates, etc.? _____

24. LABOR COSTS

- a. Give the average hourly rates for the following classes of employees in your community (the breakdown should conform to the Bureau of Labor Statistics classification; this information can be obtained from the United States Employment Service office):

- (1) Skilled \$ _____
- (2) Semi-skilled \$ _____
- (3) Unskilled \$ _____

25. LABOR POTENTIAL

- a. Total labor force in your community _____
- b. Labor force within 25 mile radius of your community _____
- c. Number unemployed within 25 mile radius of your community _____
- d. Number employed in manufacturing in your community
- (1) Skilled - male _____
- (2) Semi-skilled - male _____
- (3) Unskilled - male _____
- (4) Skilled - female _____

(5) Semi-skilled - female _____

(6) Unskilled - female _____

26. WATER AND WATER TREATMENT

- a. Is the water system in your community municipally owned? _____
- b. Total quantity of water presently available in your community _____
- c. Does the distribution system provide adequate service for all persons living within the community? _____
- d. Total capacity of filtration plant _____
- e. Average amount of treated water used during mid-summer _____

27. SEWAGE DISPOSAL

- a. Does the community have a system of sewage disposal lines to serve all residents of the community? _____
- b. Total capacity of sewage treatment plant _____
- c. Present load of sewage treatment plant _____

28. GARBAGE AND TRASH DISPOSAL

- a. Does community provide garbage and trash pick up for all residents on at least a weekly basis? _____
- b. Is there a separate charge for each service? _____

29. COAL

- a. Lowest cost of industrial boiler coal delivered _____

30. GAS

- a. Is natural gas available in your community? _____
- b. What is the capacity per day of the natural gas utility company in your community? _____
- c. What is the maximum quantity of natural gas consumed per day in your community? _____
- d. What is the quoted price for natural gas to an industrial customer having a demand of 500,000 cubic feet per month?
- (1) Firm \$ _____
- (2) Interruptible \$ _____

31. FUEL OIL

- a. Lowest cost of industrial fuel oil (#6) delivered, per gal. _____

32. LOCAL TAXATION

- a. Total real estate tax valuation in community _____
- b. Assessment ratio of the community based on current market value:
- (1) For individual _____
- (2) For industry _____
- c. Assessment ratio of the county in which you are located based on current market value:
- (1) For individual _____
- (2) For industry _____
- d. Real estate tax rate per \$100 based on current market values _____
- e. How often are real estate appraisals for tax assessment purposes made in your community? _____

- f. Are there any special local taxes imposed by the community on manufacturers? _____
- g. Are there contemplated any large expansion of community facilities within the next two years which will affect the tax rates? _____

33. BUILDING FINANCING

- a. Does your community have an industrial development corporation or organization? _____
- b. Is the industrial development corporation profit _____ or non-profit type _____ ?
- c. How much money could your community's industrial development corporation raise toward the construction of an industrial building for a well-rated manufacturer? _____
- d. Have the efforts of the industrial development corporation ever been successful in bringing new industry into your community? _____
- e. Does the industrial development corporation own land which is being held for industrial expansion? _____

34. MATERIALS AND SERVICES

- a. Are the following services available within your community?

General Services:

- (1) Employment Service _____
- (2) Architects _____
- (3) General Contractors _____
- (4) Machine Shops _____
- (5) Job Printers _____
- (6) Certified Public Accountants _____

(7) Attorneys _____

(8) Realtors _____

Technical Services:

(1) Blueprint Service _____

(2) Air-conditioning Repairs _____

COMMENTS:

Name of Community: _____

Submitted by: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX C

BLUEFIELD AREA SITE-MAPS

Area #1	Princeton	122
Area #2	Shawnee Lake	123
Area #3	Spanishburg	124
Area #4	Spanishburg-North	125
Area #5	St. Clair	126
Area #6	Bland County	127



COURT HOUSE PRINCETON, W.VA.

A. E. P. CO. SUBSTATION

①	L. C. Wickel Est.	55	Ac.
②	Porter Thompson	25	Ac.
③	Mrs. ...	28	Ac.
④	Robert Hill	6	Ac.
⑤	L. O. Belcher	87	Ac.
⑥	G. J. Wood	32	Ac.
⑦	H. P. Hunnicutt	4	Ac.
⑧	Princeton Airport	30	Ac.
⑨	R. J. ...	3	Ac.

APPALACHIAN ELECTRIC POWER CO.
 INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT DEPT. ROANOKE, VA.

PROPOSED INDUSTRIAL SITES NO. BL-18
 Area #1

PRINCETON, W.VA.

MERCER COUNTY WEST VIRGINIA

SCALE 1" = 600'	PHOTOMAP NUMBER	REVISIONS
DATE 3-12-56	DDF-7-8	
DRAWN BY A C		

132 KV To Switchback Station

33 KV To Glen Llyn, Va.
 132 KV To Glen Llyn, Va.



ALANKENSHI
40 Ac.

CONLEY SNIDOW
35 Ac.

CONLEY SNIDOW
100 Ac.

CONLEY SNIDOW
30 Ac.

CONLEY SNIDOW
55 Ac.

CONLEY SNIDOW
55 Ac.

KEGLEY, W. VA.

APPALACHIAN ELECTRIC POWER CO.
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT DEPT. ROANOKE, VA.

PROPOSED INDUSTRIAL SITES NO. BL-10
SITE-MAP #2

SHAWNEE LAKE

MERCER COUNTY WEST VIRGINIA

SCALE 1" = 600' PHOTOMAP NUMBER REVISIONS

DATE 10-1-55 DDF-24-96

DRAWN BY A. C.



U.B. FARLEY
100A.

HAROLD WHITE
110 A.

SHRE. MAXEY ESTATE
76A.

CLYDE MAXEY
60A.

A. BURN
SHRE. MAXEY

EDD MAXEY
10A.

APPALACHIAN ELECTRIC POWER CO. INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT DEPT. ROANOKE, VA.		
PROPOSED INDUSTRIAL SITES NO. BL-20		
Area #3		
SPANISHBURG		
MERCER CO.	WEST VIRGINIA	
SCALE 1" = 600'	PHOTOMAP NUMBER	REVISIONS
DATE 7/2/58	DDF-7-13	
DRAWN BY J.T.H.		

8-20-45

+



APPALACHIAN ELECTRIC POWER CO.
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT DEPT. ROANOKE, VA.

PROPOSED INDUSTRIAL SITES NO. BL-19
SITE-MAP #4
SPANISHBURG-NORTH

MERCER CO. WEST VIRGINIA

SCALE 1" = 600'	PHOTOMAP NUMBER	REVISIONS
DATE 7/2/58	DDF-24-98	
DRAWN BY J.T.H.		

BLUEFIELD, VA.



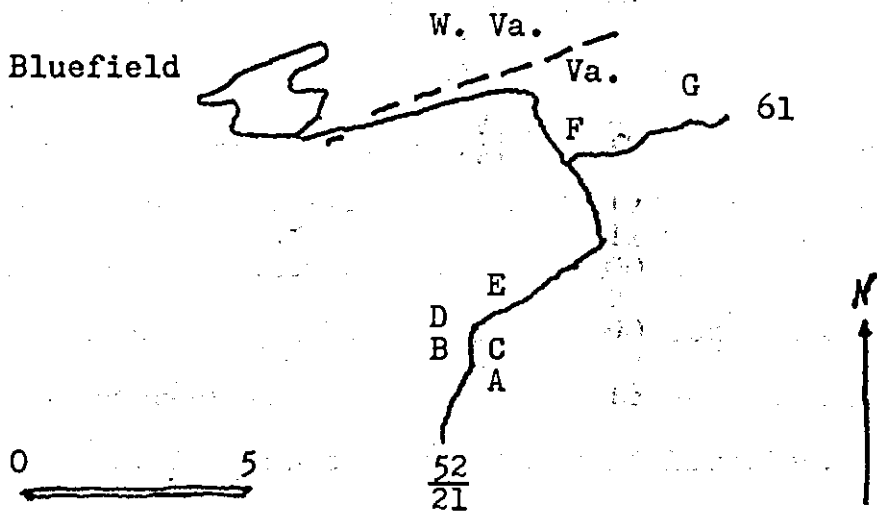
APPALACHIAN ELECTRIC POWER CO.
 INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT DEPT. ROANOKE, VA

PROPOSED INDUSTRIAL SITES NO. BL-13
 Area #5

ST. CLAIR

TAZEWELL COUNTY VIRGINIA

SCALE 1" = 600'	PHOTOMAP NUMBER	REVISIONS
DATE 10-1-55	DDF-28-17	
DRAWN BY A. C.		



Site	Acres
A	17
B	11
C	100
D	25
E	90
F	7
G	15

Area #6.--Bland County

Source: State of Virginia, Division of Industrial Development.

ABSTRACT

Mercer County, West Virginia, a prosperous area until the early 1950's, is now in a seriously depressed condition. This was brought about by mechanization of the coal fields and automation of the railroads, and resulted in a reduced labor force and increased unemployment. This further resulted in a population loss. Three solutions have been suggested to correct the present condition -- let nature take its course, develop tourism, industrialization. The purpose of this thesis is to bring to light all possible evidence that could be used in evaluating the proposed courses of action to be taken in revitalizing the economy of the county.

Mercer County still has a potent labor force; abundant natural resources; adequate industrial power; outstanding transportation facilities; excellent communication facilities; and a sufficiency of supporting industries, community facilities, and services.

Letting nature take its course would not be a wise decision -- progress, if any, would be extremely slow with the result that existing resources would be dissipated. To expend all energies toward the development of the

tourist trade would also be an unwise decision — applying total effort to something that, at best, would do only part of the job. This leaves only one prudent solution — industrialization. Since local leadership cannot fairly and reasonably recommend investment of the limited resources, the exact steps necessary to improve the economic condition of Mercer County and its neighboring counties should be determined by a team of economists from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and one of the West Virginia universities.